



# Itinerant Beginning

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GONGZHUO WANG



# *Itinerant Beginning*

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*2020 MFA Thesis Exhibition  
Electronic Intergrated Arts*

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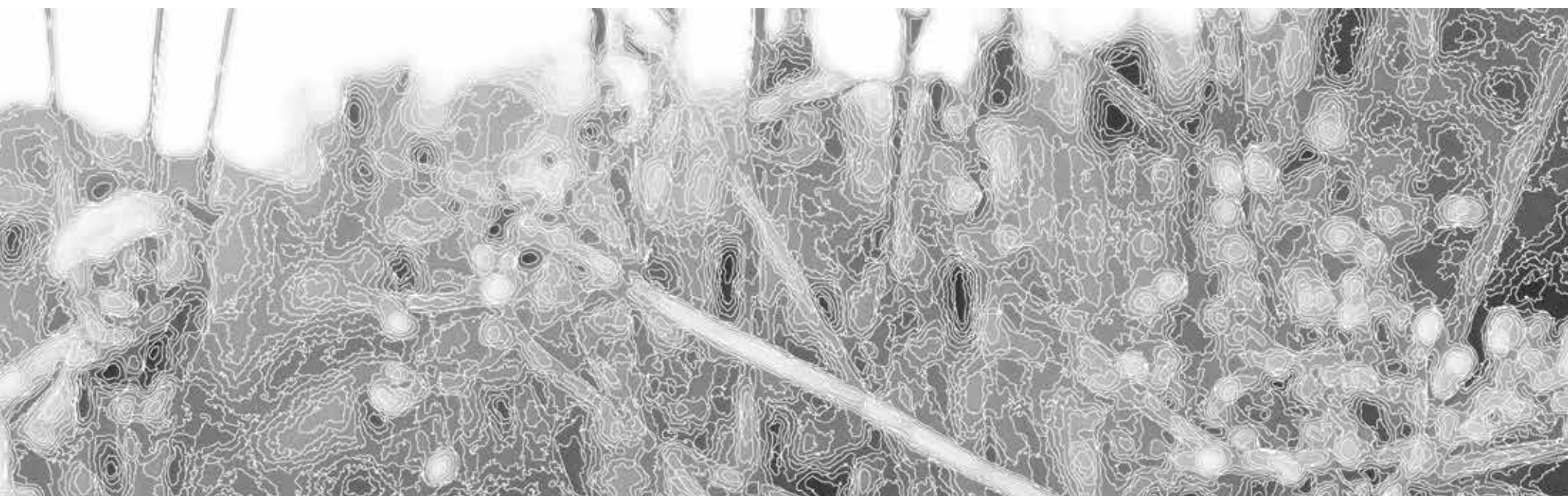
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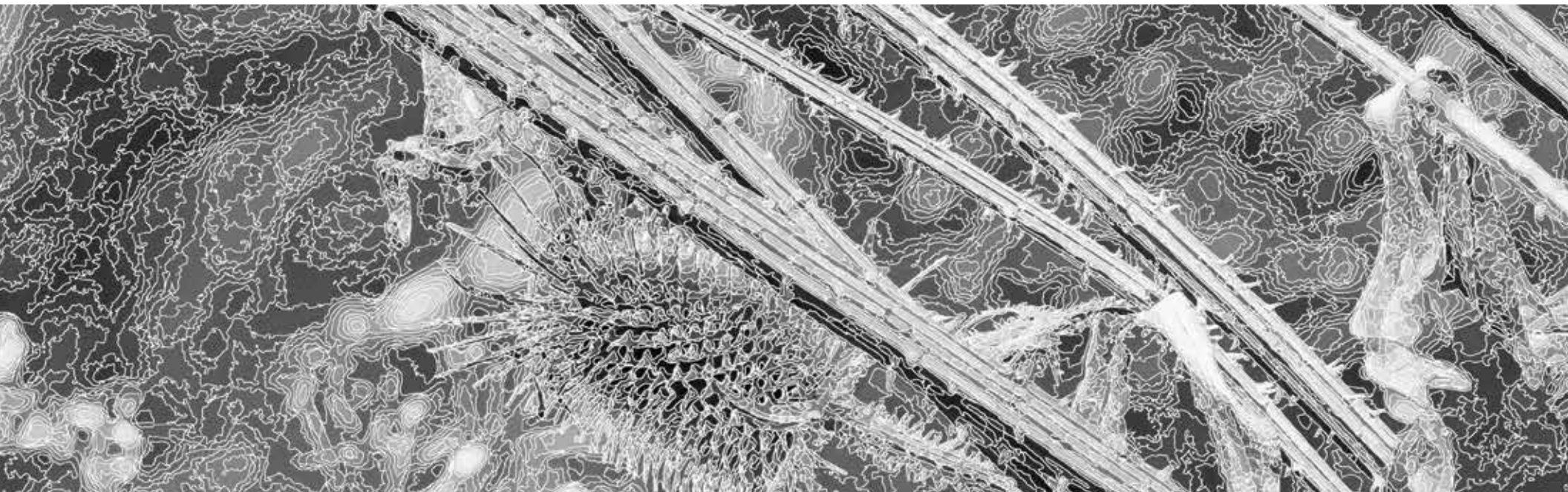
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Always obsessed with looking for natural memories, I am still exploring the existence and interdependence between animals, plants and humans.





In front of the camera, they bloomed quietly, I saw  
them silent and happy. When they disappeared in  
the jungle, I slowly approached them.





*A Perception of Chin*

2019

Performance experiment in class

# Content

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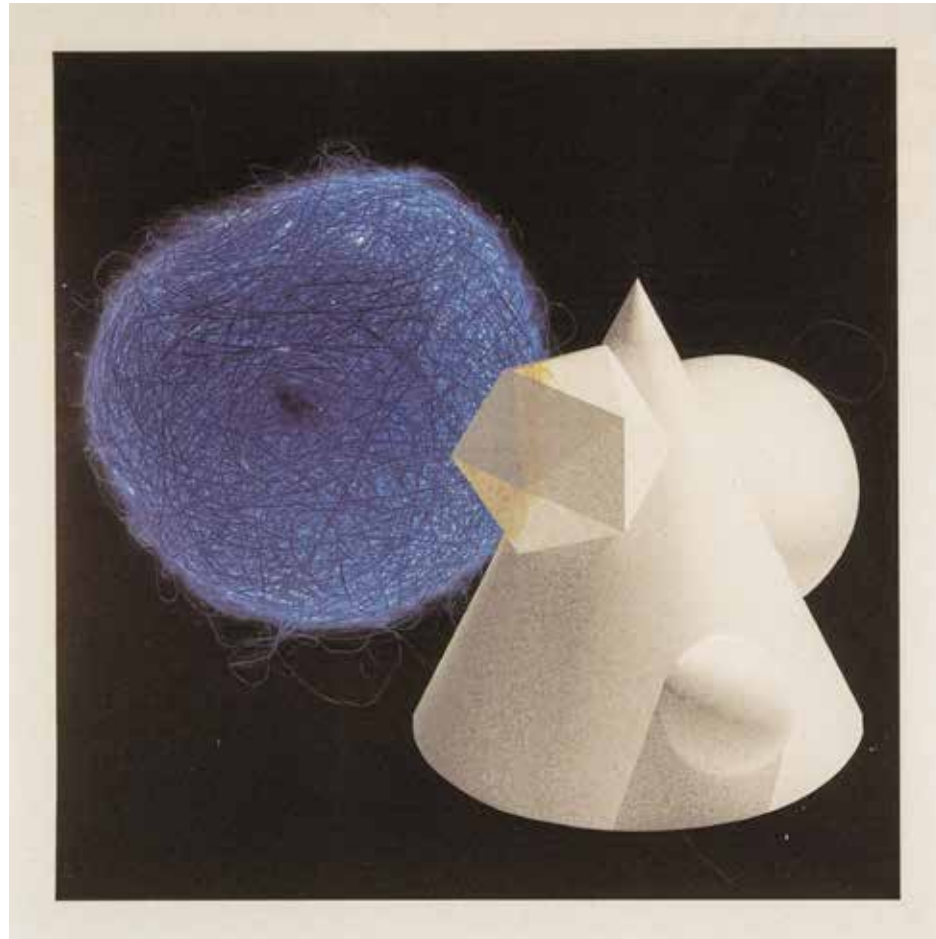
In the past few years, I explored the relationship between nature through living things, human behavior, and technology.

Expressions of the natural world, which are based on diverse natural materials and forms, model a particular way to compose the work in my thesis. I combined material references of humanity and nature to explore their intimate connections. In this artistic journey, finding an individual language to deeply analyze the different significance that each form of life brings into this world is the compelling part of these investigations.

Drawn to inspiration from two natural forms "animals" and "plants," has inspired me to re-recognize art, and allowed me to open a way to feel the real situation between how humans coexist with nature. Nature is under pressure by widespread human exploitation, making the existence of natural life more precious than ever before. This way, the concepts of reality and disappearance need our reflection to respond to global climate change and the loss of nature as we have known it.

During these two years, the surrounding natural environment of Alfred has given me the opportunity to be drawn closer to animals and plants. With the emergence of life that has been explored, short and occasionally profound moments linger in work without beginning or end.

They exist with peace indefinitely and originate with no beginning. The title Itinerant Beginning is implied in each work in the exhibition. Paper as a medium of transition that carries the weight of life with a rough or smooth surface. By collecting some animal hair (Wool) and plant specimens (teasel pods), their lives are reshaped on these carriers that were produced from natural fibers. Indeed, nature and immutability are the two significant elements that appear in the printed works. In the moment of their stillness, they confront our existence on these delicate papers, which leave a suspended presence by the power of their impressions.



*My Radius*  
2019

Digital print  
on Xuan Paper  
Size: 15 x 15 inch

# Decoding my “Language”

The reproduction of the language of the natural world through prints, videos, and sound art comes from respecting and cherishing nature; this creates equality between the works and author.

Old and new technologies convert dynamic images and sounds; the still images move and animate on the computer monitors. I use print to compose video in a narrative way to expand the story in graphic space to a much more expansive area.

In perception, the eye communicates with the viewer through the emotion of creation. Generated by the combination of the technology, I experience the prints through the fingers on paper and experience videos through the touching of my eyes on the screen; these inspired by my body's perception of the material. The apparatuses of high-definition scanners and printers have sparked my interest in the art of technology through their imaging potential and how they translate images. These types of equipment have become a search for a specific way throughout the entire creative process, which emerges as a transformation between prints and videos that then metamorphoses into an act of conveying information.

It is worth comparing the image's texture on the paper with that of the videos. What are the exciting things that are based on the differences in time, space, and materials used in each work? For example, when examining the digital print *Dipsacus Fullonum* (Fig.1), due to the nature of watercolor paper, the plants express emotions through the blooming of ink, the thorns extending on the branches contrast with the gentle paper, at this moment, danger and tenderness conjointly form a feeling. Video *Dipsacus Fullonum* (Fig.2) more often expresses emotion by emphasizing dynamic light and shadow. With the continually changing shape of the teasel, bright colors become particularly dangerous. The appearance of the shadow shocks the viewer's eyes, and the teasel almost jumps out of the screen. This combination of prints and videos has become a new and potent form of composition that converge effectively.

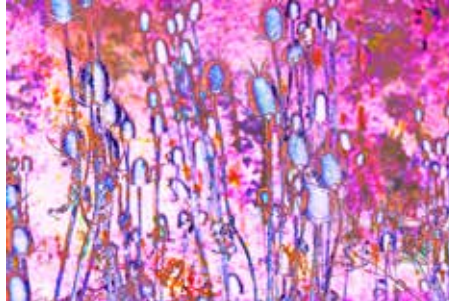


Fig.1 *Dipsacus Fullonum*  
2019  
Digital print  
Size: 15 x 10 inch



Fig.2 *Dipsacus Fullonum*  
2019  
Single-channel video  
Screenshot

Technology's power of imaging has helped me to understand nature. Switching between three-dimensional form and graphic form by machine is a way to express the variety of materials that are changing in space. It is possible to analyze the existence and characters of the identity of the natural objects by observing from different perspectives. Digital patterns enhance a unique sense for printing, reflected not only in the high-definition pixels but also the electronic characteristics of the object itself after scanning. The image is converted into electronic space and then reconverted onto paper multiple times. This happening of the information which is abstract but real, then reveals the process and results of scanning and editing. Several high-tech machines have sparked my interest in the art of technology, such as scanner, printer, 4K Camera, and so on.

Using a scanner to zoom in on objects that are invisible to the naked eyes and allowing more information to display on the screen, this creative form not only frees the viewer's eyes but also changes the living shape of the object in another space. For instance, in the print work Wool (Fig.3), they appear in an indistinguishable form of movement or as still, without knowing their identity or when they were born. The Wool itself is only 3 x 4 inches as the scanned object, but the works printed in 44 x 34 inches.





Fig.3  
*Wool*  
2020  
Digital print  
32 x 42 inch

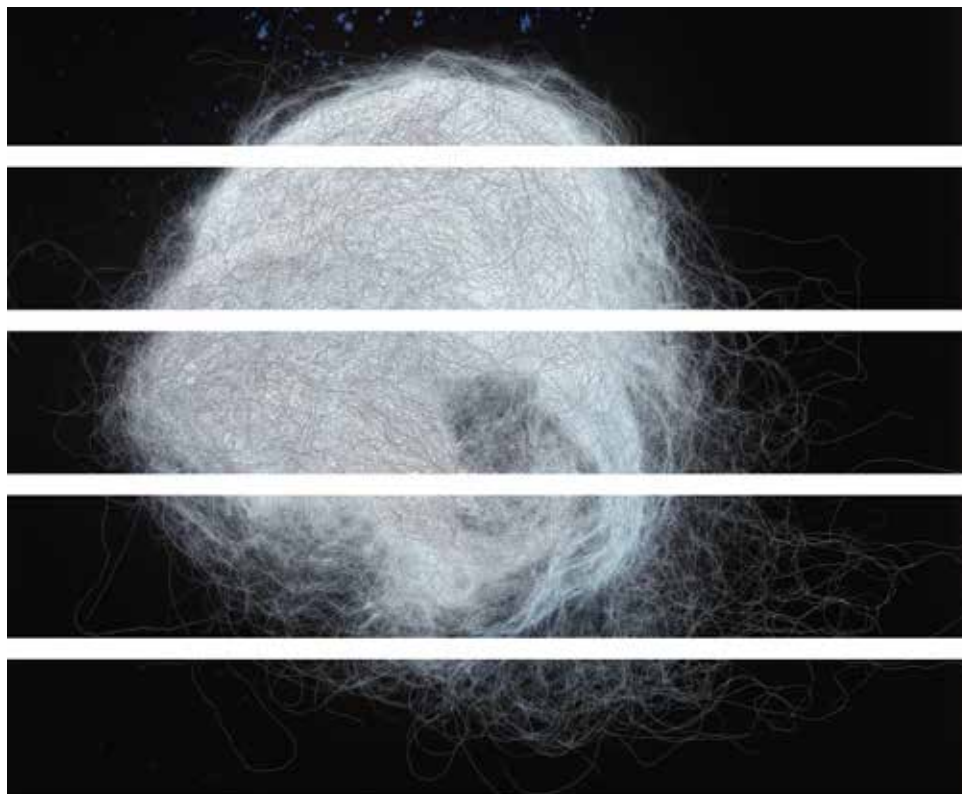


Fig.4 *Wool*

2020

Digital print on QuaForte rag paper

Size: 42 x 60 inches

## Communication with nature is a game.

By observing and touching life itself, I reshaped my aesthetic consciousness. Concentrating on the animal's hair and the texture of a plant, implies a constant relation between characteristics of life itself and the acquired environment, which affects the way life exists. The creatively detailed lines in the pattern reflect the energy of life, and the fuzzy pixel demonstrates the passing of life. The work re-frames the strong traces left of life; at the same time, the disappearance of material forms means a rebirth of life.

Some of the prints, such as Wool (Fig.4), the conversation of play and space as a psychic rule, become the frame and pattern of the Wool's lines. Thus, structure and paper interact and impact themselves on each other. Some of the elements, such as the extension of ink, absorbance of the paper, the speed of the pattern display, have experienced the completion of the work and are enjoyed.

Based on the Wool that is manipulated in its natural state, the author controlled the setting of ink color, composition of the pattern, and the choice of materials. So, who will win this amusing battle? In this game of communicating with Wool, by observing them from diverse angles but then transferring to a graphic space, they were occasionally serious and excited. Eventually, they present themselves to the spectator in a state of silence.



Due to my background in Industrial Design, 3-dimensional objects always exist in the works. I create dialogs between the various human constructions and natural materials. An example would be, a conversation between Japanese paper, a virtual model, and a scanned Mexican plant textile. The work *My Radius* (Fig.5) builds up a gentle connection between geometrical form and natural material. In this electronic space, the overlapped section as the main element went through the layers of these two structures. Exploring effects in prints by going back to consider the history of technology and how to discover these techniques is a fascinating thing.

Fig.5 *My Radius*  
2019  
Digital Print on Xuan Paper  
Size: 24 x 30 inch

## How to define the end of the game

When I was 16 years old, for me, representing the completion or incompleteness of a painting was a sensorial thing to consider. Different from the picture, printing itself explores a way to intensify the sense of time. So, time, space, and experience used to form a print will become a part of the work itself. Some works that take a long time to create are an elementary form to view. However, sometimes the short-lived work looks very colorful and splendid by chance.

Thinking about the perception of "completeness" in painting has influenced the creation of prints. Chen Danqing mentioned an unfinished painting in the program Part. An Impressionist painter walked out of the studio and finished the painting outdoors, then the subversive question raised by Impressionism is "how to define a completed painting?". The same thing happens in the layering that takes place in prints, in the work Untitled (Fig.6), a woodblock cut by a laser cutter, is then printed on diverse types of papers. The image and texture of wood are combined to create rich atmospheres.

However, the works continued to develop in your eyes. With their rich wood texture, the prints are scanned into the computer and an electronic sense of the image appears on the monitor, digital space allows the author to pursue more visually. The transformation once again becomes a conversation between papers because of the different types used. The process of time consumption and conversion establishes the possibility that the work can be completed at any time.



Fig.6 Untitled, 2020, 18 x 22 inch

# Nature of Xuan Paper

When talking about the nature of paper, handmade Xuan paper in Anhui Province of China has a history of thousands of years of traditional craftsmanship. Their softness and the toughness, natural fibers, and textures are the main characteristics of these beautiful papers. They are produced by over one hundred steps, such as steeping, washing, fermenting, and so on which are necessary for creating these delicate handmade papers.

Xuan paper is sensitive to both climate and water quality. A mild climate required for the best quality Xuan papers. Inspired by this particular method of crafting paper, a new understanding of defining material use has sprung up from the conversation between human and natural beauty when we experienced the surface of this paper. The print is a special kind of reproduction where an image is formed with ink on paper. The idea of the print in Photo Polymer Gravure (Fig.7) on Xuan paper, originally came from using a contemporary process to reexamine the history of paper and ink influenced by changes in technology.

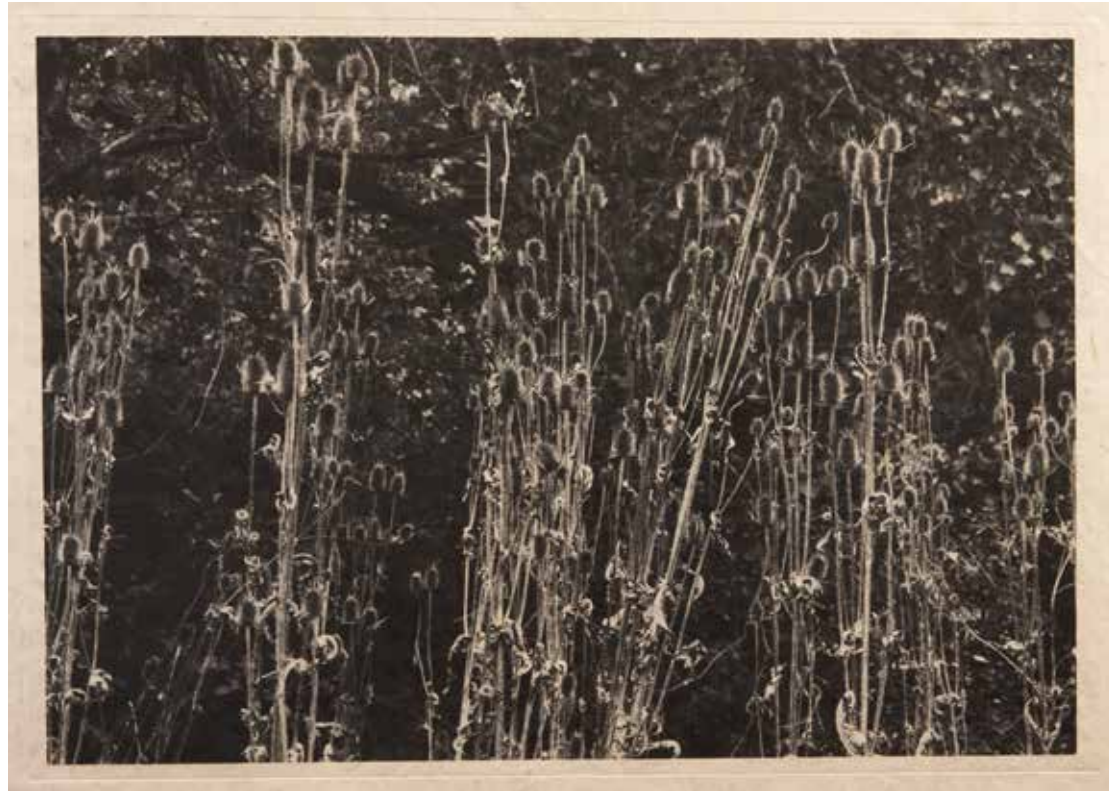


Fig.7 *Dipsacus Fullonum*, 2019, Photo Polymer Print, Edition of 8

With the passing of years, the quality of Xuan Paper will become more precious and increases its value like fine wines. Jing County in Anhui Province is the birthplace of Xuan Paper. At Xuan Paper factories, many plant fibers can be used to make paper. The majority of natural materials used are: reeds, rice straw, Blue Sandalwood, bamboo, and a variety of tree barks. The cost of them are quite different. Blue Sandalwood (Fig.8) and rice straw are always used for making the finest of Xuan Papers such as “Red Star”. Workers put rice straw in large pots for steaming, after 7 to 8 hours, the cooked straws will be carried to the mountain by these workers, and then the rice straw will face up to a year of wind, sun bleaching, and rain.

Rice straw (Fig.9) have gone through the baptism of years, from yellow to white, from wet to dry. After cooking, drying, stirring, and other steps, the lignin of the straw has been slowly lost. The reason for removing the lignin from plants is to make the paper clean and to preserve it by deacidifying it and making it archival. After the straw is smashed into pulp and blended it is put into a big vat with additives and a lot of water. Fishing paper (Fig.10) becomes the most challenging and essential step in the production of Xuan Paper where a large screen is dipped into the vat by workmen. The final texture on the surface of Xuan Paper is the result of time and craftsmanship. The high grade of paper usually has a consistency of thickness and weight—the more the paper ages, the more valuable it becomes to arts and collectors





Fig.8 Pounding Blue Sandalwood  
(Photo from Joseph Scheer)



Fig.9 Sun bleached rice straw  
(Photo from Joseph Scheer)



Fig.10 Fishing Paper (Photo from  
Joseph Scheer)



Fig.11 *Untitled*

2019

Polyester print on Xuan paper

4 pieces in this series

18 x 22 inch each

The primary interest for using these papers, comes from combining the characteristics of traditional craftsmanship with modern technology for creating original works with the awareness of both histories that appears in the works created. The concept of Chinese traditional ink painting on Xuan Paper has been transformed when it applies to woodblock printing by the diverting the form entirely and combining the texture of wood through ink on the Xuan paper. Printing digital images on regular paper happens first, then experimenting with these images using different types of the Xuan Paper. For one series of prints a polyester liquid was painted on the surface of Xuan Paper. Instantly, the Xuan Paper became soft and translucent. Then by leaving the paper until it dry, it became hard and even more translucent. These papers were then used for dye sublimation digital prints. The process of handling paper seems to be a game so that we can perceive the nature of Xuan Paper in person. This then allows more possibilities with the material uses of Xuan paper.

Between the digital prints and traditional prints, two series have experimented with polyester coated Xuan Papers, for transfer printing the work *Untitled* (Fig.11) exemplifies the evolutionary process that transformed between the texture of Wool and Xuan Paper. The work illustrates the collaborative process between the processed Xuan Paper and the converted images from four perspectives. Compared with another series of prints, *Dipsacus Fullonum* (Fig.12) with similar procedures, the Wool's soul seems to be more realistic on Xuan Paper.

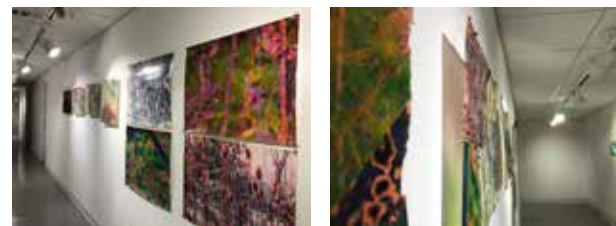


Fig.12 *Dipsacus Fullonum* 2019  
4 pieces in this series  
18 x 22 inch each

With early Photo Polymer Gravure works, Xuan Paper, was one of the various types of paper that experienced numerous tests. For the series of photo etchings Untitled (Fig.13), while the Song and Yuan Dynasty Paper were in a pretty soft and moist state, the etching ink expands out and penetrates the middle of the paper during the printing process. Struck by the appealing scenery of the brook that runs through campus, I photographed the teasels when they were shaking in the wind. Transferring these five images onto plates by exposures, I printed them on the soaked Xuan Paper, which possessed a mix of chips of hay and bamboo. The bodies of prickly teasels were painterly depicted in the prints when etching ink was diffused into the Xuan Paper. Concurrently, accompanied by the teasel present on Xuan Paper, the pressure of press shapes a delicate frame.



Fig.13 *Dipsacus Fullonum*, 2019, Photo Polymer Print, Edition of 6



# The Weight of Video

Inspired by the prints mentioned in the book (Teasel), the combination of prints and videos are worth considering for me. For an installation work completed in the 2019 Fall semester, there were some video installations composed of 4k monitors displayed in the immersive gallery (Fig.14). Of course, the video itself doesn't have any weight, since it seems to be a virtual dream built by people, but how to express the weight of the video is an attractive question around this creative period. When a good deal of screens placed and used on the ground, the viewer has the incredible illusion of weight, which is produced by the shape of these monitors. The immersive atmosphere draws the viewer's attention to the light and the intricate order of the screens. The background video in the projection on the wall that continuously interacts with the video on the monitors, three large-scale panels of projected video form which are distributed on three walls as the largest video frame in work contrasts with the monitors on the ground, the left panel shows an image about a process of a teasel's aggressive movement.

However, the right panel shows a picture of nearly peaceful teasel which covered with thorns. The most abundant video image displays on the central channel, a group of teasels moving through one miniature frame to another. as the advance of video, huge sound comes out from three channels of sound equipment, which are anthropomorphic, heavy and stretchy. The fickle sound seems to emphasize the volume of video installations and their existence in this immersive space.

The work A dream of Distortion (Fig.15), two black-and-white monitors show two pieces of Wool, which are in the adjustment. Two high-definition images of Wool were recorded while being processed by computer software. This work explores the fuzzy perception in the form of two high-resolution pictures and two old, low-resolution monitors. The content of the video emphasized the "light" characteristics of the Wool's weight and contrasted with the two bulky monitors.





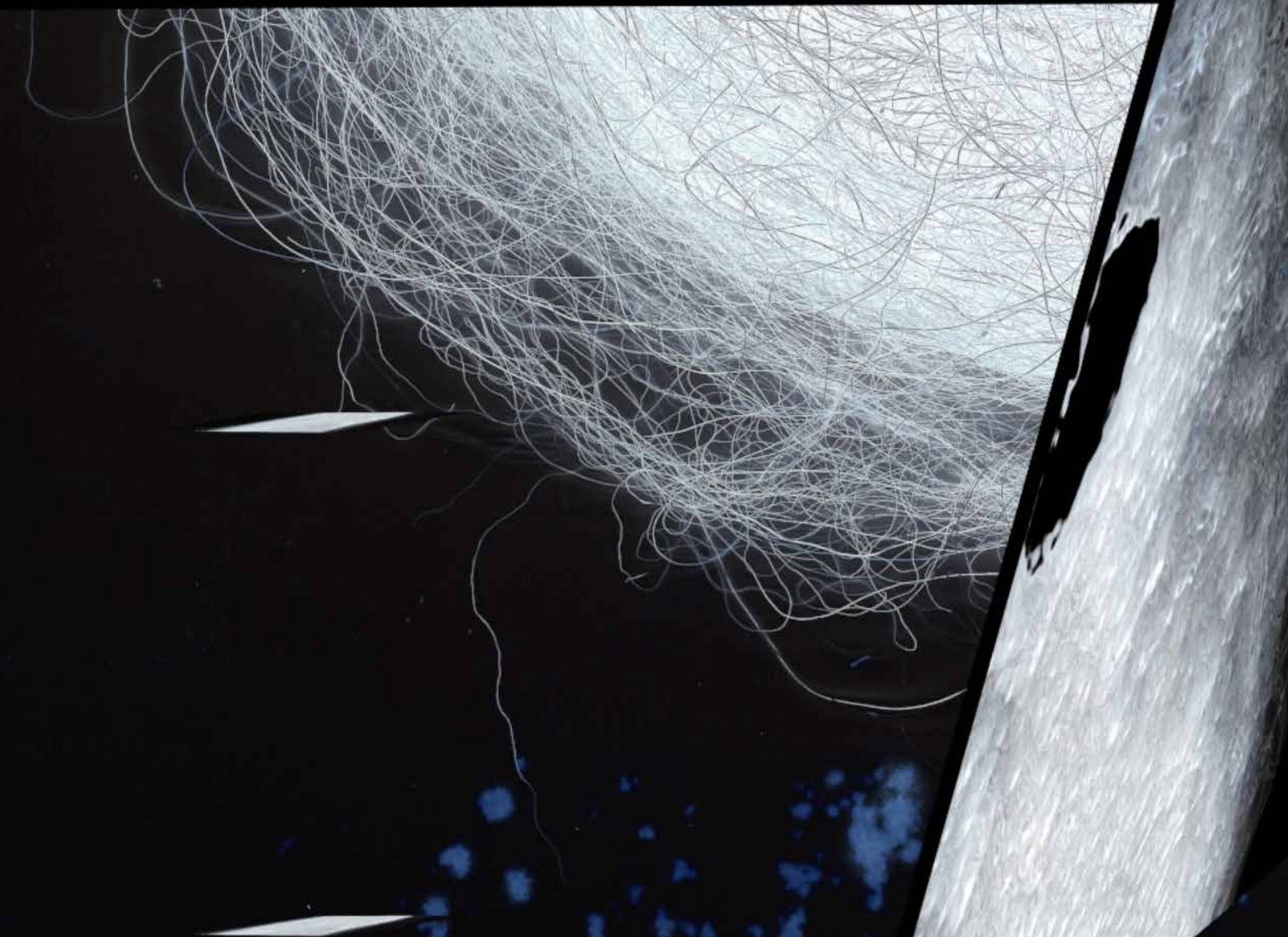
In the growth of my aesthetic consciousness, time, space, and material are the most critical components in the works. My love for print and video is because they somehow deliver my feelings in another recondite language. The inspiration and creativity are derived from the way I observe and live life.



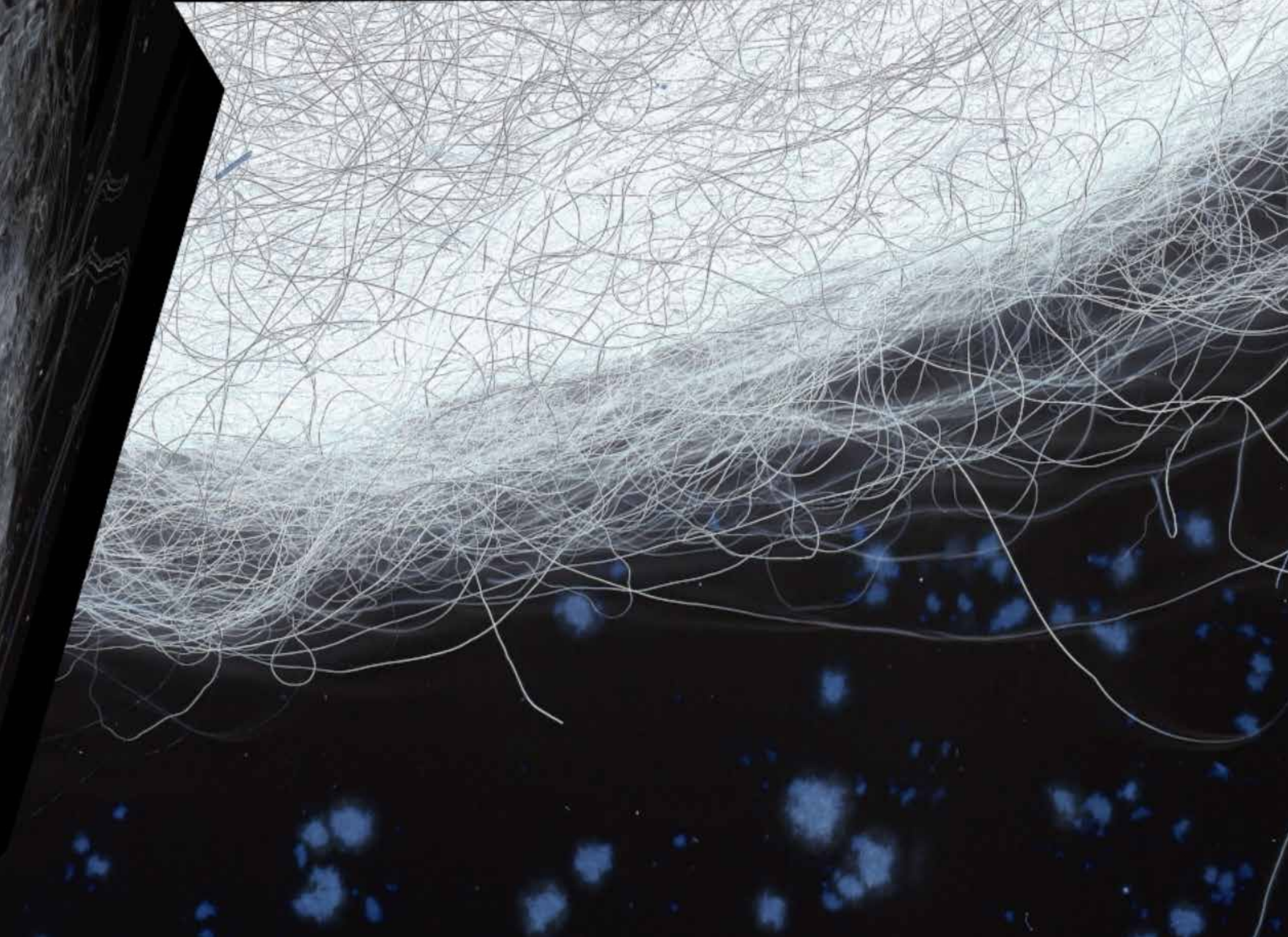
## Video Work

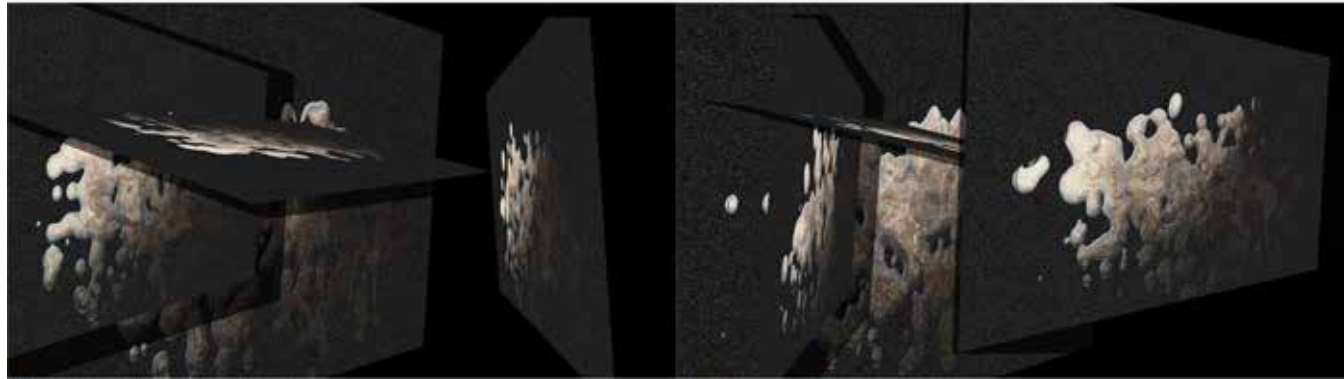
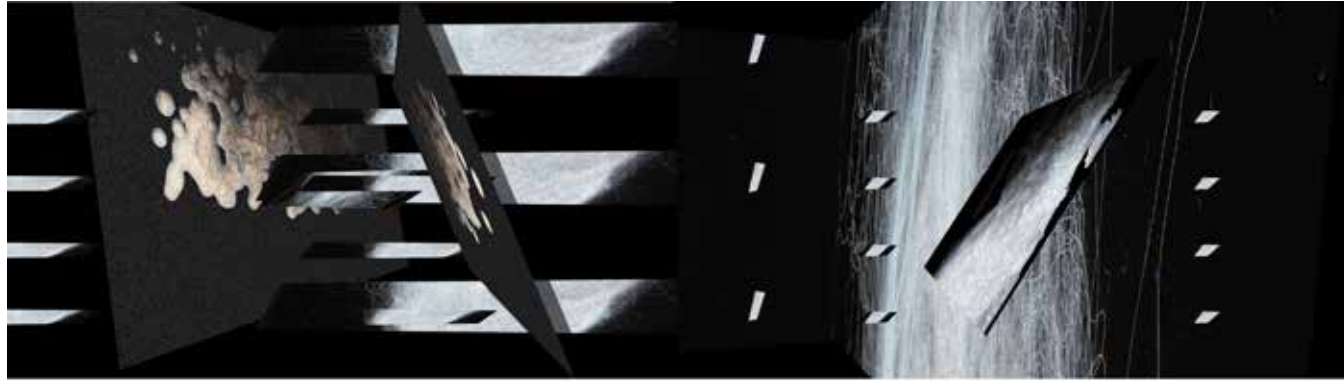
*3 Ave*

*Untitled*

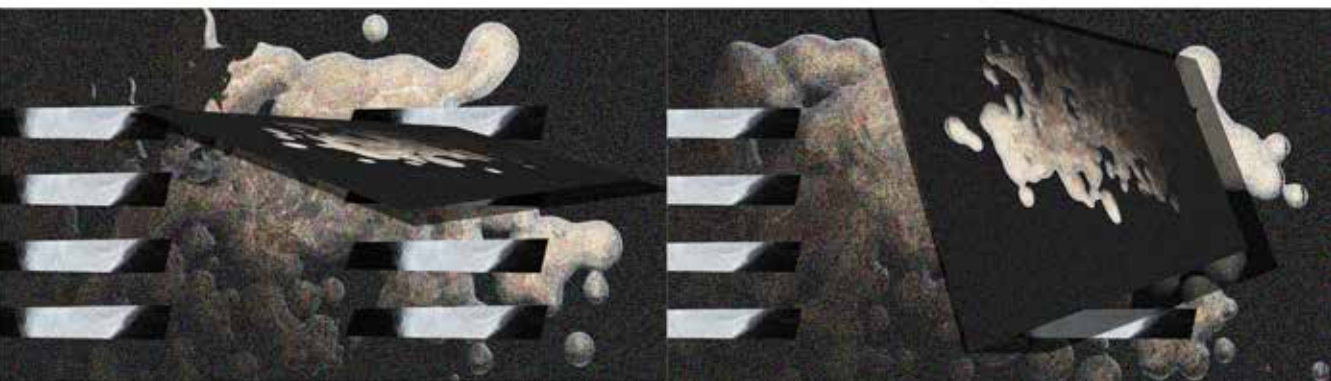
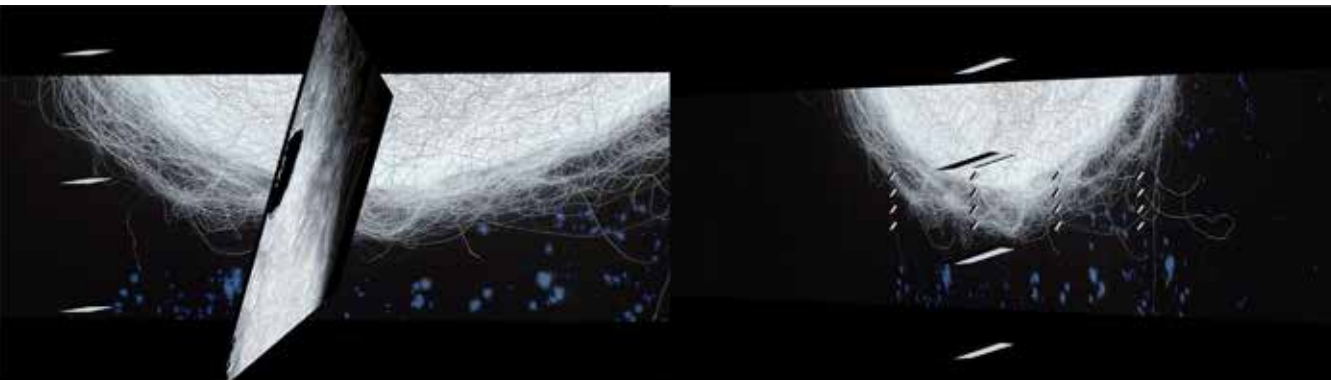








*3 Ave*  
 2020  
 Single-channel  
 Size: 1920 × 1080  
 Duration: 4 minutes 39 seconds











*Untitled*  
2020  
Single Channel  
Screenshots from the Video





# Installation Work

*A dream of Distortion*  
*Dipsacus Fullonum*



*A dream of Distortion*  
2019

Color video  
One channel of audio from left monitor  
Duration: continuously running

This work consist of Two-CDR Monitors with a noisy sound that made from the left monitor. The wool was edited in the computer's software which displayed in two monitors at the same time. In the video, the author artificially decomposes the wool, and the clear wool gradually becomes pixelated in the video









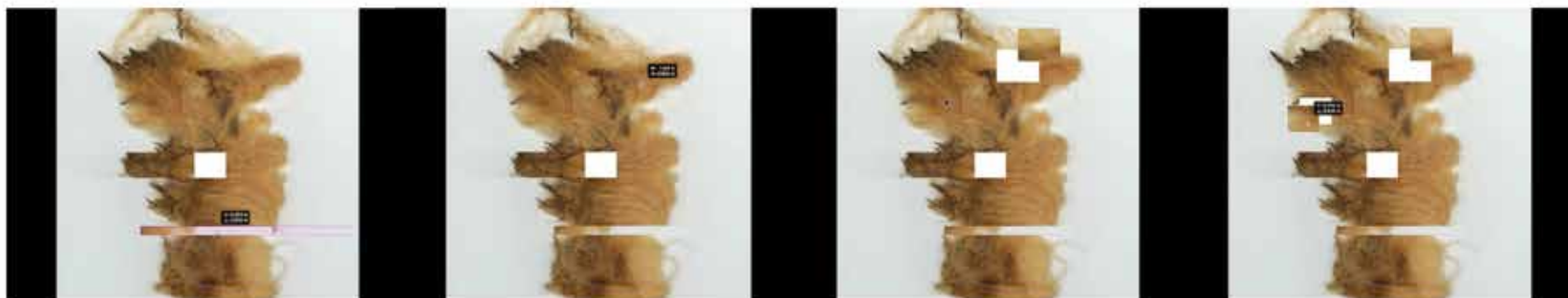
Video Installation with Professor Peer Bode

Video Installation displayed in  
sound studio, 2019





Screenshots from the video



Four-4k monitors randomly stood on the floor in a dark room with a projection that displayed on a big wall. Five teasels were dancing and shifting with the anthropopathic sound in the monitors and projection. Meanwhile, the background formed of shadow and print was lightly moving in each video.

Color high-definition video projected on a large wall.  
Four-channel videos displayed in the 4-4k monitors.  
Four channels of audio from each monitor  
Duration: continuously running

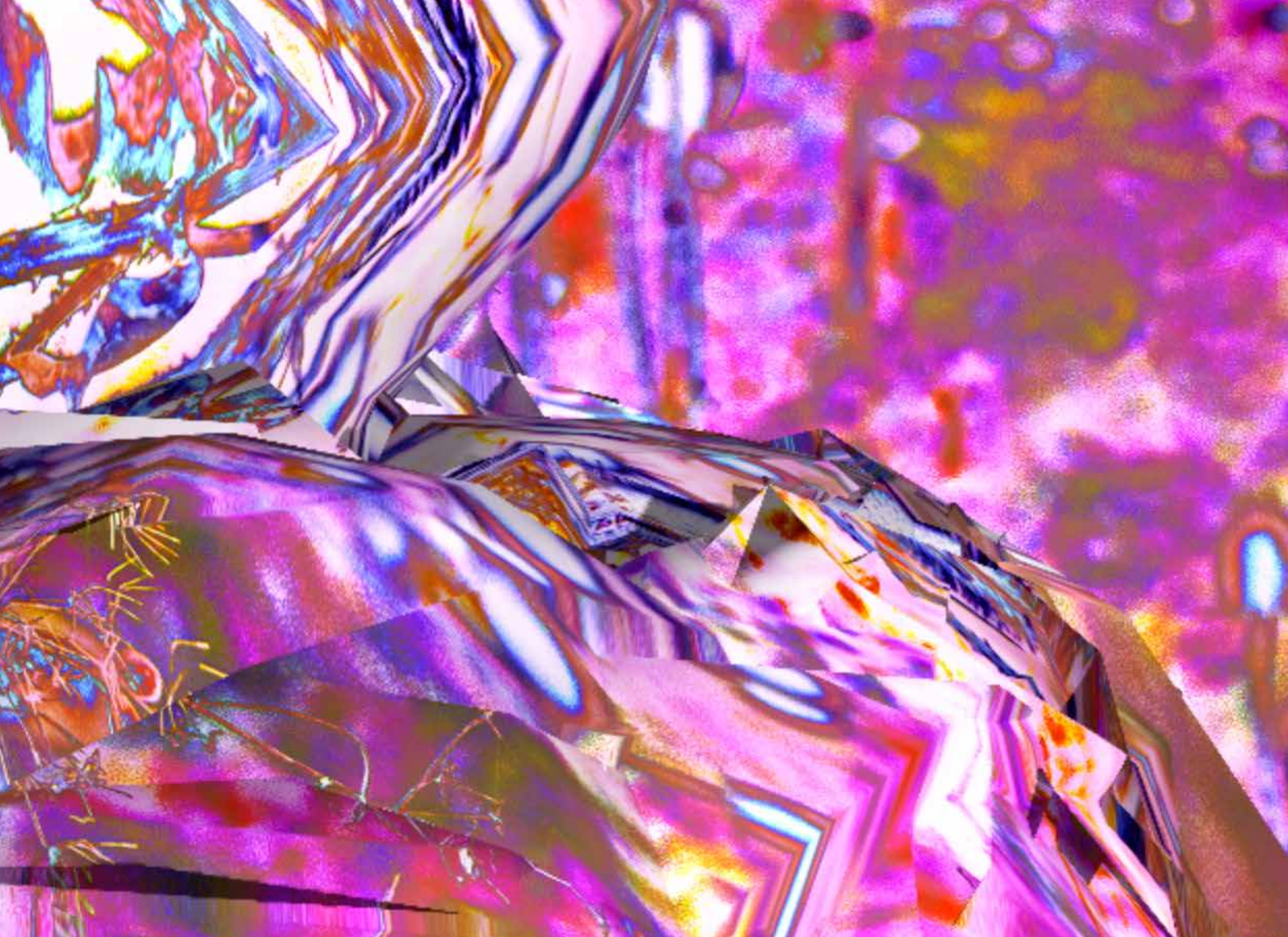




*Dipsacus Fullonum*  
2019

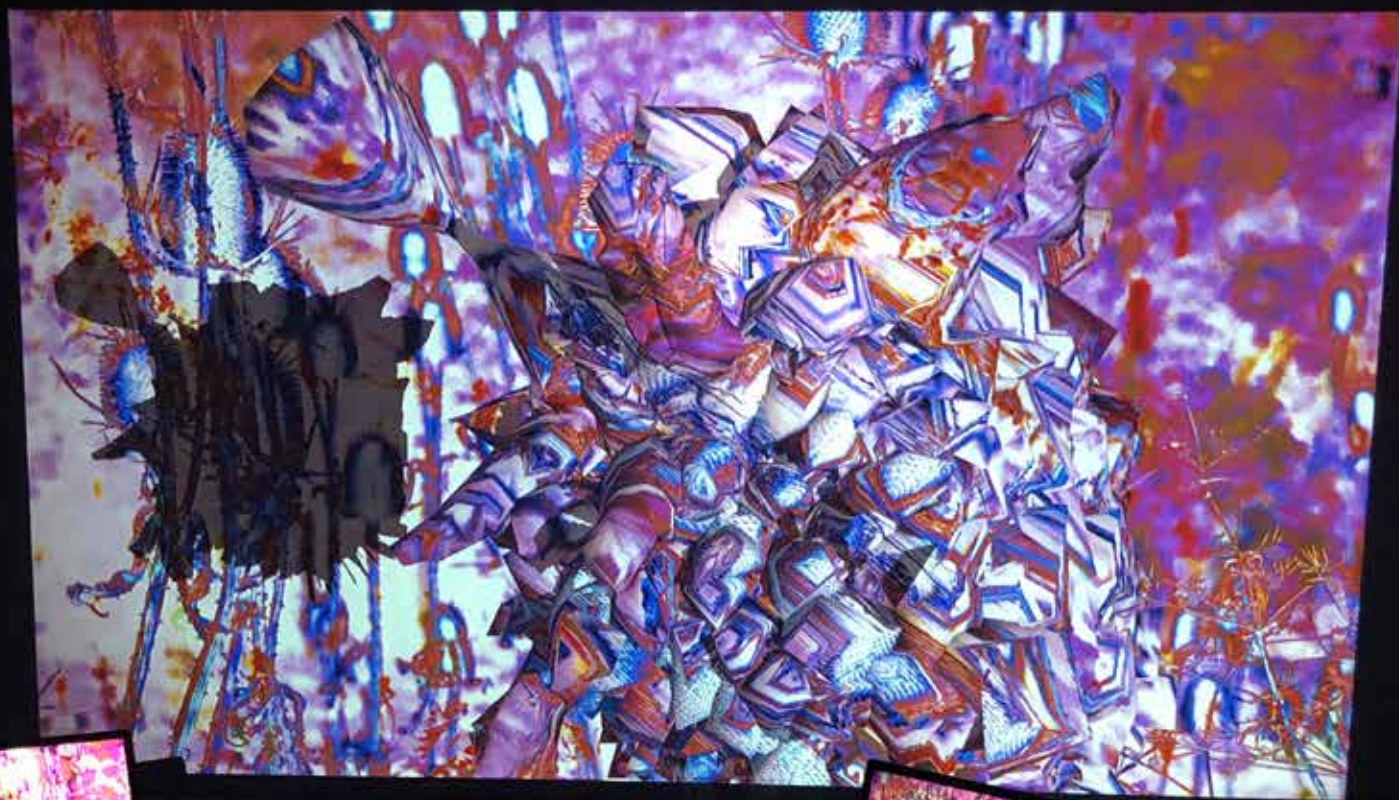




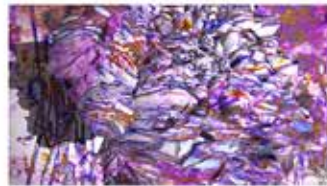
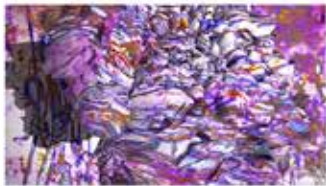
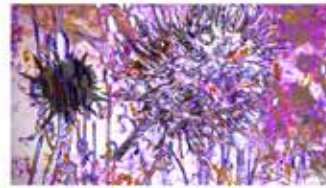








Screenshots from the video







# Print Work

Digital print

*Wool*

*My radius*

Dye Sublimation Transfer print

*Ulediti*

*Untitled*

*Dipsacus Fullonumt*

Woodcut

*Untitled*

*Poll-Goat*

*Untitled*

*Untitled*

Photo Polymer Gravure

*Dipsacus Fullonumt*

*Untitled*

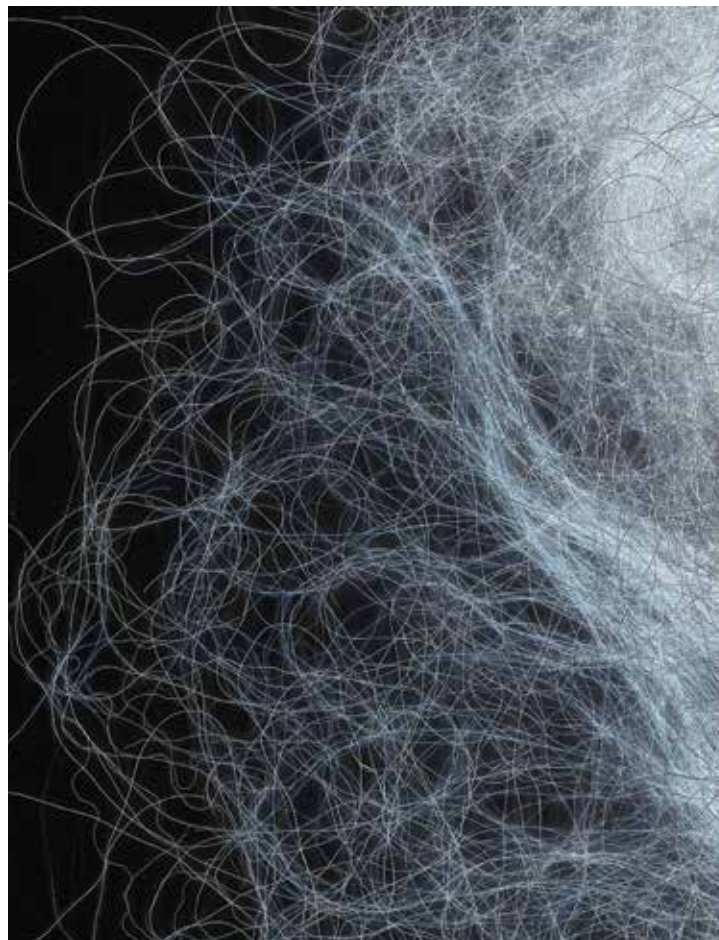
Lithography

*Dipsacus Fullonum*

*Wool*  
2019

Digital print  
On QuaForte rag paper  
1st of this series  
Size: 42 x 32.5 inch





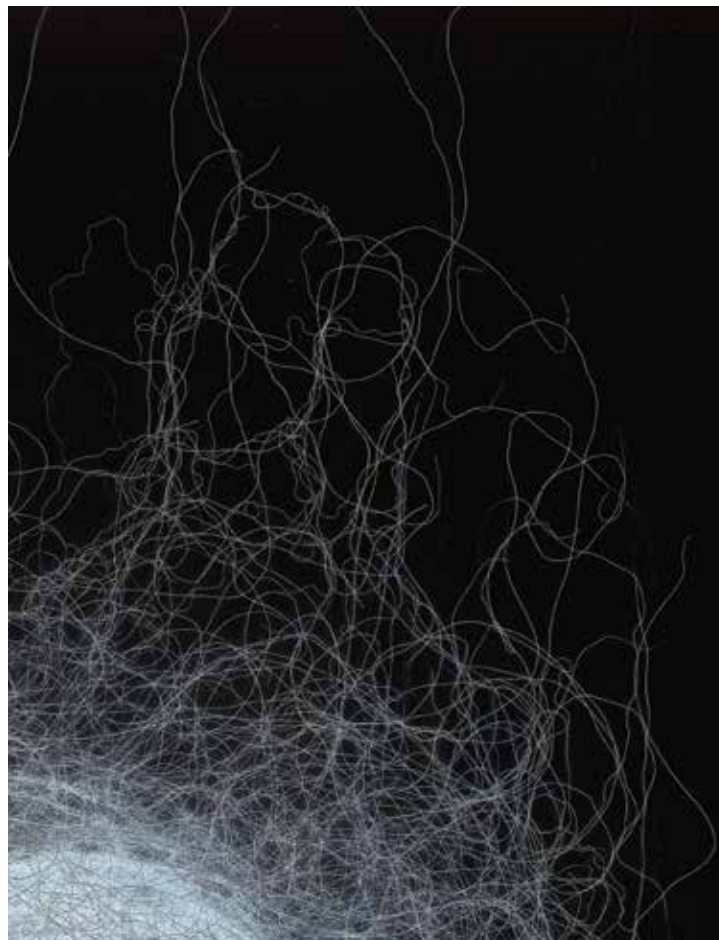
*Wool*  
2019

Digital print  
On QuaForte rag paper  
2nd of this series  
Size: 42 x 32.5 inch

*Wool*  
2019

Digital print  
On QuaForte rag paper  
3rd of this series  
Size: 42 x 32.5 inch

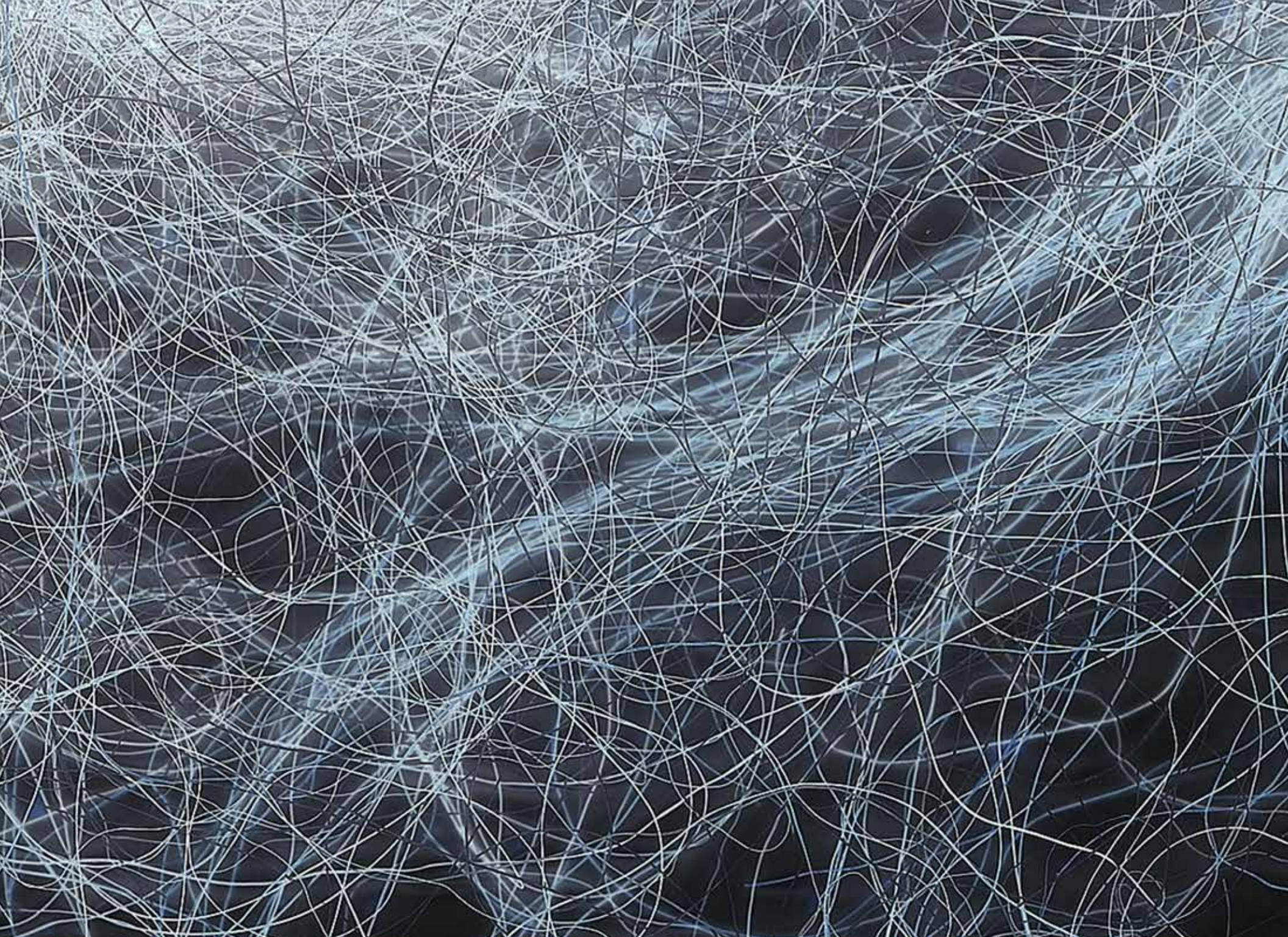




*Wool*  
2019

Digital print  
On QuaForte rag paper  
4th of this series  
Size: 42 x 32.5 inch











*My Radius*  
2019

Digital print on Xuan paper  
1st of this series  
Size: 24 x 30 inch





*My Radius*  
2019

Digital print on Xuan paper  
2nd of this series  
Size: 24 x 30 inch



*My Radius*  
2019

Digital print on Xuan paper  
3rd of this series  
Size: 24 x 30 inch





*My Radius*

2019

Digital print on Xuan paper

4th of this series

Size: 24 x 30 inch

*Untitled*

2019

Dye Sublimation transfer print on Xuan paper

1st of this series

size: 19.5 x 16 inch





*Untitled*  
2019

Dye Sublimation transfer print on Xuan paper  
2nd of this series  
size: 19.5 x 16 inch



*Untitled*

2019

Dye Sublimation transfer print on Xuan paper

3rd of this series

size: 19.5 x 16 inch





*Untitled*

2019

Dye Sublimation transfer print on Xuan paper

4th of this series

size: 19.5 x 16 inch



*Untitled*

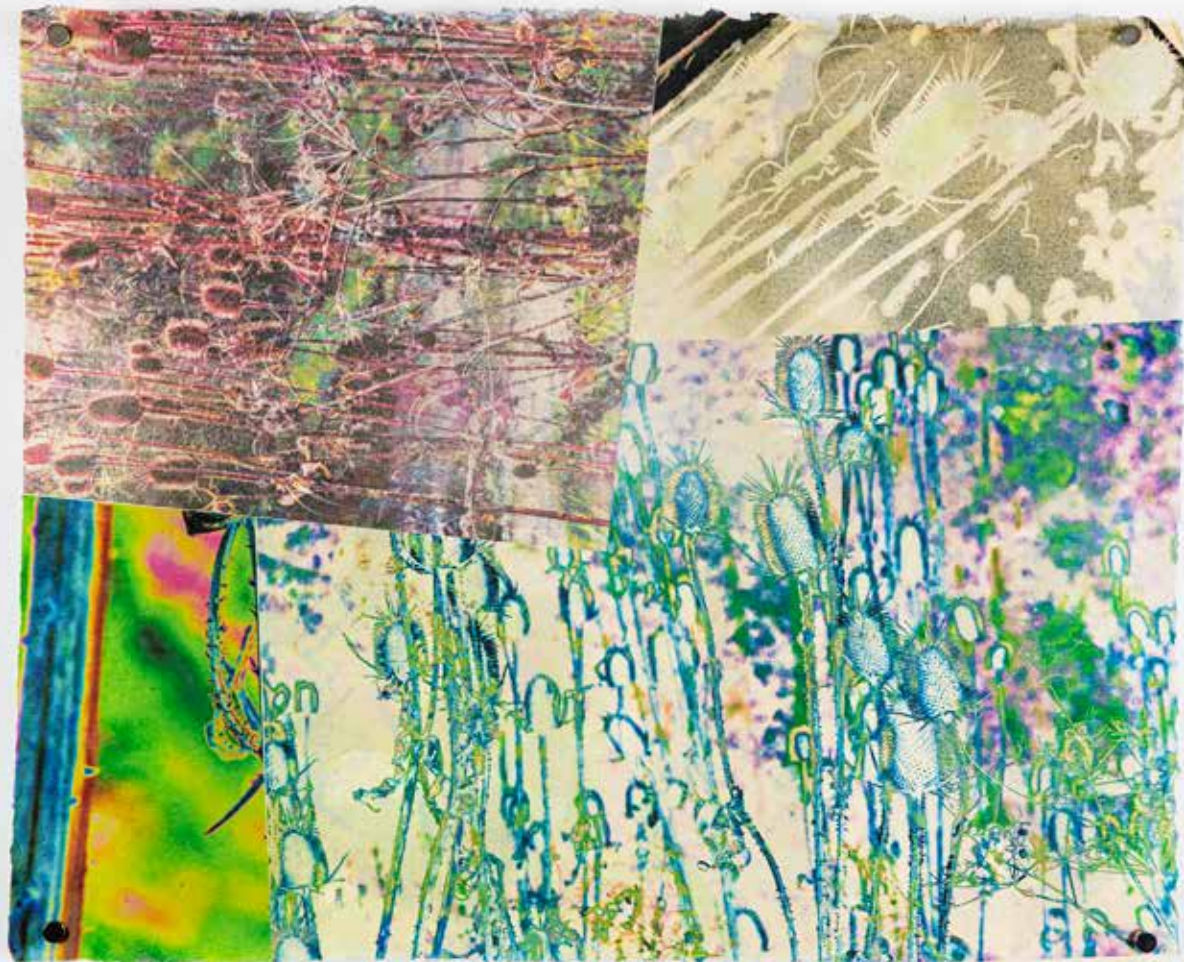
2019

Dye Sublimation transfer print on Xuan paper

1st of this series

size: 19.5 x 16 inch





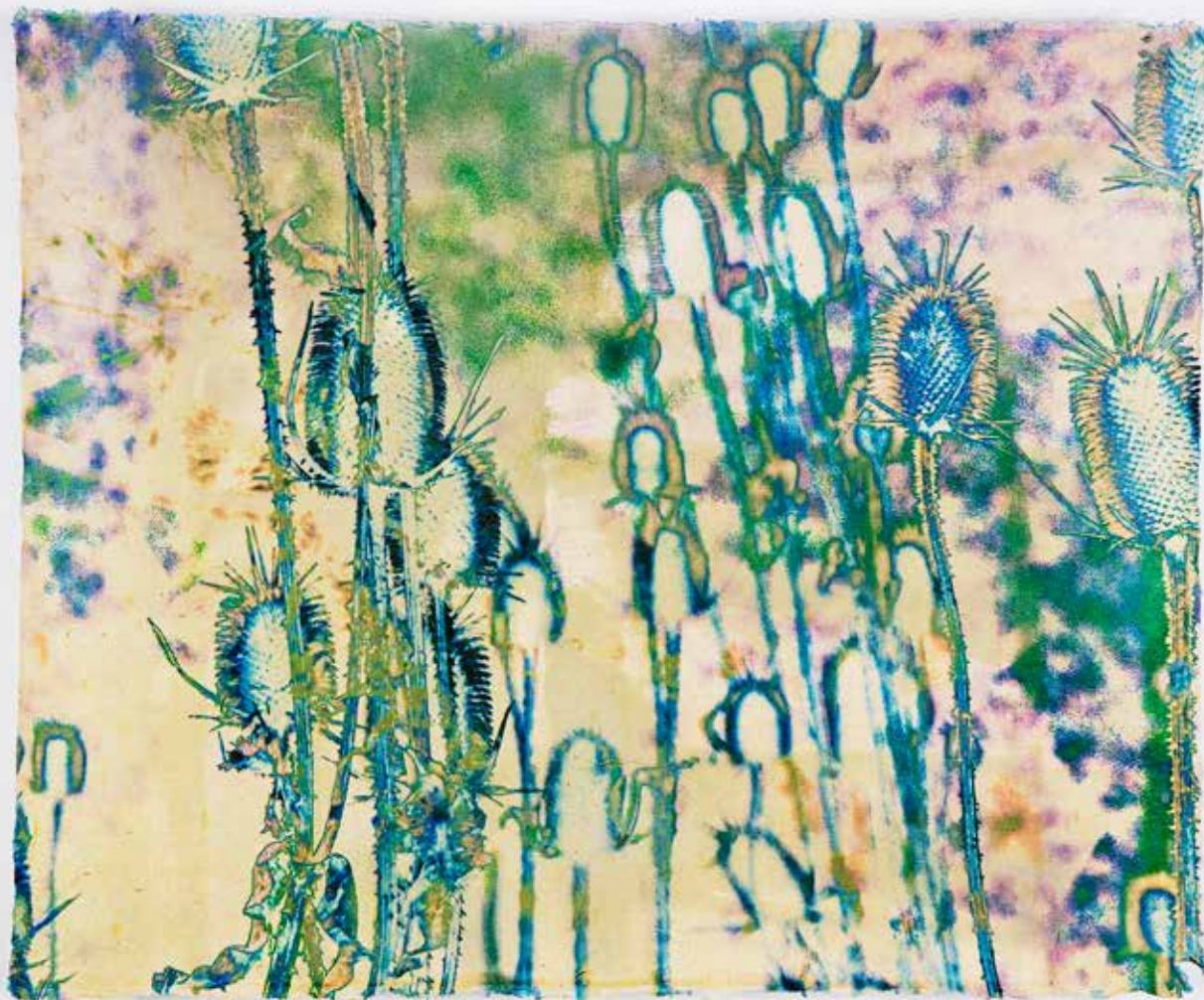
*Untitled*

2019

Dye Sublimation transfer print on Xuan paper

2nd of this series

size: 19.5 x 16 inch



*Untitled*

2019

Dye Sublimation transfer print on Xuan paper

3rd of this series

size: 19,5 x 16 inch





*Dipsacus Fullonum*

2019

Dye Sublimation transfer print on Arnhem paper

1st of this Series

Size: 30 x 20 inch





*Dipsacus Fullonum*

2019

Dye Sublimation transfer print on Arnhem paper

2nd of this Series

Size: 30 x 20 inch





*Dipsacus Fullonum*

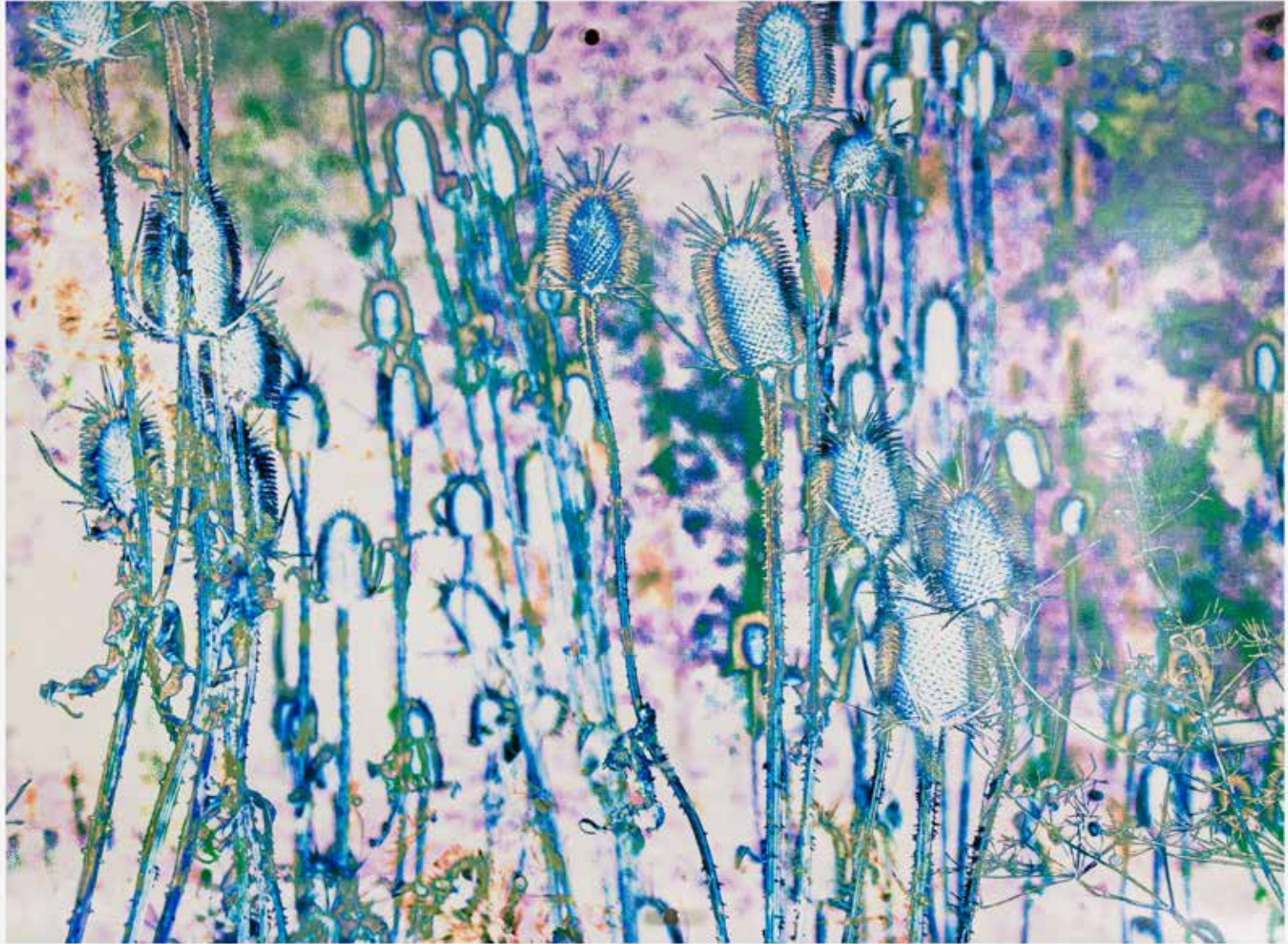
2019

Dye Sublimation transfer on Arnhem paper

3rd of this Series

Size: 30 x 20 inch









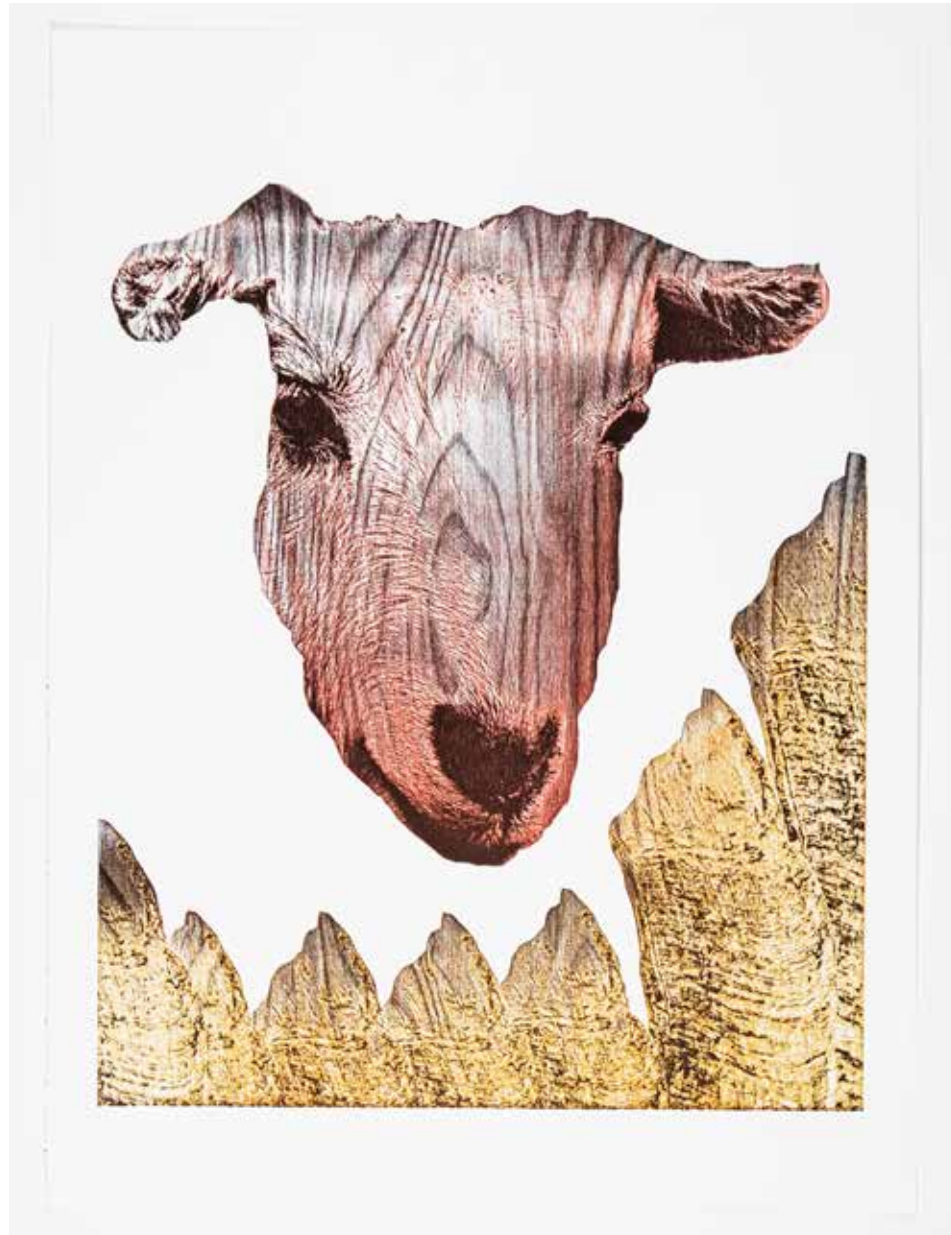
*Untitled*  
2020

Woodcut print on German Etching paper &  
Coogar Cover paper  
Laser cut on woodblock  
Size: 22 x 18 inch each

*Poll-Goat*  
2020

Woodcut print  
Laser cut on woodblock  
Size: 26 x 32 inch





*Untitled*

2019

Woodcut print

Laser cut on woodblock

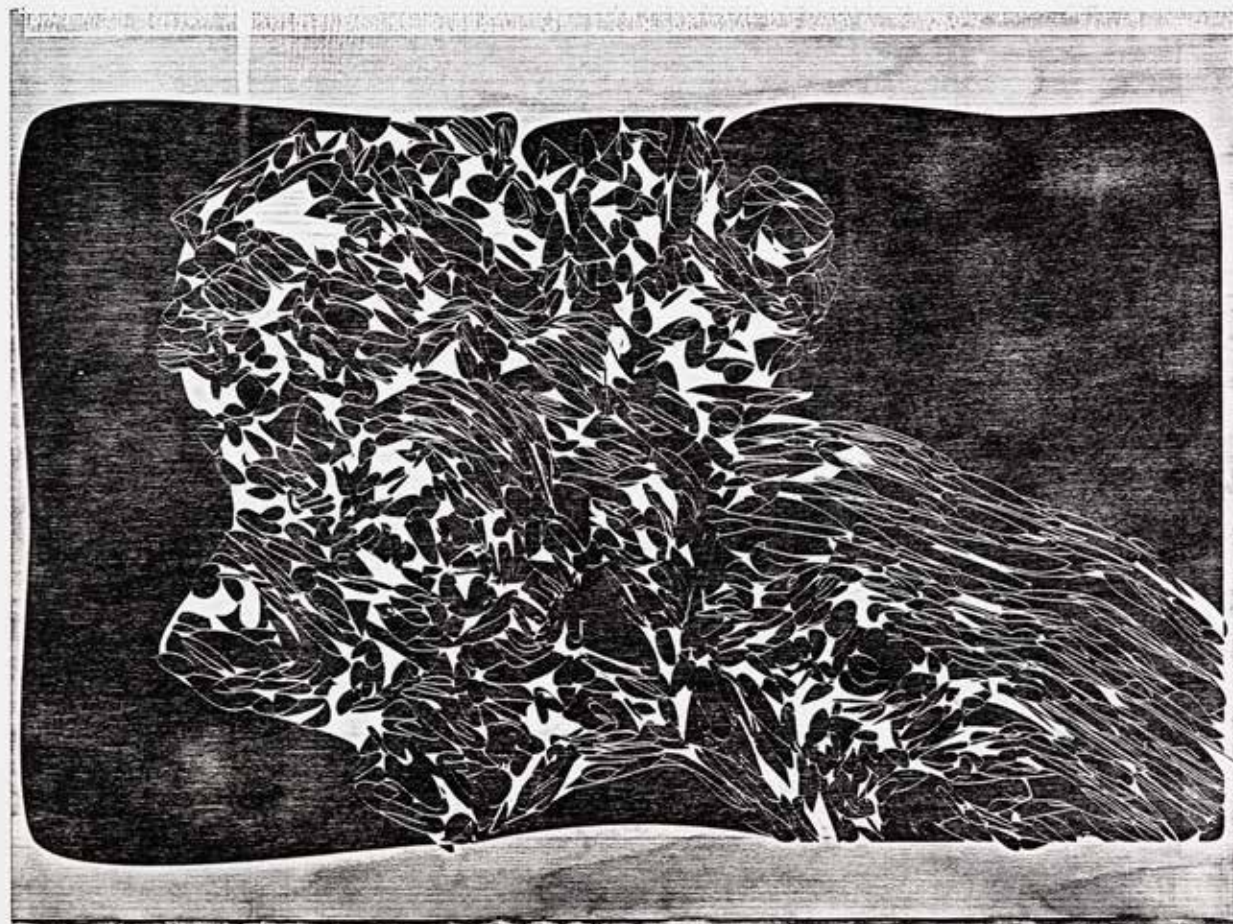
Size: 12 x 8 inch





*Untitled*  
2019

Woodcut print  
Laser cut on woodblock  
Size: 22 x 16 inch



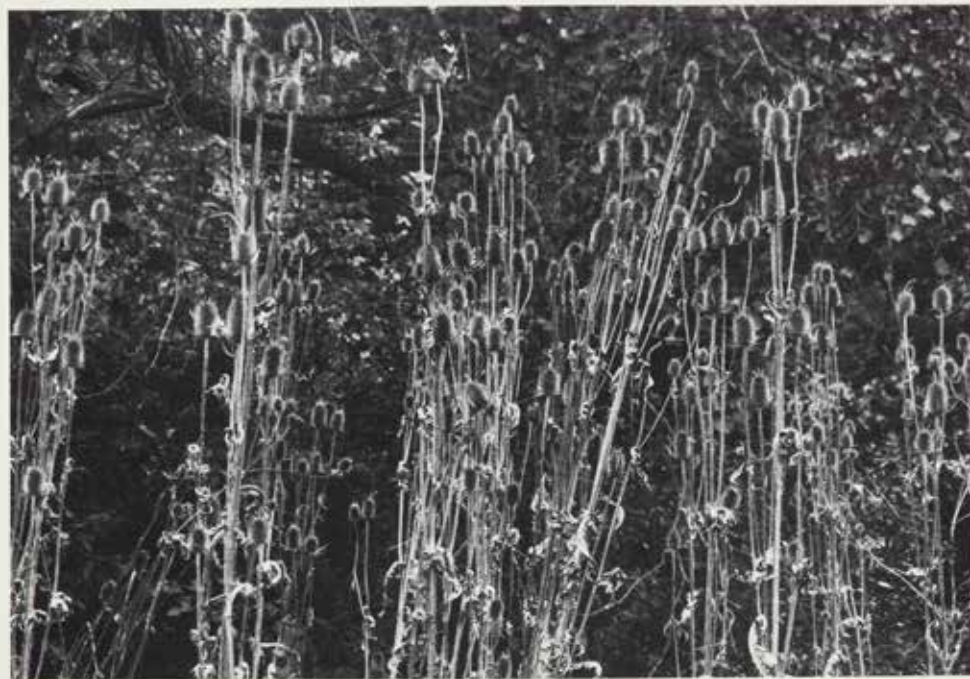
*Dipsacus Fullonum*

2019

Polymer print on German Etching paper

1st of this series

Size: 24 x 20 inch



*Dipsacus Fullonum*

2019

Polymer print on German Etching paper

2nd of this series

Size: 24 x 20 inch





*Dipsacus Fullonum*

2019

Polymer print on German Etching paper

3rd of this series

Size: 24 x 20 inch



*Dipsacus Fullonum*

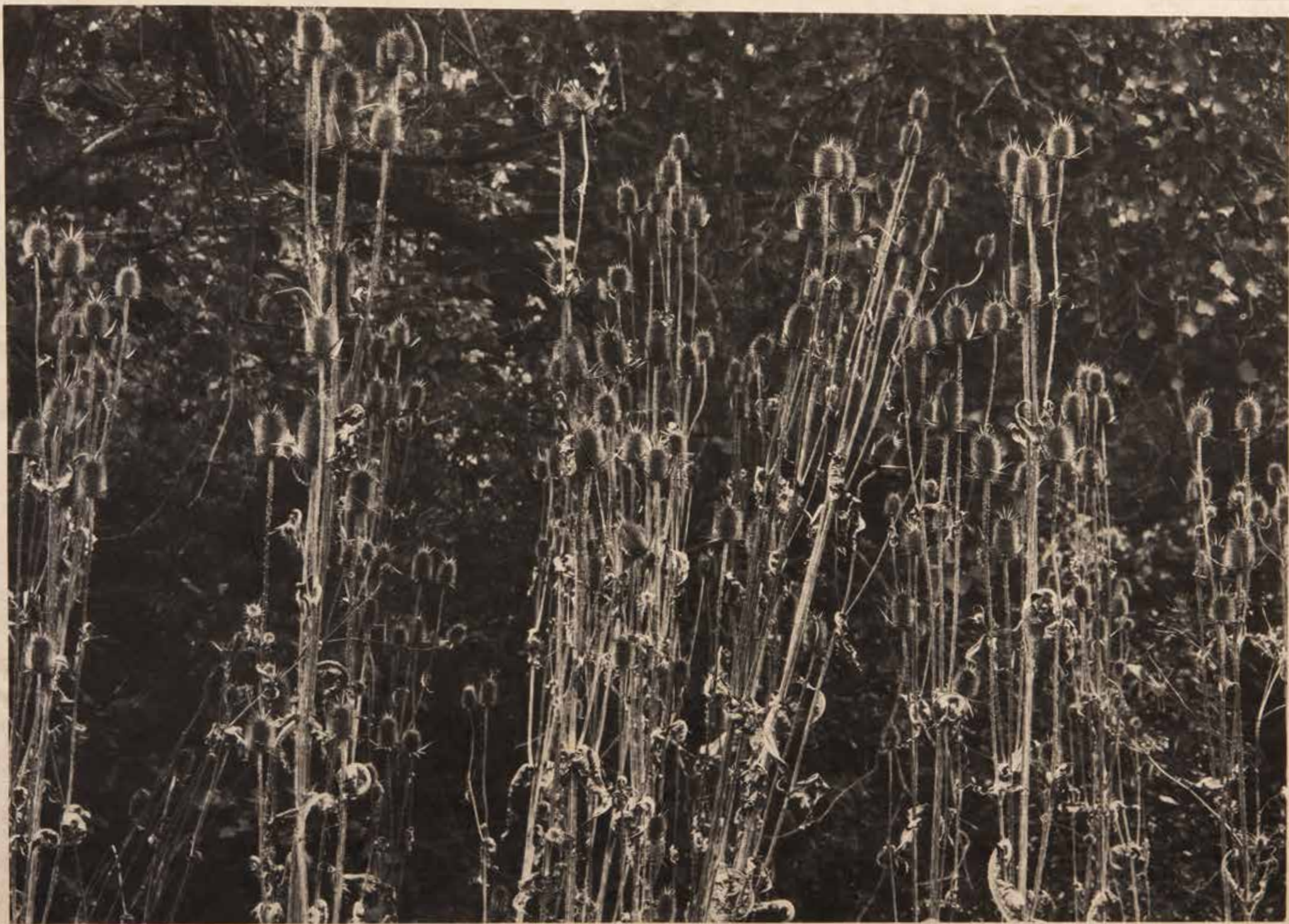
2019

Polymer print on Xuan paper

4th of this series

Size: 24 x 20 inch





*Dipsacus Fullonum*

2019

Polymer print on Xuan paper

5th of this Series

Size: 24 x 20 inch

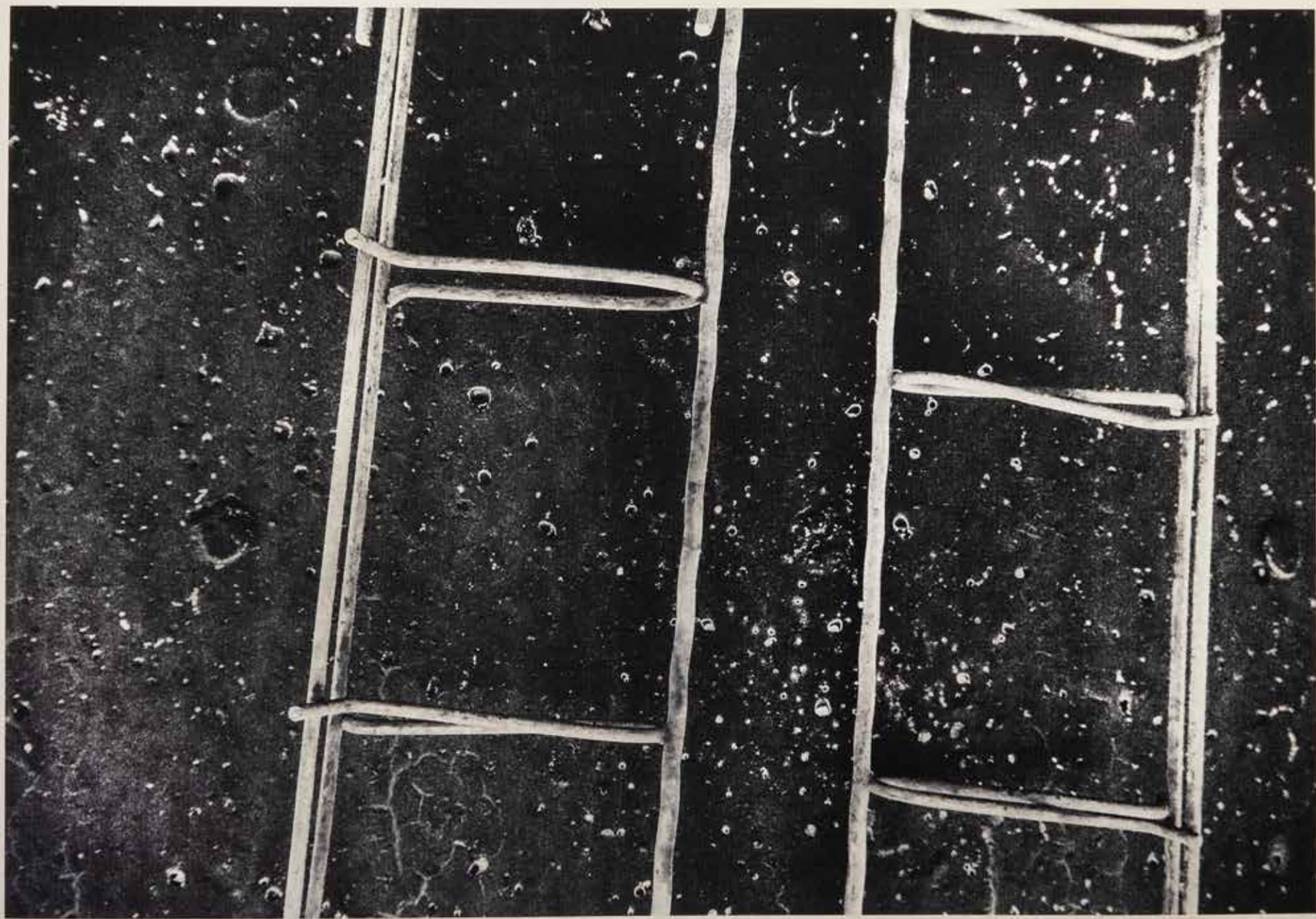




*Untitled*  
2019

Polymer print on Xuan paper  
1st of this series  
Size: 16 x 20 inch





*Untitled*

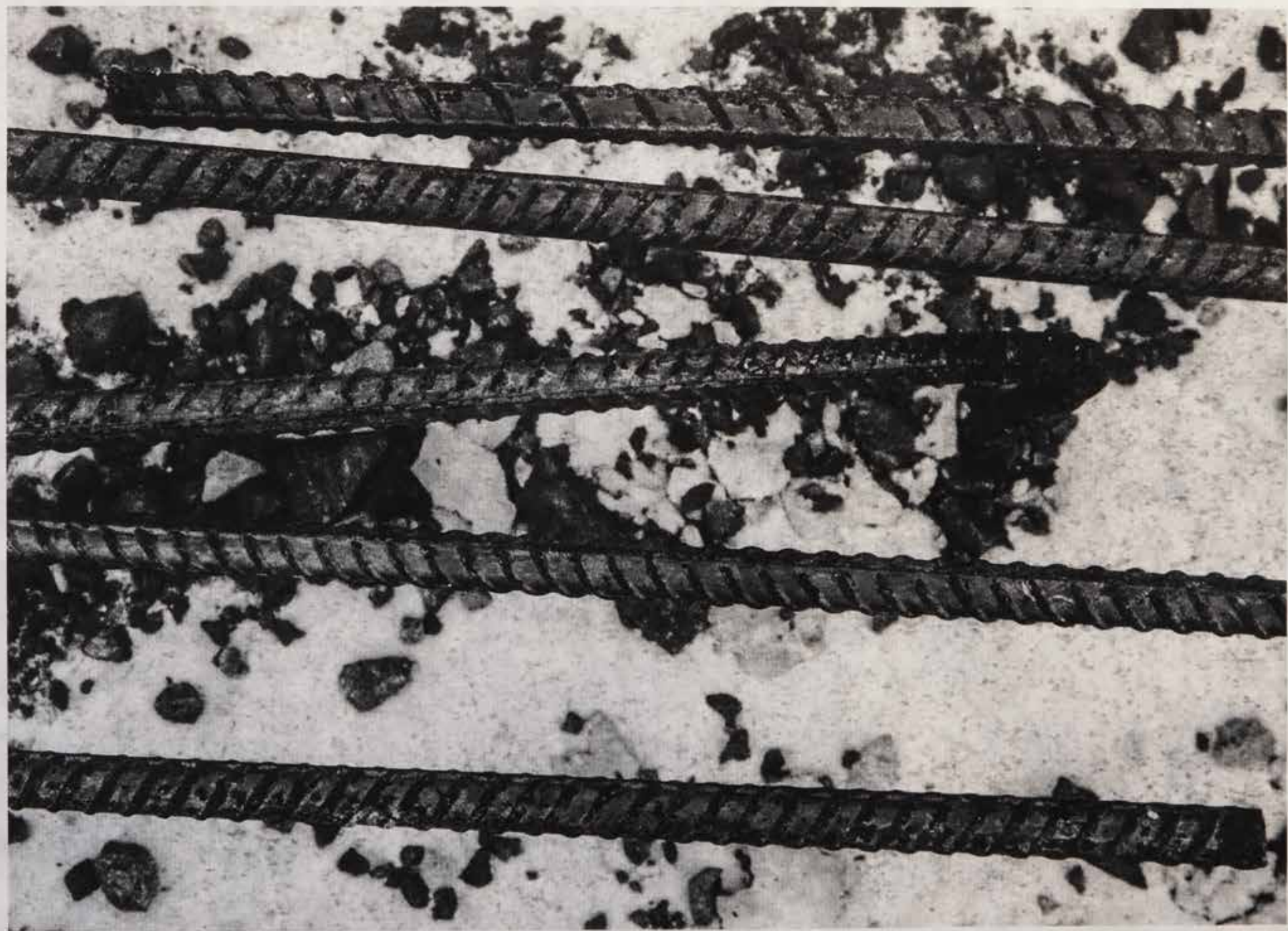
2019

Polymer print on Xuan paper

2nd of this series

Size: 16 x 20 inch







*Untitled*  
2019

Polymer print on Xuan paper  
3rd of this series  
Size: 16 x 20 inch





*Dipsacus Fullonum*  
2020

Lithography  
German Etching paper & Xuan paper  
Size: 19 x 12 inch each







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4. Martin, Clayton, and Kira, Perov. BILL VIOLA MICHELANGELO / life, death, rebirth. London: ROYAL ACADEMY OF ARTS, 2019.
5. John, Wood, and Nathan, Lyons. JOHN WOOD on the edge of clear meaning, Göttingen: Steidl, 2008.
6. Julian, Stallabrass. Translated by Wang, Ruiyan. Contemporary art: a very short introduction. Beijing: Wai yu jiao xue yu yan jiu chu ban she, 2010.
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# Technology

## Equipments:

Panasonic 4K-Camera  
Sony Alpha a6000 Camera  
DJI Osmo Pocket  
W1000(BenQ)HD Projector  
Epson V700 Photo Scanner  
WD Midea Player  
Apple Mac Mini  
Apply Mac Monitor  
Sony CDR Monitor  
Laser Cutter

## Softwares:

Adobe Photoshop  
Adobe Premiere  
Adobe Aftereffect  
Adobe illustrator  
Adobe Lightroom  
Adobe Indesign  
Adobe Audition  
Adobe Media Encoder  
ToughDesigner099  
VCV RACK  
Cinema 4D



# Acknowledgements

## ADVISING COMMITTEE

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2020 MFA Thesis Exhibition  
Electronic Integrated Arts  
School of Art and Design  
NYSCC at Alfred University



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