



David Begbie

genii

10 April - 3 May 2008

David Begbie A.R.B.S.

David Begbie uses very simple means to magical effect. His steel mesh figures use an industrial material to give life to bodies that are the direct descendants of those we see in Greek and Roman art.

The main theme of the exhibition derives from Gnosticism, a religious belief system that posits that there is not just one, but two co-equal divine forces that govern the world – one absolutely good, and one evil. This belief is the inspiration for the paired figures of Begbie's Genii series, and also for single figures that offer darker shadows of themselves when illuminated. The fact that the mesh figures offer both positive and negative shapes is also part of their message.

In the most ambitious work in the series there are three figures rather than two. A male figure and a female figure flank a third that is androgynous, offering both -male and female characteristics.

Begbie's work is interesting not only for its technical inventiveness but because of its relationship to the classical tradition. Post Modern art, and particularly Post Modern architecture, has continually flirted with classical forms, but sculptors in particular have found it difficult to work in this idiom without seeming to be academic. At the same time, Modernism has left sculptors both with a commitment to industrial materials and also, very often, a fascination with effects of light. The sculptures Begbie makes fit this pattern, but also make use of classical forms – that is, they are very obviously successors to the work of Rodin and Maillol.

Rodin, it will be recalled, was keenly interested in rendering effects of movement. So too, though in a different way, were early 20th Century Futurist sculptors and painters such as Umberto Boccioni, who rejected the classical tradition altogether. Begbie offers movement whenever there is any shift of light, so much so that these pieces can sometimes have an interactive element.

He has now found a way to push this technique further. The mesh sculptures are made into flat transparent panels. When light is transmitted through these, the sculptures reconstitute themselves as shadows on the wall. The shadow-images seem so real and three-dimensional we get the impression that we can reach out and embrace them.

The weightless quality of these figures makes them particularly attractive to current sensibilities. In a world where everything seems to be in flux, there is an instinctive prejudice against the weighty and the monumental, amply demonstrated by the failure of so many contemporary attempts to make convincing commemorative monuments. Begbie offers something completely contrary to this – a kind of art that is instinctively elegant without any sacrifice of visual legibility or fullness and completeness of form.

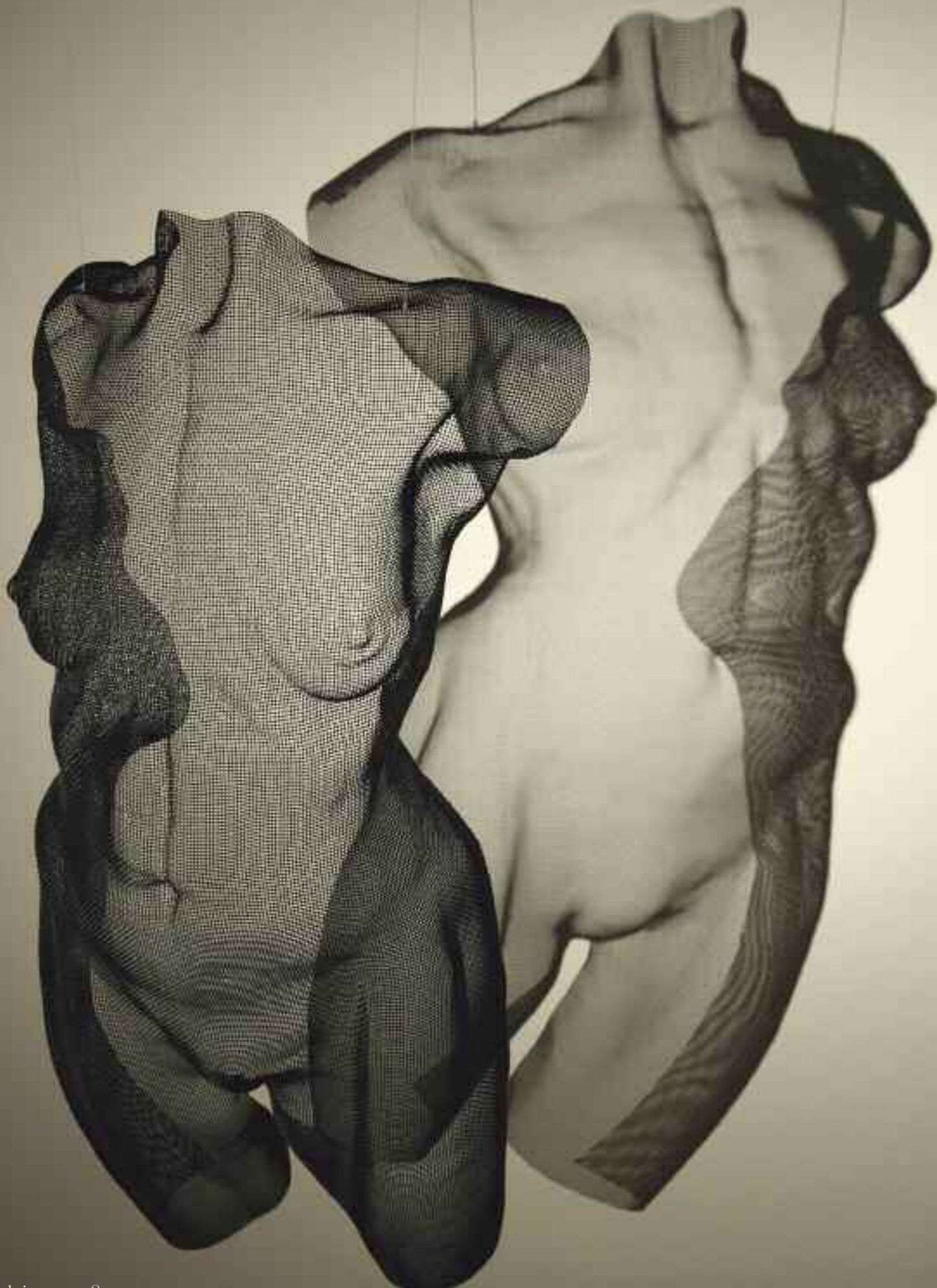
The Gnostic element that is part of the inspiration for these sculptures seems especially appropriate since Gnosticism, as a belief-system, was essentially about eating one's cake and having it. Here is a kind of art that pays tribute to the values of the past, but that nevertheless firmly remains a creation of our own epoch.

Edward Lucie-Smith

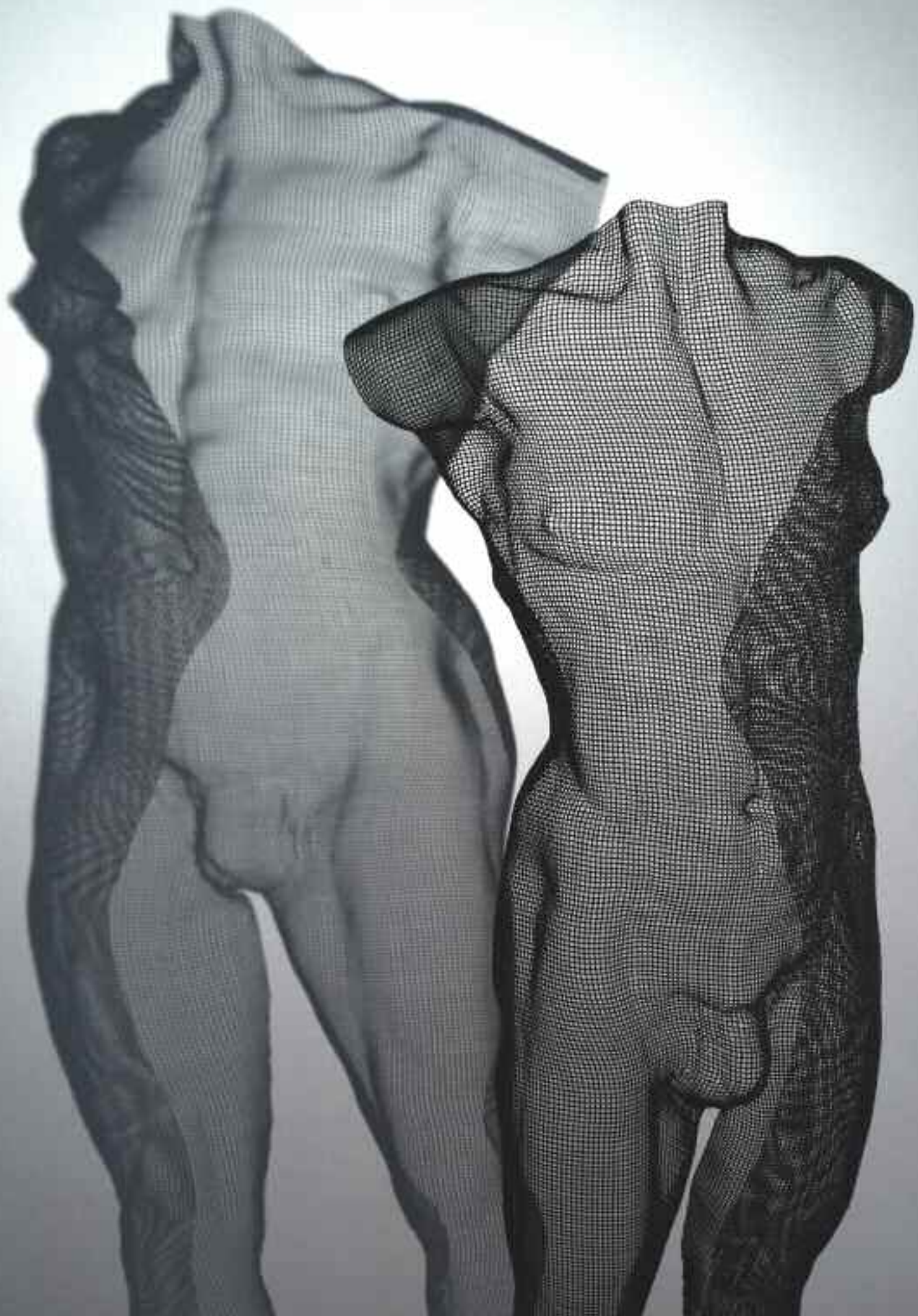
Art Historian, Critic and Writer



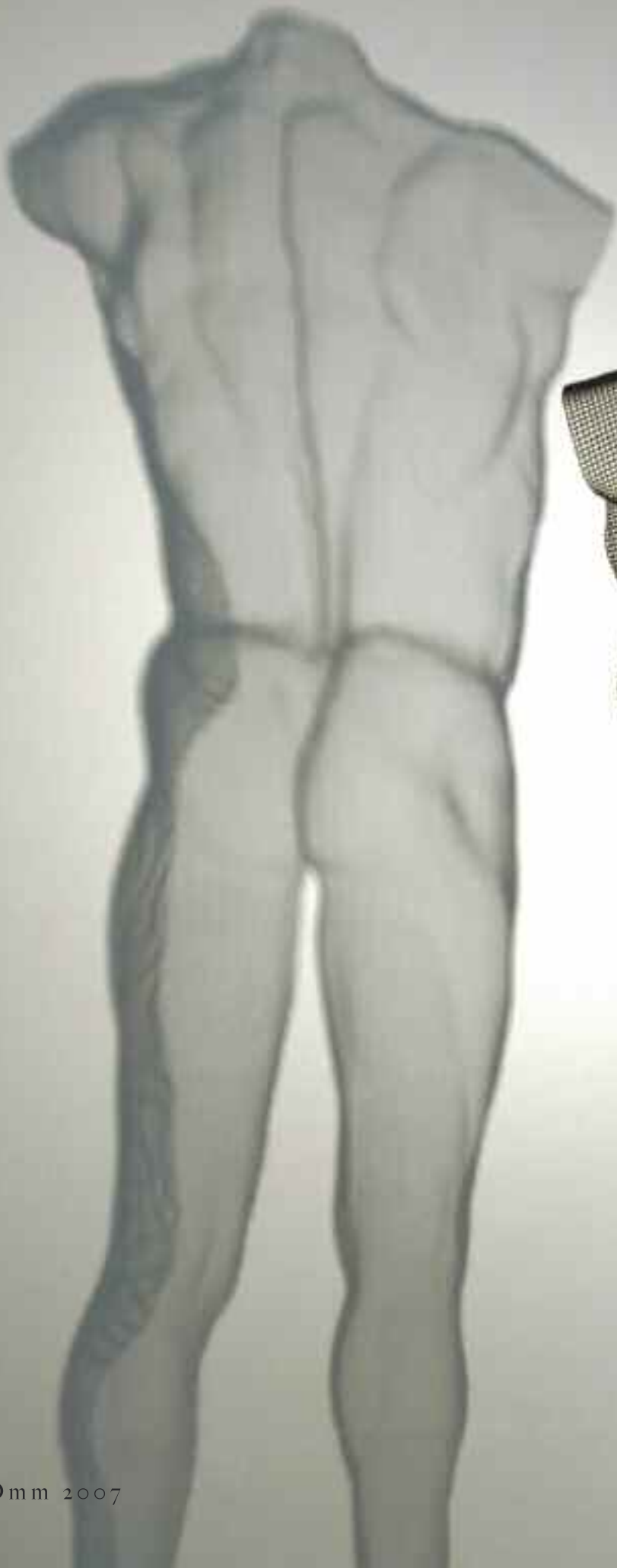
David Begbie and Tony Pontone (director of the Albemarle gallery) in David's studio

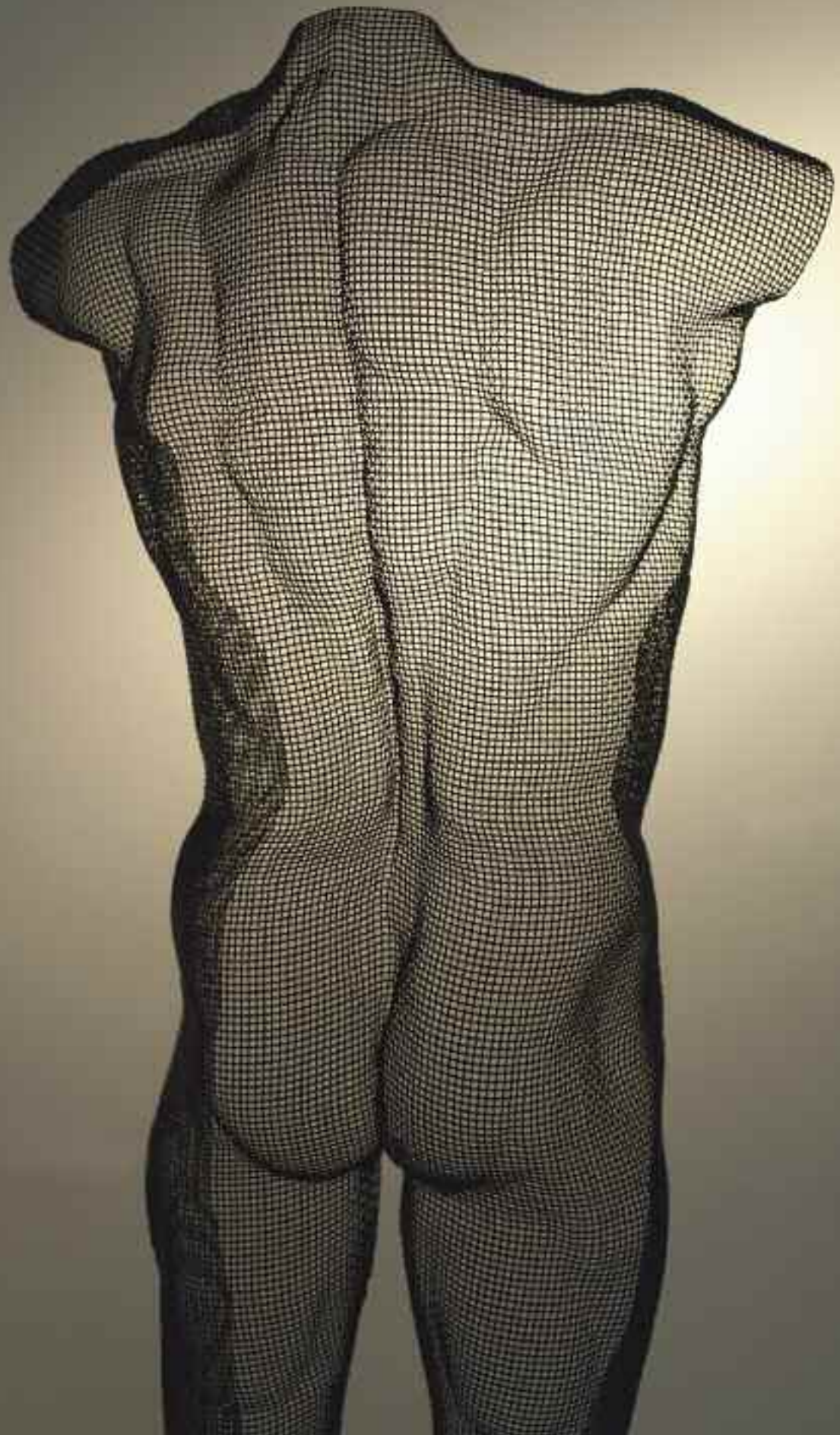




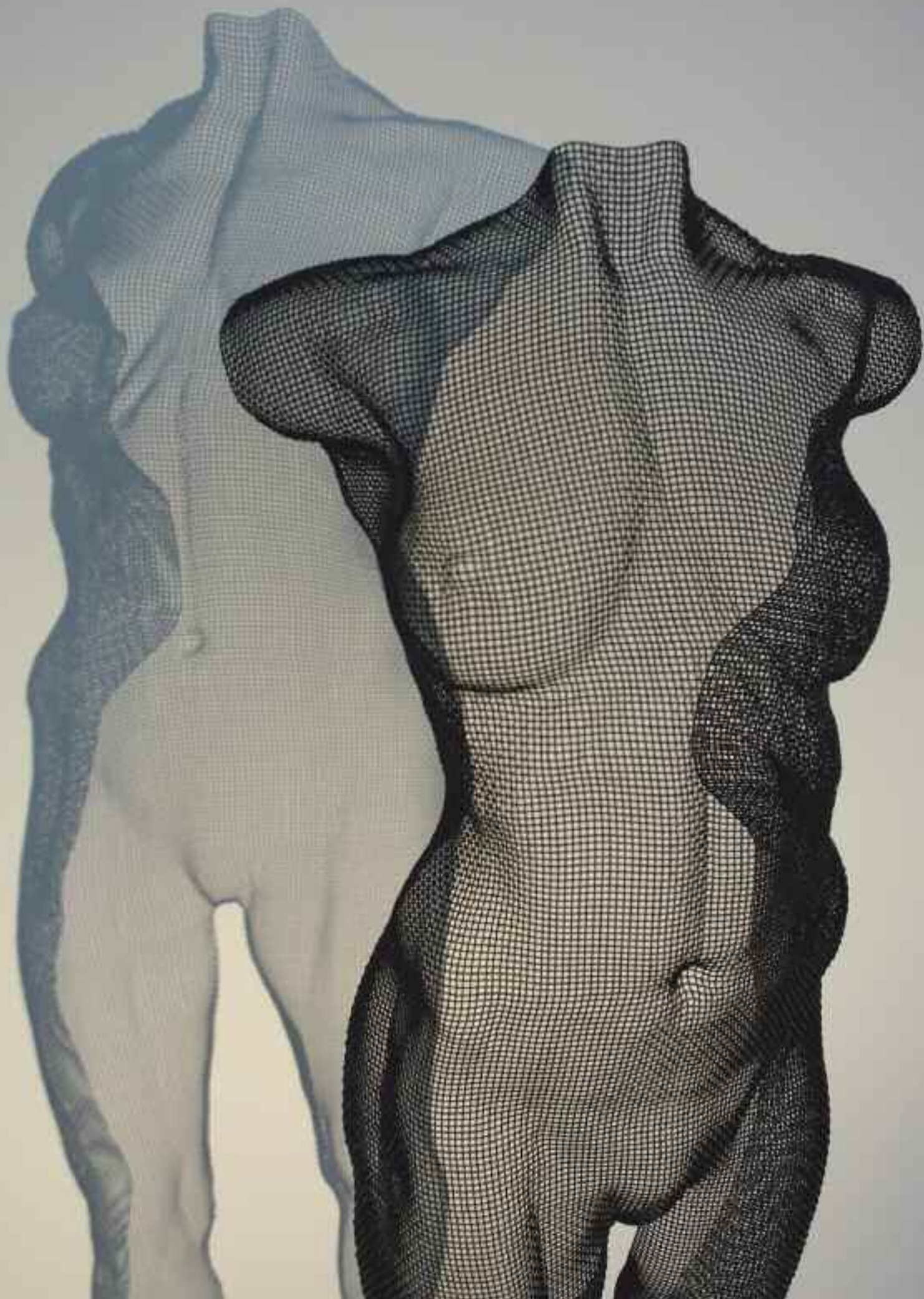




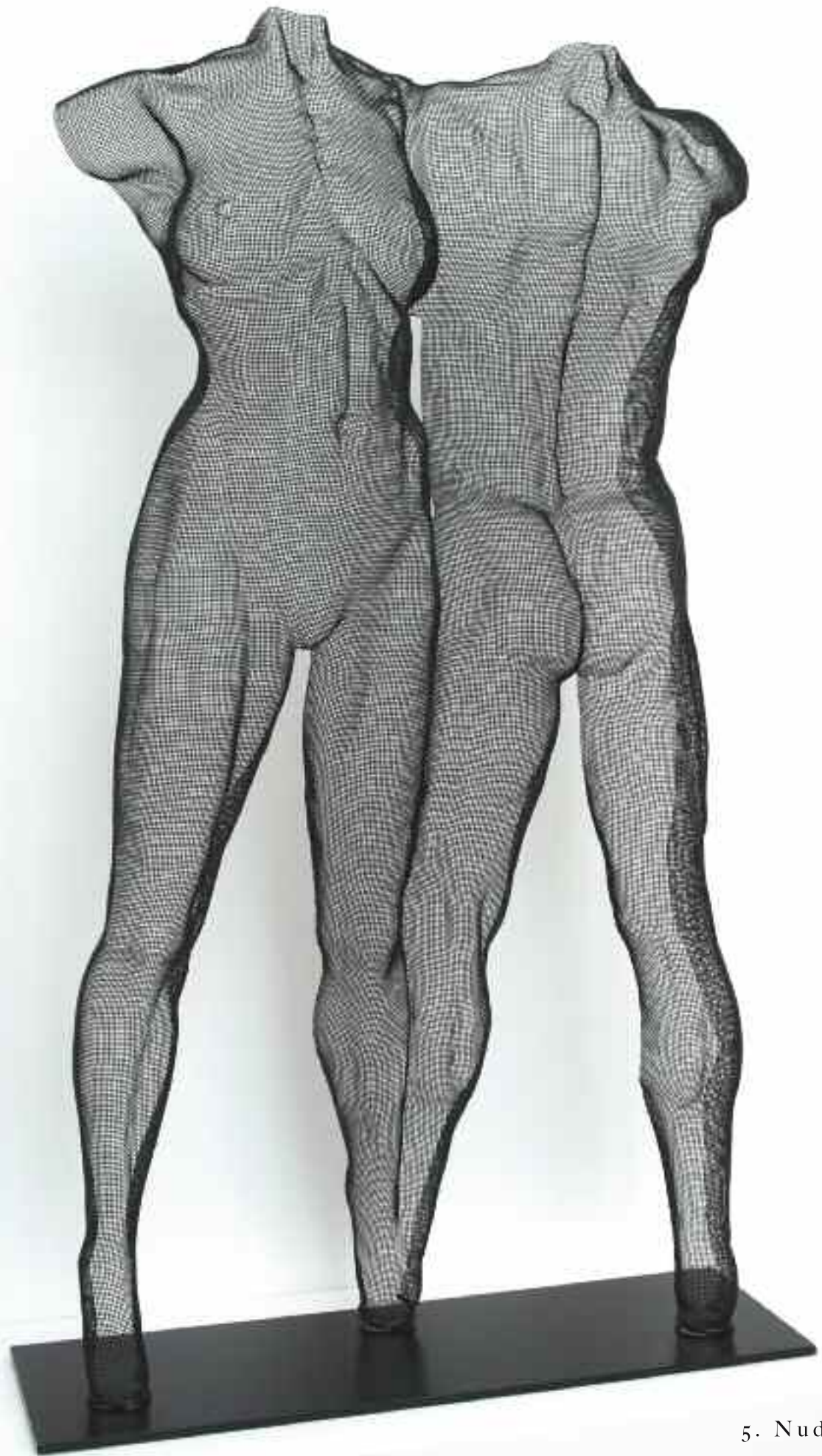


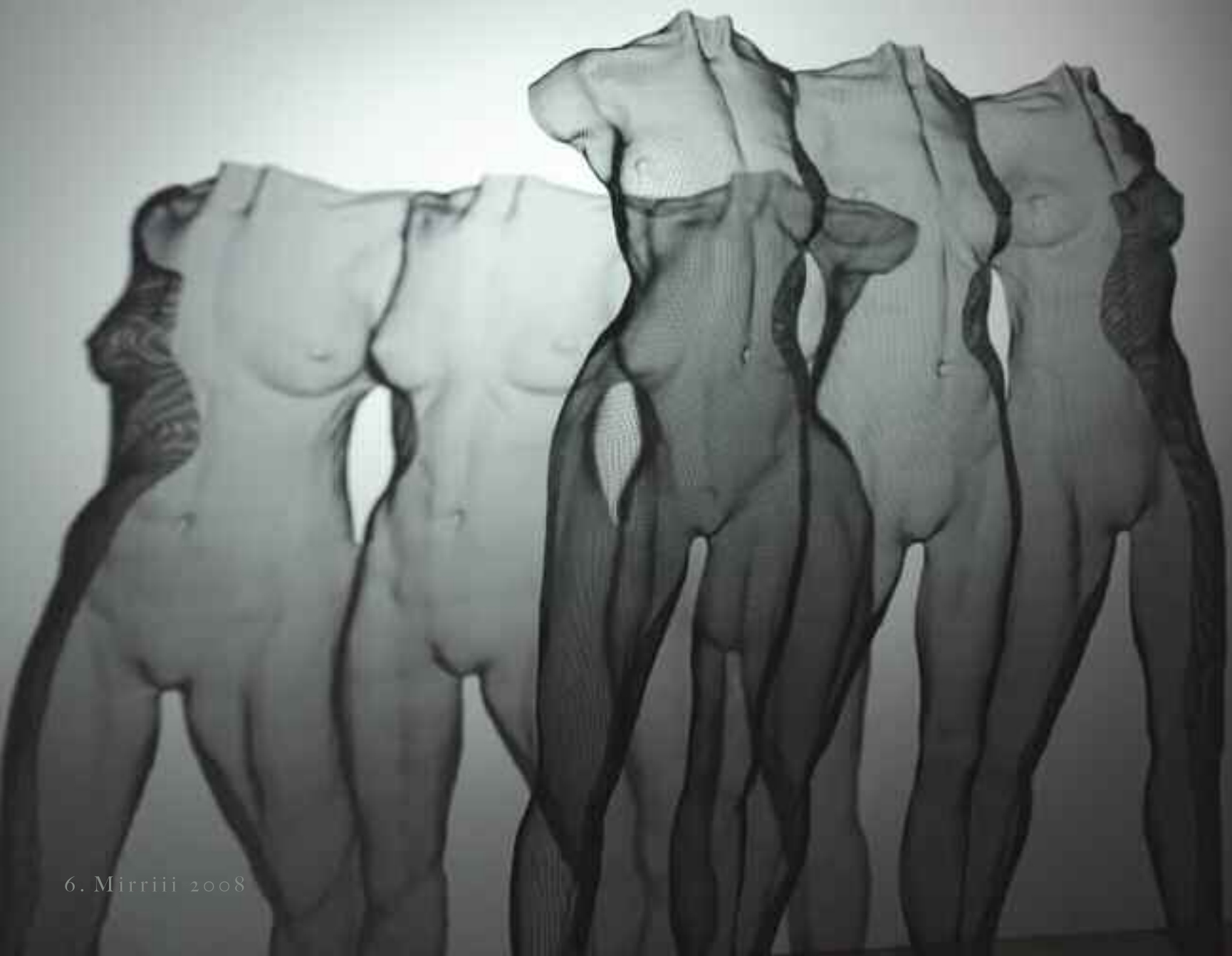


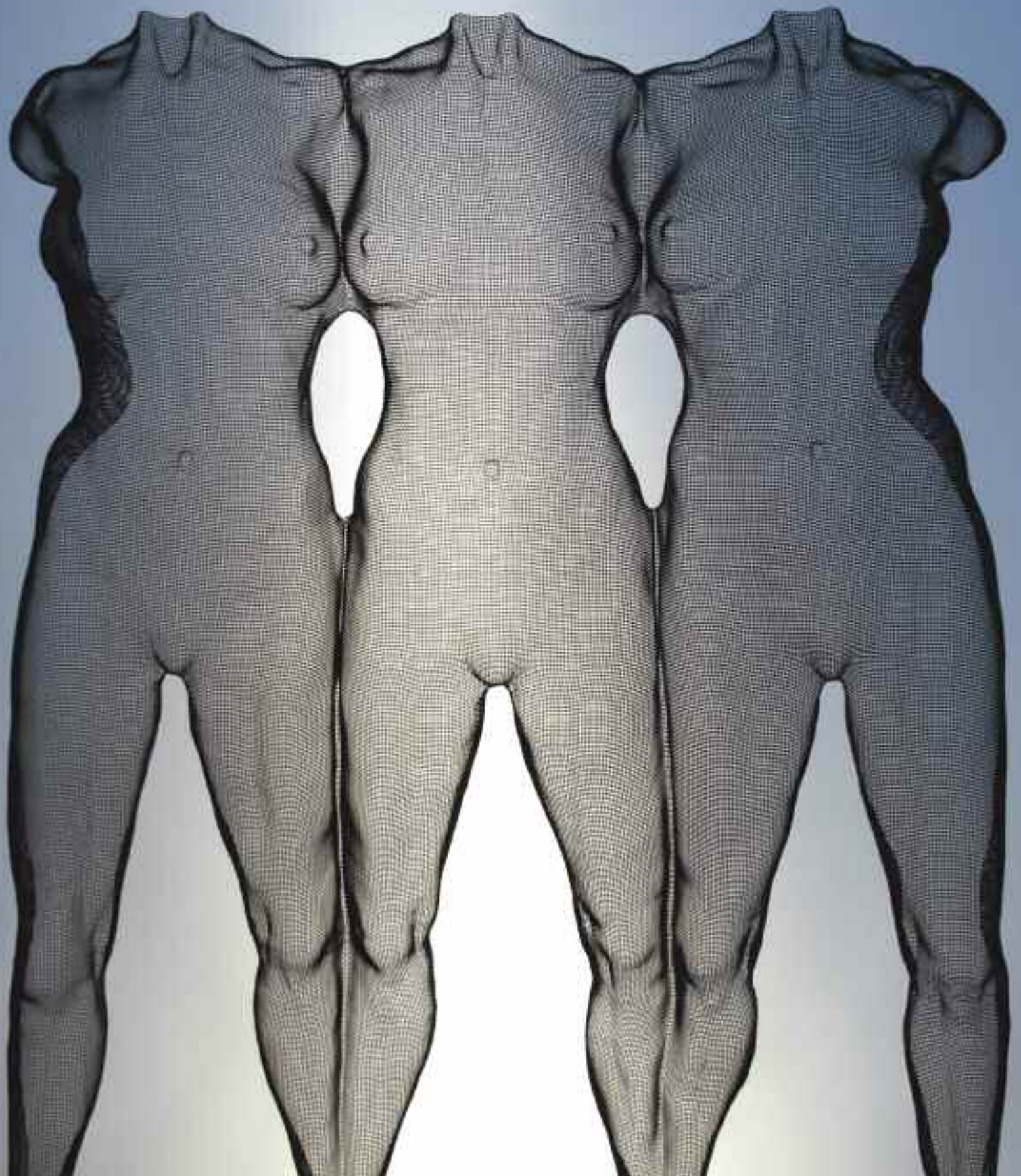
















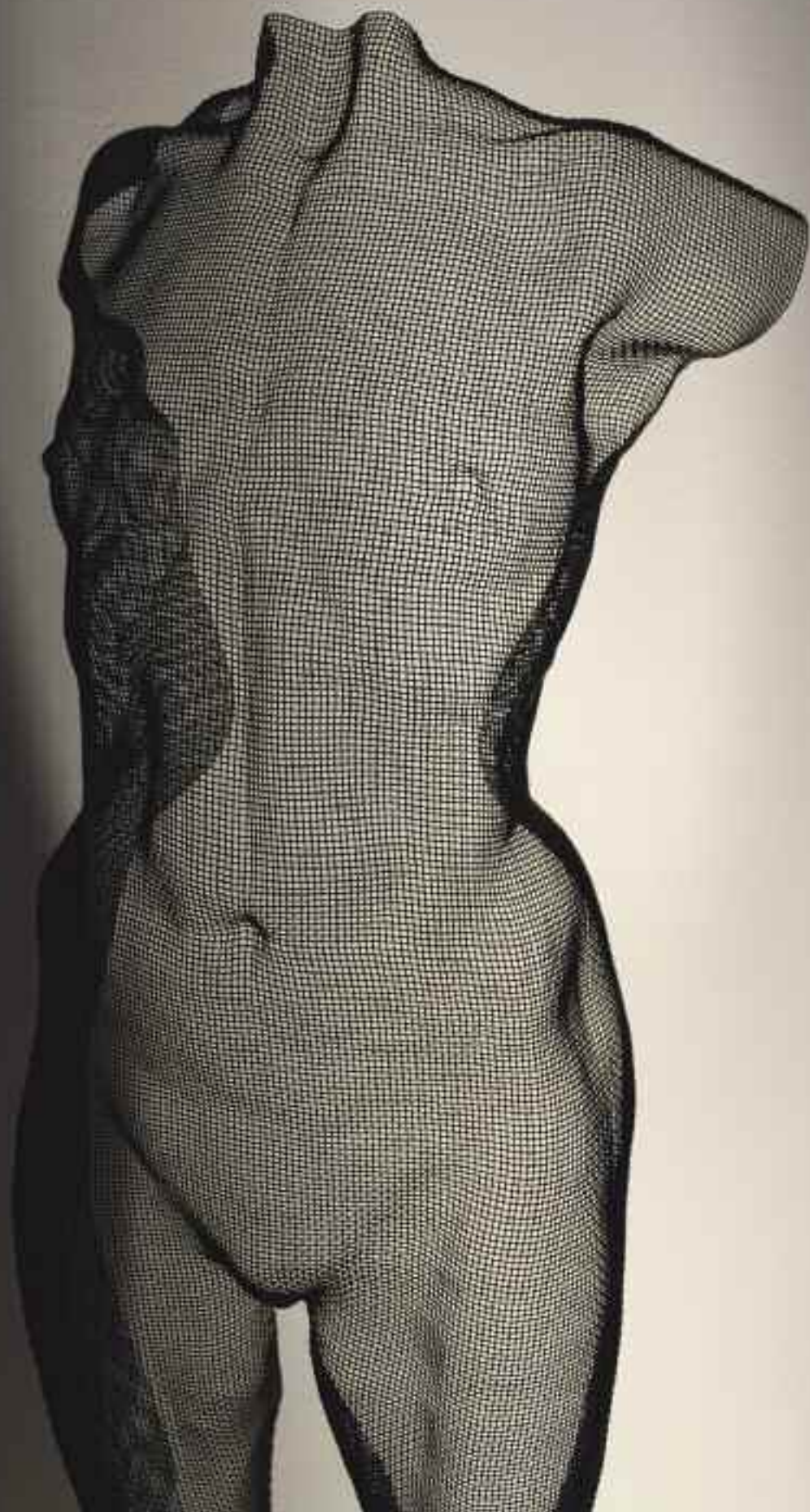


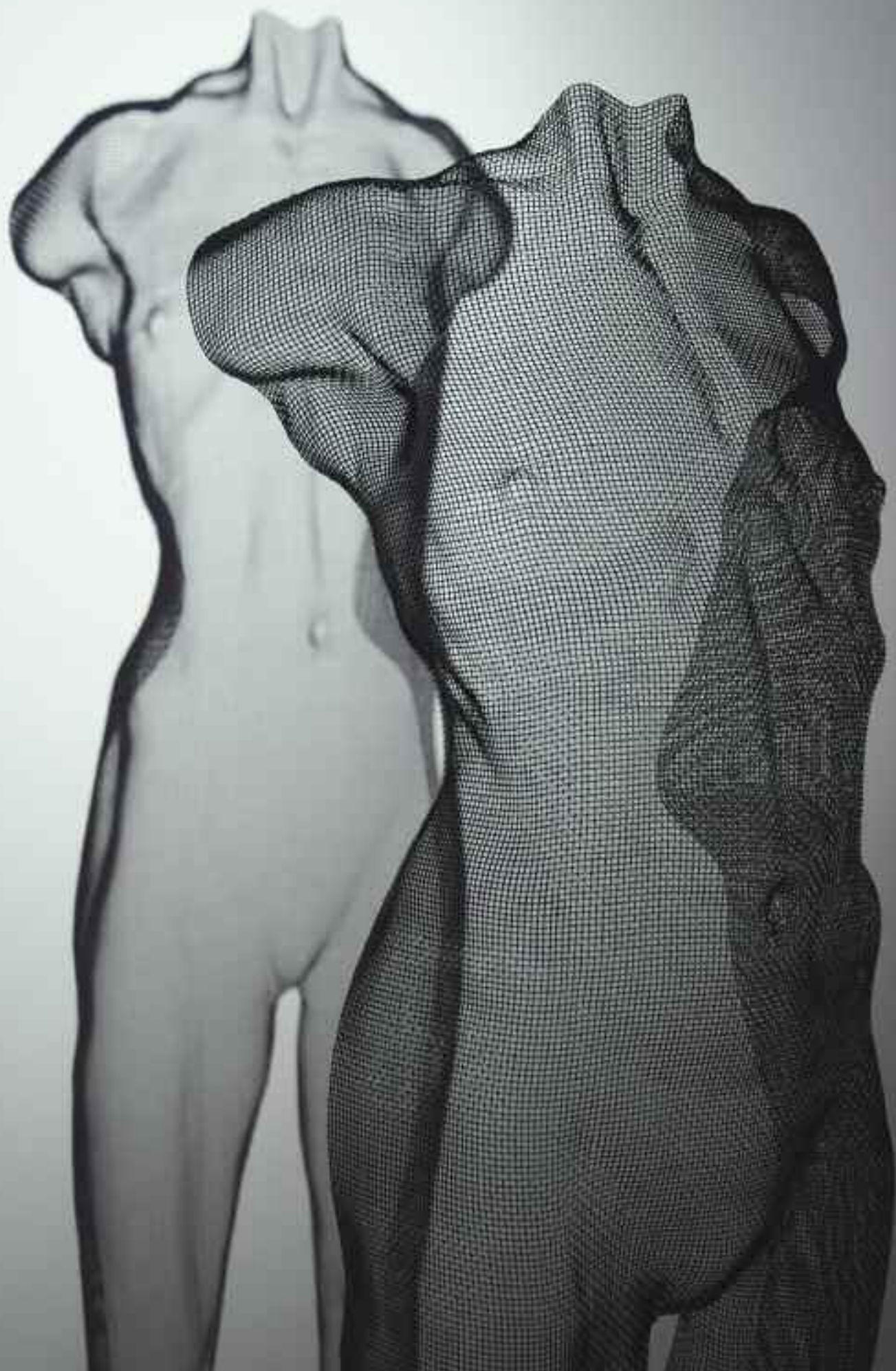
8. Naked I 2006



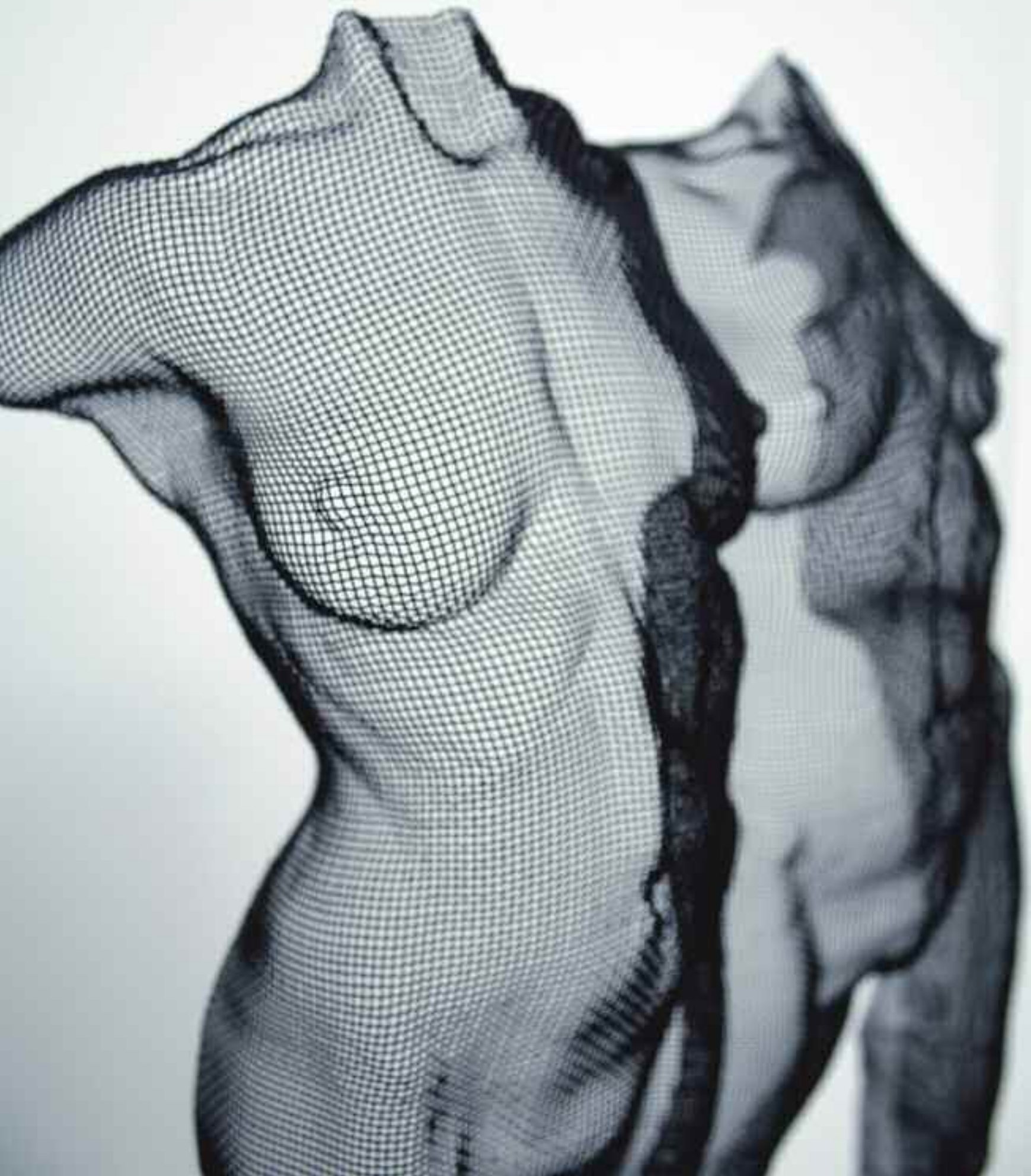




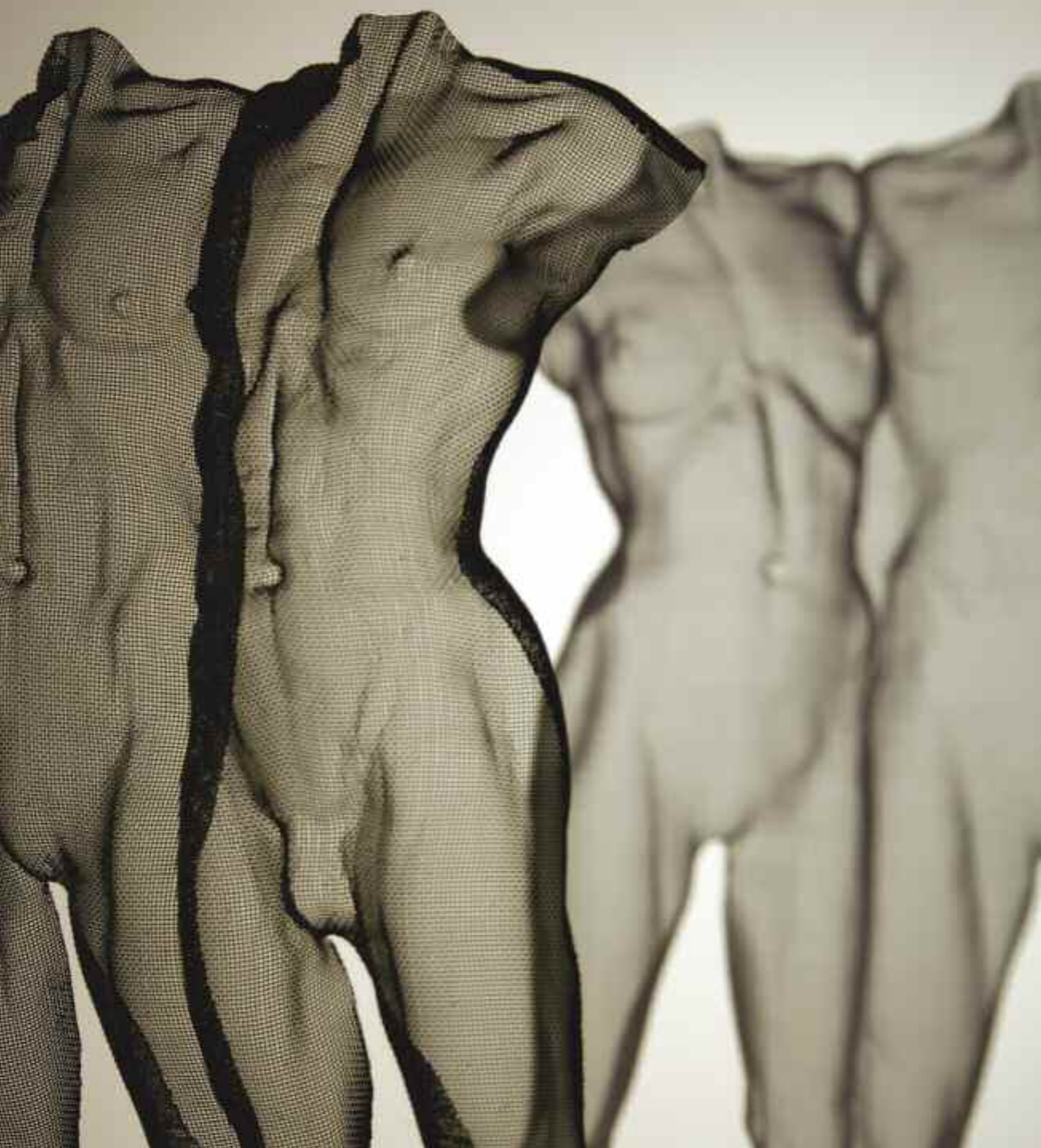


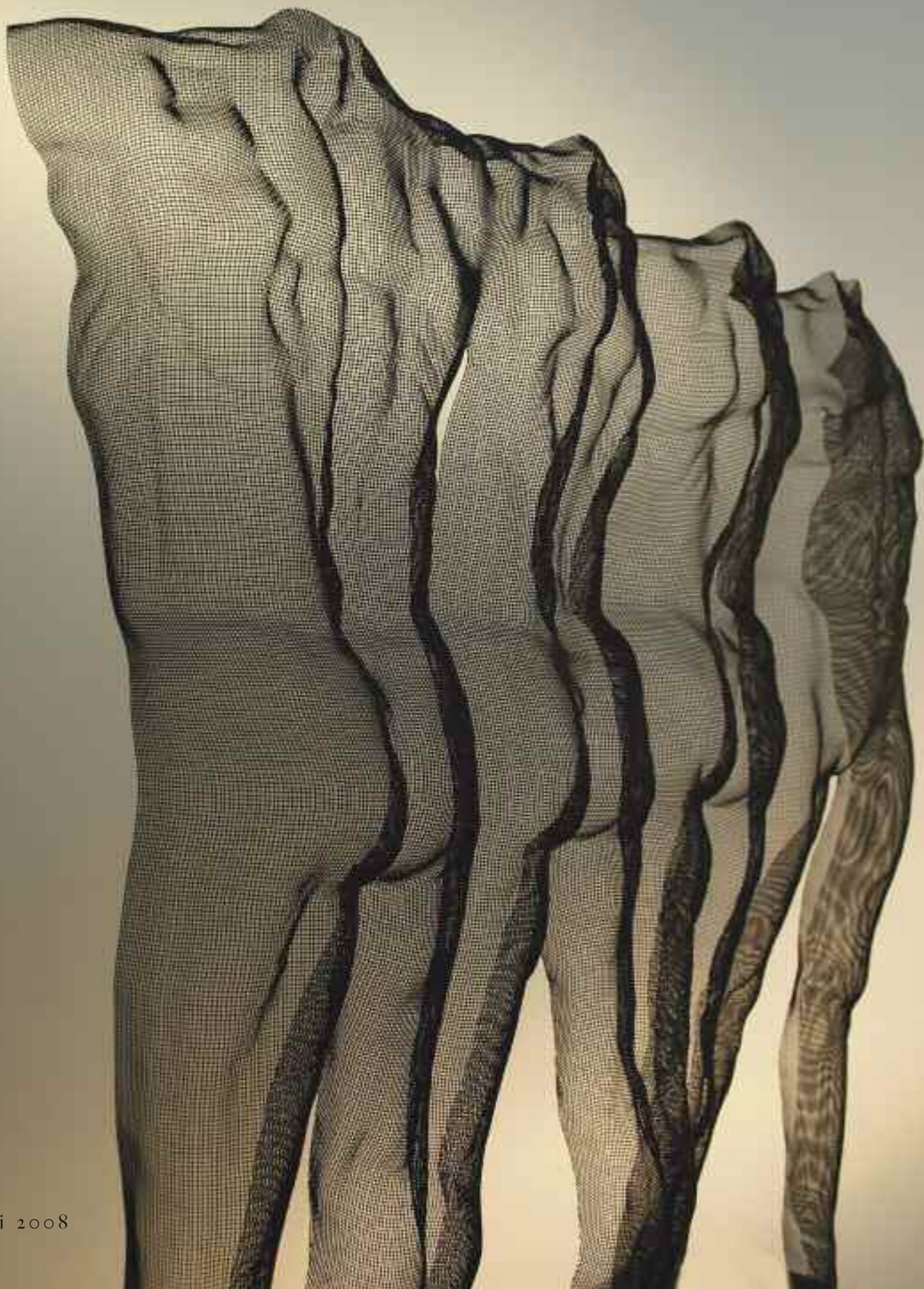




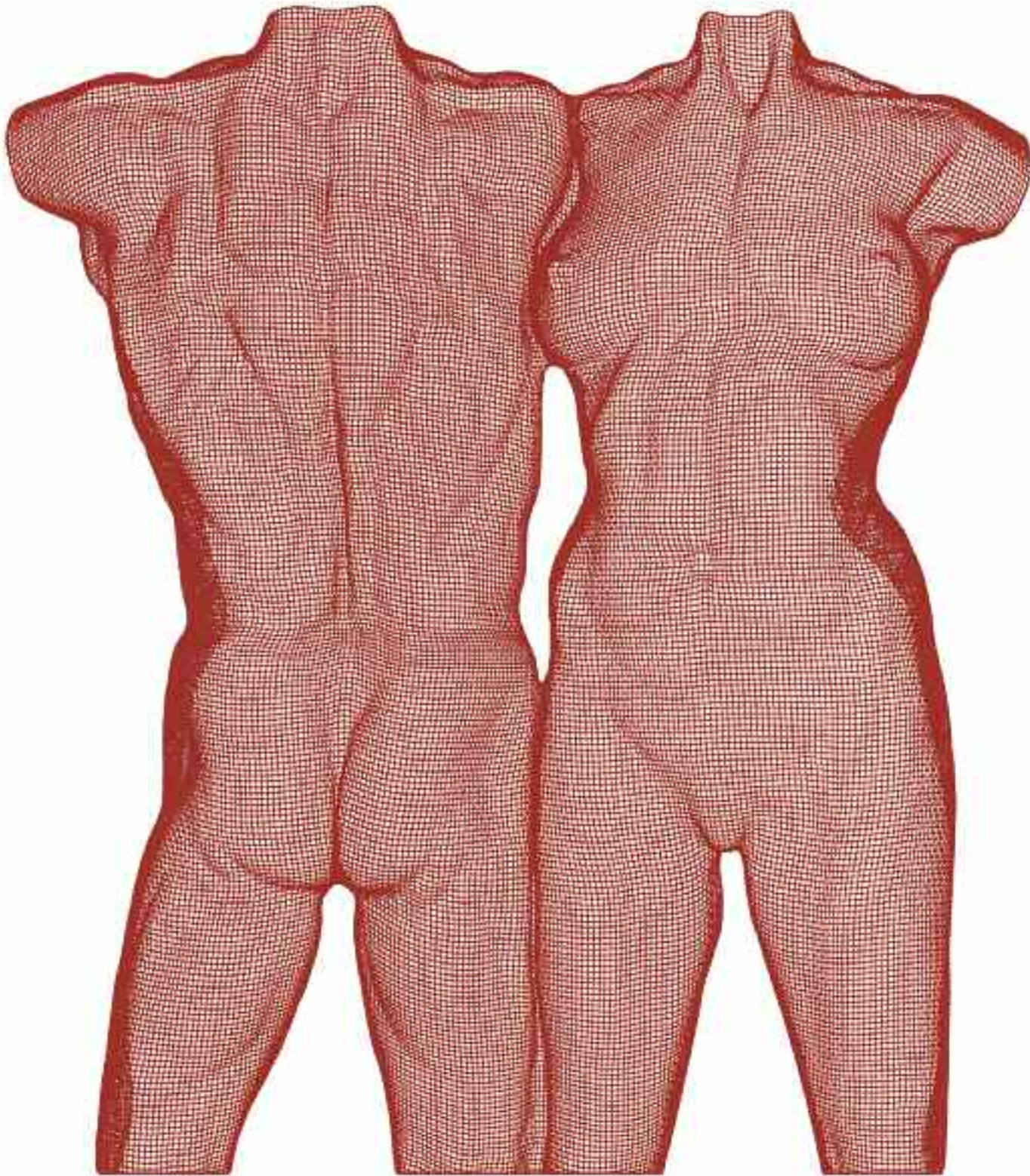








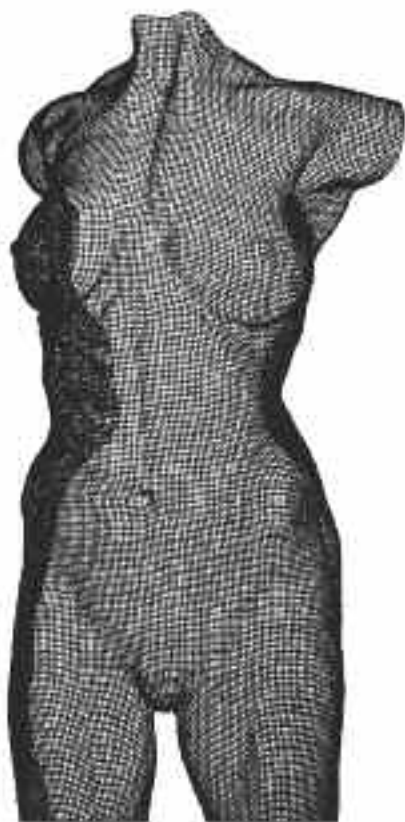




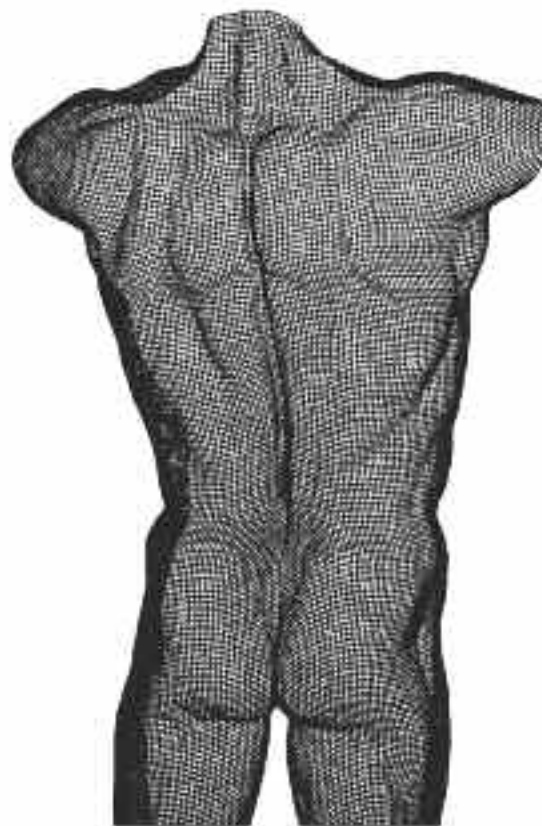
14. Venii 2007 (flat panel edition of 9)

MUSEUM COLLECTIONS AND PERMANENT PUBLIC INSTALLATIONS

Galleria Nazionale de Arte Moderna, Rome, Italy
National Gallery Canberra, Australia
Museum Beelden aan Zee, Holland
National Gallery of Canada
Citibank, London Southwark Bridge, London "Figure & Fountain" 1989
City Place House, London "Back to Front" Diptych & "Venus" 1991
The Hyatt Carlton, London, 'The Peak Health Series' 1993
Natural History Museum, Primates Gallery, "Origins" Triptych Sculpture 1993
Cannons City Gym, London "Archetypes" 1994
Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines 1996
The Hyatt Carlton, London, 'Swimmingtrunes' 1997
The Hyatt, Hamburg, 'Composure' 1998
Ladbroke Sporting Casino, London, 'Chance' 1999
The Jam House, Birmingham, 'Anangel' & 'Manangel' 1999
60 Queen Victoria Street, "Humantouch" 1999 Dyptich
Faith Zone, Millennium Dome, Greenwich, London, "Faith" 1999
Millennium Sculpture, St Mary the Less, Chilbolton, Winchester "Cruciform" 1999
Fleet Place House, Holborn Viaduct "Fishnet" 2000
Bede's World Museum, Jarrow, Tyne & Wear "Worldsapart" 2000
Ten Covent Garden, Connaught Rooms, London "Heavenlybodies" 2001
The Lowry Hotel, Manchester, England "Suspense" 2001
The Milan Bar, Grants of Croydon, London "Anangel" 2002
Hotel Linde, Mariaworth Austria "Nuda" 2004
Radisson SAS Hotel, Stansted England "Standover" 2004
The Shrine of Walsingham, Norfolk 2005 "Crucifix"
The Jam House, Edinburgh "Aangel" 2005
San Domenico House Hotel "Nuuda", "Nuudu", "Tunuud" 2006
Radisson Edwardian Hotel, Providence Wharf, Genus Series "Venus" and "Veni" 2007
62 Threadneedle Street - "Totu" 2008
All England Lawn Tennis Club, Wimbledon - "Mixed Doubles" 2008



Venus 2007 (65 x 31 cm : 25.5 x 12 in)
(flat panel edition of 9)



Venus 2007 (65 x 42 cm : 25.5 x 16.5 in)
(flat panel edition of 9)



1.
Nubis 2008
Steelmesh
71 x 36 x 22 cm
28 x 14 x 8.5 in



8.
Naked I 2006
Steelmesh
205 x 70 x 40 cm
79 x 21.5 x 11.5 in



2.
Neud II 2006
Steelmesh
76 x 25 x 19 cm
30 x 10 x 7.5 in



9.
Naked II 2006
Steelmesh
205 x 70 x 40 cm
81 x 27.5 x 15.5 in



3.
Omm 2007
Steelmesh
51 x 18.5 x 12.5 cm
20 x 7 x 5 in



10.
Geni 2008
Steelmesh
93 x 29 x 20 cm
36.5 x 11.5 x 8 in



4.
Iceis 2007
Steelmesh
77 x 21.5 x 19 x cm
30 x 8.5 x 7.5 in



11.
Nubii 2007
Steelmesh
51 x 36 x 12.5 cm
20 x 14 x 5 in



5.
Nudii 2008
Steelmesh
78 x 48 x 15 cm
30.5 x 19 x 6 in



12.
Genii 2008
Steelmesh
51 x 48 x 12.5 cm
20 x 19 x 5 in



6.
Mirriii 2008
Steelmesh
93 x 66 x 20 cm
36.5 x 26 x 8 in



13.
Uuuui 2008
Steelmesh
93 x 96 x 20 cm
36.5 x 38 x 8 in



7.
Neudangel 2006
Steelmesh
63 x 127 x 7 cm
25 x 50 x 3 in



14.
Venii 2007
Steel Panel
68 x 59.5 x 0.1 cm
26.5 x 23.5 x 0.025 in



49 ALBEMARLE STREET
LONDON W1S 4JR, UK
EMAIL

INFO@ALBEMARLEGALLERY.COM

ALBEMARLE
GALLERY

TEL +44 (0)20 7499 1616

FAX +44 (0)20 7499 1717

WEBSITE

WWW.ALBEMARLEGALLERY.COM