

**THE
BLOCKS**

RAMSEY CHAHINE

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The Blocks

I've spent many years in New York City running many miles from block to block hammering the concrete into my bones. It's an unforgiving material, the liquid-to-solid rock, and it's everywhere in this city, supporting ten million inhabitants, funneling them through the grid.

The block—it's what the city-dweller uses to navigate, count, and outline the micro-neighborhoods that make this city this city. It's the pedestrian's metric and a preeminent unit for those of us still on foot.

When I started making Endurance Paintings in 2015 there was an immediate resemblance between the paintings and the topography of this city. The solidified layers of paint extending outward resembled the skyline which, with buildings rigidly organized into gridded parcels also remained organic, imprecise. While making the Endurance Paintings I was running enough to see nearly every inch of this city, download it, take it in brick by brick.

It's unclear how much an environment will influence an artist's work but New York City has a peculiar way of burrowing into you and, whether you like it or not, making its presence known.

With all this running I'd formed an intimate relationship with the materials of this city—the concrete, the blocks, the grid. No doubt these materials are a far cry from the trails you'll find out in the country.

There's a unique soreness you experience after running 19 marathons and 2400 miles in one year on concrete. It gets deep in your bones and takes time to shake out. It's remarkable that the human skeleton can withstand even walking on the hardness of rock let alone having it hammered into the marrow.

And while my practice has largely focused on endurance psychology until now, I've become keenly aware of the physical endurance of material—how everything gets whittled down as it goes, no matter what, by many drops of water, many wisps of wind, or by time alone, eventually reduced to nothing. In nature all is changing, fleeting, wearing down.

When I run I often think of how, as this concrete is impacting me, I am also, in some small way impacting it, wearing it down to nothing.

I became interested in exploring how material can be defeated by will or how, by repeating a process something can progressively break down in the same way the body does with age or when deep in a long run.

It was a sweet victory of sorts to introduce concrete to the studio, shifting the dynamic for a moment by bringing the unwieldy material under my creative control. I made an exact silicone mold of an Endurance Painting, poured the concrete, and followed as the materials of this process began to break down with each successive pour.

As I continued the mold tore, forcing the concrete to pool in sections that would later break apart or crack. Individual knobs snapped off while demolding and I could see how the endurance of the materials was being recorded in these objects. 18 blocks, each one more weathered or coarse than the previous. It became a visual metaphor, so to speak, of how all things are worn down over time.

There I saw the endurance of physical matter threaded through a line of blocks—units of measurement—measuring the wear of the creative process on its materials. An evolution of the Endurance Paintings, an ultrarunner's metaphor, made in and with New York City.

The Blocks.



The Blocks is an editioned series of 18
concrete sculptures numbered 1 through 18
with 1 AP (Artist Proof).

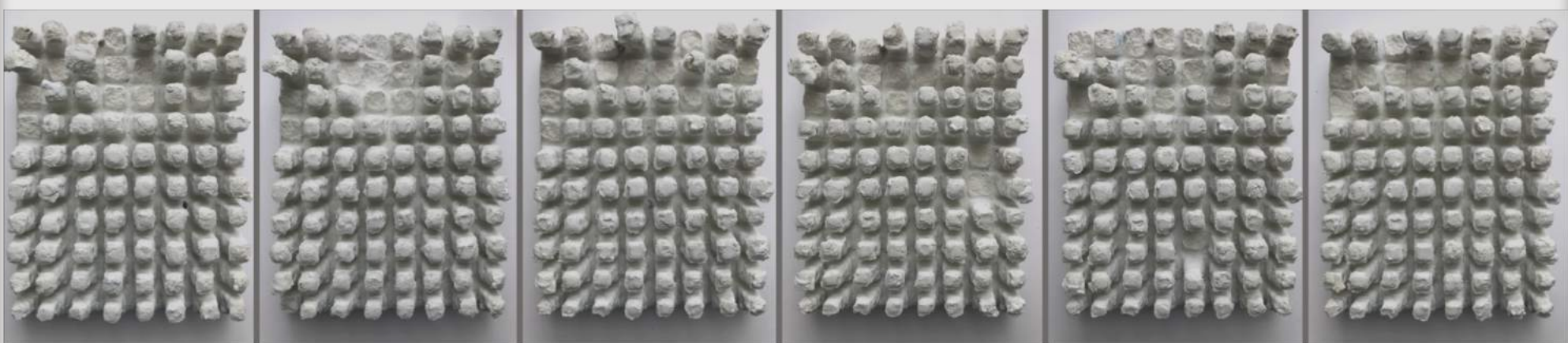
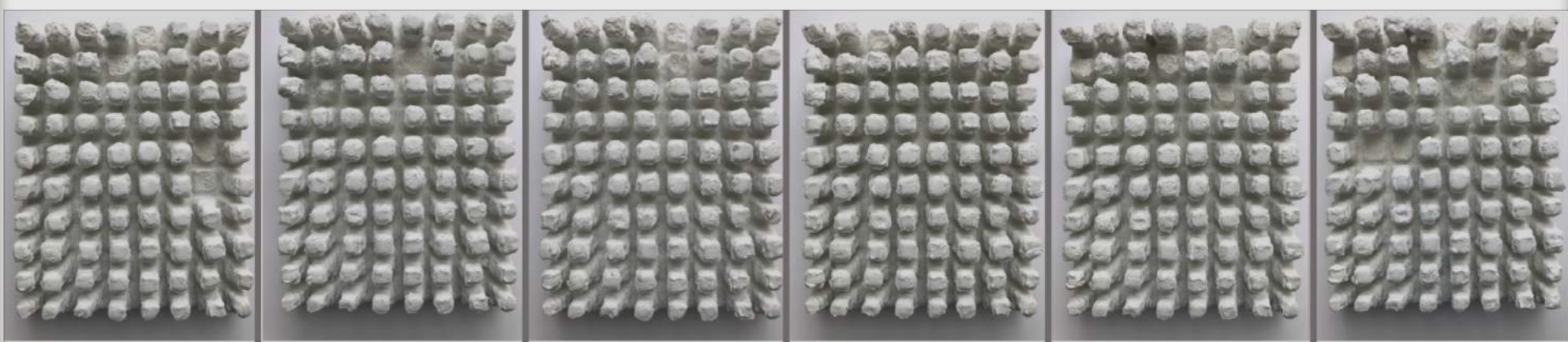
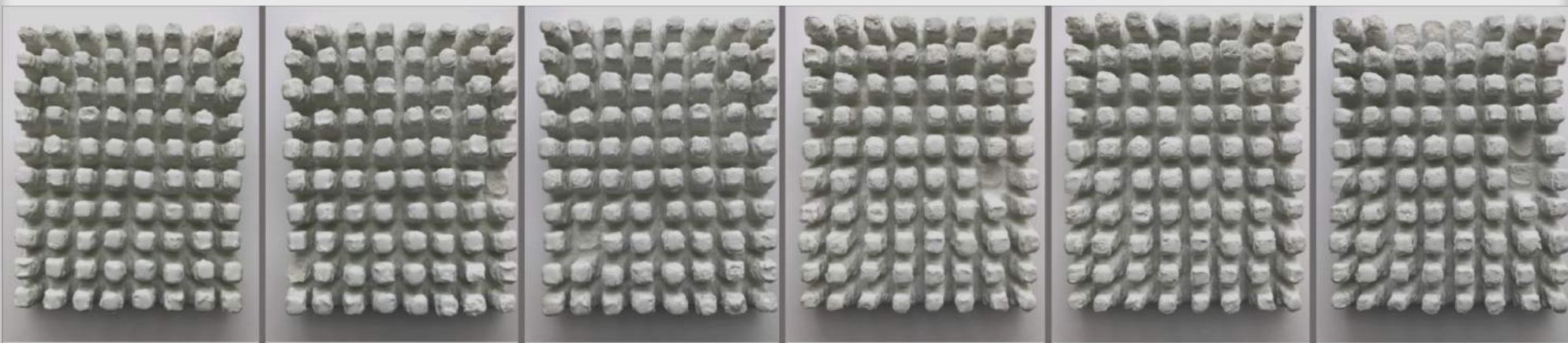
Each sculpture is reinforced by wood
backing with screwheads embedded in the
concrete form.

Each sculpture is numbered and
signed on verso:

Ramsey Chahine
2019

The materials, dimensions and price for each block are:

Concrete with Wood Backing,
10 x 8 x 2.5 inches,
2019.



The Blocks

18 Sculptures

Each 10 x 8 x 2.5 inches,
Concrete with Wood Backing,
2019















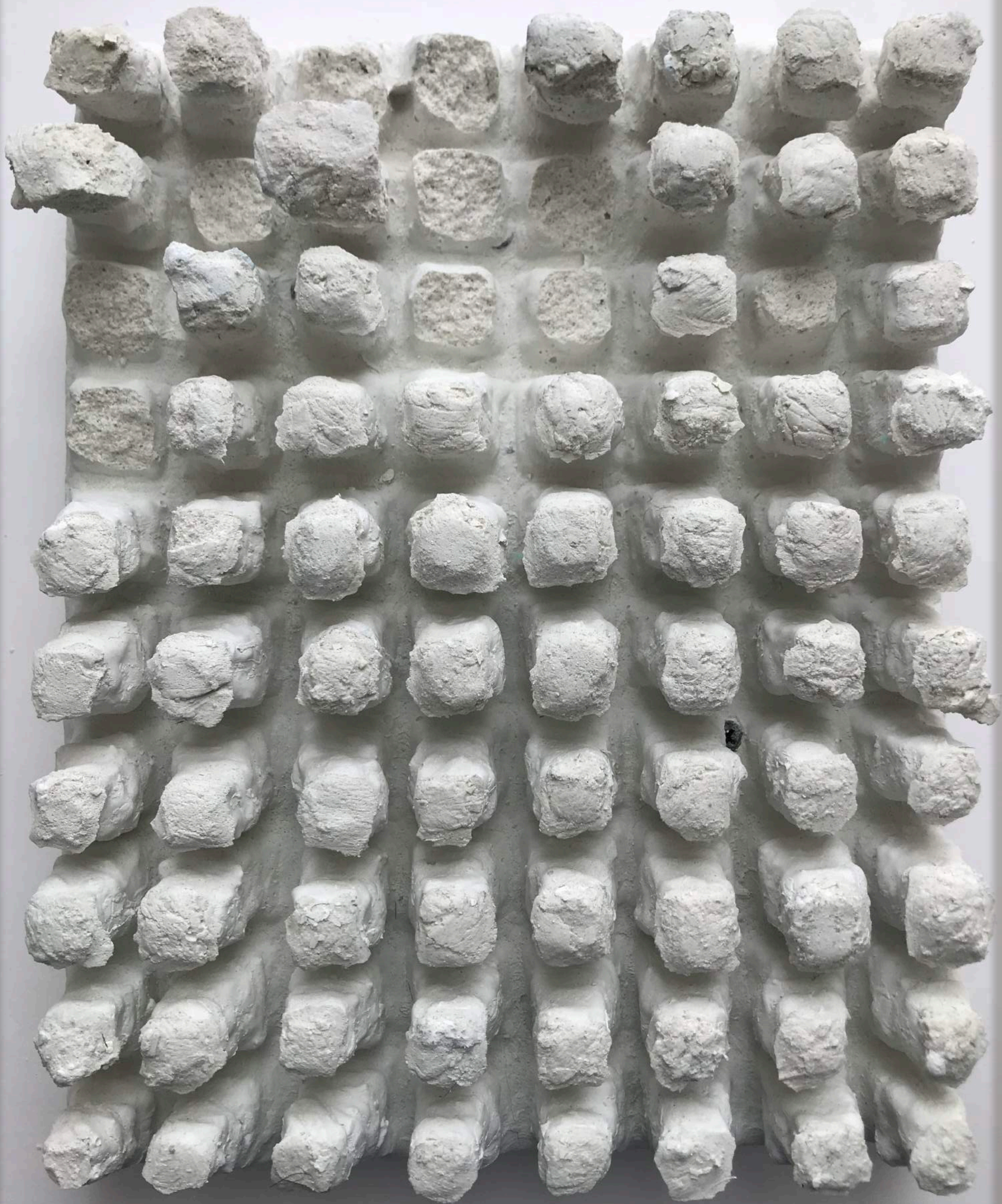
















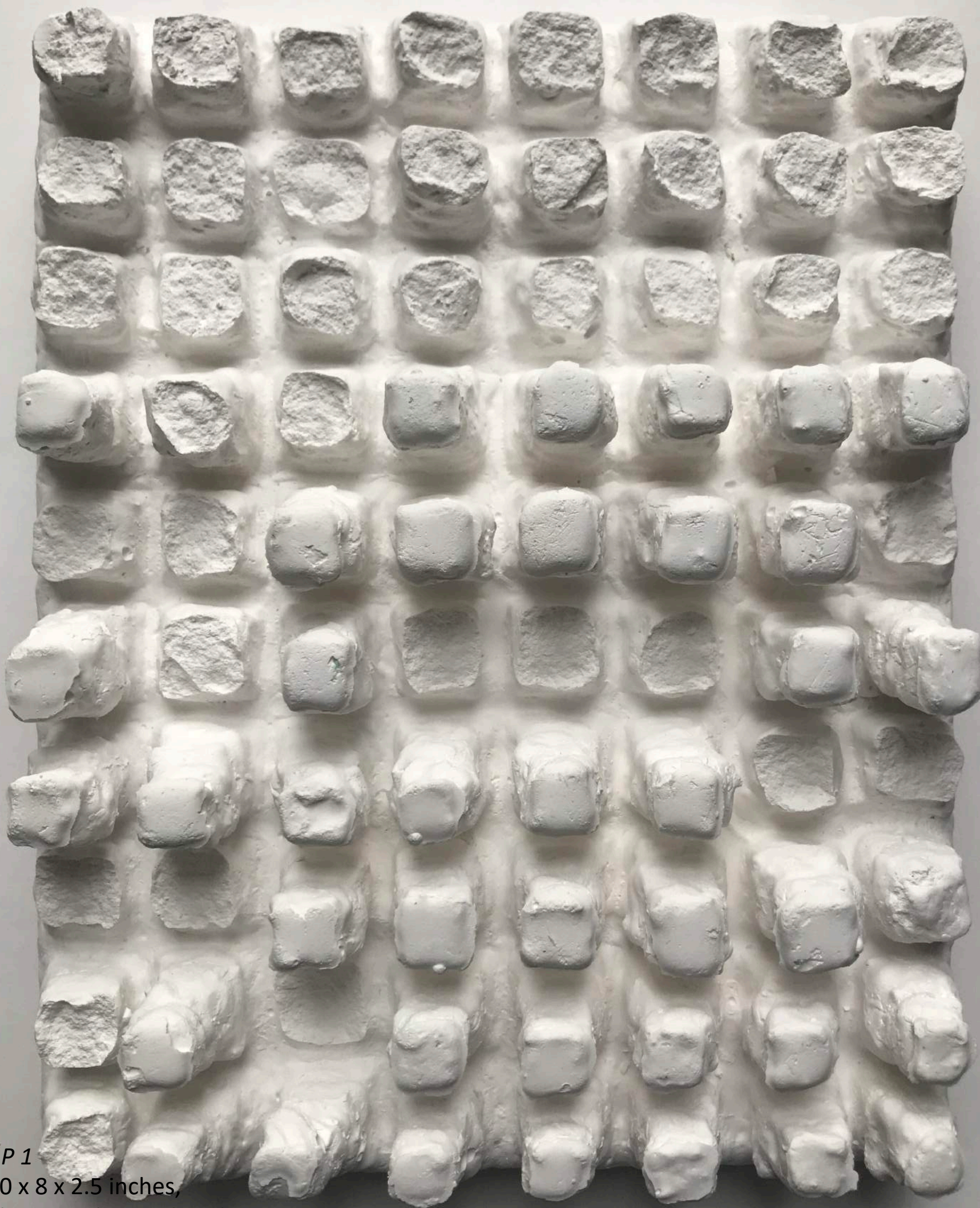






verso





AP 1
10 x 8 x 2.5 inches,
Plaster with Wood Backing,
2019

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