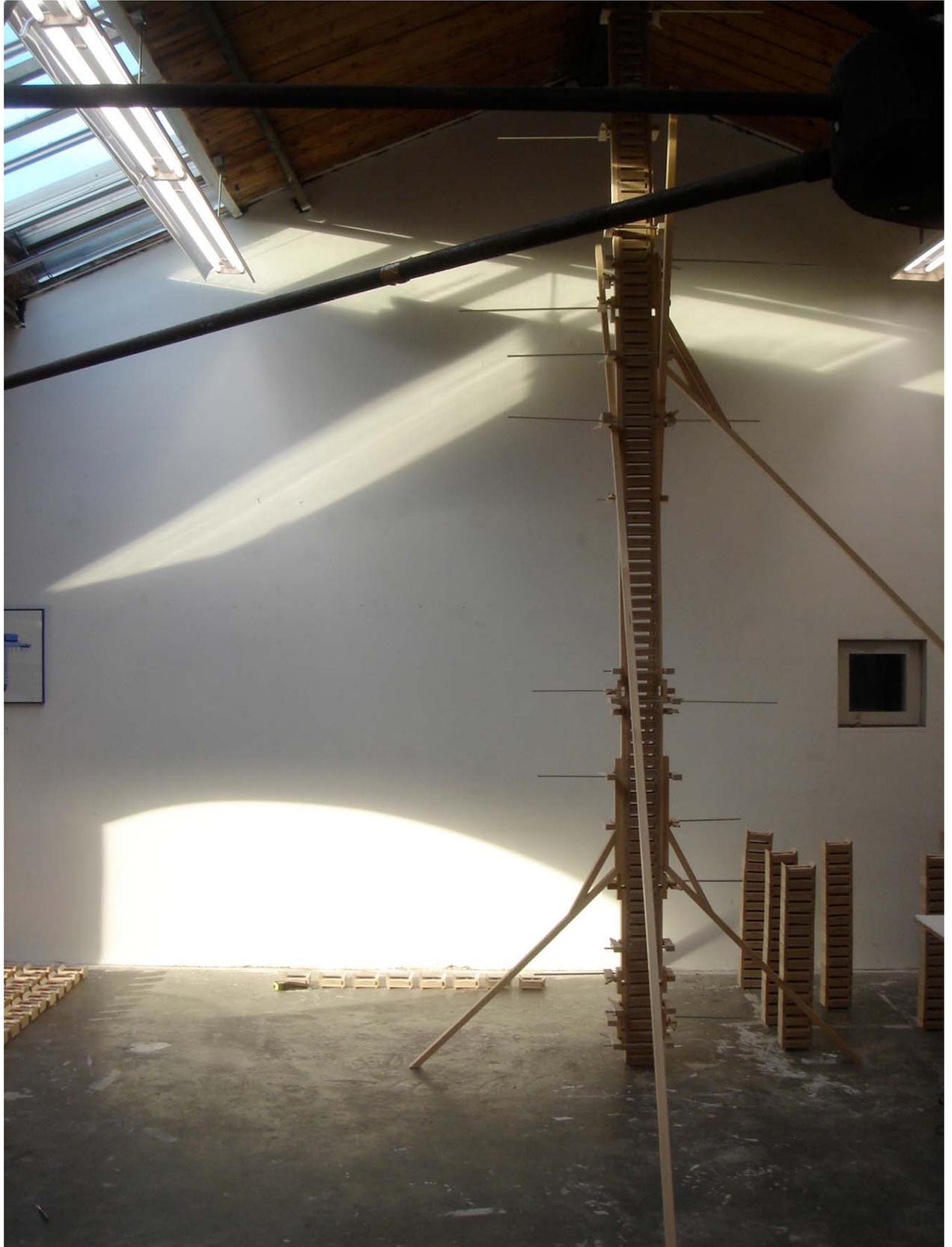


A History of Economic Thought or the Execution of Progress

Installation, 2006

Wood, silk-screen and drawings

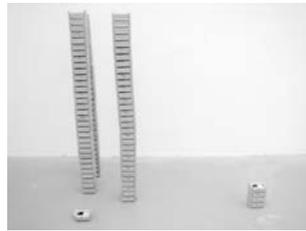


A History of Economic thought or the Execution of Progress at Open Ateliers

I was thinking that progress is all about something going up. As long as it is in an upward direction it is progress. For something to stay at one point is uncertain—since a thing cannot stay in a single point forever—it must either go up or down. Going down is *regress*. You only want something to go down if you are sure that it will eventually climb back up and that you will be able to hitch a ride up with it. How high can something go?

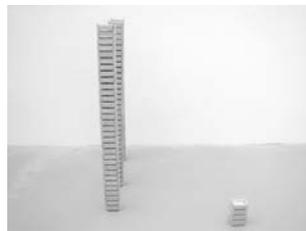
This is determined by its limits, if it reaches its limit, it will stand still for a time. It may swing and try to reach a new limit and if it succeeds it will keep going up. If it fails, however, going down is the only option left.

Because down is thought to be *bad*, and so up must clearly be *good*, much thought has been given to how progress can eternally continue to climb. Answers to how this should happen have varied widely according to different people. There was talk of an *invisible hand* and talk of *superstructures*. And there was a lot of talking about how to systemize these concepts. Some still believe it should happen like this:



Red stacks of wooden structures

Others might think it should go like that:



Blue stacks of wooden structures

And some even say it can be like this:



Black stacks of wooden structures

These theories have continued to be built upon, and in some cases have in the meantime been torn back down.

In *A History of Economic Thought or the Execution of Progress*, I tried my hand at testing these models. I created a visual vocabulary made of pie charts-like shapes that abstracted the three main modern economic models by color (red, blue and black). I built modular parts, made of 10 x 14 cm size wooden structures that were meant to stack up to five Meter high towers. This was to be done according to my interpretations of each of the economic models. When attempting to execute the building of these towers, I soon was confronted by the power of gravity and the limitations of my structure's integrity. The towers required a complex reinforcement system in order for them to rise to their potential. The final construction, with its diagonals jutting across the room and gathered stacks spread around the floor, was resting in a place between falling and rising. Resulting, finally, in a space strained by the uncertainty of the tower's balance.