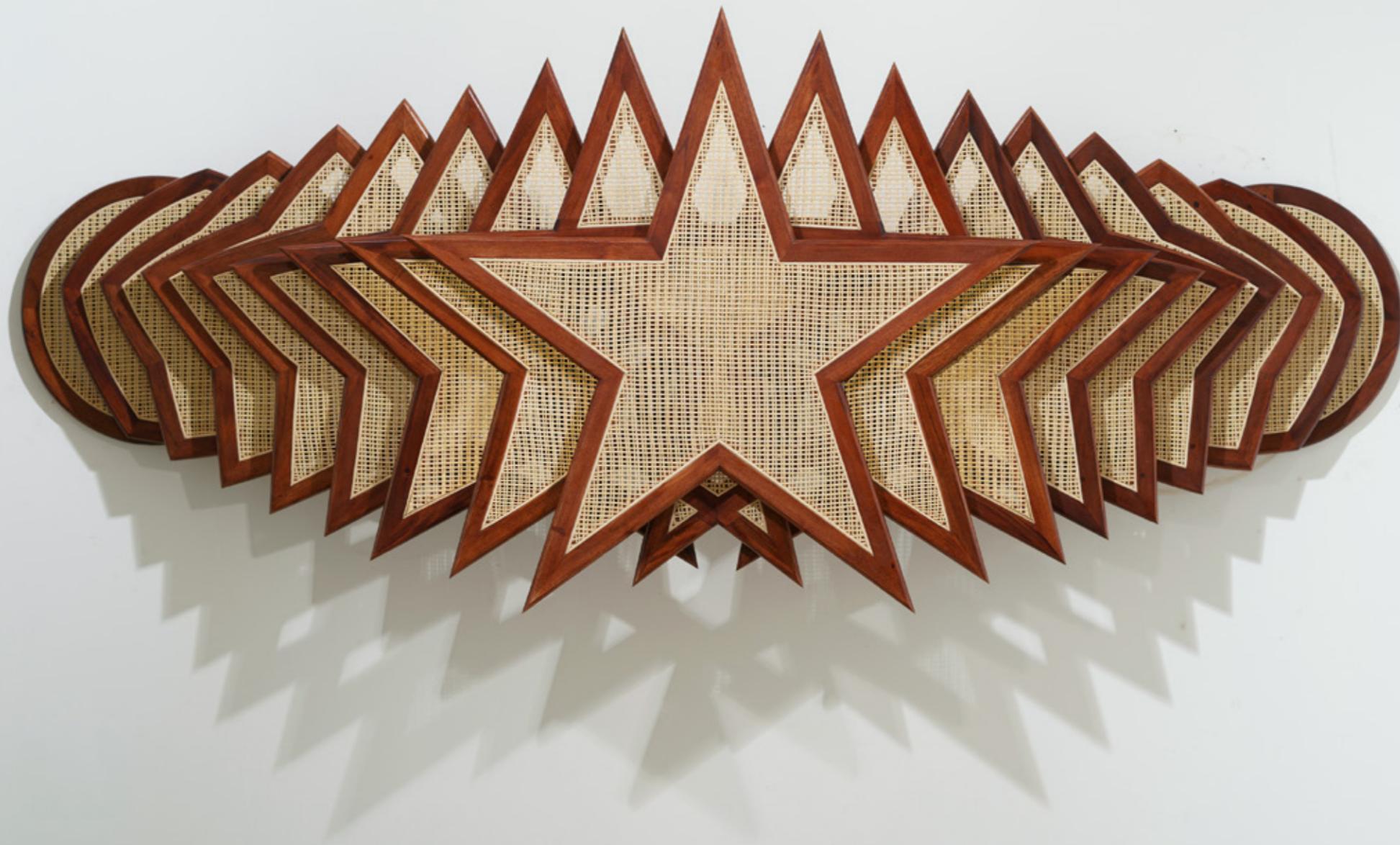


**frieze new york 2020**  
online viewing room

**preview** may 6-7

**open to the public** may 8-15

galeria	nara	roesler



**Galeria Nara Roesler** is proud to present a solo project by Cuban artist **Marco A. Castillo** for its online viewing room at Frieze 2020. Castillo is founder of the art collective Los Carpinteros, and his work is permeated by an interest in the history of Cuba and the country's post-revolutionary, social and cultural changes. Castillo has been extensively investigating architecture, design and sculpture, which are fundamental aspects of his artistic practice in seeking to create installations, drawings and sculptures that engage with space and negotiate between the functional and non-functional, often expressed in a humorous way.

In tandem with a global movement of historical revision, Castillo reflects on Cuba's modernization in the 1960 and 1970s and refers to influential Cuban artists, architects and designers. The sculptures and works on paper pertaining to his most recent project combine elements of modern design and socialist realism of the Soviet period with traditional Cuban techniques and materials—including mahogany wood and rattan fabric, as well as with graphic designs of the time.

Lately the artist has been focused on reinterpreting the works of key figures from what he calls a 'forgotten generation,' such as Gonzalo Córdoba, María Victoria Caignet, Rodolfo Fernández Suárez (Fofi), Joaquín Galván and Walter Betancourt. From a political standpoint, Castillo seeks to follow these artists historic trail, while positioning himself as an advocate and herald for Cuban artistic heritage.

## maria elena series

This body of work, made of fabric and plywood, is perhaps best explained in the artist's statement on another piece from the same series *Maria Elena 1* (2020), which was part of the exhibition *The Decorator's Home* at the UTA Artist Space in Los Angeles, USA. Castillo wrote, '*Maria Elena* draws inspiration from the lamps designed by Gonzalo Córdoba in the 1970s for his line Ambiente Joven created in fabric and plywood, which enabled mass production and was adapted to precariousness, due to the use of extremely cheap materials, albeit with a highly sophisticated design. It was also inspired by Louis Poulsen's hanging lamps with their futuristic approach. This artefact is reminiscent of radars, telecommunication and listening equipment from the Space Age and the times of secret agents. It belongs among the period's aesthetic obsessions and the typical paranoia of the Cold War.'

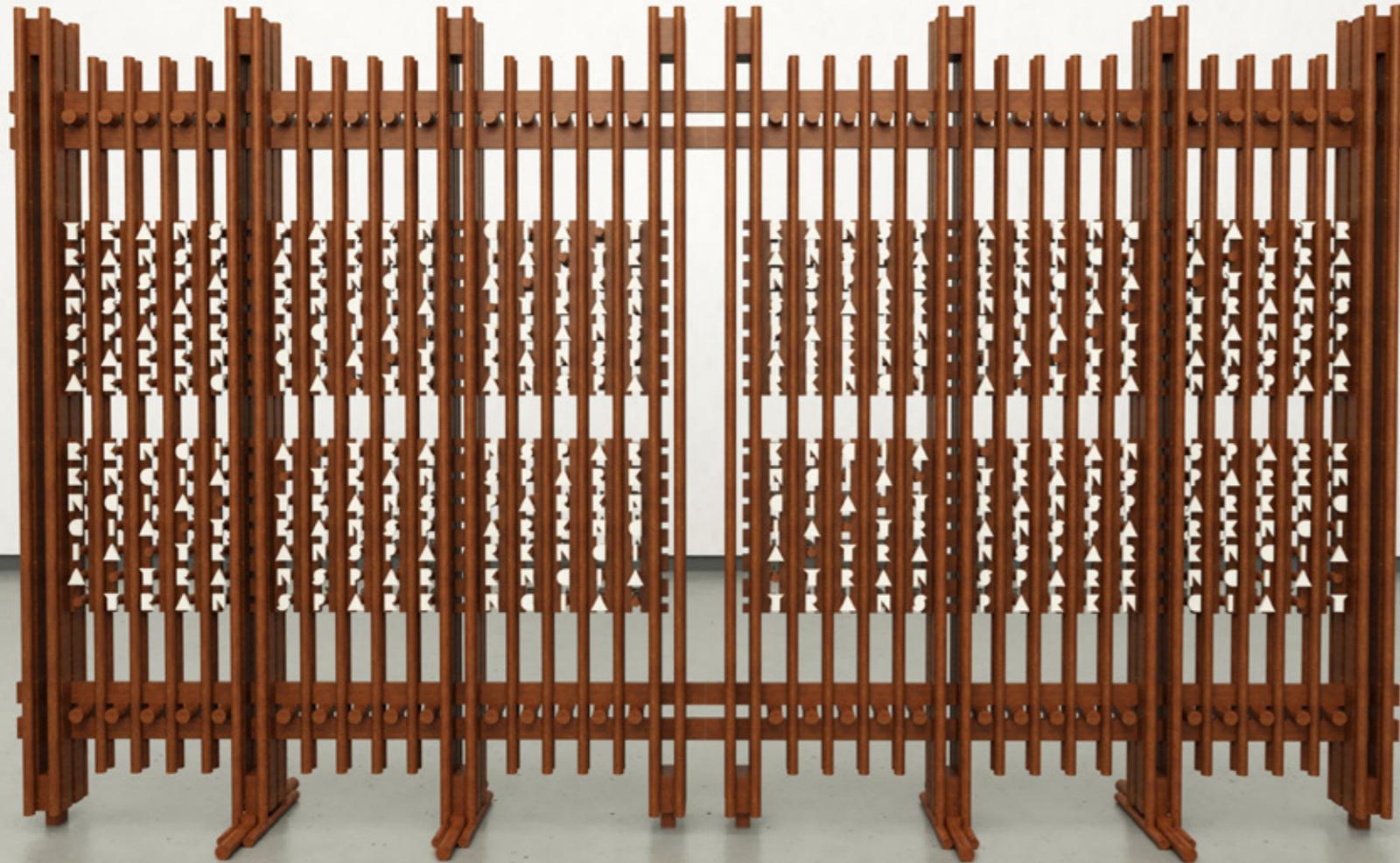




***Maria Elena 2***, 2020  
wood and fabric  
150 x 150 x 50,5 cm/59.1 x 59.1 x 19.9 in



online exhibition view  
Frieze New York 2020



## galván series

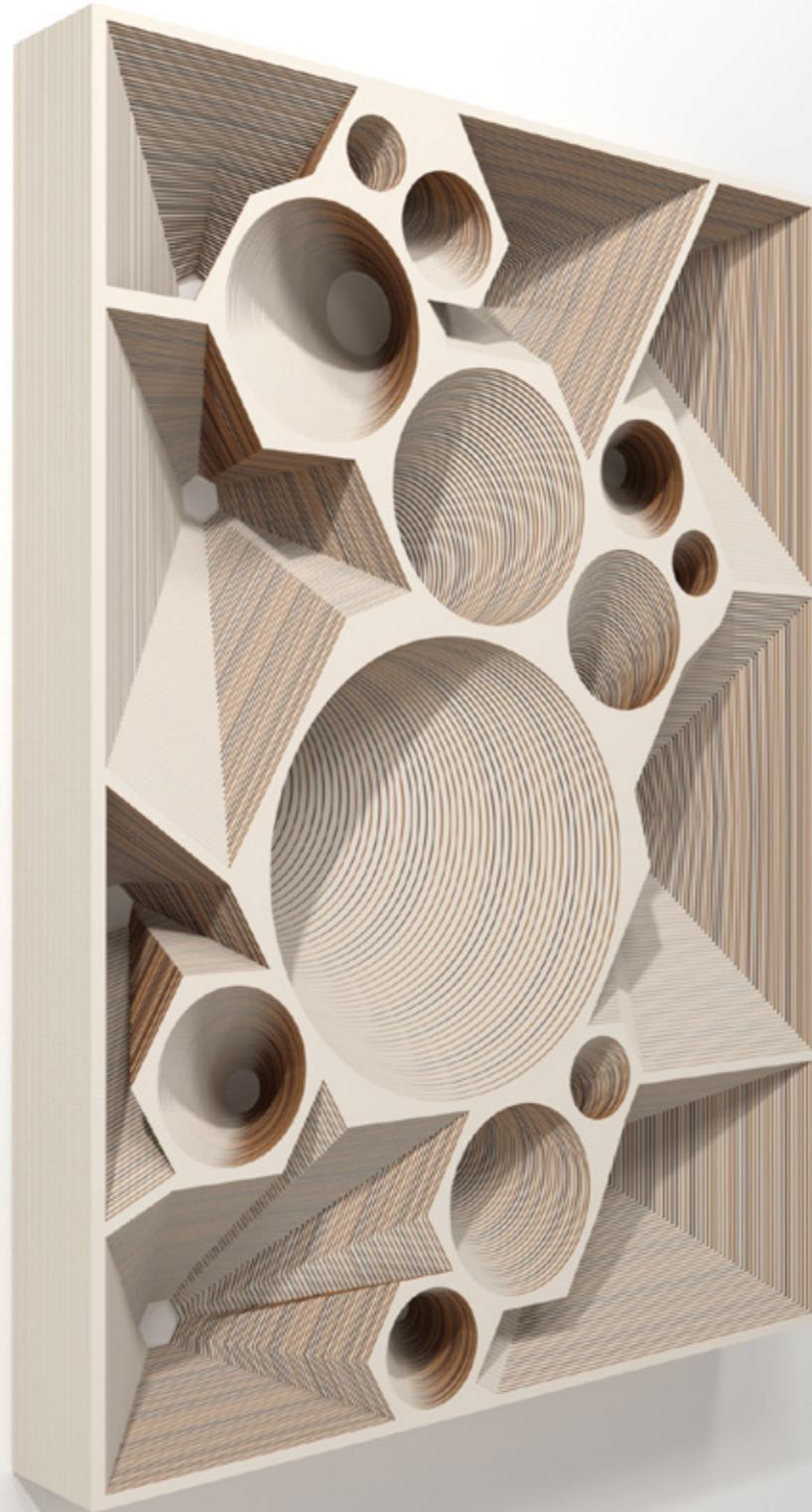
*Galván | Transparencia* (2020) is a characteristic example of Castillo's series on screens or panels. This piece is inspired by a room-divider which Joaquín Galván and Rodolfo Fernández Suárez designed for the Hall of Protocol of the Cuban Council of State. The sculpture is a large, sectioned panel with a solid framework made of wood, and lattice patterns carved throughout the screen's main body. The grid pattern is complemented with letters sculpted from wood, painted white and placed onto the structure. The artist explains that 'taking advantage of the lattice grid, I turn it into a support for a conceptual alphabet soup that recalls the encrypted languages used during the Cold War,' all while reviving tropical modernist references, 'the combination of the color white with mahogany wood that reminds you of tropical fruits like the coconut, in a very subtle and conceptual way.'



**Galván | *Transparencia***  
**(Sections I and II), 2020**  
wood  
225 x 195 x 60 cm  
88.6 x 76.8 x 23.6 in (each)

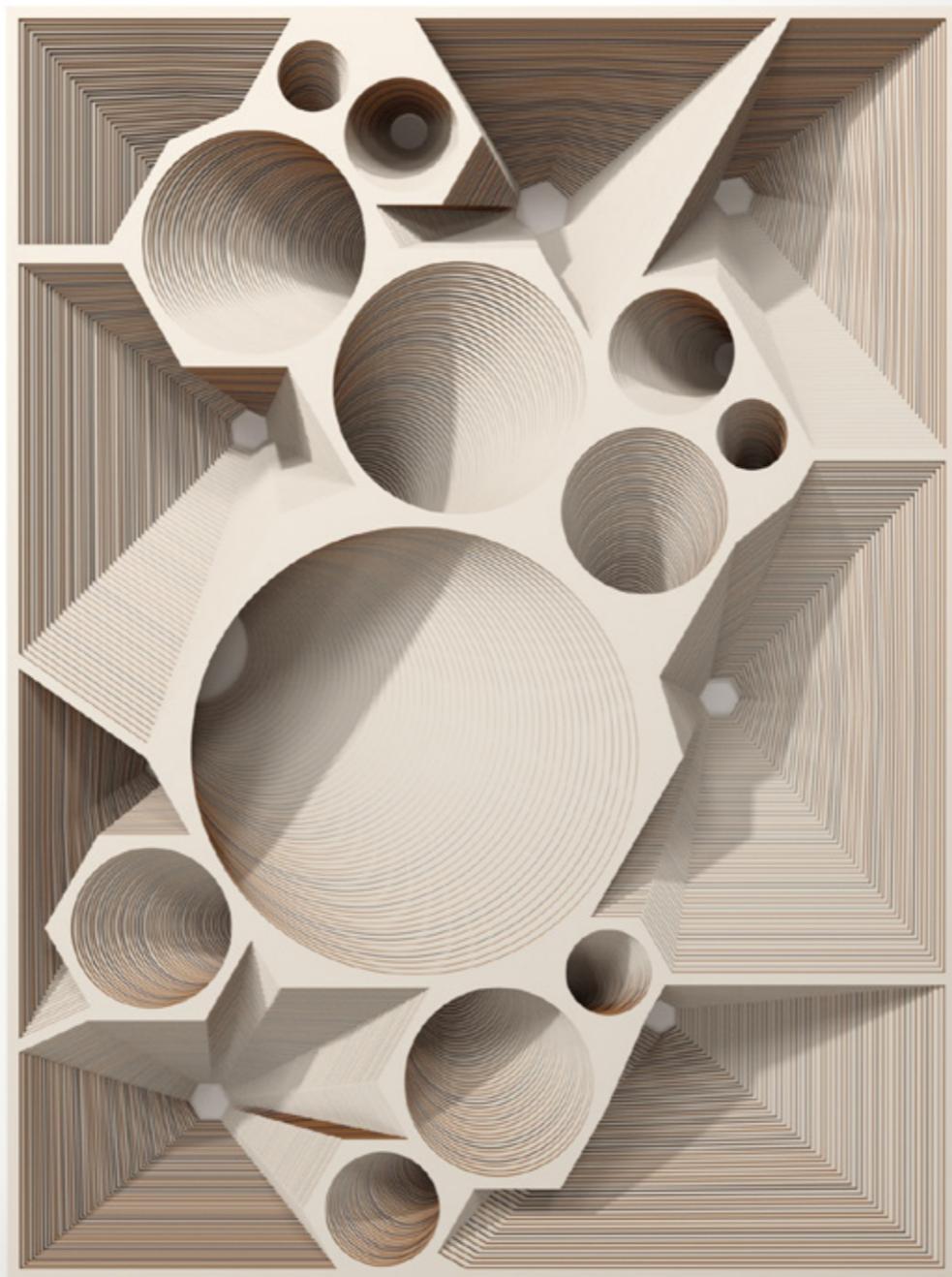


online exhibition view  
Frieze New York 2020



## low relief series

This body of work designates a series of cardboards which the artist carved into. Cutting through piles and into the various layers of paper, Castillo creates geometric drawings made of bas-reliefs using the physicality of the support to give the composition depth, layering and symmetry. The pieces evoke architectural elements, and capture a historic endeavor for modernist, utopian and high-minded aesthetics through its razor sharp lines and perfectly geometric designs.



*Low relief # 03*, 2020  
cardboard

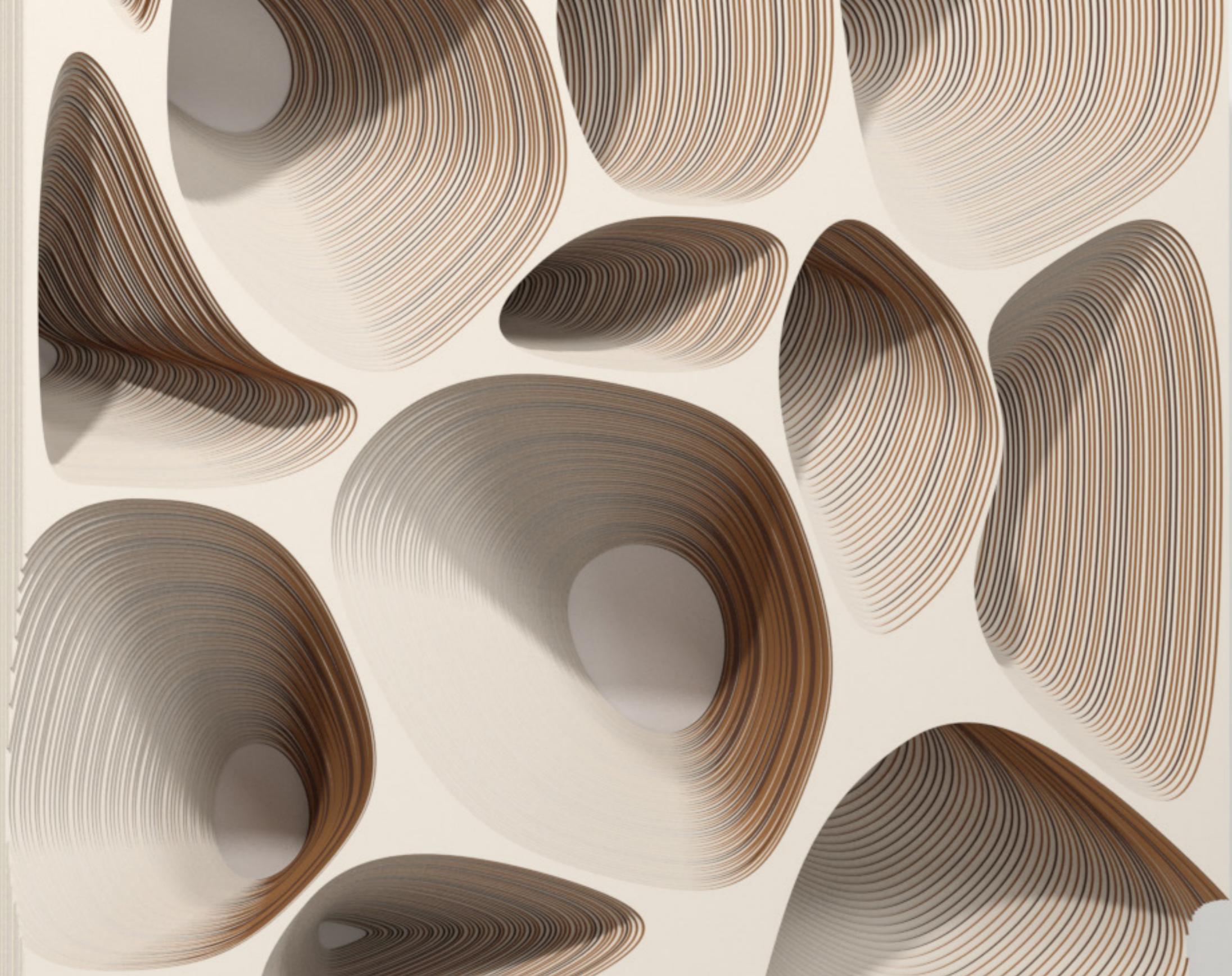
103 x 77 x 11 cm / 40.6 x 30.3 x 4.3 in



**Low relief # 04**, 2020

cardboard

103 x 77 x 11 cm / 40.6 x 30.3 x 4.3 in

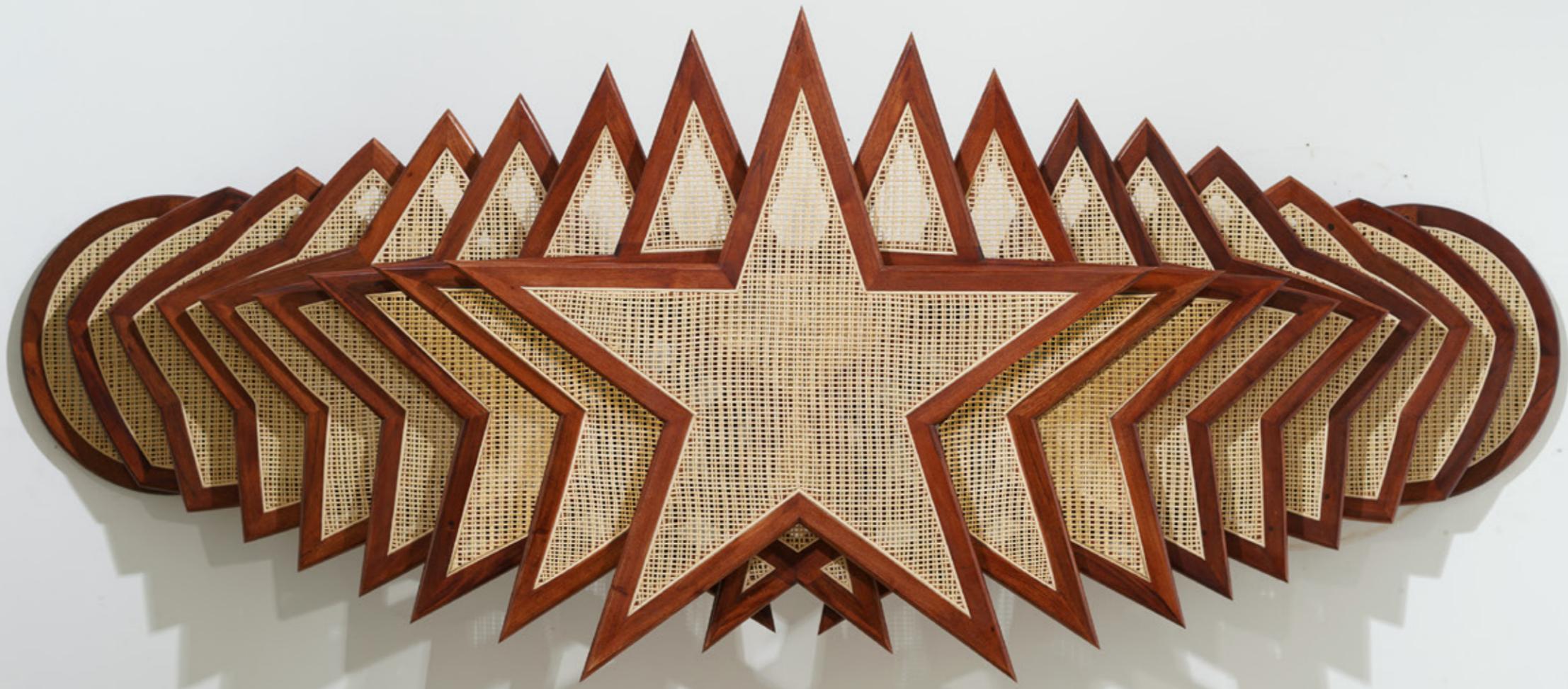






## rattan series

Marco A. Castillo's wood and rattan works are rooted in the designs of Cuban modernist practice, juxtaposing a colonial and traditional past with more ideological and figurative influences of the 1960s and 1970s—the pieces take on Soviet-era designs, and intertwine them with traditional elements of the Cuban production such as latticework and rattan. Notably, the artist explains that the work *Córdoba* (2019) represents 'the metamorphosis of a circle into a five-pointed star, operating as a metaphor of the formal and ideological evolution—or involution. The piece can be read in both directions—like a cycle—from the star to the circle and vice-versa.' The works from this series bear the names of Cuban architects and designers of the time; notably *Córdoba* (2019) refers to Gonzalo Córdoba who led the Design Department of the Cuban production company EMPROVA, and originally designed the offices and private residences for high government officials. By juxtaposing historical political emblems with woven rattan, Castillo establishes an artistic aesthetic and narrative procedure that entwines Native, Nordic and African influences on the formation of Cuban tradition, including its interpretation of Modernism and the country's political, social and economic trajectories, striving to position Cuba within both a global history of exchange and influence.



***Córdoba (Horizontal)***, 2020  
wood and rattan  
95 x 239 x 40 cm / 37.4 x 94.1 x 15.7 in



**Heriberto**, 2017  
wood and rattan  
ø 80 cm x 2,4 cm / 31,5 in x 0,9 in

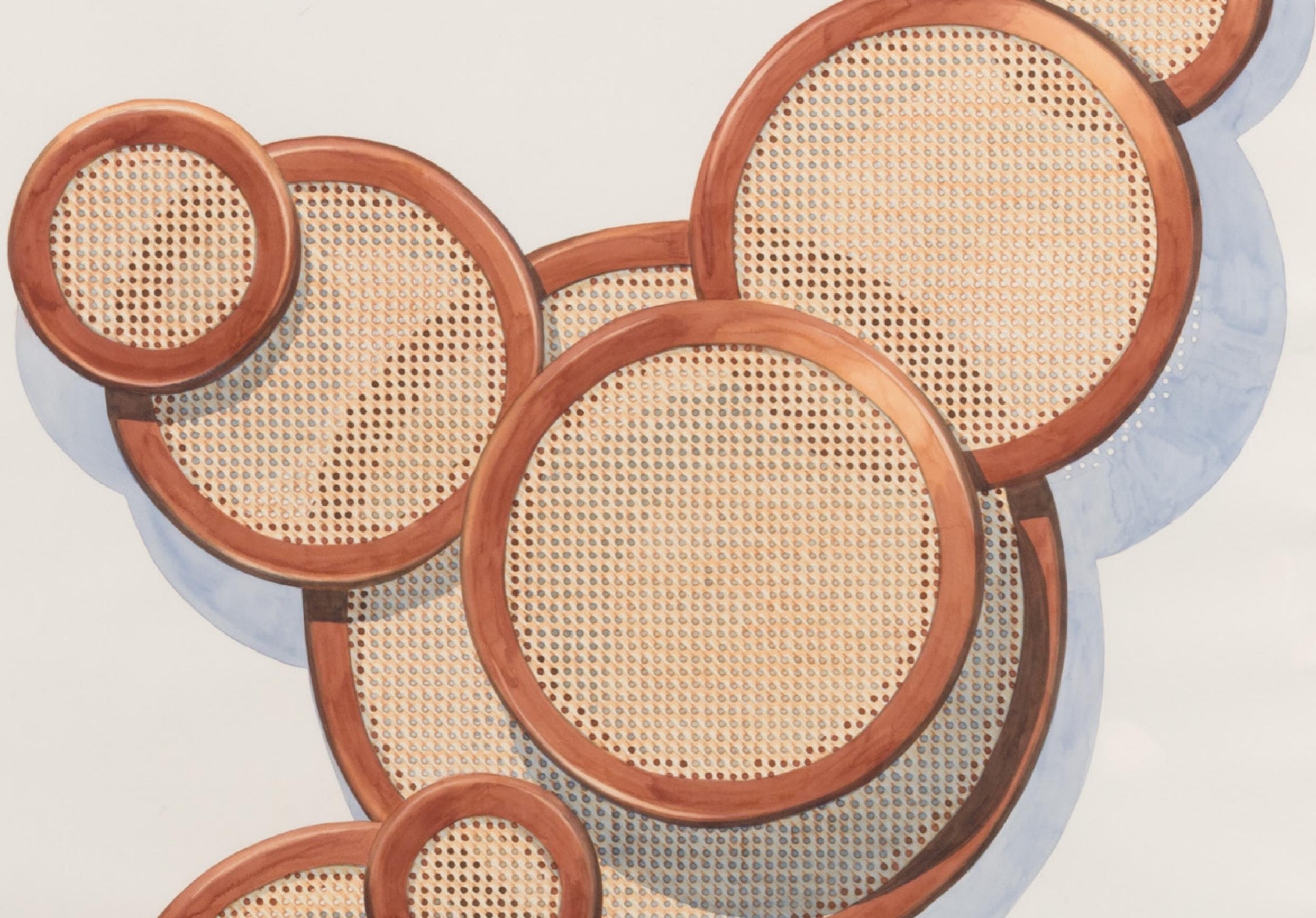




**María Victoria**, 2019  
wood and rattan  
212 x 277 x 21 cm/83.5 x 109.1 x 8.3 in



**Emilio. Diez Ceros**, 2018  
watercolor on paper  
160 x 114 cm/63 x 44.9 in

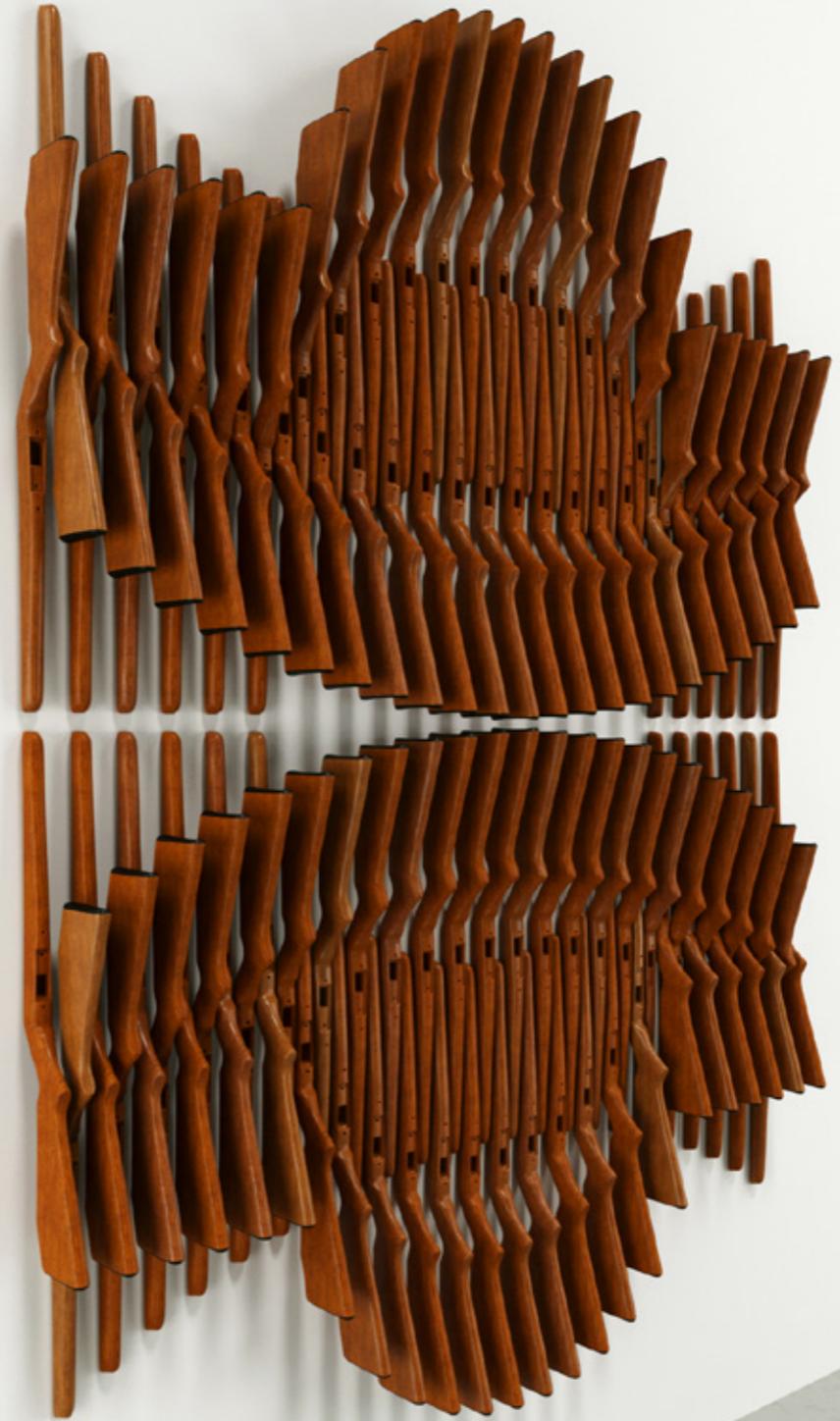


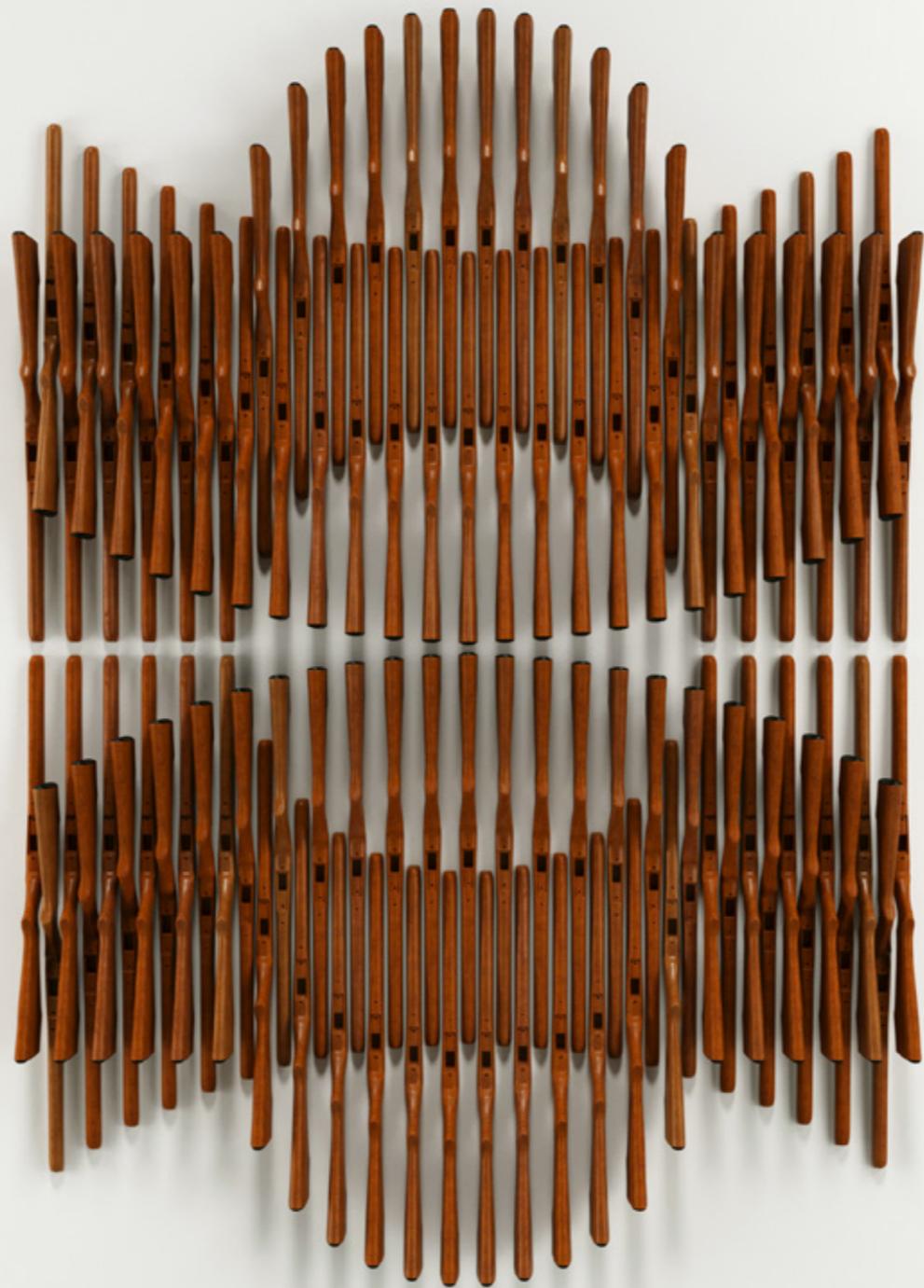


**María**, 2018  
watercolor on paper  
145.5 x 114 cm/57.3 x 44.9 in

## fusiles series

These works form part of a series of wall sculptures composed of numerous elements of wood, sculpted into the shape of rifles. The rifles are subsequently assembled into different patterns, creating an optical installation. The idea emerged as the artist imagined that, at a time of militarization, 'an artist or a designer could have made a poster creating optical art with rifles as a monument, as a creative item. It never happened, and I never saw it, so I made it.' The series also plays on the idea that the sculptures, though identical in form, are not the same object as a store-bought rifle—the artist therefore extricates the shape from the function, going even further with his play, as he propels the rifle into the realm of art.



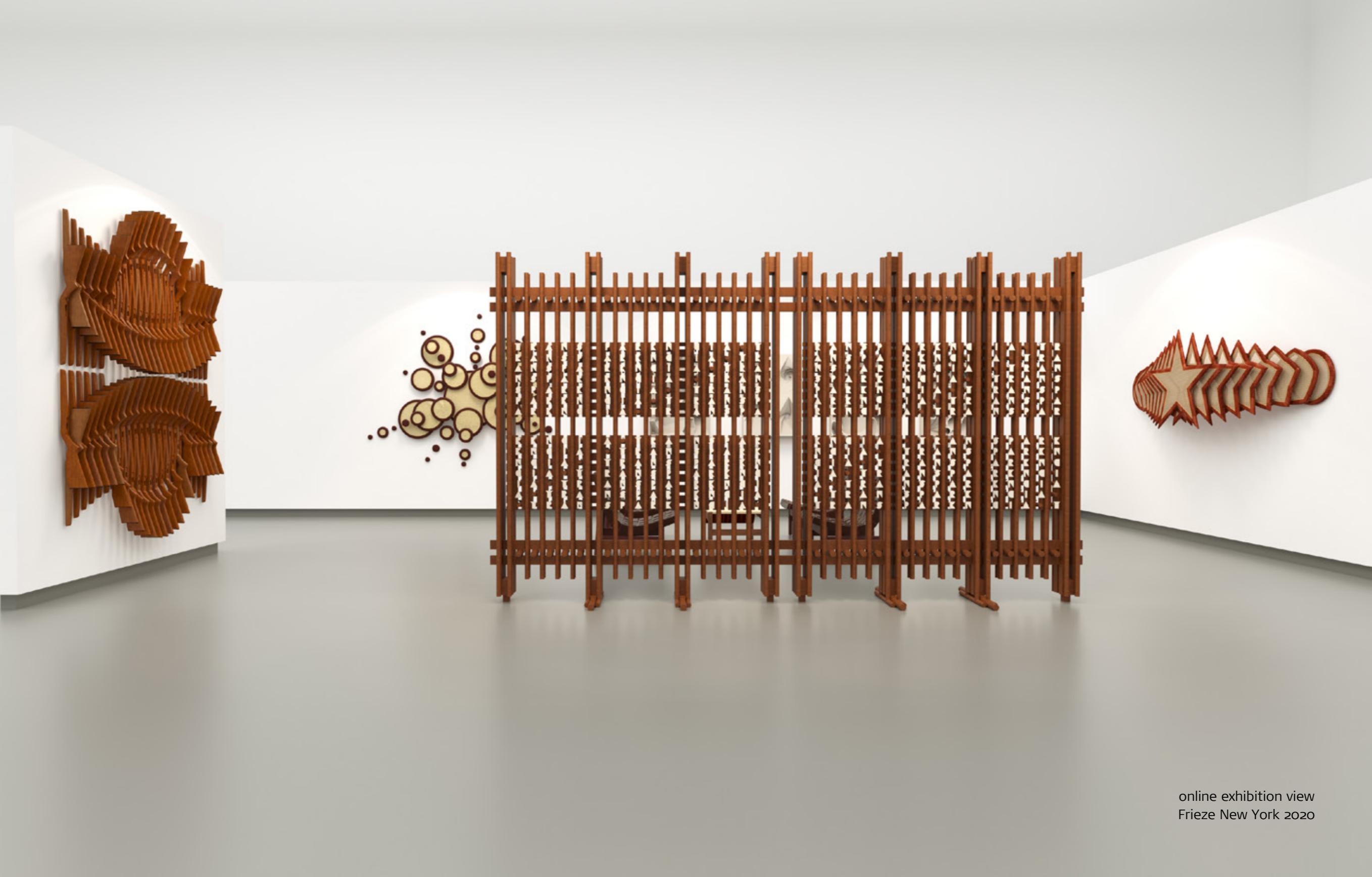


*Ivan # 03*, 2020

wood

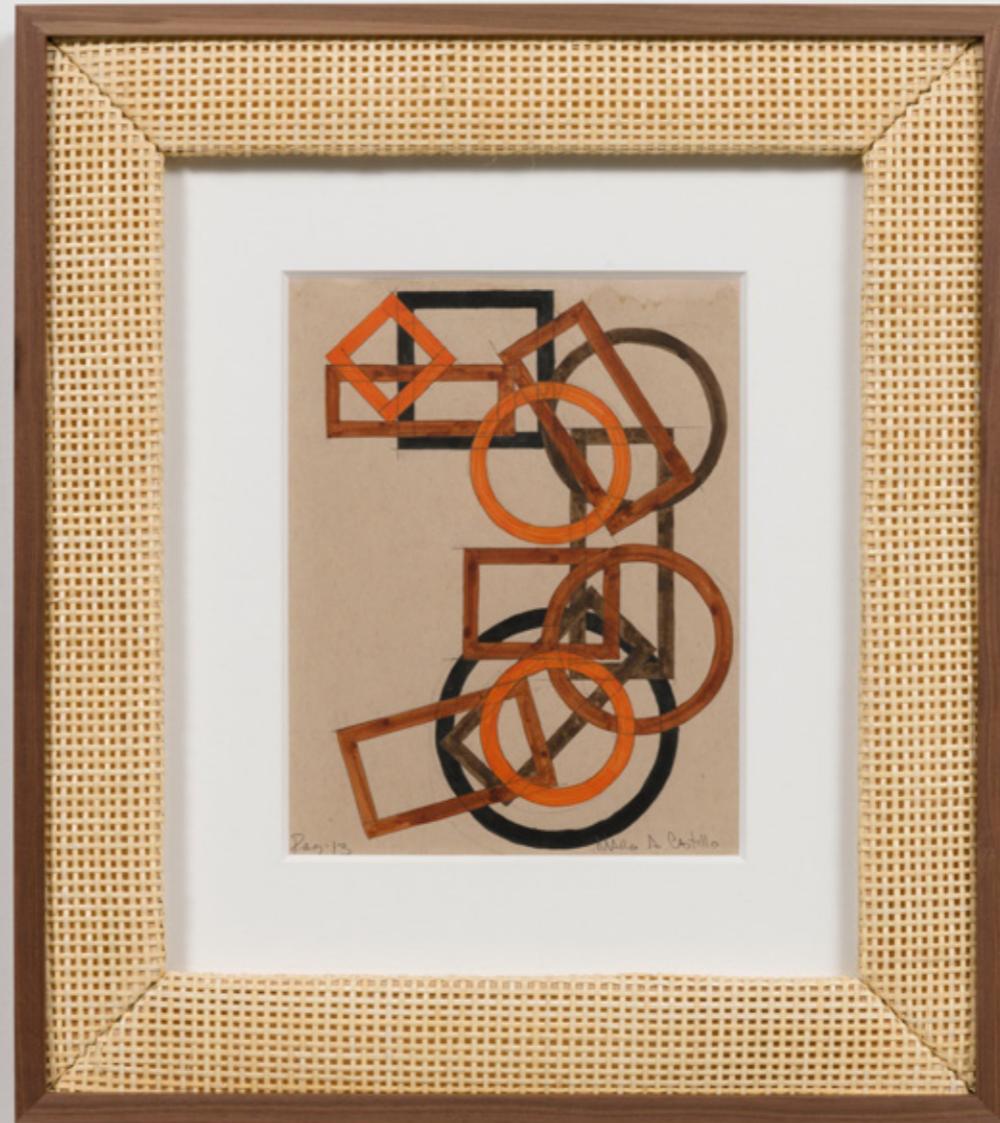
250 x 180 x 17 cm/98.4 x 70.9 x 6.7 in



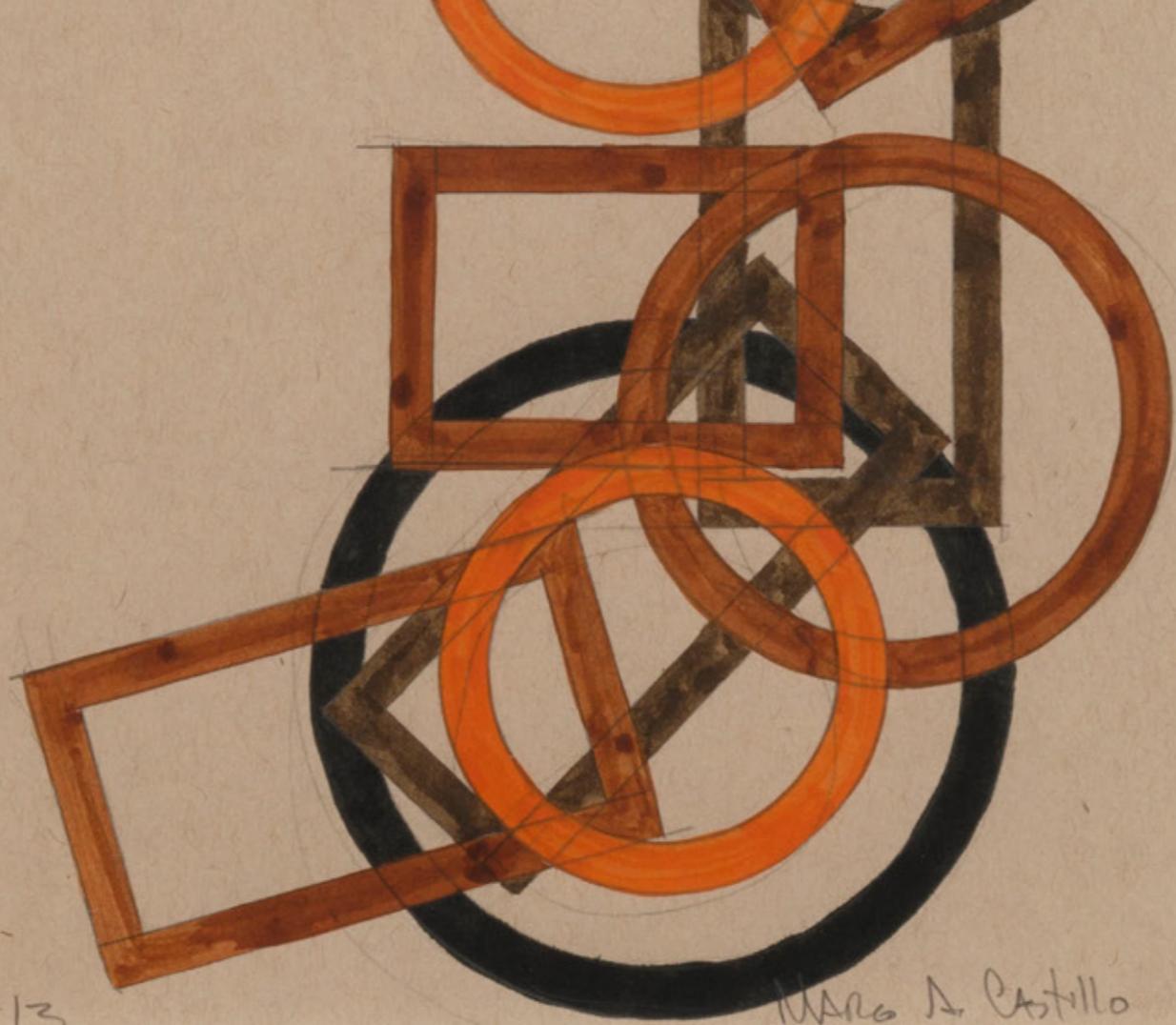


## libreta de notas series

*Libreta de Notas* consists of a series of pieces made of ink and pencil on paper, through which Castillo explores modernist designs and structures. This body of work is not developed as studies for his sculptures, but rather a means of delving into an aesthetic program, and into the role of reviving or reconstructing his country's heritage. When discussing the series, the artist says: 'I decided to show my work process and the tools that I used to understand this language. I am not a designer, and in my previous work I did not use the language of abstraction. Therefore, I needed to get into the skin of this [fictional] man, this character I decided to interpret.'



***Primeira libreta de notas, page 13, 2018***  
mixed media on paper  
24,8 x 19,8 cm/9.8 x 7.8 in



Pag-13

MARCO A. CASTILLO



*Primeira libreta de notas, page 41, 2018*  
mixed media on paper  
24,8 x 19,8 cm/9.8 x 7.8 in



exhibition view  
*The Decorator's Home*,  
UTA Artist Space, Los Angeles, USA (2019)

# marco a. castillo

Born in 1971 in Havana, Cuba. Lives and works in Havana, Cuba, and Mérida, Mexico.

Marco A. Castillo is one of the founding members of a collective named Los Carpinteros, established in 1992 in Havana, Cuba. The group was created as an objection to individual authorship and to engage with a practice that marries architectural forms, design and art. Their drawings and installations emerge from the artists' observation of material elements from our everyday life. In their work, Los Carpinteros experiments with these aspects in order to explore the relationship between the functional and the non-functional, as well as that between art and society.

Though the collective received important international recognition as a group, Castillo has also been acclaimed for his individual work. In his career as a solo artist, he has experimented with the intersection between fine arts, applied arts and the decorative arts as a means of questioning aesthetic expectations and bias. Castillo often employs elements derived from modernism and Soviet designs, which he intertwines with Cuban tradition in using techniques such as latticework, and materials like mahogany. His pieces are frequently named after prominent modern Cuban architects and designers—an homage to a forgotten generation of creators. In the artist's words, 'The works move between art, decoration and applied arts. This has allowed me to talk about cultural and aesthetic deaths as the result of stigmas, censures, and misunderstandings of the system that have happened cyclically, not only in Cuba but in other countries of the world.'

## selection of solo exhibitions

nb. any exhibition before 2017 was presented with the artistic collective Los Carpinteros

- *The Decorator's Home*, UTA Artist Space, Los Angeles, USA (2019)
- *El susurro del palmar*, Galerie Peter Kilchmann, Zürich, Switzerland (2018)
- *La cosa está candela*, Museo de Arte Miguel Urrutia, Bogota, Colombia (2017)
- *Los Carpinteros*, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Monterrey, Mexico (2015)
- *Los Carpinteros*, Parasol Unit Foundation for Contemporary Art, London, UK (2015)
- *Los Carpinteros*, Faena Art Center, Buenos Aires, Argentina (2012)
- *Ciudad Transportable*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, USA (2001)
- *Los Carpinteros*, San Francisco Art Institute, San Francisco, USA (2001)

## selection of group exhibitions

nb. any exhibition before 2017 was presented with the artistic collective Los Carpinteros

- *Everyday Poetics*, Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, USA (2017)
- *Adiós Utopia: Dreams and Deceptions in Cuban Art Since 1950*, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, USA; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, USA (2017)
- *Alchemy: Transformations in Gold*, Des Moines Art Center, Des Moines, USA (2017)
- *Contingent Beauty: Contemporary Art from Latin America*, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, USA (2015)
- *The Kaleidoscopic Eye: Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary Collection*, Mori Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan (2009)
- Havana Biennial, Havana, Cuba (2019, 2015, 2012, 2006, 2000, 1994, 1991)
- 13<sup>th</sup> Sharjah Biennial, Beirut, Lebanon (2017)
- 25<sup>th</sup> Bienal de São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil (2002)

## selection of institutional collections

- Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France
- Centro de Arte Contemporáneo Reina Sofía, Madrid, Spain
- Daros Foundation, Zürich, Switzerland
- Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, USA
- Tate Modern, London, UK
- Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, USA





# frieze new york 2020

## online viewing room

**preview**  
may 6-7

**open to the public**  
may 8-15

**[click here to register](#)**  
**[and access the viewing room](#)**

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