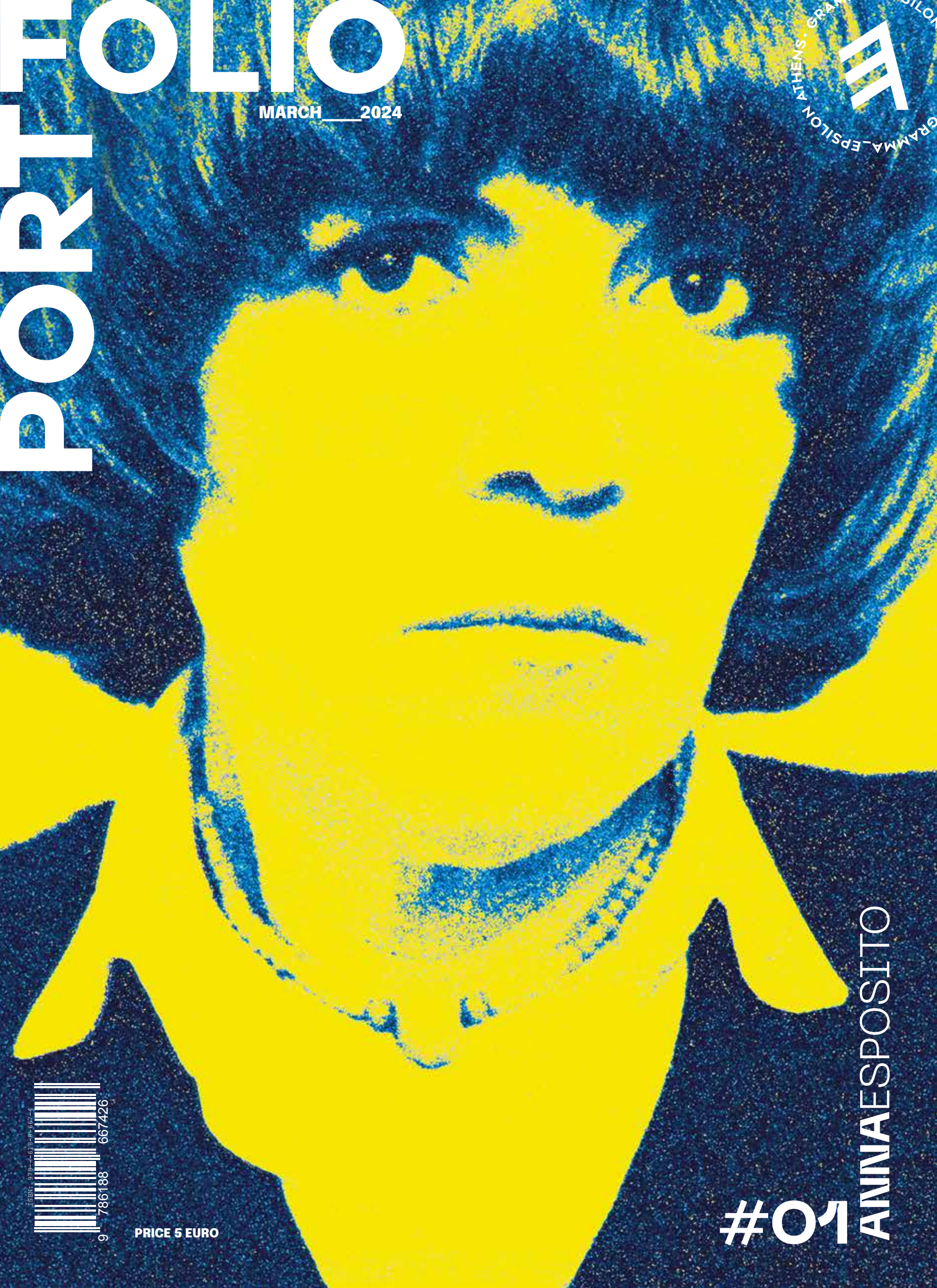


# portFOLIO

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ATHENS · GRAMMA-EPILON



PRICE 5 EURO

#01 ANNAESPOSITO



# #01 PORTFOLIO ANNA ESPOSITO

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## We thank

Carlo Canè, Roberto Freddi, Silvia Guglielmi, Nic Roome

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ANNA ESPOSITO\_ FUTURANNA

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Autoritratto (Self Portrait), 1965  
photo in perspex box, 30 x 23 cm



Anna Esposito doesn't like waste. Working as a teacher, she asked the children to bring in unwanted toys so that she might recycle them into works of art. Later, she found inspiration in the torn posters and discarded objects on the streets of Rome, or rescued images from the kind of glossy magazines that no one bothers to archive. For someone who has lived through the best part of a century that will be remembered for its unconscionable wastefulness—and the ecological damage consequent upon it—Esposito has always been remarkably attendant to that which is left behind or thrown away. Indeed, it might be more accurate to say that she does not believe in waste, that here is an artist for whom the suggestion that any material—or any living being—might have outlived its purpose is an affront to be challenged.

The earliest works in this exhibition attest to the dignity that Esposito affords to that which is left behind or ignored by consumerism. Where the poster works *Abrasione 4* and *Abrasione 6* (both 1971) might seem formally to recall the décollages being produced by Mimmo Rotella at around the same time, they are distinguished from them by their critical attitude towards the society that produces the appropriated words and images. Rather than celebrate the triumph of American culture and its ephemeral entertainments, Esposito's palimpsests draw attention to the dependence of capitalism on novelty and the corresponding speed at which objects and ideas become obsolescent. If there is a visual poetry here, it is one in which broken words and buried images are lovingly recuperated from the past to which they have been confined by a system that values only that which is newest and—in this case literally—most superficial.

In seeking to preserve that which is most impermanent, to elevate to the status of art that which is most typically dismissed as trash, and in repurposing the discarded products of a brutal system in order to critique it, these early works establish some of the principles that persist through Esposito's career. That third characteristic of her work might be described as a love of *inversion*, following the publishing protocol of describing a facing page as the *recto* and its back as the *verso*. Esposito prefers to reveal what is on the other side of the page; that which has been superseded by a newer fashion, brushed under the carpet, or hidden from sight.

One of the most striking expressions of what seems, from today's perspective, like an explicitly ecological artistic programme is the repeated conflation of human and nonhuman subjects in Esposito's collages. The impulse in such works as //

*passo dell'oca* (The goose step, 1989) seems to me similarly *inverting*, on the principle that the most damaging consequence of modernity has been the promulgation of a contrived separation of humanity from the natural world. Our species has become so alienated from the environment that supports us—and the other animals and lifeforms with whom we share it—that we are capable of destroying it completely in order to satisfy the facile desires stoked by an economic system predicated on unsustainable consumption. The hybrid creatures of *Il passo dell'oca* remind viewers of our more than formal connection to the world that waste destroys: look a little closer, and be reminded that we are animals too.

The word play of *Il passo dell'oca* is typical of Esposito's work both for its wit and for the undercurrent of fury in its allusion to fascism. The same anger suffuses *Mimetismo* (Mimicry, 1993), in which the visual and indeed tactile correspondence between a watermelon and the head of a helmeted soldier provides the basis for a bitter commentary on the wastefulness of war (a dove flies ironically over the scene with a tricolour in its beak). These inversions call to mind the rule of contrapasso that dictates the punishments in Dante's inferno; it is satisfying to our sense of justice to imagine warmongers condemned to an eternity in which their skulls are fruit to be picked at by passing birds.

A self-portrait in which a two-dimensional image of the artist as a young woman is trapped within a transparent box (*Autoritratto*, 1965) hardly needs ideological unpacking; the reimagination of the Brooklyn Bridge (*Ghigliottina*, 1980) as a giant guillotine through the addition to the picture of a mass-produced razorblade might be the sharpest commentary on the implications for humanity of industrialised modernity. But it is love as much as anger, its inverse, that animates Esposito's body of work.

The Soviet film theorist, Sergey Tretyakov, described the cinematic technique of montage—whereby disparate images are stitched together to create new meanings—as a form of “sensuous thinking” that might help to heal a fractured world. And Esposito's collages evidence a comparable impulse to repair and recuperate through the recombination into new forms of images and materials—and the histories that they carry with them—that would otherwise be lost. However clearly it sees the damage wrought by capitalism or patriarchy, the methodology of Esposito's work is stubbornly optimistic. By modelling how it might be possible for us to live among the ruins, she has created a body of work for the present and the future.



Abrasion n. 6 (Abrasion No. 6), 1971  
acrylic painting on canvas, 100 x 70 cm















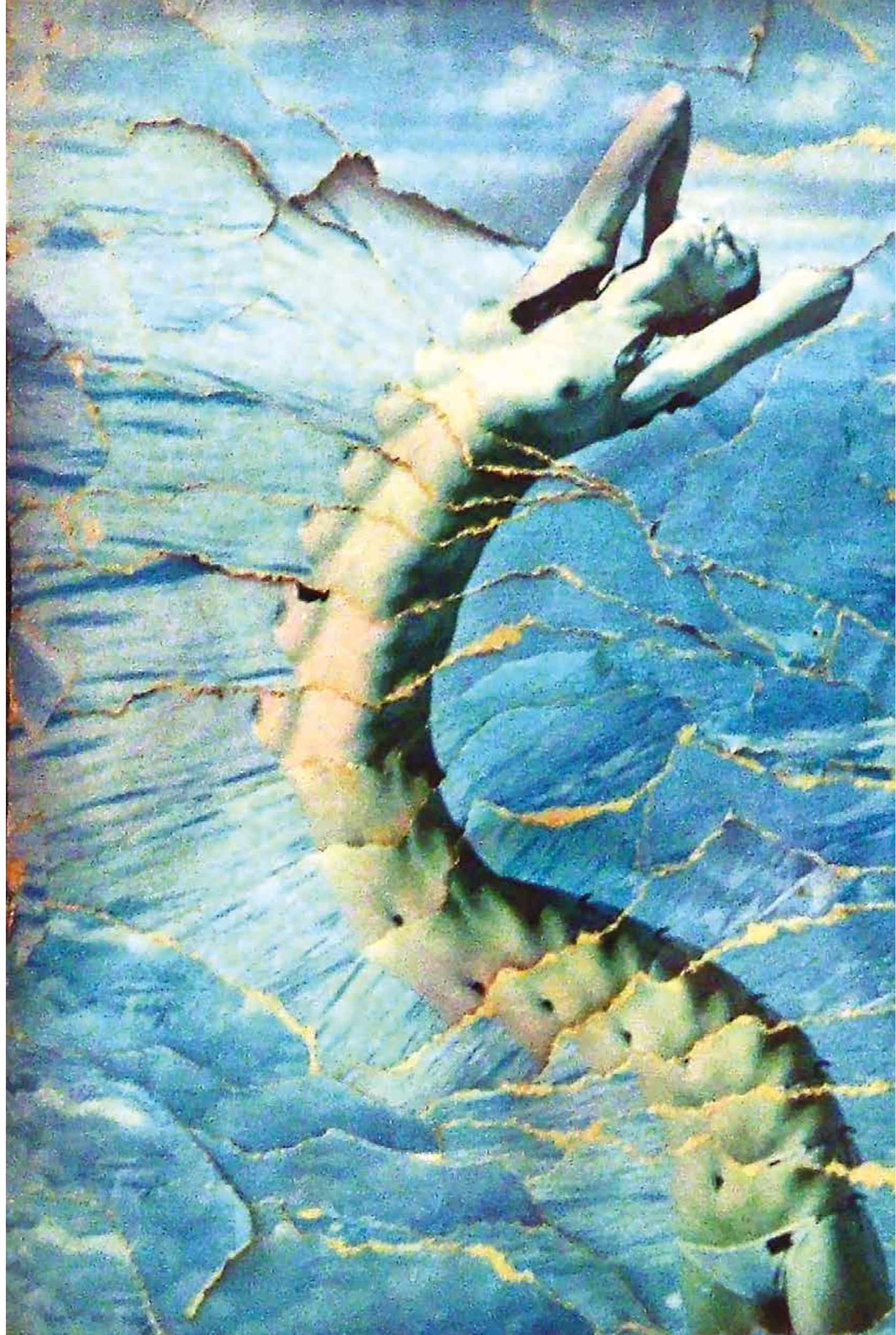


*Diretlo con i fiori (Say it with Flowers), 1974,  
collage on photo, 56 x 58 cm*









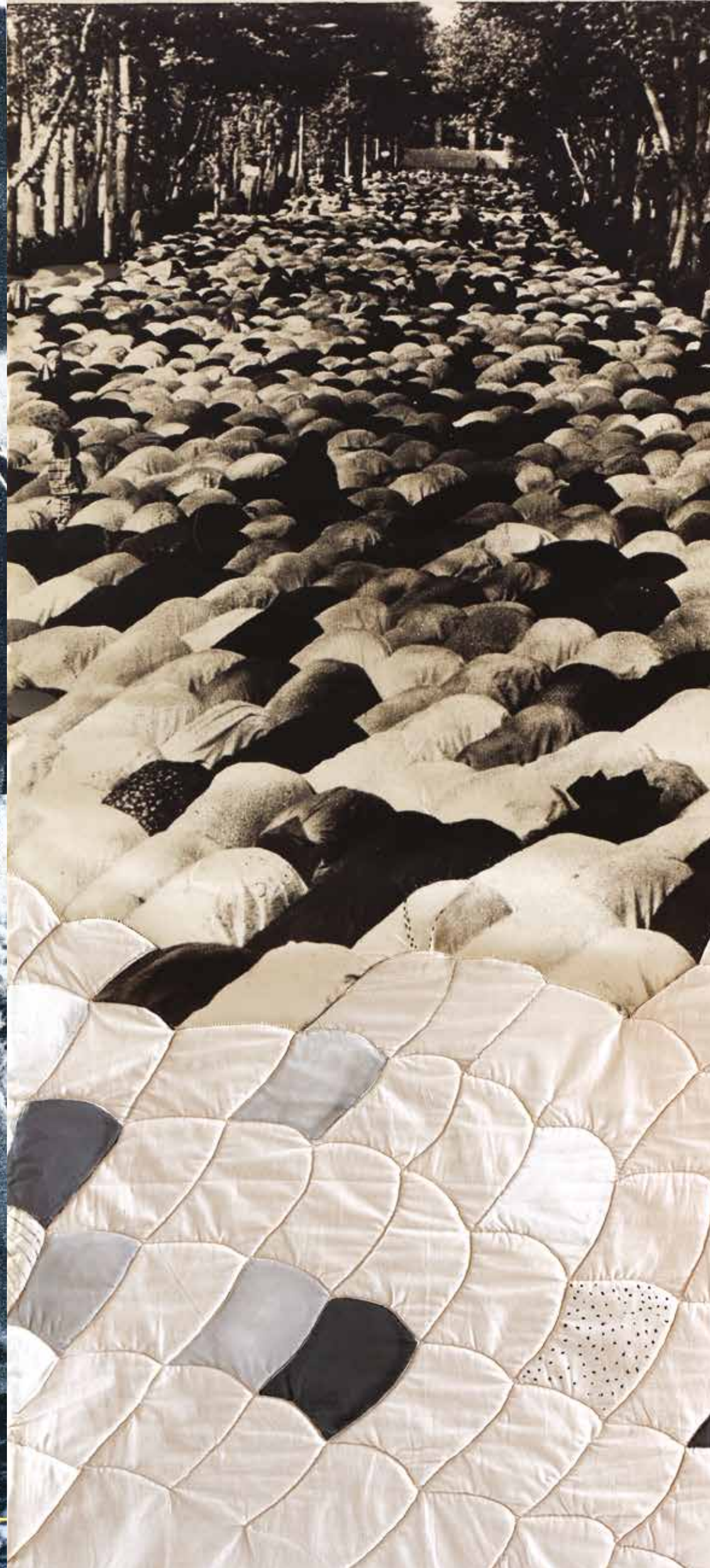
















Risme (Beams), 1987  
straw paper applications on author's photo, 71 x 100 cm



Rogo, (Fire) 1991  
collage of burnt scrap paper on author's photo, 76 x 102 x 6 cm









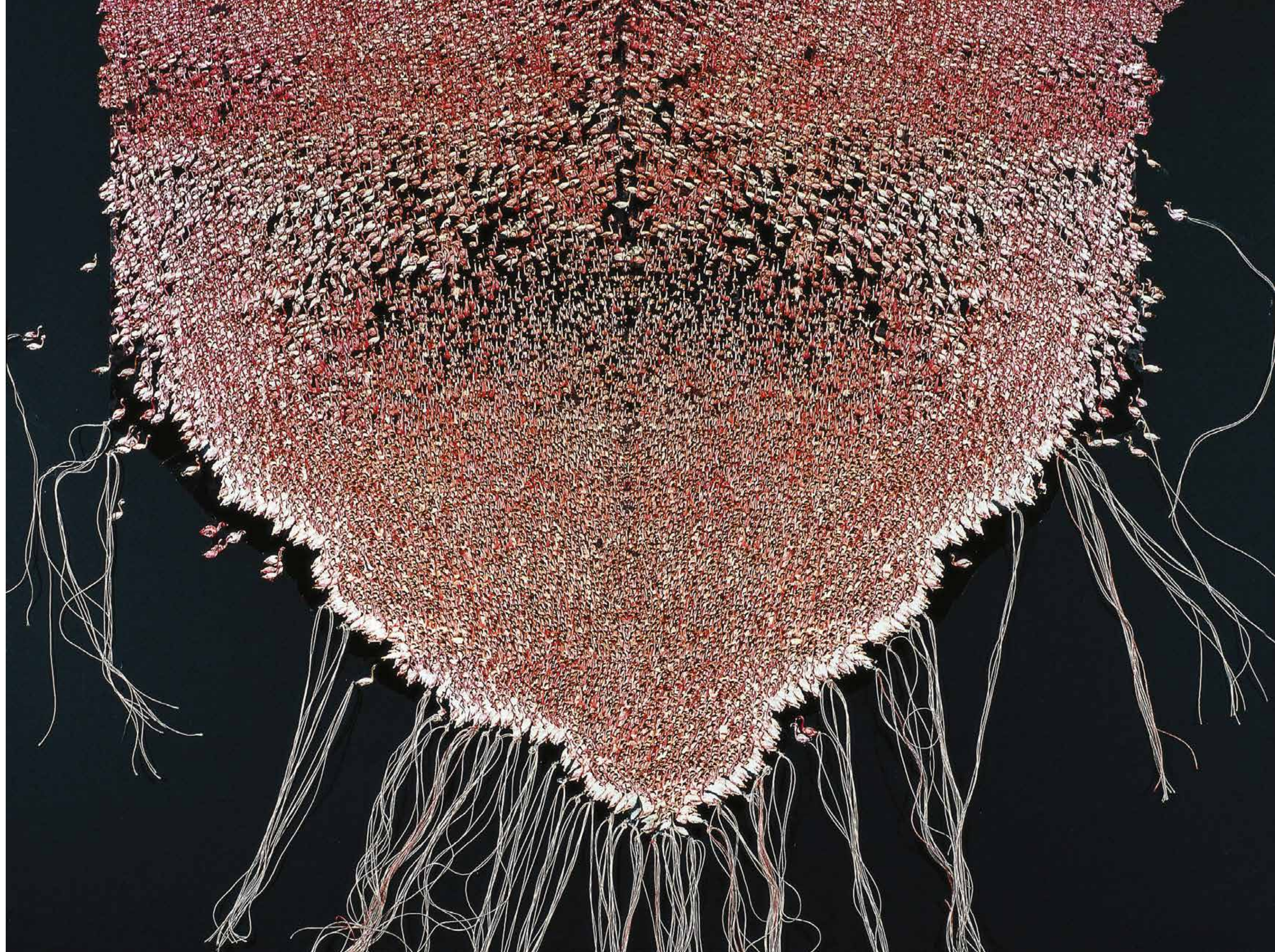












*Lo scialle di Venere (The Shawl of Venus), 1996*  
collage and thread applied on photo, 80 x 100 x 5 cm

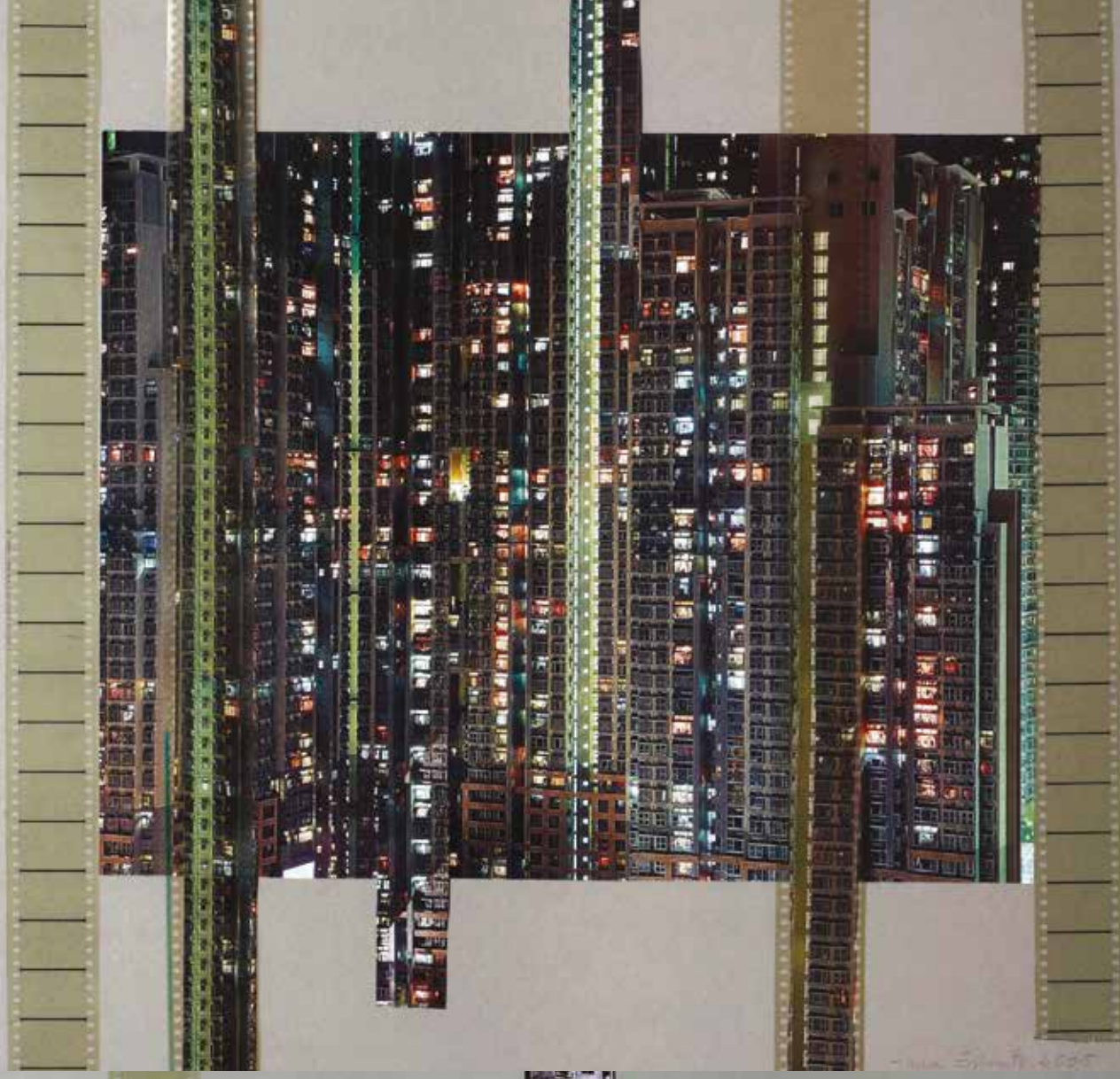
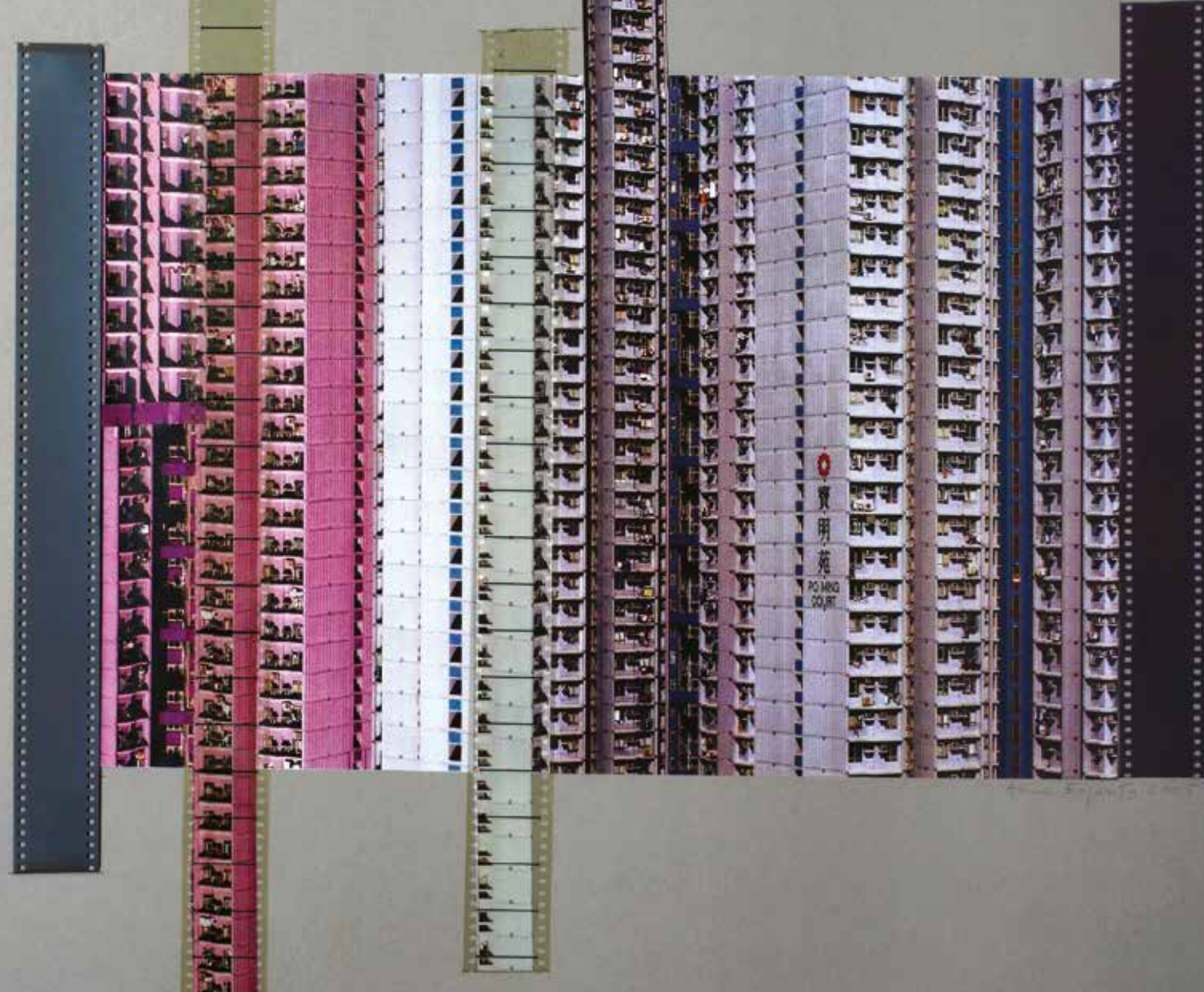




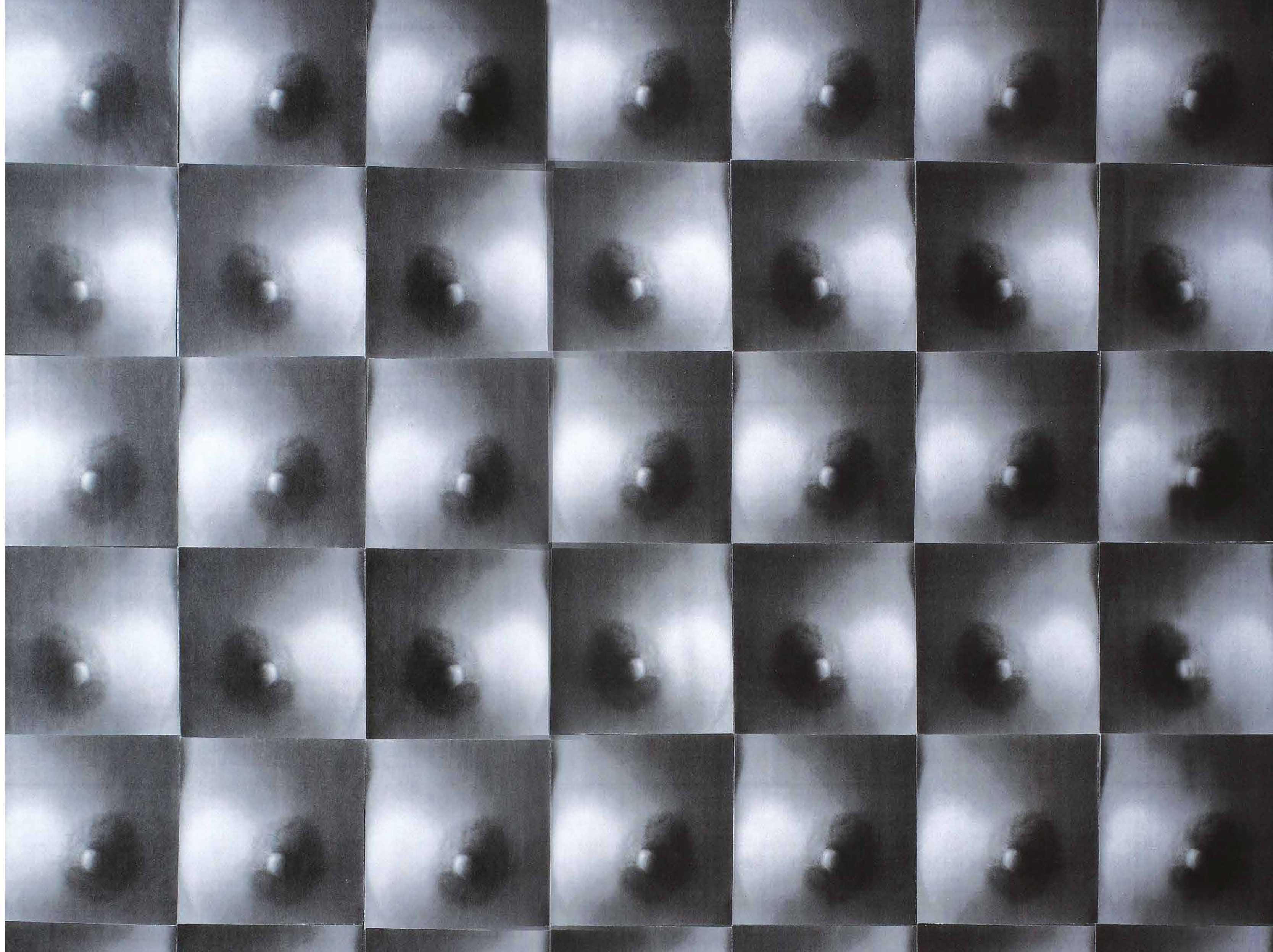




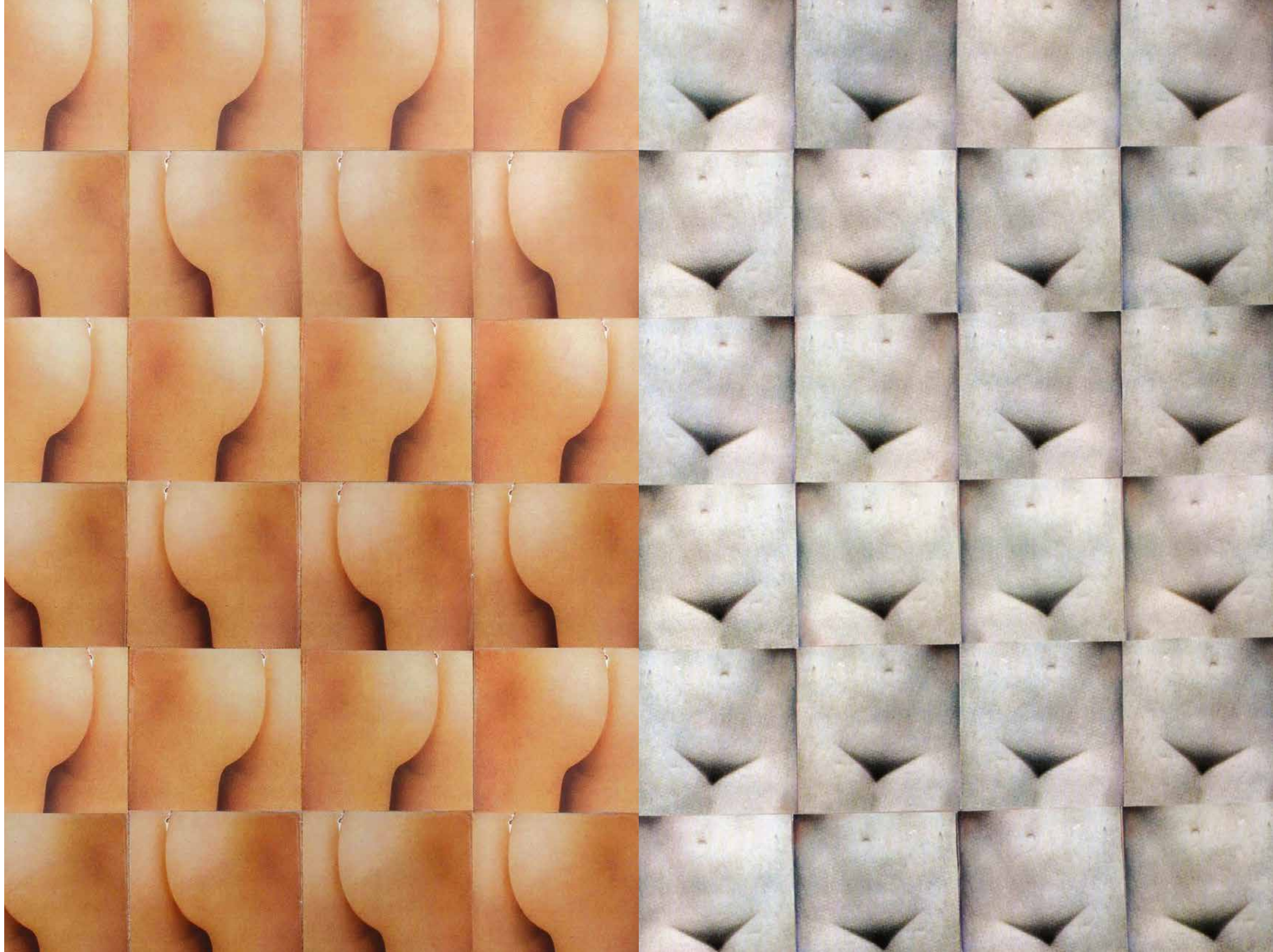














#BIO  
ANNA  
ESPOSITO

1979/84

Between the late seventies and early eighties, her work was exhibited in several Italian national galleries (Spazio Alternativo, Rome, 1979-1980; Unde Gallery, Turin 1980; NSM Gallery, Milan, 1983) and internationally (Galleria Drehscheibe, Basel, 1981) plus participating in four consecutive editions of the Art Basel fair (Galleria Artivisive, Rome, 1979-1980-1981-1982). In 1979 she showed in the collective exhibition *From Page to Space – Women in the Italian Avant-garde between Language and Image*, curated by Mirella Bentivoglio, at Columbia University in New York, and invited again by Bentivoglio in 1981, to show at the exhibition *O quadrato do dizer/ The Square of Saying*, created as part of the XVI Biennale in São Paulo, Brazil.

1969/78

After her experimentation with sculpture, she began to devote herself to painting and frequented the leading galleries of the Roman art scene of the time, soon becoming one of the most appreciated artists by both critics and the public alike. During the seventies she exhibited in numerous solo and group exhibitions, in public and private institutions, and in 1978 took part in the exhibition *Materialization of Language*, curated by Mirella Bentivoglio, organised for the Venice Biennial.

1935

Anna Esposito (b.1935) lives and works in Rome. Her formal art training began under the guidance of Pericle Fazzini at the Academy of Fine Arts in Rome where she attended a sculpture course.

1998/2009

She exhibited thirty-three works from the anthology *Appearances, 1970-1998*, which opened to the public in December 1998 in the Municipality of Marino Exhibition Hall (Rome). The exhibition, expanded with her production in the early 2000s, was revived in 2006 at the Palazzo Comunale in Serra de' Conti (Ancona). Her works appear in several collective exhibitions aimed at historicising artistic production at the turn of the sixties and seventies, such as *Post-scriptum – Female Artists in Italy between language and image in the 60's and 70's*, curated by Mirella Bentivoglio, at Palazzo Massari in Ferrara in 1998 and *Hungry Images, Women and food in art*, at Regional Archeological Museum in Aosta in 2005.

1985/2009

In the following decade she held a series of important solo exhibitions curated by the main exponents of Italian criticism of the time, such as Enrico Crispolti (Galleria Sala 1, Rome, 1985) and Palma Bucarelli (Galleria Banchi Nuovi, Rome, 1987-1991). Her works were included in the XI Rome Quadrennial (1986) and the International Biennial in Naples, curated by Marcello Venturoli (1988), and in numerous other collective exhibitions, including those curated by Mirella Bentivoglio (Gubbio, 1988; Senigallia, 1989; Cagliari, 1990; Riolo Terme, 1991; New York, 1993; São Paulo, 1994) and Achille Bonito Oliva (Erice; Rome, 1995).

2021/24

Recently she took part in a group show divided between Italy and Greece *Histoire d'E part 1 – Between language and image*, curated by Paolo Cortese and Francesco Romano Petillo, at Spazio Lettera E in Rome and at Gramma\_Epsilon Gallery in Athens (2021), *Art and the city*, curated by Stefano Pezzato, at Centro Pecci in Prato (2021), *The poetry of translation*, curated by Judith Waldmann, at Kunst Meran Merano Arte in Merano (2021) and *Re- Materialization of Language*, curated by Cristiana Perrella and Andrea Villiani, at Dalle Nogare Foundation in Bolzano (2022), *Books as Art*, curated by Paolo Cortese, at Gramma\_Epsilon Gallery in Athens (2023) and *Mediterranean Disturbances* at Gramma\_Epsilon Gallery in Athens (2024) . In 2022 she held her latest solo show, *What I've done* curated by Davide Mariani, at Gramma\_Epsilon Gallery in Athens.

2010/20

Among the exhibitions held since 2010, it is worth noting the anthologies *Appearances can be deceptive*, curated by Eva Clausen and Maria Chiara Salmeri, in the Sinopoli Foyer at Auditorium Parco della Musica in Rome in 2010 with the accompanying monograph (ed. De Luca), *Interposed images*, curated by Elio Pecora, at Palazzo Flangini in Venice in 2016 and *This world of ours*, curated by Cornelia Bujin, at Alson Gallery in Milan in 2019. Her works have also been included in several projects dedicated to artists operating between the sixties and seventies, including *Bentivoglio donation*, curated by Daniela Ferrari, at MART in Rovereto (2011), 1978, *Unexpected subject, Art and Feminism in Italy*, curated by Marco Scotini and Raffaella Perna, at FM Centro for Contemporary Art in Milan (2019).



# ***WE ARE A FEMALE ART GALLERY***

At the heart of Gramma\_Epsilon Gallery our purpose is to connect the present female avant-garde with the climate of experimentation and the female-led emancipatory movements of the 1960s and 1970s. We aim to document the work of the artists of the era, a time characterised by extraordinary inventiveness and experimental strength, yet of which still little is known.



Agathonos, 6 · Athens  
Tuesday\_Saturday  
11:00\_19:00

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