

**WE  
DESIGN  
BEIRUT**

**UNION;  
A JOURNEY  
OF LIGHT**



# UNION; A JOURNEY OF LIGHT

Union unfolds as a poetic site visit. Karim Nader and Atelier33 invite you to step into the Immeuble de l'Union—suspended in a rare state of becoming. Neither defeated ruin nor pristine completion, it lingers in-between, shimmering with possibility.

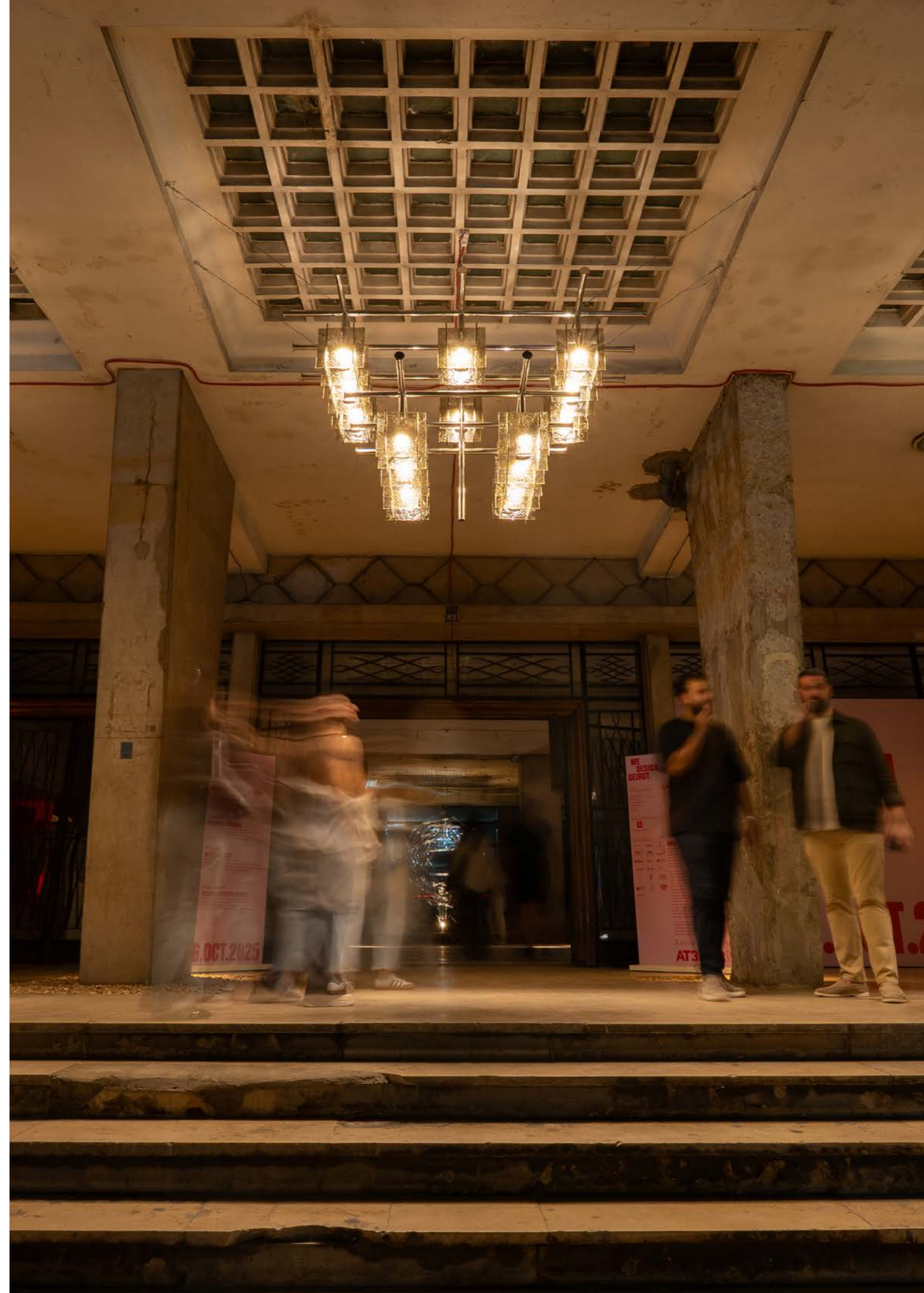
The journey begins with the unveiling of the restored façade of this 1952 modernist masterpiece by Lucien Cavro and Antoun Tabet, a gesture that anchors the building's rebirth.

From façade to roof terrace, the journey reveals the building under a new light—exposing its scars and reawakening its spirit. Light here does not merely illuminate; it remembers, heals, and transforms. It slips through cracks, follows voids, animates stillness. It listens to structure, allowing the building to speak—through scars, edges, shadows. Memory becomes visible. This is Beirut's truth: a city that does not erase the past but grows through it.

The passage is marked by interventions from local and international creators. Each uncovers a hidden facet, a fragment of awakening. From the dark red of the basement where memories ache, to the pale blues of the terrace, atmospheres shift into a narrative of hope. Shafts breathe, stairs undulate, corridors thrum. Each threshold becomes a chapter in Union's story—a journey of light.

This is not restoration. It is resurrection. From scar to sky, Union carries history into a radiant future and absences, a tribute to what's missing and what refuses to go away.

A reminder that, in Beirut, even when something is gone, it's never really gone.





# KARIM NADER

Karim Nader is a Lebanese architect, educator, and writer. He studied architecture at the American University of Beirut and holds a Master of Architecture from Rice University. In 2016, he founded Karim Nader Studio, a practice known for blending modernist clarity with sensitivity to nature, place, and cultural memory. His work ranges from houses immersed in Lebanon's landscapes to the renovation of modernist landmarks and the rehabilitation of schools after the Beirut port explosion. Alongside his practice, he teaches at ALBA and has published *For a Novel Architecture: Ciné-roman 2000-2020*, reflecting on two decades of design and thought. It was awarded "Le Geste d'Or" in Paris in 2021.

# ATELIER33

Surrounded by exceptionally talented and creative people, Noura Hakim and Jad Cortas founded Atelier Trente Trois and shaped it into a studio whose success is rooted in collective imagination and shared expertise. Today, Atelier Trente Trois is recognized as a lighting design and supply practice where architectural thinking and lighting mastery converge. With projects across Lebanon, the GCC, Africa, and Europe, the studio has built an award-winning reputation for creating luminous atmospheres that balance technical precision with poetic resonance. Light is approached not as an accessory, but as a defining element of architecture—capable of shaping mood, tracing space, and carrying narrative meaning.



# BASEMENT FRACTURE

## *The City of Musk*

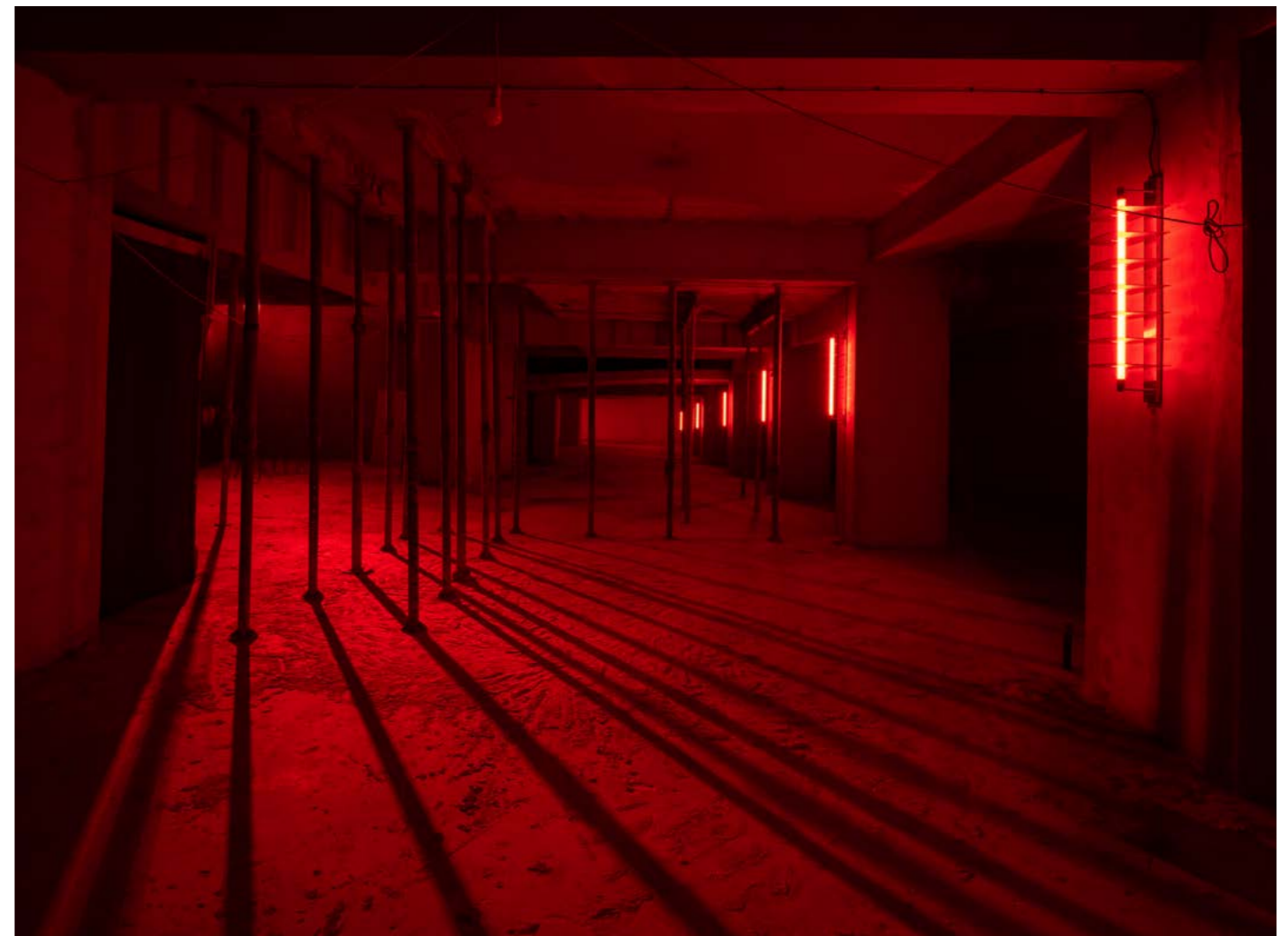
Alfred Tarazi

When I walk in the scrapyards, across the mountains of copper, aluminum, steel, tin, and plastic, I dream. It is not uncommon to find there the steel residues of every war that shatter our lives. Textures and hues speak of time and endurance, of the earth and its secrets.

At one point, I stumbled on two hundred aluminum canisters of perfume shining under the sun. It took countless hours to turn them into a sculpture: *Musk City*, a perforated prayer for life.

Alfred Tarazi (b. 1980, Beirut, Lebanon) is an artist whose multidisciplinary practice—painting, photography, digital collage, sculpture, and installation—centres on the Lebanese Civil War and the ongoing interplay of memory, history, and identity in the present.

Educated in graphic design at the American University of Beirut, with a residency in Vienna, Tarazi's work interrogates archival sources, narrative, and historiography to excavate fragments of collective memory. His pieces challenge how history is represented and remembered and are internationally exhibited and collected; in 2023 he received the Moving Narratives Mentorship Award (Prince Claus Fund) and the Lokman Slim Prize.



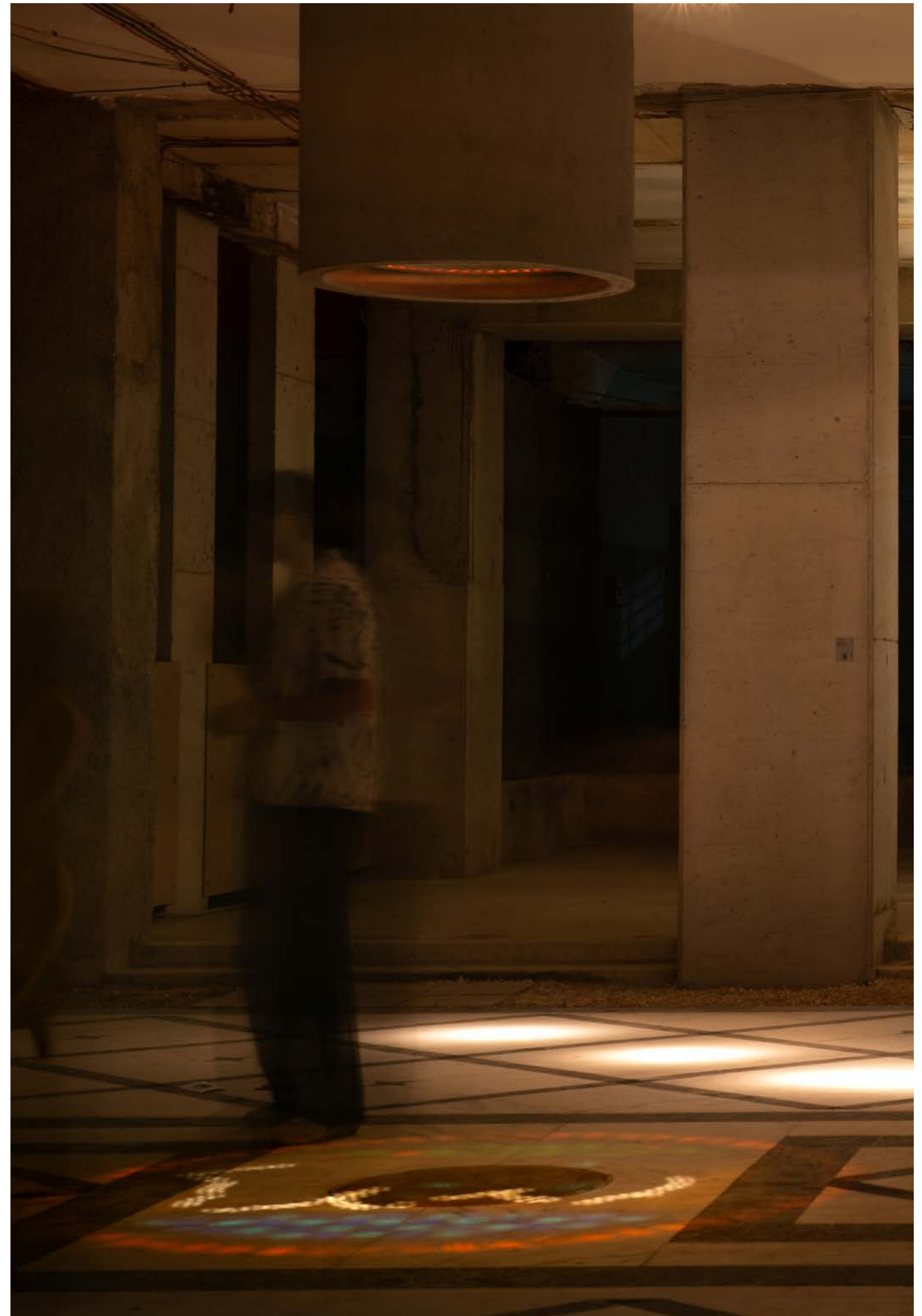
# GROUND FLOOR THRESHOLD

## *Radiant Absence* Moataz Nasr

Moataz Nasr's interventions at Immeuble de l'Union transform absence into presence. A three meter perforated steel mala, crafted from reclaimed gas canisters, evokes resilience through its industrial form. Alongside it, backlit mosaics rise where columns once stood, projecting delicate shadows across the floor. Together, they merge memory and light, reimagining architectural voids with fragility and strength.

Moataz Nasr (b. 1961, Alexandria, Egypt) is a leading contemporary artist and cultural activist whose multidisciplinary work spans painting, sculpture, textiles, video, installations, and public art.

Originally studying economics, Nasr turned to art and in 2008 founded Darb 1718, a nonprofit in Old Cairo dedicated to expanding contemporary art in Egypt and the wider MENA region. His art often grapples with identity, tradition, spiritual and social critique, rooted in both Egyptian heritage and wider global and Islamic culture. Internationally recognised, he has received major honours such as the Grand Prix at the 8th Cairo Biennale (2001) and prizes at Dakar and Sharjah, and he has represented Egypt at the Venice Biennale.

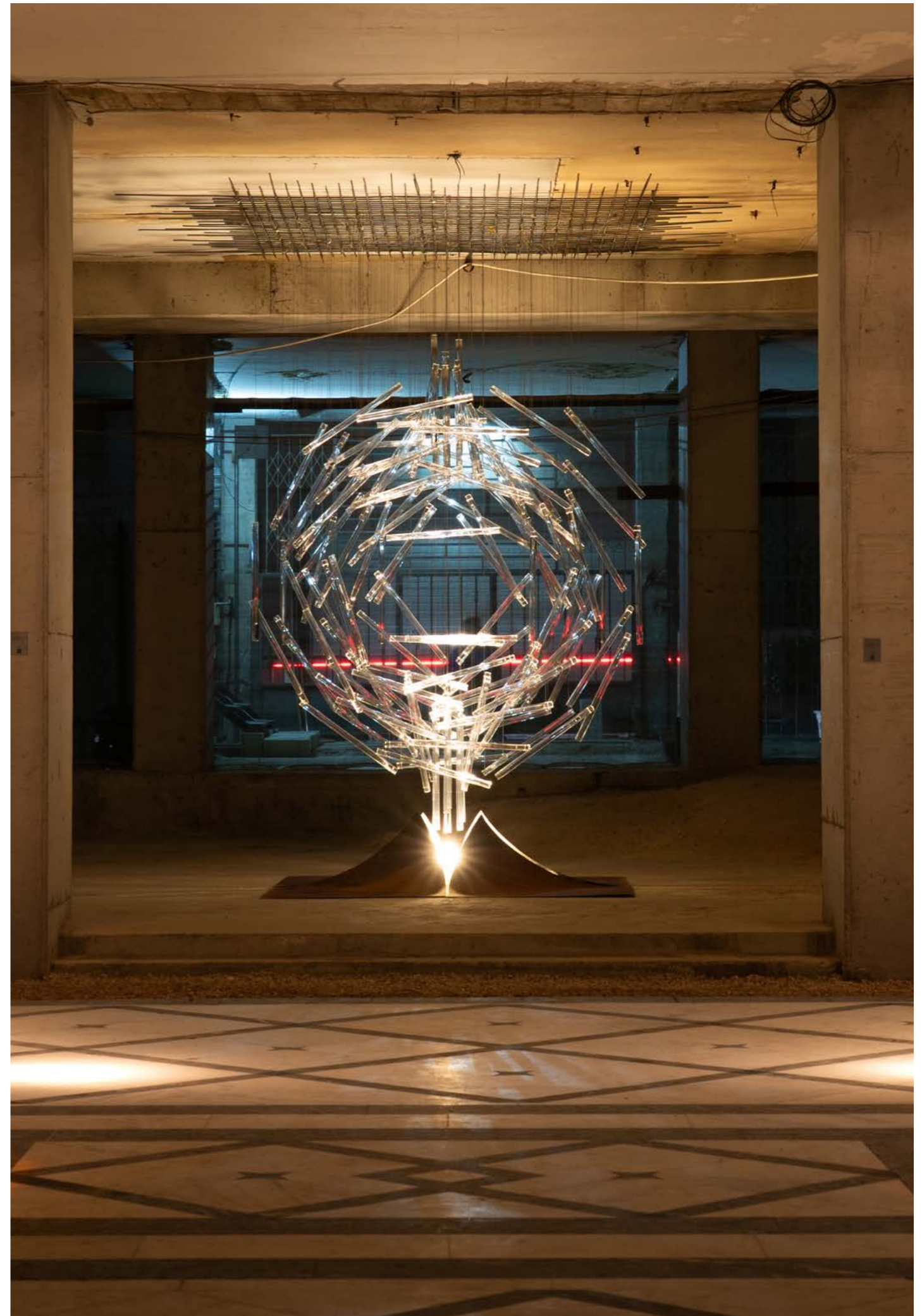


# GROUND FLOOR THRESHOLD

## *Ascencion* Preciosa

Preciosa's installation in the Union lobby is a luminous journey of transformation and reflection. Suspended as a radiant portal of glass and light, it transforms descent into ascent, fracture into harmony. Inspired by Dante's passage from Inferno to Purgatory, the work overturns gravity, carrying the soul upward from shadow to clarity. Like Beirut itself—a city that has endured the inferno of war—the installation mirrors resilience and renewal, rising toward harmony and light. An awakening into purpose, it invites viewers to reflect, aspire, and experience the transcendent beauty of hope reborn.

In the north of the Czech Republic lies the Crystal Valley, where Bohemian hand-blown crystal traditions have been perfected for over 300 years. Preciosa Lighting carries this heritage into the future, transforming crystal into bold contemporary design. Every installation is a dialogue between tradition and innovation—a fusion of artisanal mastery and modern imagination. In close collaboration with visionary architects, designers, and artists, Preciosa designs and manufactures bespoke works that transcend function and become experiences. From royal palaces and luxury hotels to cultural landmarks and iconic projects, Preciosa illuminates the world with crystal, celebrating light as both craft and art.



# FIRST FLOOR REBIRTH

## *Patterns of the Past*

Forgotten patterns return, luminous with memory. Through an artisanal technique translated into light, motifs once fading are reawakened. Each projection carries the hand of craft while opening new dialogue with the present. More than ornament, the gesture honors heritage, turning memory into radiance and allowing the ephemeral to linger as a whispered inheritance within architecture.



# SECOND FLOOR AMBER SUN

## *The Union Project*

At the heart of the exhibition, the Union model stands upon a map of Beirut, anchoring the building within its wider urban fabric. Around it, photographs from the past and from the site under construction trace a continuum of memory and becoming.

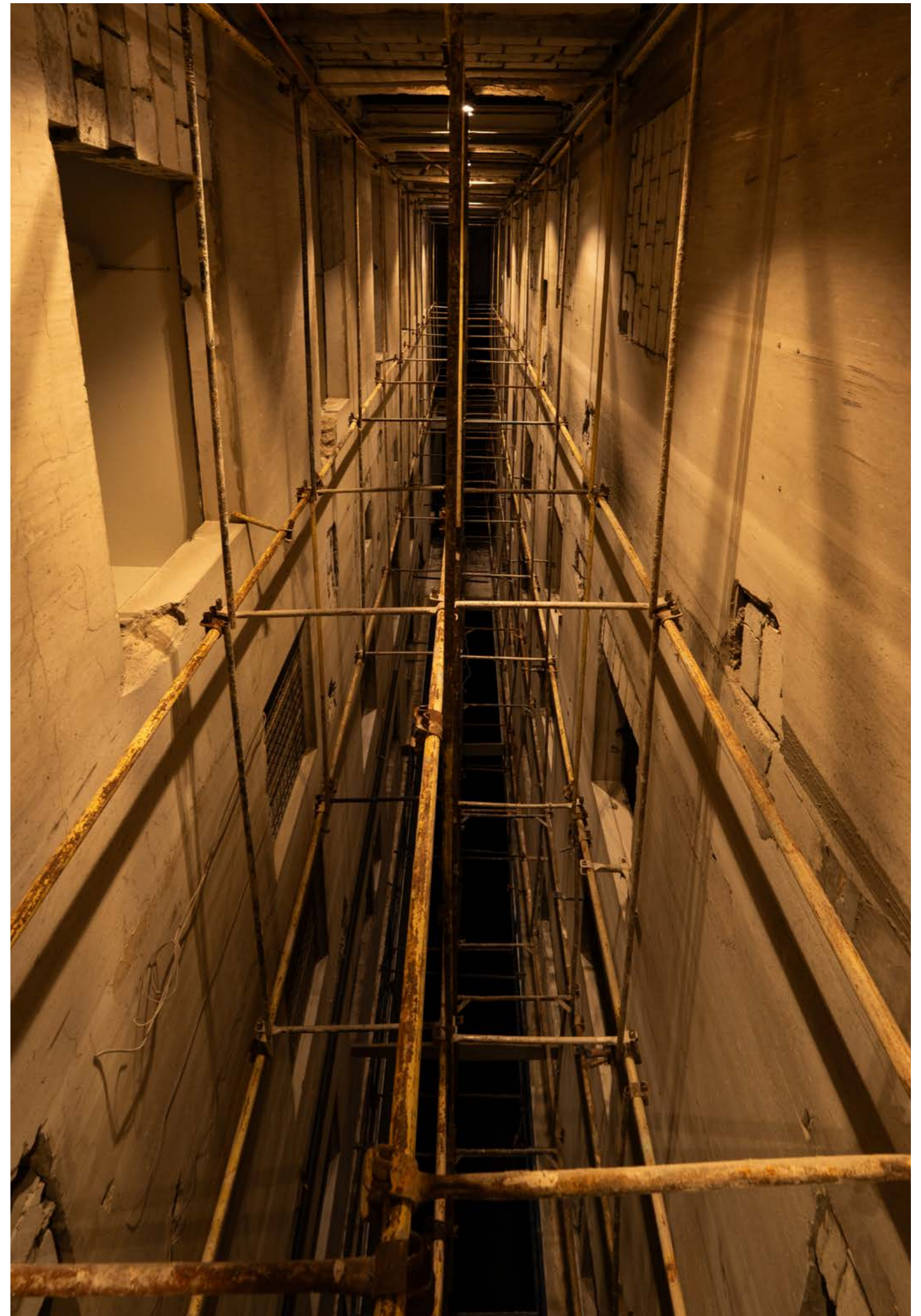
Suspended above, a solar eclipse encircles the volume—an artificial light technique that transforms the space into a moment of cosmic stillness. Shadow and radiance meet, mirroring the city's own tensions between loss and renewal. The installation becomes both testimony and prophecy: Union at the center, Beirut unfolding all around it.





# THIRD FLOOR BREATH

Breath flows through Union as shafts are filled with a pulsating light source, expanding and contracting like a living lung. The rhythm projects inward and outward, casting reflections across both the interior and exterior of the building. In this dialogue of pulse and shadow, the structure seems to inhale and exhale, transforming architecture into presence—alive, fragile, and luminous with memory.



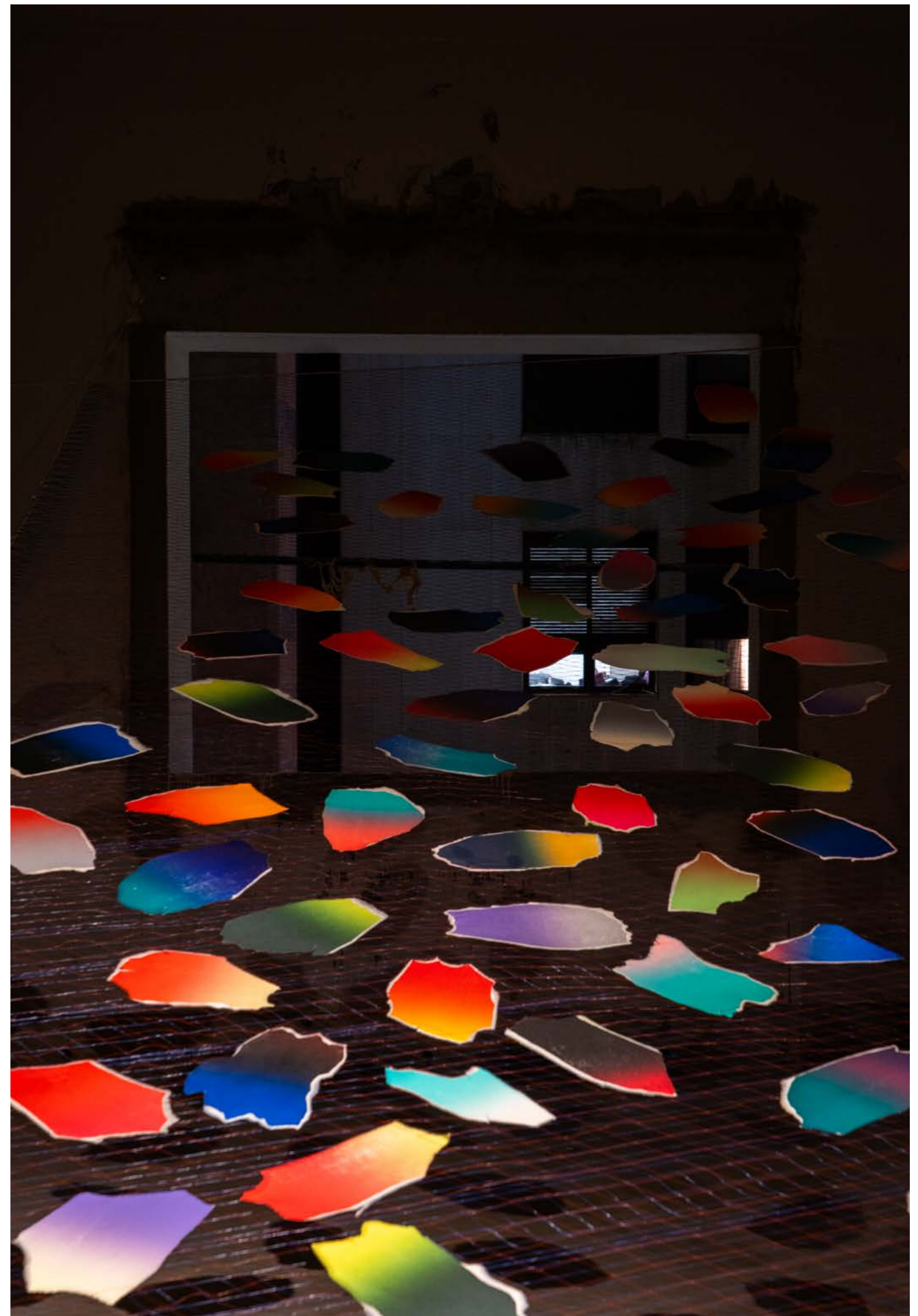


# FOURTH FLOOR RESONANCE

## *Much Peace, Love & Joy Spread*

Much Peace, Love and Joy by SPREAD is a vibrant installation that radiates optimism through color, light, and playful geometry. Immersive and uplifting, it transforms space into a field of positivity, inviting visitors to pause, reflect, and embrace a universal message of harmony. The work celebrates human connection while evoking a sense of shared hope.

SPREAD is a creative unit founded by Haruna Yamada and Hirokazu Kobayashi in Tokyo, Japan. Their practice fuses environmental/landscape design's attentiveness to place and memory with graphic and visual design's capacity for vibrancy and emotional resonance. Colour, memory, time, and the interplay of natural and built environments are central to their work. SPREAD has realized installations, brand design, and visual research—such as key visuals for major institutions, installations in Tokyo Midtown, and exhibition and branding work for international clients—earning awards including Red Dot, German Design, Dezeen, Good Design, etc.





# FIFTH FLOOR EMERGENCE

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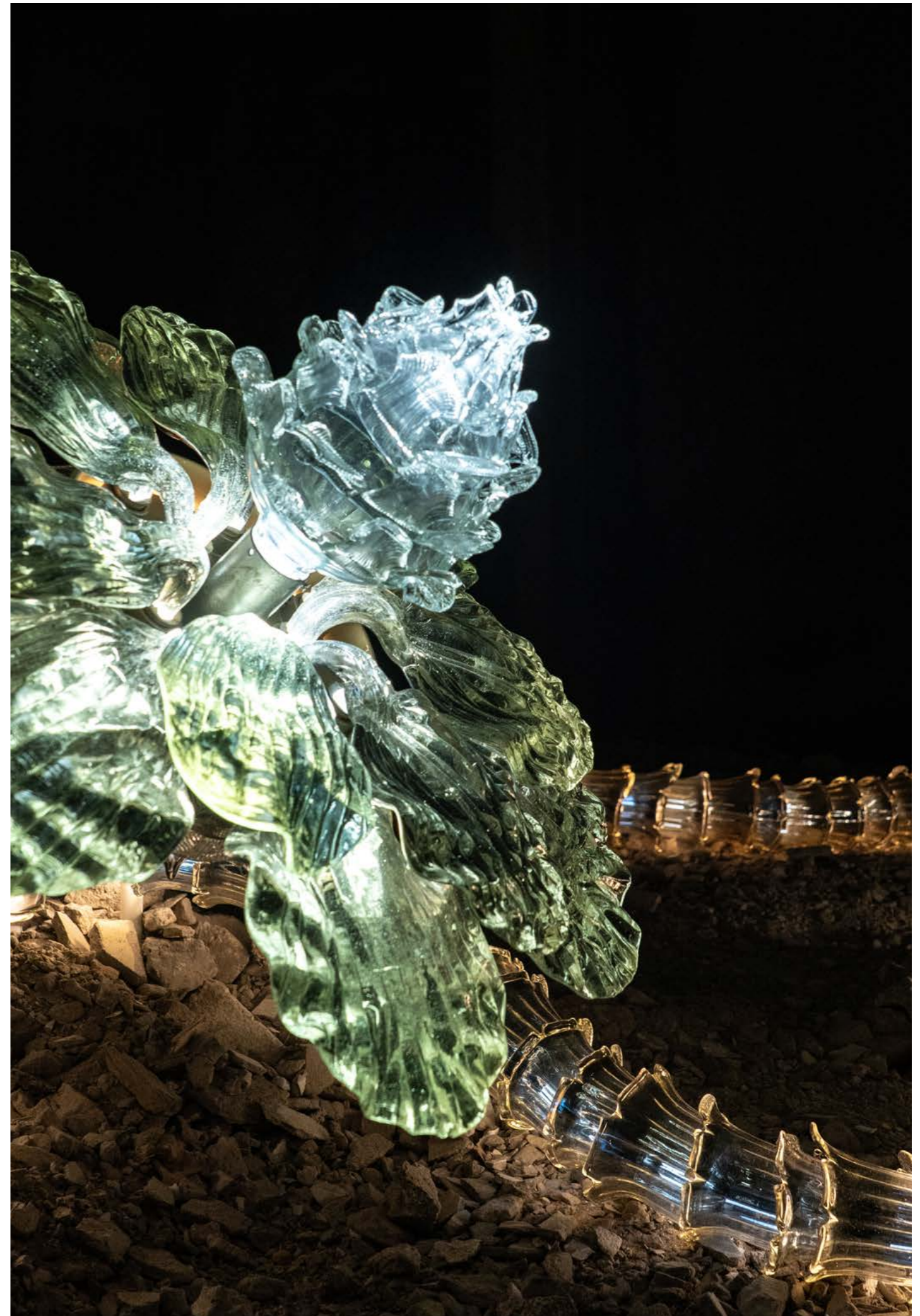
# SIXTH FLOOR AWAKENING

## *Cyclamen*

Christian Pellizzari

The Cyclamen Glass Light Installation is a sculptural play of transparency, reflection, and luminosity. Using layered glass elements, it captures and refracts light to create shifting atmospheres that echo the Mediterranean spirit of Syracuse. The installation bridges tradition and modernity, turning glass into a poetic medium of movement, radiance, and spatial transformation.

Christian Pellizzari (b. 1981, Treviso, Italy) is a fashion designer turned applied arts creator whose work bridges sartorial tradition and experimental materiality. Trained at Polimoda, with formative experiences at Tonello, Vionnet, and Jay Ahr, he launched his eponymous label around 2010. Over time he has expanded into installations, especially exploring Murano glass, nature and climate change, producing works like Genetic Variations and CLORI. His practice is marked by a love of craftsmanship, a playful yet elegant approach to tailoring, and a sensibility that brings together classic materials with surprising textures and forms.





# SEVENTH FLOOR SKY

## *The Purple Venue*

On the 7th floor of Immeuble de l'Union, our Purple Venue embraces raw authenticity. Walls, floors, and ceiling remain untouched concrete, preserving the building's industrial essence. Vertical cuts of blue neon, encased in steel cages, punctuate the space with rhythm and tension. The result is an atmospheric setting where minimalism meets intensity, blending austerity with electric vibrancy.



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