



Selma Feriani Gallery

Archaic Contingency | Catalina Swinburn

Cromwell Place, Gallery 11

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Recycling the Past into the Present while Weaving a Universal Language - The Art of Catalina Swinburn

As we continue to witness mass displacement and chaos in locations that once stood as cradles of civilization, Catalina Swinburn's practice becomes ever more significant, particularly for those like myself who have been displaced from a young age. For my generation, being "Middle Eastern" has often translated into a complex evolution over the years. While growing up in the West equated to freedom, it also often meant being exposed to constant negative or stereotyped renderings of our region in the media, films and contemporary culture. Orientalism, as defined by Said, is a concept that could only be fully grasped with time for those of us who never got to live in our motherlands, since the only lens we had were that of the West or of a generation torn apart by revolutions and wars. Many of us knew we came from an area that was once upon a time glorious, though without always knowing our own history in depth. As the first generations of immigrants we were encouraged, along with our parents, to adapt to our new environments as much as we could and to speak of our native countries in the past tense which in turn often lead to the erosion of our original culture and identity. It took a great deal of resilience to hold on to our roots and in this regard contemporary art has played a key role.

At a time where intersectional solidarity and resilience in general have become pivotal in raising awareness globally, Catalina Swinburn's perspectives and rituals have become particularly symbolic to me. Discovering and analysing the work of an artist from my generation, yet from another culture in the Global South, being so immersed and understanding of the history of the region I originally come from has been a meaningful experience. The fact that Catalina has yet to visit the sites she uses as a source of inspiration, makes her approach increasingly interesting. While her pieces stem from her own imagination when it comes to the shapes they adopt as sculptures, their titles and origins on the other hand remain deeply rooted in the

history of ancient cultures, civilizations and excavations. The books she uses, as both medium and source, are often archival material relating to archaeological documentation or musical scores carefully selected based on their symbolism or meaning. Her vision of the "other", despite being metaphorical, remains linked first and foremost to archaeological facts and physical residues. One could say that Catalina Swinburn is essentially recycling the past into the present while simultaneously weaving a universal language.

It is important to understand that Swinburn's oeuvre is multilayered. Her works operate on a shifting border she establishes between cult and artistic practice. Her exploration of different visual media –video, installation, photography and performance results in often metaphoric and symbolic manipulations. Her practice summarises her identity as a female Latin American artist in an era with a multiplicity of encounters and realities. Working with the geopolitical concept of displacement, Swinburn weaves pages of historical archives relating to displaced patrimonial treasures from areas ranging from the Persian Empire to Babylonia, Ancient Egypt and Greece. For the pieces in which she uses pages from famous operas, she relies on the idea that musical notes are a universal language. Through this process, she aims to give back to art a place of transcendence while incorporating elements of sustainability in her practice. In Swinburn's own words she believes 'there is a need to return to traditional culture, to relate with nature in a more respectful manner and to focus on sustainable projects that aspire to a certain degree of transcendence, hence the choice to work with noble and perdurable materials such as marble, stone, bronze, paper.'

The installations in "*Archaic Contingency*" combine several of Swinburn's concerns and practices into one. Made from documents relating to the displacement of archaeological stones from historical sites such as Persepolis or areas such as the Fertile Crescent, they bring us closer to the topic of cultural identity on the one hand, while also aiming to strengthen the integration between various communities

from the Global South through references to the practice of weaving and female resilience. Having operated as both cloak or armour - depending on the viewer's interpretation – some of these pieces also contain dual significance in their final form, given they were previously worn by the artist in a performance and later boxed and displayed as a sculpture. The artworks are therefore activated by the artist's position as both fabricator and performer of the sculpture.

Lastly, it is important to remember that Swinburn's sensational sculptures are constructed by intricately weaving pages of text together into robust structures. Through this labour intensive technique, the material transforms from delicate pages of books to garment-like arrangements that the artist then wears as a cloak to perform in. Her works undergo an important process of both transformation and recycling. Following her performances, the works become sculptures with a history of their own and result in an amalgamation of history and memory. Regenerating these narratives articulates both a sense of urgency and a mode of resistance in addition to conceptual layers brought to the subjects she explores. From the perspective of someone once displaced, I view her work as a sign of hope in today's world where we bear witness the continuous collapse of ancient civilizations. A sign that despite having to live on other continents and resisting what sometimes appears as an erasure of our identities through the passage of time, there remain elements and individuals that can reconnect us to where we originally come from and show how we are all interconnected.

Dina Nasser-Khadivi
Geneva, August 2021



Catalina Swinburn

Penelope, 2020

Performative photo with woven investiture "Penelope" with scores of
Il Ritorno di Ulisse in Patria, 1640 by Claudio Monteverdi.

180h x 120w cm

Edition 1 of 5

£15,000 GBP + VAT

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Catalina Swinburn

Phoenix, 2020

Woven paper investiture, from displaced gold archaeological documentation from the Ancient Egypt and Old Persian Empire.

260h x 160w x 60d cm

Unique

£37,000 GBP + VAT

[Video of artwork](#)

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Catalina Swinburn

Phoenix, 2020

Woven paper investiture, from displaced gold archaeological documentation from the Ancient Egypt and Old Persian Empire.

260h x 160w x 60d cm

Unique

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Catalina Swinburn

Athánatoi, 2021

Woven paper investiture from vintage archeological documentation books relating to the displacement of archeological glazed bricks from the Palace of Darius, Susa.

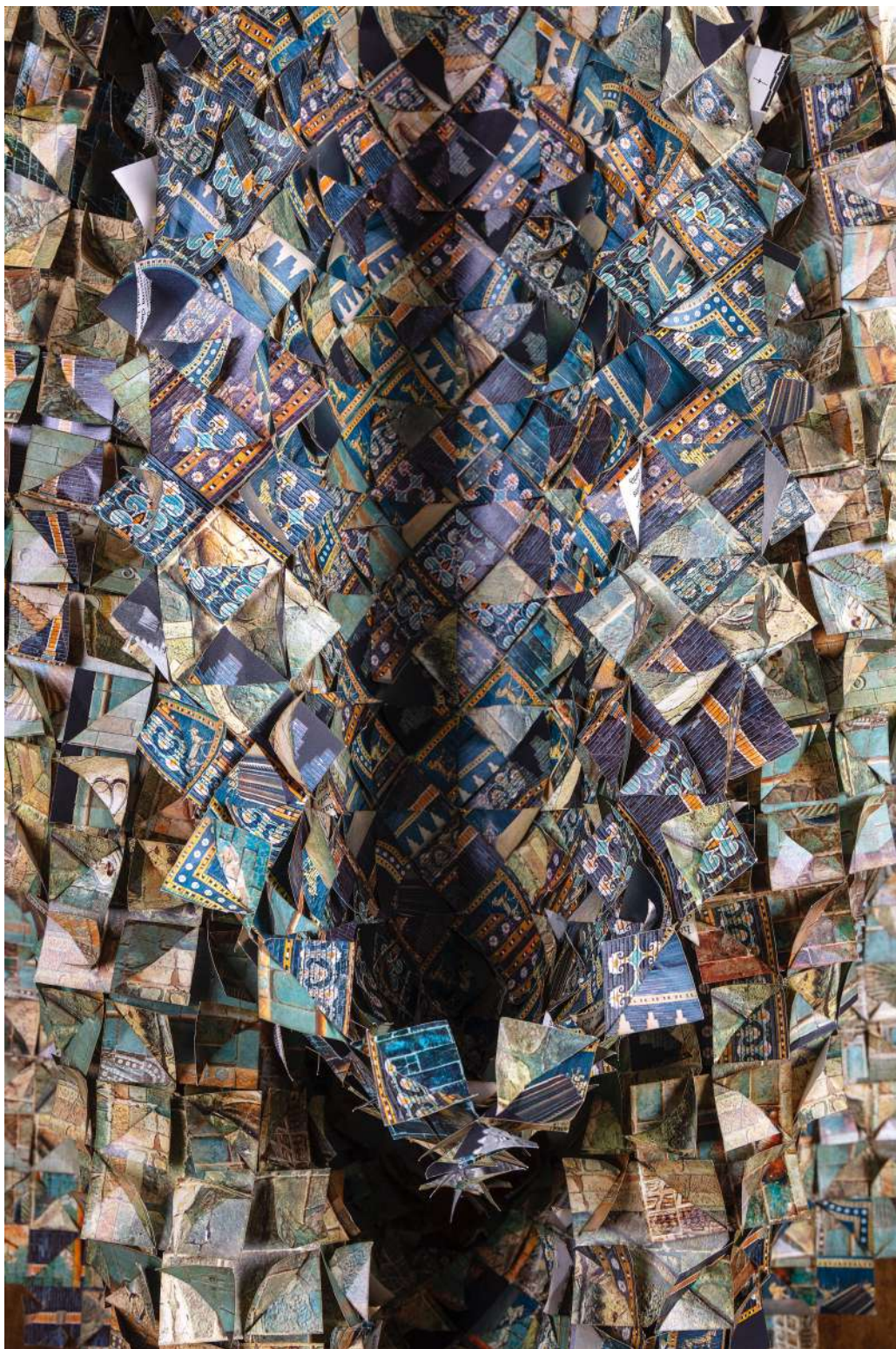
180h x150w x 30d cm

Unique

£30,000 GBP + VAT

[Video of artwork](#)

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Athánatoi, 2021

Woven paper investiture from vintage archeological documentation books relating to the displacement of archeological glazed bricks from the Palace of Darius, Susa.

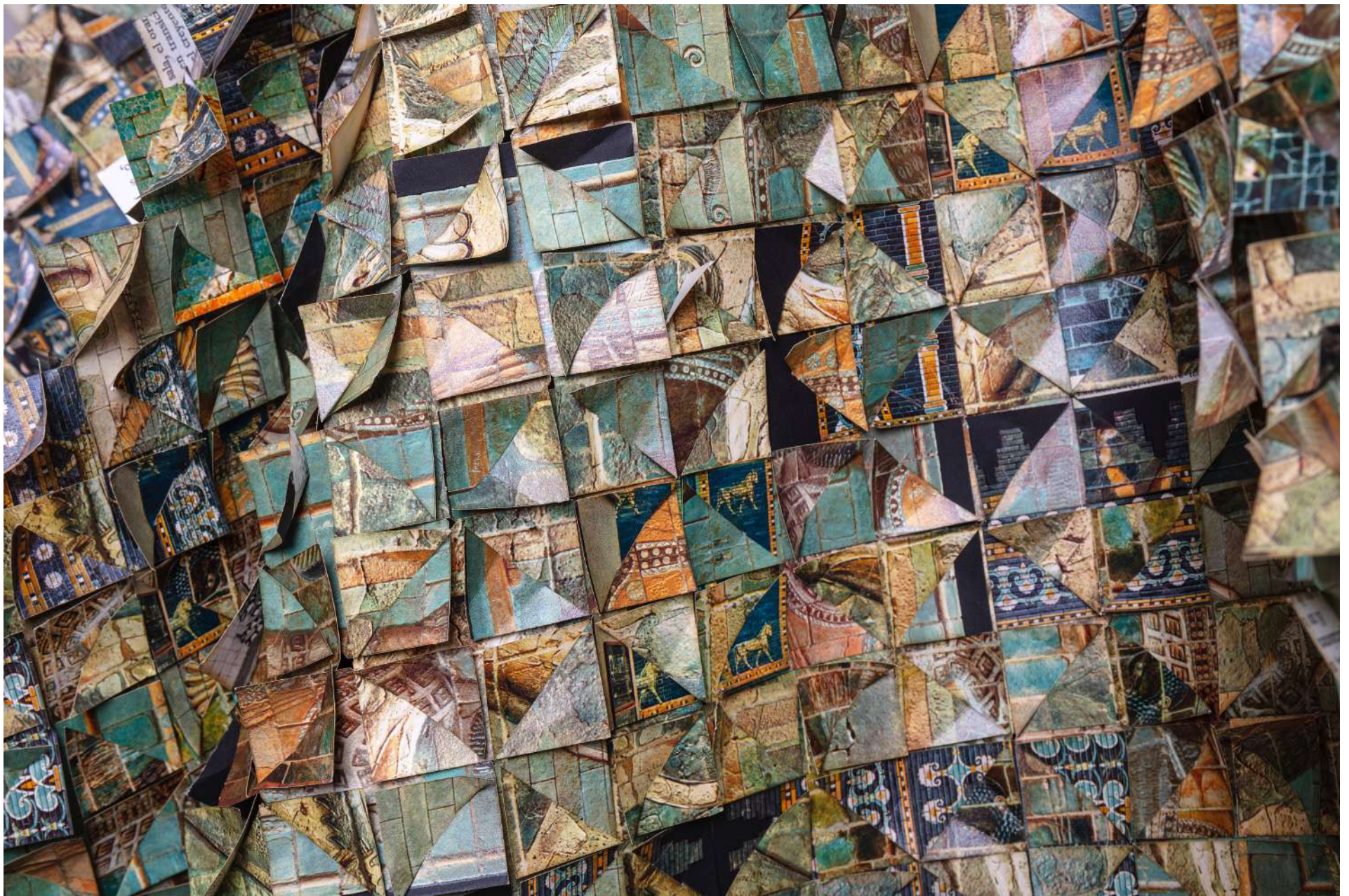
180h x 150w x 30d cm

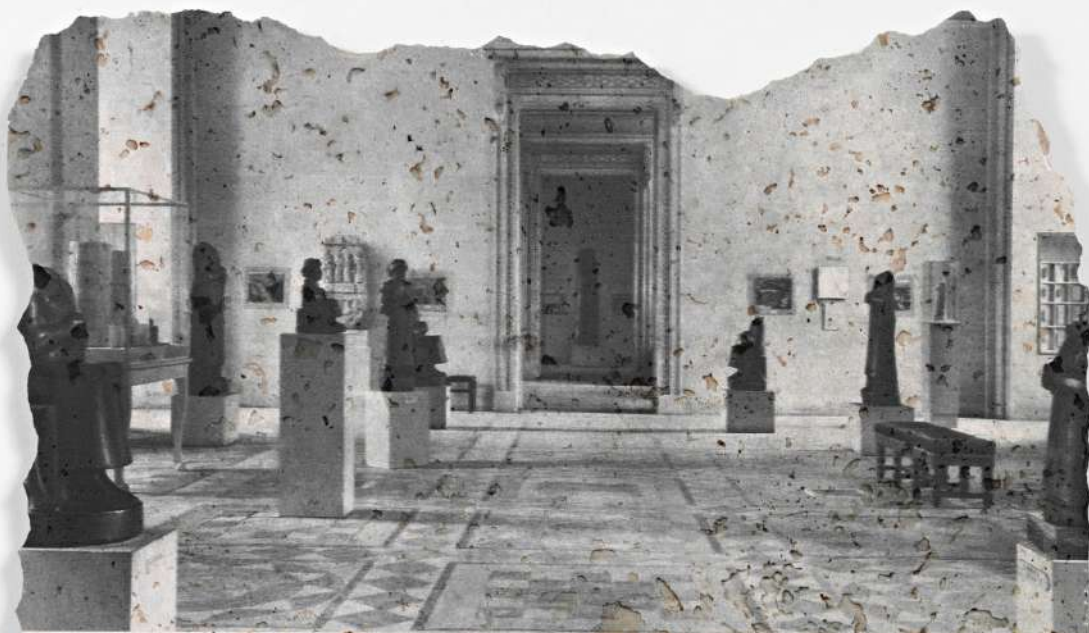
Unique

£30,000 GBP + VAT

[Video of artwork](#)

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49 - LA SALA DE LOS GUDEA - PRESENTACION DE 1947.-MUSEO DEL LOUVRE

Este principio queda ilustrado, por otra parte, con la presentación museográfica que priva actualmente. Los objetos se exponen ahora en su marco geográfico y en su sucesión cronológica. La desastrosa acumulación que, a principios de este siglo, era norma en todos los museos del mundo, ya que no se vacilaba en colocar en la misma sala estatuas *sumerias* de Gudea, el código de Hammurabi, y relieves *asirios* de Nínive o de Jorsabad, se ha hecho ya inimaginable. Y esto no se debe únicamente a que se haya querido desabarrotar las vitrinas, sino que está en función de principios y métodos fundados en datos científicos estrictos, resultado de un siglo de esfuerzos.

Por consiguiente, el visitante podrá obtener ahora una impresión exacta, así lo creemos, justificada, de cada una de las provincias artísticas orientales. Recorriendo, una tras otra, nuestras galerías, conocerá la evolución cultural de una larga evolución cultural. En algunos instantes

Catalina Swinburn

Annunaki, 2021

Black & White UV Photo Print on Travertine Marble

60h x 60w cm

Unique

£10,000 GBP + VAT

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Catalina Swinburn

***Arachne*, 2020**

Woven paper investiture from vintage documentation on silver ritual artefacts from Persian, Summer & Assur Empires.

200h x 150w x 40d cm

Unique

£32,000 GBP + VAT

[Video of artwork](#)

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Catalina Swinburn

Arachne, 2020

Woven paper investiture from vintage documentation on silver ritual artefacts from Persian, Summer & Assur Empires.

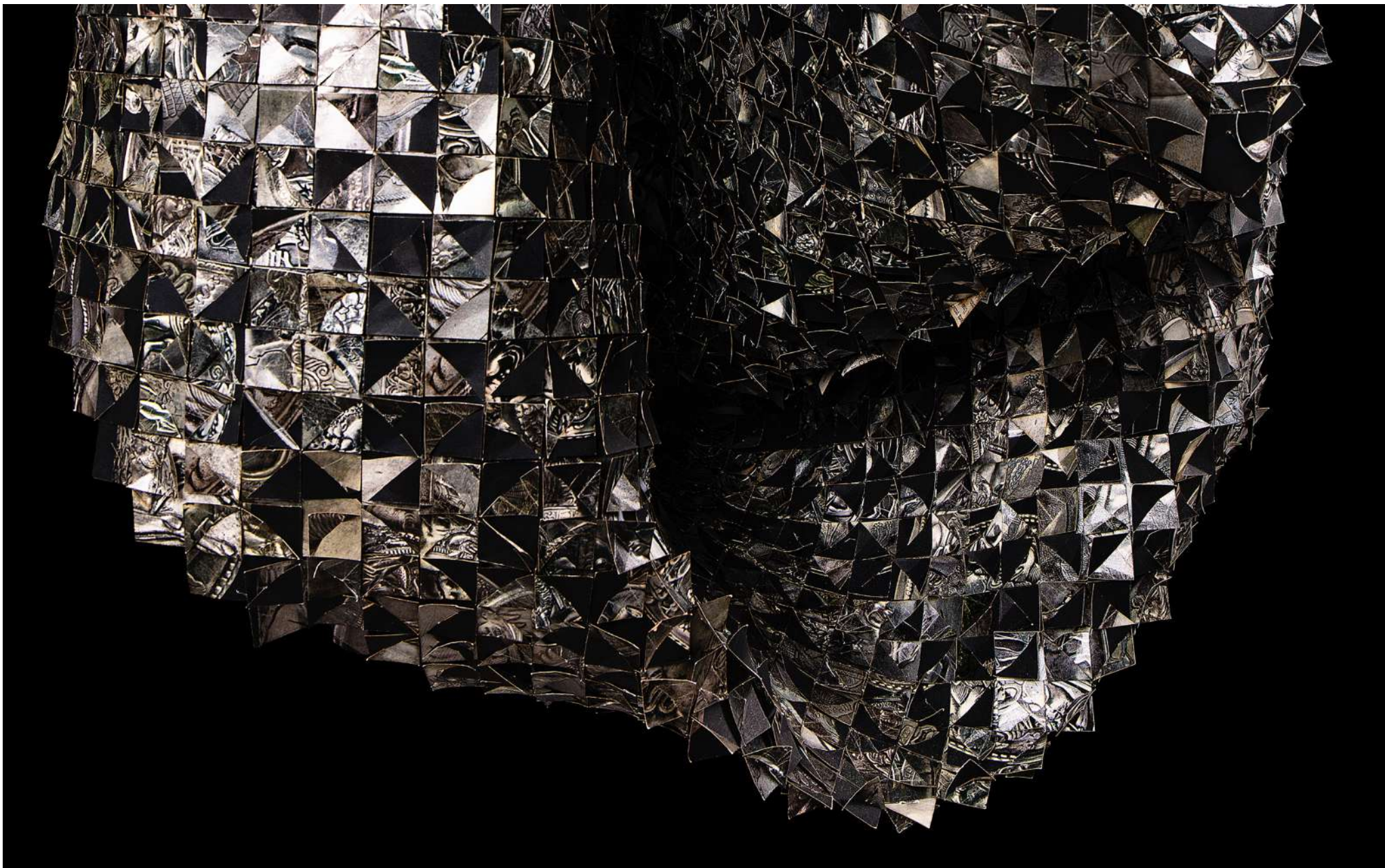
200h x 150w x 40d cm

Unique

£32,000 GBP + VAT

[Video of artwork](#)

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Catalina Swinburn

***Archaic Contingency*, 2020**

Empty book covers totem free standing sculpture
250h x 70w x 60d cm Unique
£35,000 GBP + VAT

[Video of artwork](#)

Sculpture built from
THE UNIVERSE OF FORMS by ANDRE MALRAUX-ANDRE PARROT. Madrid:
Aguilar, [dated from 1962 to 1980] .- 28 Volumes, with an average of 350 to 500
pages per volume. COLLECTION CONTAINS SOME OF THE FOLLOWING
TITLES DU: Asur / Sumer / Persia: Protoirans, Medes, Achaemenids / Iran:
Parthians and Sassanids / The times of the pyramids: From prehistory to the
Hyksos (1560 to Jc.) / The Empire of the conquerors: Egypt in the New Kingdom
(1560-1070 BC) / The Egypt of twilight: From Tanis to Meroe (1070 BC to IV
century AD) / The Hittites / The Celts / The Phoenicians : The Phoenician
Expansion. Carthage / Birth of Greek art / Archaic Greece (620- 480 BC) /
Classical Greece (480-330 BC) / Hellenistic Greece (330-50 BC)

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Catalina Swinburn

***Archaic Contingency*, 2020**

Empty book covers totem free standing sculpture

250h x 70w x 60d cm

Unique

£35,000 GBP + VAT

[Video of artwork](#)

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Catalina Swinburn

Athene, 2021

Woven paper from archaeological documentation on iconography of Athenian black- and red-figured vase painting ceramics. The subject matter of these vases vary from portraits of gods and heroes to depictions of every day Athenian life. These paintings provide an archaeological record of historical, social, and mythological information

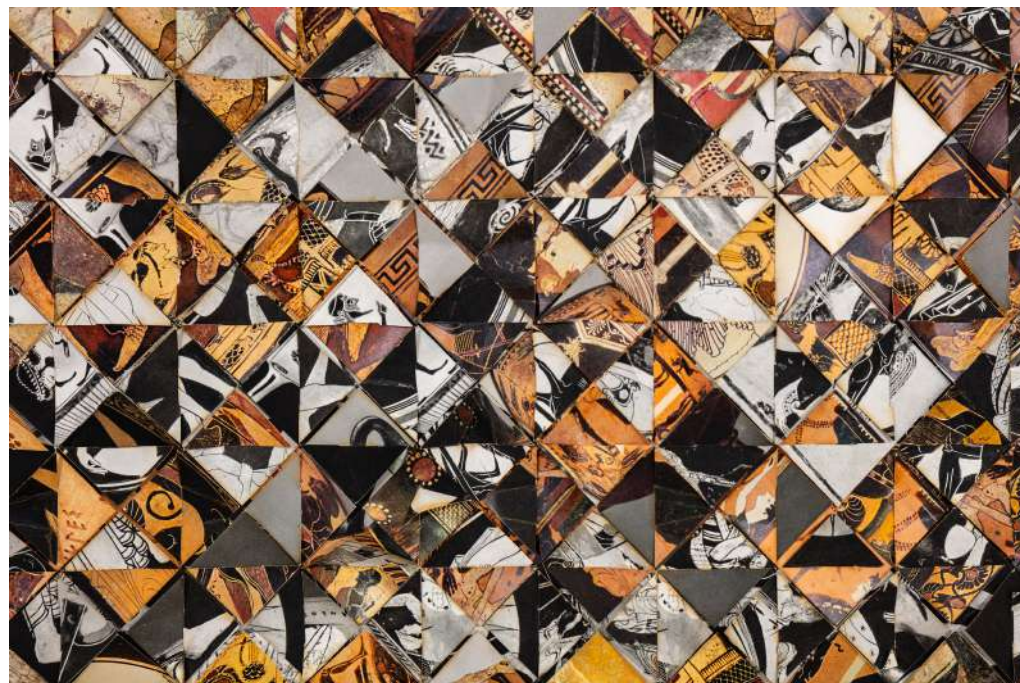
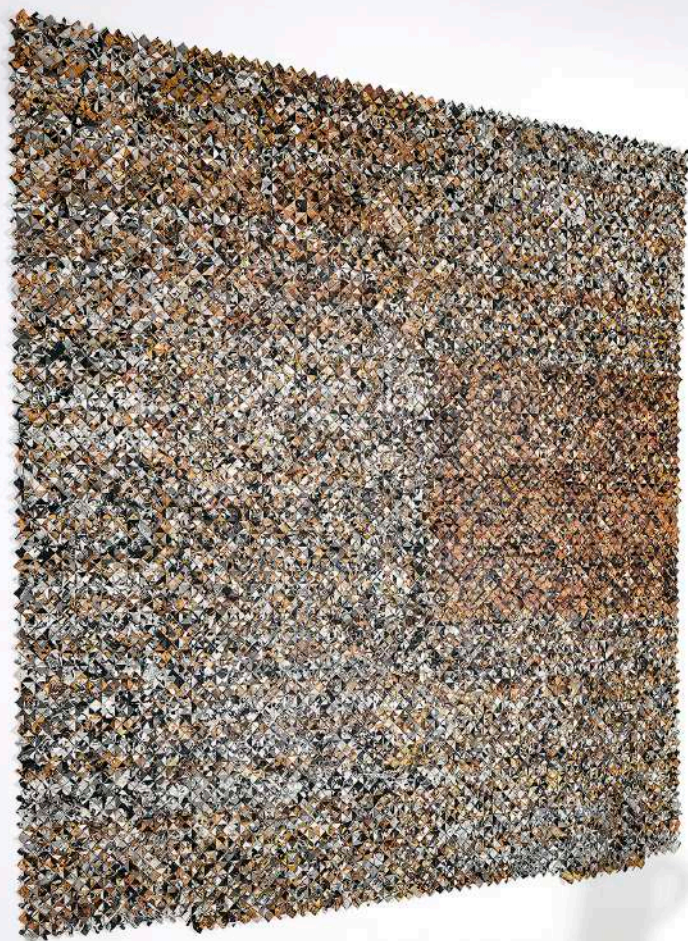
304h x 304w cm

Unique

£36,000 GBP + VAT

[Video of artwork](#)

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Catalina Swinburn

***Athene*, 2021**

Woven paper from archaeological documentation on iconography of Athenian black- and red-figured vase painting ceramics. The subject matter of these vases vary from portraits of gods and heroes to depictions of every day Athenian life. These paintings provide an archaeological record of historical, social, and mythological information

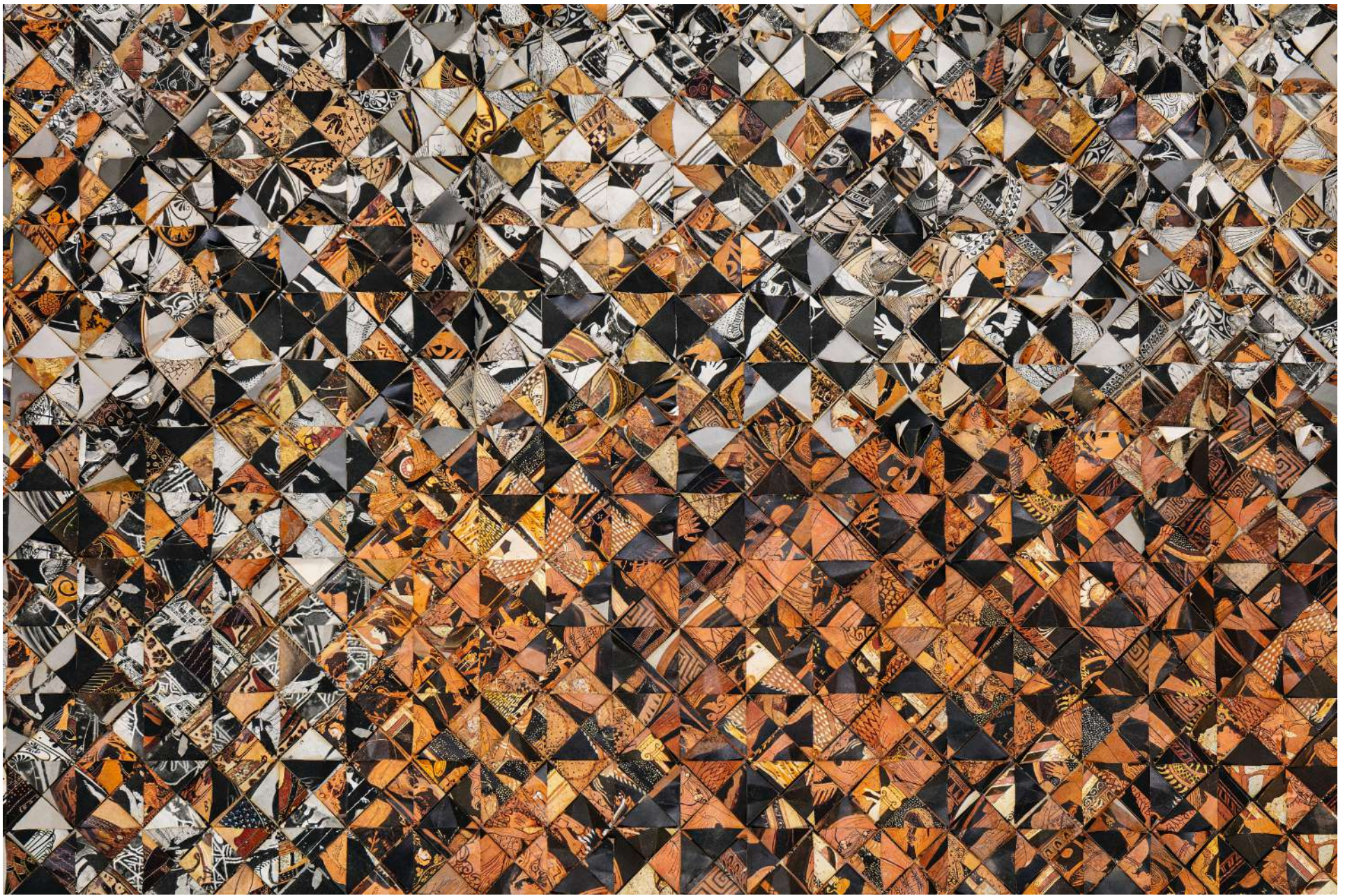
304h x 304w cm

Unique

£36,000 GBP + VAT

[Video of artwork](#)

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Catalina Swinburn

***Il Ritorno D'Ulisse*, 2021**

Woven paper investiture from the scores of *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria* by
Claudio Monteverdi .

150h x 130h x 40d cm

Unique

£27,000 GBP + VAT

[Video of artwork](#)

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Catalina Swinburn

Il Ritorno D'Ulisse, 2021

Woven paper investiture from the scores of *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria*

by Claudio Monteverdi .

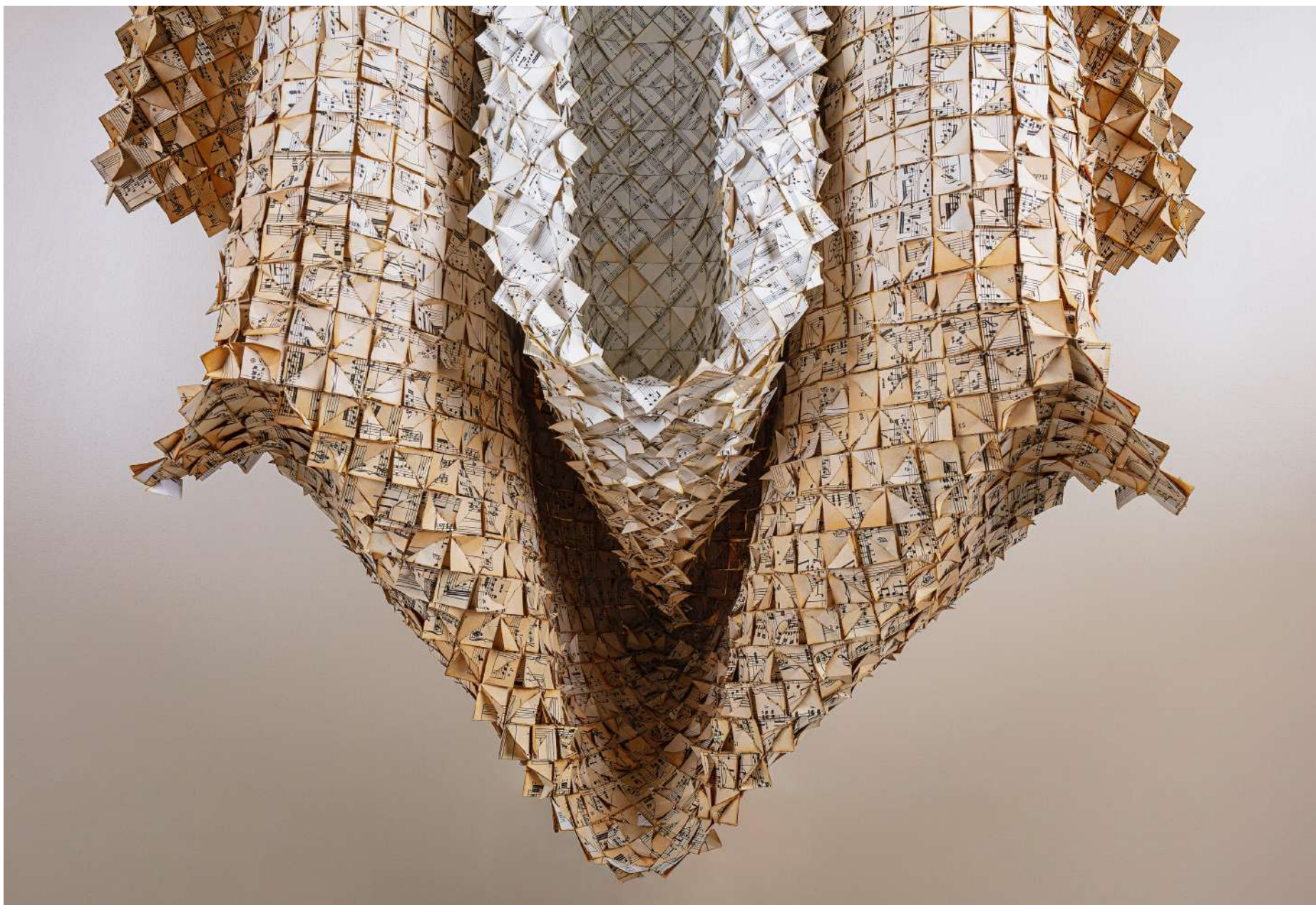
150h x 130w x 40d cm

Unique

£27,000 GBP + VAT

[Video of artwork](#)

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Catalina Swinburn

Fertile Crescent I, 2020

Woven paper from archaeological maps from the cradles of civilization capital cities discovered by British and French archaeologist in mid 1800s, such as Assyria, Babylonia and Persepolis

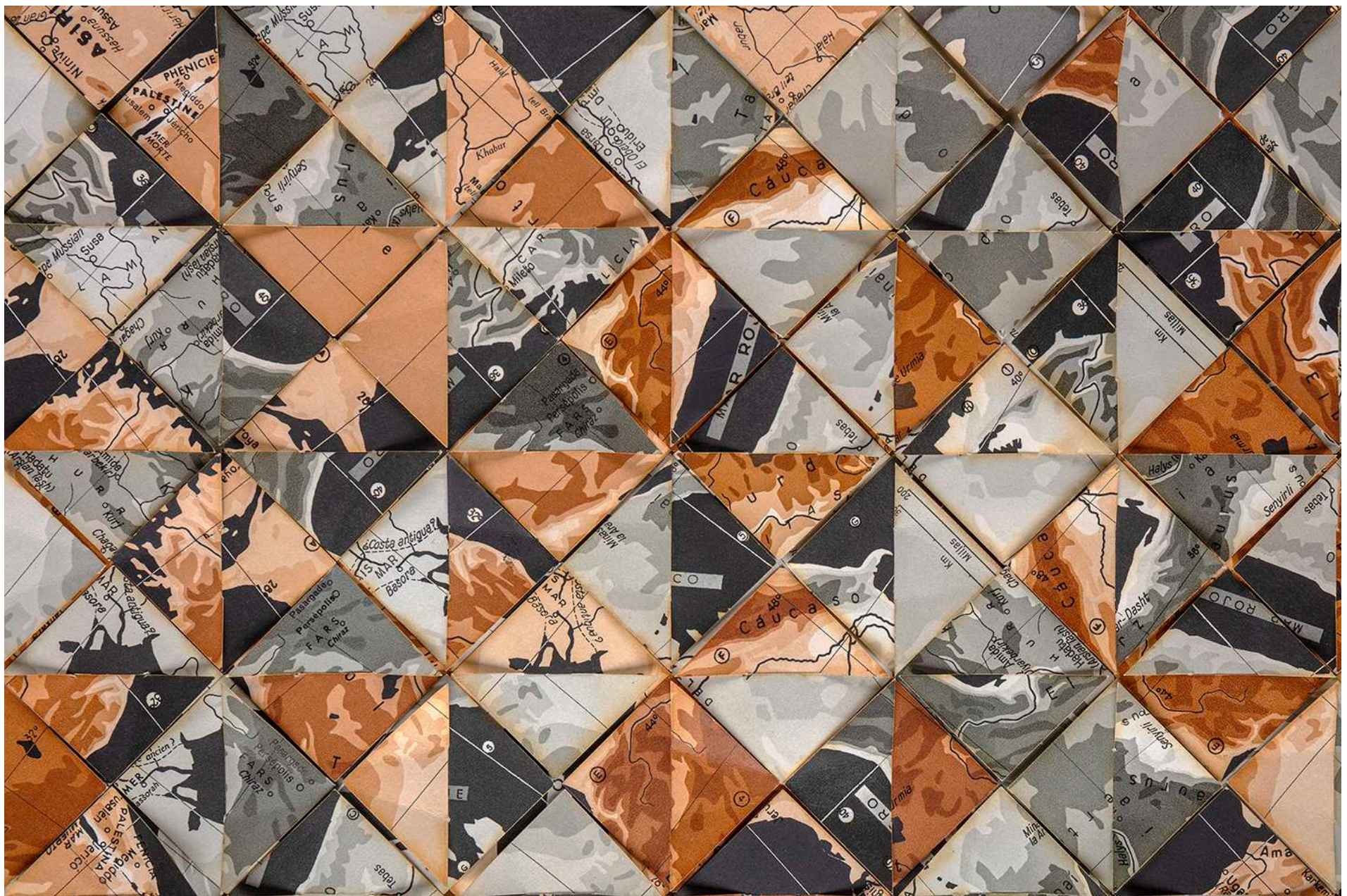
180h x 150w x 10d cm

Unique

£16,000 GBP + VAT

[Video of artwork](#)

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Catalina Swinburn

Fertile Crescent II, 2021

Woven paper from archaeological maps from the cradles of civilization capital cities discovered by British and French archaeologist in mid 1800s, such as Assyria, Babylonia and Persepolis

180h x 150w x10d cm

Unique

£16,000 GBP + VAT

[Video of artwork](#)

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Catalina Swinburn

Fertile Crescent, 2021

Woven paper from archaeological maps from the cradles of civilization capital cities discovered by British and French archaeologist in mid 1800s, such as Assyria, Babylonia and Persepolis
180h x 150w x 10d cm (each)

Unique

£16,000 GBP + VAT (each)

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Catalina Swinburn

Fertile Crescent II, 2021

Woven paper from archaeological maps from the cradles of civilization capital cities discovered by British and French archaeologist in mid 1800s, such as Assyria, Babylonia and Persepolis

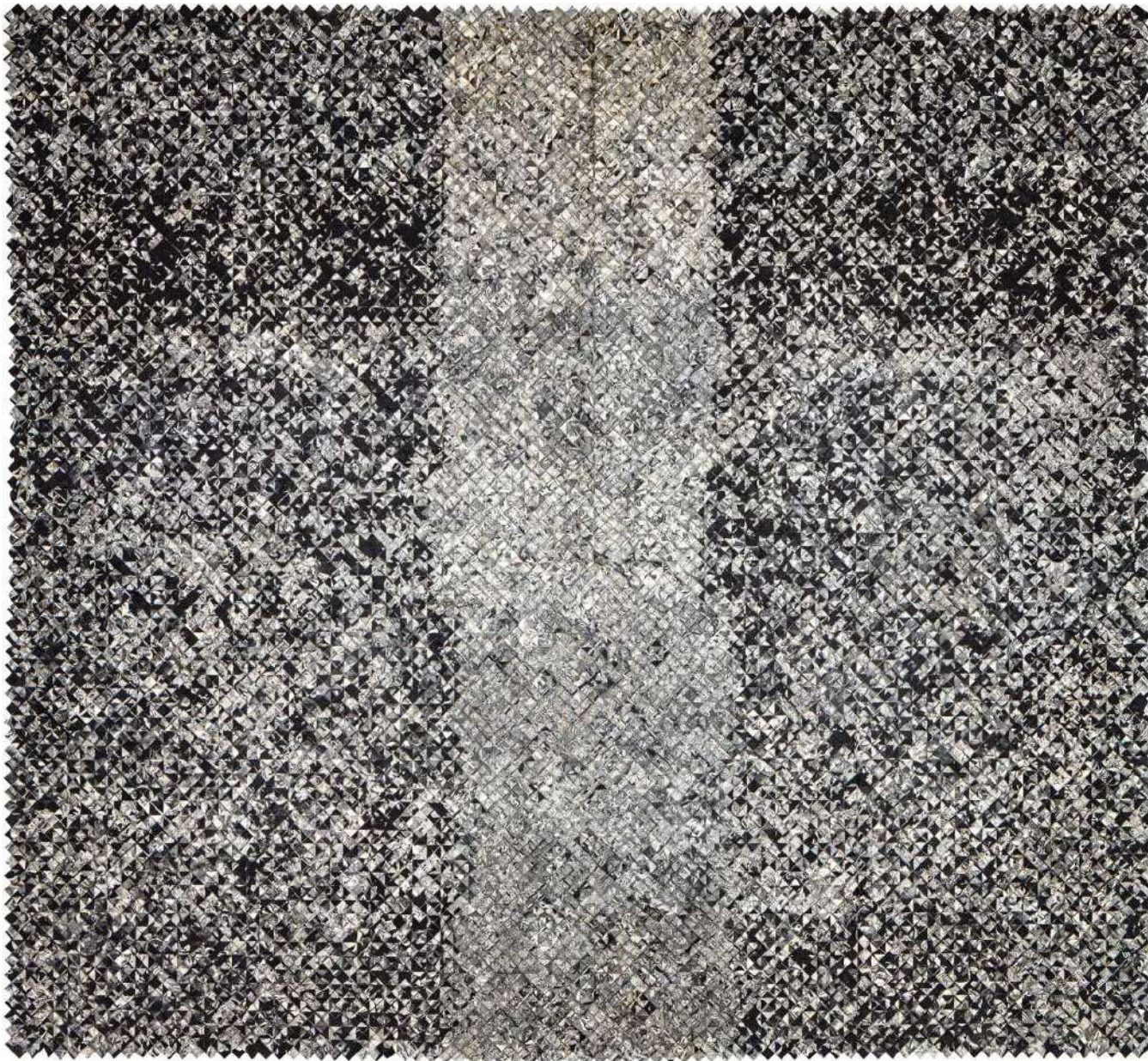
180h x 150w x 10d cm

Unique

£16,000 GBP + VAT

[Video of artwork](#)

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Catalina Swinburn

Apadana, 2021

Woven paper piece from archaeological stone documentation
displaced from Persepolis
370h x 410w cm

Unique
£40,000 GBP + VAT

[Video of artwork](#)

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Catalina Swinburn

Apadana, 2021

Woven paper piece from archaeological stone documentation displaced from
Persepolis

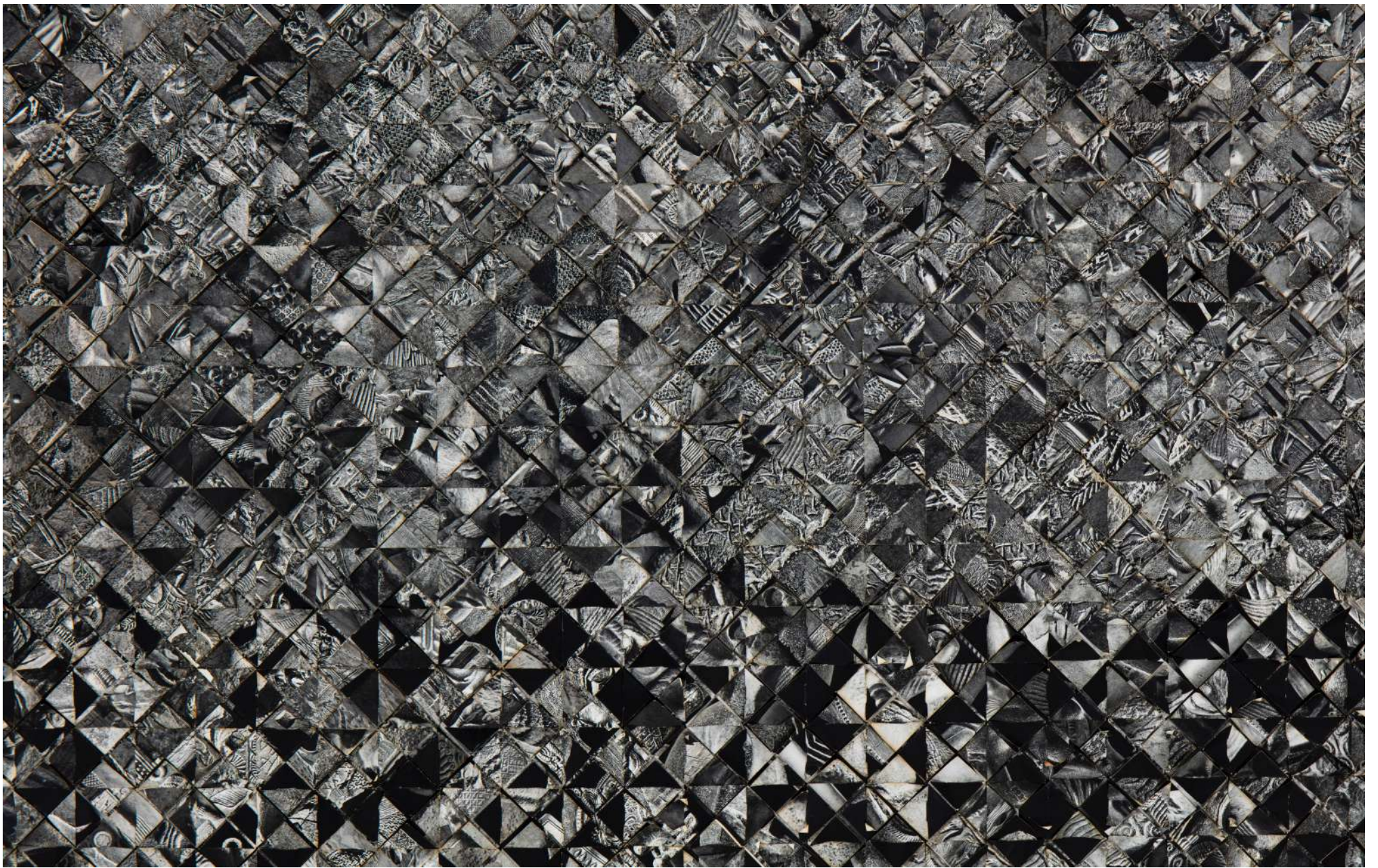
370h x 410w cm

Unique

£40,000 GBP + VAT

[Video of artwork](#)

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Catalina Swinburn

***Anahita*, 2021**

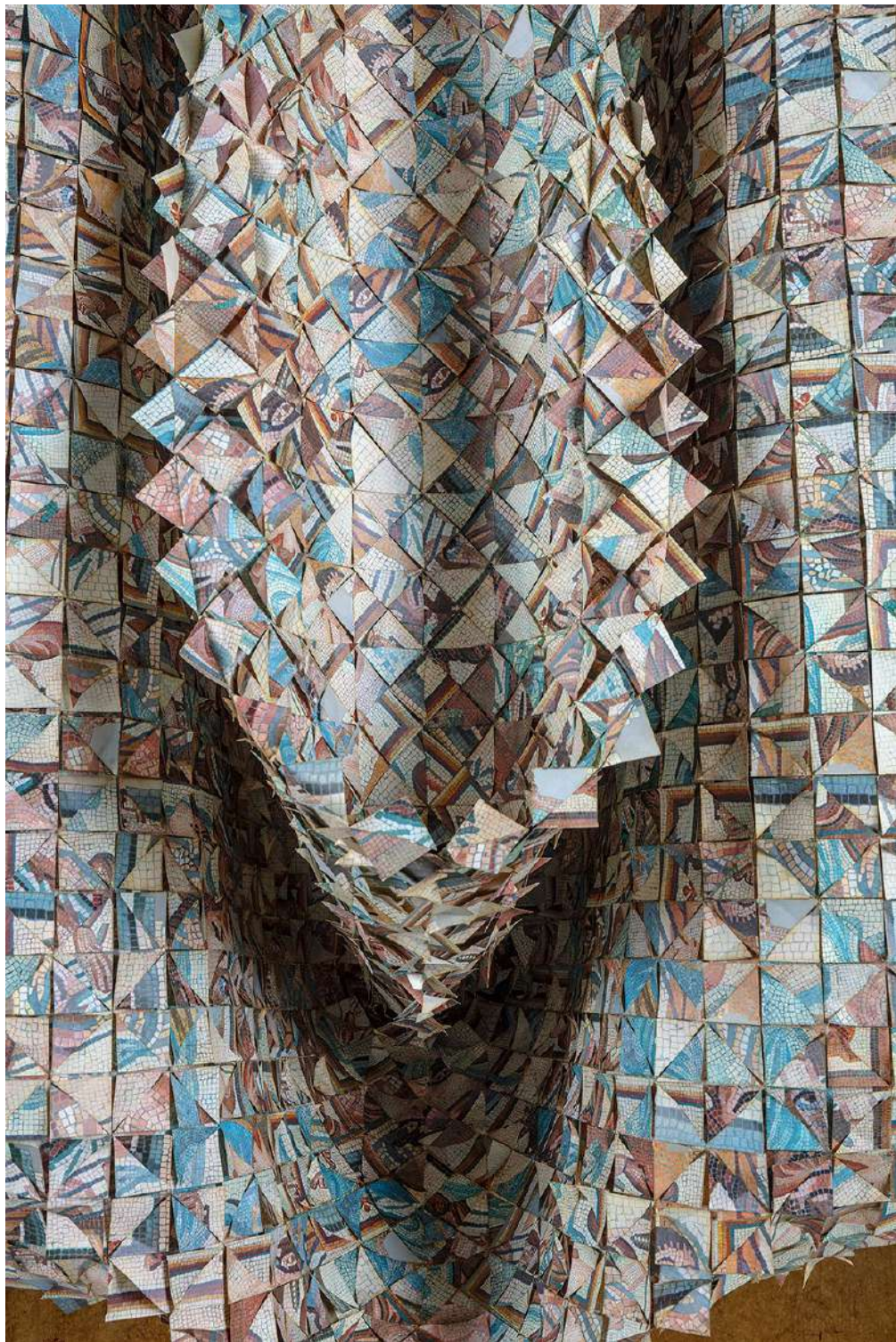
Woven paper work made from archaeological documentation from
Persian-Roman floor mosaics from the palace of Shapur I at Bishapur
180h x 150w x 40d cm

Unique

£30,000 GBP + VAT

[Video of artwork](#)

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Catalina Swinburn

***Anahita*, 2021**

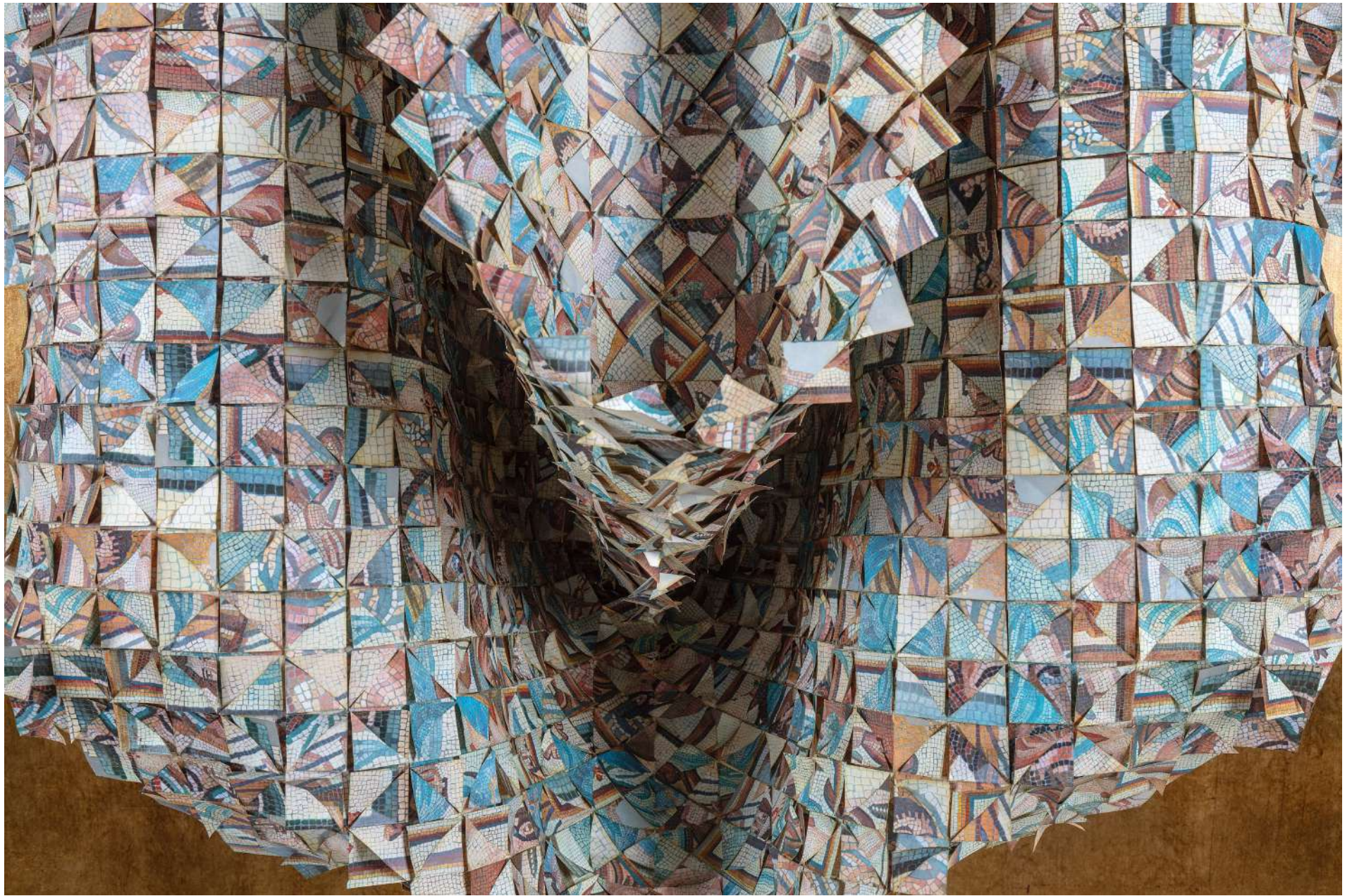
Woven paper work made from archaeological documentation from
Persian-Roman floor mosaics from the palace of Shapur I at Bishapur
180h x 150w x 40d cm

Unique

£30,000 GBP + VAT

[Video of artwork](#)

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Catalina Swinburn

Napir Asu, 2020

Performative photo with woven paper investiture from vintage documentation on brass and copper archaeological displaced pieces from Persian, Summer & Assur Empires.

180h x 120w cm

Edition 2 of 5

£15,000 GBP + VAT

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Catalina Swinburn

Phoenix, 2020

Performative photo with woven paper investiture, from displaced gold
archaeological documentation from the Ancient Egypt and Old Persian Empire
180h x 120w cm

Edition 2 of 5

£15,000 GBP + VAT

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Catalina Swinburn

b. 1979, Santiago, Chile / Lives and works between London, UK, Buenos Aires, Argentina and Santiago, Chile

The work of Swinburn operates on the shifting border that she establishes between cult and artistic practice. Through performance and the ritualistic arrangement of objects, her exploration of visual media, includes video, installation, photography and performance. The result of which are highly emotional images created with metaphoric and symbolic manipulations that challenge reality as a representation the artist is part of. She conceives a space immersed in collective and personal doubts, where her own body establishes boundaries and bonds, claims and hopes. She encourages us to reflect on the space between the body and the territory which we navigate and occupy.

She received a BA in Fine Arts from the Catholic University of Chile

Swinburn's work has recently been exhibited at Centro Cultural Matta, Buenos Aires, Argentina / Museo de la Inmigración, Buenos Aires, Argentina. She will present Archaic Contingency, a solo exhibition at Cromwell Place, London in 2021. Swinburn's work form part of many prestigious collections of art, including Pilar Citoler Foundation, Cordoba, Spain / Balanz Capital collection, Buenos Aires, Argentina / Latin American Art Collection Artnexus, Bogotá Colombia / CCu Art Collection, Santiago de Chile, Chile / ICC Contemporary Institute of Culture, Sao Paulo, Brazil / Arte Al Dia Collection, Miami, U.S.A / Rosenblum Foundation, Buenos Aires, Argentina / Permanent Public Intervention, Vitacura Parks, Santiago de Chile, Chile.

Catalina Swinburn

Born 1979. Santiago, Chile

BA in Fine Arts. Catholic University of Chile. Chile

Lives & Works Buenos Aires, Argentina & London, UK

Selected Solo Exhibitions

- 2021 Archaic Contingency. Selma Feriani Gallery. Cromwell Place. London
- 2018 Narratives of Displacement. Selma Feriani Gallery. Tunis, Tunisia
- 2016 La Frontera Perfecta. Centro Cultural Matta. Buenos Aires, Argentina
Fissures. Selma Feriani Gallery. Sidi Bou Said, Tunisia
- 2013 Arqueología Anticipada. Isabel Aninat Gallery. Santiago de Chile, Chile
- 2012 Indulgences. Selma Feriani Gallery. London
Utopia installation. Farm Street Church. London, England
- 2011 Paraíso Perdido. Fundación Collahusi. Iquique, Chile
Lujoso Silencio. Cecilia Gonzales Gallery. Lima. Perú
- 2010 Status Quo. Sala de Arte CCU. Santiago de Chile, Chile
- 2008 Lugares Comunes. Project Public Space. Vitacura. Santiago de Chile, Chile
No Hay Peor Ciego, Que El Que No Quiere Ver. Isabel Aninat Gallery. Santiago de Chile, Chile
- 2007 In Contemplation. 5006 Gallery. Buenos Aires, Argentina
- 2005 Piezas de Colección. Isabel Aninat Gallery. Santiago de Chile, Chile
- 2004 In Memoriam 12.05.04-05.06.04. Die Ecke Gallery. Santiago de Chile, Chile
In Memoriam. Animal Gallery. Santiago de Chile, Chile
Obituario. Animal Gallery. Santiago de Chile, Chile
- 2002 Memoria Velada. Animal Gallery. Santiago de Chile, Chile
En Memoria. Isabel Aninat Gallery. Santiago de Chile, Chile

Selected Group Exhibitions

- 2020 Untitled. Selma Feriani Gallery. Tunis, Tunisia
Why I Moved to the Countryside. Selections Art. Online Exhibition
We all need Opera. Mam Contemporary Art Salzburg. Salzburg
- 2019 Imagen del Texto. Galería de Arte Isabel Aninat. Santiago, Chile
- 2018 FRÜHLING [ˈfry:ling], der: weiblich. Mario Mauroner Contemporary Art
Vienna. Vienna, Austria
- 2017 Examples to Follow / Expeditions in Aesthetics & Sustainability. Global
Touring Exhibition. Curated by

- 2016 Adrienne Goehler. Parque Cultural de Valparaíso. Valparaíso, Chile
Arte Con-Texto. Museo de la Universidad de Antioquia & Museo de la
Universidad de Medellín. Medellín
- 2015 Migrations in Contemporary Art. Muntref. Buenos Aires, Argentina
- 2014 Portrait Redux. Selma Feriani Gallery. Tunis, Tunisia
- 2013 Portraits. Selma Feriani Gallery. London, U.K.
- 2012 About Change. World Bank. Washington, U.S.A.
- 2011 Con-Texto. Art Nexus Space. Bogotá, Colombia
Art & Money, Dangerous Liaisons. Curated by Sebastian Gokalp.
Monnaie du Paris. Paris, France
- 2010 Pieta. Isabel Aninat Gallery. Santiago de Chile, Chile
- 2009 Cohortes. MAC Museo de Arte Contemporáneo. Santiago de Chile, Chile
- 2008 Sesgos Míticos en el Arte Chileno. Extension Centre of the University of
Chile. Santiago de Chile, Chile
- 2007 Haber. MAVI Museo de Artes Visuales. Santiago de Chile, Chile
Handle with Care. Museo de Arte Contemporáneo. Santiago de Chile,
Chile
- 2005 Relocación. Isabel Aninat Gallery. Santiago de Chile, Chile
- 2004 Fotoamerica. Isabel Aninat Gallery. Santiago de Chile, Chile
In Memoriam 12.05.04-05.06.04. Valenzuela & Klenner.
Bogotá, Colombia
- 2003 Non Site. Cultural Centre of Las Condes. Santiago de Chile, Chile
El Objeto en el Arte Chileno. Telefonica Foundation. Santiago de Chile,
Chile
- 2002 Kent Installations. Santiago de Chile, Chile
Erased Borders. Miami, U.S.A.

Collections

- Pilar Citoler Foundation. Córdoba, Spain
- Balanz Capital Collection. Buenos Aires, Argentina
- Latin American Art Collection Art Nexus. Bogotá, Colombia
- CCU Art Collection. Santiago de Chile, Chile
- ICC Contemporary Institute of Culture. São Paulo, Brazil
- Arte Al Día Collection. Miami, U.S.A.
- Rosenblum Foundation. Buenos Aires, Argentina
- Permanent Public Intervention. Vitacura Parks. Santiago de Chile, Chile

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