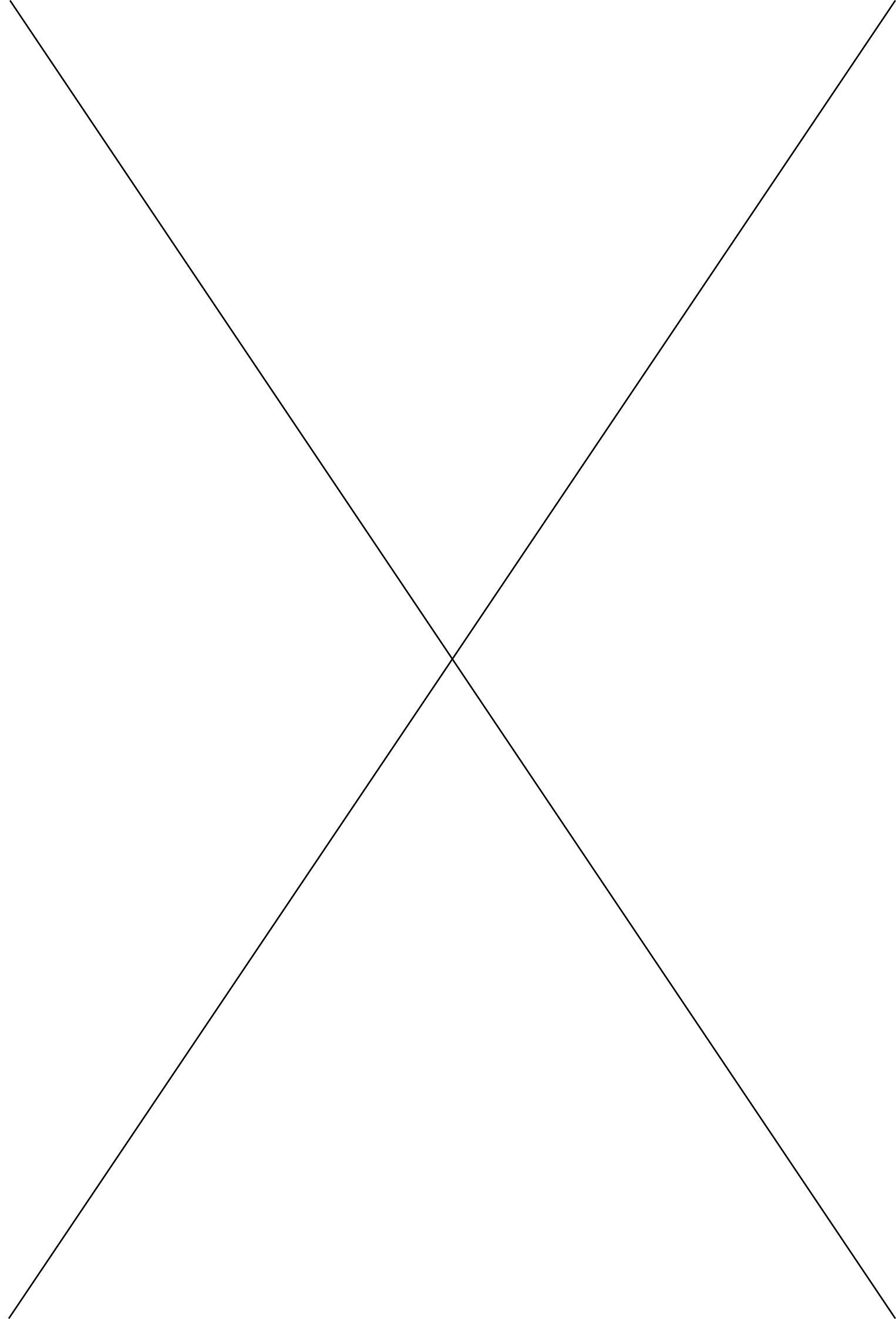


Fabrizio Contarino



Alta Mar - 2024

24 photographic sublimation on chiffon: 295cm x 150cm, 1/ 3 – Installation: variable dimensions

*“What does the “Mediterranean” mean to the people who inhabit its coasts and islands and travel its surface? How can we bring the past into the present and how can a “parallel” future become plausible within our lives? Can we arrive at the formation of new/old vocabularies that encompass risk, but also promise new forms of solidarity and interconnection, beyond normative and hegemonic narratives?”**

The Mediterranean Sea has played a fundamental role in our imagination for centuries, as the cradle or founding space of our societies, as a point of commercial exchange, as a place of dreams, but also of geopolitical tensions. It is the most overexploited sea at a fishing level according to the UN, the sea of Ulysses, the border sea of fortress Europe, the sea resort city of the middle classes.

Fabrizio Contarino in his long-term project “The Opposite Sea” collects all this ambivalence and defines the sea as a heterotopia, that is, a place that is pure otherness, which from our terracentric vision is conceived as another type of space, with its own rules, with a different system of relationships between us and with the place.

Through his artistic work, Fabrizio investigates space and how we relate to it, how we live and perceive it, as well as its relationship with the time it takes to move through it. And in the sea there is a change of element, we need to transit it in boats, we need non-corporeal technologies to inhabit it, so the perception of time and how we perceive that space changes radically. The sea is a space that does not belong to any specific place, which transforms according to the context and categorizes the individuals who decide to use it as a means of escape, as a way to save themselves. A reflection on the concepts of time, space and transformation.

The “Alta Mar” installation – which is the name by which areas of international waters are usually called in Spanish – was carried out last October 2023 between the waters of Italy and Tunisia. It is a maritime area with a special symbology, since it is a space outside the sovereignty of the states, which therefore belongs to everyone and no one, the common heritage of humanity. This, despite being apparently utopian, is not free of conflicts and economic and political interests.

In the project “The Opposite Sea” the artist uses his methodology of observing a space, recording and subsequent transfer of the digital image to a physical medium, playing with what happens in this jump and questioning the nature of the images in a moment. history of overproduction of them.

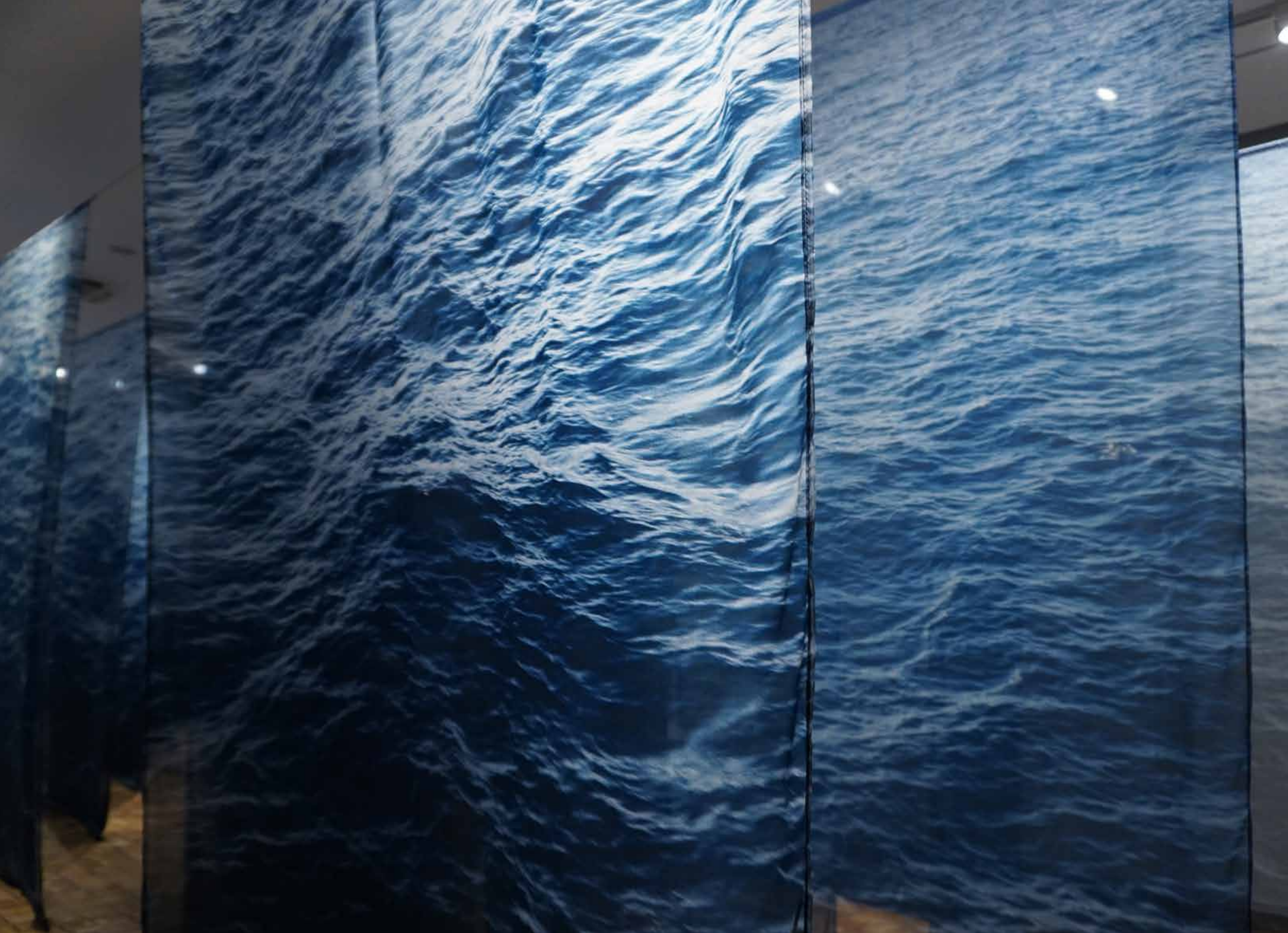
The exhibition display is made up of 24 photographs, printed by sublimation on gauze, and arranged forming a grid of long strips of fabric that must be crossed. Between the layers, the viewer’s body moves and becomes a shadow, the human presence is blurred. The fabric has a fall, sinuosity and undulation that disorients the viewer and transports them to a place that is very different from the one imagined, to a vertical sea, which accentuates the estrangement and a certain tension that provokes a question about what is being seen. The disorientation is reinforced by the vertical format of the images, which the artist recorded at sea during his journey to Tunisia. The verticality of the installation hides the landscape and denaturalizes its usual representation, hypnotizing and disorienting the senses.

The high seas are a sensory installation, a repetitive labyrinth in which we have to dive to feel the vertigo of someone who is adrift, and ask ourselves which place is opposite to the sea and if its shores are really so different.

Extract from the curatorial text by Pilar Cruz and Fabrizio Contarino

*Marina Fokidis, The Mediterranean: A Round Sea – Nero Edizioni





Meddle - 2024

Hd Video, audio, 3 channels, 31 min Edition of 3

In the video installation *Meddle*, the camera functions almost as an autonomous entity, immersed in an environment where technology and the sea engage in dialogue. The title, inspired by the cover image of homonymous Pink Floyd album, evokes visual interference and undulations that intertwine with ambient sounds. At the same time, it suggests the act of meddling or “remaining in the middle,” affecting and transforming with each encounter.

This visual realization is complemented by the sonic textures of *Les Biologistes Marins*, whose rhythms and fluctuations amplify an intermedial atmosphere, creating relationships, patterns, and tones that form various connections. We experience landscapes in transition that resonate, conveyed through images marked by strangeness and singularity.

Connected by a 50-meter red thread, the camera is cast into the sea and its movements, allowing details and multiple perspectives to generate unexpected forms. Here, the artist relinquishes control, letting it fall freely, subjected to random encounters. We observe a tension between medium and device, between water and camera, between what is in focus and what remains blurred.

The linear horizon of the open sea, observed from stable, solid ground, is fragmented and re-composed into a multiplicity of perspectives that shift the gaze toward the edges. While the center tends to capture the most of the attention, it remains in blurry motion in-between emerging spaces. What once marked the boundary between the outside and the inside becomes indistinct, affected by movement, allowing images to surface with subtle details and textures..

From the depths of the Mediterranean, the transient surface of the sea filters light, distorting and reflecting it in fleeting flashes. The tempo-spatial rhythm revealed by the machine uncovers variety, unexpected bifurcations, and turns, all while maintaining a sense of constant suspension. In this sense, the agency of the apparatus becomes more evident through its lack of precise intention, as its spins and slides differ from traditional representations of underwater landscapes.

One image becomes another without causality, in a porous montage where the process of creating images turns accidents into encounters. New perspectives arise, resulting from the device's interactions as it drifts. Drawing from Baruch Spinoza's philosophy, the world can be conceived as a surface of infinite assembled encounters, always poised to reveal itself in its constant flow and variation.

Texto curatorial de Adriana Monroy Galindo for Loop City Screen 2024





The shores - 2025

Multiple exposure, not digital, variable dimensions

'The Shores' explores the fragmentation and reorganisation of landscape perception through the image, with a specific focus on the horizon. It focuses on Pantelleria, an island in the central Mediterranean that has historically been a strategic enclave between Europe and Africa. Its perimeter road, built for military purposes, allows the island to be crossed in a continuous circuit, providing constant surveillance of the horizon. This infrastructure, designed for control, also becomes a platform for visual exploration.

The photographs, taken in analogue format and using the double exposure technique, question the idea of a homogeneous horizon. Instead of a continuous line, the images reveal a series of overlapping fragments, generating an ambiguous and constantly transforming perception. Each image captures an instant from different points along the perimeter road, challenging traditional notions of continuity and totality in the seascape. Through repetition and the layering of visual layers, 'The Shores' blurs the boundaries between surveillance and discovery.

This project is part of a broader investigation into the relationship between fragmentation and repetition as visual and conceptual strategies. Each fragment of the horizon is presented as an incomplete version of an unattainable totality. In this game of iterations, the representation of the landscape ceases to be a stable image and becomes a process of constant reconstruction. Thus, the photographs act not only as records, but as devices that reconfigure our perception and generate new spatial narratives.

Pantelleria's perimeter road, with its history of surveillance and control, functions here as a physical and conceptual boundary. In this circular route, the border of the visible becomes blurred: how does our perception change when the continuous is fragmented, how do infrastructures of control also reconfigure the cultural meanings of the landscape, and is it possible, through repetition and fragmentation, to transcend the traditional representation of the horizon and reveal its ambiguous and liminal character?

'The Shores' proposes the landscape as an interface where the human and the non-human, the built and the natural, meet in a relationship of tension and coexistence. Through a visual narrative that oscillates between control and exploration, the project invites us to question not only our relationship with the horizon, but also the mechanisms that determine how we perceive and represent it. Thus, the analogue image, with its specific materiality and its ability to record light in multiple exposures, becomes a tool of resistance to the fixity of visual control, allowing the horizon to unfold as a space of possibilities and reconfigurations.





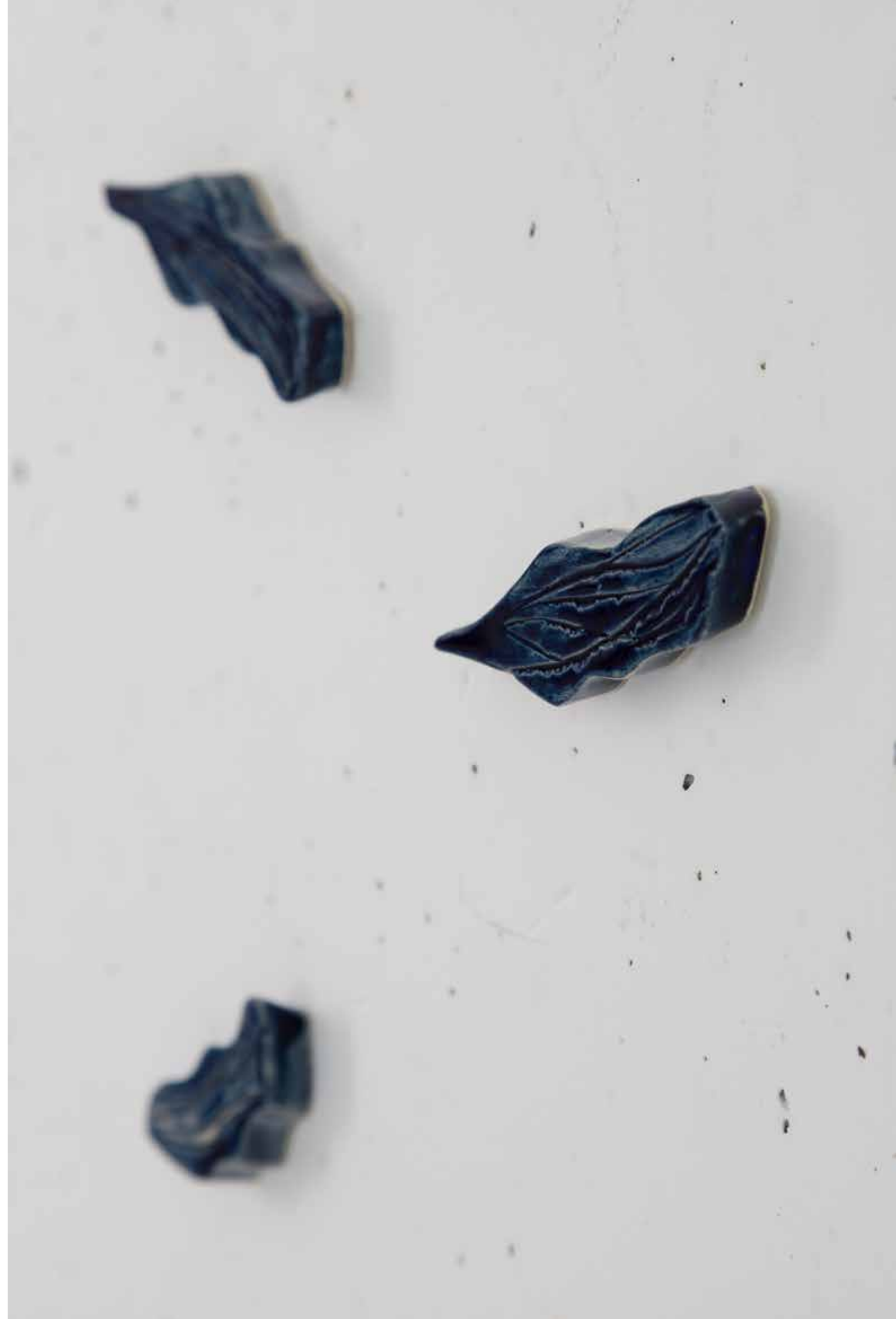
Bardo - 2024

Glazed ceramic, variable dimensions

This ceramic work is inspired by the shapes and sinuosity of a mosaic the artist came across at the Musée National du Bardo in Tunis. It is an abstract mosaic whose pattern emulates the shapes of the sea. It belongs to a group of representations of the titan Ocean, which in ancient times personified all bodies of salt water, including the Mediterranean Sea. It is a reproduction of a representation of the sea made in Tunisia in antiquity, probably in the 3rd century AD. The exceptionality of these abstract decorations, the fact that they have a greater autonomy from the standards of the time, is due to the fact that they were developed far from the central power of Rome.

Fragmentation and repetition serve here to make us look at the sea from a very different, poetic and critical point of view, which refers to the human borders imposed on a medium in constant fluidity.

A gaze that points to the fragmentation and sum of uniquenesses of the Mediterranean in contrast to the unitary and Eurocentric image of the Mare Nostrum.





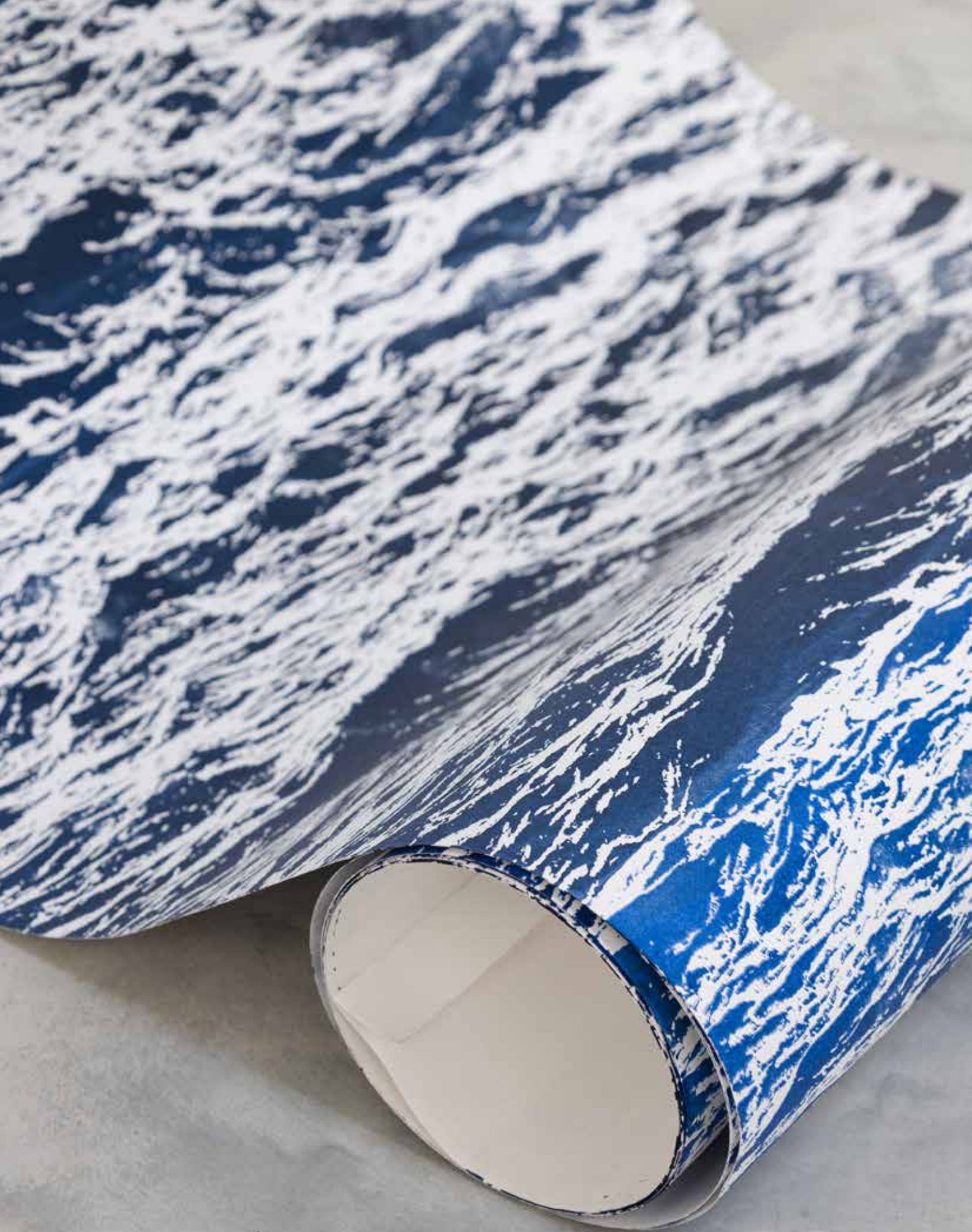
The Opposite Sea - 2021

Silkscreen print on paper, 100 cm x 70 cm

A potentially infinite multiplication of the same fragment of sea. The work is organised around a visual loop generated by the repetition of a printed image whose beginning and end are indistinguishable. The sea fragment is repeated along a print 70 centimetres wide and 10 metres long. Its extension and the way it ends, rolled up, invite us to imagine its endless continuation.

The Opposite Sea refers to a horizontal gaze from one coast to another, to a journey as close as it is distant. After collecting archival images of the sea related to news about migratory movements, the artist breaks with the horizontality of the horizon to offer us a vertical view of the Mediterranean.





The Adventure Bank - 2021

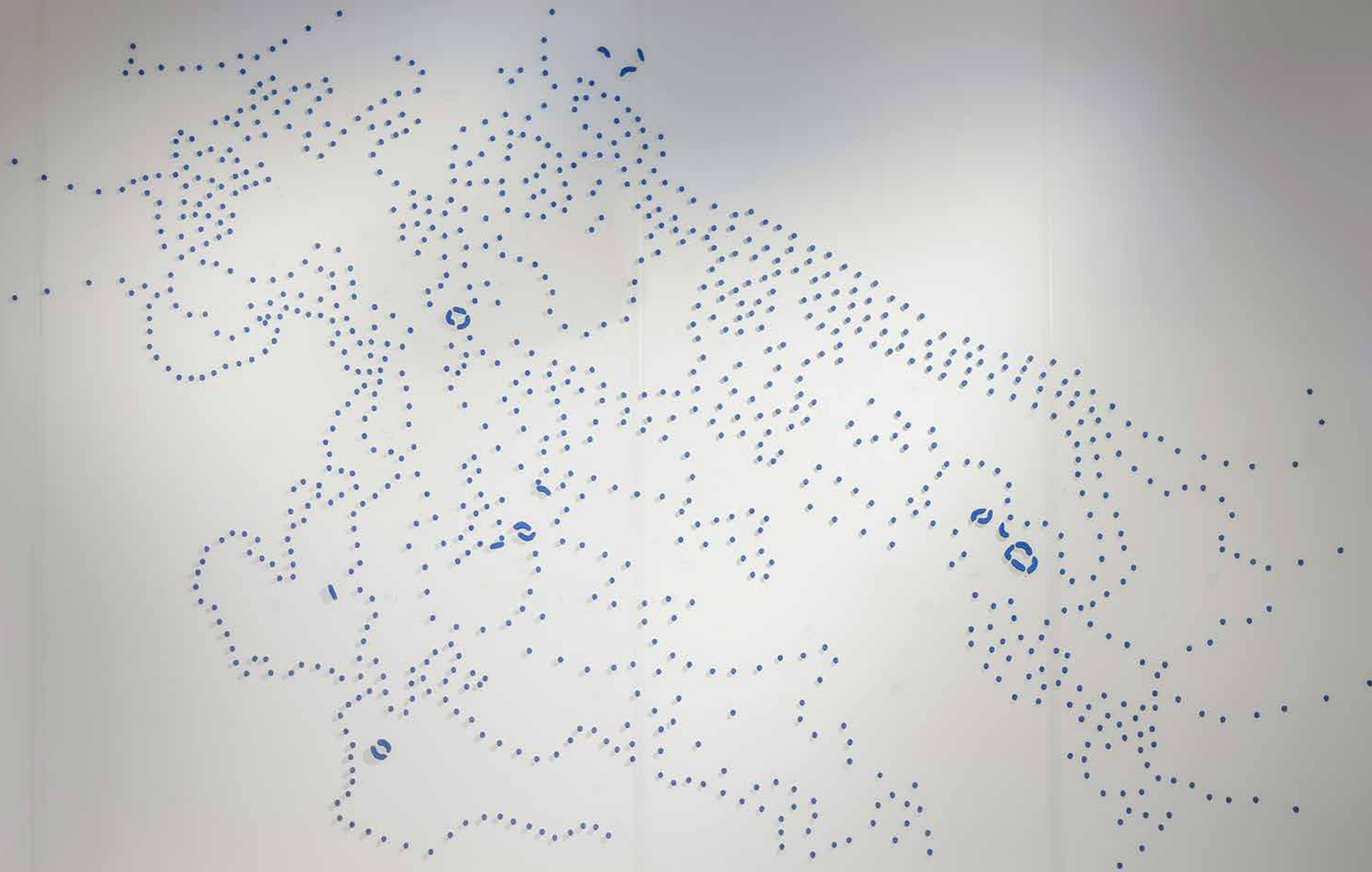
Ceramic installation - 525cm x 320cm

The 80,000 km² of the Adventure Plateau is located in the northwestern sector of the Sicilian Channel. It is the shallowest area of the entire region and is part of the northern margin of the African continental plate. Morphologically, it is separated from Sicily by a deep channel of Mazara del Vallo, and from Tunisia by the «Pantelleria Graben». The map presents a cartography of the seabed in the shallower passage between Europe and Africa where the first routes that crossed this maritime section took place, forming the first passages between the two continents.

The blue cartography drawn by the ceramic pieces brings us conceptually closer to the space and time of the sea voyage. It invites us to reflect on the fact that the sea, and specifically this fragment of sea, has always been and continues to be a space of transit but also a space of conflict.



Two small rectangular labels or plaques are mounted on the left wall, containing text that is illegible in this image.



Between waters and Walls - 2017 / Ongoing
Silkscreen print on paper – Variable dimensions

Between waters and Walls refers to the timeless ambiguity of the sea: a liquid passage unifying lands, yet at the same time a dangerous border provoking death and rejection. The piece originates from a photographed section of the Sicilian Channel. In its totality, the Channel is a 145km long sea strait between Sicily and Tunisia, a border between Europe and Africa. The artist replicated and modified the image to create an infinite motion of distant and near waves. The piece is both appealing and alarming; its movement and the history of the strait itself represent endless stories of migration, encounters and clashes.

This installation is part of a series of works, which touch upon current political issues such as migration & border controls. The works not only reflect the political status quo, but rather invite the beholder to perceive current circumstances from a stand point of the past, and how these have developed ever since.

Curatorial text by Herman Bashiron Mendolicchio





Fabrizio Contarino's artistic practice develops in the fields of drawing, photography, print reproduction techniques and installation. Through a long-term research experience in the central Mediterranean, his work is interested in the landscape as a space of tensions between control and drift, border and transit. By exploring the fragmentation of gaze and representation he explores the intersection between the documentary and the speculative. His work fuses documentary and conceptual approaches, exploring themes of belonging, identity and memory through the duality between image and space, gaze and scene.

He studied Communication at the University of Perugia (Italy), Creative Documentary at the Barcelona Film Observatory, and obtained an official master's degree in Artistic Production and Research at the University of Barcelona. His ongoing training includes seminars at MACBA's Independent Studies Programme (PEI) with Marcelo Expósito and Franco Berardi Bifo, workshops with Raimon Chaves and Andrea Soto Calderón, and participation in curatorial programmes such as On Mediation at the Faculty of Art History of the University of Barcelona and Creating Situations at the Centre d'Art Santa Mònica.

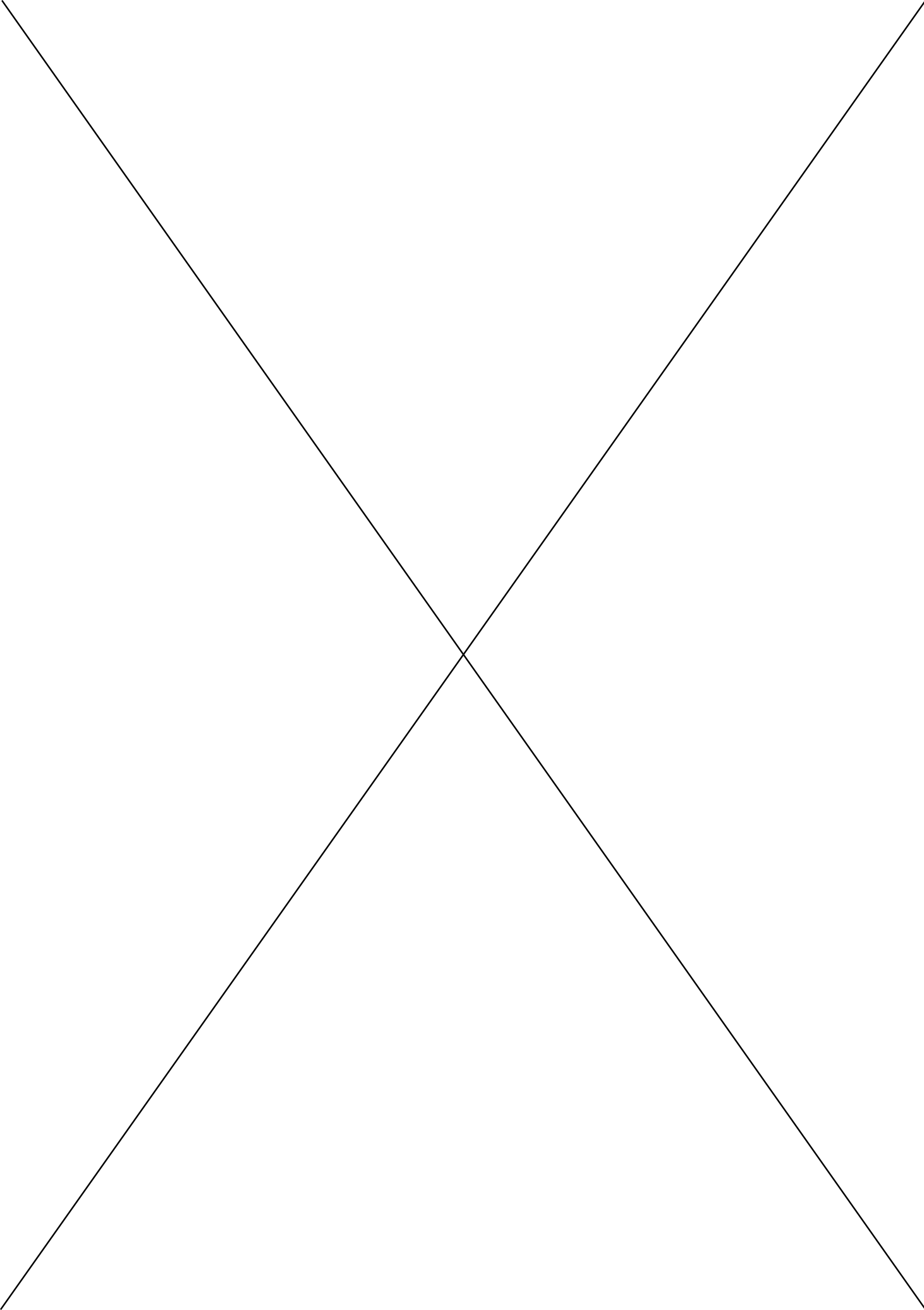
He has exhibited in galleries and art centres in Europe, Asia and Latin America. In 2020, his solo show La Calle Adentro was presented at Monumental Callao, Lima, Peru, and in 2021, his project The Opposite Sea was exhibited at the Vilnius Graphic Art Centre (VGAC) in Lithuania. He has been a regular contributor to the experimental art and design magazine Rojo, and his works have appeared in different European publications.

He currently combines research and artistic practice with his role as artistic director of Espai Souvenir, a contemporary art collaborative space in Barcelona. As a curator, he has collaborated and organised exhibitions with artists such as Miquel Garcia, Angélica Tognetti, Irma Marco, Pilar Quinteros, Bruno José Silva, Federica Matelli, Marenka Krasomil, Robert Bergmann and Maximilian Seegert, among others.

He is a partner of La Escocesa, a creative factory in Barcelona. In 2024, he participated in Barcelona Cultura's Temporals exhibition programme and has been shortlisted for Bienal 2025. Recently, he has exhibited at Studio Weil (Mallorca) in the Porus project curated by Aina Pomar, and at Raro On Site Projects, Barcelona, as part of Loop Festival 2024. His works are part of public and private collections.

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Thanks!