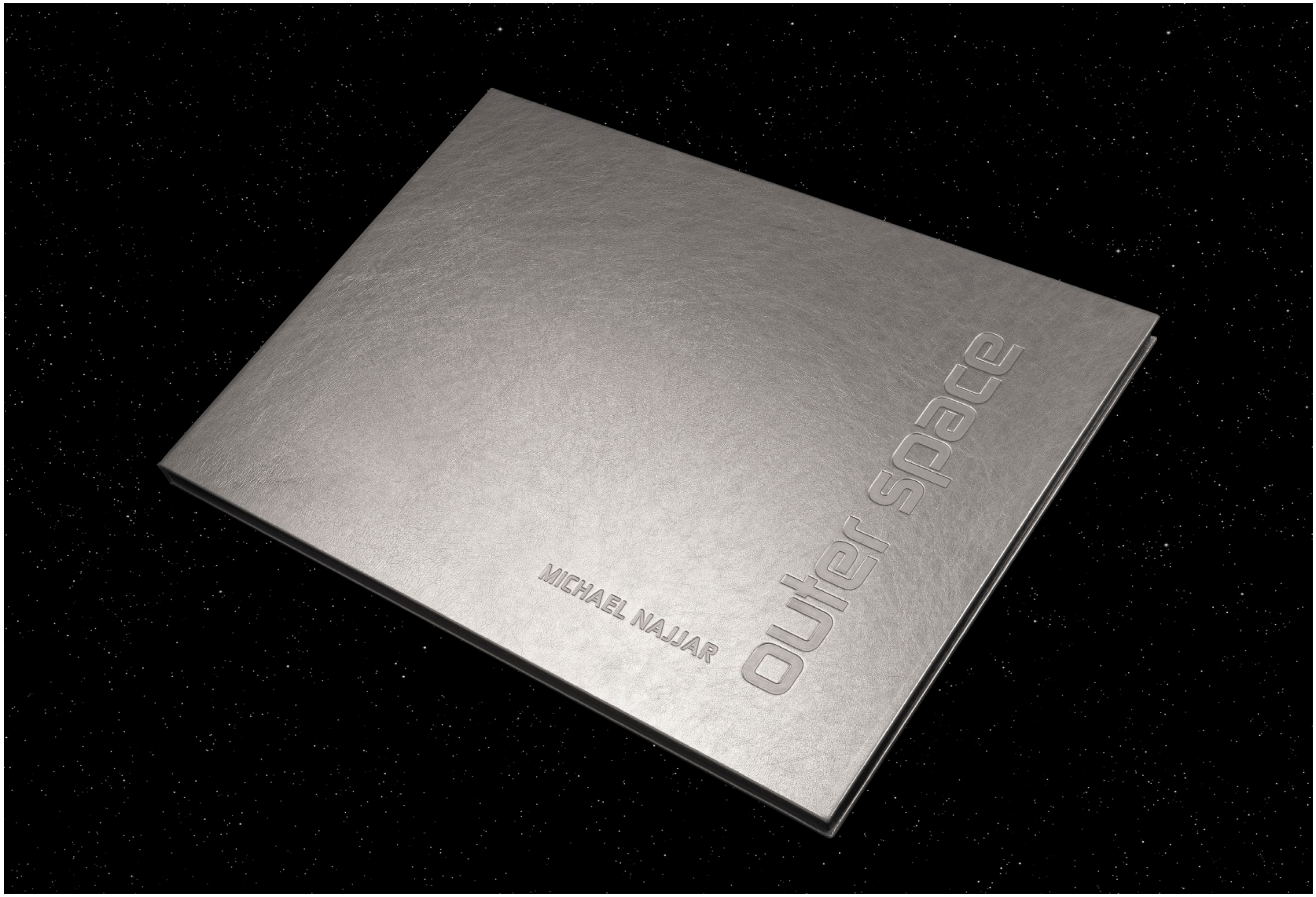
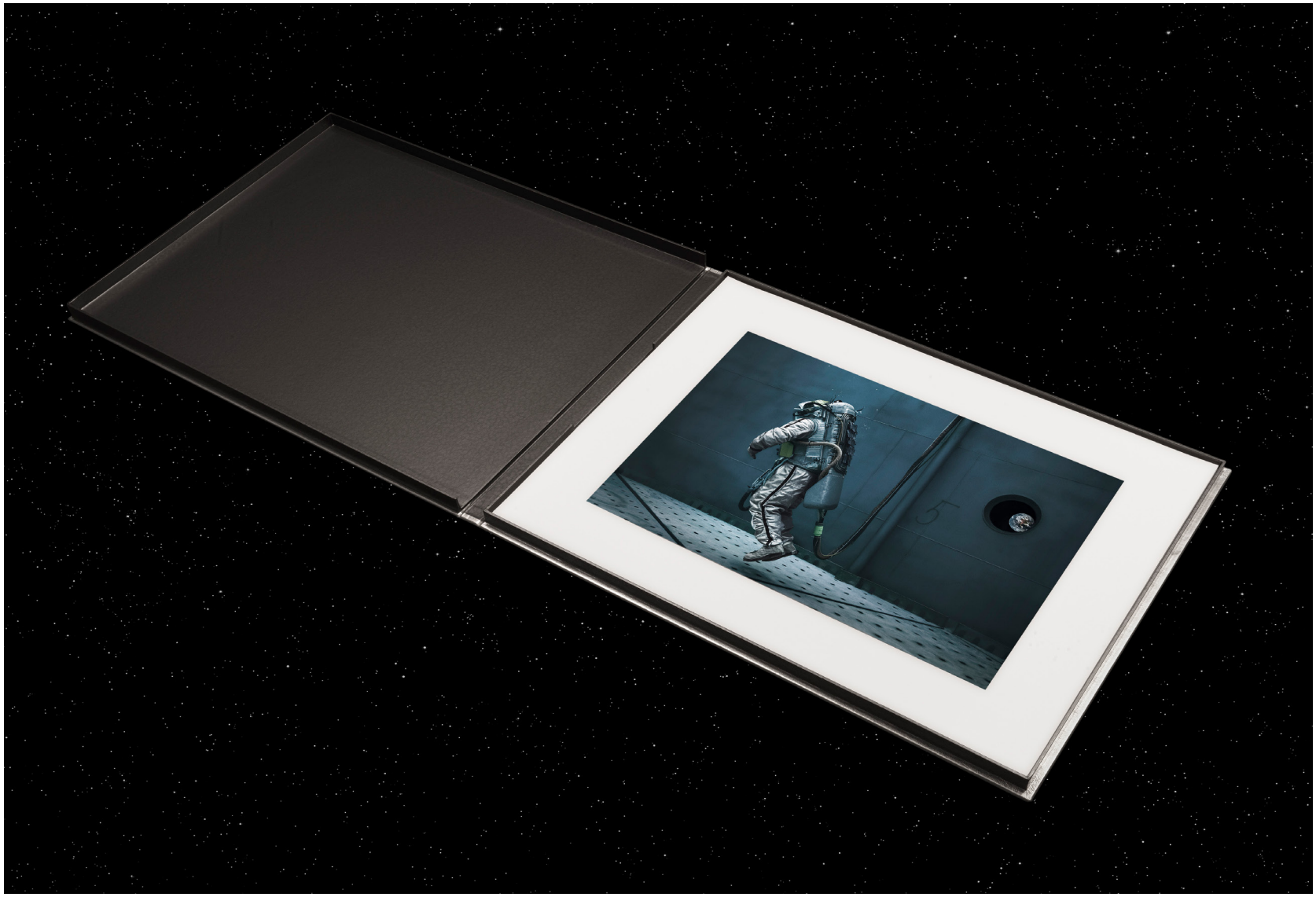
outer space l portfolio box 2020


MICHAEL NAJJAR
outer space



“outer space”

The “outer space” work series deals with the latest developments in space exploration and the way they will shape our future life on Earth, in Earth’s near orbit and on other planets. The ongoing series started in 2011 and currently comprises over 60 artworks. Works from the series have been exhibited internationally in numerous museums, biennials and galleries in the past years.

The portfolio box is a special edition which assembles 12 selected motifs from the series. These are related to the topic of astrofuturistic landscapes, extenting our understanding of traditional landscapes by showing a fascinating spectrum of phenomena, perspectives and possibilities for the viewer´s imagination.

Facts:

Content: 12 archival pigment prints on fine art paper
Sheet size: 42 x 60 cm (16,5 x 23,6 in)
Image size: 45 x 29,2 cm (17,5 x 11,5 in)
Custom made, embossed silver leather box
Edition of 30

Price: 13.500,00 EUR (excl. VAT)

liquid gravity

liquid gravity (2013)

“liquid gravity” explores linkages between space, gravity, and the human body. A cosmonaut levitates above the ground in what seems at first sight to be an industrial environment. Yet the view of the globe of the Earth through a porthole dislocates the viewer’s perspective and questions the relationship between real-world and fabricated reality. The work draws on a cosmonaut training session taken by Michael Najjar in December 2012 at the Yuri Gagarin Cosmonaut Training Center in Star City, Russia. The principle of simulating weightlessness in a huge tank of water is known as “neutral buoyancy” and was first developed by Buzz Aldrin in the Gemini project. Since then the hydrolab has been a vital part of training for all cosmonauts and astronauts.

spaceport

spaceport (2012)

“spaceport” shows the first private space hub on the planet, Spaceport America, located in the New Mexican desert west of the White Sands missile range. This futuristic building was designed by the world famous architect Lord Norman Foster. It will be the hub for future commercial space travel operated by Virgin Galactic and other private space companies. Using local materials and regional construction techniques, Spaceport America is both sustainable and sensitive to its surroundings. The sinuous shape of the building seeks to embody the drama and mystery of space flight itself. The artwork is a fusion of daytime and nighttime scenery and enforces Foster’s lead idea of reducing the visibility of the building by merging architectural structure and the natural environment.

gravity turn

gravity turn (2016)

“gravity turn” visualizes different perspectives of the launch of an Ariane 5 rocket at the Guiana Space Centre by combining a skywards view photographed by the artist from the ground near the launch pad with a view from sky towards earth photographed from an airplane flying over French Guiana. Orbital launch vehicles like the Ariane 5 commonly take off vertically, and then progressively tilt, usually following a smoothly curved trajectory. Once above the dense part of the atmosphere, the vehicle carefully angles the rocket engine jet, slowly pointing the launcher horizontally which permits the vehicle to progressively aim at the required orbit while increasing its speed. The launch vehicle and its smoke column of solid propellant combustion were photographed during the pitch-over manoeuvre about 90 seconds after lift-off, shortly before booster separation.

sands of mars

sands of mars (2014)

“sands of mars” focuses on the idea of the future colonization of Mars. Once a science-fiction fantasy, it is now the subject of serious feasibility studies. The Red Planet is unique in that it has the resources required to support a population of sufficient size to create a new local branch of human civilization. Colonization requires the establishment of permanent bases that have the potential for self-expansion, and inflatable habitats are one possible option for surface architecture on Mars. Geodesic spheres as invented by Buckminster Fuller in the fifties of the last century may serve as a perfect architectural concept for Mars habitats. The landscape was photographed in a unique location in Chile’s Atacama Desert, which offers a similar landscape to that found on Mars and which is often used as a testing ground for future Mars rovers.

europa

europa (2016)

“europa” visualizes the surface of the Jupiter moon Europa - one of the most likely places to find life outside of Earth. Europa is a stupendous marvellous world of ice, its entire surface covered by a thick ice shell. There is now strong scientific evidence that this distant satellite of Jupiter holds more than twice the amount of water contained by the Earth. There’s also a high probability that Europa has the right preconditions for life which makes it a fascinating topic both for art and science. The artwork is a visual composition - very much inspired by German painter Caspar David Friedrich - which fuses landscape portraits photographed in a glacier region of Iceland together with images of the surface of the Europa moon taken by the Galileo space probe. The work also conveys humankind’s irrepressible urge to discover new worlds and learn more about the origins of human life.

starlink

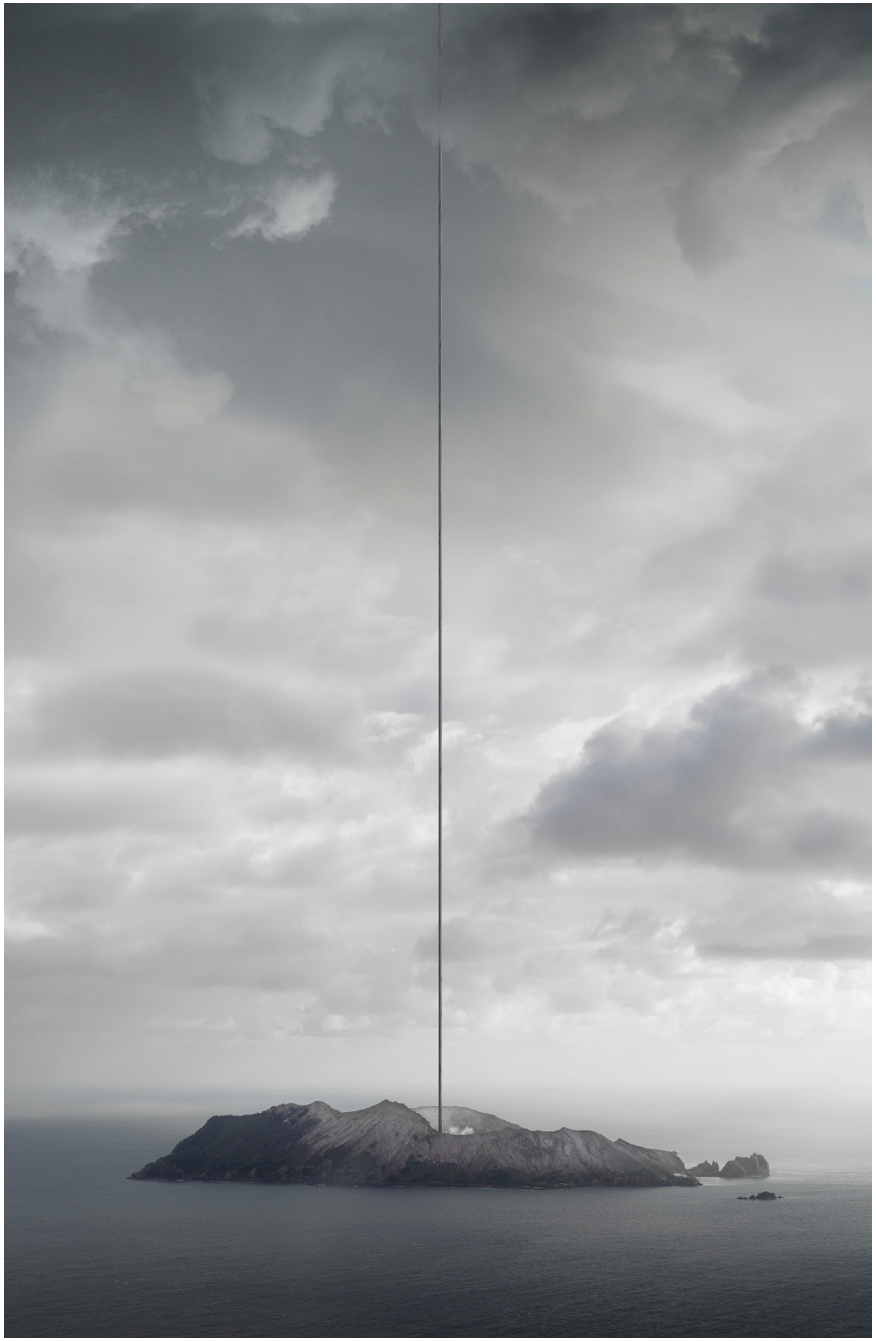
starlink (2020)

“starlink” visualizes light pollution in our sky at night, underscoring the likelihood that our starry night sky will soon drastically change forever. SpaceX plans to envelop the Earth with a global network of satellites, a mega-constellation of up to 42,000 satellites. The advent of such a global satellite network would seriously impede the research work of astronomers throughout the world. The composition shows a hilly landscape, a starry night sky photographed by a telescope in the Atacama Desert in Chile and crossed by multiple diagonal trails of light with a long flat building embedded in-between, connecting them. Entrenched in the Atacama Desert at an altitude of 2600 meters, this enigmatic building is home to research scientists and astronomers. The Starlink satellite network is destined to have a major lasting impact on the aesthetics and purity of our sky at night as technology inscribes itself intrusively on our star-studded heaven.

orbital ascent

orbital ascent (2016)

“orbital ascent” pictures the launch of an Ariane 5 rocket at the Guiana Space Centre (CSG), the European spaceport near Kourou in French Guiana. During lift-off and the first part of the ascent, combustion of solid propellant in the two side boosters produces enormous thrust which accelerates the rocket and forms a huge column of smoke. The depicted spaceport is a high tech facility surrounded by the Amazonian forest which creates not only a stirringly surrealistic setting, but can also serve as a metaphor for the strong and vital relationship between space exploration and planet Earth itself. The composition of the artwork strongly focuses on the relationship between the surface of our planet, the natural environment and Earth-observing space exploration technologies.



ascension

ascension (2020)

“ascension” visualizes the utopian vision of a space elevator. Its composition brings the three elements of ocean surface, island and clouds together, forming a sublime landscape bathed in dramatic light and divided in the middle by a vertical black line that also serves as a connecting element. Viewers approach the picture from a distance with an elevated gaze which glides over the surface of the water. In the background the horizon softly dissolves into clouds, the surface of the earth merges seamlessly with the sky. The horizontal breadth, the elevated gaze and the vertically rising line conjoin the terrestrial world with space above it. The natural landscape has an added disruptive technological element, the taut cable of the space elevator connecting Earth with outer space. Reaching the upper edge of the picture and disappearing into the clouds, it opens an infinite transcendental space in which the viewer‘s imagination can freely roam.

ignition

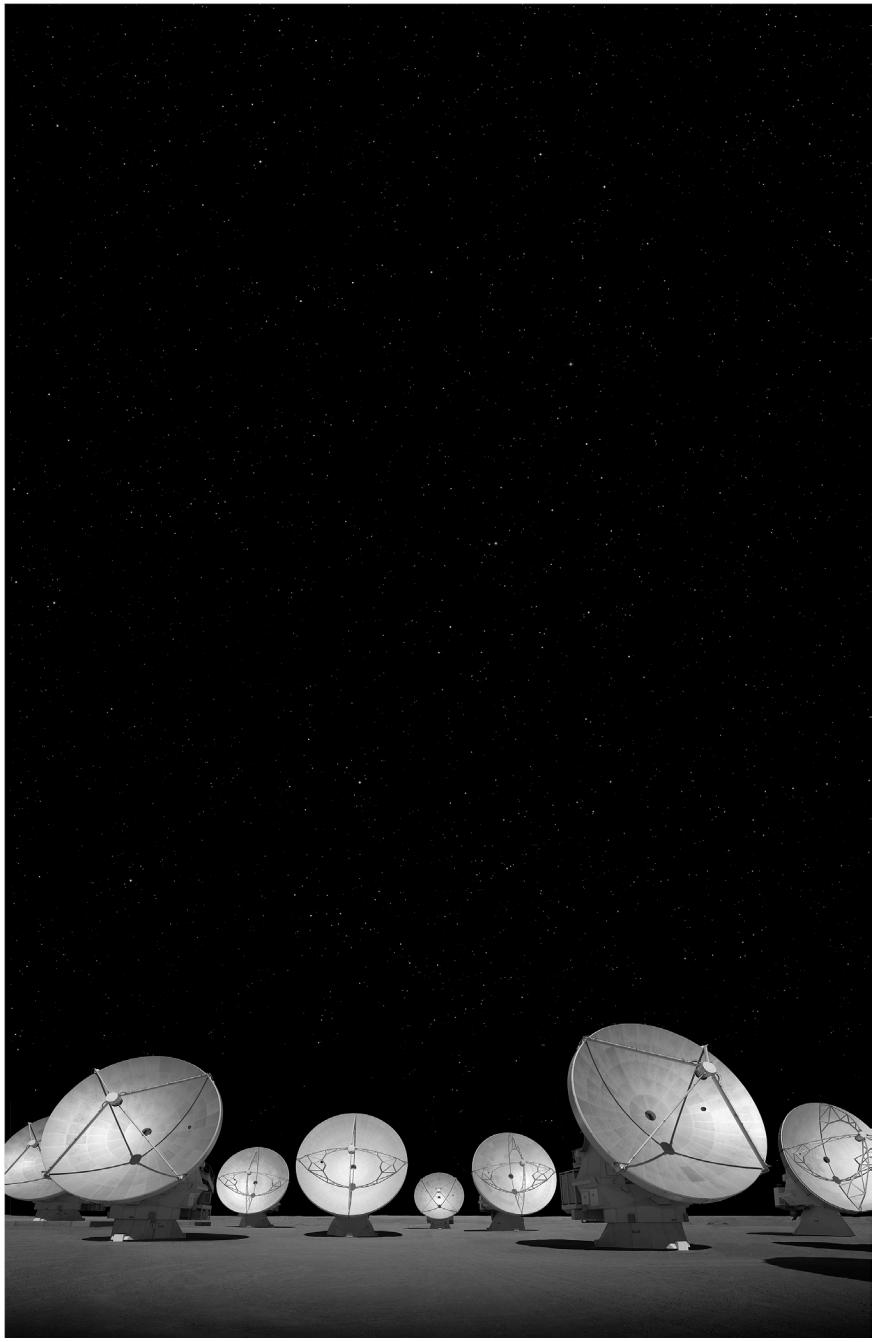
ignition (2019)

“ignition” visualizes a Soyuz launcher taking off from Europe’s Spaceport in French Guiana. The rocket was photographed at the exact moment it left the launch pad. To capture this unique image, a sound-triggered camera was installed on top of the launch tower, about 80 meters from the rocket during its critical lift-off phase. The support brackets have just opened to release the rocket; powerful flames illuminate them while the smoke escaping through the flame trench envelops the rocket’s white shining body. The artwork gives a simultaneous contradictory impression of powerful acceleration and motionless standstill: the tremendous pressure, intense heat and ear-splitting sound wave are all tangible, yet the rocket itself seems to be frozen, suspended in time and space.

f.a.s.t.

f.a.s.t. (2017)

“f.a.s.t” pictures the largest astronomical radio telescope on Earth – with a diameter of 500 metres. China built this staggeringly large instrument called the “Five hundred-meter Aperture Spherical Telescope” in a remote and barely accessible mountainous region in the south of the country. One of its main objectives is to detect interstellar communication from alien civilizations. The composition of this artwork focuses on the relationship between the natural environment and the cutting-edge astronomical instrument which evokes a sense of the sublime simply through its overwhelming size in relation to the surrounding mountains. Searching for alien life means searching for the source of life in general and confronting a fundamental question facing humankind: where do we come from? The inconceivably vast size of “f.a.s.t” is also a metaphor for the immeasurability of time and space which ranges from our own birth to the birth of the Universe itself.



a.l.m.a.

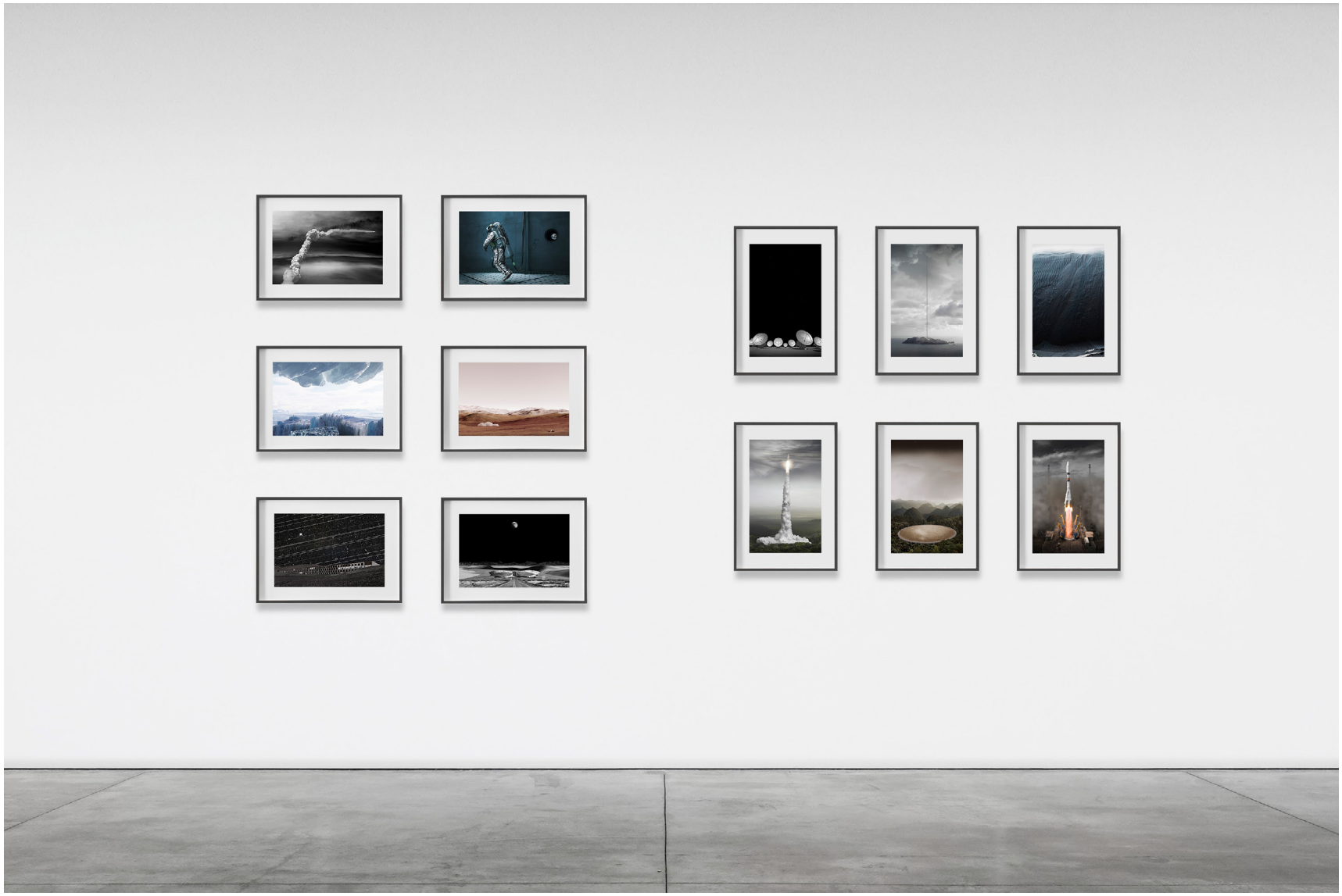
a.l.m.a. (2014)

“a.l.m.a.” pictures the largest astronomical observatory on our planet, the Atacama Large Millimeter/submillimeter Array in the Atacama Desert in Chile. ALMA is a unique telescope array composed of sixty-six high precision antennas located in the extremely dry air of the Chajnantor plateau at an altitude of 5,000 m altitude. Inaugurated in 2013 the telescope is expected to provide insight into the birth of stars in the early universe and detailed imaging of local star and planet formations. The artwork focuses on the extreme technical precision of the antennas and their relationship to the target area from which the data comes—the universe. Looking into the universe always means looking into our past. The ALMA antennas transform what is invisible and immaterial into something tangible and substantial, which will give us a deeper understanding of who we are and where we come from.

waves of mars

waves of mars (2016)

“waves of mars” is based on a picture taken by the Mars rover Curiosity which has been digitally altered so that from a certain distance it looks like a massive wave of water. NASA scientists declared that they had evidence of liquid water running down the canyons and crater walls of Mars during the summer months. This discovery raises the chances of Mars being home to some form of life and has led to speculation about the past existence of giant but slow-moving waves on the planet. The first humans on Mars will bring with them an extensive set of visual experiences about the new environment which has already been inhabited and visually mapped by machines. Thus the artwork questions the relationship between reality and the construction of reality. It´s an incontrovertible fact that machines are now producing the iconography of an environment which might one day become a new habitat for the human species.



installation view I framed prints