

**EXHIBITION:**  
**João Vasco Paiva**  
**“Dormant Fabric”**

**Opening: Oct. 2, 2015, 6pm**

**Exhibition: Oct. 3 – Oct. 30, 2015**

**Press preview: Friday, Oct. 2, 2015, 4pm**

During his Connecting Spaces residency in Zurich, João Vasco Paiva has been exploring the discarded possibilities during the processes of production. For the realization of his new installment of works at Counter Space, Paiva collaborated with a number of Zurich's craftsmen, manufactures, and producers. The urban professionals work in a surprising array of fields from shoe repair, car parts manufacturing, to stone masonry and butchery. The artist also accessed several production sites, with its more passing, anonymous makers, such as the cultural organizations Dynamo and the Kulturbüro, and the Zurich University of the Arts. In an assemblage of found objects one gets to see the visible evidence of local producers, not of their finished products, but rather of daily actions and their discarded leftovers.

It was a curiosity about ancient trades and handiwork, traditions that although now modernized exist since generations, that initiated the artist's wish to embark on the project. Historically the guilds, or *Zünfte* in German, were strongly embedded in the political culture of Zurich, and despite originally functioning as a mediating body for the fairness within commerce and crafts, it was later to be the richest merchants and nobility that ultimately gained a foothold in governing the city, with normal craftsman having little political power. Paiva frequented the various artisans at their workshops and stores, located primarily in Kreis [city districts] 4 and 5. Former working-class districts, enclaves of craftsmen's workshops exist in courtyards and street-level, despite, in recent years becoming rarer in the inner city landscape.

The multiplicity and variety of error and form is one current in the exhibition. This can be perceived in the wall installation *Kulturbüro*, made up of surplus or faulty Riso prints from the Kulturbüro accumulated by the artist. (Kulturbüro is Switzerland's first culture office supported by Migros Kulturprozent which allows cultural producers to loan technical equipment, and use their facilities.) They visually chronicle the recent cultural events of the city, as well as the work of various designers and artists, such as Eva Rust and Kerstin Schroedinger. Left at the office, the posters and other draft prints are chosen rejects. Sometimes lacking in information, they are half-finished, missing, say, a color layer or printed wrong. In another instance, *Druck-Resten*, the artist has helped himself to the bin of the TEC LAB of the ZHdK, a large receptacle for rejected 3D-printed objects. The selection was skewed towards objects of a more abstract nature.

Another strand of work discretely manipulates and lays bare the maker's mark in its various forms. In *Mürset* three carbon papers have been collected from a monumental mason. Skilled in stone masonry, such professionals create gravestones and other memorials. During the engraving process the mason inscribes the name of the deceased, dates of death and birth and simple sayings or verses through the use of stencils. The paper is reused, with the layering of cuts and inscriptions making the paper more and more translucent. For *Schuh Service Antonio* the artist documented the footprints of the shoemaker from his shop. Using paper, the traces of his tracks and movements are “fossilized” by the use of ink. Here, attention is directed towards the movements of the shoemaker and his reduced working space.

Four tables are assembled in the main space of Counter Space, with different sizes and heights, and the tops covered by rubbings. The tables are reproductions of the tables from three sites: Dynamo, a cultural organization in Zurich with a woodwork station and metal workshop, Gregory Clan – The Furniture Factory, a furniture manufacturer, and Benetti AG, an automotive spare parts manufacturer. To match the original surfaces of the tables, Paiva has made ink rubbings on Chi-

nese calligraphy paper of the original tables, still in use. Another set of rubbings is mounted onto the walls: frottages of cutting boards from a butcher, a barista and a waiter. In accumulating these markings Paiva notes: "I originally wanted to give the workmen a new cutting board and platter so that I could later gather these original items. Whilst in some cases this worked out perfectly, I quickly came to realize the slow time-based and processual factor in mark-making. It takes many months, even years, of daily activity in order for a board to be properly worn. For example the cutting board of Raphael [a butcher] took six years to reach its state, likewise with Benjamin [a vintage car radiator manufacturer], whose board is some ten years old." Carbon paper, an archaic recording method, used for headstones or other reliefs, references as well, ways of registering commercial transactions, and in this case, documents actions of hammering, soldering, printing, chopping, sanding, chiseling, burning, scratching and many more, forming a fabric of tactile connections, contrasts, and connotations. The documentation is willfully raw, and doesn't leave space for the artist's commentary, a transparency that allows for a primal recording of time and human action.

The project is in partnership with Connecting Spaces Hong Kong – Zurich, an initiative by Zurich University of the Arts ZHdK.

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#### João Vasco Paiva

(Coimbra, 1979) lives and works in Hong Kong and Lisbon. With a background in painting and advanced training in media techniques, his work is characterised by the appropriation of observed phenomena, mapping apparently random situations and presenting them in an aesthetically organised framework. He has taught at the City University of Hong Kong School of Creative Media and Hong Kong Art School/ RMIT University, and has given seminars at the Architecture Department of the American University of Sharjah, and at Goldsmiths University in London. His work has been widely shown in places such as: Athens, Beijing, Berlin, Budapest, Lisbon, Lyon, London, Moscow, New York, Prague, Rotterdam, Sao Paulo, Seoul, Shanghai, Sharjah, among others. Recently, Paiva was selected for the Encounters section of Art Basel Hong Kong completed a residency at Lichtenberg Studios, Berlin and was part of a group exhibition at the Witte de With, Rotterdam as well at Artsong Seoul, OCT Contemporary Art Terminal, Shanghai and MAAP, Brisbane. Furthermore Paiva held a major solo exhibition at the Orient Foundation in Macau.

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