

BETWEEN REALITIES

AKI+ARNAUD COOREN & THOMAS DEMAND

NEW YORK | 23 FEB – 28 APRIL



Between Realities is a dual exhibition presenting new and recent works of Japanese-French design duo, Aki+Arnaud Cooren, in dialogue with the works of German-born contemporary artist Thomas Demand. The exhibition develops the themes underpinning both artist's creative oeuvres that lean into the visual play between "what is real" and "what is illusion".

The Tiss-Tiss artworks display a relief of fabric on the surface and sewn stitch imprints on the edges of each sand-cast colourfully patinated aluminium component. The artists capture a moment in time during which the linen fabric is carefully laid out and emphasize the beauty of traditional hand-weaving techniques and the resulting irregularities in the cloth. The fluid impression of the textile imprint is juxtaposed with the architectonic, self-supporting structure of the rigid aluminium plates.

In their minimalist Tiss-Tiss series, Aki+Arnaud succinctly combine the harshness of metal with the fragile poetry of fabric. They developed a special manufacturing process which incorporates the process of sand-casting to achieve the appearance of intricate, handmade detail on the object's surface. They mould a silicone duplicate of an original cardboard and linen master model, which is then sand-cast in aluminium, and dyed in colour. The duo experimented with this technique already in 2017 when their first Tiss-Tiss low chair which was awarded the Liliane Bettencourt Prize for l'intelligence de la main (the intelligence of the hand). It took them almost four years to develop the process, further resulting in a large amount of works which complete the Tiss-Tiss collection.

The Buddhist philosophy of Impermanence is an important influence on the collection, as is the art of Keisuke Serizawa (1895-1984), a textiles master and previously a Living National Treasure of Japan, of whom Aki's father was a student for some time. Serizawa's *Waterfall* (1962), a depiction of a narrow waterfall silk-screen printed onto blue-dyed cloth, is exemplary of their shared philosophy; the linear flow of the waterfall equates to that of time, of which Serizawa takes a snapshot, creating stillness from fluidity. So too do Aki+Arnaud fix an arrangement of fluid fabric into metal as a means of preservation, contrasting rigidity with perceived softness.

Such a level of detail achieved by their masterful casting process, that the metal exhibits an illusory *trompe-l'oeil* effect. This visual dissonance between form and surface immediately questions the nature of the work, and more importantly its use. For Aki+Arnaud design is a matter of context and harmony, and of sharing an idea, so it is paramount that their works' functional relationship with its surroundings is questioned. They appreciate that the relationship between any two objects or concepts is transient, as shifting as the strands of fabric on which their forms are modelled.

In a similar manner Thomas Demand suspends disbelief; meticulously captures ephemeral models through a camera. Demand's photographs may seem objective and innocuous, but each scene is in fact handmade sculptural environment, rather than the real world they appear to capture. The artists are also linked via an appreciation of architectural forms, as well as an interest in ephemerality. Demand's sculptures live on in his photographs.

The French philosopher, Jean Baudrillard, has an immense impact on the practice of both Aki+Arnaud Cooren and Thomas Demand. The duplicity inherent in this exhibition parallels French philosopher Jean Baudrillard's thesis, *'Simulacra and Simulation'*. Whereas in Aki+Arnaud's works, aluminium becomes a simulacrum of fabric, in Thomas's art, paper becomes a simulacrum of reality – both stimulate viewers to question the reality of the world that surrounds them.

AKI+ARNAUD COOREN

COWCODILE
2022

LEATHER, RESIN

TABLE 1 | 29 x 181 x 84 CM

11 3/8 x 71 1/4 x 33 1/8 IN

TABLE 2 | 41 x 141 x 56.5 CM

16 1/8 x 55 1/2 x 22 1/4 IN

UNIQUE

Cowcodile low table is exemplary of the Aki+Arnaud's ability to render one material as another. Worked-cows leather creates a texture seemingly identical to crocodile, skin, appropriating the skin of one animal into another.

This work is composed of two tables of varying sizes. The placement of the tables, where the small one rests on the large one, is inspired by the relationship between mother crocodile and its child, and the imagery of an offspring leaning on its mother.





ISHIGAKI

The Tiss-Tiss series also includes Ishigaki light sculptures, inspired by Arnaud's freediving experiences off the coast of Ishigaki island, south of Japan. The lamp's light is projected upwards from a bulb in the base, through the lampshade, producing a mesmerising shadow on the ceiling, representative of the small circle of sunlight on the ocean's surface as viewed from many meters underwater. A metal and epoxy-carbon base supports a bamboo stem and a fixed linen lampshade dyed in subtle shades of blue. The lamps are visually distinct from the rest of the series but continue its material themes, in this instance dealing separately with the metal and fabric elements, rather than unifying them as in the aluminium furniture.

AKI+ARNAUD COOREN

ISHIGAKI LAMP #9
2021

LINEN, CARBON, RESIN, STEEL,
BAMBOO, PIGMENT, LIGHT FITTINGS
57 × 26 × 26 CM
22 1/2 × 10 1/4 × 10 1/4 IN
UNIQUE







50 LAMBS FOR A COYOTE: A TRIBUTE TO JOSEPH BEUYS

50 Lambs for a Coyote: A Tribute to Joseph Beuys are two pieces handmade by Aki+Arnaud, developed to pay homage to the German artist, in specific reference to Beuys' 1974 performance I Like America and America Likes Me. The twin artworks convey the same respect for American Indian tribes expressed by Beuys in his original performance, as Aki+Arnaud hold the savoir-faire of Native Americans and their understanding of coherence with the natural world in high esteem.

50 Lambs for a Coyote are made from felt and bee's wax, two especially important materials to Beuys, as well as lamb skin leather that was discarded from a shoe manufacturer due to its non-uniform colour – incidentally, the exact quality that drew the artists to it. These unique pieces are entirely realized by the hands of Aki+Arnaud in their Paris atelier.

AKI+ARNAUD COOREN

50 LAMBS FOR A COYOTE: TRIBUTE TO JOSEPH BEUYS YELLOW
2022

LEATHER, RESIN
76 × 52 × 45 CM
29 7/8 × 20 1/2 × 17 3/4 IN
UNIQUE







AKI+ARNAUD COOREN

50 LAMBS FOR A COYOTE: TRIBUTE TO JOSEPH BEUYS BROWN
2022

LEATHER, RESIN
76 × 52 × 45 CM
29 7/8 × 20 1/2 × 17 3/4 IN
UNIQUE







TISS TISS

In the TISS-TISS series, aluminium is sand-casted in a highly detailed relief of linen fabric, with the loose weave of individual threads held in uncharacteristically rigid formations. This technical yet poetic process captures the instance in time when the linen mould was taken and captures the movement of the fabric in rigid formations. Its colourful palette, ranging from indigo to cigare, echoes the traditional Japanese textile dying, and each sheet is edged with sewn stitch imprints, furthering the illusion these works are made of fabric, not metal. Aki+Arnaud's multidisciplinary approach fuses the Japanese Mingei movement with modernist European design.

The distinctive linen patina that defines the TISS-TISS collection was conceived not just as a technical challenge, but as a means of capturing a moment in time. The Buddhist philosophy of Impermanence is an important influence on the collection, as is the art of Keisuke Serizawa (1895-1984), a textiles master and previously a Living National Treasure of Japan, of whom Aki's father was a student for some time. Serizawa's Waterfall (1962), a depiction of a narrow waterfall silk-screen printed onto blue-dyed cloth, is exemplary of their shared philosophy; the linear flow of the waterfall equates to that of time, of which Serizawa takes a snapshot, creating stillness from fluidity. So too do Aki+Arnaud fix an arrangement of fluid fabric into metal as a means of preservation, contrasting rigidity with perceived softness.

Further inspiration was taken from the 20th century Mingei movement, which celebrated the beauty of handmade Japanese artefacts and utensils, often crafted with the same level of skill seen in supposedly 'higher' art forms. Aki+Arnaud continue to honour this tradition, as the many hand-crafted processes of each stage of fabrication (modelling, moulding, casting, assembling, and tinting) are honestly documented on the surface of their furniture. They use a comparison between the two Romantic painters JMW Turner and Caspar David Friedrich to explain their own perspective on material and nature. Friedrich painted his landscapes looking into the natural world; Turner, however, operated from within nature, capturing atmospheric context rather than objectivity. It is Turner's level of natural awareness that Aki+Arnaud bring to their work, understanding the nature of their materials and how best to express them.



AKI+ARNAUD COOREN

TISS TISS ROCKING CHAIR GREEN
2019

PATINATED ALUMINIUM
84.5 × 58 × 90 CM
33 1/4 × 22 7/8 × 35 3/8 IN
EDITION OF 8 + 4 AP





AKI+ARNAUD COOREN

TISS-TISS FAUTEUIL BRICK
2018

PATINATED ALUMINUM
90 × 57 × 81 CM
35 3/8 × 22 1/2 × 31 7/8 IN
EDITION OF 8 + 4 AP





AKI+ARNAUD COOREN

TISS-TISS TABOURET BAS A BLACK
2019

PATINATED ALUMINIUM
36 × 60 × 32 CM
14 1/8 × 23 5/8 × 12 5/8 IN
EDITION OF 20 + 4 AP





AKI+ARNAUD COOREN

TISS-TISS TABOURET BAS AAA BLACK
2019

PATINATED ALUMINIUM
30 x 39 x 32 CM
11 3/4 x 15 3/8 x 12 5/8 IN
EDITION OF 20 + 4 AP





AKI+ARNAUD COOREN

TISS-TISS PETIT TABOURET BAS AAA BLUE
2019

PATINATED ALUMINIUM
30 x 39 x 32 CM
11 3/4 x 15 3/8 x 12 5/8 IN
EDITION OF 20 + 4 AP





AKI+ARNAUD COOREN

TISS-TISS TABOURET BAS AAA GREEN
2019

PATINATED ALUMINIUM
30 × 39 × 32 CM
11 3/4 × 15 3/8 × 12 5/8 IN
EDITION OF 20 + 4 AP



AKI+ARNAUD COOREN

TISS-TISS BANC 4 ASSISES CIGARE
2021

PATINATED ALUMINIUM

44 x 228 x 35 CM

17 16/50 x 89 38/50 x 13 39/50 IN

EDITION OF 8 + 4 AP





AKI+ARNAUD COOREN

TISS-TISS BEDSIDE TABLE WITH DOOR GREEN PAIR
2019

PATINATED ALUMINIUM
61 × 65 × 45 CM
24 1/8 × 25 5/8 × 17 3/4 IN
EDITION OF 8 + 4 AP





AKI+ARNAUD COOREN

TISS-TISS COFFEE TABLE
2022

PATINATED ALUMINIUM
42 × 188 × 84 CM
16 1/2 × 74 1/8 × 33 1/8 IN
EDITION OF 8 + 4 AP









AKI+ARNAUD COOREN

TISS-TISS DINING TABLE CIGARE
2019

PATINATED ALUMINIUM
73 × 275 × 94 CM
28 3/4 × 108 1/4 × 37 1/8 IN
EDITION OF 8 + 4 AP





AKI+ARNAUD COOREN

TISS-TISS BEDSIDE TABLE BLACK PAIR
2019

PATINATED ALUMINIUM
61 × 65 × 45 CM
24 1/8 × 25 5/8 × 17 3/4 IN
EDITION OF 8 + 4 AP





AKI+ARNAUD COOREN

ISHIGAKI FLOOR LAMP #2
2021

LINEN, CARBON, RESIN, STEEL,
BAMBOO, PIGMENT, LIGHT FITTINGS
205 × 90 × 90 CM
80 3/4 × 35 3/8 × 35 3/8 IN
EDITION UNIQUE





ABOUT THOMAS DEMAND

Text courtesy of Matthew Marks Gallery.

Thomas Demand's work investigates the persistence of images and their ability to embed themselves in a society's collective memory. He studied sculpture at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf, where Bernd and Hilla Becher had recently taught a generation of German photographers, including Andreas Gursky, Thomas Struth, and Candida Höfer. Like those artists, Demand often makes mural-scale photographs, but instead of finding his subject matter in landscapes, buildings, and crowds, he uses paper and cardboard to meticulously reconstruct images taken from various media sources, often well-known historical pictures or widely seen photographs from the news. Once he has photographed his re-created environments — always devoid of figures but often displaying evidence of recent human activity — he destroys his models, further complicating the relationship between reproduction and original.

Thomas Demand (b. 1964) lives and works in Berlin and Los Angeles. He has had one-person exhibitions at museums including the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Neue Nationalgalerie in Berlin, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Tokyo, Museum Leuven in Belgium, the Garage Museum of Contemporary Art in Moscow, and Fundación Botín in Santander, Spain. In 2004 he represented Germany at the São Paulo Bienal.

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THOMAS DEMAND

BLACKCAP
2020

PIGMENT PRINT
145 × 110 CM
57 1/8 × 43 3/8 IN
EDITION 2/2



THOMAS DEMAND

BOXES
2018

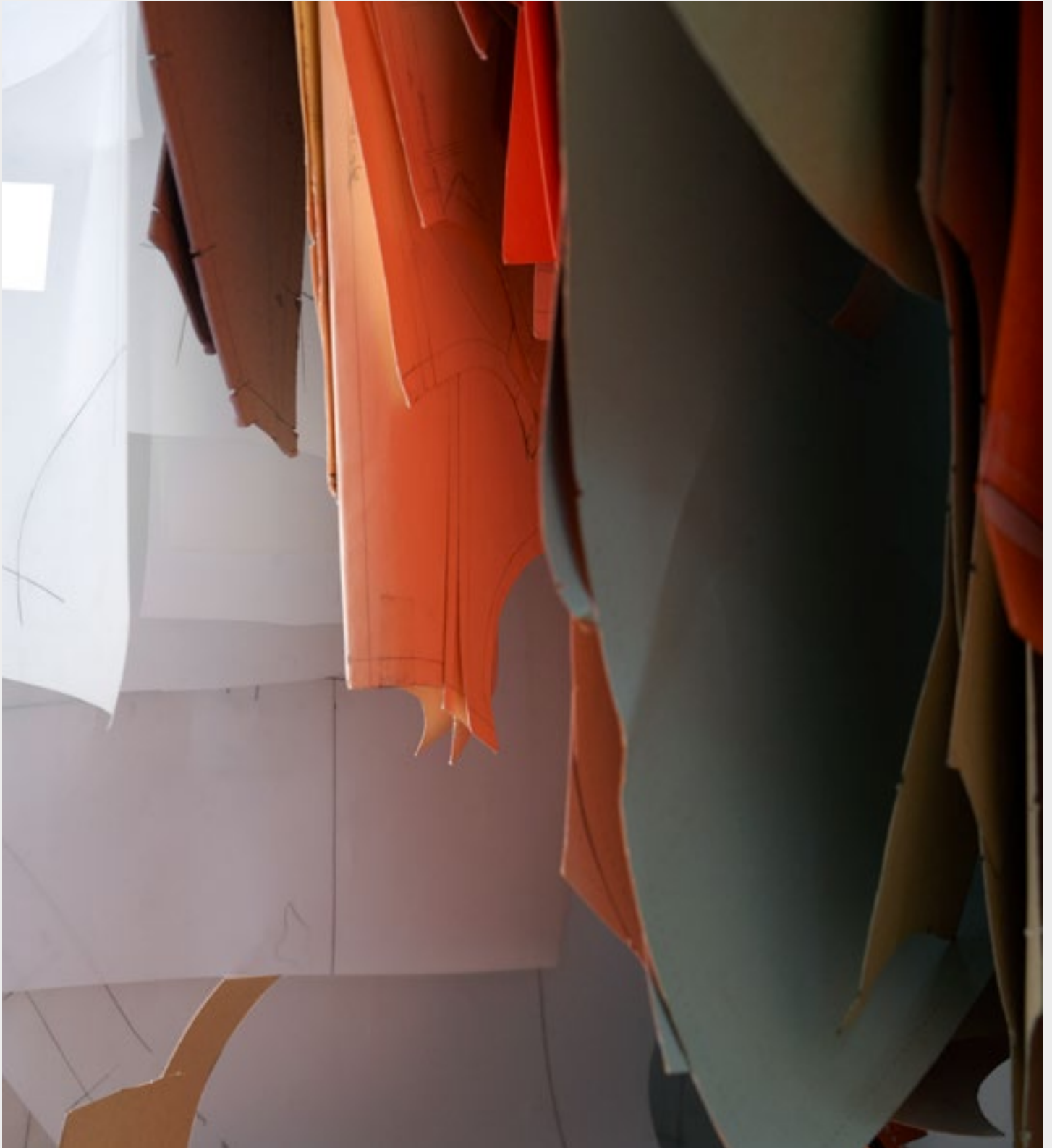
PIGMENT PRINT
83 × 110 CM
32 5/8 × 43 1/4 IN
EDITION 2/2



THOMAS DEMAND

CHAFFINCH
2020

PIGMENT PRINT
144 × 109 CM
56 1/2 × 42 3/4 IN
EDITION 2/2



THOMAS DEMAND

PRINTING FACTORY 49
2015

PIGMENT PRINT
108 × 144 CM
42 1/2 × 56 3/4 IN
EDITION 1/2



THOMAS DEMAND

PUBLISHING HOUSE 64
2015

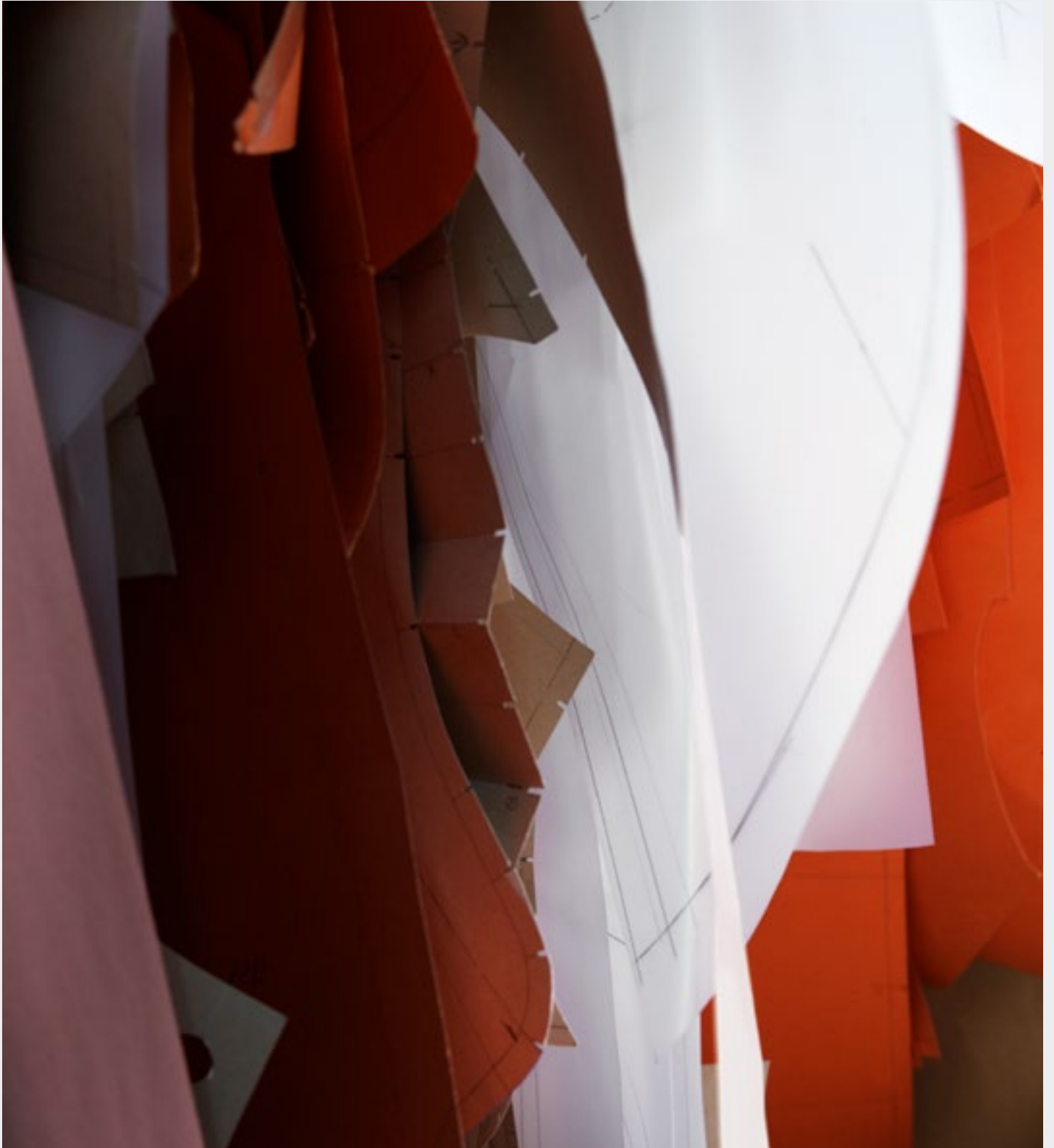
PIGMENT PRINT
101 × 135 CM
39 7/8 × 53 1/8 IN
EDITION 1/2



THOMAS DEMAND

STARLING
2020

PIGMENT PRINT
110 × 144 CM
43 1/8 × 56 5/8 IN
EDITION 2/2



ABOUT AKI+ARNAUD

Aki, the daughter of Japanese jewellery creators, was born in Paris in 1974 but grew up in Tokyo. She returned to Paris aged 18 to study interior and product design at the Ecole Camondo where she met Arnaud, a native of northern France who was born in 1973. He became interested in art during childhood and studied contemporary art in Belgium before moving to Paris. Since they opened their A+A Cooren design studio in 1999, they have worked for top-class brands as varied as Cartier, Artemide, L'Oréal, and Yamagiwa, and many others. Aki+Arnaud specialise in interior, product and furniture design projects as well as scenographies. They create bespoke pieces for private customers, and collaborate with architects on interior design projects. The pair won a Villa Médicis Hors les Murs residence in 2007 and spent several months in Denmark researching natural and artificial light. They were awarded The Liliane Bettencourt Prize pour intelligence de la main in 2017, for their Tiss-Tiss lowchair, in collaboration with craftsman David de Gourcuff. Through their minimal Japanese-French design aesthetic, they seek to integrate subtle references to nature in the everyday interiors and objects they create. For them, design is all about context and the act of sharing: sharing ideas with people, and between object and user. The duo see design as everything that surrounds us, whether it is industrially made or hand-crafted, and proceed to form new ideas that, just like nature, constantly evolve and gradually immerse the user in the present moment.



LONDON 6 ALBEMARLE ST / MAYFAIR

PARIS 54 RUE DE LA VERRIERE / MARAIS

NEW YORK 693 FIFTH AVENUE / MIDTOWN

LOS ANGELES 7070 SANTA MONICA BLVD / WEST HOLLYWOOD