

# CLARISSA TOSSIN: *ENCONTRO DAS ÁGUAS* (*MEETING OF WATERS*)

October 8–November 20, 2016



*Meeting of Waters confluence between the dark water of the Rio Negro river and the sandy-colored water of the Rio Solimões with Amazon River in Manaus, Brazil. Photo credit: José Caldas/ BrazilPhotos.com / Alamy Stock Photo.*

JOAN is pleased to present Clarissa Tossin: *Encontro das Águas (Meeting of Waters)*, a delicate and ambitious large-scale installation. Combining the basket weaving patterns of the indigenous Baniwa people, native to the Brazilian Amazon, with satellite images depicting the 900-miles (1,448 kilometers) of the Amazon River from the Manaus Basin (or Port of Manaus) in Brazil to its equatorial drainage point in the Atlantic Ocean, Tossin will exhibit an enormous tapestry whose cuts and weaves evoke the divide between two systems of representation-cultural and ideological—that exist in Manaus itself.

Located within the Amazon rainforest in the Northern region of Brazil, Manaus, the capital city of Amazonas, is situated at the confluence of the Rio Negro (Black River) and the Rio Solimões. The two rivers connect with the Amazon River at the Port of Manaus, where for 3.7 miles (6 kilometers), their nearly black and beige colored waters flow parallel to each other without joining, until the two rivers stream into the Atlantic Ocean.

For her exhibition at JOAN, Tossin weaves the cut strips of the tapestry in opposing directions creating visual breaks in the pattern to depict the physical and political fragmentation of the river and its surroundings. This psychic movement mimics the routes of consumer goods, materials, and people in the region. At the scale of 50 feet long x 4 1/2 feet wide (15.24 meters x 1.37 meters), the piece drapes over the ceiling beams in the gallery and reveals its bilateral construction before curling downwards onto the floor and across the length of the space.

In 1957 Federal Deputy of the Brazilian government Francisco Pereira da Silva (1818-1985) legally amended the city of Manaus into a "Porto Franco" or Free Trade Port, an area where goods and products from the Amazon could be stored. In 1960 the port was designated a Free Trade Zone (ZFM - Zona Franca de Manaus) and by 1967 its surrounding areas were formally extended to 6,200 square miles (16,057 kilometers). This mass deregulation lured foreign business interests with tax incentives, reduced and nearly obliterated laws protecting the deforestation of the Amazon rainforest, and offered an enormity of landmass to commercial, industrial, and agricultural industries.

Currently, Manaus is the headquarters of various consumer production plants, including Apple, Sony, LG, Panasonic, Coca-Cola, Pepsi-Cola, Honda Motorcycles, Harley-Davidson, and Yamaha Motorcycles, among others. Under the ZFM, the Port of Manaus, with its direct access to the open Atlantic Ocean, is the lifeline of these foreign corporations and a detriment to the Amazon rainforest. The consequences of massive international exchange on the natural and vulnerable corridor of the Amazon River contributes to the deterioration of the rainforest, and severely impacts the habitats of indigenous cultures in the region.

Using terra cotta, the traditional material used by the Baniwa people to make pots, urns, food containers, and other earthenware, Tossin merges these spaces of contradictory and contentious terrain with objects cast from a selection of mass produced products in the region. In contrast to the fragmentation of the tapestry, the terra cotta melds a fundamental material of an ancient Amazonian cultural history with replicas of consumer objects, making visible the production and circulation of consumer goods while stripping them of their intended function.

Clarissa Tossin earned her BFA in 2000 from Fundação Armando Álvares Penteado in São Paulo, Brazil, and her MFA in 2009 from California Institute of the Arts, Los Angeles. She was awarded a Residency Fellowship at Fundação Joaquim Nabuco in Recife, Brazil, (2015), and an Emerging Artist Fellowship from the California Community Foundation,

(2014). She participated in Artpace, an international artist-in-residence program in San Antonio, Texas, where she developed and exhibited the multimedia installation *Brasília, Cars, Pools and Other Modernities*, (2013), which was later included in *Made in L.A. 2014*, (2014), at the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles. Some of her solo exhibitions include the Museum of Latin American Art, Long Beach, (2015); Samuel Freeman Gallery, Los Angeles, (2015); Galeria Luisa Strina, São Paulo, (2014); Blaffer Art Museum, University of Houston, (2013); and Sicardi Gallery, Houston, (2013). She has participated in group exhibitions including, *Trans-Americas: A sign, A situation, A concept*, Museum London, Ontario, (2016); *United States of Latin America*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Detroit, (2015); *Unsettled Landscapes*, SITE Santa Fe, New Mexico, (2014); *Bringing the World into the World*, Queens Museum, New York, (2014); and *When Attitudes Became Form Become Attitudes*, CCA Wattis Institute, San Francisco, (2012); among others.

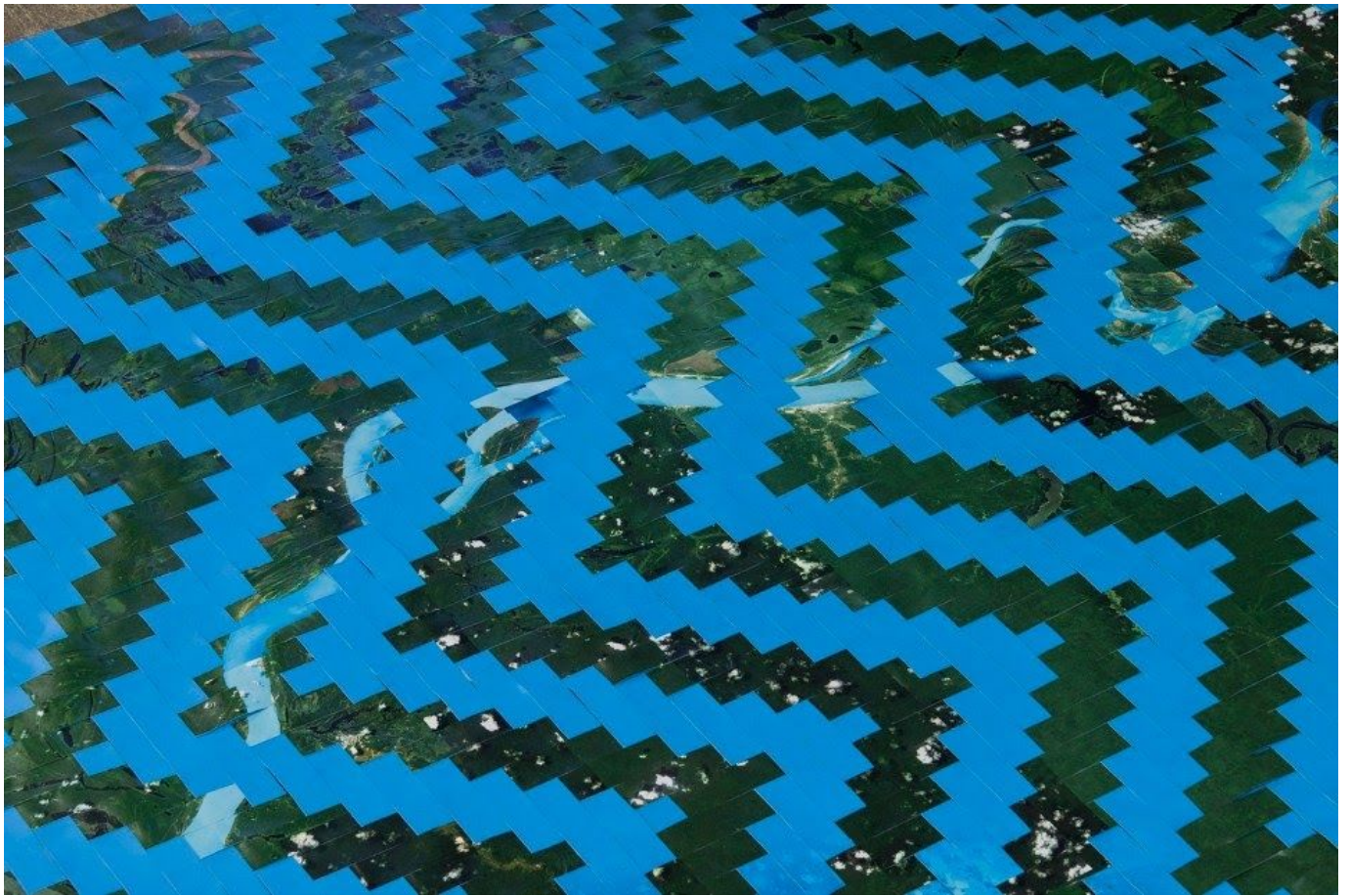
Clarissa Tossin: *Encontro das Águas (Meeting of Waters)* is organized by Gladys-Katherina Hernando.



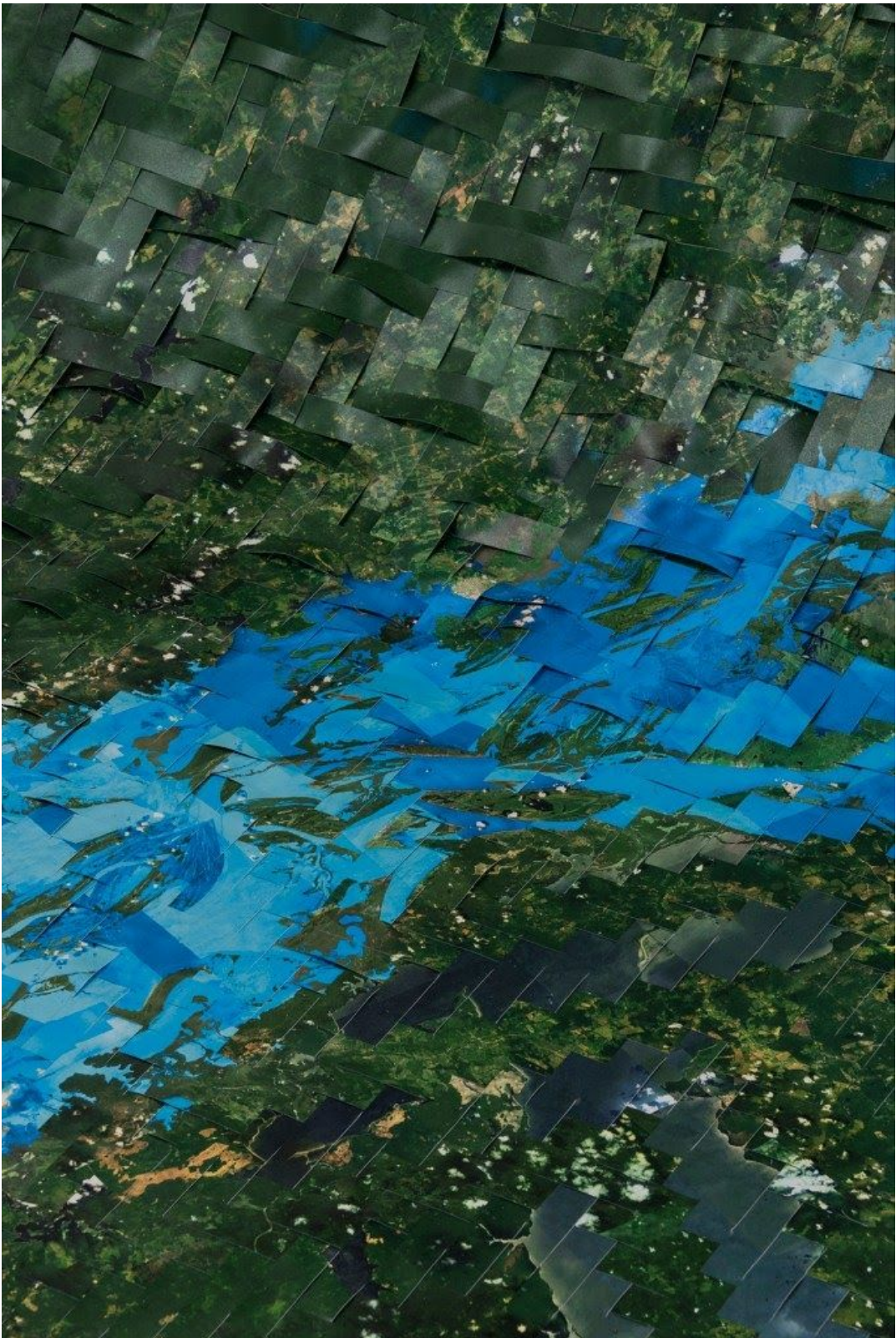
*Installation view of Clarissa Tossin: Encontro das Águas (Meeting of Waters), 2016,  
JOAN, Los Angeles, Photo by Jeff McLane.*



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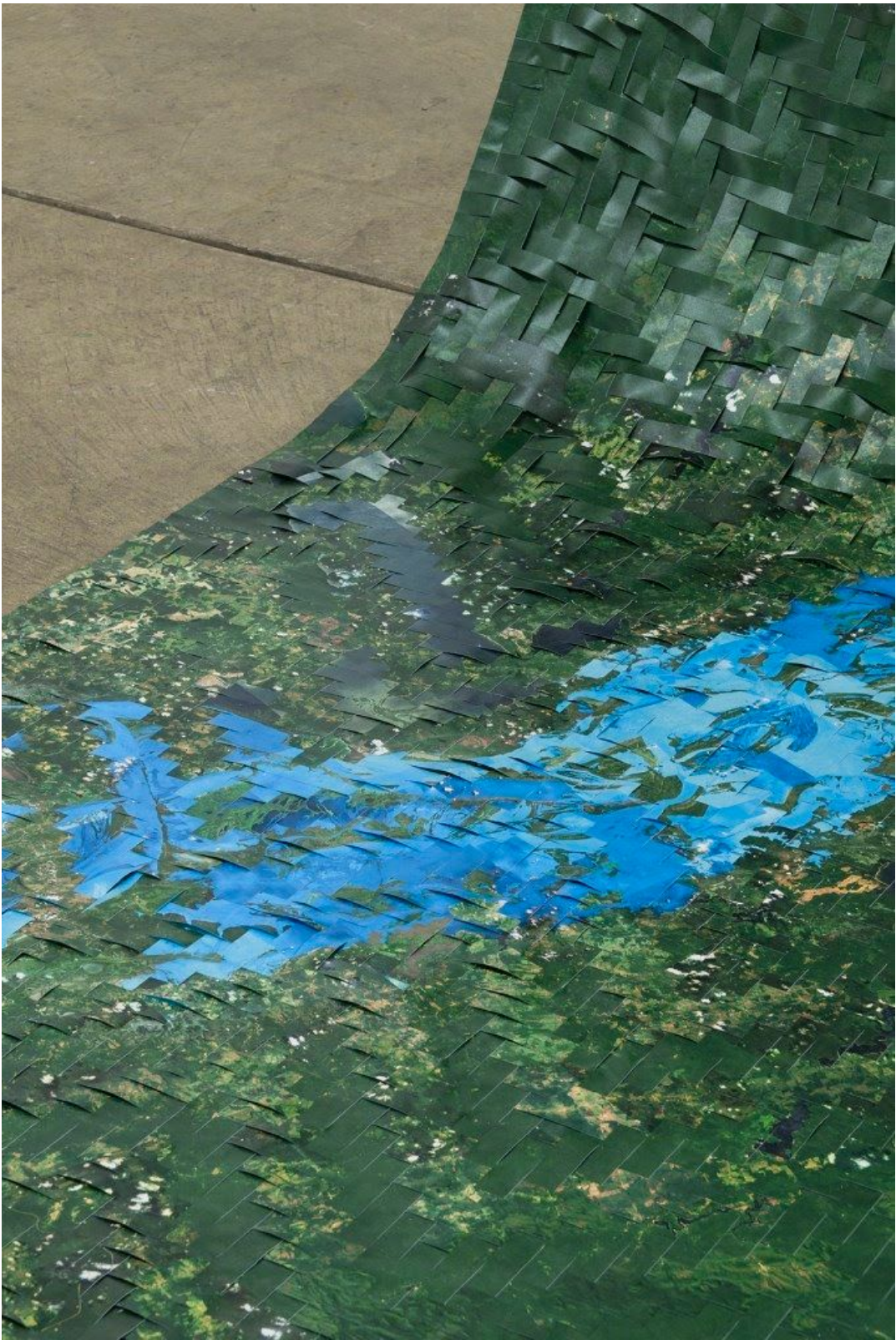
*Detail view of Clarissa Tossin: Encontro das Águas (Meeting of Waters), 2016, JOAN, Los Angeles, Photo by Jeff McLane.*



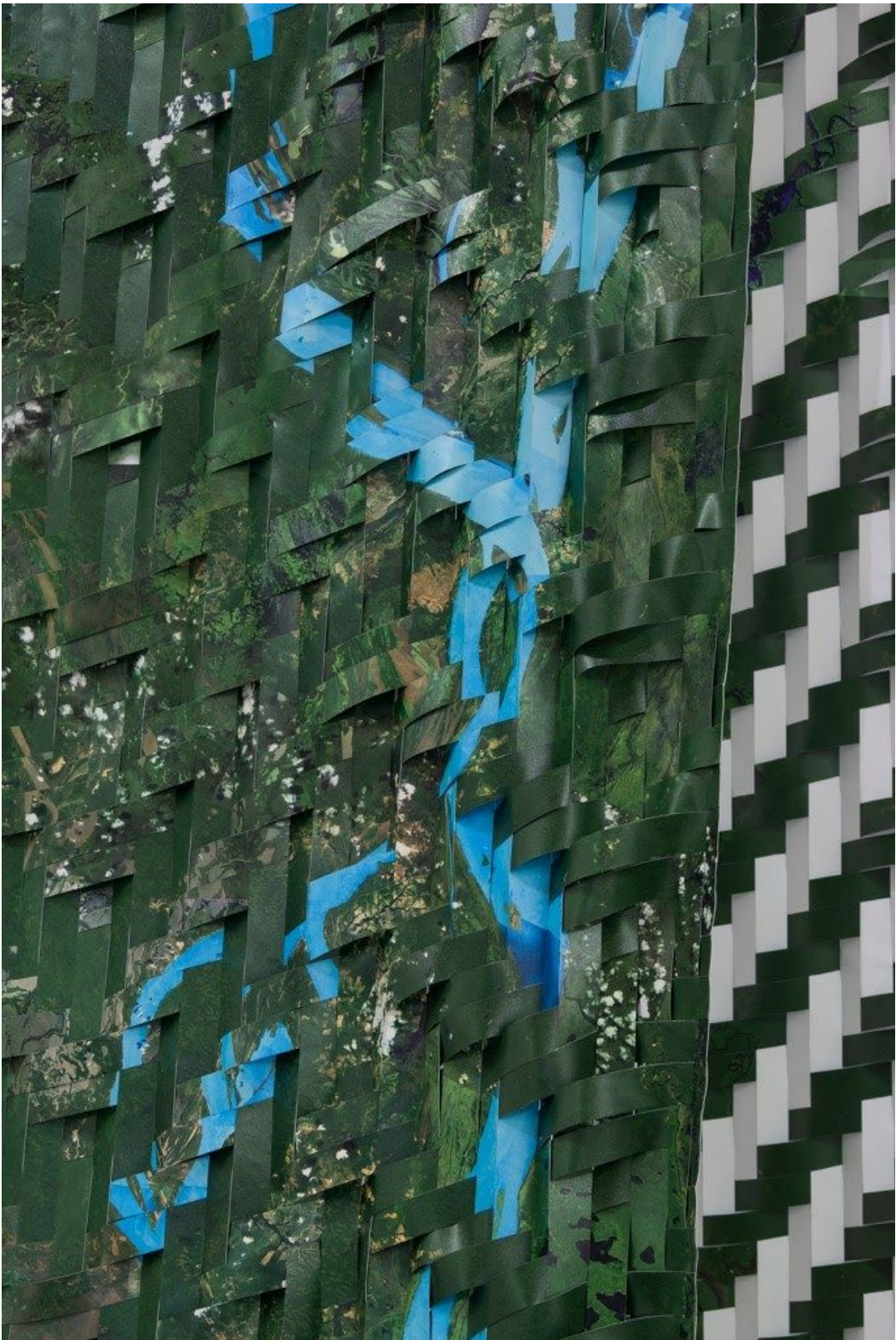
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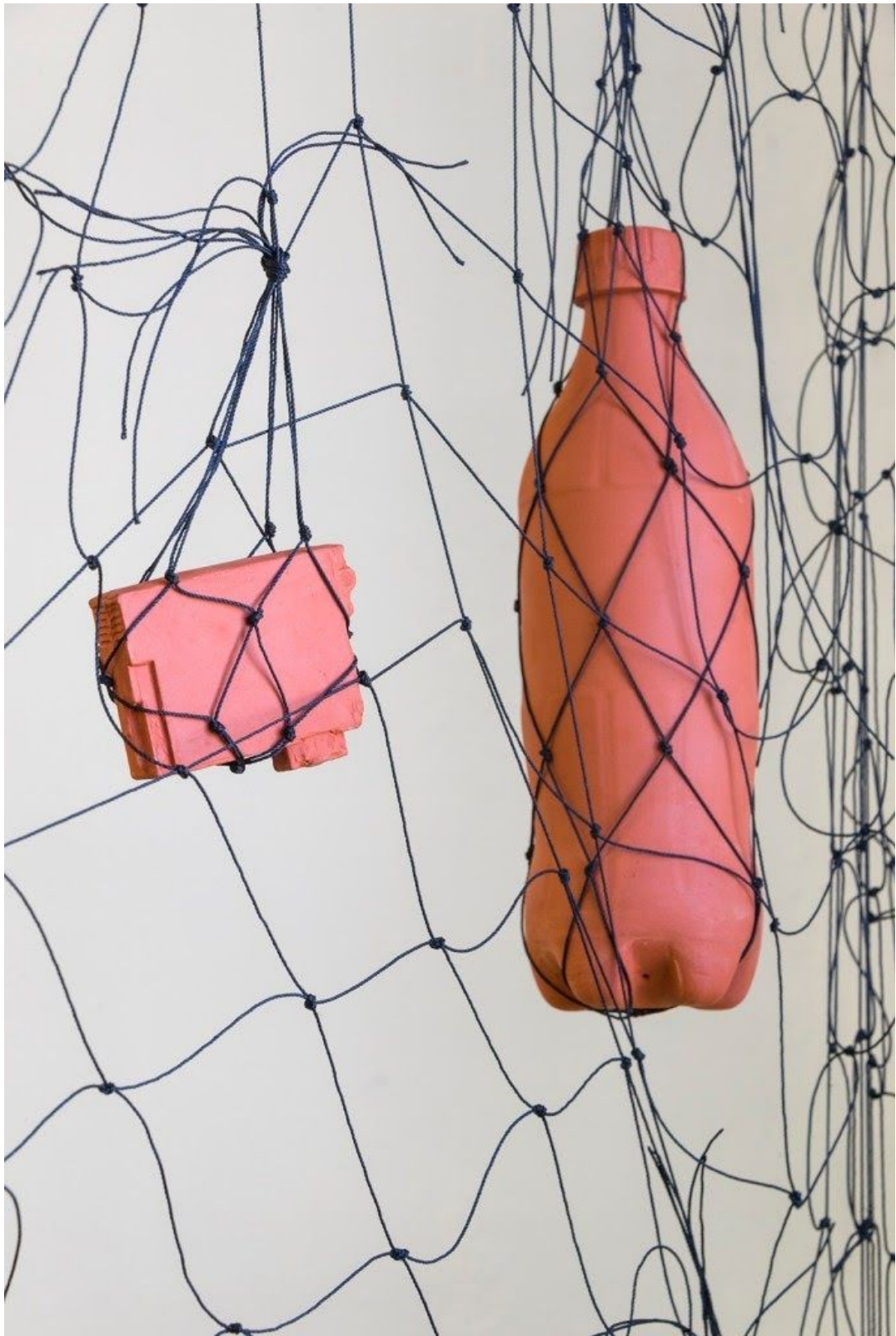
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*Installation view of Clarissa Tossin, Zona Franca de Manaus, 2016, JOAN, Los Angeles,  
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