

Ange-Frédéric Koffi
at the limit of dream

Nosbaum Reding
21.10.2023 - 18.11.2023





at the limit of dream is where we encounter the theory of surreal presence¹, where we find ourselves suspended between lucidity and fervour on the edge of imagination. 'elsewhere' a word that continues to haunt. as in, some other place. as in, something other than this. something beyond the hold² of blk life unmaking conditions. a place « where aliveness sets the parameters' for blk life.³ in elsewhere, we live in the world as if it is already otherwise. we are not holding our breath for the event, we are breathing and the world around is adjusting to our rhythm. a language and narrative made possible by the poem. language that crafts, questions, (un)makes.

a leap into the poetic void. elsewhere asks, what is your orientation in the world? if we all faced that direction, where would we go? we need our poets for that dangerous work, that leap from which so many of us shrink. that leap onto unfamiliar ground, that ground that may nurture freedom dreams and practices.⁴

1 - *The theory of blackness is the theory of surreal presence* - Fred Moten

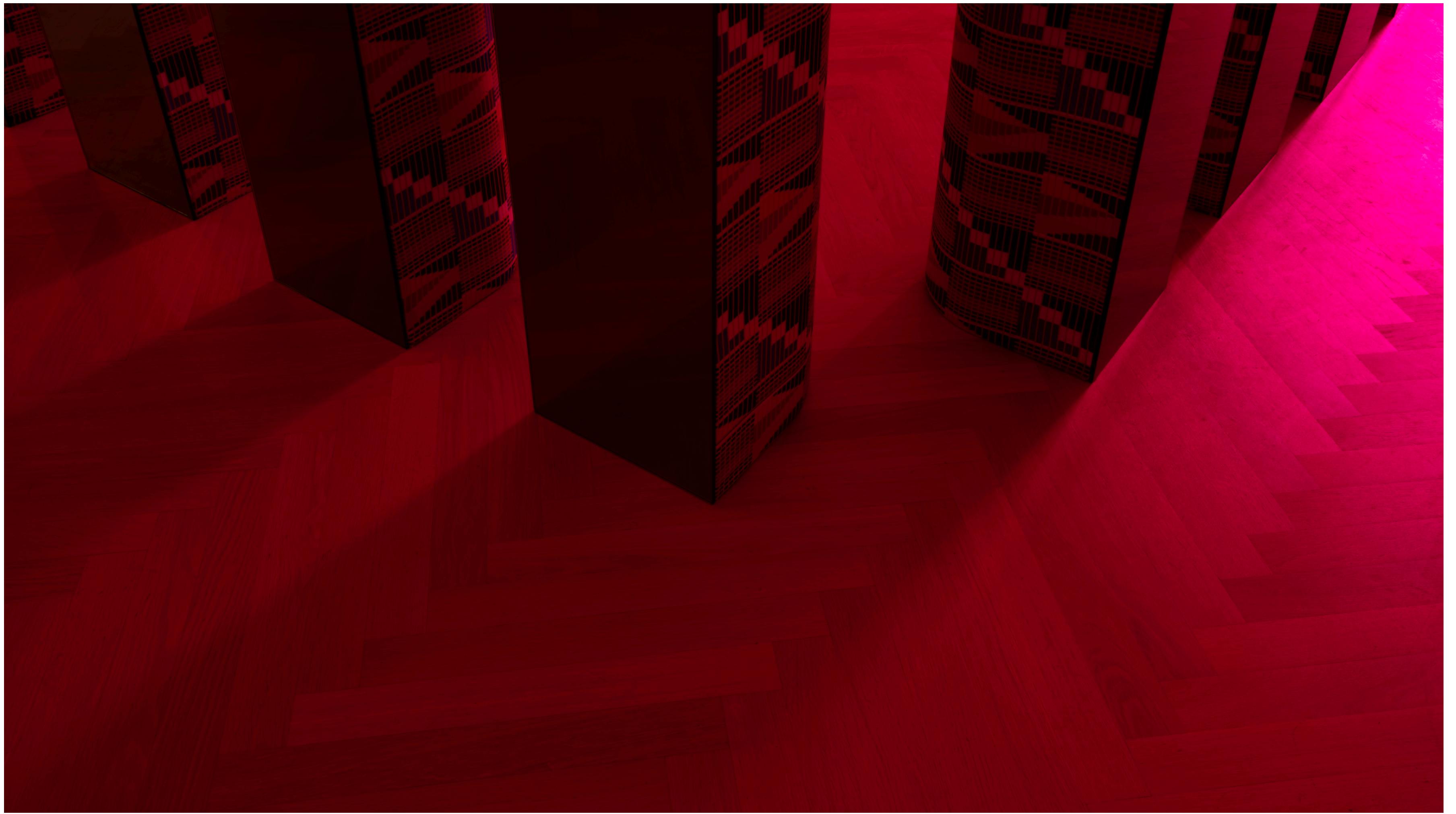
2 - *After In the Wake: On Blackness and Being* - Christina Sharpe, 2016

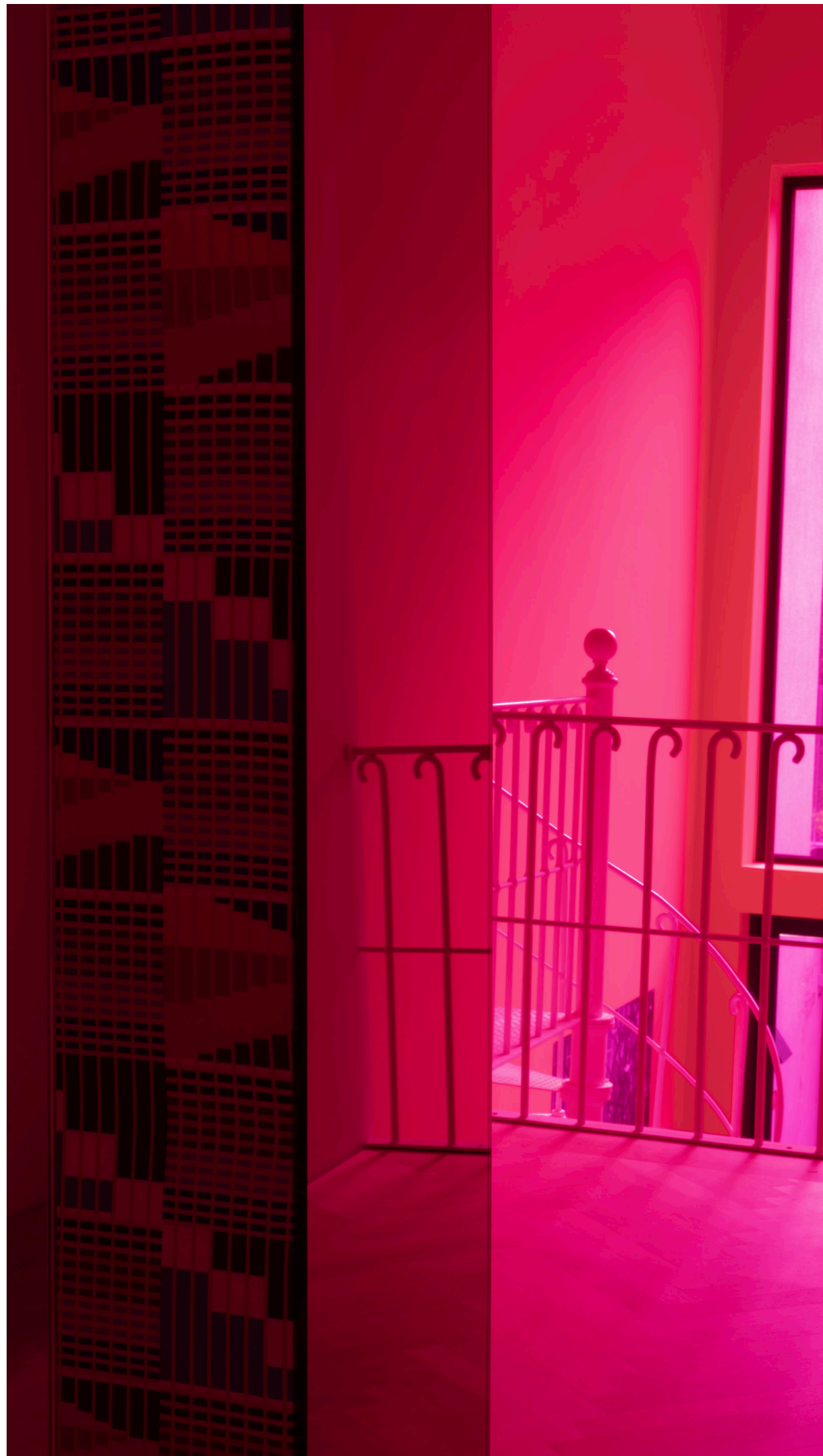
3 - *Black Aliveness, or A Poetics of Being* - Kevin Quashie, 2020

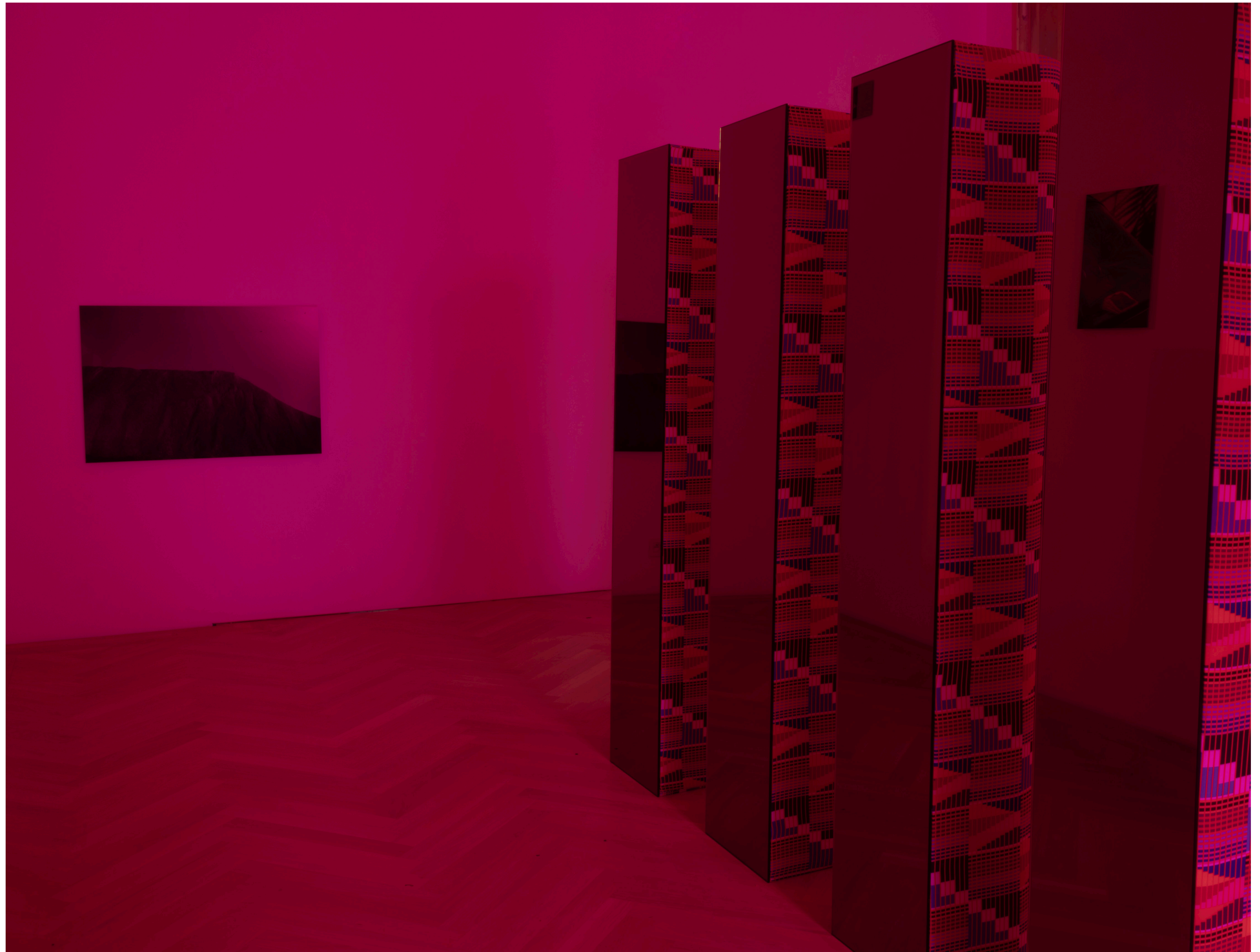
4 - Familiar Ground - <https://gukirawordpress.com/2019/07/09/familiar-ground/>











Ange-Frédéric Koffi's practice, often exploring ideas of movement, 'reveals the limits of our present geographic order and opens up a way to imagine new modes of black geographic thought'⁵. Through his lens, Koffi creates a dance between images taken in West and Southern Africa, beckoning us to challenge the conventional boundaries of space and perception. When I use the word poet in reference to Koffi's work therefore, it is within the Negritude and surrealist tradition that anticolonial Martinique poet Aimé Césaire used it.

In Césaire's seminal text, *Poetry and Knowledge*, he describes the limitations of scientific knowledge and posits that it depersonalises, deindividuates and it is poetry that helps us lean into strangeness and intimacy. What science offers up as limits, rigid and constricting, finds liberation within art. Koffi navigates these boundaries between the dreamlike and the tangible, orchestrating a dance between absence and presence. In his work, we witness each image, each object acting as a portal to new modes of perception and understanding.

Césaire offers up seven propositions on poetry and knowledge that Koffi's work takes seriously. The final corollary from which the exhibition borrows its title:

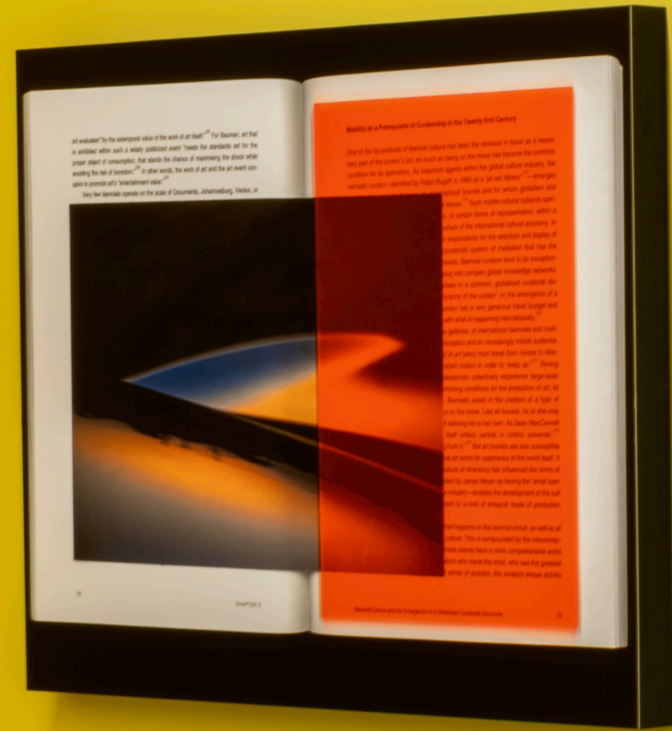
'The music of poetry cannot be external or formal. The only acceptable poetic comes from a greater distance than sound. To seek to musicalize poetry is the crime against poetic music, which can only be striking of the mental wave against the rock of the world.'

The poet is that very ancient yet new being, at once very complex and very simple, who at the limit of dream and reality, of day and night, between absence and presence, searches for and receives in the sudden triggering of inner cataclysms the password of connivance and power.'
- *Poetry and Knowledge*, Aimé Césaire (trans. A. James Arnold)

While most works of art are concerned with how to occupy space, Ange-Frédéric Koffi's practice implicates the affective production of it. Taking photography as a primary medium, his installations take the forms of sculpture, textile, and painting to create a palpable tension between images and objects. At the limit of dream is an invitation to dwell in the liminal spaces rendered by Koffi's poetic compositions.

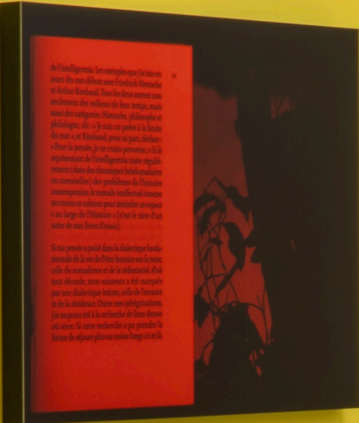
Born in Korhogo, Côte d'Ivoire, the influence of Ivorian architectural and textile cultures is evident in his work. Geometric patterns in wallpaper, carpet, and furniture designs form constellations that situate the work within a postcolonial history. His visual language is punctuated by a lucidity that acknowledges that the 'field of transcendence is limited' (after Césaire) and so makes propositions for the very mediums he uses. *Altération, 2023*, a reverse image of a car is not developed into a colour photograph but rather presented as the negative, taken on a film camera. In other instances, photographs are overlaid on important textual references. Some such experiments invite viewers to explore the intricate relationship between tangible and immaterial worlds, blurring the lines between reality and the metaphysical. Through his lens, the camera becomes a tool to capture the uncanny, paying close attention to seemingly mundane objects, zooming in and blurring edges that creates a sensibility beyond sight.



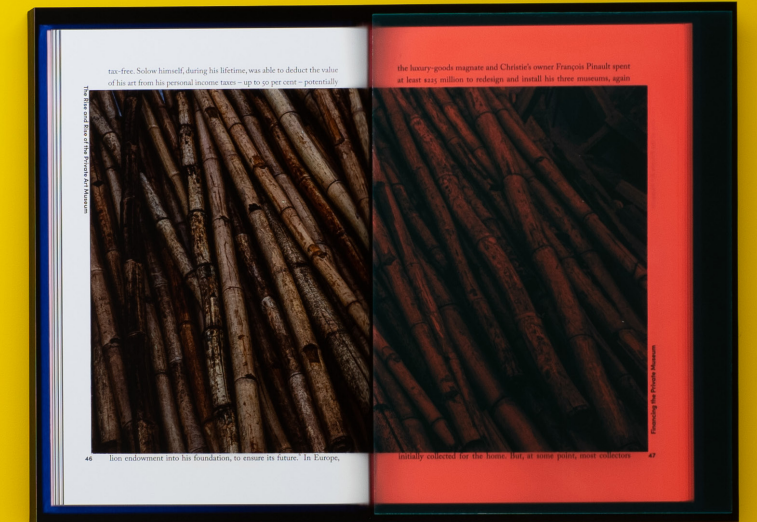
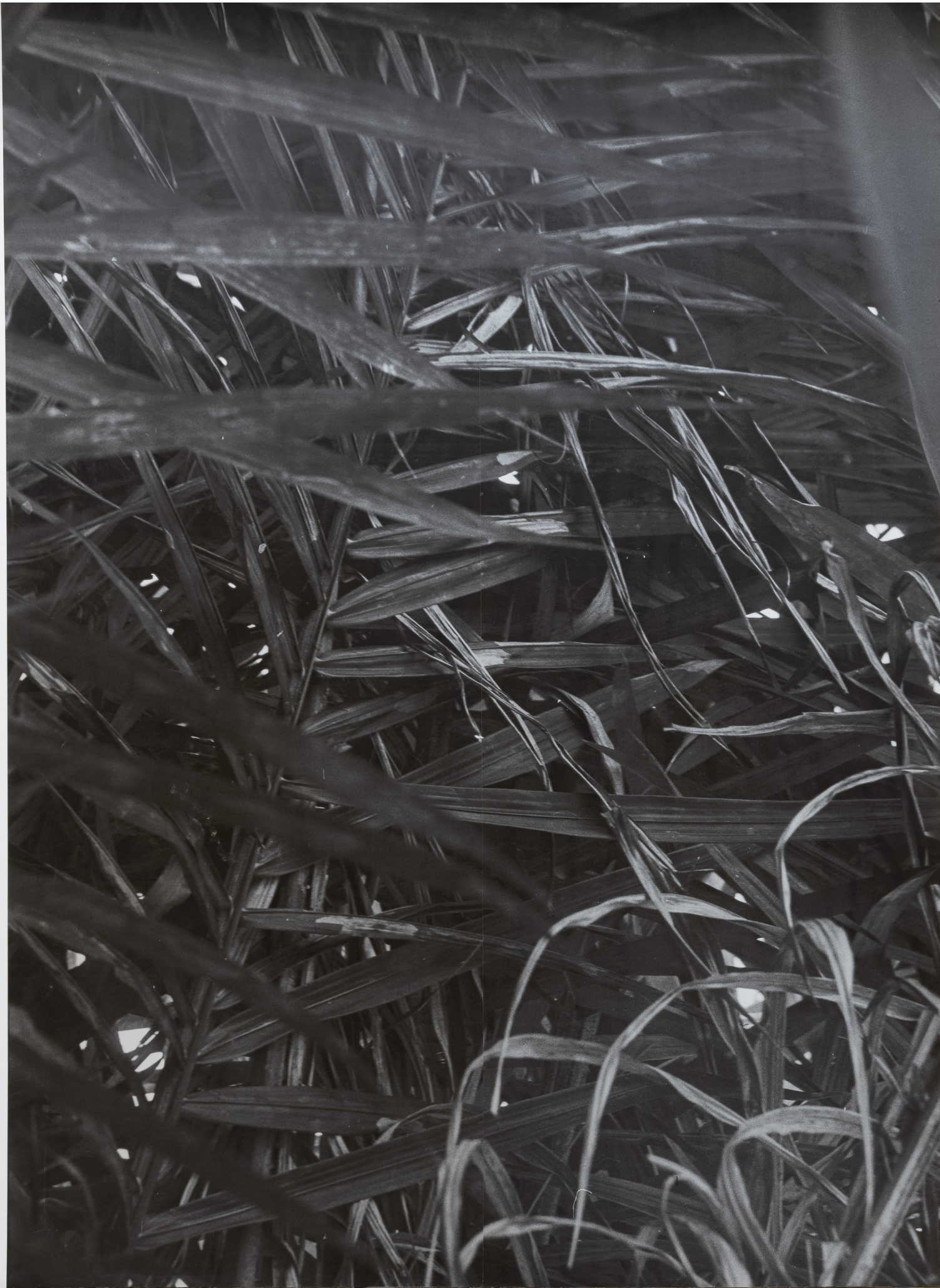














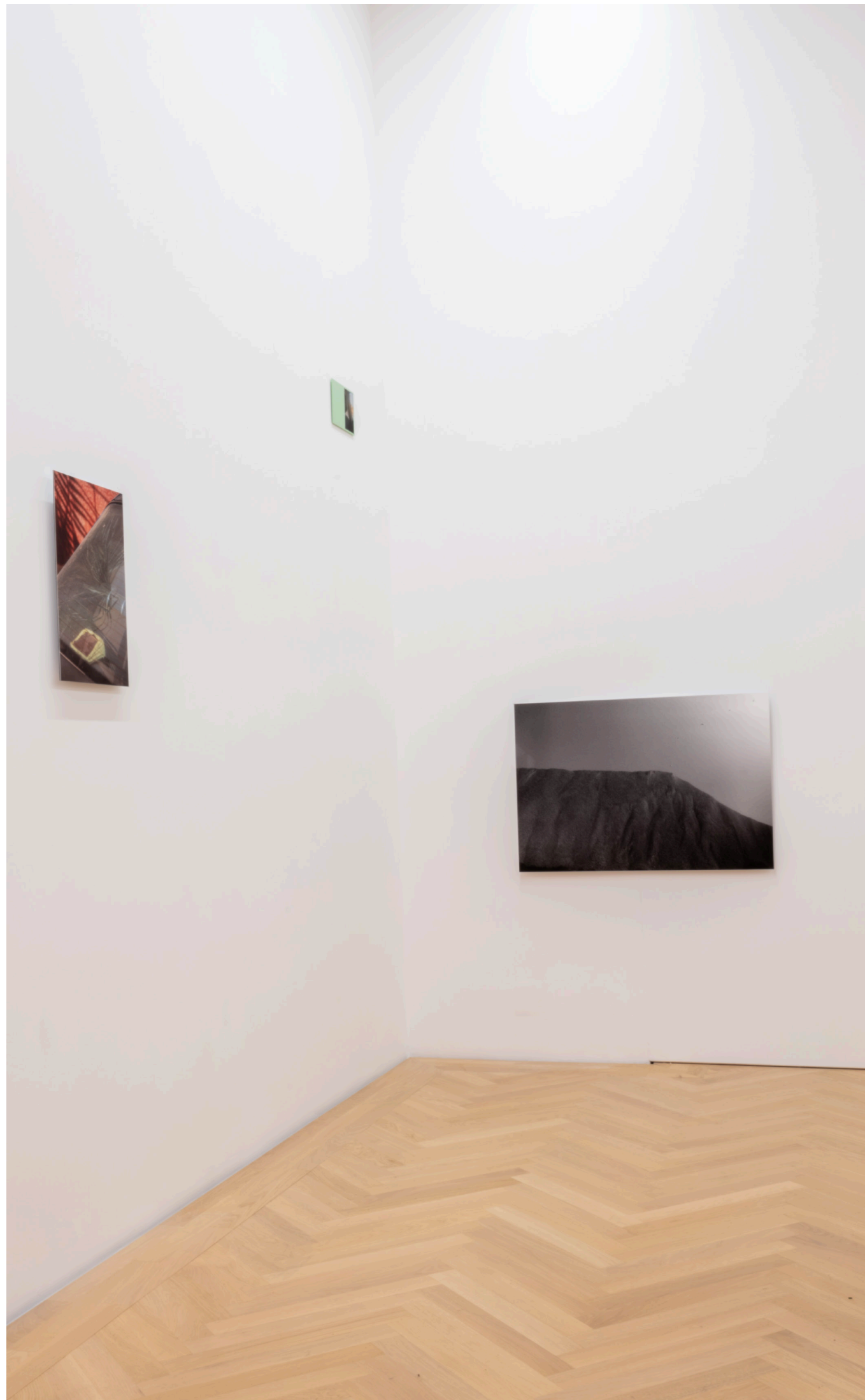
III

im gesturing towards a radical spatial politic, an illegible space, where all of our lives and loves are possible.

E. N. Miremba



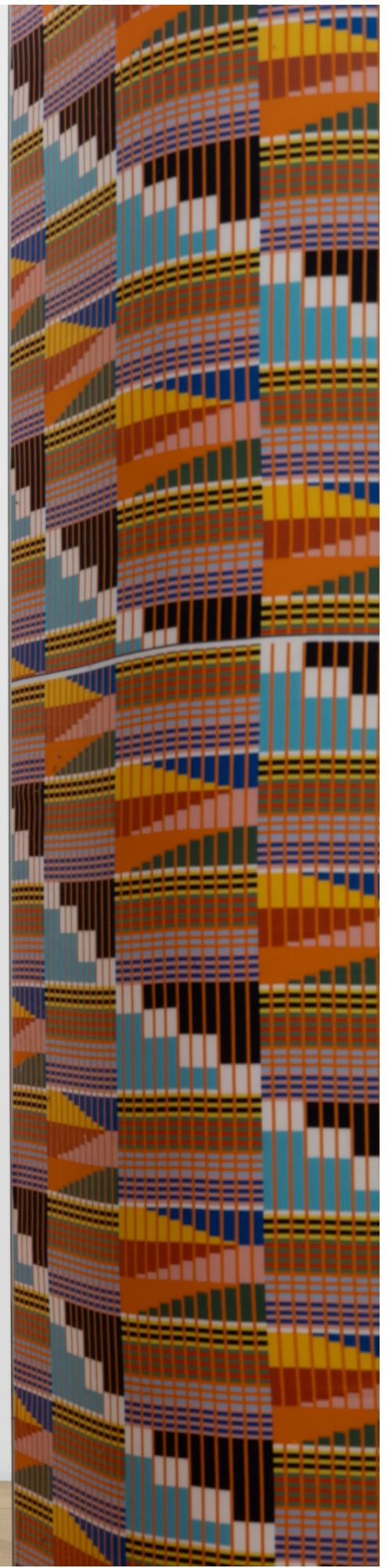


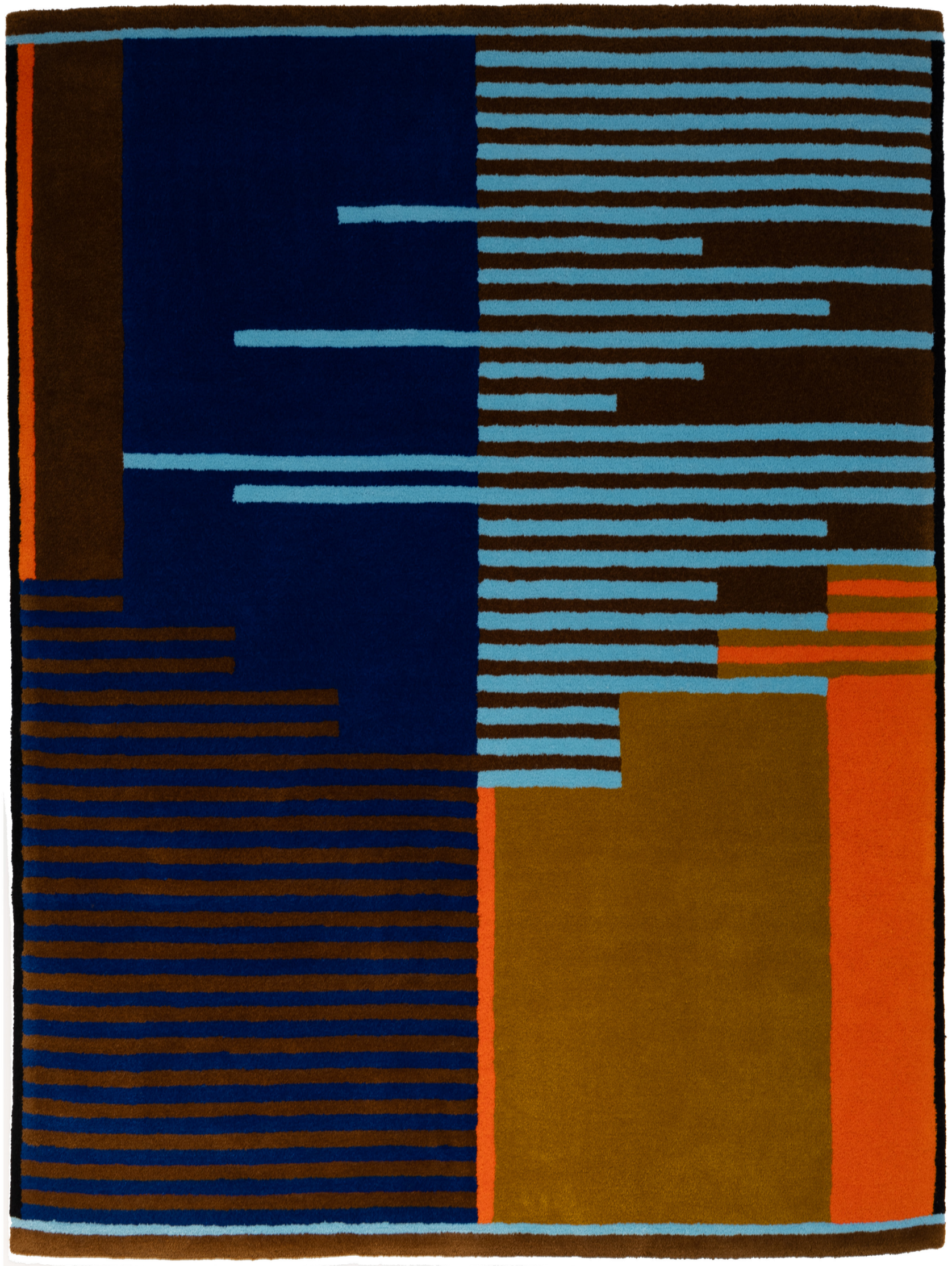


de l'intelligentsia. Les exemples que j'ai mis en avant dès mes débuts sont Friedrich Nietzsche et Arthur Rimbaud. Tous les deux sortent non seulement des milieux de leur temps, mais aussi des catégories. Nietzsche, philosophe et philologue, dit : « Je suis un poète à la limite du mot », et Rimbaud, pour sa part, déclare : « Pour la pensée, je ne crains personne. » Si le représentant de l'intelligentsia traite régulièrement (dans des chroniques hebdomadaires ou mensuelles) des problèmes de l'histoire contemporaine, le nomade intellectuel traverse territoires et cultures pour atteindre un espace « au large de l'Histoire » (c'est le titre d'un autre de mes livres d'essais).

Si ma pensée a puisé dans la dialectique fondamentale de la vie de l'être humain sur la terre, celle du nomadisme et de la sédentarité, d'où tout découle, mon existence a été marquée par une dialectique intime, celle de l'errance et de la résidence. Outre mes pérégrinations, j'ai toujours été à la recherche de lieux denses où vivre. Si cette recherche a pu prendre la forme de séjours plus ou moins longs ici et là,







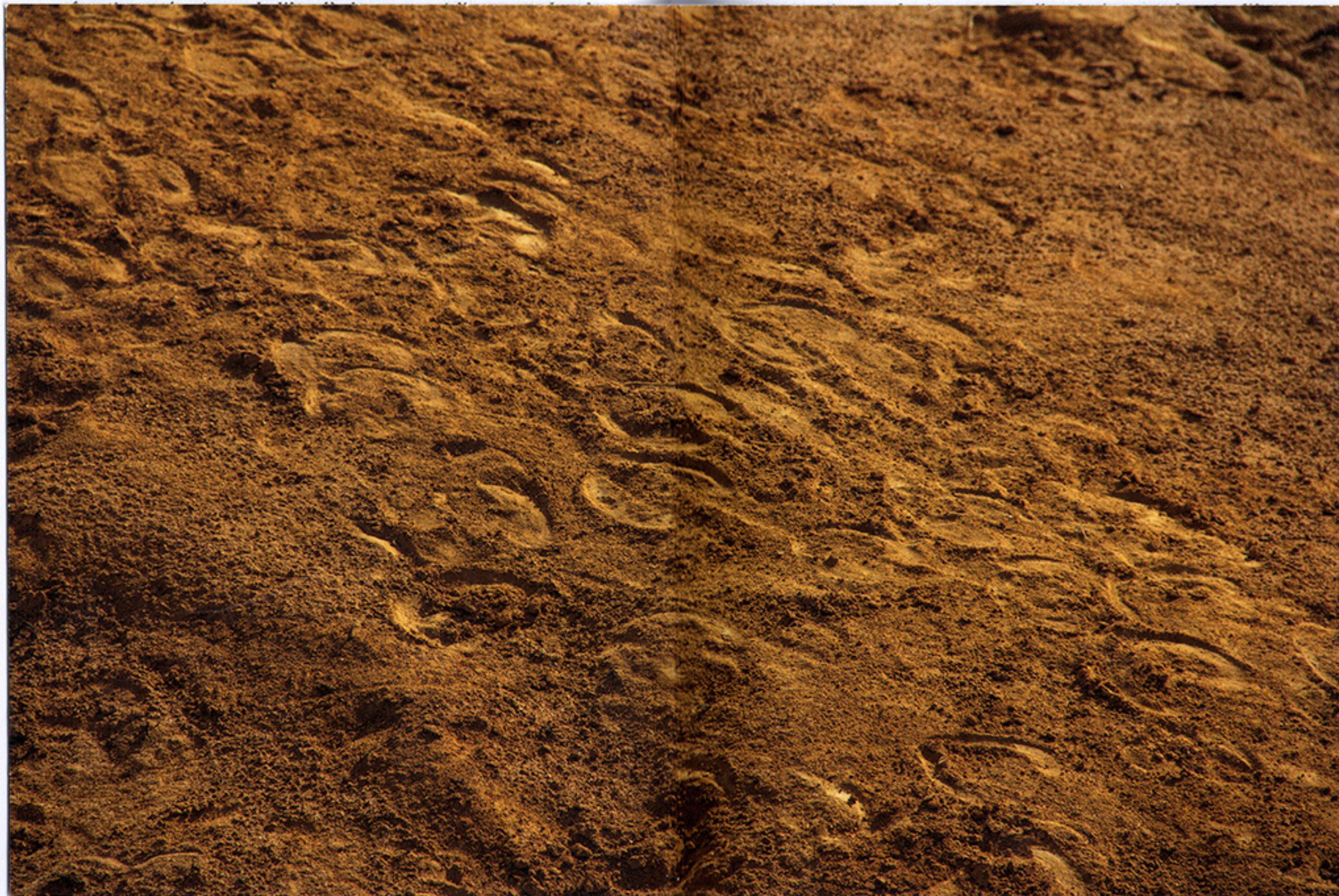








possible l'élosion du lieu. L'image ayant mis à mort le principe même de la représentation, il ne lui reste plus qu'une seule



le résultat d'un agencement de composantes hétérogènes¹. Au contraire, le sujet se conçoit comme une surface où vient s'ins-

