

J Myszka Lewis: Florals

Artist Statement

I use print media, embroidery, and painting to explore various concepts that stem from considerations of pattern and repetition. This exhibition features four series of work from recent years in which I deconstruct and repeat botanical imagery to discuss ornament, impermanence, mindfulness, and the comfort found in repetition.

I began incorporating floral imagery in my work after spending the height of the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic tending an overabundant garden in my backyard. The repetition of the growing season as flowers budded, bloomed, wilted, and sprouted up again was therapeutic to observe. Inspired by that experience, I use patterning and flowers to signify the domestic, beauty, and life cycles. The complex patterns I create incite curiosity, introspection, and meditation.

Artist Biography

J Myszka Lewis received her BFA from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in 2011 and her MFA from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 2015. She has participated in many group exhibitions at places such as the International Print Center New York (New York, NY), Charles Allis Art Museum (Milwaukee, WI), Soap Factory (Minneapolis, MN), Museum of Wisconsin Art (West Bend, WI), Trout Museum of Art (Appleton, WI), and the Chazen Museum of Art (Madison, WI). She has participated in residencies at the Jentel Foundation in Banner, Wyoming and the Kimmel Harding Nelson Center for the Arts in Nebraska City, Nebraska. She has been a finalist for a Luminarts Cultural Foundation Visual Arts Fellowship, the Hopper Prize, and the Forward Art Prize. In 2018, she received the Edna Wiechers Art in Wisconsin Award from the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Division of the Arts. J Myszka Lewis is based in Madison, Wisconsin.

For my more recent work, I create wallpaper-esque patterns of repeated floral imagery sourced from 17th-century Dutch flower paintings. To begin my ***Still Lifes***, I print these patterns on pearlescent photo paper and screen print an almost opaque white ink over the pattern, blocking out the majority of the composition to allow segments of the swirling floral images to appear as exploding Rorschach-like symmetrical abstractions. The Dutch still life paintings that serve as inspiration and source material for this series depicted flowers as symbols of wealth and brevity. Using the layer of white to pull that commentary into a contemporary context, my *Still Life* prints use abstract floral imagery and compositions akin to Rorschach ink-blot tests to engage with ideas relating to value and aesthetics while also considering how we mentally and emotionally relate to and understand ourselves.



J Myszka Lewis, *Still Life 1*, 2022

Screen print and archival inkjet on photo chrome pearl paper; Edition of 3; 24 x 24 inches; \$850 framed



J Myszka Lewis, *Still Life 3*, 2022

Screen print and archival inkjet on photo chrome pearl paper; Edition of 3; 24 x 24 inches; \$850 framed



J Myszka Lewis, *Still Life 4*, 2022

Screen print and archival inkjet on photo chrome pearl paper; Edition of 3; 24 x 24 inches; \$850 framed



J Myszka Lewis, *Still Life 5*, 2022

Screen print and archival inkjet on photo chrome pearl paper; Edition of 3; 24 x 24 inches; \$850 framed



J Myszka Lewis, *Still Life 6*, 2022

Screen print and archival inkjet on photo chrome pearl paper; Edition of 3; 24 x 24 inches; \$850 framed

Silhouetted floral forms similar to those that appear in my *Still Lives* take precedence within my **Memento** series of large cut paper pieces. I digitally trace the contours of shapes found within 17th-century Dutch still life paintings and work from those digital drawings to cut shapes out of paper. With these cut paper pieces, I compose a reimagined still life image in which floral shapes emerge in fragments as if they are either breaking apart or coming together. Disassociated from contextual cues, the forms in these works often operate as something akin to a figure, particularly as the cut paper pieces utilize mirror paper and literally reflect the viewer within the work. Dutch still life paintings often discussed themes relating to memento mori, a Latin phrase meaning “remember you must die.” By referencing that idea, these pieces ask the viewer to consider what they value, in what do they see their life reflected, and what will last after they fade away



J Myszka Lewis, *Memento 2*, 2022
Cut mirri paper mounted to rag paper; 40 x 26 inches; \$1,850 framed



J Myszka Lewis, *Memento 5*, 2022
Cut mirri paper mounted to rag paper; 40 x 26 inches; \$1,850 framed



J Myszka Lewis, *Memento 6*, 2022
Cut mirri paper mounted to rag paper; 40 x 26 inches; \$1,850 framed

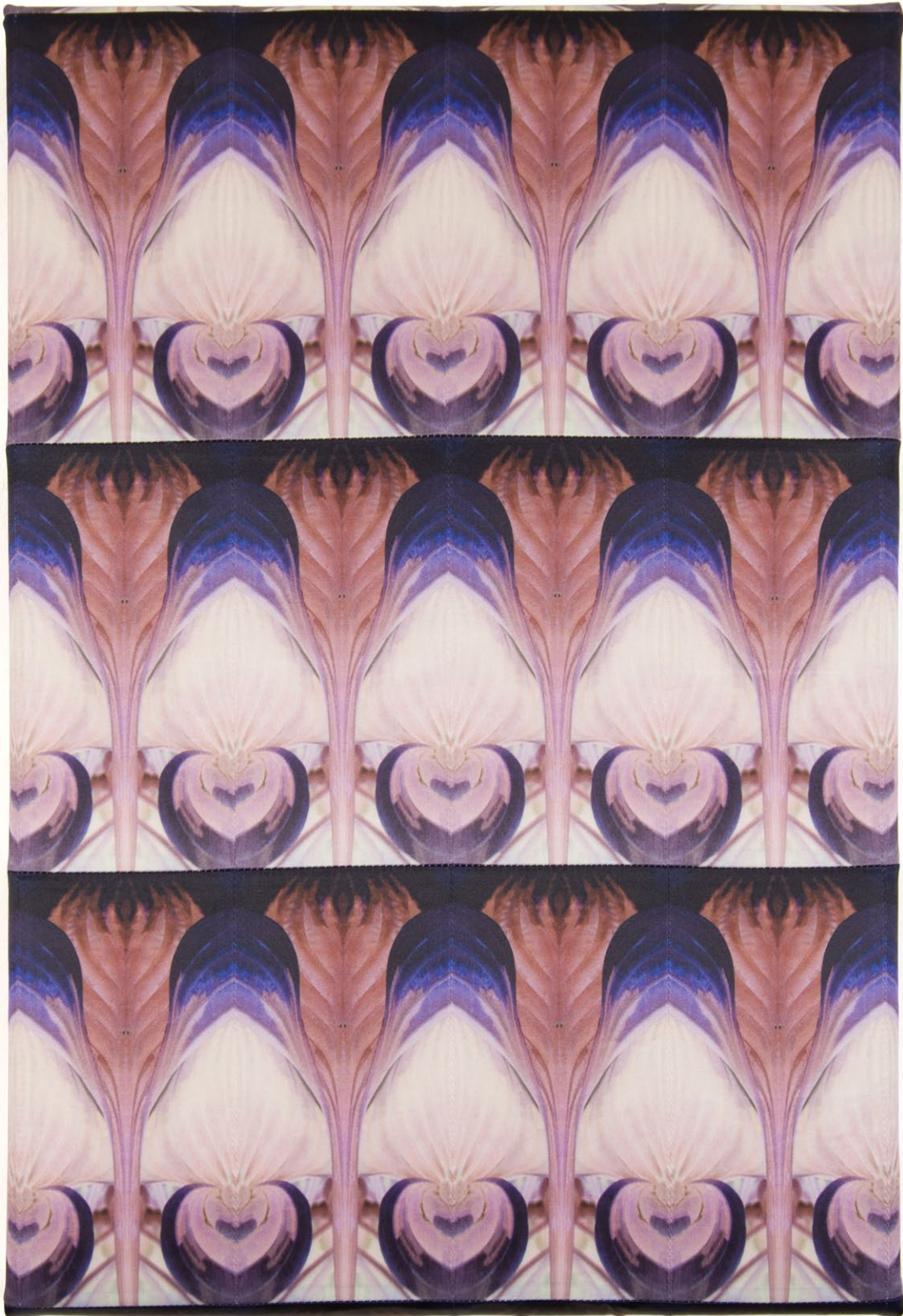


J Myszka Lewis, *Memento 7*, 2022
Cut mirri paper mounted to rag paper; 40 x 26 inches; \$1,850 framed



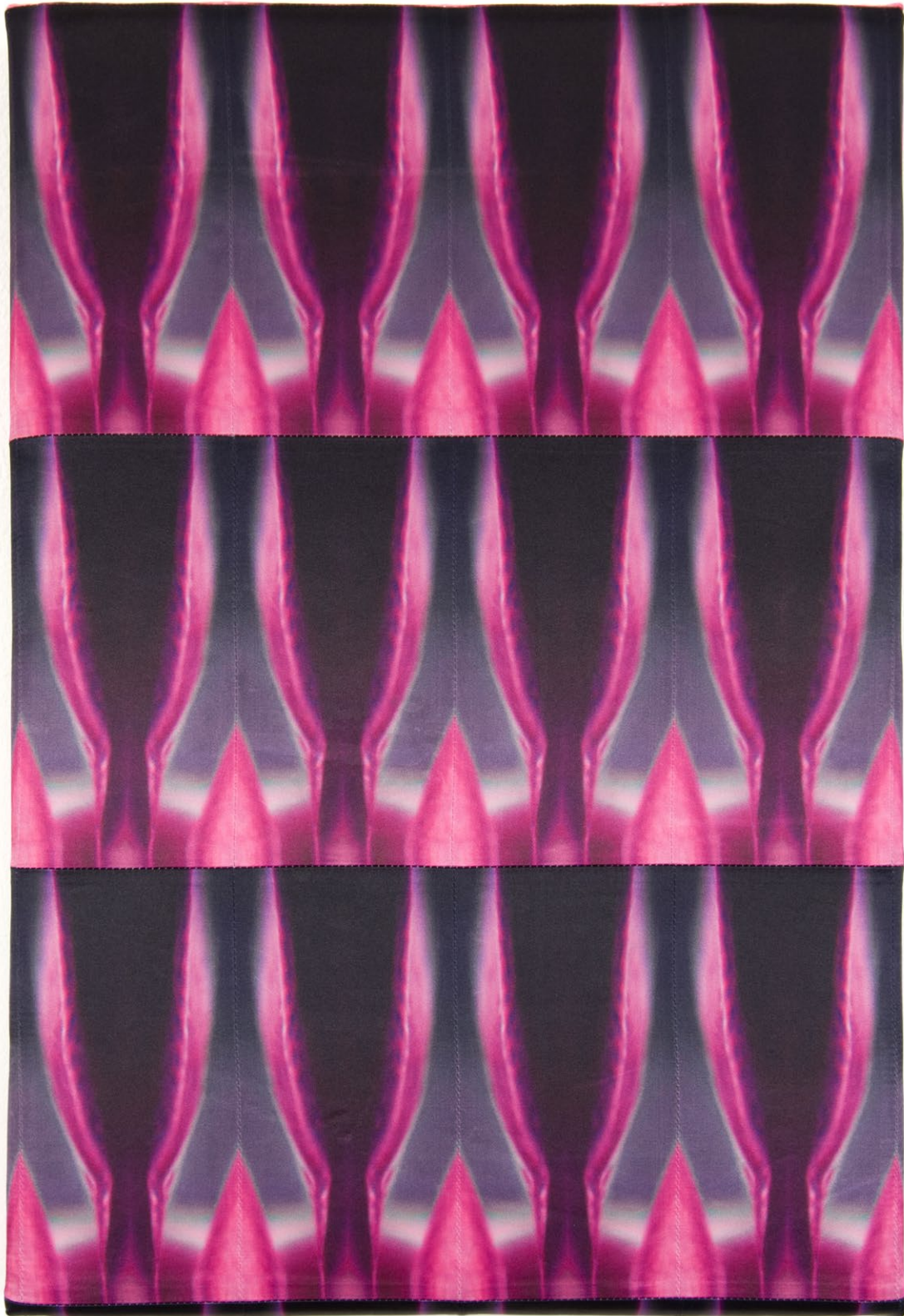
J Myszka Lewis, *Memento 8*, 2022
Cut mirri paper mounted to rag paper; 40 x 26 inches; \$1,850 framed

I worked on my *Sirens* and *Reverberations* series from 2020-2021. During this time, my work went through some changes as I moved from industrial subject matter to working with botanical images. These are my early explorations into using floral-based imagery in my work. Before I began these series, I spent a few months staging and photographing plants and flowers and playing with the forms captured in my photographs. Each piece in my ***Sirens*** series presents multiples of a singular symmetrical figure. I printed abstracted sections of my photographic images in saturated colors on satin fabric. I then sewed the satin pieces together along their edges to create a grid, a small army of identical unknown forms. Distracting and alluring the viewer with garish colors such as magenta and chartreuse, the ambiguous figures stand as vessels, beacons, or pawns. They are bodies in repetition, fortified by their multiplication.



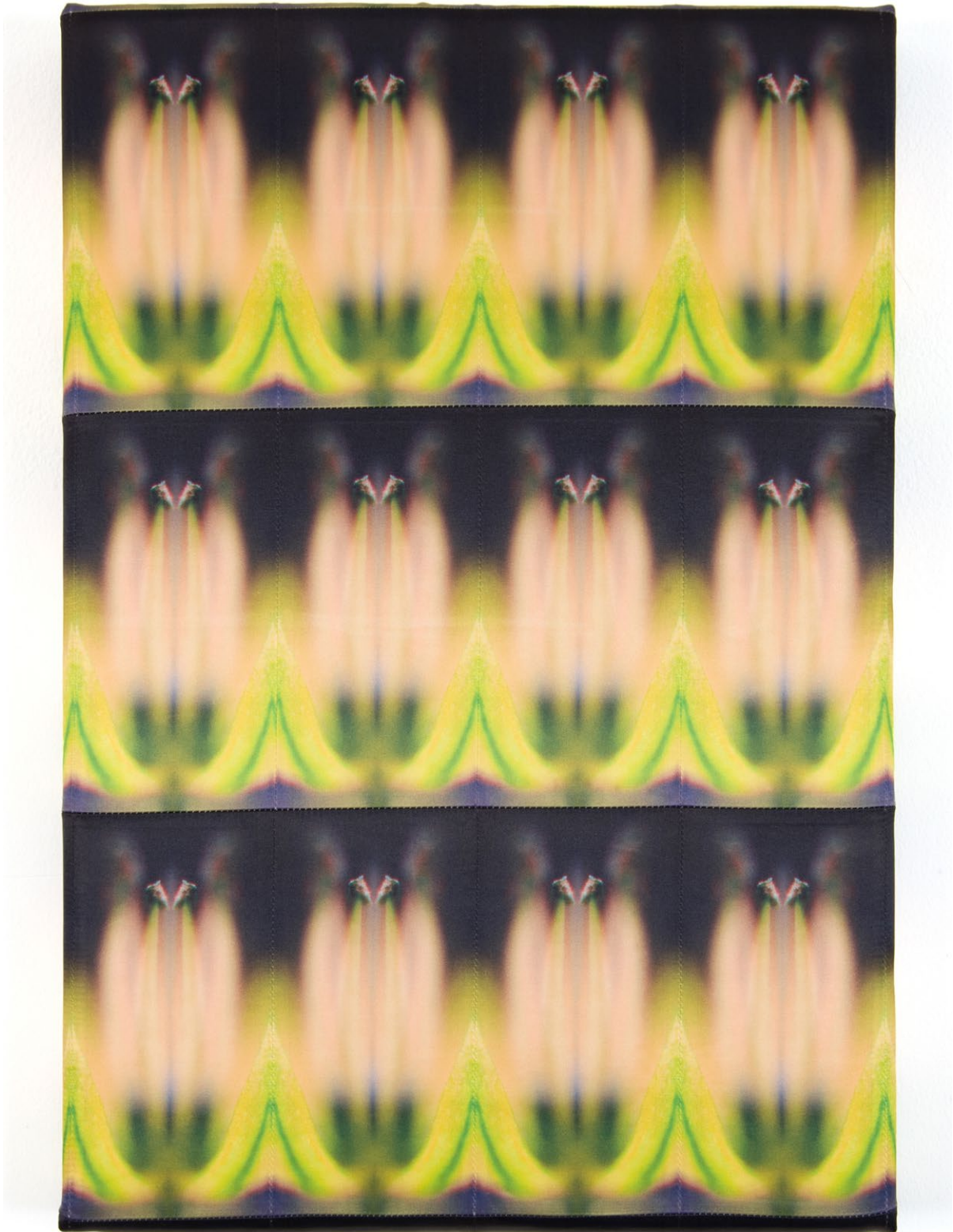
J Myszka Lewis, *Siren 1*, 2021

Dye sublimation prints on satin with sewing mounted to panel; 18 1/2 x 12 1/2 inches; \$500



J Myszka Lewis, *Siren 2*, 2021

Dye sublimation prints on satin with sewing mounted to panel; 18 1/2 x 12 1/2 inches; \$500



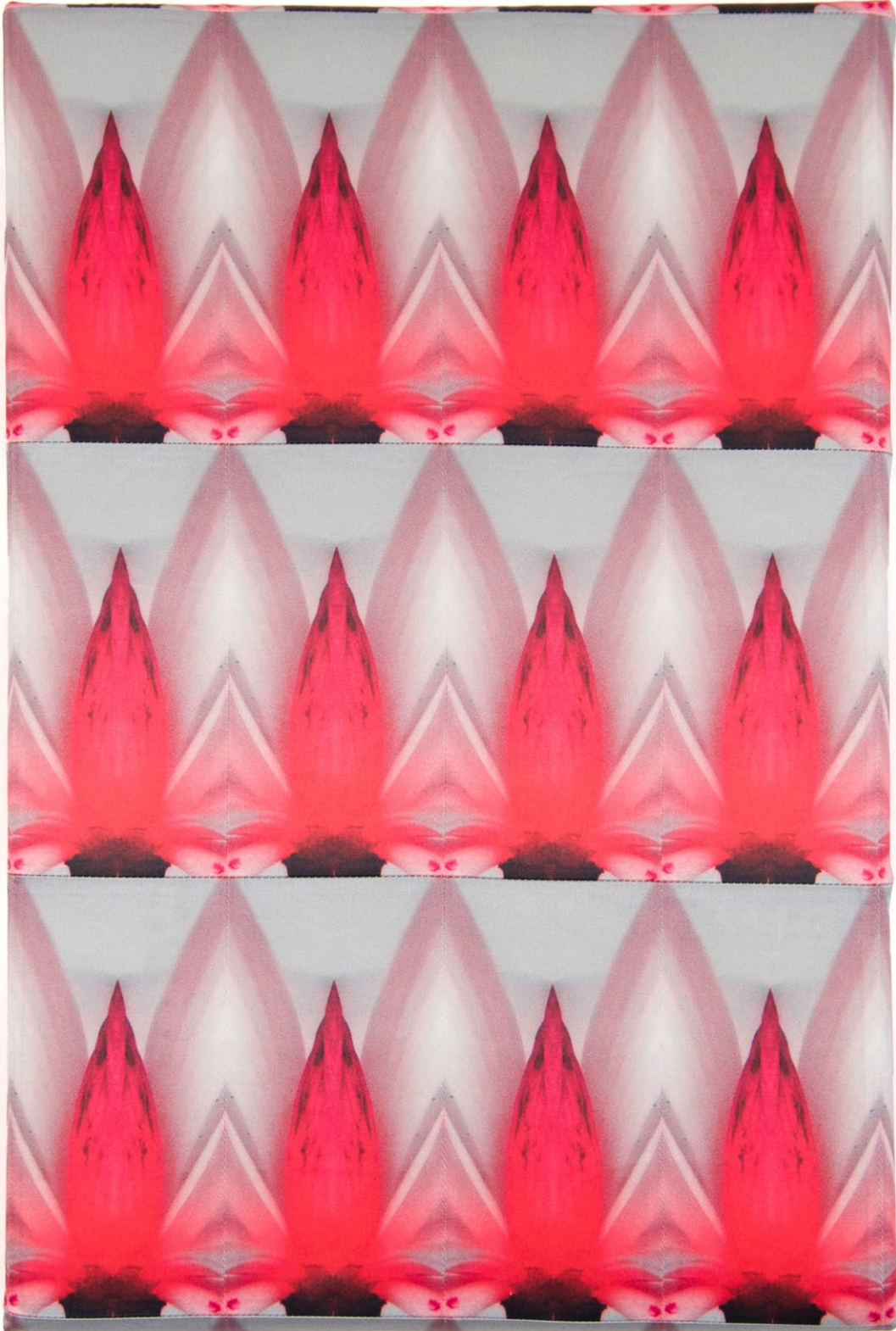
J Myszka Lewis, *Siren 3*, 2021

Dye sublimation prints on satin with sewing mounted to panel; 18 1/2 x 12 1/2 inches; \$500



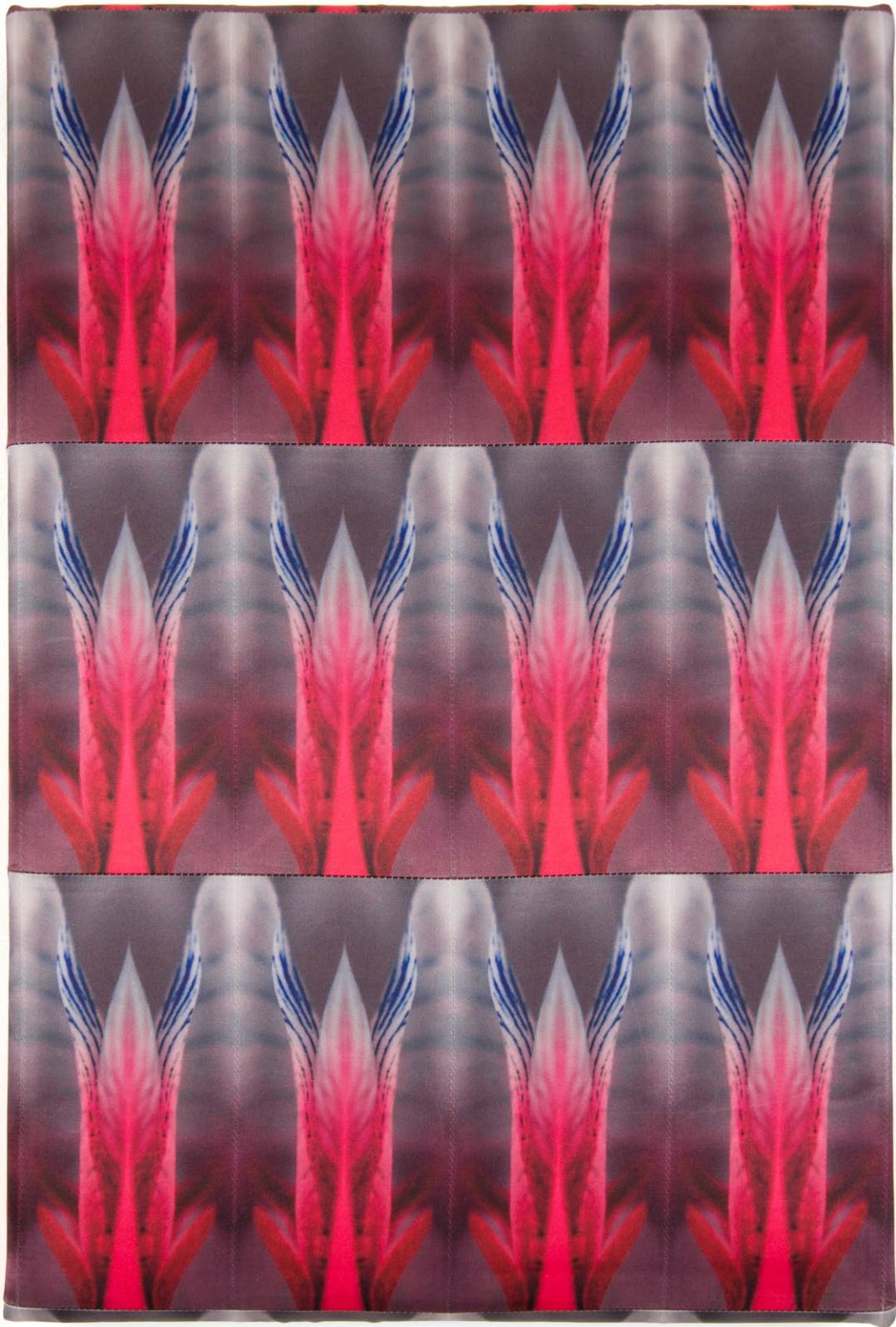
J Myszka Lewis, *Siren 4*, 2021

Dye sublimation prints on satin with sewing mounted to panel; 18 1/2 x 12 1/2 inches; \$500



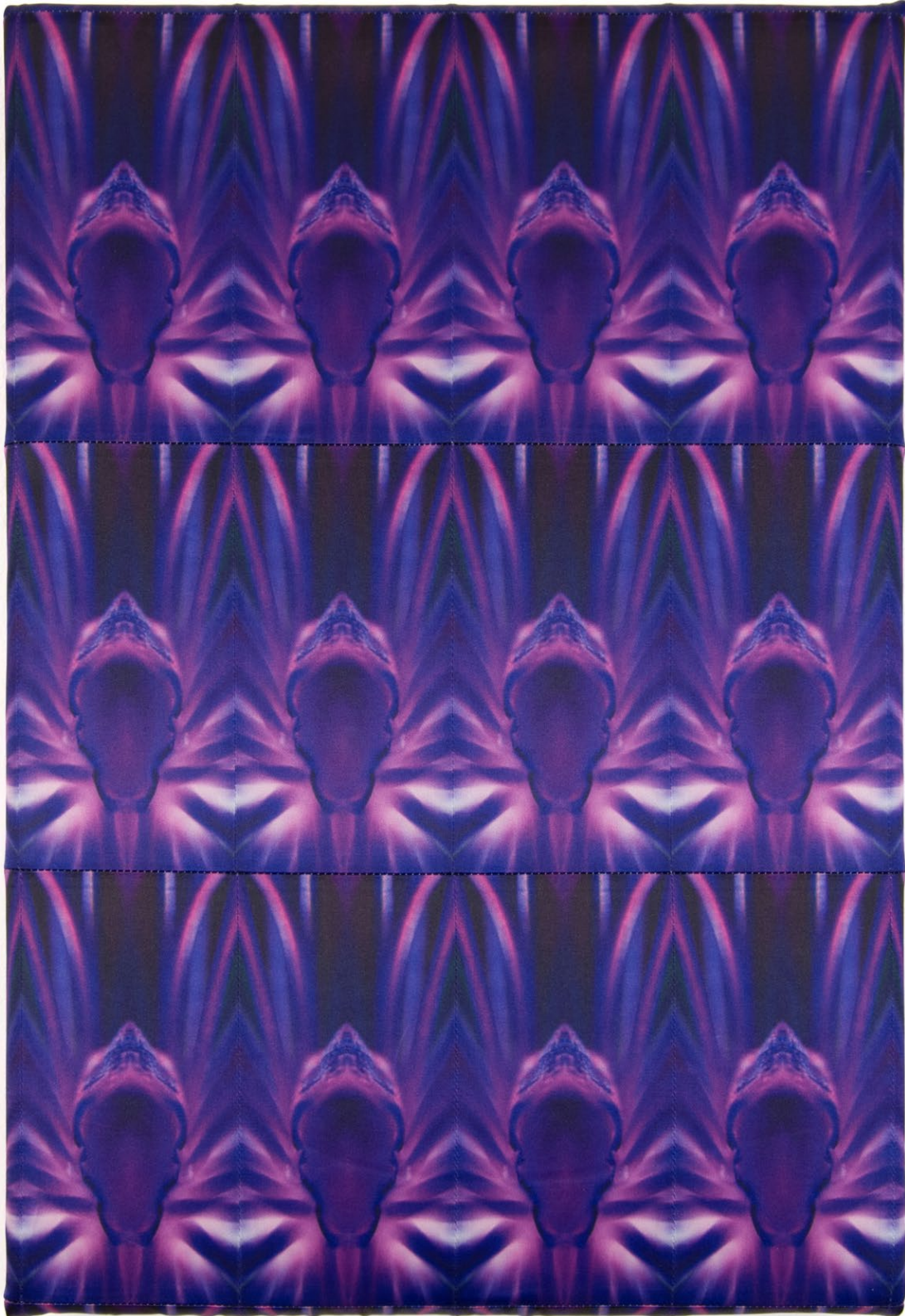
J Myszka Lewis, *Siren 5*, 2021

Dye sublimation prints on satin with sewing mounted to panel; 18 1/2 x 12 1/2 inches; \$500



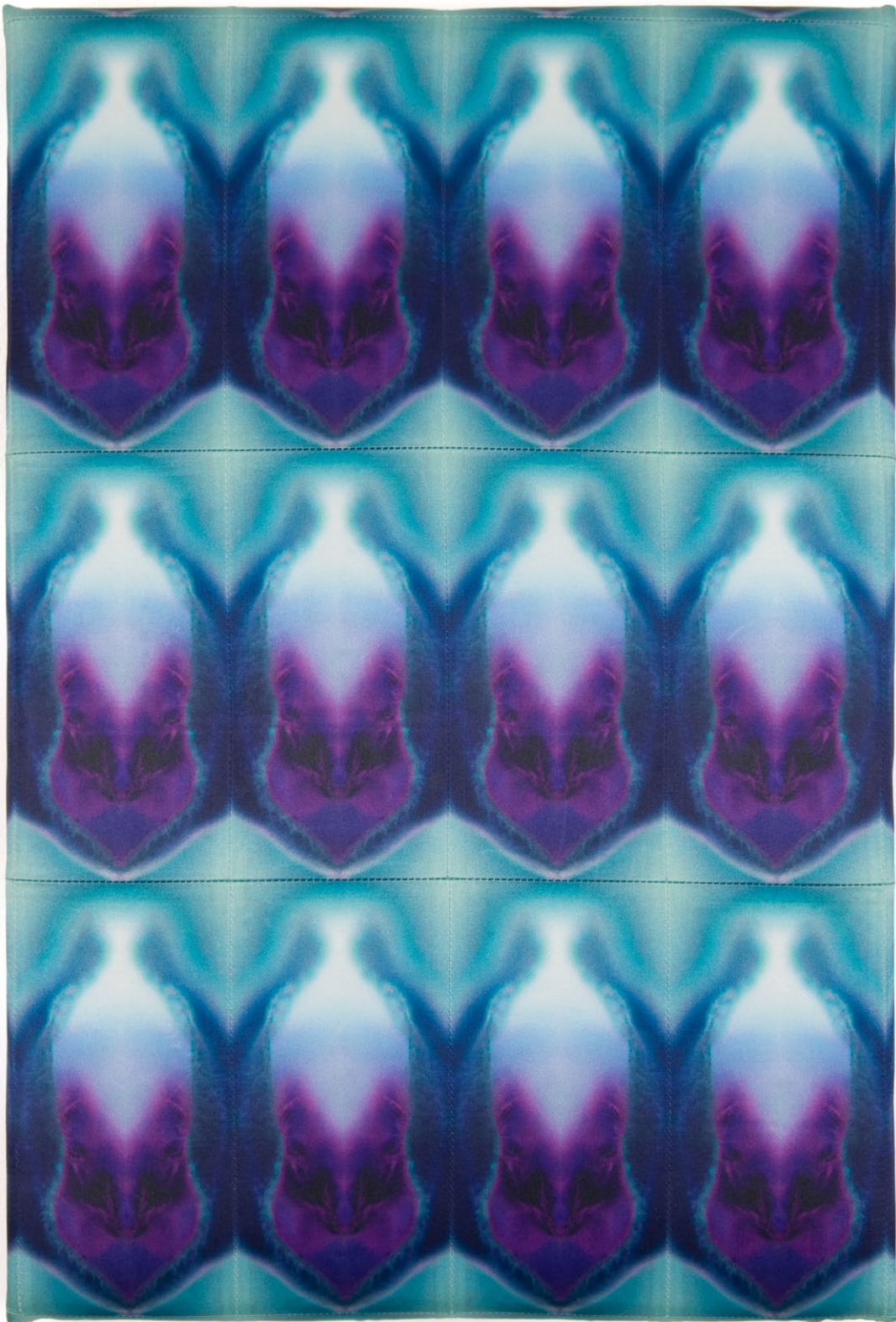
J Myszka Lewis, *Siren 6*, 2021

Dye sublimation prints on satin with sewing mounted to panel; 18 1/2 x 12 1/2 inches; \$500



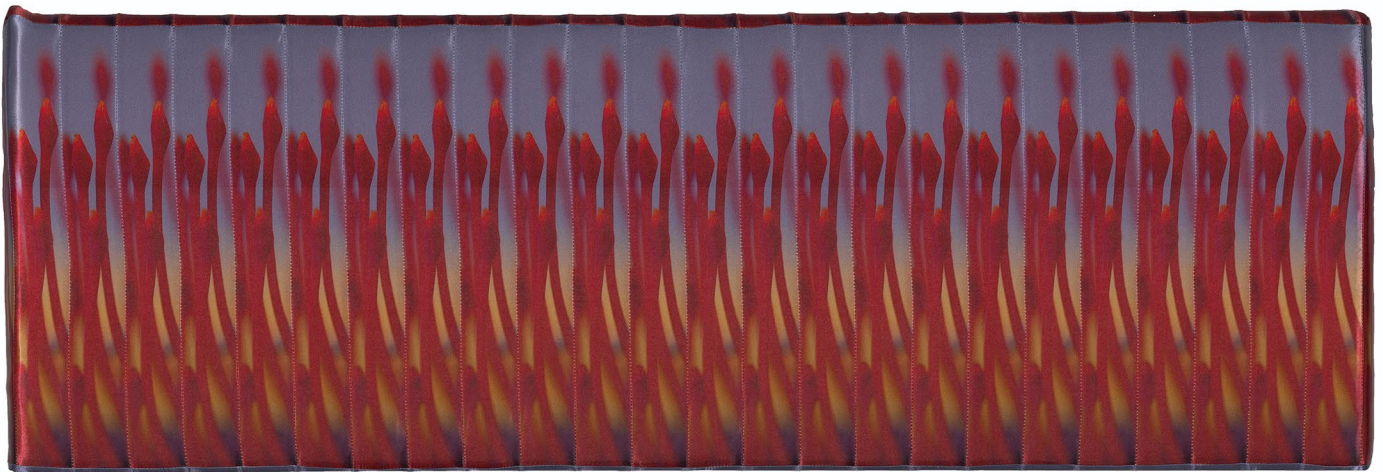
J Myszka Lewis, *Siren 7*, 2021

Dye sublimation prints on satin with sewing mounted to panel; 18 1/2 x 12 1/2 inches; \$500



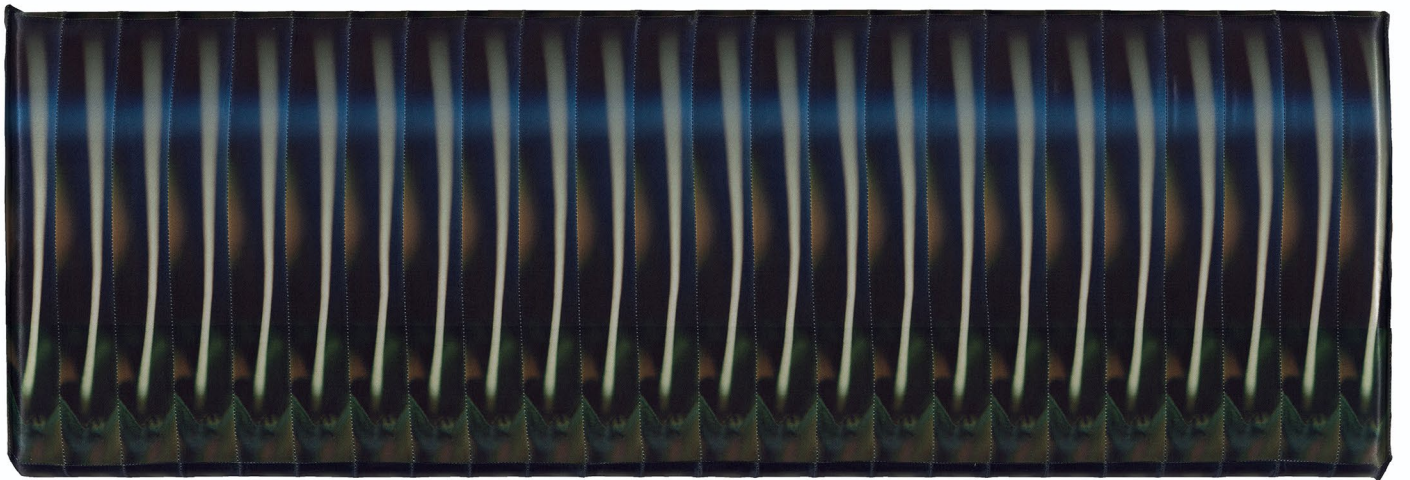
J Myszka Lewis, *Siren 8*, 2021

Dye sublimation prints on satin with sewing mounted to panel; 18 1/2 x 12 1/2 inches; \$500



J Myszka Lewis, *Siren 11*, 2022

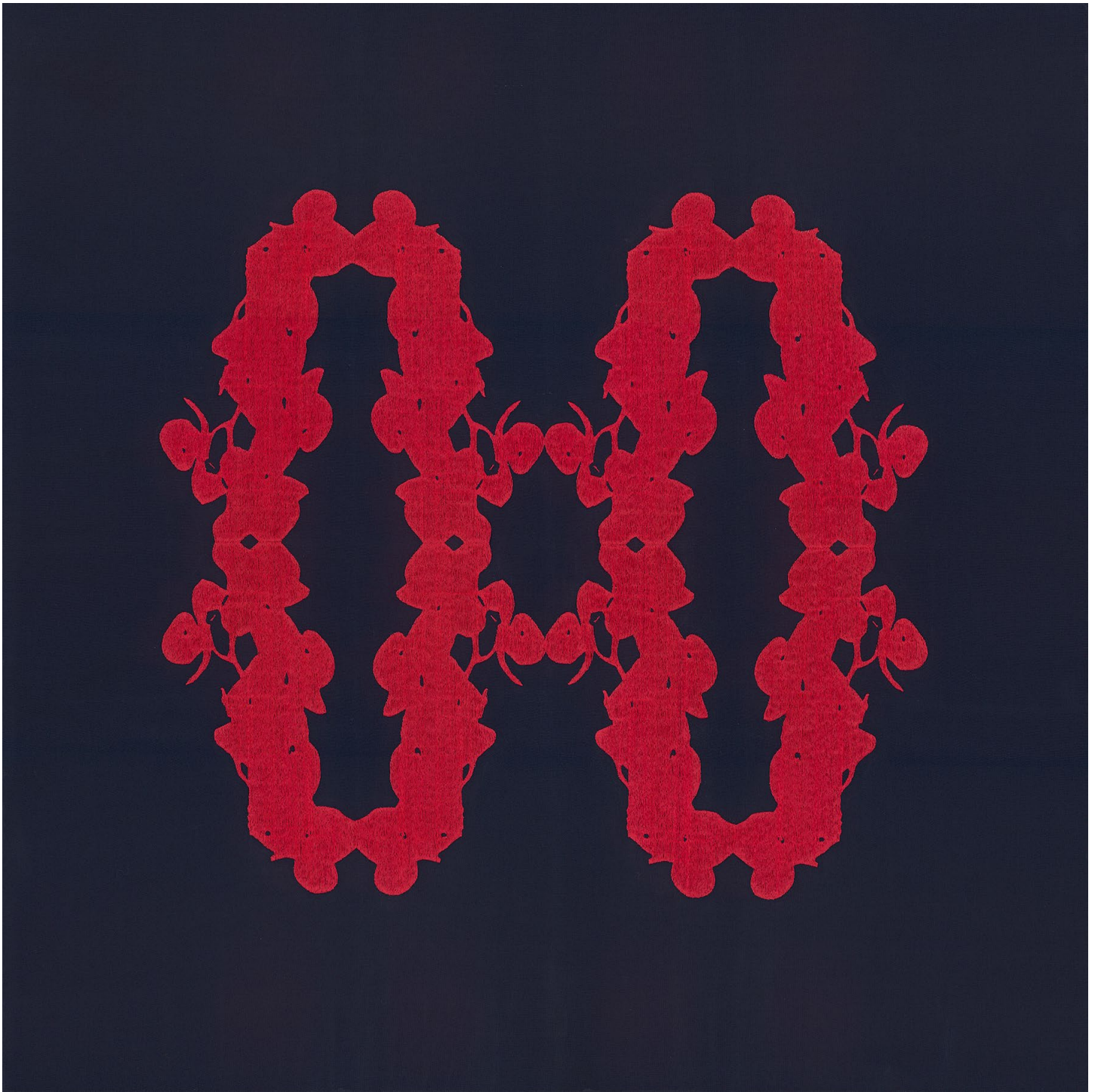
Dye sublimation prints on satin with sewing mounted to panel; 12 x 36 inches; \$1,000



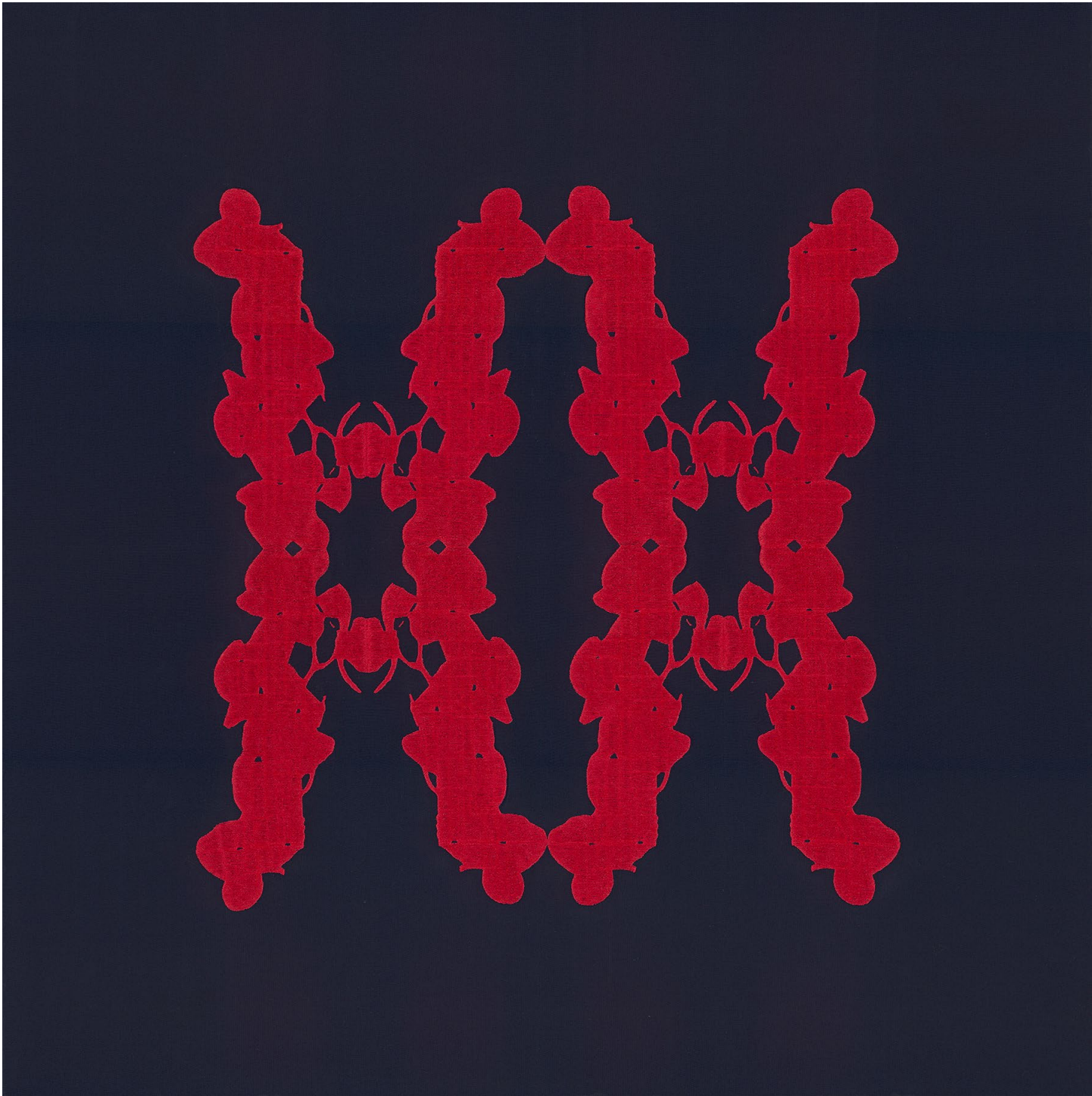
J Myszka Lewis, *Siren 12, 2022*

Dye sublimation prints on satin with sewing mounted to panel; 12 x 36 inches; \$1,000

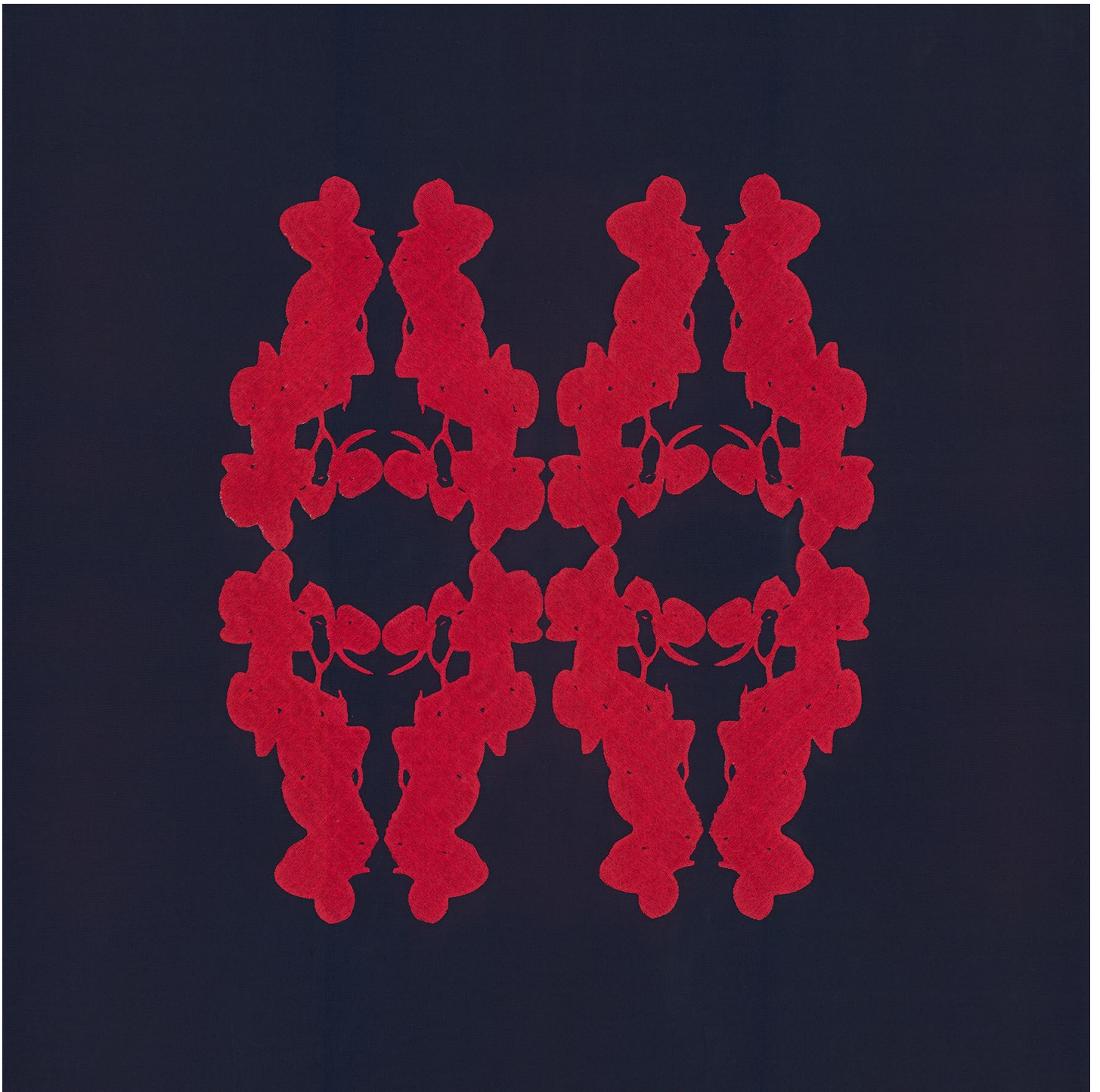
In my ***Reverberations***, I refract and repeat biomorphic shapes pulled from my photographs to create uncanny Rorschach-like arrangements that suggest processes of introspection. Embroidered in brightly colored thread on dark contrasting fabrics, the silhouetted conglomerations teeter between representation and abstraction. They appear to be growing or transforming; intentionally unclear whether they represent a singular item composed of repeated forms or a community of similar entities. Notice how the thread reflects the light in these embroideries. Because I changed the direction and angle of the stitching in some of these pieces, subtle shifts in color appear as you view the works from an angle and move around them



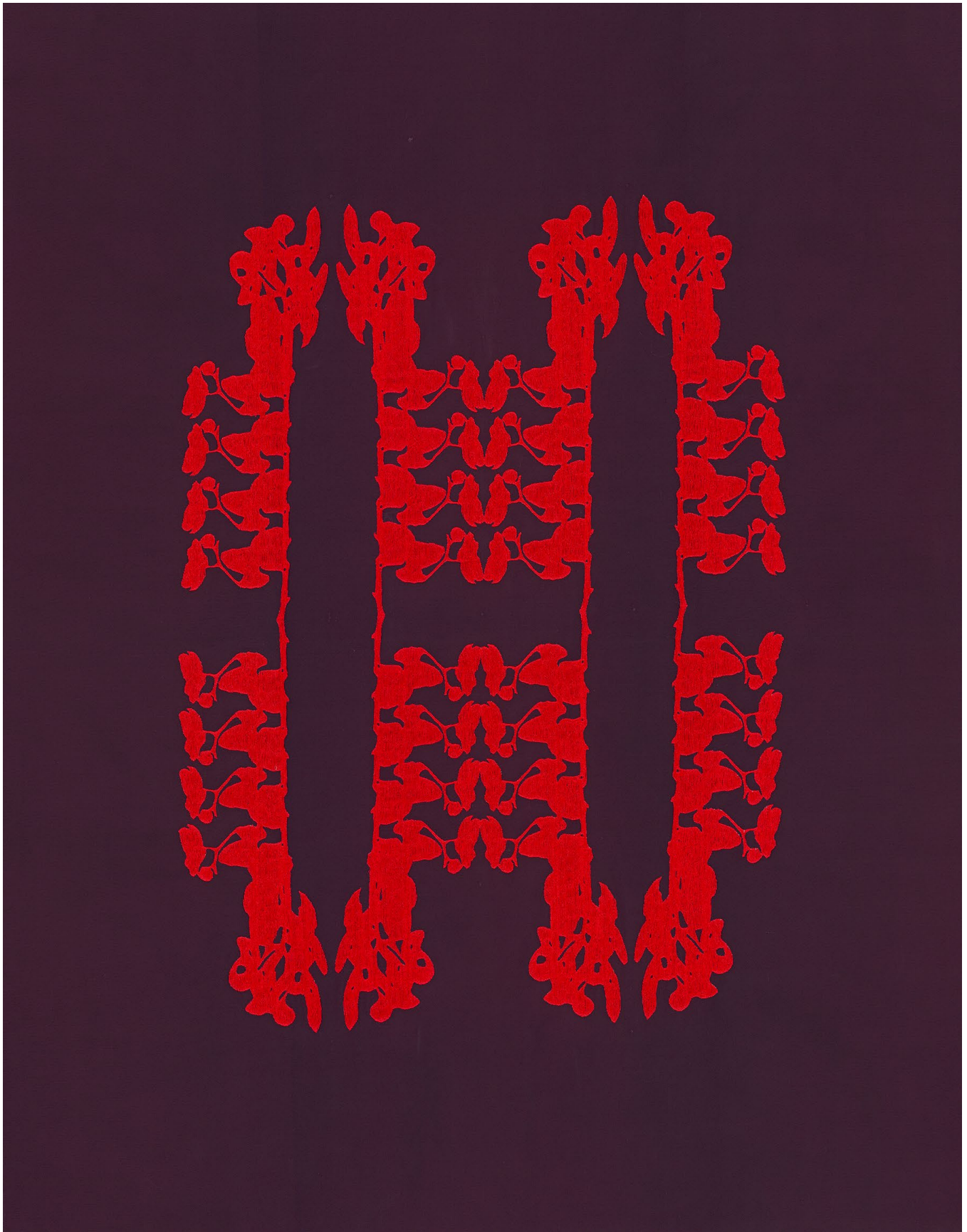
J Myszka Lewis, *Reverberation (ain't for the faint of heart) A*, 2021
Embroidery on cotton mounted to panel; 26 x 26 inches; \$800



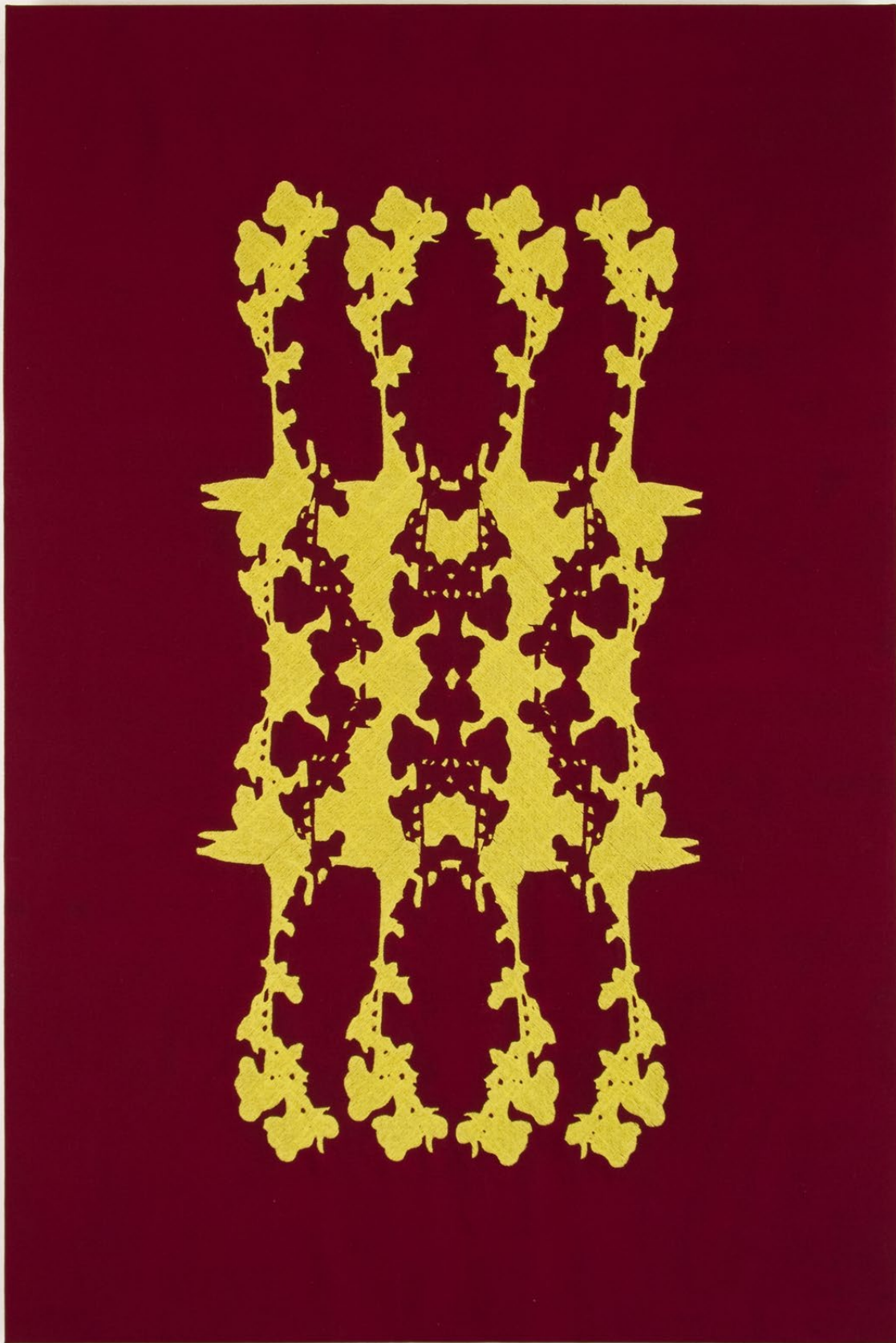
J Myszka Lewis, *Reverberation (ain't for the faint of heart) B*, 2021
Embroidery on cotton mounted to panel; 26 x 26 inches; \$800



J Myszka Lewis, *Reverberation (ain't for the faint of heart) C*, 2021
Embroidery on cotton mounted to panel; 26 x 26 inches; \$800



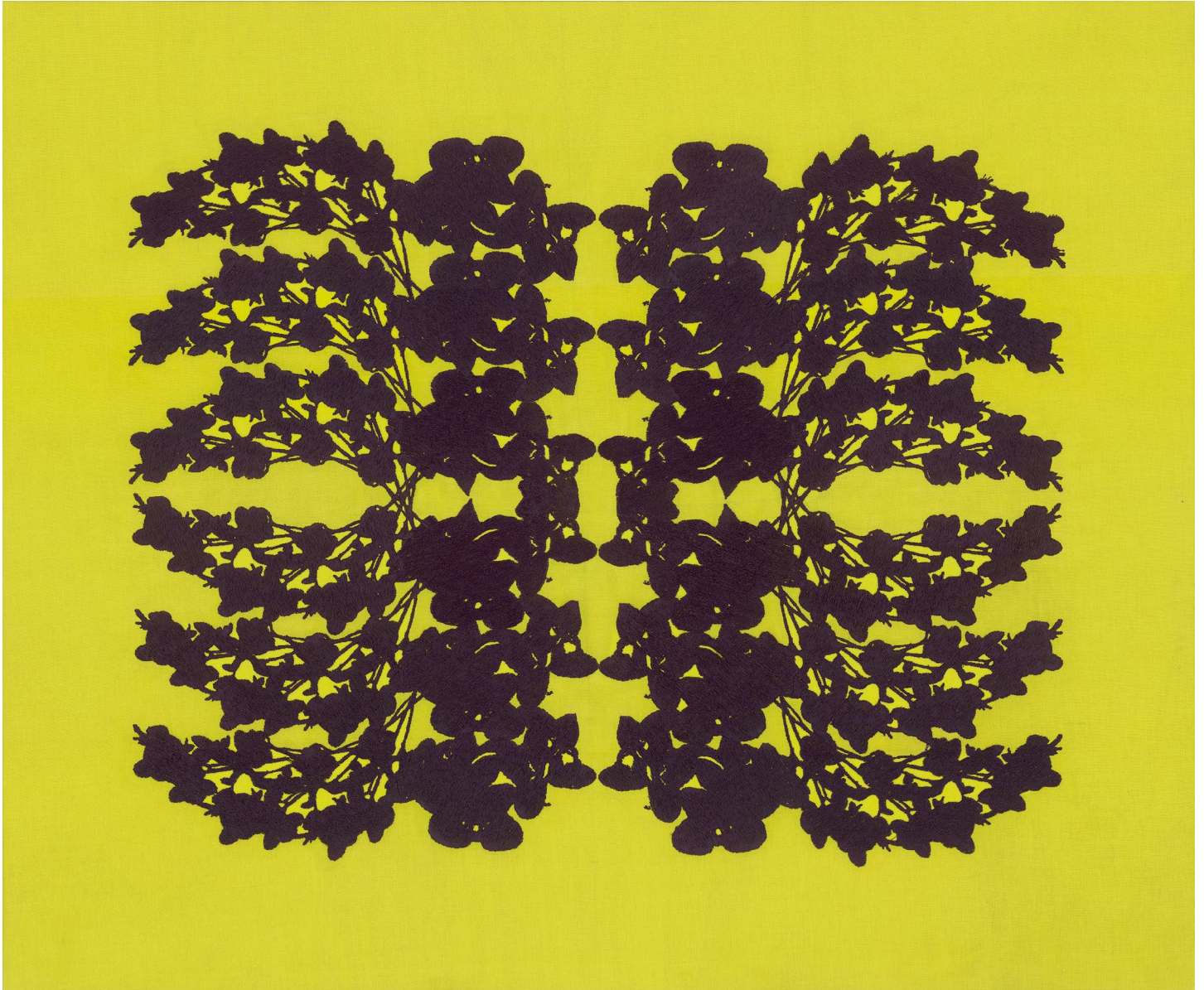
J Myszka Lewis, *Reverberation (connected to my bones)*, 2021
Embroidery on cotton mounted to panel; 30 x 23 inches; \$800



J Myszka Lewis, *Reverberation (sticks and stones)*, 2021
Embroidery on cotton mounted to panel; 36 x 24 inches; \$800



J Myszka Lewis, *Reverberation (we are the wicked ones)*, 2021
Embroidery on cotton mounted to panel; 29 x 24 inches; \$800



J Myszka Lewis, *Reverberation (different today)*, 2021
Embroidery on cotton mounted to panel; 25 x 30 inches; \$800