

A CASTLE IN THE BLUE

Christopher Green
curated by R. C. Sheering

7 - 20 March 2015

Fokidos
Fokidos 21, Ampelokipoi
11526, Athens, Greece

R.C. Sheering and Christopher Green in conversation on the occasion of *A Castle in the Blue* at Fokidos, Athens.

RCS: It's your first time in Athens, right? How long have you been there?

CG: Yes, that's correct, it's my first time, but my work has been here before. Twice in fact. By the time I leave, I'll have been here for 5 weeks. That's the plan.

RCS: On both occasions your works were shown at Fokidos. Most recently a piece of furniture; a stool from your studio, and before that, two paintings in their inaugural exhibition. One of the paintings, *Colata R.J.*, you've revisited for this show. Perhaps you can tell me about the genealogy of this work, and what it means to you to re-show/revisit a work?

CG: Of the three works I've shown previous, two, *Colata R.J.* and *Studio stool* have remained in Athens. They were absorbed into the domestic world after playing their part in an exhibition. The stool is a multiple of sorts; in the sense that I have another in London, but the painting I haven't seen since it left for Greece in 2013.

RCS: You often revisit older works, involving them in your current projects. I'm thinking of the show you organised at Middlemarch in Brussels, and also the Christmas show at Hannah Barry in London last year. What does it mean to revisit?

CG: For *En-trée* at Middlemarch I acted as a host; inviting artists, all of whom I knew, and introduced them both to one another, and also to the Middlemarch audience. The emphasis here was on the guests, and second to that was my position as an artist and 'curator', and how I chose to walk this line. So I choose to show two older works from

four and two years previous, and position myself in the kitchen. For the show at Hannah Barry I reworked three paintings from 2 years previous, applying a methodology I had suspended in 2010, thus combining old with older to make 'new' works.



RCS: But you've revisited - reworked the painting *Colata R.J.* for *A castle in the blue*, perhaps you can tell me about the specifics of this?

CG: That painting was made whilst on a work excursion to Italy. I was with some artist friends, one of which needed to buy some casting plaster for a sculpture. We soon discovered that 'colata' is Italian for 'casting'. I had been working on a number of paintings using stucco (a plaster cement compound) and this, along with the translation, got me thinking about the act of casting. It had occurred to me whilst making this painting, that I had begun 'channeling' the New York painter Robert Rauschenberg. It was as if I was casting Robert's work.

RCS: You mean the painting resembled a work by Rauschenberg?

CG: Resembled, yes. But much more like a cast, one where the mould had misshapen or split, in the sense that the result is similar but not the same as the master. At least this is what I thought at the time. In the other sense, it was as if I was casting, as in hiring, one of Rauschenberg's methods of painting.

RCS: But why revisit this work?

CG: It has been in Athens since 2013. Time has passed and I knew I



was going to be confronted with this work once more. I knew that when we met we'd have things to tell one another. Like I said; time had passed - some things have changed.

RCS: So your feelings about the work have changed?

CG: It's not a question of feelings per se. It's a case of wishing to update the work by imparting some of my recent ideas. The former painting is still present. The work has expanded to include both past and present.

RCS: But where does this kind of expansion stop?

CG: This is just the same as asking the age-old question of "when is a (abstract) painting finished". It's as good as finished, so long as it makes sense. But I'm not so interested in finishing or 'completing' things. Not within my work at least. It brings me back to the open-house analogy which we've spoken about before. Visitors are welcome. The door is open.

RCS: We're showing another painting. A small white and blue work (*untitled*) from 2014. Can you tell me about this work. You also made this in Italy, right?

CG: Yes. I found myself in the exact same part of Italy one year after the aforementioned trip. This painting is from a group of 12, out of which the dialect I've introduced to *Colata R.J.* developed. I was writing a text for Mixed Four, an off-site Fokidos show, at the time I made this, so, for me at least, there's a connection between this painting and *Colata R.J.* and Fokidos, as undetectable as it may be.

RCS: Could you tell me about the photos?

CG: The photos were all taken using my phone. I no longer own a 'portable' camera. The studio contains a repro camera, but this doesn't fit in my pocket. They're mostly personal subjects, but not in the sentimental sense.

RCS: Their size makes me think of holiday snapshots?

CG: Sure. Well they were printed at a photo print shop when I arrived in Athens. They're 6 x 4 inch digital c-type prints, the same as the kind one would receive in exchange for the jpegs of their holiday memories.

RCS: Were any of the photos taken in Athens?

CG: No. They're a compilation of photos taken over the last two years; from my studio and from my travels. My life; working, leisure, and the two combined.



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RCS: So you could say you've reversed the process of 'developing'? I mean, you've taken your photos from 'home' and you've brought them on 'holiday'.

CG: I have all these photos, as digital files, as almost everyone nowadays does. A bank into which I'm constantly depositing images. But of course, like most of us, I never print them out, they remain on the device with which they were captured, instantly filed away in the portable office. This office is omnipresent and never closed.

RCS: Why print the photos out?

CG: Because the office - the phone - is a private domain.

RCS: You could have presented them on a digital device, such as a tablet, or made them available for people to download onto *their* own devices..?

CG: Since taking these images I've only ever viewed them on a screen. Printing them out means they become published matter, ie. public matter. I wanted to move them on. As standard photo prints they're available to play a number of roles that they wouldn't so easily, or freely been able to if presented on a tablet. My decision to have them printed at a conventional photo printing shop also eradicated a good proportion of technical options; choices I would have been faced with, and ultimately detained by, had I taken the files to a specialist Fine Arts Printer. The images themselves, are to me, representative of the work-life relationship. This echoes how Fokidos operates; an artist-run project space within a domestic apartment. One person's life, and another person's work co-exist, cohabiting the space.

RCS: There was no budget for the show.

CG: I'm used to working without assigned 'budgets'. In situations like these, when one finds oneself in an unfamiliar environment, new challenges arise; chance and the unexpected take lead.

There are also, of course, the pragmatic concerns of making a show abroad and the tactics employed to work with the show's proverbial weight restriction. The decisions I made whilst packing my suitcase; how many shoes to pack, and how many books to bring, also had some bearing on this show. It's a suitcase show.

RCS: Most of the works have been carried over in your luggage, and all of it will travel onwards with you when you leave Athens?

CG: Exactly. The work is on holiday.

RCS: The show is what a travel agent would call a 'Package Holiday'. So on this occasion I'm Christopher Green's travel agent.

CG: Did you know I made a pair of sculptures called *Package Holiday*, in 2008?

RCS: Well, there you go. Things come back around, but in different forms; a change of dress, and smelling of a new cologne. And you've brought some components from your recent paintings with you?

CG: Some printed-paper parts have been installed, adhered directly to the walls. For some time now I've been feeding my works with paper. The formation of the paper strips is in accordance with the dimensions of four works I left hanging in my London studio when I left for Athens. So they're here as suggestions.

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RCS: Suggestions of an arrival or a departure...

CG: An entrance or an exit. In other words a way into the work on show, and a way out.

RCS: That can feel the same depending on the side you're standing on.

CG: A revolving door.

List of illustrations:

- 1 *Colata R.J.*, stucco, acrylic, gesso on birch wood panel, 40 x 30 cm, 2013 - 2015
- 2 *untitled*, acrylic, gesso, and medium on wood panel, 28 x 17.5 cm, 2014
- 3 *not titled* (invitation for *En-trée* show at Middlemarch, Brussels), photograph, 2014
- 4 - 6 *not titled*, photograph, 2014



List of works on show:

Colata R.J.
stucco, acrylic, gesso on birch wood panel
40 x 30 cm, 2013 - 2015

untitled
acrylic, gesso, and medium on wood panel
28 x 17.5 cm, 2014

not titled, photographs taken 2013 - 2015
51 digital c-type prints printed at 6 x 4" on the occasion of *A castle in the blue* at Fokidos.

Studio components (dotted paper #1)
printed paper adhered to internal wall
40 x 30 cm, 2015

Studio components (dotted paper #2)
printed paper adhered to internal wall
40 x 30 cm, 2015

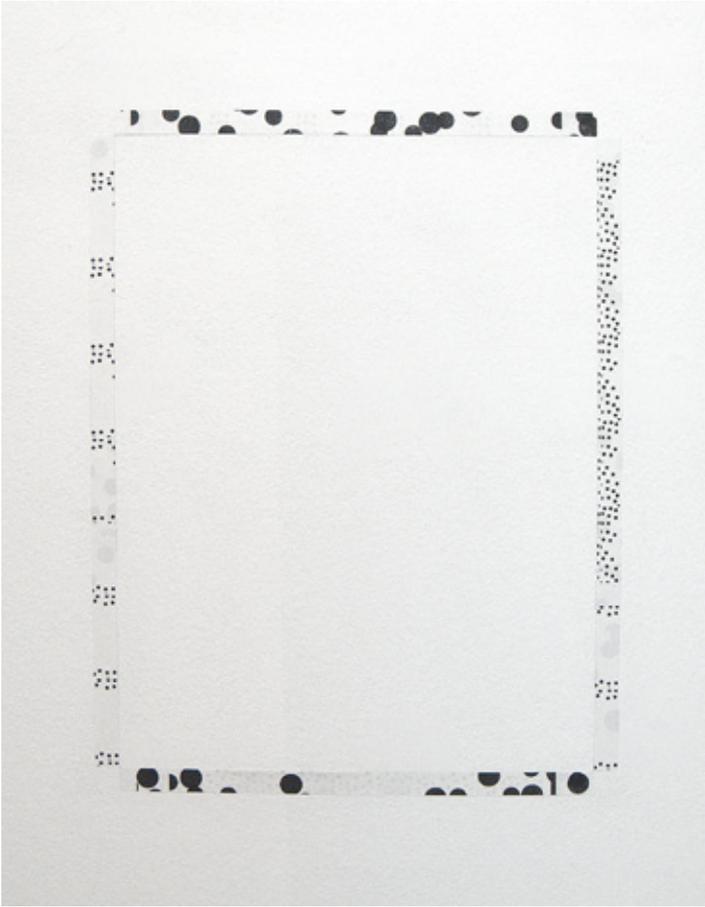
Studio components (dotted paper #3)
printed paper adhered to internal wall
40 x 30 cm, 2015

Studio components (dotted paper #4)
printed paper adhered to internal wall
40 x 50 cm, 2015

Fishing Four Drawings
printed paper
29.7 x 21 cm, 2012

INSTALLATION VIEWS

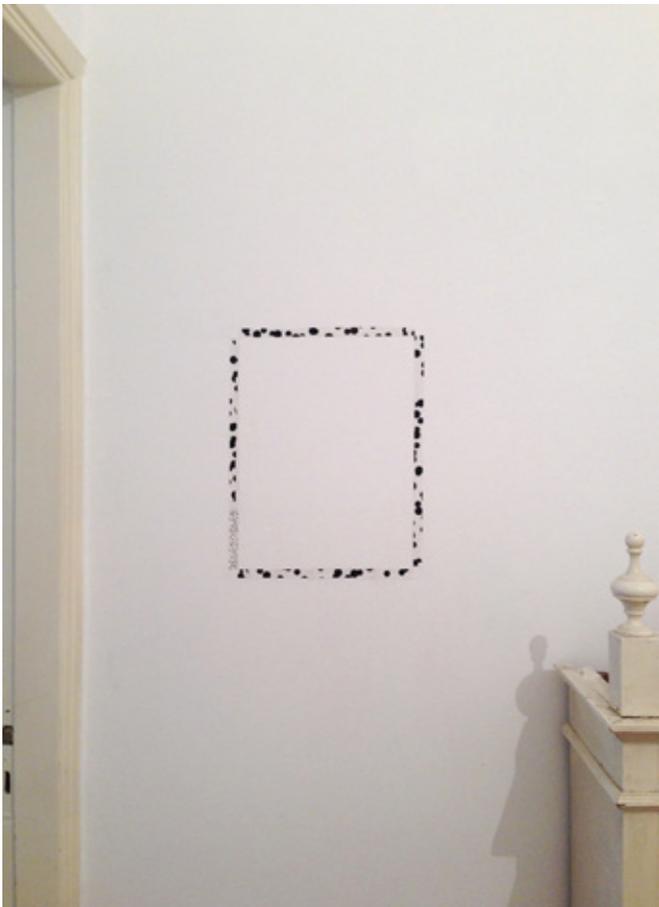


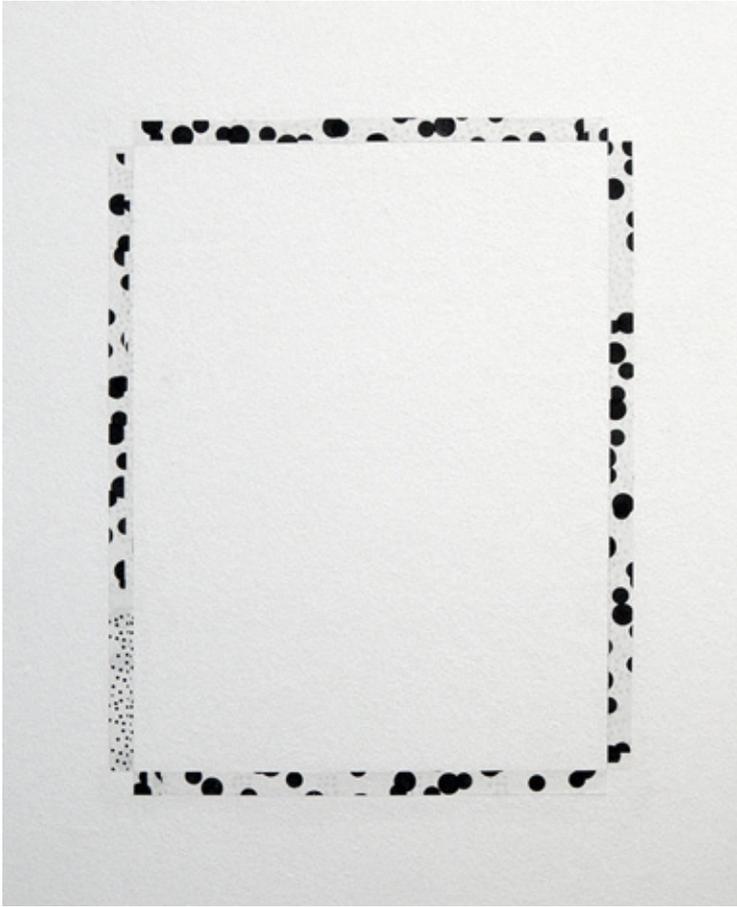








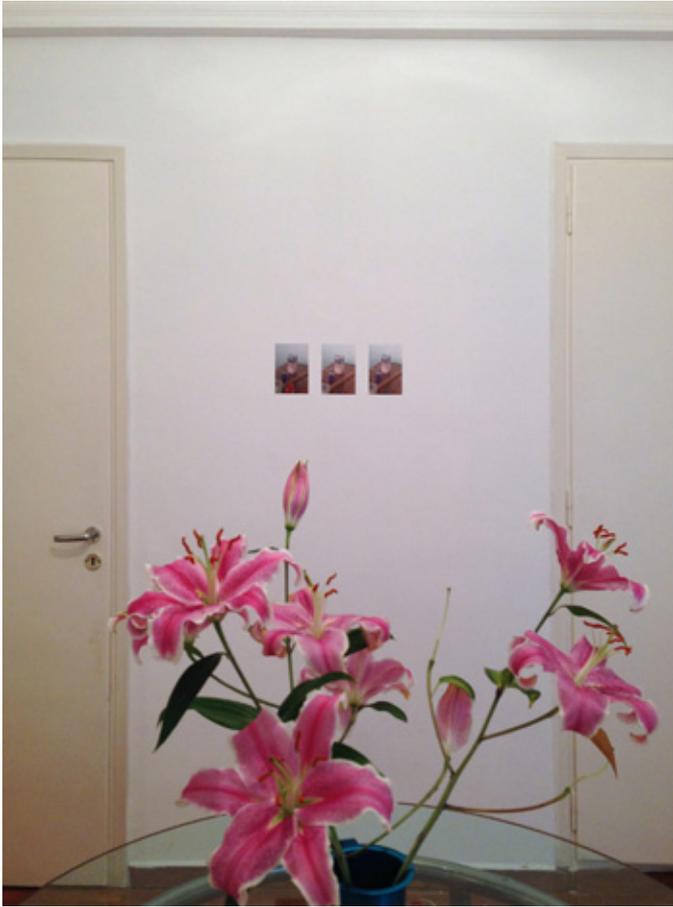














Contact

Christopher Green

www.christophergreen.org.uk

cgreenpost@gmail.com

Fokidos

www.fokidos.co.uk

fokidos@gmail.com