



EDSON LULI

***A GLIMPSE
INTO THE FUTURE***

ESSAY BY ELSA BARBIERI

19.04 - 23.06.2023

VIA G. VENTURA 6 - MILAN
PROMETEO GALLERY IDA PISANI

Edson Luli, *A Glimpse into the Future*, 2023. Installation view at Prometeo Gallery Ida Pisani, Milan.



Prometeo Gallery Ida Pisani explores humanity's impact on nature and its attempt to control it with the exhibition ***A Glimpse into the Future*** by **Edson Luli** (b. 1989, Shkoder), accompanied by an essay by **Elsa Barbieri**.

Two years after ***It Begins with You and Me***, which approached the incoherent and vibrant multiplicity that is part of contemporary life, Luli now proposes a new body of works that stimulates a discussion with the impact that our society has on the environment: saving the planet is a fundamental act for human survival, but can the planet save itself? And does it need us?

True to his ability to provide contemporary reference frames that impose a process of criticism of the present, Luli lands on a large scale by transforming the gallery ambience into a space that is both a work of art and easily lends itself to becoming a metaphor: loaded with hidden meanings - and at the same time clear as mirrors -, the works on display become prototypes of the future.

On the upper floor, the work ***A Piece of Sky for Future Generations*** is designed as the only source of light coming from seven pre-fabricated LED blocks, suspended from the ceiling, decorated with the image of a cloudy sky. These blocks, or forms, typical of the game Tetris, contribute to the vertical development of an environment that synchronously expands horizontally with three monolithic screens of different sizes that show three compelling Tetris challenges (***Don't blame yourself! It's just a game.***). In an exciting game of perspective, the falling tetrominoes that settle on the bottom or on other already deposited blocks are recalled to those suspended so that when an uninterrupted block of sky is created, the sky itself disappears. Luli's visual intervention is decisive in communicating and evoking in the public a configuration on the limit between reality and representation in which the clash between human and inhuman agency intensifies in the micro-universe of sounds - typical of the game - diffused in the environment.

In the transition to the lower floor, a new source of light - recycled water bottles, filled and illuminated with LED - is proposed in relation

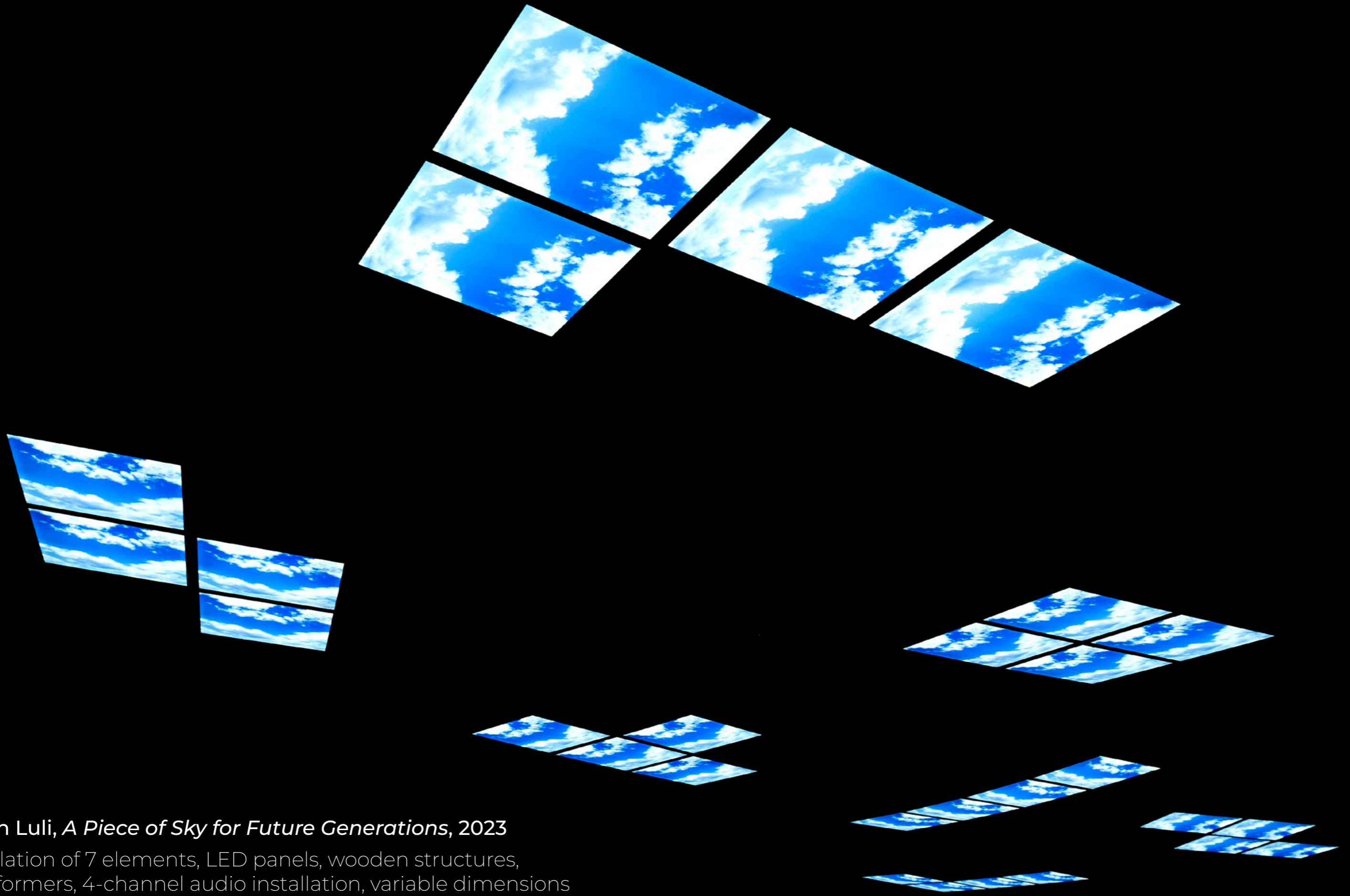
to the space, transformed into a desert with sand coming from it. Participatory by nature, the work ***Footsteps Towards the Future*** invites us to cross it, leaving our own footprint on that sand, as if to recall the imprint we give to plastic water bottles before throwing them away. Through these bottles, the only tool we have to see and consequently understand where we are, Luli highlights how the world is increasingly thirsty, but above all, prototypes a new model of renewability and sustainability that, similarly to his research, short-circuits what we believe. The gesture with which one throws away a bottle, declaring its end, is for Luli synonymous with a new use and a new fullness. Once again, agency is in play, explored from a point of view of variations, and therefore contingency and inevitably freedom of action.

The discourse that Luli initiates with the new exhibition is the result of an articulated research process of which a first and recognized start is dated March 2020. This is the work ***Now, 1.3.2020***, an installation of 10 inkjet prints on cotton paper that looks at climate and environmental changes in relation to human thought. The work, exhibited in the dividing space between the first and the second environment of the exhibition, can be assumed as the manifest request, by the artist, for conscious reflection: our fragmented way of thinking is the main cause of our society, which we consider disposable.

Human agency, which assumes a central conceptual importance - above in the form of game control, below according to a recalculation of the path -, finds formal correspondence in the constant and double register - at the boundary between light and darkness, life and death - from which emerges, not by chance, an idea of fragmentation that is common to the game as well as to reality: for thousands of years, humans have been practicing challenging the surroundings by destroying and reshaping, both in the realm of the concrete and in that of play. *A Glimpse into the Future* invites us to focus on the challenges that await us, to avoid finding ourselves in front of an unrecognizable future.



Edson Luli, *A Glimpse into the Future*, 2023. Installation view at Prometeo Gallery Ida Pisani, Milan.



Edson Luli, *A Piece of Sky for Future Generations*, 2023

Installation of 7 elements, LED panels, wooden structures,
transformers, 4-channel audio installation, variable dimensions

Editions 1 + 1 A.P.

[Audio link \(click to listen\)](#)

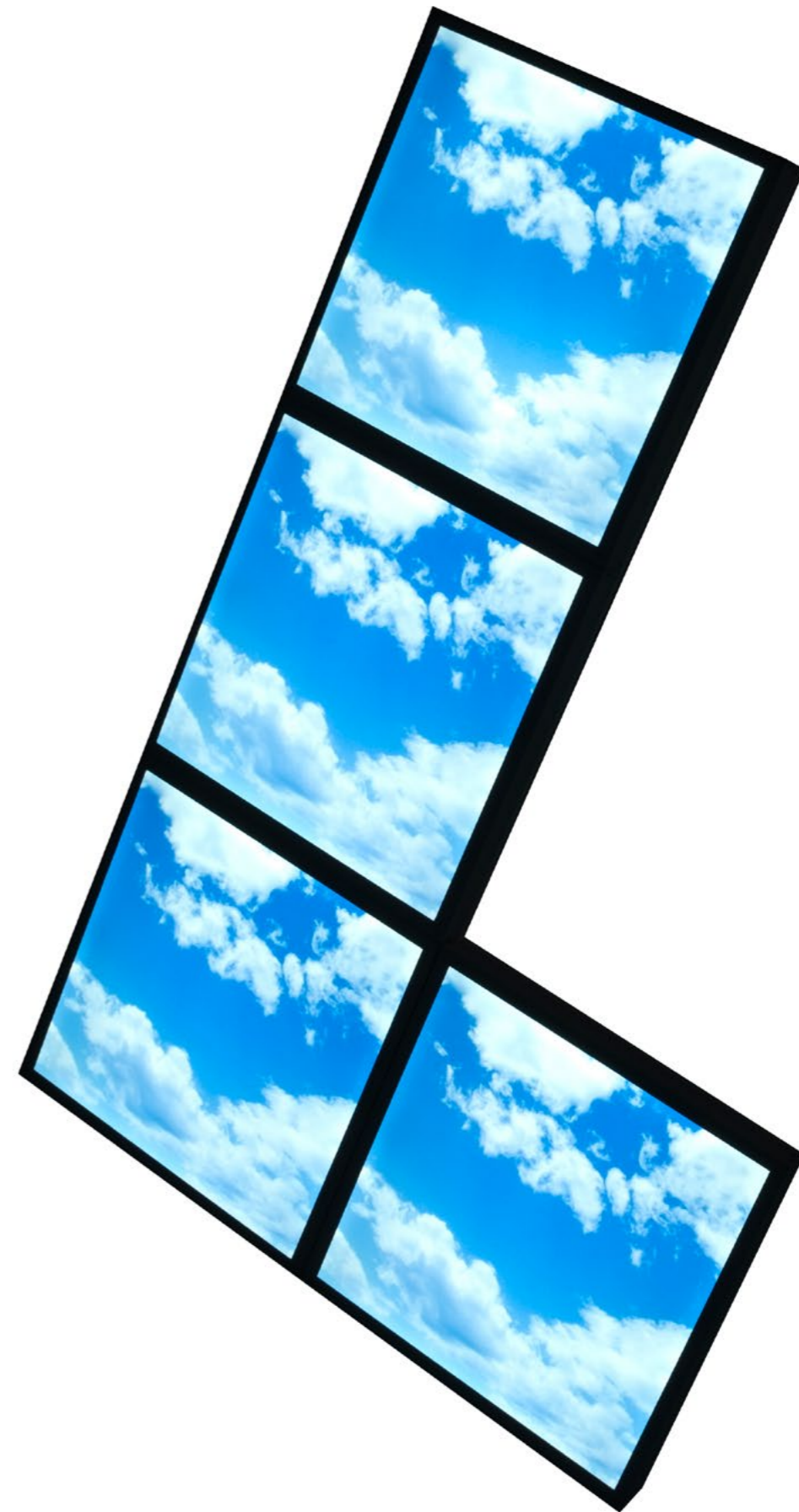
Edson Luli takes the sky as a contemporary frame of reference that imposes a process of criticism of the present, by communicating and evoking with *A Piece of Sky for Future Generations* a configuration on the borderline between reality and representation. From the ceiling seven tetramini, typical shapes of the game of Tetris, decorated with the image of a cloudy sky suspend in space, according to a minimalist aesthetic that simulates falling, as the only source of light. Indeed, light. Climate change legitimizes us to think that many attempts in this field, even technological ones, are quite discouraging. However, has the world played a trick on us, or did we play it on ourselves?

(extract from Elsa Barbieri's essay)

Edson Luli, *A Piece of Sky for Future Generations (L)*, 2023

LED panels, wooden structure, transformers,
180 x 120 x 15 cm

Editions 2 + 1 A.P.





Edson Luli, *A Piece of Sky for Future Generations (S)*, 2023

LED panels, wooden structure, transformers,
180 x 120 x 15 cm

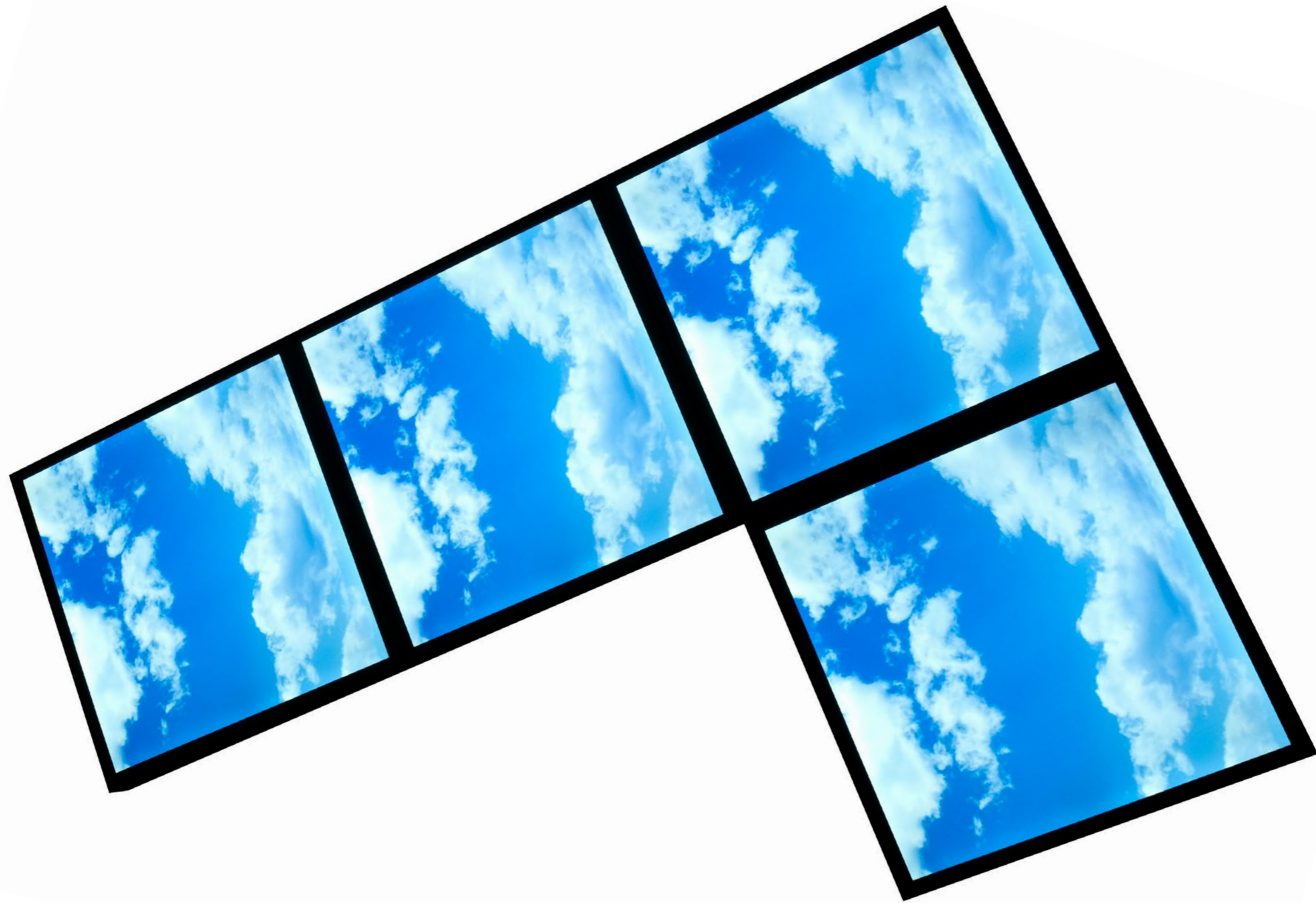
Editions 2 + 1 A.P.



Edson Luli, *A Piece of Sky for Future Generations (I)*, 2023

LED panels, wooden structure, transformers,
240 x 60 x 15 cm

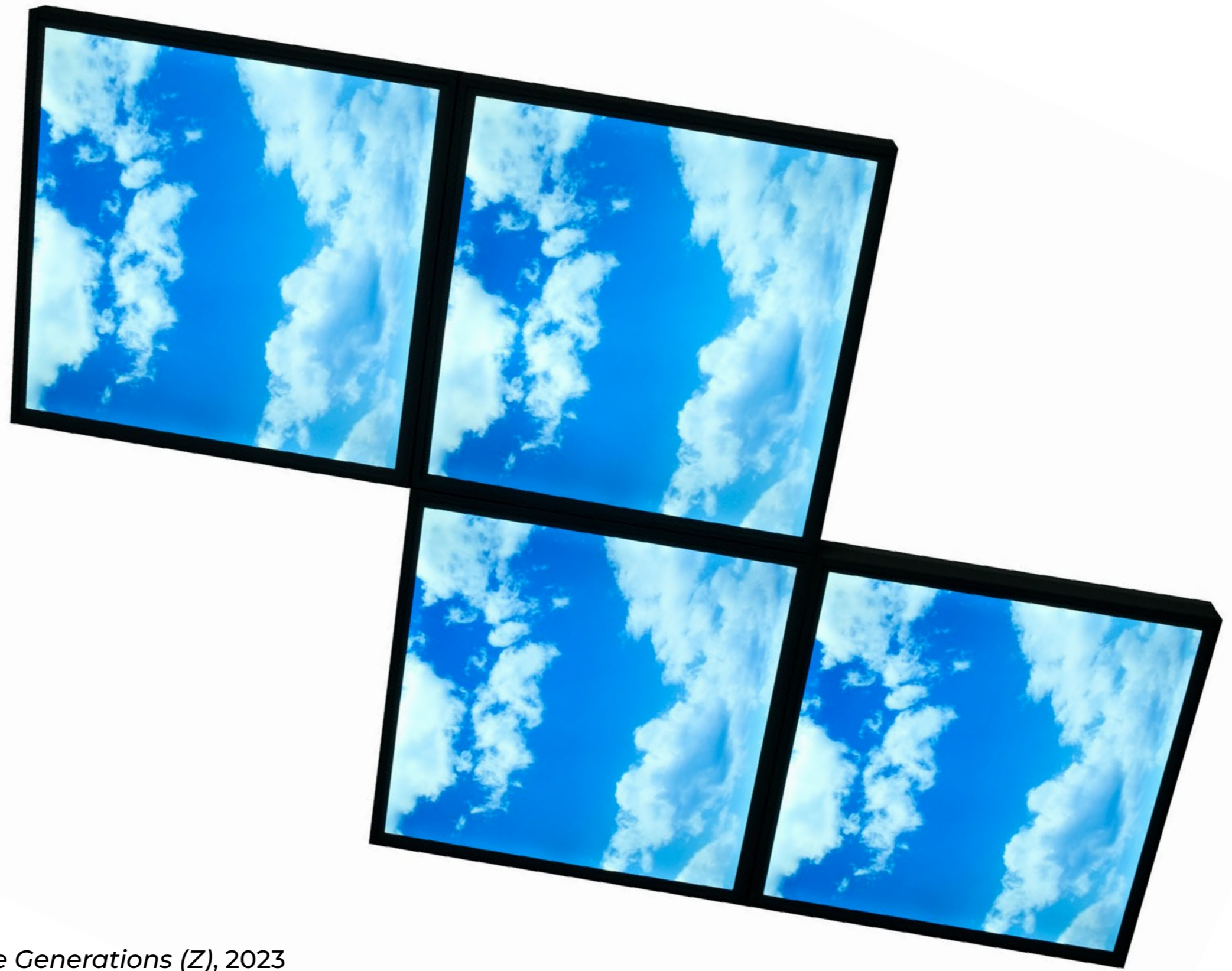
Editions 2 + 1 A.P.



Edson Luli, *A Piece of Sky for Future Generations (J)*, 2023

LED panels, wooden structure, transformers,
180 x 120 x 15 cm

Editions 2 + 1 A.P.



Edson Luli, *A Piece of Sky for Future Generations (Z)*, 2023

LED panels, wooden structure, transformers,
180 x 120 x 15 cm

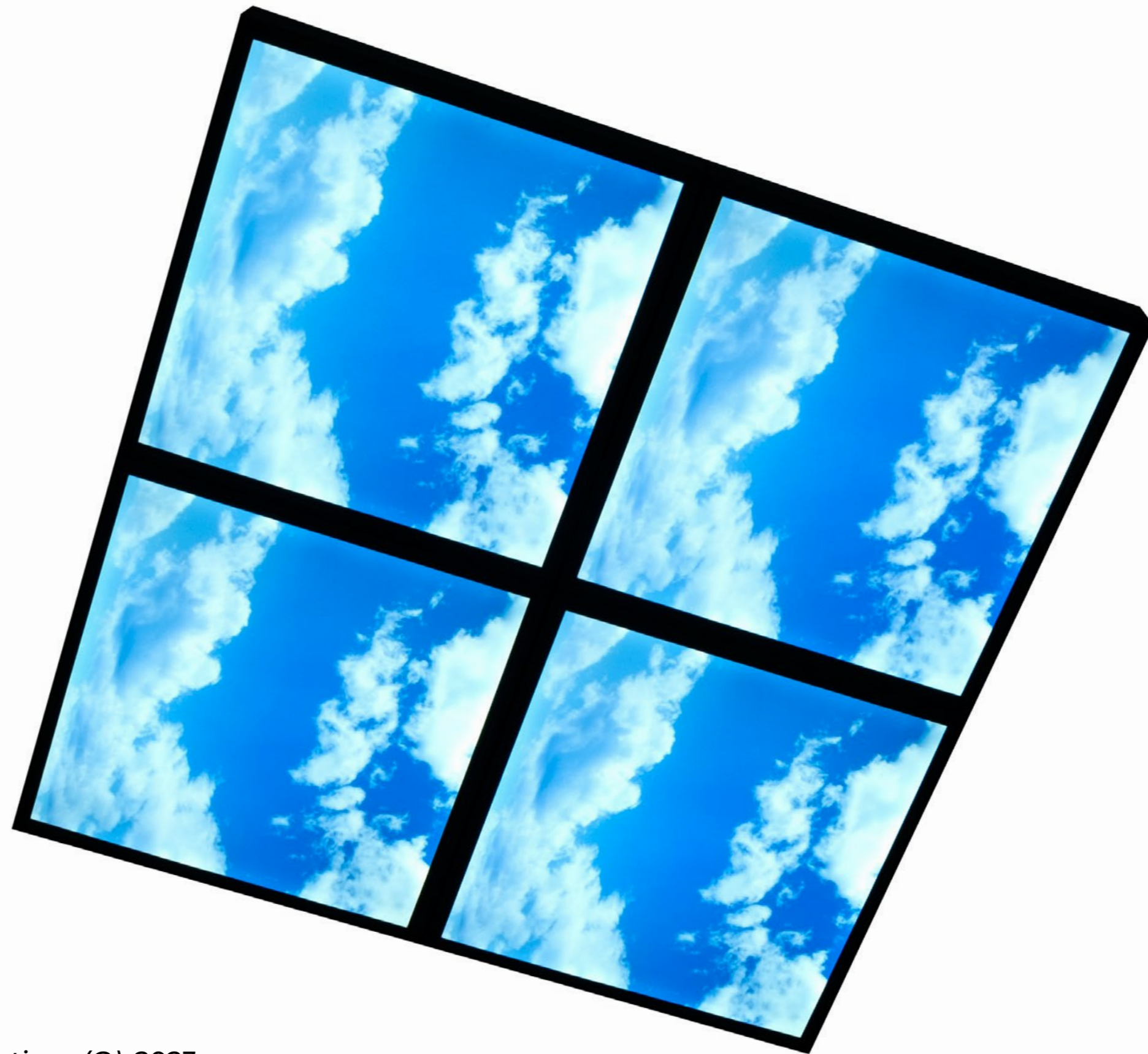
Editions 2 + 1 A.P.



Edson Luli, *A Piece of Sky for Future Generations (T)*, 2023

LED panels, wooden structure, transformers,
180 x 120 x 15 cm

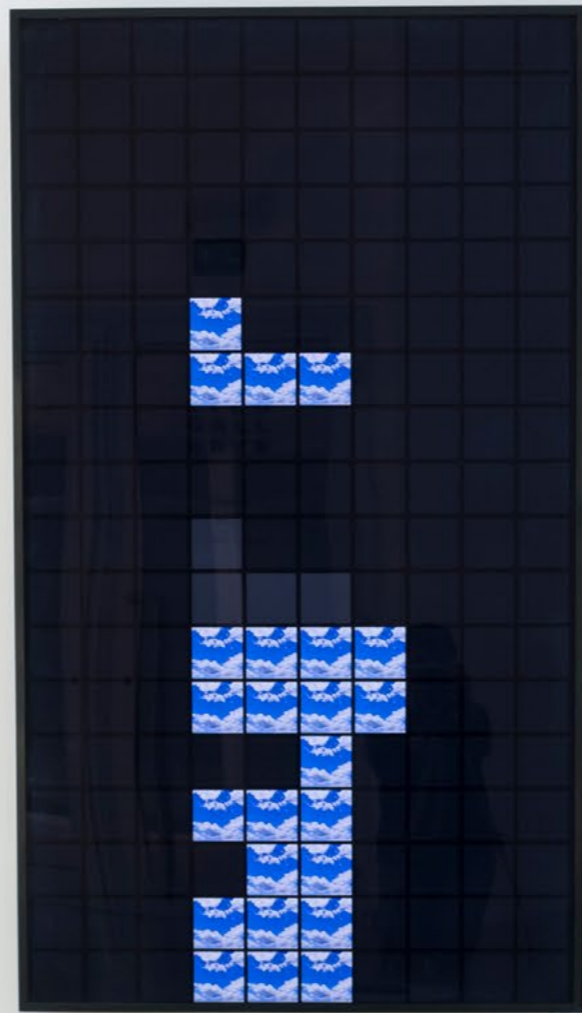
Editions 2 + 1 A.P.



Edson Luli, *A Piece of Sky for Future Generations (O)*, 2023

LED panels, wooden structure, transformers,
120 x 120 x 15 cm

Editions 2 + 1 A.P.



Edson Luli, *A Glimpse into the Future*, 2023. Installation view at Prometeo Gallery Ida Pisani, Milan.



The clash between human and inhuman agentivity is intensified in the exhibition space through three monolithic screens, of different sizes, that show three compelling Tetris challenges (*Don't blame yourself! It's just a game.*). In a fascinating interplay of perspective, intensified by the micro-universe of sounds - typical of the game - diffused in the ambience, on the screens the falling tetramini deposited on the bottom or on other blocks already deposited recall the suspended ones. But when an unbroken block of sky is created, it is the sky itself that disappears. The initial enthusiasm, stimulated by the possibility of being able to take control of the game, ends up being tempered by doubt: in order to metabolize the idea of the disappearance of the sky, and therefore the darkening of the sun, one would have to believe that the technology not only works according to plan but that it is also used according to plan.

(extract from Elsa Barbieri's essay)

[Video link \(click to watch\)](#)

Edson Luli, *Don't blame yourself! It's just a game.*, 2023

Interactive game, mini PC, 4K screen, joystick, stool, variable dimensions

Editions 3 + 1 A.P.

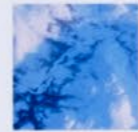
What is striking is that the artistic intervention stems from something we all think we know and that belongs - in the specific case of *A piece of sky for future generations* and *Don't blame yourself! It's just a game.* - to the rhetoric of play. What lies behind the game is a form of control. Is it possible to get rid of it? Here Luli, by allowing the viewer the playful action, instils the doubt that the program can change, opening up a critical space about the possibility of freeing oneself from control. What comes to the fore from a philosophical or anthropological point of view is thus the complex - human and otherwise - agentivity. We must think, then, that the game machine is a view of the world and, as such, embodies a subjectivity, however inhuman, that differs from our own.

(extract from Elsa Barbieri's essay)



Now

1.3.2020

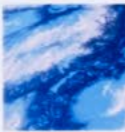


A frozen stream

moving while



standing still



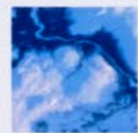
feeling warm and

white

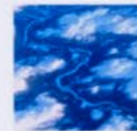


An abstract fear

has blinded my ears



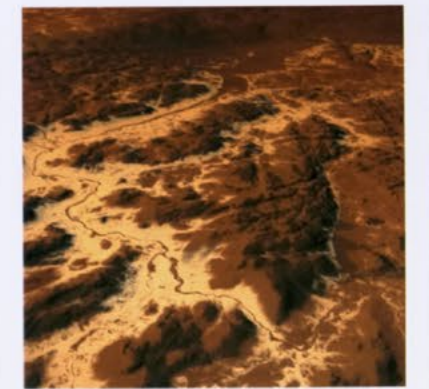
and covered my



mouth

Everything is quiet

now



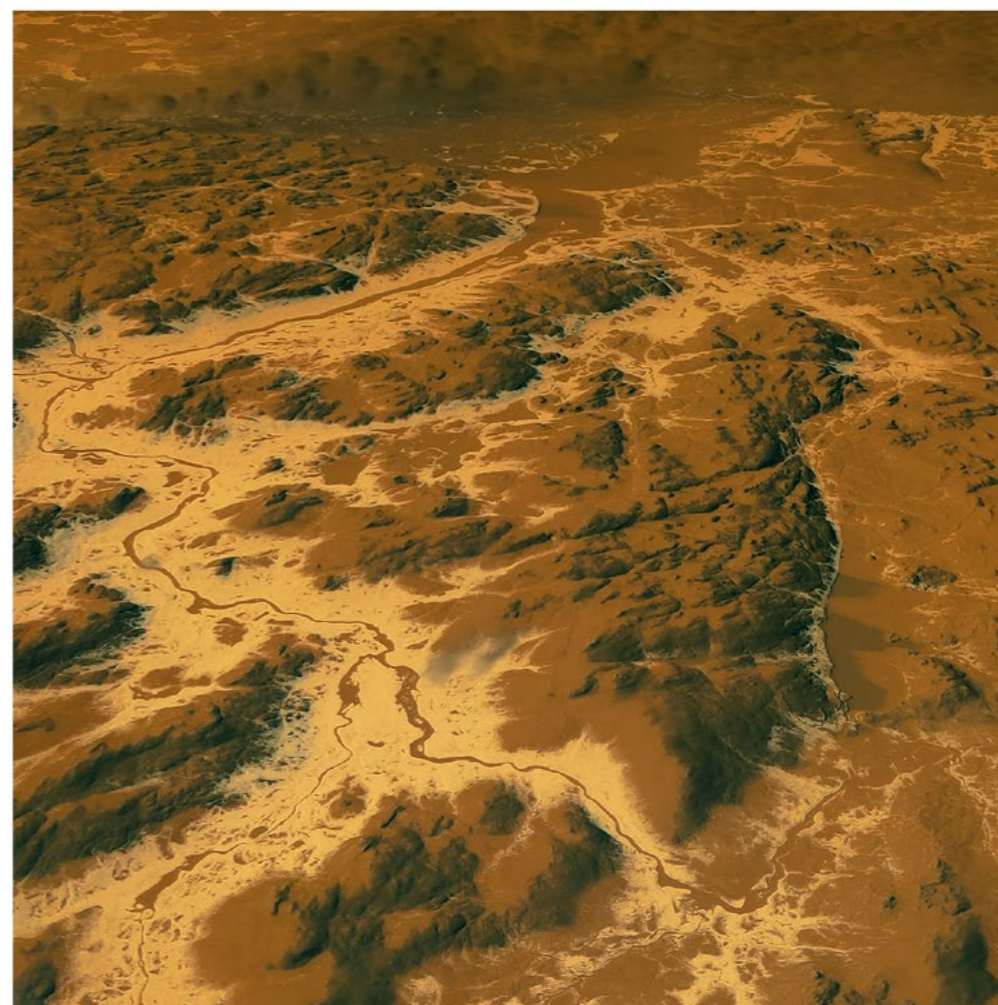
The starting point with which Edson Luli, who has always been attentive to the (in)coherent and vibrant multiplicity that is part of contemporary life, has come to explore the human attempts to reshape the planet and the challenges that await us today, bears the name *Now, 1.3.2020*. Perfect timing, one might say. The work, an installation of 10 inkjet prints on cotton paper, looks at climate and environmental change in relation to human thinking. Displayed in the dividing space between the first and the second space of the exhibition, *Now, 1.3.2020* can be taken as the artist's manifest call for conscious reflection: our fragmented way of thinking is the main cause of our society, which we consider disposable.

(extract from Elsa Barbieri's essay)

Edson Luli, *Now, 1.3.2020*, 2020

Installation of 10 inkjet prints on ultra smooth cotton paper mounted on dibond, white wooden frames, 35 x 35 cm each

Editions 3 + 1 A.P.



Our history is a story told by someone,
written by someone else and read by you.
Is any one true?
Does it even matter?
What are the consequences?
How does reality (nature) reply to that story?
In the end is it really our story?
At some point truth and lies have merged
and reality has seized to exist.
Drinking a glass of water might be one of the
most real experiences that we ever had.
Maybe nature answers only when it's too
late for us, because even the warnings have
become part of this story.

Edson Luli



Edson Luli, *A Glimpse into the Future*, 2023. Installation view at Prometeo Gallery Ida Pisani, Milan.



Edson Luli, *Footsteps towards the Future*, 2023

Protocol, 1 sqm of desert sand from five continents, plastic bottles, LED lights, transformer
100 x 100 x 30 cm

Editions 7

In the transition to the lower floor, Luli insists on the source of light by abandoning the sky and taking on water, earth and plastic for people to see, with their own eyes and actions. The room, completely dark and extended potentially to infinity by the mirrored walls that make up its perimeter, is transformed into a desert - with sand coming from it - within which the audience can move, leaving their own imprint, trusting their own sensations and partly guided by 21 micro light sources. What kind of sources? Nothing less than recycled, LED-lit plastic water bottles. It's human, all too human: how many times have we finished drinking and left a drop of water in the bottle and crumpled it up and thrown it away? "Footsteps towards the future" is, by its very nature, a participatory work that - pardon the pun - sheds light on several aspects. First of all, water, as we know, lends itself easily to becoming a metaphor.

Edson Luli, *Footsteps towards the Future*, 2023

Protocol, desert sand from five continents, plastic bottles, LED lights, transformers, variable dimensions

Editions 1 + 1 A.P.





Edson Luli, *Footsteps towards the Future*, 2023

Protocol, desert sand from five continents, plastic bottles,
LED lights, transformers, variable dimensions

Editions 1+1 A.P.

It can be murky and full of hidden meanings, or clear and limpid as mirrors. Luli's water, discarded by human beings, not only reminds us how the world is becoming more and more thirsty, but also forces us to pay close attention. Atmospheric warming, ocean acidification, rising sea levels, receding glaciers and desertification are some of the consequences of our actions. Human beings produce climates, ecosystems and an unprecedented future. It might be wise to scale back, to reduce the impact. But there are so

many of us, and we have gone far away. What to do?

Without any scientific presumption, Luli prototypes a new model of renewability and sustainability that, adhering to his research, short-circuits what we believe. The gesture with which we throw away the bottle, decreeing its end, is taken by the artist as synonymous of a new use - as illumination - and a new fullness - the drop of water in the crushed bottle occupies a greater volume than in a whole bottle. We are confronted with a completely

new situation that reminds us of the rhetoric of control. Indeed, it seems that if there is a possible answer to control, it can only be more control. The sand desert illuminated by the water bottles emerging from its dunes is not a nature that exists or that we imagine exists independently of man. The work is an act of re-creation that folds in on itself: it is not the control of nature but the control of the control of nature: firstly, Luli reverses the course of the waste disposal action, then he electrifies it.

(extract from Elsa Barbieri's essay)



Edson Luli, *A Glimpse into the Future*, 2023. Installation view at Prometeo Gallery Ida Pisani, Milan.

Here, the element of contingency, necessary for the definition of freedom of action, takes shape. But it also emerges how much every point of view that looks at the world is itself subject to the gaze. It is not only a question of reversibility, but also and above all of agentivity, which takes on a central importance on a conceptual level - above in the form of game control, below according to a recalculation of the path. It finds formal correspondence in the constant double register - on the border between light and darkness, life and death - from which emerges, not coincidentally, an idea of fragmentation that is common to the game as well as to reality: for thousands of years, humans have been practicing challenging the

surroundings by destroying and reshaping, in the realm of the concrete as in that of the playful. "A Glimpse into the Future" invites us to focus on the challenges ahead, to avoid finding ourselves facing an unrecognizable future.

No one can know who has played a trick on whom. Nor can anyone know whether the planet will be saved and whether it needs us to do so.

«Sometimes you learn a lot when you are forced to think in such a long time frame».

(from Elizabeth Kolbert's book, "Sotto un cielo bianco. La natura del futuro")

(extract from Elsa Barbieri's essay)

Biography

Edson Luli (b. 1989, Shkoder) is a contemporary artist currently based in Milan, whose work grapples with the complex interplay between ontology and epistemology. Luli's practice explores the relationship between observer and observed, interrogating the ways in which our perceptions and experiences are shaped by language and culture.

At the heart of Luli's work is a deep concern with the role of thought in shaping our world. For Luli, thought is not simply a passive reflection of reality, but an active force that shapes and creates the world around us. Drawing on his background in New Technologies of Art and Cinema and Video, Luli invites viewers to participate in a process of exploration and observation, probing the boundaries of what it means to think and perceive in a complex and rapidly changing world. Through his practice, Luli offers a powerful critique of the problematic and conflictual modes of thinking that dominate contemporary society, calling for a renewed commitment to open-ended exploration and inquiry.

Luli's work has been exhibited in galleries and museums around the world, amongst them: "War is sweet to those who have never experienced it", Fondazione MACC, Calasetta, 2022; "It Begins With you and Me", (solo show), Prometeo Gallery Ida Pisani, Milan, 2021; "Back and Forth, Again", Black Box Genesis, Vaasa, Finland, 2021; "Resisting the Trouble – Moving Images in Times of Crisis", VISIO - Schermo dell'Arte, Manifattura Tabacchi, Florence, 2021; "I don't know. Let's see!", (solo show) Prometeo Gallery Ida Pisani. online gallery space, 2020; "ARCADIA E APOCALISSE, Paesaggi italiani in 150 anni di arte, fotografia, video e installazioni", PALP, Pontedera, 2019; "Premio Cairo XX", Palazzo Reale, Milan, 2019; 16th edition of International Biennial of Photography and Award "Gjon Mili" curated by João Ribas, National Gallery of Kosovo, Prishtina, 2019. Heavenly Creatures - Strategies of Being and Seeing, Kunsthalle West Lana, Bolzano, 2019; "L'Arte nei Pixel. Videoart & Arte Contemporanea", Lucca Film Festival, Lucca, 2018; "This Exhibition Will Have a Title Soon" (solo show), Prometeogallery di Ida Pisani, Milan, 2017; "Mediterranea 18 Young Artists Biennale", Tirana e Durres, 2017; "Media Art Festival", MAXXI Museum, Rome, 2017; "22nd International Onufri Prize", National Art Gallery, Tirana, 2016; "Tirana Film Festival, Tirana, 2016; "Milano Film Festival", Milan, 2015; "The rhythm of art lies somewhere in between", Bienal del Fin del Mundo IV, Chile, 2015.

EDSON LULI

A GLIMPSE INTO THE FUTURE

ESSAY BY ELSA BARBIERI

19.04 - 23.06.2023

VIA G. VENTURA 6 - MILAN
PROMETEO GALLERY IDA PISANI

**PROM
ETEO
GALL
ERY ■**
Ida Pisani

For further information please contact:

Davide Macchiarini (Gallery Manager)

+39 347 581 8483

info@prometeogallery.com