

Transitional Objects

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A thesis

submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

Master of Fine Arts

University of Washington

2020

Committee:

Aaron Flint Jamison

Rebecca Cummins

Ellen Garvens

Program Authorized to Offer Degree:

Art + Art History + Design

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Stefan Leandro Gonzales

University of Washington

Abstract

Transitional Objects

Stefan Leandro Gonzales

Chair of the Supervisory Committee: Aaron Flint Jamison

Photomedia

Transitional objects. Objects in transition.

The current state of the (a/A)rt object is as follows:

1-The (A)rt object acts as capital in an unregulated market to ensure the rich get richer without the oversight of local, national, or global governments.

2-The (a)rt object is directly tied to the idea that your 'art' is a business and it is a job that you must perform. As an artist you must produce art objects as a source of capital. Your art is also *you*. Therefore, the value of your art is also the value of yourself as an individual, and since your art is in the business of generating (a)rt objects as capital. You, your body, your emotions, and thoughts are a source capital. Whose value is not regulated by you but is in fact regulated by the market.

Although the (A)rt object is quite troubling when it comes to arts contribution to rampant global wealth disparity: what I am concerned with currently however is the (a)rt object. First off, if the market does not find value in the (a)rt objects you produce it can be crippling to your self-worth as an individual within the market. If your (a)rt objects have no value, you have no value. Simple as that. My second concern is the decisions made in the (a)rt process will inevitably catapult you into creating (A)rt objects. As your (a)rt objects rise in value, the potential for them cross the threshold into the (A)rt market escalates. In both (A)rt and (a)rt making processes your creative decision making is vulnerable to unregulated opinions based on the speculation of an unregulated market.

Transitional objects stand against both of these renditions of the art object. Transitional objects are objects in Transition. You cannot own an object in transition; you can only provide it with space to exist. You may be nothing more than a caretaker. In addition to this, you cannot sell an object that recognizes no ownership. A Transitional object has no assessable value. This because they are objects in a constant flux. They do not serve a singular function or fulfill a singular role. They disrupt the market; they flood it with objects that maintain no perceived market value. You may photograph a Transitional object, sell that image as an (a)rt or (A)rt object; however, the Transitional objects true value will always be indistinguishable. It is not easy to pinpoint a thing that is always in motion. You do not create Transitional objects; they have always existed. Any object you "create" is nothing more than an assemblage or arrangement of other Transitional objects.

Transitional Objects

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“An old tradition and a new technology have converged to make possible an unprecedented public good. The old tradition is the willingness of scientists and scholars to publish the fruits of their research in scholarly journals without payment, for the sake of inquiry and knowledge. The new technology is the internet. The public good they make possible is the world-wide electronic distribution of the peer-reviewed journal literature and completely free and unrestricted access to it by all scientists, scholars, teachers, students, and other curious minds. Removing access barriers to this literature will accelerate research, enrich education, share the learning of the rich with the poor and the poor with the rich, make this literature as useful as it can be, and lay the foundation for uniting humanity in a common intellectual conversation and quest for knowledge.”- Budapest Open Access Initiative

This document is now a part of the institutional archive. Thanks to instances like the Budapest Open Access Initiative, this document must live among scientist, scholars, and the public. It's with this power that I will take the time to name and thank my family and friends. By this account, they too, are apart of the archive. They too are worth being remembered as key contributors to any and all knowledge produced by myself in this instance and all instances to come.

Ronald Gonzales

Renee Gonzales

Sarah Torres

Billy Torres

Irene Gonzales

Frank Gonzales

Douglas Iacono

Tina Gonzales-Arguello

Angelo Arguello

Andre Arguello

Alexis Arguello

Shelby Laine Robinson

Sean Sullivan

Makena Gadiant

Tony Mines

Pam Mines

Kyle Mines

Dylan Tucker

Preston Wadley

Bob Campbell

Bonnie Biggs

Cameron Fletcher

Margaret Johnson

Cable Griffith

David Kennedy

Eirik Johnson

Robert Rhee

Ruth Tomlinson

Natalie Riha

Tanner Shots

Jennifer Roquemore-Zercher

Cornie Romero

Renee Romero

Erica Sterling

Jacob Steven Miller

Aaron Flint Jamison

Rebecca Cummins

Emily Zimmerman

Ellen Garvens

Dan Webb

Linda Chang

Jaiden Winn

Jerica Huntington

JC Huntington

Jaren Huntington

Stacy Huntington

Jared Huntington

Grover Brittain

Linda Brittain

Mary Melinda Wellsandt

T Clear

Dominic Gracyalny

Austin Hwang

Cam Bailey

Sean Lockwood

Jackie Granger

Charles Stobbs III

Stephanie Simek

Luke Armitstead

Payton Cahill

U K

Zack Davis

Henry Detweiler

Jacob Fetterman

Xiaoyi Gao

Midori Hirose

Pinchuan (Larry) Huang

Jia Jia

Todd McKinney

Quinn McNichol

Andy Romero

Siegmund Skalar

Shuo Yin

Kahoney Otton

Dillon Edwards

Jaya Rivera

Eric Pedersen

Ephraim Russell

Balto: Since when do you need a pedigree to help someone?

-- *"Balto is a 1995 animated film about a half-dog/half-wolf named Balto, who helps save the children of Nome, Alaska by leading a team of sled-dogs carrying vital medicine. The film is loosely based on the true story about the dogs who helped save the town's children from the diphtheria epidemic in the 1925 serum run to Nome."*
(Balto n.d)

The art I deal with tends to exist in any context that my family can understand. The main entry for my family into my work is through the Transitional objects that have been passed from them to myself. They are recognizable objects that give them a direct connection to the piece. The content does not matter to them at this point, what matters is that they acknowledge their efforts in the production of my work.

In 1973 (plus or minus a year, who can trust the archive anyways), my great grandparents Leandro and Isabell Velasquez had a double wide trailer hauled to a small property on Navajo Mt. Mesa in southern outskirts of the Colorado Rockies. We called it "The Trailer". This would act as a second home through out my childhood. It was a low-class vacation home. Like many suburban family mountain getaways, we had small collection of VHS tapes that we watched when the weather forced us inside. Due to the infrequent use of the tapes, the collection rarely fluctuates. In 95' the animated film Balto was released. I watch that movie like I was on a mission to burn through the magnetic tape.

My grandfathers name was Billy. He was a joker, but he was also a dick. He picked and picked and picked at a thing. My grandfather was an alcoholic. Canadian Mist and Diet Pepsi. My grandfather loved the Denver Broncos. My grandfather smoked Marlboro Reds. Until the day he died we walked the allies every day. When I was younger it was to collect cans or used Marlboro Packs. He collected the tabs off the Marlboro packs to send into Marlboro to collect their awards for good customers. The cans he would trade to another man in the neighborhood for his used packs of Marlboros. As a child I have a Marlboro tent, Marlboro backpack, Marlboro dartboard, Marlboro jacket, Marlboro watch, Marlboro swiss army knife, and so on. He bought his cigarettes in cartons not by the pack. Each pack fit so perfectly in the long carton box. I always wanted a pack. Perfectly plastic wrapped red vessels. After the cans and cigarette packs he turned to collecting junk. Anything he deemed valuable. There were no fixed qualities that deemed an object valuable.

Again, my grandfather knew how to pick and pick and pick at a thing. That thing for me was my affinity for Balto. I would watch it simply because I knew it would get a instant reaction out of him. I suppose I got lucky that he only picked on me for such a trivial thing. I can only speculate, but I would put my money on the idea that he would have mentioned that movie to me on his deathbed. Sadly, I was not there to hear it.



I lost my grandfather on February 3rd, 2020. I smoked an entire pack of Reds that day. It had been almost a year since I had spent time with him. The last time I saw my grandfather I made us dinner. Steak and potatoes. There is nothing significant about steak and potatoes only that it was our last meal together. After dinner I pulled out my own pack and smoked a cigarette with my grandfather for the first time. I was 24. I never imagined how excited this act would make him. He was the only smoker in the family, I imagine that is a lonely position to be in.

After dinner I decided to arrange a artwork in his backyard. There was a patch of snow protected by shade. This was the perfect site. After walking through my grandfather's archive of objects in the backyard I found a steel weight and a loose 4x4. I decided to carve a line in the snow where I could lay down the 4x4 and prop it above the snow with the steel weight. I began carving a line in the snow the length of the 4x4. At a certain point I decided to take a break. My grandfather did not question my actions once. An usual situation because, like myself, he generally didn't know how to shut the fuck up. Always asking questions or making a comment. Maybe he never questioned me because I had been known for getting myself into weird projects as a kid at the trailer. After lighting a cigarette, I looked up to see my grandfather continuing to carve the line in the snow where I had stopped. With no instruction he carved the line the exact length of the 4x4. I did no interrupt him, there was no need for correction. The intervention had begun, at that point, interruption would only harm the piece. When he was done, I took the steel weight and propped the 4x4 up on the right side. I found a can of orange spray paint in an attempt to 'change the image of the snow'.

When I was done arranging, we sat down, and I listened to his same set of stories for the last time.

Before I left, I photographed the piece. I instructed my grandfather to leave it alone until the snow was gone. I told my dad to photograph the piece and send the image to me when the snow was gone so the event could come to an end.

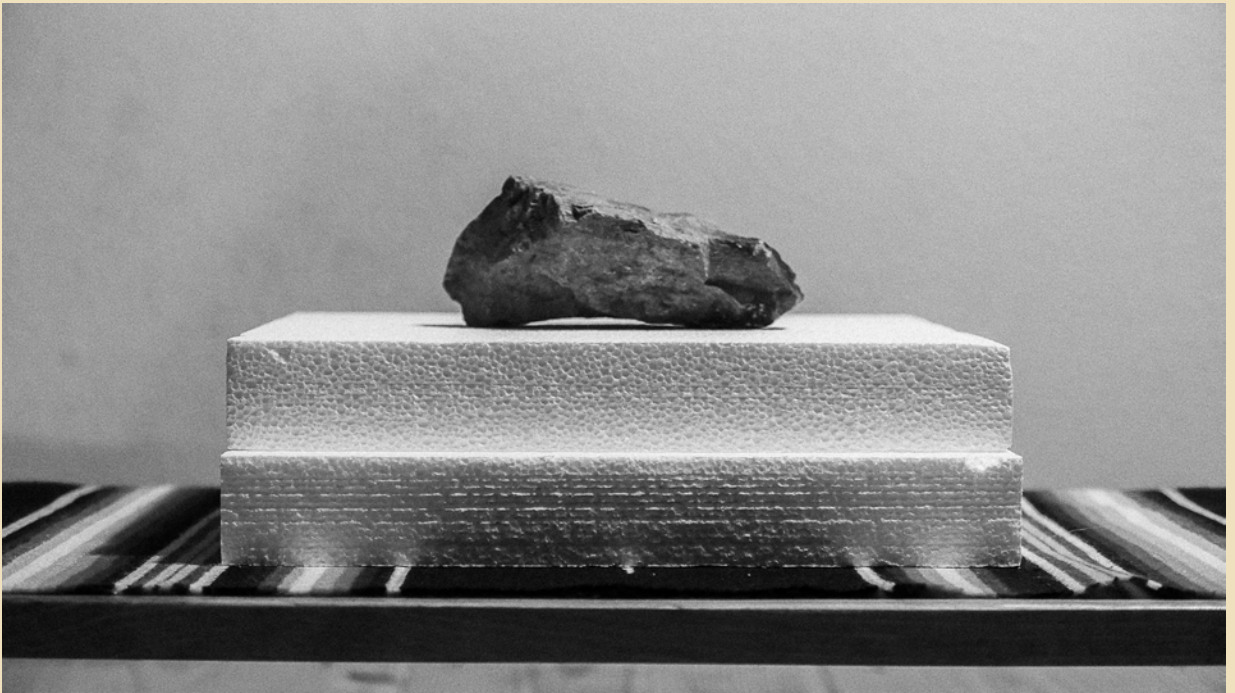
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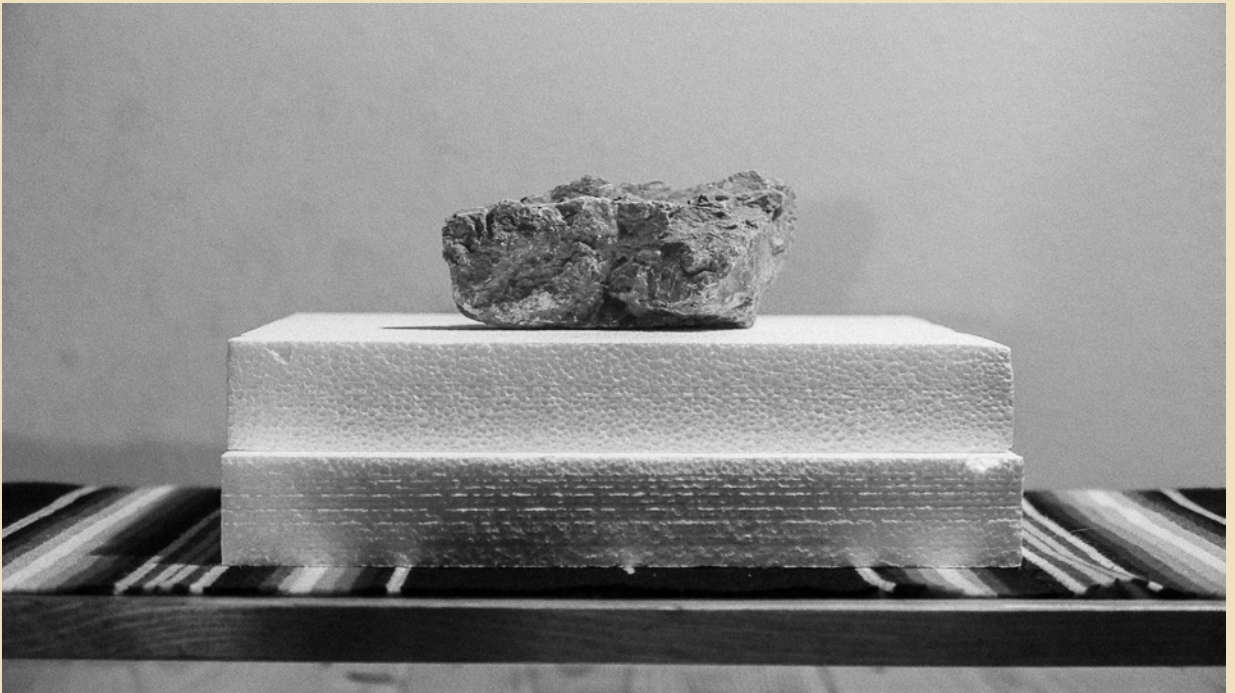
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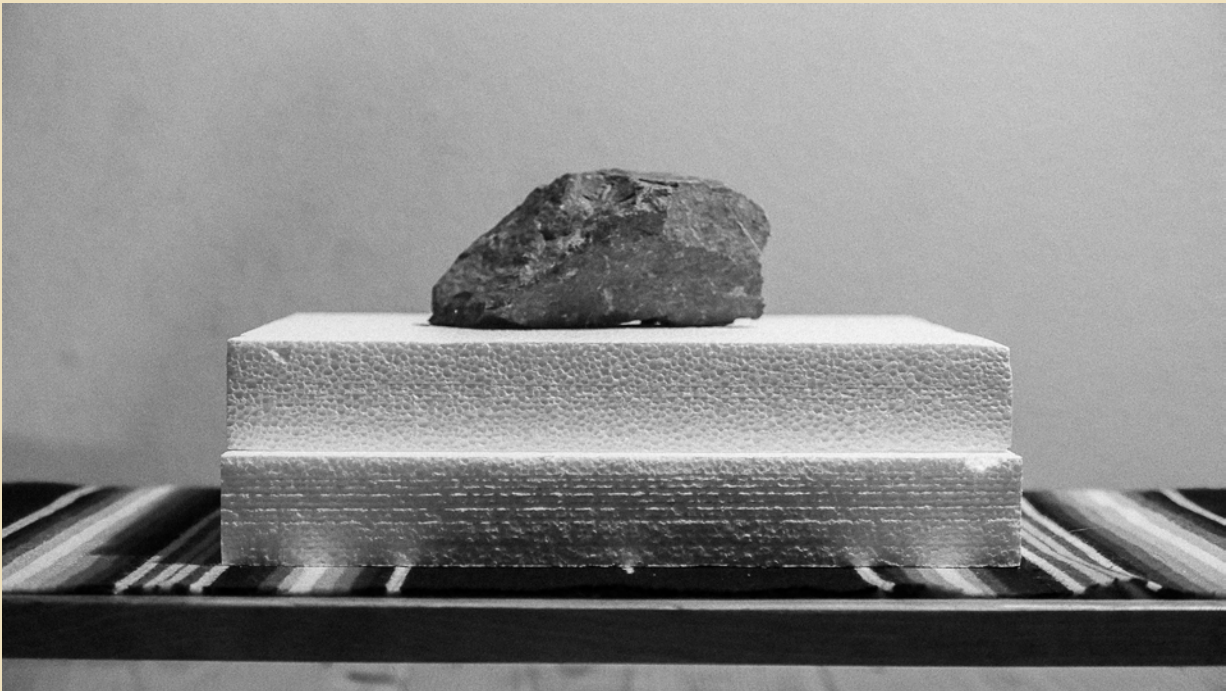
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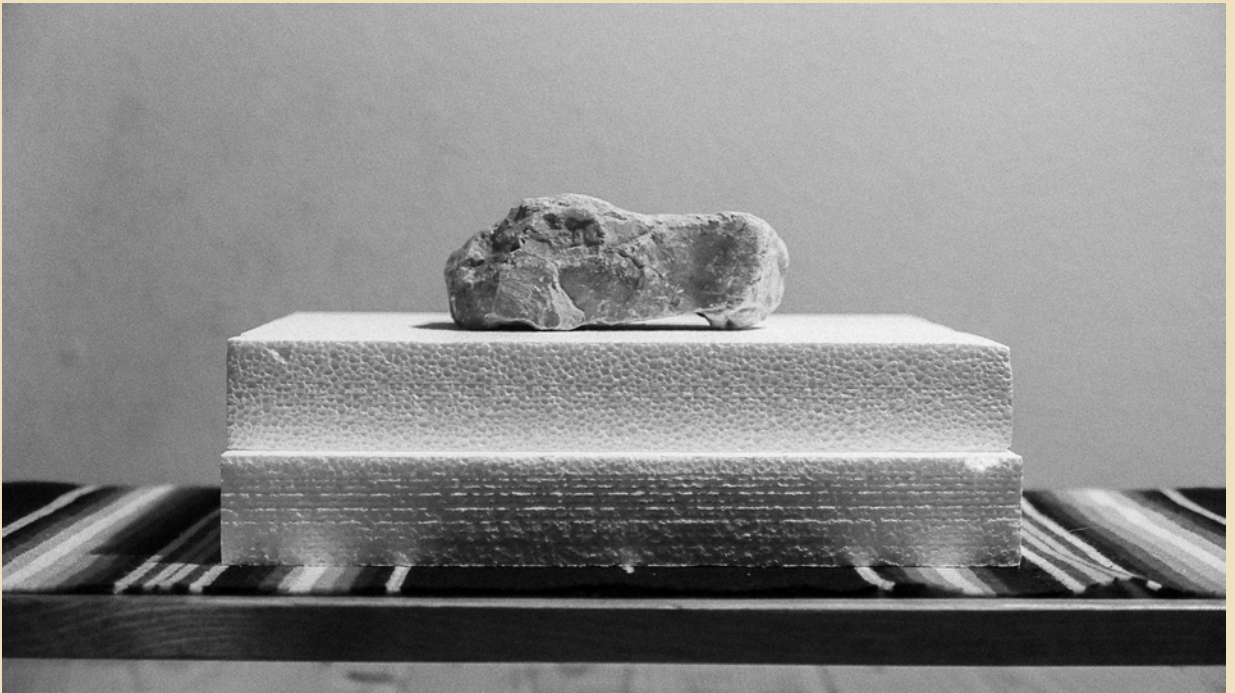
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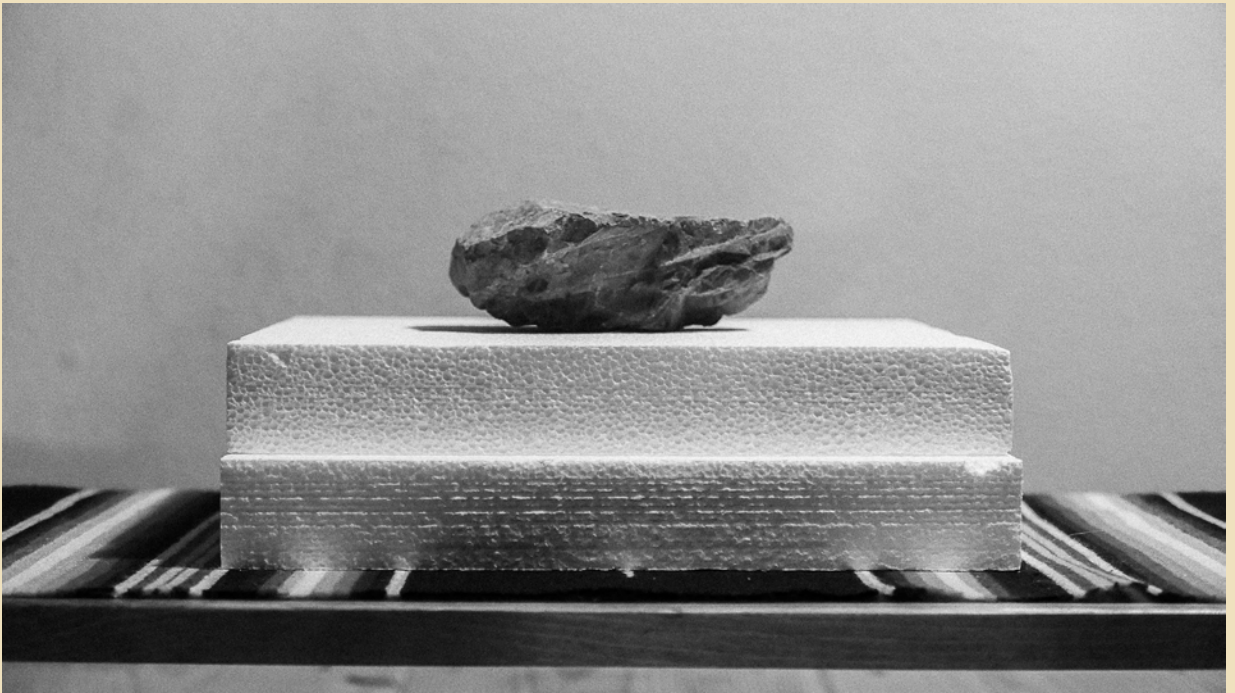


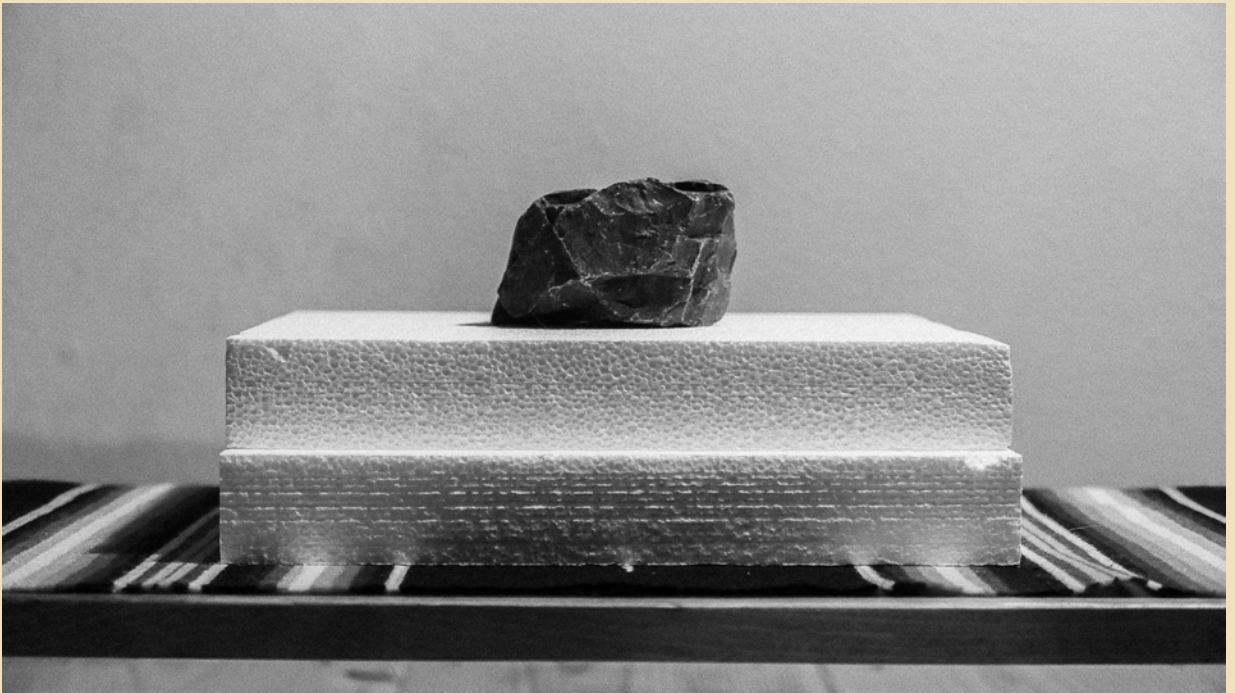






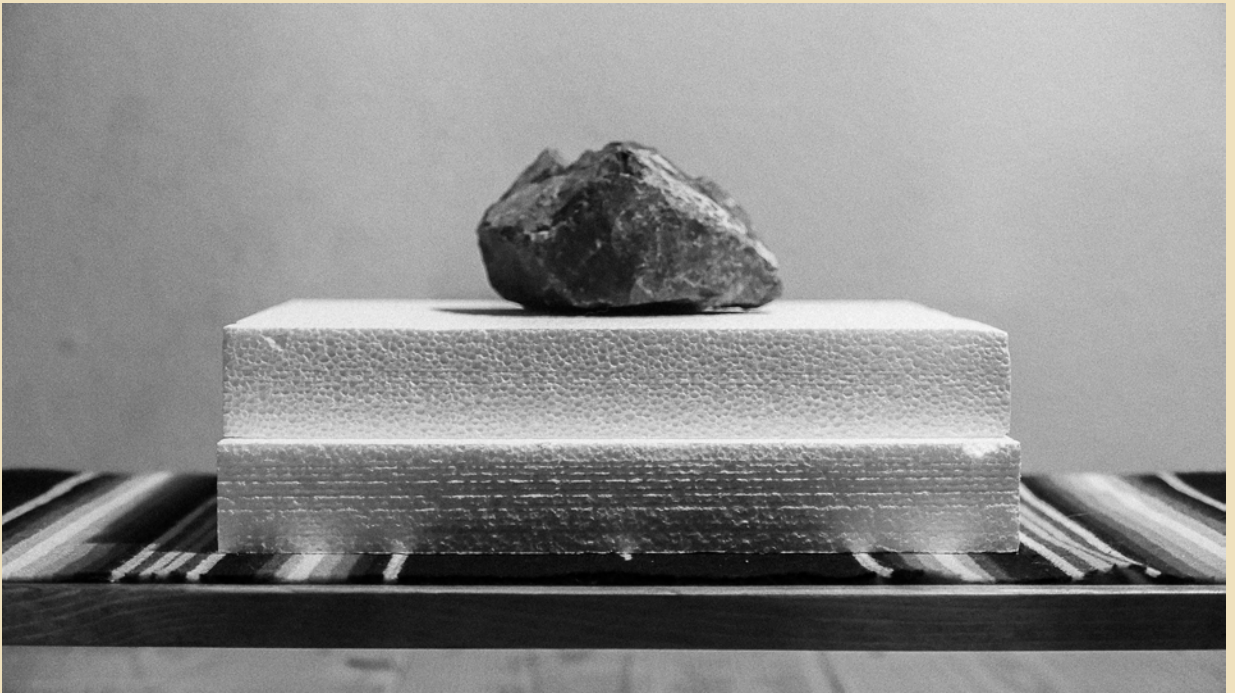




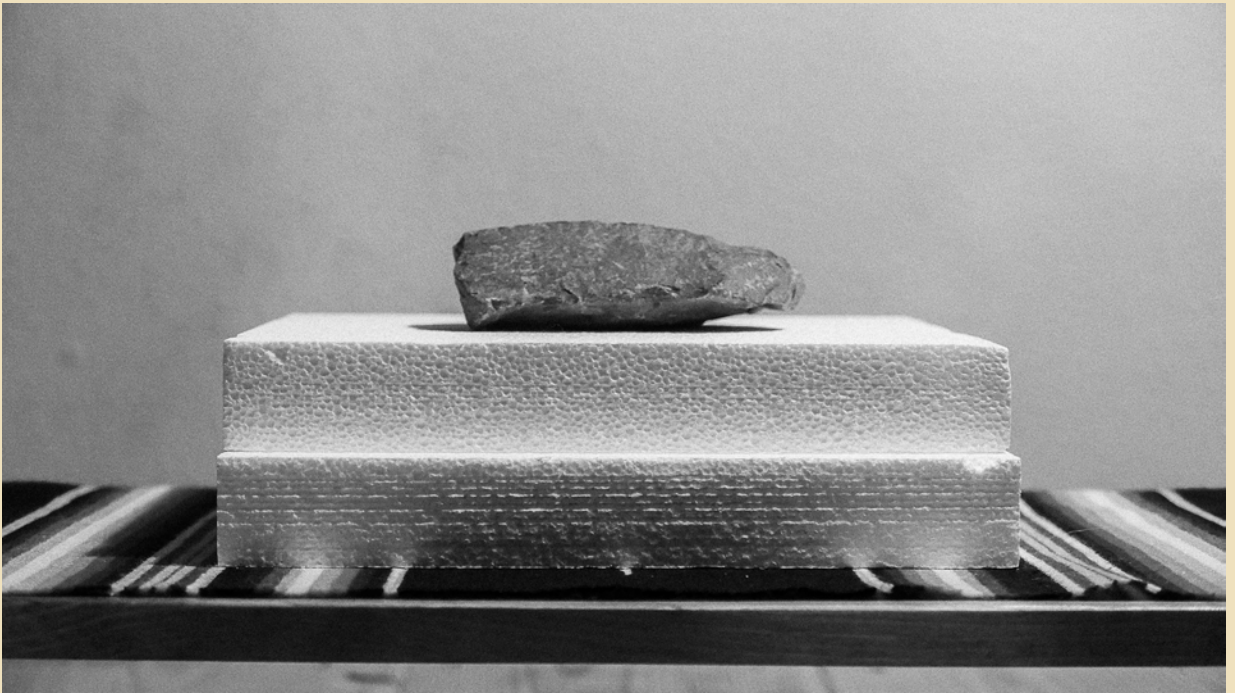


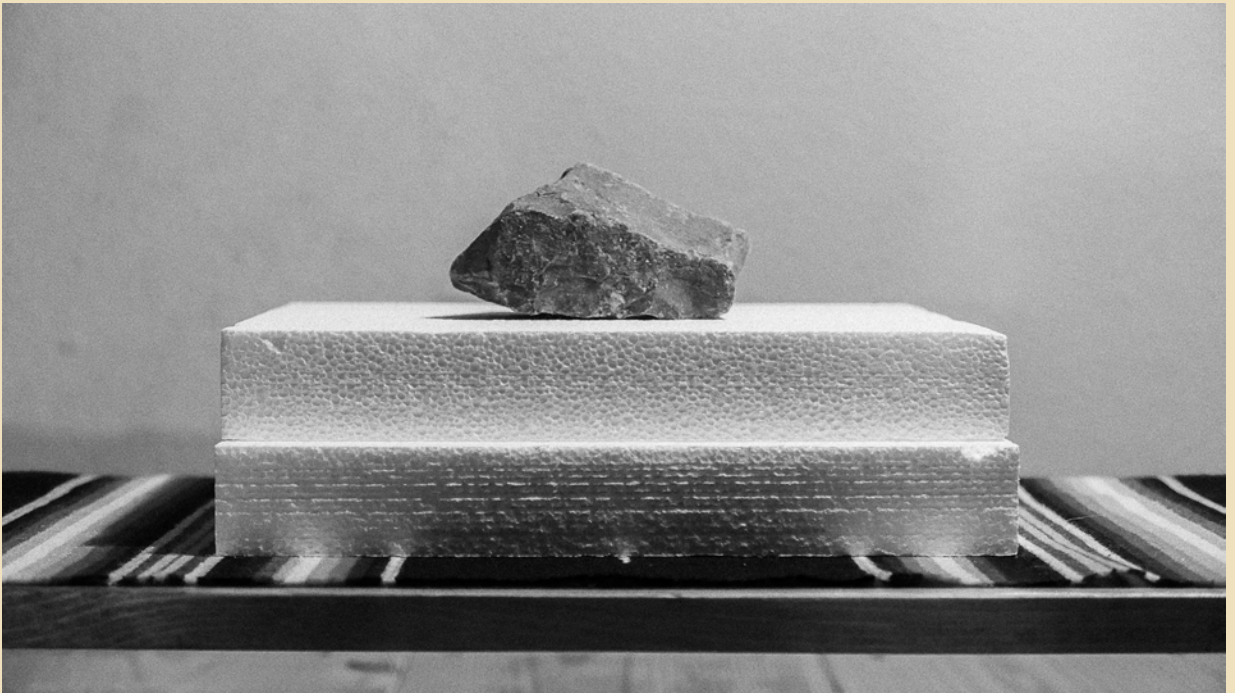


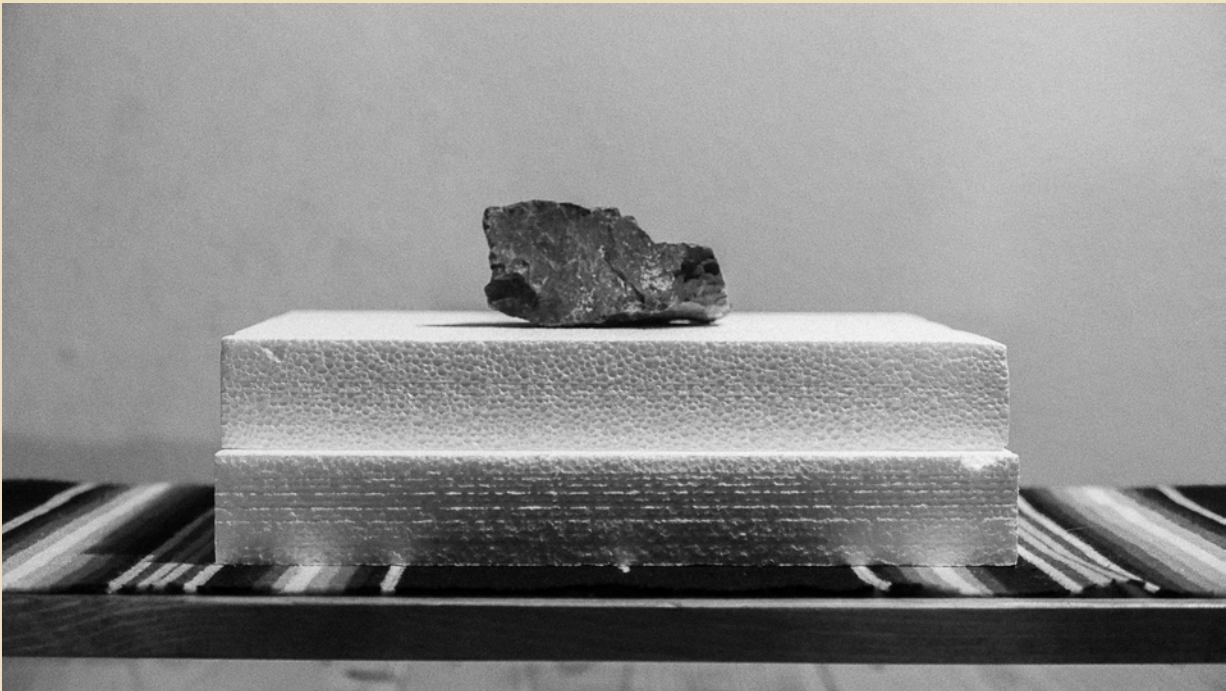


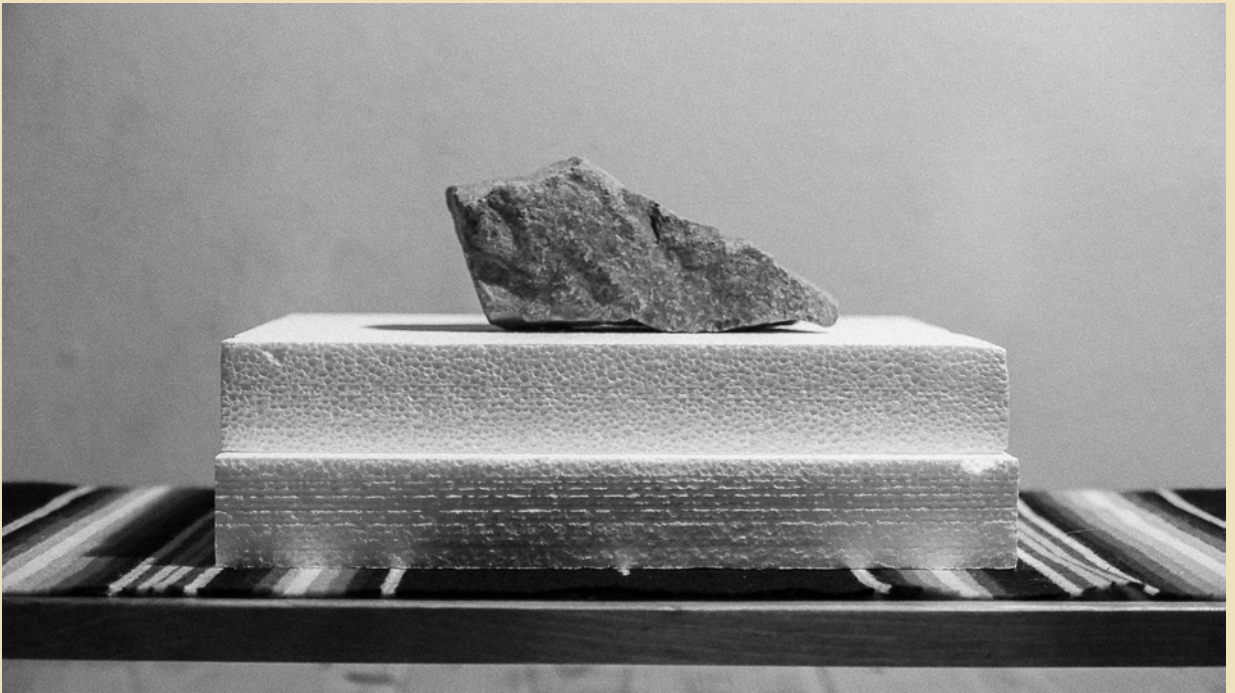


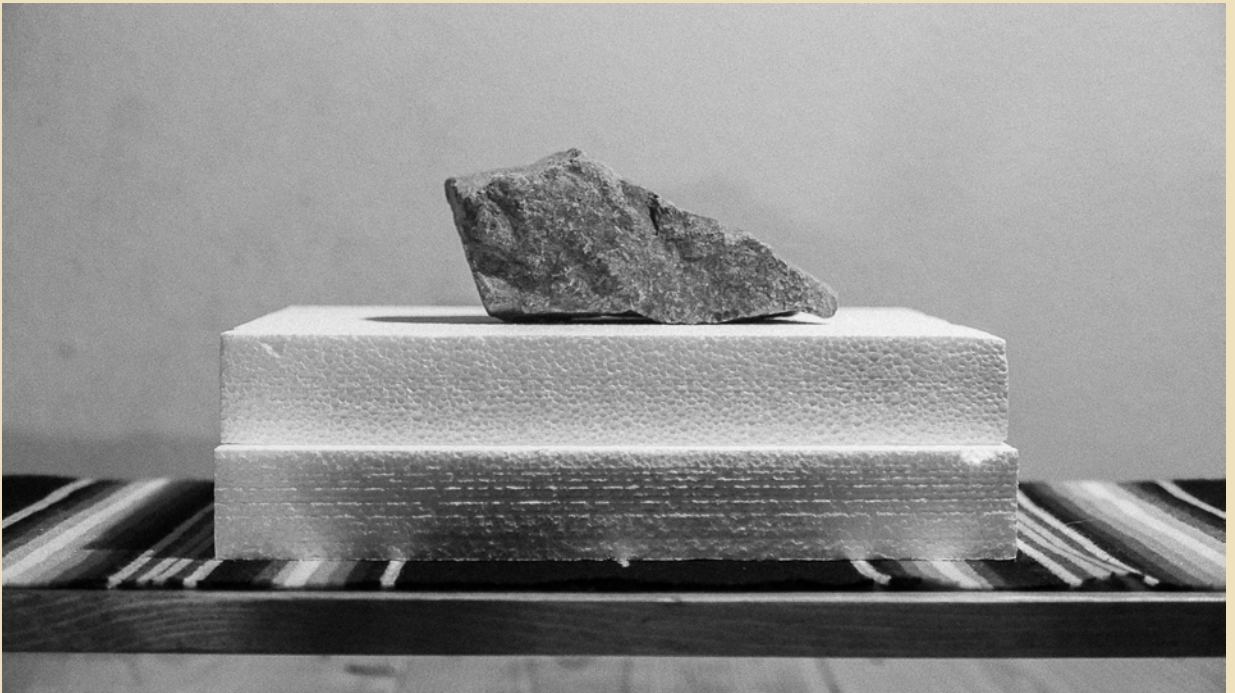


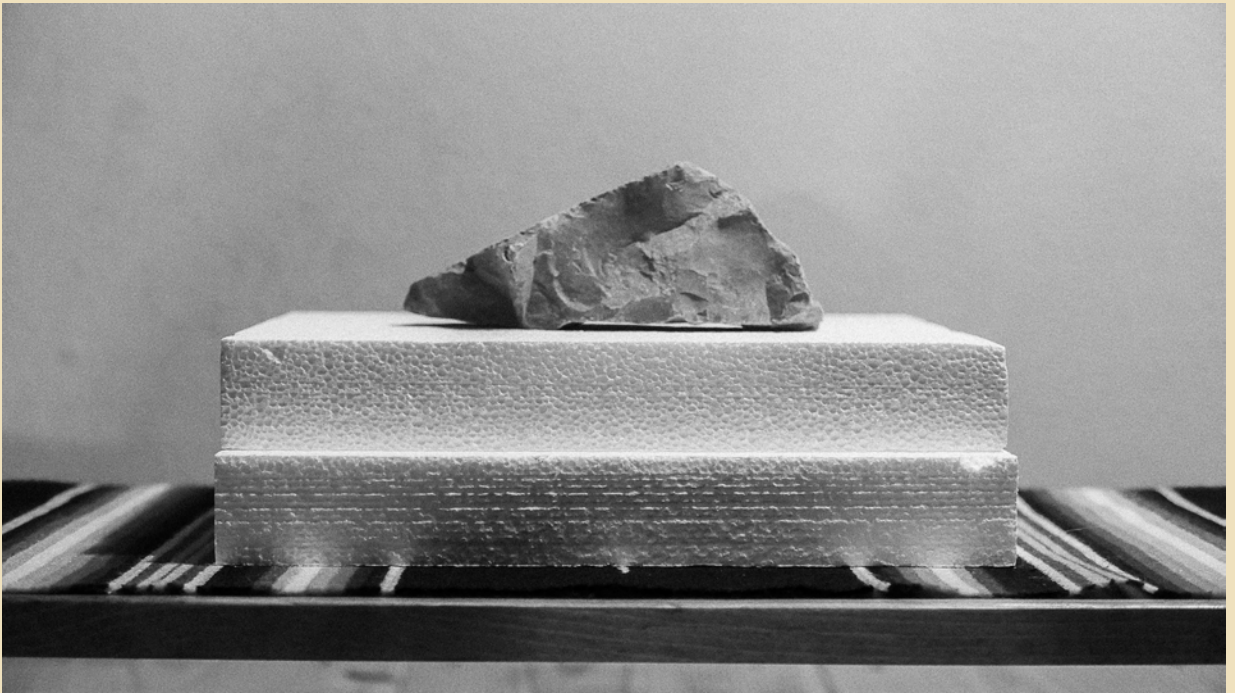




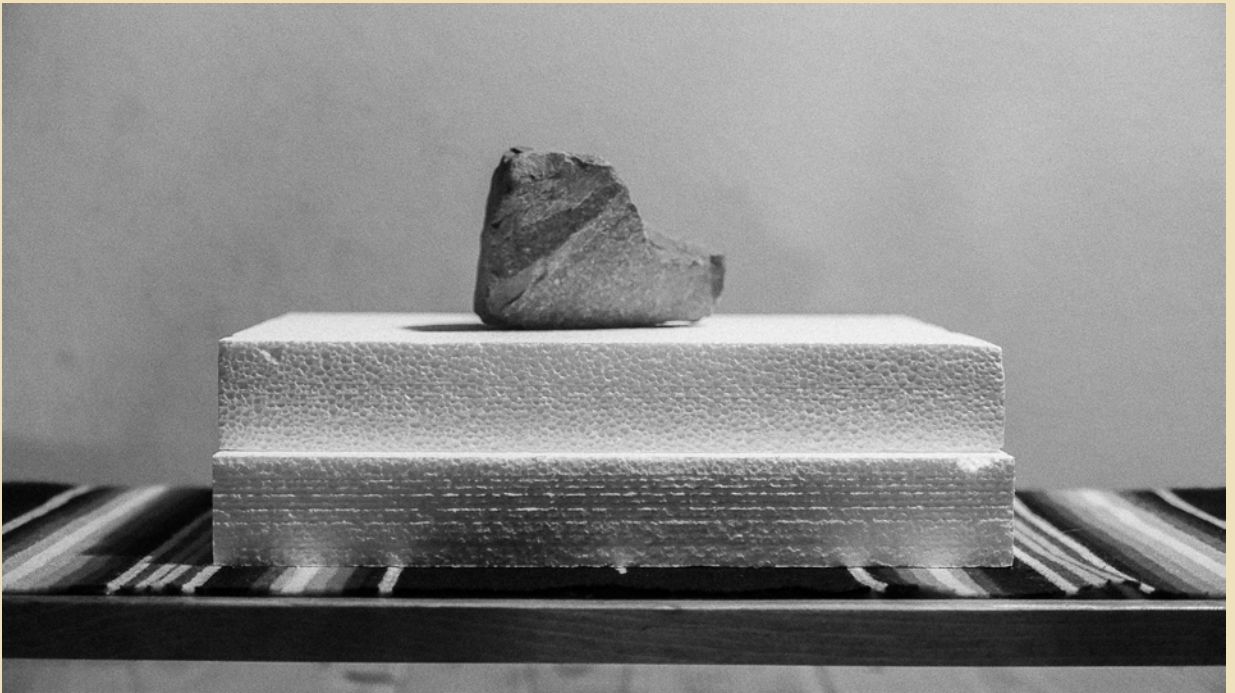


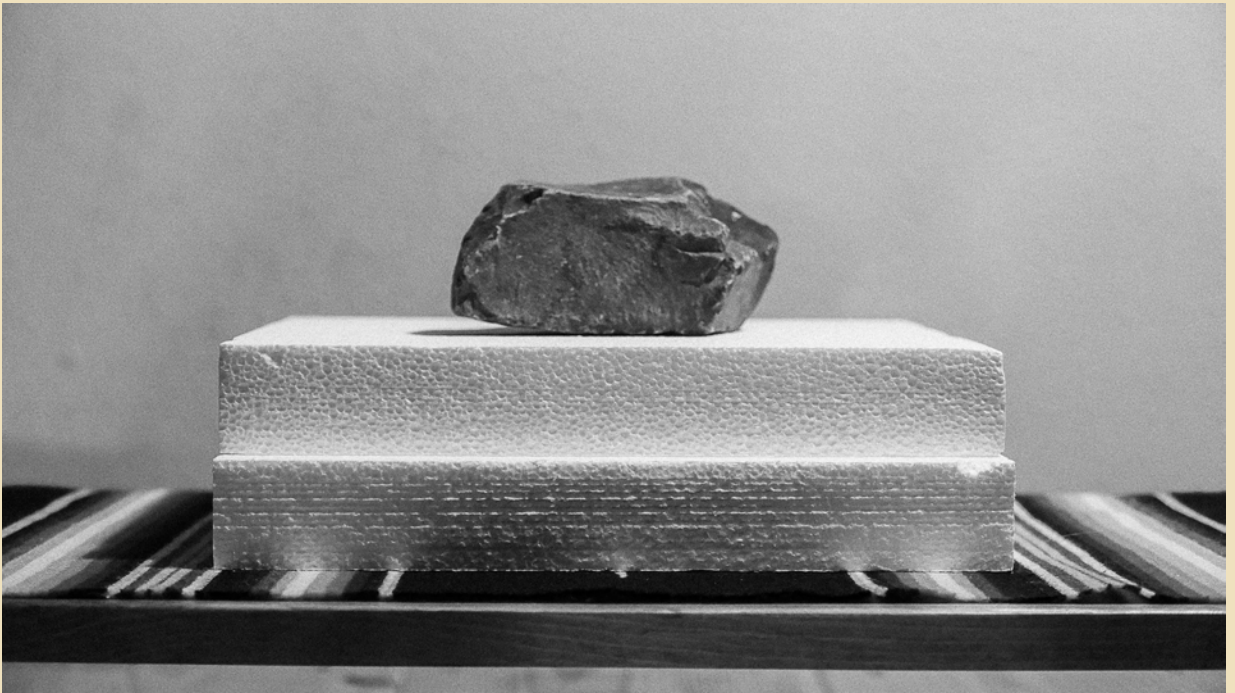






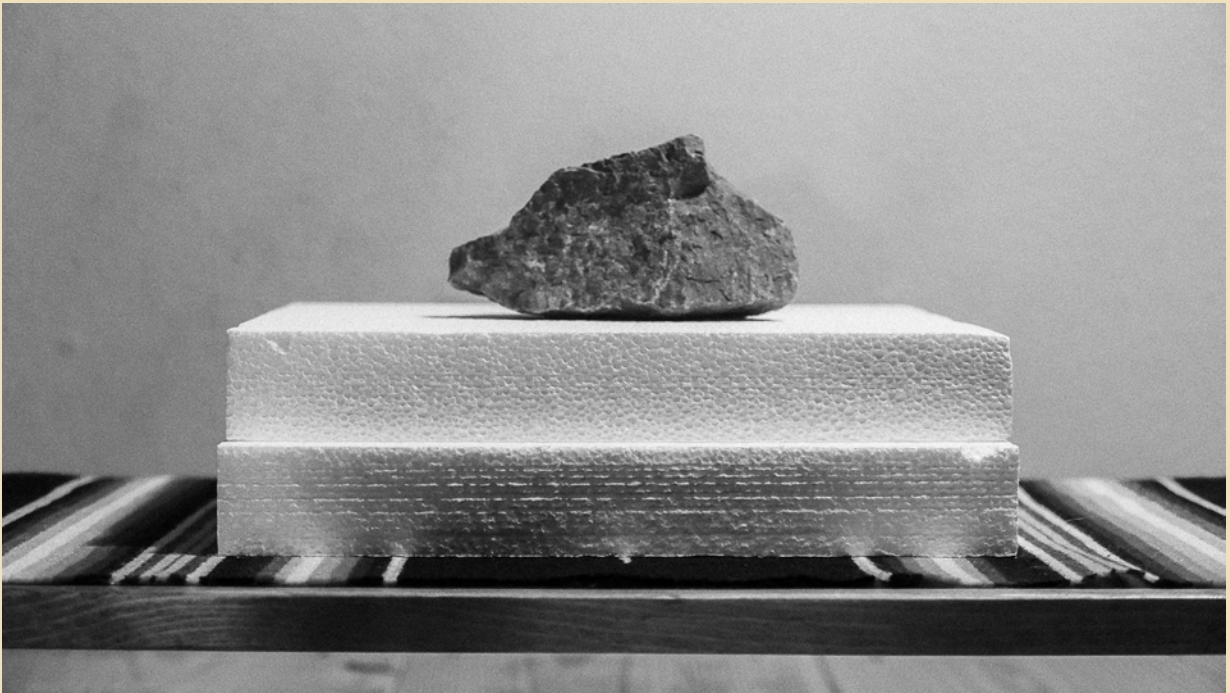




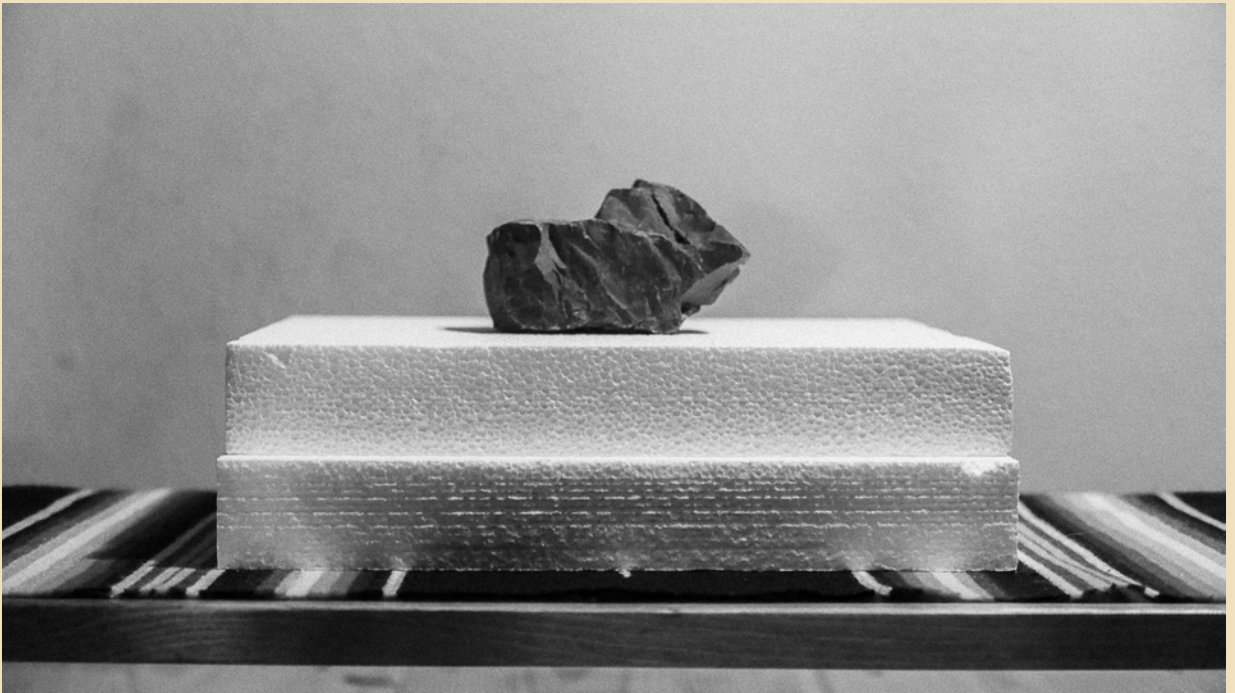


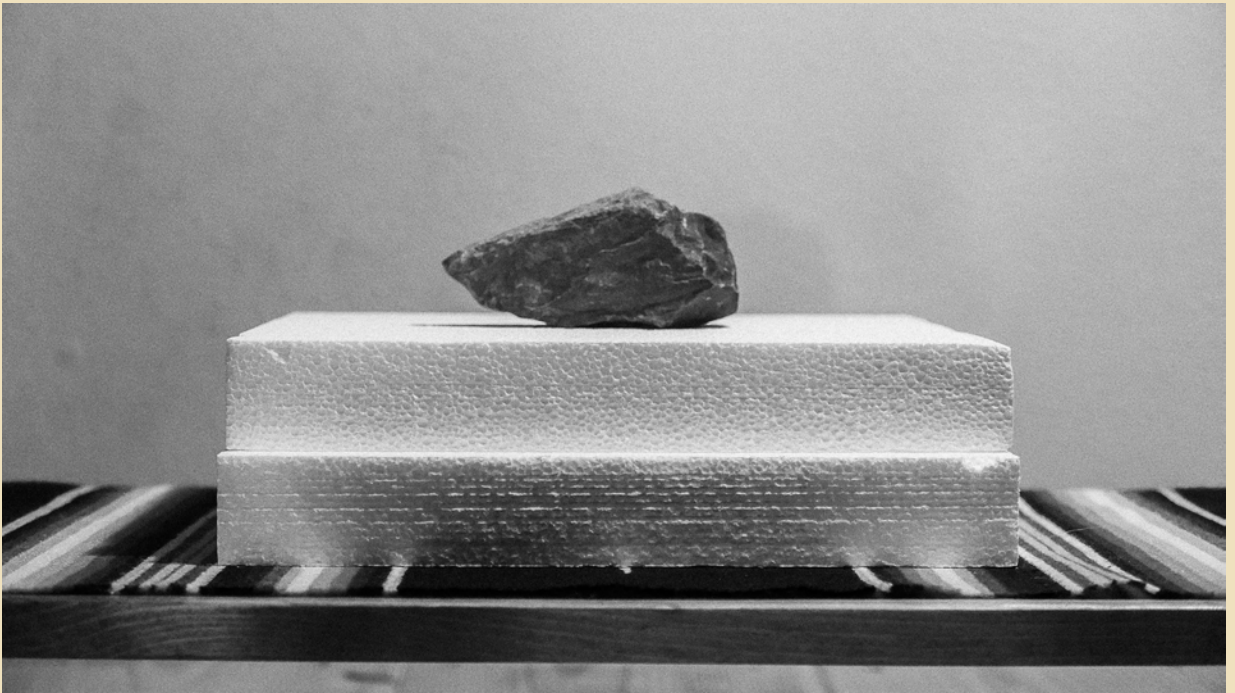




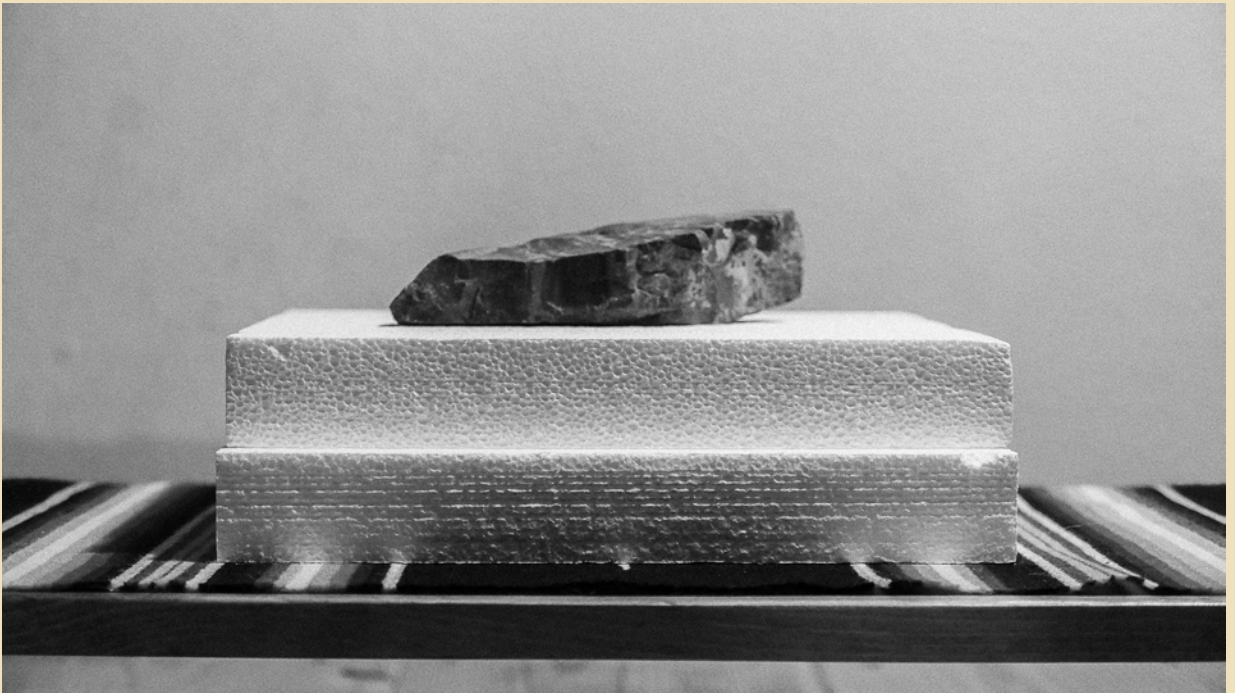


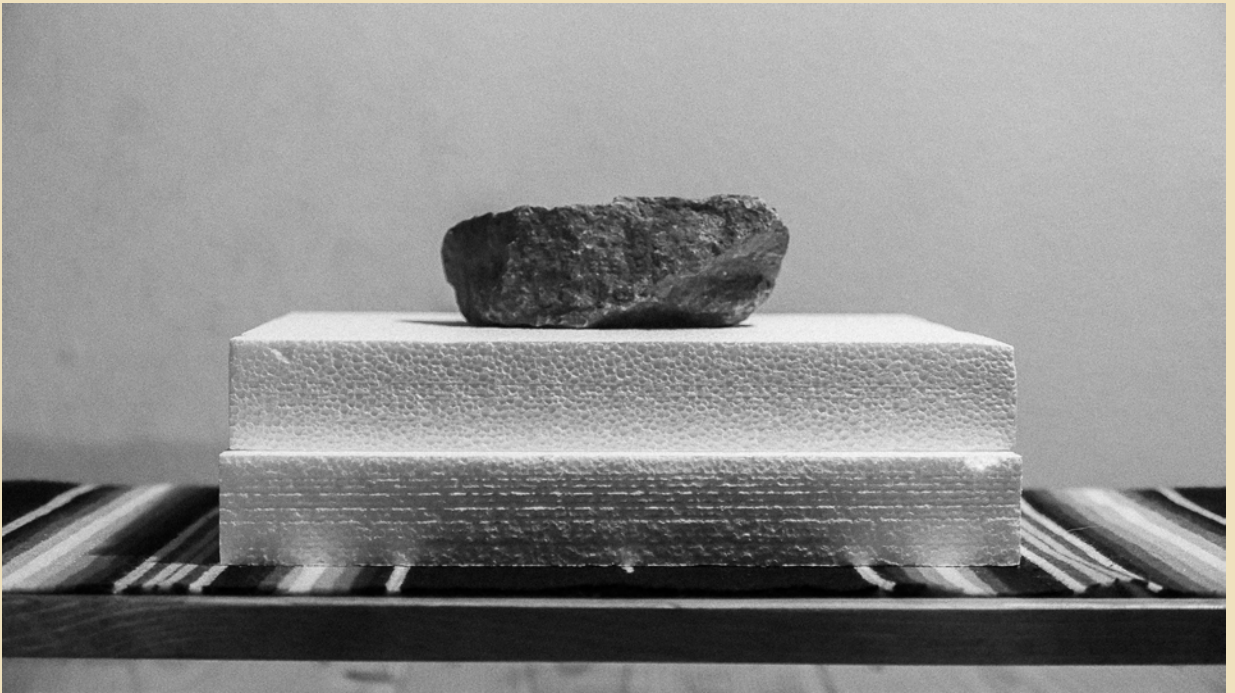


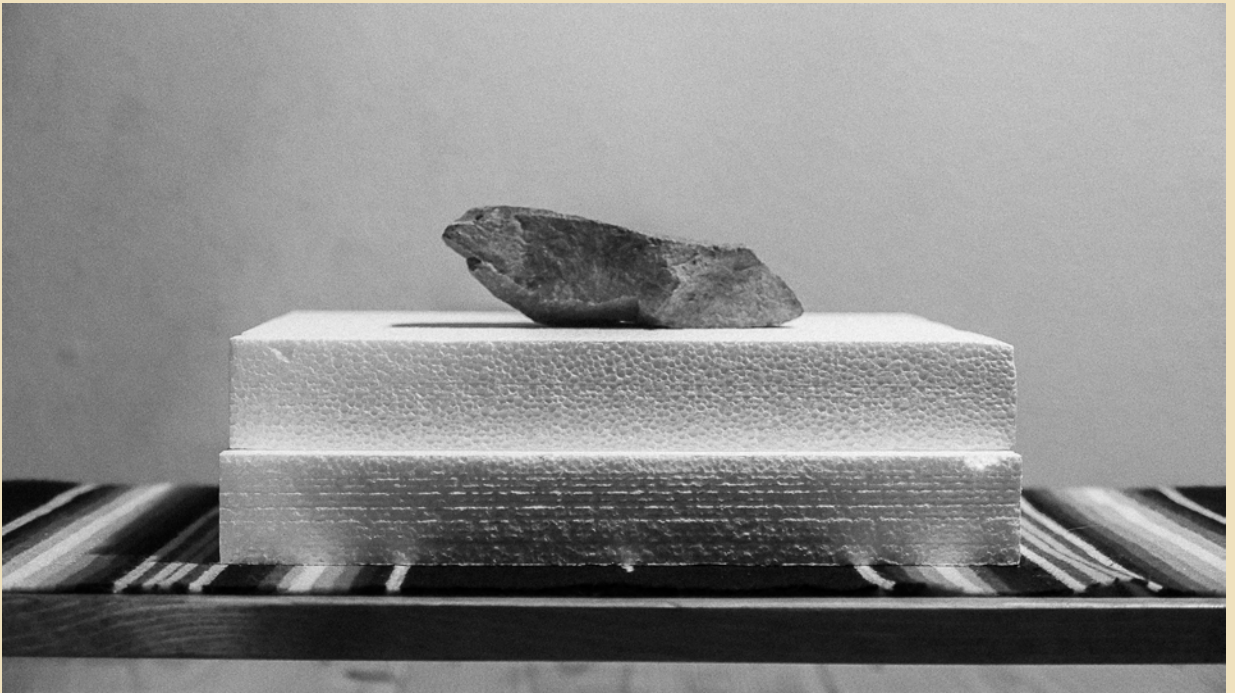


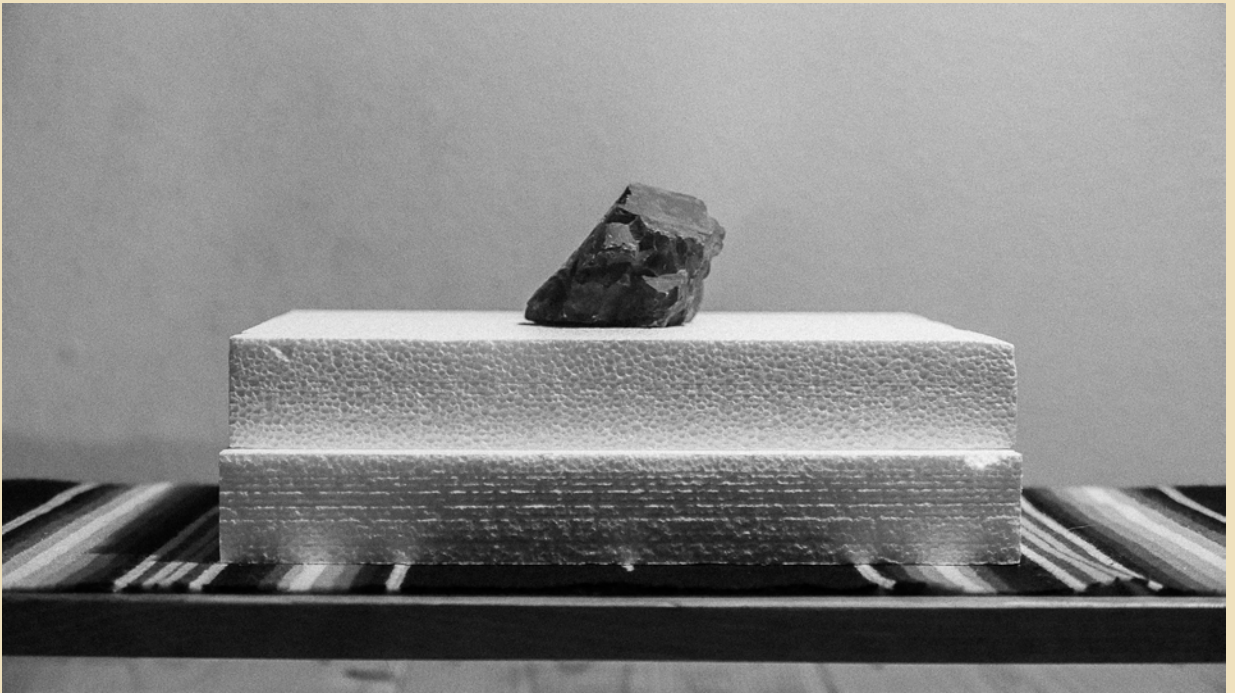


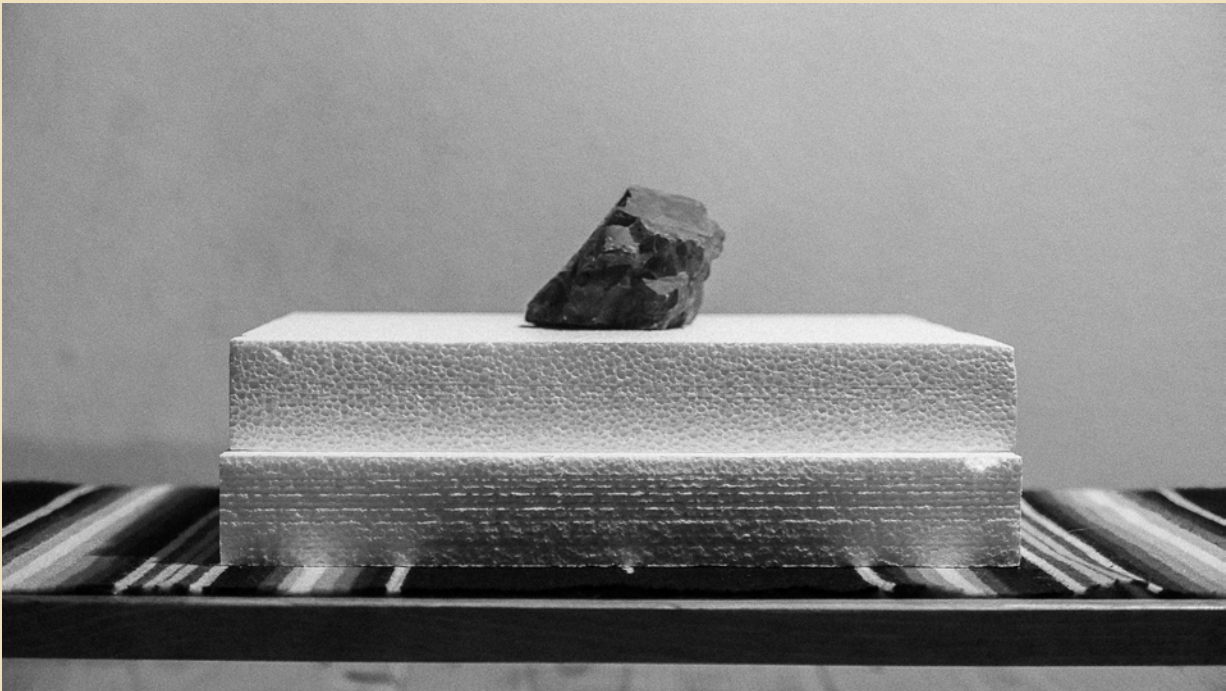






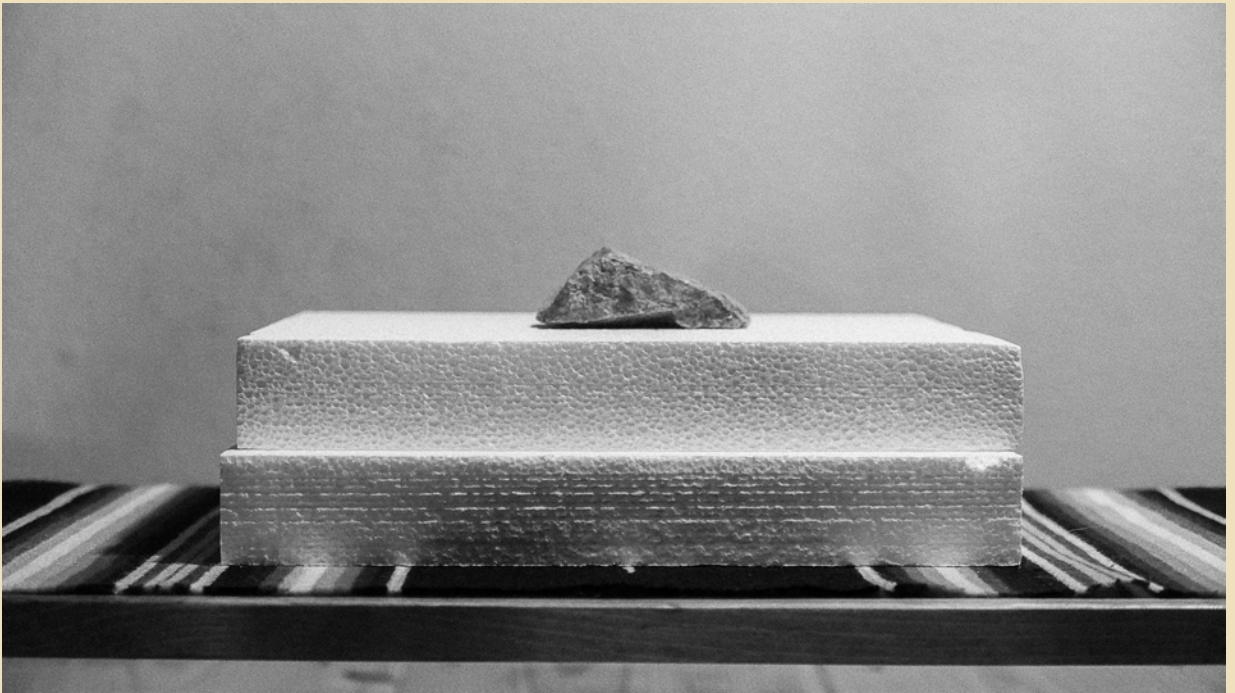


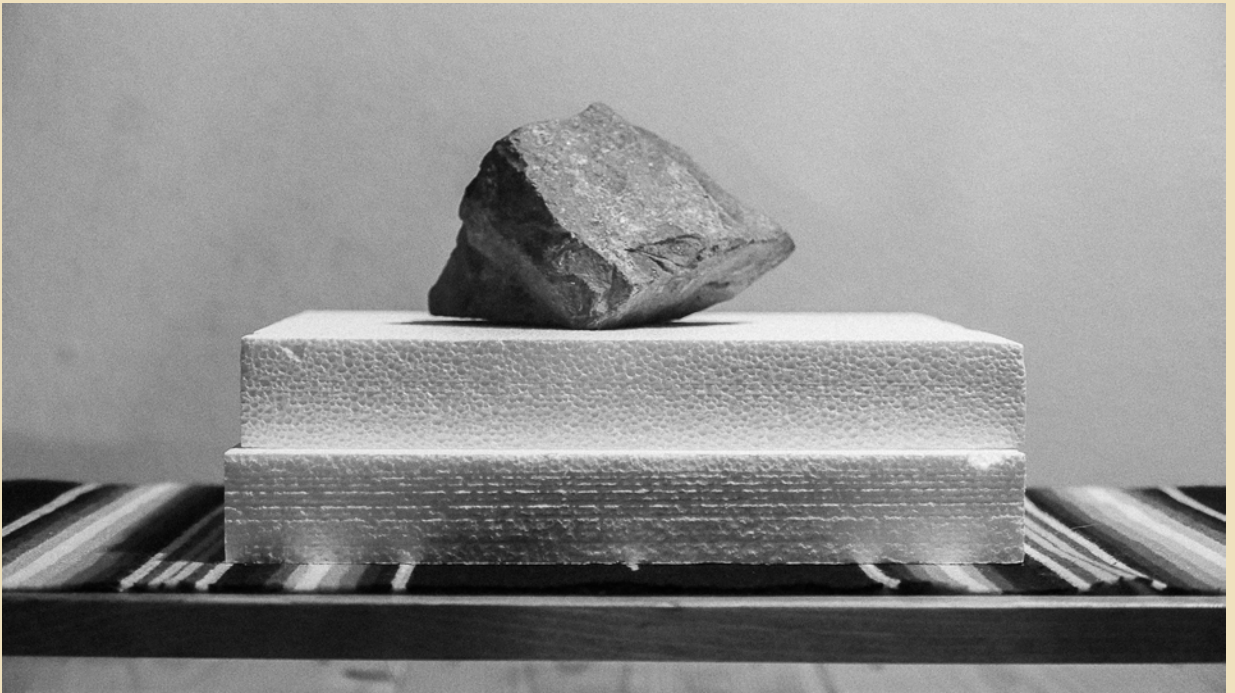




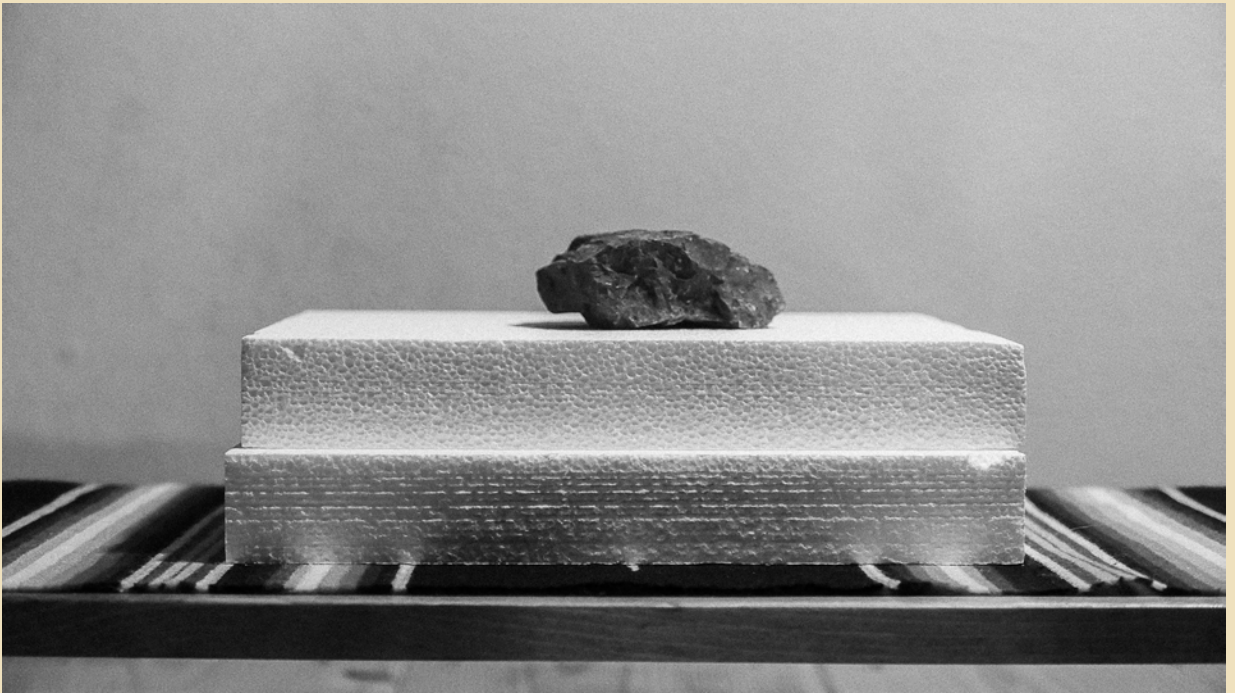




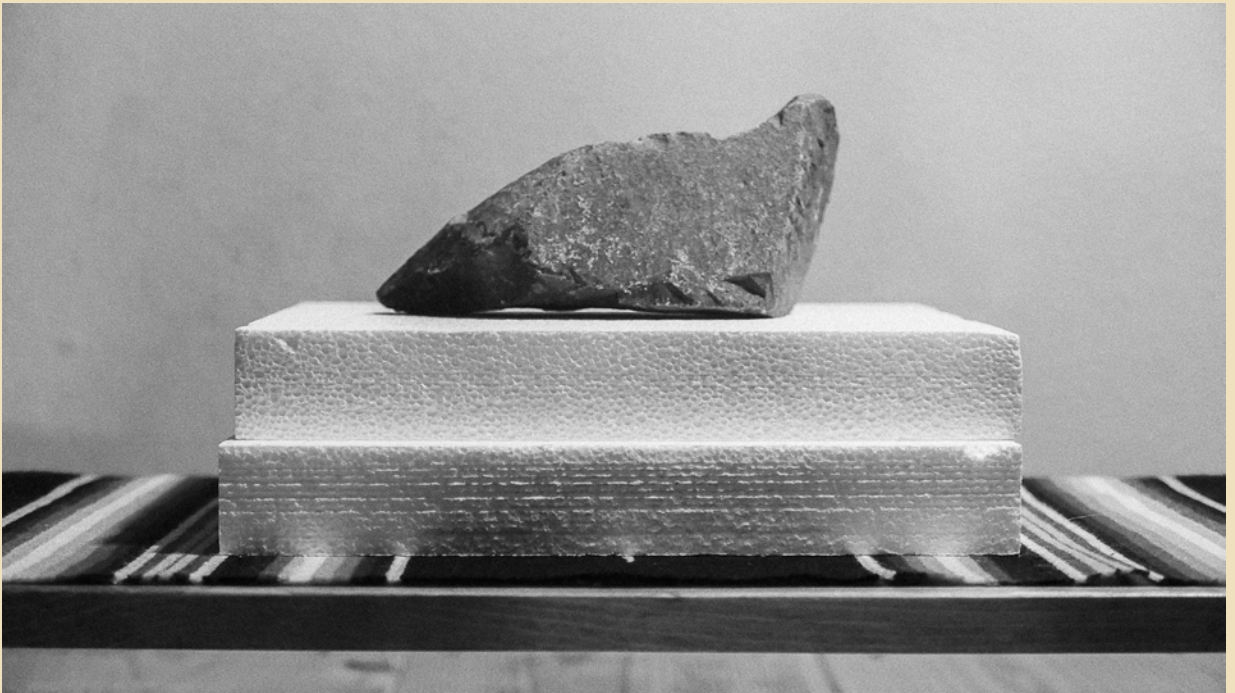


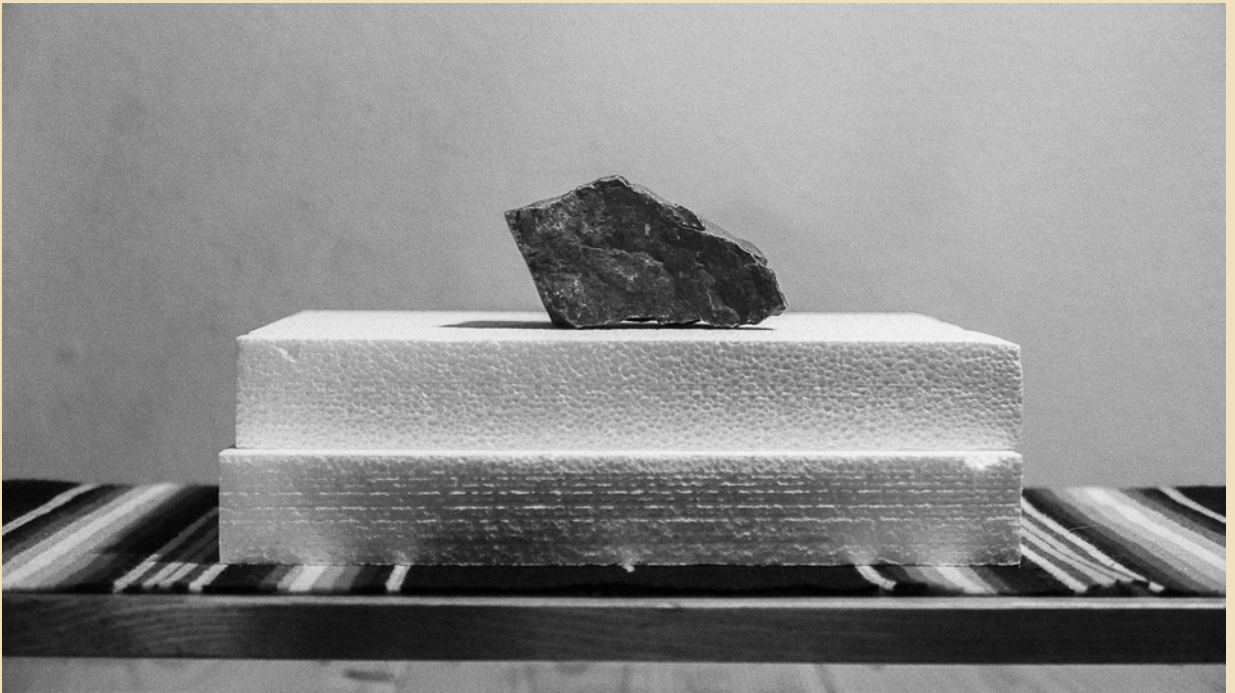




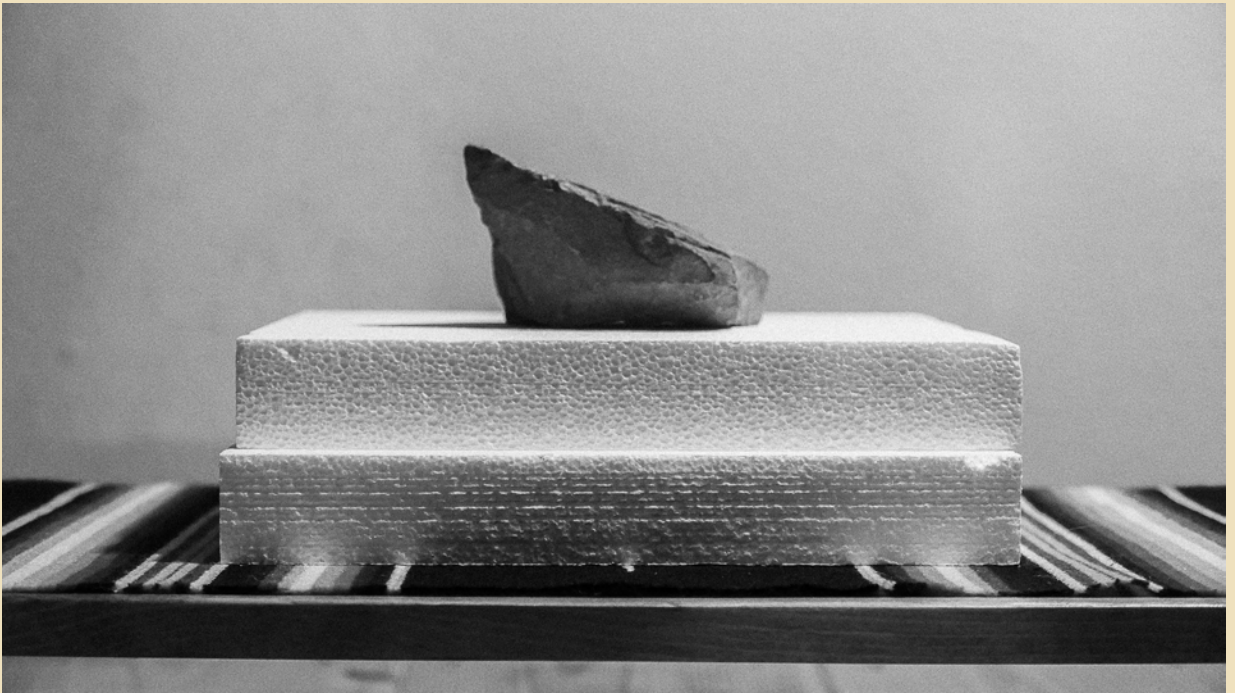


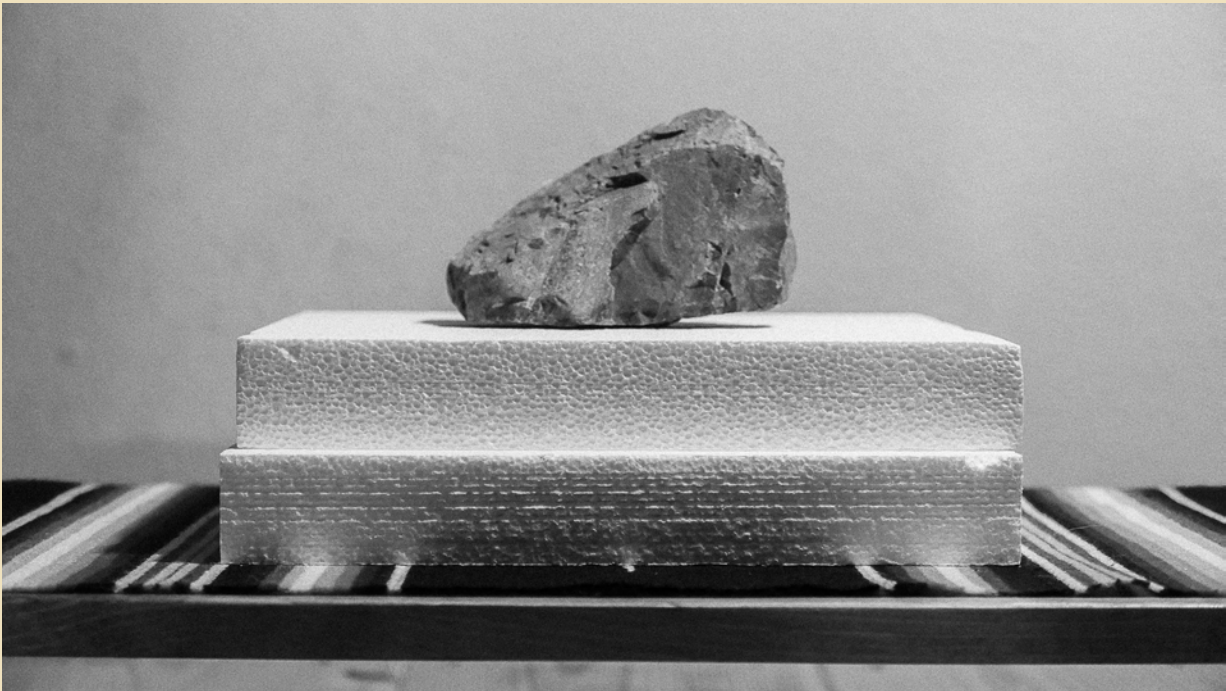


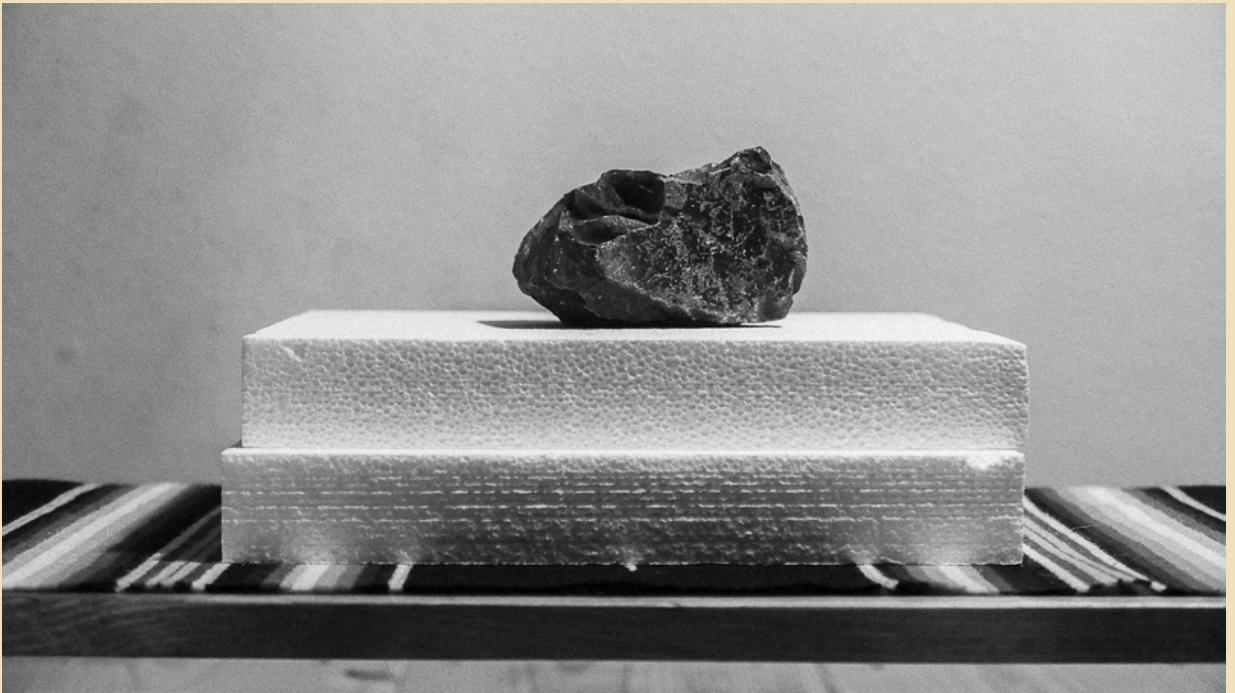


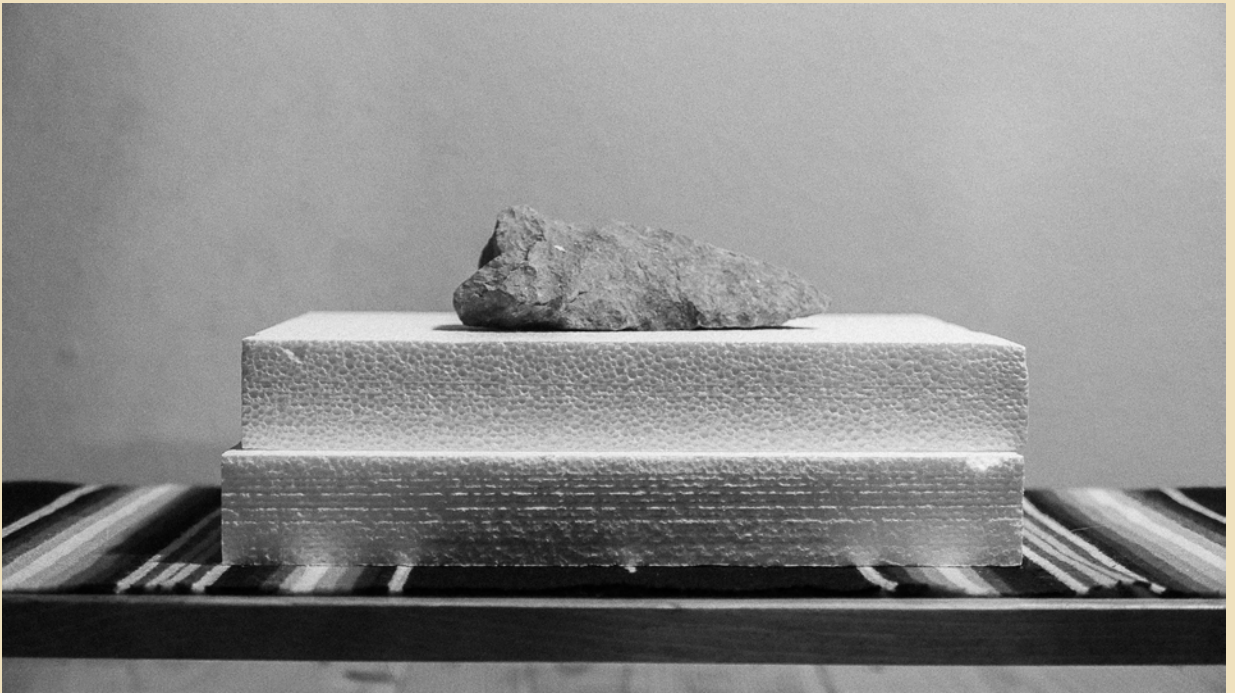






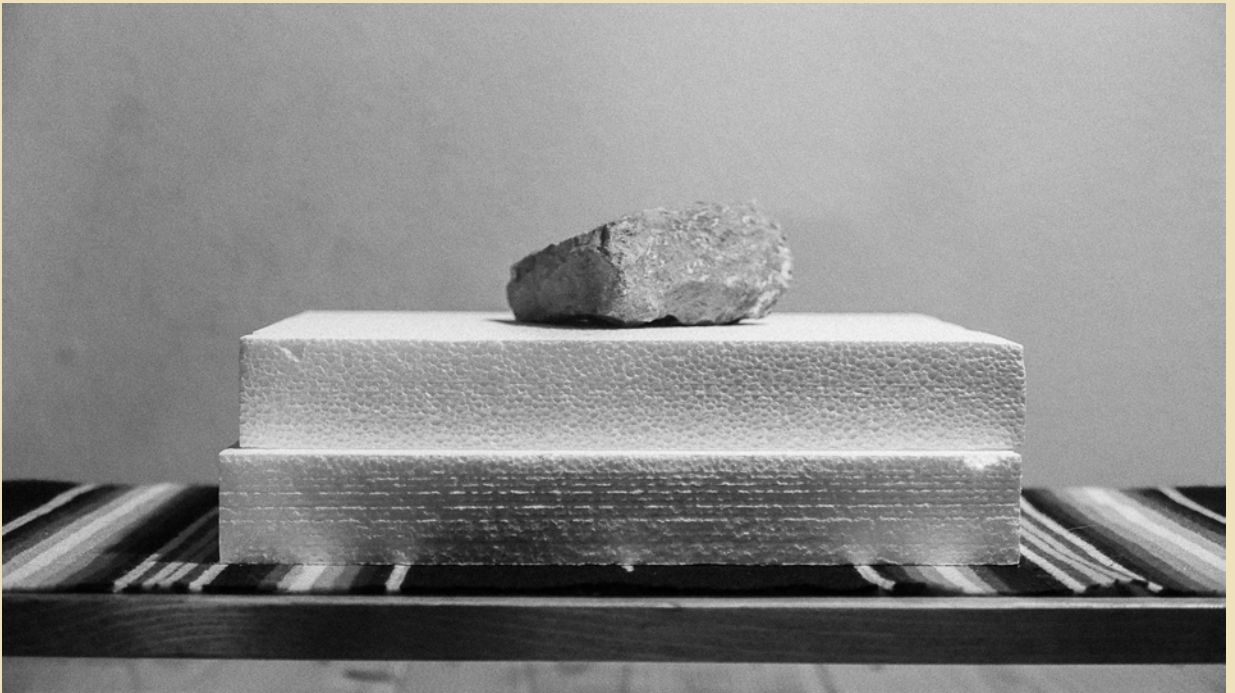
















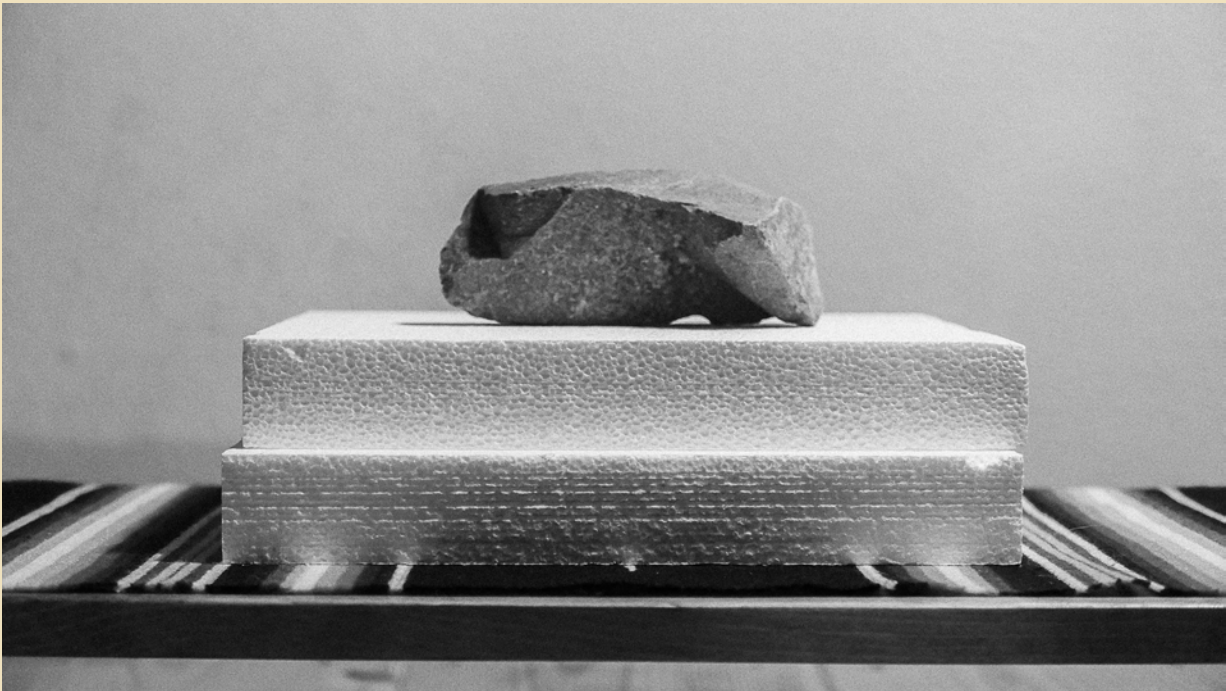






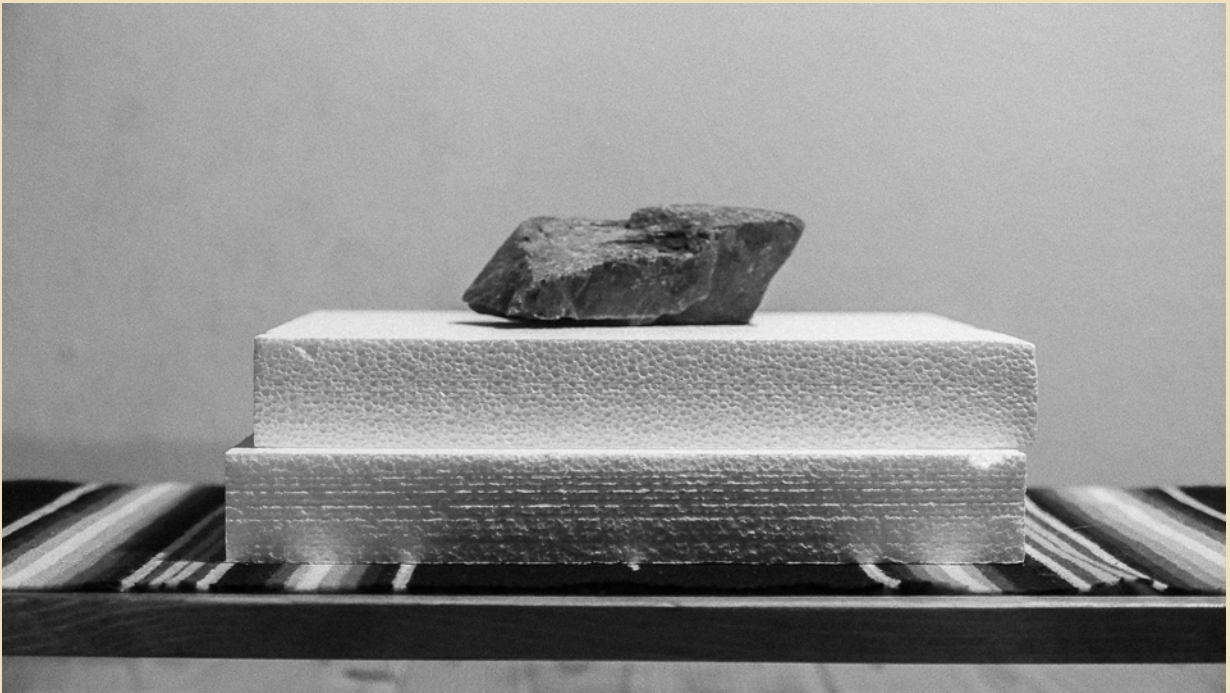


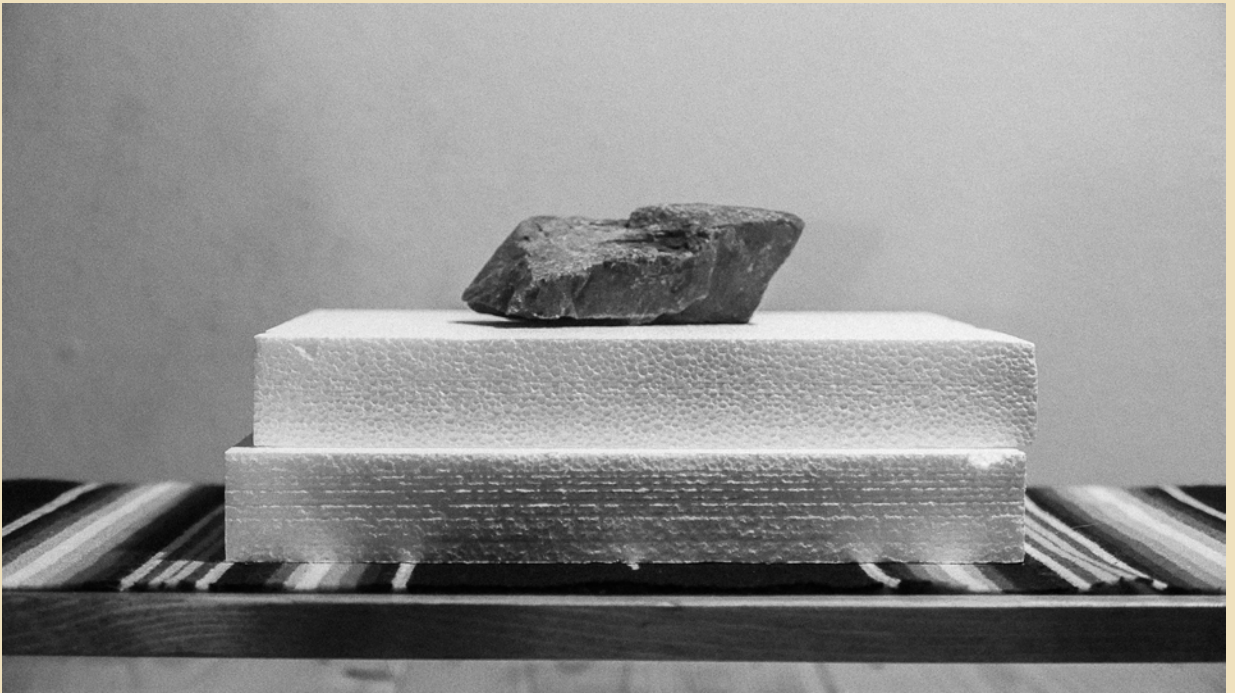


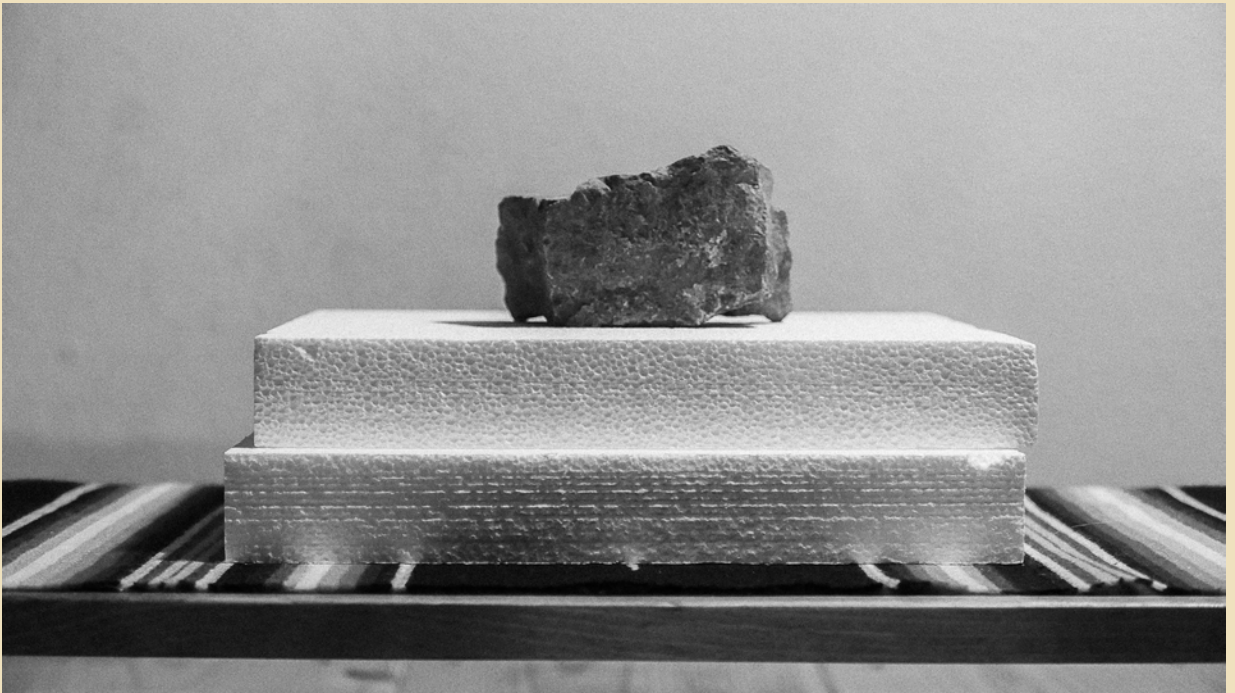


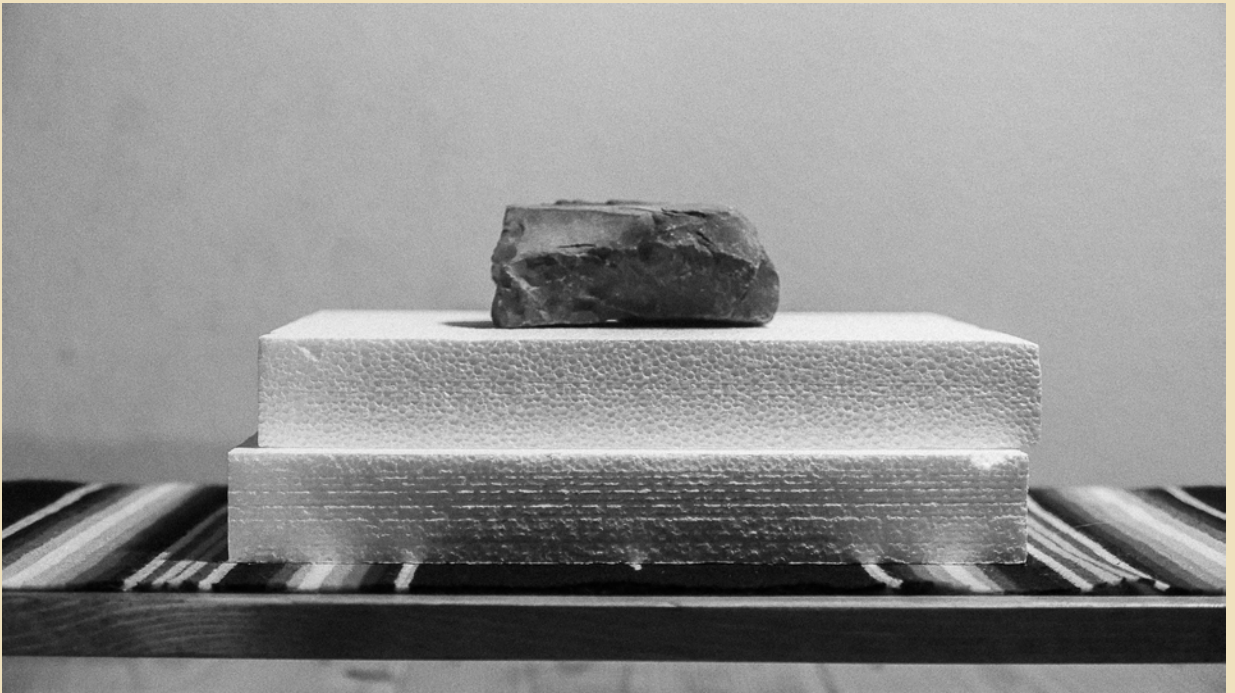




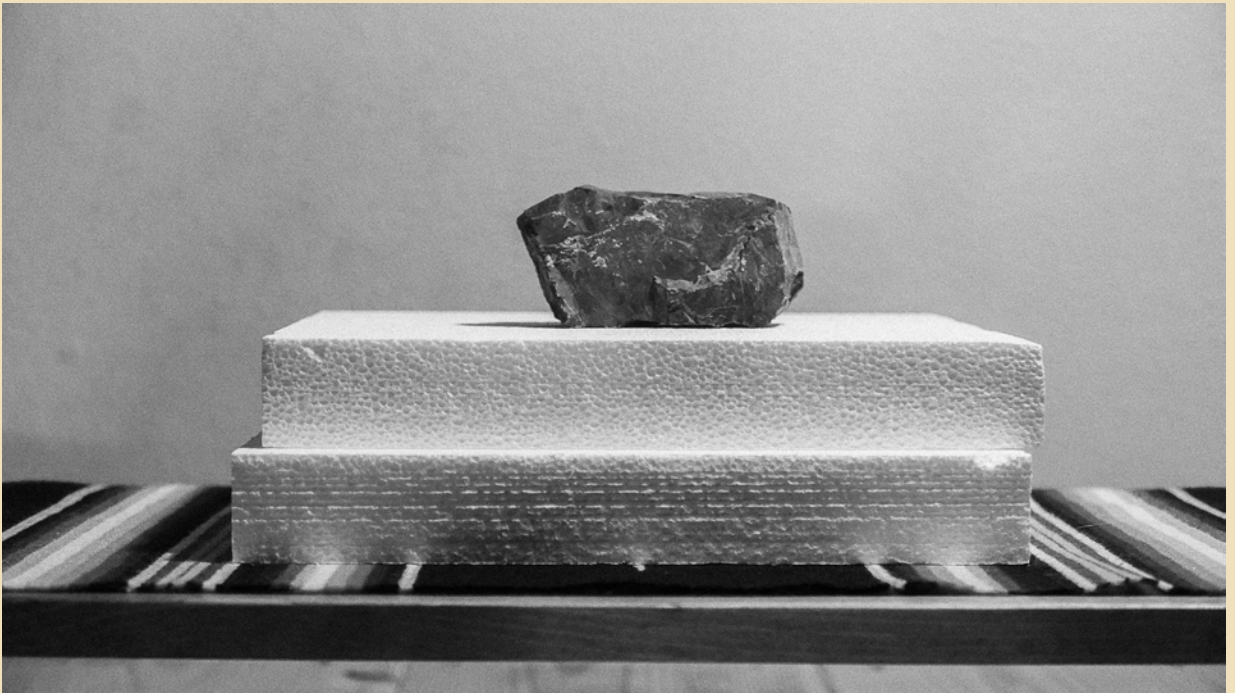




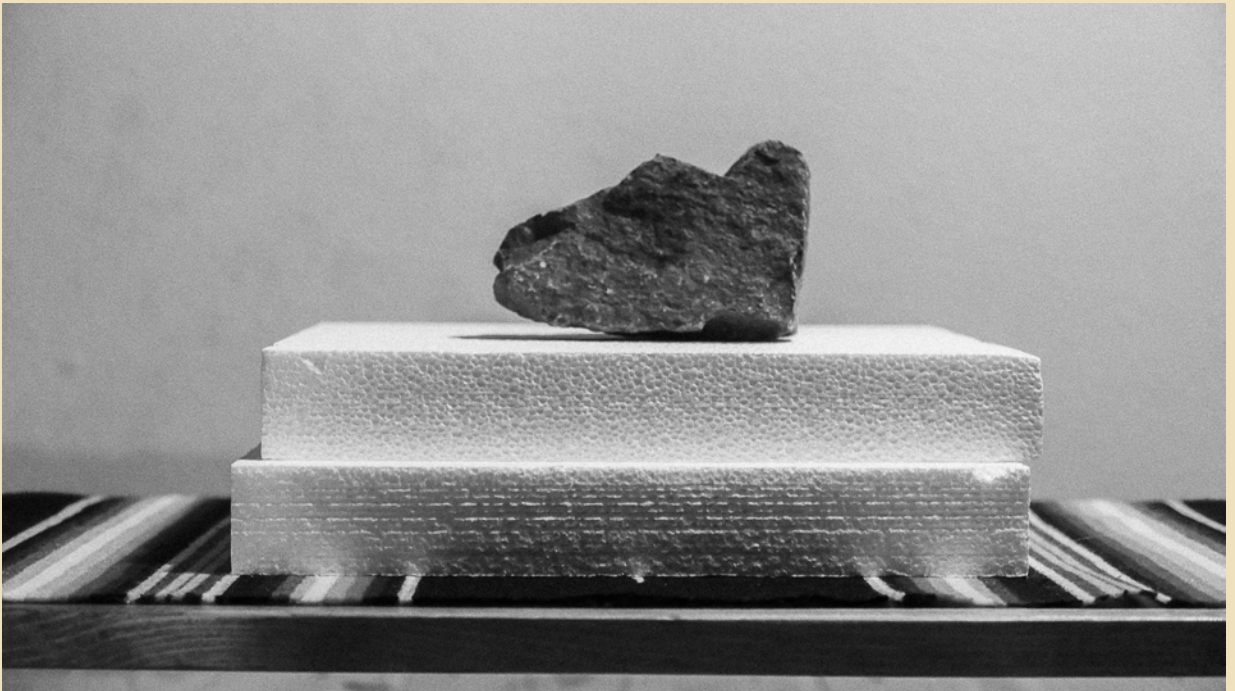


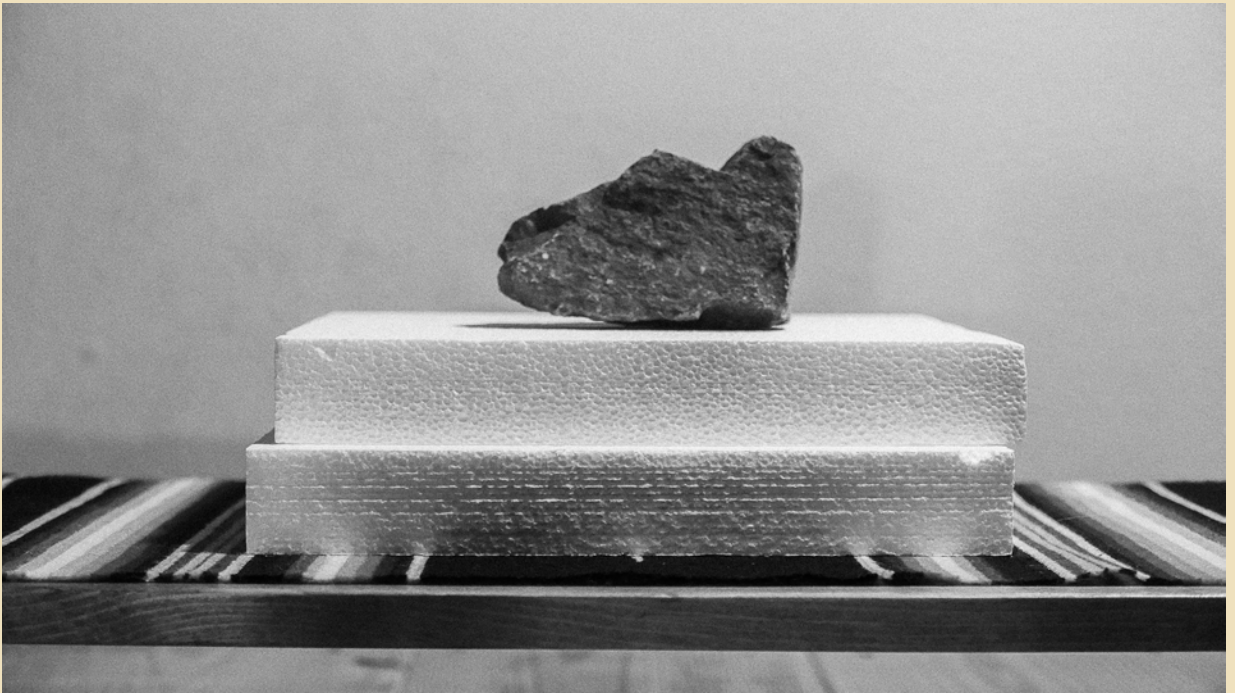


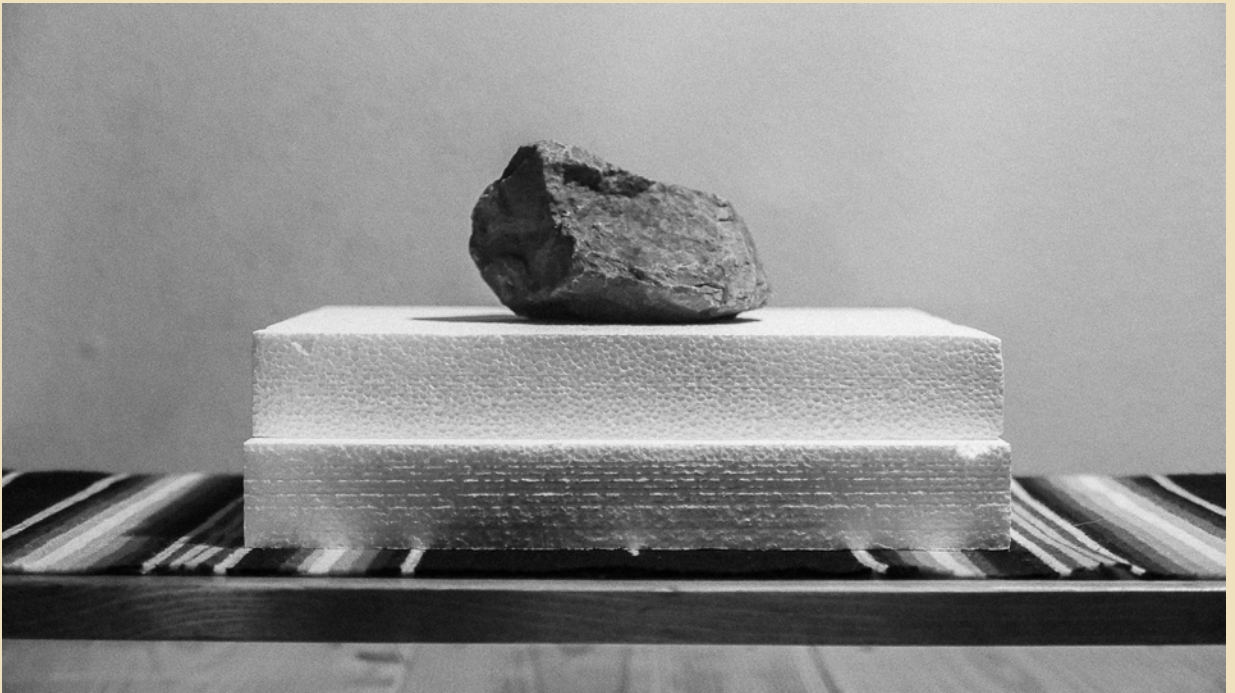


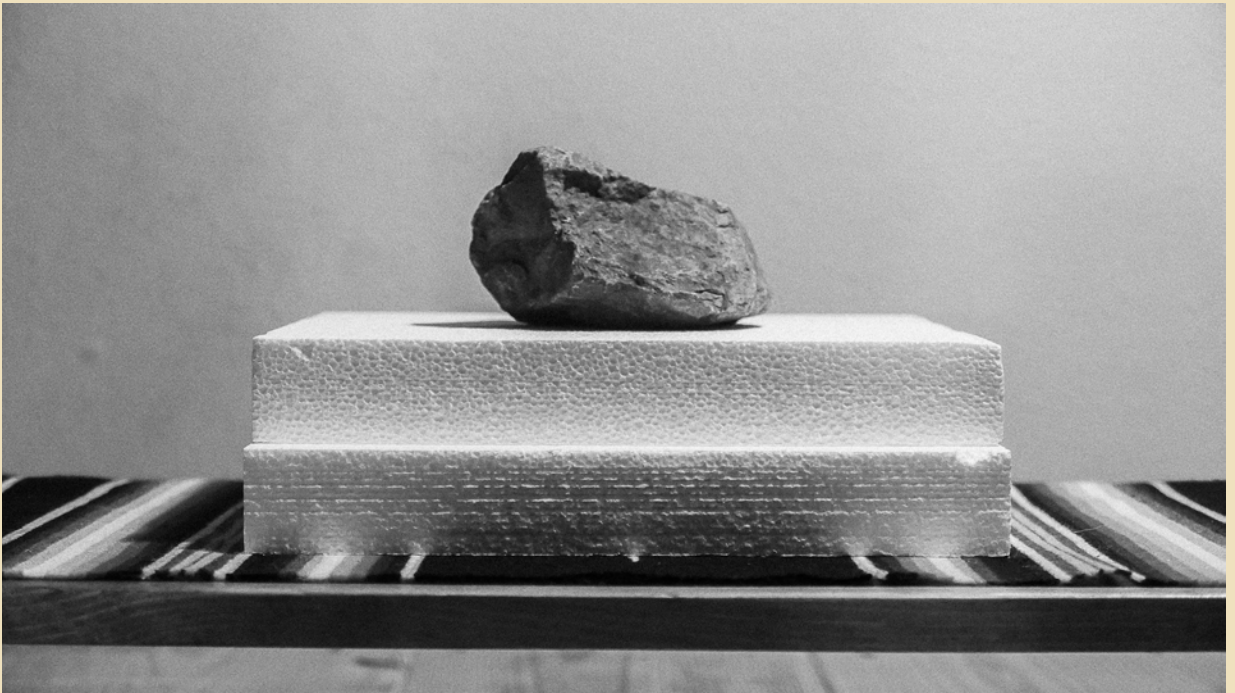


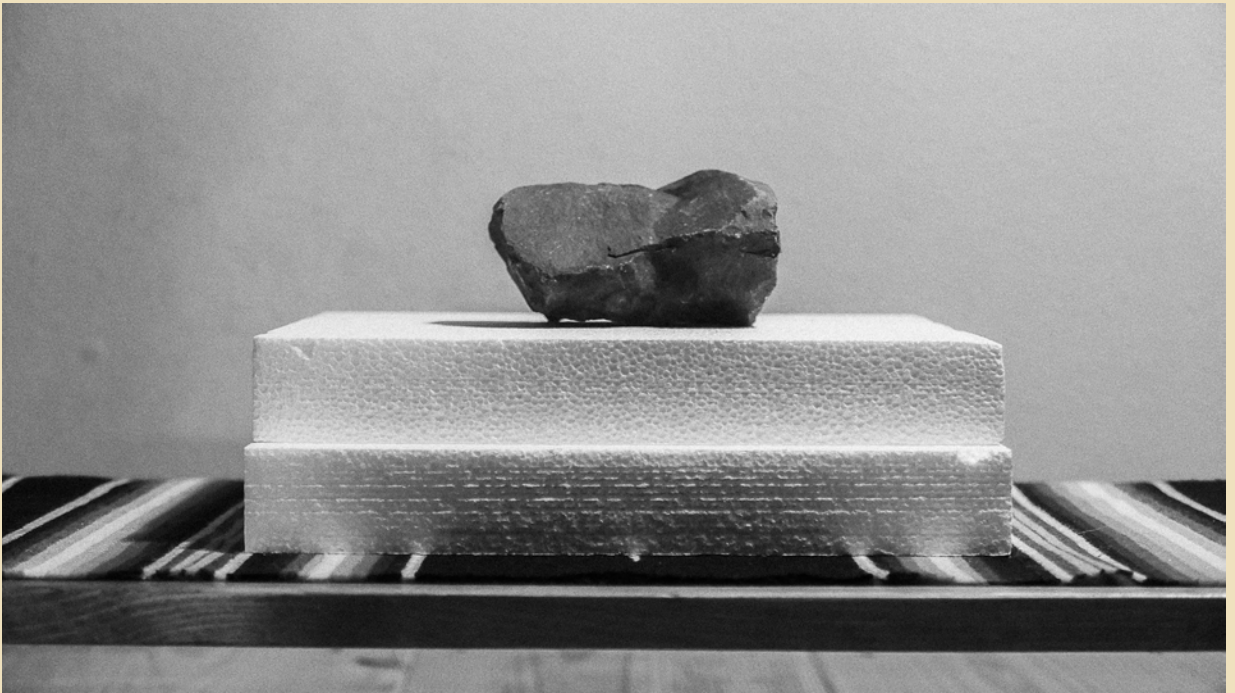


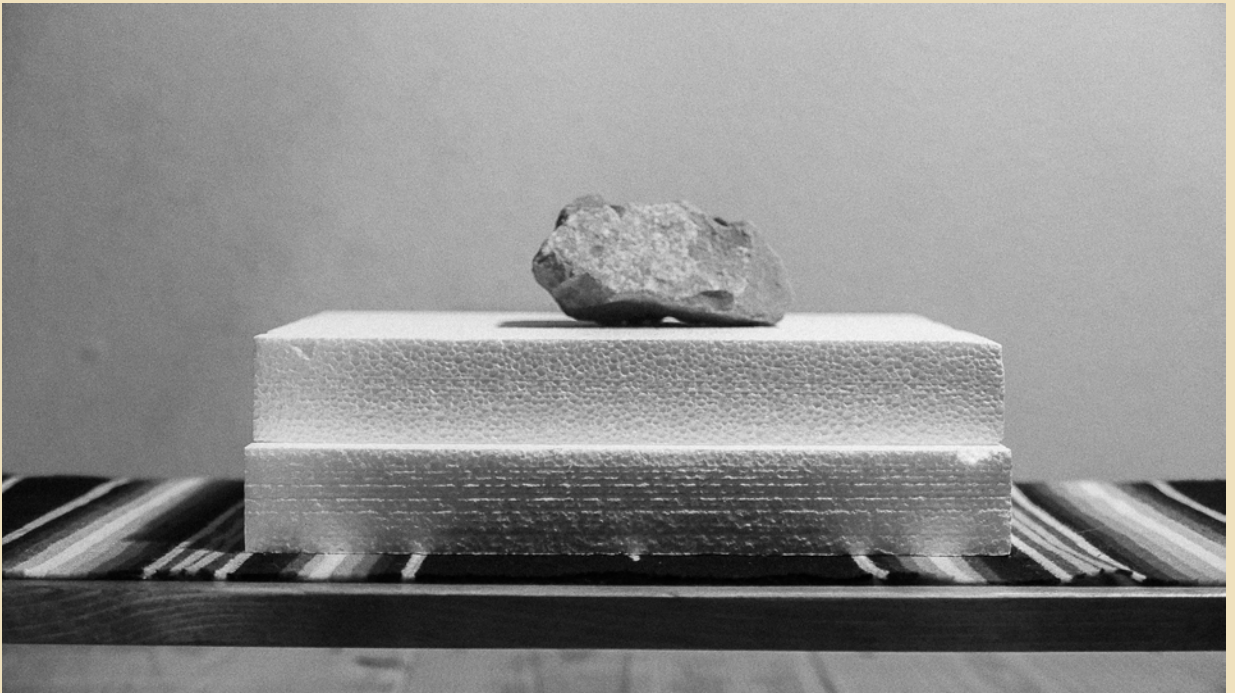


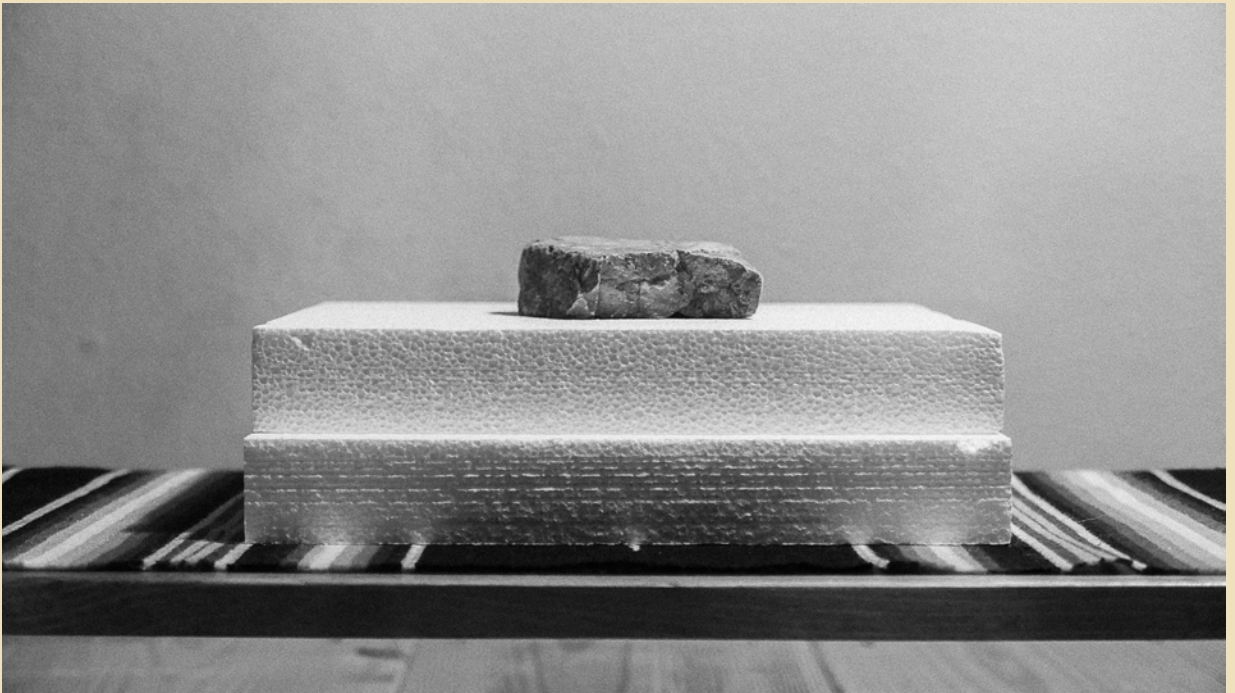


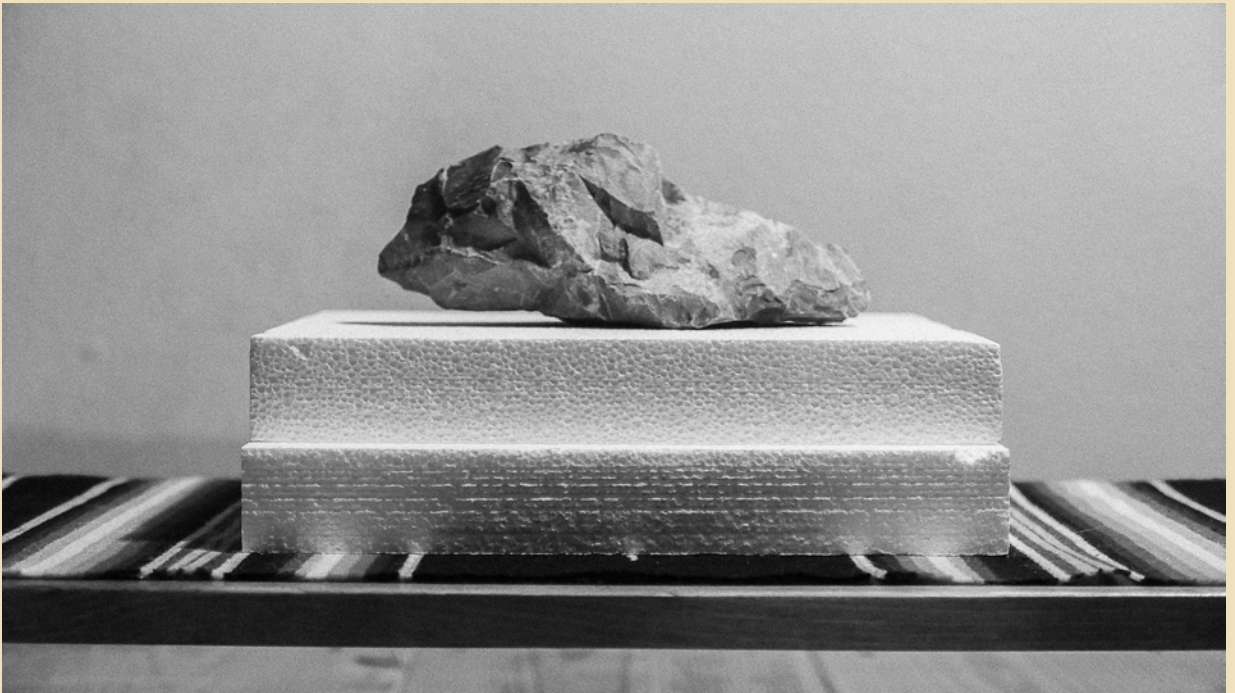


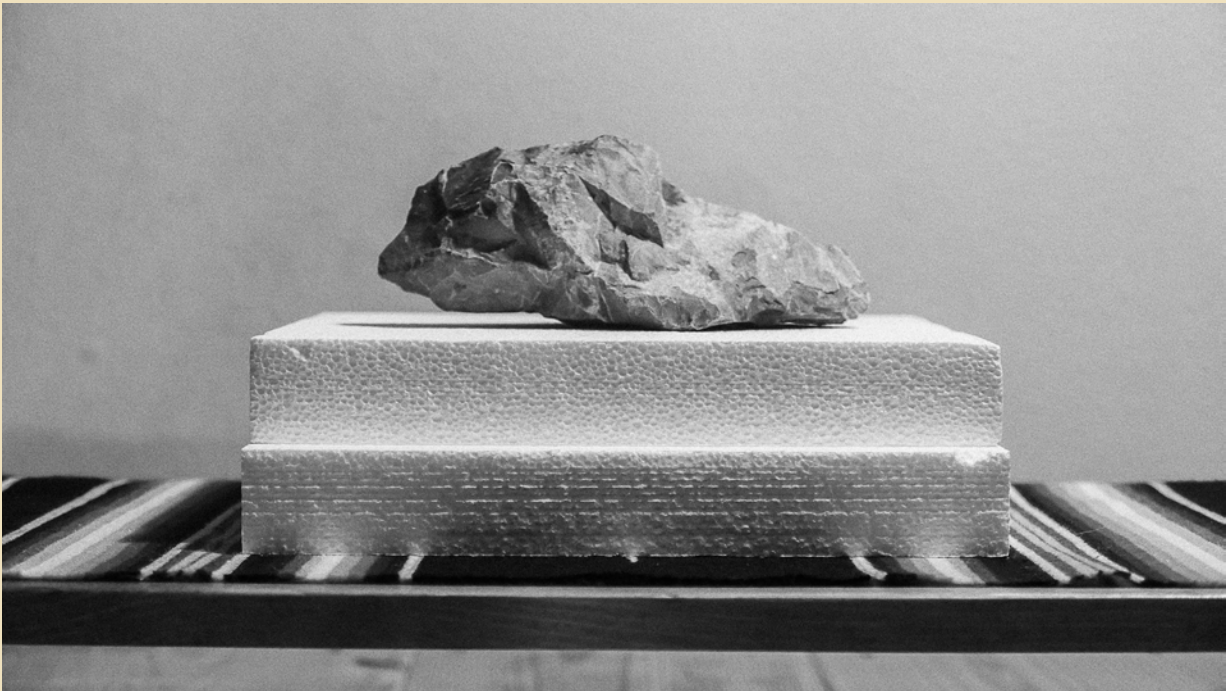


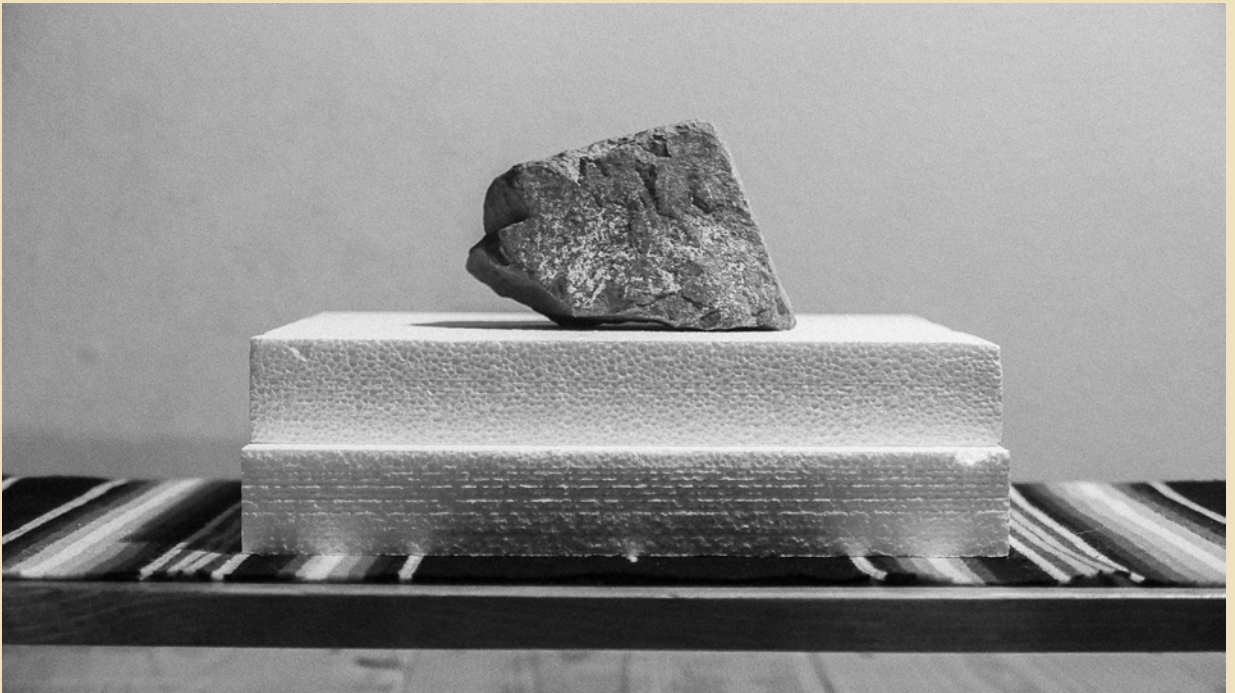






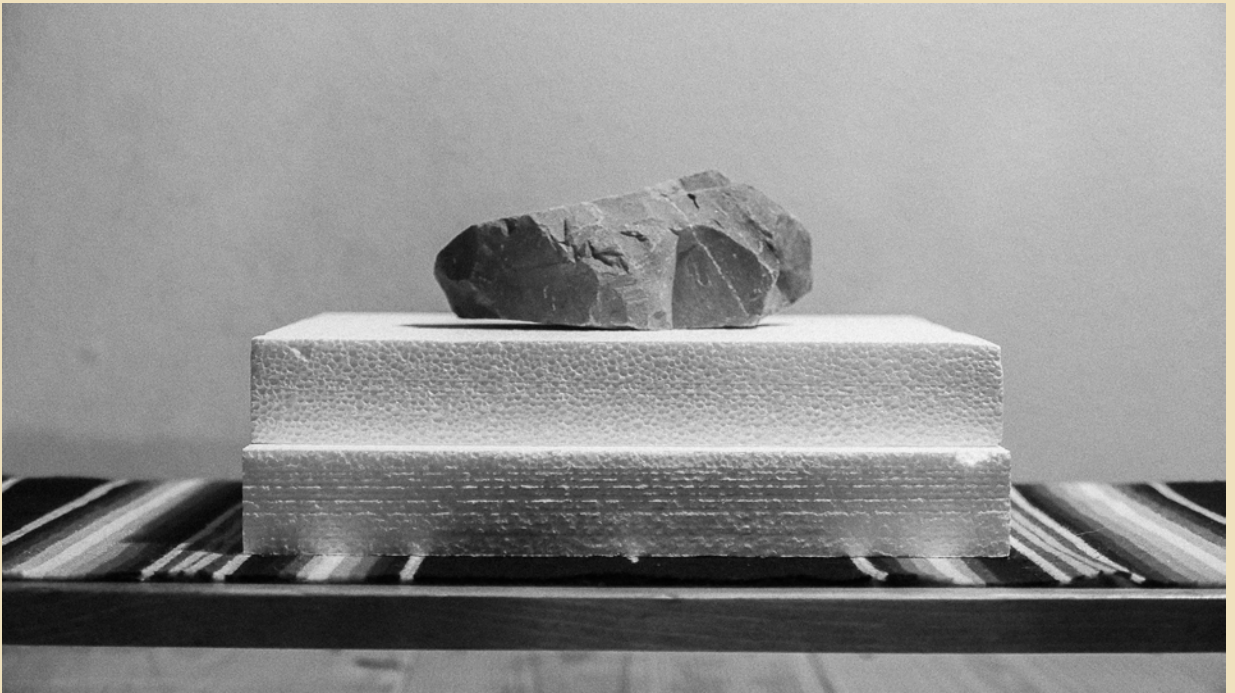


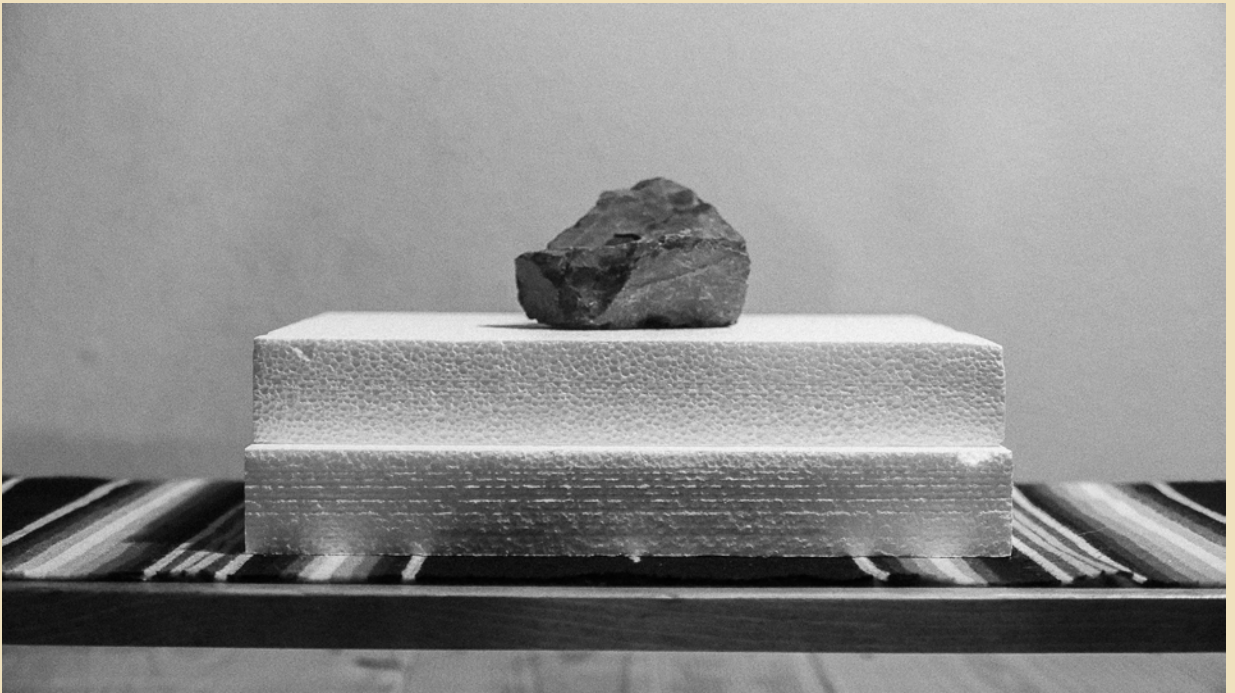




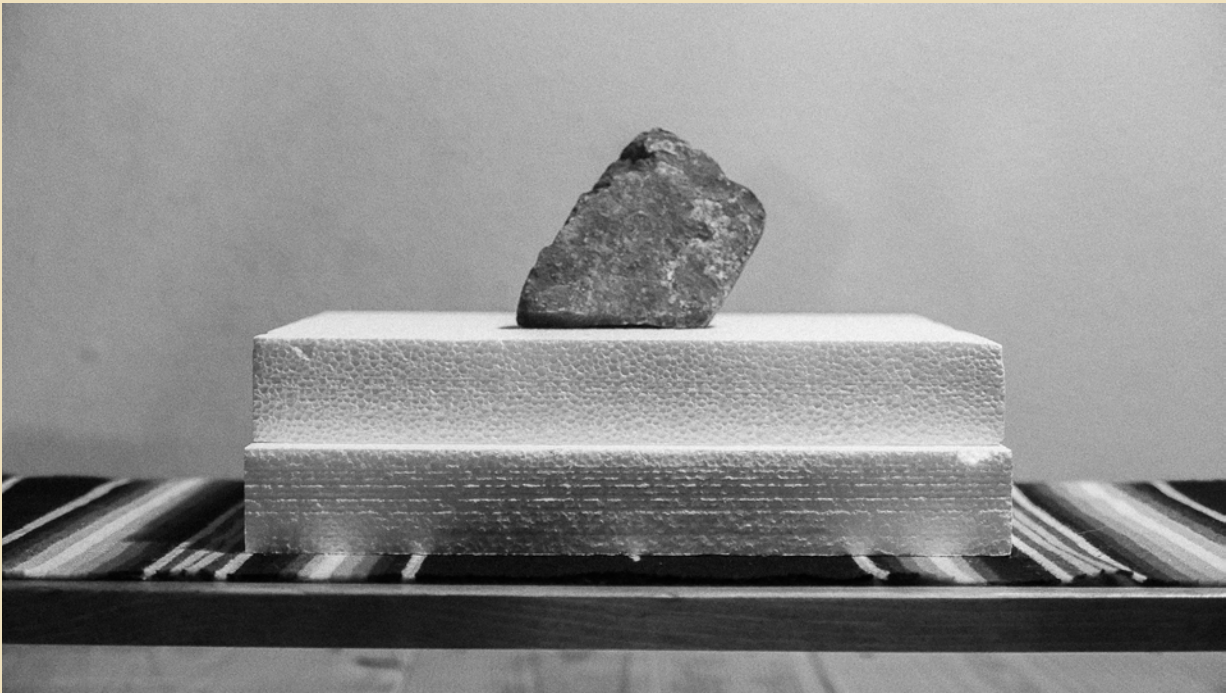


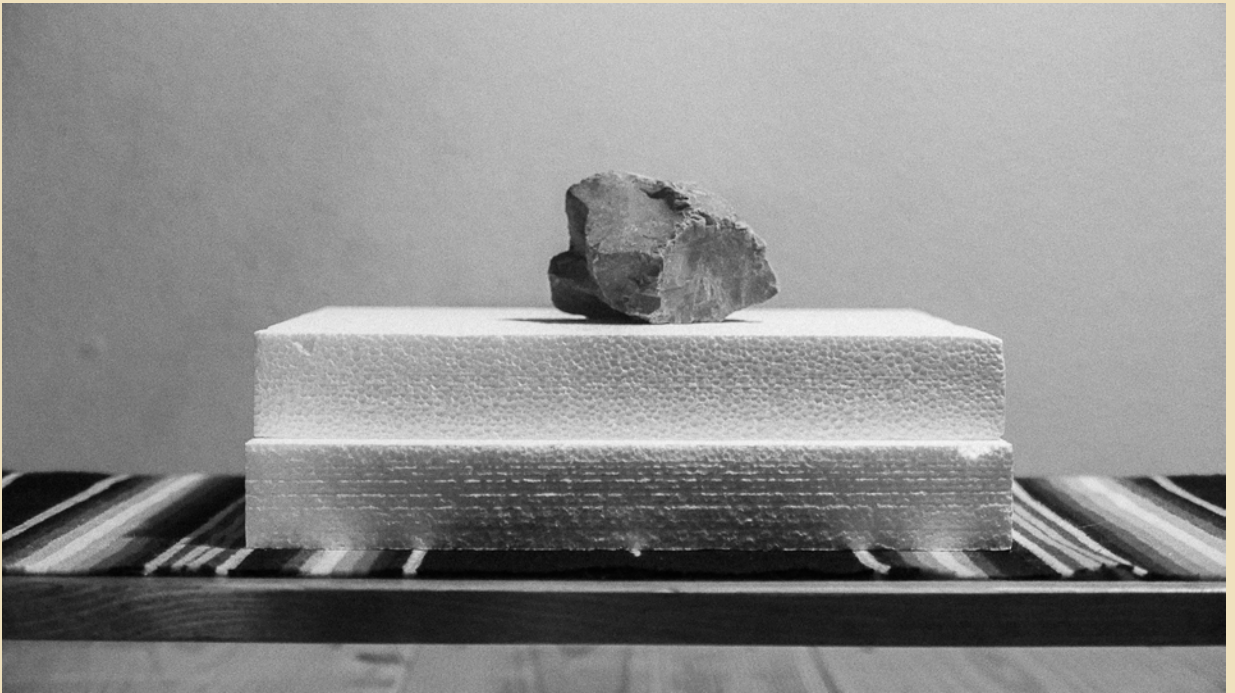


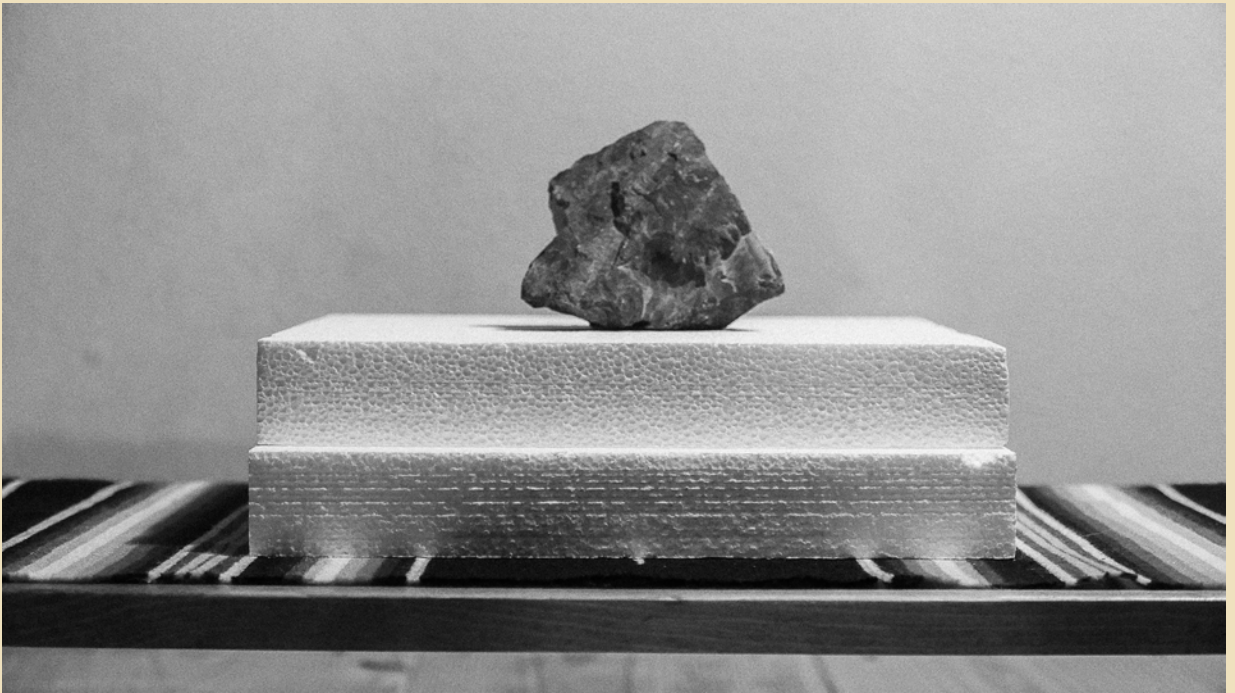


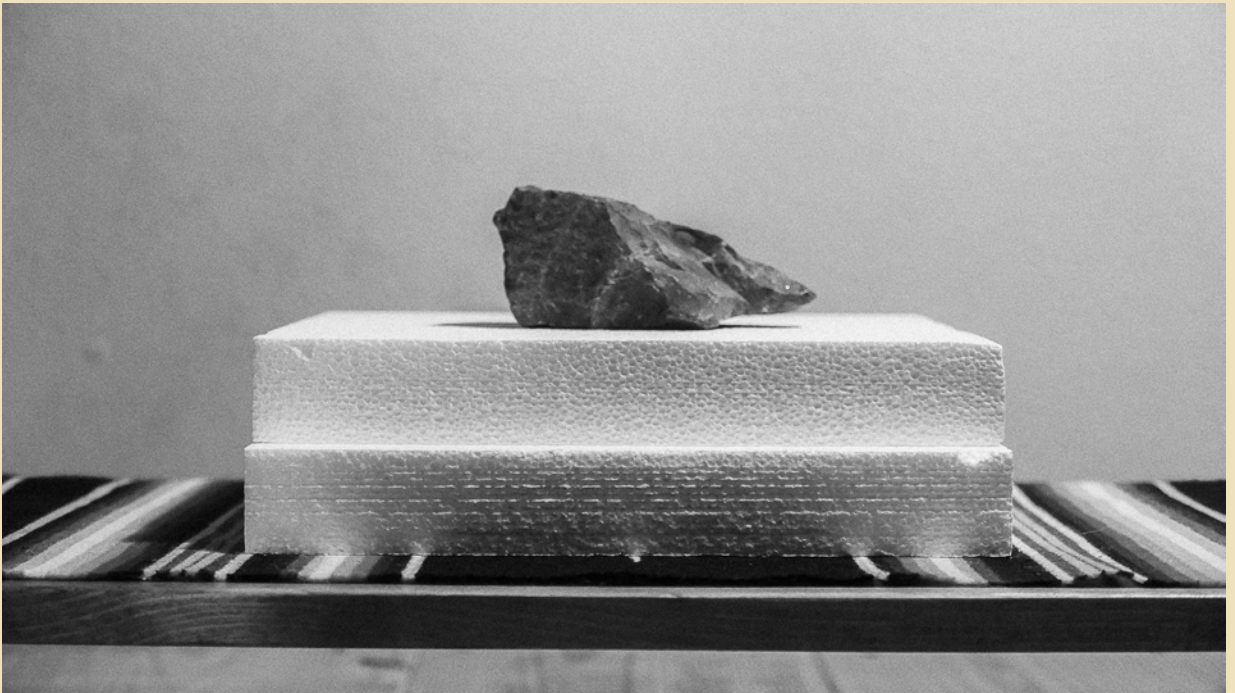


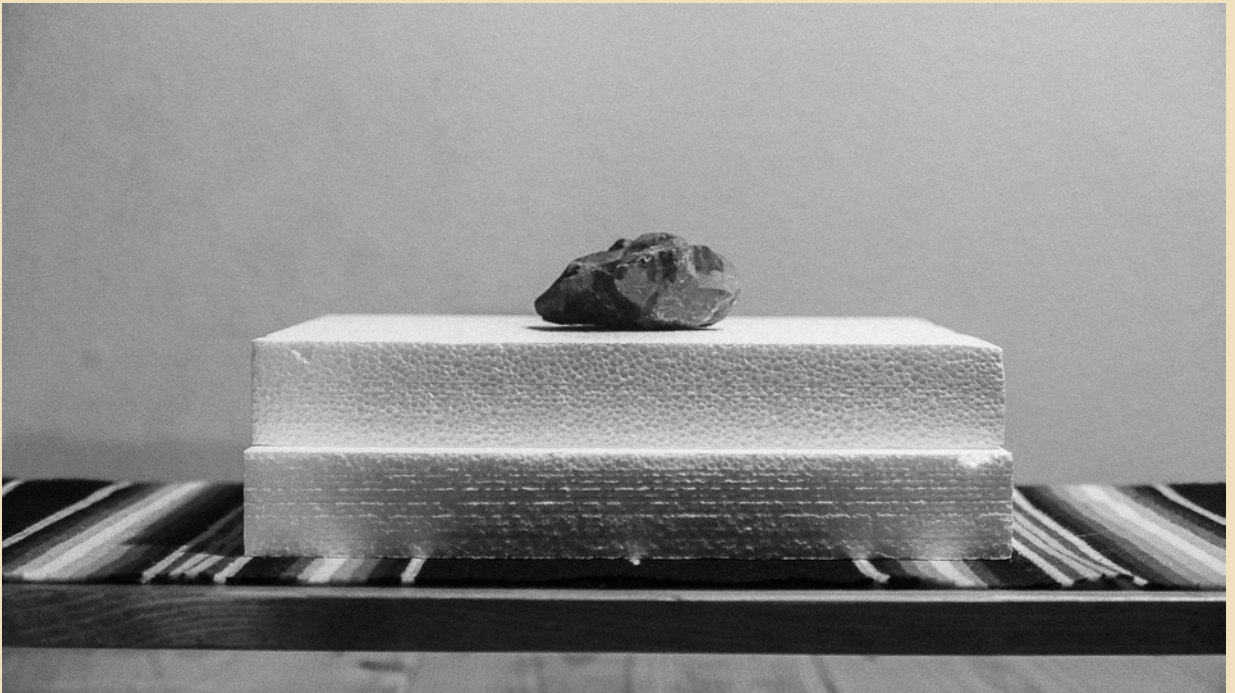


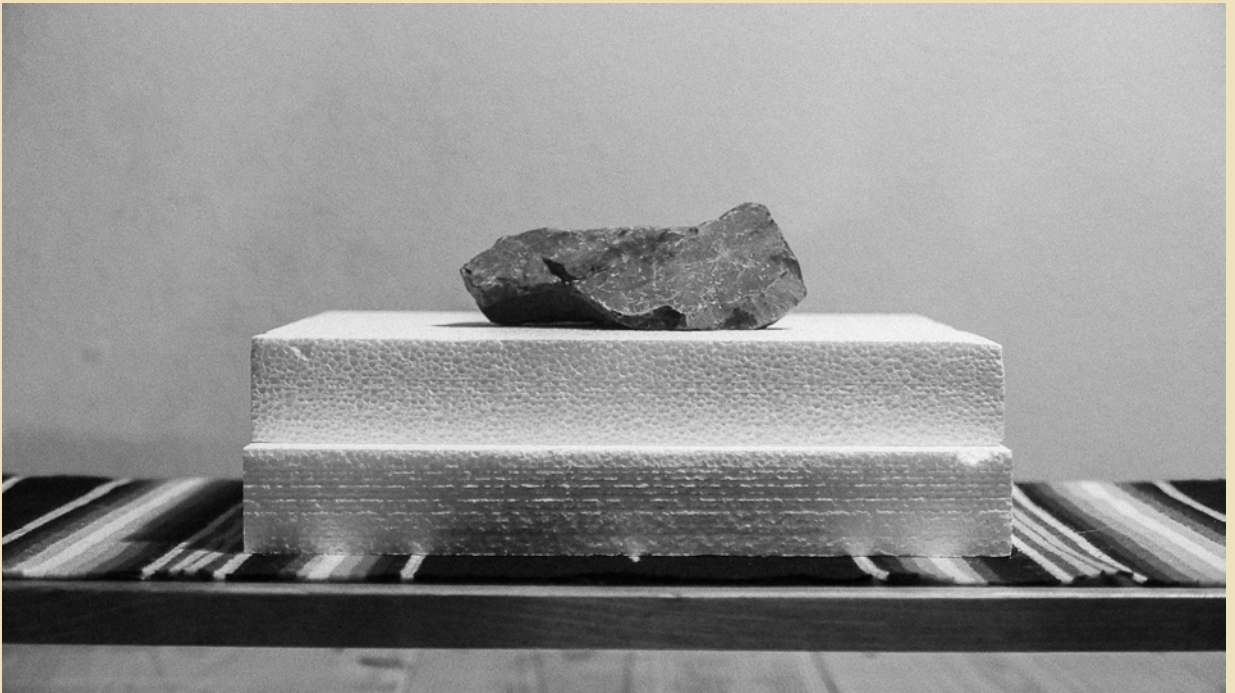


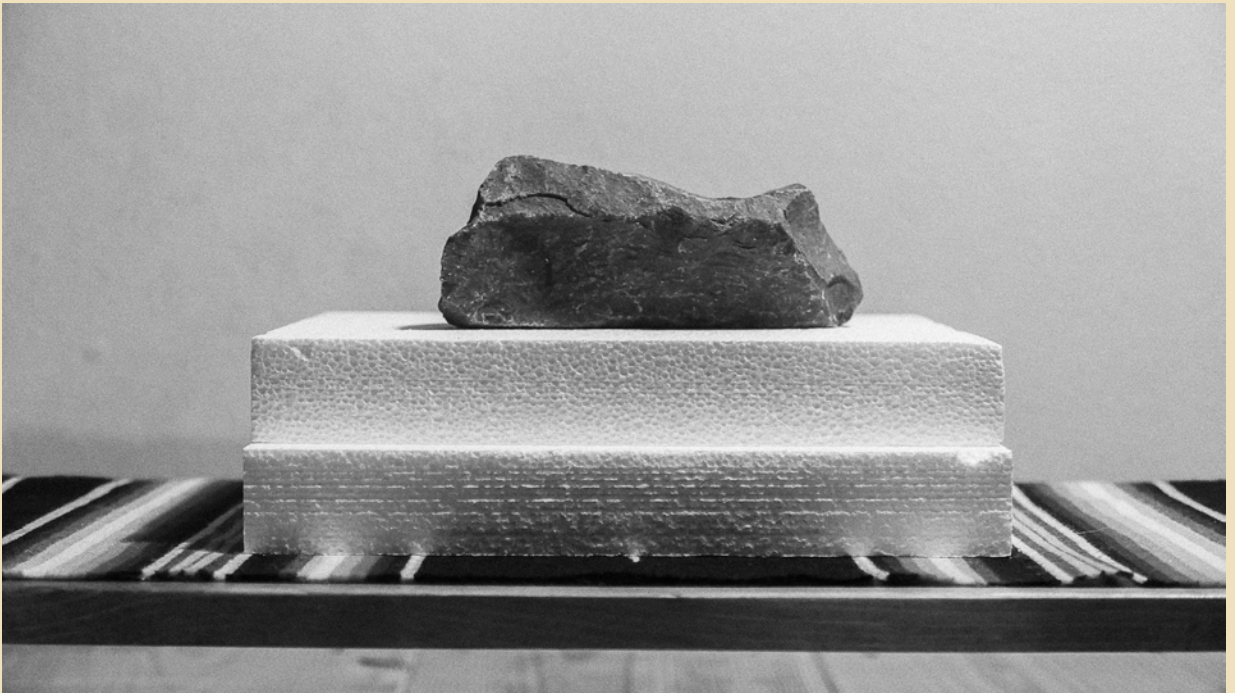


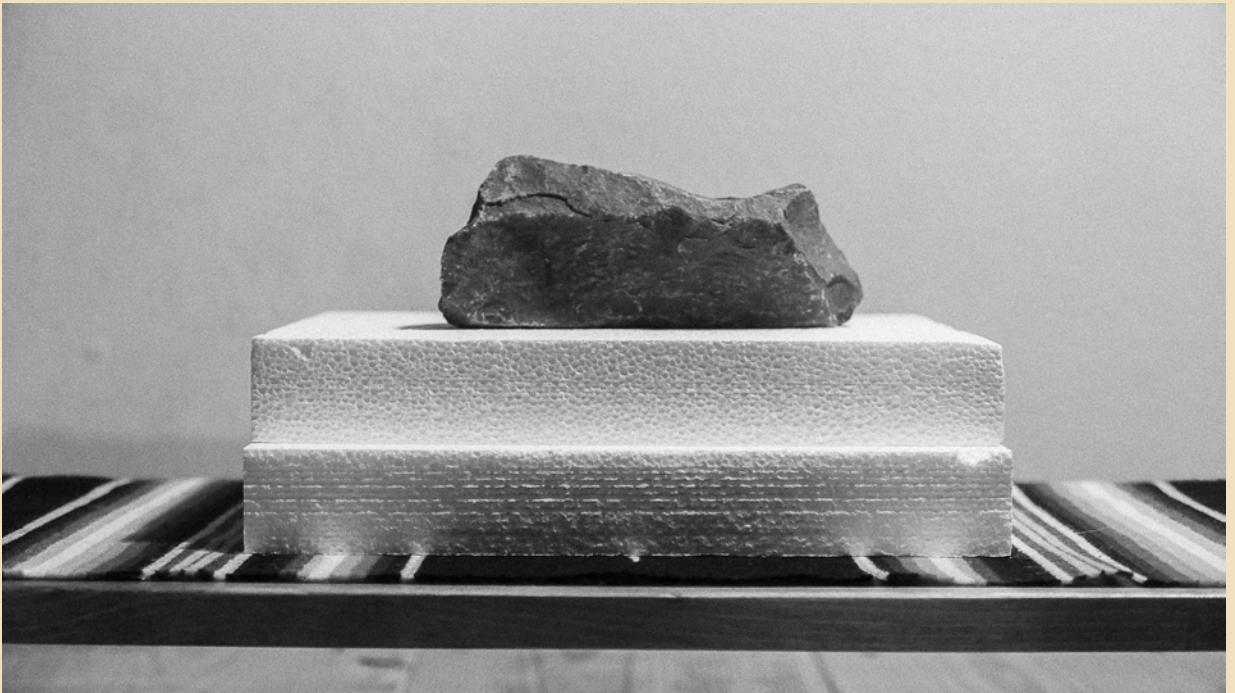


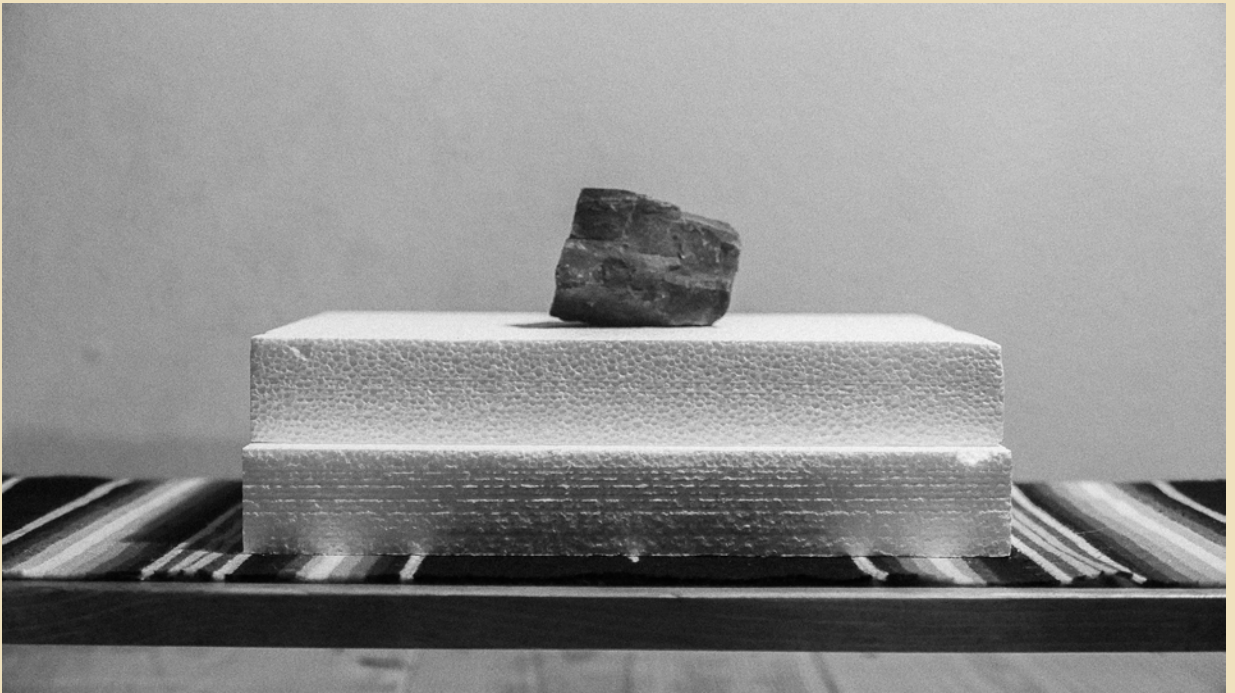


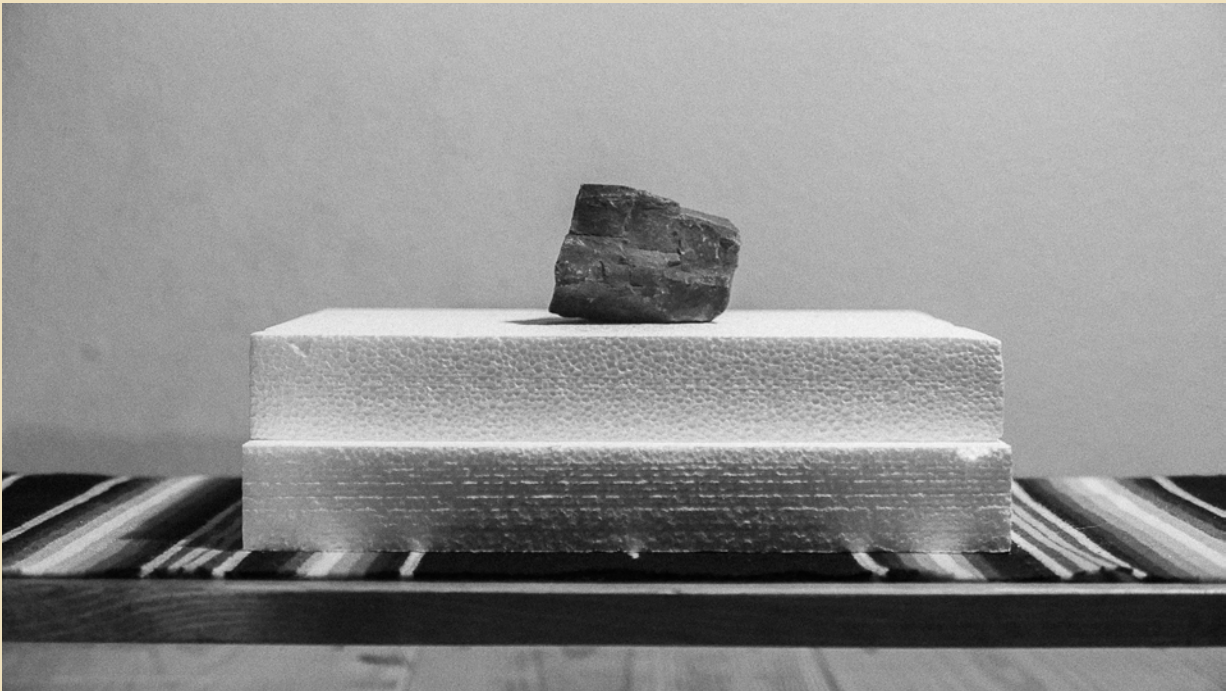




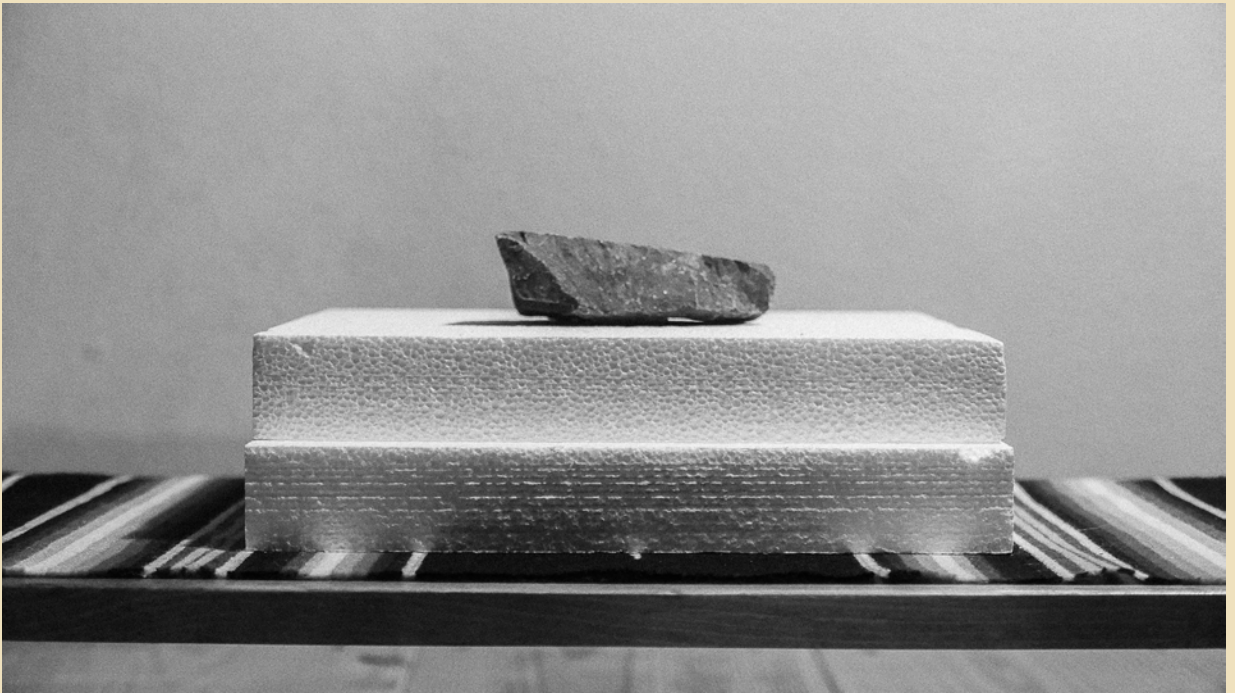


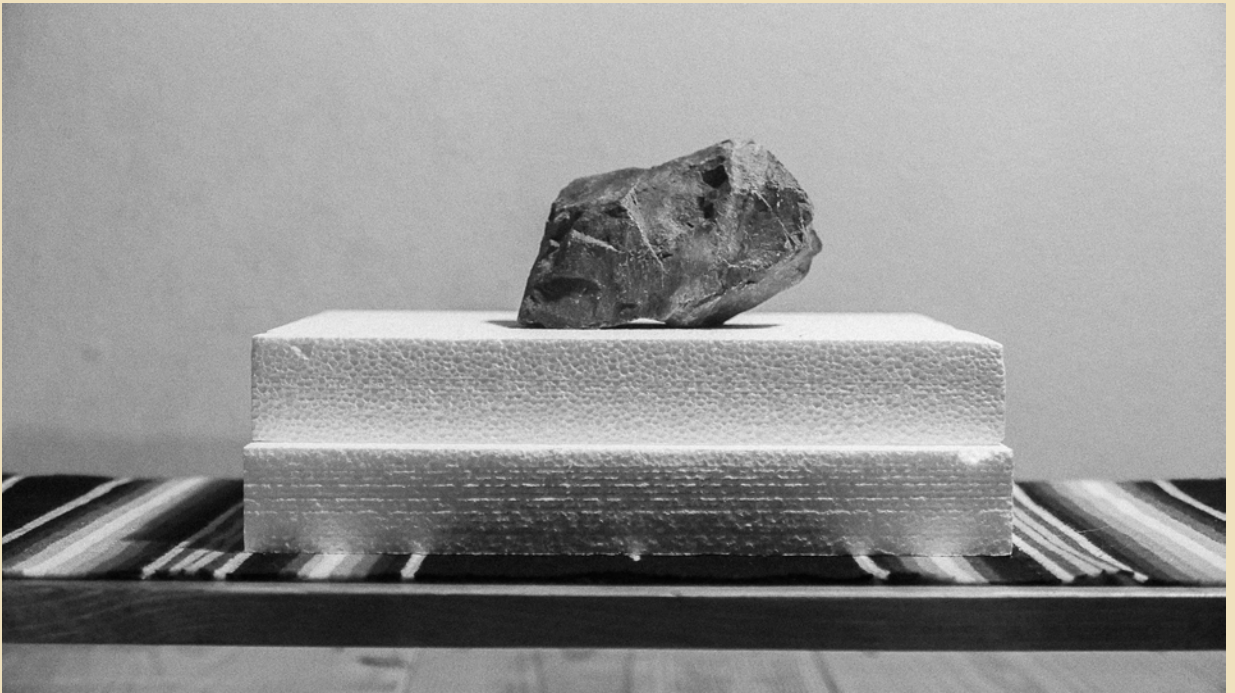


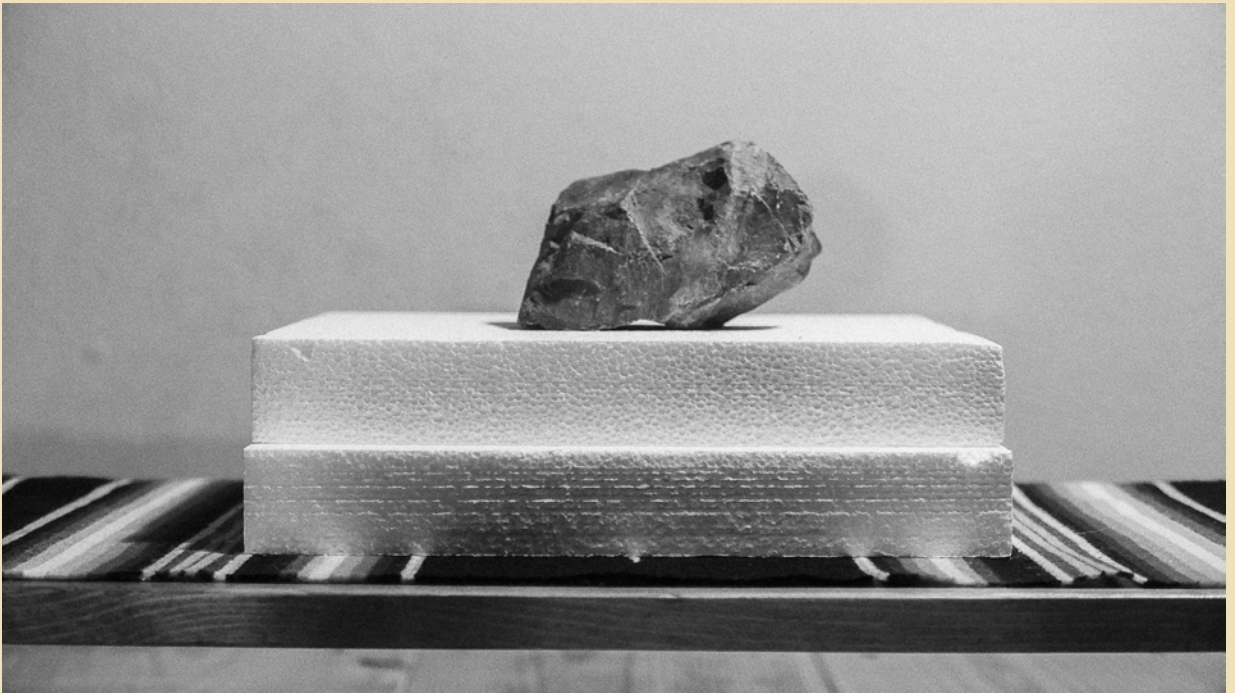


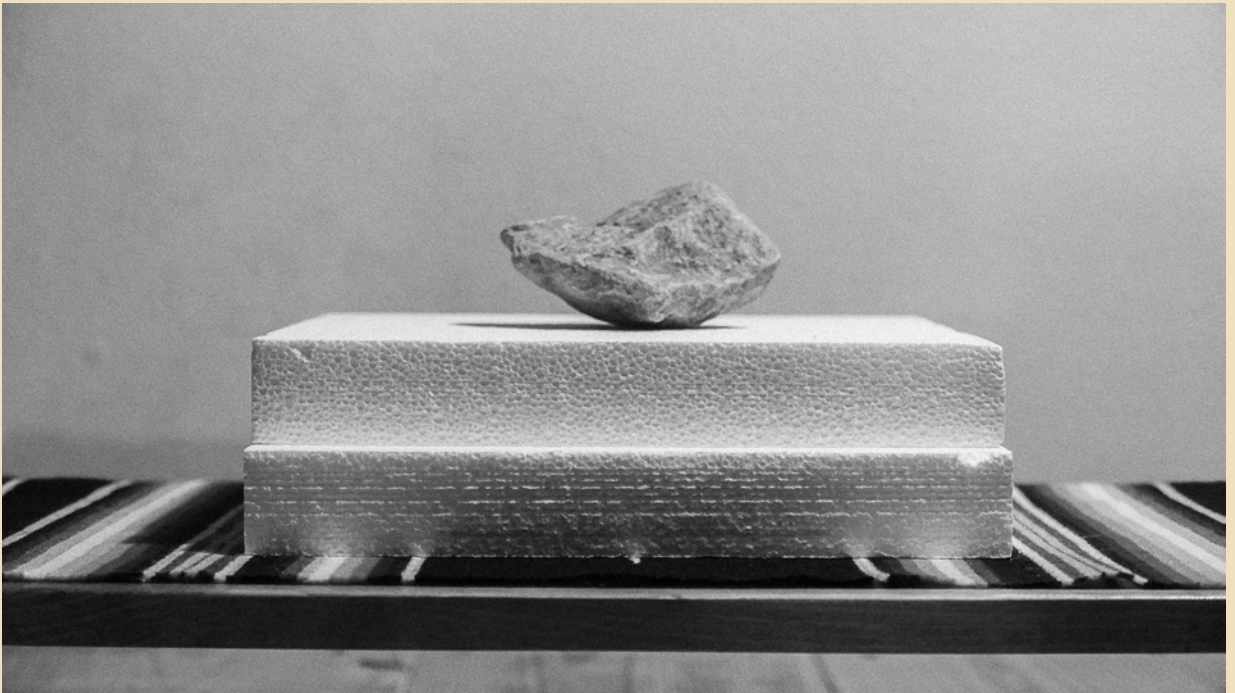




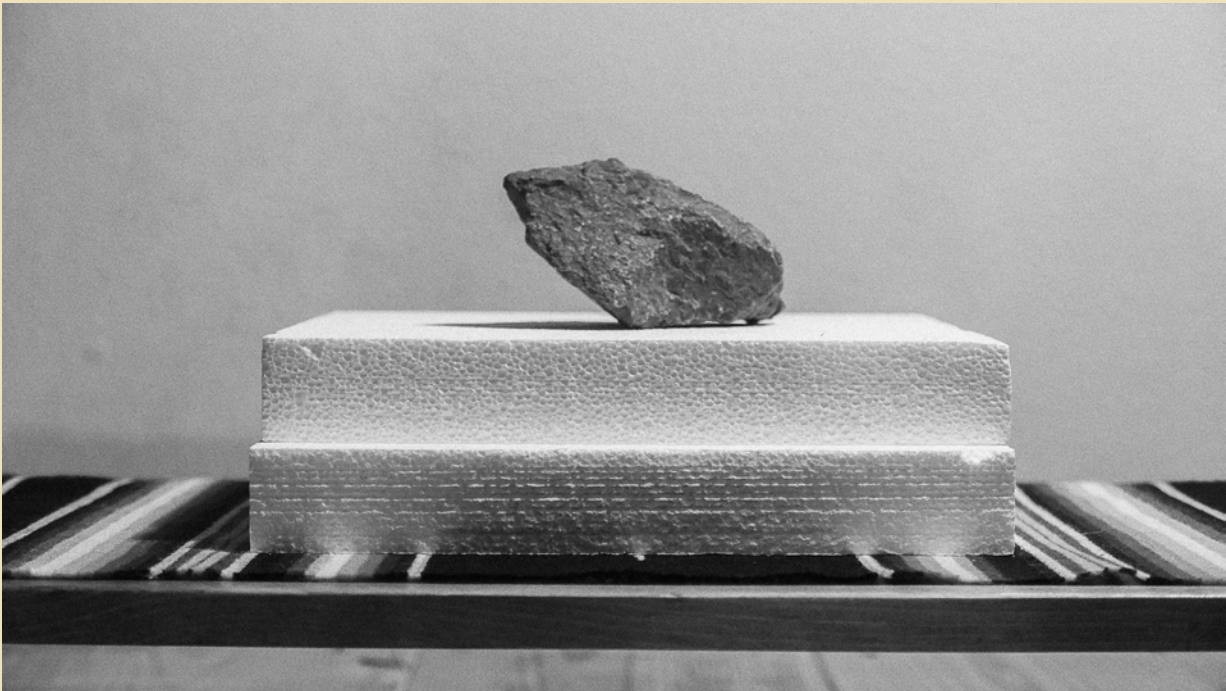


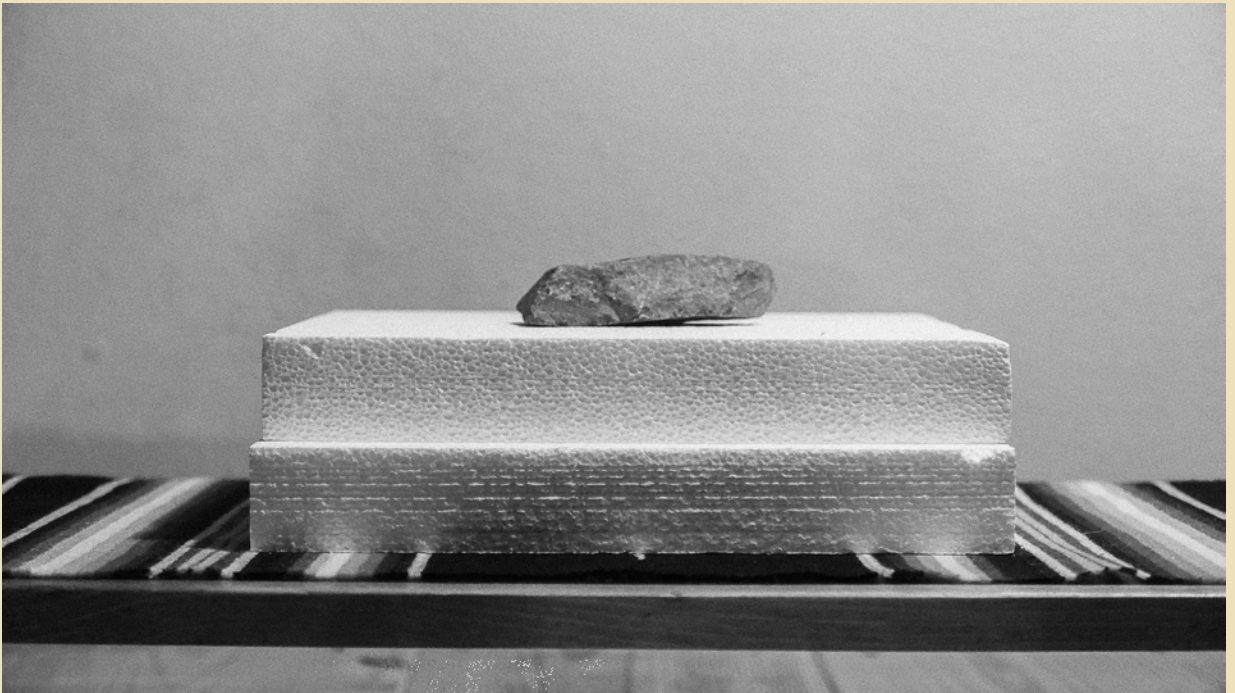


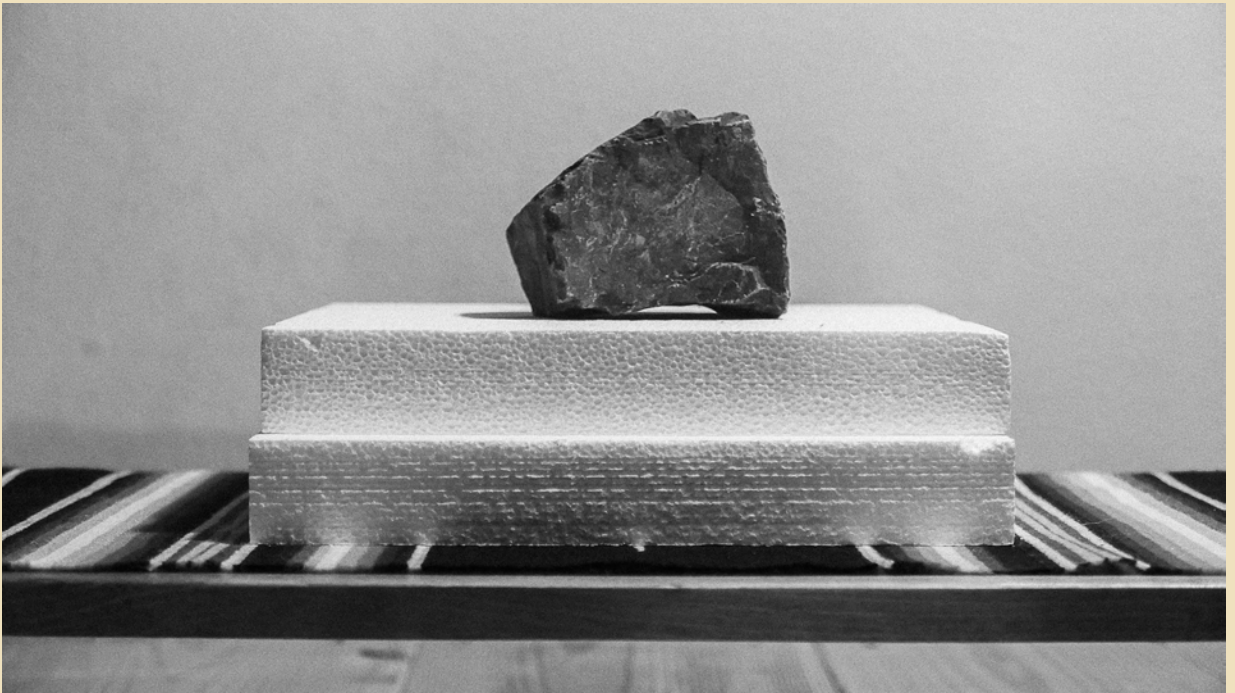


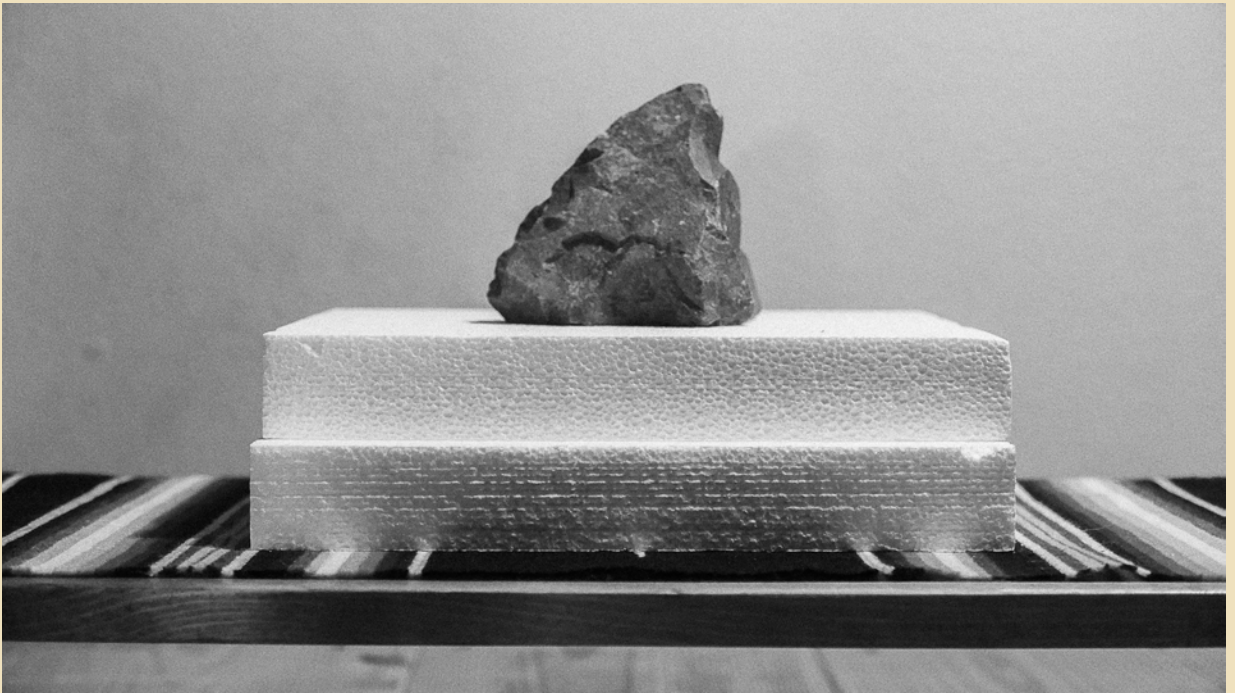


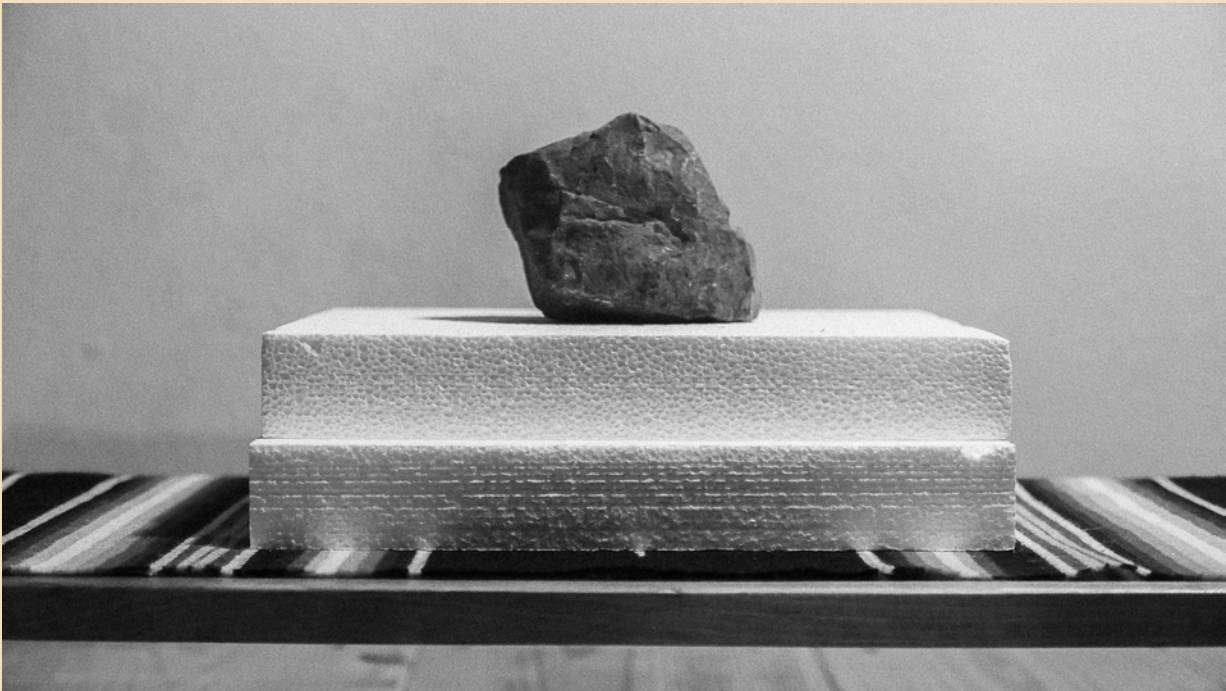


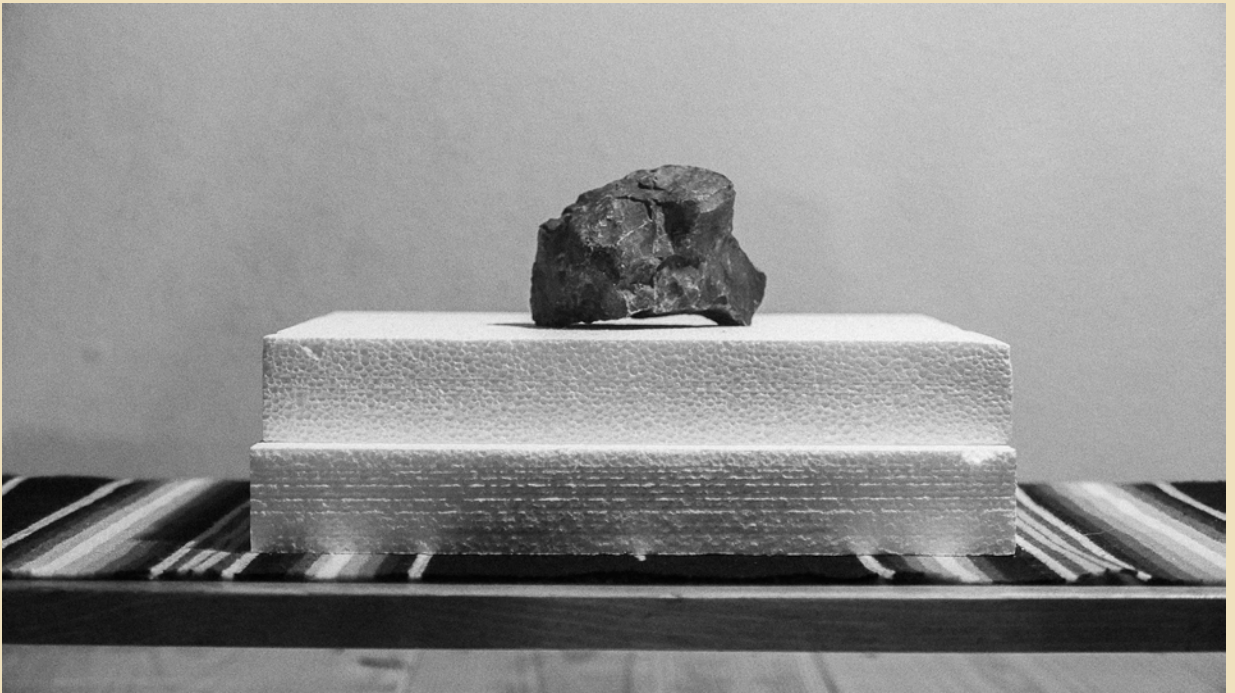


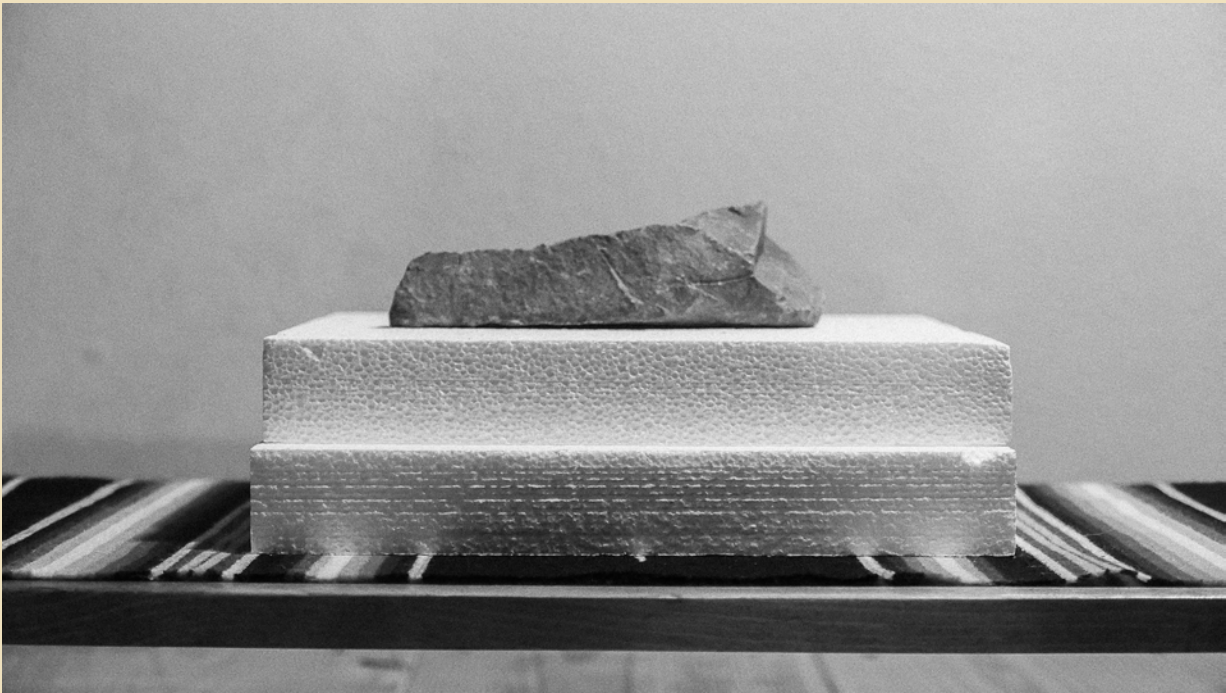




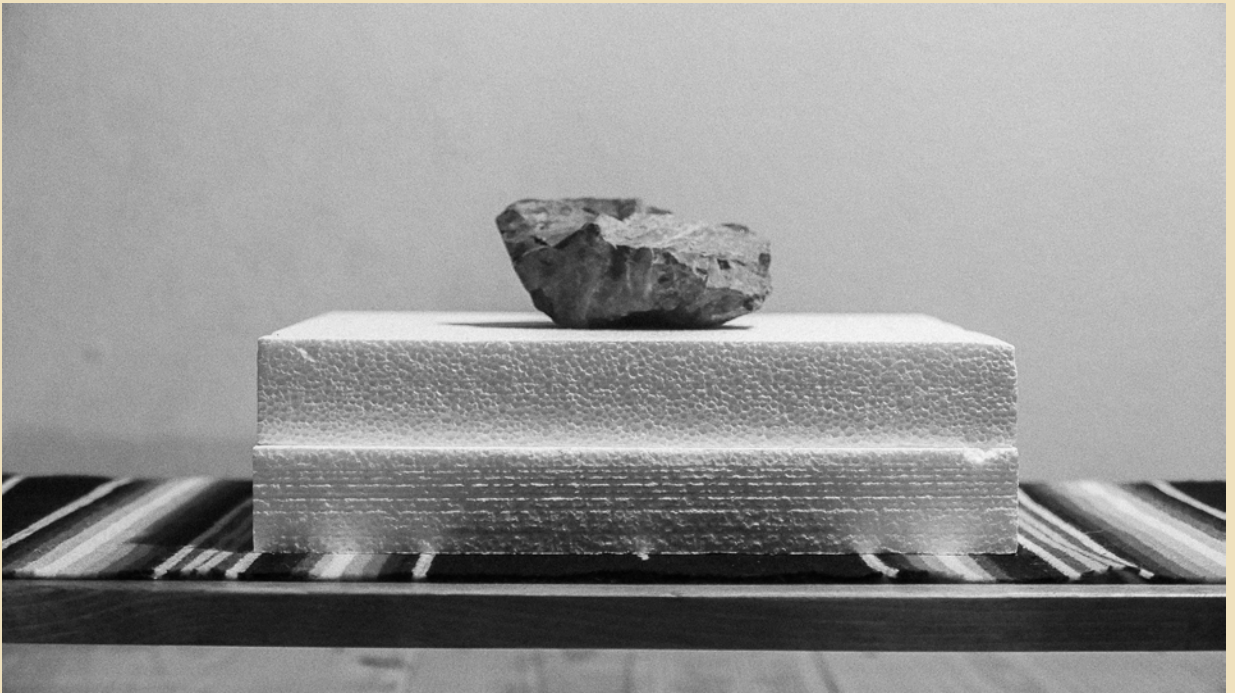






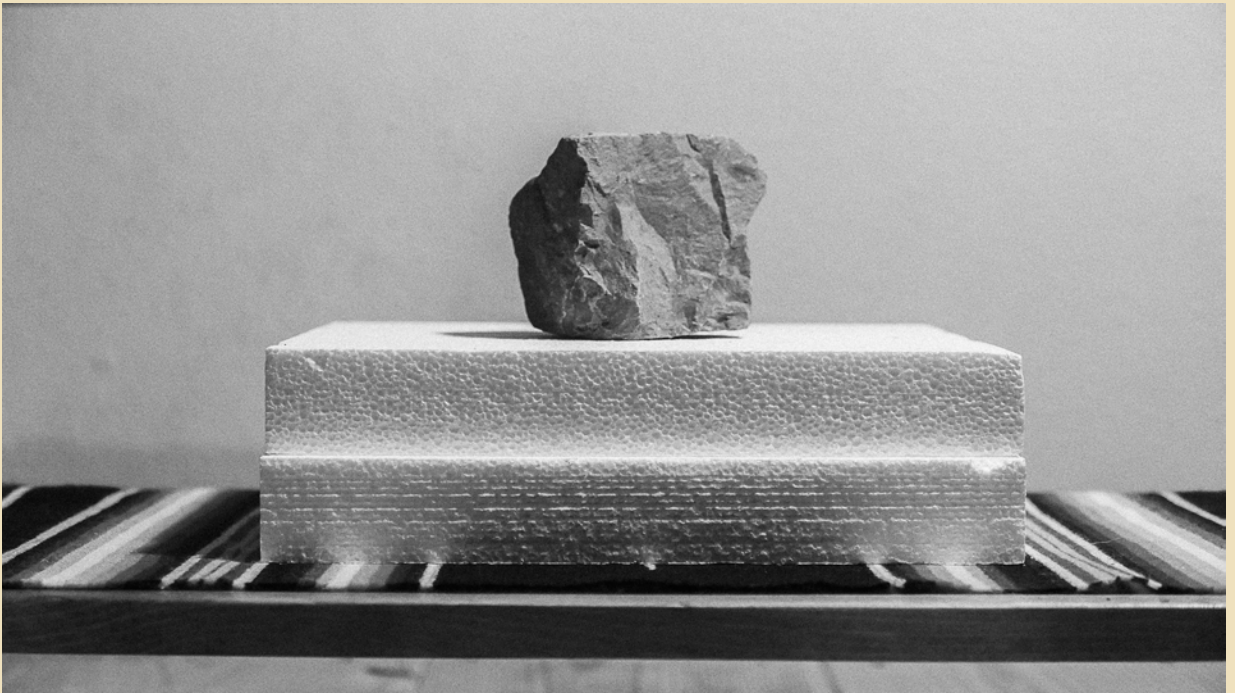


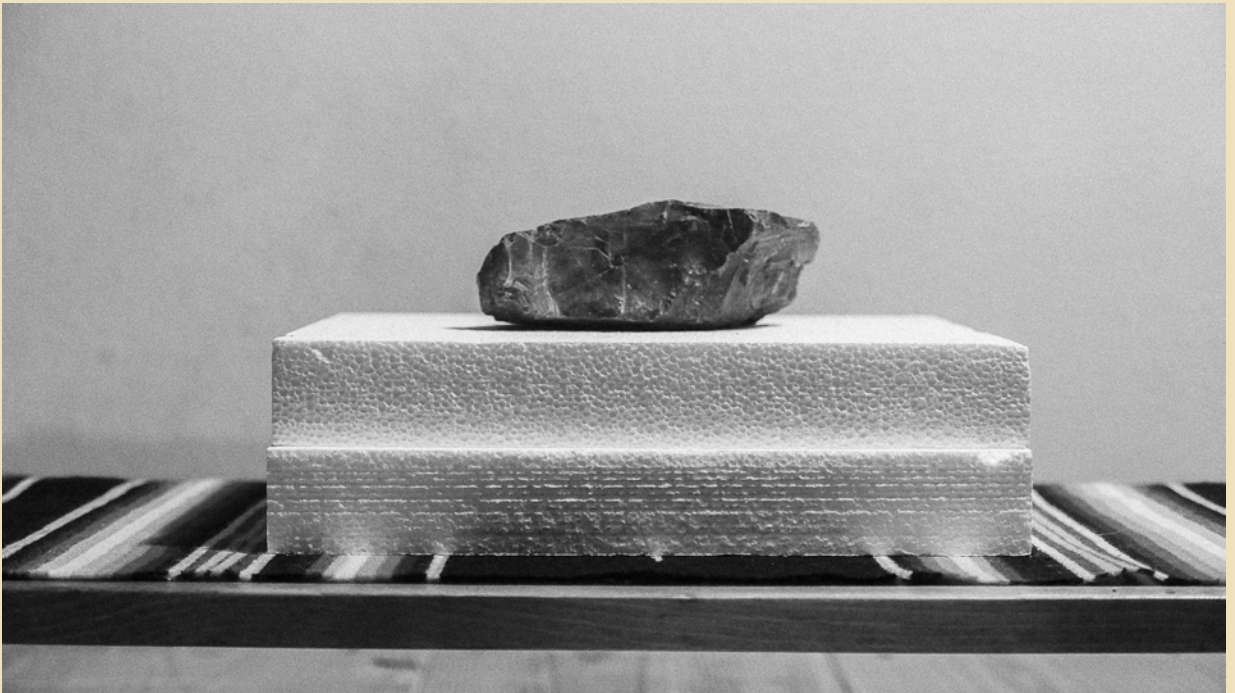


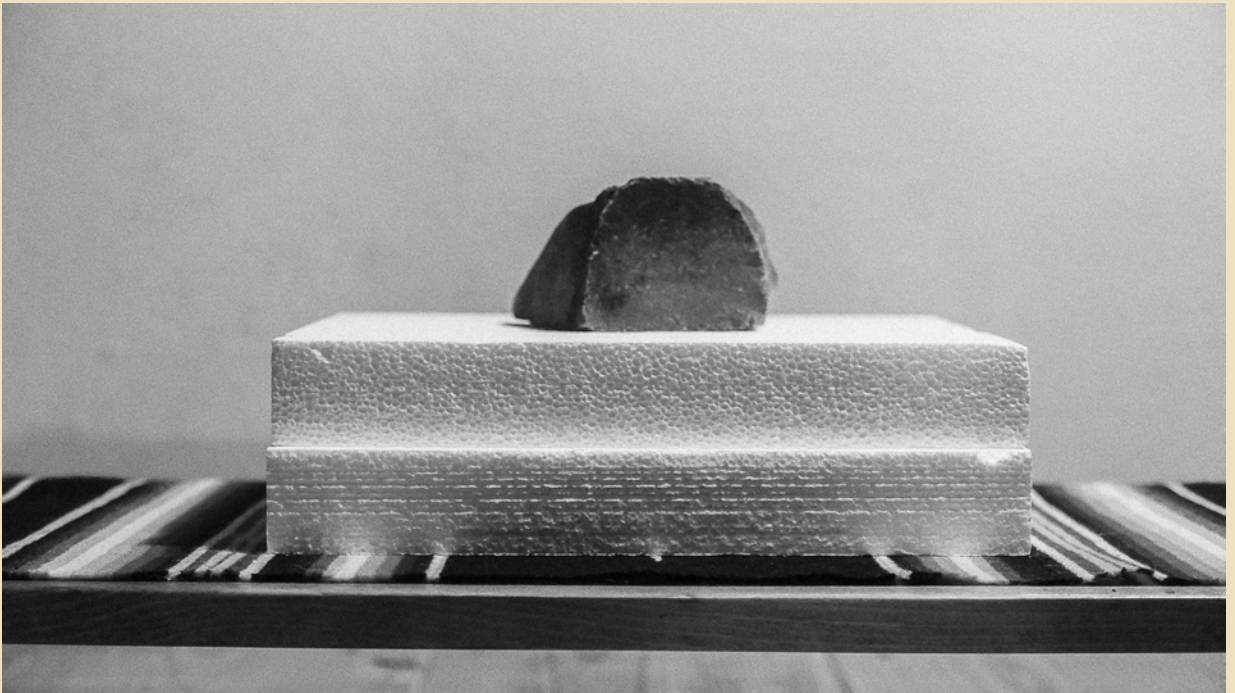


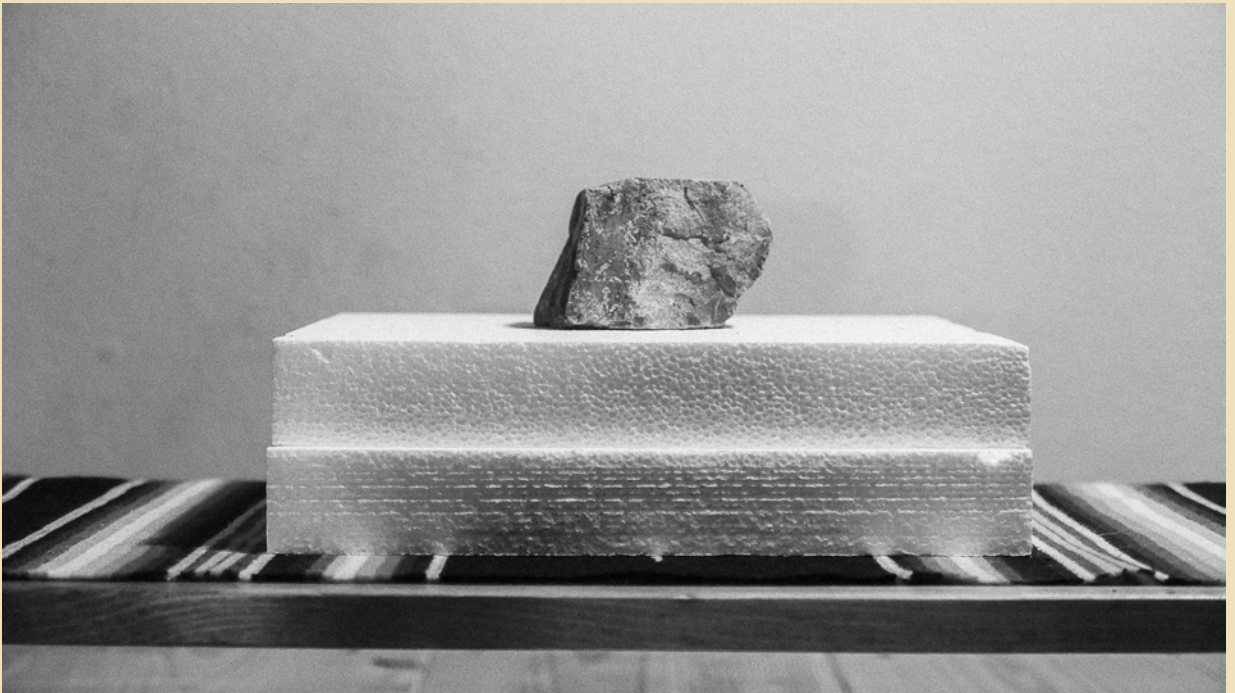


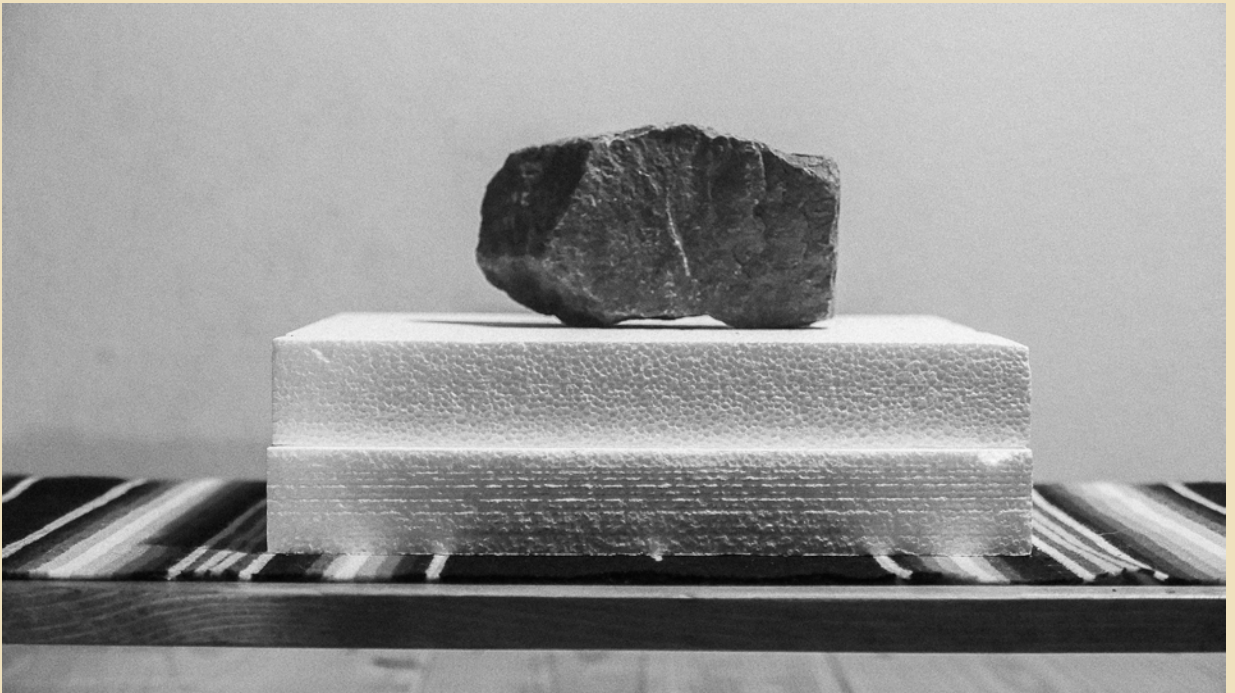






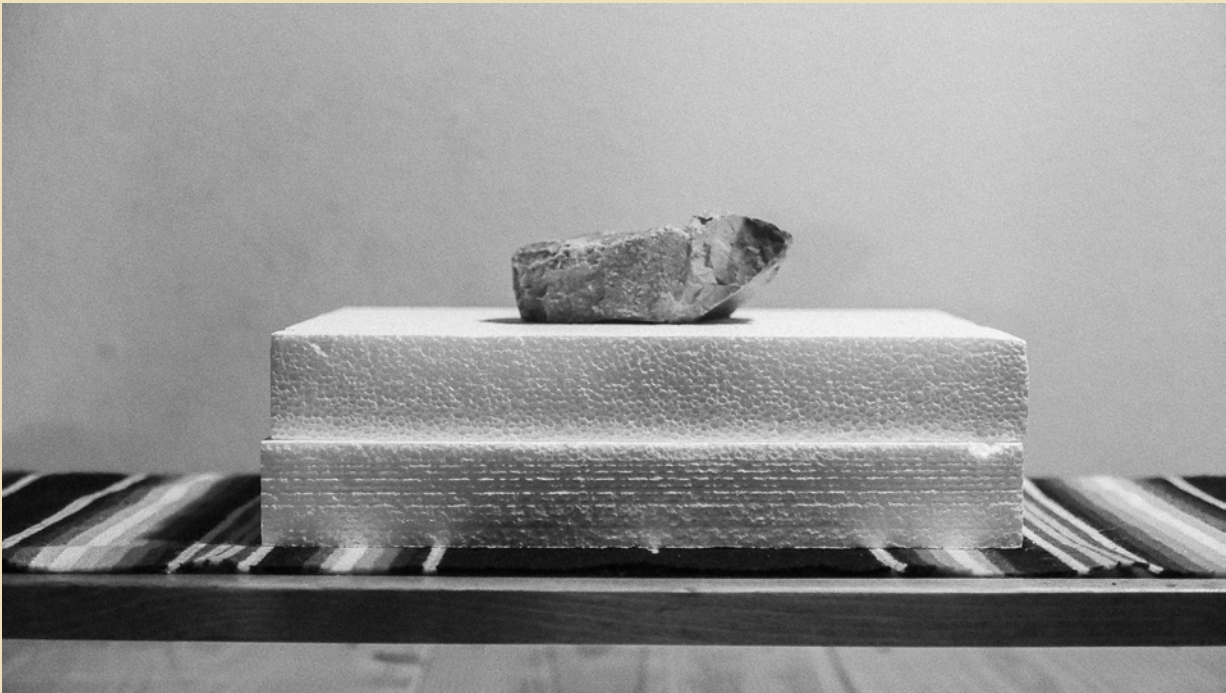


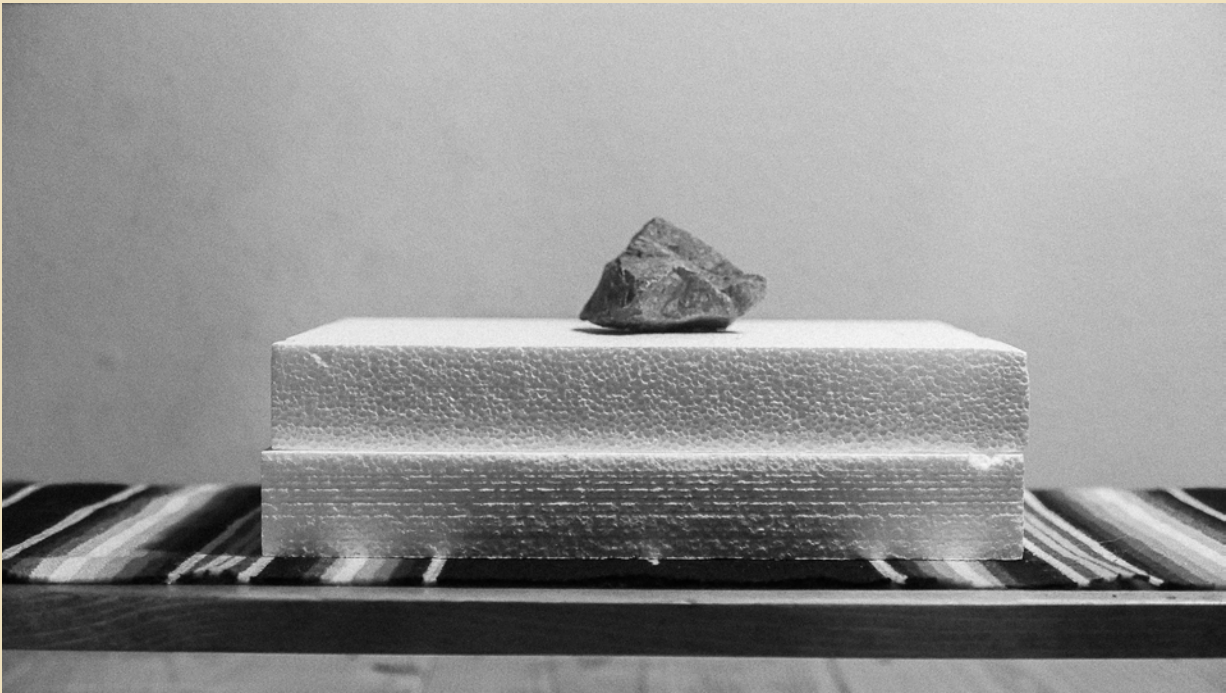




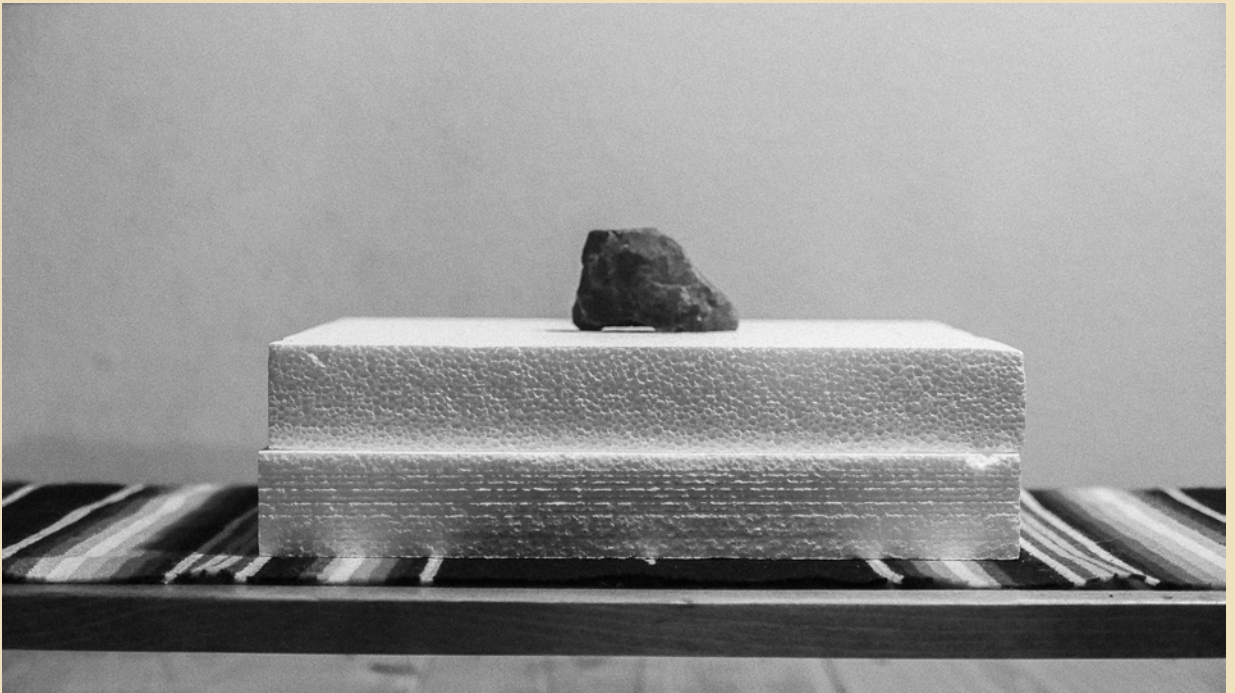


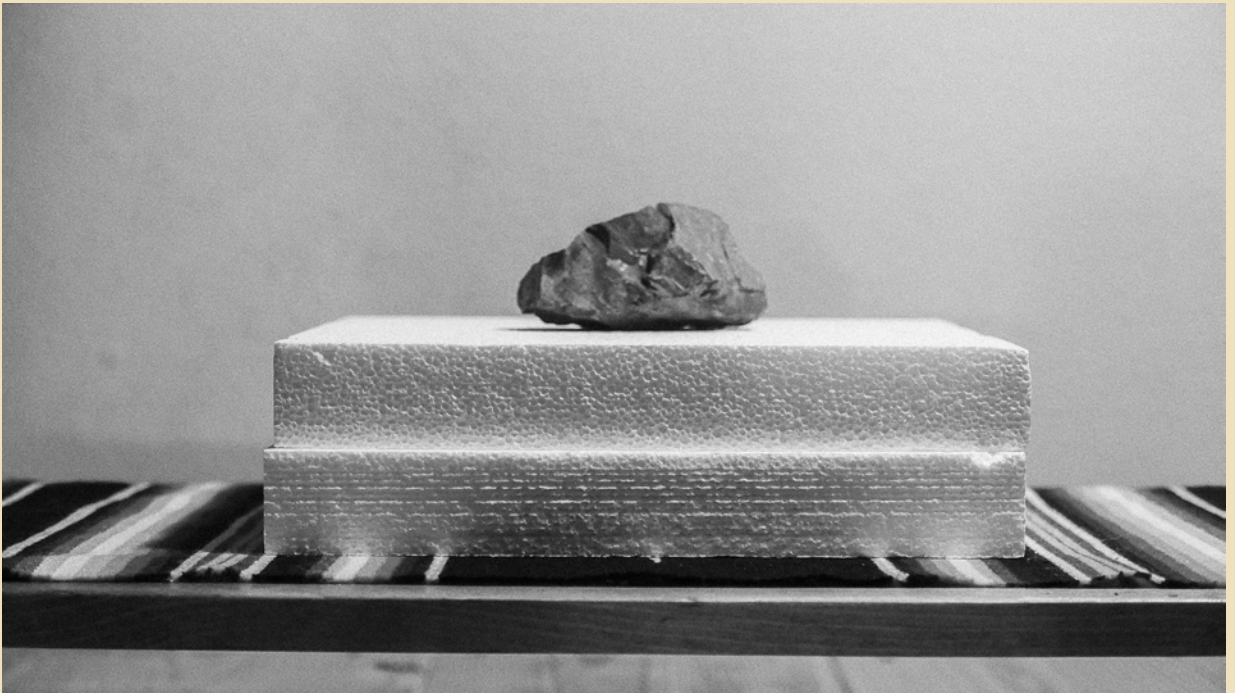




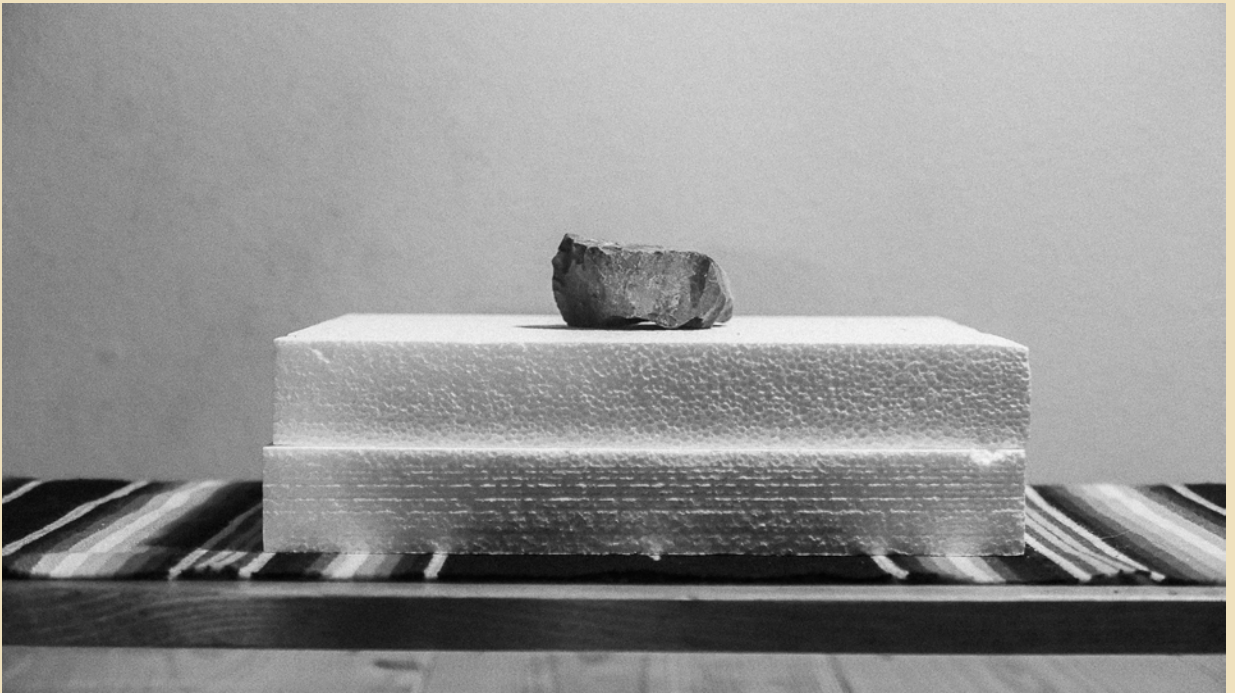


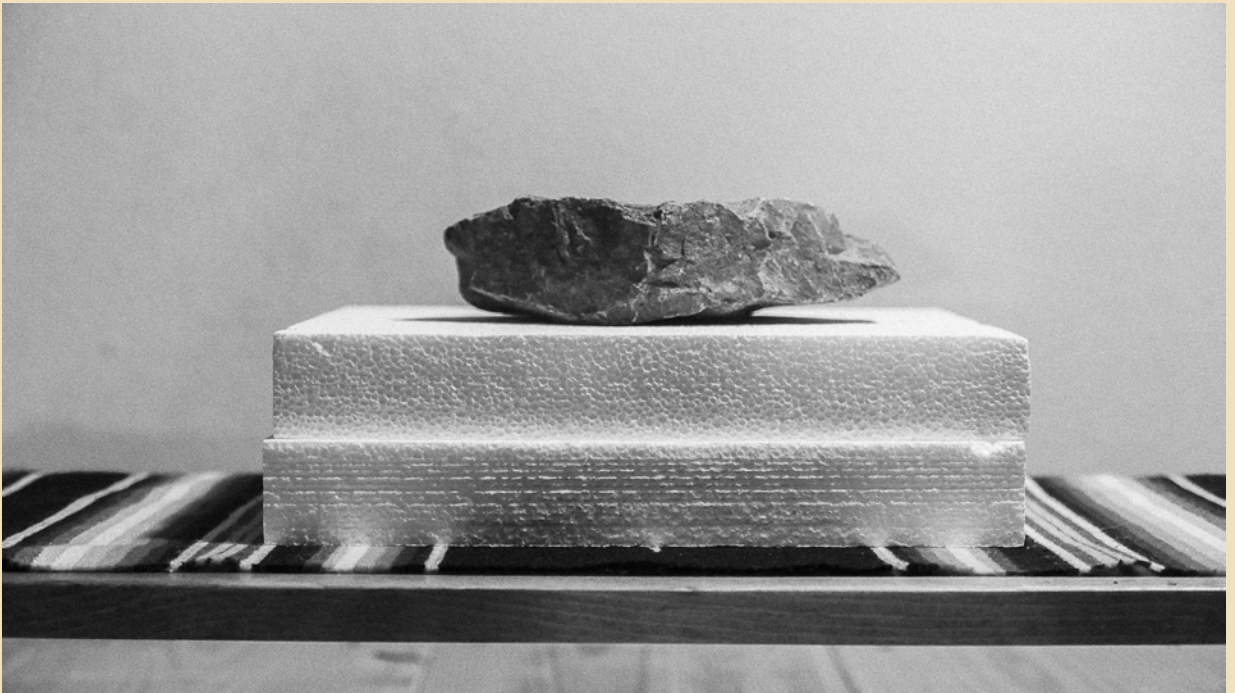


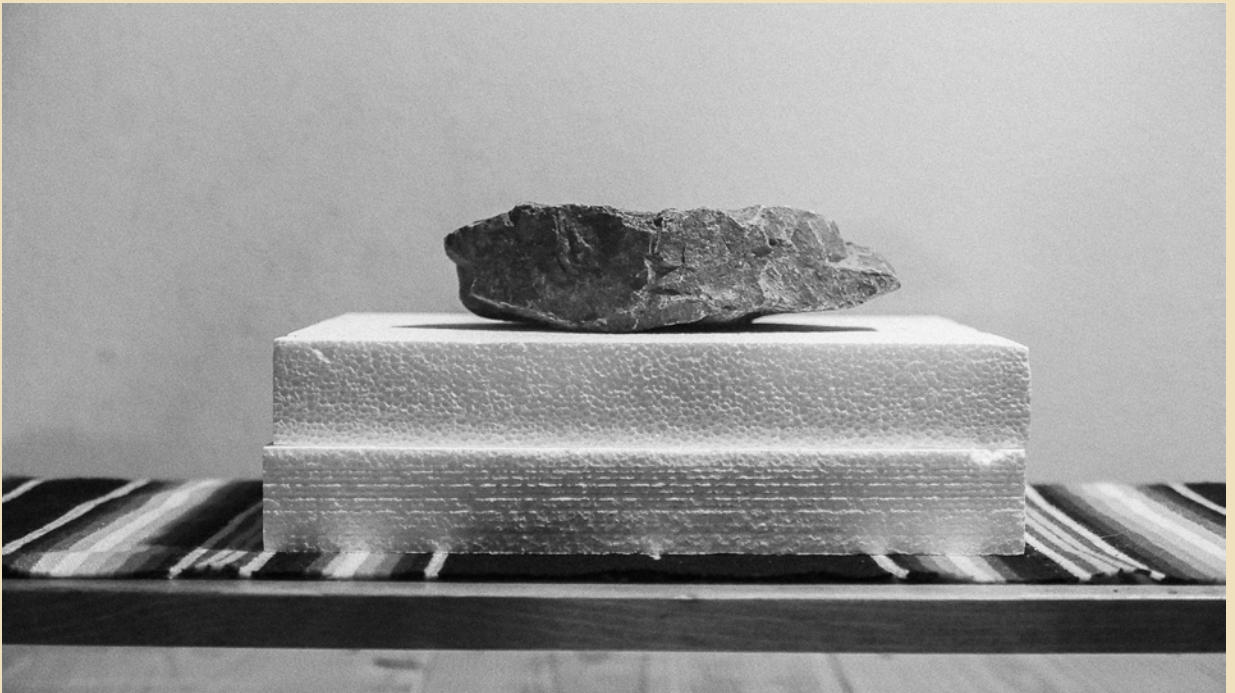


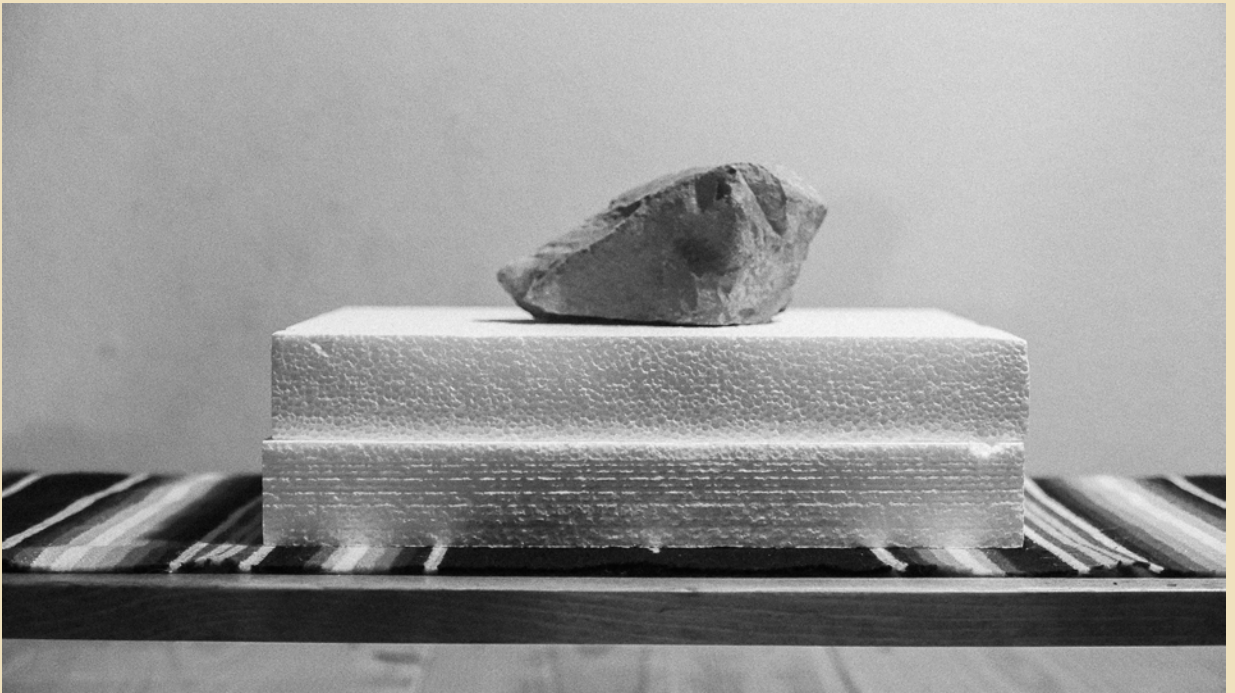


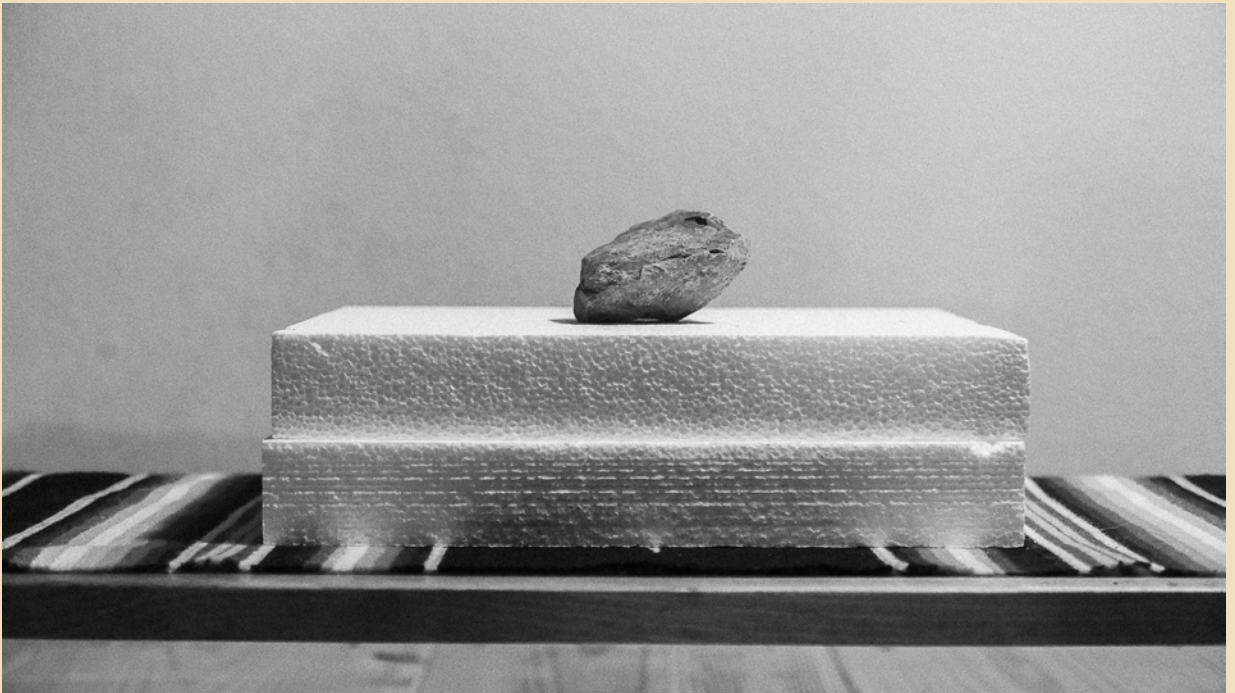


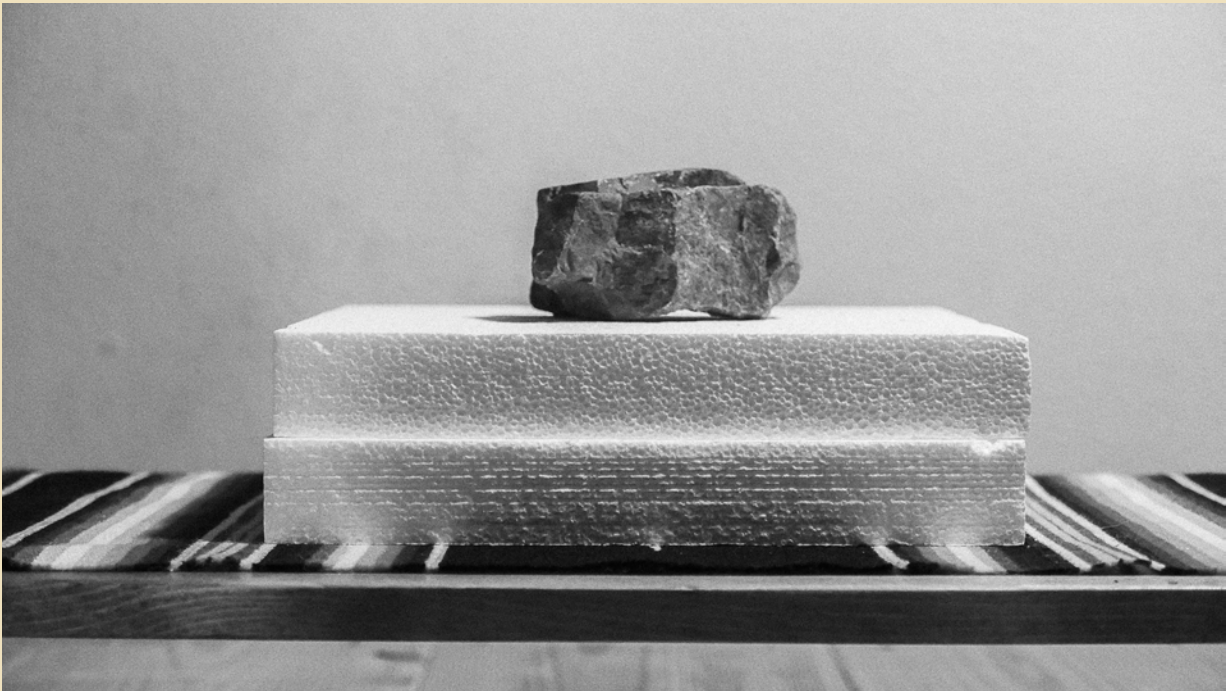


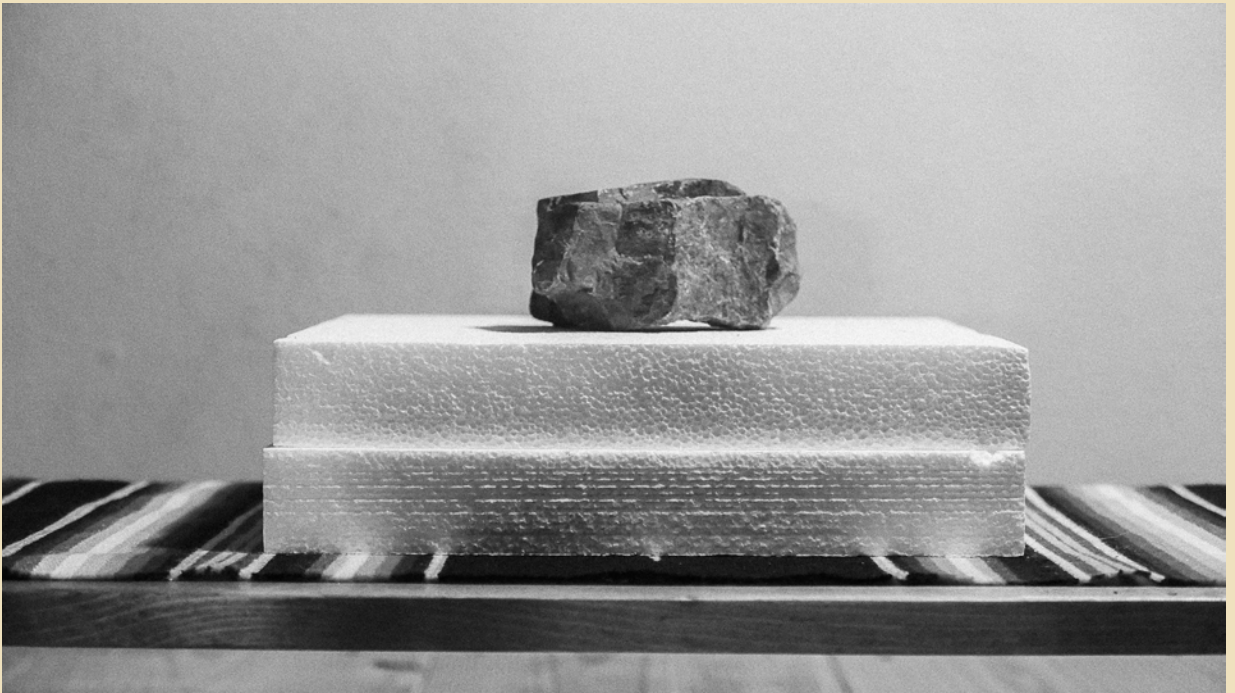


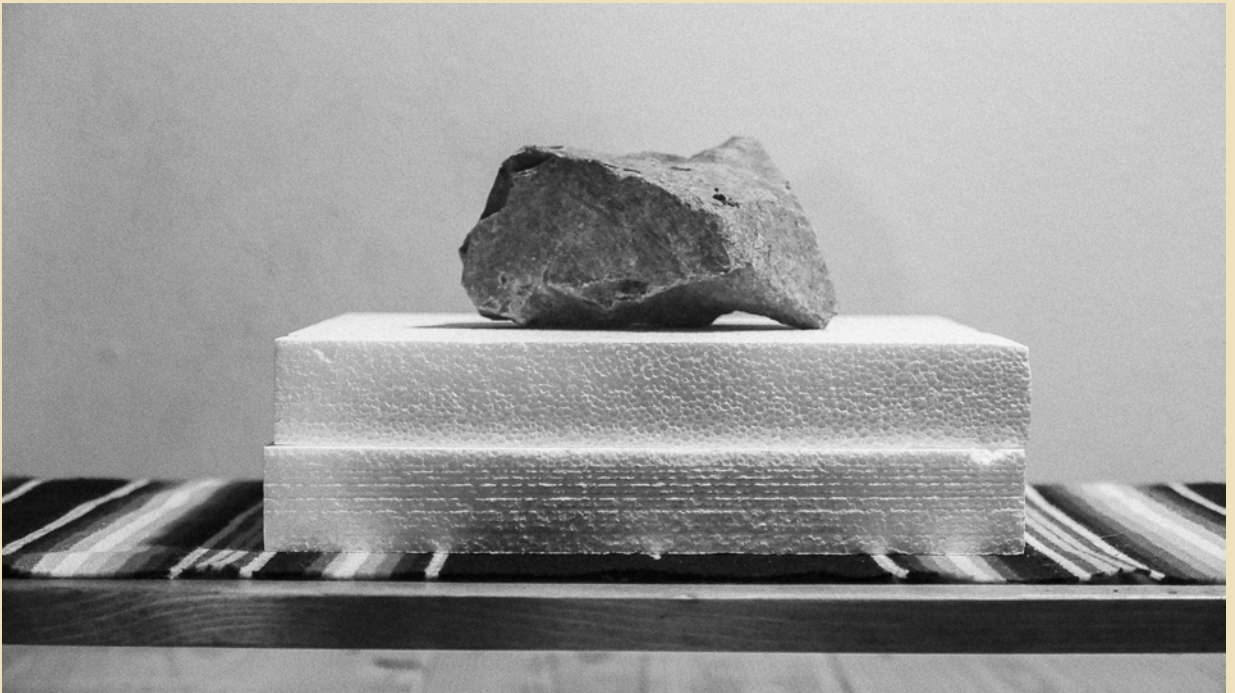


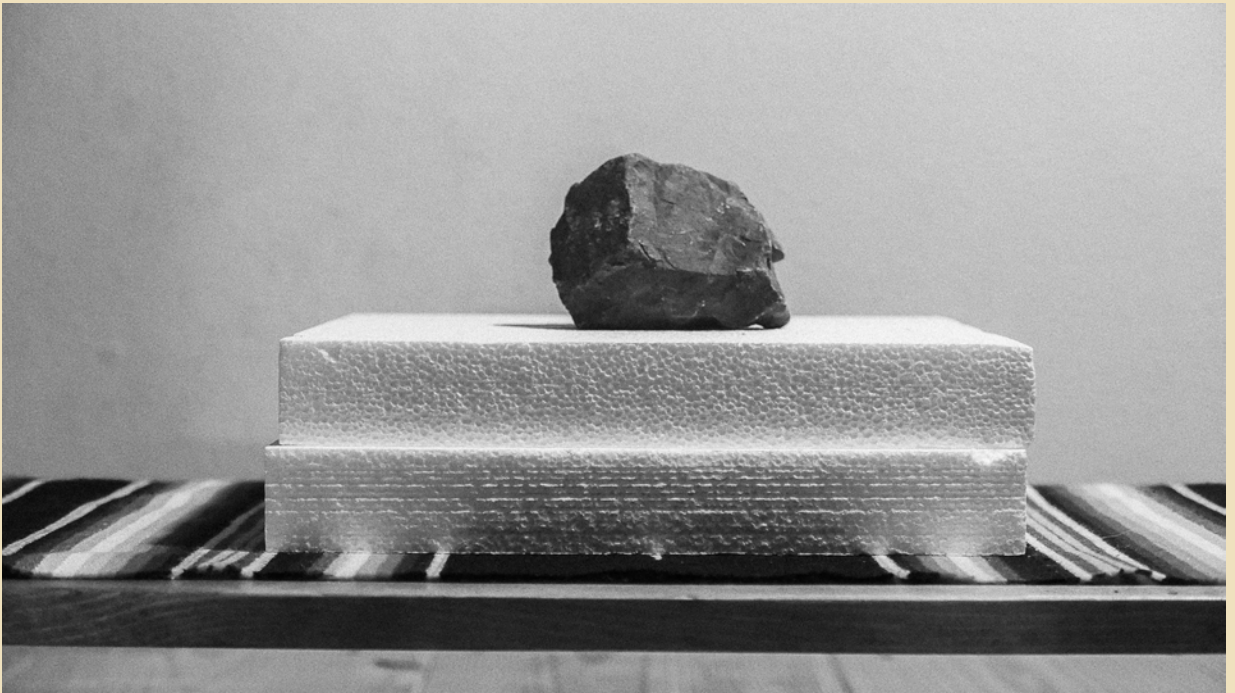


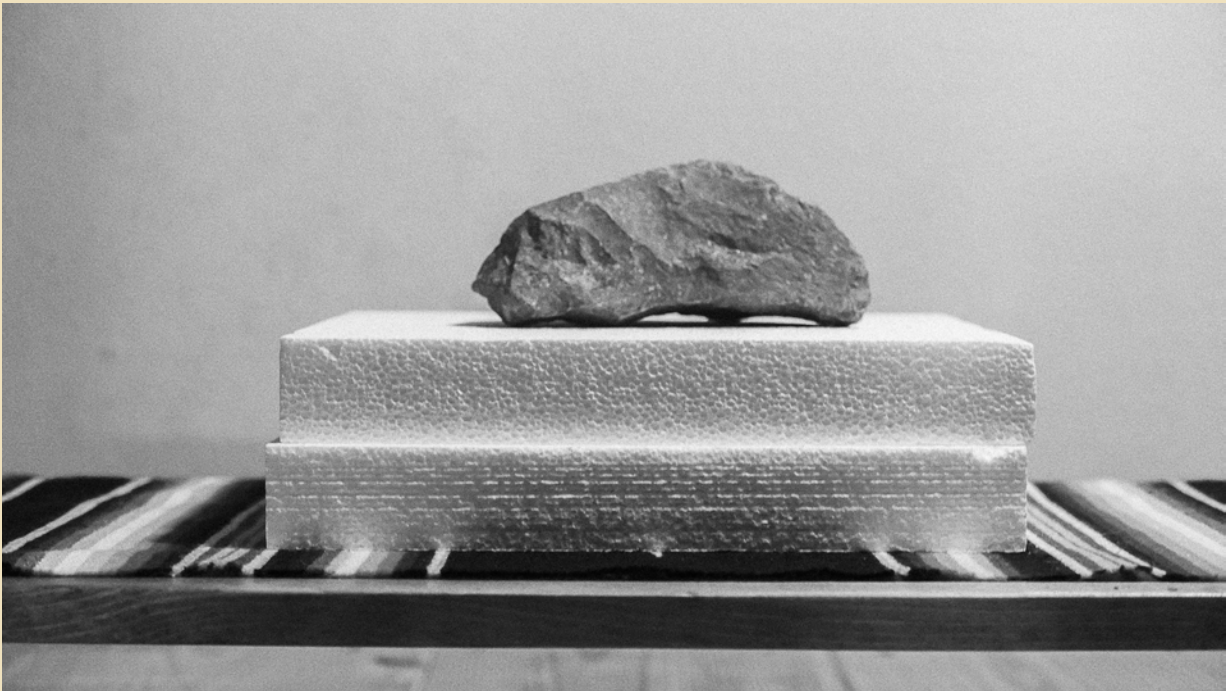


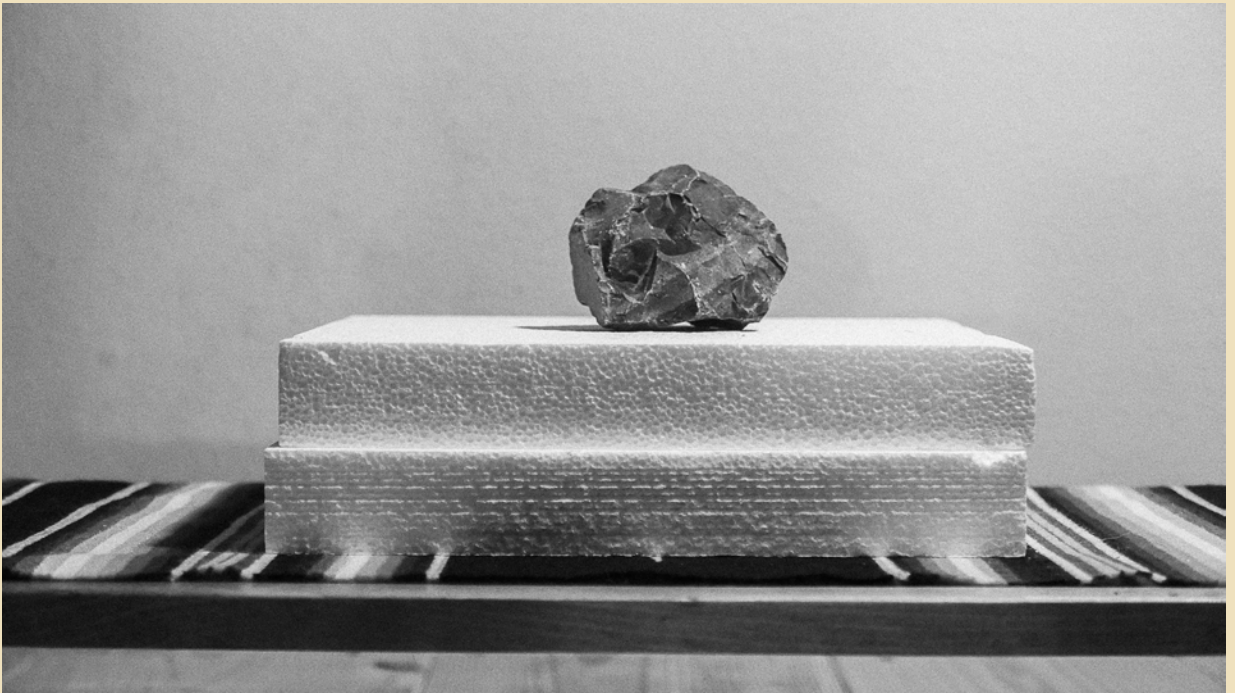


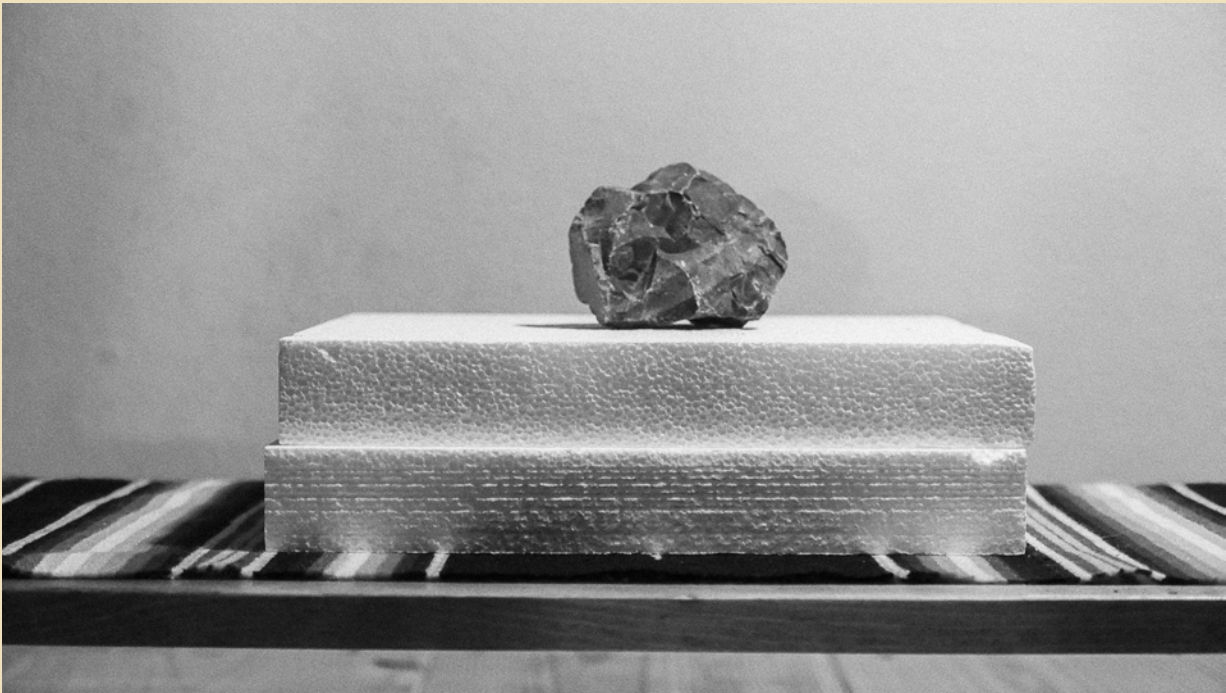






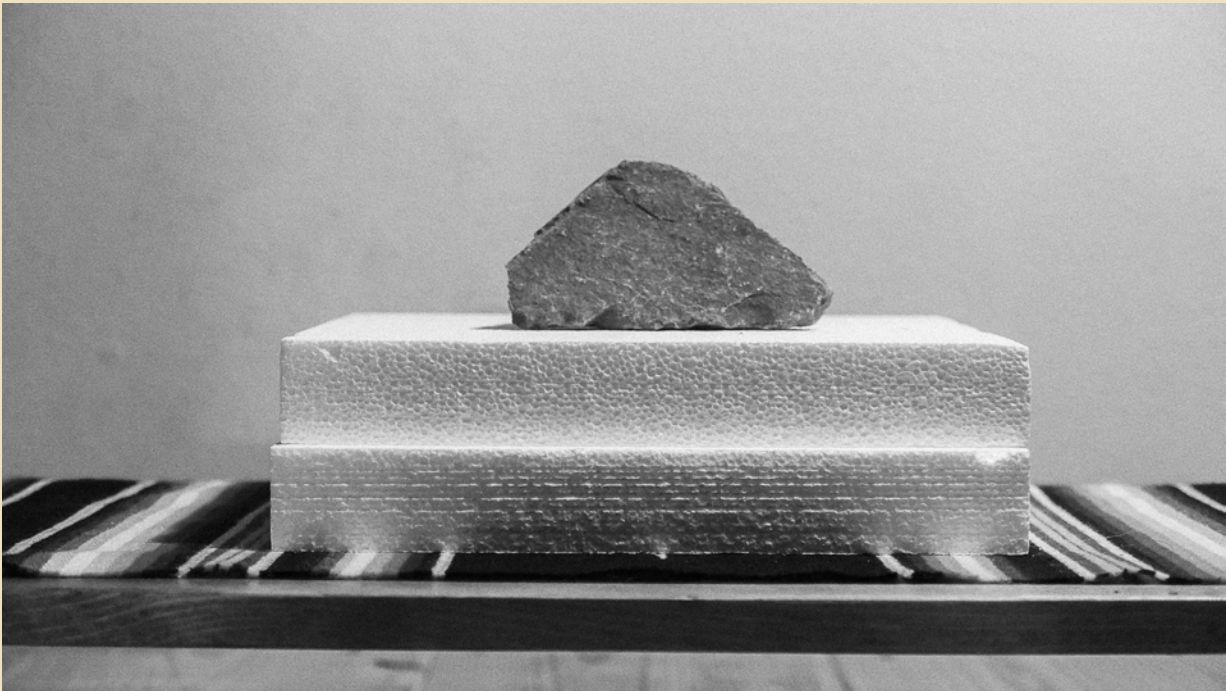




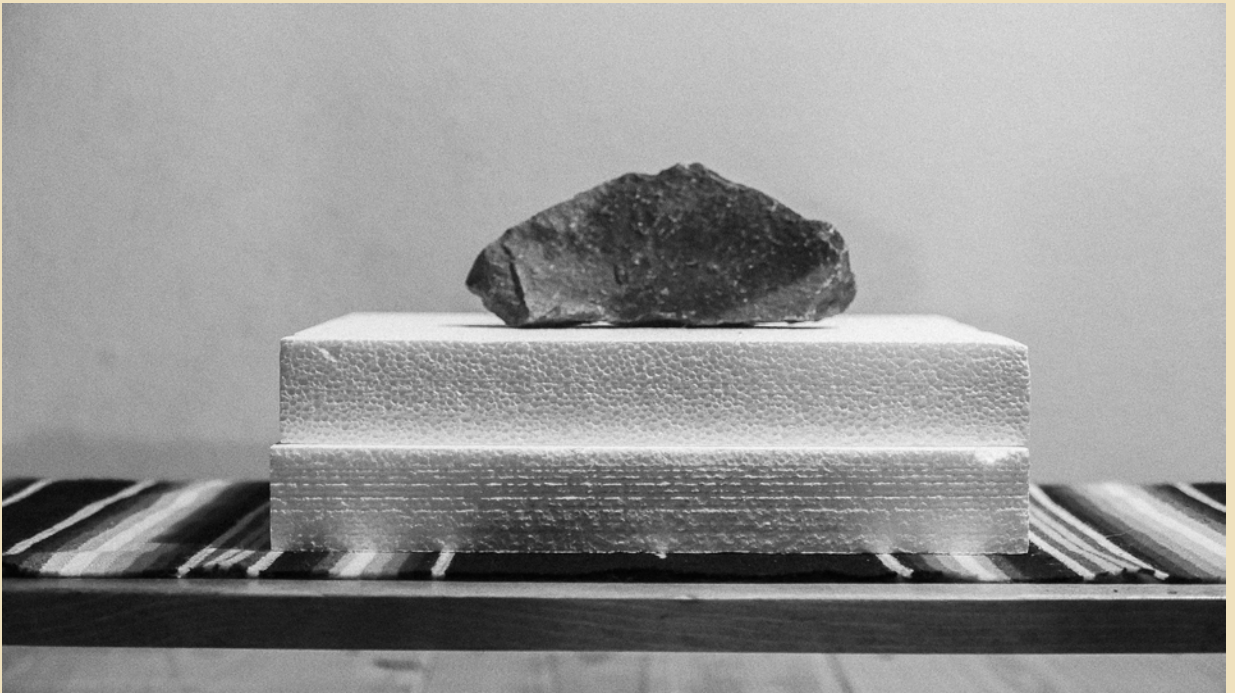


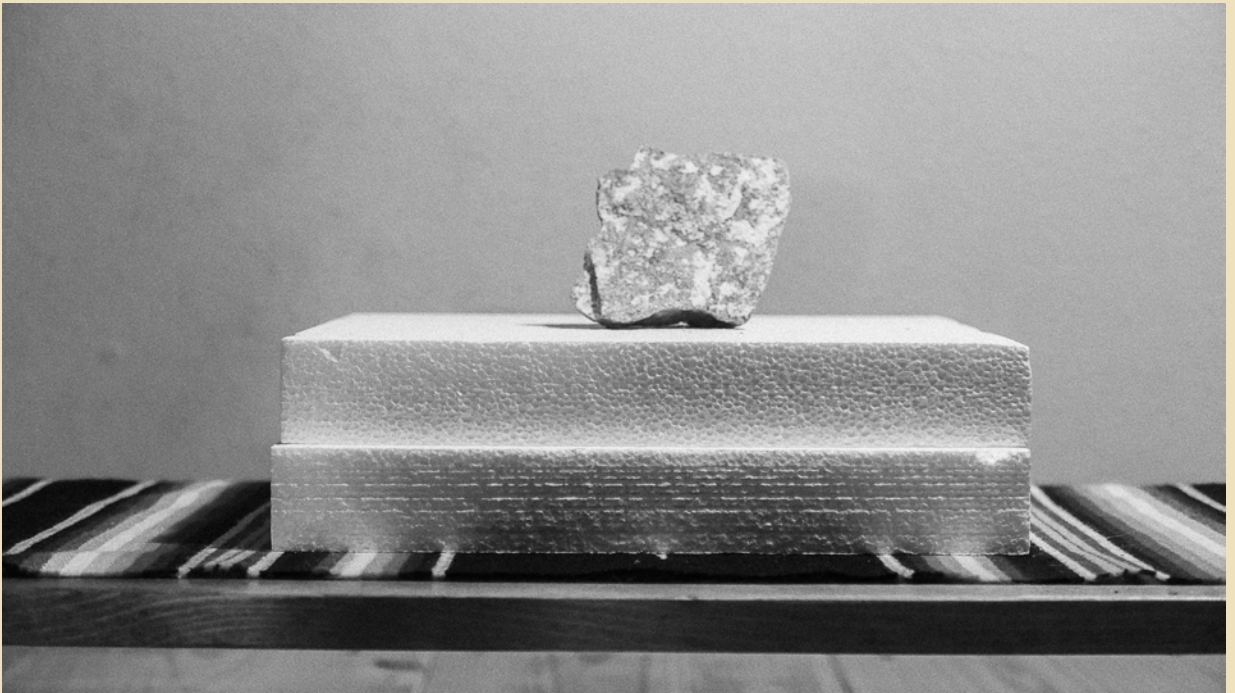


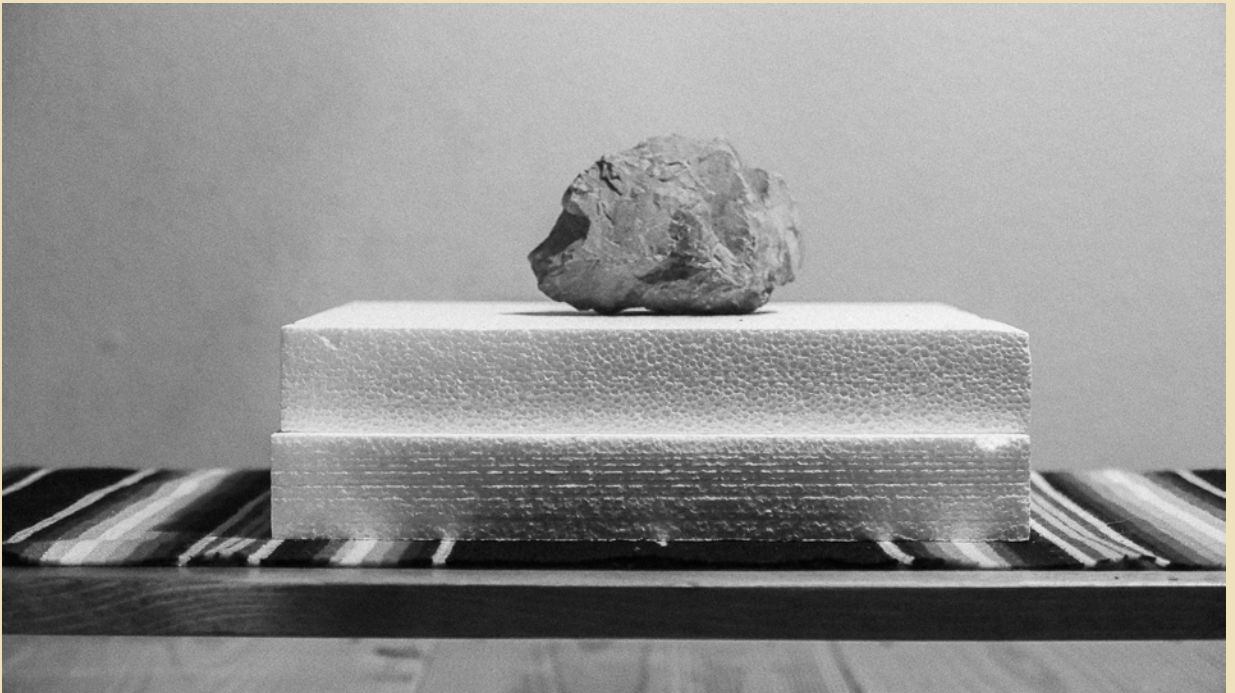


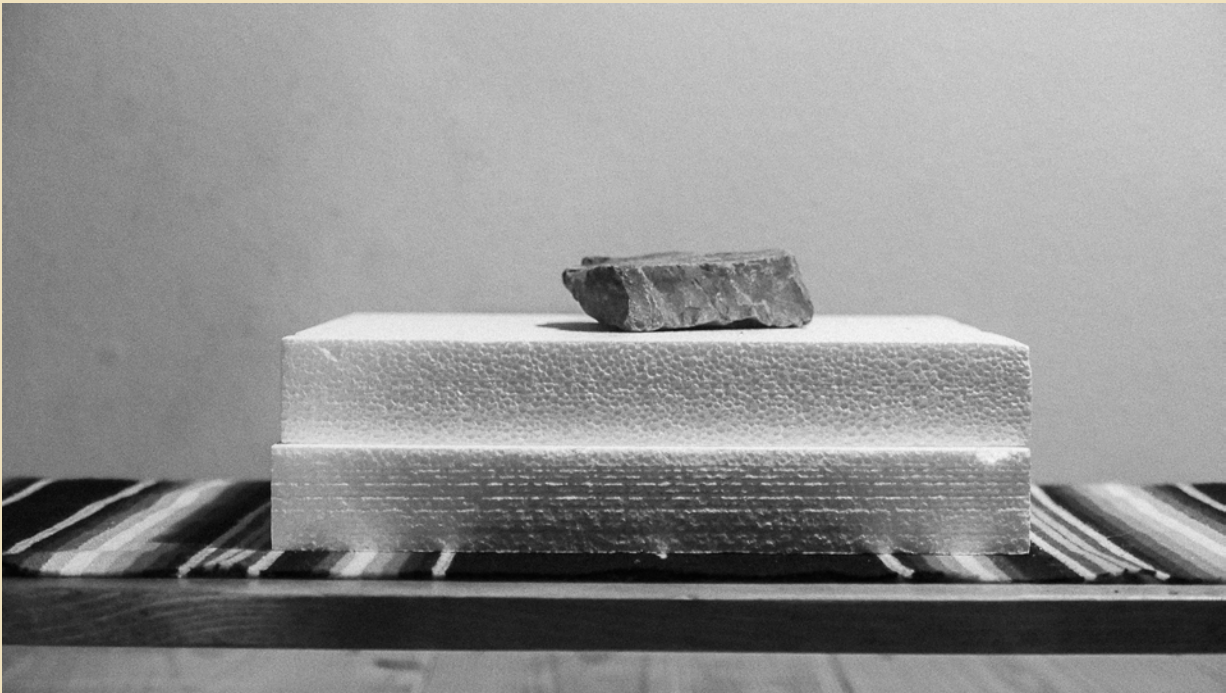


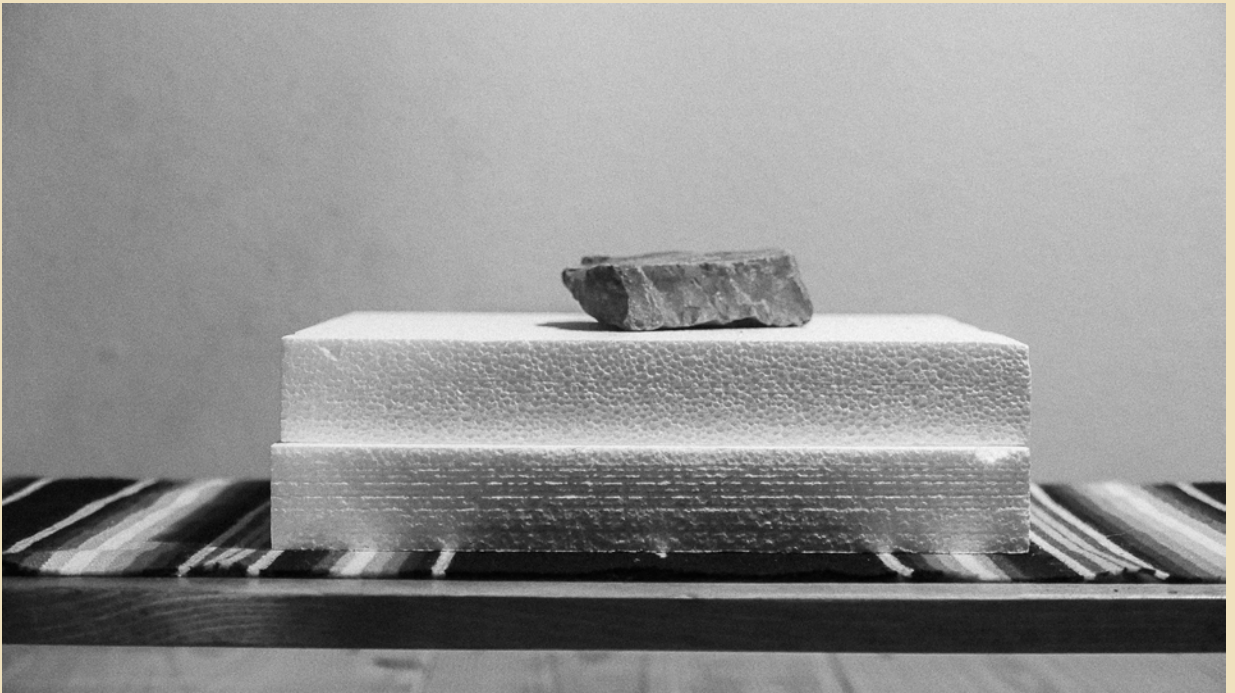










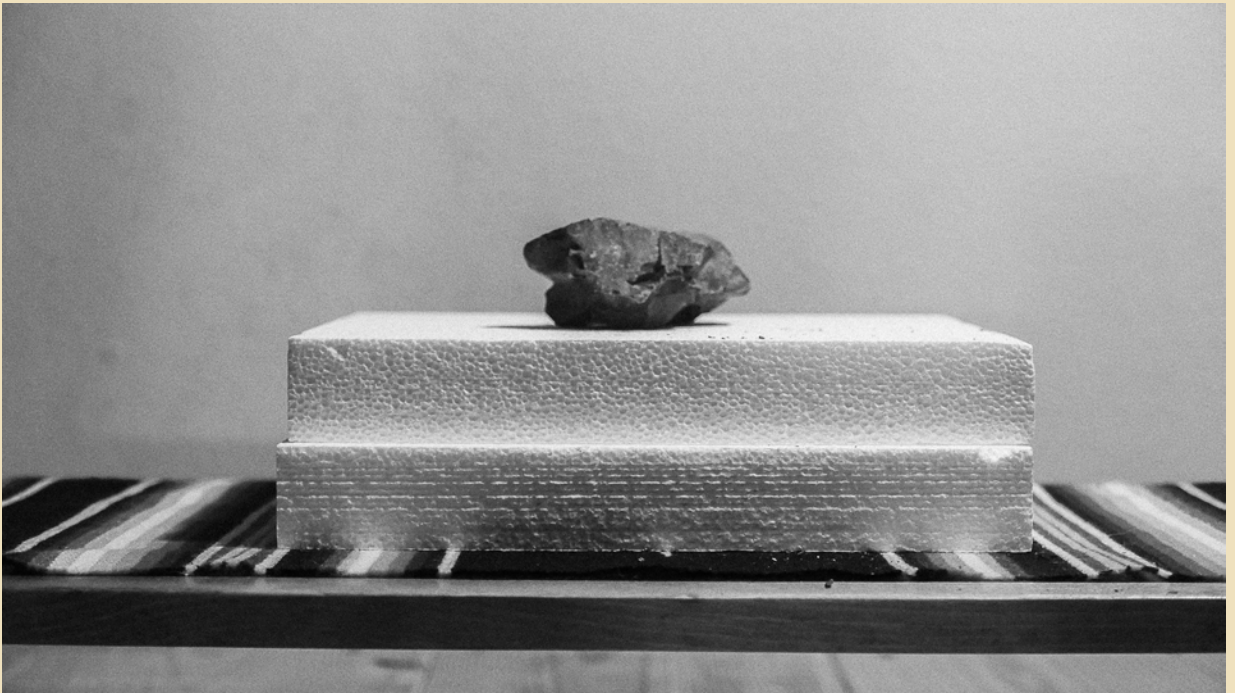


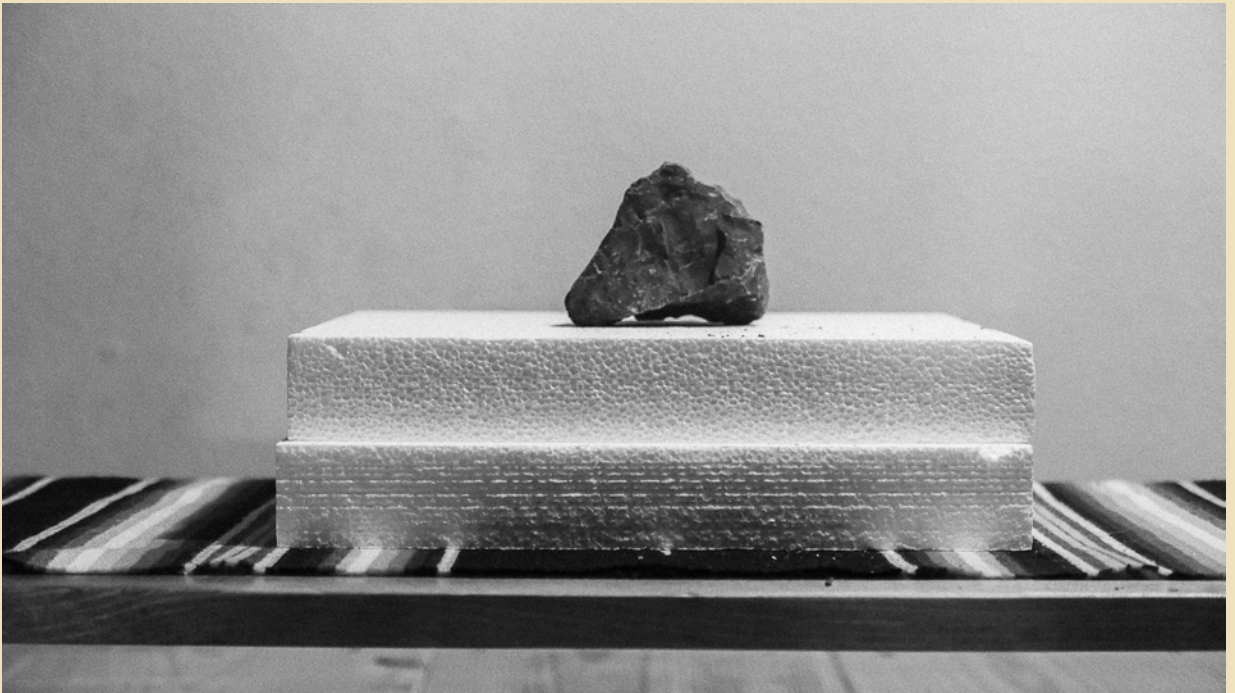














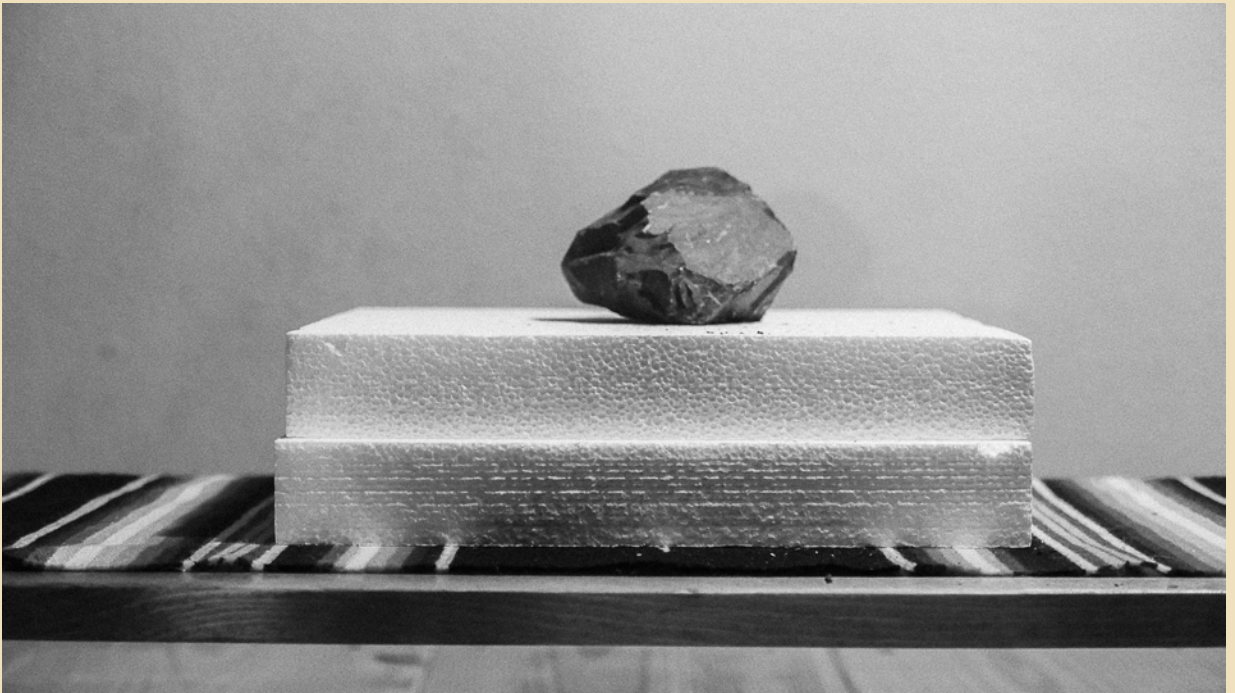








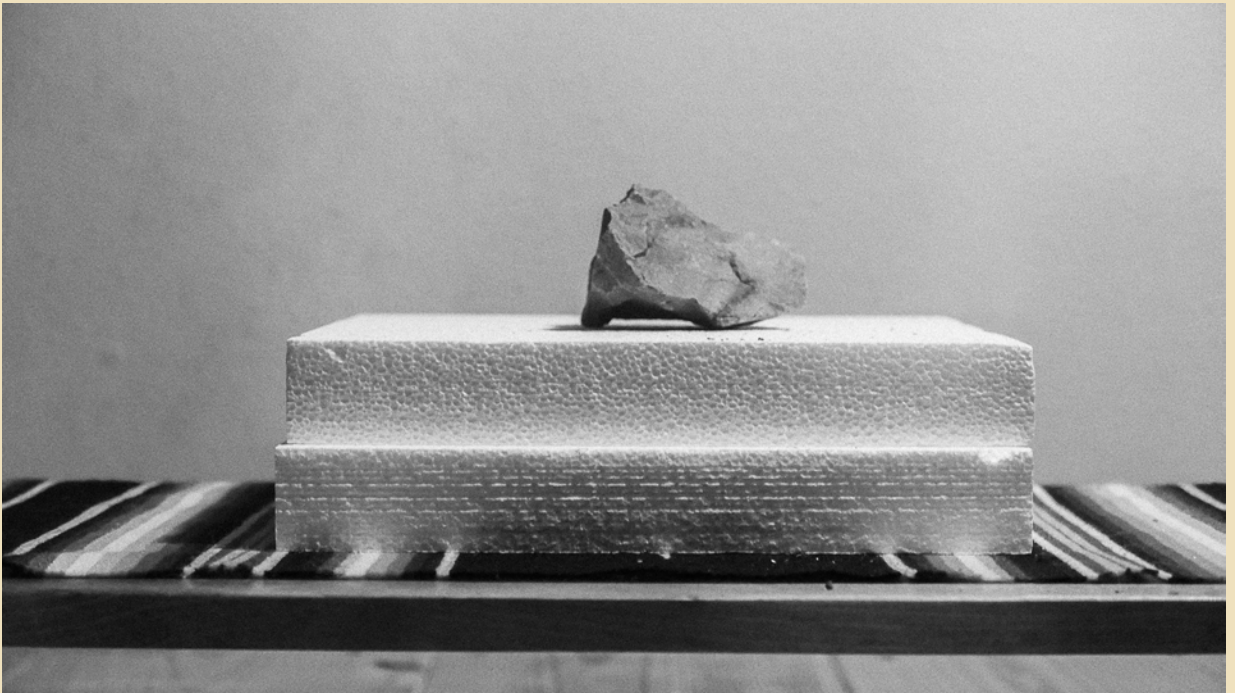










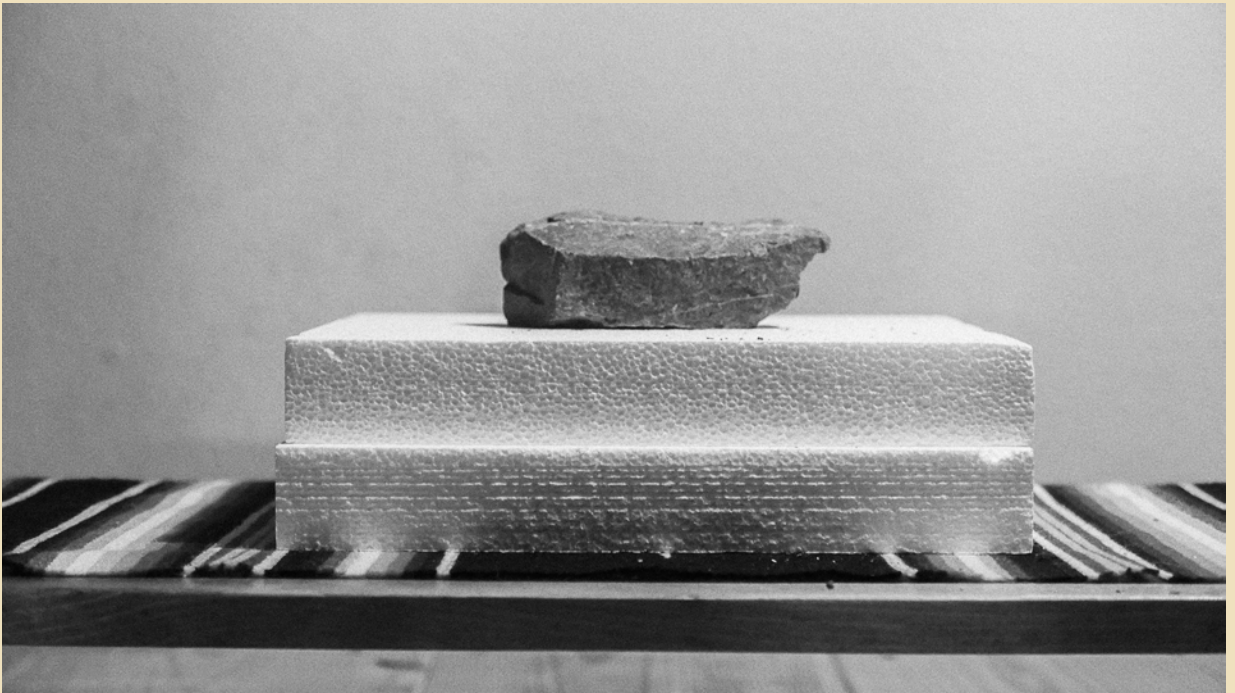


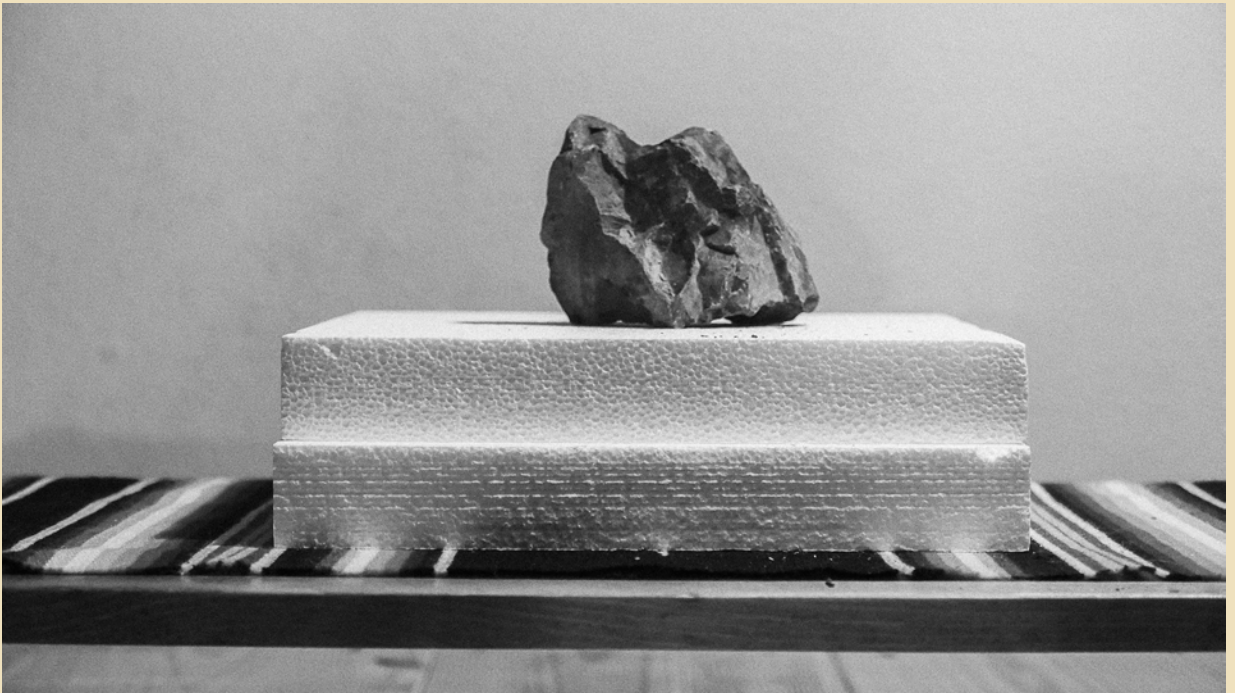


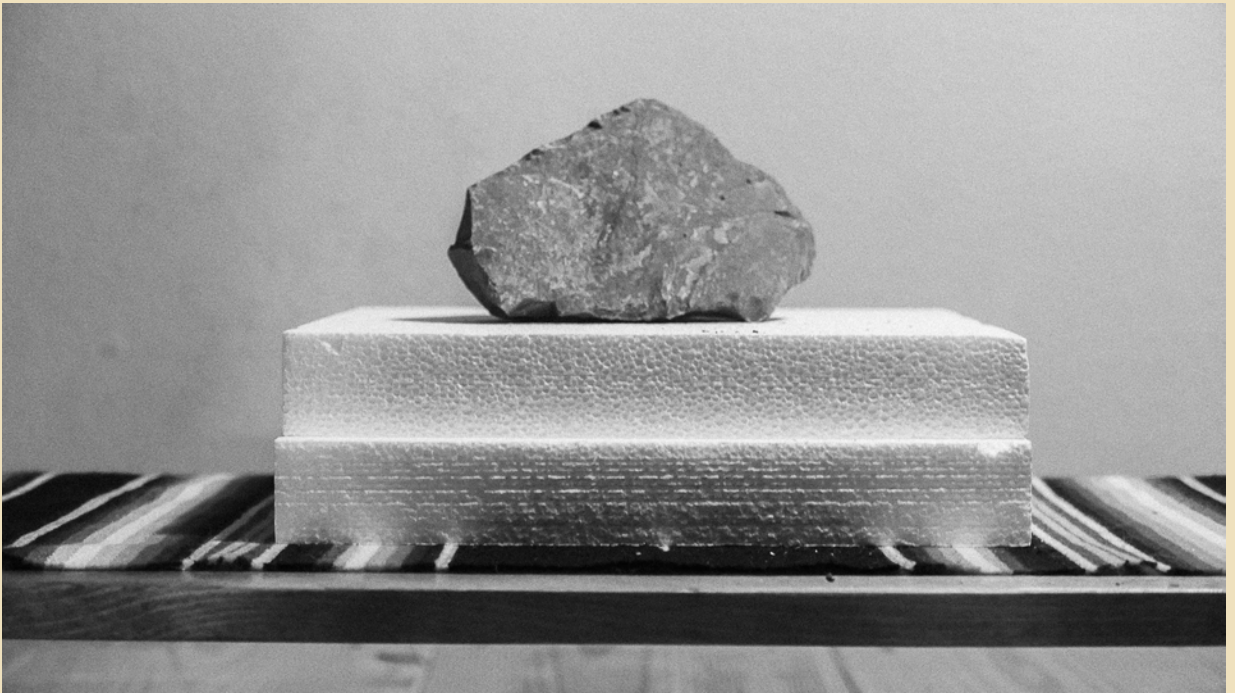






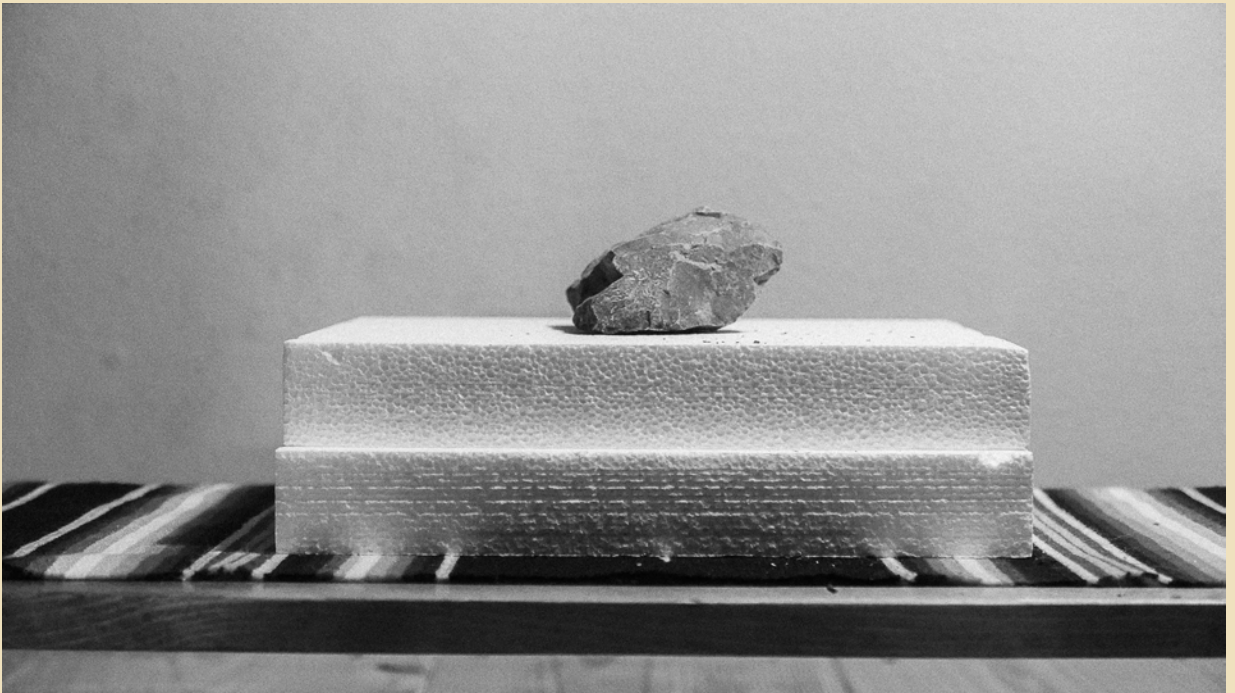


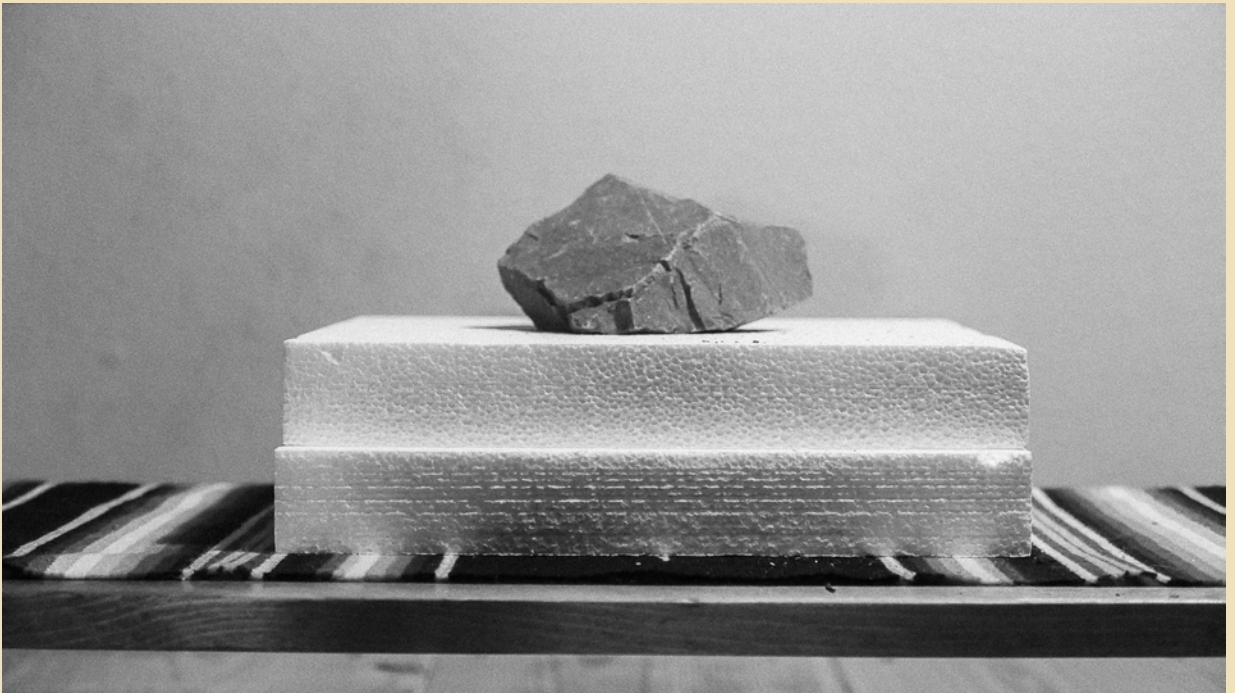










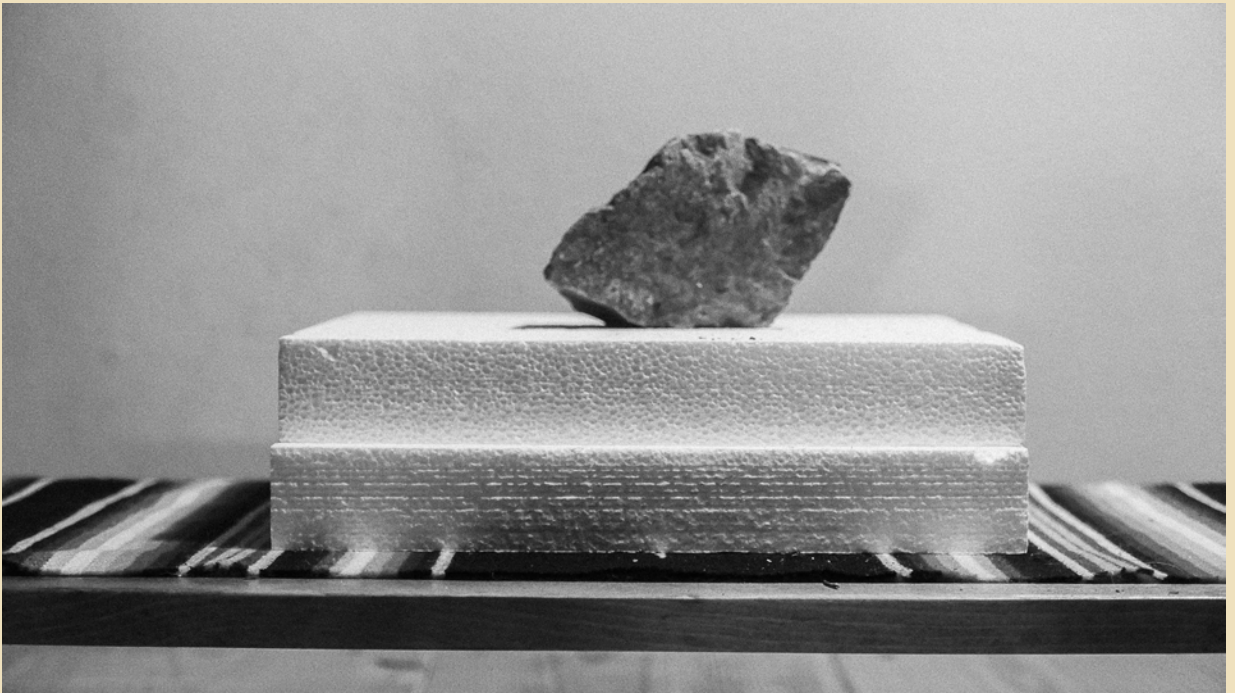




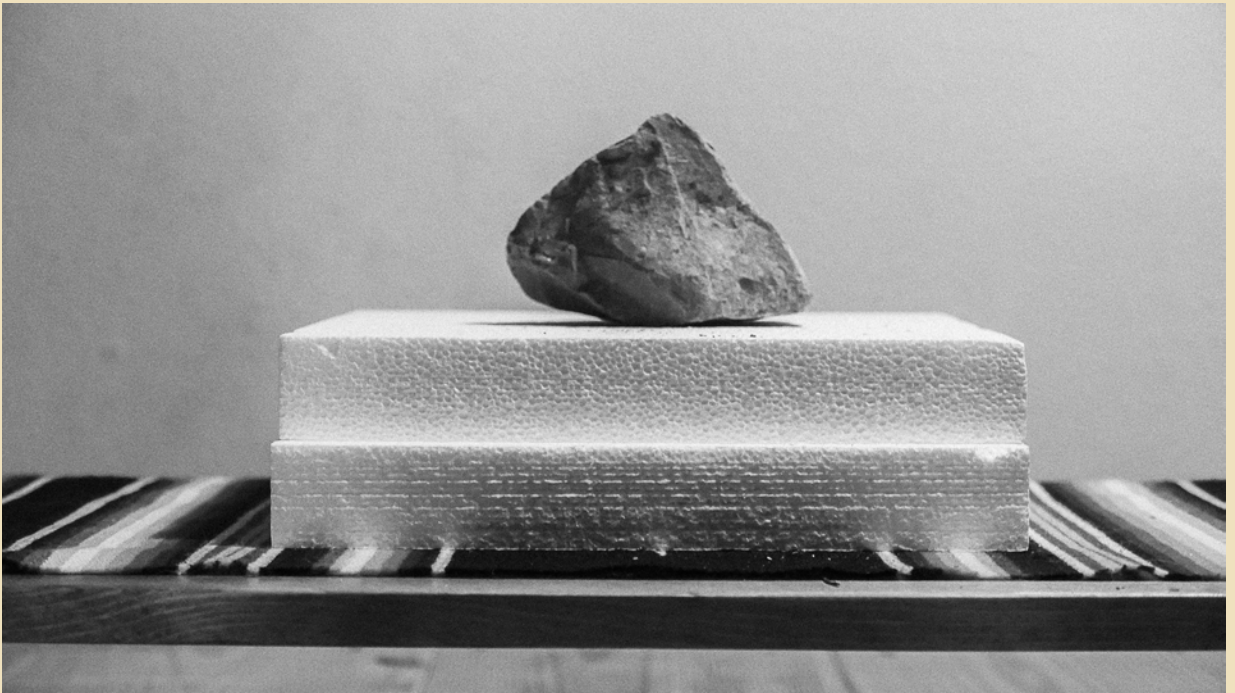


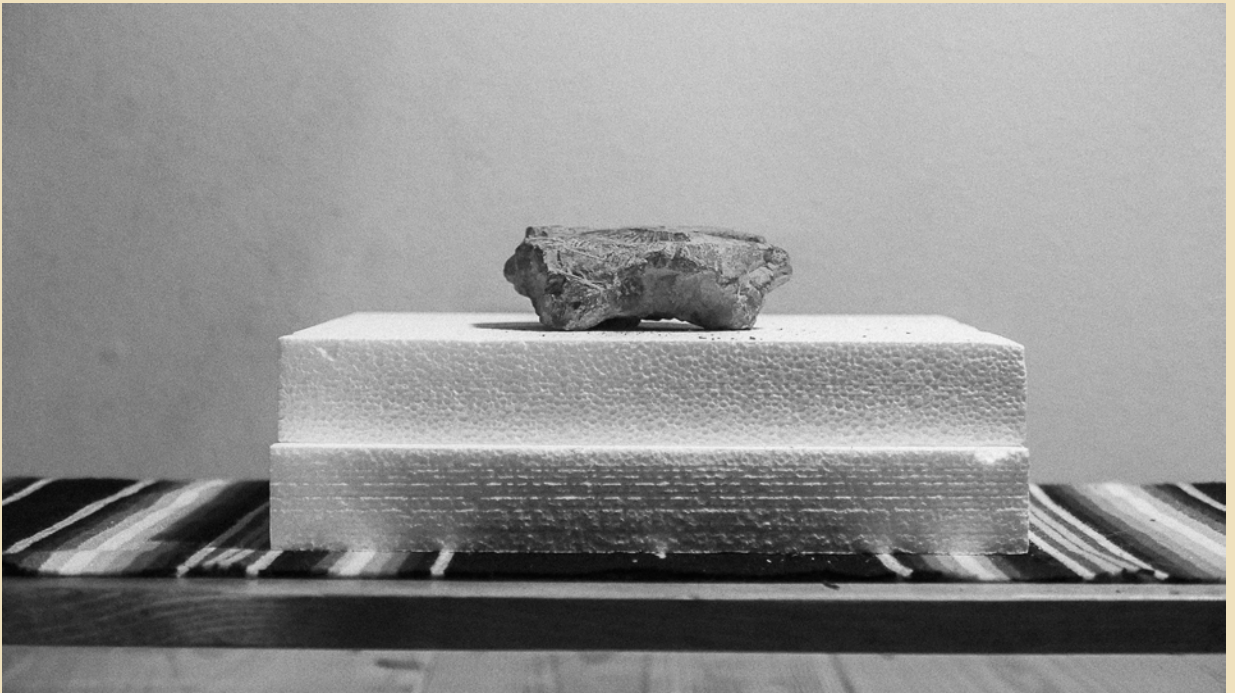


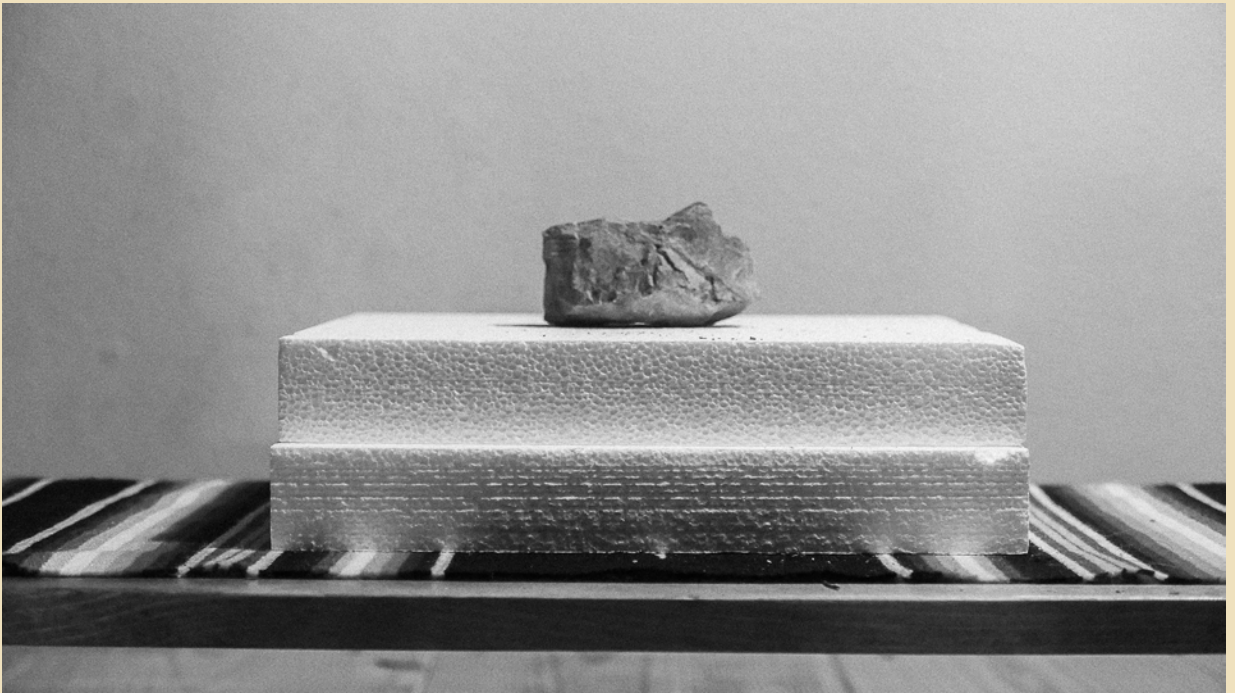


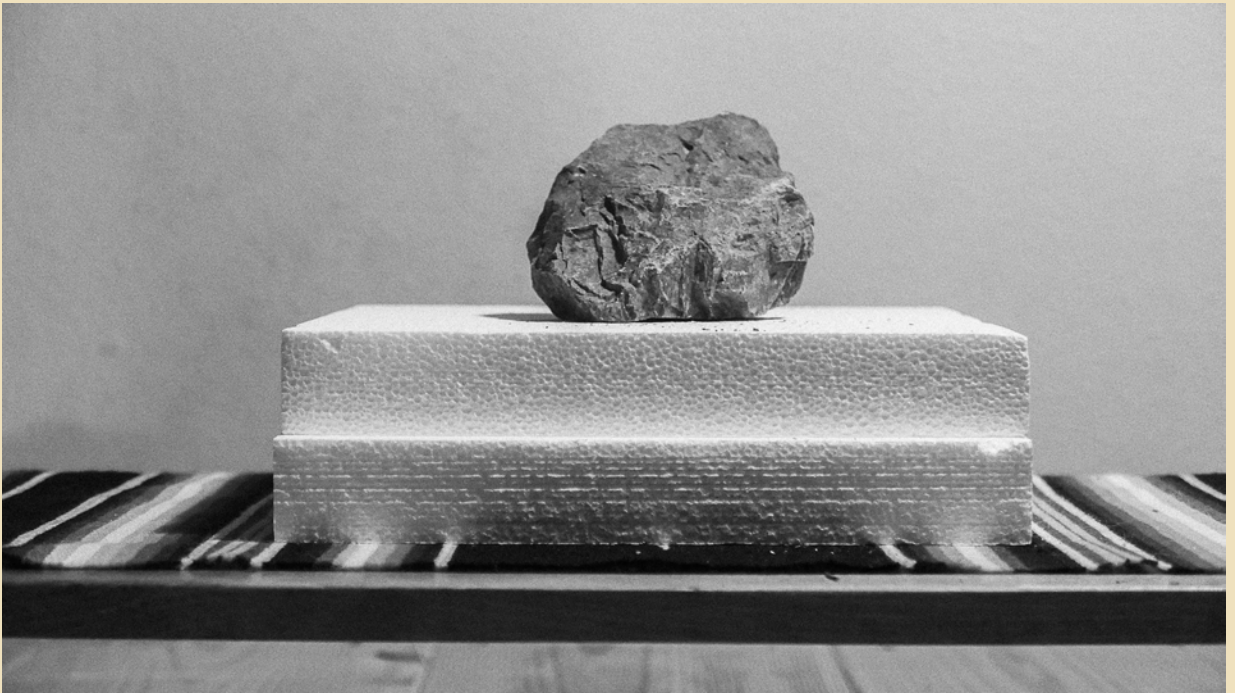


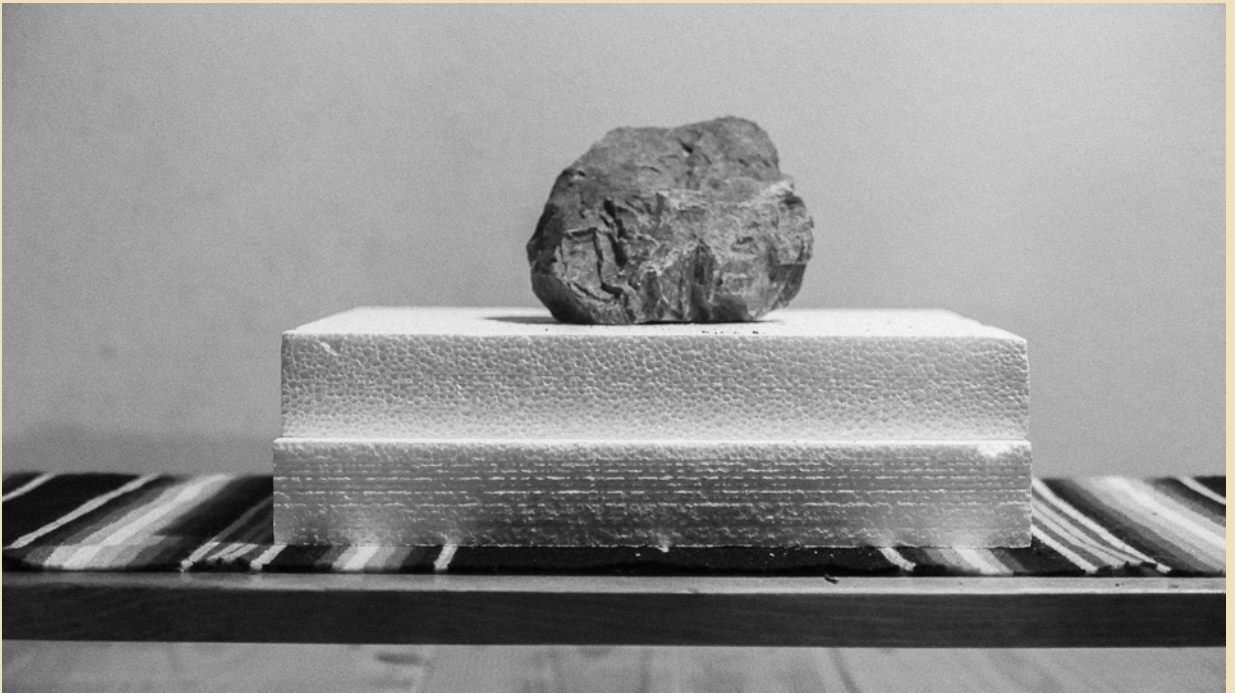


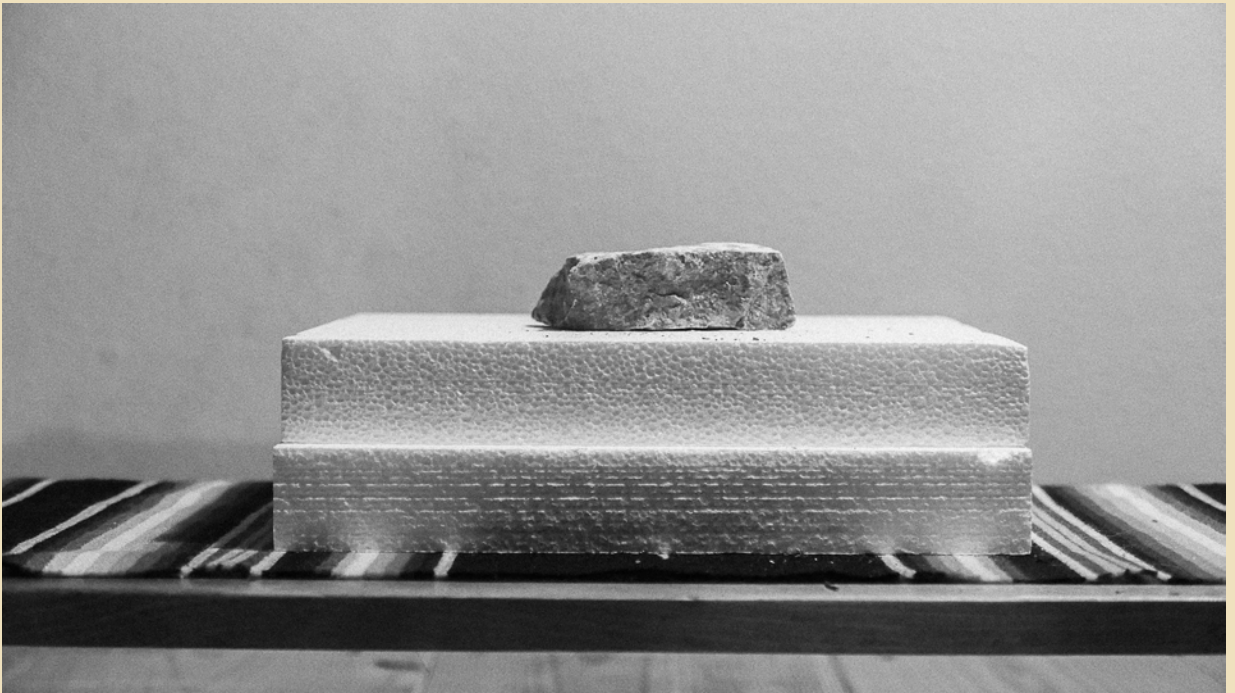


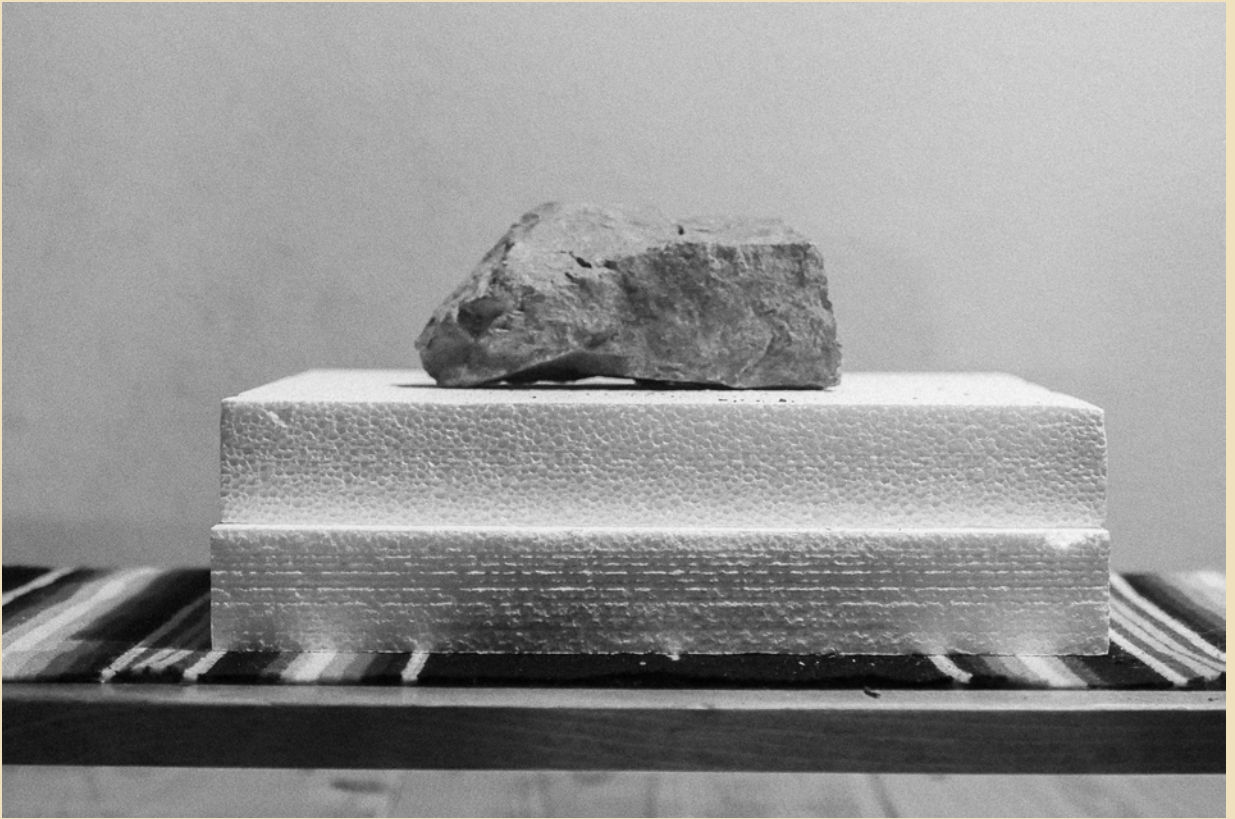


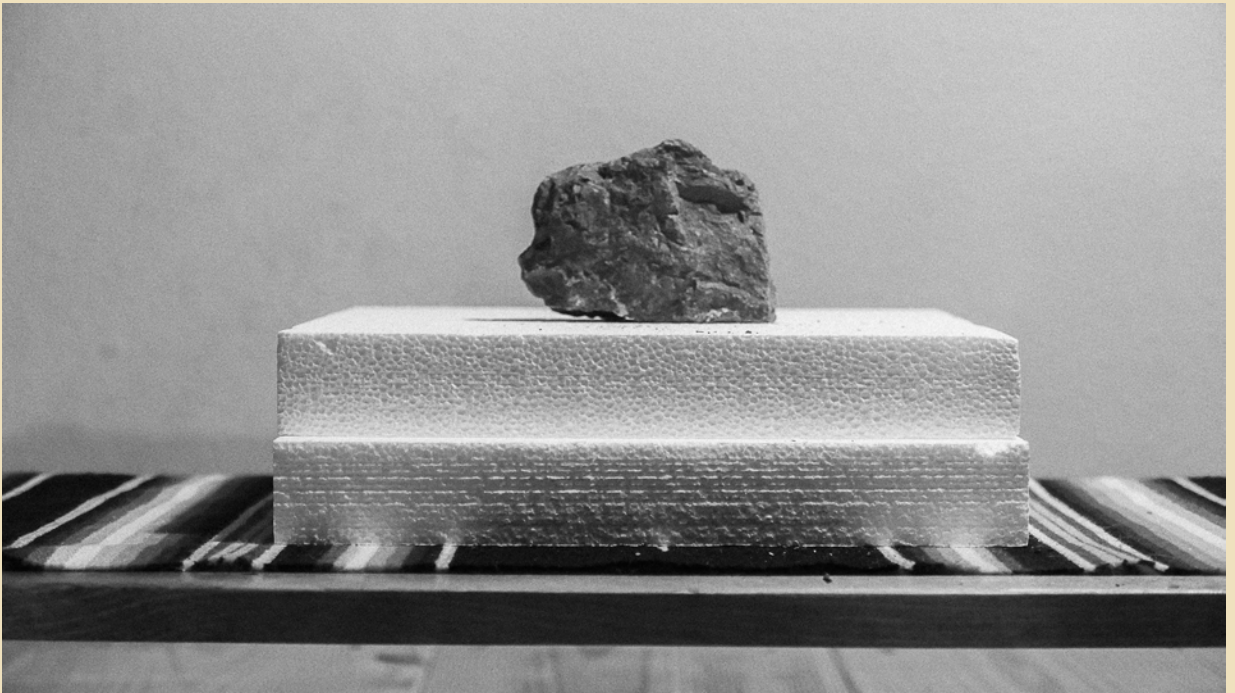




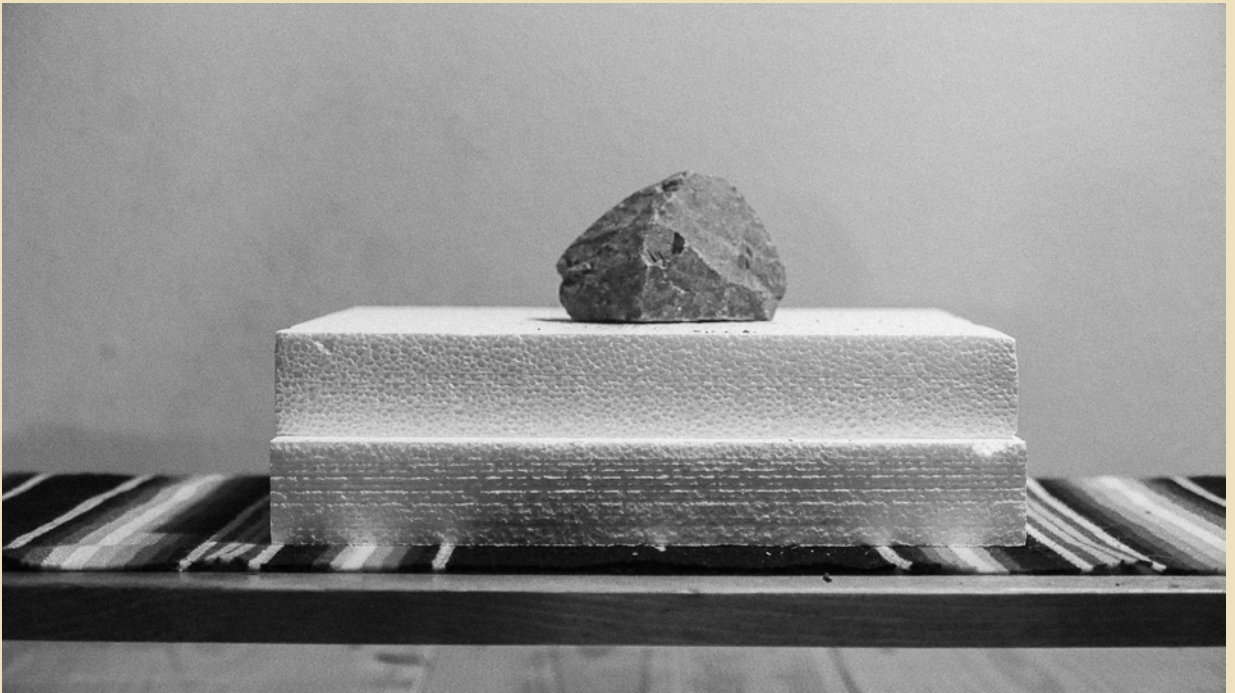


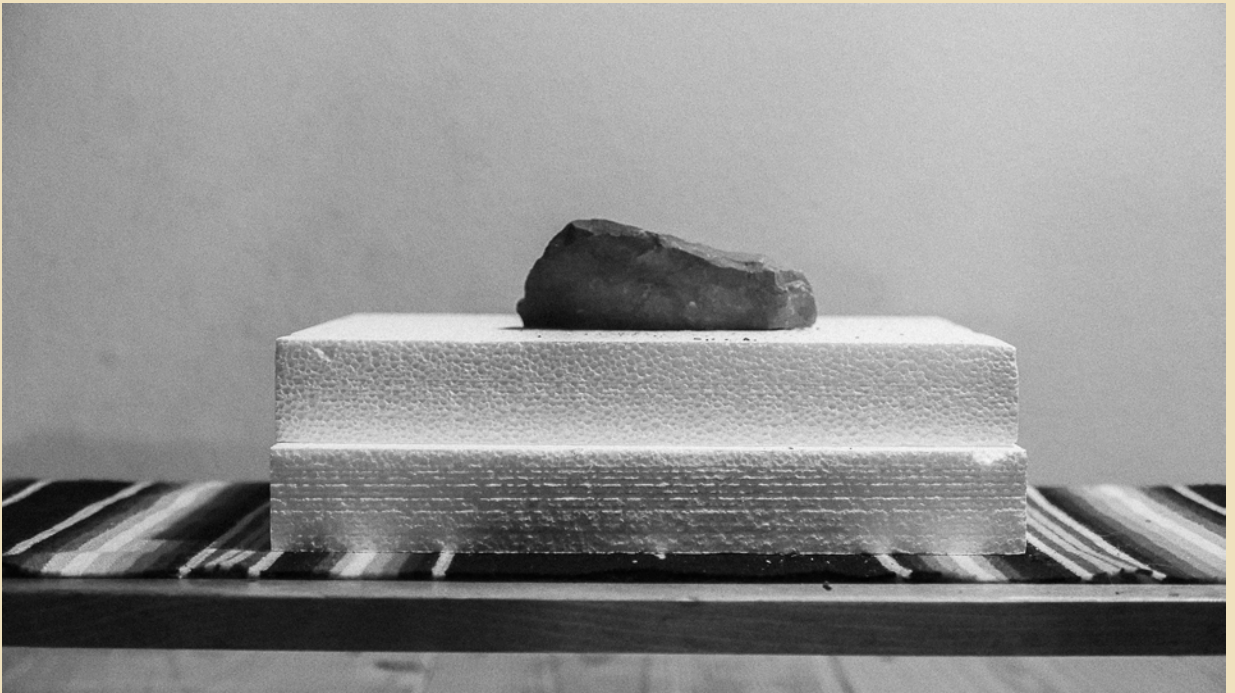


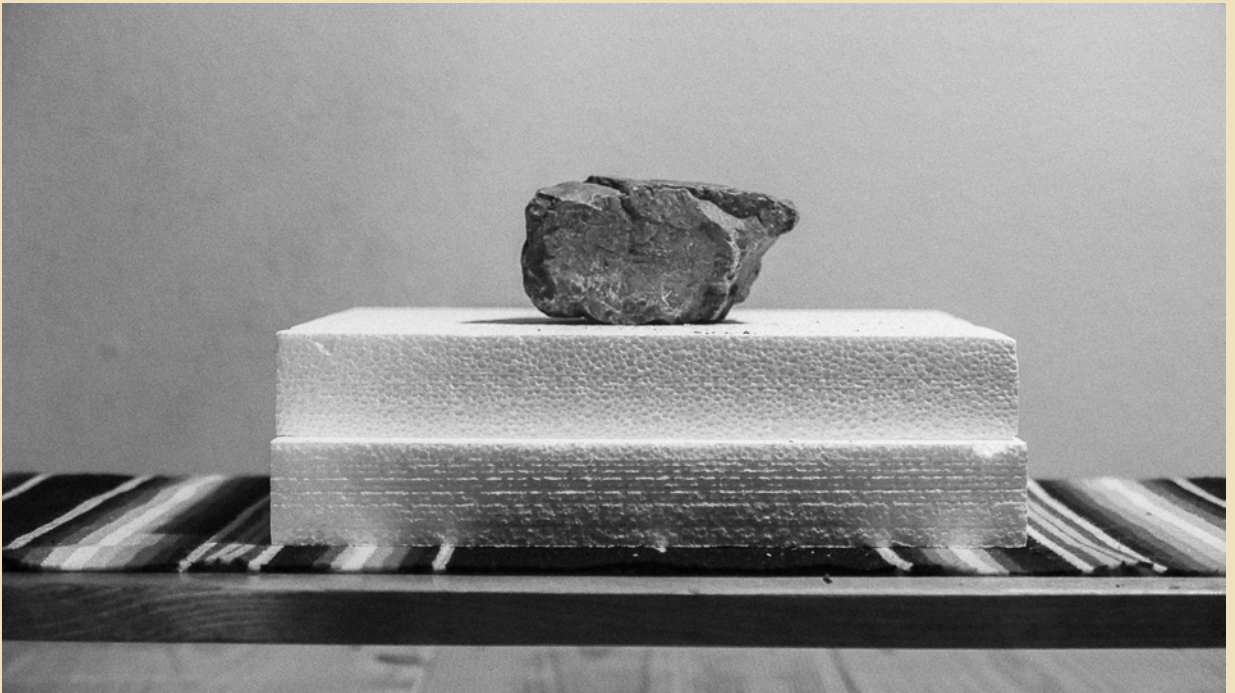


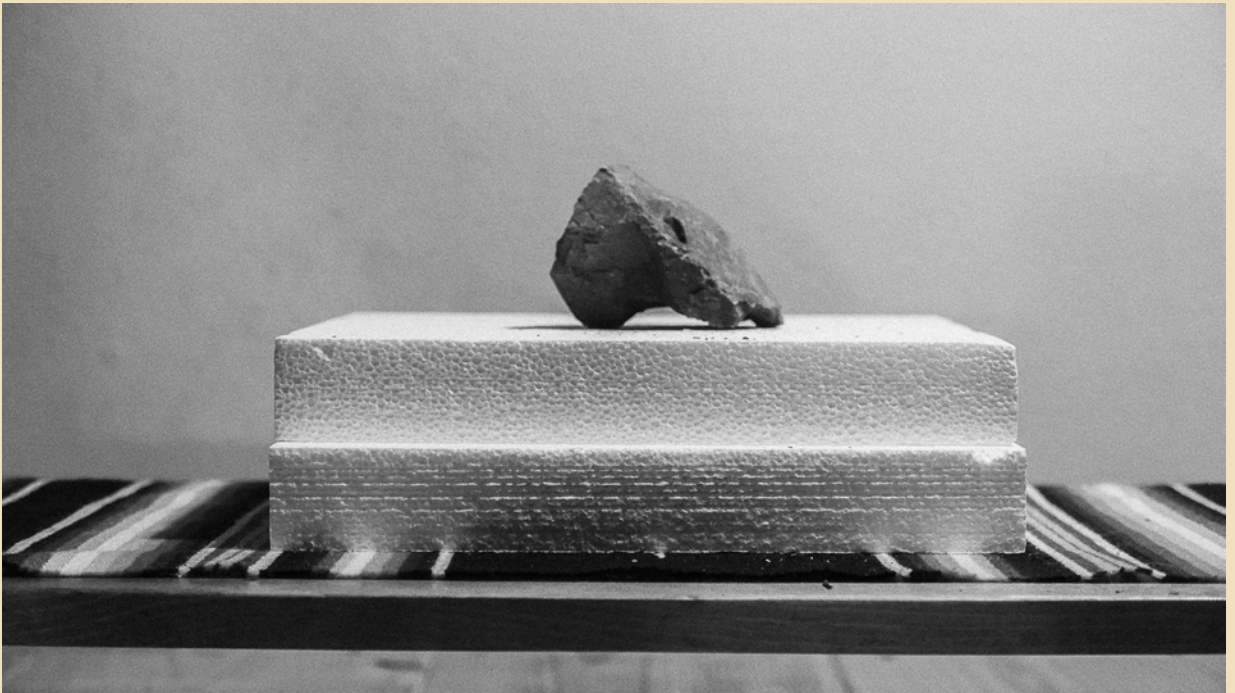




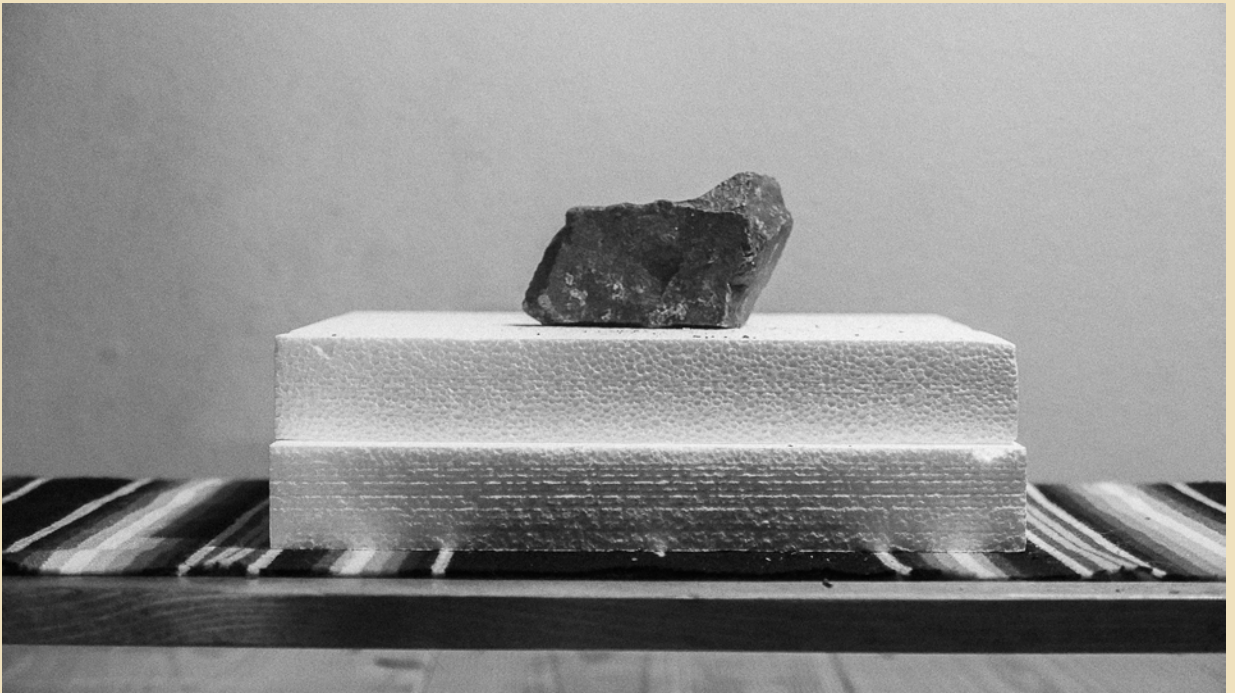






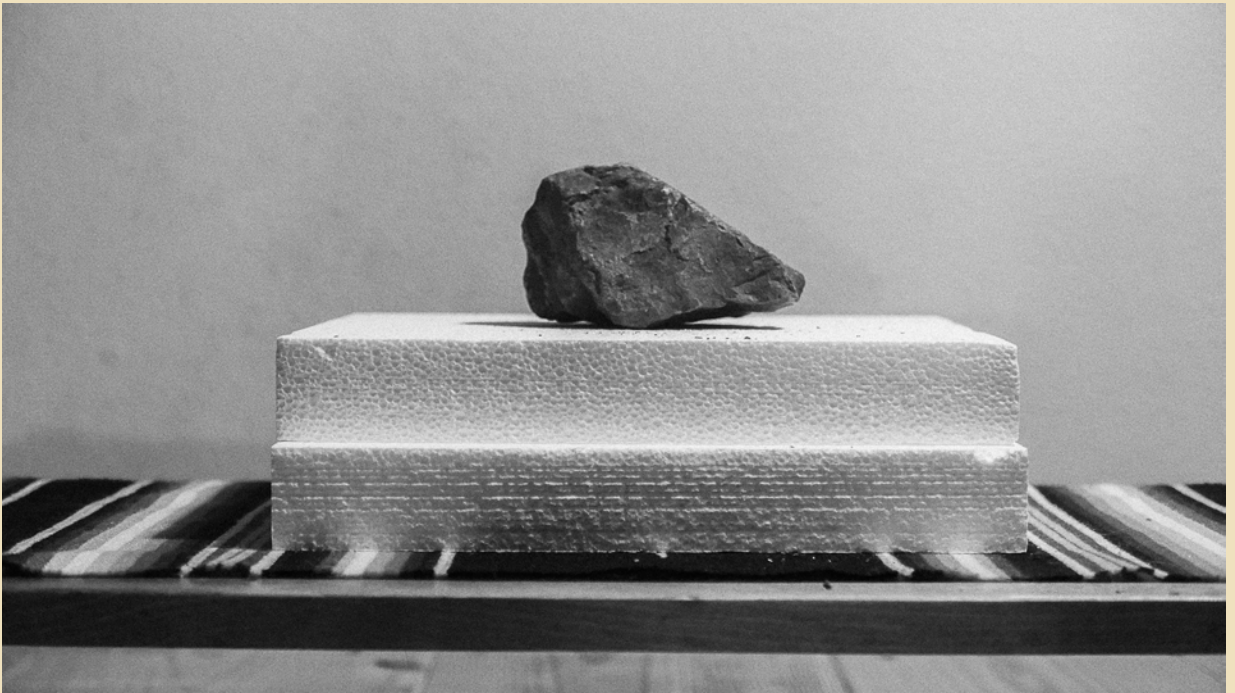






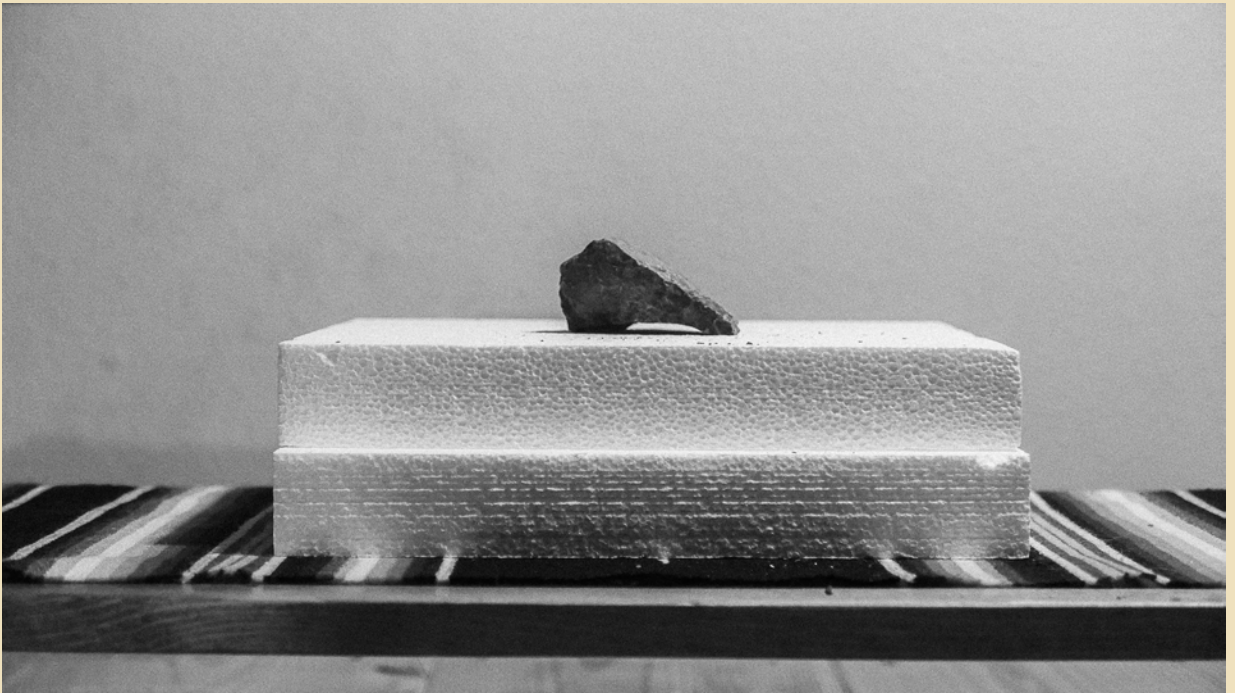




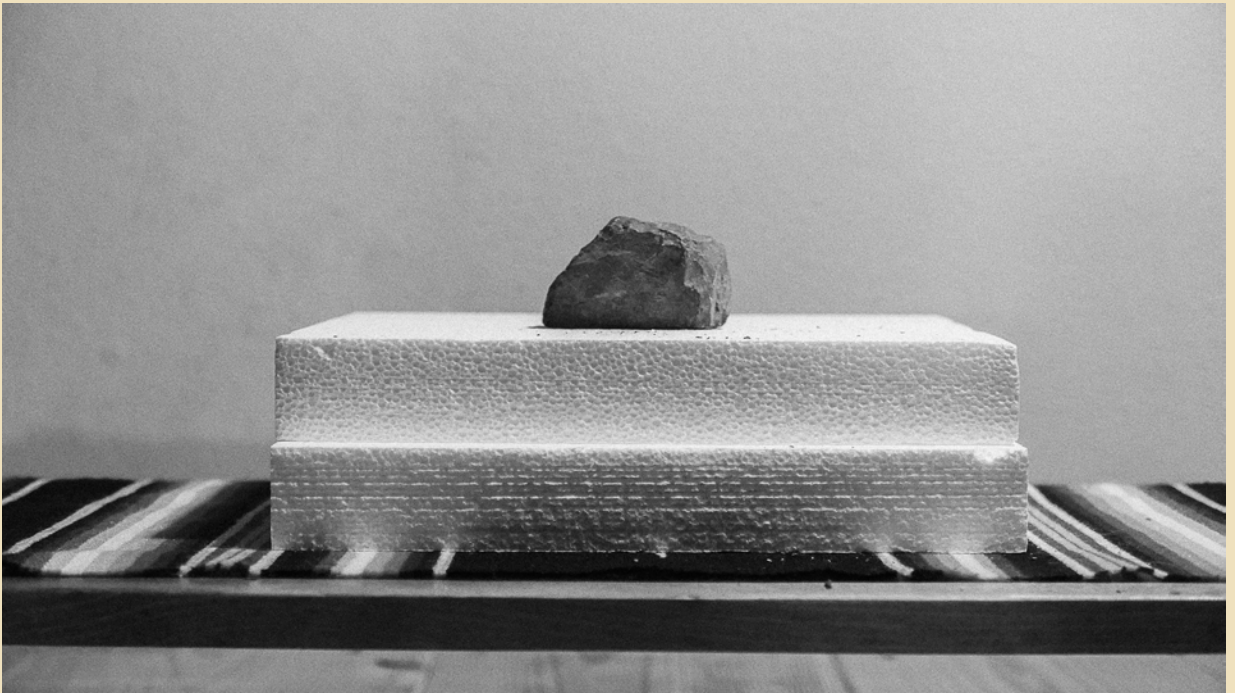


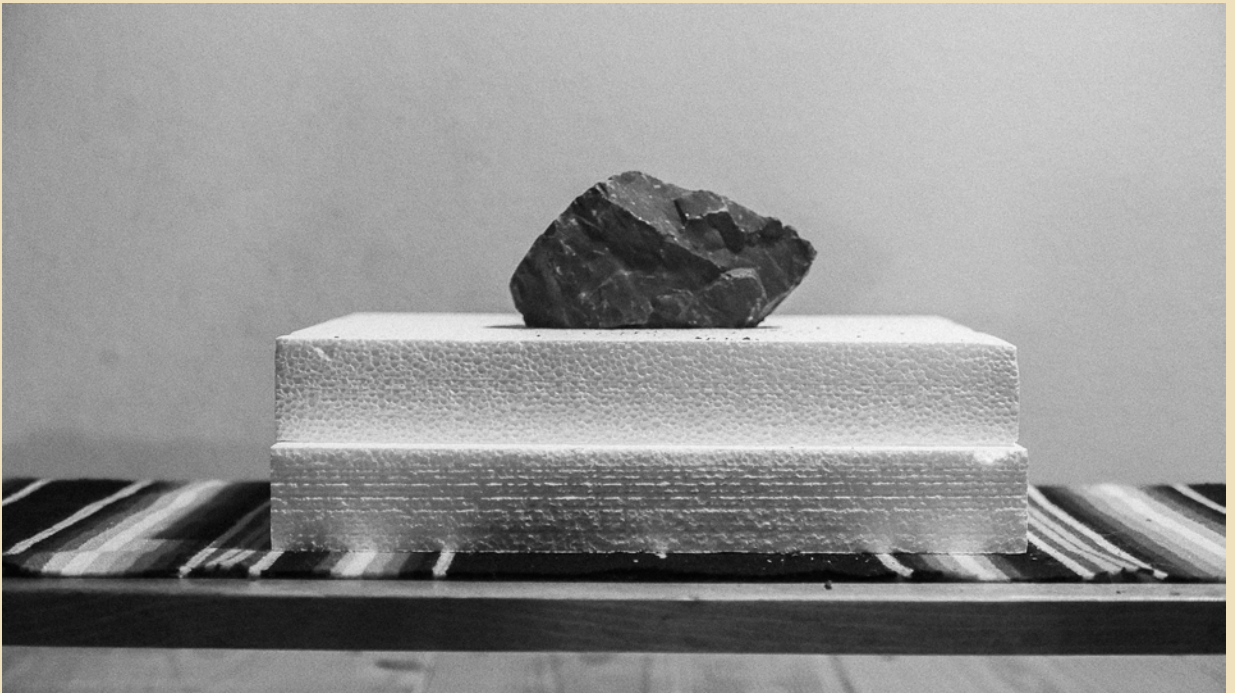


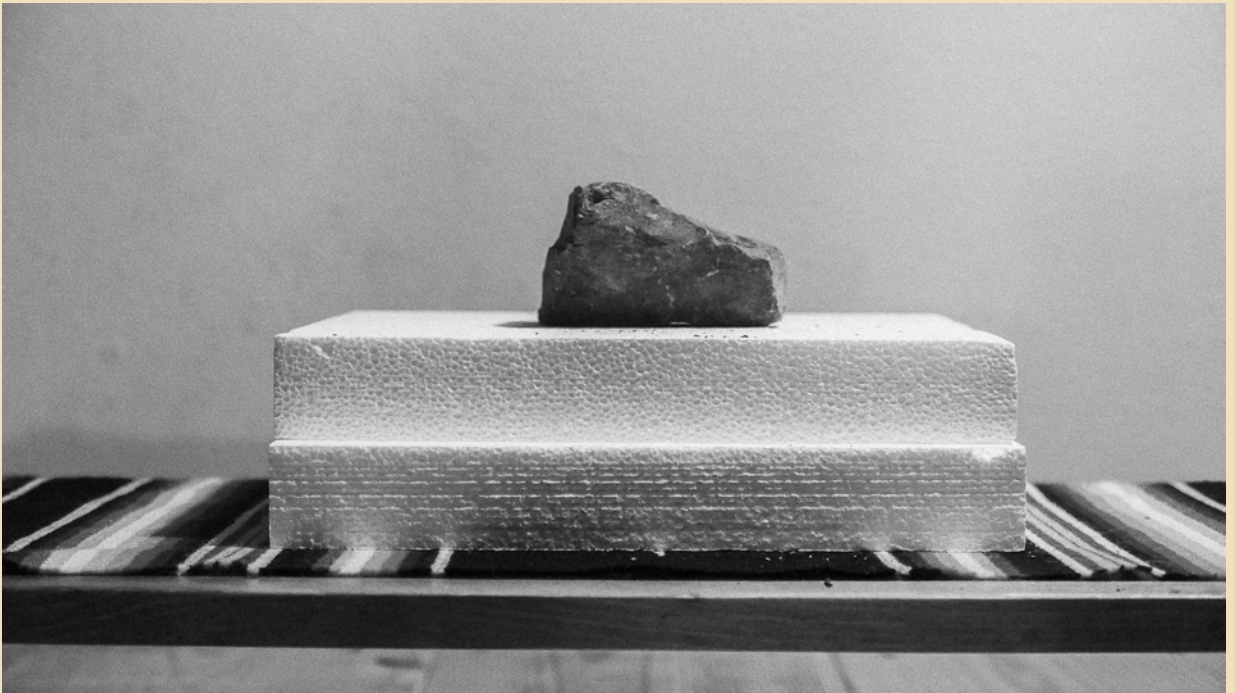




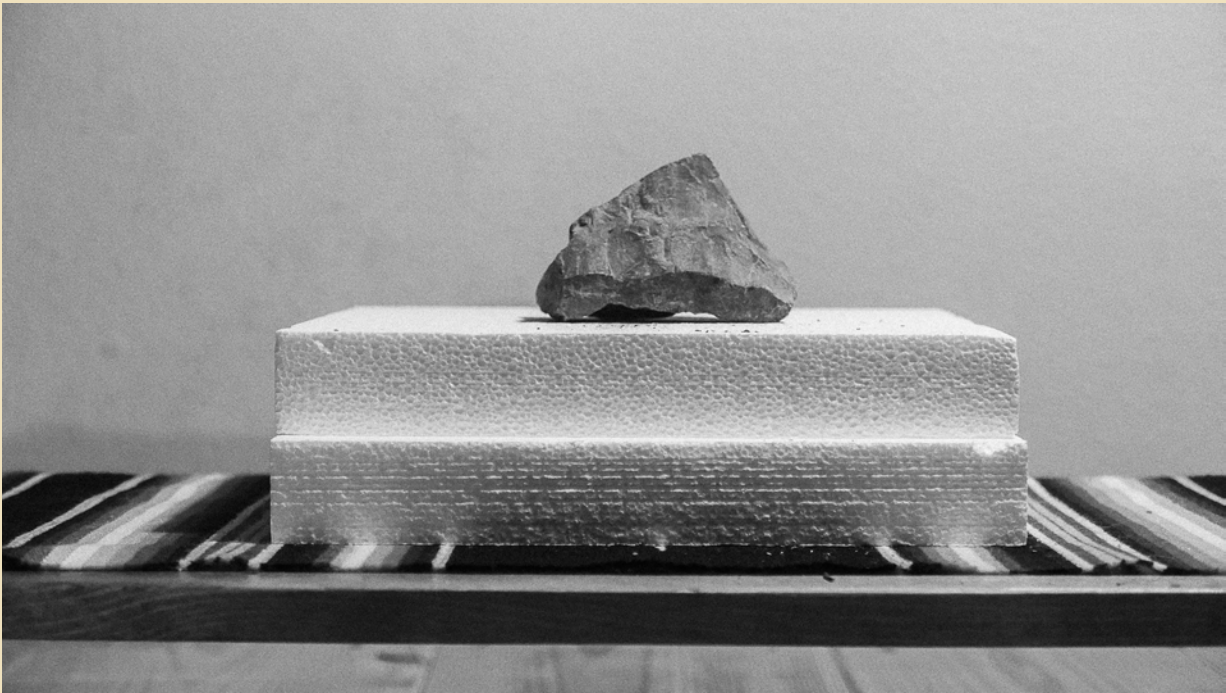


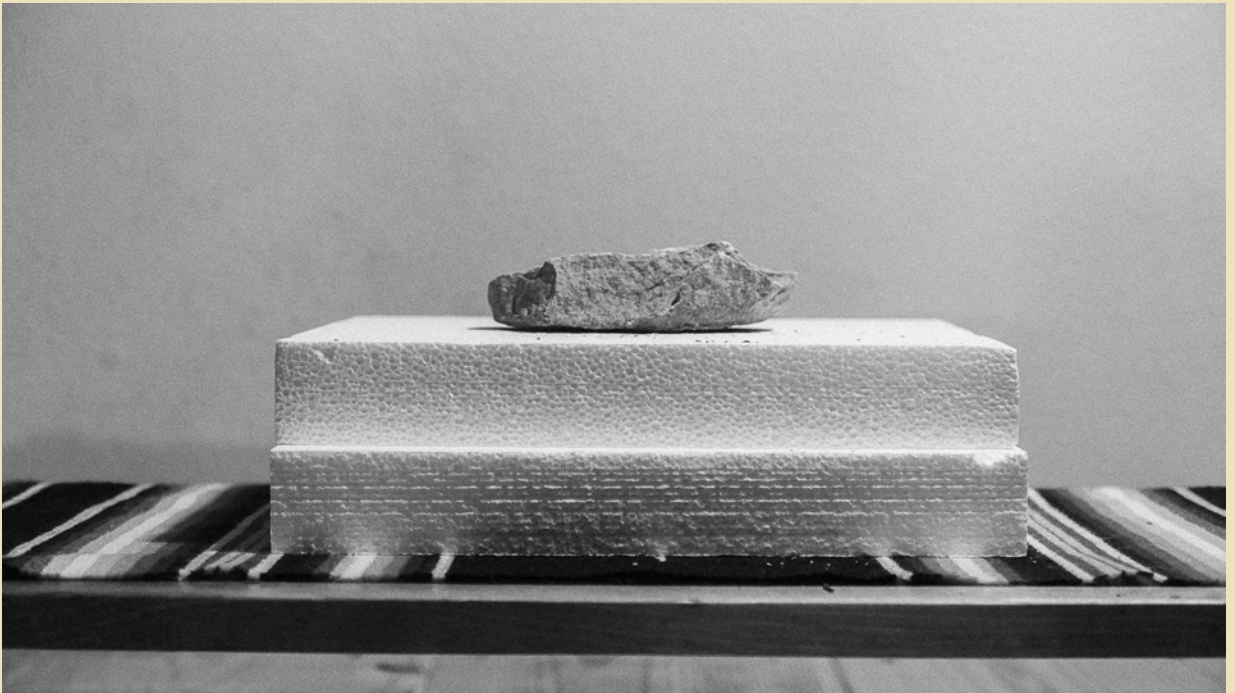




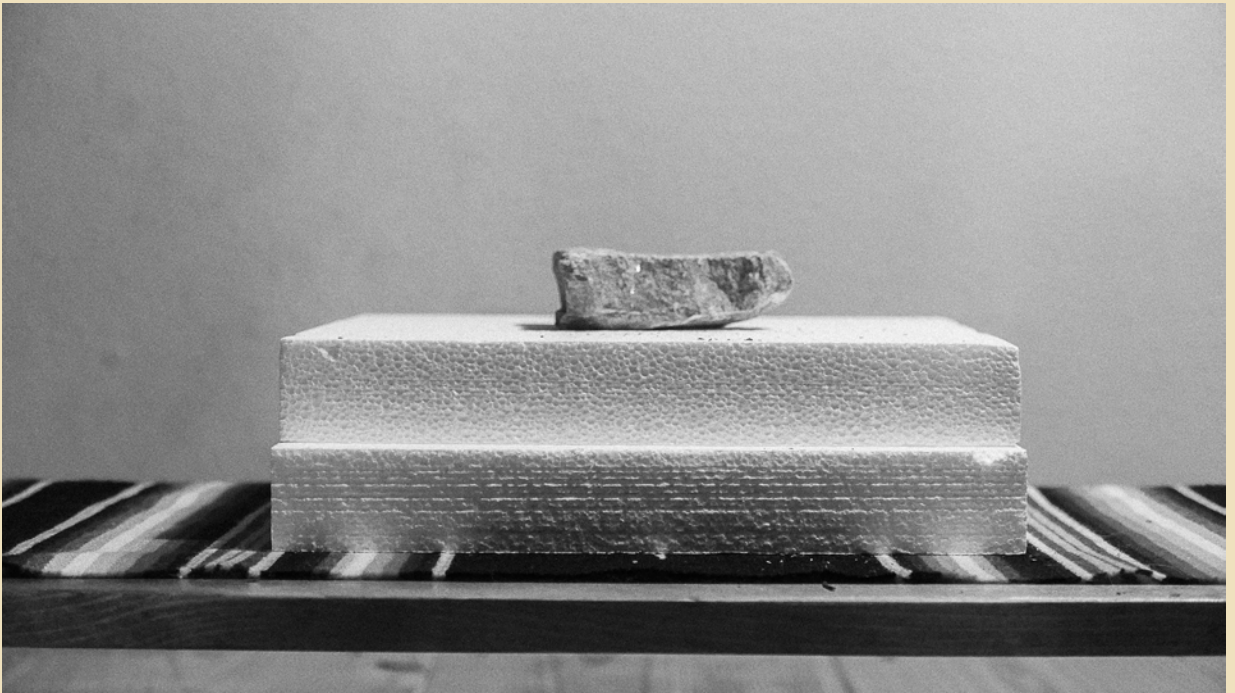


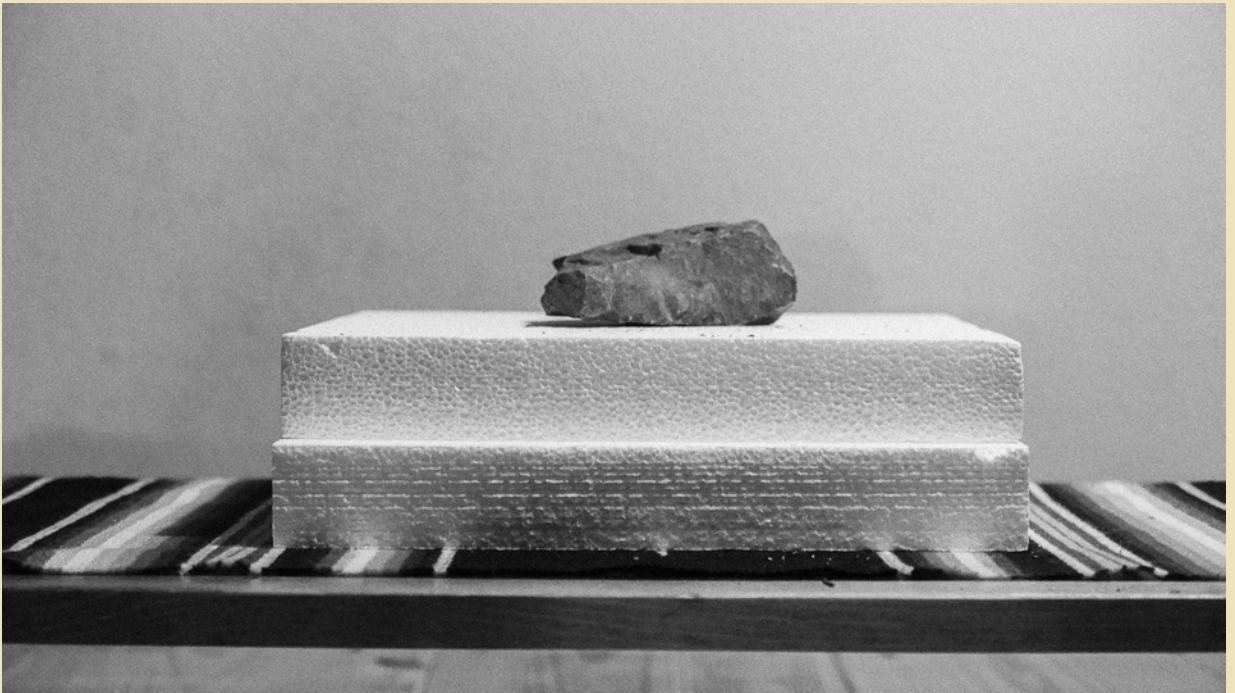




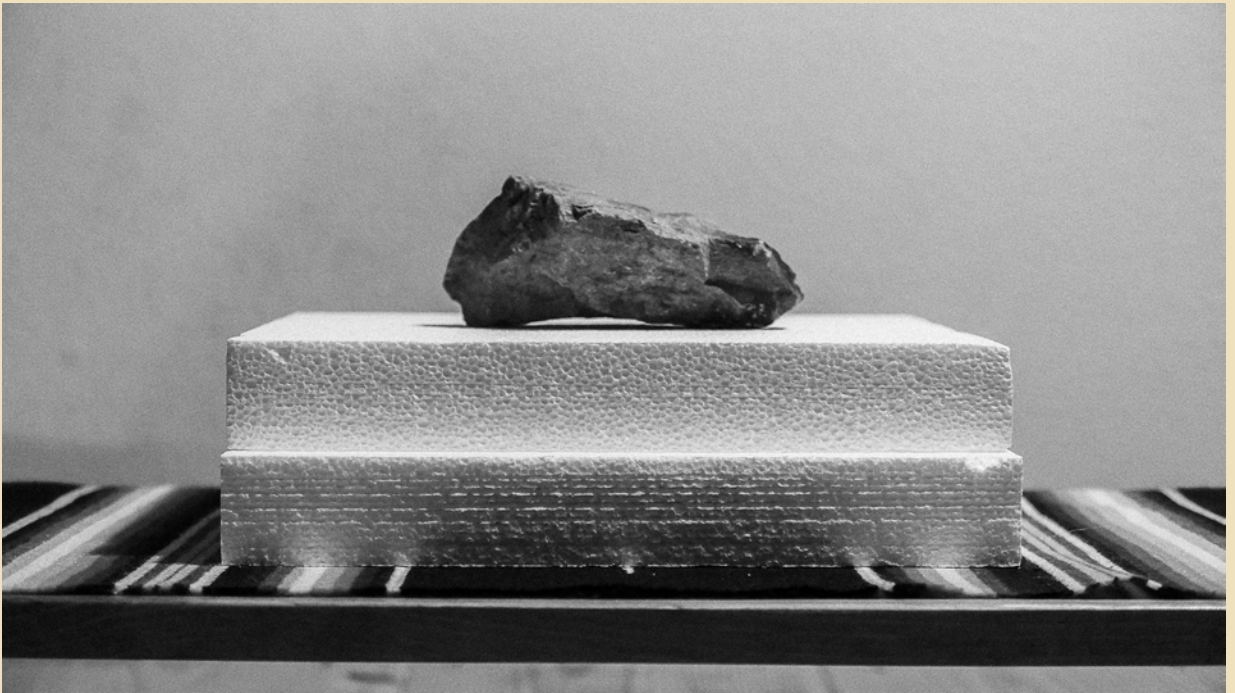












I didn't get the chance to be a delinquent until I moved out of my parents' house. I wouldn't have come across my collection of Stones without the sentiment of a suburban teenager.

I came to Seattle in 2012, the vision of the city to come was already set, but the residue of tech had yet to spread. In 2013, art school brought the Earthworks, land art, and minimalist objects of the 60s & 70s to my attention. These art works left me nostalgic for the interiors of bureaucratic Wilderness buildings owned by the National Forest Service or National and Local Parks administrations. These buildings held their own personal "Non-Sites". Except these sites were usually meant to educate the public. They were not Stones arranged as works of art to tell the story of the site outside the building, beneath the building, around the building, and beyond the building. I grew up in these sites: Weekend after weekend a new Monument, a new Campground, a new building. This work may have forgotten my ancestors, but it continues to comfort me in the present.

Back to the Stones

Its early 2014 and a new piece of shit, half-assed, box home was being built in North Ballard (a product of Tech Residue) Like many of these new lots this house had a temporary driveway constructed of quarry stones, also known as Riprap or Landscape Rock. Seeing that I had no plans on paying for rocks, I decided to steal, six, five-gallon buckets of Stones from this particular driveway. Why this driveway? No real reason. I was stoned, the music was right, and it looked like the right driveway.



The Stones' first life away from the driveway was in a piece titled:

"Conservation Ethic- The Art of Producing From The Forest Whatever It Can Yield For The Service of Man" (fig.1)

The Stones were stretching their legs. My arms were unprepared.

At this point I did not know how many Stones I was holding on to. They were measured in buckets.
There was no need to count.

I decided to get into the trade of monument building. Stones make for great monument builders.



"Crazy Horse Wasn't Built In a Day" 2016

Eventually the Stones made their way into a house. Far from the quarry but closer to the driveway. Here the Stones found work.



Job 1



Job 2



Job 3



Job 4

The Stones were no longer a material, they were a part of my home. They were a part of me, but each and every one was still their own Stone. They remain uncounted. There is no need to archive at this point, but they deserve to be washed.



















































The Stones are no stranger to instability. These stones have never known what it means to sit in a fixed position. The crust beneath our feet is in a constant flux, the earth is a Transitional object. Today our lives fluctuate on a minute-by-minute scale. Growing closer to the second-by-second fluctuation of the earth beneath our feet. As the money dries out will the Stones have a home? How does one transport six, five-gallon buckets of quarry stones? The Stones are now in a position of privilege. They occupy a space of suburban excess. At this point they have even occupied the virtual spaces of tech residue.

As a result of instability, it was time to document the Stones, not all of them, only those privileged enough to exist outside of their practical labor. Each Stone archived, photographed, and counted.

209

I would not bet my life against the accuracy of this count. Things always slip through the archive. I was stoned. Things happen.



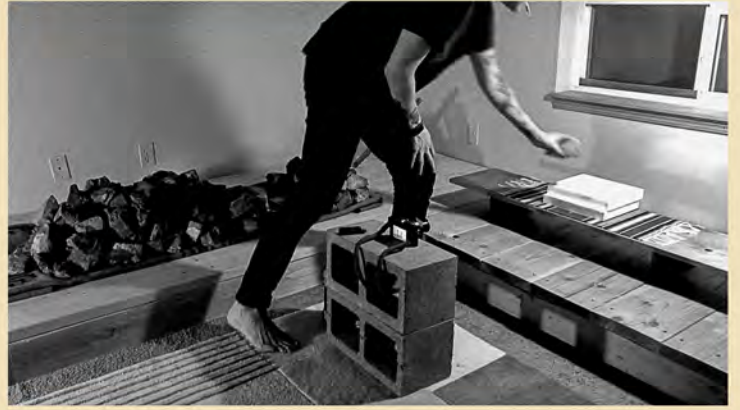
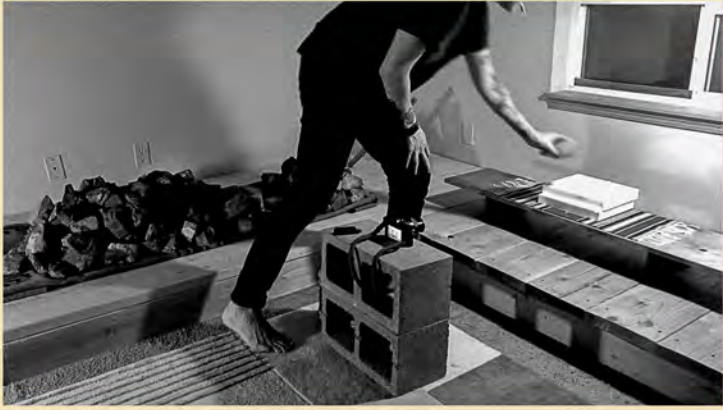
















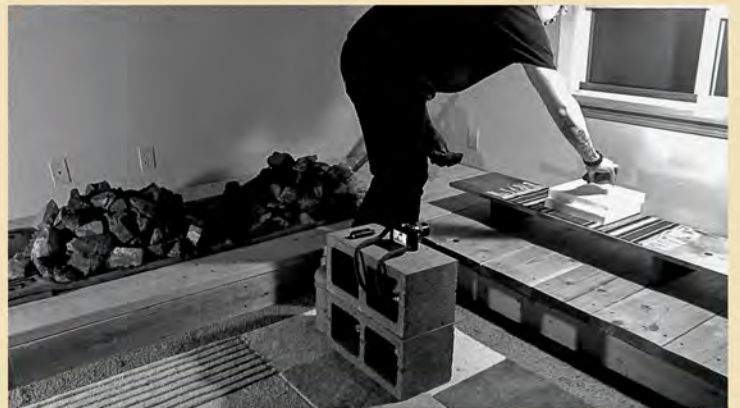
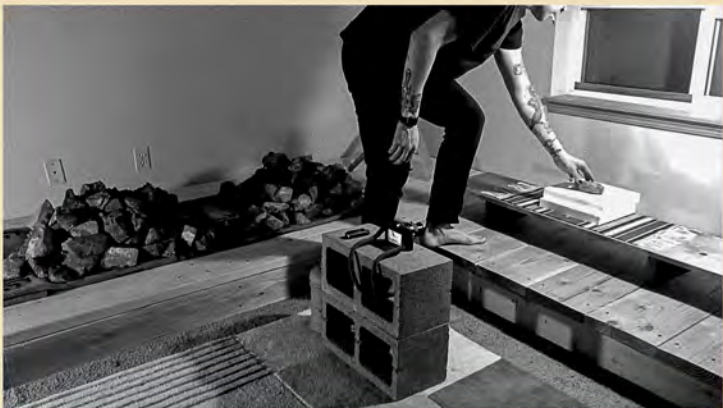


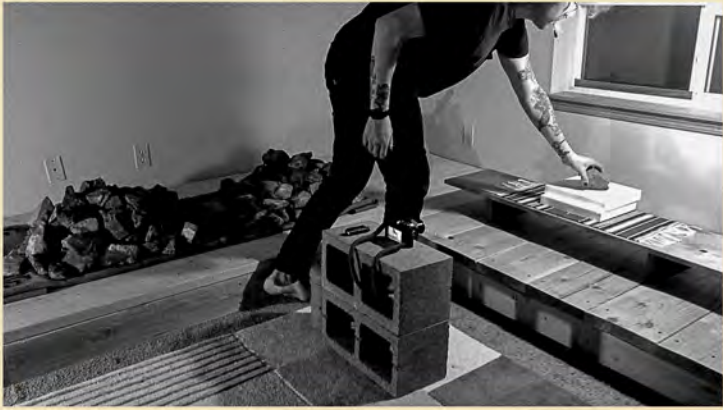








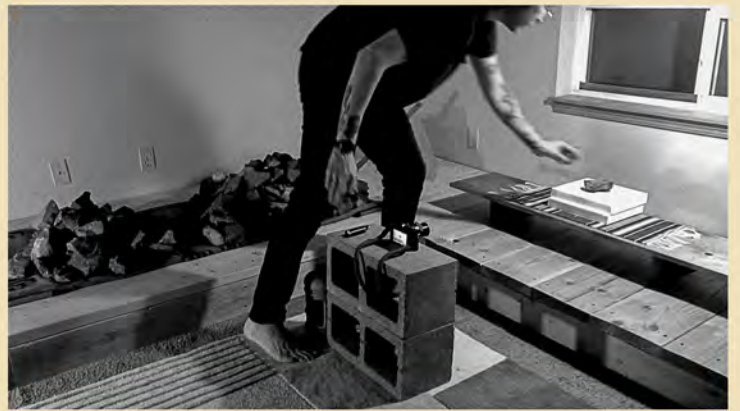
















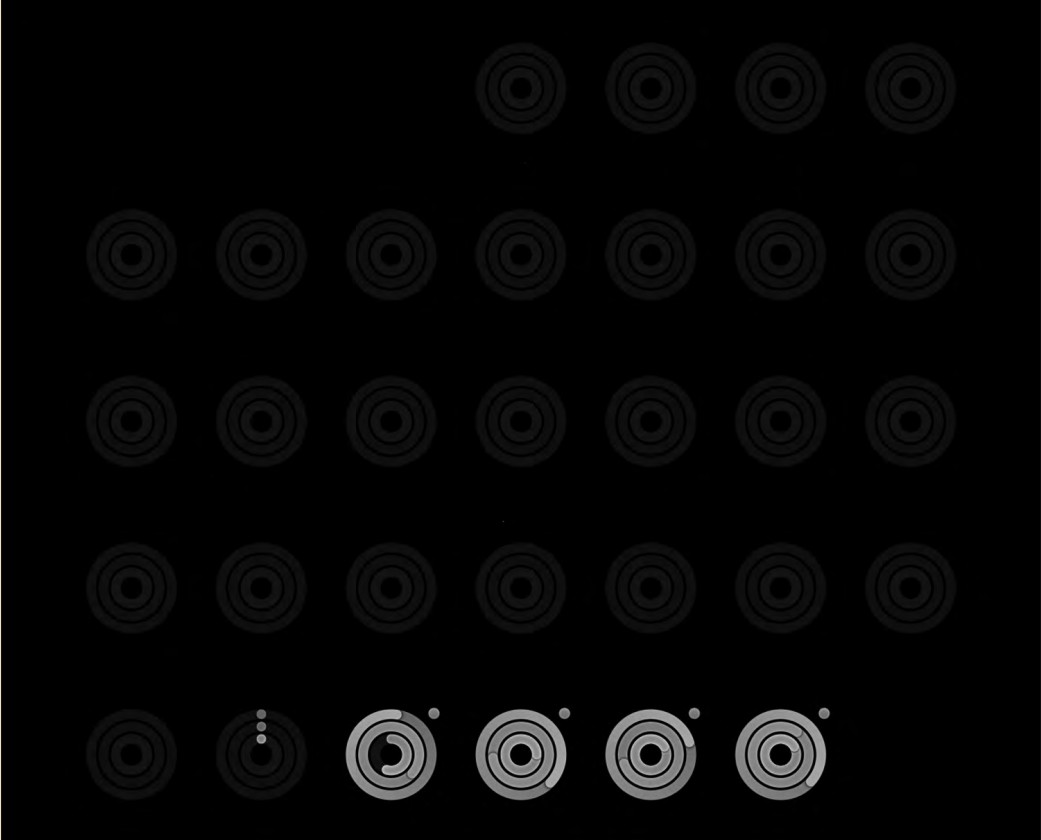


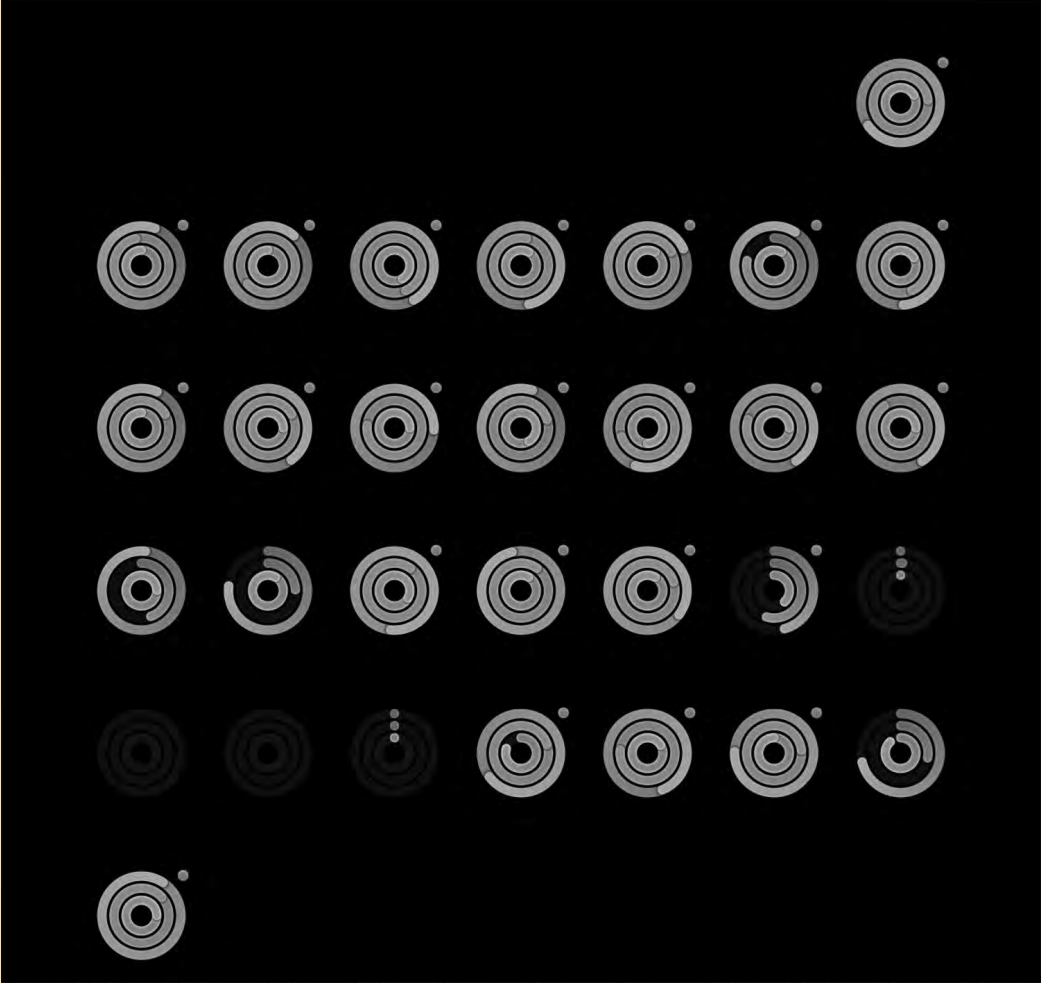


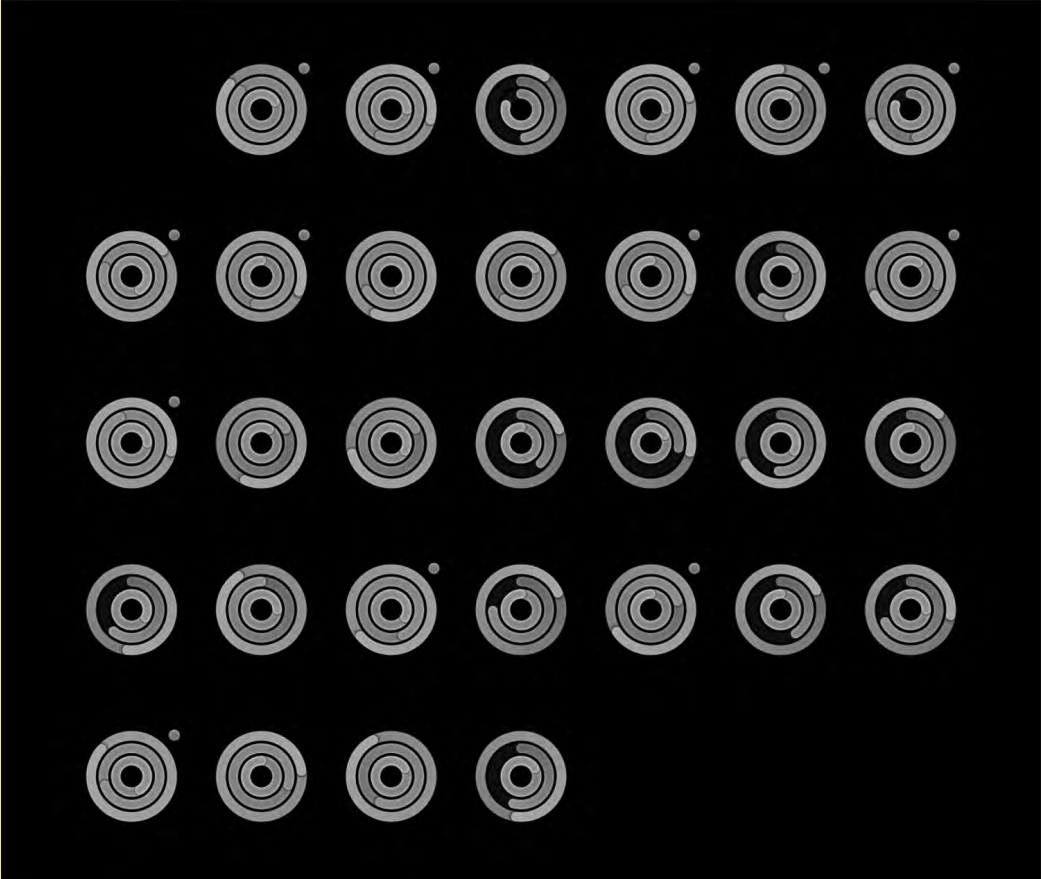


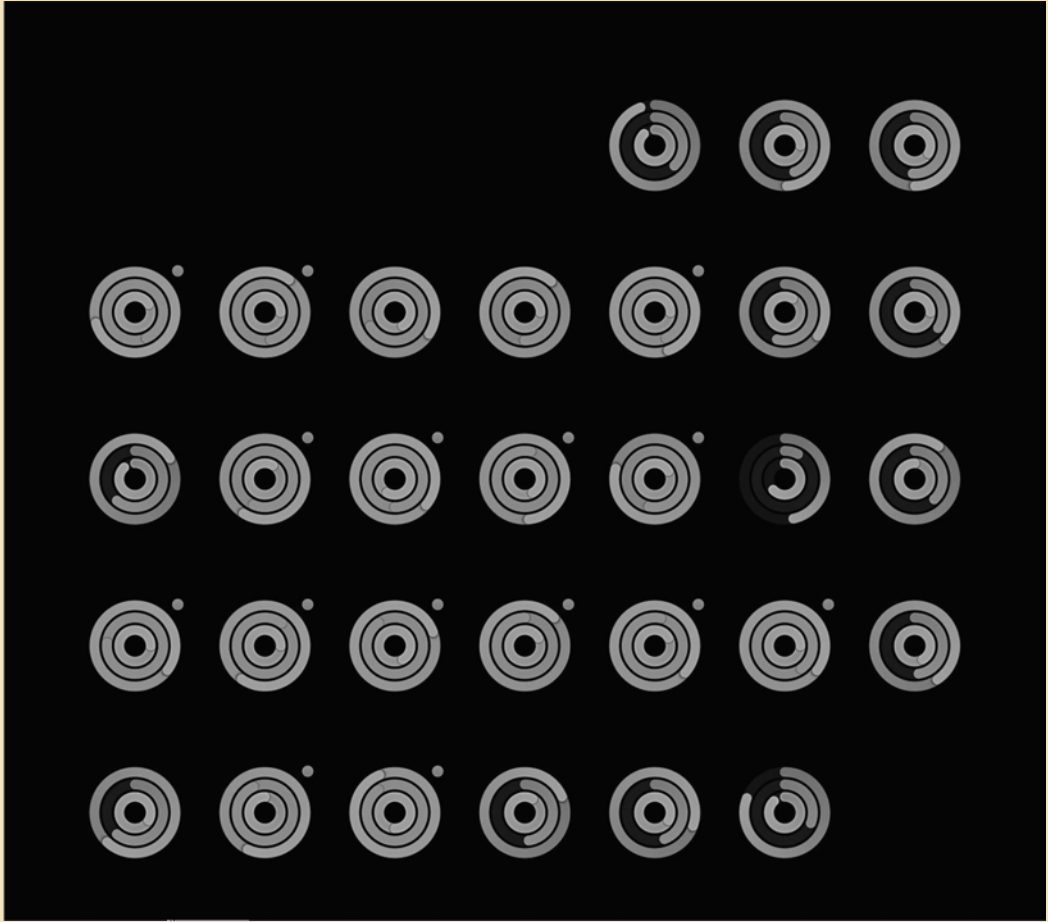
The politic of my work is in a constant flux. Maybe this is because my own identity is in a constant flux. Transitional objects. Objects in transition. I am an object in *transition*. I have always been a transitional object. In flux. My stones are in a constant transition. My objects are in a constant transition. My home is in a constant transition.

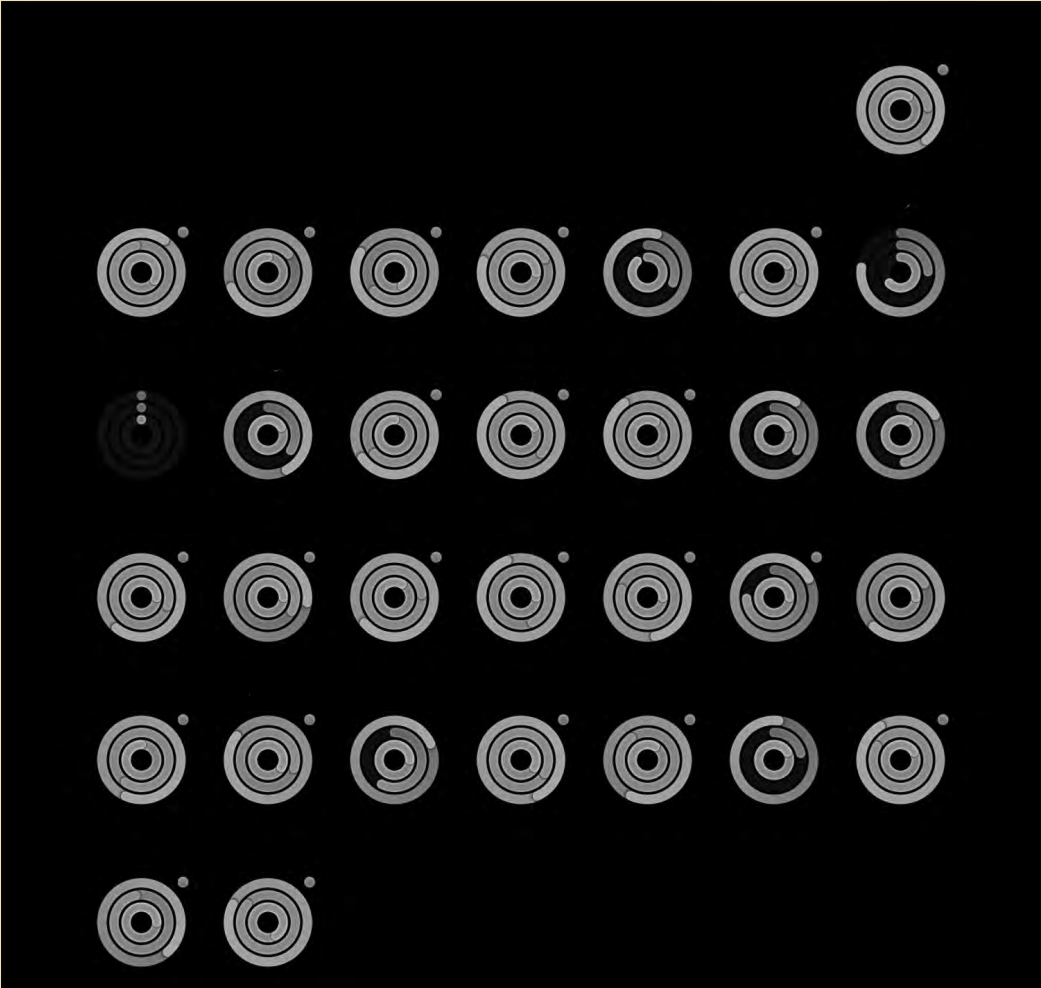
My body is the only object I know how to carve. I am a *transitional* object.

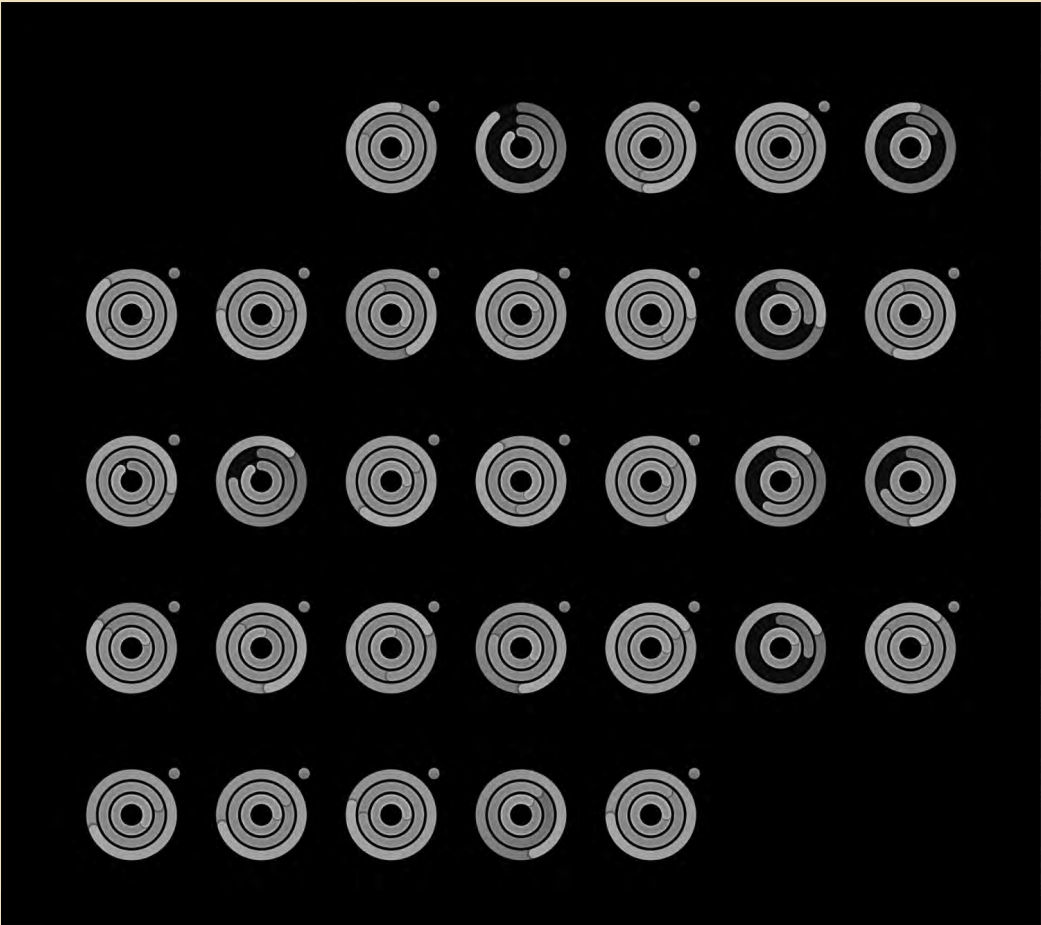


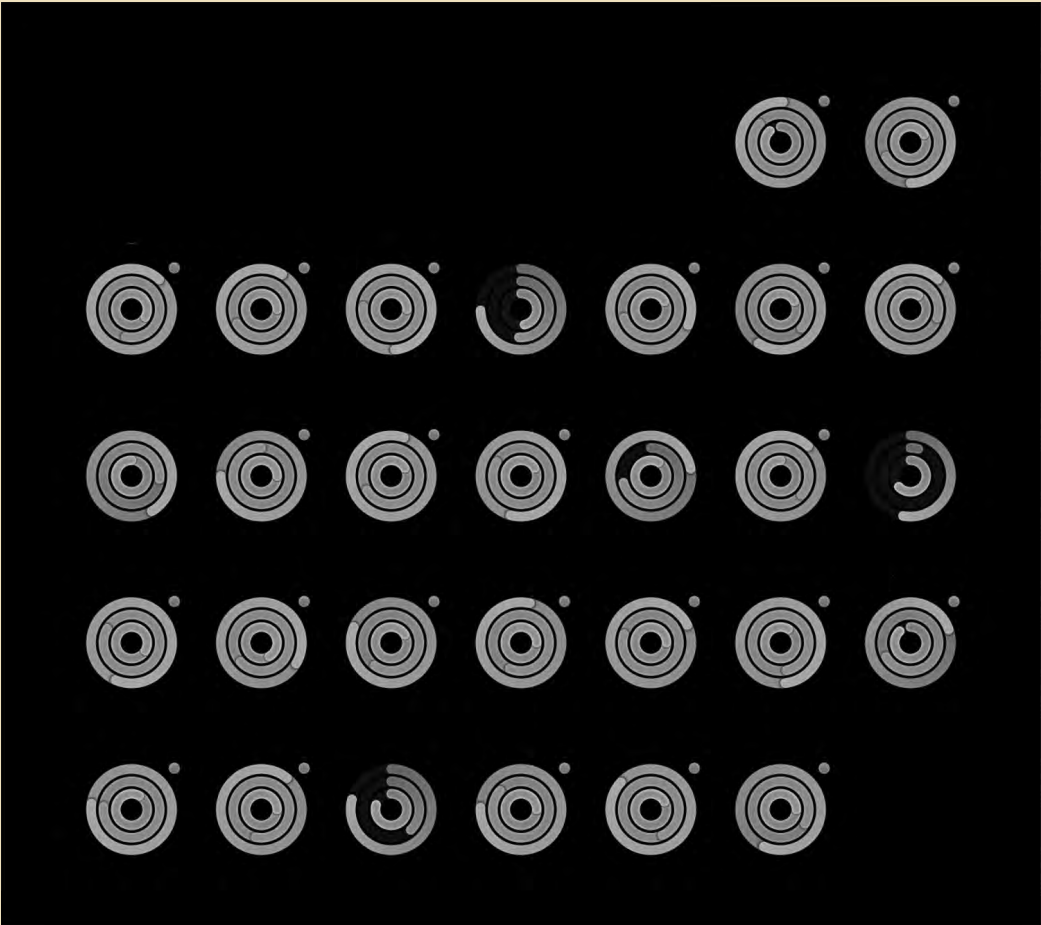


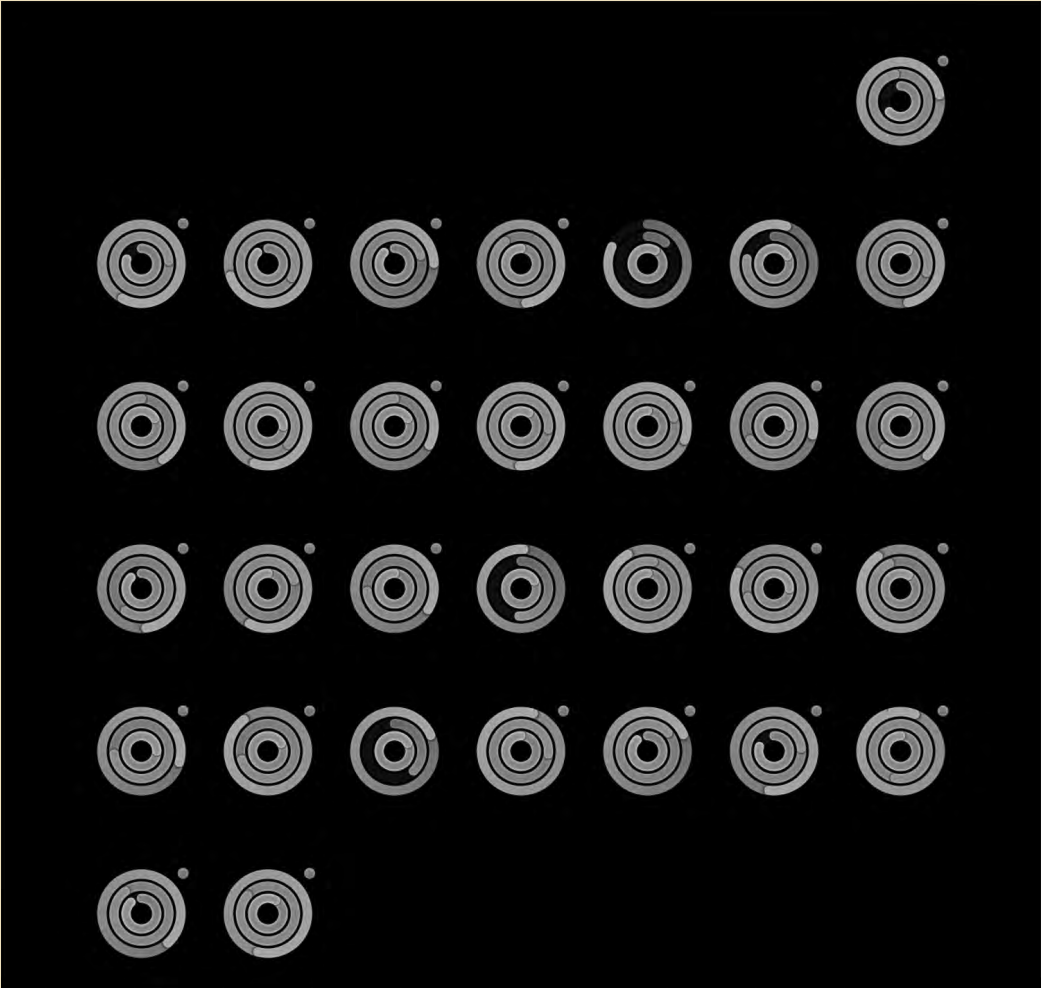


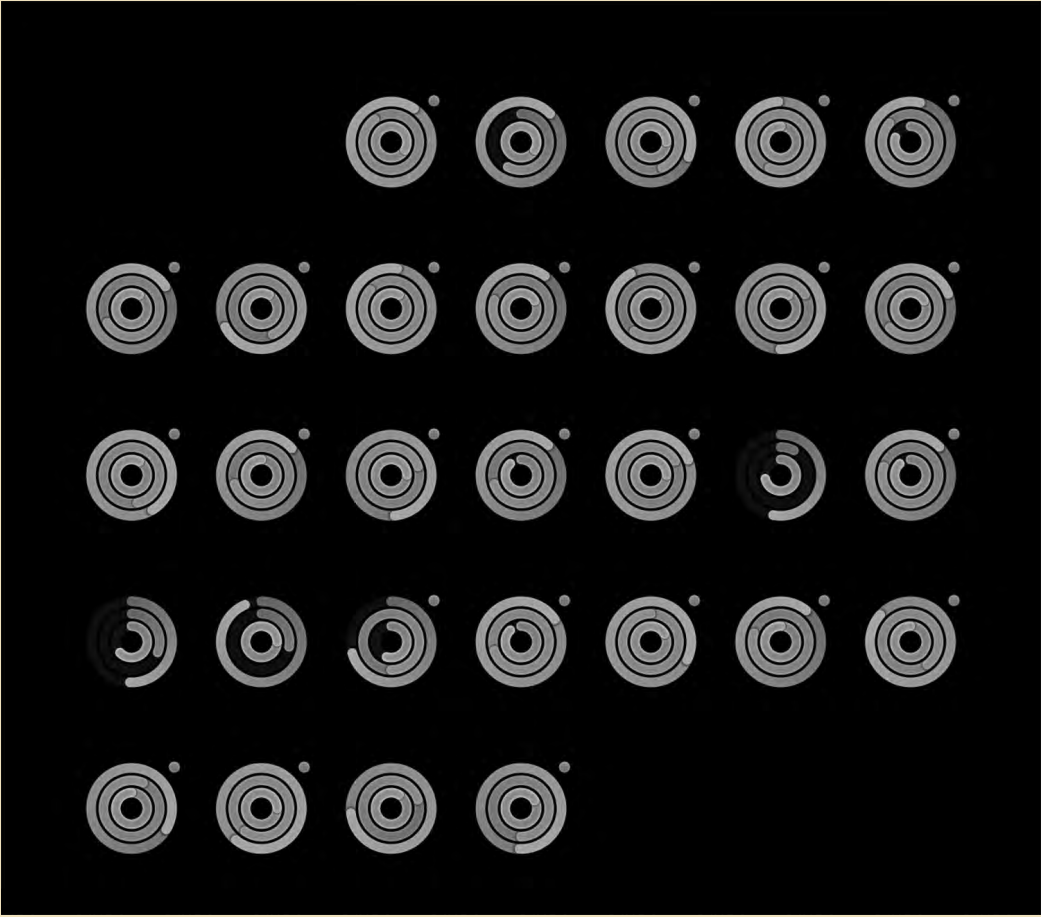


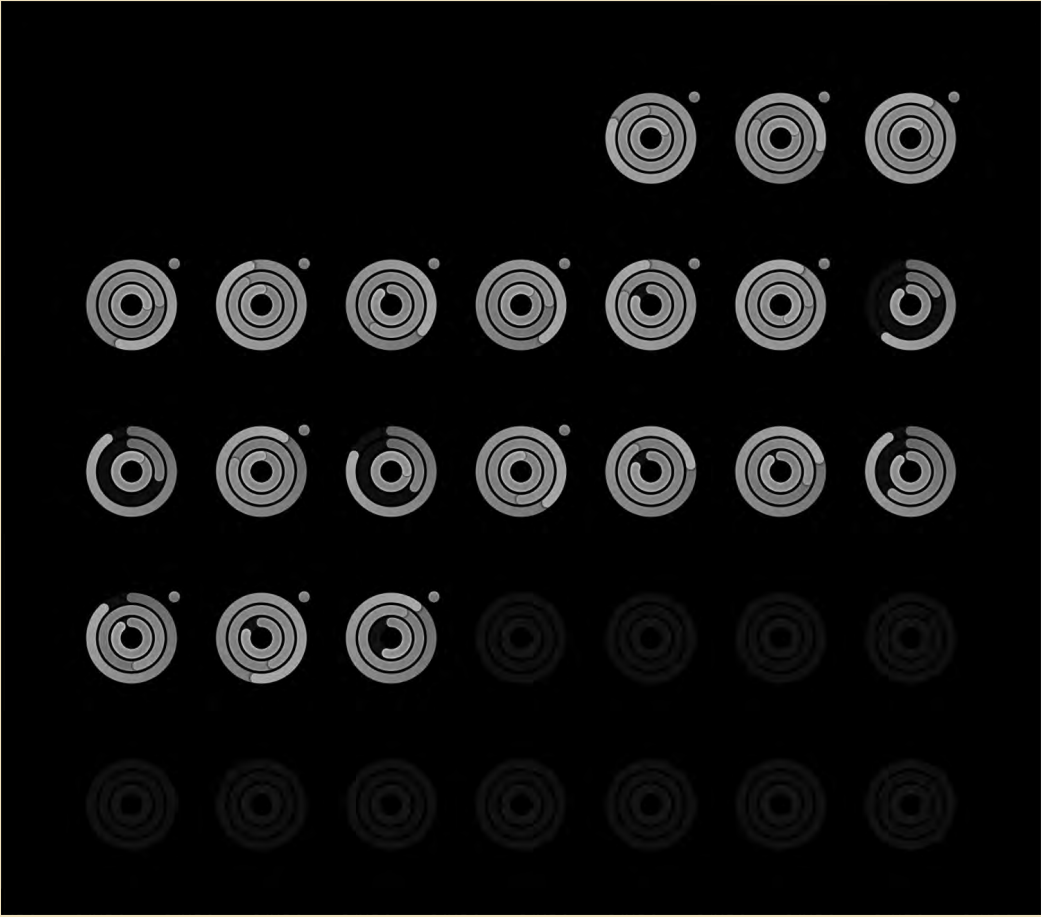












I would like to use this space as a way to map out my on going conversation about resources. I hesitate to define what I mean by “resources” at the moment. This is mostly due to my inability to give a “tldr” (or too long didn’t read, a common Internet short hand for briefs summaries provided for people who could not read an entire article or story) However, If I was to be less stubborn in this moment I would say that the “general” focus will be on “raw” “physical” materials. The way we discuss these resources will shift radically, much like the tectonic plates beneath. This shift is less about the violent clash of different definitions but more about how these ideas exist as physical masses, each plate with its own ideologies and ecosystems, connected at the surface but constantly shifting the deeper you go.

From 2009 to 2012 I worked at my family’s pawn shops in Denver, Colorado. It started off as just a weekend job. Eventually I graduated high-school early and moved to full time. The oldest shop was located in the most impoverished neighborhood in the state: Colfax Avenue. stretched from the base of the foothills near the city of Golden to the far North East outskirt of Aurora. Moving through quiet white suburbs, onto the Black/Hispanic suburbs as you neared the inner city. The most well-known stretch of Colfax ave. Is from Colorado Blvd. (A very rich predominantly white neighborhood filled with “old” money near the Denver Zoo) to Peoria St. (where now University of Colorado Hospital campus sits)

This stretch of Colfax is not a unique situation in American cities. Many cities have a similar street. Always lined with, Motels, Strip clubs, Gas Stations, Mini Marts, Pawn Shops, fast food joints, payday loan businesses, furniture & appliance rental stores, and a handful of other busin ess meant to pray on the low income Black and Latinx communities in the area.

My family's shop “Colfax Pawn” was located right in the heart of Colfax. Open for over 20 years at the time it was a neighborhood staple. It was not the average corporate pawnshop. My uncle was a Master Jeweler, a drug fiend, musician, and a collector. The fact that my uncle was a Master jeweler,; meant the business was able to thrive not only pawns but also custom jewelry repair and commissions. The clients changed constantly. One day it was a white clean- cut business man who nervously parked his BMW on the side of the building, looking for someone to make a custom engagement ring. Due to jewelries high commercial markup (generally 300% at a Zales or Jareds) it was still cheaper to have a custom piece made. The flip side of the new BWM was up and coming young black hip-hop artist from the surrounding neighborhoods. Usually there to buy large rope chains, nugget gold rings or the occasional Jesus or cross pendant adorned with diamonds.

In a way every object that passes through a pawn shop is a Transitional object. Tucked away on rickety diy shelves in the basement these objects are suspended in a state free of ownership. The pawnshop itself does not own them yet, nor does the person who pawned them in the first place. While these objects sit idle in the basement they are no longer being used for their primary function. They are a collateral loan; they are simple physical objects of capital.

Let us take a car stereo for example. There is a decent chance a car stereo being pawned is stolen. This is not a stereotype it is simply the way that the low-income economy functions. From its very origin this radio has been an object in transition. In the most literal sense, it has transitioned from raw earth materials, to manufacturing material to a capitalist consumption material intended to play sounds in the comfort of your car. Its raw earth state was not meant to play music or podcasts. It required a transition for it to achieve this purpose. When that radio was stolen it entered another transition. The individual who broke into the car had no intention on taking that radio and installing it into their own car so it could continue down its path as a sound device under the ownership of a different individual. It was stolen so it could be used as a piece of capital. Once again suspending it in a space where its intended function can be called into question.

The stereo will continue to remain in this state of flux until the loan is either past due or the customer comes back to pay off the loan and collect the item. Once this decision is made the stereo is set for another transition. Will it go out for sale? Will it make its way back to a car? Will it simply be transferred from out basement to another shelf waiting to be pawned again when money is tight? Maybe it was broken in the first place and it is ready to be trashed or recycled and take on a new state entirely?

Not every object that passes through the pawn shop has such practical transitions. My uncle was a fiend for oddities. People knew they could bring him weird art or sculptures, or really any obscure object you could imagine ranging from vintage porn to original blueprints for the World Trade Center. My uncle gave these loans with no real financial safety based on their perceived resale value of some of these objects. We did not know if he was giving a loan on an object because it truly was valuable or if he wanted it to decorate his house. These objects always fascinated me because they were free of an apparent value, pure financial and sentimental speculation.

A pawn shop can be considered a sifting mechanism.

Sift: verb (transitive verb)

1a: to put through a sieve

sift flour

b: to separate or separate out by or as if by putting through a sieve

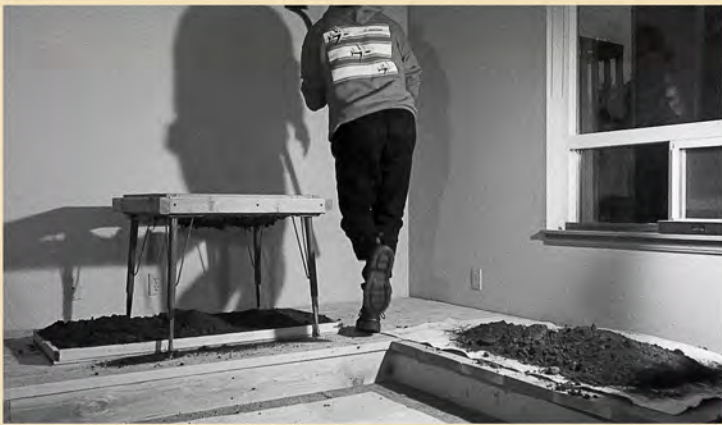
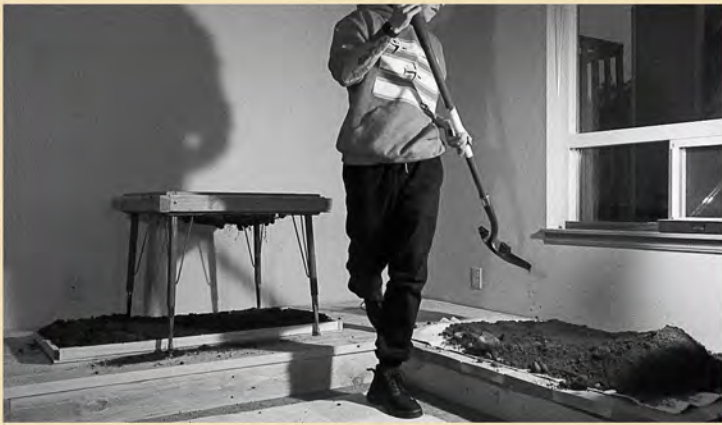
2: to go through especially to sort out what is useful or valuable

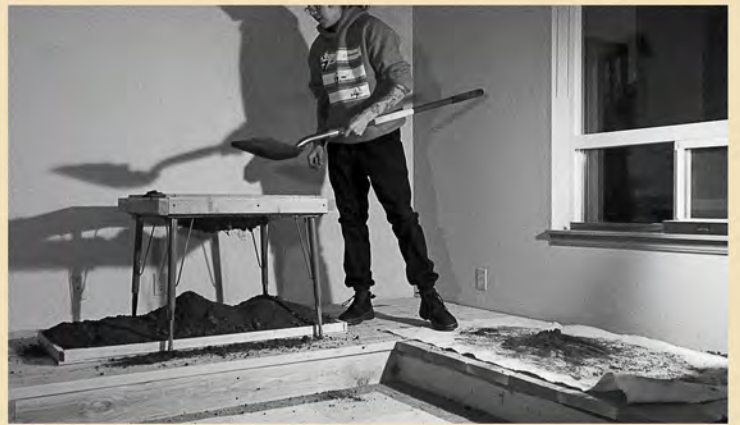
3: to scatter by or as if by sifting

4: to examine closely:

Every object that passes through the pawn shop is sifted. From gold scraps to game consoles. We sift through the objects and find what is useful or valuable. Every day you are constantly sifting through capital excess. To search for what is useful or valuable. There is no set use-value for any object that passes through the pawn shops. Some loans are based purely on speculative good faith. The value is not set by the market but is instead set by the individual seeking the loan.



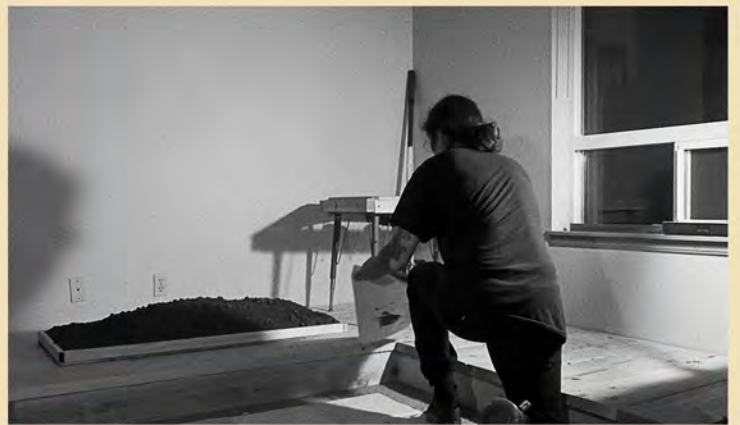














There is an anecdote that for the longest time I passed off as a delinquent stepping Stone. I did not feel the need to credit or highlight a trivial story of a middle-class suburban fit of political unrest. However due to the social climate of 2020 I no longer feel the need to brush off what was in hindsight was one of the most blatant examples of white american middle class censorship and I am no longer embarrassed by the potential “teenage angst” characterization of this story.

The time between the Arab-Spring and American Occupy movement I was applying to Art schools for the first time. After several portfolio reviews the institution was getting a head start on its pursuit to complicate art making. I came away with the feeling that I had to use photography to tell something “beyond” the image. A complication we are all too familiar with. Digital photography was running rampant and the social media we have today was still “maturing”. The election was in full swing and unrest was in the air. I lived like most of us in a constant flood of image pollution of the unrest around the world. I can now admit that the content I produced was nothing more than a feeble grasp at understanding global inequality from the perspective of a suburban middle-class teenager; however, it is not until now that I can rationalize the act of political violence that was dealt out as a response to this work from the public school system.

I created a character named “Friendly Sam” he was played by my cousin who was the same age as myself. He wore a white t-shirt adorned with a sloppy spray-painted peace sign with an American flag bandana across his face. We went around the city photographing him in various “political” situations. In front of the Capital, a McDonald’s, a new construction site, an ally way in a low-income neighborhood my grandparents lived in. I thought I was making a political statement. So, I decided to go “further”. After a night of binging images of recent riots in Egypt I decided Friendly Sam needed a riot of his own. Thanks to the recent Homecoming bonfire there was a destroyed car in my High-Schools parking lot. A perfect site for a riot. I made sure to “ask” the principle if I could use the parking lot to avoid any kind of trouble. Of course, I did not include all the details of the shoot. Even then I was not naive enough to trust the institution completely. I had my permission I was set.

That night I made my riot materials. 6 faux Molotov cocktails and two signs. One reading “Fuck America” the other “Fuck the System”. It is no surprise this is seeping with the residue of teenage suburban angst. On 6/23/2011 I held my “riot”. Seven or eight of us gathered in the back of the parking lot pretending to let out our rage holding up our props searching for an anger none of us could access or understand at the time. During the shoot, the police were called. Two police SUV’s pulled up; the officers let us know there had been complaints of a “Fuck America” sign. After explaining to the pigs that I had permission and that the shoot was for a “school project” they went about their way.

After that I promptly rushed home and began to edit. Proud of what I produced I instantly uploaded the images to Facebook. The response was to say the least negative, but it showed my that I was on a very different train of thought than my peers. The response was so negative I took down the image within twenty minutes. I was deemed un—patriotic and un-American by a majority of my peers.

The next day I brought office by my schools cop. It felt like a movie scene, except I was not the cool kid being escorted to the office by the cops for having a giant house party the night before. My first stop was at the assistant principal’s office. The real principle was in the middle of having conversations with the school district due about current predicament. The assistant principle placed a black and white screen shot of my Facebook post from the night before. I explained everything, I was taught not to lie to the people in charge. I was told that the mother of a problematic white student who had past of racist

and homophobic offences had reported my image because she felt that it deserved the same punishment as her sons past violent actions.

Despite having good standings with the administration at my high-school I was told I was being punished because I had facsimiles of weapons on school property and although I asked permission for the shoot I did not provide adequate details of how I planned on using the parking lot. When the main principle came in, he informed me that the school district wished to expel me as well as all of the other participants of the photoshoot. However, he was able to “convince” them that I was a “good student” and that I was unaware of the consequences of creating a facsimile of a weapon. As a show of good faith to the district I was suspended for a week while the rest of the participants were required to complete community service hours.

When I returned to school, I went to the photography teacher to tell her about what happened and show her the images. Sadly, I was not meet with praise for my political and artistic “bravery”, instead she told me that I would get over this state of political angst and that the rage I was feeling was simply a temporary state of teenage suburban angst. It is 2020 and the rage and dissatisfaction with the institutions around me is still present. If I could include one pop-culture phrase to close out this story it's this: “Mom it's not just a phase”

