



LÉONARD *PONGO*

APOPHENIA

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Saturday 18 October – Saturday 22 November 2025

Project Loop is pleased to present a solo exhibition of new works by our third resident artist *Leonard Pongo*.

Pongo is a Belgian-Congolese artist whose lens-based practice spans various printing techniques, textile, video and installation. Working through layered and tactile compositions, he investigates the relationship between image, material and the living environment. His installations evoke inhabited spaces, assembled from objects, fabrics and imagery that trace connections to the Congolese landscape and its ancestral narratives.

Pongo approaches landscape not as a static view but as a dynamic, sentient entity. Using modified cameras capable of capturing light beyond the visible spectrum, he constructs visual worlds that straddle the threshold between the real and the imagined. Through reflective and translucent materials, his works generate shifting perspectives that unfold as viewers move through space, creating a sense of elusive, composite reality.

For Pongo, these mutable surfaces embody the idea of the land as a living, knowledgeable being, one that cannot be fully represented or possessed, but must instead be approached through relation and resonance. His works operate as “living fragments”: objects that breathe and merge, inviting an understanding grounded in experience rather than depiction.

Apophenia takes its name from the human tendency to perceive meaning or connection within seemingly unrelated phenomena. Originating from Pongo’s artist publication with CFC Éditions (Brussels), the project reimagines the image as an autonomous object, one that escapes the conventions of documentation to exist as a hybrid of painting, mirror and fragment of land.

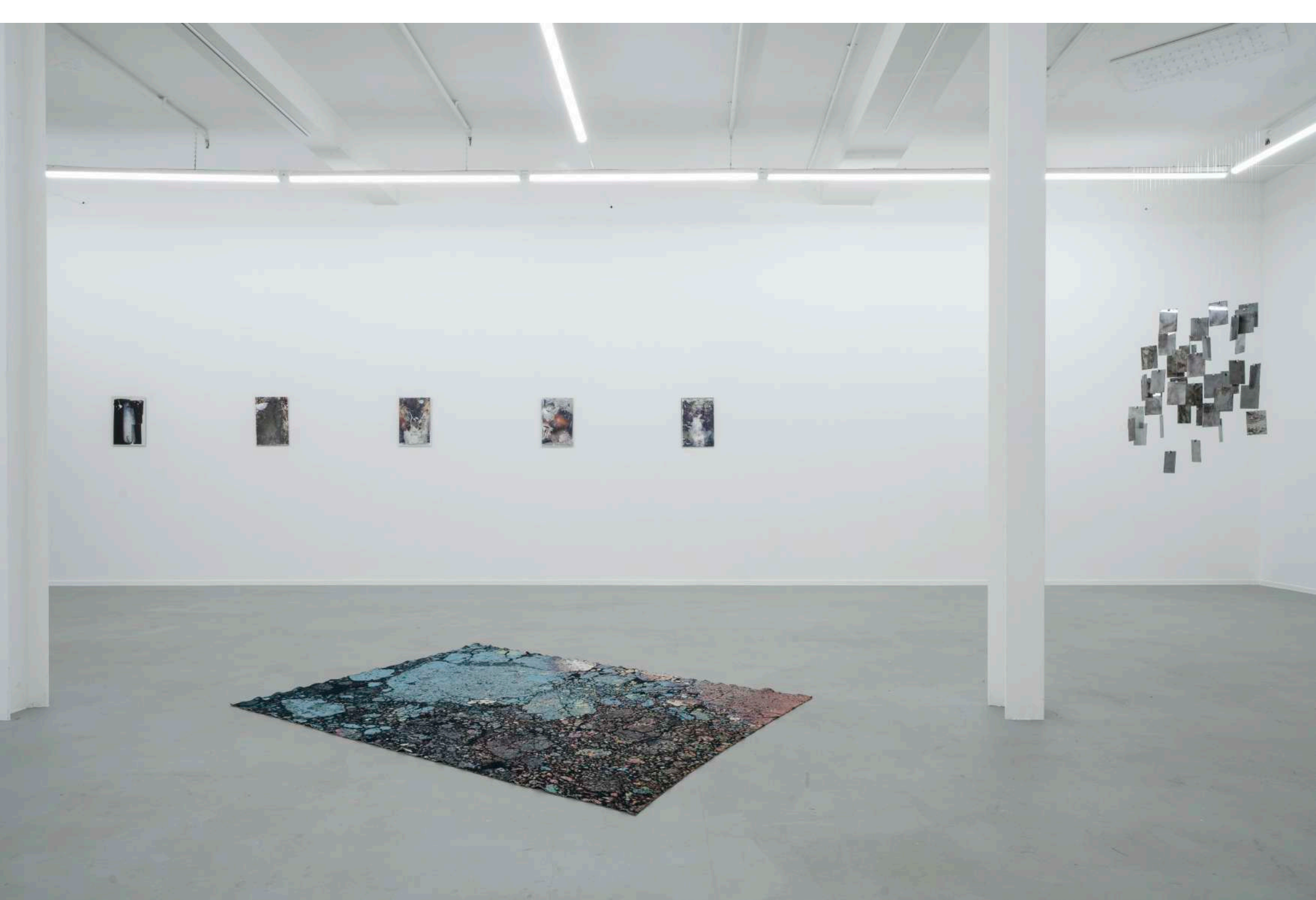
Tribute to Tshibola continues Pongo’s exploration of fragments. The installation comprises mirrored photographic transfers that together recompose the image of a banana tree seen from multiple perspectives/angles, a symbol of vital importance in Congolese cosmology, associated with regeneration, continuity and rootedness.

Each mirrored fragment possesses its own distinct reality, yet together they assemble into a collective body. The work functions as both object and portal: a threshold through which the viewer is invited to consider the landscape not as backdrop but as active presence. In *Tribute Tshibola*, the Congolese land becomes a vessel for knowledge and transformation, an entity that reflects and refracts both memory and light.

Each artefact is a residue of an encounter, a crystallisation of the artist’s interaction with the earth. These objects hold a dual nature: they are at once remains of origin and autonomous presences in their own right.

Through *Apophenia* and related works, Pongo invites reflection on how meaning is constructed, resisted and refracted through the act of looking. His practice challenges the impulse to explain or master what is seen, offering instead an experience of opacity, a contemplative space where perception becomes porous, and the boundary between self and landscape dissolves.

LEONARD PONGO (b.1988 BE/DRC) is a visual artist and filmmaker working between the Democratic Republic of Congo and Belgium. Deeply rooted in Congolese landscapes, philosophies, and craft traditions, his practice interlaces photography with textile objects, experimental printing techniques, and moving images to form immersive mixed-media installations. Dividing his time between long-term projects in the DRC, teaching in Kinshasa, and commissioned work, Pongo is committed to expanding the visibility of African visual narratives. He is co-director of The Photographic Collective, a platform dedicated to supporting and amplifying the voices of African artists. In Belgium, he mentors emerging practitioners at MINO Lab alongside Otobong Nkanga and serves as an associate researcher at the Academy of Fine Arts in Antwerp. Across these roles, Pongo cultivates a practice that is at once artistic, pedagogical, and collaborative, situating his work at the intersection of image-making, cultural memory, and collective imagination.







TRIBUTE TO TSHIBOLA

2025

40 photographic transfers, paint, glass,
timber, fishing line, hooks and clamps

260 x 90 x 50 cm /

102.36 x 35.43 x 19.68 in

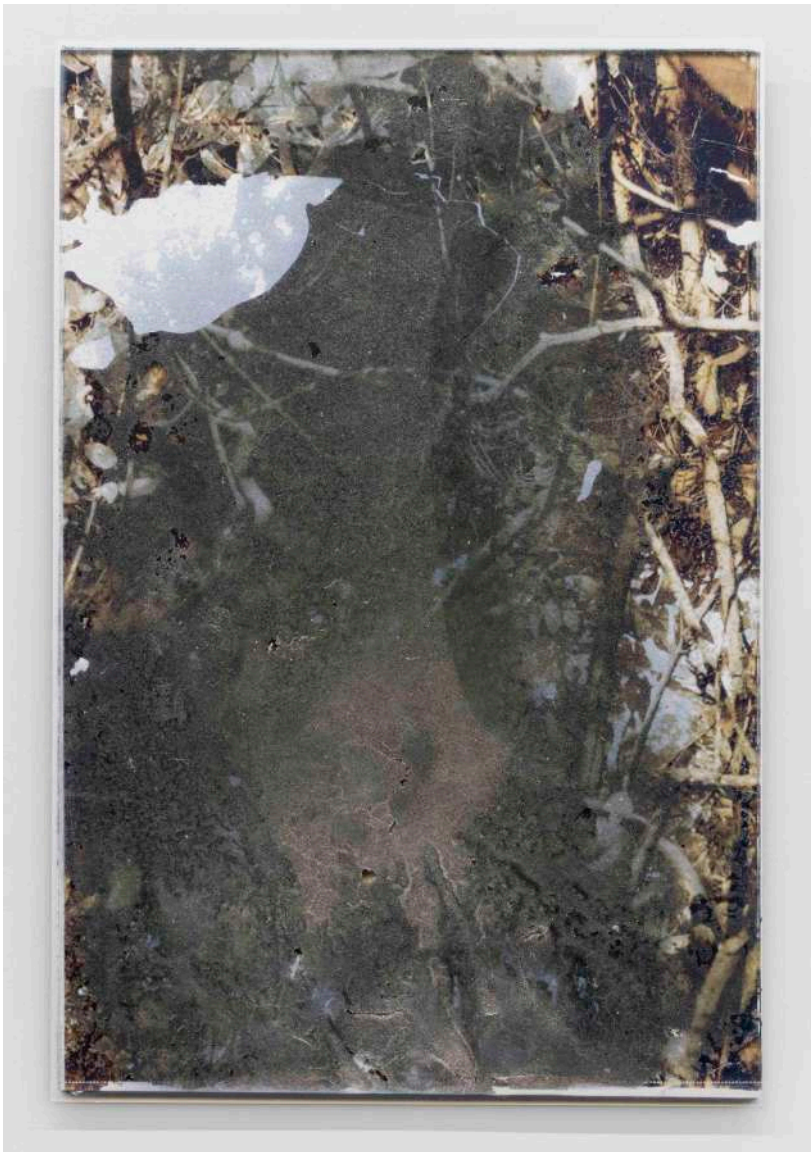


*UNTITLED V (FROM THE
APOPHENIA SERIES)*

2025

Inkjet print on 340g Hahnemuhle photo
rag metallic paper

45 x 30 cm / 17.41 x 11.81 in

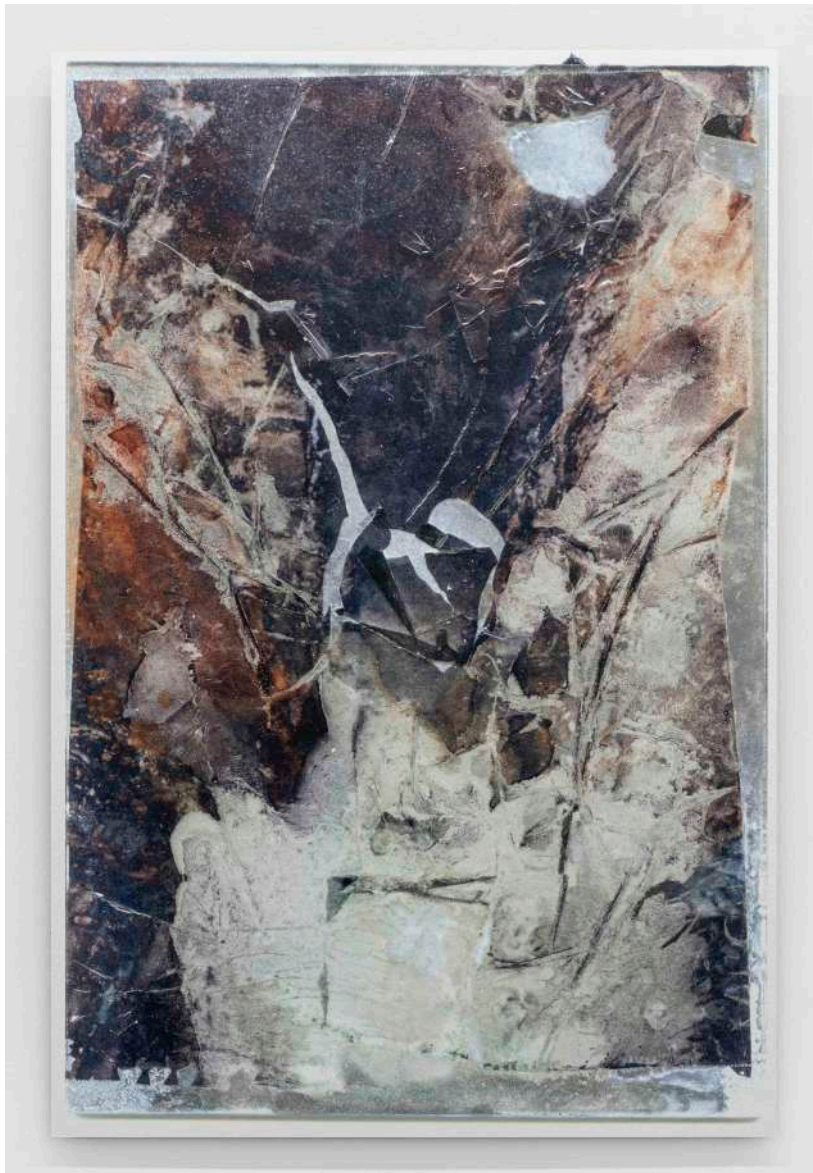


*UNTITLED IV (FROM THE
APOPHENIA SERIES)*

2025

Inkjet print on 340g Hahnemuhle photo
rag metallic paper

45 x 30 cm / 17.41 x 11.81 in



*UNTITLED III (FROM THE
APOPHENIA SERIES)*

2025

Inkjet print on 340g Hahnemuhle photo
rag metallic paper

45 x 30 cm / 17.41 x 11.81 in



*UNTITLED II (FROM THE
APOPHENIA SERIES)*

2025

Inkjet print on 340g Hahnemuhle photo
rag metallic paper

45 x 30 cm / 17.41 x 11.81 in

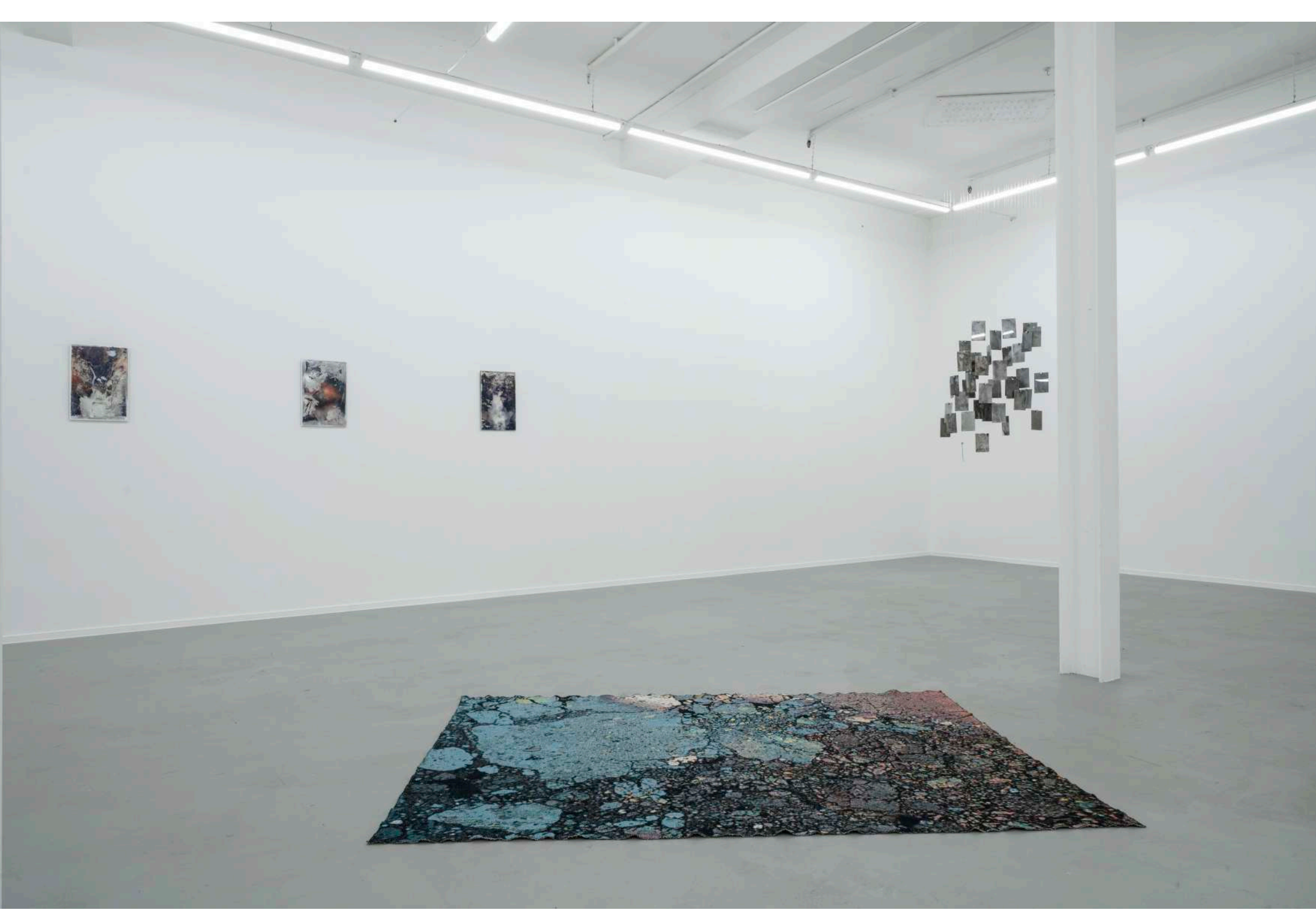


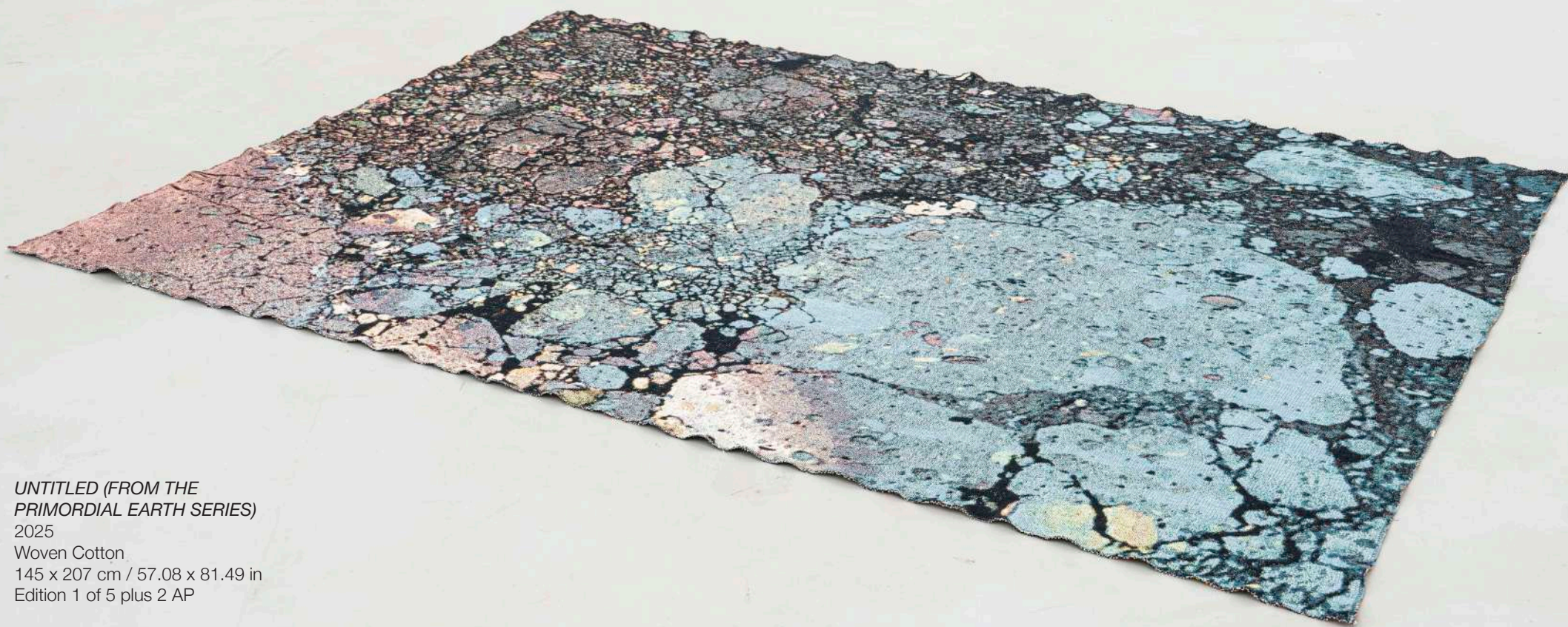
*UNTITLED I (FROM THE
APOPHENIA SERIES)*

2025

Inkjet print on 340g Hahnemuhle photo
rag metallic paper

45 x 30 cm / 17.41 x 11.81 in





*UNTITLED (FROM THE
PRIMORDIAL EARTH SERIES)*

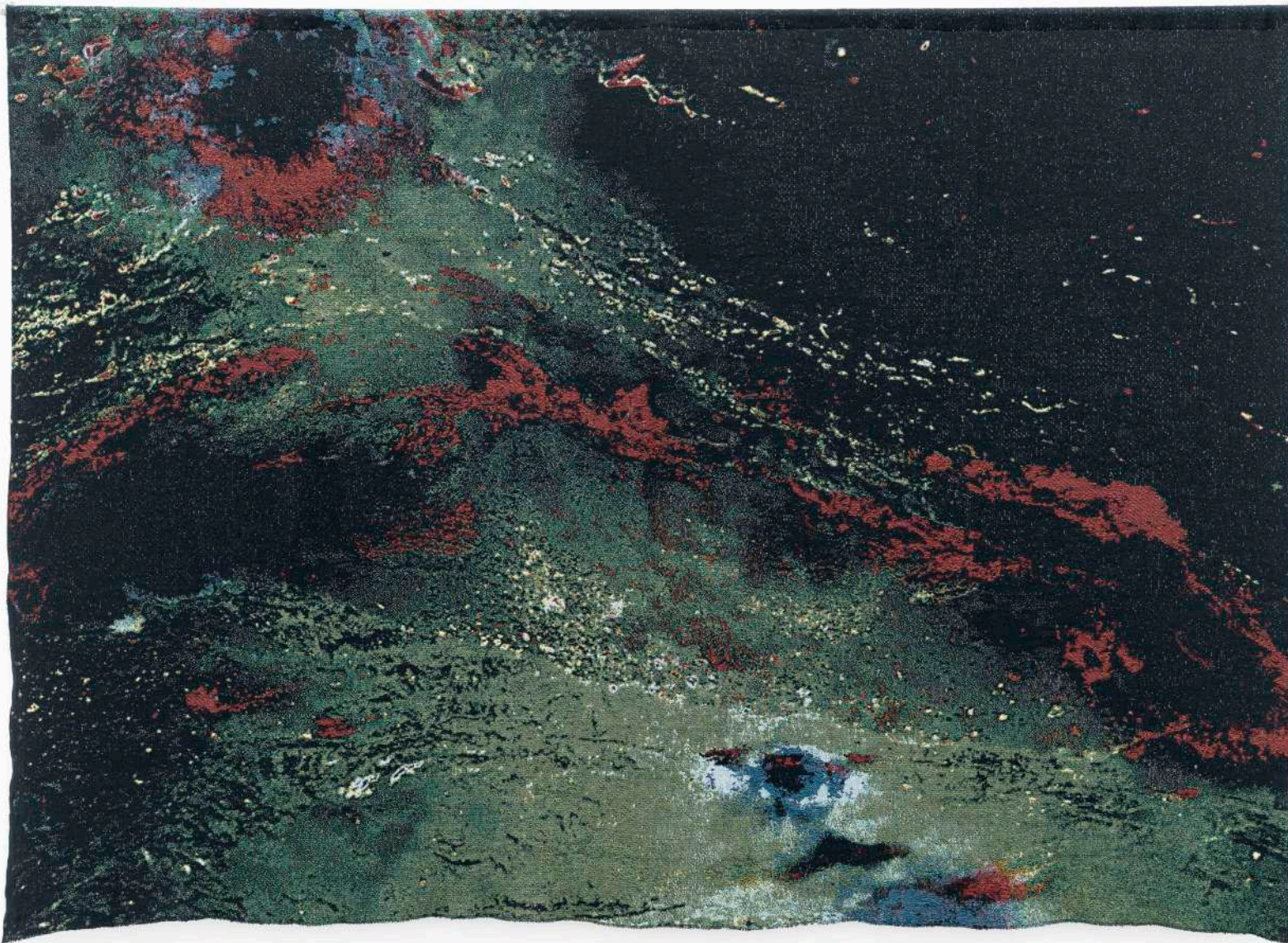
2025

Woven Cotton

145 x 207 cm / 57.08 x 81.49 in

Edition 1 of 5 plus 2 AP





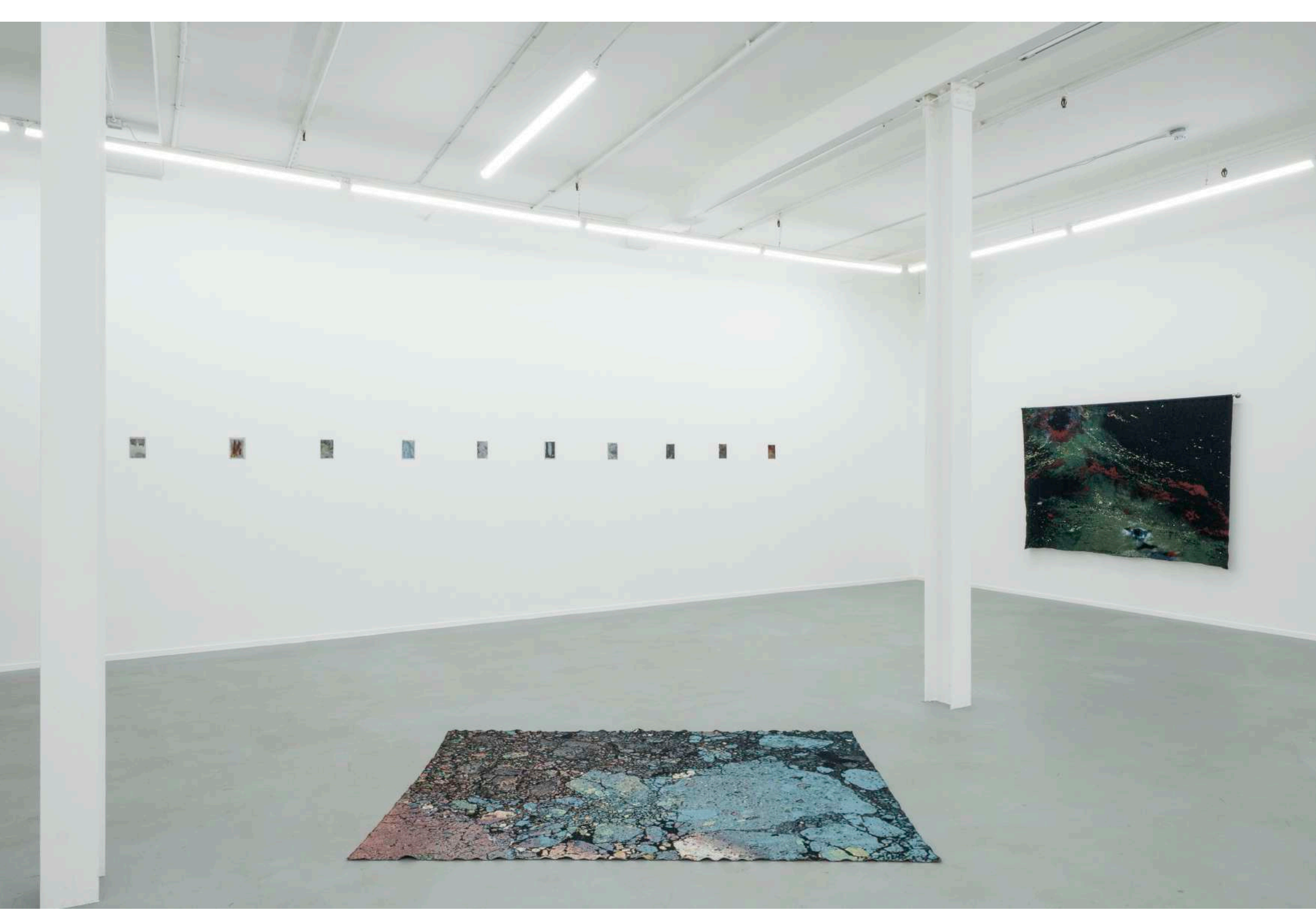
*UNTITLED VII (FROM THE
PRIMORDIAL EARTH SERIES)*

2025

Woven Cotton

146 x 210 cm / 57.48 x 82.67 in

Edition 1 of 5 plus 2 AP





ARTEFACT (I - V from top left)
 2025
 Photographic Transfer, Glass & Paint
 15 x 10 cm / 3.93 x 5.90 in



ARTEFACT (VI - X from top left)
 2025
 Photographic Transfer, Glass & Paint
 15 x 10 cm / 3.93 x 5.90 in



UNTITLED (PRIMORDIAL EARTH)

2020

Inkjet print on 305g Hahnemuhle fine art
mat ultra-smooth paper

70 x 105 cm / 27.56 x 41.34 in

Edition 1 of 6 plus 2 AP

B. 1988 in Liège, Belgium.

Lives and works in Brussels, Belgium, and, Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

EDUCATION

BA in Political & Social Sciences

BA in Visual Arts: Photography

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2026

Solo show, FOMU (Fotomuseum), Antwerp, Belgium

2023

Solo booth at Art Brussels (with Kristof De Clercq gallery), Brussels, Belgium

2022

Primordial Earth – Interpretations, Kristof De Clercq gallery, Ghent, Belgium

Enter 14: Léonard Pongo – Primordial Earth, Mu.ZEE, Ostend, Belgium

Strangely Familiar, Foreign Agent, Lausanne, Switzerland

Primordial Earth – The Beginnings, The Agprognostic Temple, Brussels, Belgium

Léonard Pongo: Primordial Earth, Bozar, Brussels, Belgium

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2025

BADAFF | Belgian Art & Design Affair, Ghent, Belgium (with Kristof De Clercq gallery)

Second Nature: Photography in the Age of the Anthropocene, Cantor Arts Center at Stanford University, Stanford, US

Festival du Jeu de Paume 2e édition: Paysages Mouvants (curated by Jeanne Mercier - new commissioned work), Jeu de Paume, Paris, France

25 Arts Seconde: Soluble & Simulacrum, Centre Wallonie Bruxelles, Paris, France

2024

Second Nature: Photography in the Age of the Anthropocene, The Nasher Museum of Art, Duke University, Durham, US

In communion, La Septième Gallery with 31Project, Paris, France
Encounters - Black Rock Senegal Alumni cycle 3 & cycle 4 (curated by Jareh Das) for the Dakar Biennial 'Off', Blaise Senghor Cultural Center, Dakar, Senegal

MK: 1-54 Art fair (special project group show with Black Rock Senegal), Marrakesh, Morocco

2023

A World in Common: Contemporary African Photography (curated by Osei Bonsu), Tate Modern, London, UK

Biennial Rencontres Photographiques de Guyane - 'Notre paysage est son propre monument', Saint-Louis, Guyana

11e Biennale De Photographie en Condroz, Marchin, Belgium

Contour Biennial of Moving Images - We Are Rooted But We Flow, Mechelen, Belgium

2022

Horst Festival: The Act of Breathing, Asiat, Vilvoorde, Belgium

Consume by, Museum Arnhem, Arnhem, the Netherlands

BredaPhoto Festival 2022: Theatre of Dreams, Breda, the Netherlands

Dak'Art 2022 Biennial: (Un)Charted Grounds, Dakar, Senegal

Je suis moi-même le soleil (curated by Liz Gomis), 31 PROJECT, Paris, France

2021

PhotoVogue Festival, Milan, Italy

My Whole Body Changed Into Something Else, Stevenson gallery, Cape Town & Johannesburg, South Africa

Presence: Five Contemporary African Photographers, The Photographers' Gallery, London, UK

Radically Naive / Naively Radical, Extra City, Antwerp, Belgium

Extractions, A Two Dogs Company, Brussels, Belgium

2020

L'Afrique - Vue par les Photographes, Patrimoine Culturel Mondial, Völklinger Hütte, Völklingen, Germany

Lagos Photo Festival: Home Museum, Lagos, Nigeria

The Photographic Collective, 1:54 African Art Fair, London, UK

Croyances : faire et défaire l'invisible, Institut des Cultures d'Islam, Paris, France

2019

IncarNations (curated by Kendell Geers & Sindika Dokolo), Bozar, Brussels, Belgium

6th Lubumbashi Biennale: Future Genealogies, Tales from the Equatorial Line, Lubumbashi, DR Congo

Rencontres de Bamako, Bamako, Mali

The New Jerusalem, VUB, Brussels, Belgium

31 Days of .TIFF - Highlighting Emerging Image Makers, FOMU, Antwerp, Belgium

2018

The 3rd Beijing Photo Biennial, CAFA Art Museum, Beijing, China

2017

Rencontres d'Arles, Arles, France

2016

Lagos Photo Festival, Lagos, Nigeria

Art Basel (with Edition POPCAP), Basel, Switzerland

Nuits de la Photo, Arles, France

2015

Museum of Contemporary Art, Rome, Italy

Noorderlicht Photo Festival, Groningen, the Netherlands

Delhi Photo Festival, Delhi, India

Fotofestiwal Łódź, Łódź, Poland

2014

CAP Prize 2014 winner with 'The Uncanny' in group show, Basel, Vienna, Addis Ababa, Dublin, Lagos, Cape Town, and Mindelo

GRANTS & AWARDS

2025

ArtReview's Future Greats 2025 (selected by Roger Ballen with The Uncanny)

2024

Talia Transformation Fund for Documentary Innovation New York, US
The Eiger African Photobook of the Year Awards (top 4 finalists), Geneva, Switzerland

2023

CAP Prize for Contemporary African Photography, Basel, Switzerland

2022

Leica Oskar Barnack Award 2022 (shortlisted with Primordial Earth)
Film Lab, Flemish Community of Belgium, Film Production Grant
Walloon Community of Belgium, Film Production Grant

2021

CAP Prize - The Contemporary African Prize (shortlisted)
ICP/GOST First Photo Book Award, London, UK

2020

Meitar Award for Excellence in Photography (finalist) Futur pour la culture, FWB

2019

Prix de l'OIF (Rencontres de Bamako) for innovative exhibition design and project

2018

Getty Reportage Grant 2018

2017

Visura Grant for outstanding Personal Project
NOOR agency

2016

PDN's 30 under 30 New and Emerging Photographers to Watch (in selection)

Vocatio Grant

2014

CAP Prize, Basel, Switzerland

RESIDENCIES

2023

Black Rock Senegal (Kehinde Wiley), Dakar, Senegal

2019

Le Point du Jour Art Centre, Cherbourg, France
Dokoutine, Bohicon, Benin

2016

KAS/Kin ArtStudio, Kinshasa, DR Congo

2013

Lubumbashi Art Biennale, Lubumbashi, DR Congo

FILM SCREENINGS

2025

Afropolitan Festival (screening *Tales from The Source*), Bozar, Brussels, Belgium

Festival en ville (screening Tales from The Source), Brussels, Belgium

2024

DOK Leipzig, Festival for Documentary and Animated Film / International Competition Documentary Film section (screening Tales from The Source), Leipzig, Germany

International Film Premiere for Tales from The Source, Lisbon, Portugal

COLLECTIONS

KANAL–Centre Pompidou (Belgium), The Flemish Community (at FOMU in Belgium) Mu.ZEE (Belgium), The Chazen Museum of Art (US), Sindika Dokolo Foundation (Angola/Portugal)

FILMS

2024

Tales from the Source, 39'

2021

Primordial Earth: Inhabiting the Landscape, 8'26"

2013

The Necessary Evil, 11'19"

PUBLICATIONS

2023

The Uncanny (monograph), published by GOST Books, London, UK

Pongo's work has been published in *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Guardian*, *The Washington Post*, *National Geographic*, *The New Yorker*, *Hart* magazine and several other international publications.