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IMAGE BY: CARA LEE WADE

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interview: mara magyarosi- laytner

Please give a brief background of yourself.

Hi, I'm Mara Magyarosi-Laytner. I live a little bit outside of Detroit, MI and have been a practicing artist for about twenty years. I've been in school for the arts for most of my life and have collected degrees a bit like Pokémon cards – I started off in photography through a three hour per day high school certificate program through William D. Ford Career-Technical Center in Westland, MI. Once I decided that I was obsessed with photography, I went to community college and worked at a portrait studio at the same time – a true adventure for a few years! After that, I snagged my BFA in Photography at the College for Creative Studies in Detroit. I am currently finishing up my MFA in Photography at the Savannah College of Art in Design and everything should be wrapped up by June! I have chosen to center my practice around combining experimental processes and exploring identity and mental health through a symbolic and poetic lens. My work has been exhibited and published internationally in a variety of exciting places and I'm always looking for more ways to engage. I am also the founder of the Silver Water Collective, a group of ten women artists from the United States and Canada who focus on fine art photography in a multitude of topics and methods.

Please state your artist statement.

The Untended Garden is an exploration of my own personal coming of age as a woman seen through the metaphor of a garden. Throughout the beginning of my thirties, I've spent so much time questioning who I am and why I see myself in that way. Self-portraits paired with experimental abstract imagery are how I am processing through those ideas. My work emphasizes texture both through the recording of the initial photograph and the rerecording of the materiality of the image transfer in the print. By experimenting with different photographic methods and processes, I am using those processes to reinforce symbolically what a garden can be. The garden shifts continuously throughout the season. Photography works in a similar way - the initial though floating, capturing light physically, aesthetic choices, the materiality of the physical print, then back to the thought, or new thoughts, again.



What role does self-reflection play in your work?

The Untended Garden is about the garden and the continuous shift and evolution throughout time in relation to my vision of myself – inherently, this is all self-reflection. The garden has seeds, beginning growth, roots taking hold, stems and leaves reaching high, different flora throughout time, and then an eventual death, just to repeat again. Roots are representative of the beginning, growth, and transformation. We're grounded through what we came from. Roots have the ability to nourish or hinder, depending on what they are feeding through to the rest of the system. Similar to veins in the human body, when roots are poisoned, the rest of the body reacts. Additionally, the range of flora during different stages of life are representative of the maturing process. I purposefully chose to utilize flowers at all parts of the life cycle in the images as a comparison to the damage that is perceived in women as they age. As the garden changes throughout the seasons, this cycle repeats. This continual transformation relates back to the understanding that I, as a woman, have of myself. By concealing myself within the garden, I am representing looking through the past through the lens of who I am now. In a similar way that hurricanes and other forces of nature are named for women, this coming of age is causing a reverberation into the foundation of what I previously believed I would be. Expectations do not meet reality, but the new reality requires acceptance. In a similar way, the garden will both react to expectations and push outside of them. Deep controlling of the direction of growth results in a stifled response. Freedom to be exactly what the garden requires causes flourishing.

What role does texture play in your artwork?

With The Untended Garden, the texture of the photographic transfer creates a layer between my skin and those who would view it – both to work against the idea of perfectionism in the body and to maintain a separation. The flowers placed on the image emphasize that separation, creating the physical and mental space between. Skin, hair, petals, and paper can parallel and the textural quality of each can be subdued or emphasized. The work has been transforming in an additional direction where I am adding objects into the image that relate to stereotypes of expectations in women. Texture is an important tool for those as well – the alcohol based transfer process that I am utilizing on paper slightly obscures and blurs the details, similar to how women are required to obscure and blur the details of their aging or their own dreams in relation to the assumptions around them. In the image The Untended Garden – The Coming of Age, the smoother texture of the smaller flower reaches towards the rougher texture of the larger bloom, the juxtaposition bringing to mind the curiosity that younger girls have while they watch the older women around them adjusting to the changes that come with the span of time.



How do the experimental processes involved with creating your images add value to your work?

I think this is an interesting question because inherently, anything that can make your work more unique adds value, right? The “hand of the artist” is often a little harder to detect in photographic work because of the influence of the camera as a mechanical object. This is why I have always been an advocate for a photograph not being truly complete until the print is done, because every step from the initial idea, shooting, editing, and printing involves decisions made specific to the work. It just so happens that for me, printing involves a few dozen more adventurous steps. I have been transferring photographs onto a variety of surfaces for a little over a decade, but every time it feels like a new space for exploration. When it comes to this project in specific, the experimental process adds an additional layer of meaning to the work, specifically in the conversation of obscuring details.

Where/who do you get your inspiration from?

I’ve been passionate about photography in all forms and functions since I was fifteen years old, so my inspiration bank has been growing for so much time. One of my favorite ways to explore this community is through photography books – the one of first times I felt acknowledged as an artist was when I was given a Wolfgang Tillmans book by one of my cousins after I decided to go to art school. I’ve been adding to the collection for years and now my students get to explore it as well. Speaking of books, two of my absolute favorites right now are Bea Nettles and Cig Harvey. For Bea, I love Flamingo In The Dark – her way of using experimentation throughout her artistic career to explore her own personal story in such an honest way is something to behold. I also just got Harvest of Memory and Complexities, and I can’t wait to dive in further! And at this point, I feel like the world has celebrated Cig Harvey’s Blue Violet book – how wonderful that a combination of poetry and identity exploration around gardens came out right at the perfect moment when I needed a shake and a lift in my own practice. I’ve been chasing the rest of her books, but they’re a little more elusive – I feel like I will find them someday in the back corner of a dusty little bookstore, and it will feel like the discovery of a lifetime.

What do you want people to learn from your artwork?

I often utilize my artwork as a jumping off point for empathetic discussions. I’ve spent most of my life exploring different art museums and gallery spaces and the way that women are often depicted in the art world is often angelic and quite frankly, an impossible standard to hold up to. I am excited to be creating work at a time where many women are looking at the expectations around them and shaking up the status quo. I am hoping that my own investigation into personal acceptance helps others view their own flaws a little kinder while they are looking at themselves in the mirror. We each are an inherently beautiful part of this evolution, and The Untended Garden will continue the cycle long after we are gone.



interview: dan herrera

Please give a brief background of yourself.

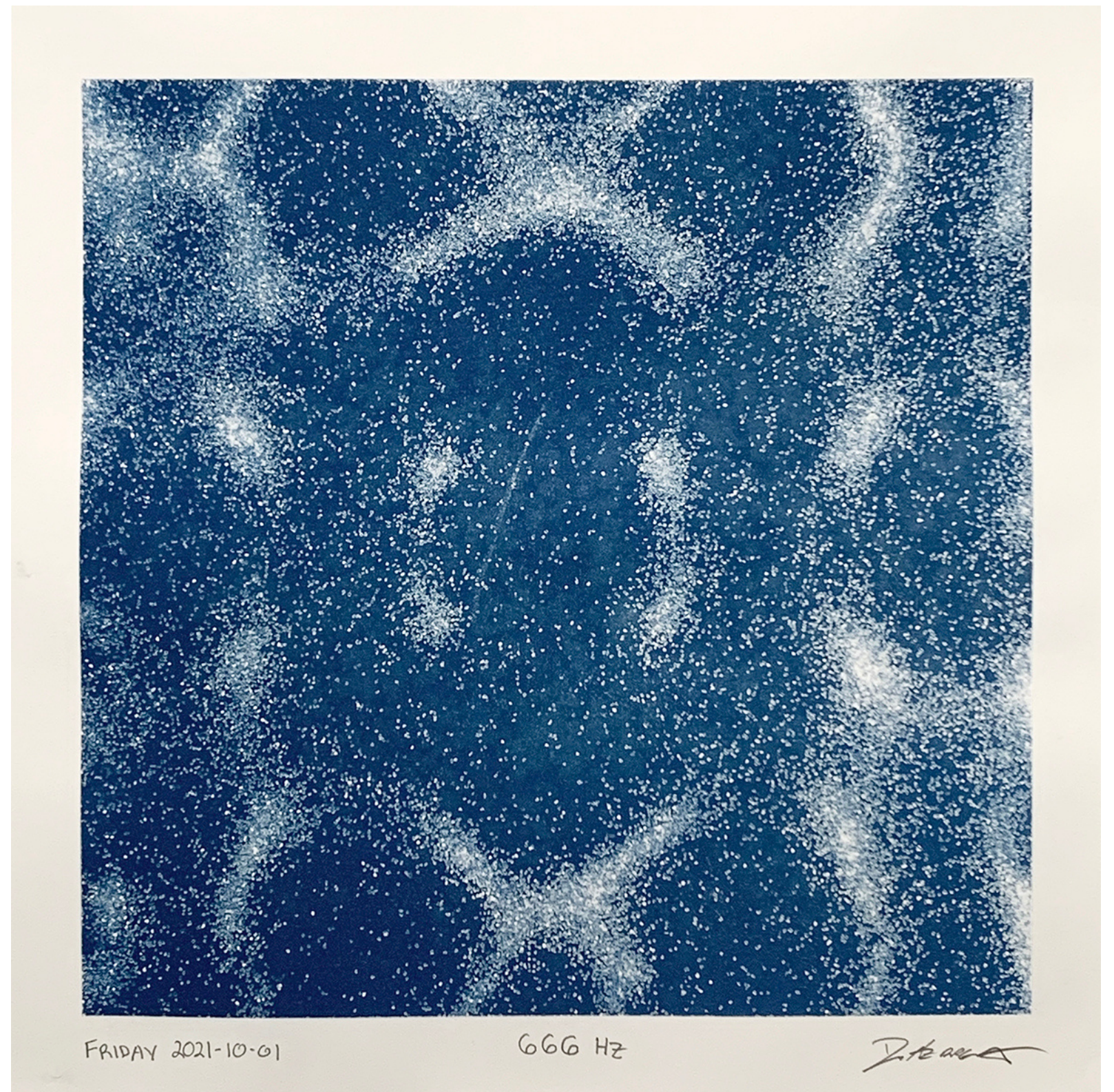
My name is Dan Herrera. I'm an imagemaker and educator living and working out of Sacramento, CA. I'm inspired by the power of objects (in addition to images) as a means to tell a story. The majority of my work involves making photographs with robust physical qualities that transcend what can be communicated on screen. I love exploring analog techniques and the science behind photography. I started taking photos when I was 10 years old using a plastic 110 camera in the 1980's. Currently, many themes of my work are an extension of these early experiments with film as a young boy. I typically work on 2-3 (sometimes more) projects or ideas simultaneously. Sometimes these projects overlap in content, sometimes not, but they inform one another conceptually. A thread that continues to inform what I do is how the aesthetics of specific photo processes can be used as a narrative element.

Please state your artist statement.

In this new body of experimental work, I'm using soundwaves and lightwaves to make images of resonance without using a camera. Using a chladni plate - which is a rigid plate supported by a post in its center - I sprinkle some sand onto the surface and vibrate it at certain frequencies. Exotic and beautiful patterns appear as the sound pushes through the sand medium. The higher the frequency, the more elaborate the pattern. I then contact print the pattern created using the cyanotype printing method. I wanted to use Cyanotype, because of its historical connection with early technical blueprint drawings, and the experimental biological specimen work of Anna Atkins. Cyanotype chemistry is sensitive to UV light - which is a waveform that can't be seen with the human eye, but can be felt and experienced (think of a sunburn). Soundwaves can't be seen by the human eye, but can be also felt and experienced. This work makes connections between what can't be seen but can be felt.

Please elaborate on the process used to create your pieces.

Cymatics Is the study of wave phenomena, particularly sound waves. A sound wave propagates in air through motion of the air. So by pushing soundwaves through other mediums (like sand), you can see traces of the node and antinode patterns that represent different frequencies. I am just contact-printing those patterns using Cyanotype.



How do the experimental processes involved with creating your images add value to your work?

I think in an age of megapixels, camera phones, and a perpetual stream of digital images – my work invites the viewer to slow down and experience photography in its infancy. A time when alchemy and craft were used to capture light and shadow, affixing it in permanence. Anna Atkins made blueprints of algae using cutting edge science known as photography. I wanted to use the cyanotype in a similar fashion exploring the idea of printing sound. Broadly speaking, I primarily work in 19th century printing techniques and hand-made processes. I will often mix and coat my own photographic emulsions, which include: cyanotype, gum bichromate, and wet plate collodion. This approach to slowing down and having my hand present in all stages of the process produces prints that are both rich in content and physical surface quality.

How do you choose which sounds you use? Do they have any significance?

There is a rabbit hole I went down looking into the cultural significance of numbers, and numerology. But I favor higher frequencies simply because the patterns are more fascinating to me. Since I started the project, I've been studying and trying to learn as much about math and the frequencies given off by natural phenomena that my brain can handle, so that's where the work is headed.

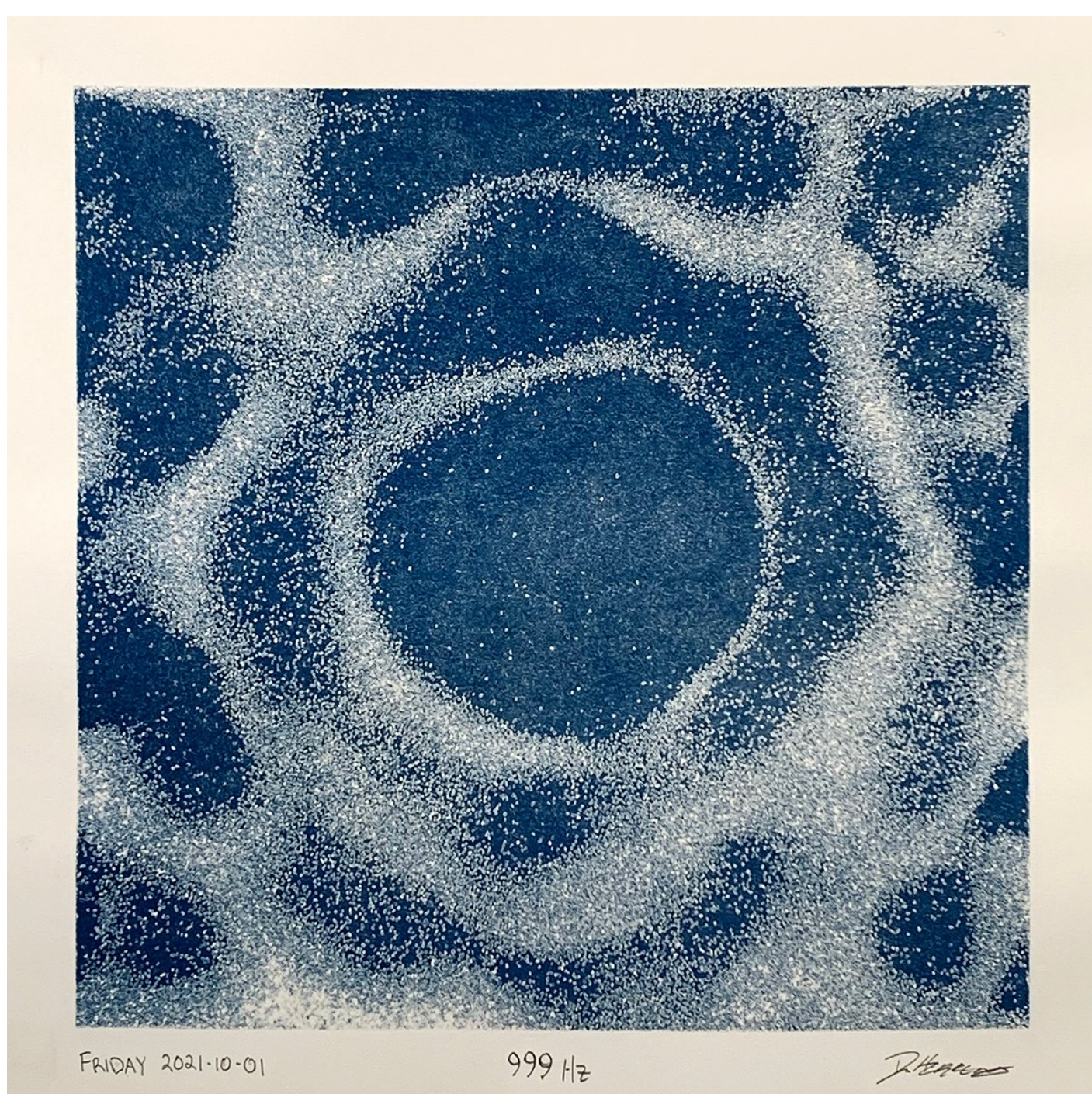
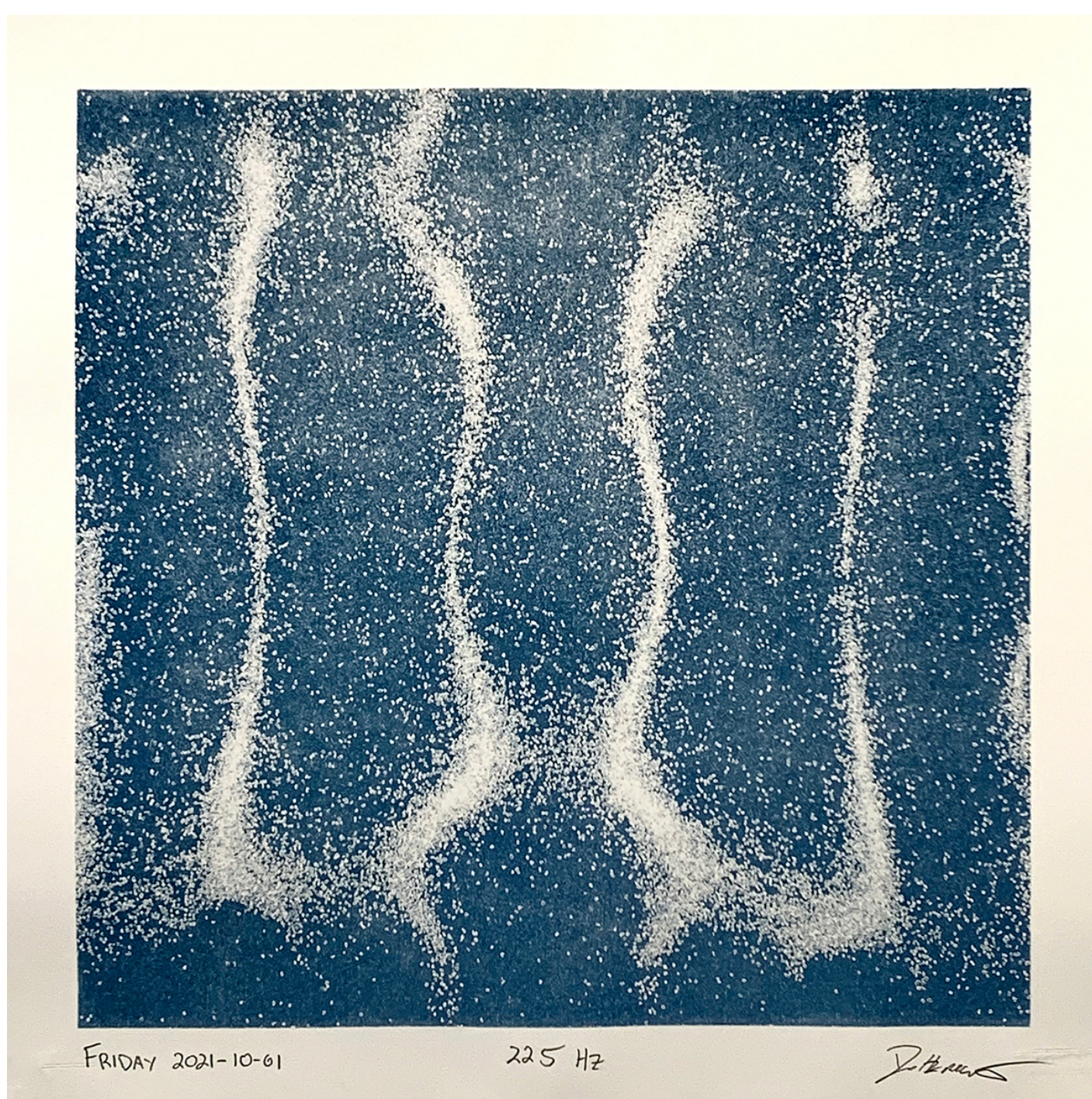
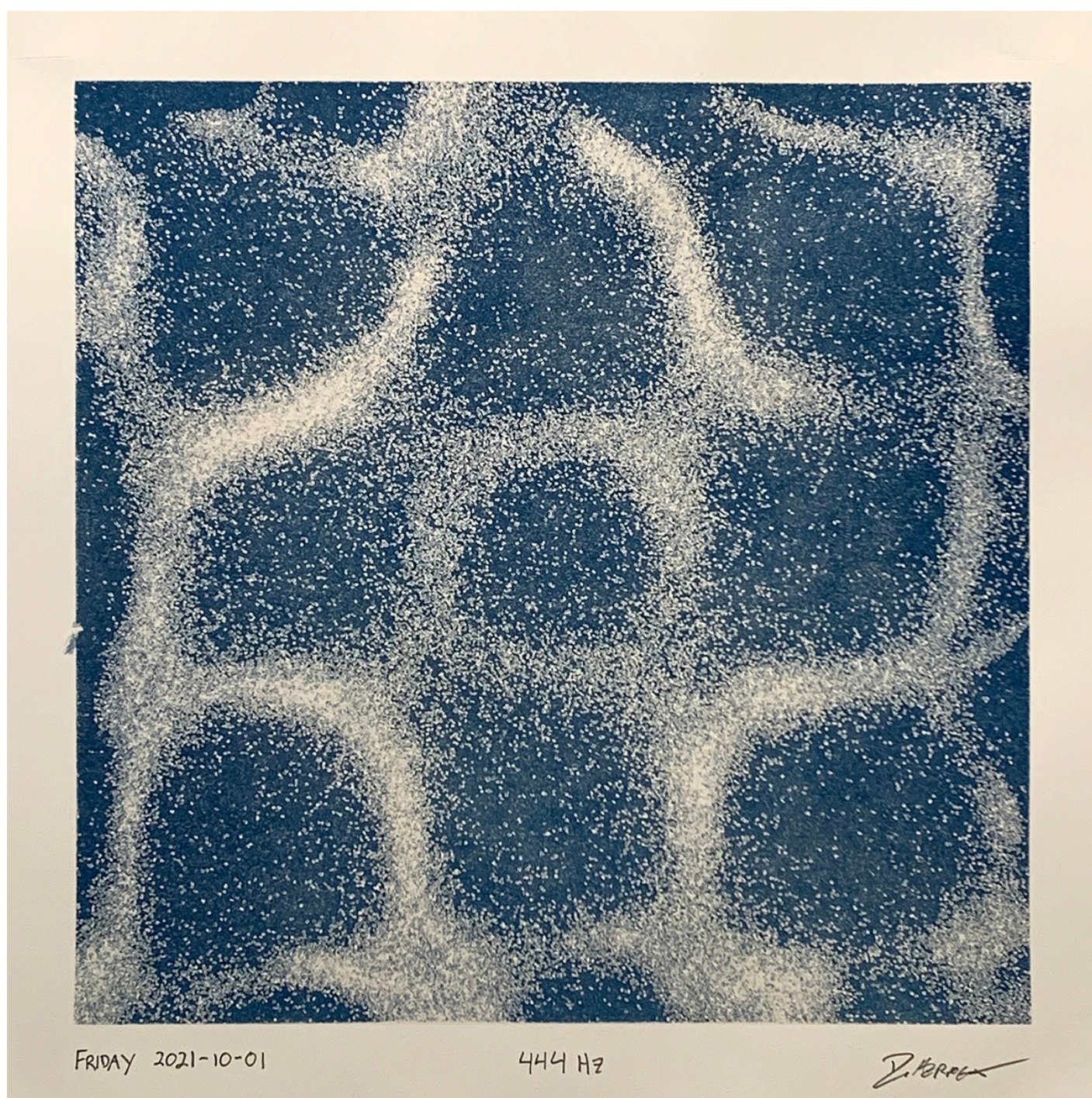
Where/who do you get your inspiration from?

I joke about this a lot, but I really have no idea. I think I'm naturally curious so I like to learn more about lots of different things. This particular project was inspired by just thinking about how people, and our brains, perceive outside stimuli. There are waveforms and vibrations happening around us at all times.

We pick up on some and not others. Everything around us has a certain frequency at which it vibrates. We vibe with some people and not others, you know? I will feel an unspoken connection to certain people and places that I can't explain. Maybe it's the frequency vibing with my own.

What do you want people to learn from your artwork?

There are nearly 200 years of photographic processes, techniques, and history to pull from. A person can learn about an old process and combine it with a new process all from home. We live in such an image saturated culture that is ripe with distraction, and I'm just as addicted to Instagram as everyone else, so it's refreshing to just make things with my hands. Honestly, if someone looks at my work for more than a few seconds that's a win. If I can steal their attention for longer, that's great too.



interview: claire mauvais

Please give a brief background of yourself.

My name is Claire Mauvais, 1992. I'm a french photographer. I am a self-taught visual artist using, essentially, analog photography. I grew up in the Caribbean and French Polynesia, I arrived in Europe at the age of 15. After that I have lived in Italy, Portugal, and now I'm based in Turkey.

Please state your artist statement.

In my photography, I'm giving back the time, the energy and the feelings or emotions that I left in the places I used to live. I believe we are abandoning a part of ourselves in the places we left. Therefore, my work is focused on memories, and exploring those other parts of myself. But my story isn't so personal, being uprooted is a very universal topic actually.



Where/who do you get your inspiration from?

My inspirations are really multiple. For the film director, I love Maya Deren, David Lynch, Jodorowski. I really admire when an artist is pushing an idea or concept in a way we haven't seen before. I also love Francis Bacon a lot, I enjoy listening to R. Stevie Moore, learning about ancient civilizations and their habits.

How has your photography helped you reflect on your life experiences?

I love to work physically on my images, it's empowering me. This is the way I found to reclaim those lost memories. Besides that, art is mostly a catharsis way to the things I've lived. I don't really want to shoot reality as it is, since everything is subjective. Experimental photography is my escape.

What do you like most about the act of altering your photographs with acid and paint?

I guess there is a childish force in altering my photography, I want to have a lot of fun in this process. Sometimes it works, sometimes it's not aesthetically pleasing. The mistakes are the best part actually. They push me to do better and to find solutions for a good -controlled-surprise.

How do the experimental processes involved with creating your images add value to your work?

I guess working on experimental photography has developed my curiosity a lot, and allows me to renew myself all the time. I'm always looking for new aesthetics ; I burn, overpaint, pour acid or cut my photography. It's very refreshing to be able to transform photography in different ways.



interview: jayne simmonds

Please give a brief background of yourself.

I'm Jayne Simmonds, artist and designer in Kent in the South East of the UK. My career has been in design management for both the tabletop and the travel goods industries and still work as a product consultant for a number of UK brands. In-between deadlines and demands of these businesses, a more self-driven, personal search for fulfilment has been sort and printmaking has become that outlet. I have a studio based at home where I disappear to draw, print and occasionally paint (though they are kept hidden!).

We are extremely fortunate to live in the countryside but are also close to the coast, so the seasons, the local flora and fauna are integrated into our daily walks with our beautiful long nosed greyhound. Both the tenacity of nature and it's fragility woven with my passion for gardening means that my work has a distinctly botanical aptitude.

Please state your artist statement.

My work is an exploration of the tension between the power and the fragility of the botanical world. I largely works in the medium of Cyanotype, one of the oldest forms of photography and with direct contact between paper, sunlight and form, an image is created. It is a spontaneous and unpredictable material, making it absorbing, mesmerising, and on occasion frustrating. It has the ability to create bold silhouettes and within it the fragility and delicate structure of petals. It is a beautiful contrast. The materials applied produce a rich tapestry of blues and used in conjunction with inks and watercolours, able to encapsulate the fleeting image of flora.

Cyanotype making came to the fore through lockdown, allowing me to take a more immediate study of my surroundings and what is important to the survival of myself both physically and psychologically but also through the wider sociological impact of this traumatic time and our perilous blue planet.





How do the experimental processes involved with creating your images add value to your work?

Experimentation comes through the lack of satisfaction of the end image, always wanting to see around the next corner and what the possibilities are. I am attracted to the lack of control of the medium, the spontaneity and unknown it delivers and knowing it'll always have the upper-hand. As with most printing processes, the reveal at the end is adrenalin inducing and drives the experimentation forward. Whether the experimentation adds value will always be determined by the viewer, but the journey of the continuous exploration and stretch of the materials in conjunction with composition, scale and repetition creates my own self worth and well being.

How do you choose which plant specimens to use in your work?

Locality is important in plants selected, so either from the garden or the immediate countryside. I seek forms with fluidity and those with contrasting structures to facilitate interest in building and layering the composition. Wherever possible I like to include long stems and leaves, as laid out in old botanical illustrations. Diaphanous single petal flowers, such as poppies or cranesbills allows light to penetrate and leaves a beautiful impression of the inner structure of the petals. Through the seasons different flowers become available, unfortunately only last a few prints before the petals disintegrate so I make sure that I dry some at the same time so that I have a ready supply, particularly through the winter months.

What surfaces do you choose to print on and why?

Surface is the area least explored, but I do work with the differential between cartridge paper and handmade, where the image is much tighter and crisper on cartridge. Up-cycling, principally white card food packaging takes the cyanotype solution well and pools beautifully along the crease lines. It also creates idiosyncratic shapes that question the compositional expectations and I have used in diptych and triptych pieces. The number of repetitions is limitless; bigger works are on the agenda!

Where/who do you get your inspiration from?

I came to cyanotype printing accidentally, a workshop came up on Instagram that was only a few miles away and thought I'd give it a go. I was hooked from that day on! So I came to this medium without any preconceptions or knowns; so the overt inspiration is the natural world around me rather than who. Keeping your eyes open and the mind a-tuned to possibilities allows for even the mundane to inspire. However, there will always be artists I gravitate to; Paul Nash, for the stillness and open skies, Jasper John drawings, Patrick Caulfield master of the graphic line, Georgia O'Keeffe bountiful florals and David Hockney's pure joy of life, are the immediate people that come to mind.

There are many, many more!

I am not familiar with the work of photographers, so you will have to forgive me; though there is one that I have to mention, Stephen Gill. His work is awe inspiring.





Hannah Latham



Dennis Humphrey



Devon Wiggers



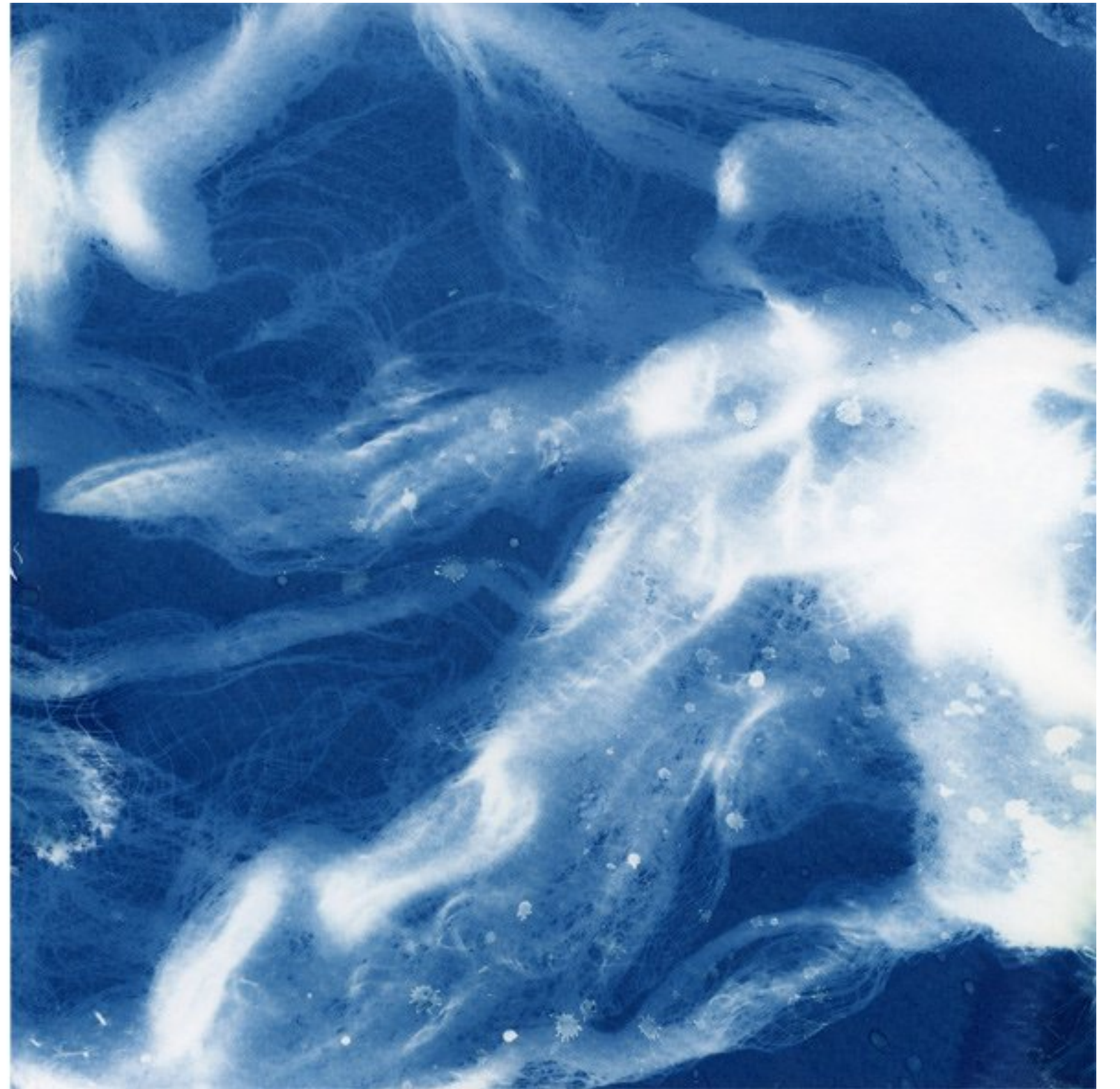
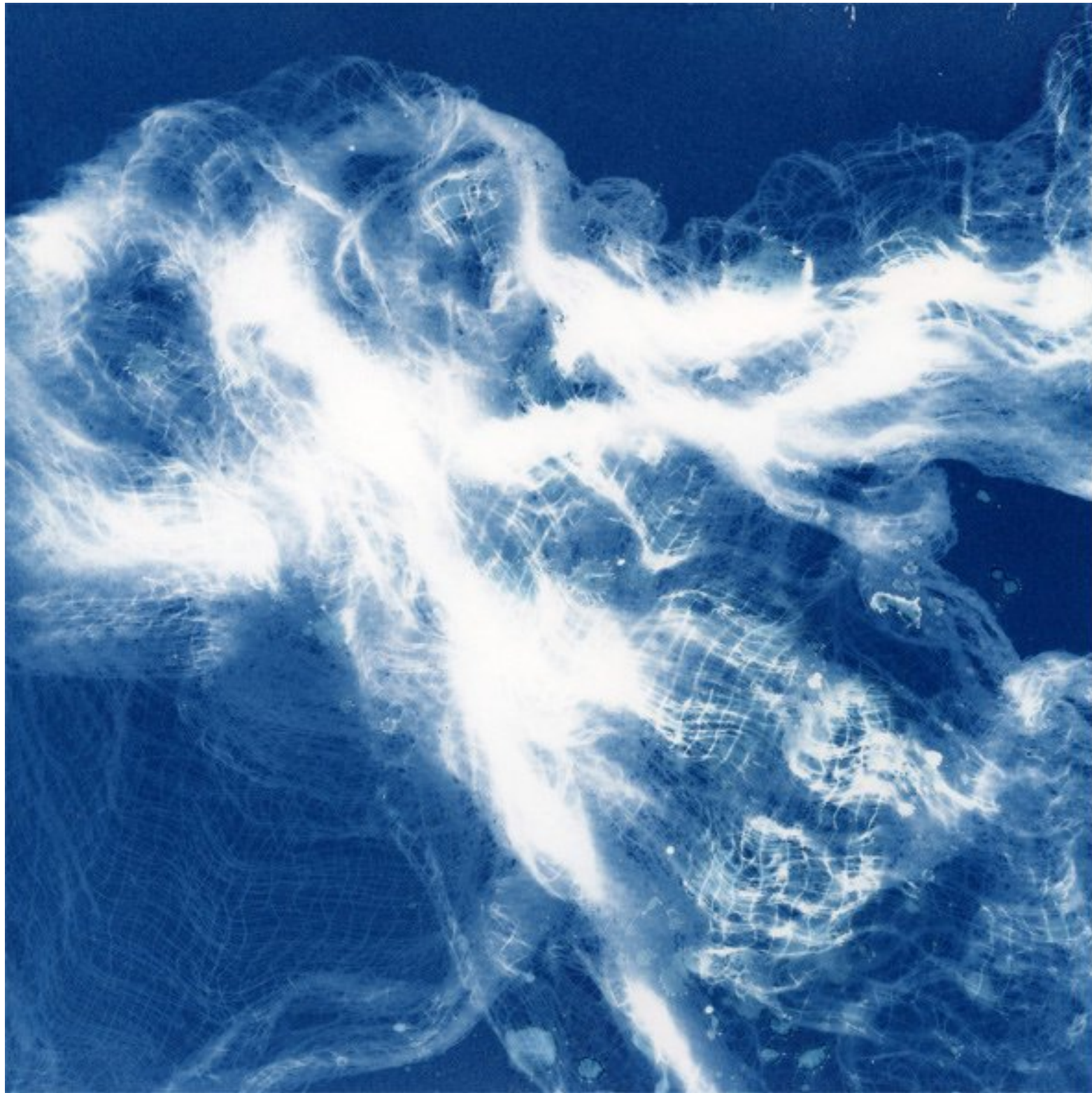
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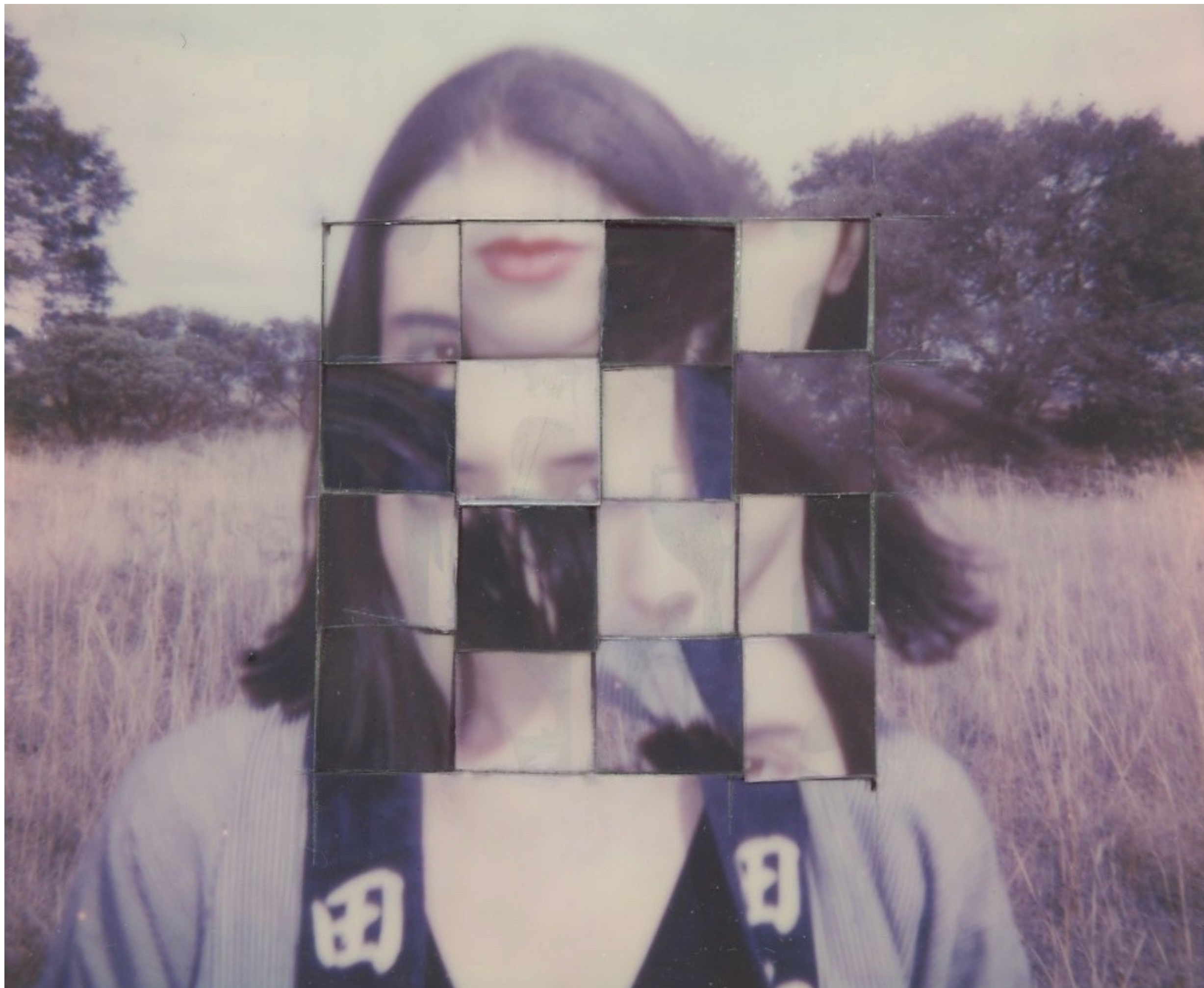
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Jessica Gerard



Kirra Kimbrell



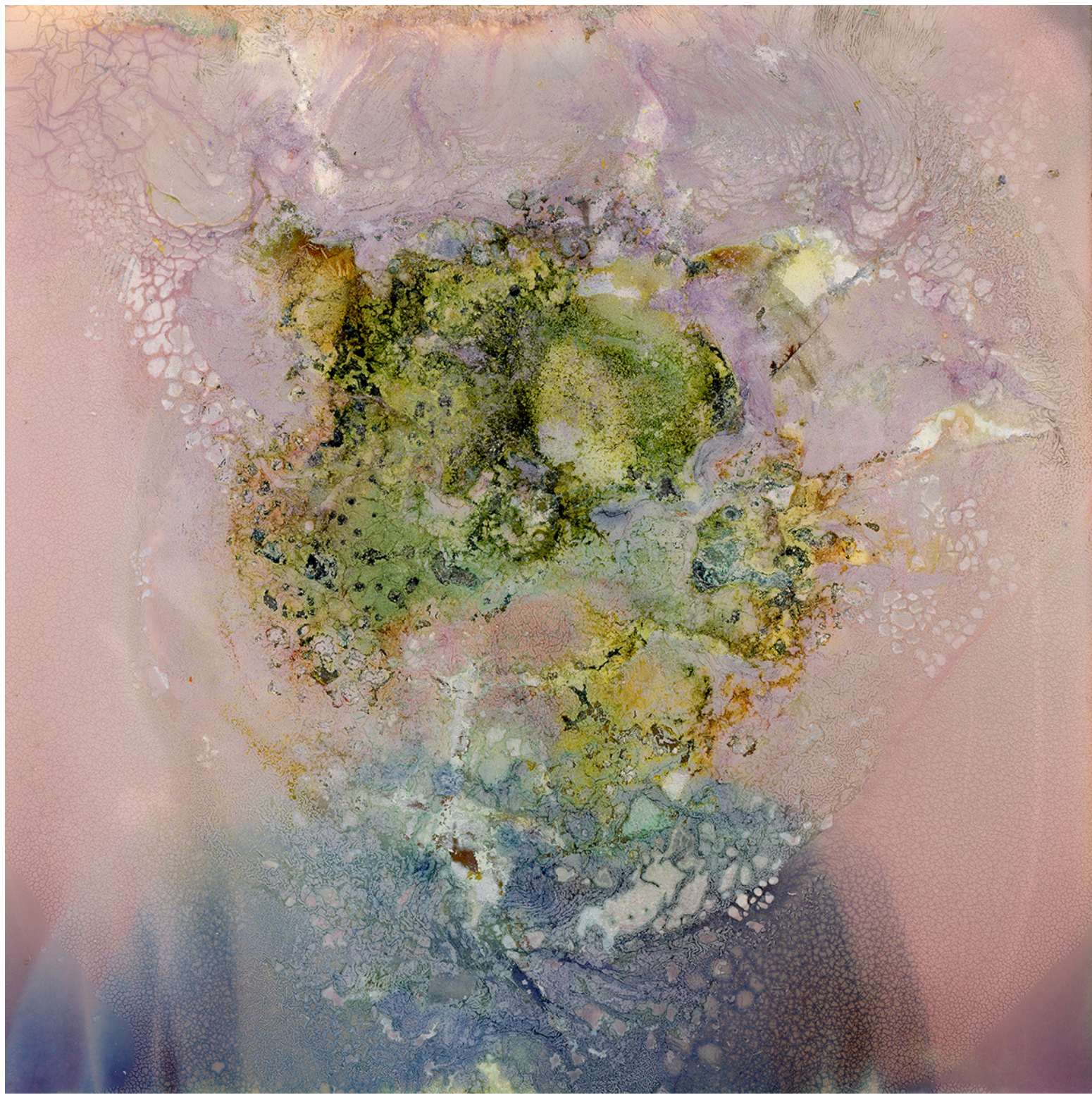
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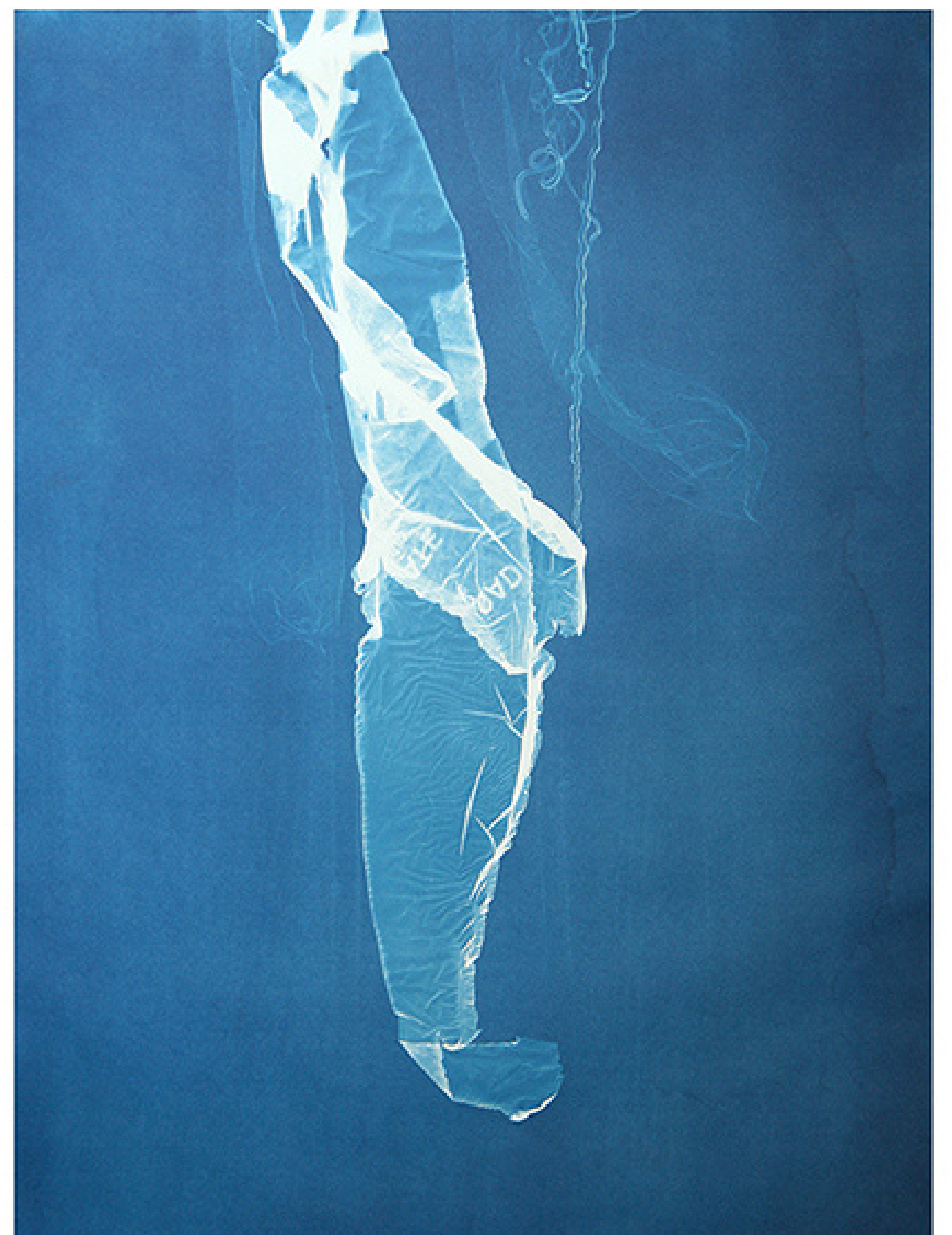
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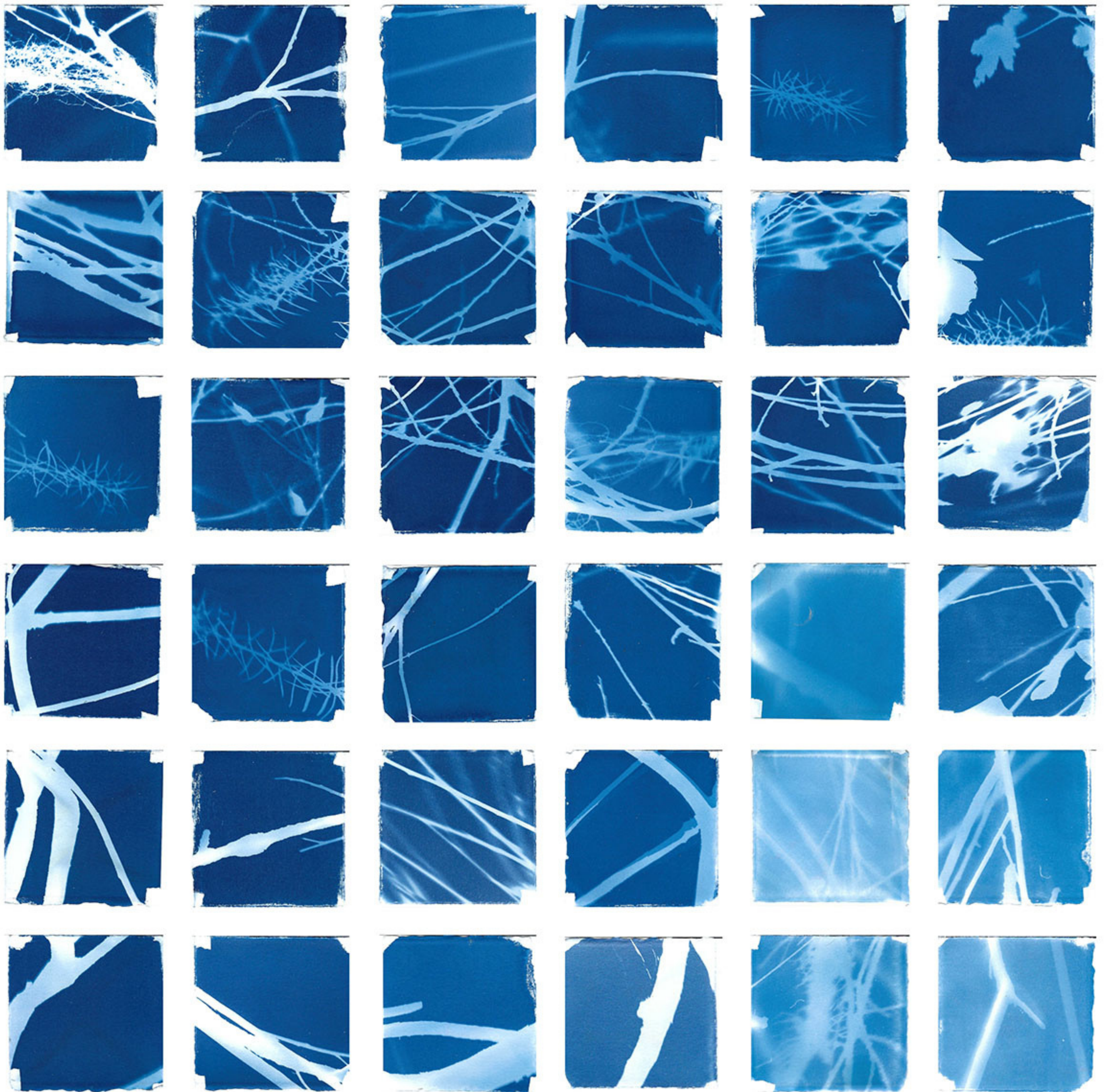
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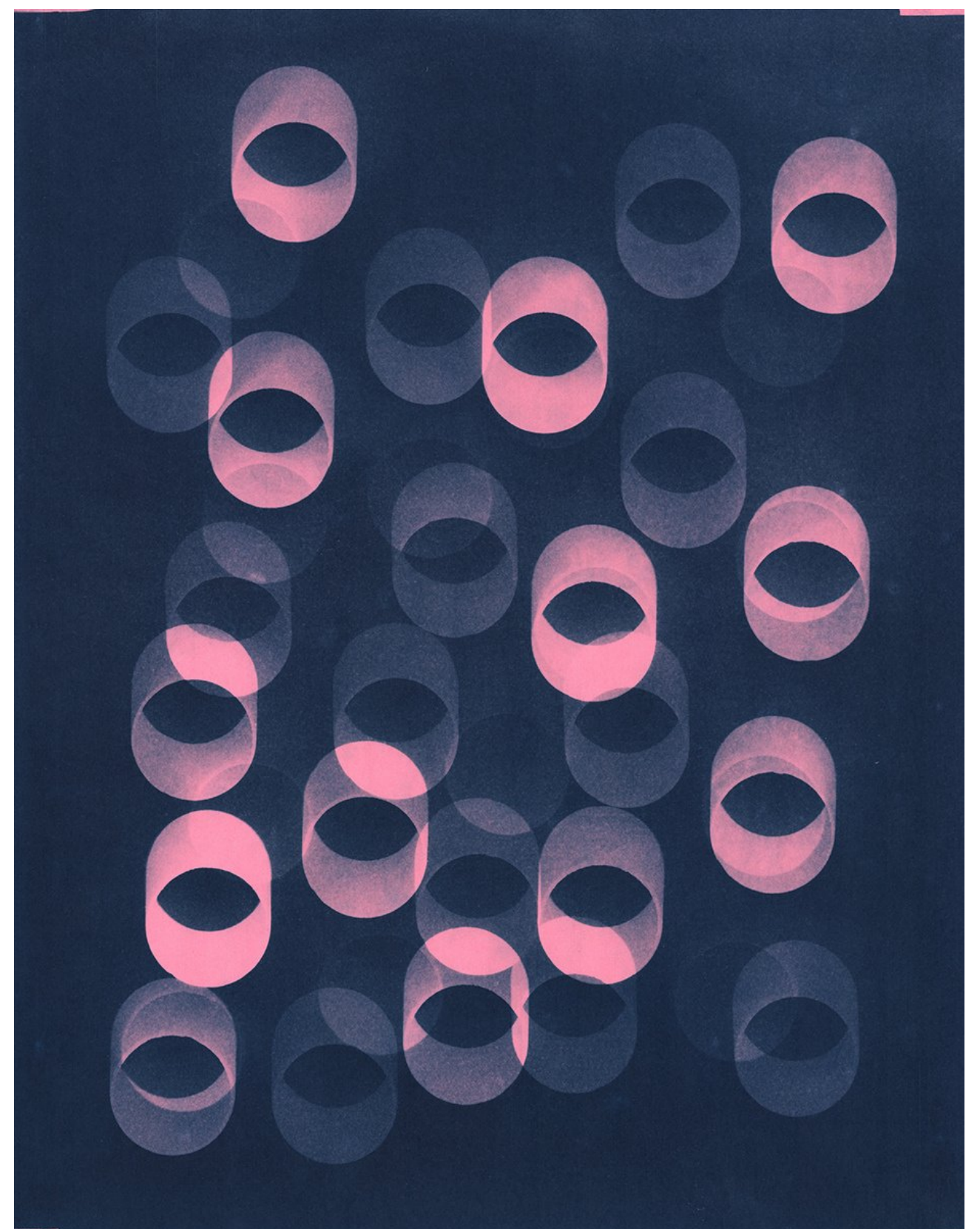
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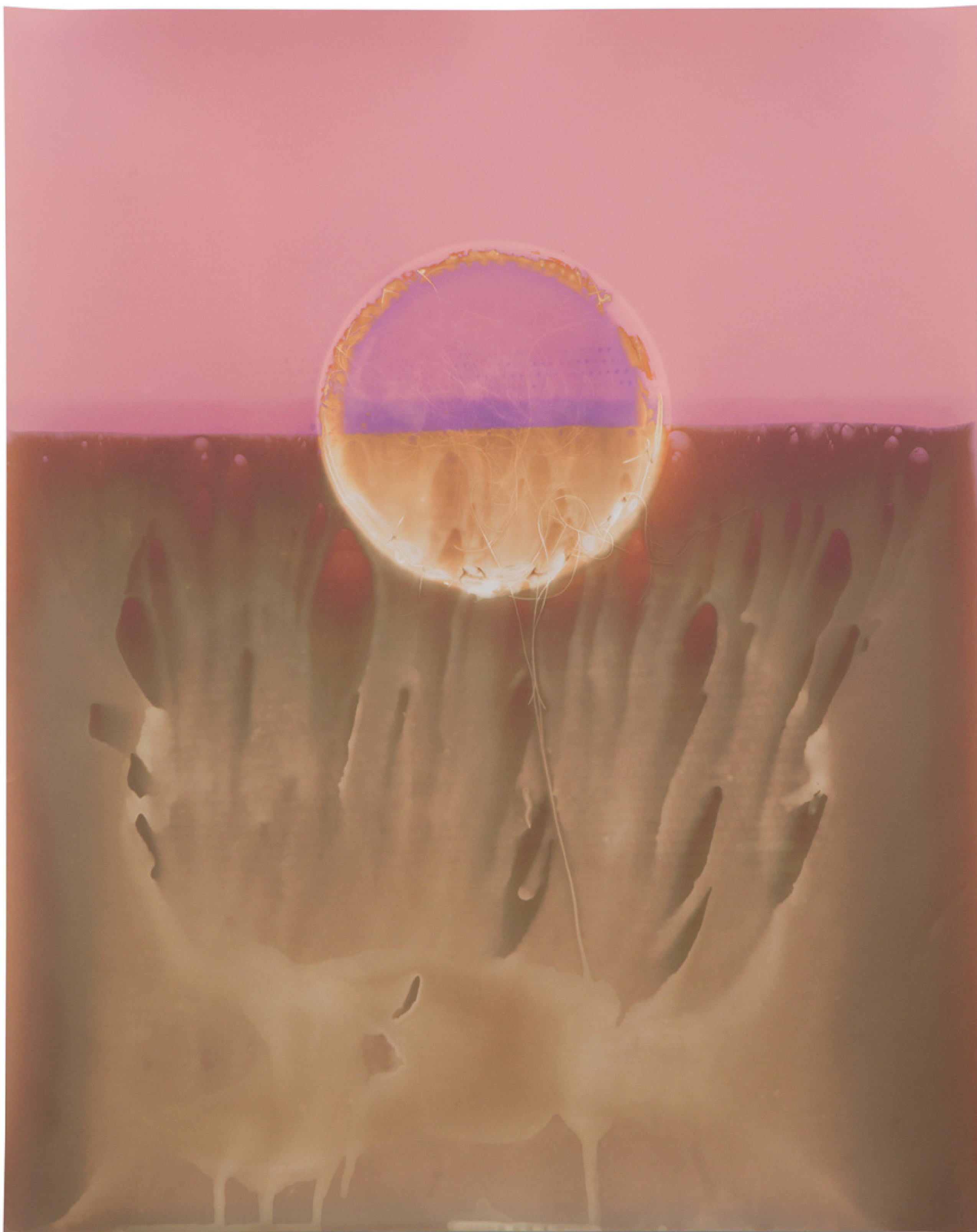
Valeria Accili



Evgenia Efstathiou



Eleanor Suess



Galina Kurlat



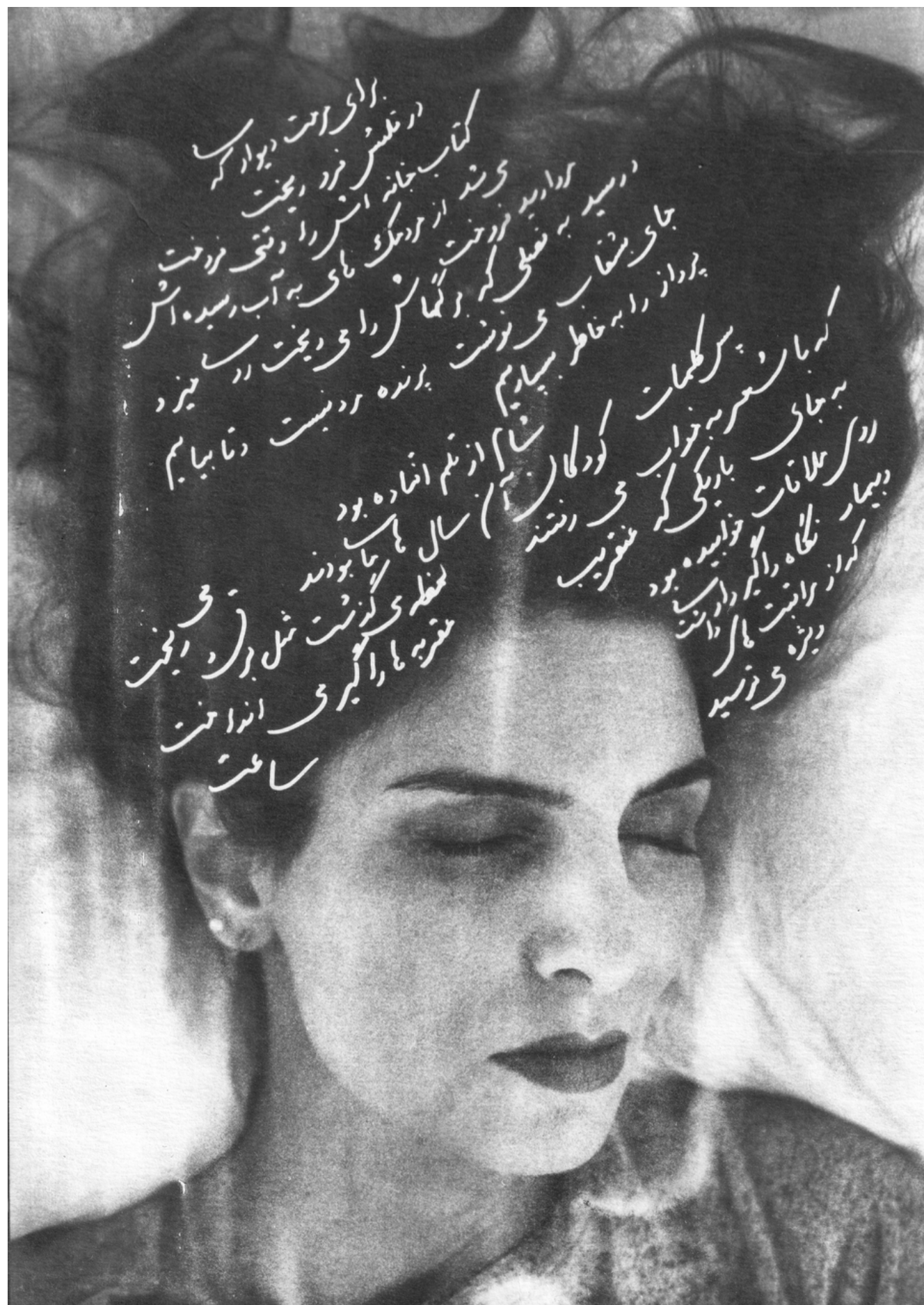
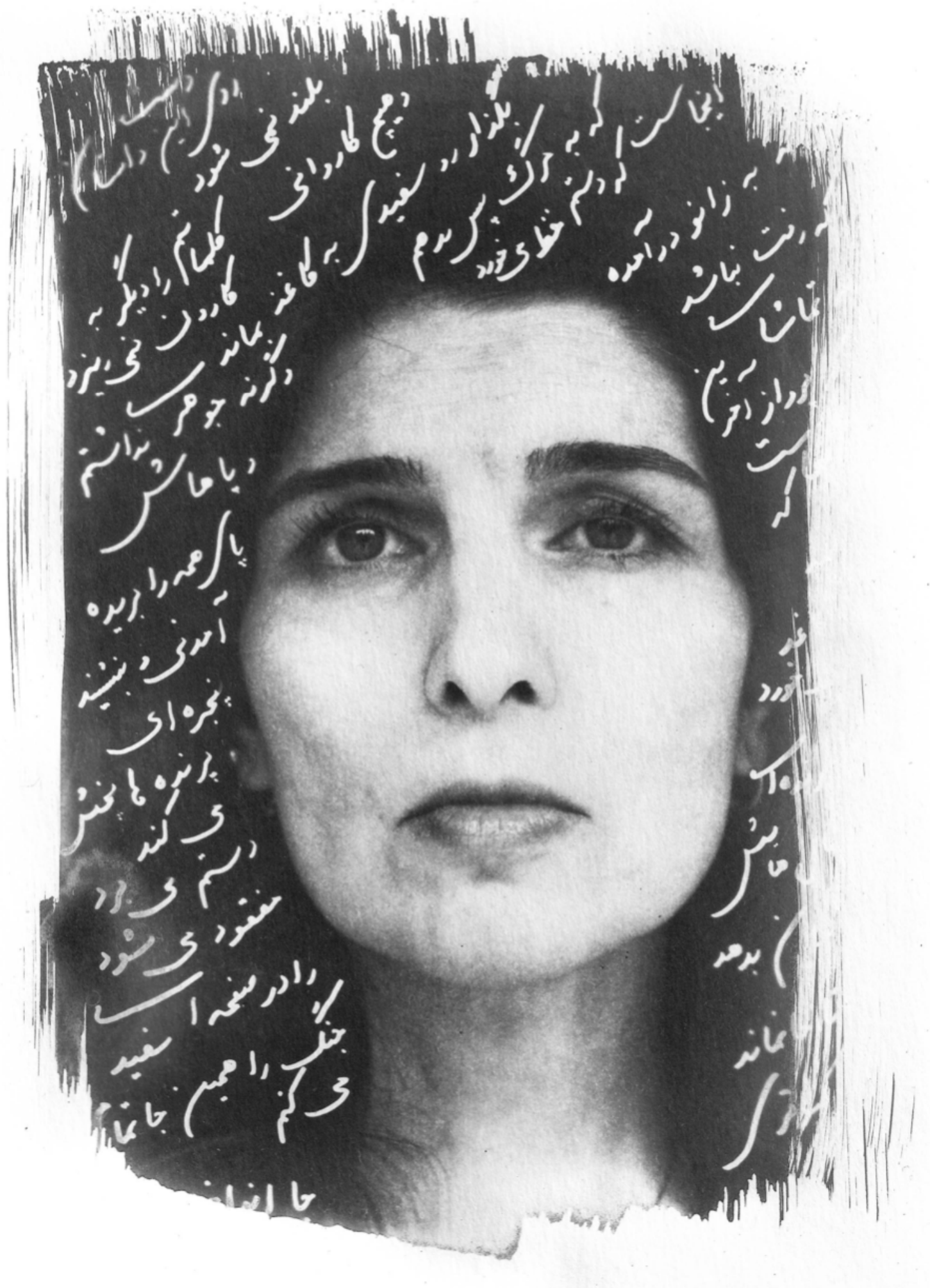
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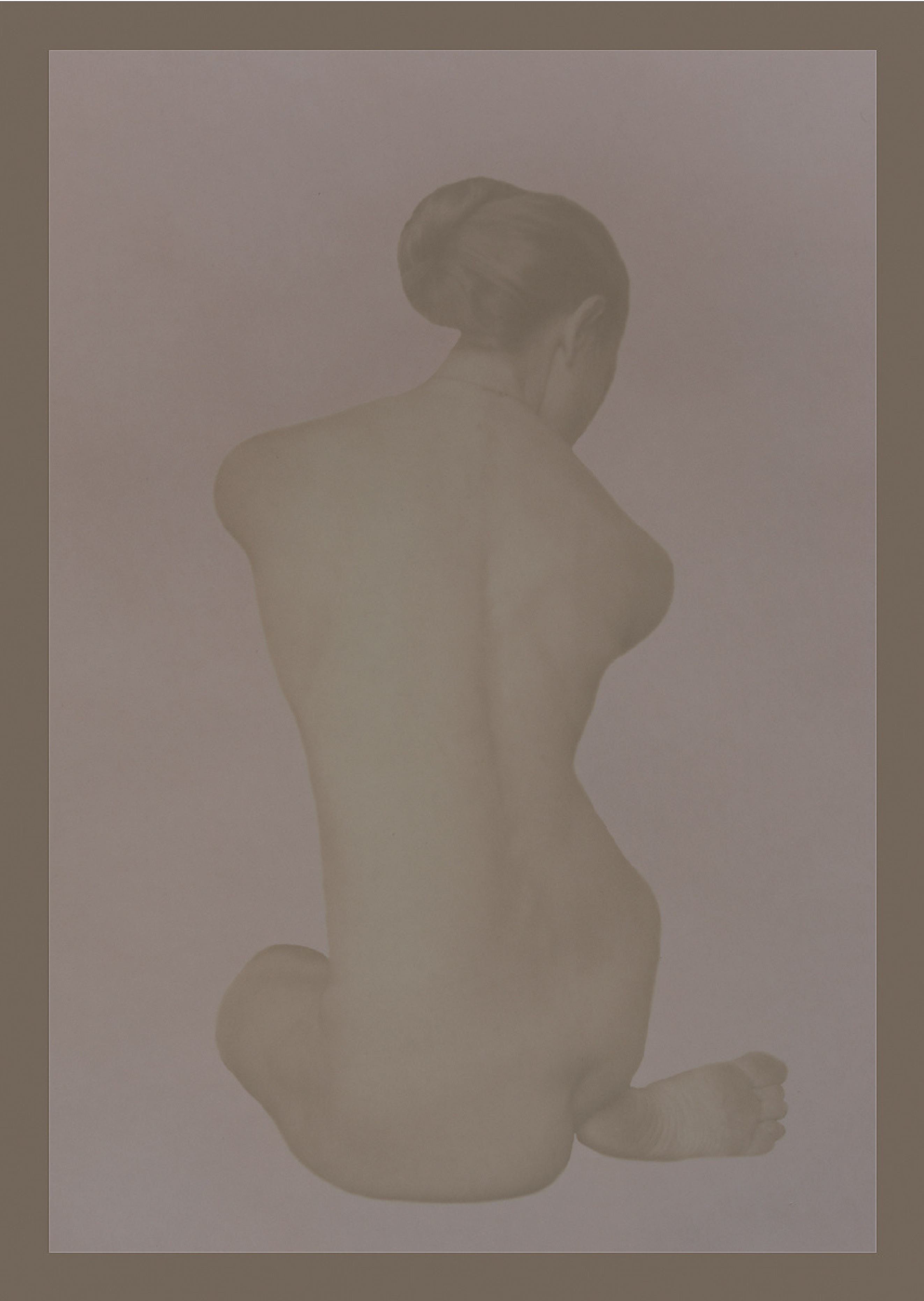
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Stu Sontier



Kimia Kazemi



Natalia L Rudychev



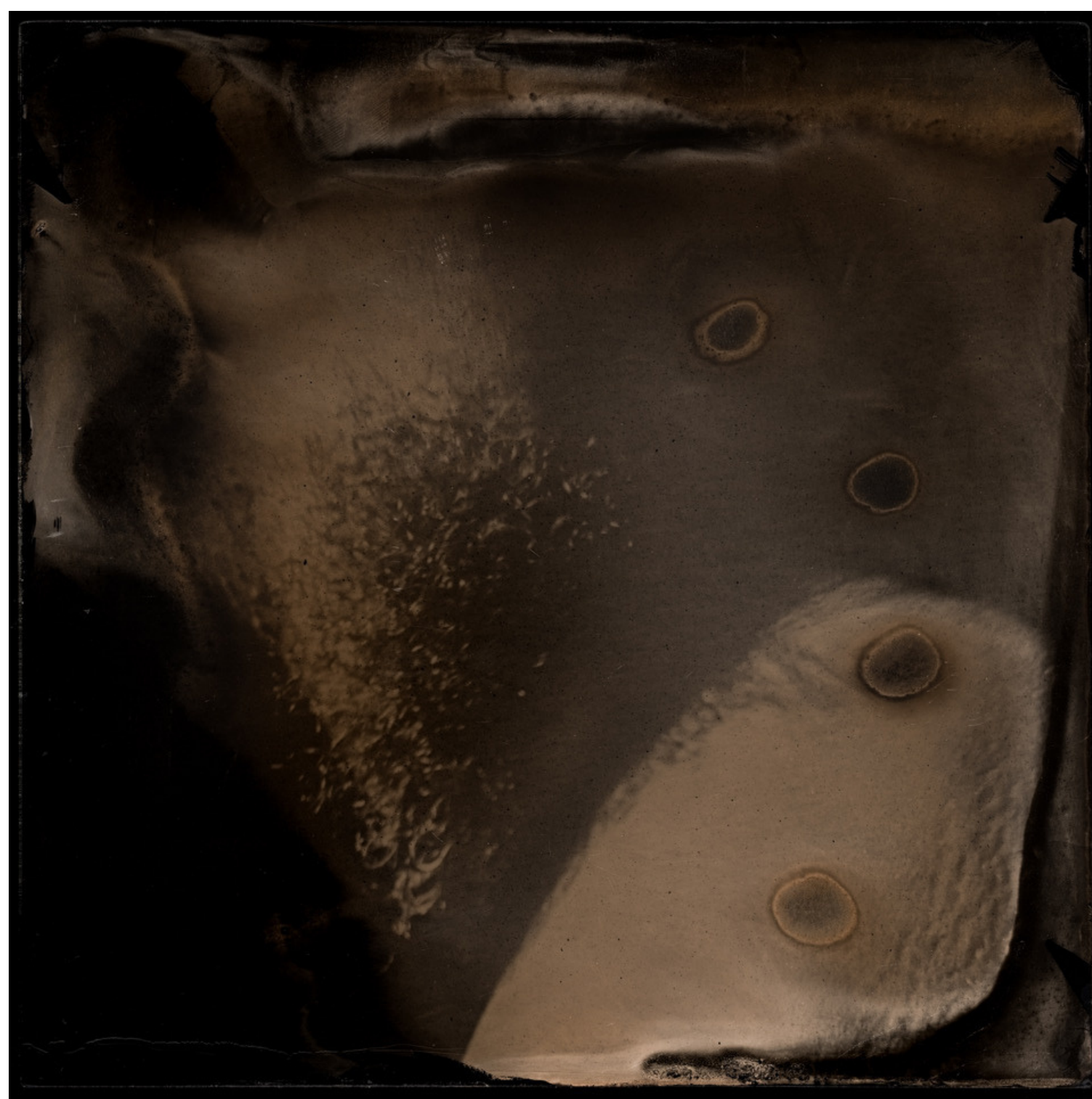
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Axel Calatayud



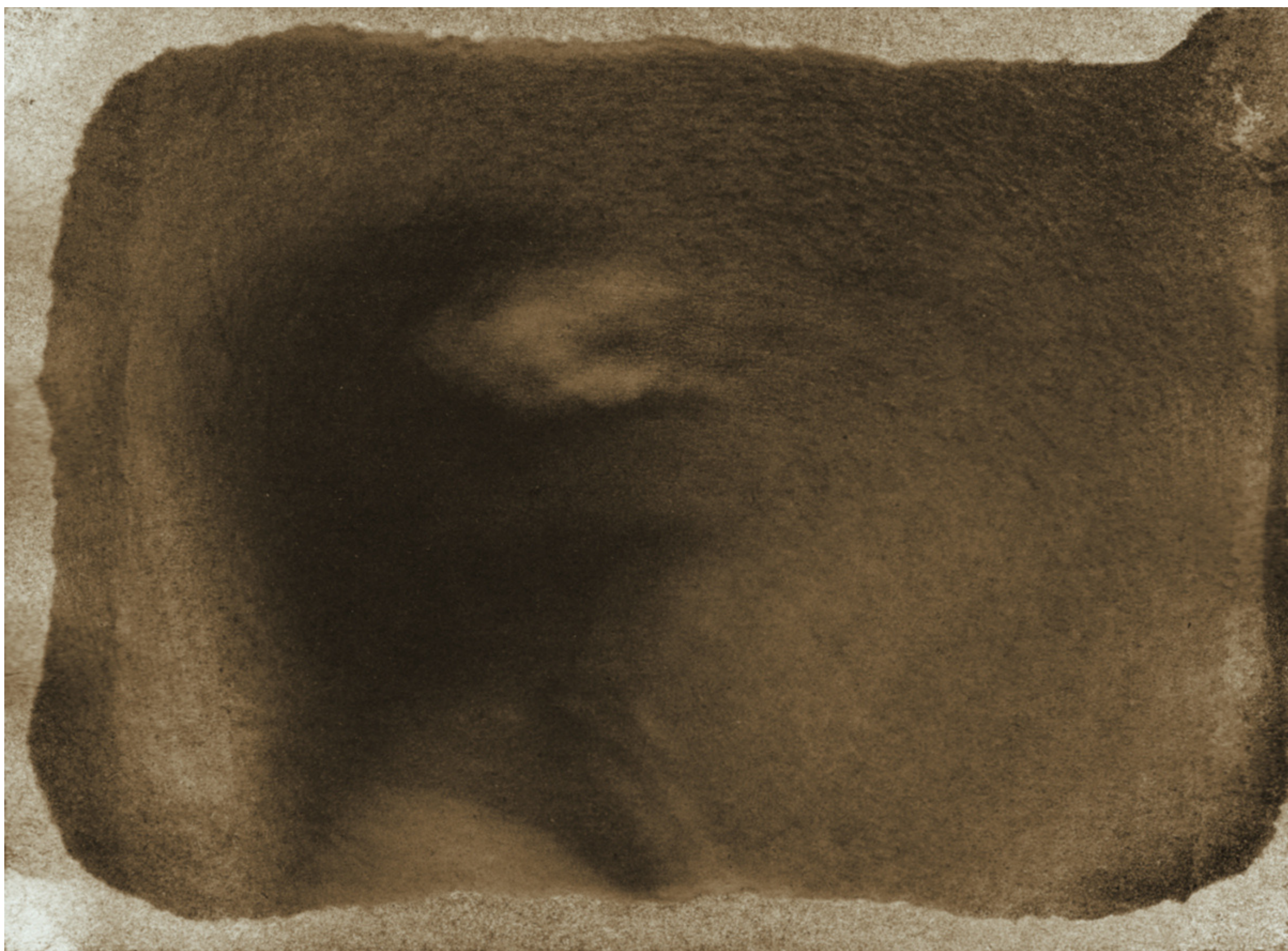
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Adriano Escanhuela



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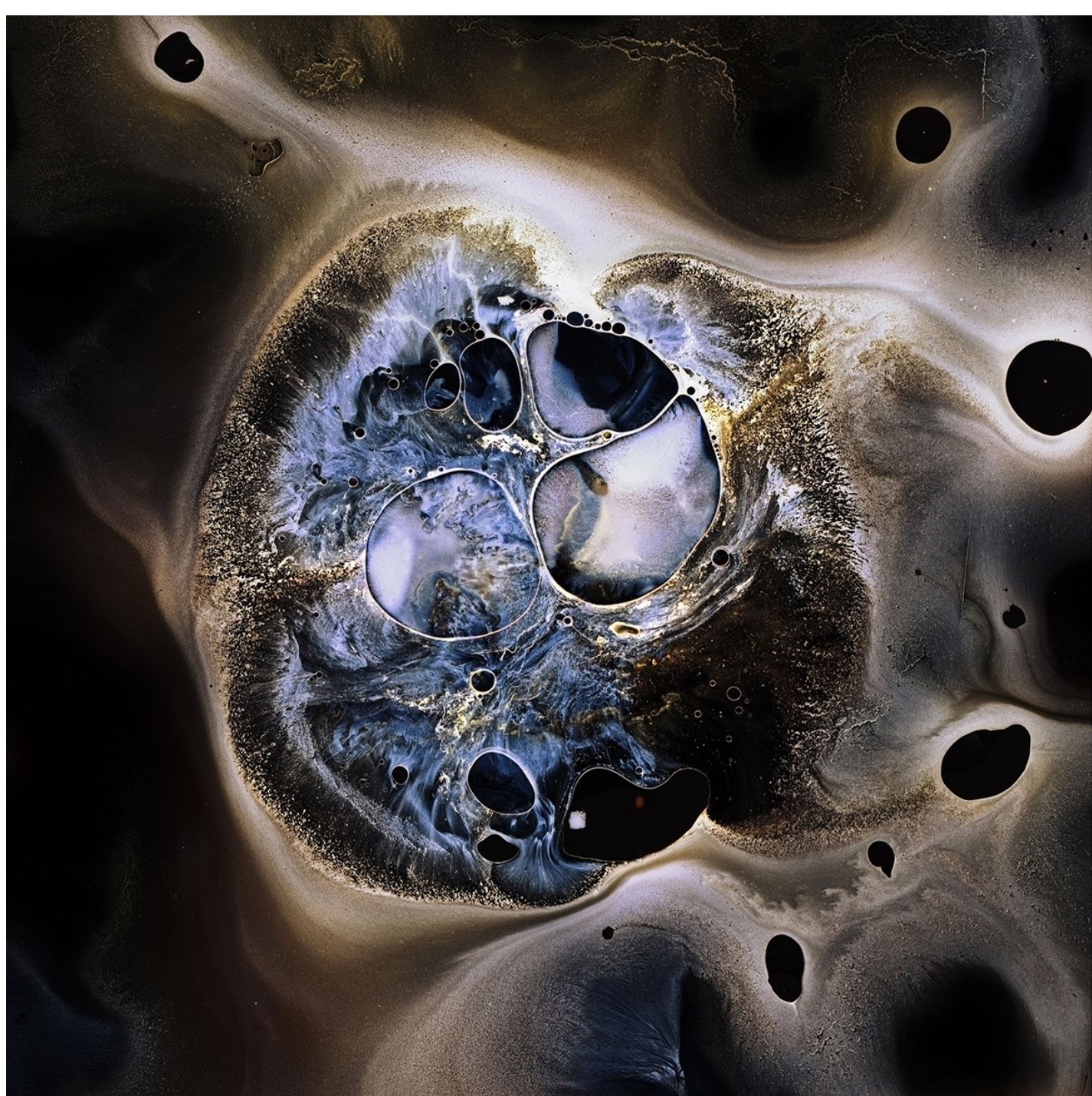
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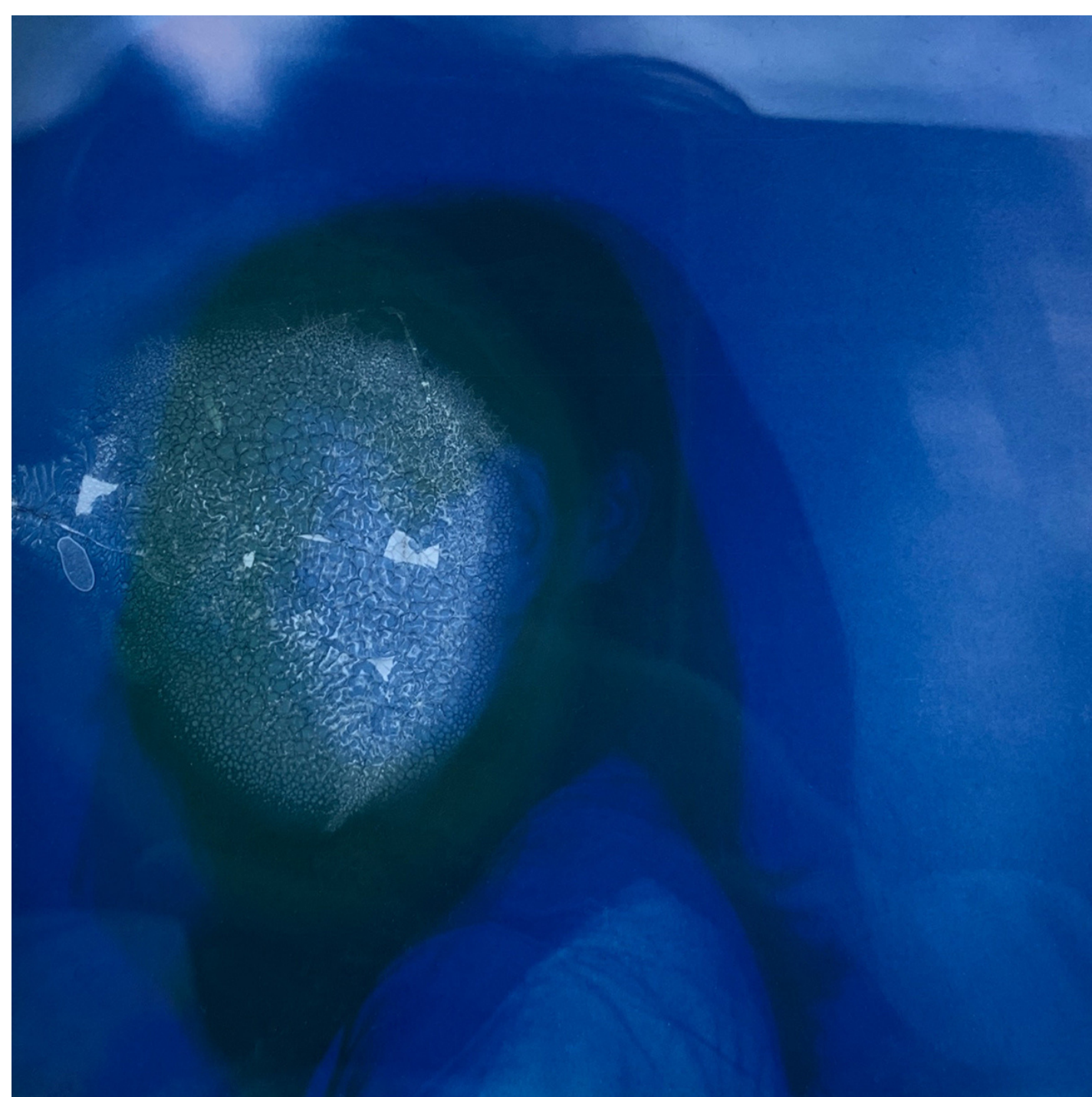
Cody Tracy



Mariachiara Pernisa



Charlotte Greenwood



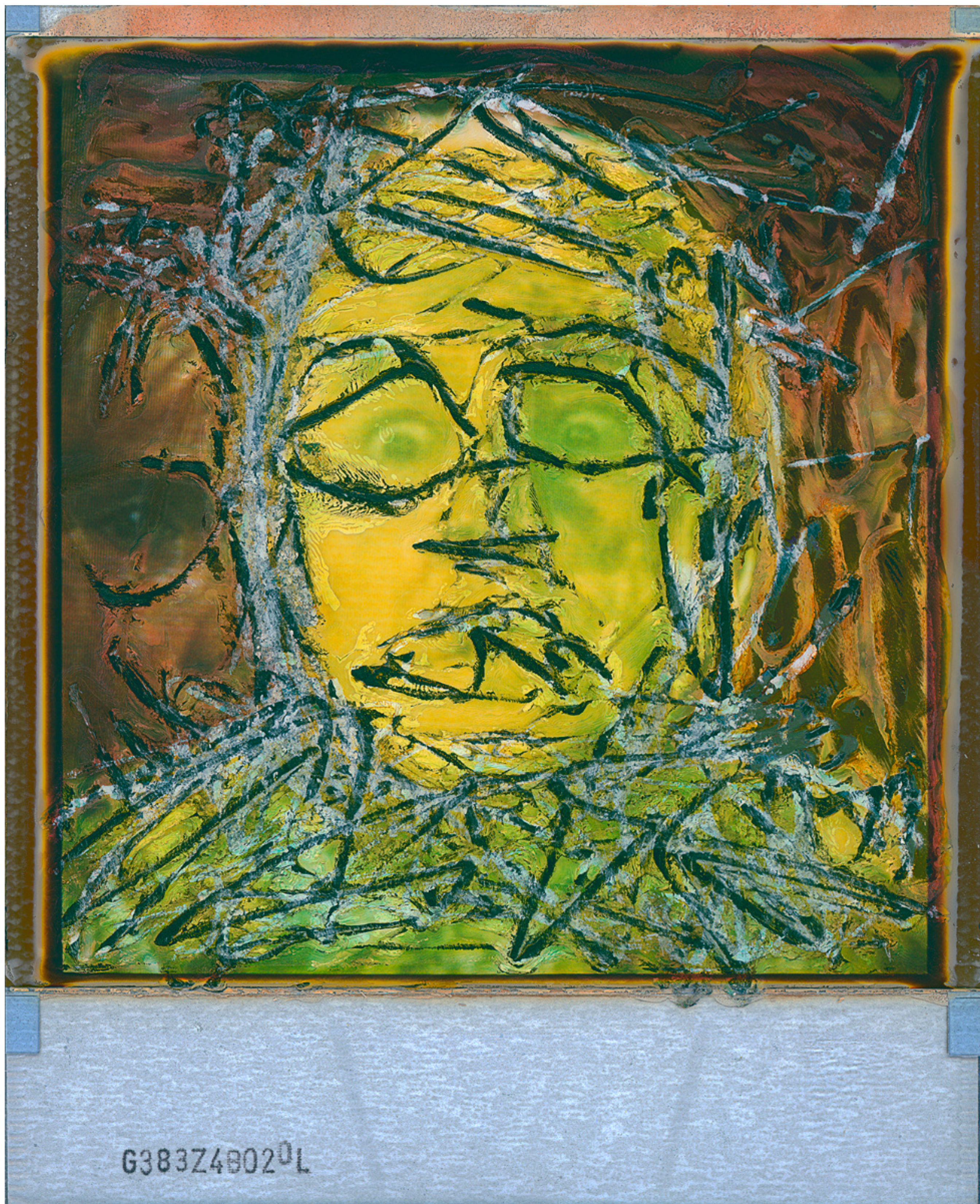
Dora Kontha



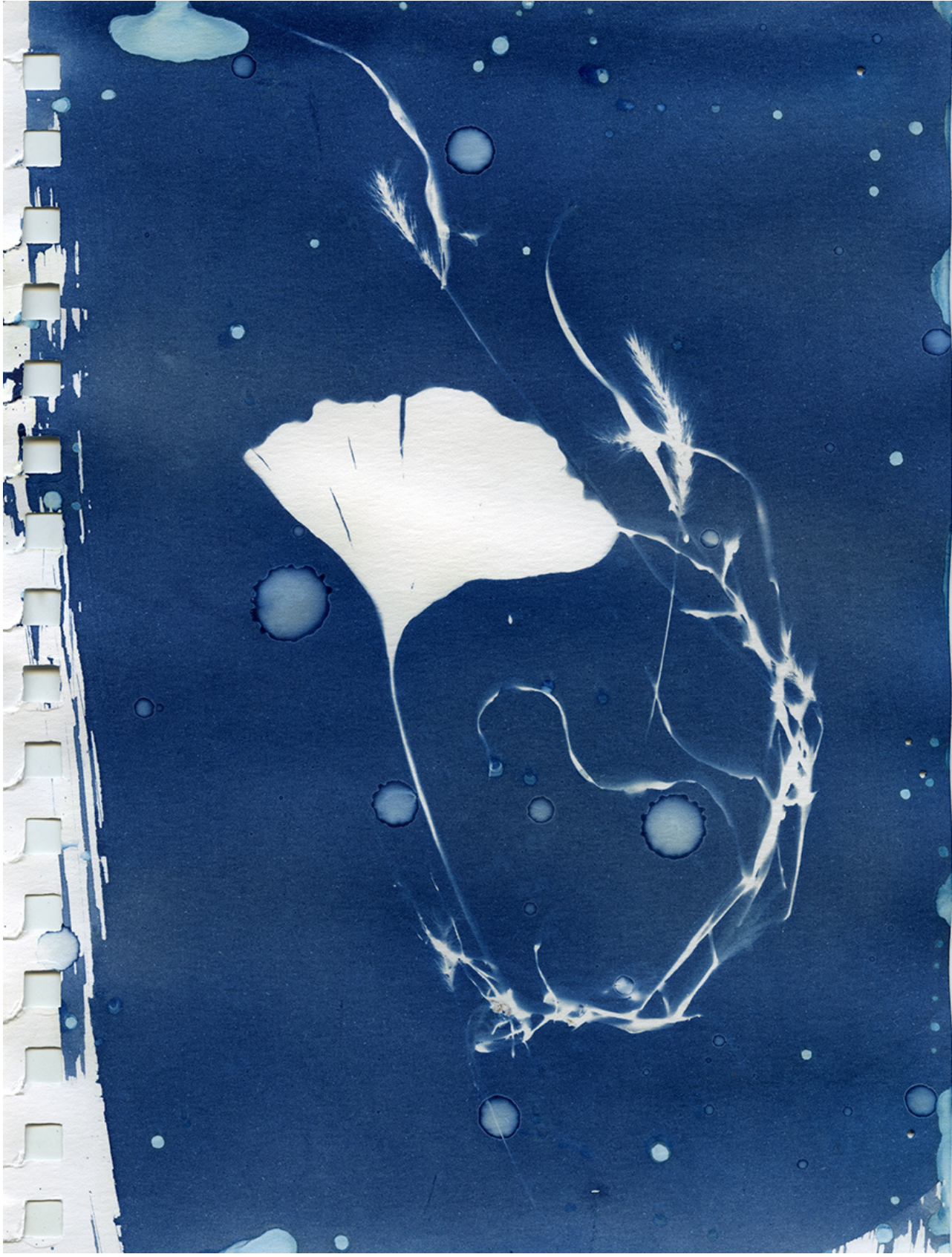
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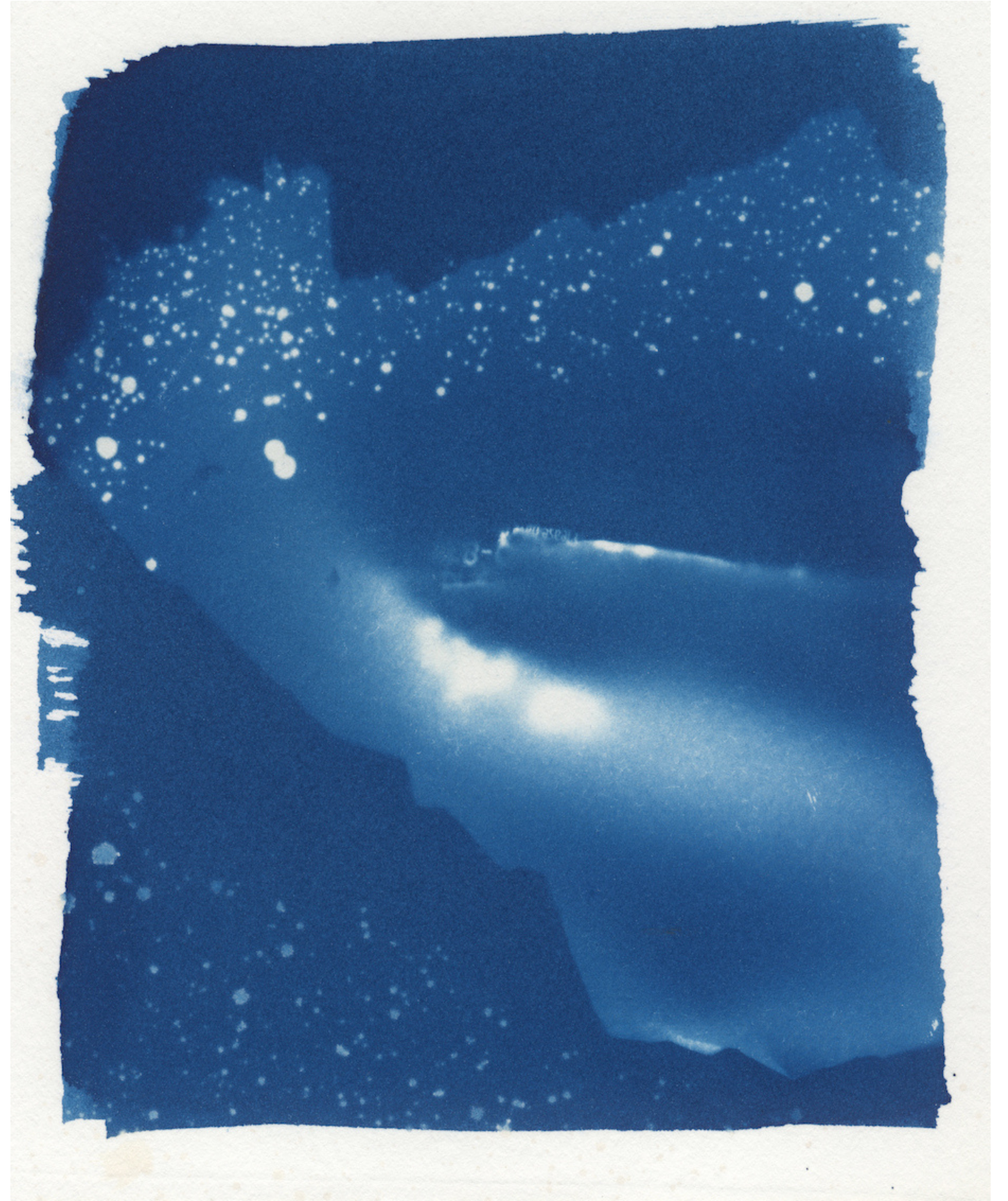
Max van der Wal



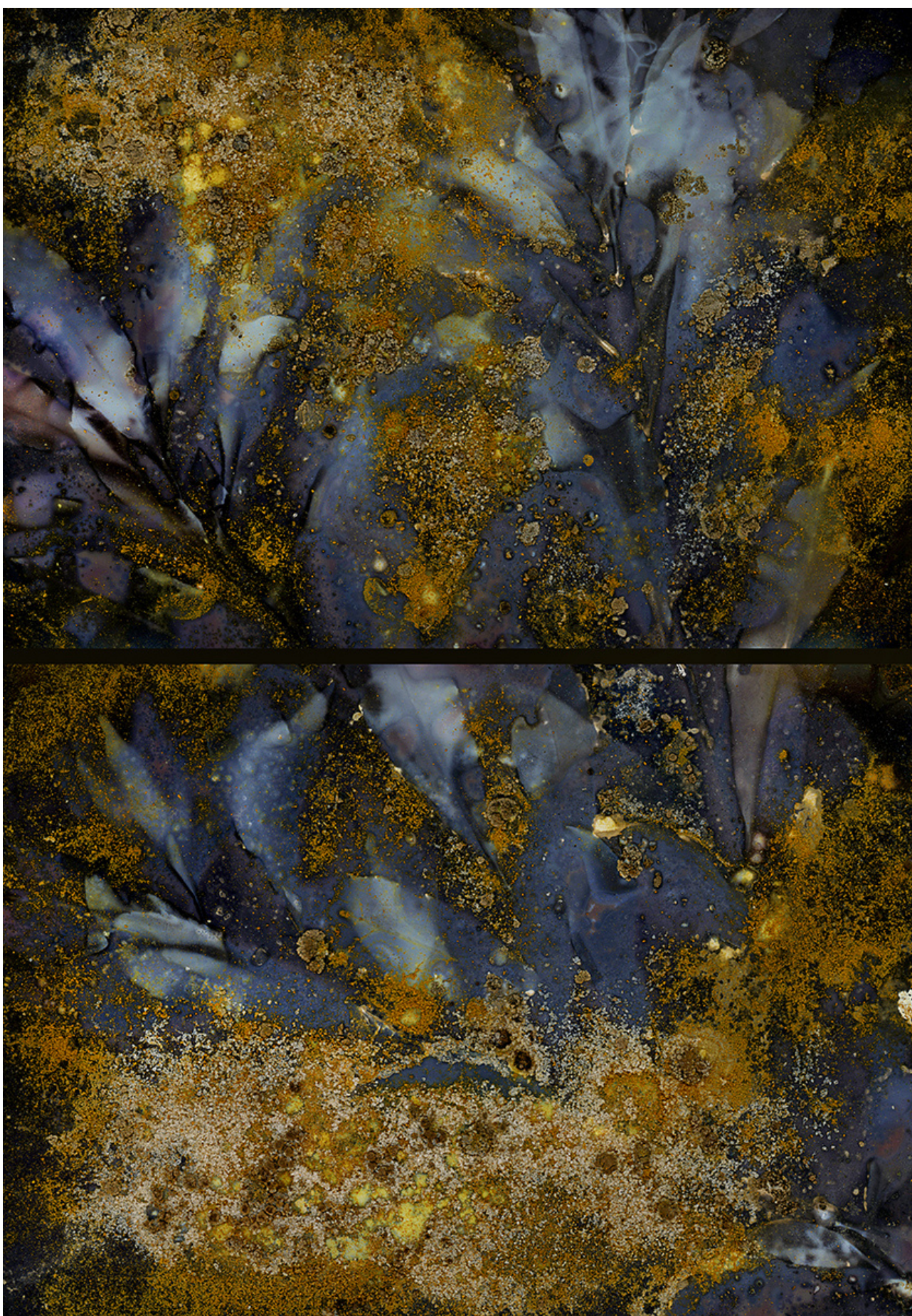
Fabian Kochendoerfer



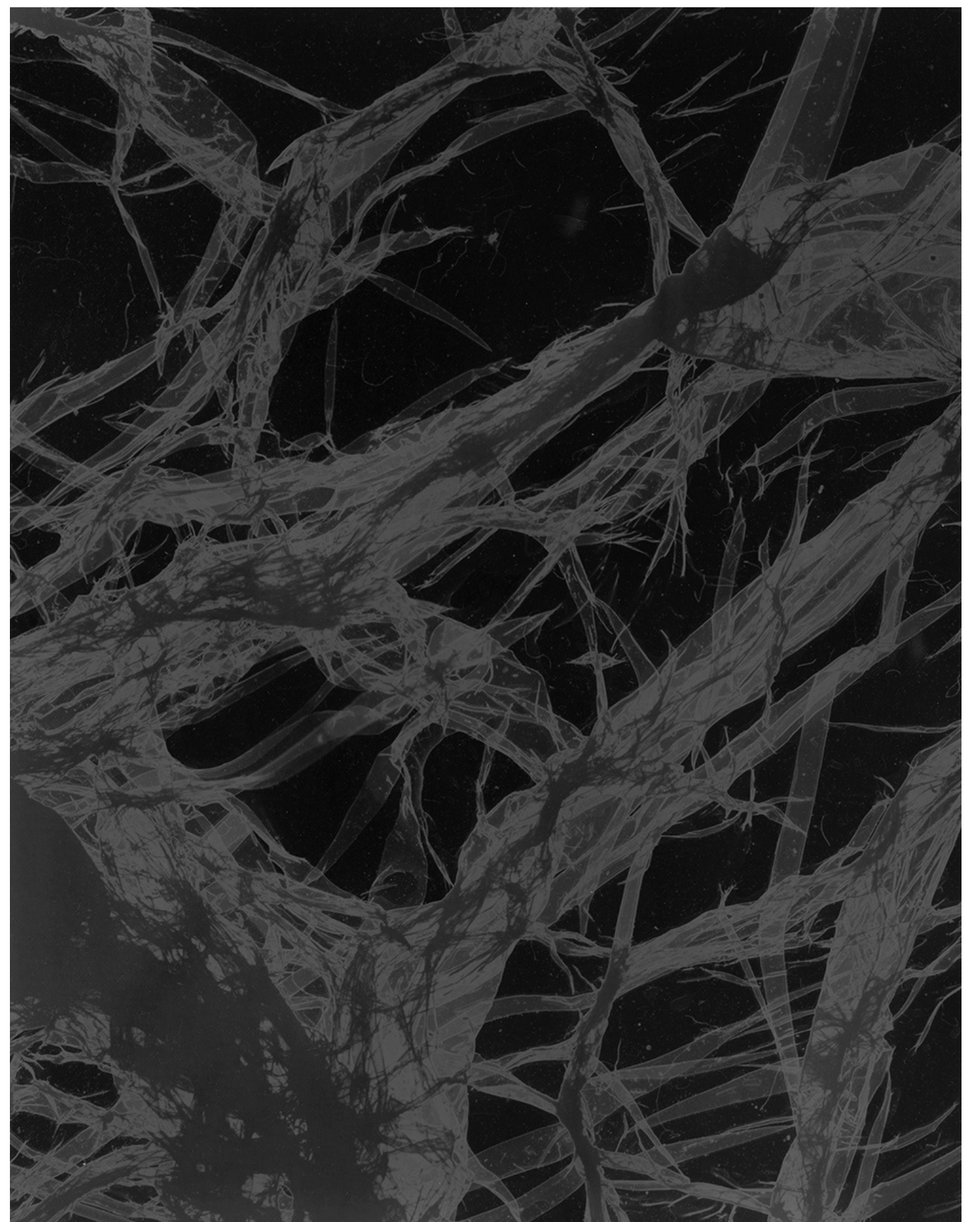
Lily Doshi



Miranda Viskatis



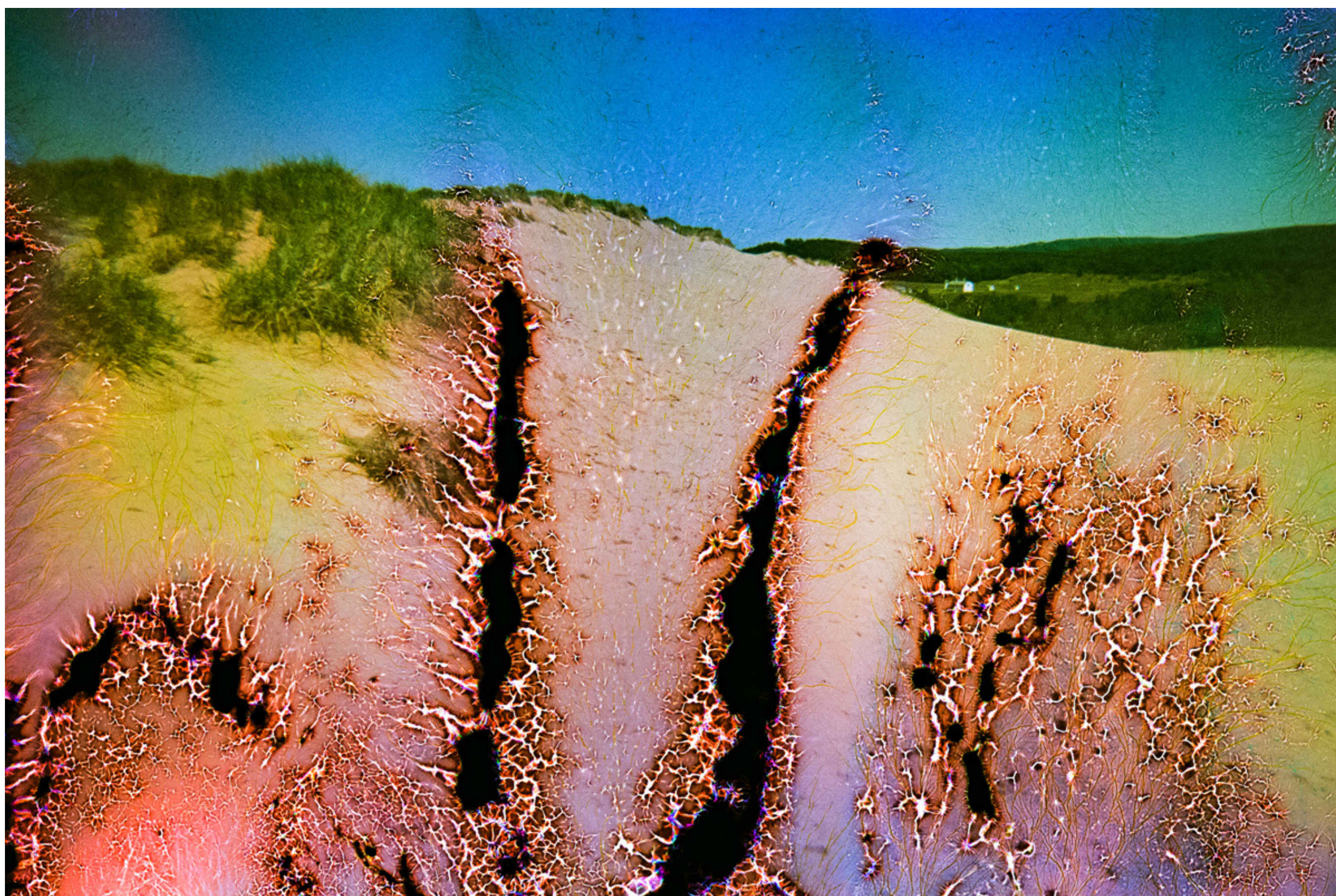
Cara Lee Wade



Carlotta Valente



Cara Lee Wade



Katie Mollon

selected artists

Adriano Escanhuela
Aindreas Philip Scholz
Alice Campos
Amy Marie Gladding
Andrea Gaytán Tassier
Axel Calatayud
Cara Lee Wade
Carlotta Valente
Charlotte Greenwood
Claire Mauvais
Cody Tracy
Dan Herrera
Daura Campos
Dennis Humphrey
Devon Wiggers
Dora Kontha
Eleanor Suess
Evgenia Efstathiou
Fabian Kochendoerfer
Galina Kurlat
Hannah Latham
Jayne Simmonds

Jenny Magruder
Jessica Gerard
Julia Skopnik
Katie Mollon
Kei Ito
Kimia Kazemi
Kirra Kimbrell
Lily Doshi
Maite Mérida
Mane Hovhannisyan
Mara Magyarosi-Laytner
Mariachiara Pernisa
Max van der Wal
Miranda Viskatis
Natalia L Rudychiev
Persephone Michou
Rainey Straus
Sera Oh
Sian Cann
Stu Sontier
Ter-Mkrtychyan Armen
Valeria Accili