



AS A MATTER OF ILLUSION
A SHOW ON LIGHT AND TECHNOLOGY

OPERA GALLERY

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Preface

Technology has taken mankind by a blast in the past years, and art was surely not left behind. It ventured far from bare representation, far from a simple brush and a white canvas, to intrigue not only artists, but all art enthusiasts across the globe.

Assisted by the development of modern materials and technology, artists now have a plethora of choices to concoct their creative output. They have the possibility to not only paint, sculpt and glue, but to experiment with materials that were once so far from the art world.

Opera Gallery Beirut is delighted to present *As a Matter of Illusion*, a collective exhibition celebrating 11 contemporary artists who bring before our eyes new perspectives and unconventional ways in understanding how dimensions, light and medium can be comprehended and rendered.

Some of the featured artists chose to manifest their interest in light from within, dealing with words or figurative images, whilst others marked their work through shedding the light onto the artwork itself.

The *enfant terrible* of her generation, Tracey Emin is one of the first to come to mind. The incandescence of neon gathers the sensation of intimacy and humour under her hands. There is something quirky about it; the artwork develops a personality of its own.

Emmanuelle Rybojad, takes us on a journey into a world of illusion. In her Paris studio, she plays with unconventional supports and pushes them beyond their basic use. Mosaics with Rubik's cubes, infinity neon diamonds, geometric shapes put into perspective by an assembly of mirrors invite the viewer to be captured by what one sees and perceives.

Korean artist Son Bong-Chae displays an Eastern aesthetic through the modernity of the materials he employs. Literati art style inspired landscapes and trees are dotted with new colours and depth in his work.

Fred Eerdekens' copper lettering inspires the meditative feeling of tranquility. He uses shadow and light as ink and paper; his approach to light and light source is very different, but the rendering would not be complete without it. We find this same quality in the work of Chris Wood who uses dichroic glass to breathe colour into her installations. She orders the accidental and makes us reflect on the experience of seeing.

Diving deeper into the realm of more familiar objects, Gregory Emvy combines the canvas with light; the outcome is a chimeric mix of painting and bright neon.

Noart's installations bring Jules Verne to the 21st century. The regular lines and shiny aluminium surfaces embody the same kind of wonder facing the infinite possibilities made real by technology.

His fellow countryman Pascal Haudressy is known for his sculptures and video installations that investigate the "link between the remote past and the future, and between science and myth", as he has said. Across media, his works are eerie and meditative, playing with light, shadow, and movement, and merging virtual and physical space.

British artist Nick Gentry does just the opposite. His touch is that of the alchemist who finds pleasure in breaking down the impersonal and morph obsolete and outdated objects into something alive.

Still, some question material itself. Umberto Ciceri brings the uncanny lenticular work to a grand scale. Visual illusion becomes the centerpiece of one's attention.

This distinctive selection of artists from around the globe helped us grasp what art is and can become in this new era of creation. Opera Gallery Beirut is glad to present to you these discovered gems and hopes you will enjoy this exhibition as much as we have during the whole process of finding, curating, and bringing to you the final hybrid yet completely one of a kind experience.

Gilles Dyan
Chairman & Founder
Opera Gallery Group

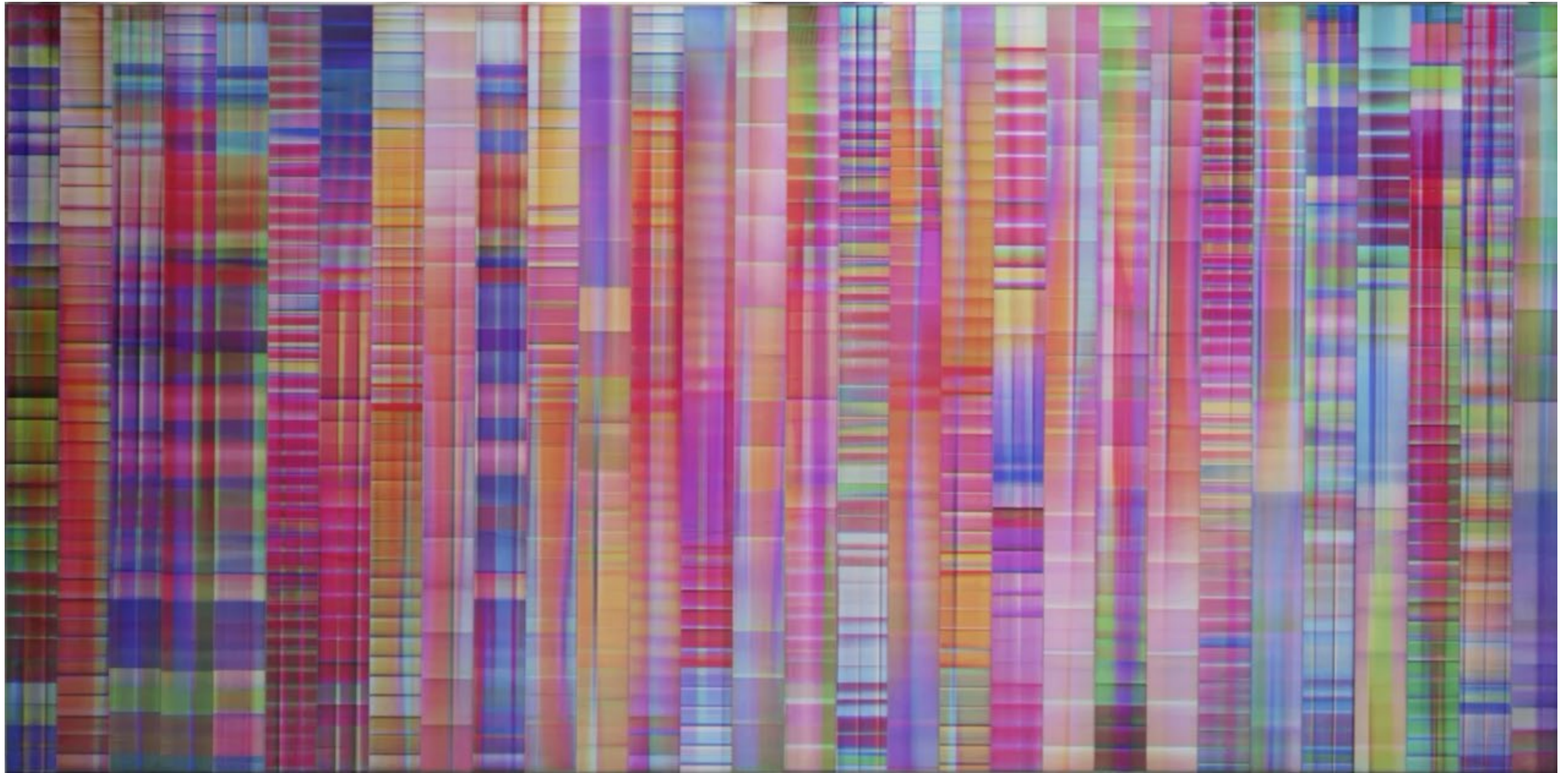
Salwa Chalhoub
Director
Opera Gallery Beirut



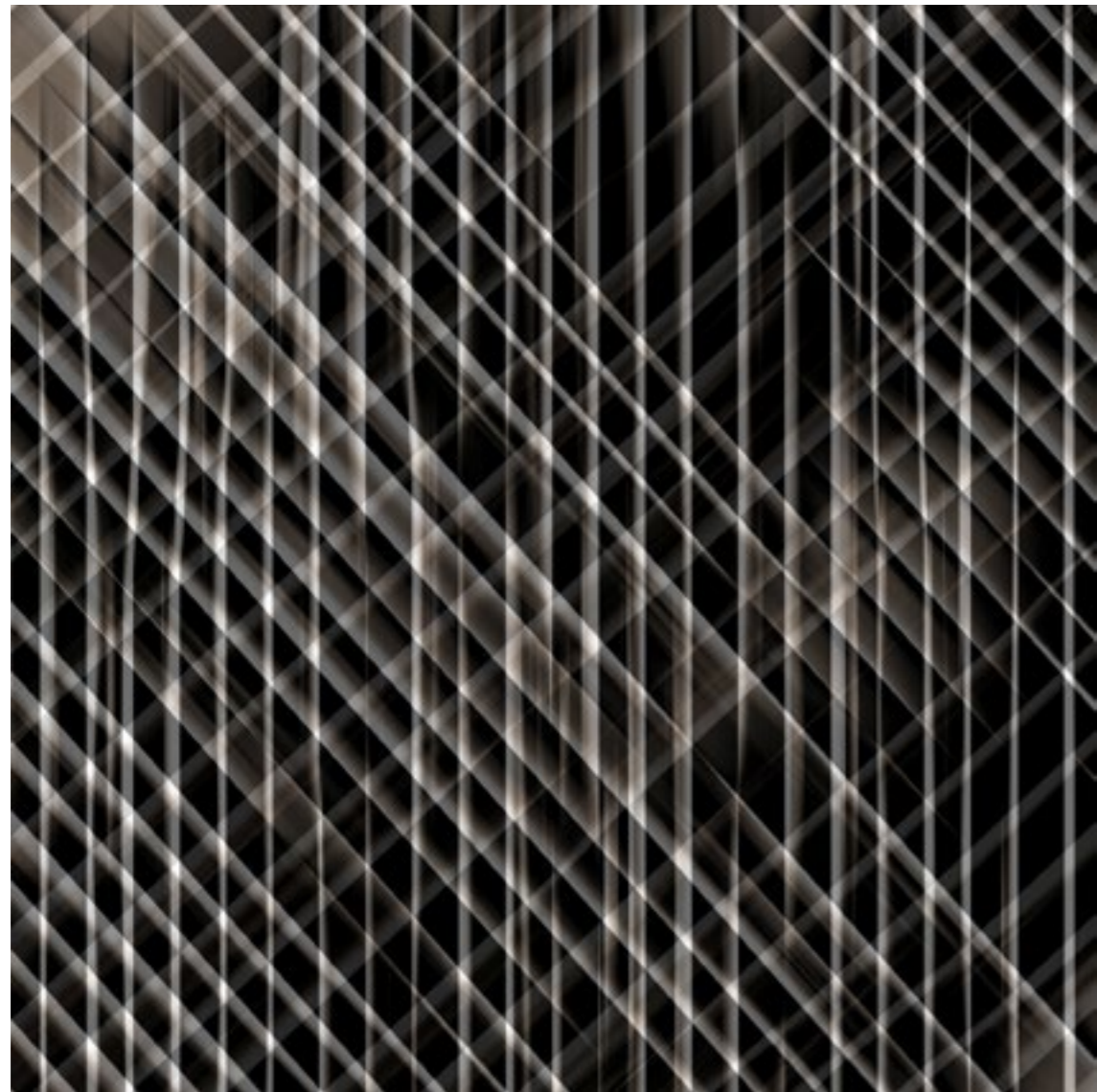
Umberto Ciceri

b. 1961

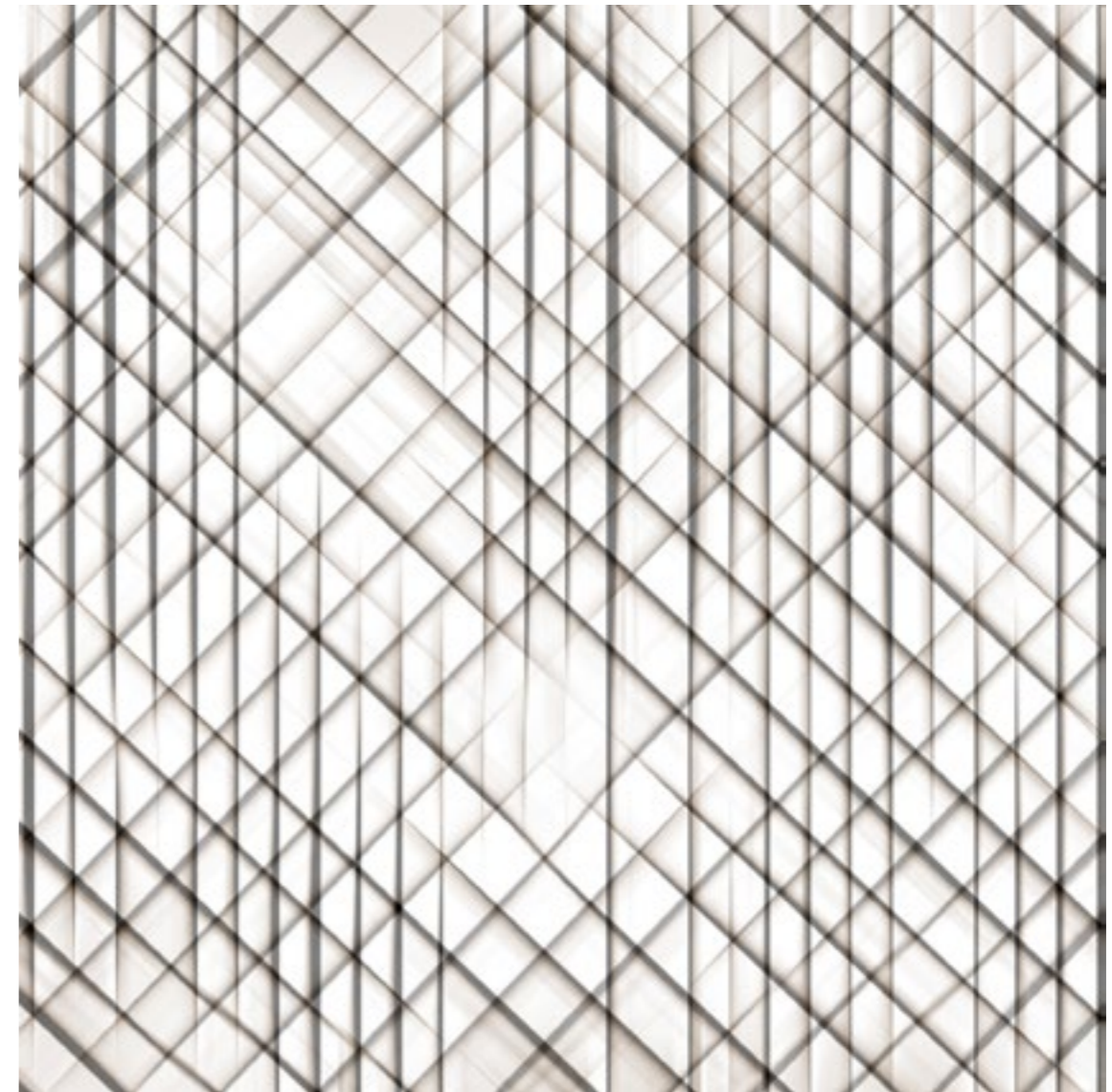
Ciceri was born in 1961 in Milan, Italy. He studied at the Academy of Art and Fashion and at the Textile Design University in Milan. He currently lives and works in Barcelona, Spain. In 2007, after twenty-five years of personal research into the visual arts, neurophysiology, ocular biology and colour chemistry, Ciceri made his debut into the art world. He produces kinetic lenticular artworks. The movement of the observer's body induces the movement of the image, and perception becomes an act where the eye and the brain coordinate with body motion. Ever changing circumstances regulate the uniqueness of the visual experience. Umberto Ciceri's personal blurring technique is the result of painstaking practice of breaking down the focus of the images and then putting it back together in elementary colour patterns resulting in hypnotic, highly original works of art.



Cut Series n° 683, 2014
Handmade lenticular
110 x 210 cm - 43.3 x 82.7 in



Shift n° 1109, 2016
Handmade lenticular
110 x 110 cm - 43.3 x 43.3 in



Shift n° 1112, 2016
Handmade lenticular
110 x 110 cm - 43.3 x 43.3 in

Fighters n° 1171, 2017
Handmade lenticular
170 x 110 cm - 66.9 x 43.3 in

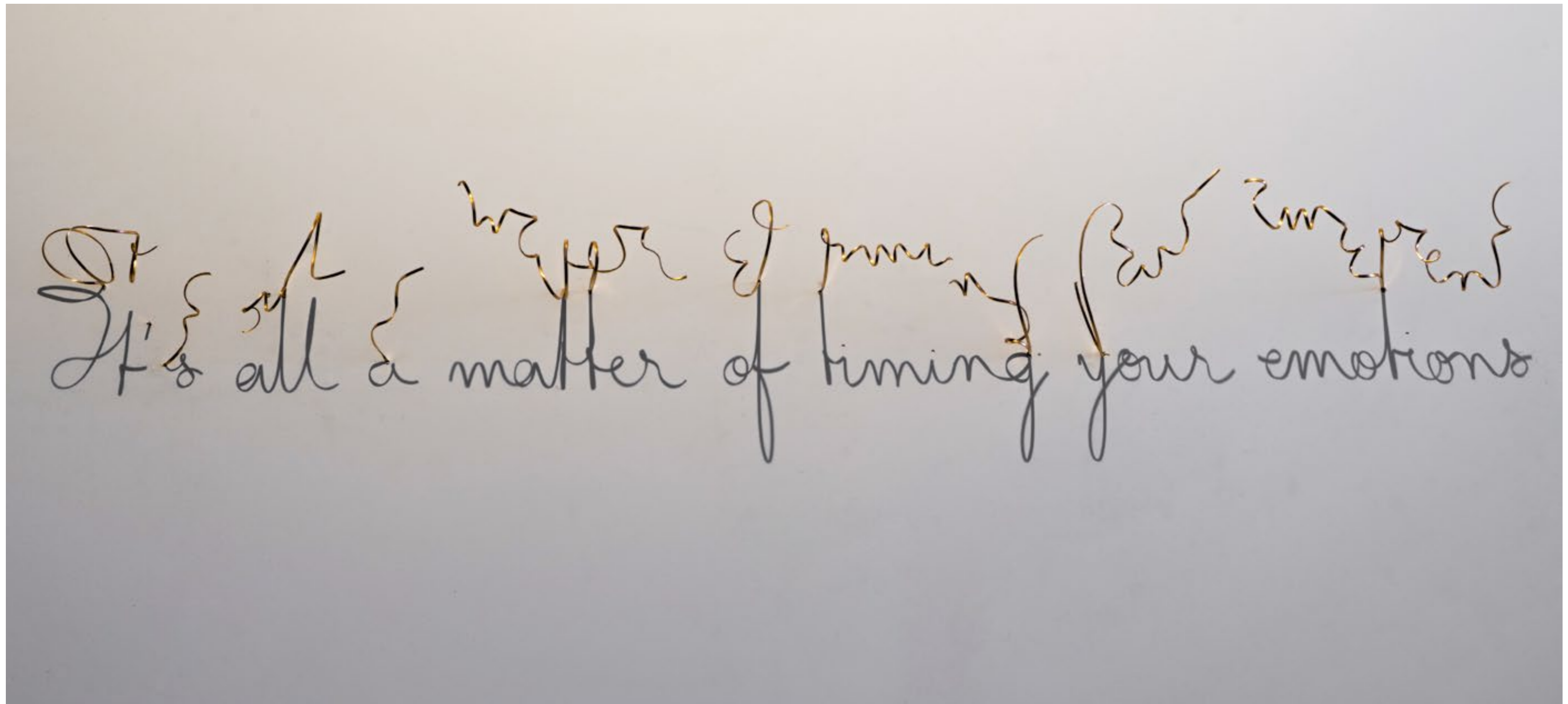




Fred Eerdekens

b. 1951

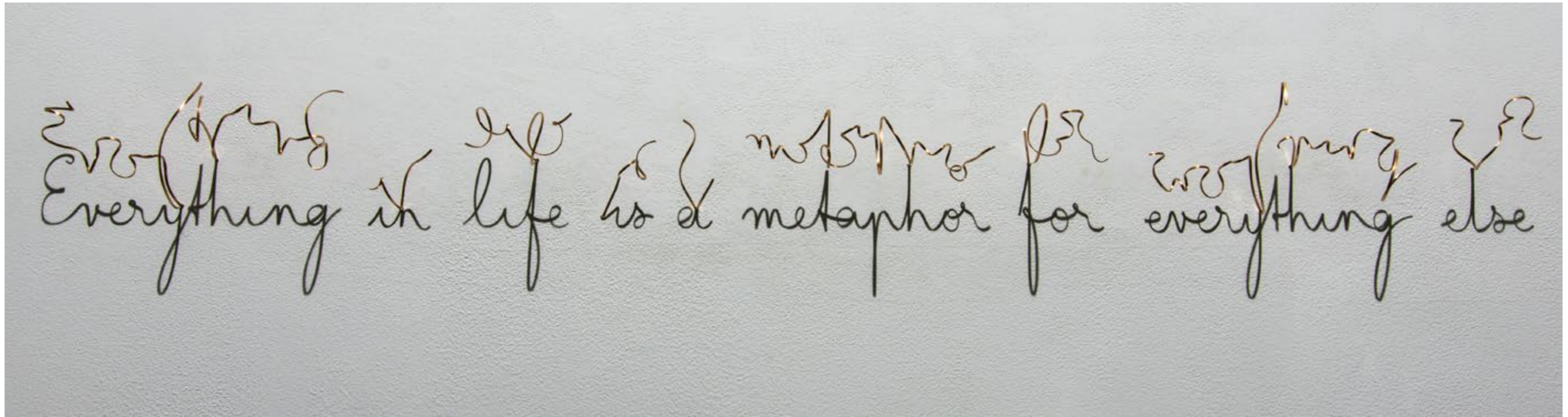
Sculptor Fred Eerdekens is one of Belgium's most celebrated contemporary artists, particularly known for his unique way of manipulating form, language and light. The artist does not sculpt letters, but abstract undulating or angular forms that, once under the light, reveal a word or a sentence. He uses shadow and light as ink and paper. His work is composed of a single word or a short sentence, of which the meaning spreads in the space surrounding the object. Although his sculptures are often made of copper or aluminium, the artist never restrains himself to just those mediums. Eerdekens' works have been exhibited in numerous solo and group shows throughout Europe, in the United States and Asia and in private and public institutions such as the Musée d'Art Moderne in Brussels, the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, the Courtauld Institute of Art in London and more. His work is also part of many prestigious private and public collections worldwide.



It's all a matter of timing your emotions, 2018

Copper, light source

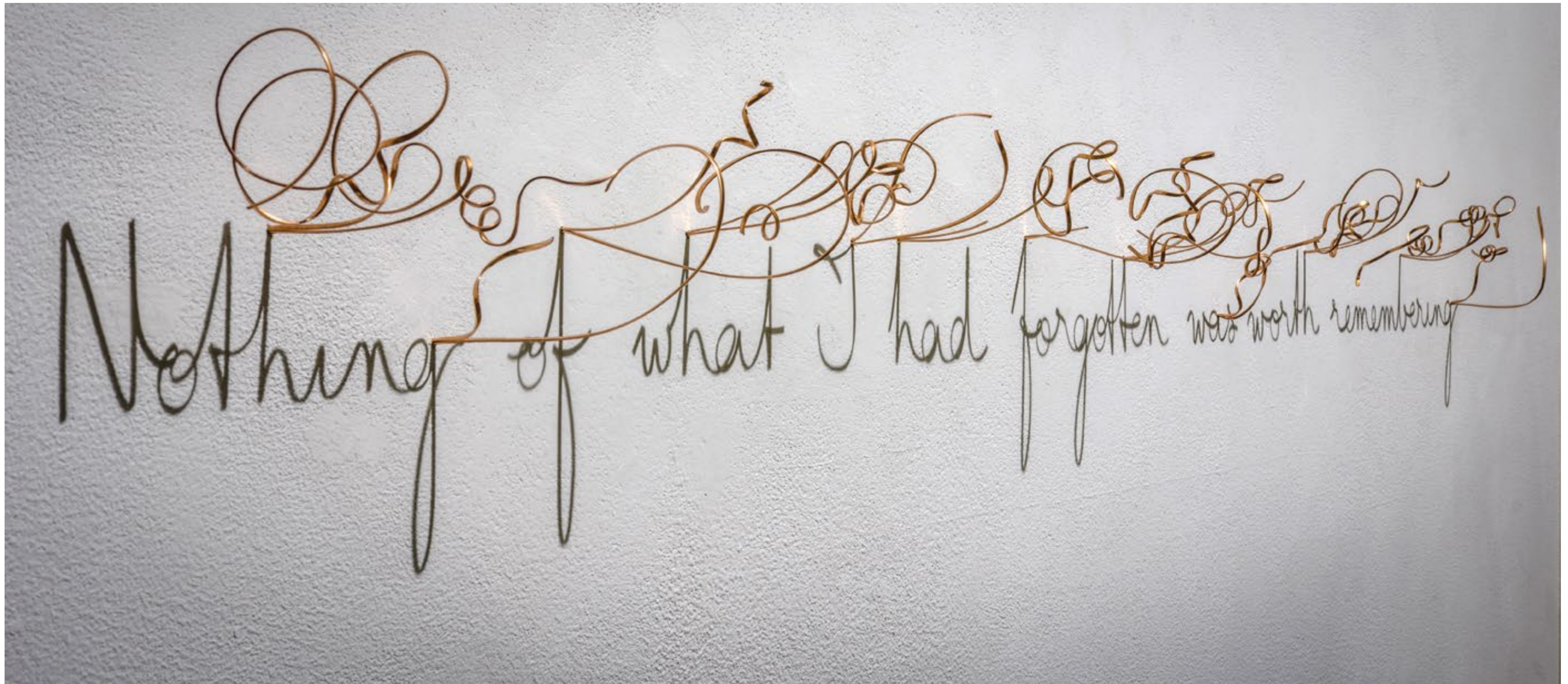
15 x 120 x 15 cm - 5.9 x 47.2 x 5.9 in



Everything in life is a metaphor for everything else, 2018

Copper, light source

18 x 140 x 14 cm - 7.1 x 55.1 x 5.5 in



Nothing of what I had forgotten was worth remembering, 2018

Copper, light source

18 x 144 x 14 cm - 7.1 x 56.7 x 5.5 in



Tracey Emin

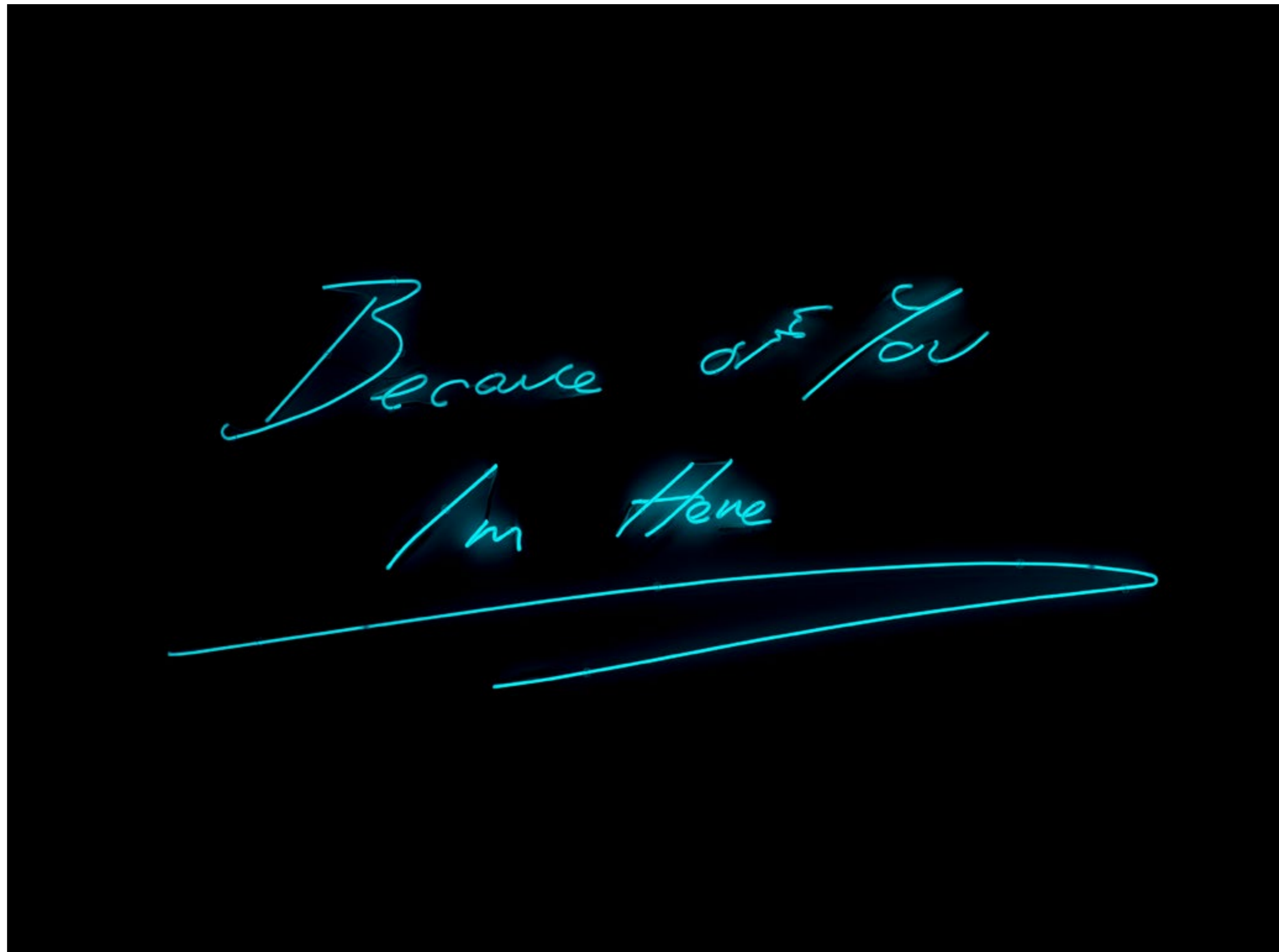
b. 1963

Tracey Emin is a British artist who emerged in the 1980s, during the Young British Artists movement. After a troubled childhood and adolescence, she studied fashion, art and philosophy. She is known for her autobiographical and confessional artwork. The artist produces in a variety of media such drawing, painting, sculpture, film, photography, neon text and more. She is noted for her provocative and controversial artworks, including *Everyone I Have Ever Slept With*, 1963-1995 exhibited at the Royal Academy in London in 1997 and *My Bed*, a 1999 installation work. Her work is intensely intimate and humorous. In 2007, Tracey Emin was chosen to join the Royal Academy of Arts in London. In the same year, she was also chosen to produce a solo show to represent the UK at the 52nd Venice Biennale. She is exhibited at galleries, museums and art fairs extensively worldwide.

Because of you I'm here, 2015

Neon (sea crest)

78 x 191 x 6.5 cm - 30.7 x 75.2 x 2.6 in





Gregory Emyv

b. 1986

Russian-born artist Gregory Emyv works and lives in London and Moscow. Emyv started on the path of pursuing a career in art in his very early childhood. His grandfather was a talented artist, and seeing the boy's apparent inherited talent and interest for painting, Emyv's parents sent him to art school. In 2001 he graduated from Foundation Painting Program Arts School of Nizhny Novgorod at the age of sixteen and in 2004 from Fine Art Program, Arts School of Nizhny Novgorod. At the age of twenty-four, he decided to dedicate himself to painting full-time. Gregory Emyv is part of a new wave of artists emerging from Russia, who step away from politics and the past. He represents the new generation of avant-garde. In October 2014, Gregory had his first art exhibition *Human Souls*, which was a success, was held during the prestigious Frieze Week in London.

Dreaming Away My Life, 2017
Oil on canvas with neon
200 x 150 x 14 cm - 78.7 x 59.1 x 5.5 in





In Love with Life, 2019
Oil on canvas with neon
170 x 130 cm - 66.9 x 51.2 in



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. The artist 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.

Iconic Bionic, 2019

Oil and spray paint on rusted steel panel
mounted on wood

88 x 142 cm - 34.6 x 55.9 in





Combination 2, 2018
Crushed compact disks, oil paint,
graphite, resin and mixed
media on wood
122 x 180 cm - 48 x 70.9 in



Mythic Logic, 2019

Oil and spray paint on rusted steel panel
mounted on wood
108 x 88 cm - 42.5 x 34.7 in



Pascal Haudressy

b. 1968

Through his artistic approach, Pascal Haudressy, a French artist of Tatar origin, aims to build an intimate relationship between content and form. Haudressy's work explores the blank space between painting, sculpture and video. The artist has pioneered a new image format that forensically focuses on the nature of movement, materiality and immateriality, exploring mutations of our world, in which biological and virtual life forms coexist. The screen is as much a veil as a surface where images reveal themselves. In this 'idea-experience', images, shadows, light, surface materials and movement form a continuum where virtual and physical spaces interact and merge. Haudressy is inspired by his ancestral ties to Uzbekistan and notably by the ornamental traditions of Samarkand art. The twists of moving motifs give birth to a flux of images that endlessly reconfigure themselves. Haudressy draws in the calculated qualities of science and the alchemy of myth. His work has notably featured at the Boghossian Foundation in Brussels, Belgium and at the Espace Vuitton in Paris, France.

Shark, 2008

Epoxy and video installation

Edition of 5

165 x 260 x 120 cm - 65 x 102.4 x 47.2 in

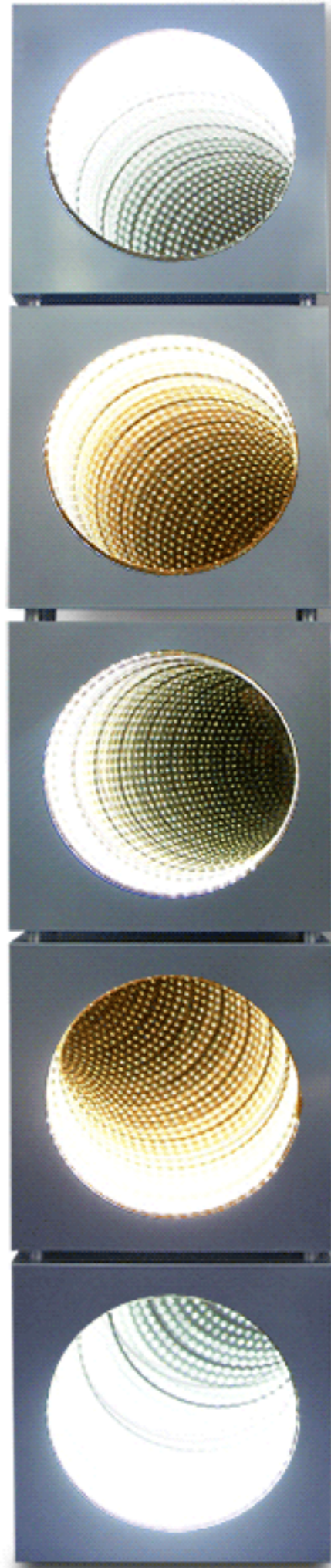




Noart

b. 1965

A true Parisian, born in Paris in 1965, Arnaud Lucet aka Noart has let his imagination run wild through the streets and history of this city. His opus, called No Art, is a nostalgic reverence to Parisian culture and French innovation with a consciousness for the environment, and a touch of humour. His work is based on the recuperation of industrial parts and objects that would otherwise have end up in the refuse heap, takes its original inspiration from Jules Vernes' novel, *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*, and its humour from a Warner Bros cartoon (Wile E. Coyote and the Road Runner), to create one-of-a-kind pieces that have style and story. Decorum, lamps, or furniture pieces... His work is futuristic, nostalgic and tongue-in-cheek all at the same time. From the local water company (which is recurrent in many of his pieces) to the aluminium piping, including the nuts and bolts that hold the city together, his art is a deep homage to his hometown.



Organic Tower, 2016

Aluminium, mirrors and LEDs

Edition of 8

225 x 43 x 21 cm - 88.6 x 16.9 x 8.3 in

Vortex 80 Whirlpool, 2011

Brushed aluminium mounted on wood, mirrors and LED

Edition of 8

80 x 80 cm - 31.5 x 31.5 in





Emmanuelle Rybojad

b. 1991

French visual artist Emmanuelle Rybojad takes us on an exciting journey into the world of illusions. In her studio, inspired by the symbols of OpArt movement and pop culture of the 1970s, she works with various materials: mirrors, neon lights, LED, Plexiglas. She interprets and plays with them to go beyond their basic use - mosaics with Rubik's cubes, infinity neon diamonds, geometric shapes put into perspective by an assembly of mirrors. The work of Emmanuelle Rybojad invites the viewer to be immersed in what one sees and perceives.



Bla-Bla-Bla, 2018

LED, mirror and Plexiglas

Edition of 8

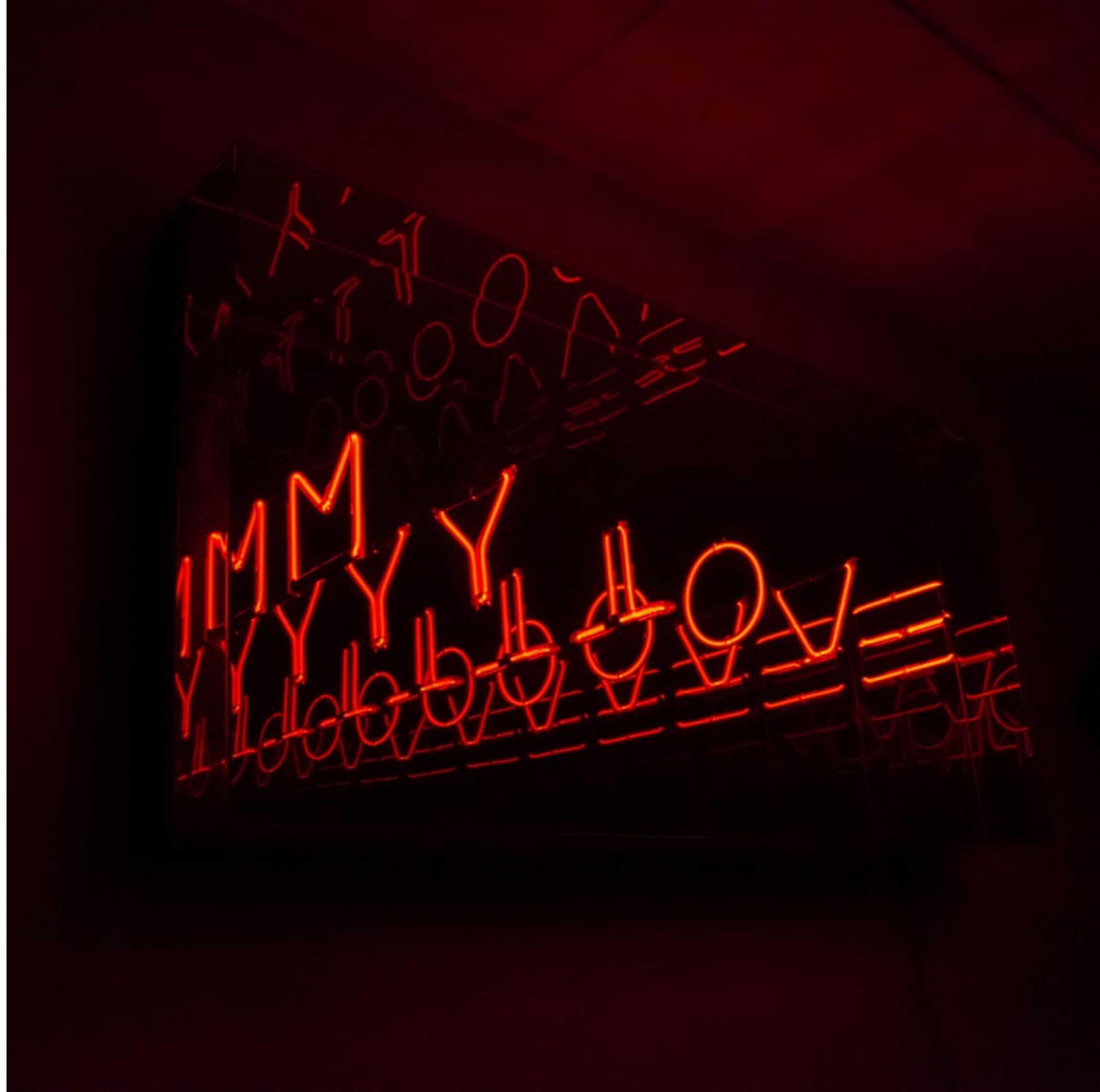
120 x 120 x 11.5 cm - 42.7 x 42.7 x 4.5 in

My Love - Red, 2018

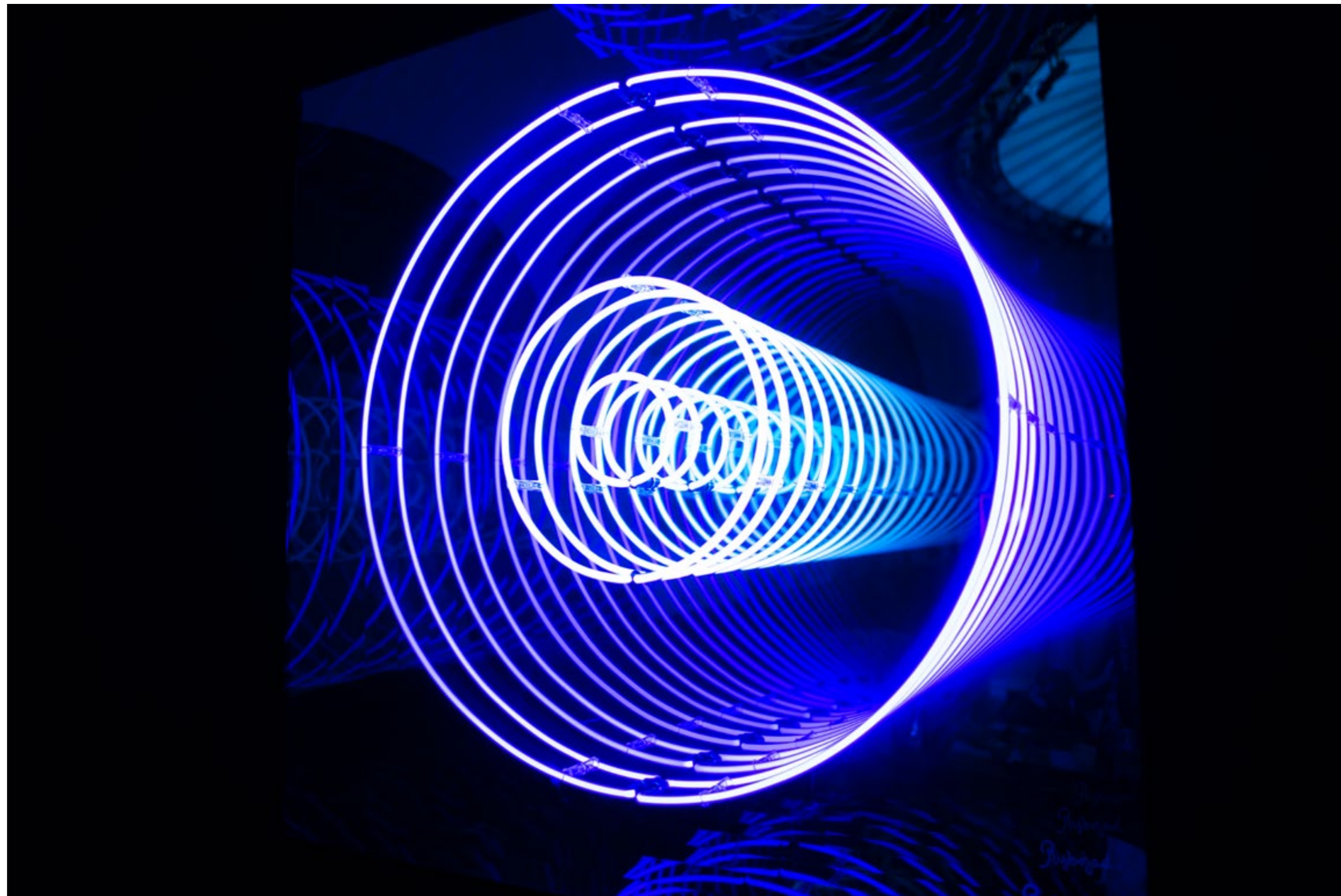
Neon, mirror and Plexiglas

Edition of 8

140 x 70 x 21 cm - 55.1 x 27.6 x 8.3 in



Infinity Eye, 2018
Neon, mirror and Plexiglas
Edition of 8
120 x 120 x 18.5 cm
47.2 x 47.2 x 7.3 in





Amin Sammakieh

b. 1972

Amin Sammakieh is a Lebanese and British visual artist. He started his career in broadcast TV with Showtime, BBC and MBC. Later, he founded Plan A in 2008, which is focused on experience design using techniques such as 3D mapping projection and LED content design. The artist's biggest projects to date include the *We Dream Lebanon* multimedia show and a permanent installation of the LED ceiling at Cinema City Beirut Souks. His most recent 3D mapping projects include *Dessine moi un cèdre* and *La nuit des musées*.

TRAPPED, 2017

Digital installation

Unique work

96 x 58 cm - 37.8 x 22.8 in





Son Bong-Chae

b. 1967

Son Bong-Chae is a Korean artist. He received his BFA from Chosun University in Gwangju, and his MFA from the prestigious Pratt Institute in New York, USA. Son Bong-Chae employs a layered painting process to create ethereal landscapes reminiscent of traditional Korean landscape painting. Each work is composed of the artist's signature trees which are painted in oil paint onto multiple layers of polycarbonate plates, a special type of bulletproof glass 300 times stronger than acrylic glass. Illuminated by a luminescent diode, a type of lighting similar to a LED, these eerie landscapes evoke both the memory of traditional painting as well as the timelessness of the scene. In 1997, at the age of 30, he became the youngest person to participate in the Gwangju Biennale. He has since then participated in numerous solo exhibitions internationally and an extensive list of biennales, and his work appears in collections including the National Museum of Contemporary Art and the Gwangju Biennale Foundation in Korea, and the Korean Cultural Centre in Shanghai, China.

Migrants, 2017

Oil on polycarbonate and LED
94 x 184 cm - 37 x 72.4 in





Migrants, 2017
Oil on polycarbonate and LED
84 x 124 cm - 33.1 x 48.8 in



Migrants, 2014
Oil on polycarbonate and LED
120 x 80 cm - 47.2 x 31.5 in

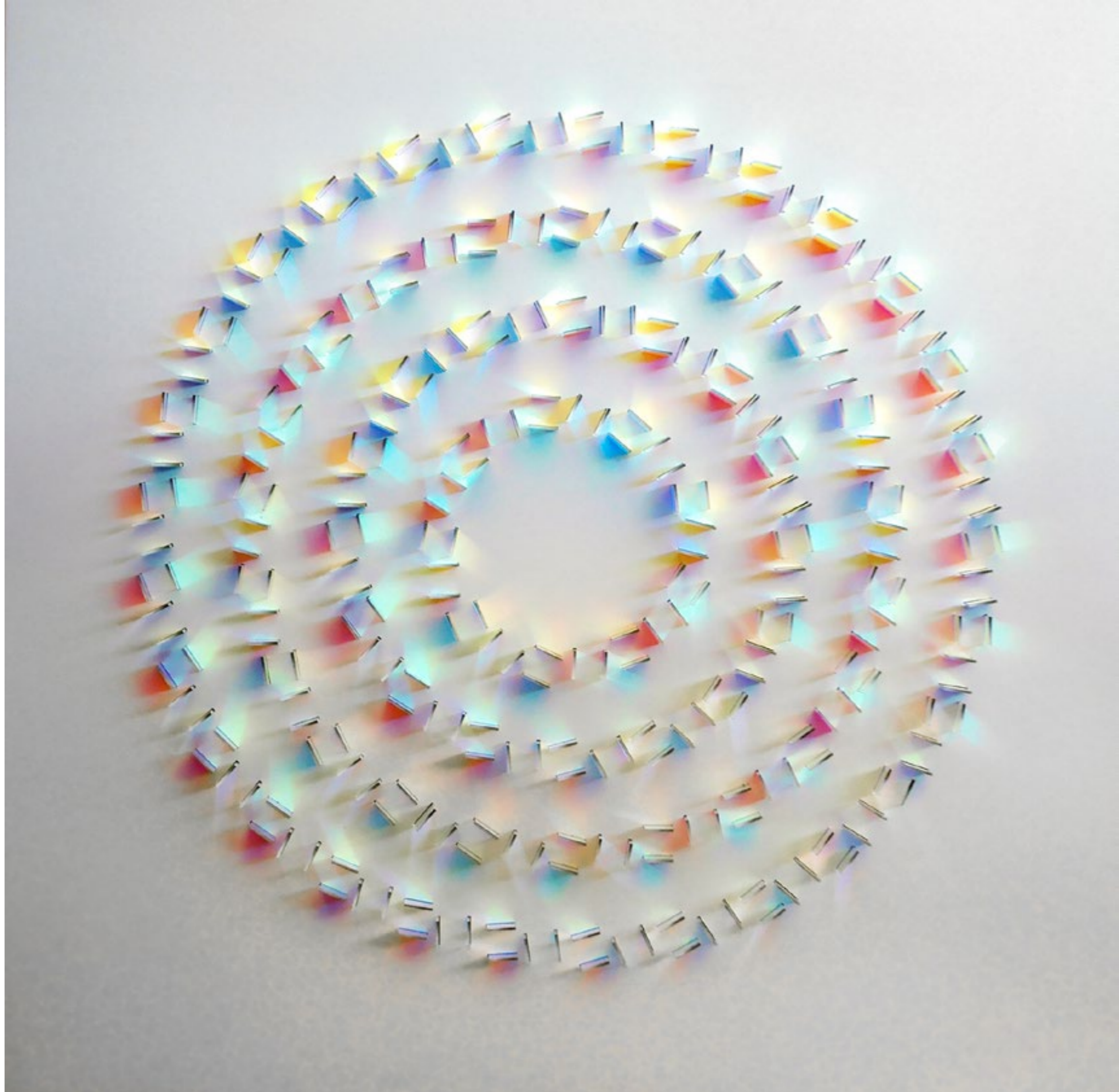


Chris Wood

b. 1954

“My work is a continual exploration of light and it never fails to surprise me.” British artist Chris Wood explains about her artwork. Wood’s medium is light. She uses a range of high and low-tech optical materials to harness patterns of light that suggest ephemeral glimpsed moments in the natural world. Her sculptures are simple arrangements creating kinetic patterns in response to the environments in which they are placed. Wood’s work brings a wistful romanticism to a minimalist aesthetic. Inspired by artists like James Turrell and Dan Flavin, Wood orders the accidental and makes us reflect on the experience of seeing. After studying Furniture Design at Middlesex University in the mid 1980s she went on to study glass at the Royal College of Art, where she worked on architectural scale projects dealing with light and space. Wood produces innovative installations for gallery exhibition and has shown extensively throughout the UK and internationally. Her work is now represented in a number of private collections as well as the Shanghai Museum of Glass. She also produces work to commission and has created works for Fendi Fashion House, Great Ormond Street Hospital, Rosie Maternity Hospital, Premier Inn Hotel and a Scandinavian cruise ship. Chris is currently working on her largest project to date in Taiwan.

Opt, 2015
Dichroic glass
115 x 115 cm - 45.3 x 45.3 in



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