BAIJU PARTHAN
Point Clouds

ART MUSINGS

Point Clouds - Baiju Parthan

Art Musings presents *'Point Clouds'*, a solo exhibition of Baiju Parthan, showcasing lenticular works. Baiju Parthan, (1956, Kerala, India) is an inter-media artist, working with painting as well as digital technology based installation art. He is one of the early exponents of new media art and mediatic-realism in the Indian contemporary art scene. Parthan's vocabulary consists of arcane symbols and found imagery that are woven together to create artworks which reveal a dense multi layered phenomenological landscape. His work in the digital realm consists mainly of explorations into the constantly mutating interstice where the virtual and real bleed into each other.

Point clouds (the technical term for location data map representing objects in three dimensions) are generally produced using 3D scanners and photogrammetry software, which measure many points on the external surfaces and objects to chart them as a cloud of location data points. Point clouds form the foundation for recreating landmarks and real world locations in virtual reality.

Baiju Parthan uses the point cloud paradigm of data points to fabricate objects using 3d Software. Rather than generate data points from a real world object, Baiju Parthan reverses the paradigm by manually creating data points first in 3D virtual space and then connecting the points together to form a 3D mesh that is texture mapped to arrive at a three dimensional virtual object. The final artwork is a composite of objects woven out of data points and presented as an animated stereoscopic lenticular print.

The show explores themes related to the world of today caught between an environmental crises and diminishing biodiversity, and where data in its various forms rule our everyday life. The massive amount of data that has been generated has now become the fertile sediment birthing artificial intelligence and forcing us to even confront existential questions about what exactly is life and sentience.

Monument
3D rendering and photography, lenticular print
45" x 135", 2011

Monument: This work belongs to a series of new media works that re-imagine historic landmarks and the cityscape of Mumbai. The reimagining is done by staging and presenting a virtual event that would impact and alter the viewer's memory and recollection of the actual landmark. The staging of events is done using objects created in 3D graphics and layered over a photograph using lenticular technology to give the illusion of three dimensional space and depth. The attempt is to suggest or point out the fact that virtual experience could affect and alter the real. Here a virtual event is enacted of sharks swimming across the skies and circling the monument as though driven by feeding frenzy.
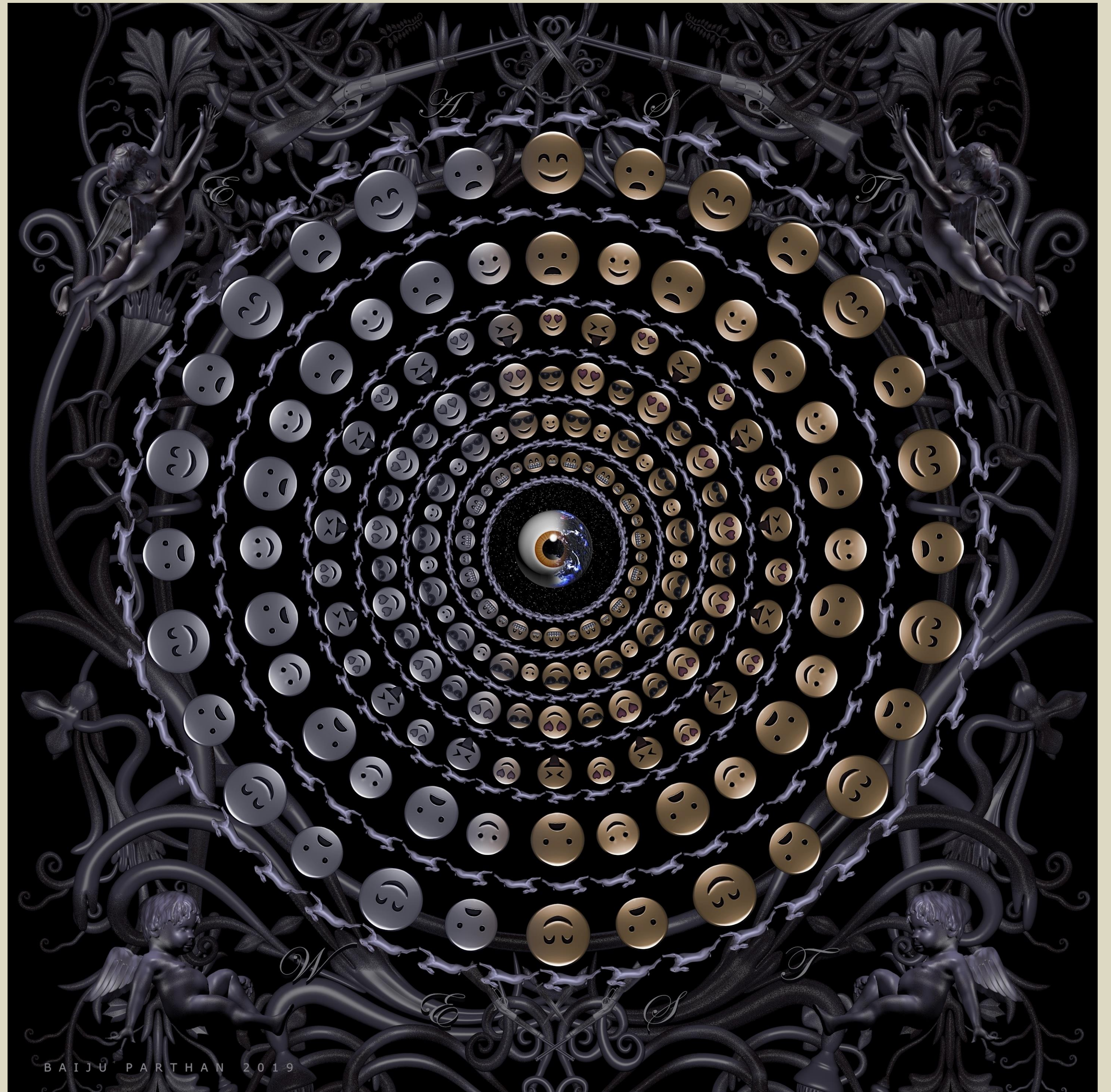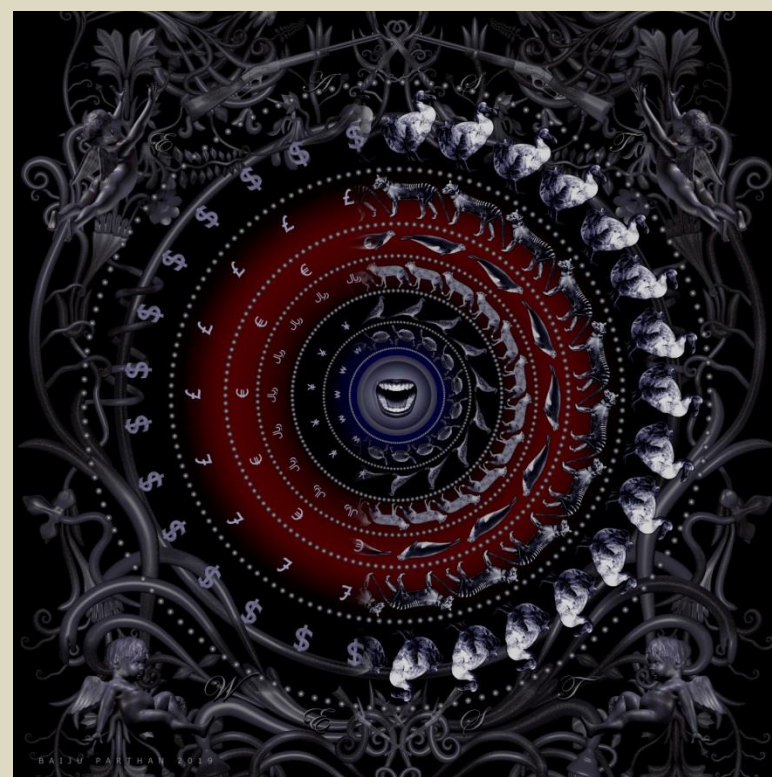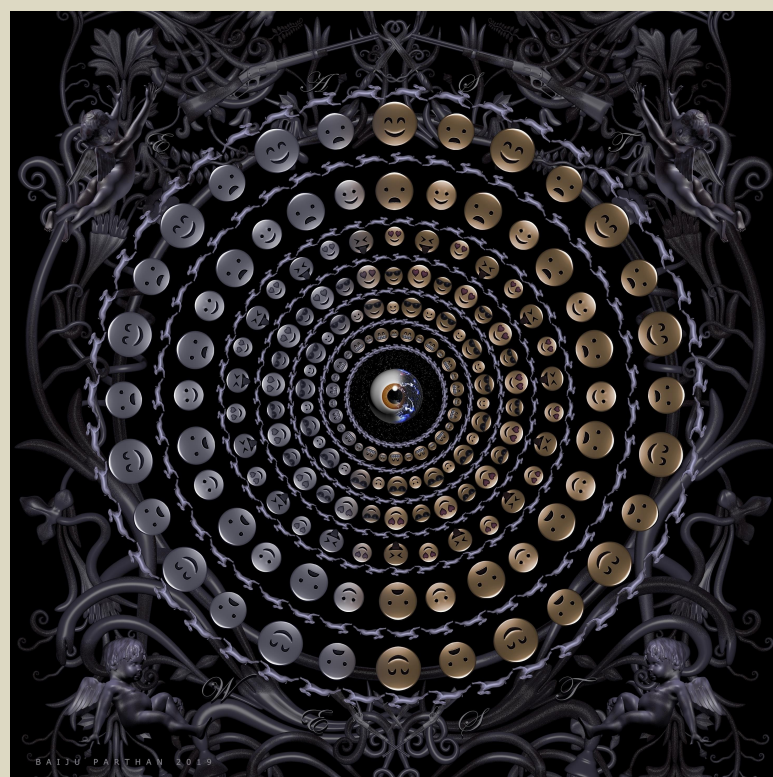
Wheel of Fortune -Rabbit Hole
animated 3d lenticular print
36" x 36", 2019

Wheel of Fortune - Anthropocene
animated 3d lenticular print
36" x 36", 2019

Wheel of Fortune - Anthropocene borrows the symbolism of the tenth card in the Major Arcana of the Tarot called 'The Wheel of Fortune' which intimates the arrival of unexpected changes in the present and immediate future. This artwork speaks about the epoch of 'Anthropocene' where human activity driven by the view that the planet is simply a source for raw materials to fuel economic growth has irrevocably altered the biosphere and the environment. The artwork presents organisms that have gone extinct in the last 150 years or so as a result of human economic activity. These are presented as an animated flip layer that reveals an underlying web of high value currency symbols. *Wheel of Fortune - Rabbit Hole* also borrows the symbolism of the tenth card in the Major Arcana of the Tarot called 'The Wheel of Fortune' that suggests the arrival of unexpected changes in the present and immediate future. This artwork speaks about how the utopian vision of a connected global village has devolved into a rabbit hole that leads not into a wonderland, but into a dystopian panopticon of data surveillance, cyber warfare, and social media reality bubbles that are dismantling the apparently cohesive world as we have had in the relatively recent past.

Big Data (Cloud -03)
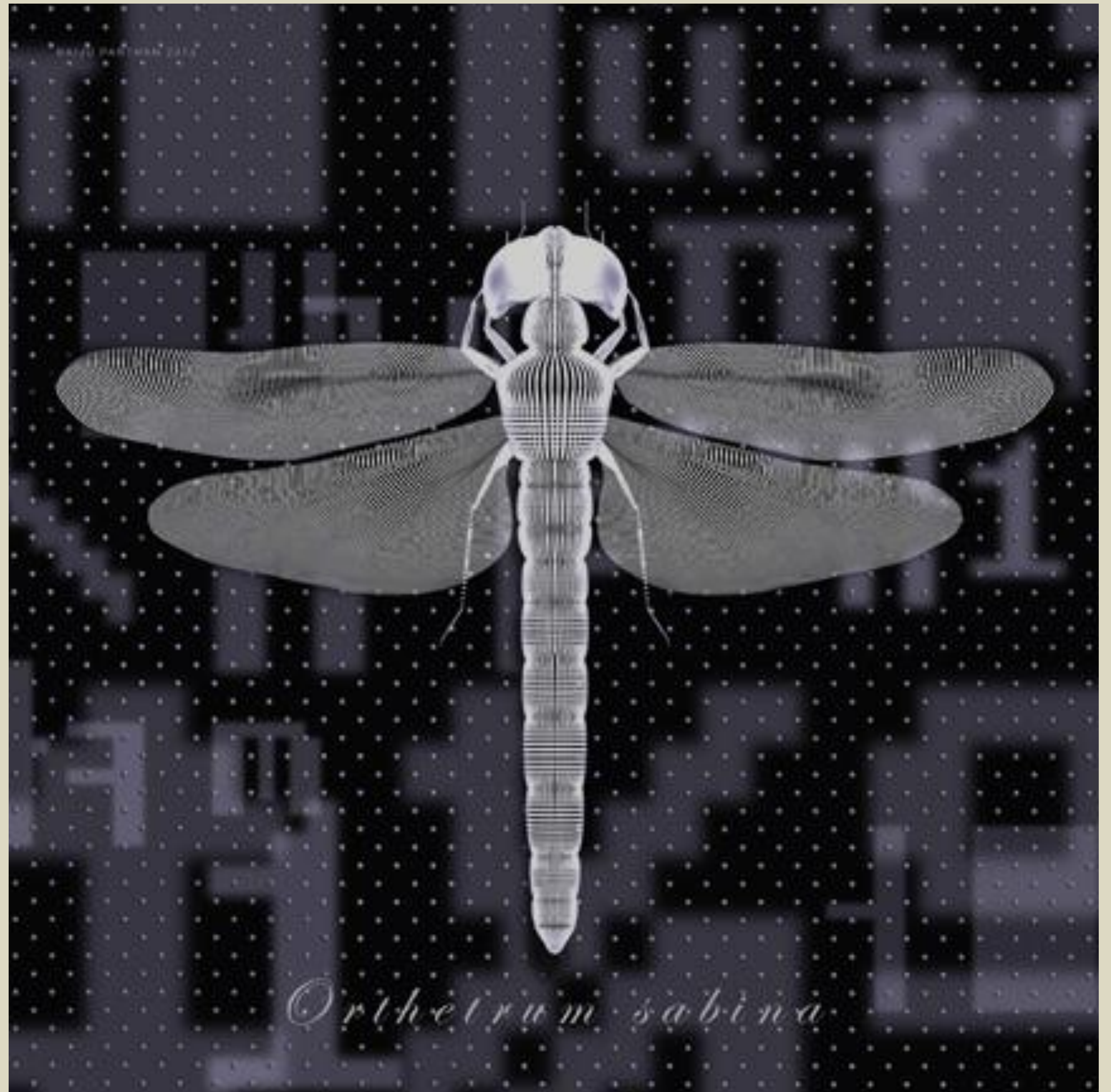animated 3D lenticular print
40" x 40", 2016

Big Data (cloud series) is a series animated lenticular prints created with 3D graphics software, and is about the present every day reality that is shaped by gargantuan data bases speed across server farms that constitute what we know as the 'cloud' which is at the core of cloud computing. The artwork is a visual representation of spread sheets that hold details of databases containing a multitude of items that blend and morph into each other, and are defined only when you specifically search for an item. The artwork suggests a world cocooned within invisible data clouds items and data that define personal identity of individuals, along with items of commerce, and also war, invisible to the human eye but are ever present as an electromagnetic field surrounding us all the time.
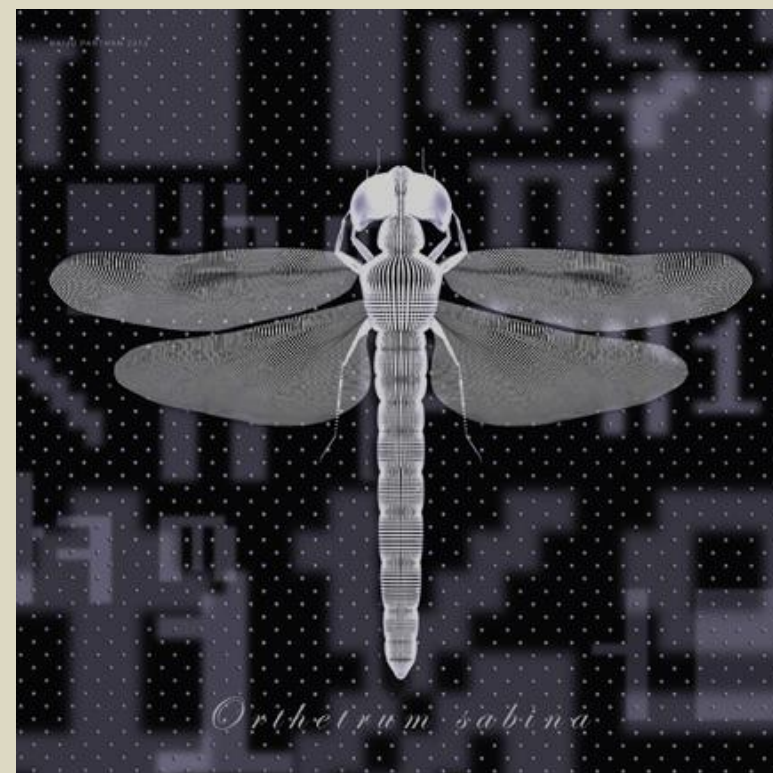
Process - D - Anisoptera Matallicis
animated 3D lenticular print
36" x 36", 2014

Process - D - Orthetrum Sabina
animated 3D lenticular print
36" x 36", 2013

Anisoptera Matallicis - These works belong to a series that is a parody of Carolus Linnaeus Taxonomic classification of species. Here the common Asian dragonfly (Species name: Othretrum Sabina) is re-imagined as cybernetic virtual organisms sculpted using 3D software. The medium of stereoscopic lenticular printing with its illusion of spatial depth becomes the perfect platform to present these virtual organisms.

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MEMENTO MORT

Elephas maximus indicus

Golden Tusker (Process E)
animated 3D lenticular print
36" x 36", 2013

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Barramundi - Process 'B' 2
3D geometry array animated lenticular print
36" x 36", 2013

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Deposition and Testimony - A
3D rendering, animated lenticular print
36" x 30", 2013

Deposition and Testimony: This artwork tries embodying the sentiment belonging to the art historical tradition of 'Memento mori' art, a genre of art which is a comment on the human drive to covet power and sensual pleasure while being deliberately oblivious of the inherent mortality of human existence. The animated print is an oblique critique on genetically modifying the biosphere and the negative fallout that follows such an activity. *Testimony and Deposition* is created entirely out of virtual objects presented within an illusory three dimensional stage and relies on viewer's location to resolve itself as an interactive artwork.

Eden - 01
animated 3D lenticular print
36" x 27", 2017

Eden 02 (Vicissitudes of Knowledge)
animated 3D lenticular print
36" x 27", 2017

Vicissitudes of knowledge - Eden is a series of lenticular prints that attempt a retelling of the symbolism associated with the mythical garden of Eden and the tree that bears the fruit of knowledge. Through this retelling the artist is reflecting upon our endeavour to bring forth a digital utopia through high technology. This series positions the internet as the archetypal tree of knowledge at the centre of an emerging digital utopia. The fruits of knowledge this emerging tree bears become agents of disruption reshaping traditional social, political, and existential foundations. Vicissitudes of knowledge is a theme the artist has explored often to suggest how information and knowledge shapes our perception and experience of reality.

Red Pill Blue Pill -Elixir For Bosschaert - A
3D Rendering, animated lenticular print
36" x 22.5", 2018

Red Pill-Blue Pill (Elixir for Bosschaert) belongs to a series of 3 works have their main motif borrowed from a still-life painting by Dutch old master Ambrosius Bosschaert. The still-life painting was recreated as a 3-Dimensional virtual object apparently undergoing alchemical transmutation. The artwork itself is made of objects sculpted using 3D software and presented as a triptych of 3D stereoscopic prints. The main thrust or intention of this art work is to bridge the distinct and separate domains of the 'Virtual' and 'Real' into an aesthetic experience. This work also refers to the ancient 'science' of alchemy and the transmutation of base material into gold. The artist is implying that digital technology and digitization with its potential to dissolve and transform reality is akin to the alchemical 'Alkahest', a universal solvent that supposedly has the ability to dissolve all known matter. The dissolved matter can then be transmuted to a higher state through applying an Elixir made from the fabled 'Philosophers Stone'. Hence the title *Elixir for Bosscahert*. The *Red Pill Blue Pill* element is a reference to the Cyberpunk movie classic 'The Matrix', where the blue pill gave you access to a life of oblivion in virtual Utopia, while the red pill gave you access to the apocalyptic desert of the real.

Cluster-Q-R-S-T-Quality-Race-Symbol-Time
animated 3D lenticular print
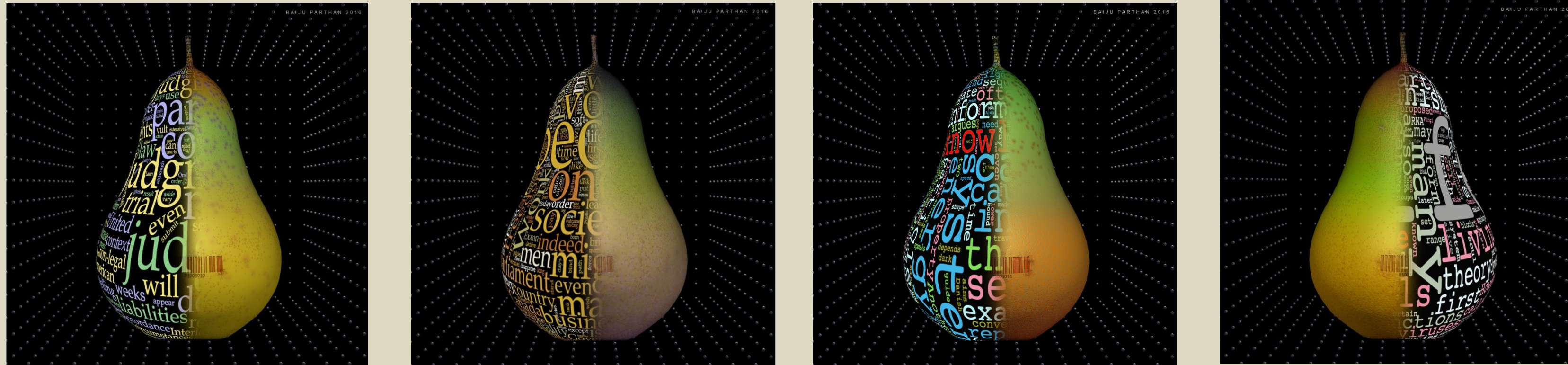40" x 40", 2019

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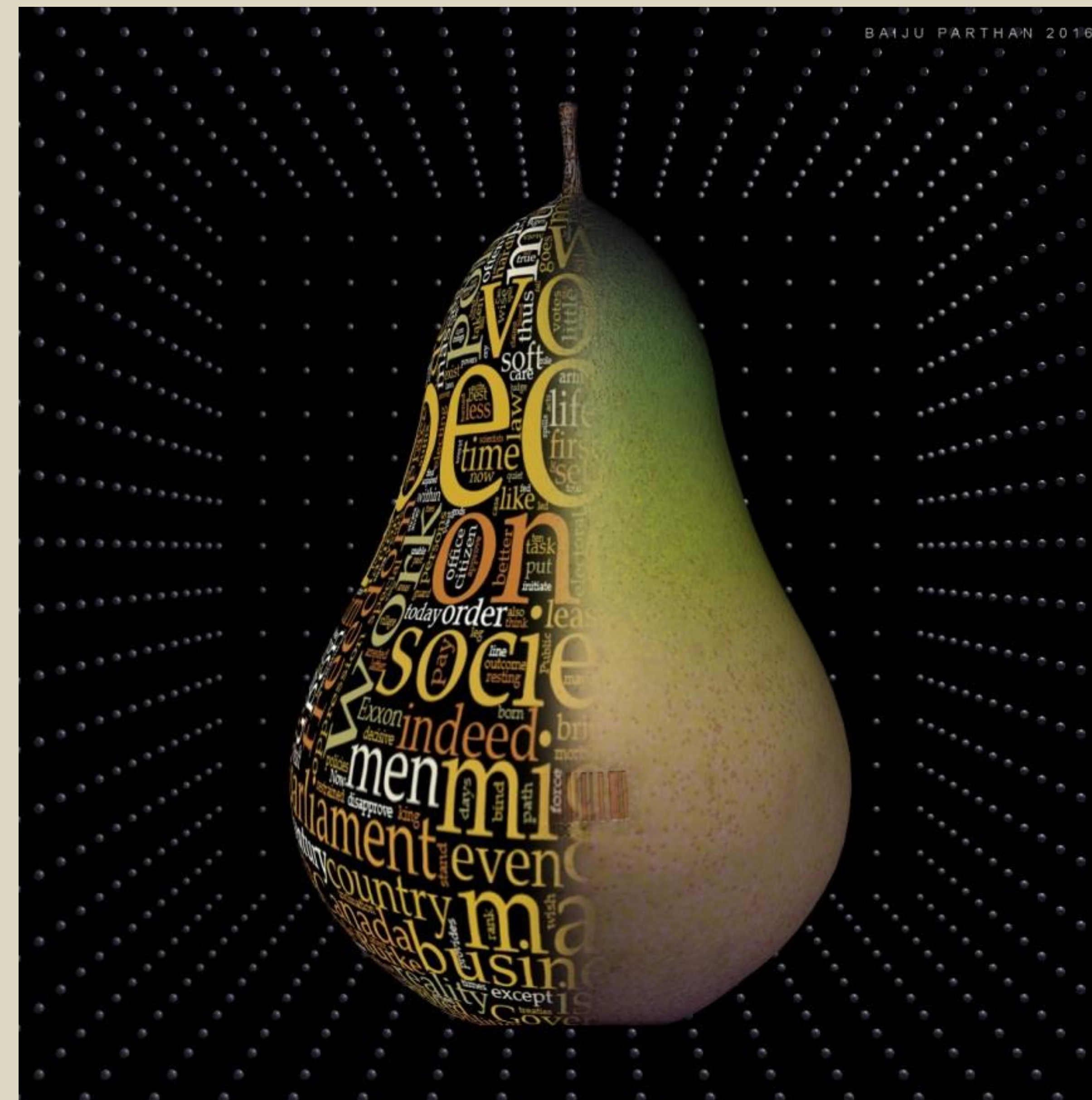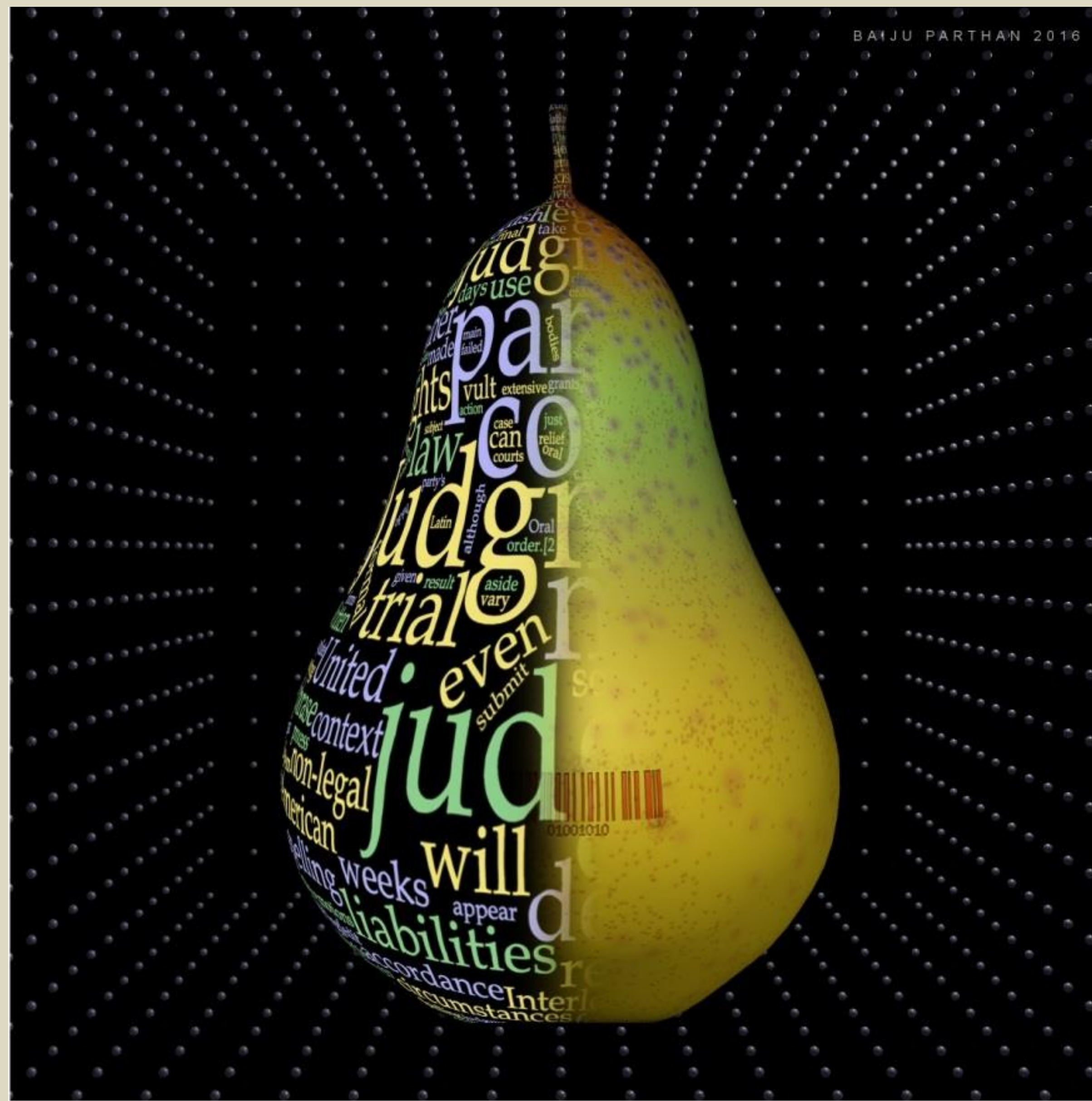
Fructus Nubes (series)
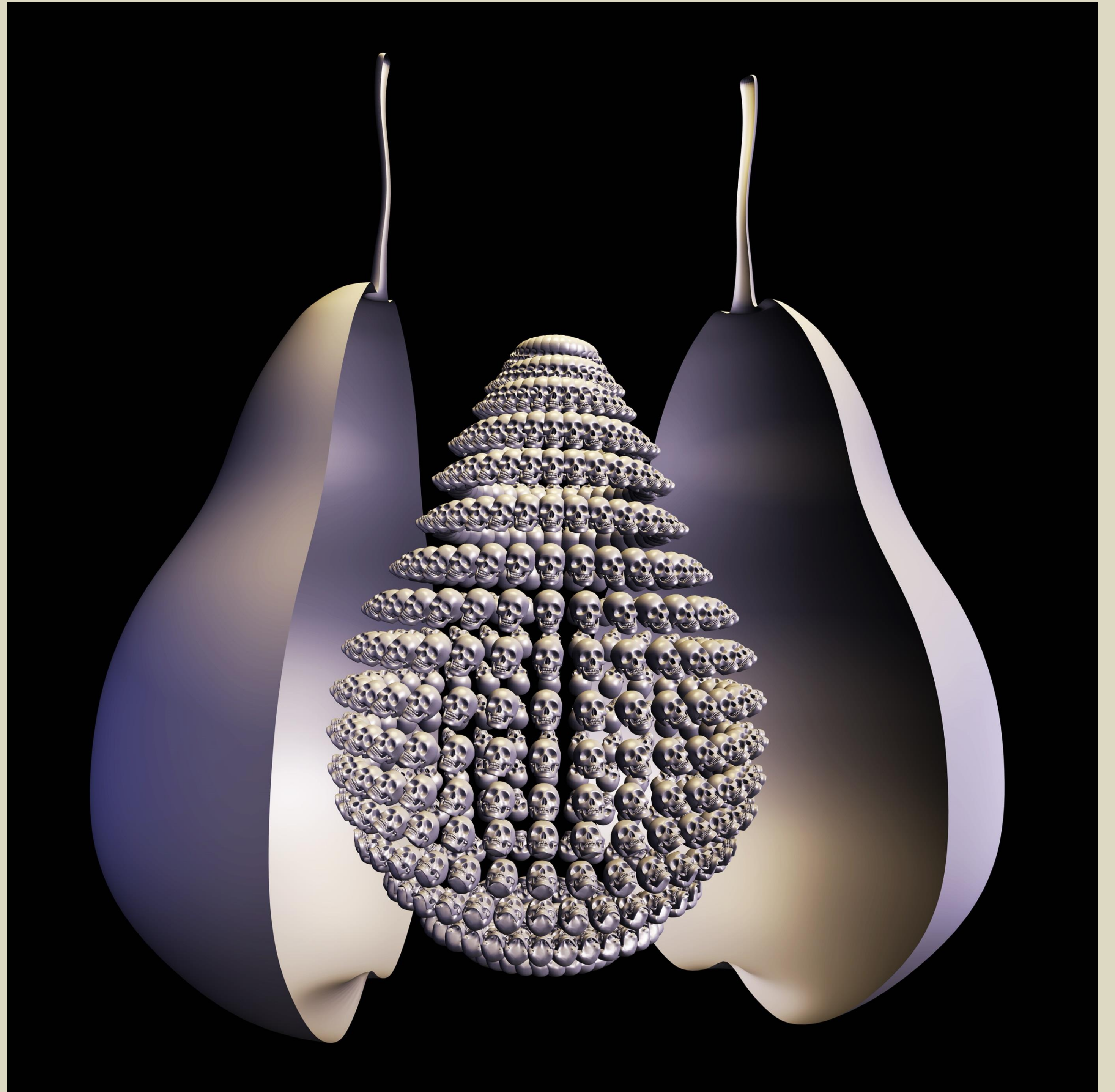animated 3D lenticular print
22" x 22", 2016

Fructus Nubes (series)
animated 3D lenticular print
22" x 22", 2016

Fructus Nubes is a work about 'tag clouds' which is a graphical interface made of key words extracted from the content of web pages, especially blogs. it is more or less like a visual summary of the content of a web page. This series of 12 prints is titled *Fructus Nubes* which is Latin for 'Fruit Cloud'. In this artwork the internet is imagined as a tree with countless branches, very much like the Mythical tree of knowledge, and tag clouds are presented as fruits borne by this tree across its innumerable branches. The artist has used a Latin name for the artwork, to reference the metaphysical qualities suggested in the metaphor of the tree of knowledge and its fruits.
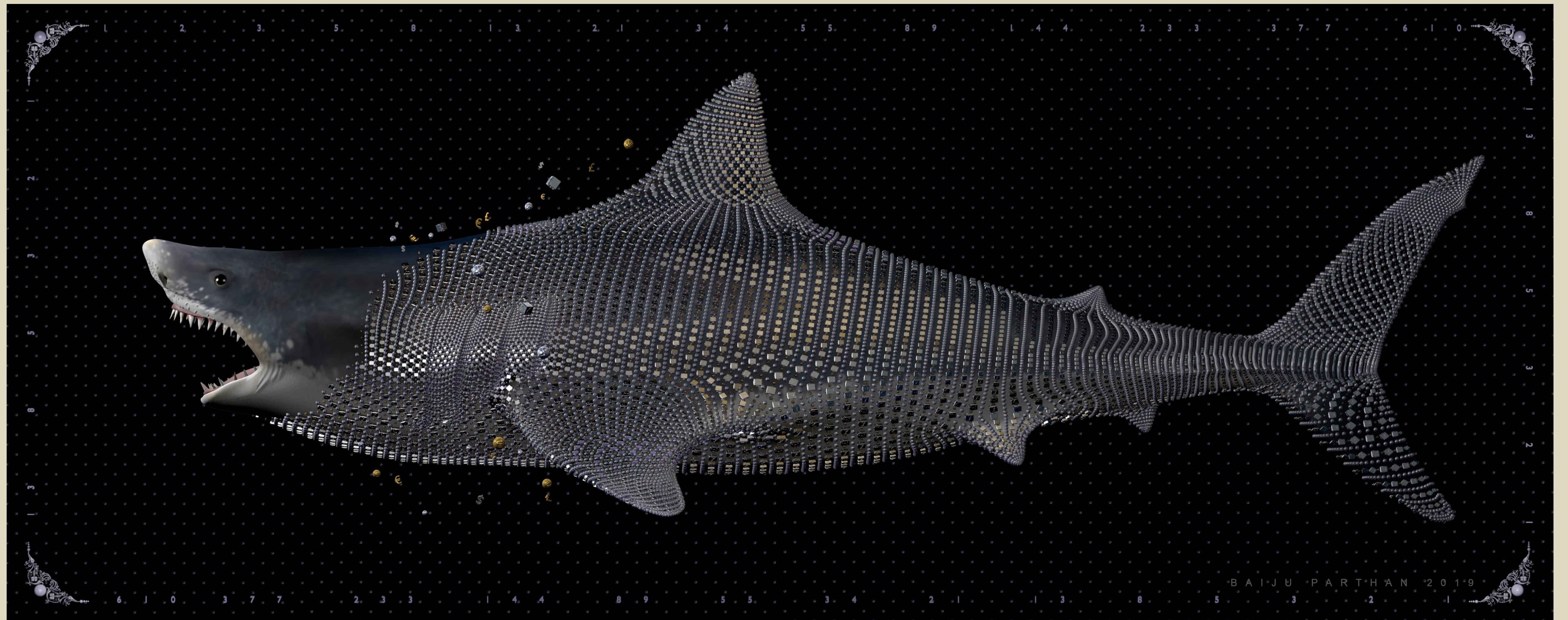
Engineered Fruit
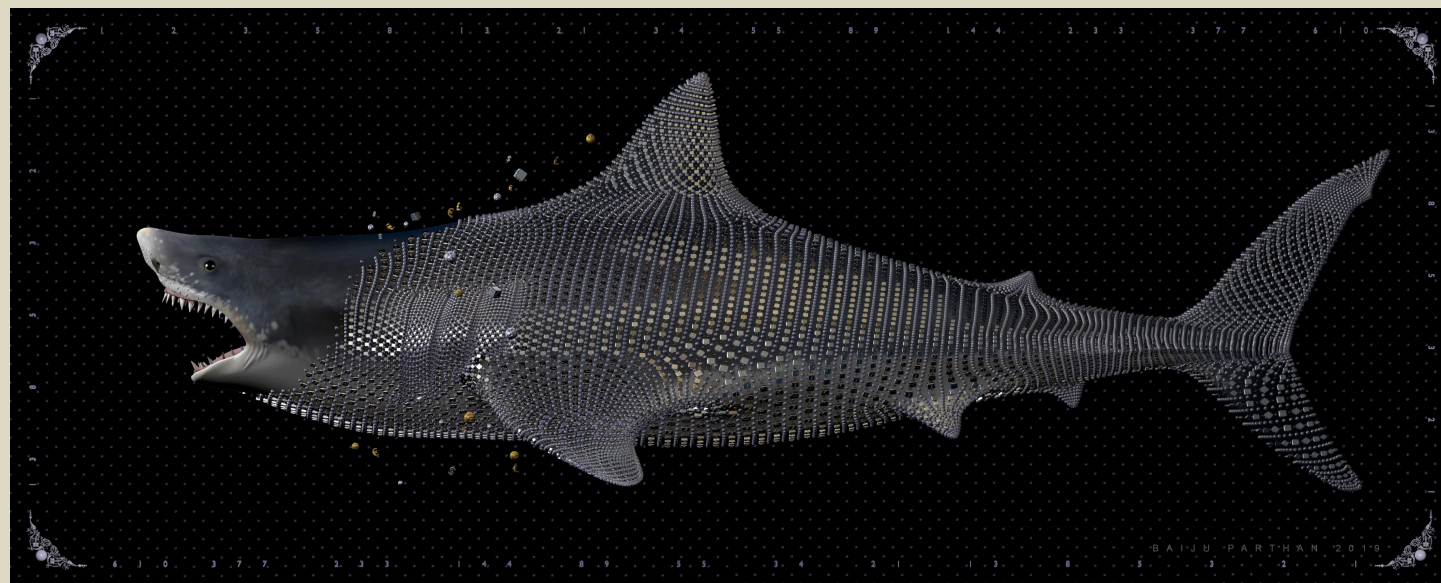animated 3D lenticular print
15" x 15", 2013

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Monument | Chorus - 2 | Eleventh-Hour-2
3D rendering & photography, lenticular print, 2011 & 2016
10" x 30" each
(These 3 are small size special editions)

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Reverse Sublimation - After D H
animated 3D lenticular print
36" x 90", 2019

Reverse sublimation - Reverse sublimation is a process where a gas directly turns into a solid through a sudden loss of heat energy. In normal conditions a gas as it gets cooled would first condense into a liquid and then turn into a solid. The artist has used reverse sublimation as a metaphor of transformation, that of an abstract idea or concept into a visible and palpable art object. This work is a reference to Damien Hirst's sculptural installation that uses a preserved dead shark floating in a tank as an art object that literally sublimates the physicality of inanimate flesh to become a most valuable and high priced collectible.

About Lenticular Prints & the Process

The lenticular prints displayed are a combination of 3D graphics and lenticular printing technology. The artist uses the open source software - Blender 3D, from Blender Institute, Amsterdam to create the 3D objects. The process is like sculpting in a virtual three dimensional space using software tools. Once the required 3D objects are generated in BLENDER, they are captured as images using virtual camera in multiple frames around a semicircle. These frame captures are then converted into lenticular prints using their proprietary software processing. Lenticular printing is a multi-step process consisting of creating an 'interlaced' image from multiple images, and combining it with a lenticular lens. Once the various images are collected, they are flattened into individual, different frame files, and then digitally combined into a single final file in a process called interlacing where the images are stripped into hairline strands and laid next to each other. The interlaced image is then bonded to a prismatic lens made of rows of minute prisms capable of refracting reflected light. The lenses are accurately aligned with the interlaces of the image, so that light reflected off each strip is refracted in a slightly different direction, and the reflected light from all the interlacing lines are sent as two sets aimed at each eye of the viewer. Both the eyes will combine the refracted images into the experience of stereoscopic 3D perception or a moving sequence of images depending on the artwork.

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