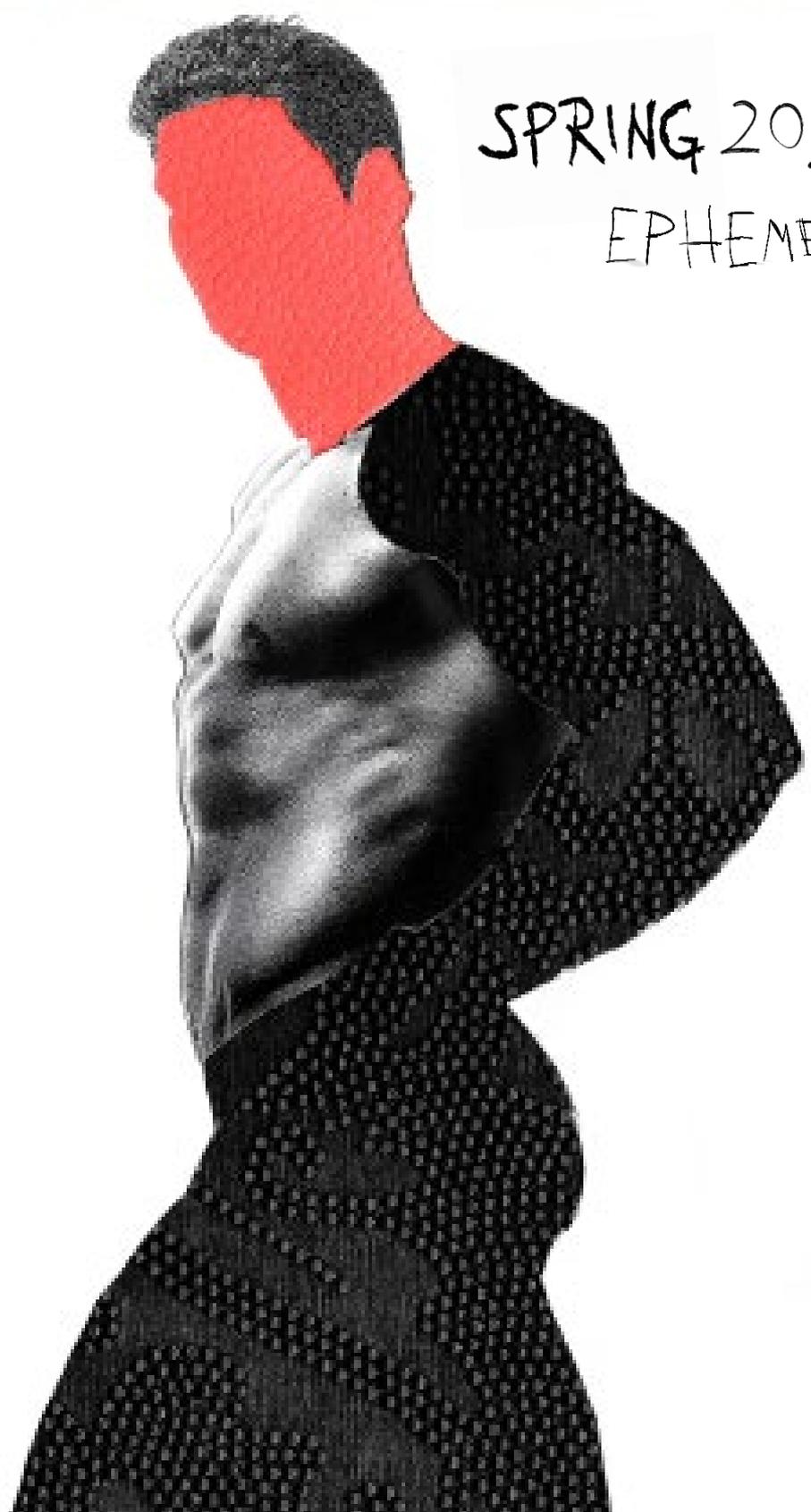


SPRING 2023
EPHEMERA



LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear readers,

We are delighted to present to you ISO magazine's Spring 2023 issue on Ephemera. In this issue, we explore how imagemakers and poets capture the fleeting and transitory nature of life.

For photographers, there is a visceral importance to preserve memories through images, and retain the ephemerality of a moment. Photographs become personal archives of lives that quickly become part of the past – subject to the fragility of remembering what used to be so present. What becomes discarded over the course of time, returns to the forefront through the photographs of careful observers.

In this issue, we delve into the concept of ephemera and how it relates to the tangible and intangible aspects of the everyday. Our contributors explore the various ways in which fleeting moments are transformed into legacies through these artists' interpretations. Artists like Cora Rafe and Gavin Elian Ben Rodriguez meditate on the personal, and temporality of life. Liz Speiser directs her attention to the cultural and familial as modernity takes over through post-photographic image-making.

Meanwhile, works of Tony Wang, Carlos Ocando, and Sarker Protick offer insightful explorations of ephemera through new approaches to documentary. They provide an entry point into the beauty and fragility of the most banal moments. Together our contributors showcase their various perspectives as they maintain distinctive processes that provide tangible remains of the most fleeting parts of existence.

We hope that this issue inspires you to reflect on your own experiences with ephemera. Most of all, we extend our heartfelt thanks to all the contributors who are included this issue, as well as our NYU community who continue to support our publication.

Thank you for joining us on this journey,
Carlos & Katie

Cover image by Antonio Pulgarín
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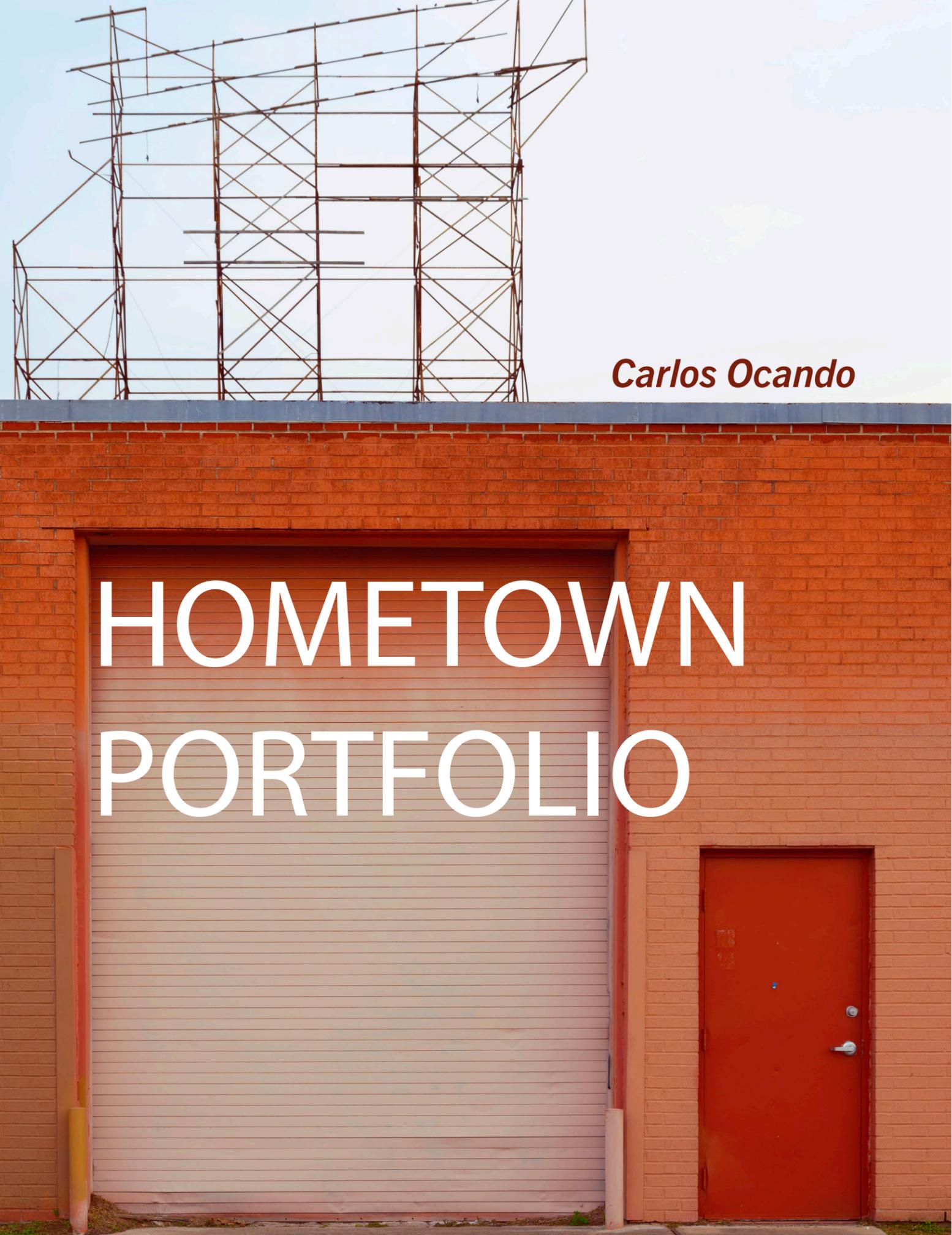
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Carlos Ocando

HOMETOWN PORTFOLIO



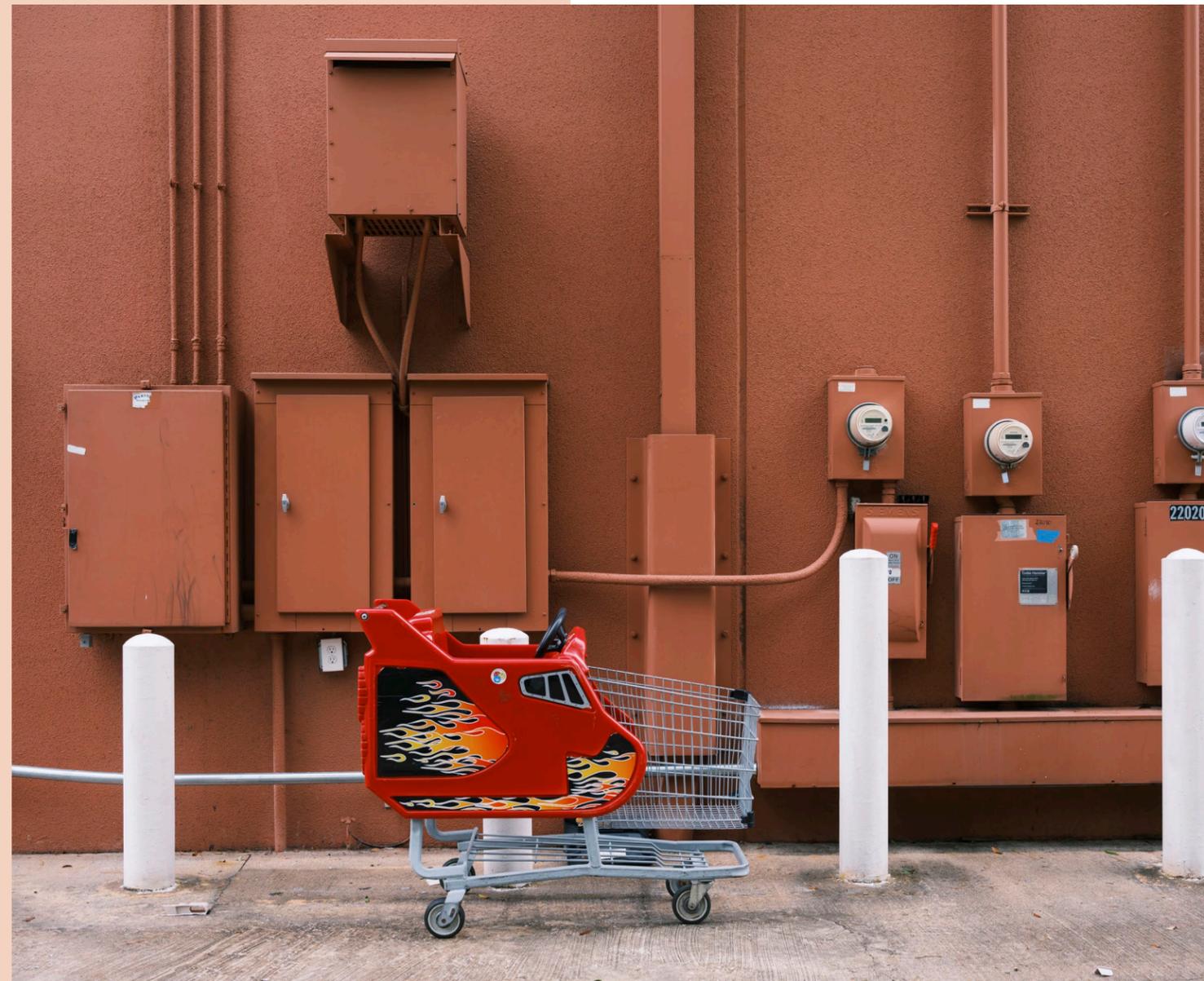
Text by Carlos Hernandez

Carlos Ocando's *Hometown Portfolio* is a series of photographs that seeks to uncover the stories hidden within Houston's urban landscape. The photographs capture the complexity of everyday life, revealing the beauty that lies within the mundane.

The images in this portfolio are striking and thought-provoking, drawing the viewer into the artist's

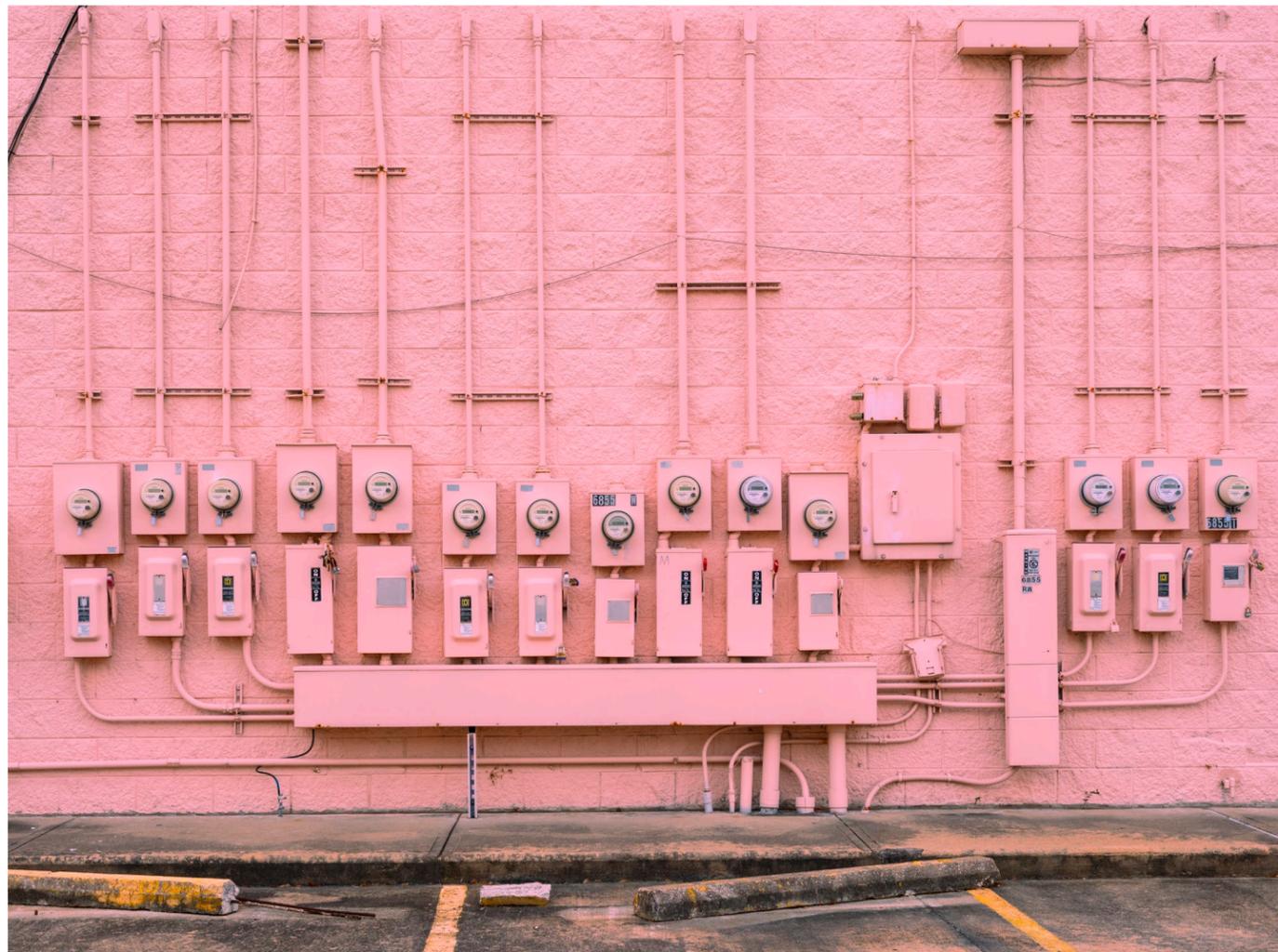
unique perspective on the world. The industrial marks of these spaces are exacerbated by the absence of human figures in the landscape. The photographs are carefully composed, with different elements of the city. By turning to the ordinary on a deeper significance, Ocando displays a symbiotic relationship between color, form, and object in his images. Most importantly, his color palettes and





their vibrancy display how his approach is both unconscious and universal. is a means to view the world with a sense of wonder. In this manner, Ocando presents his urban landscapes as a canvas for their stories. For example, a rusted chain-link fence may represent the constraints of society, while a bright red fire hydrant may symbolize the passion and energy of youth. Through their work, the artist invites the viewer to reflect on their own experiences of their urban landscape in a way that

Overall, Ocando's *Hometown Portfolio* is a stunning and thought-provoking collection that showcases the artist's colorful perspective on the world. By exploring the stories hidden within the urban landscape, the artist invites us to reflect on our own experiences of the everyday, reminding us of the beauty that remains within otherwise overlooked and disregarded social spaces.



লীন / OF RIVER AND LOST LANDS

Sarker Protick

Sarker Protick's *Of River and Lost Lands* deftly explores a rapidly-changing landscape over the course of 12 years. Through capturing the River Padma (Ganges) and the waterborne land of Bangladesh, he depicts the delicate relationship between humans and nature and the devastating impact of erosion on the landscape and ways of life.

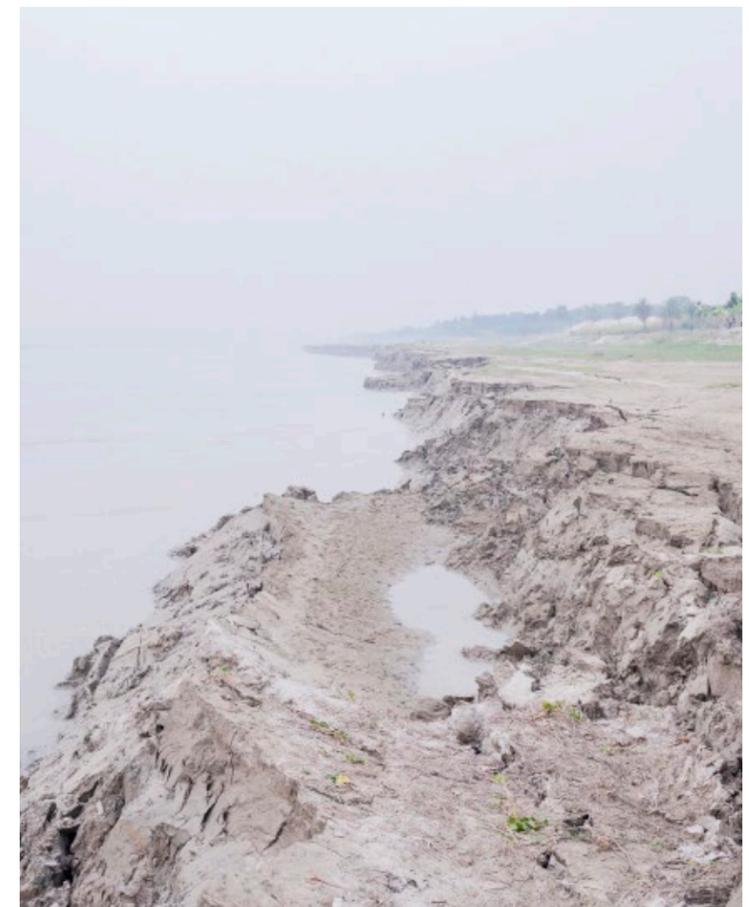
Through soft and gentle imagery and pastel hues, he shows the water in varying states, from peaceful and tranquil to violent and turbulent, demonstrating the way that the landscape is in a perpetual state of erosion. Riverbanks slowly crumble and disappear, leaving behind a barren and desolate terrain. He also includes the villages and communities that live on the riverbanks, shedding light on their daily lives and struggles as they attempt to adapt to an ever-changing environment. Depictions of the shallow mud banks that emerge

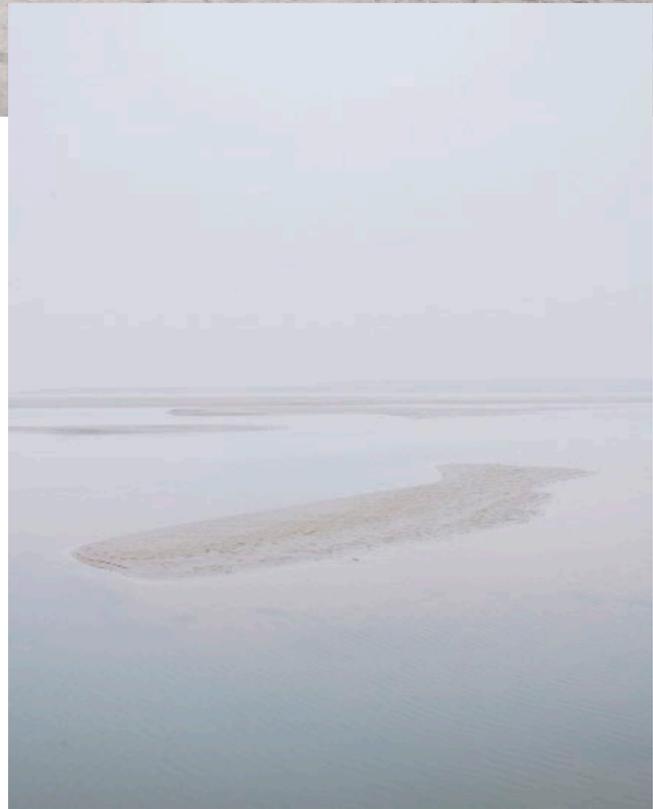
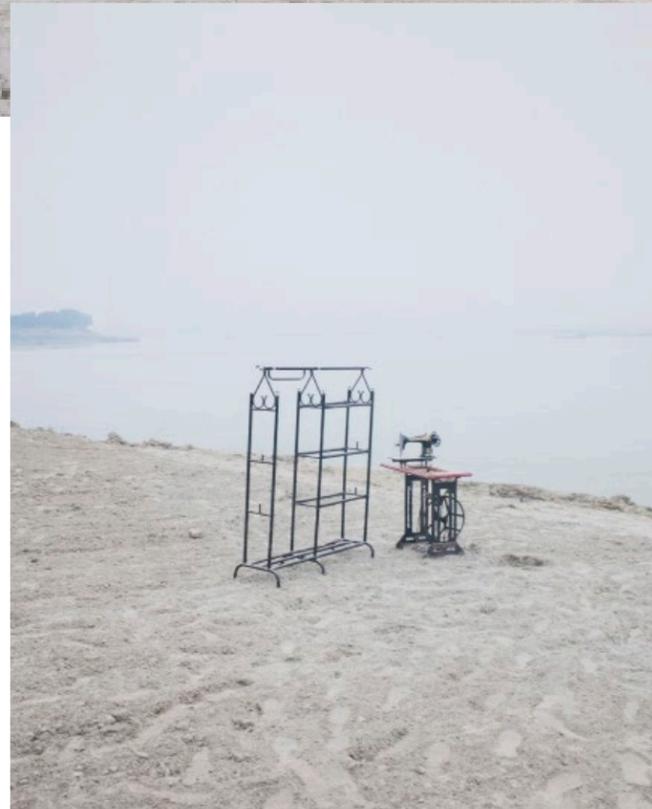
as a result of the introduction of new sediments offer a glimpse of hope, as they show the possibility of creating new communities in the face of loss and devastation. As most locations where these photographs were taken no longer exist, the series serves as a reflection of the passage of time and ideas of impermanence throughout life. Through his lens, he has managed to capture moments that are both hauntingly beautiful and deeply poignant.

Through the subtle beauty of the riverside landscape, the fleeting emotions of the people who live there, and the traces of history and memory that are rapidly fading away, Protick asks us to pay close attention to the transient nature of the environments we live in. His photographs are imbued with a sense of nostalgia and longing, as if the people are trying to hold on to something that is slipping away.

Text by Anna Henderson











Antonio Pulgarín

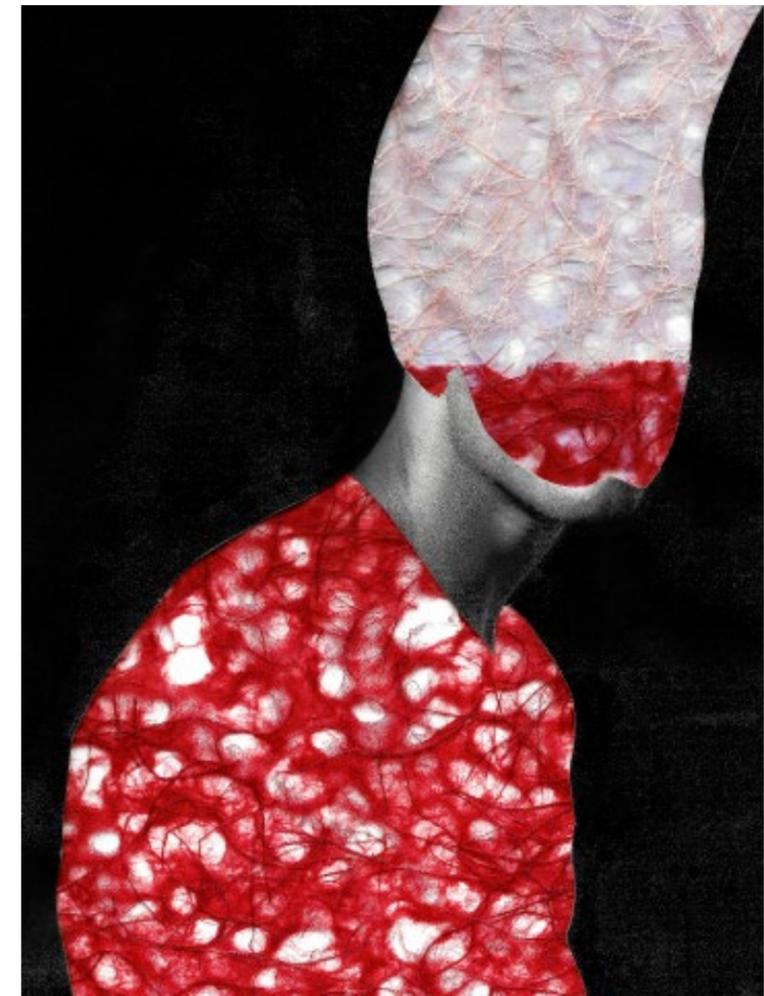
Lost Throughout the Pages

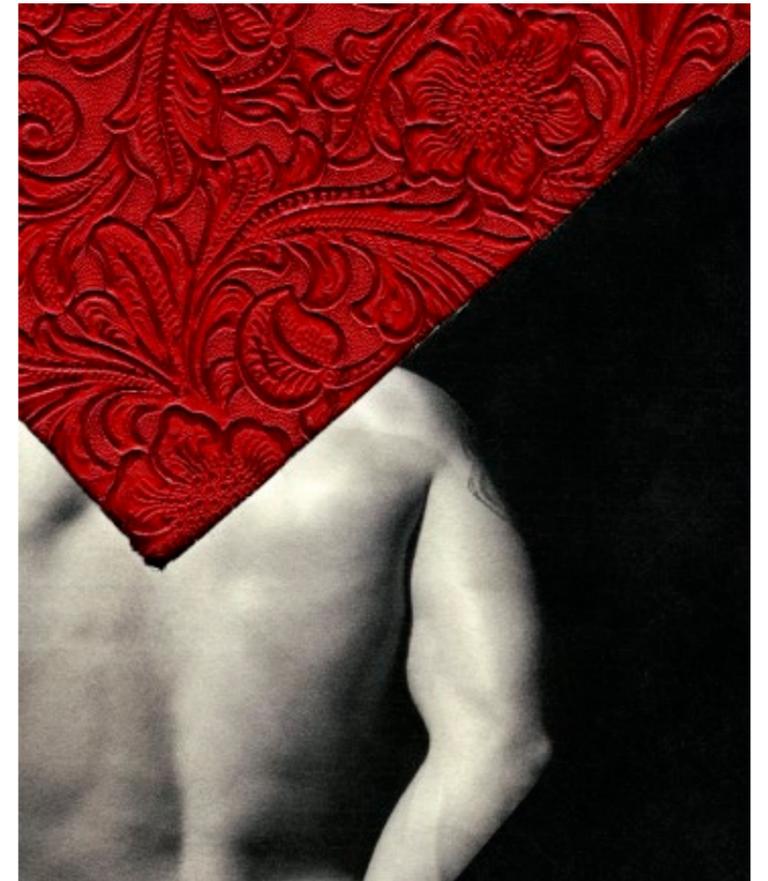
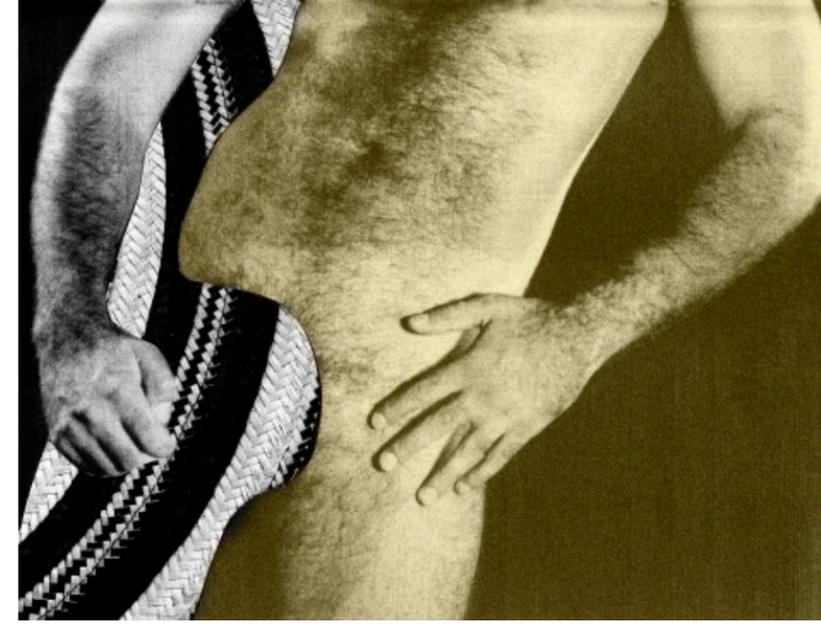
*(Whispers of
the Caballeros)*

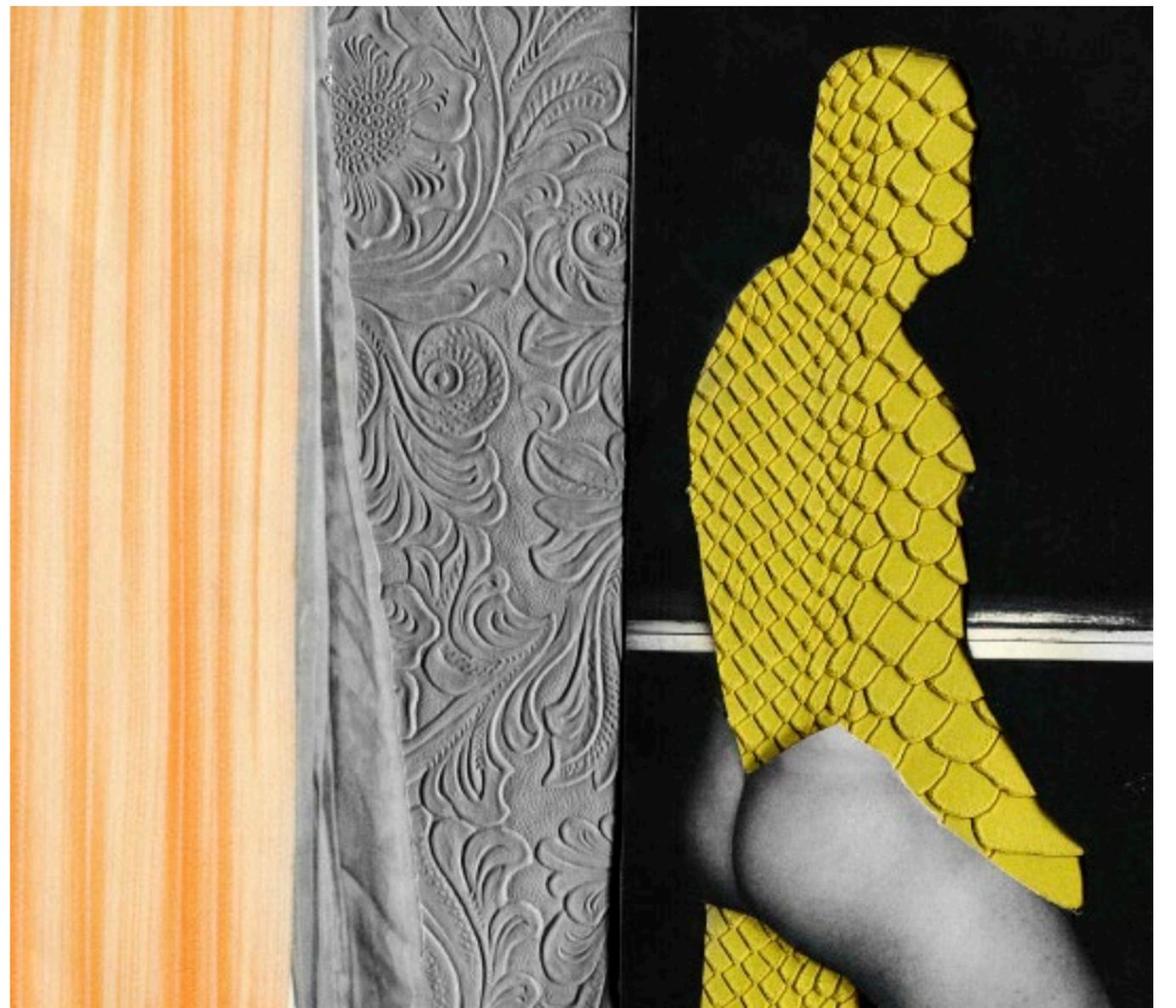
Text by Carlos Hernandez

Antonio Pulgarín's *Lost Throughout the Pages (Whispers of The Caballeros)* is a powerful exploration of queer identity and representation. By working with beefcake imagery, the artist touches on the nuances of the artist's queer Latinx identity to expand upon the historically white queer canon. By collaging different fragments of images, Pulgarín's new archive of queer imagery honors the queer BIPOC community, providing a space for representation and visibility where it has been historically lacking. Pulgarín specifically merges deconstructed queer archival images from the 1980s through the present day with aspects of his Colombian cultural identity, reaching towards textile patterns, weaving techniques, and elements that provide a sense of *home*. The use of different surfaces, including bamboo, acrylic glass, adhesive vinyl, and printed cyanotypes on fabric, is also notable, as it pays homage to the way photography was presented in Pulgarín's childhood home,

where images were often taped or pinned to a refrigerator, mirror, or religious statue. The resulting collages straddle the line between the monochromatic human forms and the disruptive vibrant patterns. In addition, Pulgarín features the red, blue, and yellow primary colors of the Colombian flag. In this manner, Pulgarín celebrates the intersection of queerness and Colombian identity. Undoubtedly, *Lost Throughout the Pages (Whispers of The Caballeros)* is a deeply personal exploration of fragments of queer history and cultural belonging, precisely as these are marked by migration and structures of racism. Pulgarín's use of collage and mixed media is particularly effective in creating a visual language that celebrates diversity and the intersectionality of queer identity and cultural heritage. By expanding the queer canon to include the experiences of queer BIPOC individuals, Pulgarín's work is an important step towards platforming the experiences and accounts of queer Latinx folk, as these are marked by the invisibility and erasure of previous generations within the archive.







photographs that belong together

these photographs work as a personal journey in visual meditation. a breath of fresh air. after all, they are just photographs. for now, i delight in this simplicity. they were made in north carolina, and new york. i hope the reason for my thinking they belong together comes through visually.

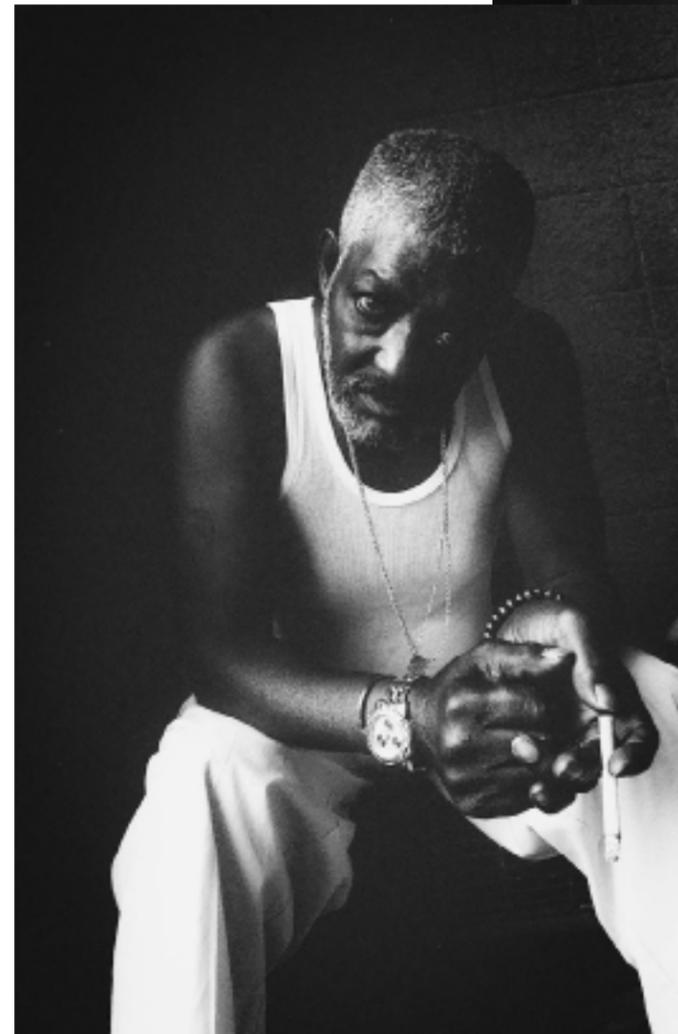
i put this together for selfish reasons. this work has never been shown either publicly or together. this was arranged in efforts for me to fall in love again with the medium itself. maybe i think it will save my soul or something. some souls need saving. some don't. still waters run deep.

Gavin Elian Ben Rodriguez









Mothers Of Thread



By Liz Speiser

Mothers of Thread is an homage to my family and to every woman grappling with growing old. It's a tribute to aging women and the folk art that is often associated with them. It's an apology. It is me coming to terms with my own fear of this invisible problem that eventually exiles women and their work to the edge of society.

We look right through the faces we no longer see value in. A woman who is no longer embedded in the cult of youth, a woman who can no longer perform physical labor for others is seen as a threat. As they cease being valuable as conventionally beautiful ornaments or thankless workers, our elders are ostracized and ignored, their only representation being the quiet "little old lady" or the "evil old witch." It's no secret that exclusively young, attractive women are frequently objects of artistic affection, which makes me ask; how are we supposed to acknowledge and respect the aging women in our lives while we tell them that they are not worthy of being looked at? Women are often the physical and social weavers of networks, sitting within a web of interconnecting, layered realities and roles. They are measured through the success of those they are tied to, rather than their own accomplishments as individuals. What is your worth when you can no longer service others in the way that a capitalist society demands? What is your legacy?

Whenever a new person enters our family, my grandmother, the matriarch, knits them a stocking, which are hung as beautifully intricate totems of her love. I have seen how not only the voices and bodies of older women have been shunned, but also their artwork. The dominant art establishment has a history of dismissing folk art as a "primitive," "naive," or an otherwise lesser form of creative expression. This view can perhaps be attributed to a few factors.

First, folk and craft art is often created by ordinary individuals with no formal art education. Practices like embroidery, crochet, woven textiles, and objects embellished with folk paintings are often created with knowledge that is passed down within a community through elder family members. Folk art is the art of a community; while craft art might be made by an individual's hand, the styles, symbols, and techniques they might use all come from their group's artistic tradition that has been developing for hundreds of years. In this way, folk crafts are a highly democratized artform. To those who grew up in communities with strong ties to folk traditions, the motifs within the genre can feel familiar, nostalgic, and the materials and skills that are needed to learn craft traditions are both realistic and attainable. It is possible that the accessibility and the recognizability of folk art iconography contributes to their rejection from an establishment that favors exclusivity, scarcity, and a perceived conceptual uniqueness.

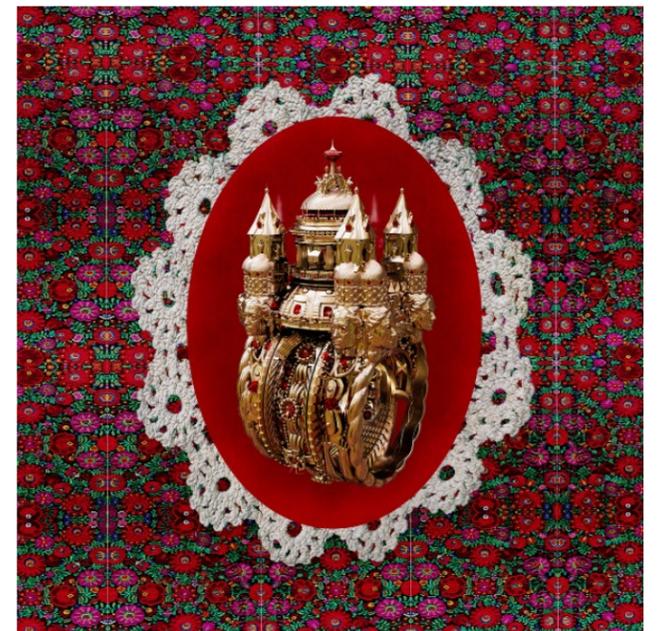
Folk and craft arts are also most practiced by lower and middle class women. Regional art aesthetics can be incredibly intricate, with communities developing styles that include bursts of rich color and maximalist detail which clashes with the minimalist art style championed by "modern art" curators. Within the past century, the art of the Global North's upper classes has seen a shift from ornate maximalism to stark, "clean" modernism, so the institutionalized aversion to art that is labeled "folk" or "craft" may stem from elites wanting



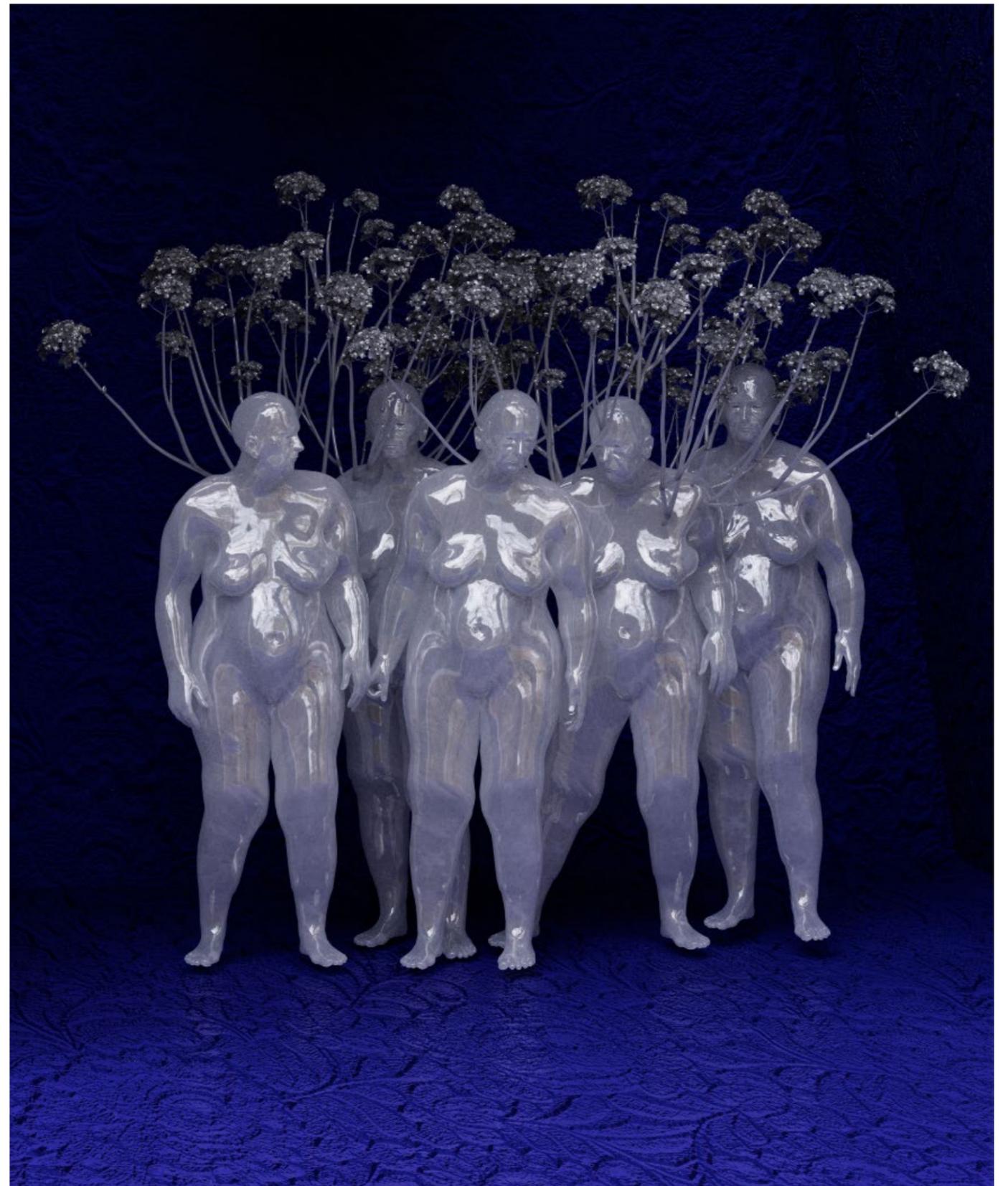
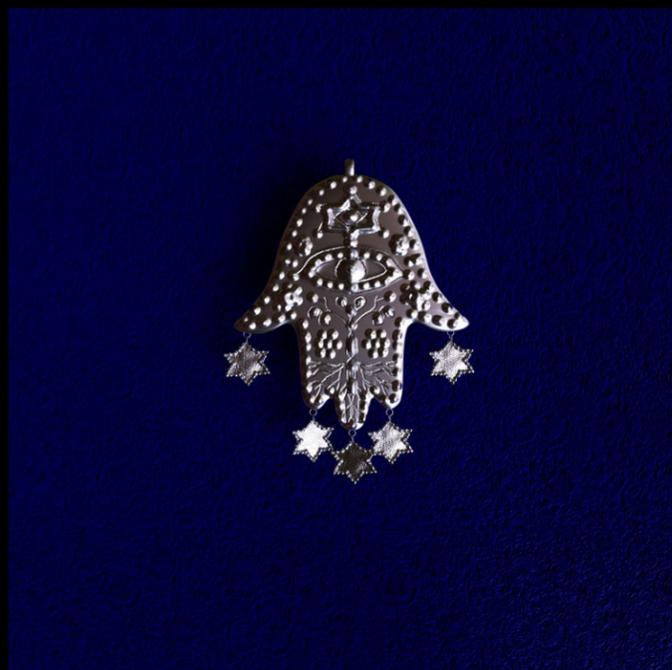
to distinguish their aesthetic tastes from those developed in lower classes.

Lastly, of course, is the gendered notion that art involving fashion and textiles is "women's work." Ornamentation such as embroidery has been historically characterized as "frivolous." The beautification of objects that are meant to be used, such as clothing, furniture, kitchenware, and lighting fixtures is an act that is often associated with women and has been excluded from art historical analysis.

Mothers of Thread puts older women and the folk art that is often associated with them into the spotlight. I aim to tap into the history of craft and maximalism as aesthetics of rebellion and femininity, hoping to start conversations around the forces which have exiled folk art and the genre's femme artists from the established art canon as both makers and subjects.









unfinished epilogue

tony wang



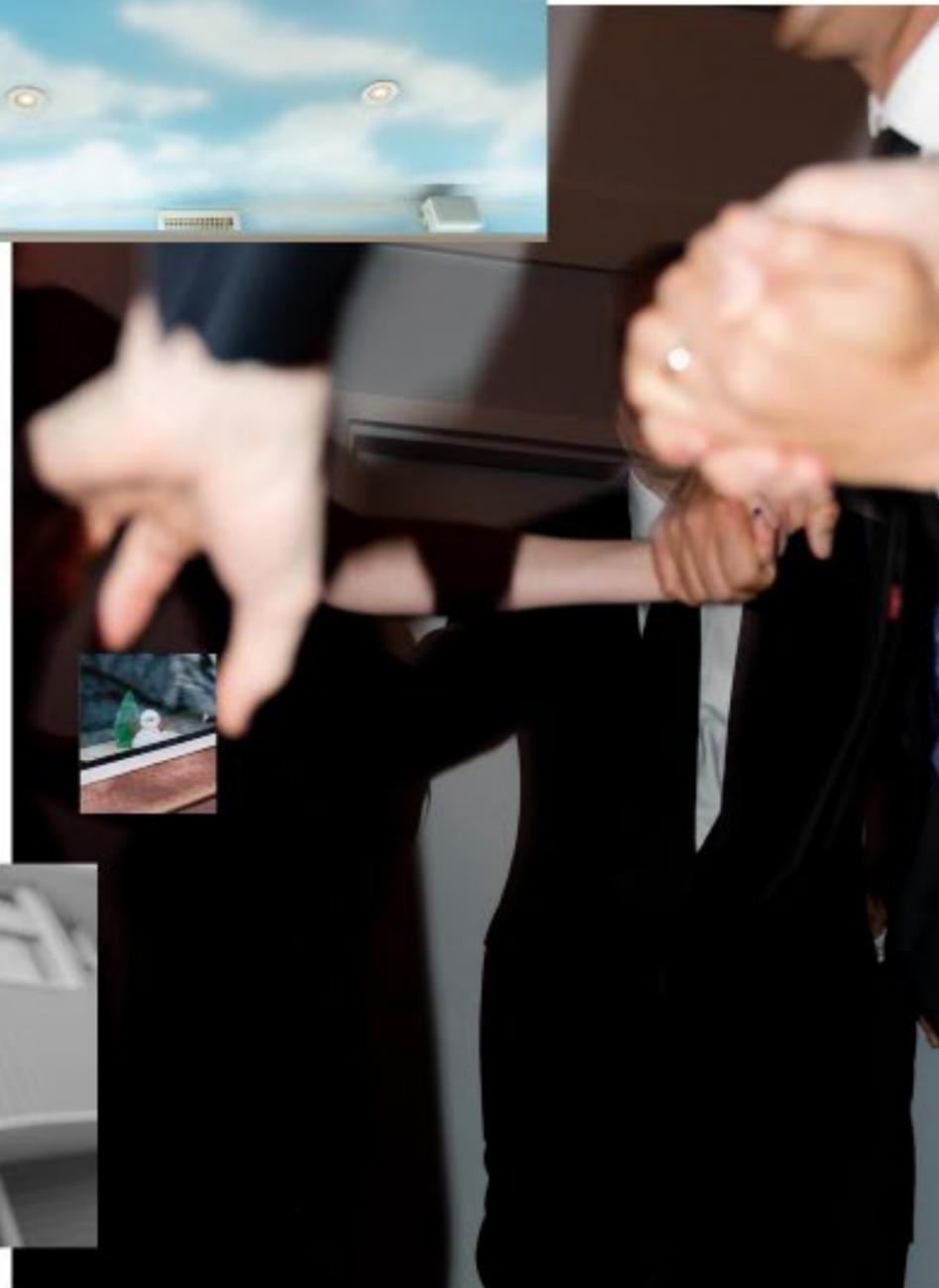
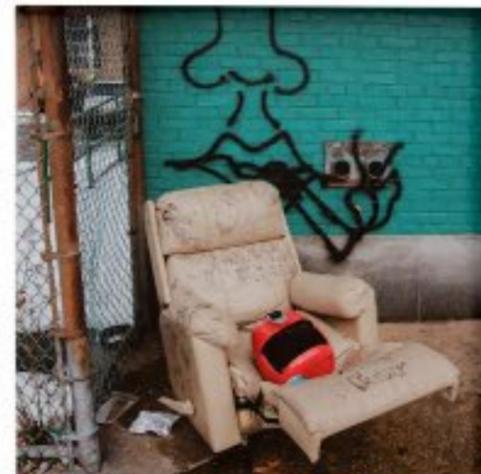
The quiet power of the subconscious takes precedence in the work of New York-based artist Tony Wang. Photographs function not so much as literal descriptive devices or representations of any straightforward narrative, but as ambiguous visual fragments in a broader study of experience, memory, and internal archiving. In his latest major body of work, *Unfinished Epilogue*, Wang collects these disparate observations, presenting a series of pristine, hard-edge photo montages which culminate as a visual distillation of his distinct ways of seeing, experiencing, processing, and remembering. These photographs are decidedly wide-ranging in subject matter, derived from both staged compositions and candid snapshots from Wang's personal life; silly string, a spilled beverage, a jagged clump of dark soil, and a goldfish in a plastic bag all make appearances throughout the series. Rather than focusing on traditional linear storytelling,

Wang gathers and unifies this diverse visual fodder, each a tiny remnant of a much broader context, and weaves them together with delicate precision. The end result is an incredibly layered body of work that feels

both like a distant memory of something vaguely familiar, and the discovery of something entirely new and exciting. Wang is deeply aware of photography's tangled, protean history. His photographs place themselves unabashedly in the lineage of seminal artists like Wolfgang Tillmans, a figure who has built his career around unconventional means of sequencing, juxtaposing, and displaying his eclectic photographs, all part of an ongoing attempt to subvert photographic tradition. *Unfinished Epilogue* deals with similar notions of hierarchy, association, and inquiry into the practice of photography itself, introducing another level of nuance in the physical spaces where these photographs cleverly overlap and entangle with one another. Both Wang's photographs, and the montages that he creates with them, are crafted with noticeable care and intention, no single ingredient in his larger composition feeling out of place or ignored. *Unfinished Epilogue* occupies a singular space where the surreal, whimsical nature of memory meets Wang's cerebral, free-associative curatorial practice; a delightfully ephemeral study in the human psyche.

text by
jarod polakoff





Dear body,

What are your limits?

You contain me and I am here to exhaust you. To reveal your mere structure? I want to feel the edges, let you crash upon the earth, let you seep into in-existence.

I am here to examine you, pick apart your mechanics, your incapacities... to dissect you from me. Am I still without you? Do you charge me?

*Can you see now? Blinded again by our own eclipse.
Our permanent entanglement.*

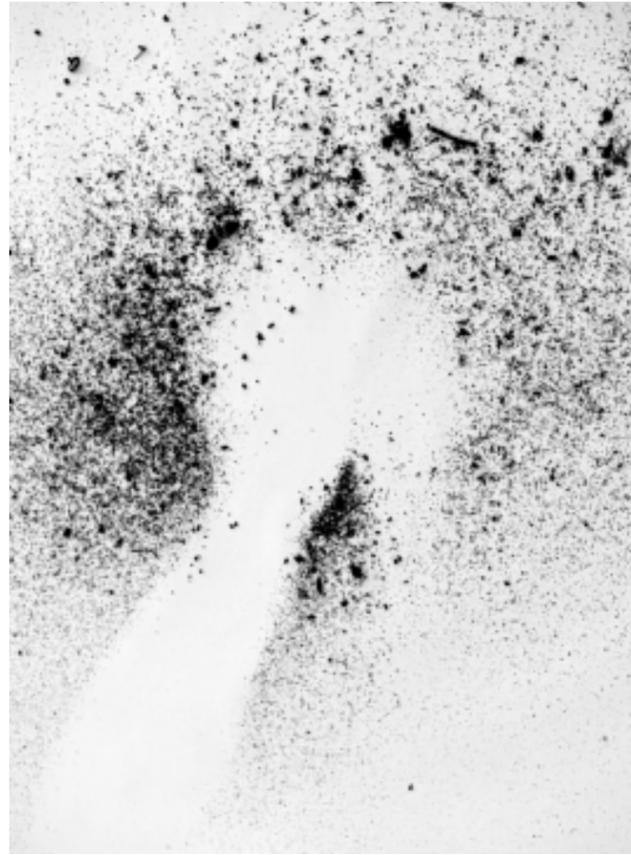
Our bodies are the only vessels we will inhabit in this life. It carries us through our days, yet we so intimately must accept the consequences of time that weather our bodies. The soul cannot live without the body; therefore, are we irrevocably bound to our physical limits? Are the actions we take limited to the mark we leave on this Earth? Cora Rafe's *Dear Body, Are You Vanities Encasement?* seeks to answer these questions through black and white photographs of dismembered limbs, hands, and feet. The extremities of the body – furthest from heart and mind – entangle themselves into the natural environment. The body returns to Earth as a

primordial sensory experience. Feet seep into the ground, taking root in the dirt, and sprouting grass from between the toes. There is a sense of urgency, as the body melds into the Earth in the darkness of the night – only to be caught, and illuminated by bright light. Hands hold dirt – only to disappear in the next frame, leaving only an outline as a trace. The testing and expositions of body parts reveal Rafe's desire to understand the body, and in turn, understand where the self is contained. In the end, our body is the only permanence we will know. Perhaps there is a bitter-sweetness that as our bodies will inevitably cease to exist, nature will keep space and remember our presence.

Text by Katie Noble









**the
gallery**



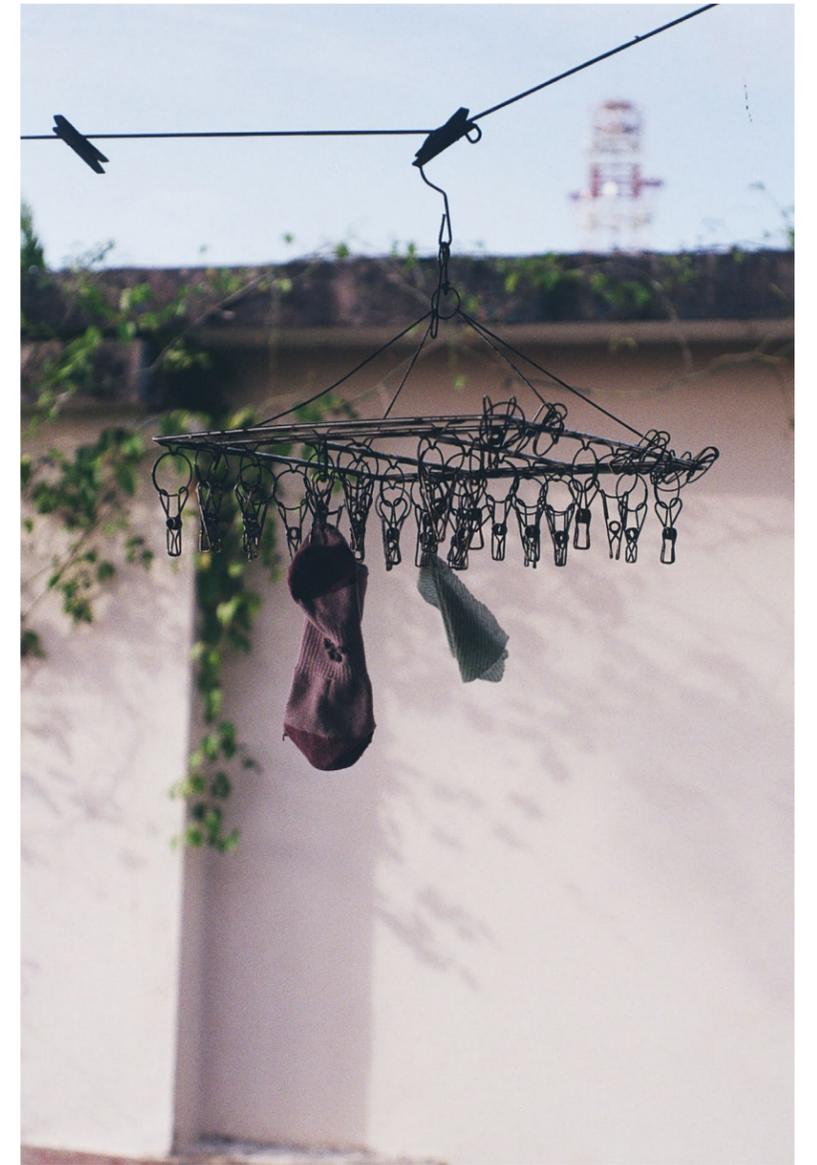
Surface Spill

Pilar Alejandra Paradiso

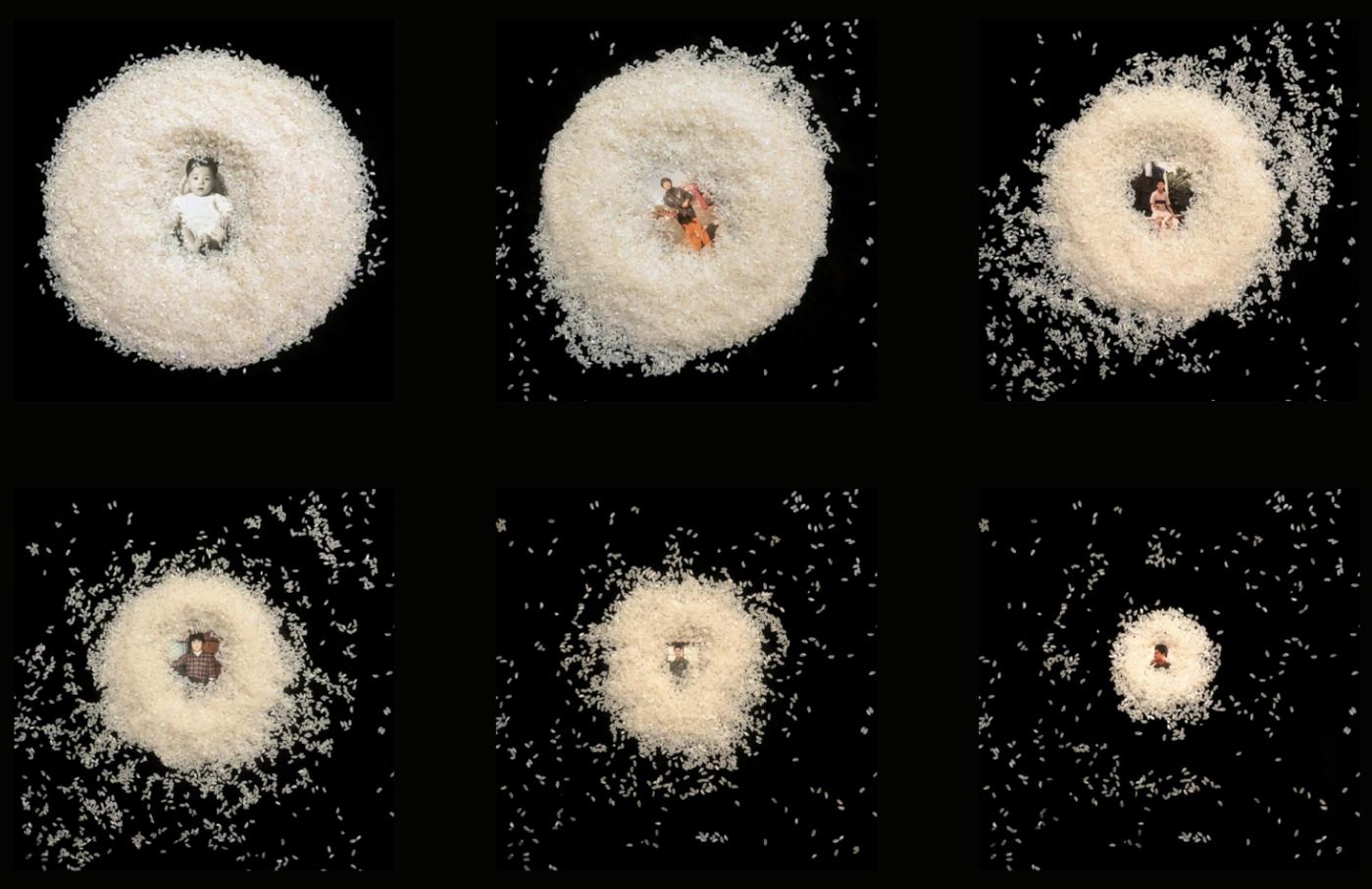
I want to lay,
In a room face up,
With a little
Sliver of light
Coming out from
Under the door.
I don't have anything
Left to give.
My hands these days,
They cup used air.
They cry for greed.







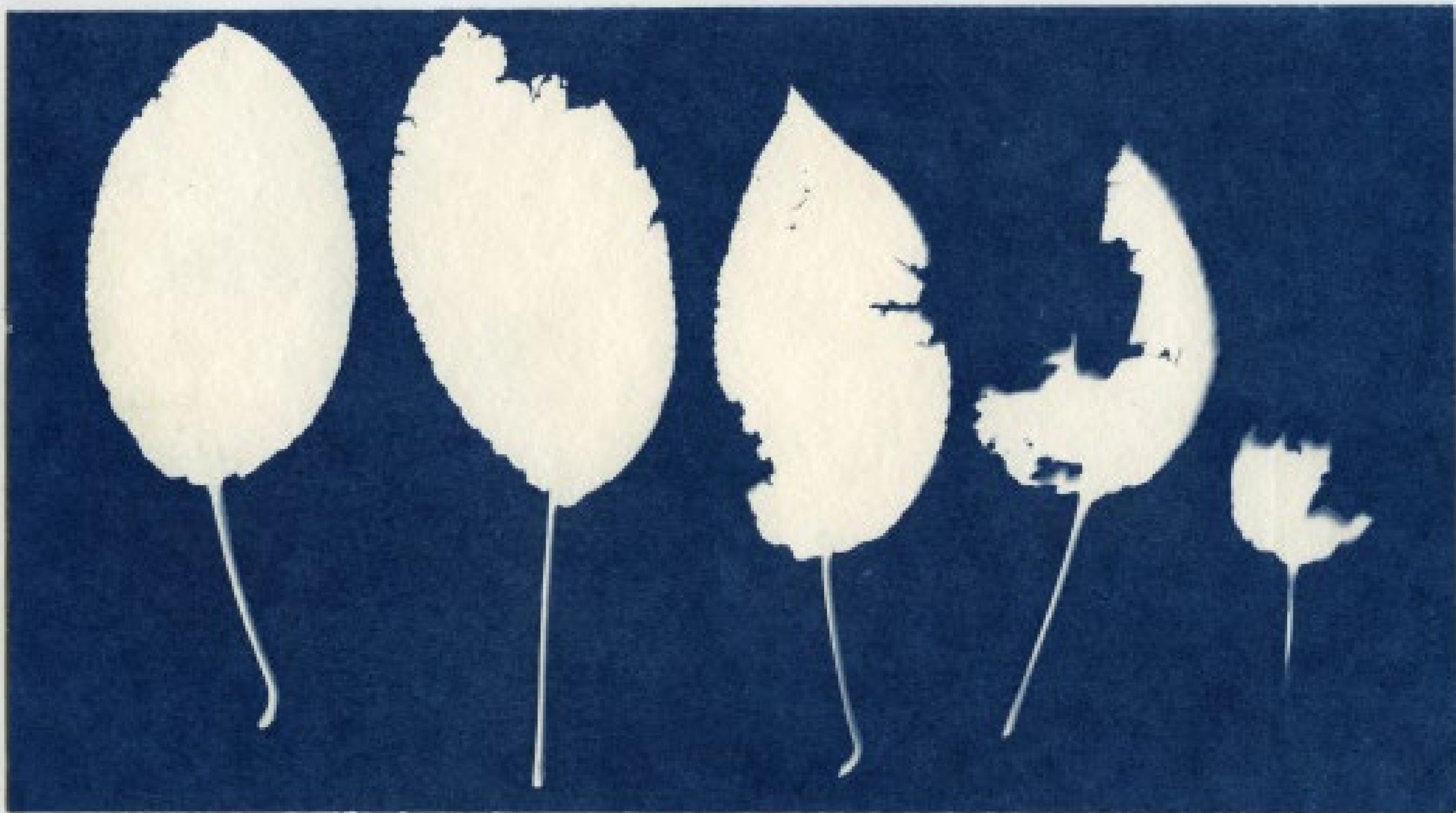












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Cora Rafe
Gavin Elian Ben Rodriguez
Liz Speiser
Tony Wang

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