

Alfredo Ramos Fernández
Selected Works 1998-2014



STATEMENT:

I am one of those people who view reality as a field of dynamic forces and interactions, in other words whose perception of the world is close to the concepts of quantum physics. In my photographic work I attempt to elucidate this perspective. Beyond simply documenting the external appearance of a motif, my interest is to capture an internal state, the reverberation of the thing observed. It is important for me that the image, although documentary, remains open to different readings, thereby increasing its potential resonance with the viewer. In each work I seek formal solutions which exploit the possibilities of the medium in a way that is appropriate to the content.

Alfredo Ramos, 2014

SERIES: IMPRESSIONS

5 images of 15, silver-gelatine on paper, 1998-2001

This series shows impressions of a city at a time of day when the crowds have withdrawn from public spaces and those left behind are confronted by their solitude and loneliness. They become part of the landscape, merging into it. The visibility of the film grain was important from a formal aspect for me. Its significance in the context of the overall image is a metaphor for the importance of the individual in a society, and the relationship between humans and inanimate matter.



Untitled, from the series: "Impressions", silver-gelatine on paper, 50 x 70 cm, 1999



Untitled, from the series: "Impressions", silver-gelatin on paper, 50 x 70 cm, 1999



Untitled, from the series: "Impressions", silver-gelatin on paper, 60 x 50 cm, 2001



Untitled, from the series: "Impressions", silver-gelatin on paper, 60 x 50 cm, 2001



Untitled, from the series: "Impressions", silver-gelatin on paper, 60 x 50 cm, 2001

CONTACTS

Slides / mixed media, 2000

This work was conceived for an exhibition held in a private house during the 6. Havana Biennial. I wanted to respond to the specific exhibition situation and created a curtain which at first sight appeared to be part of the room decor. The idea was an ironic commentary on the usual function of a curtain, namely to avoid looking at what is behind it. The work consists of differently coloured transparencies of the same photogram which shows an elderly woman begging for money in the street. The series is not to be considered an exploration of the subject of urban poverty in this context, for which reason I chose not to use a photo taken in Havana, but in Venice.



Untitled, silver-gelatine on paper,
50 x 60 cm, 1998

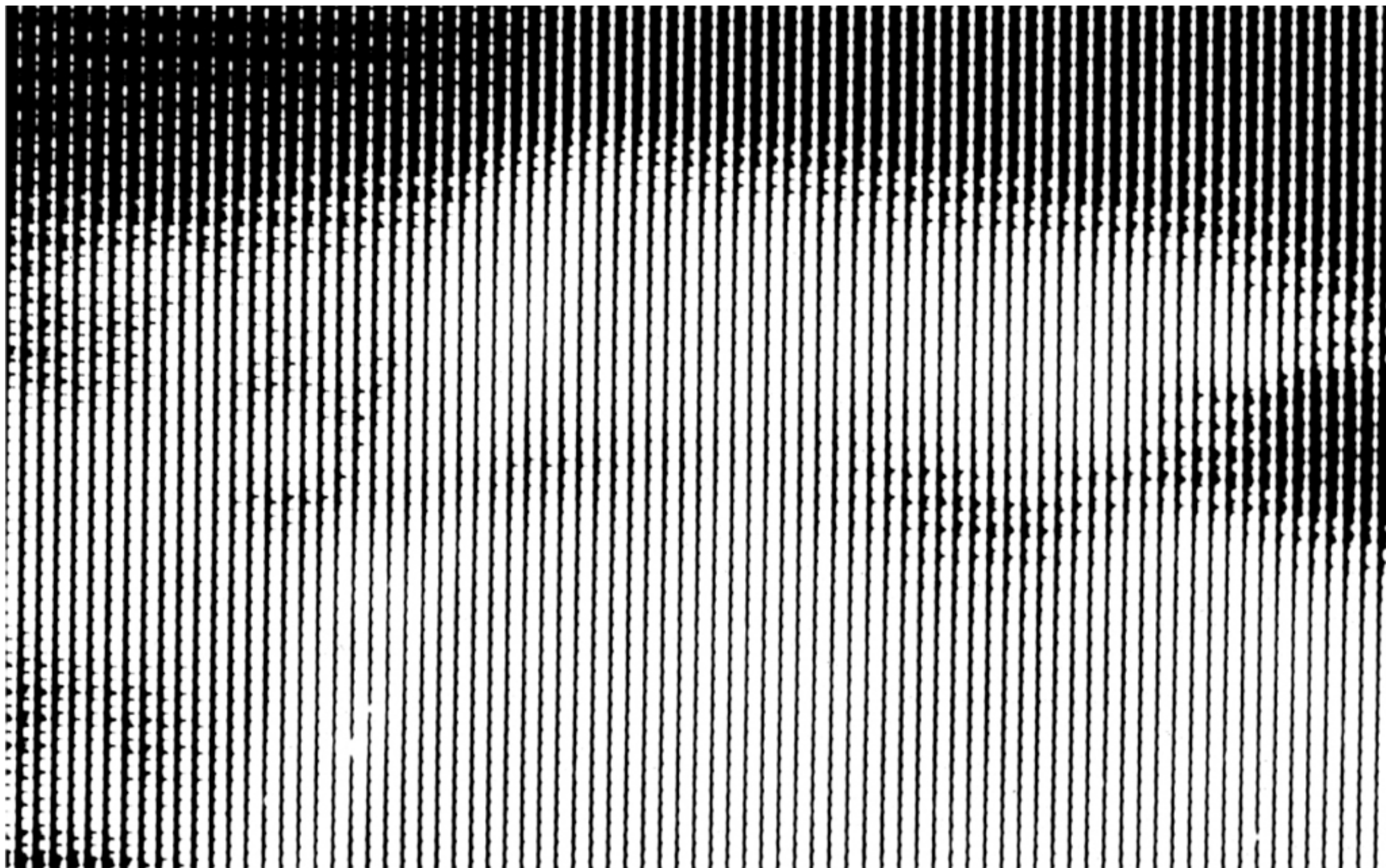


"Contacts", slides / mixed media, variable dimensions, 2000

MI CIELO

Silver-gelatine on celluloid, 2002

Mi Cielo means “my heaven” in Spanish, and is a common term of endearment, equivalent to “my darling”. For this work I took a photograph of a television screen showing a sky. Since the photo is an extreme close-up, the screen grid became the dominant element of the image. The work is prompted by a reflection on the influence of mass media in determining how their consumers view the world, as well as the question of what happens when people’s reality is replaced with a generic image of it. The title plays with the paternalistic attitude of mass media towards their consumers.

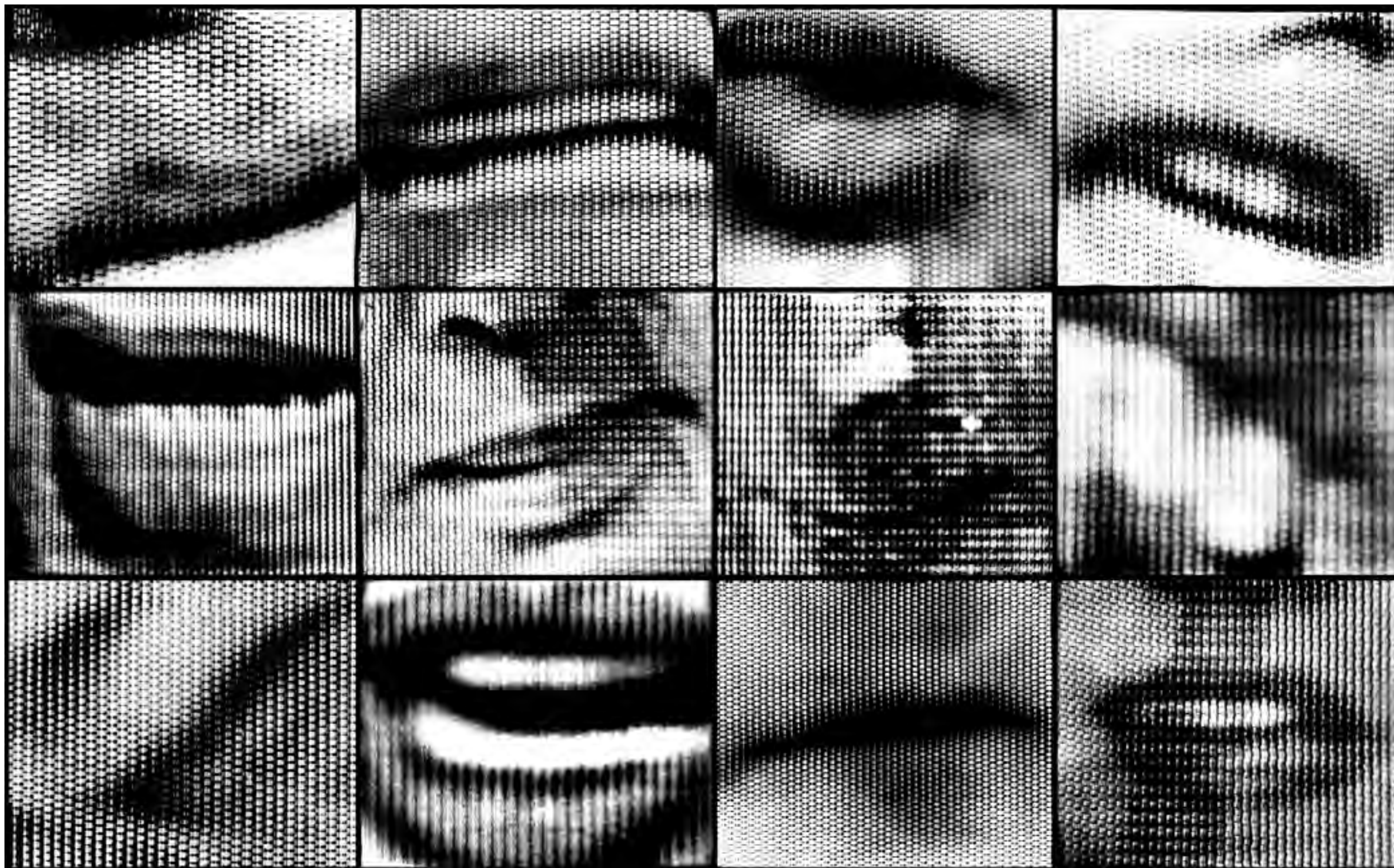


"Mi Cielo", silver-gelatine on celluloid, 150 x 240 cm, 2002

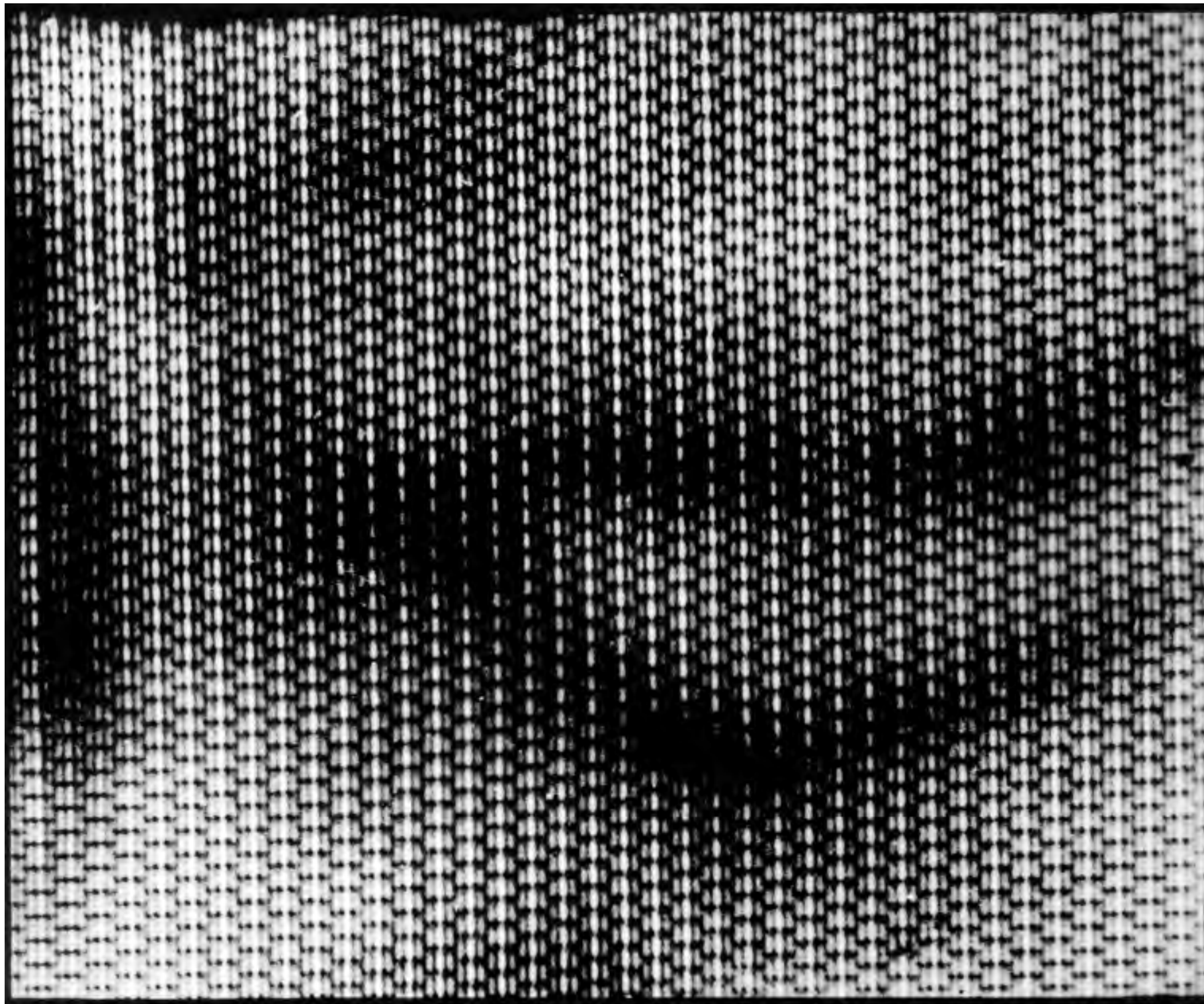
SERIES: WORDS

12 images of 20, silver-gelatine on celluloid, 2001-2006

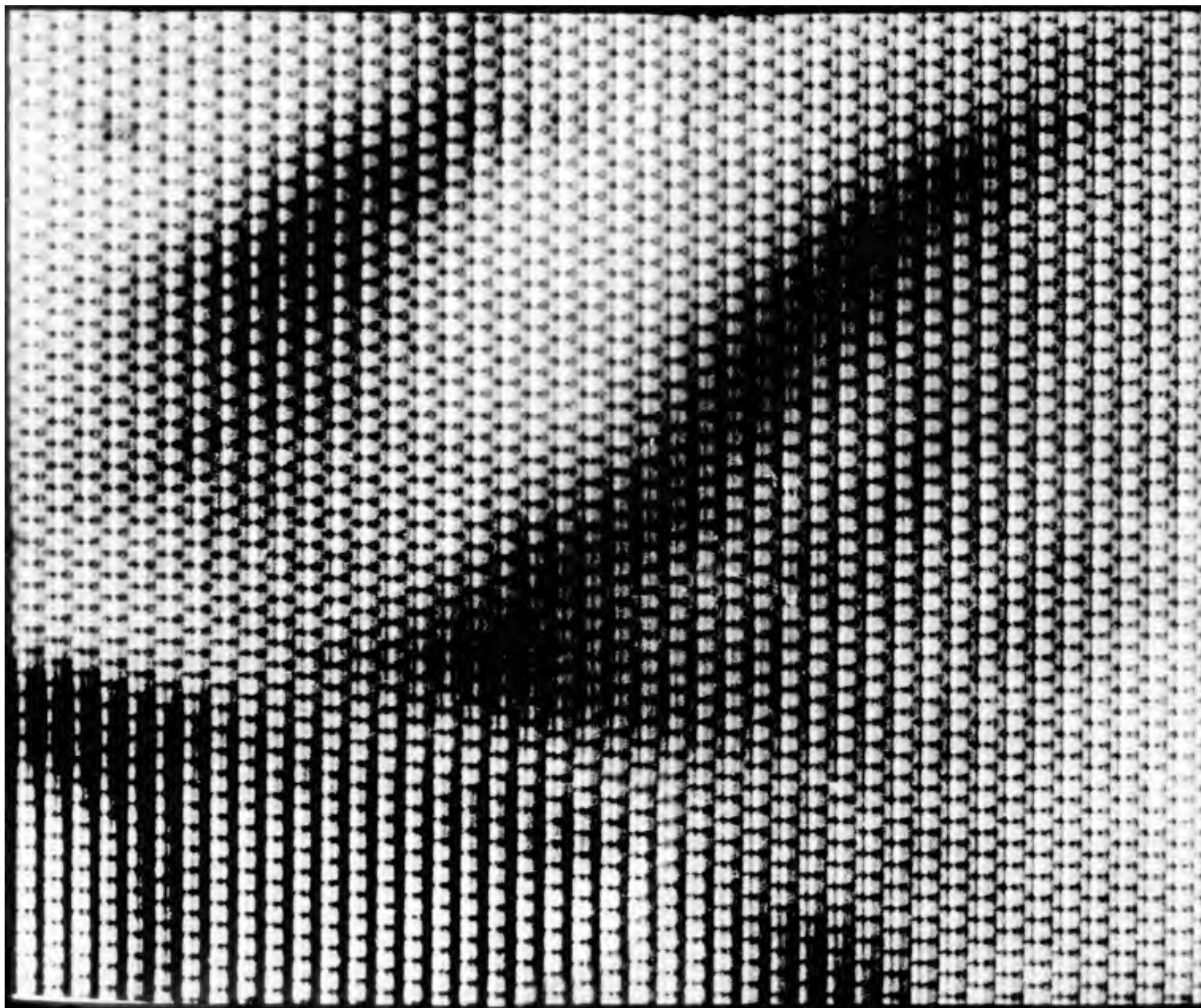
The series "Words" consists of photographs which were taken from the television screen during transmission of a program of political propaganda. They are close-ups of the faces of the presenters. The idea was that their faces were captured in the process of communication and reproduced by grid pixels in a manner just as abstracted, fragmented and simplified as the content of their speech.



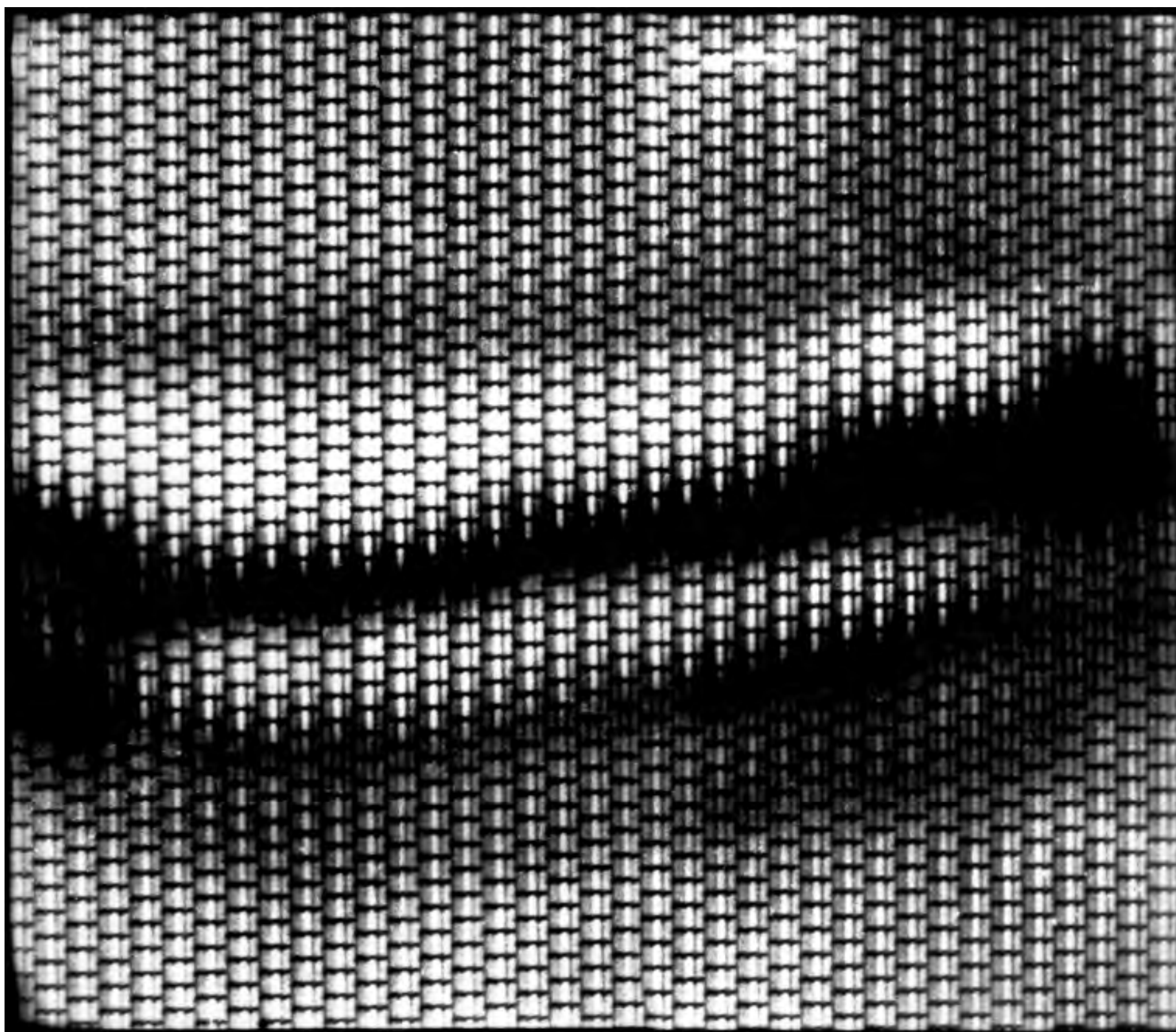
"Words", silver-gelatine on celluloid, 12 x 60 x 50 cm, 2001-2006



Untitled, from the series: "Words", silver-gelatine on celluloid, 60 x 50 cm, 2006



Untitled, from the series: "Words", silver-gelatine on celluloid, 60 x 50 cm, 2006

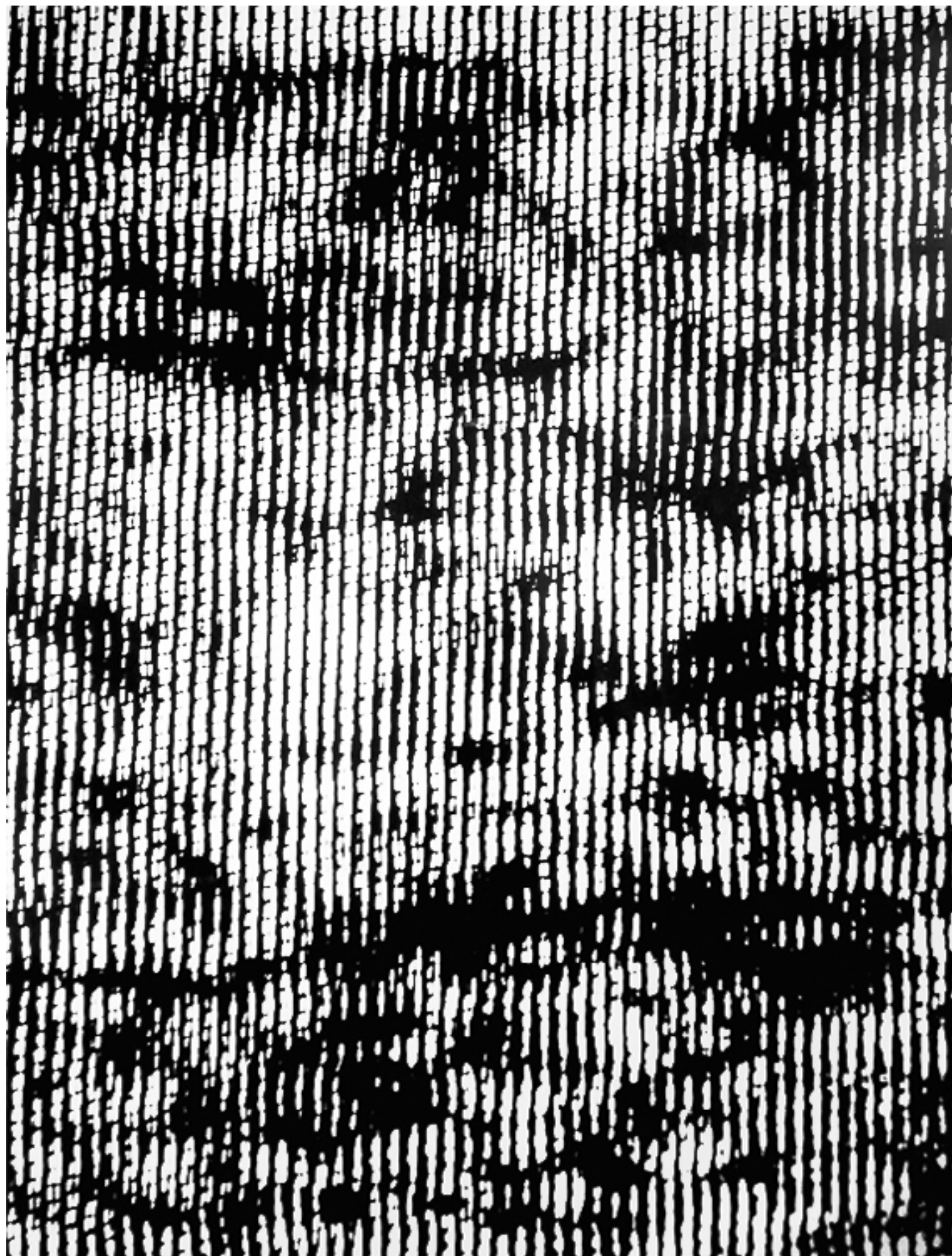


Untitled, from the series: "Words", silver-gelatine on celluloid, 60 x 50 cm, 2005

SERIES: CLOSED CAPTIONS

2 images of 4, silver-gelatine on celluloid, 2003

“Closed Captions” shows the faces of TV presenters from Cuban television programs for the deaf. As with all television programs in Cuba these are strongly ideological in nature. As in the series “Words” I exploit the composition of the TV image in order to emphasize the fragmentary and abstract nature of the transmitted content. On this occasion I added distortion of the TV signal, which serves as a metaphor for the ideologically misformed image of reality represented, as well as the distortion of meaning which occurs when content cannot be meaningfully decoded.



Untitled, from the series: "Closed Captions", silver-gelatine on celluloid, 150 x 180 cm, 2003



Untitled, from the series: "Closed Captions", silver-gelatine on celluloid, 150 x 180 cm, 2003

WORDS II

Silver-gelatine on paper, 2001

This photograph was the instigation for my work cycle on “Traces”. It shows the names and marks sprayed, written and scratched onto a wall. I am moved by the human need to proclaim one’s identity by leaving a name in a public place. I see it as a (perhaps unconscious) awareness of the transitoriness and irrelevance of one’s own existence, and as proof of the need to transcend this condition and make contact with one’s fellow man.

SERIES: OTHER WORDS

3 images of 6, silver-gelatine on paper / 32 slides in lightboxes, 2006

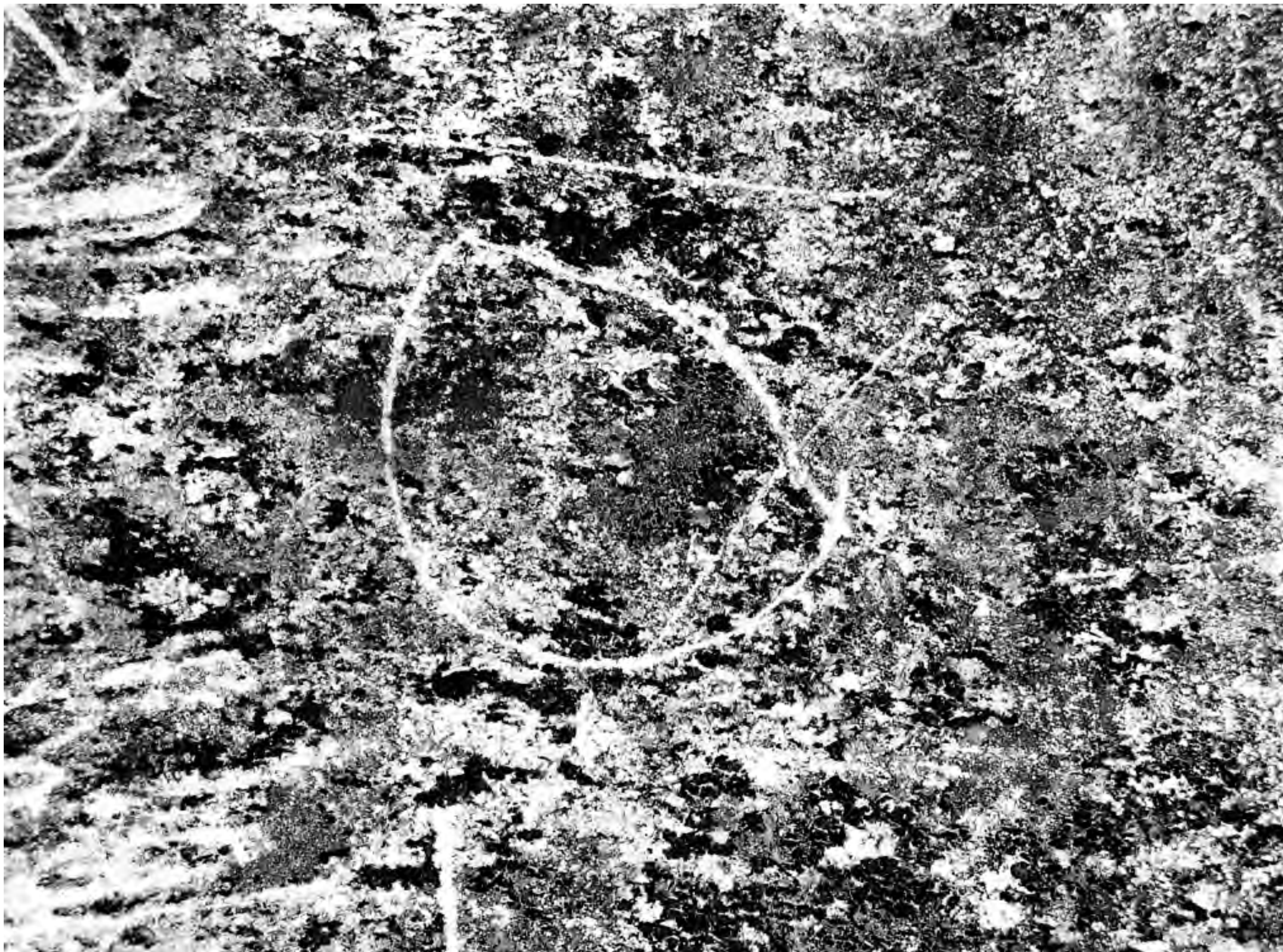
“Other Words” was conceived for the Havana Biennial in 2006, the theme of which was the urban environment. The work exhibited there consisted of 6 large format black-white photographs and 32 light boxes holding transparencies. The images pick up the leitmotif of “Words II” and are concerned with the human need to proclaim one’s existence by marking one’s name in public spaces, thereby leaving a record of one’s existence. However this series focuses on the futility of such attempts inasmuch as most of the graffiti photographed is in the process of being erased by various external factors and the inexorable march of time.



"Words II", silver-gelatin on paper, 100 x 120 cm, 2001



Untitled, from the series: "Other Words", silver-gelatine on paper, 100 x 120 cm, 2006



Untitled, from the series: "Other Words", silver-gelatine on paper, 100 x 120 cm, 2006



Untitled, from the series: "Other Words", silver-gelatine on paper, 100 x 120 cm, 2006



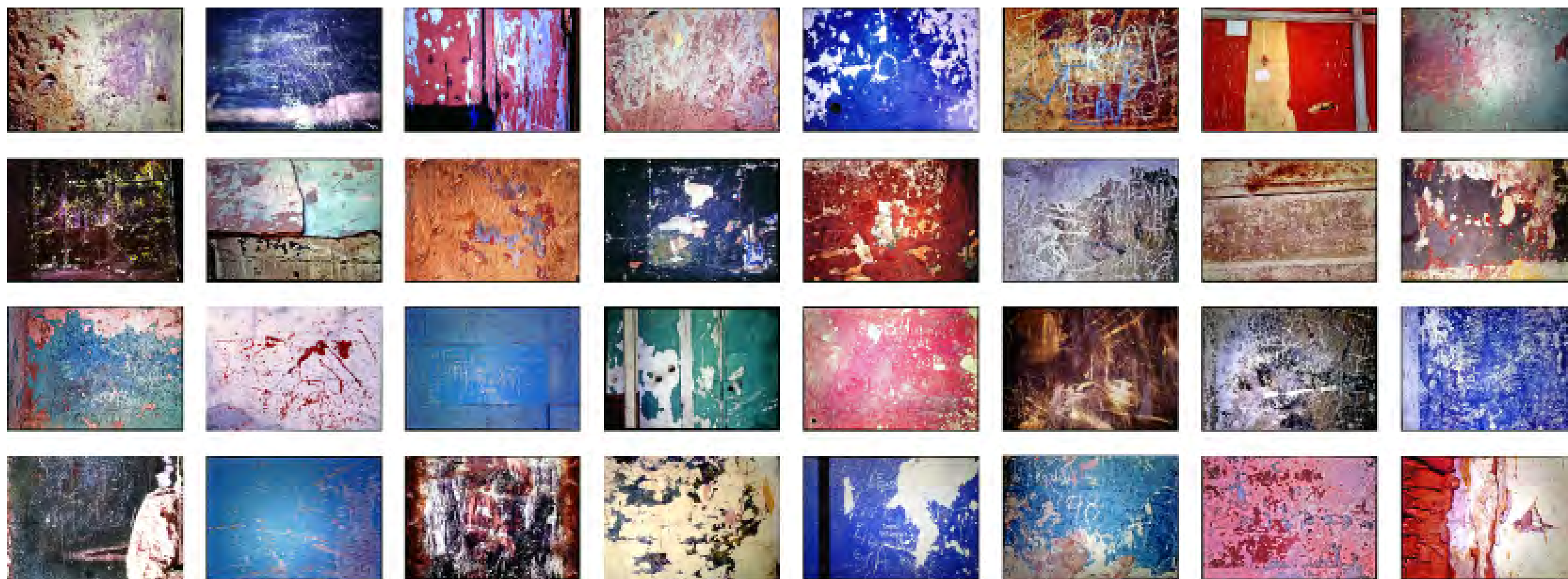
Untitled, from the series: "Other Words", slide, 13,5 x 18,5 cm, 2006



Untitled, from the series: "Other Words", slide, 13,5 x 18,5 cm, 2006



Untitled, from the series: "Other Words", slide, 13,5 x 18,5 cm, 2006

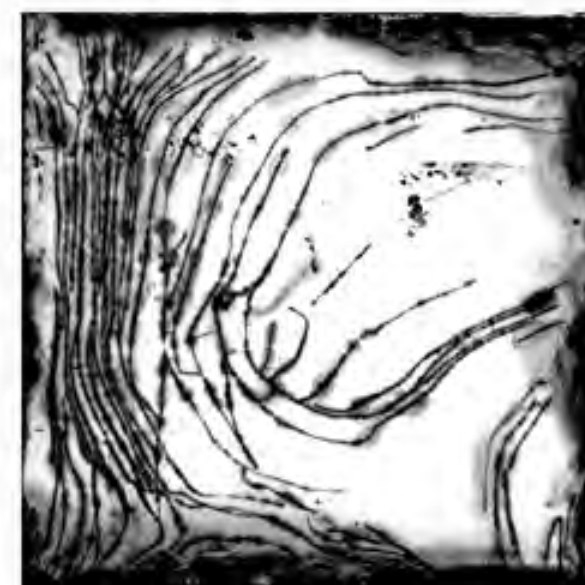
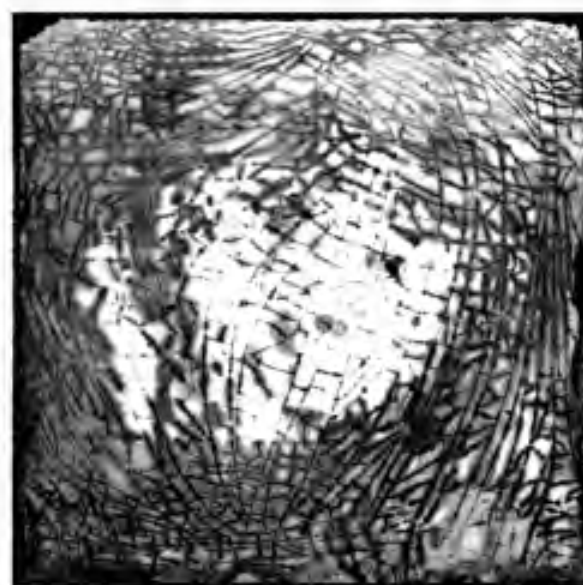
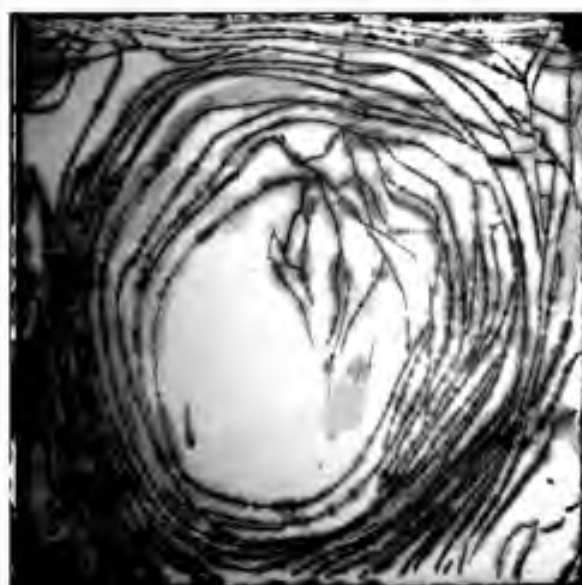
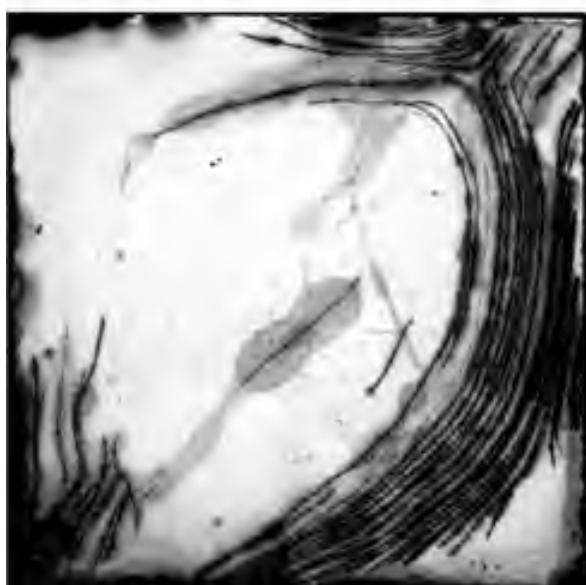
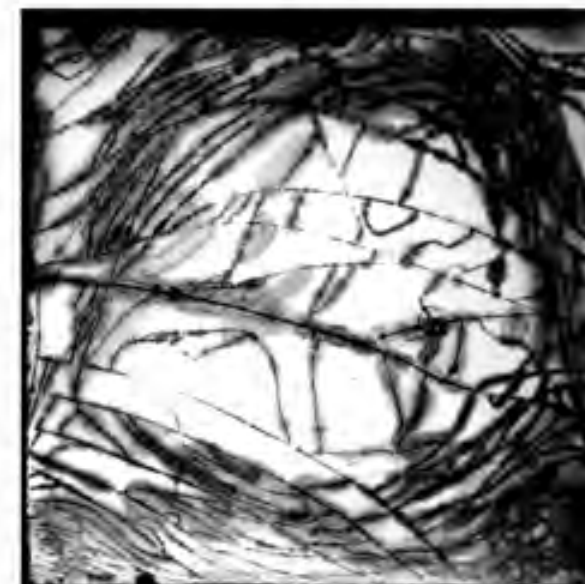
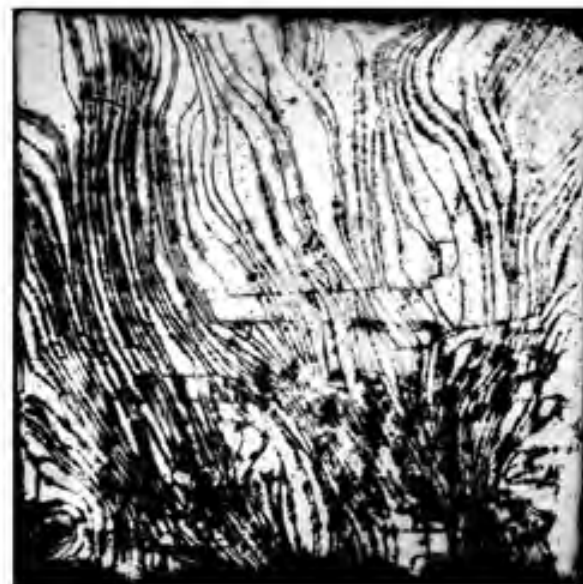
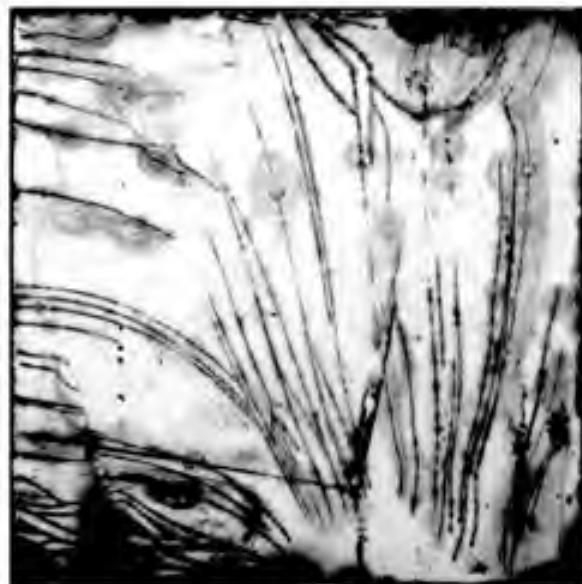
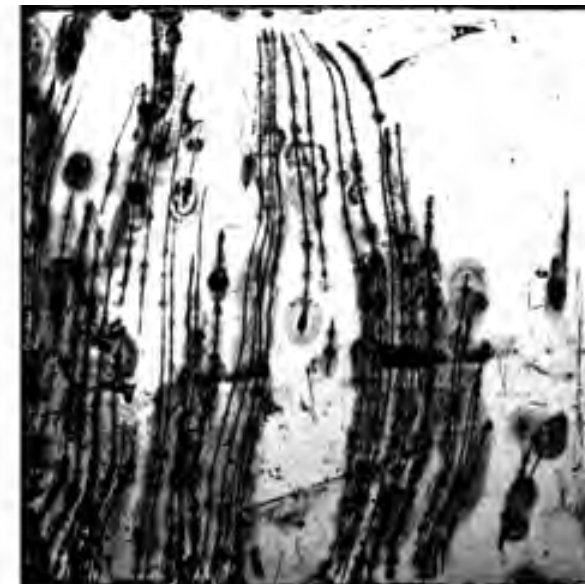
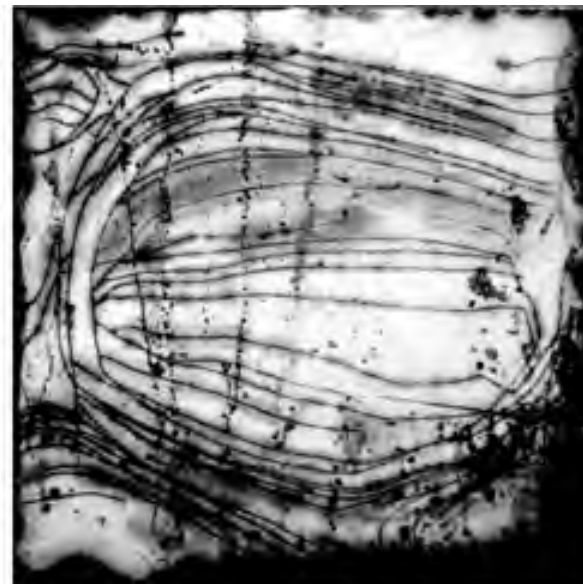
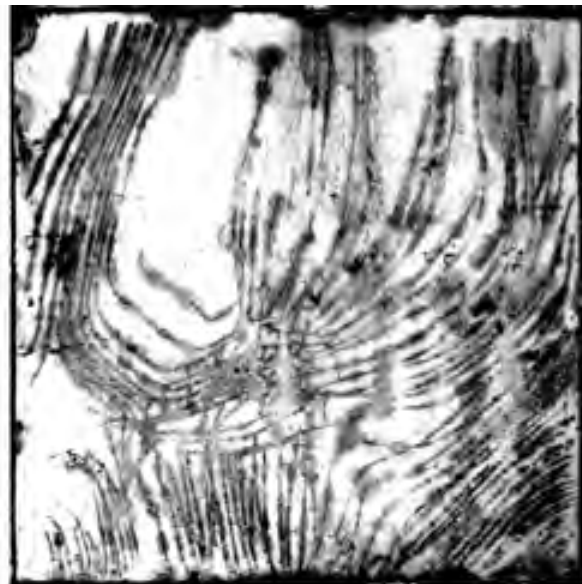
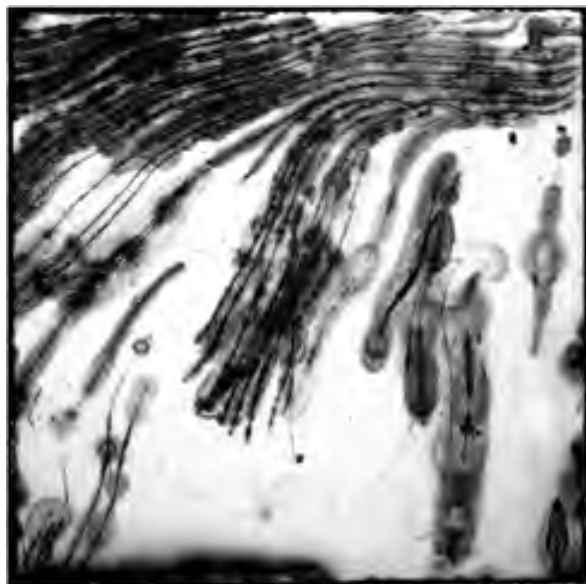


“Other Words”, slides, 32 x 13,5 x 18,5 cm, 2006

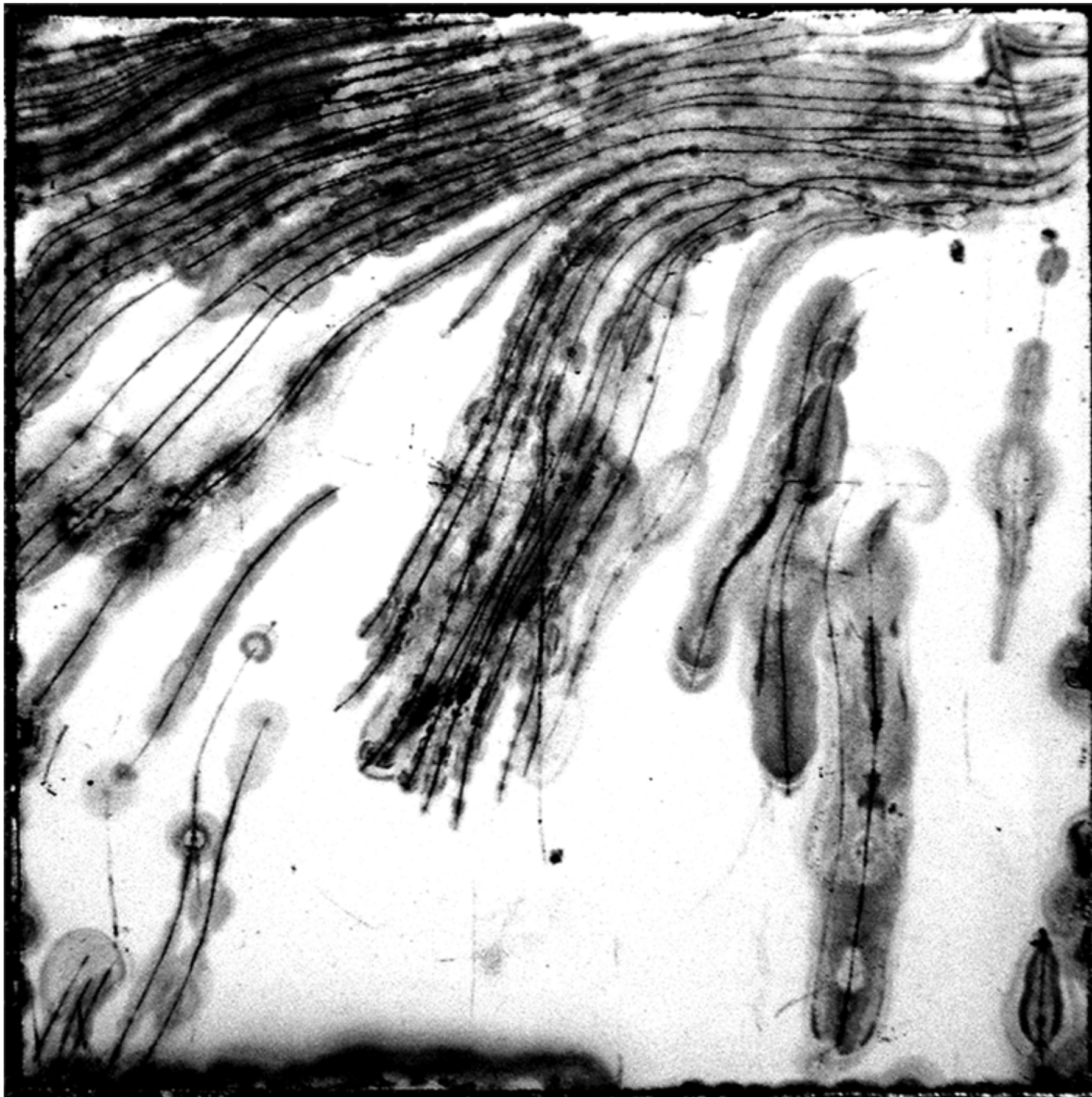
SERIES: VESTIGES

12 images, silver-gelatine on paper, 2005

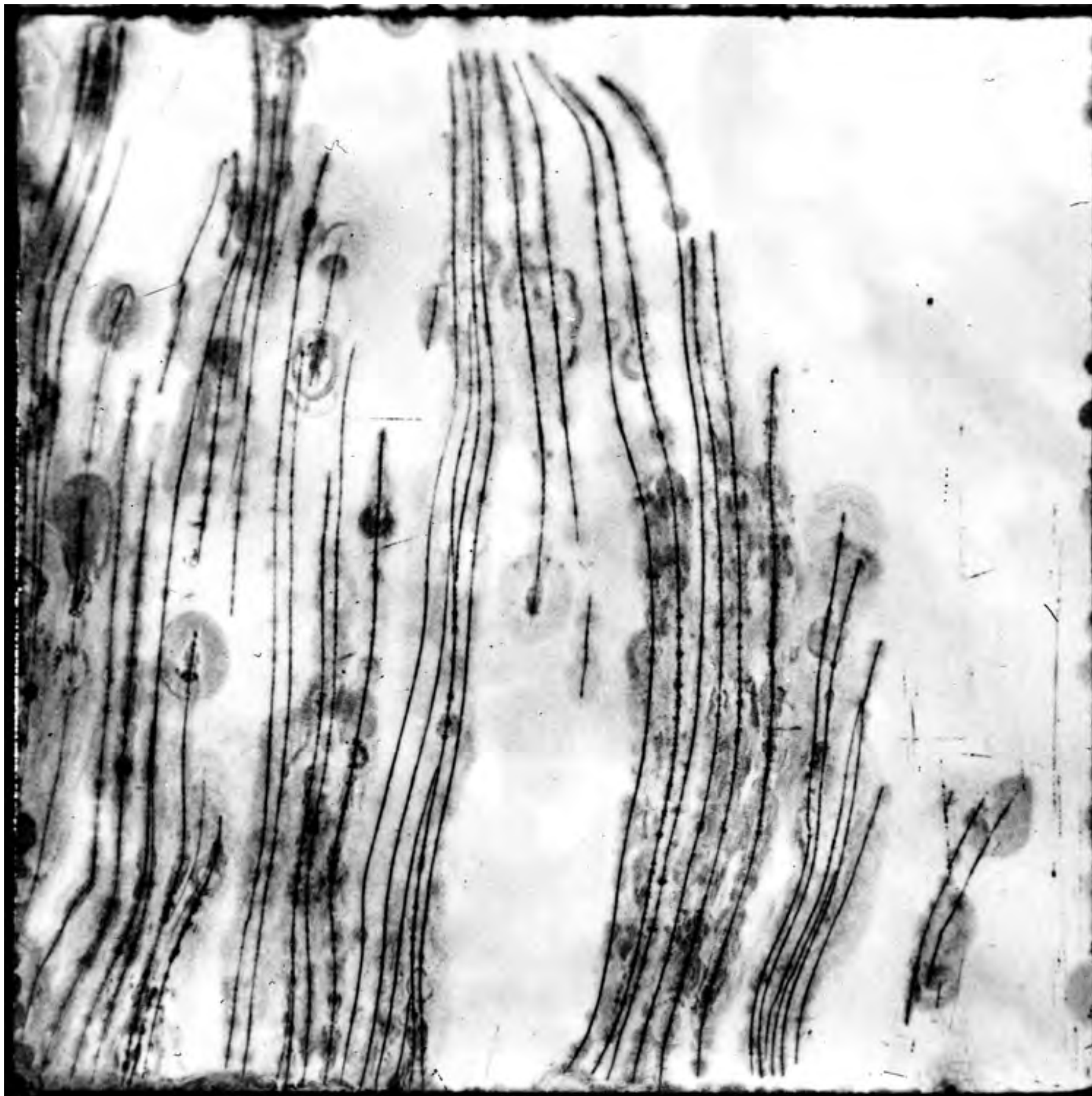
The series “Vestiges” is the third part of the work cycle on “Traces”. It consists of pictures of the wall tiles in my bathroom and darkroom. For many years I have been in the habit of sticking the prints of photo proofs on the wall, with the result that the chemical salts have eaten into the tiles and together with cracks in the tiles’ glazing created abstract drawings. For me, these are the traces of my own constant effort to overcome the limitations of human existence through artistic endeavor.



"Vestiges", silver-gelatine on paper, 12 x 78 x 78 cm, 2005



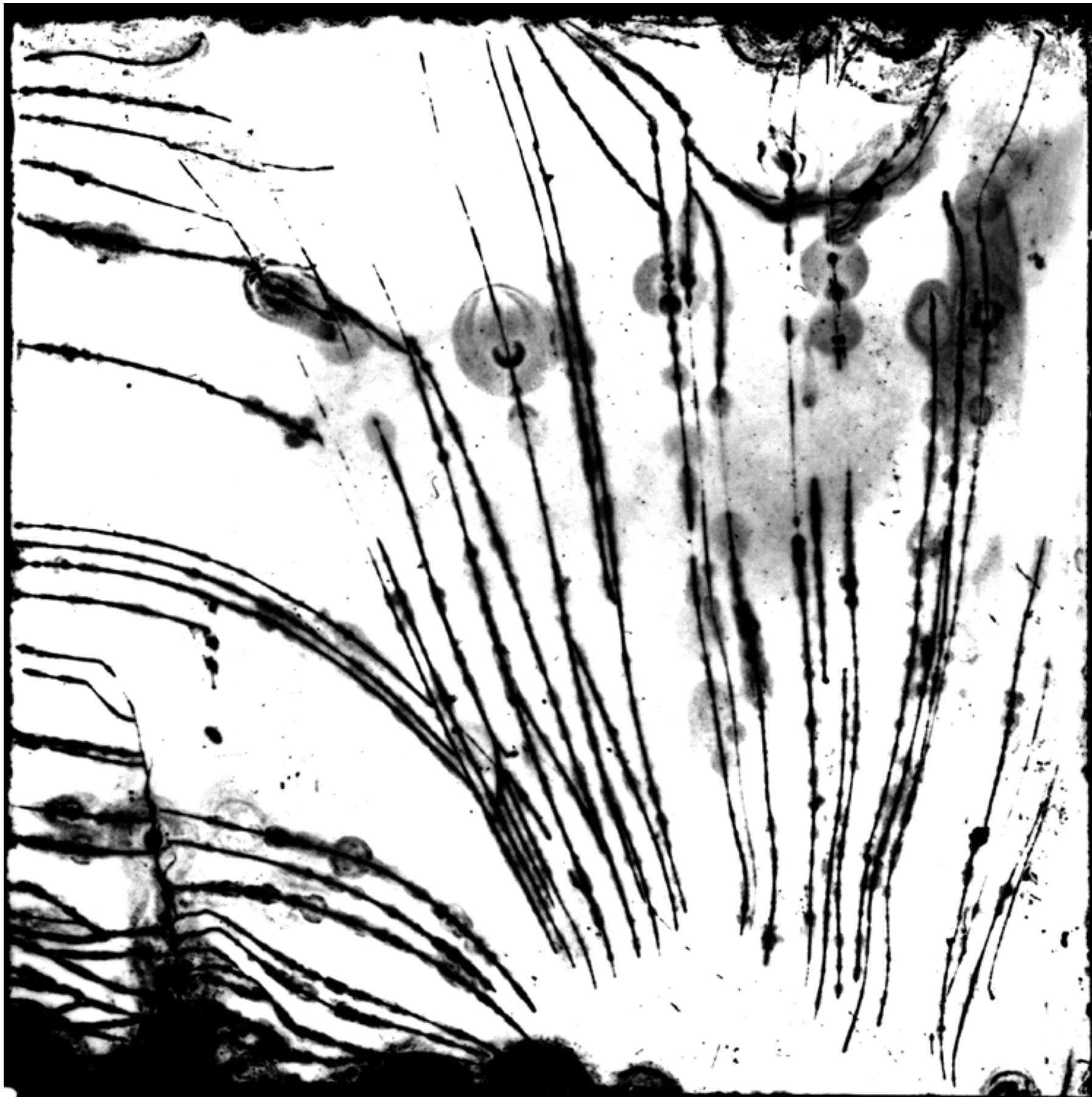
Untitled, from the series: "Vestiges", silver-gelatine on paper, 78 x 78 cm, 2005



Untitled, from the series: "Vestiges", silver-gelatine on paper, 78 x 78 cm, 2005



Untitled, from the series: "Vestiges", silver-gelatine on paper, 78 x 78 cm, 2005



Untitled, from the series: "Vestiges", silver-gelatine on paper, 78 x 78 cm, 2005

SERIES: STUDIES FOR VESTIGES

3 images of 25, silver-gelatine on paper / 3 images of 20, c-prints, 2008-2011

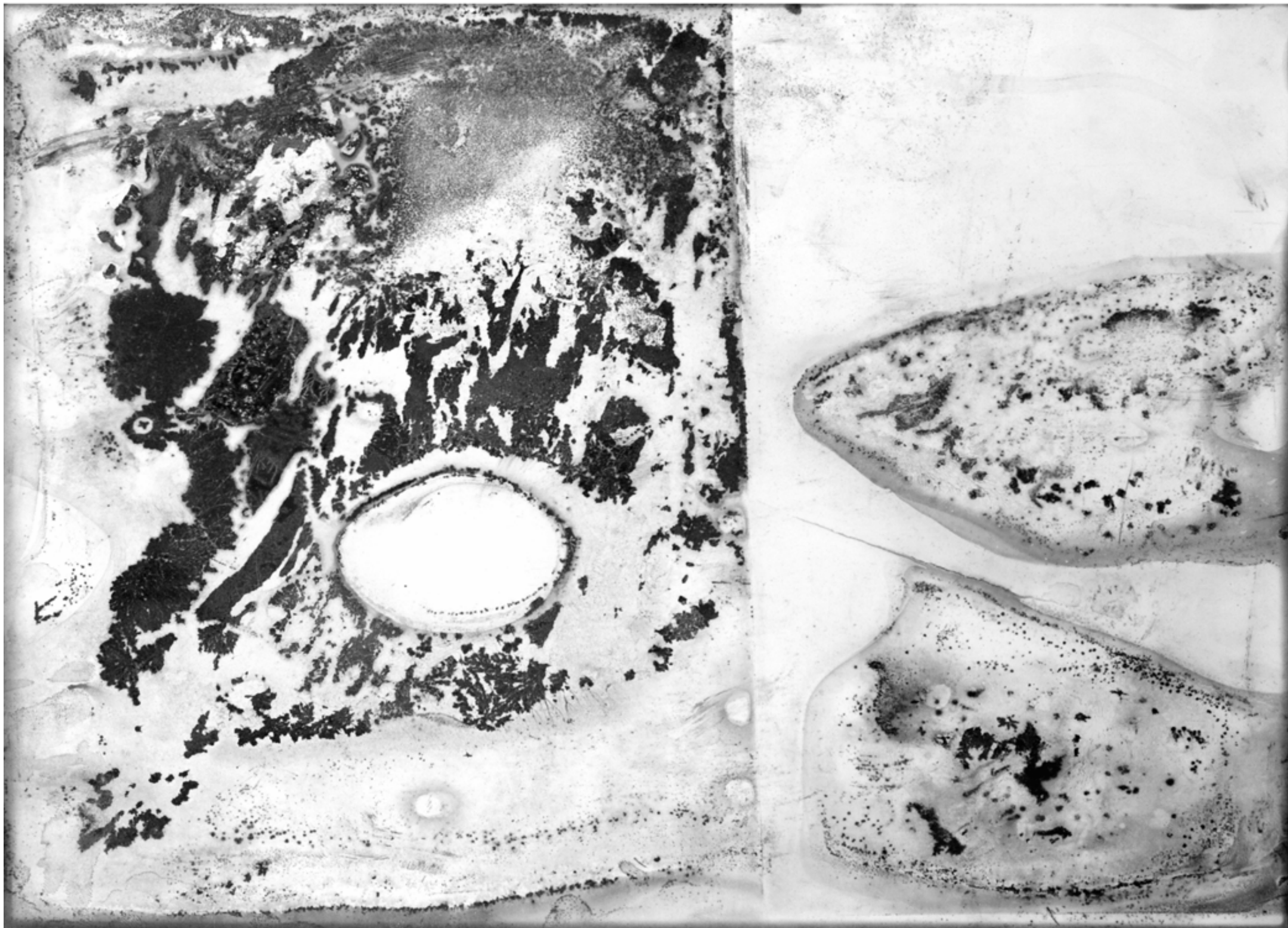
"Studies for Vestiges" is also a continuation of the theme of "Traces". This series consists of photographs of scraps of paper which accumulate during work in the darkroom. They are leftovers of discarded prints or proofs which by chance have come into contact with photochemicals. As they were never fixed, they are in a continual process of change, and thereby became an inexhaustible fund of images in which forces and elements organize themselves in autonomous universes. Within these scraps of paper I discover landscapes which reflect my perception of the world in a constant flux of energy.



Untitled, from the series: "Studies for Vestiges", silver-gelatine on paper, 100 x 120 cm, 2009



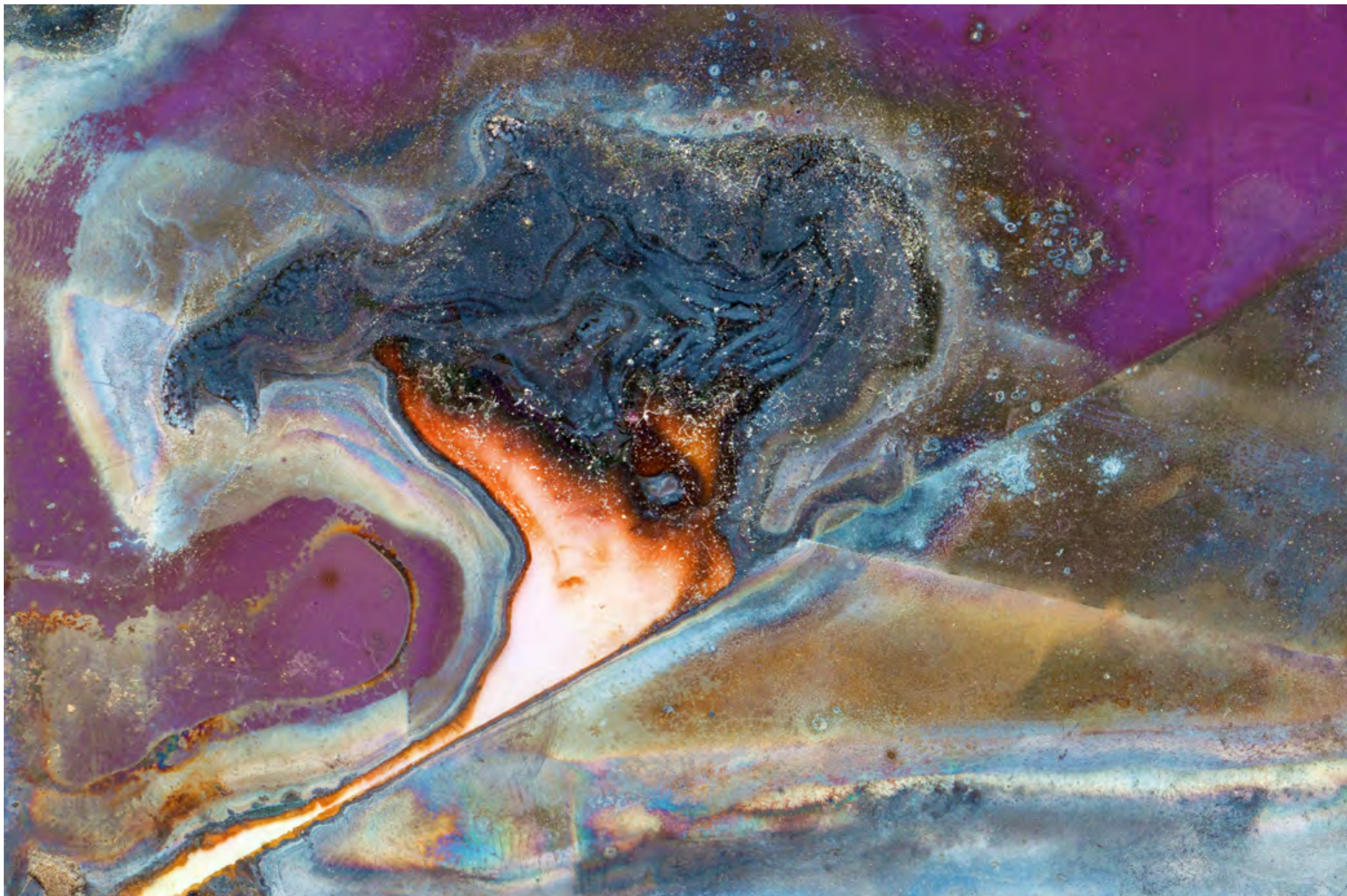
Untitled, from the series: "Studies for Vestiges", silver-gelatin on paper, 100 x 120 cm, 2009



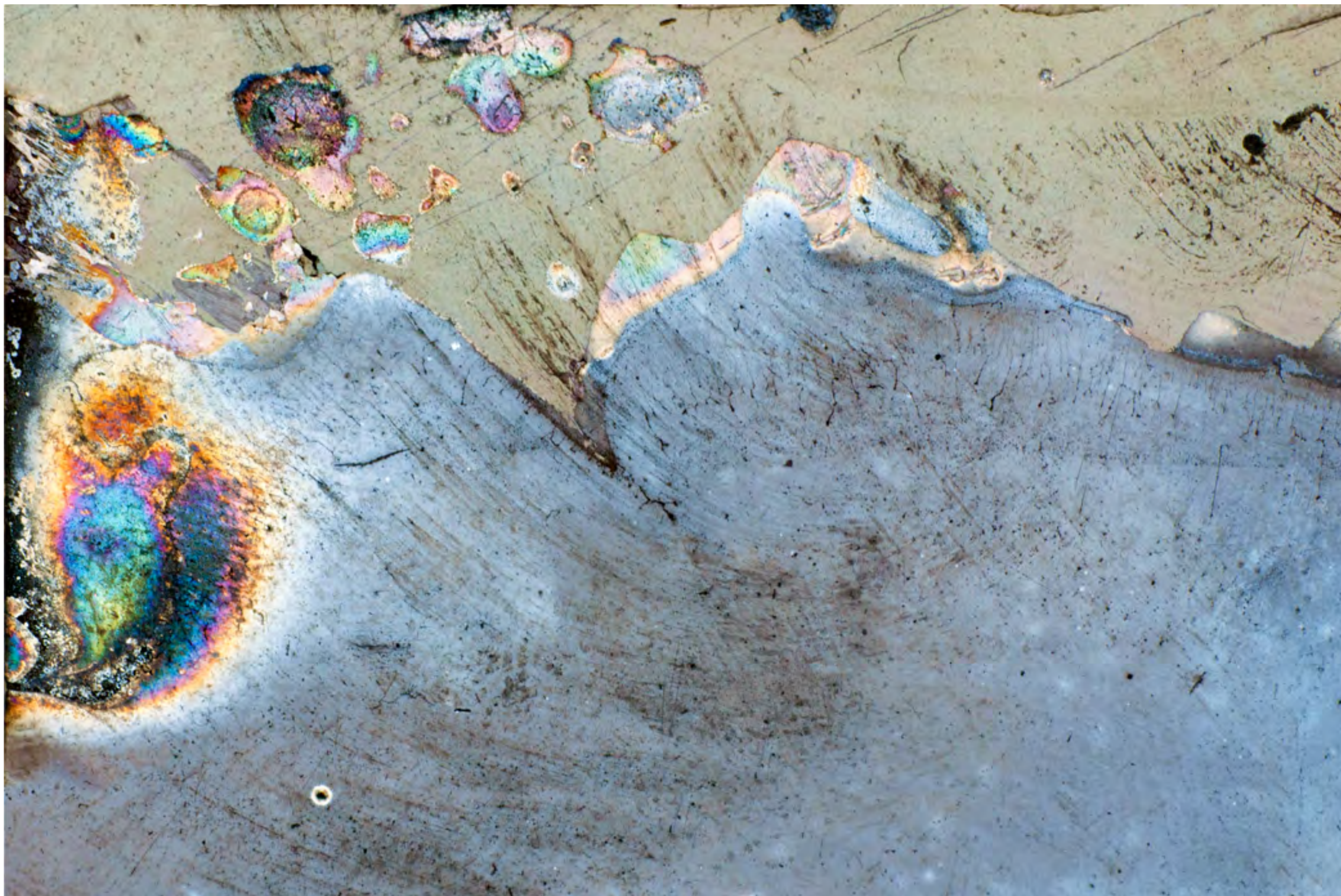
Untitled, from the series: "Studies for Vestiges", silver-gelatine on paper, 100 x 120 cm, 2009



Untitled, from the series: "Studies for Vestiges", c-print, 55 x 80 cm, 2010



Untitled, from the series: "Studies for Vestiges", c-print, 55 x 80 cm, 2010



Untitled, from the series: "Studies for Vestiges", c-print, 55 x 80 cm, 2010

HOME (II)

2 images, c-prints, 2008

The photographs “Home II” are the result of an invitation to an exhibition with the theme “At Home”. Upon reflection I realized that for me the feeling of being at home was in large measure based upon the sensations which I repeatedly experience within my four walls. These form a kind of shield around me, and provide an emotional bedrock. For the exhibition I sought a visual correlative. “Home II” arose a couple of years later, more or less immediately after moving to a new house which needed extensive renovation. Rather than familiar memories and the feeling of security, it was at first associated with many difficulties and the wish to create a real home. In the images of this series I sought to convey this emotional state.

SERIES: HOME (III)

4 images of 12, c-prints, ongoing work since 2012

“Home III” is a series in progress, in which through portraits of objects I find at home, I seek to create a portrait of myself. The resulting images are intended to express my inner states.



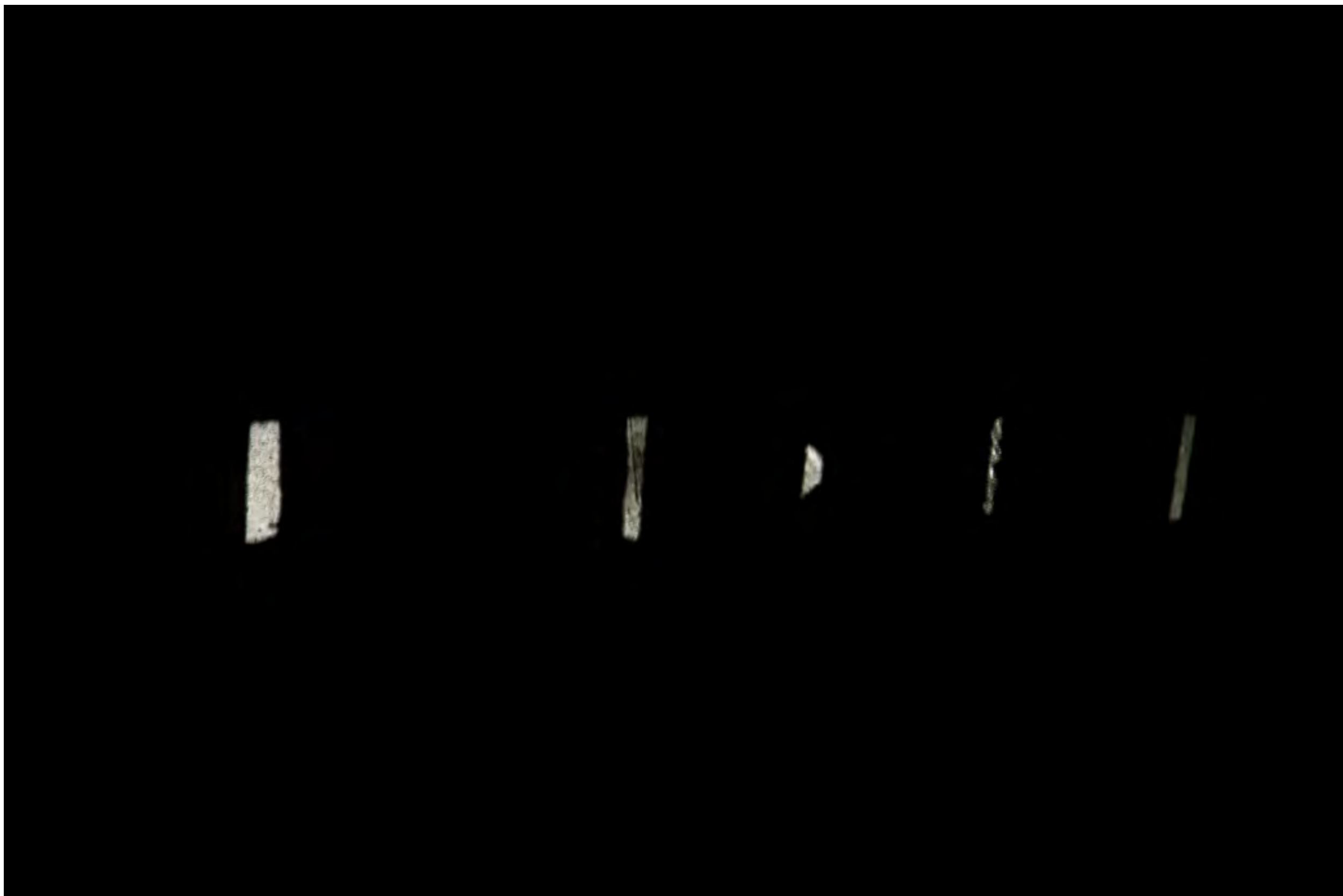
Untitled, from the series: "Home (II)", c-print, 61 x 86,5 cm, 2008



Untitled, from the series: "Home (II)", c-print, 61 x 86,5 cm, 2008



Untitled, from the series: "Home (III)", c-print, 61 x 100 cm, 2013



Untitled, from the series: "Home (III)", c-print, 61 x 100 cm, 2013



Untitled, from the series: "Home (III)", c-print, 61 x 100 cm, 2013



Untitled, from the series: "Home (III)", c-print, 61 x 100 cm, 2014

SERIES: TEMPORARY REFUGES

4 images of 25, c-prints, 2013-2014

The series “Temporary Refuges” consists of pictures of the remains of objects which have been thrown into the sea and swept back to land by the tides. They are for the most part animal and vegetable in nature, and are the leftovers of sacrificial rituals practiced in Cuba by devotees of syncretic religions such as Sentaría. These age-old rituals are enjoying increasing popularity on the island. In contrast to earlier times, they are practiced by people of all social classes, even though many still belong to the poorer strata of society. Their purpose is the fulfillment of wishes, and they are often seen as the only practicable means of improving one’s life. Frequently they have to do with material needs. I am moved by seeing what remains of these ritual gestures enacted with so much hope. I consider these remnants of hope a metaphor for the current state of my homeland. Despite the endlessly repeated official discourse which preaches the achievement of a utopia of equality, altruism and progress, and despite the hopes and sacrifices of generations, the perception of people at all levels of society is precisely the opposite. The only remaining path to happiness is now magic. The photos were taken at a small beach in a neighborhood of Havana. As with all accessible beaches of the city, it overflows on a daily basis with countless leftovers of such rituals.



Untitled, from the series: "Temporary Refuges", ink-jet print, 42 x 59 cm, 2013



Untitled, from the series: "Temporary Refuges", ink-jet print, 42 x 59 cm, 2013



Untitled, from the series: "Temporary Refuges", ink-jet print, 42 x 59 cm, 2013



Untitled, from the series: "Temporary Refuges", ink-jet print, 42 x 59 cm, 2013

Alfredo Ramos Fernández

Born 1964, Havana, Cuba. Lives and works in Havana and Berlin.

Education

1983-1987 University of Havana (MA), Havana, Cuba.

Awards

2008 Batiscafo Scholarship, Triangle Arts Trust.

Solo Exhibitions

2014 “Paradiso”, La Moderna Gallery, Havana, Cuba. (with Katarzyna Badach)
2012 “Globos de Verde”, collateral to the 11th Havana Biennial, Proyecto Línea106, Havana, Cuba. (with Katarzyna Badach)
2011 “Estudios para Vestigios”, Fototeca de Cuba, Havana, Cuba.
2006 “Other Words”, collateral to the 9th Havana Biennial, San Fracisco de Asís Convent, Havana, Cuba.
2003 “Foto-No”, Espacio Aglutinador, Havana, Cuba.
1999 “Re-tratos”, Fototeca de Cuba, Havana, Cuba. (with Antonio Nuñez and Ricardo Elías)

Selected Group Exhibitions

2014 “Ostrale 2014”, Dresden, Germany.
2013 “Dios los Cria”, Factoría Habana, Havana, Cuba.
“Mentes”, Museo de Arte Maniaco, Havana, Cuba.
2012 “VIDEOARDE”, Critical Video Works from Latin-America and the Caribbean, Instituto Cervantes, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. (catalogue)
“Fade”, collateral to the 11th Havana Biennial, San Carlos de La Cabaña Fortress, Havana, Cuba.
2011 “Becoming: Photographs from the Wedge Collection”, Nasher Museum of Art, Toronto, Canada.
“Soft City”, Alainstanbul Gallery, Istanbul, Turkey.
2010 “Video Screening: Latin America”, Photo Phnom Penh Festival, Phnom Penh, Cambodia.
“905614954”, Jacob Karpio Gallery, San José, Costa Rica.
2008-2010 “VIDEOARDE”, Critical Video Works from Latin-America and the Caribbean, itinerant show, Spanish Cultural Centers in Latin-America.
2009 “Making Connections: Contemporary Cuban Printmakers”, Laconia Gallery, Boston, U.S.A.
“LOVE”, Jacob Karpio Gallery, San José, Costa Rica.
“Perra Subasta”, Espacio Aglutinador, Havana, Cuba.
2008 “Buenos Aires Photo”, (Jacob Karpio Gallery), Palais de Glace, Buenos Aires, Argentina.
“Becoming: Photographs from the Wedge Collection”, Museum of Contemporary Art, Detroit, U.S.A.
“Antes Que Nada: 13 Contemporary Artists in Cuba”, ASFA Vulcan Materials Gallery, Alabama, U.S.A.
“La Previa”, Batiscafo Project, Havana, Cuba.
2007 “On Board”, Huntington Beach Art Center, Huntington Beach, U.S.A. (catalogue)
2006 “Home”, One Night Gallery, Havana, Cuba.
“Embarkation Point”, Tina Newton Gallery, Birmingham, U.S.A.
“La Ciudad y la Fotografía; La Habana 1900-2005”, 9th Havana Biennial, National Library José Martí, Havana, Cuba.

2006	“Orvieto Photography 2006”, Palazzo dei Popolo, Orvieto, Italy. “Ciudades Invisibles”, La Casona Gallery, Havana, Cuba.(catalogue)
2005	“One Night Gallery”, Miami, U.S.A. “Paz. The Line Between Life and Death”, Karpio-Facchini Gallery, Miami, U.S.A. “Cuarto Salón de Arte Cubano Contemporáneo, Centro de Desarrollo de las Artes Visuales, Havana, Cuba. (catalogue) “Arte y Moda”, San Carlos de La Cabaña Fortress, Havana, Cuba. (catalogue)
2004	“Other Realities”, Refugium Gallery, Berlin, Germany. (catalogue) “Mayo Abstracto”, Wifredo Lam Art Center, Havana, Cuba. “Jumping Free”, Arístides Fernández Gallery, Güines, Cuba. “Crosscurrents”, Refugium Gallery, Berlin, Germany.
2003	“Circuito Cerrado”, collateral to the 7th Havana Biennial, Nacional Library José Martí, Havana, Cuba. “V.Rencontres de la Photographie Africaine”, Bamako, Malí. (catalogue) “Sentido Común”, Galería Habana, Havana, Cuba.
2002	“La Huella Múltiple”, Centro de Desarrollo de las Artes Visuales, Fototeca de Cuba, Havana, Cuba. (catalogue) “Royal College of Art FAIR”, (Espacio Aglutinador), London, England. (catalogue)
2000	“Window onto Venus”, 7th Havana Biennial, Barrio de San Isidro, Havana, Cuba. (catalogue) “Cuba. Arte Entre Vecinos”, 106 Gallery, Austin, Texas, U.S.A.
1999	“La Huella Múltiple”, Centro de Desarrollo de las Artes Visuales, Havana, Cuba. (catalogue)

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