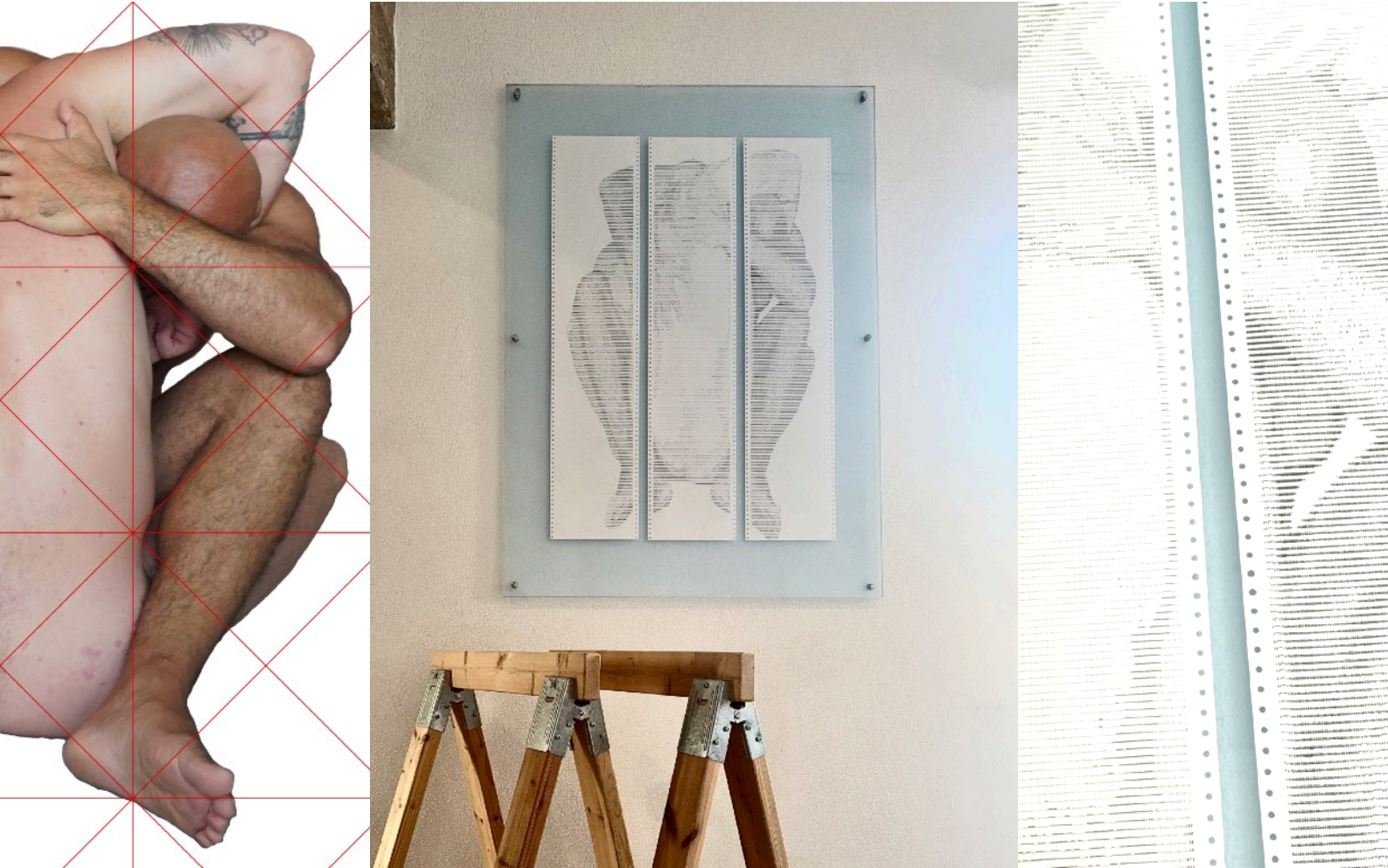


CHARACTERS ASCII

Reimagining digital space as a site of erotic ritual
and archival presence.



Website: charactersascii.com

Instagram: [@charactersascii](https://www.instagram.com/charactersascii)

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01 – Artist Bio

Characters is the working alias of a Greece-based artist whose practice spans conceptual photography, queer digital archives, and early text-based internet aesthetics. Beginning with original erotic photographs, each work is rendered into ASCII characters—reviving a hallmark of early internet visual culture—using custom Python scripting to encode memory, intimacy, and queer resistance.

These ASCII-based compositions are printed on salvaged dot-matrix paper in limited editions of three per colorway. Through their tactile surfaces and language-based forms, the works transform technical output into artifacts that are both archival and confessional—echoing the interfaces of 1990s digital space while gesturing toward contemporary queer archiving. Each sheet is assembled with a kind of ritual slowness, drawing on the aesthetics of text-based ornament, manual coding, and devotional repetition.

Drawing from the artist's experience growing up in the Caribbean—where online spaces have long served as essential refuges for queer communities facing physical danger and systemic hostility—the project reframes what dominant narratives often dismiss as nostalgic or obsolete. While rooted in that specific context, the work reactivates these overlooked aesthetics and the urgencies they continue to carry in many parts of the world, where connection still depends on secrecy, code, and fragile digital shelter.

Anonymity in this context is a continuation of queer survival tactics—an echo of the forums, chatrooms, and command lines that required names be replaced with handles, bodies with symbols, and presence with trace. The artist follows in that lineage, letting the work speak in fragments and code.

02 – Curatorial Statement

Characters transforms the overlooked aesthetics of early computing into sacred queer documents—material translations of the immaterial digital spaces where gay men and queer people have gathered for decades to find one another, survive isolation, and build kinship beyond state and society.

ASCII code and chatroom culture are often framed as obsolete or merely nostalgic within dominant digital narratives. But for many, these platforms—despite their latency and limitations—remain active sites of connection. They were shaped by constraint, yes, but also by care, creativity, and an urgent desire to exist. In many parts of the world, these architectures continue to function as coded sanctuaries where queer expression unfolds quietly and powerfully inside systems never meant to hold us.

The project draws from the artist's experience growing up in the Caribbean, where such spaces were never nostalgic, but continue to be necessary. By leaning into what first appears as nostalgia, the work invites viewers to reconsider their relevance.

Characters gives these architectures material form—erotic compositions rendered in ASCII, printed on salvaged dot-matrix paper, and framed as devotional sheets. What may be understood as archival or sentimental by some is reactivated here as what it has always been for others: essential, encrypted, and alive.

To remain anonymous is to inhabit the very condition the work illuminates: to speak through code, to exist without full arrival, to remain encrypted. In a time when queer digital spaces are often recalled as quaint or obsolete, this refusal to be named draws attention to a deeper dissonance: these systems still scaffold queer presence, even when we pretend they don't. To look away from that is to dissociate from the very conditions we emerged through.

This is a living archive—erotic, fugitive, and infrastructural: digital bodies flickering beneath the system's surface, one character at a time.

03 – Selected Works

BODY.QUEUE

2024 · 72 × 252 cm · Edition of 3 per colorway

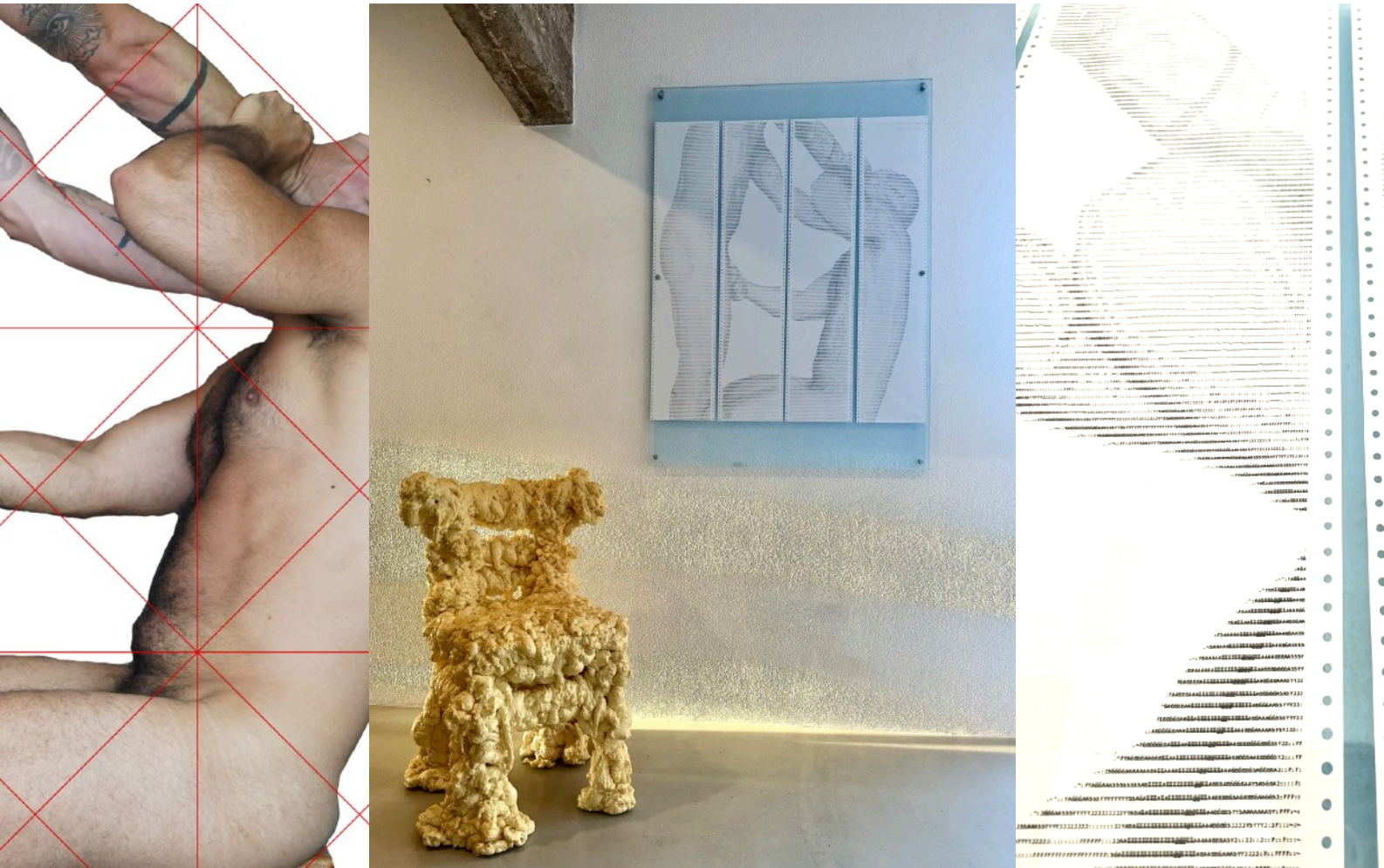


BODY.QUEUE prints two mirrored forms caught in recursive hold—capturing the body not as climax, but as condition. This isn't simultaneity—it's system sync. Rendered in dot-matrix ASCII, the image holds a slowed-down haptic: flesh frozen mid-frame, sensation stretched to breaking—what's depicted isn't contact, but its residue.

04 – Selected Works

CTRL+SUB

2024 · 96 × 112 cm · Edition of 3 per colorway

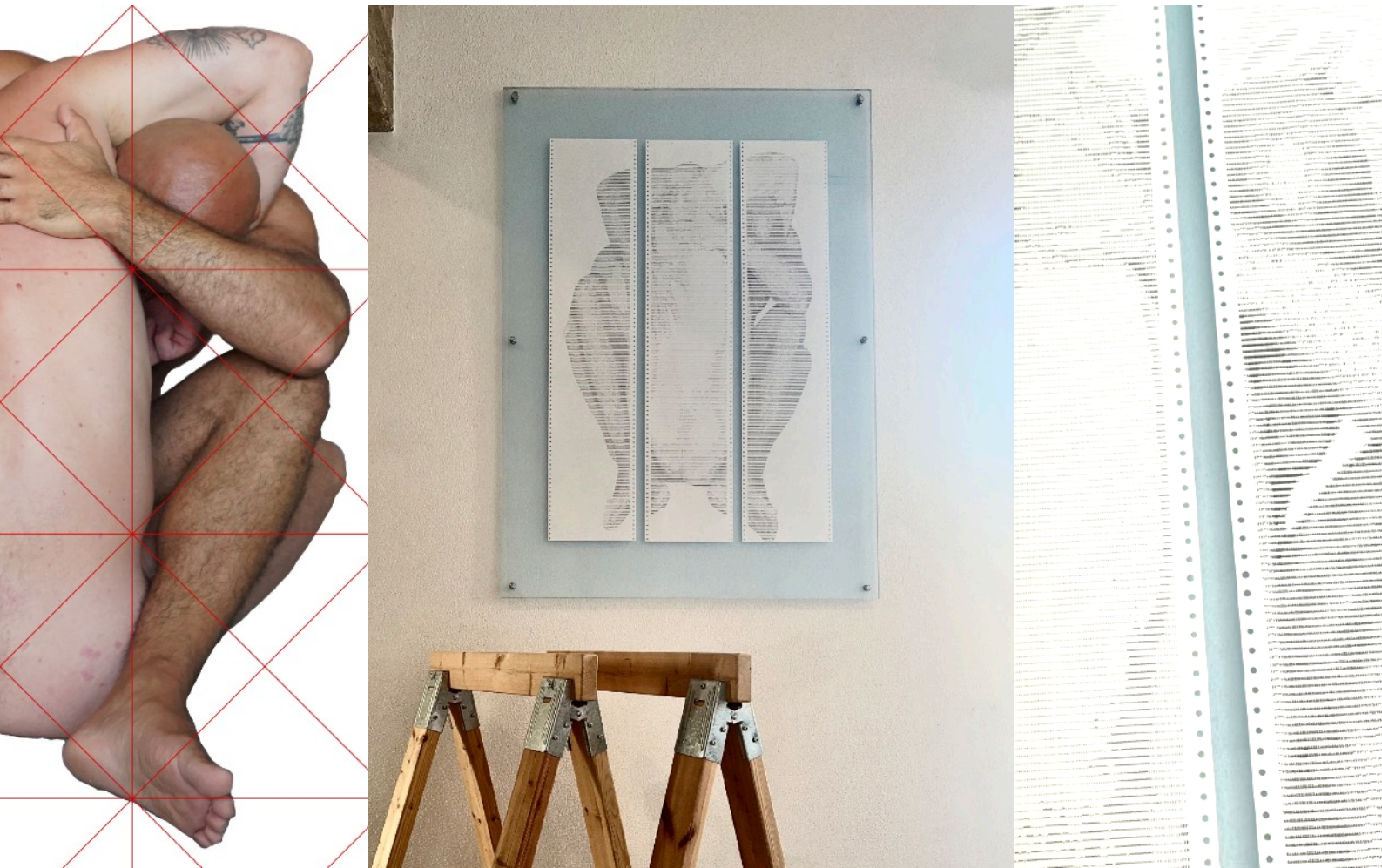


CTRL+SUB renders domination as structure. The figures—one braced, one gripping—exist inside a mutual override: a feedback loop of command and consent. Contorted limbs speak in repetition, not spectacle. Printed in ASCII on salvaged paper, the work doesn't just depict—it executes. Desire here is formatted: a set of system instructions enacted through flesh.

05 – Selected Works

SAFE MODE

2024 · 72 × 112 cm · Edition of 3 per colorway

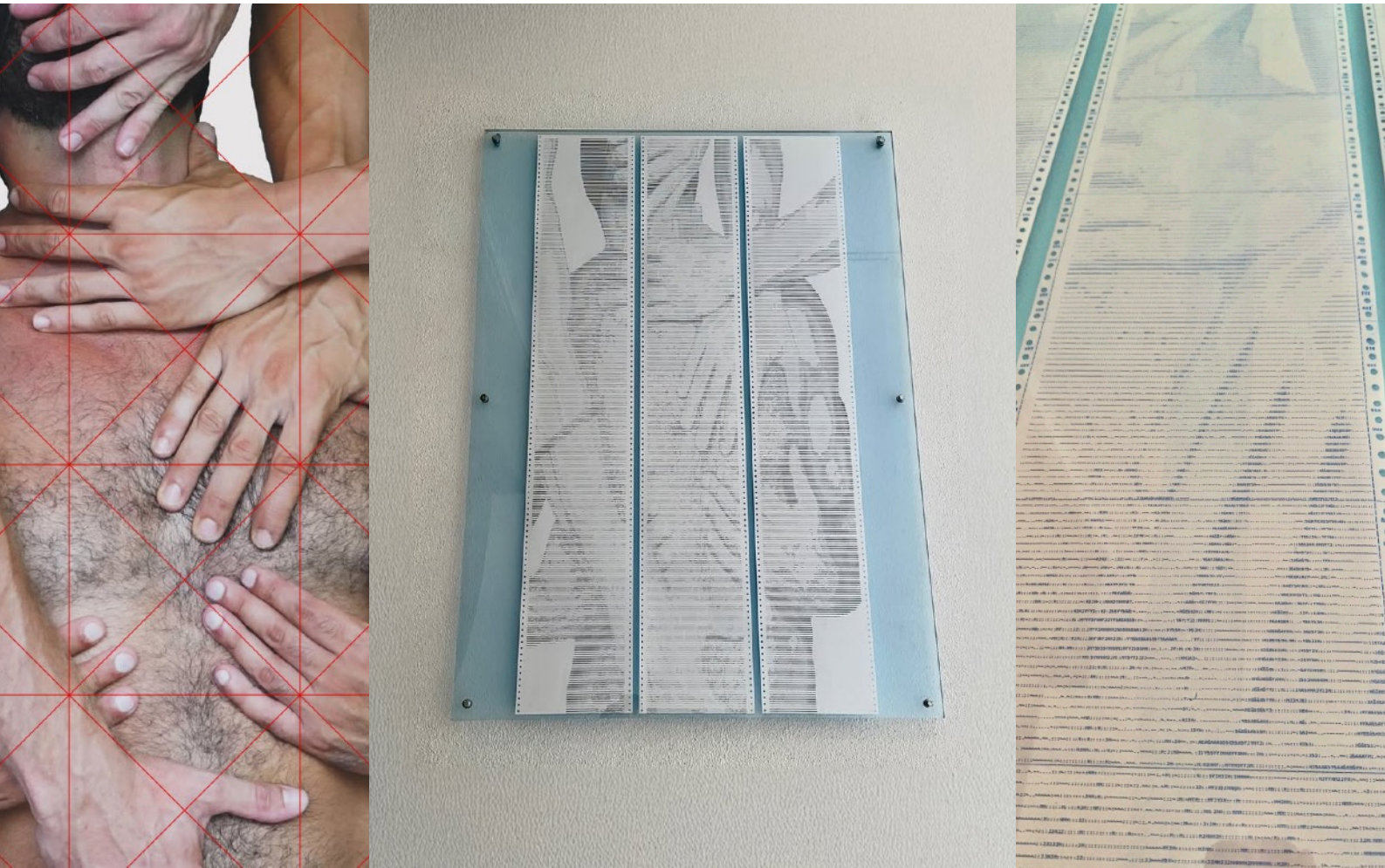


SAFE MODE stages intimacy as delay. Touch here is cached, not enacted—stored for safety. Intertwined and faceless, the figures form a soft protocol of withdrawal. Printed in near-monochrome ASCII on salvaged paper, the image doesn't collapse—it queues. What we see is not retreat, but a necessary pause: sensation buffered, waiting for conditions to change.

06 – Selected Works

SOFT.RENDER

2024 · 72 × 140 cm · Edition of 3 per colorway



SOFT.RENDER archives sensation instead of capturing it. Printed in faint ASCII on salvaged paper, each line echoes a contact once felt. The image doesn't outline—it enfolds. Code becomes communication; repetition becomes survival. What remains is a looped ritual of translation—soft, persistent, and unresolved.

07 – Selected Works

SUBMISSION FORMAT

2024 · 120 × 97 cm · Edition of 3 per colorway

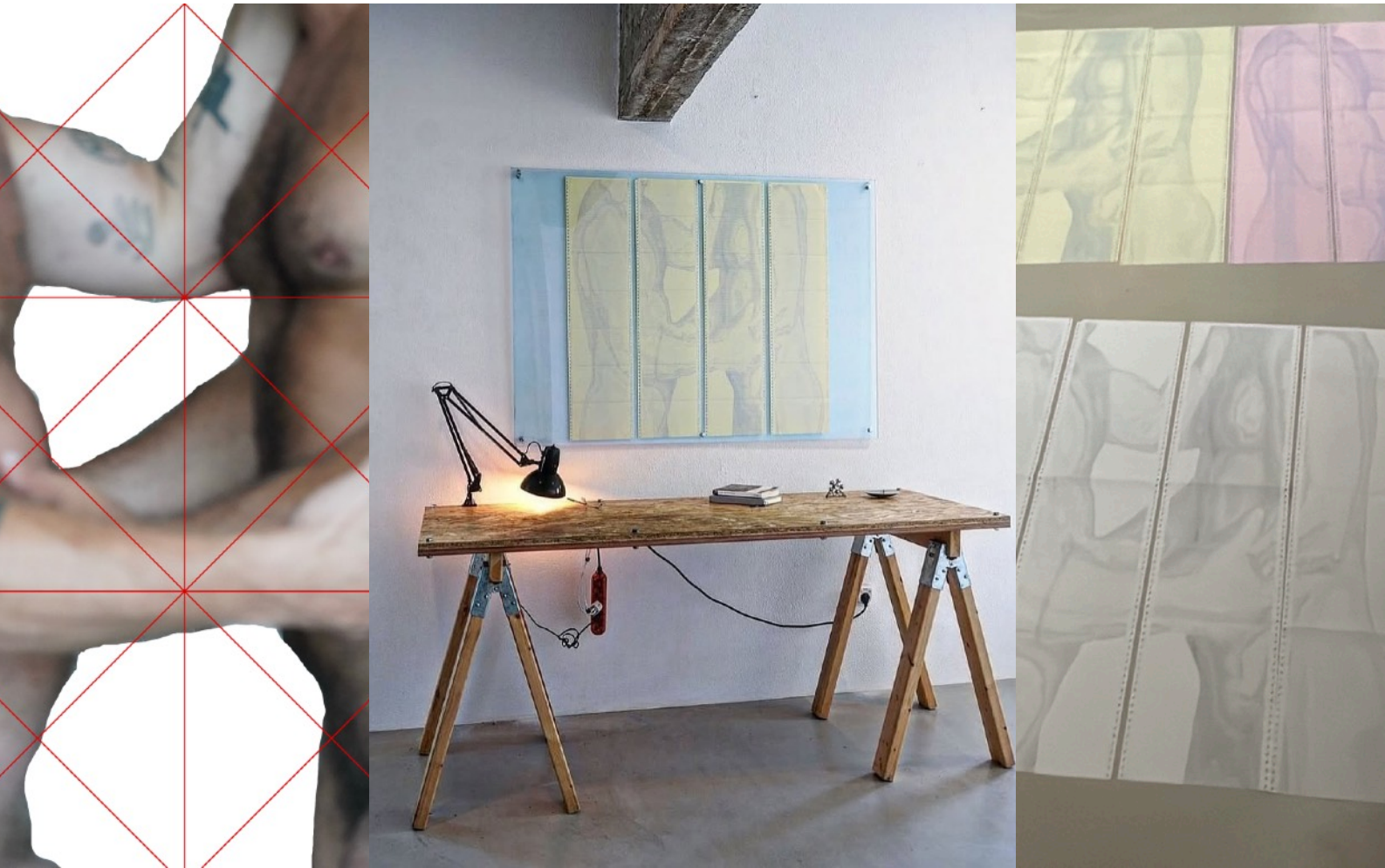


SUBMISSION FORMAT reinterprets yielding as structure. The figure folds inward—not in surrender, but as a command executed. Limbs align by instruction, not collapse. Rendered in ASCII on salvaged dot-matrix paper, the work becomes a diagram of discipline: visibility calibrated through control. Submission here is not passive, but performed—an assertion shaped by syntax.

08 – Selected Works

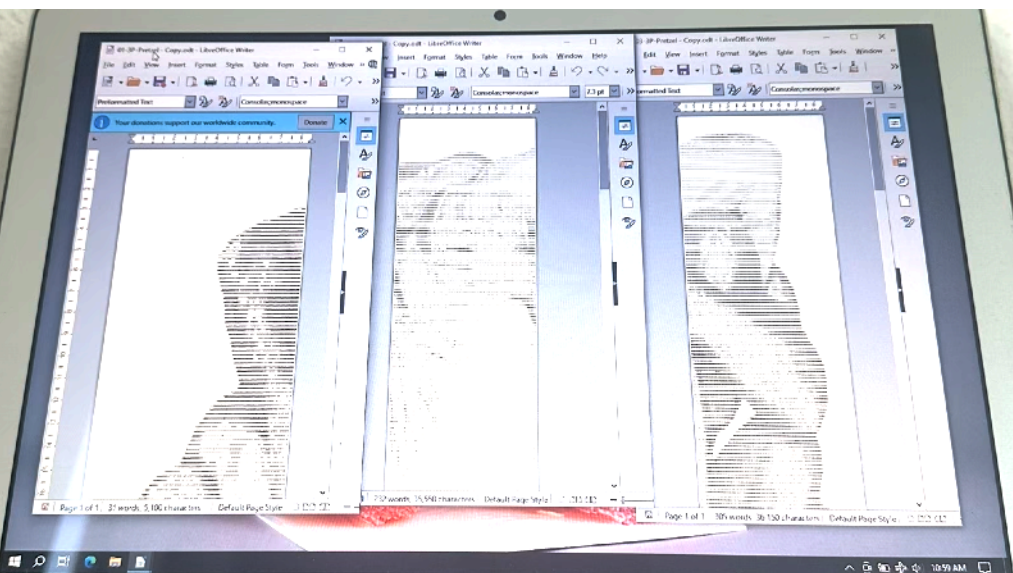
(txt)TOUCH

2024 · 96 × 96 cm · Edition of 3 per colorway



In **(txt)TOUCH**, code lingers just before it resolves. Printed in soft hues across four suspended sheets, the figure hovers—neither legible nor lost. The image reads like a system trying to recall itself, a looped signal encoded in flesh. What emerges is not a message, but a sensation: a haptic reading that privileges slowness, delay, and the erotic potential of interruption.

09 - Installation / Process Views



```
asci_util.py
import clipboard
import os
from PIL import Image, ImageEnhance
import numpy as np
from itertools import islice
import sys
import zipfile
from xml.sax.saxutils import escape

custom_chars = None
selected_charset = "@#%*~!., "
last_preset_index = -1

# ASCII Converter
def image_to_ascii(img, num_cols, contrast=1.0, brightness=1.0, charset="@#%*~!., "):
    img = img.convert("L")
    img = ImageEnhance.Contrast(img).enhance(contrast)
    img = ImageEnhance.Brightness(img).enhance(brightness)
    W, H = img.size
    aspect_ratio = 0.55
    col_width = W // num_cols
    row_height = int(col_width / aspect_ratio)
    num_rows = H // row_height
    img = img.resize((num_cols, num_rows))
    pixels = np.array(img)

    global custom_chars
    if charset == custom_chars:
        chars = np.array(list(charset[1:-1]))
    else:
        chars = np.array(list(charset))

    scale = 255 // (len(chars) - 1)
    indices = pixels // scale

    ascii_image = []
    for row_idx, row in enumerate(indices):
        line = ""
        for col_idx, val in enumerate(row):
            pixel_val = pixels[row_idx][col_idx]
            if charset == custom_chars and pixel_val == 255:
                line += " "
            else:
                line += chars[val]
        ascii_image.append(line)
```



10 – Contact Information

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