



Rooms Studio

Photography: Adrianna Glaviano
Catalogue Design: Liza Asatiani



Keti Toloraia Nata Janberidze

Works of Rooms Studio refers to the sculptural forms and abundant materials in juxtaposition with the feminine instincts. Born and raised in Tbilisi, Georgia, the duo behind the Rooms Studio (founded in 2007), Nata Janberidze and Keti Toloraia, lean towards preserving the inherited craftsmanship techniques unique to the region.

Reclaimed timber, stone and other experimental materials are hand-crafted to create raw and symbolic forms often rooted in the designers’ childhood memories. Growing up in a culturally diverse environment, where the two worlds - Western and Eastern collide, remarkably influenced their design language.

Over the years, Rooms has created eight independent

collections such as *Wild Minimalism*, *DNA Archives*, etc., and collaborations with other artists equally memorable and representative of the duo’s perpetual mission to bring life to omitted elements of a former life. Through their series of works, Janberidze and Toloraia try to examine the boundaries between the public and private. Experiencing adolescent years in the 90s - a significant decade of cultural and societal shifts - their work is a narrative of personal experiences of womanhood.

By contrasting the new feminine monumental shapes with architectural brutality, Rooms challenges the status quo and also bridges the conventional and contemporary design with a confluence of female energy.

The work of Rooms Studio has concerned itself with questions of nomenclature since the Tbilisi-based design atelier was co-founded by Nata Janberidze and Ketí Toloraia in 2007. Take, for instance, the studio's name: in adopting the basic unit of interior space as the title of their practice, Janberidze and Toloraia also emphasized the emotional force of interiority and inner life in determining their creative output.

The studio's largest U.S. exhibition to date, Distant Symphony expands upon this impulse to focus inward. The title is again a chief concern—some of the objects included here were designed during the global pandemic, under a regime of forced isolation that made the studio's typically collective work process untenable. The pieces shown here are the results of Rooms' search for a way forward.



The first room, an antechamber of sorts, evokes the intimate quality of a private home. Shown here are trinkets and personal effects chosen by Janberidze and Toloraia for their emotive qualities; a low background noise emphasizes the climate of urban domesticity. The ensuing gallery space features highlights of Rooms' recent design output. Here, the subtle scent of organic materials provides a sensory indication of the atelier's interest in dichotomies: natural and man-made, personal and collective, local and cosmopolitan. In light of the global circumstances, Janberidze and Toloraia felt it was especially important to pursue collaborative work. Rooms invited three artists—Shotiko Aptsiauri, Salome Chigalashvili and Mariana Chkonia—to conduct a dialogue and shared design process. As such, this exhibition is a kind of polyphonic meditation on a need for solitude and desire for companionship. The practice of polyphonic singing, essential to Georgian folk culture, is re-interpreted here as a design endeavor.

Chigilashvili, working with unprocessed yarn, interpreted folk motifs by adapting embroidery to the scale of furniture with expansive stitches applied to painted boards. Whereas Aptsiauri proposed beeswax as a material solution for the Sacral Geometry collection, to which the wax stool and candle holder on view belong—the haptic qualities of these pieces will be familiar to anyone who has seen beekeepers tending to their hives in the Georgian countryside or watched candles burn inside a Georgian church.

Also included in the exhibition are objects from Rooms' celebrated Wild Minimalism and DNA Archive collections, both of which seek to apply Georgian artisanal knowledge to the design of contemporary furniture. Both collections mine "our identity," as the designers call it— a return to the roots of highly localized expertise. The curvilinear wooden chairs of the Wild Minimalism collection evoke primeval thrones with their palpably hand-carved quality; whereas the wooden chess table, from the DNA Archive collection, takes inspiration from Soviet-era public furniture still found in Tbilisi.

And therein lies the affective logic of Distant Symphony—call it what you may, but the important part is that you feel it too.

Text written by Anna Kats









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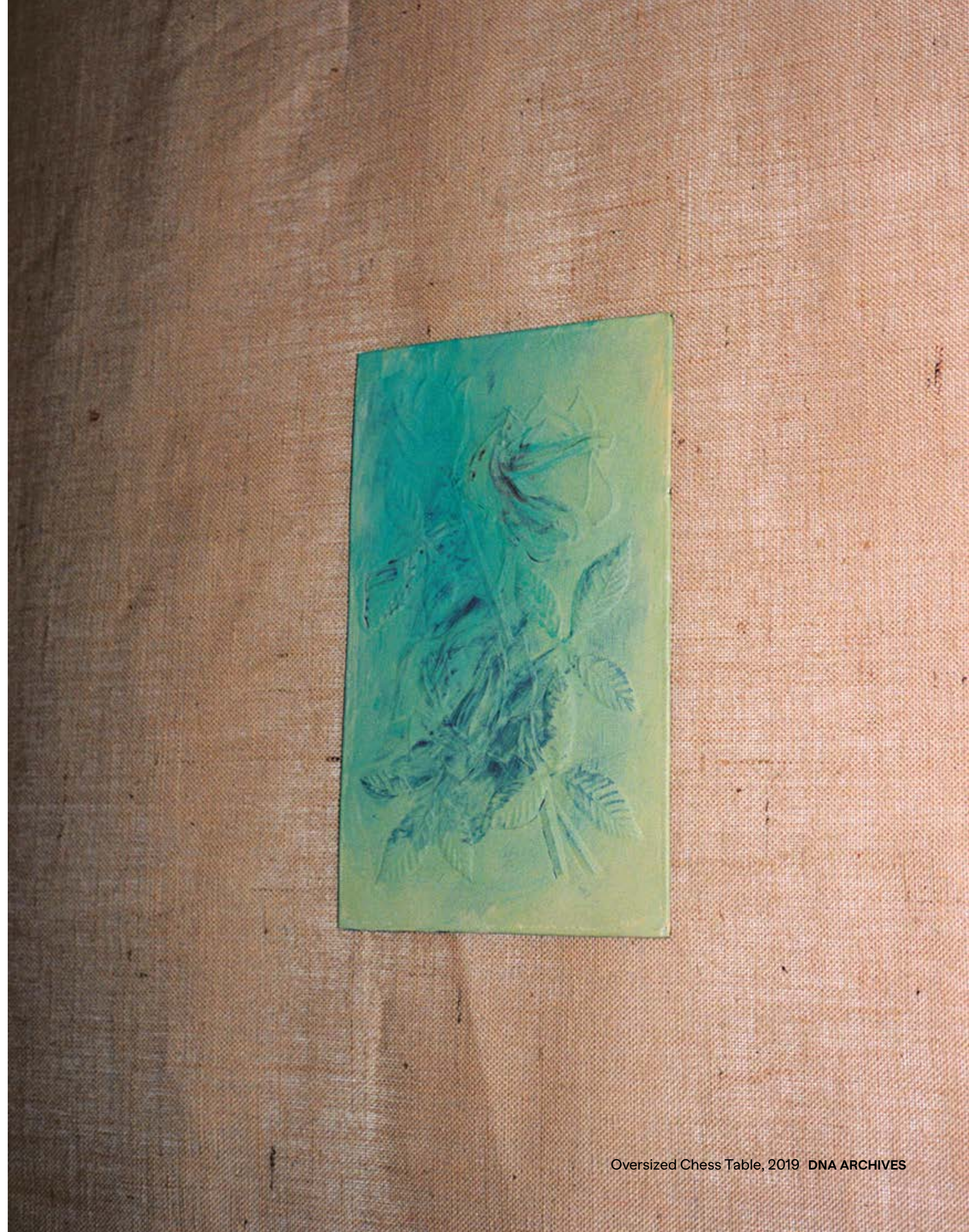




Sacral Geometry Stool / Side Table, 2020 **SACRAL GEOMETRY**
Shotiko Aptsiauri x Rooms Studio



Iron Secret Cabinet, 2020 **IN CIRCULATION**
Sacral Geometry Stool / Side Table, 2020 **SACRAL GEOMETRY** Shotiko Aptsiauri x Rooms Studio



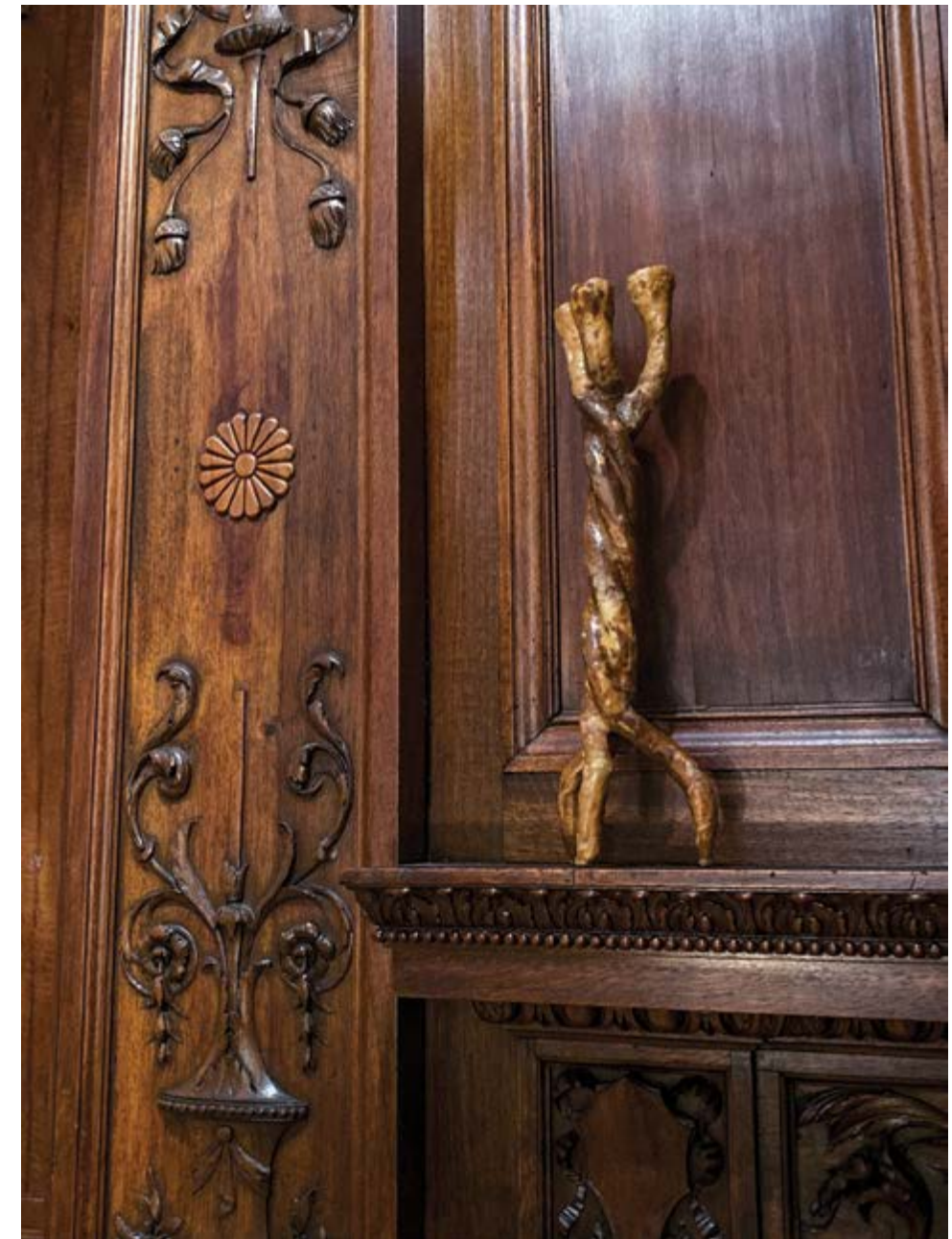




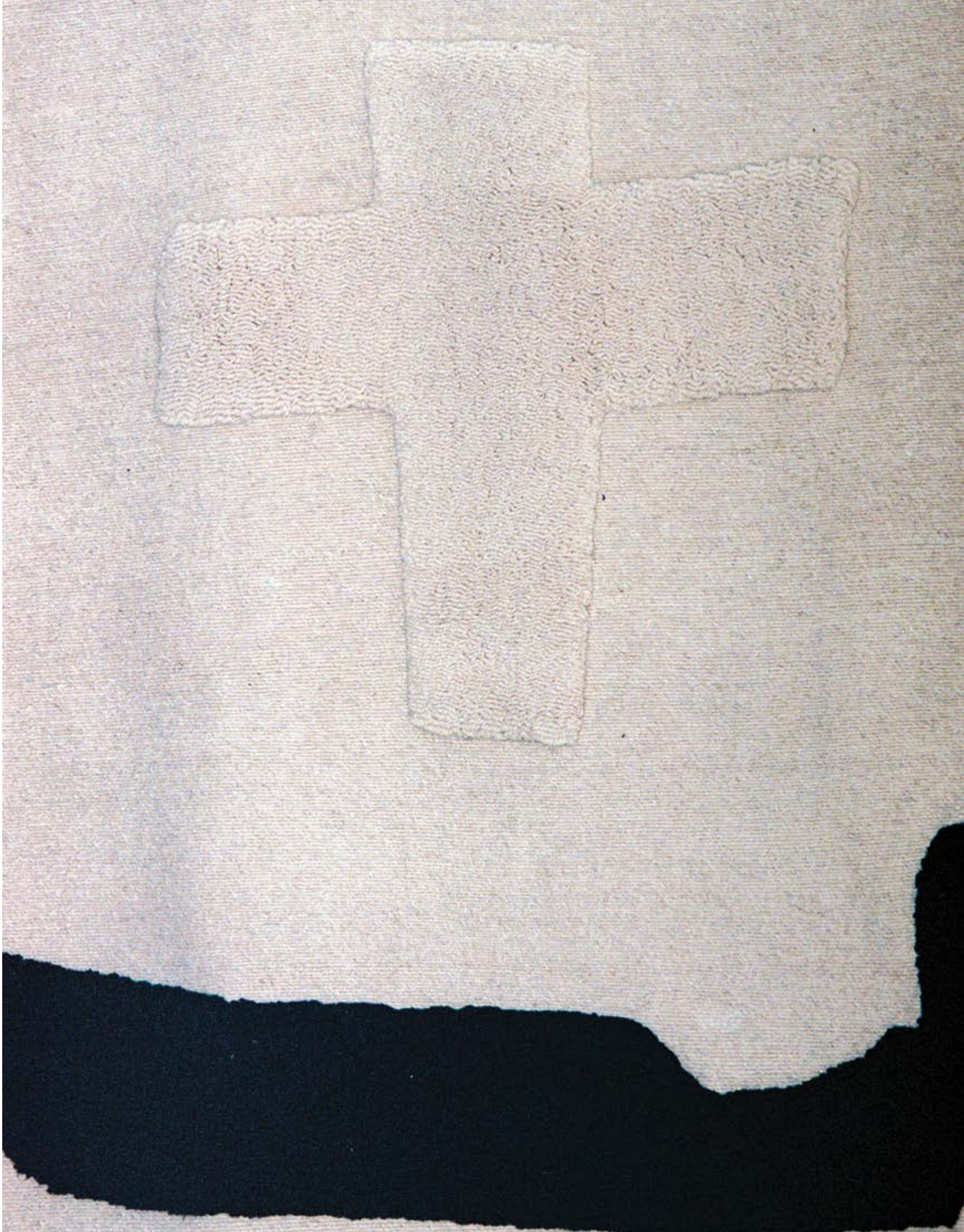


Black and White Felt Rug, 2020 CONFLUENCE Mariana Chkonia x Rooms Studio

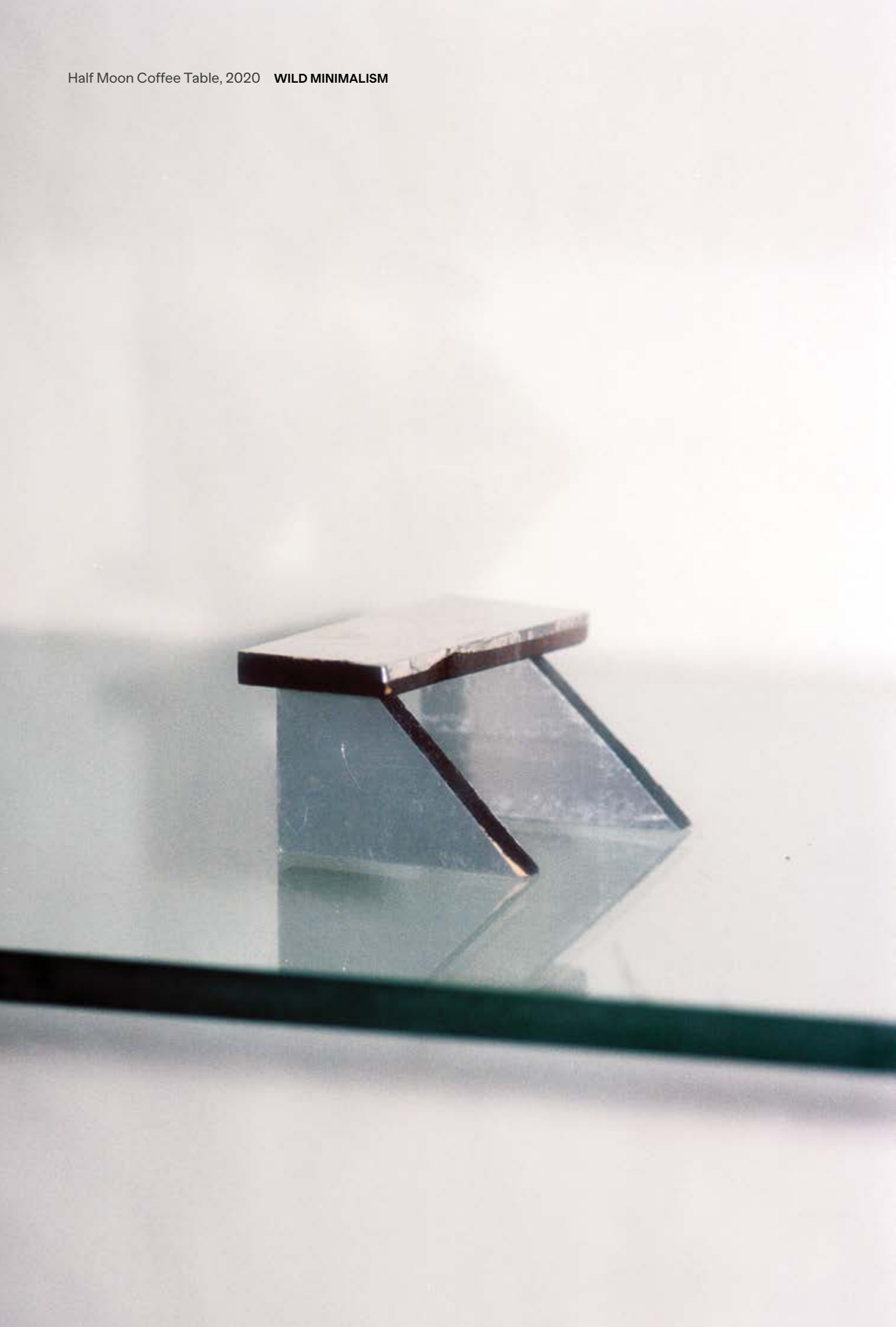
Sacral Geometry Candle Holder, 2020 SACRAL GEOMETRY
Shotiko Aptsiauri x Rooms Studio

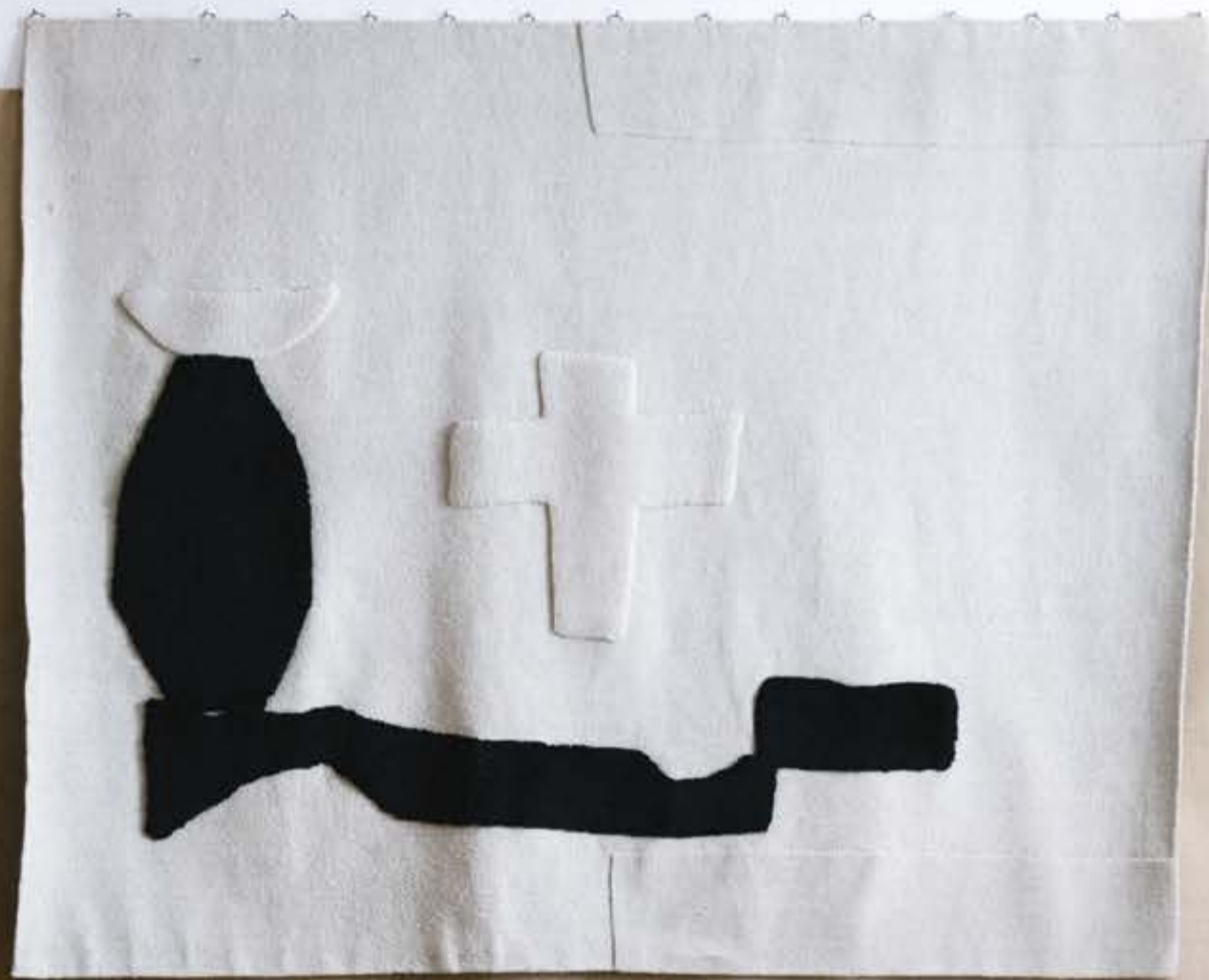






Half Moon Coffee Table, 2020 WILD MINIMALISM









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