

The Poetics of Silence

As an opening exhibition in our new gallery space in london, we are very privileged and proud to be able to mount a retrospective of the work of the Spanish artist Enrique Brinkmann. The decision to have a wide overview of an artist’s work is a risky one because a great deal of artists fail to pass that most stringent of tests. One needs to see a fairly constant and interesting development with no long troughs devoid of inspiration. This show stretching back 50 years, represents a singular, restless yet coherent journey over an epoch which could, artistically speaking, be called, with understatement, turbulent. However, Enrique has remained an outsider, observing the world but never allaying himself with its rapidly changing artistic fashions, instead, pursuing his own path and only listening to his inner voice.

His German surname derives from a grandfather who moved to the Mediterranean and it is maybe the puritanical spirit of his ancestry which explains an almost old-fashioned craftsman like dedication to work. No composition simply reproduces another and never could he be

accused of taking an artistic short cut; every painting, drawing or print is worked and worked until he is completely satisfied with the result. The first works date back to 1960, a moment when in American terms, pop art had replaced abstract expressionism and the relationship between commerce and art had started to become intrinsically linked never again to return to the lofty separateness it had previously enjoyed. The irreverence of pop art and its striking contrast to the drama of the fifties, is surely a consequence of a new upswing in most western economies after the darkness of the Post War years. Spain, however, which was still under Franco’s shadow, was a different story and these first works, rigorously in black and white, contain that sense of oppression which permeated the country and the minds of the majority of its citizens. **Sin Título** (Without Title) of 1961 even seems to echo references to Picasso’s tragic “Guernica”

Although these works are very clearly figurative, Enrique’s figuratism never follows a straightforward line and displays a freedom

which even in these early days, casts a more than cursory look towards abstraction. Step by step, over some twenty years, that look finally evolved into total commitment.

Although his work develops and changes, the overbearing darkness remains even as far as 1974 and 1975 (**H.P. Lovecraft** and “Personaje en Descomposicion”) Both are complex images and superbly realized but Franco’s presence over the country is the dominating undercurrent in the work, only removed after his death 1975. The country suddenly erupts culturally and politically and the seismic change in atmosphere touched virtually everyone, and Enrique was no exception. The compositions increase with yet more complexity and colour is introduced. Francois Truffaut once famously remarked, that every director makes the same film again and again throughout his career, yet this great director, within this apparent limitation, never repeated himself and neither does Enrique. He continually explores and pushes forward his art whilst always remaining always absolutely true to himself. From Franco’s death

until the present time, he has moved between a love of monochrome and a love of colour, a colour however, that is used like a poet uses pauses or breaths, to highlight points in a composition, rather than construct a picture with colour alone. His work never explodes with colour like in late picasso because Enrique’s quiet almost still voice does not have that exuberance The works are full of emotion, but there is a strong intellectual control behind every decision. For the years from 1978 to 1988, the show has four major works all lent from his private archive: “Blancos y Humo” and “Personaje Cuerno” from 1979, “Falso Carnival” from 1980 and “Asunto en Gestacion” from 1988. In these pictures, he is still recounting the world, although the narrative is less clear surely because the directness he’d previously found so necessary is no longer an imperative. The sun is shining on Spain and he can push his art forward and concentrate on more formal questions. Each of these 4 pictures contain untold riches, the result of a new pictorial density.

Step by step, his seduction by abstraction



Sueños de Breuguel, 1974
Isolde, 1963

Opposite
Moscas, 1988





Golfistas, 1980
Vigilante, 1977

continues as his need for a narrative recedes. Clement Greenberg the very influential American critic wrote, in probably his most significant text “Avant-Garde and Kitsch” (1941) that abstract art is achieved when the artist turns away from his need for narrative and concentrates on the processes of painting itself. No explanation could be more concise in explaining Enrique’s journey.

From being an artist who recounts the external world, he has become an artist who is concerned with his inner world and his emotional responses to it. Now, the formal questions of “how” an artist paints becomes uppermost and the “what” concerns itself with pure emotion. To represent the years when he is moving slowly towards his major artistic breakthrough, the exhibition has one large work from 1992 “Elementos Sobre Manchas Blancas”. This is the work of a full blown abstract painter but one who is still working in a traditional medium. Yet Enrique’s journey is in no way over and in 1998 his desire “to find a way of creating air between the wall and the pictorial plane” leads him to invent a surface using a thin, tightly strung metal mesh. “what i painted previously was based on a placing of points and lines around the space of the canvas; now i am able to achieve it in real space, in the air”, and we can see through the mesh to the wall behind.

At first, he uses a mesh made of iron and he covers it with antioxidant before working with the oil. Later however, he turns to a steel mesh on which he can paint directly. Outside his home town of Malaga where he had a retrospective exhibition in 2007, i don’t really feel that the significance of his work has been sufficiently recognized. Over the centuries artists have worked on relatively few surfaces and Enrique’s discovery has opened up new possibilities some of which he has explored in the years since his initial discovery.

The lyricism which was always present in his work now blossoms. He has illustrated many volumes of poetry and his work is now far closer to a visual equivalent of his two principle loves outside the visual arts: Poetry and music. He listens to music when he works and the works are, in particular from this point on, increasingly

musical. They are also more meditative and silence assumes great importance. Looking at them, one feels as if John Cage’s 4 minutes 33 seconds, the piece where the composer sits at his piano and doesn’t play a note for that time period, has been a major influence on him. The silence speaks and if one adjusts to it, then you realize that sound is always present; abounding in our external and internal worlds even when it appears nothing is happening.

If this moment represents a watershed, the 13 years that have passed since then have enabled him to explore the possibilities of this new form. Just as in the first part of his career, the pictures have continued to evolve, his voyage of discovery does not stop here.

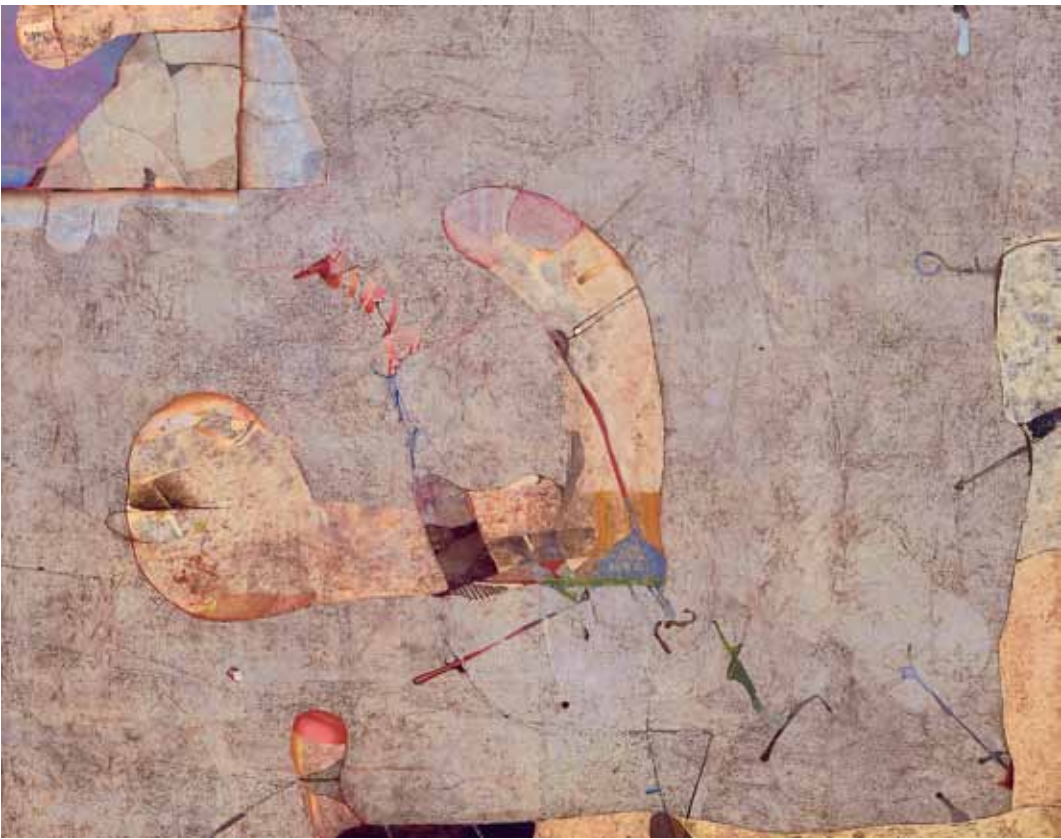
Until 2003 his pictures were a mixture of colour, highlighted lines, and black and white marks as a form of punctuation so that the cumulative effect was moments of fullness and moments of emptiness or silence where the mesh becomes the absolute protagonist as it filters through the light. From 2004 and for the following four years, with rare exceptions, the pictures become dominated by silence, and the purity of line, the moments of “noise” becoming ever rarer. Even when the titles are obviously political, like in the series he calls Irak, one is looking at a very personal vision, with the dark areas punctuating the mesh’s overall transparency. Compared to the direct images of the 60’s, we are now looking at an abstract, emotional response to the subject. The Irak series of 2004 gives way to the series called “Segmentos” where Enrique places small segments, (each one like a little individual painting) over a large part of the mesh’s surface so it resembles a map or grid. In this series the references to a musical score are even more clear; it’s as if one can almost hear the notes. The type of painterly gesture and the continuing dialogue between gesture and emptiness, noise and silence, shifts again in the Proximos Tiempos Aquaticos” series of 2006. These works include the “Dos horizontales Paralelas” of the same year and “Fanja Central” from 2007, which although very much part of the preceding works in the way Enrique has used the space of the picture, the thick paint work and density in the middle of the

painting points to the way he will go from 2008 onwards. The great artists have the capacity to always be one step ahead of the viewer. In 2008, after all the work exposing the mesh and continual dialogue between opposites, Enrique covers the mesh with a thick layer of paint. This group of works takes us right up to the present day; now the pictorial surface has lost its transparency but in its place, he has turned his attention to the various levels of depth which the mesh enables him to find, so that he can explore the possibilities of an almost sculptural texture to the work. Who could have imagined that from inventing a surface which because of its extreme transparency enabled him to tackle the idea of air and light and its effect on the space of the picture, he would have managed to come full circle by using that same surface as a very unique way of playing with depth and its effects on colour, line and mass. The colour has returned and for the first time also words. Compared to the colour paintings when he was working on more conventional surfaces, the colours are now stronger and more definite,



although always used quite sparingly within the space of the whole picture. The final painting in the show is also the largest: A triptych entitled (Triptico de la Intolerancia”) When you see this large picture and reflect on the other works which have preceded it, something else becomes apparent. Every piece or art, whatever size, never seems either too big or too small. They all sit perfectly in their space. Many contemporary artists appear obsessed with painting huge canvases to fill the walls of the equally huge galleries and museums, yet often when one looks at them, they feel too loose as if the desire to be large in format has been the overriding factor as opposed to the inherent need of the work. Enrique paints the size the picture requires and it is always the right choice. He has again taken us by surprise. The mesh is covered in thick black paint on which he cuts out thin white jagged lines as if done with a very thin brush but actually cut into the impenetrable surface with a knife. On top of which, using yellow paint, he has written the picture’s title spread out over the three works.

Too often in the contemporary art world, and not exclusively in the visual arts, the age of the artist determines both his success and the attention he gets. However, how many artists begin creating at 20 and ten years later have nowhere to go and nothing left to say. As a society in general we like to consume quickly and fashion and money determines that everyone is looking for the new idea. Art, in all its ramifications, is a serious business and the great artistic journeys which have dotted human existence have seen artists reach their full maturity in old age when the benefits of a lifetime’s searching can produce full fruit. Enrique, today, is as focused, as restless in an artistic sense, as he was as a young man, and in the coming years i am sure he will continue to explore new unforeseen directions in a way we would never have imagined, and it is this endless curiosity and passion tied to a unique poetic voice which will ensure that this wonderful body of work will leave its mark and the resonance emanating from it will be felt far into the future.



Juegos de Laura, 1979
Canihueso, 1980

Oppoiste
Con Musica, 1989





The Franco Years 1960 - 1975

Pintor en el Suelo, 1960



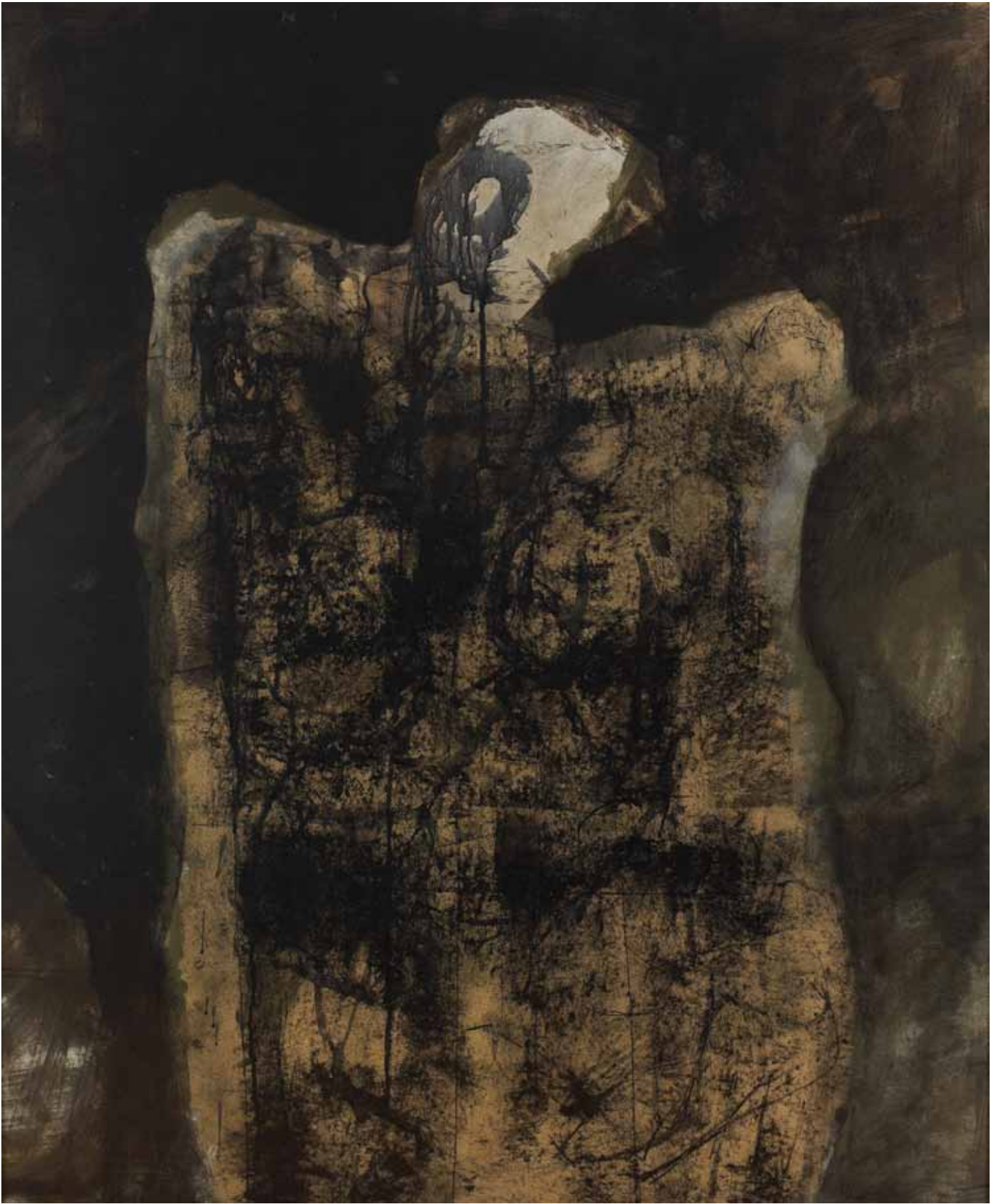
Sin Título, 1962



Sin Titulo, 1962



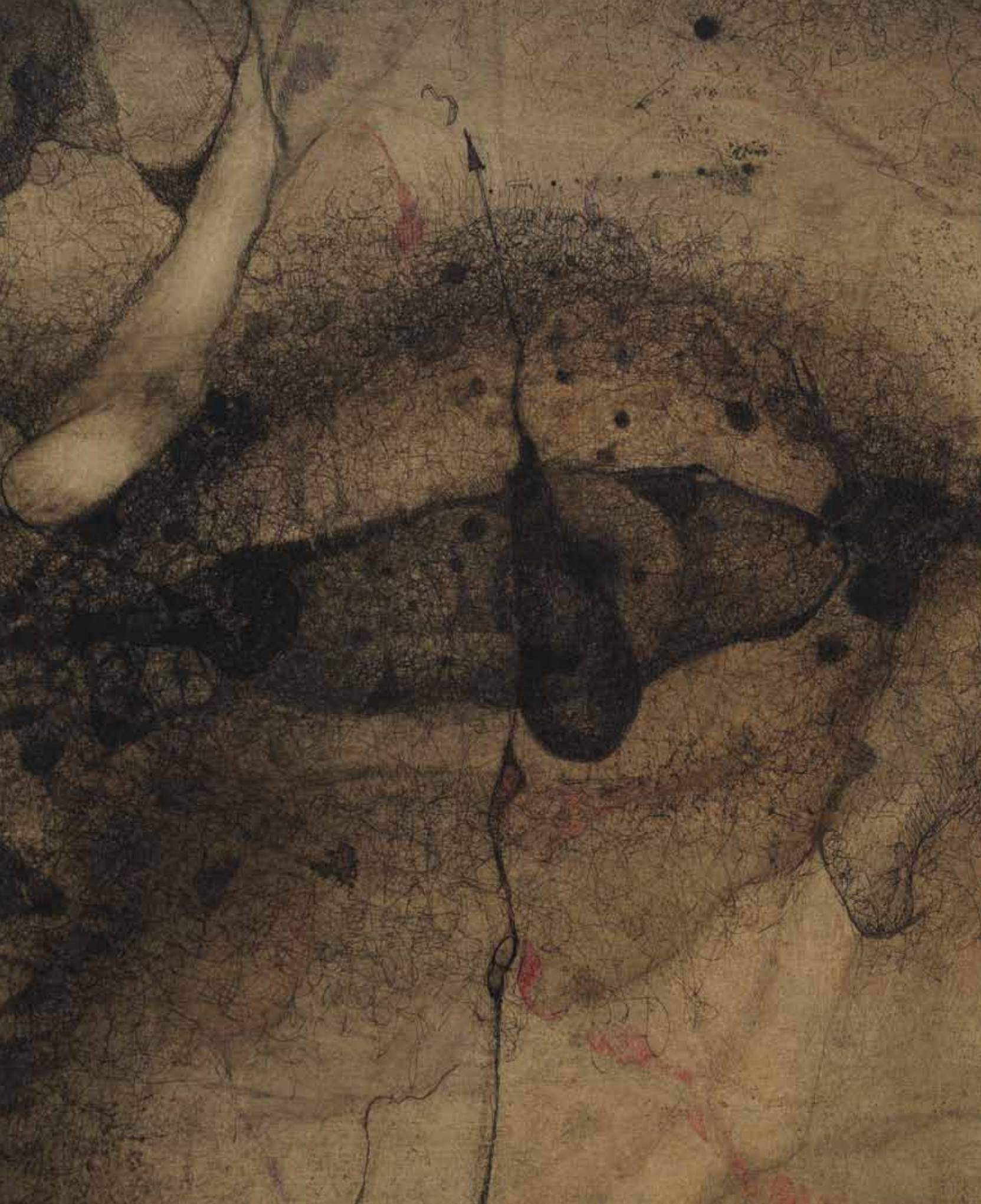
Autorretrato, 1962





Personaje en Descomposicion, 1975







Towards Abstraction

1976-1998













Silent Witness

Rachel Spence

“The most merciful thing in the world...is the inability of the human mind to correlate all its contents. We live on a placid island of ignorance in the midst of black seas of infinity, and it was not meant that we should voyage far.”

— **H.P. Lovecraft**, The Call of Cthulhu

In 1975, Enrique Brinkman painted an imaginary portrait of the 20th-century horror writer HP Lovecraft. The surreal monster he conjured – sprouting tumerous growths, thick, rubbery lips, one eye blind, the other gazing into our collective soul – is a fitting tribute to the tenebrous fantasy of an author considered the heir to Edgar Allen Poe. Brinkman executed the picture just before the fall of Franco, one of the last in a cycle of black-and-white paintings that mark the first phase of a career that spans half a century.

He insists his decision to embrace colour only after the death of the dictator was not motivated by politics. Deeply reserved about

his art, he rarely ascribes outside influence to any work. Abjuring debts to earlier masters or historical events, he prefers to suggest an inward voyage – at times as dark and perilous as that prophesied by Lovecraft – towards a vision that is entirely his own.

His oeuvre hints at a different story. Born in Malaga in 1938, he grew up in a country trapped in the grip of dictatorship. Generally, artists working under tyrannical regimes were bullied into adopting a realism that served as state propaganda. Franco, however, took a different approach. As Spain struggled to survive a crippling post-war blockade, he knew it was essential to re-establish his country’s reputation in Europe and the US.

Just as Washington championed the Abstract Expressionists as symbols of avant-garde western culture, so Franco swung behind the informal vision of mid-century Spanish painters such as Manuel Millares and Antonio Sauro. Although these artists may well have felt their spontaneous painterly gestures encoded a message that was



intrinsically libertarian, the hermeticism of their images repelled interpretation.

As the French critic Laurence Toussaint put it bluntly: The government in Madrid understood that it was a waste of time to forbid it since, by its own definition, it was incapable of transmitting any subversive messages.

Certainly, the US had no difficulty in recognising Franco as an ally. By the mid-1950s, American airbases in the Iberian peninsula marked Spain as a key player in the anti-communist cause.

As a young man, Brinkman belonged to a circle of southern Spanish painters known as the Picasso Group. Motivated by admiration for the author of Guernica – which was of course created in explicit condemnation of the carnage wrought by Franco’s Nazi allies – they came together in the 1950s at a time when, in Brinkman’s words “To be a friend of Picasso was very dangerous.”

Like Picasso, whose paintings even at their most fragmented never entirely abandon their object, for much of his career Brinkman flirted with abstraction yet never entirely committed.

The amorphous shapes, sprayed lines and ragged blotches that characterise early works on show here – “**Sin Titulo**” 1961 and “**Sin Titulo**” 1962 clearly chime with the era’s informel tendency. Yet the subjects – a pair of desperate, skeletal hands clawing the air, two fragile yet unmistakably corporeal figures – show a painter determined to bear witness to the world around him. Rather than offering nebulous visual metaphors, Brinkman charted the territory of concrete human suffering.

Given the evolution of his vision, it is difficult not to interpret the liberation of his country as a moment when Brinkman’s own imagination was freed from a duty of social testimony.

The title of the “False Carnival” cycle produced directly after Franco’s fall may hint at the bittersweet nature of even the most fervently-desired freedom. Nevertheless, it is now that Brinkman starts to explore the possibilities of colour. These canvases possess the dull, mottled glow of precious marbles, their skins splitting to reveal new shades within, as if he is hewing into a fathomless vein of polychrome rock.



Negro Partido, 1991

Opposite
Viento Negro, 1990
Ampliado en Punto Blanco, 1993

The subject, mostly, is still present. In “Personaje Cuerno” for example, a sinister, phallic curve, its tip inappropriately sheathed in a harlequin-striped cap, is heir to the wild, irrational imaginings unleashed by Goya and subsequently elaborated by Surrealists such as Dali and Mirò.

Yet as the 1980s unfold, he gradually distances himself from anything approaching orthodox narrative. A painting such as “Assunto en Gestacion”, 1988, may tentatively gesture at a fetus clambering from the womb but what truly compels is the texture. With layers of oil in hues of earth and slate scored, scratched and scraped to resemble the surface of a devastated quarry, it is as if Brinkman wants to push the canvas to its material limits. It is no surprise that he believes: “Technique [not art] is the most creative process.”

A desire to extend artistic boundaries while remaining faithful to the formal demands of a “flat, continuous, finitely-bounded surface” was of course the challenge faced by every post-war abstract painter who did not wish to abandon their medium in favour of new practices such as video,

installation and performance.

By the time Brinkman confronted the dilemma, he was embarking on a road well travelled. His own compatriot Antoni Tàpies had married poor materials such as sand, dust and earth with oil’s aristocratic silkiness; Alberto Burri had ripped hemp and cracked clay; Lucio Fontana had slashed the canvas itself.

Brinkman’s own solution, arrived at in 1998, was to paint on a wire mesh laid on a perspex or metal surface. At first, what drew him to the material was its capacity to “create air within the pictorial surface.”

An artisanal, anti-painterly tool that also radically alters the canvas’s spatial possibilities, the mesh captures various virtues of his predecessors’ practices. Yet it also creates an effect that is entirely new and permits myriad variations.

In the first mesh works, for example, such as “Item Perspectiva V” 1998-2002, flakes of paint cling to the grid like tattered scraps of paper in a way that recalls certain décollages of Fluxus artist



Tres Apuntes, 2002
Lineas Con Precintos, 2003

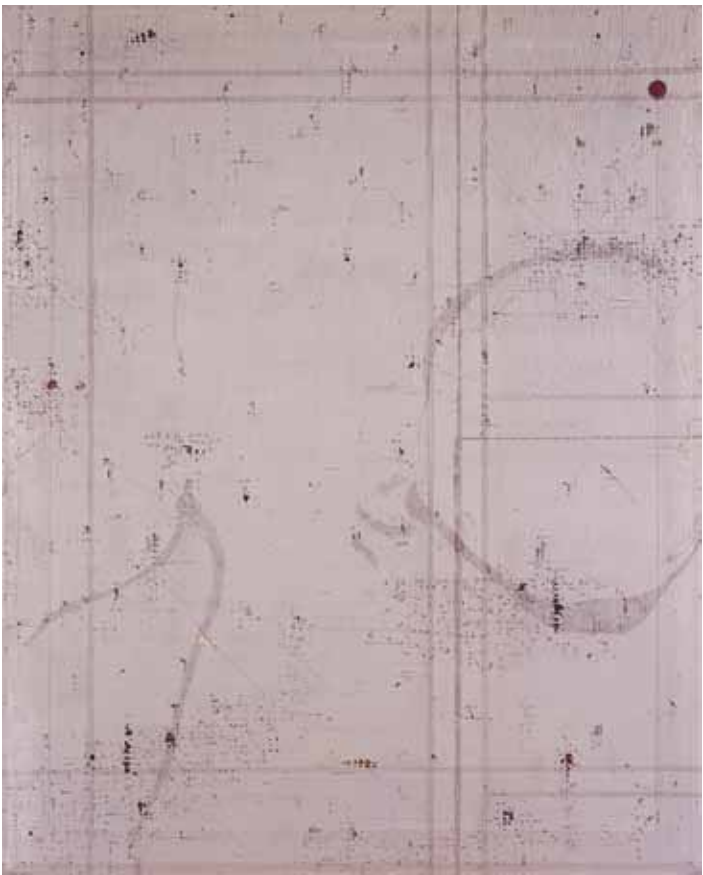
Opposite
En Forma de Arco, 2001





Lianto Negro, 1999
Mano Amputada, 1987

Opposite
Anotaciones, 2002



Wolf Vostell – whose work had impressed Brinkman during a period in Germany as in the 1960s.

By the dawn of the new century, Brinkman is experimenting with a more minimal style. In “Estudio de Linea Rota”, 2003, for example, he appears to use the grid to play with the notion of a neo-Platonic geometry. A thin wire creates an ephemeral, fluctuating graph while random squares are stretched and blotted to deprive them of their symmetry.

The discovery of the mesh, allied to a new maturity in his own practice and perhaps that of his country’s too, has allowed Brinkman to explore new metaphysical and methodological landscapes. Yet his most recent work resonates profoundly with the vision of his younger self.

By now familiar with the mesh’s physical possibilities, increasingly he has chosen to efface it almost entirely, filling the quadrants with paint to create viscous, impasto surfaces on which he then makes marks and signs. In doing so, he erases the transparency that recommended the material to him in the first place.

This unwavering pursuit of the new and unpredictable is responsible for the unrivalled quality of his last works. At a moment in his career when so many other painters have been handicapped by a failure of energy and precision, he is still producing passionate declarations of feeling such as “Triptych of Intolerance”, 2010, in which diaphanous, carved scribbles and flame-orange letters shine out from a dense, airless ground.

If one was unaware of Brinkman’s long and painstaking journey, one would interpret this picture – with its bold, careless immediacy – as the work of a brilliant young artist with a burning sense of social justice. To be a friend of Picasso may no longer be dangerous for a Spanish artist but Brinkman’s awareness of the world beyond his studio is sharper than ever.

John Moffit, *The Arts in Spain*, (Thames and Hudson, 1999), p224-225.
 Clement Greenberg, *Obituary and Review of Exhibition byKandinsky, The Collected Essays and Criticism*, (University of Chicago Press, Paperback Edition, 1988) p.4



Creating Space

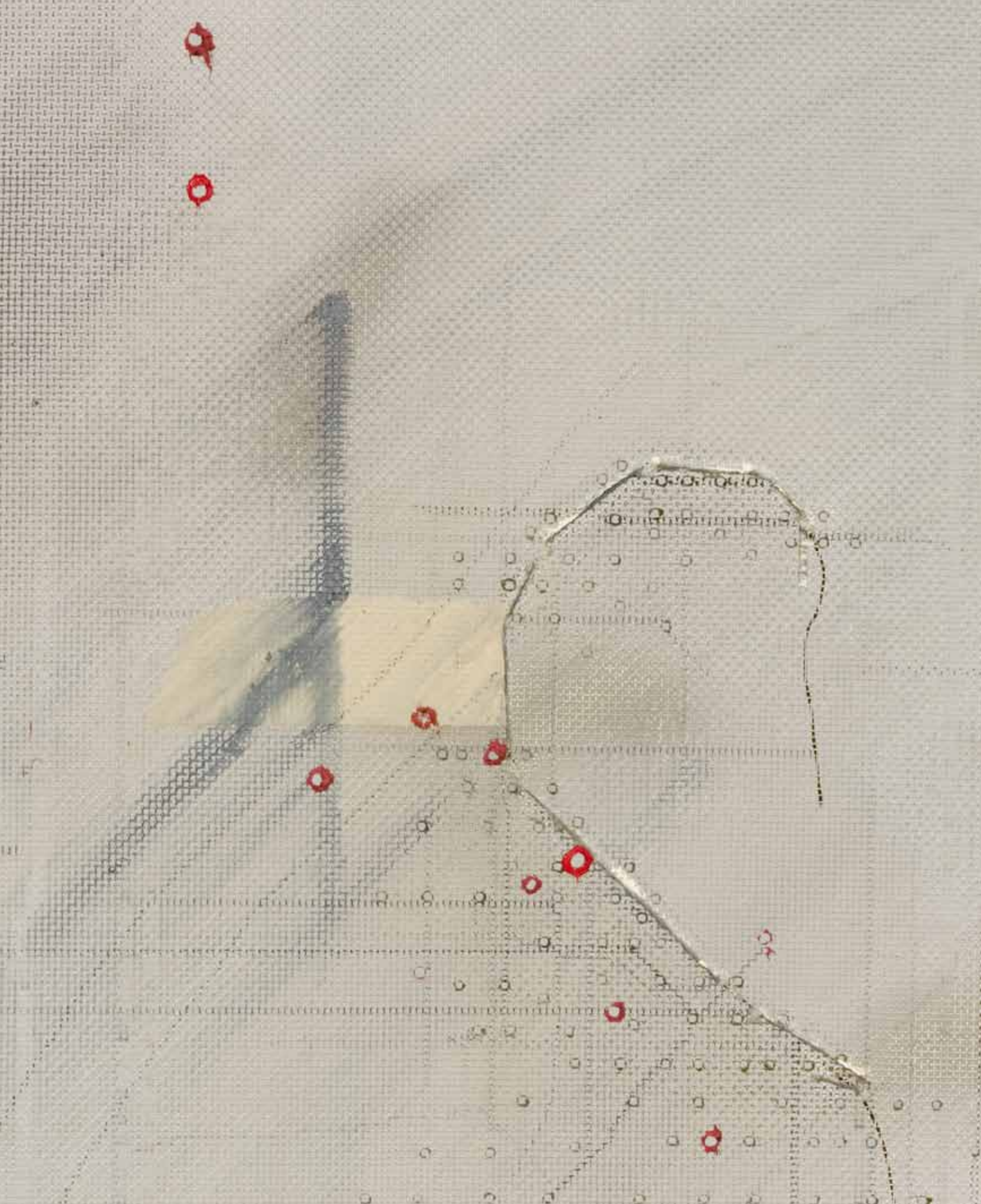
1999-2002



Negro Zig-Zag, 2001

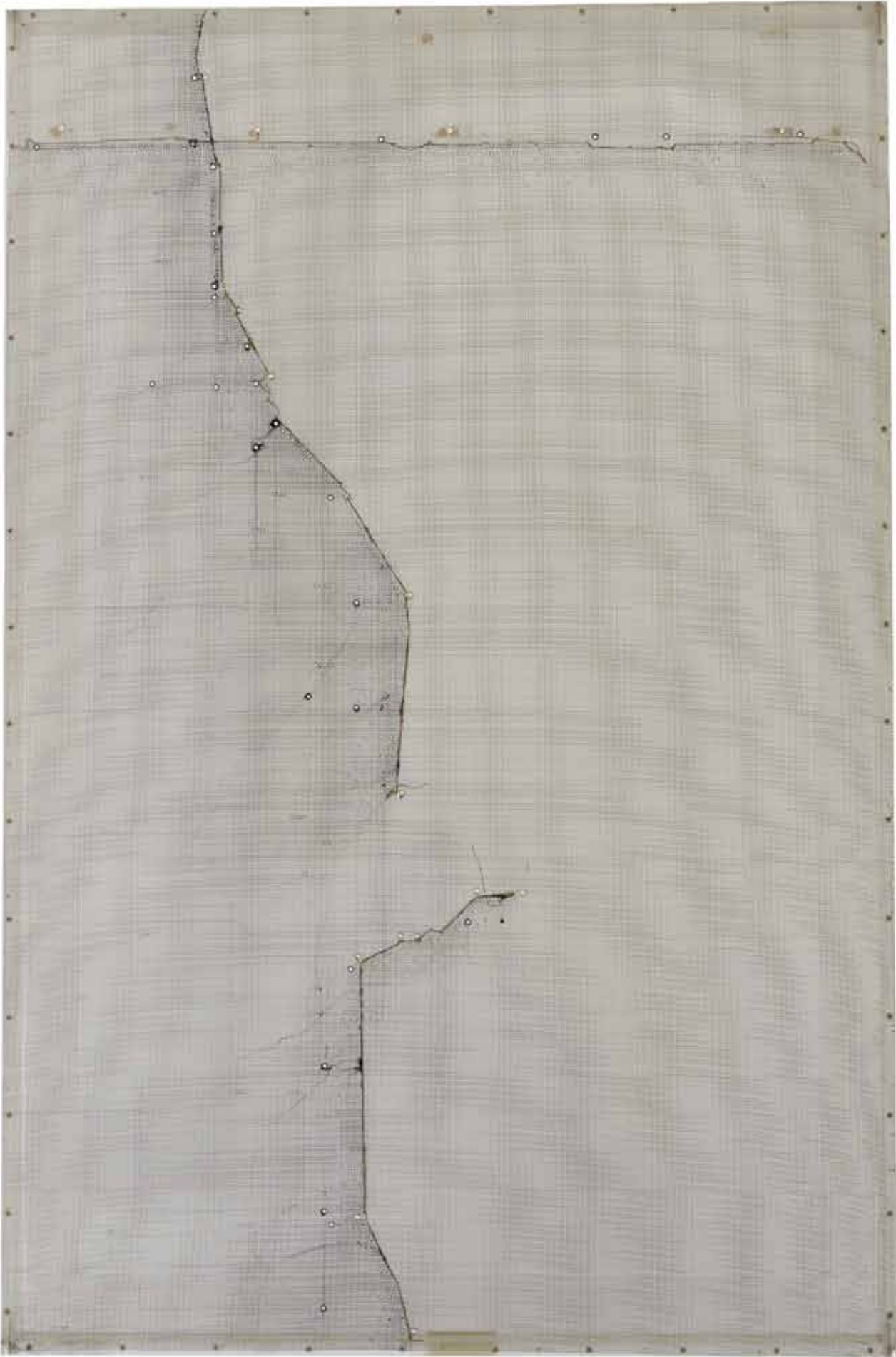




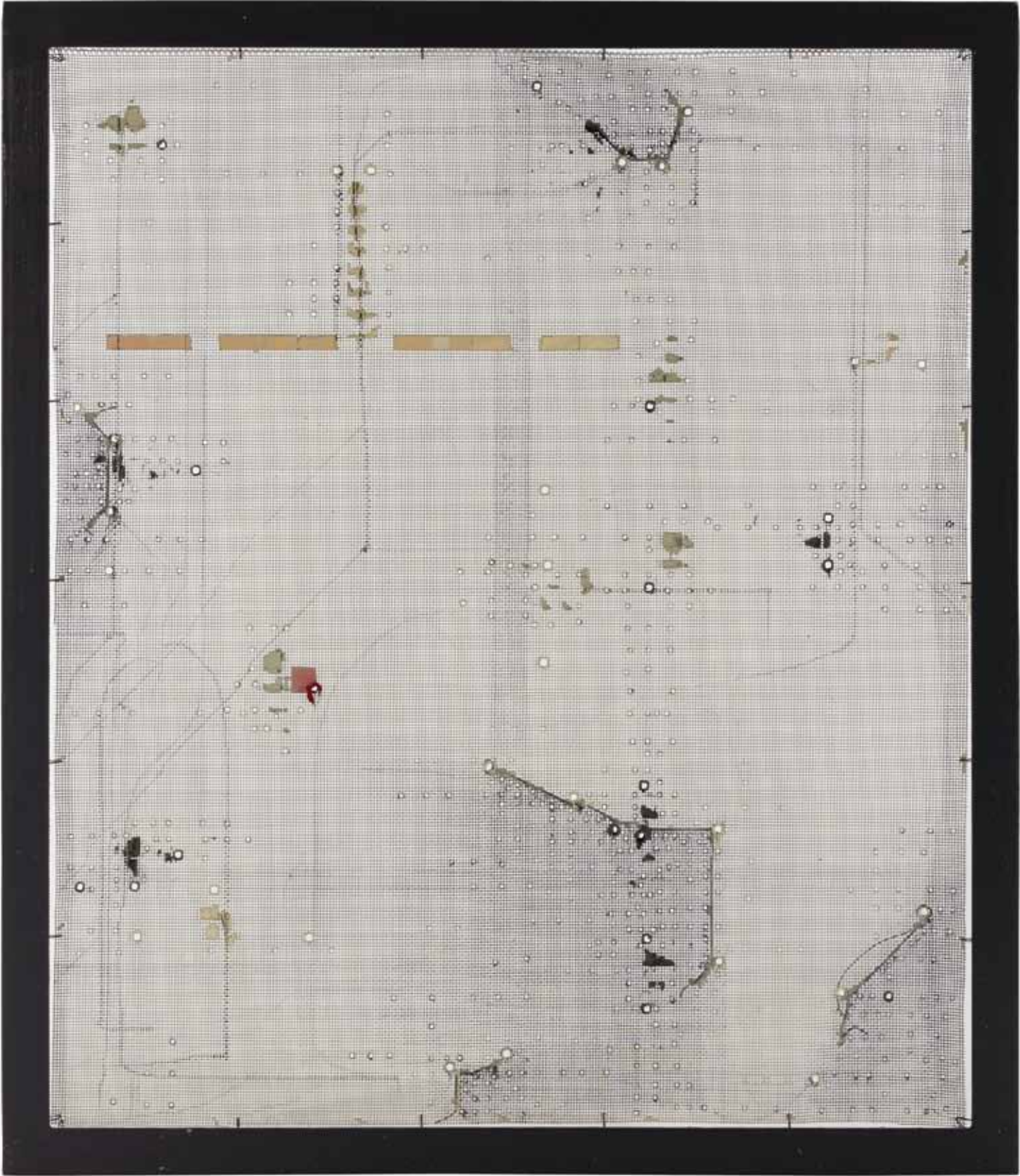


Piercing The Surface

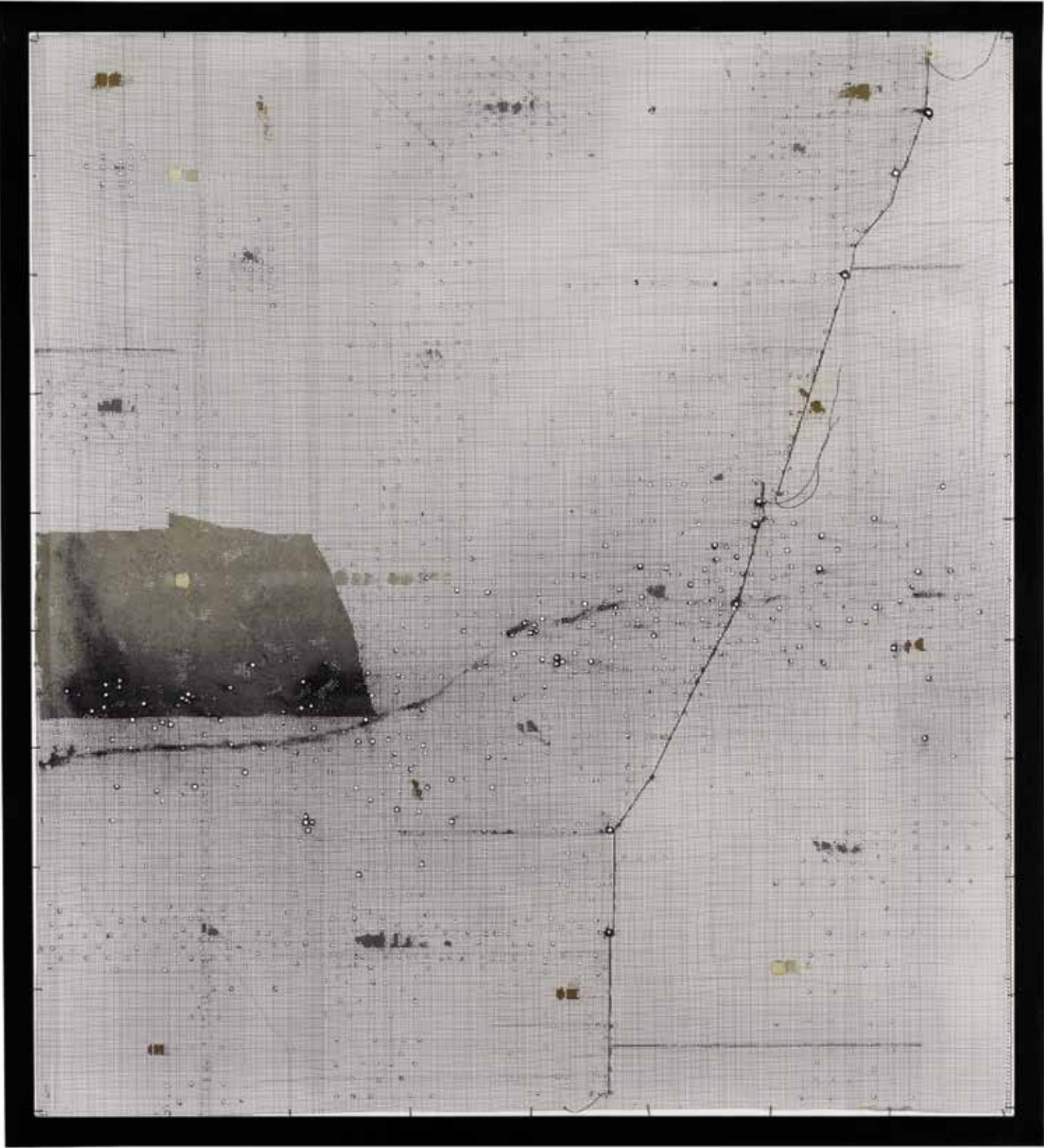
2002-2004

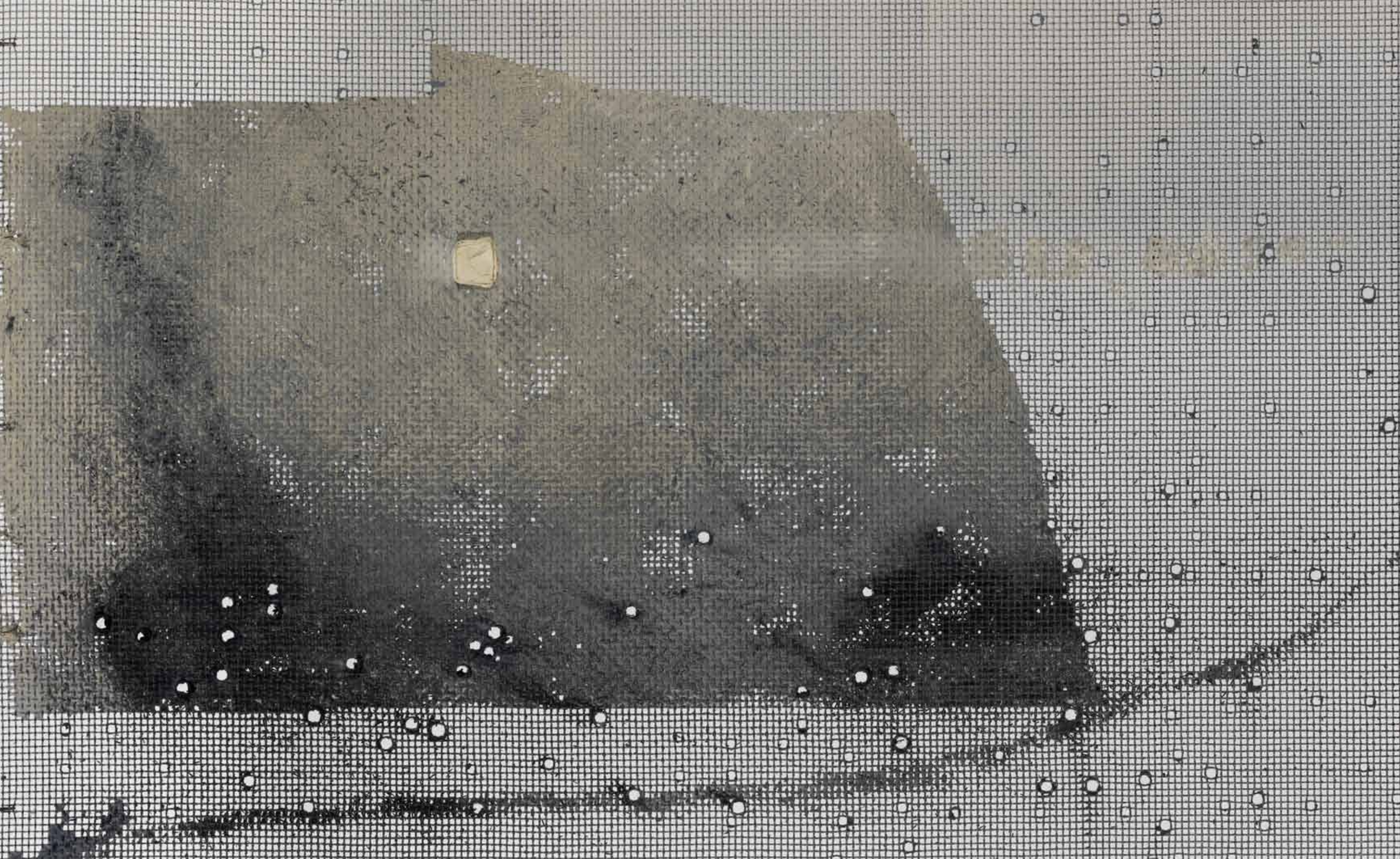


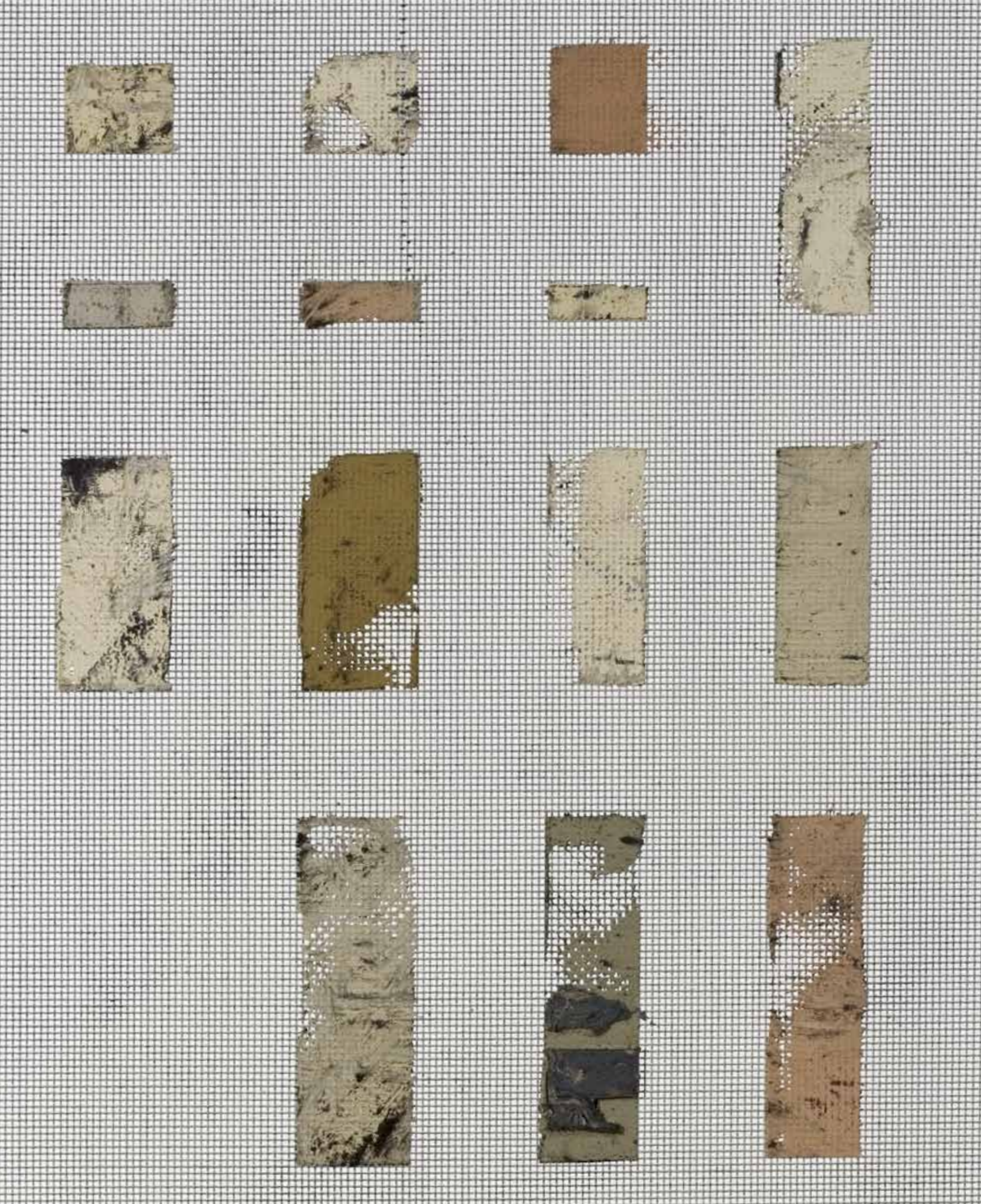






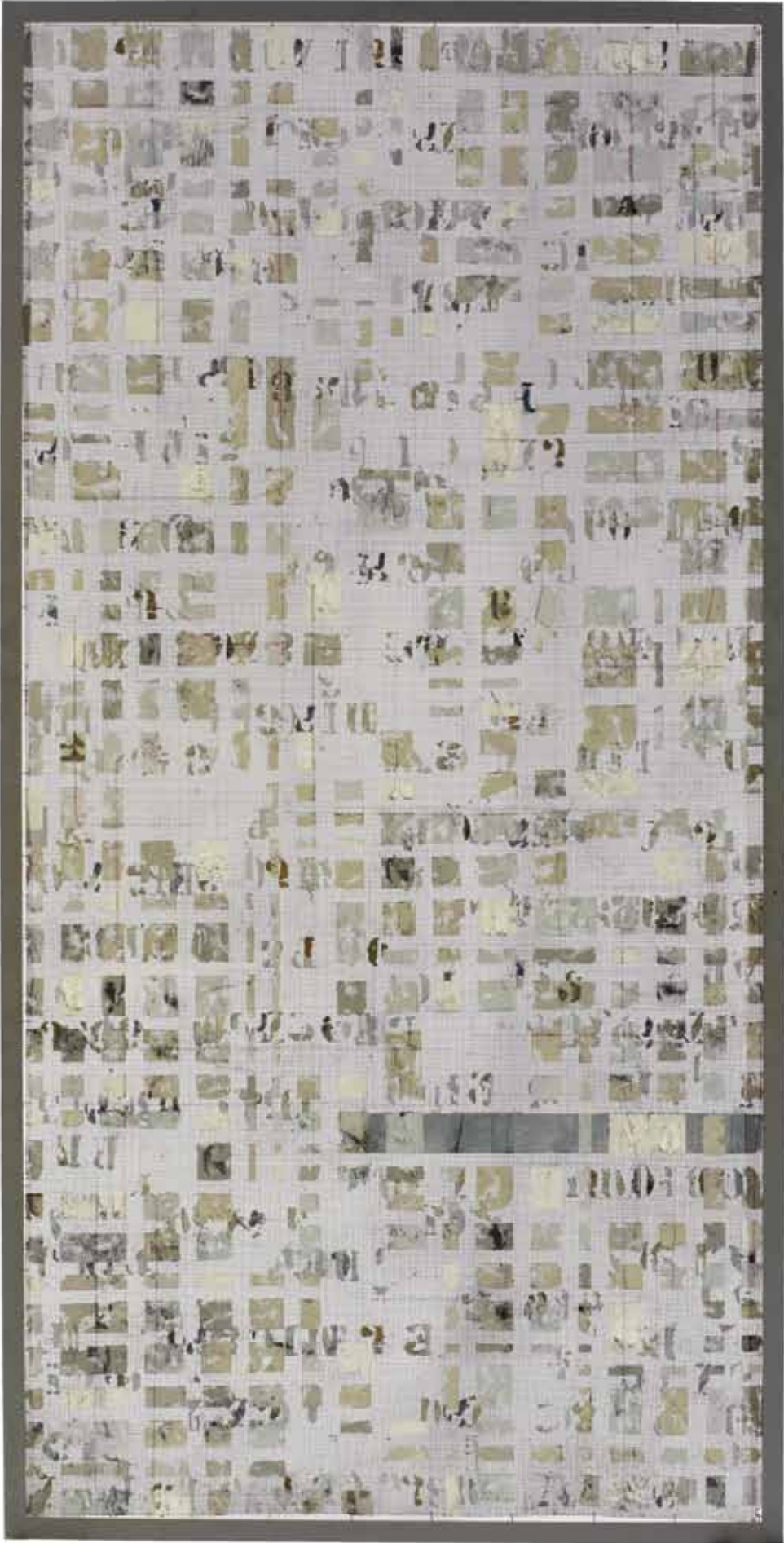




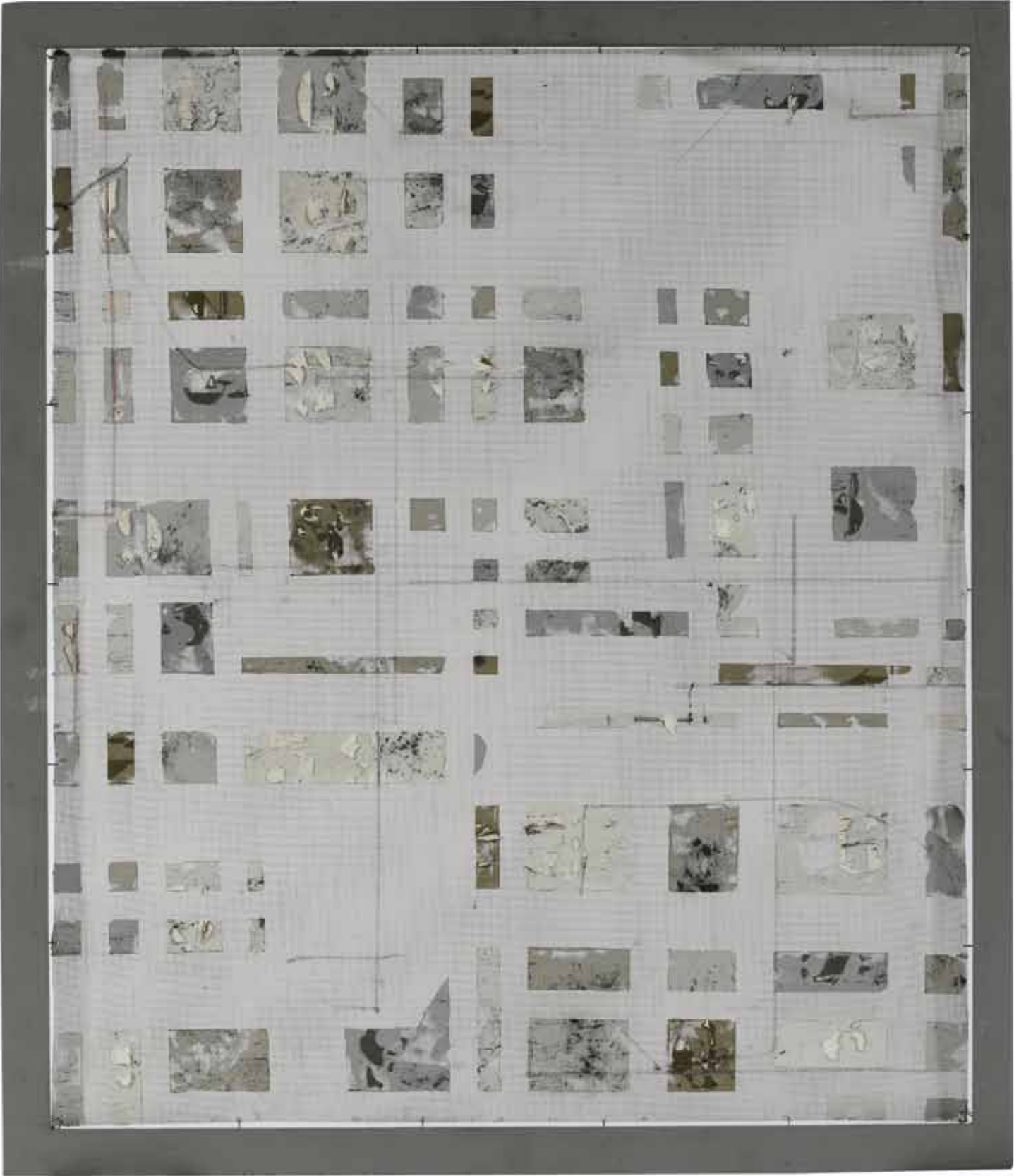


Segmentation

2005-2006



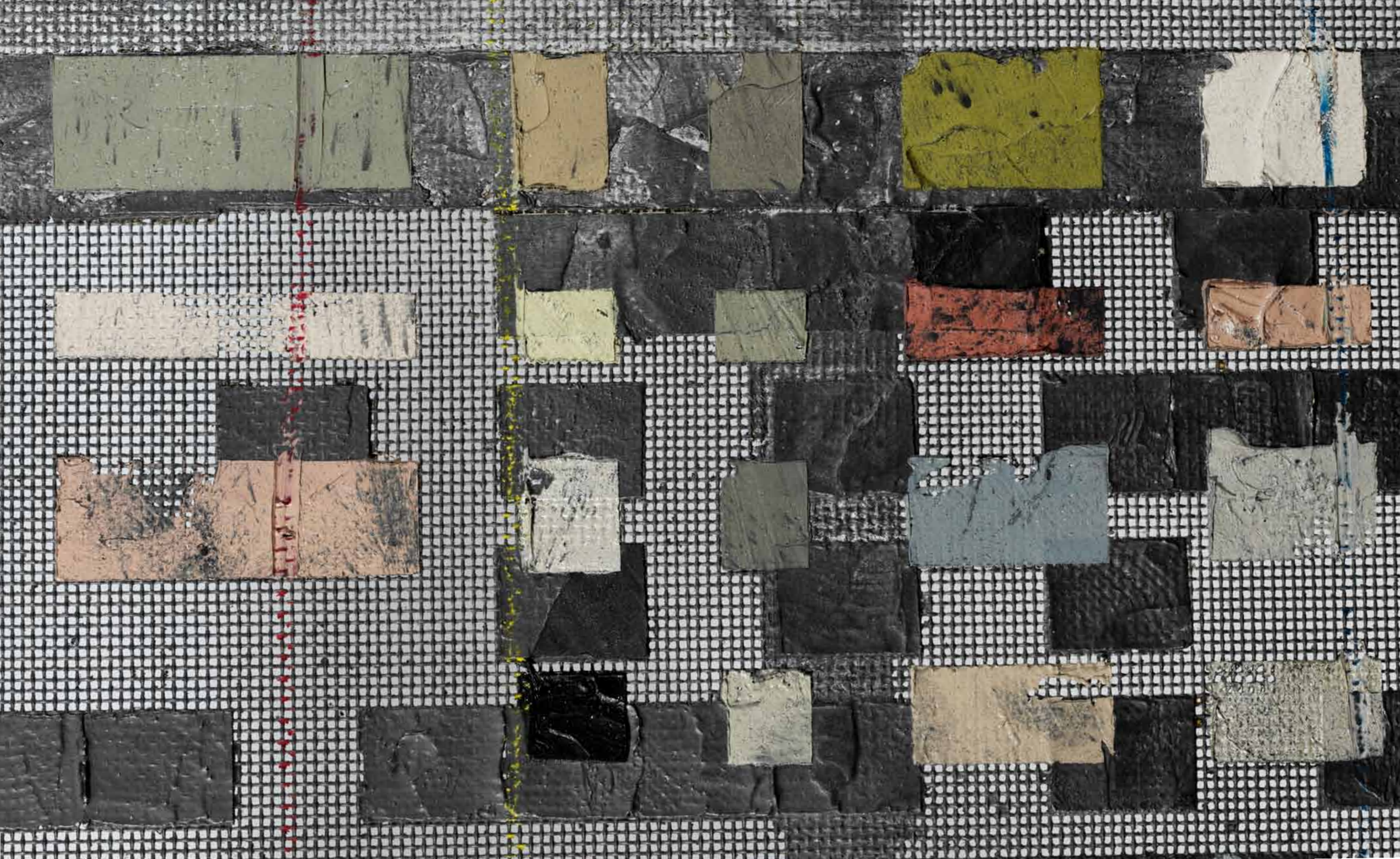






Panel de Segmentos, 2006





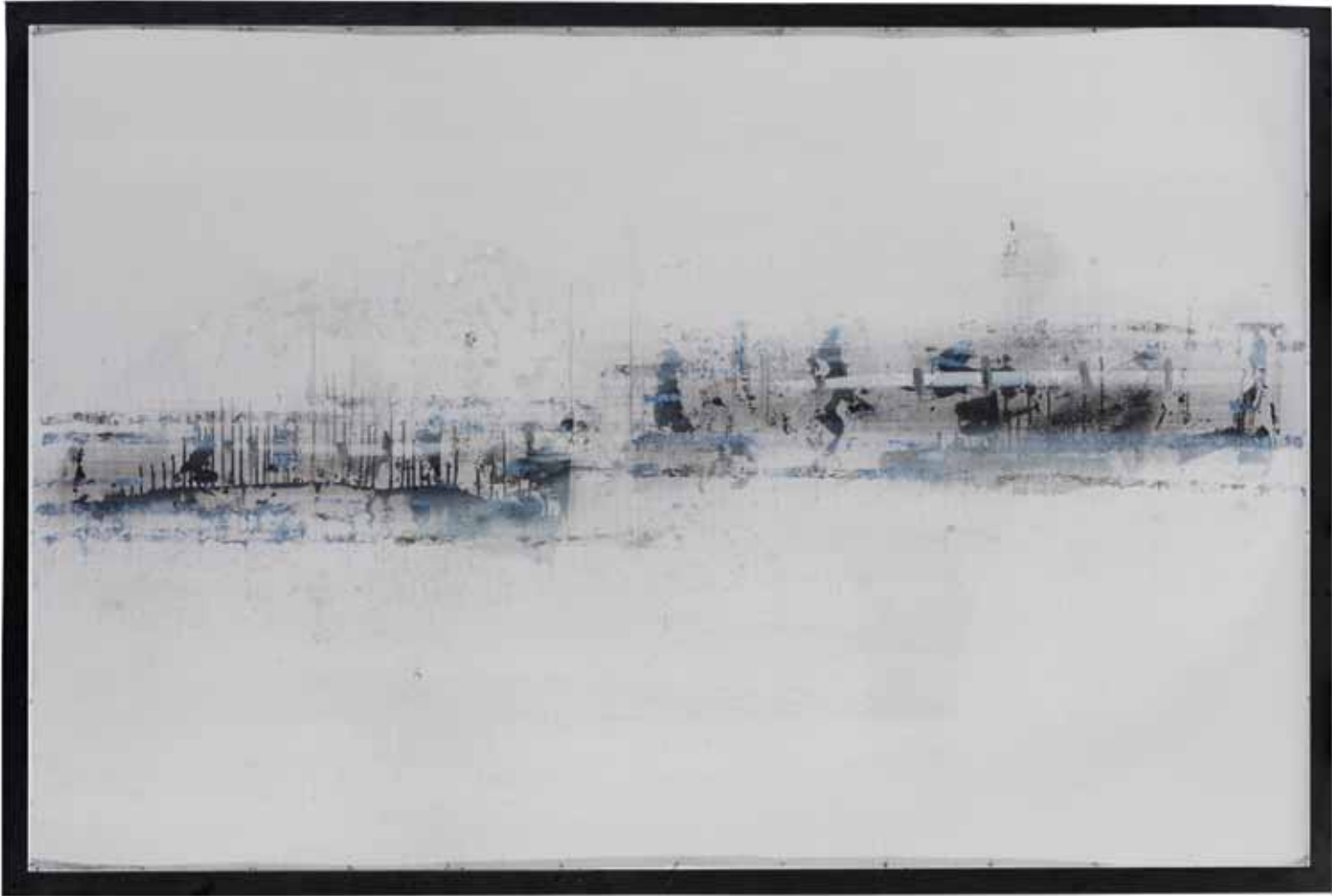












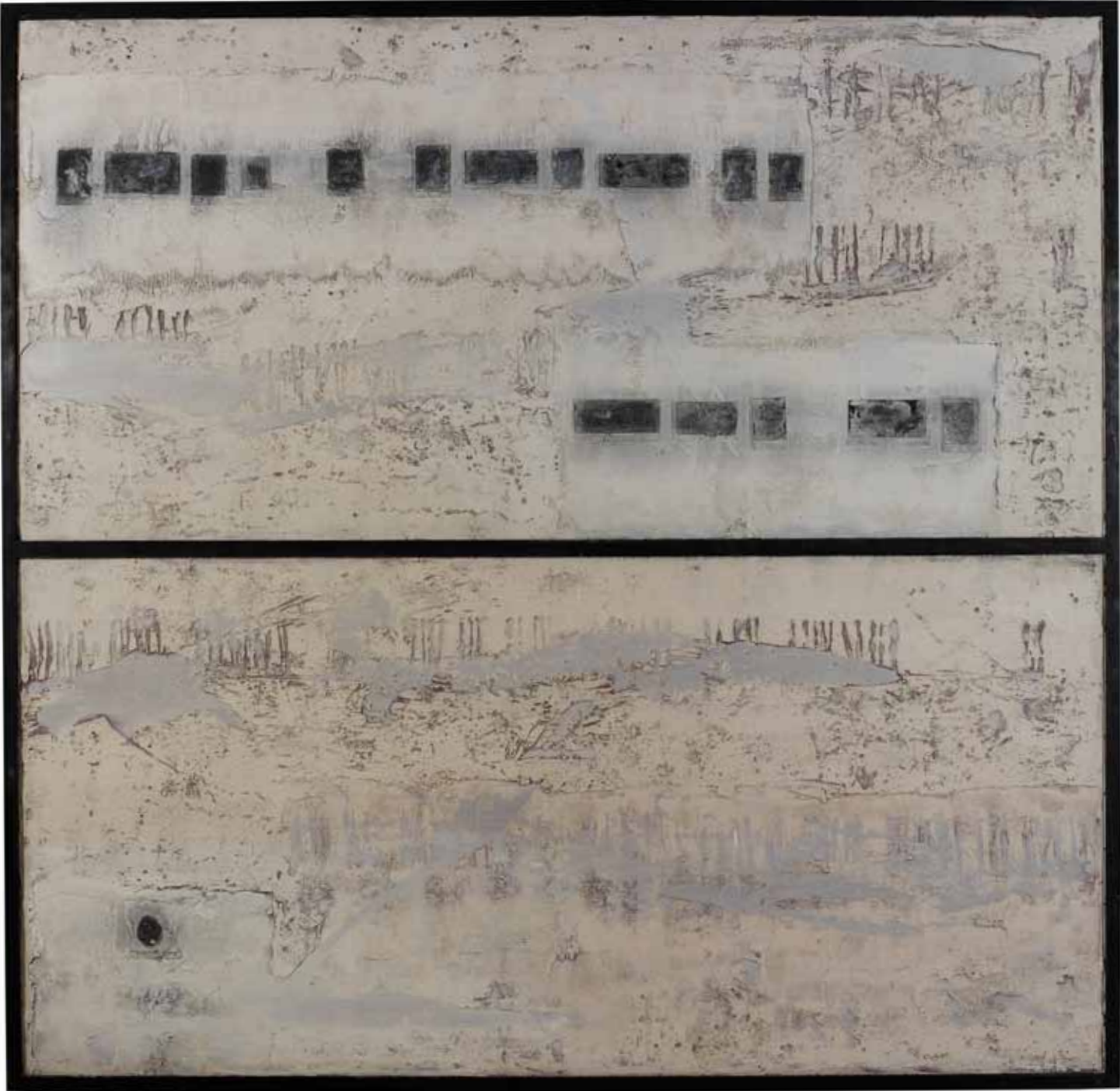




Sculpting The Surface

2008-2010







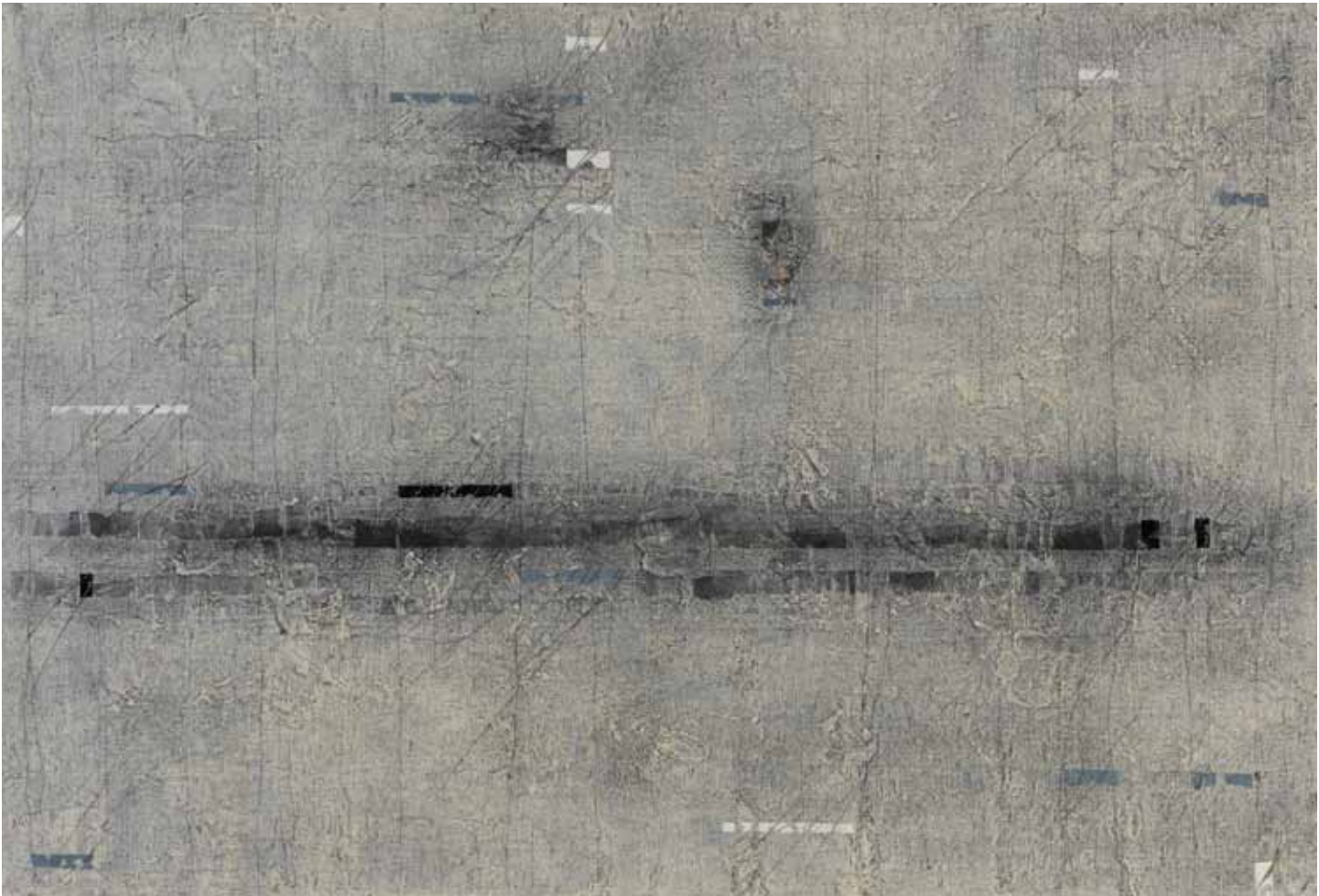






Lineas Azuladas, 2010



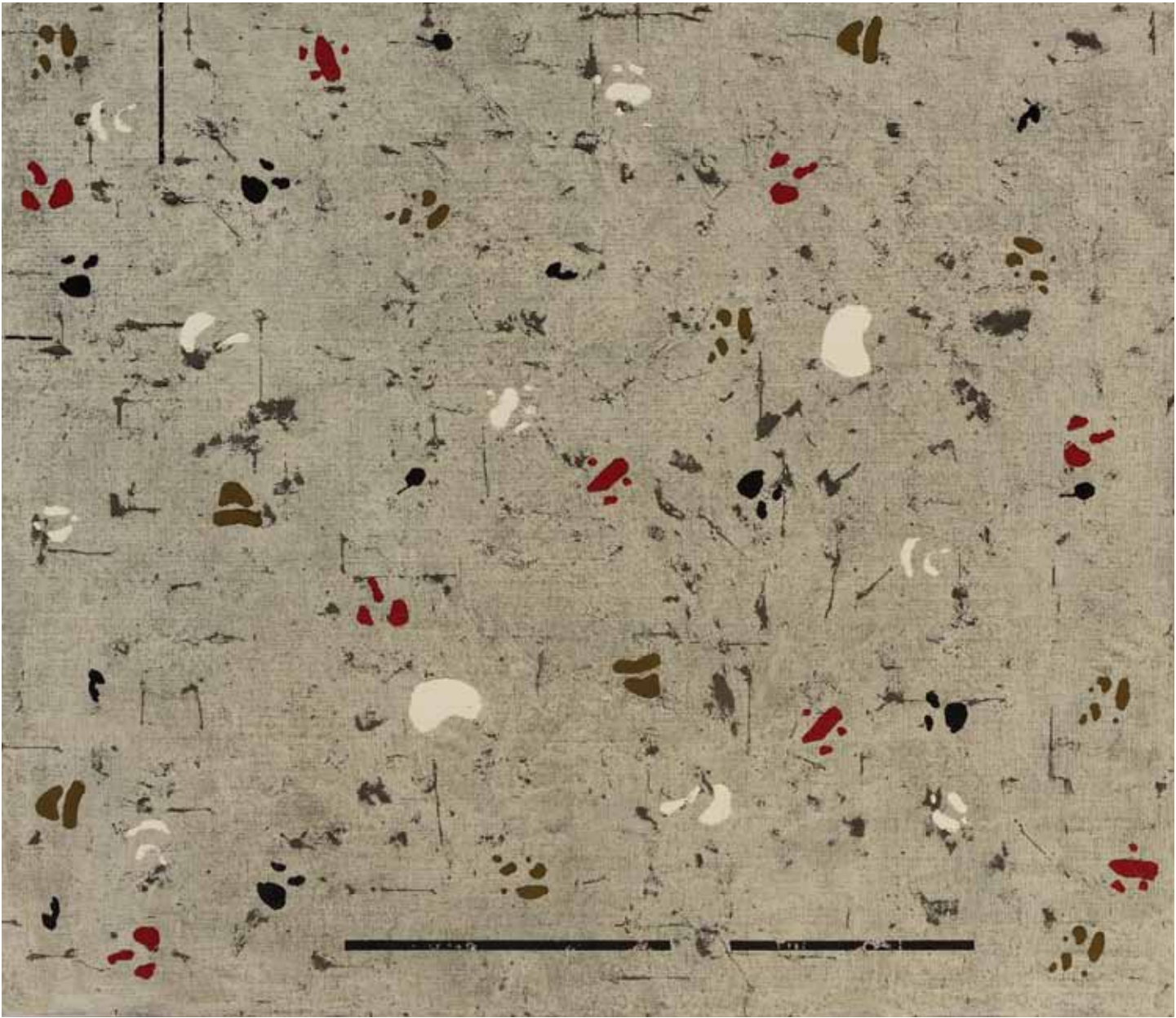








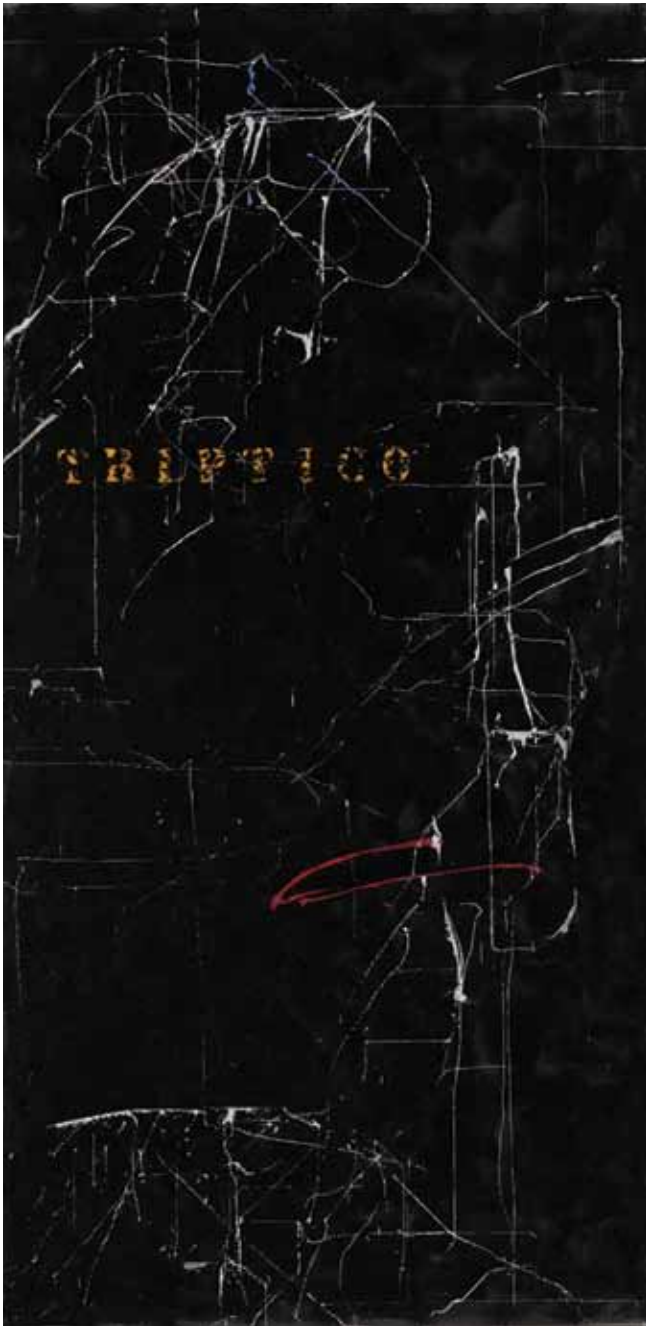




Tres Puntos Amarillos, 2010









Try and Make it Float

An Interview with Enrique Brinkmann by Sue Steward

The Spanish artist Enrique Brinkman celebrated internationally for his painting, drawing and engraving, is a discreet resident in Calle Cervantes on the site of Miguel Cervantes’ house in Central Madrid. He divides his life between the spacious studio-apartment and his studio and family home in Malaga.

A small, pale-skinned and youthful looking man, Enrique doesn’t represent the archetypal Andalucian, but the surname reveals German ancestry dating to the late 19th century when his father’s family arrived at the port of Malaga, then the industrial hub of the South. Their presence coincided with the brief stay of the wealthy Picasso family, whose house today is the Museo de Picasso. Its permanent collection not only honours their son, it also represents international, Spanish and local Andalucian artists including Enrique Brinkmann and his friend from the early 60s, ‘the wrapper’ Cristo, who both lived in Cologne amongst Germany’s significant avant garde community.

The Madrid studio is neat, organized and

minimal, with slight evidence of the different techniques he operates with supermarket sponges, brushes, engraving tools, paints and paper cutouts, remains from collages. Natural light is focussed from the ceiling onto an easel supporting a sheet of minimally scratched plexiglass: an engraving in progress. The walls are hung with engravings, drawings and paintings created with different techniques, records of almost half a century’s continuously evolving work. The studio was a little bereft when I visited because of the drain to London for Enrique’s first UK exhibition (only paintings), which date from the early 1960s to 2010.

Enrique was born in Malaga in 1938 and as a teenager was encouraged to study engineering. He lasted no time.

Sue Steward: You were 17. Why did you turn to painting?

Enrique Brinkmann: There was no university in Malaga then,” he says, “So I left the course and



for a year, and did no work: I just painted. And got into lots of trouble with my father. I had to leave home - and I had no money.

I was in my grandfather's house one day – he had many books by international writers on his shelves – and I just caught hold of a short story by Dostoevsky called “White Nights”, and began to read it. I was fascinated. I have read most of them and today I consider him to be the greatest writer in the world. The Russians in general interest me, but I also read Kafka, Thomas Mann, and many other writers.

SS: But why did Dostoevsky have such an impact on you, and trigger you to start painting?

EB: For me at that age, in the mid-50s, Dostoevsky was very, very important. Because of him I began painting; painting and literature became an escape. His world reflected very much the life under Franco, the life I was living. Living in Spain then was bad, really hard and the cultural environment was very poor. For painters, it was

a very sad, dark and depressing place. But if you were born under a Dictator, it was normal and you didn't notice it – until you left.”

Having been shown many of Enrique's paintings, drawings and engravings, I feel I'm seeing the visual equivalent of the Russians' writings, sharing noirish, existential, psychological scenarios and characterizations, and similarly living in a dictatorship. In the same way, his paintings represent rather than detail the despair, chaos, suffering and darkness into his translations onto canvas and paper.

SS: So how did you cope – as a beginner painter – under the Franco regime?

EB: In 1957, when I was 18, six or seven of us painters in Malaga set up Grupo Picasso. It was courageous to give it that name because at that time, Picasso had left Spain and was in Paris, and he was very bad in the eyes of the Republic, anti-Franco, anti-Spanish and Communist. To be a friend of Picasso was very dangerous. Our group was paying homage to the son of our city. A year later, we joined an organization called MAM (Movimiento Artístico del Mediterraneo) and I had my first exhibition at the Economic Society of Malaga. I was 19.”

SS: What kind paintings were you doing during that period when Abstract Expressionism was the late 50s trend?

EB: All figurative works, that's what we made. But gradually I introduced a more Expressionist style – you can see it in the 1960 painting, **Pintor en el Sueño** (Painter in the Dream) whereas “Mujer con palomas” (Woman with doves) is purely figurative.

SS: Do you today detect vague influence from Picasso and Modigliani...

“The eyes,” he acknowledges, adding, “It was the beginnings!”

SS: You said that living under Fascism was

the norm, and that you only realized later the unnatural life-style you led. How did you get out while Franco was still alive?

EB: In 1961, I was conscripted to Germany in the military, to Berlin. That was much better. After I left service, I moved to Cologne and worked in a weaving factory and I painted. But I had to leave the country because I was an illegal and went to Sweden. Then I could return and I stayed for some years - in Cologne, then Dusseldorf and Rome. That was freedom. I stayed until 1967, then returned to Malaga.

SS: In Cologne, you underwent many changes. You made the large, seemingly angry drawings “**Sin Titulo, 1962**” and the similar **AutoRetrato (Self-Portrait), 1962**, when you were 24 years old. Both show clear links with Expressionism, but do you see signs of abstraction too?

EB: The paintings I was doing then were literal and figurative at first, but that was the time of Germany's Abstract Expressionism after the War, and my paintings then moved away from the figurative, but for the Germans, still much more abstract in general..

Sin Titulo, 1962 was a very old drawing made quickly in my studio with black pigment, washes and Indian ink. The studio was in an old factory with a cement floor and I would lay the sheet of paper on the floor and cover it with black pigment, then draw on it.

Three, long-necked cartoon-like heads emerge from the visual tension filling most of the canvas with a tangle of lines and curves made with charcoal, dense but with airy patches. I suggest similarities with Anselm Kieffer and he admits. “I like his work a lot, but of course he was working in the 90s, there was no influence.” The tangled layers and balls like metal wool are deceptively light, a mass which Enrique laughingly describes as Existential chaos. From that chaos emerges the three anonymous figures drawn in the similar basic, almost angular but certainly not

Cubist style, for **Self-Portrait (Autoretrato)**. Surprisingly, “**H.P. Lovecraft**” (1974) and “**Personaje en Decomposición**” from the year of Franco's death (1975) were produced during the Cologne period. Still figurative in essence, they depict darkly terrifying and grotesque, overgrown and distorted ‘figures’ with the surreal, hallucinatory air of Hieronymus Bosch's twisted characters. **Personaje en Decomposición** is an even more grotesque, deformed and enraged portrait, implying Franco de-composing physically and politically.

SS: You have won many prizes over the years for your engraving. You taught yourself to engrave while you were in Cologne. What led you to that?

EB: I knew an artist there who had some engravings; he liked my paintings and I liked the engravings. And I was fascinated. So I bought a copper sheet and started to teach myself and





Back in Malaga, in 1967, I bought a printing machine and experimented with many different techniques. Years later, I taught courses in Fuendetodos (Goya’s birthplace) and at Madrid’s Royal Mint [the 18th century school for engravers, and today, the Museum of Engraving.]

SS: I keep asking you if this is a drawing or an engraving because they truly come close in spite of employing very different techniques.

EB: The processes are more or less equal but distinct. Each has its own language, and I was experimenting with the languages and interconnecting them. There are things in engraving you can’t do with painting; if I paint a canvas and take a red but then I don’t like it, I can change it. But in engraving you can’t change it because it’s etched onto the surface of the copper. The engravings have been seen over time and I think the difference between the years is now more obvious.

SS: The metal grid paintings are very intriguing. You began them in the 1990s, and describe them as “another turning point in my work.” How did they come about and what function do they serve? Were they initially experiments to find a solution to a problem or…?

“Try and make it float!” a quote from Enrique’s friend Cornelius Cardew, the London musician/composer who died in a hit-and-run in 1981, and who had worked together on his graphic scores in Cologne. It fits perfectly the painter’s answer.

EB: I was searching. I began making the ‘tela metalica’(metal grid) paintings in the 1990s when I was searching for a technique to make painted objects ‘float’ in space. I was working on a painting that had a lot of white space but very few elements in it, and I was looking for a transparent material and a possible way of making these ‘elements’ float in the air. I tried placing them on plexiglass but I didn’t like the result. I also wanted to find a way to create air between the wall and the pictorial plane. Another possibility was to use

a metal mesh grid; I liked it and I repeated it. SS: What is involved in the process of creating paintings on the metal grids?

“Here is space,” he says, pointing to hanging shapes and twists, suspended like plankton in what could be white smoke or steam.

EB: When a metal sheet is attached to the easel, I paint the front of the grid then, when it’s dry, I paint the back all over with oils on sponges, using only one colour. That creates textures at the front and a surface that isn’t flat. And I can keep building it or not as I put the colour and the designs on the surface, creating different levels, shapes and forms.. The effect is of a canvas. In fact, it **is** a canvas but it’s not; it creates a new sense of surface from the metal grille with its fine holes. But when I paint the front I can’t correct or improve it.

With **Segmentos II, 2005**, the surface is adorned with small, square, jewel-like squares in rows (others in the series are scattered, minimal and very minimal), individualistic and each containing a narrative, symbolic form, gloopy impasto twist, neat graphic shapes, and all lying on the surface but hanging against the background space as if ...floating.

Floating. It offers a much freer hand and resembles a sketch. For several years, I played with the grid’s transparent power, but today, what I’m producing with the same metal grids are no longer transparent - because the surface is now so covered!

To me, the engravings make sense of the metal grid paintings – with their different levels and textures. And they possess an influence of Oriental calligraphic design. The Chinese and Japanese have a capacity for ‘synthesis’. And for slow, delicate work – which is engraving.

Many of the engravings bisect the scenario with a band of narrow, uneven intrusions into the plain, textured white or blueish surfaces. **The Irak Series, 2004**, surprised me with its political theme and your depiction of it through an emotional

almost clinical process presented as if – to me - through the mist of warfare. What led you to that?

EB: The beginning of the war in Iraq affected me a lot; it was an emotional reaction to a big lie. These paintings vary a lot but they’re finished now... They are universal, they stand for all wars.

Tension is maintained by laying a single taut or curving piece of string across the surface ‘landscapes’ and anchoring them with pins. Thick oil gobs outlining tiny holes in the mesh resemble bullet damage. The results can be seen as sublimely beautiful designs with tragic, violent implications and for me, conjure aerial surveillance of small desert communities.

SS: Let’s return to your life in Cologne. Was it such a life-changing experience?

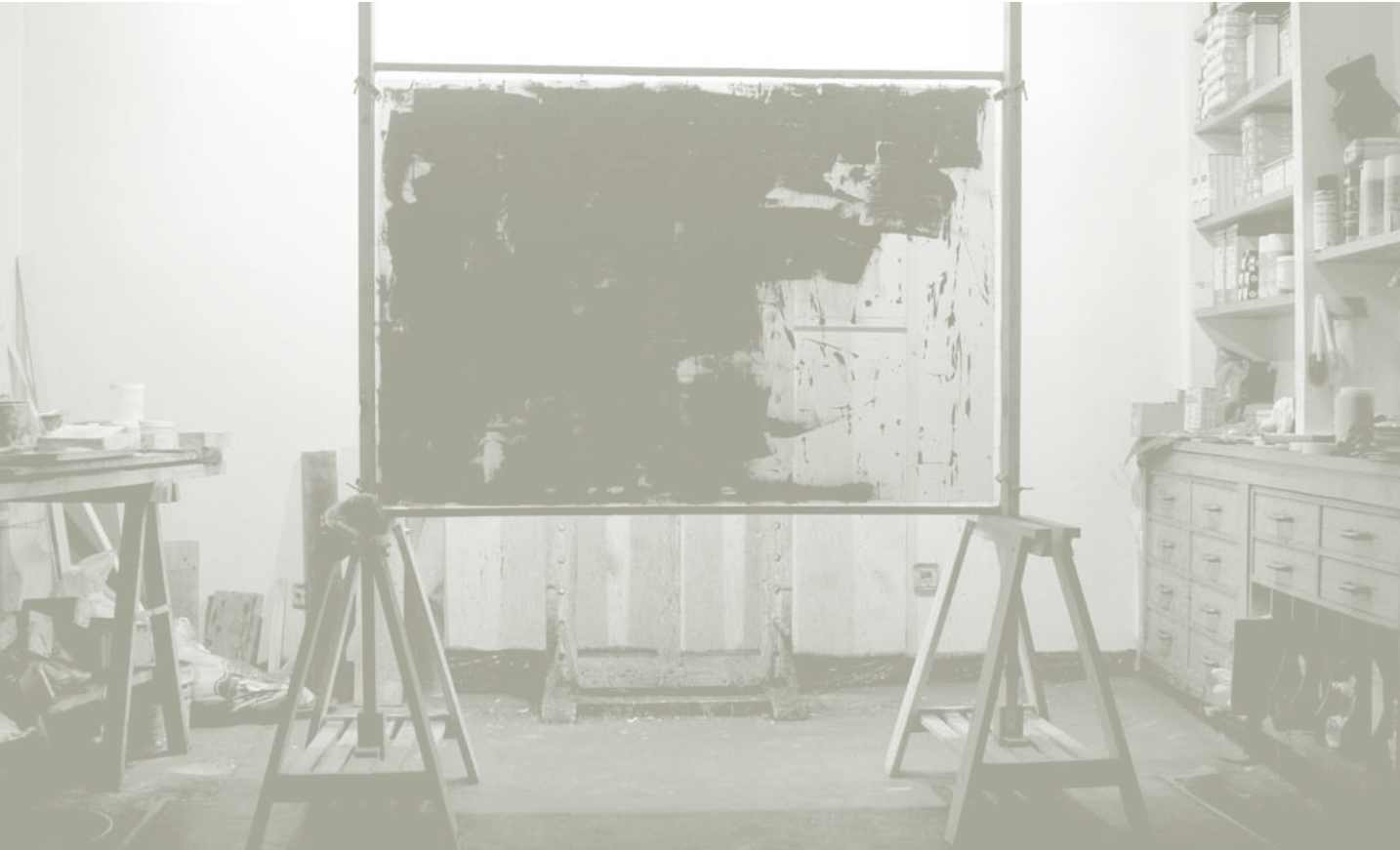
EB: Cologne was a very strong change for me

and I became friends with artists, musicians, and the community of the new avant garde, including the painters Klaus Koch, and Wolf Vostell who was a very important figure. He led Germany’s Fluxus movement and worked with John Cage and Karlheinz Stockhausen [who grew up near Cologne], and led political performances with musicians and artists at his house and in the streets. He was the Father of the ‘Happenings.’ Also Cristo was there, a painter and collage artist then, already ‘wrapping’ things, but small everyday objects then.

SS:For a rather quiet man, how did you handle this wild bunch and their performances and audacious political events after Malaga?

EB: I kept out of it, I was shy. I just watched.

SS: And in Cologne how did you become friends Cornelius Cardew and work on his graphic scores?





EB: Through Klaus I met Cornelius who was Stockhausen’s assistant, and we became friends. At that time, Cologne was an important centre for the new experimental music led by John Cage and Stockhausen. Cornelius went between Cologne and London and sometimes stayed at my house - but I didn’t have a piano. He asked me to illustrate the cover of the small book “Two Books of Study for Pianists.”

At that point, Enrique pulls out delicate drawings and engravings of his scores interpretations - more sensual, and emotional and with an almost audible, slow, meditative rhythm passing through them compared to the composer’s more formal, geometric and staccato interpretations of his music. Cardew’s death inspired a magnificent tribute through a drawing he called “Who Killed Cornelius Cardew?” Constructed from grids arranged like a film storyboard and composed of units of small rectangles as if created with a camera motor-drive, they document imaginary, abstract courses through the end of his life. The abstract forms are tense and appropriately black and brown, broken up by shocking intrusions of blood-red moments. They are entirely different from Enrique’s usual work.

SS: You casually mentioned Schopenhauer and raised the significance of Taoism to your work, particularly the engravings with their tranquillity and use of space. Are you aware of their influence or inspiration?

EB: Schopenhauer has a great place in Taoism; everyone who reads him, realizes that his writing owes a lot to the Eastern world, to Tao and Buddhism. After painting for so many years, I can see in there connections between Taoism and my work. Today, it is more simplified.

SS: I see in the engravings in particular, but also in some metal grid paintings, the spaces and silences remind me of the music and scores of Cage and Cardew. And both men talked

of inspiration from the calligraphic Chinese paintings. They also suggest Cy Twombly - do you like his work?

EB: I like Cy Twombly’s work very much; it is very graphic and his painting comes before his drawing. Drawing is drawing and painting is painting, but he made a painting which is almost a drawing; it’s very subtle. I also like Anselm Kieffer’s work a lot. He’s a printer, very potent. His concept is very important but he’s not conceptual; he is a real painter, working with philosophy, and very conceptual. He works in 3-D like a collage. It’s very difficult to present things in dimensions; a painter is 2-D, so his work is a strong shock.

SS: Having seen many of your works now, I try to sum up how you would describe your style?

EB: I was never interested in a style; I have no style. Style encourages repetition and I’m interested in something distinct. I invented a technique and when I paint anything, I invent. The painting comes from within; the technique doesn’t make any difference. I have to be coherent – logical, coherent. And, I like to be surprised. The aesthetic pleasure is the surprise.

Biography and Biliography

1938 Born in Malaga, Spain

Solo Exhibitions

- 1957 Sociedad Económica de Amigos del País, Málaga.
1958 Sala Libros, Zaragoza.
1959 Sala Alfil, Madrid.
 Galería Artis, Salamanca.
 Galería Quin, Palma de Mallorca.
1960 Sala Neblí, Madrid.
 Galería Libros, Zaragoza.
1961 Iowa Memorial Union, Iowa.
1963 Gallery Forum, Nueva York.
1964 Librería Internazionale Terzo Mondo, Roma.
 Galerie Boisserée, Colonia.
 Galerie Clasing, Münster.
 Galleria Scorpio, Roma.
1965 Museo Provincial de Málaga.
1966 Galerie Montjoie, Bruselas.
1968 Galerie Boisserée, Colonia.
 Galerie Montjoie, Bruselas.
 Galerie Clasing, Münster.
 Galería Seiquer, Madrid.
1969 Galería Da Vinci, Madrid.
1970 Caja de Ahorros de Antequera, Málaga.
1972 Museo Español de Arte Contemporáneo, Madrid.
 Galería Ramón, Durán Madrid.
1975 Galería Lúzaró, Bilbao.
1976 Galería Rayuela, Madrid.
1977 Galería Rayuela, Madrid.
1978 Galleria Trentadue, Milán.
 Galería Rayuela, Barcelona.
1979 Galería Italia, Alicante.
1980 Museo de Málaga.
 Galería Laguada, Granada.
1982 ARCO, Madrid.
 Galería Laguada, Granada.
1983 Galerie Pierre Huber. ART 14-83, Basilea.
1984 ARCO, Madrid.
1985 Galerie Pierre Hüber, Ginebra.
1986 Galería Juan Gris, Madrid.
1987 Galería Manuela Vilches, Marbella.
 Galería Italia, Alicante.
1988 ARCO 88, Madrid.
 Galería Tórculo, Madrid.
1989 Sala Gaspar, Barcelona.

1991

Galerie Detursa, Madrid.
Galería Johannes Schiling, Colonia.

1992

Galería Anselmo Álvarez, Madrid.
Galería Tórculo, Madrid.
Galería Durero, Gijón.
Galería Italia, Alicante.
Palacio de la Madraza, Granada.

1993

Fundación Pablo Ruiz Picasso, Palacio Episcopal, Málaga.
Museo Cruz Herrera, La Línea, Cádiz.

1994

Caja Provincial de Ahorros de Córdoba, Córdoba.

1995

Galería Tolmo, Toledo.

1996

A’G Arte Gestión, Bilbao.
Galería Durero Gijón.
Sala Luzán, Zaragoza.

1997

Galería Ars Vivendi, Pfaffenhofen.
Galería Joan Gaspar, Barcelona.

1998

Galería Italia, Alicante.
Sala del Colegio de Arquitectos, Málaga.
217

1999

Galería Rayuela, Madrid.
Museo del Grabado Español Contemporáneo, Marbella.
Galería Joan Gaspar, Barcelona.

2000

Galería Durero, Gijón.
Galería Juan Manuel Lumbreras, Bilbao.
Galería Joan Gaspar, Barcelona.

2001

Galería Tolmo, Toledo.
Galería Italia, Alicante.

2003

Galería La Caja Negra, Madrid.
Casa Fuerte Bezmiliana, Rincón de la Victoria, Málaga.

2004

Galería Pedro Torres, Logroño.
Galería Javier Marín, Málaga.
Le Confort des Etranges, Toulouse.
Galería Joan Gaspar, Madrid y Barcelona.

2005

Sala Alameda, Málaga.
Pedro Peña Art Gallery, Marbella.
Ana Vilaseco. La Coruña.

2006

Sala Robayera, Miengo.

2007

Carmen del Campo. Córdoba.
“Hacia la luz” Retrospectiva. Museo Municipal. Málaga.

2008

GACMA. Málaga.
Joan Gaspar. Barcelona.

2009

Joan Gaspar. Madrid.
“Serie Barcelona” GACMA. Málaga.
Ana Vilaseco. La Coruña.

2011

“The Poetics of Silence”, rosenfeld porcini, London.

Group Exhibitions

1959

Veinte años de Pintura Española Contemporánea, Lisboa.

1962

Herbst Salon, Haus der Kunst, Munich.

1963

Arte de América y España, Madrid-Barcelona.

1964

Winterausstellung, Düsseldorf.
Kölner Künstler.

1966

Artistas Gráficos Españoles, Museo de Arte Moderno, Johannesburgo.

1967

IX Bienal de Sao Paulo.

1968

I Exposición Internacional de Dibujos, Rikeja.

1969

X Bienal de Sao Paulo.

1970

Exposición Nacional de Arte Contemporáneo, Madrid.
XII Concurso de Dibujo Fundación «Inglada Guillot», Barcelona.

1972

La Paloma, Galería Vandrés, Madrid.
III Exposición Internacional de Dibujo, Rikeja.
Gráfica Española Actual, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo, Sevilla.

1973

Pintores Españoles del Siglo XX, Varsovia.

1974

IV Exposición Internacional de Dibujo, Rijeka.
V Muestra Internacional del Arte, Basilea.
I Bienal de Arte Seriado, Segovia.

1976

Homenaje a Tiziano, Galería Rayuela, Madrid.
I Bienal de Arte Seriado, Segovia.

1977

Festival Internacional de Pintura, Cagnes-sur- Mer.

1978

Pintura Española del Siglo XX, Ciudad de Méjico.
Pintores Andaluces Contemporáneos, Universidad de Sevilla.
Pintores Andaluces desde 1900, Valencia, Málaga, Sevilla, Granada.
VI Exposición Internacional de Dibujo Rijeka.

1981

Spanish Art Tomorrow, Corcoran Gallery, Washington.
Exposición Surrealista en Canarias, Galería Vegueta, Las Palmas de Gran Canarias.

1982

Spanish Art Tomorrow, Bronx Museum of the Arts, Nueva York.
El Surrealismo y su evolución, Galería Theo, Madrid.

1985

Andalucía, Puerta de Europa, Madrid.

1986

Arte Español en Nueva York, Fundación Juan March, Madrid.
ARCO 86, Madrid.

1987

ARCO 87, Madrid.

1988

La Estampa Contemporánea en España, Centro Cultural del Conde Duque, Madrid.

1989

ARCO 89, Madrid. Andalucía Arte de una Década, Sevilla, Granada.

1990

La Línea de Van Gogh, Museo Cruz Herrera, La Líneade la Concepción.
Brinkmann, Mitsuo Miura, Galería Rafael Colomer, Madrid.
Col.lecció Testimoni, 1989-90, Barcelona.
Adquisiciones de Bienes Culturales, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo, Sevilla.

1992

Brinkmann, Peinado, Rogelio López Cuenca, Museo de la ciudad de Malmoe.

1993

Premio Nacional de Grabado, Calcografía Nacional, Madrid.
Art Múltiple 93, Düsseldorf.
45 Frankfurter Buchmesse, Frankfurt.
ARCO 93, Madrid.

1994

Premio Nacional de Grabado, Calcografía Nacional, Madrid.
Latitud de la Mirada. Modos de Coleccionar.

1995

Centro Atlántico de Arte Moderno, Las Palmas de Gran Canarias.
18 Hilzinger Kunstaussstellung, Hilzinger.
Kunst unter tausend, Munich.
I Trienal de Arte Gráfico, Oviedo.
Premio L’Oreal, Madrid.
Estampa, Madrid.

1996

ARCO 96, Madrid.
Estampa, Madrid.
La Memoria de un Sueño, Fundación Caja Vital Kuntxa, Vitoria-Gasteiz.
Ex-libris Walter Benjamin, Museu de Ciències Naturals dels Pallars, Tremp.

1998

El diván del Tamarit, Sevilla, Granada.
II Trienal de Arte Gráfico, Oviedo.
104 Exlibris em homenagen a Walter Benjamin, Instituto Cervantes, Lisboa.
Homenaje a Manolo Millares, Biblioteca Expresión Contemporánea Antonin Artaud.
San Juan de la Rambla, Tenerife.
Últimas propuestas, Galería Marín Galy, Málaga.

1999

Aena, Museo Municipal de Málaga.
Museo Cruz Herrera. Diez años de galería, La Línea.
Fefa Seiquer, Círculo de Bellas Artes, Madrid.

2000

«Estampas 1990-2000 Artistas Premiados en España»
Maracaibo, Caracas (Venezuela), Lima (Perú), Bogotá(Colombia), Santiago de Chile (Chile).

2001

«Disparates de Fuendetodos», Fuendetodos.

2002

«Andalucía y la Modernidad», CAAC, Sevilla.
Premio Nacional de Grabado 2002.
«1993-2002 Décimo Aniversario», Vitoria, Cuenca, Granada, Avilés.
III Trienal de Arte Gráfico. Centro Cultural Caja de Asturias. Gijón.
Exposición Colectiva Homenaje a Cernuda, Galería Ópera, Sitges.

2004

Mostra Unión Fenosa, A Coruña.

2005

Nodos. Galería Arteko, San Sebastian.
23. Hilzinger Kunstaussstellung. Hilzinger
E=mc2, Galería Horizon, Colera.
El arte del dibujo. El dibujo en el Arte.
Aula de cultura de BBK, Bilbao.

2006

Arco 06. Madrid.
Maestros del grabado del S. XX.
Centro de Exposiciones Benalmadena.
25 Años de Gravura. Sala Alameda. Málaga.
Colectivo Palmo. Museo de Málaga.

2007

Arco 07
Málaga Arte Actual. Universidad de Málaga. Málaga.
24 Hilzinger Kunstaussstellung 2007. Hilzinger. Alemania.

2008

III Bienal Internacional de Arte. Beijing. China.

2009

Arco 09 “Blanco/Negro: Sujeto, Espacio, Percepción”.
Museo de Bellas Artes de Catellón. Castellón.
Berlaymont Summartis. Bruselas. Bélgica.
“Tengo un sueño” Homenaje a Martin Luther King, Jr. Nueva York, Sitges.
“Homenaje a Vicente Aleixandre” Sevilla, Miraflores de la Sierra, Madrid, Sitges, Málaga.
“Impacte!” Fundación Vallpalou. Lérida.

Works in Museums & Public Collections

Albertina Museum, Viena.
Museum of Modern Art, Nueva York.
Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, Colonia.
Bayrische Staatsgemäldesammlung, München.
Sammlung Regierungspräsidium, Freiburg.
Saarland Museum, Saarbrücken.
Museo de Arte Abstracto Español, Cuenca.
Museo Provincial de Bellas Artes de Bilbao.
Museo Provincial de Málaga.
Museo de Arte Contemporáneo, Lanzarote.
Museo Abierto, Fuengirola.
Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid.
Museo del Grabado Español Contemporáneo, Marbella.
Museo de Elche.
Fundación Juan March, Madrid.
Colección Santander Central Hispano, Madrid.
La Caixa, Barcelona. Col.lecció Testimoni.
Fundación Pablo Picasso, Málaga.
Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid.
Calcografía Nacional, Madrid.
Aena Colección de Arte Contemporáneo.
Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporáneo, Sevilla.
Colección CAI, Zaragoza.
Colección Unión Fenosa, A Coruña.
CCM. Obra Social y Cultural.

Graphic Editions

1964

Carpeta con cinco aguafuertes y texto de Ursula Storch.
Hake Verlag, Colonia.

1977

Experiencias de Amor. Conde de Villamediana con prólogo de José MigueUllán.
Dieciséis aguafuertes, Rayuela, Colección Espacio.

1990

Los tres Impostores. Cuatro serigrafías con un relato de Alejandro Víctor García.
Ediciones Laguada, Granada.

1991

Carpeta de Grabadores Españoles Contemporáneos, Calcografía Nacional, Madrid.

1995

Carpeta Aorist. Trabajos de Paco Aguilar, Enrique Brinkmann,
Theo Scherlin, Norbert Käs y Hans Schnell, München.

2001

Disparates de Fuendetodos. Ediciones de Fuendetodos.

2003

Cuaderno de Desbarajustes.
Edición La Caja Negra, Madrid.

2011

“The Poetics of Silence”, Rosenfeld Porcini, London.

AMIA



List of Plates

Sueños de Breuguel*
1974

Isolde*
1963

Moscas*
1988

Golfistas*
1980

Vigilante*
1977

Juegos de Laura*
1979

Canihueso*
1980

Con Musica*
1989

Pintor en el Suelo, 1960
38 x 46 cm
Drawing on paper

Sin Titulo
1962
38 x 46 cm
Drawing on paper

Sin Titulo
1962
154 x 147 cm
Drawing on Paper

Autorretrato
1962
132 x 110 cm
Mixed media on paper, laid on canvas

H.P. Lovecraft
1974
106 x 81 cm
Oil

Personaje en Descomposicion
1975
60 x 72.5 cm
Oil

Blancos y Humo
1979
130 x 162 cm
Oil

Personale Cuerno
1979
200 x 150 cm
Oil

Falso Carnival
1980
146 x 114 cm
Oil

Asunto en Gestacion
1988
180 x 122 cm
Mixed Media

Elemento sobre Manchas Blancas
1992
200 x 150 cm
Mixed Media

Viento Negro*
1990

Ampliado en Punto Blanco*
1993

Negro Partido*
1991

En Forma de Arco*
2001

Tres Apuntes*
2002

Lineas Con Precintos*
2003

Lianto Negro*
1999

Mano Amputada*
1987

Anotaciones*
2002

Negro Zig-Zag
2001
100 x 150 cm
Mixed Media

Item Perspectiva V
1998 - 2002
110 x 211cm

Sequencias Transparentes
1999
215 x 116 cm
Mixed Media

Estudio de Linea Rota
2003
146 x 96 cm
olio Grafito y Cuerdas

Dos Situaciones
2002
96 x 146 cm
oleo grafito

Codigo Horizontal
2004
68 x 56 cm

Irak VI
2004
106 x 96 cm
olio, grafitte e cuerda

Irak IV
2004
106 x 96 cm
olio grafito cuerda

Numerados En Vertical
2005
200 x 100 cm
Mixed Media

Segmentos II
2005
56 x 68 cm
Mixed Media

Segmentos III
2005
68 x 56 cm
Mixed Media

Segmentos IV
2005
56 x 68 cm
tecnica mixta

Panel de Segmentos
2006
195 x 155 cm
Mixed Media

Proximos Tiempos Acquaticos I
2006
96 x 146 cm
Mixed Media

Proximos Tiempos Acquaticos II
2006
96 x 146 cm
Mixed Media

Proximos Tiempos Acquaticos III
2006
96 x 146 cm
Mixed Media

Dos Horizontales Paralellas
2006
106 x 96 cm
Mixed Media

Franja Central
2007
146 x 96 cm
Mixed Media

Siete Burbujas Negras
2008
206 x 200 cm
Oil

Dieciseis Mas Uno
2009
200 x 206 cm
olio

Dos Horizontales Con Escalas
2008
146 x 96 cm
Oil on steel mesh

Asunto Italiano
2009
151 x 105 cm
olio

Plano Blanco
2010
105 x 151 cm
olio

Lineas Azuladas
2010
105 x 151 cm
olio

Horizontalidad
2010
105 x 151 cm
olio

Espacio de Claridad
2010
105 x 151 cm
olio

La Claridad del
2010
105 x 120 cm
olio

Pantalla Negra
2006
146 x 96 cm

Papeles Cortados
2009
105 x 120 cm
olio

Tres Puntos Amarillos
2010
120 x 105 cm
olio grafite

Colores Sobre Fondo Rosa
2010
151 x 105 cm
olio

Triptico De La Intolleranza
2010

*Denotes works not included in the exhibition.

Colophon

Curated and Organised by:
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Dario Porcini
Emily Dolan

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