

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Lucas Simões: Drawing Tense

November 16, 2019 – February 1, 2020

Opening reception: Saturday, November 16, 6–8 pm

Lora Reynolds is pleased to announce *Drawing Tense*, an exhibition of new work by Lucas Simões—the artist’s second presentation at the gallery.

Lucas Simões thinks of his new works as drawings, even though they carry no graphite and have some dimensionality. He draws with an industrial laser, cutting angular or curved shapes (reminiscent of Brutalist architecture) into blackened steel plates, essentially turning them into elaborate paperclips that pinch, pull, and compress his trademark stacks of tracing paper. He slices into each stack to make its sheets spread apart or curl back onto themselves. Screws pierce both the steel and the paper—from the front—simultaneously holding the artworks together and fixing them to the wall. The new drawings hang in precarious tension, as do Simões’s previous concrete and paper *Abismo* sculptures.

Before he found art-making, Simões was an architect. He worked on commercial projects as part of a large team and designed and built residential projects on his own. He made architectural drawings in AutoCAD, the same software he uses to draw plans for his artworks now. Before the pieces in this show were realized (when they existed only on his computer screen), the line separating them from architectural drawings, in Simões’s mind, was faint. They could have just as easily become rooms, spaces, buildings. But by pushing their final form toward drawing instead of architecture, Simões is grasping for a type of poetic purity that was hard to come by when he was designing buildings for clients. His architectural practice was mired in compromise, tempering beautiful dreams with practicality. The negotiations that define his art-making practice, however, he undertakes directly with his materials.

Sheet metal, concrete, tracing paper, brass, gold leaf, rebar, insulating sheathing—the materials Simões works with all have minds of their own. His constructions never turn out exactly like their blueprints stipulate (the same goes for buildings), no matter how precisely he follows his plans. Pulling molds off his concrete forms once they dry, Simões sometimes finds surprising surface textures or colors. He usually needs to revise the plans for his metal plates after building a mock-up—to adjust the direction or amount of tension the plate applies to the paper it holds. A large stack of tracing paper with a slice through its middle, when suspended vertically, will drape differently than a smaller but otherwise identical stack. And once his work in the studio is complete, installing his drawings/sculptures in the gallery always requires unexpected adjustments to find their perfect balance points.

Balance, tension, unpredictability, adjusting expectations—the defining features of Lucas Simões’s artwork point as much to the process and beauty of making buildings as to that of

building a relationship, a life, with another human being. The paper in this show often takes on figurative (maybe even sensual) qualities: spreading, bending, teasing, exposing, demurring. Drawing is a more primordial art form than sculpture. It is more direct; it removes a measure of mediation between an object and its conception. Simões's new drawings bring us closer to the early lives of his artworks (as digital renderings no one but the artist ever sees), closer to his first love (architecture), closer to the inside of his mind, and perhaps even to his experience of eros.

Lucas Simões, born in 1980 in Brazil, lives and works in São Paulo. Simões has had solo exhibitions at Caixa Cultural (São Paulo), Instituto Figueiredo Ferraz (Brazil), Museu de Arte Moderna Aloísio Magalhães (Brazil), and Pivô Arte e Pesquisa (São Paulo). He has participated in shows at another vacant space (Berlin), Astrup Fearnley Museet (Oslo), Instituto Figueiredo Ferraz (Brazil), Itochu Aoyama Art Square (Tokyo), Museu Brasileiro da Escultura (São Paulo), and Zachęta National Gallery (Poland). His work is owned by the Blanton Museum of Art (Austin), Instituto Itaú Cultural (São Paulo), Museu de Arte do Rio (Rio de Janeiro), and Museu de Arte Contemporânea da Universidade de São Paulo.