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Tromarama
Auto Ally



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Tromarama *Auto Ally*

September 6 – October 26, 2024

DOCUMENT Chicago
1709 W Chicago Ave
Chicago, IL 60622

DOCUMENT is delighted to present *Auto Ally*, Tromarama's second solo show with the gallery.

In *Auto Ally*, Tromarama explores the blurred boundaries between leisure and labor, relaxation and productivity, personal and public spheres, especially within the context of the growing platform economy. The works aim to dissect how digital platforms reshape social behaviors and economic practices, highlighting the tensions and contradictions inherent in this evolving landscape.

Inside the exhibition space, wallpaper covers three of the walls, displaying close-up images of bare skin, a red mark, a purple circle, and a glitch effect where these images overlap. The visual elements ambiguously blend notions of pain, violence, and wellness.

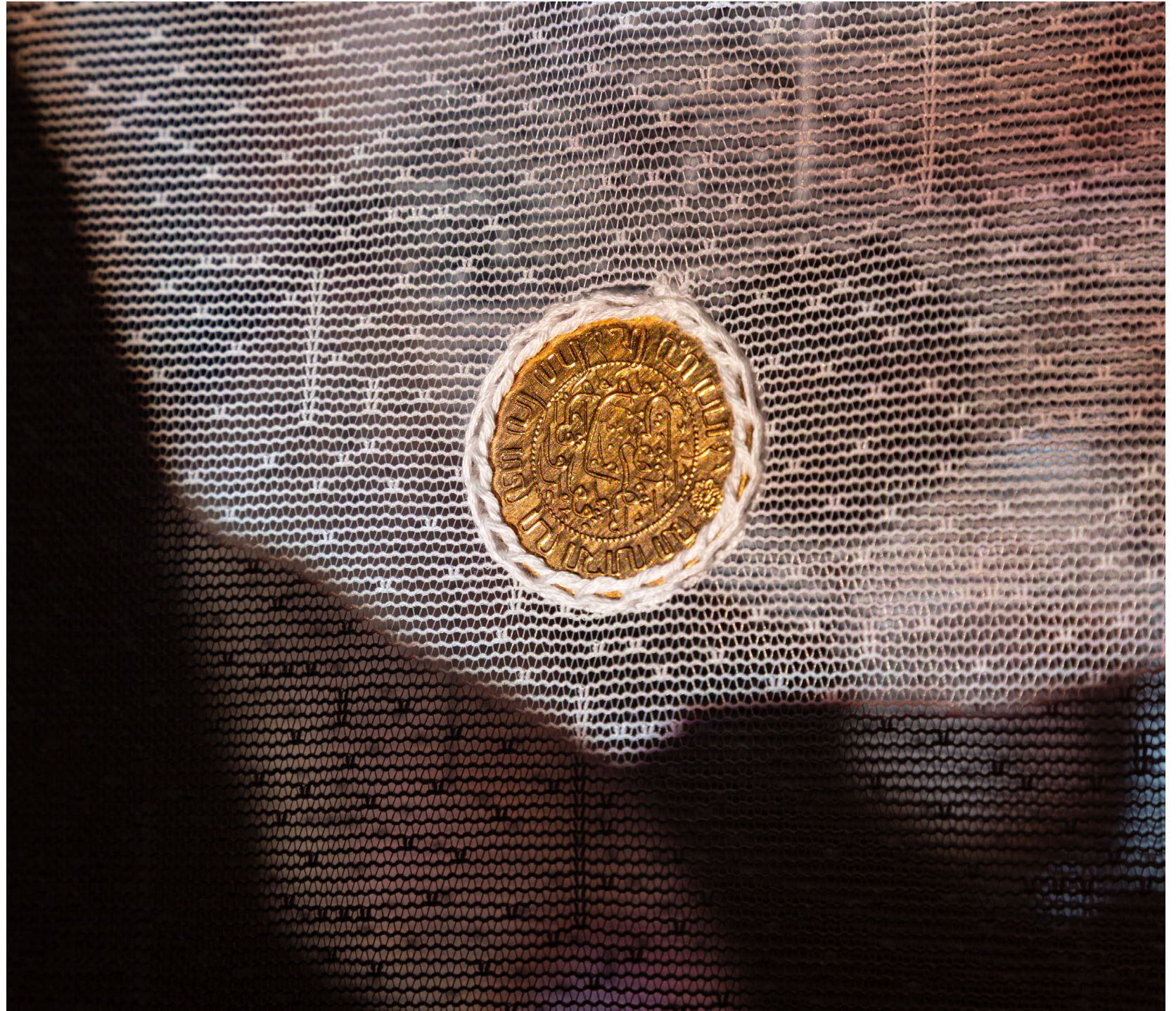




The project began when one of the artists caught a cold and sought a coin to perform *kerokan*, a traditional Indonesian practice used to relieve colds, muscle aches, and other ailments. *Kerokan* involves scraping the skin, typically on the back, with a coin after applying oil, such as eucalyptus or coconut oil. The process is believed to improve blood circulation and expel “bad wind” or negative energy from the body. During *kerokan*, red or purple marks often appear on the skin, which are seen as signs that the treatment is effective.

To find the right coin for *kerokan*, the artists searched an online marketplace and discovered many sellers offering the 2 ½ cent Nederlandsch–Indie coin. This coin was minted between 1914–1945, when Indonesia was a Dutch colony. However, after Indonesia declared its independence in 1945, the Netherlands Indies currency gradually became obsolete. As the 2 ½ cent coin lost its monetary value, people began repurposing it for *kerokan* due to its convenient size and smooth edges, which made it ideal for therapeutic practice.

In *Sea Change*, a 2 ½ cent Nederlandsch Indie coin is stitched with metallic copper thread onto a digital fabric print that features an image of the eye’s fundus. The fundus, which includes vital structures such as the retina, optic disc, macula, and blood vessels, is the interior surface opposite the lens. In *This Currency is Spasming Me*, the same 2 ½ cent Nederlandsch Indie coin is stitched onto mosquito nets—a lightweight fabric commonly used in Indonesia to cover beds and protect sleepers from mosquito bites. This creates a familiar bedroom atmosphere, reminiscent of the artists’ experiences across various cities in Indonesia. The mosquito net, adorned with the stitched coins, is illuminated by a video projection displaying thumb movements and the blinking of an eye. Both works underscore how online platforms have turned attention – tracking views, taps, and clicks – into their primary currency. Additionally, they reflect the significant economic transitions that have shaped Indonesia, particularly the shift from a colonial economy to a modern, platform–based economy.





Sea change, 2024

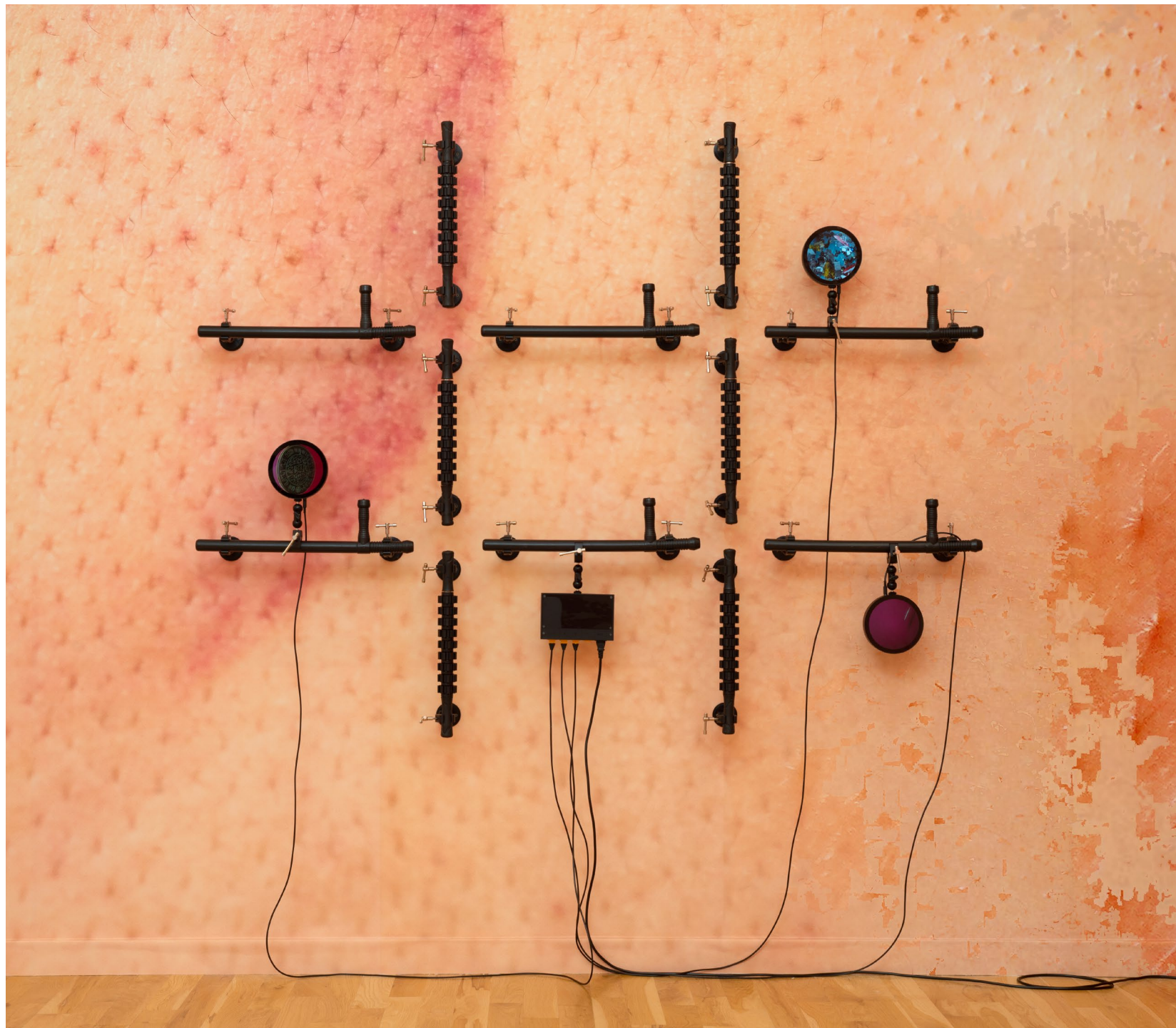
Digital print on fabric, 2 ½ cent Nederlandsch Indie coin

34 x 45 ¾ in.

86.5 x 116.5 cm.



This currency is spasming me, 2024
Digital projection, 2 ½ cent Nederlandsch Indie
coin, mosquito net
Dimensions variable
Edition of 3 (#1/3)



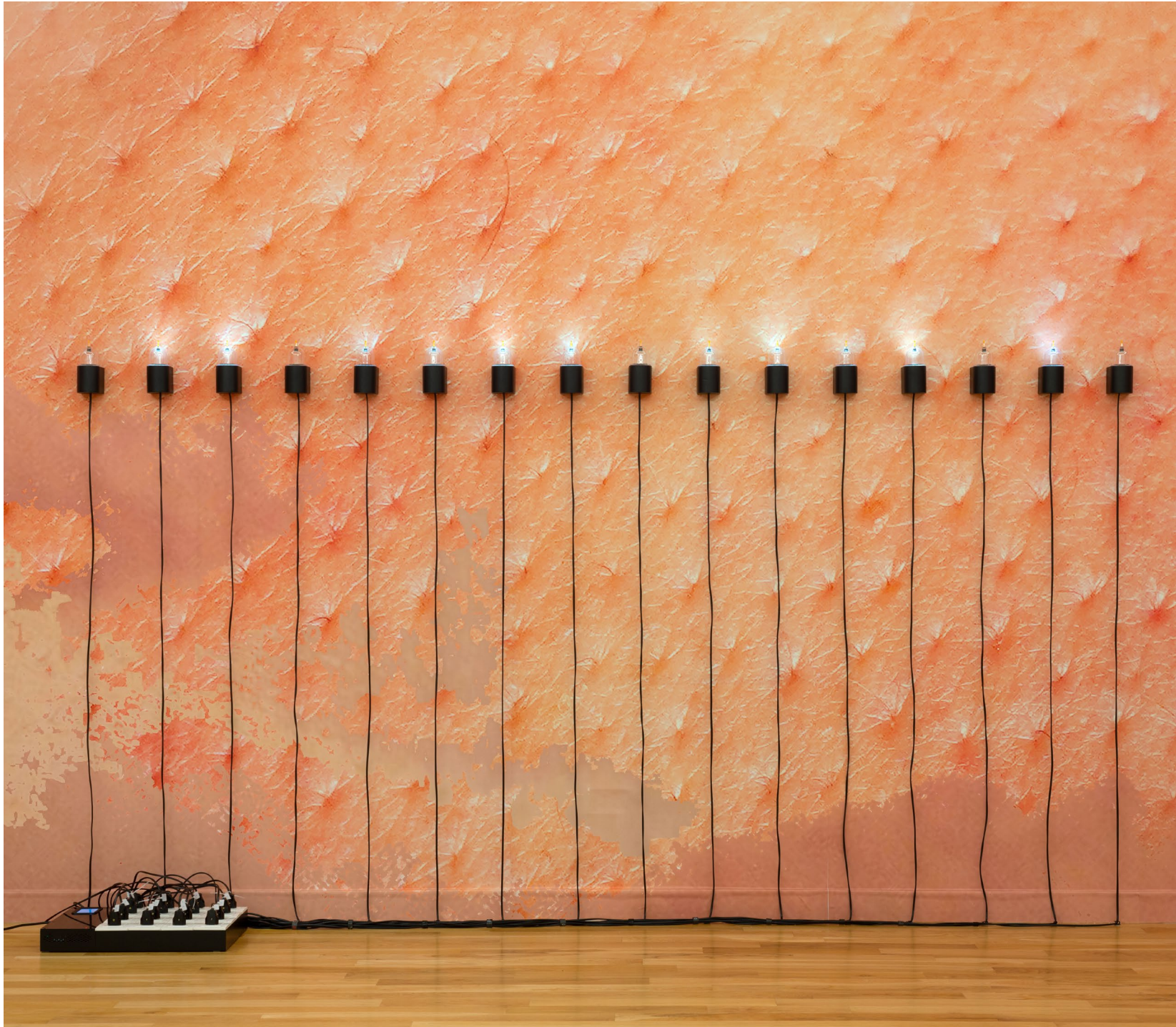
Auto Ally, the work that lends its name to the exhibition, features massage roller sticks and side-handle baton sticks arranged to form a fence-like structure. Attached to some of these sticks are three circular monitors. One of the monitors displays a 2 ½ cent Nederlandsch Indie coin spinning on its axis, while a second monitor shows bare, reddened skin on both sides of the spinning coin, encircling the screens. The background video on these monitors includes dark red flashes, captured from the artist's skin using a mobile phone camera. Additionally, a third monitor depicts various domestic objects flying around in the artist's private spaces, such as the bedroom, living room, and terrace.

Auto Ally, 2024

Massage roller stick, side handle baton stick, monitor, magic arm, clamp

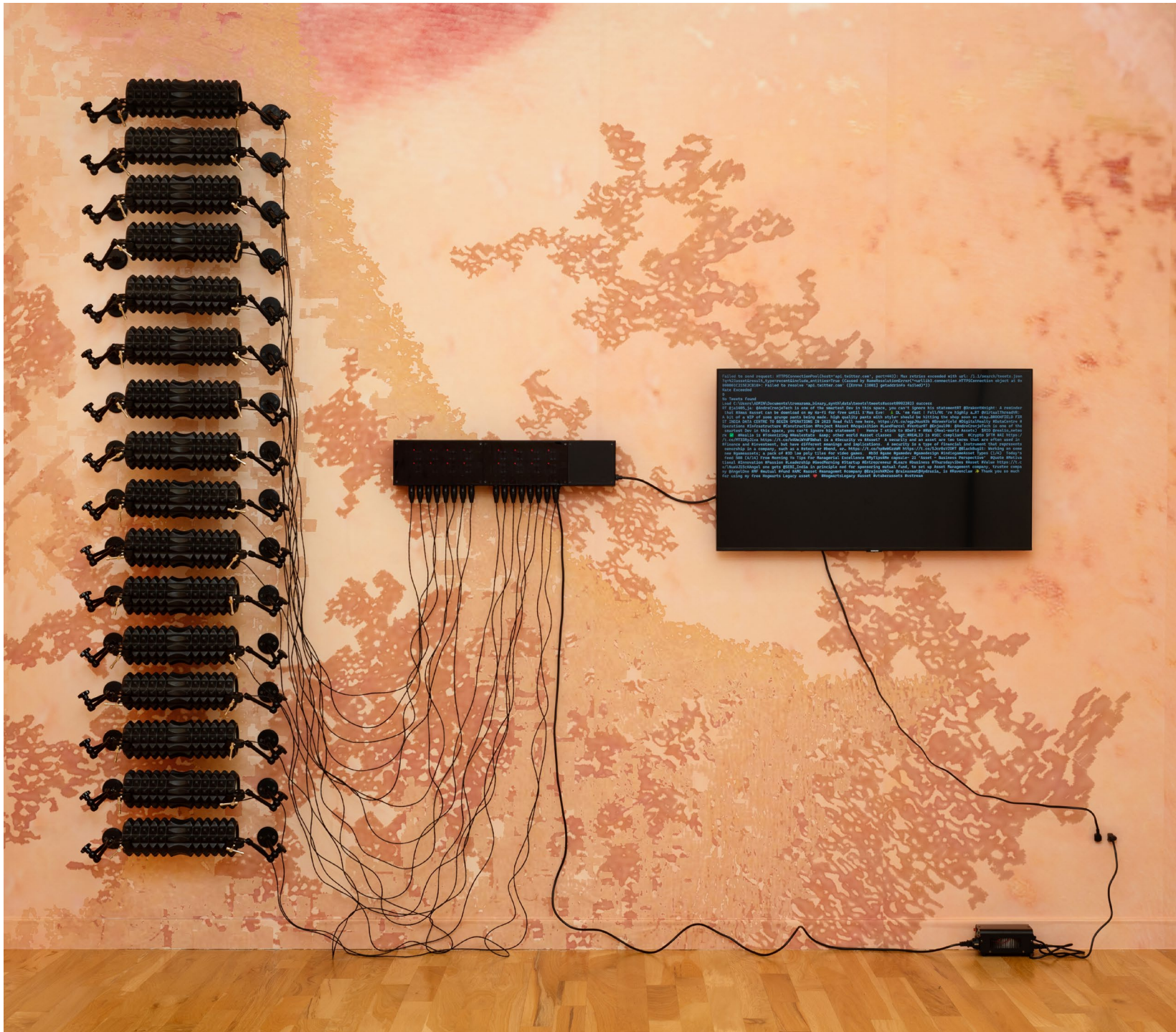
Dimensions variable

Edition of 3 (#1/3)



Purple Sims consists of an installation of sixteen wall lamps, commonly used on the exterior of households, with a cupping glass standing on top of each lamp. The wall lamps are activated by tweets using the hashtag “#force”, performing blinking dances choreographed by a binary code–translating machine. Cupping therapy, an alternative medicine technique, involves the use of small, bell-shaped glasses. A vacuum is created inside the cups, either by heating the air or using a suction pump, causing the skin beneath to rise and redden, often turning purple. The appearance of the color purple, known as an ‘index of error,’ can be interpreted both physiologically and digitally. It indicates that something has gone wrong or deviated from the norm—whether it’s a physical injury in the body or a malfunction in a digital system.

Purple sims, 2024
Wall lamp, cupping glass, custom computer program, #force
Dimensions variable
Edition of 3 (#1/3)



Sore Sore features sixteen foam rollers—cylindrical tools made of dense foam commonly used for self-myofascial release (SMR). In this installation, an algorithmically generated binary synthesizer distributes sound through 16 speakers embedded within the foam rollers. The sound is generated by analyzing the use of the hashtag “#asset” on social media platforms and is inspired by the sound of electromyography (EMG) signals. EMG is a technique that measures the electrical activity produced by skeletal muscles during contraction. The sound characteristics can vary depending on the type of muscle activity, ranging from strong contractions to subtle twitches. “Sore” is an Indonesian word meaning ‘afternoon’, symbolizing the time when people transition mentally and physically from work responsibilities to personal activities and relaxation.

Sore sore, 2024

Foam Roller, speaker, mini PC, monitor, magic arm, clamp, custom computer program, #asset

Dimensions variable

Edition of 3 (#1/3)



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Established in 2006 in Bandung, Indonesia, Tromarama is formed by Febie Babyrose (b. 1985 Jakarta, Indonesia), Ruddy Hatumena (b. 1984, Manama, Bahrain), and Herbert Hans (b. 1984, Jakarta, Indonesia). Selected solo exhibitions include *Contraflow*, Kiang Malingue, Hong Kong (2023); *Personalia*, ROH, Jakarta (2022); *The Lost Jungle*, Museum MACAN, Jakarta (2021); *Amphibia*, Centre A, Vancouver, (2017); Open Eye Gallery for the Liverpool Biennial, Liverpool, (2016); Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (2015); *MAM PROJECT 012*, Mori Art Museum, Tokyo (2010). Their work has been featured in group exhibitions such as *Digital Diaries*, Julia Stoschek Foundation, Düsseldorf, Germany (2024); *84 Steps*, Kunstinstituut Melly, Rotterdam (2023); *CLOUD WALKERS*, Leeum Art Museum, Seoul (2022); *Not In My Name*, CCA, Tel Aviv, (2022); *Contemporary Worlds: Indonesia*, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra (2019); the 2015 Jakarta Biennale, Gudang Sarinah Ekosistem, Jakarta (2015); and the 11th Gwangju Biennale: *The Eight Climate (What Does Art Do?)*, Gwangju, (2016).

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