

Eva Stenram: Offcut

These new works, on show at the Ravestijn Gallery in Amsterdam until October 22, extract components from within a photographic image and render them in three-dimensional, material space.

As in previous series, the source images for the recent artworks are 'found' vintage erotic photographs. In each, a fabric that features in the original photograph is the point of departure for the new work. The eroticised woman is here intimately bound up with the pattern of the fabric close to her. Erotic photography could be said to be all about having a 'virtual' experience; but paradoxically that experience is often about the fantasy of touch.

To produce these works, which straddle conventional photography and installation, the chosen pin-up photographs were first digitised. A new textile pattern was then designed and produced based on the scanned information of the original, analogue image's fabric. The newly-designed pattern incorporates and repeats the photographic quirks of the source image (such as foreshortening); it also reproduces, in its flatness, the source textile's creases and folds. Once the fabrics have been printed, they are set in dialogue with the photographic image from which they've been extrapolated, with the space of the gallery, and with the viewer. Thus the fantasy world of the image is made present in the real world of the gallery space, albeit in 'warped' or imperfect form.

The title of this exhibition, *Offcut*, may point to the pieces of fabric made tactile for the viewer, to a set of neglected negatives that never made the final 'cut', and perhaps to what lies beyond the framing or instant that the photograph was taken. The question of what larger part has been removed is kept lingering.



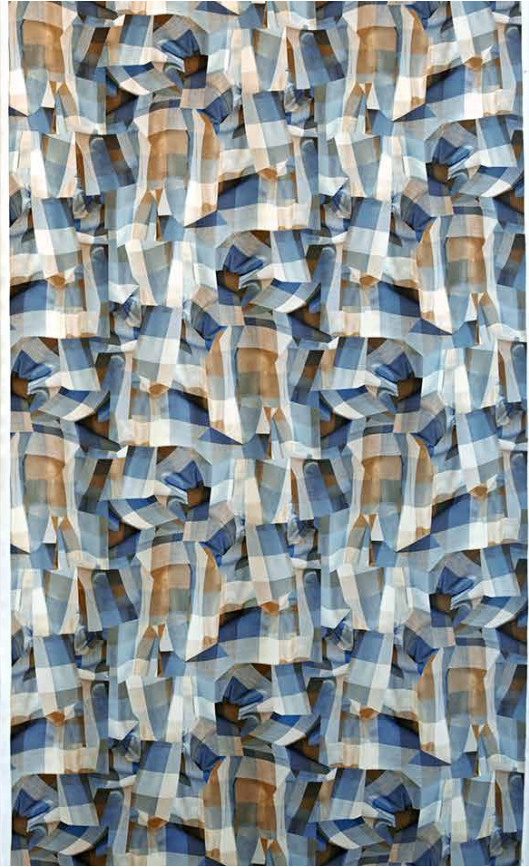
Vanishing Point

Digital print on silk, framed C-type print on Fuji Chrystal Archive paper, wood support.

Image size: 73cm x 100cm / frame size: 81cm x 108cm / length of fabric: 10m

The muse of *Vanishing Point* is a c-type photograph, enlarged and printed from a vintage colour slide purchased online. The photograph depicts a woman with her shirt open to reveal a section of her bust, her hands spread out over her lap. The picture is cropped so that her eyes remain unseen, focusing the attention on the woman's body and the fabric that half-hides, half reveals it. Beside this picture hangs a large strip of silk, displaying a new textile pattern spawned from the old. Its lower reaches are bunched up on the floor. Here the pattern of the model's shirt has been fragmented, scrambled and reassembled.

Vanishing Point is charged by a tension between the accessible and inaccessible, the representational and the abstract, the pictorial and the tactile. The photograph is a space of imaginative projection, a world we can enter visually but not touch, while the silk print is rendered tangible in the material space of the gallery, both disrupting and expanding the narrative that the found image originally implied. *Vanishing Point* both negates and emphasises the desire for the eroticised body that is so prevalent in Western culture. We oscillate between having visual control and losing ourselves within the image.





Split

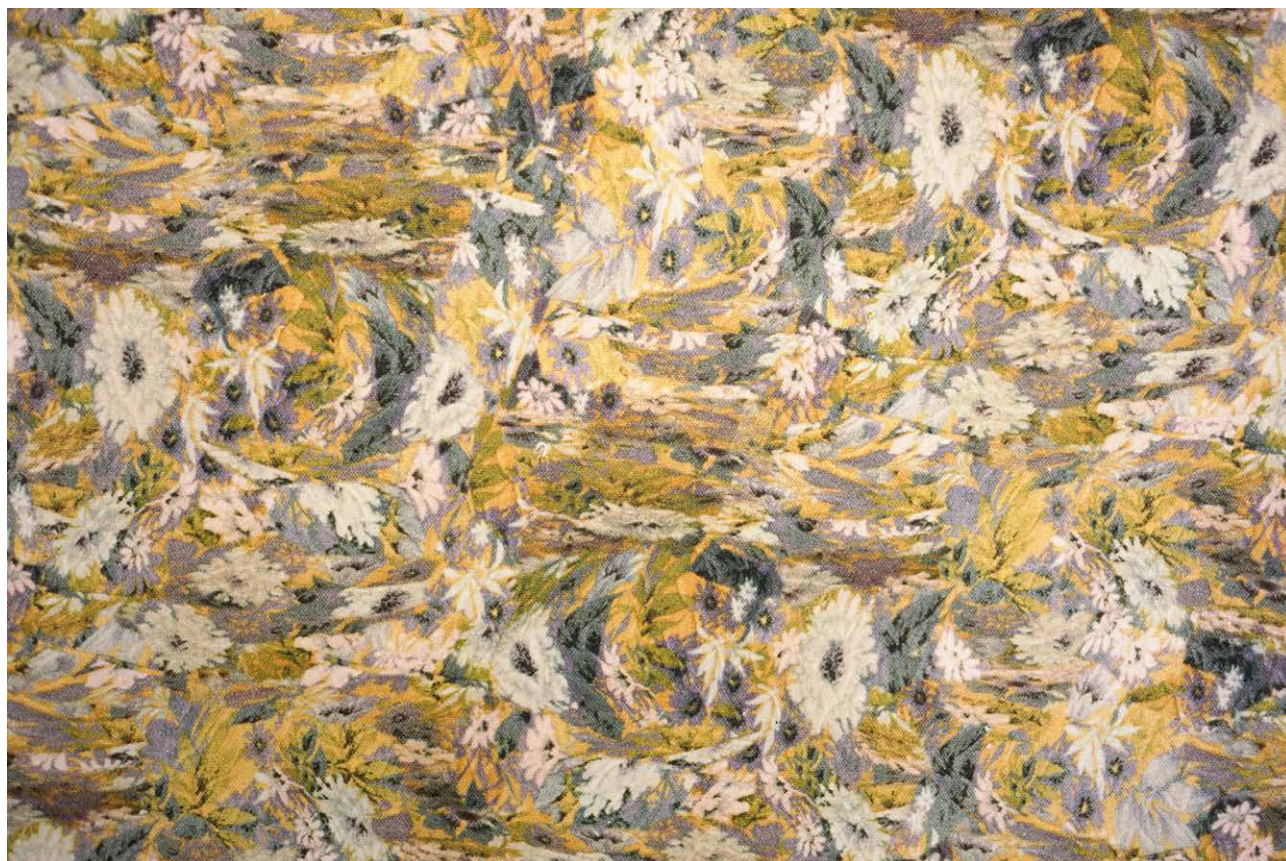
Digital print on cotton, armchair, framed C-type print on Fuji Chrystal Archive paper.

Image size: 33.5cm x 59.5cm / frame size: 35.2cm x 61.2cm / chair dimensions: H74cm x D74cm x W60cm

Split provides the viewer with a viewing position (a chair) in which to sit and contemplate a cropped source-image (a vintage pin-up slide bought online and printed). The chair's legs echo the outspread limbs of the image's model, and the pattern of the fabric of the beds in the original image is partially repeated in the (new) fabric on the chair.

As the viewer sits down on something which appears to be part of or born from the picture, the focal point is divided, the vanishing point suspended. Yet rather than being seductive, the new upholstery, in reproducing the foreshortening seen in the original picture, generates a swirling, whirling pattern that is not necessarily aesthetically pleasant, evoking a slight vertigo or nausea. *Split*'s uncanny corporeality ruptures the libidinal visual field of the photograph.

The picture splits and if we sit down, the picture touches the body of the viewer. As it engulfs and envelops us, we are drawn both into the picture and outside of the picture. The boundaries become porous and unsteady. *Split* deepens the viewer's haptic relationship to the photograph.





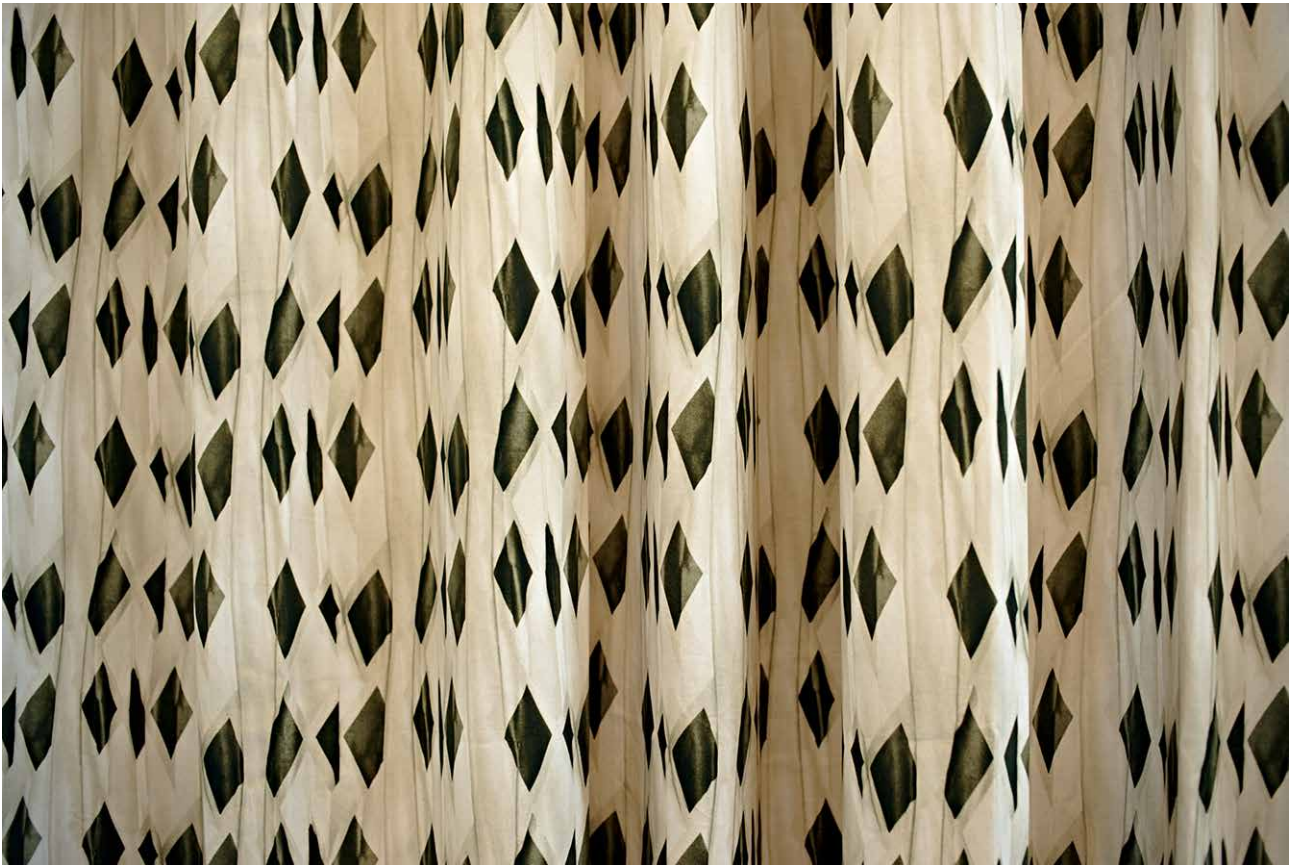
Harlequinade

Digital print on cotton, framed C-type print on Fuji Chrystal Archive paper, cotton thread.

Image size: 5cm x 5cm / frame size: 21.7cm x 26cm / size of curtain made to measure

Harlequinade is simple and playful, as its title suggests. Here the found photograph is a tiny contact print of a negative. The curtain behind the pin-up model has a distinctive harlequin pattern that I have reproduced (incorporating the original image's visual distortions) as an actual curtain in the space of the gallery.

In terms of scale, the new curtain appears at a size that sits somewhere between that which it occupies on the contact-print paper and the actual one of the original object: a new object stuck in a kind of limbo. The drape becomes a back-drop or a prop for theatricality, play and performance.





Field

Framed C-type print on Fuji Chrystal Archive paper
Image size: 55cm x 55cm / frame size: 74cm x 74cm

Field is shown as a straightforward photograph on the wall, serving as an introduction to the exhibition and its focus on pattern within erotic imagery. For *Field*, a section from a 1960s pin-up magazine has been cropped, and the wallpaper pattern behind the woman's body has been repeated to extend the original parameters of the magazine and our original field of vision. As the model gets relegated to a corner of the picture, trapped just within this domestic void, the wallpaper becomes the main 'subject'. Like the narrator in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper*, the longer you look, the more this pattern mutates – a surface for our visions, illusions or reveries to become animated.