



IMAGINARY EXPLOSIONS

Imaginary Explosions draws upon geology to investigate how deep time and interspecies communication might assist us in radical planetary transformation. Comprised of video, sculpture and communication instruments, the cosmology explores what other presents and futures become possible once we begin to think beyond the framework of the human.

The videos follow an affiliation of transfeminist scientists operating in communication with the desires of the mineral earth to simultaneously erupt all volcanoes. As they traverse geological sites across place and time, they attempt to divest technoscientific instruments of their military and corporate power, in order to re-embody them towards alternative cosmologies and valorize embodied knowledges.

Co-conspiring with the videos' characters—who are artists and scholars whose real-life work pushes the very limits of science and culture. *Imaginary Explosions* points towards mutual alliance, climate reparation and worldbuilding. Across episodic videos, sculptures, costumes and texts, the interweaving of science with speculative fiction forges into affective geologies and the idea of becoming mineral.



Imaginary Explosions, Episode 1, Eyjafjallajökull, 2018

Single-channel video (2k HD color, with sound); audio description version available; duration: 12 minutes

<https://vimeo.com/caitlinberrigan/imaginaryexplosions1>

Episode 1 focuses on the 2010 eruption of the volcano, Eyjafjallajökull in Iceland. Timescales shift across geological time, snail time, human time, and the rapid pace of the news media cycle.



The reach of the network is deep time. What is deep? Deep is a conspiracy. Deep is an alliance. Deep is nonlinear, spatial temporality.

The first episode of *Imaginary Explosions* focuses on the 2010 eruption of the volcano, Eyjafjallajökull, in Iceland, when the deep time of volcanic activity ruptured into the space of global air travel. Timescales and affective embodiment shift across geological time, snail time, human time, and the rapid pace of the news media cycle.



Imaginary Explosions, Episode 2, Chaitén, 2019

Single-channel video (2k HD color, with sound); audio description version available; duration: 23 minutes

<https://vimeo.com/caitlinberrigan/imaginaryexplosions2>

The real-life research of an archaeology team is woven into the narrative of Episode 2, as the network follows signals coming from a cave at the foot of the Chaitén volcano in Chile.



Like each one of us, the volcano is a dense, energetic node. It's part of an extended social and biological ecosystem. To perceive a system, many impressions are necessary. We weave our perceptions together... We find that there are often missing pieces. As well as surplus. We didn't quite feel around a corner... or we forgot to feel the ground when we were so focused on the sky. When that happens, we leave holes.

In *Episode 2*, the network follows signals coming from a cave at the foot of the Chaitén volcano in Chile, where the first human settlers carved the walls with vulvas—including a hybrid spider vulva. Interweaving documentary footage of a research team into the narrative, *Episode 2* departs from the evolutionary theory of holobionts to speculate about acquiring military radar cartography into the bodily sensorium.





Imaginary Explosions, Episode 3, Artifice, 2023

Single-channel video (2k HD color & digitized 16mm film with sound); audio description version available; duration: 23 minutes

<https://vimeo.com/caitlinberrigan/artifice>

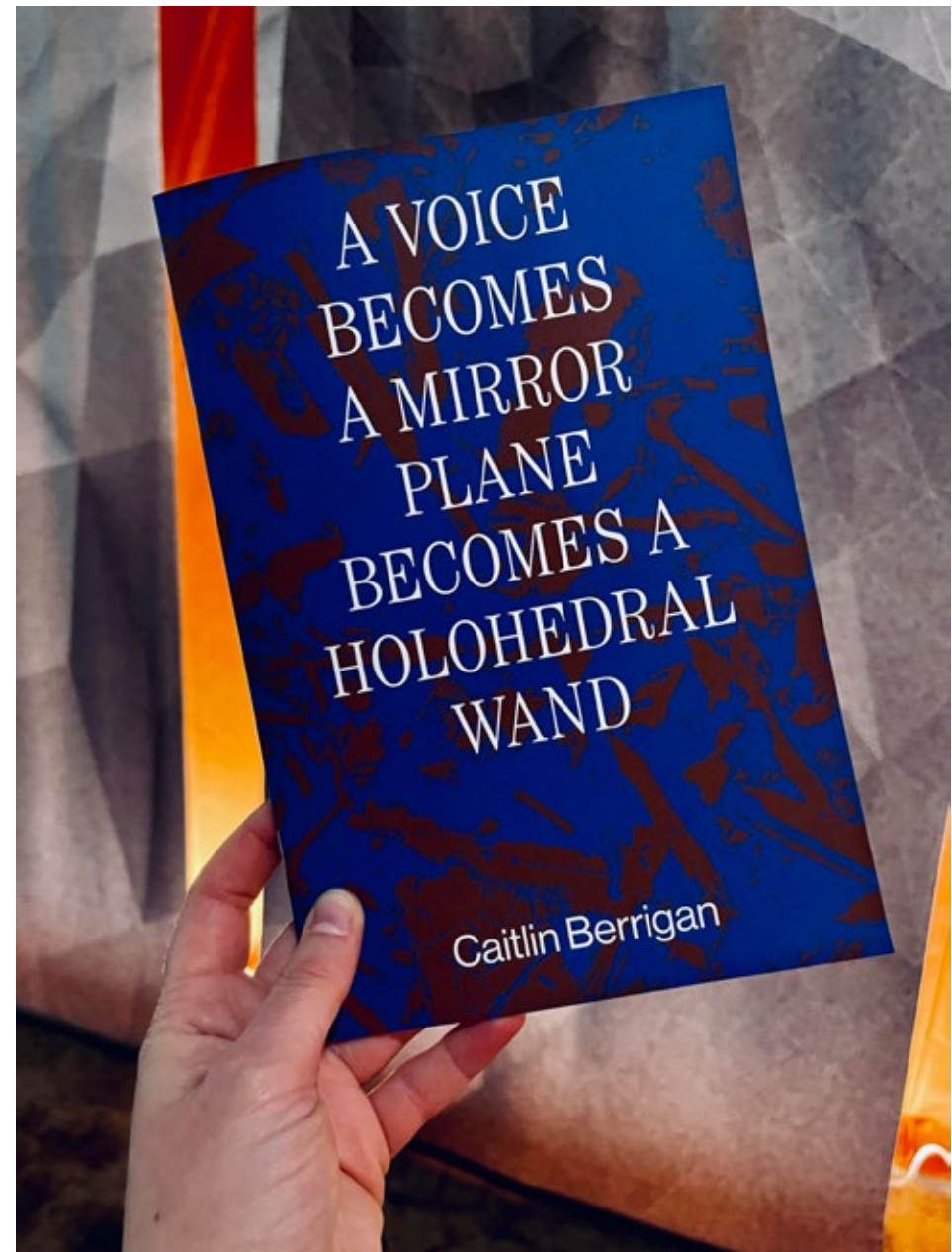
Artifice stars the only artificial volcano to survive its own eruption: a model replica of Vesuvius from the grounds of an 18th-century German pleasure palace. Gardens as models for the worldbuilding of empires are the subject of this queer cli-fi that mixes facts with speculation. A media archaeology of earth and atmosphere culminates in a dazzling yet foreboding explosion of forms.



Few, few mortals like us, my dear, have ears to catch the low whisperings that issue in dark hours from rocks.

stars the only artificial volcano to survive its own eruption: a model replica of Vesuvius from the grounds of an 18th century German pleasure palace. Gardens as models for the worldbuilding of empires are the subject of this queer cli-fi that mixes facts with speculation, propelled by feminist methodologies of embodied, environmental sensing through satellites. A media archaeology of earth and atmosphere culminates in a dazzling yet foreboding explosion of forms.

A voice becomes a mirror plane becomes a holohedral wand is a speculative fiction about the extraction of minerals in the deep sea. Narrated by a not-quite-human character, it tells the story of a deadening ocean, and the adventures of this one being amidst the increased desperation to maintain the structures of life under capitalism. The accompanying soundscape composed by Samuel Hertz immerses the listener in an oceanic underworld that has become the site of deep-sea mining, with recordings from hydrothermal vents and impulse responses from mineral crystallographies. The artwork was originally commissioned by Radio Amnion as an audio transmission to the Pacific Ocean during the full moon with a submerged neutrino telescope.

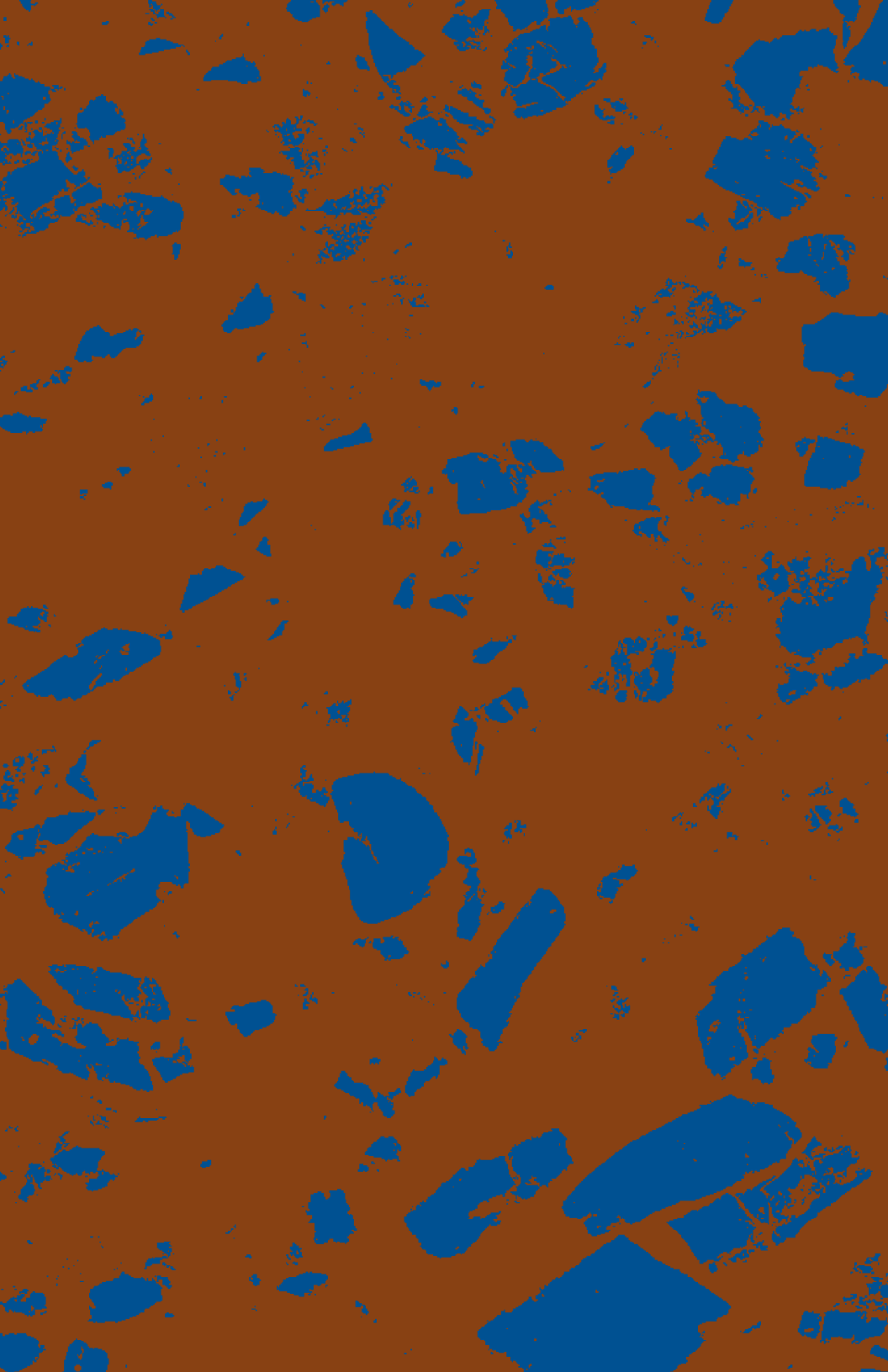


A voice becomes a mirror plane becomes a holohedral wand, 2021/23

Two-channel projection with vertical caption screen & artist's book

2k HD video, color, sound; duration: 22:10 minutes looping

<https://vimeo.com/caitlinberrigan/holohedral>



Blue was never reliable. But I never expected this: a drastic shift in value and even in hue. From serpentine to sapphire. Otherwise said: from noise to echo. Once darkly full with algae—bull kelp, kombu, and grapestone—the shifting color of ocean crashed onto the rocks where it could be seen from a vista on the cliffs. Now light illuminates the seafloor without friction. The clarity of its reflections signals an absence of life and liveliness within its waters. The kelp beds are dead.



A voice becomes a mirror plane becomes a holohedral wand, 2021/23

Two-channel projection with vertical caption screen, 2k HD video, color, sound; duration: 22:10 minutes

<https://vimeo.com/caitlinberrigan/holohedral>

Installation view, "Cassandra with a flood in her mouth," JOAN Los Angeles, February 4 - April 15, 2023



Imaginary Explosions Cosmology

Installation view, "Cassandra with a flood in her mouth," JOAN Los Angeles, February 4 - April 15, 2023

Curated by Suzy Halajian with Hannah Spears



CASSANDRA WITH A FLOOD IN HER MOUTH

Caitlin Berrigan

Imaginary Explosions Cosmology
Installation view, "Cassandra with a flood in her mouth," JOAN Los Angeles, February 4 - April 15, 2023
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Imaginary Explosions Cosmology

Installation at Forum Expanded, Berlinale, 15 February - 30 March 2020
Curated by Stefanie Schulte Strathaus, Maha Mahmoud, and Uli Ziemons



Imaginary Explosions Cosmology

Installation at Art in General, Brooklyn, NY, solo show curated by Laurel Ptak, September 4 - November 14, 2019

View of Gallery 1: Vistas; Signal Amulets



Imaginary Explosions Cosmology

Installation at Art in General, Brooklyn, NY, solo show curated by Laurel Ptak, September 4 - November 14, 2019

View of Gallery 3: big dumb rocks; Imaginary Explosions, episode 2, Chaitén



Imaginary Explosions Cosmology

Installation at Art in General, Brooklyn, NY, solo show curated by Laurel Ptak, September 4 - November 14, 2019

View of Gallery 2: Seismic Communication Instrument; Imaginary Explosions, episode 1, Eyjafallajökull



Imaginary Explosions Cosmology

Installation at the Henry Art Museum, Seattle, 'Between Bodies' curated by Nina Bozicnik, October 2018 - April 2019

View of Gallery 1: Vistas; big dumb rocks



Imaginary Explosions Cosmology

Installation at the Henry Art Museum, Seattle, 'Between Bodies' curated by Nina Bozicnik, October 2018 - April 2019

View of Gallery 1: Vistas; big dumb rocks; Imaginary Explosions episode 1; Snails, Sensors; Vista Archive



CHECKLIST GALLERY 1

Imaginary Explosions, Episode 1, Eyjafjallajökull

single-channel video (HD color, with sound); duration: 11:21 minutes
Installed as a projection, 10'4" x 5'9"

Snails, Sensors

single-channel video (HD color, no sound); looping duration: 6:38 minutes
Installed on a vertical screen, 50" x 30"; accordion wall mount; painted wood base, 30" x 6.5" x 2.5"

Vistas

digital elevation topographical rendering of Eyjafjallajökull, Iceland;
pigment print on neoprene
Installed hung from ceiling; weighted at the bottom; backlit with daylight fluorescent bulbs facing the wall; 4 each 3'11.5" w x 11'2.5" l, or 16'9" total width x 10'7" total height

big dumb rocks

2x obsidian, basalt, and brass
Mounted on painted foam wedges, 5" h x 8" w x 8.25" d and 5" h x 14.25" w x 13.5" d; painted wood dais, 7'4" w x 18" h x 5'4" d

Vista Archive

Ranapar Studio, Distant view of Mt. St. Helens from Mount Rainier
National Park, Washington, ca. 1925, from the University of Washington
Special Collections
Silver gelatin print in case 24" w x 27.25" h x 25" d



big dumb rocks, 2018

obsidian and brass mounted on painted foam wedge, 5" h x 8" w x 8.25" d;
painted wood dais, 7'4" w x 18" h x 5'4" d



big dumb rocks, 2018

obsidian and brass mounted on painted foam wedge, 5" h x 8" w x 8.25" d;
painted wood dais, 7'4" w x 18" h x 5'4" d



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View of Gallery 1: big dumb rocks; Imaginary Explosions episode 1; Snails, Sensors; Vista Archive

Distant view of Mount St. Helens from Mount
Rainier National Park, Washington, ca. 1925.
Courtesy of University of Washington Special
Collections, PH 128.50.4



Vista Archive

Ranapar Studio, Distant view of Mt. St. Helens from Mount Rainier National Park, Washington, ca. 1925, from the University of Washington Special Collections
Silver gelatin print in case 24" w x 27.25" h x 25" d



Vista Archive

Ranapar Studio, Distant view of Mt. St. Helens from Mount Rainier National Park, Washington, ca. 1925, from the University of Washington Special Collections
Silver gelatin print in case 24" w x 27.25" h x 25" d



Imaginary Explosions Cosmology

Installation at the Henry Art Museum, Seattle, 'Between Bodies' curated by Nina Bozicnik, October 2018 - April 2019

View of Gallery 2: Seismic Communication Instrument; Becoming Mineral; Signal Amulets



CHECKLIST GALLERY 2

Becoming Mineral

single-channel video (HD color, no sound); looping duration: 7:33 minutes
Installed on accordion wall mount, 50" x 30";

Signal Amulets

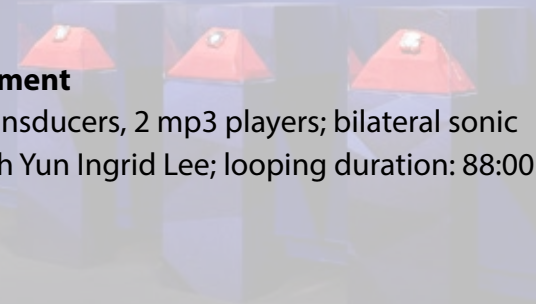
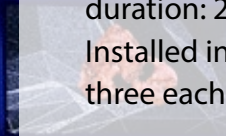
3x brass, wearable video players, video (color, no sound); looping duration: 27 seconds
Installed in vitrines with pigment prints, painted foam, and plexiglass; three each 14" w x 4'6" h x 3'8" d

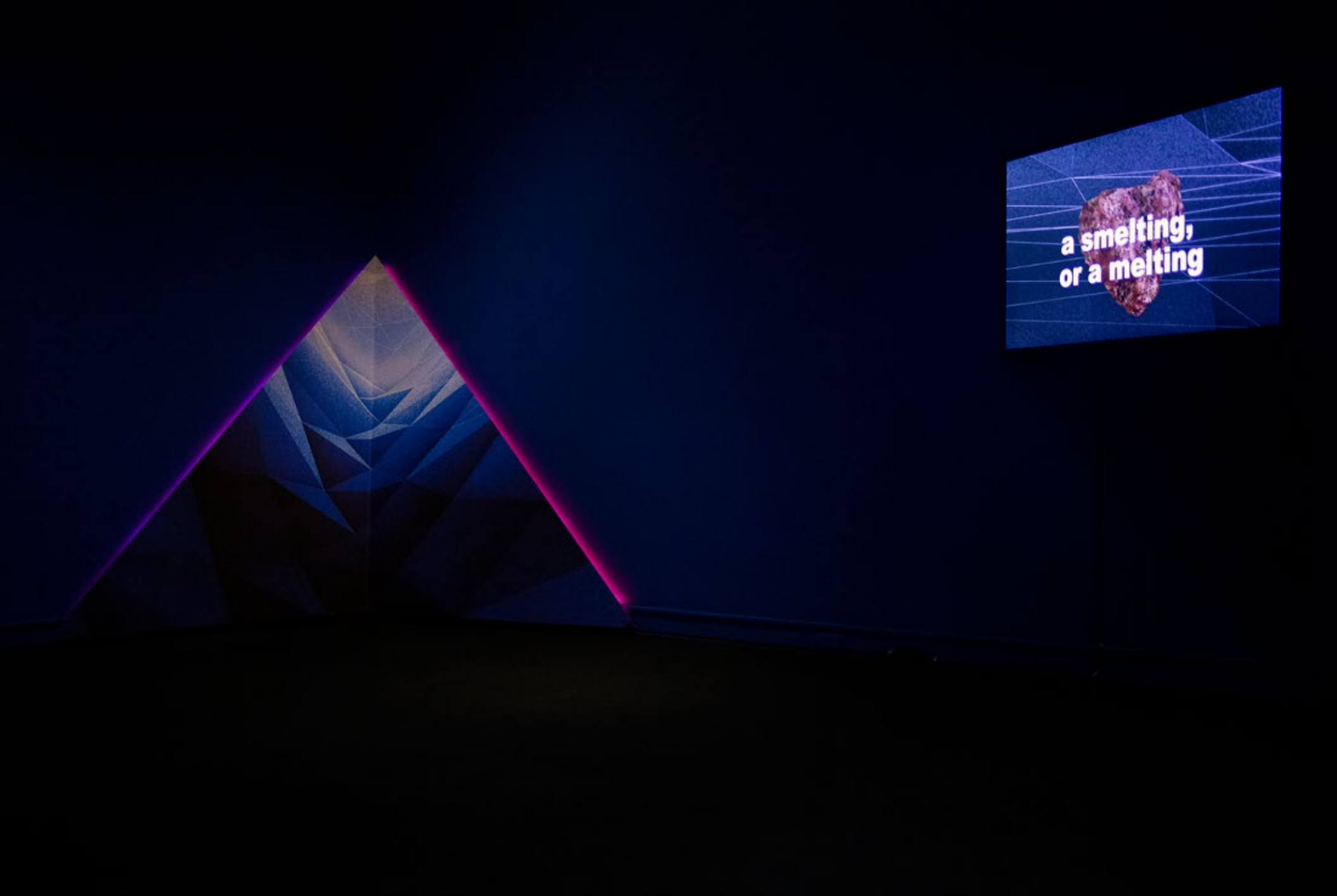
Seismic Communication Instrument

wood, pigment print, 4 tactile transducers, 2 mp3 players; bilateral sonic composition in collaboration with Yun Ingrid Lee; looping duration: 88:00 minutes
8'7" w x 6' h x 2'6" d

Field Notes Archive

Artist texts, drawings, and archival materials from the University of Washington Special Collections; including a HAM radio net Mount Saint Helens eruption logbook from 1980-81
60" w x 27.25" h x 25" d

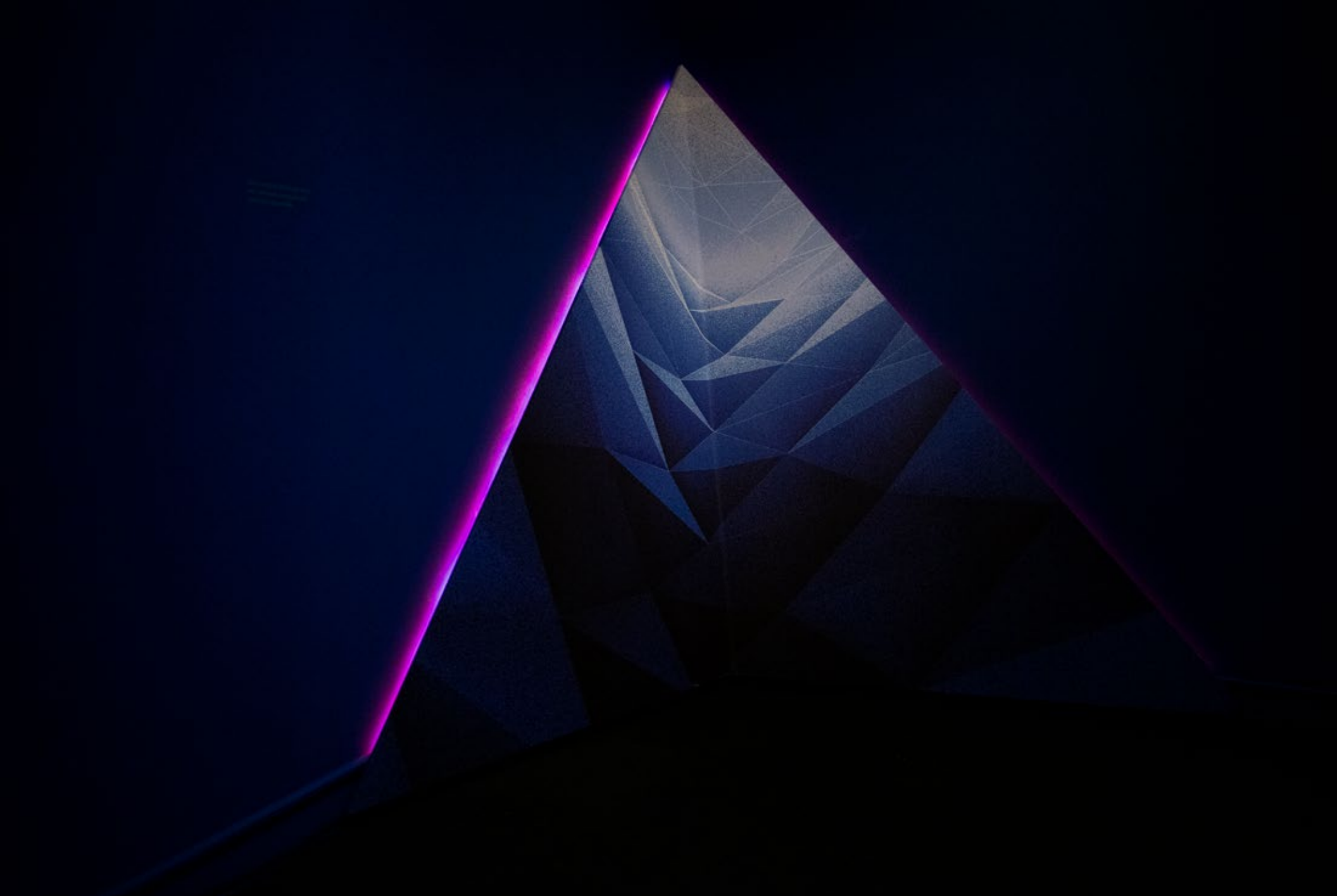




Imaginary Explosions Cosmology

Installation at the Henry Art Museum, Seattle, 'Between Bodies' curated by Nina Bozicnik, October 2018 - April 2019

View of Gallery 2: Bilateral Seismic Communication Instrument; Becoming Mineral



Seismic Communication Instrument, 2018

wood, pigment print, 4 tactile transducers, 2 mp3 players; bilateral sonic composition by Yun Ingrid Lee;

looping duration: 88:00 minutes

8'7" w x 6' h x 2'6" d



Seismic Communication Instrument, 2018

wood, pigment print, 4 tactile transducers, 2 mp3 players;

bilateral sonic composition by Yun Lee;

looping duration: 88:00 minutes

8'7" w x 6' h x 2'6" d

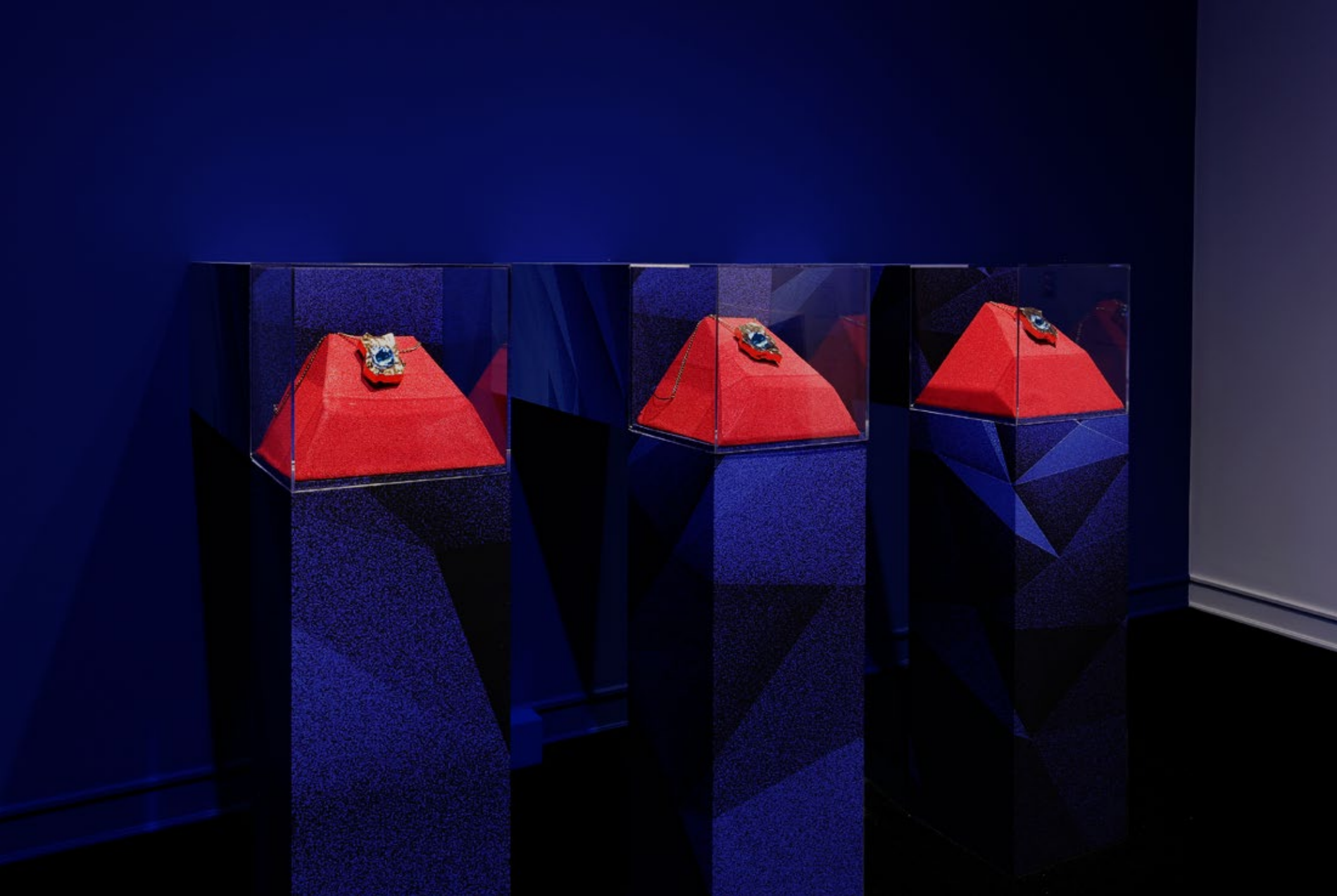




a smelting, or a melting

Becoming Mineral
Video Still

single-channel video (HD color, no sound); looping duration: 7:33 minutes
Installed on accordion wall mount, 50" x 30"



Signal Amulets, 2018

3x brass, wearable video players, video (color, no sound); looping duration: 27 seconds
Installed in custom vitrines with pigment prints, painted foam, and plexiglass; three each 14" w x 4'6" h x 3'8" d



Signal Amulets, 2018

3x brass, wearable video players, video (color, no sound); looping duration: 27 seconds
Installed in custom vitrines with pigment prints, painted foam, and plexiglass; three each 14" w x 4'6" h x 3'8" d



Signal Amulets, 2018

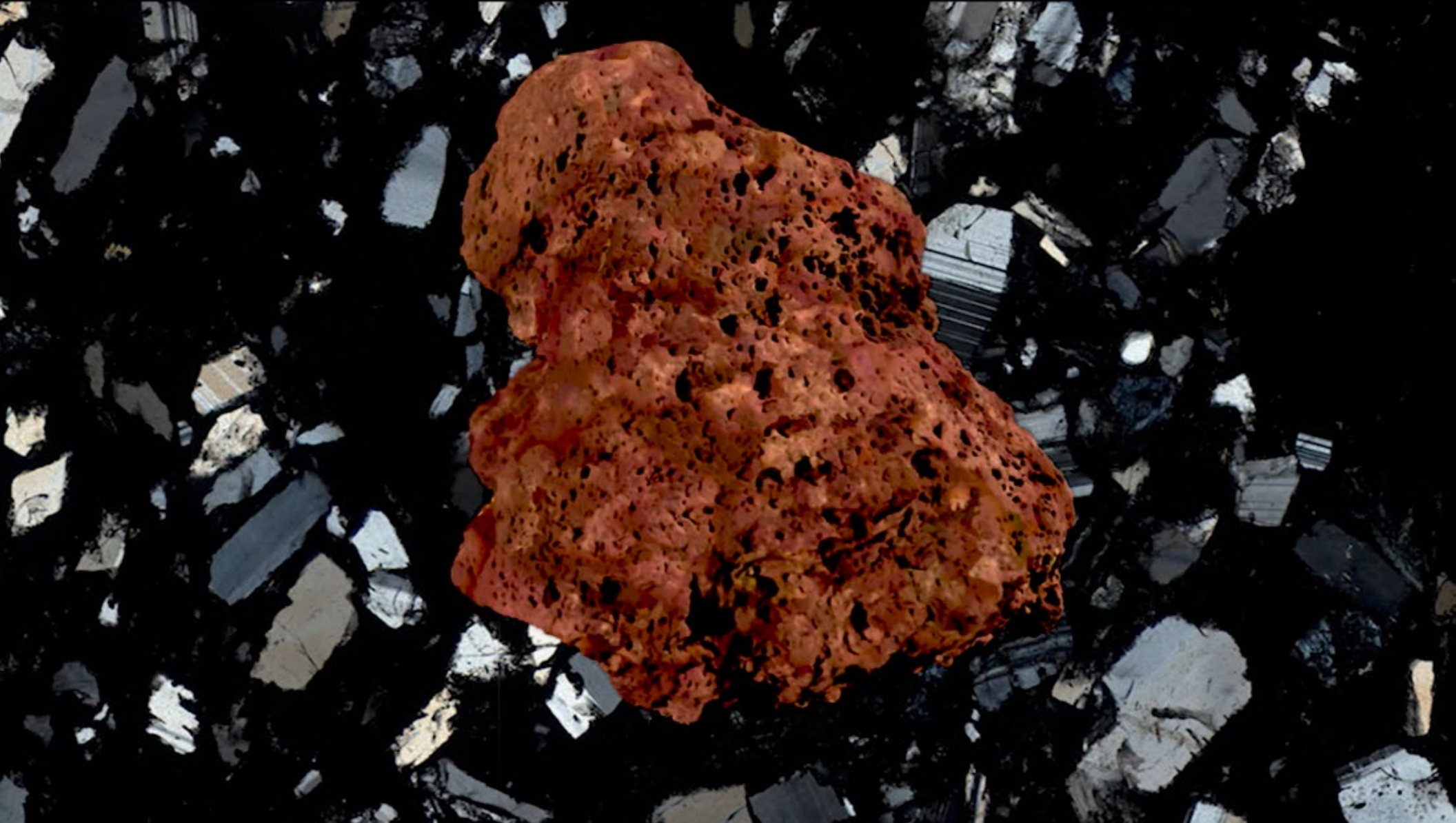
3x brass, wearable video players, video (color, no sound); looping duration: 27 seconds
Installed in custom vitrines with pigment prints, painted foam, and plexiglass; three each 14" w x 4'6" h x 3'8" d



Basalt Signal Video, 2018

HD video (color, no sound); looping duration: 27 seconds;

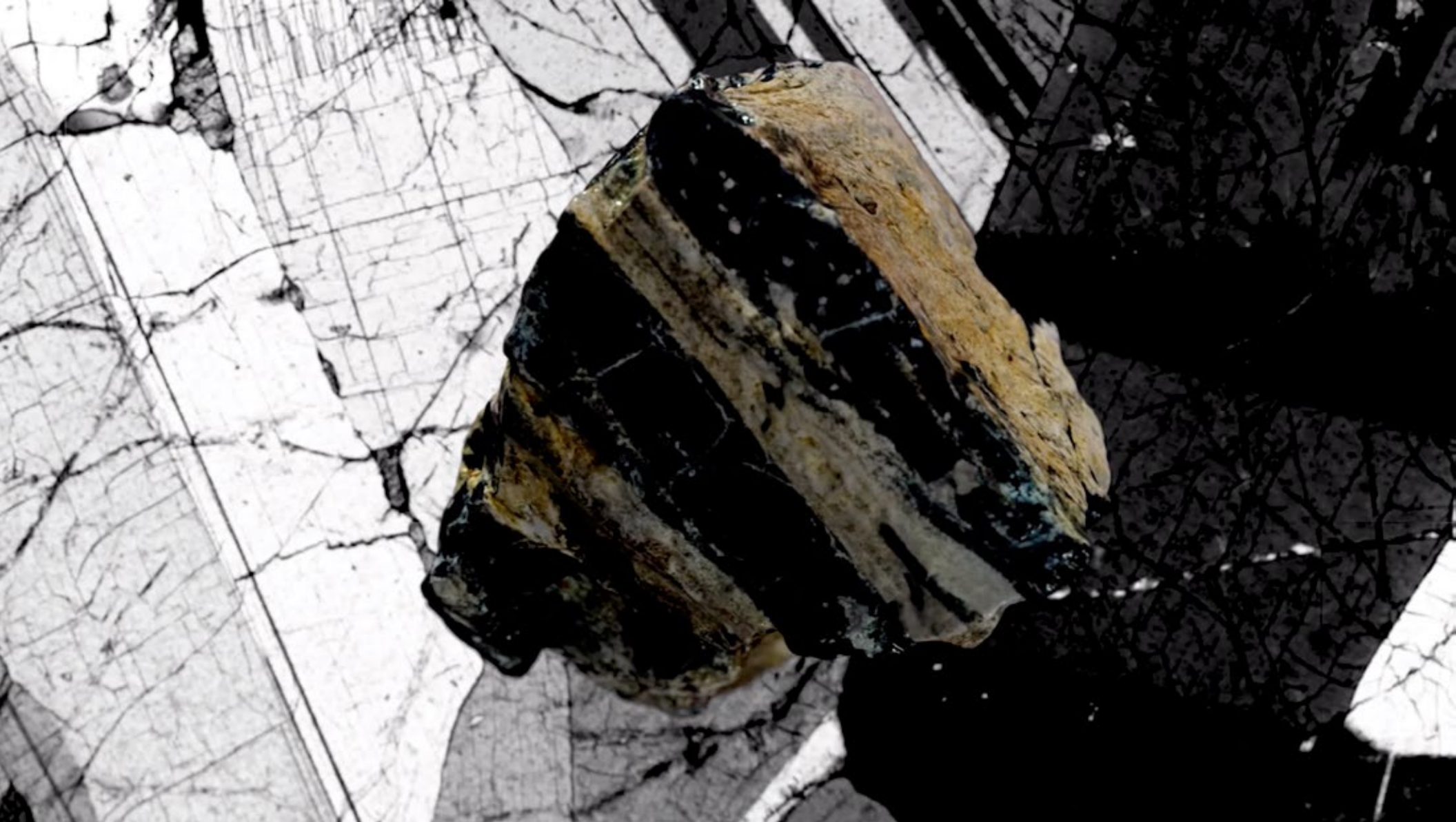
Additional visual effects by Harry Sanderson
3D laser scanning by NYU LaGuardia Studio



Pumice Signal Video, 2018

HD video (color, no sound); looping duration: 27 seconds;

Additional visual effects by Harry Sanderson
3D laser scanning by NYU LaGuardia Studio



Obsidian Signal Video, 2018

HD video (color, no sound); looping duration: 27 seconds;

Additional visual effects by Harry Sanderson
3D laser scanning by NYU LaGuardia Studio



Field Notes Archive

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Artist texts, drawings, and archival materials from the University of Washington Special Collections; including a HAM radio net Mount Saint Helens eruption logbook from 1980-81
60" w x 27.25" h x 25" d

Credits

Imaginary Explosions, Episode 1, Eyjafjallajökull, 2018

Featuring: Yun Ingrid Lee, Rae Parnell, Caitlin Berrigan, helix pomatia snails, and Eyjafjallajökull. **Original sound composition:** Yun Ingrid Lee. **Voicover:** Nina Støttrup Larsen. **Shot on location** at Gunnuhver, Eyjafjallajökull, and across Iceland; Schloss Solitude, Stuttgart, Germany. **Additional animation:** Harry Sanderson and Lily Fang. **News footage:** Christopher Huppertz, Roman Pech, Fedrik Holm, teleSur TV, TageshauTV, ina.fr, BBC, CNN, Sky News.

Imaginary Explosions, Episode 2, Chaitén, 2019

Featuring: Nicole L'Huillier, Daniela Catrileo, Karen Holmberg, Vilcún Caves, Chaitén.

The Vilcún caves and volcanic landscape of Chaitén, Chile: a transdisciplinary conservation study of coastal Patagonian archaeology and geoheritage (National Geographic, NGS-185C-18). Principal Investigator: Dr. Karen Holmberg. Team members: Dr. Francisco Mena, Dr. Rafael Labarca, Dr. Brent Alloway, Dr. Andres Burbano, Constanza Gomez (ProCultura), Dr. Javiera Letelier.

Original compositions by Yun Ingrid Lee & Andrie van der Kuit (2019), Nampülwangulenfe / Mapunauta by Nicole L'Huillier & Daniela Catrileo (2018), Palindrome Max de Wardener (2019). **Voiceover:** Edwina Portocarrero. **Shot on location** at Chaitén, Chile; Berlin, Germany; New York City, USA. **Sound mix:** Sindhu Thirumalaisamy. **Colorist:** Marika Litz. **Additional Imagery & Footage:** Andres Burbano (Drone), Alfredo Barroso (Underwater), United Kingdom Virtual Microscope for Earth Sciences and ALMA (ESO/NAOJ/NRAO).

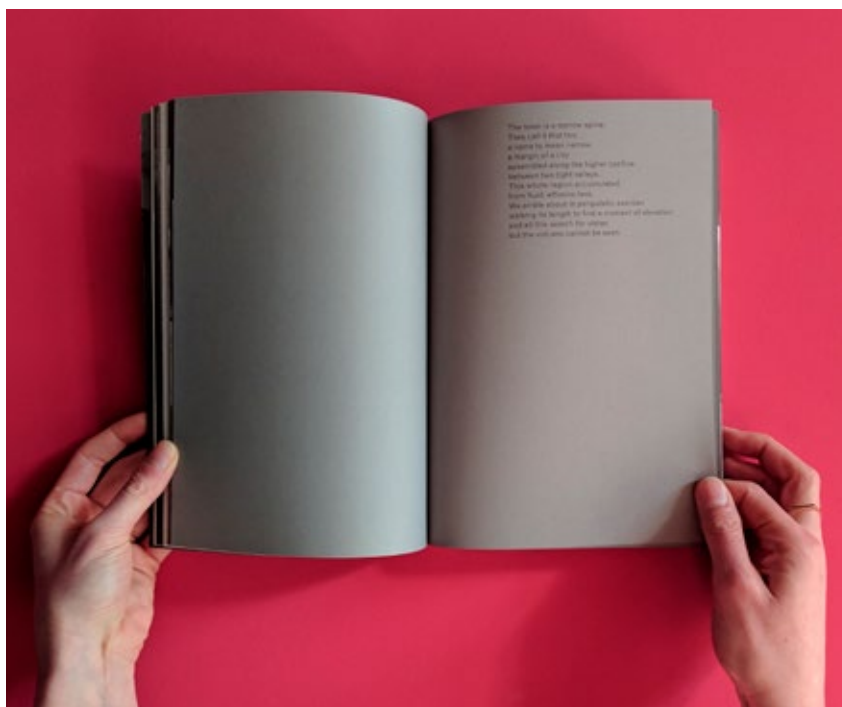
Gratitude

This project was supported, in part, by the Centre for Geohumanities, Royal Holloway University, Akademie Schloss Solitude, Henry Art Gallery, Foundation for Contemporary Arts Emergency Grant, Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, Art in General New Commissions, and the Wassaic Project.

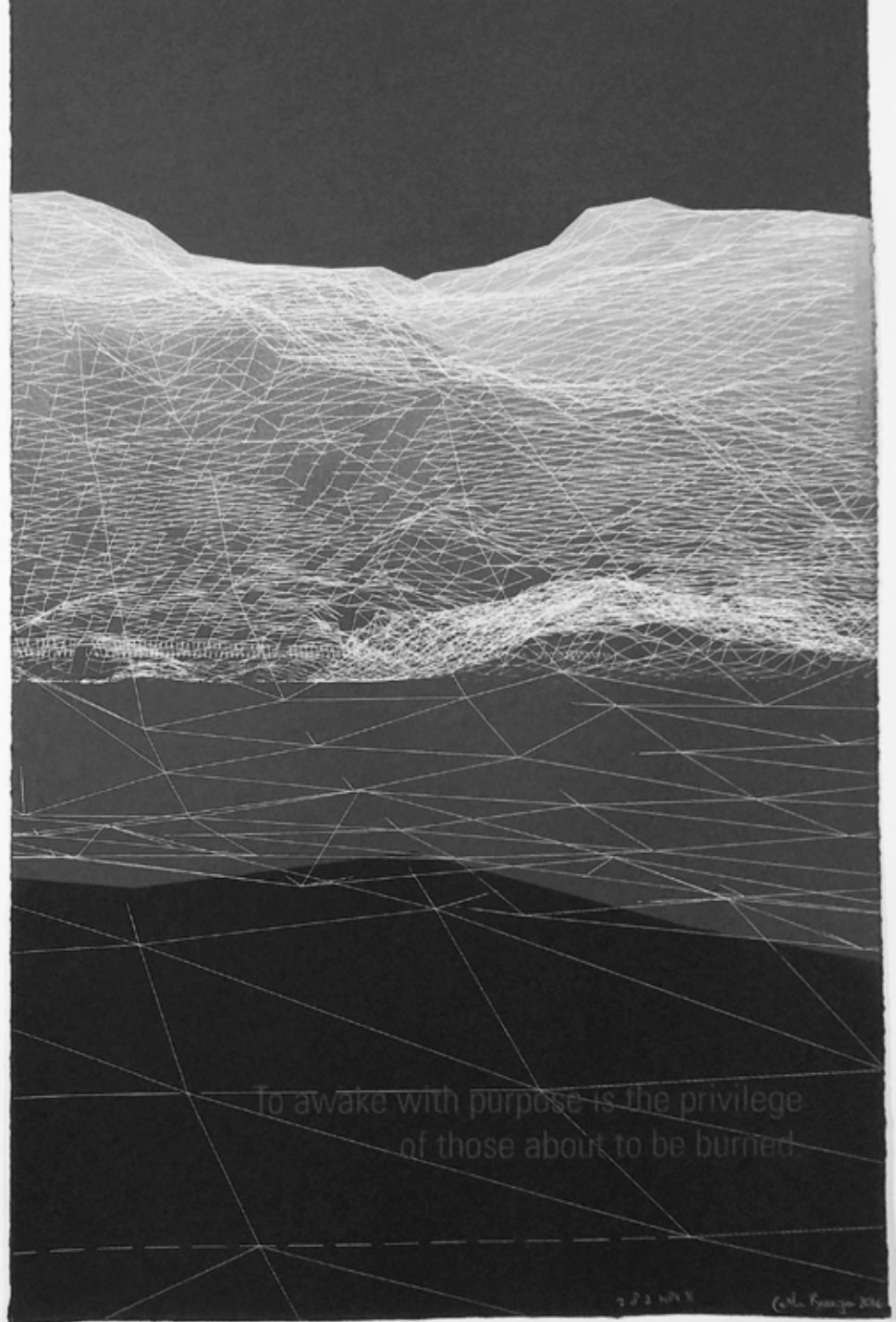
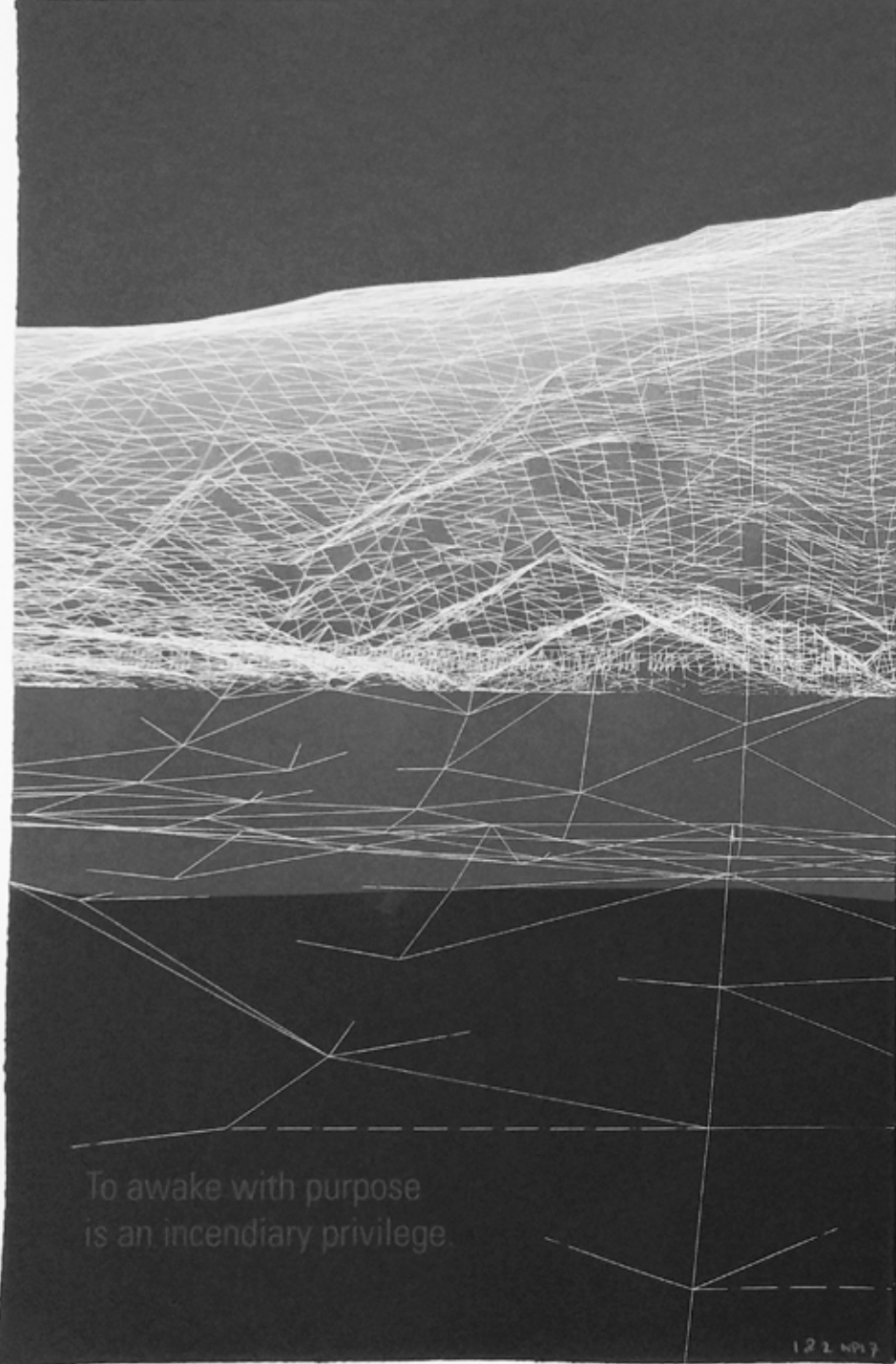
The artist wishes to thank Nina Bozicnik, Susan Lewandowski, Sasha Engelmann, Harriet Hawkins, Yun Ingrid Lee, Nicole L'Huillier, Karen Holmberg, Brent Alloway, Andres Burbano, Constanza Gomez (ProCultura), Javiera Letelier, Rae Parnell, Sindhu Thirumalaisamy, Luke DuBois, Marika Litz, Julia Murray, Sebastian Morales, Lily Fang, Harry Sanderson, Sharlene Bamboat, Renate Lorenz, NYU LaGuardia Studio, Harvestworks, Laurel Ptak, Yonatan Katzelnik, AD Cantor, Mika Lee, Marina Ruojia Yang, Lilian Yeling Yang and Art in General's Board of Directors.

IMAGINARY EXPLOSIONS, VOL. I

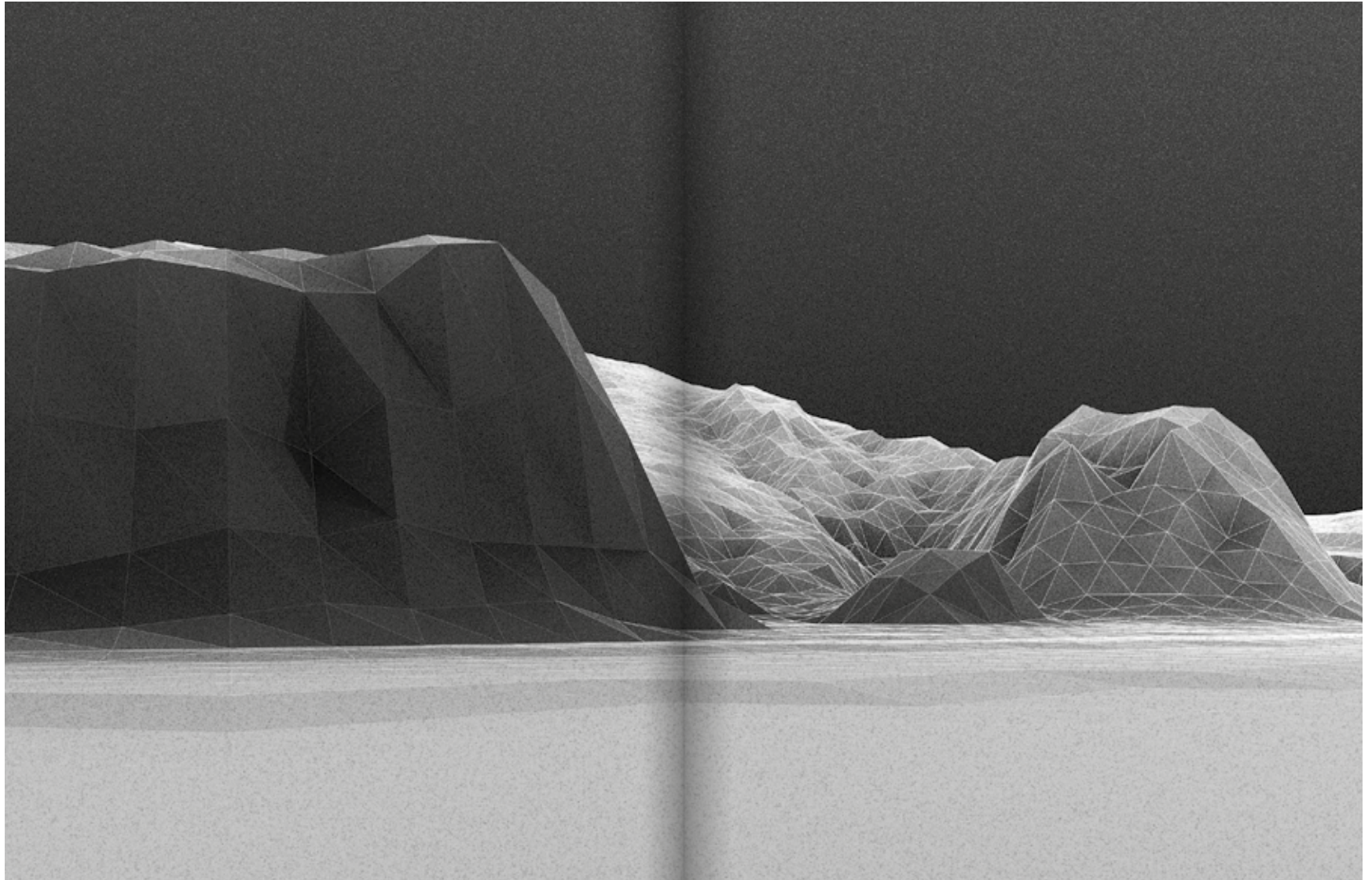
Imaginary Explosions is an artist book rich with images, poetry, and topographical delineations. Its pages explore geological ruptures, the immense scale and deep time of sexual violence, and the ways traumas reverberate through bodies across multiple generations of relationships and families. It is an experiment in sequential, narrative poetry. Sparse, material language combines with synthetic landscapes based on the computational radar topography of the Eyjafjallajökull volcano in Iceland. Berrigan takes on the book as a time-based medium, creating a walk through the landscape of the volcano across the pages. It draws from storytelling and geological time and space through episodes of volcanology. Can we begin to grasp the scope and scales of both geological change and the deep time of patriarchy, by in fact becoming mineral ourselves? *Broken Dimanche Press, Berlin, 2018.*



Imaginary Explosions, 2018
Broken Dimanche Press, 208 pages, 170 x 245 mm



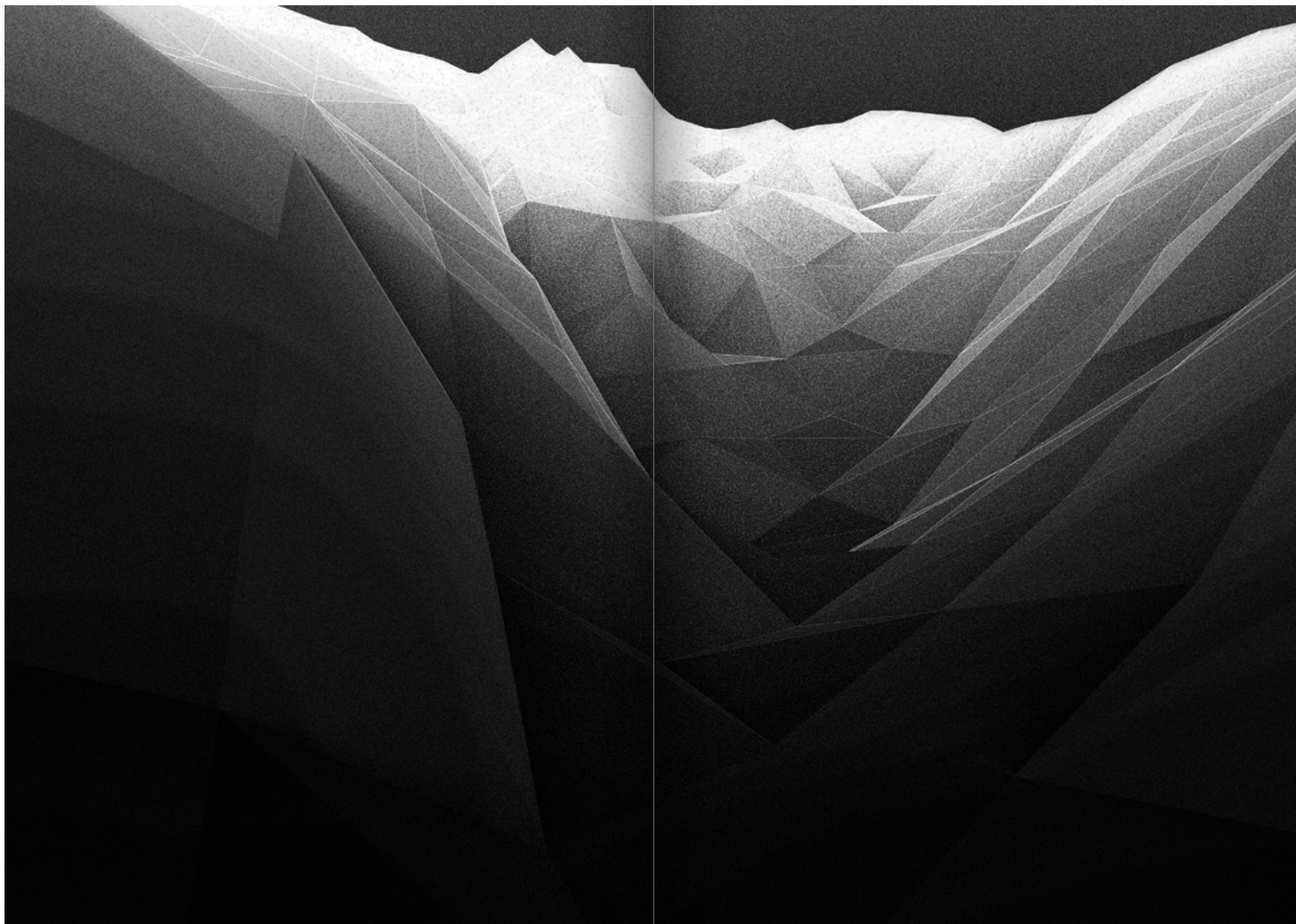
Treatise on Imaginary Explosions, vol. I, 2016
Charcoal & ink silkscreen on black cotton rag paper, diptych edition of 30



Imaginary Explosions, 2018

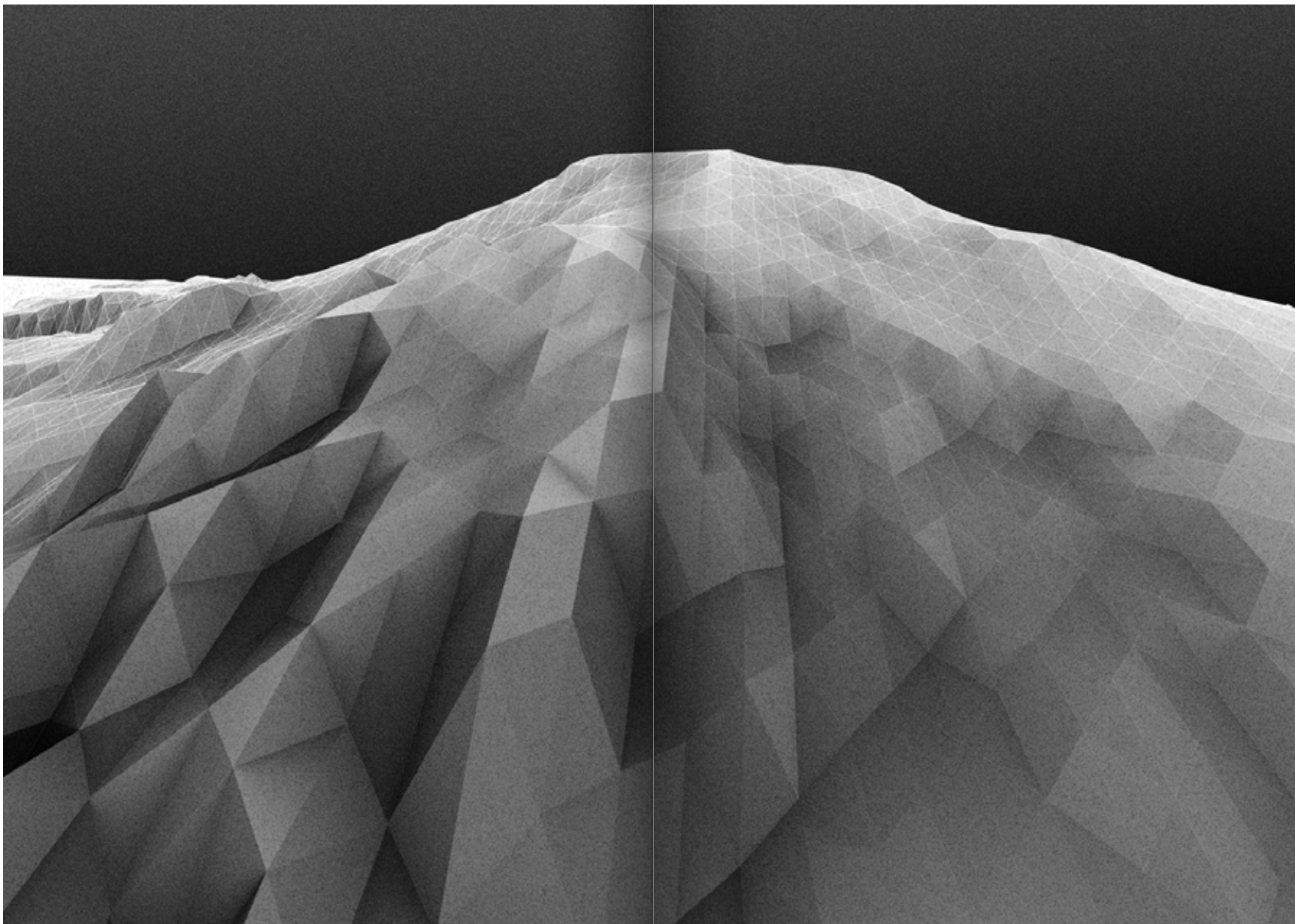
Sample spread from book, Broken Dimanche Press, 208 pages, 170 x 245 mm

An experiment with the book as a time-based medium. Sequential, narrative poetry explores affective geologies and the idea of becoming mineral. Sparse, material language combines with 3D computational photographs rendered by the artist from topographical radar data of the Eyjafjallajökull volcano from the National Land Survey of Iceland.



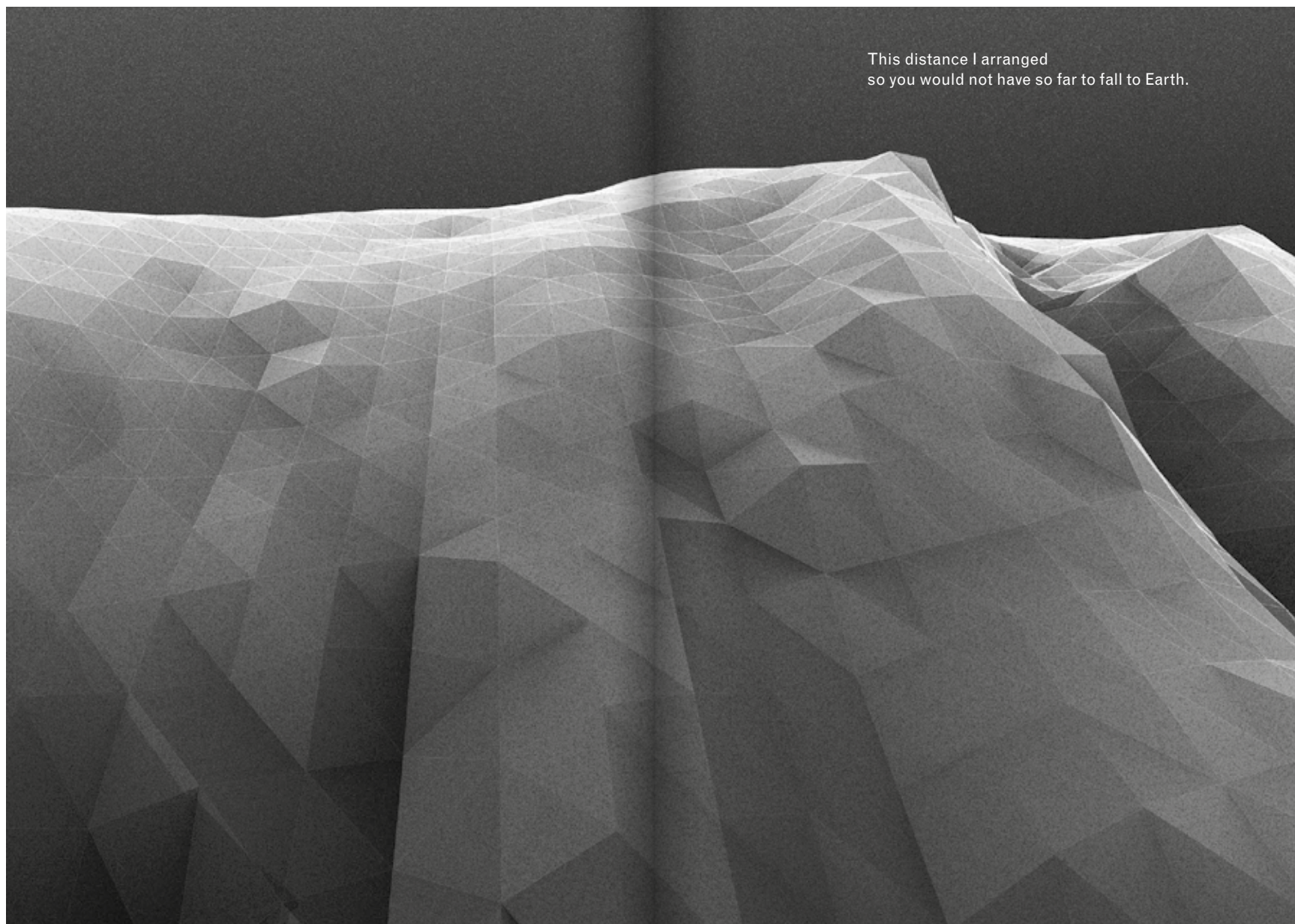
Imaginary Explosions, 2018

Sample spread from book, Broken Dimanche Press, 208 pages, 170 x 245 mm



Imaginary Explosions, 2018

Sample spread from book, Broken Dimanche Press, 208 pages, 170 x 245 mm



This distance I arranged
so you would not have so far to fall to Earth.

Imaginary Explosions, 2018

Sample spread from book, Broken Dimanche Press, 208 pages, 170 x 245 mm