

Elinor Zoë Karl

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Vita

b. 1998, Frankfurt am Main, Germany
Lives and works in Offenbach am Main, Germany.

Education	Selected Exhibitions	Scholarships & Awards
since 2023 M.F.A. Fine Arts, Hochschule für Gestaltung Offenbach, Germany	2026 <i>Les Rencontres d’Arles</i> , Arles, France	2025 Travel Grant (with Len David Oswald) for <i>Tomorrow is a Latter Day</i> , Nebendorfstiftung
2021-2023 Research Assistant at the Peace Research Institute Oslo, Norway	2026 <i>Worlds Within Worlds</i> , Deutsche Börse Photography Foundation, Eschborn	2025 Honourable Mention, Deutsche Börse Photography Foundation, for <i>Heiteres aus Kamerun</i>
2020–2021 M.Sc. Public Policy and Human Development (cum laude) United Nations University–MERIT, Maastricht, Netherlands	2026 <i>See, Saw, Sort pt. 1</i> , Atelierfrankfurt, Frankfurt	2025 Second Prize, Photography Category, Willi Münzenberg Forum Art Award, Berlin
2017–2020 B.A. Liberal Arts and Sciences (cum laude) University College Maastricht, Netherlands	2025 <i>Der Krieg beginnt nicht mit dem ersten Schuss</i> , Willi Münzenberg Forum, Berlin	2025 Zollamt Studio Scholarship, Offenbach
2019 Exchange Semester, Chinese University of Hong Kong	2025 <i>Guck mal drüber nach</i> , Hafenspace, Offenbach	2025 Photography Forum Frankfurt Masterclass Scholarship (Elinor Carucci Workshop)

Heiteres aus Kamerun

2025

Cut and woven photographic paper

Various formats

The German Federal Archives contain 867 photographs under the search term “Cameroon.” Most date from the period between 1884 and 1919, when Cameroon was one of Germany’s eight colonies.

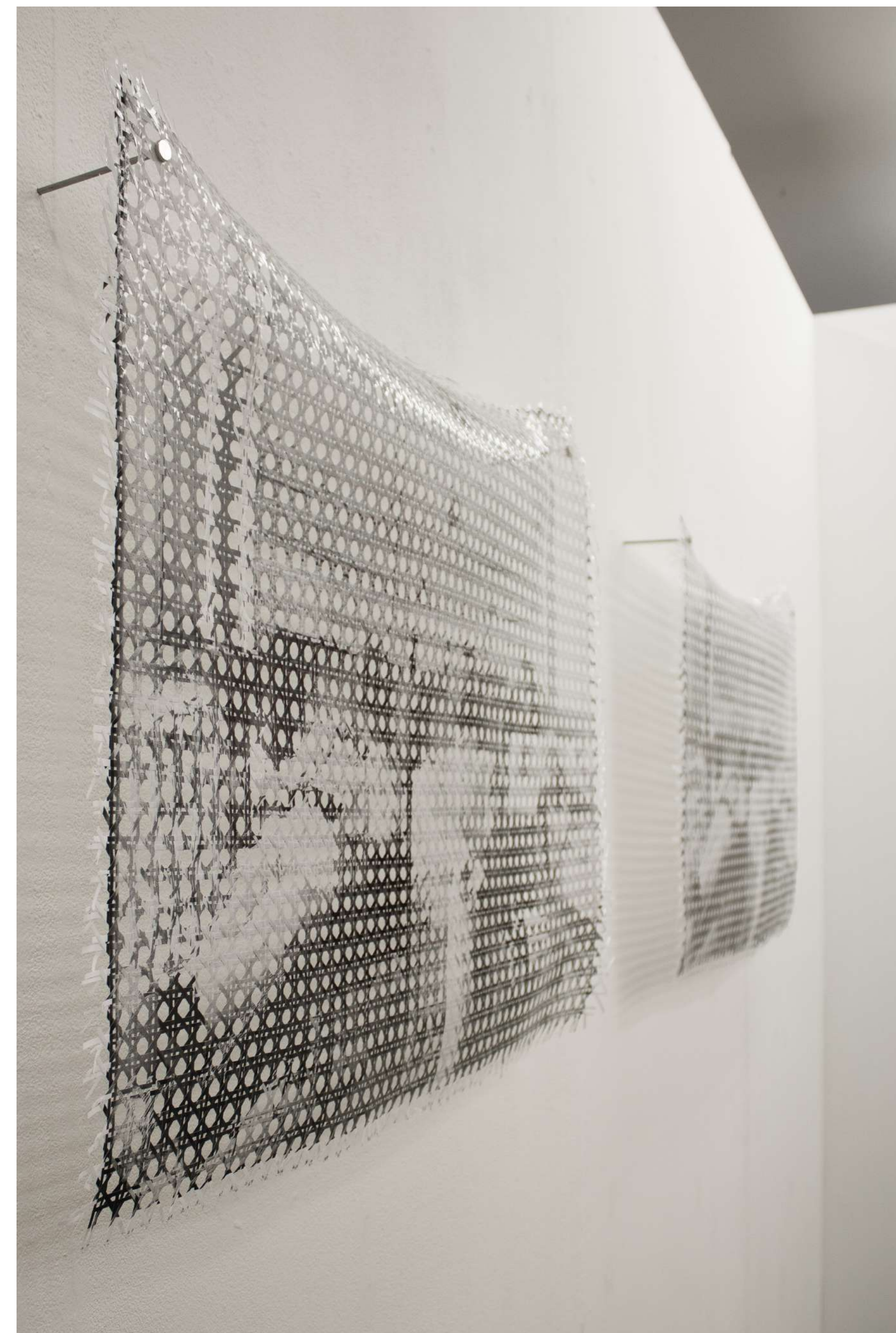
They present a familiar visual repertoire: exoticizing depictions of the land and its people. Particularly striking, however, are those images in which German colonialists stage themselves in white tropical suits. In “Siesta im Hafenhaus” (Siesta in the Harbor House, original title, 1903), they recline comfortably in woven rattan deck chairs. In “Heiteres aus Kamerun” (Cheerful Scenes from Cameroon, original title, 1903/1905), a man rides a goat. These are images of a demonstrative self-affirmation by perpetrators who have largely remained anonymous.

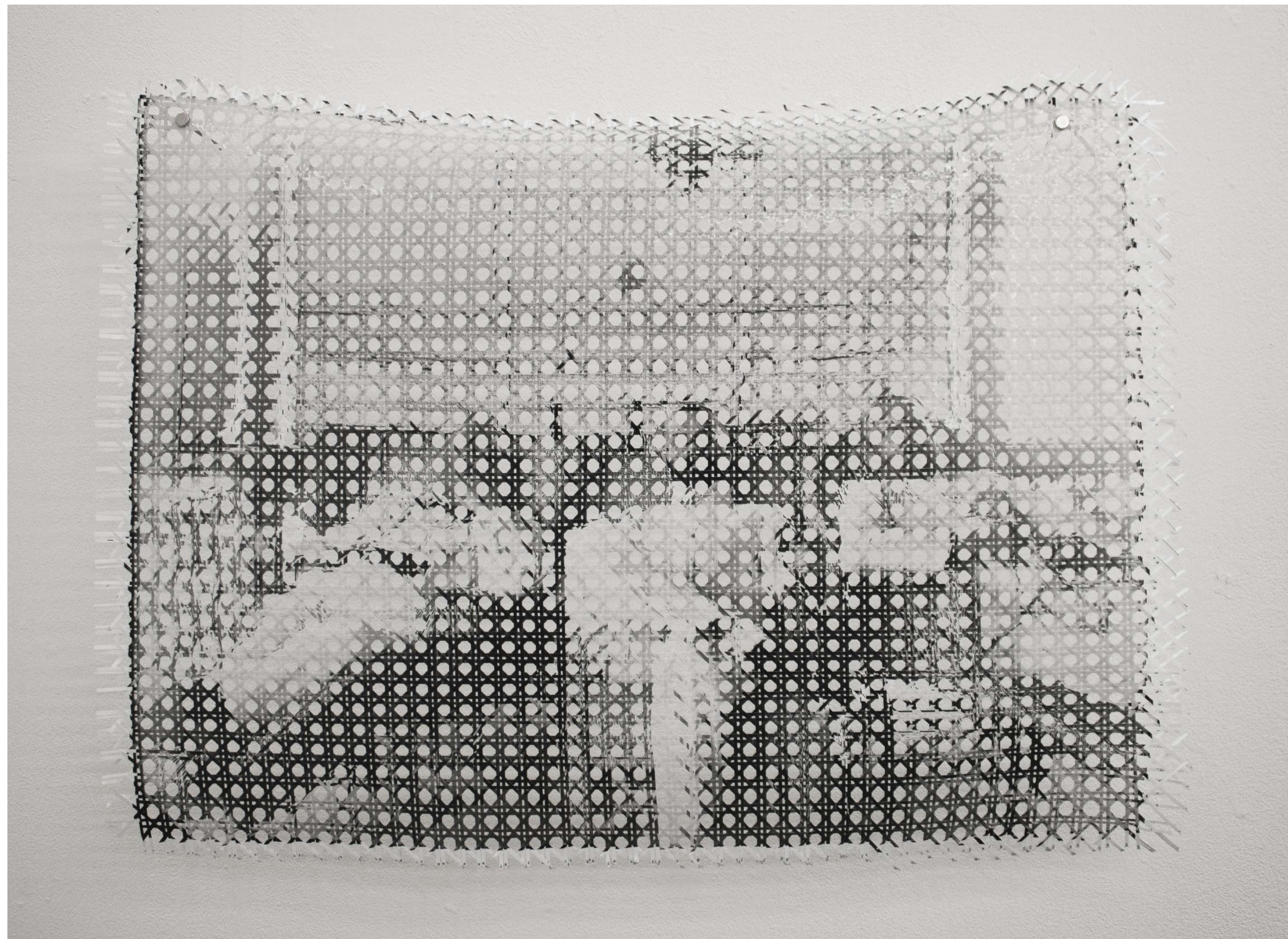


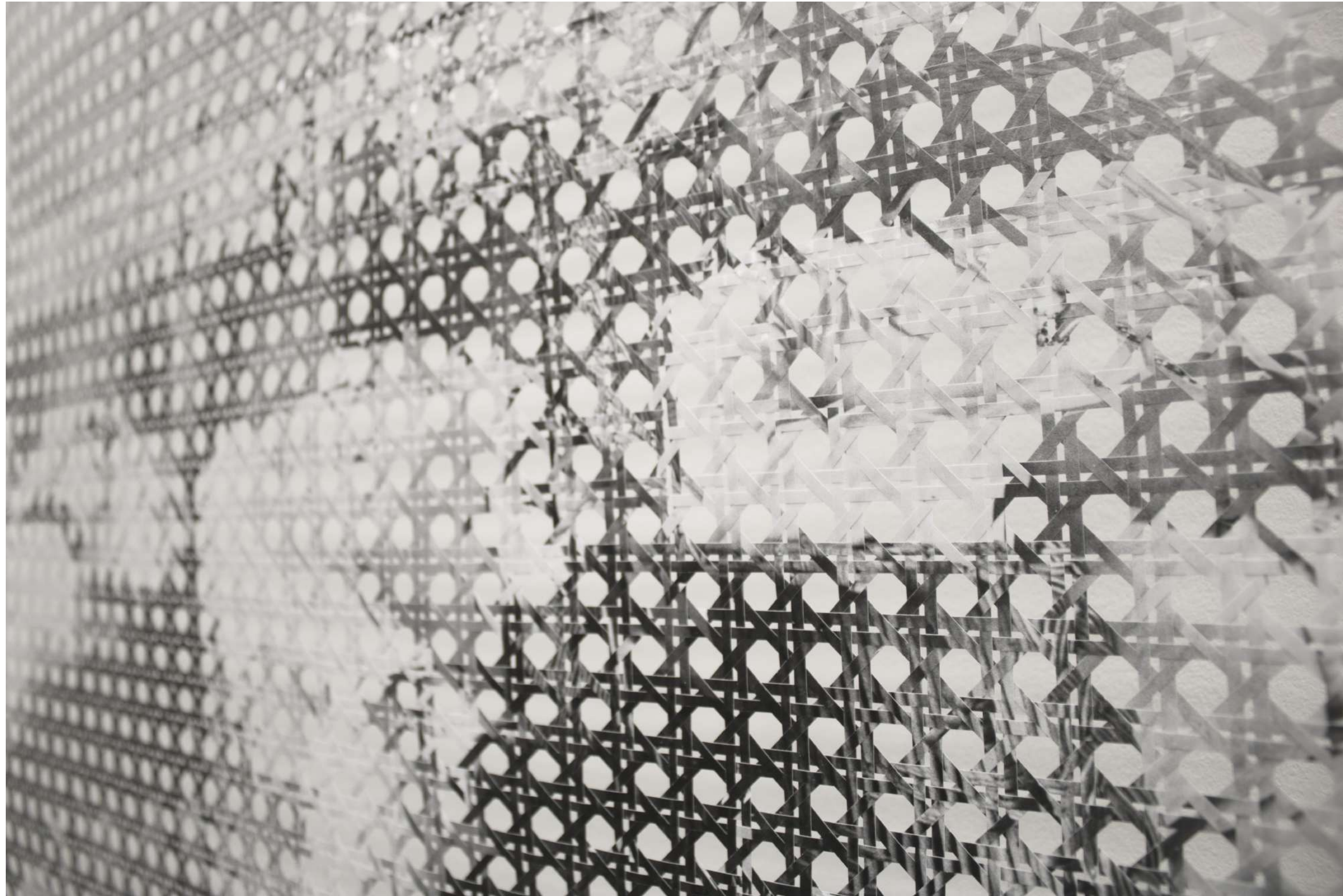
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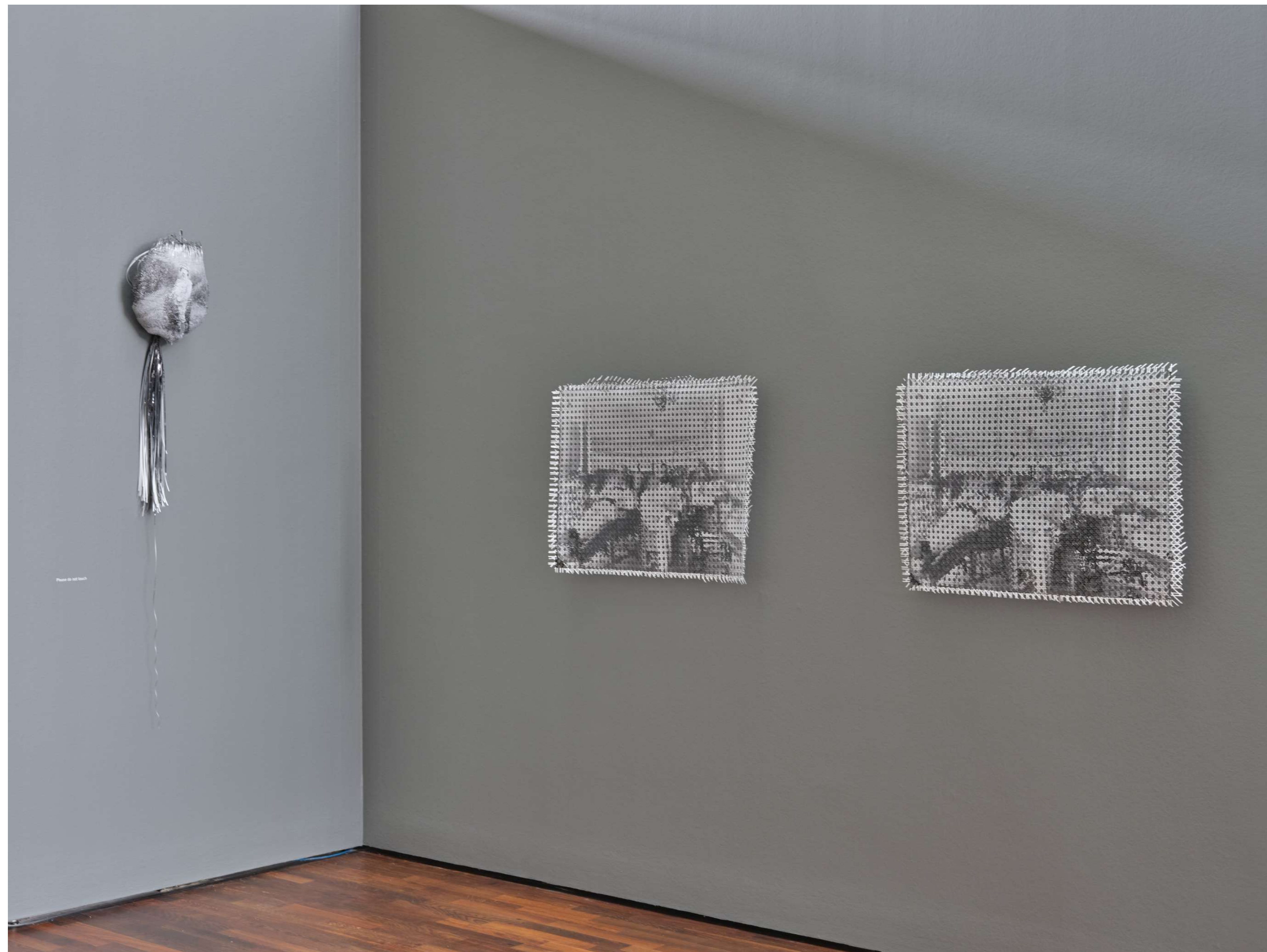
These photographs form the source material for my work. I cut them apart, reassemble them in multiple layers, and weave them into a new image. What emerges is a fragile, fragmented mesh: pixelated and marked by ruptures. The once-clear self-fashioning of the colonial rulers loses its contours; faces blur and lines dissolve. The illusion of photographic objectivity is visibly disrupted.

The woven pattern refers to another colonial legacy: rattan furniture, made from a material that grows exclusively in formerly colonized regions yet became an integral part of European domestic culture. Appropriated under the name “Viennese cane weave” (Wiener Geflecht), it stands as a symbol of the appropriation of material, knowledge, and aesthetics.









Exhibition view, *Worlds Within Worlds*, Deutsche Börse Photography Foundation, Eschborn, 2026.
Foto credit: © Jakob Dieckmann



Exhibition view, *Worlds Within Worlds*, Deutsche Börse Photography Foundation, Eschborn, 2026.
Foto credit: © Jakob Dieckmann

Neoliberalism's Frankenstein*

2026

Inkjet print on analog photographic paper, sewn with
analog photographic paper

ca. 438 cm x 80 cm

The work takes its point of departure from Wendy Brown's text of the same title, in which the American political scientist and theorist examines how neoliberal social orders create the conditions under which authoritarian politics can gain strength.

Central to her inquiry is the question: „How and why have freedom and illiberalism, freedom and authoritarianism, freedom and legitimized social exclusion and social violence become fused in our time?“ (Brown 2021, S. 11).

*Brown, W. (2018). Neoliberalism's Frankenstein: Authoritarian freedom in twenty-first century “democracies”. Critical times, 1(1), 60-79.

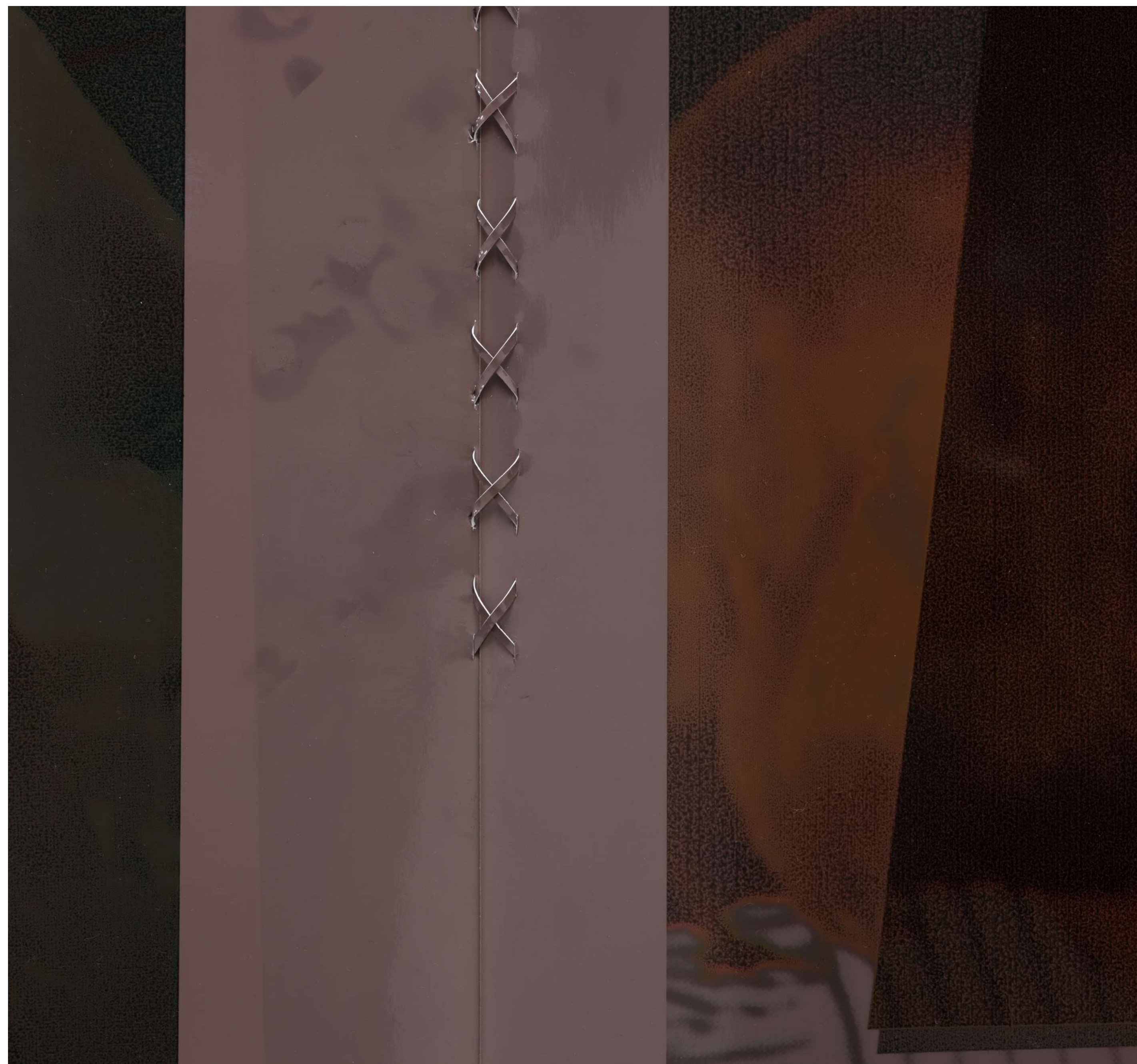
Ausstellungsansicht, See Saw Sort, Atelier Frankfurt, Frankfurt, 2026.
Foto credit: © Len David Oswald



While Brown develops her analysis through a historical trajectory stretching from Keynes and Friedman to Reagan and Thatcher, this work extends that arc further, proposing a connection between the myth of the freedom-loving nineteenth-century cowboy and the conservative-nationalist to proto-fascist forms of media-mediated lived realities in the contemporary United States.

Beginning with a romanticized cowboy narrative—whose historical figures were in fact neither exclusively heroic, white, male, nor American—the work addresses the transformation of a concept of freedom that has become increasingly associated with exclusion, privatization, and authoritarian governance.

The image montage brings together key moments in this analysis of the present: from the Marlboro Man to the American rapper Nicki Minaj—once a critic of Donald Trump and now sympathetic to right-wing positions—and Nara Smith, one of the most prominent “tradwives” on social media.



Ausstellungsansicht, See Saw Sort, Atelier Frankfurt, Frankfurt, 2026.

Foto credit: © Len David Oswald



Exhibition view, See Saw Sort, Atelier Frankfurt, Frankfurt, 2026.
Foto credit: © Len David Oswald



Exhibition view, See Saw Sort, Atelier Frankfurt, Frankfurt, 2026.
Foto credit: © Len David Oswald



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