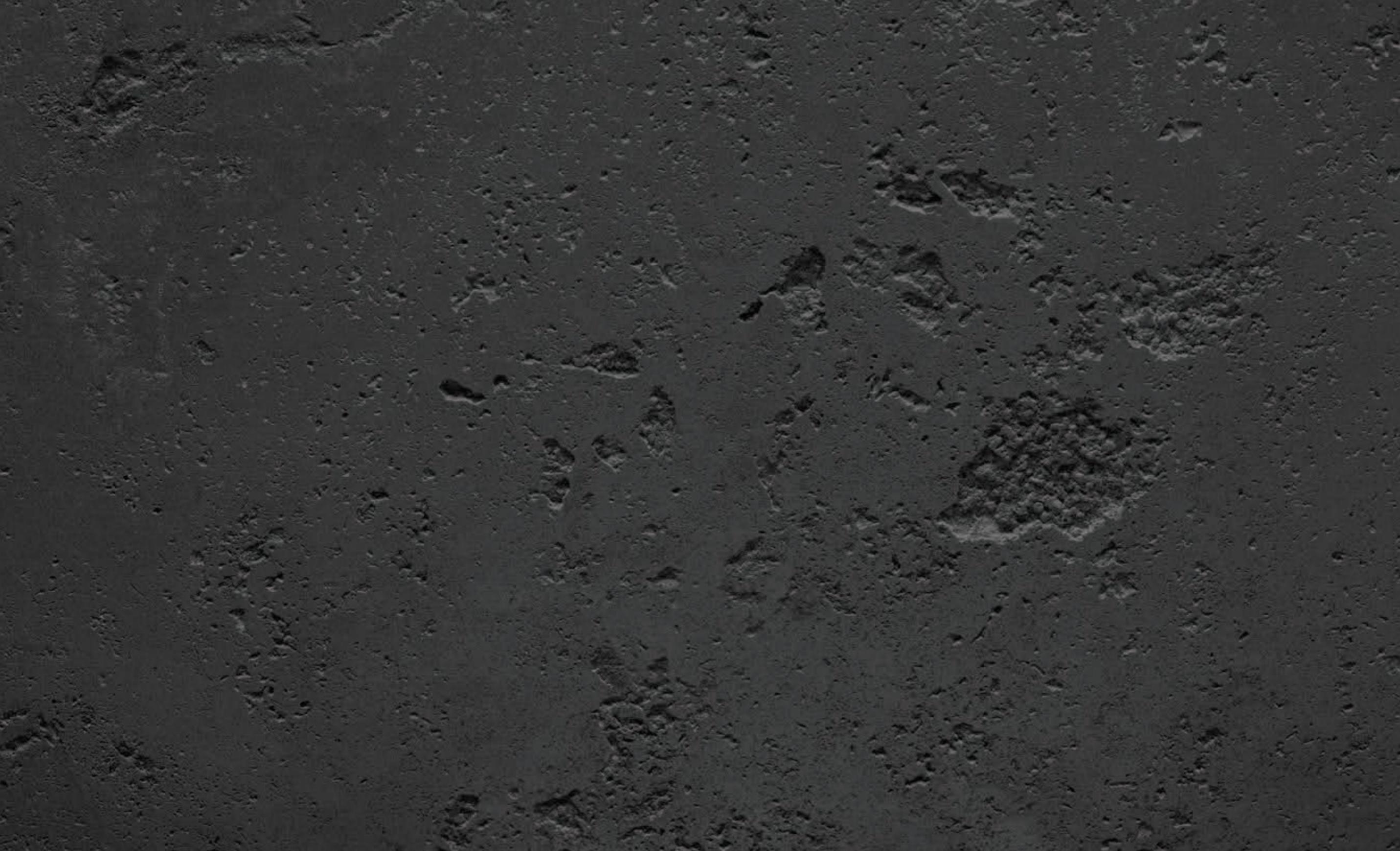


# CATALINA SWINBURN

NARRATIVES OF DISPLACEMENT





CATALINA SWINBURN





NARRATIVES OF DISPLACEMENT  
2015—2018

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

[by CATALINA SWINBURN]

I wish to offer my special thanks to Selma Feriani for her immense support and for taking me to places that have opened my visual perspective. I would like to express my appreciation to my collaborators, who believe in my ideas and help me to accomplish my delusions: Leopoldo, Alejandro, Jessi, Miguel, Fabián, Pato, Pancho, Gustavo... My gratitude to Jaime & Santos.



## PREFACE

[by SELMA FERIANI, FOUNDER OF SELMA FERIANI GALLERY]

Catalina is working in a very distinct style and in permanent creativity.

Photography is one of her resources, though not the only one. She makes use of photomontage to transmit her ideas and concerns. She found inspiration in researching the universal ideas of mobility, memory and transmission.

Preserving and transmitting memories of the past in order to leave a legacy for the future has often been at the core of Swinburn's work.

What is fascinating in Swinburn's practise is the coexistence of diverse spaces, cultures and languages that offers the spectator a rich platform for exploration.



## UNCERTAIN TERRITORY

[by ISABEL ANINAT, DIRECTOR OF ISABEL ANINAT GALLERY]

Contingency issues have always been present in Catalina Swinburn's work, in which the following question is raised: where is the limit between the past and the present, death and the vital drive, wake and sleep, the real and the imaginary, of the games of borders and of religions? This and other questions are addressed by a corpus conceived in hazy territories, prodigal though blurry zones, the vagueness of which leads us to the realm of the subconscious. It takes us through the borders of the here and beyond, the archaic and the contemporary, into the multiple memory «of permanence» either as myths or reality. She employs the intervention space to delve into personal and collective doubts, where her own body establishes boundaries and bonds, denouncement and hope. The artist seeks to make us reflect upon the gap between body and territory and upon the inhabiting process.

Her proposal embodies a game of opposing relationships between technology, the perception of news, the territory as a solid element (marble) and lightness (the bodily shadow). She uses noble materials such as traditional marble, which appears cracked and intervened by a photograph taken with a high tech device (a drone). All of her pieces are ironically presented as a great sublime staging, which, nonetheless, leaves atavistic questions about territory unanswered.



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## RITUALS OF IDENTITY

[by JUSTO PASTOR MELLADO, ART CRITIC AND INDEPENDENT CURATOR,  
DIRECTOR CENTER FOR ART STUDIES (CEDA)]

An entire complex work is not usually analysed on the basis of the singularity of a piece whose image is reproduced in a catalogue. Neither is it common to force the nature of a catalogue in order to recognize in it an editorial expansion of the exhibition space. However, we must be prepared to have a minimum understanding, namely, the ruin of the book as a dismantled monument that preserves the existence of the house of letters.

I suggest that readers consider this catalogue as an «instructions manual» to access Catalina Swinburn's work. The texts do not necessarily add legibility, but provide us with a cultural distance that can only be understood if we pay attention to certain considerations; in other words, the «ways of doing» in the first place and secondly, the graphic effects on the territory.

With regard to the former, the catalogue reproduces the image of a book in a state of de/composition revealed by the ostensible number of pages that has been ripped off. By tearing the binding of a book, its damaged spine is exposed, with its pieces of paper and

the visible threads. It is one of many images and yet, it establishes the legibility of the set of pieces reproduced. In this regard, it underscores a cultural catastrophe, for the destruction of a book is comparable to the demolition of a building, even more so when we learn that the book includes the score of Verdi's opera «Aida», which conveys an idea of sentimentality that can be seen in the underlying configurations of power.

The pages –ripped, folded and transformed into coded messages already destined to such a purpose by the folding– mark the line that determines the scope of an enigma.

The origami thus restructures the ruins of the book to prepare them for an unimaginable role, as the singular components of a new object: a blanket, a dress. In the catalogue, the book appears as remains, since it shows the destruction of the binding to give way to the making of a blanket that can be used as a garment or a shroud. The above leads to the second consideration introduced in the first paragraphs: the graphic effects on the territory. It is clear that the first consideration yields two

anticipatory effects: the visible injury (the destruction of the binding) and the folding (marking out and setting the boundaries of the surface). Here the design of the catalogue symbolizes grief with drawings on the sand, cracks on walls, and fences on borders and cemeteries. We must talk about these photographs: a plan of the house is drawn on the sand, creating a meeting point somewhere between the anecdotal and the encyclopaedic memory, under the threat of being completely swept away (covered) by the waves. The plan is drawn straightaway to show how the return of the repressed works.

In contrast, the photographs of the cracks ostensibly call for realism through controlled reappropriations of traumatic experiences, which are in turn reabsorbed by the art space.

This inevitably reminds me of the 1985 earthquake, which damaged the Fine Arts Museum of Santiago, Chile. Although there were cracks on the walls, the museum never closed, because the specialists in the resilience of materials had concluded that the building had no structural

damage. However, the restoration work took so long that the cracks became «part of the building».

As I accompanied a European curator on a tour of the museum, he asked about the author of this work, which boldly challenged the museum institution by exhibiting its cracks. I hated myself for correcting his error of appreciation. As we never had Greco-Roman ruins, we had to invent, to our convenience, symbolic destruction through commemorative constructions in territories of major migratory conflicts that survive as enclaves of the worst nineteenth century colonialism. This is when the photographs of Egyptian excavations are comparable to those of Darwin cemetery on the Malvinas Islands, which close the Rituals of Identity series. We look at some ruins from the point of view of other ruins, including the ruin of narratives and bodies. «Aida», whose pages are ripped off to make portable sarcophagi of the letter, makes the tombstones of the unidentified fallen become archaeological findings of a present that is forcefully acknowledged as the vestige of a damaged memory. ▀



WHEN I AM LAID  
IN EARTH, 2018  
Woven paper from  
Dido's lament in *Dido and Aeneas*  
by Henry Purcell  
280 x 280 cm





$36^{\circ} 49' 0''$ ,  $10^{\circ} 11' 0''$  E, 2018  
Woven paper with Atlas index,  
engraved iron frame  
185 x 150 cm

**THE SORROWS OF ABSENCE**, 2018  
Performative photo  
printed on a marble block  
Woven paper from «Das lied VonDer  
Erde» (*The Song of the Earth*)  
by Gustave Mahler  
30 x 30 cm



**THE SORROWS OF ABSENCE**, 2018  
Woven paper from «Das lied Von  
Der Erde» (*The Song of the Earth*)  
by Gustave Mahler (1909)  
500 x 350 cm



# AIDA

COPIED ON 10/10/2005 BY  
SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL  
ANTONIO GHILANZONI  
ATTORNEY GENERAL  
DEPT. OF TR.

TONIO  
GIUSEPPE VERDI

USEPPI  
Tutor - Home Schooling  
Sister - Child Support  
Mother - Child Support  
Child Support  
Child Support  
Child Support

CANTO E PIANOFORTE

WIMBORNE SOLO  
+ 11

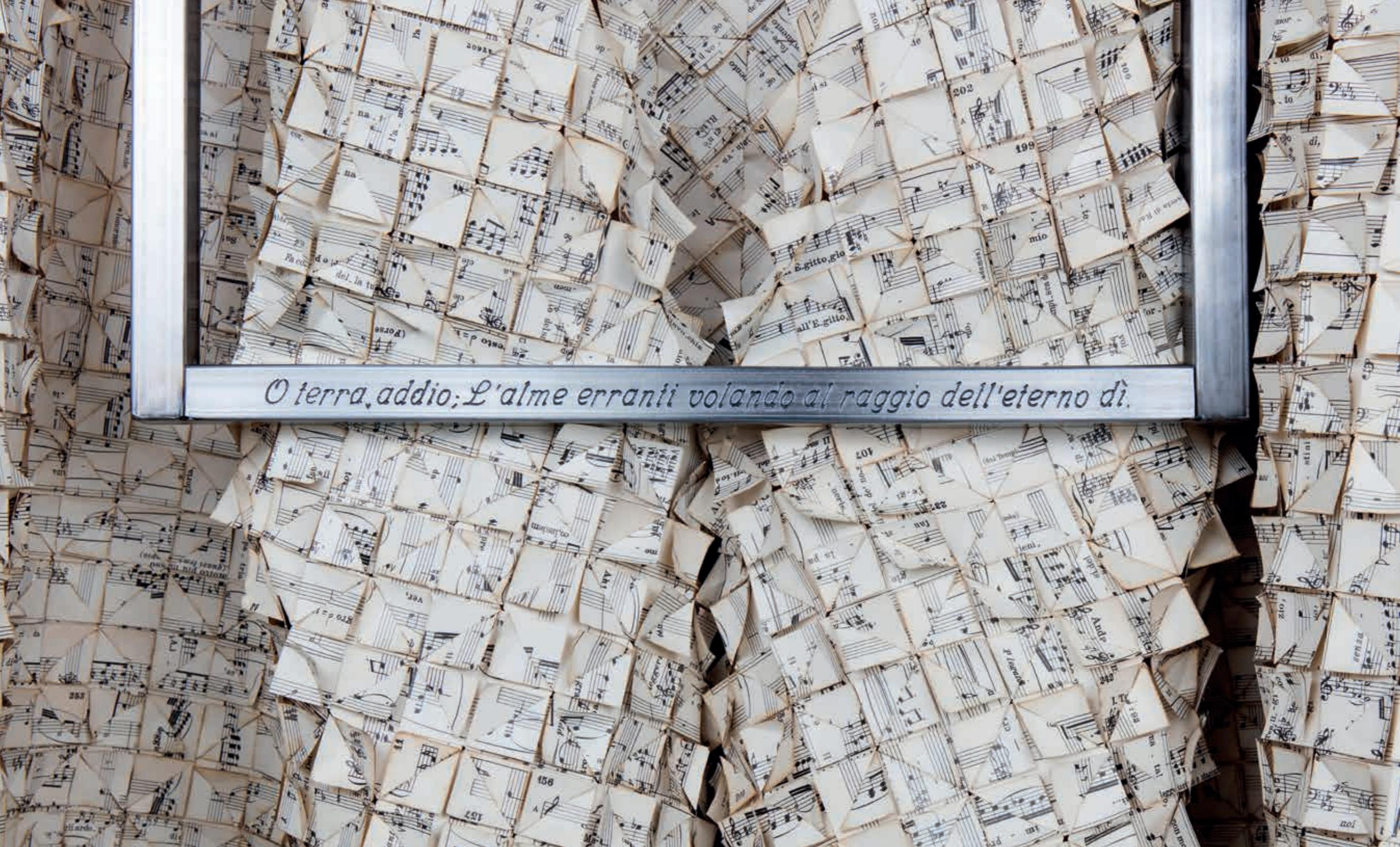
G. RICORDI E. C.

G. RICORDI & C.  
Milano - Via Verri, 10 - Tel. 22.000



«Aida», whose pages are ripped off to make portable sarcophagi of the letter, makes the tombstones of the unidentified fallen become archaeological findings of a present that is forcefully acknowledged as the vestige of a damaged memory.

**ALME ERRANTI, AIDA, 2018**  
Woven paper old partiture of the  
opera *Aida* by Giuseppe Verdi (1871)  
130 x 160 cm



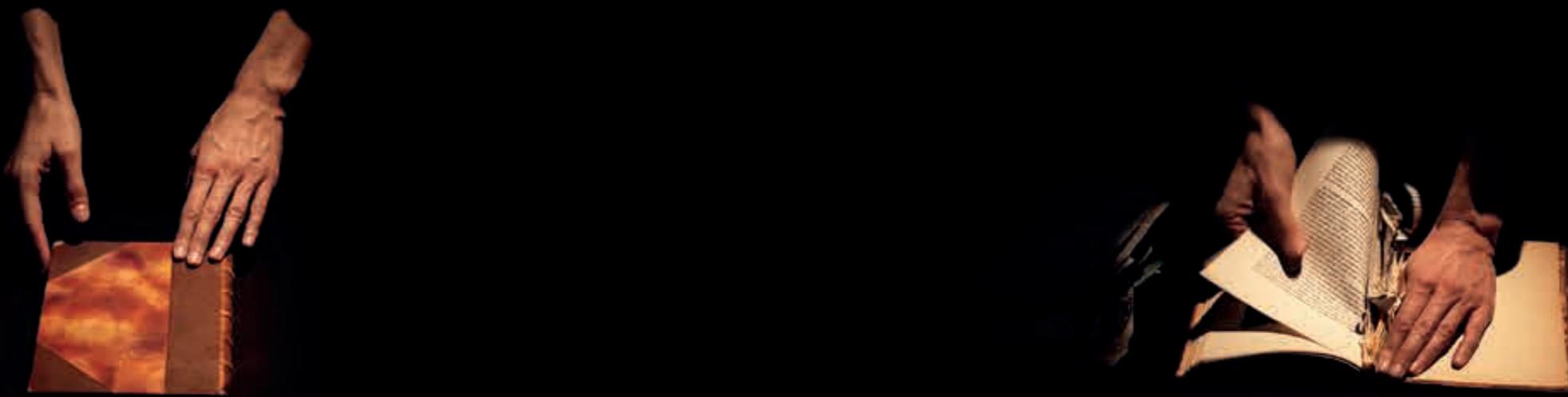
*O terra, addio; L'alme erranti volando al raggio dell'eterno di.*

## **DES/COMPOSITION**

The image of a book in a state of des/composure is revealed by the ostensible number of pages that has been ripped off. By tearing the binding of a book, its damaged spine is exposed, with its pieces of paper and the visible threads. It is one of many images and yet, it establishes the legibility of the set of pieces reproduced. In this regard, it underscores a cultural catastrophe, for the destruction of a book is comparable to the demolition of a building.

PAGES 36-37

**DES/COMPOSITION**, 2018  
Video, 6.48 min



The materials –paper, bronze and stone– are more than a mere support on which images are printed. They are part of the montage offering further elements of meaning through their light fragility, their gloss and brightness, or their rustic roughness. Probably because Catalina sketches what she defines as «anticipated archaeology», it is the presence and accumulation of fragments that provides meaning to the whole re-signified in each piece.





**BABETTE'S FEAST**, 2017  
Woven paper totems  
195 x 110 x 30 cm

**EXTRATERRITORIAL  
(THE PERFECT BOUNDARY), 2016**  
Performative photo  
120 x 120 cm



The delimitation of territory and the deployment of limits, landmarks, milestones, hedges or fences have always been part of the ways that individuals gathered in societies –whether large or small– adopt to produce an inside-outside situation in order to express ownership, belonging or their opposite. In the words of Zygmunt Bauman, these physical and symbolic barriers are «a declaration of intent» meant to establish positions, define points of view, and to both include and exclude.\* Thus, from a certain position, from inside we can see other places and people that are not physically included in our world, even if we have a number of symbolic and imaginary constructions and references about them. Within certain contexts, this simple observation becomes specifically problematic. Migrations have always been part of the logic of human settlement on the planet since the beginning of time. Likewise, the setting of limits had an early start and the safekeeping of territory, property and people has been the driving force for the creation of all kinds of boundaries ever since. Such boundaries are the setting of Catalina's works.

#### EVENT HORIZON (THE PERFECT BOUNDARY), 2016

Installation built in iron and galvanized wire grating  
5,150 white tapes intervened (5,150 km length  
of the border between Chile and Argentina)



\* Zygmunt Bauman, *Society under Siege*, Blackwell Publishers, 2002, Chapter 3 «To live and to die in the planetary frontiers».



AN ALTERNATIVE LANDSCAPE  
(THE PERFECT BOUNDARY), 2016  
Ritual cape  
Woven paper, old maps  
550 x 350 cm

PAGES 48-49

THE PERFECT BOUDARY, 2016  
Video, 7.06 min



**OSCILLATING IDENTITY**  
**SERIES**, 2016  
Performative photograph  
printed on a travertine  
marble block  
110 x 140 cm





She uses noble materials such as traditional marble, which appears cracked and intervened by a photograph taken with a high tech device (a drone). All of her pieces are ironically presented as a great sublime staging, which, nonetheless, leaves atavistic questions about territory unanswered.

**OSCILLATING IDENTITY  
SERIES**, 2016  
Performative photograph  
printed on a travertine  
marble block  
110 x 140 cm

**OSCILLATING IDENTITY**  
SERIES, 2016  
Performative photograph  
printed on a travertine  
marble block  
110 x 140 cm



## MEMORIES THAT REMAIN

[by MAISA AL QASSIMI, CURATOR]

The continuous change of territories and borders has always been a global concern. It produces an inside/outside situation within societies; it creates a new form of expression to ownership and belonging. These struggles have affected the upsurge in refugees and migrants crossing borders today. These are some of the issues that are explored in Catalina Swinburn's more recent series *The Perfect Boundary*, a journey that started in 2015.

Swinburn's practice investigates through a variety of media such as video, installation, sculptures and photography and the use of materials such as paper and marble. Many of Swinburn's process starts with performance whether utilising her own body in the work or the act of performance in the artwork's production. This embodiment and interconnection through time, place and space allowed the artist to express the human experience.

In this series, Swinburn combines the two performative forms by initially creating an object by the act of weaving. The materials used are archival sources from

historic books such as atlases, archaeological and music. In *The Perfect Boundary*, 2016, Swinburn uses pages from an atlas from the 1970s, a documentation of a time where countries once existed and borders have changed. These archival pages are then woven into each other continuously modifying the shift of geographical lands. The interlaced sculpture here is worn by the artist in the performance and dragged across lands, creating its partition by recreating borders. Where was that object in time and place before the performance? Has it taken the shape of my body? What memories will it have? What narratives will it tell and where will it go? These are a few questions Swinburn poses before, during and after each performance. She explains: «The paper works have their own life. They become a sculpture, an abandoned body that has a history that traces the form. They gained a history and remind me of stitches of memory that remain. All the cultural catastrophes around the world where cultural sites have been displaced and others destroyed.»

In the work *The Sorrows of Absence*, 2018 Swinburn uses pages from an archaeological book that has reproductions of historic sites that have been recently destroyed. Through presentation and representation of these images, the artist explores the concerns and effects of the loss of National Identity in these states. Swinburn reconstructs by folding the pages into each other in an attempt to repair what was destroyed. In this way, the sculpture creates a monument that revolutionises its previous history and references the change in their time and place. Swinburn captures the ephemeral conditions of performance with photography and disseminates these images either on marble or stone. In a way, the monumental nature of the work returns and is reformed from the fragile materiality of paper to a symbolic material such as marble or stone to signify its cultural significance. The process in which Catalina Swinburn creates her interpersonal work emphasises on the human necessity of the conditions of being, loss and destruction. Regenerating these narratives articulates a sense of

urgency and a mode of resistance. With the continuous struggles globally and displacement of human beings, Swinburn expresses hope and freedom to the world and anticipates an openness for cultural dialogue. ▀





**FISSURES AS METAPHORS  
OF RESISTANCE, 2017**  
Performative photo  
with ritual cape  
Woven paper, archaeological  
documentation on pieces of Iran  
and Persia taken out of its territory  
140 x 125 cm



FISSURES AS METAPHORS  
OF RESISTANCE, 2017  
Woven paper, archaeological  
documentation Summer  
160 x 320 cm





The starting point of this series is an investigation related to archaeological pieces that were taken from their original place, and travelled to different institutions around the world to be exhibited as an emblem of power. In this regard, the artist collected a myriad of heteroclite images of ancient pieces that were subsequently folded and woven all together in workshop exercises engaging several people. Just like the numerous hands captured in repetitive gestures in the workshops, images are important when approached in their totality and unity. They are a sort of patchwork fabric made possible only through a collaborative work echoing the daily practices and social interactions involved in the complex process of reconstruction.

↑ French excavations in Lagash, Summer, ancient city, Iran, 1877-1923

← Excavations in Naqsh-e Rustam, necropolis of the Achaemenid dynasty, Iran, c. 550–330 BC



Nationalism requires the elaboration of a real or invented remote past. This work on paper shows how archaeological data and music are manipulated for nationalistic purposes and discusses the relationship of archaeology and nation building, and the articulation of identity.

**FISSURES AS METAPHORS  
OF RESISTANCE**, 2017  
Woven paper, archaeological  
documentation from *Asymmes  
Antiques* 160 x 160 cm  
Printed marble block with image  
of the first collection of *Asymmes  
Antiques*, shown in Louvre, 1847



The political uses of archaeology are also reviewed for the construction of national identities in immigrant and postcolonial states. These skins –with their various folds and contingent aspects– are the place of fissures and traces bearing witness to memory.

**FISSURES AS METAPHORS  
OF RESISTANCE**, 2017  
Woven paper, archaeological  
documentation Summer  
180 x 180 cm

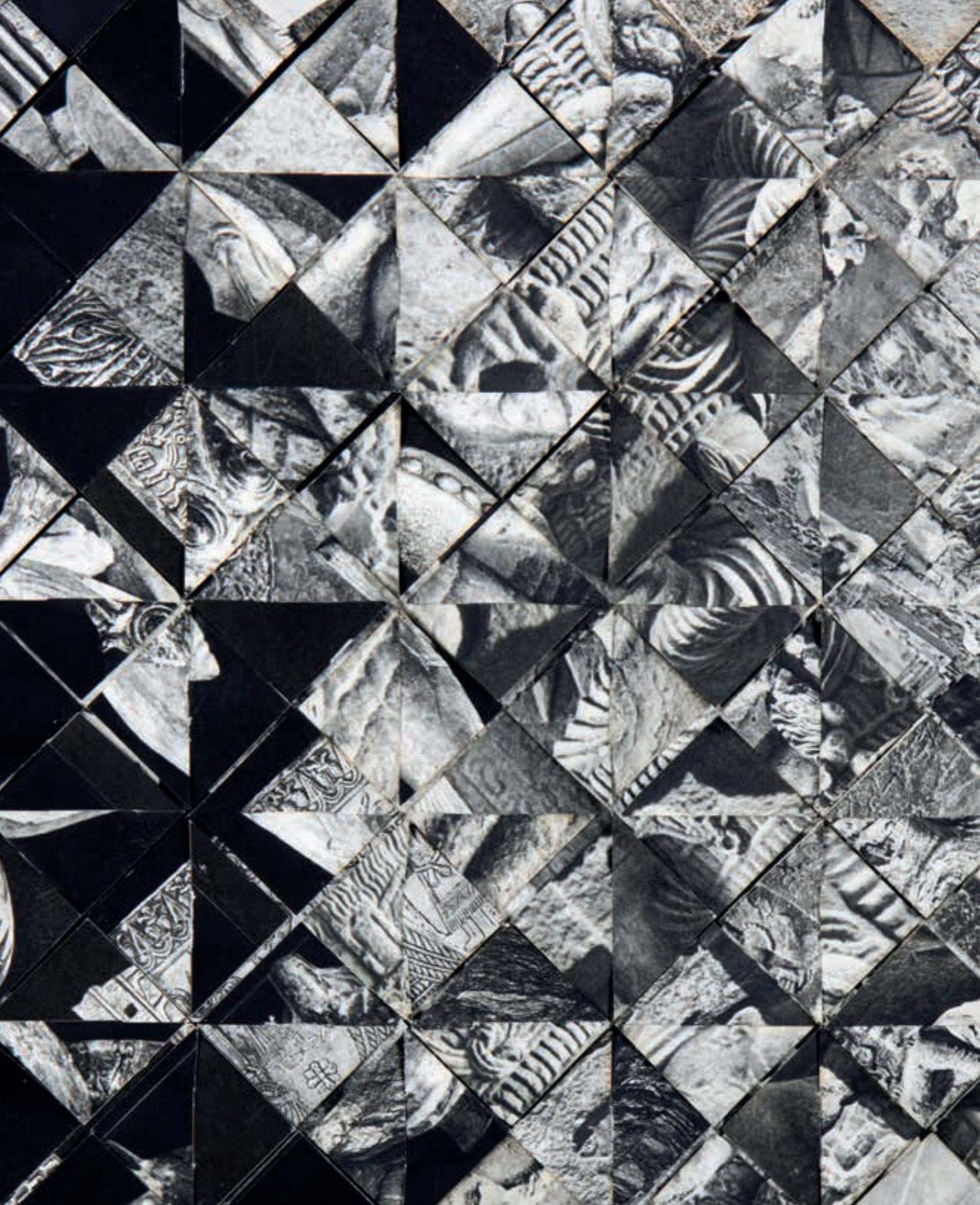
PAGES 72-73

**FISSURES AS METAPHORS  
OF RESISTANCE**, 2017  
Video, 7.03 min

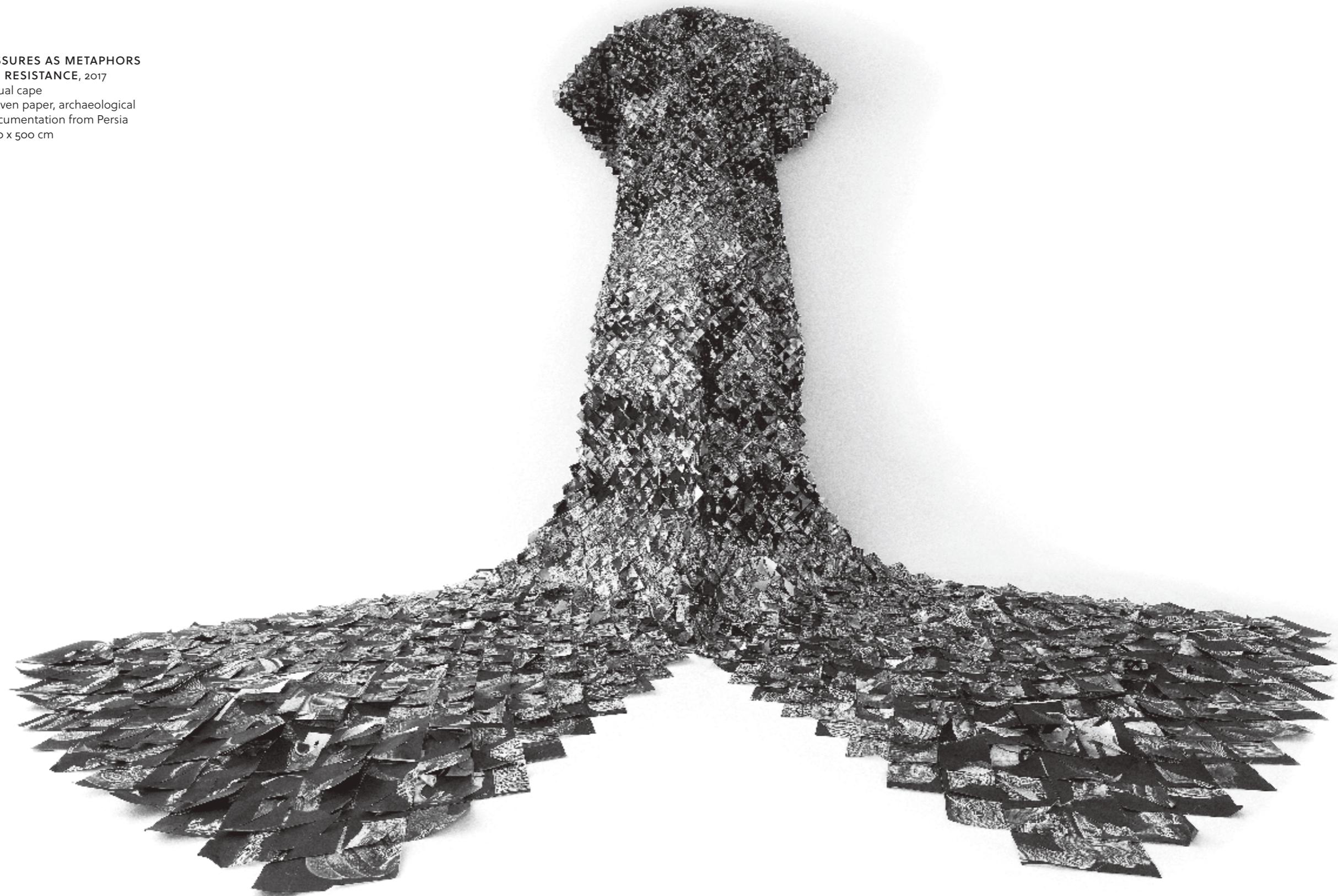




**FISSURES AS METAPHORS  
OF RESISTANCE**, 2017  
Woven paper totems,  
archaeological documentation  
from Iran and Persia  
230 x 130 cm

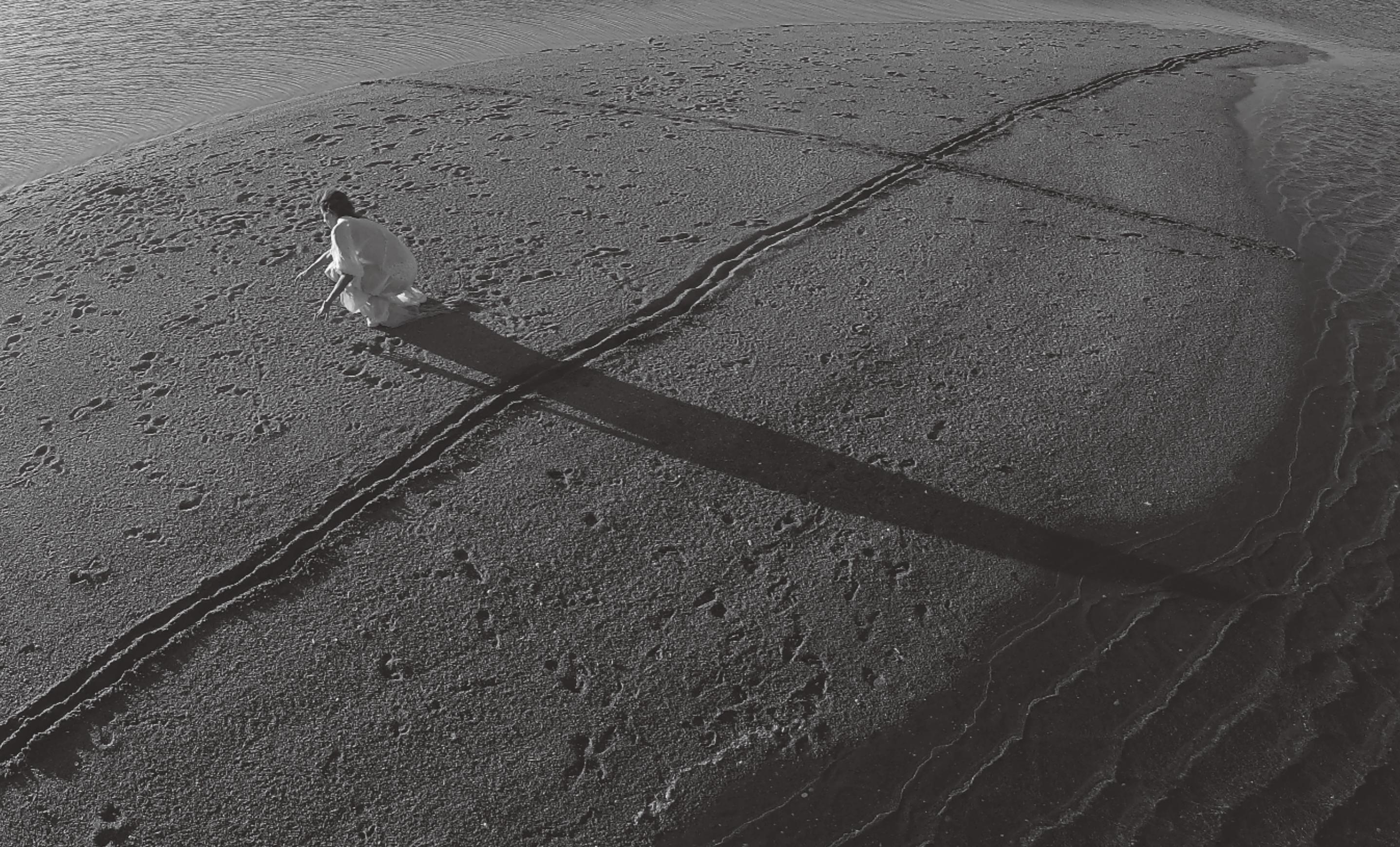


FISSURES AS METAPHORS  
OF RESISTANCE, 2017  
Ritual cape  
Woven paper, archaeological  
documentation from Persia  
300 x 500 cm



**FISSURES AS METAPHORS  
OF RESISTANCE, 2017**  
Performative photo  
printed on a marble block  
Woven paper from  
archaeological documentation  
from Iran and Persia  
30 x 30 cm





## **HERE OR THERE?**

It is a question that appears in every piece as a litany, the one that guides the slender image of a woman through territories and borders and leads the artist to inquire into those alien spaces that she makes her own by reinventing them.



PAGES 84-85

**HERE**, 2016

Performative photograph  
printed on a travertine marble  
110 x 140 cm

**THERE**, 2016

Performative photograph  
printed on a travertine marble  
110 x 140 cm

**THERE**, 2016

Performative photograph  
printed on a travertine marble  
110 x 140 cm





## RITES OF PASSAGE

The body of the artist is presented as a metaphor of where representations of difference and identity are inscribed, showing the tensions between the experience of women and cultural meanings that are featured on the female body to express social, political and cultural ideas. The actions are photographed and recorded from the sky, using the same technology that constantly monitors political borders. This device of high technology distorts «visual perspectives» – a key theme within the artist's research. *Rites of Passage* distinguishes between «the secular» and «the sacred», the magic-religious separation between the profane and the sacred. In this work the territorial passage is a crossing of borders into a culturally different region, for example, one where a different religion prevails.

**RITES OF PASSAGE**, 2015  
Performative photograph  
printed on a travertine marble  
120 x 130 cm





**THERE**, 2016  
Light box installation  
Translucent marble & iron  
155 X 35 X 12 cm



In her work a diversity of coexistent spaces and times can be perceived, languages and cultures can be sensed, and various inhabiting manners can be imagined. These open zones – crevices where the senses, intuitions and suspicions diverge– help expand the images invented by the artist into the references of each spectator. The invention turns the real into fiction and participates in the montage of images and materials, of performatic actions, and of her own and other specific sites. The texts – fleeting and «accidental» or complex and illegible at times– are integrated into her works not necessarily to provide illegibility but rather for the opposite reason: to place us in the space of cultural distance, in the eloquent banishment imposed by such a distance.

**BLURRED**, 2016  
Printed travertine marble block  
140 x 80 cm

FIGURE I, 2016. B&W silver print photography, 183 x 122 cm





**FISSURES OF REVOLUTION**, 2016  
Diptych B&W silver print photography  
200 x 75 cm



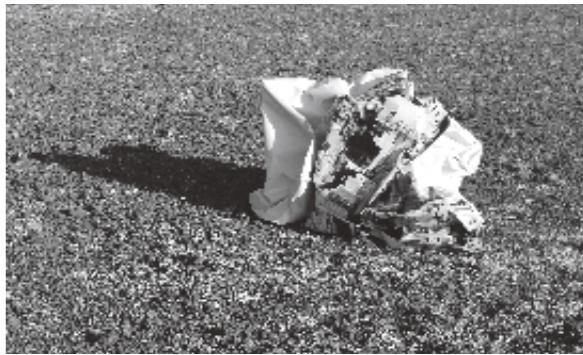
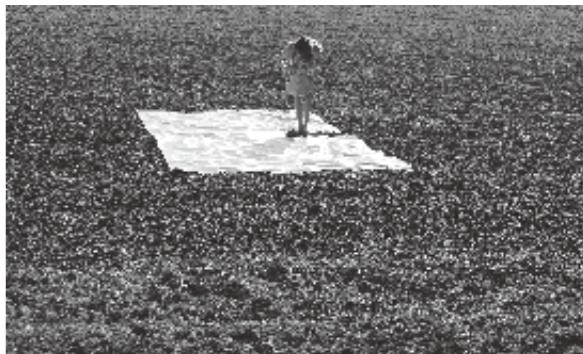
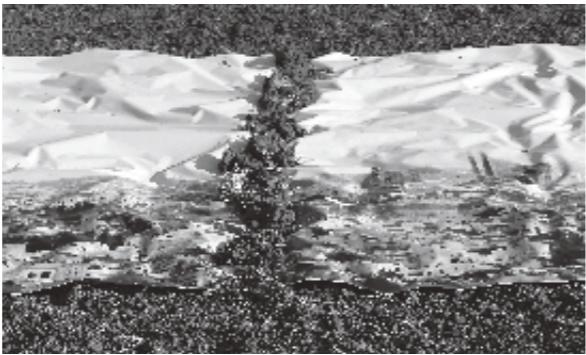
Photography is one of her resources, though not the only one. She makes use of photomontage, thus upholding the tradition of this technique for the transmission of ideas. The overlapping crevices on various internal and external landscapes are used as a double reference, as a cluster of aggregated and combined meanings that give way to others. This somewhat coarse surface, evenly stained with black dots in some parts and scratched with careless despair in others, turns out to be enigmatic. The great crevice that goes through it horizontally creates a broken line of varying intensities. Further down, something that looks like a shadow repeats that sinuosity almost like an echo. Is it a territory? Is it a distant aerial view of a desert landscape with a dark deep canyon, a legacy of quakes or explosions? The ambiguity, uncertainty and indefiniteness expressed by certain images lead the beholder to unexpected horizons and new questions. The crevice, the leitmotif of several of these images, drastically prevails over them and places them in a new threshold, one that is fractured, disobedient or threatening at times.

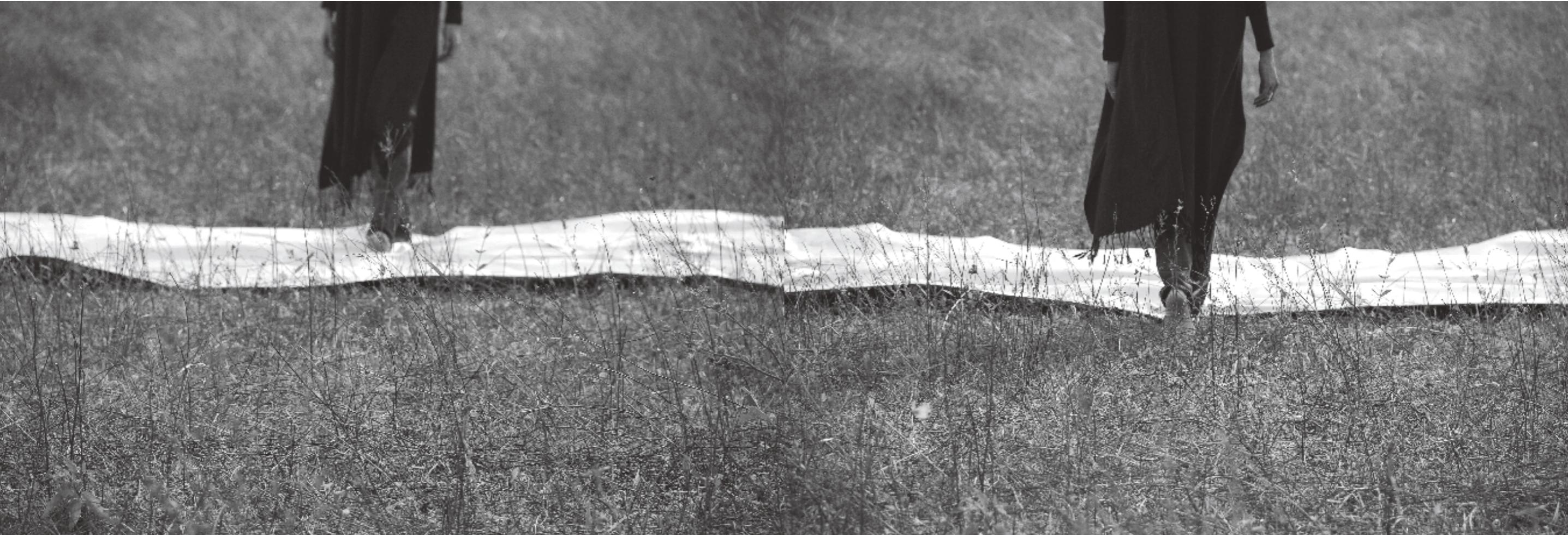


RITUALS OF IDENTITY  
[an alternative landscape]

## EVENT HORIZON

In general relativity, an event horizon is a boundary in spacetime beyond which events cannot affect an outside observer. In layman's terms, it is defined as «the point of no return», i.e., the point at which the gravitational pull becomes so great as to make escape impossible. Light emitted from beyond the event horizon can never reach the outside observer. Likewise, any object approaching the horizon from the observer's side appears to slow down and never quite pass through the horizon, with its image becoming more and more redshifted as time elapses. The traveling object, however, experiences no strange effects and does, in fact, pass through the horizon in a finite amount of proper time.



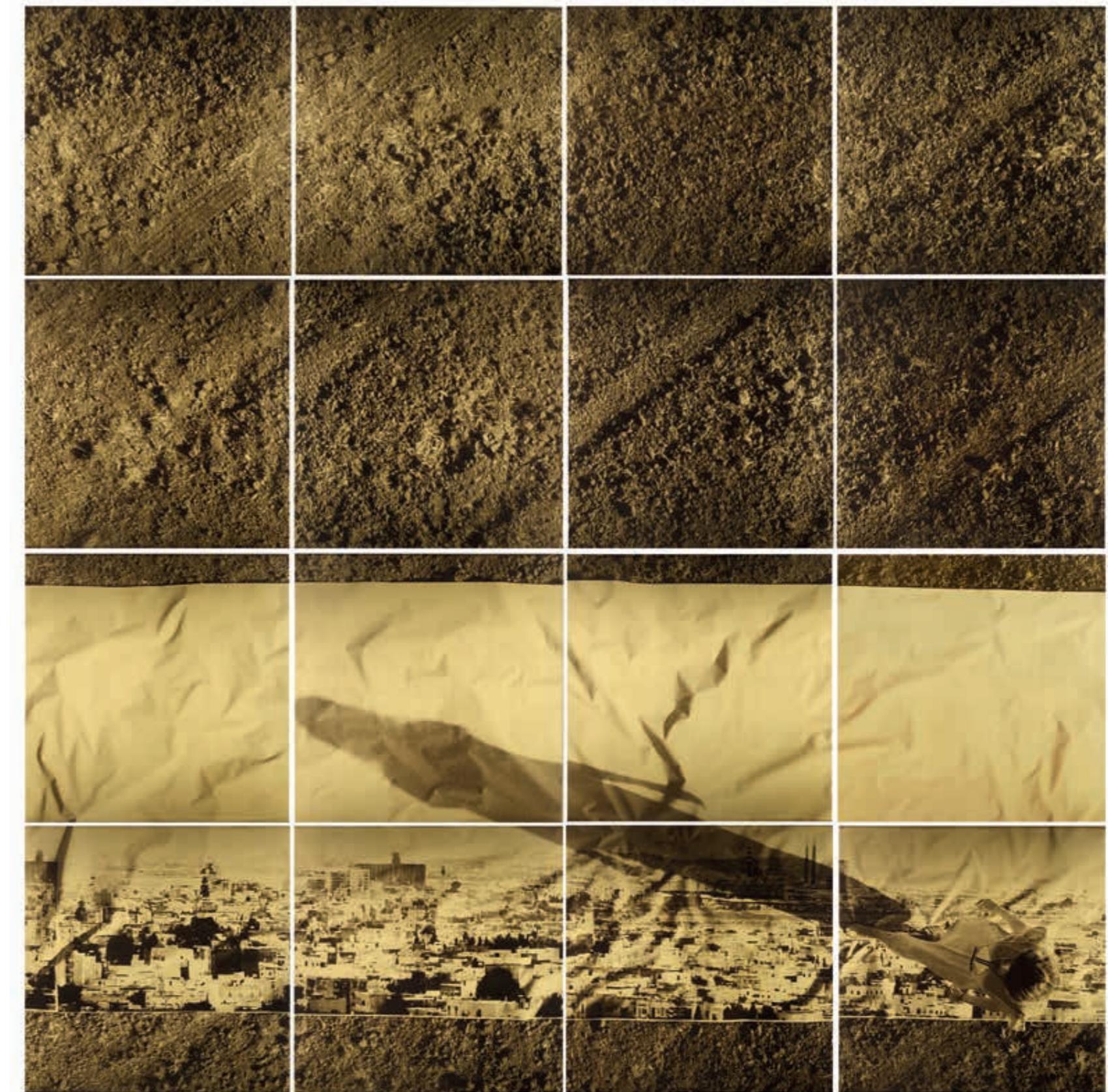


*Rituals of Identity* focuses on the concept of boundaries and the ritual of reconstruction from a fragmented narrative, presenting the viewer with an alternative landscape. Emotionally charged images created with metaphoric and symbolic stylistic manipulations, powerfully challenge the «reality as representation» the artist is part of. Deconstructing what is portrayed in the media, the artist prints huge fabric images with internal boundary dialogues, which are later transported to and located in diverse natural places, where the artist performs actions and rites that activate this imaginary narrative which, taken away from its original context, adapts to the new territory. The shadow of the artist is presented as a metaphor of where representations of

difference and identity are inscribed, showing the tensions between the experience of women and cultural meanings that are featured on the female body to express social, political and cultural ideas. The actions are photographed and recorded from the sky, using the same technology with which the political borders are constantly monitored. This high tech device, distorts the «visual perspectives», the main research topic of the artist. The shift from materiality is evident in the final installation, where the image obtained is transferred into a modular support of polished bronze, a noble material that casts new longings, though disturbing for its military and commemorative character.

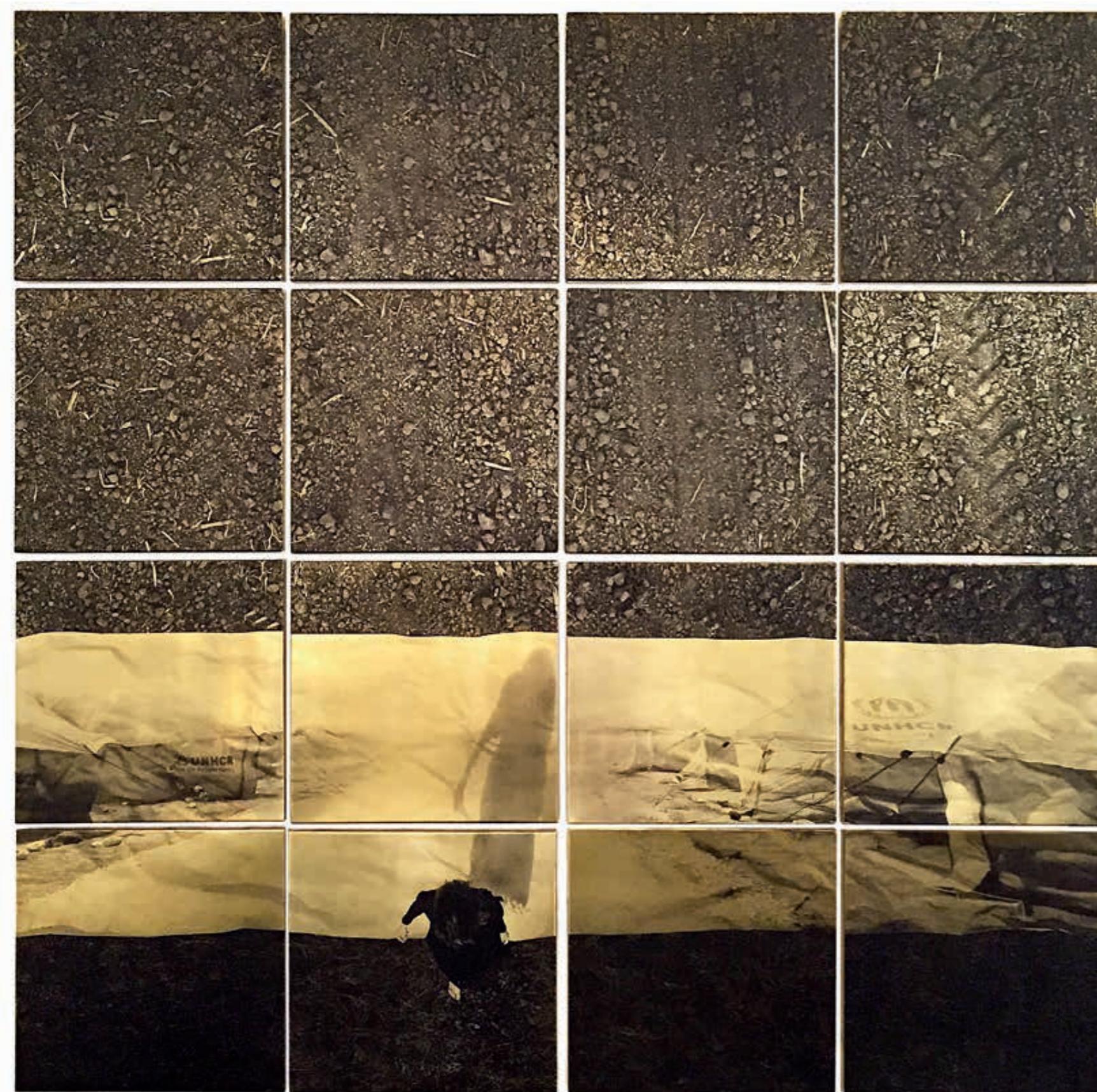
**RITUALS OF IDENTITY**, 2016

Installation  
Performative photo printed  
on polished & lacquered bronze blocks  
178 x 178 cm

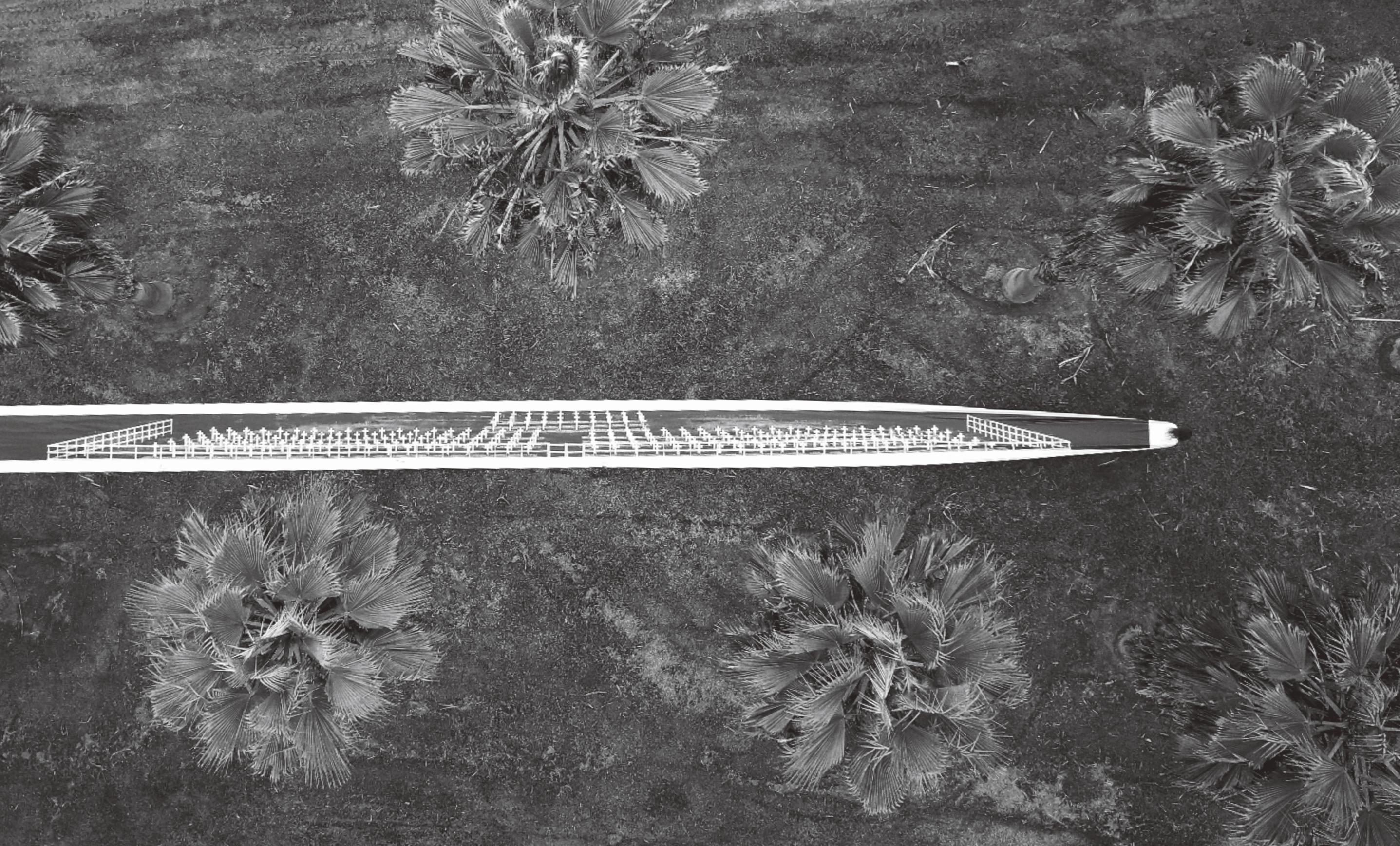




MIGRATIONS (IN)  
CONTEMPORARY ART, 2015  
MUNTREF - Contemporary  
Art Museum Headquarters  
Hotel for Immigrants,  
Buenos Aires, Argentina



**RITUALS OF IDENTITY**, 2016  
Installation  
Performative photo printed  
on polished & lacquered bronze blocks  
178 x 178 cm





A and B.

Two regions of space-time in which the horizon of events divides the space.

A cannot be affected by events in B.

But the events in B generally are affected by the events in A.

The light from one side of the horizon of events will never reach an observer situated on the other side.





She offers an aesthetically poetic visual approach that stimulates the viewer's capacity to imagine the extent of boundaries. The execution of the work, conceptual in its approach, invests the photographic object with gesture, action, and performance that validate the fictive reality represented by the image. Her political and ritual expressions are intrinsic to her art, which provides a support for personal and critical reflections on a political and social situation. The images obtained from the abovementioned actions are manipulated by the artist, thus creating a fictitious universe.

PAGES 112-113, 116-117

**RITUALS OF IDENTITY, 2015**

There is nothing to repatriate,  
because they are in their homeland,  
Performative photo, manifestation dress  
Darwin Cemetery, Malvinas Islands



03-03-1951

23

24

25

1

-50-00

19-51

23

01

24

03-03-19-\*

25

*Here/there* is a binomy of polarities that alludes to the uncertainty where all her works are set. A water surface extends beyond the boundaries of the image. A white boat faintly inhabited by a figure floats adrift. This image, a melancholic evocation, becomes a threatening presence with the irruption of an abyss on that water surface.

**OSCILLATING IDENTITY**  
**SERIES**, 2016  
Performative photograph  
printed on a travertine  
marble block  
110 x 140 cm





124



125



OSCILLATING IDENTITY  
SERIES, 2016  
Performative photograph  
printed on a travertine  
marble block  
33 x 26 cm





The horizon is another key motif of this artist. Just like the crevice, albeit even, serene and tense at the same time, the horizon reminds us of the point of view: here or there.

## HERE/THERE... IMAGES OF UNCERTAINTY

[by DIANA WECHSLER, RESEARCHER AND CURATOR,  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR MUNTREF]

The delimitation of territory and the deployment of limits, landmarks, milestones, hedges or fences have always been part of the ways that individuals gathered in societies –whether large or small– adopt to produce an inside-outside situation in order to express ownership, belonging or their opposite. In the words of Zygmunt Bauman, these physical and symbolic barriers are «a declaration of intent» meant to establish positions, define points of view, and to both include and exclude.\* Thus, from a certain position, from inside we can see other places and people that are not physically included in our world, even if we have a number of symbolic and imaginary constructions and references about them.

Within certain contexts, this simple observation becomes specifically problematic. Migrations have always been part of the logic of human settlement on the planet since the beginning of time. Likewise,

the setting of limits had an early start and the safe-keeping of territory, property and people has been the driving force for the creation of all kinds of boundaries ever since. Such boundaries are the setting of Catalina's works. This somewhat coarse surface, evenly stained with black dots in some parts and scratched with careless despair in others, turns out to be enigmatic. The great crevice that goes through it horizontally creates a broken line of varying intensities. Further down, something that looks like a shadow repeats that sinuosity almost like an echo. Is it a territory? Is it a distant aerial view of a desert landscape with a dark deep canyon, a legacy of quakes or explosions?

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The horizon is another key motif of this artist. Just like the crevice, albeit even, serene and tense at the same time, the horizon reminds us of the point of view: here or there.

«Here or there?» is a question that appears in every piece as a litany, the one that guides the slender image of a woman through territories and borders and leads the artist to inquire into those alien spaces that she makes her own by reinventing them.

Photography is one of her resources, though not the only one. She makes use of photomontage, thus upholding the tradition of this technique for the transmission of ideas. The overlapping crevices on various internal and external landscapes are used as a double reference, as a cluster of aggregated and combined meanings that give way to others.

The materials –paper, bronze and stone– are more than a mere support on which images are printed. They are part of the montage offering further elements of meaning through their light fragility, their gloss and brightness, or their rustic roughness.

Probably because Catalina sketches what she defines as «anticipated archaeology», it is the presence and

accumulation of fragments that provides meaning to the whole re-signified in each piece.

«Banished but not silent». In the standard typography of newspapers, this phrase prevails over the image. It is another montage. The texts –fleeting and «accidental» or complex and illegible at times– are integrated into her works not necessarily to provide illegibility but rather for the opposite reason: to place us in the space of cultural distance, in the eloquent banishment imposed by such a distance.

In her work a diversity of coexistent spaces and times can be perceived, languages and cultures can be sensed, and various inhabiting manners can be imagined. These open zones –crevices where the senses, intuitions and suspicions diverge– help expand the images invented by the artist into the references of each spectator. The invention turns the real into fiction and participates in the montage of images and materials, of performative actions, and of her own and other specific sites. Here or there? This is the question aroused by the very physical and symbolic material nature of her works. ▀

\* Zygmunt Bauman, *Society under Siege*, Blackwell Publishers, 2002, Chapter 3 «To live and to die in the planetary frontiers».

EXTRACTS OF THIS TEXT IN PAGES  
38, 44, 83, 95, 99, 122, 133

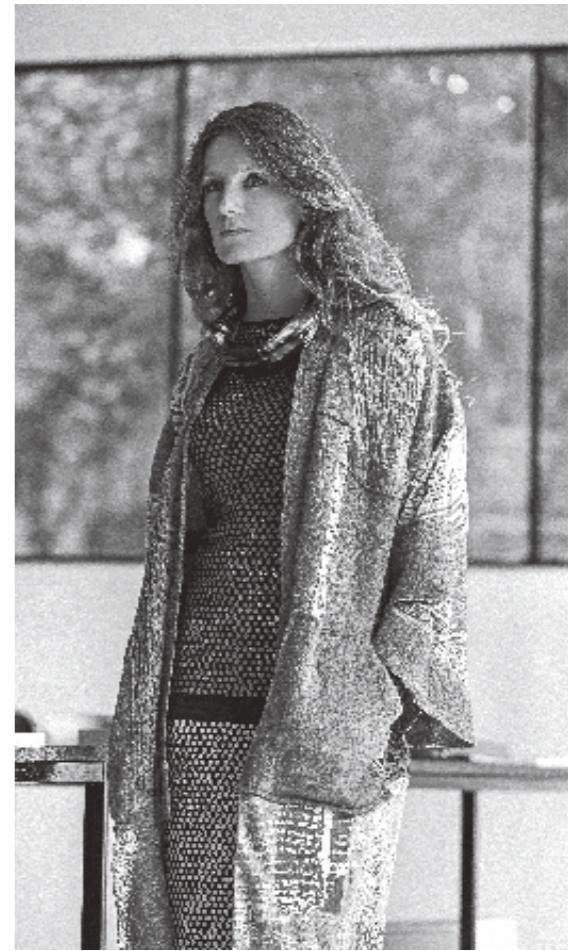
## BIOGRAPHY

Catalina Swinburn (Santiago, Chile, 1979)

She lives and works in London, Buenos Aires and Santiago, Chile. The work of Chilean visual artist Catalina Swinburn operates on the shifting border that she establishes between cult and artistic practice through the use of rites (performance) and the arrangement of objects. Her exploration of different visual media – video, installation, photography and performance – results in highly emotional images created with metaphoric and symbolic manipulations that challenge reality as a representation the artist is part of. The strong theatrical and choreographic content interpreted and recorded in her rituals supports her personal critical reflections upon a socio-political situation whose context goes beyond history or religion. Great emphasis is laid on spirituality, nostalgia and tradition. Her work is presented as a syncretic *bricolage*, as an attempt to reconcile different doctrines, a process of transculturalization and miscegenation, the union of the sacred and the secular. All of this summarizes her identity as a female Latin American artist in an era with a multiplicity of encounters and realities. The artist's

body appears as a metaphor of the space where representations of difference and identity take place. The tension between the experience of women and the cultural significance of the female body is thus manifested. Contingency issues have always been present in Catalina Swinburn's work, in which the following question is raised: where is the limit between the past and the present, death and the vital drive, vigil and sleep, the real and the imaginary, of the game of borders, and of religions? This and other questions are addressed by a corpus elaborated in hazy territories, prodigal though blurry zones, the vagueness of which leads us to the realm of the subconscious. It takes us through the borders of the here and beyond, the archaic and the contemporary, into the multiple memory «of permanence», either as myths or reality. She employs the intervention space to delve into personal and collective doubts where her own body establishes boundaries and bonds, denouncement and hope. The artist seeks to make us reflect upon the gap between body and territory and upon the inhabiting process. ■

[www.catalinaswinburnstudio.com](http://www.catalinaswinburnstudio.com)



## SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS



**NARRATIVES OF  
DISPLACEMENT**  
Selma Feriani Gallery  
Sidi Bou Said, Tunis  
2018



**ANTICIPATED  
ARCHEAOLOGY**  
Aninat & Swinburn  
Isabel Aninat Gallery  
Santiago, Chile  
2013

AWARDED BEST EXHIBITION



**FISSURES**  
Selma Feriani Gallery  
Sidi Bou Said, Tunis  
2016



**INDULGENCES**  
Aninat & Swinburn  
Selma Feriani Gallery  
London, United Kingdom  
2012



**THE PERFECT BOUNDARY**  
Centro Cultural MATTA  
Embajada de Chile  
Buenos Aires, Argentina  
2016



**UTOPIA**  
Aninat & Swinburn  
Mount Street Church  
London, United Kingdom  
2012



**LOST PARADISE**  
Aninat & Swinburn  
Collahuasi Foundation  
Iquique, Chile  
2011



**NOVUM MEMORAE**  
Aninat & Swinburn  
Centro de Extensión ucc  
Santiago, Chile  
2008



**LUXURIOUS SILENCE**  
Aninat & Swinburn  
Cecilia González Gallery  
Lima, Peru  
2011



**THERE IS NO WORSE  
BLIND MAN THAN  
HE WHO WISHES  
NOT TO SEE**  
Aninat & Swinburn  
Isabel Aninat Gallery  
Santiago, Chile  
2008



**STATU QUO**  
Aninat & Swinburn  
ccu, Santiago, Chile  
2010



**IN CONTEMPLATION**  
Aninat & Swinburn  
Galería 5006  
Buenos Aires, Argentina  
2006

## SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS



—  
**ORBITUARY**  
Aninat & Swinburn  
Galería Dieeke  
Santiago, Chile  
2004



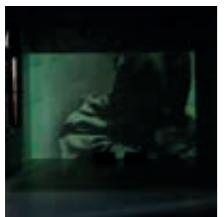
—  
**IN MEMORIAM**  
Aninat & Swinburn  
Galería ANIMAL  
Santiago, Chile  
2002



—  
**IN MEMORIAM**  
Aninat & Swinburn  
Galería ANIMAL  
Santiago, Chile  
2004



—  
**VEILED MEMORY**  
Aninat & Swinburn  
Galería ANIMAL  
Santiago, Chile  
2002



—  
**IN MEMORIAM**  
12.05.04 – 05.06.04  
Aninat & Swinburn  
Galería Valenzuela  
& Kenner  
Bogotá, Colombia  
2004



—  
**NON SITE – IN MEMORIAM**  
13.11.02 – 07.12.02  
Aninat & Swinburn  
Corporación Cultural  
de las Condes  
Santiago, Chile  
2003



—  
**FRÜHLING [‘FRY:LING],  
DER: WEIBLICH**  
Mario Mauroner  
Contemporary Art Vienna  
Vienna, Austria  
2018



—  
**MIGRATIONS (IN)  
CONTEMPORARY ART**  
MUNTREF - Contemporary  
Art Museum Headquarters  
Hotel for Immigrants,  
Buenos Aires, Argentina  
2015



—  
**EXPEDITIONS  
IN AESTHETICS  
AND SUSTAINABILITY**  
Parque Cultural  
de Valparaíso, Chile  
2017

AWARDED BEST EXHIBITION



—  
**PORTRAIT REDUXE**  
Aninat & Swinburn  
Selma Feriani Gallery  
Sidi Bou Said, Tunis  
2014



—  
**PORTRAIT  
PAINFUL TIMES**  
Aninat & Swinburn  
Selma Feriani Gallery  
London, United Kingdom  
2013



—  
**CON-TEXT  
ART OF TELLING TALES**  
Aninat & Swinburn  
Artnexus Space  
Bogotá, Colombia  
2011



—  
**HE WHO DOES NOT  
RISK, DOES NOT  
CROSS THE RIVER**  
Aninat & Swinburn  
About change, World Bank  
Washington, United States  
2011



—  
**PAINFUL TIMES**  
Aninat & Swinburn  
Isabel Aninat Gallery  
Santiago, Chile  
2010



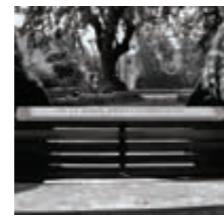
—  
**IN GOD WE TRUST**  
Aninat & Swinburn  
Dangerous Liasons  
Monnaie de Paris  
Paris, France  
2011



—  
**IN GOD WE TRUST**  
Aninat & Swinburn  
Museo de Arte  
Contemporáneo (MAC)  
Santiago, Chile  
2009



—  
**IN GOD WE TRUST**  
Aninat & Swinburn  
Bolsa de Arte  
São Paulo, Brasil  
2009



—  
**COMMON PLACES**  
Aninat & Swinburn  
Proyect Vitacura  
Public space  
Santiago, Chile  
2008



—  
**SINCE 11.09**  
Aninat & Swinburn  
Museo de Artes  
Visuales (MAVI)  
Santiago, Chile  
2007



—  
**COLLECTION PIECES**  
Aninat & Swinburn  
Isabel Aninat Gallery  
Santiago, Chile  
2005



—  
**ALTAR OF SACRIFICE**  
Aninat & Swinburn  
Museo de Arte  
Contemporáneo (MAC)  
Santiago, Chile  
2007



—  
**FRAGMENTS OF OBLIVION**  
Aninat & Swinburn  
Galería Animal  
Santiago, Chile  
2003



—  
**OPERACIÓN LÍMITE  
AMBULATORIO**  
Aninat & Swinburn  
Galería La Sala  
2005  
WINNER OF  
DELTA AIRLINES CONTEST



—  
**MEMORY IN TRANSIT**  
Aninat & Swinburn  
Fundación Telefónica  
Santiago, Chile  
2002

## RITUALES DE IDENTIDAD

[por JUSTO PASTOR MELLADO, CRÍTICO DE ARTE Y CURADOR INDEPENDIENTE, DIRECTOR DEL CENTRO DE ESTUDIOS DE DISEÑO Y ARTE]

No es usual analizar el conjunto de una obra compleja a partir de la singularidad de una pieza, cuya imagen es reproducida en un catálogo. Tampoco es usual tomar un catálogo y forzar su condición para reconocer en él una expansión editorial del espacio expositivo. Sin embargo, debemos estar preparados para comprender lo mínimo; es decir, la ruina del libro como un monumento desmantelado que retiene la existencia de la casa de las letras.

Sugiero a los lectores considerar que este catálogo es un «manual de instrucciones» para acceder a la obra de Catalina Swinburn. Los textos no aportan, necesariamente, legibilidad, sino que nos sitúan en una distancia cultural, para cuya comprensión es preciso poner atención a ciertas consideraciones; a saber, primero, los «modos de hacer», y segundo, los efectos gráficos en el territorio.

Vamos a lo primero: el catálogo reproduce la imagen de un libro al que le han sido arrancadas unas páginas, en número suficiente, para hacer visible su des/compostura. Al romper el empaste de un libro pasamos a exhibir la columna vertebral averiada, con los cortes de papel y de hilo a la vista. Esta es una de tantas imágenes y sin embargo, determina la legibilidad del conjunto de las piezas reproducidas. En tal sentido, enfatiza el momento de una catástrofe cultural, porque la destrucción de un libro equivale a la demolición de un edificio; más aún, si nos enteramos que el libro desmantelado contiene la partitura de una ópera de Verdi, «Aída», que sella una cierta idea de la sentimentalidad que se deja ver en la trama subterránea del poder.

Las páginas arrancadas, plegadas y convertidas en mensajes cifrados, ya determinados para dicha función por el doblez, delimitan la línea que fija el alcance

de un enigma. Es así como la papiroflexia recomponen las ruinas del libro, para habilitarlas mediante una función impensada, en elemento singularizados de un nuevo objeto: un manto, un vestido. En el catálogo, el libro es reproducido en condición de despojo, ya que exhibe la destrucción del empaste, para luego dar paso a la fabricación de un cobertor que puede ser utilizado como prenda de vestir y como una mortaja. Lo anterior permite exponer la segunda consideración que he planteado en los párrafos iniciales; es decir, los efectos gráficos en el territorio. Como se verá, de la primera consideración se obtienen dos efectos anticipatorios: la herida visible (destrucción del empaste en el libro) y el pliegue (trazo y delimitación de la superficie). Aquí, el diseño del catálogo hace el trabajo de duelo, señalando dibujos sobre la arena, grietas en los muros y ciertos de fronteras y de cementerios.

Hay que hablar de estas fotografías: sobre la arena se dibuja el plano de la casa, fijando un lugar de encuentro entre el recuerdo anecdótico y lo enciclopédico, bajo la amenaza que las olas barren (cubren) todo. Se dibuja, en seguida, para señalar como funciona el retorno de lo reprimido.

Las fotos de las grietas, en cambio, hacen evidente una exigencia de realismo a través de reappropriaciones reguladas de experiencias traumáticas, que son reabsorbidas por el espacio de arte.

No puedo dejar de recordar el terremoto de 1985 que dañó el museo de bellas artes de Santiago de Chile. Pese a la presencia de grietas en los muros, el museo no dejó de funcionar, porque los especialistas en resistencia de materiales habían concluido que el edificio no tenía daño estructural. Sin embargo, los trabajos de restauración demoraron a tal punto que las grietas pasaron a «ser parte del edificio».

Acompañando a un curador europeo en su recorrido por el museo, tuve que escuchar su pregunta por el autor de esta obra que ponía audazmente en crisis a la institución museal, exhibiendo sus grietas. Me odié por haberlo sacado de su error de apreciación. En la medida que nunca tuvimos ruinas greco-romanas, debimos inventar los derrumbes simbólicos de nuestra conveniencia, mediante construcciones conmemorativas levantadas en los territorios extremos

del conflicto migratorio y que subsisten como enclaves del colonialismo decimonónico más abyecto. Es el momento en que las fotografías de excavaciones egipcias se homologan a las del cementerio de Darwin, en las islas Malvinas, y que sellan la serie de los Rituales de Identidad. Solo analizamos unas ruinas desde otras ruinas, incluyendo la ruina de los relatos y de los cuerpos.

Es «Aída», cuyas páginas son arrancadas para fabricar con ellas unos sarcófagos portátiles de la letra, que hace que las lápidas de los caídos sin identificar, sean hallazgos arqueológicos de un presente forzado a ser reconocido como vestigio de una memoria averiada. ▀

## RECUERDOS QUE PERMANECEN

[por MAISA AL QASSIMI, CURADORA]

Los continuos cambios en territorios y fronteras siempre han sido un problema global. Provocan una situación de adentro/afuera en la sociedad y generan una nueva forma de expresión respecto de la propiedad y la pertenencia. Estas luchas han derivado en un aumento significativo de refugiados y migrantes que atraviesan las fronteras en la actualidad. Estos son algunos de los temas explorados por Catalina Swinburn en su reciente serie *La Frontera Perfecta*, un viaje que emprendió en 2015.

La práctica artística de Swinburn es una indagación a través de diversos medios tales como videos, instalaciones, esculturas y fotografías, además del uso de materiales como papel y mármol. Muchos de sus procesos comienzan con una performance, ya sea usando su propio cuerpo en la obra o el acto performático como producción artística. Esta personificación e interconexión a través del tiempo, del lugar y del espacio le permiten a la artista expresar la experiencia humana.

En esta serie, Swinburn combina las dos formas performáticas mediante la creación de un objeto a través de la acción de tejer. Los materiales empleados son fuentes de archivo de libros históricos, de un atlas, documentos arqueológicos y musicales. En *La*

*Frontera Perfecta* (2016) Swinburn usa las páginas de un atlas de la década del 70, documentación de una época en que había países que ya no existen y en que las fronteras eran otras. Esas páginas de archivos se entrelazan de modo tal que el desplazamiento geográfico cambia permanentemente. En la performance la artista viste la escultura entrelazada, y mientras la arrastra a través de la tierra, la va quebrando y recreando fronteras.

¿En qué lugar y en qué tiempo estaba el objeto antes de la performance? ¿Ha tomado la forma de mi cuerpo? Qué recuerdos tendrá? ¿Qué relatos contará y dónde irá? Estas son algunas de las preguntas que Swinburn plantea antes, durante y después de cada performance. Dice la artista:

«Las obras en papel tienen vida propia. Se convierten en una escultura, un cuerpo abandonado con una historia que va trazando una forma. Adquieren un pasado; me hacen pensar en las puntadas de un recuerdo que perdura. Todas las catástrofes culturales del mundo en las cuales algunos sitios culturales se desplazan y otros se destruyen».

En su obra *The Sorrows of Absence* (2018) Swinburn usa las páginas de un libro de arqueología que contiene reproducciones de sitios históricos recientemente destruidos. Mediante la presentación y representación de esas imágenes, la artista explora los problemas y las consecuencias de la pérdida de Identidad Nacional en esos estados. Swinburn reconstruye las páginas plegándolas entre sí en su intento de reparar lo que se ha destruido. De esta manera, la escultura se convierte en un monumento que revoluciona su propia historia y hace referencia a sus cambios de tiempo y lugar. A través de la fotografía, Swinburn captura las condiciones efímeras de la performance y disemina esas imágenes sobre mármol o piedra. De algún modo, la naturaleza monumental de la obra retorna y es reformada desde la materialidad frágil del papel a un material simbólico como el mármol o la piedra para representar su significado cultural.

El proceso creativo de la obra interpersonal de Catalina Swinburn pone el énfasis en la necesidad humana de condiciones de existencia, pérdida y destrucción. La regeneración de estos relatos manifiesta un sentido

de urgencia y un modo de resistencia. En un contexto global de constante lucha y desplazamiento de seres humanos, Swinburn expresa un mensaje de esperanza y libertad y anticipa una apertura hacia un diálogo cultural. ▀

## HERE/THERE... IMÁGENES DE LA INCERTIDUMBRE

[por DIANA WECHSLER, INVESTIGADORA Y CURADORA, SUBDIRECTORA MUNTREF]

La delimitación del territorio, la instalación de marcas, trazados, mojones, cercos o empalizadas forman parte desde siempre, de las maneras que los individuos integrados en sociedades –grandes o pequeñas– fueron asumiendo para generar una situación de adentro-afuera y con ella para indicar propiedad, pertenencia, o su contrario.

Estas barreras tan físicas como simbólicas –en palabras de Zigmunt Bauman, «una declaración de intenciones»\*– están destinadas a marcar posiciones, a circunscribir puntos de mira, a incluir y excluir a la vez. Así, vemos desde una posición dada, desde un adentro, otros sitios y personas que no están incluidos físicamente en nuestro lugar, aunque simbólica e imaginariamente tengamos una serie de referencias y construcciones sobre ellos.

Esta simple constatación adquiere en ciertos contextos una intensidad problemática específica. Si las migraciones formaron parte de la lógica de poblamiento del planeta desde que el hombre lo ocupa, también tempranamente la marcación de límites se impuso. El resguardo de territorios y los bienes y personas incluidos en ellos ha sido desde entonces el motor para la creación de fronteras de todo tipo. Sobre ellas, transita el trabajo de Catalina.

Esa superficie de cierta rugosidad, manchada regularmente con puntos negros en algunas zonas, raspadada como con desprolja desesperación en otras, resulta enigmática. Una gran fisura la atraviesa de

manera horizontal describiendo una línea quebrada de distintas intensidades, más abajo, algo que se presenta como una sombra repite casi como un eco aquella sinuosidad. ¿Se trata de un territorio? ¿Es una vista desde lo alto, a distancia, de un paisaje desierto atravesado por un cañadón oscuro, profundo, heredado de algún temblor o de alguna explosión? La ambigüedad, la incertidumbre, la indefinición, es lo que ciertas imágenes ofrecen para abrir en cada ser que las mira horizontes inesperados que conducen a cuestionamientos nuevos.

Here/there es el binomio de pares polares que nombra la incerteza en la que se instala cada uno de sus trabajos. Una superficie de agua se prolonga más allá del límite de la imagen. En ella flota, a la deriva, un bote blanco habitado débilmente por una figura. Esta imagen, se convierte de evocación melancólica en amenazadora presencia ante la irrupción en esa superficie acuosa de un abismo.

La grieta, el leitmotiv de varias de estas imágenes, se impone sobre ellas marcándolas de forma drástica para instalarlas en un nuevo umbral: quebrado, desobediente unas veces, amenazador otras.

El horizonte es otro de los motivos clave del trabajo de esta artista. Como la grieta, aunque regular, sereno y tenso a la vez, el horizonte no hace sino recordar el punto de mira: here or there.

Aquí o allí? Una pregunta que se reitera en cada trabajo como letanía, esa que guía quizás a la imagen espigada de mujer que atraviesa territorios y fronteras, esa que lleva a la artista a indagar una y otra vez sobre estos espacios ajenos que hace suyos reinventándolos.

La fotografía es uno de sus recursos, pero no está solo. El fotomontaje aparece en sus manos –reivindicando la tradición de la técnica– como vehículo para las ideas. La superposición de esas fisuras sobre distintos paisajes interiores y exteriores se ofrece como doble referencia, como aglutinación de sentidos que se agregan, se combinan y dan paso a otros.

Los materiales: papel, bronce, piedra; son mucho más que un simple soporte sobre el que imprimir las imágenes. Ellos son parte de estos montajes ofreciendo en su leve fragilidad, en sus páginas y brillós, o en su rustica dureza otros elementos de significación.

Quizás porque Catalina traza, como ella misma la define, una «arqueología anticipada», son los fragmentos los que con su presencia y en su adición van dando sentido al conjunto que se resignifica en cada pieza. «Banished but not silent». En tipografía regular de periódico, esta frase recortada se impone sobre la imagen. Otro montaje. Los textos, unas veces así de fugaces y «accidentales», otras tan complejos como ilegibles, se integran también en sus obras no necesariamente para aportarle legibilidad, sino más bien lo contrario, para situarnos en el espacio de la distancia cultural: en el elocuente destierro que esa distancia impone.

En su trabajo se sospechan espacios y tiempos diversos en convivencia, se intuyen lenguas y culturas, se imaginan distintos modos de habitar. Estas zonas abiertas, grietas donde divergen los sentidos, intuiciones y sospechas, contribuyen a expandir en las referencias que porta cada espectador, las imágenes inventadas por la artista. La invención ficcionaliza lo real y forma parte de su operación de montaje de imágenes y materiales, de acciones performáticas y sitios específicos propios y ajenos. Sus obras instalan en su propia materialidad física y simbólica la pregunta que las ronda: here or there? ▀

## BIOGRAFÍA

Catalina Swinburn (Santiago, Chile, 1979)

Vive y trabaja en Londres, Buenos Aires y Santiago de Chile. La obra de la artista visual chilena Catalina Swinburn opera en la movediza frontera que establece entre el culto y la práctica artística mediante el uso del rito (performance) y la disposición objetual. A través de la exploración de diferentes medios de comunicación visual –video, instalación, fotografía y performance–, presenta imágenes de gran carga emocional creadas a partir de manipulaciones metafóricas y simbólicas que desafían la realidad como representación la artista es parte de. El fuerte contenido teatral y coreográfico que interpreta y registra en sus rituales respalda sus reflexiones críticas de una situación política y social en un contexto que va más

allá de lo histórico o religioso, con marcado énfasis en la espiritualidad, la nostalgia y la tradición. Su obra se presenta a modo de *bricolage* sincrético, un intento de conciliar doctrinas distintas, un proceso de transculturación y mestizaje, la unión de lo sacro y lo pagano, lo cual la identifica como mujer artista latinoamericana perteneciente a una era en la que confluye una multiplicidad de encuentros y realidades. El cuerpo de la artista se presenta como una metáfora del lugar donde se inscriben las representaciones de la diferencia y la identidad. De este modo se manifiestan las tensiones entre la experiencia de la mujer y los significados culturales que se inscriben en el cuerpo femenino. Los problemas de la contingencia han estado siempre presentes en la obra de Catalina Swinburn, a través de los cuales nos plantea la siguiente pregunta: ¿dónde están los límites entre el pasado y el presente, entre la muerte y el pulso vital, entre la vigilia y el sueño, entre lo real y lo imaginario, del juego de fronteras, de las religiones? De éstas y otras cuestiones trata un cuerpo de obra elaborada desde territorios difusos, zonas pródigas aunque borrosas que, al no poderse identificar con precisión, nos conducen al terreno del subconsciente. Nos encamina a transitar por «los bordes» del aquí y del allá, por lo arcaico y lo contemporáneo, a atravesar por la memoria múltiple «de la permanencia» como mito o realidad. Utiliza el lugar que interviene para encarnar dudas propias y colectivas, donde su propio cuerpo es el que establece los límites y las conexiones, las denuncias y esperanzas. La artista quiere hacernos reflexionar sobre la brecha que separa el cuerpo del territorio y el tránsito del habitat. ▀

\* Zygmunt Bauman, *La sociedad sitiada*, Buenos Aires, FCE, 2007 cfr. Cap. 3 «Vivir y morir en la frontera planetaria» pp.113-149



BOOK CONCEPT AND COVER DESIGN: Catalina Swinburn Studio

GRAPHIC DESIGN: Estudio Lo Bianco [Catalina Ruiz Luque, Juan Lo Bianco]

TRANSLATION & EDITION: Laura Fryd

TEXTS BY: Justo Pastor Mellado, Maisa al Qassimi, Diana Weschler

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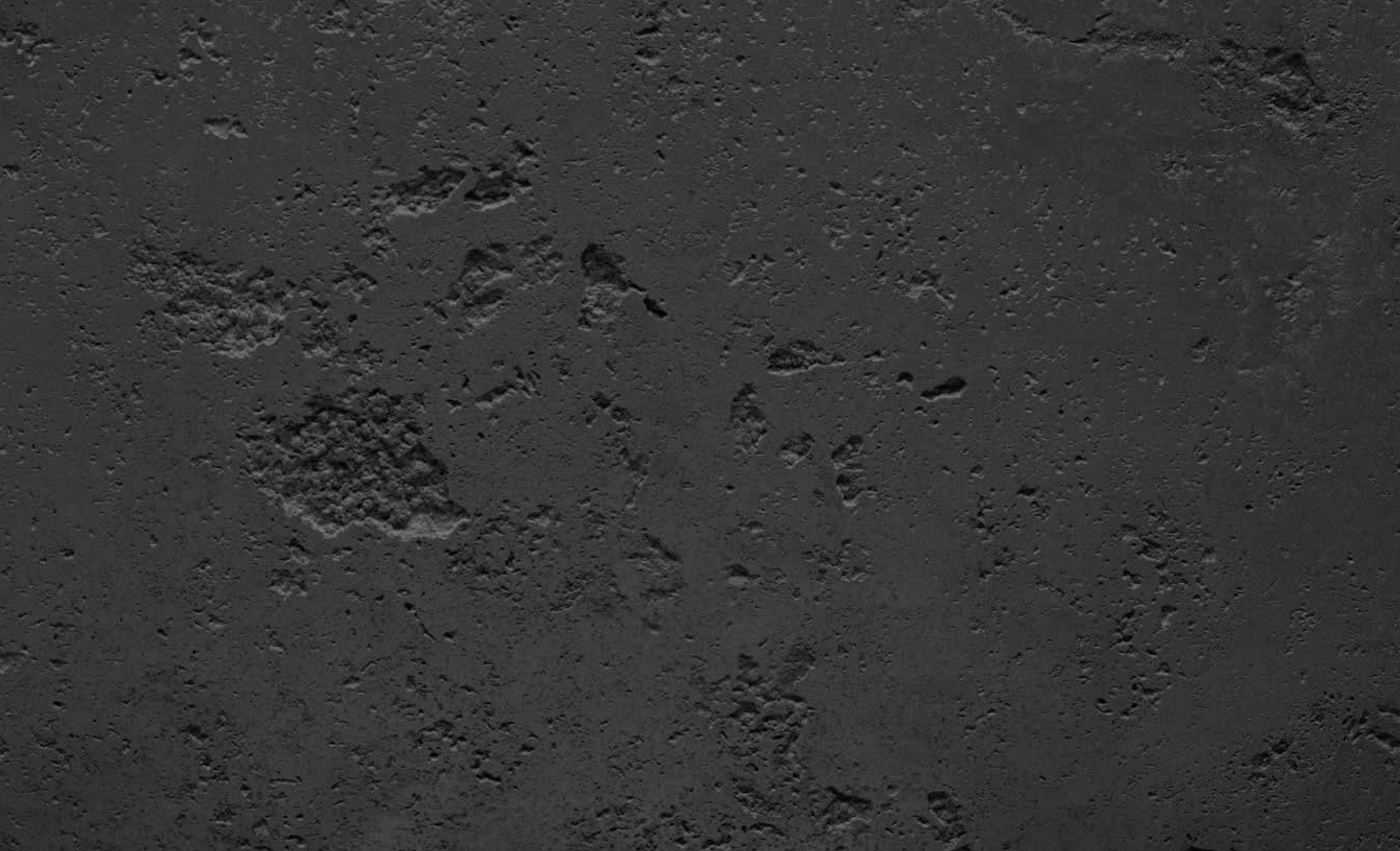


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«The process in which Catalina Swinburn creates her interpersonal work emphasises on the human necessity of the conditions of being, loss and destruction. Regenerating these narratives articulates a sense of urgency and a mode of resistance. With the continuous struggles globally and displacement of human beings, Swinburn expresses hope and freedom to the world and anticipates an openness for cultural dialogue.» MAISA AL QASSIMI

«The book appears as remains, since it shows the destruction of the binding to give way to the making of a blanket that can be used as a garment or a shroud. In this regard, it underscores a cultural catastrophe, for the destruction of a book is comparable to the demolition of a building, even more so when we learn that the book includes the score of Verdi's opera *«Aida»*, which conveys an idea of sentimentality that can be seen in the underlying configurations of power.» JUSTO PASTOR MELLADO