

---

**white**

---



# Interpreting white

White is a complex term with diverse definitions depending on the context in which it is used. It is representative of minimalism and modernity in art and design, purity and peace in culture and religion, emptiness and detachment in psychology and emotion, or a specific race under anthropology and sociology.

Many creatives have adopted white as their signature “color of choice”. Examples include architects Zaha Hadid and Richard Meier, artists Kazimir Malevich and Constantin Brâncuși, designers Coco Chanel and Apple team. The list is long, diverse and intriguing.

Over time white shifted from being identified as a color to dismissed as a non-color reinforced by the definition of the physical phenomenon of light. Michel Pastoureau’s “History of a Color: White” (2023), presents the evolution of society’s understanding of white through centuries, highlighting its visual and social connotations and implications. In practice and meaning, it crossed geographical boundaries and societal strata, accumulating varied representational associations and symbolic nuances along the way.

On an intuitive physiological level, we comprehend white as the absence of color and thus barren of thoughtful engagement and visual clutter. A viewer is reluctant to engage with a monochromatic white object, perhaps because its piercing absence urges a response. On a more sensory psychological level “the color white is the absence of memory” (Stephen King), reflects

a primal state of mind where the absence of thoughts is present and experiences erased. Here the viewer ponders the inner meanings of white mediated through a fresh canvas, Carrara marble cube, or draped Egyptian cotton sheet. Essentially, both levels allow for a personal interpretation into the color of white with varying degrees of engagement and individual inference.

“White” brings us back to the beginning, to Richard Meier’s “white is all colors” where it selflessly reflects all colors. This exhibition, through the work presented in the following pages, highlights faculty’s diverse fascination with and response to “white” through various mediums and techniques. Through mass and void, layers and textures, shade and shadow, warp and weft, and pixels and motion, they reaffirm that white is indeed a forceful adversary, yet worthwhile challenge, not easily conquered and manipulated. But when skillfully worked, it reflects a gentleness and serenity that engages all senses and invites reflection. We are grateful to XVA Gallery for hosting the Academy of Visual Arts’ Annual Faculty Show 2026.

Professor Nadia M. Alhasani, PhD  
Director, Academy of Visual Arts  
University of the Arts Sharjah

Sharjah, April 2026

# Exhibition Statement

My first encounter with 'white' was as a child, when I lost consciousness due to shortness of breath. We used to play a game: one person would press down so hard on the other's lungs until they passed out. That's exactly what happened to me. And when I came round, I said: "Everything around me turned white; I'd like to experience that again." I simply wanted to put myself back into that dreamlike state. Much later, on a trip to the Faroe Islands in the North Atlantic, I fell off my bike because I'd been staring too long at the low, glaring sun. The intense sunlight triggered a grand mal seizure, a neurological convulsive fit. When I woke up in the hospital hours later, my first memory was of a white environment in which I was walking around. When my friend visited me, I couldn't remember the accident, but I told her how I had been walking around in a white room and had found everything very beautiful.

Sometime during the winter months of the 2000s, I spent three months in north-east Siberia. I learned that the indigenous people – the Nenets – have dozens of words for snow, white, and frost. They distinguish among different types of snow and snow conditions, as well as among shades of white. I had to learn to calibrate my cameras and use neutral density filters, as every negative was overexposed by a factor of 3–4 due to insufficient contrast and a lack of black point.

When I developed the theme of 'White' for the faculty exhibition, as an artist who works primarily with photography and video, I reflected on the experience of light in Siberia and on how white light encompasses the entire color spectrum. It remains fascinating to realize that the colors we see are merely reflected light and that objects

are only perceptible through light. Of course, nature has given us other senses to complete our perception, but light creates the world and the experience, and perhaps this is how we can understand what the German philosopher Immanuel Kant meant by the 'thing-in-itself', a transcendental object that we cannot fully comprehend. So, what are objects without light?

I invited my colleagues at the academy to explore the theme of 'white' and to imagine it as a color, as light, as a concept, and as a memory. A sculptor works with malleable materials, carves stone, fires it in a kiln, and casts it in a foundry. Each process is an immersion in color and in the questions of line and form, which light can express in very different ways. A printmaker will consider which colors to use and what role white plays in the tones and in accentuation. The painter faces similar questions; he can draw on chiaroscuro techniques to create a dramatic scene. Painters face similar questions; they can use chiaroscuro techniques to create a dramatic scene. Photographers, film and video artists, and animators are particularly dependent on light as a fundamental element of their work: if they don't want to rely on automated processes, they face complex issues. But these are merely technical and aesthetic issues that need to be resolved. First, however, the artist must fathom the mystery of white.

Curated by Tor Seidel.



GRANDFATHER'S BOOK



الى اللقاء يا فدا...

من بيت يافا الى بيت بيروت

القنصام: جسر العلك حسيه - الشوننة  
الى طريق الشام

١٩٤٥

# Georgina Abood

## White Archive Silent Narratives

**Georgina Abood** is a Palestinian interior architect, designer, and researcher whose work engages with memory, space, and archival practices. Born and raised in Jerusalem, her hometown plays a central role in shaping her practice. She is currently conducting research with META and the American University of Beirut (AUB), focusing on the importance of the revitalization of historical Palestinian buildings and their potential to function as spaces that carry personal and collective narratives. Working across installation, spatial design, video, and documentary-based research, Abood examines how cultural memory persists across generations despite displacement and spatial loss. Her practice often draws from personal and collective archives, emphasizing restraint, absence, and institutional systems of preservation. Abood is lecturer at the College of Design.

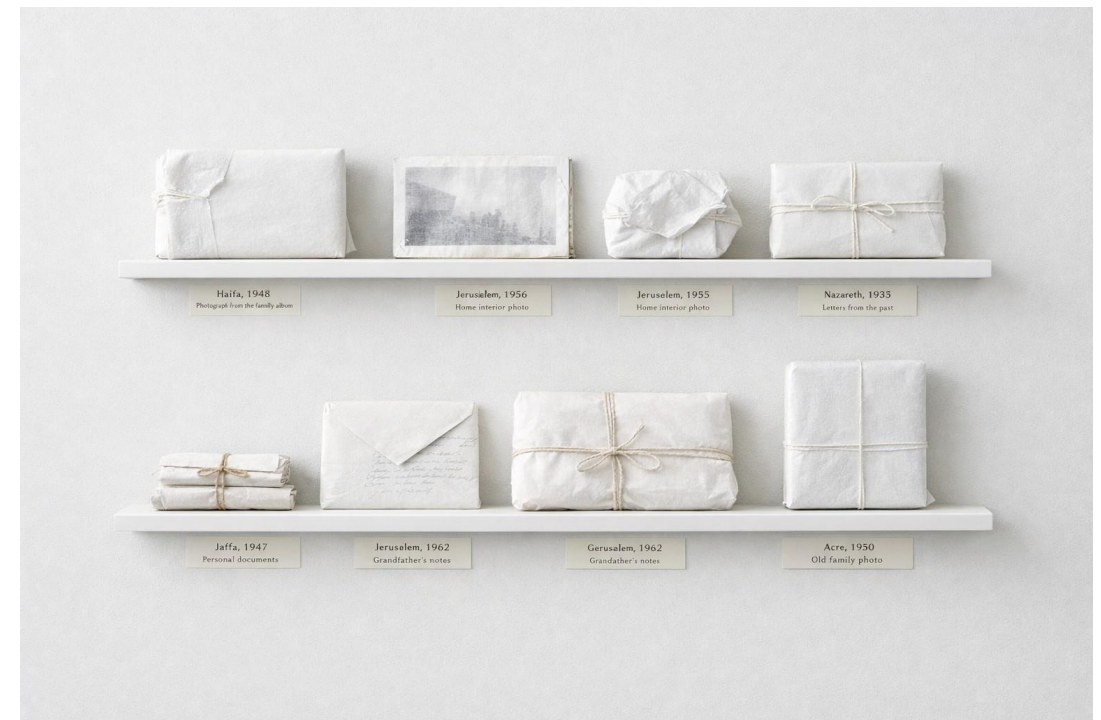
**White Archive | Silent Narratives** treats white as an archival material rather than a neutral background. The installation consists of wrapped photographs and handwritten documents from Palestinian homes in Jerusalem, Haifa, and Nazareth, drawn from personal family archives and documentary work with elderly Palestinians who speak about homes they were forced to leave.

Instead of revealing these images and texts, they are preserved and partially concealed using white archival paper and minimal labeling. This gesture reflects institutional archiving practices, where histories are protected yet distanced from lived experience. White functions as a mediator between presence and absence, holding memory in suspension rather than reconstruction.

The archive becomes a space for silent voices and inherited narratives, allowing continuity, restraint, and unresolved space to coexist.

**Mixed-media installation (archival paper, printed photographs, handwritten text reproductions,**

Dimensions: 120 × 100 cm (wall-mounted installation)





# Dr. Mohammed Yousif Alhammadi

## The Blank Slate

---

**Dr. Mohamed Yousif** (b. 1953, Sharjah, UAE) is a pioneering Emirati sculptor, educator, and cultural figure, widely recognized as one of the founders of the United Arab Emirates' contemporary art movement. A graduate of the Cairo College of Fine Arts, he later obtained advanced degrees in fine arts internationally. He is a co-founder of the Emirates Fine Arts Society (1979), where he served as president, and has played a central role in shaping arts education and cultural infrastructure in the UAE.

Working primarily in sculpture and installation, Yousif engages natural materials drawn from the local environment, exploring themes of memory, landscape, and the relationship between human presence and place. His work has been exhibited internationally, including participation in the UAE Pavilion at the Venice Biennale, and is held in major collections such as Tate, London. Alhammadi is an assistant professor at the College of Fine Arts.

### The Blank Slate

rooted in the tactile language of stone, Dr. Mohammed Yousif revisits the simplicity of childhood where play, material, and imagination exist without separation.

The carved forms echo the act of shaping sand or collecting stones, gestures tied to innocence and instinct. The recurring presence of white holds symbolic weight: it reflects purity, clarity, and the openness of early perception, while also suggesting a surface where memory is continuously rewritten.

These works invite a return, not to a specific place, but to a state of being where material and meaning are inseparable.

#### Childhood

Gypsum relief, 1995  
130 × 70 cm

#### Echo Form I

Limestone  
50 × 40 × 40 cm

#### Echo Form II

Limestone  
40 × 45 × 45 cm

#### Echo Form III

Limestone  
60 × 45 × 40 cm  
2022





# Muatasim Alkubaisy

## Trade of the Sacred

---

**Muatasim Alkubaisy** is an Iraqi sculptor and teacher at the College of Fine Arts and Design, University of Sharjah. He graduated with distinction from the Academy of Fine Arts, University of Baghdad in 1992, ranking first in his class. Working within a framework of expressive realism, his sculptures emphasize mass and exaggeration as symbolic devices to explore authority, fragility, and the human condition. His bronze works have been exhibited in Iraq, Lebanon, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, France, and the United Kingdom, including the notable exhibitions Last Generals and Drums of War. His practice critically engages with themes of power, violence, and ideological dominance in contemporary societies. Alkubaisy is a senior tutor at the College of Fine Arts.

### Trade of the Sacred

This work exposes the moment when the sacred shifts from a spiritual value into a commodity of power. The heavy bodies embody an inflated discourse that accumulates authority in the name of salvation. The crown is carried, not worn, suggesting a power that is managed in secrecy rather than declared. The umbrella functions as a symbol of privilege, shielding authority from accountability. Erased faces deny individuality, reinforcing a system that endlessly reproduces itself. The two accompanying figures stand as witnesses and accomplices within a cycle of obedience. Trade of the Sacred is a condemnation of domination when holiness is marketed as control.

**Bronze**  
24x40x44 cm





# Alina Erimia

## Accumulated Silence & Fields of Attention

---

**Alina Erimia** is a fashion designer and educator whose practice explores the intersection of historical craftsmanship and contemporary material innovation. Currently a lecturer at the College of Design. She engages students in developing concept-driven fashion collections through an emphasis on research, technical precision, and experimental processes.

Prior to her academic career, Erimia gained international recognition in Spain and Italy, receiving several prestigious awards, including first prize at The Brandery, Barcelona, and a scholarship from Vogue Italy. These achievements continue to inform her multidisciplinary approach to both design and pedagogy.

Passionate about 15th-century artistic techniques, Alina integrates traditional craftsmanship with cutting-edge material innovation, drawing inspiration from contemporary art and scientific exploration. Her work and teaching reflect a commitment to pushing the boundaries of fashion while honoring its rich history.

### Accumulated Silence & Fields of Attention

My practice draws on the engraving techniques of the fifteenth century, particularly those associated with the Northern Renaissance and the work of Albrecht Dürer. I am interested in the discipline, precision, and visual intensity of early engraving, where meaning is constructed through accumulation rather than scale. This historical language is translated into a contemporary context, becoming a framework through which I examine the role of time, attention, and beauty today.

Working within deliberately small formats, my process is grounded in the meticulous addition of detail, often by the millimeter. Through dense mark-making and subtle gradations, each surface unfolds as a site of close observation. The viewer is invited into a slower mode of looking, where form, rhythm, and nuance emerge gradually through sustained engagement.

By reactivating a historical technique in the present, my work resists the speed and immediacy of contemporary visual culture. It proposes slowness, patience, and intimacy as critical gestures, allowing beauty to surface through precision, labor, and concentrated attention.

**1. The Woman Head Watercolor, Crosshatching / Own Technique**  
32cm/43cm. 2025

**2. The Hands Watercolor, Crosshatching / Own Technique**, 32cm/43cm. 2025



# Muhammad Asad Iqbal

## Layers of Connection

---

**Muhammad Asad Iqbal** A seasoned multimedia designer with a passion for digital artistry and new emerging mediums, Muhammad Asad Iqbal brings over a decade of experience as an educator and nearly two decades of working directly with the industry. His strength comes through seamlessly blending technical expertise with creative expression across the ever-evolving fields of 3D/2D animation, game design, visual effects, augmented and virtual reality. His work includes some internationally recognized projects across borders including an Oscar Short listed feature film. Asad is a lecturer in AVA's College of Design.

**Layers of Connection** is initially perceived as a restrained, white presence. From a distance, only fragments of the work are visible subtle traces suggesting depth beneath the surface. White here functions as a social membrane: calm, neutral, and controlled. It reflects the emotional armor we instinctively wear when facing the unfamiliar.

When a visitor approaches, the artwork responds by withdrawing. The white surface intensifies, concealing what lies beneath, mirroring our human tendency to retreat when trust feels rushed or imposed.

However, if the visitor chooses to remain, to pause, to slow down, to stay the work begins to soften. Gradually, layers beneath the white surface emerge: color, texture, movement, depth. The revelation is not immediate but earned through presence and patience.

In this way, the installation becomes a living metaphor for human connection. Just as white light invisibly contains all colors, the surface we present to others contains hidden emotional complexity. Openness unfolds not through force, but through time.

In human encounters, we rarely present ourselves in full. Instead, we offer a controlled surface, polite, neutral, composed. Beneath this visible layer exists something more fragile: memory, emotion, uncertainty, trust. Between these two states lies a delicate negotiation.

Layers of Connection explores this fragile balance between vulnerability and protection through an interactive spatial experience.

### **Interactive Video Installation**

Ratio: 9:16

Screen Size: 50"





# Thaier Helal

## White Landmarks

---

**Thaier Helal** (b. 1967, Syria) is a contemporary painter recognized for his materially rich abstract practice. Trained at the Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Damascus, his work explores texture, surface, and the sensory qualities of landscape through layered compositions incorporating unconventional media. Based in the UAE since the 1990s, Helal has played a significant role in shaping the region's art scene as both artist and educator. His practice moves fluidly between abstraction and figuration, particularly in response to the Syrian experience. Helal has exhibited widely across the Middle East and internationally, including at Sharjah Art Museum and Ayyam Gallery. His works are held in major public and private collections. Helal is a senior tutor at the College of Fine Arts.

**White Landmarks** explores abstraction as a language of memory, endurance, and quiet transformation. Composed through layered textures and a restrained white palette, the work draws on landscape not as representation but as structure, where surface and material carry meaning.

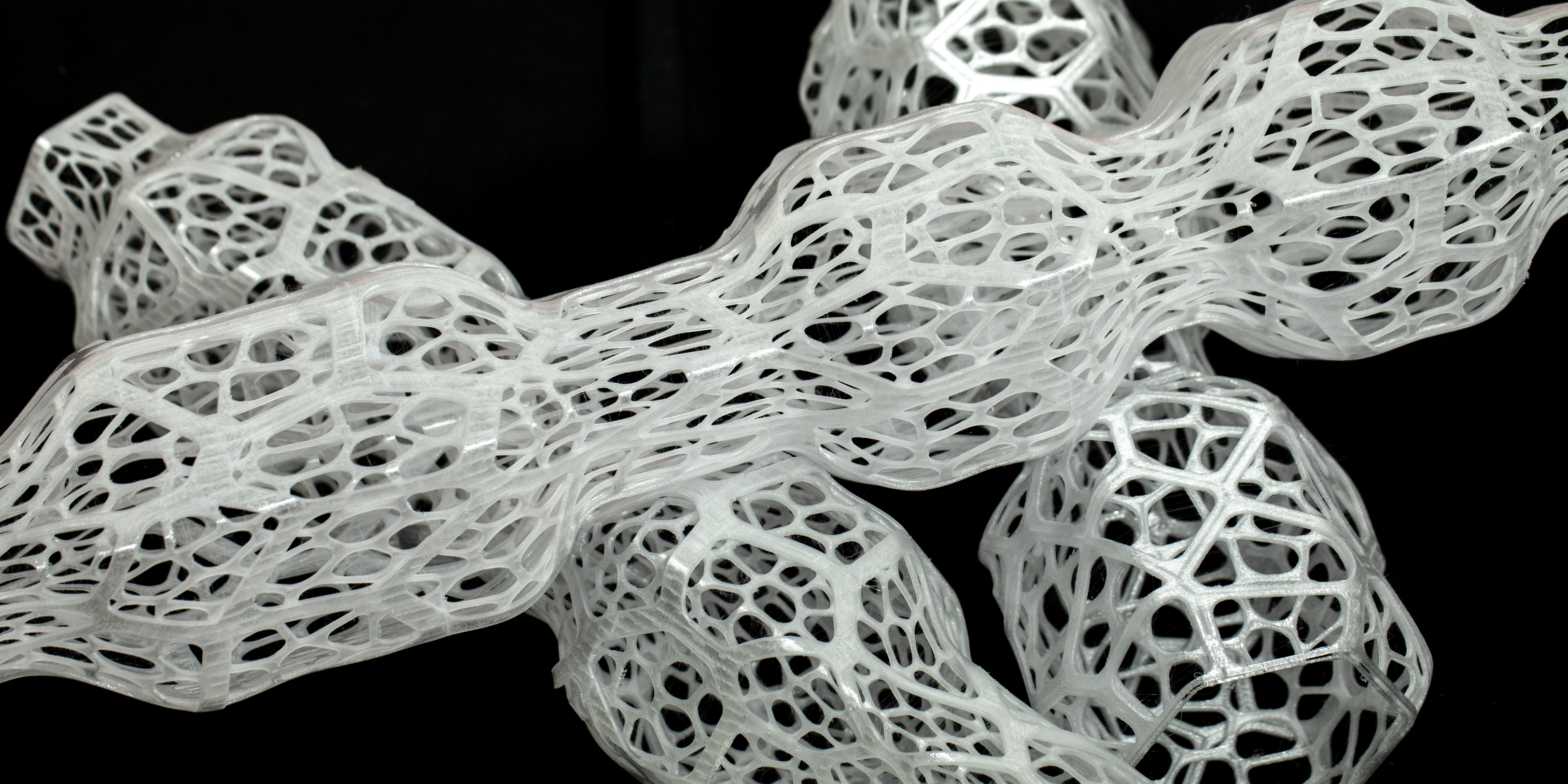
White functions as both presence and absence, evoking earth, stone, and water while suggesting silence and erasure.

By isolating a fragment of an imagined terrain, the painting invites close looking, revealing depth, repetition, and subtle shifts that speak of loss, resilience, and continuity.

Here, nature becomes a quiet witness, holding stories beyond conflict, and enduring beyond time.

**Paint on Canvas**, 100x130cm. 2018





# Dr. Iman Ibrahim

## Biogenesis

---

**Dr. Iman Ibrahim** is an award-winning designer and associate professor at the College of Design. Her work bridges design, research, and innovation, with a focus on sustainable design, regenerative materials, smart cities, and biophilic systems.

Alongside her academic career, she actively engages in professional practice, participating in international competitions and exhibitions, including multiple installations at Dubai Design Week and Expo 2020 Dubai. Her work explores the intersection of material experimentation, environmental responsibility, and spatial storytelling.

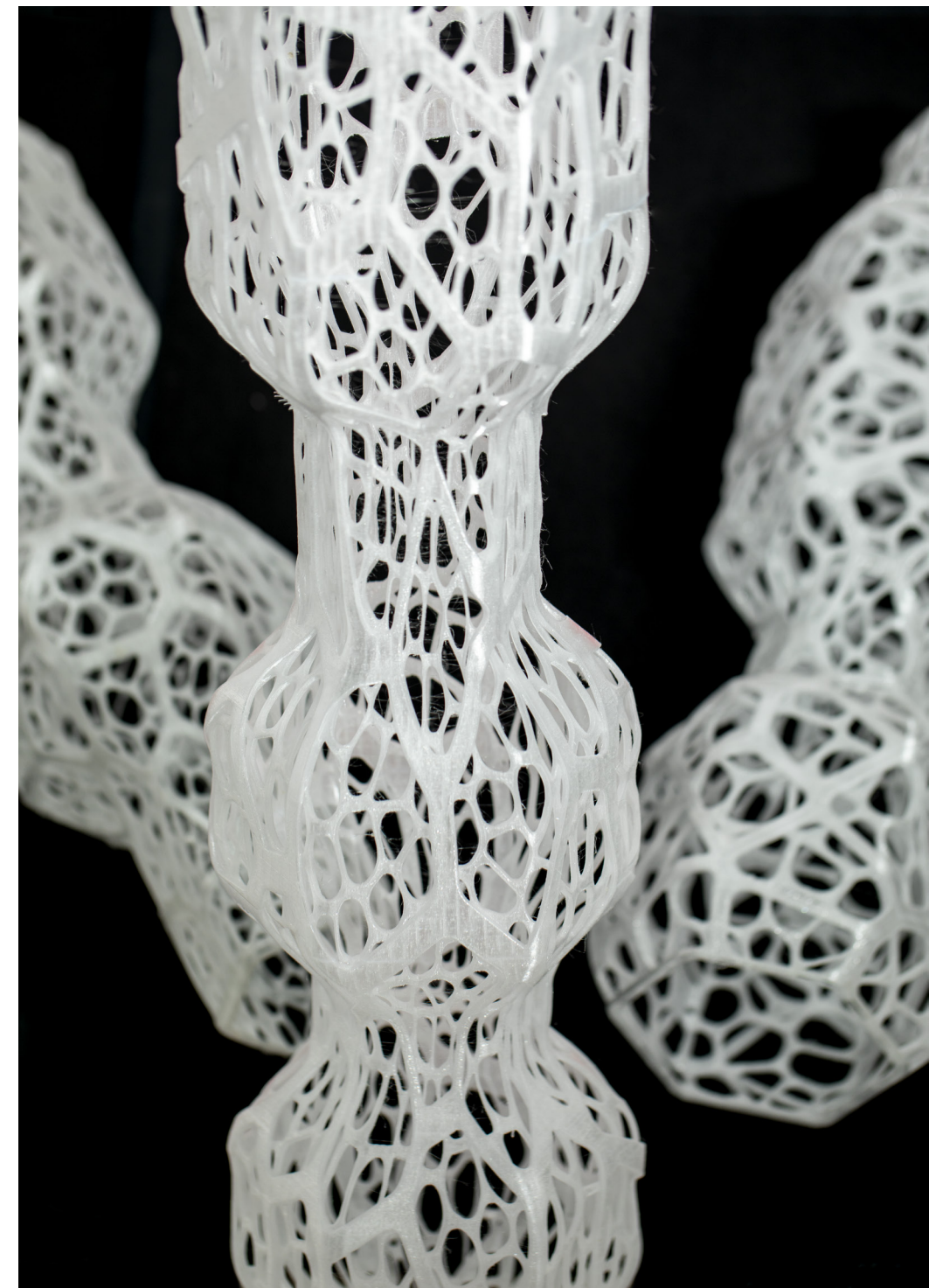
Iman has received several prestigious awards, including the Sharjah Award for Excellence, the University of Sharjah Distinguished Award, the Sharjah Sustainability Award, and the Future Pioneers Award 2024 by Bee'ah for her "ECO MESH" prototype.

### Biogenesis

The sculptural light, White Cell Lamp, with its latticework of delicate tendrils between translucent orbs conjures the structure of living cells. Both the orbs boast spidery patterns, which look like cellular membranes and give a feeling of biological architecture floating about in space. Blank white light, stemming from a central core in the heart of the structure gradually permeates across semi-transparent surfaces, resulting in very soft gradients and glowing halos. This managed light scatter becomes the metaphor for cellular respiration and embryonic development slowly pulsating rhythm that makes the inert form a living presence. The pristine white is the end point of all colors, shapes and complexity as they converge and instinctively suggest that from this single, unified shell emerge infinite possibilities. Serving as a symbolic totem, the lamp serves as an invitation to meditation on creation's essential mystery: how from simplicity arises diversity, and how one cell can contain the plan for all life.

### Recycled Plastic 3D Printed

4 towers of light (20x60 cm and 20x80 cm)





# Andreea Lonhardt- Muresan

## White, Interrupted

---

**Andreea Lonhardt** is a textile artist, fashion designer, and lecturer based in Dubai whose practice explores textile structures, hand weaving, and material experimentation, bridging fashion, textiles, and contemporary art installation. Her work investigates the relationship between fabric, space, and architecture through textile installations that focus on structure, repetition, tension, and material presence. She is a lecturer at the College of Design.

**White, Interrupted** explores white not as a color, but as a condition of space, structure, and silence. Suspended cotton threads form a vertical field, ordered, continuous, and restrained, recalling fabric, light, and architectural surfaces. In this field, a woven intervention disrupts uniformity, introducing density into an otherwise neutral expanse.

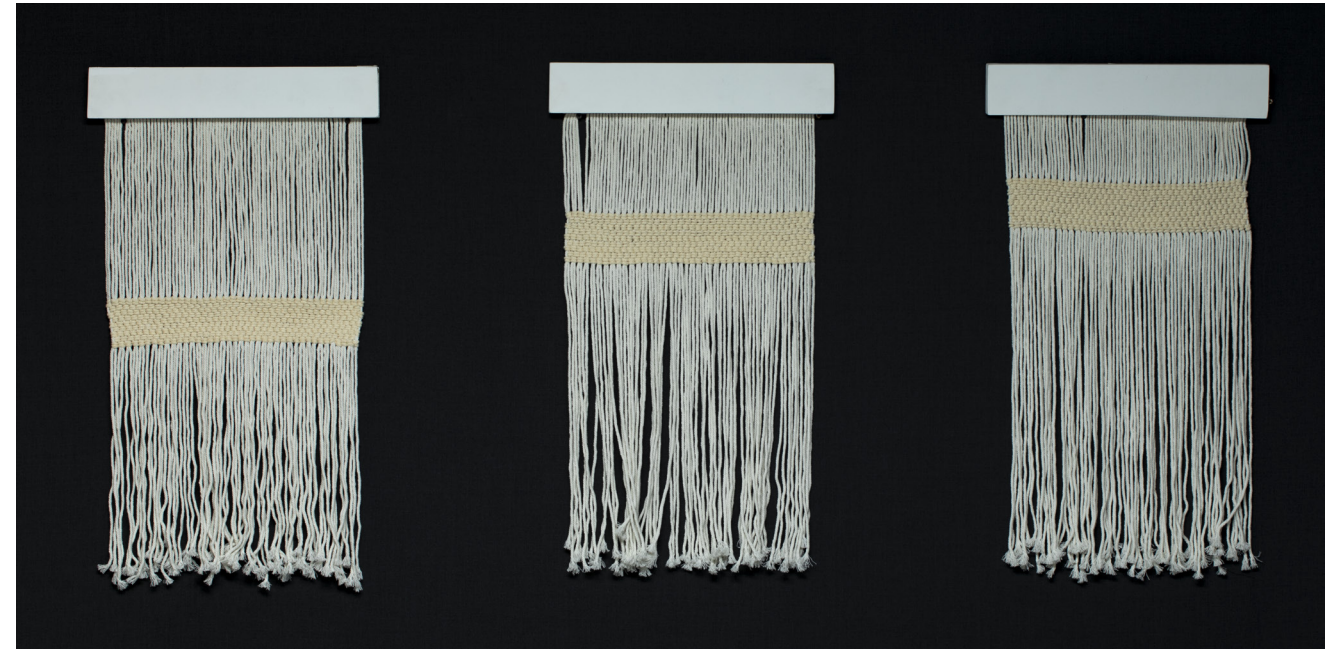
The work engages with white as both presence and absence, a surface that appears empty yet remains materially active. Untouched strands emphasize continuity and stillness, while the woven sections mark moments of resistance, compression, and contact.

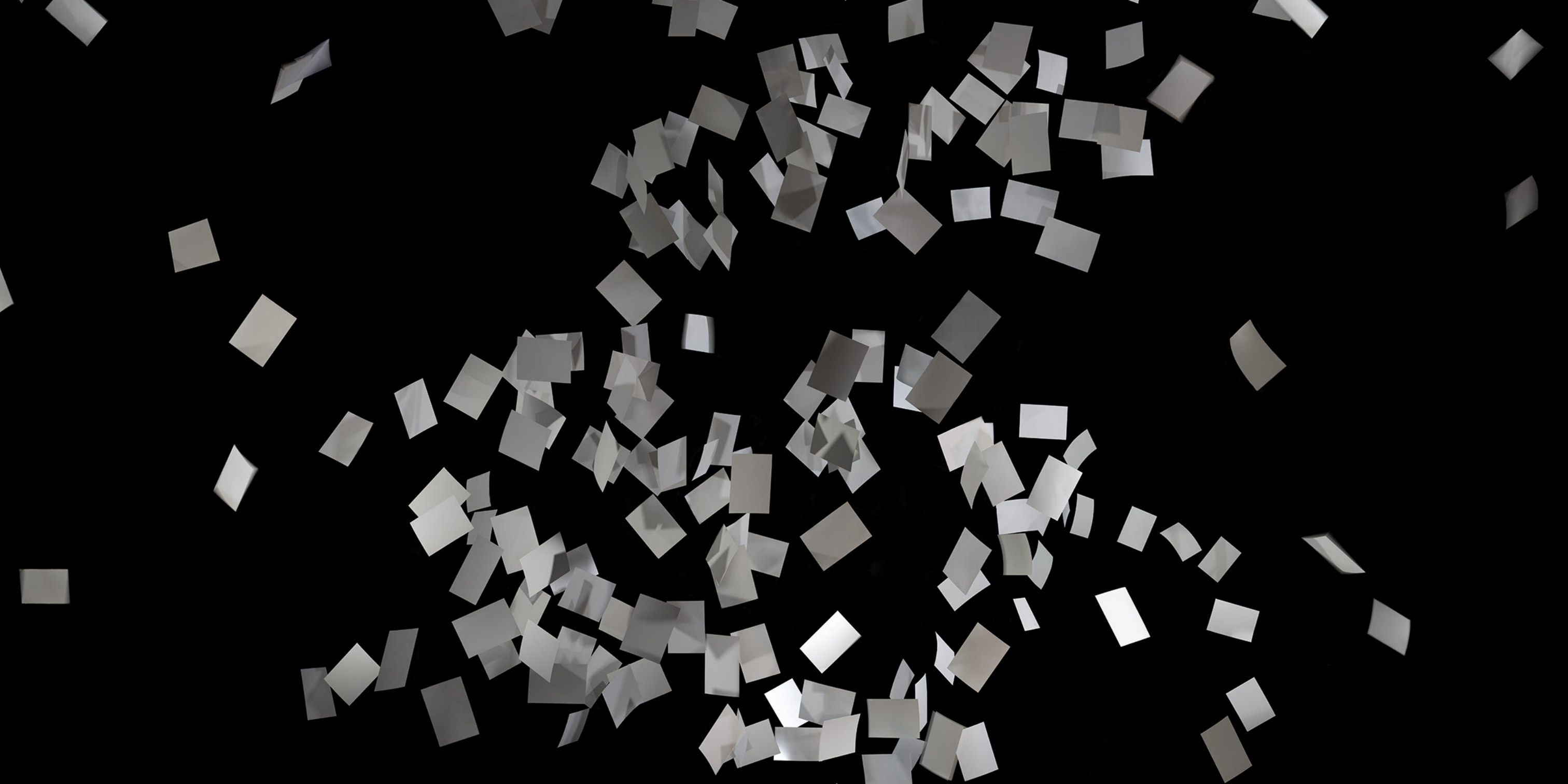
Through tension, repetition, and interruption, the work reflects on white as an accumulation of light and matter, and as a space where form emerges through restraint rather than excess.

### **Cotton Cord, Hand-Woven Installation**

90 × 70 cm

2026





# Tor Seidel

## Dispersion

---

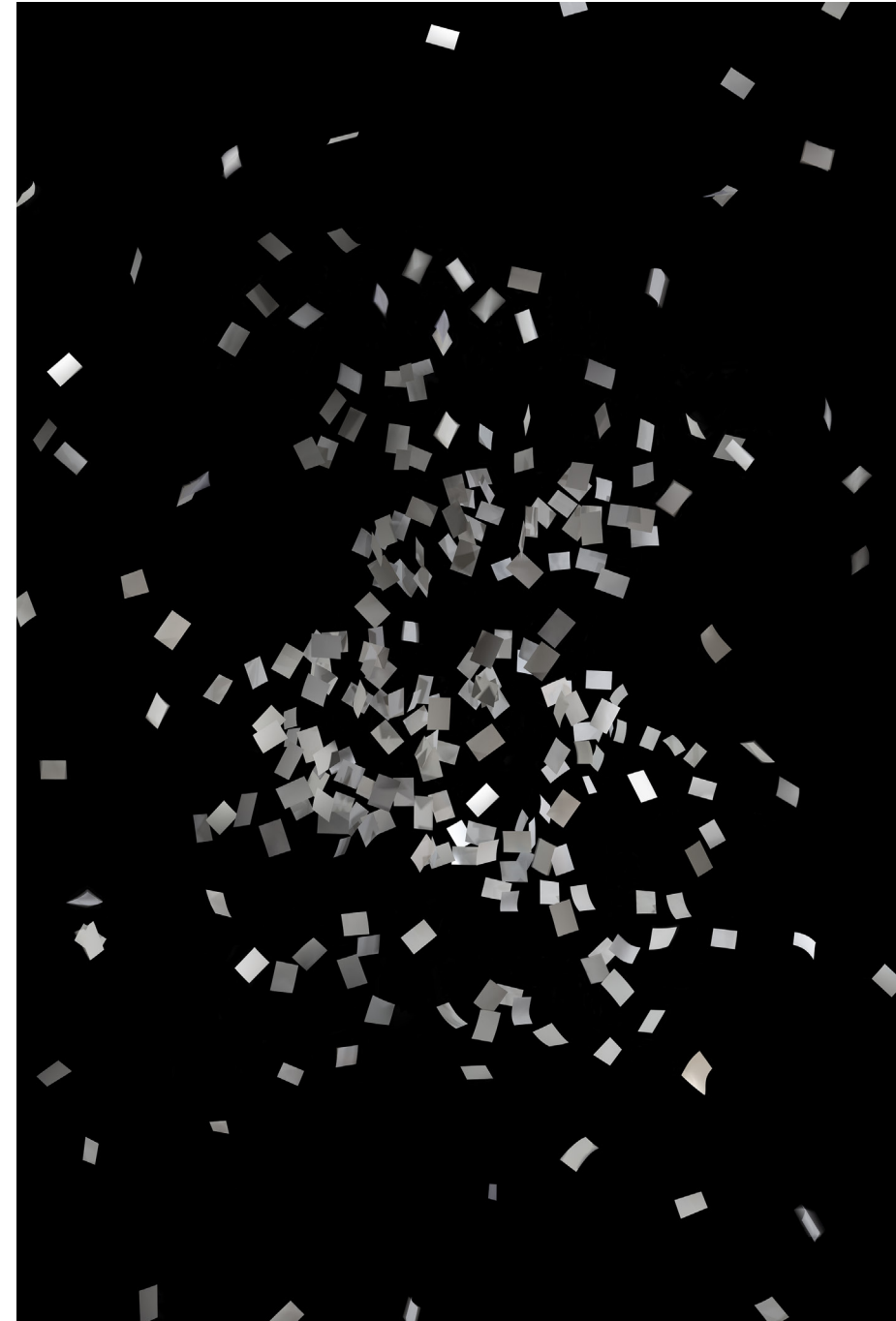
**Tor Seidel** is a German artist, curator, and lecturer (M.A.Phil) with many years of experience in academia as well as in the gallery and exhibition sectors. He also works as a filmmaker and author of art books (e.g., \*The Dubai\*, Hatje Cantz, 2015).

Tor was recently selected to participate with a work at the International Symposium on Electronic Art (ISEA) 2026 in Dubai. Seidel is a lecturer at the College of Fine Arts.

### Dispersion

When I visited a well-known writer, I was struck by the emptiness of his study. I asked him about his latest works, and he said he didn't know which passages or characters I meant, because he had written those works a long time ago and had never reread them. 'I haven't written for a long time,' he remarked. 'Writing is like wanting something too much. I spent years locking myself away to write. In the end,' he said calmly, 'my friends and children had left me because I was never there for them.'

**Lambda Print on Baryta Paper (Hahnemühle),**  
160 x 110 cm, 2026.





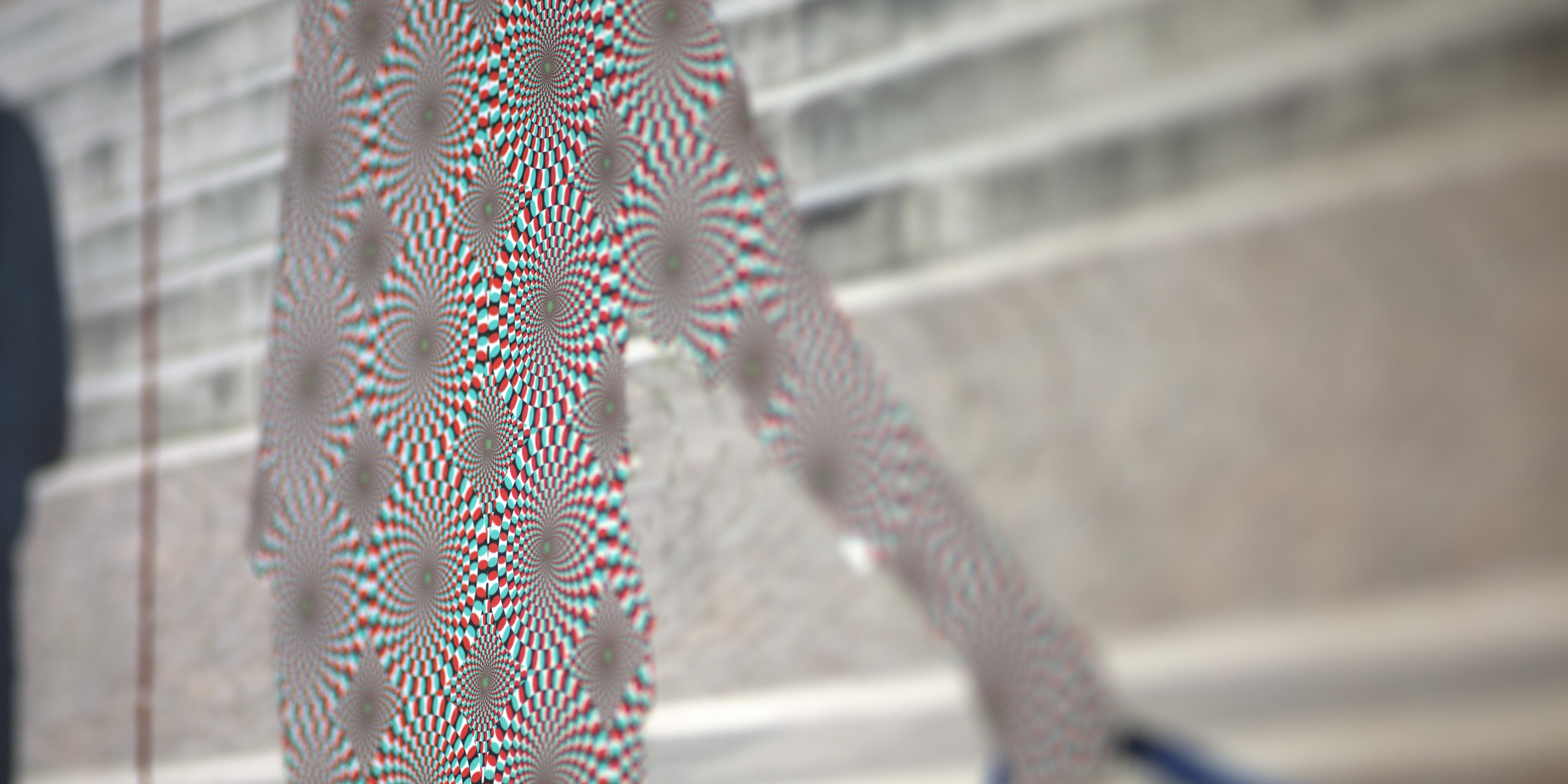
# Tor Seidel Reconsidering a Photograph of the Exhibition (0,10)

## Exhibition (0,10)

The Suprematist exhibition was a groundbreaking event in 20th-century art history, marking the beginning of the 20th century. This exhibition sparked the Suprematist movement and increased the popularity of works by Tatlin and Malevich. K. Malevich's Suprematist pieces also transformed the art landscape through this exhibition. Only five photographs from the exhibition have survived. The simplicity with which Malevich presented his non-representational pictorial elements adhered to the principle of avoiding decoration. It is rare for an exhibition photograph to achieve such cult status. By recreating it on the wall with white paper in the same composition, I am investigating the extent to which this photograph has become ingrained in the collective memory.

**Lambda Print on Baryta Paper (Hahnemühle),**  
top: 160 x 110 cm, 2026.  
bottom: Exhibition Photograph: '0,10' - St.Petersburg,  
Russia, 1915.





# Joshua Watts

## Lost in Plain Sight

**Joshua Watts** is a Visual Artist and Printmaker whose practice explores spaces, identity, and perception through traditional and post-digital printmaking, time-based media, and installation. His work often incorporates viewer-activated elements and site-responsive interventions, creating immersive experiences that unfold over time. His international solo, group, and juried exhibitions, supported by publications that reflect his practice, demonstrate a sustained exploration of materiality, temporality, and viewer engagement within contemporary art practice.

Alongside his studio practice, Watts is deeply invested in creative education and mentorship. As a faculty member at the Academy of Visual Arts in Sharjah, he integrates professional artistic practice, experimentation, and critical inquiry into studio teaching while fostering connections between students, alumni, and the global arts community. He has curated and coordinated exhibitions across the UAE and supported collaborative initiatives including the Shaghaf Group through its ongoing international printmaking exhibitions. Through both his artwork and teaching, Watts emphasizes sustained inquiry, experimentation, and creative independence as lifelong practices. Watts is an associate professor at the College of Fine Arts.

### Lost in Plain Sight

In the middle of a crowded public space, one figure dissolves into visual noise while everyone around them moves with clarity and direction. An experience of sensory overload and invisibility at the same time - present, yet psychologically erased. The figure visually unravels under the weight of the surrounding world, highlighting how anxiety can distort self-perception to leave us isolated in plain sight.

My work explores the many ways we perceive and interact with the people and environments around us. The ideas, contexts, and motivations embedded within everyday life are often more complex than what first appears on the surface. Like light passing through a prism and separating into a spectrum, the experiences and meanings that shape our understanding of the world reveal multiple layers when examined more closely. Through my work, I investigate these shifts in perception, encouraging viewers to reconsider familiar images, places, and encounters.

By drawing attention to the subtle relationships between observation, context, and interpretation, my work seeks to open new ways of seeing and understanding the world we inhabit.

### Mixed Media on Somerset

Size : 94 x 75cm





# Maryam AlQassimi

## White Matter

**Sheikha Maryam AL Qassimi** (b. 1993, Sharjah, UAE) is an Emirati artist whose practice is rooted in subconscious automatism, exploring the structures of the mind through painting and mixed media. Her work engages with the subconscious as a field of encoded imagery, where symbols and fragmented narratives emerge through process.

She has exhibited internationally, including at Volta Art Fair, Basel, and the London Art Fair (Encounters), and regionally at Abu Dhabi Art and Art Dubai. She is the founder of Rekn Happenings, an interdisciplinary platform in Sharjah fostering immersive, cross-cultural artistic exchange.

Al Qassimi is a studio officer at the Academy of Visual Arts.

### White Matter

Rooted in over a decade of sustained research into subconscious research with the use of pure psychic automatism, *White Matter* advances an ongoing inquiry into the depth & structures of the mind and the visual languages that emerge from them. The work engages the subconscious as a field of encoded imagery,

where symbols, figures, and fragmented narratives surface through a continuous, process-driven method.

The title references the brain's white matter, its network of connective tissue responsible for communication between regions, serving as both a conceptual and structural framework. Within the painting, forms appear entangled, dispersed, and interlinked, reminiscent of neural pathways, carrying an emotional charge. Thoughts, memory, and imagination unfold as an internal experience, both fragile and enduring. The colour white in the base is not an absence, but an active, generative field; it is a site where data accumulates, dissolves, and reconfigures, allowing endless narration to exist. The study of the interaction of white shades creates the abstract stage for emerging figurative elements that resist fixation, existing in a state of psychological flux that mirrors the instability and complexity of internal experience.

Through this work, I, the artist, position the painting as a site of investigation, where meaning remains open and continuously formed through encounter. The viewer moves through its layered imagery, constructing a personal narrative while engaging with the depth and ambiguity of the subconscious as something both intimate and shared.

**Oil on canvas, 68 × 90 cm. 2026**



Curator and Catalogue Editor  
**Tor Seidel**

Assistant  
**Maryam AlQassimi**

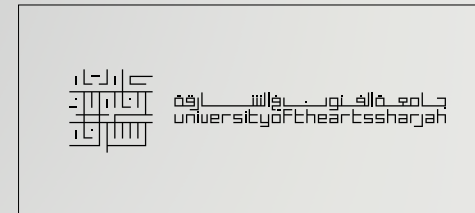
Catalogue Designer  
**Nour Kzar**

Photography  
**Tor Seidel**

Technical Supporters  
**Mazin Alsamman**  
**Abdulhadi Alsalti**  
**Joey Abiertas**  
**Noushad Kadavath**

Copyright © 2026  
**Academy of Visual Arts**  
**University of the Arts Sharjah**

Printed in Sharjah  
United Arab Emirates





The Annual Faculty Exhibition of the Academy of  
Visual Arts, University of the Arts Sharjah

---

**white** 2026

Academy of Visual Arts

---

8th of April  
23rd of April  
Rawaq Gallery  
Academy of Visual Arts,  
University of the Arts, Sharjah

25th of April  
21st of May  
XVA Gallery, Dubai