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NICK GENTRY

SEO YOUNG-DEOK

HUMAN CONNECTION



OPERA GALLERY

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## Preface

Opera Gallery London is proud to present *Human Connection*, a joint exhibition featuring the London based painter Nick Gentry and the South Korean sculptor Seo Young-Deok, exhibited for the first time together. Both born in the 1980s, these two emergent artists construct fascinating portraits of anonymous individuals searching for identity in a world destabilised by increasingly relentless technological progress.

Nick Gentry and Seo Young-Deok utilise unusual, recycled materials to create their artworks. Gentry paints enigmatic portraits on floppy disks, VHS cassettes, film negatives and fragmented CD-ROMs that contain people's memories and data. In Seoul, on the other side of the globe, Seo renders large-scale sculptures of the human figure from bicycle chains. This material is emblematic of the contrasting feelings of empowerment and alienation people often experience in industrialised, modern East Asian cities

The faces that Gentry portrays are idealised, yet they express a certain degree of anxiety and discomfort in their faultlessness. They appear harmonious, yet simultaneously distant and silent. Are they human or are they robot? Are they celebrities of the digital age or characters trapped as fictitious online personae? They appear as higher beings, perhaps perfected by plastic surgery or by genetic manipulation. Likewise, Seo's sculptures magnificently reinterpret classical beauty with impressive reimaginations of the ideal human body. They can however, upon second thought and closer inspection, appear to be empty shells, soulless beings residing in an existential vacuum. Are these sculptures human or are they machine? Are these indestructible persons, living in an ever-expanding metropolis? Or are they held captive in an industrial reality of their own making?

Opera Gallery is delighted to show these two young artists who explore the challenges and the opportunities which contemporary mankind faces in the industrial and digital world of the present. Gentry connects people from all over the globe by visualising a collective human identity through his painting, whilst Seo reaches out to reconnect us to one another through his intricate weaving of chains. Despite geographical and cultural boundaries, Nick Gentry and Seo Young-Deok seem to find remedy, or at least relief from the adversities of our fast paced world in the value of social relationships. Comfort in the power of human connection.

Gilles Dyan  
Chairman and Founder of Opera Gallery Group

Sébastien Plantin  
Director Opera Gallery London





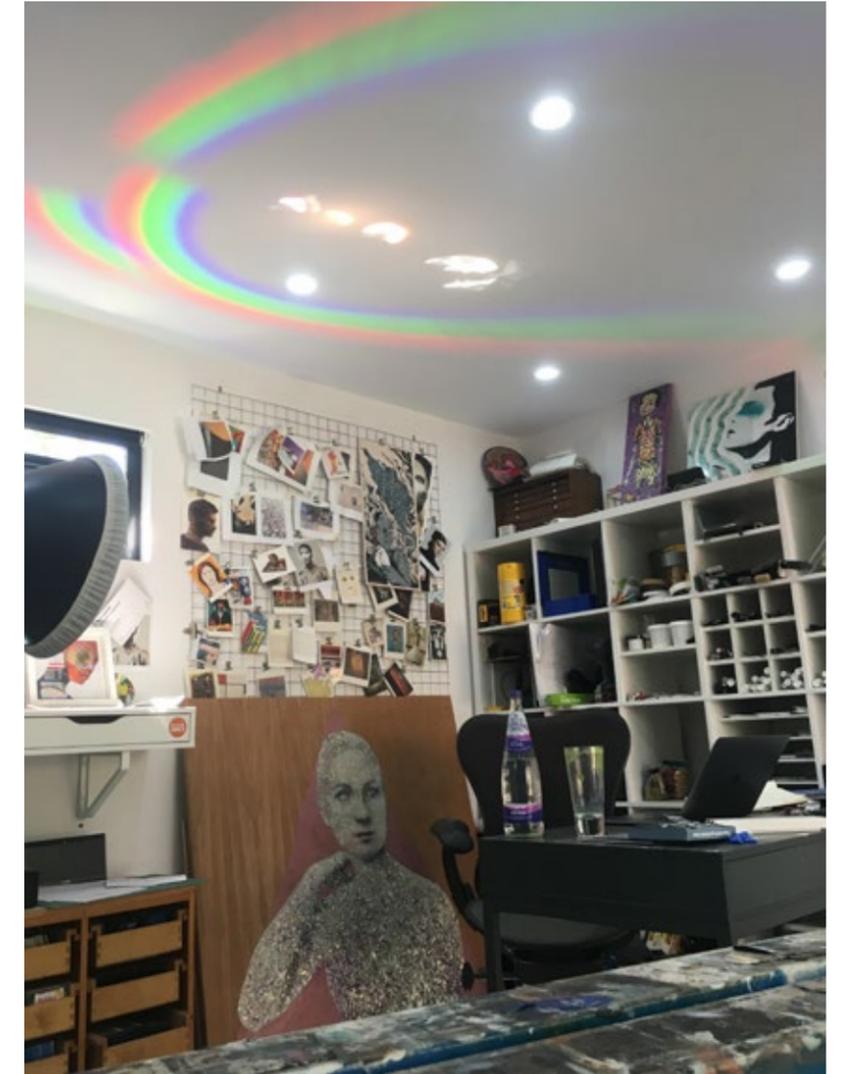
### Nick Gentry (b. 1980)

Nick Gentry is a British artist.

Drawing upon recycled and obsolete technological materials as the grounds for his paintings, London-based artist Gentry creates a conversation between digital and analogue processes. Gentry constructs his painting supports out of materials such as compact disks, film negatives, X-rays, VHS cassettes and floppy disks. These are displayed as preserved artefacts or conversely as nebulous blends of deconstructed data dust.

The materials are contributed directly by members of the public in a collaborative 'social art' project. The rigorous conceptual basis of this work explores the notion of collective identity. His portraits and installations treat the human form not simply as the subject in itself, but as the vehicle to carry the medium.





Nick Gentry's studio, 2018

*Guess Who*, 2018  
Oil paint & used computer disks on wood  
169 x 99 cm - 66.5 x 39 in



*Universal*, 2018  
Crushed CDs, graphite & resin on rusted steel panel  
122 x 108 cm - 48 x 42.5 in





*Futureproof*, 2018  
Crushed CDs, oil paint, graphite, resin & sand on wood  
96 x 88 cm - 37.8 x 34.6 in

*The Survivors*, 2018  
Oil paint on rusted steel panel  
122 x 197 cm - 48 x 77.6 in





*Being 1*, 2018  
Crushed CDs, graphite & resin on rusted steel panel  
108 x 108 cm - 42.5 x 42.5 in



*Devious Designs*, 2018  
Oil paint & used computer disks on wood  
75 x 72 cm - 29.5 x 28.3 in

*Life Model*, 2018  
Crushed CDs, graphite & resin on aluminium panel  
148 x 100 cm - 58.3 x 39.4 in



Combination 1, 2018  
Oil paint & used computer disks on wood  
75 x 117 cm - 29.5 x 46.1 in



*Flame*, 2018  
Crushed CDs, oil paint, graphite, resin & sand on wood  
118 x 122 cm - 46.5 x 48 in



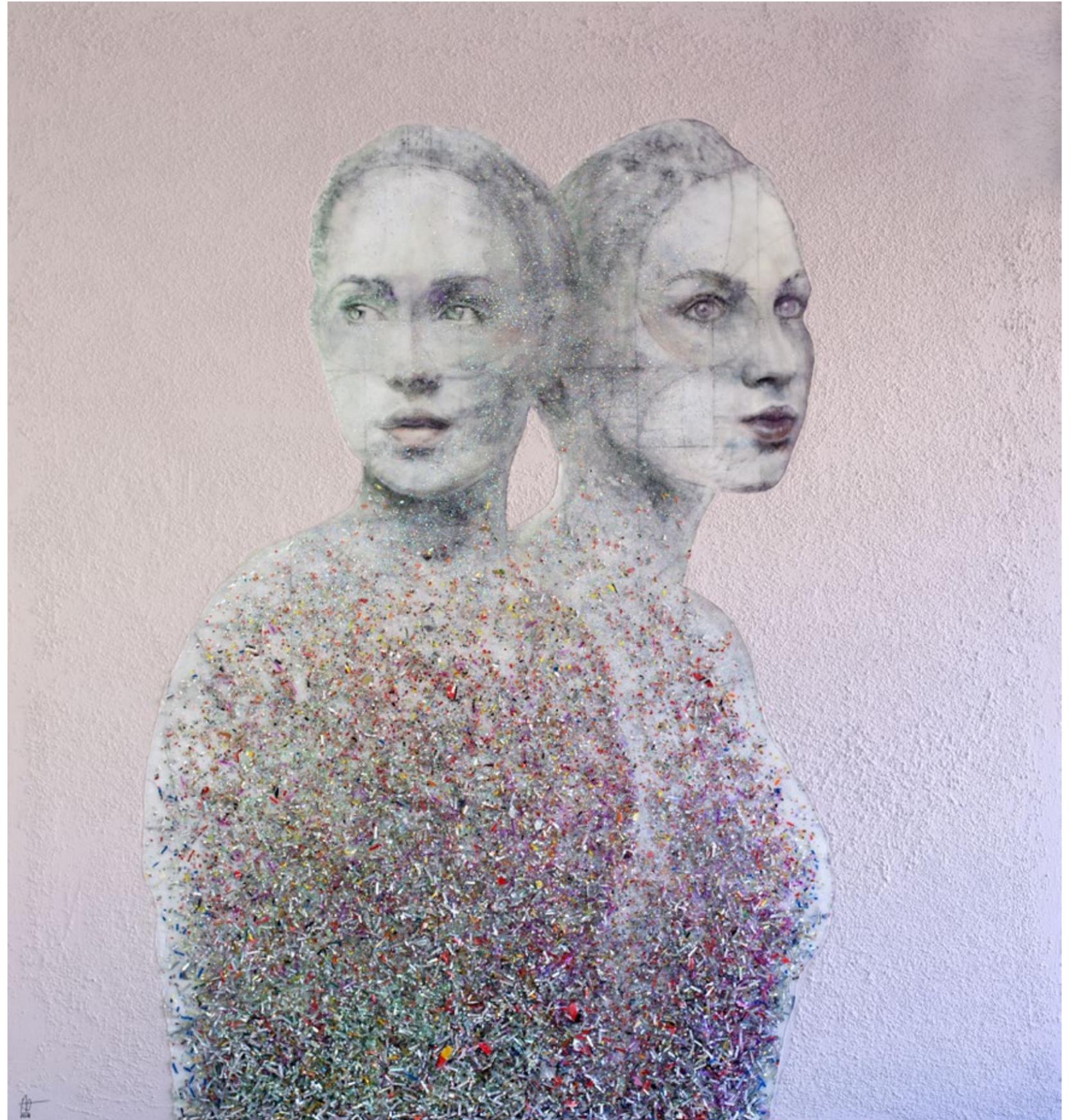


*Icon*, 2018  
Oil paint & used computer disks on wood  
103 x 72 cm - 40.6 x 28.3 in



*Solitude*, 2015  
Film negatives, x-rays, resin & copper in LED lightbox  
80 x 80 cm - 31.5 x 31.5 in

*Lifelike*, 2018  
Crushed CDs, oil paint, graphite, resin & sand on wood  
188 x 178 cm - 74 x 70.1 in





*Profile Number 16, 2018*  
Oil paint & used computer disks on wood  
169 x 99 cm - 66.5 x 39 in

*Being 2*, 2018  
Crushed CDs, oil paint, graphite, resin & mixed metals on wood  
180 x 122 cm - 70.9 x 48 in





## Seo Young-Deok (b. 1983)

Seo Young-Deok is a Korean artist.

A graduate of the department of Environmental Sculpture at the University of Seoul, Seo gained prominence through his sculptural exploration of the human form through unconventional materials such as the metal chain, a material that has been critical to the development of the modern world and Korea's manufacturing industry.

Inspired by his own rural upbringing in contrast to his urban adult life, Seo Young-Deok's use of chains questions the industrialisation of labour that has become synonymous with today's human condition. Each iron piece is welded together to become a part of the dynamic system of organic connectivity exhibited under human figures. While the material may be physically strong, its structural completeness is what exudes strength of the human spirit. By constantly weighting the dichotomy between 'complete' and 'incomplete' existence, Seo Young-Deok addresses the inevitable social inequalities of the industrial system.





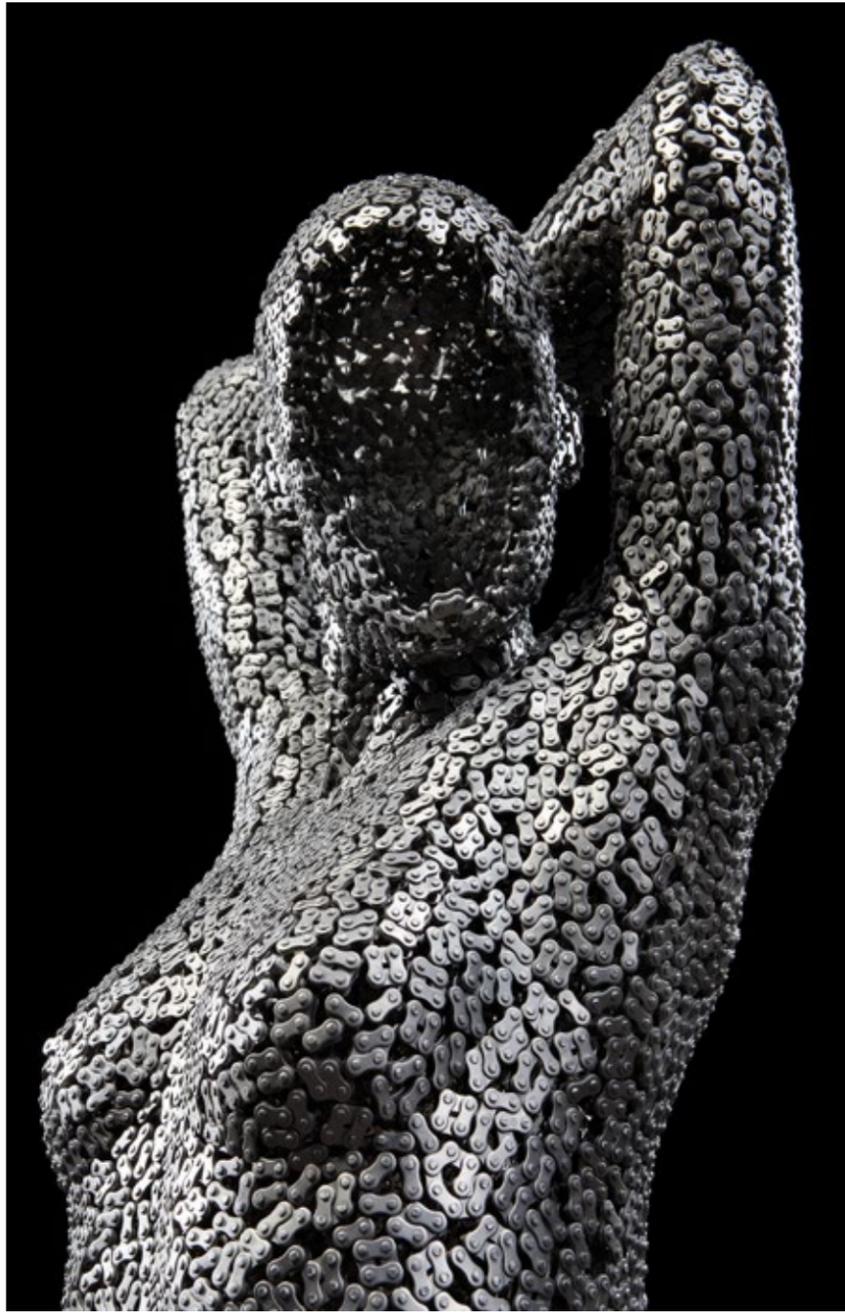
Seo Young-Deok working in his studio



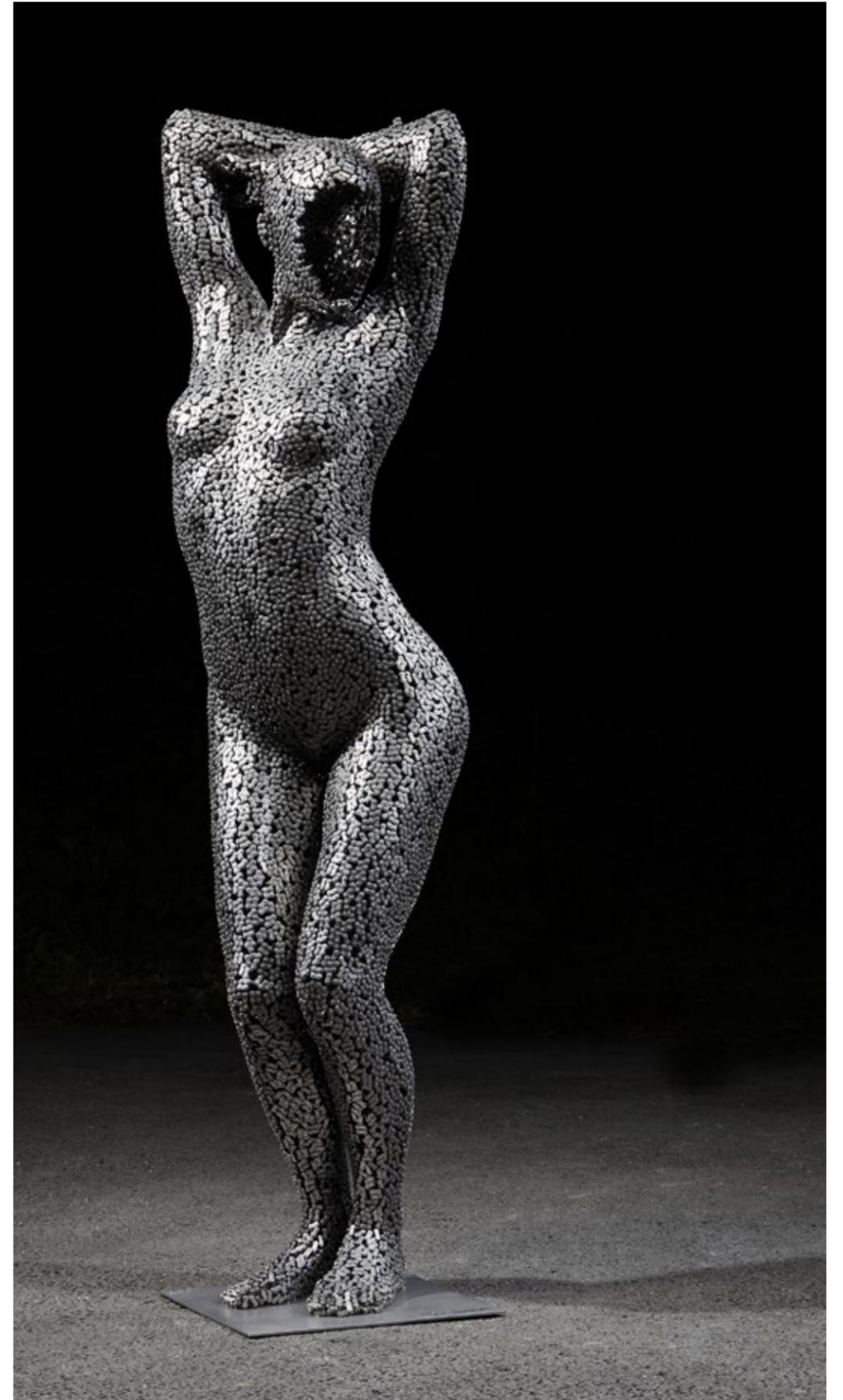
*Meditation 17*, 2015  
Iron chain, edition of 8  
90 x 110 x 90 cm - 35.4 x 43.3 x 35.4 in



*Nirvana 4*, 2010  
Iron chain, edition of 8  
80 x 60 x 37 cm - 31.5 x 24.8 x 14.6 in



*Nirvana 355*, 2015  
Stainless chain, edition of 8  
180 x 40 x 45 cm - 70.9 x 15.7 x 17.7 in



*Meditation 210*, 2016  
Stainless chain, edition of 8  
95 x 77 x 71cm - 37.4 x 30.3 x 28 in

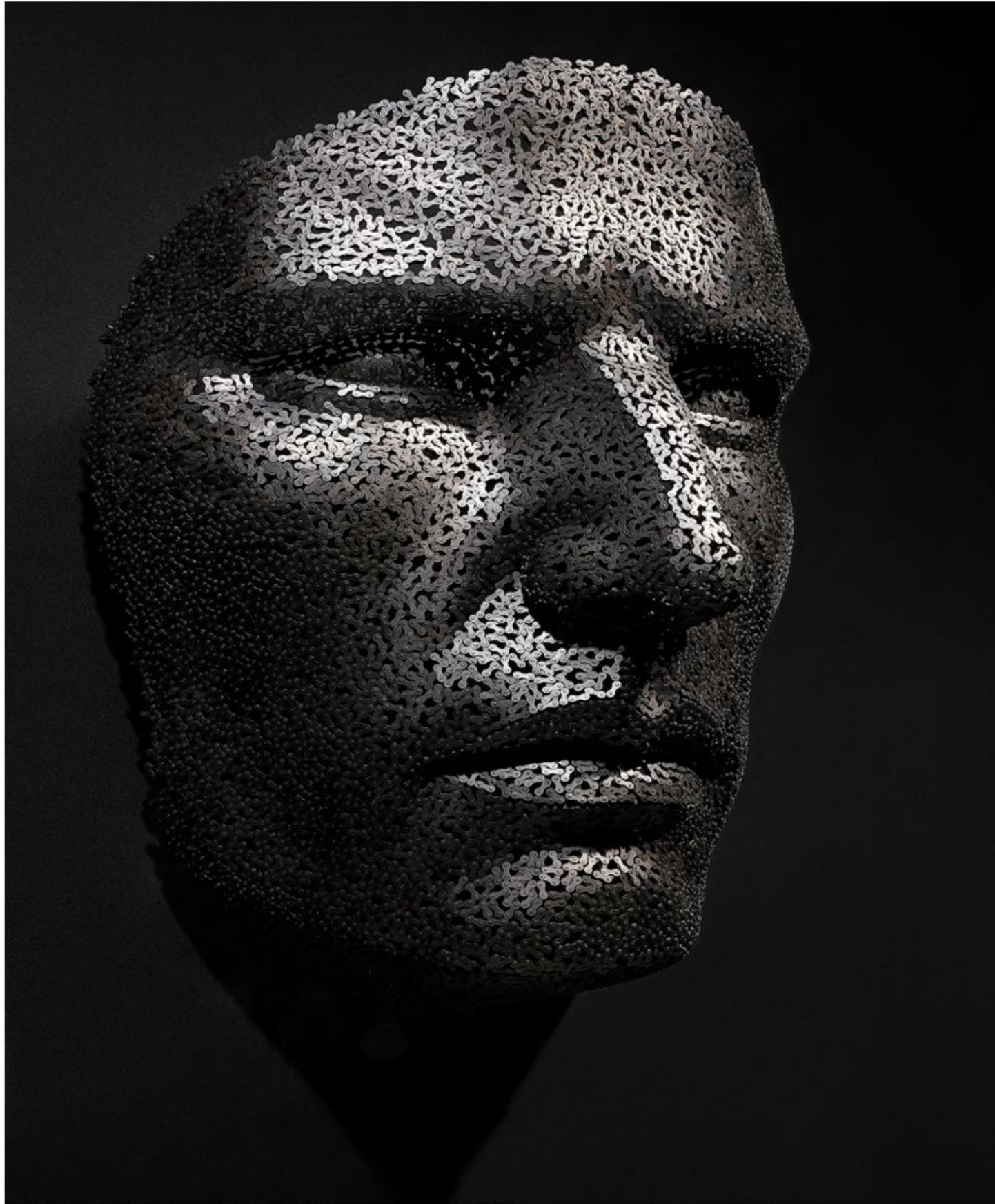


*Anguish 12*, 2013  
Iron chain, edition of 8  
85 x 75 x 75 cm - 33.5 x 29.5 x 29.5 in



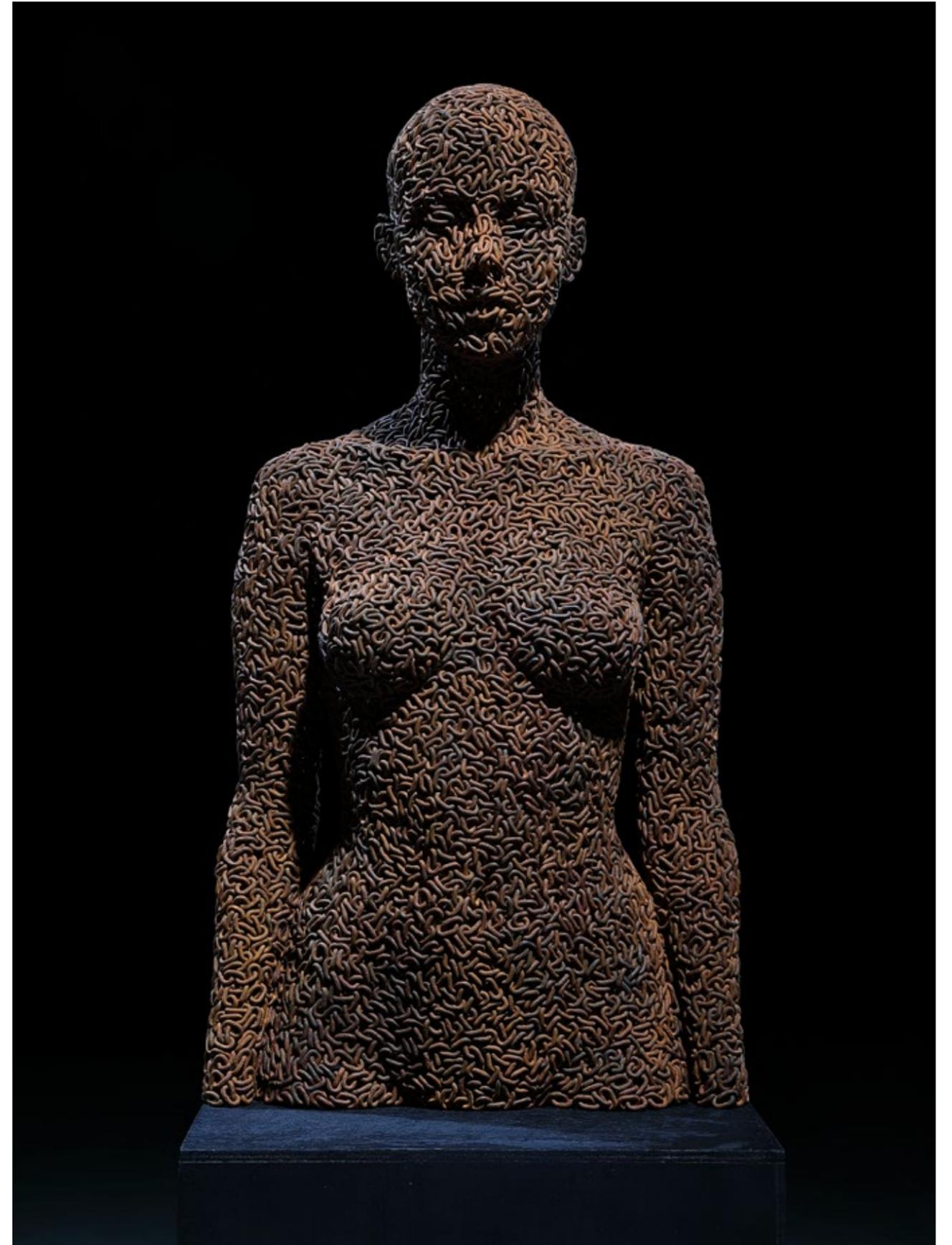


*Anguish 17*, 2013  
Iron chain, edition of 8  
170 x 40 x 40 cm - 66.9 x 15.7 x 15.7 in



*Meditation 187, 2018*  
Iron chain, edition of 10  
110 x 84 x 50 cm - 43.3 x 35.4 x 35.4 in

*Meditation 97*, 2018  
Rusted iron chain, edition of 10  
88 x 46 x 30 cm - 34.6 x 18.1 x 11.8 in





*Meditation 285*, 2018  
Rusted iron chain, edition of 10  
85 x 164 x 50 cm - 33.5 x 64.6 x 19.7 in

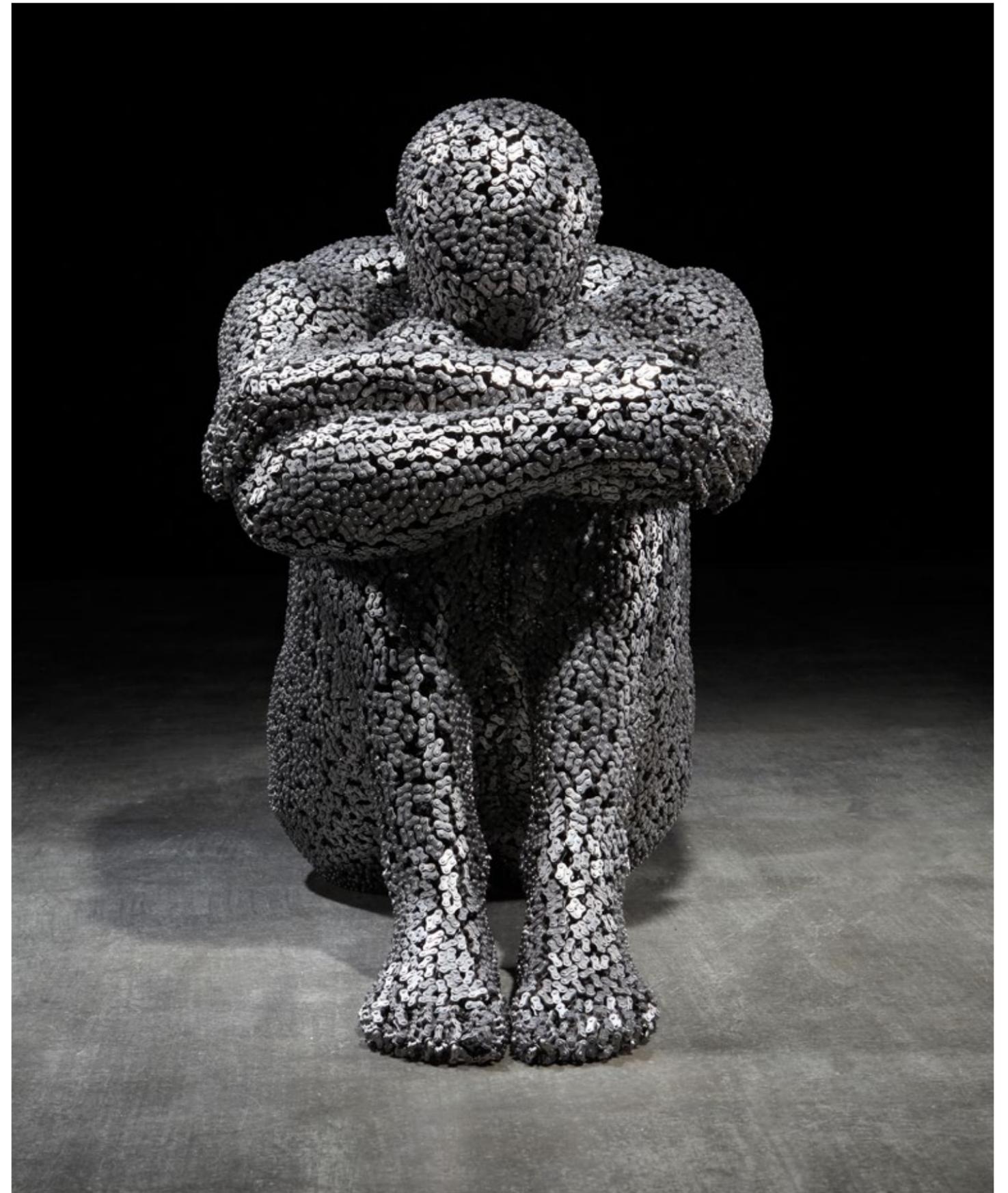
*Meditation 975*, 2016  
Rusted iron chain, edition of 8  
275 x 225 x 130 cm - 108.3 x 88.6 x 51.2 in



*Anguish 22*, 2015  
Iron chain, edition of 8  
40 x 120 x 80 cm - 15.7 x 47.2 x 31.5 in

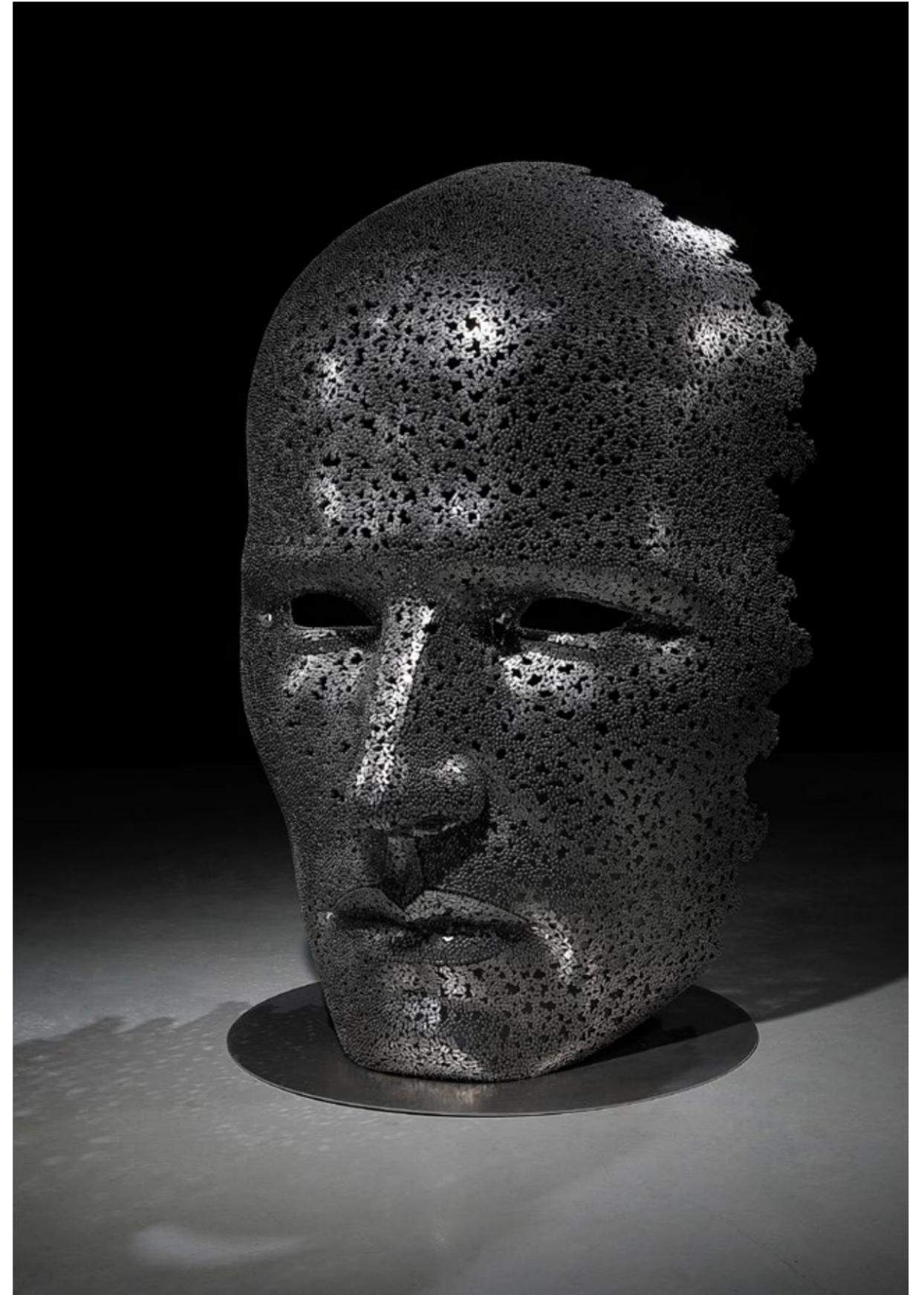


*Anguish 385*, 2016  
Stainless chain, edition of 8  
84 x 60 x 101 - 33.1 x 23.6 x 39.8 in





*Meditation 626*, 2018  
Stainless chain, edition of 10  
200 x 135 x 120 cm - 78.7 x 53.1 x 47.2 in



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