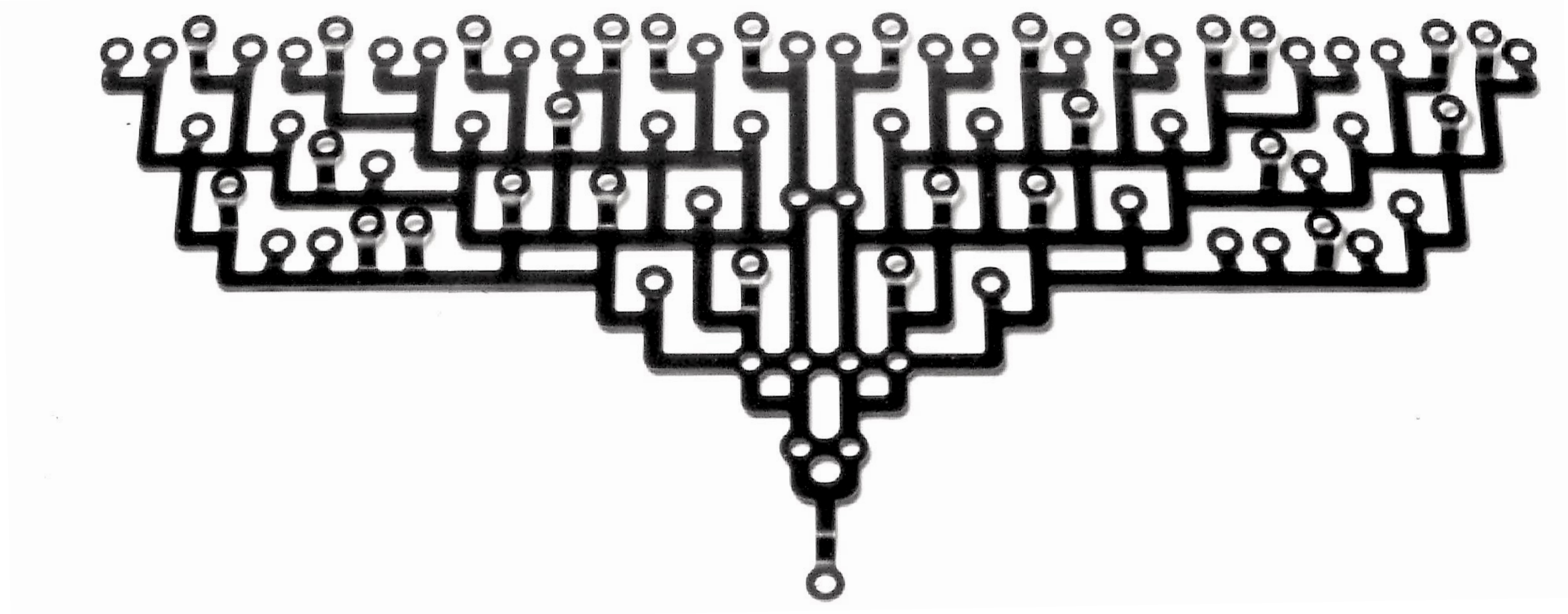
SIMEON NELSON

SELECTED WORK AND PROJECTS

MY APPROACH	1990-2010	2010-2025	PUBLIC SPACE?
SCULPTURE SYSTEMS	EPIPHYTE	INFRASTRUCTURE	ART & SCIENCE



Origin of Species, 1999 steel, 240 x 120 x 4 cm

Meiosis 1996,
plywood,
formica,
50cm x
70cm x
3.6cm

I am because I am part,
Part of the world,
The world of the other,
As they are part
Part of the world
The world of mine.

The aim of art is to uncover the questions that have been hidden by the answers.
James Baldwin

My sculpture, installation and time-based work is concerned pattern, perception and systemic connections between art and science. It also looks at problems of cultural encounter, tensions between the public and the private, local and the global and the difficulties of making sense of the other.

I work with art-historical, ethnographic and scientific form and pattern. The visual languages of my work straddle a boundary between organism and machine. Underlying all this is an interest in how things change. Cybernetics, systems theory and process philosophy see things as events in a world of constant metamorphosis; the connected and evolving forms I use explore this idea of continual movement and ever-changing relations. They envision a world of interrelated events and ceaseless flux that nevertheless gives rise to enduring things.

My work is about relatedness, the relationships within the work, with the site and context and the perspective of the viewer. I work at a perceptual level provoking the viewer to question whether, for example, what they are looking at is 2D or 3D; static or moving, solid or fluid. For example, the moiré effect creates optical ripples, waves and concentric pulsations as a viewer moves past static parallel planes of grating, lattice woven or otherwise perforated material.

My public work is organised around geometric and iterative systems in which parts are nodes in a network. For example Desiring Machine and Cosmoscope emerge from nested hierarchies of scale and dimension, lines, planes, volumes and time-based light and sound elements speak to each other - parts only make sense in relationship to each other and their constitutive whole.

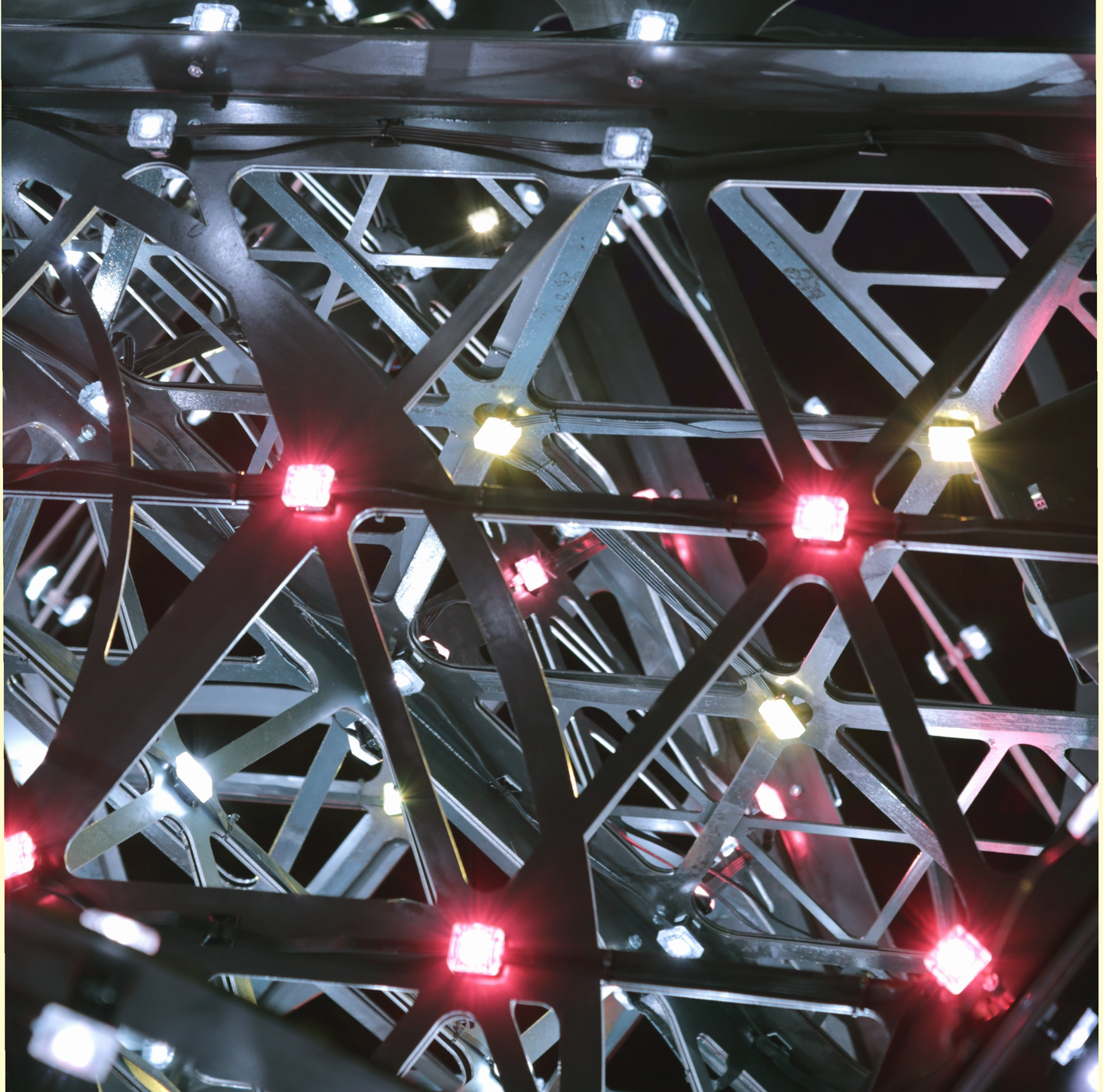
Dendrite maquette, 2003
steel plate
45 x 45 x 43 cm
Jerwood Sculpture Prize

Mnemonic maquette, 2005
Proposal for memorial to Alfred Felton, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

SITE SPECIFICS

In responding to a site, I look for its unique attributes from a cosmological perspective. This might be the angle of the daylight streaming down from the fenestration, the shifting position of magnetic north, the flows of wind and water, the trajectory of an animal or bird migration route, previous historical usage or occupancy, or even. the colour spectrum of a distant culturally significant planet or star.

It's important to me to acknowledge the presence of the past, its layers through time. When we travel across the street or across the world, we pass over innumerable pathways and tracks that have crossed the site, human and more than human, whether the day before, before we were born, back to deeper and deeper time before humans, to the time of Gondwana, Pangea and before.



SITE SPECIFICS

I try to site my work to maximise its perceptual affect, working with sun path, shadow, relationship to pedestrians, to façade, to lobby, to ingress and egress.

I work with how we affect and are affected by place, by others and by a wider ecology of relationships continually forming and being formed by us. I try to bring this fundamental participatory element of reality out, to make visible and form a focal part of an environ or site.

COLLABORATION AND CO-CREATION

Many of my commissions have included collaboration and co-creation with specific communities, e.g., the Regents Canal boat residents, London and UCL Hospital cancer patients.

Durham Science Festival 2017 flyer

COLLABORATION AND CO-CREATION

A key element for my public work is partnering with, engineers, e.g., the Advanced Geometry Unit, ARUP, geographers from RHUL, physicists and cosmologists from Durham, UCL, Hertfordshire, Cambridge and Oxford amongst others.

I work with organisations like Artichoke and the Royal Geographical Society, London and funders like Wellcome Trust, British Council, Arts and Humanities Research Council, UK; Arts Council England, Leverhulme Foundation and EU Culture Fund.

I have run workshops, outreach and public lectures with a wide variety of school children, artists, community groups, with for example, the Hertford Astronomy Group, Durham University Science Outreach Unit, the Canal and River Trust, the Inorganic Chemistry Lab, Oxford, the Royal Geographical Society, Artquest, Acava, UCL, Guys Hospital, Hakone Museum, Japan, Lalit Kala Akademi, India, to name a few.

1990-2010

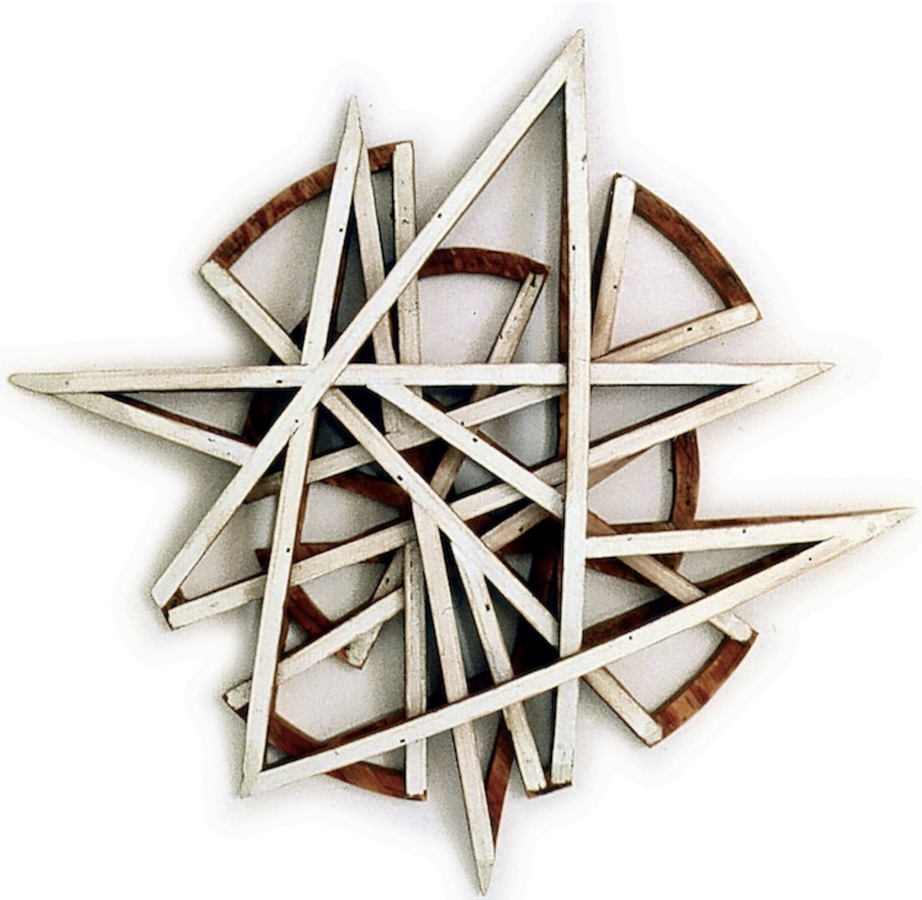
Attractor 1995
88 x 50 x 7 cms, plywood

Musquarna #5, 1994
40 x 50 x 2 cms, plywood, metal

Back

Plenum 1, 1997,
plywood paint,
120 x 240 x 29 cm

Hortus Conclusus, 1996,
cement, masonite, linoleum,
70 x 70 x 22 cm

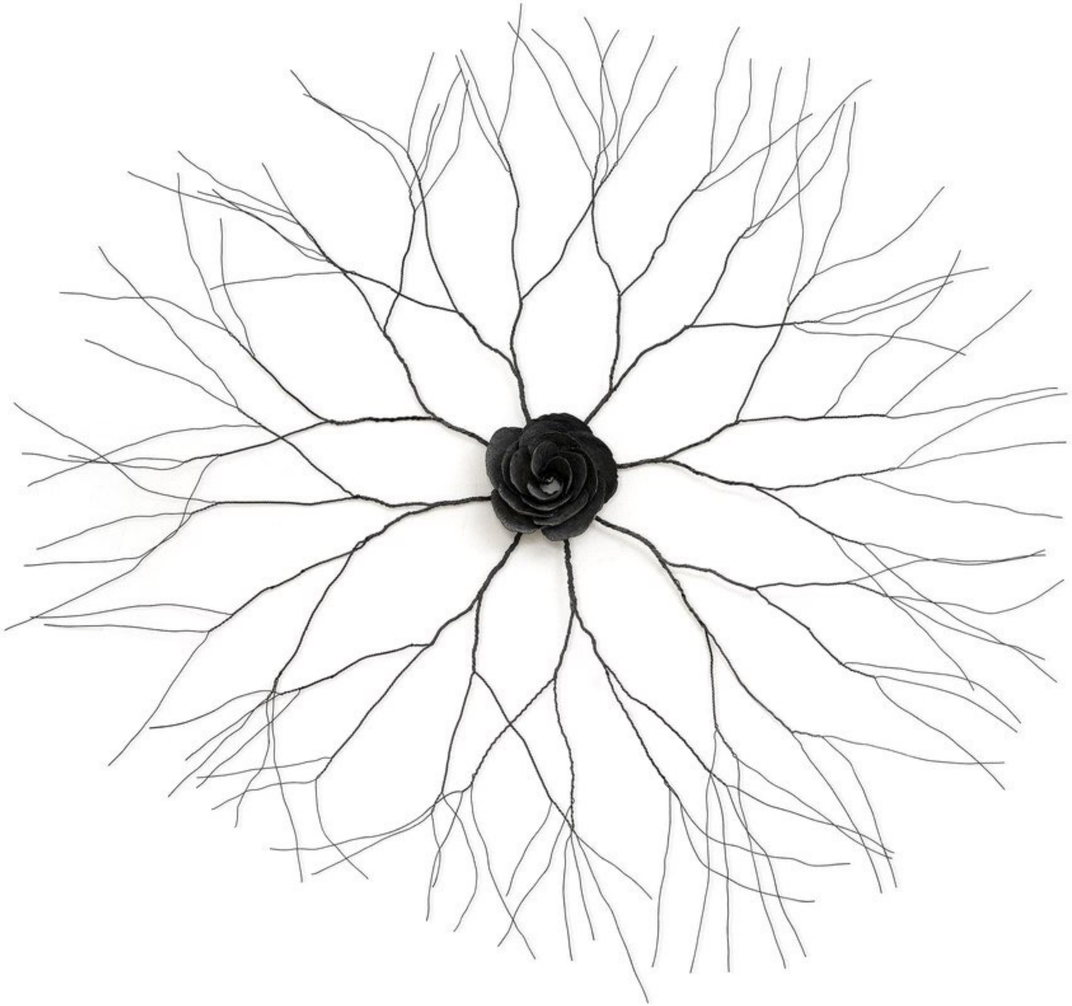


Free Radical 1995,
plywood, paint, shellac, 90cm x 90cm x 9cm

Musquarna 1 1995,
plywood, paint, shellac, 100cm x 70cm x 8cm

Back

Dazz 1996, acrylic, 56 x 48 x 6cm

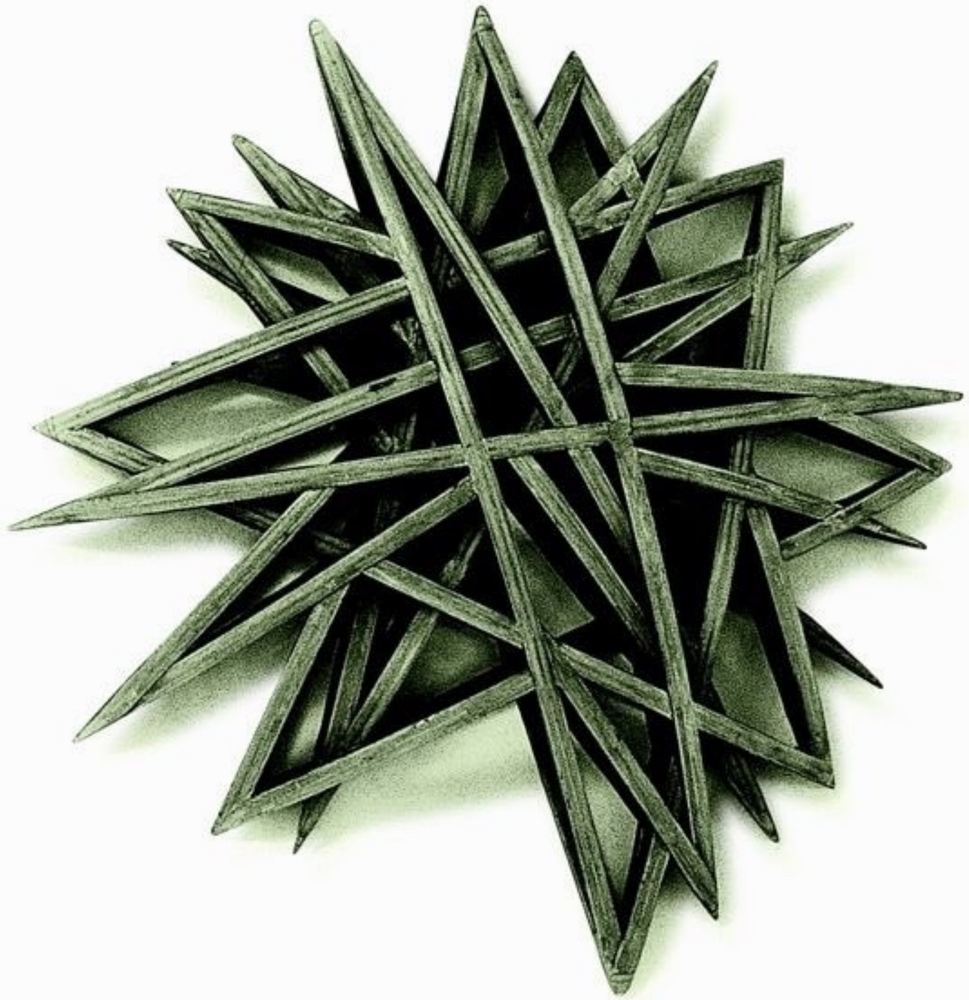


The Name of the Rose 1994, black steel, 90cm x 86cm x 8cm

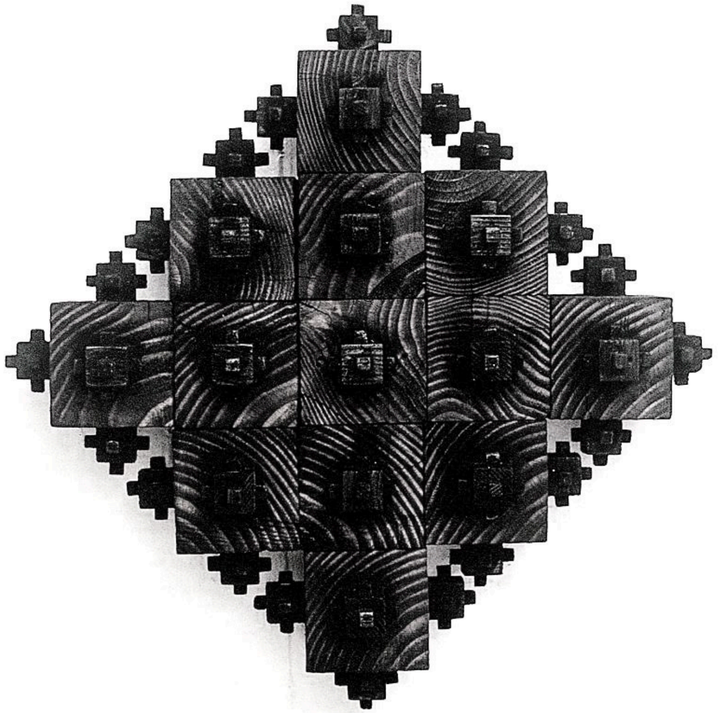
Interpolator 1995
88 x 50 x 7 cms, plywood

Omphalos, 1995
85 x 82 x 13 cms, plywood

Back

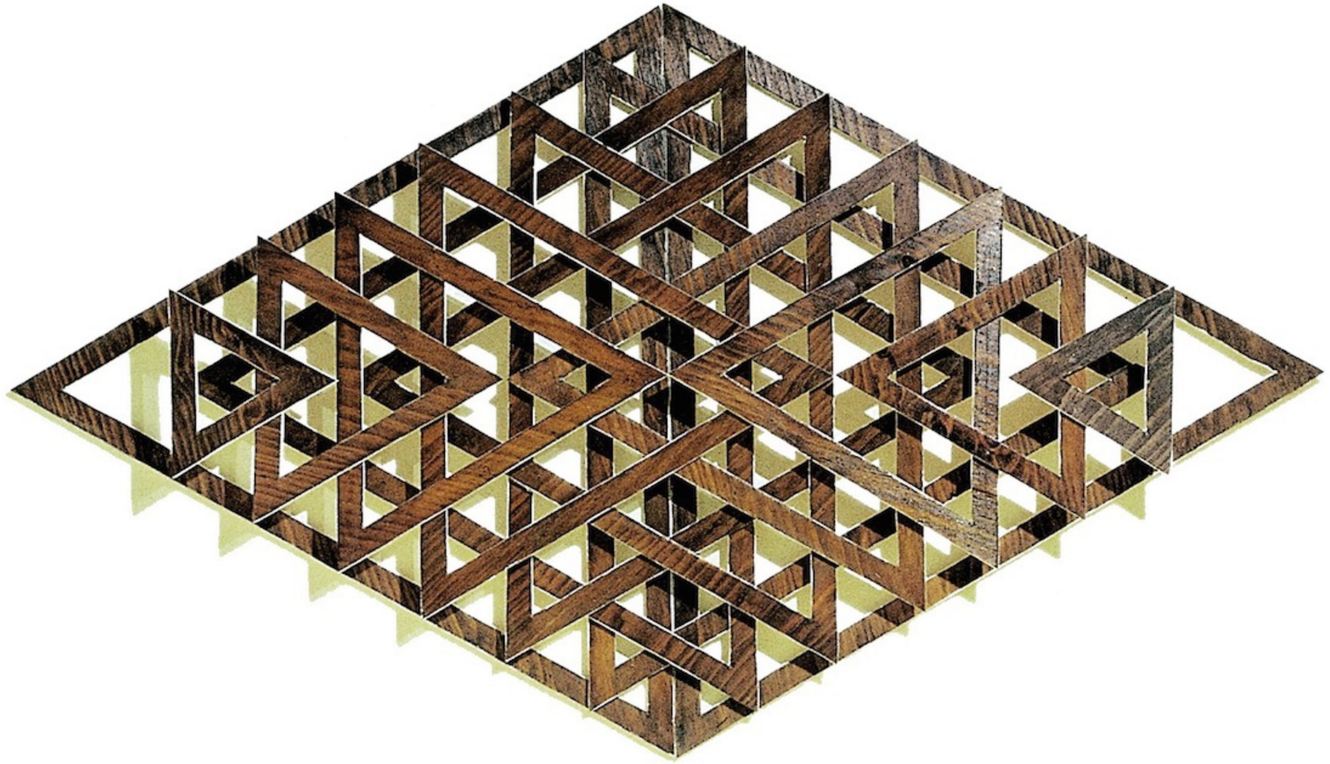


Enigmatrix, 1994
84 x 85 x 14 cms plywood



Variation on a Fractal Theme 1994
55 x 55 x 14 cm, wood

Back



Orthogon 100 x 180 x 18 cms, plywood 1994

Mode Sauvage 91 x 51cm mixed media 1996

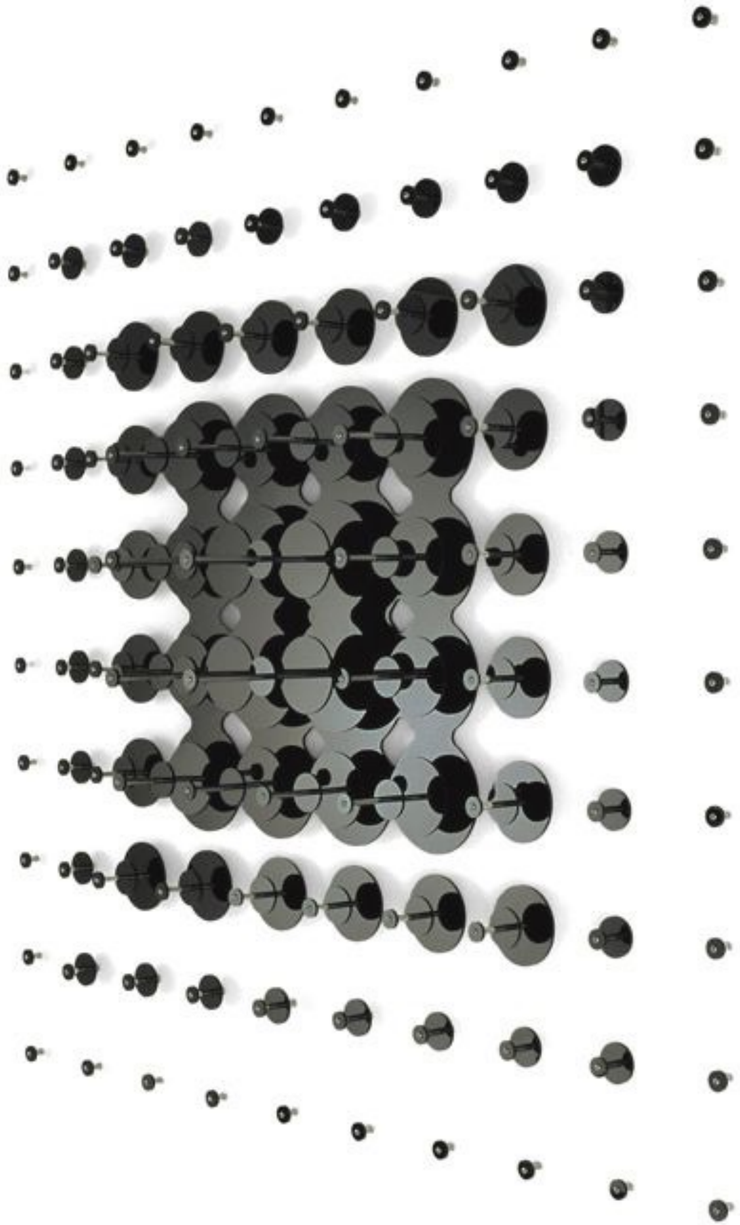
Back

French Curve 1 1996 MDF & formica, 104 x 62 x 12cm

Wind & Water 124 x 88cm, plywood, formica, 1996

Back

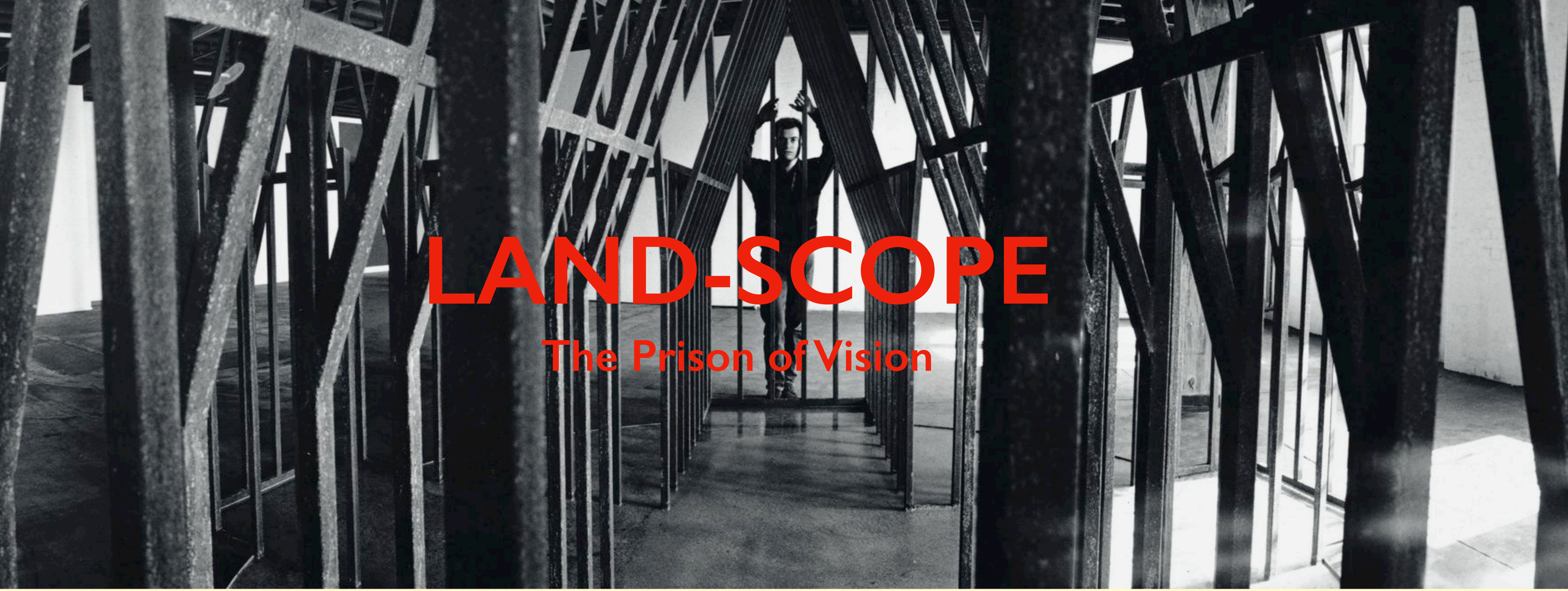
Caravan Romance 1996, formica, aluminium, 121 x 46cm



Theory of Matter 159 x 159 x 35 cm, Acrylic and aluminum, 1999

The Machine in the Garden

My concern with the connection between the natural and the artificial and my growing awareness of global environmental degradation manifested in a series of three ecological installations in the 1990's, *Land-scope (the Machine in the Garden)*, *Seascape* and *World Between*. Representations of nature and organic material (living and decaying) were combined in these large-scale installations that referred to a disjunction between nature itself and the attempt to represent, ideate and control it through the sciences and art. Spinoza distinguished between *natura naturans*, nature 'naturing', being itself, mysterious, unquantifiable, indifferent to and beyond the conception of humanity and *natura naturata* the notion of nature being 'natured', represented, constructed, domesticated and serving the utilitarian and psychological needs of humanity. This trajectory evolved in works such as *Desiring Machine, Terroir/Boudoir* and *Cosmoscope* which address our longing for and anxiety about the natural world.

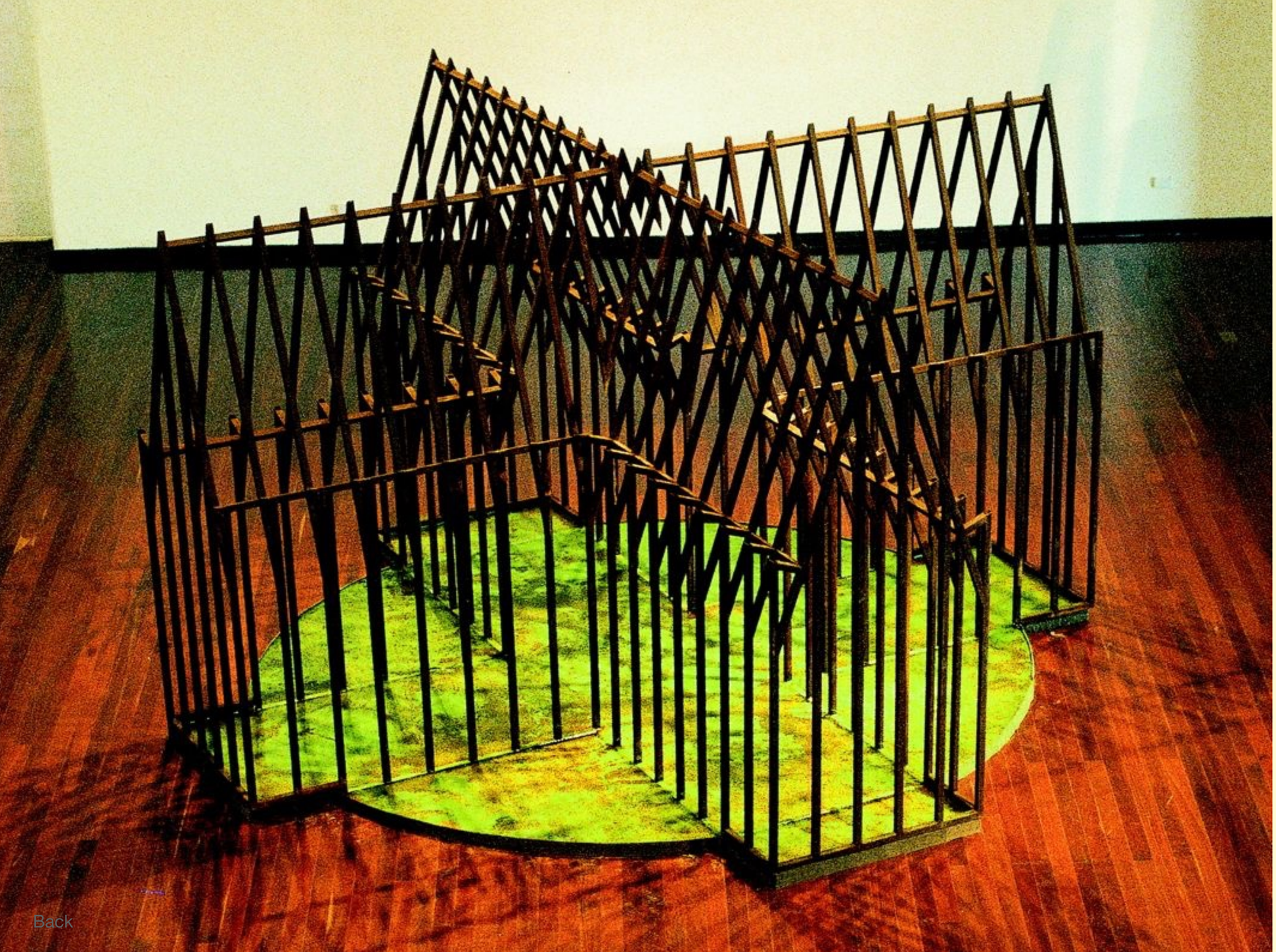


LAND-SCOPE

The Prison of Vision

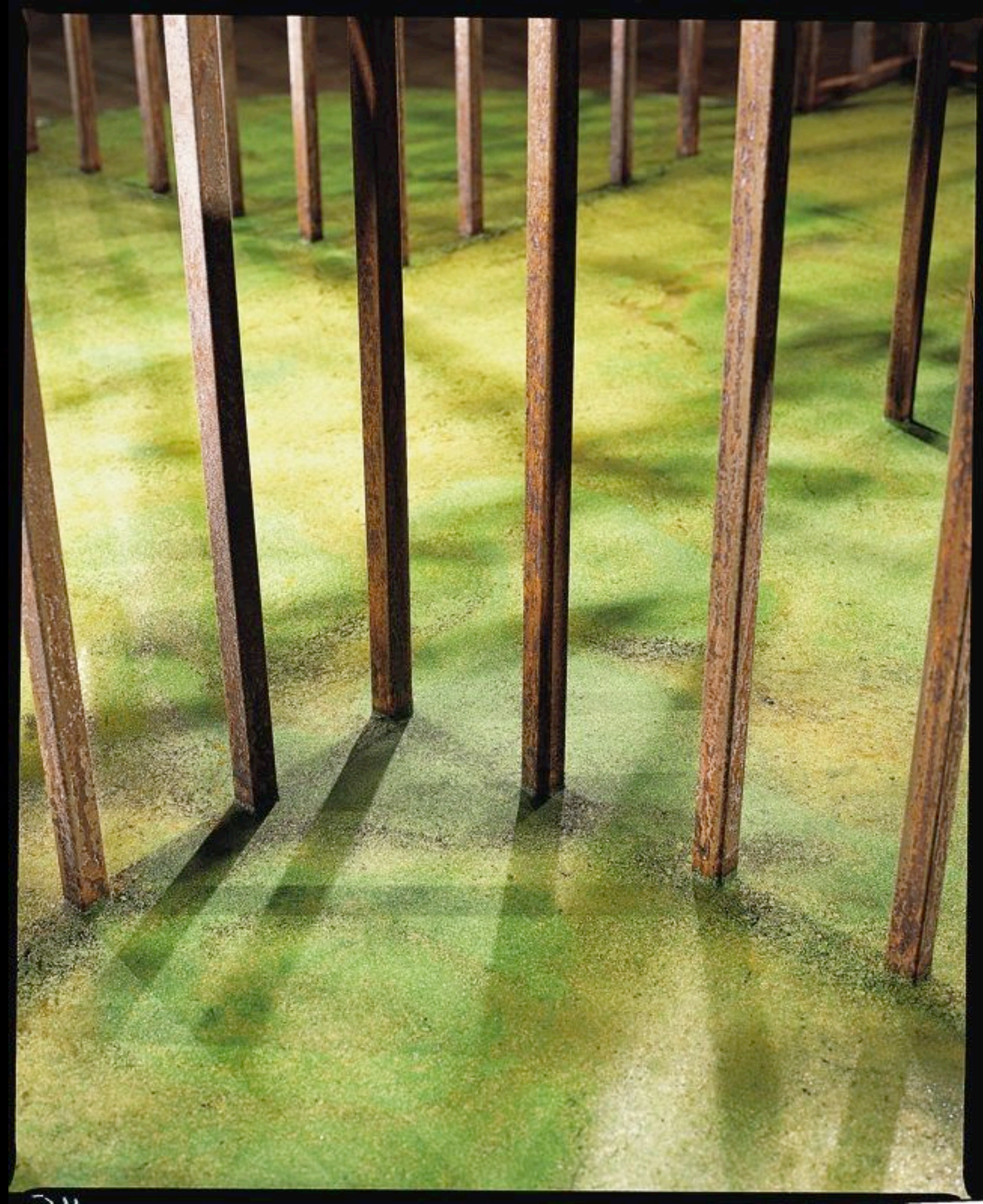
A rusting church/prison rises from a body of blue-green algae and weed-infested water.
The Judeo-Christian ethic with its explicit mandate to dominate the wild, to bend nature to culture is at a critical point. The world is no longer a vast wilderness sprinkled with human settlement.
The wild has been pushed into smaller and smaller pockets.
It is now a garden that needs careful nurturing.
According to the Manichean tradition humans were created in Gods image,
transcendant beings removed from the vulgar mechanics of nature,
angels fallen from the sky, not beasts risen from the earth.
Nature has rebelled.
The machine has poisoned the garden.
Artificial nutrients upset its balance, nurturing monstrous monocultures.
Populations explode, invading others niches.
The music of Lucifer is echoed in the discord of mutated organisms
severed from their subtle programming.
We strive for the sky, yet are imprisoned by the wastelands that spread at our feet.

Back



Landscope (The Machine in the Garden) 1993-1995
Steel, water, duckweed
480 x 480 x 320cm
Installation view, Perth Institute of Contemporary Art

Back



Back

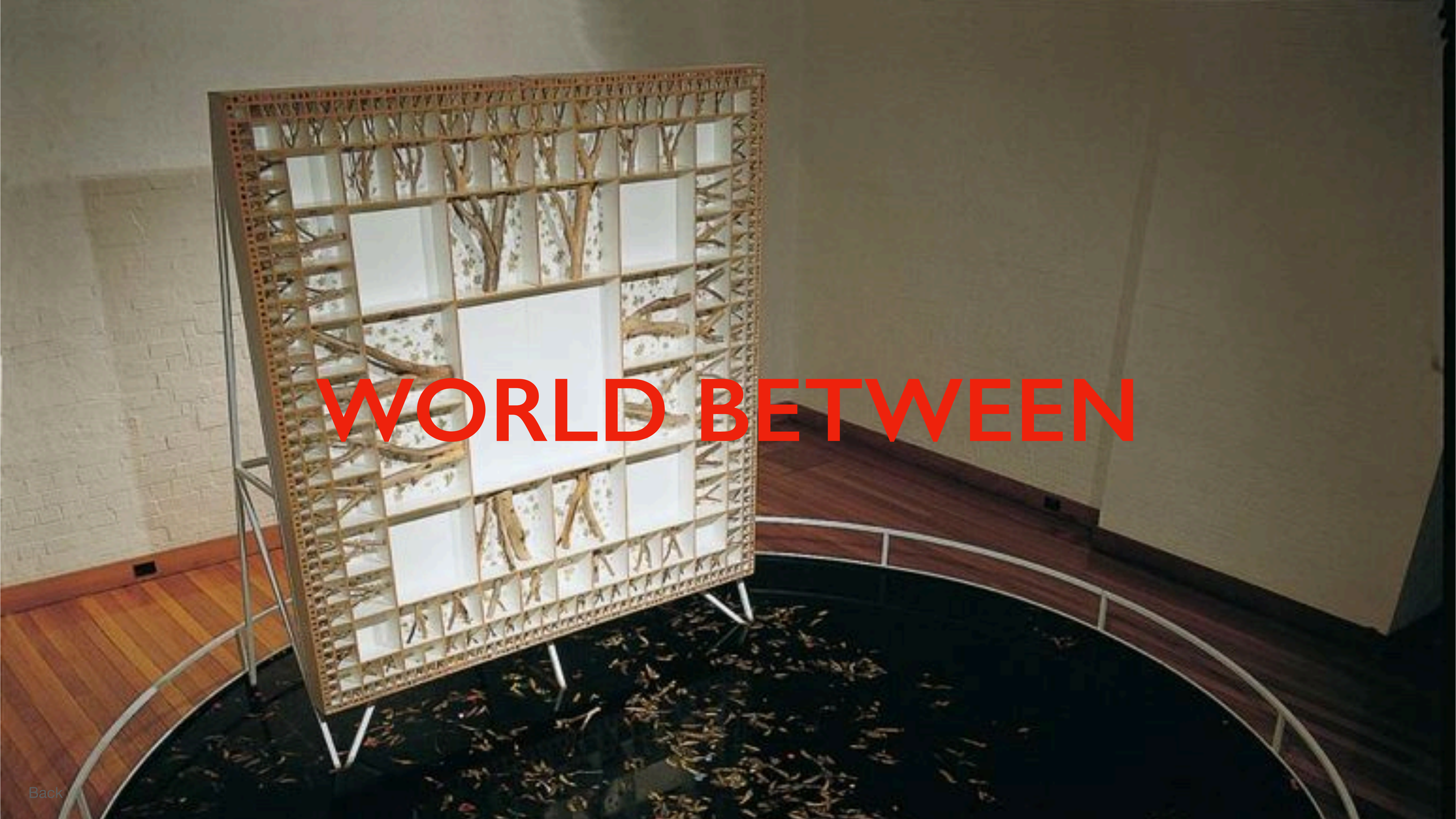
Seascape 1995
Steel, seawater, detritus
600 x 600 x 10 cm
Installation view, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney

Back

SEASCAPE

In the water blue-green algae and other marine micro-organisms compete for dominance. A colourful, jetsam of coke cans, wrappers, sea scoured foam etc as well as organic detritus, shells, seaweed etc collected from Sydney harbour beaches litter the suface leaving the middle of the pool relatively empty except for a drowned human form arms and legs outstretched in an anti-vitruvian posture. Around the outside of the tank is a thin fuzz of worn buffalo grass radiates short tendrils onto the floor.

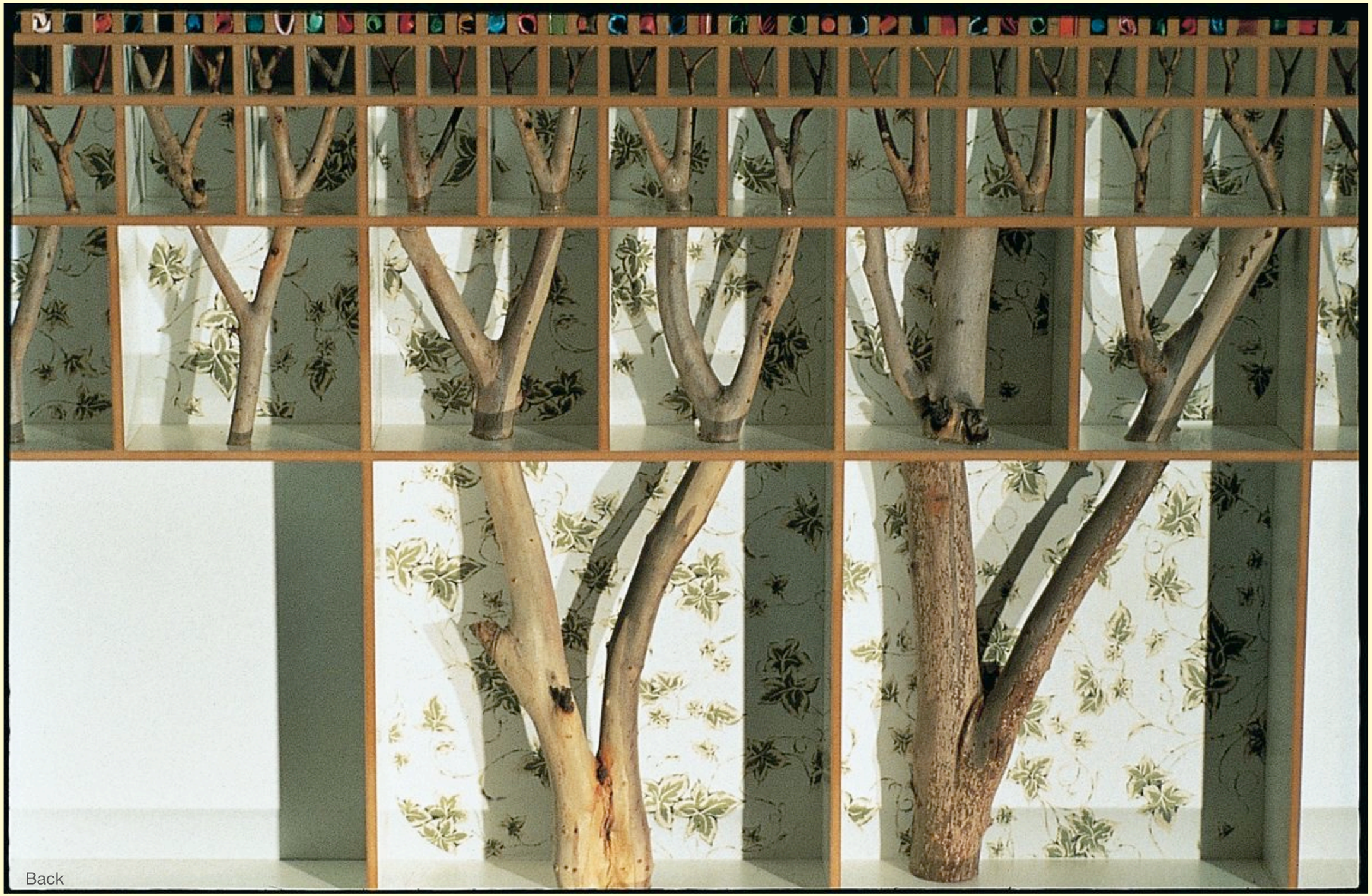
Back



Back

WORLD BETWEEN, 1997, IX Triennale India,
Funded by the Australia and Australia India Councils
Water, steel, MDF, detritus, branches, vinyl,
600 x 600 x 280 cms
Installation view: Lalit Kala Akademie, New Delhi

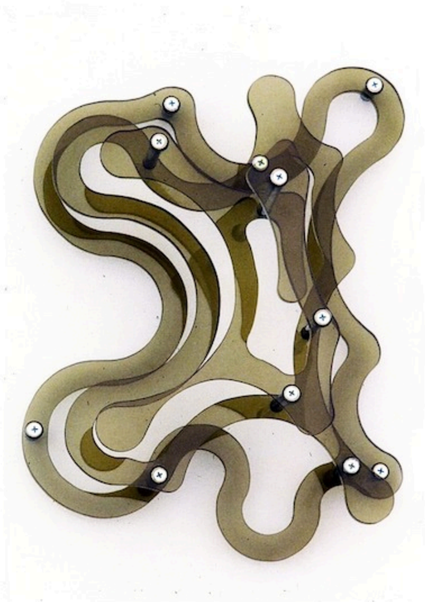
Back



Out of a circular shallow pool of water from the Yamuna River clogged with leaves, iridescent oil patches and jewel like specks of plastic rises a vertical square module ,2.5,2.5 m supported on a spindly steel A frame like an advertising billboard or the scoreboard from a deserted suburban sports ground.

Within this module compartments of decreasing size and increasing number radiate from a central blank square.

A branching tree has been vivisected, then forced into this artificial period doubling structure.



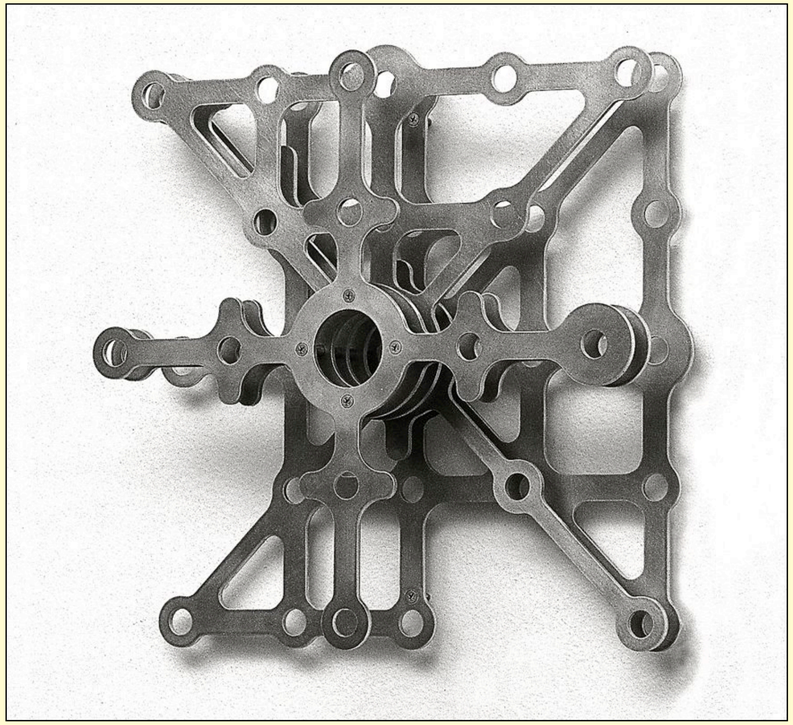
Untitled 1997
35 x 41 x 5 cm, acrylic

Burb (2234) 1999
70 x 25 x 13cm, MDF, Formica

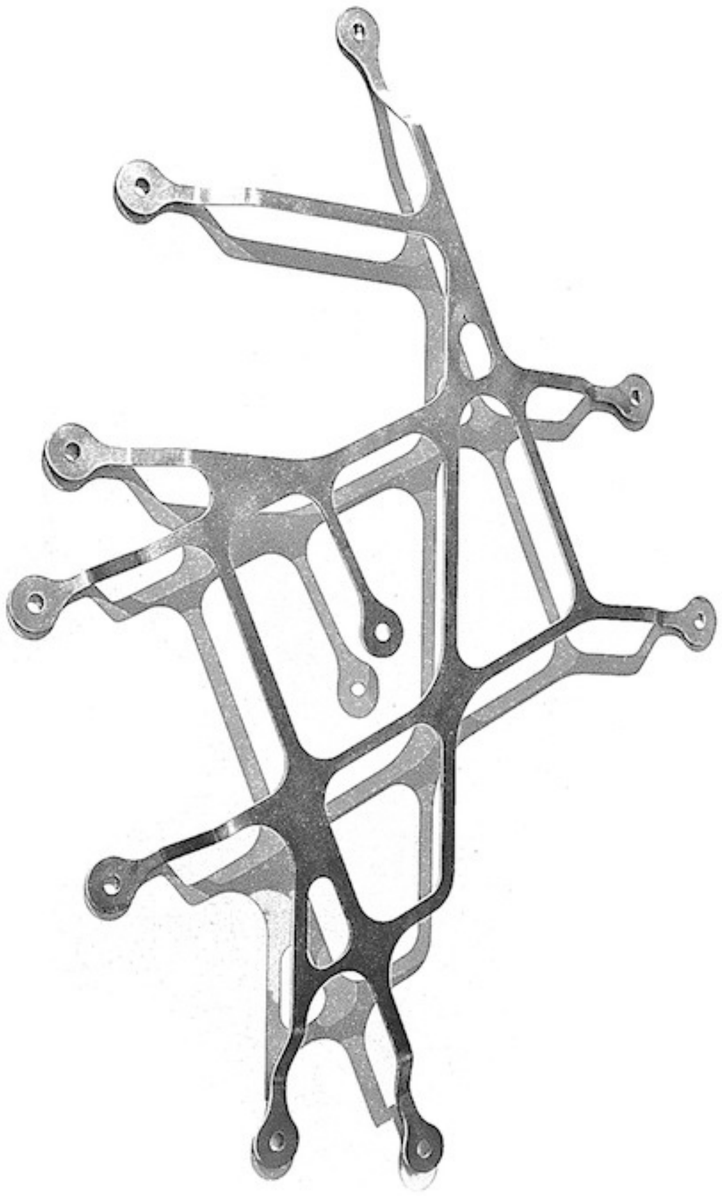
Burb (2030) 1999
48.5 x 20 x 13cm MDF, Formica

Via Libertas 1999
107 x 35 x 12.5cm, MDF, Formica

Back

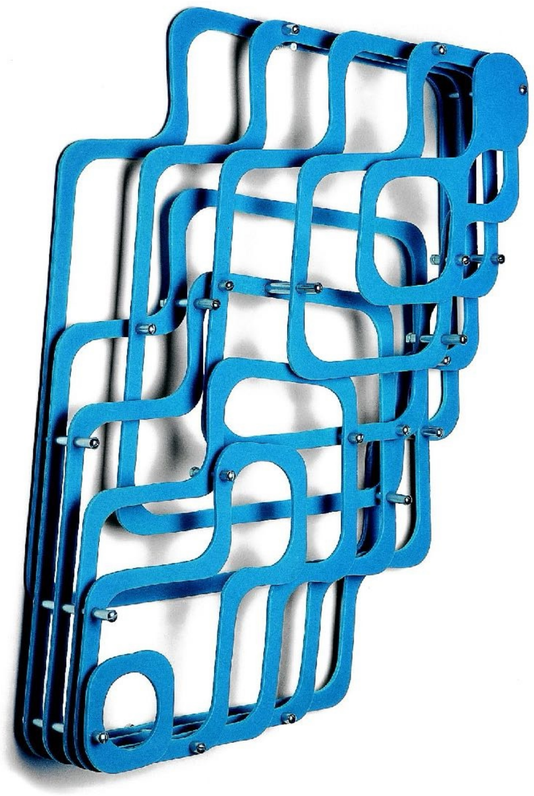


Calculus II 45 x 45 x 11cm, anodised aluminium, 1999

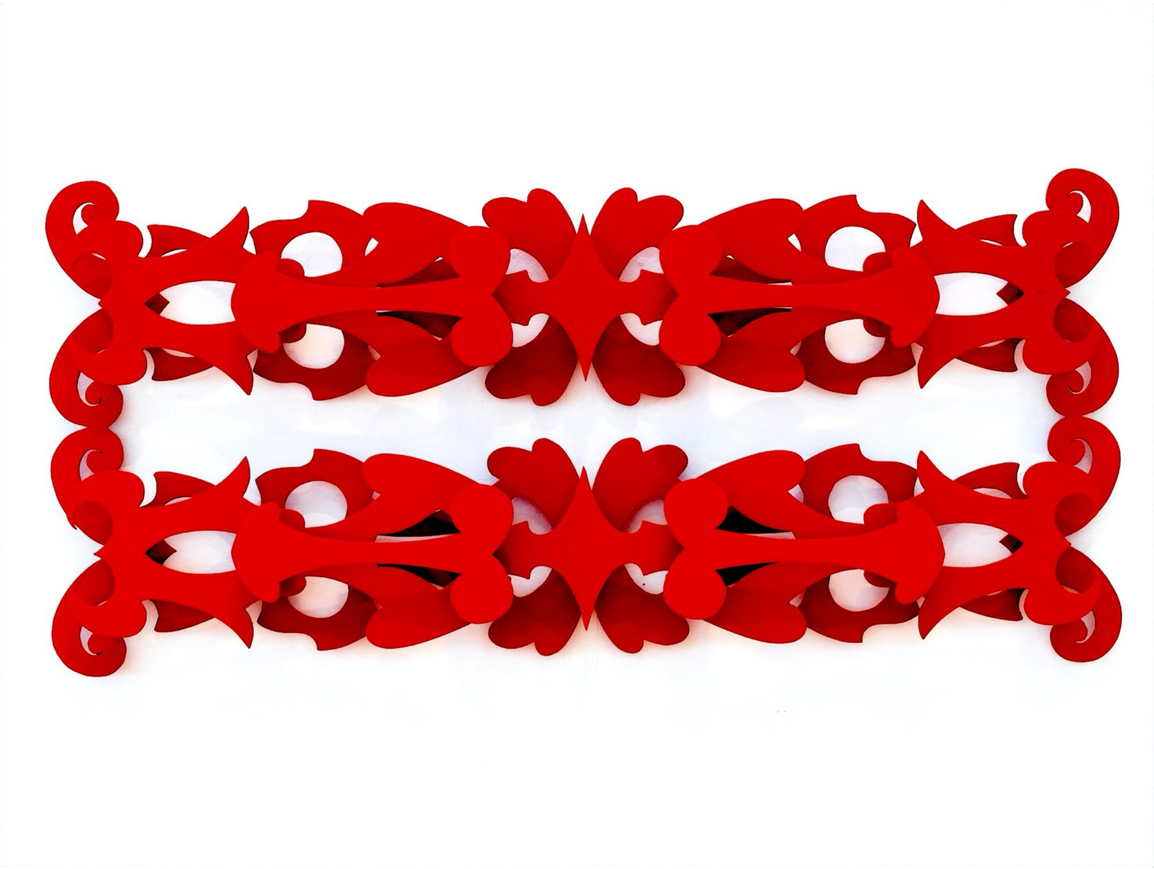


Metrope #1 138 x 104 x 4.5cm, aluminium, 1999

Back

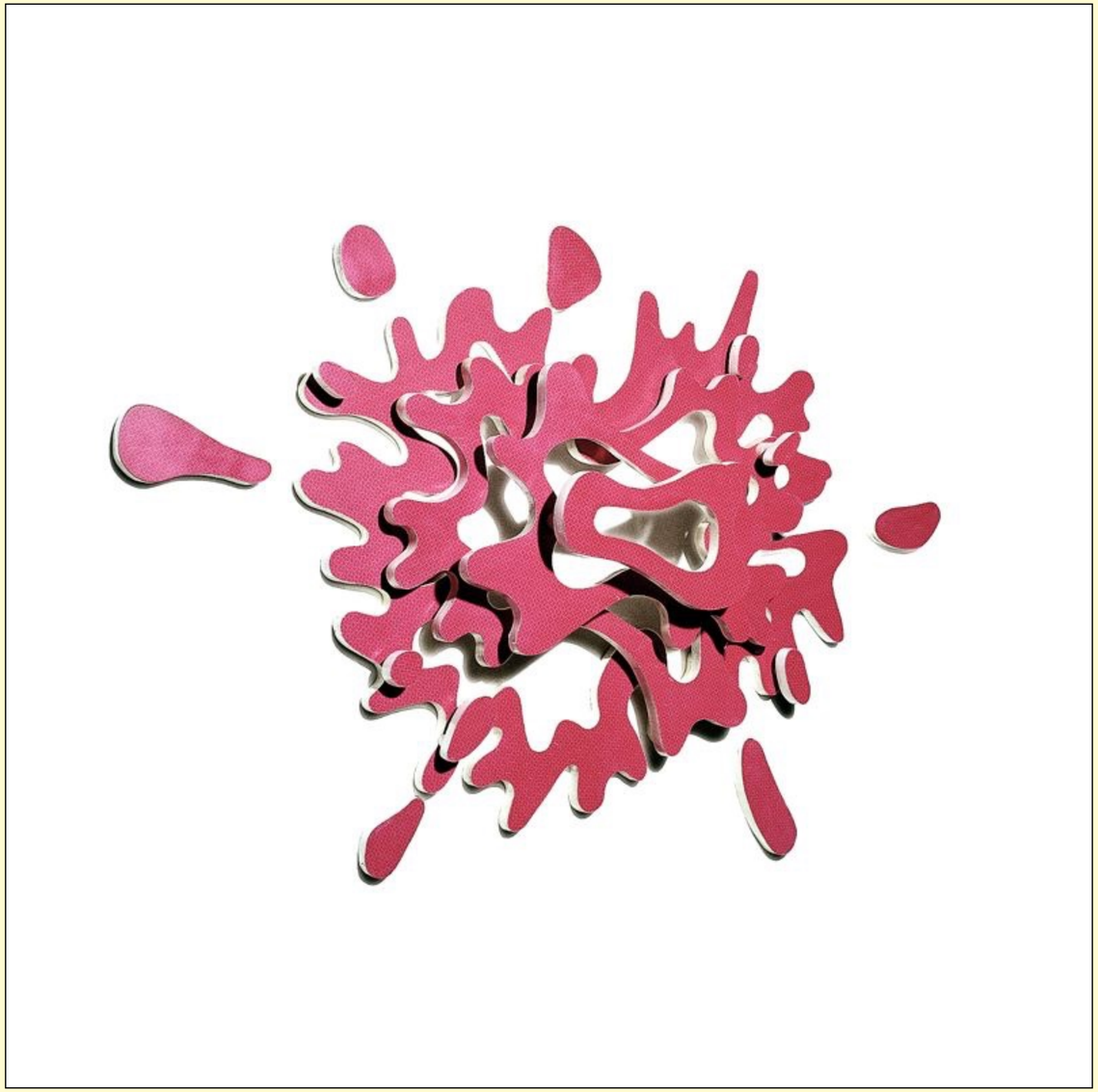


Aquamandala, 1996, 87 x 61x 9cm acylic sheet,

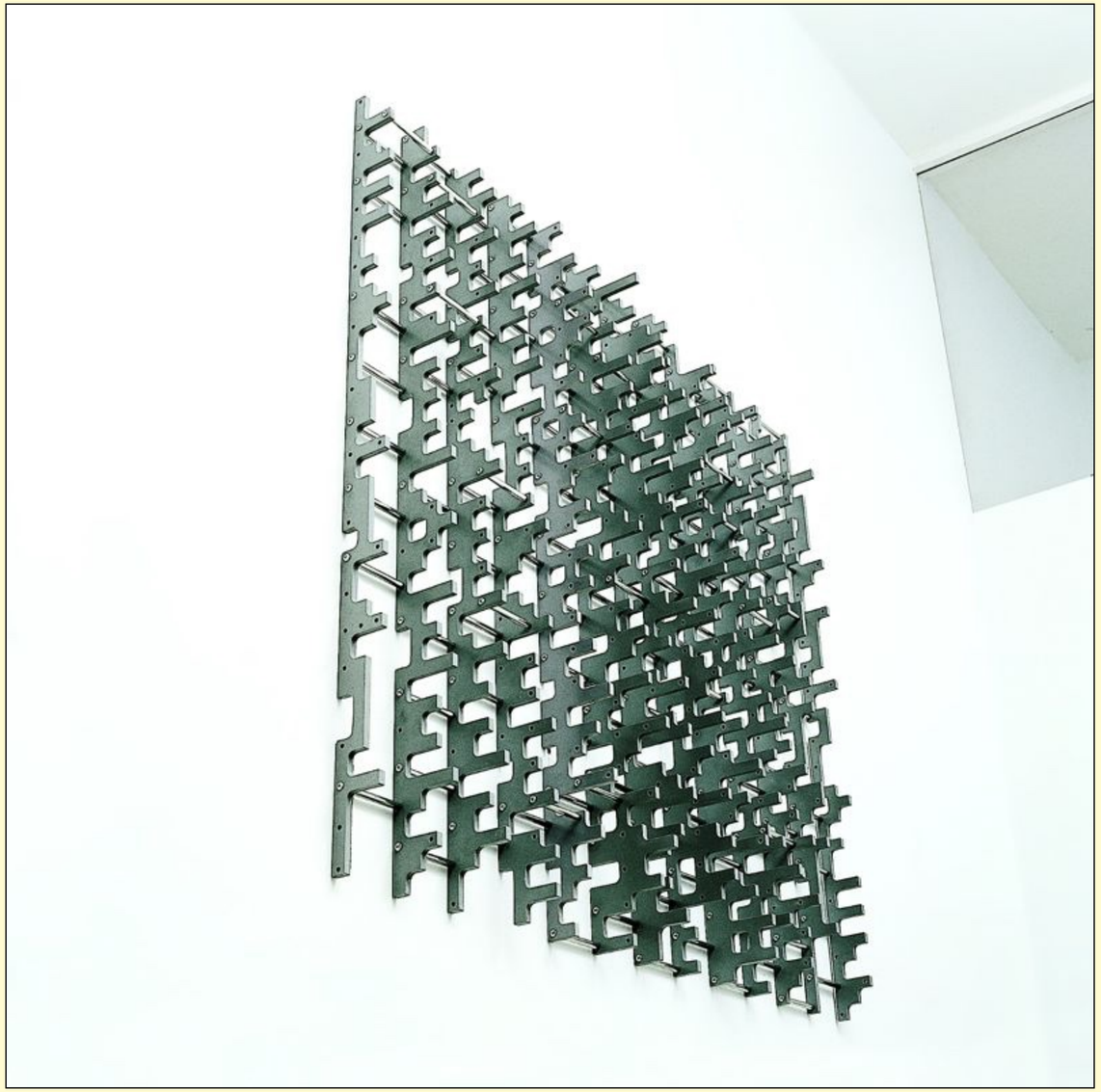


Ornamenamanro, 2005, plywood paint, 120 x 40 x 13 cm
Collection: University of Hertfordshire, UK

Back



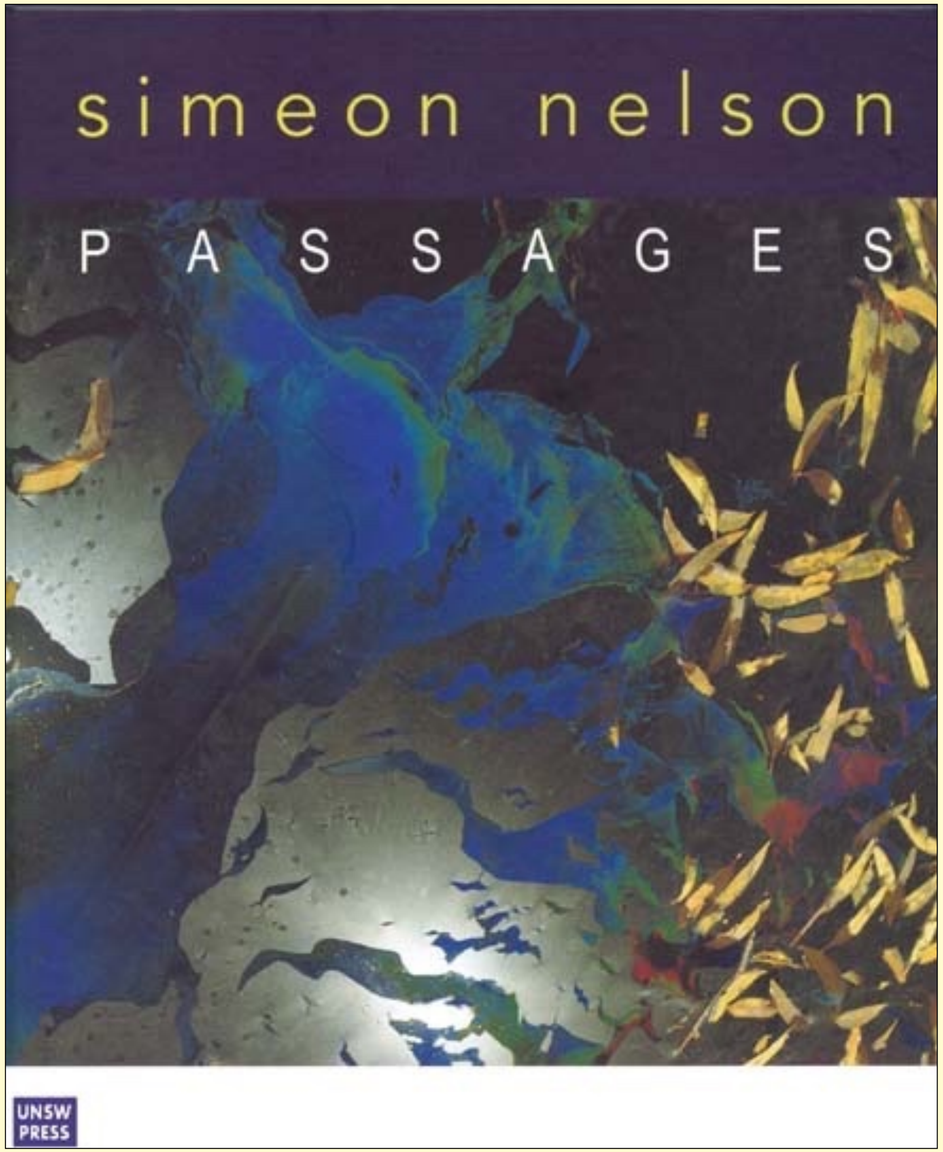
Polypolyp, 98x 160 x 18 cms, altered formica table

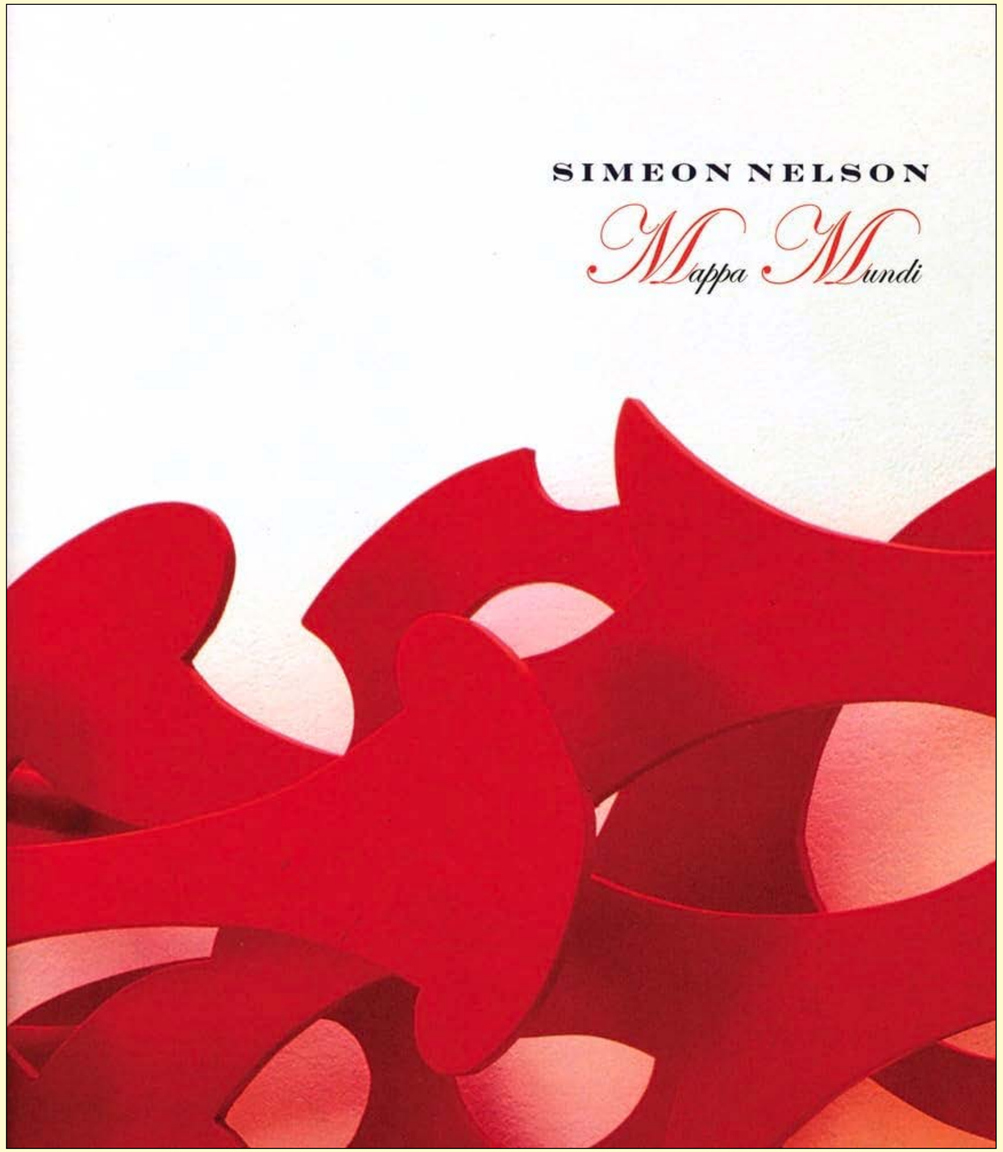


Polypolis, 117 x 128 x 14.5cm, aluminium, PVC 1999

Back

Simeon Nelson: Passages, monograph Benjamin Genocchio, UNSW Press, Sydney 2000 ISBN: 868407305

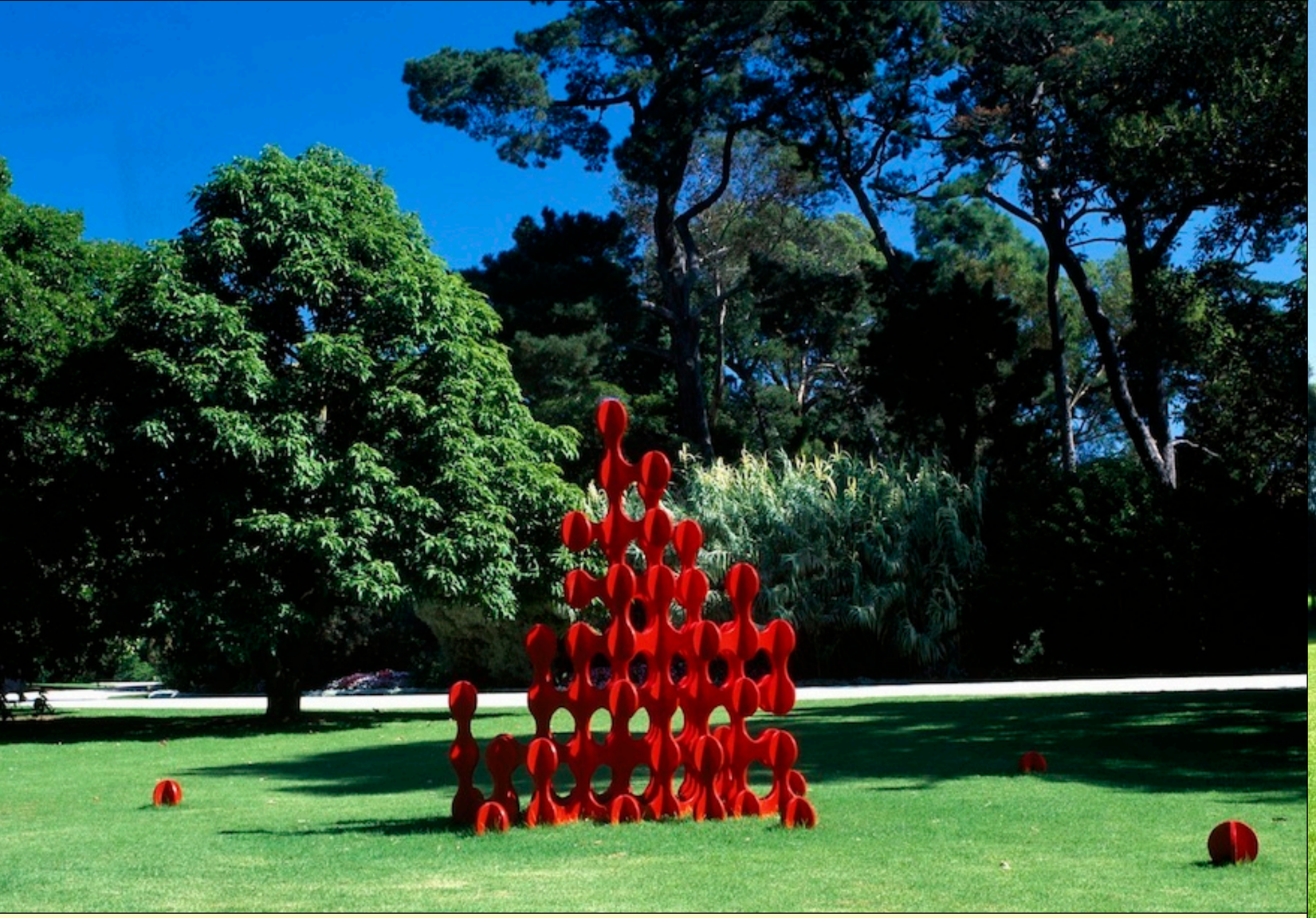




Mappa Mundi catalogue Gyonata Bonvicini UH Press, Hatfield 2006 ISBN:898543933

Back

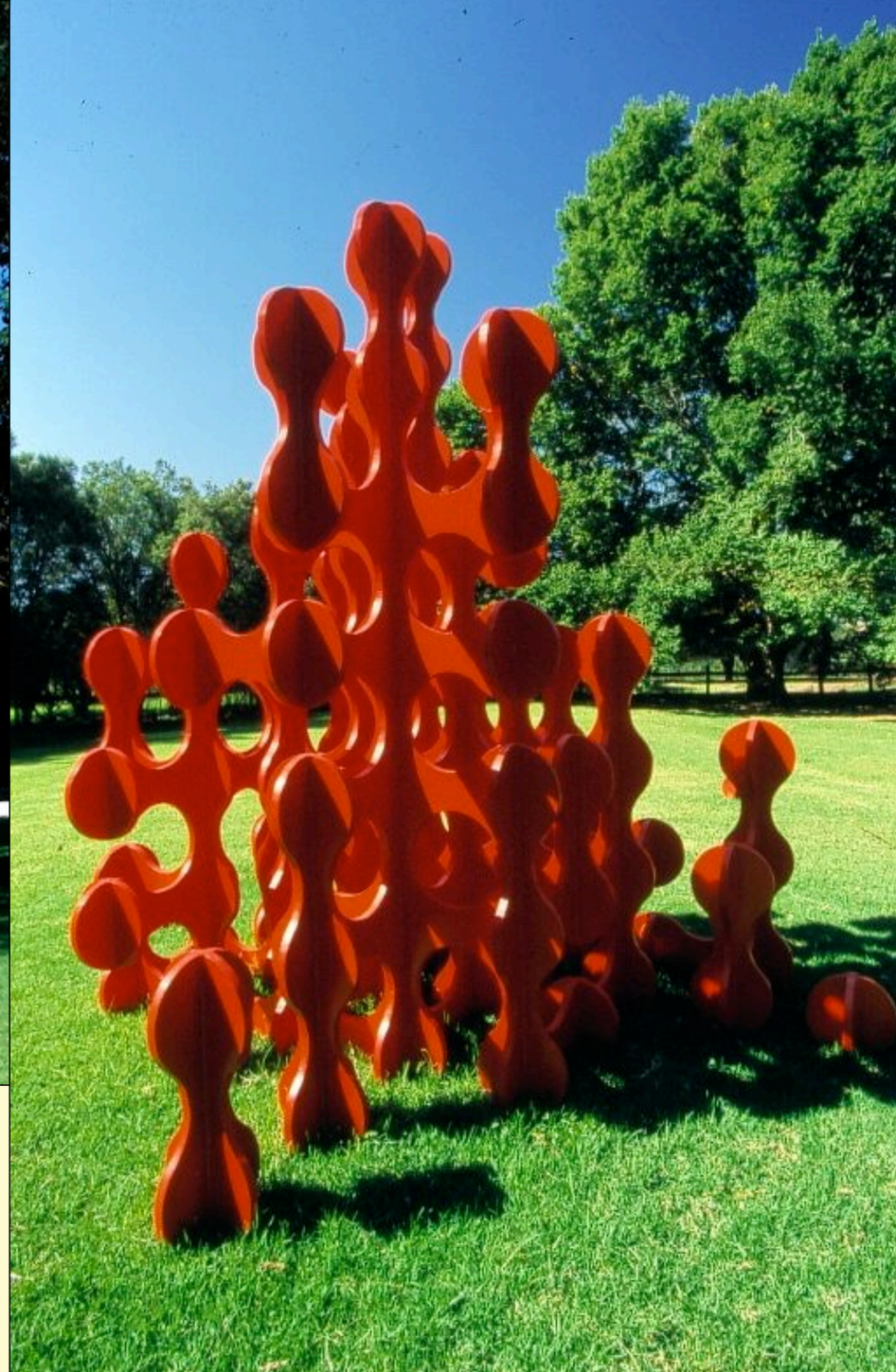
Back



Pollinator Phenotype (cactal) 2000, 1000 x 900 x 340 cms, polypropylene, collection McLelland Gallery, Australia

Pollinator is self-generative, like a coral building its own calcium carbonate skeleton as it grows over the seabed, The structure self-pollinates 'unpacks' its Truchet geometry as it spreads over the lawn.

Back



2005, plywood, coppiced branches, net curtain, dead weeds
500 x 450 x 250 cm Elastic Residence, London, 2005

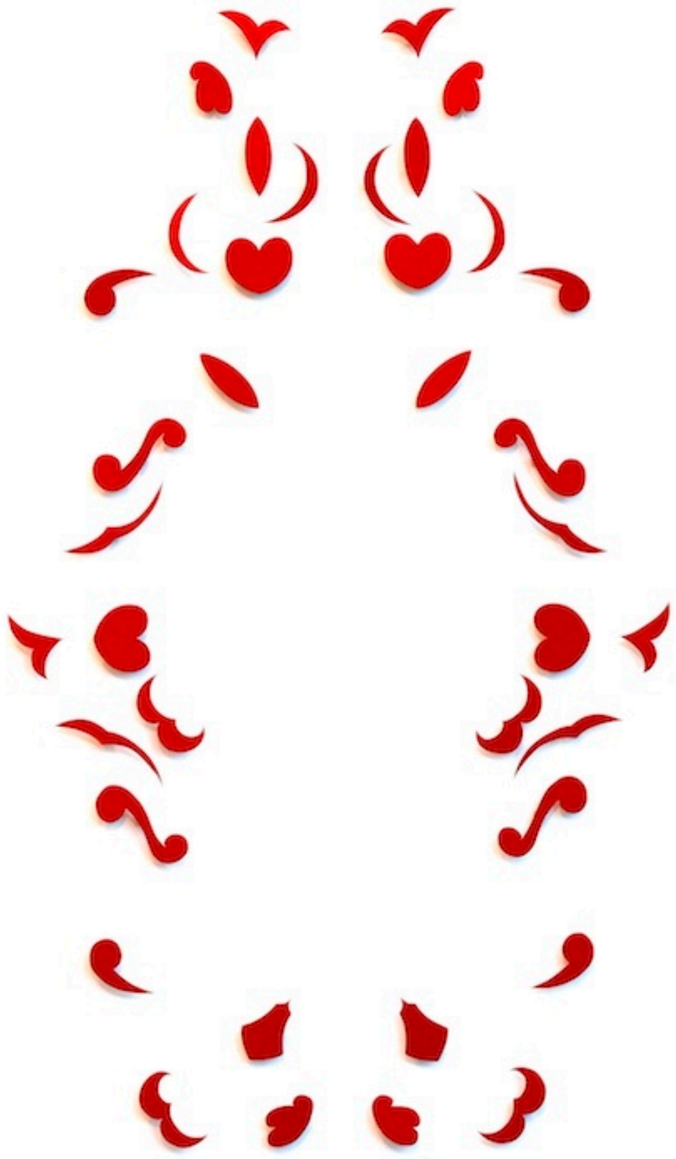
Back

Back

Ornamatrix
(for Sol le Witt)
2005
plywood,
wood dye
300 x 300 x
180 cms

Back

Godhead Gestalt, 2005, found cupboard door, metallic gold paint, 240 x 110 x 30 cms



Mutual Attraction of Monads, 2005
plywood, paint, dimensions variable

Back

Stilfragen #4, 2004,
plywood, dimensions variable

Back

Back

"Wolfflin noted that the Baroque is marked by a certain number of material traits: ... matter handled in masses or aggregates, with the rounding of angles and avoidance of perpendiculars ... spongy, cavernous shapes, or to constitute a vortical form always put in motion by renewed turbulence ... matter tends to spill over in space, to be reconciled with fluidity at the same time fluids themselves are divided into masses."

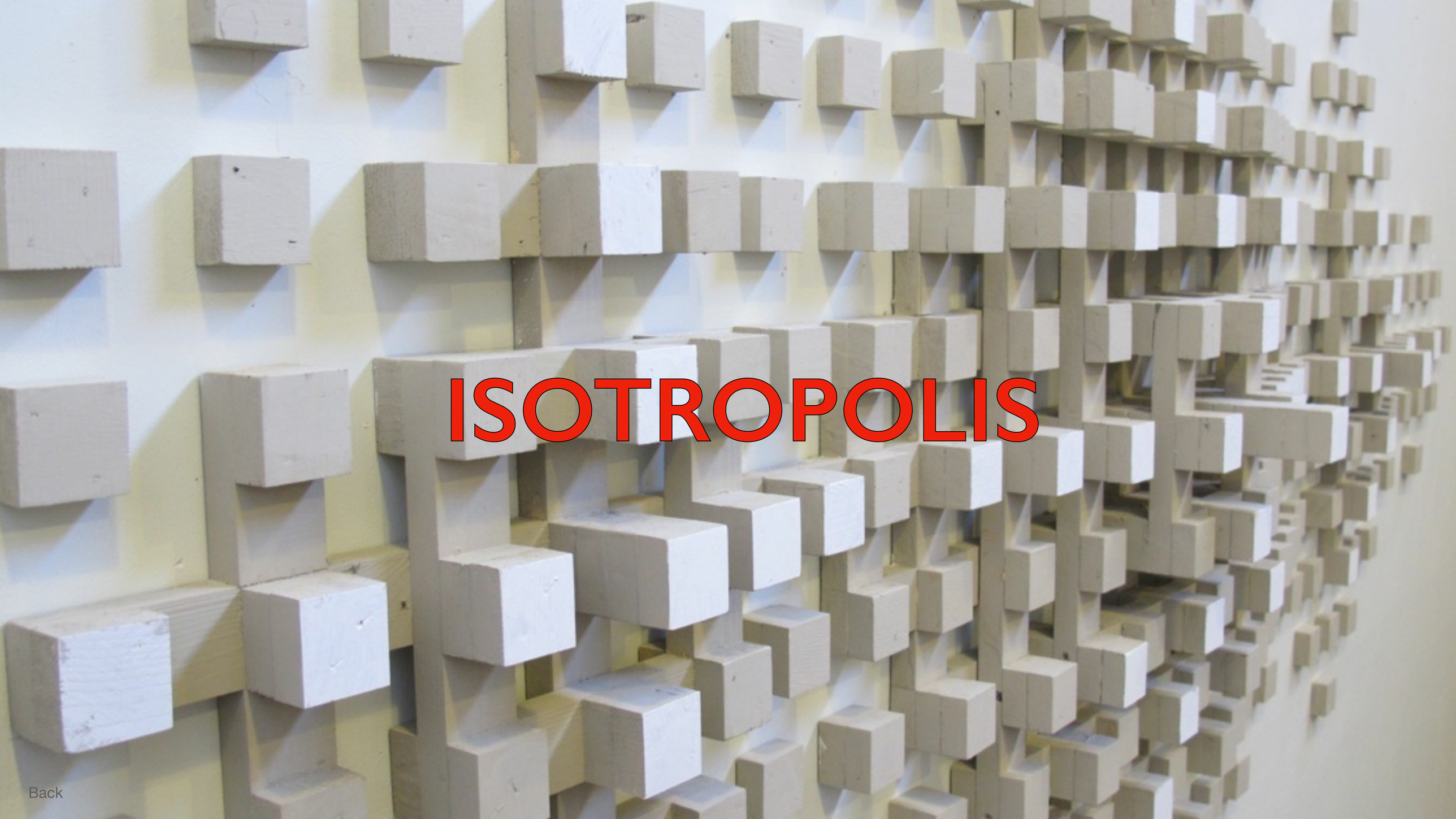
Gilles Deleuze, The Fold

Wall Zip, 2005, plywood, dimensions variable, collection: National Gallery of Australia

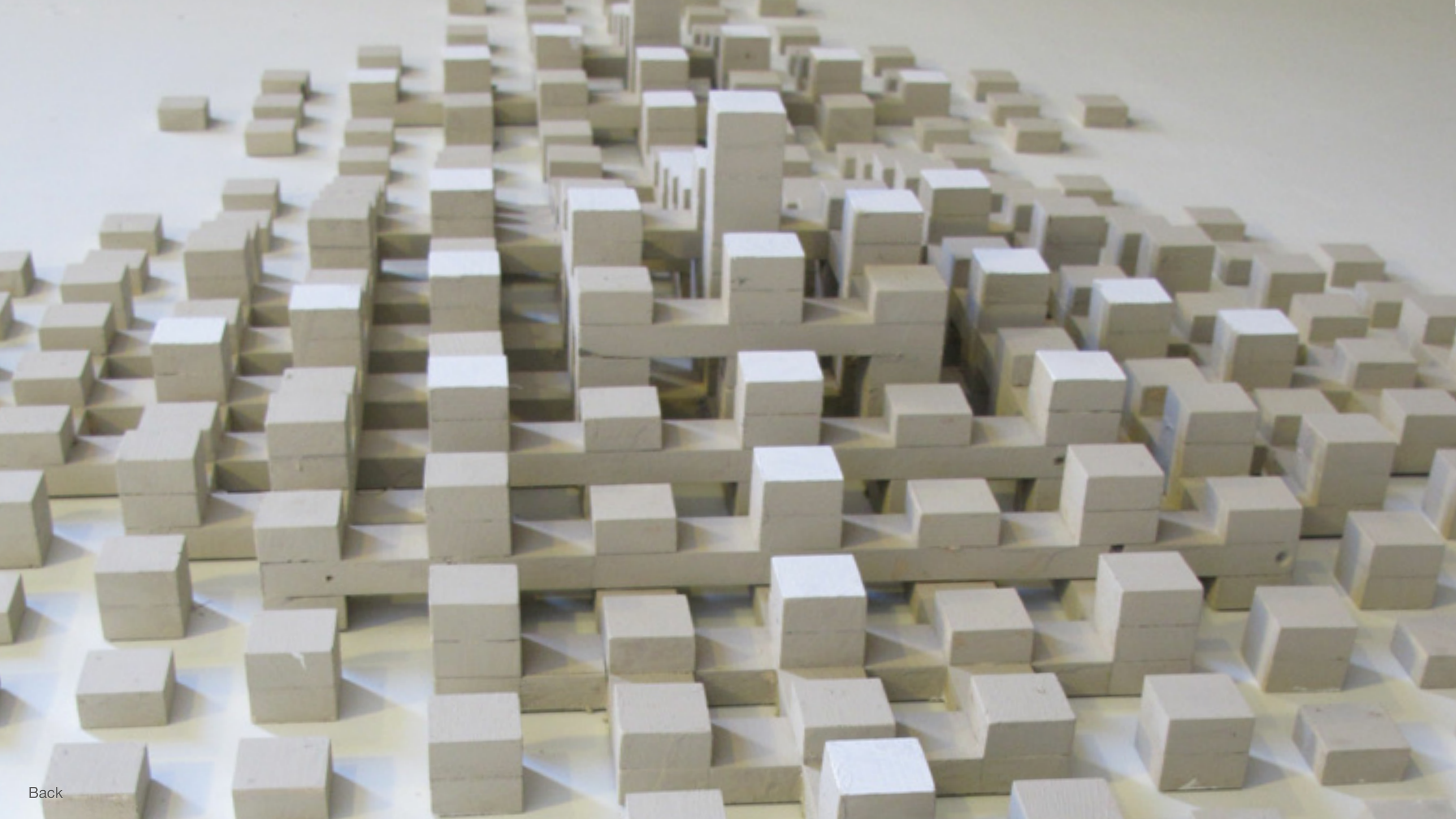
Back

Arachne 2007
plywood, wood dye,
varnish
290 x 120 x 22 cm

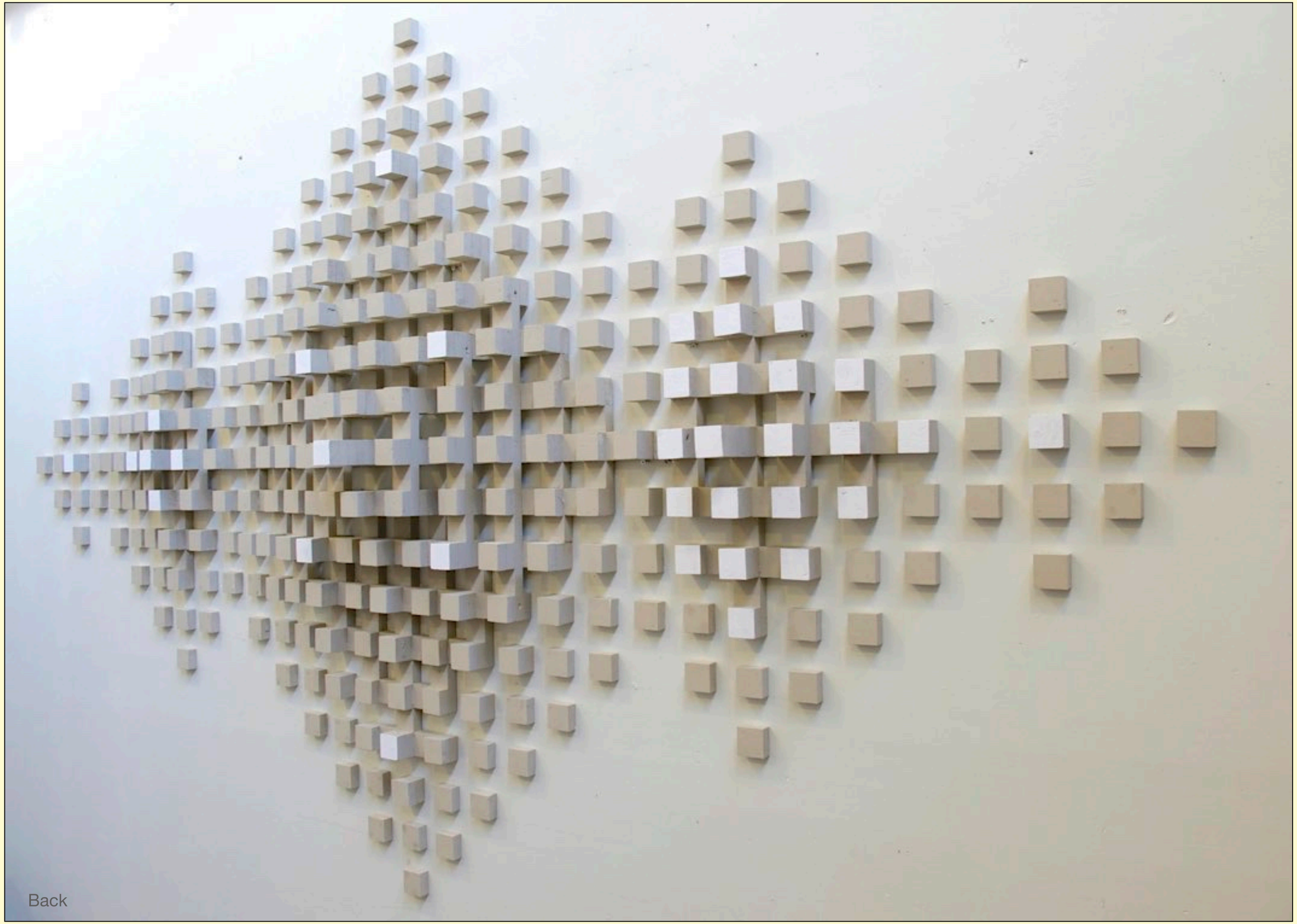
2010-2025



Back



Back



Isotropolis
2013-15
Wood, paint
320 x 240 x 30 cms

isotropic:
exhibiting properties with the same values when measured along axes in all directions,
eg. an *isotropic* crystal

Back

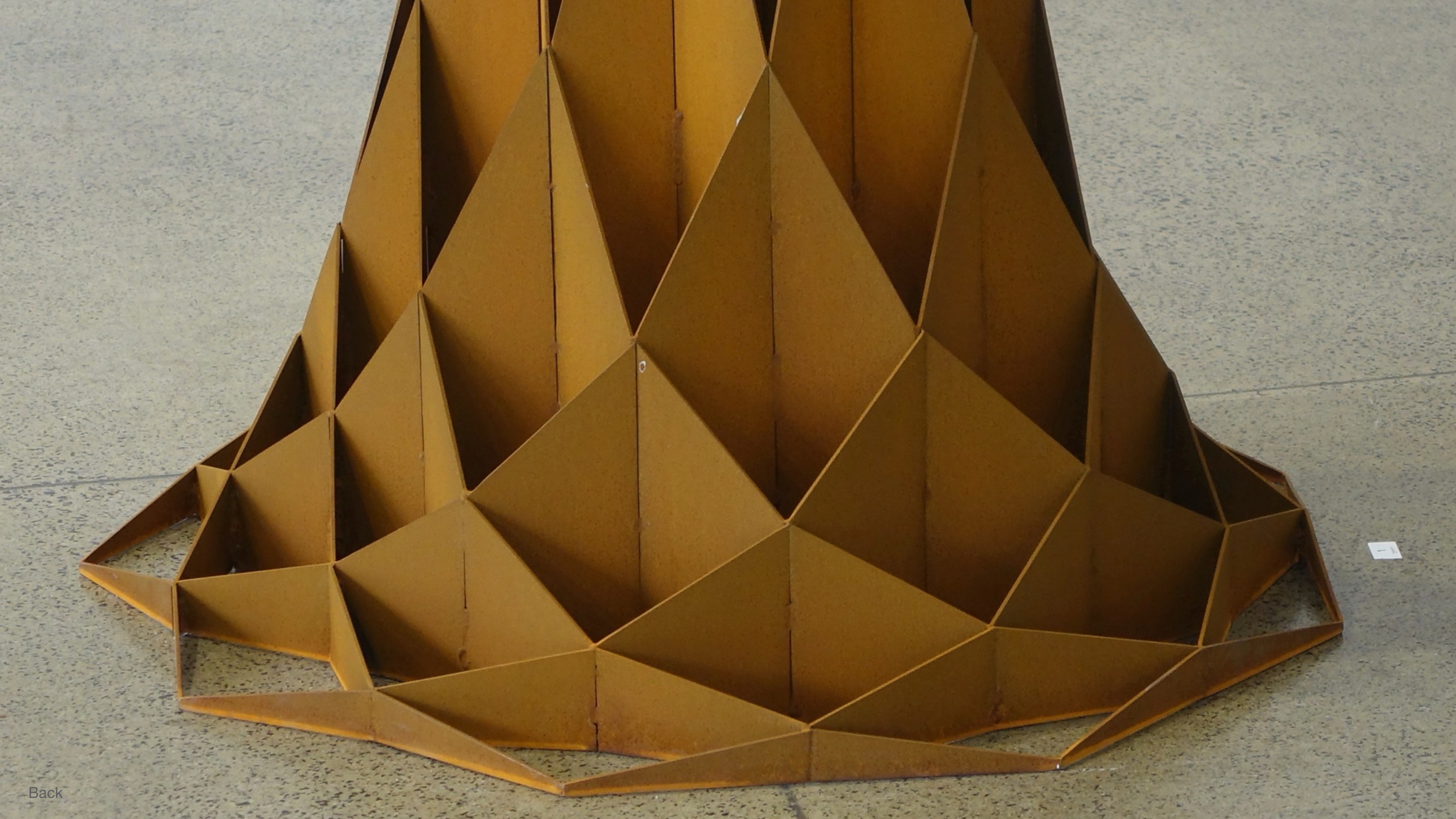
INTERLOCUTOR, Mossgreen Gallery, Melbourne 2015

Back

Horns of the Dilemma 2015
Cor-ten steel;
326cm x 90 cm x 100 cm

This sculpture rises from the floor in truncated Fibonacci curves of cor-ten steel. Each iteration becomes closer to the vertical and the golden mean without attaining either, as to do so would require an infinite number of iterations.

Back



Back

Matrilocutor
2015
metallic polyurethane on 6mm mild steel plate
226cm high, 83cm wide, 83cm deep

Back

These dialogical works fold machine-like planar forms into human scale totems, referencing gaskets, connection plates and by extension the devices and mechanisms that we in our human bodies interact with.

Matrilocutor is based on a 60 degree trilateral geometry and Patrilocutor on a 90 degree quadrilateral geometry.

I titled them to suggest a dialogue between the feminine and the masculine. Matrilocutor's three legs make it stable on any surface while Patrilocutor's four legs mean that it needs a geometrically flat surface to find stability on.

Patrilocutor
2015
metallic polyurethane on 6mm mild steel plate
240cm high, 104.5cm wide, 104.5cm deep

Fock

Back

Back

All Our Ancestors
2014
Cardboard, bolts, thread, bottles
260 x 260 x 200 cms

Artist residency and collaborative exhibition with Moffat Takadiwa. Assisted by Terrence Musekiwa

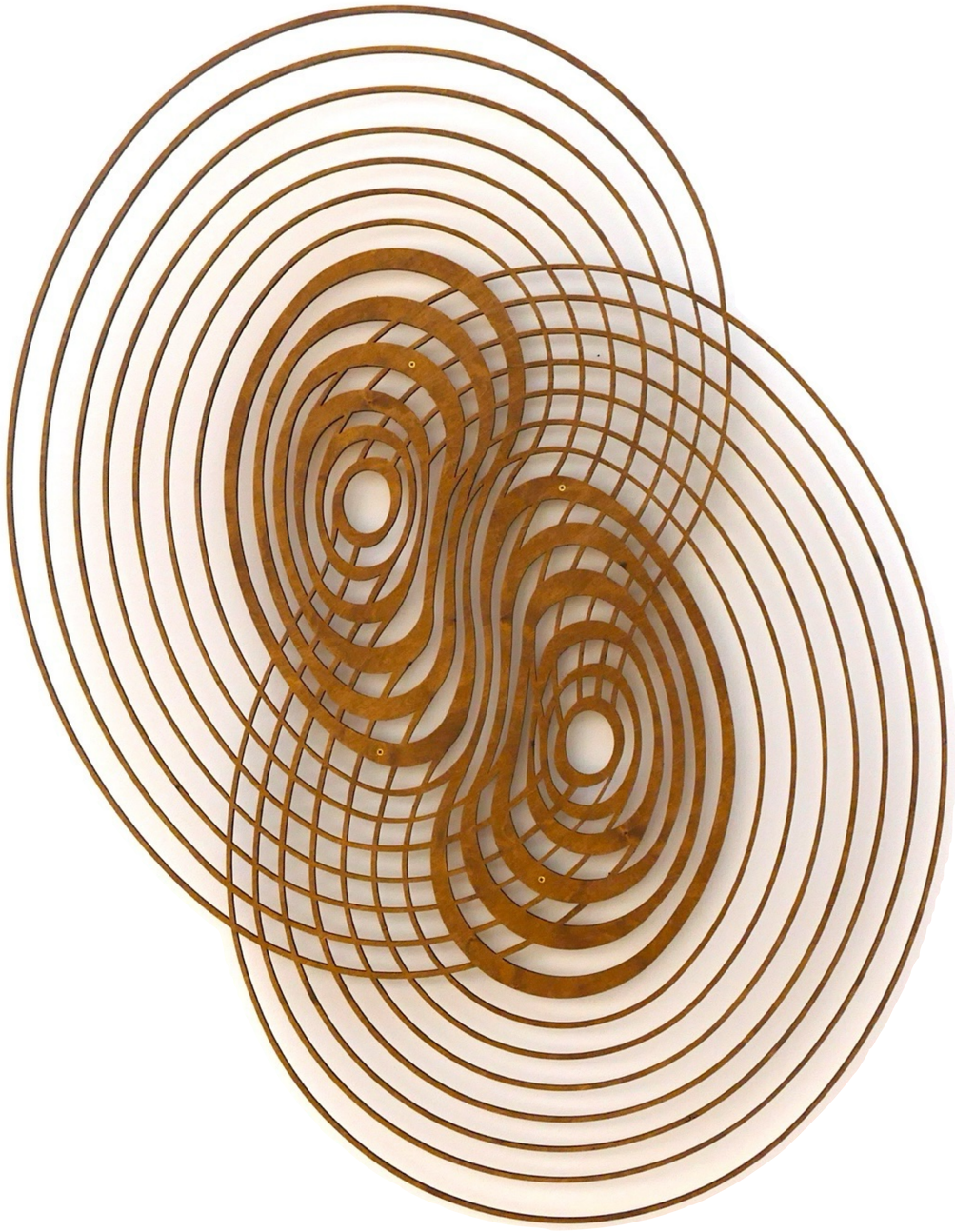
Curated by Valerie Kabov, director of First Floor Gallery Harare, Zimbabwe.
Supported by the Arts Council International Development Fund

Also exhibited at, Commune 1 Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa, curated by Conor Ralphs and Leigh-Anne Niehaus

This demountable cardboard work was fabricated over two intense weeks from initial research, conversations, drawings and models. It hovers between architecture and sculpture in scale and structure; it synthesises pattern and ornament from European Christian traditions, African Shona, Ndebele and other traditions into a style we dubbed "Afro-Gothic".

It was inspired both by the sacred architectural geometry of the European gothic and the complex mathematical patterning of Zimbabwean and Zambian traditional crafts and architecture.

Back

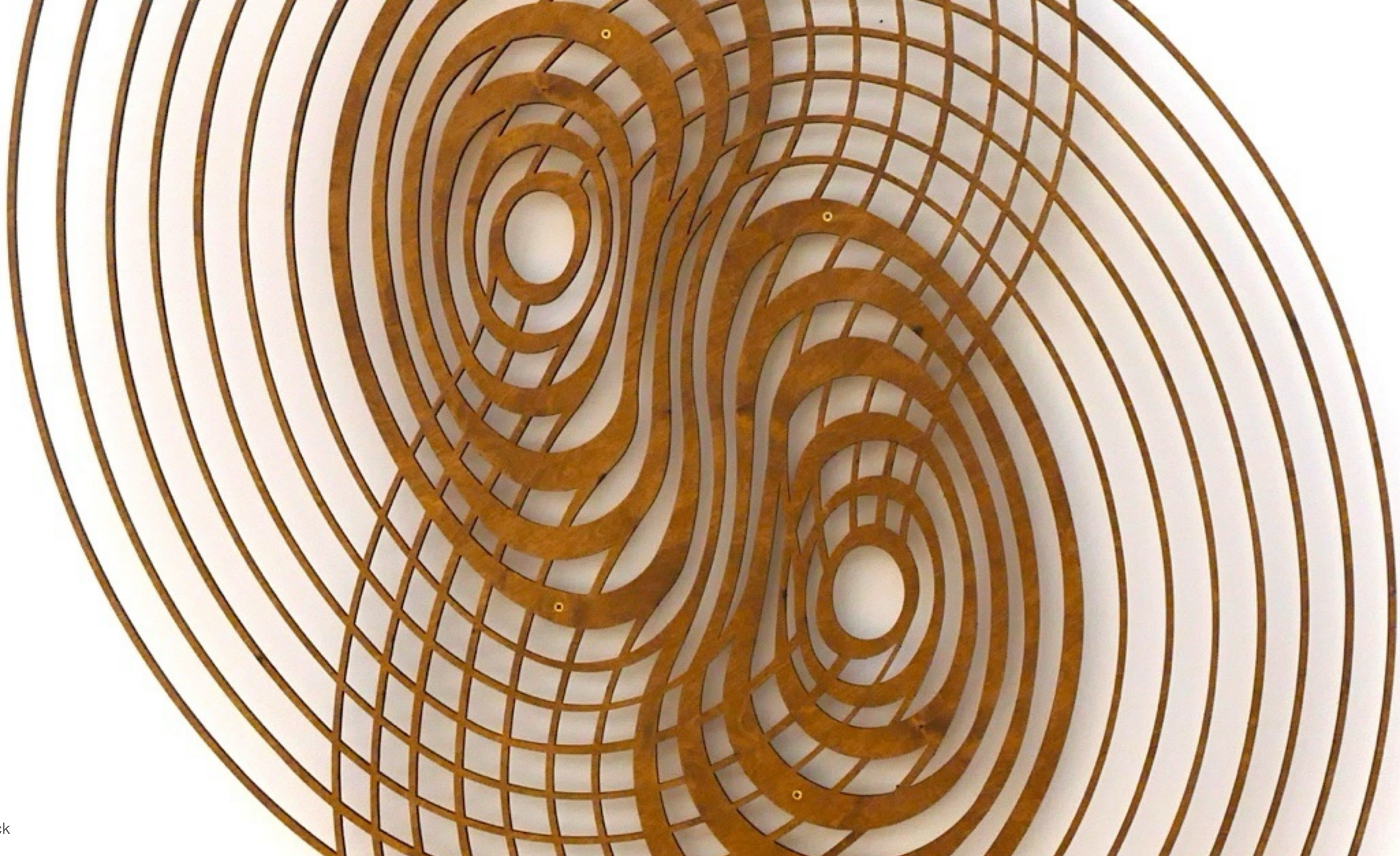


The wall sculptures ***Daimon, Holarchy, Moko and Attractor*** use a limited colour palette to emphasise the repeating structures. The works organise themselves into geometric emanating patterns which suggest they are in a process of unfolding. They occupy a space between 2 and 3D, between drawing and construction. Like much of my sculpture these wall works are part of a dialogue about what it might mean to be a separate entity or an element of a wider system.

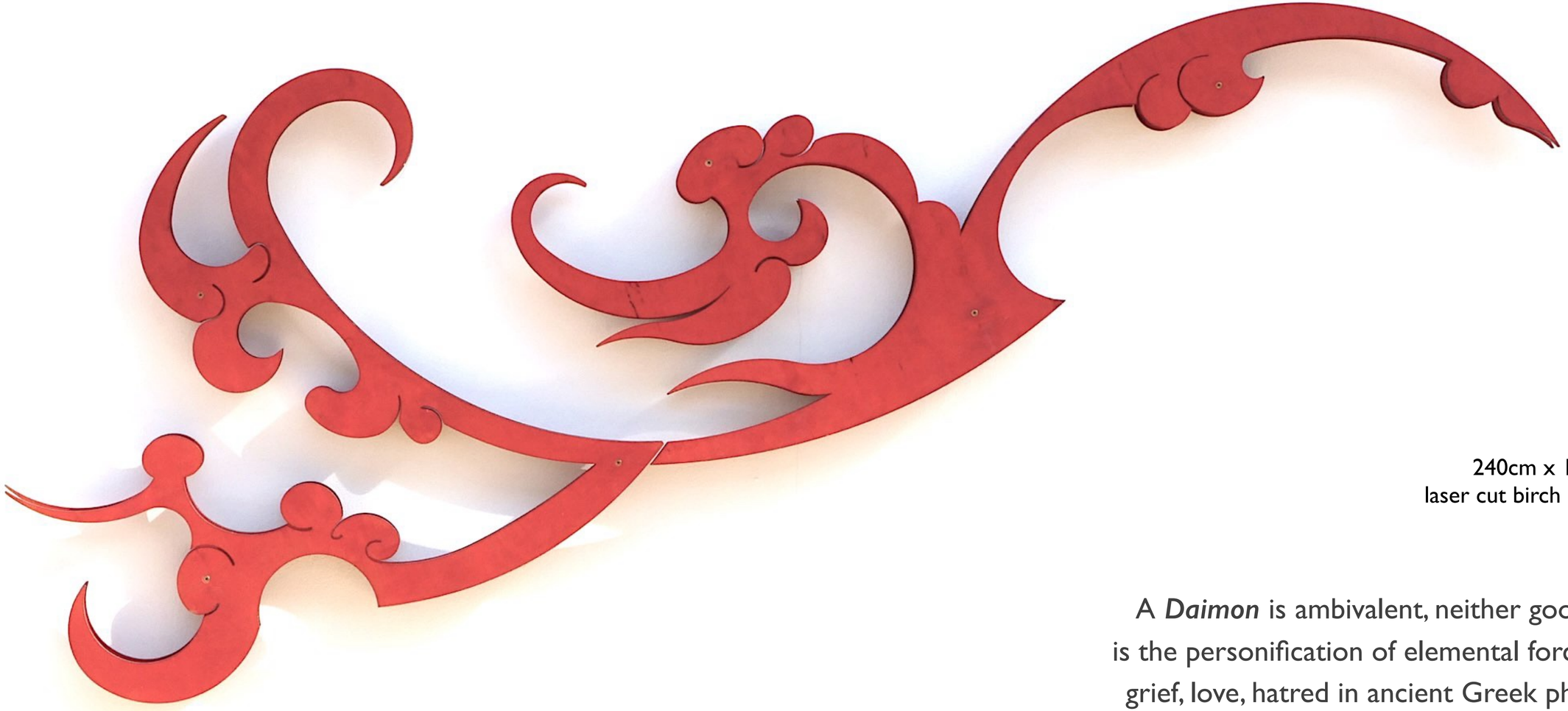
Attractor is an interacting two-part system, each element giving rise to the other, each providing context for the other in a dance of attraction and repulsion. Each forms the context for the other..

Back

Attractor 2019, laser cut birch ply, dye, shellac, 178cm x 130cm x 3.6cm



Back



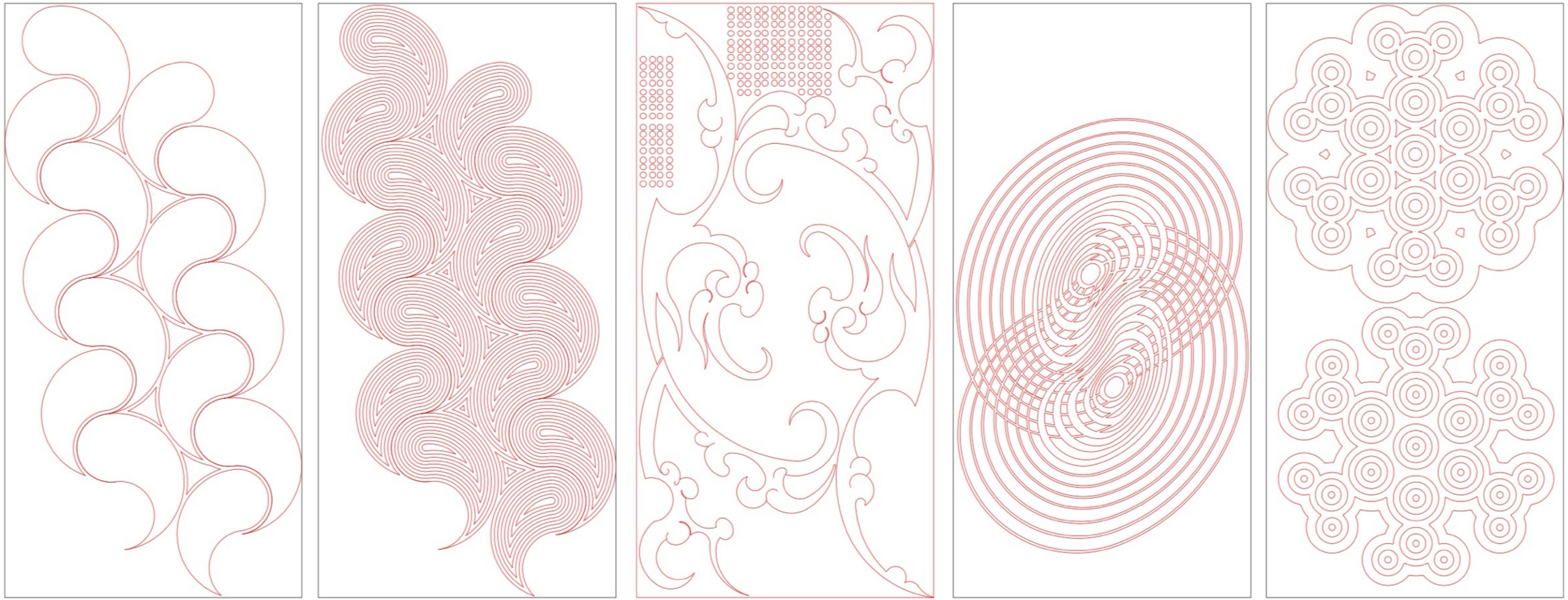
Daimon 2019
240cm x 110cm x 7.2cm
laser cut birch ply, dye, shellac

A *Daimon* is ambivalent, neither good or evil and is the personification of elemental forces like anger, grief, love, hatred in ancient Greek philosophy and drama. I derived its flowing forms from the illustrations in a volume on Chinese Han ornament, published in Maoist China.

Back

Moko 2019, birch ply, paint,
14 elements each 56cm x
37cm x 3cm

Back



Moko 2019, birch ply, paint, 14 elements each 56cm x 37cm x 3cm

Relief wall drawing or tattoo propagating over the wall. This work encodes the questions of separateness and separability. Like a conglomerate organism each element nests within the collective system - each part is as essential to the whole as the whole is to each part.

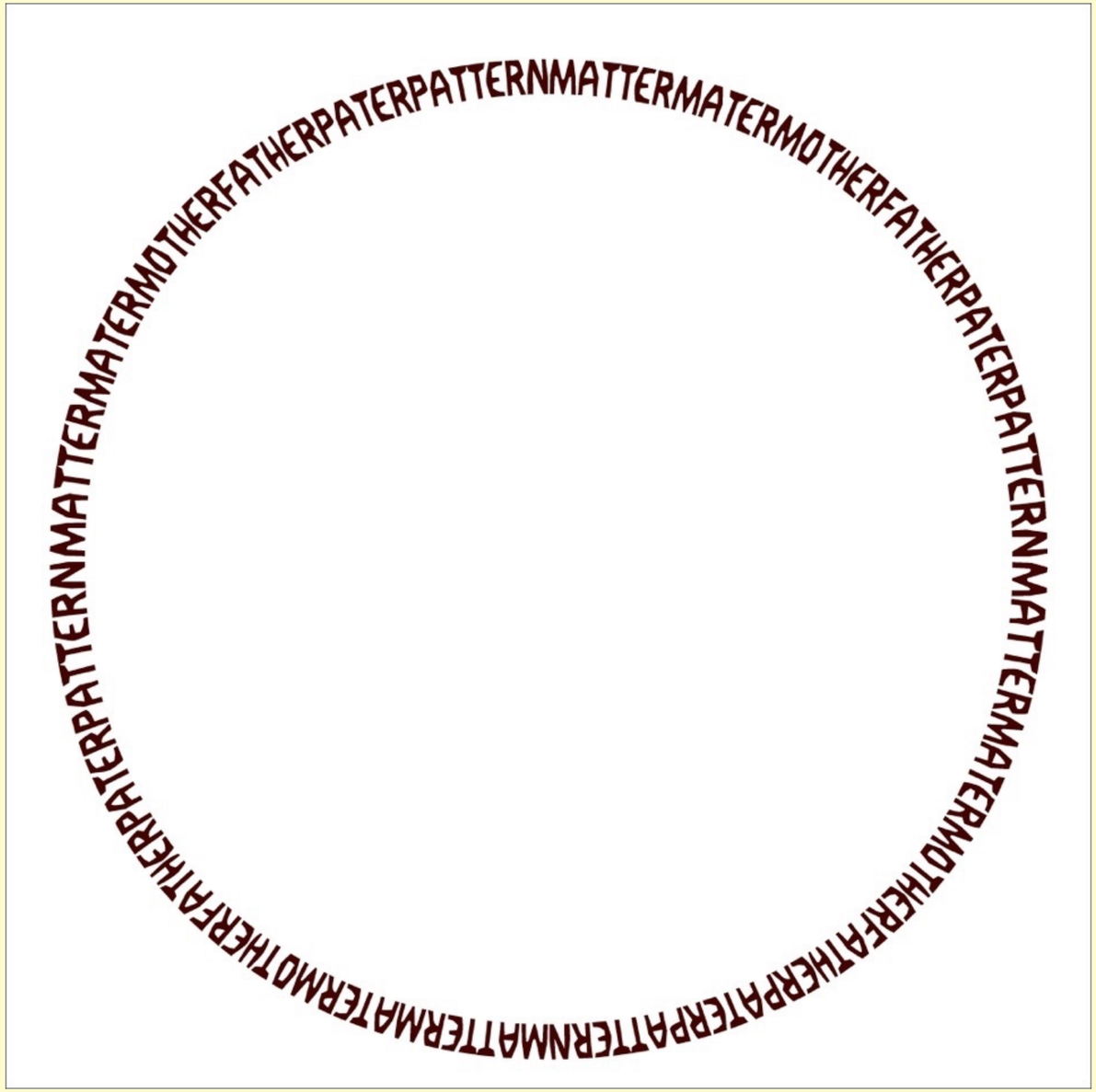
Back

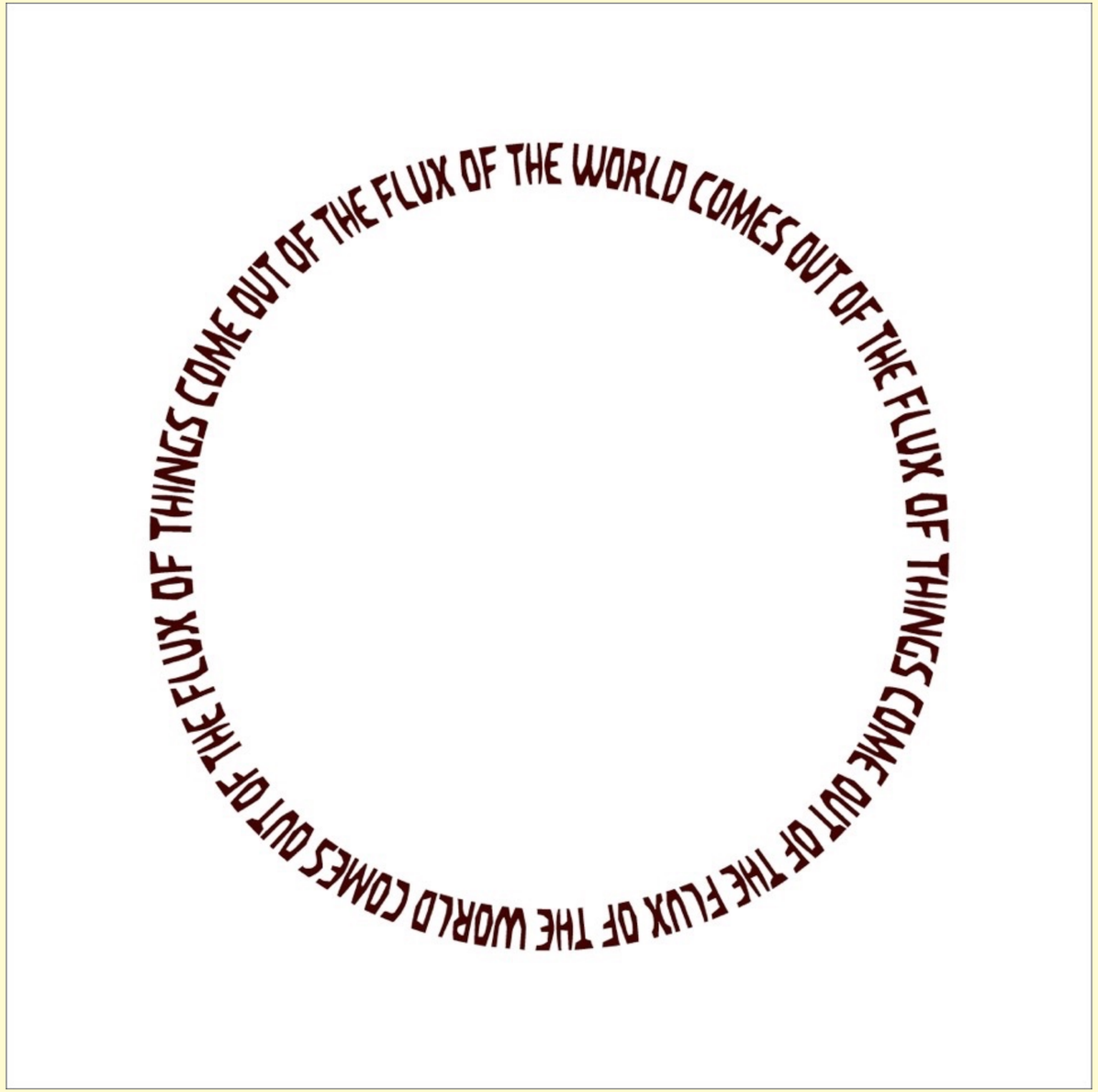
Holarchy 2019
125cm x 125cm x 21cm
laser-cut birch ply, dye, paint

Holarchy is inspired by Arthur Koestler's notion of the same name which refers to a decentralized system of parts and wholes. In contrast to a rigid top-down hierarchy its parts can be seen to contain aspects of whole as much as the whole contains the parts.

Back

Back


MATERMOTHERFATHERPATERPATTERNMATTERMATERMOTHERFATHERPATERPATTERNMATTERMATERMOTHERFATHERPATERPATTERNMATTERM

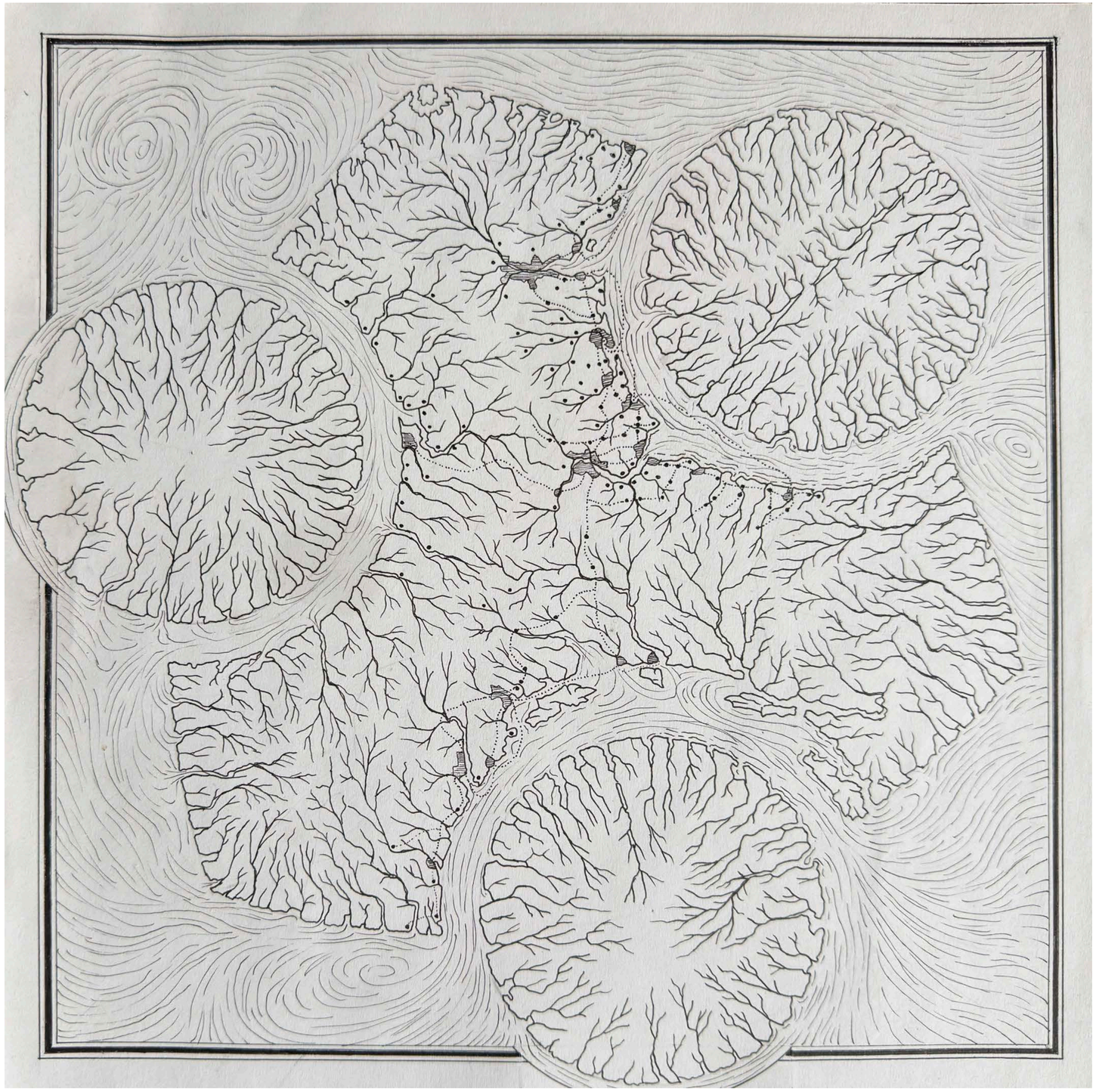


Out of the World 2019, 150cm x 150cm wall text, self adhesive vinyl

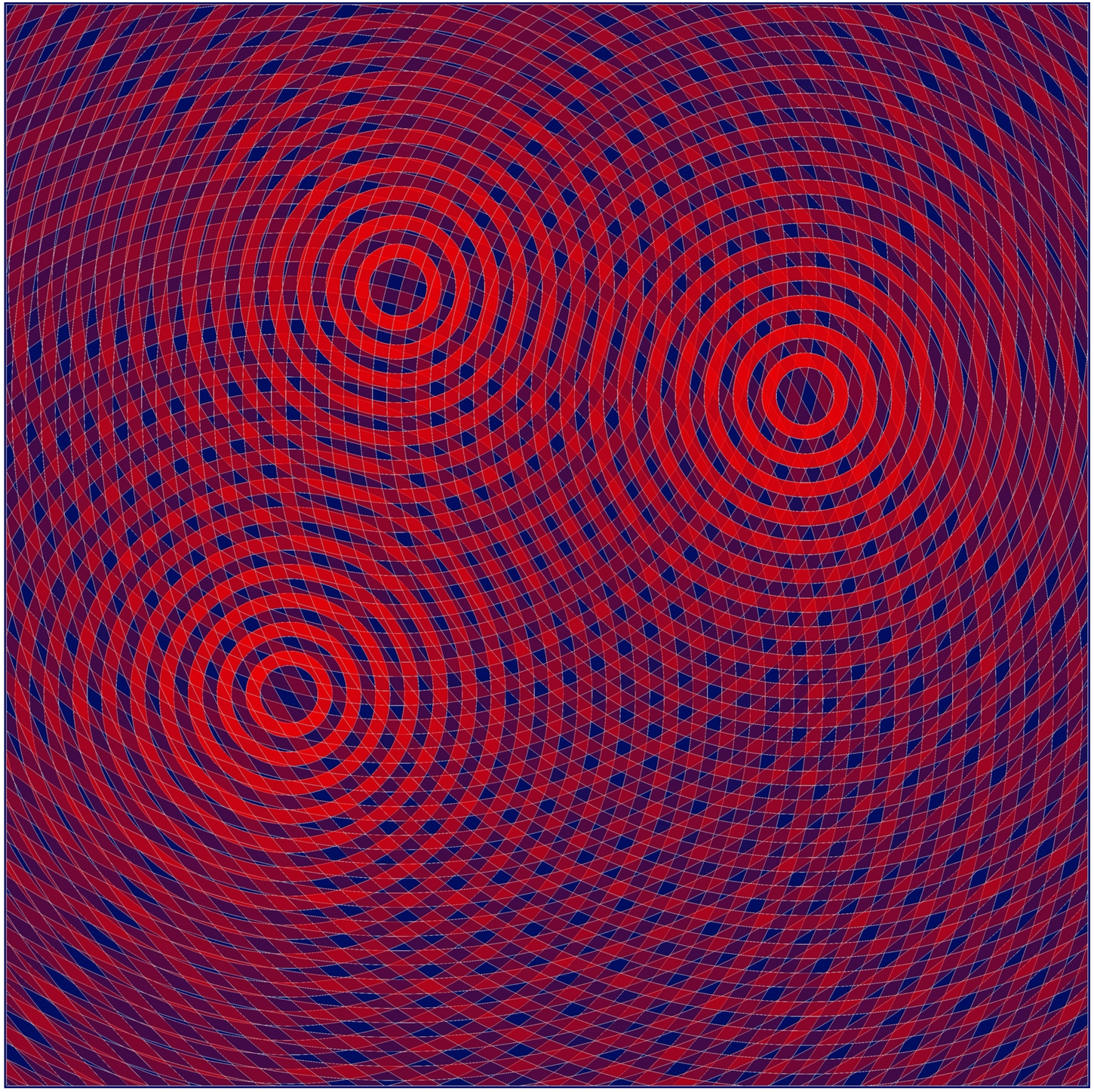
Back

Sweet Bird of Truth, 2024, plywood, 70 x 75 x 7 cms

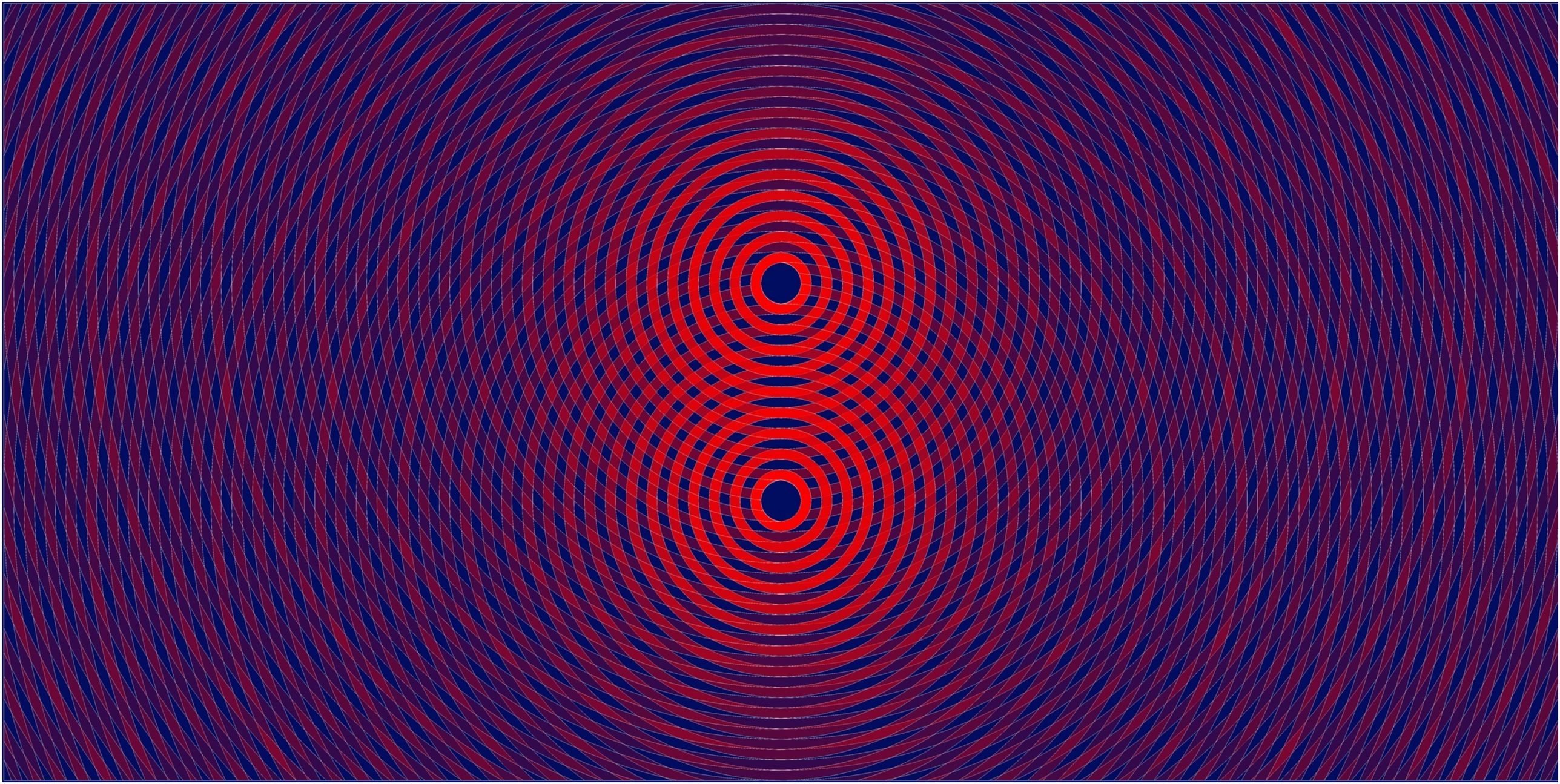
Back



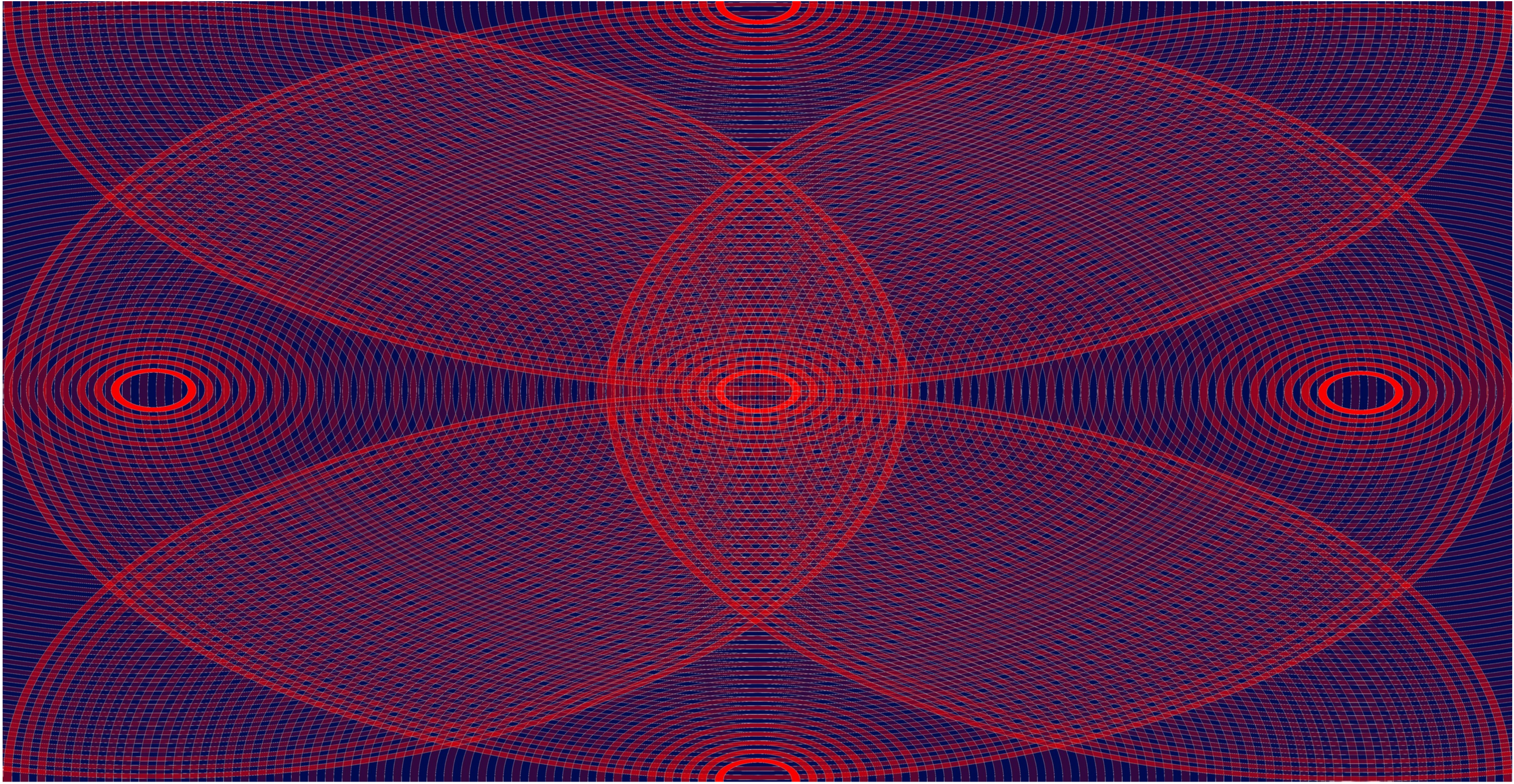
Mundus Medimaranea
2026
Ink on paper
30 x 30cm



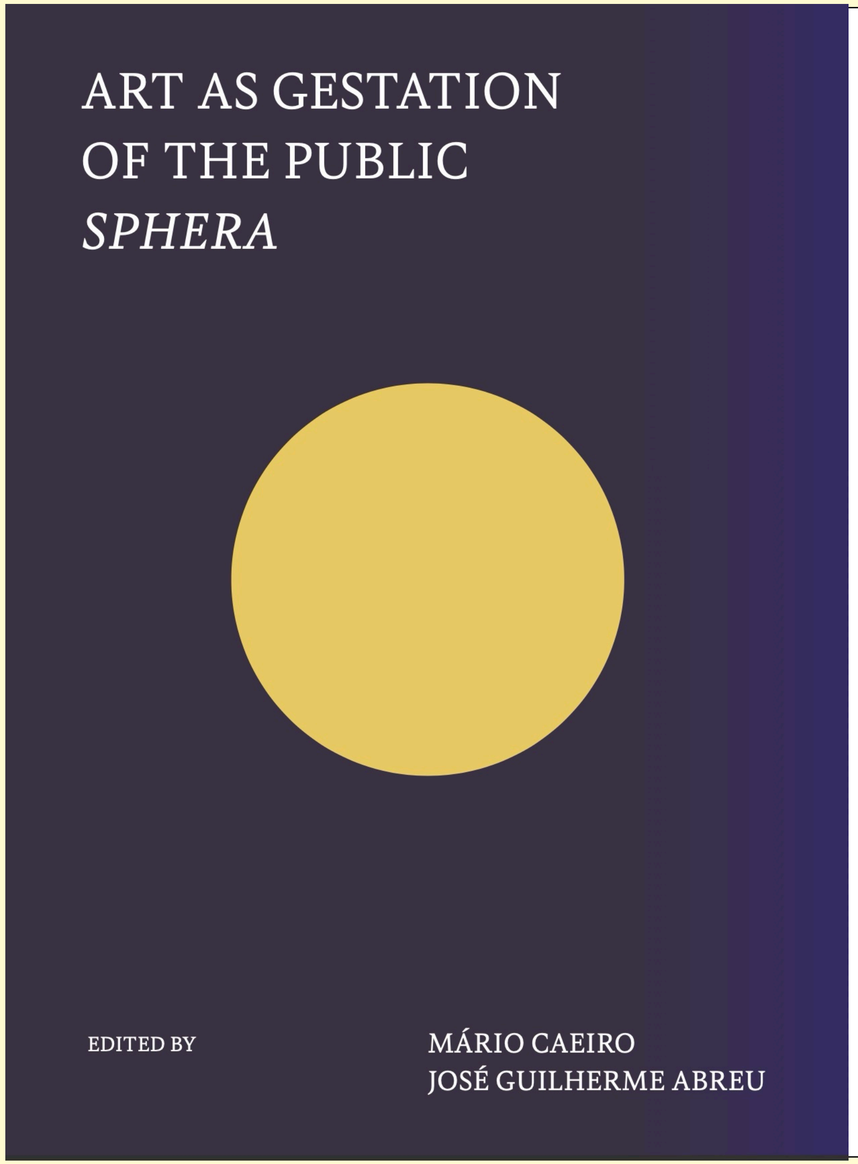
Three Body Problem
2026
Inkjet on paper
66 x 66cm
Edition of 6

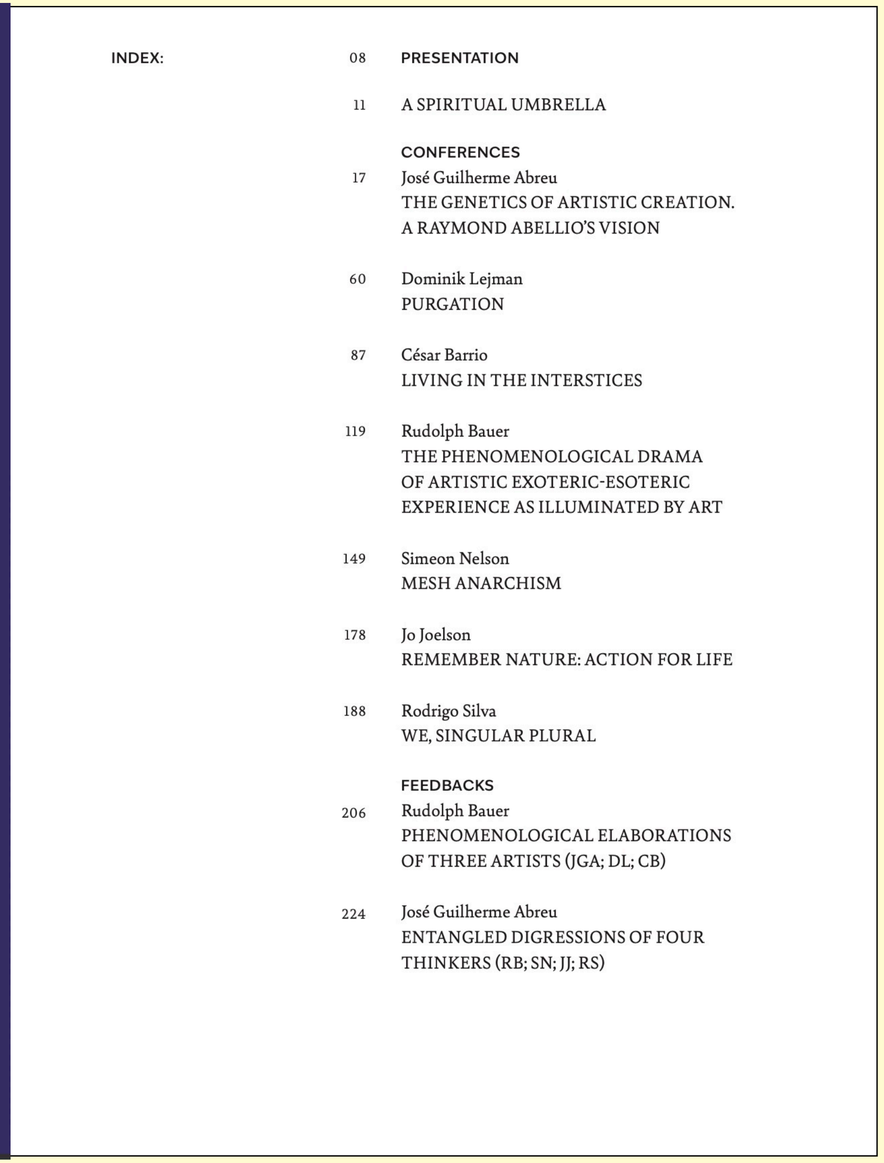


Double Slit 2, 2026, inkjet on paper, 660mm x 1220mm, edition of 6



Untitled, 2026, inkjet on paper, 660mm x 1220mm, edition of 6





INDEX:

08 PRESENTATION

11 A SPIRITUAL UMBRELLA

CONFERENCES

17 José Guilherme Abreu
THE GENETICS OF ARTISTIC CREATION.
A RAYMOND ABELLIO'S VISION

60 Dominik Lejman
PURGATION

87 César Barrio
LIVING IN THE INTERSTICES

119 Rudolph Bauer
THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL DRAMA
OF ARTISTIC EXOTERIC-ESOTERIC
EXPERIENCE AS ILLUMINATED BY ART

149 Simeon Nelson
MESH ANARCHISM

178 Jo Joelson
REMEMBER NATURE: ACTION FOR LIFE

188 Rodrigo Silva
WE, SINGULAR PLURAL

FEEDBACKS

206 Rudolph Bauer
PHENOMENOLOGICAL ELABORATIONS
OF THREE ARTISTS (JGA; DL; CB)

224 José Guilherme Abreu
ENTANGLED DIGRESSIONS OF FOUR
THINKERS (RB; SN; JJ; RS)

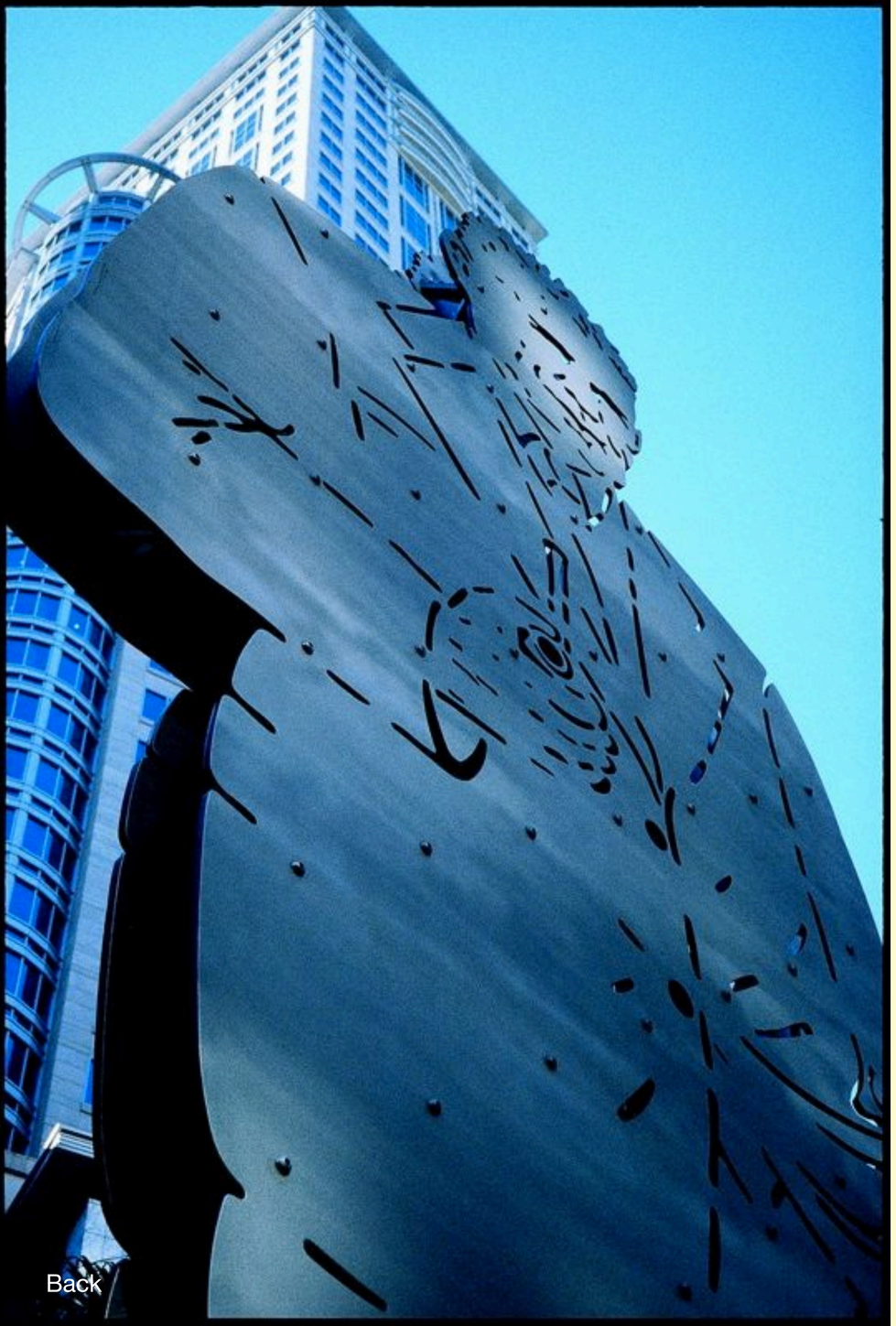
Mesh Anarchism, essay in Art as Gestation of the Public Sphere, 2024, Catholic University Porto, Portugal

Back

PUBLIC SPACE?

BEN CHIFLEY
CHIFLEY PLAZA
Makers Mark
BOTTEGA VENETA
KENZO

Back



1997, Stainless Steel, 8 meters high
Permanent commission for Chifley Square, Sydney, Australia in association with Hassell Architects

This statue melts into its urban environment. The perforations undermine the heaviness of the material, turning structural steel into a gravity defying filigree, merging matter with the air and light around it. Viewed from edge on the figure disappears in an ordered vertical tangle of zig-zag trussing. This is a deliberate play off between an internal utilitarian structure that supports an external figurative icon like the old steel billboard frames that can be seen rusting on building rooftops, and an external message bearing skin. This is reversed in the statue as the frame and external skin are structurally interdependent.

This particular structure carries the likeness of Prime Minister Joseph Benedict Chifley. A pivotal figure responsible for post-war reconstruction initiating many policies and projects that helped define modern Australia including immigration and multiculturalism, the founding of the CSIRO and The Snowy Mountains Scheme.

The pose, typical of Chifley's relaxed style, rumpled suit, hand in pocket, the other grasping the bowl of his ever-present pipe belies the monumentality of the statue and severity of its internal structure and stainless steel surface. Pedestrians walking up the Phillip St hill or coming from Martin Place will see this statue as a giant billboard, a perforated architectural slab that mediates between the scale of the architecture and the human body.

Back

Back

2008, galvanized steel, 38 x 10 x 10 meters
Eastlink Motorway, Melbourne

A fallen tree/tower lies by the roadway, a crashed relic of machine-age desire putting down new roots into the earth and unfurling tendrils from it's architectonic radii and sections. To motorists speeding past it is an indeterminate blur, a silhouetted filigree that might be a decaying windmill or other piece of obsolete agricultural machinery - a relic of the struggle of humans to co-exist with nature.

The cause of this optical confusion is a vegetal motif, a floral border from a 19th century pattern book that has been adapted to form the base unit of the modular system of this sculpture which is composed of three repeated modular units generated from the 'original' pattern. Desiring Machine's recursive plant-like structure unfolds from a single stem five units long that branches into four stems, three units long which in turn branches into nine stems, two units long and finally branches into sixteen stems, each one unit long

It is too mechanical and perfectly symmetrical to be a tree and it is too ornate to be an industrial artefact. In Desiring Machine a collision of abstraction and ornamentation is played out. It appears vaguely utilitarian, logical; it could have been left behind by the road builders or be a collapsed electricity pylon. If so, its structural logic is obscured by intense ornament as if it had been infected by net curtain, lace doily or other item of domestic frippery. These stereotypical oppositions are a playful critique of various forms of techno-industrialism that have objectified nature as passive and mechanical, a 'thing'to be controlled and made useful.

Back

Back

Desiring Machine, 2008, Eastlink Motorway, Melbourne, Australia

Desiring Machine, 2008, Eastlink Motorway, Melbourne, Australia

Back

Back

Back

Back

Proposal for the new science building,
University of Hertfordshire
2020

?\

3mm Cor-ten steel plate
500cm x 130 cm x 150 cm

Hortus Desiderata, 2010,
Anodised Aluminium, water,
600 x 205 x 100 cms,
The Mahogany Room,
Crown Casino, Melbourne, Australia

In association with Urban Art Projects

Rt

Back

EPIPHYTE

epiphyte: a plant that grows on another plant, such as the ferns, bromeliads, and orchids growing on tropical rainforest trees.

Back

Efflorescence
M on Mary Building, Brisbane, 2007, steel, painted finish
1200 cm x 500 cm x 400 cms
In association with Urban Art Projects

Efflorescence replaces three architect-designed fins on the facade with vegetal sculptural forms. They make an emphatic axial statement. Aligned to the verticality of the building they draw the eye upward away from the clutter of the city street.

These three fins are neither fully sculptural nor entirely graphical, they occupy an in between dimension that I call 2.5D. They refer to my interest in the rich eclecticism of nineteenth century architectural ornament, which freely pillaged historical and ethnographic styles. They appear to emanate or float out of the architectonic structure of the building.

Back

Back

DIASPORA COALESCENCE, Spitalfields, Markets, London, 2008-10

CACTAL

Cactalgorithm

Back

Cactal, 2007

University of Teeside,

Middlesbrough, UK

powder coated and galvanised steel
1190cm(h) x 614cm(w) x 217cm(d)

Cactal (conflation of cactus and fractal) started life as a digital organism. The final built form, growing out of the street facade of the Institute of Digital Innovation emerged from a collaboration with Andrew Keeble a fellow of the institute who coded an algorithm that grew like ivy across the computer screen.

The sculpture is a 3D Truchet tiling growing across the building surface like ivy. What one encounters high up on the facade on the Institute is a process of self-generation that has been frozen at a particular moment.

Back

BACK

Back

Cactal, University of Teeside, Middesbrough, UK

Back

Back

Back

OCEANIC ENDLESS, 2008, Cardinia Aquatic Centre, Victoria, Australia, with David Chesworth and Sonia Leber

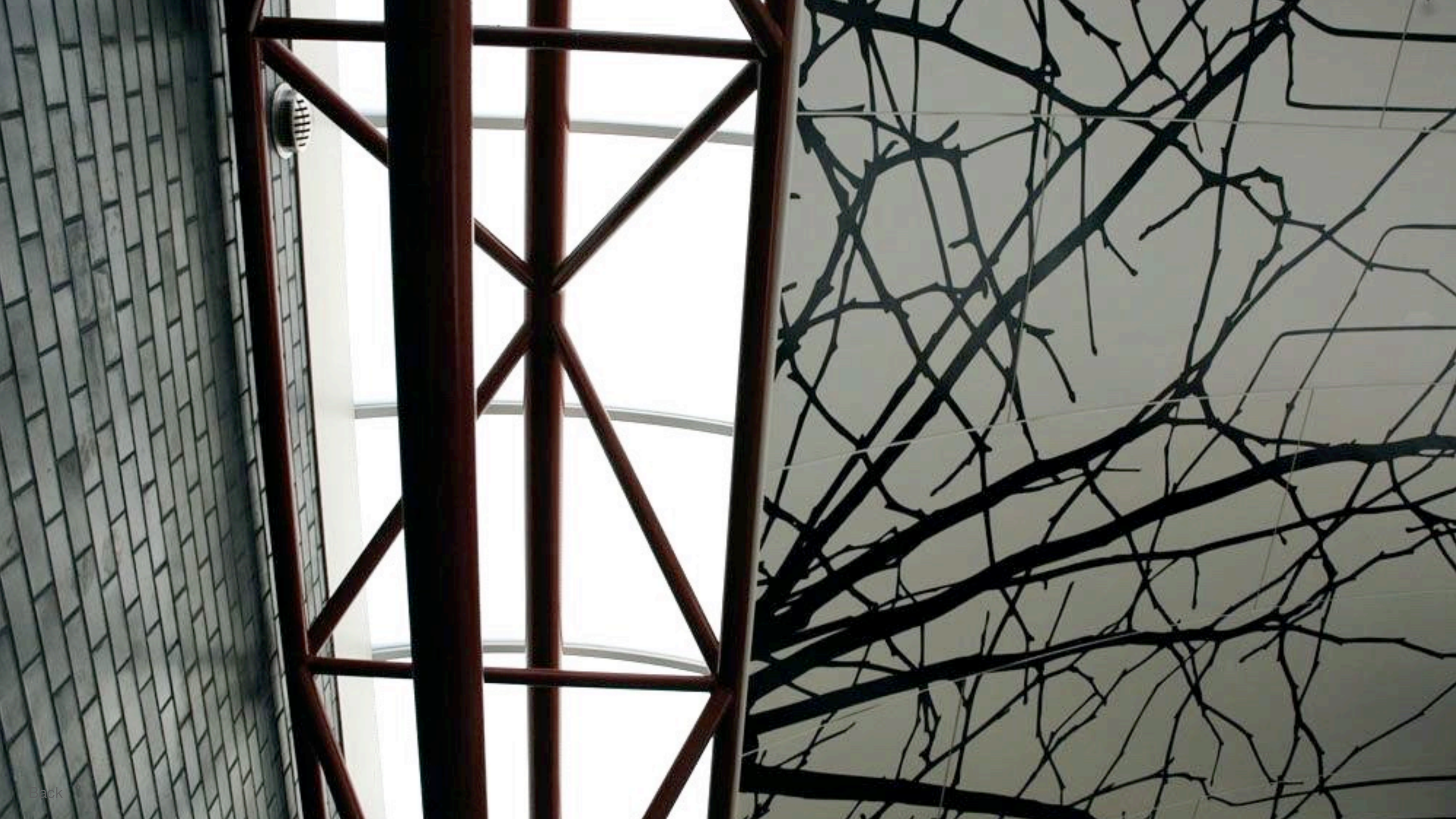
Oceanic Endless is a soundscape and applied paintwork which transforms the architectural wave of the Cardinia Life aquatic centre. The wave-like entrance now constantly reminds us of water renewal in the natural environment and the human consumption of natural resources.

You hear the sudden power of blowholes, the delicate tracings of rivulets, the arrival of rain and the directional rush of a waterfall. On the underside of the ceiling, branches of a tree extend into water channels, each ending with an enlarged droplet suspended from the curved ceiling.

Visitors are invited to move around the space and experience the unique audio effects produced by the sound travelling across the curved ceiling.

Back

Back



Back

Back

SCULPTURE SYSTEMS

Back

Cryptosphere

2008-2010
laser cut plywood, steel sheet
dimensions variable depending on site
Royal Geographical Society, London 2008 and Plataforma Revolver, Lisbon, 2010

Supported by the Leverhulme Trust

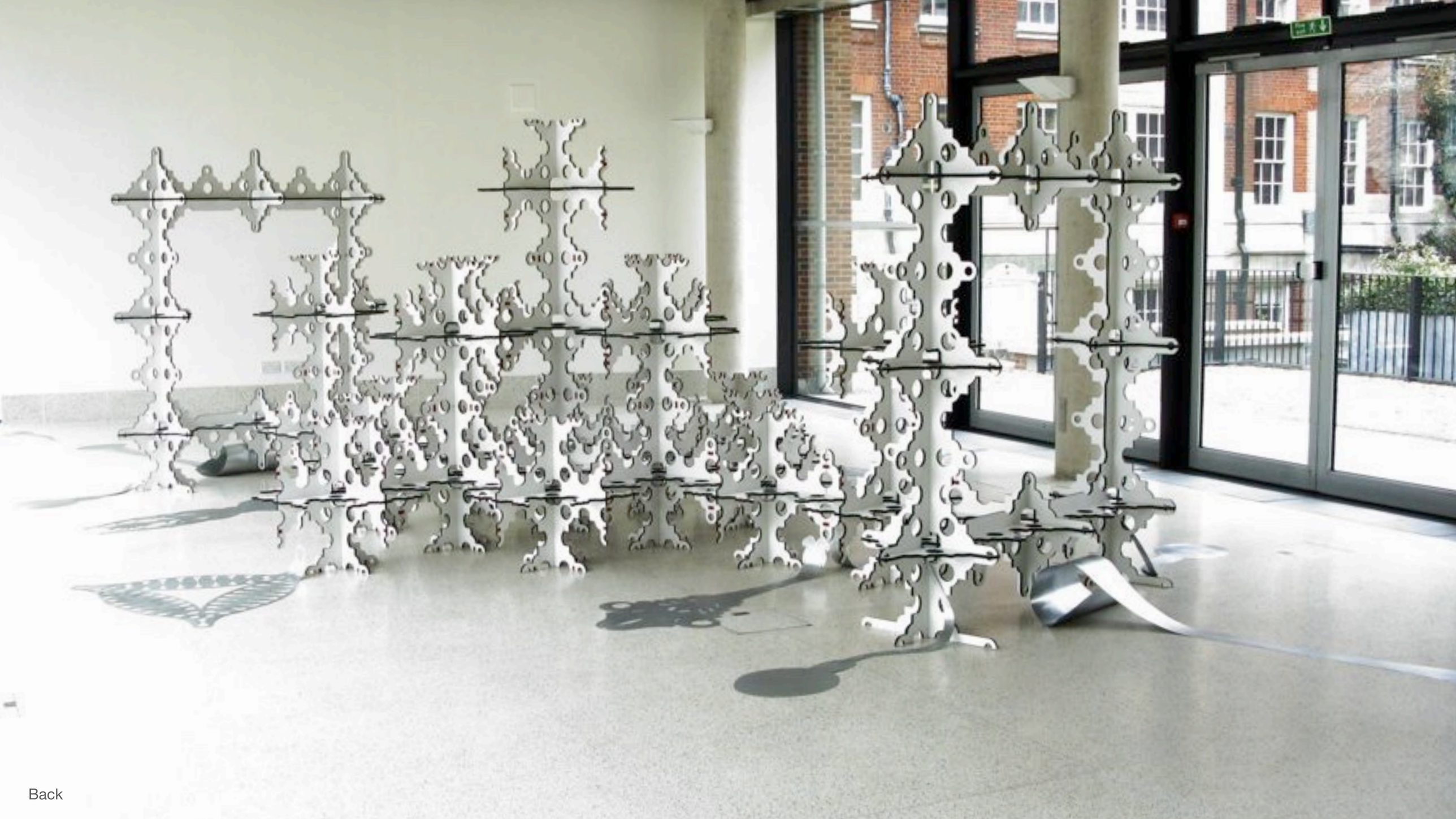
Cryptosphere was the first artist residency to be held by the Royal Geographical Society. I investigated thousands of the Society's extensive map collection dating back to the fifteenth century. I focused on maps that consider mythical places as physical locations within the evolution of Western cartography.

It was interdisciplinary in scope with consultation and contribution from scholars and thinkers on this hybrid topic. It culminated in an exhibition at the RGS in 2008 which consisted of a modular sculptural system based on the complex framing systems of early modern European cartography.

An extensively illustrated book was published by Parabola with essays by Denis Cosgrove, the Alexander von Humboldt Professor of Geography at UCLA, Denis Alexander, director of the Faraday Institute for Science and Religion, Cambridge, Dr Alessandro Scafi, The Warburg Institute and Rebecca Geldard, a London based art critic.

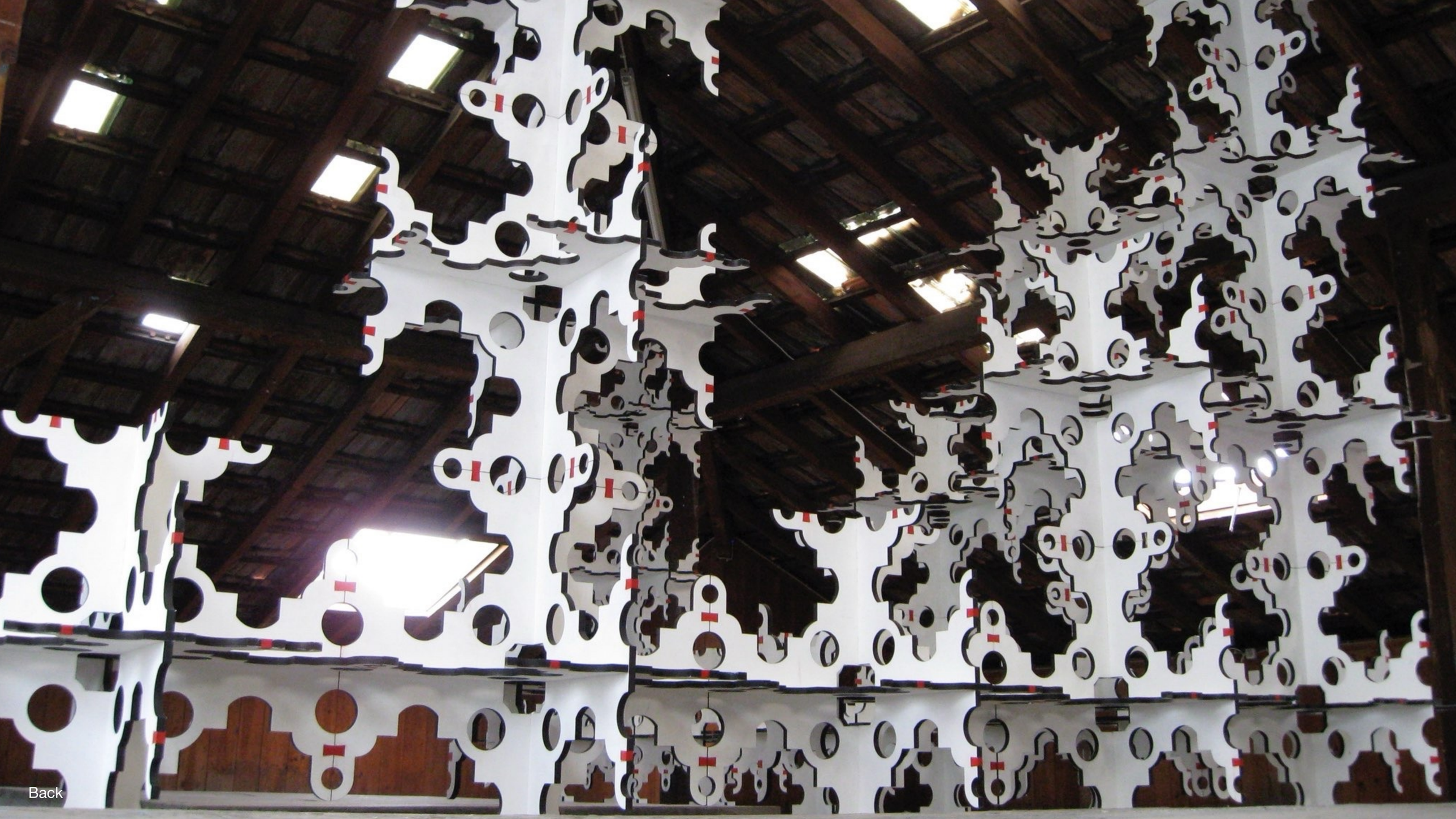
A public symposium attended by about 60 academics, artists was held on Friday 9 May 2008 with presentations from, Dr Catherine Souch, head of Research at the Royal Geographical Society, Prof Felix Driver, RHUL and Dr Alessandro Scafi of the Warburg Institute.

Back



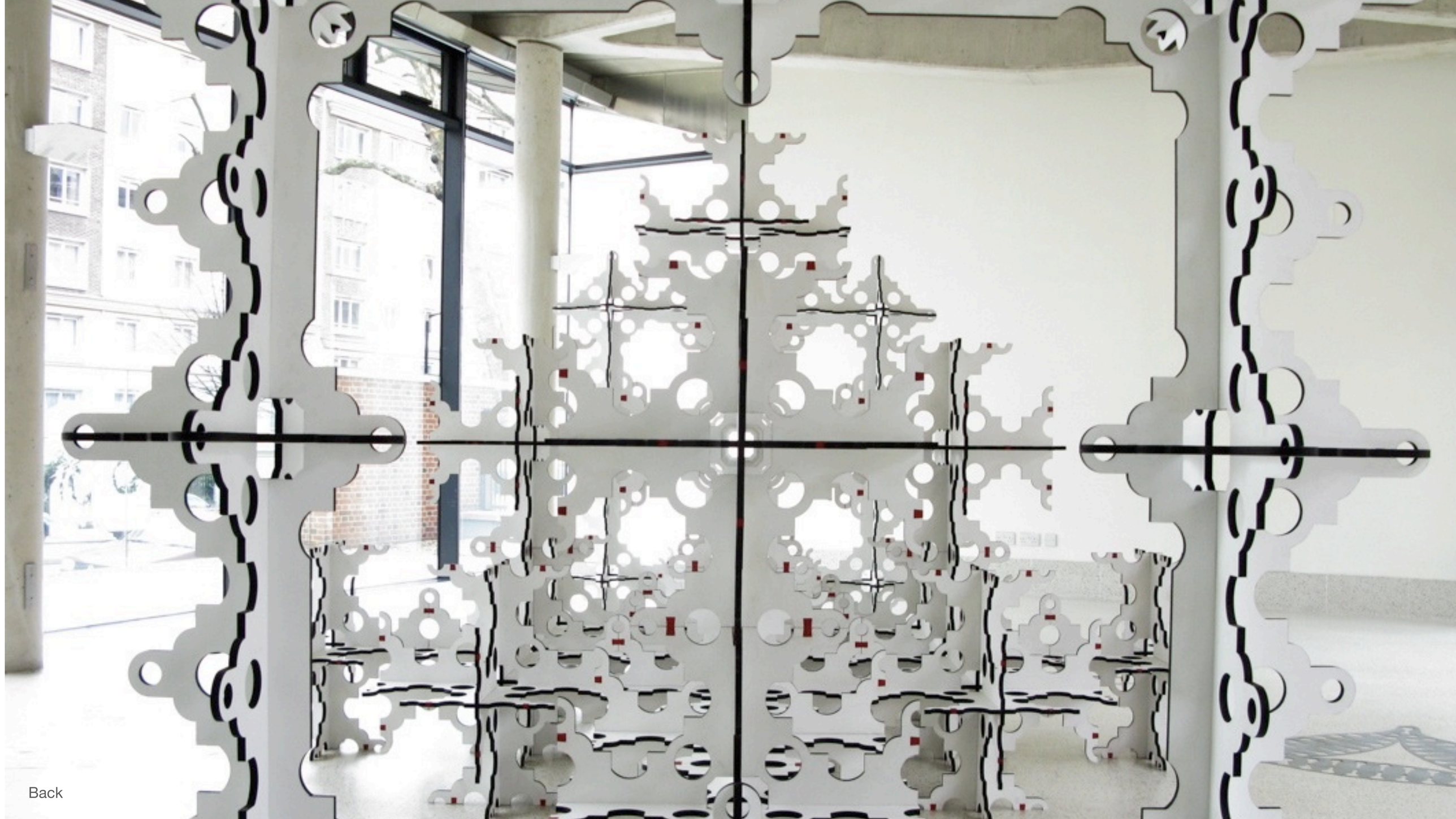
Back

Back



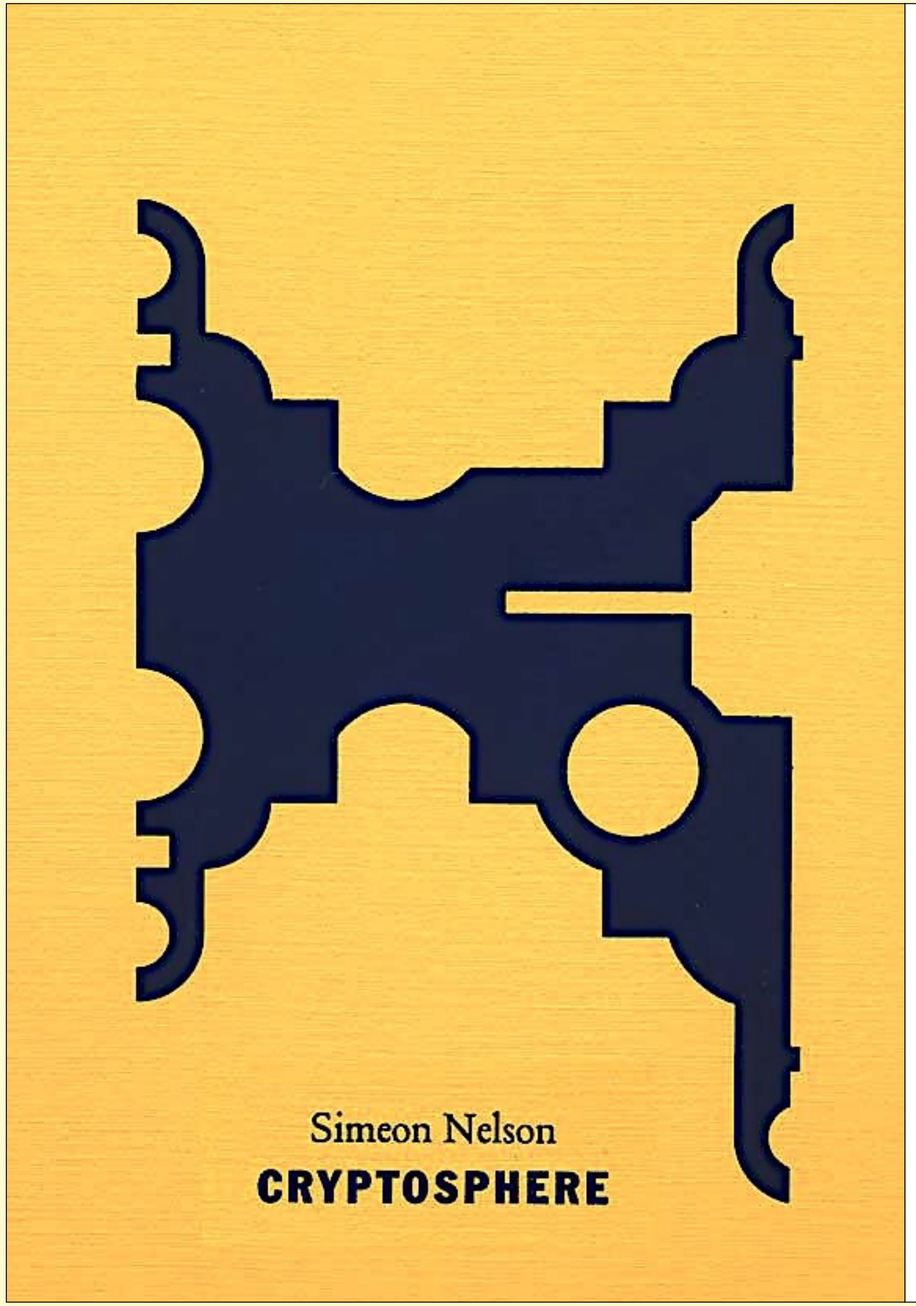
Back

Back



Back

Back



5
FOREWORD
Dr. Rita Gardner, CBE

6
THE ORDER OF THINGYNESS
Jordan Kaplan

10
ART, SCIENCE AND FLATLAND
Dr. Denis Alexander

15
SCALING, DECORATING, MAPPING
Professor Denis Cosgrove

24
REBECCA GELDARD IN CONVERSATION WITH SIMEON NELSON

41
ORNAMENTAL GRIDLOCK
Rebecca Geldard

48
GAYHURST COMMUNITY SCHOOL

53
THE INNER SOUND OF SPACE
Dr. Alessandro Scafi

63
BIOGRAPHIES

Back

Cryptosphere Catalogue, cover and table of contents, 2008, publ. by Parabola, 64 pages

Back

Back

Vicente group exhibition 2012
Travessa da Ermida, Lisbon,
curated by Mario Caeiro
modular sculptural system
33 modules white MDF

Supported by the Pollock
Krasner Foundation

*E*ach module consists of four 12mm laser cut patterns that slot together to make a cubic form. Each of the 33 modules has 24 joining points at their six extremities and can be configured in different ways depending on the space they are being installed in.

St Vicente is the patron saint of Lisbon a and this work references the reliquary, the resting place of a saint's bones..

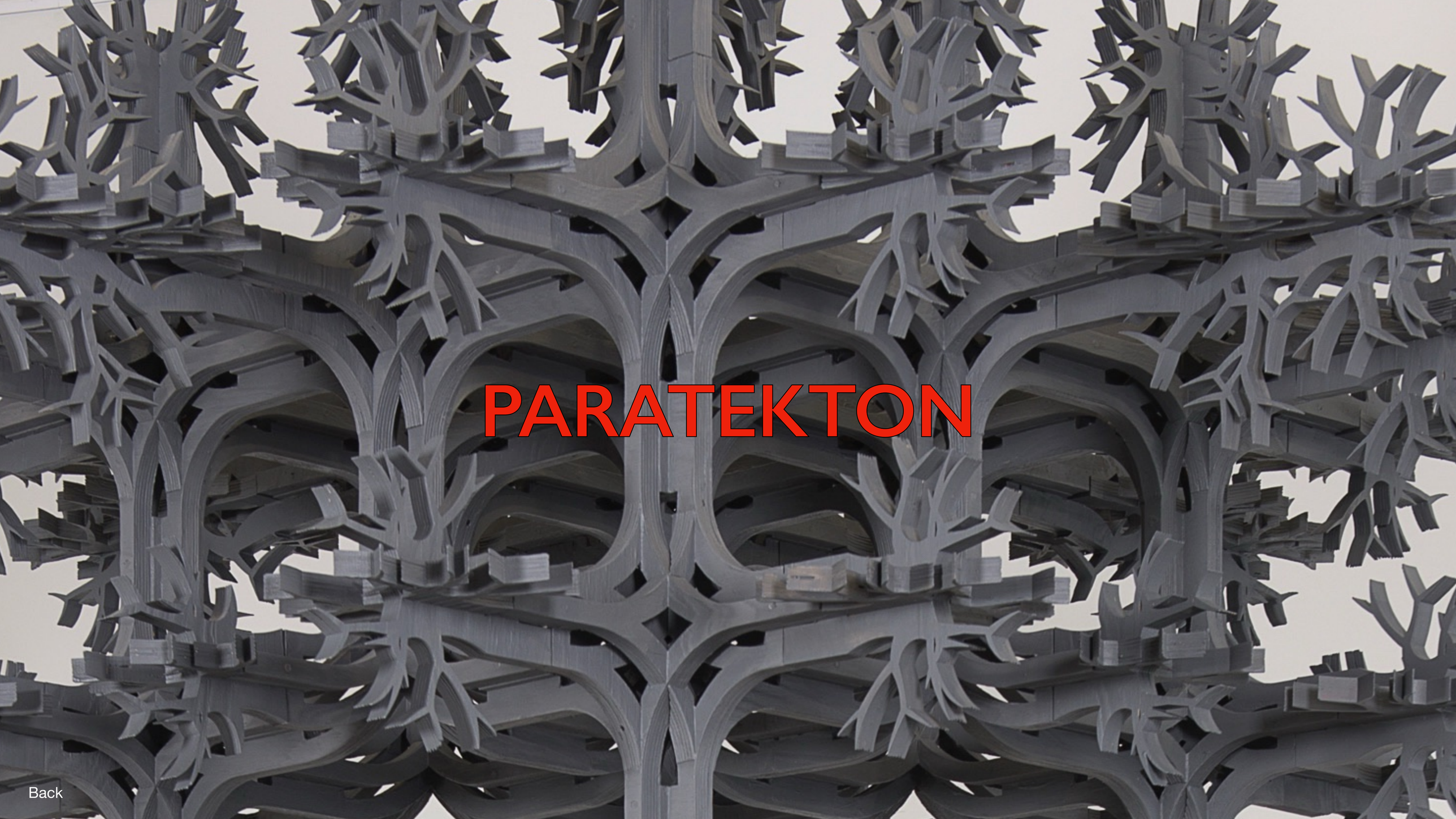
Back

The piece becomes a white filigree in a white room hovering near the floor, pile of transfigured bones emanating radioactively into the space.

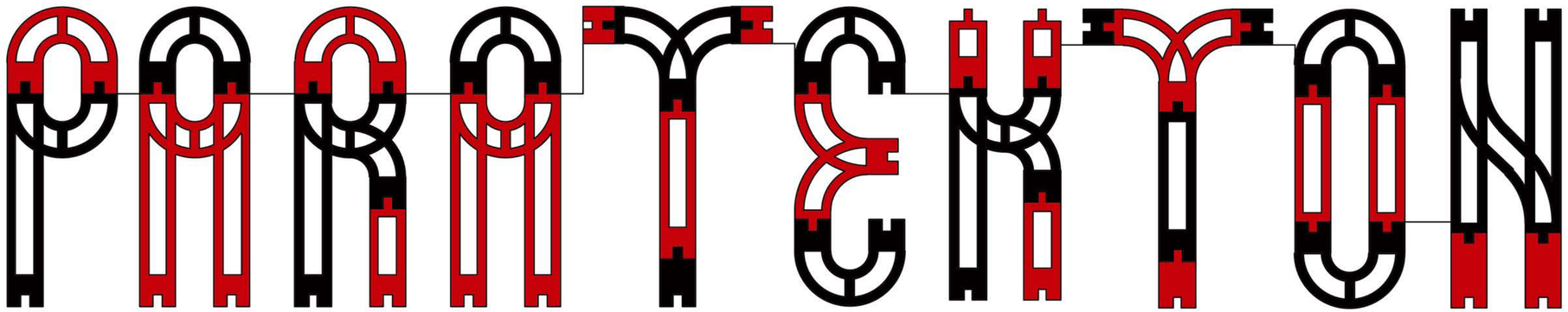
The open fretwork of the modules is transcribed from the typical *Lisboetan* blue and white tiling so the mass of matter in the middle of the room is highly patterned and dematerialised, a ghost-like emnation.

Back

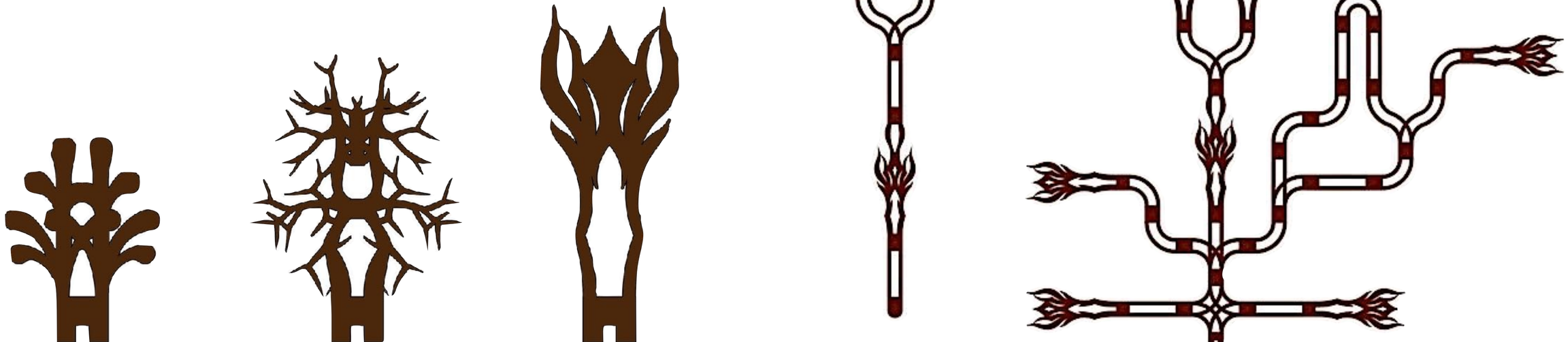
Back



Back



Paratekton font and interchangeable termini



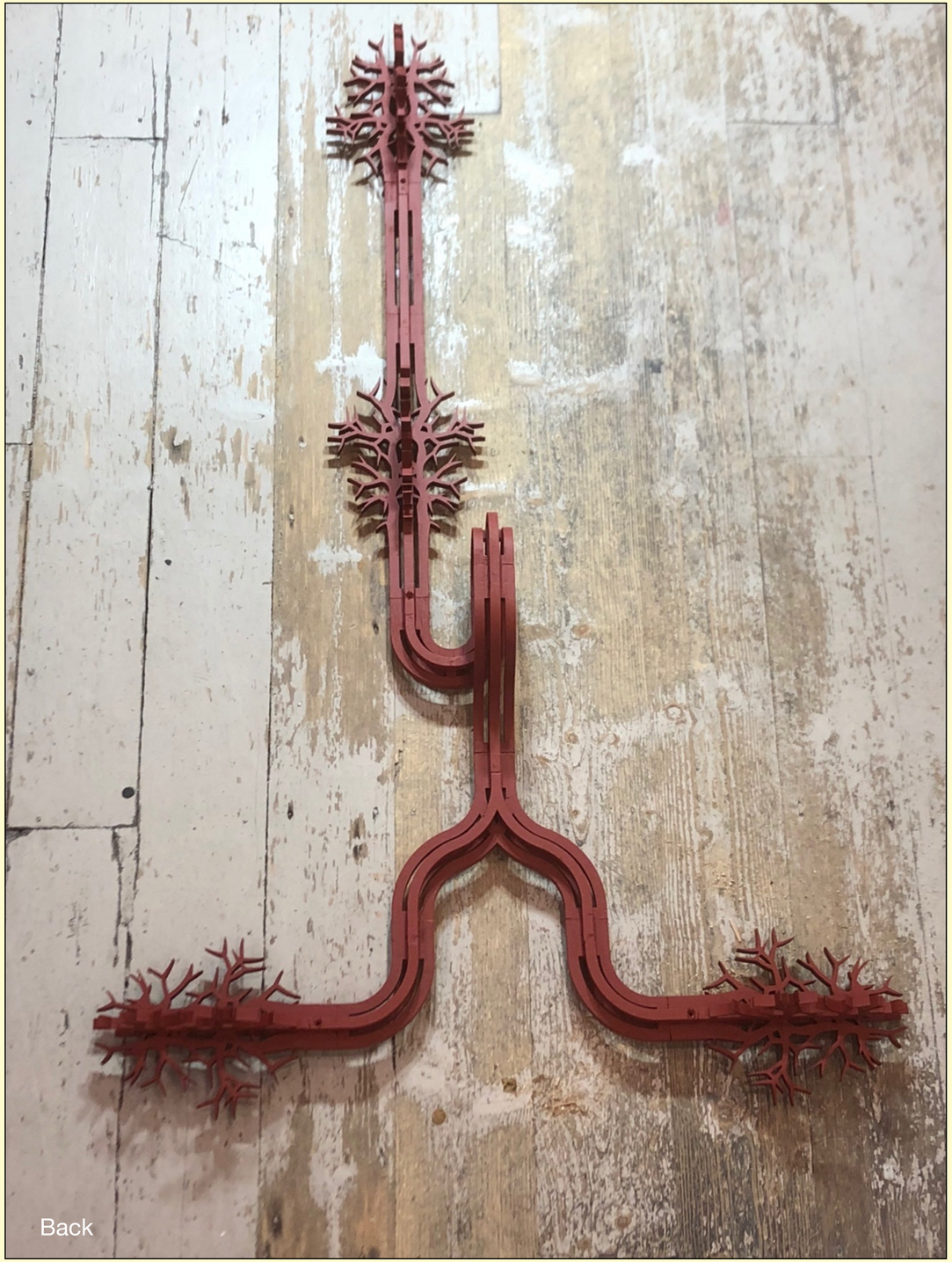
Back

Paratekton is a recombinant sculpture system I have developed for many years. The ways its components can go together is a bit like a game of dominoes, its randomness is part of its meaning as is letting go some of the authorship and sharing the possibility of creating a virtual infinitude of possibilities with the audience and indeed I have worked with collectors on a couple of occasions to generate specific arrangements.

Supported by the Pollock Krasner Foundation

Paratekton
Box Set
plywood
2012

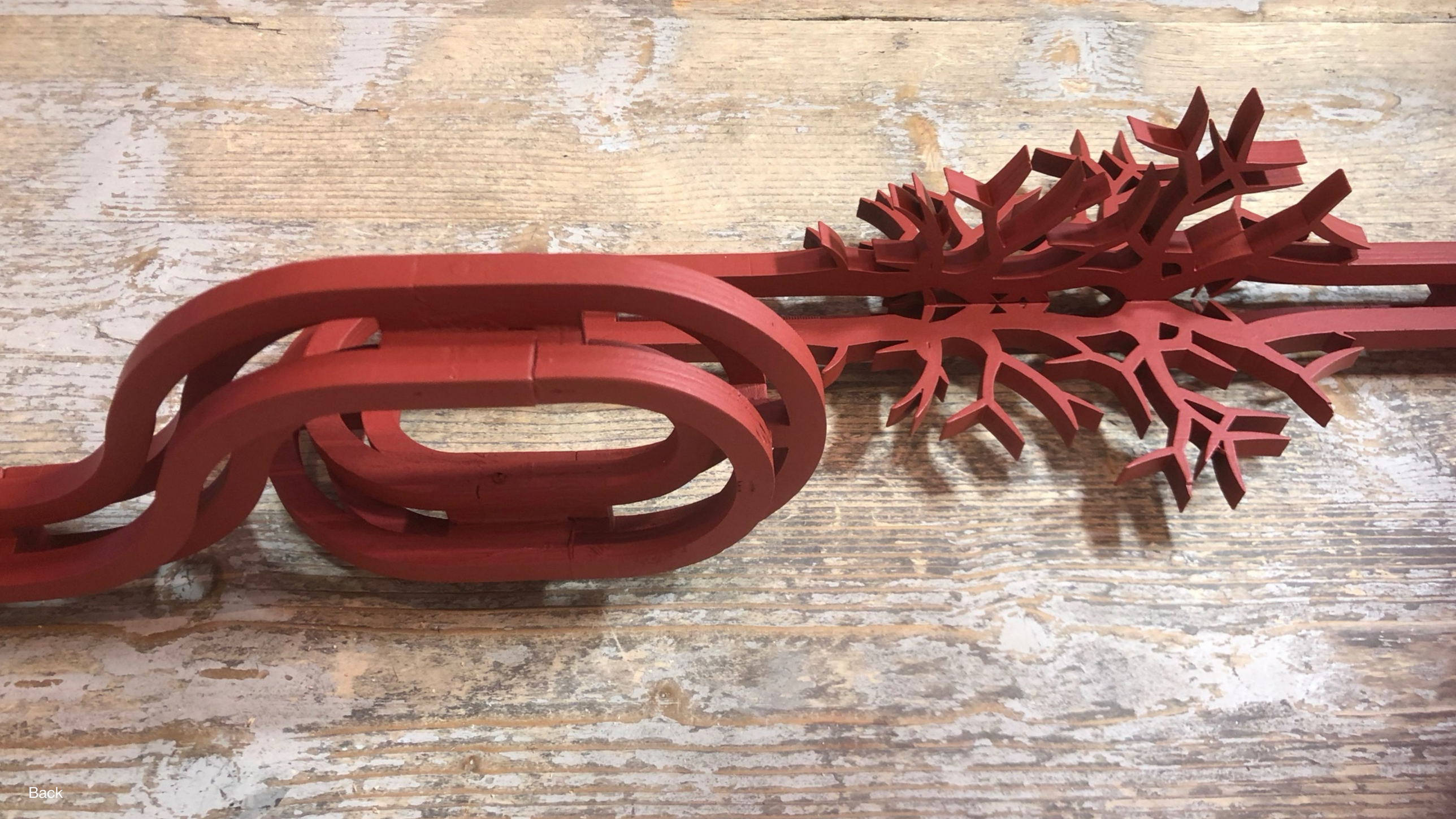
Back



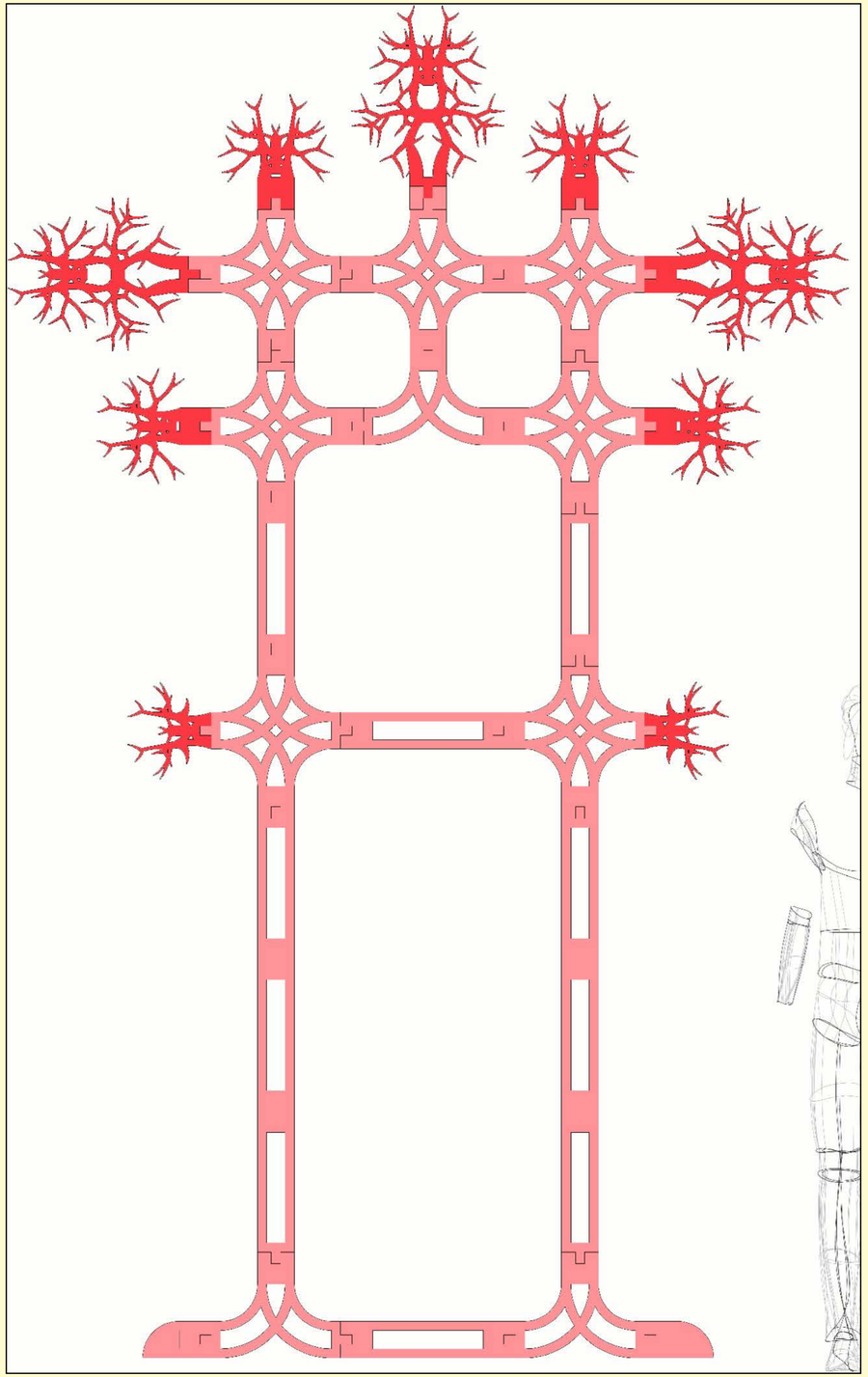
Back

Paratekton
System #7
2015
plywood

Paratekton
System #8
2015
plywood



Back



Paratekton

Tower

2015,

Birch ply,

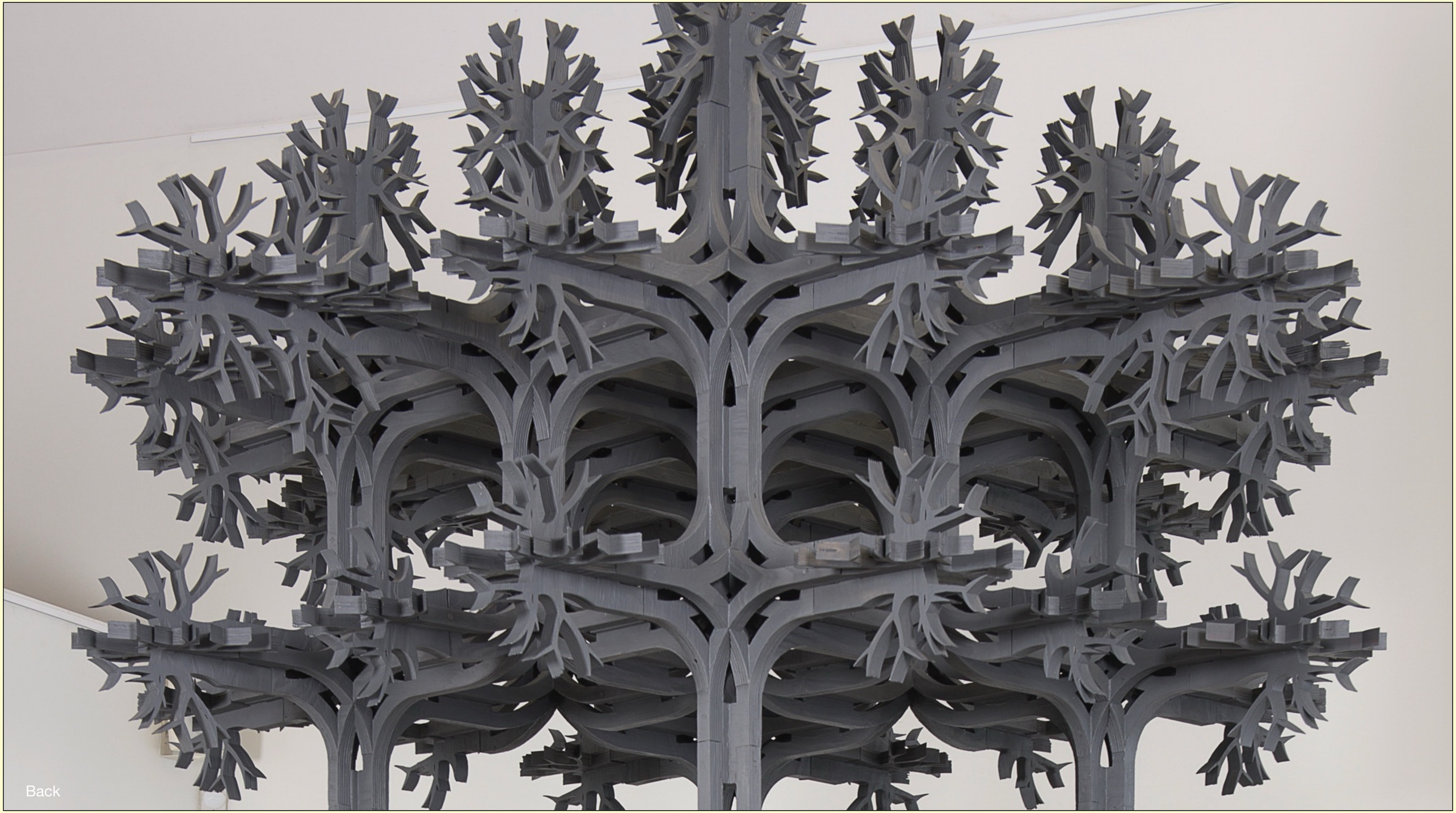
acrylic enamel,

180cm wide

180cm deep

290cm high

Back



Back

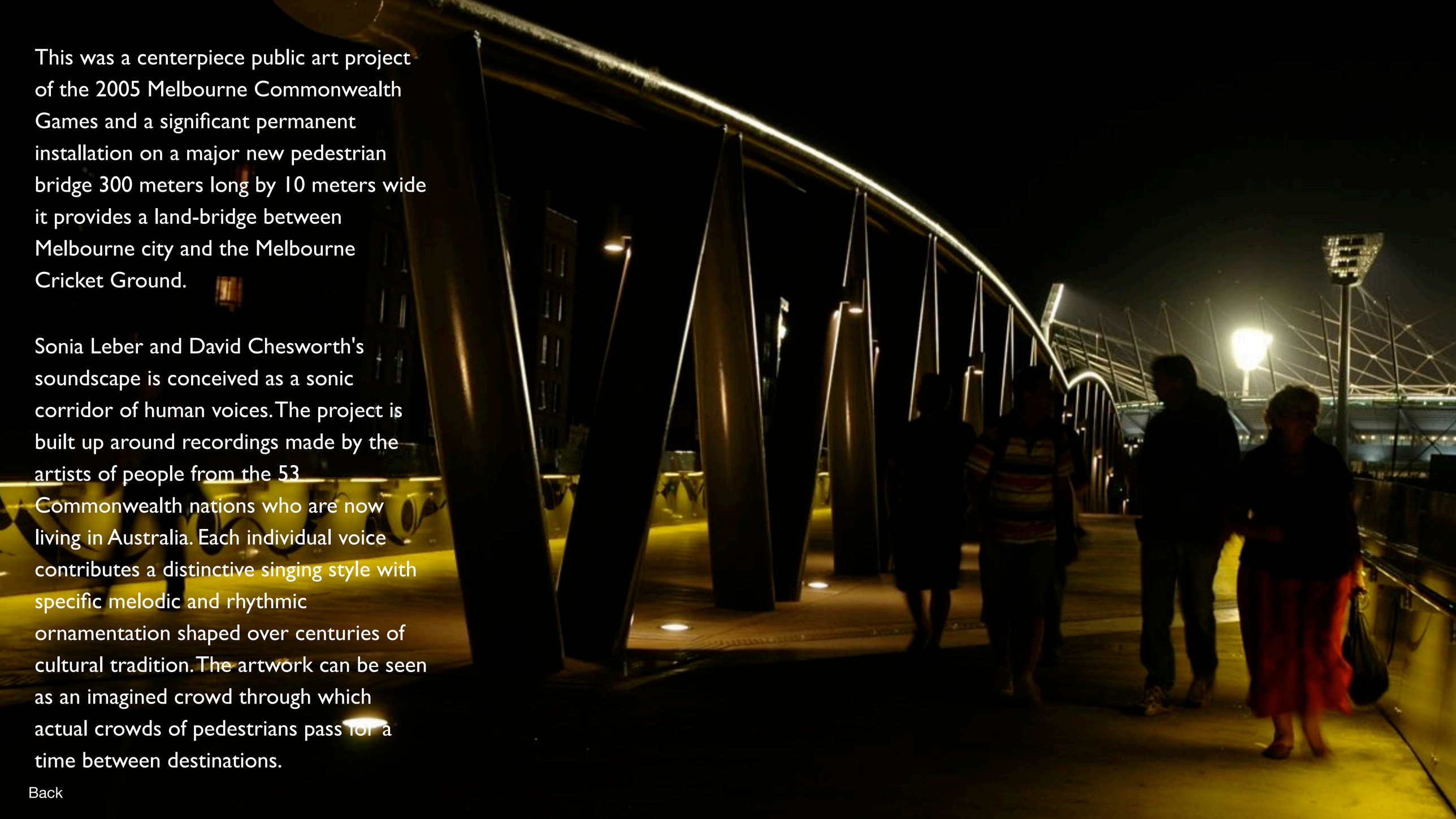
INFRASTRUCTURE

PROXIMITIES

LOCAL HISTORIES/GLOBAL ENTANGLEMENTS

Melbourne, Australia , 2006, with David Chesworth and Sonia Leber
Applied paintwork, 60 grilles, 56 loudspeakers, 4 sensors, 300 metres long, 10 meters wide

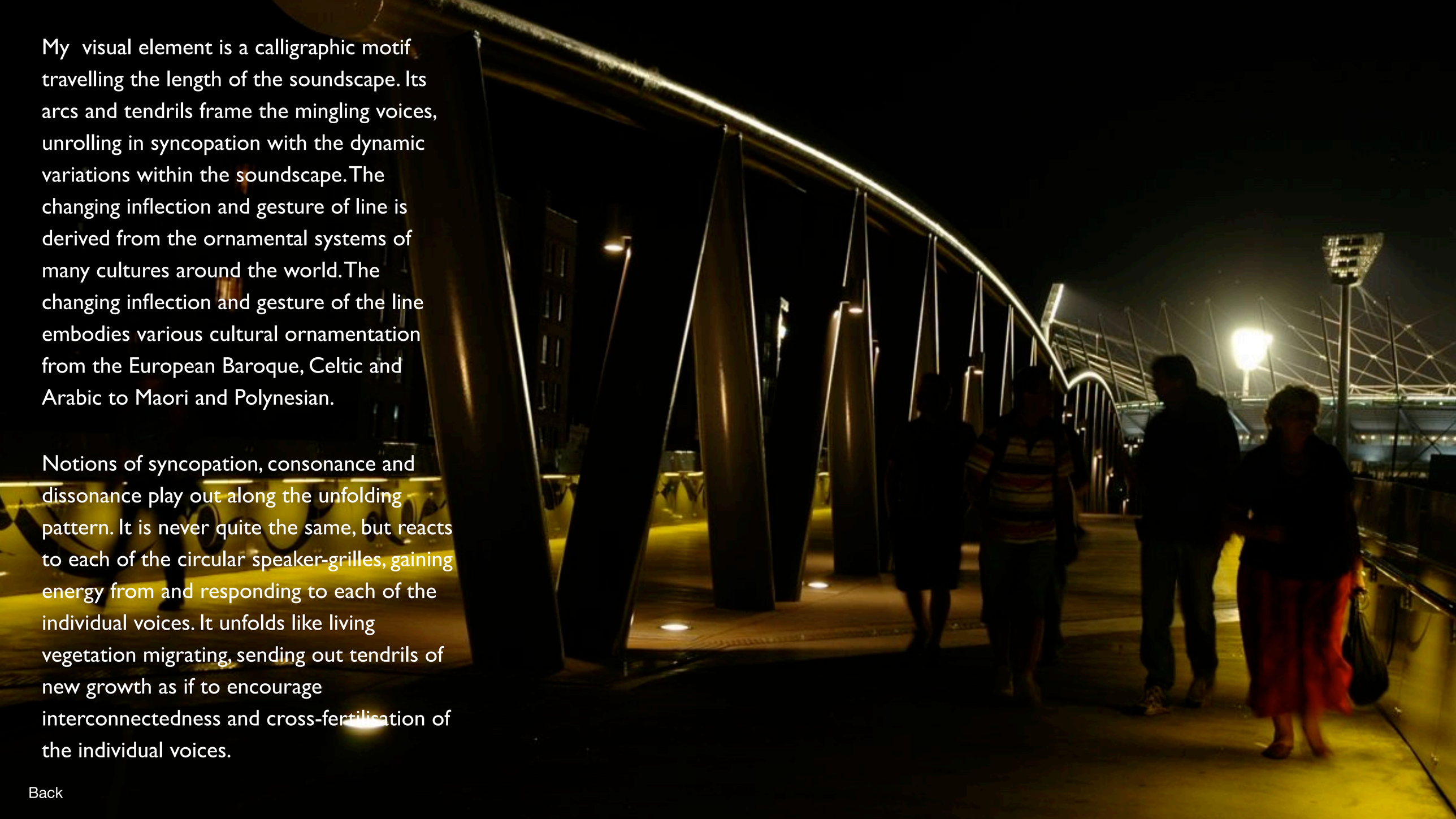
Back



This was a centerpiece public art project of the 2005 Melbourne Commonwealth Games and a significant permanent installation on a major new pedestrian bridge 300 meters long by 10 meters wide it provides a land-bridge between Melbourne city and the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

Sonia Leber and David Chesworth's soundscape is conceived as a sonic corridor of human voices. The project is built up around recordings made by the artists of people from the 53 Commonwealth nations who are now living in Australia. Each individual voice contributes a distinctive singing style with specific melodic and rhythmic ornamentation shaped over centuries of cultural tradition. The artwork can be seen as an imagined crowd through which actual crowds of pedestrians pass for a time between destinations.

Back



My visual element is a calligraphic motif travelling the length of the soundscape. Its arcs and tendrils frame the mingling voices, unrolling in syncopation with the dynamic variations within the soundscape. The changing inflection and gesture of line is derived from the ornamental systems of many cultures around the world. The changing inflection and gesture of the line embodies various cultural ornamentation from the European Baroque, Celtic and Arabic to Maori and Polynesian.

Notions of syncopation, consonance and dissonance play out along the unfolding pattern. It is never quite the same, but reacts to each of the circular speaker-grilles, gaining energy from and responding to each of the individual voices. It unfolds like living vegetation migrating, sending out tendrils of new growth as if to encourage interconnectedness and cross-fertilisation of the individual voices.

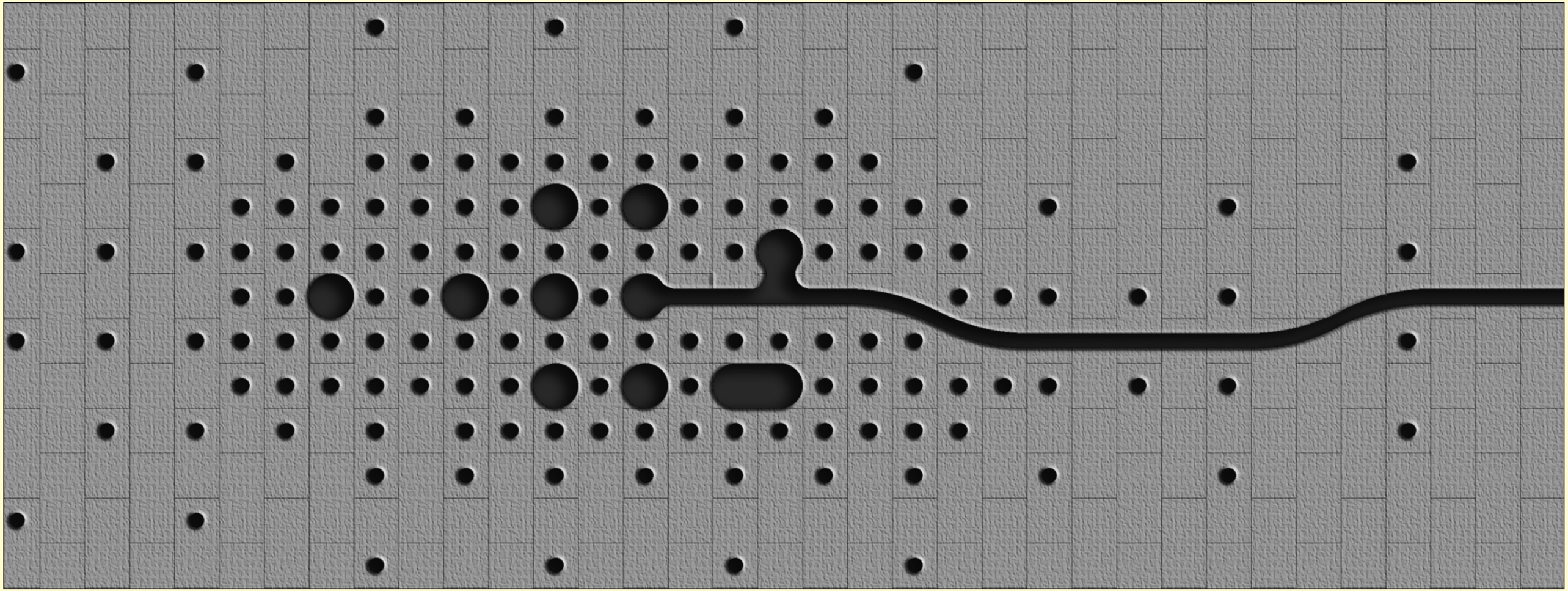
Back

Back

Back

Back

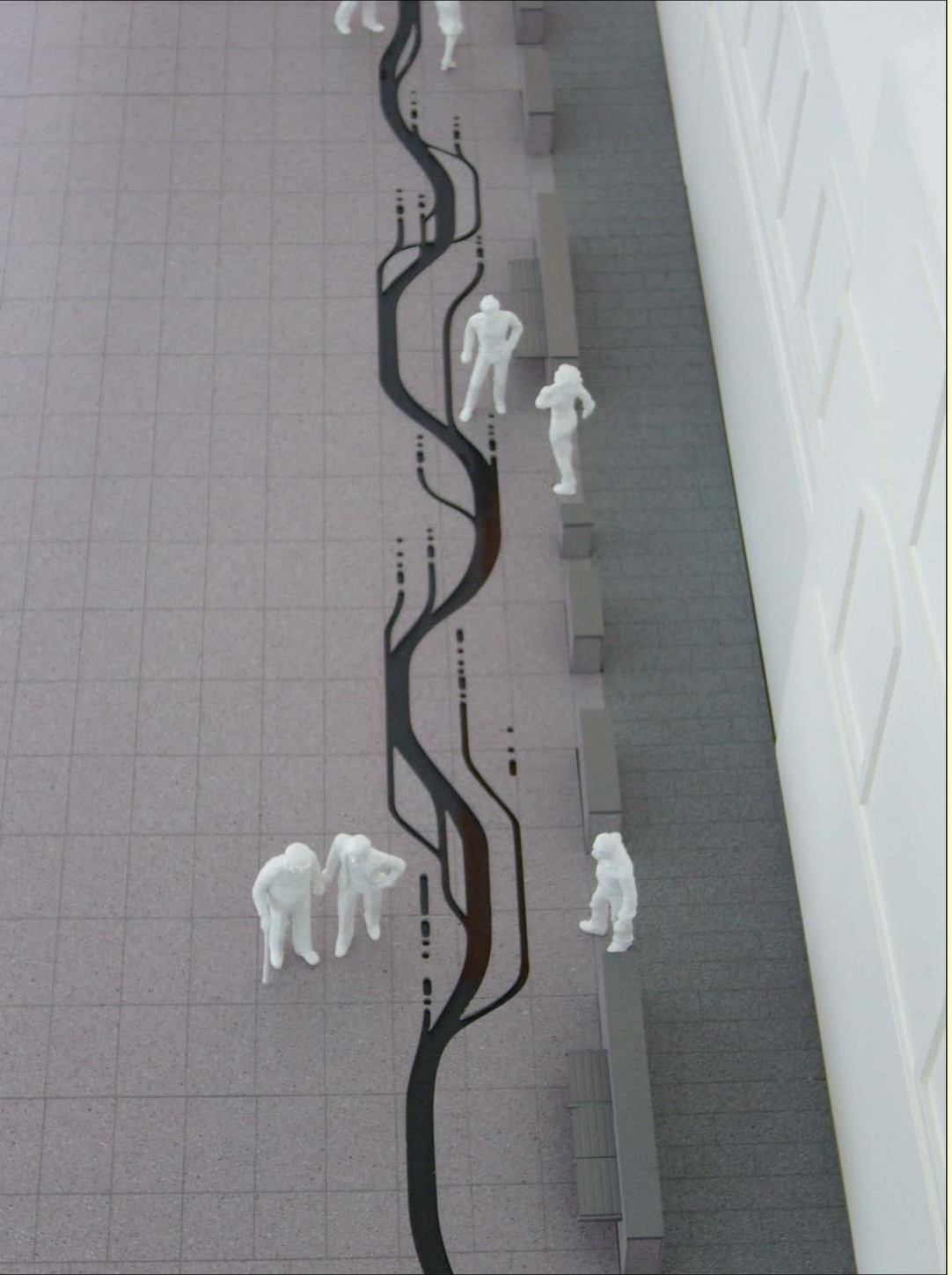
Back



Flume, Bank Street paving pattern, Ashford, Kent, UK, 2007,
curated by David Cotterrell, with Whitelaw Turkington Landscape Architects

Flume detail: a small stream emerges from a 'soak' that consists of a indented pattern in the stone flags. It catches small 10 cm diameter pools of rainwater.

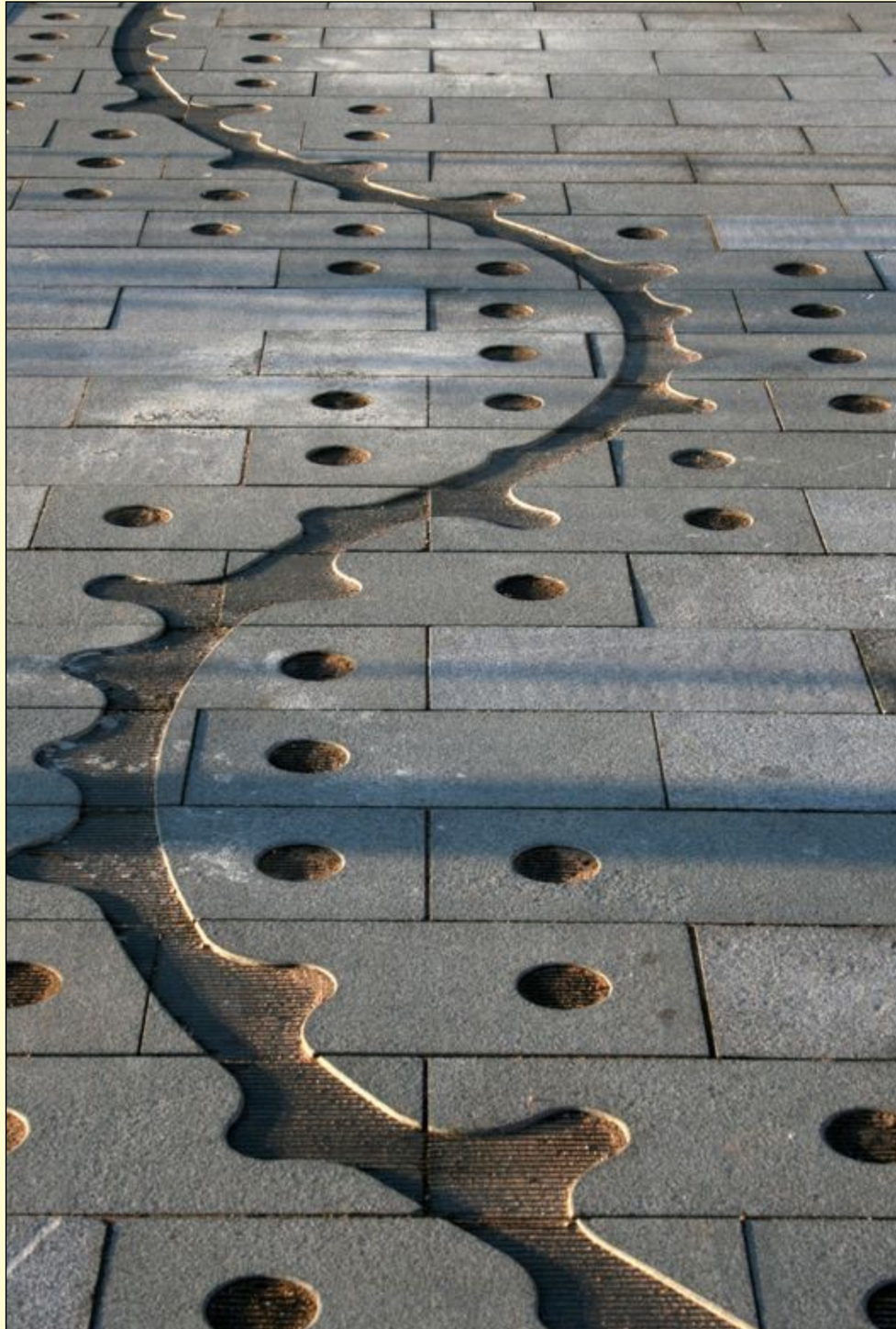
Back

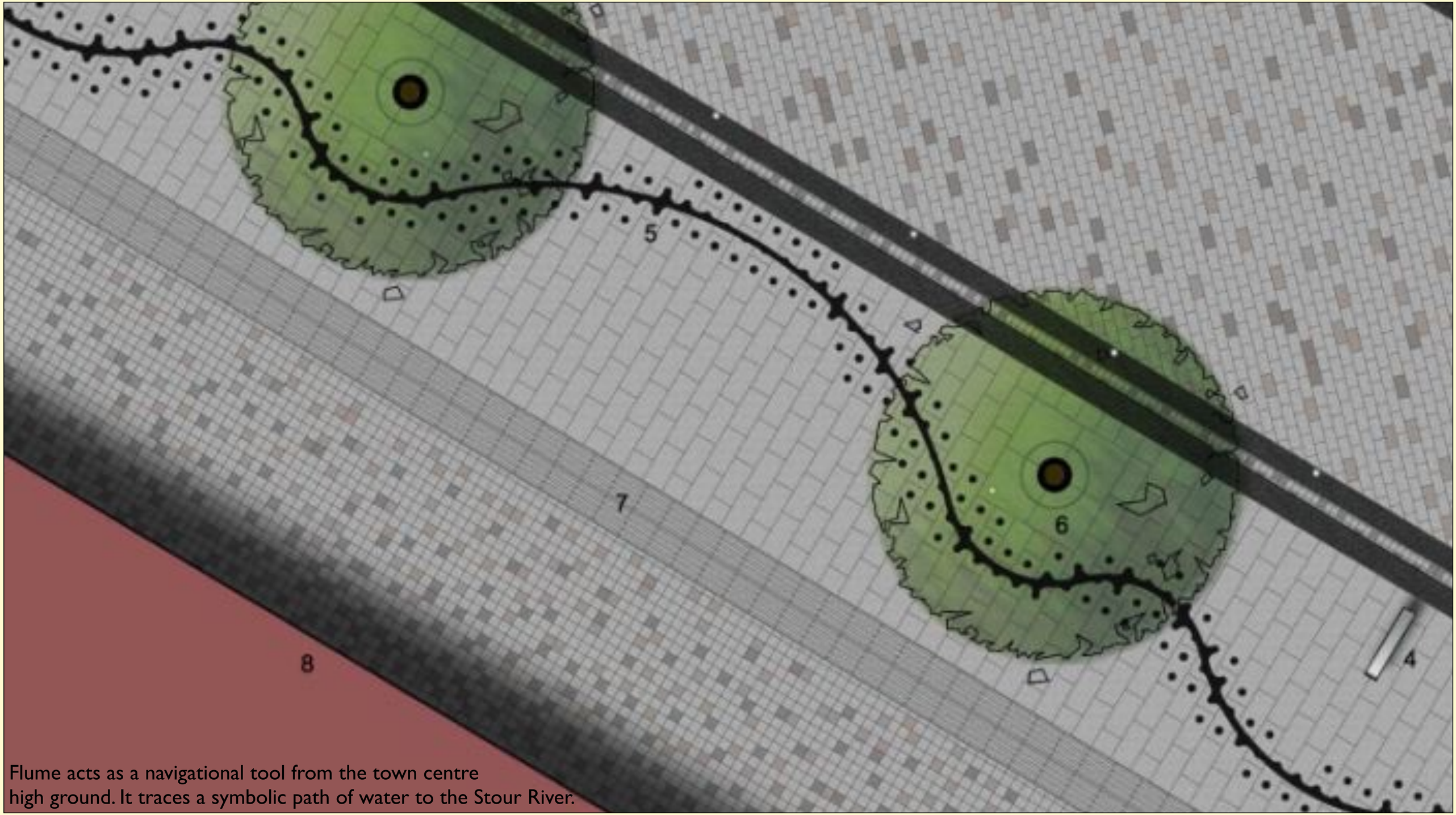


Flume maps the sewage and storm water systems of Ashford to create an diagrammatic 'river' within Bank Street and surrounds.

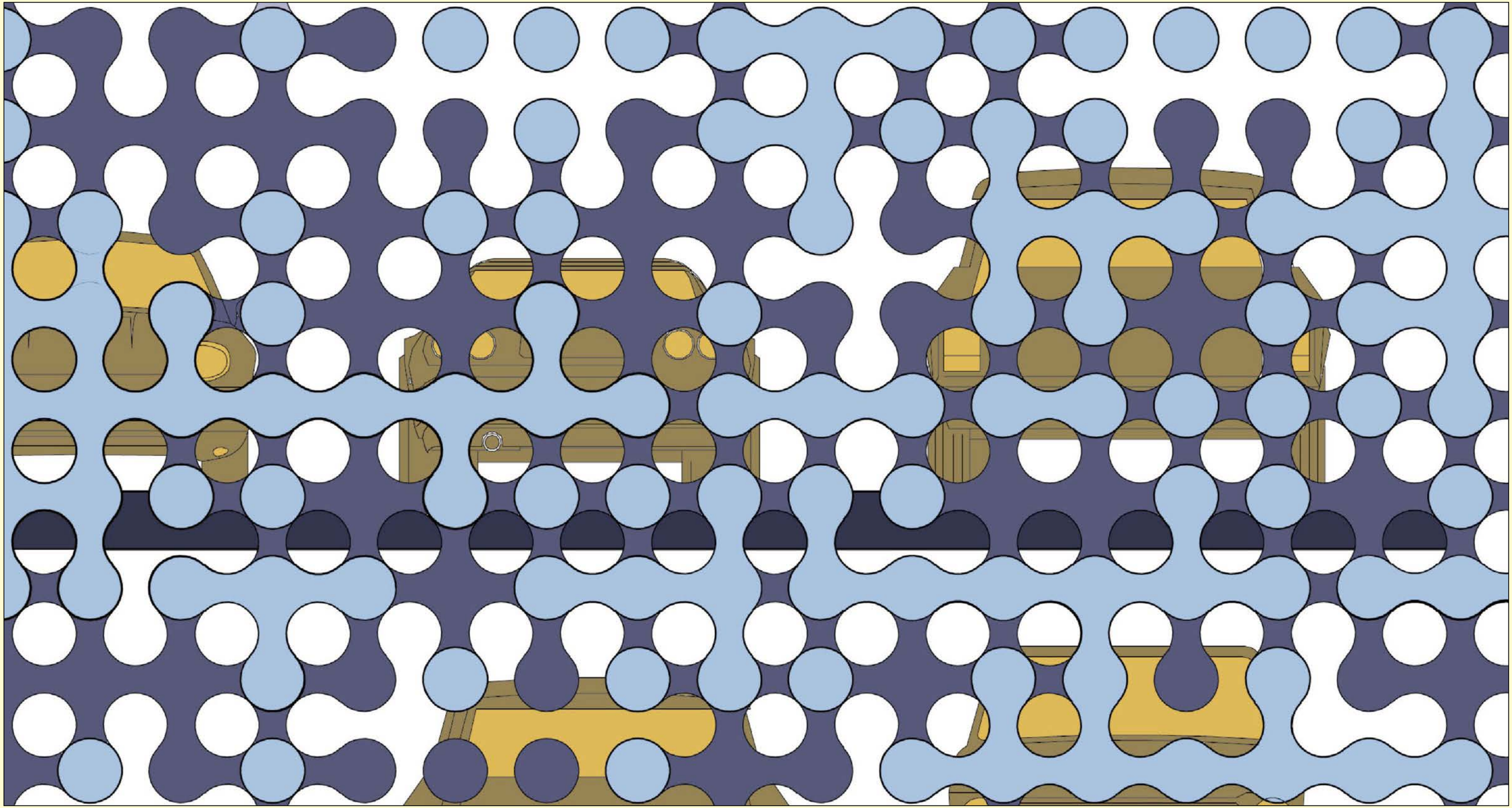
It meanders through the streetscape acting as a navigational tool from the town centre high ground.
It traces a symbolic path of water to the Stour River.

It expresses water management as an integral and visible part of the public realm . The normally hidden processes of rainwater collection, conveyance, treatment, use and disposal are celebrated and revealed to the public.





Flume acts as a navigational tool from the town centre
high ground. It traces a symbolic path of water to the Stour River.



Back

Proposed car park screen, Temple Mead Railway Station, Bristol, based on a Truchet tiling pattern, 2008

Sound attenuation walls, Sydney, 2000

BACK

M4 Motorway,
Sydney Olympic Site,
Australia 2000
Glass-fiber reinforced cement

occupies a 3000 meter stretch of elevated motorway

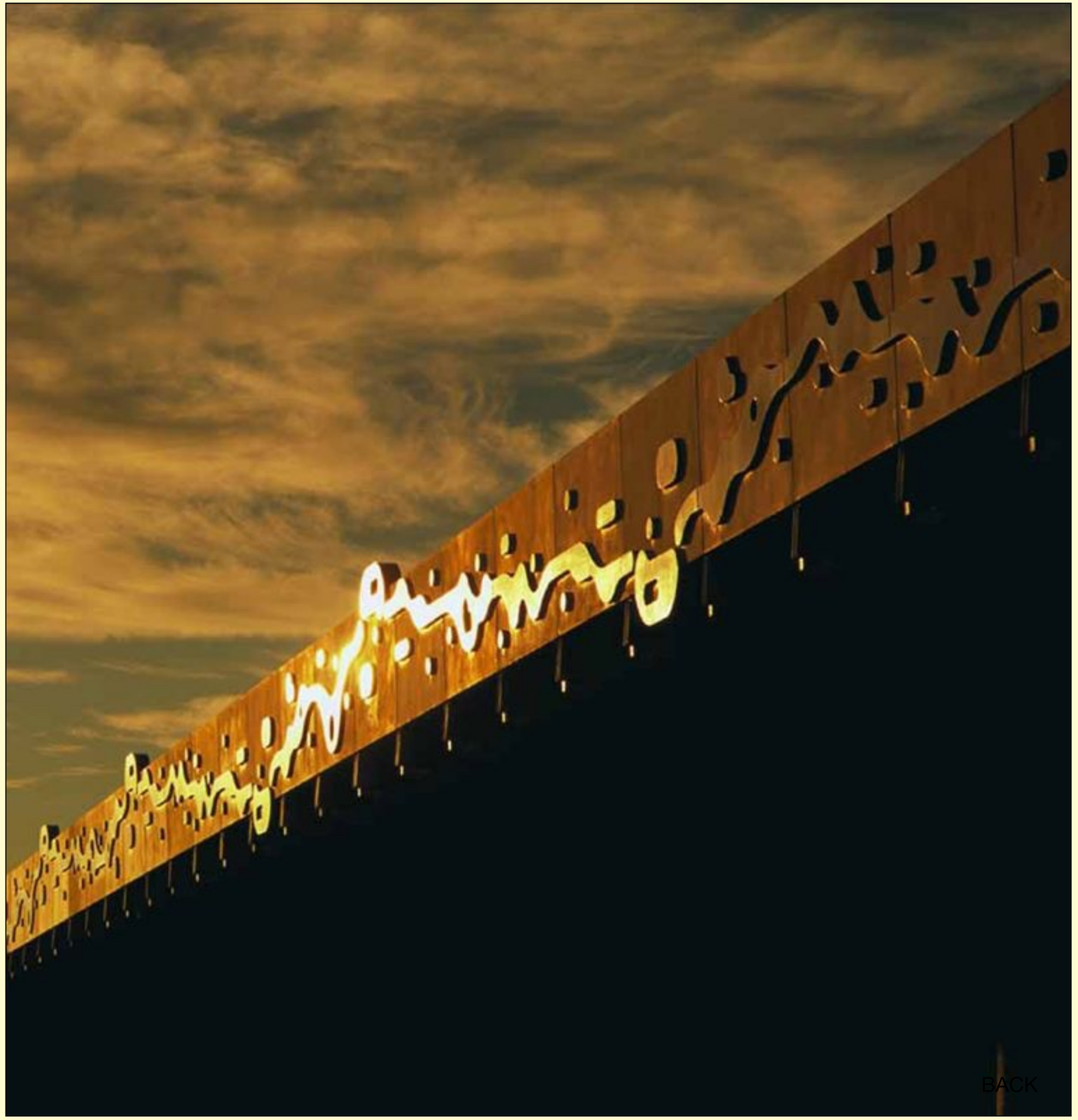
Commissioned by the Road and Transport Authority, New South Wales
Collaboration with Hassell Architects

BACK

The idea for this piece grew out of notions of fluidity v rigidity that I had been working with in the studio over the last few years. I wanted to make a form that flowed for the entire length of the motorway, spilling over each edge of the wall, independent of the functional aspects, only coincidentally colliding with the noise wall itself. I want them to have an iconic presence on the skyline, like a Mobil sign from 20 years ago, the one with the red Pegasus in sheet steel over a 100mm thick frame, a solid extruded form.

I designed a modular system of six interchangeable panels which could be combined with each other like dominoes or DNA bases to form long strings of random, differentiated pattern.

The patterns were initially derived from a jagged line which could be the all ordinaries index over a given period of time, a mountain range or the course of a meandering river. I then refined and confined the 'jags' to curves and horizontal lines of specific radii and positions on each of the six panels which were divided into 9 equal horizontal datum lines to facilitate the continuity of the pattern between each panel. The end result is like liquid blobs of mercury travelling at speed down each side of the freeway.



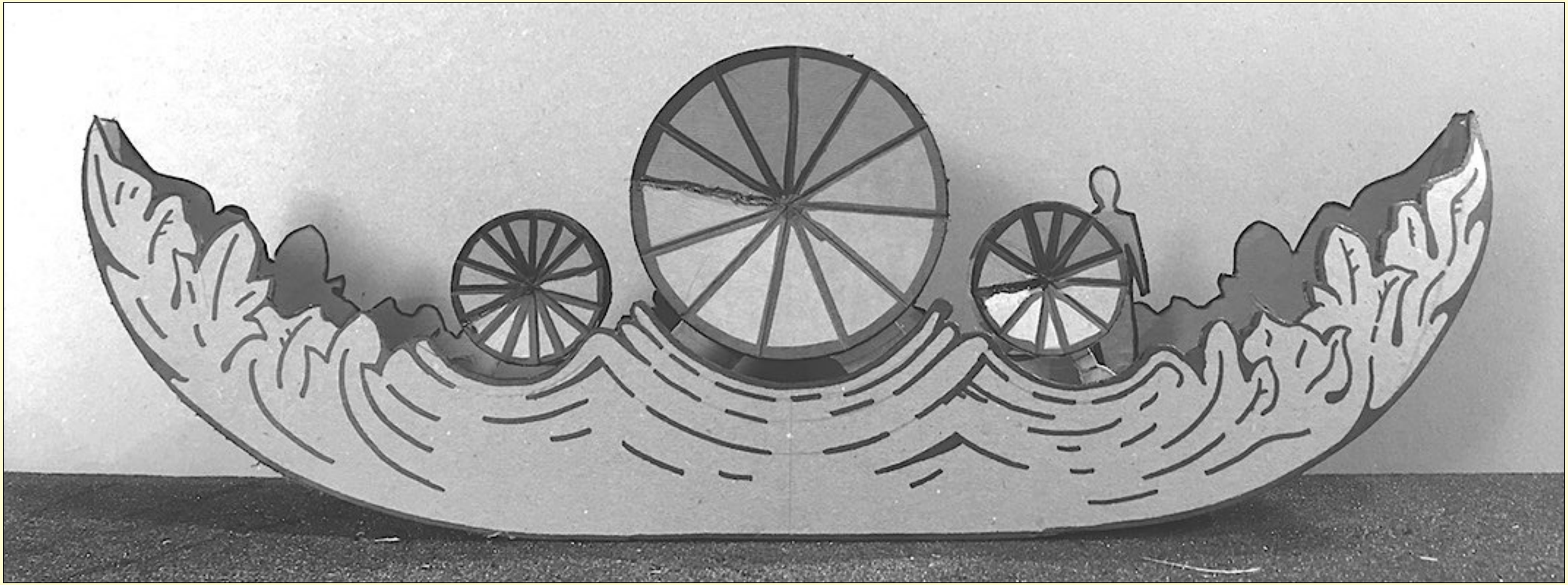
Back

Back

Back

HYDROSIREN
MEANWHILE GARDENS

Back



Hydrosiren 2017-18 London

Plywood, fibreglass, speakers, microphones, electronics, batteries
Bow to stern: 10.6 meters
Beam: 2.4 meters
Draught: 30 cm
Total overall height, freeboard and draught: 290 cm
A participatory commission with Meanwhile Gardens and the Canal & River Trust, London in collaboration with Rob Godman.
Managed by Modus Operandi Art Consulants

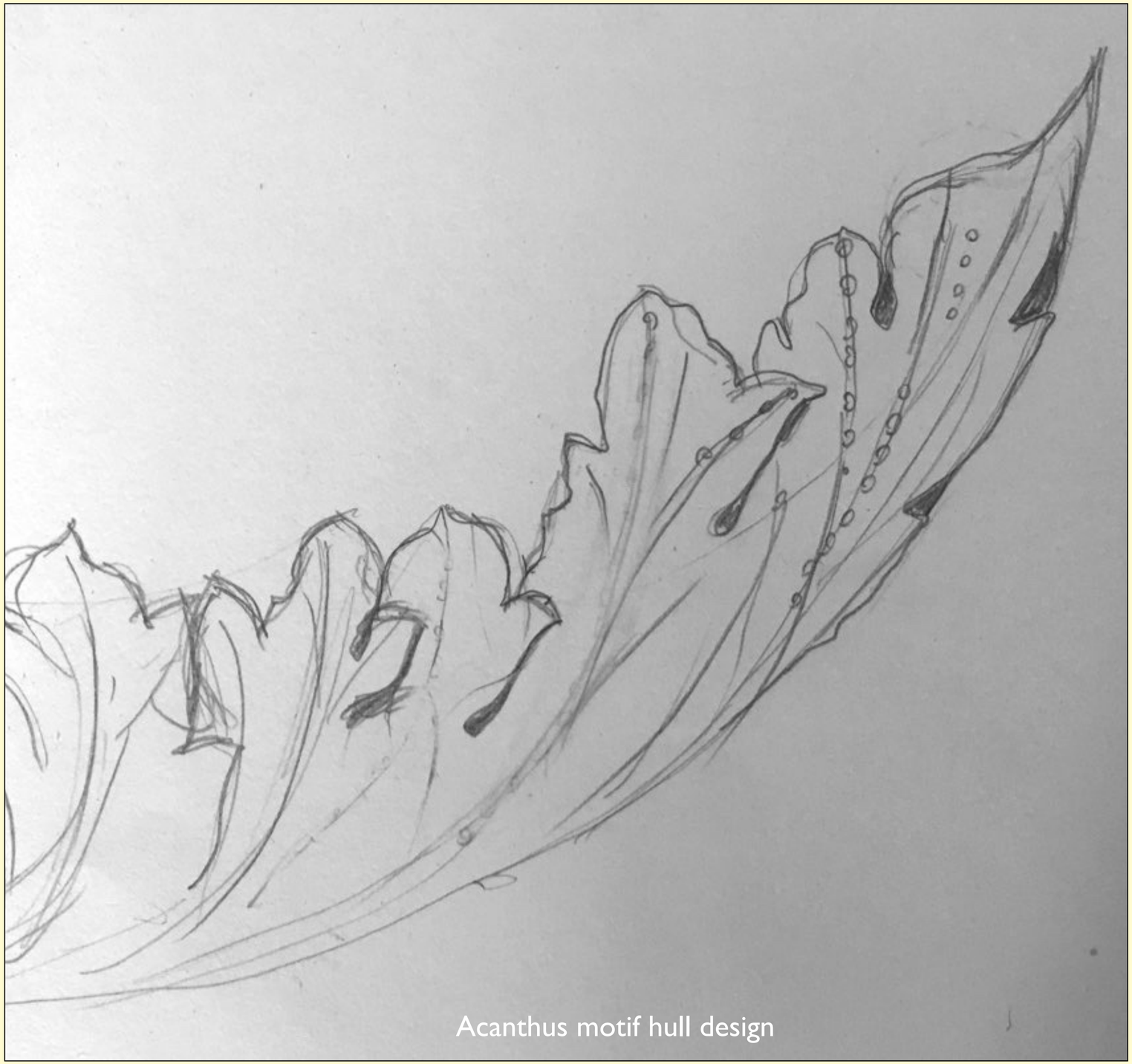
Built from scratch by a team of long-boat community and student volunteers under my direction, Hydrosiren was an electro-acoustic ceremonial barge that processed in a sequence of performances from Little Venice to Meanwhile Gardens on the Grand Union Canal propelled by a punter at the stern.
A soprano standing in the bow sang the music composed by Rob Godman. Three sound mirrors mounted on its deck recorded and played back incident sound encountered on its processions, weaving them into the score.

Back

Back

Back

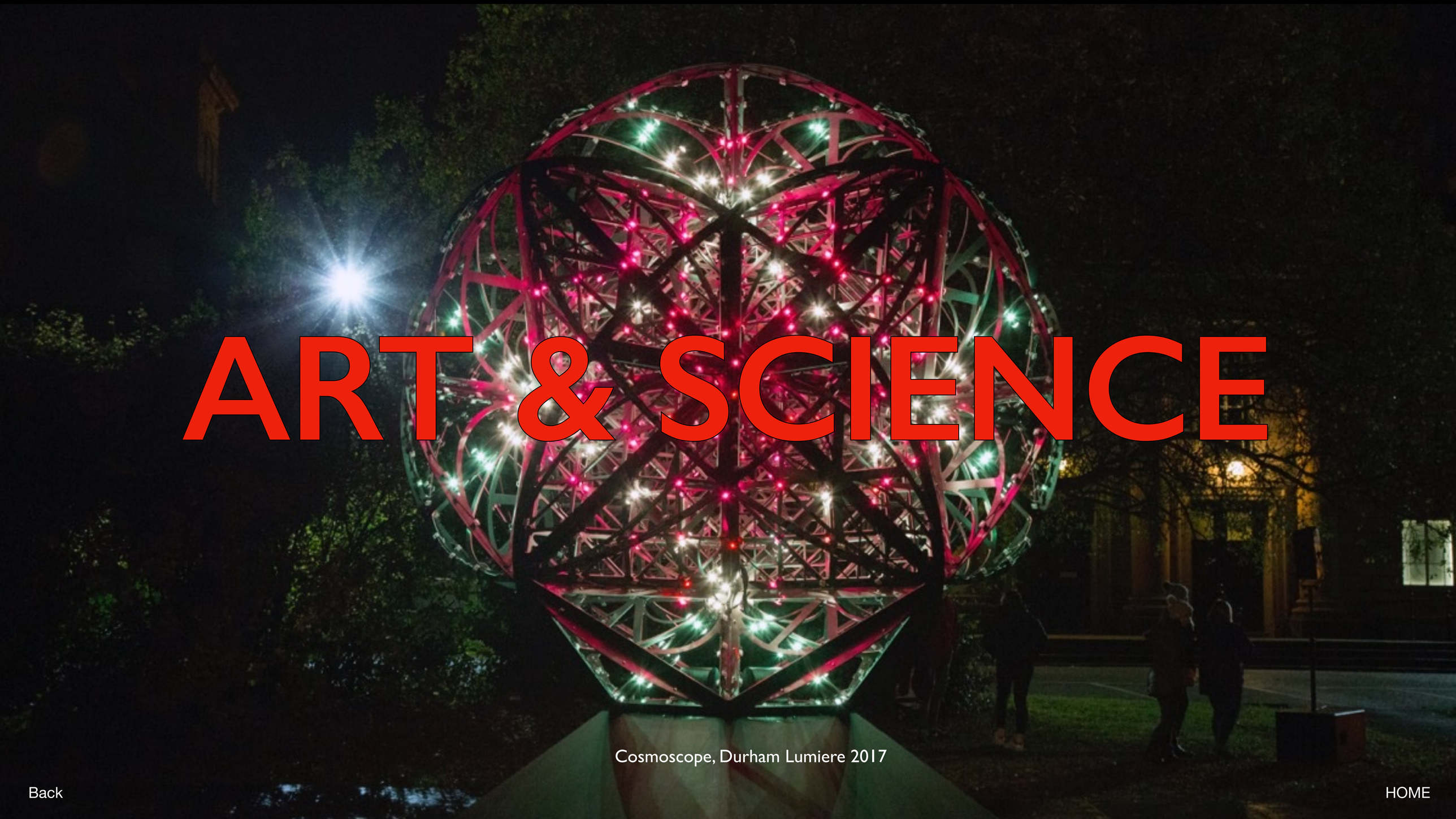
Starboard gunwale detail



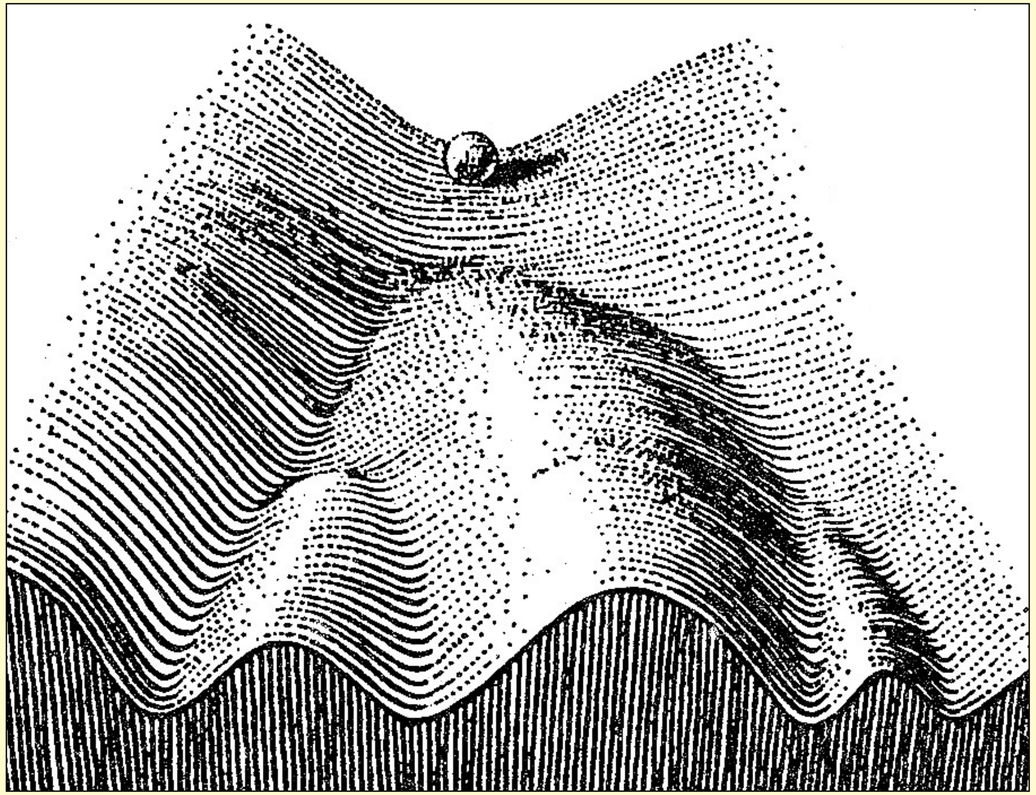
Acanthus motif hull design

Back

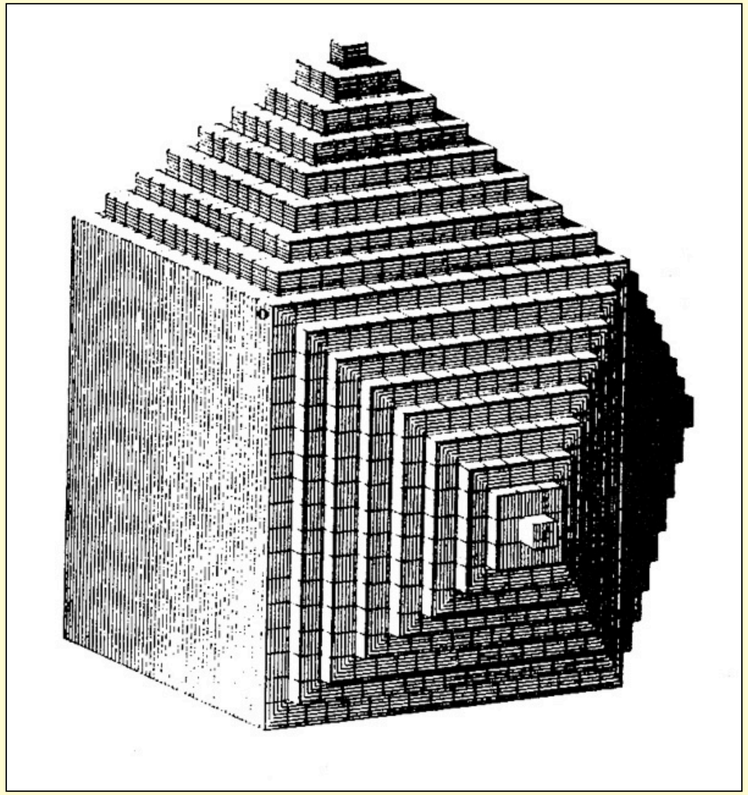
ART & SCIENCE



Cosmoscope, Durham Lumiere 2017



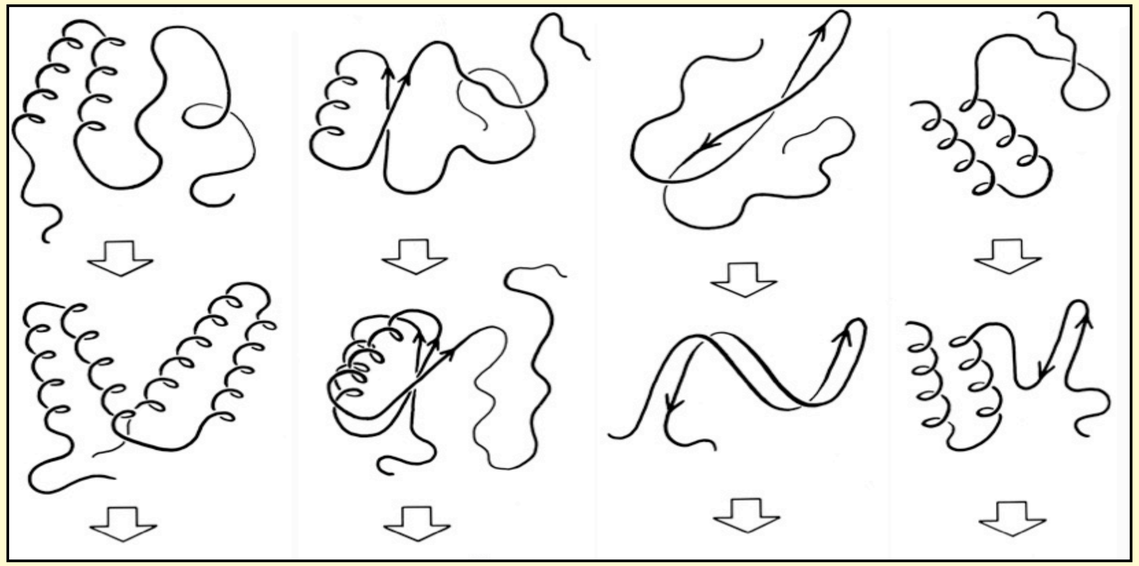
Game of chance: valleys depicting C.F Waddington's pathways of probability in embryology. 1942

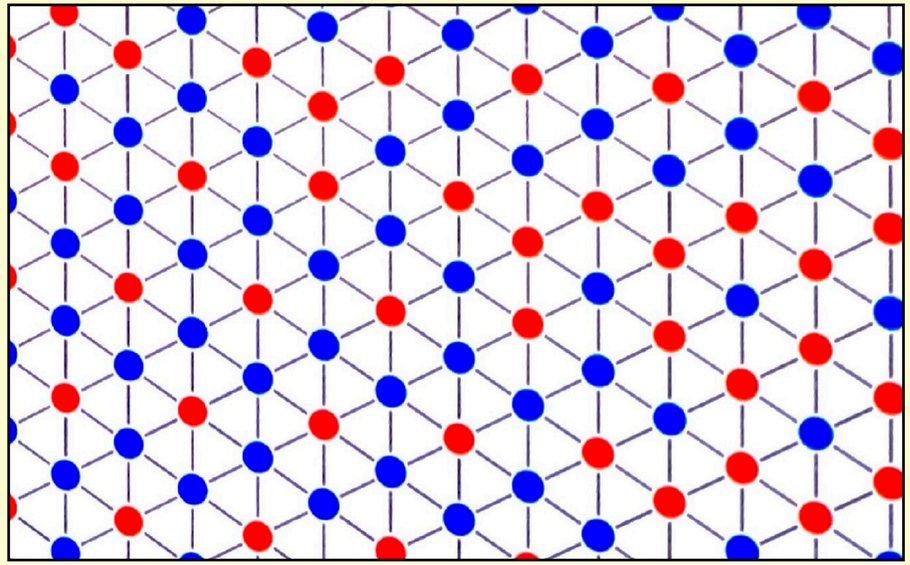


Abbe Hauy's model of crystal structure 1784

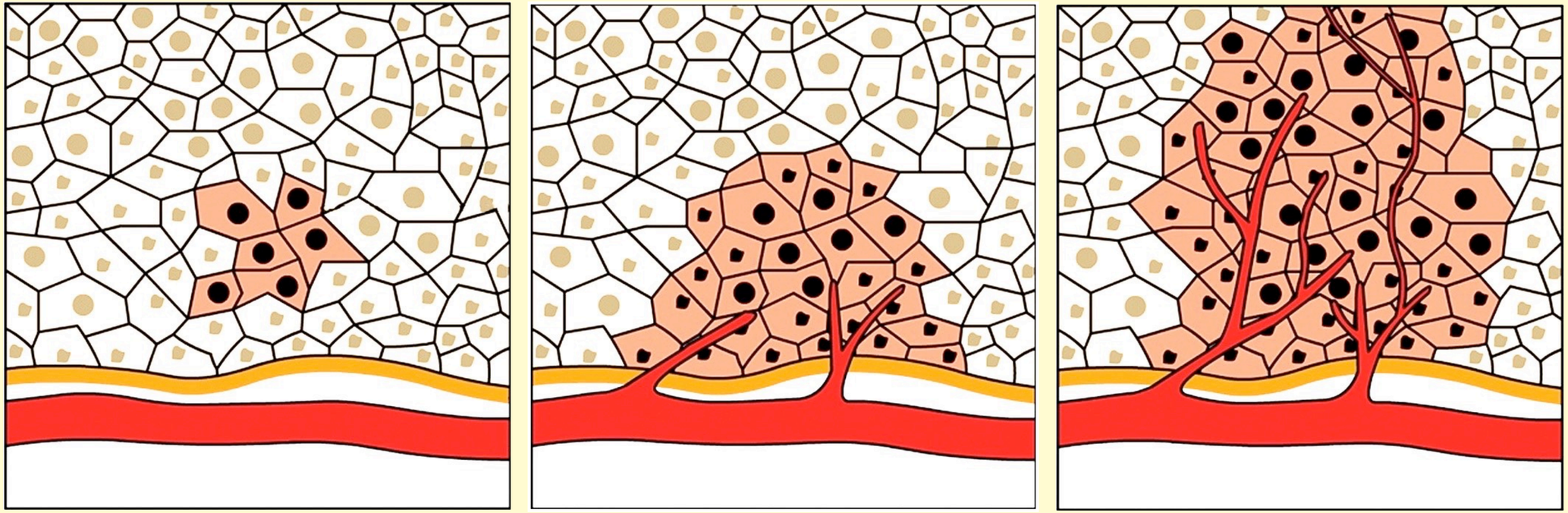
Back

topologies of protein folding



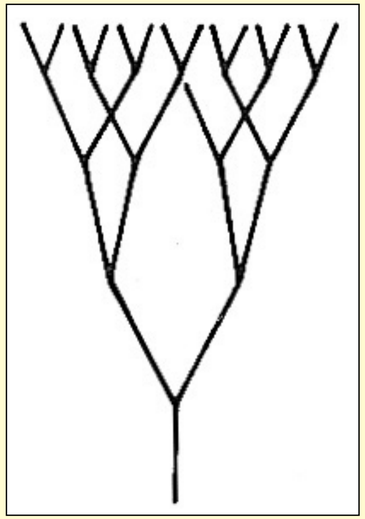


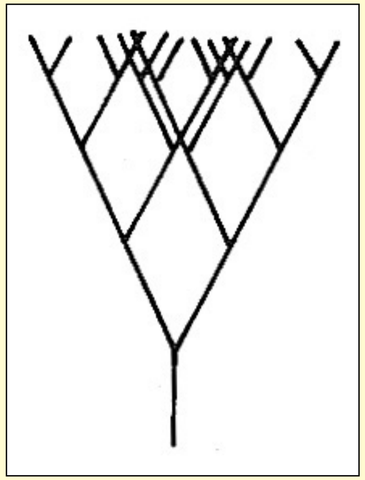
frustrated atomic spin geometry



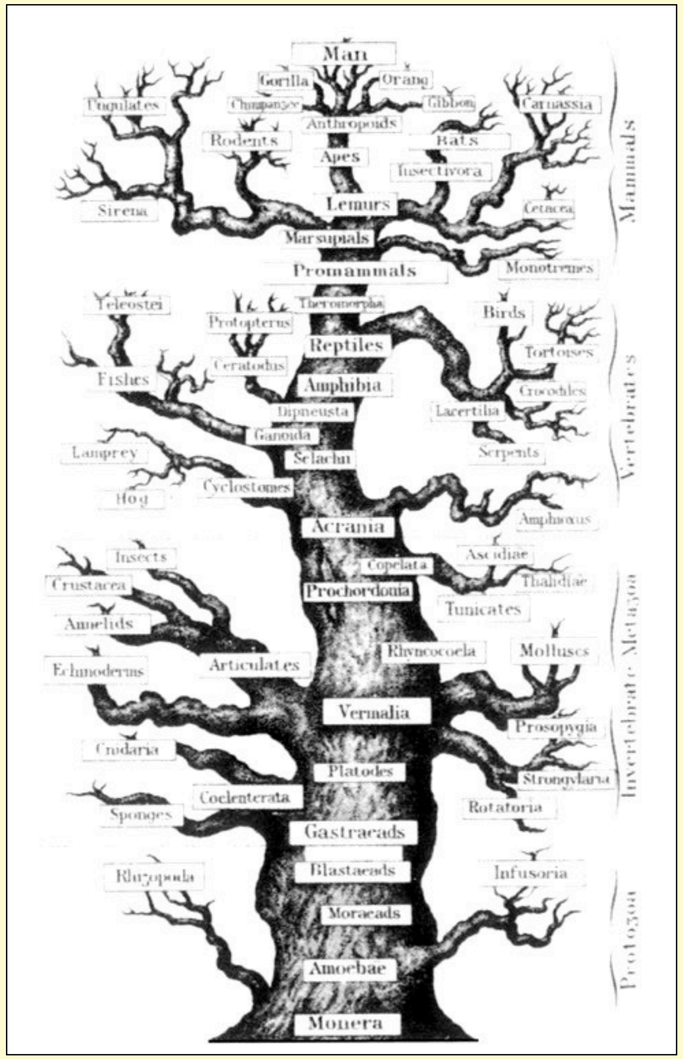
angiogenesis, a tumor co-opting its hosts blood supply to grow its own blood vessel network

Back

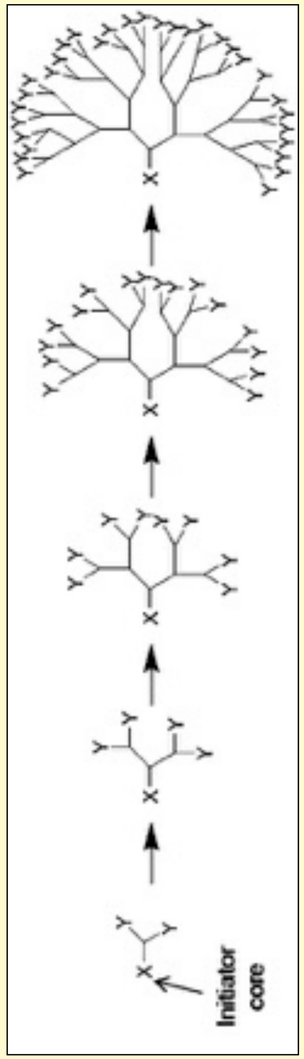




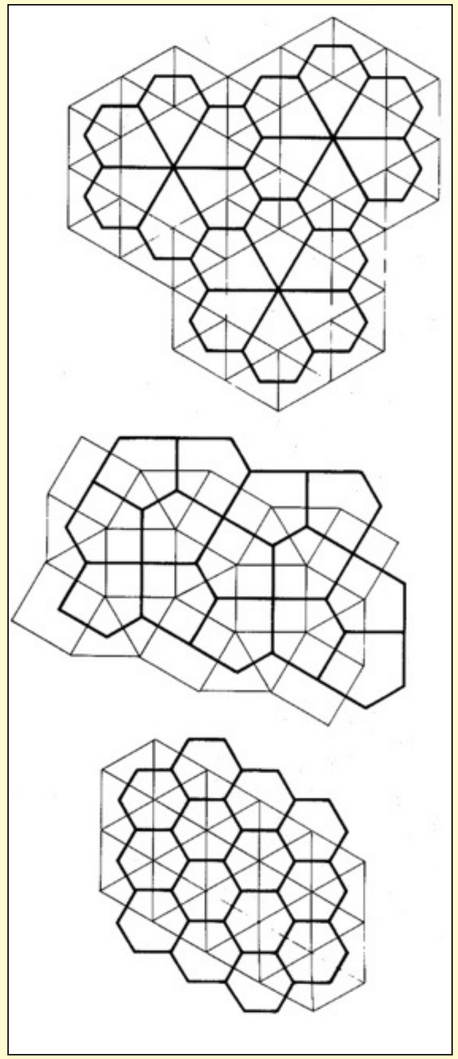
branching organisations intrinsic to ornamental, computational and organic systems



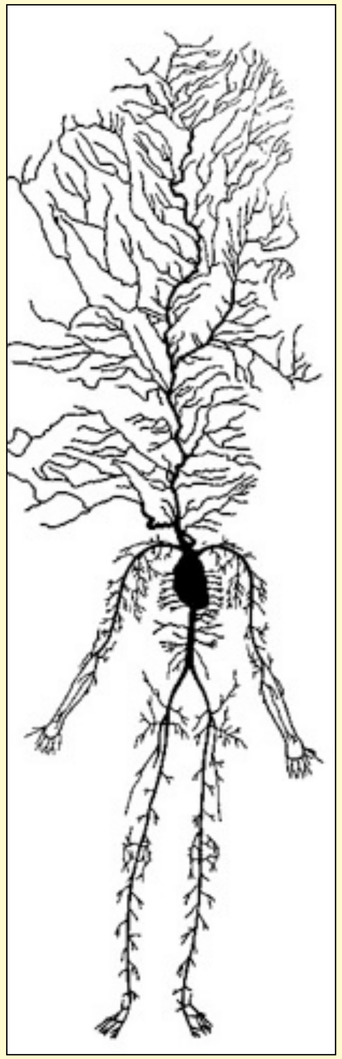
Ernst Haeckel's anthropocentric evolutionary tree, 1868



Dendrimer macromolecule growing from initiator core

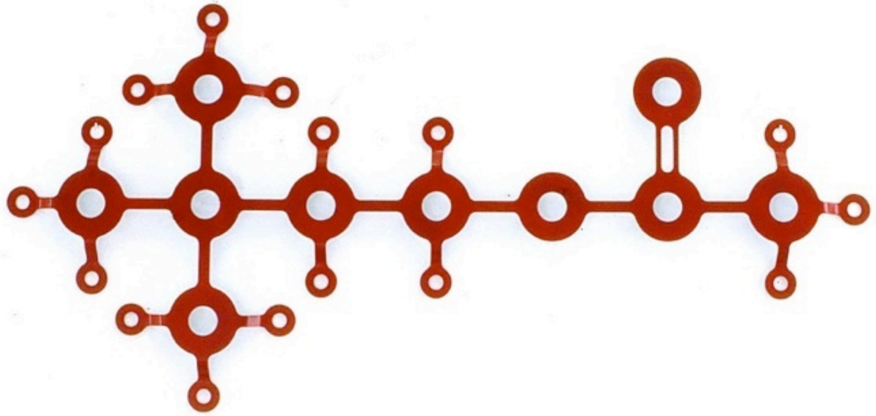


Tesselations - implicit and explicit structure

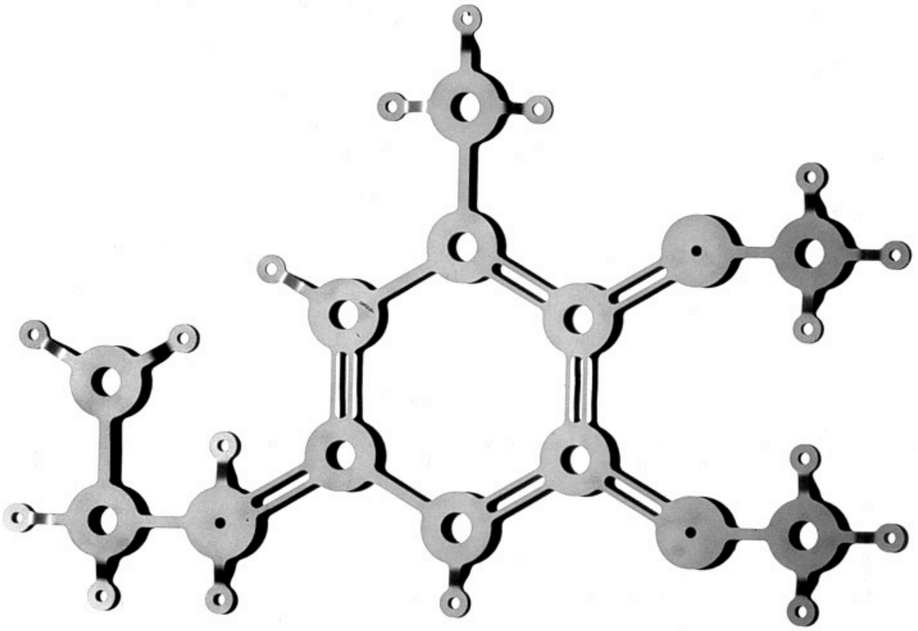


River of Veins

Back



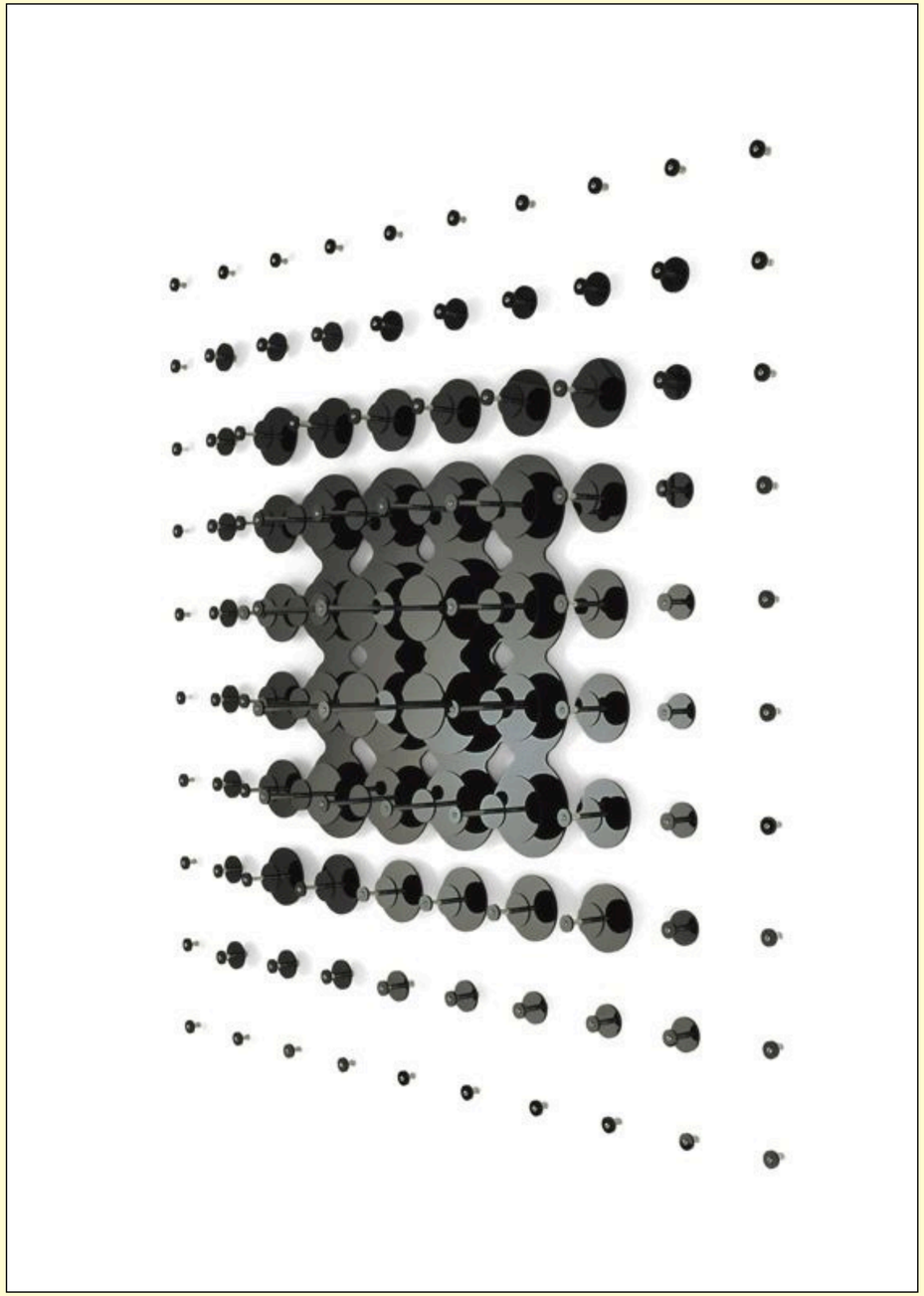
Neuronature (Dopamine) powder-coated steel, 1996



Neuronature (Mescaline) powder-coated steel, 1996

it is impossible to adequately represent matter at the molecular scale

Back



THEORY OF MATTER 1999 Acrylic and aluminum 159 x 159 x 35 cm

Effluvium, 1999, Acrylic, aluminum dimensions variable

Back

LABORATAROBAL

Guys Hospital Biomedical Research Centre, London

Back

LABORATAROBAL

2010-11
vinyl and acrylic
dimensions variable

Biomedical Research Centre,
Guys Hospital London

Curated by Modus Operandi, as part of the Guy's and St Thomas' Art Commissioning Programme.

This textual intervention explores the Greek and Latin roots of medical terminology and nomenclature.

The origins of these roots often had mythological and poetic resonances and remembering these adds richness and depth to the understanding of medicine and to the experience of working in the Guys Hospital Biomedical Research Centre.

It derives from the slippage of language from the semiotics of a known word to the suggestive calligraphy of a random string of letters. I adapted suffixes and prefixes of medical terminology pertinent to the research of the Biomedical Research Centre into wall based word diamonds and palindromes cut from 10mm acrylic sheet and also applied as vinyl signage to the internal windows.

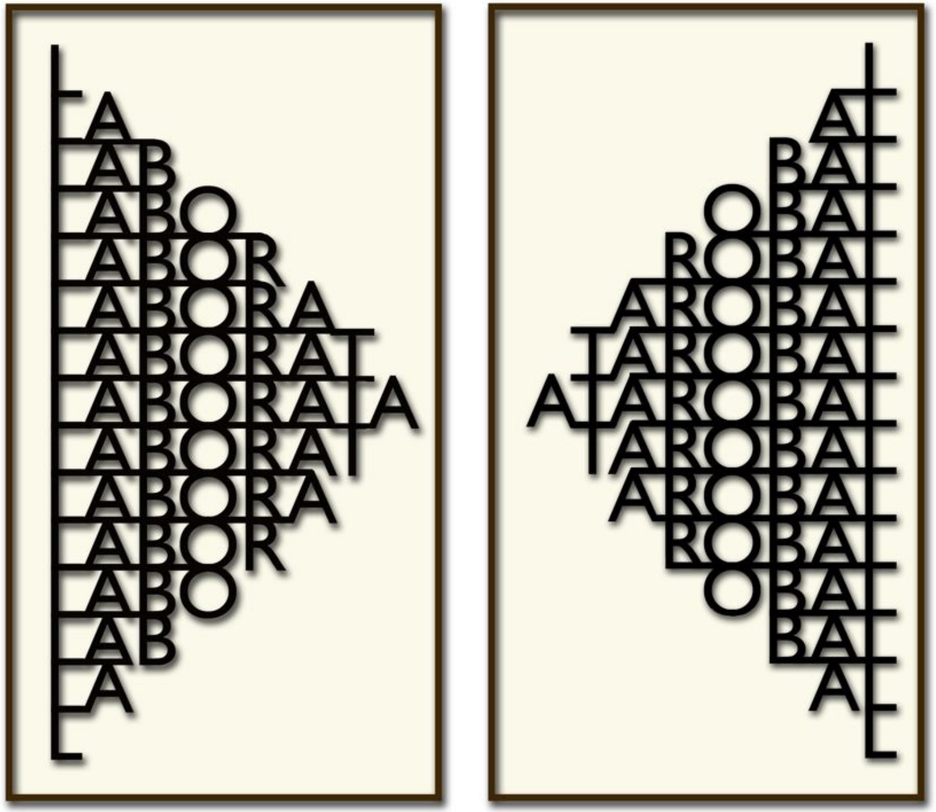
The vinyl flows through the space on the same datum line in bands of repeating palindromes so that the transparency of the windows are disrupted by text that moves from almost recognisable medical language to almost nonsensical associations.

The word diamonds are works in their own right, framed and separate from the wall, operating on the boundary of the calligraphic and the semantic. The font, Gill Sans has a classical modernist monumentality and calm.

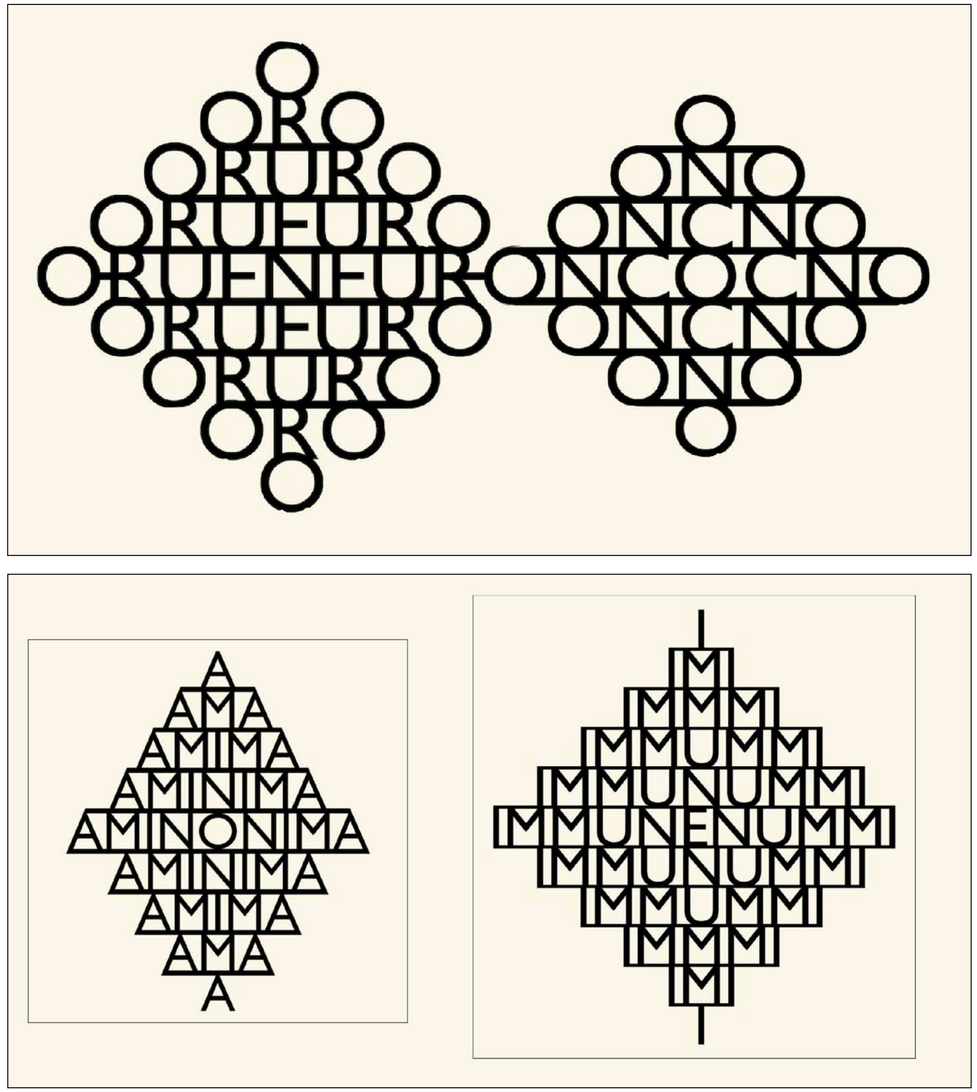
Back

ALBALOBALROBALAROBALTAROBALATAROBALTAROBALAROBALROBALOBALBALAL

Back



Title work



Word diamonds

Back

Back

Back

YSTRC
ACTIN
NINI
MOGL
TINIT
OS NI
HINIHP
CACTI
OCORC
BINIBO
EKERA
YMMOS
ITIBI
CAC
INN
OME
NITAR
NISOY
OR
AH
RE
M

Back

Back

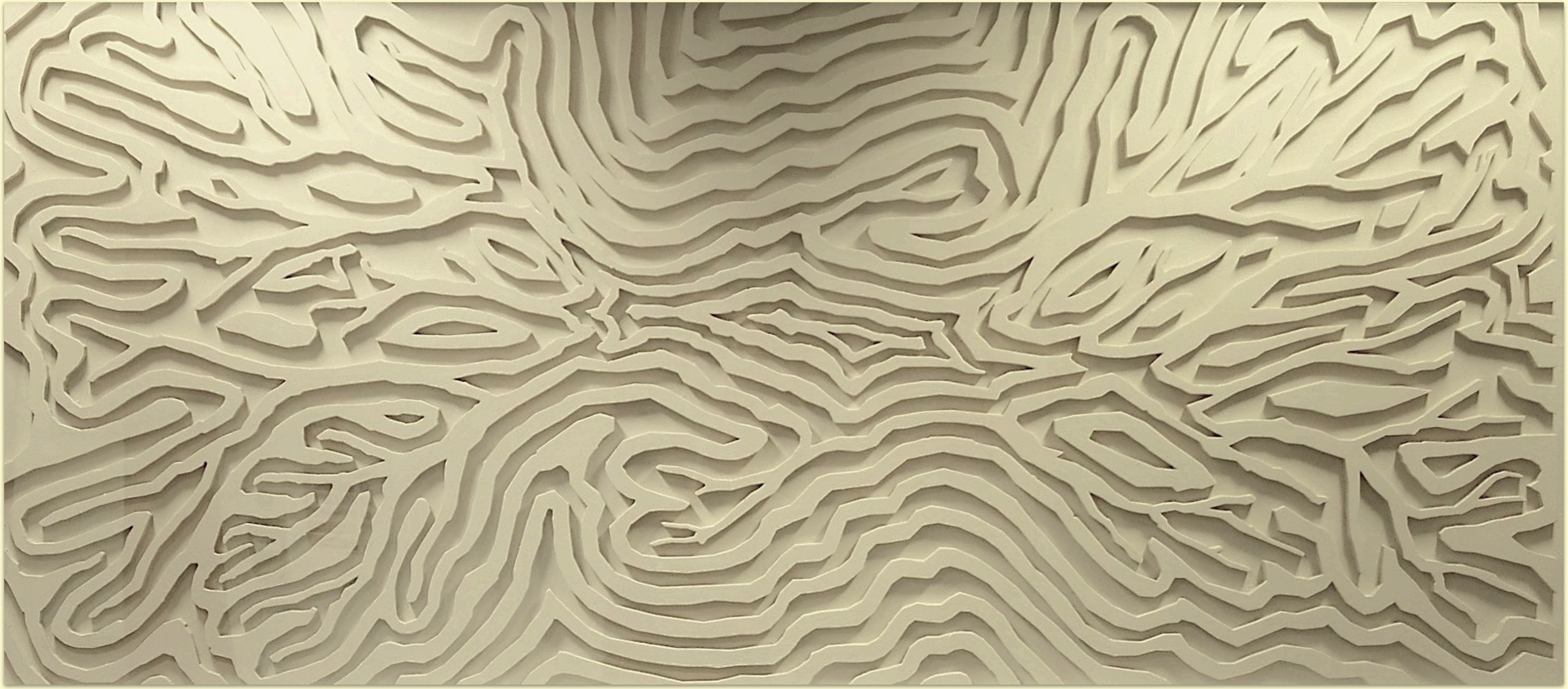
Back

Four new works for the Biomedical Research Centre, level 15
Guys Hospital Tower, London, UK
2014, laser cut plywood, paint

-*Mitosis* 100 x 100 cms
-*Lymphic* 100 x 100 cms
-*Chreode* 160 x 100 cms
-*Dendriform* 90 x 90 cms

They operate optically in low relief under anti-reflective glass, their shadows are part of their visual rhythm and topographical ambiguity. They could be contour maps of landscapes as much as their immediate references - cellular structures in the body, neurons, cell division and dendritic immune cells.

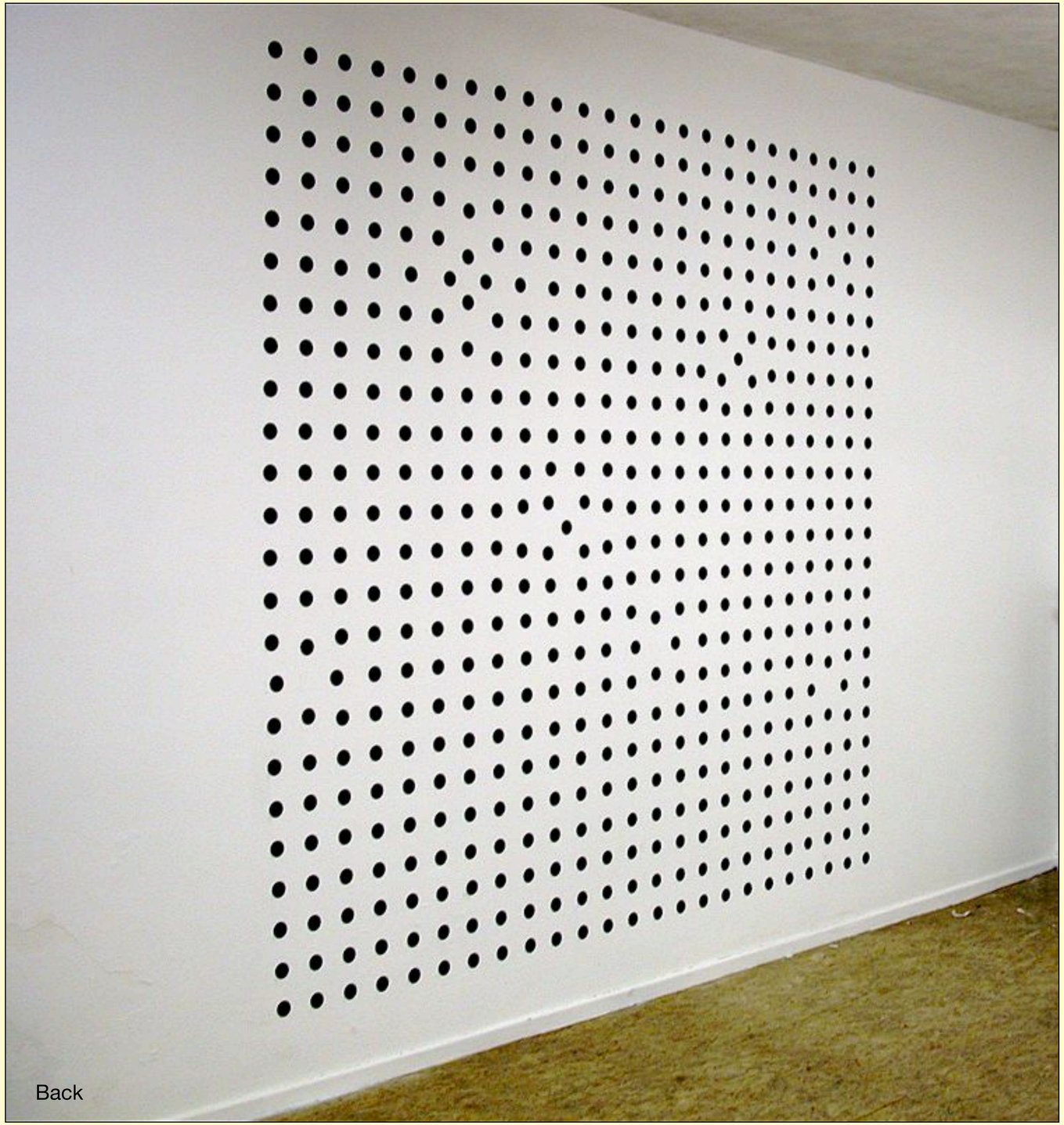
These works isolate an element like a cell and re-embed it in a an optical field of operation. They are both iconographic and refute the notion of simple location seeing the entity they signify as an actor in a wider network, an event or process rather than a solitary thing.



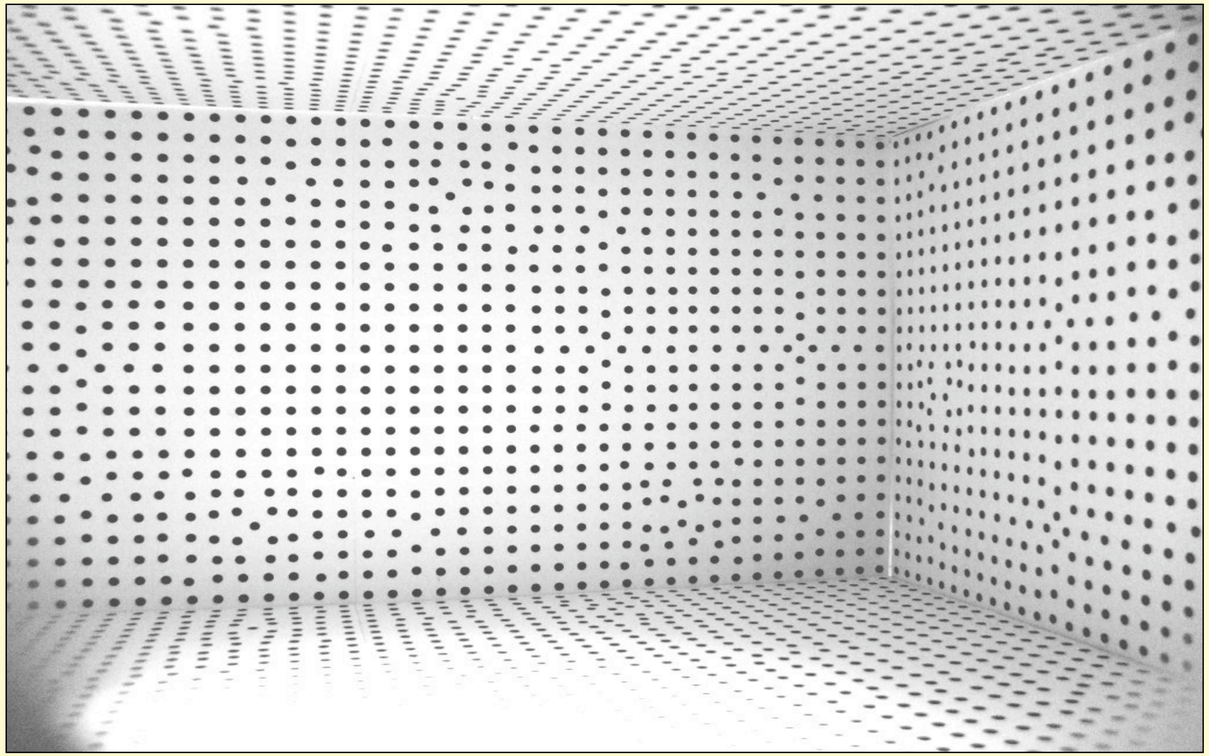
Chreode, 2014, 160 x 100 cms, laser cut plywood, paint

Back

Back



Back



Above: proposal for room scale installation

Infinitesimal

self adhesive vinyl, 250 x 250 cms,
H29 Gallery, Brussels 2008

Space is not empty. It is full, a plenum as opposed to a vacuum and is the ground for the existence of everything, including ourselves. The universe is not separate from this cosmic sea of energy. David Bohm, Wholeness and the Implicate Order

PLENUM

Back

2010-12
computer generated light and sound projection
Exhibited:
2010,
Skyway 10, Torun Poland

2011
Skyway '11, Torun, Poland
Valgus Festival Tallinn, Estonia
Lumiere Festival, Durham, UK

2012
Contemporary Art Space, Cairns, Australia
Kings College Chapel, Cambridge Music Festival, UK

Supported by the Pollock Krasner Foundation, the
EU Culture Fund and Arts Council England

PLENUM projected onto Kings College Chapel, Cambridge Music Fesitval 2012,

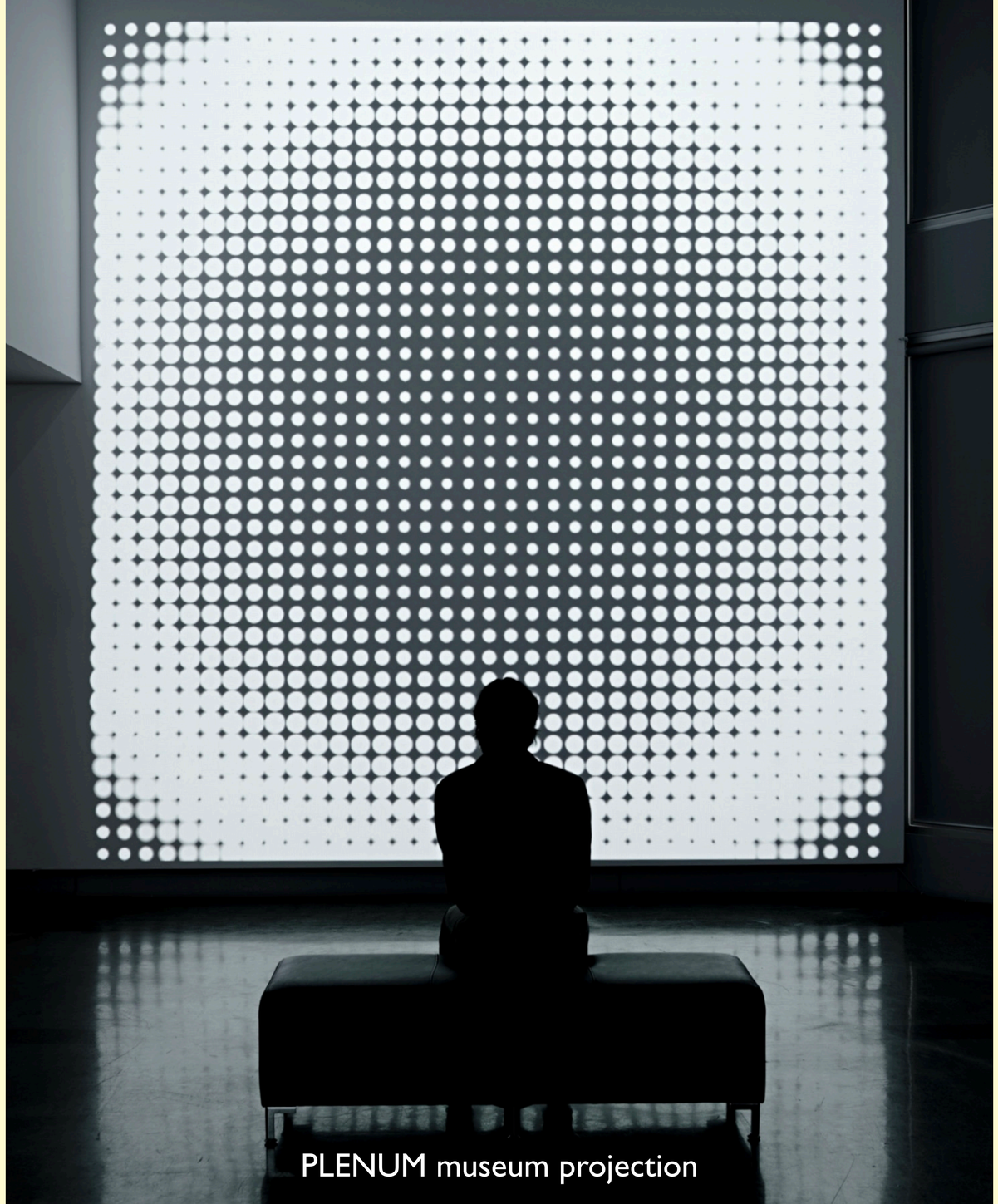
BACK

Plenum sees the world as illusory, an atom is not a thing, it is a set of energetic relationships inhering in space.

If the nucleus of an atom were the size of a grape, the electrons would be specks of dust orbiting at radii of several kilometres.

But of course nuclei and electrons are not things either, they are vibrations, perturbations of the field, they are events or locations of experience.

The vast emptiness of inner space mirrors that of outer space.



PLENUM museum projection

Plenum is based on the illustrations of crystal lattices found in physics textbooks.

The projection cycle ibegins as a perfect grid of dots arranged in a crystalline matrix, new dots begin to appear forcing the surrounding dots apart so that after 15 minutes the entire grid is pulsating, swaying and liquefying with particles popping in and out of existence.

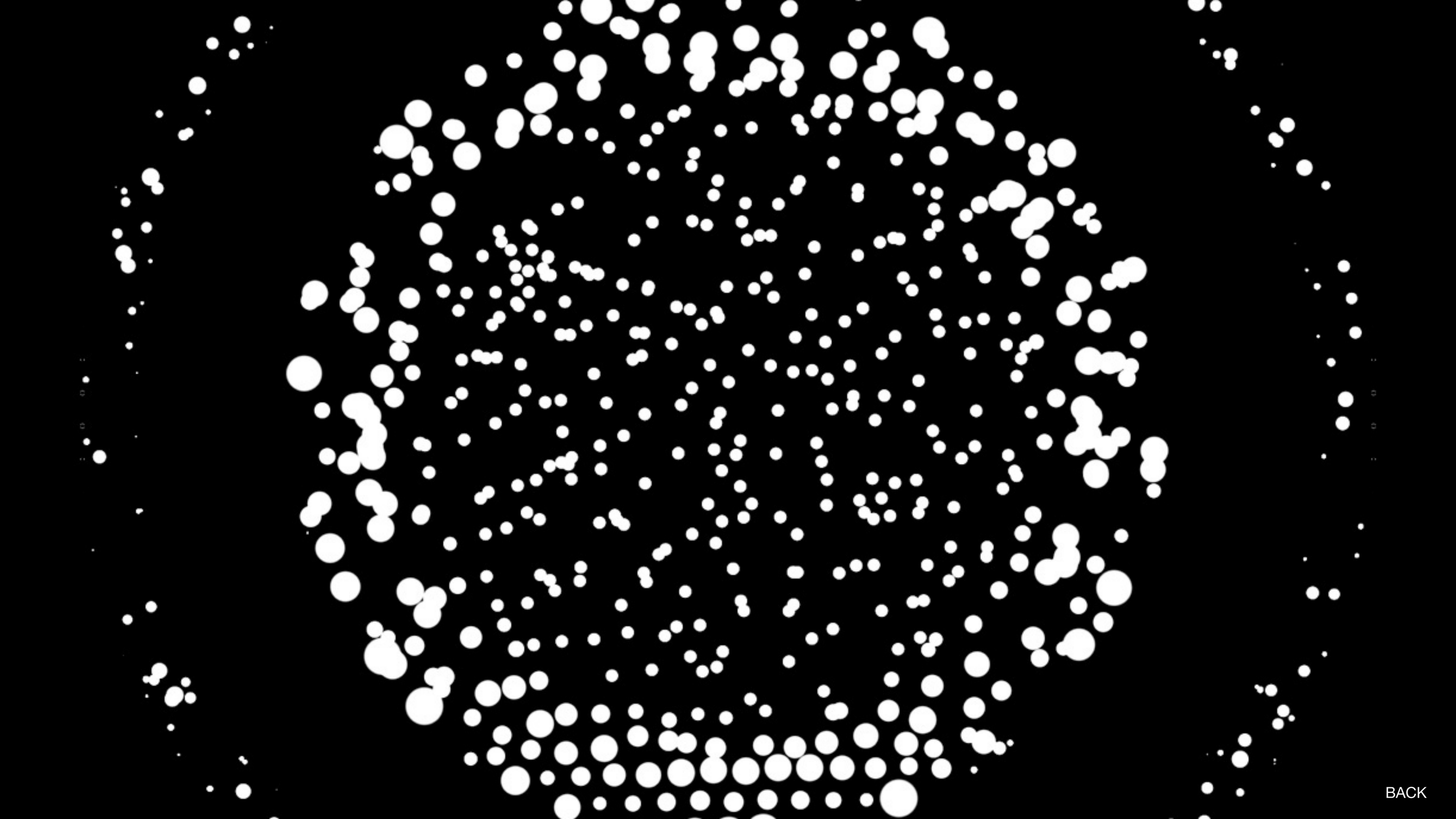
The top layers of the grid begin to disintegrate into a gaseous state shooting off in seemingly random trajectories so that the projection runs a full sequence from a frozen state of absolute order through increasing entropy to a state of complete chaos.

BACK

PLENUM projected onto St Oswald's Church, Durham Lumiere Festival, 2011

BACK

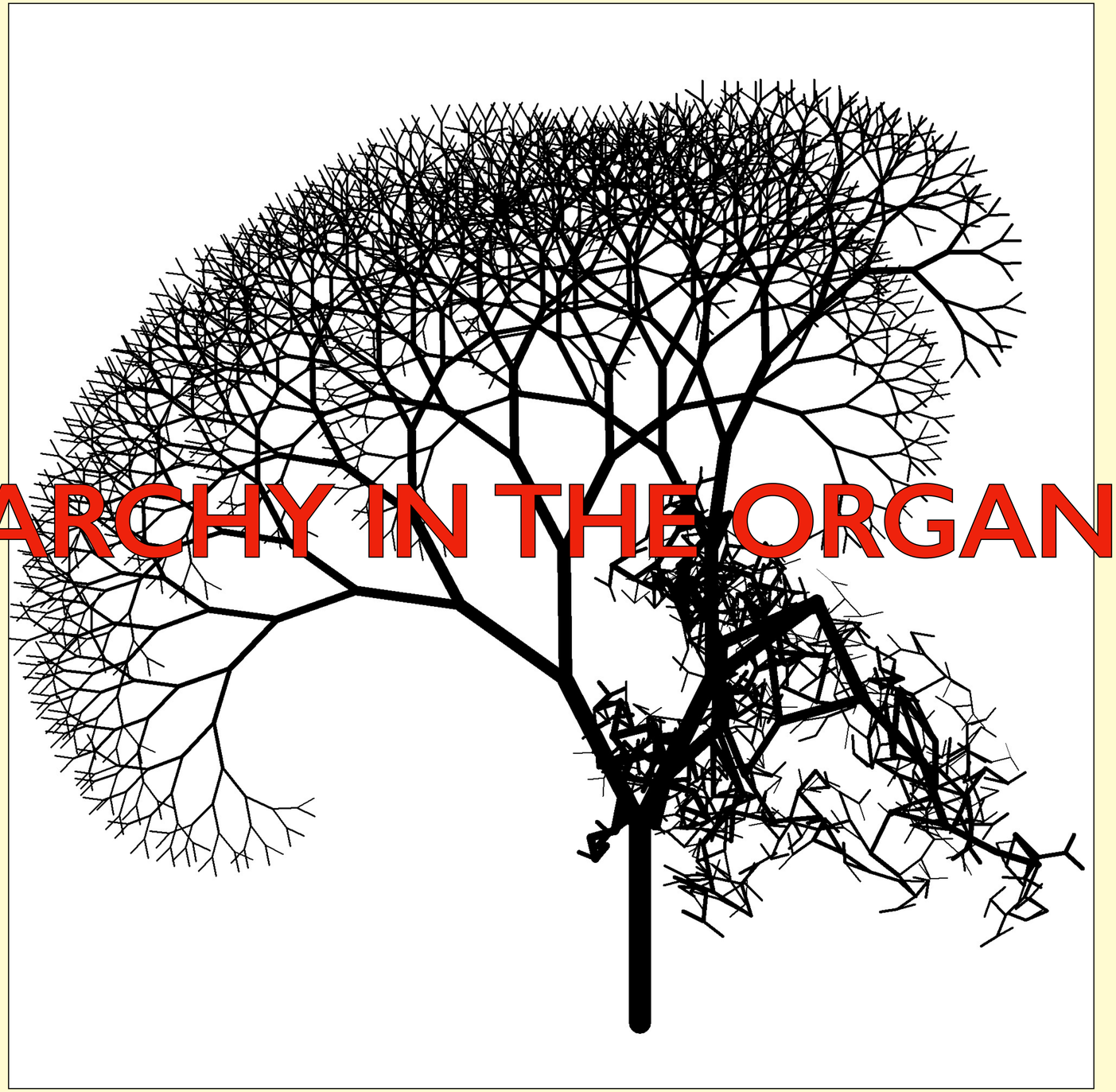
BACK



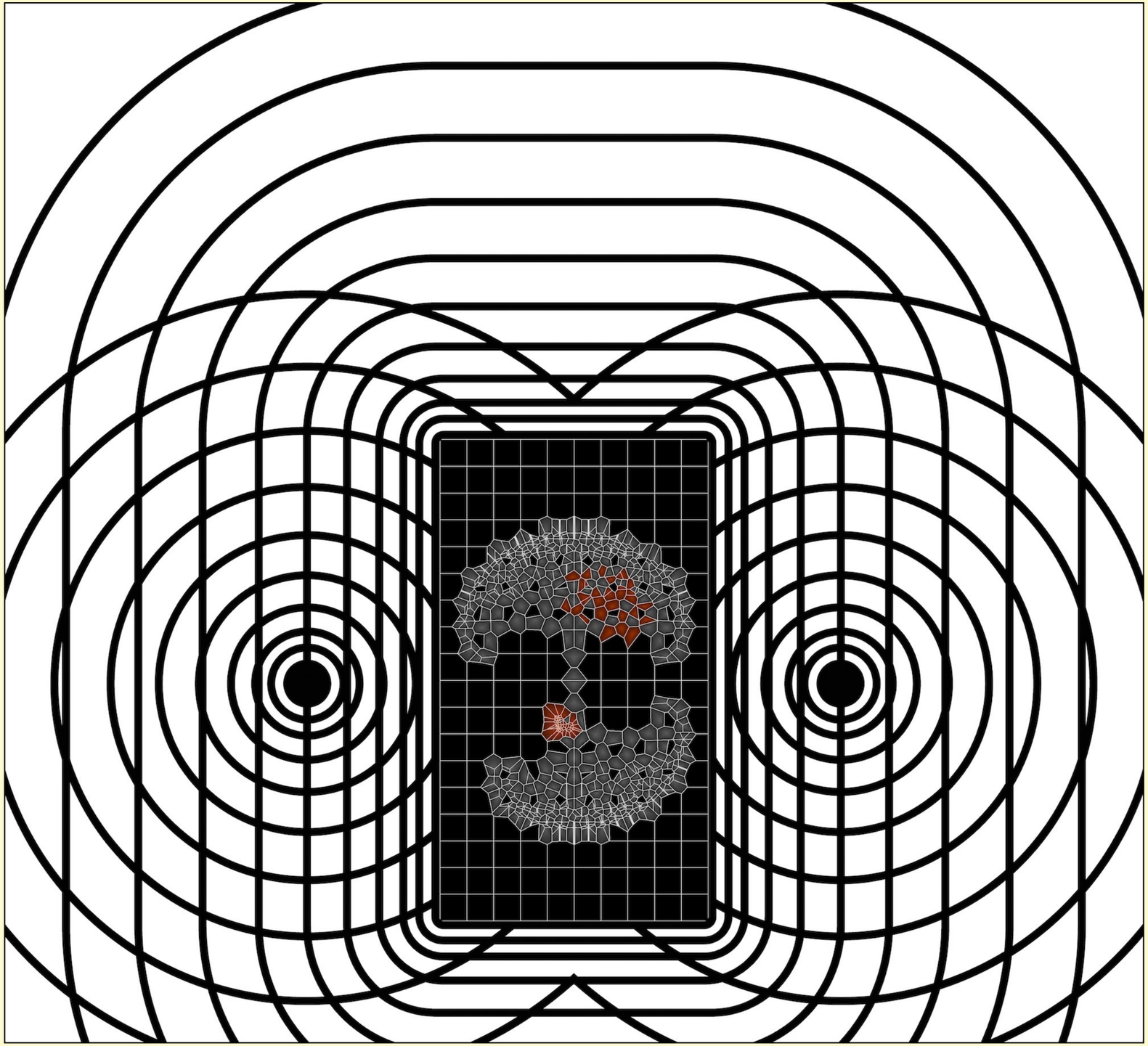
BACK

BACK

ANARCHY IN THE ORGANISM



BACK

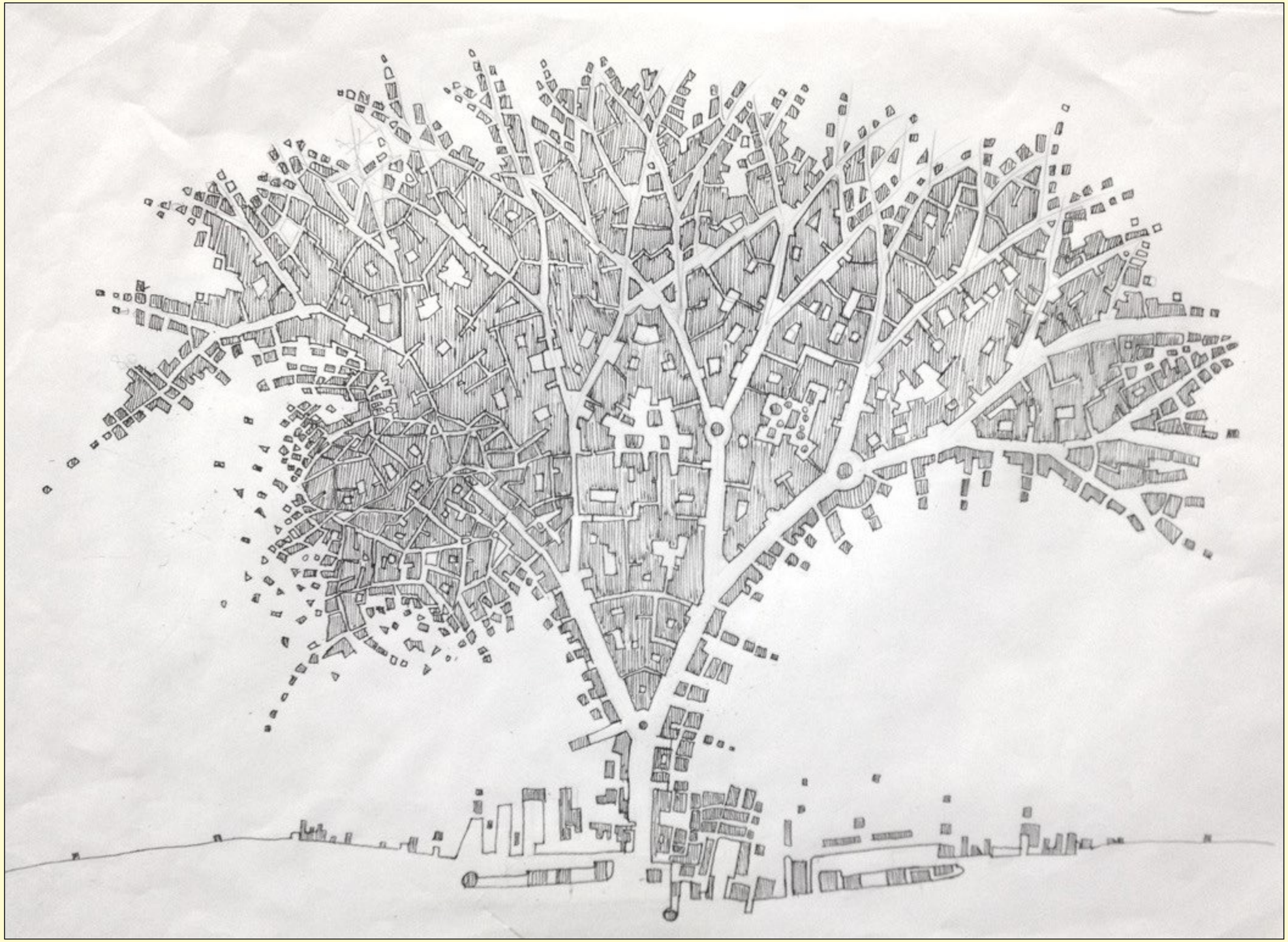


-Wellcome Artist Residency and installation at the UCLH Macmillan Cancer Centre, London, April 2012 - July 2013

-Live performance at the John Lill Music Centre, University of Hertfordshire, Hatfield, 15 July 2012
-Anarchy in the Organism Symposium at the Wellcome Trust, 22 June 2012
-Live performances with the Goldfields Ensemble: Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival November 2013,
Kings Place, London, anuary 2014,

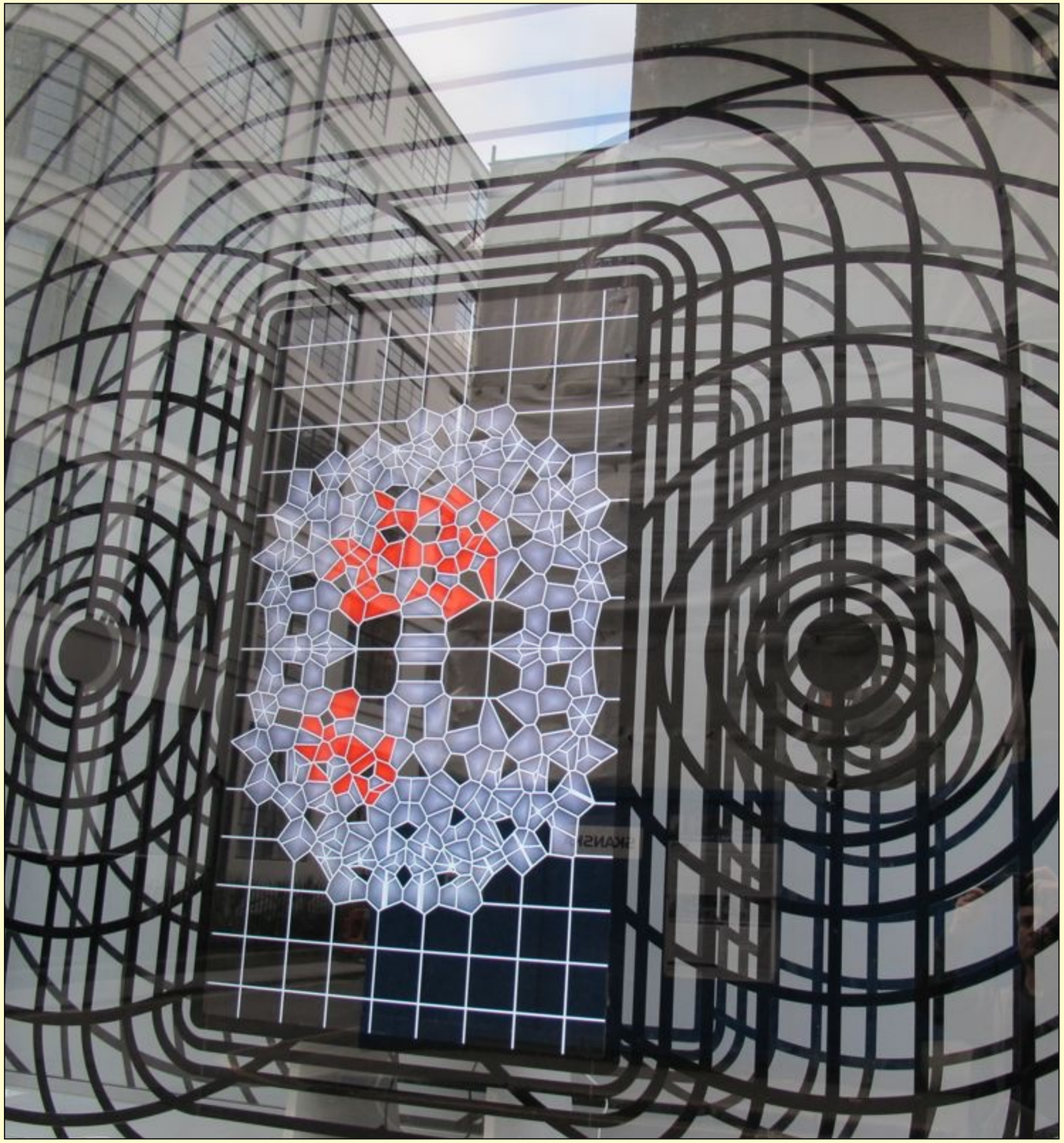
Software: Nick Rothwell
Music: Rob Godman
Patient representative: Gilly Angell
Consulting psychologist : Monia Brizzi
Consulting scientist: Simon Walker-Samuel
Curator: Guy Noble
Commissioned by UCLH Arts

BACK



Oncoburg 2012
Pen on A3 paper,
is a city plan based on an l-system, drawing analogies between urban, organ and plant growth patterns. The non-conforming area is analogous to a mistletoe in a tree.

BACK

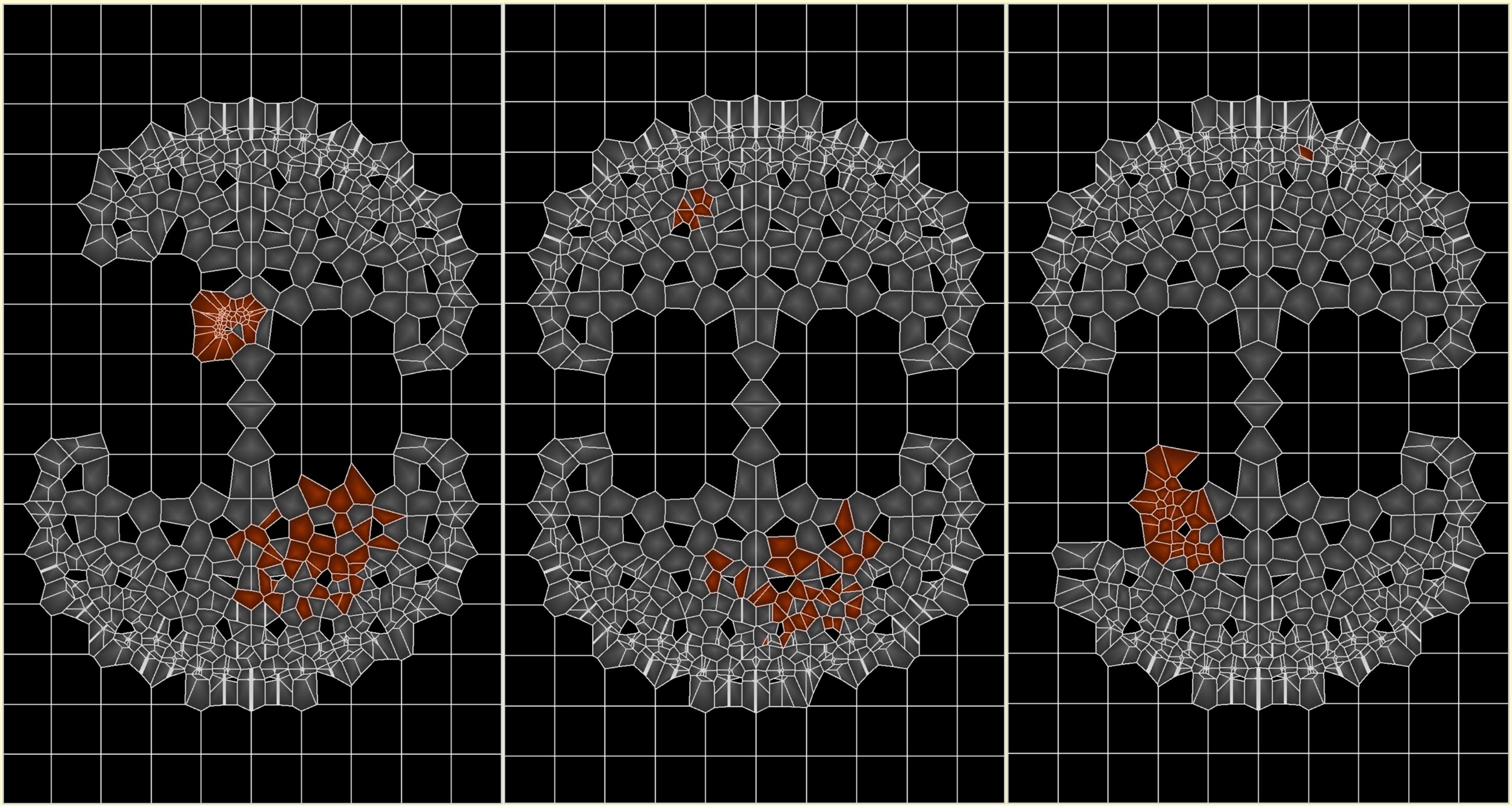


The organisms on the screens grow, mutate and decay - normal aspects of being alive. Is cancer an aberration or is it an embedded characteristic of complex organisms? By situating cancer within a wider context of complex evolving systems from cities to trees to landscapes, this work attempts a reconciliation of cancer as a normative part of being in the world. The computer generated organisms develop cancer to varying degrees.

Their code ensures that their survival rate is similar to that of the general population. They are ambiguous, they could be streetscapes of evolving cities disrupted by the successive impositions of changing social imaginaries. Music generated from the same code and played through window-mounted transducers haunts the streetscape.

AITO was created in collaboration with oncologists, a computer scientist, a psychologist, a composer and others. Participants felt that it deepened and challenged their thinking and attitudes to cancer. A central aspect was the interaction with cancer patients, some of whom initially found the work difficult. It required rigour and care to be responsible for the impact of my artwork on patients and to confront cancer unflinchingly to create a new way of conceptualising and representing cancer.

BACK



Screenshots of tumours growing within the *carcoid* digital organisms

BACK

Capper Street installation view

BACK

Capper Street installation view

BACK

Anarchy performance at Frome Festival 2012

Back

Anarchy in the Organism explores a variety of discourses derived from Simeon Nelson's affecting art installation of the same name. As the artist-in-residence at the UCLH Macmillan Cancer Centre, Nelson engaged with the experience of cancer and with ideas of complexity theory, cybernetics and the philosophy of science, and the biology of the human body to create a work imagining cancer as a complex adaptive system arising within the body, investigating what properties of growth and development the disease shares with social, cultural and natural arenas.

The book features a selection of essays, each detailing the author's differing experiences and subsequent applications of their reaction to this interdisciplinary art project:

Simon Walker-Samuel's "The Architecture of Tumour Blood Vessel Networks" documents his collaboration with the artist and how he designed cancer visualisations based on how normal tissues can transform into a diseased, cancerous state and how he interpreted the artists ideas about analogous processes such as the industrialisation of towns and cities; Jorge Castillo-Sepúlveda & Francisco Tirado's "Complexity, Heterogeneity and Medicine" addresses cancer as a biomedical object, considering it as a material and social assemblage; Monia Brizzi's "Transience and Complexity in Anarchy in the Organism (AITO): Implications for Counselling Psychology" highlights the installation's demands for the viewer to consider the implications of their responses within the phenomenological dimensions of cancer, mortality and ultimately of life itself; finally, Gilly Angell's "A View From the Other Side: A Patient Perspective" is a thoughtful and affecting comment exploring the legitimacy of Nelson's work and a cancer patient's reaction to the artist's appropriation of such a personally and existentially challenging experience.

In addition, the book includes two further expositional texts in the form of notes on the musical accompaniment to the installation by the composer Rob Godman, and notes on the video software for the project designed by computer scientist and artist Nick Rothwell.

Anarchy in the Organism presents integrative ways of looking at disparate phenomena to confront the possible meanings of cancer, from scientific, social, cultural, ethical and existential perspectives.

£12.95 / $19.95

ISBN 978-1-908966-28-5
91995>
9 781908 966285

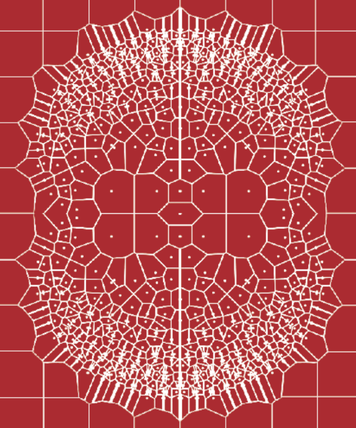
reuse recycle reduce

art design fashion
history photography
theory and things

black dog publishing
london uk

www.blackdogonline.com

ANARCHY IN THE ORGANISM *Simeon Nelson*



ANARCHY IN THE ORGANISM

Simeon Nelson

black dog publishing

Monograph publ. by Black Dog 2014

BACK

An Argument for Living in the Suburbs

2000 x 700 x 300 mm; video screen, plywood, mirror, palm fronds, wire, flint
Collaboration with Daniel Polani

Exhibited in *Are you Seeing what I am Seeing?* UH Galleries Hatfield, UK, 2022

Back

This video sculpture came out of a collaboration with complexity theorist Daniel Polani. It was part of a larger speculative project titled *Mesh Anarchism* investigating possible societies other than the one we have.

It's crisp architectonic form can be seen as both plan or elevation, as a building or as a glimpse into someone's private cupboards.

A swarm of black dots jitter across the central screen. Daniel programmed them to seek to maximise their empowerment. Being too far out or being too hemmed in by the clusters that coalesce from this flux is least fun. On the edge, in the suburban fringe they can choose.

COSMOSCOPE

Back

"A universe simple enough to be understood is too simple to produce a mind capable of understanding it." John Barrow

Cosmoscope 2016-19

Steel, aluminium, programmable leds, integrated speakers
440cm high, 340cm wide, 340 cm deep

Software: Nick Rothwell
Music: Rob Godman

Lumiere Festival, Durham, November 2017
Lumiere Festival, London, January 2018

Laser cut steel, c. 1700 individually addressable LEDs, driver boxes, 12 midrange speakers and 4 subwoofers,

Supported by Wellcome Trust, The Arts Council England, Durham Council, Durham University, University of Hertfordshire
Curator: Artichoke - http://artichoke.uk.com/

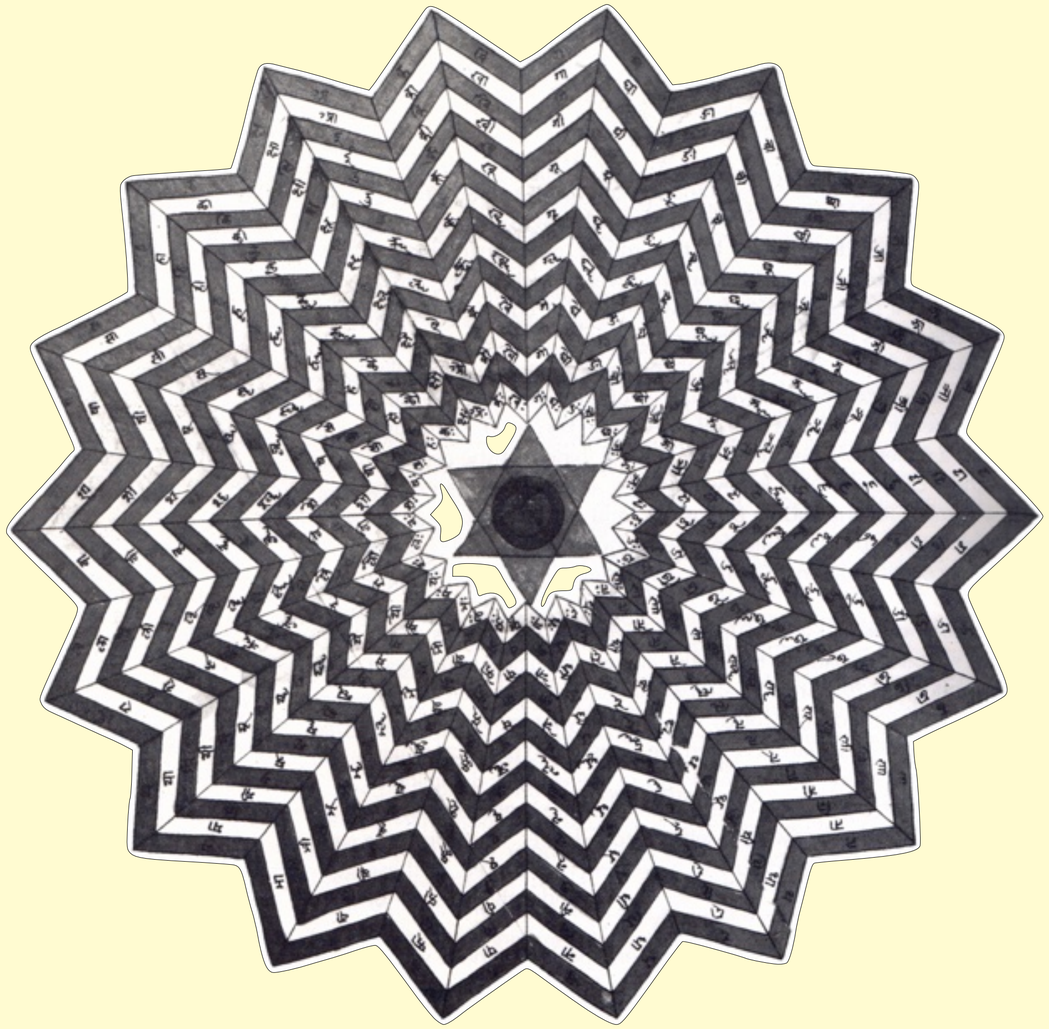
Cosmoscope was a 2-year funded research project I led in collaboration with three physicists Andrew Goodwin (Oxford University) Simon Walker-Samuel (UCL) and Richard Bower (Durham University).

Their respective research into aberrations in the geometry of matter at the sub-atomic and atomic scale, blood-flow dynamics, and galactic clustering showed commonalities in the behavior of matter on the micro, meso and macro levels. *Cosmoscope* gives the parts and the wholes to which they give rise, and the contiguity and discontiguities between them over time, sculptural and sonic form. *It* is a historically informed audio/visual orrery giving sculptural and sonic shape to phenomena, normally seen in isolation and but here placing them connection with each other.

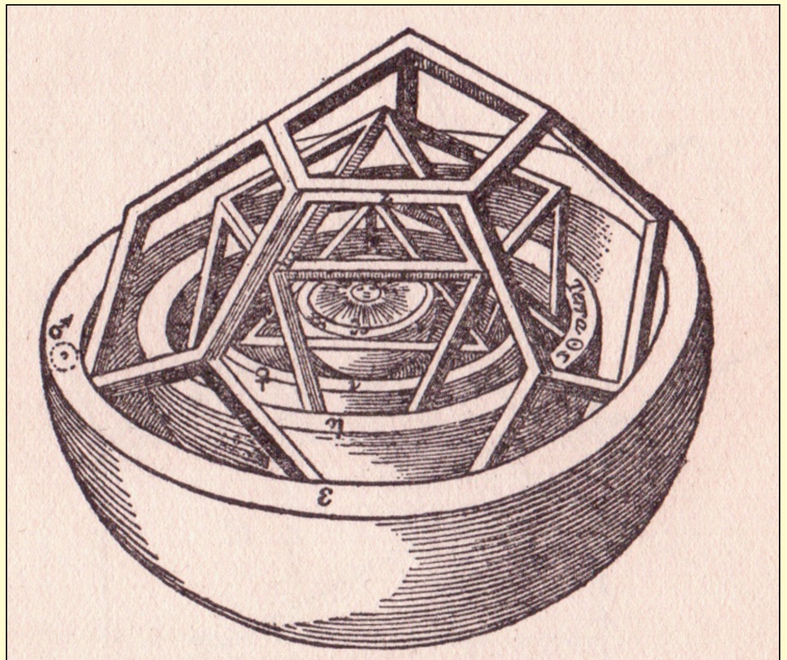
Cosmoscope's structure comprises fifty-two steel nested tetrahedra, hexahedra, octahedra and icosahedra mirroring these scientific mutations.

An immersive soundscape projected over a spatialized speaker system integrated tightly with the structure, plotting the periodicity of orbits and irregularities within quantum and cosmic scales.

Back

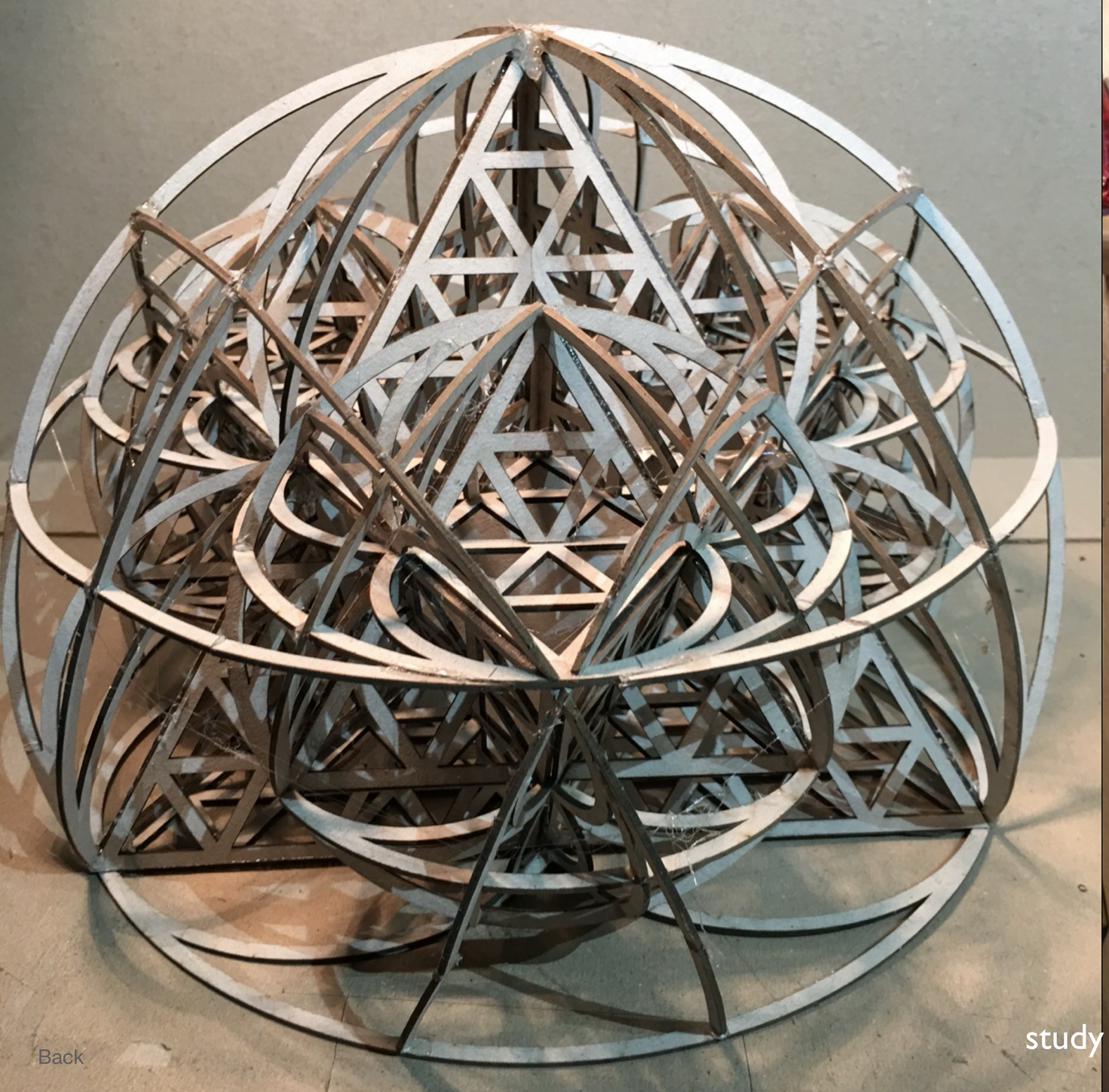


Yantra depicting the evolution and
involution of the cosmos,
c.19th century, Rajasthan



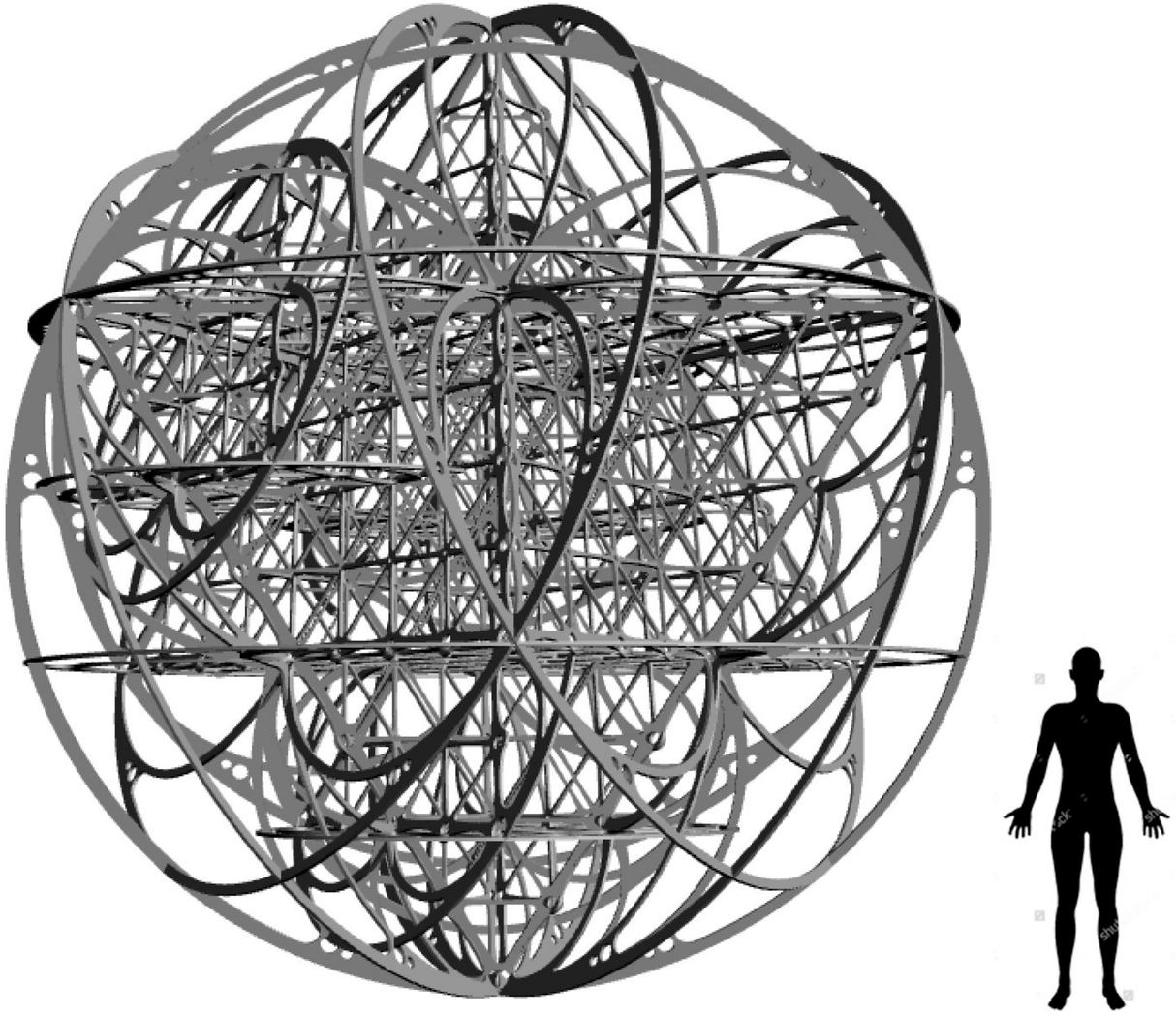
-Inner Portion of Kepler's Cosmographicum.
Fig. 37.)

Back

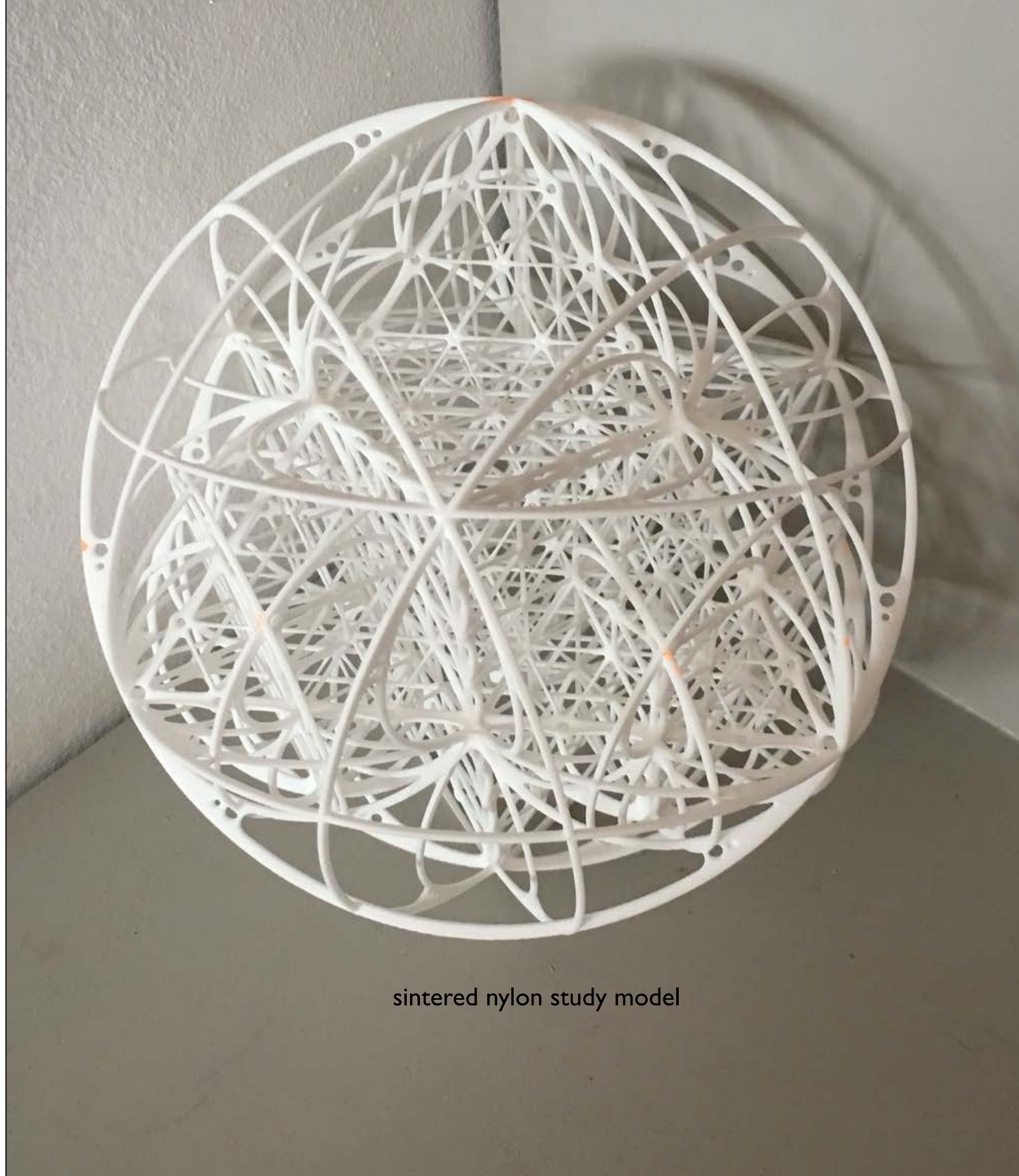


study models

Back



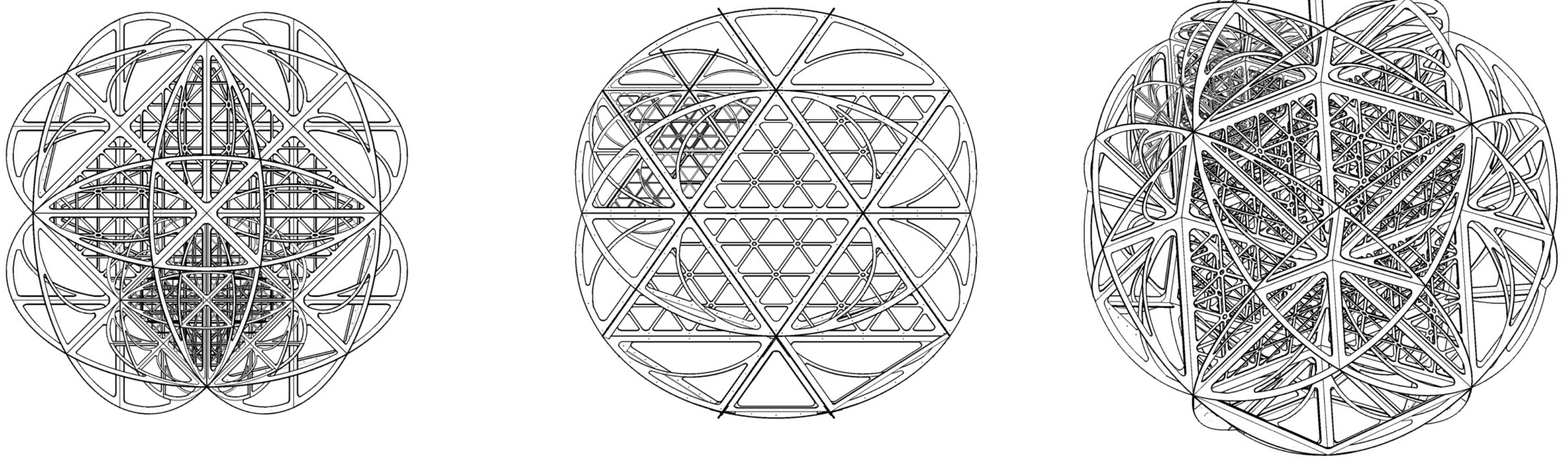
Study render of the Holohedron, the physical manifestation of Cosmoscope to human scale



sintered nylon study model

Back

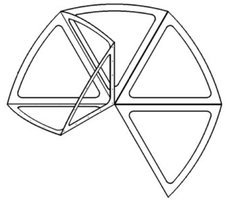
A1



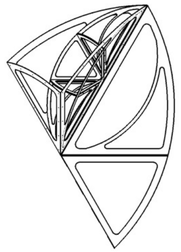
Plan and Elevations - Scale 1:25

Details - Scale 1:2.5

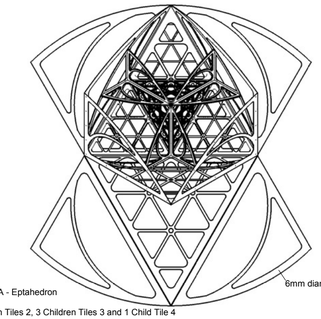
DRAFT



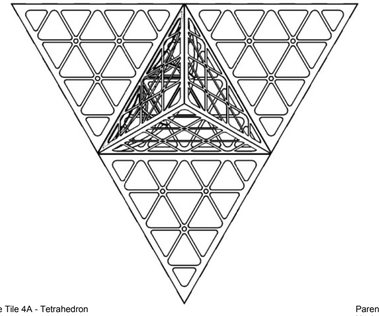
Parent Corner Tile 1A - Square Pyramid
No 5 - 3.0mm
Contains No Children Tiles



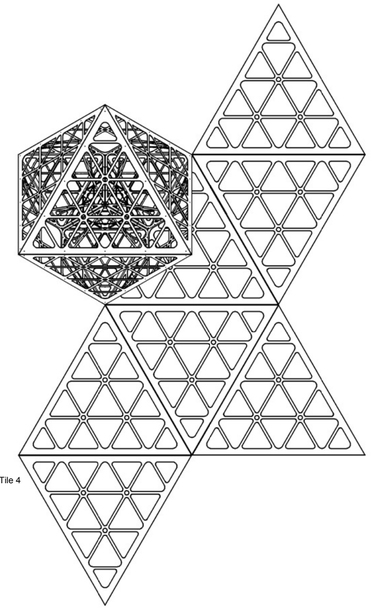
Parent Corner Tile 2A - Tetrahedron
No 4x5=20 - 3.0mm
Contains 1 Child Tile 1 and 2 Children Tiles 2



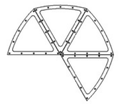
Parent Edge Tile 3A - Eptahedron
No 8 - 3.0mm
Contains 3 Children Tiles 2, 3 Children Tiles 3 and 1 Child Tile 4



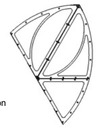
Parent Face Tile 4A - Tetrahedron
No 8 - 3.0mm
Contains 1 Child Tile 1 and 2 Children Tiles 2



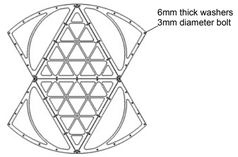
Parent Centre Tile 5A - Octahedron
No 1 - 3.0mm
Contains 3 Children Tiles 2, 3 Children Tiles 3 and 1 Child Tile 4



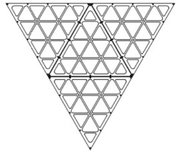
Child Corner Tile 1 - Square Pyramid
No 6 - 1.5mm



Child Corner Tile 2 - Tetrahedron
No 6x2+4x3=24 - 1.5mm



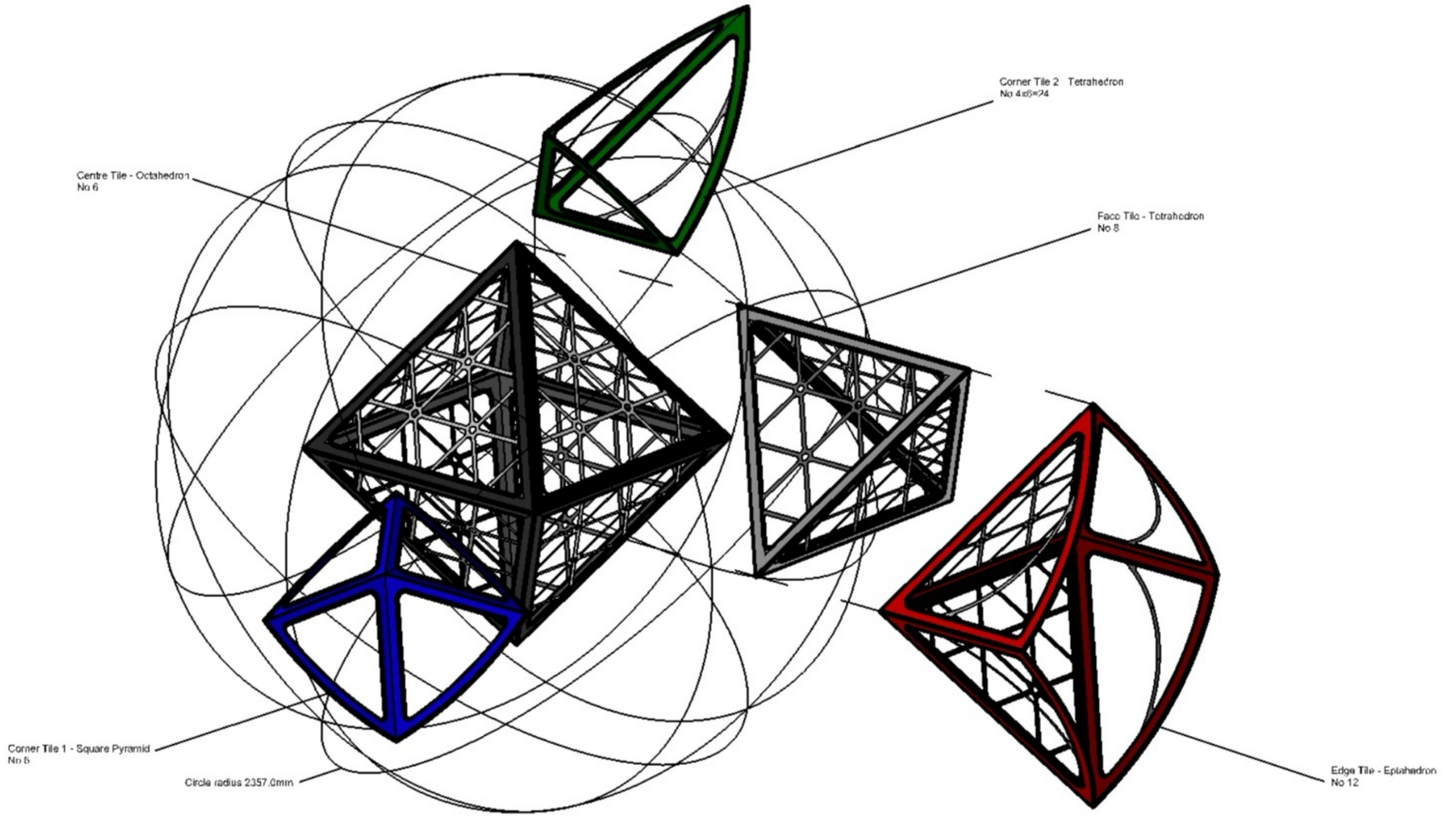
Child Edge Tile - Eptahedron
No 4x3=12 - 1.5mm



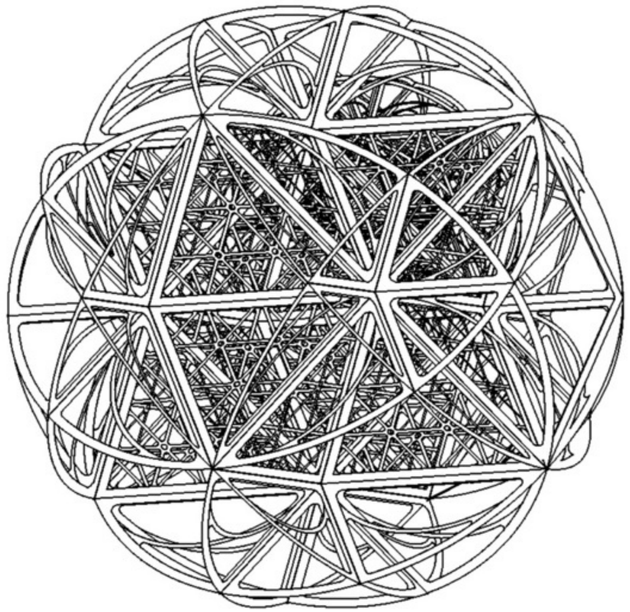
Child Face Tile - Tetrahedron
No 4 - 1.5mm

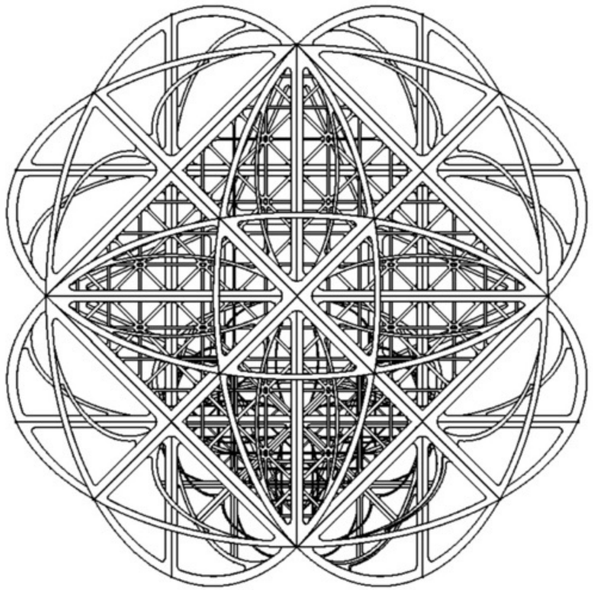
Back

Notes:
Total tonnage approx 1.6t

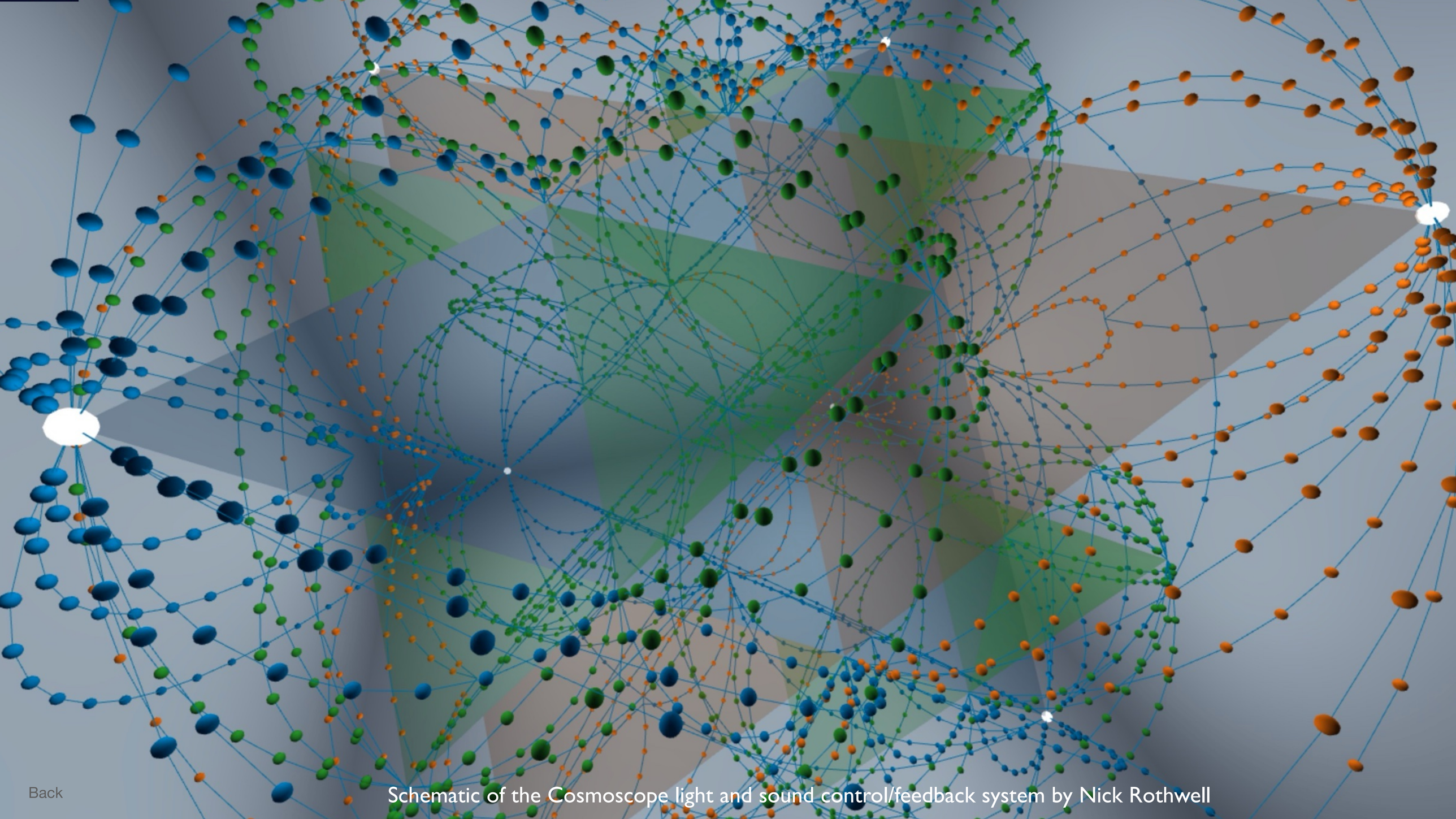


Exploded Isometric View





Back



Schematic of the Cosmoscope light and sound control/feedback system by Nick Rothwell

Back

Cosmoscope construction

Cosmoscope, Durham Lumiere November 2017

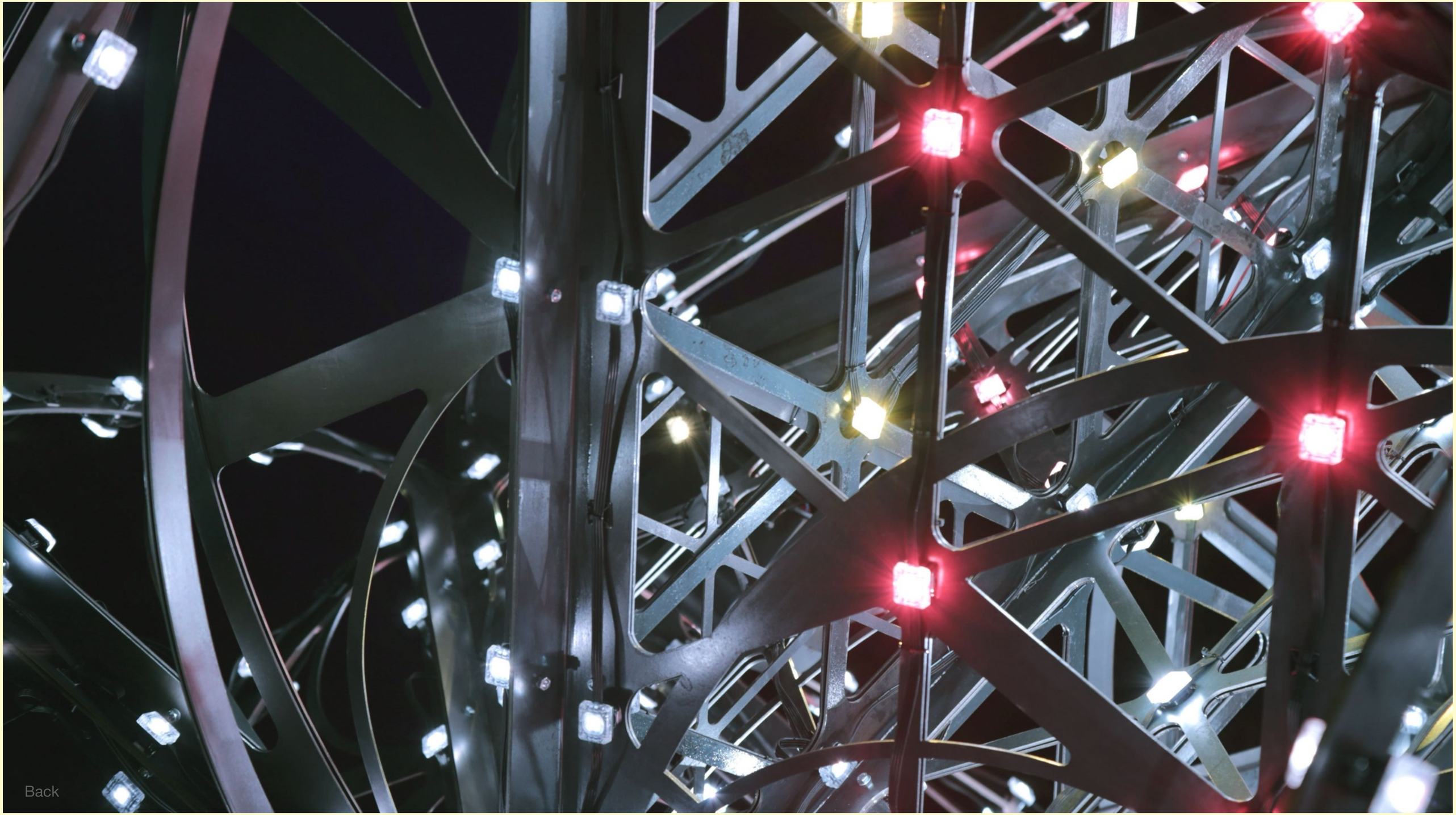
Back

Cosmoscope, Durham Lumiere November 2017

Back

Cosmoscope, Durham Lumiere November 2017

Back

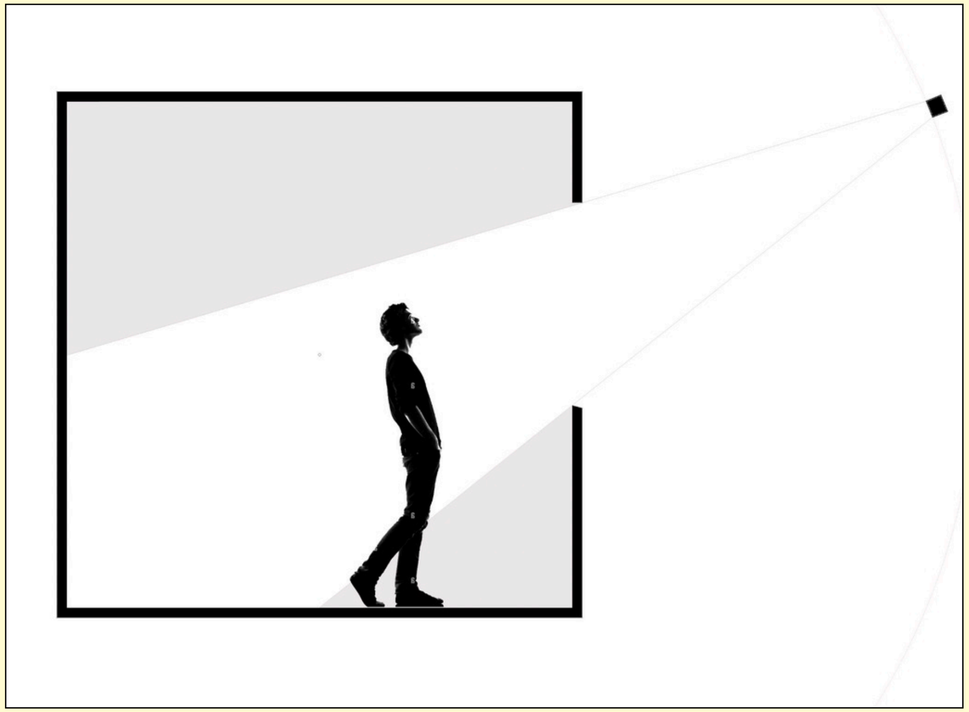


Back

Back

Interior view of viewing booth prototype maquette

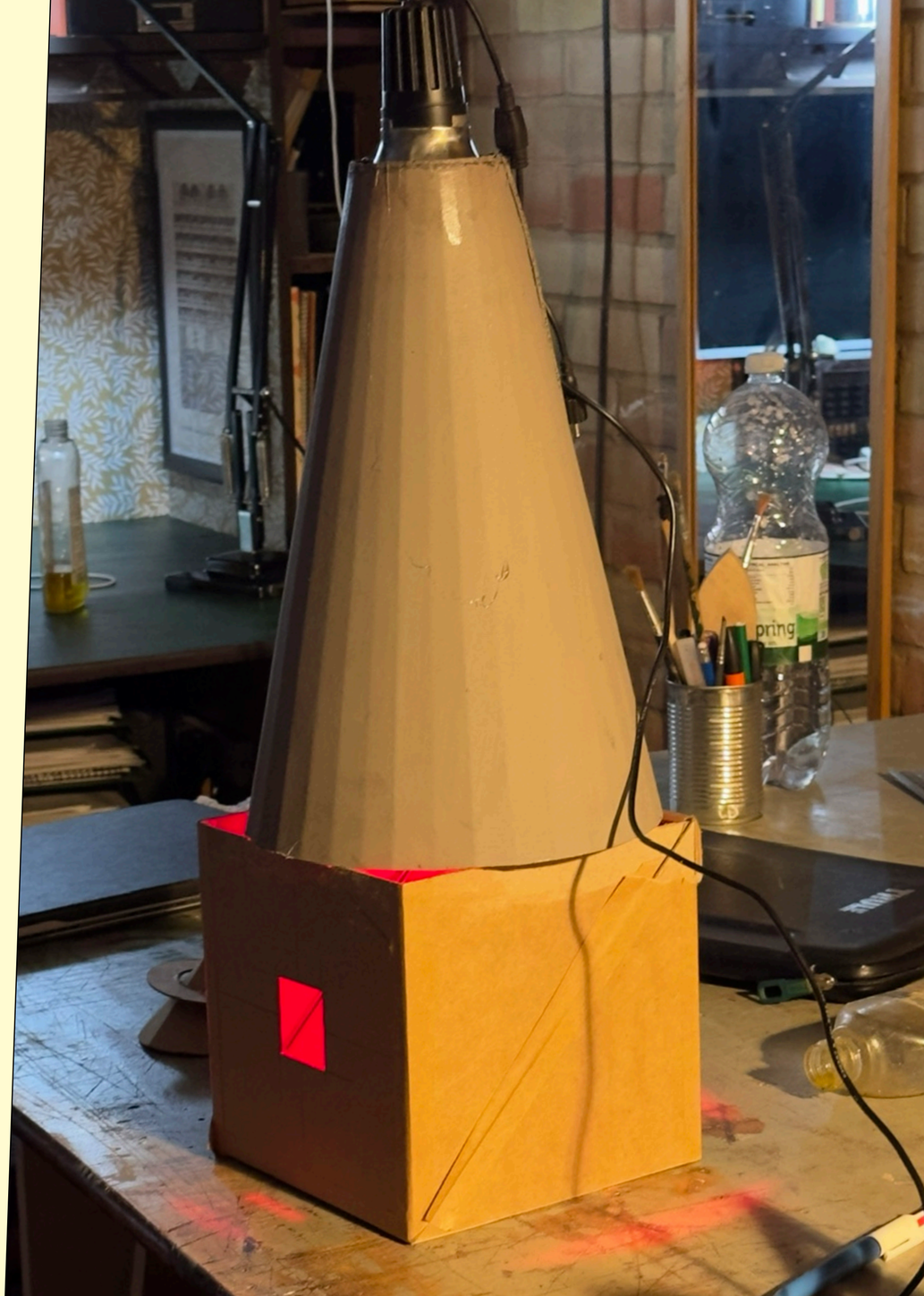
Back



An ongoing project with astrophysicists at Hertfordshire to replicate the light of distant stars from the vantage point of their exoplanets.

On entering a black box 12 x 12 x 12 feet, the viewer is blinded by intense otherworldly light apparently streaming through a giant window.

The viewer encounters a spectroscopic signature different to our sun and bathes in the ‘sunlight’ of an alien world many lightyears away.



Back

Calibrating LED spotlights to the spectral light signatures of chosen stars

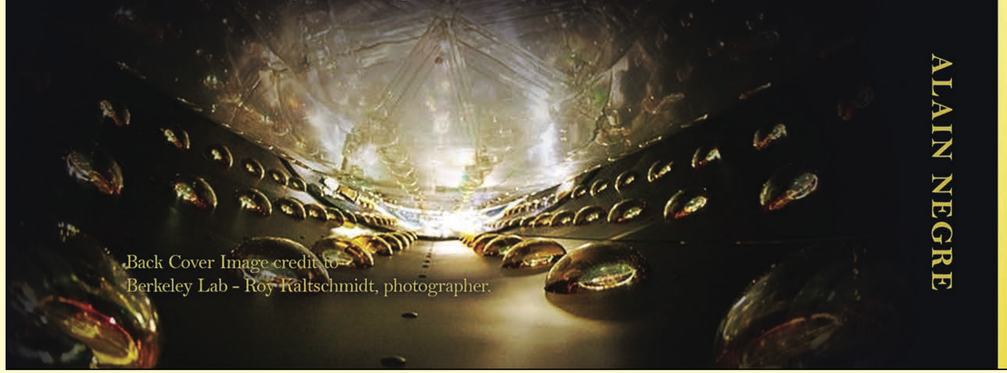
Back

Mathematics is built from the natural integers 1, 2, 3, etc. Numbers are fundamental ordering elements and possess qualitative aspects that are widely present in many traditions such as the Pythagorean or the I Ching. During the building process of mathematical construction, these factors—which physicist Wolfgang Pauli called "primary possibilities" of the unconscious—abandon their symbolic meaningful charge to become quantitative mathematical numbers. Since then, although quantity and significance have been deployed in independent fields of knowledge, qualitative unconscious halos of the numbers have not disappeared so far. Pauli met them in his quest towards the famous "exclusion principle". They might seep into the scientific discourse that has reached the limits of its method, which sees the observer "coming in through the back door," as an integral part of the phenomenon "whole universe" modeled by contemporary cosmology. Through the reflection of the archetypal number, detected as "rhythmic configurations of energy" in the history of the universe, the author reveals unprecedented links between certain events in this story and raises the questions of their use in theoretical physics as an aid in interpreting and in suggesting new avenues of research.

Alain Negre is an independent researcher, retired from French Education.

"More and more I see the psycho-physical problem as the key to the overall spiritual situation of our age, and the gradual discovery of a new ("neutral") psycho-physical standard language, whose function is symbolically to describe an invisible, potential form of reality that is only indirectly inferable through its effects, also seems to me an indispensable prerequisite for the emergence of the new hieros gamos predicted by you."

(Pauli to Jung, Letters, May 17th, 1952)



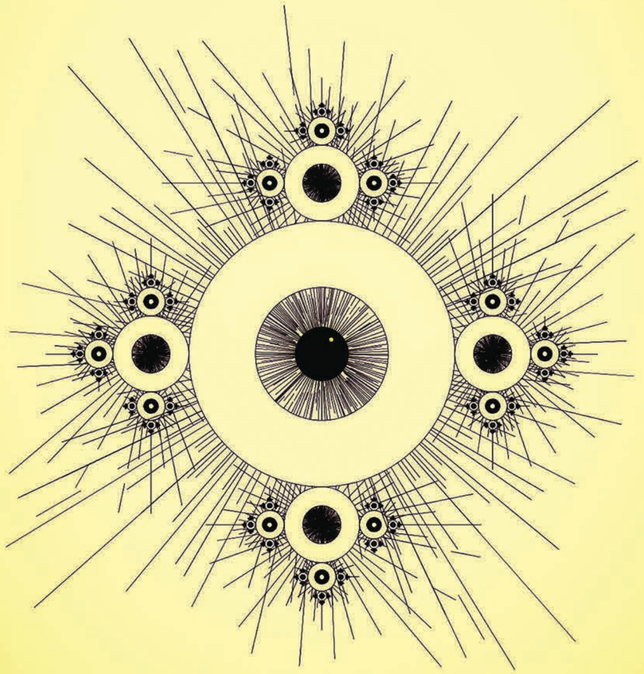
Back Cover Image credit to:
Berkeley Lab - Roy Kaltschmidt, photographer.

THE ARCHETYPE OF THE NUMBER AND ITS REFLECTIONS IN CONTEMPORARY COSMOLOGY

ALAIN NEGRE

The Archetype of the Number and its Reflections in Contemporary Cosmology

Psychophysical Rhythmic Configurations



Building on Jung, Pauli and von Franz works

ALAIN NEGRE

Back

Auṃ bhūr bhuvaḥ svaḥ

tát savitúr váreṇyaṃ

bhárgo devásya dhīmahi

dhíyo yó naḥ pracodáyāt

No part of this document may be reproduced or transmitted without the express permission of the artist or nominated representative © Simeon Nelson Studio