



Refugee

# Refugee

An Art Installation that considers the  
current Refugee Crisis in the UK, and  
prompts the question:

What if this was Me?

Mihelle Wright

Mihelle Wright





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"So often the world sits idly by, watching ethnic conflicts flare up, as if these were mere entertainment rather than human beings whose lives are being destroyed. Shouldn't the existence of even one single refugee be a cause for alarm throughout the world?"

Urkhon Alakbarov

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This multi-faceted installation is an attempt to look at the refugee crisis through the eyes of those experiencing these circumstances first hand, the refugees themselves, their experience, their treatment, the barriers and the stereotyping that they face on a daily basis.

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A long held belief of the artist that humanity, dignity and respect are basic human rights that everyone deserves irrespective of his or her circumstances, the refugee crisis highlights to the artist the lack of humanity in our society today. Inspired by the increasing efforts of many artists to raise awareness of the refugee crisis, in particular, Ai Wei Wei and the Migration Museum, the artist wanted to create a platform that says, "Look at how these people are treated, this could be you or me".

The poem, Refugee by Brian Bilston, an amazing example of a palindrome, when read backward puts into words precisely how the artist feels about this situation. When you first read the poem

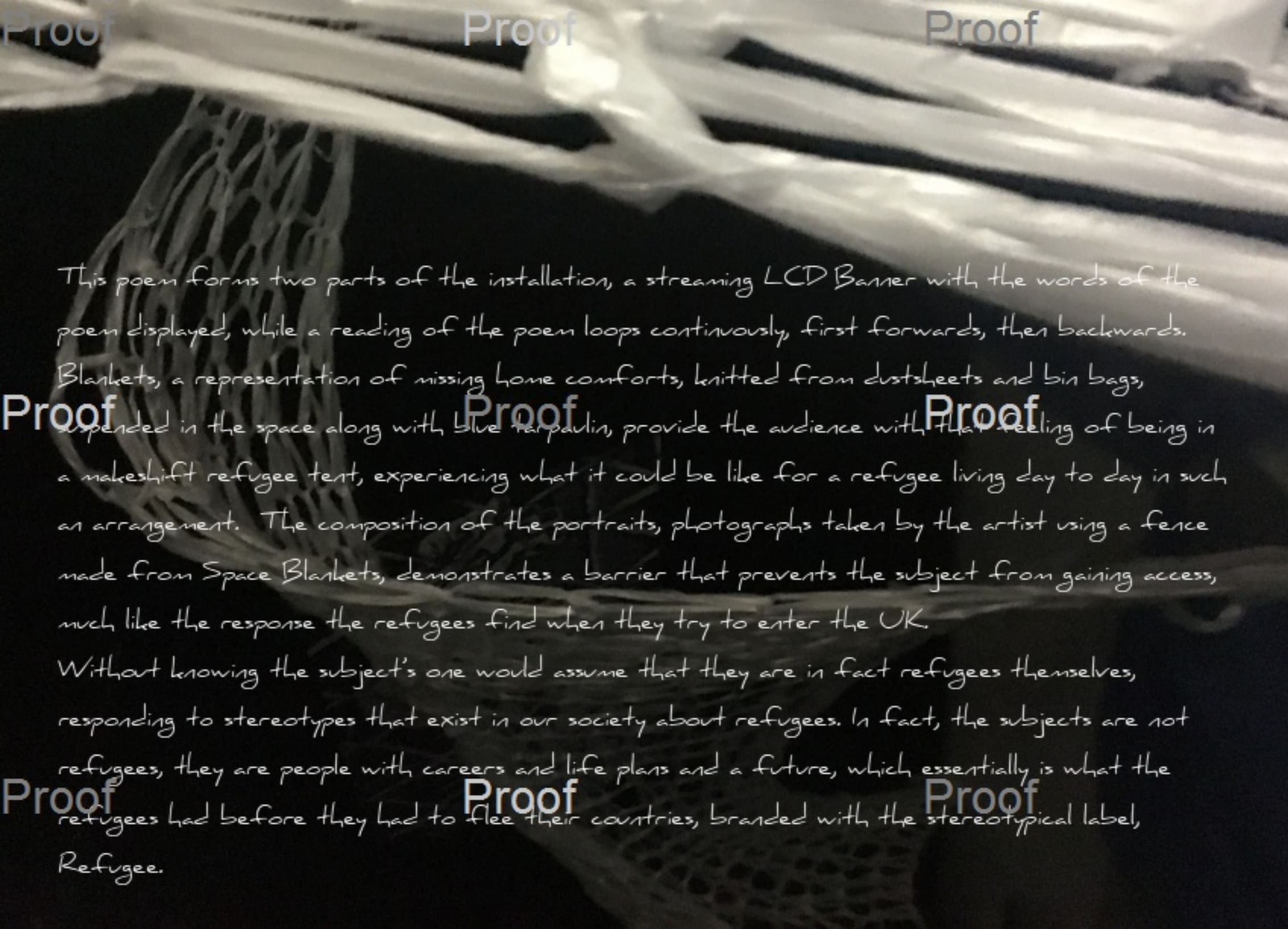
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(forwards), the words describe in essence the propaganda that the government would like us to believe, however, when read backwards the words reveal a humanitarian view of the situation.





This poem forms two parts of the installation, a streaming LCD Banner with the words of the poem displayed, while a reading of the poem loops continuously, first forwards, then backwards.

Blankets, a representation of missing home comforts, knitted from dustsheets and bin bags, suspended in the space along with blue tarpaulin, provide the audience with that feeling of being in a makeshift refugee tent, experiencing what it could be like for a refugee living day to day in such an arrangement. The composition of the portraits, photographs taken by the artist using a fence made from Space Blankets, demonstrates a barrier that prevents the subject from gaining access, much like the response the refugees find when they try to enter the UK.

Without knowing the subject's one would assume that they are in fact refugees themselves, responding to stereotypes that exist in our society about refugees. In fact, the subjects are not refugees, they are people with careers and life plans and a future, which essentially is what the refugees had before they had to flee their countries, branded with the stereotypical label, Refugee.



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Bullied Migrant  
Refugee

Sister

Lonely

Proof

Proof

Proof

Daughter

Syrian

Human

Friend

Grandchild

Proof

Proof

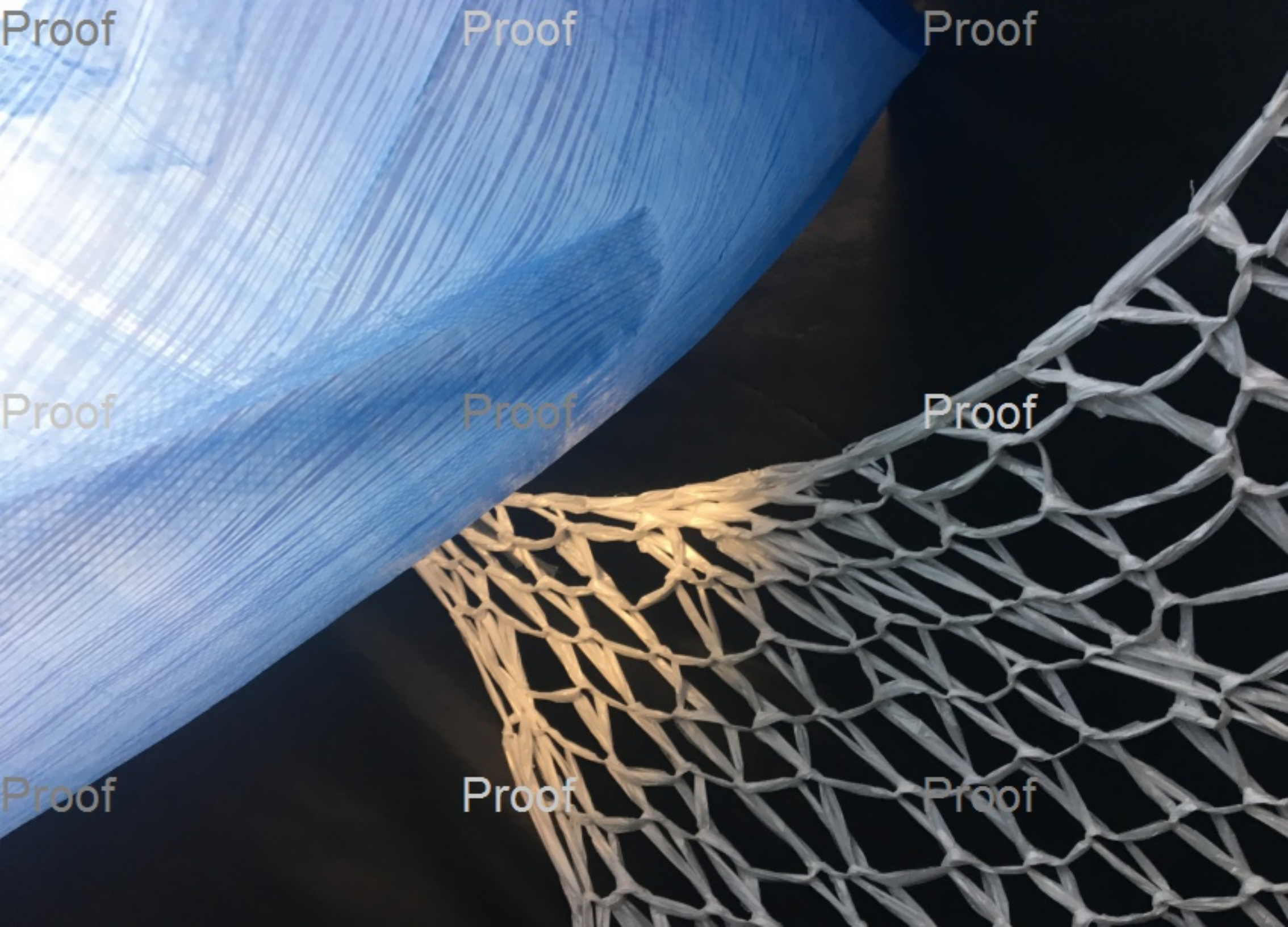
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Daughter Schoolchild









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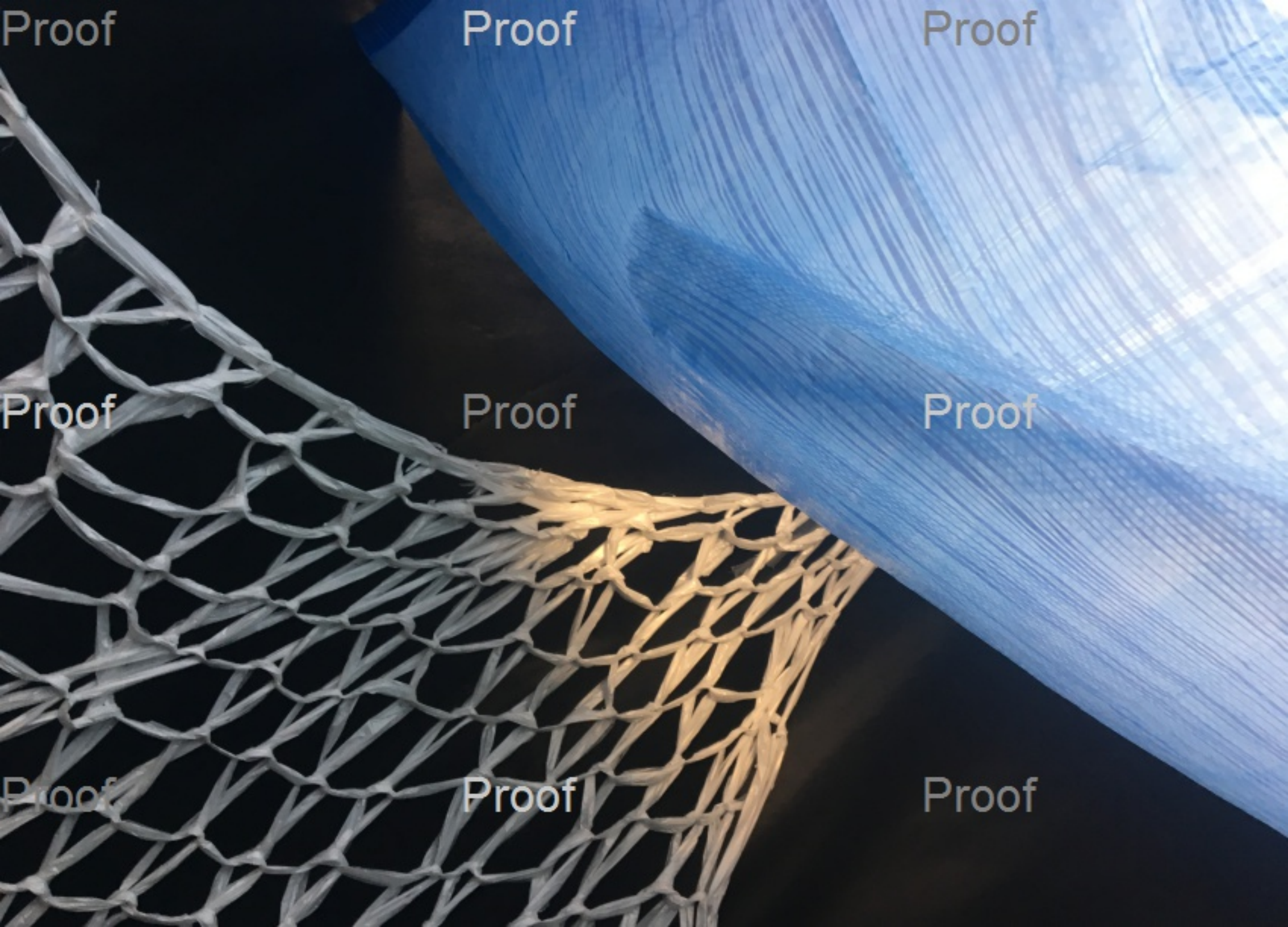
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Proof

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Proof

Proof

Proof

Homeless

Syrian  
Friend

Proof

Proof

Proof

Cousin

Refugee Aunt Daughter  
Mother Human

Sister

Hungry

Proof

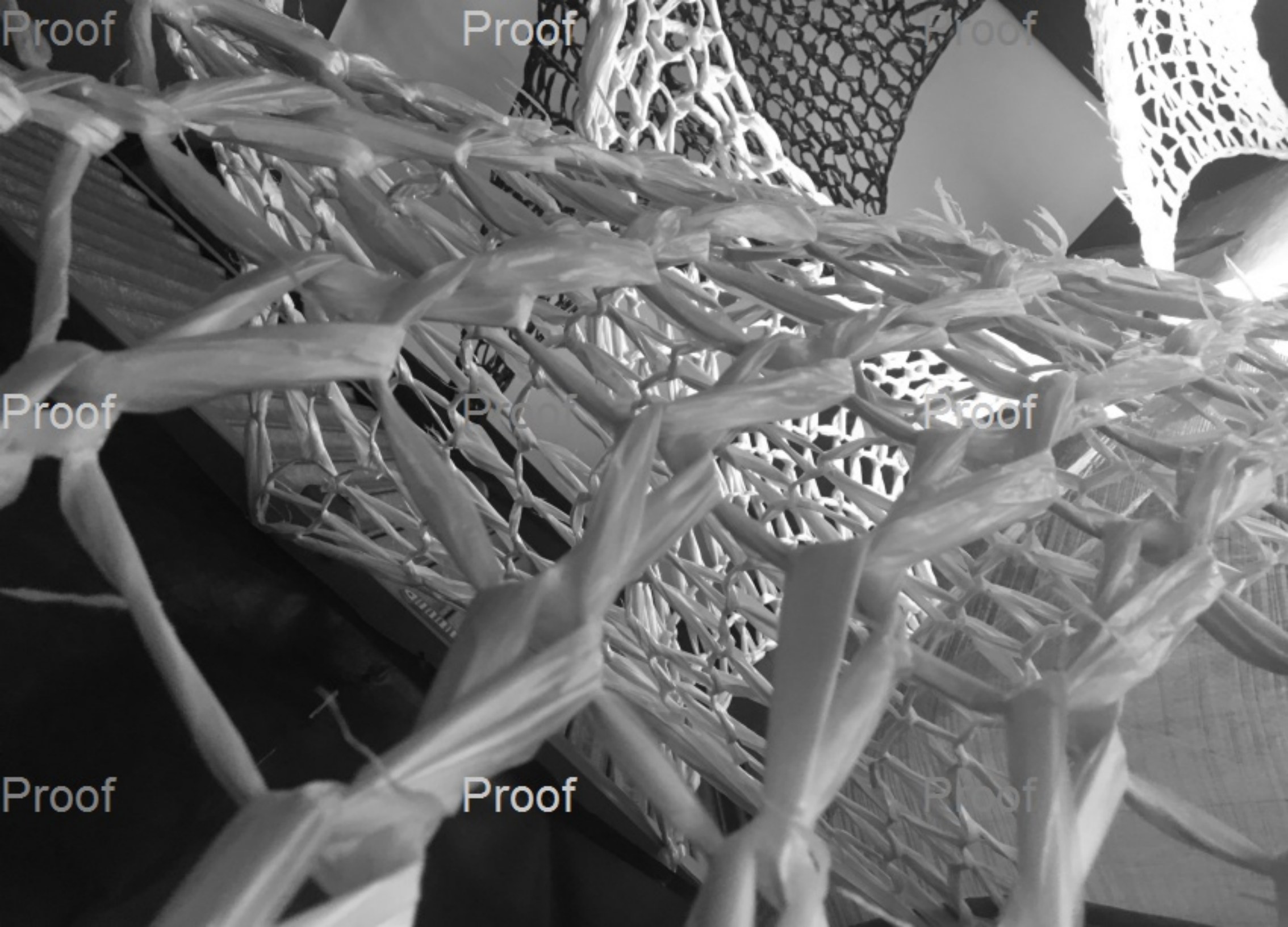
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If you are in EKO station  
You will see the real dehumanisation  
You don't have the right to have  
to love, to get small inspiration  
You are just a number  
For another greedy nation  
They will never see you as a human  
being  
Just a creature they threaten with  
deportation  
I wish that I was dead in Syria  
Rather than be in this situation  
I am not sure what you can call this  
treatment from the best civilisation



Proof

Proof

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Despite this all  
We will not break down  
We are the strongest combination  
To cross the mountains  
The desert the borders  
To make the sea our last destination  
To be Syrian that means to suffer  
in every way  
In your imagination

EKO Station by Ahmed Yonso  
a Literature Student

from Daraa, Syria,  
living in the EKO Refugee Camp

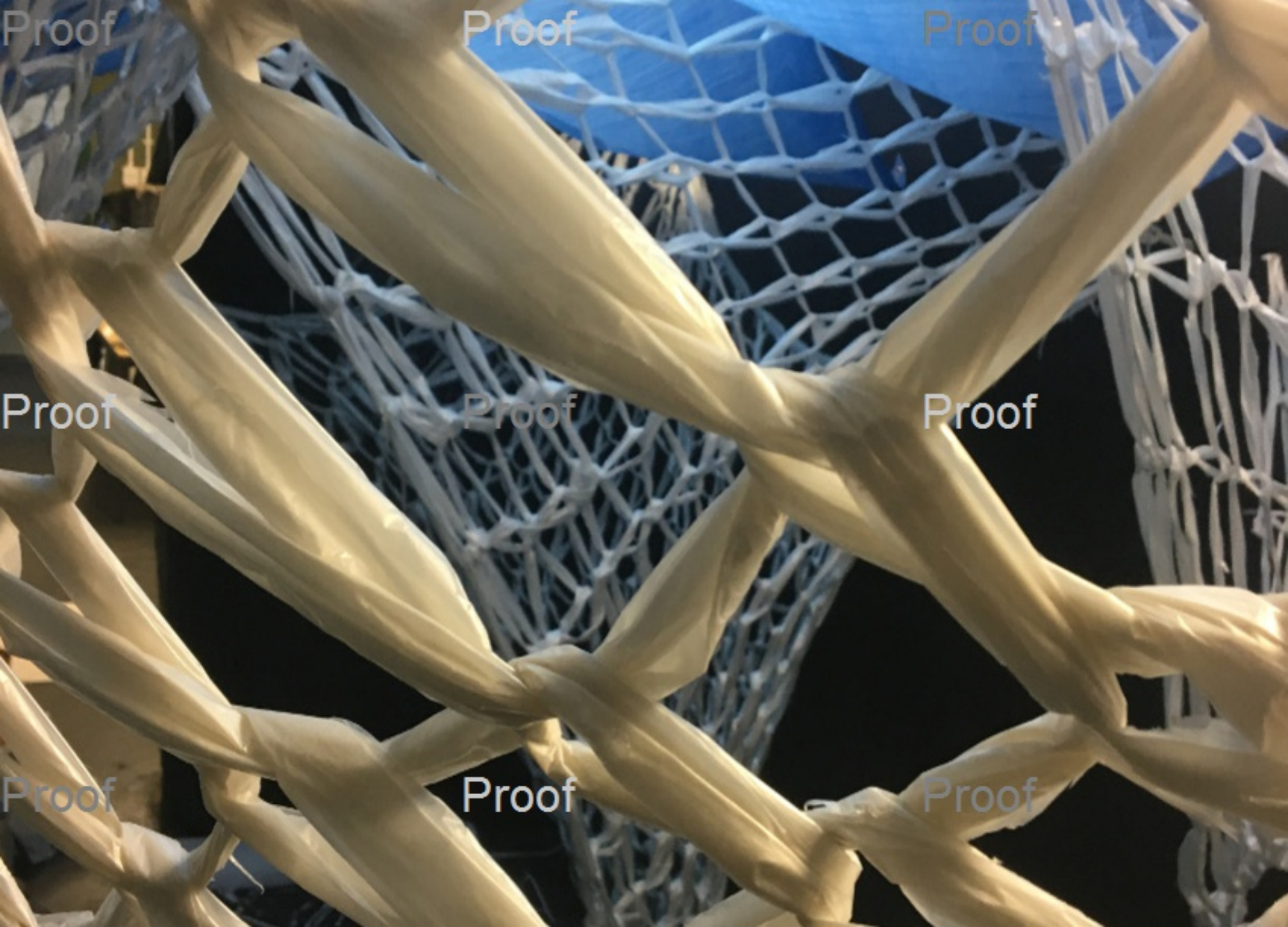
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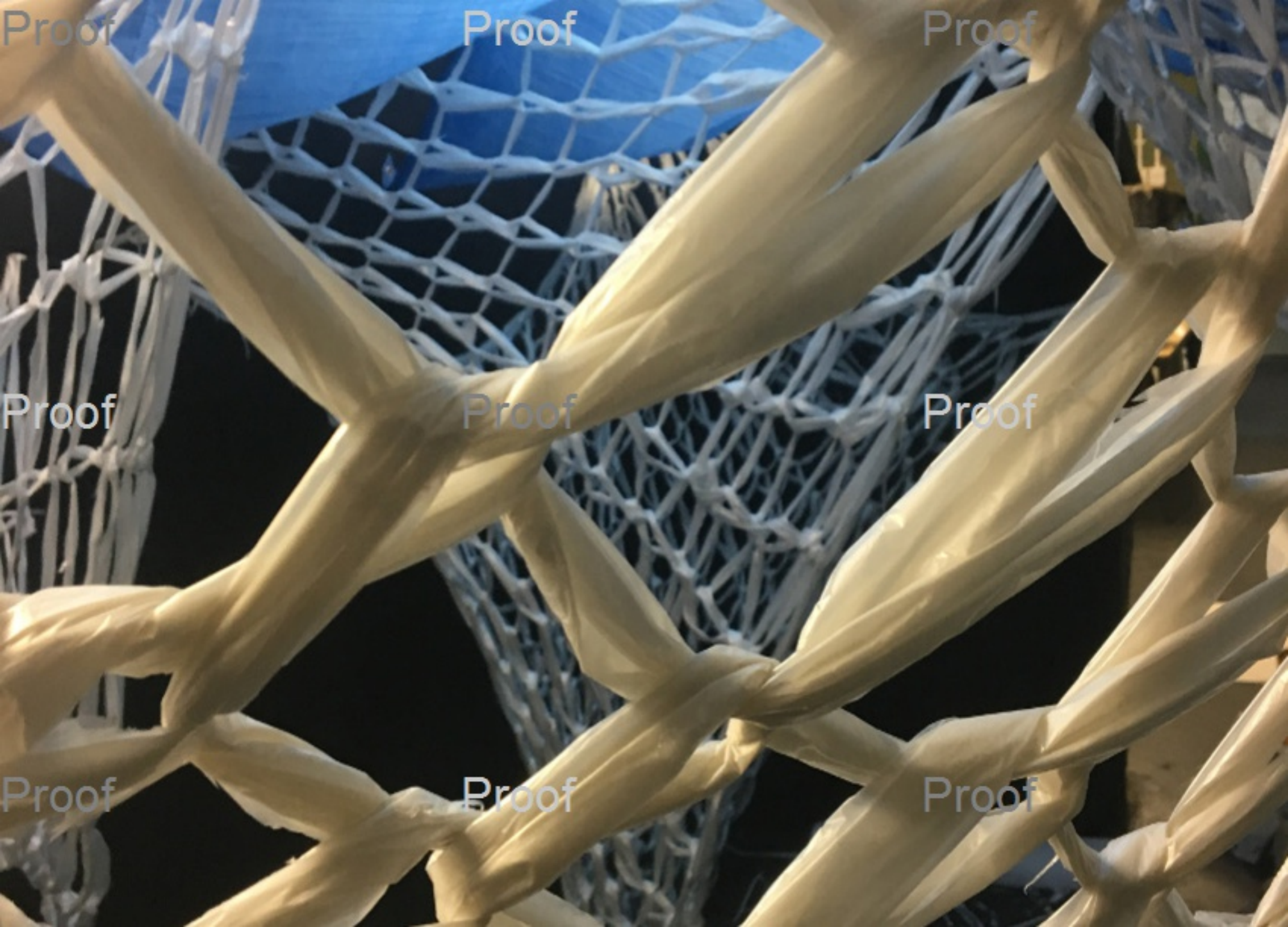
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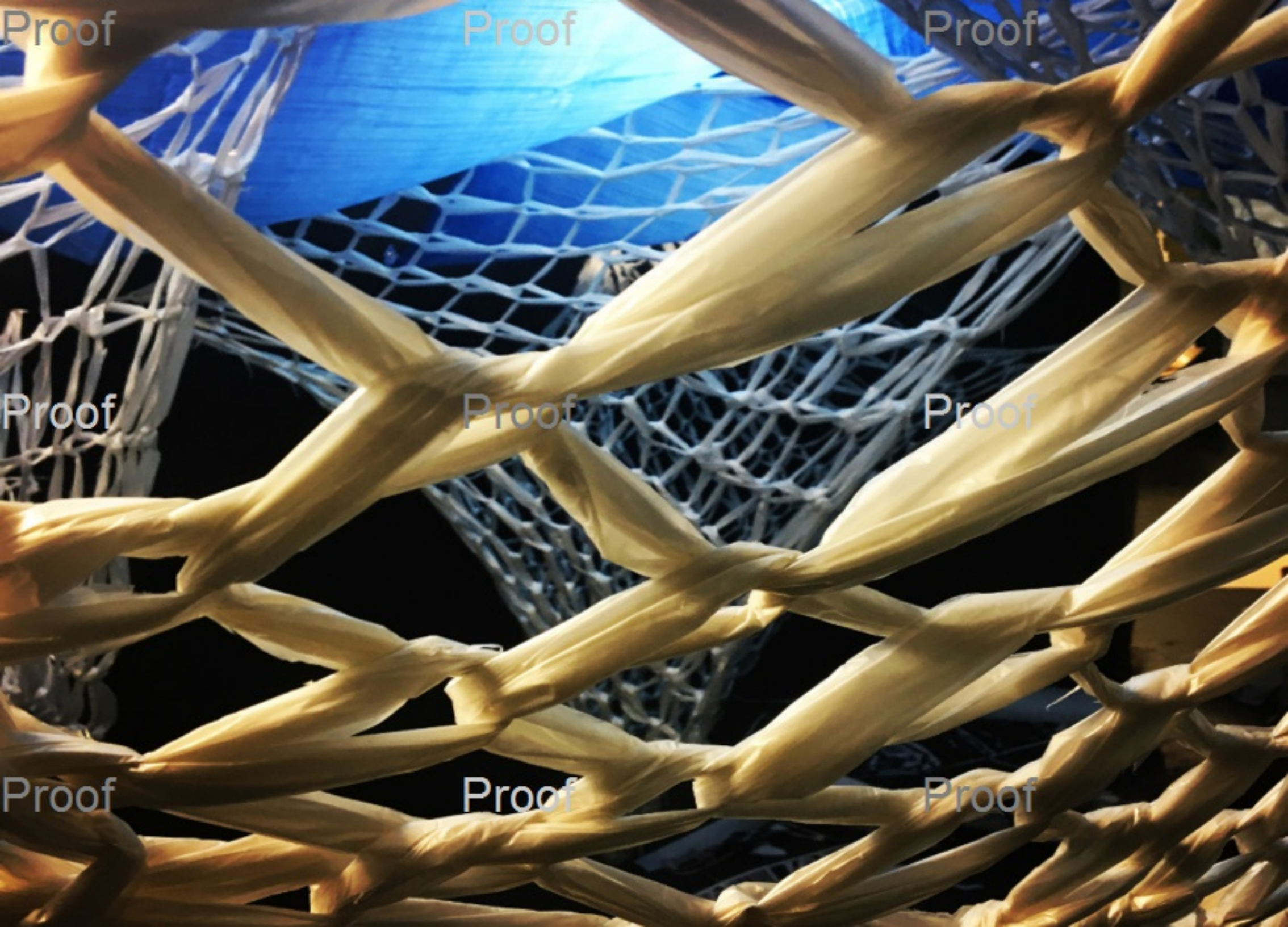
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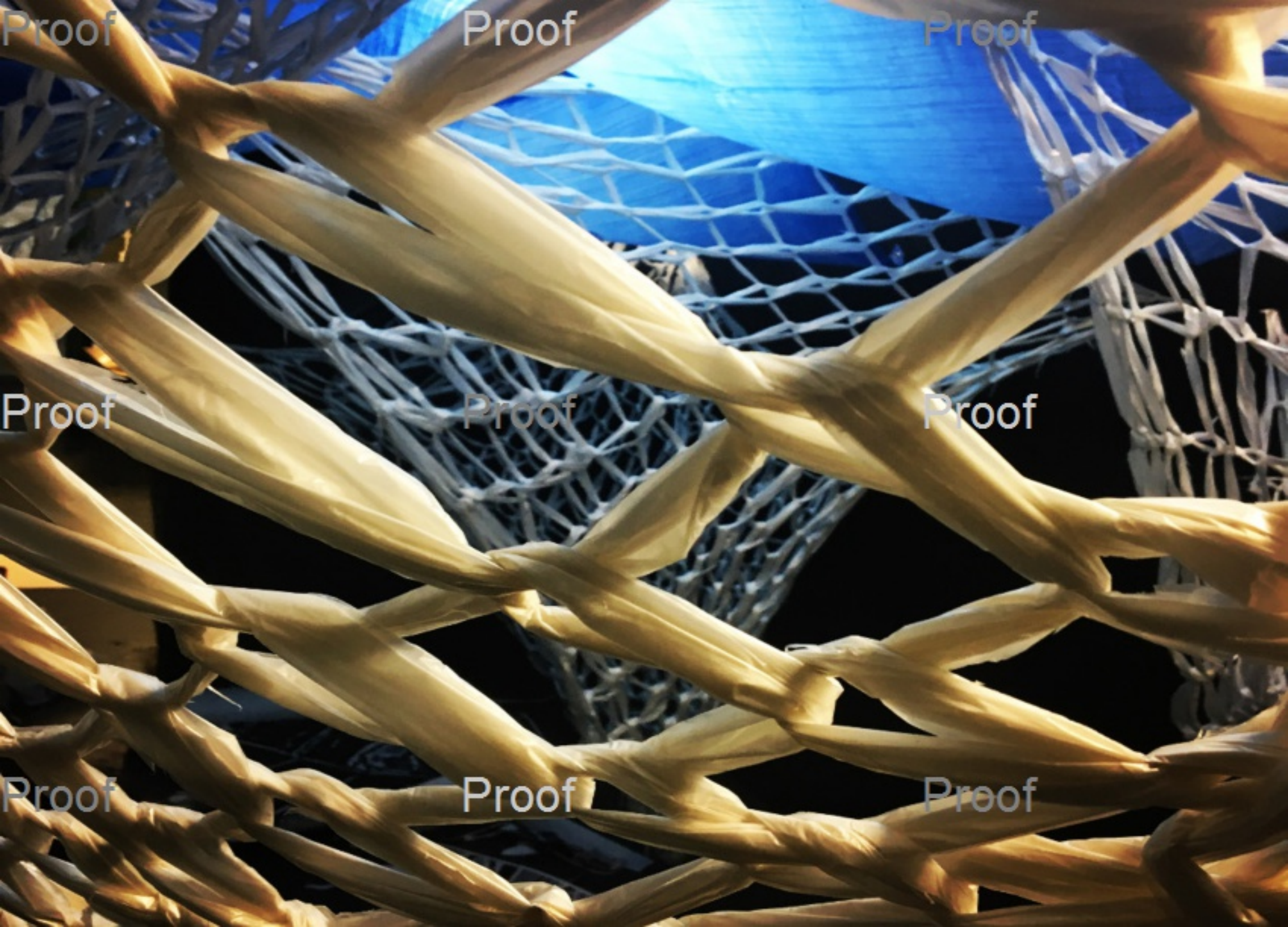
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Proof



Proof

Proof

Proof

Refugee Brother

Human

Migrant

Father

Syrian

Proof

Proof

Proof

Brother

Displaced

Uncle

Dirty

Proof

Proof

Proof

Thief





Proof

Proof

Proof

Proof

Proof

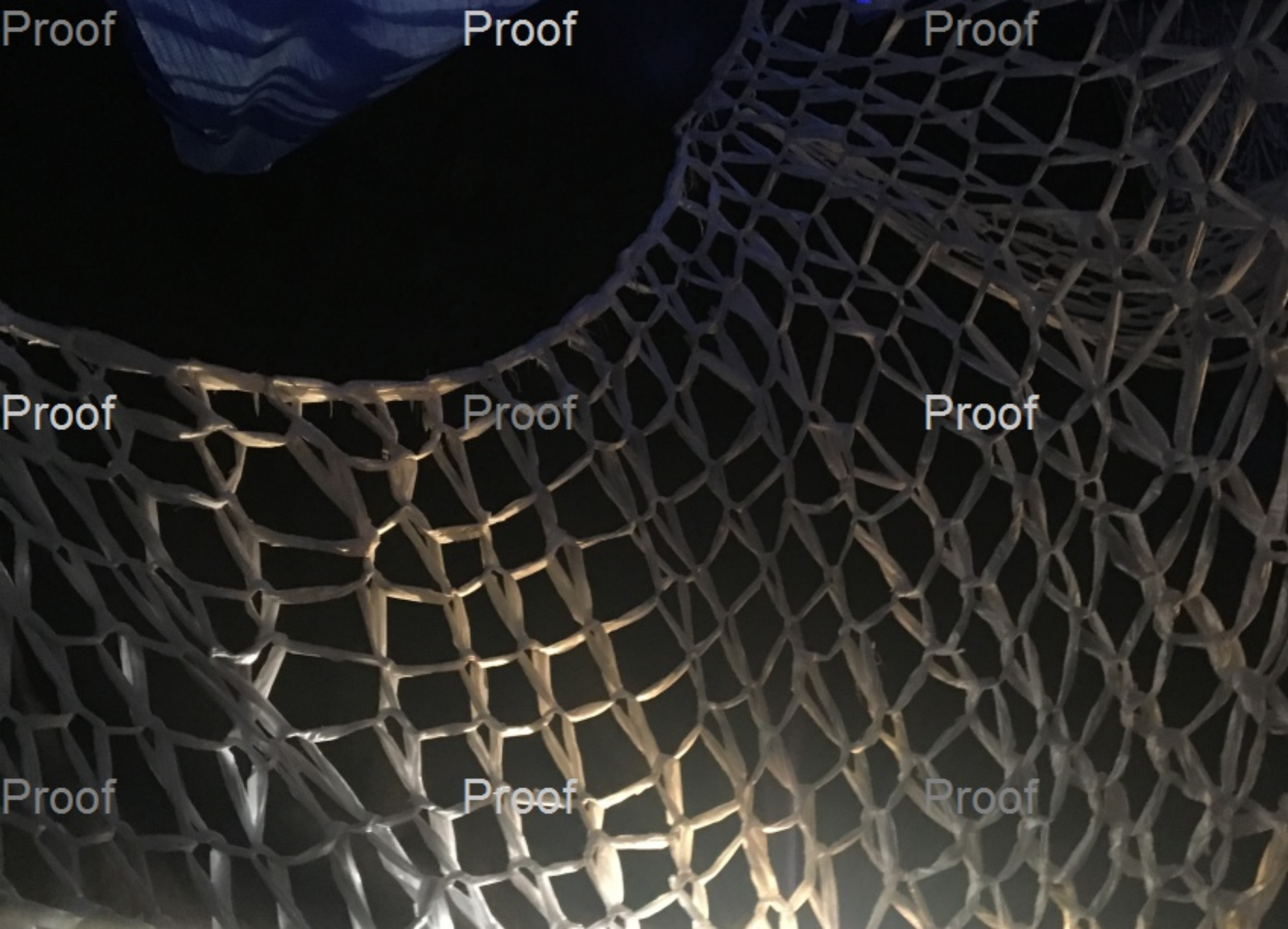
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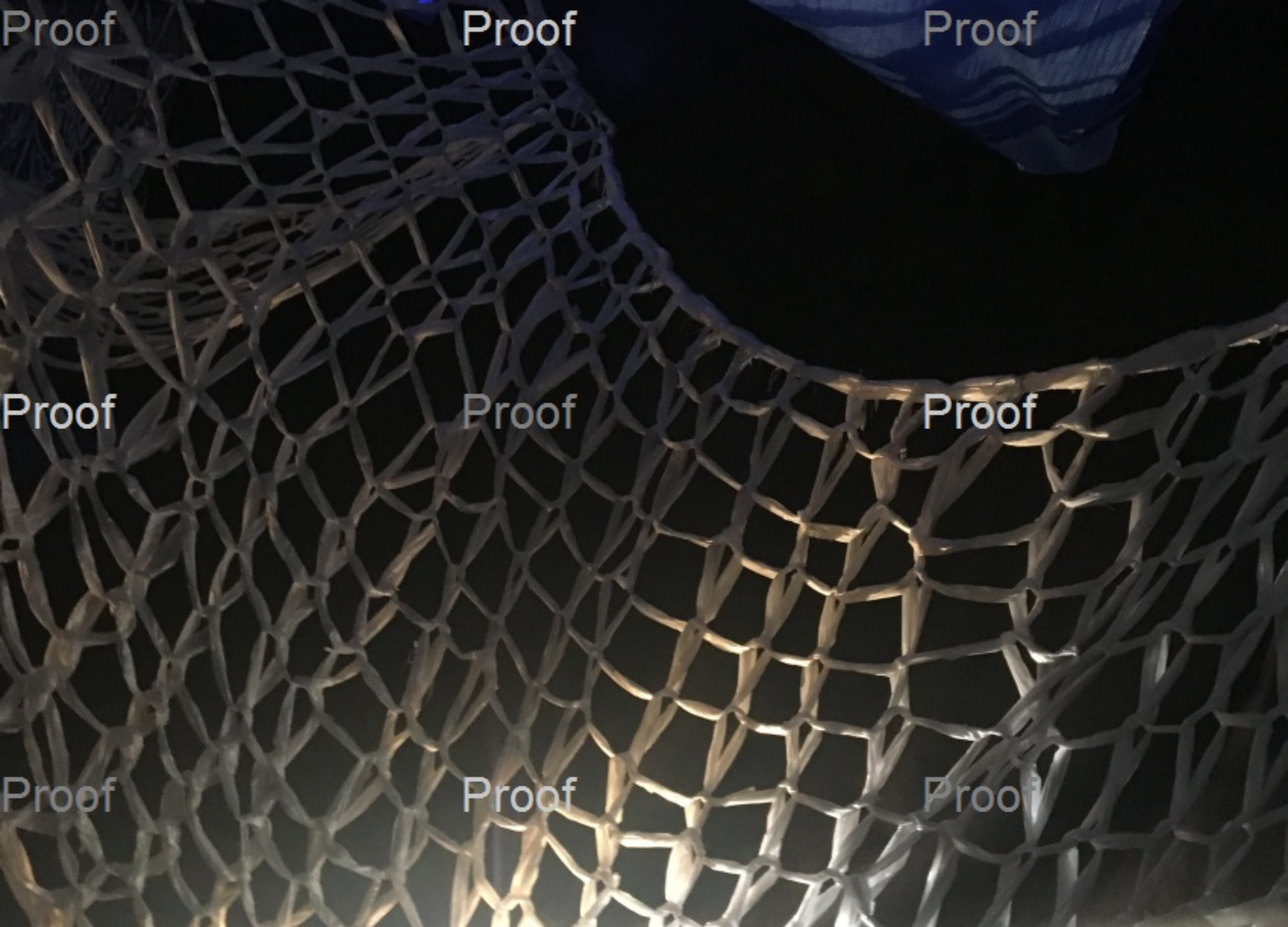
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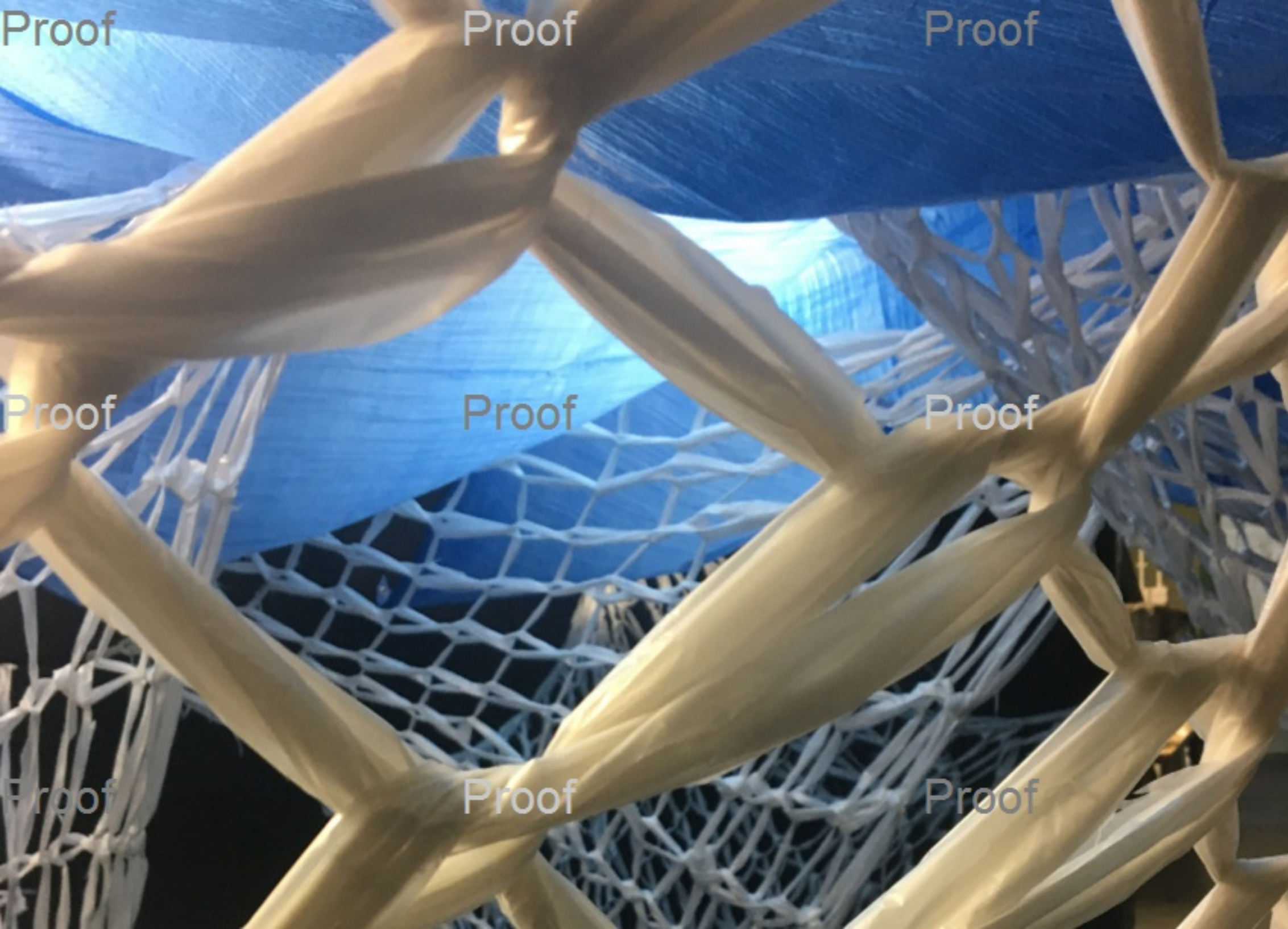












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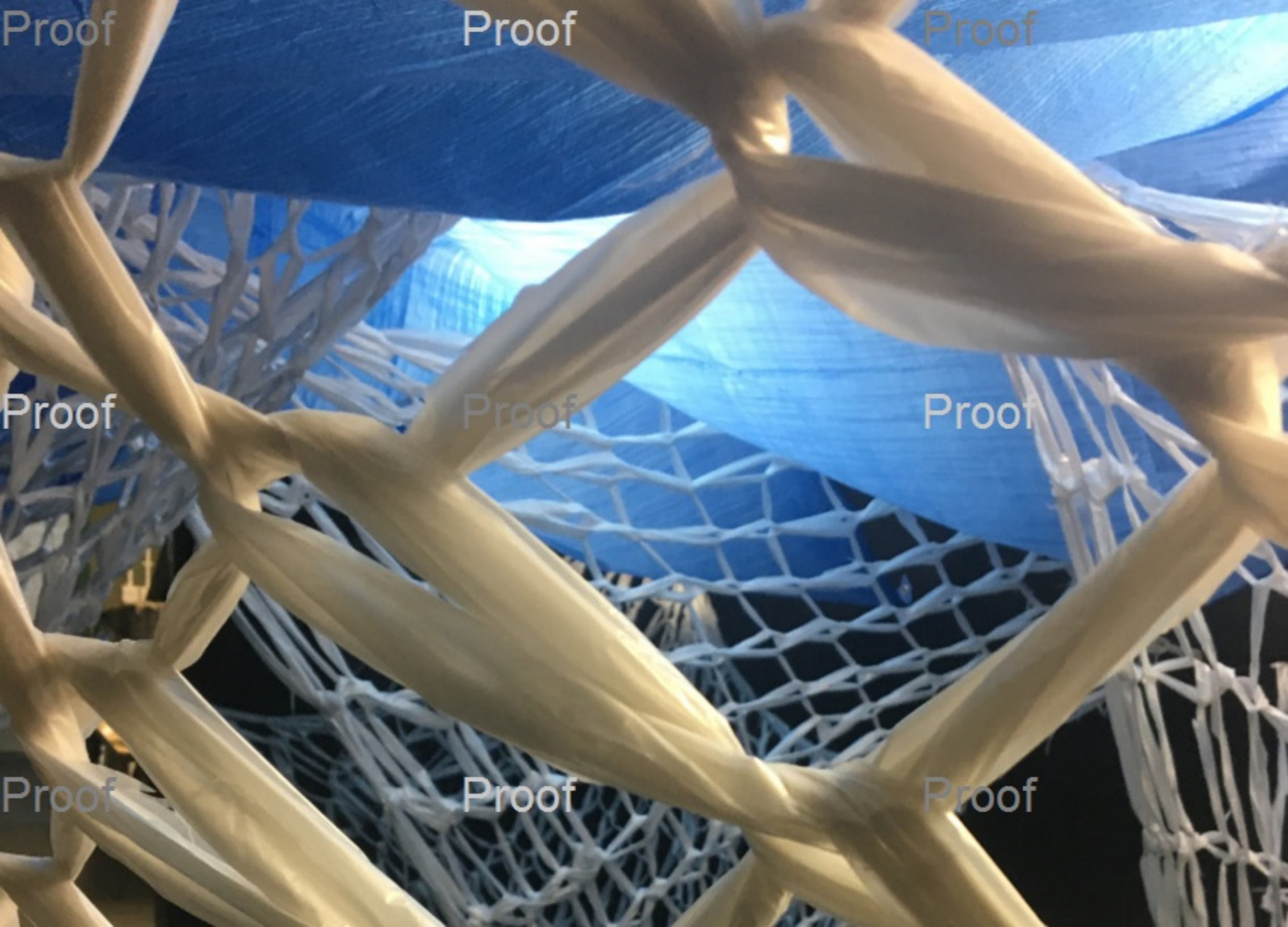
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Refugees by Brian Bilston

Proof

They have no need of our help  
So do not tell me

These haggard faces could belong to you or me  
Should life have dealt a different hand  
We need to see them for who they really are

Chancers and scroungers

Layabouts and loungers

With bombs up their sleeves

Cutthroats and thieves

They are not Welcome here

Proof

We should make them

Go back to where they came from

They cannot

Share our food

Share our homes

Share our countries

Instead let us

Build a wall to keep them out

It is not okay to say

These are people just like us

A place should only belong to those who are born there

Proof

Do not be so stupid to think that

The world can be looked at another way

Proof

Proof

Proof

Proof



Proof

The world can be looked at another way  
Do not be so stupid to think that  
A place should only belong to those who are born there  
These are people just like us  
It is not okay to say  
Build a wall to keep them out  
Instead let us  
Share our homes  
Share our food

Proof

Share our countries  
We should make them Welcome here

They cannot  
Go back to where they came from

They are not  
Cut-throats and thieves  
With bombs up their sleeves

Layabouts and loungers  
Chancers and scroungers

We need to see them for who they really are  
Should life have dealt a different hand

Proof

These haggard faces could belong to you or me  
So do not tell me

They have no need of our help

Proof

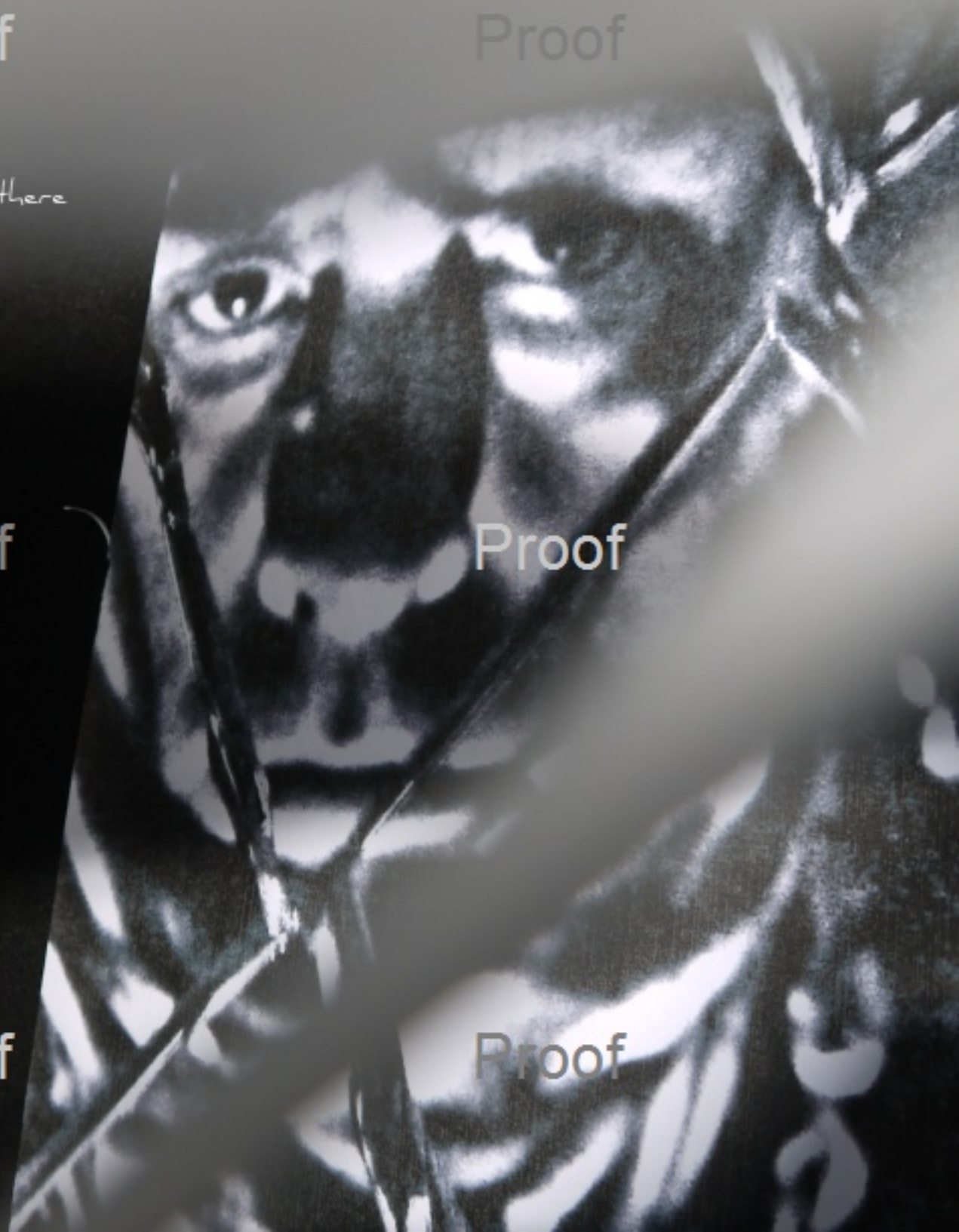
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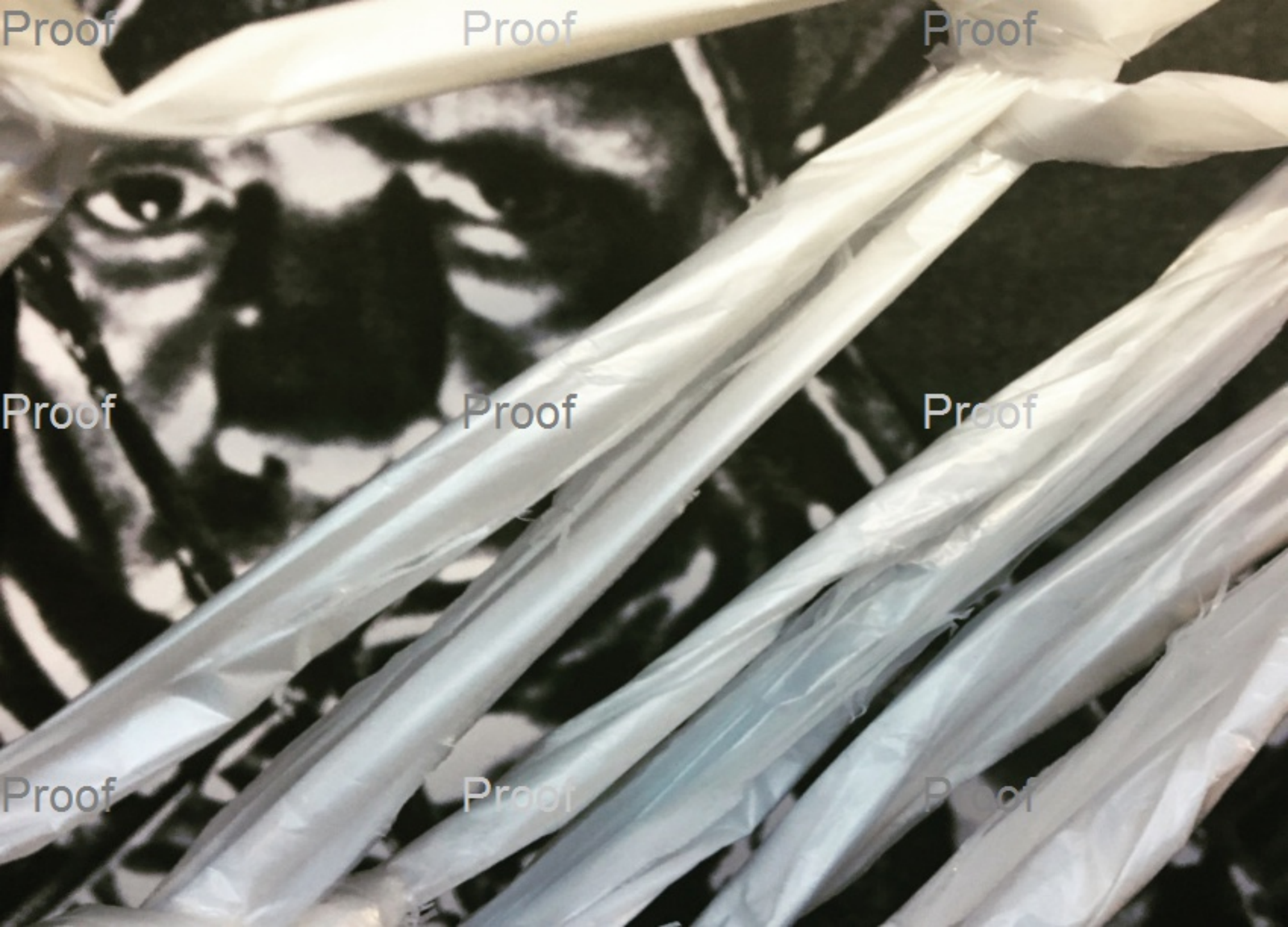
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Proof

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Proof

Proof

Proof

Proof

Proof



Proof

Displaced  
Homeless

Uncle Son

Proof

Human Migrant  
Uncle

Proof

Syrian Father

Proof

Brother

Friend Husband

Proof

Refugee

Proof

Homeless

Proof





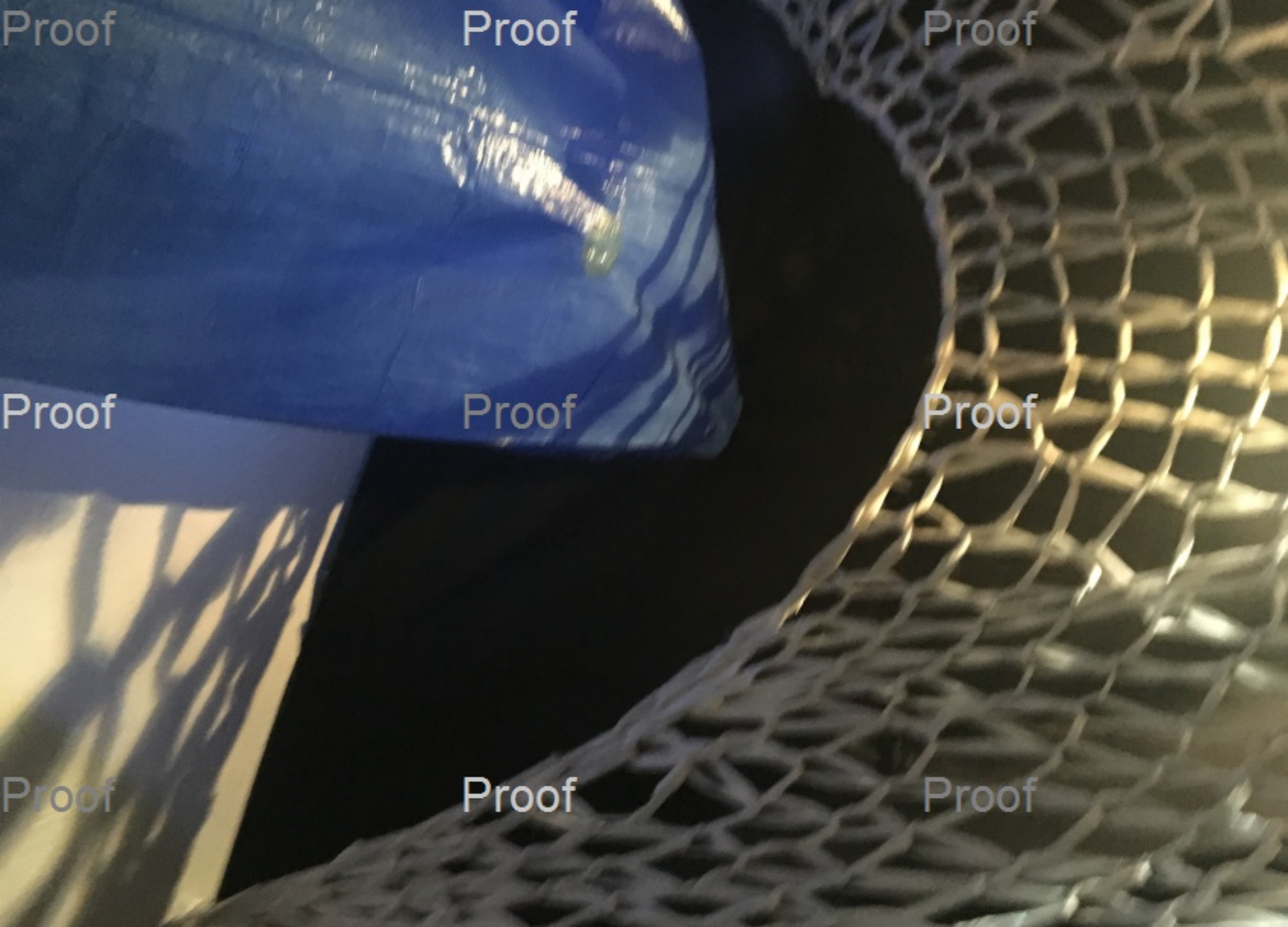












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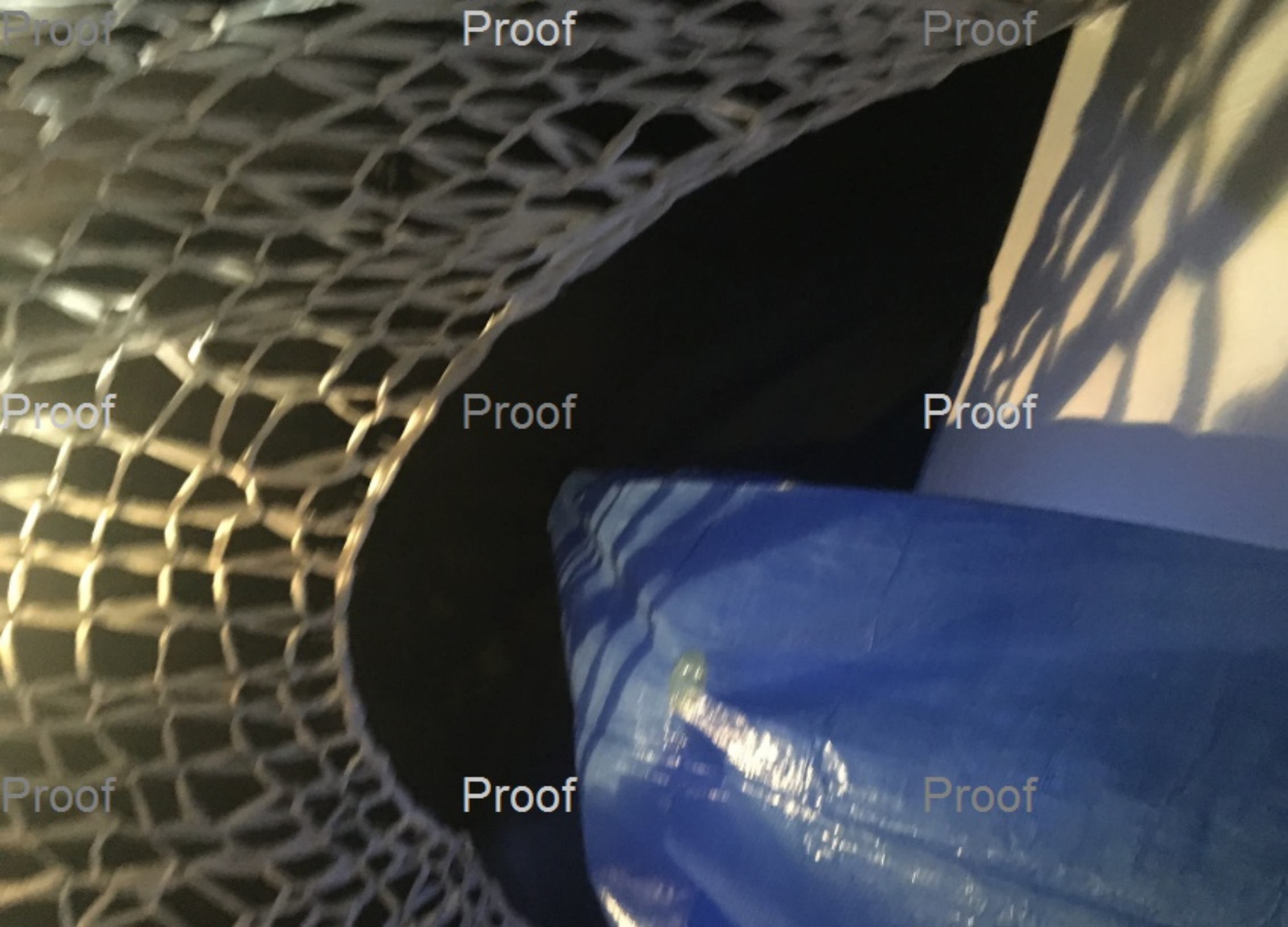
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Proof

Proof

Proof

Displaced

Migrant Husband

Son Uncle

Proof

Proof

Proof

Friend  
Uncle  
Homeless

Homeless

Human Syrian

Refugee Father

Proof

Proof

Proof

Brother





Proof

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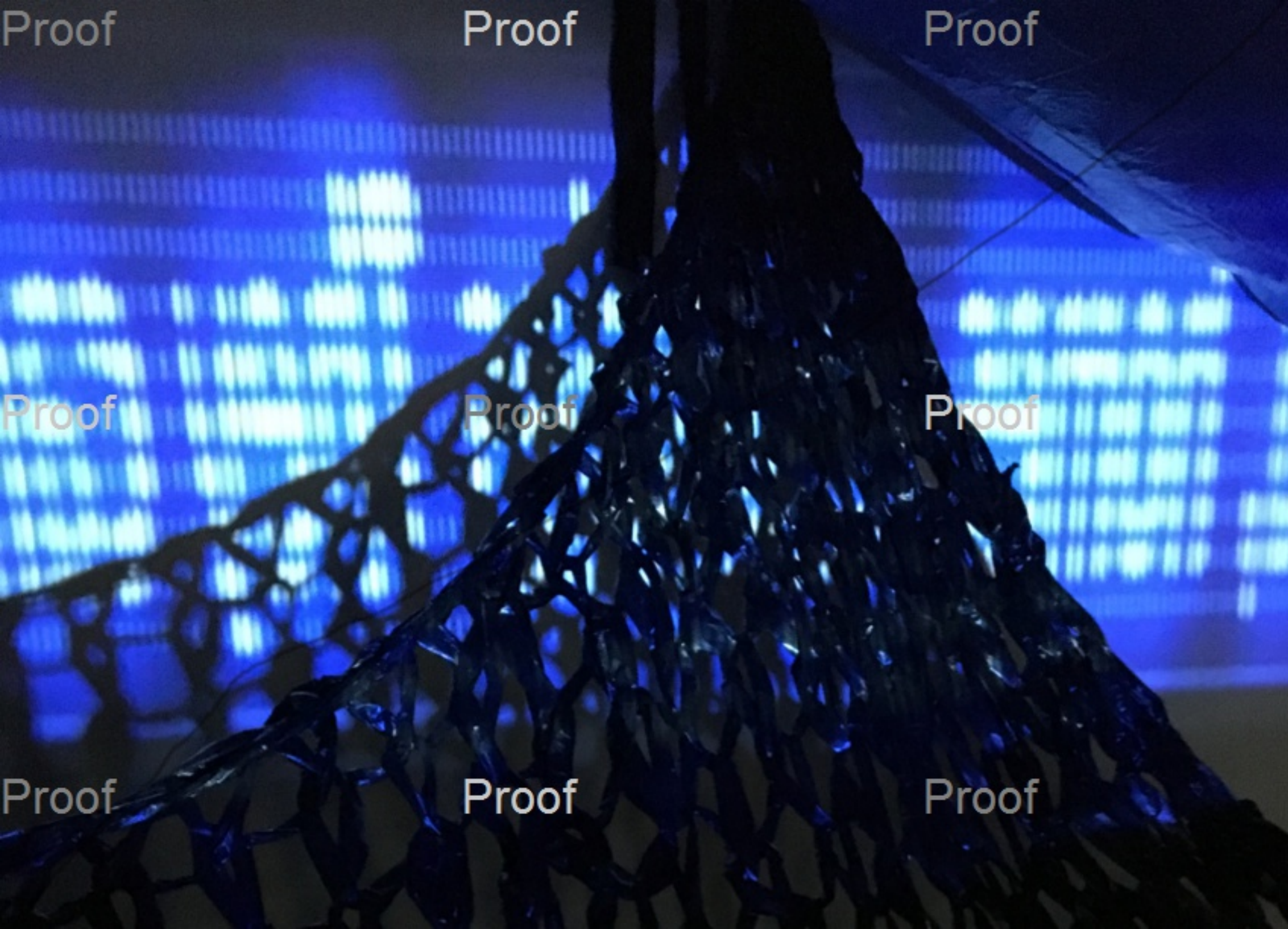
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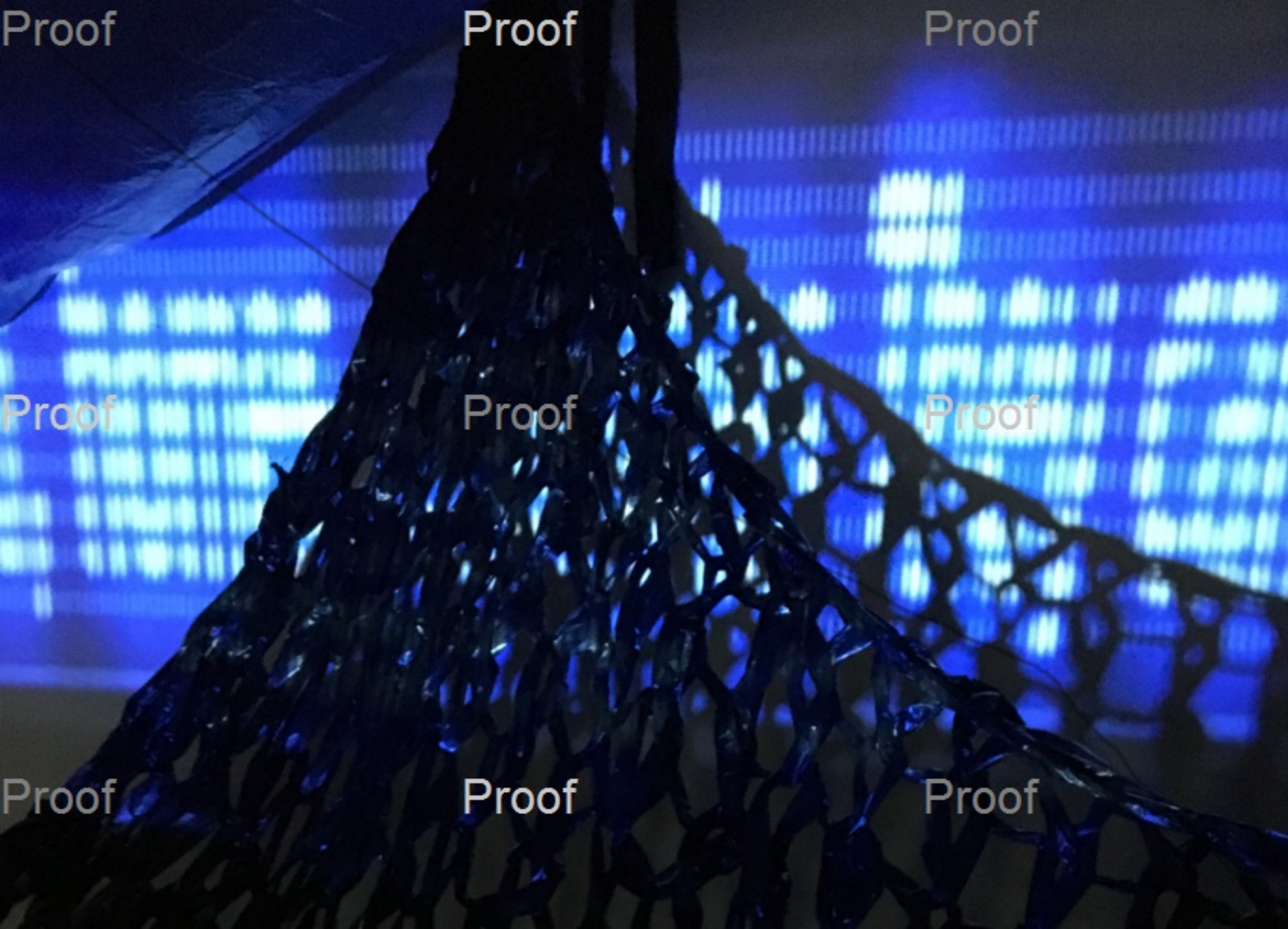
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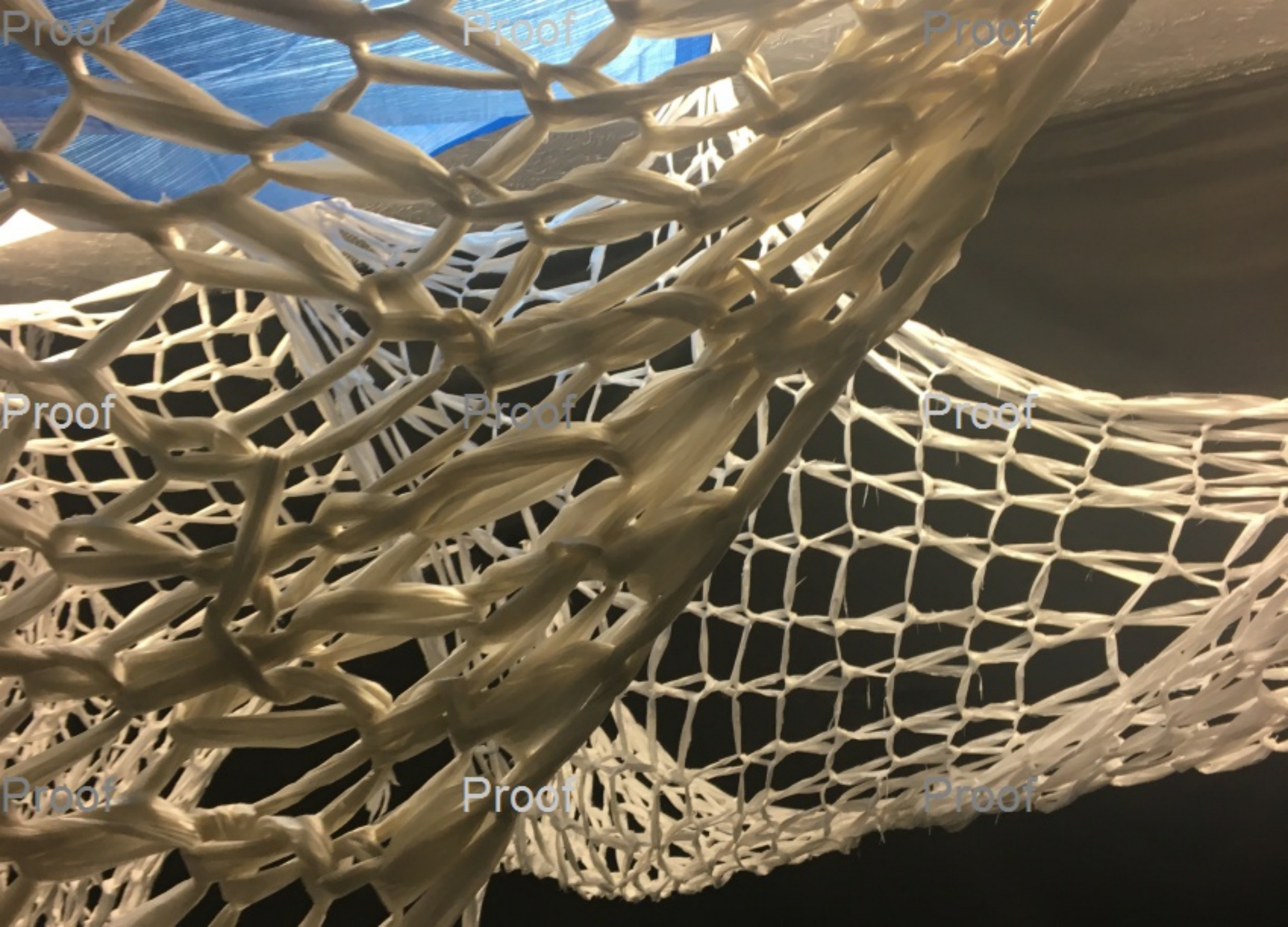




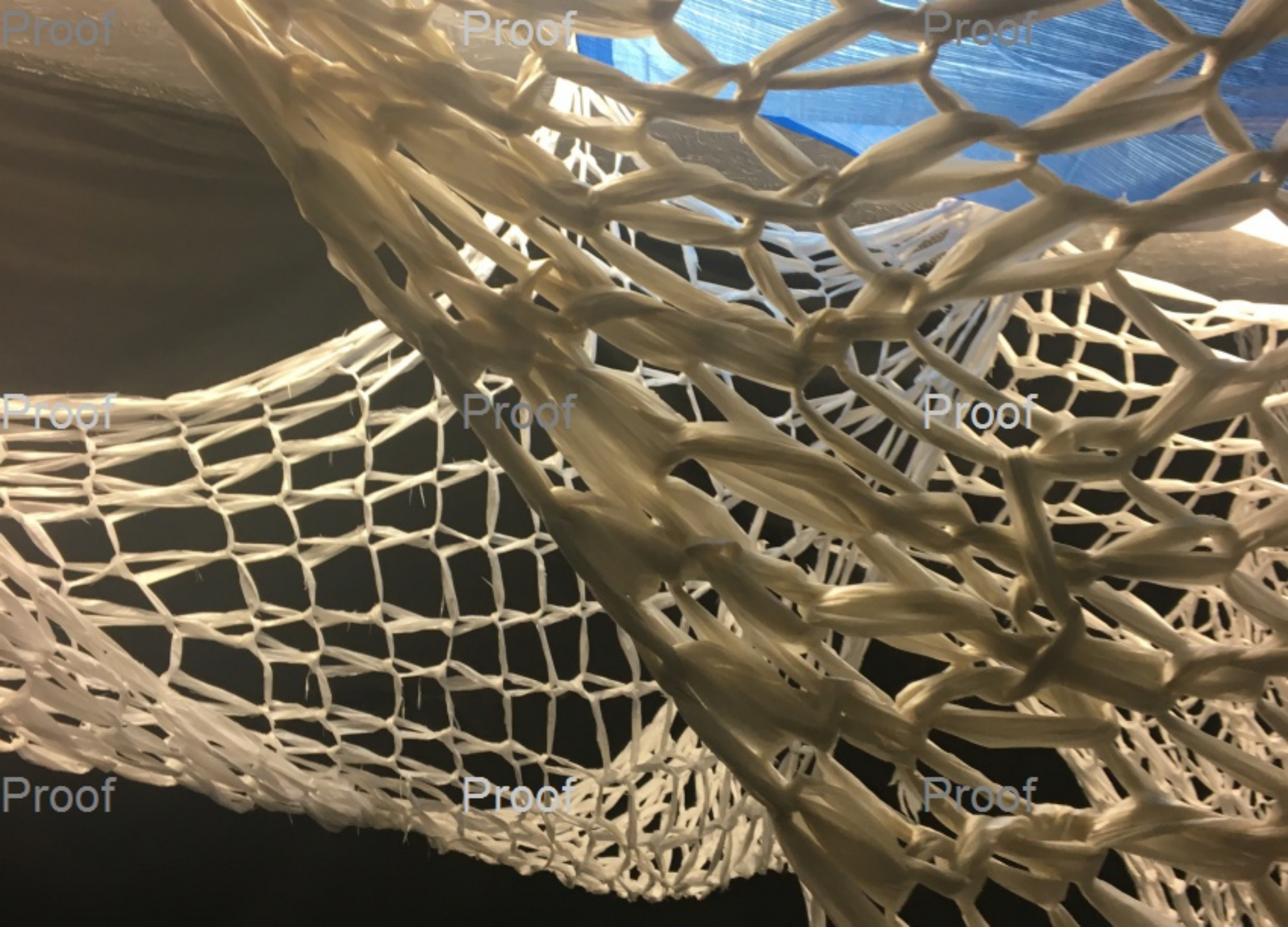




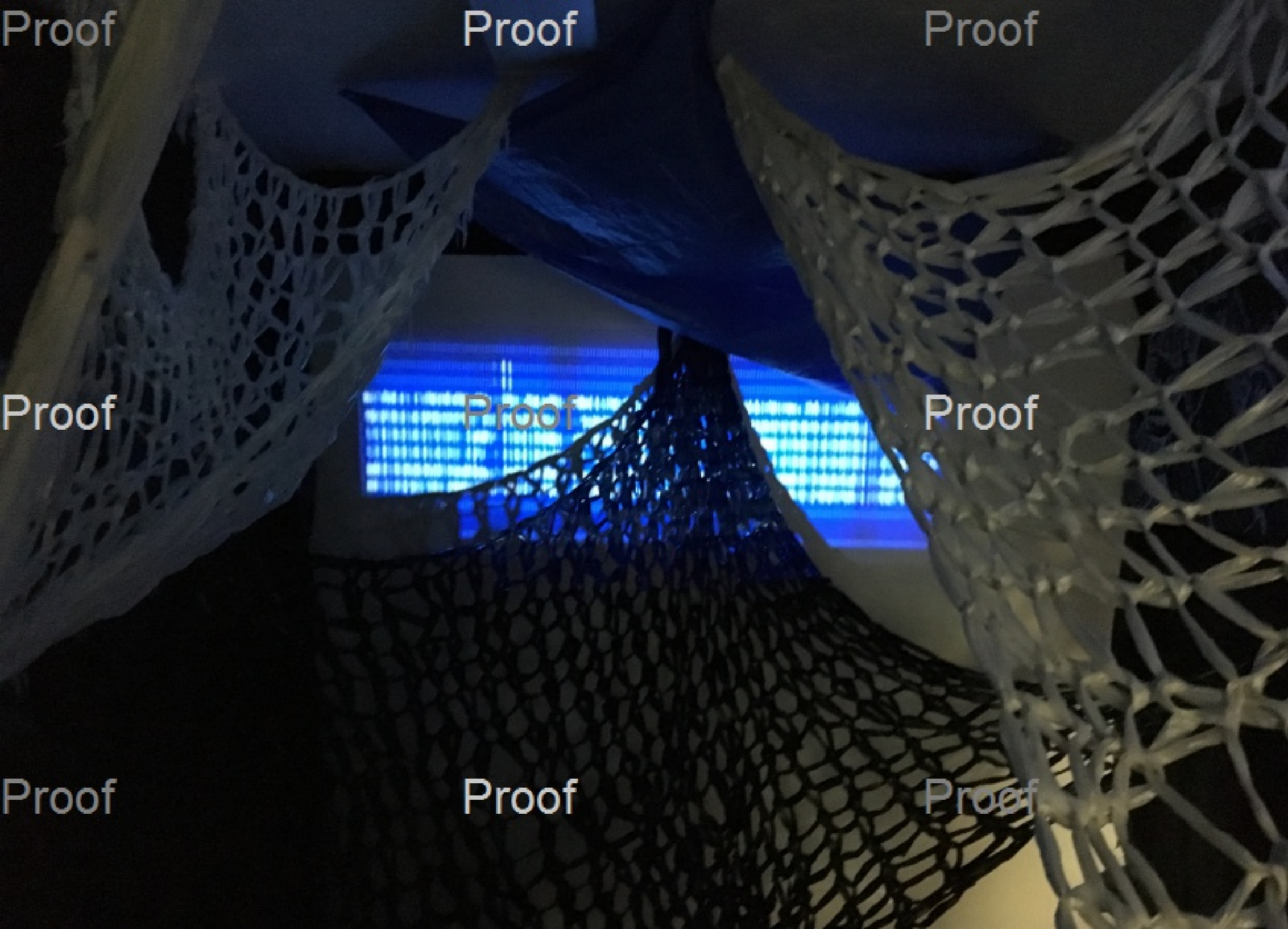




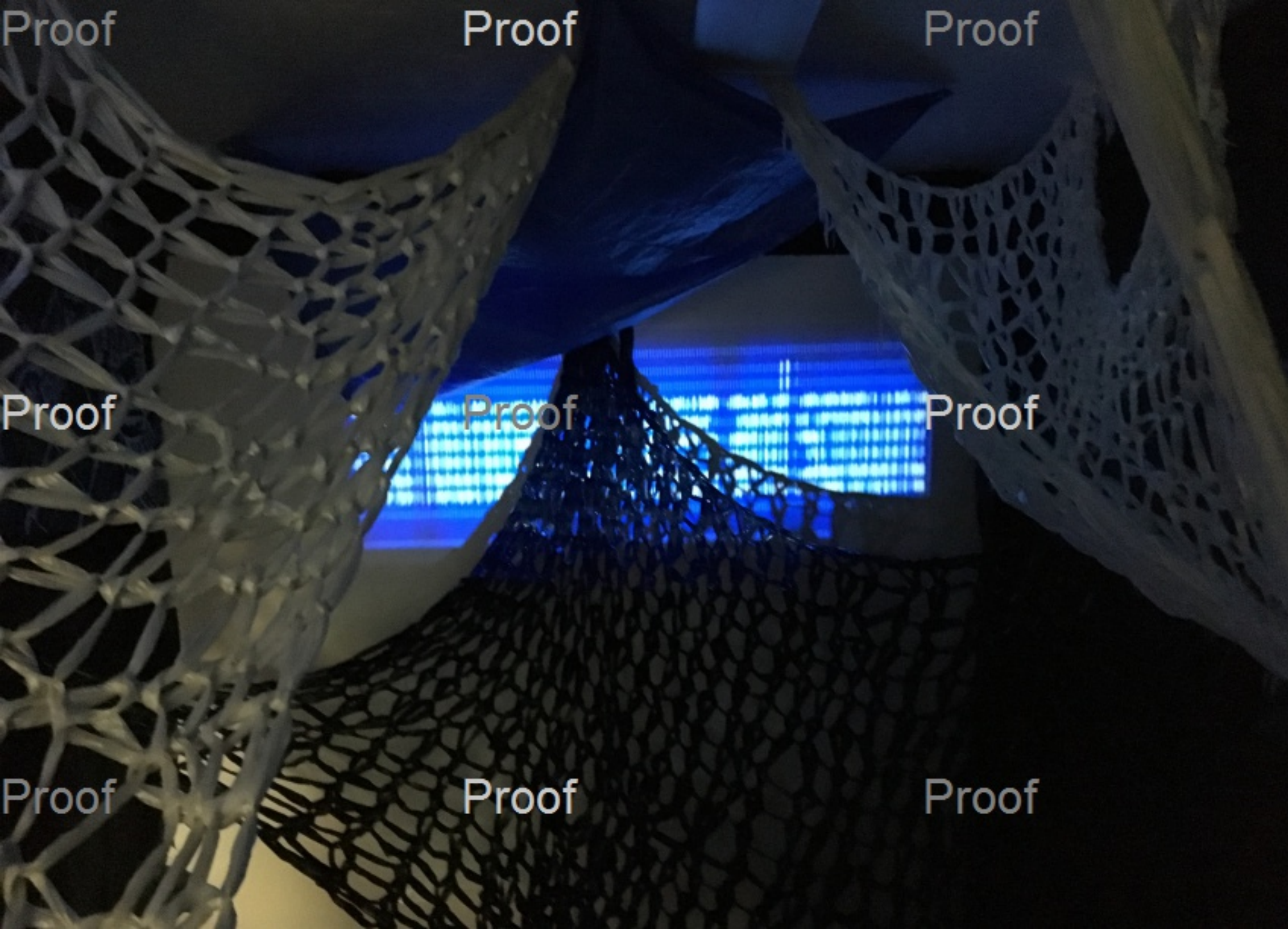












Proof

Proof

Proof

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Proof

Proof

Proof

Proof

Proof



Proof

Proof

Proof

Mother

Mother Hungry

Refugee Aunt Syrian

Proof

Proof

Proof

Sister Wife

Human

Grandmother

Migrant Displaced

Proof

Proof

Proof

Wife Friend Friend









Proof

Proof

Proof

Proof

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Proof









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Proof

Proof

Proof

You know, those of us who leave our  
homes in the morning and expect to  
find them there when we go back - it's  
hard for us to understand what the  
experience of a refugee might be like.

Naomi Shihab Nye

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