

**A01**

**Andrew Owen A01**

**SOLARGRAPHS**

l a r g e - f o r m a t  
c a m e r a l e s s  
p h o t o g r a p h s

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THE CYANOTYPE PHOTOGRAPHIC PROCESS was discovered by English scientist Sir John Herschel (1792-1871) in 1842. The process produces permanent photographic images in tones of blue and white.

Anna Atkins (1799 -1871) was a British botanist and photographer, and a friend of Sir Herschel, is credited as “the first woman photographer” who produced hundreds of small cyanotypes of algae, ferns, and water weeds.

Atkins compiled photograms of algae on paper into limited edition books in 1843, *Photographs of British Algae - Cyanotype Impressions*, which is considered the first photographically illustrated book, and continued to produce several more albums of cyanotype photograms of natural subjects.

The cyanotype process is usually considered a ‘contact’ process with a restricted tonal range; tones are usually produced by halftone negatives sandwiched between glass, the photosensitized paper and a back board, an arrangement known as a ‘contact frame’. Cyanotypes produced with a contact frame are generally small works on paper with a flat depth of field, and limited to two-tone blue and white.

Receiving a small Suprint Kit for my 12th birthday I produced small, 10 x 12 cm solargraphs of ferns and cedar leaves. The next year, larger solargraphs were produced by combining several small sheets edge-to-edge.

Although a childhood amusement, memories of the process endured, especially decades later while studying ink painting in Korea, Japan and China. After 18 years operating abroad, a studio was reestablished in Toronto and production of large-format solargraphs began in 2013, inspired by Eastern thought and ink painting, and the sensitive works of Anna Atkins.

Working with bulk raw chemicals supported development of original processes and procedures over several years of continual experimentation with chemical formulations and substrates, sensitizing procedures, increasingly complex arrangements of three-dimensional subjects, and exposure times and techniques. Over time the technical quality and complexity of imagery has continually improved, and the works have vastly increased in intricacy, tonality, scope and scale.

Specialized exposure processes were developed that produce a range of tones from pure white, through cyan mid-tones to dark Prussian blue.

Ongoing experimentation over years has led to mastering floral solargraphs on fabric averaging ~60 x 90 cm (2 x 3 ft.), followed by a doubling in size to 1.50 x .90 m (5 x 3 ft.), doubling in size again - and with human figures - to 2.13 x 1.52 m (5 x 7 ft.), and again to 2.13 x 1.52 m (7 x 9 ft.)

Several massive works 3.66 x 2.13 m (12 x 9 ft.) in size with many live human figures have now been achieved, which are perhaps the largest single-take photographs produced in Canada.

The solargraphic works developed from many years studying and practising ink painting while immersed in Korea, Japan and Taiwan for more than a decade, as a very direct way of presenting flora that reference ancient Eastern philosophical, moral and literary concerns with elegant simplicity and an austere monochromatic brevity akin to ink painting.

Having produced expansive programme of floral landscape paintings known as *Impressions* and *Nine Rivers Romance*, as well as an extensive range of photo-based art programmes collectively known as *Fauxtography*, the programme of large-format solargraphs also operates as a bridge between these seemingly very different programmes of painted and photographic artworks.

The solargraphs explore similar issues to those developed in other programs of my art practise: exploring ontological issues around subject-object relationships; to reveal things as they are as directly as possible by minimizing manipulation and distortion caused by the artificiality of artistic media, techniques, concepts and ego; allowing images of life with minimal mediation, and true life-size one-to-one-scale; to collapse artificial separation between subject and object.

These cameraless photographs were created outdoors with an economy of means: locally available living flora and fauna, cotton fabric, iron-based chemicals, natural sunlight and water.

The sun as the source of all life manifesting images of living things sustained by sunlight and water, with a process employing sunlight and water. Not representations of, but traces of living presence.



**Cedar Leaves and Dried Ferns Sunprint**

1974

cyanotype solargraph on paper, mounted on acid free card

12 x 10 cm.

FOR MY 12TH BIRTHDAY IN 1974 MY FATHER presented me with a Sunprint Kit with 10 small sheets of blueprint paper with which I produced small Sunprints using only natural sunlight, water, cedar leaves and dried ferns (previous page). Amazed by the process, I instantly awoke to its significance and was overcome by a strong urge to create bigger pieces. Asking my father for a kit with larger paper, I was told to wait until my next birthday.

The next year I received a Sunprint Refill Kit with twenty sheets of slightly different yet still small size photo paper, and created Sunprints with the wild grape vine clambering up the balcony deck of our country home at Glenstreams. Realizing several small sheets could be assembled together to make bigger pieces, I produced a four-sheet Sunprint of a pine branch (next page).

I remember a strong feeling of how remarkable this super direct picture making was and wanting to make much bigger ones, as if someone was saying to me *“Hey little Andrew, pay attention! These pictures are really important, and you have to make bigger ones!”* My father pinned the Sunprints on the wall of our country house where they remained without fading for many years.

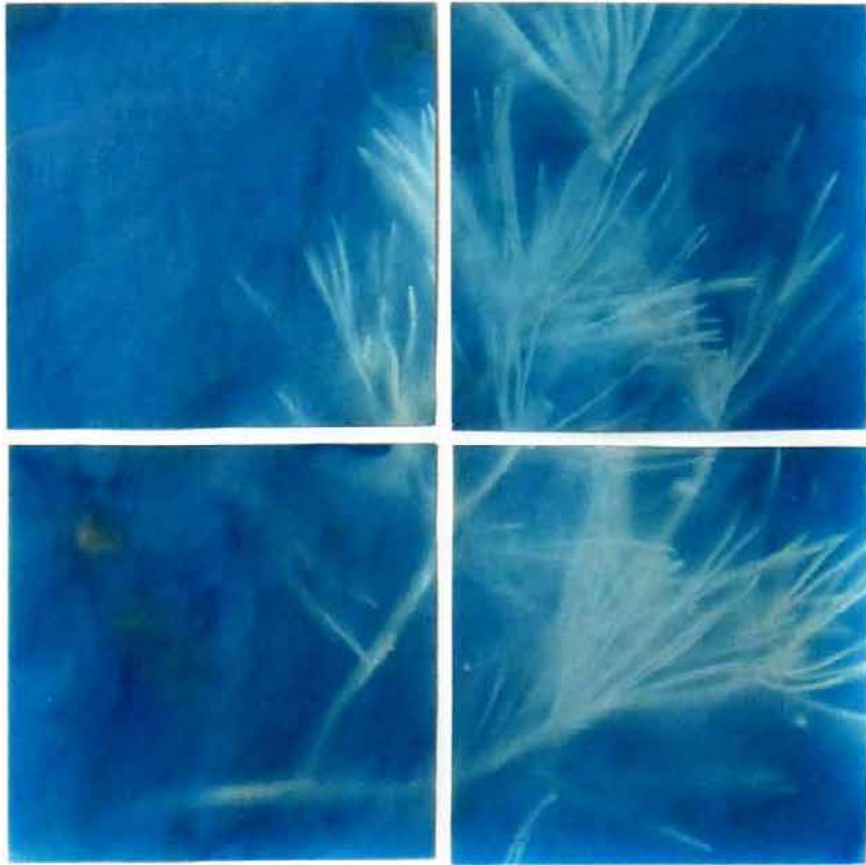
Fast-forward 25 years to the time I was studying ink painting during several years in Seoul, Korea, followed by four years in Kyoto, Japan and then four years in Taipei, Taiwan. I often thought about how the minimally mediated directness and austere monochromatic brevity of ink painting, especially Zen ink painting, were closely related to the same qualities in the Sunprints of my childhood.

Jump another 15 years to when after an absence of 18 years I returned to Toronto and was helping transition my father to long-term care. While packing-up his city apartment at Performing Arts Lodge he reached from his wheelchair into some files and pulled out the Sunprints made in my childhood, saying “Remember these?” I was astounded he had kept them so long, and remembered exactly where they were just for that moment.

By that time I had reestablished a Toronto studio and was two years into major production of large-format solargraphs, and had produced a small test print on fabric of wild grapes from the lane way near my studio in 2015. When the Sunprints of wild grapes made in my childhood were superimposed on the solargraph of wild grapes made in my middle-age - despite the intervening four decades - the match was eerily close (following page).

It was if my present self was so deeply immersed in producing the large-format solargraphic works (200+ pieces to date) and expanding the technical limitations of tonal range, intricacy, scale, and three dimensional complexity, and constantly ruminating over the philosophic and conceptual aspects of this work that I had sent a message back in time to my childhood self to pay close attention and make bigger works.

So just to make it real, the other day I shouted it out loud in the studio - to my past self 40 years hence: *“Hey little Andrew, pay attention! These pictures are really important, and you have to make bigger ones!”*

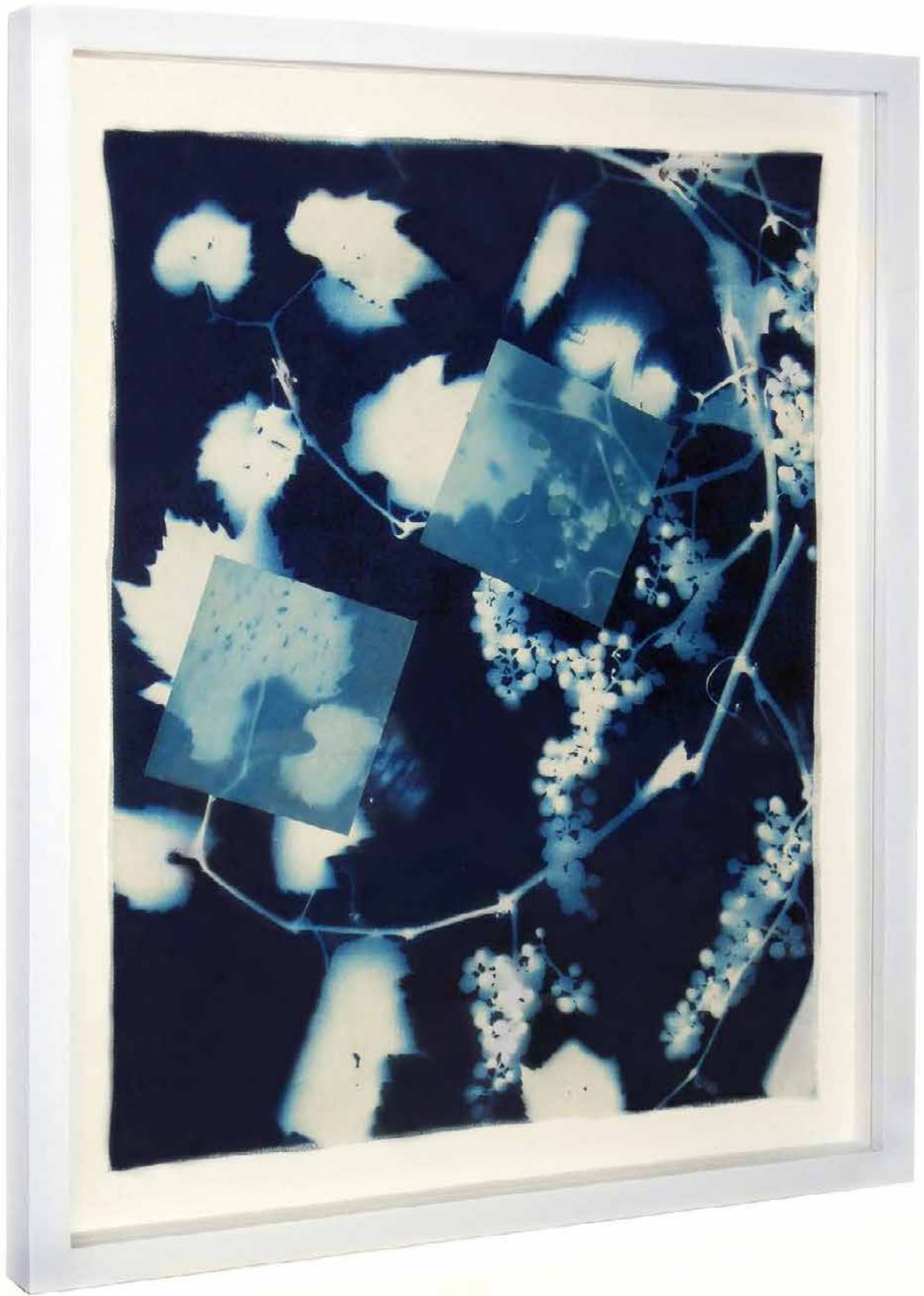


**Pine Branch Sunprint**

1975

cyanotype solargraphs on paper, mounted on acid free card

20 x 20 cm



**Quantum Entangled Wild Grape Vines 1975 - 2015**

1975 - 2016

cyanotype Sunprint on paper on solrgraph on fabric, mounted on acid free card

44 x 35 cm.



**CYANOTYPE SOLARGRAMS: Pop-up Exhibition at Image Foundry, October 2014**

**NATURE**  
**MORTE**





**Pitcher of Irises V (after Van Gogh) NEGATIVE**

2016 (1 of 5)

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature .91 x .71 m. / 36 x 28 in.

[\[More Images\]](#)

\* presenting the inspiration for and relationship between solargraphs and Eastern ink painting \*



**Pitcher of Irises V (after Van Gogh)**

2016 (1 of 5)

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature .91 x .71 m. / 36 x 28 in.

[\[More Images\]](#)



**Painted Photo Irises II**

2015 (1 of 3)

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized paper .57 x .38 m. / 22.5 x 13.75 in.

[\[More Images\]](#)

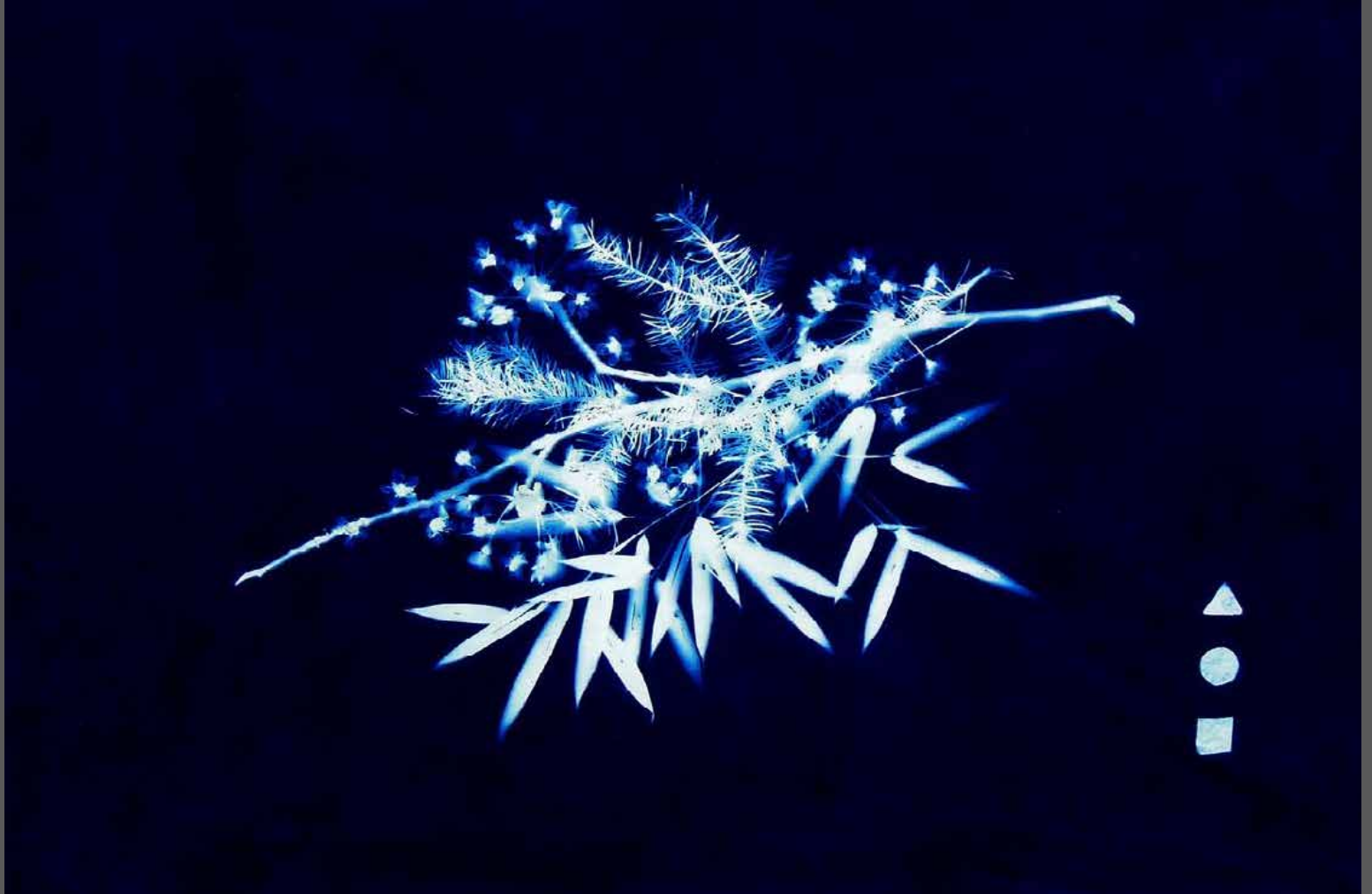


**Wild Squirrel and Grapes**

2015

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature .66 x .71 m. / 26 x 28 in.

[\[More Images\]](#)



**Three Friends of Winter** 歲寒三友 [after 趙孟堅 Zhao Mengjian, 13th century China]

2016 (1 of 2)

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature .61 x .91 m. / 24 x 36 in. / 2 x 3 ft..

[\[More Images\]](#)



**Vanitas V**

2016

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature .71 x .91 m. / 28 x 36 in.

[\[More Images\]](#)

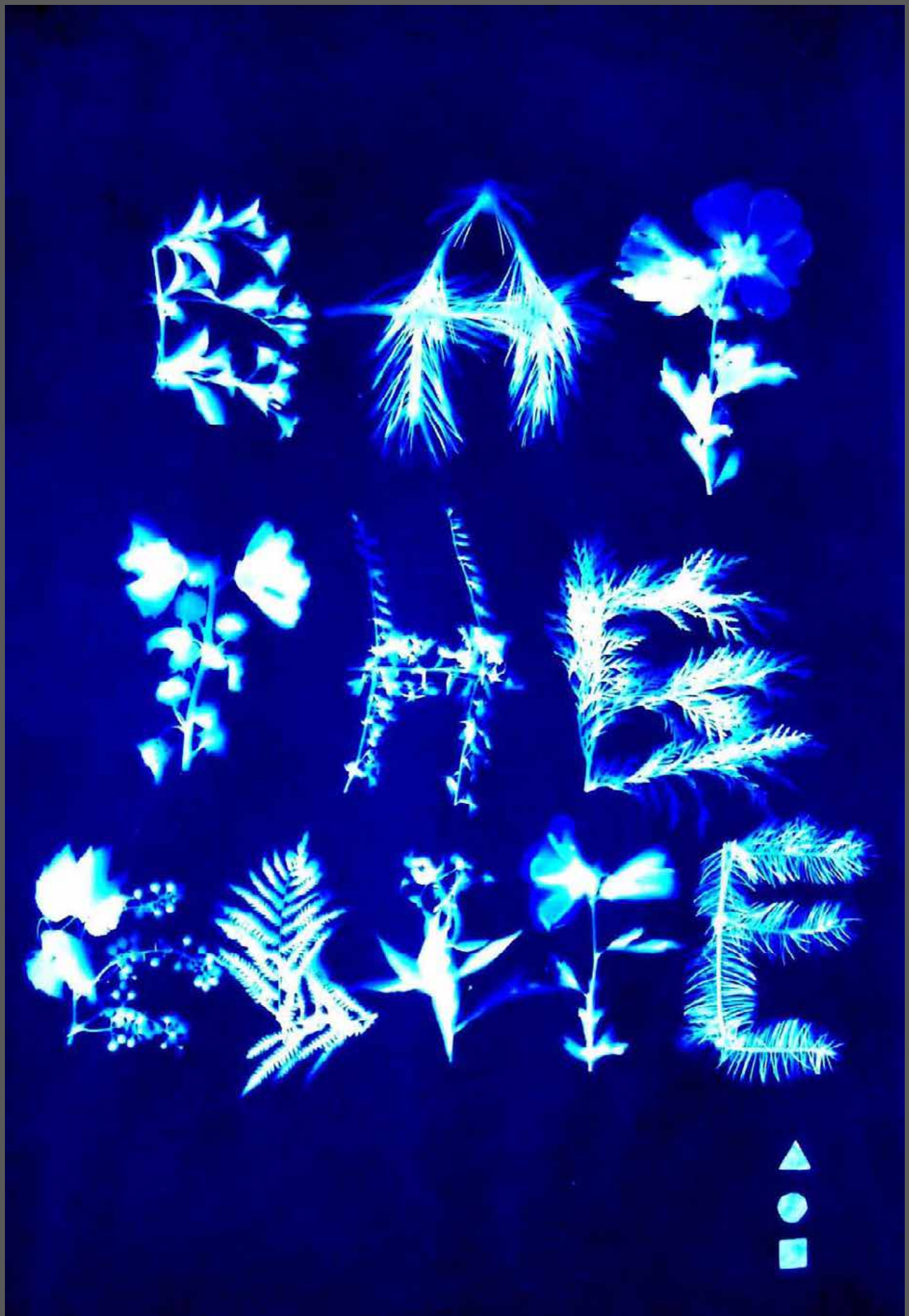


**All Authorities Are Criminal**

2016 (1 of 5)

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature .71 x .91 m. / 26 x 36 in.

[\[More Images\]](#)



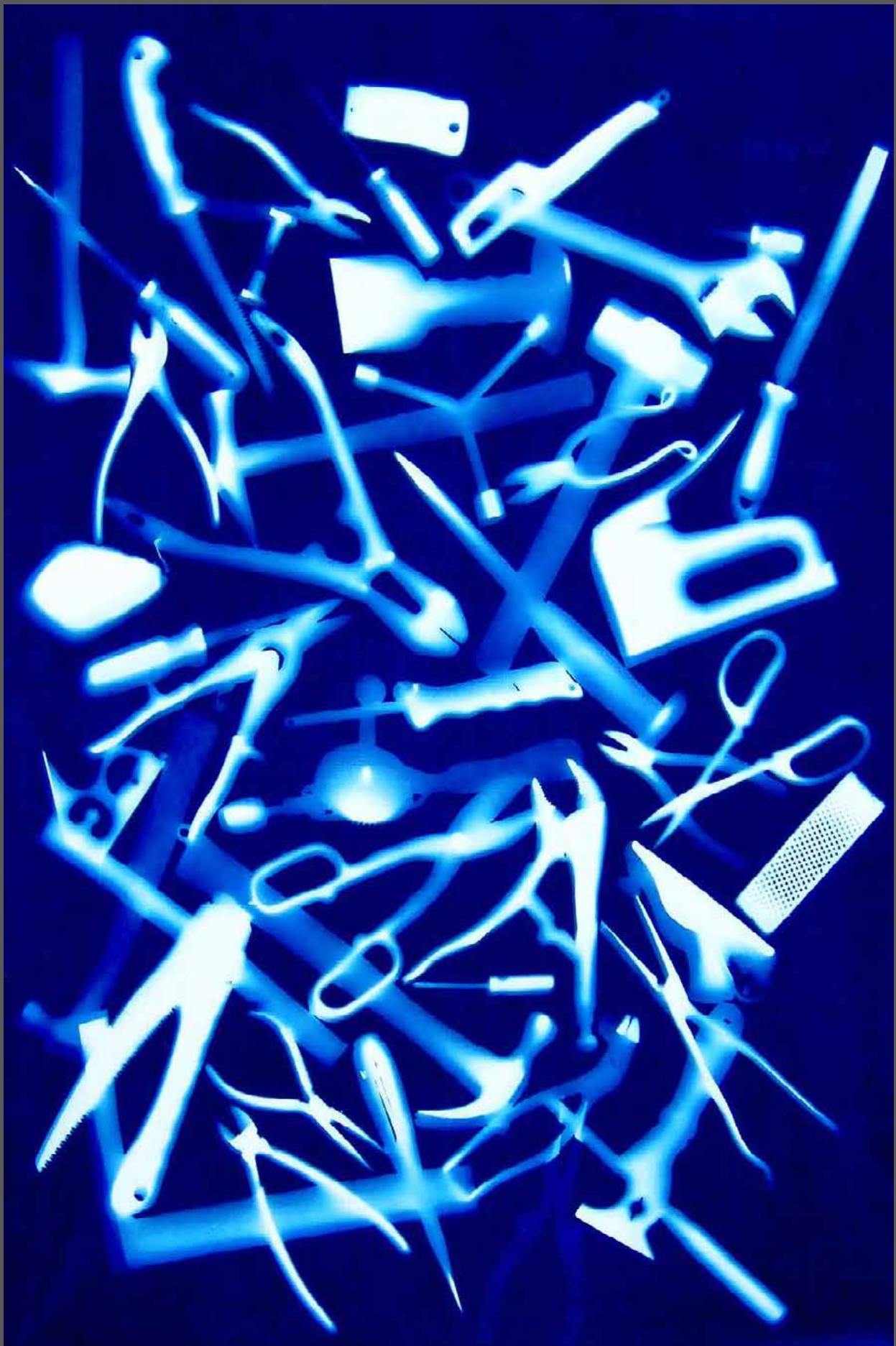
**Eat The Elite**

2016

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature .91 x .71 m. / 36 x 28 in.

[\[More Images\]](#)





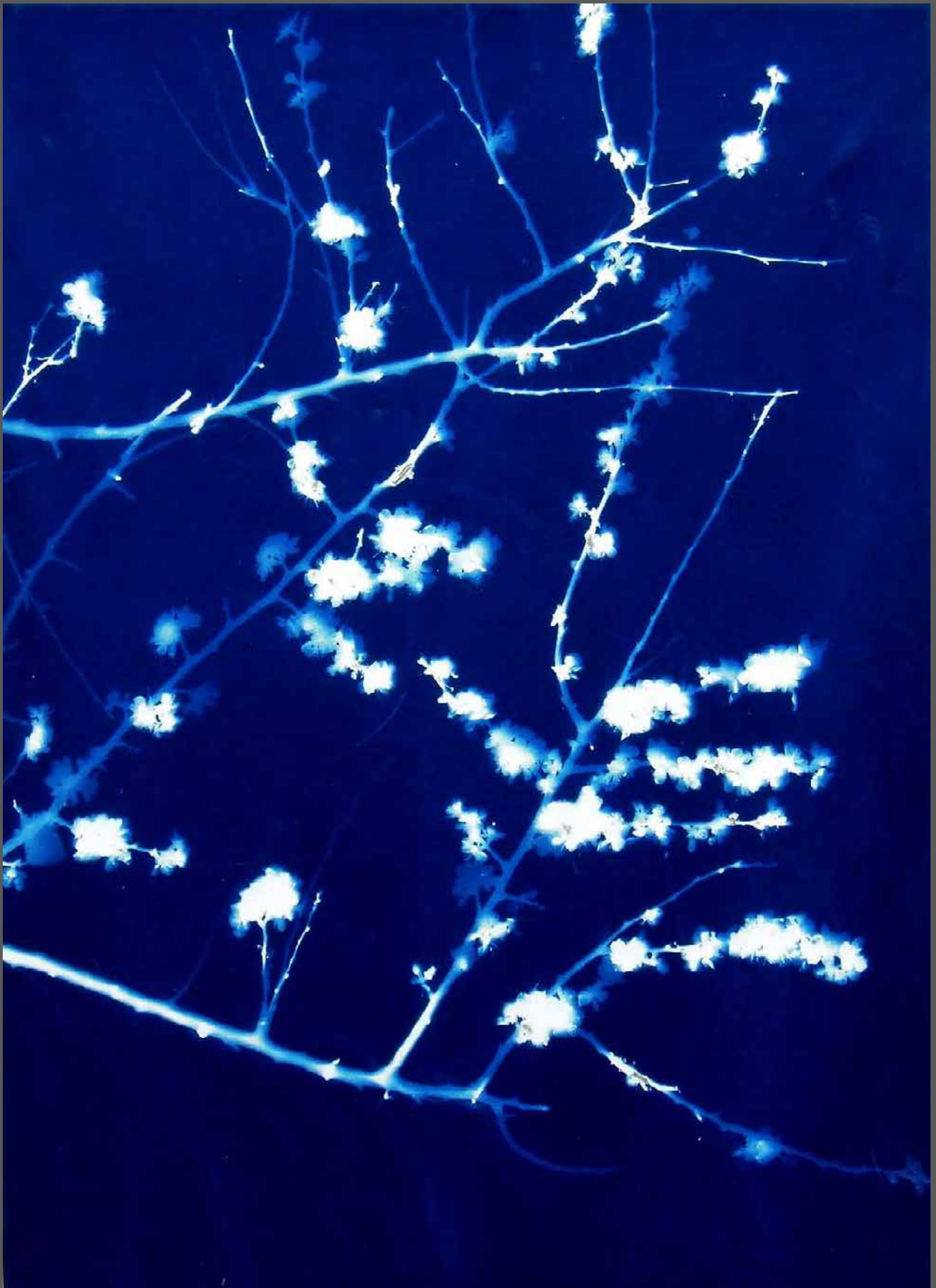
**Hand Tools**

2016

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature .97 x .71 m. / 38 x 28 in.

[\[More Images\]](#)

**F L O R A L S**



**Apricot Blossoms I**

2014 (1 of 2)

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature .91 x .66 m / 36 x 26 in.

[\[More Images\]](#)



**Cherry Blossoms IV**

2014 (1 of 6)

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature .91 x .71 m. / 36 x 28 in.

[\[More Images\]](#)



**Magnolia Blossoms III**

2014 (1 of 5)

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature .91 x .66 m / 36 x 26 in.

[\[More Images\]](#)



**Peonies II**

2014 (1 of 2)

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature .91 x .76 m. / 36 x 30 in.

[\[More Images\]](#)



**Poppies II**

2014 (1 of 2)

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature .91 x .76 m. / 36 x 30 in.

[\[More Images\]](#)



**Lilac I**

2014

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature .91 x .76 m. / 36 x 30 in.

[\[More Images\]](#)



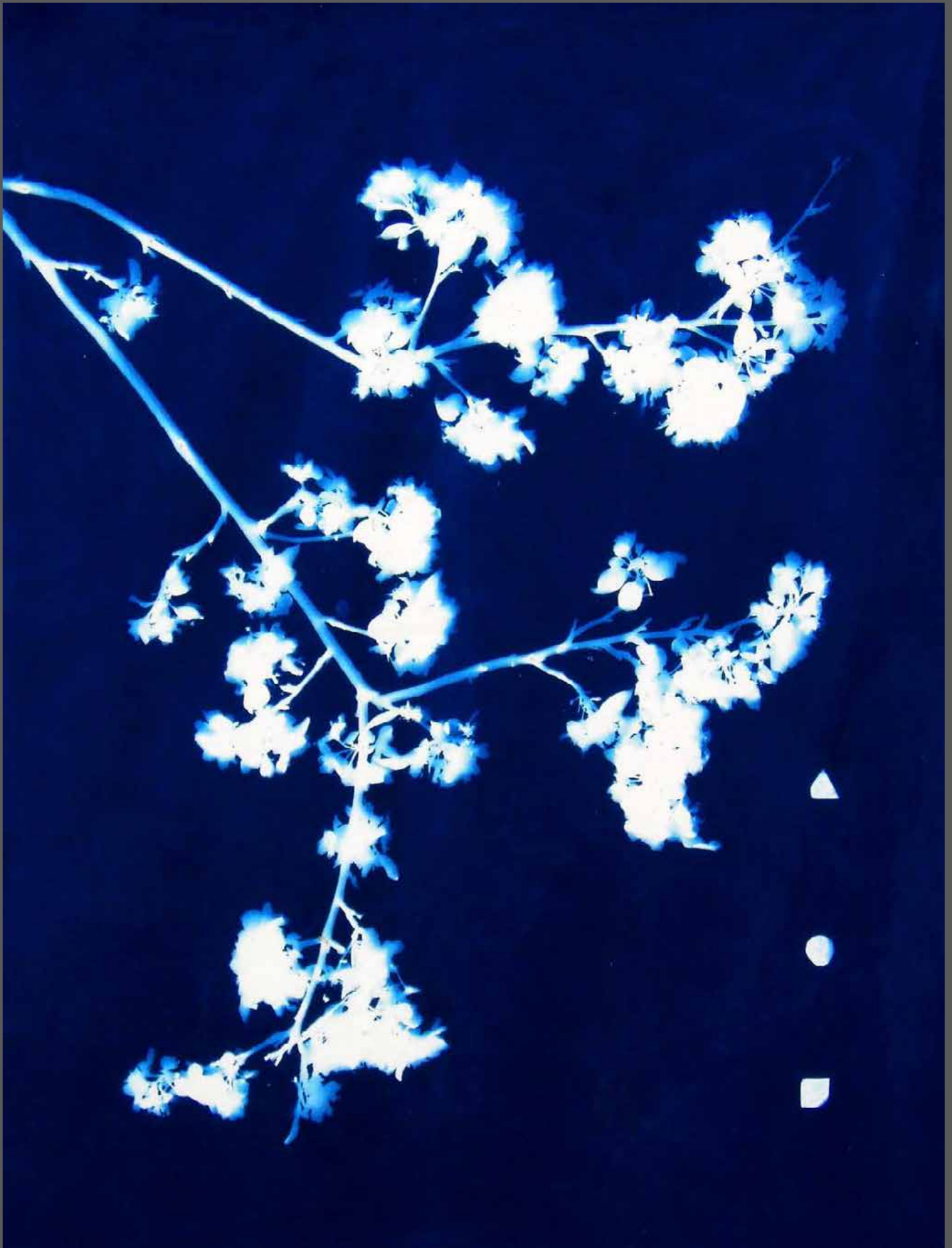


**Lilac II**

2014

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature .91 x .76 m. / 36 x 30 in.

[\[More Images\]](#)



**Apple Blossoms**

2016

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature .91 x .71 m / 36 x 28 in.

[\[More Images\]](#)



**Miscanthus Grass**

2013

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature .91 x .66 m / 36 x 26 in.

[\[More Images\]](#)



**Grass**

2014

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature .91 x .71 m. / 36 x 28 in.

[\[More Images\]](#)



**Irises III**

2014 (1 of 4)

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature .91 x 1.52 m. / 36 x 60 in. / 3 x 5 ft.

[\[More Images\]](#)



**Wildflowers**

2013

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature 1.42 x.91 m. / 56 x 36 in.

[\[More Images\]](#)



**Hollyhock**

2013 (1 of 2)

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature 1.42 x 91 m. / 56 x 36 in.

[\[More Images\]](#)



**Small Sunflowers**

2013

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature 1.22 x .81 m / 48 x 32 in.

[\[More Images\]](#)





**Wild Sunflowers**

2013 (1 of 2)

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature 1.42 x .91 m. / 56 x 36 in.

[\[More Images\]](#)

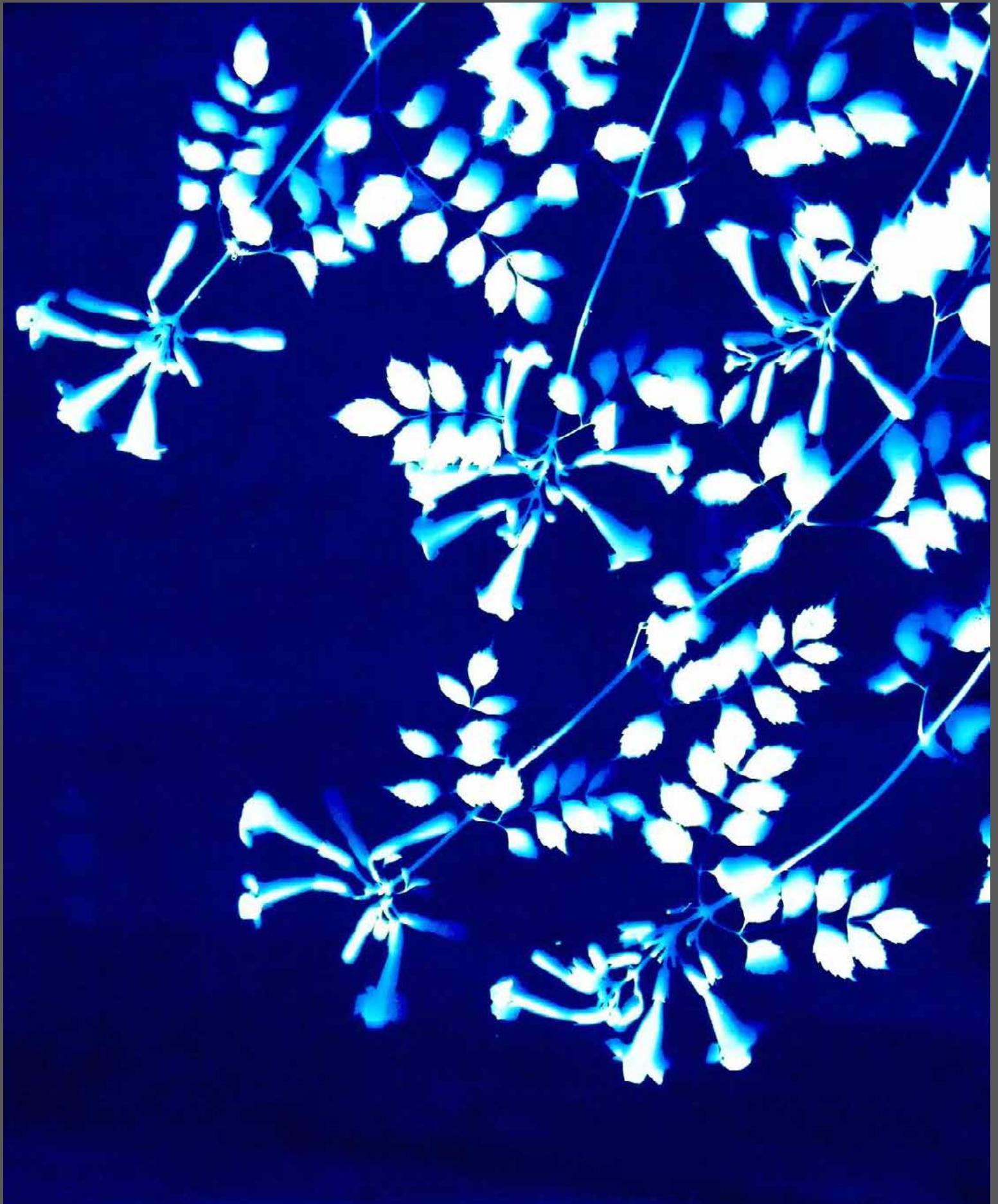


**High Park Wildflowers (Golden Rod, Purple Loosestrife, Miscanthus Grass)**

2013

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature 1.42 x .91 m. / 56 x 36 in.

[\[More Images\]](#)



**Trumpet Flowers**

2015

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature .91 x .76 m. / 36 x 30 in.

[\[More Images\]](#)



**Milkweed**

2015

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature .91 x .66 m / 36 x 26 in.

[\[More Images\]](#)



**Wild Green Onions**

2014

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature .91 x .76 m / 36 x 30 in.

[\[More Images\]](#)

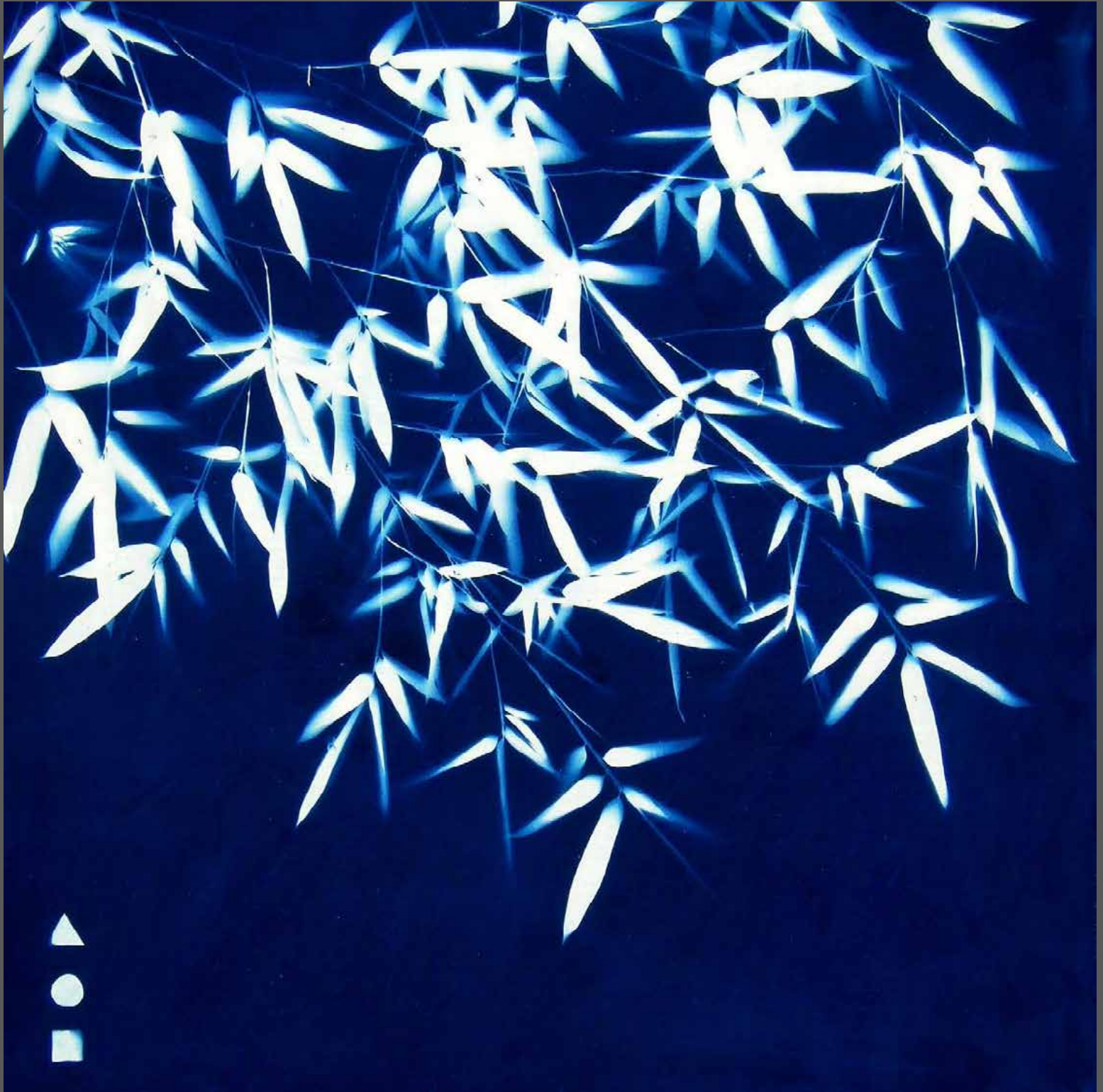


**Daylilies IV (with Clouds)**

2015

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature 1.12 x 1.12 m / 44 x 44 in.

[\[More Images\]](#)



**Bamboo Leaves**

2015

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature .71 x .71 m / 28 x 28 in.

[\[More Images\]](#)



**Ferns**

2015

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature .91 x .71 m. / 36 x 28 in.

[\[More Images\]](#)



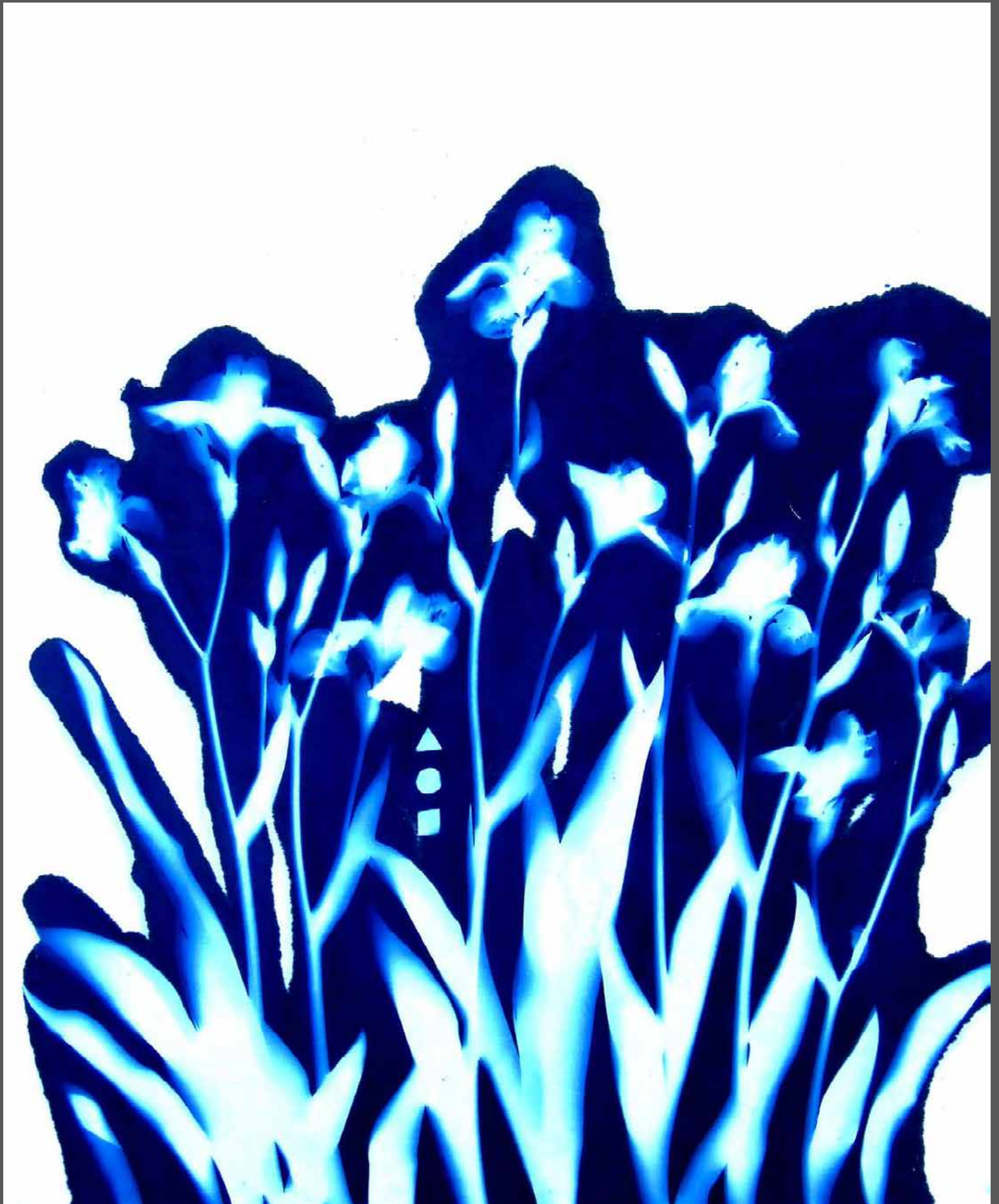


**Smoke Bush**

2015 (1 of 2)

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature .91 x .71 m. / 36 x 28 in.

[\[More Images\]](#)



**Painted Photo Irises I**

2015 (1 of 7)

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature .91 x .71 m. / 36 x 28 in.

[\[More Images\]](#)



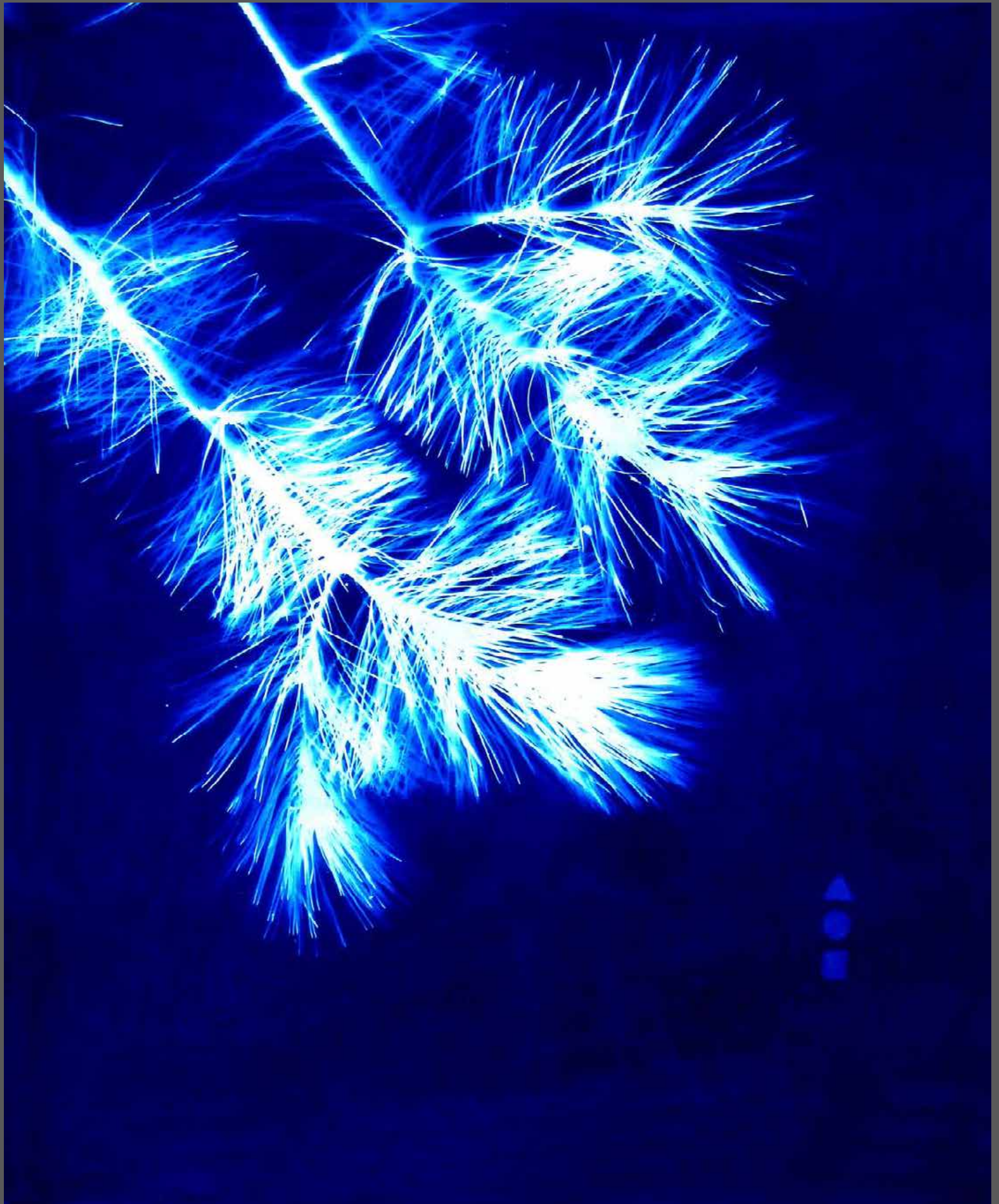
**Irises IV**

2014 (1 of 4)

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature .91 x .76 m. / 36 x 30 in.

[\[More Images\]](#)

**ARBORALS**

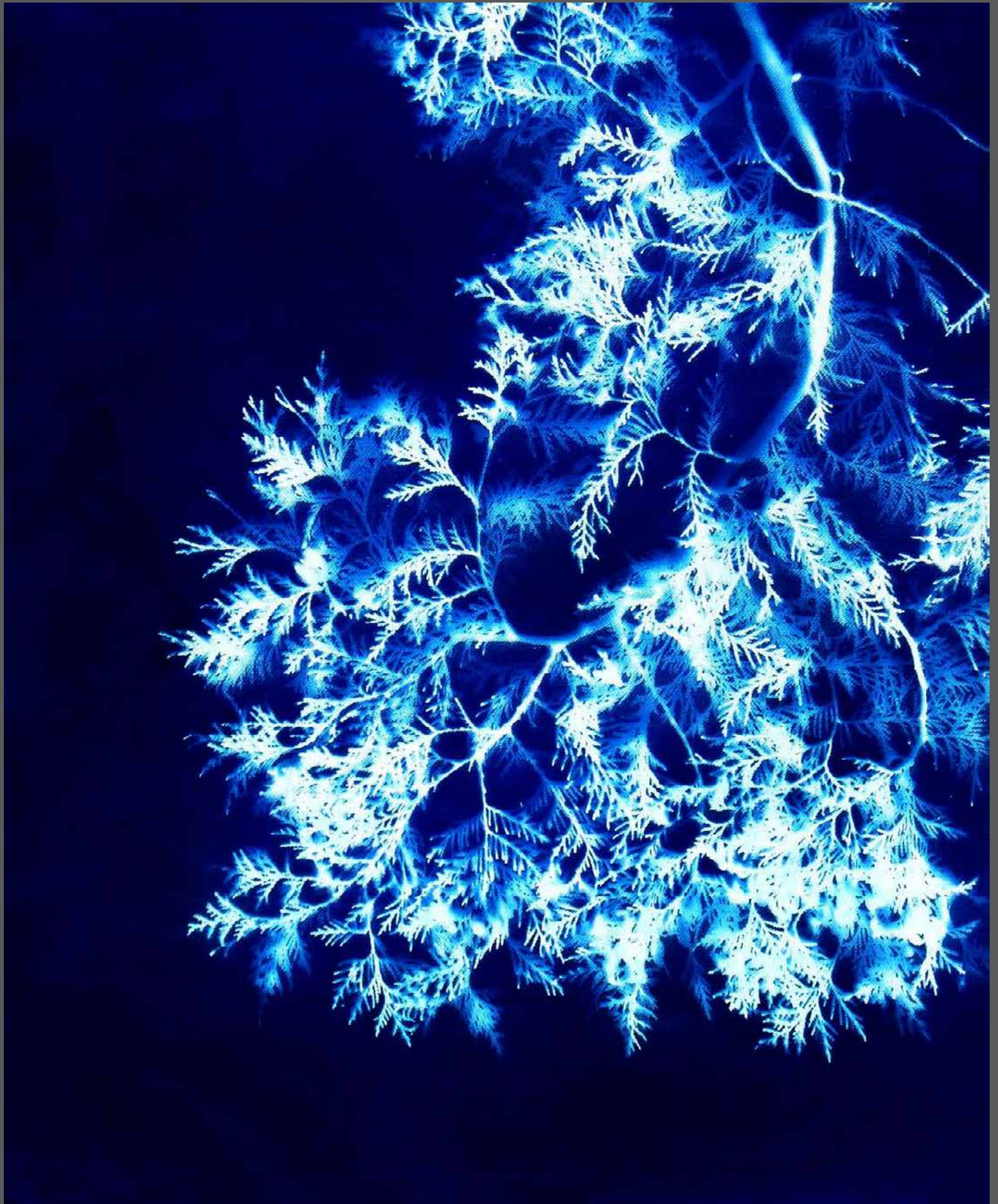


**Pine Branches**

2014

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature .91 x .66 m. / 36 x 26 in.

[\[More Images\]](#)



**Cedar Branch**

2013 (1 of 2)

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature .91 x .66 m / 36 x 26 in.

[\[More Images\]](#)



**Scotch Pine Branch**

2013

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature .91 x .66 m / 36 x 26 in.

[\[More Images\]](#)



**Fir Branches**

2013

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature .91 x .66 m / 36 x 26 in.

[\[More Images\]](#)



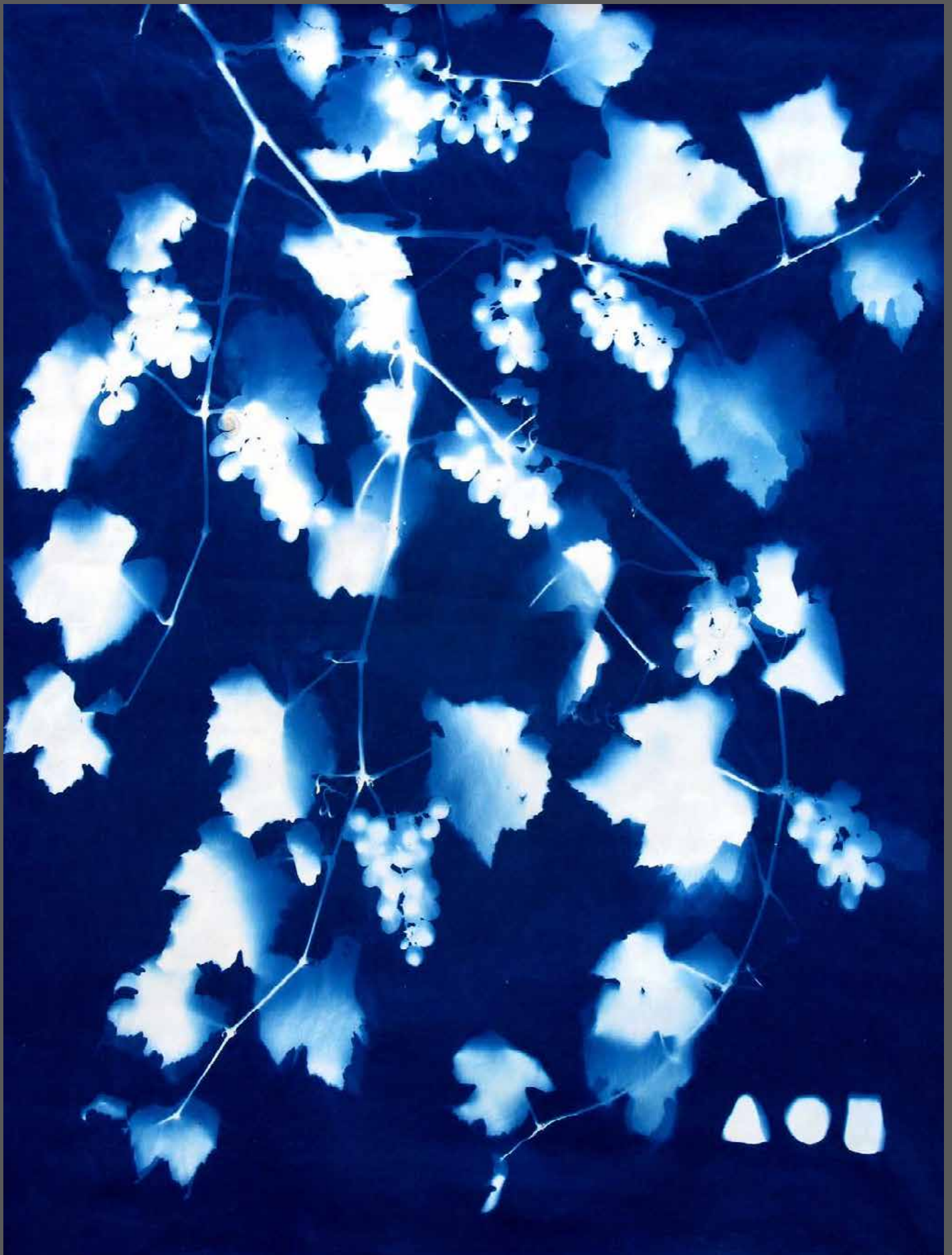


**Juniper Branch**

2013

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature .91 x .66 m / 36 x 26 in.

[\[More Images\]](#)

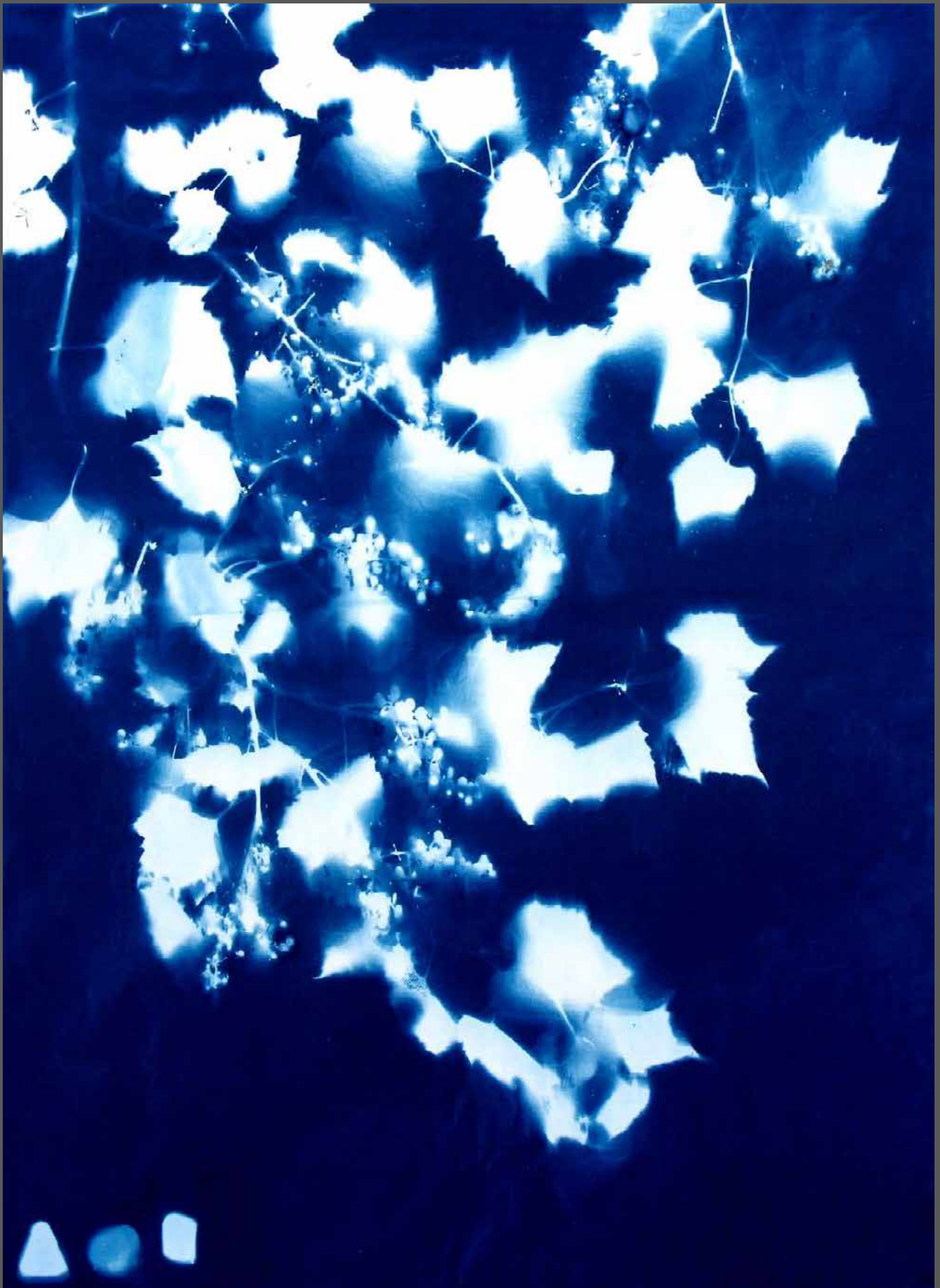


**Grape Vine**

2013

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature .91 x .66 m / 36 x 26 in. / ~3 x 2 ft.

[\[More Images\]](#)



**Wild Grape Vine**

2013

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature .91 x .66 m / 36 x 26 in.

[\[More Images\]](#)



**Small Apple Branch**

2013

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature .91 x .66 m / 36 x 26 in.

[\[More Images\]](#)

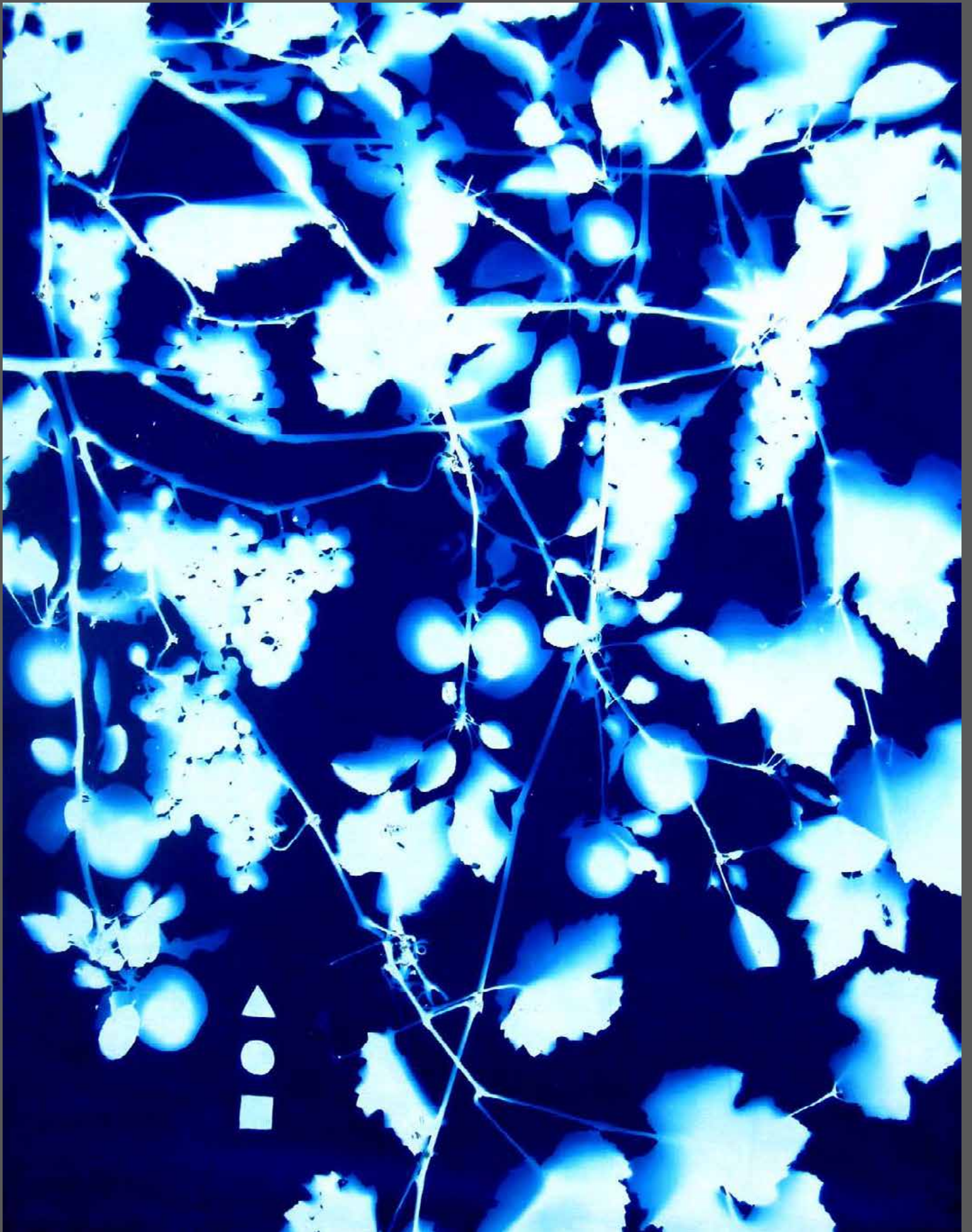


**Chestnut Blossom Branch**

2014

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature .91 x .66 m. / 36 x 26 in.

[\[More Images\]](#)



**Tangled Grape Vine and Apple Branch**

2014

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature .91 x .66 m. / 36 x 26 in.

[\[More Images\]](#)



**Cherry Branch**

2014

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature .91 x .66 m. / 36 x 26 in.

[\[More Images\]](#)



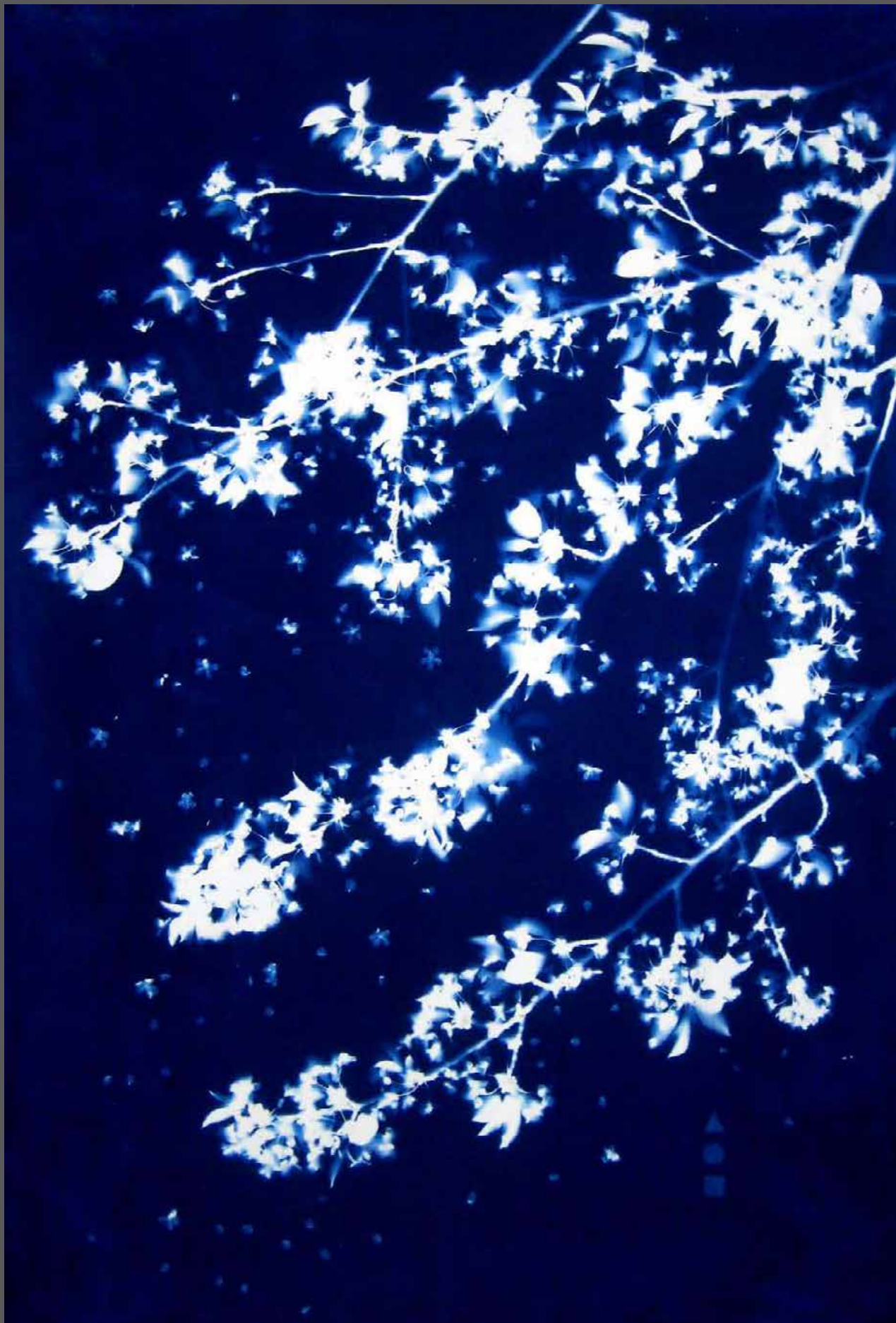
**Pear Branch**

2015

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature .71 x .71 m. / 28 x 28 in.

[\[More Images\]](#)





**Cherry Blossoms III**

2014 (1 of 4)

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature 1.52 x .107 m. / 60 x 42 in. / ~5 x 3.5 ft.

[\[More Images\]](#)



**Large Magnolia Blossoms IV**

2014 (1 of 6)

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature 1.52 x .107 m. / 60 x 42 in. / ~5 x 3.5 ft.

[\[More Images\]](#)



**Large Grape Vine**

2013

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature 1.52 x .107 m. / 60 x 42 in. / ~5 x 3.5 ft.

[\[More Images\]](#)



**Large Apple Branch**

2013

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature 1.52 x .107 m. / 60 x 42 in. / ~5 x 3.5 ft.

[\[More Images\]](#)



**Apricot Branch II**

2015

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature 1.02 x .76 m. / 40 x 30 in.

[\[More Images\]](#)

# FIGURALS



**Mobile Lovers (after Banksy)**

2014 (1 of 2)

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature

56 x 36 in. / ~5 x 3 ft.

[\[More Images\]](#)



**Old Guitarist** (after Picasso)

2014 (1 of 2)

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature

56 x 36 in. / ~5 x 3 ft.

[\[More Images\]](#)





**Blue Nude (after Picasso)**

2013 (1 of 2)

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature

56 x 36 in. / ~5 x 1.3 ft.

[\[More Images\]](#)



**Blue Nude (after Matisse)**

2013 (1 of 5)

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature

56 x 36 in. / ~5 x 3 ft.

[\[More Images\]](#)



**Blue Nude Skipping** (after Matisse)

2013

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature

56 x 36 in. / ~5 x 3 ft.

[\[More Images\]](#)



**Walking Woman (after Snow)**

2013 (2 of 5)

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature

56 x 16 in. / ~5 x 1.3 ft.

[\[More Images\]](#)



**Self Portrait**

2013

[\[More Images\]](#)

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature

56 x 36 in. / ~5 x 3 ft.



**Elegant Cyclist**

2013

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature

60 x 84 in. / 5 x 7 ft.

[\[More Images\]](#)



**Swift Cyclist**

2013

[\[More Images\]](#)

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature

60 x 84 in. / 5 x 7 ft.



**Study of Man in Chair V (after Bacon)**

2016 (5 of 5)

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature 1.68 x 1.37 m / 66 x 54 in. / 5.5 x 4.5 ft.

[\[More Images\]](#)





**Three Swimmers I**

2013 (1 of 5)

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature 2.13 x 2.13 m / 84 x 84 in. / 7 x 7 ft.

[\[More Images\]](#)



**Three Swimmers IV**

2013 (4 of 5)

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature 2.13 x 2.74 / 84 x 108 in. / 7 x 9 ft.

[\[More Images\]](#)



**Three Swimmers V**

2013 (5 of 5)

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature 2.13 x 2.74 / 84 x 108 in. / 7 x 9 ft.

[\[More Images\]](#)



**Twelve Figures II**

2014 (1 of 2)

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature 3.66 x 2.13 m / 144 x 108 in. / 12 x 9 ft.

[\[More Images\]](#)



**Solar Dance (after Matisse)**

2016 (1 of 2)

solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature

2.13 x 3.66 m / 108 x 144 in. / 9 x 12 ft.

[\[More Images\]](#)



**Solar Dance (after Matisse) detail** (Erin Loree)

2016

solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature

2.13 x 3.66 m / 108 x 144 in. / 9 x 12 ft.

[\[More Images\]](#)

**Z O D I A C  
L O V E R S**



**Zodiac Lovers [Aquarius]**

2014 (2 of 12)

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature 1.52 x 1.52 m / 60 x 60 in. / 5 x 5 ft.

[\[More Images\]](#)





**Zodiac Lovers [Sagittarius]**

2014 (5 of 12)

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature 1.52 x 1.52 m / 60 x 60 in. / 5 x 5 ft.

[\[More Images\]](#)



**Zodiac Lovers [Pisces]**

2014 (2 of 12)

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature 1.52 x 1.52 m / 60 x 60 in. / 5 x 5 ft.

[\[More Images\]](#)



**Zodiac Lovers [Aries]**

2014 (4 of 12)

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature 1.52 x 1.52 m / 60 x 60 in. / 5 x 5 ft.

[\[More Images\]](#)



**Zodiac Lovers [Gemini]**

2014 (1 of 12)

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature 1.52 x 1.52 m / 60 x 60 in. / 5 x 5 ft.

[\[More Images\]](#)



**Zodiac Lovers [Cancer]**

2014 (6 of 12)

cyanotype solargraph on photosensitized fabric, wood armature 1.52 x 1.52 m / 60 x 60 in. / 5 x 5 ft.

[\[More Images\]](#)



**A O 1**

**Andrew Owen A01**

## **SOLARGRAPHS**

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