



**BIG BANG
BATIKS**

CATALOGUE
2024
RAKI NIKAHETIYA



Formation I

250 x 250 cm

Wax on High Grade Sarong
Cotton





Formation II
150 x 150 cm
Wax on High Grade Sarong
Cotton

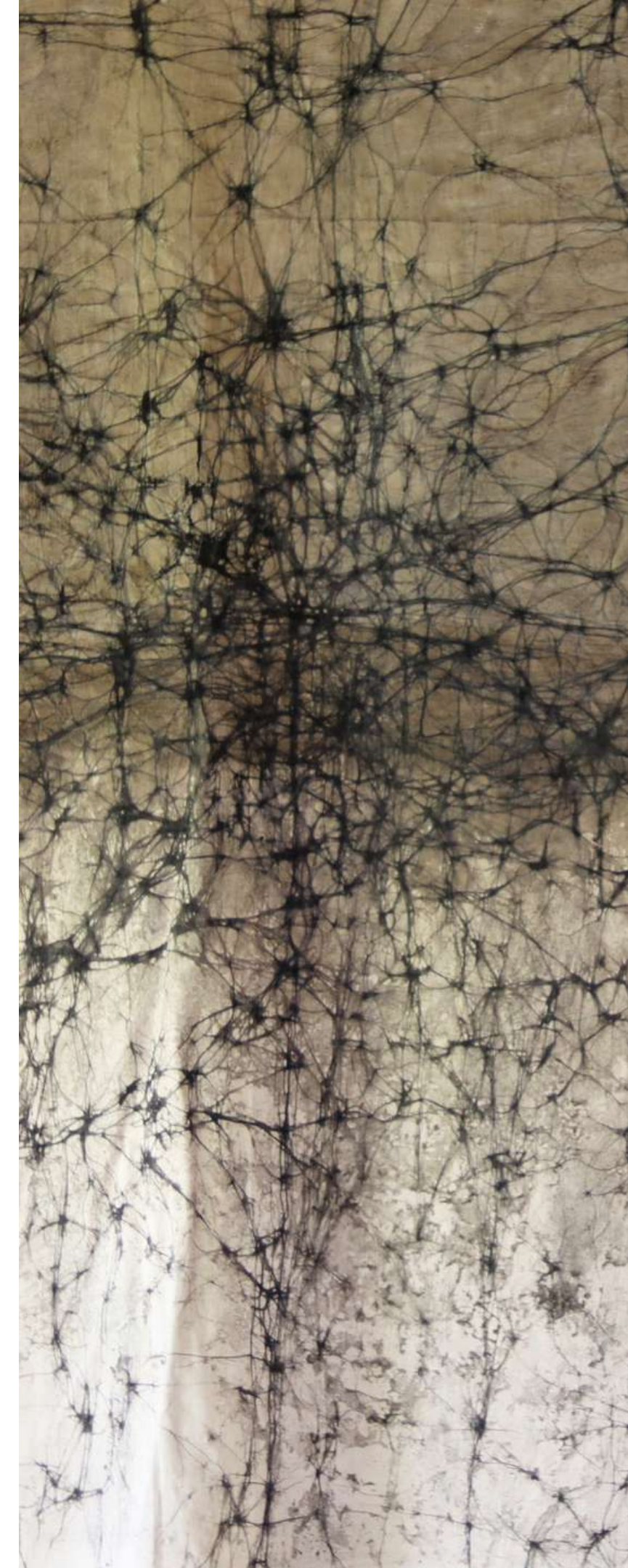




Formation III

150 x 150 cm

Pigments, dye, wax on
High Grade Sarong Cotton



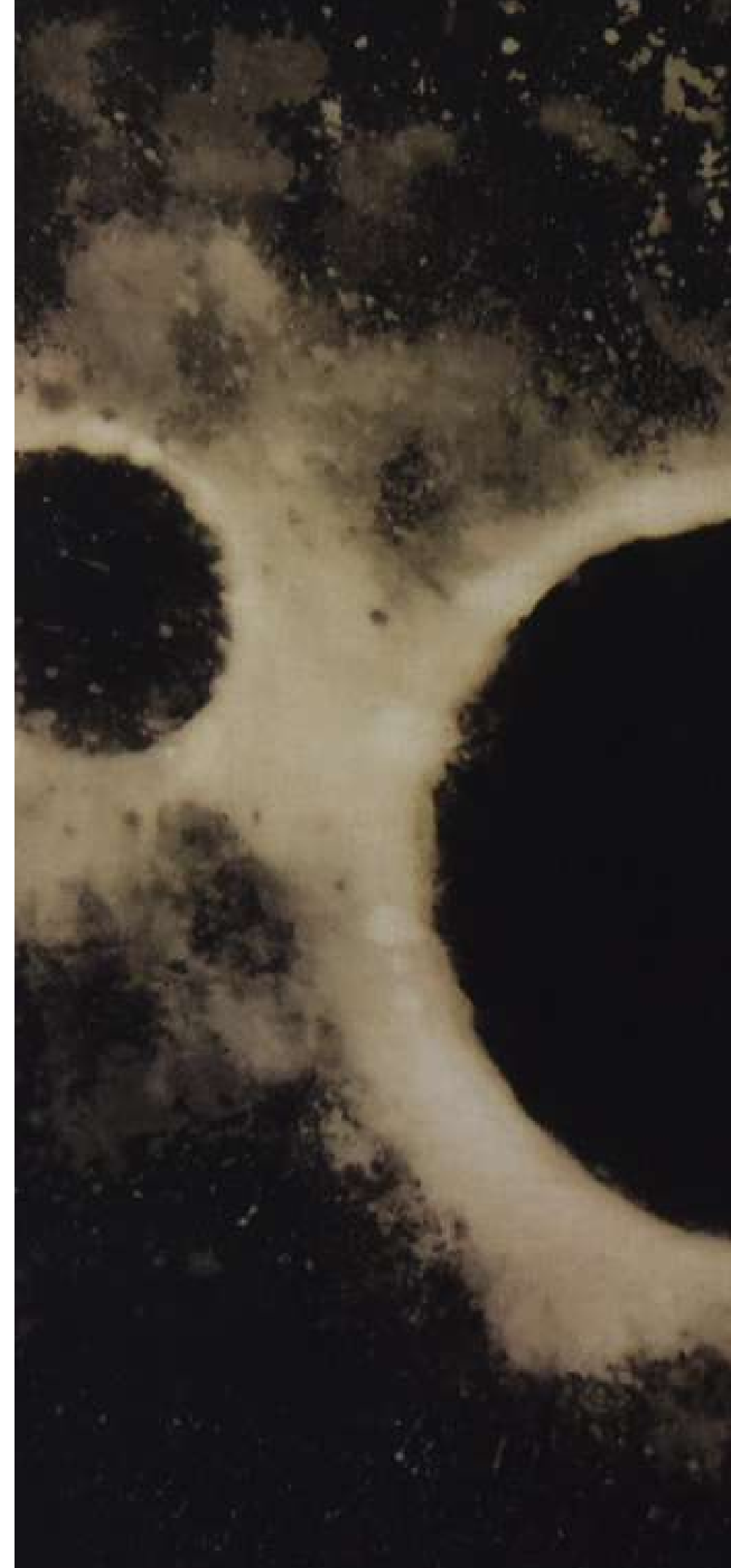


Formation IV
150 x 150 cm
Pigments, dye on
High Grade Sarong Cotton





Unknown Object I
50 x 50 cm
Acid wash on
High Grade Sarong Cotton





Unknown Object II

50 x 50 cm

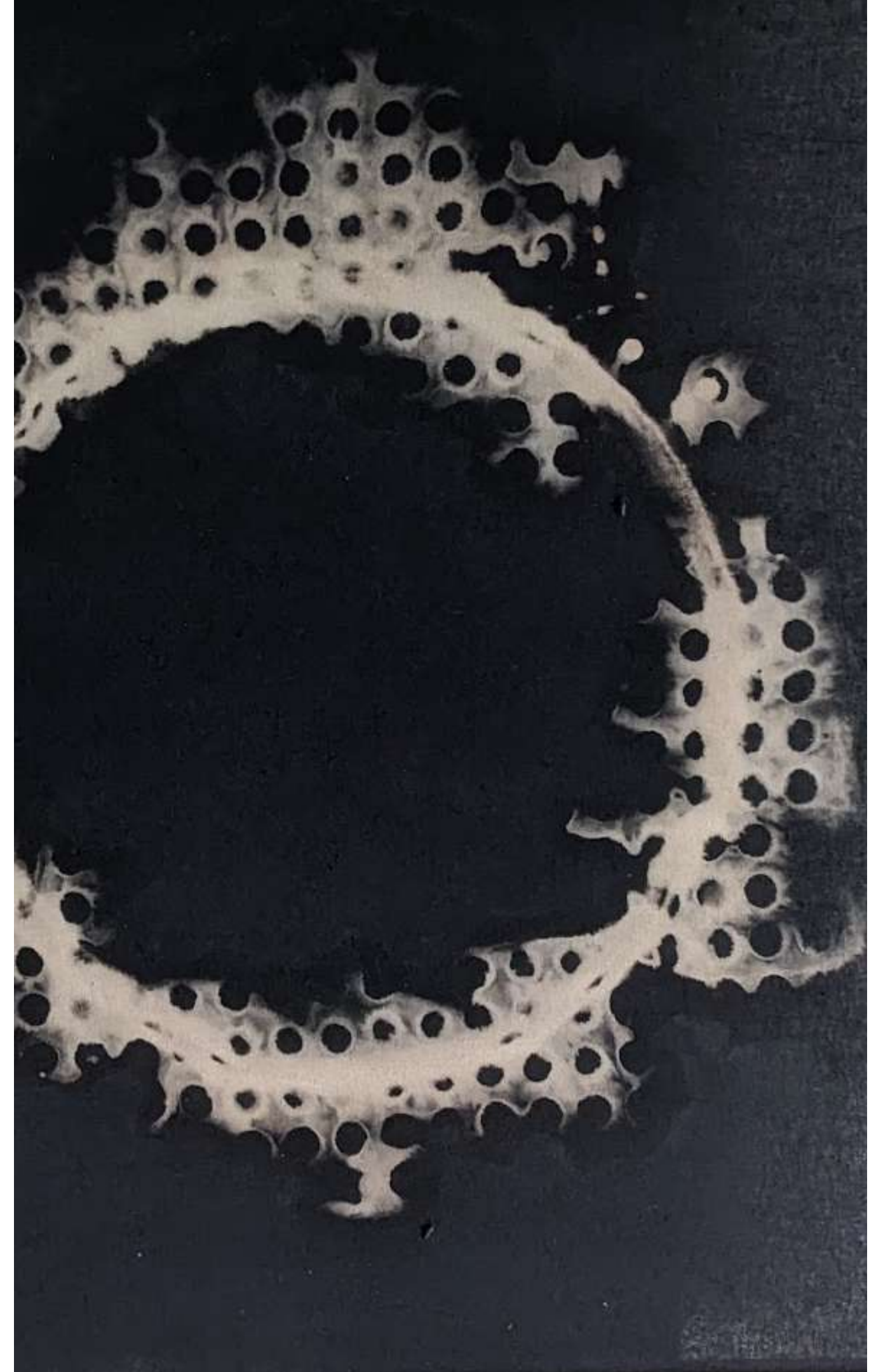
Acid wash on

High Grade Sarong Cotton





Unknown Object III
50 x 50 cm
Acid wash on
High Grade Sarong Cotton





Unknown Object IV

50 x 50 cm

Acid wash on

High Grade Sarong Cotton





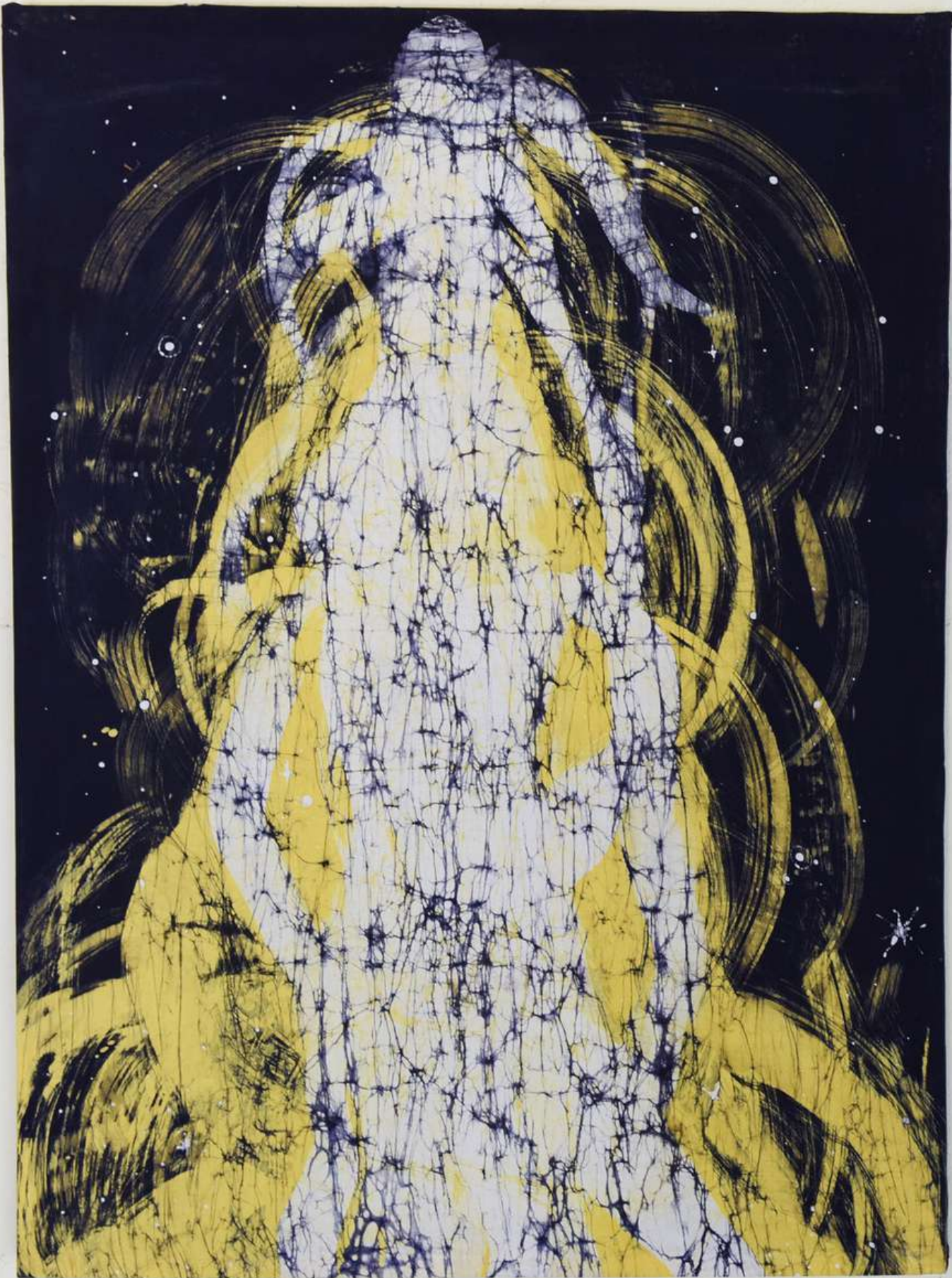
Unknown Object V

50 x 50 cm

Acid wash on

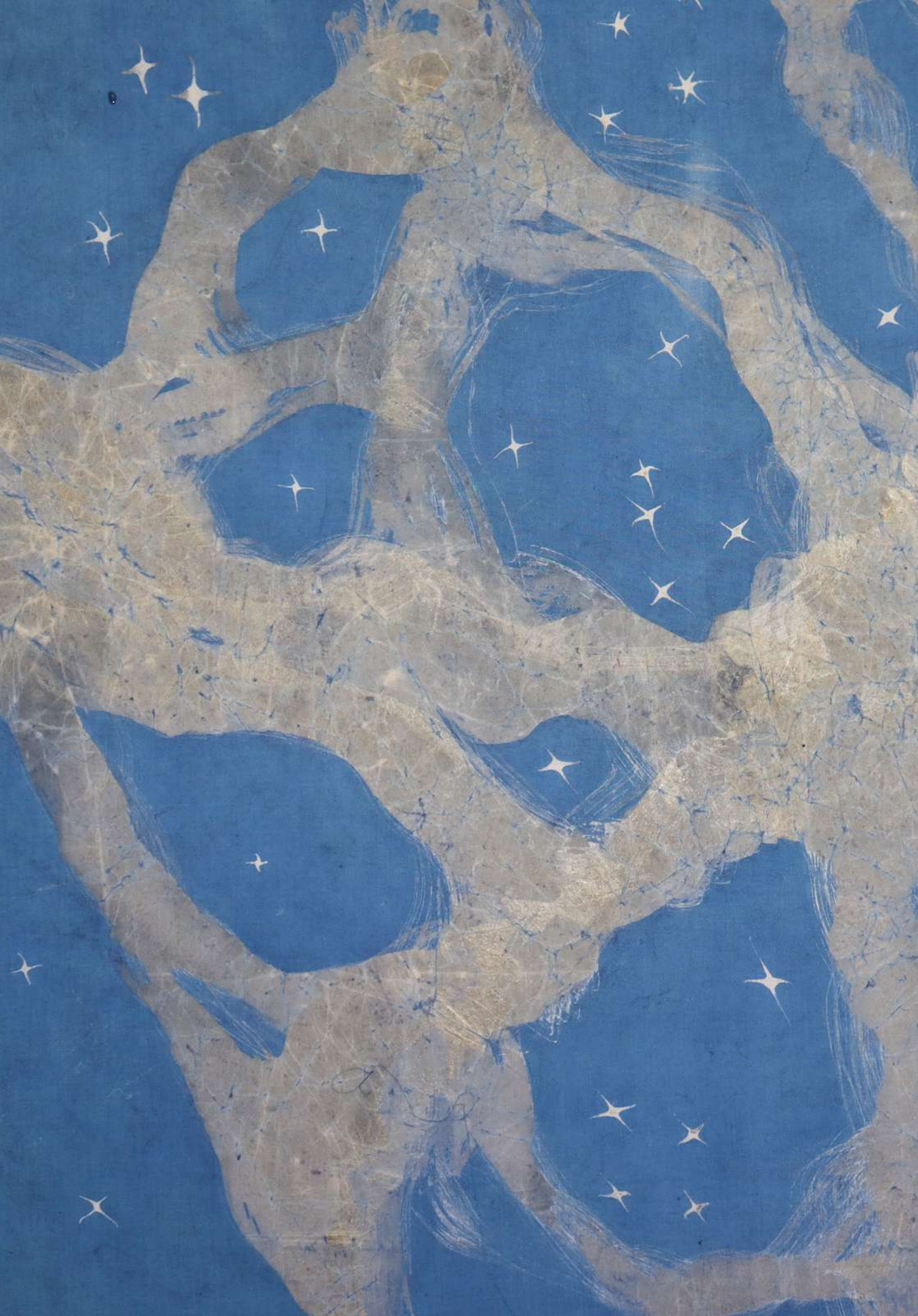
High Grade Sarong Cotton





Nebula I
120 x 90 cm
Pigment, dye on
High Grade Sarong Cotton





Nebula II
120 x 90 cm
Pigment, dye, wax on
High Grade Sarong Cotton





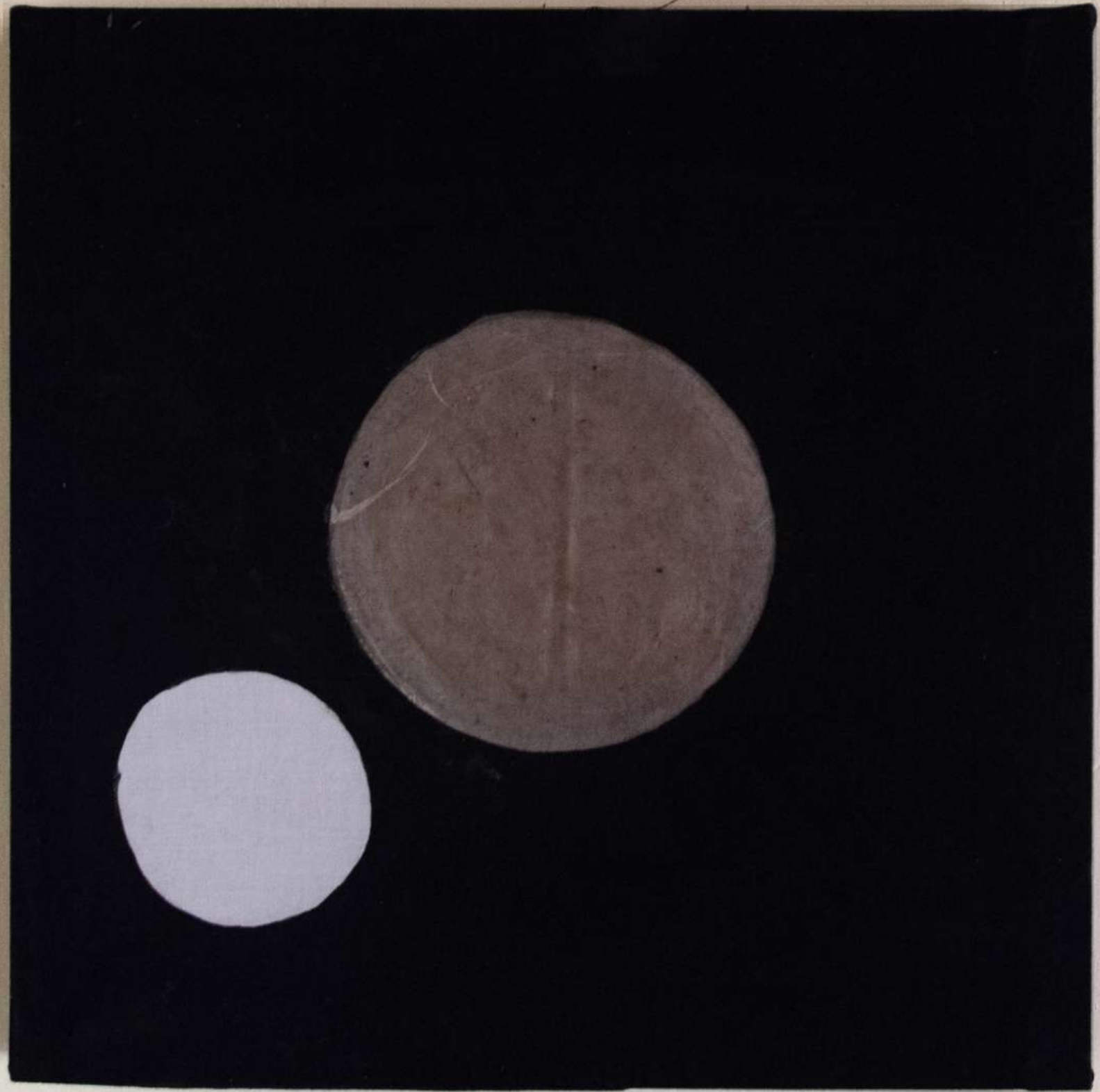
Nebula III
120 x 90 cm
Pigment, dye on
High Grade Sarong Cotton





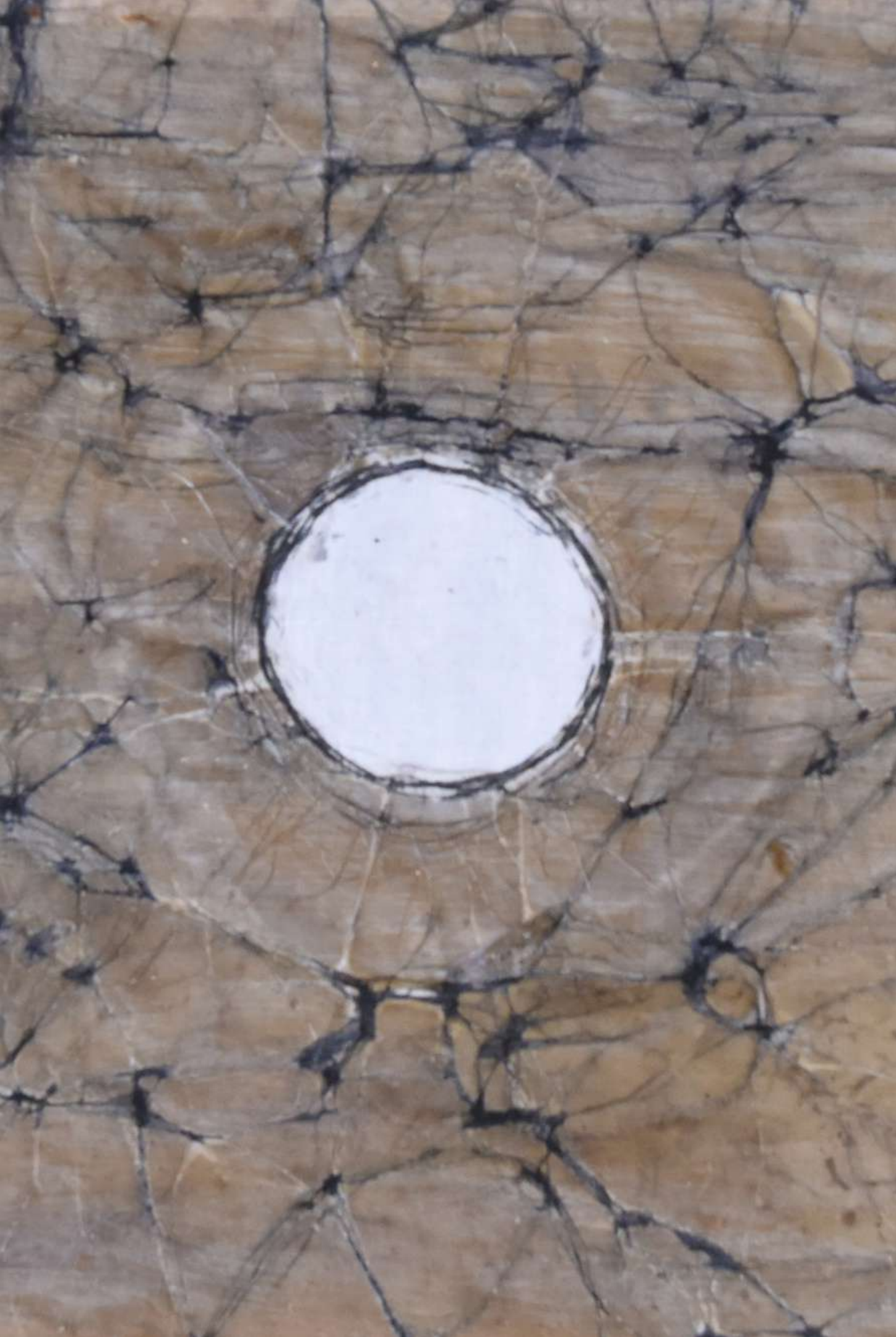
Supermassive Structure I
40 x 40 cm
Pigment, dye, wax on
High Grade Sarong Cotton





Celestial Object I
40 x 40 cm
Pigment, dye, wax on
High Grade Sarong Cotton





Supermassive Structure II
40 x 40 cm
Pigment, dye, wax on
High Grade Sarong Cotton



ESSAY

As far as I can **remember** I have been fascinated by nature, the universe and the exploration of the unknown. I think it was sparked in the wild tropical family gardens of my youth. Observing patterns on leaves with my dad, finding tiny life with my cousins in the undergrowth and little streams which ran like veins through the land, gazing at the stars and galaxies flickering brightly through the majestic crowns of coconut trees my ancestors had planted. It was a curiosity which never left me. In the past four years I have been on a personal quest, trying to find a medium and process which would enable me to create a visual representation of this desire to comprehend the unknown, the beginning and origin of everything: **The Big Bang**.

Similar to the nature of this unproven physical theory itself, my search has been abstract, lengthy, complex and full of **miscalculations**. It was a process of four years of experiments and failures, but I believe that I have found solace in the right medium, language and process to materialise this **search** - and it is linked to my own memory. After all it felt that the search for the beginning of anything is also a search for self and identity. As life goes, there are moments when answers come while you are not looking for them. Fast forward three decades, I am at the school of the one world foundation (owf), back in Sri Lanka. As I was shown the various wonderful classes, meeting pupils and teachers, we also met Ms Anoma Malkanthi Mendis and the owf Batik studio. It was there that something **subconsciously** clicked.

Spending my first five years in Sri Lanka, Batiks were found everywhere in the 80ies and 90ies. One of my earliest memories was my dad's red Batik sarong. After some trials and reflection back in the studio with Batik textiles and samples, it dawned on me that the motifs were not what caught my attention - it was the intricate, random cracked patterns and connections around the motifs that unlocked a deeper emotion. They resembled **neural pathways**; **structures of the cosmos** - the same celestial snapshots from NASA and the Hubble telescope into deep space - a snapshot of time that no longer exists. Simultaneously, the similarity to neural pathways resonated with the subject of memory, a topic sitting at the core of my practice.





ESSAY

The **lost patterns** of the beginning of everything came back to existence as the wax dried and melted again, in between the cracks and in the hues and shades of drying black, blue and red pigment. Observing the works, they had the same quality as a celestial landscape - capturing a moment in time when dye touches wax touches fabric. Beauty immortalised through a series of random actions and reactions leading to that moment frozen in time on canvas. The **magnificent unknown** structures and patterns I have been dreaming about and tried to recreate for so long through various means were there on a simple **sarong** pattern all along.

Thirty years of fascination and four years of thought came into being during the brief but intense residency at owf. As the saying goes; "there are decades where nothing happens; and there are weeks where decades happen." The week in June 2023 was such a decade. A week of learning, processing, problem solving and creating - and above all patience, passion and commitment from the team to realise the body of work for which I am very grateful. As such we were artists, teachers, students, scientists, explorers, inventors and children again and that **all at once**.

© Raki Nikahetiya 2023

With special thanks to Ms Anoma Mendis and the Batik dream team: Ms Niluka De Silva, Ms Nishanti Liyanage, Ms Daisy Irangani and Ms Champika De Zoysa.

With gratitude and thanks to Prof. Kathrin Messner, Mr Prabath Wijesekara De Zoysa, Ms Xiane Kangela, Ms T. Jenita Raji De Silva, Mr Ronnie Jaklitisch and the whole owf team.