

blu & NOTE  
alia ali



FOTO RELEVANCE HOUSTON TEXAS // SEP 9, 2022 - NOV 11, 2022



alia ali  
blue NOTE

**Pink Sunset, MIGRATION Series, 2022**

pigment print with UV laminate mounted on aluminum Dibond in wooden frame upholstered in Dutch wax print

62 x 42 x 3in // 157.5 x 106.5 x 7.5 cm (framed)

Edition of 5 + 1 EP + 1 AP

LIBERTY IS A LOVE LETTER TO THOSE  
WHO HAVE TAUGHT ME THE MOST  
ABOUT WHAT I KNOW OF PATTERN,  
COLOR, TEXTURE, AND THE EXPANSE  
OF THE WORLD OF TEXTILE – WHICH IS  
THE WORLD OF LINGUISTICS,  
CONSTELLATIONS, CARTOGRAPHIES,  
AND EXPRESSIONS.

MAY YOU NEVER BE FORGOTTEN, MAY  
YOU ALWAYS BE ACKNOWLEDGED, AND  
MAY YOU FOREVER BE SEEN.

– ALIA ALI



**Blue Tides, LIBERTY Series, 2022**

pigment print on French produced Canson Baryta Photographique Baryta Matte Paper 310gr. with UV laminate  
mounted on aluminum Dibond in custom built wooden frame hand upholstered with Rajasthani hand-printed cotton  
traditional wood block printing methods

49 x 35 x 3 in // 124.5 x 89 x 7.5 cm (framed)  
Edition of 5 + 1 EP + 1 AP

# LIBERTY, 2022-ONGOING

For centuries, Yemen has been at the crossroads of Africa, Asia, and the islands that pepper the majestic seas in between. Textiles have served as a driving force of cultural, economic and diplomatic exchange, offering a living archive of the communities they have touched. Their motifs have migrated away from the fibers and into the architecture, the design, the porcelains, and the story-telling, offering reminders of the histories that they both share and preserve.

Growing up in Sana'a, Yemen, I remember my mother always stressing to us that education wasn't only what we read, but what we saw, touched, tasted, and smelled. She taught us that in order to be well-rounded we needed to be grounded in the cultures of our community and to know and appreciate the stories we heard and told. I loved to ask questions and to share my impressions and thoughts - however, as we traveled and moved to different parts of the world, I discovered that in some places I was ignored and made to feel unwelcome, hushed as though what I saw didn't matter. But, it was different in Asia, whether at home in Sana'a, or traveling in Mumbai, Lahore, Hong Kong or Bangkok, I was always accepted, integrated, and seen. The world through my eyes was understood as essential for reminding elders of the cyclical nature of their existence. Children offered a reminder of the wonder, curiosity, and amazement of discovering the world for the first time.

Many of my early memories are of traveling with my mother to these places and visiting the local markets. I remember vividly the feeling of entering into spaces where there were textiles stacked and ordered from floor to ceiling, creating perfect walls of carefully arranged colors and textures. The merchants—and even sometimes the Master Artisans themselves— would insist on inviting us in, and would share with us their processes and their histories. It became very clear that they weren't just makers and sellers, they were storytellers, entrepreneurs, and artists – and they invited me into their world.

These were my favorite people and places to visit. The process of selling was so much more than a transaction—it was a ritual that had been perfected, as a choreographed dance, all parts of which would play into the final negotiations at the end. But the most important aspect was the journey that was shared together through pattern, pigment and storytelling. There was always an elevated seating area, designed for resting, relaxing, and remaining. Tea was offered as a way of showing hospitality, kindness, trust and comfort. We would commence with niceties to engage mutual curiosities and facilitate the collection of information, and soon enough the flowing of fabrics, teas, and stories would begin. It was through this flow that I developed the rhythm and timing of my own practices. I would sit there for hours, while fabrics were thrown across my legs and lap one after another, until it was no longer only the small pattern that I saw, but also what it looked like within a community of its own.

The word that comes to mind most when I think about the experience of fabric finding and garment making is *royalty*. Not only because of the treatment one receives in the process, but because of the textures and color that takes one on a journey through time and place. The liberated feeling of actively reimagining one's image by defining factors of how the fabric falls, how it pleats, how it fits together. The process of touching the finest and least fine fabrics that exist, knowing the difference between what is good quality or poor, and learning that someone else's taste might not be my own.

It was in the markets that I learned to harness my own opinion and to develop an appreciation for what I was drawn to, rather than what I was meant to be drawn to. I didn't learn this from being told – I learned this by what I observed, felt, and experienced. I learned that cotton is the most exquisite fabric, and the finest cottons are among the finest fabrics made. Cotton has the capacity to both cool the body and to keep the body warm, and the potential to be worn by all classes of society. The fabric impresses the richest of colors, and as a plant itself, cotton both harbors and reflects the language of the natural world. Cotton is also the most difficult fabric that I have worked with thus far, because of its extreme capacity to wrinkle, more so even than silk.

It is well-known that *Liberty* cotton is among the finest cottons in the world. The skills required to create these couture fabrics were developed by Indian artisans over hundreds of years, and their place within British culture is a direct result of Britain's violent occupation of India. Taking the artistry as their own, the British disassociated the roots of this ancestral knowledge and beauty from its origin, replacing histories of splendor with narratives and images of suffering, victim-hood, and criminality – all under the trademark of "Liberty." How can one copyright liberty? How can one steal the knowledge of generations, divorcing them from their ancestors and from their land, in the name of freedom?

*Liberty* (2022) is a love letter to those who have taught me the most about what I know of pattern, color, texture, and the expanse of the world of textile – which is the world of linguistics, constellations, cartographies, and expressions. When asked how I obtained such a knowledge, the answer is that I owe it to my mother, to those merchants, to the keepers of knowledges, to the protectors of the archives, to the storytellers, to the tea makers, to the dyers, to the Master Artisans, to their apprentices, to the land... This series is dedicated to all those who have generously taken time, served me tea, and invited me to root my identity in and alongside their own. To this day my wonder and amazement only gets larger and bigger. You've taught me that Liberty cannot be owned, trademarked, or captioned, but must be experienced.

May you never be forgotten, may you always be acknowledged, and may you forever be seen.

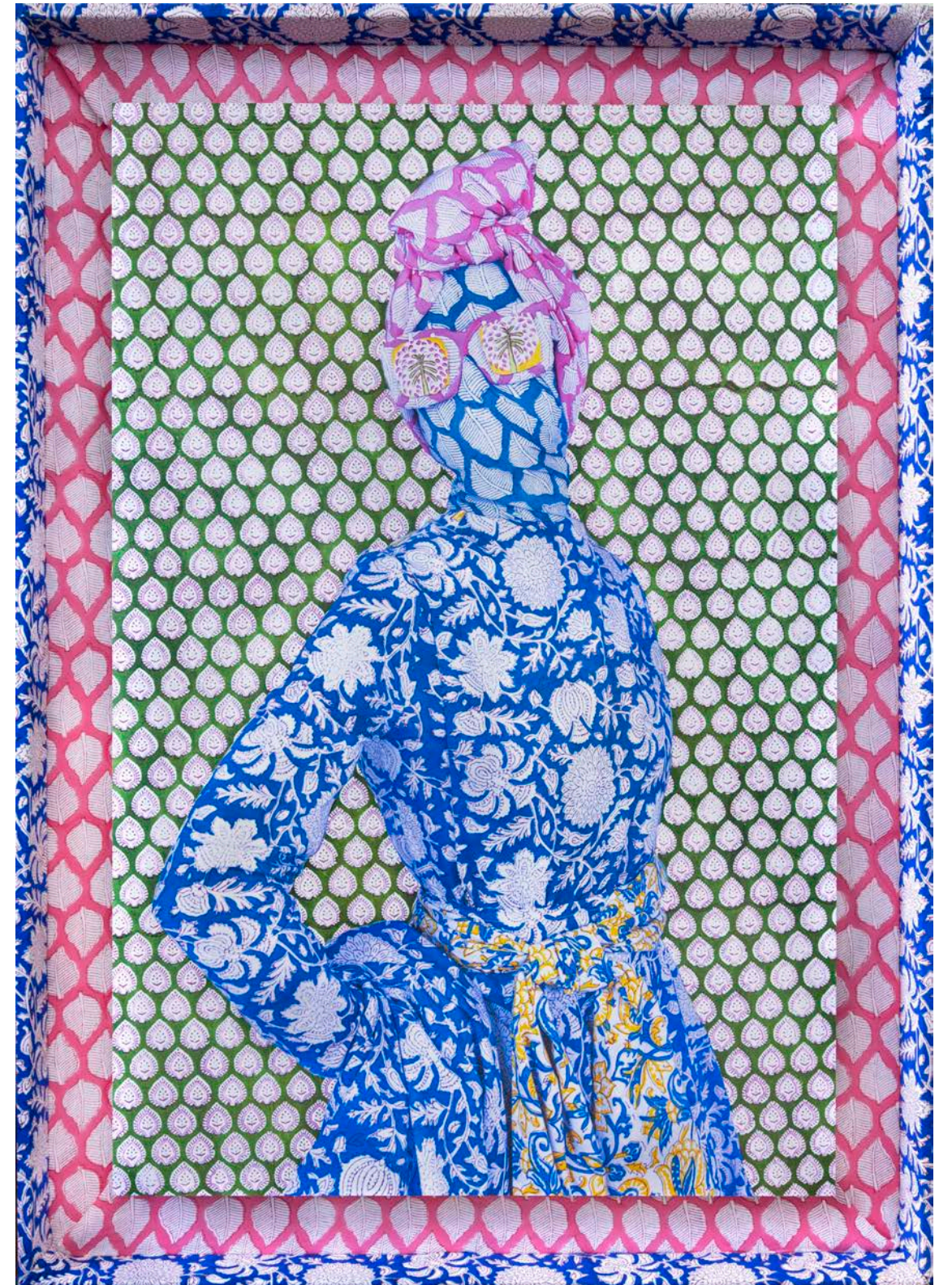


**Flock, LIBERTY Series, 2022**

pigment print on French produced Canson Baryta Photographique Baryta Matte Paper 310gr. with UV laminate mounted on aluminum Dibond in custom built wooden frame hand upholstered with Rajasthani hand-printed cotton traditional wood block printing methods

49 x 35 x 3 in // 124.5 x 89 x 7.5 cm (framed)

Edition of 5 + 1 EP + 1 AP

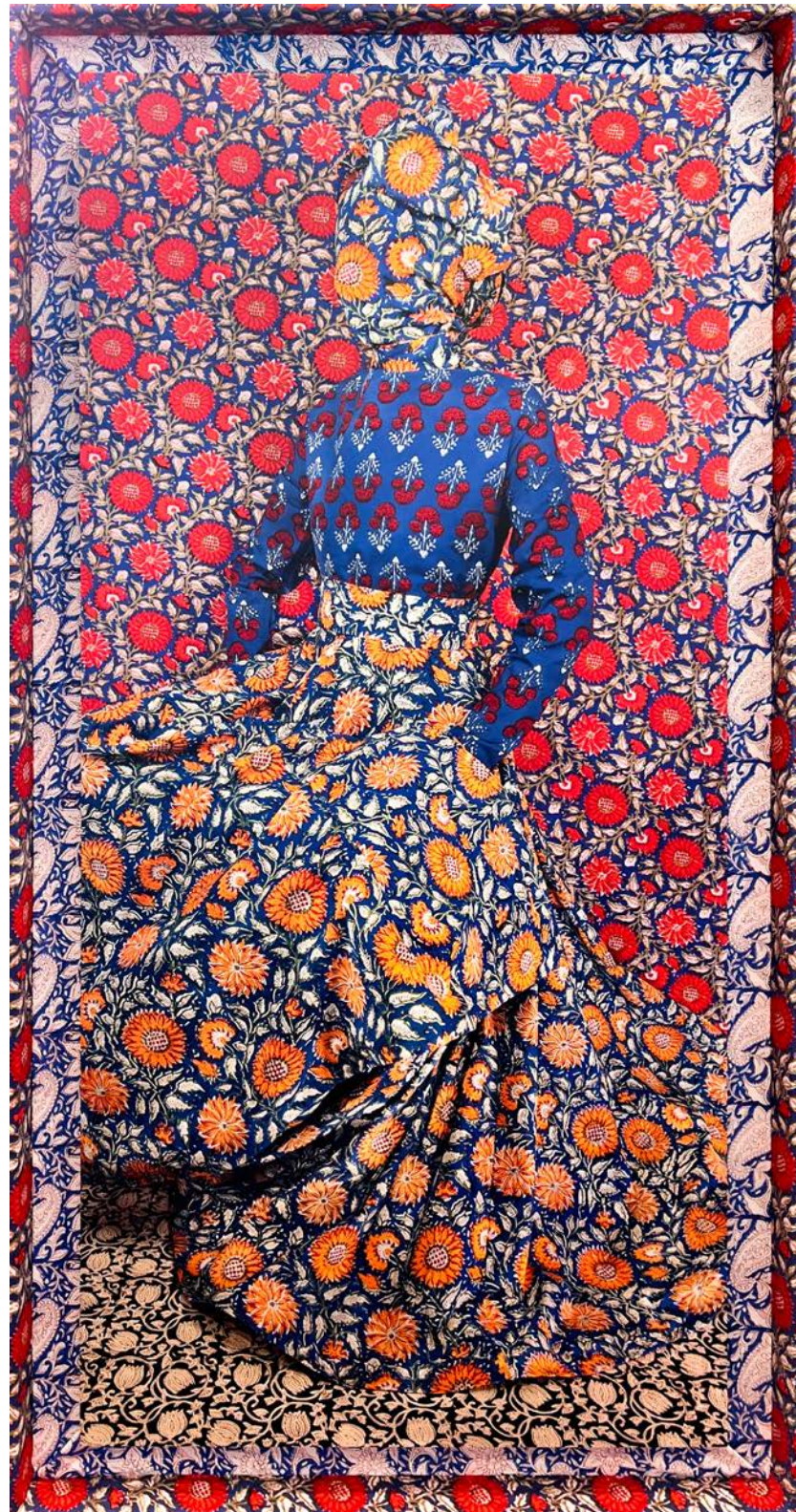


**Pink Palms, LIBERTY Series, 2022**

pigment print on French produced Canson Baryta Photographique Baryta Matte Paper 310gr. with UV laminate mounted on aluminum Dibond in custom built wooden frame hand upholstered with Rajasthani hand-printed cotton traditional wood block printing methods

49 x 35 x 3 in // 124.5 x 89 x 7.5 cm (framed)

Edition of 5 + 1 EP + 1 AP



**Super Bloom, LIBERTY Series, 2022**

pigment print on French produced Canson Baryta Photographique Baryta Matte Paper 310gr. with UV laminate mounted on aluminum Dibond in custom built wooden frame hand upholstered with Rajasthani hand-printed cotton traditional wood block printing methods

79 x 41 x 3 in // 200 x 104 x 7.5 in (framed)  
Edition of 3 + 1 EP + 1 AP



**Guardian I, LIBERTY Series, 2022**

pigment print on French produced Canson Baryta Photographique Baryta Matte Paper 310gr. with UV laminate mounted on aluminum Dibond in custom built wooden frame hand upholstered with Rajasthani hand-printed cotton traditional wood block printing method

79 x 41 x 3 in // 200 x 104 x 7.5 in (framed)  
Edition of 3 + 1 EP + 1 AP



**Minakshi, LIBERTY Series, 2022**

pigment print on French produced Canson Baryta Photographique Baryta Matte Paper 310gr. with UV laminate mounted on aluminum Dibond in custom built wooden frame hand upholstered with Rajasthani hand-printed cotton traditional wood block printing methods

63 x 39 x 3 in // 160 x 99 x 7.5 cm (framed)

Edition of 5 + 1 EP + 1 AP



**Guardian II, LIBERTY Series, 2022**

pigment print on French produced Canson Baryta Photographique Baryta Matte Paper 310gr. with UV laminate mounted on aluminum Dibond in custom built wooden frame hand upholstered with Rajasthani hand-printed cotton traditional wood block printing methods

49 x 35 x 3 in // 124.5 x 89 x 7.5 cm (framed)

Edition of 5 + 1 EP + 1 AP



**Red Blossom, LIBERTY Series, 2022**

pigment print on French produced Canson Baryta Photographique Baryta Matte Paper 310gr. with UV laminate mounted on aluminum Dibond in custom built wooden frame hand upholstered with Rajasthani hand-printed cotton traditional wood block printing methods

66 x 32.5 x 3 in // 168 x 65 x 7.5 cm (framed)

Edition of 5 + 1 EP + 1 AP



**Blue Blossom, LIBERTY Series, 2022**

pigment print on French produced Canson Baryta Photographique Baryta Matte Paper 310gr. with UV laminate mounted on aluminum Dibond in custom built wooden frame hand upholstered with Rajasthani hand-printed cotton traditional wood block printing methods

66 x 32.5 x 3 in // 168 x 65 x 7.5 cm (framed)

Edition of 5 + 1 EP + 1 AP





**Leopard Sun, IKATIKAT Series, 2022**

pigment print on French produced Canson Baryta Photographique Baryta Matte Paper 310gr. with UV laminate mounted on aluminum Dibond in wooden frame upholstered with hand-dyed and hand-loomed Uzbek Baghmal silk velvet

57 x 32 x 3 in // 145 x 114.3 x 7.5 cm (framed)

Edition of 5 + 1 EP + 1 AP



**Pomm, IKATIKAT Series, 2022**

pigment print on French produced Canson Baryta Photographique Baryta Matte Paper 310gr. with UV laminate mounted on aluminum Dibond in wooden frame upholstered with hand-dyed and hand-loomed Uzbek Baghmal silk velvet

57 x 45 x 3 in // 145 x 114.3 x 7.5 cm (framed)

Edition of 5 + 1 EP + 1 AP



**Wander, IKATIKAT Series, 2022**

pigment print on French produced Canson Baryta Photographique Baryta Matte Paper 310gr. with UV laminate mounted on aluminum Dibond in wooden frame upholstered with hand-dyed and hand-loomed Uzbek Baghmal silk velvet

40 x 33 x 3 in // 101.6 x 84 x 7.5 cm (framed)

Edition of 5 + 1 EP + 1 AP



**Roar, IKATIKAT Series, 2022**

pigment print on French produced Canson Baryta Photographique Baryta Matte Paper 310gr. with UV laminate mounted on aluminum Dibond in wooden frame upholstered with hand-dyed and hand-loomed Uzbek Baghmal silk velvet

40 x 33 x 3 in // 101.6 x 84 x 7.5 cm (framed)

Edition of 5 + 1 EP + 1 AP



**Lust, IKATIKAT Series, 2022**

pigment print on French produced Canson Baryta Photographique Baryta Matte Paper 310gr. with UV laminate mounted on aluminum Dibond in wooden frame upholstered with hand-dyed and hand-loomed Uzbek Baghmal silk velvet

40 x 33 x 3 in // 101.6 x 84 x 7.5 cm (framed)  
Edition of 5 + 1 EP + 1 AP



**Infinity Shift, FLOW Series, 2022**

pigment print on French produced Canson Baryta Photographique Baryta Matte Paper 310gr. with UV laminate mounted on aluminum Dibond in wooden frame upholstered with hand-dyed and hand-loomed ikat silk

63 x 39 x 3 in // 160 x 99 x 7.5 cm (framed)  
Edition of 5 + 1 EP + 1 AP

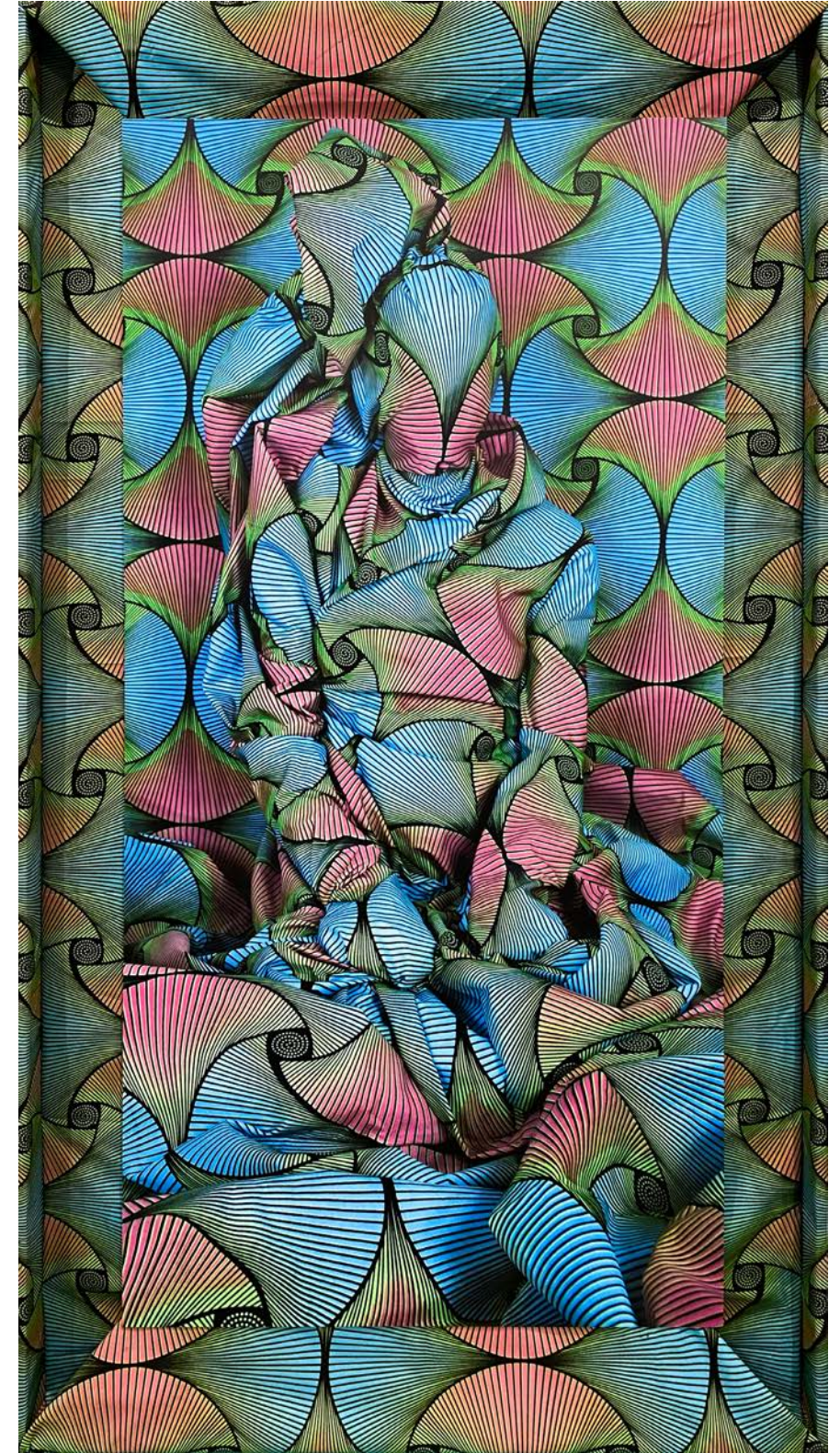


**Floral, WARP Series, 2022**

pigment print on photo rag 310gr. with UV laminate mounted on aluminum Dibond in wooden frame upholstered in Dutch wax print sourced from Senegal

94 x 51 x 3 in // 240 x 130 x 7.5 cm (framed)

Edition of 3 + 1 EP + 1 AP

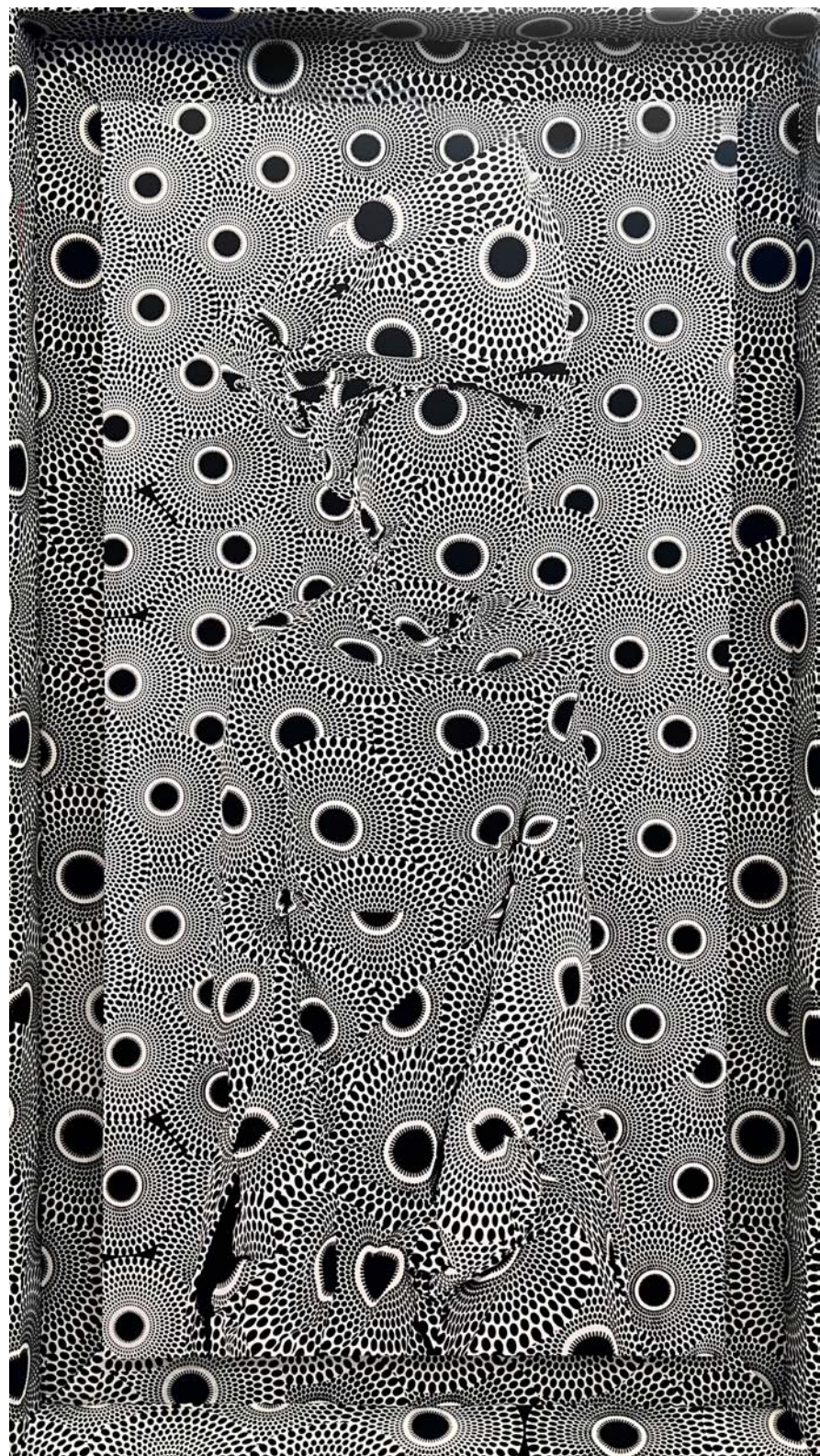


**Fanning, WARP Series, 2022**

pigment print on photo rag 310gr. with UV laminate mounted on aluminum Dibond in wooden frame upholstered in Dutch wax print sourced from the Ivory Coast

65 x 35 x 3 in // 162.5 x 90 x 7.5 cm (framed)

Edition of 5 + 1 EP + 1 AP



**Ayn, WARP Series, 2022**

pigment print on photo rag 310gr. with UV laminate mounted on aluminum Dibond in wooden frame  
upholstered in Masai Shakura blankets sourced from Kenya

57 x 32 x 3 in // 144.7 x 81.3 x 7.5 cm (framed)

Edition of 5 + 1 EP + 1 AP

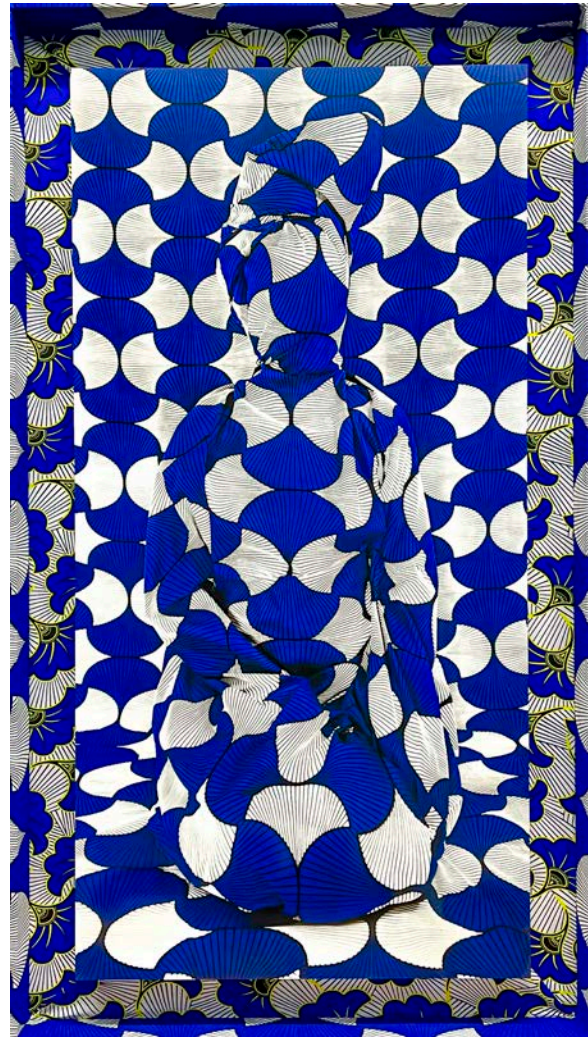


**Tidal, WARP Series, 2022**

pigment print on photo rag 310gr. with UV laminate mounted on aluminum Dibond in wooden frame  
upholstered in Dutch wax print sourced from Nigeria

79 x 41 x 3 in // 200 x 104 x 7.5 in (framed)

Edition of 3 + 1 EP + 1 AP



**Left to right: Blue Bleed, Masai Mama, Bolt, Wave-ing, WARP Series, 2021**

pigment print on French produced Canson Baryta Photographique Baryta Matte Paper 310gr. with UV laminate mounted on aluminum Dibond in wooden frame upholstered with wax print

57 x 32 x 3 in // 144.7 x 81.3 x 7.5 cm each (framed)

Edition of 5 + 1 EP + 1 AP



**Pollen, FLUX Series, 2021**

pigment print on photo rag 310gr. with UV laminate mounted on aluminum Dibond in wooden frame upholstered in Dutch wax print sourced from Senegal

49 x 35 x 3 in // 124.5 x 89 x 7.5 cm (framed)

Edition of 5 + 1 EP + 1 AP

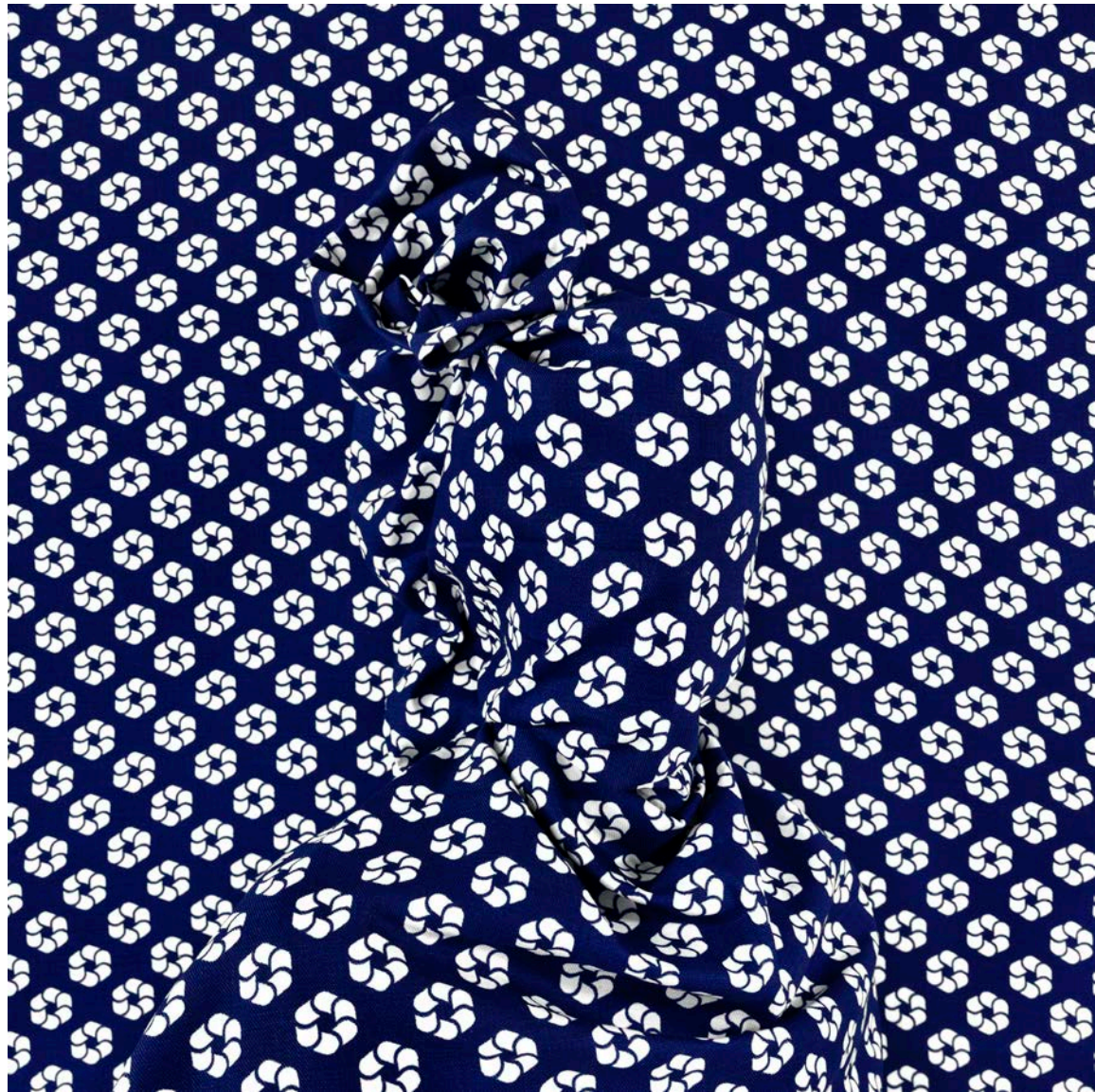


**Sojourner Flex, FLUX Series, 2021**

pigment print on photo rag 310gr. with UV laminate mounted on aluminum Dibond in wooden frame upholstered in Dutch wax print sourced from the Ivory Coast

49 x 35 x 3 in // 124.5 x 89 x 7.5 cm (framed)

Edition of 5 + 1 EP + 1 AP



**Hex, INDIGO Series, 2021**

pigment print on photo rag 310gr. with UV laminate mounted on aluminum Dibond in white wooden frame

35 in x 35 in // 89 x 89 cm (framed)

Edition of 5 + 1 EP + 1 AP



**Links, INDIGO Series, 2021**

pigment print on photo rag 310gr. with UV laminate mounted on aluminum Dibond in white wooden frame

35 in x 35 in // 89 x 89 cm (framed)

Edition of 5 + 1 EP + 1 AP



CAST NO EVIL  
2017



**Peacock Triptych, 2017**

pigment print on photo rag 310gr. with UV laminate mounted on aluminum Dibond in upholstered wooden frame

60 x 42 x 3 in // 152.5 x 106.5 x 7.5 cm (framed, each panel)

60 x 126 x 3 in // 152.5 x 320 x 7.5 cm (total, with no spacing)

Edition of 5 + 1 EP + 1 AP

# alia ali

Alia Ali (Arabic: **عاليه علي** // Sabean: 1ḥ°|°11ḥ°) is a Yemeni-Bosnian-US multi-media artist. A child of migrant linguists, Ali has traveled to sixty-seven countries, lived in and between seven, and grown up among five languages. Her migrations have led her to process the world through interactive experiences and the belief that the damage of translation and interpretation of written language has dis-served particular communities, resulting in the threat of their exclusion, rather than a means of understanding. As an artist who exists on the borders of identifying as West Asian, Eastern European, a United States citizen, queer, culturally Muslim yet spiritually independent, her work explores cultural binaries, challenges culturally sanctioned oppression, and confronts the dualistic barriers of conflicted notions of gender, politics, media, and citizenship. Through her practice, Ali critiques linguistics and inherited political structures and narratives, while simultaneously attempting to counter the polarization and miscommunication that imperils communities across the world, encouraging viewers to confront their own prejudices.

Working between language, photography, video, textile, and installation, Ali's work addresses the politicization of the body, histories of colonization, imperialism, sexism, and racism through projects that take pattern and textile as their primary motif. Textile, in particular, has been a constant in Ali's practice. Her strong belief that textile is significant to all of us, reminds us that we are born into it, we sleep in it, we eat on it, we define ourselves by it, we shield ourselves with it, and eventually, we die in it. While it unites us, it also divides us physically and symbolically. Her work broadens into immersive installations utilizing light, pattern, and textile to move past language and offer an expansive, experiential understanding of self, culture, and nation.

Ali's research and practice are also informed by discourses of criminality, Yemeni Futurism, and feminist theory, all of which are tools to unpack practices of refusal and rupture. Ali calls upon oral histories to conceptualize these narratives, while reflecting on contemporary circumstances, in her native land Yemen, her adopted land the United States and the endless places and people that continue to inspire her. Ali is currently expanding her practice by drawing on stories from Yemen including the nostalgic past of Queen Belquis of Saba (also known as the Queen of Sheba). By investigating histories of the distant past, she addresses the realities of the dystopian present in order to carve out spaces for radically imagined possibilities for the future in what has evolved to be Yemeni Futurism.

Ali has exhibited in numerous solo exhibitions and art fairs across the globe, and her work has been featured in the Financial Times, Le Monde, Art Review, and Hyperallergic. Her work is in collections at the British Museum, Princeton University, the New Orleans Museum of Art, the Tucson Museum of Art, the Anderson Museum of Art, the Benton Museum of Art, and a myriad of international private collections. Ali is the recipient of the Artsy Vanguard Prize 2021.

In 2022, Ali revealed a newly commissioned work generously supported by the Andrew Mellon Foundation at the Arab American National Museum. The sculpture is an octopus-shaped Yemeni starship that serves as a museum within a museum. The work draws on her research of Yemeni Futurism in which she addresses the active erasure and violent looting of ancient artifacts from her native land Yemen and one of its many ancient civilizations, Saba'a.

Ali is a graduate of Wellesley College and the California Institute of the Arts. She lives and works in and between Los Angeles, New Orleans, and Marrakech, and recently concluded a residency at the Roswell Artist-in-Residence Program (RAiR) in New Mexico.

# FOTO RELEVANCE

Since 2016, Foto Relevance cofounders Geoffrey C. Koslov and Bryn Larsen have focused on the exhibition and acquisition of museum quality contemporary fine art photography and photography-based work. Joined by Suzanne Zeller in 2019 who leads the program as Assistant Director, Foto Relevance is dedicated to providing a platform for an innovative selection of American and international photographic artists pushing the boundaries of photography. The gallery has mounted monographic exhibitions as well as group shows to investigate current trends and themes in contemporary art, showcasing a broad range of both darkroom and digital photographic techniques. In addition to promoting the work of artists, Foto Relevance provides guidance, educating individual collectors and corporations in the acquisition and sale of art. Foto Relevance is a member of the Houston Art Gallery Association (HAGA). The gallery is located in the historic Museum District of Houston, Texas.