

ROSA BARBA

FRAME TIME OPEN

National Museum of 21st Century Art, Rome

November 26, 2025 – March 8, 2026

*Esther Schipper*

## Rosa Barba



Rosa Barba was born in 1972 in Agrigento, Italy. She currently lives and works in Berlin.

She studied at the Academy of Media Arts Cologne and has completed her PhD with the title **On the Anarchic Organisation of Cinematic Spaces: Evoking Spaces beyond Cinema** at the Malmö Faculty of Fine and Performing Arts, Lund University in 2018.

She currently holds the Professorship for Art in Space and Time at the ETH Zurich. Beforehand, she was a visiting professor at the MIT – Massachusetts Institute of Technology, ACT (Program in Art, Culture and Technology), in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Rosa Barba engages within the medium of film through a sculptural approach. In her works, Barba creates installations and site-specific interventions to analyze the ways film articulates space, placing the work and the viewer in a new relationship. Questions of composition, physicality of form and plasticity play an important role for the artist as

Barba examines the industry of cinema and its staging vis-à-vis gesture, genre, information and documents. Her film works are situated between experimental documentary and fictional narrative. They often focus on natural landscapes and human-made interventions into the environment and explore the relationship of historical records, personal anecdotes, and filmic representation, creating spaces of memory and uncertainty.

Her work has been exhibited at numerous international institutions. Selected solo exhibitions include: **Rosa Barba**, Museum Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon (upcoming); **Frame Time Open**, MAXXI, Rome (2025); **The Ocean of One's Pause**, Museum of Modern Art, New York (2025); **Meaning Distances**, Museum of Contemporary Art Zagreb, Zagreb (2025); **Under The Canopy**, Museum der bildenden Künste Leipzig, Leipzig (2025); **Evoking a Space Beyond the Cinema**, MALI Museum, Lima (2024); **Rosa Barba: The Hidden Conference**, The Tanks at Tate Modern, London (2023); **Rosa Barba: Emanations**, Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts, Perth (2023); **Rosa Barba: Weavers**, CCC OD – centre de création contemporaine olivier debré, Tours (2022); **Rosa Barba – Art Club #36**, The French Academy in Rome - Villa Medici, Rome (2022); **Rosa Barba: Exhibition Notes**, Cukrarna, Ljubljana (2022); **Rosa Barba: In a Perpetual Now**, Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin (2021); **Rosa Barba: Pillage of the Sea**, permanent sculpture for Beaufort Triennial, Belgium (2021); **Rosa Barba, Touched by the Same Breath of Air**, Wäinö Aaltonen Museum of Art, Turku (2020); **Rosa Barba: The Hidden Conference**, ARTER, Istanbul (2019); **Rosa Barba**, Armory Park Avenue, New York (2019); **Rosa Barba: Send Me Sky**, Remai Modern, Saskatoon (2018); **Rosa Barba: Drawn by the Pulse**, Tabakalera, International Centre for Contemporary Culture, San Sebastián (2018); **Rosa Barba: Solar Flux Recordings**, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Palacio de Cristal, Madrid (2017); **Rosa Barba: From Source to Poem to Rhythm to Reader**, Pirelli HangarBicocca, Milan (2017); **Rosa Barba: Spacelength Thought**, Vienna Secession (2017); **Rosa Barba: Elements of Conduct**, Malmö Konsthall (2017); **Rosa Barba: From Source to Poem**, CAPC musée d'art contemporain de Bordeaux (2016); **Rosa Barba: Blind Volumes**, Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt (2016).

The artist's work is held in the following collections: Centre Pompidou, Paris; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Philadelphia Museum of Art; SFMoMA, San Francisco; Walker Art Centre, Minneapolis; Staatliche Museen Berlin, Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin; Staatliche Museen Berlin, Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin; Lenbachhaus, Munich; Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg; Tate Modern, London; Collezione MAXXI, Rome; Mart – Museo di Arte Moderna e Contemporanea di Trento e Rovereto; Galleria civica d'arte moderna e contemporanea (GAM), Turin; Castello di Rivoli, Piemonte; Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid; Museum of Contemporary Art, Barcelona; Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon; Jumex Collection, Mexico City; Mali, Lima; Kunsthau Zürich; Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk; Sharjah Art Foundation, Sharjah; Vehbi Koc Fondation, Istanbul; and Wäinö Aaltonen Museum of Art, Turku.

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Cover image: Exhibition view, Rosa Barba, **Frame Time Open**, National Museum of 21st Century Art, Rome (2025-26)

## EXHIBITION TEXT

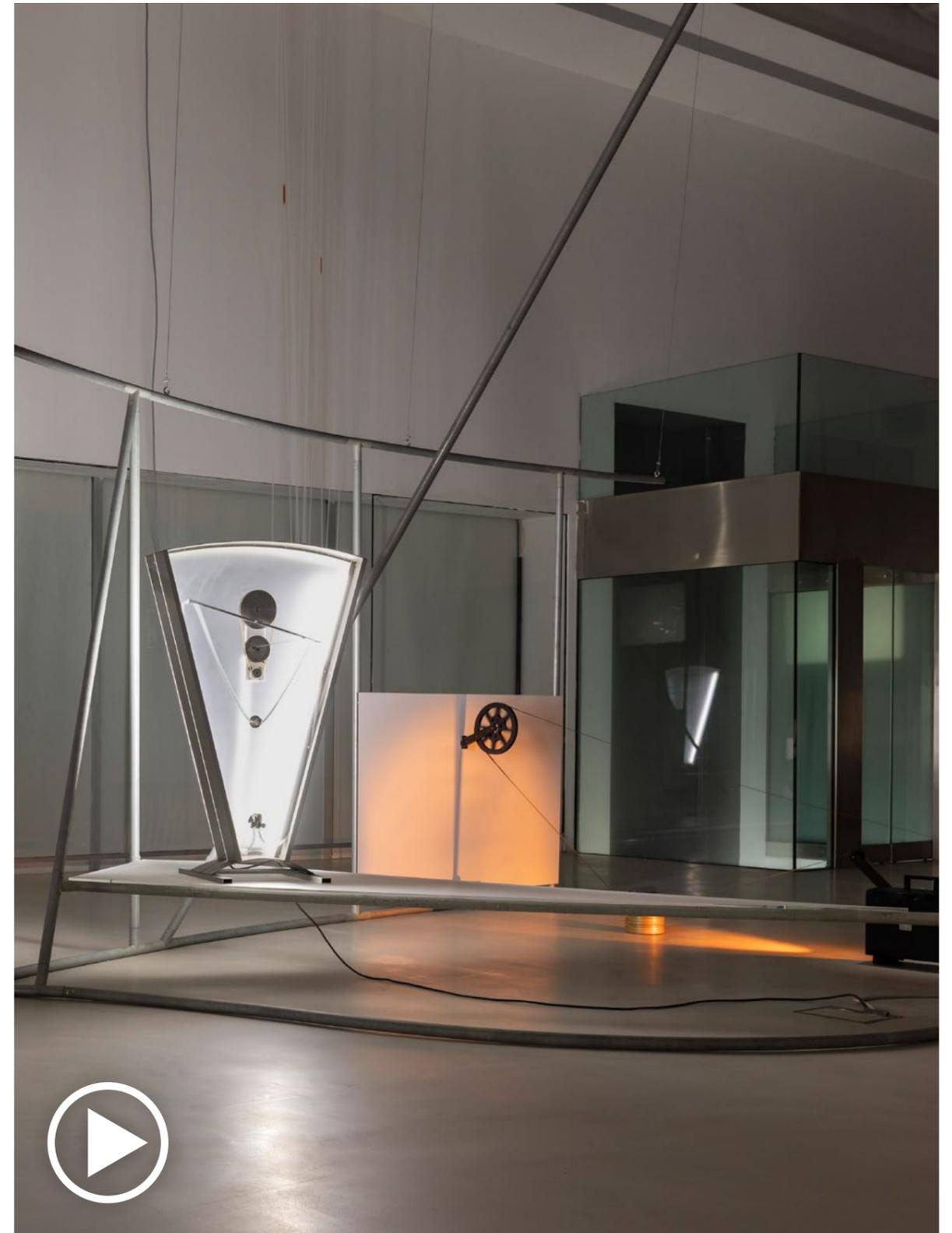
MAXXI National Museum of 21st Century Arts presents **Frame Time Open**, the most comprehensive solo exhibition ever held in Italy dedicated to Rosa Barba (Agrigento, 1972), one of the country's most internationally acclaimed and influential contemporary artists.

Curated by Francesco Stocchi, the exhibition will be open to the public from 26 November 2025 to 8 March 2026 and will highlight over twenty years of the artist's research through a selection of her most significant sculptural works and films, including two new productions created specifically for this project and premiering at MAXXI. With **Frame Time Open** - developed in close collaboration with the artist, who also conceived the exhibition design - MAXXI's spaces transform into an architectural notation of rhythmic interconnections through, film, language, sound and light.

Rosa Barba's research, positioned between cinema, literature, and science, explores time as both a physical and conceptual material. The exhibition at MAXXI offers a comprehensive overview of her continuously evolving artistic methodology and reaffirms her position as a pioneering figure in contemporary visual art, celebrating her distinctive approach to time – in her words: «considered as an accumulation of events rather than a linear progression - and to cinema as a spatial and temporal dimension».

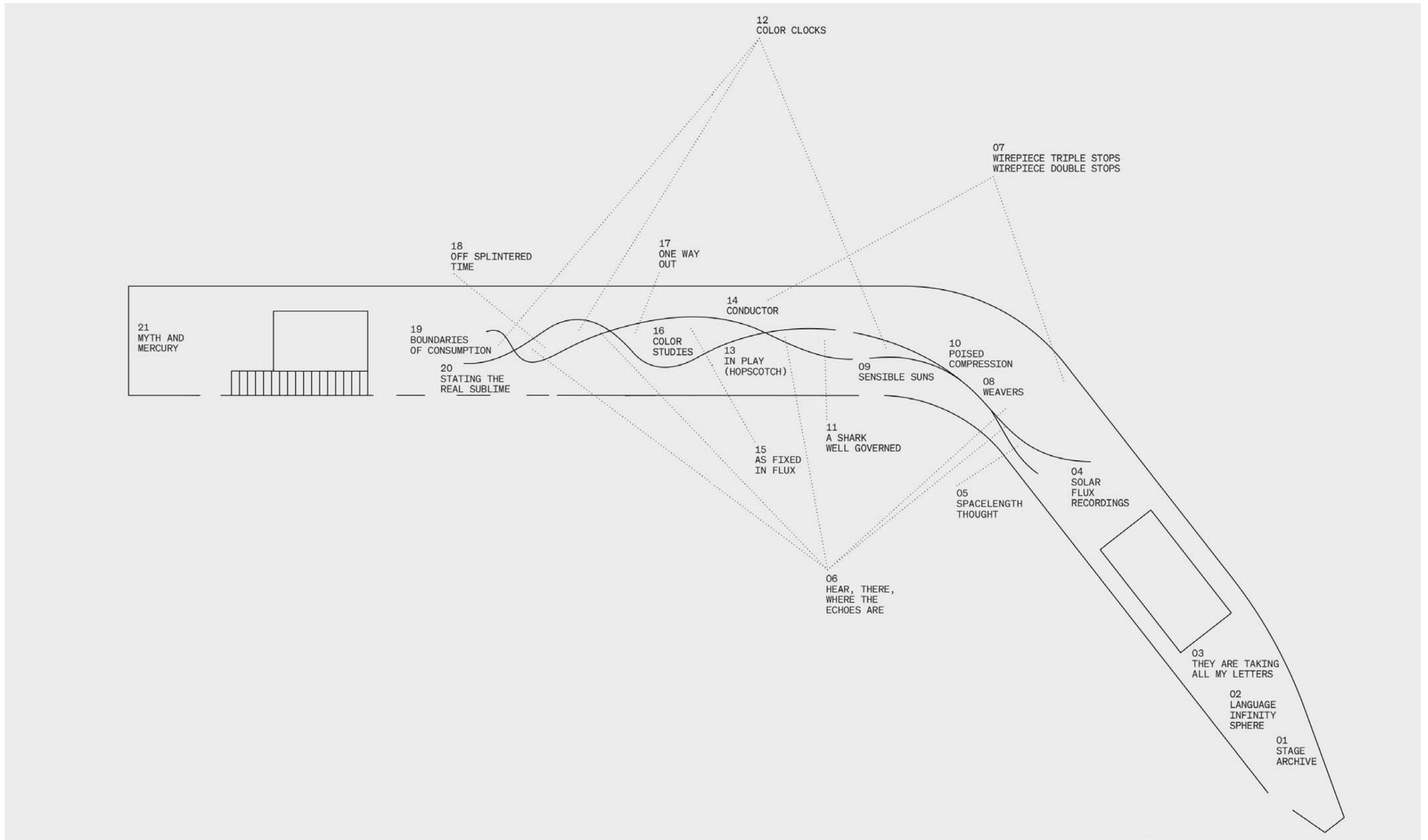
The exhibition layout, designed by Barba in response to Zaha Hadid's spaces, is conceived as a three-dimensional score, an artwork-display on intertwined tracks which extends like a drawing across Galleria 2 and responds sensitively to the architecture, making the exhibition a unique and site-specific experience. A large steel and plexiglass framework presents 24 works created between 2009 and 2025, arranged along an open route with three distinct access points.

Cinematic elements become autonomous fragments that also emphasize the interdependency of each. Time unfolds in a circular flow of light, rhythm, and transparency, while sound amplifies the exhibition's synesthetic dimension.



Exhibition Video: Rosa Barba, **Frame Time Open**, National Museum of 21st Century Art, Rome (2025-26)

EXHIBITION MAP



Exhibition map: Rosa Barba, **Frame Time Open**, National Museum of 21st Century Art, Rome (2025-26)



Exhibition view: Rosa Barba, **Frame Time Open**, National Museum of 21st Century Art, Rome (2025-26)

## THEY ARE TAKING ALL MY LETTERS, 2025

The new wall-mounted kinetic sculpture, **They Are Taking All My Letters**, 2025 features 34 vertical strips of 70mm celluloid film that move across its rectangular surface, lit from the back. The 34 lines are in constant motion as a sequence of words in white printed letters on a black background scroll up and down. The fragments draw on texts by the American poets Susan Howe, Charles Olson and Robert Creeley, as well as on the artist's own writings. The excerpts are held together conceptually by themes of time, flickering light and language.

One challenge is in reading the texts: whether by moving one's eye up or down a vertical loop or by jumping across the lines to observe a constant rearrangement, a new editing and orchestration is ever evolving and changing. The work creates an interesting temporal parallax by using a nearly obsolete medium such as celluloid film across the grain, so to speak: Not only does the work exclusively "depict" text, not images as such, but because it is not moving at the 24 frames per second that are at the root of film's illusion of movement, the film is not strictly speaking cinematic. Instead, each thread moves at its own speed, turning the film into a vehicle for text, and just as with speech, each speaker has their own pace of expression.



Video: Rosa Barba, **They Are Taking All My Letters**, 2025, 70 mm film, aluminum, LED, plexiglas, motors, 187 x 262 x 15 cm (73 5/8 x 103 1/8 x 5 7/8 in), edition of 3 (RBA 133)



Rosa Barba, **They Are Taking All My Letters**, 2025, 70 mm film, aluminum, LED, plexiglas, motors, 187 x 262 x 15 cm (73 5/8 x 103 1/8 x 5 7/8 in), edition of 3 (RBA 133)



Detail: Rosa Barba, **They Are Taking All My Letters**, 2025, 70 mm film, aluminum, LED, plexiglas, motors, 187 x 262 x 15 cm (73 5/8 x 103 1/8 x 5 7/8 in), edition of 3 (RBA 133)



Exhibition view: Rosa Barba, **Frame Time Open**, National Museum of 21st Century Art, Rome (2025-26)

## SOLAR FLUX RECORDINGS, 2022

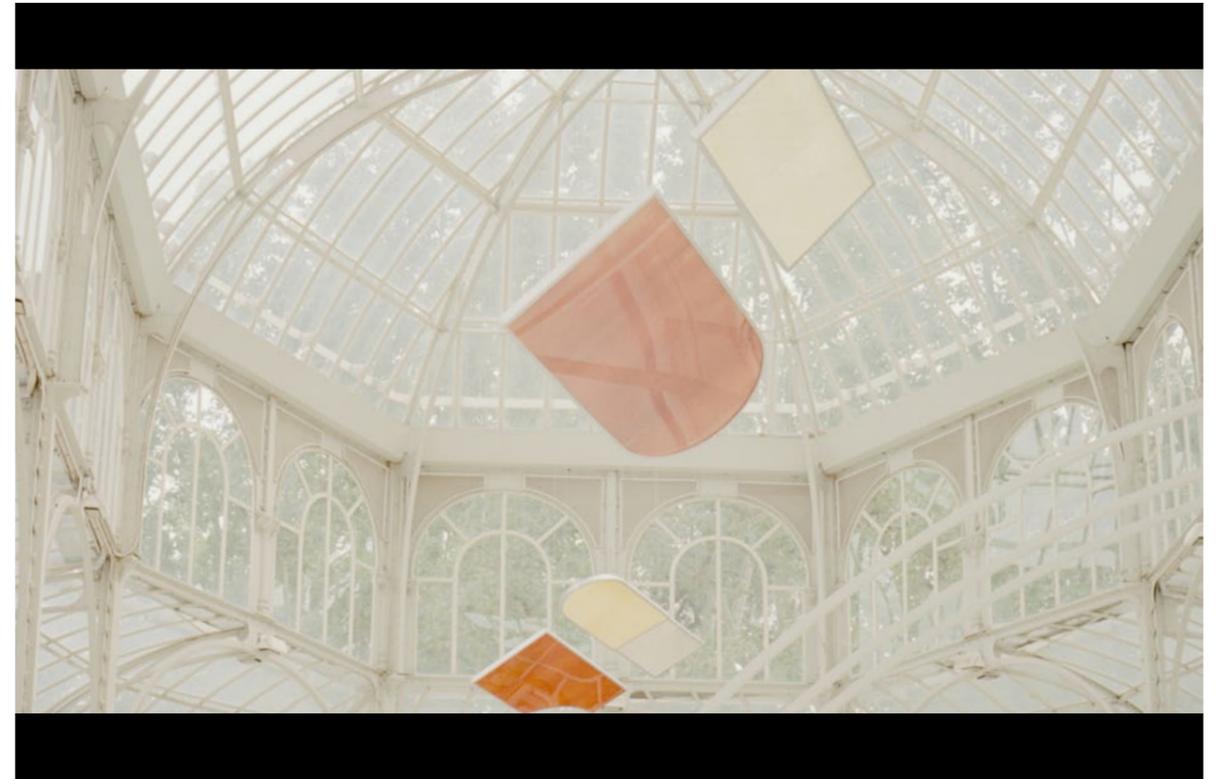
**Solar Flux Recordings**, 2022 draws on footage shot during Rosa Barba's 2017 solo exhibition at the Museum Reina Sofia's Palacio de Cristal in Madrid.

For this project, Barba constructed a delicate frame (a reconstruction of the Palacio's formal vocabulary) inside the nineteenth-century structure and placed shapes with filters high up in its roof. Made from handblown colored glass, the locations of the filters were precisely calculated according to the passage of the sun. The building "became a kind of machine" as Barba noted, in effect turning the entire Palacio de Cristal into a sundial.

On the floor small metal disks were placed, on which calculations about the passage of the sun were marked.

The 2022 film, **Solar Flux Recordings**, captures the passage of time through the sun's movement over the course of the Madrid exhibition. The film documents the play of light and shade, the delicate shadows of the interior frame the artist build, and the patches of color produced when the sun hit the suspended color filters. Alternating temporal registers—the film includes seemingly normal time and stop-motion passages in which time appears to accelerate—**Solar Flux Recordings** is a poetic take on that project, its soundtrack of bird song, various ambient noises and softly vibrating sounds creating an atmospheric portrayal.

In an echo of its conception, the film is projected through glass filters that emulate the ones Barba installed in the Palacio de Cristal and refract the film as it is projected.



Video: Rosa Barba, **Solar Flux Recordings**, 2022, steel table, color glass plates, 35 mm film, projector, looper, duration: 11 min, 130 x 100 x 55 cm (49 1/4 x 39 3/8 x 21 5/8 in) (sculpture), edition of 5 (RBA 077)

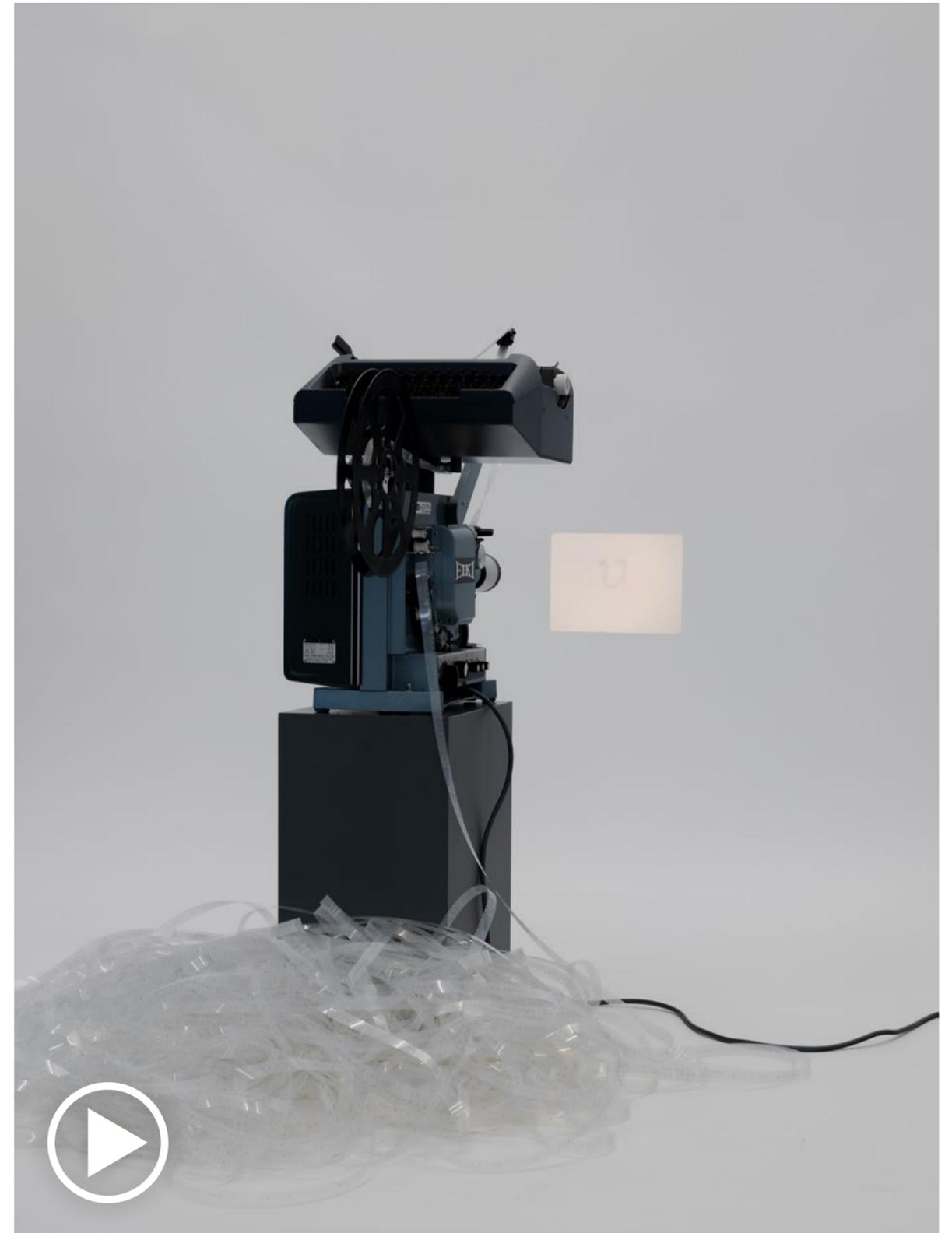


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## SPACELENGTH THOUGHT, 2012

In **Spacelength Thought** (2012), a typewriter is typing a monologue onto 16mm blank film, projecting one letter at a time against the wall or, in the case of the installation at the Neue Nationalgalerie, a small screen. During the projection, film accumulates progressively on the floor: the process of writing is highlighted and staged, while its outcome piles up on the floor in a tangle. Although Rosa Barba chose not to reveal the content of typewritten text, one can try and reconstitutes the words spelled one letter at a time, creating a kind of a line poem.

"Barba's films, installations and publications all raise the question of cinema as a kind of writing" notes the critic Melissa Gronlund, underlining the central role played in the artist's works by the written word and the idea of the physicality of a film projection, usually perceived as something purely immaterial.



Video: Rosa Barba, **Spacelength Thought**, 2012, 16 mm film, projector, typewriter, programming, dimensions variable, typewriter incl. arm: 39 x 34,5 x 75 cm (15 3/8 x 13 5/8 x 29 1/2 in), base: 27,5 x 30 x 40 cm (10 7/8 x 11 3/4 x 15 3/4 in), projection distance: 2-2.5 m approx, edition of 3 (RBA 051)



Detail: Rosa Barba, **Spacelength Thought**, 2012, 16 mm film, projector, typewriter, programming, dimensions variable, typewriter incl. arm: 39 x 34,5 x 75 cm (15 3/8 x 13 5/8 x 29 1/2 in), base: 27,5 x 30 x 40 cm (10 7/8 x 11 3/4 x 15 3/4 in), projection distance: 2-2.5 m approx, edition of 3 (RBA 051)



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Exhibition view: Rosa Barba, **Frame Time Open**, National Museum of 21st Century Art, Rome (2025-26)



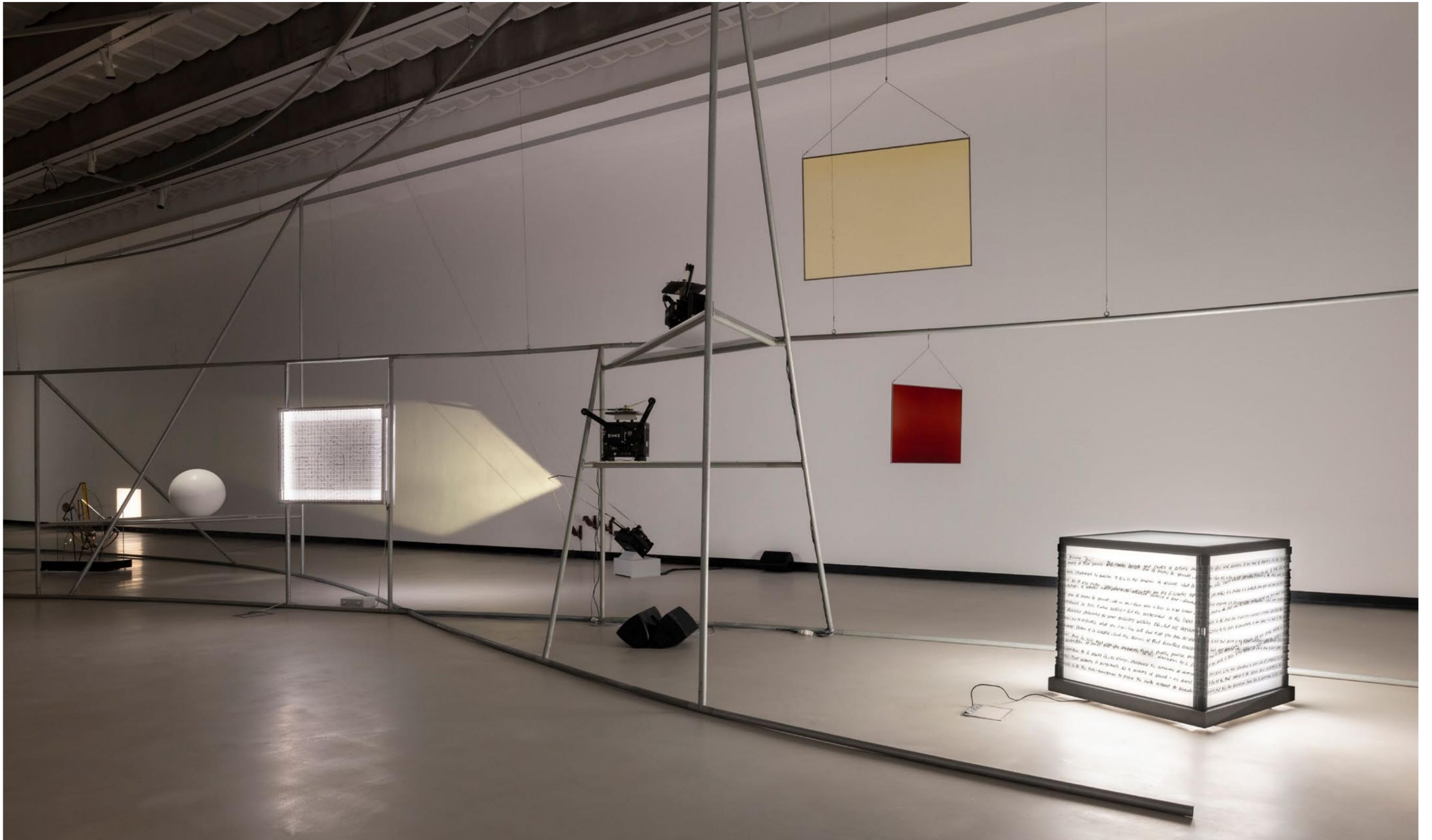
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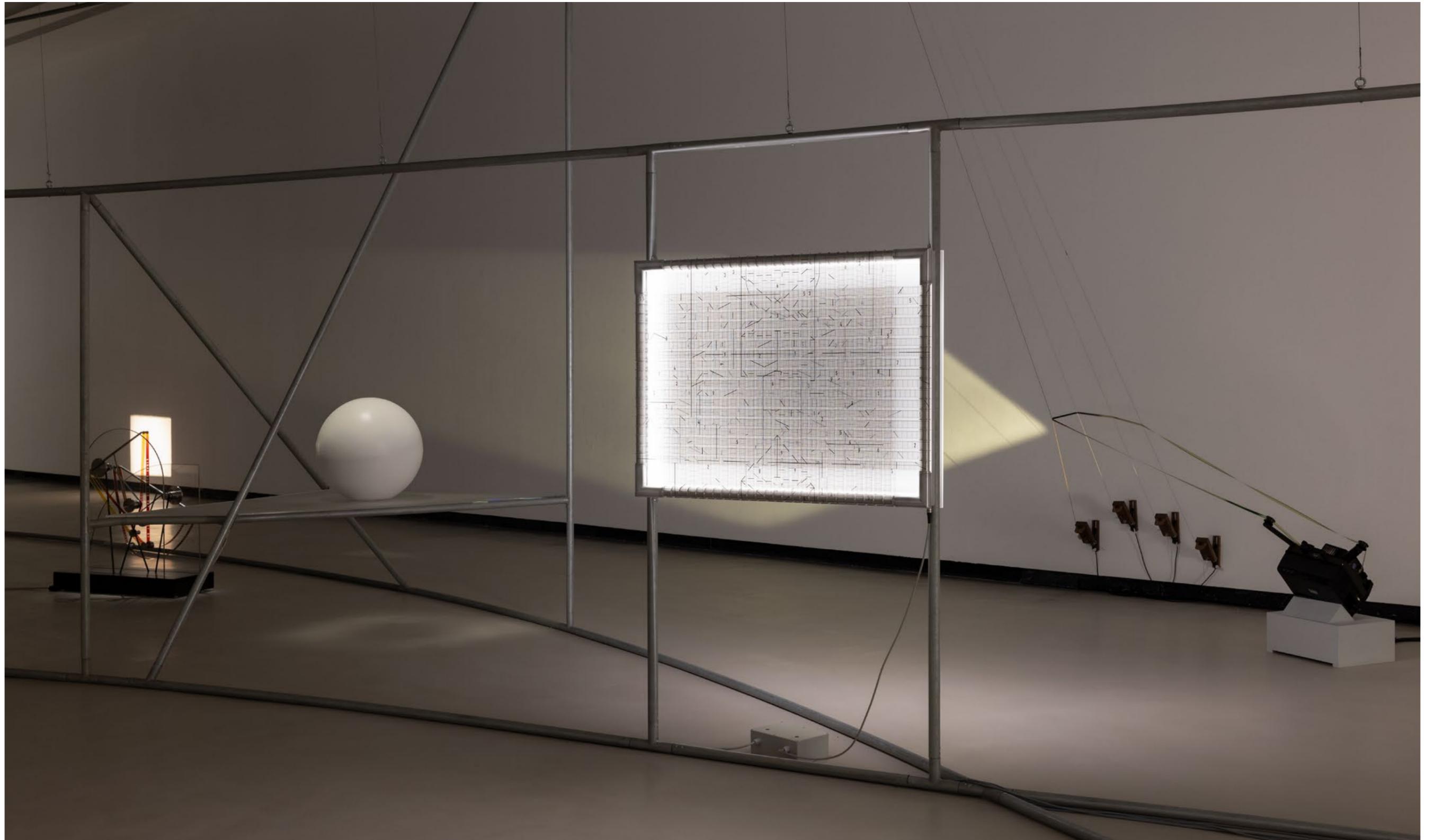
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## CONDUCTOR, 2014/2021

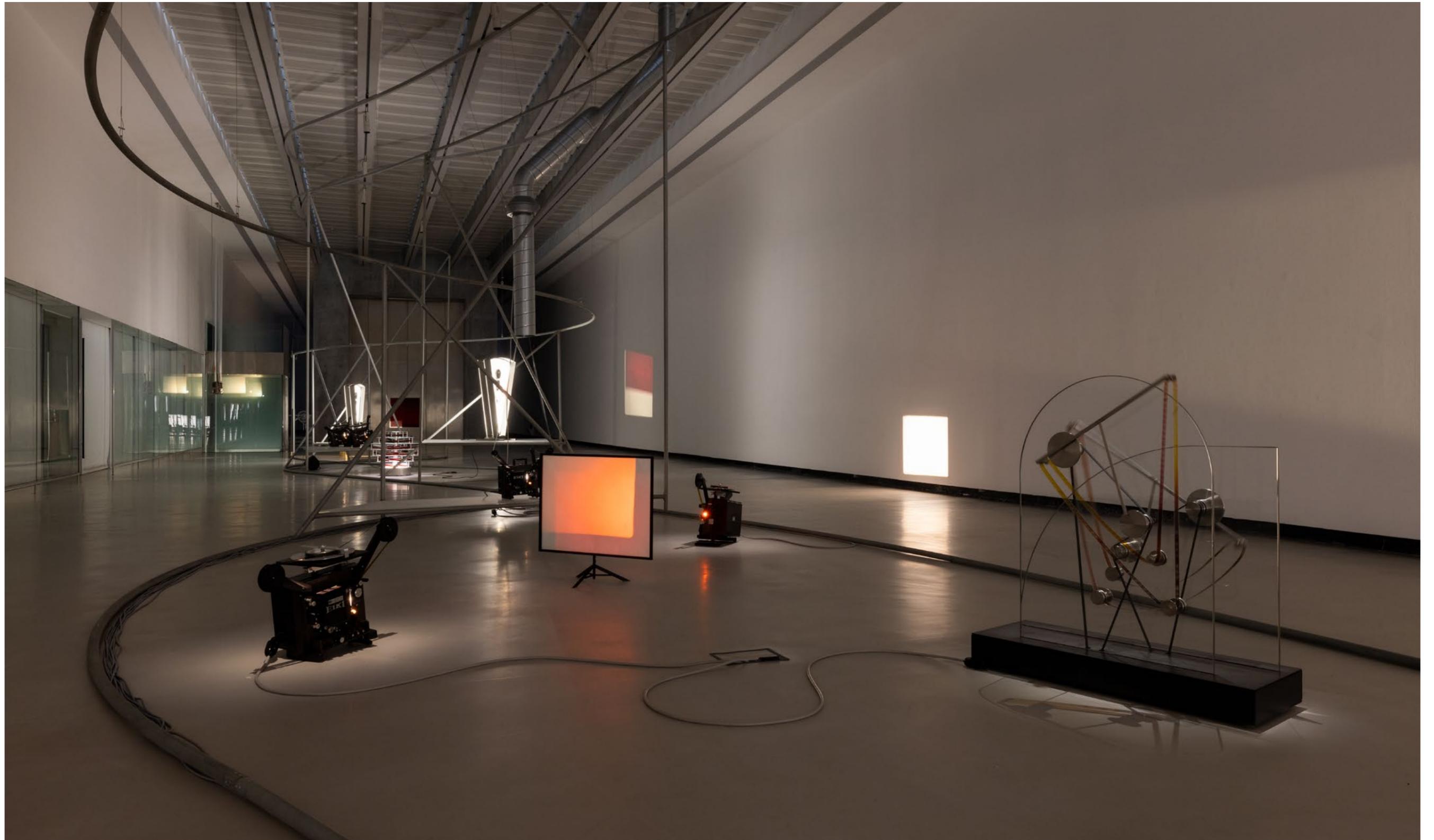
**Conductor** (2014/2021) is a spherical object whose silicone membrane is rhythmically deformed by sound. A speaker placed inside the sphere causes the membrane to vibrate, thus turning the sculptural work into a pulsating object. The work expands Barba's investigation of materials.



Video: Rosa Barba, **Conductor**, 2014/2021, silicone membrane, motor, sound, ø 60 cm (23 5/8 in), edition of 3 (RBA 041)



Rosa Barba, **Conductor**, 2014/2021, silicone membrane, motor, sound, ø 60 cm (23 5/8 in), edition of 3 (RBA 041)



Exhibition view: Rosa Barba, **Frame Time Open**, National Museum of 21st Century Art, Rome (2025-26)

## AS FIXED IN FLUX, 2025

The kinetic sculpture consists of two panes of glass held in a base. An intricate play of moving metal spools and arms is created via bands moved by motors hidden in the base. Loops of film strips hang suspended in elegant loose loops on the metal parts, animated by their constant movement.

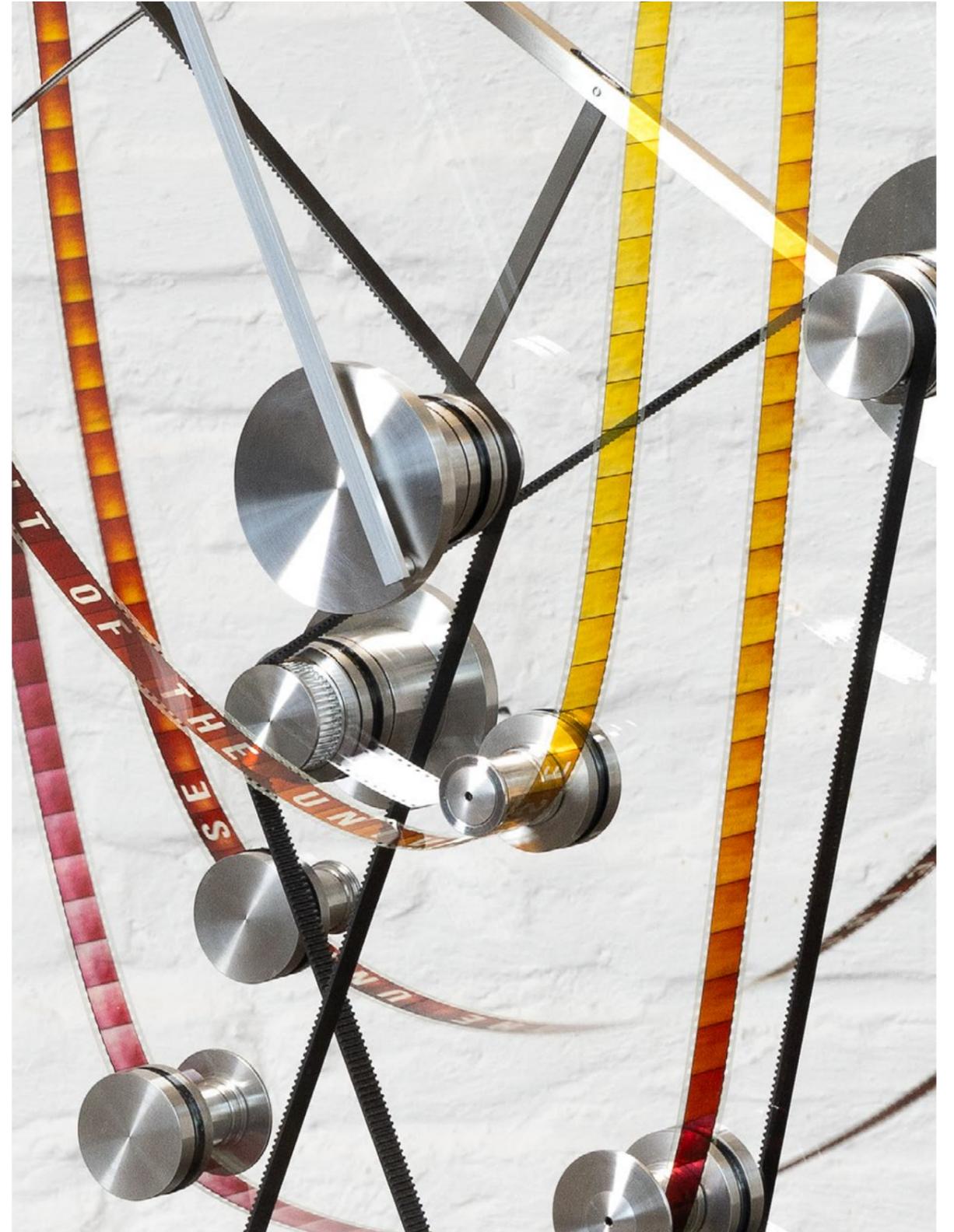
**As Fixed in Flux**, sculpture in motion and film at once, derives from experiments in physics, and plays with different modes of perception. Reminiscent of László Moholy-Nagy's treatment of kinetic sculpture, and exploration in machine aesthetic and material novelty, the work continues an interest in light as an essential part of the universe and yet expands earlier experimentation in the field. Effected by transparency, movement and light, **As Fixed in Flux** contemplates the continuous repetition of revolutionary potential as well as the limits inherent in the artwork as a physical event. It further invites to contemplate time-images, performing sculpture, the history of machinic life, as well as animate and inanimate mechanisms, past and present.



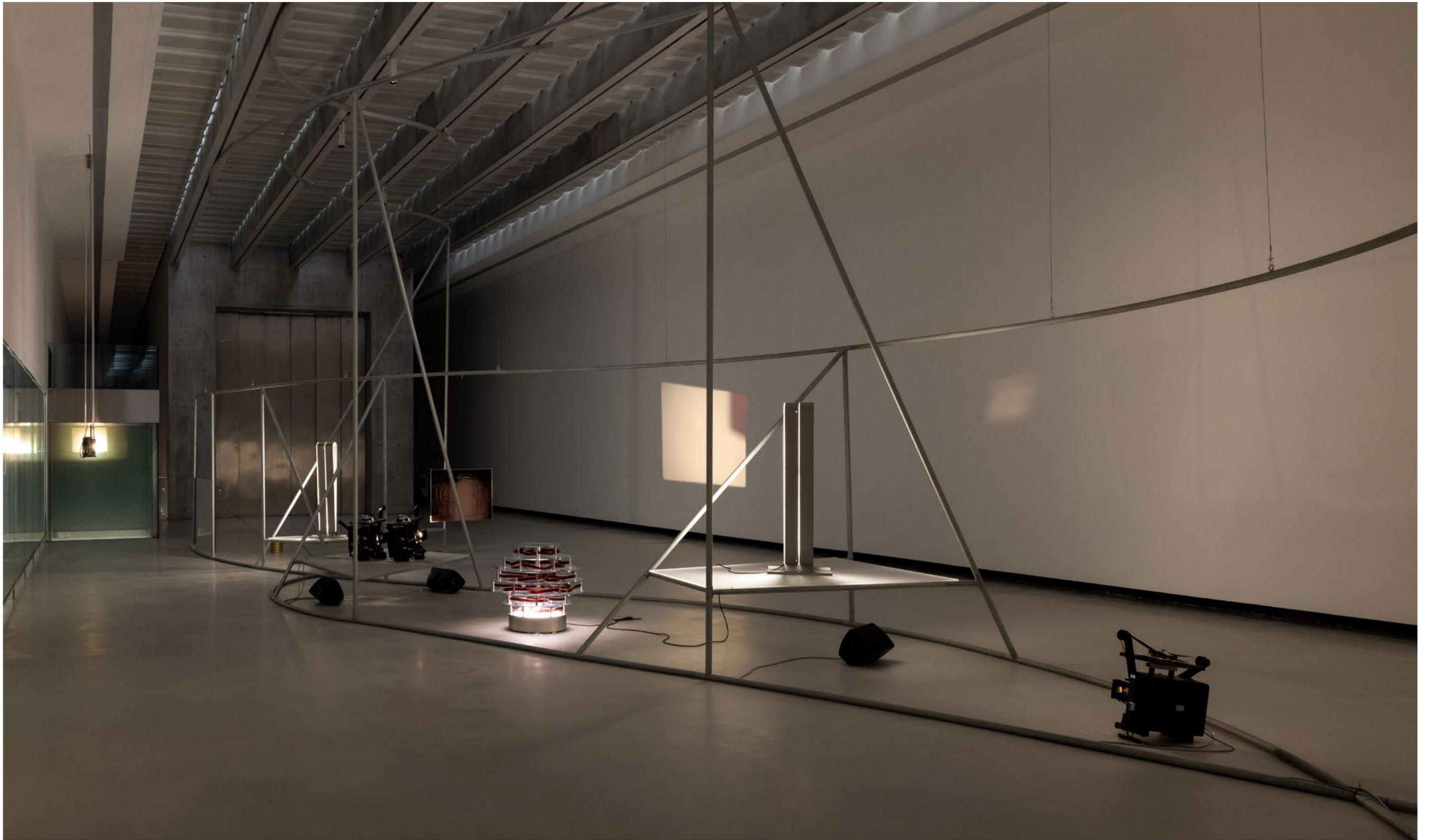
Video: Rosa Barba, **As Fixed in Flux**, 2025, steel, aluminum, glass, motors, 35mm film, 114,5 x 107,5 x 39 cm (45 1/8 x 42 3/8 x 15 3/8 in), edition of 5 (RBA 139)



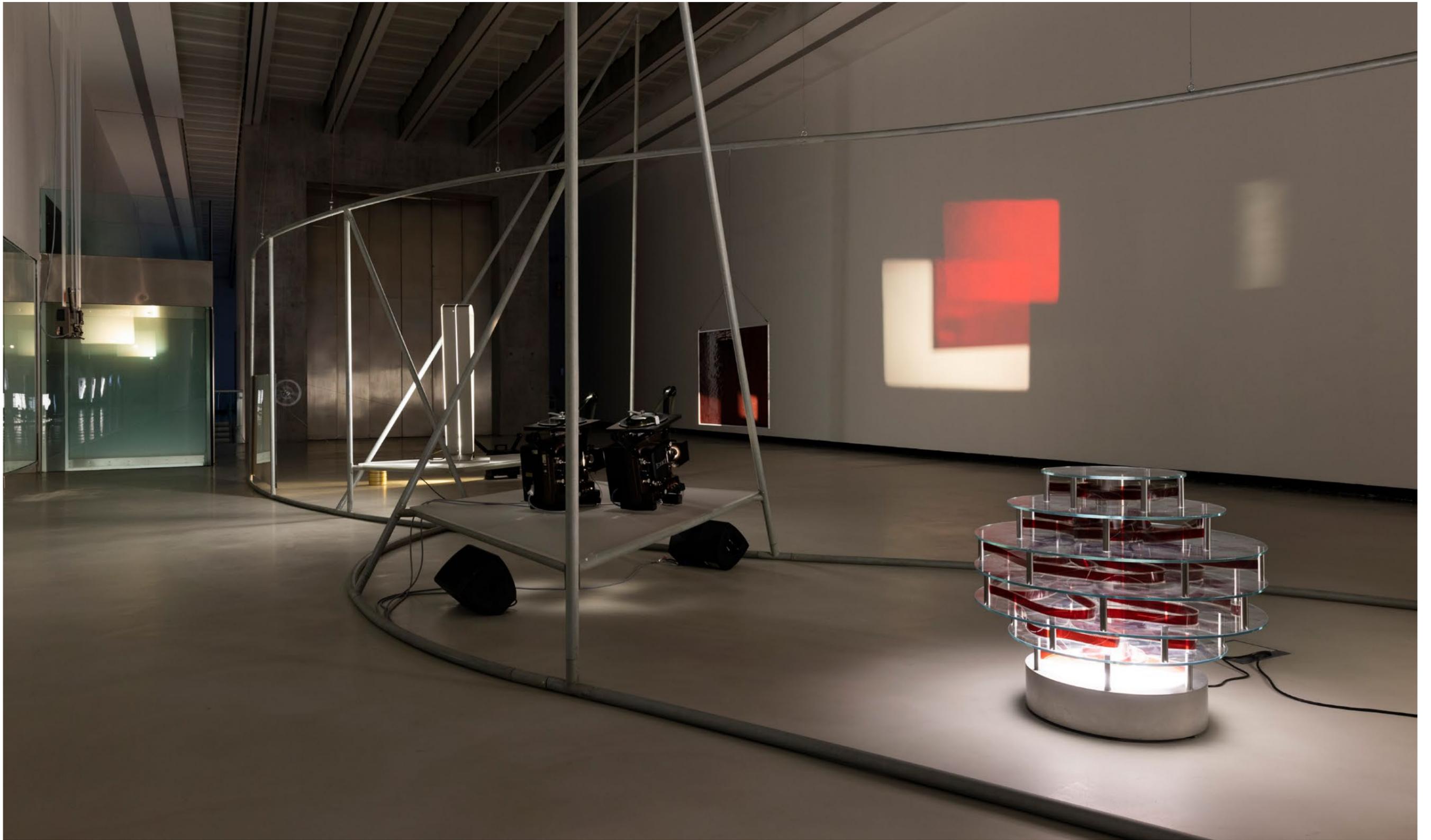
Rosa Barba, **As Fixed in Flux**, 2025, steel, aluminum, glass, motors, 35mm film, 114,5 x 107,5 x 39 cm (45 1/8 x 42 3/8 x 15 3/8 in), edition of 5 (RBA 139)



Detail: Rosa Barba, **As Fixed in Flux**, 2025, steel, aluminum, glass, motors, 35mm film, 114,5 x 107,5 x 39 cm (45 1/8 x 42 3/8 x 15 3/8 in), edition of 5 (RBA 139)



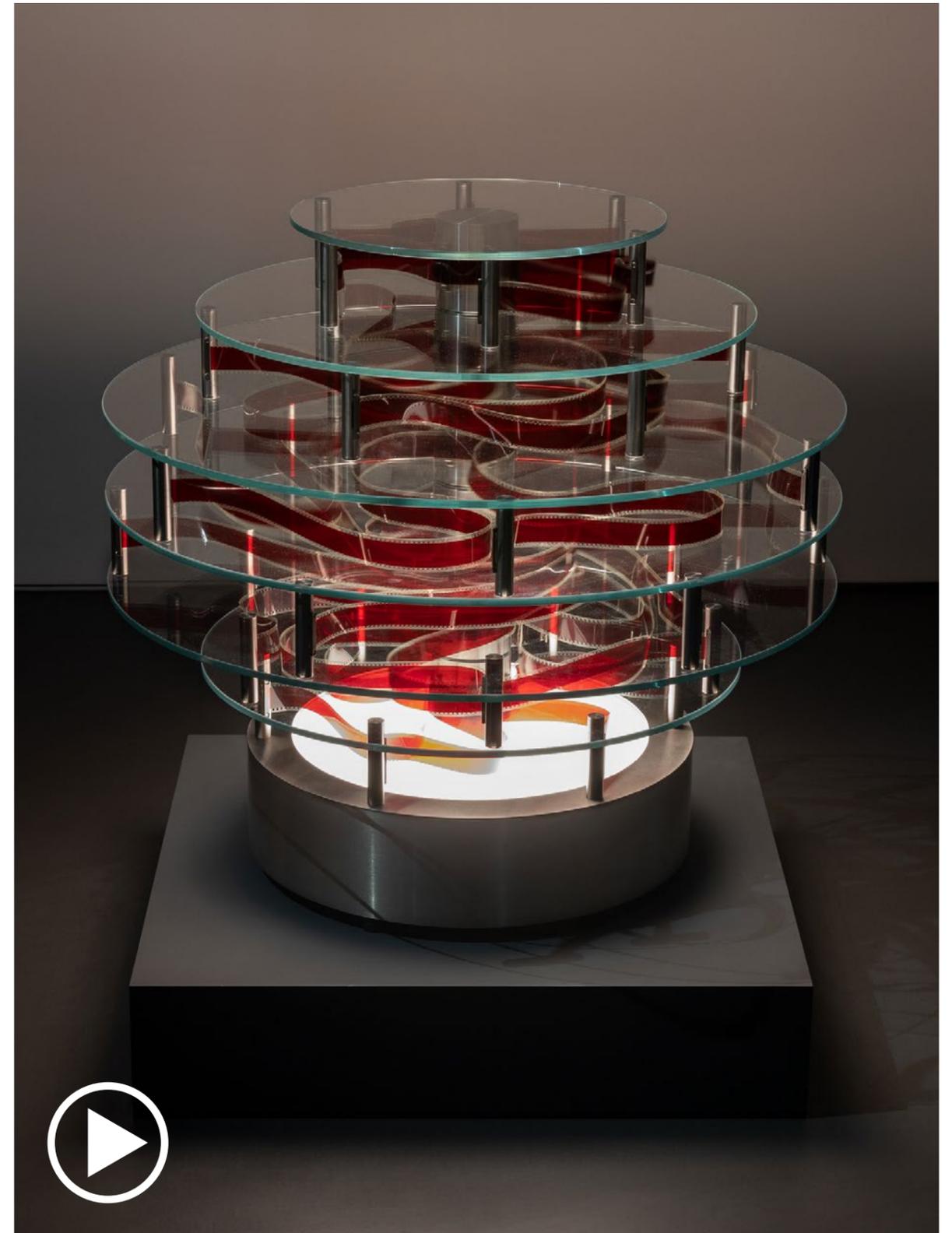
Exhibition view: Rosa Barba, **Frame Time Open**, National Museum of 21st Century Art, Rome (2025-26)



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## OFF SPLINTERED TIME, 2021

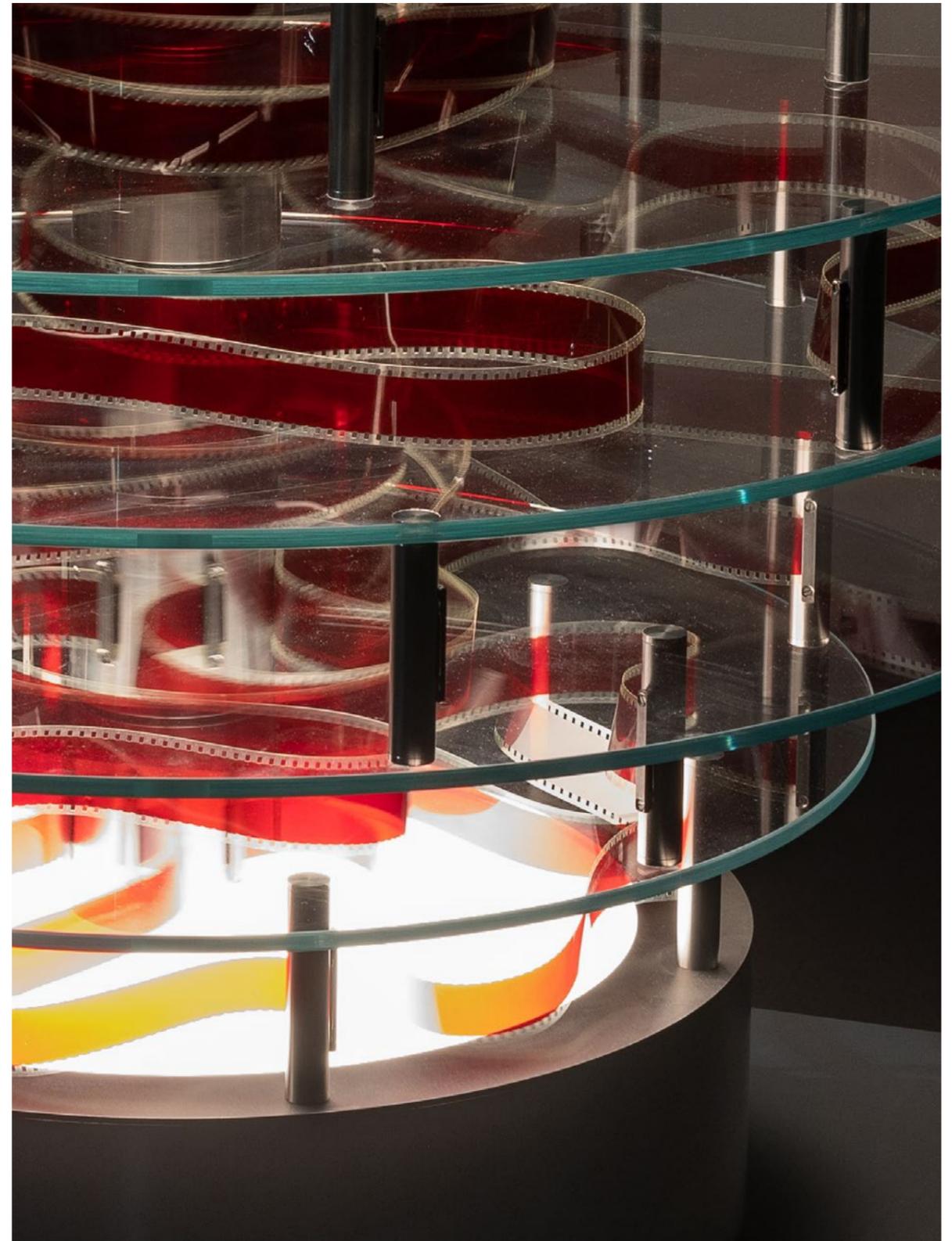
**Off Splintered Time** (2021), first conceived for Rosa Barba's solo exhibition at the Neue Nationalgalerie in Berlin, employs celluloid film as a sculptural medium, held in constant motion along several parallel planes. The work consists of 6 glass disks of various diameters stacked on top of one another creating a pyramid-like structure placed atop a light source. Metallic rods inserted in between the disks keep them apart and function as kind anchor points for strips of red 35mm film. These strips are connected to the sculpture's central axis which is activated by a motor. This central axis consists of individual rotating sections. Each section has their own rhythm as the rotating center functions as a spool around which the film strips tighten and loosen as it changes direction. The different levels of moving disks create an engaging dance of color and light, as the red film strips continuously change shape.



Video: Rosa Barba, **Off Splintered Time**, 2021, glass, motors, 35 mm film, LED light, 70 x 80 x 80 cm (27 1/2 x 31 1/2 x 31 1/2 in) (sculpture), 15 x 70 x 70 cm (5 7/8 x 27 1/2 x 27 1/2 in) (plinth), edition of 3 (RBA 087)



Rosa Barba, **Off Splintered Time**, 2021, glass, motors, 35 mm film, LED light, 70 x 80 x 80 cm (27 1/2 x 31 1/2 x 31 1/2 in) (sculpture), 15 x 70 x 70 cm (5 7/8 x 27 1/2 x 27 1/2 in) (plinth), edition of 3 (RBA 087)



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Exhibition view: Rosa Barba, **Frame Time Open**, National Museum of 21st Century Art, Rome (2025-26)

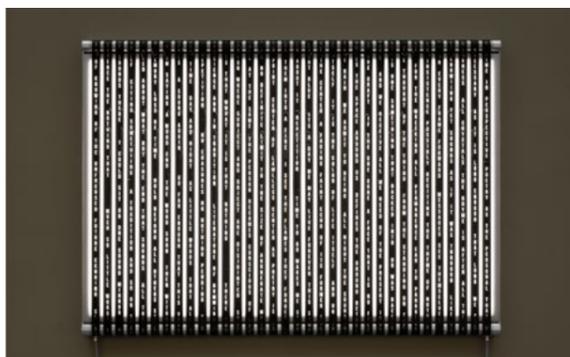


Exhibition view: Rosa Barba, **Frame Time Open**, National Museum of 21st Century Art, Rome (2025-26)



Exhibition view: Rosa Barba, **Frame Time Open**, National Museum of 21st Century Art, Rome (2025-26)

AVAILABLE WORKS



Rosa Barba  
**They Are Taking All My Letters**, 2025  
 70 mm film, aluminum, LED, Plexiglas, motors  
 187 x 262 x 15 cm (73 5/8 x 103 1/8 x 5 7/8 in)  
 Edition of 3  
 (RBA 133)

EUR 180,000.00 (excl. taxes)



Rosa Barba  
**Solar Flux Recordings**, 2022  
 Steel table, color glass plates, 35 mm film, projector, looper  
 Duration: 11 min  
 130 x 100 x 55 cm (49 1/4 x 39 3/8 x 21 5/8 in) (sculpture)  
 Edition of 5  
 (RBA 077)

EUR 105,000.00 (excl. taxes)



Rosa Barba  
**Spacelength Thought**, 2012  
 16 mm film, projector, typewriter, programming  
 Dimensions variable  
 Typewriter incl. arm: 39 x 34,5 x 75 cm (15 3/8 x 13 5/8 x 29 1/2 in)  
 Base: 27,5 x 30 x 40 cm (10 7/8 x 11 3/4 x 15 3/4 in)  
 Projection distance: 2-2.5 m approx.  
 Edition of 3  
 (RBA 051)

EUR 120,000.00 (excl. taxes)



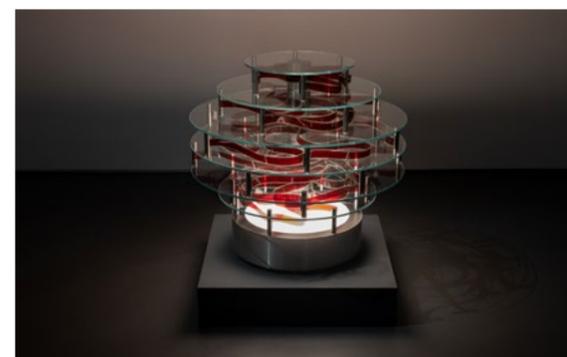
Rosa Barba  
**Conductor**, 2014/2021  
 Silicone membrane, motor, sound  
 ø 60 cm (23 5/8 in)  
 Edition of 3  
 (RBA 041)

EUR 75,000.00 (excl. taxes)



Rosa Barba  
**As Fixed in Flux**, 2025  
 Steel, aluminum, glass, motors, 35mm film  
 114,5 x 107,5 x 39 cm (45 1/8 x 42 3/8 x 15 3/8 in)  
 Edition of 5  
 (RBA 139)

EUR 125,000.00 (excl. taxes)



Rosa Barba  
**Off Splintered Time**, 2021  
 Glass, motors, 35 mm film, LED light  
 70 x 80 x 80 cm (27 1/2 x 31 1/2 x 31 1/2 in) (sculpture)  
 15 x 70 x 70 cm (5 7/8 x 27 1/2 x 27 1/2 in) (plinth)  
 Edition of 3  
 (RBA 087)

EUR 100,000.00 (excl. taxes)

RELATED AVAILABLE WORK



Rosa Barba  
**Weavers**, 2021  
 35 mm blue and 16 mm clear film, aluminum frame, rotating motor  
 204 x 153 x 2,5 cm (80 1/4 x 60 1/4 x 3/4 in)  
 (RBA 120)

EUR 60,000.00 (excl. taxes)

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