



Glass Sacred Geometries
Michal Macku

Wei-LingGallery

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20 November - 31 December 2020

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Michal Macku's '*Glass Sacred Geometries*', a series of glass objects that intersects both science and spirituality. While his previous series reflected on the questions surrounding human existence, this body of work observes the idea of God as creator through the theory of Sacred Geometry, so as to understand himself better as an artist, whose role is also to create. Although Sacred Geometry can be broken down into a language of mathematics, the artist decided to look at it beyond the rational, to try to understand its relationship to the human consciousness. Many forms found in nature can be understood through geometry, such as the Nautilus shell that takes the shape of a logarithmic spiral, or honeybees that construct cells in a hexagonal form, to store their honey. For many years, artists and architects have also implemented geometry in the design inspiration for various religious structures. Sacred Geometry can therefore refer to the language of our universe; naturally occurring patterns that unite different realities.

The artist's main inspiration behind this series was his direct relationship with nature, which he has nurtured through his travels to South America. His first visit was in 2012, to the land of the Shipibo people, an indigenous tribe who inhabit the area along the Ucayali River of the Amazon rainforest in Peru. In the following years, he returned to South America to learn the practice of traditional Amazonian healing at the Takiwasi, an NGO located in the city of Tarapoto, in the Peruvian High-Amazon region. The

teachings that he received in Takiwasi led him to the ancestral knowledge of physical, mental and spiritual healing, using medicinal and sacred plants of the region. During one of his visits, he also stayed with a Peruvian shaman, or what the South Americans call a "curandero". A curandero is a traditional native healer whose life is dedicated to inventing and sharing remedies for mental, emotional, physical and spiritual illness. His encounter with this curandero was a life-changing one, as it has influenced his perception on the principle of energy.

For the past 4 years, Michal Macku has also been traveling Colombia, starting from the forests in the Southern region, to the mountainous area in the Northern part of the country. All the time he spent there has made him realise the power of nature in bringing positivity and consciousness to human beings. The same way as how nature conveys the energy of its creator, he believes that art too, being a form of creation, has the power to mediate harmony from its creator to its preceptor. The artworks in this series feature different types of shells and two geometric cubes inspired by the Archimedean Solids; shapes constructed based on the Sacred Geometry principles. A series that expresses the happiness of life; and spreads positive vibrations to its surroundings.

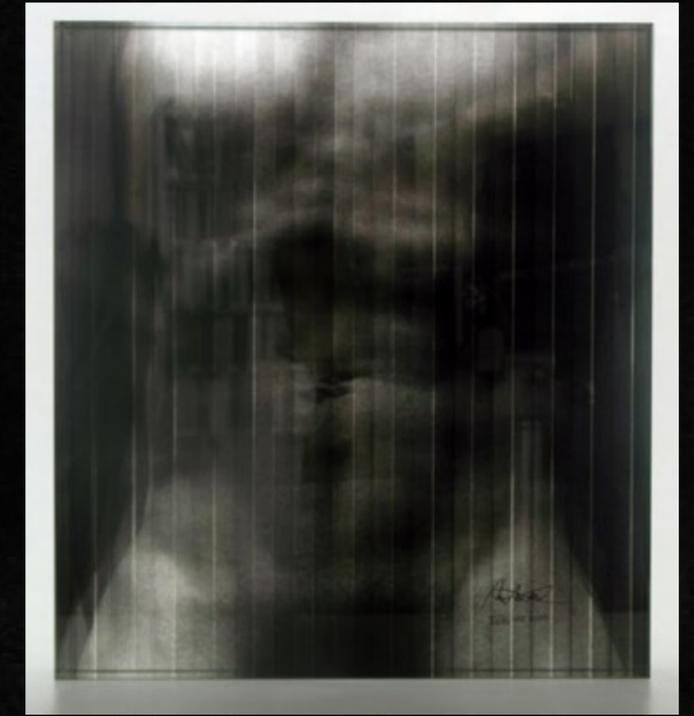


Glass Gellage No. XII
Glass & combined technique
25cm x 31cm x 3cm
edition 1/12
2008

The technique of my own invention called 'Gellage' consists of transfer the exposed and fixed photographic emulsion from its original base on paper. This is not a traditional photographic technique, but it is simple for example to the Polaroid transfer. I thought up also the name Gellage as a ligature of words 'collage' and 'gelatin'. This transparent and plastic gelatin substance makes it possible to reshape and reform the original images, changing their relationships and endowing them with new meanings during the transfer.

The finished work gives a compact image with a fine surface structure. The laborious technology, which often includes the use of more than one negative per image, makes it impossible to produce absolutely identical prints: each Gellage is an original work of art. The technique gives me almost unlimited possibility how to modify photographic image, how to combine more negatives into one final composition. And more – its only classical chemical photography – no digital work.

If there are people which want to share their energy with my – collect my work because they want it - I feel it just like a gift, like a blessing. The people give me their energy to continue my work. It is only my responsibility to stay faithful on my outlook and not to prostitute my soul for money. Money is nor bad nor good: it is only a symbol, a symbol of energy sharing among people.



Glass Gellage No. XX
Glass & combined technique
25cm x 31cm x 3cm
edition 4/12
2009

My works can be categorized into three things: Gellages, Carbon prints and Glass objects. I like the stylization of black and white, the play of light and dark. I like the graphic outlook which gives to our minds wide space for its own creativity. I don't feel black and white just like an absence of color but like a very specific way of expression with deep tradition. I like for example black and white movies too.

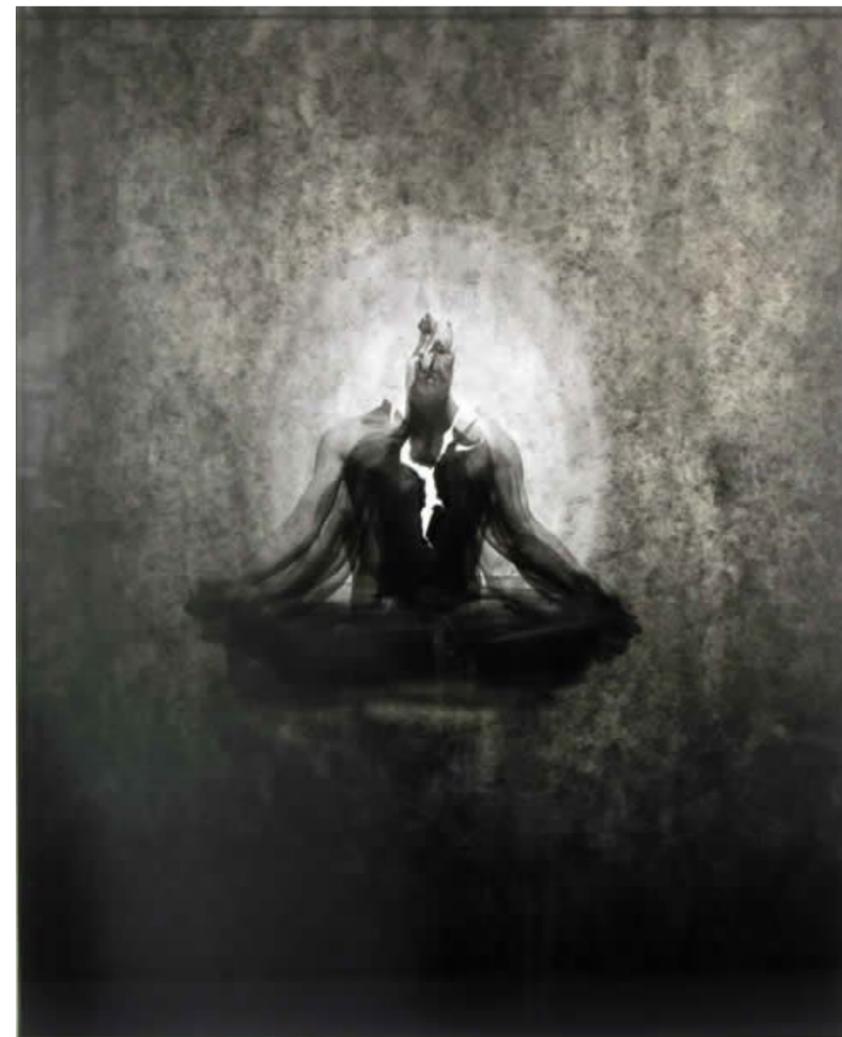
In most cases, the subject of my photographs is my body itself, or parts of it. My body is my unique physical possession. Fascinating in its contrasts of perfection, complicatedness and its fragility and transitory nature. My body is the vehicle for all of my perceptions. My body as a temple for my soul and a prison for my soul. The most complicated and most intimate object I can explore and discover.

Object and subject of my work, both at the same time. I am not trying to create my version of autobiography. But yes, many of the works mean some concrete story for me, experience, meeting, relationship.

The relationship with others is important: I can communicate with others fully and with no problems. But when I work I must be alone. The inspiration is coming to me when I am alone, concentrated at my work or meditating.

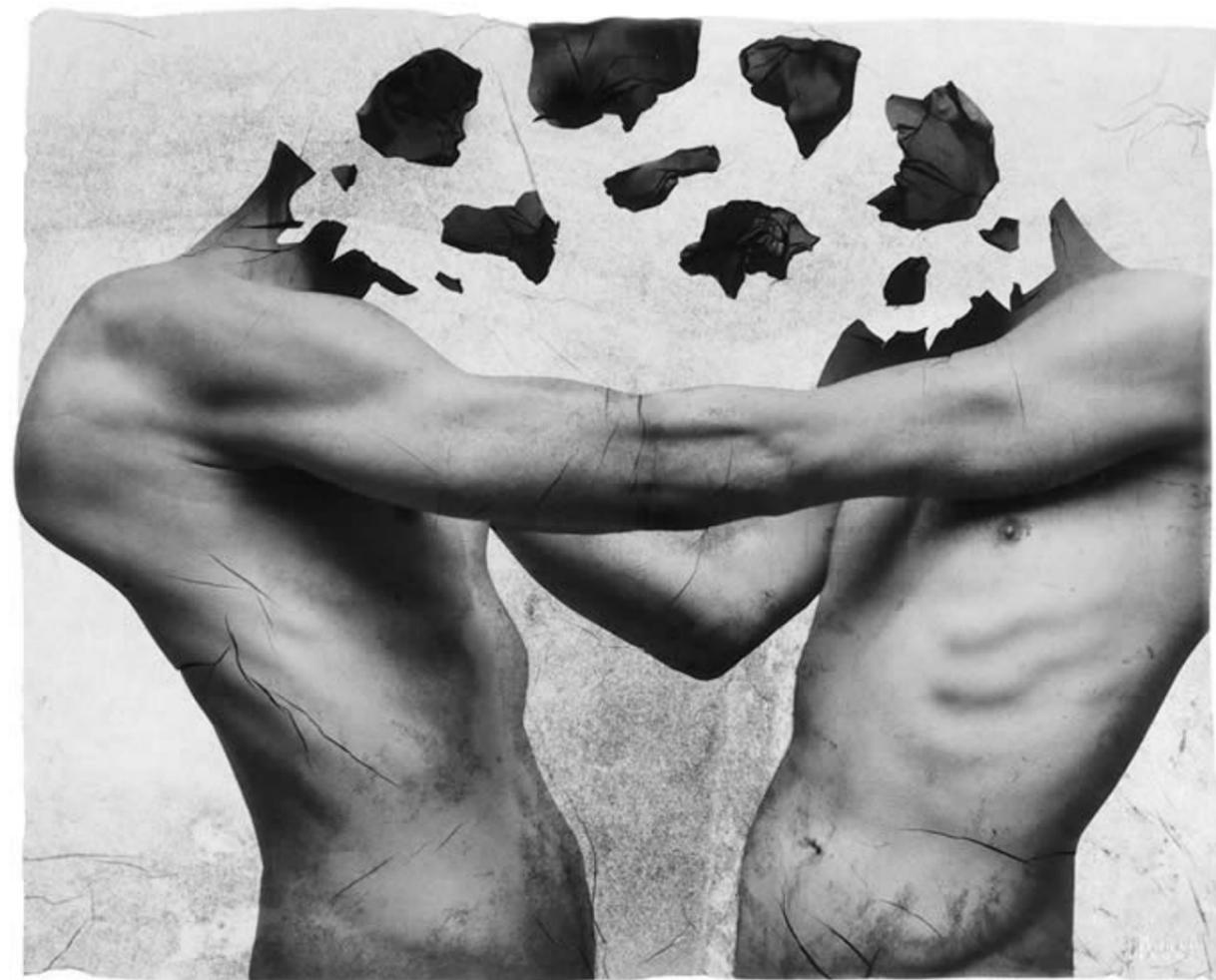
With the technique of Gellage, I also made an animated film, in collaboration with the Czech Television Brno: it was my idea to use the Gellage technique for animating the photographic image. I had also an idea for screenplay. So I tried. But there is too much animation everywhere around me last years. I am afraid I don't have enough energy to try for it now. I don't know, what will come in future. Let's see. I have actively been taking part in solo and group exhibitions every year since 1990, and to many places, in Europe and the United States. It is great to meet people, which like my work. I am happy, when people react to my work or positively, or negatively. It's always better then indolence.

Michal Macku



Glass Gellage No. XVIII

Glass & combined technique
25cm x 31cm x 3cm
edition 2/12
2008



Untitled - Gellage No. 69
Manipulated Silver Print on paper
66cm x 79cm
2008

GELLAGE

Since the end of 1989, Michal Macku has used his own creative technique which he has named “Gellage” (the ligature of collage and gelatin).

The technique consists of transfer the exposed and fixed photographic emulsion from its original base on paper. This transparent and plastic gelatin substance makes it possible to reshape and reform the original images, changing their relationships and endowing them with new meanings during the transfer. The finished work gives a compact image with a fine surface structure. Created on photographic quality paper, each Gellage is a highly durable print eminently suited for collecting and exhibiting.

The laborious technology, which often includes the use of more than one negative per image, makes it impossible to produce absolutely identical prints: Each Gellage is an original work of art. The artist does make at least 12 signed and numbered prints of each image.

Michal Macku talks about his work: “I use the nude human body (mostly my own) in my pictures. Through the photographic process [of Gellage], this concrete human

body is compelled to meet with abstract surroundings and distortions. This connection is most exciting for me and helps me to find new levels of humanness in the resulting work.

I am always seeking new means of expression and, step by step, I am discovering almost unlimited possibilities through my work with loosened gelatin. Photographic pictures mean specific touch with concrete reality for me, one captured level of real time. The technique of Gellage which I am using helps me to take one of these “time sheets” and release a figure, a human body, from it, causing it to depend on time again. Its charm is similar to that of cartoon animation, but it is not a trick. It is very important for me to be aware of the history of a picture and to have a sense of direct contact with its reality. My work places “body pictures” in new situations, new contexts, new realities, causing their “authentic” reality to become relative. I am interested in questions of moral and inner freedom. I do what I feel, and only then do I begin to meditate on what the result is. I am often surprised by the new connections I find in it. Naturally, I start out with a concrete intention, but the result is often very different. And there, I believe, lies a hitch. One creates to communicate what can not be expressed in any other way. Then comes the need to describe, to define.”



Untitled - Carbon Print No. 38
 Historical carbon Print on paper
 30cm x 35cm
 2004

CARBON PRINTS

Since 2000 Macku uses also other historical photographic techniques in combination with the technique GELLAGE. After experiments with heliogravure, platinum and kallitype he mastered technique of carbon printing. He was provided for working with original negatives of a real master of this technique and one of the legend of Czech photography - worldwide well known photographer Frantisek Drtikol.

The carbon prints are sized approx. 35x30 cm (14x12"), on a top quality graphic watermark paper, stamped and signed and the edition of each motif is limited to 24 numbered copies.

About the CARBON technique

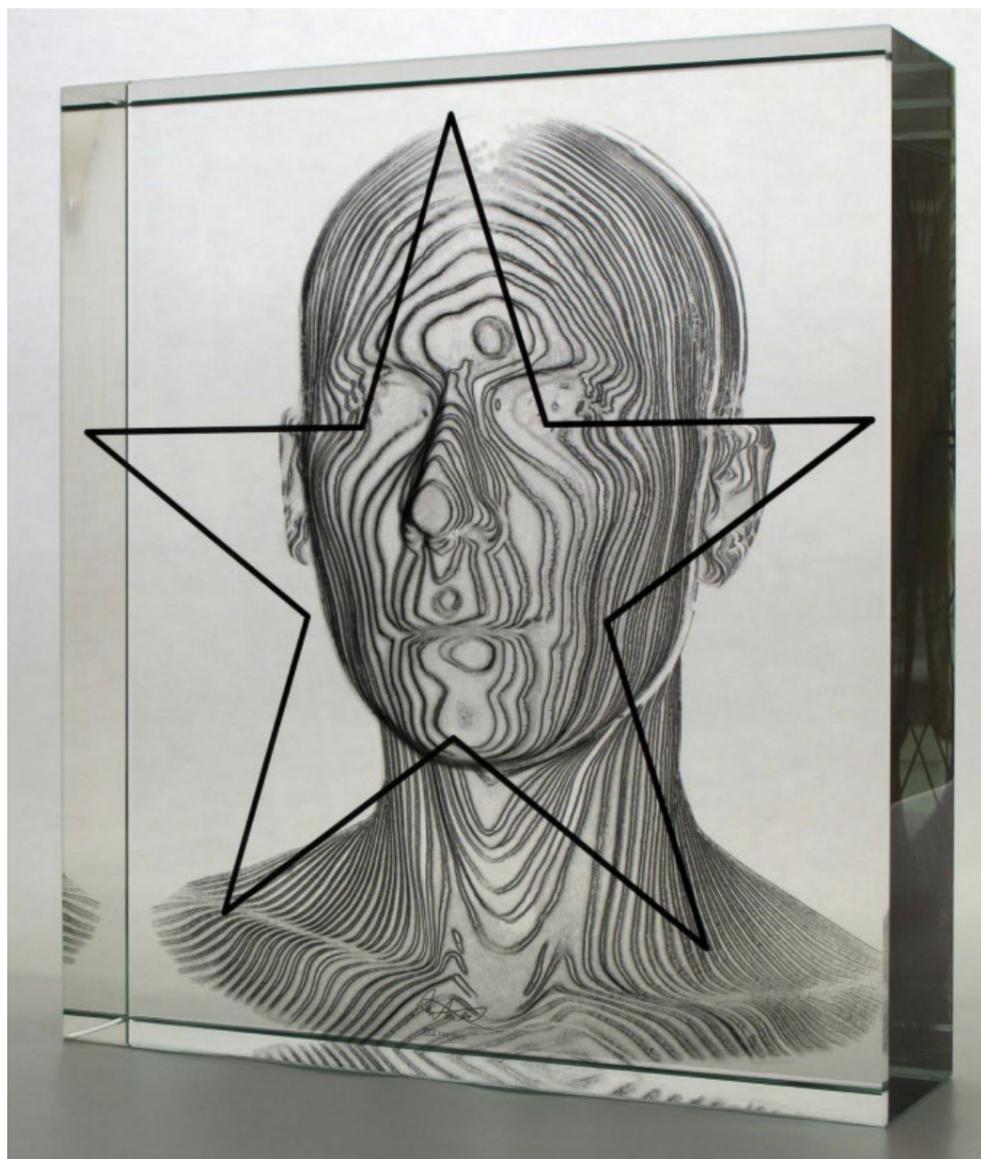
Text from book called: The Book of Carbon and Carbro:
 Contemporary Procedures for Monochrome Pigment Printmaking.
 For more information contact author: Sandy King

In versatility and range of possibilities, carbon is a superb process. It is capable of presenting images with a wide range of image characteristics, of virtually any color or tone, and on a wide variety of surfaces. During the entire period of its history when it co-existed with other commercial processes in the second half of 19th century, carbon was considered

the aristocrat of printing processes. Carbon prints were more costly than those produced by other processes, about twice as expensive as platinum and three to five times as much as silver. On the other hand, the technique is very difficult to work. But once mastered, carbon process offers a range of possibilities not available with any other photographic system, and difficult to, if not impossible, to duplicate.

The carbon process, like all pigment processes depends upon the fact that colloids (gelatin, gum, albumen, casein etc.), when applied to a suitable support, sensitized with a dichromate salt and activated by exposure to light change their physical characteristics in proportion to the intensity of the chemical or light. The process, called tanning or hardening, makes the colloid insoluble in hot water.

Carbon prints can be made to look virtually indistinguishable from silver prints. Because of their discernible relief, carbon images often have greater apparent sharpness than of silver prints. The archival qualities of carbon prints are superior to those derived from silver salt papers. The stability of carbon is limited only by the gelatin carrier and its paper base, making it the most stable of all photographic processes.



Glass Gellage No. XXX

Self portrait with pentagram
 Glass and combined technique
 37.5 cm x 42 cm x 9.8 cm
 edition 2/12
 2012

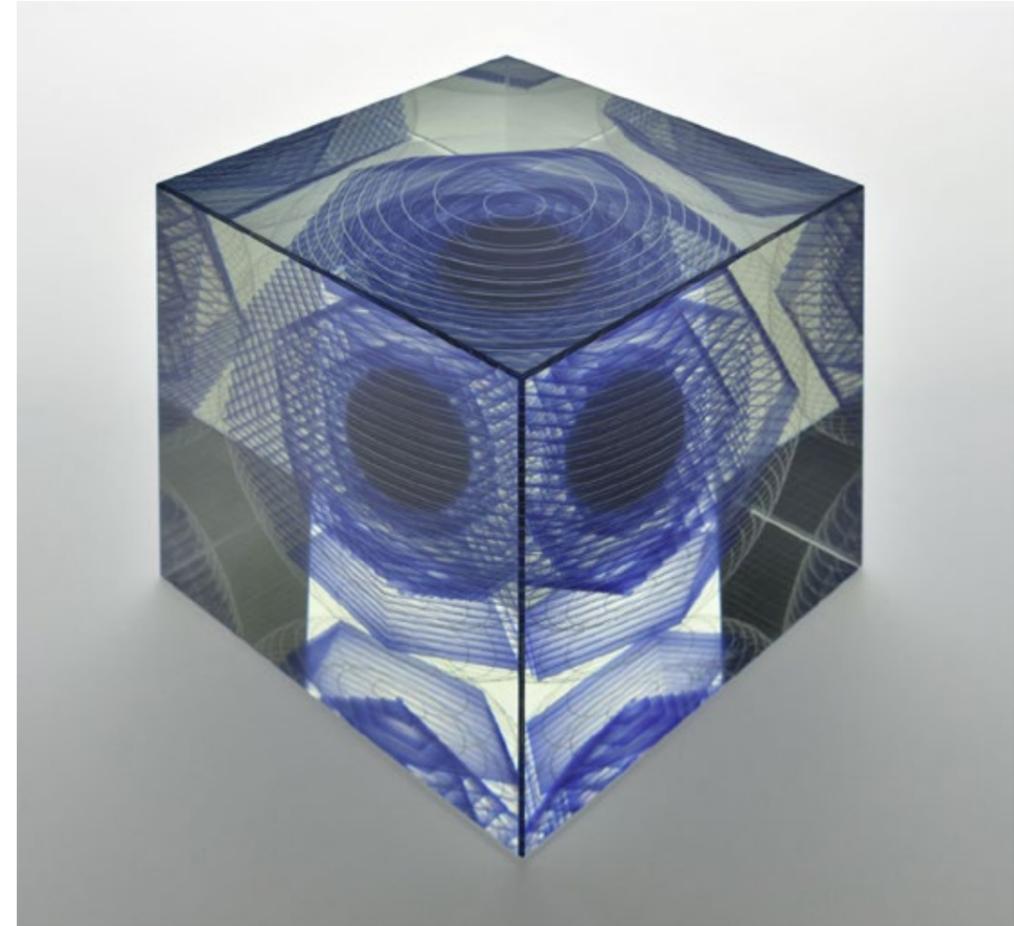
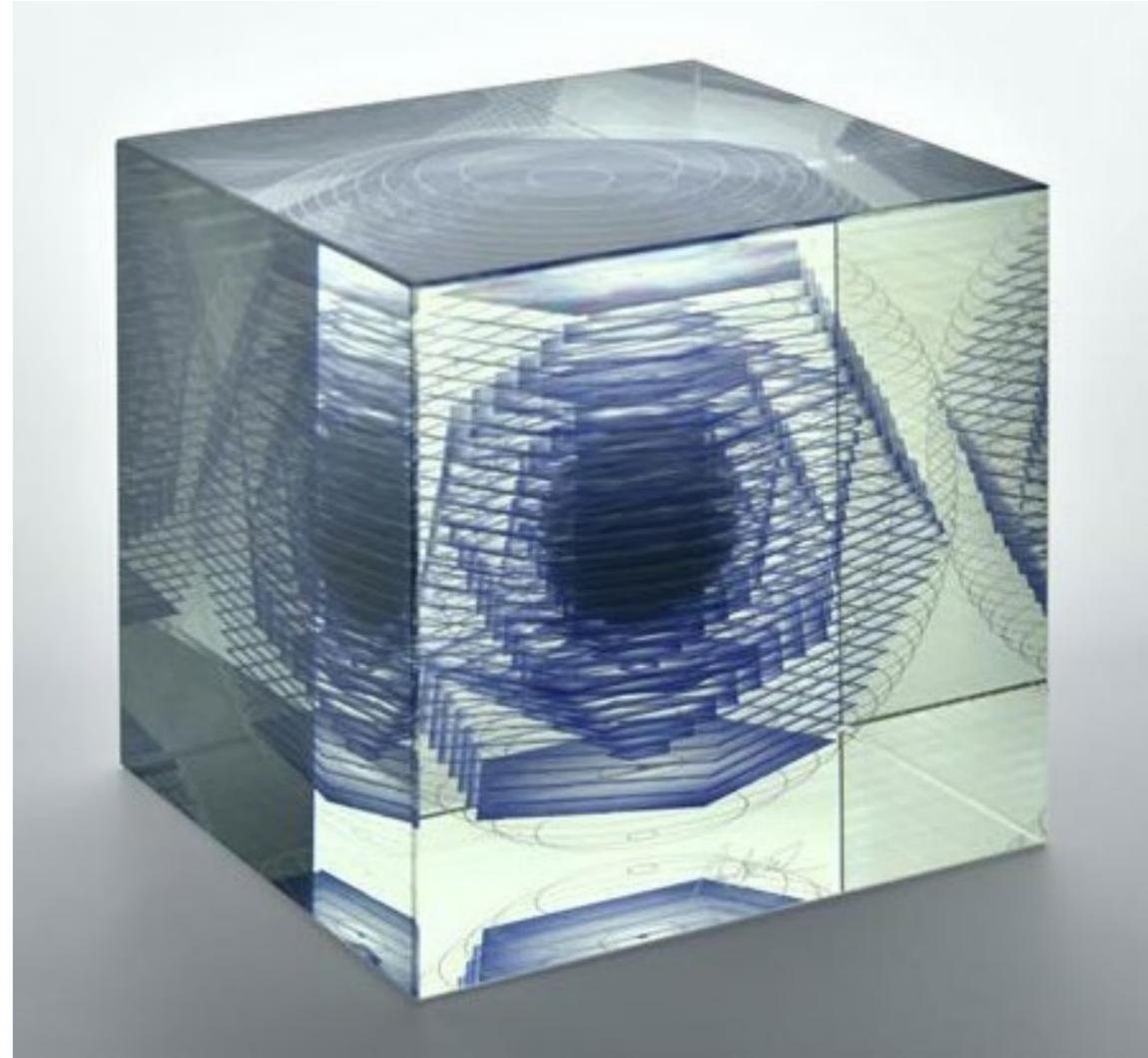
GLASS GELLAGE

In the second phase of his creative process Macku applies Gellage to a new material: the glass. So, he creates the 'Glass gellage': the artist really likes its transparency, which reminds him of the one of the gelatin, and at the same time lets him play with superimpositions. In his sculpturephotographies there's now the three-dimensionality, rendering his works even more expressive. In these new works the bodies seems to float in a dimension deprived of time and space, the subjects are less lacerated, the breaking is a less-recurring theme and, when present, it's far less dramatic.

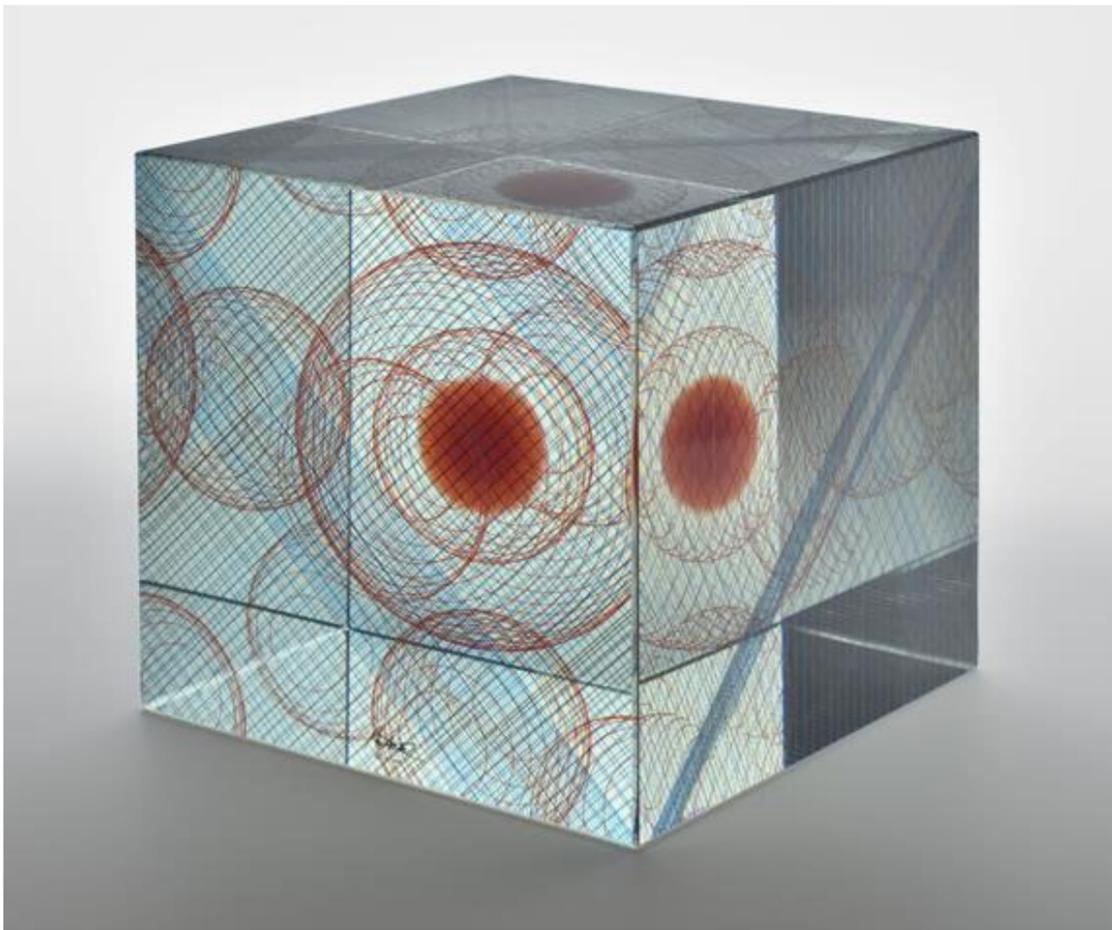
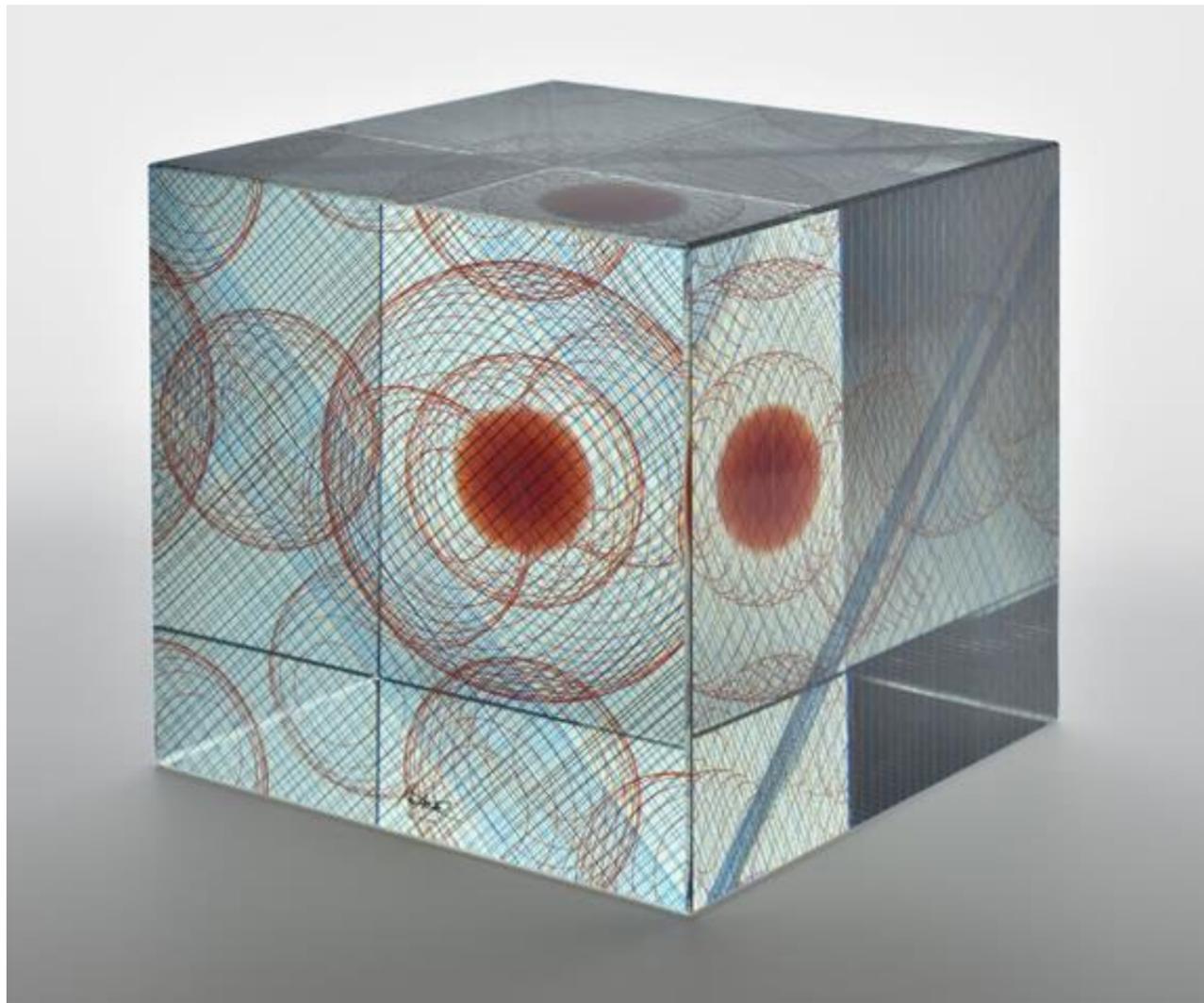


Glass object No. LII

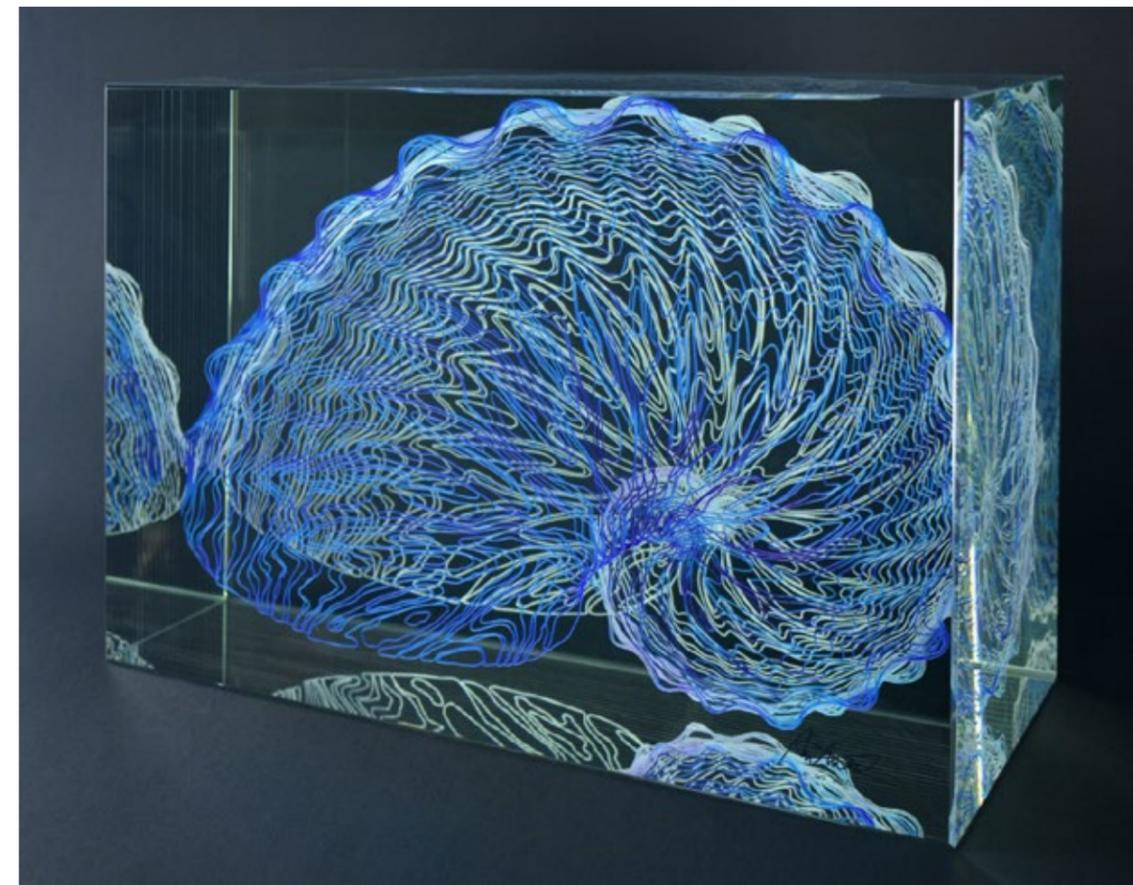
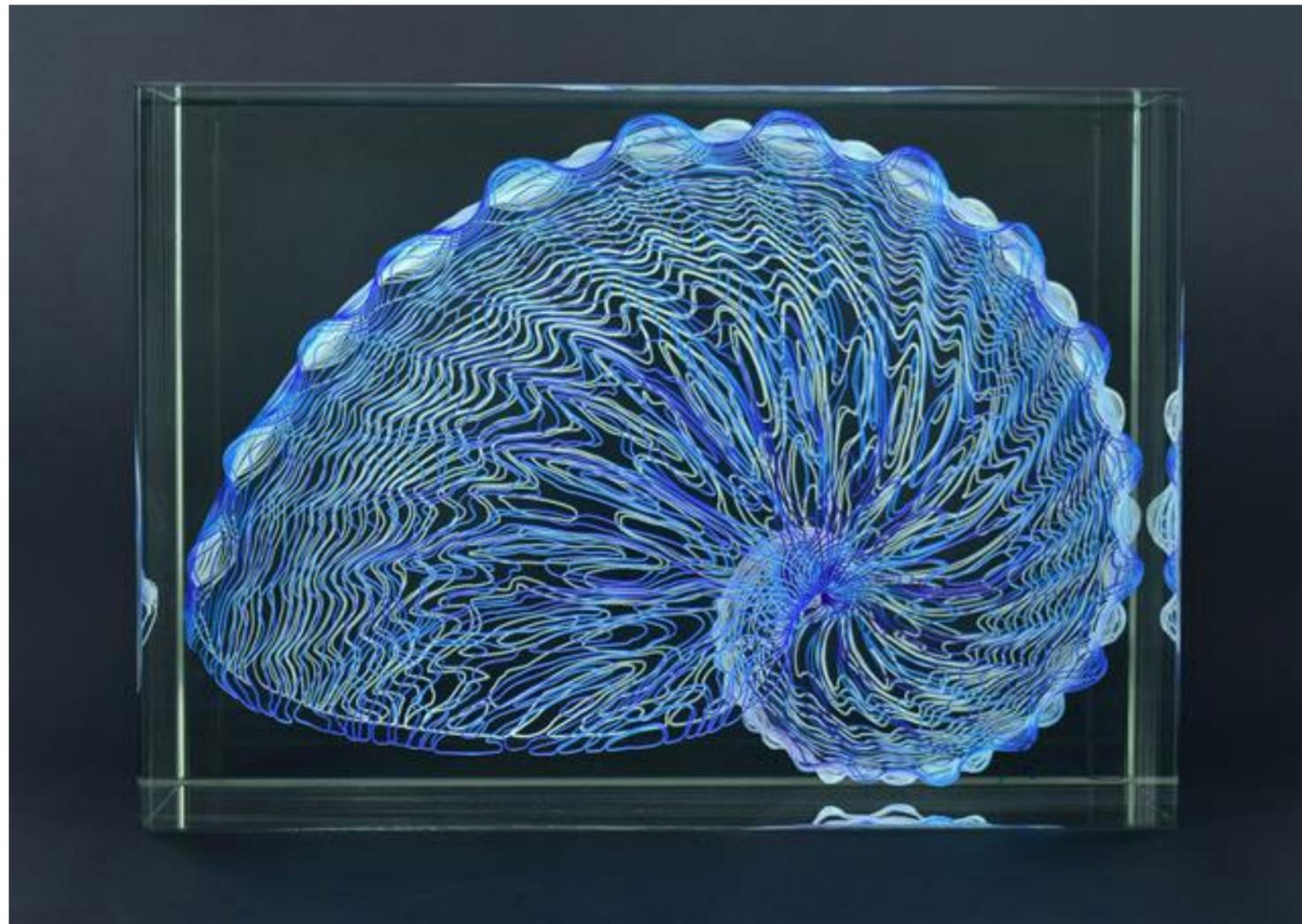
Nautilus shell, white lines with brown structures
Mixed media (Optical clear glass, nanopigment print)
33cm x 24cm x 14cm
edition 5/9
(2020) ©2016



Glass object No. LVI
Geometry blue
Mixed media (Optical clear glass, nanopigment print)
19cm x 19cm x 19cm
edition 3/9
(2020) ©2017



Glass object No. LIV
Geometry red
Mixed media (Optical clear glass, nanopigment print)
19cm x 19cm x 19cm
edition 3/9
(2020) ©2016



Glass object No.LXI
Argonauta Hians shell, blue
Mixed media (Optical clear glass, nanopigment print)
34cm x 24cm x 14cm
edition 4/9
(2020) ©2017



Glass object No. LXIII

Volva Volva Pink shell white
 Mixed media (Optical clear glass, nanopigment print)
 19cm x 63cm x 15cm
 edition 2/9
 (2020) ©2018



Glass object No. LXVII

Spirula spiral shell white lines with brown structures
 Mixed media (Optical clear glass, nanopigment print)
 38cm x 40cm x 8cm
 edition 1/9
 (2019) ©2019

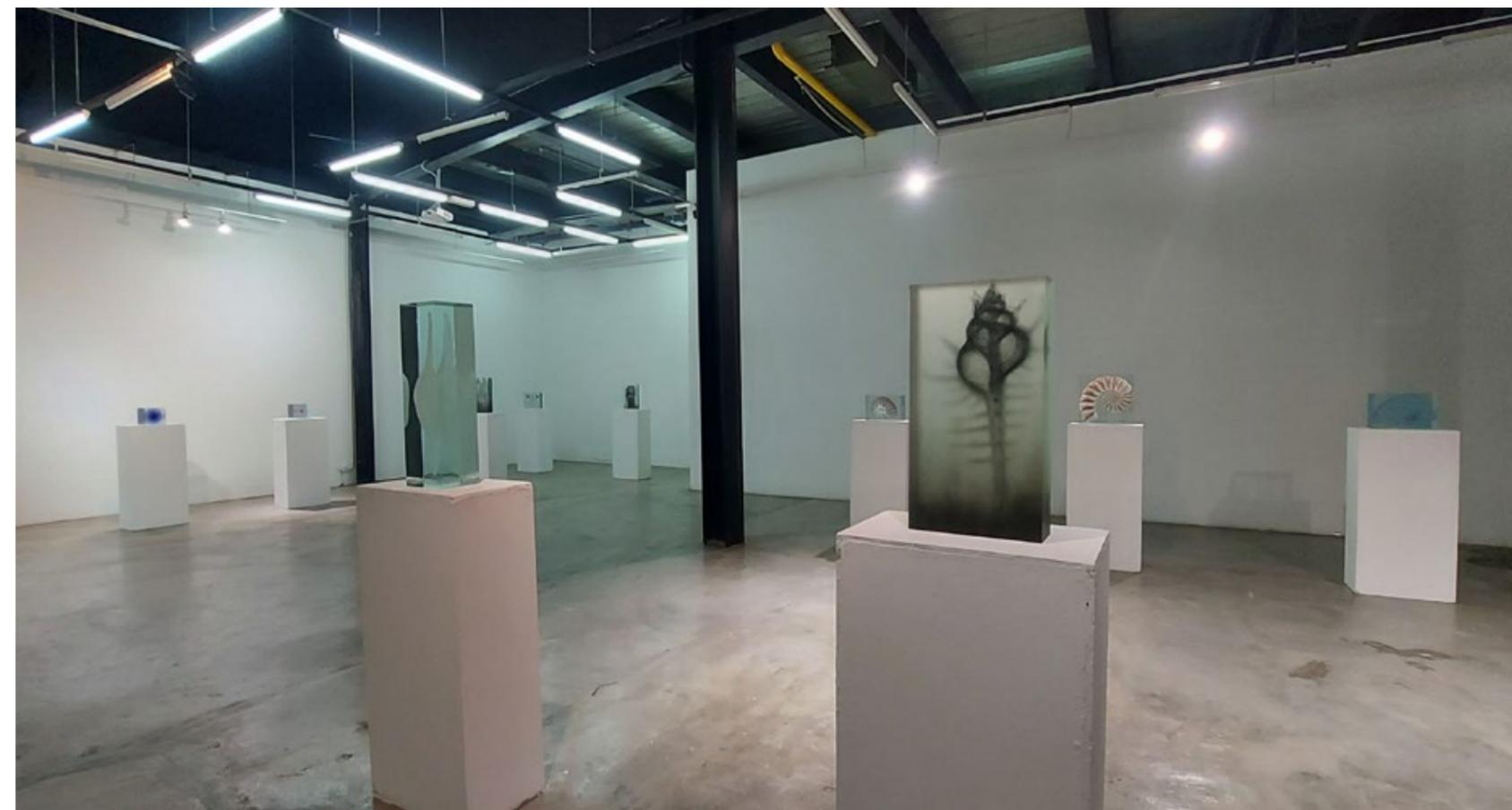


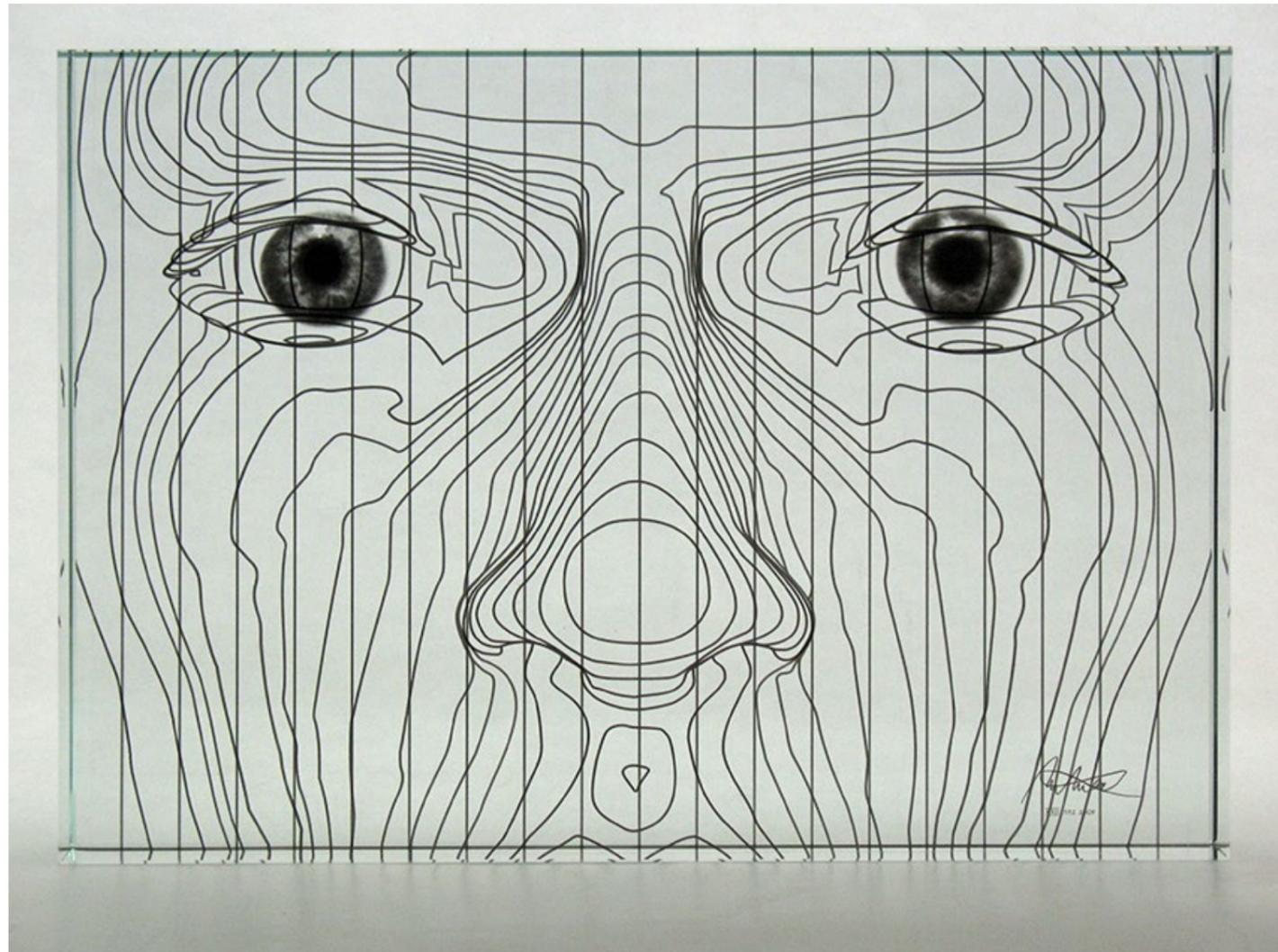
Glass object No. LXXII
Siratus Alabaster shell, white
Mixed media (Optical clear glass, nanopigment print)
20cm x 40cm x 15cm
edition 1/9
(2020) ©2020





Glass object No. XXXIV
 Murex Poppei shell, black
 Mixed media (Optical clear glass, nanopigment print, etched)
 29cm x 55cm x 10cm
 edition 2/9
 (2015) ©2011

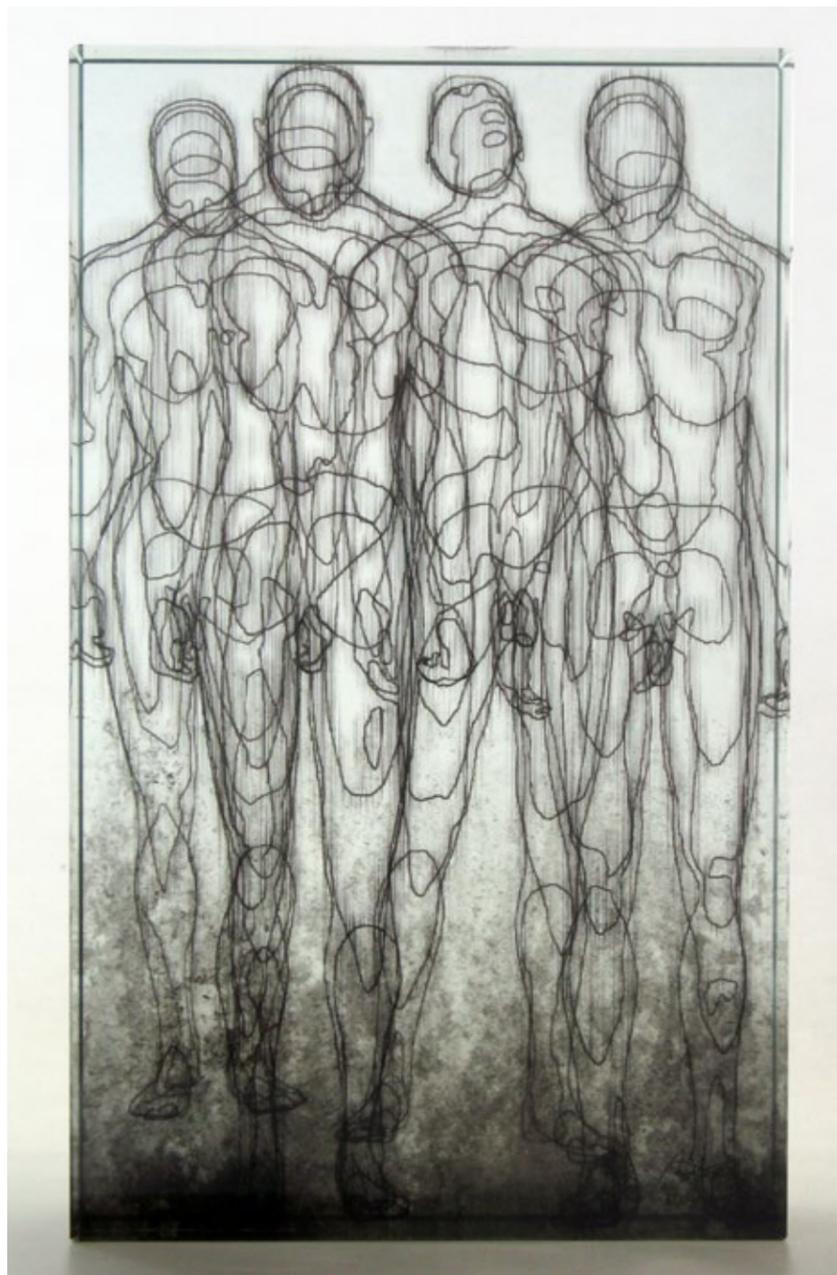




Glass Gellage No. XXII

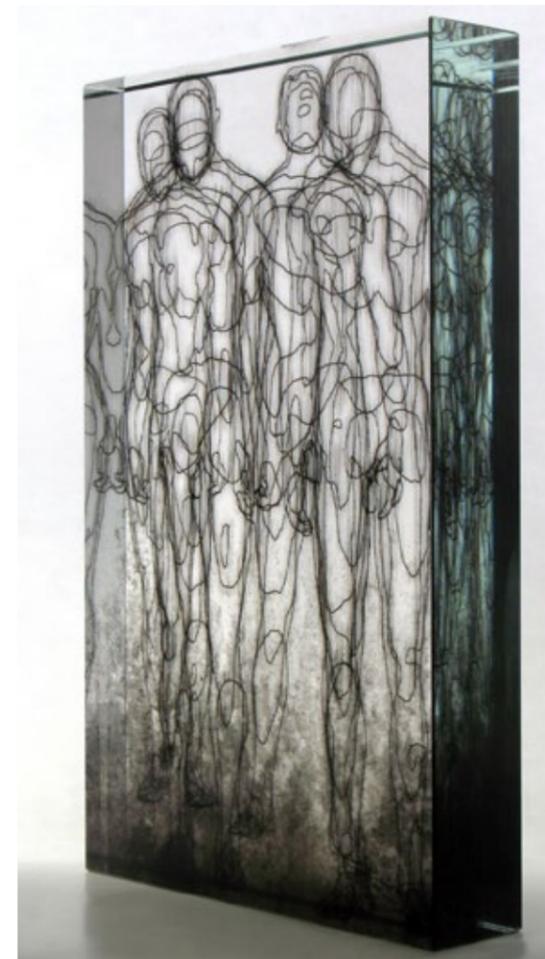
Eyes in cage
 Glass and combined technique
 40cm x 28.3cm x 5cm
 edition 6/12
 2012





Glass Gellage No. XXI

4 man figures
Glass and combined technique
30cm x 50.7cm x 7.3cm
edition 5/12
2012





Glass Gellage No. XXIX
 Matt glass multiply self portrait 3
 Glass and combined technique
 29.8cm x 39.8cm x 3.9cm
 edition 2/12
 2012





Glass Gellage No. XXVII

Matt glass multiply selfportrait 1
Glass and combined technique
29.8cm x 39.8cm x 3.9cm
edition 2/12
2012





MICHAL MACKU (B.1963)

The renowned Czech artist Michal Macku (B. 1963) started by creating works using his own photographic technique named 'Gellage'. The technique 'Gellage' consists of the transfer of exposed and fixed photographic emulsion onto paper. This transparent and plastic material makes it possible to reshape and reform the original images, changing their relationships and endowing them with new meanings during the transfer. His discovery of this unique process has cemented his name in the history of contemporary photography.

Later in his career, he mastered other historical photography techniques, such as platinum printing and carbon printing. In 2016, he started combining the technique of carbon printing with glass art, which is considered as an old artistic tradition in Czech Republic. Ever since, he has been focusing on making contemporary glass objects, which overtime grew to become technically and artistically more ambitious.

Michal Macku graduated from the Technological Faculty of the Polytechnic Institute in Brno and the Institute of Art Photography, Prague. After working for a number of years in research, he taught for a at the Pedagogical Faculty of Palacky University in Olomouc for a certain period of time. Michal has been working as a full-time artist since 1992.



Wei-Ling Gallery

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To accompany the exhibition entitled '*Glass Sacred Geometries*' by Michal Macku
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Wei-Ling Contemporary

RT01, 6th Floor , The Gardens Mall,
Mid Valley City, Linkaran Syed Putra,
59200 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

T: +603 2282 8323

E: weilingcontemporary@gmail.com

Wei-Ling Gallery

No. 8 Jalan Scott, Brickfields
50470 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
T: +603 2260 1106 F: +603 22601107
E: weilinggallery@gmail.com
W: www.weiling-gallery.com

PROJECT DIRECTOR | Lim Wei-Ling

DESIGNED BY | Lim Siew Boon

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Cover image: Glass object No. LXXII