

Intro Exhibition Text

Vhils: Haze

February 21 - July 6, 2020

Vhils: *Haze*

Portuguese artist Alexandre Farto (b. 1987) has worked in cities around the globe under the name of Vhils since the early 2000s. Although known for his bas-relief carvings in building walls, Vhils utilizes a variety of media including sculpture, screen printing, wood carving and video to create his work. His process, which he refers to as "creative destruction," is much less traditional. Often employing methods more akin to construction—drilling, hammering, and explosions—Vhils acts as an urban archaeologist, bringing to the surface a city's historical identity.

*Haze*, Vhils' first solo exhibition in the United States, can be seen as a continuation of his work of the last decade. His subjects are often the city and its residents. In his process, however, Vhils exposes not just layers of plaster and brick walls. He makes revelations about contemporary culture. His work is an ongoing reflection on identity in a global society that increasingly values media saturation, cultural uniformity, over production and consumption.

By exploring life in urban societies, Vhils brings to light the paradigm of contemporary life in the city: how do we reconcile the benefits of globalized culture with the disadvantages? Increased trade and economic development with increased economic inequalities. Elevated living standards with greater environmental impact. *Haze* requires us to slow down, reflect, despite the busy city outside the gallery doors. It forces us to consider the cost of our material comforts. And, through this contemplation and questioning, we begin to wonder what revelations Vhils' destruction might bring.