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THOMAS HENRIKSSON



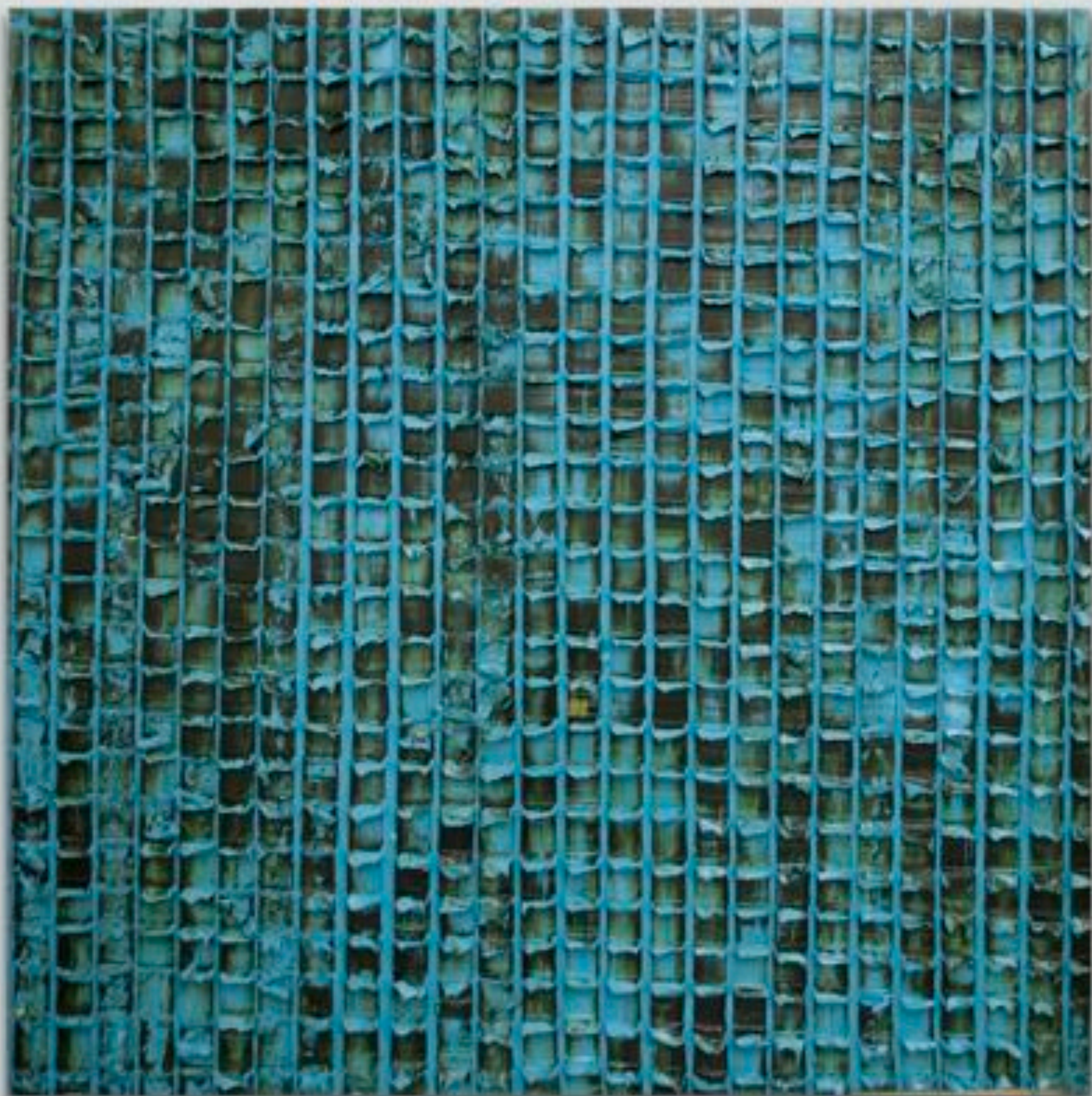
V.25.11 (Gold), 25x25cm, 2015



M.03.01 (Sand), 270x270cm, 2014



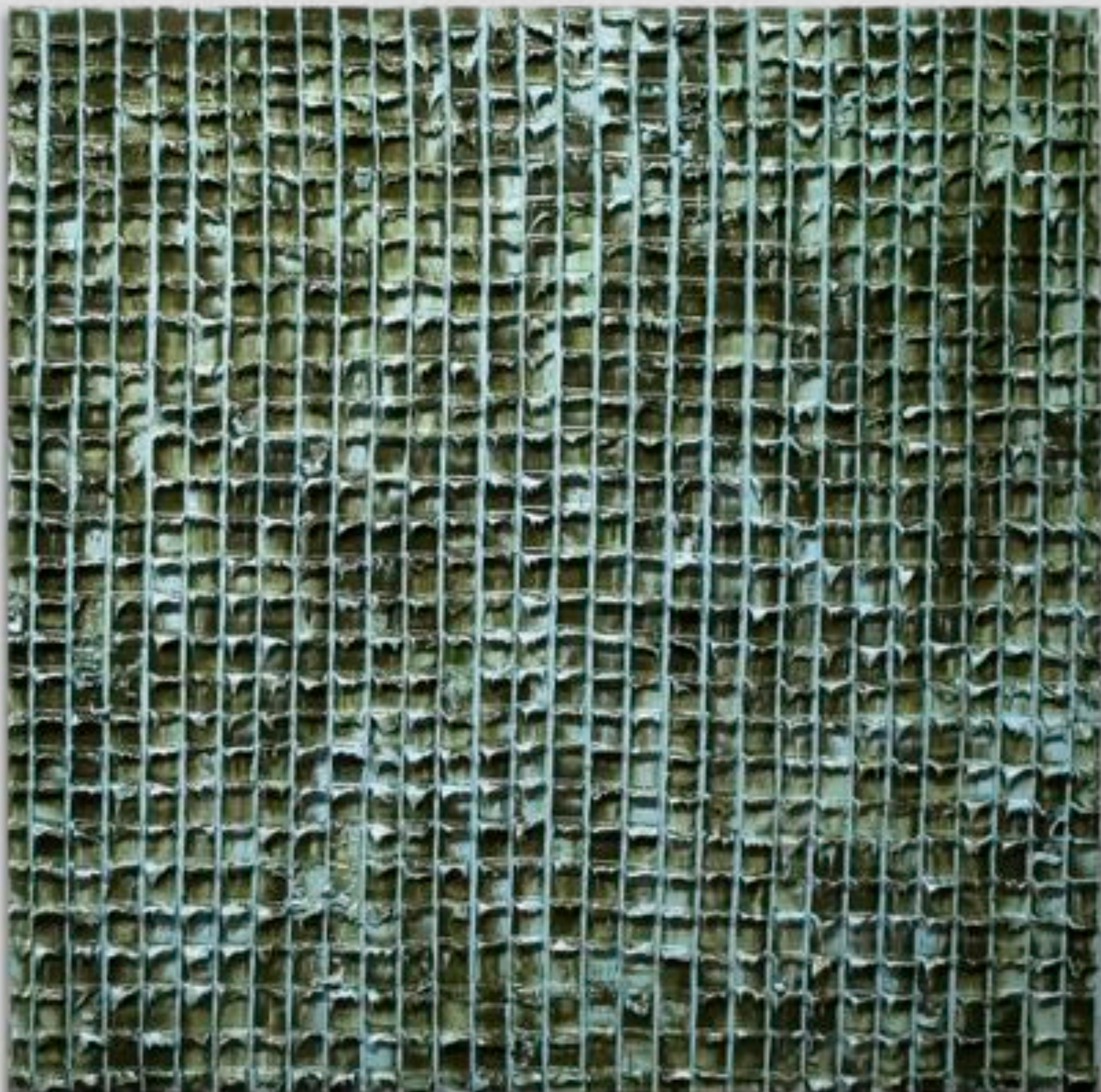
K.03.02 (Cerulean), 60x60cm, 2015



K.04.01 (Cerulean), 160x160cm, 2015



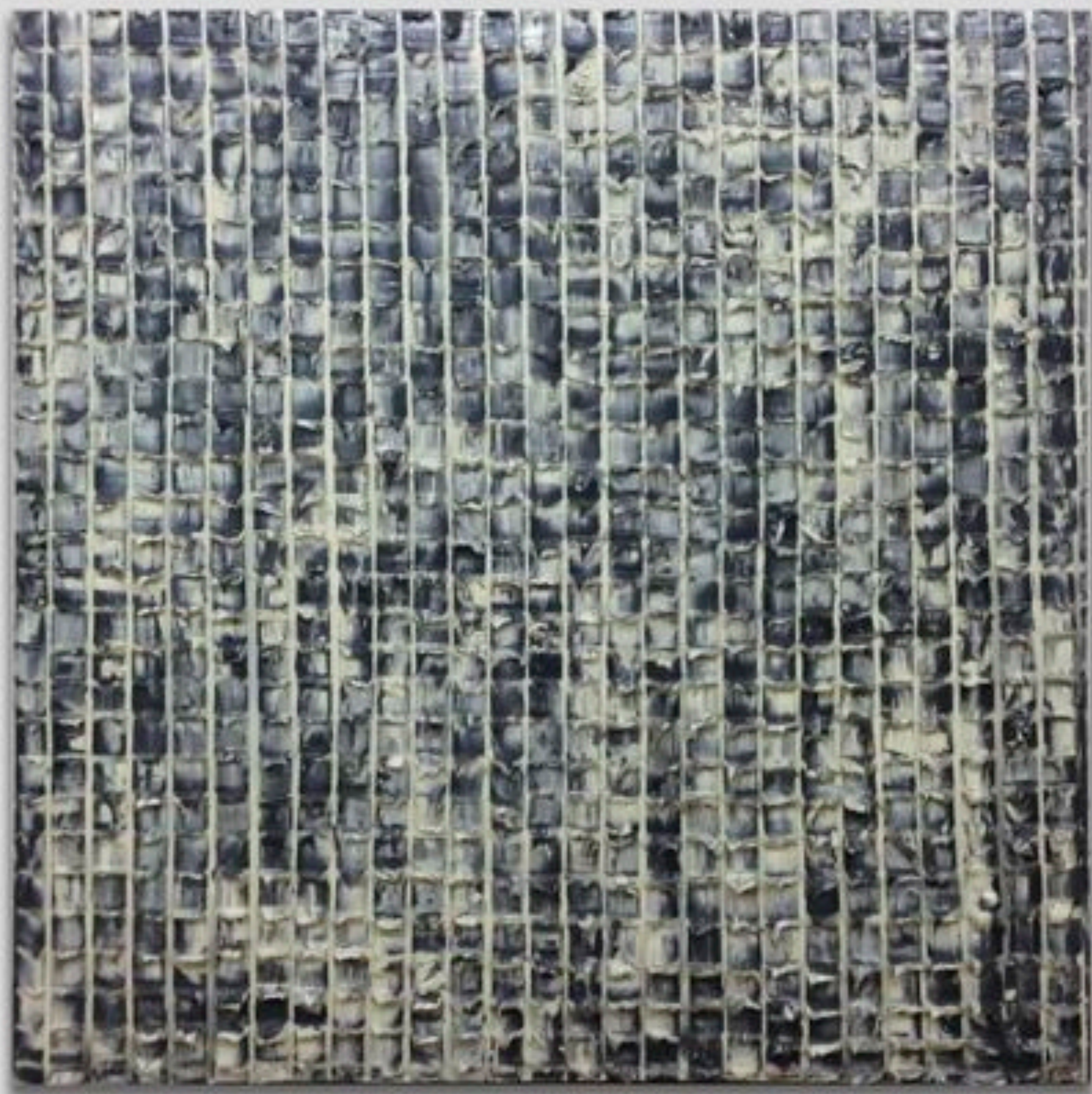
G.04.03 (Athens), 40x40cm, 2014



G.07.02 (Athens), 210x210cm, 2014



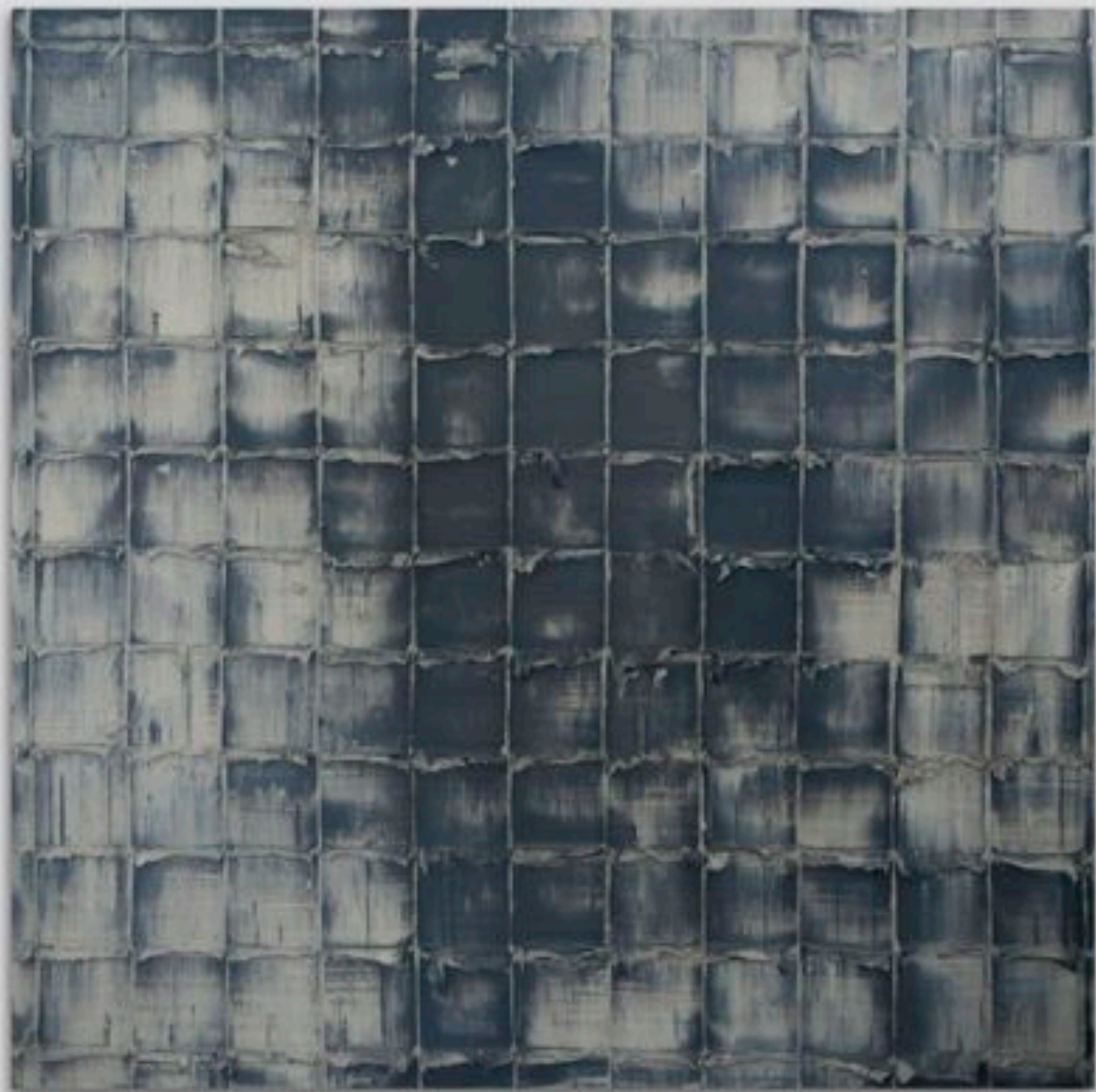
B.02.01 (Stahlgrau), 180x180cm, 2014



D.03 (Tokyo), 160x160cm, 2014



M.06.03 (Nacht), 40x40cm, 2015



E.04. (Lisbon), 190x190cm, 2014



B.03.02 (Kalix), 90x90cm, 2014



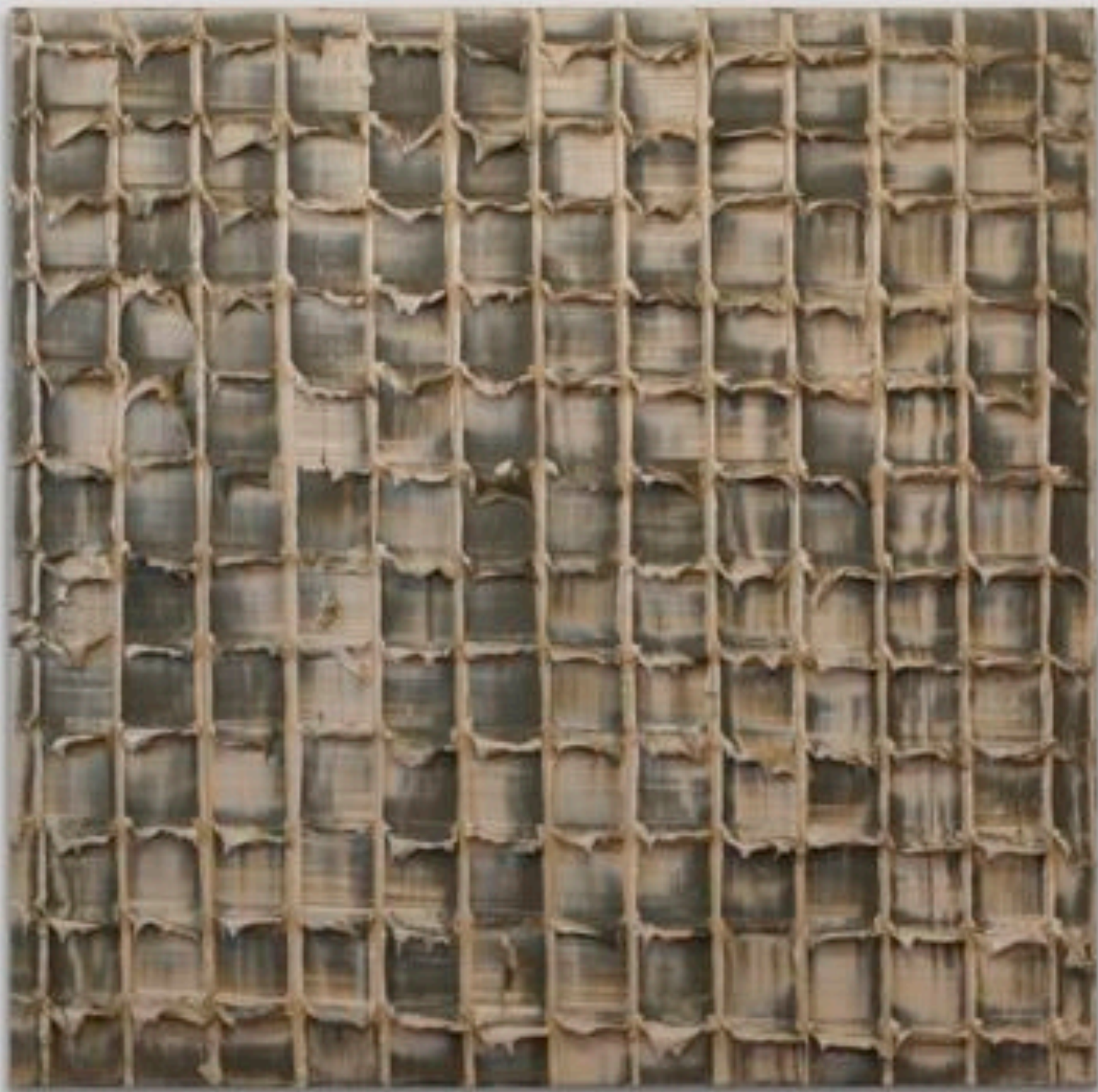
K.02 (Braun), 90x90cm, 2014



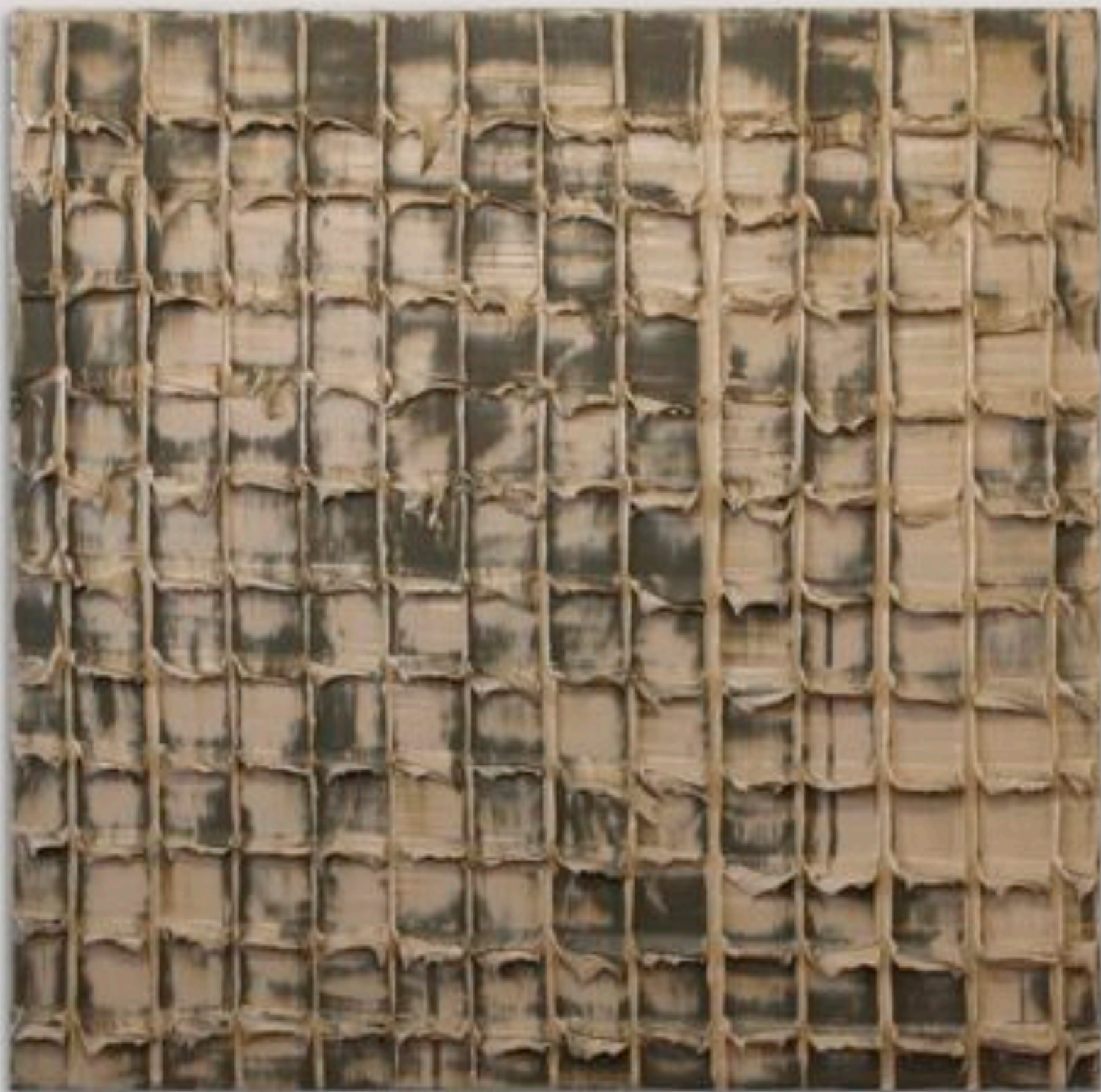
L.09.02 (Morning), 90x90cm, 2014



P03 (Schwarz), 90x90cm, 2014



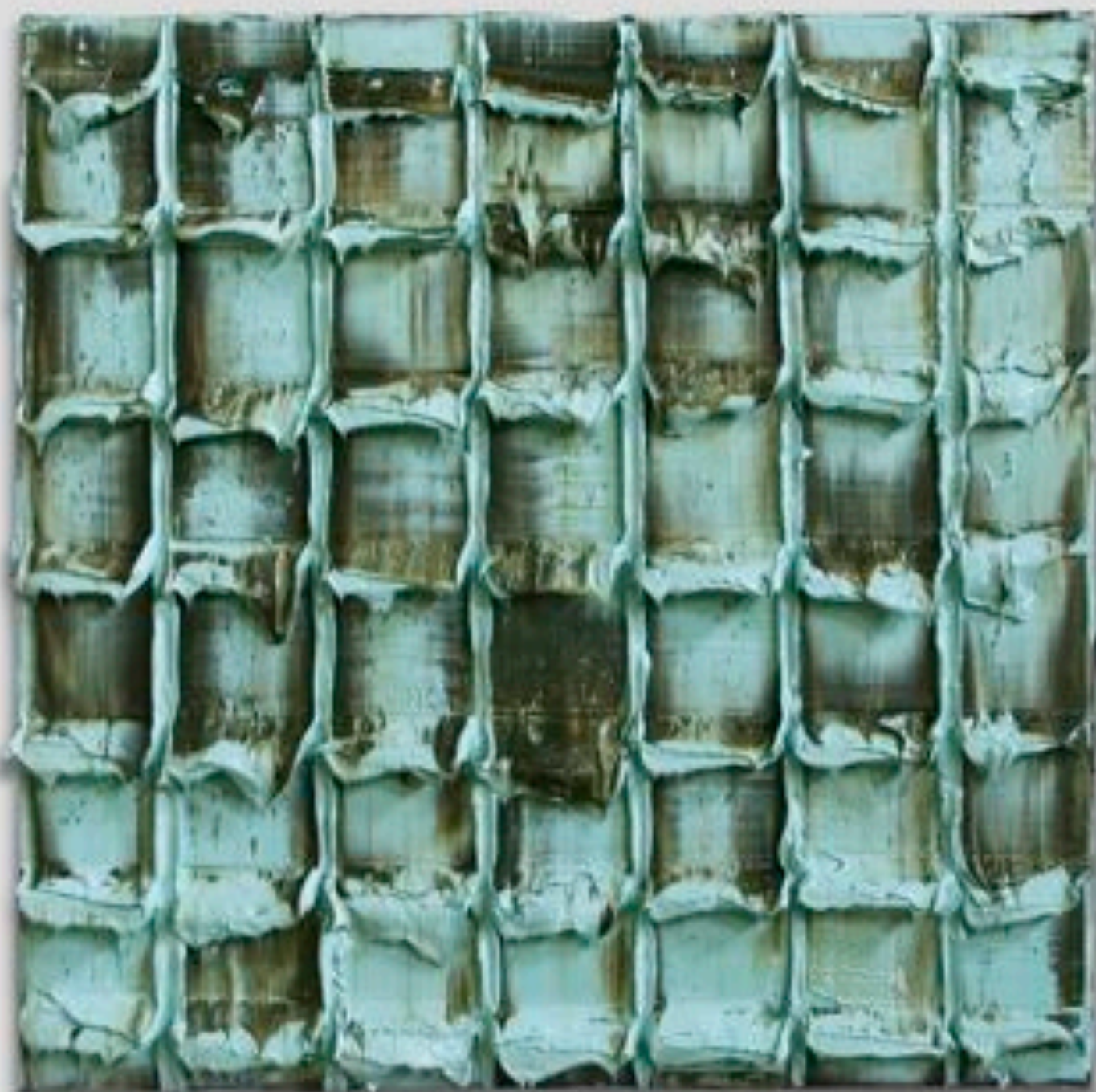
C.01. (Sand), 90x90cm, 2014



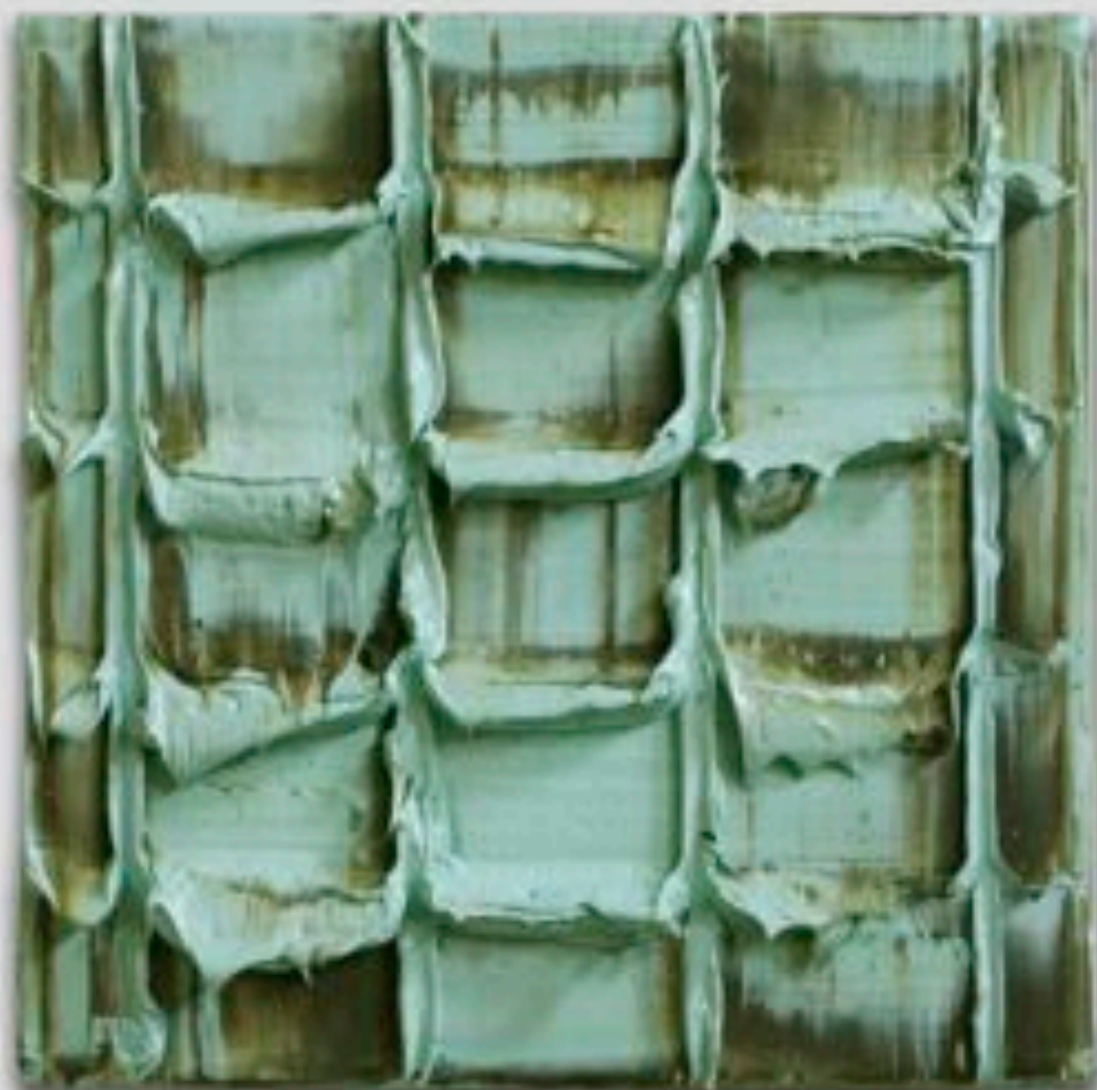
C.02. (Sand), 90x90cm, 2014



C.03.05 (Smaragd), 25x25cm, 2015



C.03.04 (Smaragd), 40x40cm, 2015



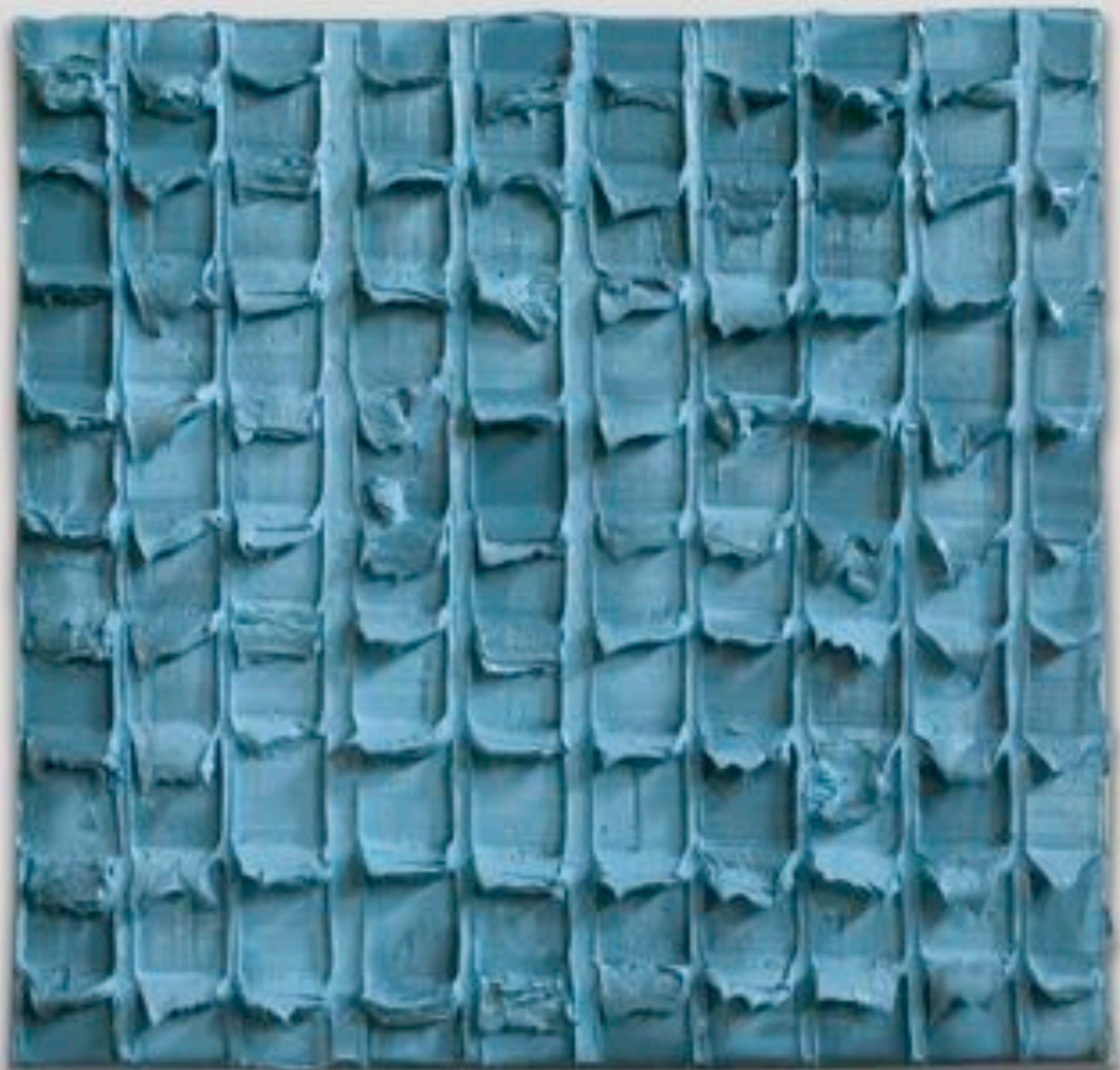
C.02.07 (Smaragd - Umbra), 25x25cm, 2015



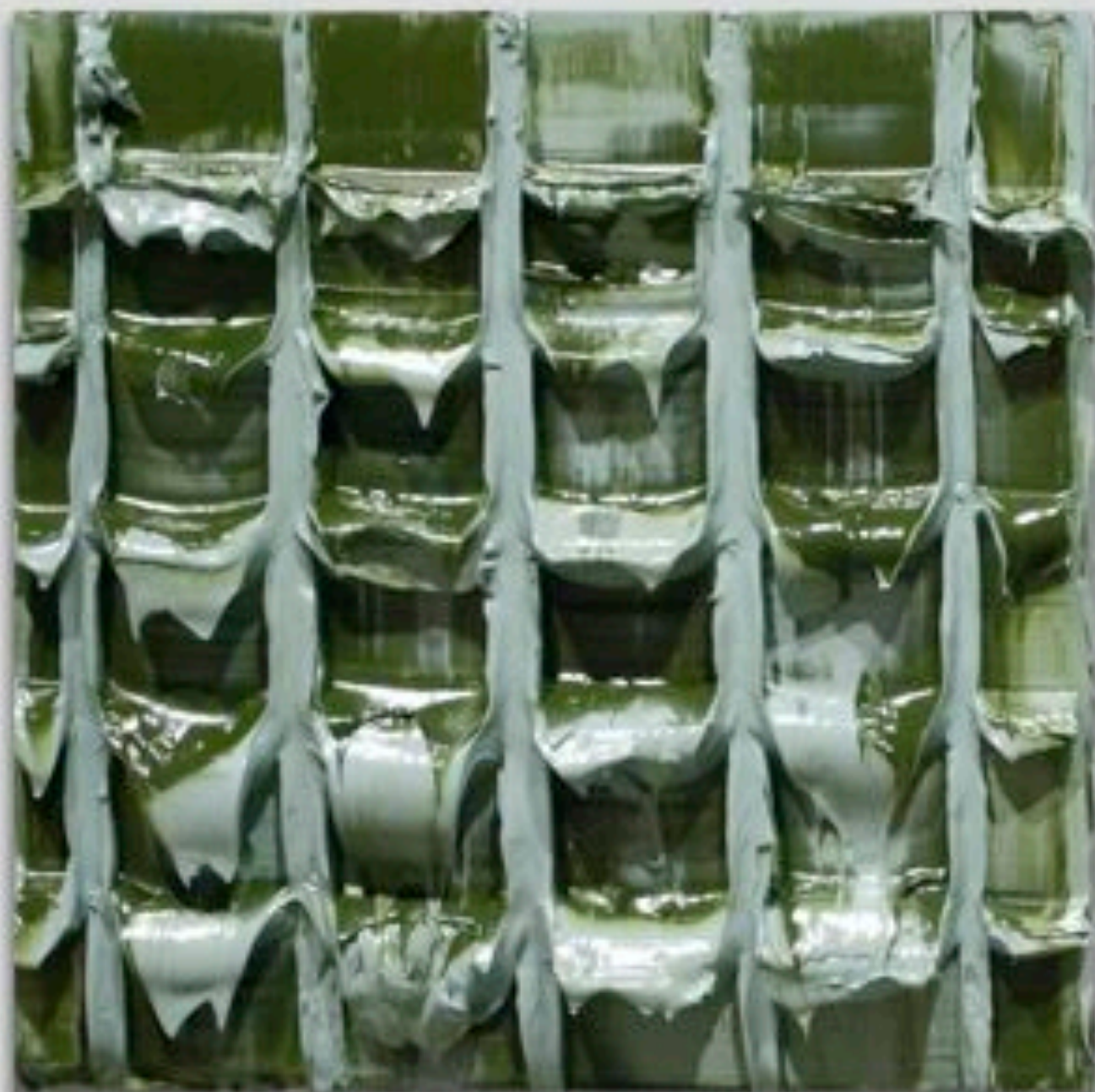
C.04.01 (Smaragd-Umbra), 160x160cm, 2015



L.03.03 (Hellblau), 40x40cm, 2015



L02.04 (Hellblau), 60x6cm, 2015



G. 05 (Morgenblau), 40x40cm, 2014

On Berlin and Painting

published in several Swedish newspapers in 2014

"It's interesting to show paintings in Berlin. People here try to formulate what they see for themselves. In Stockholm, visitors to art shows don't because they're afraid of being wrong in other people's eyes. Here everybody knows no one is absolutely right," says the artist, Thomas Henriksson. He has been based in the German metropolis for 14 years.

His studio is in Wedding, inside a green gate, in a red brick complex that looks like an ruined castle. Craftsmen and artists have their workshops and studios here. One room is occupied by a bar - Unbezahlbar.

Until 1933 the location, known as Die Wiesenburg, was home for 1100 homeless people every night (Berliner Obdachlos Asyl Verein). Then the Nazis took over: they built weapons here, and coloured the flags for the 1936 Berlin Olympic Games.

His studio is 300 sm. The sun comes in through high windows. It is spacious with it's 9 metre ceiling. A large gas heater hangs from it looking like a cross between a canoe and an enormous toaster.

Thomas always paint in oil. "The only paint that ages beautifully," he explains. Many are several square metres large, filled by a matrix of squares. The colours are earth green or dampened pink. At first glance they look purely abstract. "Formally they are abstract, but the paintings can also represent windows, facades of skyscrapers, computer pixels or whatever. I have no idea how these paintings will turn out till all the squares are done. The most interesting aspect for me is that they turn out so very differently from each other, even though I in many ways try to make them the same."

Thomas works intensively during the summer:

"Oil-paint does not dry, it hardens from UV-light. I paint so thickly the paint does not harden fast enough in the winter. The best time to paint are nights when everything is still."

Before painting, the paint has to be mixed. If it takes ten hours to paint, mixing takes twenty. Thereafter he has three days to change what needs to be changed before the paint has begun to harden.

Thomas Henriksson came to Berlin after living for five years in New York. In 2000 the Scandinavians were the first large group of artists that came to Berlin. "About 50 Scandinavian artists came at the same time, independently of each other. Of Europe's three metropolises - London, Paris and Berlin - this was the only one that was not already defined. It was also cheap with a lot of vacant premises."

The first few years Thomas worked in a former piano factory in Treptow together with other artists in Atelierhaus Mengerzelle, and founded an exhibition space that still exists - M3 kunsthalle. When he arrived in Berlin the galleries were both few and small.



"Berlin was like a small town: empty streets, as in Kristianstad where I grew up, just many more of them. Now it seems as if Berlin is all about visual art but traditionally Berlin was never really a city for visual art, it was always a word city. It's focus was on literature and theatre." Thomas calls Berlin the world's metropolis for creating art. New York is the world's storefront for art.

"The biggest point about Berlin is that people talk to each other. They like to spend time and discuss things over a beer or coffee. In New York people never have time, they work all the time to be able to afford their studios and rents. That is happening here too now," says Thomas.

"It's sad that artists are forced to leave the city due to rent increases and are at the same time being blamed for the gentrification. The city has always lived from the artists of all kinds who moved here. They are the city's true blood."

One night two years ago, his studio caught fire while he was sleeping. He barely managed to get out. Thomas had third degree burns and was kept in a coma for seven weeks. The first few days it was not certain he would survive. When he woke up he did not know who he was. The first thing he did when he got out of hospital was to paint.

He called these paintings the 'Fire Paintings'. All are in strong orange or grey and black.

"I started painting to see if I still could. The only thing possible to paint then was fire. In the coma I had many dreams I still remember, most of them relating to being tied down without being able to do anything about it." His whole studio was gone after the fire, now Thomas has restored it.

He grew up in Kristianstad, 'the perfect high school town', he calls it. In his early twenties he started at his first art school, Permbys Målarskola.

The headmaster, Börje Axelsson, passed on the attitude to art and reality that still influences Thomas: the important question is WHY. HOW can be in very many different ways, and that we have to figure out for ourselves.

"Back then I saw art as something magical you had to understand, be initiated into, and it is, but mostly it is a language. The challenge is to find the 'place' where you are solid and confident, and to try to stay in balance. Having painted for so long, you know when the paintings are good, and for that external confirmations are not necessary. I would paint these paintings even if I was the last person on earth. It takes a long time to do really good art, which is a good thing - if it had been easy it would have been boring. The best thing about art is that you can do great things in so many different ways."

Betina Bettenhausen

www.diewiesenburg.de

Thomas Henriksson

Born 1964 in Stockholm, Sweden
Lives and works in Berlin, Germany

Royal University College of Fine Arts, Stockholm 1989-94
Pembys School of Arts, Stockholm 1984-86

- 2015 - "Gallery Weekend" Galerie Nordenhake, Berlin
"Kurz-Kurz in Kurt-Kurt", Kurt-Kurt, Berlin (with Heather Allen)
- 2014 - "Feuerbilder" Galleri Olsson, Stockholm (Solo)
"Not so damn contemporary" Artloft, Berlin (Participant and Curator)
"Double Trouble" Kunsthalle m3, Berlin
- 2013 - "Triptychon" Atelierhof Kreuzberg, Berlin
"Vaderlekar" Bolin Gallery, Östersund (Solo)
"Feuerbilder" Artloft, Berlin (Solo)
"The pleasure principal" Candyland, Stockholm
- 2012 - "Checkpoint Mengerzelle" M3 Kunsthalle, Berlin (Participant and Curator)
- 2011 - "Naked Factory", Kunsthalle m3, Berlin (Participant and Curator)
"Dirty Fingers", Wiesenburg, Berlin (Participant and Curator)
- 2010 - "Ristningar" Galleri Olsson, Stockholm (Solo)
- 2008 - "Skies" More North Gallery, New York (Solo)
- 2008 - "Paris- Texas" Galerie Elly Brose-Eierman, Dresden (with Matthias Reinmuth)
"The weather Paintings" Galleri Olsson, Stockholm (Solo)
"Wolken" Wilde Gallery, Berlin (Solo)
- 2006 - "I det gröna" Galleri Olsson, Stockholm (solo)
"Panzerkreuzer trifft Sitting Bull" Parkgalerie, Berlin (with Matthias Reinmuth)
"20 years Maria Bonnier Dahlin", Bonniers konsthall, Stockholm
- 2004 - "Rymdmaskiner" Royal Academy of Arts, Stockholm (Solo)
"Weltraum Maschinen" Galerie Stefan Denninger, Berlin (Solo)
"Eek, Henriksson, Krause, Reinmuth, Vlamming" Galerie Stefan Denninger, Berlin
"New York Paintings", Match artroom, New York (Solo)
"Normalmstorg" Galleri Olsson, Stockholm
- 2003 - "I det gröna" Galleri Olsson, Stockholm (Solo)
"Möte" Tjörnedala Konsthall, Simrishamn (with Tomas Renström)
- 2001 - "Maschinen" - m3 kunsthalle, Berlin (Solo)
- 1999 - "New York, New York" Galleri Olsson, Stockholm (Solo)
- 1996 - "Faces" Galleri Olsson, Stockholm (Solo)
"Alone together" Liljewalchs konsthall, Stockholm
- 1993 - "Maskiner" Galleri Olsson, Stockholm (Solo)
- 1990 - "Staden" Galleri Axlund, Stockholm (Solo)

www.thomas-henriksson.com



Photo: Oliver Mark