



Synaesthetic // Chuck Elliott





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FOREWORD

Chuck Elliott has been making digital images since the late eighties. An early adopter in the digital revolution, he claims to have used the first Apple computer imported to the UK. Over the last six years his output has continued in a line of ever more fluid digital abstractions.

His work coalesces a desire to use the latest digital technologies with a strong sense of his place in the tradition of colour space and abstract geometrical art, spanning back to Vasarely, Riley, Gabo and Kandinsky.

The latest works combine a shimmering planar surface with his trademark liquid geometries and fluid colour dynamics. New pieces take on an asymmetrical and more fluid style than his more overtly geometric earlier works.

Created digitally as a series of drawings derived from sculptural forms, the images are rendered onto metallic photographic paper and Diasec mounted.



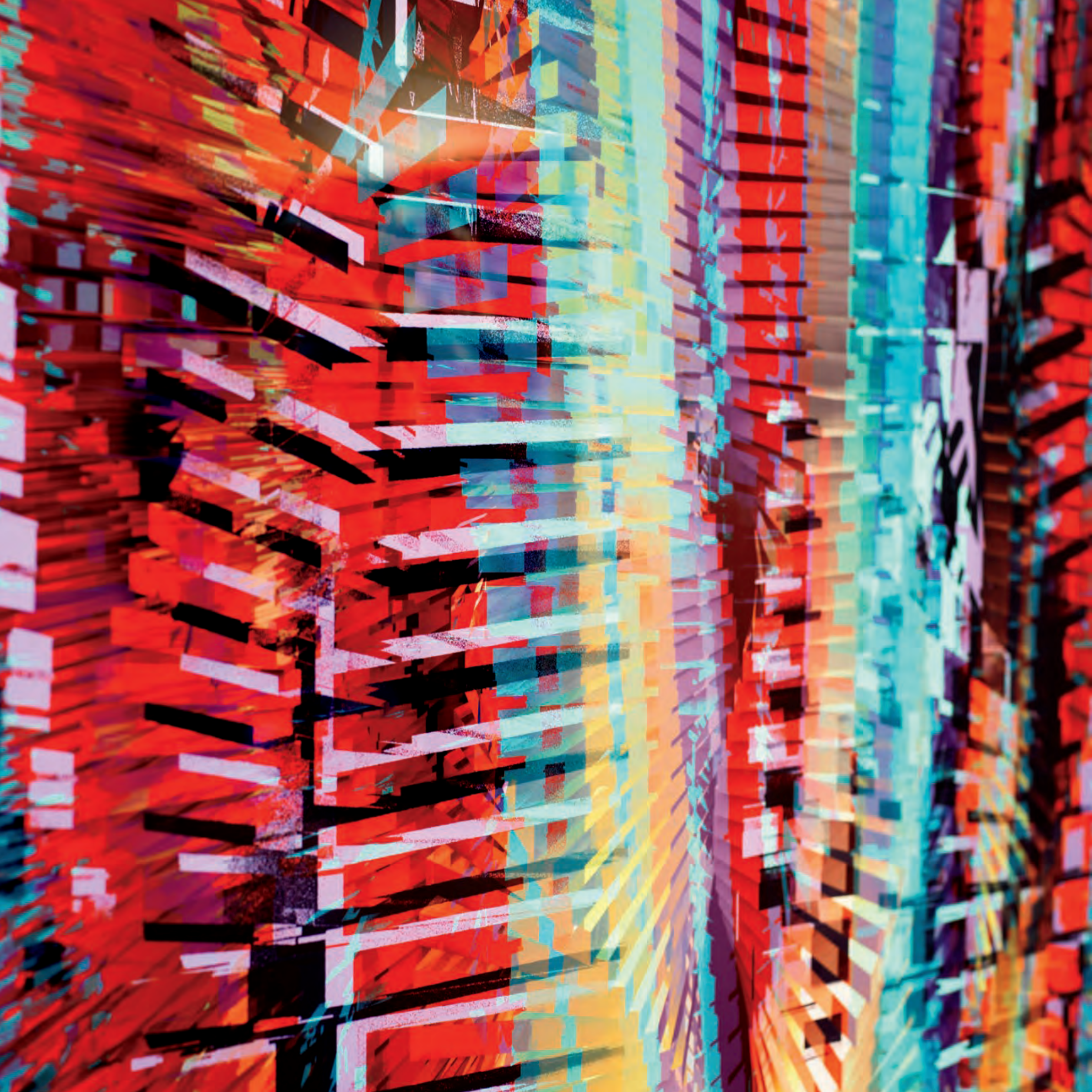
ReVOX / masked
42 x 38cm / Copperplate etching with aquatint / edition of 12



ReVOX / silvered
74cm sq / metallic Lambda print with Diasec mount / edition of 12

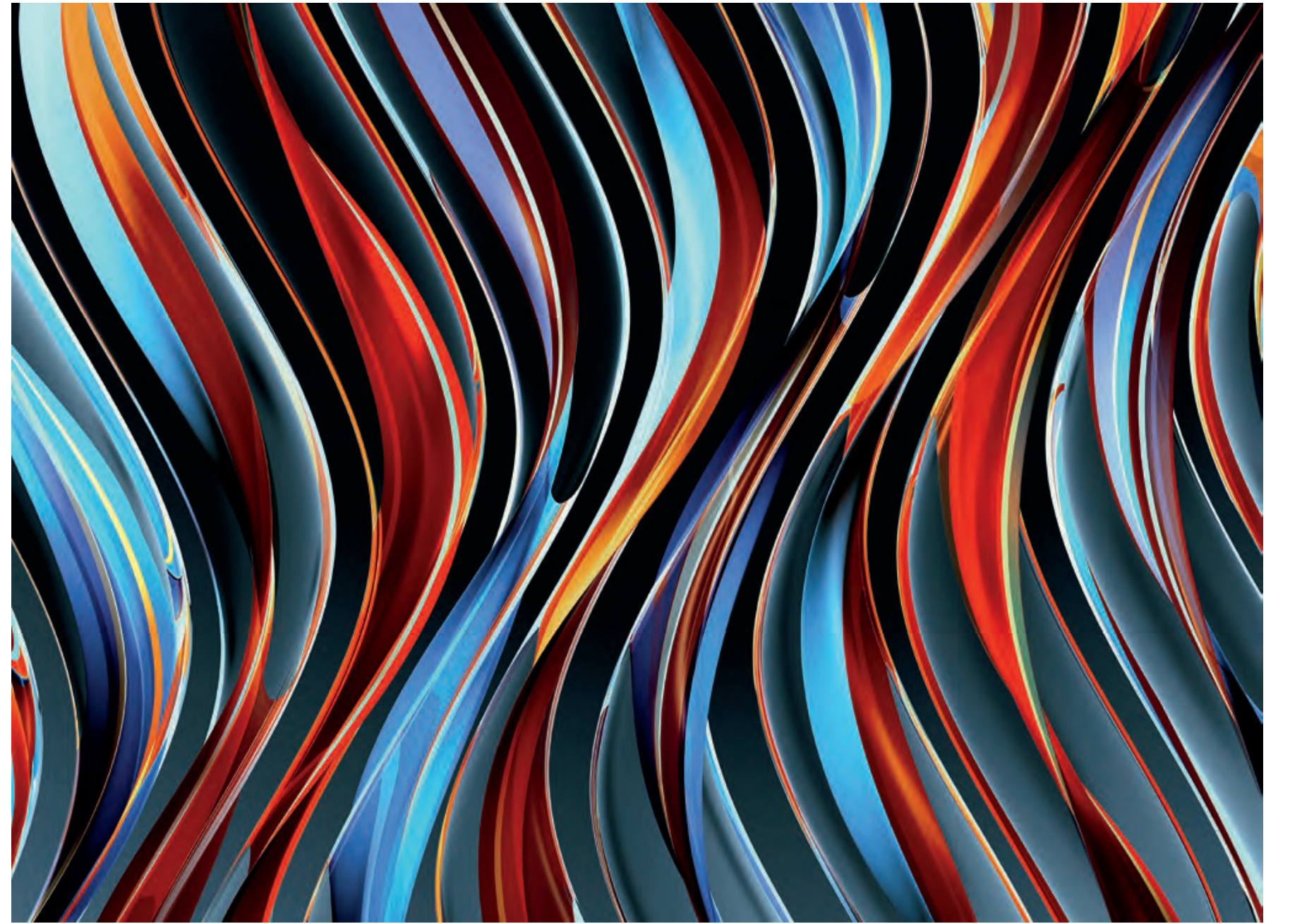


Aquiline / cerulean angel
120 x 158cm / metallic Lambda print with Diasec mount / edition of 8



Aquiline / crimson angel
120 x 158cm / metallic Lambda print with Diasec mount / edition of 8





In situ at the Bristol Contemporary Open / 2008

Flow / indigo black
88 x 124cm / metallic Lambda print with Diasec mount / edition of 12



Flow / diptych at Greater London House

Flow / triptych // cadmium / rubine / cerulean
66 x 90cm / metallic Lambda print with Diasec mount / edition of 8



Flow / silver base
150 x 120cm / metallic Lambda print with Diasec mount / edition of 12

Flow / silvered
120 x 164cm / metallic Lambda print with Diasec mount / edition of 8







Chime / CERULEAN CROP
60cm sq / metallic Lambda print with Diasec mount / edition of 12

Chime / CROP
52.4 x 68.4cm / metallic Lambda print with Diasec mount / edition of 12



FLUID DYNAMIC

Chuck Elliott in conversation with Louise Copping / 2009

Chuck Elliott’s incandescent digital abstractions have become increasingly collectable over the past five years. Louise Copping makes a studio visit to discover how they’re made, and what drives the project.

LC I know from our work together that you see your drawing process as experimental rather than goal driven. Can you explain that a bit further?

CE To date, none of my pieces have been goal driven, there isn’t a predetermined image that I’m trying to capture. In place of the traditional ‘goal’ is an experimental drawing process in which new forms are drawn, sculpted, manipulated, glazed, lit and rendered. A kind of abstract sculptural environment within which views or images become apparent as the process resolves itself.

Some of the drawings remain incomplete as a result, in some way failing to deliver a cohesive image or solution to the parameters I’ve set, and subsequently never see the light of day. But those that do fly are imbued with a density of interest and completeness that I feel validates them in a way that wouldn’t happen if I were using more traditional media.

LC The surface of your work seems to be of particular interest to you. The pieces have a high gloss sheen that unifies the line work and colour spaces, whilst capturing deep reflections from the spaces they inhabit. Tell me more about that process.

CE Some twenty years ago I used to spray custom motor scooters, so perhaps I’ve retained a deep seated love for that language of colour and the high gloss finishing that went with the scene. The candy paints would be sprayed on with dozens of coats of clear lacquer, and in fact many of my naming processes stem from those times - candy, metalflake, pearlescent and so forth. There was also a vogue for pin lining in contrasting colours, a practice which I’ve certainly held on to. The shimmering metallic quality of the finished work, in which the final image is captured, as if a single moment from a series of kinetic movements, is in part provided by the Diasec mounting behind Perspex,

and in part by the pearlescent photographic paper I’m using for the Lambda printing.

Of course there are layers of preliminary studies and exploratory drawings underlying that surface. But in the end, when the work leaves the studio, it’s the final image and its surface that has to convert some tangible interest, or even an abstract beauty, that will draw people in and create some kind of presence within a space.

LC You use terms such as ‘liquid geometry’, ‘captured light’ and ‘brilliant incandescence’ to describe your practice. Can you expand on these phrases?

CE I guess they’re a kind of linguistic shorthand to sum up the core of what I’m going for at the moment. Digital drawing systems allow you to create dense sculptural forms that haven’t previously been possible. Geometries can be far more complex than they could even ten years ago. Zaha Hadid’s practice, for instance, is a textbook example of how technology is changing the way we can explore form.

Studying glass making, I became aware that Dale Chihuly, for example, creates a colour and kinetic interaction with light in his work, that I’m definitely keen to evoke. So trying to capture some of that effervescence and brilliance, by exploring light and colour densities, and embedding that drama in the work, is a key part of the process.

LC Your work seems to look forward, but without being completely cut off from the long tradition of British colour abstraction, and the modernist movement that suffuses the art world. Do you see yourself as a modernist, or more firmly rooted in the contemporary scene?

CE I think the work absolutely picks up on that long tradition of constructivist, vorticist and modernist work from Britain, Europe and America, but moves it on into a contemporary space. Partially because of the industrial / digital production techniques I employ, such as the laser light exposure, and the laser cut Perspex.

I think a move toward the contemporary and away from the geometric purity of modernism will become more clearly defined in my work over the next few years.

LC We’ve often discussed inspirational groups like Tomato, painters such as Albert Oehlen, and of course the ubiquity of the Apple Mac. Can you discuss how digital tools have become embedded in the fine art process for you and other contemporary artists?

CE I first discovered the Mac in 1984, by sneaking into a pioneering software consultancy called Praxis one evening after work. They had imported what was reputed to be the first Apple computer in the UK. I was completely sold on the idea that you could draw, edit and erase, fine tuning your work until all the relationships made sense, or in some way coalesced.

I think most people have embraced digital techniques in music and film, photography and architecture, and whilst there are some corners of the art world that have yet to condone it, digital work has been brought into the mainstream by artists such as Julian Opie, Tony Cragg, Takashi Murakami and Andreas Gursky, to great effect, and has enriched our visual culture in a myriad of unexpected ways.

Your reference to Tomato is apt, a hybrid studio fusing the music of Underworld with digital art projects such as ‘mmm... skyscraper I love you’. I think they, and other studios like Stylorouge and Why Not Associates have trailblazed a fusion of digital art, design and music which has already had a far reaching legacy, and of course the Apple Mac is a ubiquitous part of that process. Indeed Julian Opie’s current web site makes specific reference to the Mac’s desktop environment in which he creates his graphic works.

Albert Oehlen, for me, represents a great example of a hybrid artist who works across the digital / traditional divide. I’m increasingly intrigued by the idea of working back into the digital with paint, varnish and lacquers, as well as re-sculpting the works, perhaps with cuts, folds and seams. The 36 panel piece with nails I showed at the Bristol Contemporary Open was a primary example of this idea of objectifying the printed material within the gallery, and is an idea I will be pursuing further.

Clearly it is during the transition from the drawing board to the gallery that the work becomes imbued with its own life, and the collision between the analogue and the digital is a recurring theme that I’m keen to study further. My recent Arpeggi drawing is in part an exploration of

a series of transitions from the seamless analogue curve to the clipped, cut and shut stepping of the digital forms, alongside a random fluidity that permeates the interstitial spaces.

It’s this sense of what is ordered, what is generated, what is contrived and what is happenstance that really lies at the root of these most recent works.

LC You founded the Transistor project as a means of showing your own and other artists work, and to gain momentum within the art world. How does Transistor fit in with your studio practice, and what are you hoping to gain from the collaboration?

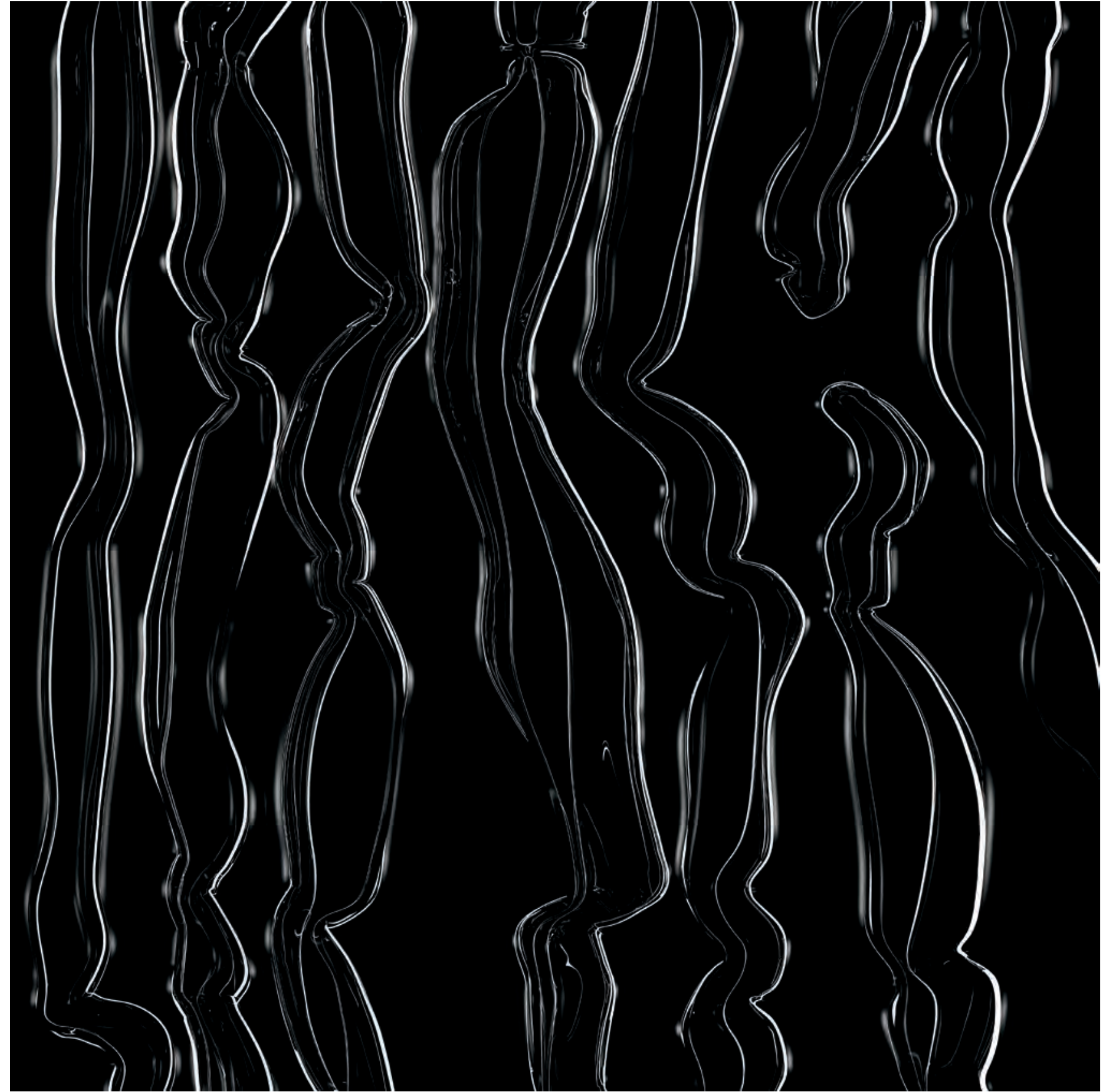
CE Transistor stems from a belief that artists prosper best when loosely affiliated in groups. So whilst I’m keen to continue showing work with established galleries, Transistor provides a great vehicle for creating experimental shows, without an overbearing concern for base line profitability. It’s all part of my long term DIY ethos I guess.

LC So what’s next?

CE I’m really excited to be able to get back to the studio full time this autumn, and I have a myriad of projects that I’m going to be working on. The multi panel installations continue to be directional for me, and I may try out some non rectilinear forms with these. I’ll also be working up some smaller studies of highly focused single forms, and there’ll be a move towards more freeform abstractions, which will allow for a more lyrical and fluid exploration of the volume and line relationships I’ve been pursuing in studies such as Lumen and Shellac.

I’m also keen to reconvene my collaboration with Dunstan Baker at the Fine Art Print Company, and G. Ryder and Co, to create another boxed folio of works on paper as a follow up to the Arpeggi folio, which has been a new and intriguing departure for me this year.

In purely linguistic terms, I’ll be moving away from ‘Flow’ and ‘Lumen’ and towards ‘Torsion’ and ‘Shatter’. I think there’ll be a natural progression with these new forms and I hope creating drawings around these more splintered ideas may be more in tune with the times in some way.

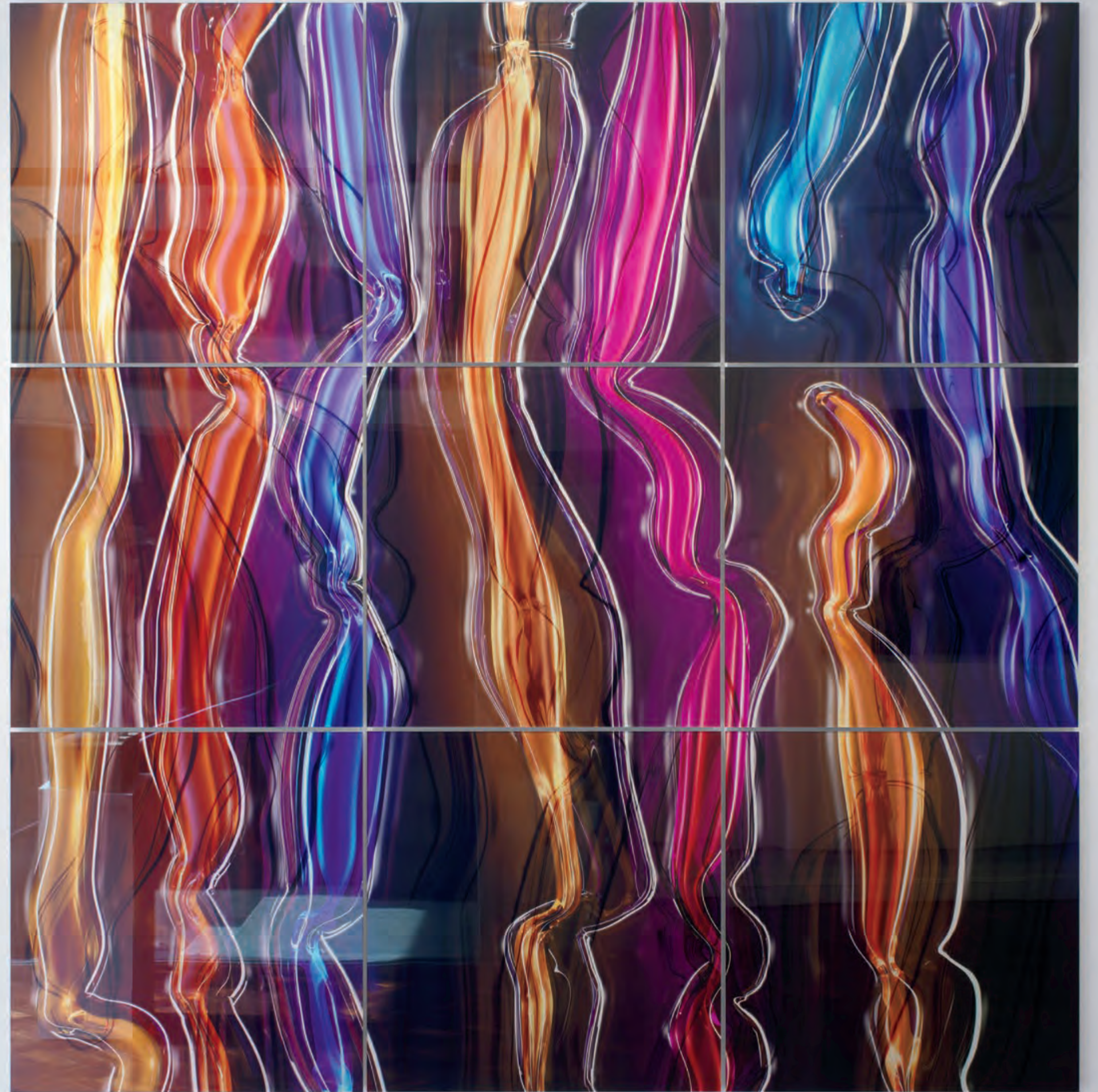


In situ at Coda on Cork Street / a two man show with Anna Gillespie / 2008

Lumen / black ghost
120cm sq / metallic Lambda print with Diasec mount / edition of 12



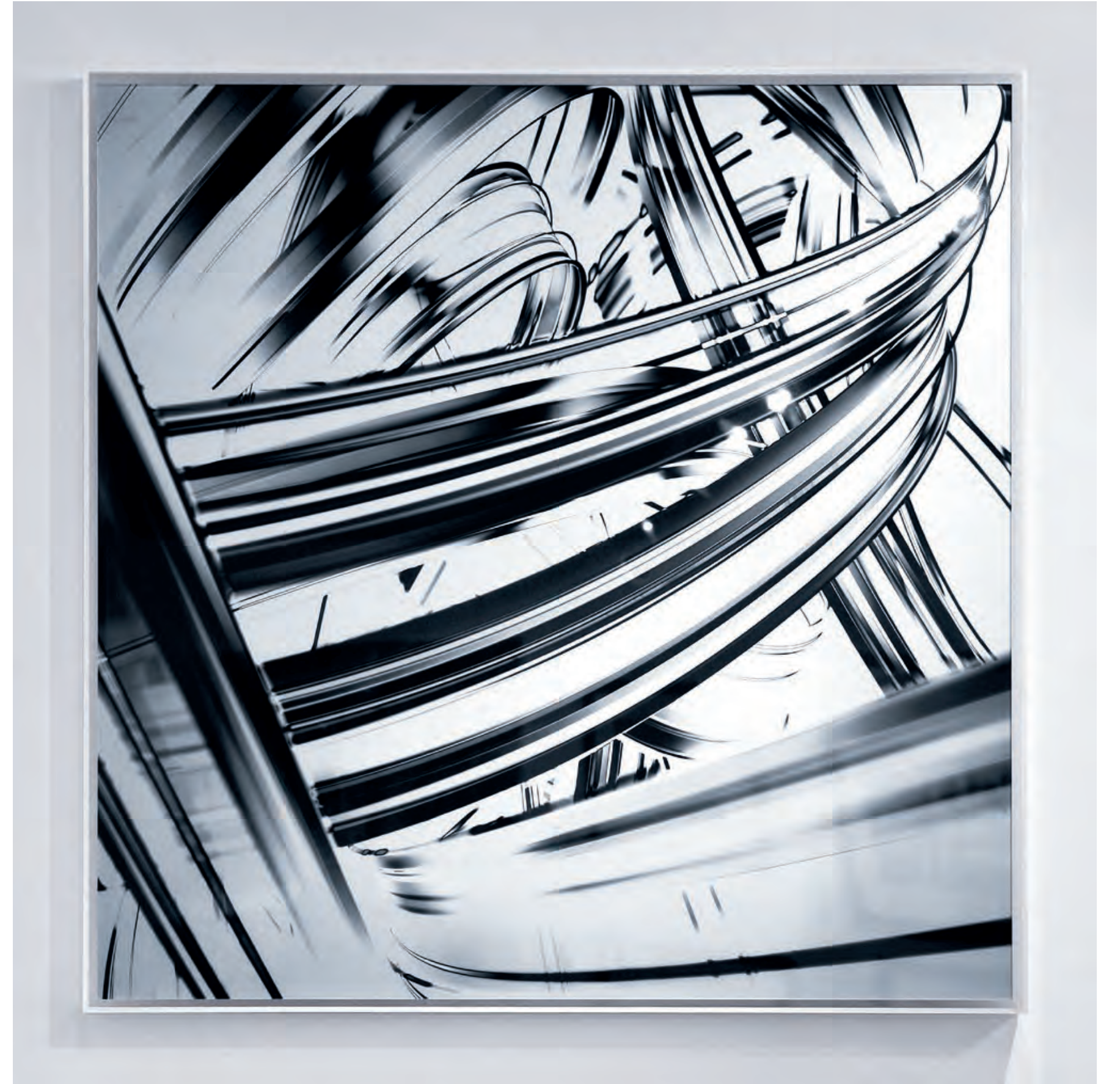
Lumen / hard kandy
Shown in situ at Transistor at the South Bank / 2007



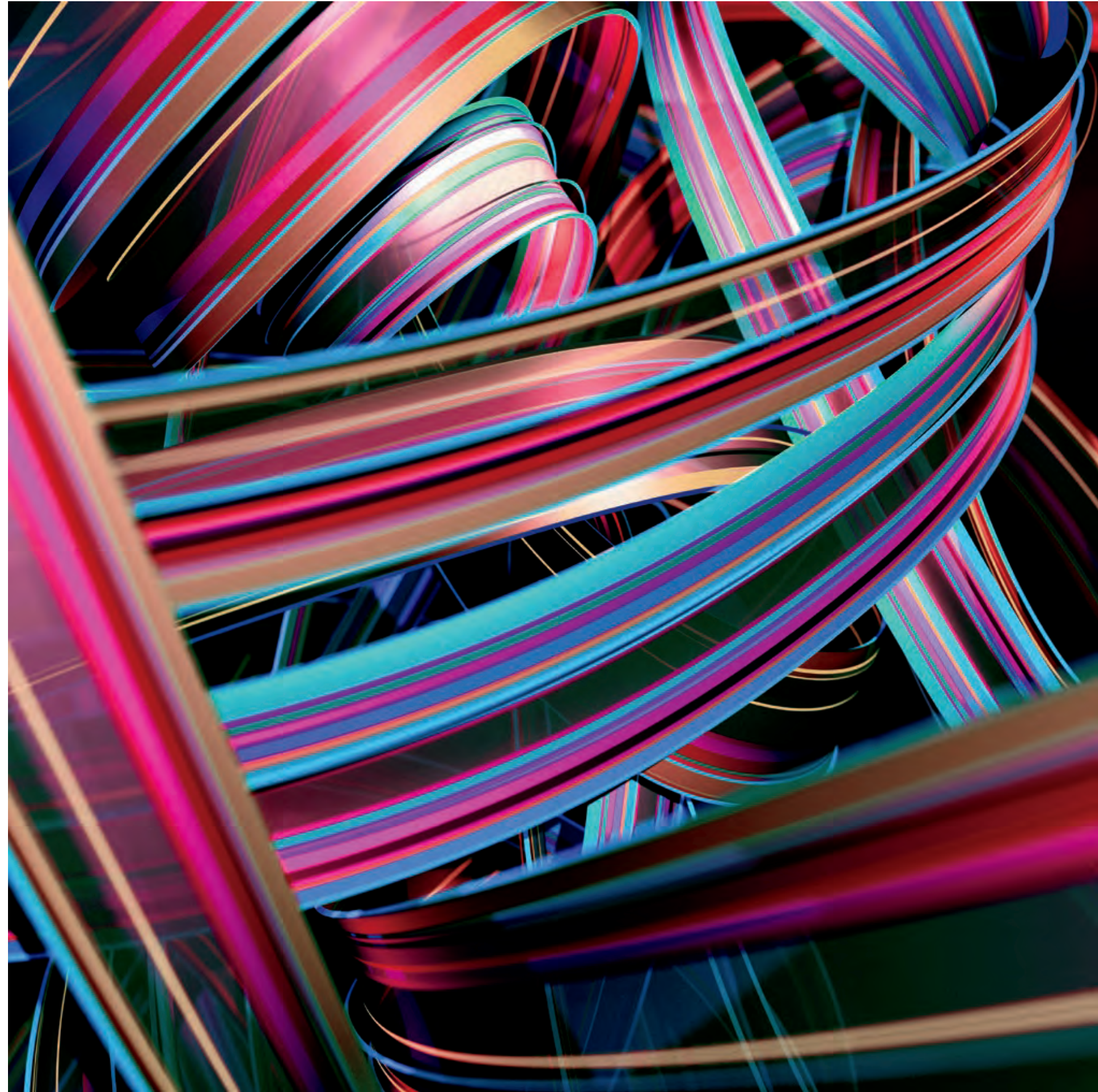
Lumen / lacquered kandy
200cm sq / metallic Lambda print with Diasec mount / edition of 4



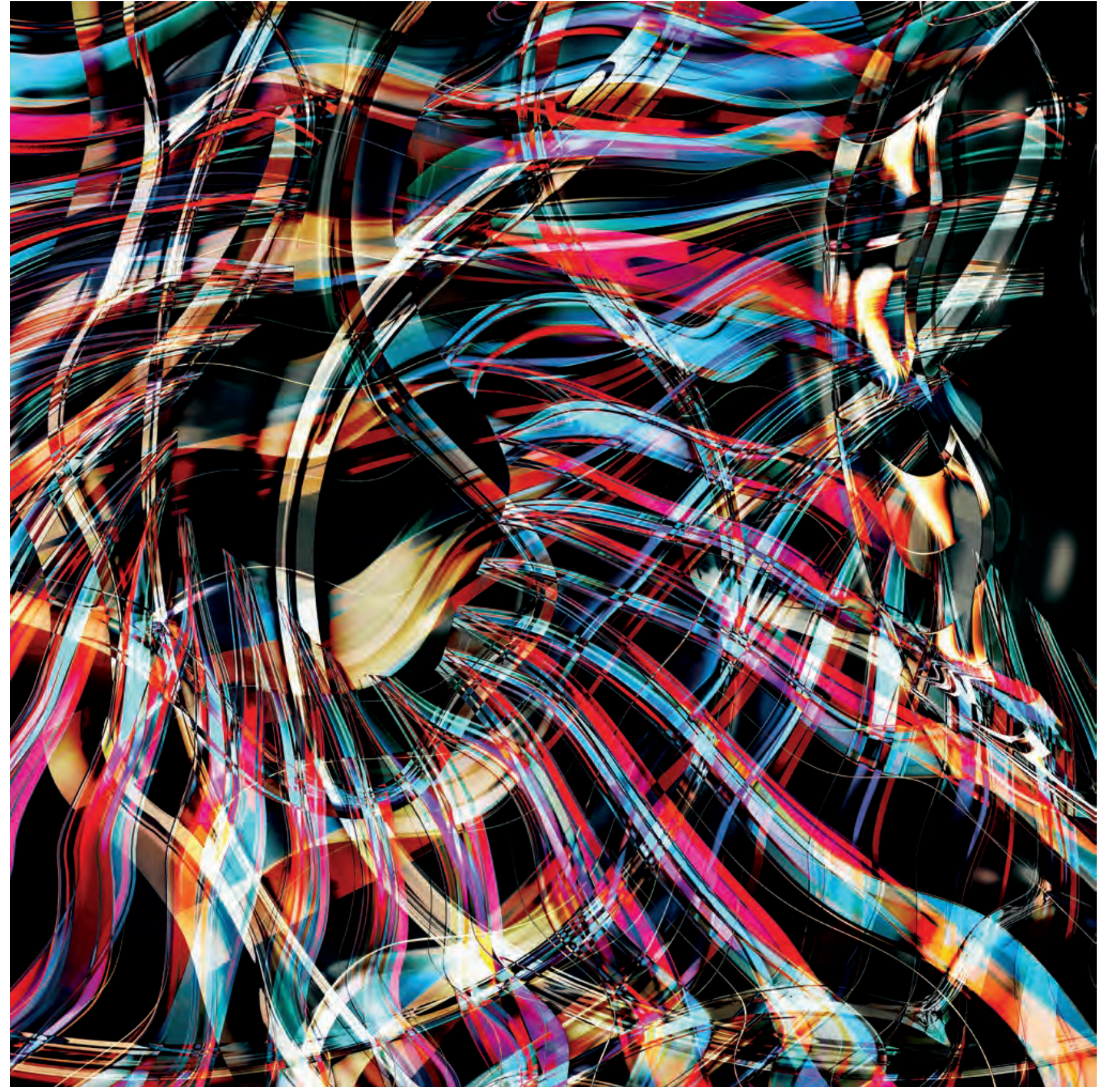




Halcyon / silver solar
88cm sq / metallic Lambda print with Diasec mount / edition of 12



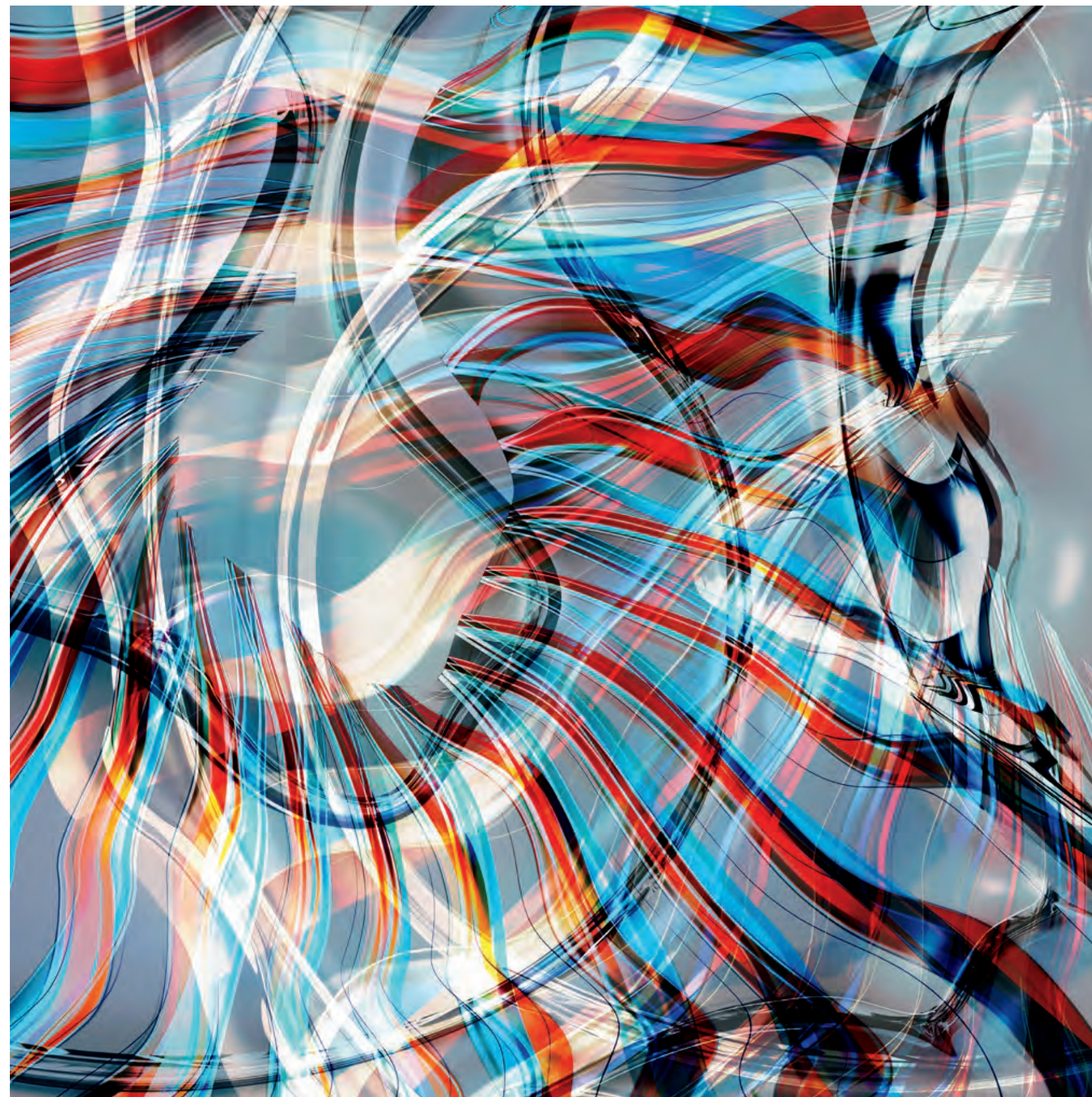
44 Halcyon / deep pink
66cm sq / metallic Lambda print with Diasec mount / edition of 4



Shellac / blacker lacquer
74cm sq / metallic Lambda print with Diasec mount / edition of 12 45



Shellac / indigo base
74cm sq / metallic Lambda print with Diasec mount / edition of 12



Shellac / silvered
74cm sq / metallic Lambda print with Diasec mount / edition of 12

THE CHANCY ELEMENT

Chuck Elliott in conversation with Matthew Collings / 2011

MC I can see the images are computer generated. I respond to the intricacy, rhythms, playfulness, but I’ve no idea what technical processes are involved. I see very beautiful visual relationships, and I imagine from their intensity that creating them involves a high degree of labour, as with any artistic process, and in fact it’s basically drawing...?

CE Yes, every part of the image is hand drawn. You know those animated 3D films, and you look at the credits at the end, a list of the names of five thousand people who spent four years drawing everything, and you think, Oh God, look at the sheer volume of work. I think my process has a similarity to that, years of drawing form, shape, geometry and so forth. But you could argue about whether what I do is really drawing or not. Both my brothers are artists. And we have a lively debate all the time. One of them tells me that drawing is always “pencil on paper.”

MC I suppose he’s talking about many things that might go into the notion of drawing, including mythology and history, and so on, a cultural idea and not simply the technical thing. Whereas when you say you’re “drawing” you’re describing what you do for hours and hours, carefully building, refining, repeating, altering and adjusting, which is certainly what drawing usually meant for the majority of artists in the past. I think if your brother is being philosophical without realising it, then you’re a bit philosophical too in your designs. You come up with variations on an idea of symmetry, and the effect of all that serious consideration, those critical revisions, is that every shape has its own particularity but is also contributing to an overall dynamic balance – you’re testing out symmetry’s appeal. I feel the pleasure I’m getting from the work is connected to life, to nature, how the mind organises reality.

CE They’re experiments, yes, and it’s different for every image. I’m fascinated by what I see in geometric and abstract painting, take Mondrian’s for instance. Maybe he concentrates on a sort of minutiae of changes that will make every new painting a different experiment to the previous one, so each catches your interest in a subtly different way. A kind of logical progression, a journey.

MC Whatever else he’s doing with his notions about an ideal immaterial higher plane of existence versus the mere illusion of reality that we actually live by, when you look at enough of his paintings you have to conclude that the medium of paint means a lot to him. In your case you might digitally generate a highlight down the side of a form. It’s done on a computer screen. You’re not actually up to your elbows in Titanium White. It’s a virtual equivalent. But somehow you’re in that same place where a painter or a sculptor gets ideas from the materials they work with.

CE Yes, a highlight can be placed anywhere, and the placing makes a difference to whether the colours are enriched or killed.

MC In a painting by Rubens you just believe that’s where the light should be on the side of the face, or on the robes, or whatever. But it’s really a constructed effect. He could have put that highlight anywhere and made it any shape or any shade. But the whole of the rest of the painting, its shape, colour, tonality, the nature of the lines, the placement of elements, they’re all enhanced by that highlight – which seems so spontaneous – being exactly the way it is.

CE These are decisions, yes. I look for a line that has something fabulous about it as a line and at the same time works as highlight and as colour, plus I’m thinking about the way all these aspects relate to everything else in the image.

MC What’s your main reason not to be a painter using paint, since the concerns are so similar ultimately? Why do you create prints? Why not splash paint around?

CE A kind of northern European puritanical uptightness. I feel I wouldn’t have control over the medium to the same degree. I might do, I suppose – I’m often amazed by the sophistication of paintings from the 1950s. But I like the control I get with the digital medium. For me it means energy, more experimentation, more rigour.

MC People assume that the ideal of abstract art in the 1950s is “freedom.”

CE My work isn’t about that kind of ideal of freedom. But I do think the artistic process generally, and in my case it’s no different, is largely about an exploration of freedom. The freedom that’s real for me is the freedom to create the work I want to, each day. To create a studio that is conducive for learning, experimentation and philosophy. To become unconstrained by having to turn up in a workplace and participate in the usual kinds of production. With this work I do you’re looking at a series of events of my own free choosing – this is what I decided to make. In the end though, you’re working within rules that you set yourself, and of course the constraints of finance and space. I want my prints to appear to be casually free, and very liquid and loose, but they have to have a power behind them, a muscularity, and that’s what I’m working on over the weeks or sometimes months that it takes me to generate each image. I want the labour to be known as well, I want whoever buys the work to feel there’s been some labour there.

MC So there’s control plus an old fashioned work ethic?

CE Yes.

MC They’re very musical. The pleasure I get from them is all about rhythm, about repetition and variation. With music, the idea might be that there is a fantastic outpouring of emotion that overwhelms the listener, and in that moment the question of the construction of the emotion isn’t the urgent thing. But in reality that emotion is a produced thing, and it comes out of a bit-by-bit creative process. Every note has been laboured at. The music didn’t just well up by magic or luck.

CE That’s certainly right. The prints are constructed. You’ve been talking about analogues with abstract painting and with music, but when I’m working I’m thinking about constructions in 3D, about constructing sculptural forms, and that’s how I see the prints finally, as constructed forms. They’re not solid or static but they are sculptural. I’m working on the screen with a virtual version of three-dimensional form, physically building three-dimensional solids, prior to working on the colours and the balance of light and dark.

MC I tend to see any work in terms of abstract values, regardless of whether it has an image or not. But I suppose you have your own ideas about the place of imagery, and the relationship between a recognizable image, or sign, and the internal visual mechanisms of the work?

CE I don’t think of my work as abstract particularly. It’s figured with numbers and forms that give it a very real substance. I’m certainly interested in abstract art, and my appreciation of it does inform what I do. Maybe I play by a set of rules that is similar if not the same as abstract painting. In the final part of the process colours are changed and elements are edited and moved. But the majority of the creative process is in the previous stages, where there are malleable sculptural forms that can be rotated, cut, twisted and reformed until all the elements somehow coalesce. I like the idea that the image might appear very rapid and spontaneous but everything you see has been built, sculpted and endlessly reconsidered. I’m also interested in the element of beauty. It’s not overt, and it’s not specifically what I’m building towards. But perhaps when geometry, form and colour are all successfully handled, then beauty manifests itself, not as a designed in element, but as a serendipitous by product of the creative process.

MC For all the complex tangle of values and ideals that went on in the 1950s in Jackson Pollock’s head, reflecting the little cultural milieu in which he worked, what has happened in culture in a broader sense, since that time, is that a myth has evolved that joins up freedom in art with an extreme lifestyle, full of romantic danger.

CE Yes. There are a multitude of figures like Pollock, where the life invades how you think of the work. But ultimately, when it leaves the studio, the art has to stand on its own, without the crutch of a supporting text or prior knowledge. It has to have an internal logic, an ability to convey a dynamic presence on the wall and be able to project into the space.

MC And yet these myths are inevitable and necessary. People get excited about madness and art, and feel a bit bored and distanced when they hear about control. It’s a question of how the attractive and exotic

are made up at different times. In your case you can do something that seems way beyond normal capabilities, these complex light filled structures made by a kind of technology that is both known and unknown. We all know about computers but not necessarily at this finessed level.

CE I've been doing it for well over twenty years, which is a long time for digital art.

MC And there's a feeling of modernity, because we know this is a technology that architects and advertisers use. They've been doing it since the mid-1980s, when you yourself first saw someone demonstrating the Quantel system. They often use the technology to hide things and remove things, and you use it to expose things, to bring out form. When I look at a work like "Torsion" I see a repeated stylised ear of corn shape or wheat shape. How would you describe that image?

CE Certainly a use of natural forms, yes, and an ongoing study of studio and stained glass imagery, as well as certain anthropomorphized forms, taken from life, and reused in the fluid geometries and curved surfaces that make up the image. The scale is important too, as it is intended to envelop the viewer in a really immersive colour field.

MC Relatively timeless images, then, plus a very insistent modernity because of the technology, and then again old fashioned pleasure in intricacy and detail – and curious colour, kind of artificial and earthy at the same time. Initially you see these high transparent reds and icy blues, then when you go in you see the colours of earth and nature.

CE I individually drew and coloured each unit first and then I overlaid coloured varnishes to mute some areas and allow others to be full strength, to really sing. This is the kind of thing that I meant when I said that each work is always experimental, but in different ways.

MC By "overlay" you mean a procedure you do on the computer, it's not an instruction you give to the printer?

CE No, not the printer, all the work happens on screen. The printing is hi-tech, but straightforward. But with the work on screen there are various stages: the initial marks, then a sculptural stage, and then a laying on of colours. And then – not on all the pieces but on some of them – there will be an overlay of other colours that influences what comes through, a kind of glazing process. When it comes to the printing, there is no handcraft or inking up as per a traditional print. The work is really all over by then. The print process is a mechanical transition of the work from my screen to the world, a way of showing what I have made, no more than that. From a creative point of view it may also be a good thing to have some fixed parameters to work within, to force a certain level of decision-making, and deliver real things that actually exist. I like the idea of living with a painting or work of art over many years, so on balance, at this moment at least, I'm happy to produce pieces that are capable of being owned and displayed in a conventional way.

MC How would you describe the surfaces you're working with at the moment?

CE The Diasec surface resembles car paint, lacquer or nail varnish. It's a machine made high gloss surface that is very alluring and draws you in, as well as giving a very immediate view of the work, no flaws or drips to distract from the line making. Here you just get the pure visual hit of the colour and the form, no distraction at all really, and the reflections add life and motion with mobile light and shadow reflections. This helps the work come alive really. I'm interested in trying other surfaces in the future, perhaps I'll reintroduce the overtly hand finished, although the lure of the machine remains strong I think.

MC Do the images all have simple beginnings?

CE Yes, very much, it might be a cross shape, like a pencil making a cross on a piece of paper. And then that shape will be elaborated.

MC So it's like Islamic decoration, this simple shape or set of lines that a very complex and intricate enormous pattern in a mosque will tend to boil down to?

CE Yes, the original shape gets repeated and the repetitions have a certain variation, and the effect will get far away from the beginning point, but the beginning is always present, you can always find it or work it out somehow. It's important that the basic form is still in there, as with any art I think.

MC And where we see effects of radiating light, and diffused edges contrasted by sharper edges, and so on, originally there was just a bare, simple line, as basic as a pencil mark?

CE Yes all the glows, and so on, are elaborations and variations, and they all have to coordinate with everything else that's happening, and each one is individually constructed. I might repeat a line so it has certain elements that appear to be flying off, and then I'll follow up those elements, and elaborate them, each with their own treatment, which might be transparent or solid, or blurred or sharp, or variations on solid and transparent and blurred and sharp. And then those elaborations will have to resolve visually with the line I was repeating in the first place. That's what the labour is about largely. And there are a lot of discarded versions, a lot of experimental stages.

MC You set something off that's a bit impulsive, and then there's a time of thought, and then you follow up those impulses, and elaborate them, and you're maybe looking for a pulse that flows through everything, and that pulse has a meaning of its own. Simplicity at the beginning point and then a build up of complexity as you're responding to things that are actually there. I imagine they take a little time to see? To some extent you're idealising what's there, but you're also looking carefully. People who aren't painters assume the artist thinks of something marvellous and then somehow carries it out, and they don't think about that making stage because they can't relate to it. They don't know it. They like the fantasy of inspiration, the gift of art, as if an angel gives you the whole idea all at once. They don't realise how much the process of making and correcting and remaking actually determines what is made in the end.

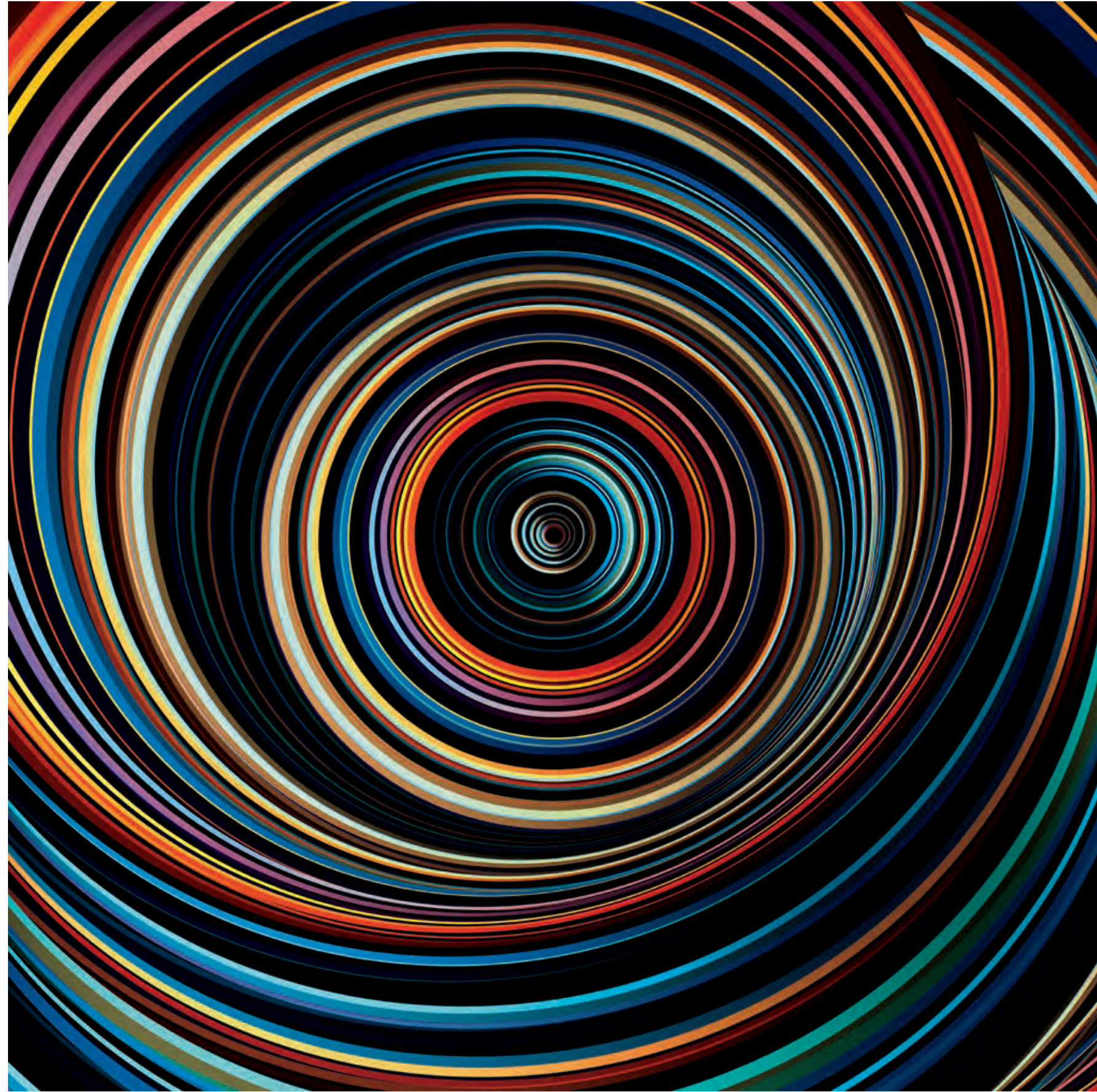
CE Yes, there's a very chancy element in there, from which some kind of substantial meaning is developed.

Chuck Elliott and Matthew Collings talking at Close House, in February 2011. The resulting interview was published in the show catalogue Coda at Close, designed by Herman Lelie, with photography by Stephen White.

Coda at Close was curated and hosted by Freeny Yianni.



Revolver / oxidised
74cm sq / metallic Lambda print with Diasec mount / edition of 12



Revolver / cerulean glaze
88cm sq / metallic Lambda print with Diasec mount / edition of 12



Revolver 25 in situ at Transistor at the Southbank / 2007







60 Torsion / indigo lacquer
In situ at Close House / 2011



Torsion / indigo lacquer
240 x 200cm / metallic Lambda print with Diasec mount / edition of 4
61





Torsion / silvered
100 x 83.4cm / metallic Lambda print with Diasec mount / edition of 12

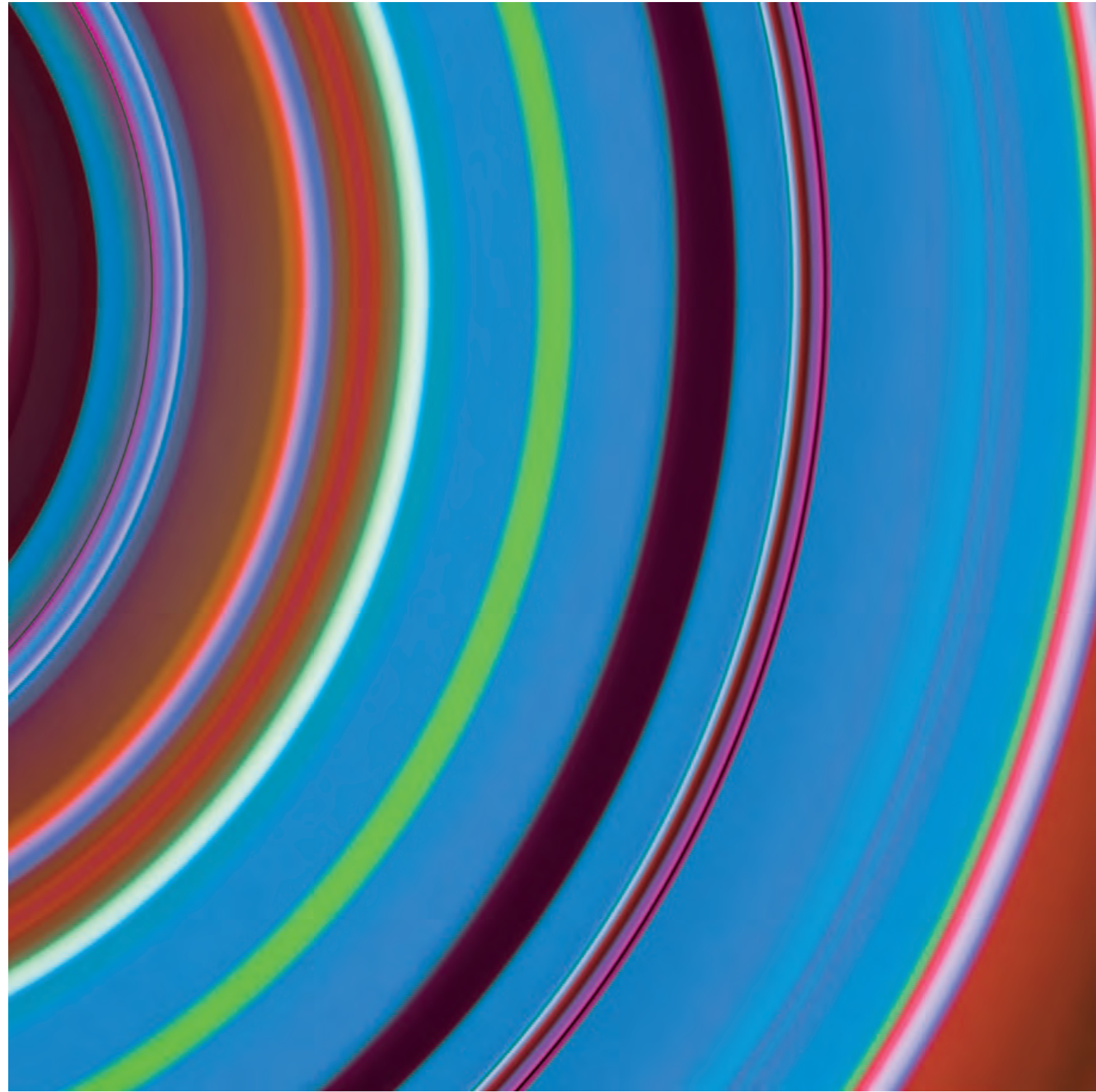


Spiral scratch / crimson underglaze
Detail / shown in situ at Coda on Cork Street 2008

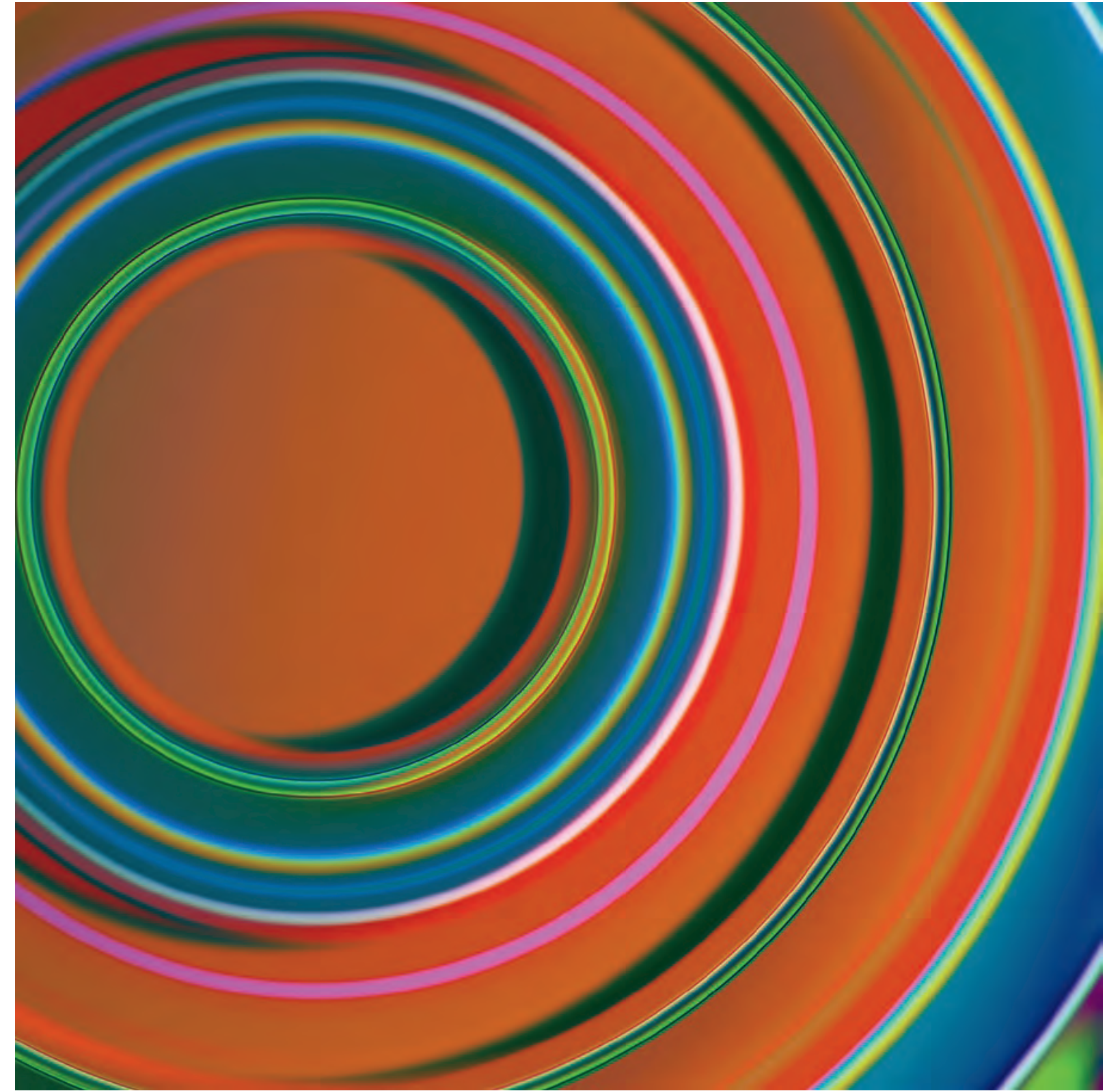
Spiral scratch / clipped kandy
74cm sq / metallic Lambda print with Diasec mount / edition of 12



Spiral / orange oblate
44cm sq / metallic Lambda print with Diasec mount / edition of 8

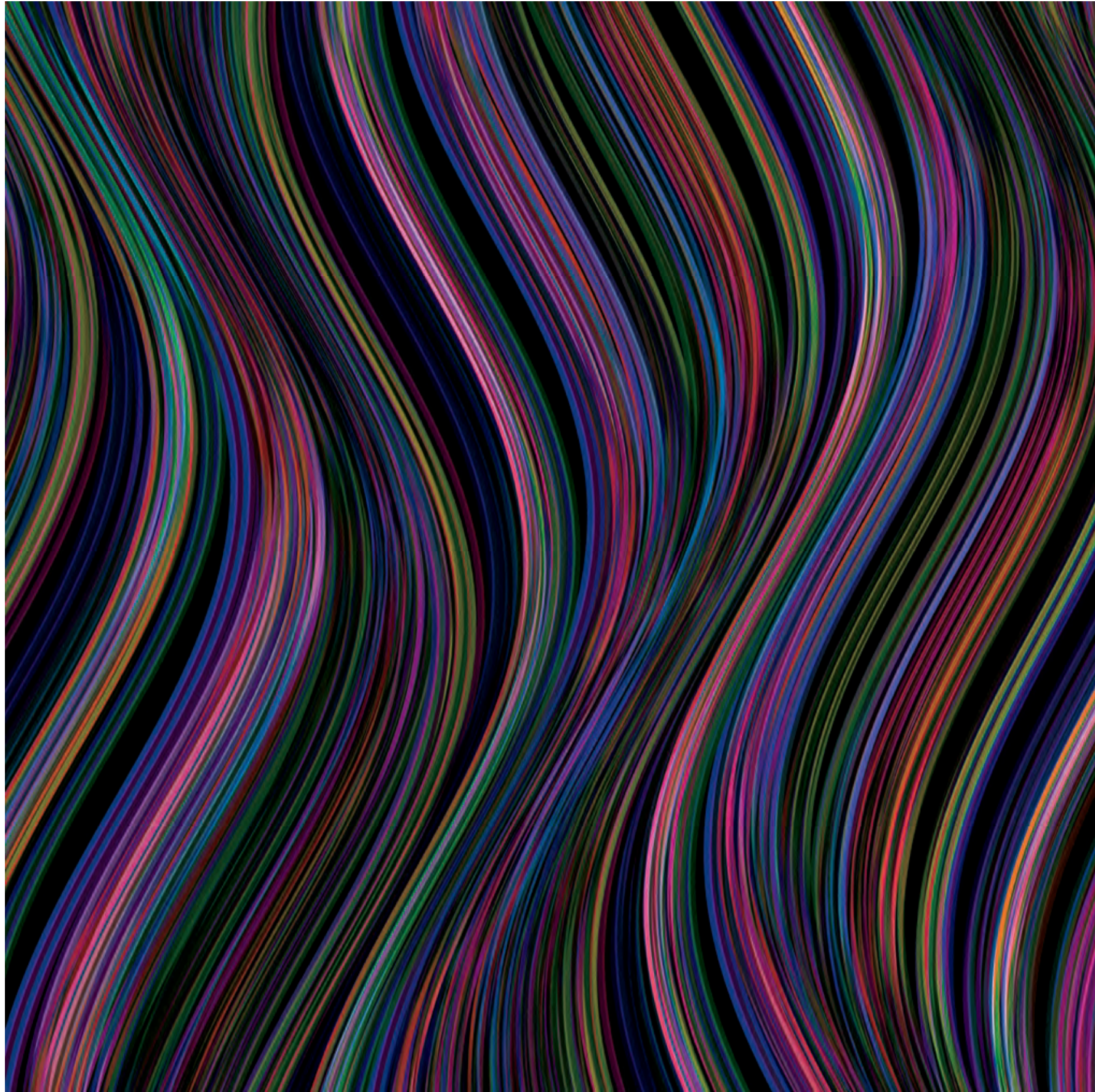


Concentric 13
66cm sq / metallic Lambda print with Diasec mount / edition of 4



Concentric 1
66cm or 74cm sq / metallic Lambda print with Diasec mount / edition of 4





Wave 11 / black wave
74cm sq / metallic Lambda print with Diasec mount / edition of 4



Wave 3
66cm sq / metallic Lambda print with Diasec mount / edition of 4

BCFM

Chuck Elliott in conversation with Lynette Quinlan / transcribed from a broadcast on BCFM / May 2011

LQ *Hello and welcome to the Bristol Hum with me Lynette on BCFM 93.2 FM and the Bristol Hum is all about arts and theatre and culture around Bristol, and they indeed are our topics for today. We are going to be hearing from Bristol based artist Chuck Elliott about his solo show currently on at the Bristol Gallery down at the waterside and a very amazing show it is too. We'll hear all about that, and then continuing with our director's cut season from the Bristol Old Vic theatre school we'll be hearing from the director who is currently on, showing her work there this week, which is very interesting, and we should be joined by one of the cast members as well. That's all coming up, and of course there's Mayfest to talk and talk and talk about. All coming up after this tune...*

LQ That was the real Beatles doing Come Together, and the reason I say real is because the fake Beatles apparently are playing in Bath this week at the opening of the Peter Blake exhibition at the Holbourne Museum. I've just been alerted to that fact. I'm joined in the studio now by Bristol based artist Chuck Elliott. Hi Chuck...

CE Hi Lynette...

LQ And, um, it was you who told me all about the fake Beatles...

CE Yes, yeah, yes...

LQ At Peter Blake. Now Chuck, you have got a beautiful, colourful, wonderful solo exhibition currently down at The Bristol Gallery, down at the Millennium Square. And, you're a digital artist, I can say that with confidence, can't I?

CE That's right, absolutely, all the work is computer generated.

LQ Computer generated, now, there already you might have to explain something. First of all though for people listening, can you describe your work?

CE I would describe the work, um, I've been asked this a lot of times, and I currently say that I think they are sculptural drawings, rendered onto photographic paper. And what that really means is that they are

drawings of sculptural forms, fairly basic loose sculptural forms, which are then coloured up with translucent glazes of colour and imaged onto photographic paper using a high tech laser process. And that gives you these large format colour prints.

LQ It certainly does, and because I've seen them I understand where you're coming from exactly, and it didn't sound too technical, although when I was standing in front of these beautiful, beautiful images I couldn't even, to be honest, understand the little piece explaining what they were next to them, because it just seemed a bit technical for me.

CE Yes, yeah...

LQ But you've mentioned the photographic paper...

CE That's right. I'm using this amazing Kodak paper, and the light is exposed onto the paper using laser light, and then they're developed and washed in the normal way. So you do have kind of traditional photographs, but instead of using a camera I'm drawing on a computer, so the images are created completely manually as drawings, but they're done in a kind of sculptural way. So they're done in three dimensions, and you can move around the drawings, whilst they're still on the computer, as if you were looking around a real object in the real world, and choose a view of it that's going to make the picture in the end.

LQ Okay, I think that's really interesting that you mentioned that you draw them on the computer, because I think a lot of people when they see computer art or think about computer art, digital art, they think that the artist's skill has somehow, is somehow being done by the computer? And a lot of people still think that drawing is kind of the pinnacle of the artist's skill. But you're saying that you draw with the computer?

CE Yes. I think both of those are true. Drawing is, probably, the pinnacle of the artist's skill, and certainly the computer is being used as a tool for drawing. Obviously some people think that drawing will always be charcoal or pencil on paper, and other people think drawing is more of an activity about line making, and really what I'm doing is I'm making

lines in a three dimensional space, in a kind of sculptural way, so I'm describing shapes using line, and then choosing views of those drawings and using those as the basis for the new images. I think the drawing process is about examining the line, exploring the line, making the line, making the mark, making the expressive marks and getting them onto the paper. So I do call it drawing, but obviously the computer does make that controversial. Computing really is a modern way to make marks which I totally embrace, other people eschew, and you have to choose for yourself whether you think it's a valid tool. It does allow you to edit, reedit, colour, recolour, move and really get to exactly where you want to get to in terms of image making, and you know, employ those amazing new tools in a creative way.

LQ Well that's right, its the tool of the time isn't it...

CE Yes, yeah...

LQ And you mentioned also that you rework the images in the computer, so I was going to ask whether you have an idea of your image in your head before you start or whether it evolves and emerges as you're working on it?

CE It's kind of both of those I think. I think it's a smash together of a whole load of visual reference that I'm thinking about for each new image. Each of the images is hopefully fairly different from the previous one, and the sources come from all over, from walking through life, and seeing what you see as you travel. Lots of natural forms, lots of man made forms, architecture, product design, lots of glass, I'm looking at a lot of stained glass...

LQ I can recognise that, saying that stained glass is an influence...

CE Yes, yeah. And all kinds of studio products, product design, modern design. But also art, lots of art history thrown in there...

LQ I was interested with you working in computer art, what the link is with past artists. Have you... is there a link, or do you feel that you are

treading completely new ground, and if there is a link, how have you picked it up?

CE I think there's a huge link. I think it's impossible to create anything that's genuinely new in some sense. I don't think you can do unique. I think you can only build on what's gone before, and I think you can move forward from the massive body of work that's come before your own, and enjoy what's there, you know, choose what you want to work with, and add to that, sort of enormous pile really... so certainly I've spent my whole life looking around, mostly Europe, but also America, looking at art in all the core places, you know, Italy, Spain, France, America, um, well those are my influences, obviously there's a lot of art going on in other countries as well...

LQ And would that be modern artists?

CE Yeah, but also the old stuff too. Definitely. 15th, 16th century Italian icon painters, all those amazing golds and blues. But then...

LQ If you think of the colours...

CE Yeah, definitely. And certainly the modernist movement, especially for architecture, Bauhaus, Josef Albers, Anni Albers, millions of people, um, Moholy-Nagy I think is hugely influential. Twenties work, thirties work, and then of course you've got the Sixties, the pop stuff, the op stuff. People like Bridget Riley, lots of great British artists in that area as well...

LQ Bridget Riley I picked up on I think as an influence...

CE Yeah, yes, yes...

LQ But, um, this is the first time I've seen your work, and it is, as I've mentioned, such huge impact, the colour, the design, the effect, you know, that you're using with this new technique. But I'm interested, how long have you been doing it like this, is this a new body of work, what kind of art were you creating five years ago?



CE Five years ago it was this body of work, I've been making this series for about six years. Before that I was working more as a commercial artist, working in my own studio, but making images more for, um, business to business and corporate use. So for instance I drew the FIFA logo, and I drew the British Airways logo. So it's that kind of...

LQ Well that is terribly of the moment. FIFA and British Airways are both in the news...

CE They're always in the news aren't they... um, yes, so. It's a similar kind of space, you know, looking at shape, looking at form, looking at colour, and I just decided really that I wanted to move away from those kind of clients and just start making work for its own sake really. And really pushing into the technology more, and exploring what I wanted to explore, with my own voice, rather than being briefed by other people. I think the difference between commercial art and fine art is really about making your own exploration rather than being told what to do.

LQ That must have been a very exciting moment, to take those skills to create individual pieces. What are you hoping, what kind of a response do you want, or do you hope to have from the viewer, of your works?

CE I don't think I've ever thought about that. Um, I hope that people just enjoy the moment, and enjoy the colour and the movement and the light that's in the work. I hope that if you live with a piece over a number of years, I mean I think art is a very slow burn, I live with quite a lot of paintings by my brothers in my house, and other people, and I think over a number of years you can really kind of get into a piece. Hopefully there's a lot to explore, visually, I think they have to be dense, with the potential to hold your interest over the long term. If they're at all successful that should happen.

LQ You mentioned movement and light, and that is preeminent in a lot of them, and standing in front of them for me, I felt that it was almost, there's quite an emotional reaction, but a physical one as well, and a pulse, some of them seem to have a bit of a pulse, because they're so rich in design, the colours, whatever, the shapes, the lines...

CE Yes, yeah, that comes from the sculptural forms I think, there's a kind of set up, so that although they are flat images on the wall, they do have this kind of base of being studies of three dimensional forms, so you get some of that three dimensionality coming through, and you get that sense of solidity from the forms probably...

LQ And the other thing was the light that they exude. I thought that they must be lightboxes, but they're not.

CE No, they're not...

LQ That is incredible, that you can get such a shimmering light from within almost...

CE Yeah, yeah yeah, yes. I think that's part of the study process, working out how to get maximum hue and light and dark all onto the paper at the same time. And that's done by a whole load of optical... um, I'm not going to use the word tricks, but they're kind of optical observations, processes, of how things can be lit in such a way as to maintain these big colours but also, you know, have highlight and shadow, and certainly, with stained glass for instance, the black line is key to making the colour areas look more colourful. So you're using your lines to emphasise the colours where you want them to come alive.

LQ Let's just mention, there's one in particular, I think it's called Torsion...

CE Right.

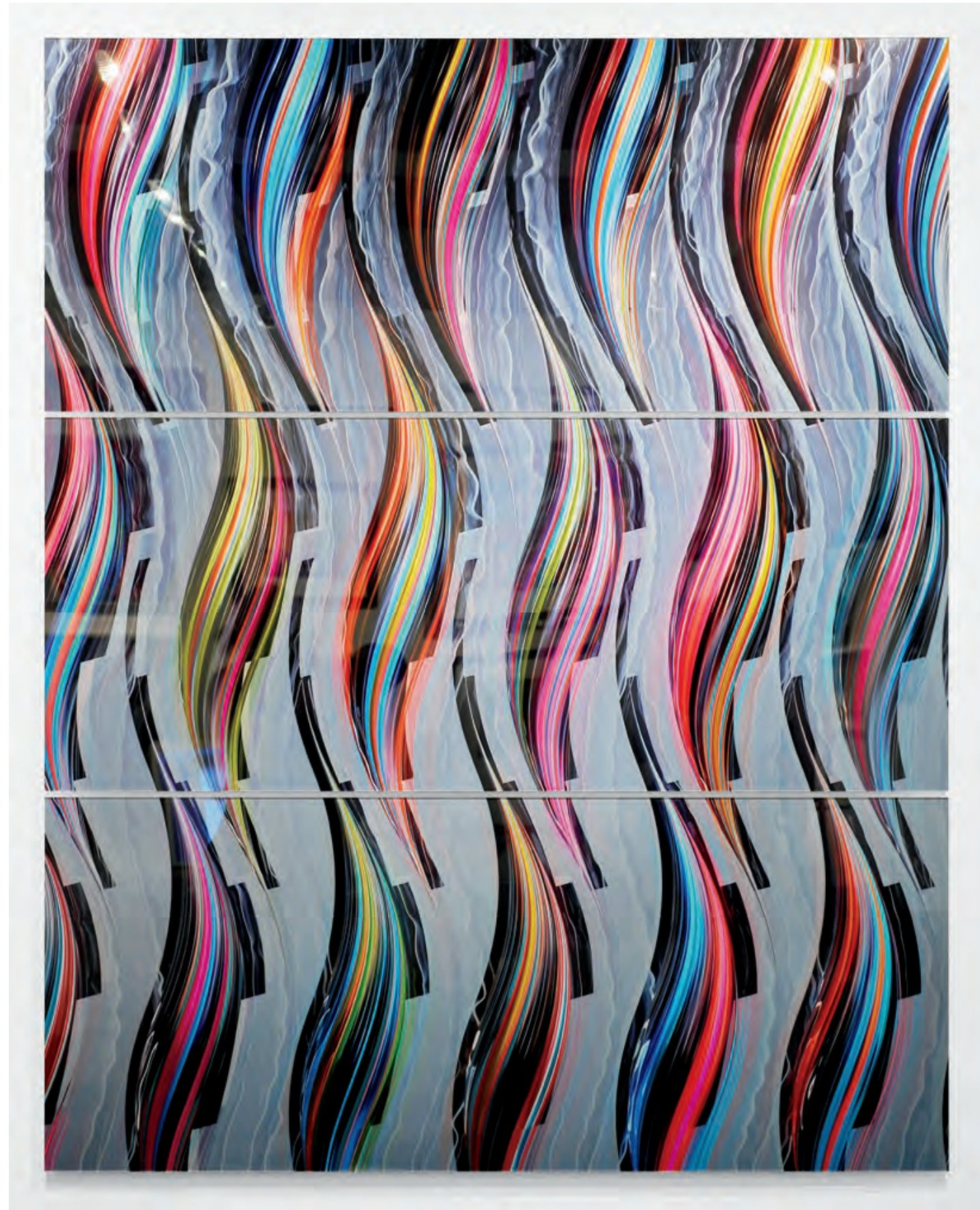
LQ And that is the one for me that really, because it's very large, it's as you walk in the gallery, and it really does sing, stained glass influence. Very very beautiful piece. So were you intending to make a sort of, uh...

CE Yeah, absolutely. That one is about eight feet high I think, and um, it's really designed to completely fill up your kind of peripheral vision with the colour and the forms that are there. And it's a kind of fairly complex study of lots of smaller, basically studies of kind of glass work, which are then embedded together into a much bigger study. So what's happened there is there's been a series of small studies, probably a hundred and twenty small studies, which have been meshed together into this bigger piece, in exactly the same way that you'd make a stained glass window, I think, where maybe someone would've painted out hundreds of figures and then put them all together into a bigger tableau or scene.

LQ Oh. Well it's beautiful Chuck. That's really interesting. We're just going to go for a song, and then we're going to come back, and you'll stay here, and we might hear a bit more about how you came to be based in Bristol.

CE Great.

*interview continues, with conversation about Bristol galleries, etc
listen again here
<http://bcfm.org.uk/2011/05/12/13/bristol-hum-12/4187>*



Arpeggi / REZ / silvered
160 x 128cm / metallic Lambda print with Diasec mount / edition of 12



Arpeggi / kandy black
82.5 x 66cm / Chromogenic print with Diasec mount / edition of 12



Arpeggi / sotto voce
52 x 40cm / pigment print on archival 330gsm Somerset velvet paper / edition of 12





Arpeggi / REZ / cerulean japanned
100 x 80cm / metallic Lambda print with Diasec mount / edition of 12









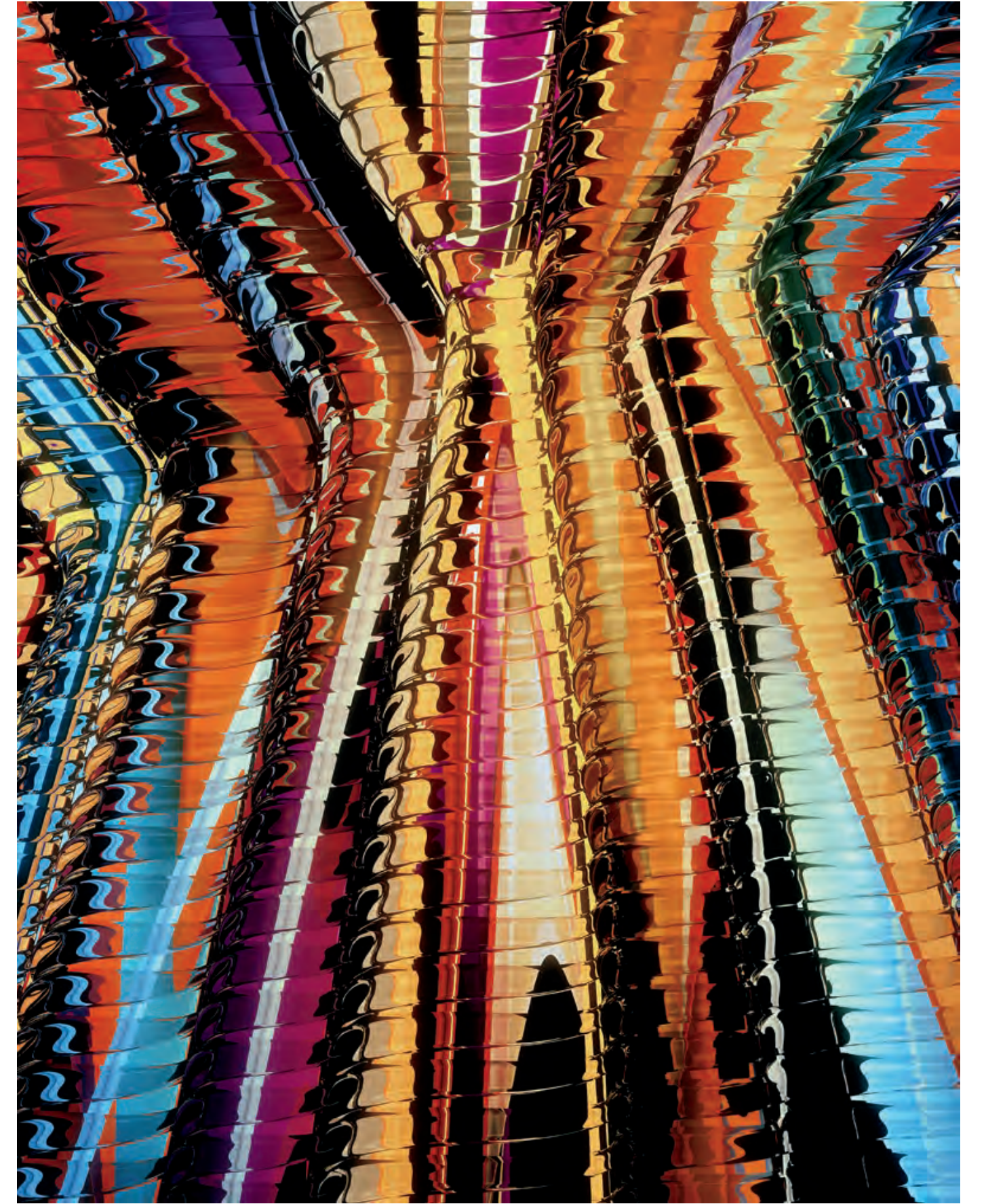
Arpeggi / FOLIO
6 prints with a clam shell folio box / edition of 24



ARPEGGI / FOLIO

CHUCK ELLIOTT / 2008





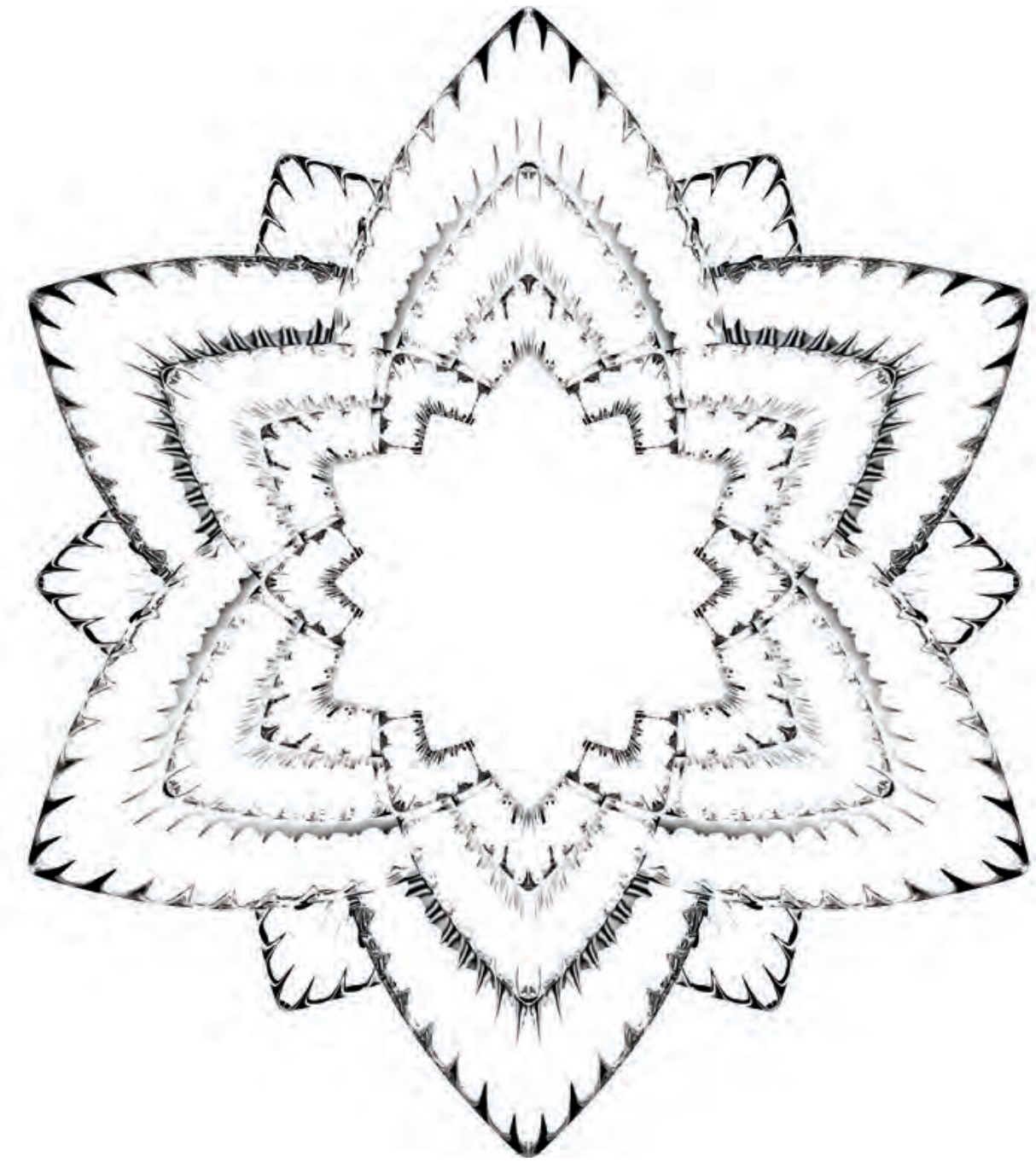
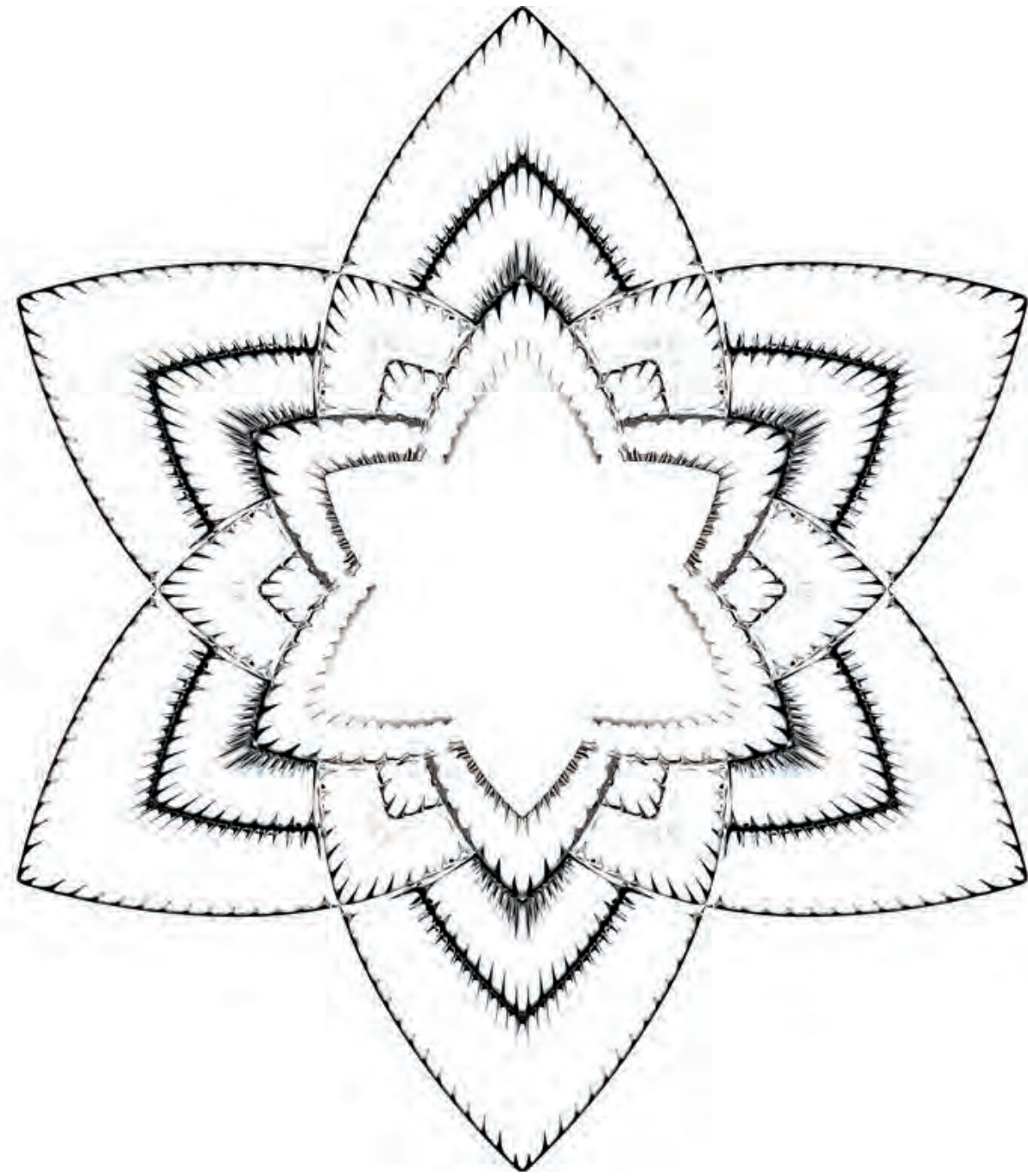
Blast FIRST / fractureRefract
154 x 120cm / metallic Lambda print with Diasec mount / edition of 8

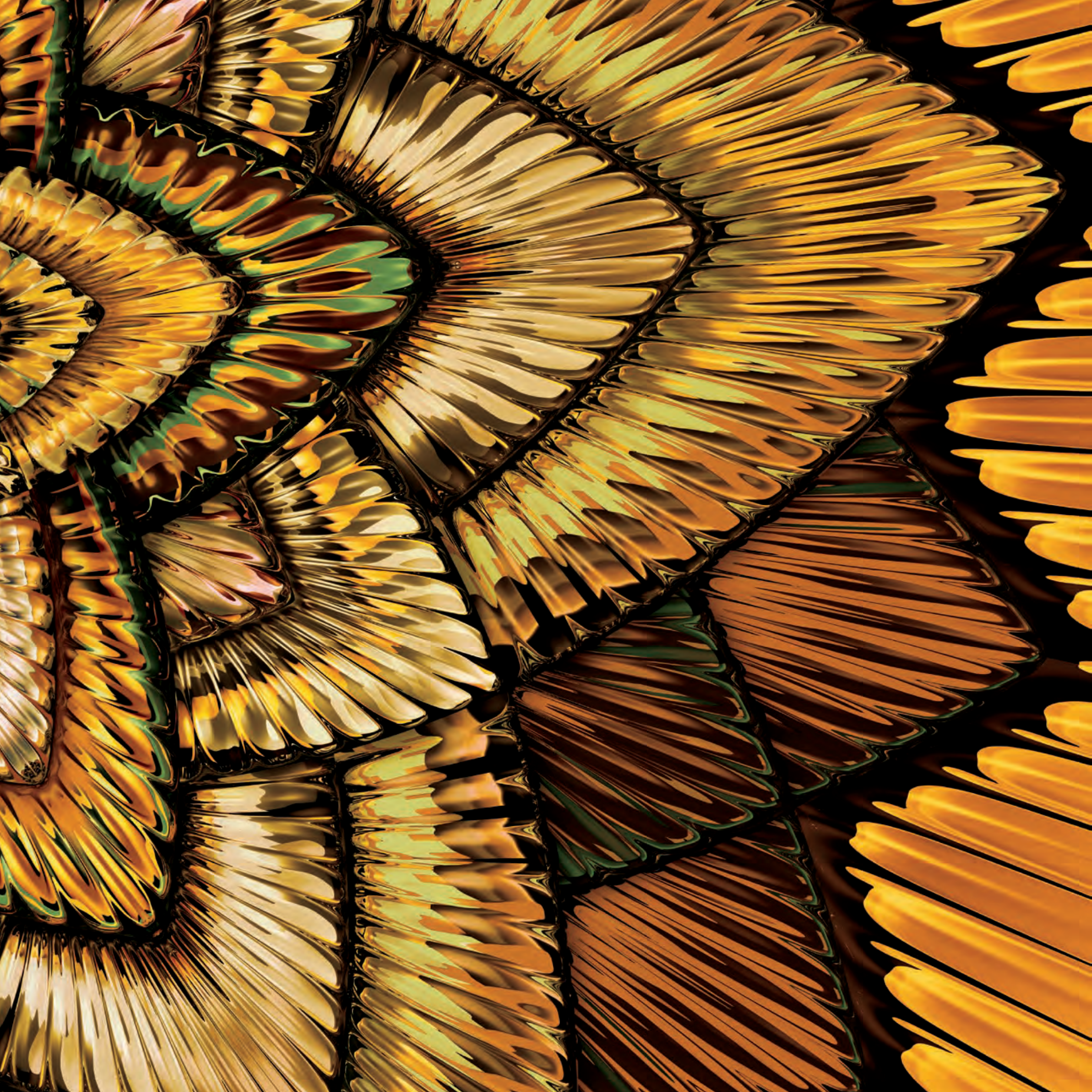


Collider / cadmium mandala
74cm sq / metallic Lambda print with Diasec mount / edition of 12



Collider / gilded mandala
120cm sq / metallic Lambda print with Diasec mount / edition of 12





Collider / silvered mandala
120cm sq / metallic Lambda print with Diasec mount / edition of 12

BIOGRAPHY



Chuck Elliott, born in Camberwell, London, 1967

Studied at Middlesex University, formerly The Hornsey School of Art, graduating with a First Class (Hons) Degree in Graphic Art in 1992

DAiS / 1994

Founder. Commercial art studio, Great Marlborough Street, London W1

Flux / 1995

Founder. Commercial art studio, Greek Street, Soho, London W1
Commissions for Prada, Yohji Yamamoto, Nike, Apple, BA and FIFA, amongst many others

Transistor / 2005

Founder. Fine art studio and quasi artists co-operative. Studio moves to Bristol

EXHIBITIONS

Gallery shows /2006 to 2011

360 Gallery, group show, Perth, Australia, August 2011
My Life in Art, Hurst House, London, August 2011
Beaux Arts, Artists of Fame and Promise, July 2011
The Bristol Gallery, solo show, May 2011
CODA at Close, solo show at Close House, March 2011
Supersize, **Catto Gallery**, February 2011

Blackheath Gallery, group show, December 2010
Visual Arts & Business, Coutts Bank, December 2010
Grant Bradley Gallery, MS Therapy show, December 2010
Contemporary Six, Manchester, October 2010
The Catto Gallery, September 2010
A two man show with Derek Balmer (PPRWA)
Edgar Modern, summer show, August 2010
Masters of Print, Foss Fine Art, June 2010
A six man show with Damien Hirst, Tracey Emin and Peter Blake
Visual Arts & Business, TLT London, May 2010
Guildhall Chambers, February 2010
New Year / New work, View Gallery, January 2010

Drugstore Gallery, group show, December 2009
Visual Arts & Business, TLT Bristol, November 2009
Red Shift / The Collective, October 2009
Blackheath Gallery, autumn show, September 2009
Modern Artists Gallery, autumn show, August 2009
Envy W1, Drugstore group show, 2009
View Gallery, summer show, 2009
Modern Artists Gallery, summer show, 2009

Morgan Boyce Gallery, group show, December 2008
Blackheath Gallery, group show, December 2008
Visual Arts & Business, Beechcroft, November 2008
View Gallery, inaugural group show, November 2008
IMPACT, Centre for Fine Print Research, UWE, October 2008
Emporium, Penny Brohn, October 2008
Brsitol Contemporary Open, October 2008
Blackheath Gallery, September 2008

Lovebox, Victoria Park, London, August 2008
CODA on Cork Street, May 2008
A two man show with Anna Gillespie

Fairfax Gallery, December 2007
Black and White, Modern Artists Gallery, December 2007
Second Helping, RWA at Bordeaux Quay, December 2007
Niche, Steps Gallery, December 2007
RWA, 155th Open, October 2007
Kinetic, Aria, Islington September 2007
Revelation, Paintworks, Bristol, July 2007
Transistor at the Southbank Centre, London, March 2007

Kinetic, City Inn, October 2006
The Steps Gallery, Bristol, September 2006
Artonomy, group show, Truro, August 2006
Modern Artists Gallery, group show, Pangbourne, July 2006
The Steps Gallery, summer show, Bristol, 2006
Gallery 54, summer show, London, July 2006
The Walk Gallery, summer show, London, June 2006
Artonomy, group show, Truro, February 2006

Art fairs /2005 to 2011

ST-ART, Strasbourg, 2011
Art London, 2011
Hampstead AAF, 2011
Amsterdam AAF, autumn 2011
New York AAF, 2011
20/21, The Royal College of Art, 2011
Utrecht Open Art, 2011
Amsterdam AAF, spring 2011
Art Chicago, 2011
Transistor at the AAF, Battersea, 2011
London Art Fair, 2011

New York AAF, 2010
Manchester Art Fair, 2010
Art London, 2010
The Drugstore Gallery at Paris AAF, 2010
Bristol AAF, 2010
Transistor at Battersea AAF, 2010
Transistor at London Art Fair, 2010

The Drugstore at Paris AAF, 2009
Transistor at Bristol AAF, 2009
Chelsea Art Fair, 2009
Transistor at Battersea AAF, 2009
20/21, The Royal College of Art, 2009

Edinburgh Art Fair, 2008
Amsterdam AAF, 2008
Transistor at Battersea AAF, 2008

Bridge London, 2007
AAF Bristol, 2007
Newcastle Gateshead Art Fair, 2007
artDC, Washington DC, 2007
Glasgow Art Fair, 2007
AAF Battersea, 2007
FORM, Olympia, 2007
Christie's NSPCC Art Auction, 2007
20/21, The Royal College of Art, 2007
Modern works on paper, The Royal Academy, 2007
London Art Fair, 2007

The Great Art Fair, London, 2006
Art London, 2006
New York AAF, 2006
Bristol AAF, 2006
Battersea AAF, 2006
Art on Paper, Royal College of Art, 2006
London Art Fair, 2006

Beijing Art Fair, 2005

CREDITS

In situ photography by Julian Welsh, 2005 to 2011
except
CODA on Cork Street photography by Liz Eve, 2008
CODA at Close photography by Stephen White, 2011

Fine art photographic printing
Spectrum, Brighton
Powerprint, London

Pigment prints
Dunstan Baker, Fine Art Print Company, Bath

Etching
Ros Ford, Spike Island, Bristol

Diasec mounting
Kay Mounting Service, London
Grieger, Dusseldorf

Framing
Darbyshire, London
Sky Blue, Bristol

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