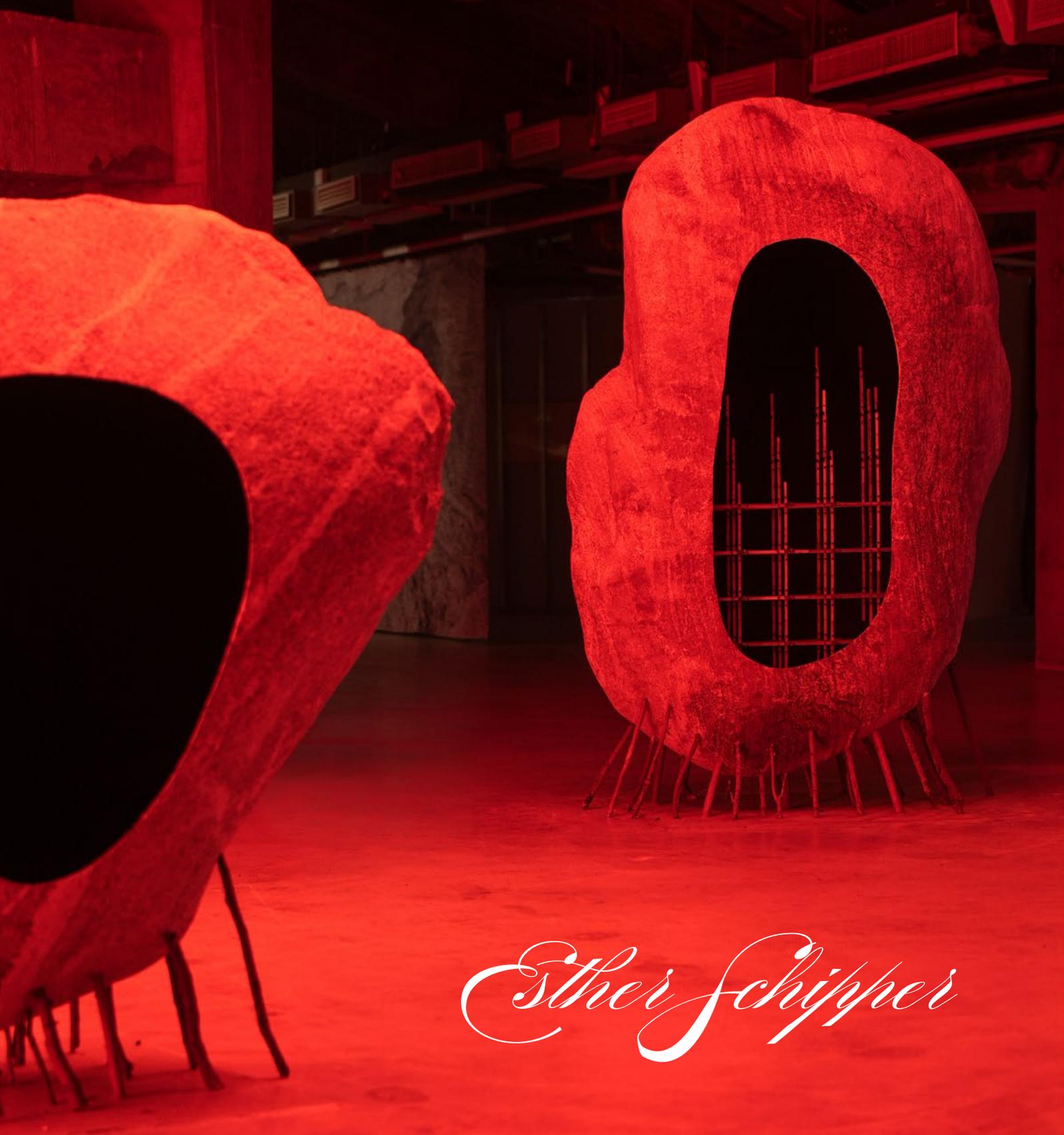


JULIUS VON BISMARCK

TIĀN GŌNG KĀI WÙ: ROCKS, FIRE, THUNDER

Beiqiu Museum of Contemporary Art, Nanjing

November 11, 2025 – February 1, 2026



Esther Schipper

Julius von Bismarck



Julius von Bismarck, born 1983 in Breisach am Rhein, Germany, grew up in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. He currently lives and works in Berlin and in Switzerland.

The artist studied at the Berlin University of the Arts (2005-2013) and Hunter College, New York (2007). Julius von Bismarck received the Award of the Shifting Foundation, Beverly Hills (2018); IBB Photography Award, IBB Atrium, Berlin (2013); and Prix Ars Electronica Award, Linz (2009), among others.

Spanning a wide range of forms—from kinetic sculptures and photographs to video installations and landscapes—Julius von Bismarck's work is produced in an intense engagement with the world and the physical conditions that determine existence on the planet. His work treats the natural world as a laboratory, a studio or sometimes even as a kind of canvas. Employing optical illusion, elaborate tromp l'oeil or incongruous action, his works can confound viewers, allowing them to experience the world and their place in it from a reoriented perspective. At the core of his

practice is the question of how the notion of Nature was constructed: specifically, how the conceptual split stipulated by man from his surroundings, through naming, classifying and creating systems, has gone hand in hand with control and domination of the environment, to increasingly disastrous effects, not just for nature itself but as a consequence of wider notions of humanity's sovereignty, also for the lives of other beings, human and non-human.

Ambitious and expansive, von Bismarck's projects are rooted in extensive research and experimentation to invent entirely new technological apparatuses that articulate and give form to his ideas. At times grandiose or granular, the works beguile with their originality of thought and execution. Playing on danger—real and implied existential risks for the artist, or his team, for example, by triggering lightning with small rockets, or for the audience who are placed near slowly collapsing sculptures or confronted with what appear to be large quantities of precariously suspended explosives—von Bismarck's projects reveal an explorer's adventurousness, tempered by a scientific approach and the artist's profound self-awareness of his engagement with the operations of a flawed Enlightenment that his work seeks to critique.

Selected solo exhibitions and commissions include: Yi Museum, Hangzhou (upcoming); **Julius von Bismarck: This is not the storm**, ACCA, Melbourne (upcoming); **Tiān Gōng Kāi Wù: Rocks, Fire, Thunder**, Beiqiu Museum of Contemporary Art, Nanjing (2025-2026); **Normale Katastrophe**, KunstHaus Wien, Vienna (2025); **Grenzen der Intelligenzen**, Deichtorhallen, Hamburg (2024); **Zwei Wölfinnen**, Esther Schipper, Berlin (2024); **When Platitudes Become Form**, Berlinische Galerie, Museum für Moderne Kunst, Berlin (2023); **NEUSTADT** (with Marta Dyachenko), Emscherkunstweg, Duisburg (2021); **Feuer mit Feuer**, Bundeskunsthalle, Bonn (2020); **Art Club #28**, Villa Médicis – Académie de France à Rome, Rome (2019); **Baumanalyse**, Haus Mödrath – Räume für Kunst, Kerpen (2019); **Die Mimik der Tethys**, Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2019); **I'm afraid I must ask you to leave** (with Julian Charrière), Kunstpalais Erlangen, Erlangen (2018); **Gewaltenteilung**, Städtische Galerie Wolfsburg, Wolfsburg (2017); **Objects in mirror might be closer than they appear** (with Julian Charrière), Villa Bernasconi, Geneva (2016); **Fade Into You – A Series of Film Screenings**, Kunsthalle Mainz, Mainz (2016); **Tiere sind dumm und Pflanzen noch viel dümmer**, Kunstverein Göttingen, Göttingen (2015); History Apparatus, Kunstverein Arnshausen, Arnshausen (2014).

His work is held in the collections of various institutions including: Yi Museum, Hangzhou; Arken Museum, Ishøj; FRAC Alsace, Sélestat; Fundación Televisa, Mexico City; Kunsthalle Hamburg; Musac – Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Castilla y León; Sammlung Philara, Düsseldorf; Sammlung zeitgenössischer Kunst der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Bonn; Sprengel Museum Hannover, Hanover; Hong Museum, Wenzhou and Stadtgalerie Wolfsburg.

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Cover image: Exhibition view, Julius von Bismarck, **Tiān Gōng Kāi Wù: Rocks, Fire, Thunder**, Beiqiu Museum of Contemporary Art, Nanjing (2025-26)

EXHIBITION TEXT

Beiqiu Museum of Contemporary Art presents **Tiān Gōng Kāi Wù: Rocks, Fire, Thunder**, the first solo exhibition in China by German artist Julius von Bismarck. Drawing inspiration from the seventeenth-century Chinese encyclopedia of technology, **Tiangong Kaiwu**, the exhibition bridges ancient wisdom and contemporary thought, exploring the interrelations between nature, technology, and humankind.

Bismarck's artistic practice consistently revolves around the triangular relationship between humankind, nature, and technology. In his art and thinking, "nature" is not external to human, nor does it stand in opposition as a passive material world; rather, nature, for him, is mutually shaped through human perception and experience. Often employing the logic of scientific experiment, he combines satellite data, meteorological instruments, mechanical structures, and moving images, transforming art into a renewed experiment of natural phenomena.

The title **Tiān Gōng Kāi Wù** (or Heavenly Craftsmanship, Opening Things) carries philosophical resonance: "Heavenly Craftsmanship" refers to the self-generating artistry of nature, while "Opening Things" denotes human creativity that mirrors cosmic laws. The title thus signifies more than a text; it embodies a worldview in which art and technology evolve through cycles of imitation and transcendence, modeling a vision of coexistence and renewal between humanity and the natural world. In Bismarck's artistic thought and practice, he resists the conventional, narrow definition of "nature" — one that relies on a binary logic to oppose it to "the human," or to divide the "natural" from the "artificial." In this sense, Bismarck's understanding of "nature" resonates profoundly with the philosophy of ancient Chinese technologies. Therefore, the exhibition's triad—rocks, fire, and thunder—are no longer forms of "nature" external to humanity, but rather isomorphic entities of man and nature, transformed through the artist's mediation and creative process.

At the heart of the exhibition lies a newly commissioned site-specific work for Beiqiu—a rock sculpture series inspired by the museum's name, Beiqiu, meaning "North Hill." These seemingly solid boulders are hollow structures supported by steel frameworks, revealing the illusion of mass. Inspired by his visit to Lingyin Temple, where worshippers leaned wooden sticks against rocks in prayer, Bismarck extends the metaphor by giving the stones "legs," imbuing them with a sense of life and humor, and reflecting on the spiritual autonomy of matter.

Across the triad of rocks, fire, and thunder, the exhibition traces humanity's enduring dialogue with natural forces. Complementing new rock sculptures are Bismarck's long-term studies of fire and lightning. The **Talking to Thunder** series, born from his personal lightning strike, transforms atmospheric electricity into an aesthetic event that unites experiment and ritual. In **Fire with Fire**, slow-motion mirrored images of wildfires turn catastrophe into contemplation, rendering fire as both destructive and sacred.

In **Tiān Gōng Kāi Wù: Rocks, Fire, Thunder**, Bismarck fuses the precision of science with the sensibility of art to rekindle awe toward the natural world. His works suggest that to "open things" (kāi wù) is not merely to expand the realm of technique, but to rediscover the resonance between the human mind and the cosmos.

— Tiange Yang



Exhibition view: Julius von Bismarck, **Tiān Gōng Kāi Wù: Rocks, Fire, Thunder**, Beiqiu Museum of Contemporary Art, Nanjing (2025-26)



Exhibition view: Julius von Bismarck, **Tiān Gōng Kāi Wù: Rocks, Fire, Thunder**, Beiqiu Museum of Contemporary Art, Nanjing (2025-26)

BOULDER SERIES

Julius von Bismarck's series of unique sculptures titled **Boulder** at first sight appears as heavy objects. While seemingly massive, the rocks are in fact hollowed out, leaving only a very thin outer sheath. A thin, grid-like steel framework supports the exterior shell of the work **Boulder (Granitic Gneiss I)**.

The individual works of the series are hand-crafted in an elaborate production, exploiting contemporary technologies, such as 3D scanning, alongside the established methods of sculpting. Reduced to a thin shell, the sculpture's surface, as much as the void comprising its core, reads as a reference to the coordinated processes designed to cast free-standing objects: merging positive and negative forms, and the liquid, elastic, firm, malleable, and solid qualities of materials.

Given that the eye can only perceive surfaces, when observed from the front, the viewer is confronted with the optical illusion of a solid object. Only as one walks around the work, one realizes that there is no intact three-dimensional object, but only its surface. Wittily mining the prerogative of visibility in contemporary culture, von Bismarck manifests weight through what is actually light. **Boulder** then portrays the experience of a contradiction, of experiencing heaviness through lightness, finally suspended in surprise.

The artist presented the first sculpture of the series on a cushion. For his solo exhibition **Tiān Gōng Kāi Wù: Rocks, Fire, Thunder** at Beiqiu Museum of Contemporary Art, Nanjing, von Bismarck conceived of a new design for the sculpture's display. As he travelled across China, von Bismarck came up with this new presentation, after he observed the local habit of securing large, rocky ledges with a few sticks or scattered branches. Squarely placed on and carried by a handful of slim twigs, the work bespeaks the capacity and resilience harbored in the petit.



Julius von Bismarck, **Boulder (Granitic Gneiss I)**, 2025, stone, resin, metal, wood, 236 x 150 x 80 cm (92 7/8 x 59 x 31 1/2 in) (JVB 010)

BOULDER (GRANITIC GNEISS I), 2025



Julius von Bismarck, **Boulder (Granitic Gneiss I)**, 2025, stone, resin, metal, wood, 236 x 150 x 80 cm (92 7/8 x 59 x 31 1/2 in) (JVB 010)



BOULDER (PINK GRANITIC GNEISS), 2025



Julius von Bismarck, **Boulder (Pink Granitic Gneiss)**, 2025, stone, resin, metal, wood, 213 x 140 x 80 cm (83 7/8 x 55 1/8 x 31 1/2 in) (JVB 065)



BOULDER (GRANITIC GNEISS II), 2025



Julius von Bismarck, **Boulder (Granitic Gneiss II)**, 2025, stone, resin, metal, wood, 178 x 130 x 80 cm (70 1/8 x 51 1/8 x 31 1/2 in) (JVB 068)





Exhibition view: Julius von Bismarck, **Tiān Gōng Kāi Wù: Rocks, Fire, Thunder**, Beiqiu Museum of Contemporary Art, Nanjing (2025-26)



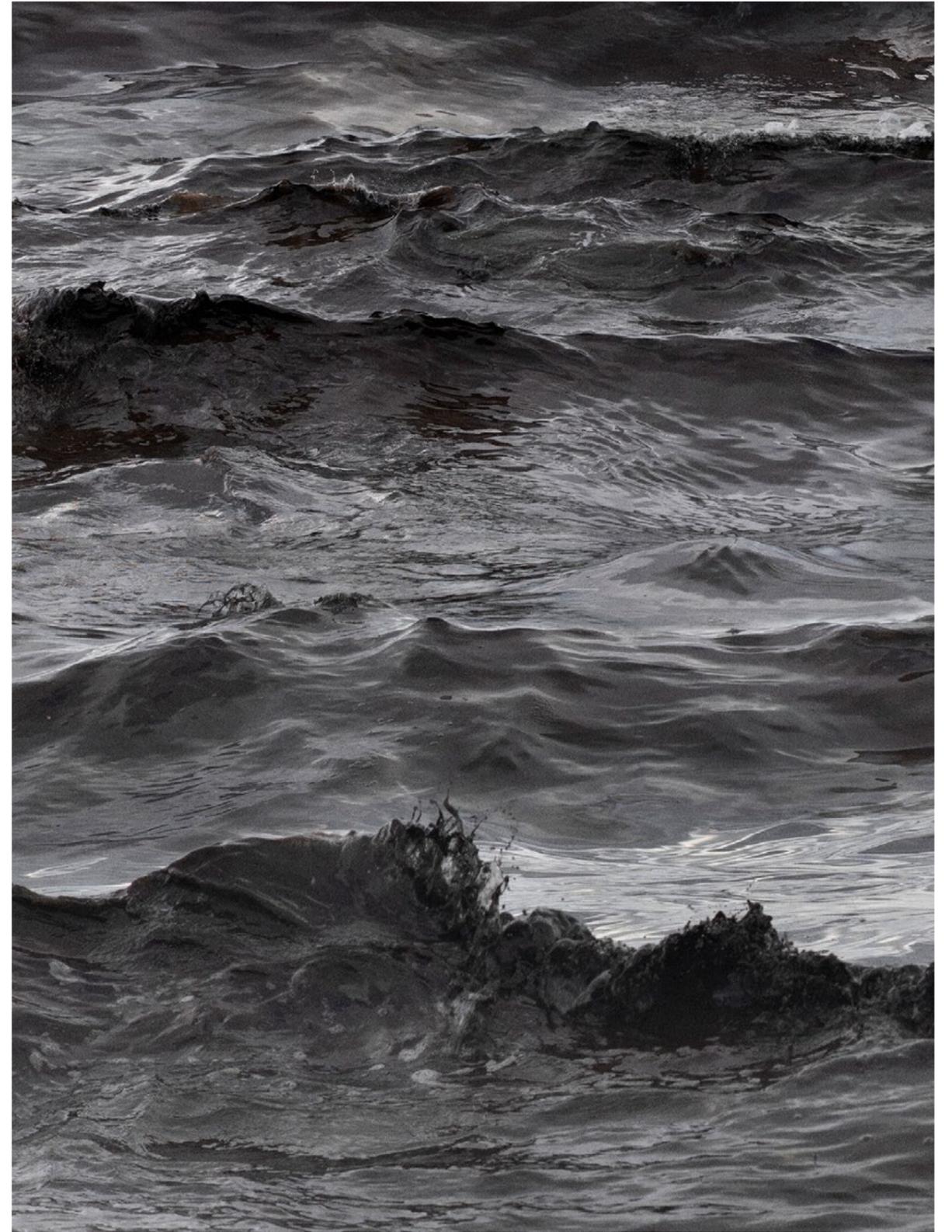
Exhibition view: Julius von Bismarck, **Tiān Gōng Kāi Wù: Rocks, Fire, Thunder**, Beiqiu Museum of Contemporary Art, Nanjing (2025-26)



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THE DAY THE OCEAN TURNED BLACK, 2025

Julius von Bismarck's new photographic works, titled **The Day the Ocean Turned Black**, were created in early 2025 in the aftermath of the devastating Los Angeles fires. They revolve around the element of fire as both a destructive and a regenerative force. The works contradict the familiar aesthetics of disasters as they are represented in media reports: the images capture and convey the duality of fire – on the one hand a destructive elementary power, on the other a tool to dominate nature and the engine driving human ecological power.



Detail: Julius von Bismarck, **The Day the Ocean turned Black**, 2025, archival pigment print on Hahnemühle Photo Rag Baryta paper, 210,2 x 360,6 cm (82 3/4 x 142 in) (unframed), 214,4 x 373,2 cm (84 3/8 x 146 7/8 in) (framed), edition of 6 (JVB 071)



Julius von Bismarck, **The Day the Ocean turned Black**, 2025, archival pigment print on Hahnemühle Photo Rag Baryta paper, 210,2 x 360,6 cm (82 3/4 x 142 in) (unframed), 214,4 x 373,2 cm (84 3/8 x 146 7/8 in) (framed), edition of 6 (JVB 071)



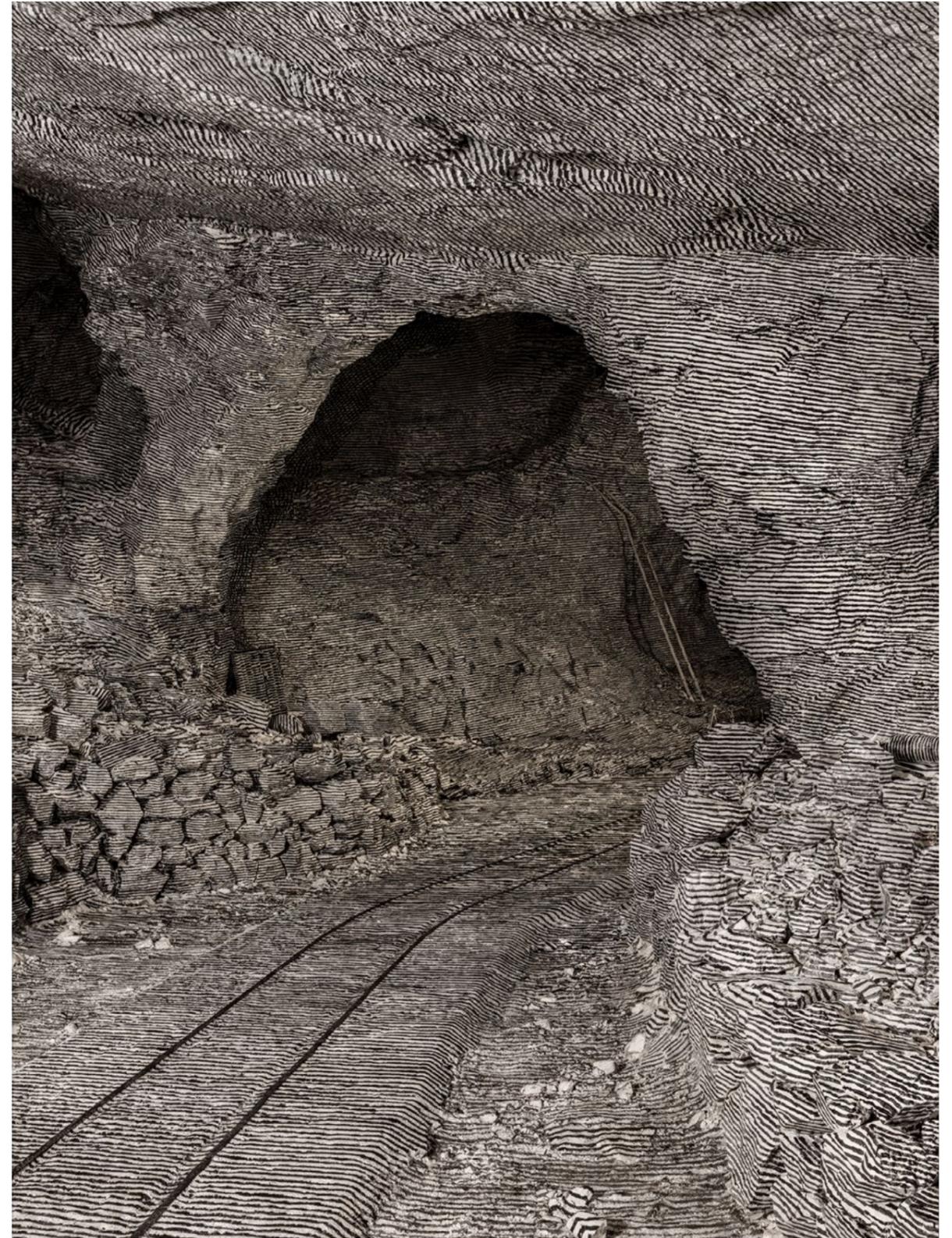
Exhibition view: Julius von Bismarck, **Tiān Gōng Kāi Wù: Rocks, Fire, Thunder**, Beiqiu Museum of Contemporary Art, Nanjing (2025-26)

LANDSCAPE PAINTING (MINE), 2025

The photograph is based on images of an Italian mine near Dossena, close to Bergamo. Fine lines appear to crisscross the stone surfaces that make up the cave. Stripped of color, stone and earth are transformed into an abstract representation. The large-format photo series creates an illusion in its mediality and seems to oscillate between historical engraving, painting, and photograph. The work is part of a larger series entitled **Landscape** which is intended as a continuation of the deconstruction of our understanding of landscape.

In this context, the mine pictured in this work represents the ancient practice of humanity to objectify and strip nature. The mining area of Dossena might be one of the most ancient farming mountains of Bergamo: the ancient cultivation of the area seems to date back to the Bronze Age. Historians believe Romans used to send slaves sentenced to forced labor in the mines for the mineral extraction. Pliny the Elder mentioned Bergamo in his *Naturalis Historia* as place of calamine extraction and possible location to which he refers as the mine of Dossena - Oltre il Colle. Some of the minerals collected in the mine of Dossena were calamine, Argentiferous galena and starting from the 20th century, fluorite, a mineral used in the glass industry and metallurgy for lowering the melting temperature and for the production of hydrofluoric acid.

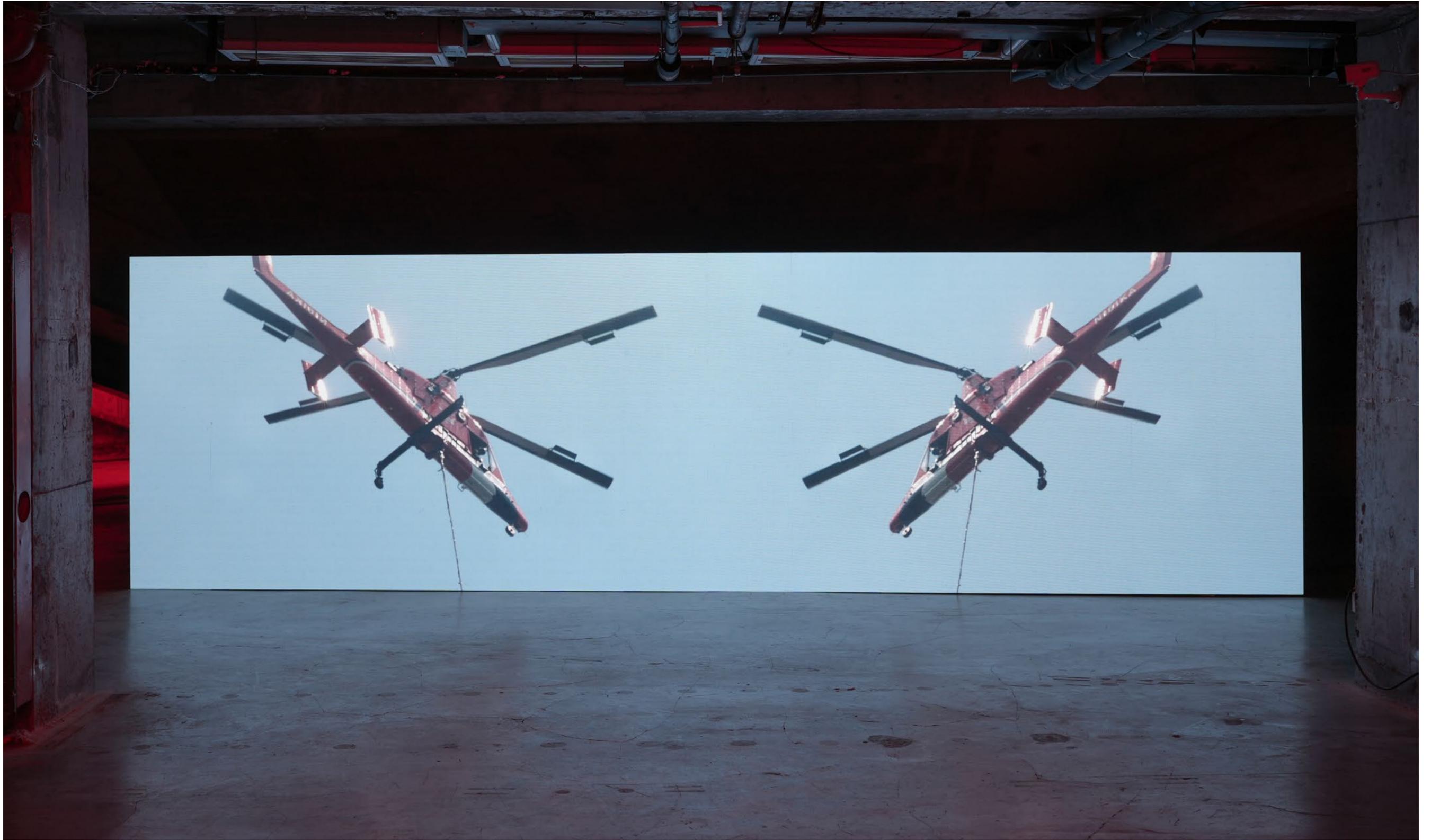
Analogous to the works **Landscape Painting (Quarry)**, which were created in a quarry on Lanzarote, and in a reversal of the original intention of landscape representations—i.e., to depict faraway landscapes in a reproducible manner—the artist applies horizontal lines to the cave. The lines of this work do not seek to imitate a three-dimensional landscape, but to transform the real landscape into a surface that appears two-dimensional, into an image of itself. In his choice of subject, Julius von Bismarck draws on the historical use of engravings in colonial contexts and inquires into how Europeans have made the world their own.



Detail: Julius von Bismarck, **Landscape Painting (Mine)**, 2025, archival pigment print on Hahnemühle Photo Rag Baryta paper, 180 x 360 cm (70 7/8 x 141 3/4 in) (unframed), 184,4 x 373,2 x 5 cm (72 5/8 x 146 7/8 x 2 in) (framed), edition of 6 (JVB 061)



Julius von Bismarck, **Landscape Painting (Mine)**, 2025, archival pigment print on Hahnemühle Photo Rag Baryta paper, 180 x 360 cm (70 7/8 x 141 3/4 in) (unframed), 184,4 x 373,2 x 5 cm (72 5/8 x 146 7/8 x 2 in) (framed), edition of 6 (JVB 061)



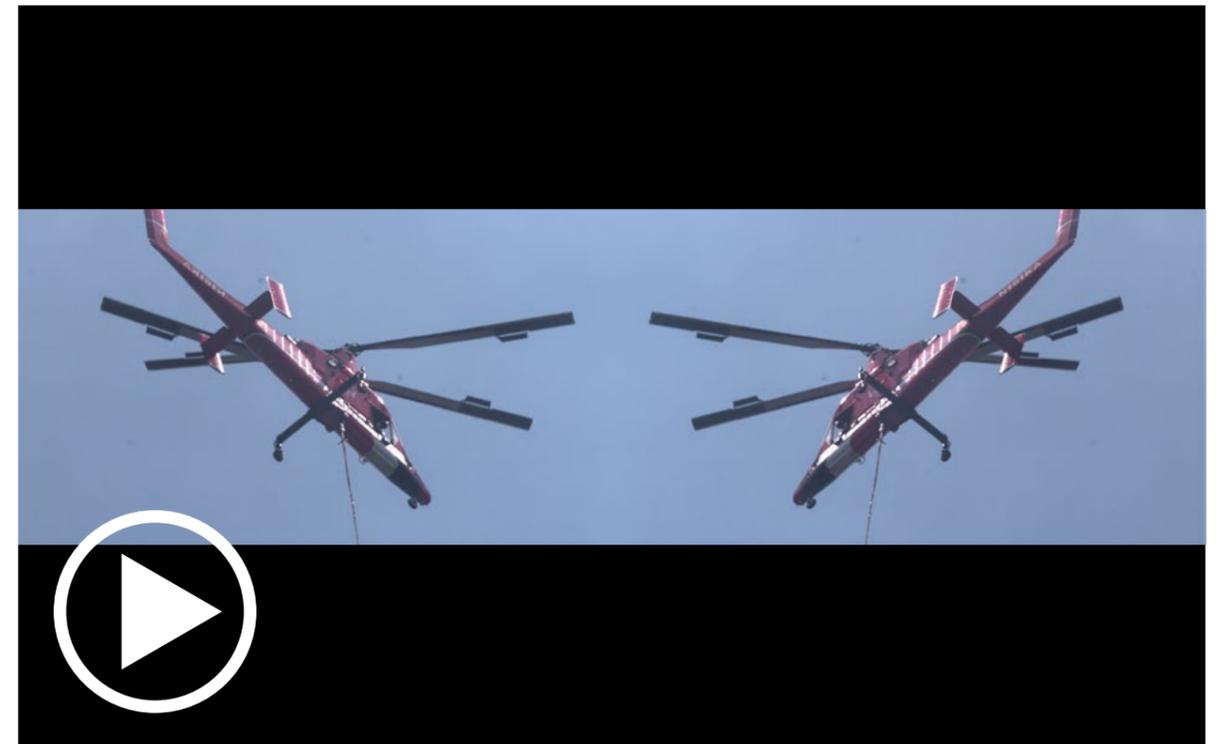
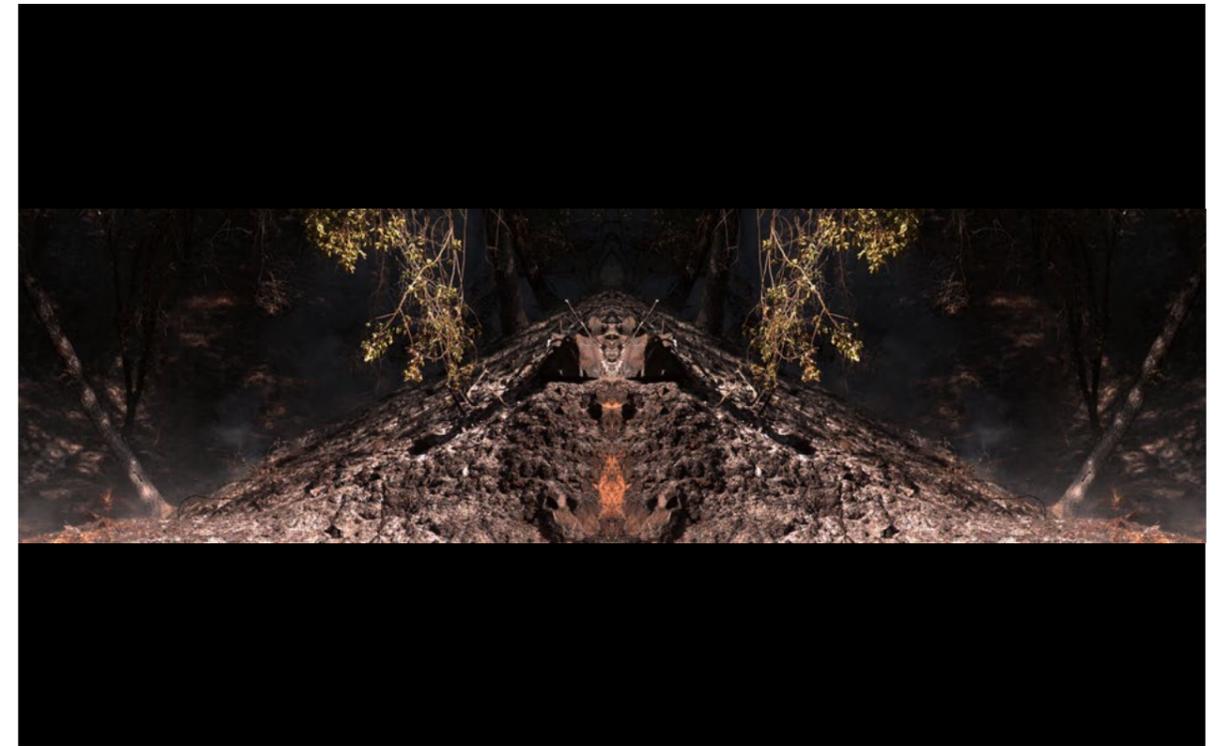
Exhibition view: Julius von Bismarck, **Tiān Gōng Kāi Wù: Rocks, Fire, Thunder**, Beiqiu Museum of Contemporary Art, Nanjing (2025-26)

FIRE WITH FIRE, 2020

The body of work **Fire with Fire** (2018-2021) stems from Julius von Bismarck's continuous quest to explore the aesthetics of nature's calamitous force. Including film, photography and sculpture, **Fire with Fire** exposes unseen images of fire, which von Bismarck captured during various expeditions to forest fire sites in Germany, the Arctic Circle in Sweden, and across California. The year 2018 being determined by the most destructive wildfires since the beginning of records, a typical aesthetic of calamity became ubiquitous in the media. This led Julius von Bismarck to question how to see beyond this simplified, politicized perspective on wildfires and natural catastrophes in general. For his work **Fire with Fire** von Bismarck collaborated with various fire fighting forces, to be allowed admittance to the restricted areas, and seizure the aesthetic apocalypse of blustering flames. Using slow motion and image mirroring as a technique to enhance the hypnotic effect of fire, von Bismarck's **Fire with Fire** images differ greatly from the brutal reality depicted.

The illusions created the decelerated images in vertical symmetry are reminiscent of the 'inkblot pictures' by Swiss psychoanalyst Hermann Rorschach, originally introduced as a projective psychological tool. Indeed, the symmetric patterns induce subconscious observations: new figures gradually emerge from the flames: some viewers see mythical creatures, others see fiery spirits or forest demons.

The various sculptures are inspired by 'eternal flames' emblematic of historical monuments and memorials. They function as models of constructed sites of collective memory worldwide. The original bronze or stone sculptures are duplicated in fired ceramics; the blazing flames are transformed into flickering LEDs. The work series was first presented in Julius von Bismarck's solo exhibition Feuer mit Feuer at Bundeskunsthalle Bonn, 2020.



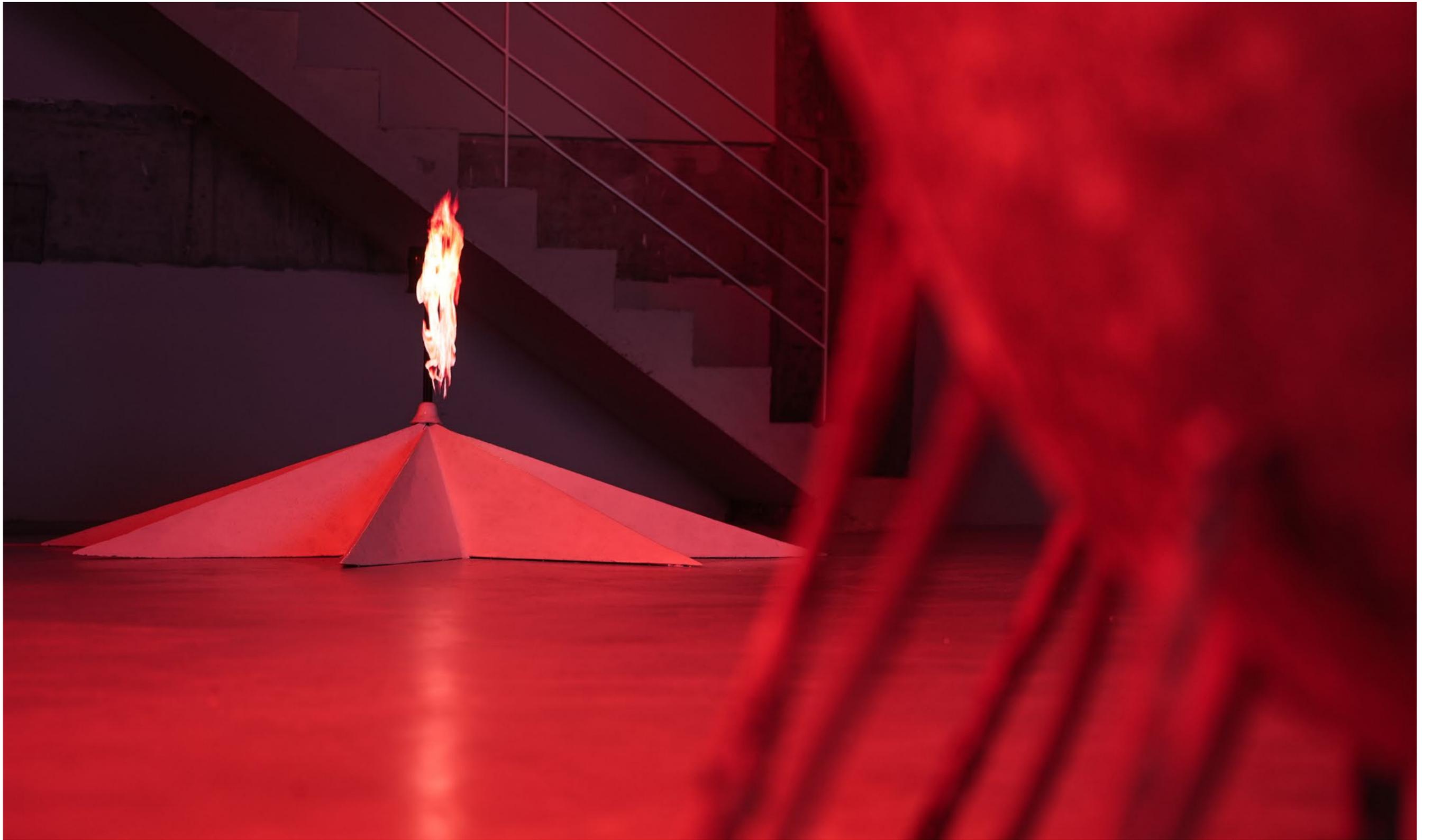
Video: Julius von Bismarck, **Fire with Fire**, 2020, LED screen, video, stereo sound, duration: 67:40 min, edition of 6 (JVB 067)



Video still: Julius von Bismarck, **Fire with Fire**, 2020, LED screen, video, stereo sound, duration: 67:40 min, edition of 6 (JVB 067)



Video still: Julius von Bismarck, **Fire with Fire**, 2020, LED screen, video, stereo sound, duration: 67:40 min, edition of 6 (JVB 067)



Exhibition view: Julius von Bismarck, **Tiān Gōng Kāi Wù: Rocks, Fire, Thunder**, Beiqiu Museum of Contemporary Art, Nanjing (2025-26)

ETERNAL FLAMES SCULPTURE SERIES

The sculpture belongs to a series inspired by 'eternal flames' emblematic of historical monuments and memorials. They function as models of constructed sites of collective memory worldwide. The original bronze or stone sculptures are duplicated in fired ceramics; the blazing flames are transformed into flickering LEDs.

The sculptures are related to von Bismarck's body of work **Fire with Fire** (2018-2021) which stems from the artist's continuous quest to explore the aesthetics of nature's calamitous force. Including film, photography and sculpture, **Fire with Fire** exposes unseen images of fire, which von Bismarck captured during various expeditions to forest fire sites in Germany, the Arctic Circle in Sweden, and across California. The year 2018 being determined by the most destructive wildfires since the beginning of records, a typical aesthetic of calamity became ubiquitous in the media. This led Julius von Bismarck to question how to see beyond this simplified, politicized perspective on wildfires and natural catastrophes in general.



Detail: Julius von Bismarck, **Shahidlar 1**, 2020, glazed ceramic, rotating LED display, 50 x 220 x 220 cm (19 3/4 x 86 5/8 x 86 5/8 in), edition of 1 (JVB 066)

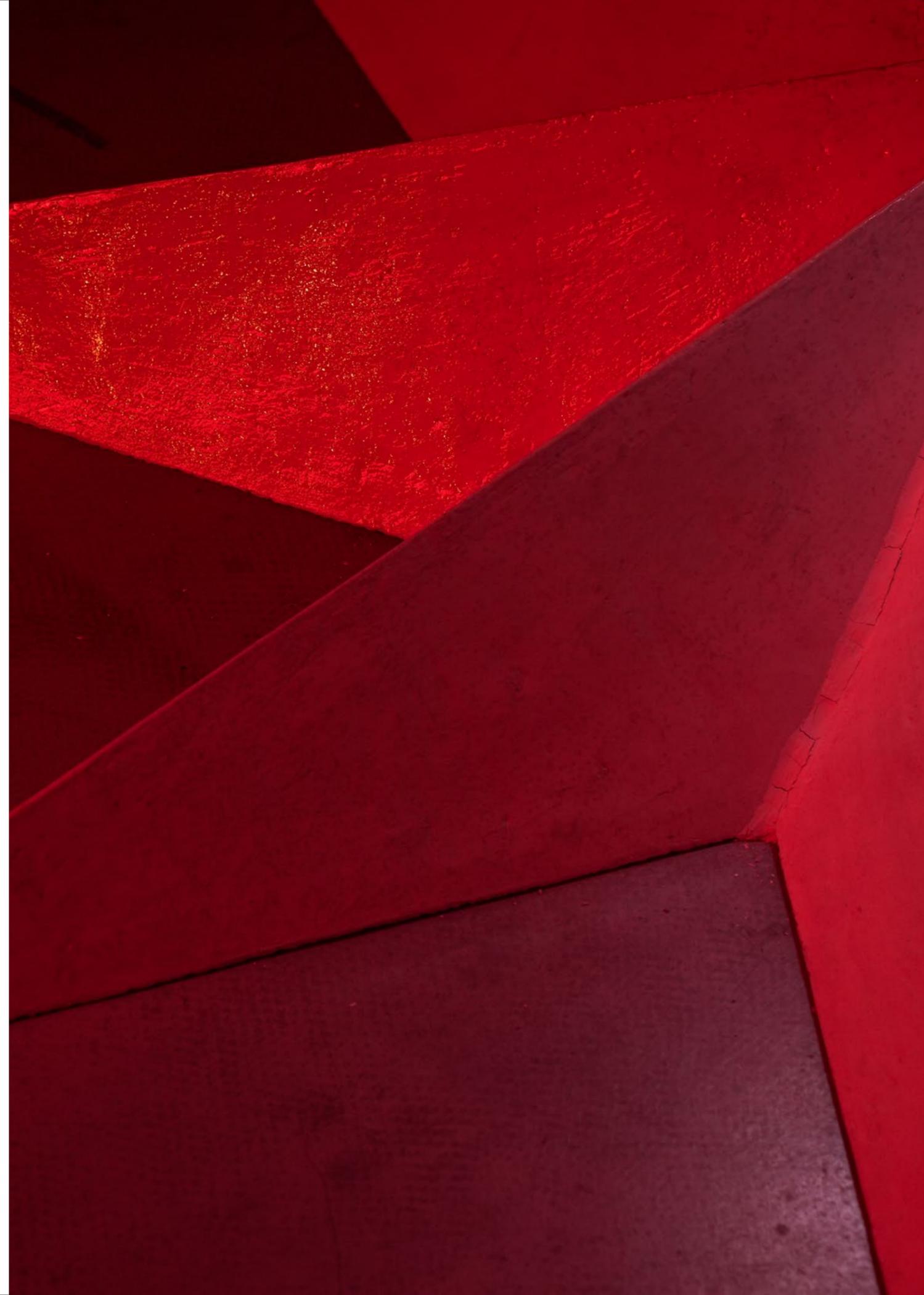


Julius von Bismarck, **Partisan Glade 1**, 2020, glazed ceramic, rotating LED display, 110 x 100 x 100 cm (43 1/4 x 39 3/8 x 39 3/8 in), edition of 1 (JVB 011)





Julius von Bismarck, **Shahidlar 1**, 2020, glazed ceramic, rotating LED display, 50 x 220 x 220 cm (19 3/4 x 86 5/8 x 86 5/8 in), edition of 1 (JVB 066)



TALKING TO THUNDER, 2017

The work explores Julius von Bismarck's long-standing interest and artistic engagement with the natural phenomenon of lightning.

Ever since he was struck by lightning while camping in his car, years ago, Bismarck has been attempting to tame lightning bolts. He traveled to an atmospheric research lab in New Mexico, to a Navy base in Florida, and he visited a remote area of Venezuela where there are particularly frequent electrical storms time and again. With a slow-motion camera, he filmed intense thunderstorms: lightning perforates the sky, plants sway heavily in the storm, gushes of rain whip the surface of a lake. These silent recordings have been set to a score of the artist imitating the sounds of a rain, thunderstorm, and wind. The electric current between the ground and the sky can be measured. If it is particularly high, an electrical discharge can be provoked by building a bridge, for example, in the form of a Kevlar-spun copper thread shot into the sky by a sounding rocket. In a fishing village in the middle of the Venezuelan jungle, after many experiments, Bismarck succeeded in capturing several lightning bolts and guiding them toward the ground. In a series of photographs that show the lightning striking palm trees, tropical plants, and the lake, the lightning bolt itself becomes almost tangible as a sculptural object. In northern Colombia, a region of frequent and intense thunderstorms, the artist met a shaman named Taita of the Wiwa tribe, a survivor of a lightning strike that killed eleven members of his community. As is common in indigenous cosmologies of the Americas, the Wiwa speak of thunder as a person. And in late 2016, Bismarck arrived a day after a large herd of reindeer was struck by lightning on the Hardangervidda mountain plateau in southern Norway and took as sad trophies of his journey 130 antler tips harvested on the spot. Individually mounted on stainless-steel rods approximately the height of a reindeer's head, the array of different sized and shaped horns offer a monument to the relentless brutality of nature.

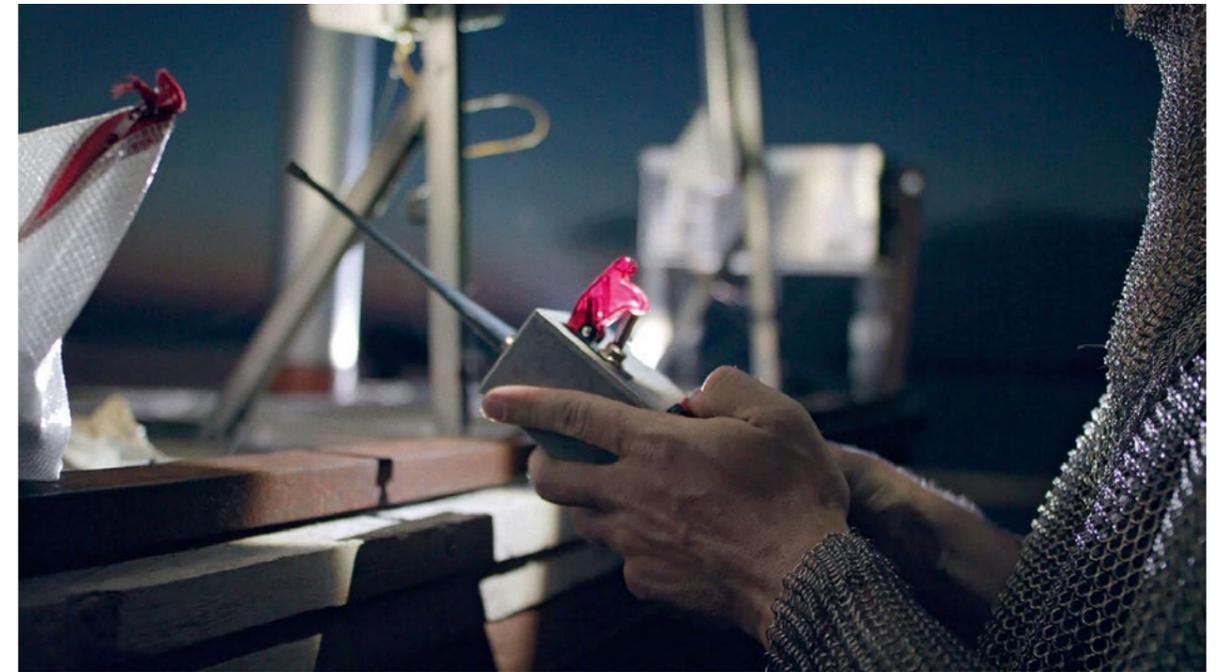
Talking to Thunder confronts the Western dogma of nature as a domain of innocence in need of protection with a competing image of nature as a punishing deity, a force which invariably devastates, which demands to be soothed and worshiped.



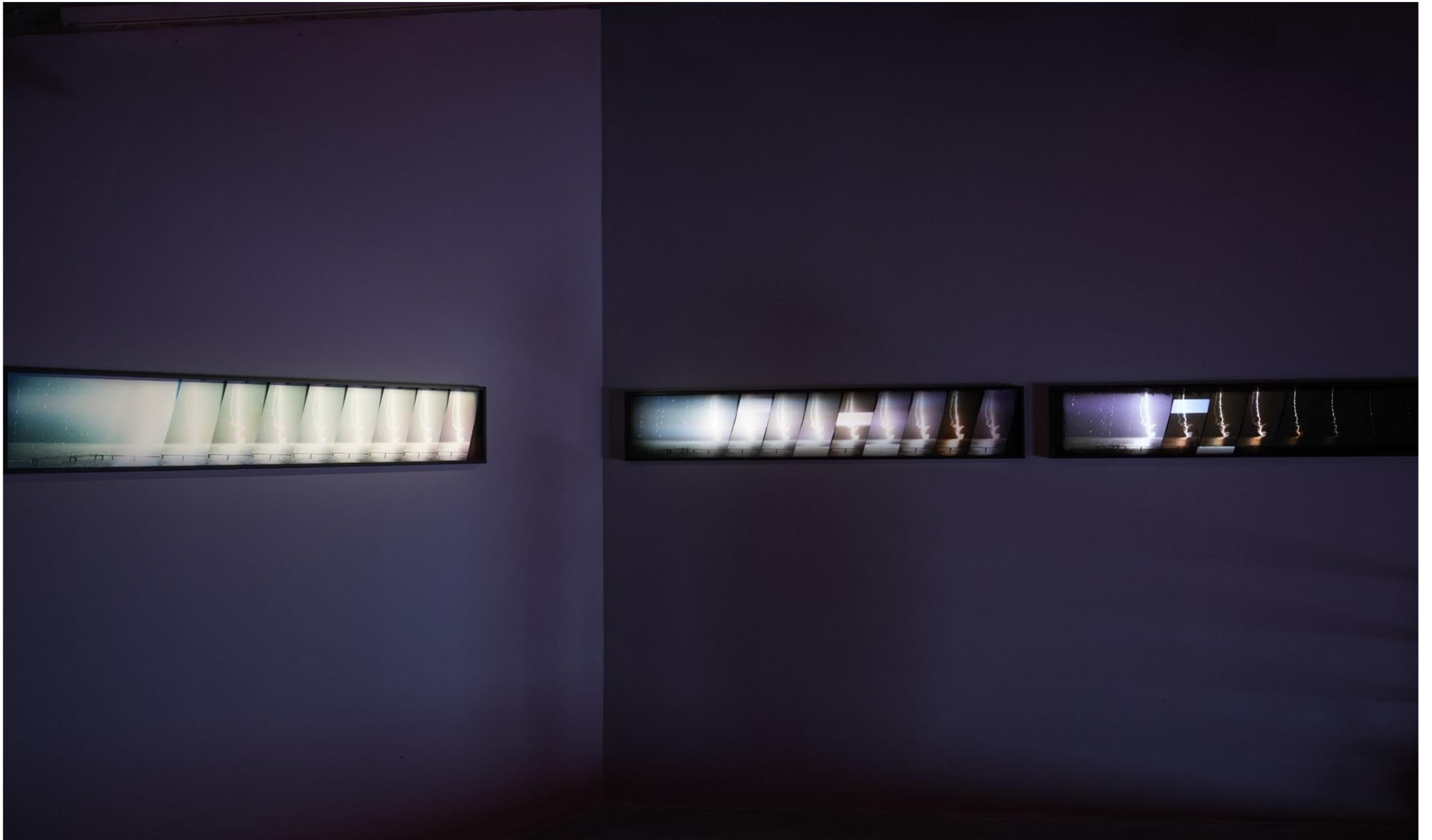
Julius von Bismarck, **Talking to Thunder**, 2017, single channel HD video projection (color, sound), dimensions variable, duration: 20:55 min, edition of 3 (JVB 034)



Video: Julius von Bismarck, **Talking to Thunder**, 2017, single channel HD video projection (color, sound), dimensions variable, duration: 20:55 min, edition of 3 (JVB 034)



Video stills: Julius von Bismarck, **Talking to Thunder**, 2017, single channel HD video projection (color, sound), dimensions variable, duration: 20:55 min, edition of 3 (JVB 034)



Exhibition view: Julius von Bismarck, **Tiān Gōng Kāi Wù: Rocks, Fire, Thunder**, Beiqiu Museum of Contemporary Art, Nanjing (2025-26)

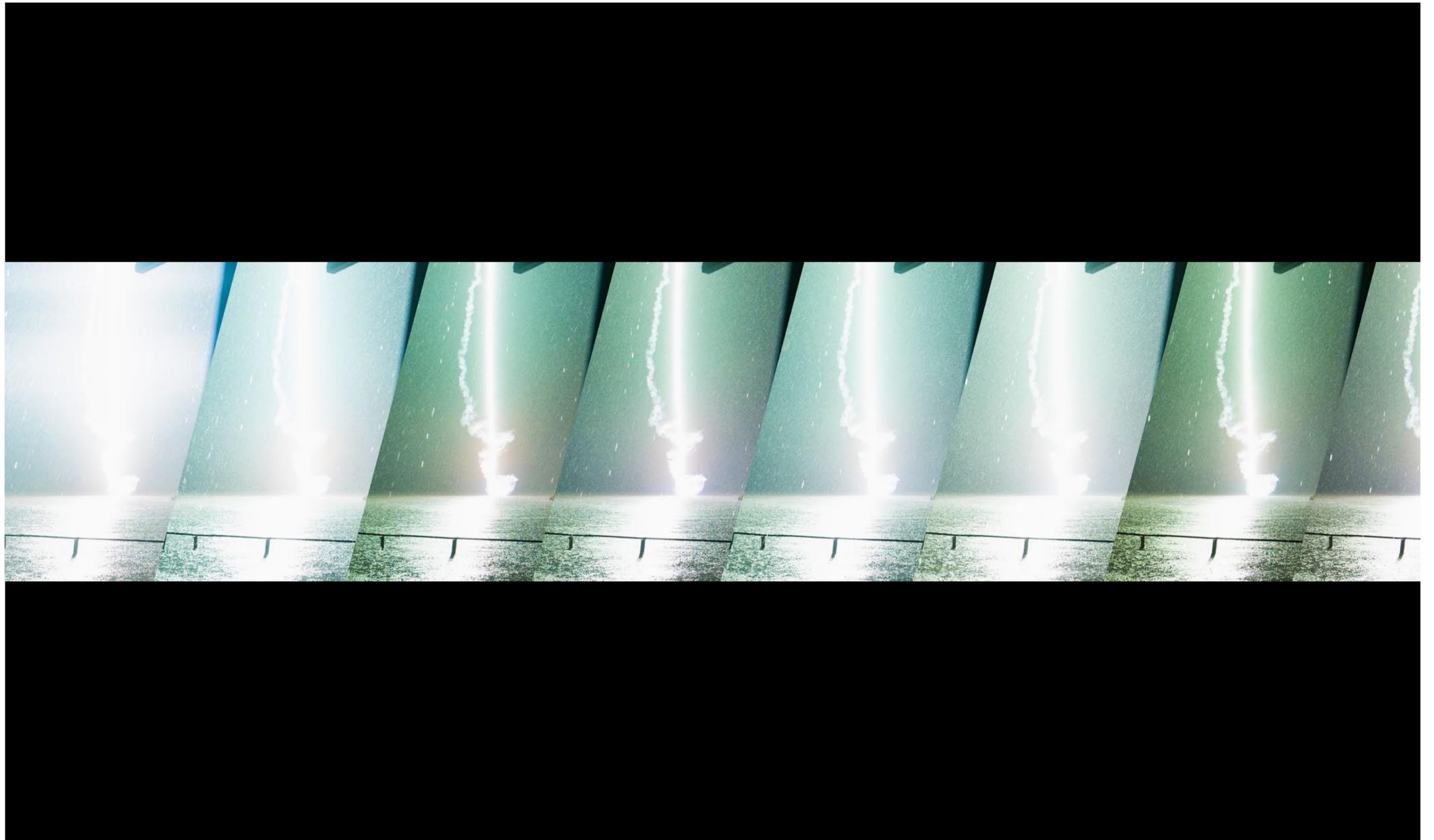
TALKING TO THUNDER (LAGOON), 2017

The work explores Julius von Bismarck's long-standing interest and artistic engagement with the natural phenomenon of lightning. In the course of extended research and after many experiments, Bismarck succeeded in capturing several lightning bolts and guiding them toward the ground. The series of photographs show the lightning striking palm trees, tropical plants, and the lake, the lightning bolt itself becomes almost tangible as a sculptural object.

Ever since he was struck by lightning while camping in his car, years ago, Bismarck has been attempting to tame lightning bolts. He traveled to an atmospheric research lab in New Mexico, to a Navy base in Florida, and he visited a remote area of Venezuela where there are particularly frequent electrical storms time and again. With a slow-motion camera, he filmed intense thunderstorms: lightning perforates the sky, plants sway heavily in the storm, gushes of rain whip the surface of a lake.



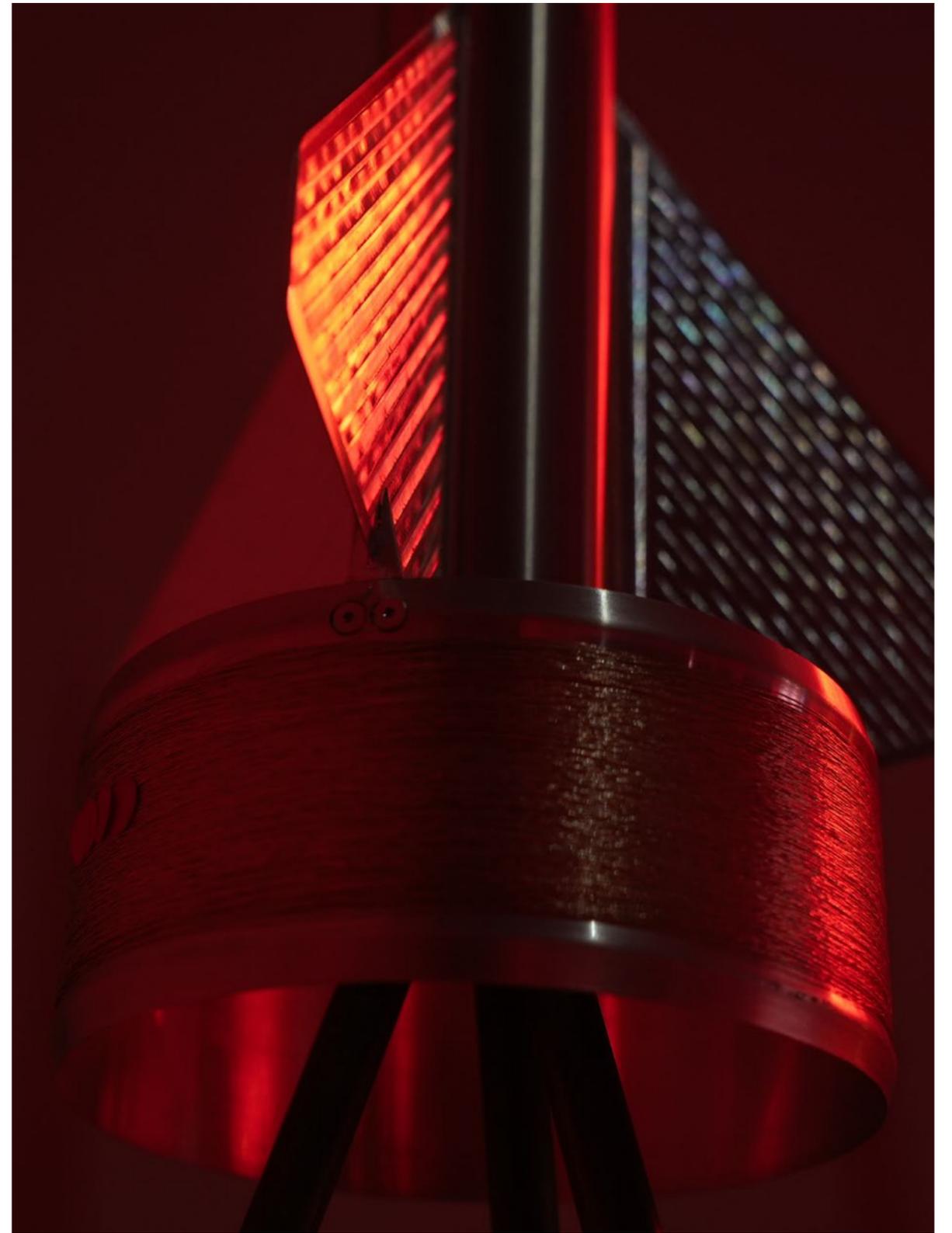
Julius von Bismarck, **Talking to Thunder (Lagoon)**, 2017, archival pigment print on Hahnemühle Photo Rag Baryta paper, triptych, 28,2 x 158,9 cm (11 1/8 x 62 1/2 in) each, edition of 3 (JVB 070)



Detail: Julius von Bismarck, **Talking to Thunder (Lagoon)**, 2017, archival pigment print on Hahnemühle Photo Rag Baryta paper, triptych, 28,2 x 158,9 cm (11 1/8 x 62 1/2 in) each, edition of 3 (JVB 070)



Exhibition view: Julius von Bismarck, **Tiān Gōng Kāi Wù: Rocks, Fire, Thunder**, Beiqiu Museum of Contemporary Art, Nanjing (2025-26)



Exhibition view: Julius von Bismarck, **Tiān Gōng Kāi Wù: Rocks, Fire, Thunder**, Beiqiu Museum of Contemporary Art, Nanjing (2025-26)

LIGHTNING ROCKETS, 2021

Lightning Rockets (2021) is a hybrid between a sculpture and an operational piece of equipment. Produced in 2021, the object is a continuation of **Talking to Thunder** (2016-17), Julius von Bismarck's series of close encounters with lightning, which he pursued in Venezuela, Colombia and Norway. Designed to be launched during a thunderstorm, **Lightning Rockets** has the ability to trigger and direct a lightning bolt. The electric current between the ground and the sky can be measured. If it is particularly high, an electrical discharge can be provoked by building a bridge, for example in the shape of a Kevlar-spun copper thread, which is shot into the sky by a small rocket. Equipped with a recovery system consisting of a parachute and 3 high-power LEDs, the rocket can be reused after each flight. The system allows the rocket to land securely and be retraced, not only on land but also on water.

The **Lightning Rockets** is made of aluminium and can be operated with G, H or I motors. Within the framework of an exhibition Blitzrakete is presented as a sculpture without an engine.



Julius von Bismarck, **Lightning Rockets**, 2021, aluminum, carbon fiber, kevlar and silver, 155 x 19 cm (61 x 7 1/2 in), edition of 50 (JVB 074)



Detail: Julius von Bismarck, **Lightning Rockets**, 2021, aluminum, carbon fiber, kevlar and silver, 155 x 19 cm (61 x 7 1/2 in), edition of 50 (JVB 074)



Detail: Julius von Bismarck, **Lightning Rockets**, 2021, aluminum, carbon fiber, kevlar and silver, 155 x 19 cm (61 x 7 1/2 in), edition of 50 (JVB 074)

IRMA TO COME IN EARNEST, 2017

Irma to Come in Earnest is a video portrait of Hurricane Irma and its aftermath. Through slow-motion images witnessing the major destruction caused by the category-five hurricane, which struck the U.S. state of Florida on August 30, 2017, Julius von Bismarck reveals the aesthetics of nature's devastating force.

"**Irma to Come in Earnest**" warned a news headline in September 2017, as the category-five hurricane swept through the Caribbean and bore down on Florida. Its arrival is the subject of Bismarck's eponymous film, shot in Naples (Florida) amid gale-force winds, flooding, and desolation. In an attempt to fathom the essence of a hurricane beyond the media spectacle, the black-and-white footage is drastically slowed down, taking in rain and debris swirling through empty streets, submerged cars, and houses in disarray. A haunting ambient soundtrack pieced together from news reports is slowed to the same pace as the moving image, rendering it unintelligible.

In the first part of the film, the camera stands still; the only thing that moves is the hurricane itself. The slow-motion effect brings the violent event back to a speed perceptible to the human eye, allowing the viewer to perceive the union of the storm with the suburban environs—the actual invisibility of moving air overcome by an interplay of raindrops and blowing objects. In the second part, the storm has moved on, allowing humans to move again amid the destruction. For the first time people, not least media representatives, appear in the frame. For the viewer, the pleasure of watching the constructed image dovetails with the perverse implications of witnessing a catastrophe. By shifting the speed of image and sound, the film attempts to transcend familiar images of disaster, capturing both the nature of the storm and the media presentation of the catastrophe in an otherworldly atmosphere.

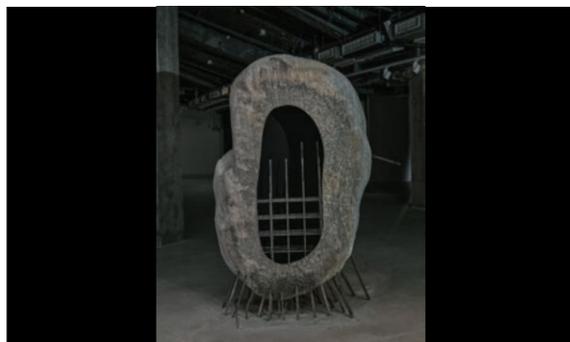


Video: Julius von Bismarck, **Irma to Come in Earnest**, 2017, HD video (stereo sound), duration: 51:21 min, edition of 3 (JVB 069)



Video stills: Julius von Bismarck, **Irma to Come in Earnest**, 2017, HD video (stereo sound), duration: 51:21 min, edition of 3 (JVB 069)

AVAILABLE WORKS



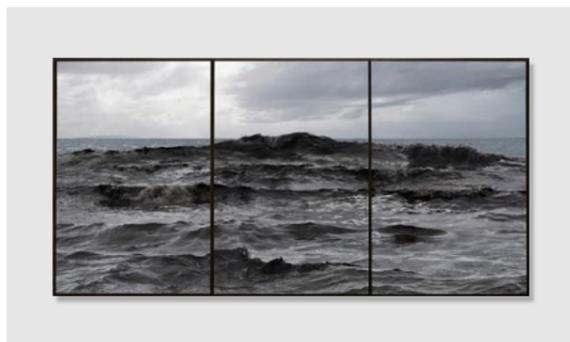
Julius von Bismarck
Boulder (Granitic Gneiss I), 2025
 Stone, resin, metal, wood
 236 x 150 x 80 cm (92 7/8 x 59 x 31 1/2 in)
 (JVB 010)



Julius von Bismarck
Boulder (Pink Granitic Gneiss), 2025
 Stone, resin, metal, wood
 213 x 140 x 80 cm (83 7/8 x 55 1/8 x 31 1/2 in)
 (JVB 065)



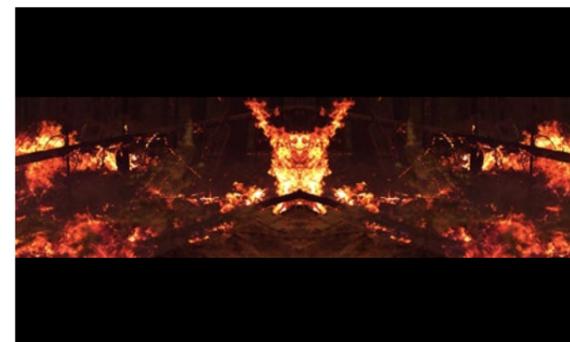
Julius von Bismarck
Boulder (Granitic Gneiss II), 2025
 Stone, resin, metal, wood
 178 x 130 x 80 cm (70 1/8 x 51 1/8 x 31 1/2 in)
 (JVB 068)



Julius von Bismarck
The Day the Ocean turned Black, 2025
 Archival pigment print on Hahnemühle Photo Rag
 Baryta paper
 210,2 x 360,6 cm (82 3/4 x 142 in) (unframed)
 214,4 x 373,2 cm (84 3/8 x 146 7/8 in) (framed)
 Edition of 6
 (JVB 071)



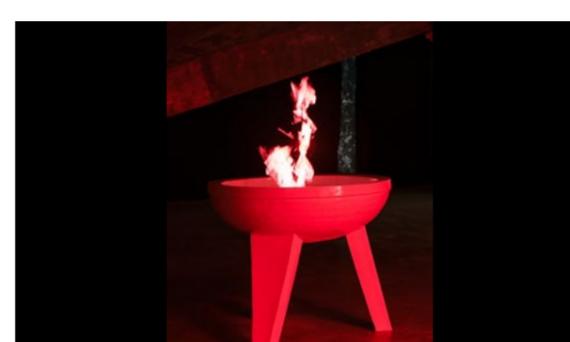
Julius von Bismarck
Landscape Painting (Mine), 2025
 Archival pigment print on Hahnemühle Photo Rag
 Baryta paper
 180 x 360 cm (70 7/8 x 141 3/4 in) (unframed)
 184,4 x 373,2 x 5 cm (72 5/8 x 146 7/8 x 2 in) (framed)
 Edition of 6
 (JVB 061)



Julius von Bismarck
Fire with Fire, 2020
 LED screen, video, stereo sound
 Duration: 67:40 min
 Edition of 6
 (JVB 067)



Julius von Bismarck
Partisan Glade 1, 2020
 Glazed ceramic, rotating LED display
 110 x 100 x 100 cm (43 1/4 x 39 3/8 x 39 3/8 in)
 Edition of 1
 (JVB 011)



Julius von Bismarck
Freiheit Recht Friede 1, 2020
 Glazed ceramic, rotating LED display
 64 x 96 x 96 cm (25 1/4 x 37 3/4 x 37 3/4 in)
 Edition of 1
 (JVB 008)



Julius von Bismarck
Shahidlar 1, 2020
Glazed ceramic, rotating LED display
50 x 220 x 220 cm (19 3/4 x 86 5/8 x 86 5/8 in)
Edition of 1
(JVB 066)



Julius von Bismarck
Talking to Thunder, 2017
Single channel HD video projection (color, sound)
Dimensions variable
Duration: 20:55 min
Edition of 3
(JVB 034)



Julius von Bismarck
Talking to Thunder (Lagoon), 2017
Archival pigment print on Hahnemühle Photo Rag
Baryta paper
Triptych
28,2 x 158,9 cm (11 1/8 x 62 1/2 in) each
Edition of 3
(JVB 070)



Julius von Bismarck
Lightning Rockets, 2021
Aluminum, carbon fiber, kevlar and silver
155 x 19 cm (61 x 7 1/2 in)
Edition of 50
(JVB 074)



Julius von Bismarck
Irma to Come in Earnest, 2017
HD video (stereo sound)
Duration: 51:21 min
Edition of 3
(JVB 069)

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