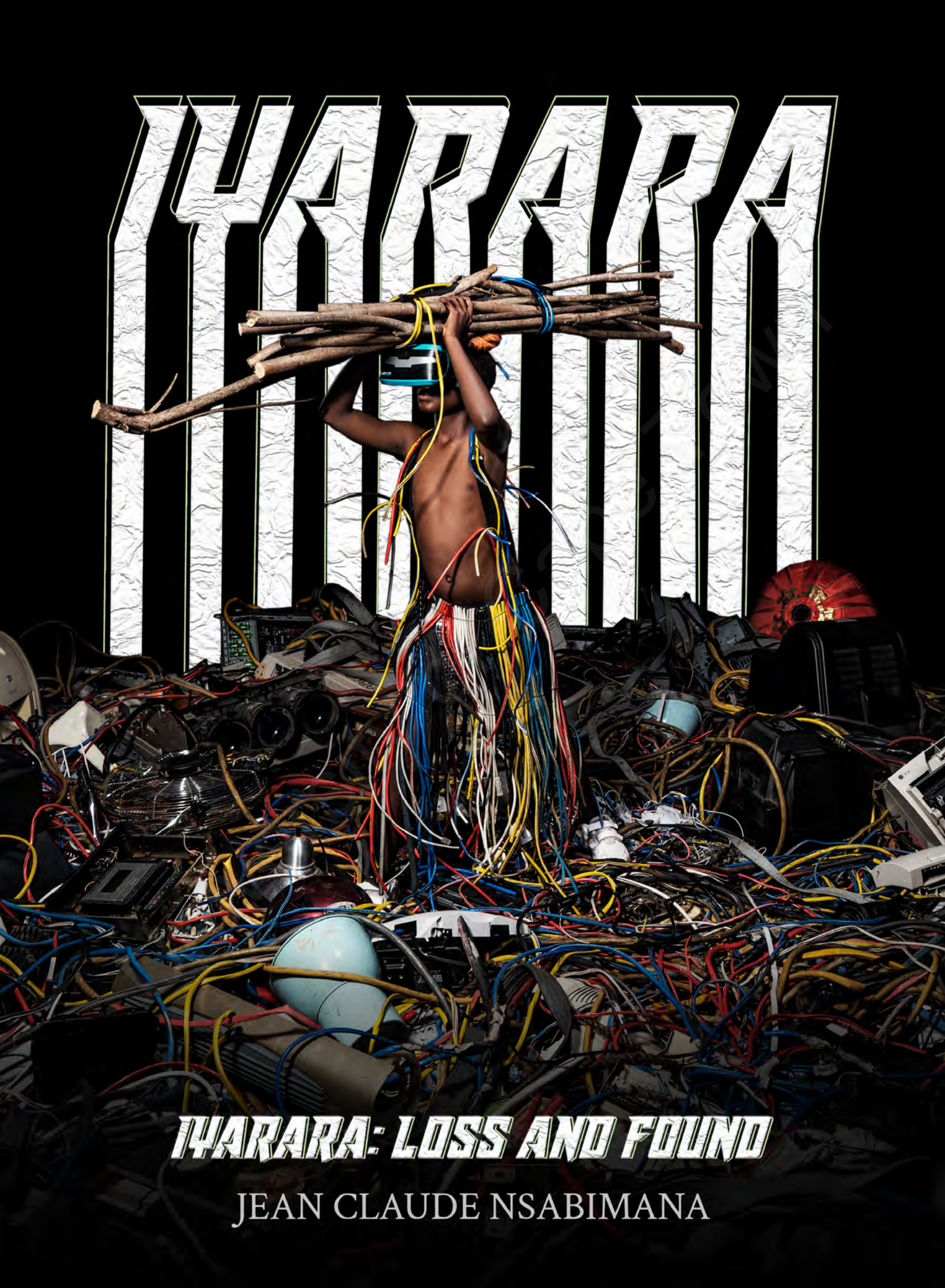
IHARARA



IHARARA: LOSS AND FOUND

JEAN CLAUDE NSABIMANA

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A dissertation submitted in fulfillment of the
requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Fine Art
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University of Cape Town
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DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to or quotation in this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

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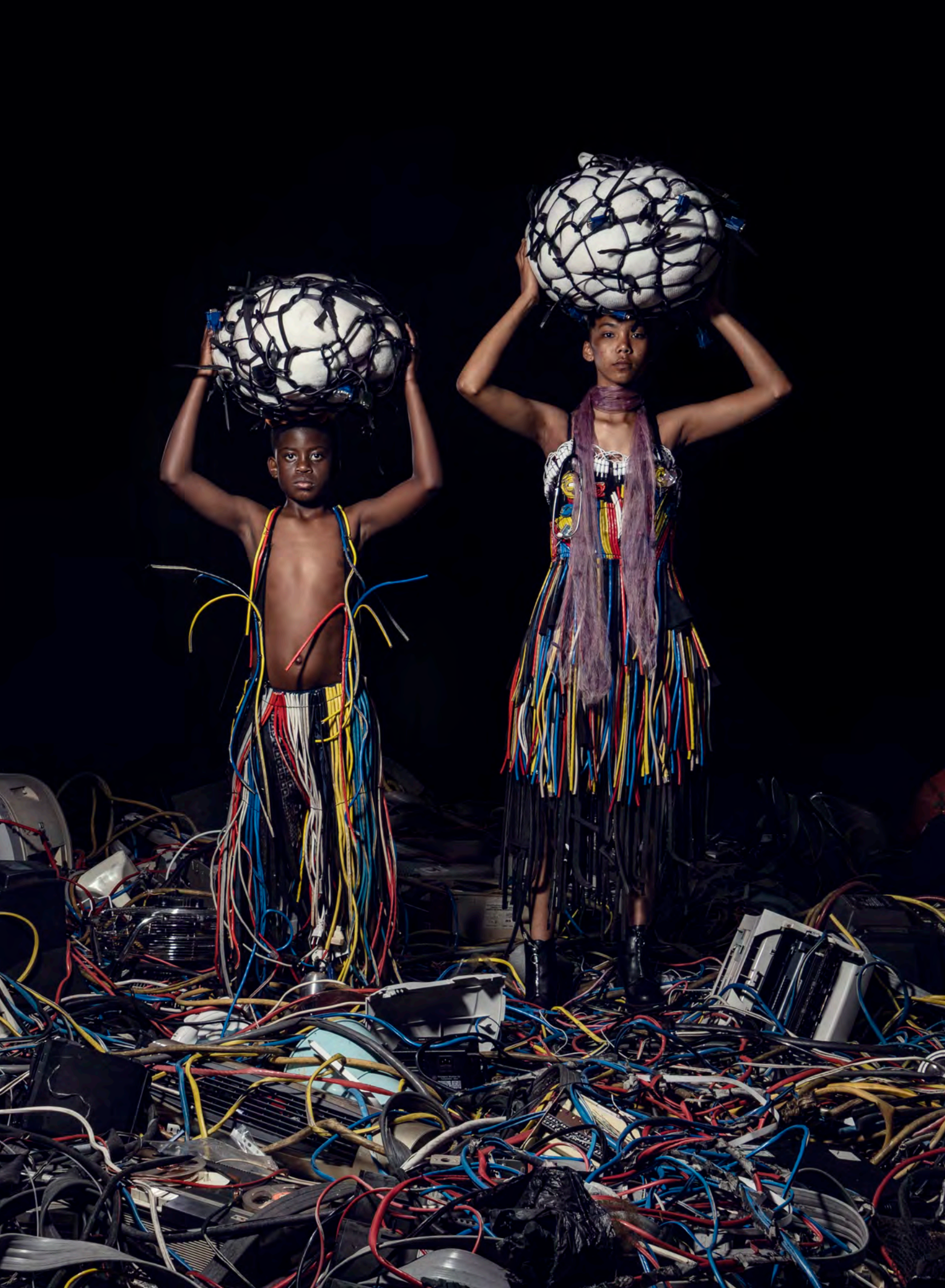

ABSTRACT

This MFA research project investigates the issue of e-waste in Africa, drawing attention to the cycle of trade associated with the extraction and exploitation of minerals in Africa and the impact on the environment and lives of people on the continent. The project uses e-waste to highlight sponsored conflict in Africa, the displacement of millions of people and the dumping of outdated and unwanted electronic goods back on the continent. The attendant exhibition, foregrounded the impact of colonialism, capitalism and the competition for mineral resources that have impacted millions of lives. Personal experience is woven into this wasted landscape, considering the repurposed materials used by many artists in Africa historically and contemporarily and their relationship both to these social and environmental issues and to European and North American art history.

CONTENTS

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I will never forget my colleagues' encouragement, support and advice throughout this journey.

INTRODUCTION

Iyarara[1]*: Loss and Found* is a body of work manifested in sculpture, performance and photography and is explicated and theorised in this document. This exhibition was prompted by my lived experiences as a refugee from Rwanda/Burundi[2] from the age of nine.

I have only three photographs from my childhood. The rest were destroyed in the genocide and war in 1994, when my family and I had to escape from Rwanda and leave everything behind. This migration resulted in traumatic experiences that are alluded to in this project. Looking at this photograph (Fig. 1), the happiness in my gaze still hurts. I was just an innocent and happy child in this image. I had no idea what was to come. I could not know that I would suffer, lose family, relatives and friends, and that I would remain displaced as an adult into my thirties.

Figure 1. Young Jean Claude Nsabimana, Butare, Rwanda. Family album.

[1] Iyarara means trash in Kinyarwanda (the language of Rwanda).

[2] When we fled Rwanda in 1994, we went to live with my mother's family in Burundi. The situation got more complicated and we had to flee again.

Loss and found[3] speaks to my lived experience since 1994, when I lost everything – family members, relatives, friends, properties, a country and, most importantly, a future. *Loss* also speaks to objects discarded in the landscape, in our neighbourhoods and in the surrounding dumps. *Found* speaks to finding myself, putting myself together and moving forward against all odds: finding myself in new countries and new environments, finding new means to survive, new ways to create a better future. *Found* also speaks to the found objects I use in my work, objects that I repurpose into new objects, new artworks, giving them a chance to serve a new purpose, a new meaning. *Loss* and *Found* speak to my experience, the material I use and my practice itself.

This project is a quest that offered me an opportunity to reflect on my own lived experiences but also served as a healing, therapeutic journey. Most of the memories recreated in this project are traumatic experiences that I had never addressed or talked about with anyone, not even a family member or others who suffered with me. The project also makes reference to the deep roots that underlie the issues that exploded in my home country in 1994: colonialism, neocolonialism and conflict in the Great Lakes region[4], particularly relating to the extraction of minerals.

Africa has long been a place of rich natural resources that have been extracted and exploited – both minerals and human beings, the latter as slaves and labour. Over the years, valuable minerals such as coltan, cobalt, gold, diamonds and copper have fuelled African armed conflict. This is not a new phenomenon, with origins in the colonial mining of minerals and other resources. While African nations are now considered independent, the underlying extraction and exploitation persists, notably in the Great Lakes region. In *The Curse of Coltan*, Noury (2010) posits that the trade of coltan and other minerals (including gold, cassiterite and diamonds) has destabilised eastern Congo and caused over five million deaths since 1996.

In this project I use found objects as my primary material. Found objects reference the notion of being lost and found, as I have been. The found materials have been used, repurposed and made into something new, which speaks to both my own history and my materials and stories. Found objects also carry with and in them their own histories and stories – the stories of their extraction, movement, manufacture, distribution, use and how they were eventually discarded. They bear the traces of their use. This cycle of making, use and being thrown away is closely connected to the capitalist system in which we function.

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[3] Dominique Edwards suggested my work dealt with being "lost and found" during a Tierney Fellowship workshop in 2021.

[4] The four countries that make up the Great Lakes region are: the Democratic Republic of the Congo (D.R.C.), Burundi, Rwanda, and Uganda. https://2009-2017.state.gov/s/greatlakes_drc/191417.htm

I use waste, primarily e-waste, as a material to speak to these cycles and connect them to histories of colonisation, neocolonialism and the negative impact of capitalism. Minerals found in e-waste are originally mined in Africa, often through the sponsorship of conflict, and are taken overseas and manufactured into highly desirable electronic devices such as computers, smartphones, TVs and other home appliances to satisfy ever-hungry consumerism and to enrich the monopoly of a few individuals and corporations. The obsolete, unwanted and surplus of these electronic goods are often dumped back in Africa, causing serious e-waste problems on the continent. Orisakwe et al. (2019) observe that informal e-waste recycling has increased as a result of the high unemployment rate in Africa, causing serious threats to human health, water and the environment.

The current cycle of trade and waste and the colonial cycle of trade have an analogical relationship. In the triangular trade route of the 17th century, slaves were extracted from Africa and taken to America to produce sugar and cotton, which were taken to Europe to be turned into rum and textiles and then sold back to Africa to buy more slaves, allowing colonial powers to amass ever-increasing wealth (Emert, 1995:20).

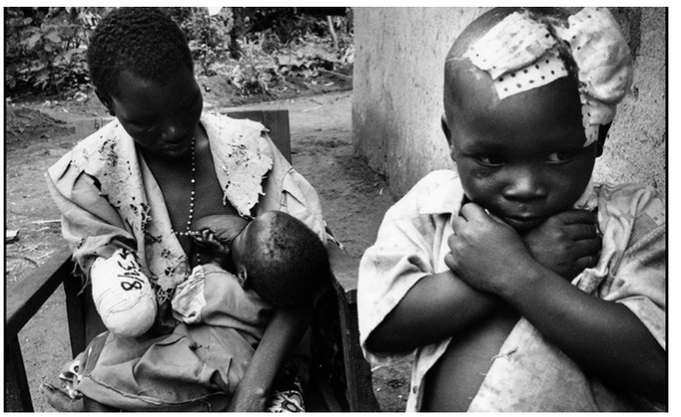


Figure 2. *Maria, a mother of three, lost her arm defending her children in Nizi. After the soldiers amputated her limb, they ate flesh from it. DR Congo, 2005.* Photograph by Marcus Bleasdale.

Figure 3. *Bonded workers crush rocks in Mongbwalu, eastern Congo. Whole families work in slave conditions for warlords controlling huge amounts of land, where gold is extracted to finance their military campaigns. DR Congo, 2004.* Photograph by Marcus Bleasdale.

[5] Artist El Anatsui, discussed later in this document, comments on this cycle through his lavish textile art-works, which are made of liquor-bottle caps and sold back to Europe and America (Aronson &Weber, 2012).

Figure 4. Pieter Hugo. *Untitled, Agbogbloshie Market,* Accra, Ghana, 2009.

Marcus Bleasdale's photographs (Figs. 2 & 3) document people in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in the aftermath of civil conflict and in near-slavery conditions for mineral mining, while Pieter Hugo's *Untitled, Agbogbloshie Market* (Fig. 4) shows a waste site in Ghana where minerals are extracted from e-waste. Innocent individuals have been killed, tortured and displaced, and the informal e-waste recyclers, the environment and the soil have been poisoned .

My life, while once privileged, changed irrevocably in 1994. In my time as a refugee in Kenya and Tanzania I learned about survival and resourcefulness. While these are lessons I would much rather not have learned, they enable me to see materials in a new light and to be imaginative, creative and innovative with them. When I come across a new material, I can immediately imagine it being used in new and unexpected contexts.

[6] The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) is believed to have killed, tortured and abducted more than ten thousand people in DRC, the Central African Republic and South Sudan. The LRA continues to fund itself through ivory poaching and mineral looting in these countries (Campbell, 2017).

[7] The idea of "slow violence", first described by Rob Nixon, is "incremental and accretive", harming both people and ecosystems globally (Carruth, 2013).

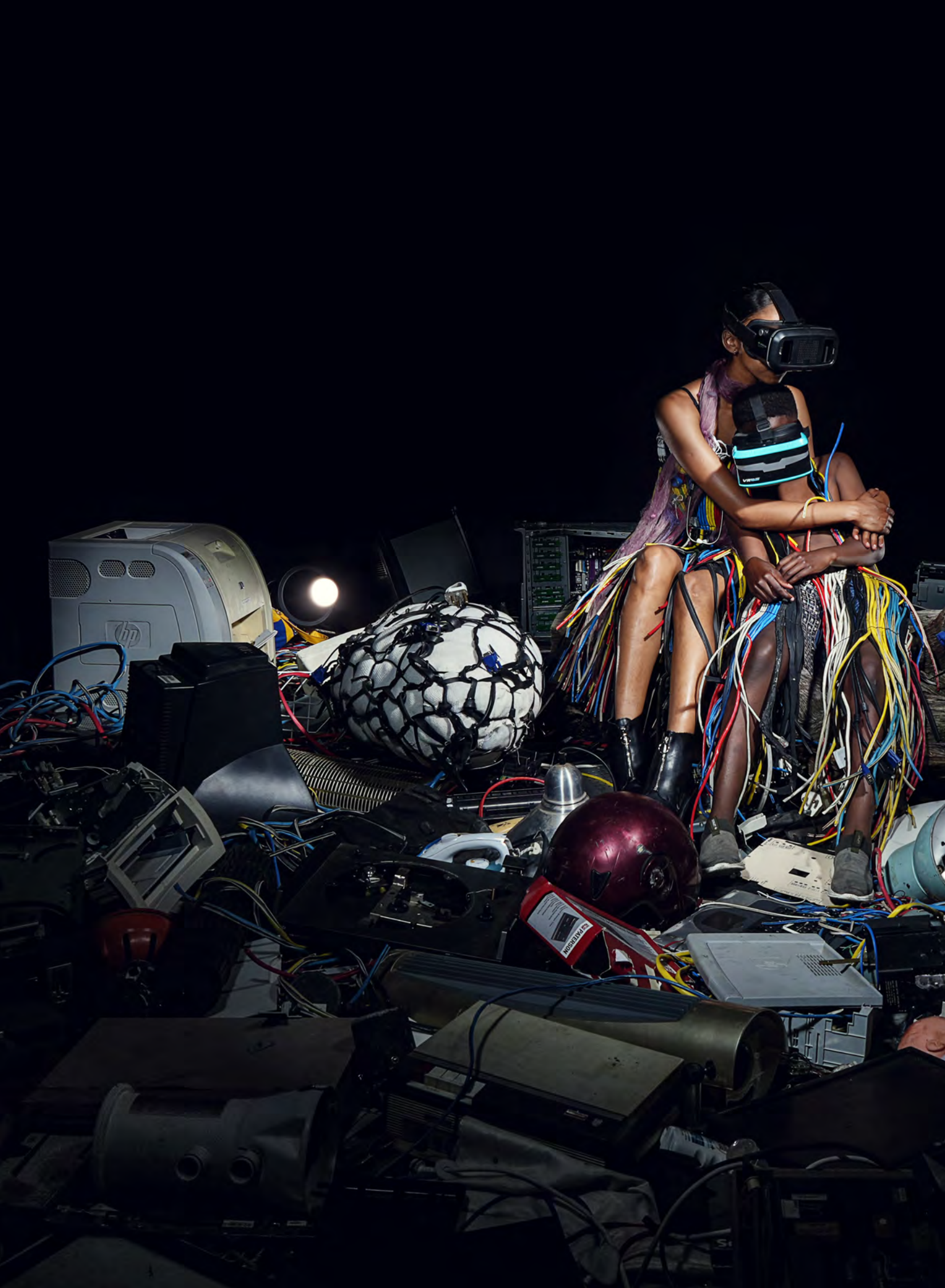
Using this resourcefulness, I have repurposed found objects, activating them in a socio-political context to highlight political, social and environmental concerns. I create imaginative and real-life heroic characters that are myself, family members and other heroes in my life. These are not heroic characters as defined and utilised in Greek mythology, but heroes in real life – people who have helped me and impacted my life, family members and other people who have showed me kindness, from my childhood and into the present. These works are infused with my life narratives.

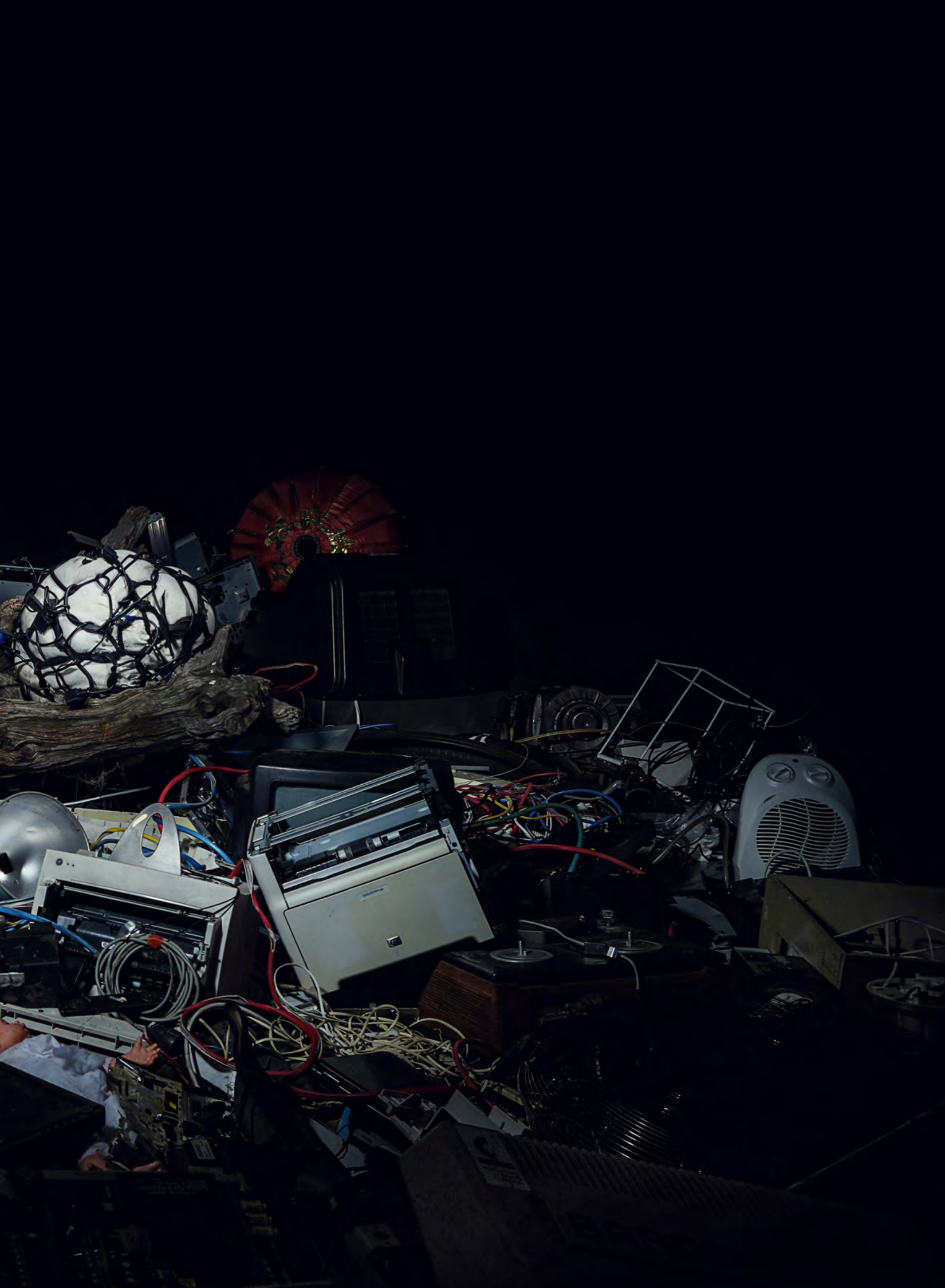
I use the materiality of these found objects to foreground the substantial effects that the materials mined in Africa have had on peoples' lives and the environment that sustains them. The politics and economics of the raw materials needed for electronic goods played a role in what happened to me, my family and many other people of the Great Lakes region, specifically in DRC, Rwanda and Burundi.

My interest in waste and repurposing found material should be considered in relation to other artists working in similar ways in Africa and the African diaspora, such as El Anatsui (Ghana, Nigeria), Maurice Mbikayi (DRC, South Africa), Francois Knoetze (South Africa), Fabrice Monteiro (Senegal, Belgium), Dilomprizulike and his *Museum of Awkward Things* (Nigeria), the Congolese protest artists represented in the photo essay *'They Call Us Bewitched': The DRC Performers Turning Trash into Art*, The Nest Collective's *Return to Sender* (Kenya), as well as Nick Cave (USA) and Wangechi Mutu (Kenya, USA). Some of these artists recycle and repurpose found objects, while others turn trash into art materials, but they all use these media as a metaphor to express ideas related to the continent, community and personal concerns. Similarly, I use such material to comment on environmental, sociopolitical and personal concerns[8], particularly with reference to my own experiences and the Great Lakes region.

I am influenced by African popular culture, particularly fashion and the innovative ways that African designers use materials and costume design, particularly science fiction, super hero and fantasy films such as *Black Panther* (2018), *Supa Moda* (2018) and *District 9* (2009). I combine recycled elements, aspects of African fashion, technology and other materials such as plastic, wires, found objects and wood to create wearable sculptures for installation and to photograph them. I also make photographs of my heroes on location, activating the wearable sculptures in heroic scenes. The characters in the sculptures and photographs are fashionable heroes who, when dressed in these sculptures, look both "futuristic" and simultaneously handmade from recognisable waste. They speak to the innovative and creative practices I have observed in African fashion and art, which often use recycled materials and few resources. These concerns about the environment and the health and overall well-being of African people are the driving force behind my project.

[8] A good example of these artists is Modou Fall, who dresses in plastic from head to toe and takes to the street of Dakar to raise awareness of the growing threat of plastic bags (Camara and Maclean, 2022).





HISTORICAL AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT

Consumerism is essential to capitalism's effective operation, but in the contemporary neoliberal globalised society, consumerism has caused a crisis through excess and waste. Strategic obsolescence drives the production of commodities that "need" to be replaced (Meneley, 2018). Writing about Pieter Hugo's *Permanent Error*, Jim Puckett (2011: 98) asserts that the electronics sector is extremely profitable as a result of "hyper-consumption and hyper-obsolescence". While we are able to gratify our personal desires, our need for speed and our competitive edge, we also produce mountains of waste and e-waste across the globe (Puckett, 2011). Advertising encourages consumers to believe that a person is of more "value" if they wear certain brands, own particular electronic accessories and live a certain lifestyle. As a result, the world has a waste crisis – particularly Africa, as a result of poor waste management, corruption and poverty and the combination of its own waste and that dumped in the continent by the rest of the world.

Alarming volumes of waste are exported, particularly to low-income nations, with detrimental health and environmental consequences (Salvia et al., 2021). Hippolyte (2012) notes that the most serious environmental injustices occur between industrialised and underdeveloped worlds. Demands for "environmental justice" have lately arisen with our understanding that globalisation has imposed a disproportionate strain on poor nations' environments. Waste management is a social, economic and environmental issue that affects every African country, with a breakdown in governance at the heart of the problem. For the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to be realised, sustainable waste management systems must become an environmental and public health political priority (Hippolyte, 2012).

AFRICA'S MINERALS: A CURSE OR BLESSING?

Africa is blessed with a wealth of natural resources, including copper, diamonds, gold and oil. Despite this, many African countries continue to suffer from poverty. Several wars and conflicts have created unrest in the Great Lakes region and destabilised resource-rich nations (Ighobor, 2019), for example the endless conflicts in the DRC; the horrific civil war in South Sudan that lasted from its independence in 2011 until a peace deal in 2018; six years of conflict in the

Central African Republic (CAR); Libya's continuous conflict following the fall of Muammar Gaddafi's government in 2011; and the Boko Haram insurgency, which began in Nigeria in 2009 and has spread to neighbouring countries such as Cameroon, Chad and Niger. Mabikke (2012) writes that these conflicts and wars have caused displacement, death and the devastation of property and the environment.

Katharine Ainger (2004) wonders whether Africa's overabundance of natural resources is a blessing or a curse, writing that Joseph Conrad's classic novella of colonialism and cruelty, *Heart of Darkness* (1899), which describes colonial expansion in the Belgian Congo, references Europe's theft of Africa's wealth and its collaboration in an African holocaust.

In this context, Ainger (2004: 9-10), refers to Europe's ongoing involvement in the "blood" timber and minerals:

> At Tilbury dock today, there is nothing to prevent the importation of timber sold to fund distant conflicts. Just beyond the circle of the M25 motorway, diamonds arrive at Heathrow airport, where customs can't detect "blood" gems sold for arms by warmongers and that everything from diamond rings and garden furniture to the components of mobile phones may have originated as the booty of Africa's conflicts.

Plundering natural resources and sponsoring conflicts has long been part of the colonial plan. Ainger (2004) describes how ship worker Edward Morel discovered the truth about Belgian atrocities in the Congo in 1897, noticing that high-value ivory and rubber were brought in by ship, and ammunition and rifles were sent back to the Congo. The story of King Leopold's influence in the Congo is discussed in detail in Adam Hochschild's *King Leopold's Ghost* (in Hymans, 2012) and makes harrowing reading.

In *The Rape of a Nation*, John le Carré (2009) writes that no country has suffered more cruelly under colonial control than the Congo, from Arab slavers to Belgian King Leopold's pillage of the country's resources and people. Throughout its history the Congo has suffered at the hands of colonialism and other foreign predators (Le Carré, 2009). Every day in Africa, women and children are raped, enslavement and unfair labour practices occur and people are displaced to benefit capital controlled by former colonial powers, new colonial powers (the US and China) and big corporations.

Figure 5. Congolese people were forced to be human exhibits in a "zoo" in Belgium in 1897.

Figure 6. Colonial officials amputated and mutilated Congolese people, including children, as punishment.

BACKGROUND TO THE CONFLICT IN THE GREAT LAKES REGION - DRC, RWANDA, BURUNDI AND UGANDA

Minerals harvested for electrical equipment and jewellery mostly come from conflict-affected areas and indirectly or directly fuel violence (Addaney & Lubaale, 2021). Natural resources have been both a blessing and a burden for some African nations (Olanrewaju et al., 2020), and nations rich in natural resources have been increasingly impacted by conflicts and civil wars (Rwafa, 2017). In DRC, the illegal exploitation of minerals continues to fuel the conflicts that have destroyed the country and the lives of its people (Noury, 2010).

Patrick Kanyangara (2016) clarifies that the main drivers of these conflicts are multi-factorial and complex, with ethnic divisions, inequitable access to land and natural resources, unfair access to political power and a rapid increase in small, armed groups being among the causes of the conflicts in the Great Lake region. Närman et al. (2004) observe that foreign engagement in conflicts and civil wars in the Great Lakes region is not a recent occurrence. The US has had geopolitical interests in the region since the 1960s and participated in the forcible establishment and support of Mobutu Sese Seko's tyranny from the 1960s until 1995. France and Belgium, former colonial powers in the DRC, Rwanda and Burundi, also supported Mobutu's regime, deploying soldiers to protect the dictator against intruders in 1977 and 1978. During the Cold War, the Great Lakes area became a focal point of rivalry between the superpowers of Russia and the USA and their respective allies. Legislative concerns in this region have been shaped by this resistance. After thirty years of mismanagement, Sese Seko's removal from power in 1997 sparked rebellions that engulfed the whole Great Lakes region.

Rumbidzayi Rwafa (2017) describes evidence of European and American collaboration in the DRC's struggles and conflict. Rwafa emphasizes that the US partnership is subject to military preparation and the support of both Rwanda and Uganda, the main allies of DRC rebels. There have been counter-claims and -allegations, with the DRC accusing Rwanda and Uganda of receiving funding from American corporations and the World Bank to continue hostilities.

According to the Human Rights Watch report *The Curse of Gold*, AngloGold Ashanti, a subsidiary of Anglo American, formed ties with the Nationalist and Integrationist Front (FNI), a rebel group accused of war crimes and crimes against humanity, to gain access to the gold-rich mining site near Mongbwalu in north-eastern Ituri. These insurgents use proceeds from the gold trade to

fund their activities and purchase weapons. The report also traces the blood gold's journey to neighbouring Uganda, from where it is exported to worldwide markets in Europe and beyond. The study details how Metalor Technologies, a major Swiss gold refining company, obtained gold from Uganda. To guarantee safe access to minerals in South Kivu (DRC), Chinese mining corporation Kun Hou Mining is accused of providing weapons, money and supplies to armed groups operating on the banks of the Ulindi River (Berman et al., 2017).

These are only a few examples of foreign-owned enterprises harvesting and exploiting resources in Africa, which is then ripped apart by conflict. The conflicts in DRC have seriously affected the country and neighbouring Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda. Many people, myself included, have fled their countries looking for refuge in South Africa and other countries on this continent and overseas. Africa's "instability" only benefits the economic superpowers of Europe, China and the US.

E-WASTE IN AFRICA: A THREAT TO HUMANITY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Africa is rich in minerals and natural resources, but their extraction has caused unrest, conflict and environmental destruction across the continent. The coltan and copper used in many electrical products and associated technologies are frequently returned to the continent, causing further damage to the environment, water and human health concerns. The e-waste dumped in Agbogbloshie in Ghana, the Olusosum dump site in Lagos and at other dumpsites are most often near poor communities' living areas.

As a result of the high levels of unemployment and high demand for these minerals, the poor people in these communities burn and extract the coltan and copper so it can be resold to economically empowered countries to manufacture more electrical and electronic equipment. Electronic devices are burned as part of this informal e-waste recycling, releasing toxins very harmful to human health and the environment.

Orisakwe et al. (2019) write that people in Africa are exposed to a very dangerous toxic cocktail of heavy metals through their handling and disposal of e-waste, and Maphosa and Maphosa (2020) note that Africa is the main destination for second-hand electronic goods exported by the economic superpowers. Maphosa and Maphosa (2020) posit that dependence on electrical

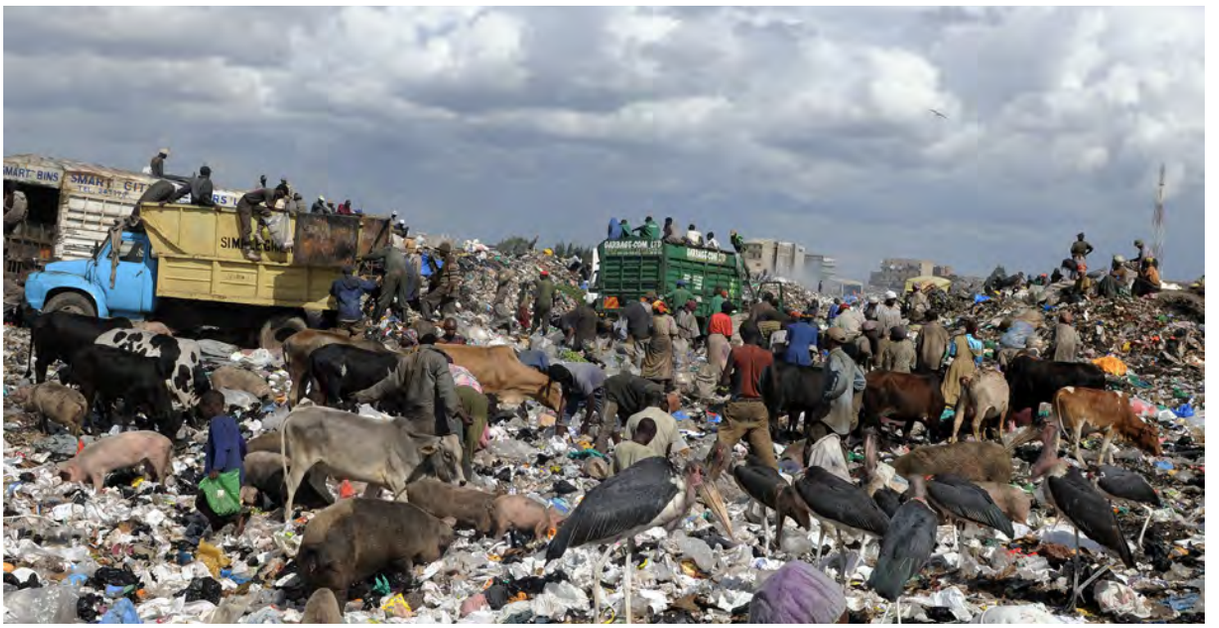


Figure 7. The Dandora dumping site in Nairobi. Clar Ni Chonghaile, Nairobi, Kenya, 2012.

and electronic equipment has risen because of the knowledge economy. Rapid technological advancements and the need to maximise profits has resulted in the production of new, cheap, disposable products with short lifespans. A number of countries in Africa depend on reconditioned electronic appliances and computers to engage in the knowledge economy, but mismanagement of unrepairable and obsolete electrical and electronic equipment results in e-waste (Maphosa and Maphosa, 2020).

There is consistent evidence that e-waste and the exploitation of minerals in Africa have a negative impact on the continent and must be addressed as a matter of urgency. The corruption and negligence of both our governments and the people of Africa are destroying this continent, the people and the environment. In *Away Is a Place*, Jim Puckett (2011) reminds us that when something is thrown away it appears to disappear from our lives for good, but *away* is often in Africa.

In this context, Puckett (2011:103) writes:

> Wherever we live, we must realise that when we sweep things out of our lives and throw them away… they don't ever disappear as we

> might like to believe. We must know that "away" is in fact a place. In a world where cost externalisation is made too easy by the pathways of globalisation, "away" is like to be somewhere where people are impoverished, disenfranchised, powerless and desperate to be able to resist the poison for the realities of their poverty. "Away" is like to be a place where people and environments will suffer for carelessness, our ignorance or indifference. Away is a place called Agbogbloshie.

As Puckett asserts, "away" is, in fact, a place – where people, animals and the environment suffer the consequences of selfish actions, ignorance and negligence.

IYARARA IN CONTEXT OF CONTEMPORARY ART FROM AFRICA

As a contemporary African artist using found materials in the form of waste, I reflect on Africa's problems in my work, as have many other artists on the continent. In the following section, I elaborate on some of these artists' works.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND AWARENESS IN AFRICA

Pieter Hugo

South African photographer Pieter Hugo has contributed significantly to awareness of the complex histories and stories on the African continent. He has produced a variety of works and published books on socio-political and environmental concerns across the globe. Here I focus on two projects: *Permanent Error* (2011) and *Rwanda: Vestiges of a Genocide* (2004).

In Permanent Error, Hugo foregrounds shocking instances of toxic waste in an e-waste dump in Accra, Ghana, exposing the scandal of shipping millions of tons of outdated electronic devices to developing countries. Burning these gadgets to remove valuable metals turns the site into a toxic wasteland that pollutes air, soil and groundwater and threatens human health (Hugo, 2011).

Figure 8. Pieter Hugo. *Untitled, Agbogbloshie Market,* Accra, Ghana, 2010.

Writing about *Permanent Error*, Federica Angelucci references the arcadian harvest time in Africa, describing the activities of men and women, a dog dozing among cows that graze peacefully on patches of golden grass. In contrast, Agbogbloshie harvest time evokes no happy moments or thoughts of success, only the hard work and toxification of human and environmental health. Angelucci (2011: 9) writes:

> At first, absurd as it may appear, one seems incapable of registering what these images of Agbogbolishie present to us. There is no idyllic seasonal harvest in this vast dump of discarded technology; there is no chanting, no sign of festive gatherings at the end of a long day. The land is burnt, barren, discharging chemicals which will poison the community for years to come.

She describes the extraordinary power of photography and how images can evoke sensory reaction: smoke in the sky makes us feel confined and deprived of air and reminds us of the reality of odour, intensity and disease (Angelucci, 2011). *Permanent Error* informs and inspires both the practical and theoretical parts of my project. I am influenced by both Hugo's subject matter and his technical excellence, which in turn makes his subject speak more powerfully.

Hugo also completed a project in my home country – *Rwanda: Vestiges of a Genocide* (2004), where he documented the residue ten years after genocide. Two missiles shot down Rwandan President Habyarimana's plane on his way home to Kigali on April 6, 1994 (Caplan et al., 2004). This crime, whose perpetrators remain unknown, sparked one of history's darkest tragedies: the Tutsi genocide. The genocide came to an end a hundred days later, with between 500,000 and 1,000,000 Tutsis killed. Thousands of women and girls were raped and tortured, with survivors suffering serious disabilities.

Hugo became interested in the Rwandan genocide after reading the cover story of a financial magazine in January 2004. The article's cover image, a human skull on a church altar in Ntarama, emphasised Rwanda's progress since the 1994 genocide and urged quick prosecution of its perpetrators. The journalist wrote that evidence of genocide could be seen everywhere.

Hugo (2004: online) explains his photographs:

> These photographs offer a glimpse of what I saw there before the reburials took place, and a very limited forensic view of a few of the genocide sites. At many of the places there is nothing happening and

historical knowledge is needed to support the images; through the stillness the atrocity continues to resonate. At some of the sites human remains and the personal effects of the dead are still present. I hope these images in some small way bear testament to the personal anguish of these individuals (Hugo, 2004).

Figure 9. Pieter Hugo. 2004. *Clothes Hanging, Murambi Technical College.* "People fled in the clothes they were wearing and took little with them; survivors wore the same clothes for months. Many victims were buried naked after their clothes were looted. These bloodied rags belonged to the victims of the massacre at Murambi."

Due to these horrors, I have lost relatives and remain displaced, still dealing with the traumatic experiences I have lived through since 1994. How does one heal from dreadful experiences like these? Art is my therapist, and I weave these experiences into my artworks as a process of healing. I look also to the histories of extractive and exploitative acts that underlie these atrocities and that brought this genocide into being.

Hugo's photographs tell some of this story. The blood-stained garments in Figure 9 belonged to the 40 000 or more people slaughtered after finding safety inside the Murambi technical college. This photograph elicits strong emotions in me, and it is easy to be transported to the place and recall or imagine what occurred during the slaughter.

Fabrice Monteiro

In Senegalese-born photographer Fabrice Monteiro's *The Prophecy* (2014), models wear costumes designed by Senegalese fashion designer Doulsy (Jah Gal) to emphasise Senegal's environmental challenges. The ghostly-looking figures enhance the photographs' fantasy of a *jinn* (an ancient magical genie) dealing with the consequences of human-caused pollution (Niedan, 2014).
In an interview with Christian Niedan (2014: online), Monteiro says:

> I grew up in Benin. When I got back to Senegal four years ago, I couldn't believe how dirty it was. I realised that Africa had a serious, serious issue with environmental problems. So I thought I could do something, being a photographer, and I came up with the idea of mixing art and culture. Because to me, the mistake of a lot of NGOs that try to make Africans aware, they don't consider the culture. They come with ideas that are already all made, and the people there don't get it, because it doesn't talk to them. But using animism, the whole of West Africa believes in the spirits, and the idea was to use those spirits to deliver a message, instead of just saying, "Oh, you shouldn't do this" or "You shouldn't do that".

The initial idea was for each photograph to be accompanied by a short, child-friendly tale to inform the next generation about what is happening to the environment. Little booklets would be created and distributed in Senegalese classrooms so that children could take the booklet home and tell the rest of their family not to throw plastics away (Niedan, 2014). I also feel that the younger generation should be prioritised, because they are the future; if the transformation does not begin now, children will have no future.

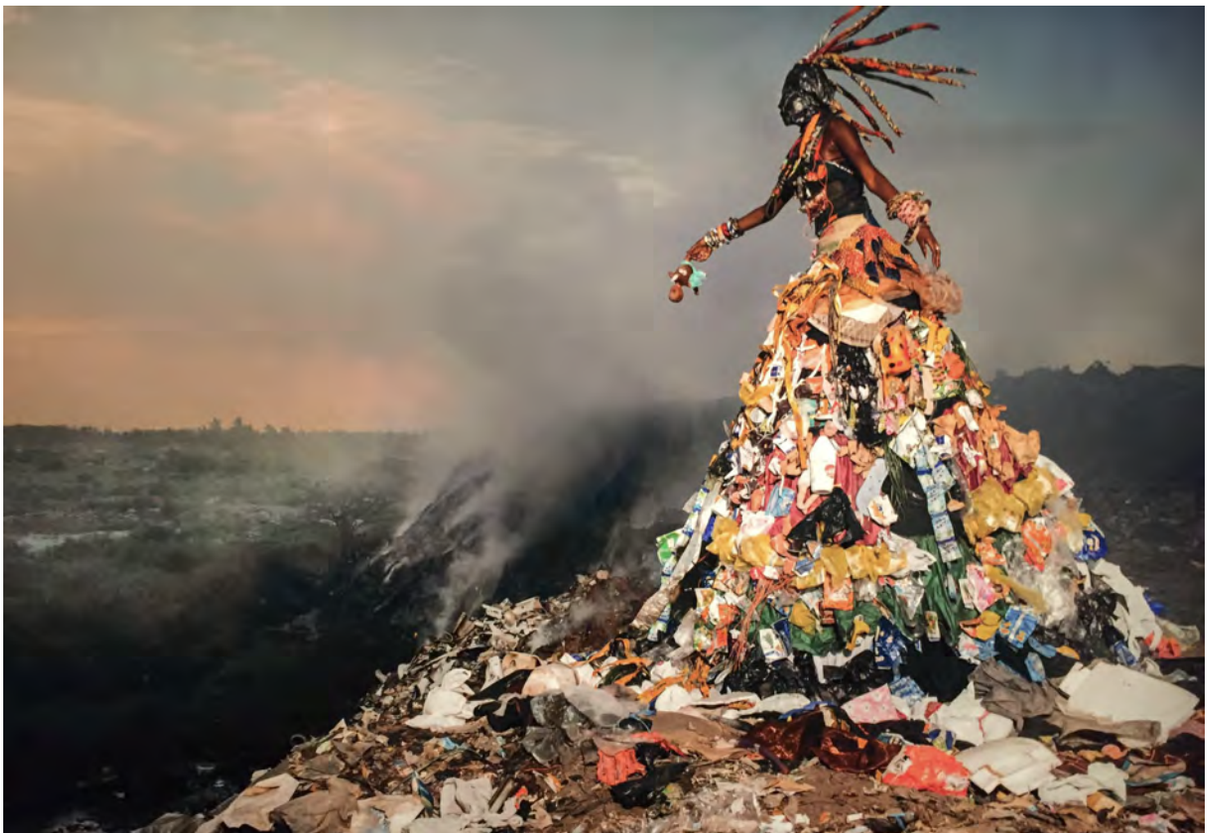


Figure 10. Fabrice Monteiro. 2018. *The Prophecy.* Dakar, Senegal.

In *The Prophecy* (2014), a series of ten images, a tall female figure on the right of the frame wears a ball-gown-shaped dress made entirely of plastic that extends seamlessly into a large, smoking rubbish dump. The woman seems to be struggling to walk, her legs weighed down by the enormity of the dump below her. The image is taken at sunset, and clouds and smoke obscure the sun, speaking of air pollution as well as land pollution. She is lit with artificial light in the style of a studio photograph, emphasising her appearance as a fashion model or a product. While such lighting is usually used to glamorise a model and show a product in the best possible light, here the lighting emphasises the trash and the abjection of the scene.

This photograph addresses us directly as viewers, informing or reminding us of how human materials – plastic and air pollution – devastate the ecosystem, air and human health. The trapped model, unable to move, is a visual representation of the Earth or humankind; if we continue in this manner, we shall perish.

CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN ARTISTS AND MATERIALITY

Materiality is a significant part of many artists' production, because materials are imbued with their own histories and meanings that can be harnessed in the artwork. African artists have increasingly used found objects in their practice to comment on conditions in Africa and to reflect and comment on the past and current crises on the continent – environmental, socio-political and economic (Aronson & Weber, 2012).

Found objects are initially made or produced for a particular purpose but are eventually discarded. Through this journey, these objects embody stories that can be used by the artist to amplify a particular conceptual interest, where the material embodies past narratives. Through art, new narratives are reimagined.

> Objects gain their value through the situations in which they are placed – in other words, what defines the value of an object is not the material it is made from or the function it serves, but its position in a context (Johansson, 2010).

Figure 11. *Songye. Power Figure (Nkishi).* Late 19th or early 20th century. Wood, raffia, metal, cloth, leather, horn, beads. 76.2 x 30.5 x 37.5 cm. Brooklyn Museum.

[9] In Africa, the art of transformation ranges from minor changes to the face and body to comprehensive alteration of the human form by enclosing it in a "costume" of a nonhuman nature. By superimposing a whole new form, these spirit-associated alterations erase or obliterate the wearer's personality, even their humanity (Cole, 1985). Men of all ages take part in masquerading, and artists are also involved. Members of the masked cults organise, orchestrate and rehearse elaborate shows (Cole, 1985). In some parts of Africa, women also participate, such as the Bundu devils or Ndoli jowei masquerades of Sierra Leone (Basu,2020).

The repurposing of discarded materials to create new objects is not a new phenomenon in Africa. In masquerade[9], for example the masquerade of the Egungun from Yorubaland, Nigeria, and the power figures from Tanganyika province, DRC are often made from natural materials. According to Herbert Cole (2009), the materials commonly used to build or embellish masks have local symbolic significance and contribute to a masquerade's message-system. These materials include skins, metal, cloth, nails, beads, cowrie shells and fibre and form an integral part of many African cultural and spiritual practices. Songye power figures are carved of wood and embellished with horn, leather, beads and other found materials, such as cloth and found objects such as glass, nails or metal (Brooklyn Museum, 2007).

Contemporary African artists use different found materials to highlight different concepts. Maurice Mbikayi uses recycled computer parts, specifically computer keyboard keys and cables in his creative practice to comment on the issue of coltan mining, e-waste and the desirability of technology and references to La Sape, a fashionable expression of identity and resistance in the DRC.[10] Ibrahim Mahama works with jute sacks to reference trade and labour in Africa, transforming materials and buildings or spaces to explore commodity, migration, globalisation and economic exchange.

Below I discuss the creative practice of several contemporary artists and their choice of material, their creative process and methodology and how they influence my own practice.

El Anatsui

El Anatsui, a Ghana-born, Nigeria-based artist, has always spoken clearly about the important role of found objects in his creative process. He believes that "Art is the one language we all speak, and is infinite in power. Art is about the voyage of the human spirit and the commonality of all experiences" (Anatsui, 2019: online). With a career that spans over four decades, his practice of creating art from materials that the "environment has thrown up" has progressively contributed to the meaning, form and interpretation of his work across the globe.
Using recycled and flattened bottle caps and metal foil bottle tops, Anatsui creates monumental works that present a fantasy of luxury and opulence.

Anatsui exhibits a historically complex and critical engagement with his materials and makes visual connections to Ewe Kente cloth. John Weber (2012) describes Anatsui's materials and their relationship to bigger issues of history

[10] La SAPE, or "Société des Ambianceurs et des Personnes Élégantes", is associated with resistance against sartorial impositions by Mobutu Sese Seko.

and socio-politics. Speaking of his original impetus to create wall works from metal scraps, Anatsui says:

> Several things went through my mind when I found the bag of bottle tops in the bush. I thought of the objects as links between my continent, Africa, and the rest of Europe. Objects such as these were introduced to Africa by Europeans when they came as traders. Alcohol was one of the commodities brought with them to exchange for goods in Africa. Eventually alcohol became one of the items used in the transatlantic slave trade. They made rum in the West Indies, took it to Liverpool, and then it made its way back to Africa. I thought that the bottle caps had a strong reference to the history of Africa (Aronson & Weber, 2012).

El Anatsui prefers working with "objects that have their own story or history" and "things that have been used before, things that bring people together." “If you touch something, you leave a charge behind, and everyone who touches it is linked to you" (Aronson & Weber, 2012). Anatsui’s choice to work with

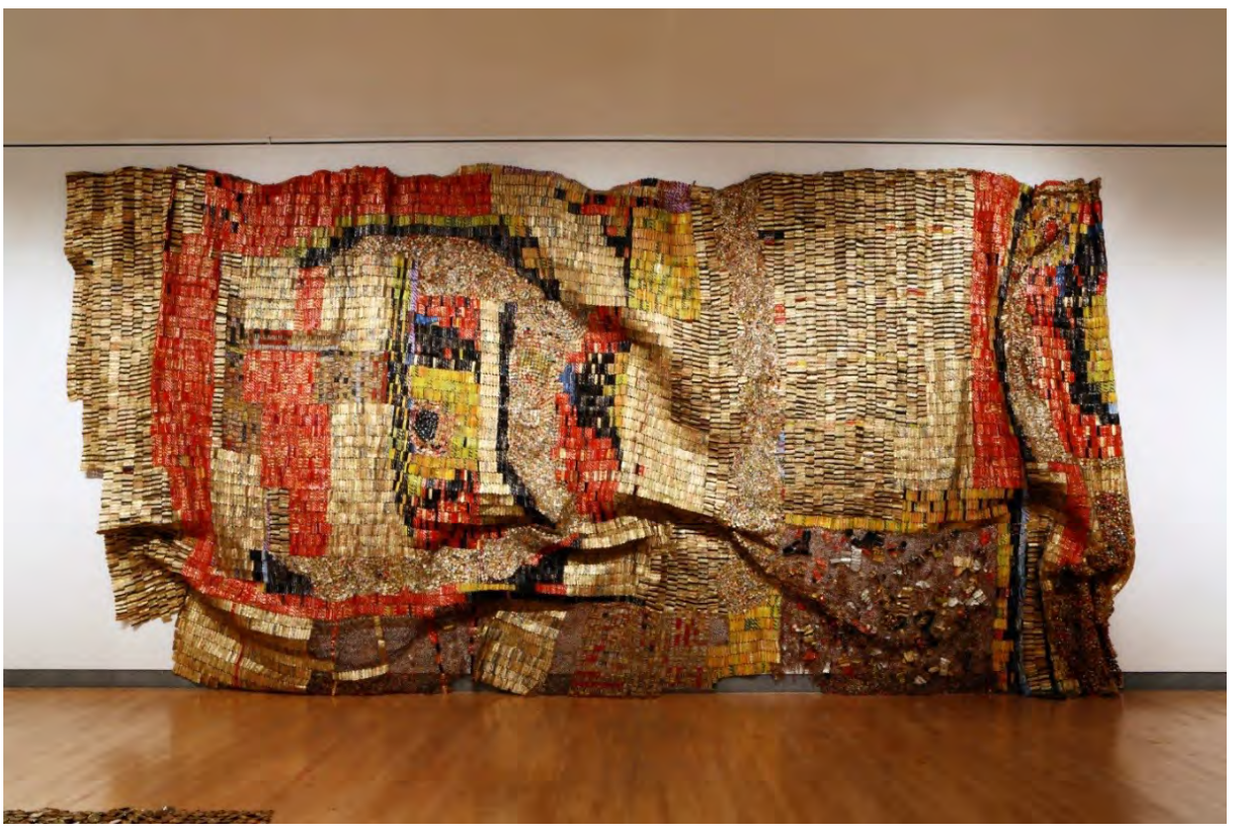


Figure 12. El Anatsui. 2007. *Earth’s Skin.*

something that has its own story or history directly influenced my own choice of materials (discussed later in this document).

Earth's Skin (2007) has the sumptuousness and texture of rich, velvety cloth, but on closer inspection the piece is made entirely from metal bottle caps joined with wire. The rich golds, reds, yellows and blacks of the individual bottle tops give the impression of wealth and luxury rather than discarded rubbish. The title of the work suggests environmental concerns and the contours and mapping of land and resources. Anatsui is commenting on and reacting to past and present narratives in Africa of slavery, trade, exploitation and environmental damage.

Maurice Mbikayi

Maurice Mbikayi is from DRC but is resident in South Africa. He investigates the increasing use of electronic commerce in our geopolitical system, collecting the remains of this fast-evolving technology and combining them in his work to make sculptures, photographs and performances that connect the materials to their political settings. Mbikayi (2015) says:

> I focus on various ways in which the technological advancement of the last twenty years has both positively and negatively affected the world. Its reliance on mining for resources, for instance, has made Africa and its people vulnerable to low-wage labour abuse as well as a range of other factors beyond their control, as dictated by international economic markets. The effect on cultural and environmental diversity has been devastating.

Mbikayi utilises e-waste as a medium to comment on and raise awareness about Africa's problems. In his MFA project, "Fashionable Addiction: The Impact of Digital Identity through the Cult of the Body", Mbikayi (2015) reflects on how information technology (IT) has affected society. In particular, he discusses his personal experiences in Kinshasa and changes in fashion and IT accessibility in his native DRC. He looks at how the consumerist character of IT in Africa as a whole contributes to "FOMO", or the fear of missing out. He draws on modern computer technology and African fashion because both use products from economically empowered countries for African self-representation (Mbikayi, 2015). Mbikayi (2015:8) writes:

> I draw an analogy between the consumption of IT and African fashion, and specifically with my own country's culture of dressing-up, which has developed into a kind of doctrine (the "cult of the cloth") and an

> expression of resistance. The analogy is linked to the desire to stay up to date with IT, which can lead to addiction … My reference and use of computer parts critiques the way that contemporary technology has become an extension of our personal style, as in the fashion sense.

Mbikayi critiques the status symbols of IT and fashion in Africa, where consuming the most recent IT and fashion items is seen by the majority of Africans, particularly those in metropolitan areas, as being desirable. This reflexive consumerism is an inevitable consequence of the principle of planned obsolescence and can become an addiction that leads to more waste.

Mbikayi makes references to and employs computer components to criticise how modern technology has evolved into an extension of our fashion sense and to make statements about the horrors connected to mineral mining, notably in the Congo (DRC), and e-waste in Africa. *E-Munkishi* (2015) demonstrates Mbikayi's

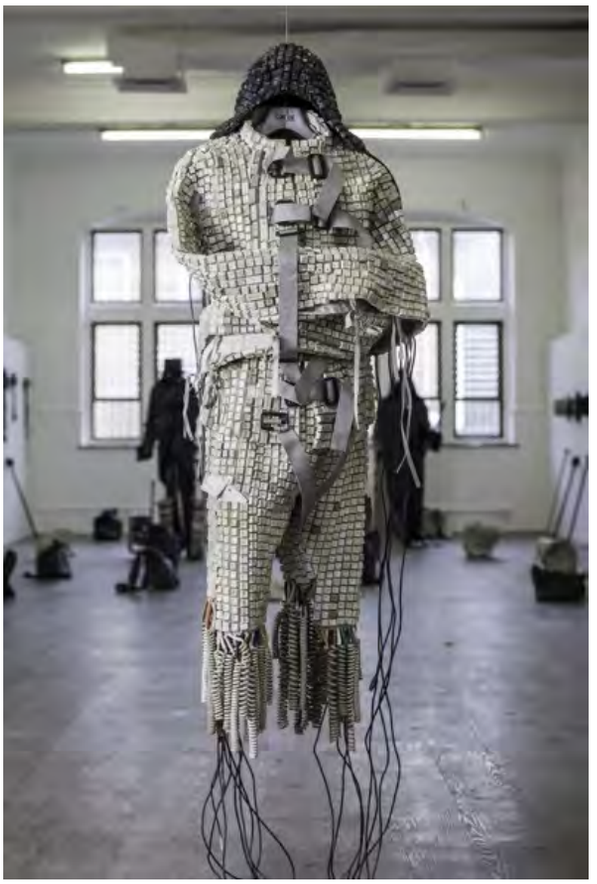


Figure 13. Maurice Mbikayi, 2015. *Web Jacket.*

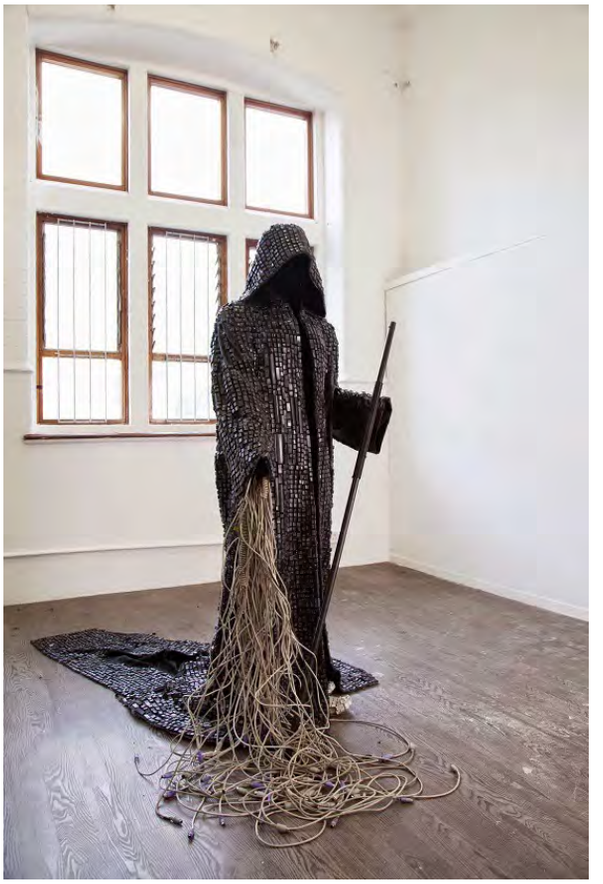


Figure 14. Maurice Mbikayi, *2015. E-Munkishi.* Computer parts, fibreglass, resin, clothes and found objects.

use of e-waste and its environmental consequences. *Munkishi* is a Luba term to describe a spirit, bad or good. *E-Munkishi* thus symbolises the spirit of the internet and its everyday use, a regular habit for many people. In this work, a long dark robe made of computer keys is shaped like a standing life-sized human figure holding a staff, with a hooded head like the Grim Reaper. Making this work from technological debris speaks to the death inherent in the entire process of acquiring technology – such as mineral extraction, which often happens through sponsored conflict – and to the death of normal human engagement. The internet and social media have replaced our regular human interactions, and Mbikayi (2015: 70) writes that "the use of the internet is a daily ritual for many people. Hence *E-Munkishi* represents the power of the internet over people's lives."

François Knoetze

South African sculptor, filmmaker and performance artist François Knoetze explores the relationships between material histories and retraces the life cycles of discarded objects (or "mongo") .[11] In his *Cape Mongo* sculptures, Knoetze (2015) fuses the synthetic with the human to highlight the personification of objects and draw attention to the commodification of people.

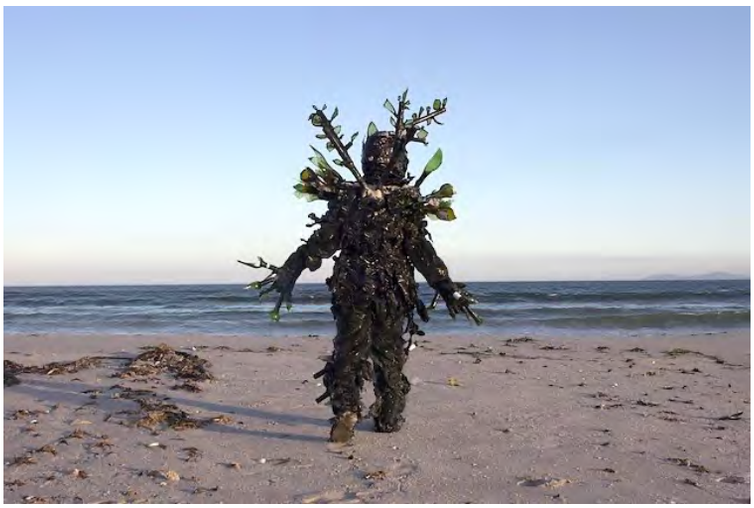


Figure 15. Francois Knoetze. 2015. *Cape Mongo.*

[11] "Mongo" is "any discarded object that is retrieved" (Reynolds, 2004).
https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2004-jul-11-bk-reynolds11-story.html

In the form of five videos, *Cape Mongo* combines sculptural, performative and video-montage techniques. A different Mongo character travels to different Cape Town locations in each piece. Investigating the many settings and metropolitan areas that these discarded objects may have called home over their existence, the project offers a type of social commentary on the city's current geographical, economic and political realities.

Knoetze (2015: 10) writes: "This process has also involved a great deal of reflection on my personal entanglement with the conditions of living and consuming in the city. The journeys of the commodities that I consume and discard on a daily basis can be traced to reveal the intricate economic networks which underpin the consumer culture of Cape Town. The recyclable packaging of consumer goods is presented as mnemonic vessels of interconnectedness which expose the relationship between myself and the spaces and lives these objects inhabit."

Knoetze's work exemplifies his artistry, and his choice of materials speaks to environmental, economic and socio-political realities. He is also concerned with Africa's dual role as a beginning point for electronic objects and as a dumping ground for the same.

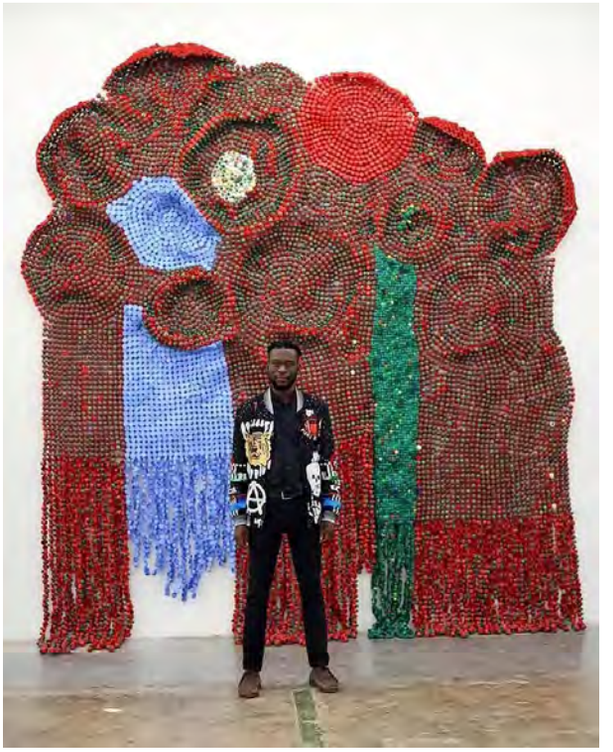


Figure 16. Moffat Takadiwa with his *Tengwe Farms* art piece, 2019.

Moffat Takadiwa

Moffat Takadiwa is an artist from one of Zimbabwe's oldest and most populous high-density areas, the Mbare township in Harare.

While a Harare Polytechnic student in 2007 and facing financial difficulties, Takadiwa established himself and the type of work he has come to be associated with. He created different types of art using recyclable materials, including paper, computer parts, plastic containers, lids and many other discarded objects. Takadiwa says that he "encountered difficulty in acquiring materials due to lack of funds". He draws creative and material inspiration from his surroundings, including the waste piles across the city and around townships such as Mbare and other high-density districts (Mohamed, 2020).

His works take the shape of carpets, deftly knitted together from computer keyboard keys, aluminium cans, aerosol bottles, toothbrushes and plastic and metal bottle tops into fascinating patterns (Mohamed, 2020). In an interview With Mohamed (2020:online), Takadiwa explains:

> The Tengwe piece mimics a topographical map of where I grew up, giving an aerial view of the tobacco commercial farming activities which are affecting the environment. It continues to speak about the land question in Zimbabwe and Africa, which has not been addressed properly. By using everyday recognisable materials, I infused the African way of weaving to challenge Western aesthetics and comprehension of art ... This is a way I elevate the discarded materials into something of value and return the materials to the West, although by means of art. As they continue dumping in Africa, I return it.

The Nest Collective

Return to Sender (2022) by The Nest Collective from Kenya addresses the idea of returning rubbish to where it came from. The Sri Lankan government recently returned illegal waste to the United Kingdom, and *Return to Sender* similarly highlights a problem with bales of clothing sent to Africa as "donations" for poor Africans. The documentary video *Delivery Details* made as part of this work exposes the skimming off of valuable "vintage" items for resale in Europe and North America, after which the clothes are baled and sent to Africa. Only about 40% of these clothes are usable and are sold to traders; the rest end up in landfills. Thus, Europe and America have found a "charitable" way of disposing of their waste.

The work was shown at Documenta 2022 in Kassel in a structure made of bales of clothing surrounded by bales of e-waste (Nest Collective, 2022).

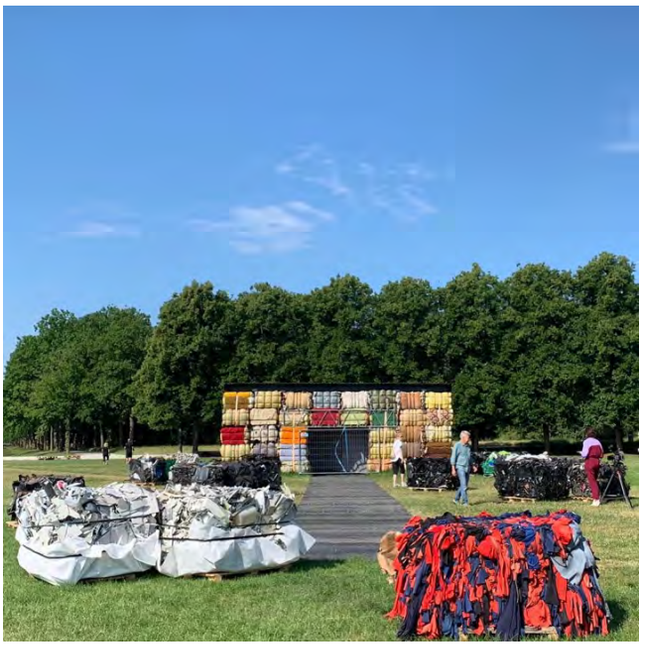


Figure 17. The Nest Collective. 2022. Installation view of *Return to Sender.*

The Congolese protest artists represented in the photo essay, 'They call us bewitched': the DRC performers turning trash into art.

In collaboration with KinAct, a group of Kinshasa protest artists used protest and performance art to address political and environmental concerns. Dolls, radio parts, broken flip-flops and more from rubbish dumps were used to create performance costumes and address political and environmental concerns (Pannecoucke, 2021).

Shaka Fumu Kabaka makes costumes out of domestic waste from dumps or from the streets. He was a child when a six-day war started between Ugandan and Rwandan forces in his hometown of Kisangani in 2000, in which thousands of people were killed. He made the costume for *Matshozi Six Jours* ("Six Days of Tears") from discarded dolls to honour the battle's victims (Pannecoucke, 2021). Speaking to Kris Pannecoucke (2021: online), Kabaka explains:

> Every time I see a broken doll lying around somewhere in the street, it reminds me of what happened in Kisangani. They symbolise the victims I saw with my own eyes. It took a year to collect all the dolls. The first time I wore the costume, it was a heavy burden. Not because of the weight, but because of the number of casualties it represents.

Kabaka is a member of the group Ndaku Ya la Vie Est Belle, which performs as living sculptures on the streets of Kinshasa (Pannecoucke, 2021). In a city plagued with trash and plastic, utilising costume as political commentary underlines the urgent need to recycle.

The week-long arts festival KinAct brings artists together to perform on the streets of Kinshasa and the nearby neighbourhoods (Pannecoucke, 2021). In addition to street performances, the festival offers programs that educate children in a variety of artistic mediums, including sculpting, painting, theatre and poetry. Kalenga Kabangu Jared frequently roams the streets as Robot Annonce in a costume made out of scrap radios to convey the idea of fake news. Falonne Mambu created *Femme Électrique* (Electric Woman) out of electric wire in protest against sexual abuse and kidnapping.

Figure 18. Kris Pannecoucke, 2021. Shaka Fumu Kabaka in his costume for *Matshozi Six Jours* (Six Days of Tears).

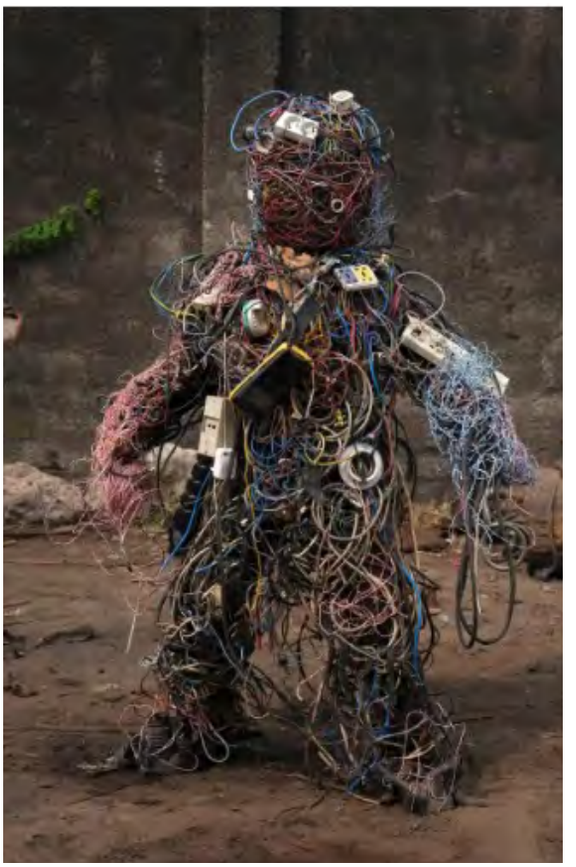


Figure 19. Kris Pannecoucke. 2021. Falonne Mambu in *Femme Électrique* (Electric Woman).

Falonne Mambu explains to Kris Pannecoucke (2021: online):

> I lived on the streets. I was homeless. But I discovered art and it has given me a voice. In the dark, the residents dare not come out of their houses. If there were light, social control would be greater, more people would be on the street. What I experienced on the streets of Kinshasa as a homeless young woman and what many girls still experience today, I address through my paintings and performances. I can talk about sexual violence through my work.

Many African artists, including myself, use art as a tool to protest and raise awareness, to empower communities and themselves, to give a voice to the voiceless, and to heal themselves and others.

CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN ART AND ITS ASSOCIATED AMBIGUITIES

There has been a surge in interest in and exposure and production of contemporary art from Africa since the turn of the 21st century. [12] Art from the continent has grown in value and recognition on major worldwide stages. This includes an expansion in the number of art fairs on the continent and the rise of galleries specialising in African art at fairs in European and North American art centres (Corrigall & Murinik, 2018). Discourses that seek to theorise this art practice have emerged but contribute ambiguity that makes comprehension of its history, conceptual foundation and context in the contemporary art world difficult. In *Found Object, Recycled Art, Readymade, or Junk Art? Ambiguity in Modern African Art – Ambiguities Identified*, Clement Emeka Akpang (2013) reviews texts on these issues, ranging from the problems of contextualisation and vague terminologies to questions of exclusive hegemony.

Assumptions that Africans derive their creative processes from European and North American trends are misguided, as found materials and objects were appropriated into works of art in Africa before Europeans labelled the practice as assemblage and/or conceptual art in the early twentieth century. [13] The Songye power figure (Figure 11) could be considered a work of assemblage, but there is little literature to provide an in-depth examination of the historicity of this art practice. African artists working in this arena find it difficult to theorise and contextualise their practice because of the dominance of interpretation

[12] Simon Njami (2013) argues against describing art produced in Africa as "contemporary African art": "There is no such a thing as 'African Art'. Or, if there is, foreigners have labelled it and it mostly refers to what I call 'classic art from Africa' (wooden sculptures and masks, clay, etc.). Nowadays, when we say Contemporary African Art, at least we know that we don't mean much. We know that Africa is a vast continent with many different histories and practices, and that, even in the same country it is not easy to find a common pattern that would suit everyone." "Contemporary art from Africa" hence seems more appropriate.

through the lens of European and North American art history. Essel and Acquah (2016), state:

> Conceptual art is one of the twentieth century art movements that has gained popular attention in the contemporary artworld. It has received much scholarly prominence in the Western world, and perceived as an emergent art of European origin. What has been given little or no scholarly attention is the African essence of root of conceptual art movement.

Essel and Acquah (2016) write that pre-colonial African art did not make use of European aesthetic canons such as perspective, realistic proportions and mimetic representation. Instead, concepts were often prioritised over realism. This conceptual aspect of African art is rarely acknowledged, but African art inspired European artists such as Pablo Picasso, Henry Moore and numerous art movements of the twentieth century (Essel and Acquah, 2016).

Figure 20. Edo peoples, Court of Benin, Nigeria. 16th century. *Queen Mother Pendant Mask (Iyoba)*. Ivory, iron, copper. The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

[13] The term 'assemblage' as an art form is usually associated with French European artist Jean Dubuffet, who began using it in the 1950s.

Based on historical evidence and the analysis of curved wooden masks, shrines, performances, and installations, it is evident that forms of conceptual and other art approaches predate European and North American movements that are often assumed to have prompted forms of contemporary art from Africa (Essel and Acquah, 2016). Masquerade and masks, shrines and embellished power figures can all be seen as precursors to related uses of bodies, forms and space in 20th century European and US movements such as performance, installation and assemblage, albeit with different cultural intentions. Conceptual art can thus be argued to have African origins. Shiner (1994) notes that the practice of making visual artworks from pop culture materials in Africa is likely to be a result of intercultural exchange caused by migration, colonisation and globalisation.

After reviewing recent literature that deals with the use of waste materials and found objects in works of art from Africa, Akpang (2013) identifies a number of obscurities that surround this art practice. The first is the issue of classification and the use of "muddle terminologies" to describe works of art in this practice.

"Terminologies such as junk art, trash art, found object art, recycled art, transformations, readymade, objects the environment yielded", re-purposed material art and more have been used by academics and artists to describe art from Africa made from these materials. Descriptions like "junk art" and "trash art" risk dismissing or minimising work that is the result of individual creativity that often incorporates the same creative processes and ideas for waste and found objects from pop culture into art. Akpang (2013) suggests the need for a terminology for this genre that accommodates all African art forms made from found objects and waste materials under one typology.

Another issue is the "hegemonic exclusion of African found object art historiography" in the writing of some European and North American academics about modern and contemporary art from Africa. These academics have fashioned a narrative about art from Africa made from found materials as what Akpang describes as "transmutation art", removing its historical context and hindering any attempt at a thorough comprehension of its genesis (Akpang, 2013).

The third problem is that of contextualisation. Using Euro-American terminologies to describe and liken this African art practice to European ideologies disregards its own context-specific history and that the art forms and movements in the West were not founded on the same ideological and philosophical principles. Euro-American terms cannot adequately express and embrace this art form in Africa (Akpang, 2013).

Akpang's text offers many insights and raised many questions for me. How should I theorise and contextualise my own practice? What terminology should I use to describe my work – "repurposed", "found object", "recycled", "assemblage", "trash art" – or none of these? How does one contextualise a practice that has largely been interpreted, documented and deciphered by academics from outside the continent? Should terminology and contextualisation be based on European norms and modernism or the region or part of Africa one practices from? Or the working material and how it was obtained? Or on cultural inspirations or traditional beliefs? Akpang (2013) concludes:

> Available literature sources … which contextualise this art type in analogous aesthetic context with European art movements are misleading, while those that treat it as traditional to Africa provide insufficient information to underpin their assertions.

In my practice I repurpose found objects and recycled and junk materials into artworks with new purpose and meaning, transcending their materials. A number of artists in Africa use found materials in visually and conceptually complex and nuanced ways for different purposes and with different messages. Nonetheless, our work originates from related ideologies and conveys similar messages and concerns about the environment and the impact of colonisation and capitalism on Africa's resources and its people.

The ongoing dissemination of European and North American art history in many art schools in Africa also contributes to these obscurities. What I and many other artists on the continent do is a fusion of local innovation, circumstance, resourcefulness, social and environmental consciousness and impact and intercontinental influence. Our practices are based on the same ideology and use similar materials but our approaches differ. Coining terminology to accommodate and categorise all African art forms made from found objects and waste materials under one typology, as Akapang (2013) suggests, does not seem the best or only solution, but we should be mindful of terminology that refers to movements in the West. Anatsui speaks of "objects the environment yielded" (in Akapang 2013), while Dilompruzilike describes himself as the "junkman from Africa". African artists approach their working materials in many different ways and choose a terminology that best suits their practice. "Repurposing found materials" seems the most appropriate term to describe my own practice.

For me, repurposing is much more than just giving obsolete, discarded materials a new purpose and meaning; it is also about concept, space and language. Repurposing allows me to create a mental and physical space in my practice within which I am free to create things and give them a personal meaning.

For instance, repurposing an old space inhabited by the material into my own space, one that allows me to tell new stories. It also allows me to conceptualise in my own way, using my own imagination, my own language – my own understanding and interpretation of the concept and language in the form of system communication. For example, all my characters and concepts are named in Kirundi or Kinyarwanda or in one of the other African languages (particularly Swahili) I experienced in my migration through numerous East African nations. Here, I repurpose a common language into an artistic language to create the space, language and concept that conveys reimagined and reinterpreted stories of my past and of awareness, hope and triumph.

THEORISING AND CONTEXTUALISING MY OWN WORK

In my artistic approach I refer to the notion of *articulage*, a combination of the terms articulation and assemblage. Massa Lemu (2019: online) explains that a kerosene lamp is an example of an articulated assemblage, because the glass is attached to the frame and other parts, and the object is readily articulated and disarticulated:

> In *A Bouquet of Sublimated Desires* (2019), kerosene lamps, antique sewing machines, rubber straps and asphalt are nostalgic objects and materials for reflecting upon issues of biography, history and home.… As a child I used to tinker with this fascinating household item, particularly marvelling at its humanlike shape and also at how the different parts are held together. Now I return to the lamp to disarticulate and rearticulate its articulated parts in order to emphasise the anthropomorphic qualities in a process I call *articulage*.

My practice is based on this concept of disarticulating and rearticulating objects that are already built or joined together and carry or speak to a certain history or story. In most cases, I break objects apart to find reusable materials to utilise in my *articulage*, but sometimes I maintain the objects in their original shape but rearticulate them into new pieces. Fashion in Africa is based on creativity and resourcefulness – using all sorts of materials, fabrics and recycled or second-hand clothes to create amazing new items. I look to conceptions of the *sapeur* – not literally as a person who dresses with the utmost elegance, sophistication and class (Tamagni et al., 2009) – but focusing simply on the sophistication and elegance inherent in this notion.

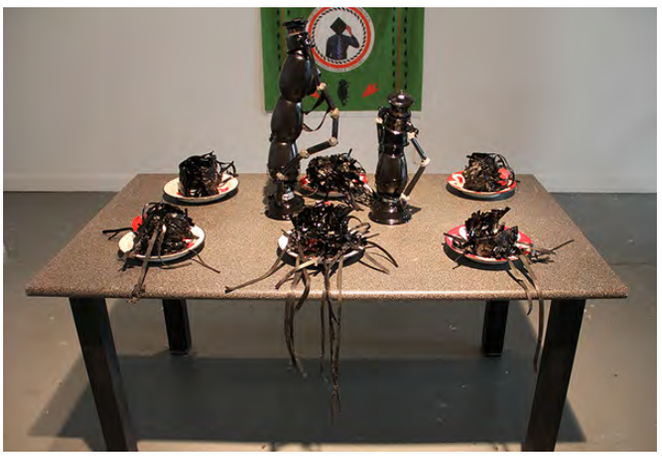


Figure 21. Massa Lemu. 2019. *A Bouquet of Sublimated Desires.*

I am also interested in costume design, particularly science fiction costume design, and am particularly inspired by the work of Ruth Carter, the *Black Panther* (2019) costume designer, and *Star Wars* costume designer John Mollo. Incorporating technology, fashion and traditional African tribal attire, Carter designed costumes that gave the actors and viewers a sense of ownership and empowerment (Dinh, 2021). My artworks fuse technology, African cultural fashion and modern fashion to appear historic, fashionable and futuristic all at the same time. They are historic in that they allude to certain historical periods, while their emphasis on technology makes them seem futuristic.

I refer to the futuristic or fiction (science fiction) theories or theorists of Africanfuturism (Okorafor, 2019) but also borrow aspects of Afrofuturism as viewed by Ytasha Womack (2013) as a creative aesthetic and theoretical framework that combines aspects of science fiction, historical fiction, speculative fiction, fantasy, Afrocentrism and magical realism with non-Western beliefs to critique the contemporary dilemmas of people of colour and to reassess, investigate and retrace historical events.

The most popular definitions of Afrofuturism (Okorafor, 2019) do not fully apply to what I do, and instead I see my work aligning more with concepts of Africanfuturism, a positive way to transcend the hurdles posed by systematic racism and socioeconomic inequality. Africanfuturism is similar to Afrofuturism in that Black people on the continent and in the Black diaspora are all linked by blood, spirit, history and future, but it is distinct in that Africanfuturism is primarily and more explicitly grounded in African culture, history, mythology and point of view (Talabi, 2020).

"Africanfuturism is concerned with visions of the future, is interested in technology, leaves the earth, skews optimistic [sic], is centred on and predominantly written by people of African descent (Black people) and is rooted first and foremost in Africa". It is less concerned with 'what could have been' and more concerned with 'what is and can/will be'. It acknowledges, grapples with and carries 'what has been'" (Okorafor, 2019). I see Africanfuturism in the same way Kenyan photographer Osborne Macharia (2019) defines Afrofuturism, as a post-colonial narrative about the continent in which one embraces the past, the current culture and the future ambitions of people of colour using art, music and fashion to create a different or alternative story about the continent.

Womack (2013) describes Afrofuturism as a fantastic vehicle for using the imagination to foster both individual and societal development. Giving people the ability to envision themselves and their ideas in the future encourages the development of innovators and free thinkers who can draw on the greatest

aspects of the past while considering a wide range of possibilities to create culture and a new and harmonious world. The ability to think creatively is the key to advancement, but this ability is all too frequently suppressed in the name of communal norms and conformity.

The concept of "time travel" is a common theme in science fiction and has intrigued a number of the brightest minds, artists and scientists on our planet. Time travel is also a commonly used theme in Afrofuturistic works. Scholar and artist D. Denenge Akpem (in Womack, 2013) suggests that Afrofuturists develop fresh perspectives – a fresh vision of the past is possible if you can construct a new vision of the future, and Dr Quantum (in Womack, 2013) notes that the past and future are both being produced. I can become a magician when I realise that I can control the past, present and future rather than just being a victim of it. In reshaping myself and the future I am empowered. If you close your eyes and think back to a childhood experience, who is to say that you are not traveling through time (Womack, 2013)? This is an important point for me, because this is my only point of access to my childhood. In doing this time travel backwards and forwards from the past to the future, I can invent new and parallel realities.

These elements of Afrofuturism and Africanfuturism allow me to imagine, travel in time, reinterpret my past and tell futuristic stories. In my work I revisit traumatic past experiences to create a future space for healing, empowering myself and my future. To stop being the objects of the future – victims of oppression and exploitation – I firmly believe we must think about the future as agents of it, as people who can influence it to be better. In this regard, I express stories of optimism and success in my artwork and encourage a future environment that is conducive to healing, change and empowerment. Good ideas are timeless and cross cultural boundaries. One lives the future by first imagining it, then putting it into practice. As an artist I control the future – the future is now.

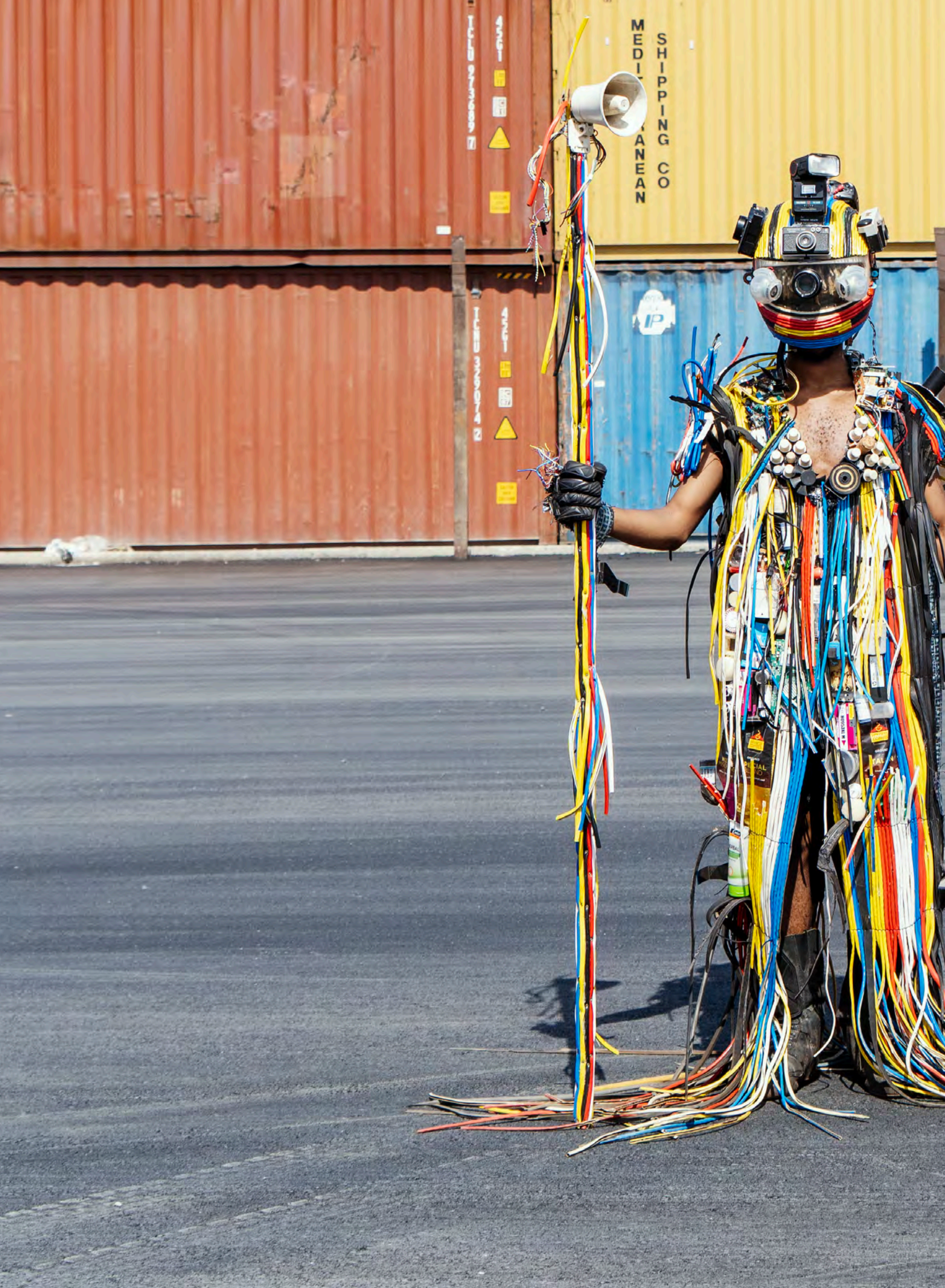
My work also addresses how identity politics divides people rather than bringing them together. Fixed identity categories are a major cause of conflicts, war and many other atrocities in Africa and were the cause of my displacement and fleeing from my country. The division between Hutu and Tutsi in Rwanda and Burundi was, and still is, used as a weapon to destabilise the region. It is a concept that was utilised by colonisation to divide and conquer and has been the most successful weapon used by the West to keep Africa destabilised for economic and political benefits.

Stuart Hall (1996) suggests that identities are built on the marking of difference rather than sameness and calls for a new concept of identity to be considered, one that merges psychoanalytic and discursive elements. In *The*

Location of Culture (1994), Homi Bhabha contends that there is no such thing as unique and pure cultural identity in a post-colonial society; all cultures are mingled. Bhabha describes this cultural hybridity as the consequence of various types of colonialism that have resulted in cultural interchanges and collisions.

In my work, this concept of hybridity influences my characters and wearable artworks. I merge African culture and tradition – attire from South Africa and Rwanda/Burundi with European culture and technological and imaginative aspects – to produce artworks that combine and express both cultures and are a hybrid of fashion and technology. For example, in *Ubukwe* (Kayitesi and Shaba) (Fig. 22), Kayitesi is dressed in traditional Rwandan wedding attire infused with modern European cultural elements interpreted through articulage. Here I purposely combined traditional African and European cultures to create a hybrid of cultural practices and clothing.

I create sculptures and photographs that are hybrids of the human form and technology to tell stories of my experiences in Rwanda/Burundi, Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique and South Africa.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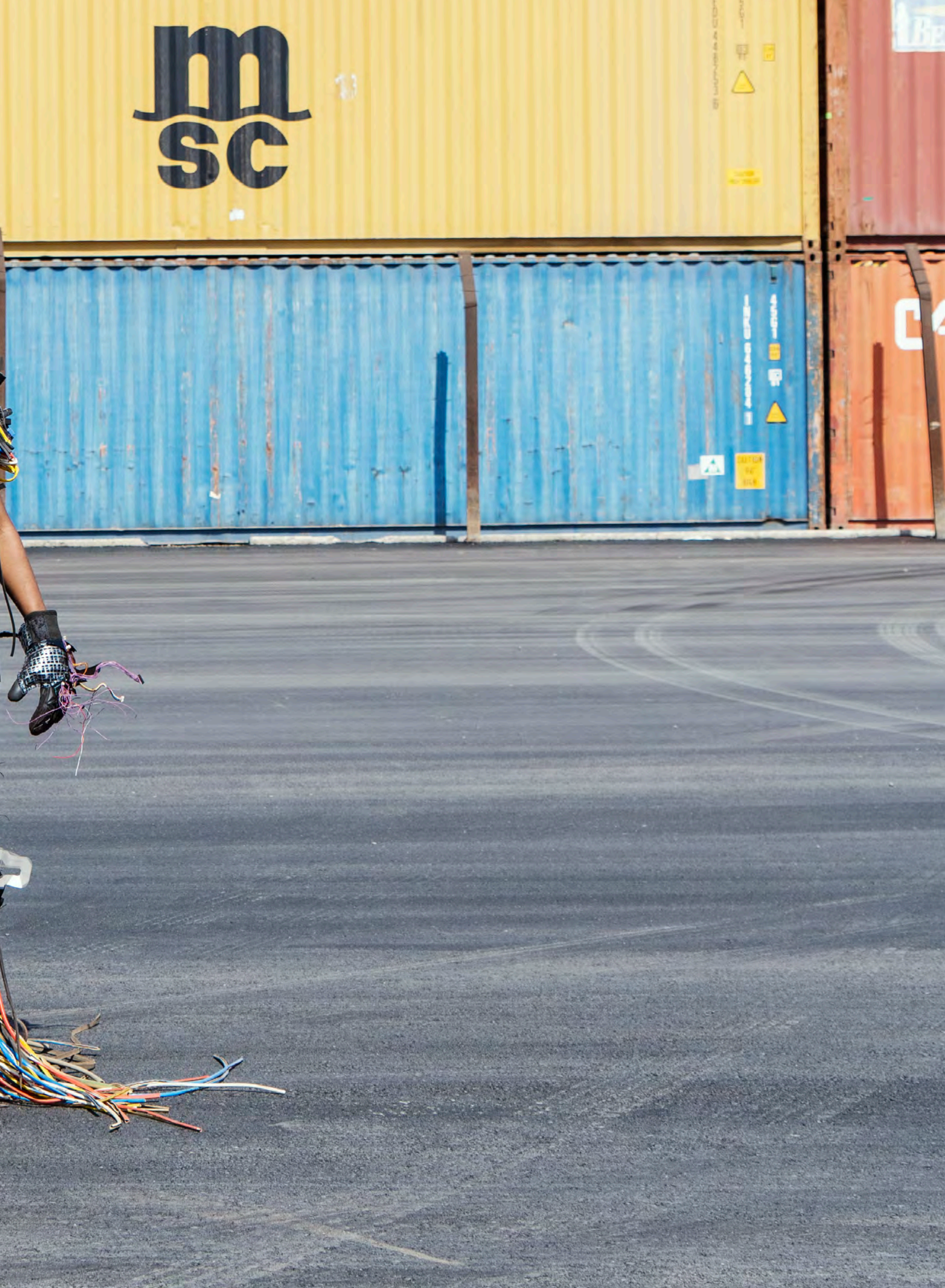
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CREATIVE PROCESS AND METHODOLOGY

Materials carry history and meaning within themselves, past narratives that can be utilised by the artist to tell new stories. The material and the artwork are interconnected, informing each other. As a refugee displaced from my country by atrocities associated with the extraction of minerals in this region, the material of e-waste speaks to this history. I use this in my practice to tell my stories and those of many others like me, but also to highlight the socio-political, economic and environmental issues associated with these acts.

Creating imaginative reinterpretations enables me to revisit my biography and bring my real-life heroes, myself included, into the present and the future to tell new stories. For this project, sculptures are presented as part of a large sculptural installation, both in tableaux and as individuals, while large photographic prints tell stories in a variety of contexts and a video projection shares traumatic experiences from my childhood.

Apart from the personal lived experiences that form and inform my work, most of my inspiration comes from past and everyday experiences. I walk a lot in Cape Town's Central Business District and neighbouring suburbs, drawing inspiration from people and things I remember and see. I am moved by the many economically disenfranchised people I see and the creativity with which they live, dress and survive on the streets. Such a person might evoke a new character or an element that forms part of a character. In other cases, I am inspired by scrap objects I encounter by chance. Sometimes while scavenging for materials I find an item that sparks a new idea or contributes to existing ideas. Sometimes a character arrives fully formed from my past. I am also influenced by news and magazines and more acutely by the world of electronic communication, the internet and social media.

I work with a wide variety of found and recycled materials: computer components, screens, colourful wires and other electronic devices; plastic waste and rubber, specifically the rubber from cars' windscreens; and recycled or second-hand clothing and shoes. I recycle the wires, electric cables and other obsolete electronic gadgets myself from an illegal dump in Woodstock with the help of Tanzanian migrants who reside around the dump. I also buy broken electronic devices at the Woodstock depot, the Wednesday market at the Grand Parade and from second-hand shops around Woodstock, Observatory and Mowbray – including discarded helmets, gas masks and an oversized stuffed

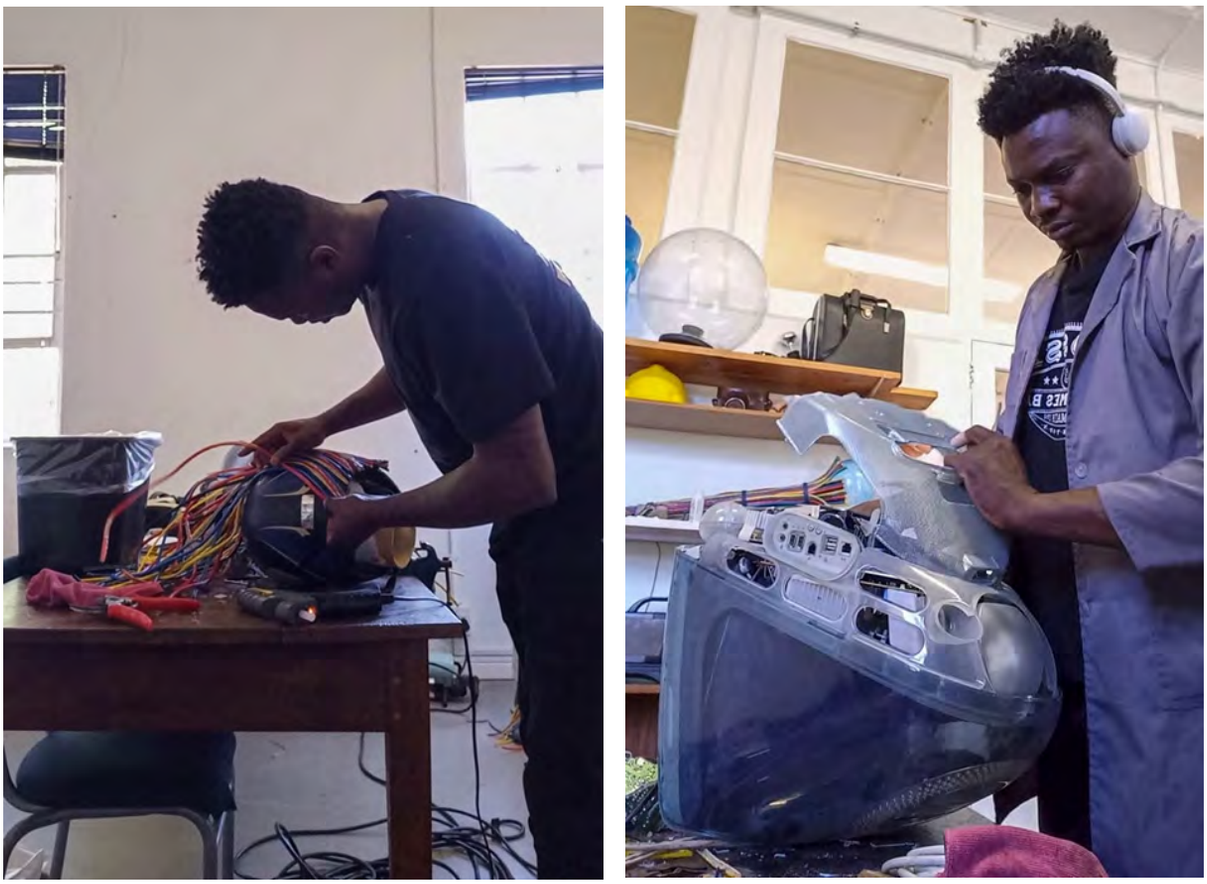

Figure 22. *Untitled, the process,* Iyarara Project, Cape Town, 2021

dog. Other materials were collected or given to me by my supervisors and other people in my social group.

Much like the informal recyclers on the Ghanaian waste dump, to find the treasure in these materials I must break them apart. Instead of looking for precious metals inside them, I reassemble them as art. Sometimes the objects have already been taken apart at the dump – for example, the cables have been stripped for their copper. Working with these objects, I am exposed to their materiality, their own sense of time, their use and meaning, past and present narratives and layers of interbeing and interconnections. In other cases, I maintain the object's original form but develop it into a reimagined item.

I work primarily with electric cables to create my wearable artworks/costumes. Communication plays an integral role in life to keep people and places connected to one another. The cables once transmitted information or power, pulses associated with communication, connections and exchange between

people and places. This is appropriate given the disruption of contact and communication that is a consequence of the displacement and loss of loved ones that is a result of genocide and war. Other objects utilised in my work also refer to communication, reception and warning – aerials and siren speakers. Computer motherboards act as a point of connection and communication between computer components, people and places. A variety of found waste materials reference characteristics and roles of family members represented in the story. Colour is also significant – for example, red visually represents certain moments – murder and death, and acts as a warning.

I use crash helmets in most of the headpieces I make. Crash helmets are protective, they protect the head, the centre of identity. A number of crash helmets I use have been through an accident and are broken. They carry with them some sort of trauma from the previous user(s). As headdresses and protective gear with futuristic associations, crash helmets bring these past experiences into my work. They speak to the traumatic experiences I lived, the protection I received from my sister, family members and other people, and to the futuristic stories I tell.

I also use virtual reality (VR) goggles. Apart from its futuristic associations, VR refers to the use of computer technology to create simulated worlds, and I utilise them as a lens through which to look into my past, bring it into my present and suggest reimagined futuristic stories.

I use a glue gun and glue sticks to construct my works, particularly when working with wires, cables and electronic materials such as capacitors and other pieces from the motherboard to build costumes or headpieces. When I work with rubber, I combine the glue gun and sticks with hand stitching done with a hooked needle (crochet) and threads. To make sure that the safety of the assemblage is 100% safe, I sometimes use a drill, screws and bolts. I have adopted the method of stitching all my costumes as a standard with screws in most of the headpieces to ensure longevity.

In the process of my *articulage*, I join components that seem to fit together with their own logic, which is not necessarily the logic that their original manufacturers intended but that seem relevant to communication. The gluing, screwing, sewing and stitching are a mode of articulage, but also of repair. By "repairing", finding, even rescuing these used, lost and discarded objects, I give them new narratives and new purpose.

The creation of artworks and characters is the most important part of my project. Working on these artworks or characters is emotional but therapeutic as I recall and reinterpret my past traumas and transfer them into the artworks

to reimagine stories. I often play music from home, especially the songs my sister and my mother used to sing, which draws me close to them. I see and feel them, and I am transported into that particular moment, seeing and feeling those experiences. Sometimes I become so emotional that I weep. This is the only way I can reconcile my past and heal from it. Art is the only therapist I can talk to, and it is the healing process that I have chosen. From 1994 until last year, when I started working on this project, I had sealed these hurtful memories away and never shared or discussed them with anyone, not even family members or relatives. I have become a more emotional person than I was before, but I am healing exponentially.

I do not sketch or draw my characters beforehand; my sketch book is my brain. All my concepts are sketched in my head. Some have been in my head for years, and I keep developing them as time goes by until they manifest in photographic, sculptural or video form. Photography is the disciplinary lens through which I most often think and some of my stories are told. A sculpture or a costume exists in my head as a photographic concept before it is made. Initially I made sculptures to photograph them, but as time went on I became more and more interested in the practice of assemblage, sculpture, installation and video. Photography allows me to communicate my sculptural ideas to a wider audience as a two-dimensional print that can be easily transmitted via the internet. With photography, I turn a sculpture, a three-dimensional object, into a digital image, something that can be easily uploaded, transmitted and shared via various digital platforms to reach millions of people in seconds. Photography also allows me to test ideas and characters in different contexts to move them from sculptural tableaux to performance.

Much of my photography takes place in the studio, but I also shoot in landscapes or other outdoor spaces that suit my concepts and message. Photographing in the studio gives me control of every technical aspect of my concept, from set design and camera settings to lighting. Photographing outdoors comes with its challenges – weather and lighting conditions, security and safety – but it allows me to add another layer of meaning to my characters and a sense of real-world context. Photographing in the studio and outdoors can both be rewarding, but shooting in a more appropriate outdoor location can make my images more powerful. I try to create relationships between my sculptural installations and my photographs; for instance, I shoot at a real dumpsite and recreate the dumpsite in the gallery to bring the context into that space and to give the characters a physical context.

The sculptures represent characters from my family and other characters I have met or who carry a symbolic value in my life. I appear or am reflected

in three characters: my younger self between the ages of 4 and 5 years old; my 9-year-old self; and Shaba, my adult self.

My five-year-old self is only manifested in a sculpture named *Bikatiro*, which literally means "the one who plays with mud", a nickname given to me due to my naughtiness as a child. *Bikatiro*, is dressed in a long vest-like costume made out of colourful electric cables, rubber, earphone cables and computer keyboard keys and is wearing VR goggles, stretching his hand out in greeting and welcome. *Bikatiro* was a confident, happy innocent child who loved people and welcomed them into his home and never wanted them to leave. This sculpture represents the idyllic time in my life before everything changed.

My younger self at around the age of nine represents me when I left my home country. This character reflects my traumatic experiences during the genocide and war in 1994 and my whole trajectory through Tanzania. This is when I suffered the most. This character, *Bikatiro nimiruho* – "*Bikatiro* with

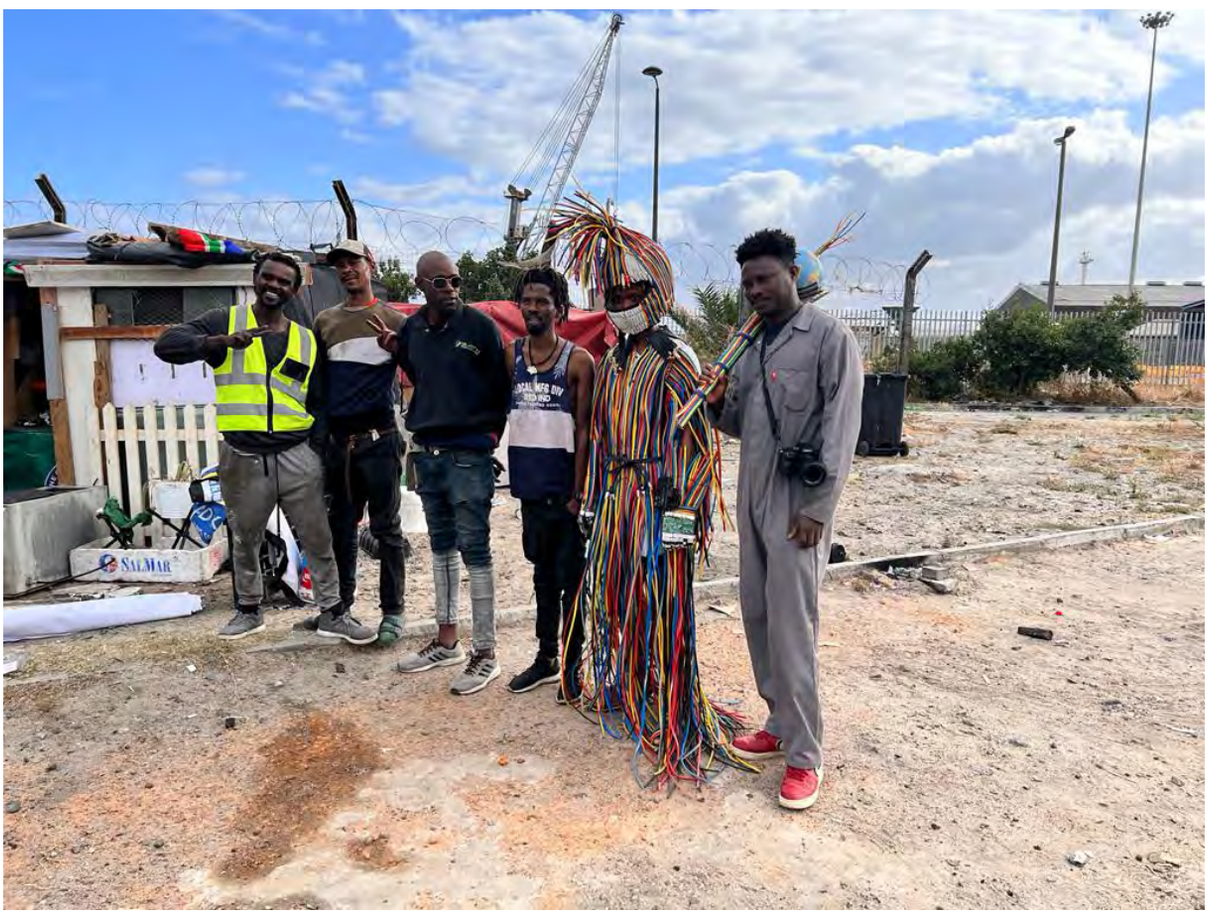

Figure 23. *Untitled, on location shoot,* Iyarara Project, Cape Town, 2022

struggles" – appears in various scenes of the project, both photographic and in the short film Kana Kamama – "My mother's child". Dressed in shorts and braces made out of colourful electric cables and rubber, *Bikatiro nimiruho* is carrying firewood and looks beaten and broken.

A short film portrays a situation in which the war erupts. My character is lost and separated from his parents and the rest of the family. In this film, my first and ultimate hero, my sister, *Kayitesi*, comforts me and promises to provide for me and protect me even when it seems impossible; she has done so ever since. My sister is the person I suffered with the most and is reflected in many stories I tell and appears in two characters. In *Shaba (Revisit)*, *Shaba* revisits his past home to see what could have been his future. My sister appears in the photograph titled *Ubukwe* ("The wedding") (Figure 25), where I reimagine a wedding my sister never had.

The last sculpture that represents me is me as an adult, at my current age. This character, named Shaba – "Copper" – travels in time, revisits and interrogates the past, brings it into the present and reinterprets and reimagines past histories and stories to tell futuristic stories. This character appears in many scenes of the project. Wearing a long, dress-like costume made out of colourful cables, Shaba is photographed in the dumpsite where the cables used for his costume were found.

The rest of my family members – my father "Muzehe" and my brother "Madudu" – appear once in a photographic tableau. Pox, my childhood dog, appears in many scenes, but always with me, Shaba. All these characters exist in both photographic and sculptural forms.

In my exhibition, a sculptural installation is staged in the form of a large dumpsite made of electric cables, e-waste and other waste materials in the middle of the gallery. The dumpsite resembles the dumpsites in many African cities. Three old television screens are installed diagonally next to each other so that visitors can see the screens as they walk around and through the installation. The three screens display real news feeds showing the past and current situations in the Great Lakes region: genocide and war in Rwanda in 1994; conflicts and war in the DRC; the extraction of minerals and exploitative labour; and refugees and massive refugee camps. The speakers are invisible, buried in the trash under the cables, and the sound emanates from the bottom of the dump at a volume that does not distract viewers. Sculptural figures form small tableaux and, in some cases, appear individually. As life-size human figures, they seem animated in pose, gesture and expression, but they are all very still.

At one point, however, one of these sculptures slowly moves and walks from the room. I am the performer in that living sculpture and my exit from the room signals a movement beyond and out of the circumstances of my past. Low spotlights on the figures and parts of the dump illuminate the installation. Some characters are illuminated by lights in their costumes, and the sculpture of my father has a photographic flash unit on his head that flashes occasionally. This references the night we fled through the jungle away from our home.

The short film *Kana kamama, Bikatiro nimiruho* is about when my sister and I were lost and stranded in the middle of the jungle. In a song she sings when resting in a jungle of e-waste she promises to protect and provide for me – even when protection seems impossible. This mirrors events as I remember them as we migrated across central Africa. My sister, not much more than a girl herself, was suddenly my only family, my parent and bread winner. For a while we were all each other had. She is my hero and my rock.

This film was shot on the set of a dump created in the studio using recycled electric cables, e-waste and other waste materials, with a tree stump in the middle. Three recycled TVs were placed in the set, their screens covered with green paper to allow keying of the green screens in post-production. In this jungle of e-waste, my sister and I run for our lives, carrying luggage like other refugees. We escape and settle on the tree stump, deserted in the middle of this electronic jungle. Devastated and worried, my sister holds me tight, comforts me and sings to me a song with a very powerful message, assuring me of care and safety.

This video piece is projected onto the white wall in the projector room. A dry tree stump is placed in this room and is the seat for the viewers as they watch the film.

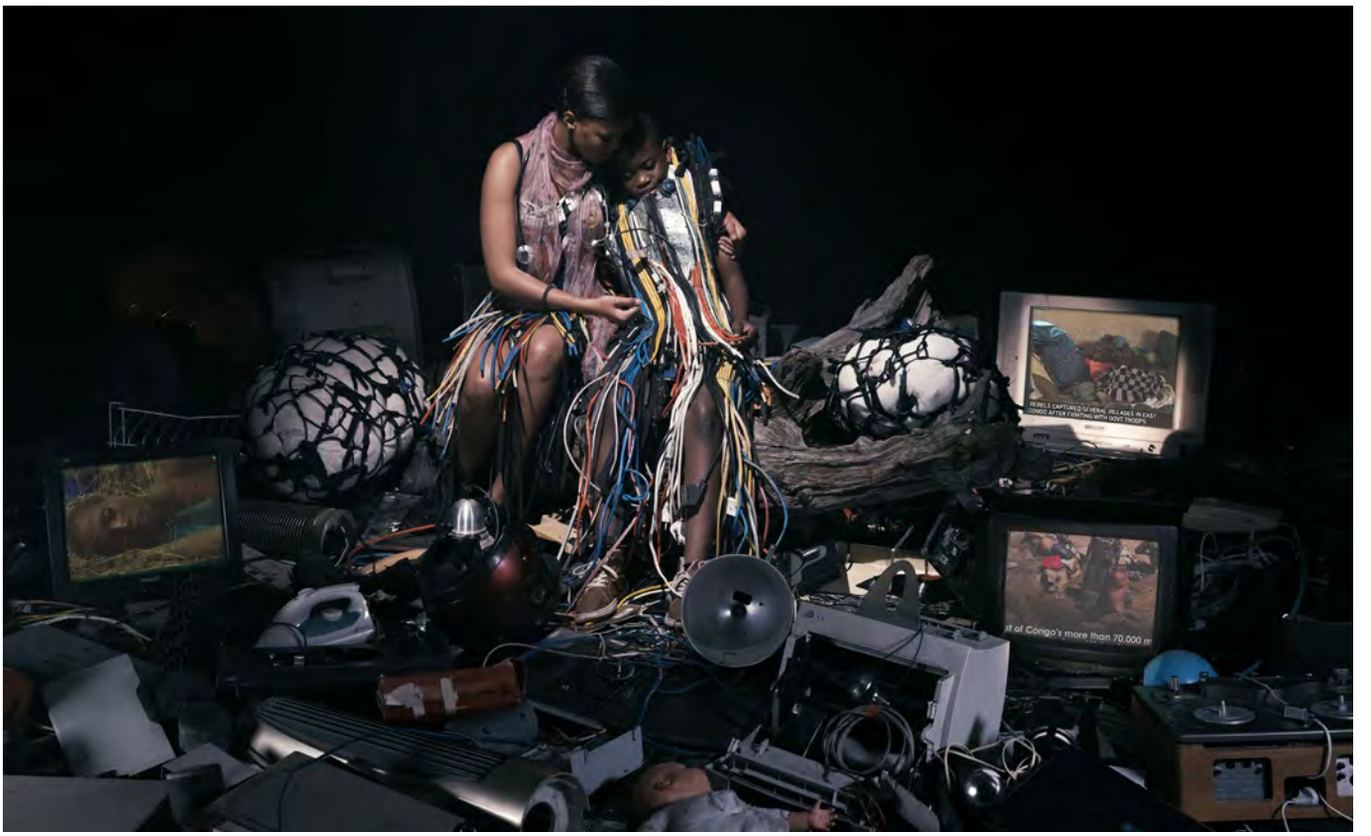

Figure 24. *Kana kamama short film screenshot,* Iyarara Project, Cape Town, 2022

Figure 25. *Ubukwe (The Wedding), Shaba and Umugeni 'Kayitesi'.* 2022. Iyarara Project, Cape Town.

The photograph *The Wedding* (Fig. 25) shows a moment in 1994 when our lives turned upside down. My older sister was about to be married, but her fiancé was abducted and disappeared. This loss of "love" and our missing (lost) parents and siblings created sorrowful moments for my sister and me. We became lost and stranded in the middle of nowhere.

In this image I am *Shaba*, walking my sister (*Umugeni*) down the aisle – an imaginative recreation of how the wedding might have been. Shaba is made out of recycled electronic cables, computer keyboard keys and other electronic parts associated with our displacement. My sister's hybrid dress is made out of found objects and recycled materials such as cardboard, electronic cables and plastic nets. I combine these objects with elements from Rwandan traditional weddings, such as African print fabrics, lace and other fabrics. I also fused in elements from white wedding such as white gloves, a veil and flowers.

My sister is holding a dry flower bouquet as a symbol of the long wait for her fiancé, who has been taken from her and never been returned. The fresh white roses on her headdress symbolise the "forever fresh love" she has for him. I walk her down the aisle wearing technological goggles and a futuristic costume to tell this story, which is real and fictional at the same time. I bring past narratives into the present to tell a reimagined future.

In *The lookout, Mhenga* (Fig.26), the elder, often considered the wise ones in Rwandan culture, is sitting on *umusambi*, a mat. *Umusambi* is an African cultural object commonly found in central and east Africa and in some southern African countries. It is a very significant object in my culture. When I was growing up, this mat would be found in most Rwandan and Burundian households. It served multiple purposes: it was used for sitting and sleeping on, it was a playground and safe area for babies, it was used for weddings and for burial purposes. I re-created this mat using the traditional method, in which grass and a fibre made from *imigwegwe* (*Agave sisalana*) leaves are woven together. Similar mats made in China from plastic are now exported to Africa in huge quantities and have replaced this cultural object. In this work I wove together found and recycled electronic cables. Like our traditional mats, these cables were once significant and served an indispensable purpose; now they are obsolete, replaced and discarded. Burundi and Rwanda are landlocked countries far from the sea, but minerals leave and plastic commodities arrive. Guns and machetes also arrive via the sea, causing havoc in people's lives. *Mhenga* sits on the beach on his plasticised *umusambi* and wonders about what has been lost through slavery, colonialism, globalisation and war.

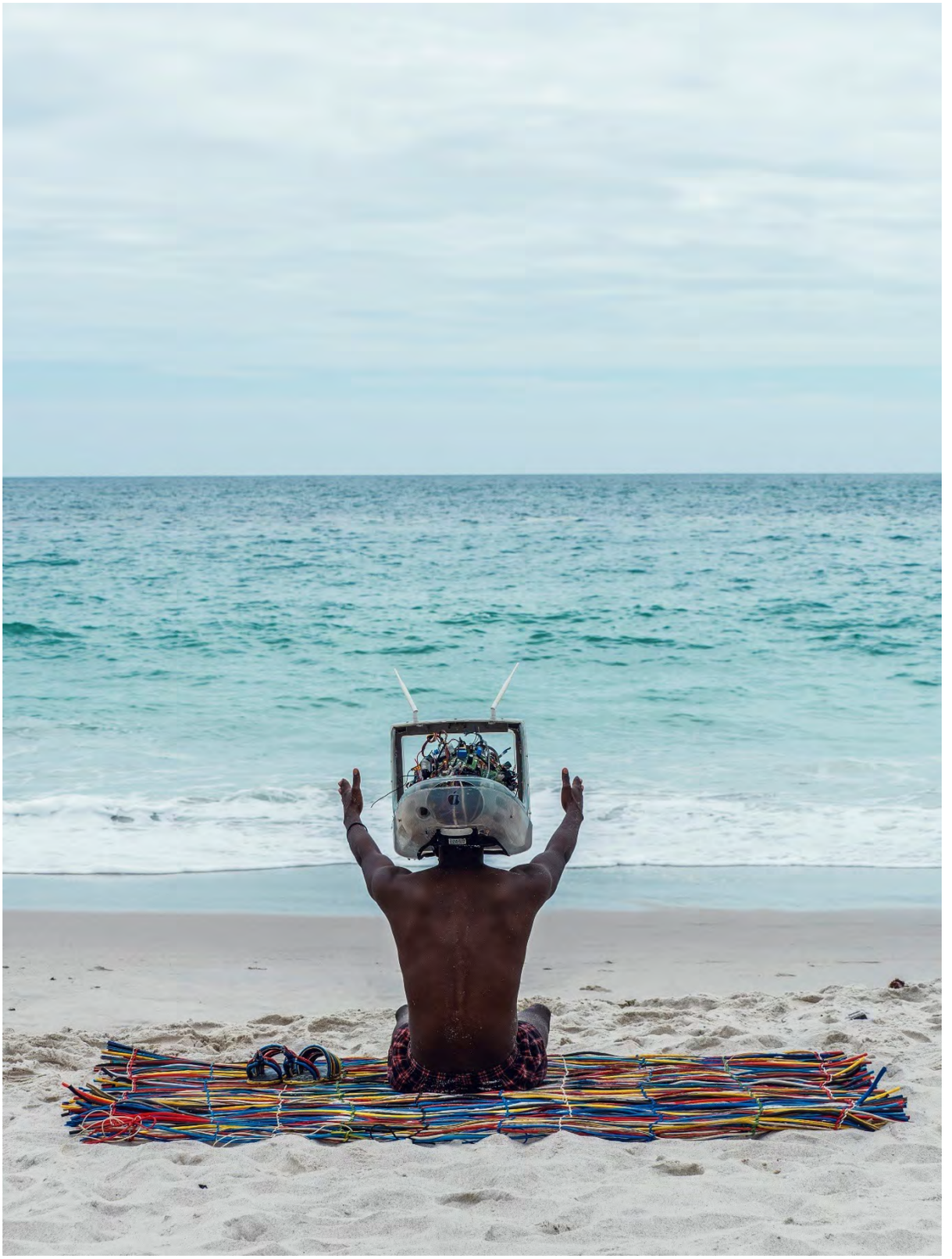

Figure 26. *The Lookout, Mhenga, Sitting on Umusambi.* 2022. Iyarara Project, Cape Town.

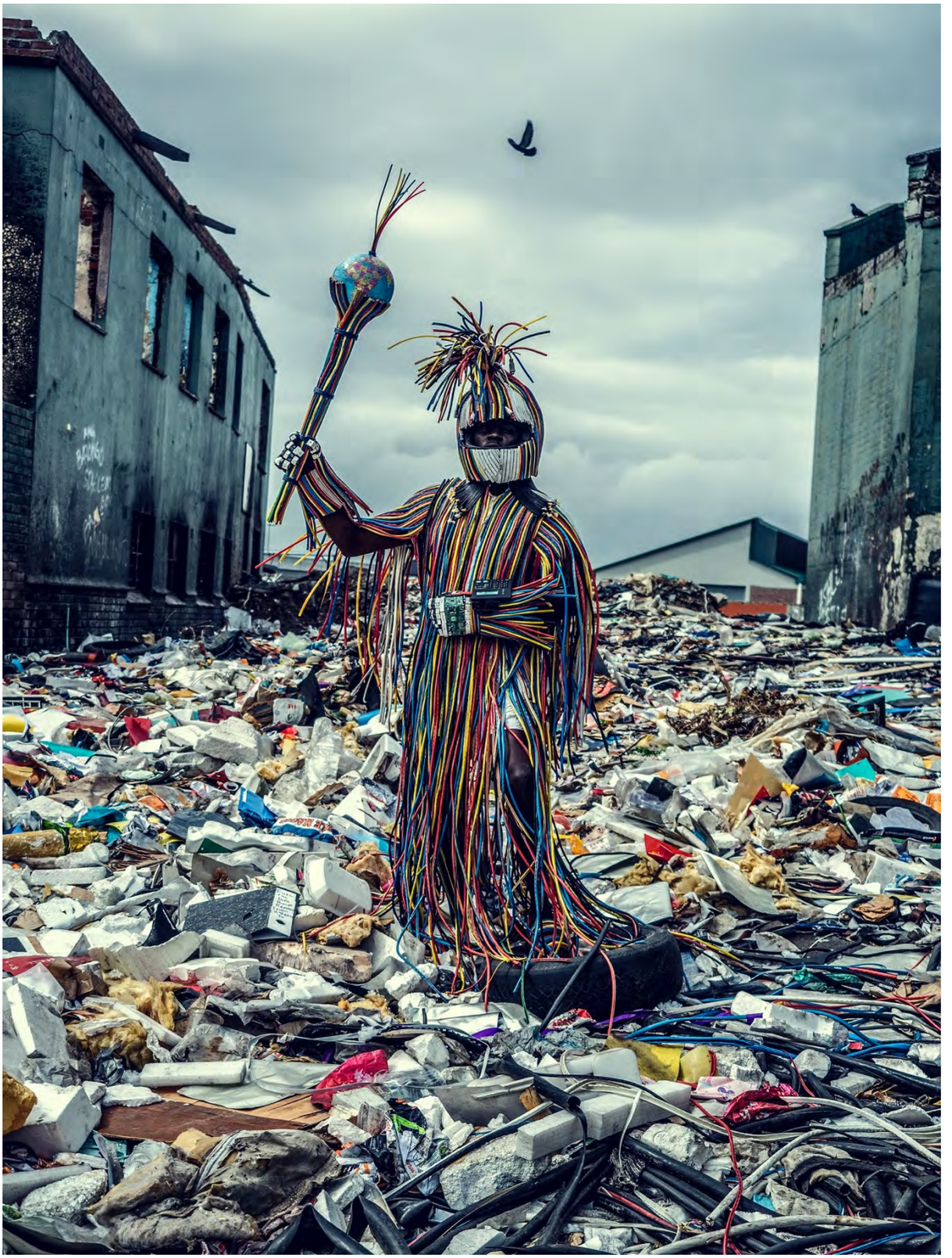

Figure 27. *Shaba (Revisit).* 2022. Iyarara Project, Cape Town.

In *Shaba (Revisit)* (Fig. 27), *Shaba* wears a costume made out of the cables recycled from the dump he is standing in, and his gloves are made from printer and computer parts recycled from Woodstock Drop Off, the building visible behind him. His right hand holds an orb, or sceptre, as a symbol of power and triumph. Here *Shaba* revisits his past home to see what could have been his future. In this image, I speak to the past and the future of the cables that constitute this costume, but also to my experience if I had remained in Rwanda, where I could have been the victim of genocide in 1994, maybe long dead – in the same way that these cables are the victims of technology, greed and human actions.

Pox (Fig. 28), a stuffed dog toy, is covered with cables and computer keyboard keys. *Pox* was my childhood dog and my best friend, very big and strong. We shared many experiences together. I recreated his look and colours – apart from the red on his eyes, which is a visual representation of the honourable and heroic death he died defending our home. He looked just like this, but fluffy. When we were informed that the enemy were coming, we fled so fast, but Pox refused to come with us. When they got to our home and found us gone, they were angry and disappointed, and they murdered *Pox*. These cables, though cut and stripped of copper, still connect me to him, and I still recall how we used to play.

Figure 28. *Pox,* 2022. Iyarara Project, Cape Town.

Ifoto y'umuryango (Fig. 29), the family portrait, is of my father (*muzehe*), my younger self (*Bikatiro nimiruho*), my sister (*Kayitesi*) and my brother (*Madudu*). Although it is a "family photo", my mother is missing, because we were separated. My father is wearing a long coat made out of cables, computer parts and other waste material in reference to his character as a smart man who loved cleanliness and tidiness. His headpiece is made out of a crash helmet, cameras, computer parts and a speed light (camera flash). As a family leader and protector, my father holds a sceptre and my hand, while my sister and my brother carry luggage as we flee through the jungle in the middle of the night. Because we were being followed, we could not use a continuous light source such as a torch to navigate the jungle, so my father improvised, using a camera flash to light the way for a split second. This allowed us to navigate the jungle and escape. The electronic waste in my photograph acts as the jungle, where we became entangled in the branches, vines and undergrowth as we fled. This jungle was responsible for the loss of communication between family members when we lost each other and went separate ways. It also speaks to the entanglement that underlay the politics, economics and environmental issues of the Rwandan genocide in 1994.

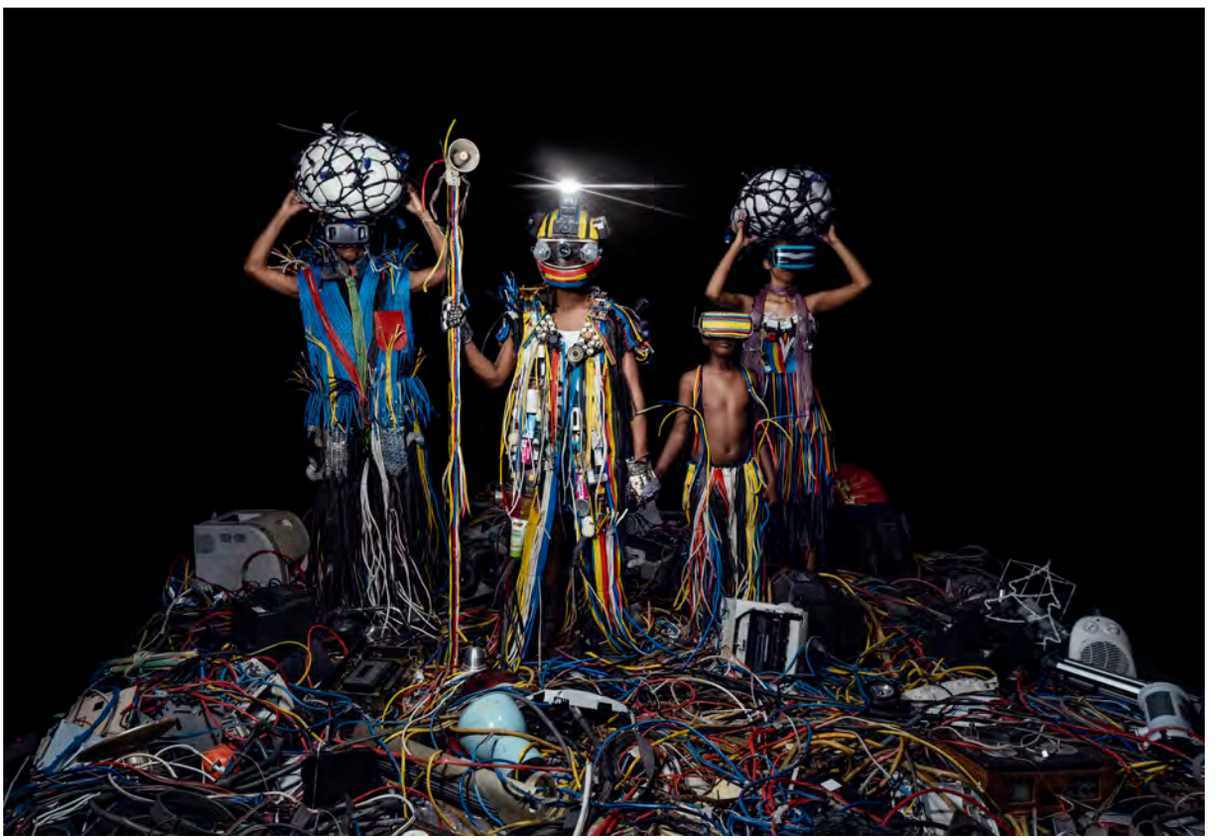

Figure 29. *Ifoto y'umuryango (The Family Portrait).* 2022. Iyarara Project, Cape Town.

In Gutashya (Fetching Firewood) (Fig. 30), *Bikatiro nimiruho* (my younger self) wears shorts made out of cables and the inner parts of computer keyboards and a bracelet made out of cables. In this photograph I am standing in a jungle of e-waste, carrying firewood. This picture references an incident in Tanzania when I was between 11 and 12 years old. Coming back from fetching firewood, I was attacked by Tanzanian police because I was a refugee in their land. Beaten and broken, I could not walk, and I crawled for kilometres to get home. My sister cried to see me in this condition. She cared for me until I was healed. Who beats up an innocent child for being a refugee in a foreign land? I have pondered this question while making this work, but I still have no answer.

I suffered the most at this age, but I also learned the most. I became a man and provided for both my sister and I, selling sweets, roasted peanuts and bananas. At this age, I learned how to survive and how to be a man. The conflicts associated with the extraction of minerals have made us suffer. We have lost loved ones, been beaten, tortured and displaced, turning boys into men. It is this jungle that is responsible for my suffering.

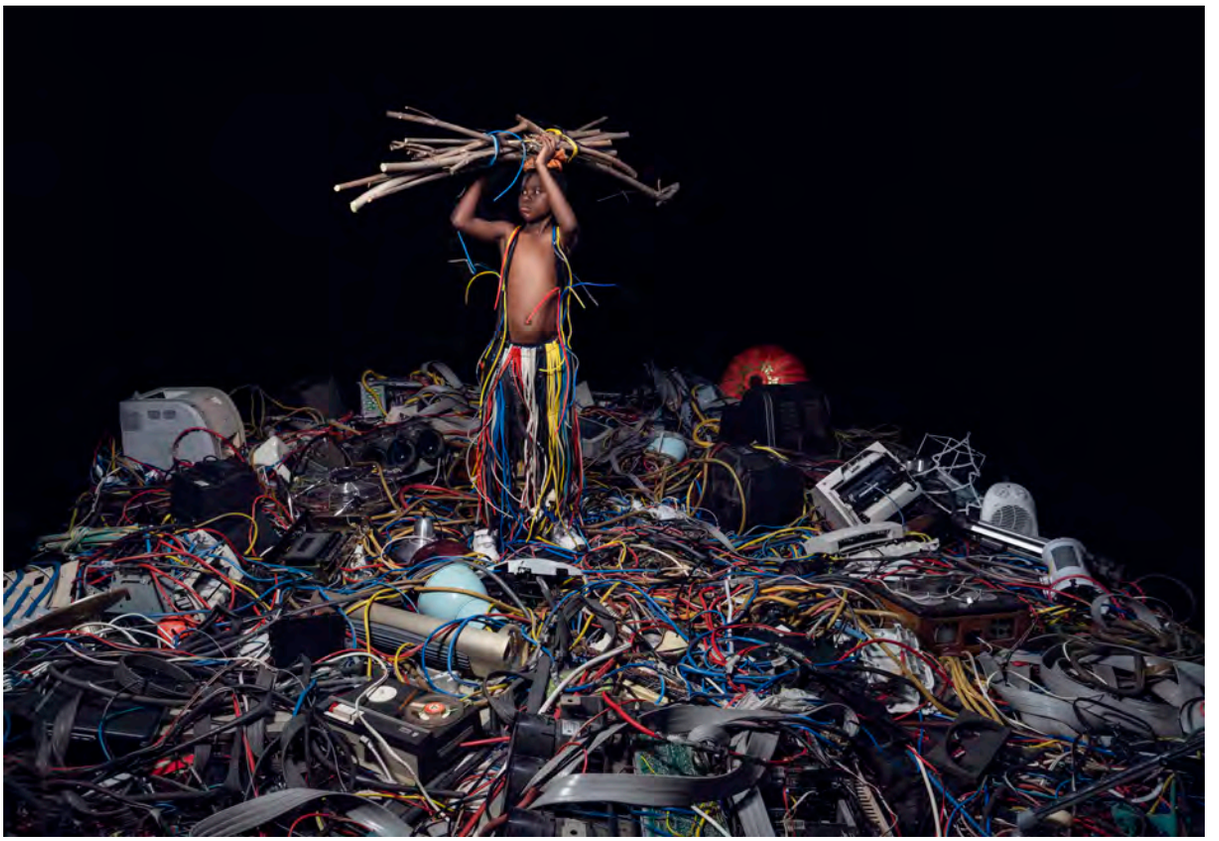

Figure 30. *Gutashya (Fetching Firewood), Bikatiro nimiruho.* 2022. Iyarara Project, Cape Town.

The exhibition is curated as a dark, immersive space to give the impression and feeling of being in an electronic jungle, a wasteland that is a parallel history and future of the continent. This immersive, dark space also represents those dark moments in my life, dark nights in the jungle and the fear of not knowing and seeing what is in front of you and what and who is following you. I wish the pasts could have been different, but – barring reimagining them – they are what they are. Through my healing, my work and my own futures, I have the ability to shift and change the future.

CONCLUSION

Throughout this document I have discussed environmental, economic and socio-political concerns related to the issue of e-waste in Africa, bringing attention to the trade cycle linked with mineral extraction and exploitation in Africa, which happens through sponsored conflicts that cause the deaths and displacement of Africans. I have discussed the issue of e-waste, looking into the exportation of electronic garbage from Europe, the US and China to be dumped in Africa. I have highlighted the negative impact of the informal recycling of e-waste on people, land and the environment and have commented on the impact of colonialism and capitalism, particularly in the Great Lakes region. I have contextualised these issues in a discussion of the work of some contemporary African artists and their choice of materials.

While the extraction of minerals and its associated horrors is linked to my displacement and other traumatic lived experiences, I choose to weave my own story into this wasted landscape, repurposing e-waste materials into works of art that reference my story and the stories of many like me. My aim in repurposing e-waste and other waste materials into fashionable artworks in this project was to raise awareness about environmental, economic and socio-political issues in Africa and to share my personal experience to the materials. In creating hero characters infused with my life story, I found myself healing, and I discovered that art can be the best therapeutic journey.

I am concerned about current high-speed technological advancements, which have both negative and positive effects on people and the environment that sustains them. I am concerned about capitalism's consumerist agenda of strategic obsolescence, which results in excess and waste. I am concerned about the endless conflicts and degradation of the environment in Africa, particularly in the Great Lakes region; the exploitation of minerals; the death of African people; and the rape of children and women. I am also concerned about waste and waste management in Africa. While exploring these concerns, I discovered that the responsible parties in this mess are the economic superpowers (Europe, the US and China), historical colonial powers, big corporations, corrupt African government officials and some greedy individuals, who all enrich themselves with no regard for the harm they cause humanity and the environment.

In my work I have told reimagined stories using futuristic concepts and ideas, e-waste and personal memories. I intend to continue creating works that

are concerned with African problems within this framework to educate and raise awareness. I hope to tell stories of hope, success and awakening. Using Fabrice Monteiro's idea of making a cheap publication, I would like to develop some of this work into a comic-style photobook with short stories, which can be published and distributed to schools and libraries around the country, and even the continent. The younger generation is the future and should be our primary focus.

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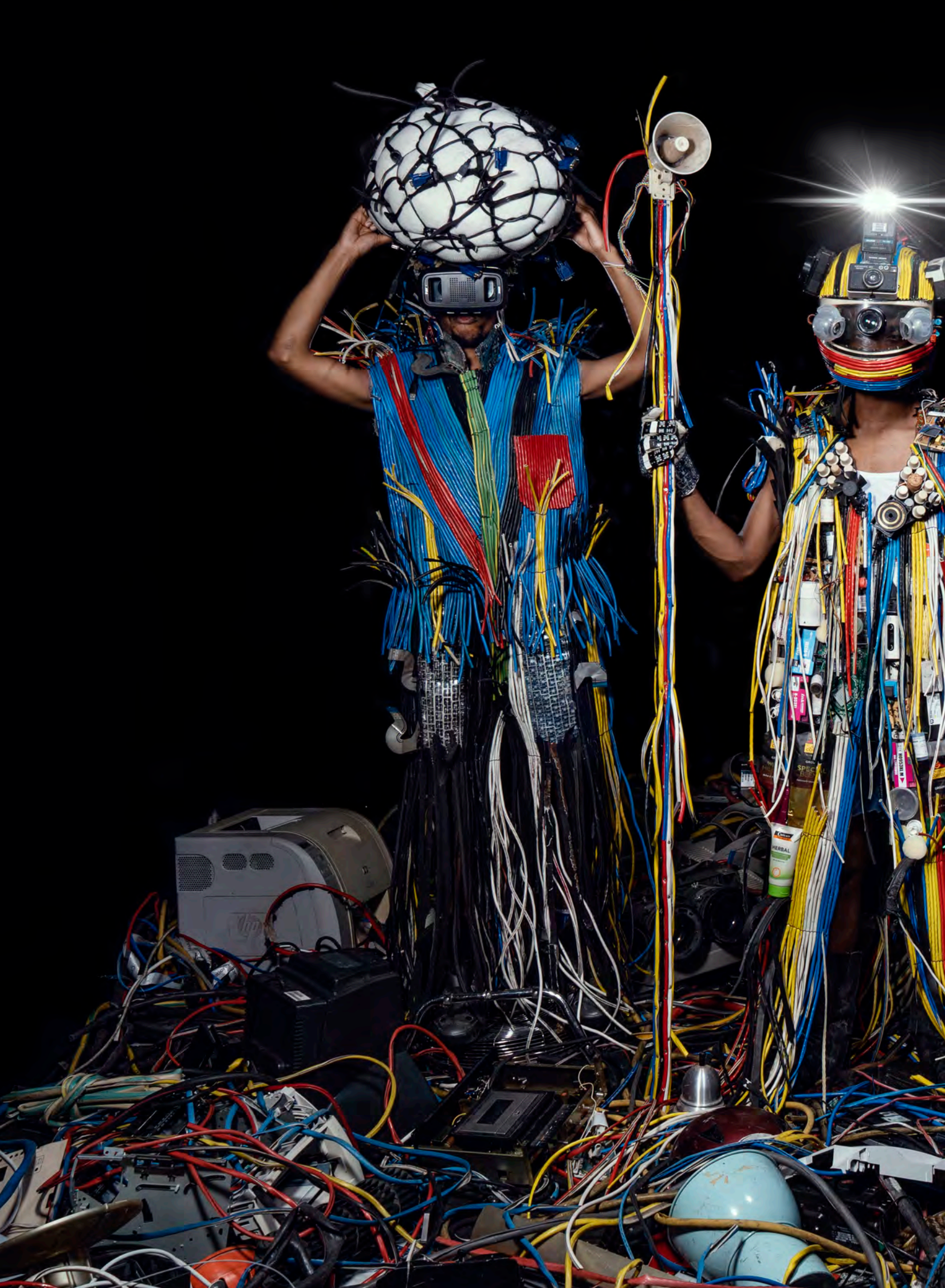

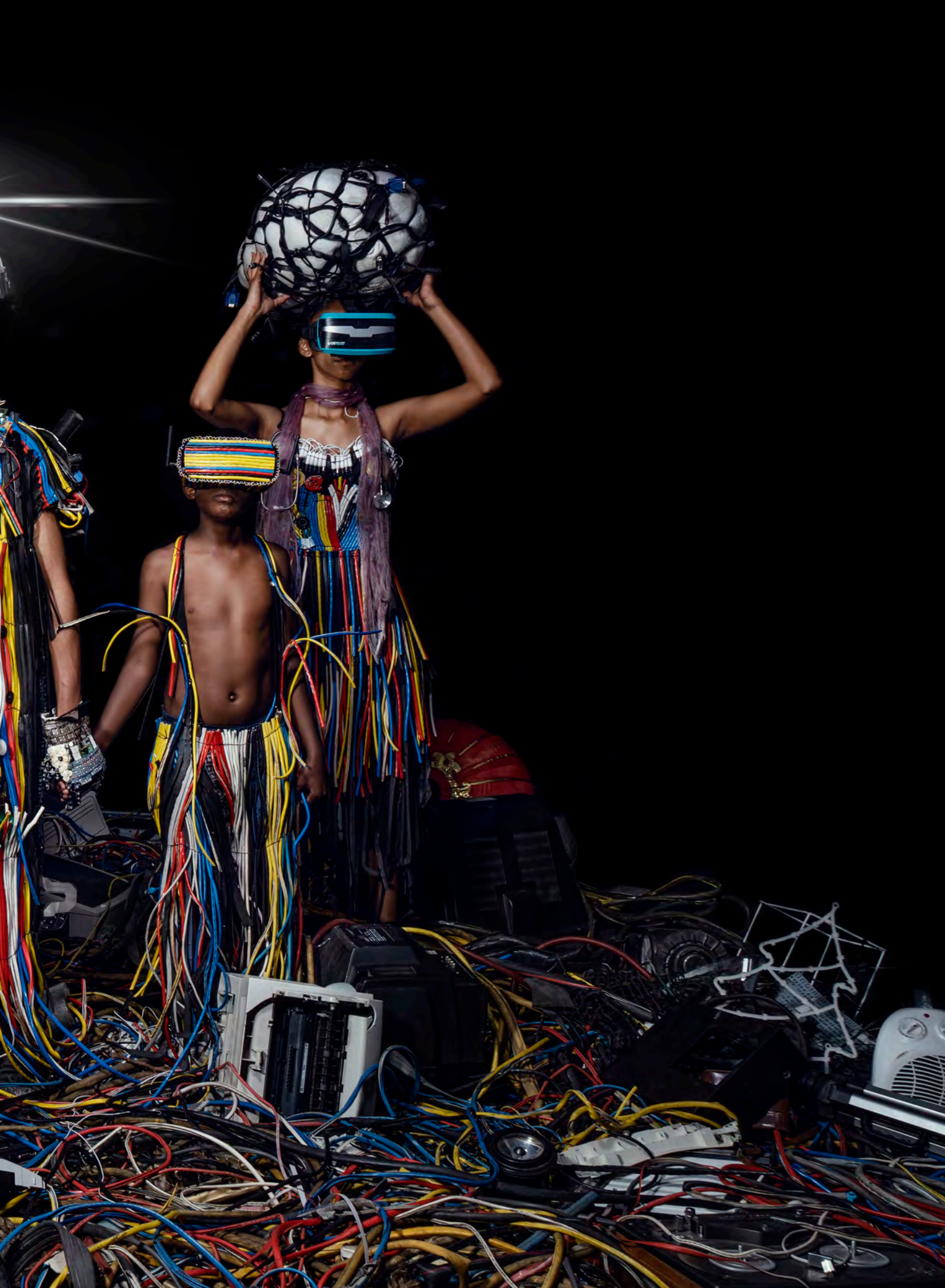

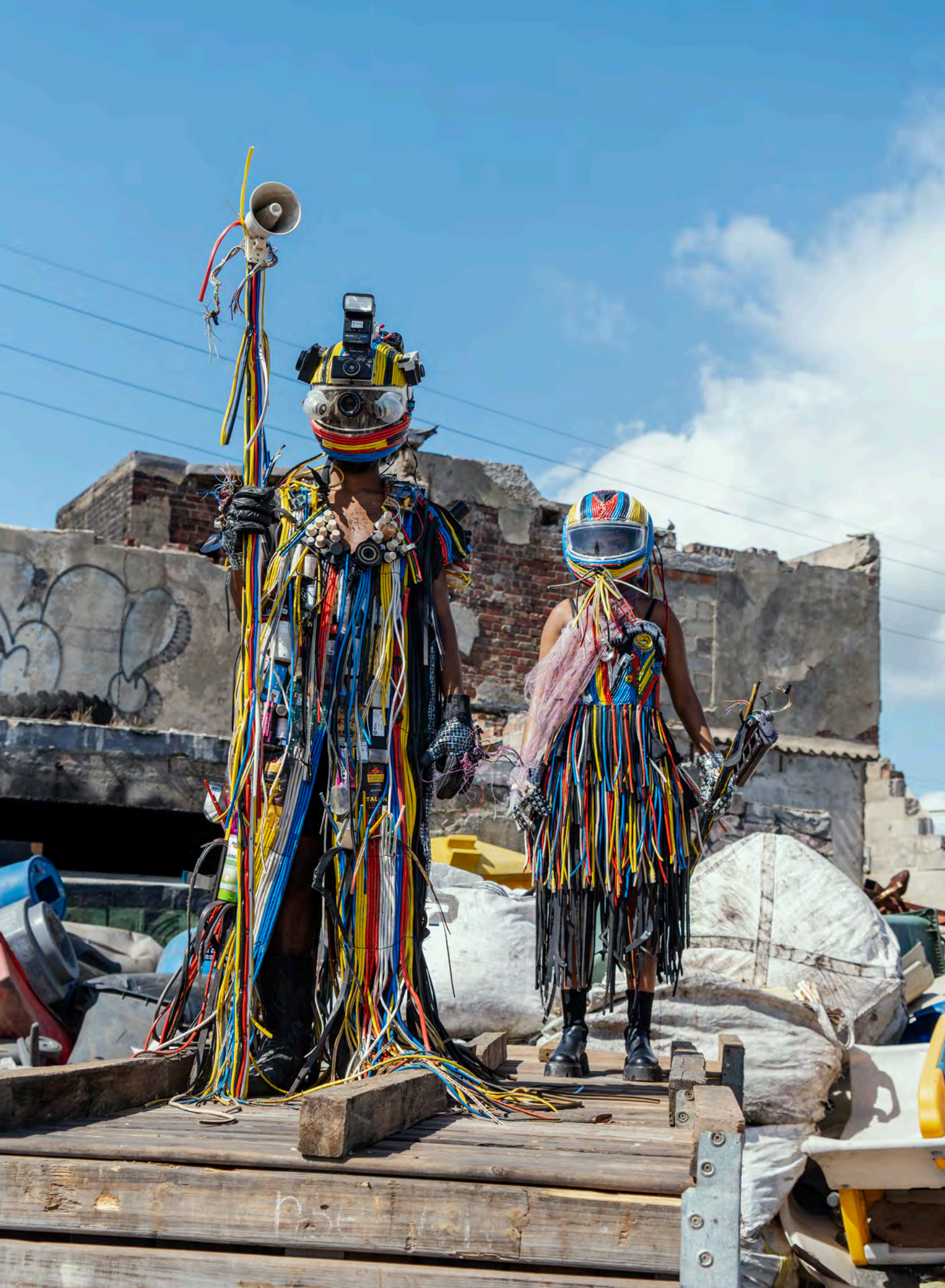

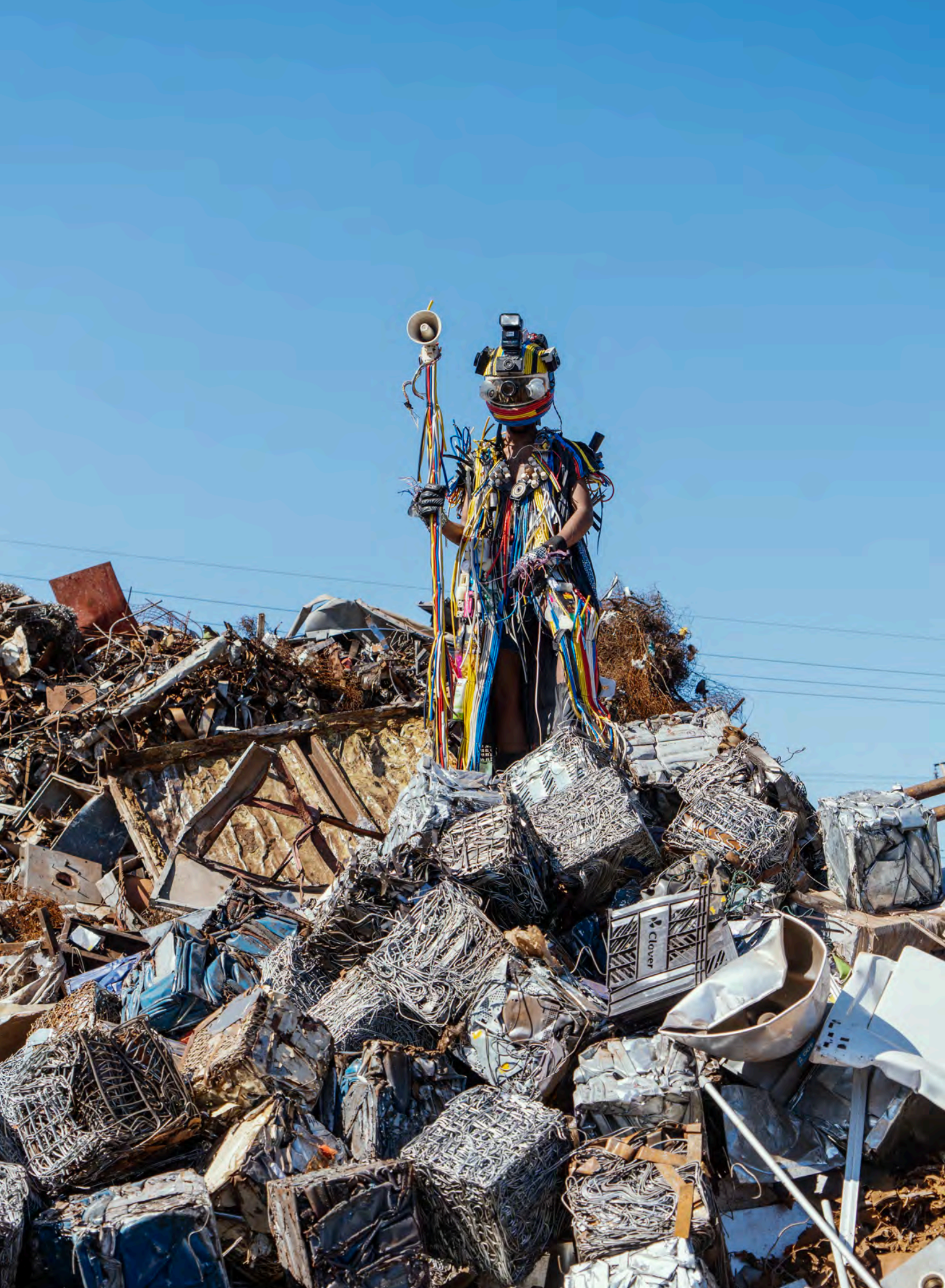
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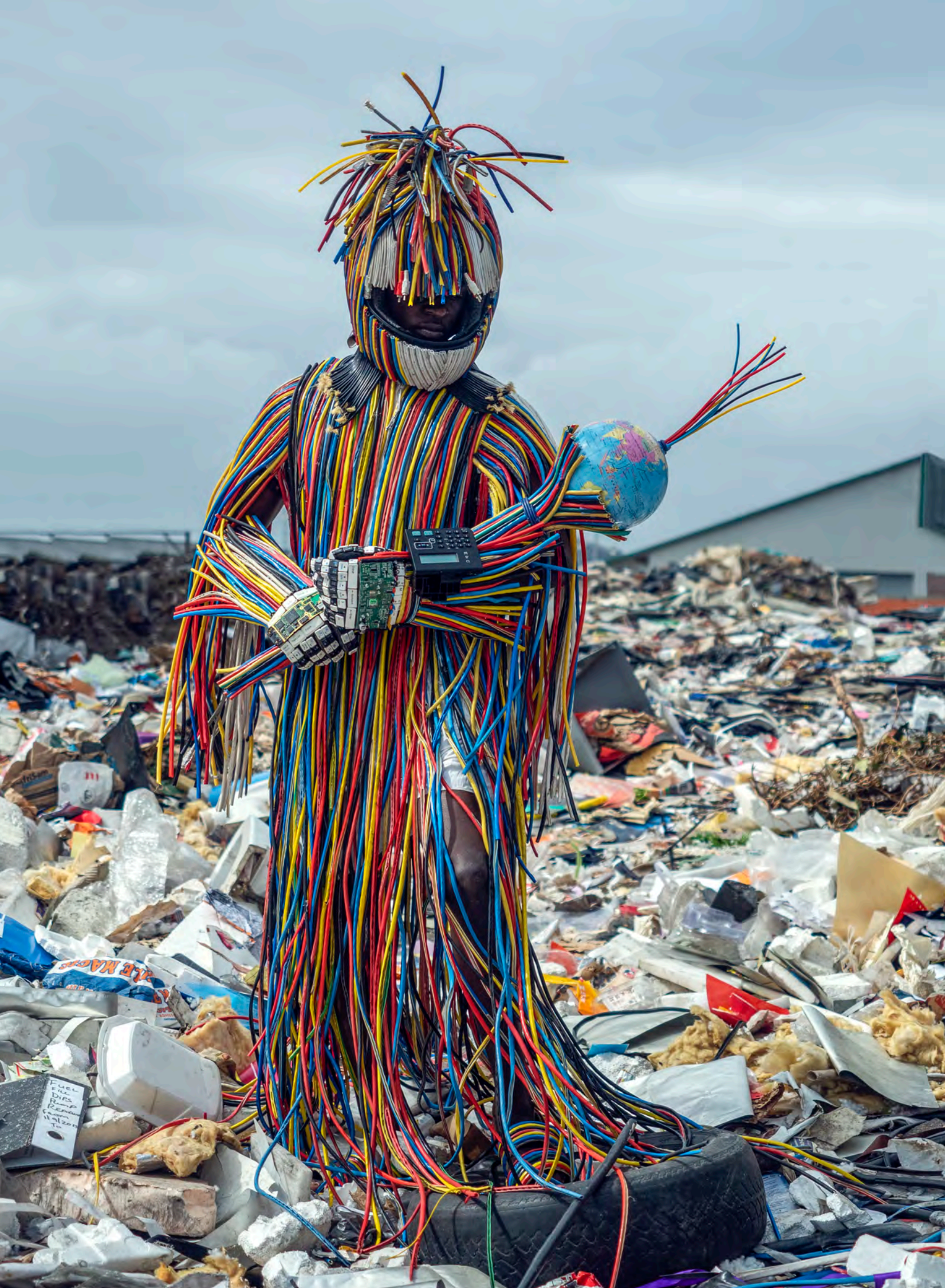

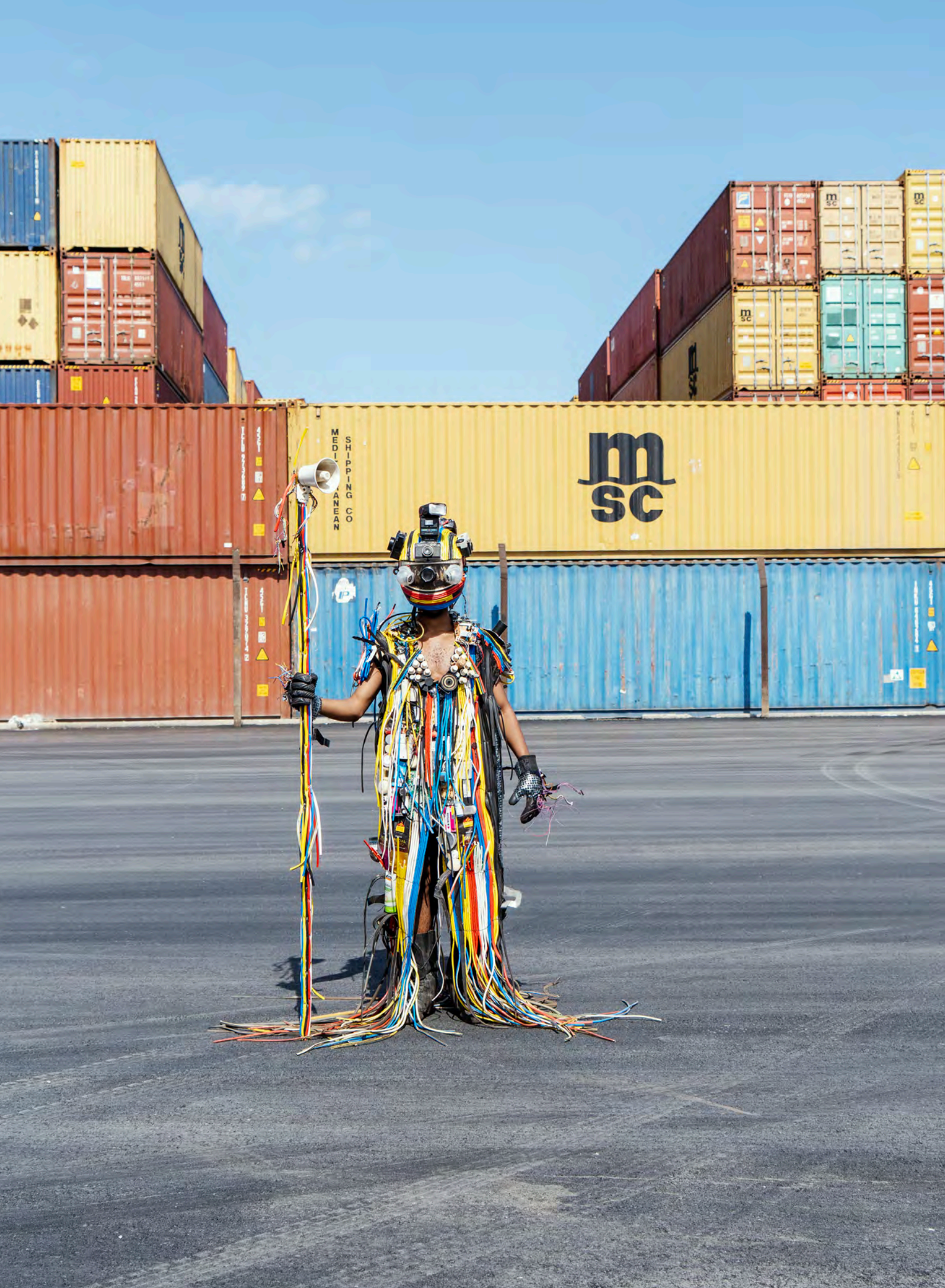
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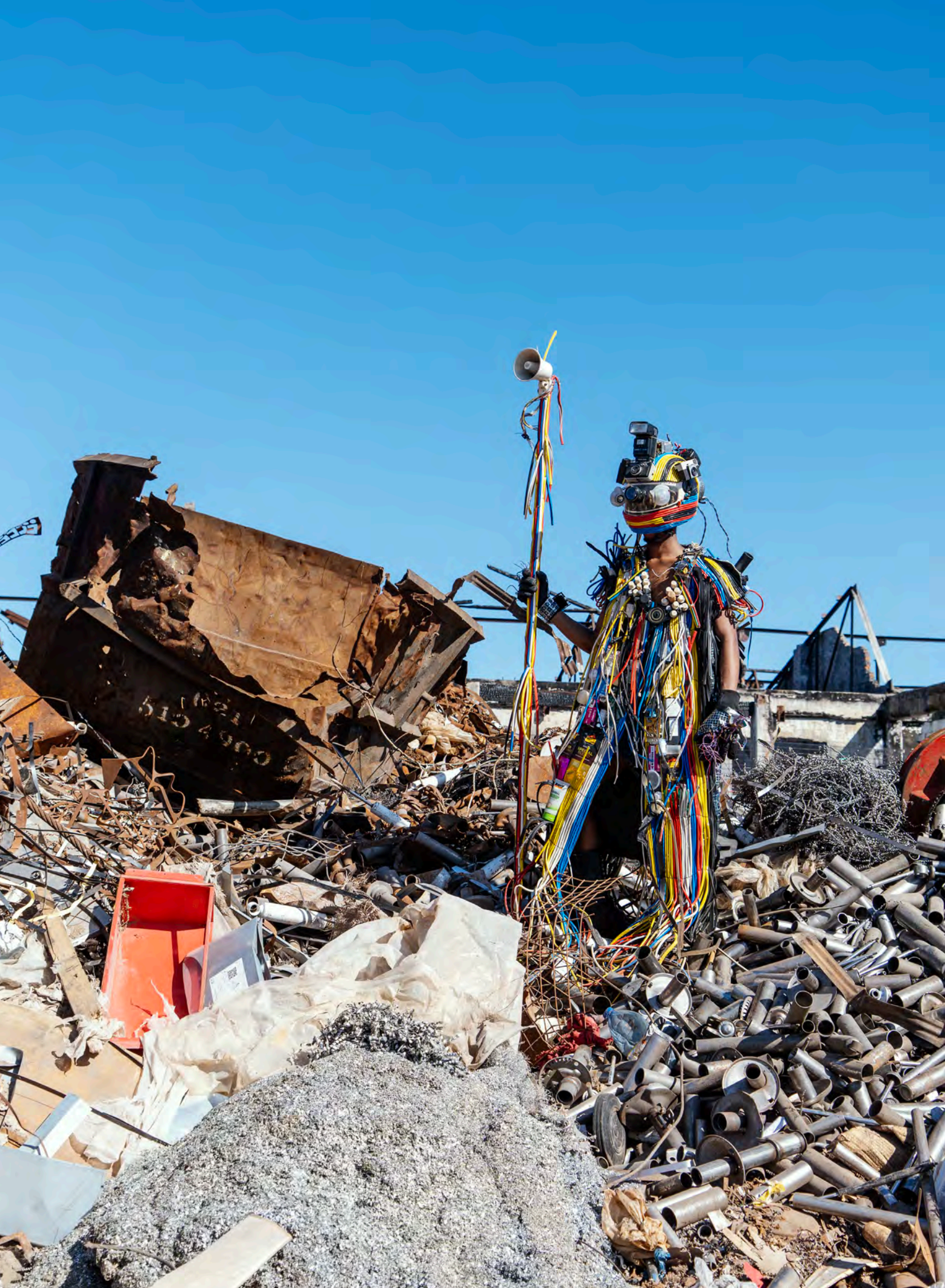

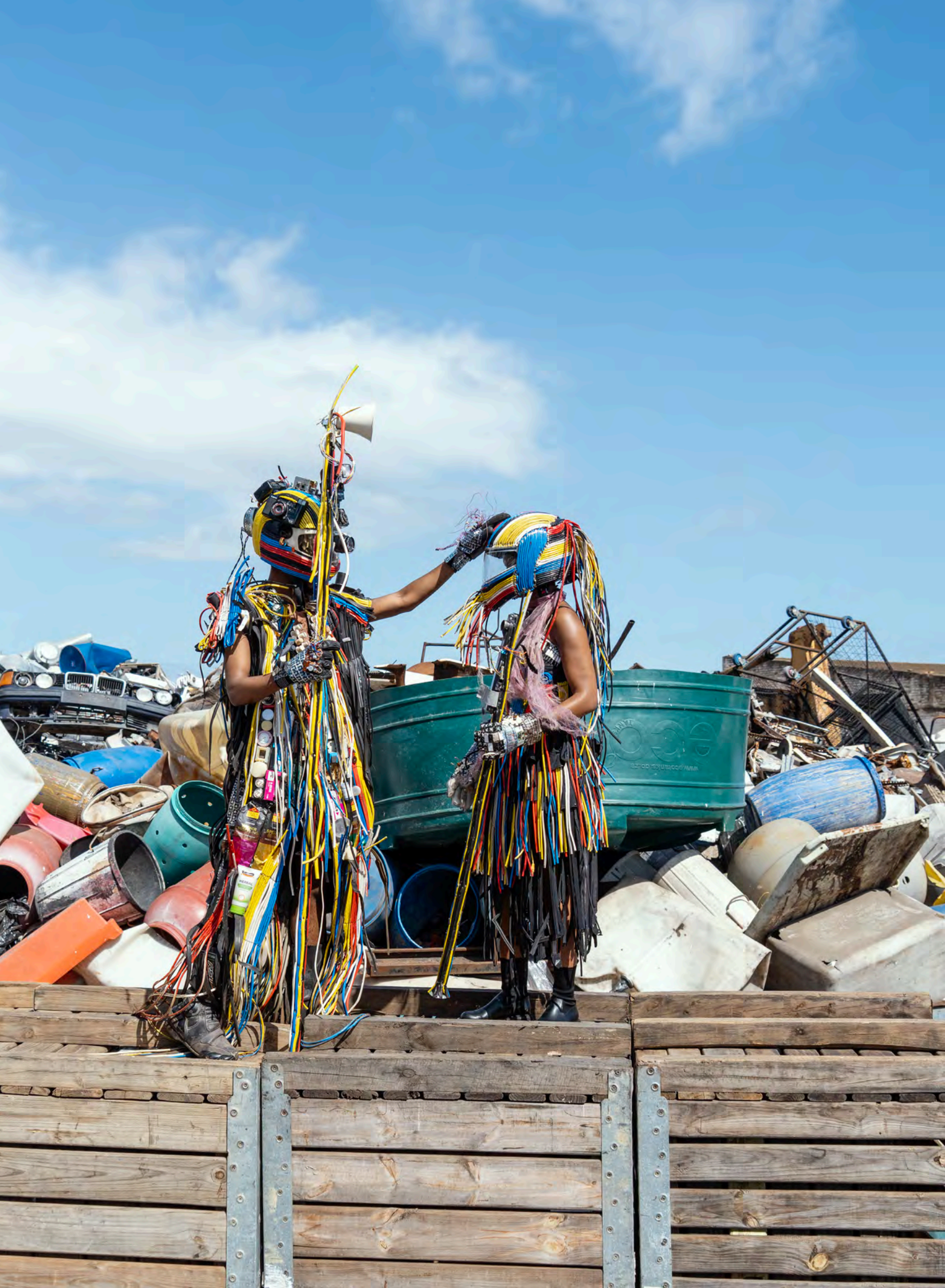

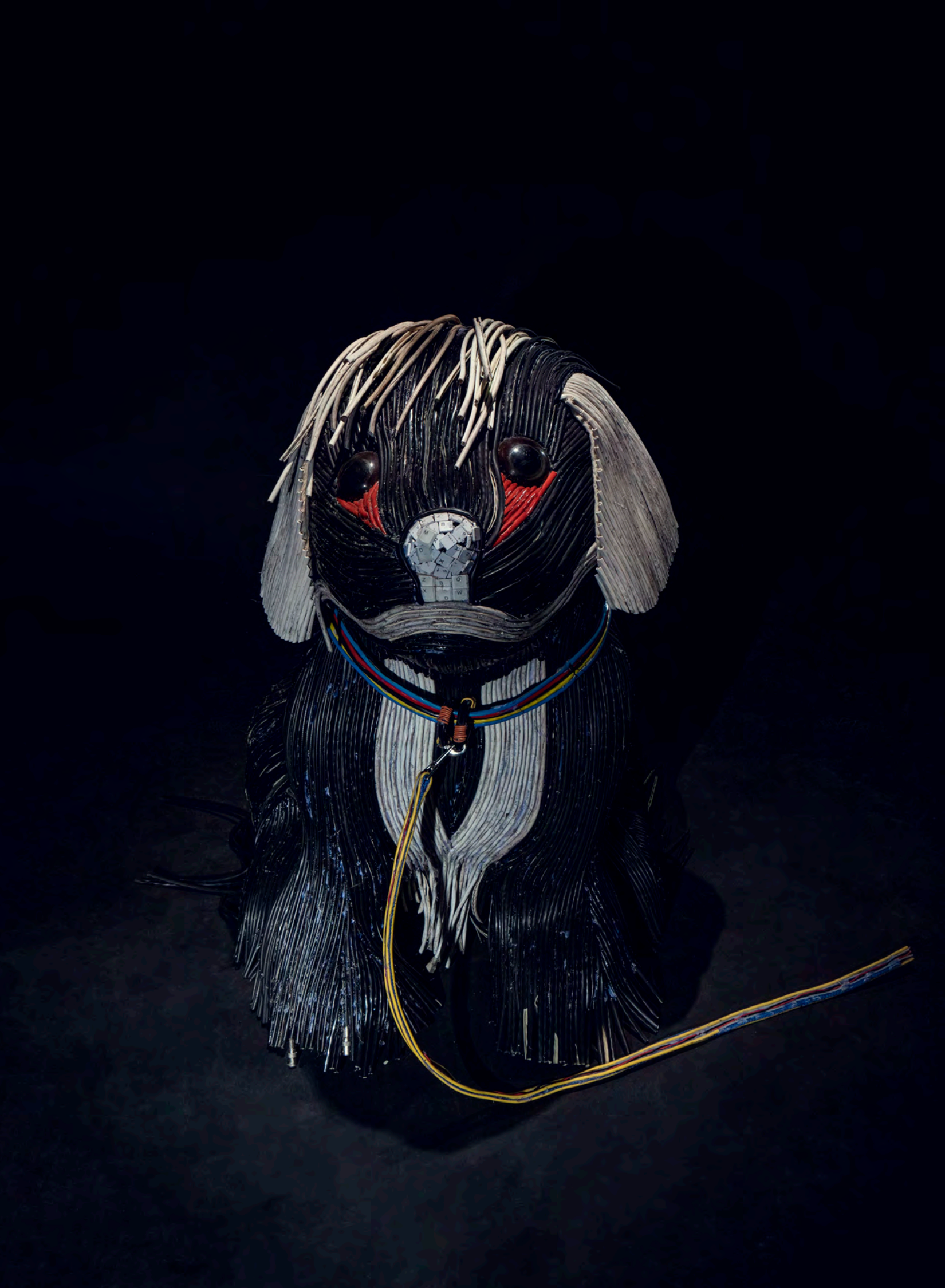

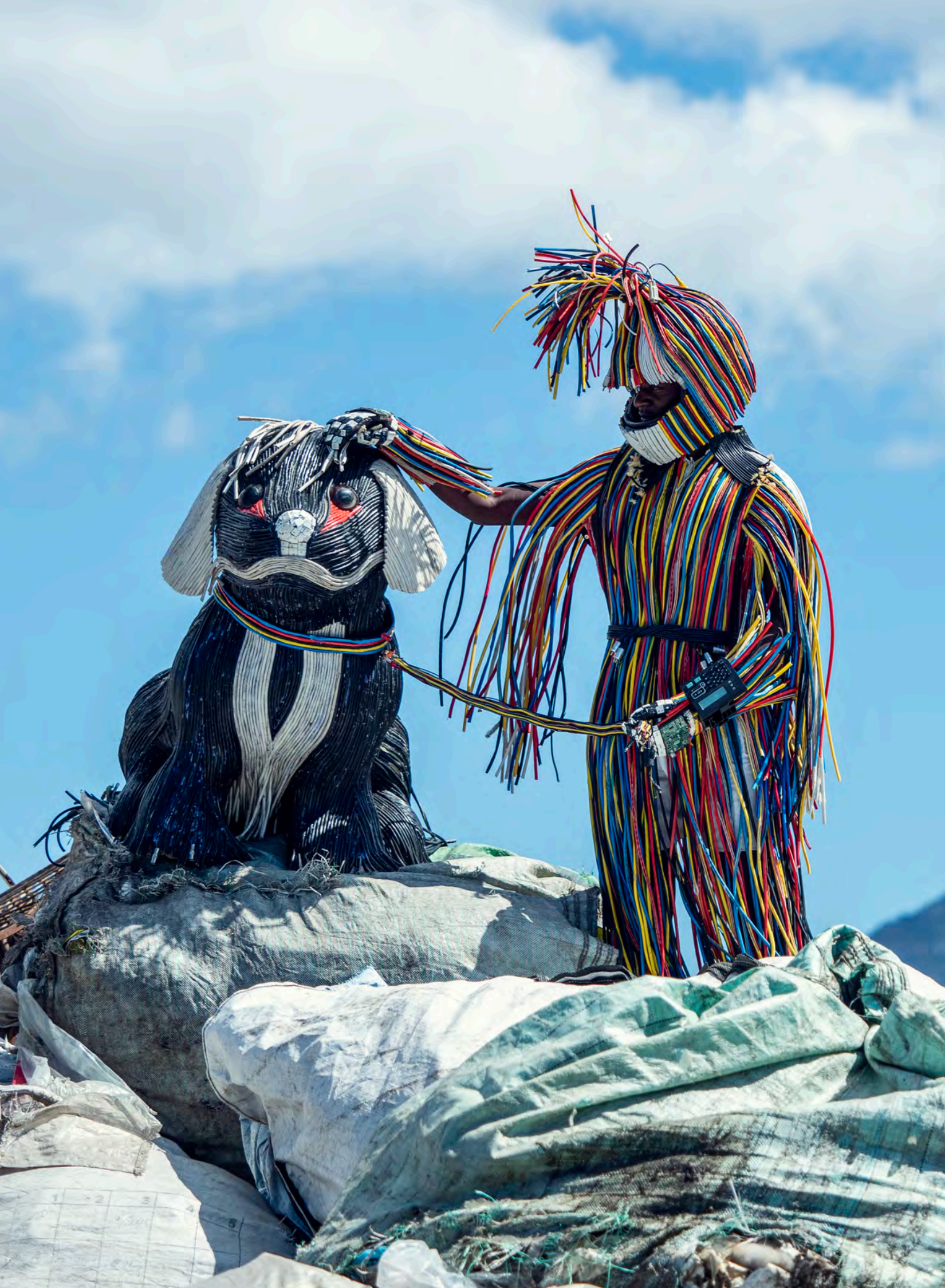

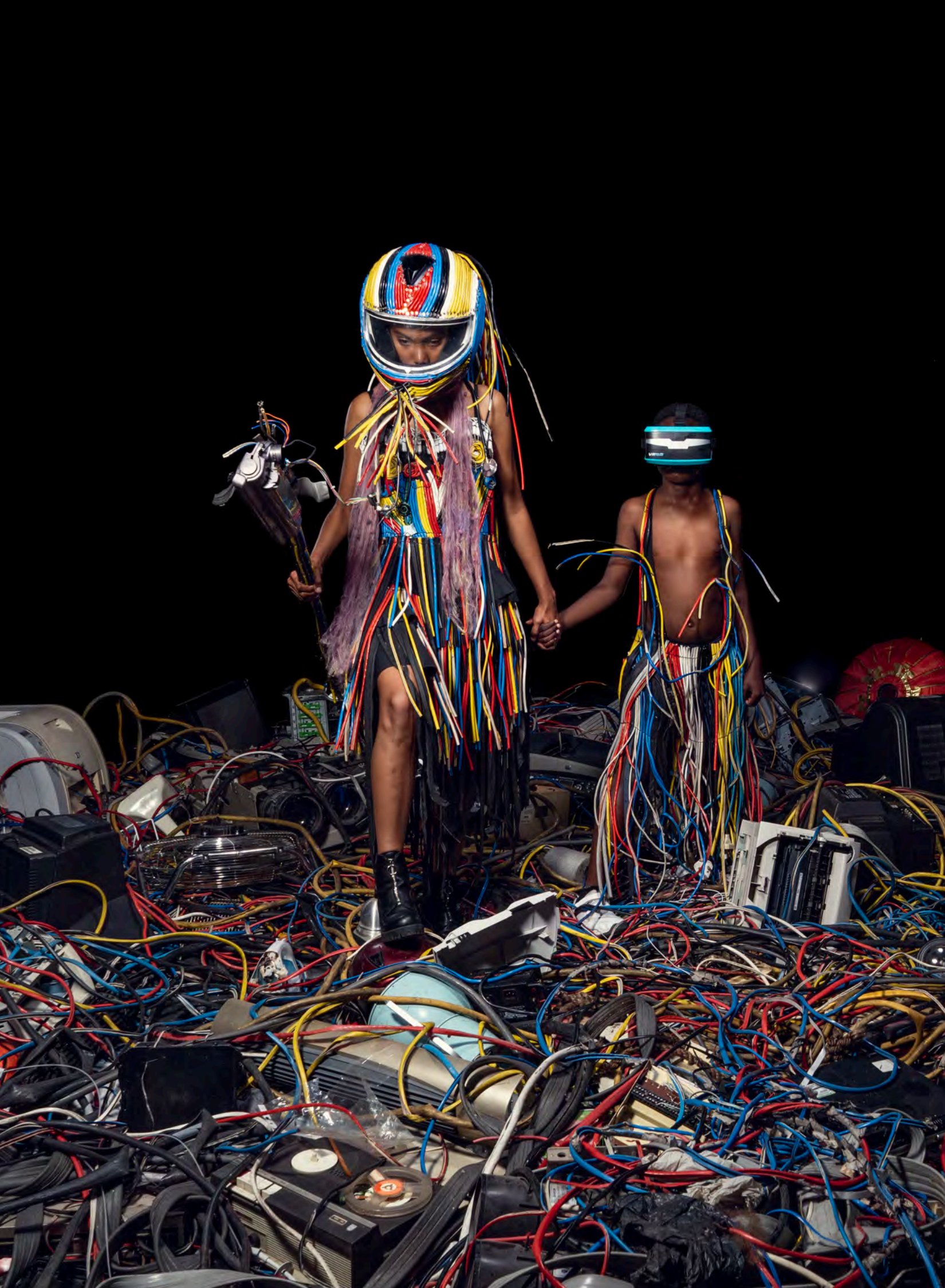

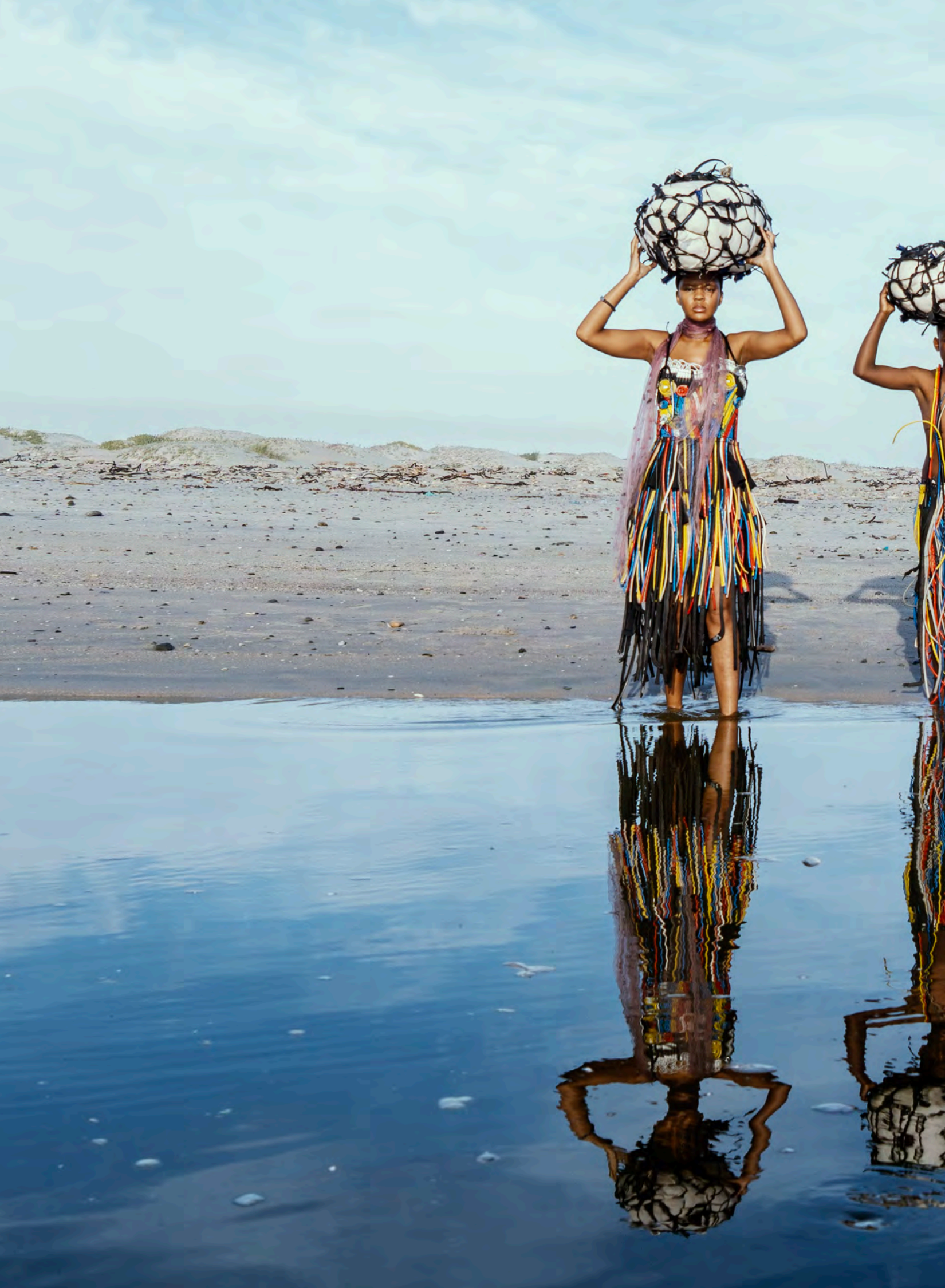

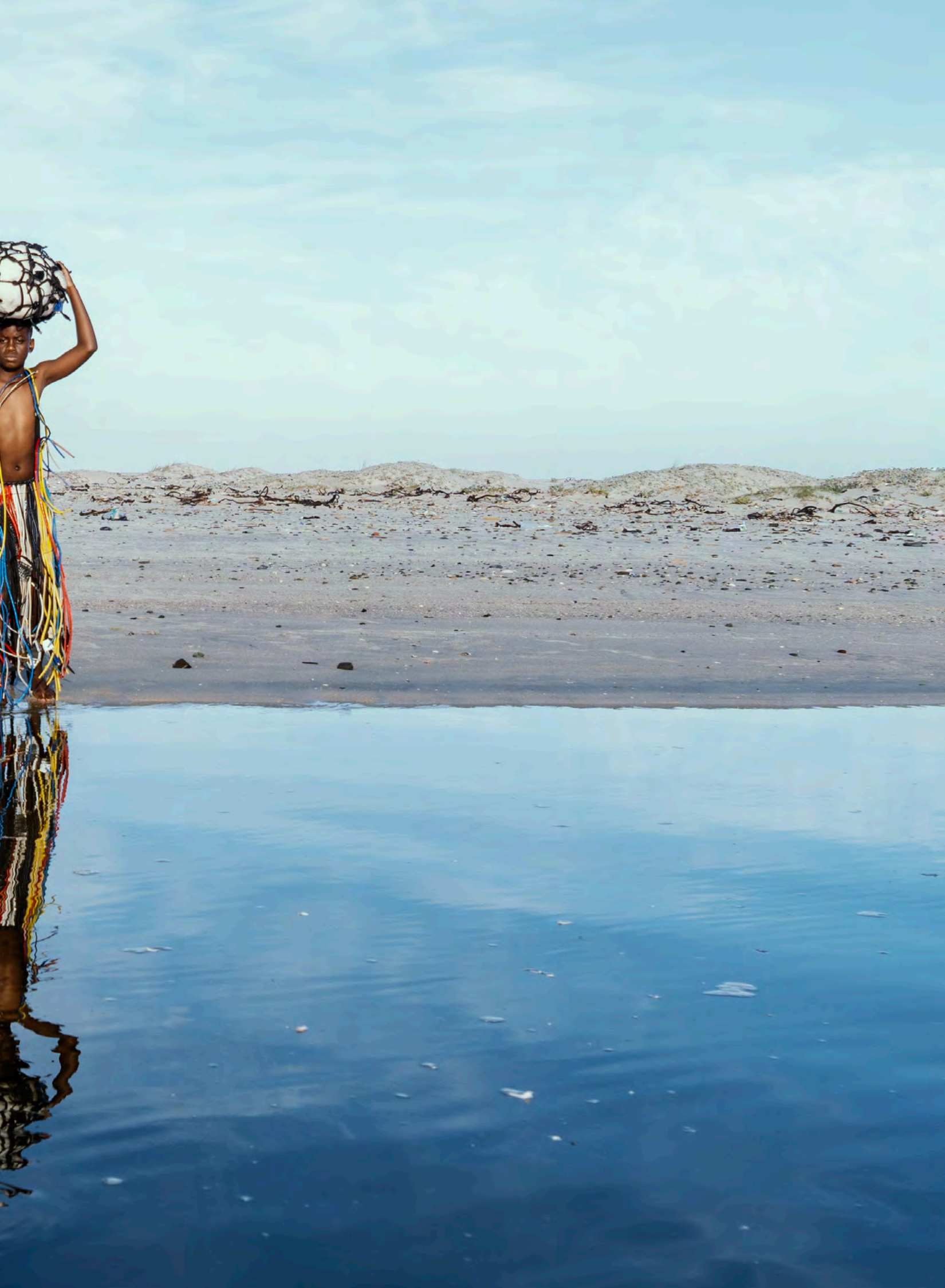

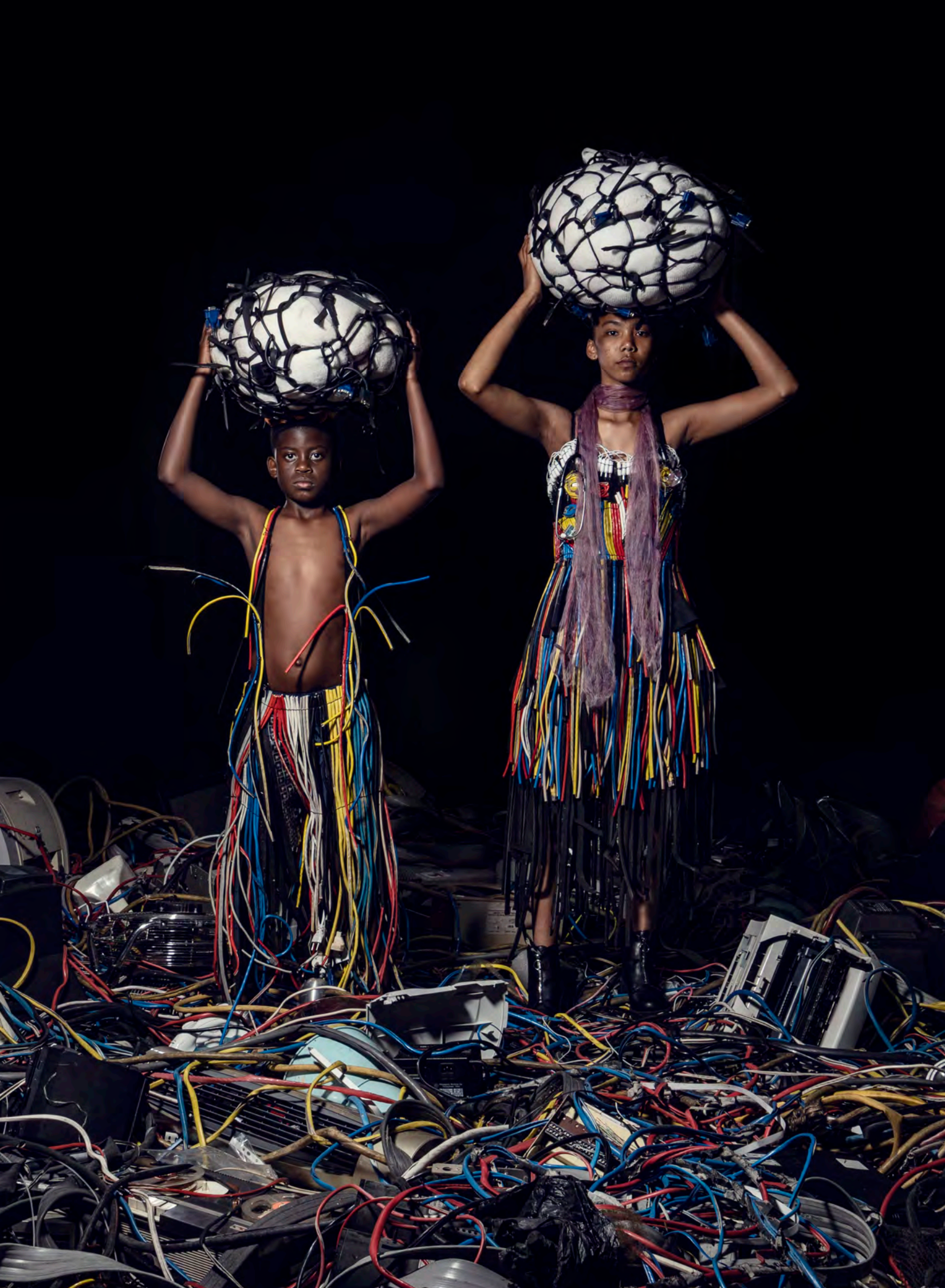

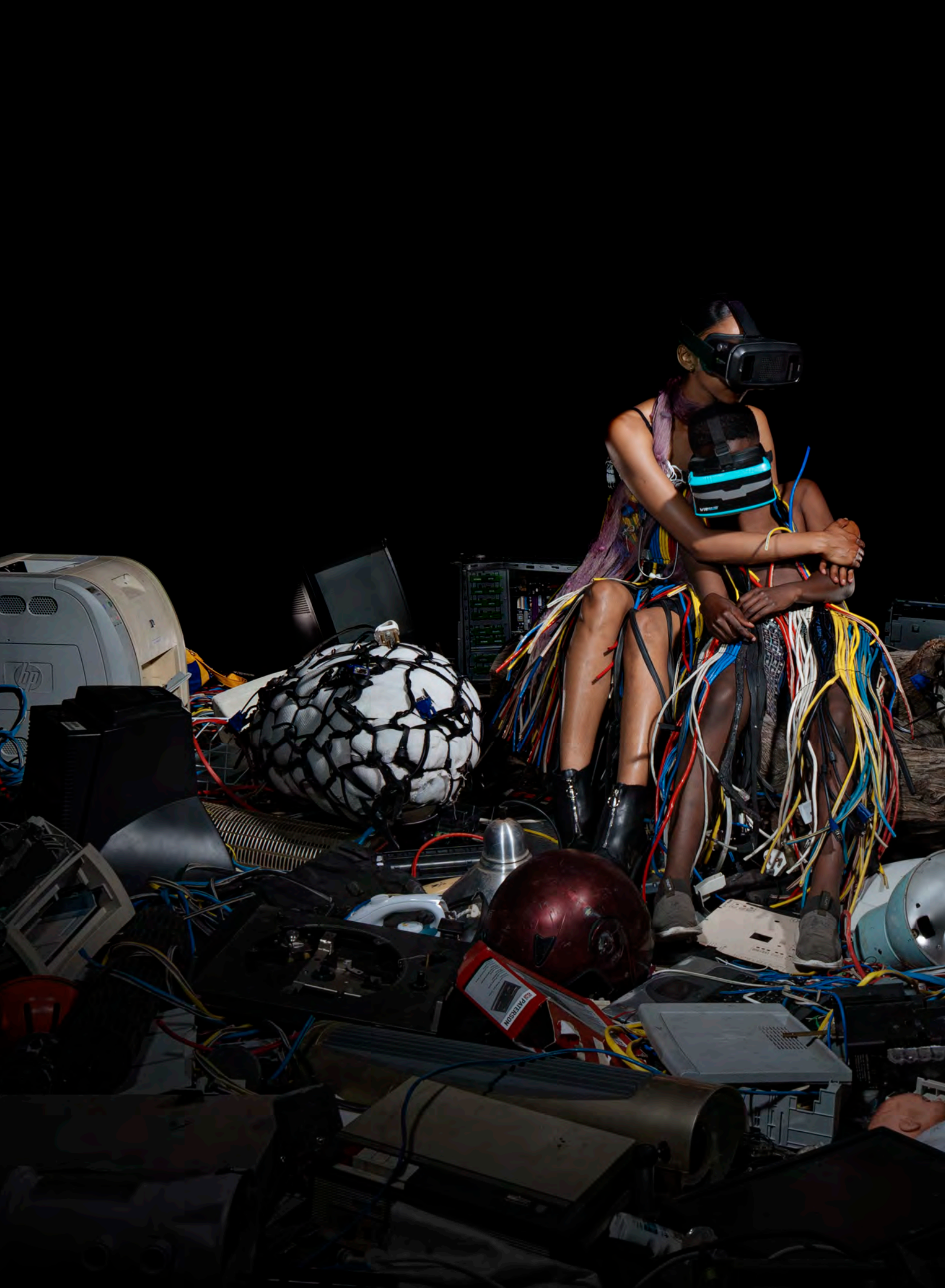

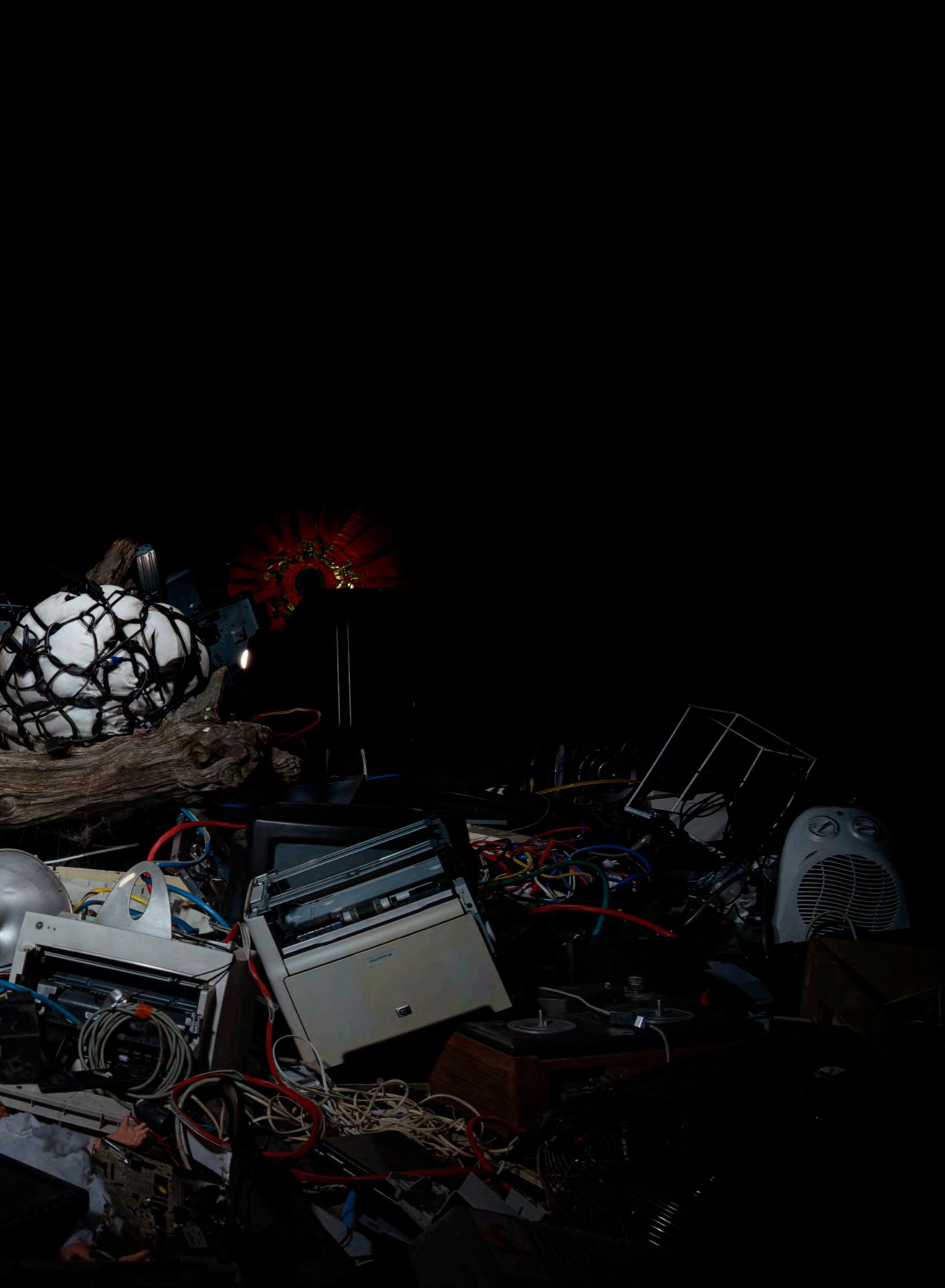

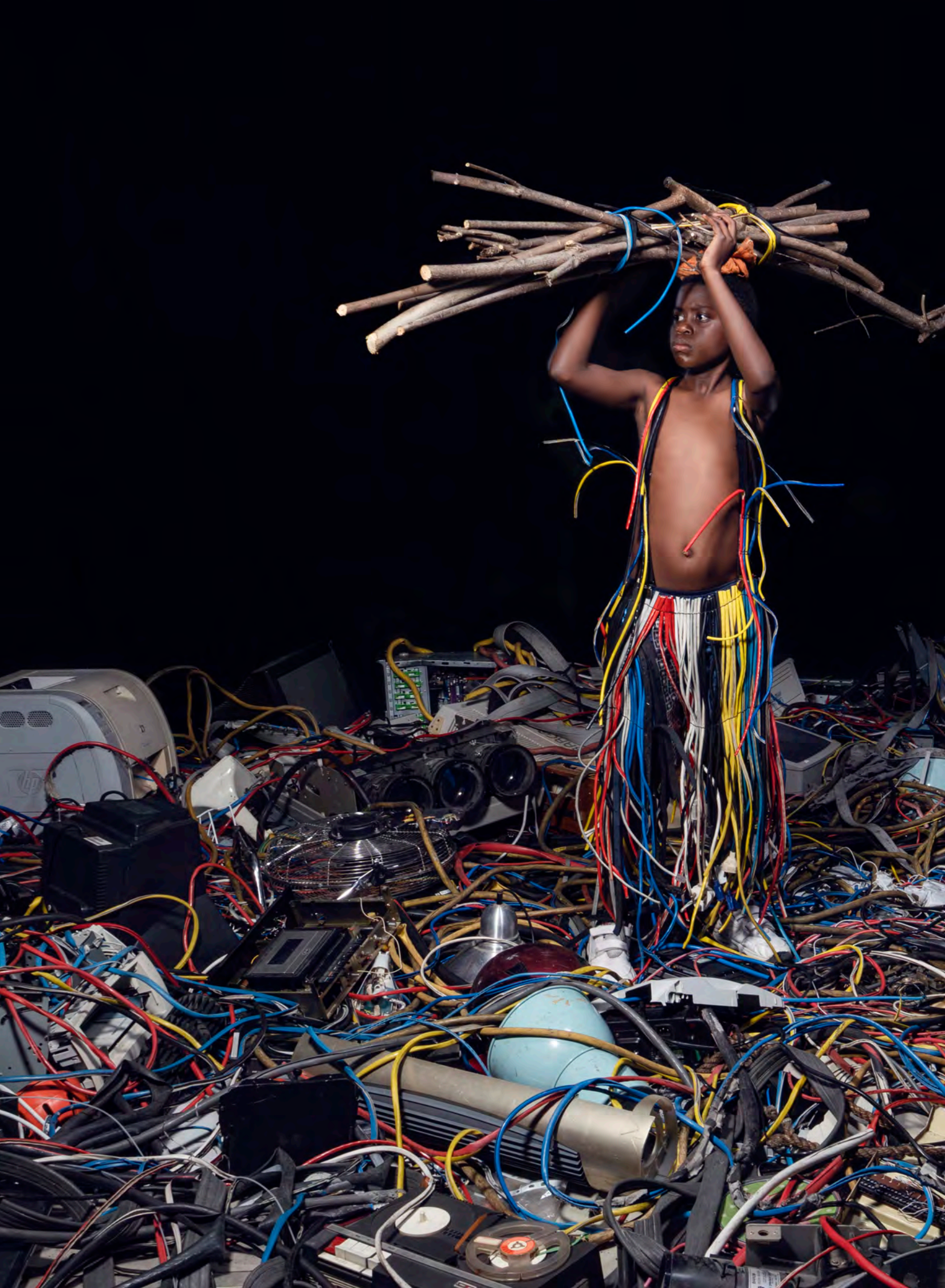

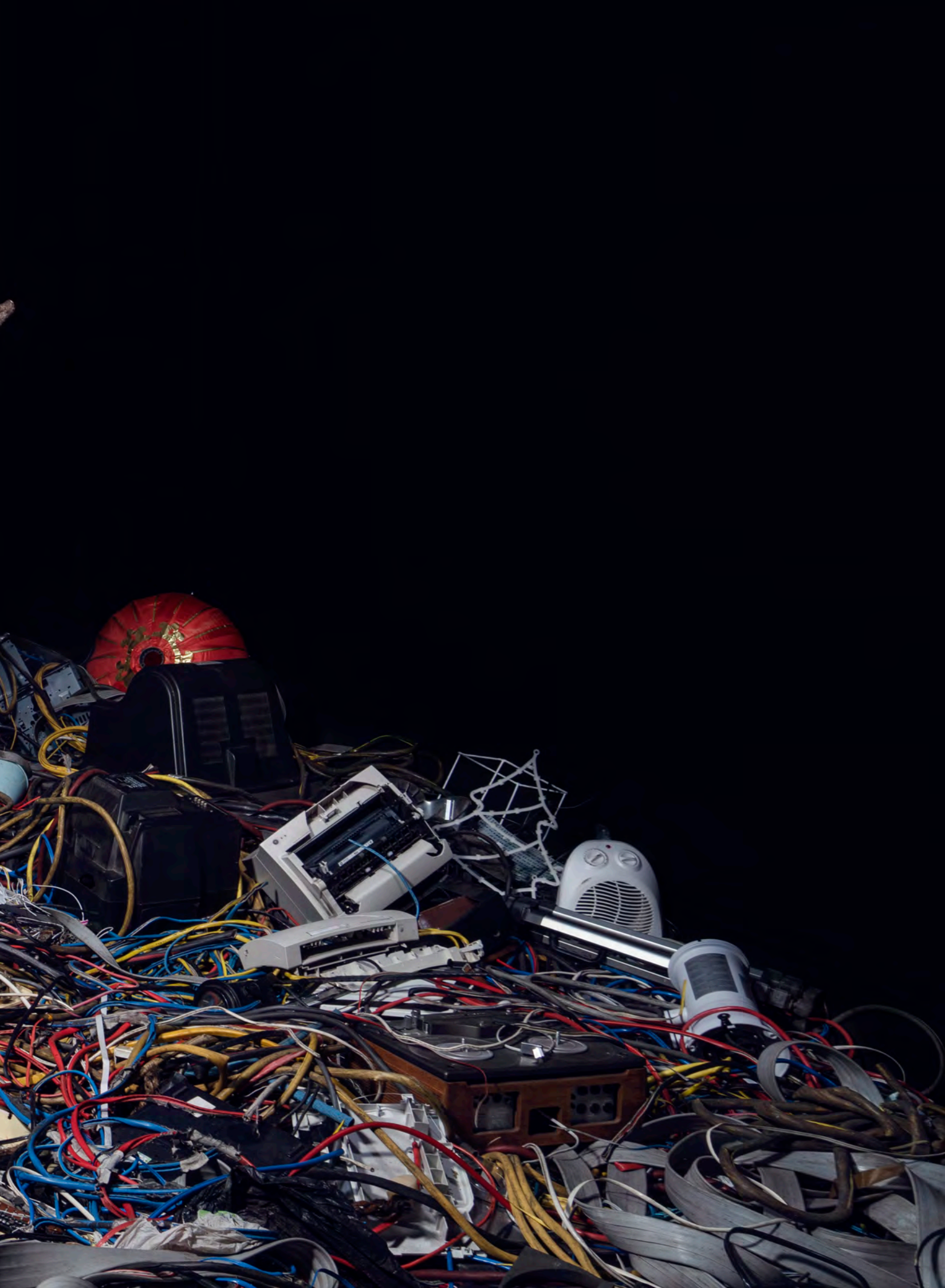

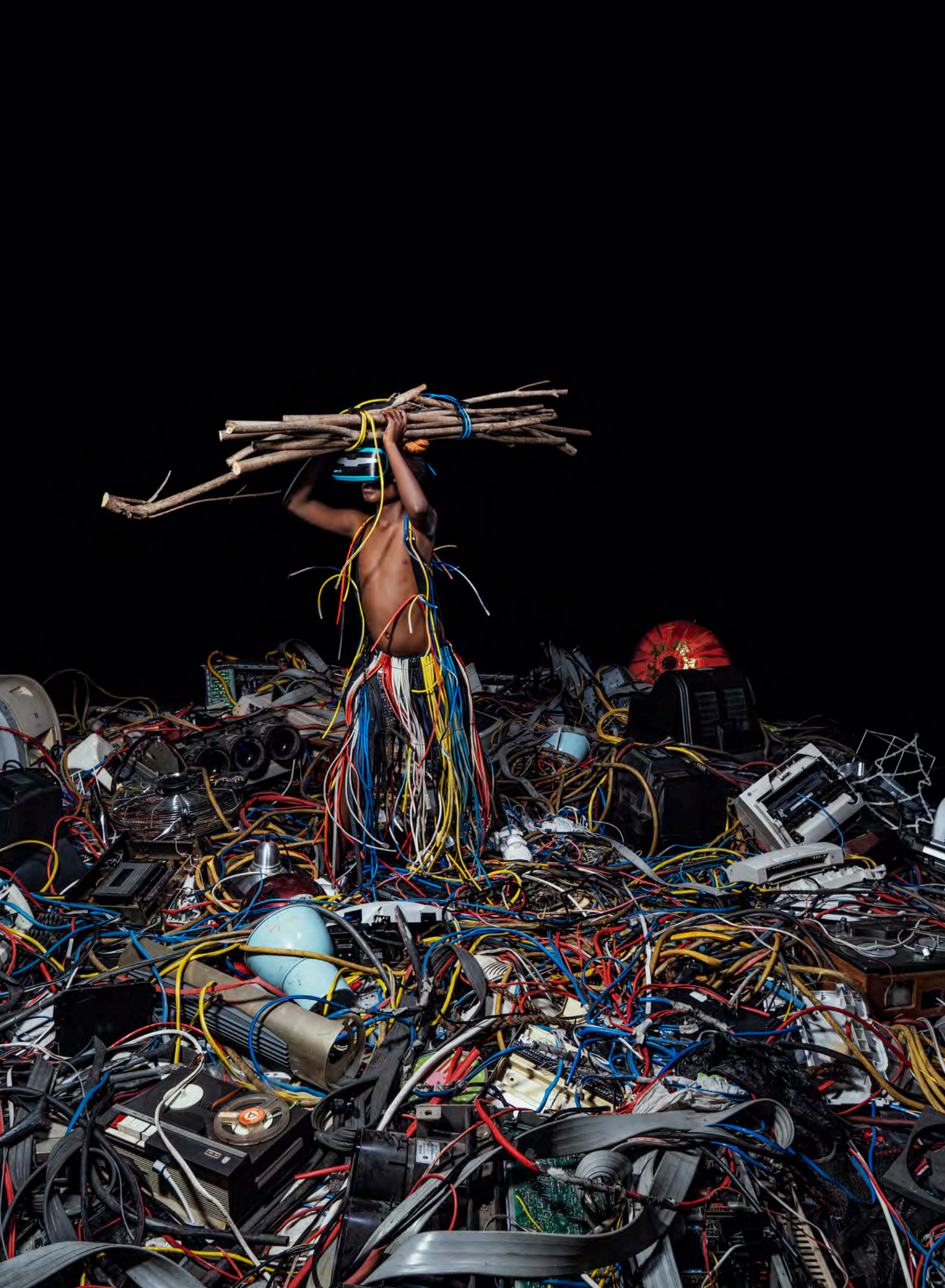

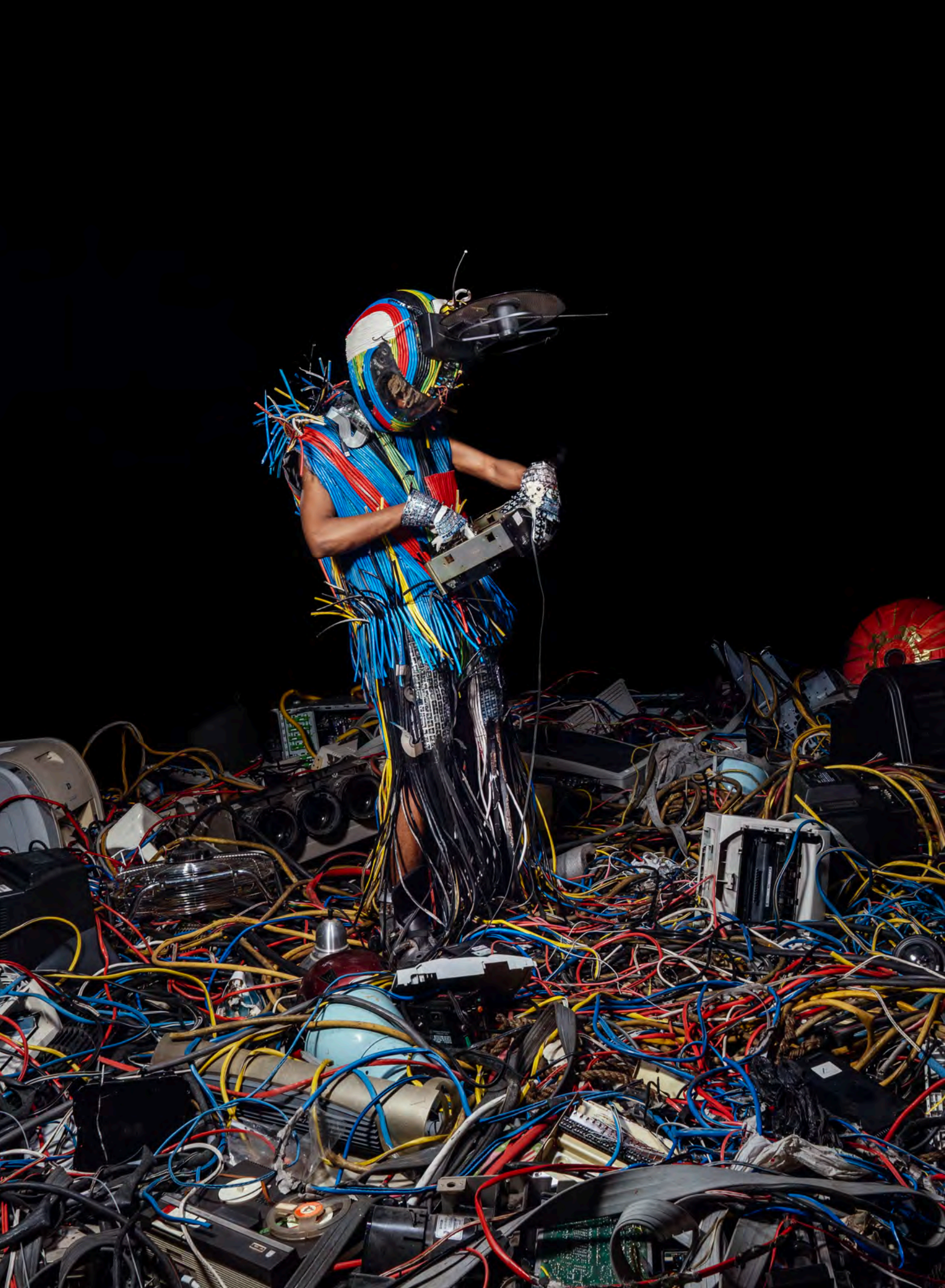

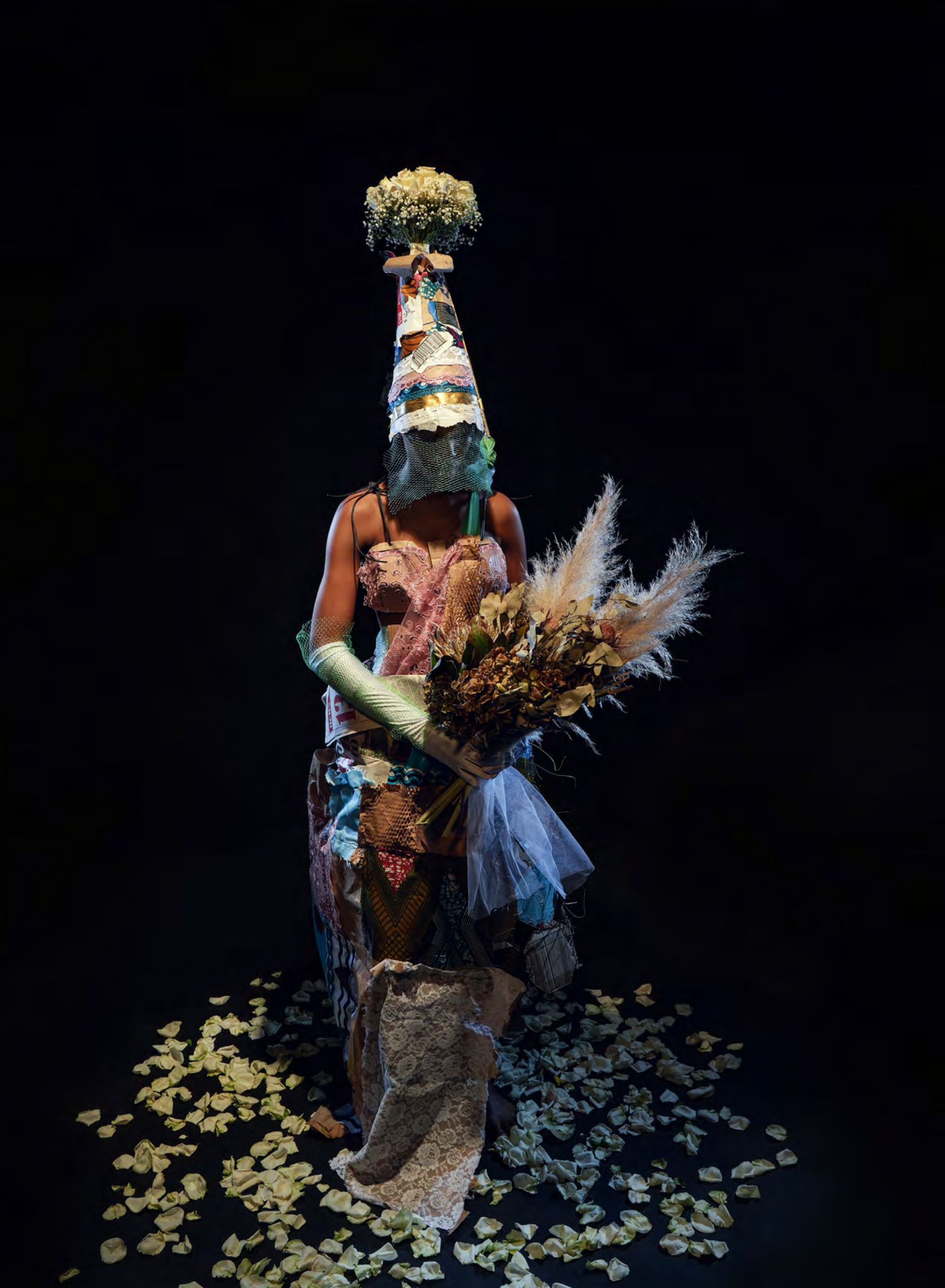

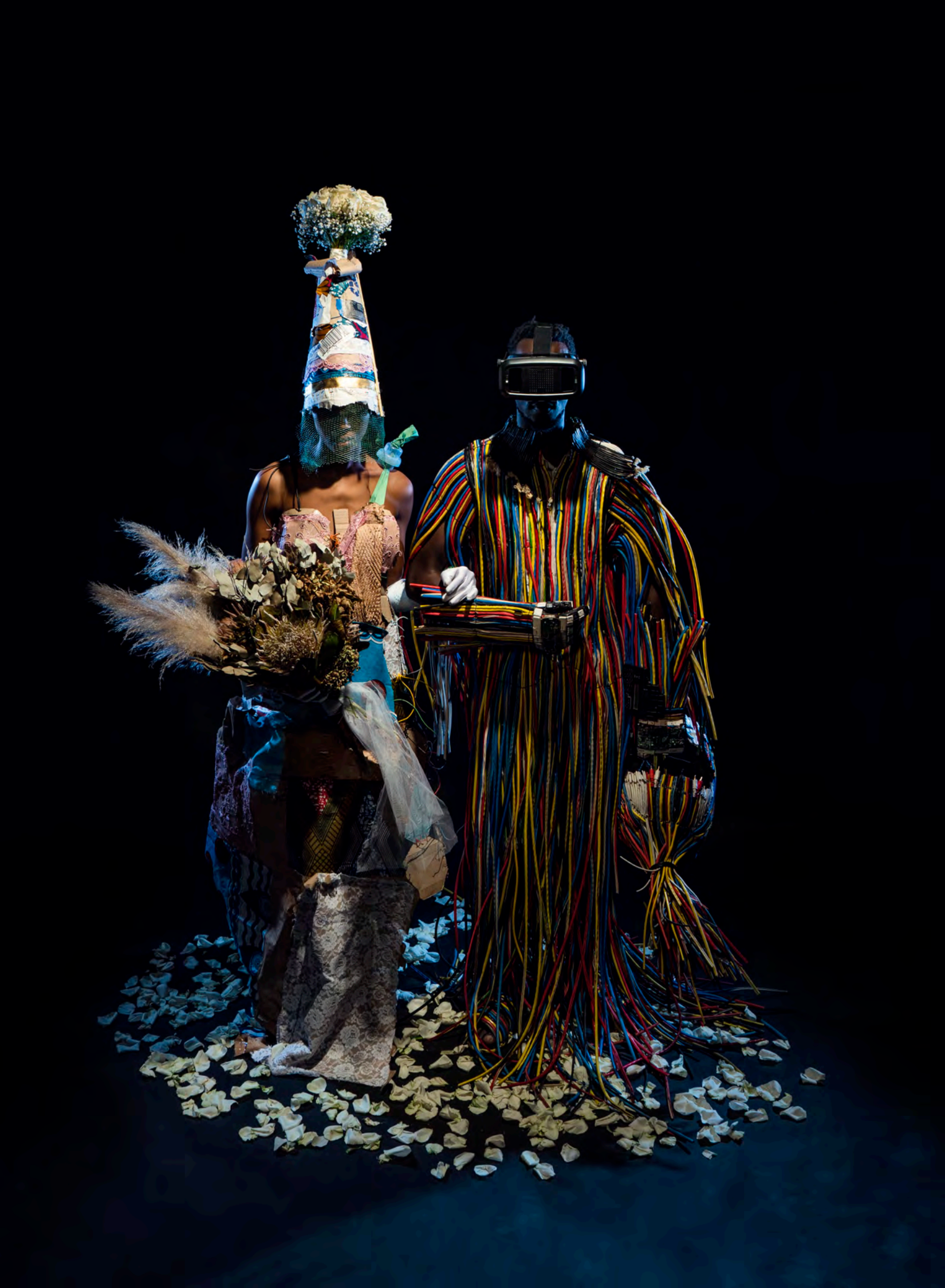

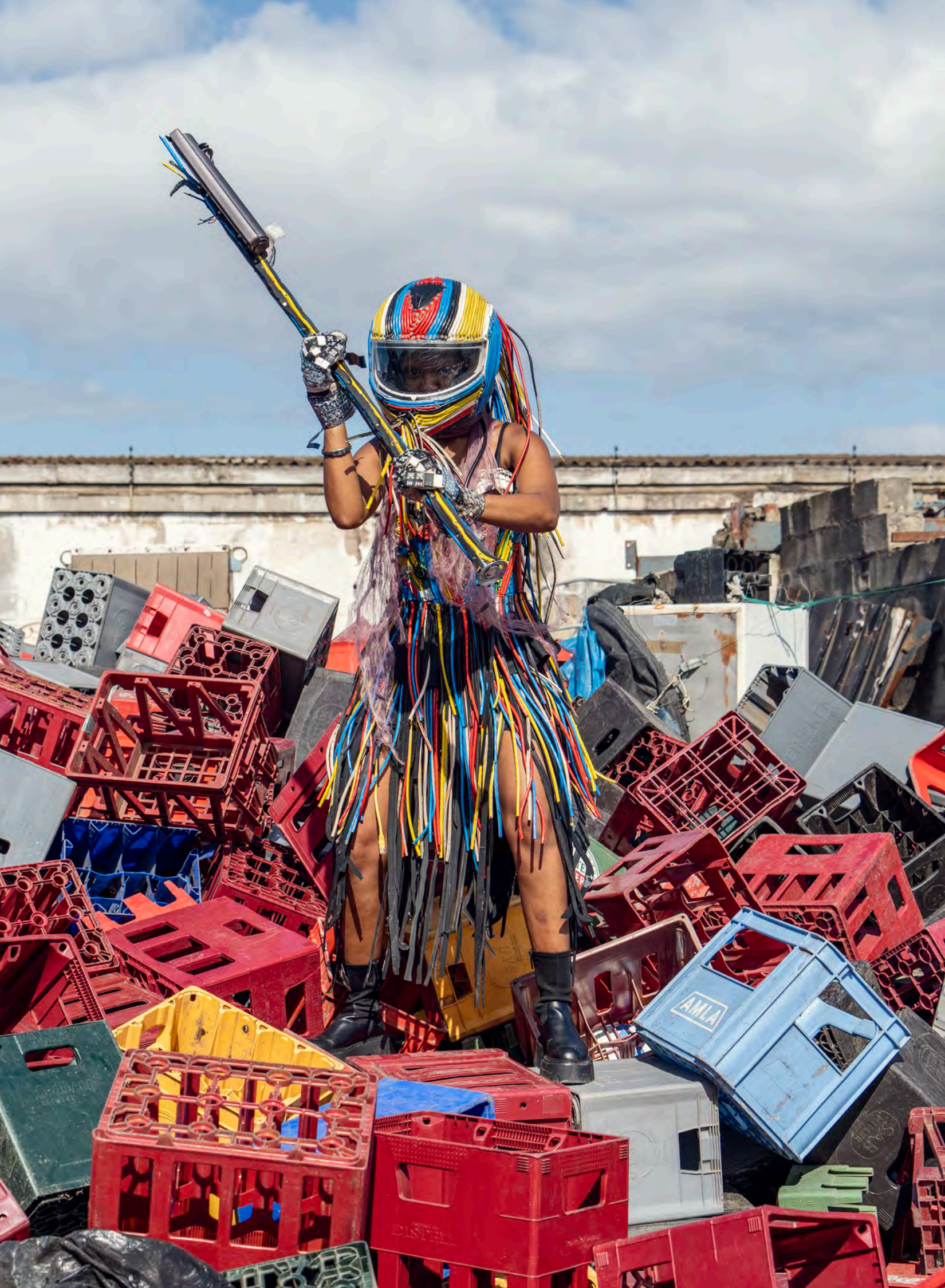
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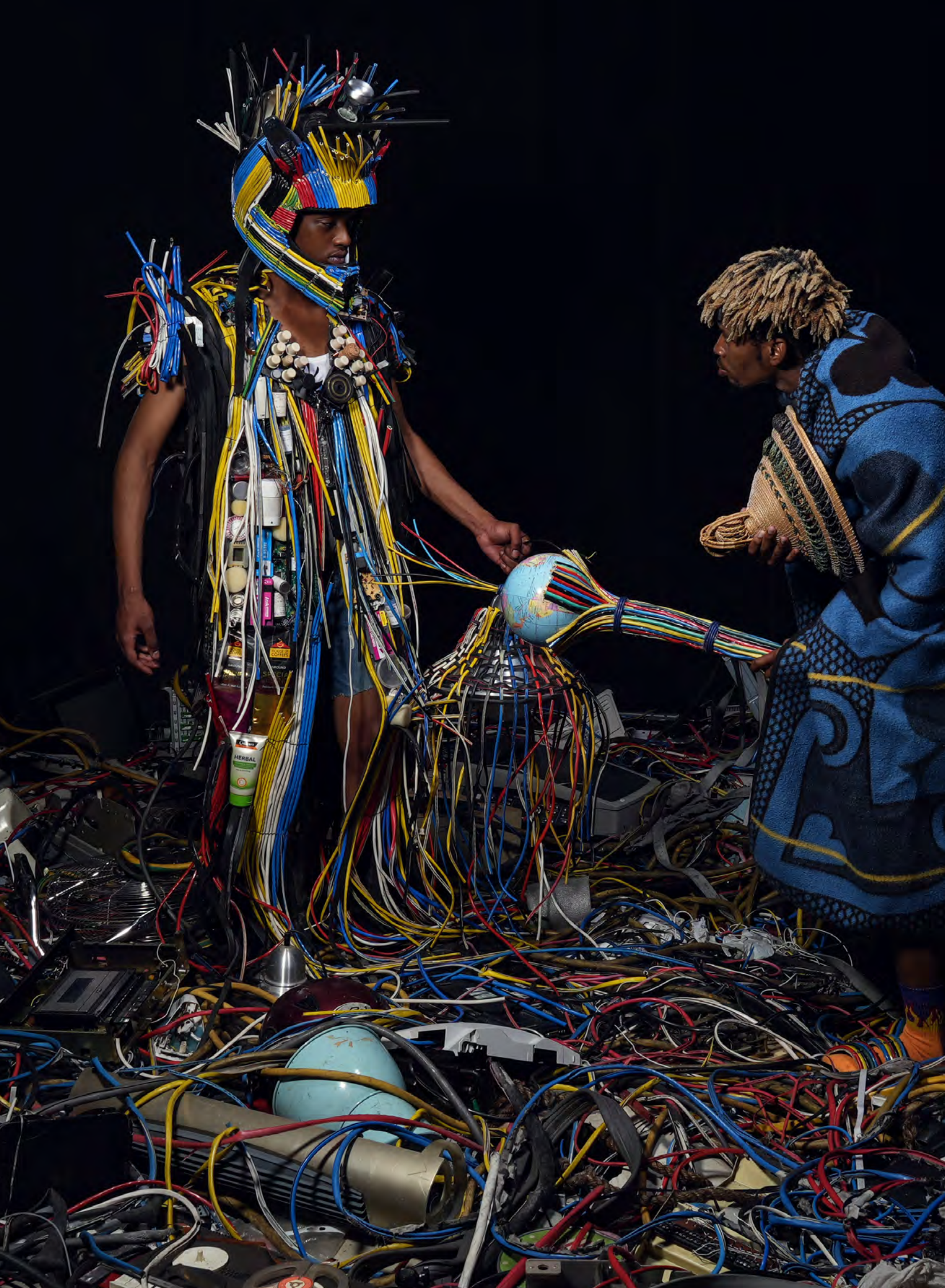
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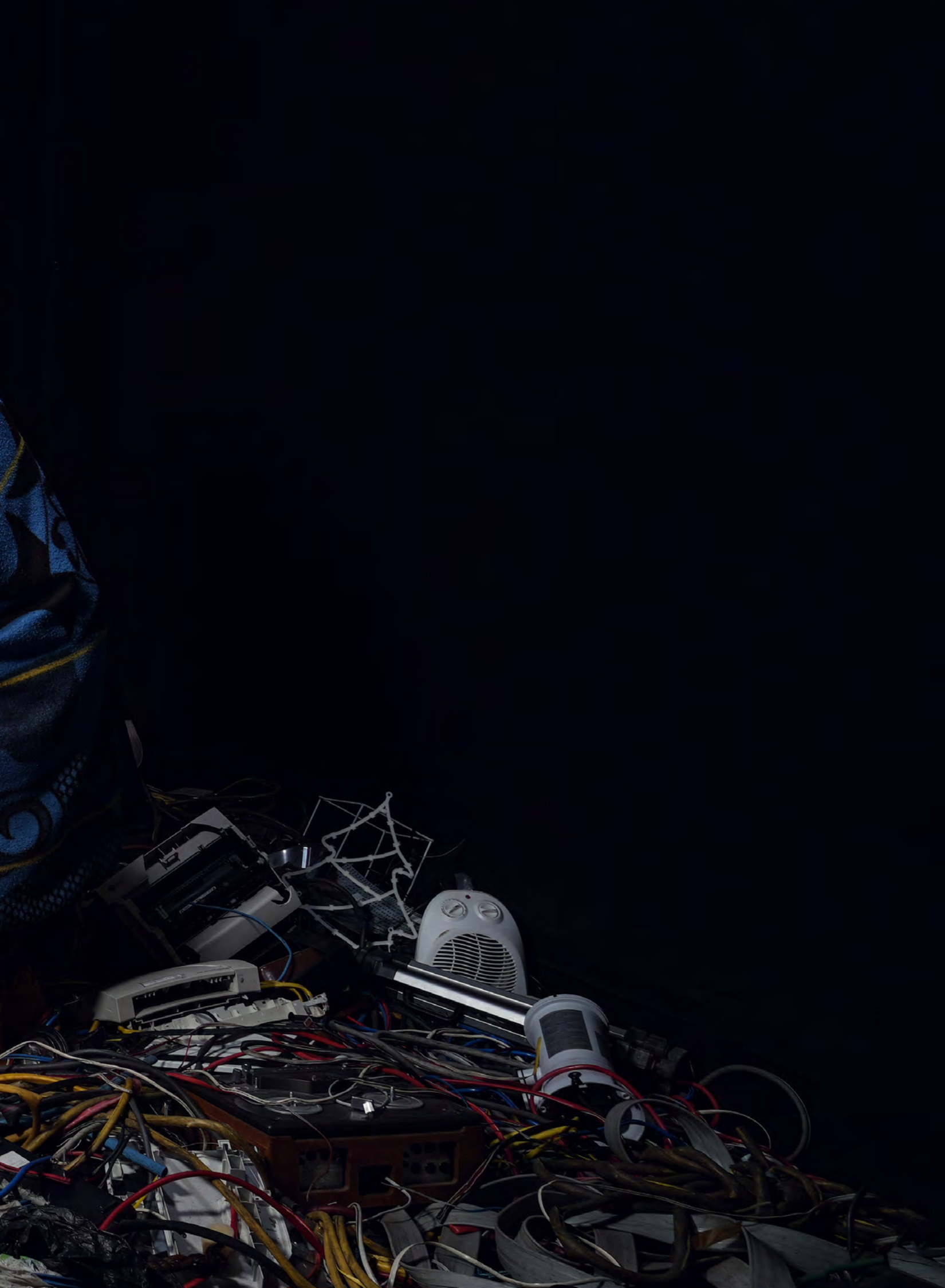

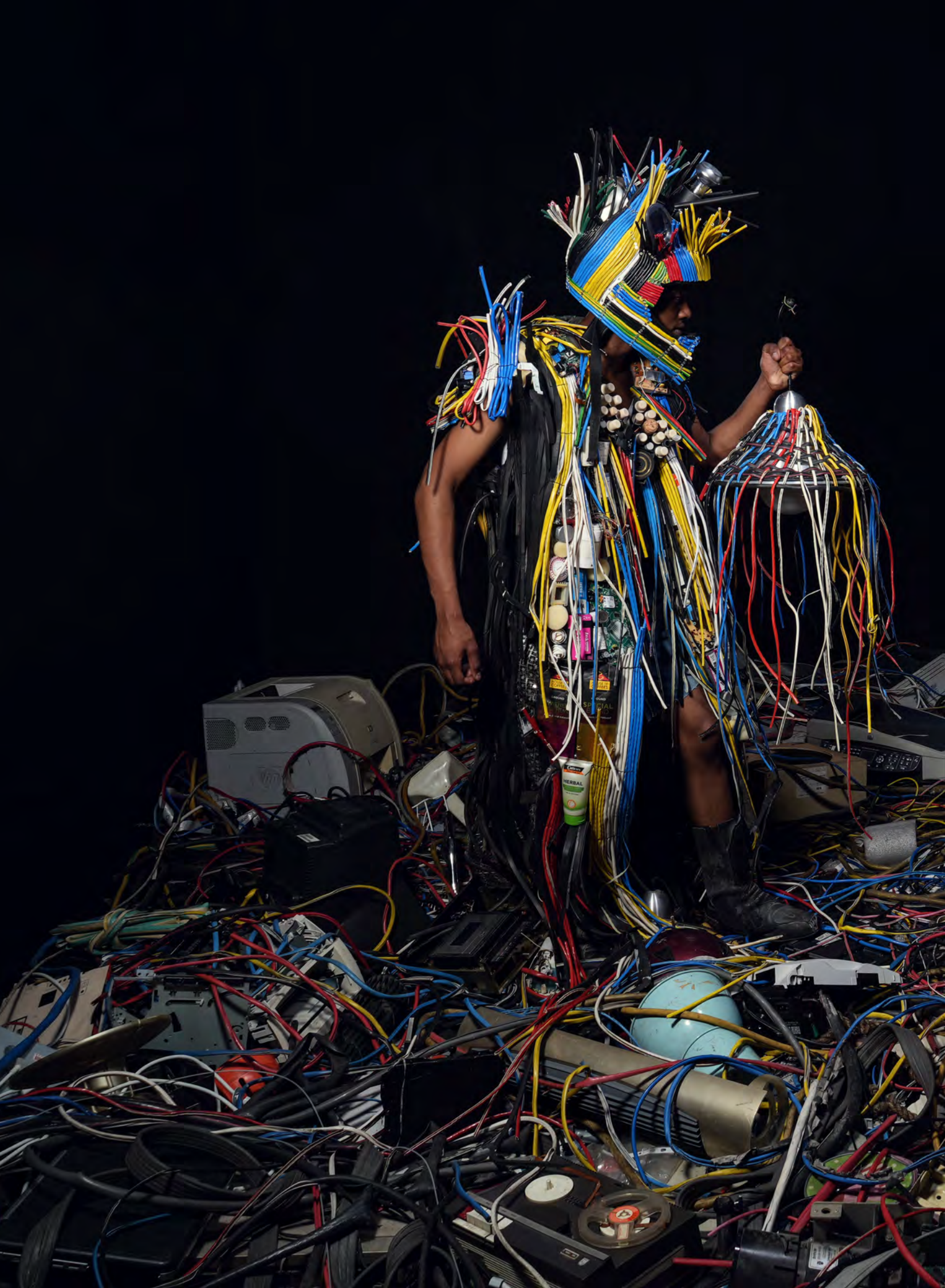
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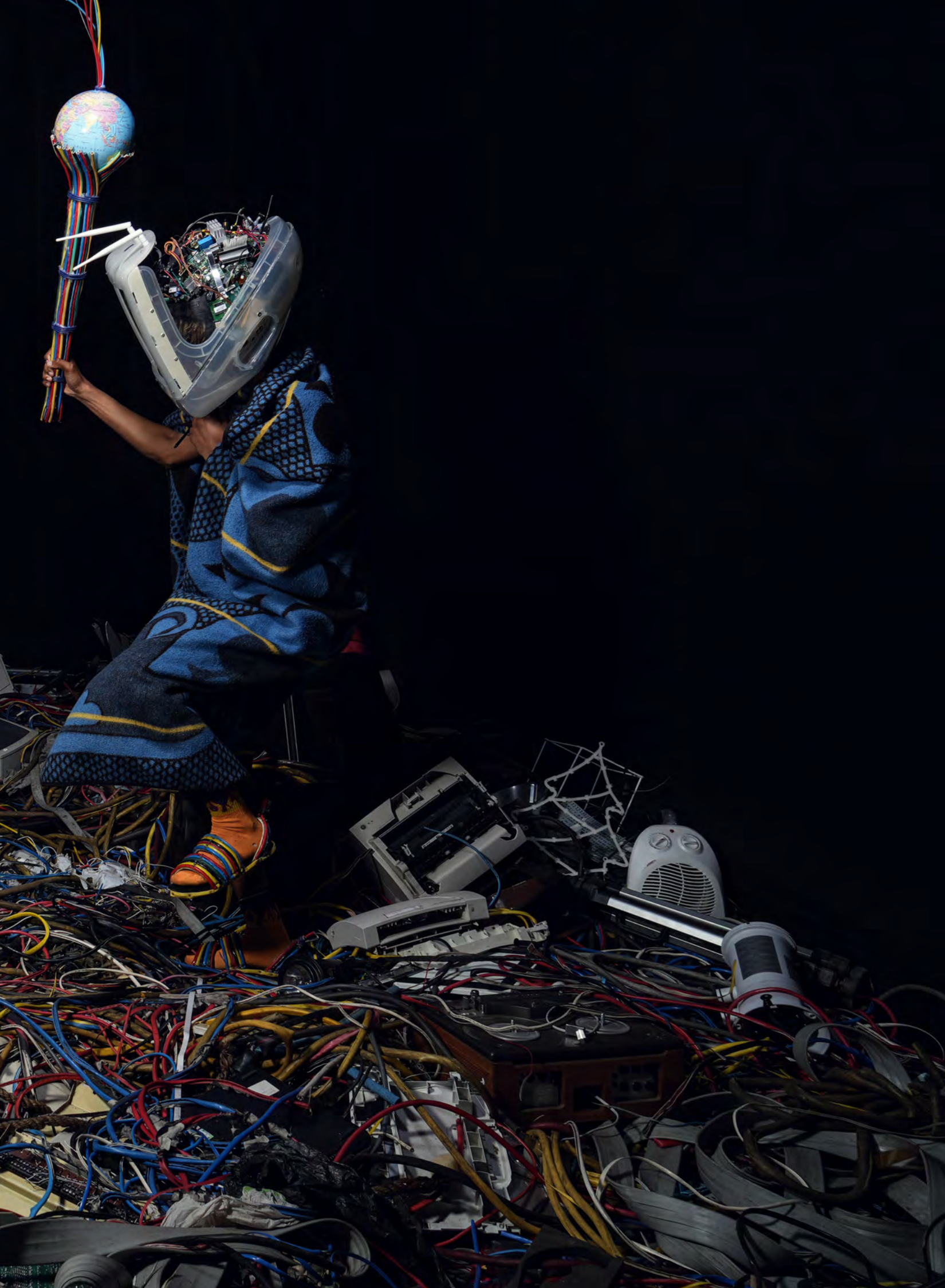

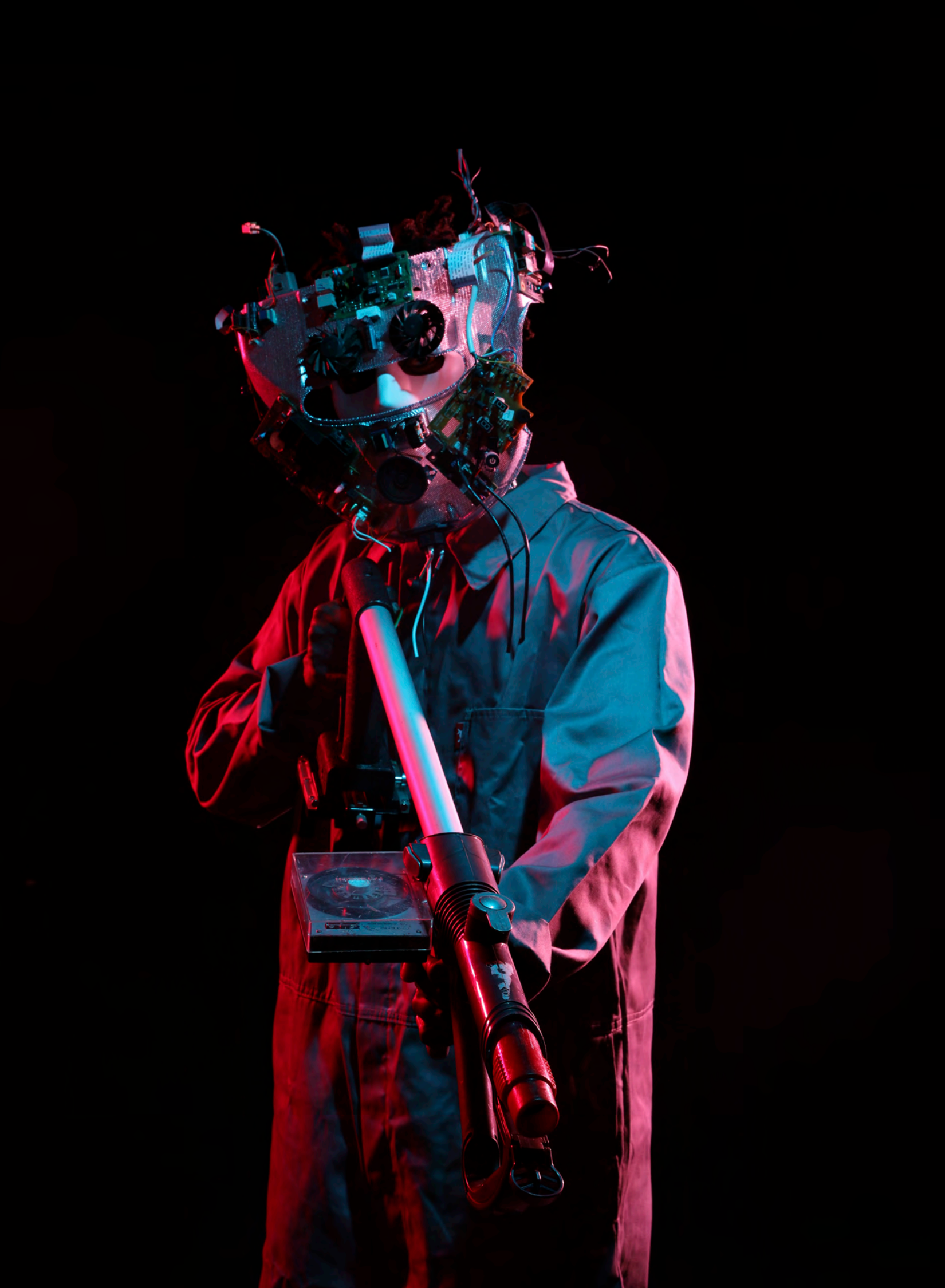

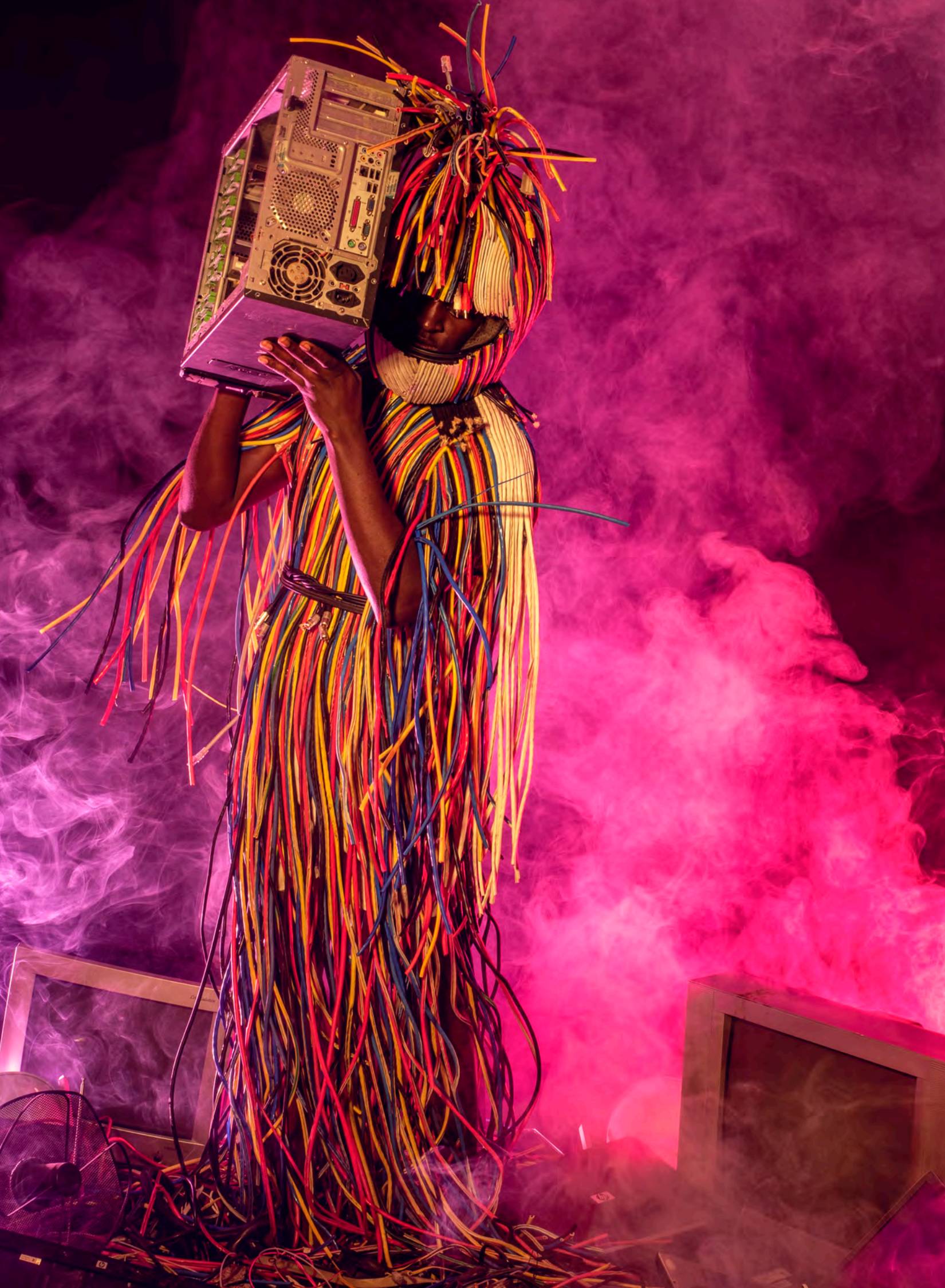

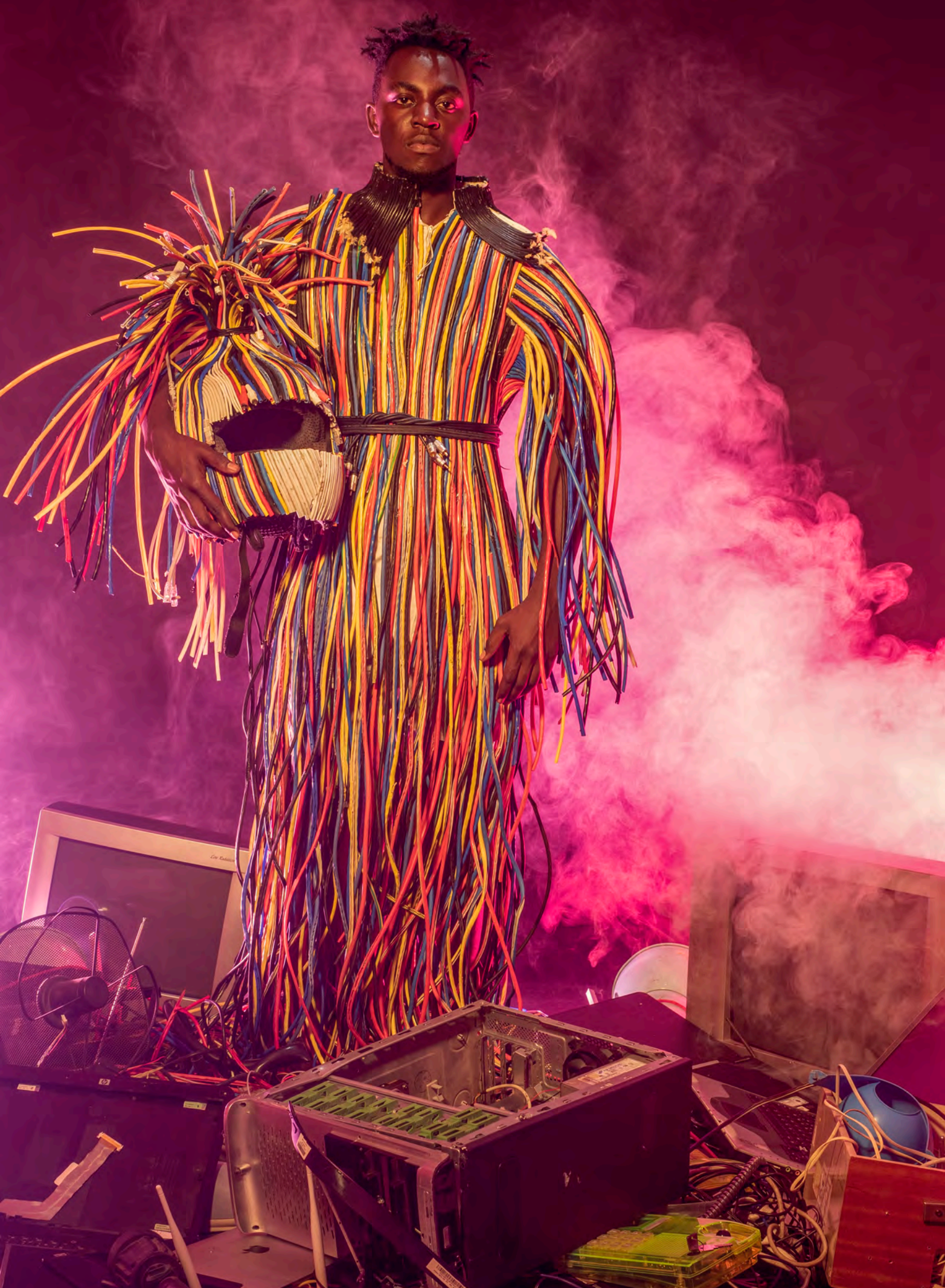

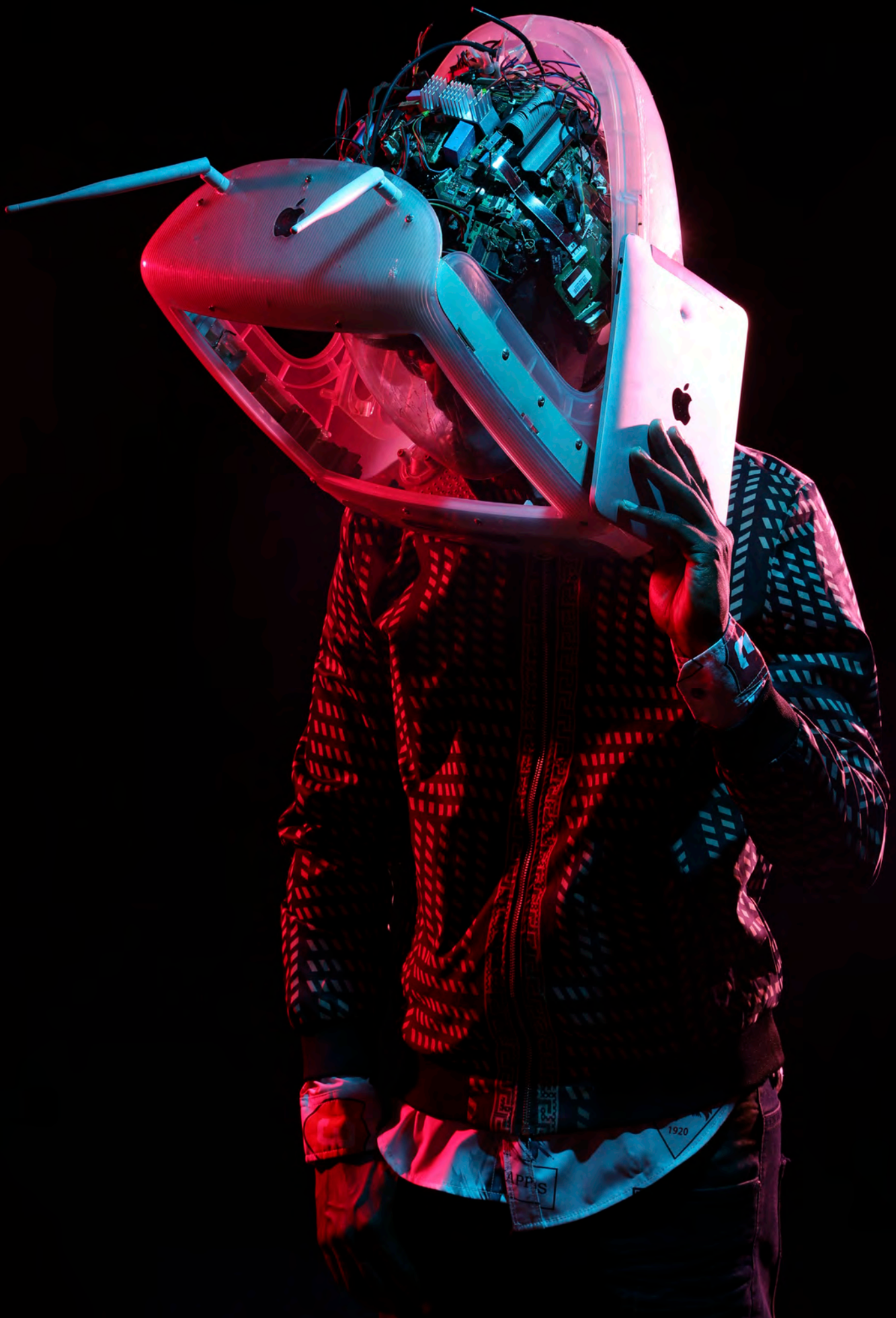

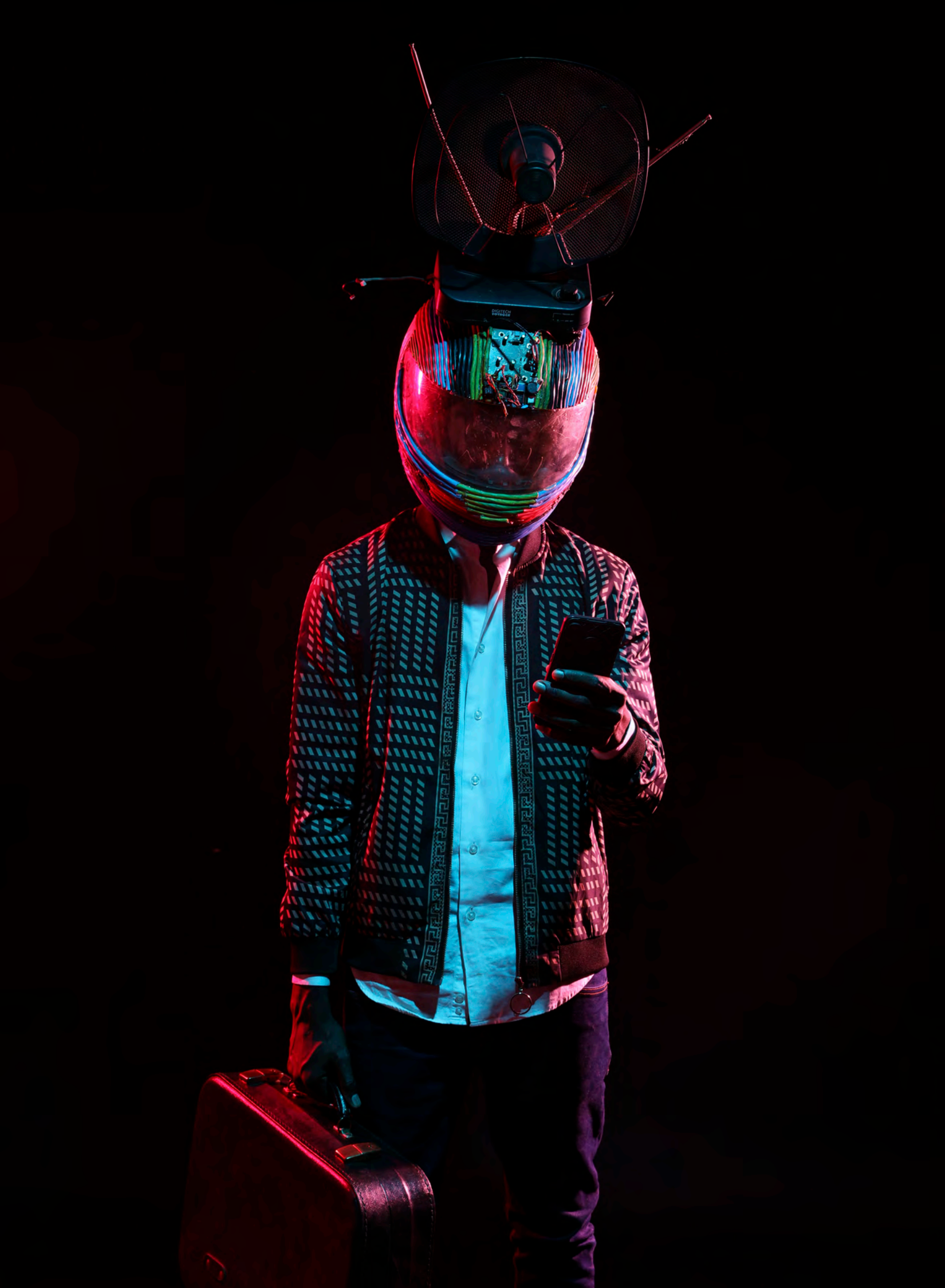

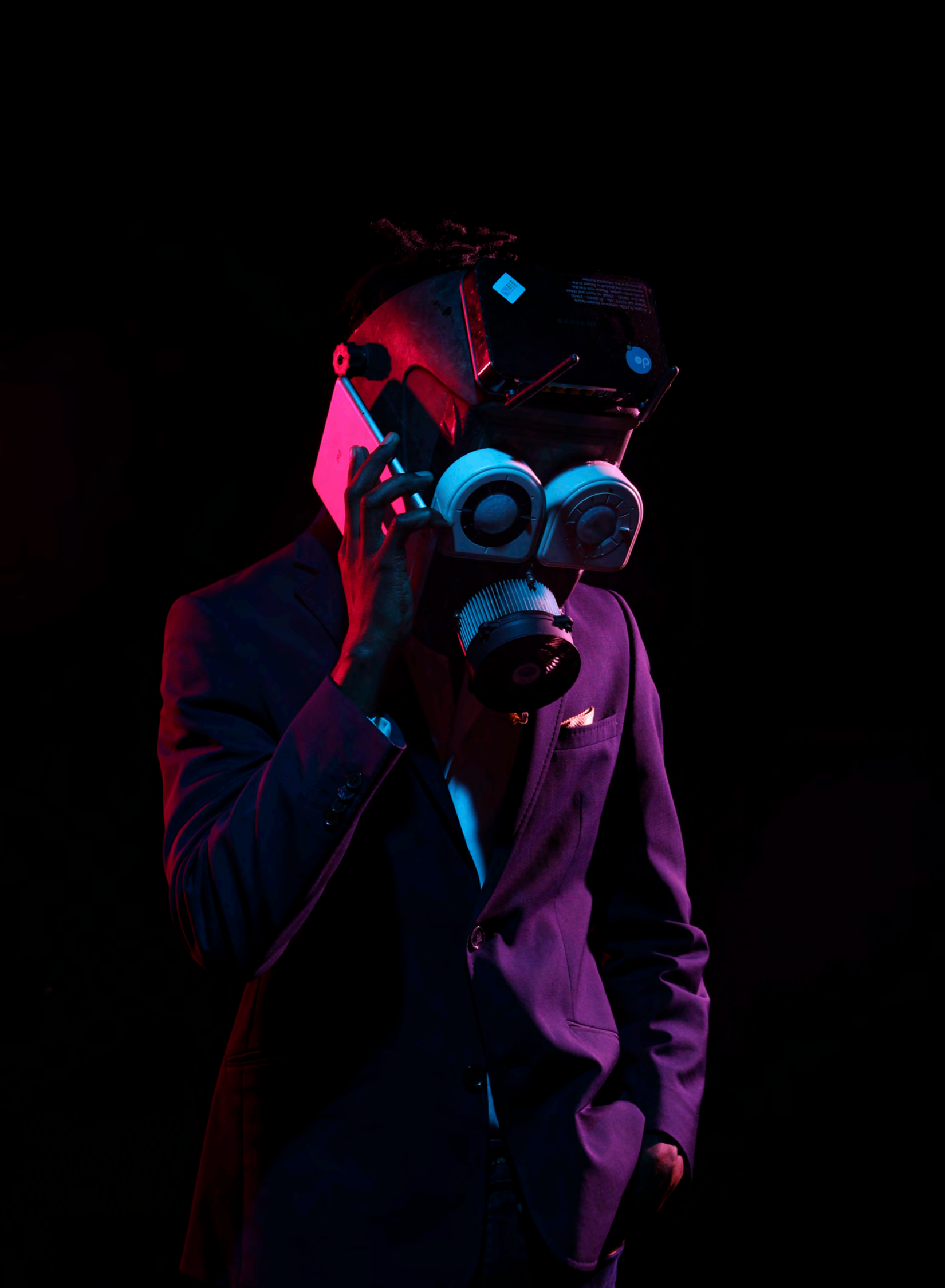

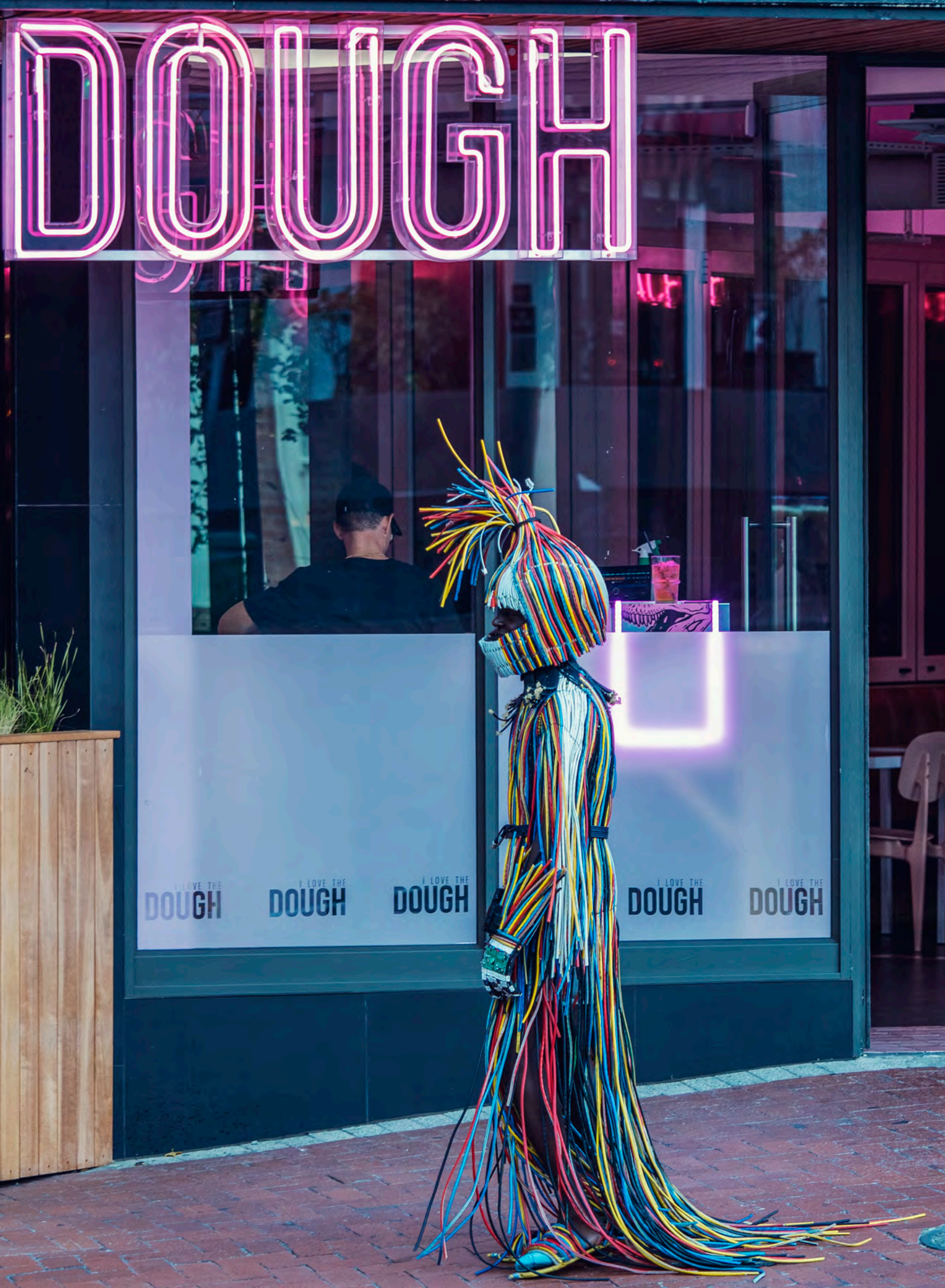
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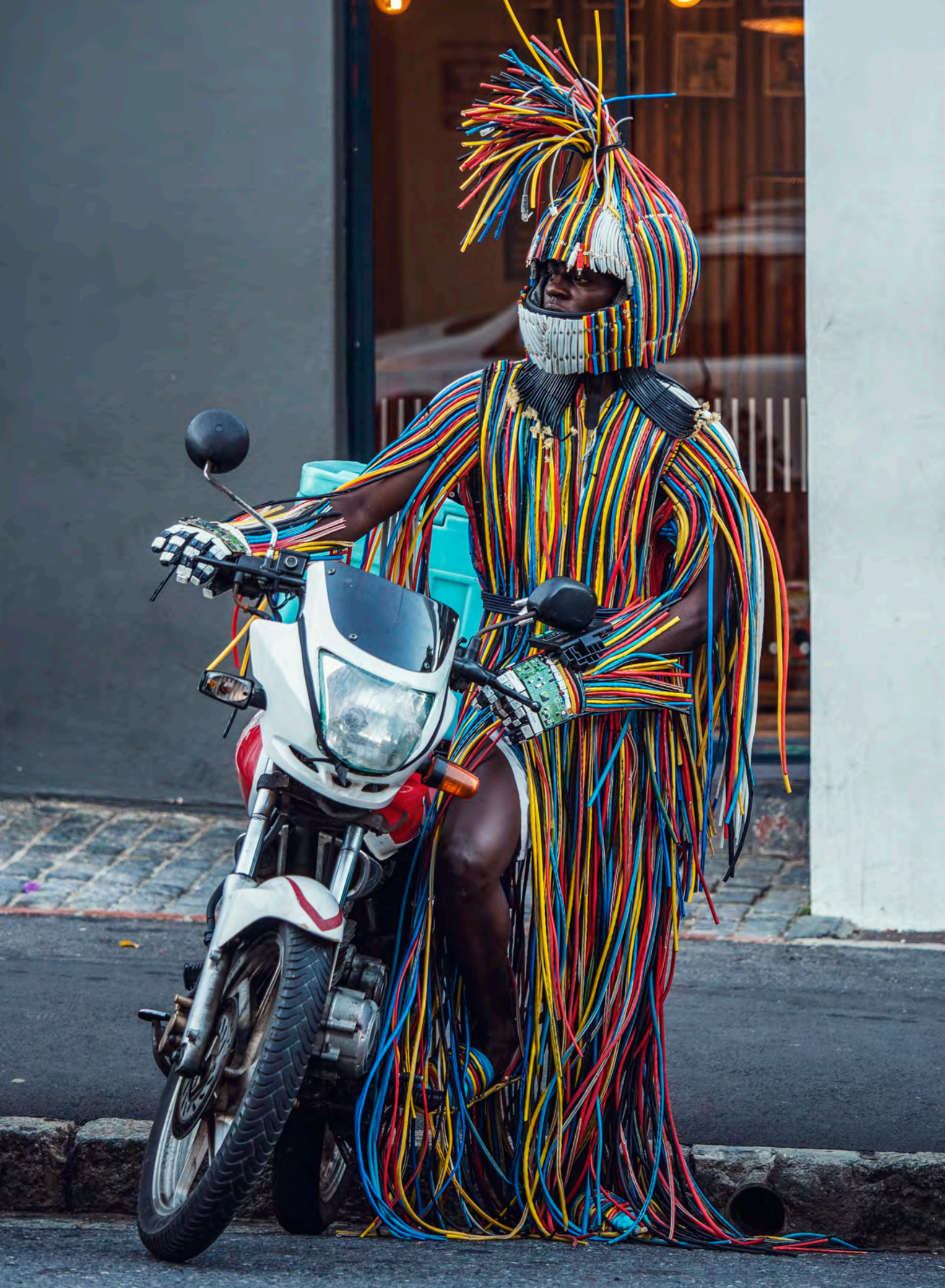

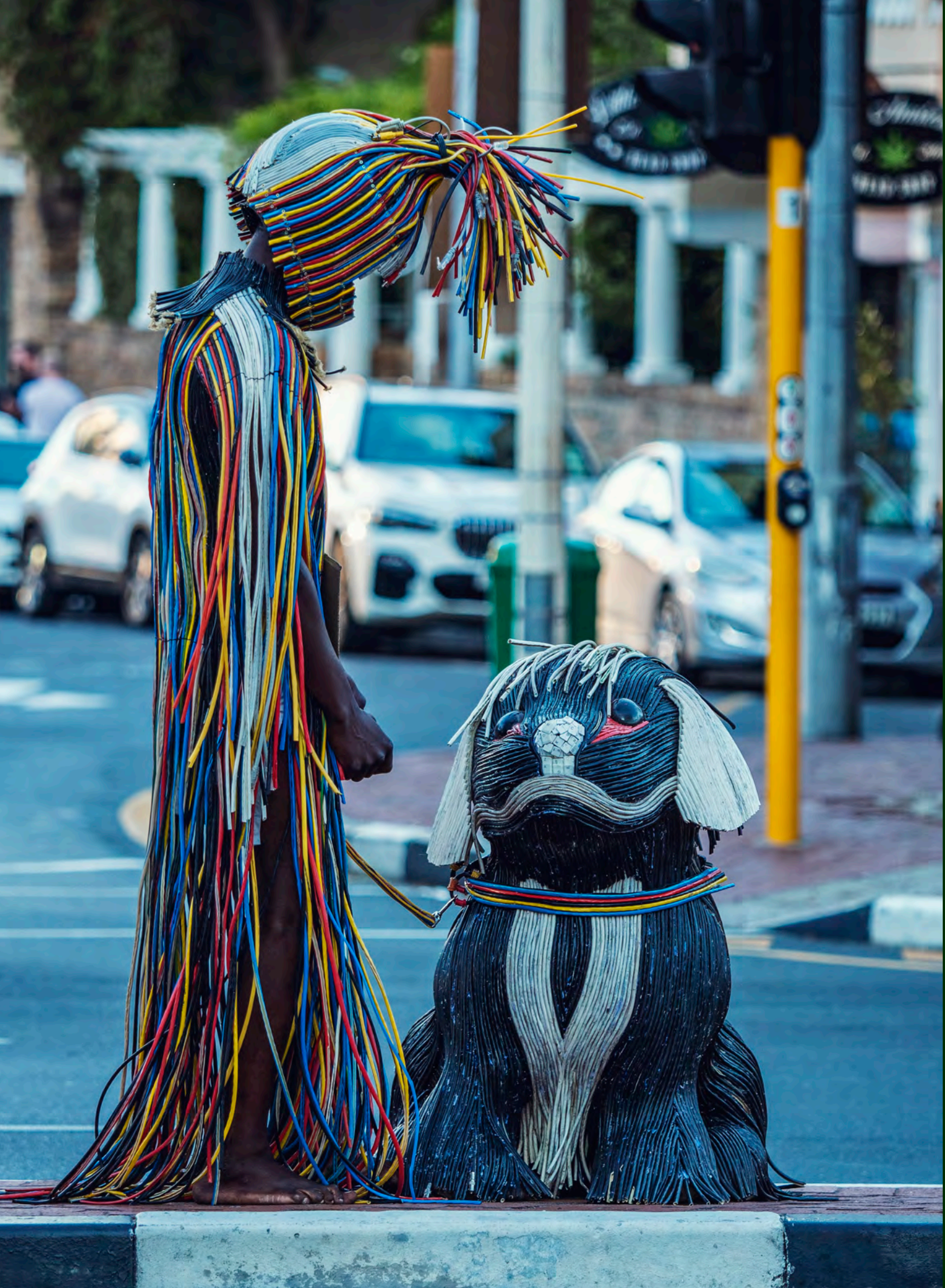

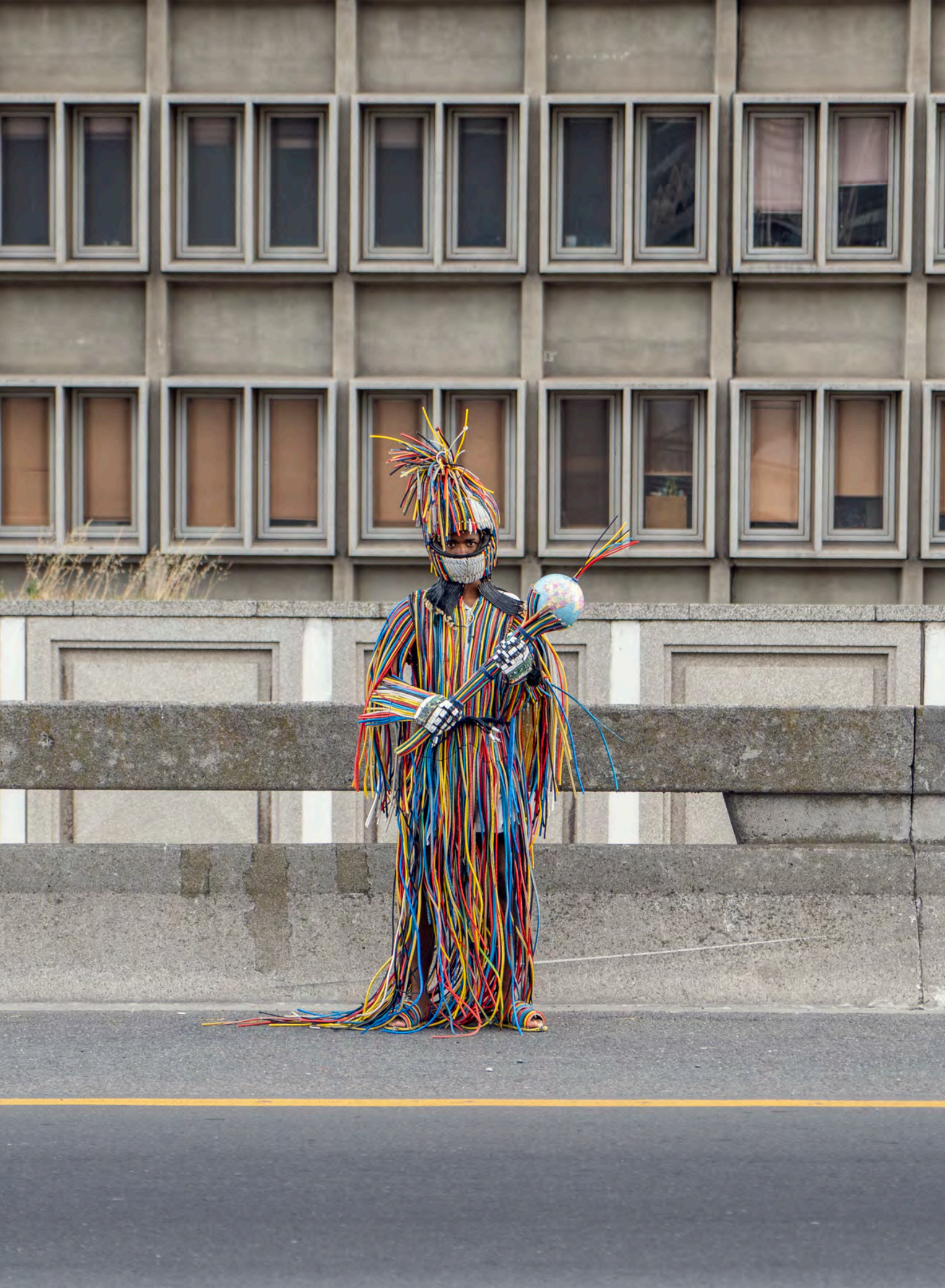

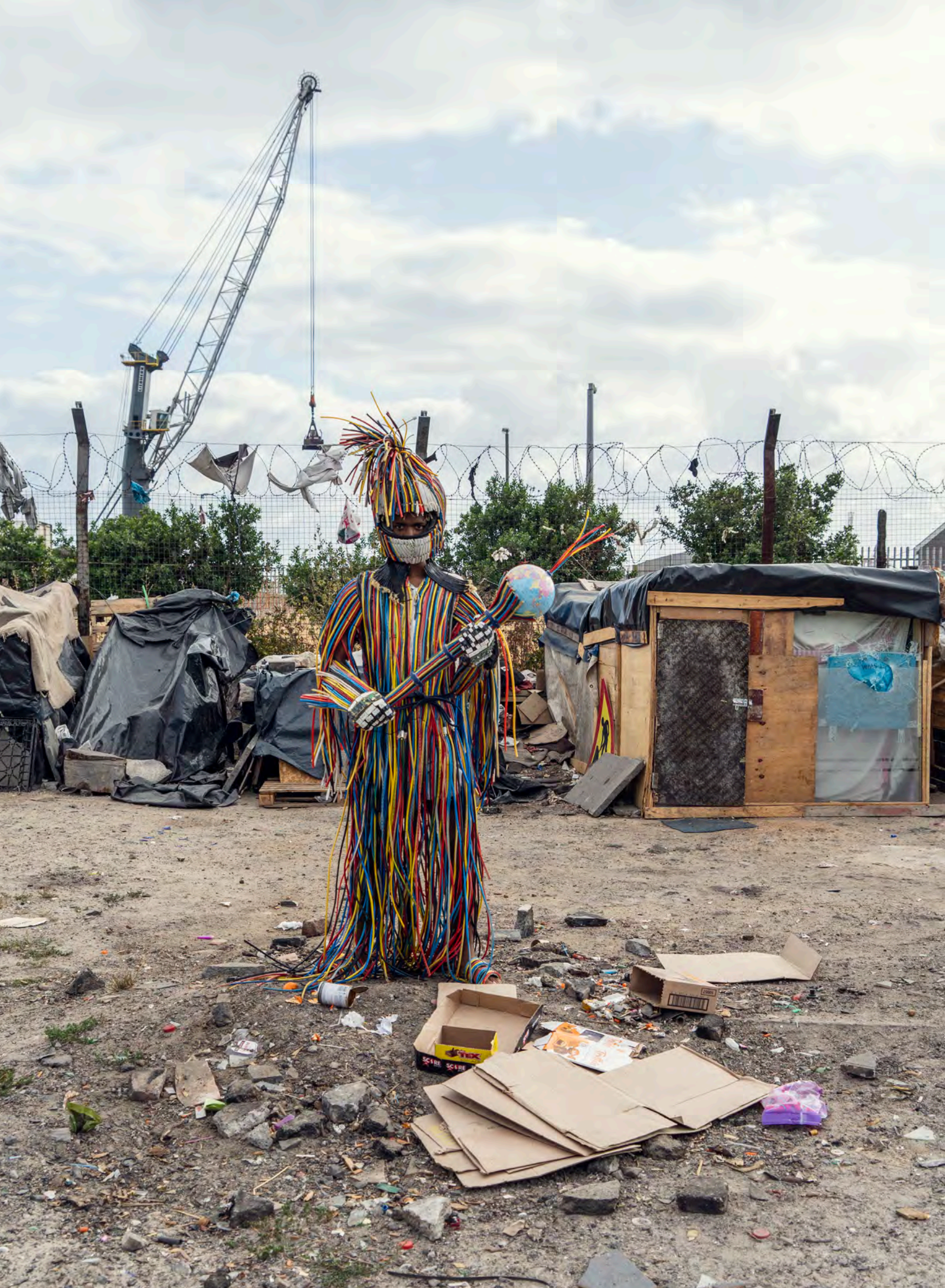

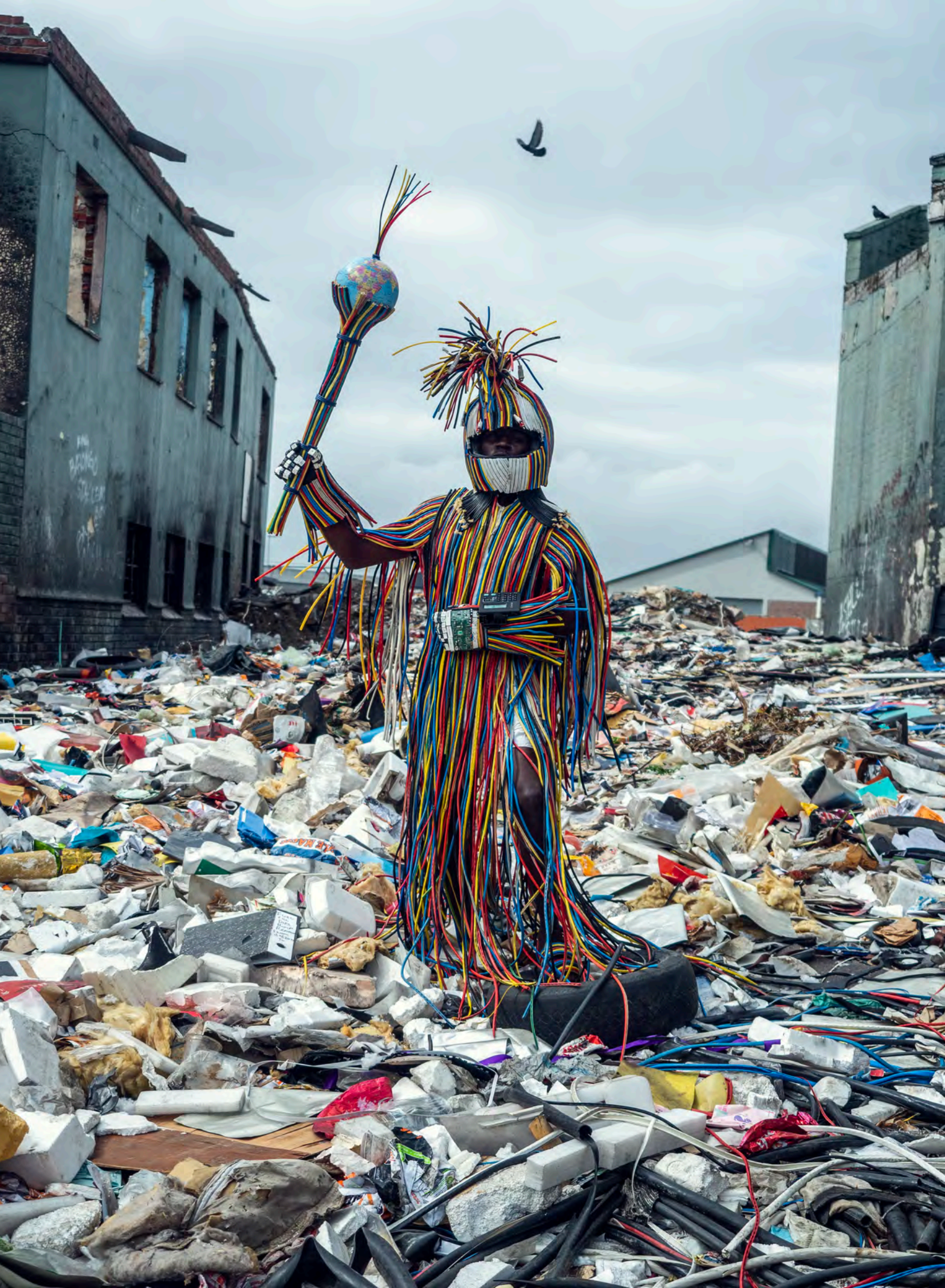

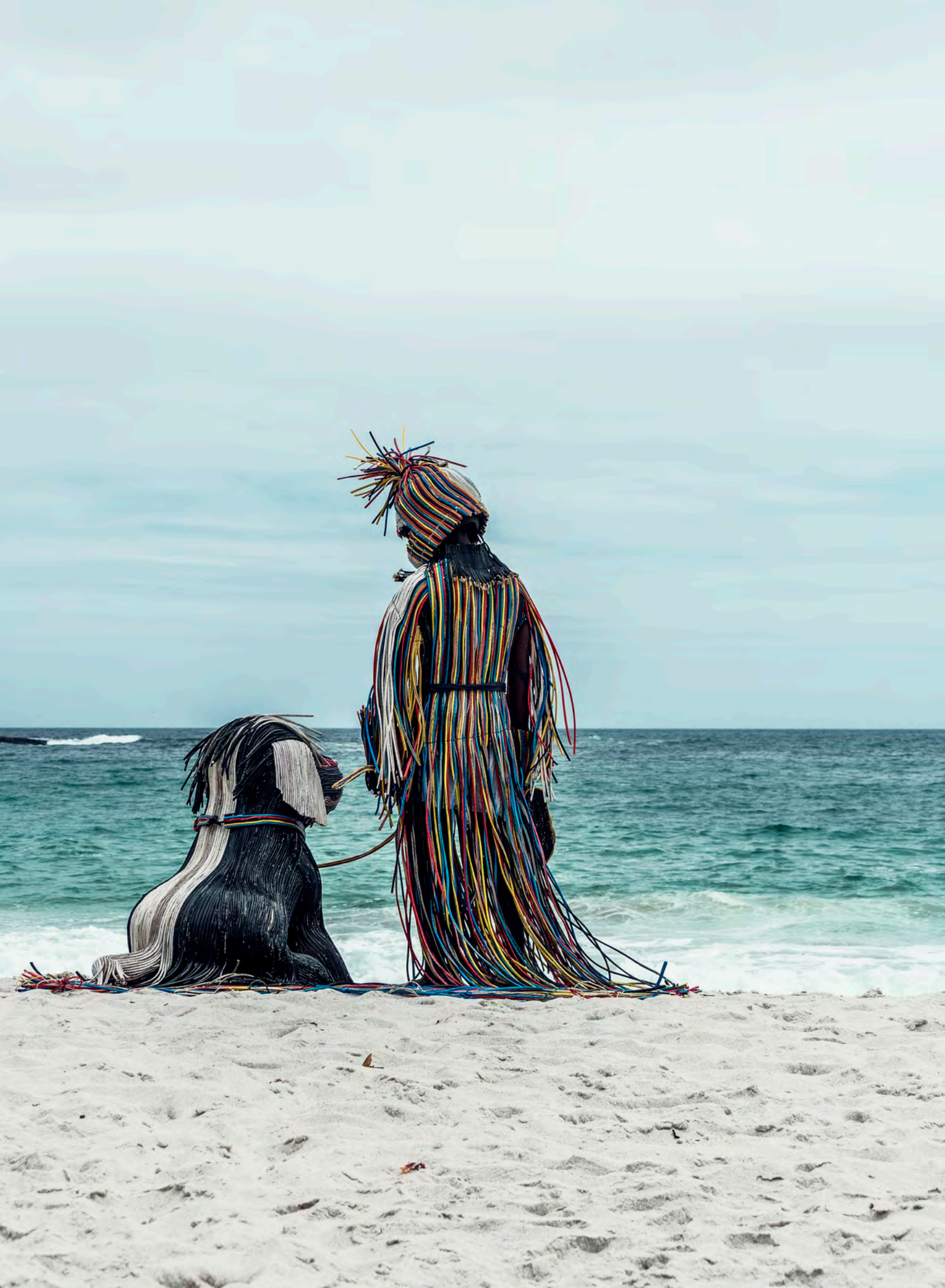

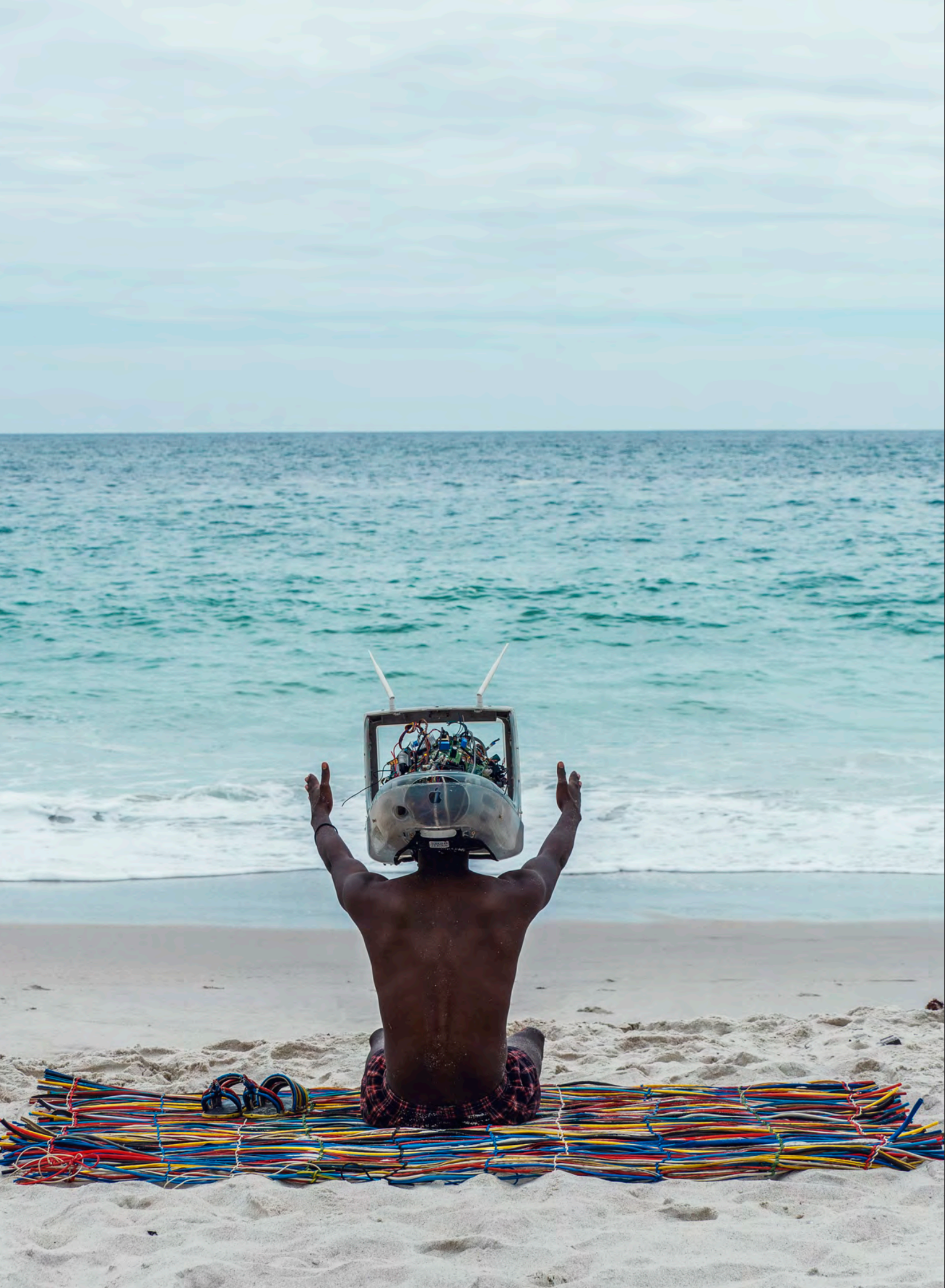

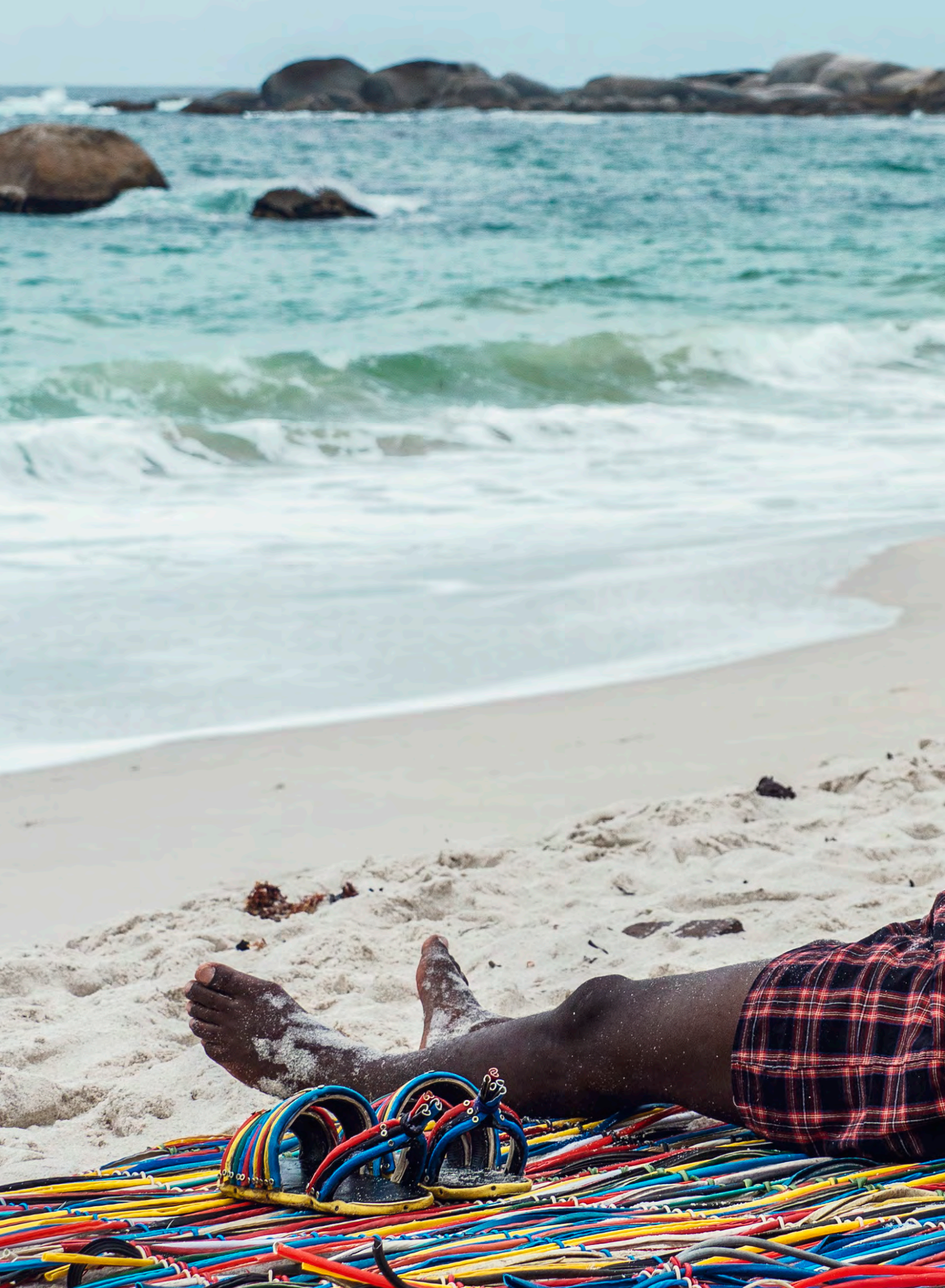

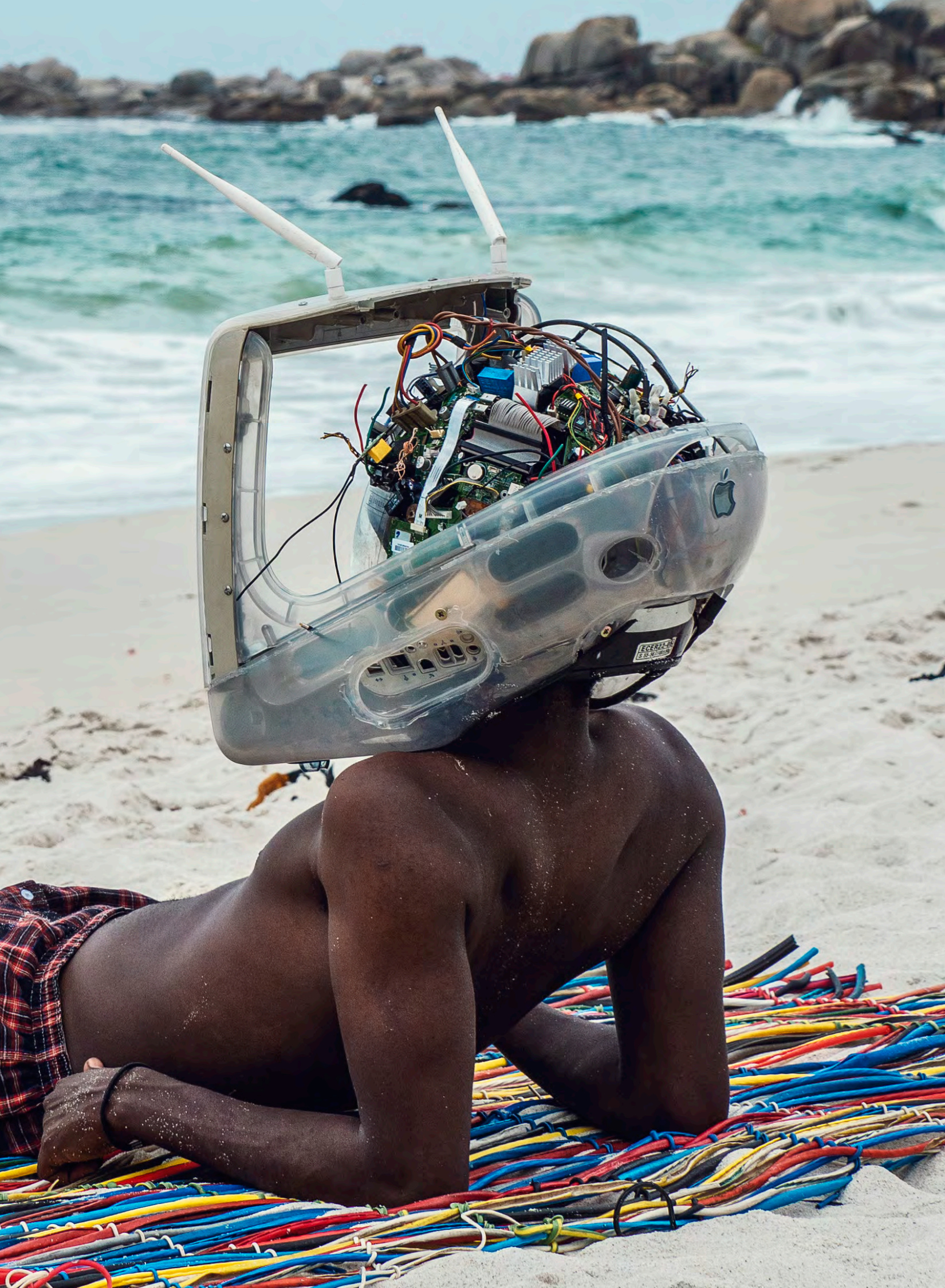

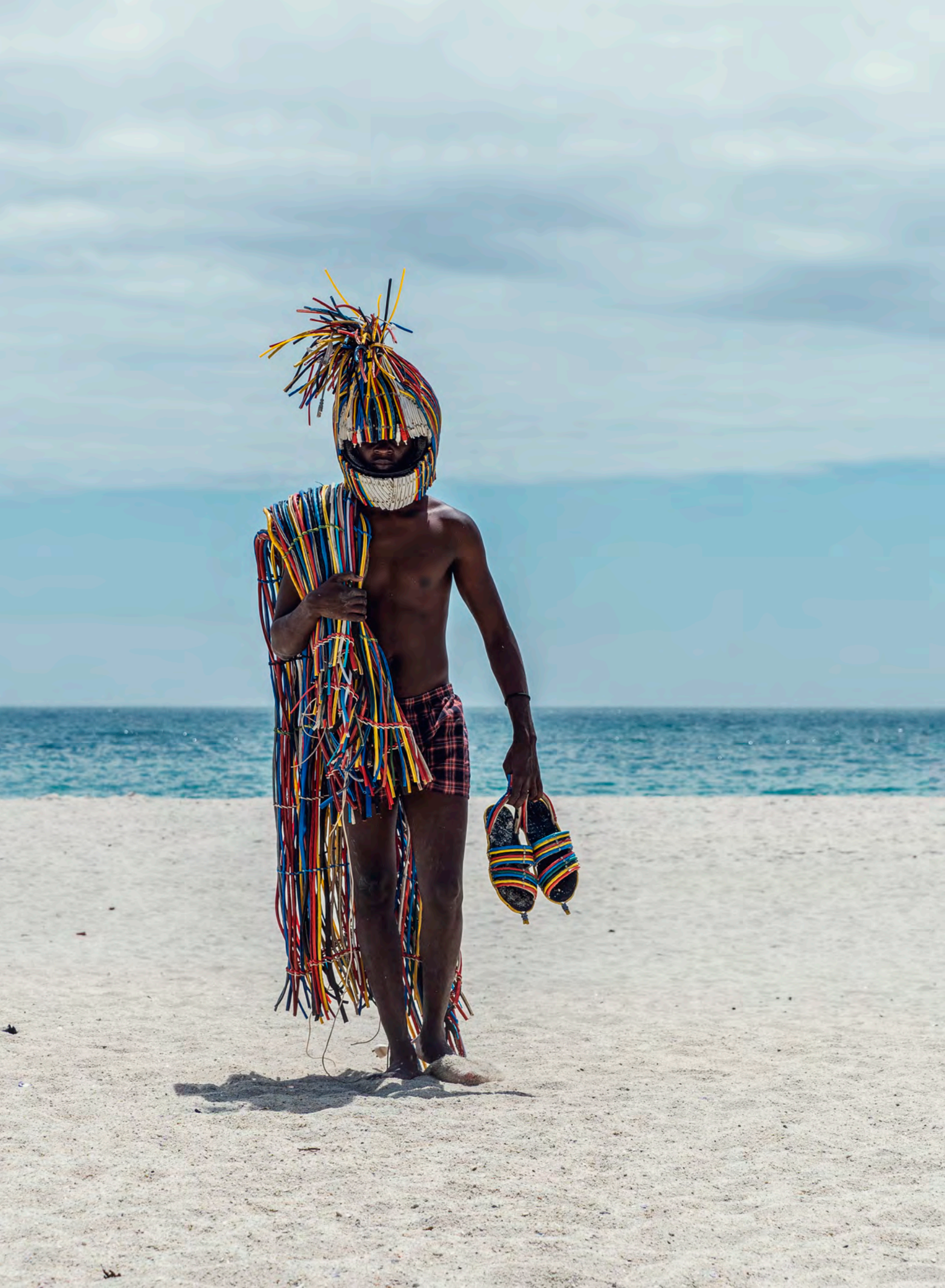

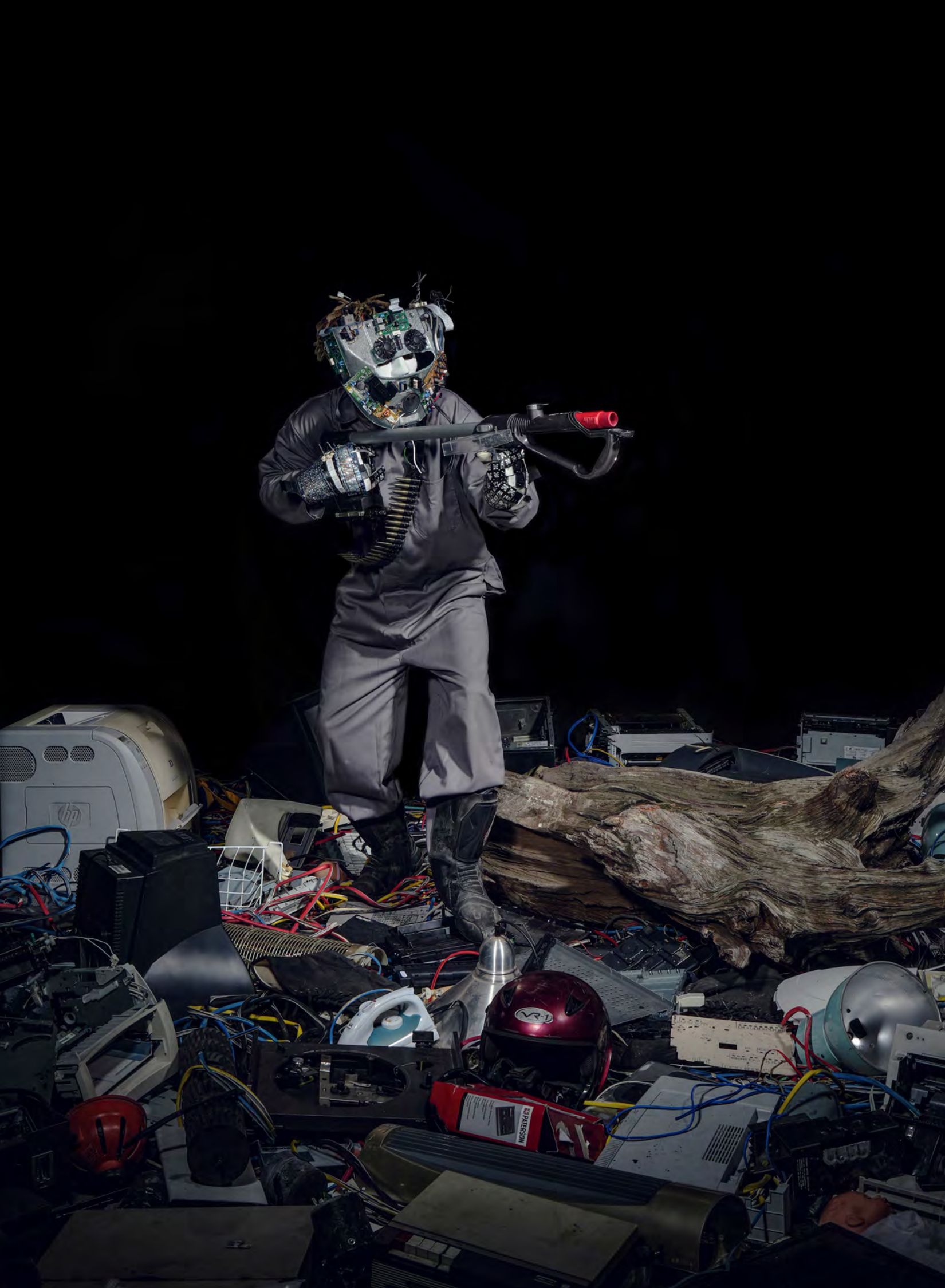
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