

AGUS WIJAYA • 27 APR - 21 MAY 2022

RSVP OPENING - THURSDAY 5 MAY 6 - 8PM

Stanley Street gallery

SYDNEY



# Tata Reka

## Exhibition Essay

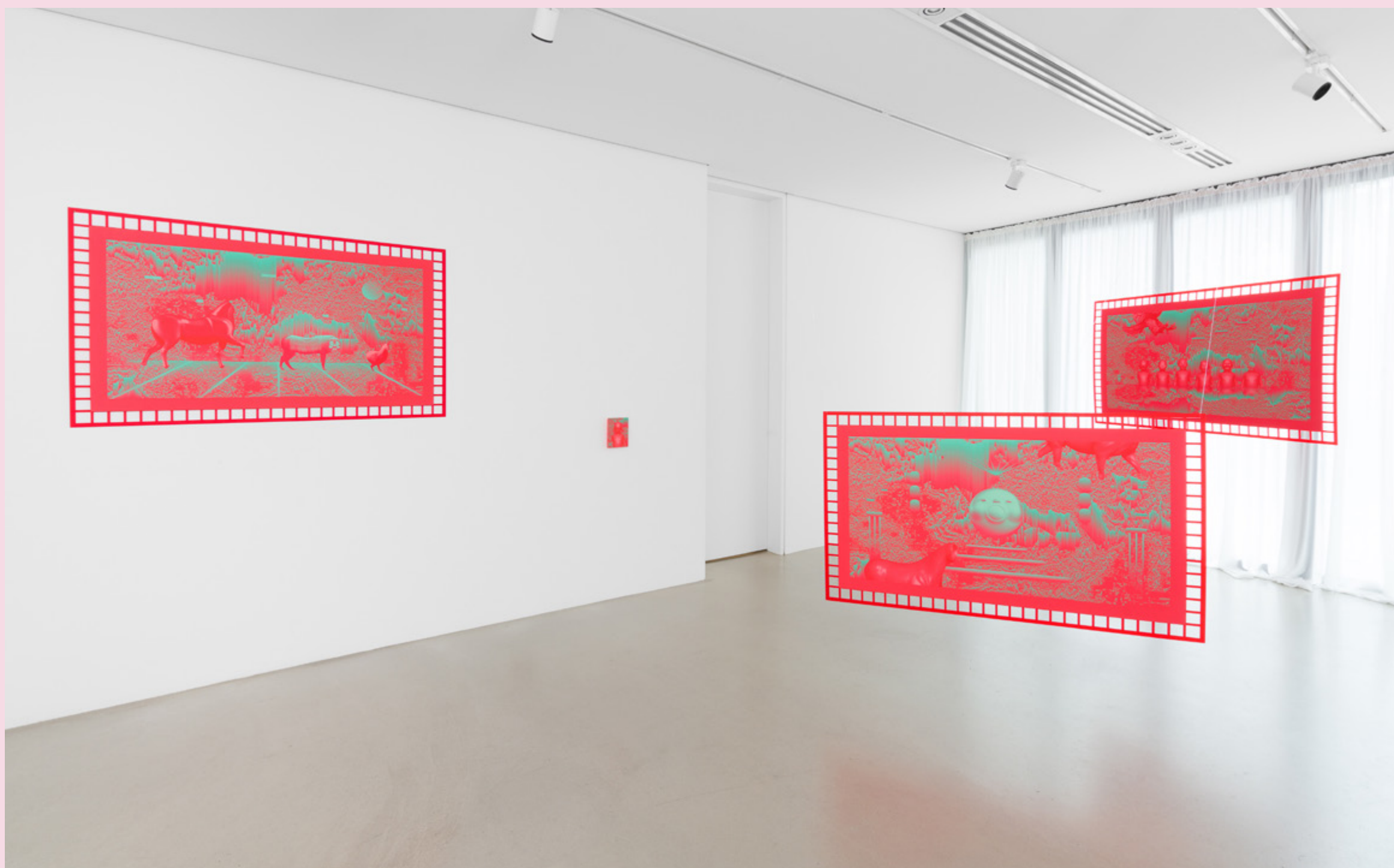
It takes a while for your eyes to adjust to the red and aqua patterns that define Agus Wijaya's most recent body of work, for his exhibition Tata Reka. There is an intriguing contrast to be observed between the undercurrent 'glitching' appearing to intrude upon the forms in many of these images, and the singular, well-defined forms of the characters who live in them, albeit some with limbs, legs or head missing. There is something anachronistic about their presence in this strange landscape, that seems to be collapsing into atomised segments before our very eyes, much in the same way that pixels in a television screen work to display one tiny portion of a larger picture. In my conversations with Agus, and beyond, in my research, I haven't been able to find much information about these characters. After the initial panic of not knowing what to write about them, in returning to the works themselves, it's clear that to simply know their histories, and to reproduce them here would be beside the point. My initial eagerness to know them at their core is, in fact, at odds with the ways which these works ask to be engaged.

As Agus says, the works reflect a complex, doubled feeling of comfort and uneasiness within the place he grew up in - Indonesia, where for a long time dating back to Dutch colonisation, there has been an open mistrust and normalised violence towards Chinese Indonesians. He refers to it as a political othering, resulting in an ever-changing sense of self in relation to the mainstream values held in broader Indonesian society. These childhood figures represent a slippery space of identification and disidentification, of certainty and then not. For me then, they shouldn't be used as a means of thinking through static understandings of identity (Chinese, Indonesian, Australian), dependent as these are on ways of knowing that look to see the world and the things in it as determined, categorically separate from each other, and sequential. Rather, they demonstrate the feeling of uneasiness itself. This body of work is about focus, and then again not, each work exemplifying an internal play between noise, and then recognising patterns, discerning order from within that noise.

The sound of someone's accent isn't fixed evidence of who they are, but rather a reflection of where they have been over time, the journeys they have taken. Similarly, these works give us a better understanding of the complicated context within which an identity may grow. As a person with Chinese background growing up in Indonesia, deciding which aspects of himself should be legible and which aspects should remain harder to read, has long constituted much of Agus' everyday practice as much as it has his artistic one. This practice is defined by risk and secrecy, hence vulnerability, in navigating a larger power-dynamic than one individual can affect. Agency is simply the power that an individual has access to within a very specific intersection of distinct subjugations. In this way, these works provide a safe space within which the artist may take risks, refine practice, all the while reclaiming some of the culture, figures and beliefs that previously weren't available due to the situation defining his childhood.

These works feel 'staged' in the sense that there are obvious and less obvious techniques of staging in their creation. In their panoptic composition - which adheres to the conventions of visual perspective - at the same time that these works seem to present themselves up for easy viewing, I'm reminded of the dynamics and politics between 'onstage' and 'backstage', and the attendant modes of performativity, authenticity that characterise the gestures unfolding in each. Precisely, what should remain front and centre, and what should simply remain backstage? Agus Wijaya's works make me interested in the slippery ways that we exist in these spaces, in the ways and perspectives from which we perceive them. Asking from one side - how deep does the extractive gaze pierce in spaces of fine art, and what does it mean to present these works in Australia, to an audience who might have little understanding of the political, social and personal narratives that underpin their existence? Is this not the fundamental struggle of communication itself? How far is the distance between two minds, and how does it compare to geographies shaped by socio-political activity? These works ask us not to pay attention to what's front and centre, but rather to listen to the context structuring their appearance to us - that is, the works ask us to pay attention to the shifting nature of experience itself. Experience as a moment in which we are constantly negotiating our view and our place onstage, backstage, of internal and external worlds.

by Sebastian Henry-Jones





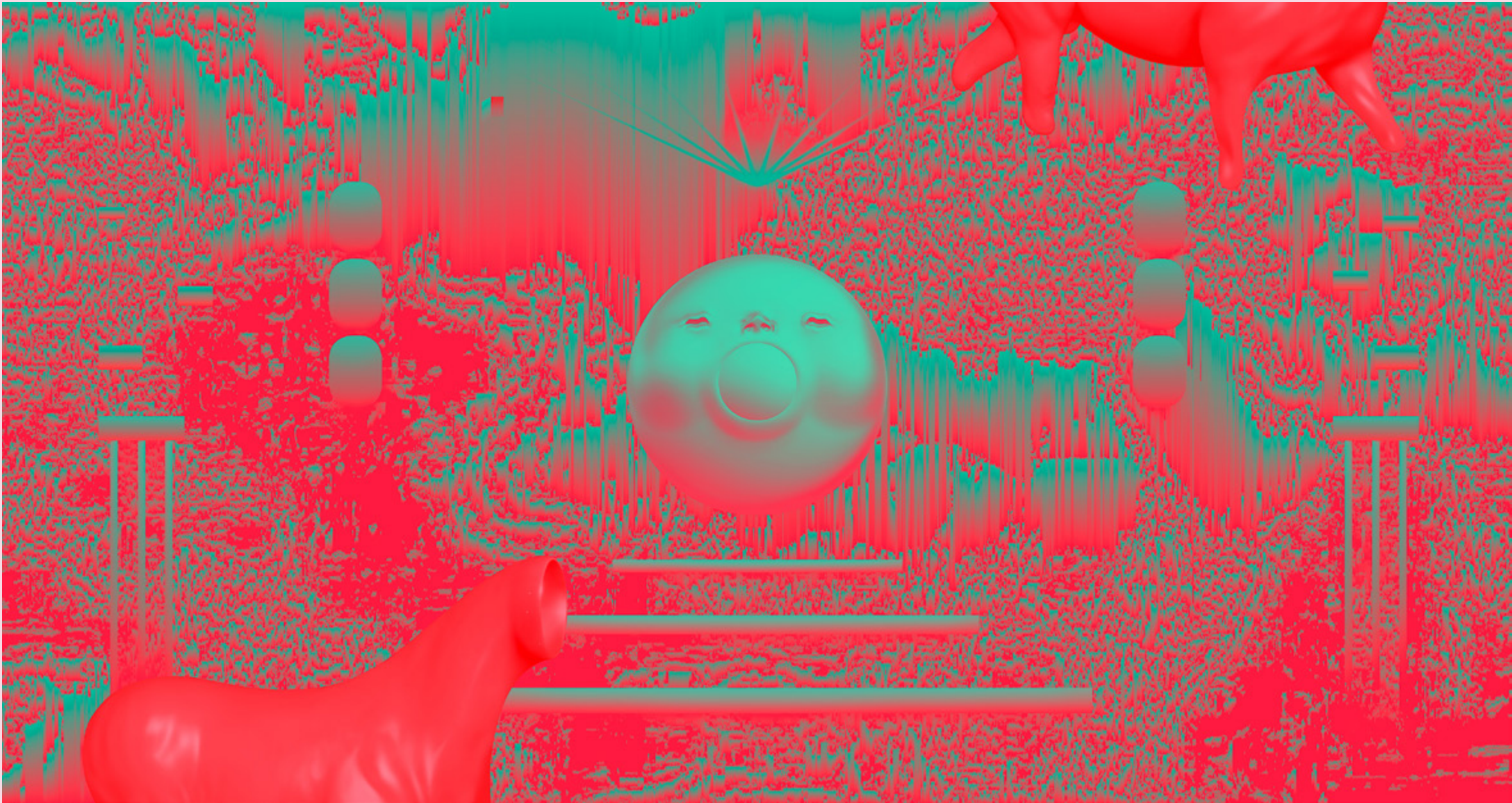


Enquire

**Procession**  
2020  
Archival pigment printing on art canvas and mixed media,  
mounted on perspex  
73.9 x 135 cm, Edition 1/1 + 1 AP

**\$2,500**





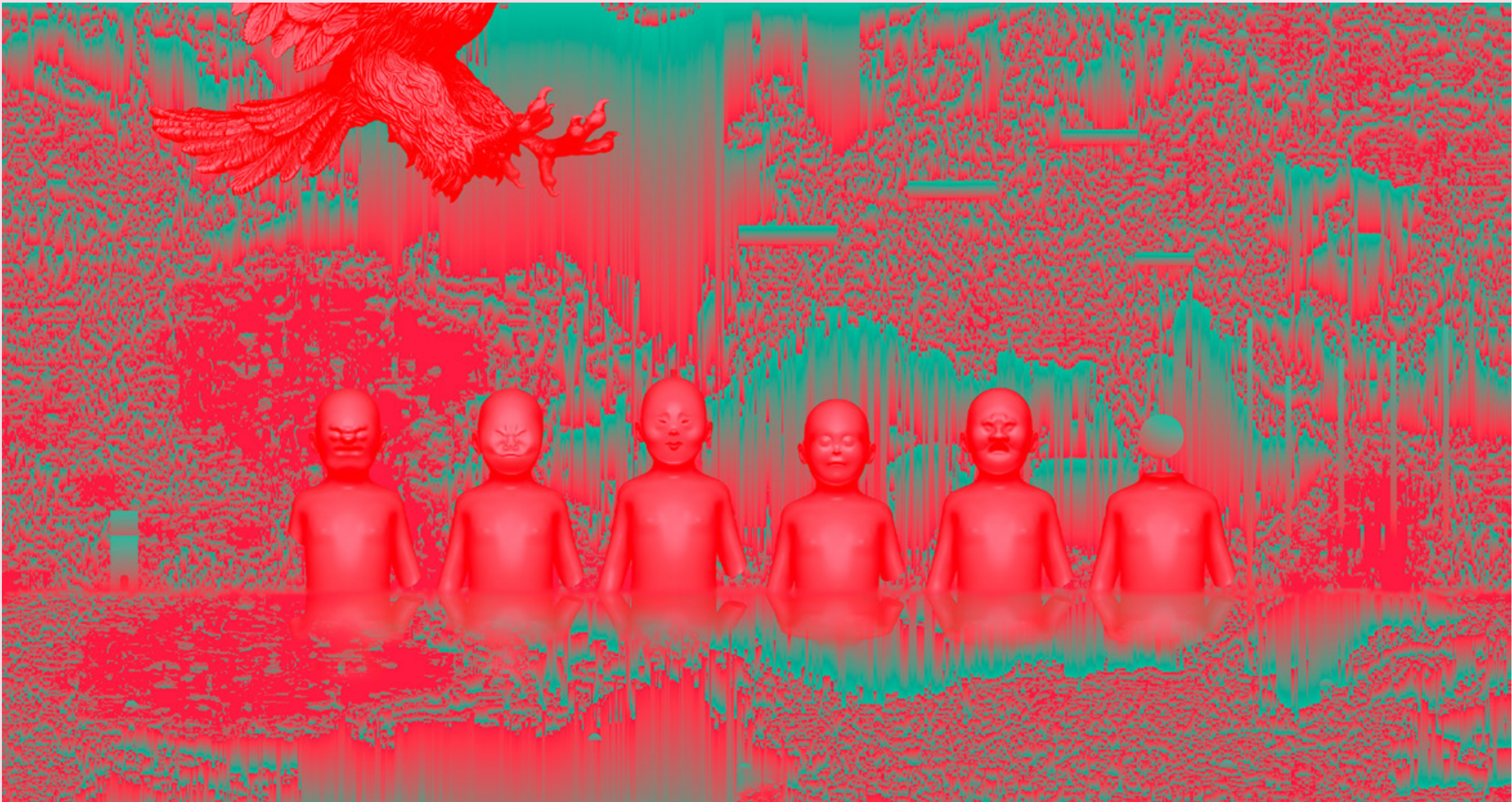
**Homecoming**  
2021

Archival pigment printing on art canvas and mixed media,  
mounted on perspex  
73.9 x 135 cm, Edition 1/1 + 1 A P

**\$2,500**

Enquire



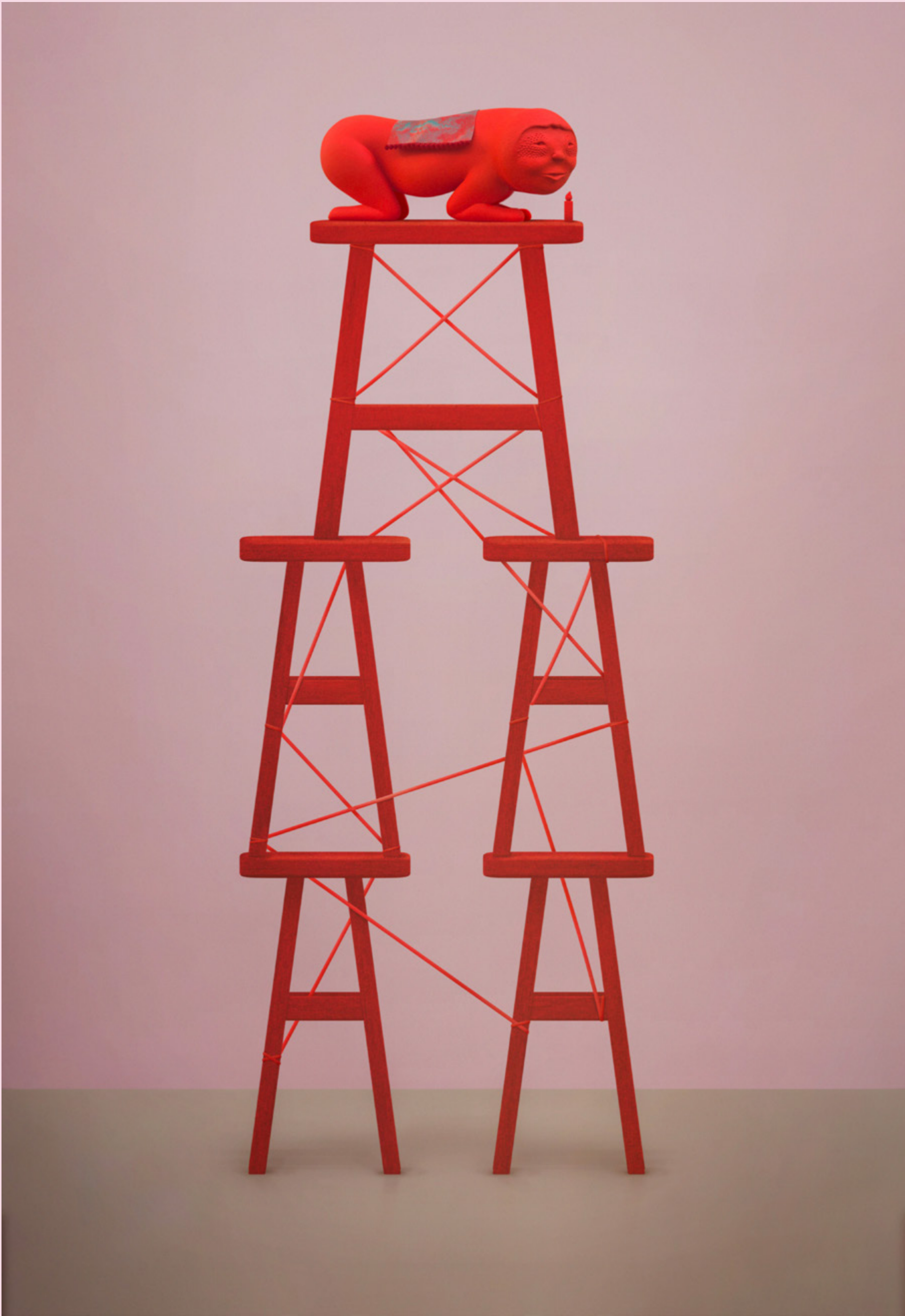


Enquire

**Taksakala**  
2021  
Archival pigment printing on art canvas and mixed media,  
mounted on perspex  
73.9 x 135 cm, Edition 1/1 + 1 AP

**\$2,500**





Enquire

**Jejadian**

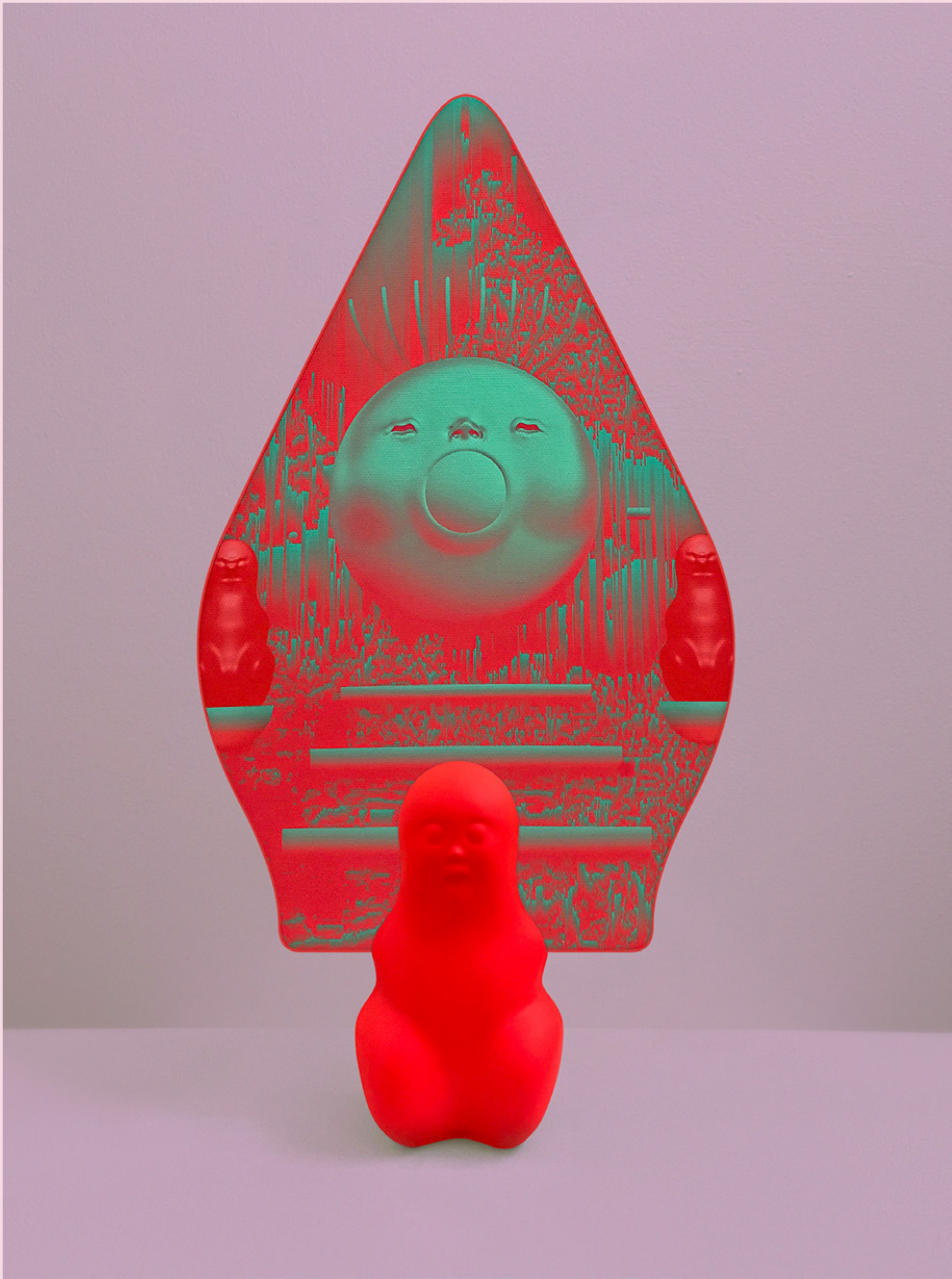
2022

Installation - timber, mixed media

Edition 1/1 + 1 AP

**\$5,500**





Enquire

Sampurasun

2022

mixed media

41 x 21 x 6.6 cm

\$1,250









Enquire

Yi  
2022  
Archival pigment printing on art canvas and mixed media  
18 x 14 x 2 cm Edition 1/1 + 1 AP

\$650





Enquire

**Er**  
2022  
Archival pigment printing on art canvas and mixed media  
18 x 14 x 2 cm  
Edition 1/1 + 1 AP

**\$650**





Enquire

**San**  
2022  
Archival pigment printing on art canvas and mixed media  
18 x 14 x 2 cm  
Edition 1/1 + 1 AP

**\$650**





Enquire

Si  
2022  
Archival pigment printing on art canvas and mixed media  
18 x 14 x 2 cm  
Edition 1/1 + 1 AP

\$650





Enquire

**Wu**  
2022  
Archival pigment printing on art canvas and mixed media  
18 x 14 x 2 cm  
Edition 1/1 + 1 AP

**\$650**





Enquire

**Liu**  
2022  
Archival pigment printing on art canvas and mixed media  
18 x 14 x 2 cm  
Edition 1/1 + 1 AP

**\$650**









Tutuluyan

2022

Installation, iPad, Mixed Media

NFS





**Bwwamtm**

2022

Animation 68 seconds

**NFS**