Kevin Cooley, *Skyward*, 2012, video, color, sound, 9 minutes 45 seconds. Installation view.

sail away and pixelate against the bright blue; a bee that hovers over the camera; the sun turning its transparent body to amber; a blimp seemingly blown sideways by the wind) are nearly heart-stopping. Every object seen and recorded by the camera comes to seem defined by the direction in which it moves: toward us or away from us? With the forward movement of the car or in opposition? Along axes or defying them? The sky, as seen from the earth, becomes something abstract, a realm of pure directionality.

At the very end of the video, the camera does a slow vertiginous spin, suddenly dipping down to show us distant verdant hills with houses, then the rippled ocean, before ascending through airy boundaries delineating water and atmosphere. This sublime moment emphasizes our weightlessness—we have seamlessly gone from earthbound, in a car, to somewhere midair—and establishes that almost nothing in the video's scenario can be taken for granted. This is not a slice of life, the happenstance result of turning on a camera and going for a drive; it is a video that calls attention to its own constructedness, not least with the overpasses that chop up the screen like the frames of a film.

—*Emily Hall*

Cyprien Gaillard
MoMA PS1

The bold beating heart of "The Crystal World," Cyprien Gaillard's first solo exhibition at a museum in New York, was a work that viewers could hear before they could see it. A snatch of an old David Gray song, endlessly repeating the name of an ancient place with as heavy a sorrow as anodyne pop could bear, drifted through the corridors and drew visitors into a large, darkened room. There, beyond the crackle and whir of a 35-mm film projector, Gaillard's mesmerizing elegy for a ruined Iraq, *Artefacts*, 2011, was playing in a continuous loop on a screen more than nineteen feet high. The artist shot the entire piece with the video camera on his mobile phone, then transferred the footage to its lush cinematic support. The wild discrepancy between amateur-style camerawork and commercial-quality film stock is just one of the many contradictions that make *Artefacts* such a strange, disarming, and deeply moving work.

It's a project that could easily have gone wrong: A young and fashionable artist goes to Baghdad for adventure and war tourism and casts an indolent set of eyes across the wreckage laid out before him. But Gaillard's images are ardent, curious; they hum with self-awareness. The film unfurls a ceaseless procession of deserts, sandstone archaeological sites, and apocalyptic junkyards with cars piled high; of palm trees, tall grasses, and other such tufts of vegetation; of soldiers in fatigues, mustachioed men in *thobes* and kaffiyehs, some character in a fine-tailored suit holding a chunk of rock to the camera, and the skirts of a whirling dervish. And still, somewhere off-screen, that thin, melancholy voice intones "Babylon" over and over again.

To a certain extent, Gaillard's reputation continues to rest on the heft of *Desniansky Raion*, 2007, a thirty-minute video and "electronic opera" made in collaboration with the DJ and composer Koudlam. Though typically shown as an installation, the piece has also been staged as a concert, a mode of presentation that amplifies the sense that the social-housing projects that are pictured in the footage are the subjects and backdrops of obliterating violence. More recently, Gaillard earned considerable acclaim for *The Recovery of Discovery*, 2011. At the KW Institute for Contemporary Art in Berlin, he built a pyramid from cases of Efes beer and then invited the public to consume, and thus destroy, the work.

MoMA PS1's survey of Gaillard's practice over the past ten years, which was curated by Klaus Biesenbach, certainly tapped into that aesthetic of entropy and collapse, particularly in its selection of films and videos, *Desniansky Raion* included. But the show's nine glass display cases holding the bucket teeth of construction and demolition machines, alongside the dimly lit rooms lined with fifty-six of the artist's "Geographical Analogies," 2006–11, each featuring nine Polaroids arranged in a diamond shape, emphasized the elegance of Gaillard's slower, more thoughtful formalism over the rambunctiousness of his quicker, in-your-face work. The result was a judicious edit of the artist's oeuvre, with only one false note: three rubbings of New York City manhole covers, titled *Gates*, 2012.

Specially commissioned for the exhibition, these frottages added nothing to the weight of Gaillard's visual language of beauty and violence. His vocabulary for the twenty-first-century sublime includes tower blocks, bunkers, smoke-filled forests, controlled implosions, failed utoptias, frat boys, ritualized fistfights, and the highly stylized dance of a gang member in a layered landscape of Mayan ruins and a Cancún resort. The "Geographical Analogies" alone, drawn from a collection of fifteen thousand images, create their own systems of meaning, shuffling through experiences of a deep past and a turbulent present by eliciting, as does *Artefacts*, the fleeting recognition of a famous landmark, an ancient temple, a looted artwork, or a streetwise stencil of Arthur Rimbaud. "The Crystal World" proved Gaillard a credible heir to his explicitly stated influences, such as Robert Smithson and the eighteenth-century painters of the picturesque. But he might also belong to another line of sensitive and inquisitive filmmakers, epitomized by Chris Marker and his *Sans Soleil* (1983), who take seriously their great privilege to travel the world and make searching work from the wonders and horrors they have seen.

Cyprien Gaillard, *Artefacts*, 2011, digital video transferred to 35 mm, color, sound, continuous loop.

—*Kaelen Wilson-Goldie*

Ignacio Uriarte
THE DRAWING CENTER

Ignacio Uriarte never got the memo explaining that artists often keep two résumés: one listing the exhibitions, degrees, reviews, and awards

that comprise an artist's *career*, and a second cataloging the stints—as bartender, computer programmer, proofreader, paralegal—that contribute to an artist's *livelihood*. Pushing against this unwritten convention, Uriarte prefaces his CV with an overview of his past positions at such corporations as the German electronics conglomerate Siemens, and he underscores his administrative background by rooting his art in materials ubiquitous to cubicles. His exhibition "Line of Work," organized by Joanna Kleinberg Romanow, included a series of felt-tip-marker drawings composed of ruler-straight lines, a slide show of pens wittily arranged into Roman numerals (from one through forty), and an audio recording of vocalist Blixa Bargeld percussively reciting letters in concert with an old-fashioned typewriter.

Ignacio Uriarte, *Blue Wrist Suite* (detail), 2012, one of four ballpoint-ink drawings on paper, each 27½ x 19⅝".

At a talk sponsored by the Goethe-Institut New York, Uriarte justified his fidelity to office supplies by likening himself to the late Richard Artschwager, whose sculpture reflected his day job constructing cabinets and furniture. The comparison is apt, and opens onto the question of how to situate Uriarte's practice historically. In the early 1960s, Artschwager's ersatz furniture was simultaneously a synthesis and a send-up of Minimalism's formalist pretensions and Pop's vernacular slumming. In an important essay from 1989, Benjamin Buchloh argued that Pop and Minimalism were the last movements to retain some vestige of art's autonomy—its tenuous claim to a separate sphere of experience—before Conceptual art blithely, even triumphantly, inscribed itself within Adorno's "totally administered world." Plotted on graph paper, Xeroxed, or stored in three-ring binders, this so-called aesthetics of administration exuded the sensibility of midlevel managers who filed their reports and kept their heads down. In this Frankfurt School scheme, Artschwager's workshop still affords the freedoms associated with the traditional artist's studio, however diminished, while Uriarte's office furnishes little other than an ergonomic seat of mute complicity.

The question, then, is, What has changed? It's been nearly a half century since Conceptual art's heyday, and Buchloh's late-'80s vantage point doesn't register the shifts in business usually shorthanded as affective labor or the new spirit of capitalism: the team-building exercises, the faux friendships, the foosball. The competent, squarely anonymous IBM man is no longer anyone's model employee, and the Robbe-Grillet-inspired impersonality of Conceptual art is no longer so assiduously enforced. Uriarte's drawings, for instance, mimic the permutational rigor of Sol LeWitt's wall pieces, but at a diminutive scale, typically that of A4 paper. Whereas LeWitt could deploy pencil work only by establishing a system of instruction and delegation that removed him from the final result, Uriarte underscores the presence of his hand: The orderly and undulating Bic-blue arcs of *Blue Wrist Suite*, 2012, correspond to the curving swing of Uriarte's own wrist. Or, in *Strong Upper and Downer*, 2012, Uriarte coaxes fluid, expansive lines of black and red from a typewriter—an unwieldy drawing tool and, it should be noted, an appliance more prevalent in the '60s than today. Now that corporations exhort employees to be creative, it seems that Uriarte can appropriate the administrative procedures and office paraphernalia of Conceptual art for a traditional studio aesthetic.

However, a funny thing happens on the way to the studio. The intimate handwork in *Blue Wrist Suite* starts to appear less natural than mechanical, the incidental disparities in pressure no more pronounced or expressive than the typewriter's fades and smudges in *Strong Upper and Downer*. The supposed freedom of an artist's career shadows the presumed monotony of a livelihood. Uriarte's drawings are beautiful, but their underlying message isn't necessarily pretty. By all means, they tell us, quit your day job, but don't think you can leave it behind.

—*Colby Chamberlain*

Peter Wächtler

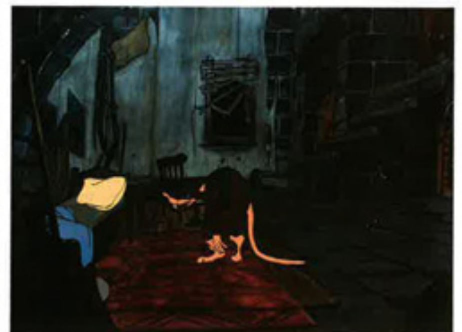
LUDLOW 38

How do we describe our everyday existence? Colloquially, we might cheekily use the term *rat race*. In his first US exhibition, "B.A.C.K.," German-born, Brussels-based artist Peter Wächtler seemed to take up this idiom, presenting a cartoon that addresses the nuanced emotions that shade the experience of daily life and stars a beleaguered, vest-wearing rodent. *Untitled*, 2013, smartly encodes quotidian routine and the slippages therein with a recursive structure—time may progress, but outfits and countenances don't.

Set in a stone *chambre de bonne* with peeling wallpaper and warping floorboards—a red Oriental carpet and a tossed-aside liquor bottle serve as lifestyle indicators—the animation shows the stuporous protagonist vacantly performing his everyday "leisure time." In a sequence about one minute long, the rat lumbers home at night, trips on his rug, and dislodges a precariously placed bowling ball from his desk, predictably conking himself on the head. Soon, he recovers and climbs into bed. After some tossing and turning, the sun rises all too quickly. Our protagonist labors out of bed, replaces the bowling ball, and hulks off-screen—presumably to a job—only for the Sisyphean scene to repeat again and again.

Throughout the video, Wächtler provides a voice-over. Breaking the first thirty seconds of silence, he reads evenly, if slowly, with a tinge of the forlorn. "How I learned to drive a car," he begins. His solemn but steady voice utters memories, improvised recollections, and other scraps of information. "How I try to go on and just can't make it any further and how I still have this photograph of you in my locker that all my colleagues know of," he says midway through, causing a whiplash of pseudobiography, each line veering further into fantastical tragicomedy. Marked by the beat of his inhalations between lines, Wächtler's vignettes traipse through various pasts, lived or imagined, possible or not.

Production and consumption day in and day out can sap one's motivation to continue on, instilling a feeling of being hemmed in by and folded into the arbitrary structures of life. Yet within daily routines, humanness creeps in nonetheless: Midway through the video, our workingman breaks the cycle by sleeping through an entire day. This gray zone is summarized by Henri Lefebvre: "The days follow one after another and resemble one another, and yet—here lives the contradiction at the heart of everydayness—everything changes." In Wächtler's work, this notion manifests via minor imprecisions in the scene, a product of the cartoon's handmade quality (a route differing from the one taken by Wächtler's peers Jordan Wolfson and Helen



Peter Wächtler, *Untitled*, 2013, still from the 14-minute, color, HD video component of a mixed-media installation additionally comprising an ink-and-color-pencil drawing on Xerox.