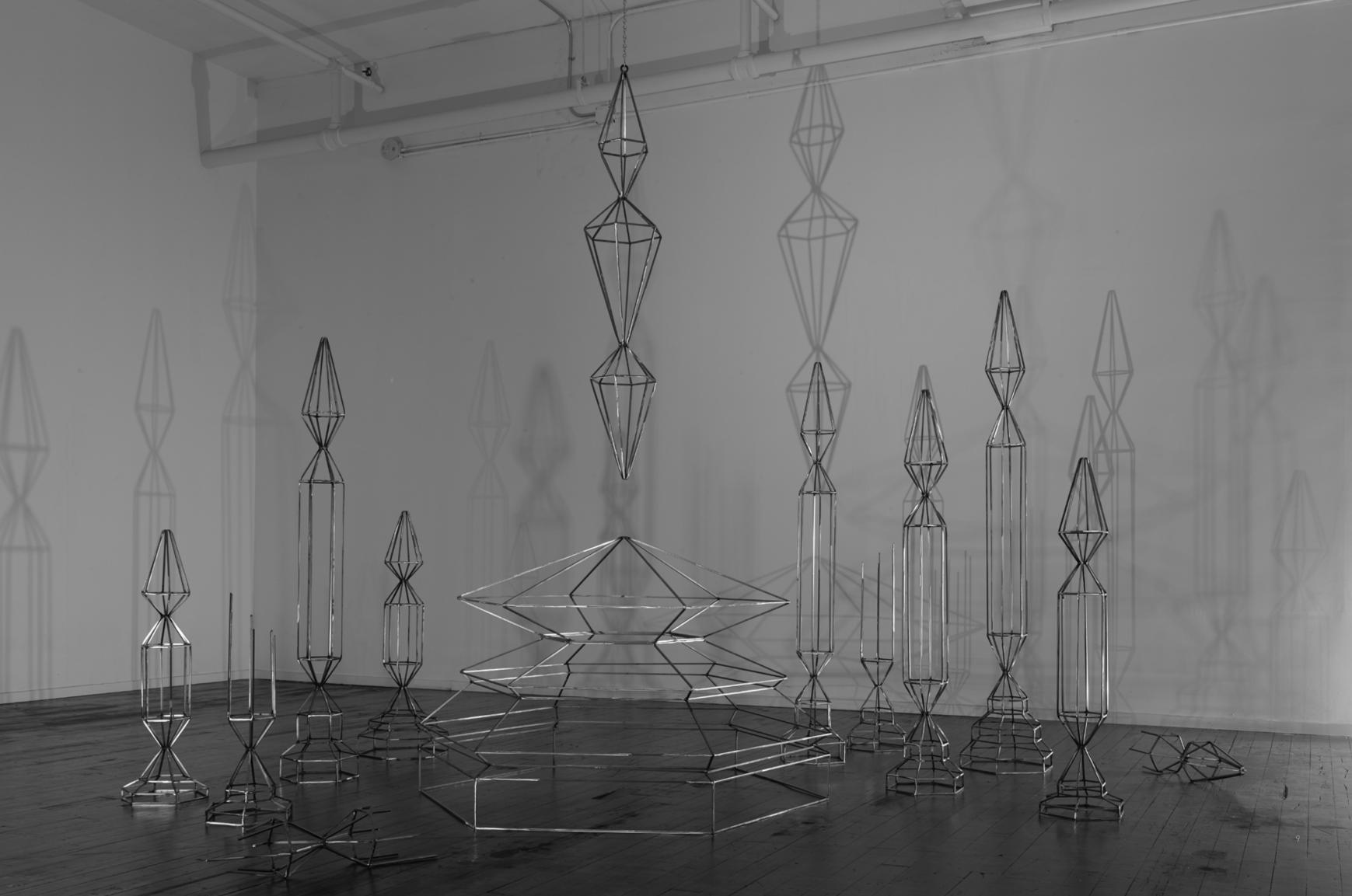
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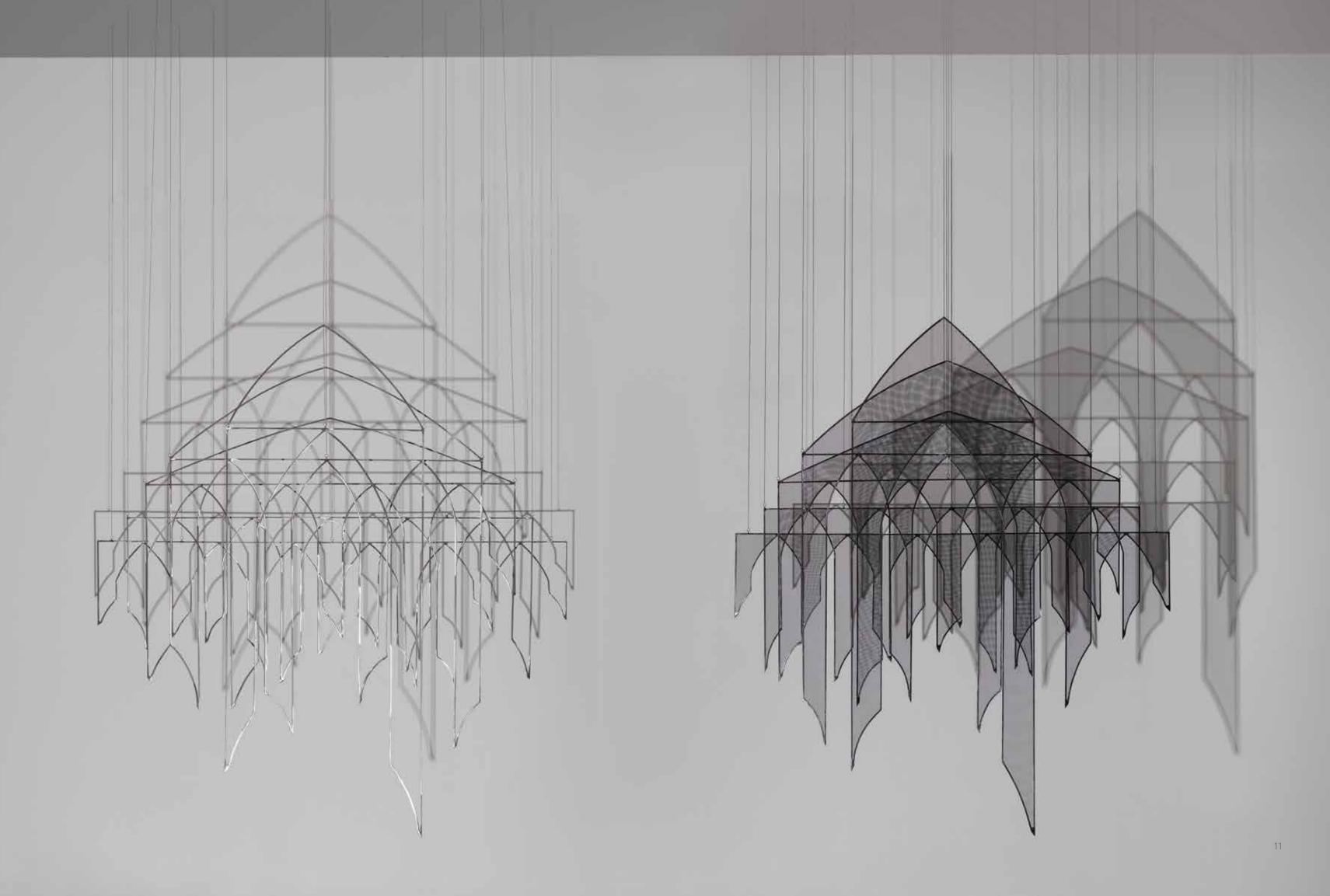


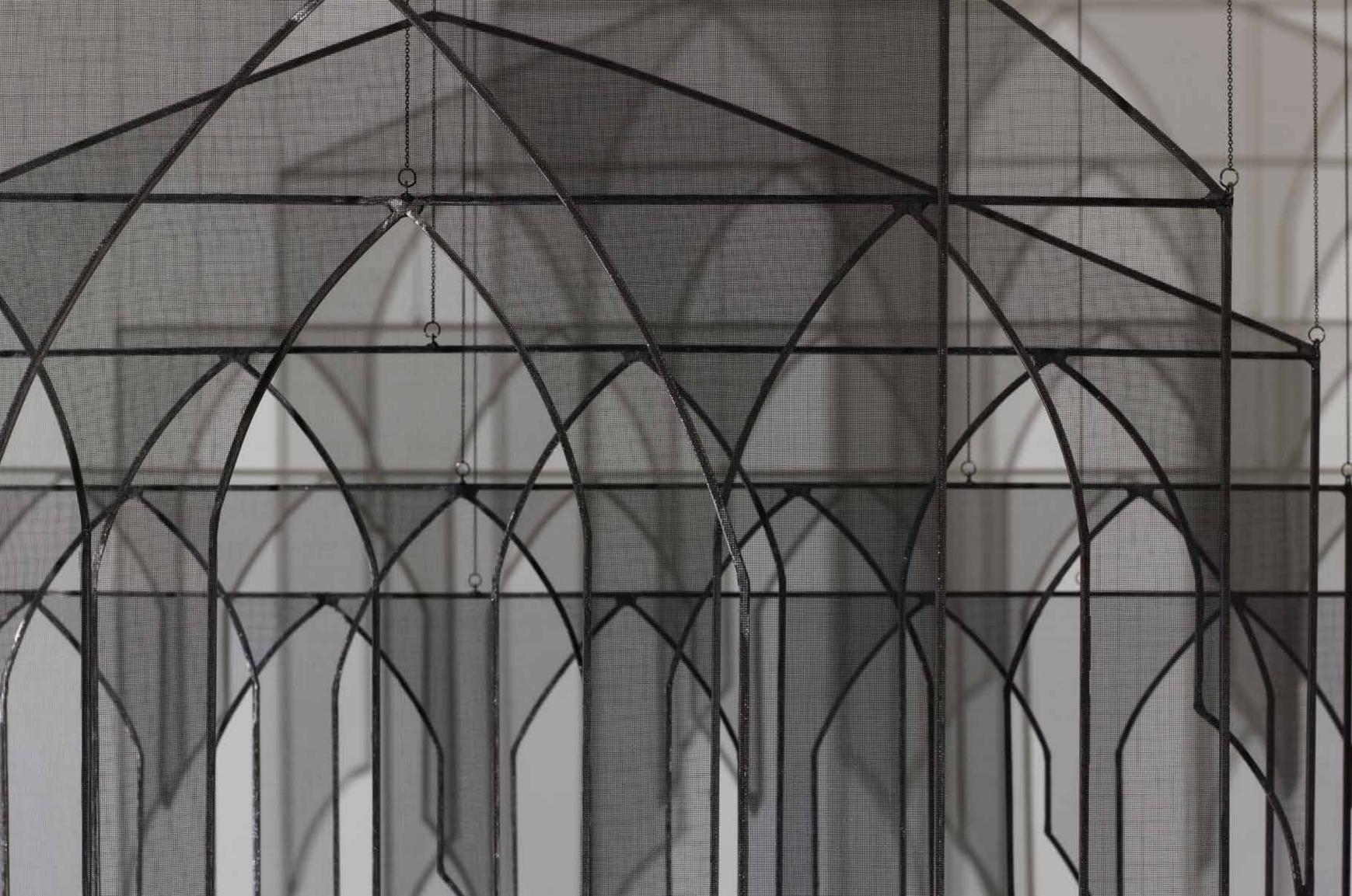
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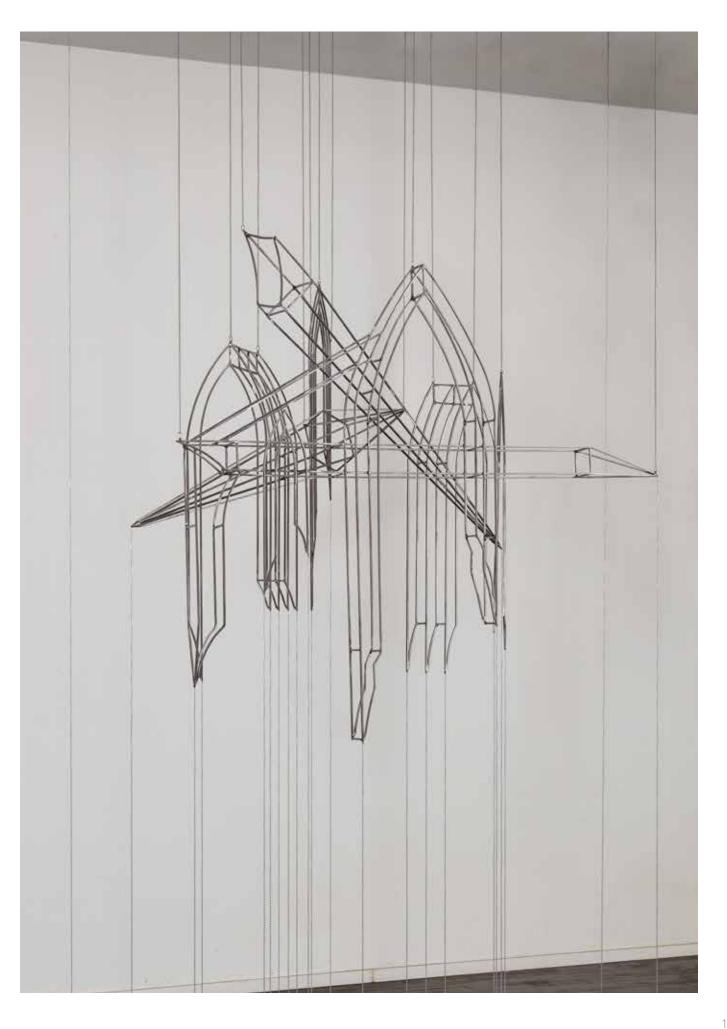


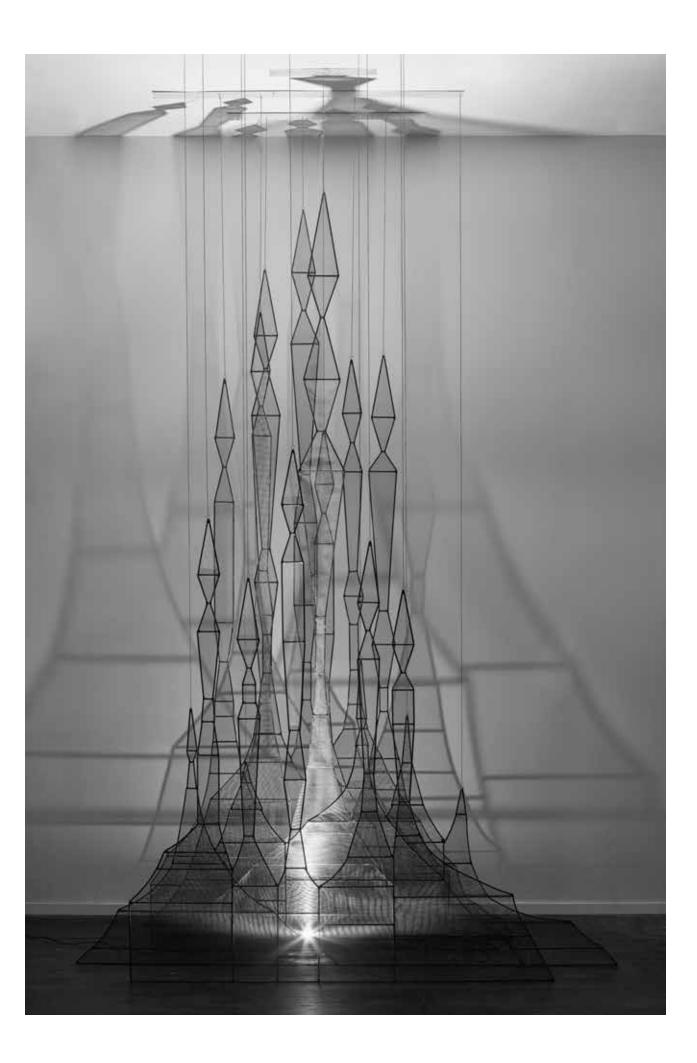


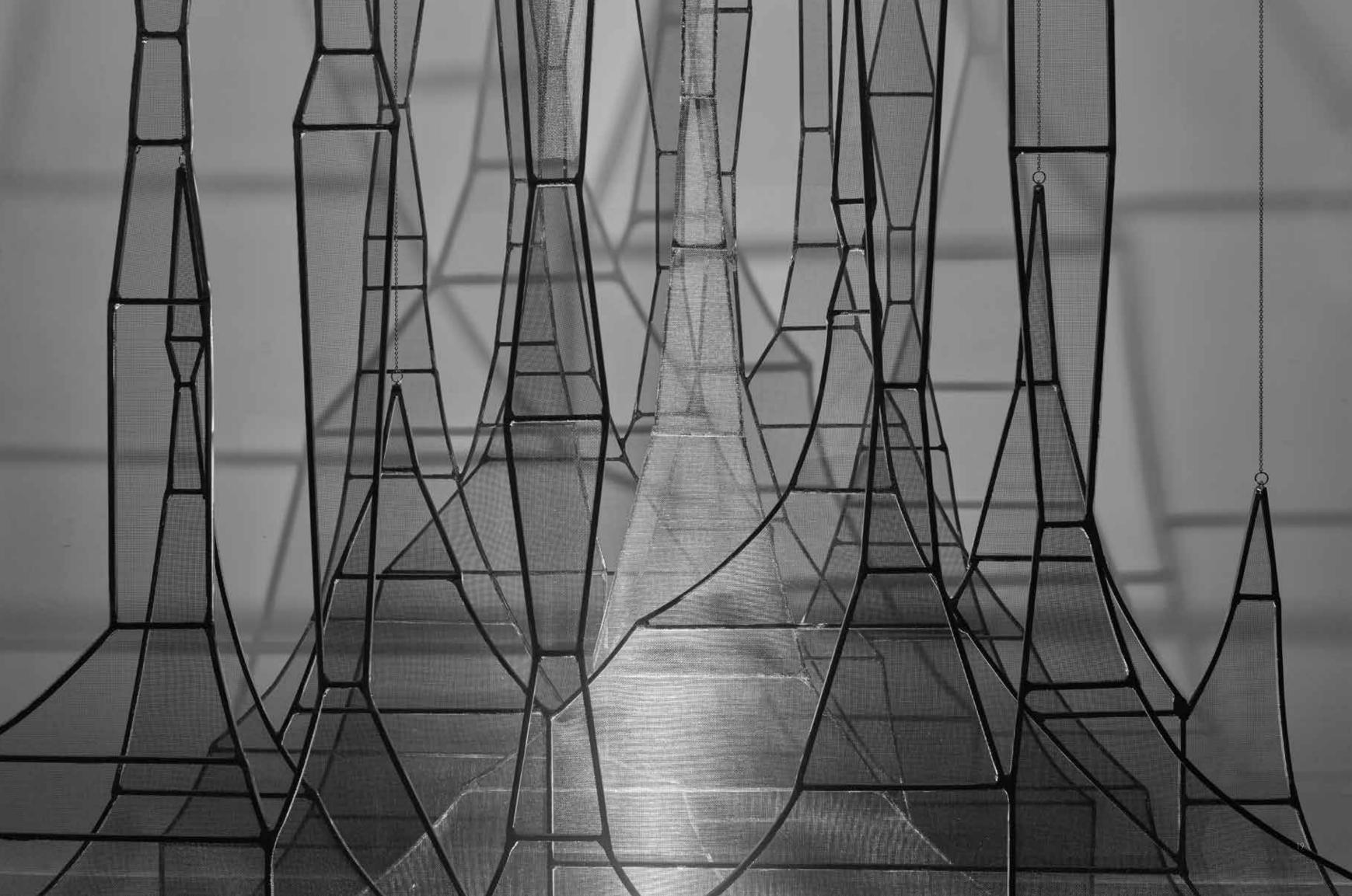






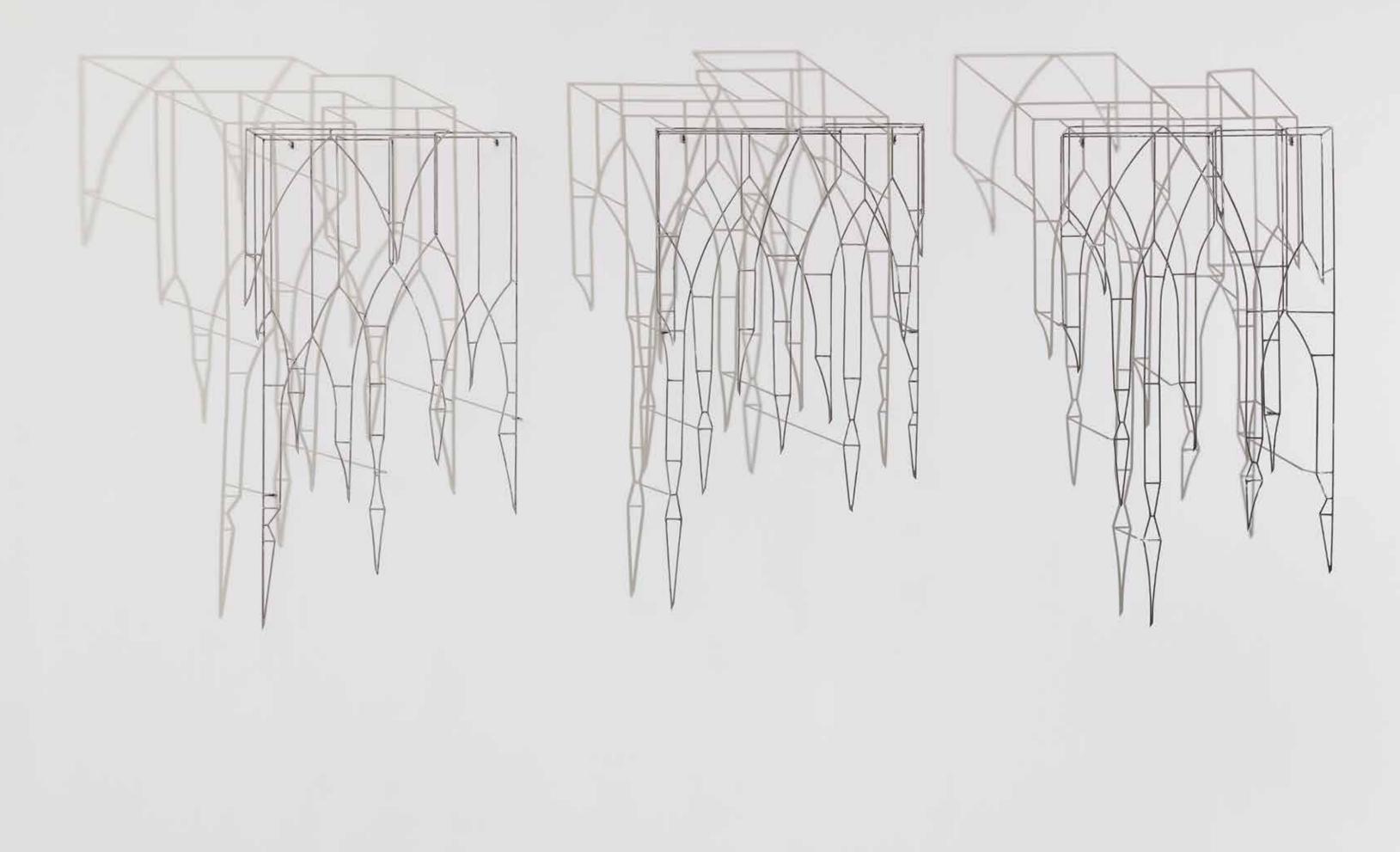
















DIGGING: ARTIFACTS FROM THE FUTURE

Afruz Amighi discusses her practice with friend and fellow artist, Ali Banisadr and curator, Brooke Lynn McGowan.

Brooke: Let's begin with what we can see: your linear, rational, and structural works are often presented in a darkened environment, devoid of, even absorbent of, and antithetical to color.

Afruz: When I am thinking about a new sculpture, the colors that come up for me are the ones inherent to the medium that I think would best suit the forms I want to make. The use of the word color is not so accurate for me, because I think more of the luster of the material, its reflectivity when subjected to light, its ability to cast shadows.

The actual application of color onto material is something I've only done once, and that was to paint an already white epoxy based sculpture with white paint. There is something about applying color onto something that already possesses its own natural color that feels false to me, fraudulent, like eventually it will peel off and reveal something grotesque.

Ali: Tell me about your transition from working with textiles to steel?

Afruz: When I was working with textiles, I was interested in making sculptural work, but I didn't know the traditional techniques associated with it, like casting or welding. So I used light and shadow to create the illusion of depth. While my physical work took place in the two-dimensional realm, drawing designs and cutting them into the textiles by hand, the experience of viewing the work, empty, they contain a sense of absence, which is something else. took place in the third dimension.

Eventually, I wanted the physical work to be in the third dimension as well. So a few years ago I learned how to weld. I hated it at first... but then I learned how to make things that had been on my mind for so long. In the past, I was always scavenging for discarded at once proximate and distant. things, like furniture or lighting fixtures, whatever was left on the side of the street, hoping they would match the forms I had in my head. But it never worked out, I tried, but the 'found objects' were too pre-determined, manufactured, I couldn't make them mine.

Ali: It is interesting how an artist's physical environment influences their work, in your case you have literally researched the materials that you have observed around you and used them in your work. It (mosquito netting) and turn it into something beautiful and sacred.

Afruz: I love industrial materials. They have this anonymity to them. Often I will see a material somewhere in the city, like the mosquito netting you mentioned. One night on my way home from JFK, I noticed all these buildings that were in a state of construction... they were draped with black netting and lit with these giant bulbs from inside. I thought it was so elegant.

I ordered hundreds of rolls of this netting and it sat in my studio for six years before I figured out what to do with it. That's how my process usually goes. It starts with a sighting, usually architectural, leads to the hoarding of a particular material, an incubation period, and then the assimilation of a new skill, like welding, to go forward with it.

Brooke: Speaking of the relationship between materials, media and landscape - how do you relate to landscape, as a genre, as a medium, as a kind of imperial knowledge, but also, viscerally, as a relation to place?

Afruz: My relationship to landscape is architectural, urban. Urban in an ancient way. The atmospheres I am drawn to are stony, metallic, cold. I feel like it is through this kind of landscape that I am able to access that part of the world that exists outside of it, the intangible part, the organic part. I guess I relate most to the landscapes of de Chirico....empty, devoid, hollow, structures which rarely contain figures, but, like the construction site, they aren't

I was absent from the upheavals that shaped the course of events for my family, the revolution, the Iran-Irag war, and yet I was so intimately affected by the psychological ramifications of those events. As a result I experienced this fixation with themes that were

Brooke: Can this sense of absence or detachment also be a site of trauma, or a way of addressing it?

Afruz: For me, like many others, it is easier to explore trauma that is once removed. In an early body of work I was dealing with the issue of displacement. I was using woven polyethelene, a material used in the fabrication of tents in refugee camps... cutting patterns is fascinating that you can find material that is used for construction from mosques and palaces into this material and illuminating it to create a wall of shadows.

I was using a material associated with abjection to cast shadows containing patterns and designs associated with power and opulence. Somehow in the realm of shadows, a dematerialized realm, these two opposites made contact.

Brooke: In the sense of material, your work seems to be transcendent, and draw upon a certain idea of history, towards this ancient urban. It is a language which invokes archeology.

Afruz: I think many sculptors are engaged in a process of digging, unearthing objects, or in some senses artifacts, from the future, structures that have a relationship to the past but have not yet been realized.

For me these structures are nearly all abodes. Whether they reference cathedrals or mosques, tombs or shrines, they are places of refuge, solace. They are idealized homes I build for myself to live light (and dark) as a medium? in for a time, and then walk away from.

Afruz: I use light and shadow to create proximity. I have never **Ali:** Your work always has echoes and fragments of religion in it, been interested in irony, because it usually acts as a distancing can you speak a little about that? mechanism. I want to bring the viewer in closer. Light and shadow help me achieve this, somehow their interplay softens the lines Afruz: I grew up with a Jewish mother and Zoroastrian father, but between subject and object.

they were both staunchly secular, atheistic. Still we celebrated many religious holidays, mostly because my mother loved the The two moments I experienced this sensation most deeply arts and crafts component...decorating eggs, setting up the haftwere when first seeing Dan Flavin's "monument" for V. Tatlin at sin table, making elaborate ginger bread houses. I think I came to Dia Beacon, and then some years later when looking up at the muquarna filled ceiling of the Abdolsamad Tomb in Natanz, Iran. associate religious ritual with object making.... its strange, I don't consider myself religious, or even spiritual, but I do structure my They had the effect of interrupting time, creating stillness. Yet at the same time they spoke to impossibilities, false promises. life with many rituals....

Temples, cathedrals, mosques, even humble shrines consisting of Brooke: You also respond to questions of violence and a candle and some plastic flowers, have always been fascinating civilization-a deep mining of the need for the transcendental and to me. Humans, we forget things so easily, but when we build its spatial-architectonics of worship to answer these horrors, but things our experiences become imprinted on them. Shrines also protection, guardians. I can't help but asking, how does your are like vessels of collective memory. Last year when the Temple work respond to Benjamin's angel of history? He is the observer of of Baalshamin in Palmyra, Syria was bombed by ISIL, a piece of failed, if not false promises. human memory was obliterated.

Ali: I always feel like I need to be guiet, respectful or even kneel down in front of your work. Even though many are made out of steel, they feel fragile and in need of protection.

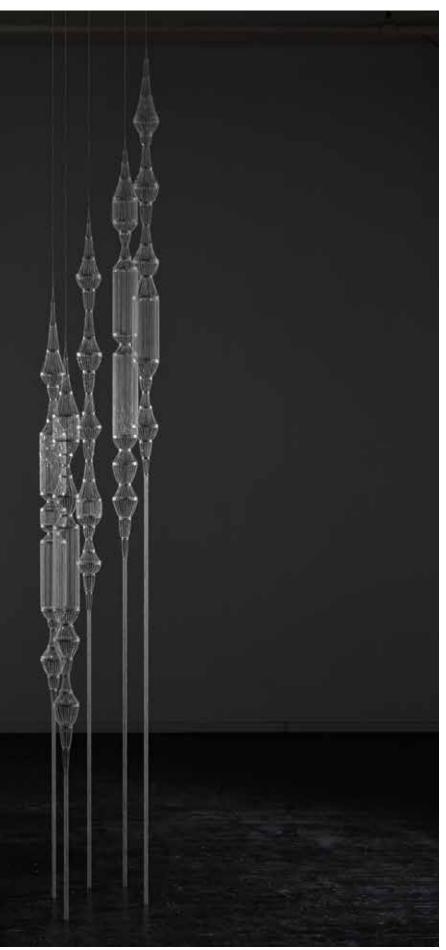
Afruz: That's very nice to hear, because I always hope that someone will find some sense of quiet with my work. And I think this quiet can be channeled with materials like concrete and steel, materials that are often associated with the opposite sensations, urban sprawl, frenzy, oppressive containment.

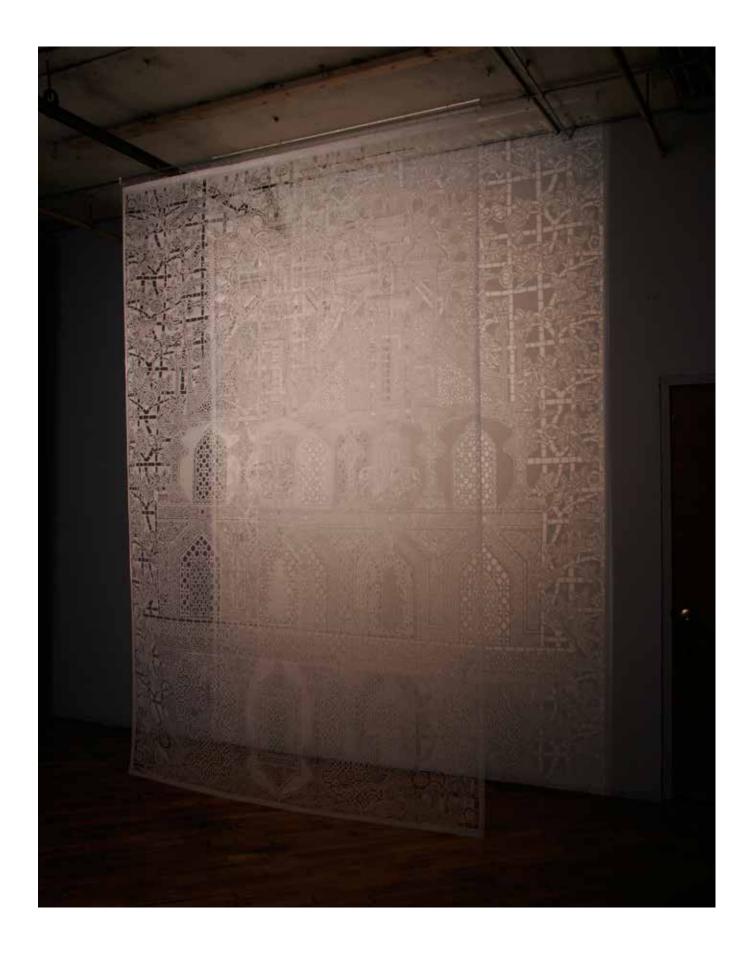
I usually work these materials to their physical limits, to the point that there is so much negative space that the material itself has become almost non-existent. Materials that were once associated with strength, industry, become something outside of that. Yes, fragile and in need of protection, but also protectors themselves, guardians.

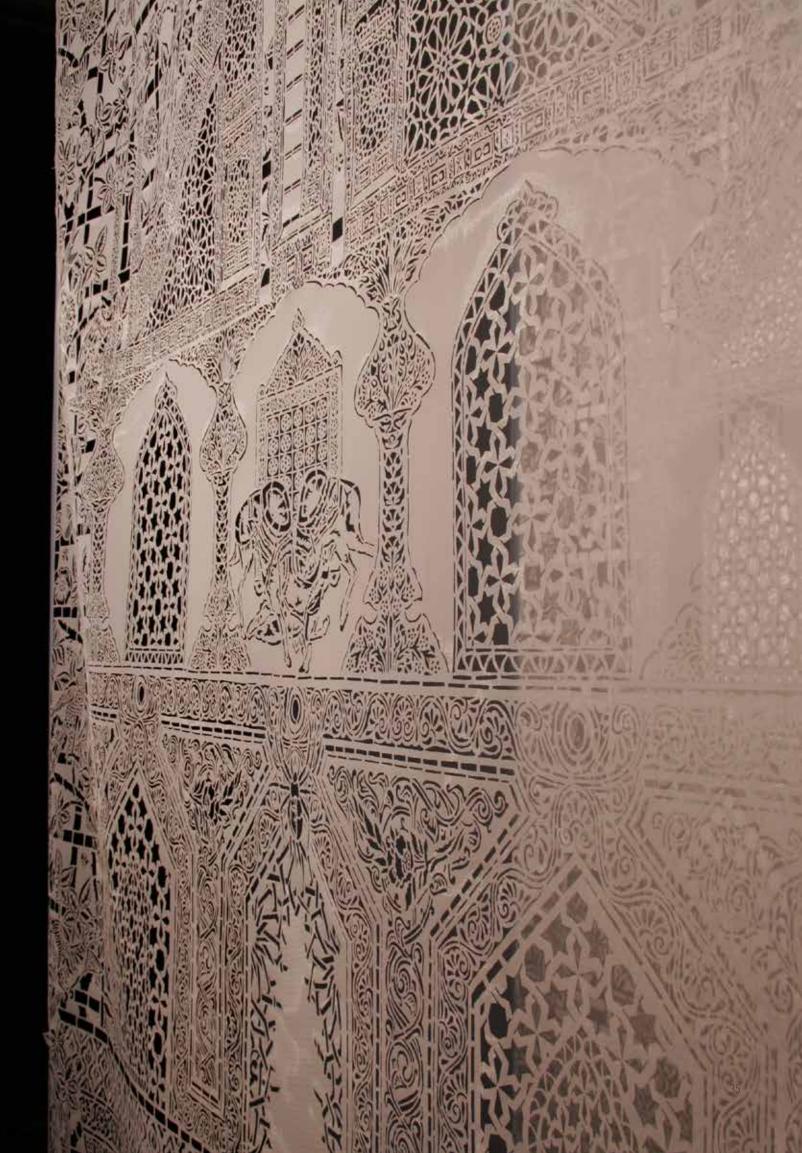
Brooke: Working at the material's limits certainly defines a performative quality in your work, deeply linked to the importance of light and shadow. How do you relate to the history of the use of

Afruz: The question of the tipping point is what intrigues me, the point at which things fall apart...what happens in those moments just before violence completely overtakes us. But I don't see transcendence, in whatever form, as an answer, rather as temporary respite... Benjamin's angel of history will never turn its back from the future, but perhaps can be given momentary pause for wonder.

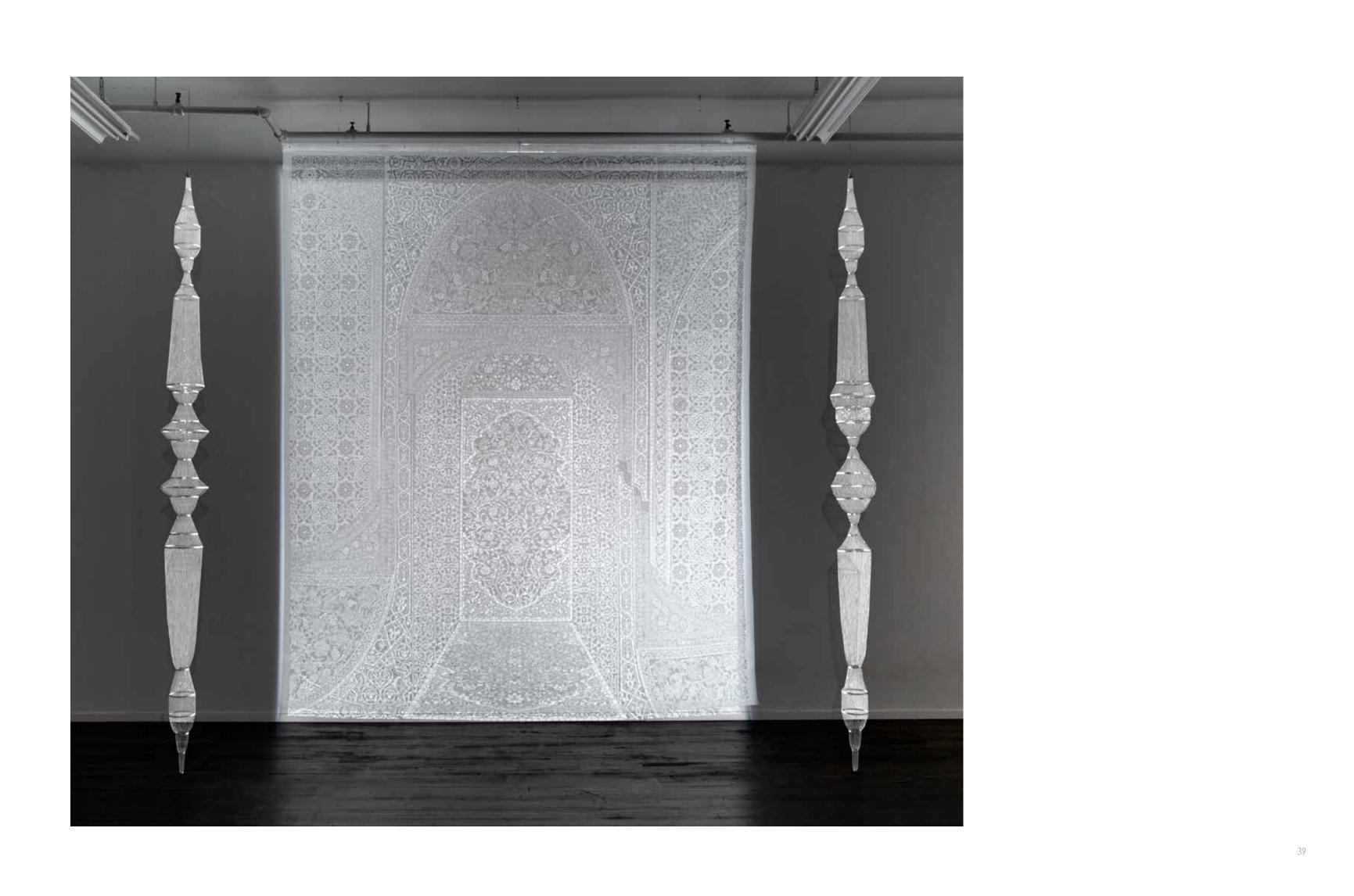


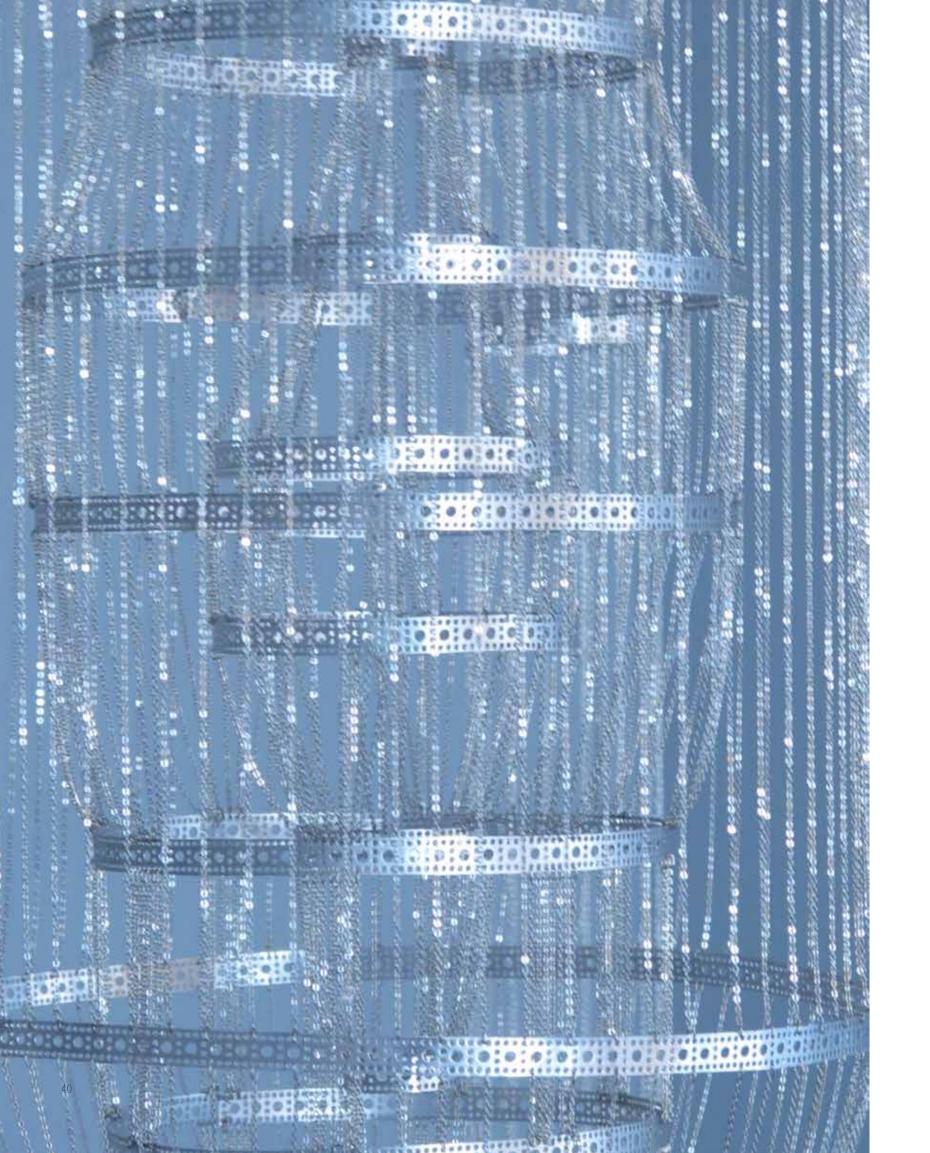


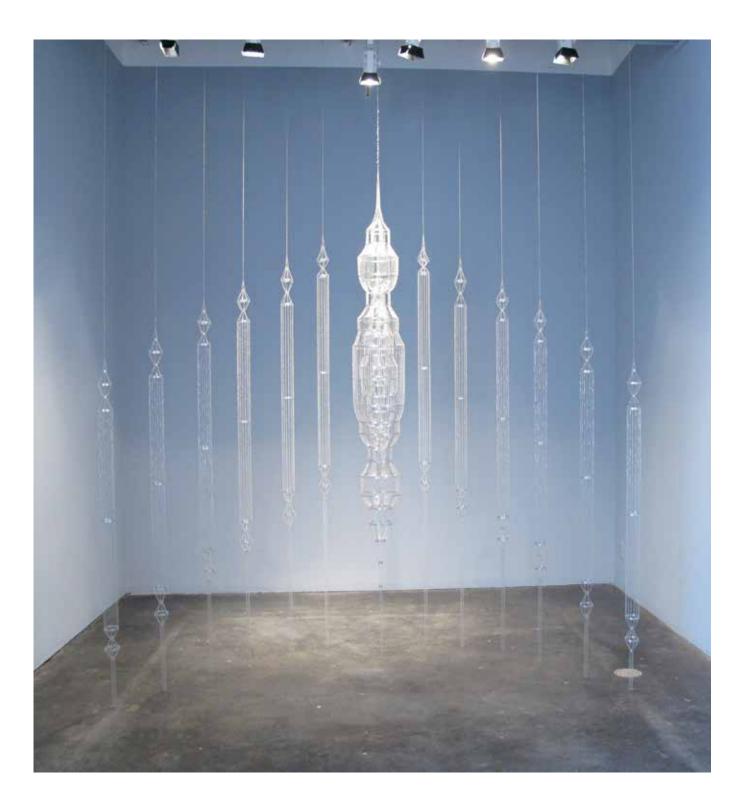


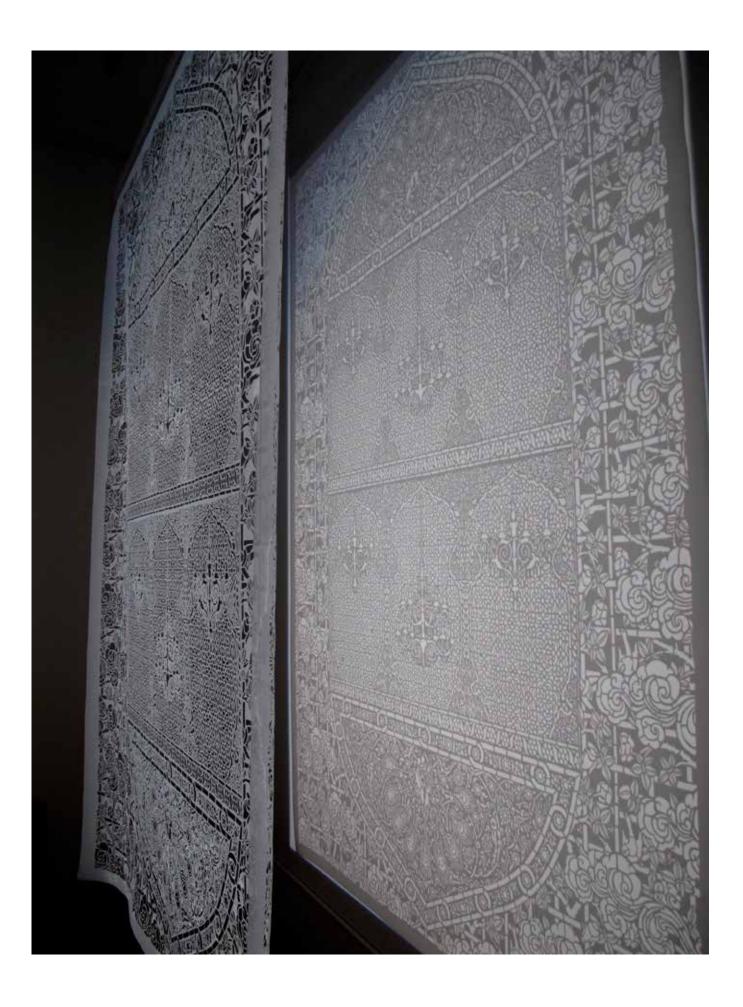


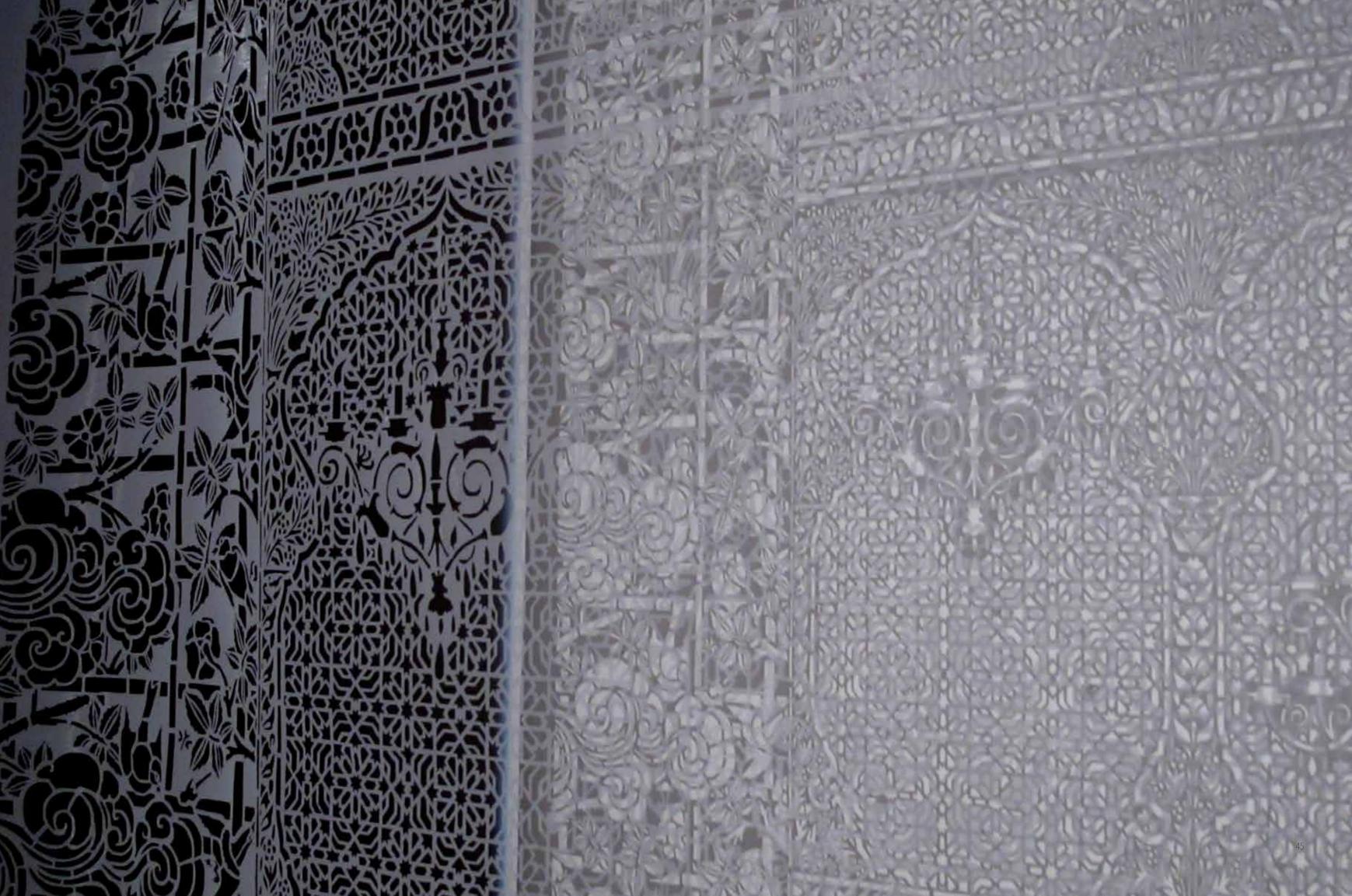






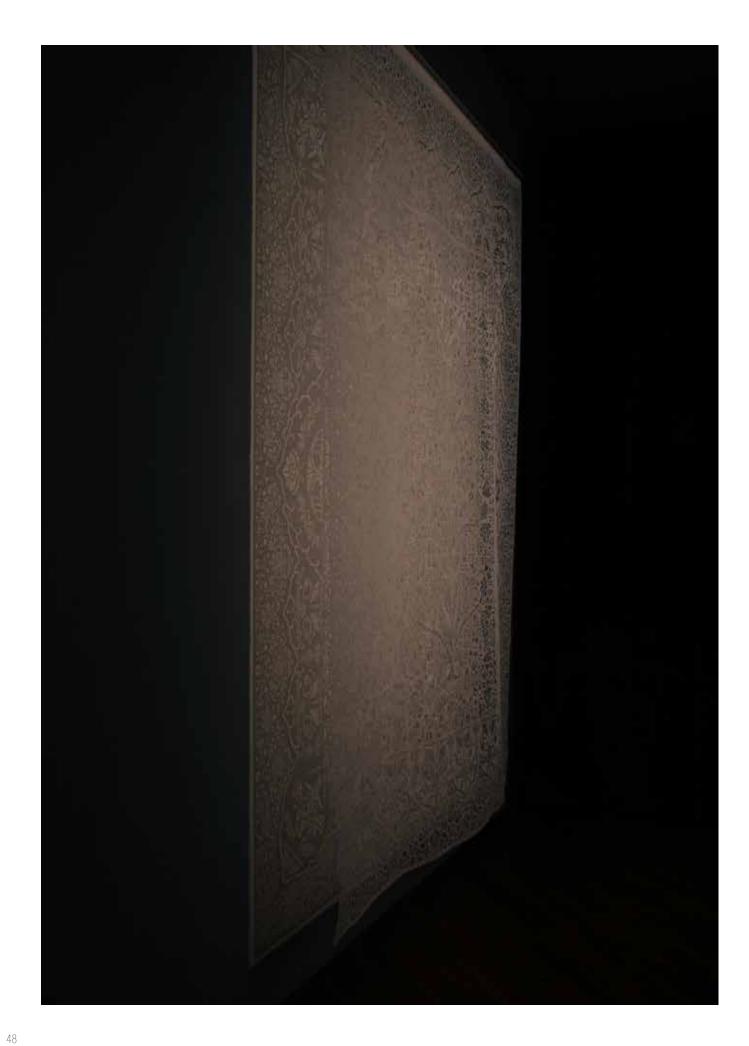


















AFRUZ AMIGHI

Lives and works in Brooklyn, New York (b. Tehran, Iran, 1974)

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PLATES

page 7: Nameless, 2014 Steel, fiberglass mesh, Wenge wood, ultra-suede, invisible thread, gunmetal chain, LED lights 168 x 132 x 96 in / 427 x 335 x 244 cm

page 9: The Anchoress, 2014 Steel, chain, light 168 x 192 x 168 in / 427 x 488 x 427 cm

page 11: My House, My Tomb, 2015 Steel, fiberglass mesh, chain, light 168 x 90 x 70 in / 427 x 229 x 178 cm each

page 13: My House, My Tomb (detail)

page 14: All That is Solid..., 2016 Steel, chain, light Dimensions variable

page 15: All That is Solid..., (detail)

page 17: Forest, Aglibol, 2015 Steel, fiberglass mesh, chain, LED lights 168 x 104 x 60 in / 427 x 264 x 152 cm

page 19: Forest, Aglibol (detail)

page 20: Veins, Malakbel, 2015 Steel, chain, light 168 x 108 x 60 in / 427 x 274 x 152 cm page 23: Veins, Malakbel (detail)

page 25: Night Paintings, Series II, 2016 Steel, light 61 x 31.5 x 12 in / 155 x 80 x 30.5 cm 59 x 31.5 x 12 in / 150 x 80 x 30.5 cm 59 x 31.5 x 12 in / 150 x 80 x 30.5 cm

page 27: Lamentation, 2016 Steel, light 83 x 31.5 x 12 in / 211 x 80 x 30.5 cm

page 28: Night Paintings, Land II, 2016 Steel, light 54 x 31.5 x 12 in / 137 x 80 x 30.5 cm 58 x 31.5 x 12 in / 147 x 80 x 30.5 cm

page 33: Spiral, 2016 Aluminum radiator banding, base metal chain 72 x 4 x 4 in / 183 x 10 x 10 cm, each

page 34: 1001 Pages, 2008 Woven polyethelene, plexiglass, light 125 x 80 in / 317.5 x 203 cm Collection of the Victoria & Albert Museum, London, United Kingdom

page 35: 1001 Pages (detail)

page 36: *Toofan*, 2012 Aluminum radiator banding, base metal chain 204 x 12 x 12 in / 518 x 30.5 x 30.5 cm Private Collection

page 39: Untitled, 2013 Woven polyethelene, plexiglass, aluminum radiator banding, base metal chain, light Center panel: 144 x 120 in / 366 x 305 cm Side sculptures: 156 x 12 x 12 in / 396 x 30.5 x 30.5 cm, each Commission for the 55th Venice Biennale Collection of Yarat Contemporary Art Center, Baku, Azerbaijan

page 40: Self-Portrait in Chain (detail)

p.41 Self-Portrait in Chain, 2012 Aluminum radiator banding, base metal chain 144 x 120 x 60 in / 366 x 305 x 152 cm Private Collection

page 43: Fana'a, 2011 Woven polyethelene, plexiglass, light 96 x 68 in / 244 x 173 cm Private Collection

page 45: Fana'a (detail)

page 46: The Offering, 2016 Aluminum radiator banding, base metal chain 72 x 12 x 12 in / 183 x 30.5 x 30.5 cm 144 x 12 x 12 in / 366 x 30.5 x 30.5 cm 120 x 12 x 12 in / 305 x 30.5 x 30.5 cm Collection of The Newark Museum, New Jersey, United States

page 47: The Offering (detail) page 48: Poppy Garden, 2007 Woven polyethelene, plexiglass, light 126 x 84 in / 320 x 213 cm Collection of The Devi Foundation, New Delhi, India

page 51: Trinity, 2013 Steel, epoxy, spray paint, wood, grout, light Center sculpture: 101 x 15 x 15 in / 256.5 x 38 x 38 cm Side sculptures: 108 x 13 x 13 in / 274 x 33 x 33 cm, each

page 53: Crowns, 2014 Steel, epoxy, spray paint, concrete, light 31 x 10 x 9 in / 79 x 25 x 23 cm 25 x 12 x 10 in / 63.5 x 30.5 x 25 cm 31 x 10 x 9 in / 79 x 25 x 23 cm 27 x 10 x 10 in / 69 x 25 x 25 cm 31 x 10 x 9 in / 79 x 25 x 23 cm 25 x 12 x 10 in / 63.5 x 30.5 x 25 cm

page 55: Far from God, 2014 Steel, epoxy, spray paint, light Dimensions variable

LEILA HELLER GALLERY.

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to worship, to trust, to satisfy, to consume, to be in awe of, please follow us, toward order, toward peace, it may not be finished yet, but we will arrive, it is only a matter of time, just a little more time is needed, and now we ask you to please rise ||6Ì sidt rof noseer ətemitlu ədt bnif ot məəz tonnes teuj ew ,enog pnol ei ərədi sew tedw ,tfəl pnidton si ərəht zreəqqe ti ,əveəl ot əmit zi ti the more problems we saw, perhaps at what we did, but the deeper we looked, so we took a step back, and took a long look , swelf rolem amos are aradit basilear teul aved aw

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