

**RICCARDO ARENA**

---

**PORTFOLIO 2022**

---

[www.riccardoarena.org](http://www.riccardoarena.org)

# ARTIST STATEMENT

---

Riccardo Arena is an artist, researcher and teacher, whose practice is oriented to investigate the philosophical and symbolic contents of images through the creation of visual reflections conceived as poetic formalizations of a research devoted to admiring the plot of significant correspondences that link forms, phenomena, topographies and mirages of consciousness.

By exploring the analogies between interdisciplinary territories and integrating multiple languages and expressive techniques his praxis is devoted to the construction of visual and narrative imagery. Ecosystems of abstract forces that by combining and harmonizing theoretical and formal research, pose as cultural devices of imaginative knowledge.

Over the years, he has dedicated himself to the development of long-term independent projects in different countries, whose poetics and contents are defined through an intuitive study, connection and intertwining path that occurs during the travel experience.

During this process, the continuous movement between the stratification of archival materials and their intuitive reconfiguration, is condensed into diagrams and mental maps that act as a basis and guide for the elaboration of fictional narratives expressed through installations, films, drawings, prints, books, stories, seminars and workshops. A constellation of languages in mutual dialogue, orchestrated in a field of vision aimed at contemplating the metaphysical and universal components that tie stories, cultures, theories and myths distant in time and geographies.

After the projects developed in China "Four times a tree" (2006/2008), Argentina "Ellero's dual death and visual ecosystem" (2009/2012), Russia "Vavilon" (2013/2017), he is currently showing the project "Hyphae - Where things fall and never return to themselves" (2017/2021), a project born from a series of travels and researches carried out among Iran, Armenia and Ethiopia. The work is based on the novel called "LuDD! - Topography of Light" published in 2019 and reprinted in 2021 by Kunstverein publishing.

*Riccardo Arena (Milan, 1979) lives and works in Milan. Currently, he is an associate professor at: Bologna Academy of Fine Art; Brera Academy of Arts. His works were exhibited at: MONTE VERIÀ, Ascona; GALLERIA MILAN, Milan; MAMbo - Bologna Modern Art Museum; MATERA CAPITAL OF CULTURE 2019; ITALIAN CULTURAL INSTITUTE OF ADDIS ABEBA, Ethiopia; TRIENNIAL OF CONTEMPORARY ART IN ARMENIA, Merkurov Museum, Gyumri; MAXXI, Rome; IMMA, Dublin, CENTROPECCI, Prato; QUADRIENNALE D'ARTE, Rome; ITALIAN CULTURAL INSTITUTE OF LONDON, England; VIAFARINI, Milan; FONDAZIONE SANDRETTO RE REBAUDENGO, Turin; PREMIO FURLA, Palazzo Reale, Milan; MART, Rovereto; MAGA, Gallarate; MUSEO DEL NOVECENTO, Milan; 54th VENICE BIENNALE, Buenos Aires/Venice; 1918ARTSPACE, Shanghai. He was selected as a finalist for the MAXXI PRICE 2017 and won the National Prize LONG PLAY - XXIV, MAGA, Gallarate, and the First Prize at MANUALMENTE, Varese. His workshop, seminars and readings were hosted at: FELTRINELLI FOUNDATION, Milan; AHK - Netherlands Film Academy, GALLERIA MILANO, Milan; ECOMUSEO, Milan; MATERA CAPITAL OF CULTURE 2019; BRERA ACADEMY; MAGA MUSEUM, Gallarate; P.I.A. Persistence Is All- Lecce; AAU - University of Fine Art And Design, Addis Ababa; TUMO, Center for Creative Technologies, Yerevan; VIAFARINI/MIBACT, Milan. He took part in workshops and residencies like: INVISIBLE PAVILIONS, Matera; GRAND TOUR D'ITALIE, Viafarini, Milan; KOOSHK, Thera; IN FAVOUR OF A TOTAL ECLIPSE, Fiorucci Art Trust, Stromboli; ACH - Ammirato Culture House, Lecce; VIR, Viafarini Residency, Milan.*

---

## SELECTED WORKS

---

**GERANOS**

*Choreography of a mental landscape - Movement*

---

Solo Show | MONTE VERITÀ | 2022

Geranos is the first stage of a new project by Italian artist Riccardo Arena, who thus concludes his first residency at Monte Verità. Curated by Noah Stolz, the project will be articulated in various forms and events over the next two years, interacting with various cultural realities in the Locarno region. Geranos is the name of an ancient Greek dance inspired by the mating dance of cranes. It was Karoly Kerényi, a frequent visitor to Olga Fröbe and Eranos, who revealed that this dance is nothing other than the oldest cultural expression evoking the mythology of the labyrinth.

Riccardo Arena will start from this seminal image to open a shared reflection on the enormous potential of the ideas emanating from the Eranos meetings and the Monte Verità community. The wall-collage presented by the artist in the Balint room will constitute an initial restitution of a mental landscape in the midst of its crystallisation.



GERANOS \_Wall Collage Diagram\_2022



**HYPHAE**

*Where things fall and never return to themselves*

---

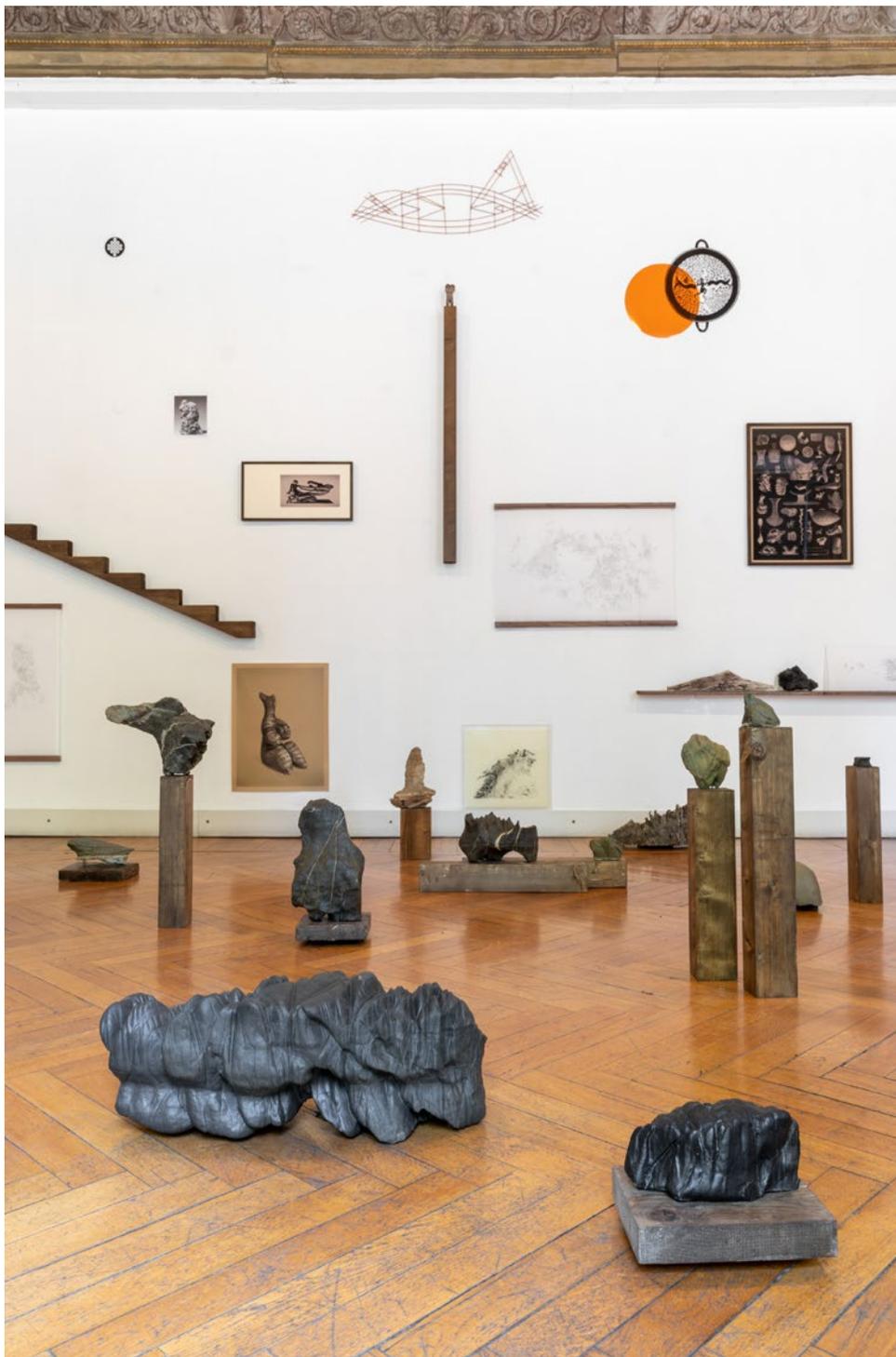
**Solo Show | Galleria Milano | 2021**

After the long-term projects developed in China, Argentina and Russia, the artist embarked on a new research path between Iran, Armenia and Ethiopia in 2017. Travel experiences, studies and investigations in these countries crystallize in a metaphysical poem divided into 21 chapters called LuDD! - Topography of Light, published in 2019. The book constitutes the architecture of Hyphae, a compositional work designed for the spaces of Galleria Milano and developed as a guide for orienting oneself in the imaginaries of the writing.

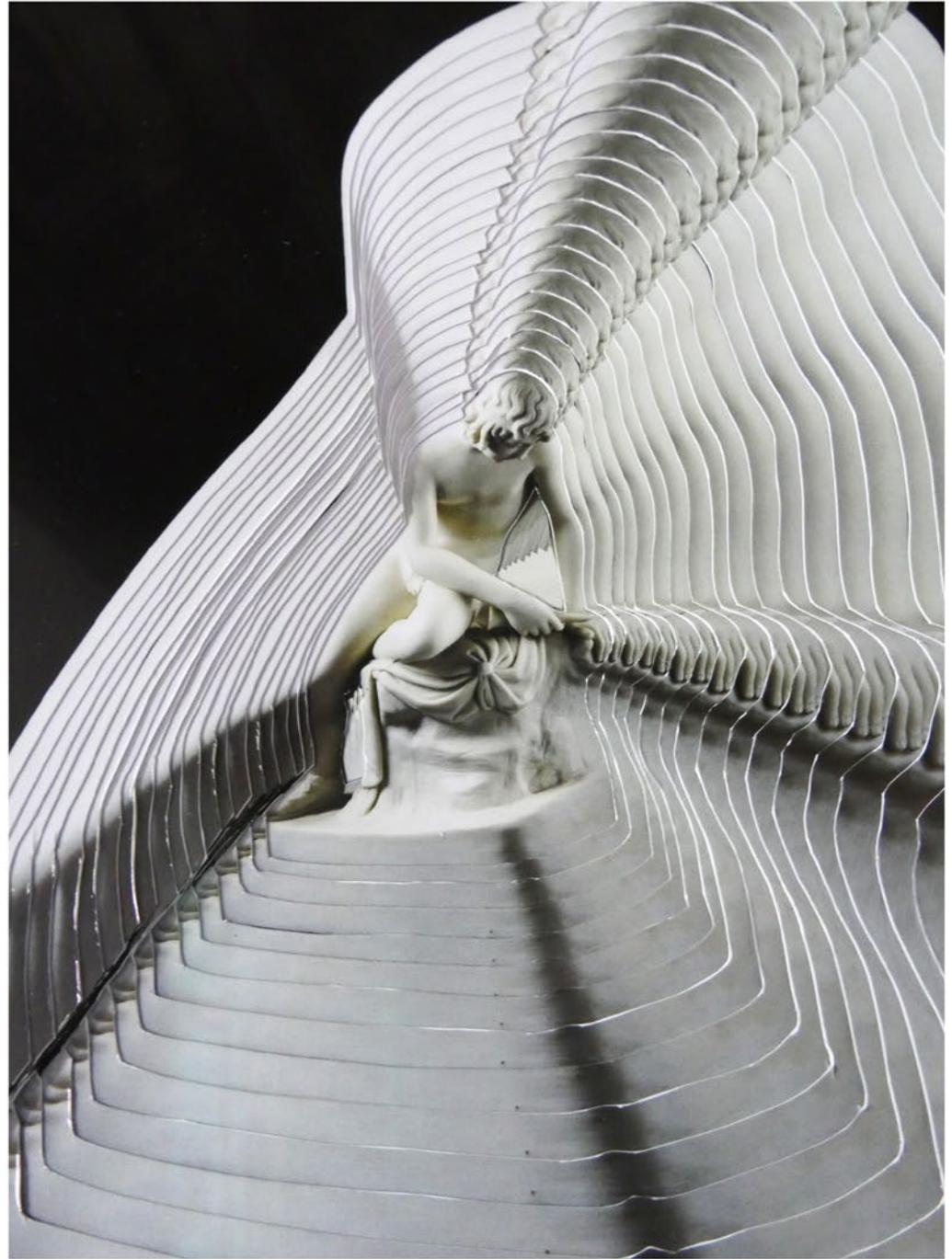
The exhibition, curated by Katia Anguelova is conceived as an articulated installation that orchestrating collages, photographs, drawings, sculptures and archival material. The show is accompanied by a Public Program gathered as an integral part of the work. The program includes a panel of conferences by Giuliano Boccali, Professor of Indology, Sanskrit and Tibetology, Maurizio Barracano, art conservator of carpets and scholar of symbology and religions; a musical performance by Fakhraddin Gafarov and Lorenzo Pierobon; a workshop and a series of guided tours.



Hyphae \_Installation View\_Ph. Roberto Marossi, 2021



Hyphae \_Installation View\_Ph. Roberto Marossi, 2021



Echo & Narcissus | Paper Cut Collage | 56x44cm | 2021



GEUSH URVAN | Fine Art Print | 67x121cm | 2021



Hyphae \_Installation View\_Ph. Roberto Marossi, 2021



Fault Line #8 | ink drawing | 75 x 65cm | 2021



Head of Priest | Paper Cut Collage | 72 x 35cm | 2021



Hyphae \_Installation View\_Ph. Roberto Marossi, 2021



La vetta del Monte Analogo | Paper Cut Collage | 130 x 130cm | 2021



Hyphae \_Installation View\_Ph. Roberto Marossi, 2021

LuDD!

*The topography of light*

---

1° Edition 2019

2° Edition 2021 - Kunstverein Publishing / Boite Edition

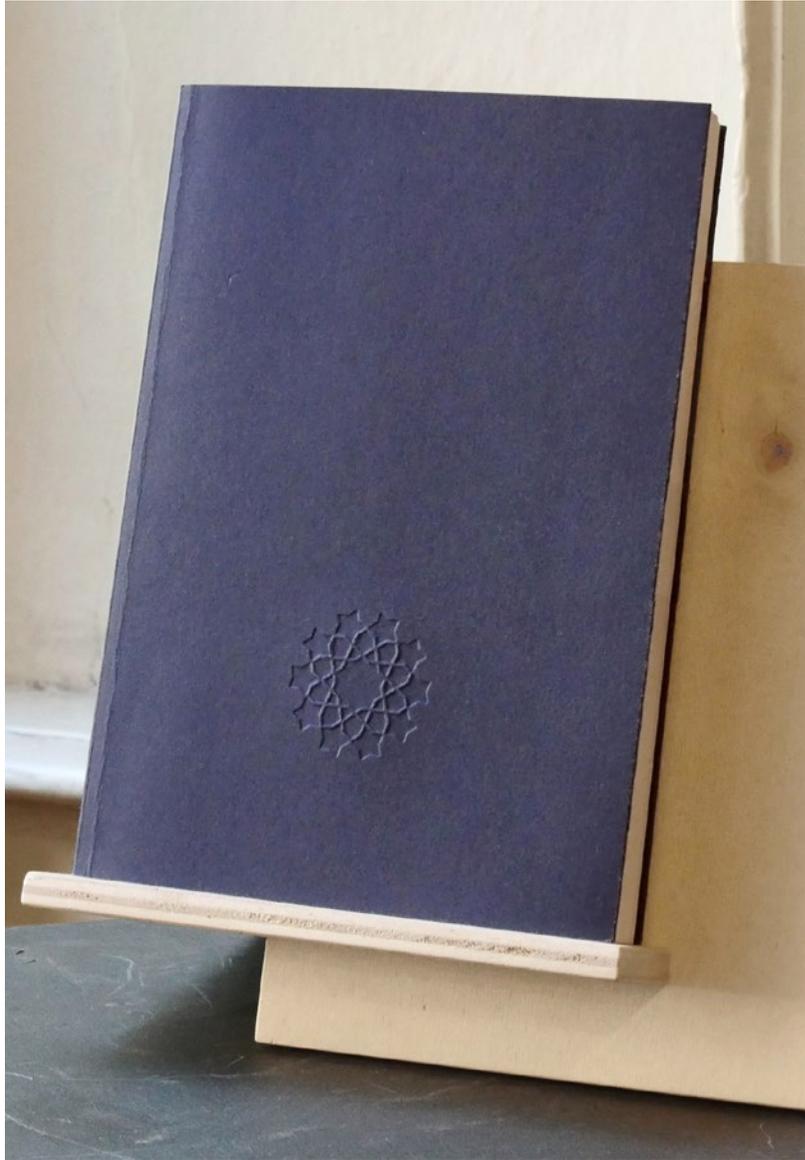
Selected Presentations:

Galleria Milano, Brera Fine Arts Academy, PAV, Matera Capital Of Culture 2019

“LuDD! - The Topography of Light” is a metaphysical poem divided into 21 chapters inspired by a series of researches performed among Iran, Armenia, and Ethiopia.

Built through the interlace of biographies, scientific theories, mythologies and experiences, the story tells the creation and collapse of a Carpet warped with a sound-light yarn, originated by the sacrifice of a Primordial Taurus forced to gallop inside a particle accelerator in whose geometry mirages of consciousness come to life. The carpet is a ritual cartography crossed by a solitary figure who, following a guiding river, embarks on a dissolutive journey between psyche and landscape in search of the voice that first sang the infinite creative act operating within the limits of space, time and metamorphosis of forms.

The writing constitutes the architecture of a wider project and the guide to orientate within the imaginary evocated by its formalizations: installations, lectures, conferences, and workshops are conceived as interdependent elements, whose composition intends to investigate the forces hidden in the concepts of origin, simulacrum, sacrifice, weaving and creative act involved in the vision and contemplation phenomena.



"LuDD! - The Topography of Light", 1° Edition, 150 copies, 220pages, 15 x 22cm, 2019

"LuDD! - The Topography of Light", 2° Edition, 350 copies, 288 pages, 17 x 24cm, Published by Kuntverein, 2021

Per tutto il tempo necessario al completamento dell'opera, l'Artista diventava colui che non è più nessuno. Da quel momento in poi la comunità gli conferiva il prestigio dell'anonimato: senza patria, stato sociale e identità, veniva temporaneamente liberato dall'incombente del suo Io.

Si metteva quindi al lavoro dipingendo Coppe dell'Incanto, ciotole di terracotta al cui interno raffigurava le configurazioni dei Nodi che per un istante gli erano stati concessi in visione.



78



XI

GUIDA FLUVIALE  
*Naufrago tra le Onde del Grano*

Più veloci del mio passo, bastimenti lanosi garrivano alti, rivestendo la plaga di frescure in movimento.

Seguivo il fiume e le sue fedeli battigie.

In viaggio.

97

Il Simbolo mi istruiva nelle arti della lavorazione della pietra e nei segreti dei suoi tagli. Scolpivo massi cicchigli come fossero blocchi di umida creta, liberando dalle loro vene cuori di lucentezza e colore. Educato sui pesi, sulle leve e sulle misure, calibravo equilibri compositivi e proporzioni spaziali.

Apprendevo per sua prossimità ogni maestranza necessaria all'opera da compiere, ora ero progettista e scalpellino, ora ingegnere e muratore, ora falegname e fabbro, eccellendo in tutti questi mestieri come fossero innate vocazioni.

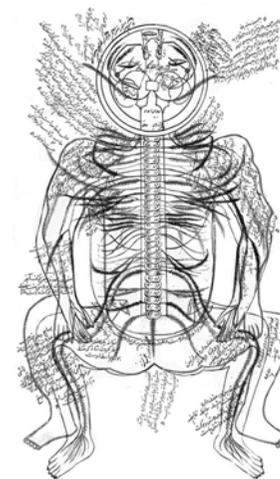
Sotto la sua guida anche i lavori più gravosi erano eseguiti con minimi sforzi ed estrema perizia. La fatica era un tedio ormai sconosciuto. Ogni singolo movimento era calcolato secondo coscienza per impiegare l'esatta energia necessaria all'operazione da compiere.

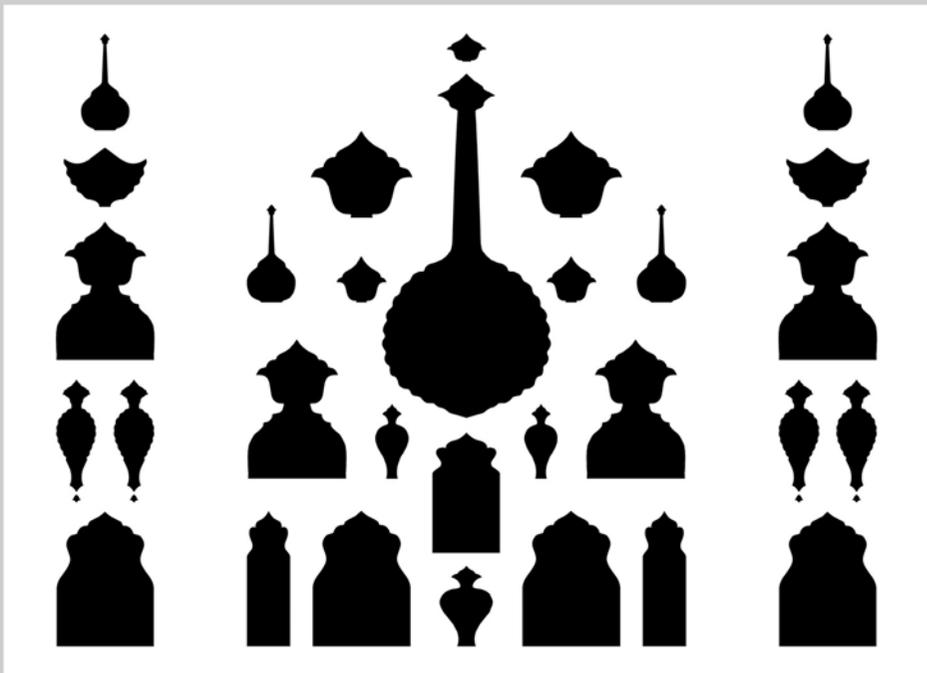
Il mio corpo veniva amministrato per rendermi presente in ogni sua parte: dalle ghiandole del sistema endocrino all'ambiente chimico dei neurotrasmettitori, dal tessuto fibroso dei tendini alle giunzioni articolari, dalle regioni idrofile della membrana ai processi metabolici del citoplasma.

Il Simbolo insegnava alla mia mente come pensare in maniera integrale e alla mia anatomia come respirare attraverso ciascun organo e cellula, come assorbire le energie telluriche distribuendole nei centri e meridiani, come processare i raggi solari nel derma per convertirli in vitamine, come riposare e rinvigorire mediante brevissimi periodi di sonno senza attività onirica.

Sublimato in una creatura purificata e potente, mi facevo organismo templare.

186





La pietra che dava forma al Tempio era svanita lasciandone intatto il pensiero, indelebilmene impresso nell'immagine del suo suono.

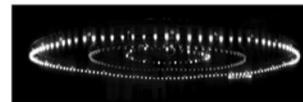
Dentro le sue stanze invisibili, nella ricchezza dispensata dalla trasparenza, ascoltai il distante urlo del Toro sacrificale e percepii nelle profondità di quel lamento primordiale un vagito ancor più remoto, di cui lo straziante urlo era solo flebile eco.

Il suono di una voce siderale e solitaria. Dal fondo cresceva in purezza infiltrandosi tra le vibrazioni, e amplificando, silenziava il resto.

E per la prima volta ascoltai la sua voce.

O forse era la mia vera voce?

Pristina, dalla potenza di mille uragani giugulari, una voce celeste alla ricerca della sua controparte terrestre. Mi chiamava a sé, domandava della sua creatura, il figlio prediletto tra tutti i suoi figli, il riflesso sensibile della sua immagine trascendente.



Al centro della prigione, la seconda gerarchia prendeva ad addensarsi in forma di nubi luminose.

Vorticavano come trottole sibilanti, spinte da una forza astratta.

Dal cuore dei loro mulinelli si sviluppavano due turbini filiformi assottigliandosi ai vertici antipodi: uno proteso verso l'alto, simile a un braccio dal cui dito passava la brama animatrice del moto, e uno verso il basso, un piede che fungeva da perno per ancorare l'asse della folle gravitazione.

Le formazioni nebulose erano gli Scienziati dell'Immaginazione, la rivelazione angelica destinata alla prefigurazione dell'invisibile.

Ruotando vertiginose, irradiavano ideali in purezza, slegati dal tempo, dall'azione e dal fenomeno.

Nei loro centri immaginavano il silenzio, e dai silenzi modulavano cromatismi, dispensando dalle gamme visioni esemplari e incantate.

I modelli sovraconsenzienti, sottesi all'imminente creazione.



-  
**ECHO)))SYSTEM**

---

## **QW.11 | Collective Work | Standards, Milan | 2021**

QW.11 Echo))) System is conceived as a collective narrative work, with the sound participation of Radio Safari. Through the interweaving of the description of countless species, forms or races, the participants are called to take an active part to build a meta-narrative diagram. A collective score that describe an organic entity so complex and incongruous to be unrepresentable.





# THE COLLAPSE OF TRANSPARENCY

## Sound Installation

---

Matera Capital of Culture 2019  
Hypogaeum Water-Cisterns Of Viceconte Palace

The Collapse of Transparency is a site-specific sound installation composed for one of the seven hypogeal cisterns of Palazzo Viceconte in Matera. The sound architecture created within the underground space explores the concept of limit, intended as contact with what is inaccessible, an ultimate boundary that unites, relates and at the same time isolates and separates.

The work idea is developed from a narrative passage of "LuDD! - The Topography of Light", a metaphysical poem divided into 21 chapters written by the artist in 2019 and inspired by a series of researches performed among Iran, Armenia, and Ethiopia, whose contents intends to investigate the forces hidden in the phenomena of vision through the concepts of origin, simulacrum, sacrifice, weaving and creational act.



Installation View

**ĀSHKHĀRHĀTZŪYTZ**

**Visual Chrestomathy of the Mount Analogue Inland Peak Expedition**

---

**STANDART 2017 - Triennial of Contemporary art in Armenia**

**S. D. Merkurov's Museum, Gyumri**

The installation is inspired by *The Mount Analogue*, a symbolic novel of mountaineering geographic adventures by René Daumal, left unfinished due to the premature death of the author.

Ashkharhatzuytz - Visual Chrestomathy of the Mount Analogue Inland Peak Expedition imagines, through a visual compendium inspired by passages of Daumal's novel and its missing part, the mystical topography of the summit of the Mount Analogue, which for the same analogical reason must necessarily be quarried. Introducing inside the external specular landscape, the climb is celebrated in the descent to the abyss where the upper skies are disbanded.



Installation View



Installation View



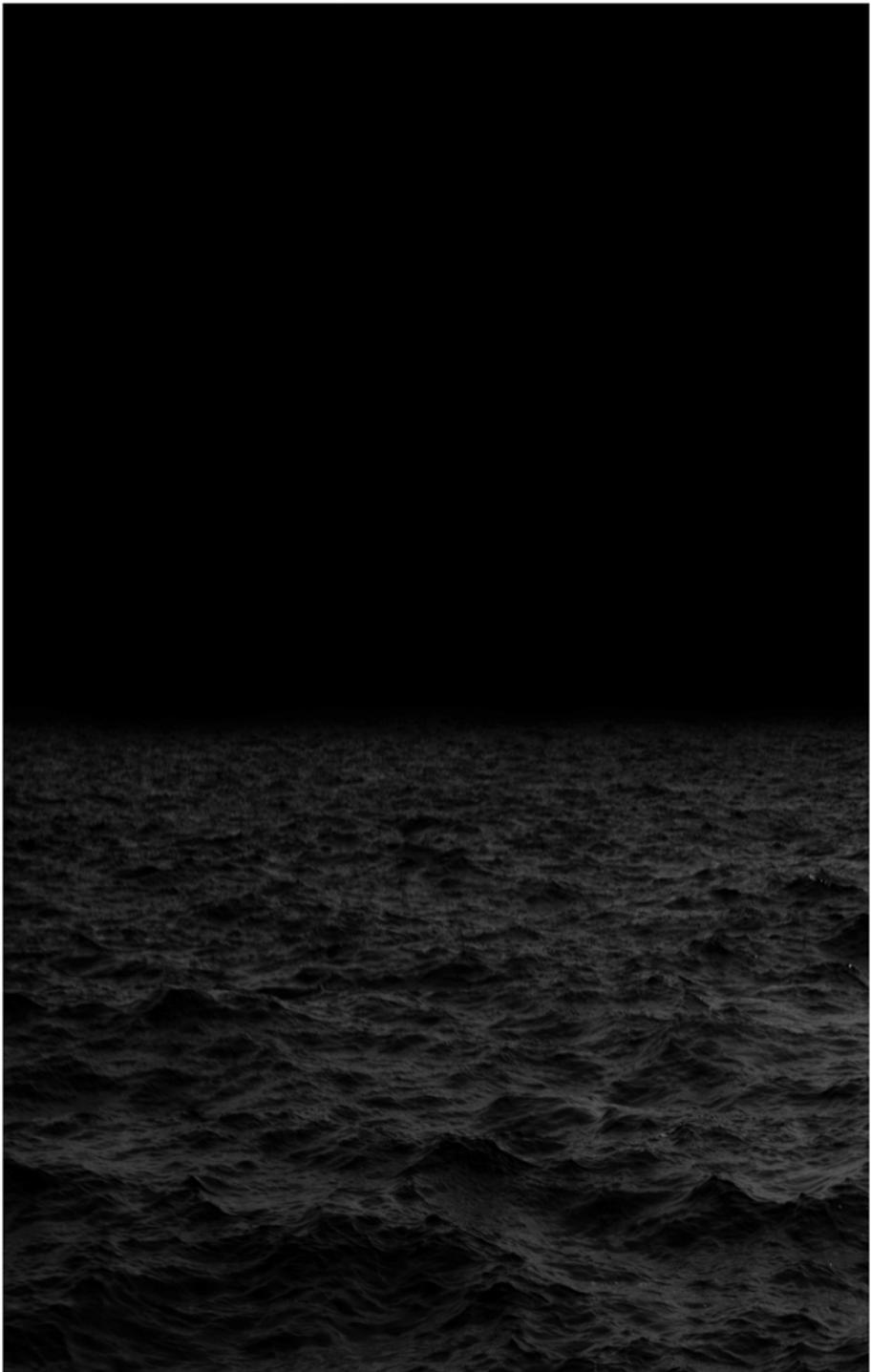
Installation View

## ORIENT 1 - Everlasting Sea

---

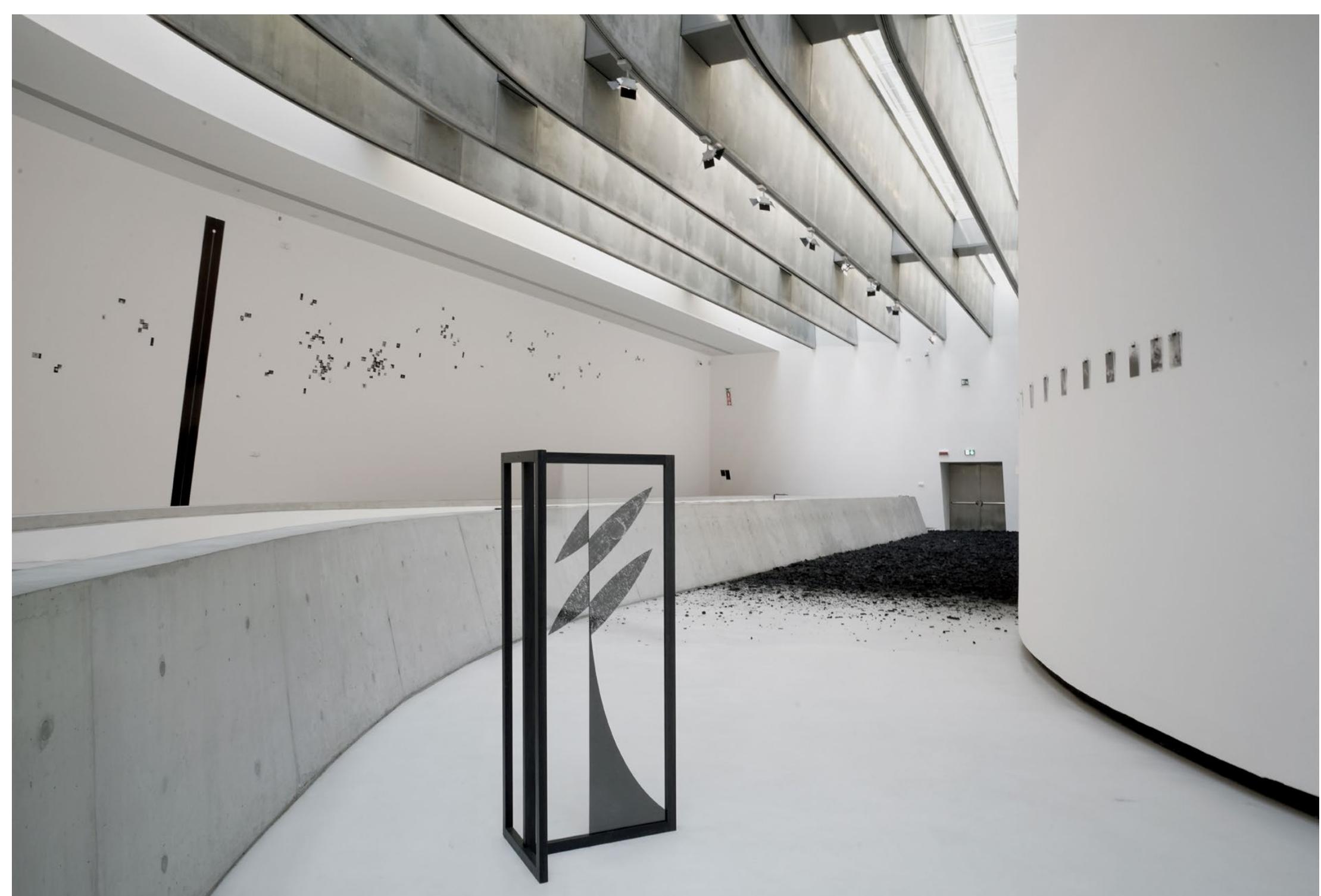
### MAXXI PRICE, National Museum of the 21st Century Arts, Rome

Starting from the suggestions developed by Russian Cosmism, Orient 1 contemplates the exploration of a "Terra incognita", that, by mirroring the cartography of the Moon and the Earth, evokes an atlas without geography, in which distances and landscapes are nullified: a reproduction of the monument dedicated to Russian cosmonauts rises from a coal crater; a wall painting refers to Kazimir Malevi's Suprematist Square; pictures of sailing boats drifting into obscure lunar oceans; Boris Godunov's musical notes by Modest Musorgskij (used as a secret code for Russian aerospace launches) brings the viewer in an unfathomable time. The multiple elements of the installation shape the millennial human tension towards the unknown, reflecting on the inscrutability of the forces that move his wanderings in a metaphysical space.



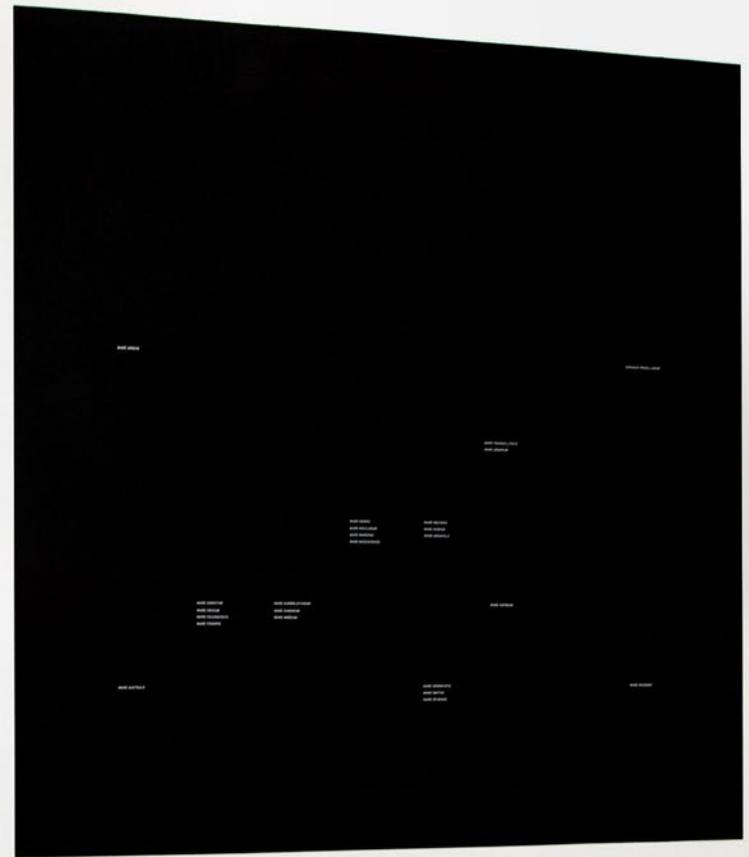


Exhibition View - Photography by Luis Do Rosario



Exhibition View - Photography by Luis Do Rosario





Exhibition View - Photography by Luis Do Rosario





Exhibition View - Photography by Luis Do Rosario

## THE PLOUGH, AND OTHER STARS

---

IMMA, Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin, Ireland 2016

This exhibition proposes some alternatives to death – space travel, time travel, reincarnation. Works by Riccardo Arena, Richard John Jones, Lara Khaldi and Yazan Khalili are brought together in the immortal domain of the museum, to explore strategies towards life extension, by artistic if not other means. The exhibition functions as both a show, for people to come and visit, and a rehearsal space for the development of a new theatrical production, in collaboration with Cow House Studios and The Centre For Dying On Stage.

Kete Strain



Exhibition View



## VAVILON | Project C - Solovki Island

---

CRATER OF ETERNAL LIGHTNESS - IIC Addis Ababa, 2018

VAVILON, Viafarini, Milan, 2015

THE MAN WHO SAT ON HIMSELF, Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin, 2015

ALTRI MITI ALTRI TEMPI, Quadriennale d'arte, Rome, 2016

LA FINE DEL MONDO, Centro Pecci, Prato, 2016

VAVILON project develops from the studies and suggestions that arise from the research conducted on the Solovki Islands, an archipelago located in the Russian White Sea, at 160 km from the Northern Pole. Through history the archipelago became a place of worship for the ancient nomadic populations, a realm for asceticism and mysticism, an orthodox sanctuary, and more recently the site of the first Soviet forced labour camps, Gulag. The Islands are at the same time witness of the utopias and the dystopias, battlefield of ideologic wars and a place for redemption. The inputs for the artistic investigation were a travel experience on the Islands in 2013 and the study of the less renowned aspects of the Russian culture. In particular the Russian Cosmism, that represents a common ground of the totalitarianistic system and that characterized all the history of the Soviet spaceship program, aimed to pursue the immortality through the cosmic escape from the labyrinth of mortality.



VAVILON | installation view | Viafarini, Milano | 2015







VAVILON | installation view | Viafarini, Milano | 2015







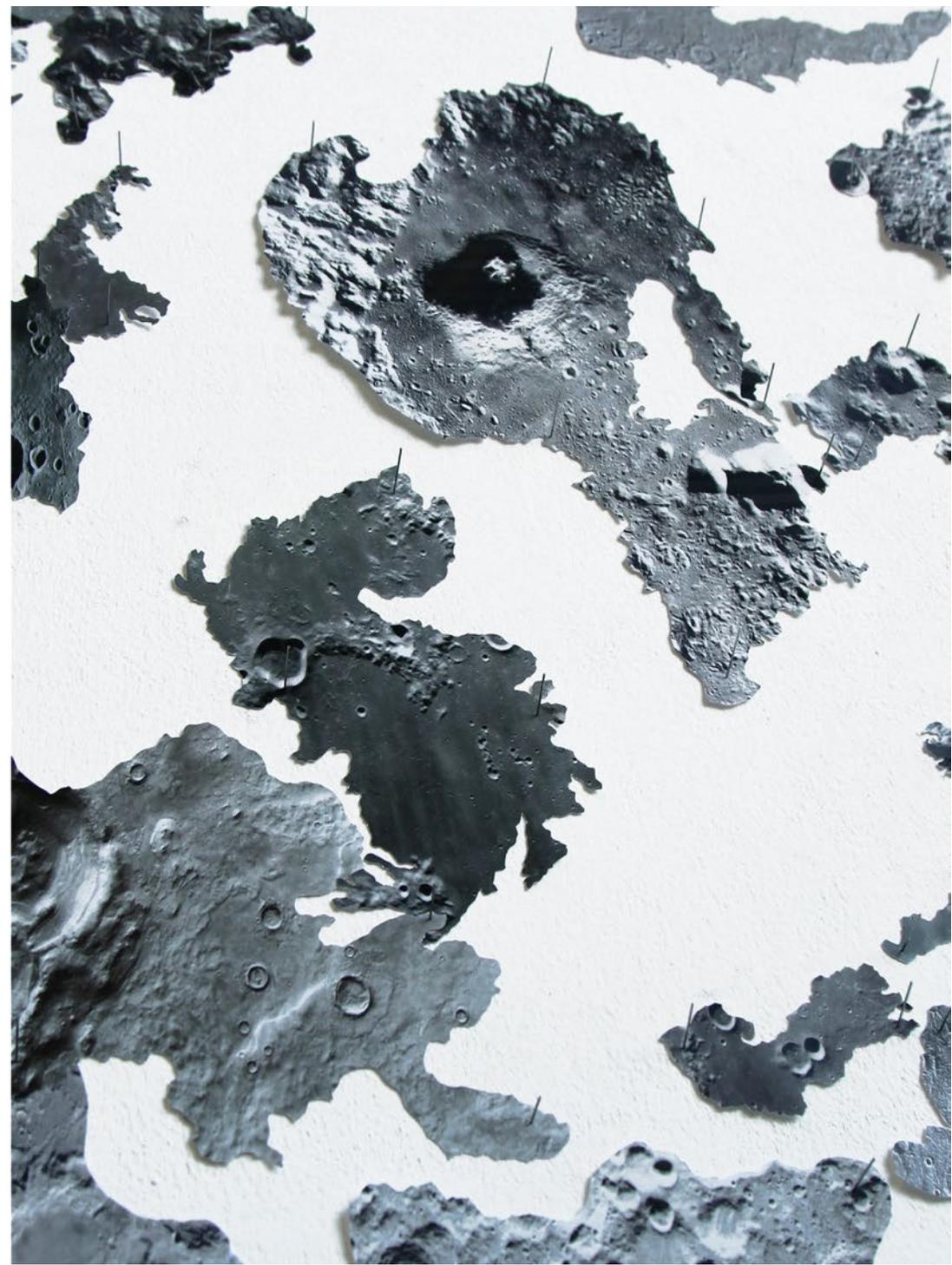
VAVILON | installation view | Viafarini, Milano | 2015



VAVILON | Screen printing, 25 Editions, 35cm x 50cm | 2015



VAVILON | installation view | Viafarini, Milano | 2015



VAVILON | Paper cut collage, 120cm x 120cm | 2015

## **VAVILON**

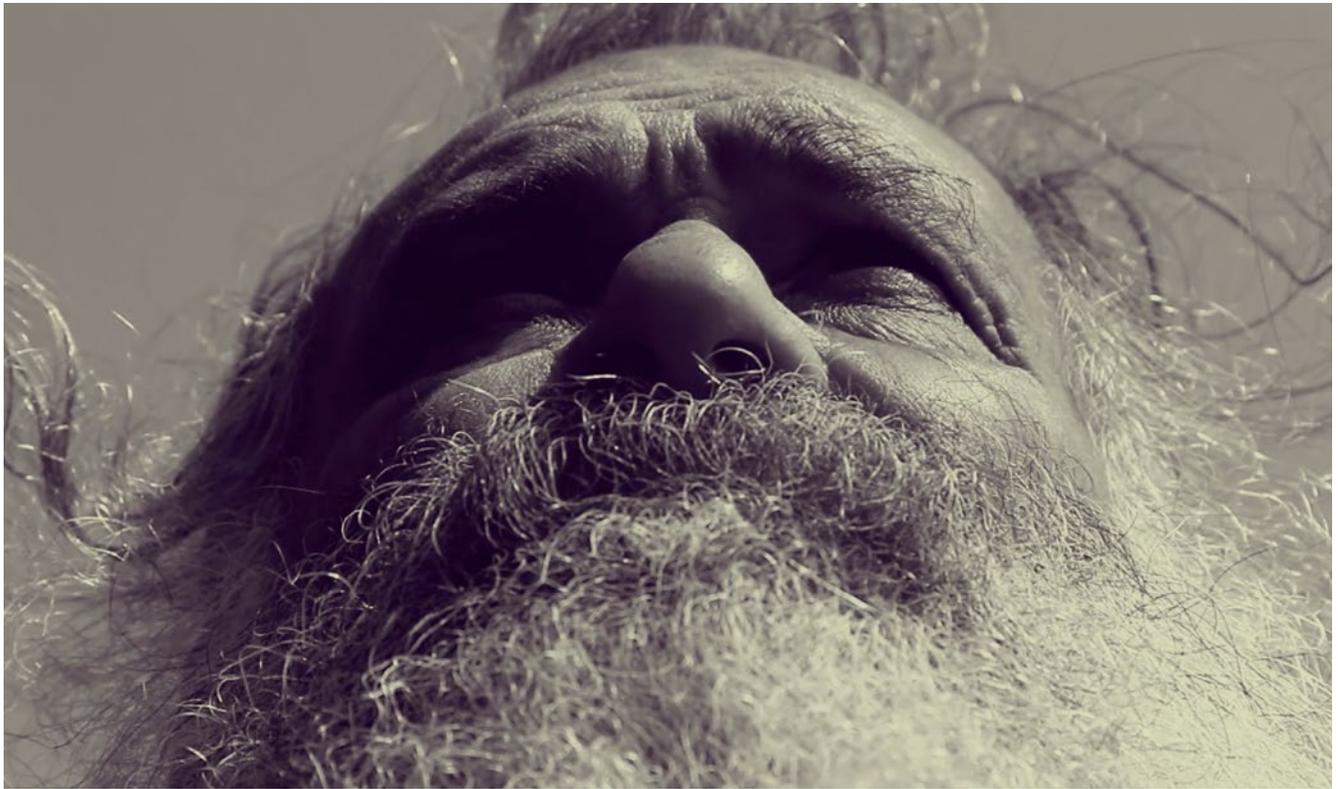
---

**Video HD, Dur 26 min, 2015**

**Music and sound: Matteo Mariano,  
Featuring music composer: Nicola Ratti  
In Collaboration with: Fiorucci Art Trust**







**Dual death Ellero and visual ecosystem  
Project B - Argentina**

---

**RACCONTARE IL PRESENTE, Italian Cultural Institute of London, 2016  
LONG PLAY, XXIV ed. del Premio Nazionale Arti Visive MAGA, Gallarate, 2012  
2011 MUERTE DUAL ELLERO, Galeria Wussmann, Buenos Aires, ARGENTINA  
54th Venice Biennial - Padiglione Italia nel Mondo**

“Dual Death Ellero and visual ecosystem” began in a Tibetan village in Sichuan and developed after a series of trips between Argentina and Bolivia. This project was inspired by the first fingerprint classification techniques; through an articulated physiognomic investigation conducted by a detective in search of an imaginary face. It reflects historically and symbolically on the differences between observation and contemplation, questioning the concepts of identity, identification, indivisibility and multiplicity.



Duplici morte Ellero ed ecosistema visivo | installation view | MAGA, Gallarate | 2012  
Photography by Roberto Marossi

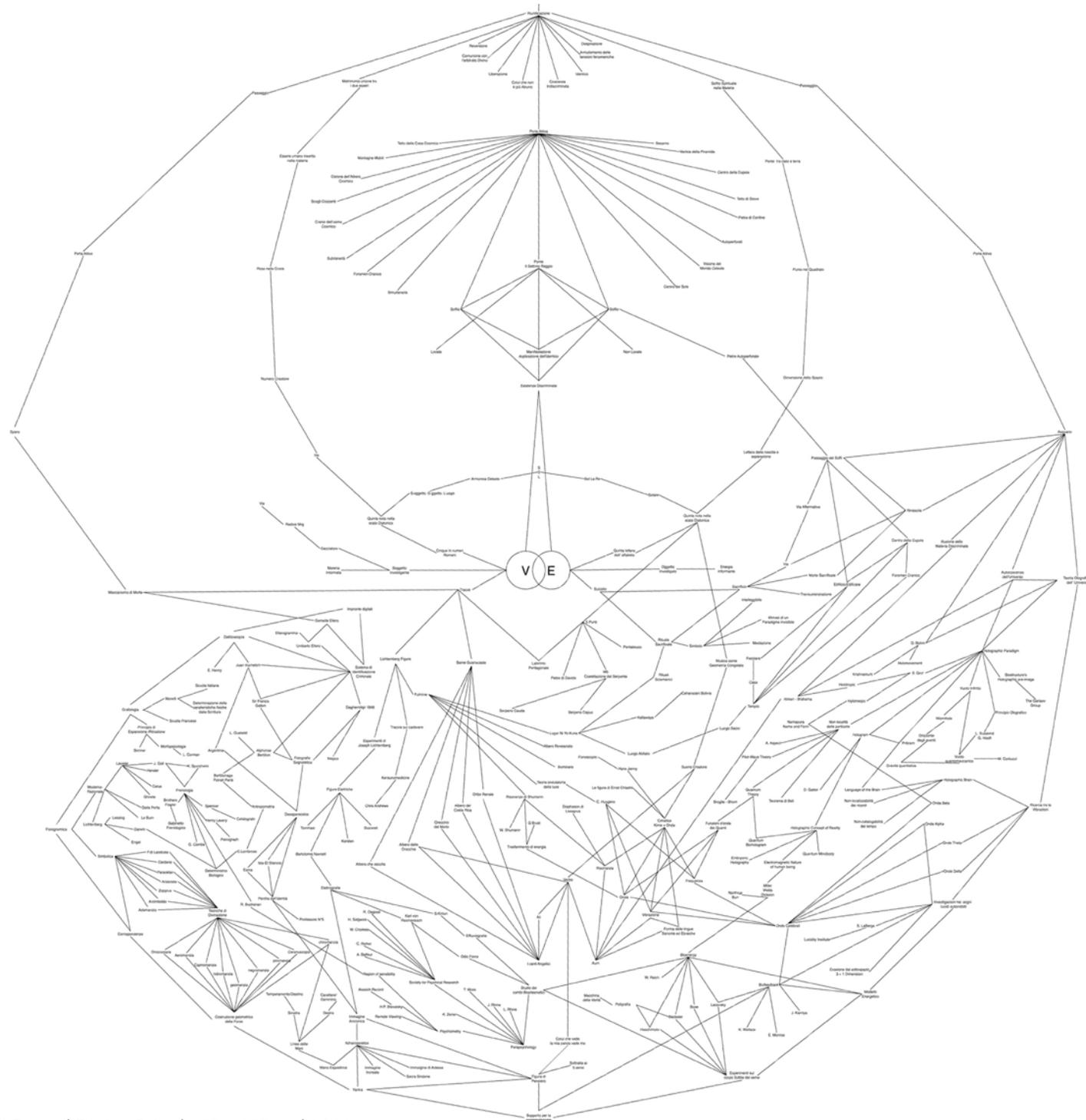
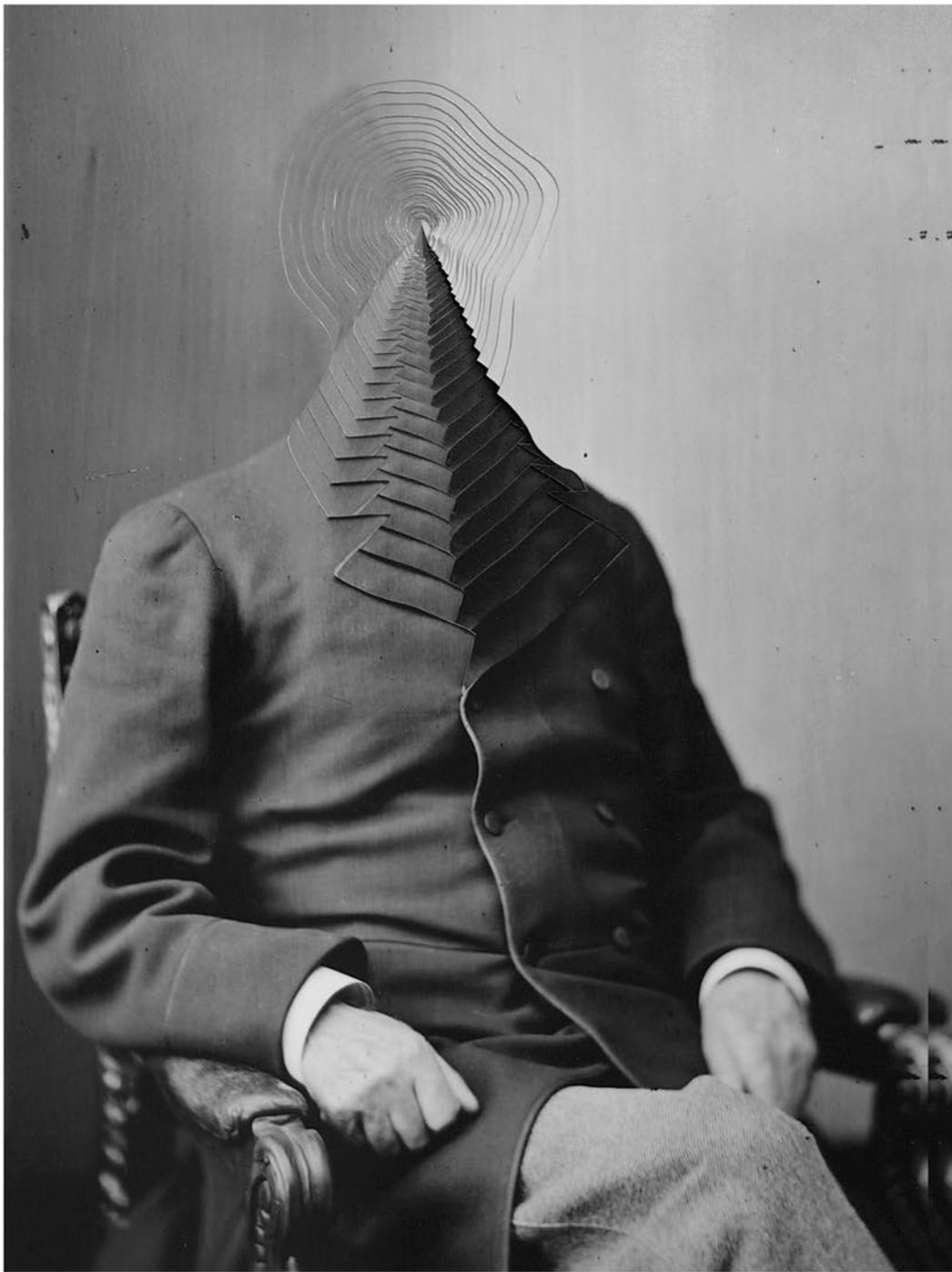


Figura di Parola - Geometria di Forze | Digital Print | 155 x 155cm | 2011

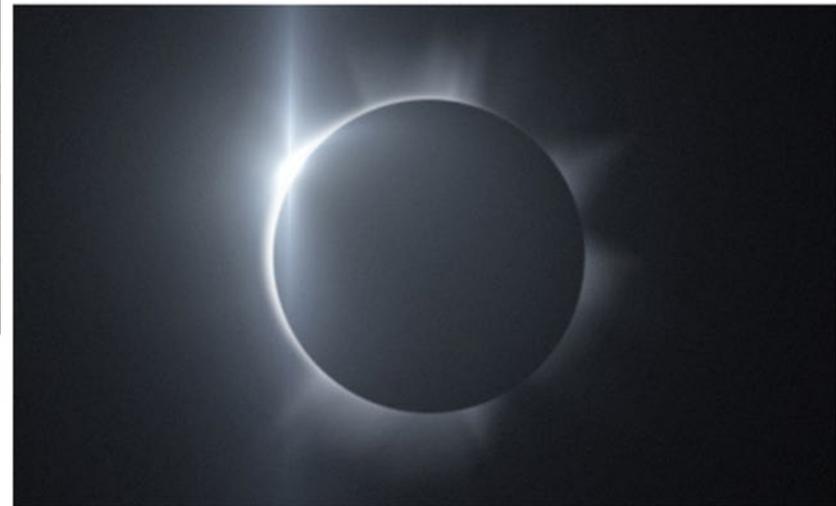


Lichtloch # 1- 2 -3 | Paper Cut Collage | 50cm x 40cm | 2011





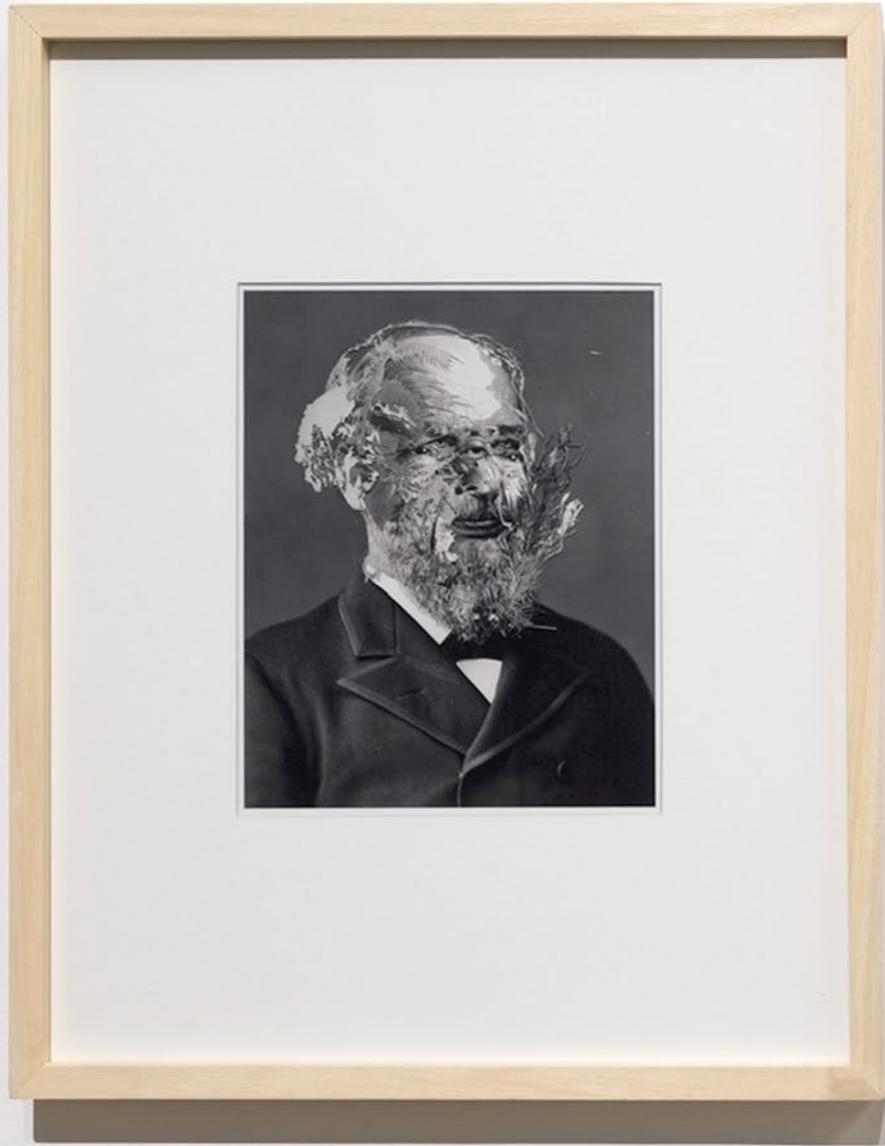
Duplica morte Ellero ed ecosistema visivo | Exhibition view | Galeria Wussman | Buenos Aires | 2011



View from the window at Le Gras | Video | Dur. 16min. | 2012



Untitled | Mixed Media | Museo del Novecento | Milano | 2013



Physiognomic Investigation | Paper cut collage | 50 x 40cm | 2011



Geode-Cristallizzazione | 50 x 50cm | Digital Print | 2011

**FOUR TIMES A TREE**  
**Project A - China**

---

**FOUR TIMES A TREE, TILT Space, Lausanne, 2011**  
**IL QUATTRO VOLTE ALBERO, Mayr3 - Allegra Ravizza Art Project, Milan, 2009**  
**FOUR TIMES A TREE, 1918ArtSpace, Shanghai, 2008**

“Four Times a Tree”, elaborated through a series of journeys in China between 2006 and 2008, develops from the idea of “nature reserve”, garden or park, as a microcosmic reiteration of the universe. Describing the vision of a Chinese garden created by a catastrophic event, it narrates the adventure of this human generation, whose presence is felt through the harmonization of its remains in a melancholy celebration of a mythical future.



And all the Gods huddled themselves against the wall like stray dogs | Lambda print | 110 x 165 cm | 2008

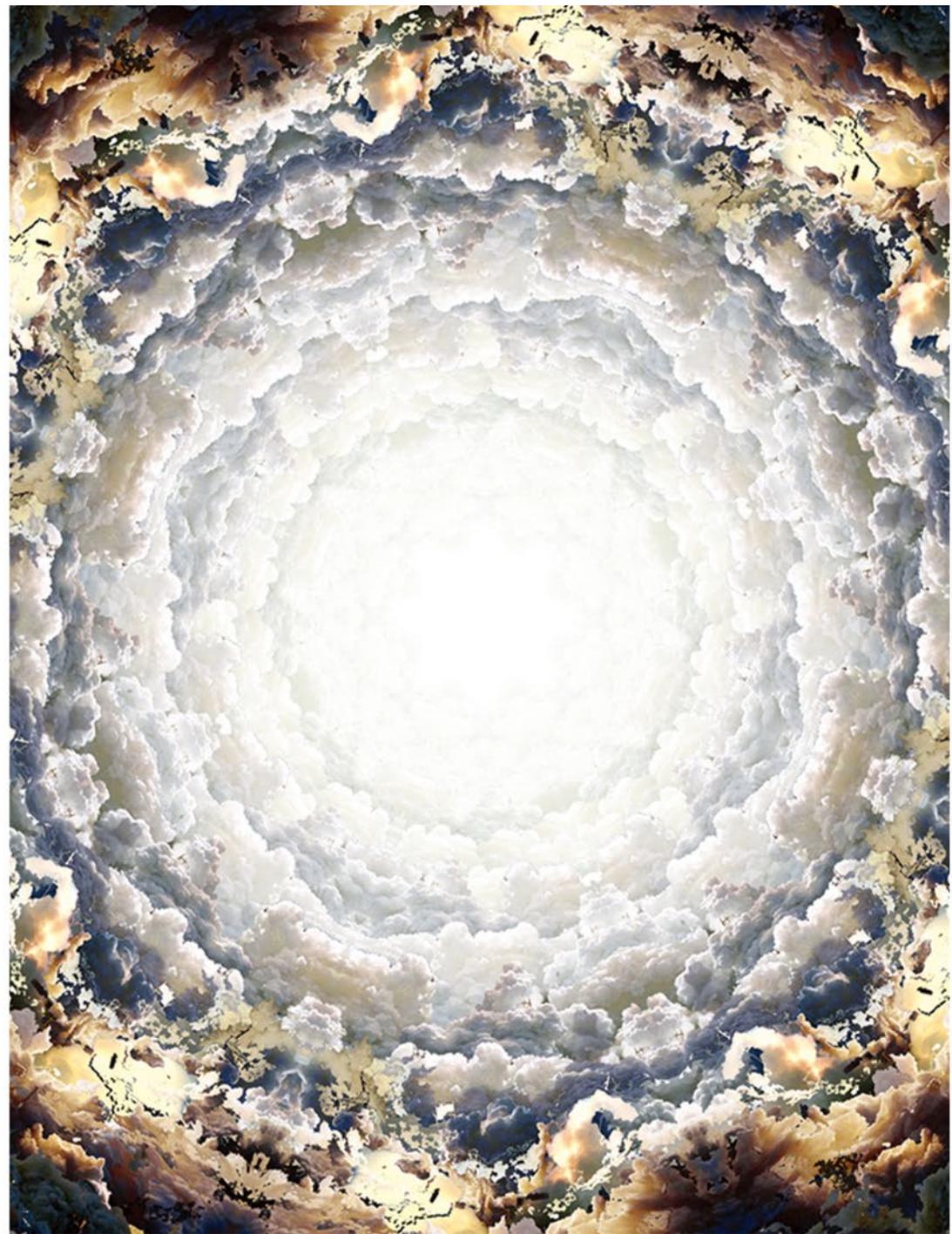


Four Times a Tree | Exhibition view | 1918 ArtSpace, Shanghai 2008 | Mayr3 , Milan 2009





Another 18.000 years of coagulation | Lambda print | 110 x 165 cm | 2008

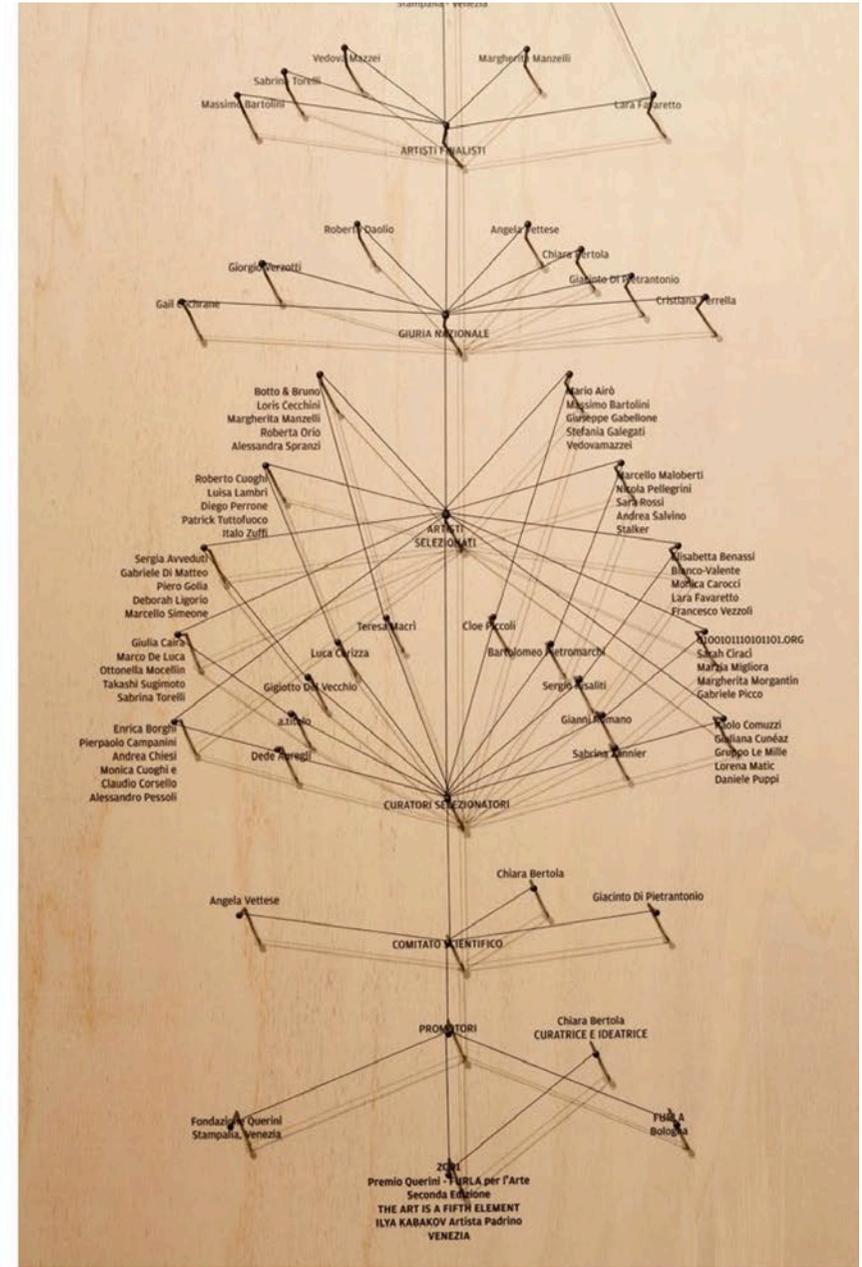


The light became intense, our souls full of joy, we lost our memory 62 hours before vanishing forever  
Paper cut collage | 110 x 110 cm | 2008

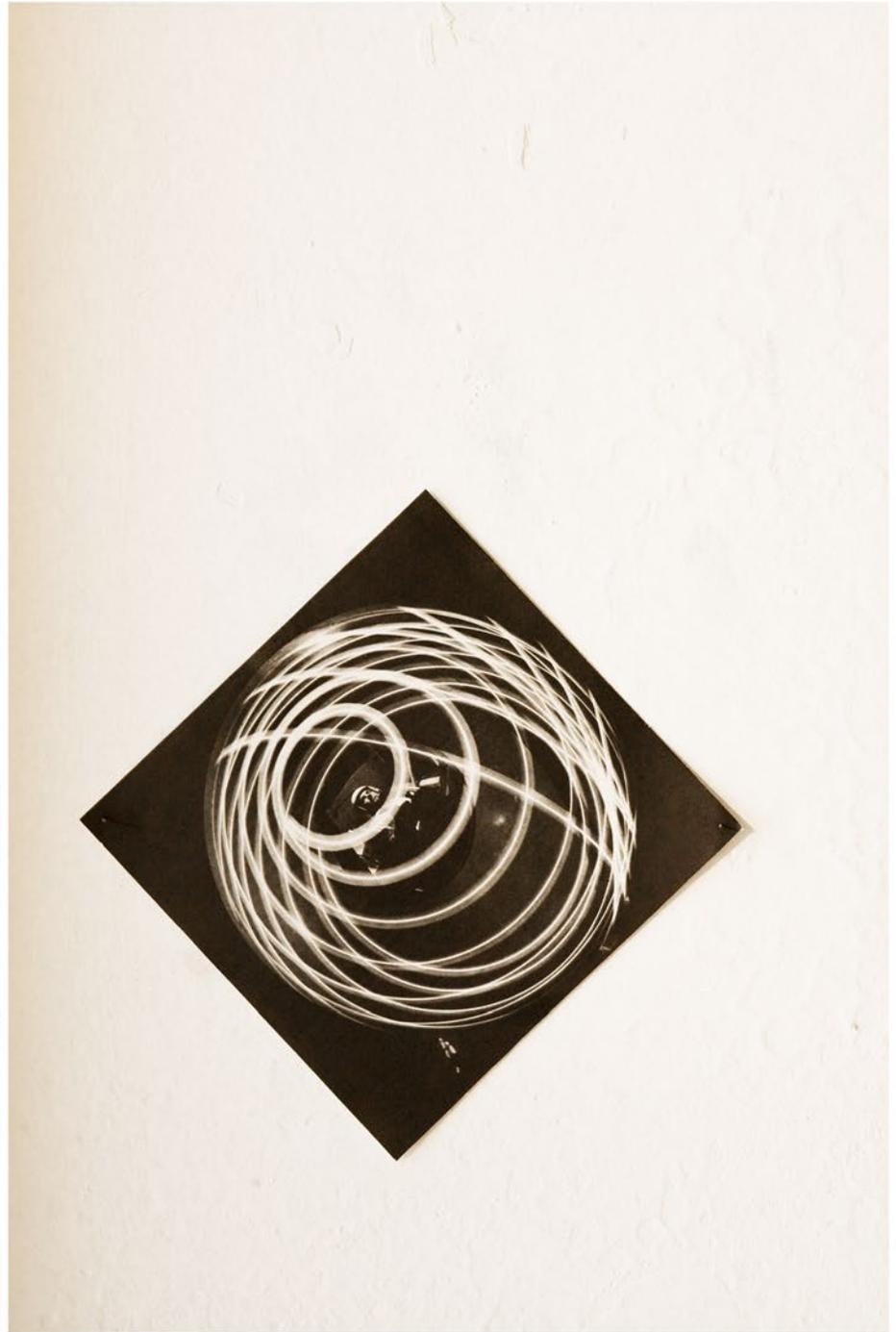
---

## SELECTED WORKS

---



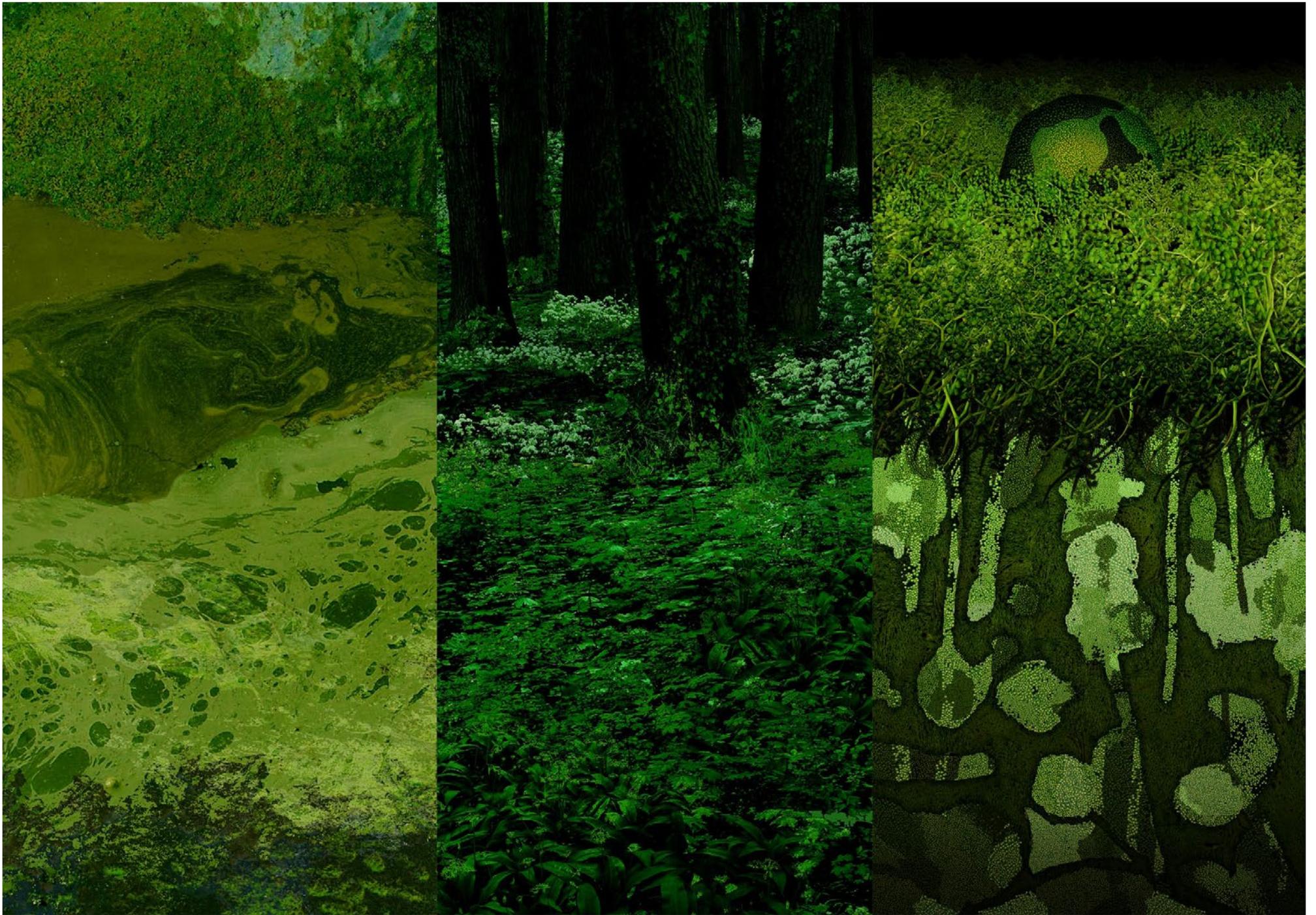
GROWING ROOTS - PREMIO FURLA | Installation view | Palazzo Reale, Milano | 2015



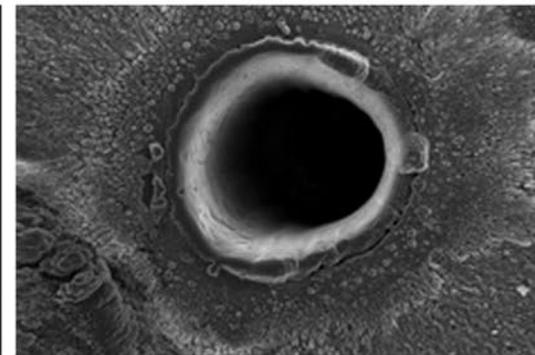
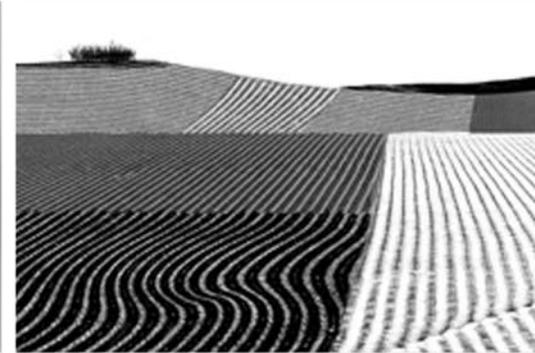
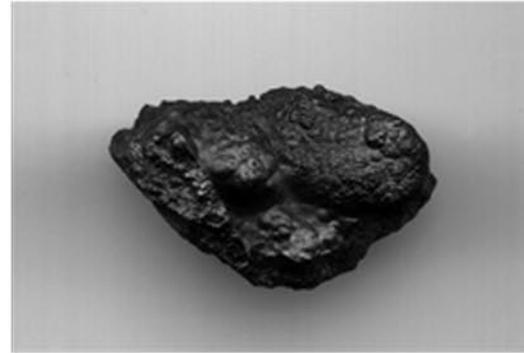
HOW EARLY MEN BELIEVED THAT ALL THINGS THAT MOVE ARE ALIVE | Installation view | Ammirato Culture House | 2014







JAMES P. | Video | Dur. 15. min. | 2006



The mills of God grind slowly | Installation view | Galerie Knap, Amsterdam | 2007