

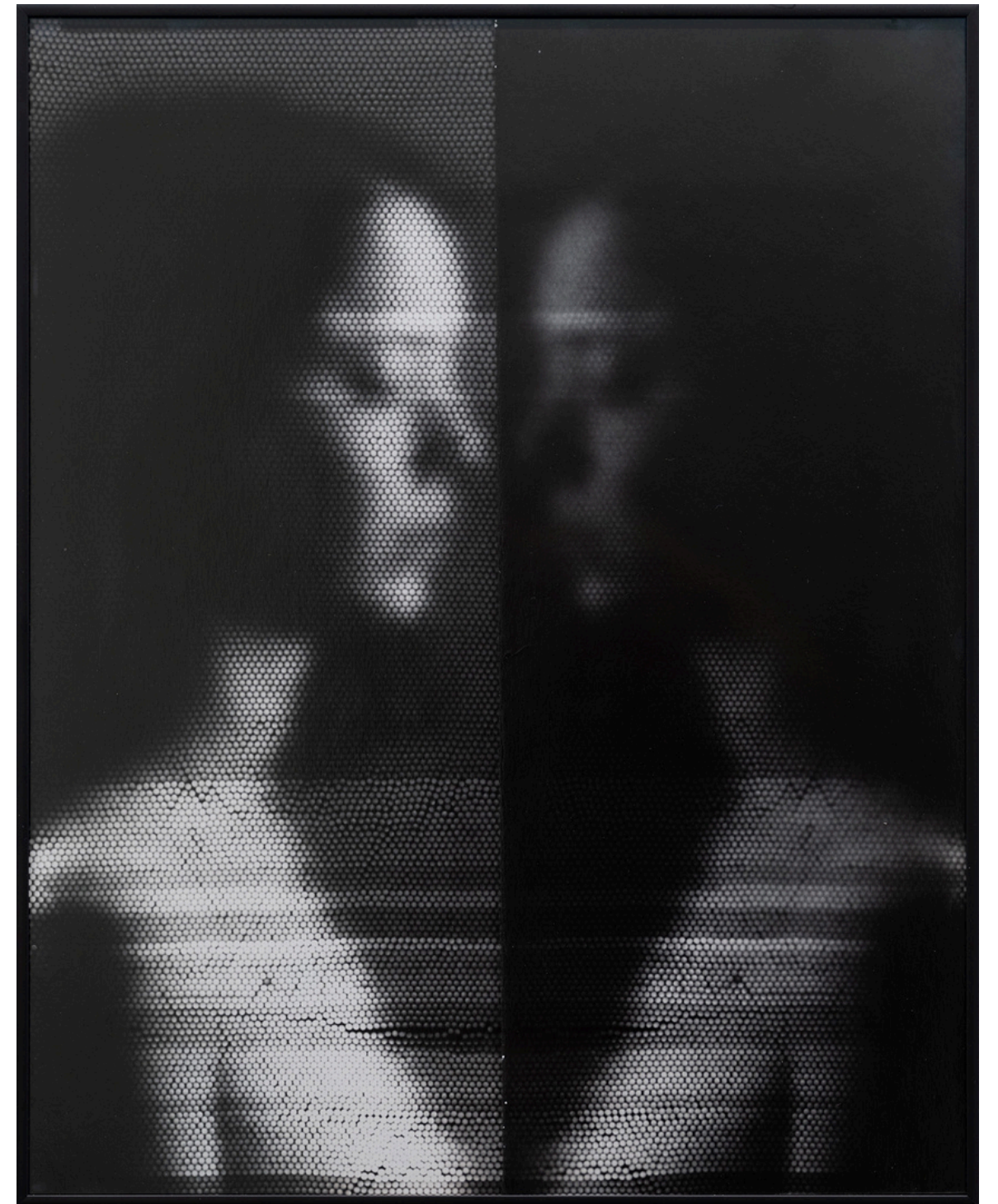
THE ARMORY SHOW

September 24 – 27, 2026

Booth P49

Lucy Kim & John Shen

**PRAISE
SHADOWS**
ART GALLERY





LUCY KIM

Lucy Kim is a visual artist working across painting, sculpture and biological media. In her hybrid works, she embraces distortion as a tool to deconstruct how we see what we see: the relationship between our evolved vision-centricity, constructed socio-cultural systems, and personal desires.

Kim is a recipient of the 2026 Wagner Arts Fellowship, 2024 Howard Foundation Fellowship, and the 2017 ICA Boston James and Audrey Foster Prize. In 2022, she received the Creative Capital Award for her project printing images with bacteria that has been genetically-modified to produce melanin. Melanin is the main bio-pigment behind human skin, hair, and eye color. She began this project while an artist-in-residence at the Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard, and continues to develop it at Boston University, where she teaches. Through this project, Kim expands her committed study of our visual habits, which she first began in her sculptural paintings using unconventional processes in the studio. Kim is based in Cambridge, MA and is Associate Professor of Art at Boston University. She received a BFA in Painting from Rhode Island School of Design, and her MFA in Painting and Printmaking from Yale University School of Art.





The largest of her new paintings, *Herds and Waves*, is one of fourteen molds created from **casts of a Massachusetts shoreline**. In this iteration, Kim expands upon the sculpted rhythm of the sand by painting washes of red, umber, chestnut, and violet to create an **animalic sense of a horse**. Closer inspection reveals details that elaborate on both states of the sculptural painting: finely rendered hairs soften ridges of sand, while shelled critters support the replica of a beach scene. Kim leverages this visual push and pull of mammalian against coastal associations to interrogate the coincidental aspect of seeing. The brain and eye work together and apart to understand the both/and of *Herds and Waves*.

Herds and Waves, 2026

Oil paint, acrylic paint, spray enamel,
urethane resin, fiberglass, epoxy,
aluminum framing

85 x 42 inches

(LK083)

\$ 25,000





Exploiting the discrete patterning of the loon, *Two Loons 1* and *2* explore the effect of varying sculptural support on the paintings' subject. In both works made for the Armory Show, Kim uses only black and white dotting on corn kernel molding – in *Two Loons 2*, the molding is corn kernels and teeth – to discern the subject from the background.

Kim's sculptural paintings are created by applying oil paint onto resin casts of surfaces, objects, and people. This work layers different ways that visual information presents itself – from sculptural relief to painted illusion – to create a calibrated dissonance. The evolution of this process began when Kim was contending with photography's domineering authority over visual culture, specifically the role that it plays, and has played, in structuring vision. But rather than use photography directly, she opted to employ mold-making and casting as photography's extremely tactile, full contact surrogate.

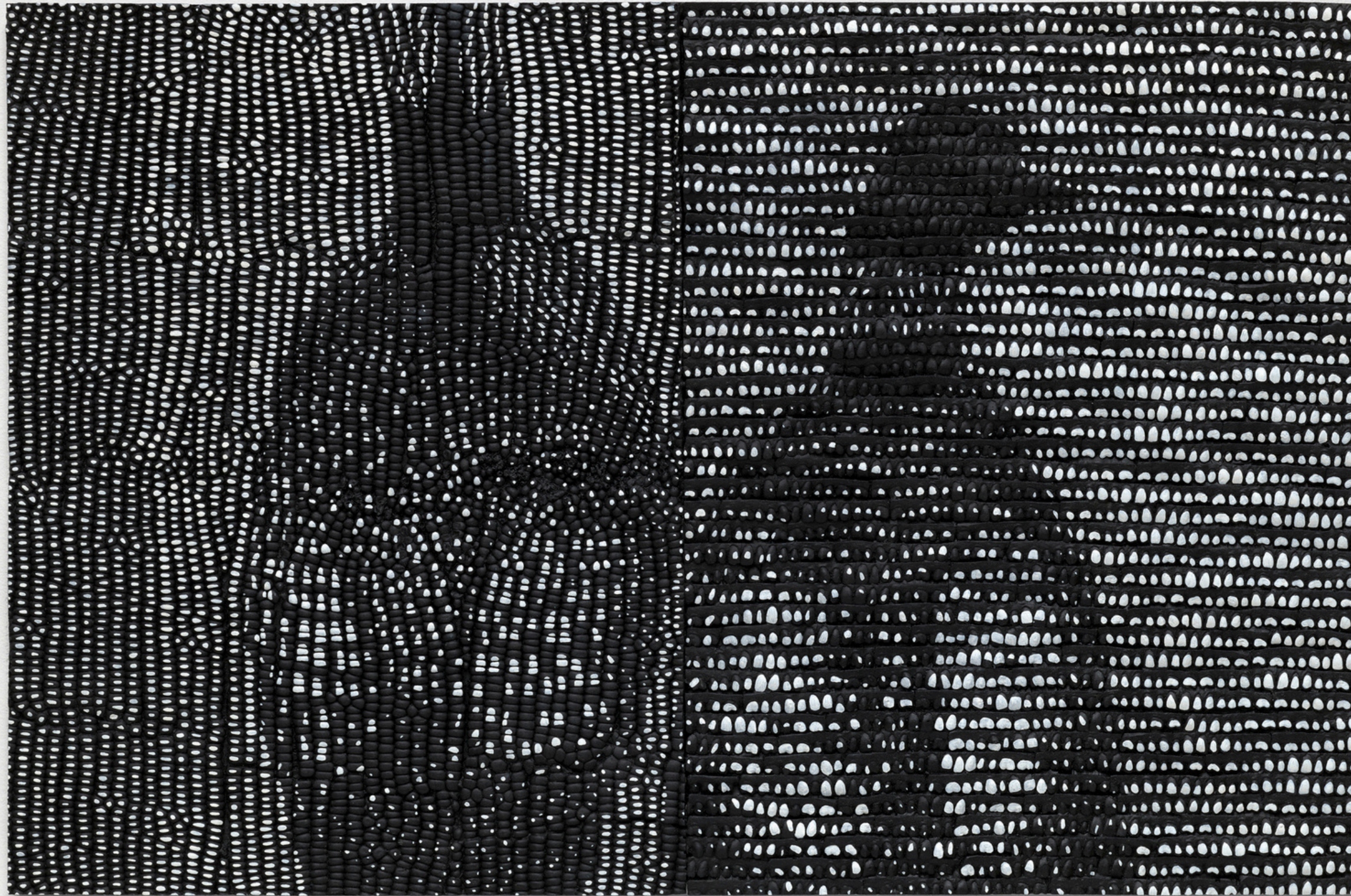
Two Loons 1, 2026

Oil paint on urethane resin

20 x 15 inches

(LK087)

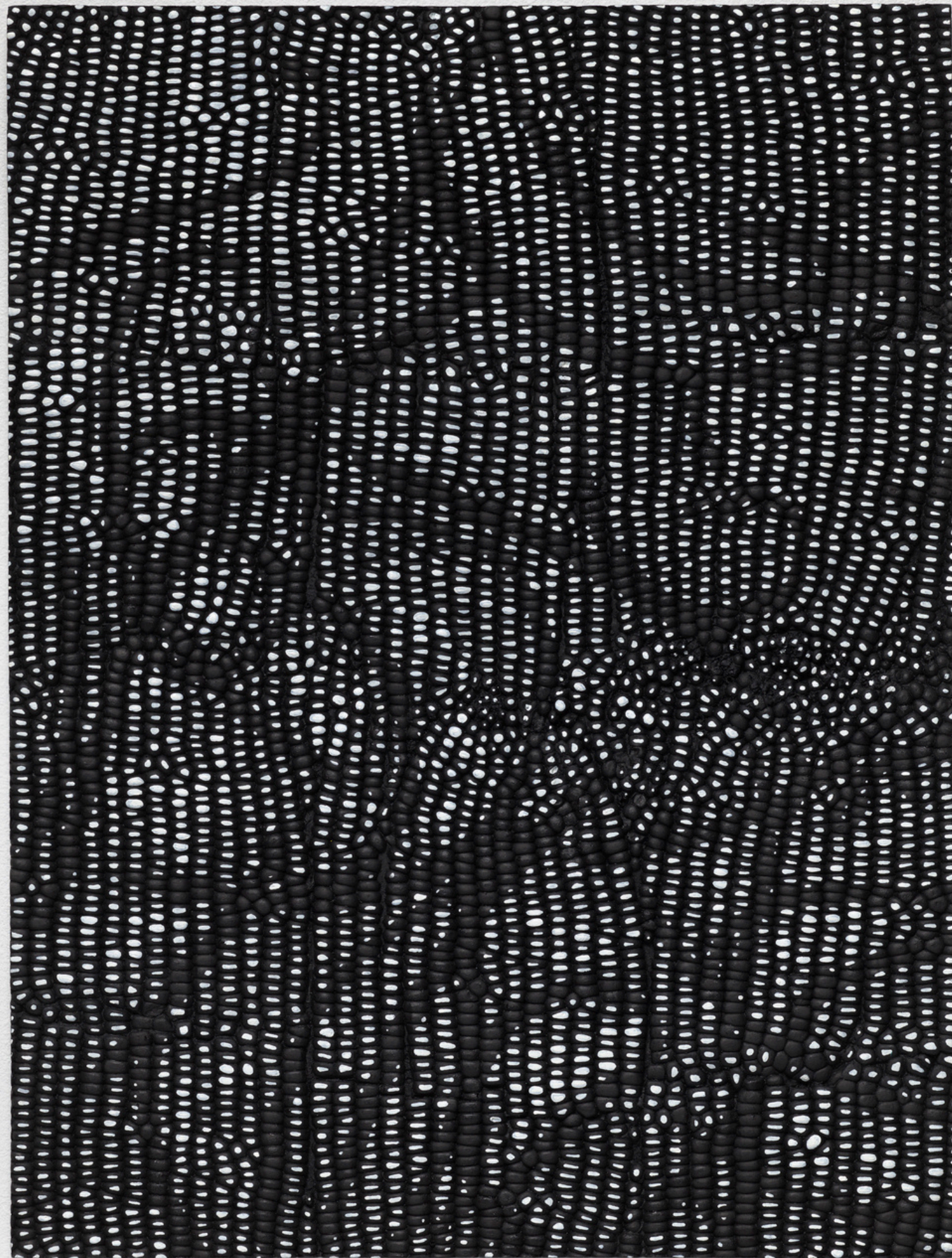
\$ 6,500



Two Loons 2, 2026

Oil paint on
urethane resin
20 x 30 inches
(LK086)

\$ 9,000



In *Mutant Optics*, Kim's recent solo exhibition at the Henry Art Gallery, University of Washington, the artist used melanin from genetically modified bacteria to create prints of vanilla plants undergoing genetic research in Florida (example seen to the right). As Kim simultaneously develops the melanin project and the sculptural paintings, the role of pigments in nature, and how the human eye and desire interprets them, have been central in driving the work. This painting is the synthesis of these two significant artistic practices.



Vanilla Beans (Black and White) 1, 2026

Oil paint on urethane resin

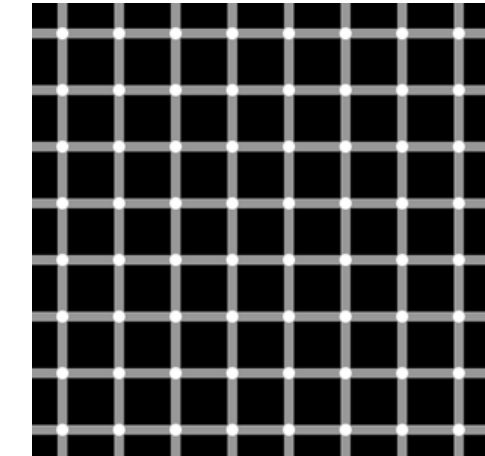
20 x 15 inches

(LKo85)

\$ 6,500

Kim paints known optical illusions, Bergen's Scintillating Grid and Ninio's Extinction Illusion, over molds of the left hands and feet of her niece and nephew. Due to the overflow of visual information, both illusions involve the brain "forgetting" the placement of dots throughout the pattern. The dots appear and disappear, depending on the eye's focus, resulting in perceived animation of a static design.

The tidy placement of the hands and feet, lined according to size along the vertical edges of the mold, appears as an analytic documentation of growth. Conversely, their tender associations alongside the intimate familial practice of documenting hand or footprints to mark age mark these paintings as intensely personal. By shielding her niece and nephew's hands and feet underneath human-made illusions that causes the brain to forget, Kim ties the limited perception of reality to carefully cast molds of loved ones, hinting at a desire for devoted attention, free of distractions.



Bergen's Scintillating Grid

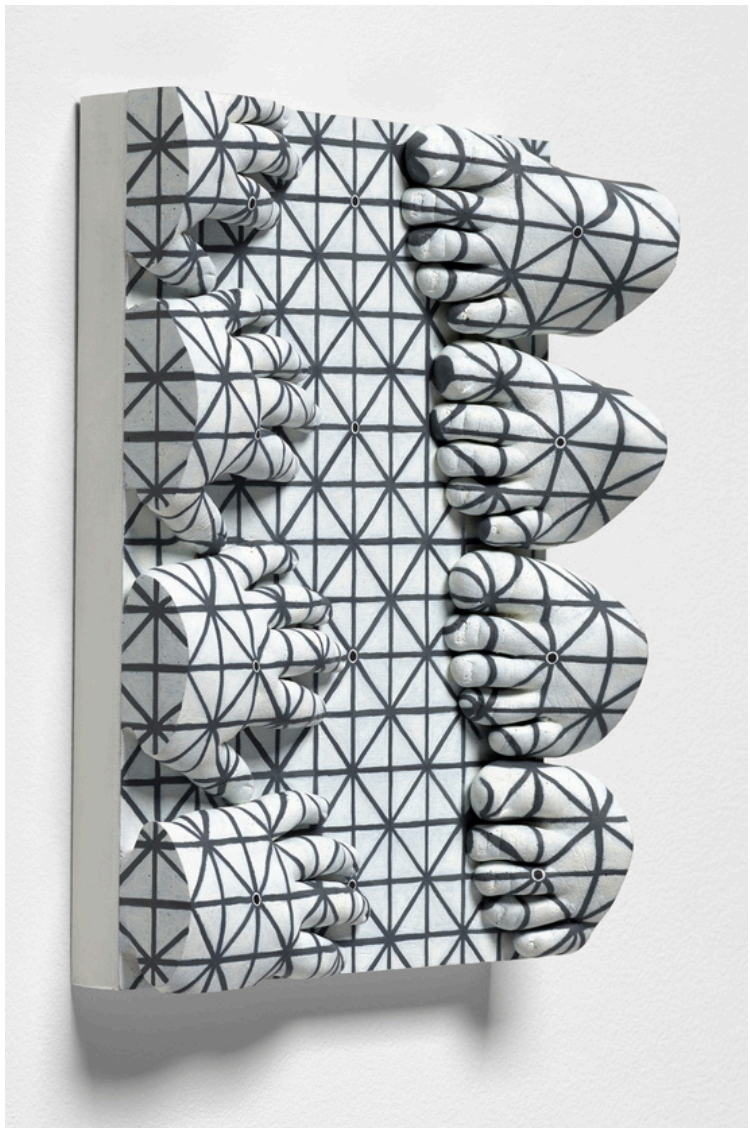
Black dots appear to scintillate in white patches



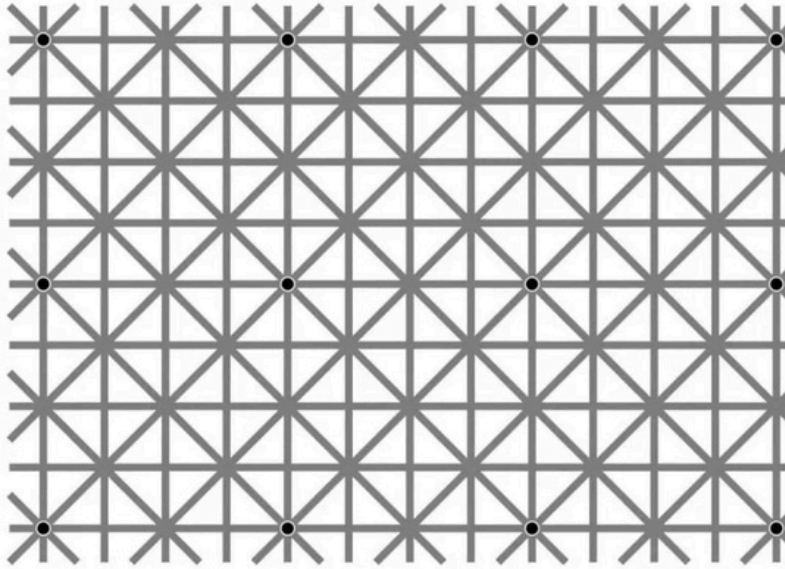
Bergen's Scintillating Grid (on Mylo and Hanna), 2026

Oil paint, flashe paint, urethane resin, cork, epoxy on wood panel
12 x 9 inches
(LKo88)

\$ 6,000



Ninio's Extinction Illusion
There are twelve black dots at the intersections in this image. Can you see all at once?



Ninio's Extinction Illusion (on Mylo and Hanna), 2026
Oil paint, flashe paint, urethane resin, cork, epoxy on wood panel
12 x 9 inches
(LKo84)

\$ 6,000

A dark, high-contrast portrait of a man's face, partially obscured by a vertical band of a fine dot pattern. The text "JOHN SHEN" is centered over the image in a white, serif font.

JOHN SHEN

John Shen is a multidisciplinary artist born in China, raised in New Zealand, and based in New Haven, Connecticut. Shen's practice explores the nexus between the image and object, approaching photographs as material events rather than mere representations. Through experimental, research based processes, he engages photographic history and material as sites where memory is stored, distorted and reactivated.

His projects often begin with a specific apparatus, hand built or modified and are used to inscribe images onto physical substrates, testing the limits of memory and legibility. Shen's work is deeply interested in making the stakes of looking felt, to insist on tactility where images are consumed frictionlessly. Working across lens-based and hybrid forms, Shen treats technology as collaborator, using it to examine how images imprint themselves upon us and how inherited narratives are carried forward. Ultimately, his experimentations are a way of thinking through the intimacy of love, grief, memory, and myth. Shen completed his MFA in Photography at the Yale School of Art and earned his BFA in Photography and Painting from the Rhode Island School of Design.



After Image, 2024

00:48:08 minutes

14 inch CRT Photographic Sculpture with
Image Burn (bolide SCM-14T Color Monitor),
with Single Channel Video & Audio and
Custom Aluminum and Acrylic Pedestal

31 x 14.5 x 15.5 inches monitor

52 x 24 x 24 inches pedestal

\$ 30,000



After Image on view at The Aldrich Museum, June 7, 2026 to January 10, 2027.
Photo by Olympia Shannon.



About *Afer Image* by John Shen

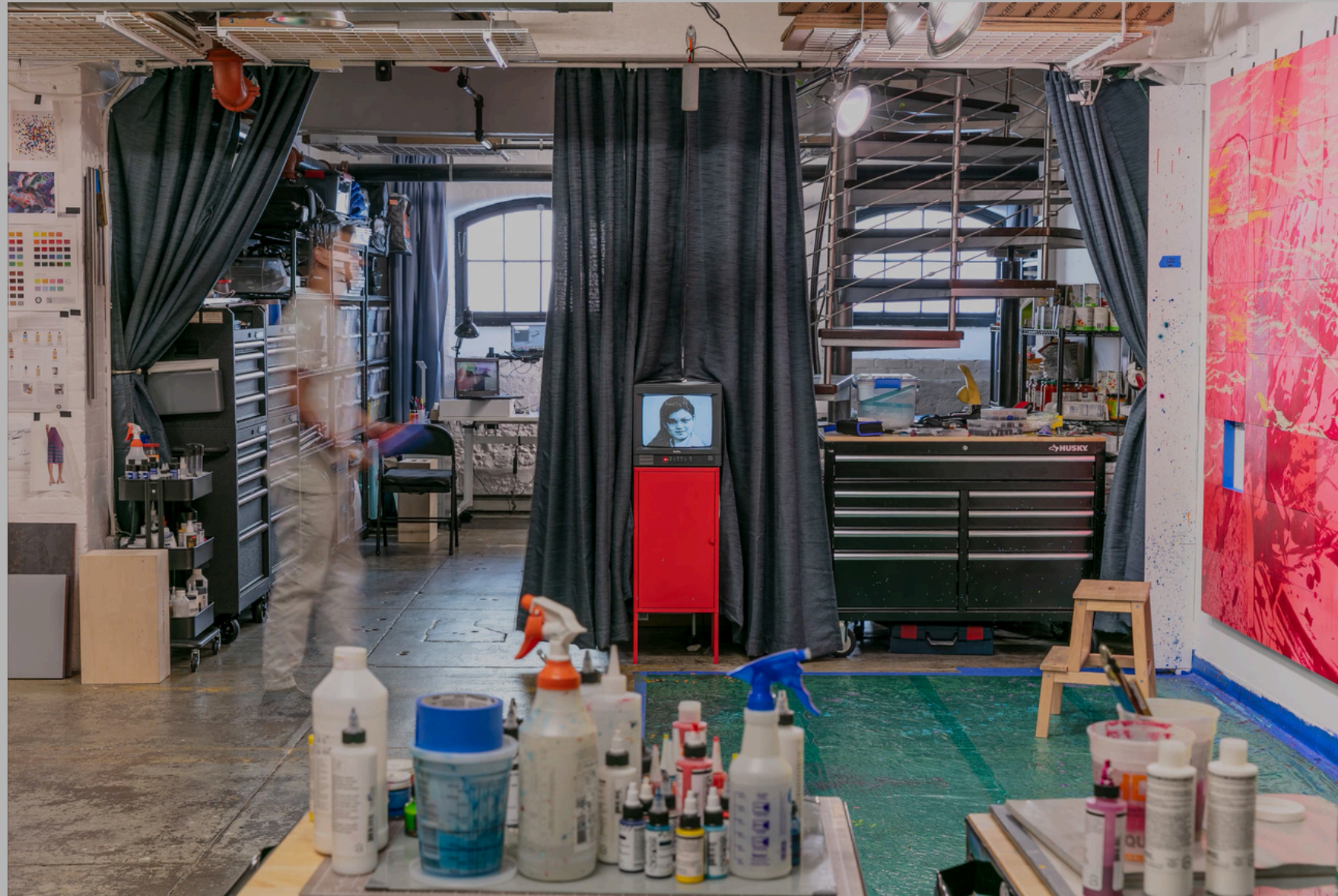
This 14-inch CRT television monitor, a ubiquitous technology at the time of Shen's birth, serves as both medium and message. **The artist has inscribed a portrait of his mother, captured from a photo of her before she gave birth to him, directly into the cathodes of the monitor.** This imprinting process results in a **persistent after image**, an indelible reflection of his mother that remains visible even when the TV is in use.

The creation of the after image is a testament to the power and preciousness of time as a resource. **Over three years, during a long separation due to the pandemic, Shen allowed the image to gradually etch itself into the monitor, a slow burn that mirrors the gradual fading and resurfacing of memories over time.** This process underscores the idea that some aspects of our identity and relationships are forged not through immediate actions but through sustained, patient effort. Every image or video played on the TV now bears the subtle, yet persistent, imprint of Shen's mother, merging the act of viewing with the endurance of memory. This overlay challenges the viewer to navigate the interplay between the visible content and the underlying after image, reflecting on how our perceptions are invariably shaped by our histories and the people who have influenced us.

Shen included a Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) that he underwent within the 48-minute video. The TAT is a psychological assessment tool that uses a series of ambiguous images to delve into an individual's personality, emotions, and subconscious conflicts. By documenting his personal experience with this test, and playing the final video on the image-burned TV, Shen adds another layer of introspection and self-examination. This component invites viewers to consider not only the external representations of memory but also the internal processes of self-discovery and psychological reflection.

Included in the sale of *After Image* is edition one of three of the time lapse video. See the following page for more information.

This artwork is currently on view and included in the The Aldrich Museum Decennial, *I am what is around me* organized by chief curator Amy Smith-Stewart. The exhibition closes January 10, 2027. Many thanks to the Aldrich for permission to showcase this significant work at the Armory Show in our booth.



Stills from *After Image (Timelapse)*, 2024. Single channel video & audio, 3840 x 2160 pixel projection, 2:09:00 minutes. Edition 1 of 3. (SHENo40)

Accompanying *After Image* is **one year's worth of time-lapse footage documenting the gradual formation of *After Image*** within Shen's studio. This visual chronology is paired with a soundtrack featuring his mother singing lullabies, melodies that soothed him in infancy. The juxtaposition of visual and auditory elements creates a multi-sensory experience, bridging past and present, and imbuing the work with layers of Shen's own personal emotional history.



Straw Inscriptions

Straw Inscriptions is a series of black and white photographs created using a camera built by John Shen over a meticulous year-long process using approximately 28,000 hand-glued black drinking straws. Drawing from Hito Steyerl's ruminations on the 'poor image,' Shen seeks to navigate the tension between hyperrealism and authenticity in contemporary photography. By intentionally forgoing advanced optics and embracing a low-resolution approach, this work challenges the prevailing obsession with technical perfection. The resulting photographs are painstakingly produced on Direct Positive Gelatin Silver Paper, making each image a one-off unique object. By prioritizing emotional resonance over technical precision, *Straw Inscriptions* offers a profound commentary on how our memories and identities are intricately woven into the images we create and perceive.

Lovers (Zak & Gray), 2025

Silver Gelatin Direct Positive Photographs (Selenium Toned on Fiber Paper)

60 x 32 inches

3 x 2 Array of 20 x 16 inch panels

(SHENo14)

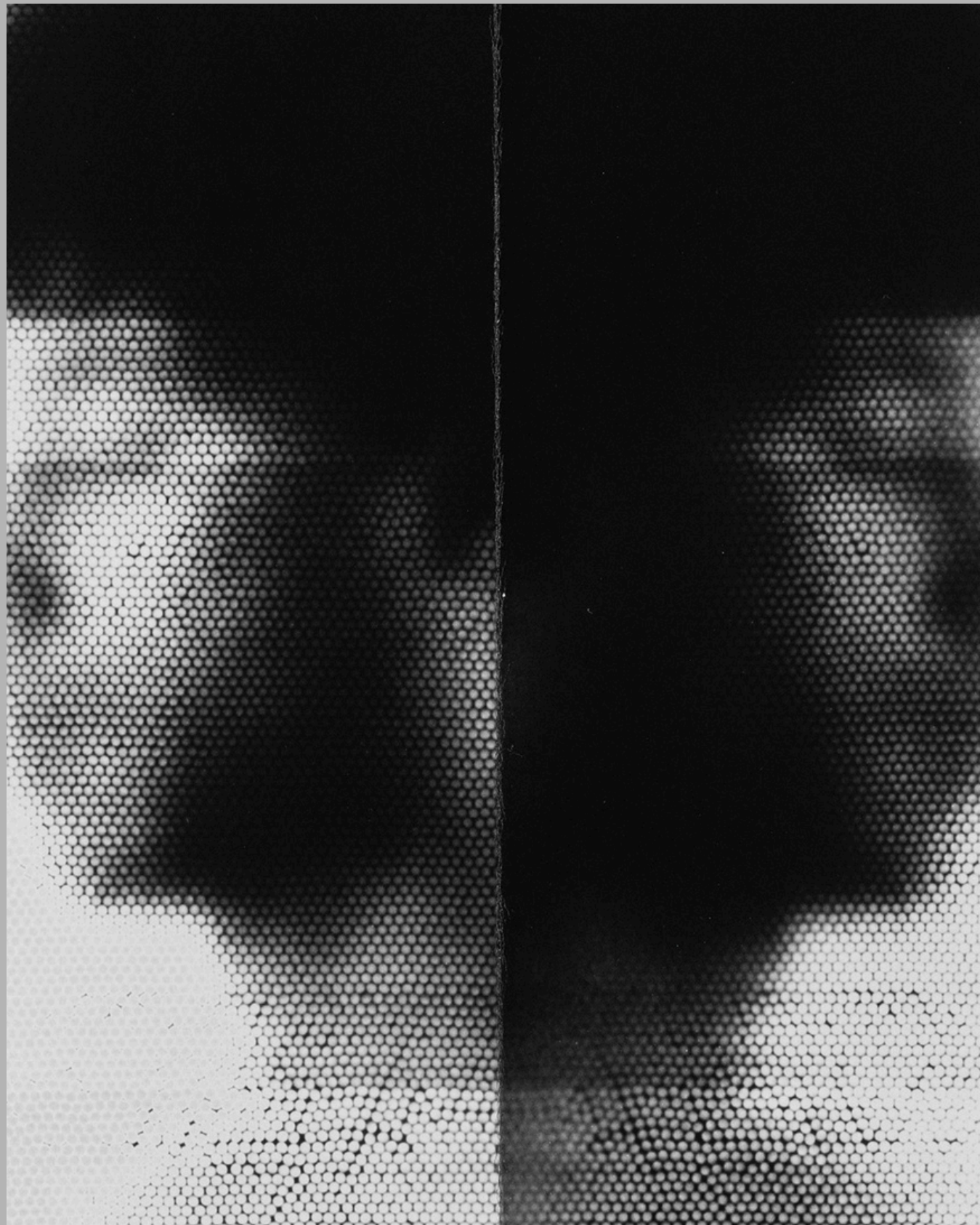
\$ 18,000



Janus (Oshi), 2026
Silver Gelatin Direct Positive
Photograph (Selenium Toned on
Fiber Paper)
20 x 16 inches
(SHEN051)

\$ 4,500

The sitter takes on the form of the Roman god of gates and thresholds in *Janus (Oshi)*. **By folding light-sensitive paper, the image is divided and doubled, producing two mirrored faces that look away from each other.** As one face looks backward at history and the past, the other gazes into what will come of the future. For Shen, this Janus becomes a way of thinking about the photograph as a medium caught between two technological eras.



In *Pandora's Camera*, Joan Fontcuberta makes an important delineation between analog and digital photography by suggesting that the former is inscribed while the latter is written. Analog photography is a mark made on matter; the digital image belongs to something else completely. It is composed of translated data and can be continually reconstructed and retranslated. In this sense, the digital image is closer to the text of a book than a singular object, as it can be copied, transmitted, and instantiated again without belonging entirely to any one material form.

Shen's photographs occupy both conditions simultaneously. They are direct physical inscriptions made by light without any optics, yet the field of drinking straws breaks the images into thousands of discrete, separate units. Bernard Stiegler calls the digital transformation of the image a "grammatization of the visible," in which vision ultimately becomes divisible into elements that can be read, calculated, and rewritten. In Shen's work, discretization happens before the image ever becomes digital. This archaic, analog process begins to resemble the structure of the bitmap. The past thus contains an image of its own future.

The Janus is a recurring figure in Shen's work. His sitters look backward to the indexical inscription that changed the world and forward toward information and simulacra. *The fold is simply that threshold between them.*

Image at left: detail of Janus (Oshi), 2026

On *Inward*

Playing with the physical act of folding the photograph, *Inward* draws on obsidian mirror scrying techniques used in divination, reflecting on perception, introspection, and the unseen. The word *scrying* comes from the Old English descry, meaning 'to make out dimly' or 'to reveal.' It is a practice of unveiling the unseen through our innate ability of second sight. Ancient Greeks and Celts scryed using beryl, crystal, black glass, polished quartz, and water – materials that capture and refract light.

Scrying is an act of interpretation, seeing shapes, colors, and images emerge and allowing meaning to unfold. *Inward* mirrors this process, inviting the viewer to glimpse what lies beyond the visible.

Inward (Hali), 2025
Silver Gelatin Direct Positive Photograph
(Selenium Toned on Fiber Paper)
20 x 16 inches
(SHEN028)

\$ 4,500





Inward (D), 2026

Silver Gelatin Direct Positive Photograph
(Selenium Toned on Fiber Paper)

20 x 16 inches

(SHENo59)

\$ 4,500

On Arrangement



These photographs begin as flower arrangements in front of Shen's camera. Flowers are an instantly recognizable subject throughout the history of art, but the folding of the photo paper makes it difficult for them to remain a simple arrangement. Mirrored like the *Janus* work, petals, stems and leaves appear to form bodies, faces, animals, masks, transformed in the imagination as something entirely new.

Arrangement (Cat Woman), 2026
Silver Gelatin Direct Positive Photograph
(Selenium Toned on Fiber Paper)
20 x 32 inches
(SHEN052)

\$ 8,000

Shen created these photographs with the **Rorschach inkblot test in mind**, where an abstract and symmetrical form is present without a fixed image to be found within. The meaning comes through the imagination and the act of looking, revealing more about the viewer than the artist.

Arrangement (Lion & Mage), 2026
Silver Gelatin Direct Positive Photograph
(Selenium Toned on Fiber Paper)
20 x 32 inches
(SHENo53)

\$ 8,000





Bruce Conner's drawings occupy a similar territory for Shen in relation to this body of work. In Conner's inkblot drawings, folding and mirroring create forms that hover between structure and serendipitous recognition. **There is always a temptation to name what appears. In that sense what is magical is where the space between abstraction and representation becomes psychological.**

Arrangement (Mantis & Chameleon), 2026
Silver Gelatin Direct Positive Photograph
(Selenium Toned on Fiber Paper)
20 x 32 inches
(SHENo56)

\$ 8,000

*Kiss (Jasmine &
Edward), 2025*
Silver Gelatin
Direct Positive
Photograph
(Selenium Toned
on Fiber Paper)
20 x 16 inches
(SHEN021)

\$ 4,500



*Kiss (Alec & Oshi),
2026*
Silver Gelatin
Direct Positive
Photograph
(Selenium Toned
on Fiber Paper)
20 x 16 inches
(SHEN058)

\$ 4,500



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