

Lisa Mara Batacchi

The Time of Discretion

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The Time of Discretion is an intimate, slow and relational time. It is also an artistic project, at its first chapter. Beside Italy, it has been developed in the remote areas on the south-east border of the Gobi Desert and in the Guizhou Province (South China), in search of rituals, ancient textile practices or together in one.

This long term project is composed of vanishing actions and installations located or inspired by areas around the world where traditions are still alive in favor of the timeless. In parallel to this, also video material and writings gathered becoming a film and a book as an attempt to cover idealistically, with thought, spirituality, provocation and resistance, the years to complete our century starting from re-imagining our present and predicting a fictional future.

The first chapter of *The Time of Discretion*, began in 2016 with the invitation to the Land Art Mongolia Biennale *Finding the Axis between Sky and Earth*.

Before arriving in Mongolia, I have traveled in Inner Mongolia from Ordos to Hohhot, to Beijing and finally to a remote village in the Guizhou Province, located in South West China, a landlocked mountainous territory, home of some of the most distinctive «Chinese Ethnic Minority Groups». Among them, the Hmong tribe, well known for the craftsmanship displayed in their textiles, grow their own fibers and the Indigo plant which is necessary to prepare the dye.

Persuing this direction, establishing relations of cooperation with the community and entering a state of *Discretion*, I gave new meanings to the Hmong traditional indigo color dye, through several art works.



Left: *Elisir of Return* #6 and #5, photographic prints on fine art paper (barytha Hahnmuhe) series of seven, 39 x 53 cm, framed

Above: *The Time of Discretion* (film), 2019 stills from the short film, HD, color, sound, 26 min

The Time of Discretion. Curtain

LAND ART MONGOLIA BIENNALE 4th edition, 2016

FINDING THE AXIS BETWEEN SKY AND EARTH

The project came to life starting with an invitation to participate to the LAM 360° Land Art Mongolia biennial's fourth edition which title was *Catching the Axis Between Sky and Earth*.

I interpreted the theme as a real invitation to explore the invisible tie which connects the sky with the earth and began thinking about realizing a large indigo-blue colored curtain that could represent that axis.

Before leaving for China/Mongolia I have asked the I-Ching Oracle a question on the future of our world from now to the end of this century:

“Will human beings be able to decrease this accelerating materialism and reconnect with the natural cycles of our planet? If so, when, how?”

I interpreted Hexagram 40 in this way:

The world is going through a difficult time where we cannot hope for great changes, but a very strong and liberating rain will come, from which new seeds on the earth will sprout again in the future.

And its changes from Hexagram 2:

In our century the world will be able to rise again if humanity can advance with a different equilibrium. To do this, human beings must search for the creative and spiritual energy of the horse, which represents the egotistic male urge, balanced by the feminine devotion of the cow and its spatial energy which can nourish our planet.

From the I-Ching's response I saw some key elements that accompanied and guided me on my journey, looking for coincidences with certain indications of this ancient Taoist text.

To create the art work I decided to head towards southern China where the cultivation of indigo and the natural blue sacred color is still produced. The journey which followed led me to stay in a Miao ethnicity village.

Here I learnt the natural technique of indigo tincture and with the help of the community of local women I produced *Curtain* (2016) a batik fabric decorated with the image of an animal, half cow and half horse.

The choice of this pattern was not by chance and the hybrid figure derives from my interpretation of two I Ching hexagrams.

With *Curtain* I left China to reach the LAM 360°'s artists and organizers, finally arriving at the foot of the Altan Oovo mountain.

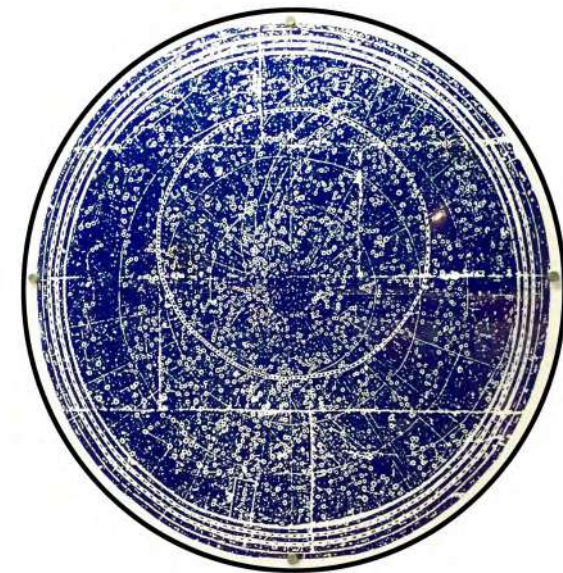
Here the blue *Curtain* is more than just a work of art, it becomes a ritual object of a performance:

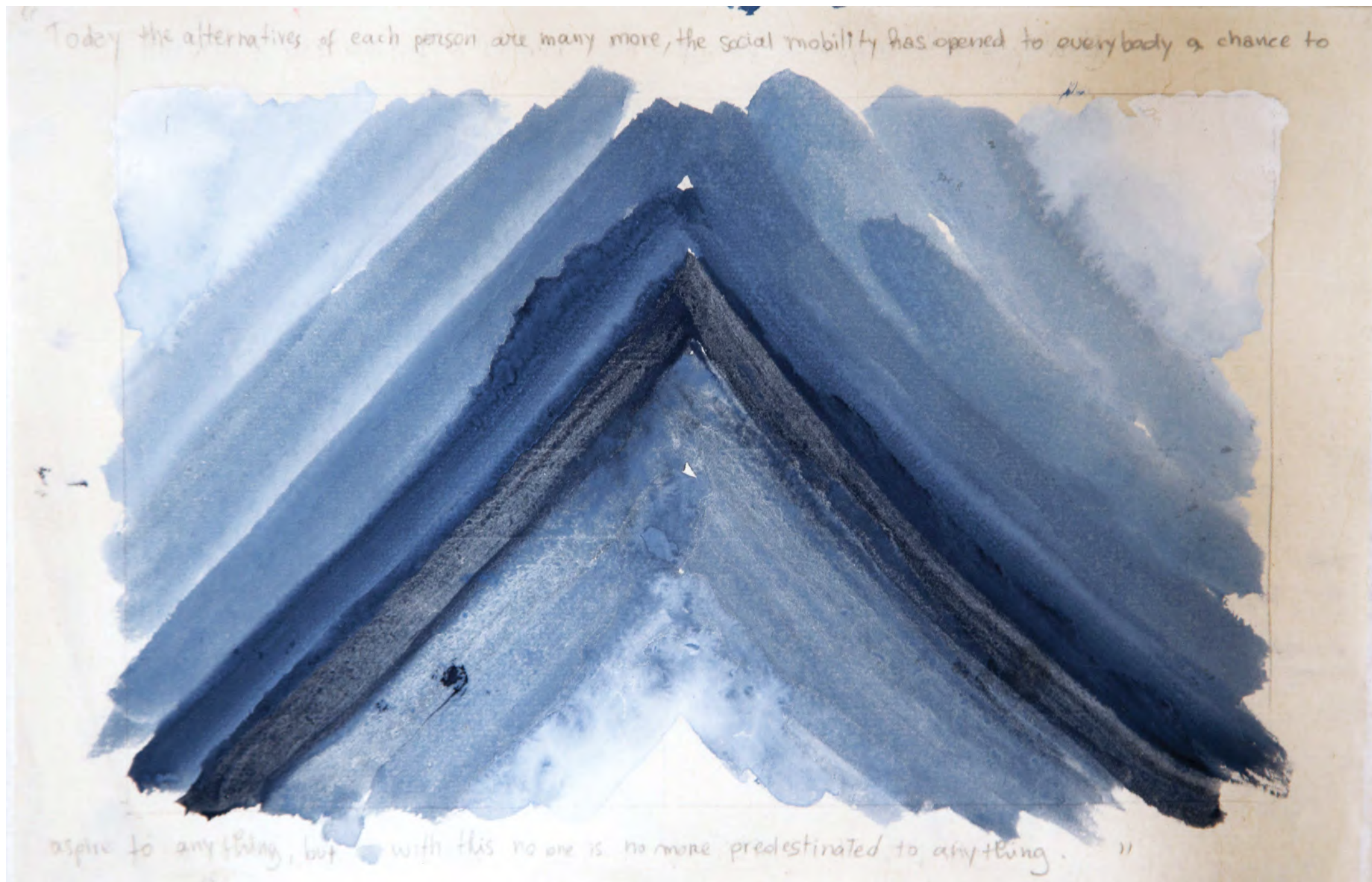
it appears to our eyes like a tangible trace of an initiation journey, a silent testimony of the passage to distant places, in a narration outside and beyond time, space and history, where reality and imagination blend in a message of hope.



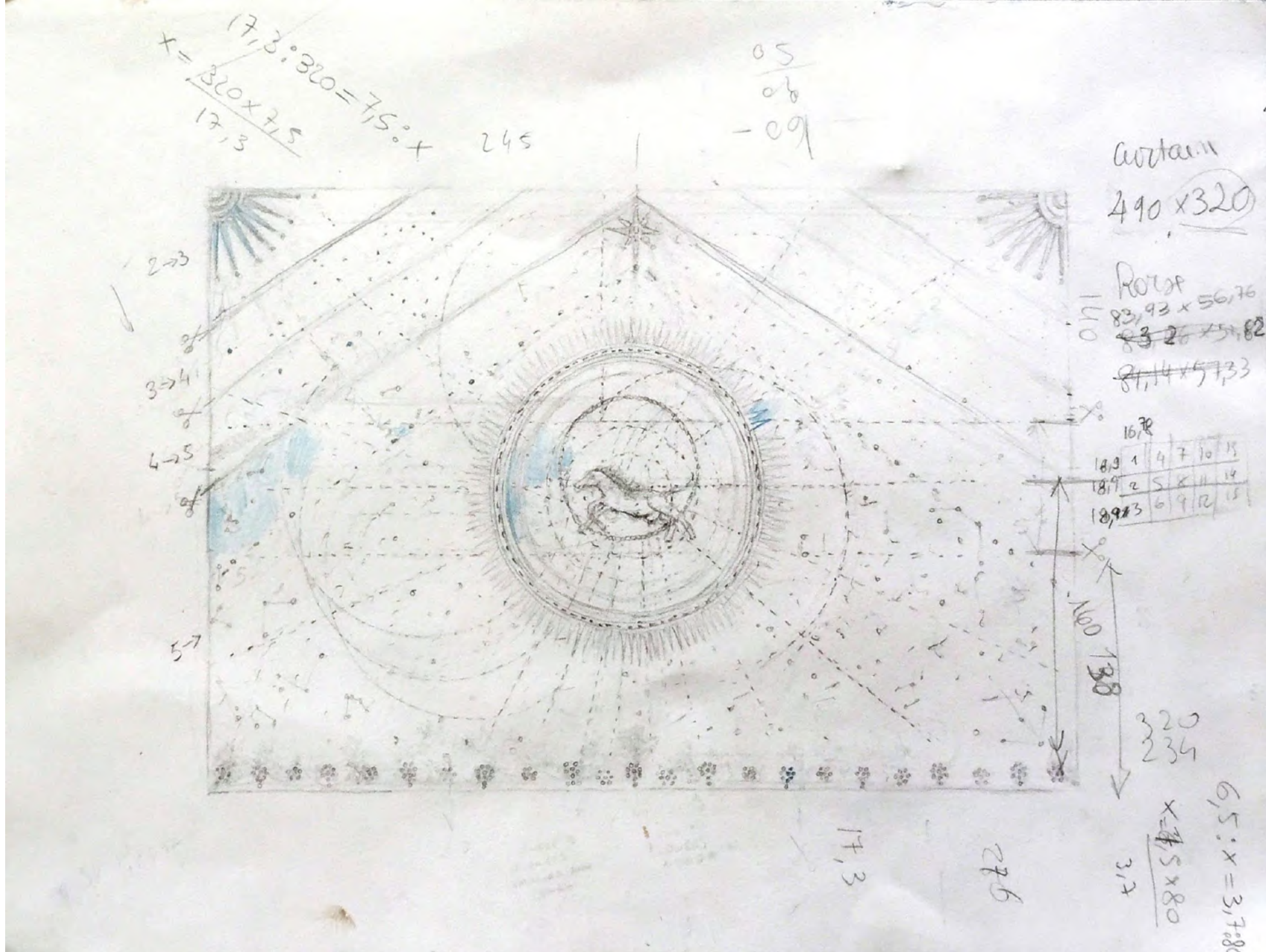
Above: still from the short film *The Time of Discretion*, 2021
HD, color, sound, 28 min

Below: photographic print on cotton paper, 50,5 x 50,5 cm, 2016





The Time of Discretion. Blue shading studies, watercolor and pencil on rice paper, 19 x 28,8 cm, 2016



The Time of Discretion. Preparatory sketch of Curtain, 2016
 Pencil on acquarel paper, 36x26 cm, white wooden frame, glass.



Working together with Hmong ladies tracing my pencil drawing on the fabric with hot wax.



Still from the short film *The Time of Discretion*, 2021

HD, color, sound, 28 min

Immersing the curtain fabric several times to create the different shadings of blue.



Wishes on the Altan Ovoo, 2016
pencil drawing on paper, 29,2 x 36 cm



The Time of Discretion. Curtain, 2016

Photographic print on Hahnemuhle fine art baryta paper, 100x70 cm, white wooden frame, glass.

Edition of 3



The Time of Discretion. Curtain, 2016
Photographic print on Hahnemuhle fine art baryta paper, 100x70 cm, white wooden frame, glass.
Edition of 3



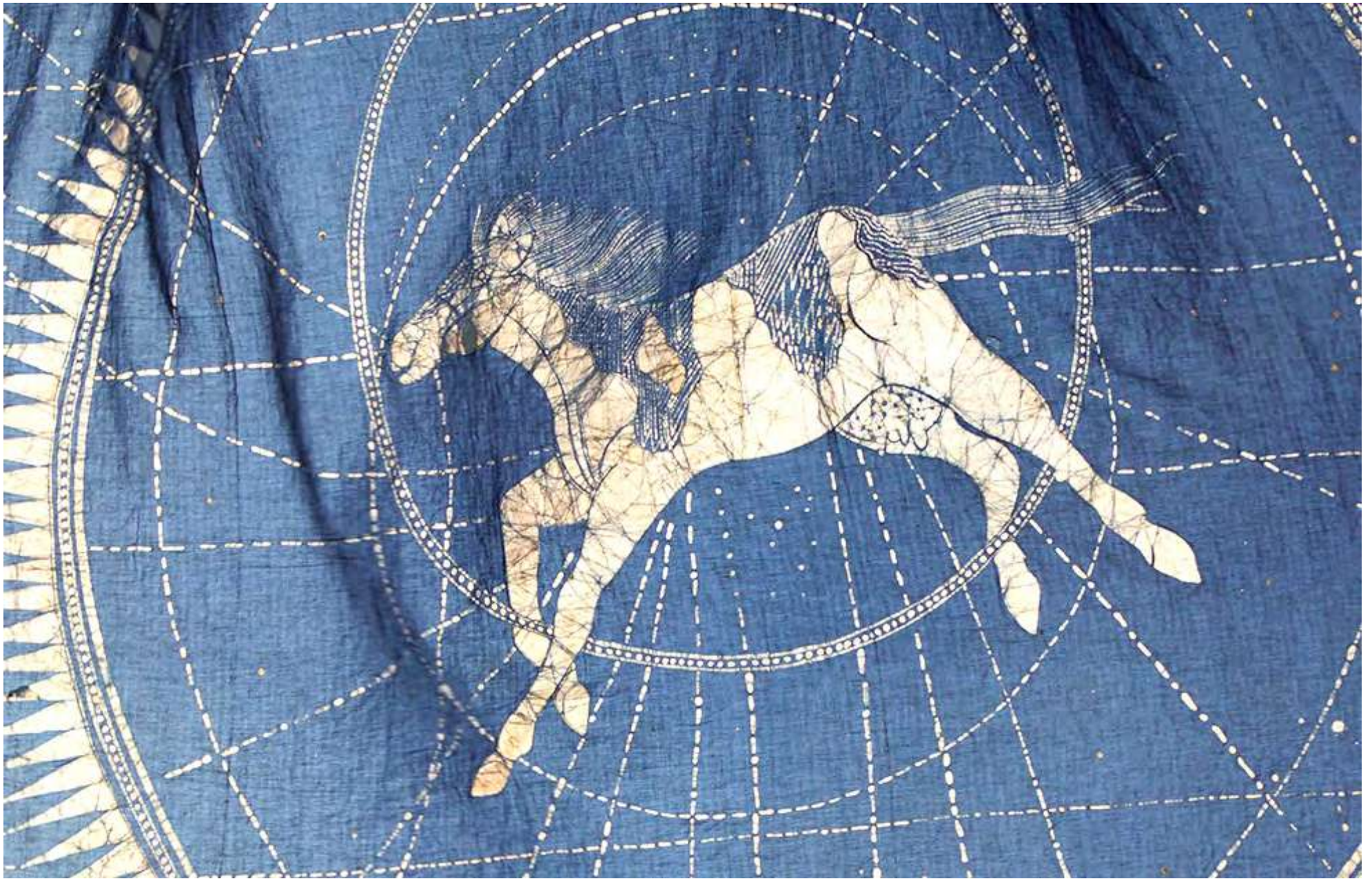
The Time of Discretion. Curtain, 2016

Photographic print on Hahnemuhle fine art baryta paper, 100x70 cm, white wooden frame, glass.

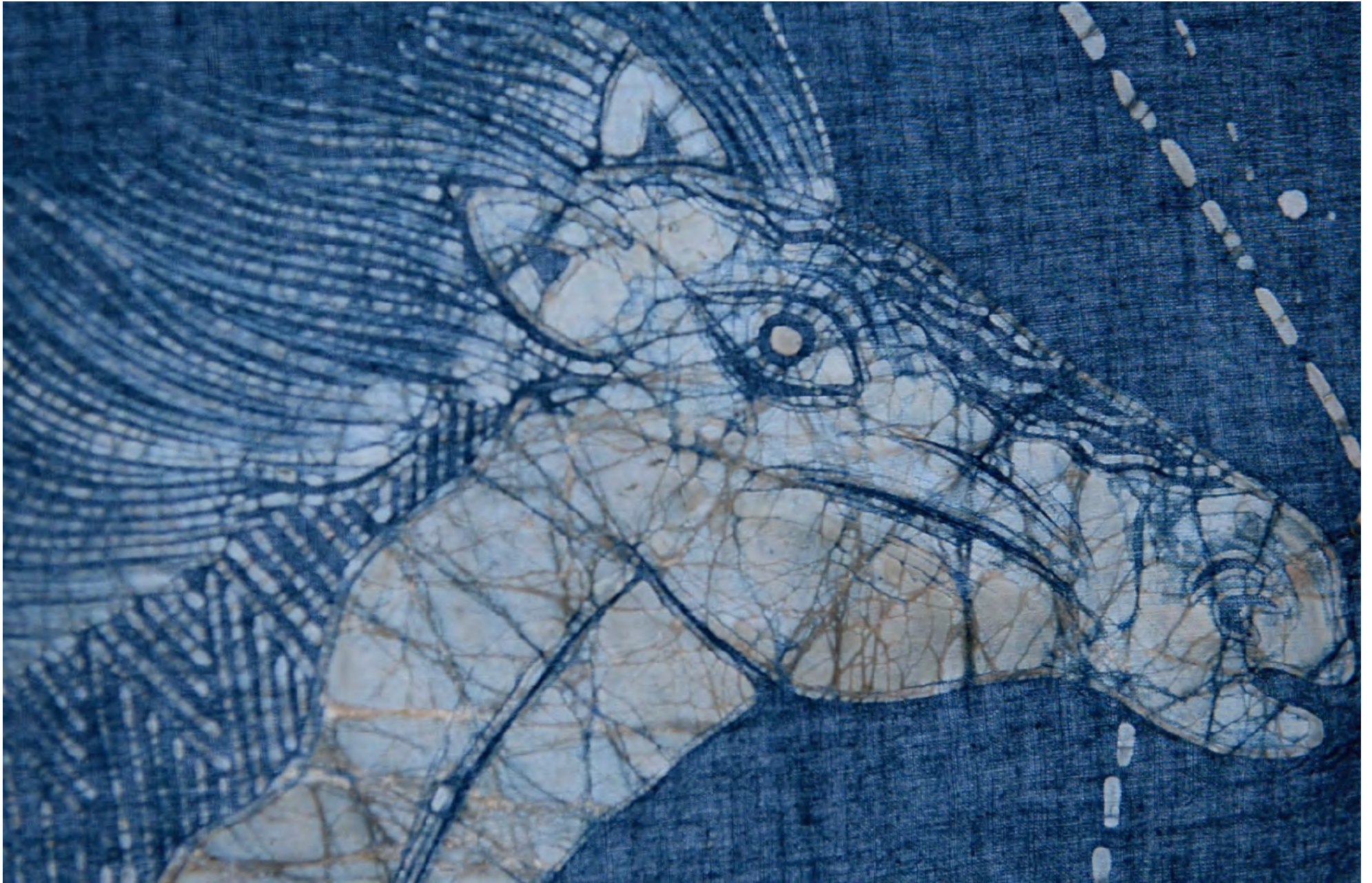
Edition of 3



The Time of Discretion. Curtain, 2016
Photographic print on Hahnemuhle fine art baryta paper, 100x70 cm, white wooden frame, glass.
Edition of 3



Detail of *Curtain*, 2016



Detail of *Curtain*, still from the short film *The Time of Discretion*, 2021
HD, color, sound, 28 min

Crossing Destinies

Crossing Destinies, 2018
series of 5 tapestries, each of 60x62 cm.
Cotton thread, natural Miao indigo dye from
Guizhou Province, China

Manually woven by the artist on the Takemura loom during a residency at Fondazione Arte della Seta Lisio in Florence Italy.

Crossing Destinies represents the manifestation of the mediumistic power of the Miao indigo: after the indigo solution sits untouched, a brilliant blue froth builds on the surface. Miao women believe that this is a sign that their ancestors are protecting them. Ancestors's worship rituals are an important part of the dying process. Therefore, in their tincture tanks the Miao women recognize sacred signs that can reunite them once they die with their ancestors and their land of origin, the North Star.

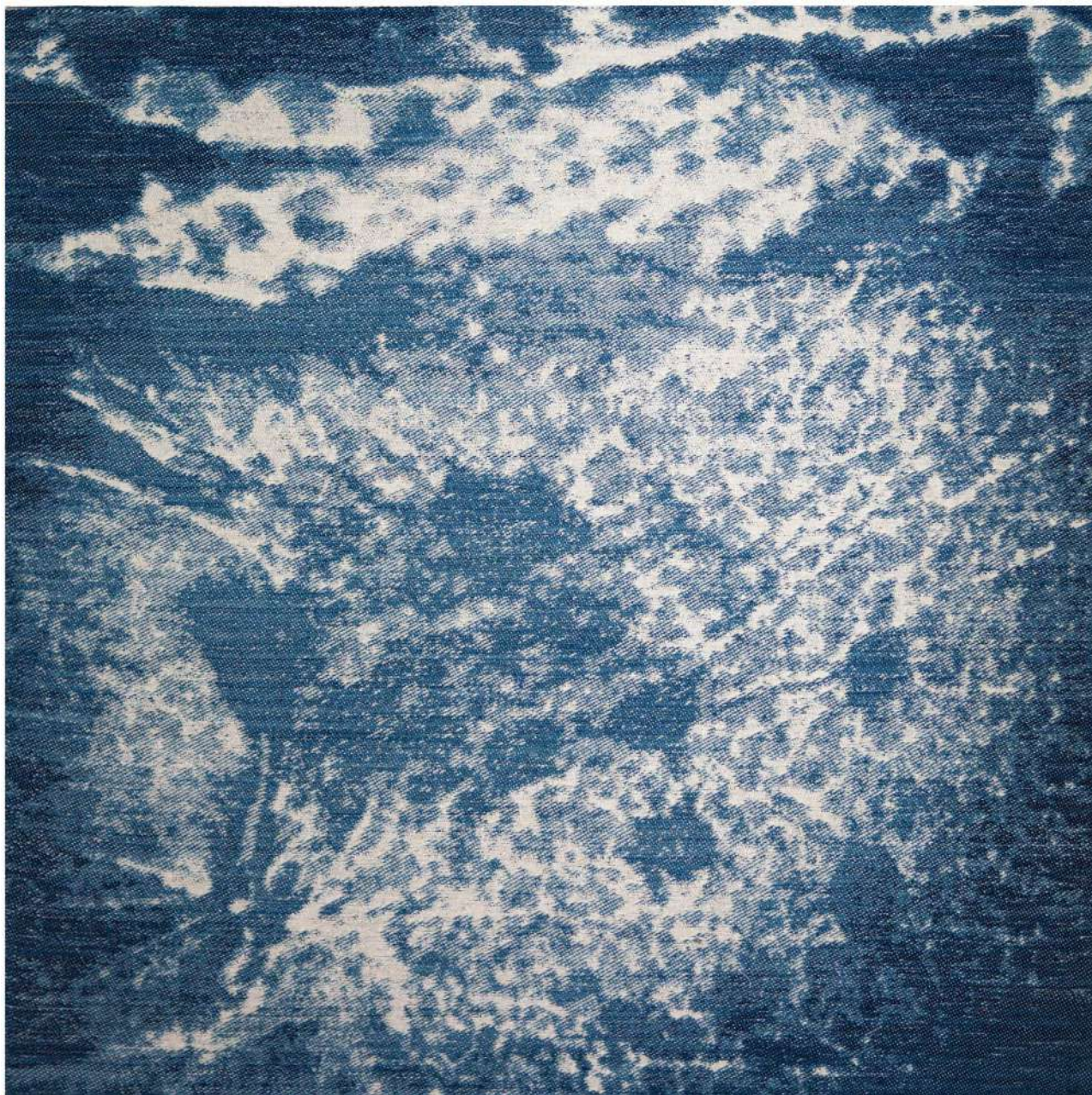
Resisting the industrial production by now spread nearly everywhere, their natural indigo dye claims their traditions and identity as well as their destiny.

The result is a series of 5 tapestries interwoven with the Miao yarns, carried out manually by my self and in a female context.

They recall celestial universes, as reflected by an earthly microcosm.



Above: photographic documentation



Crossing Destinies #1, 2018

series of 5 tapestries created manually by the artist on the Takemura loom. Each 60x62 cm, cotton thread, natural indigo dye from Guizhou Province, China.



Crossing Destinies #2, 2018

series of 5 tapestries created manually by the artist on the Takemura loom. Each 60x62 cm, cotton thread, natural indigo dye from Guizhou Province, China.



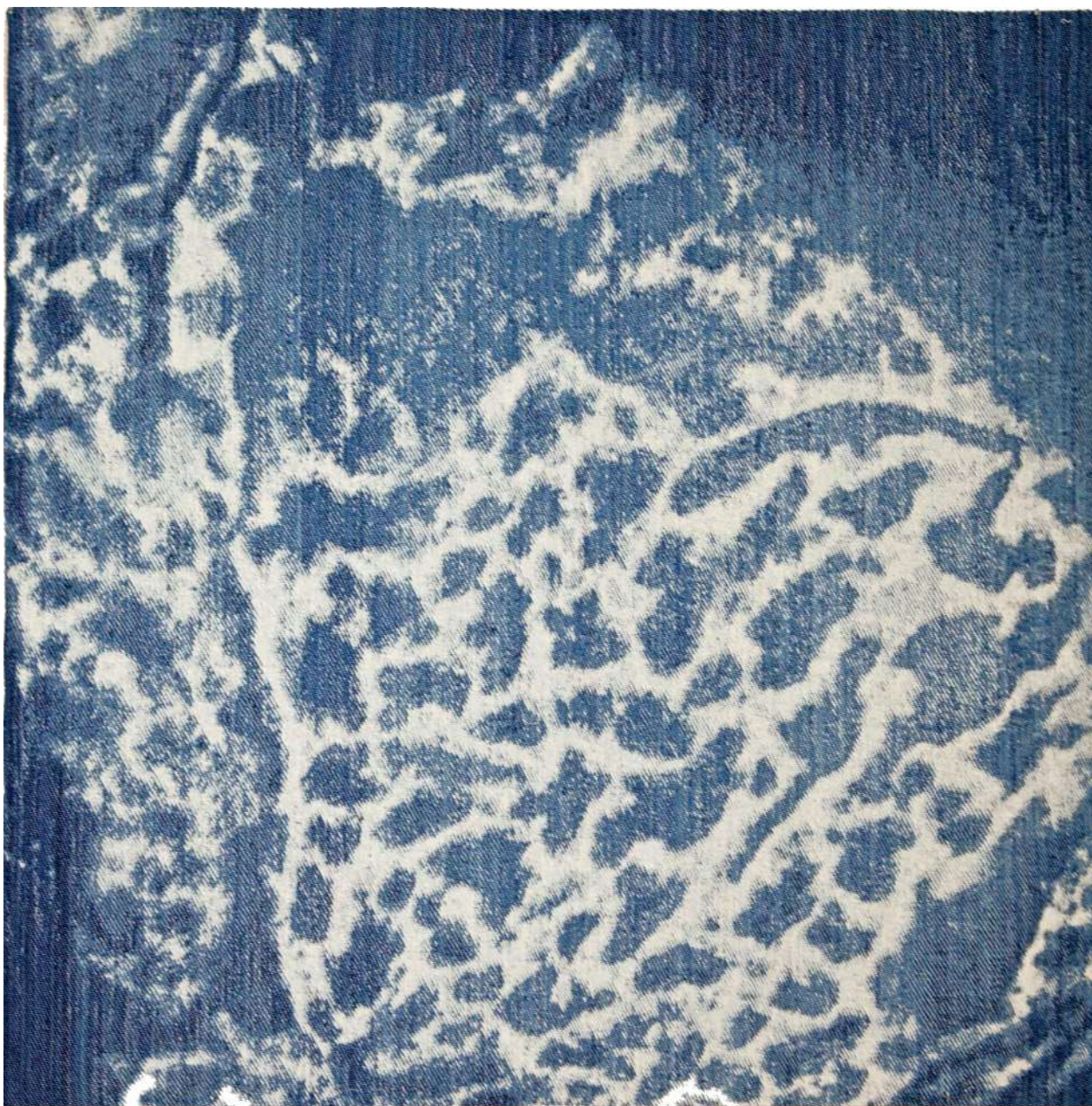
Crossing Destinies #3, 2018

series of 5 tapestries created manually by the artist on the Takemura loom. Each 60x62 cm, cotton thread, natural indigo dye from Guizhou Province, China.



Crossing Destinies #4, 2018

series of 5 tapestries created manually by the artist on the Takemura loom. Each 60x62 cm, cotton thread, natural indigo dye from Guizhou Province, China.

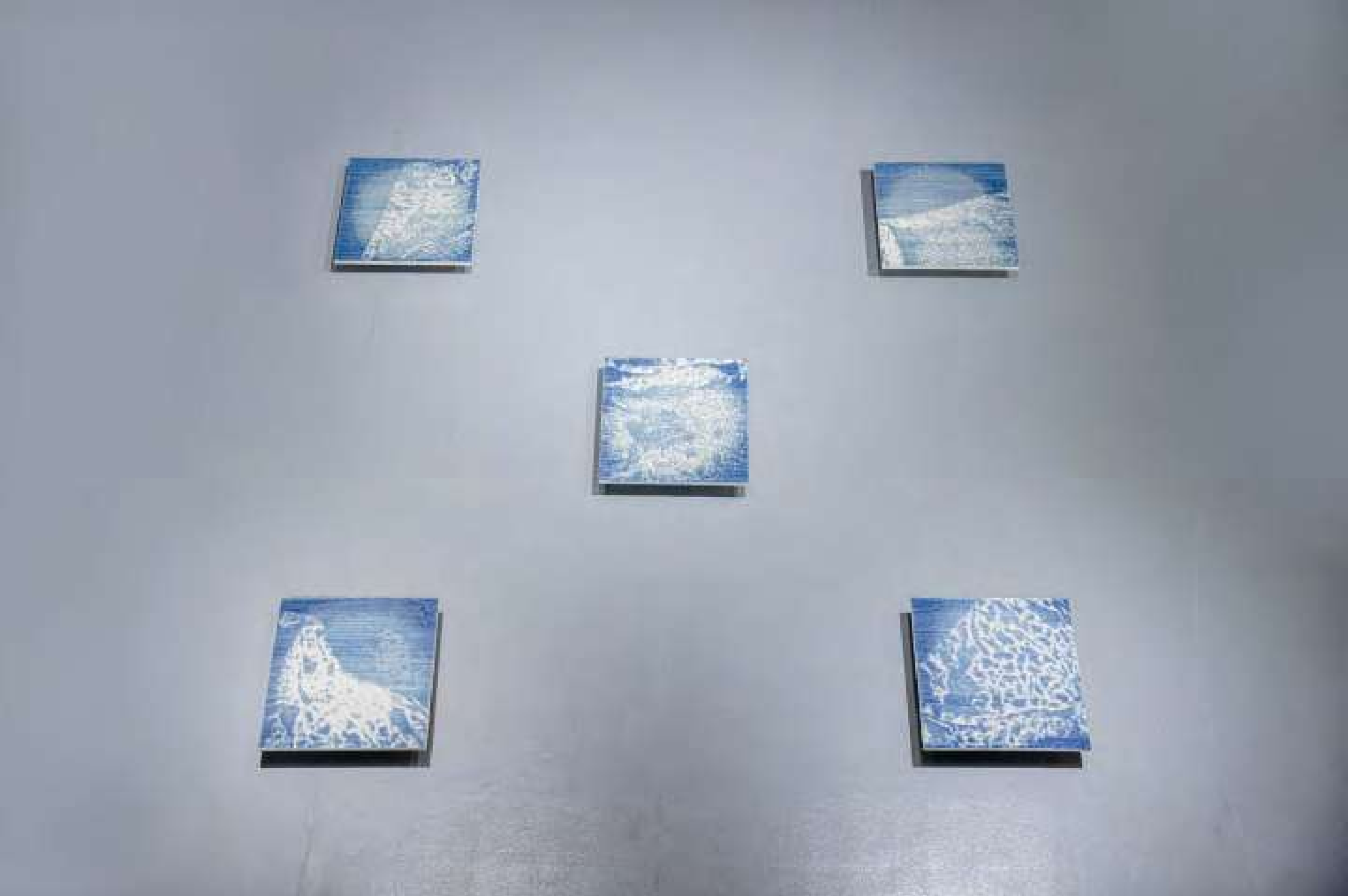


Crossing Destinies #5, 2018

series of 5 tapestries created manually by the artist on the Takemura loom. Each 60x62 cm, cotton thread, natural indigo dye from Guizhou Province, China.



Crossing Destinies
installation view of *The Time of Discretion. Chapter One* (Solo Show) at Murate Art District, Firenze, 2018



Crossing Destinies,

Installation view from above, for *(UN)COMMON THREADS*, curated by Designeast in partnership with Arselkal Avenue for the Dubai Art Week, Arselkal Avenue warehouse, 2023



Crossing Destinies,

Installation view from above, for *(UN)COMMON THREADS*, curated by Designeast in partnership with Arselkal Avenue for the Dubai Art Week, Arselkal Avenue warehouse, 2023



Crossing Destinies,
detail



The Time of Discretion (Film), 2021 (Link: <https://vimeo.com/785371243> password: CARR23)

Installation view, for *(UN)COMMON THREADS*, curated by Designeast in partnership with Arselkal Avenue for the Dubai Art Week, Arselkal Avenue warehouse, 2023



The Time of Discretion (Book), 2021 > WWW.SILVANAEDITORIALE.IT

Installation view from above, for *(UN)COMMON THREADS*, curated by Designeast in partnership with Arselkal Avenue for the Dubai Art Week, Arselkal Avenue warehouse, 2023

Toli

Toli, 2018

Produced with the support of PERCRO
Perceptual Robotics Laboratory, Sant'ANNA,
PISA, for the solo show at Le Murate curated
by Veronica Caciolli

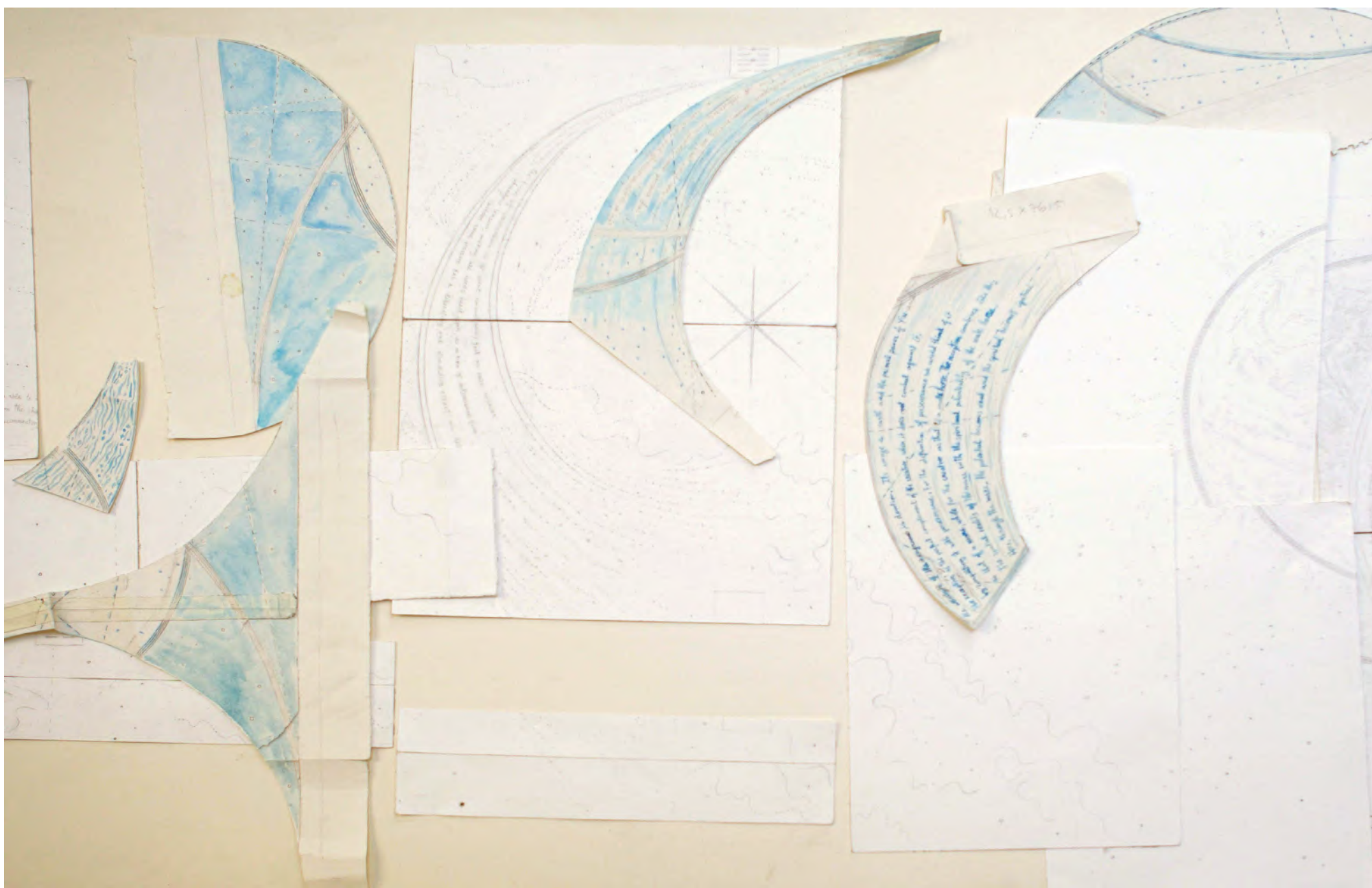
In South East Asia there is a belief that materials reflecting light can hunt away bad spirits. Usually the Hmong women wear tin-silver elements as ornaments, instead Mongolian sciamans rather use round reflecting amulets. In this case I decided to create a very big amulet starting from an Asian kitchen panel found in Hong Kong which, composed with additional 27 panels, becomes a common shield for people to protect themselves. This object will be used both as sculpture and as a device for performances in the private/public space.



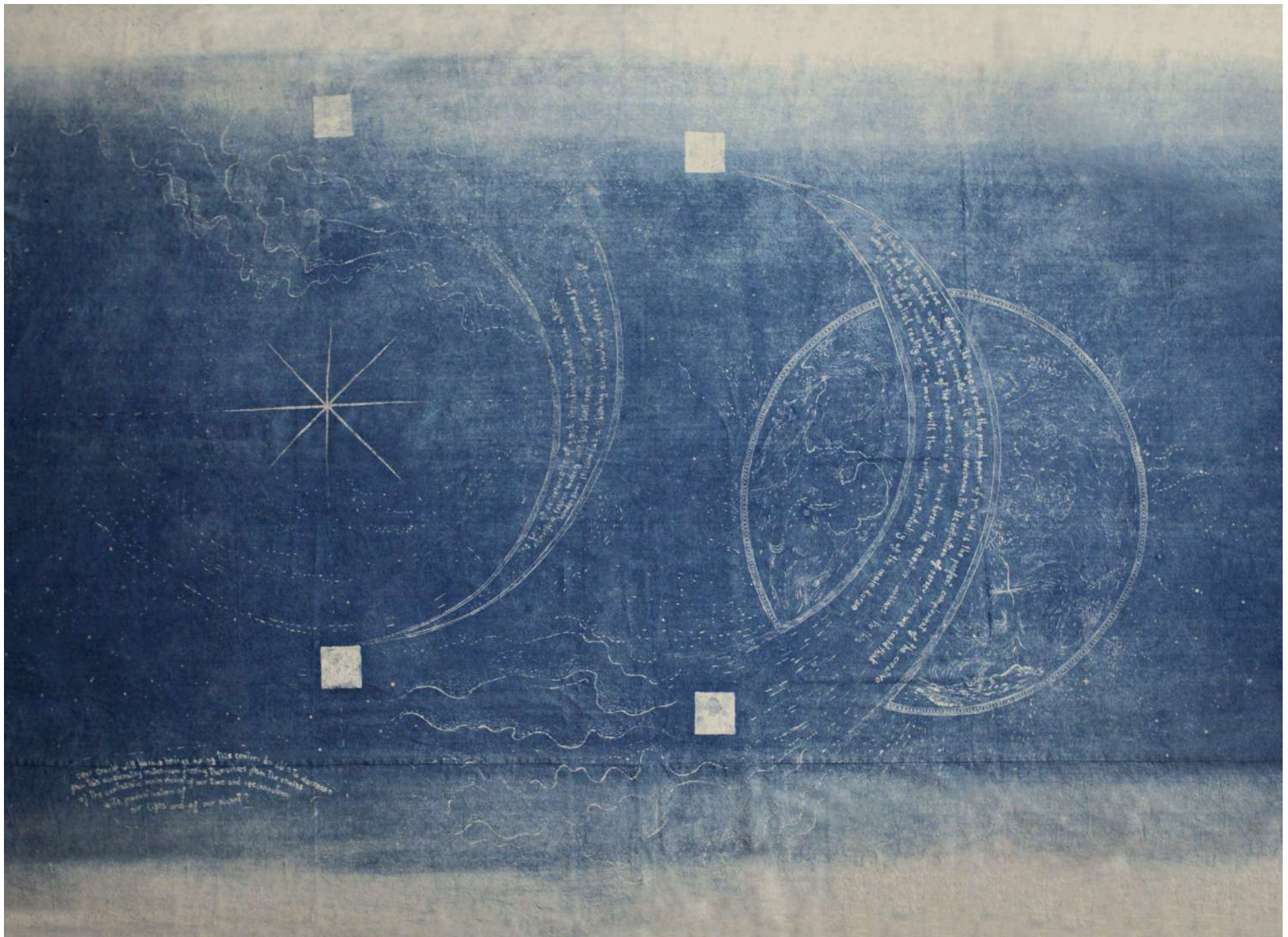
Toli, 2018
tin, 28 peaces, wood, ø 280 cm
site specific installation, MAD Murate Art District, Florence, Italy



Toli, 2018
tin, 28 peaces, wood, ø 280 cm
site specific installation, MAD Murate Art District, Florence, Italy



Preface sketches, pencil and water color on paper, installation variable, 2017



Preface, wax on raw silk fabric, indigo batik, 149 x 200 cm, 2017

Elisir of Return

Elisir of Return consists in two photographic series. The first one captures a process of economic and cultural exploitation practiced by the Miao people from Xijiang towards tourists, through the explicit invitation to the fast and cheap hiring of their traditional clothes and ornaments: “authentic traditions, the pure products, are everywhere yielding to promiscuity and aimlessness” (Clifford 1988). Nevertheless, the other series shows the cohabitation within the same province, of a lifestyle still rooted in agricultural rhythms and local customs. This work as a whole rises then a question about the future, poised at the moment between Lévi-Strauss melancholic despondency and the faith in survival of the indigenous cultures through their hybrid re-invention.

Veronica Caciolli (ed. by), *The Worlds of Others*, in Lisa Mara Batacchi. *The Time of Discretion*, Silvana Editoriale 2019



Elisir of Return #1, 2017/2018
photographic print on fine art baryta hahnemuehle
23,7x15,8 cm (framed)



Elisir of Return #2, 2017/2018
photographic print on fine art baryta hahnemuehle
23,7x15,8 cm (framed)



Elisir of Return (installation #1,#2), poster print of variable dimension and photographic prints on fine art baryta hahnemuehle 23,7x15,8 cm (framed)



Elisir of Return #3, 2017/2018
photographic print on fine art baryta hahnemuehle
23,7x15,8 cm (framed)



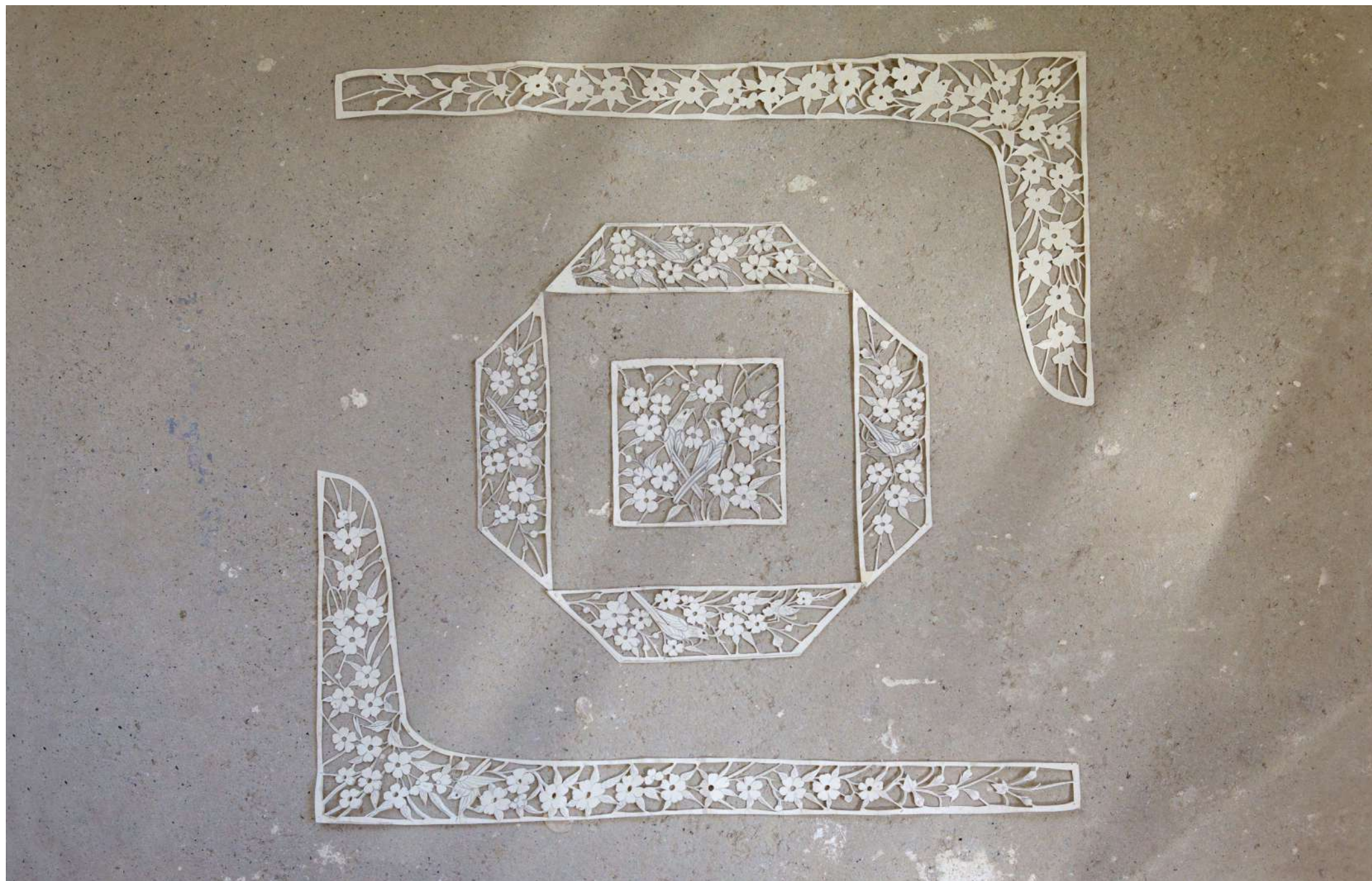
Elisir of Return #4, 2017/2018
photographic print on fine art baryta hahnemuehle
23,7x15,8 cm (framed)



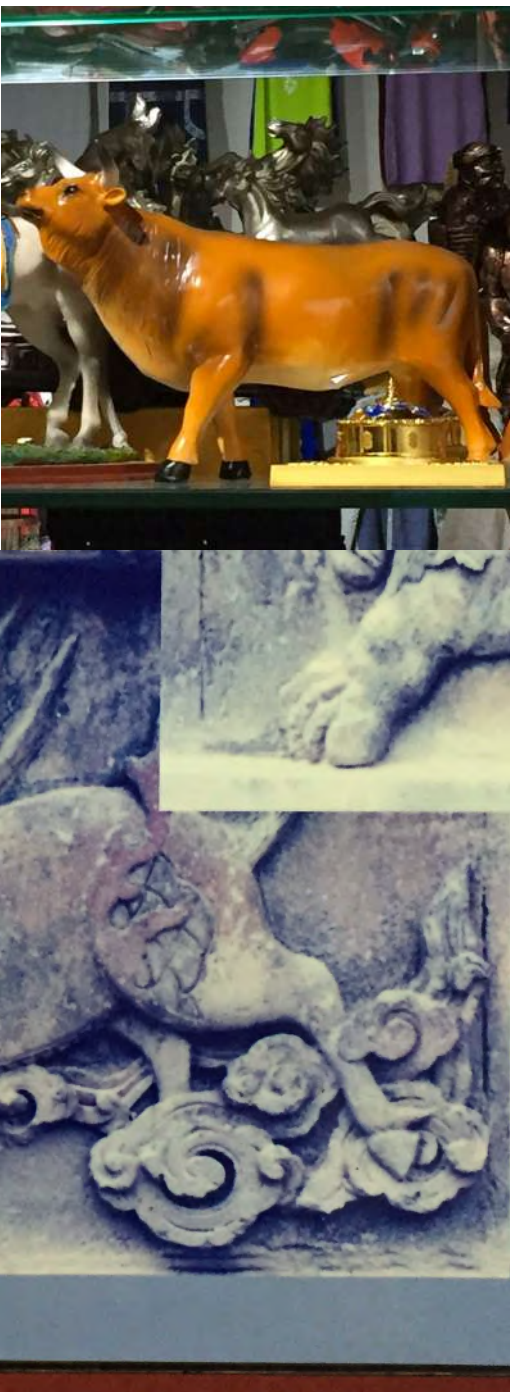
Elisir of Return #5, 2017/2018
photographic print on fine art baryta hahnemuehle
23,7x15,8 cm (framed)



Elisir of Return (installation #3,#4,#5), poster print of variable dimension and 3 photographic prints on fine art baryta hahnemuehle 23,7x15,8 cm (framed)



Elisir of Return (cut out papers), 2018
Miao cut out papers with shapes of birds and flowers.
Site specific intallation, Murate Art District, Florence, Italy



In Search for a Precise Shade of Blue #1, 2019
photographic collage, variable dimensions



In Search for a Precise Shade of Blue #2, 2019
photographic collage, variable dimensions



In Search for a Precise Shade of Blue #3, 2019
photographic collage, variable dimensions



In Search for a Precise Shade of Blue #4, 2019
photographic collage, variable dimensions

The Time of Discretion (the book)

The Time of Discretion is an intimate, slow and relational time. It is also an artistic project, at its first chapter. Besides Italy, it has been developed in the remote areas on the south border of the Gobi Desert and in the Guizhou Province (South China), in search of rituals, ancient textile practices or together in one.

This monography Photos, drawings, stills, collages and stories cross experience and representation, cadenced by a dense theoretical scenario offered by the different contributions in the catalogue.

CURATED BY Veronica Caciolli

TEXTS BY Lisa Mara Batacchi, Sumesh Sharma, Federico Campagna, Valentina Gioia Levy, Xiaomei Wang, Veronica Caciolli

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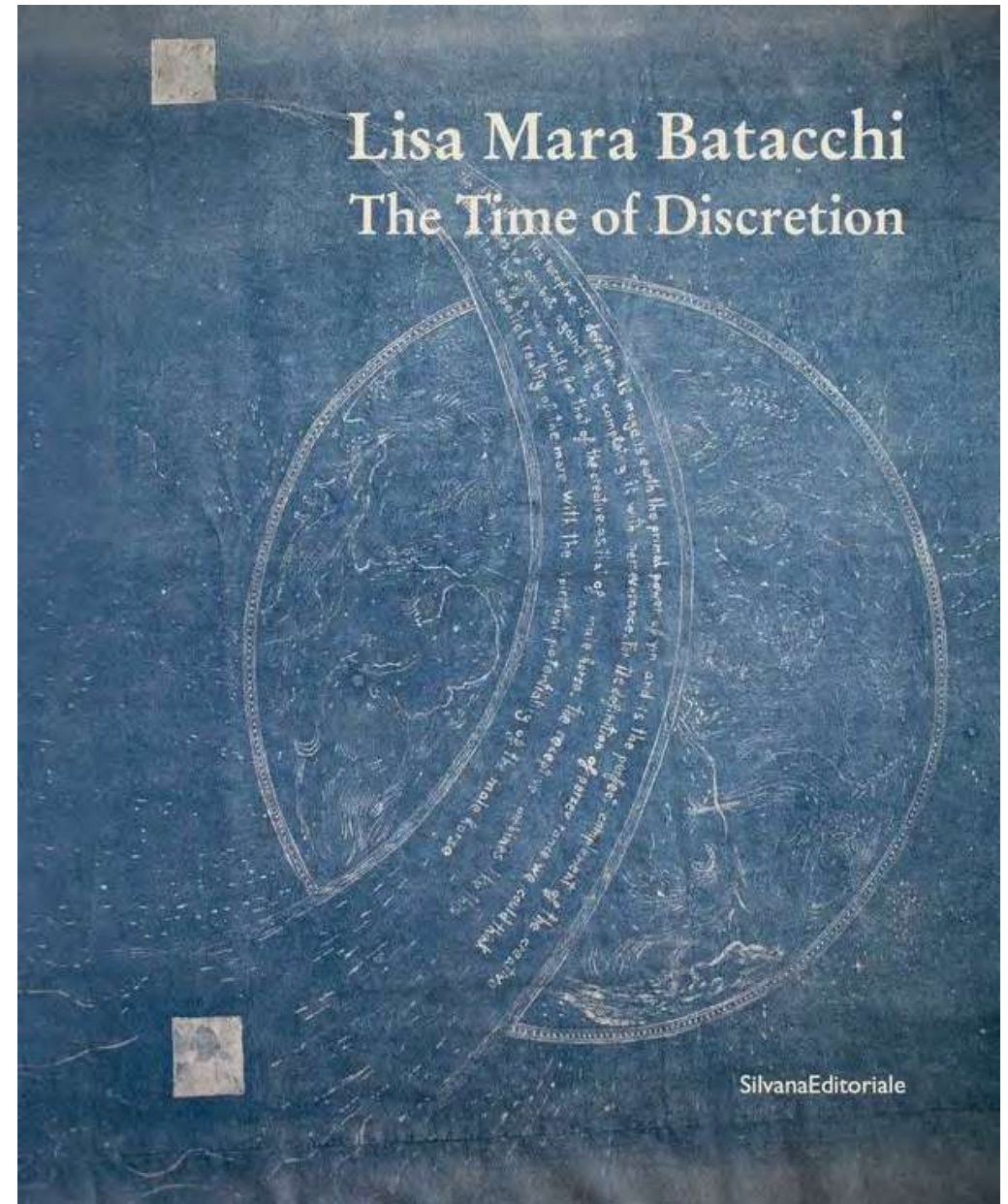
PAGES 152

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YEAR 2020

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The Time of Discretion (film)

<https://vimeo.com/876639433?share=copy>
password: SAB2123

YEAR 2021

LENGH 25"18'

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