



# Bedrock

A selection of drawings from then and now

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## Then.....

This exhibition is a small retrospective of my drawings from the past 30 or 40 years. Its focus is a decisive period either side of the turn of the 21st century.

At that time there was much talk of a millennium bug, a thing that was going to disrupt all our lives. Well I certainly felt I had my own millennium bug, driving major changes in my approach, thinking, attitude and methodology, as far as my art practice was concerned.

My work up until that time had been narrative in form. It was political, angry, at times quite dark. My images consisted of fallen bodies, men usually, heads hidden by bags, torso only, inert, dumb, abandoned or stranded, sidelined in the world in some way. My work reflected the times as I felt them: masked men, policed by masked men through violence and indifference. There seemed to me to be a strong smell of decline. The society I lived in was decaying from the top.

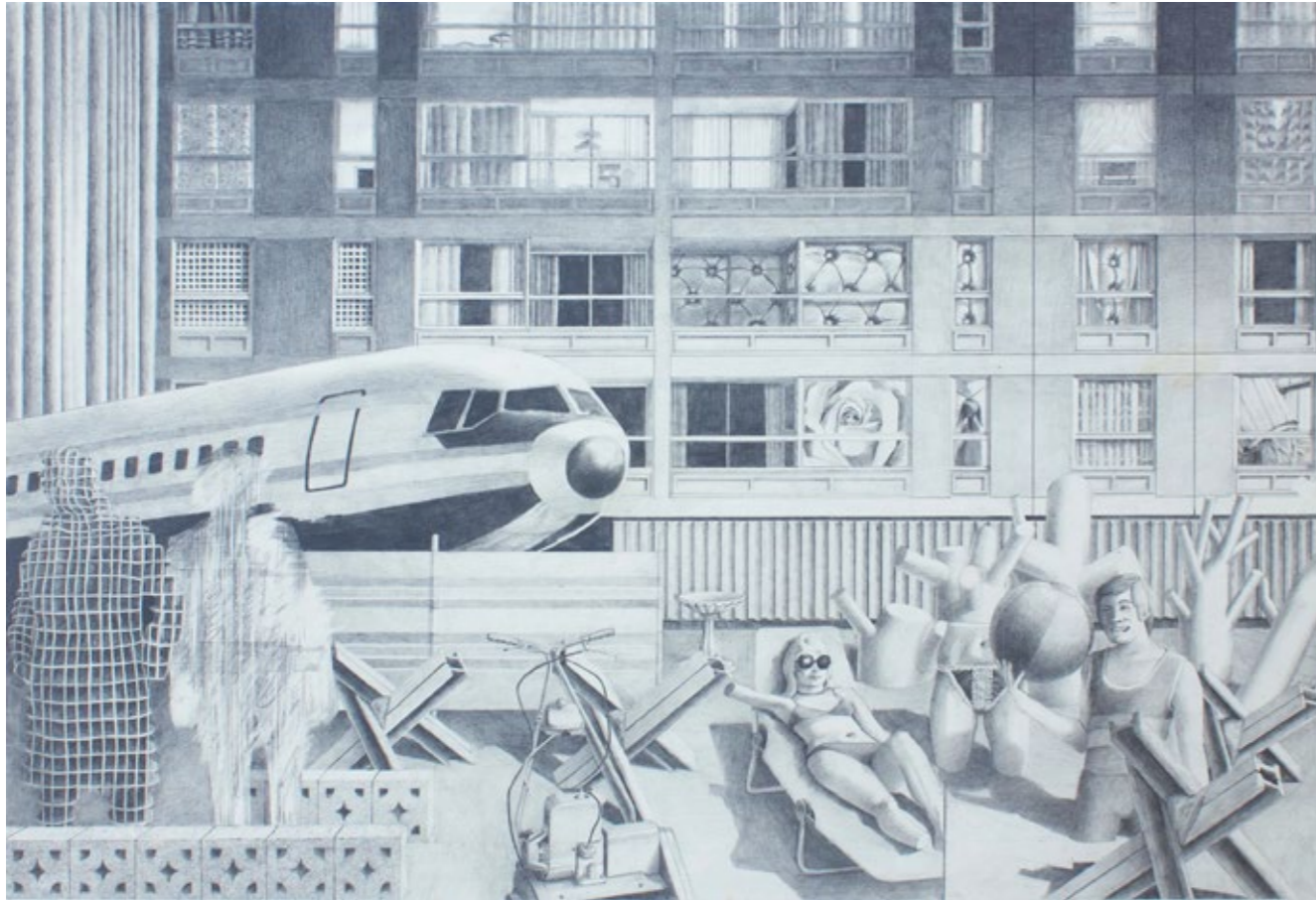
From the late 90's through 2000 and onward, I just felt the anger had to stop. I endeavoured to move in exactly the opposite direction, to a calmer, narrative-free work. It was drawing, the act of which was in the vanguard, driving this change.



*A fugitive on holiday (1986) Ink on paper 108.6 x 86.3cm*



*After Titian (1996) Graphite, compressed charcoal, pastel on paper. 84 x 84cm*



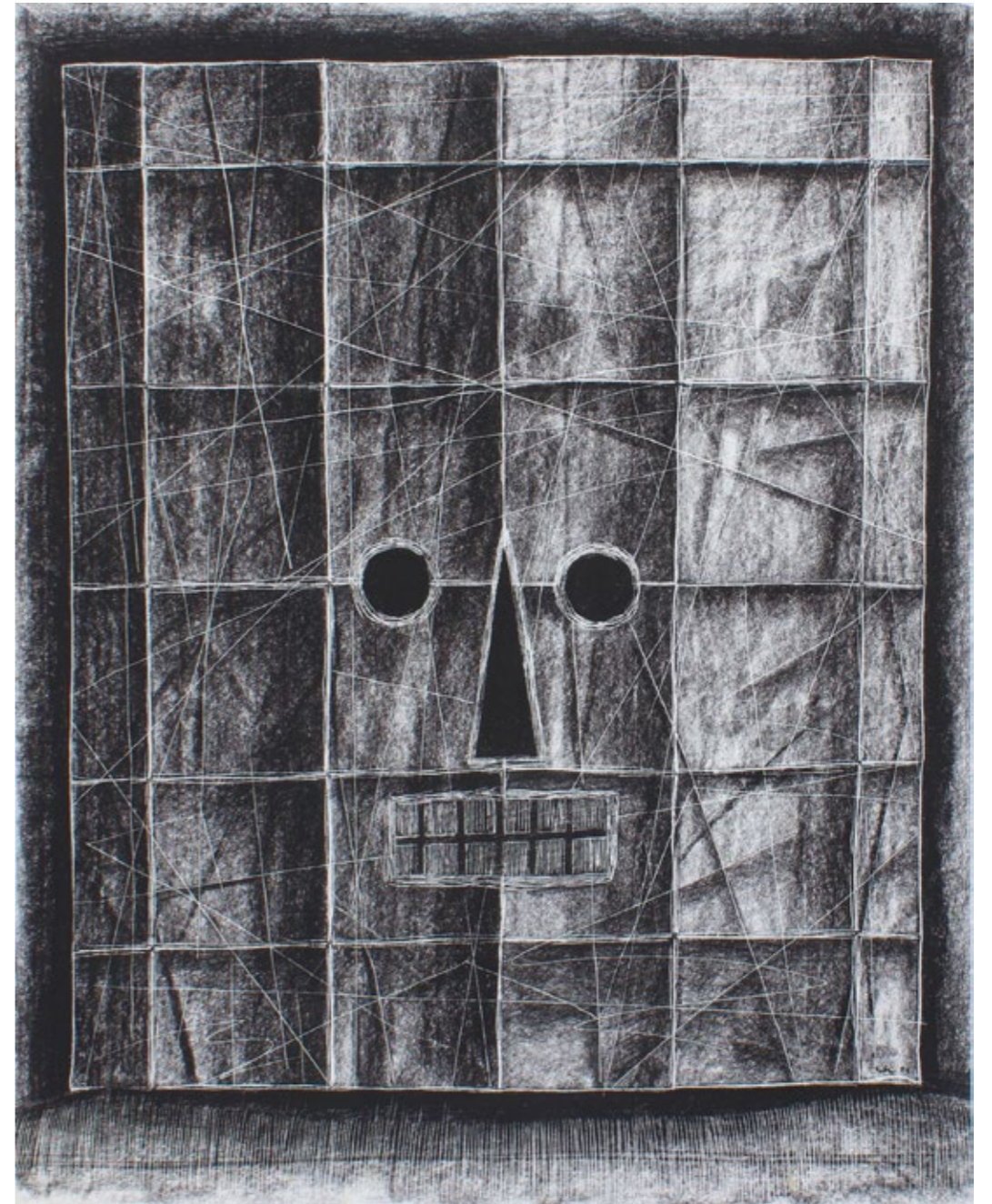
*Garden of earthly delights (1978) Pencil on paper. 74.9 x 55.6cm*



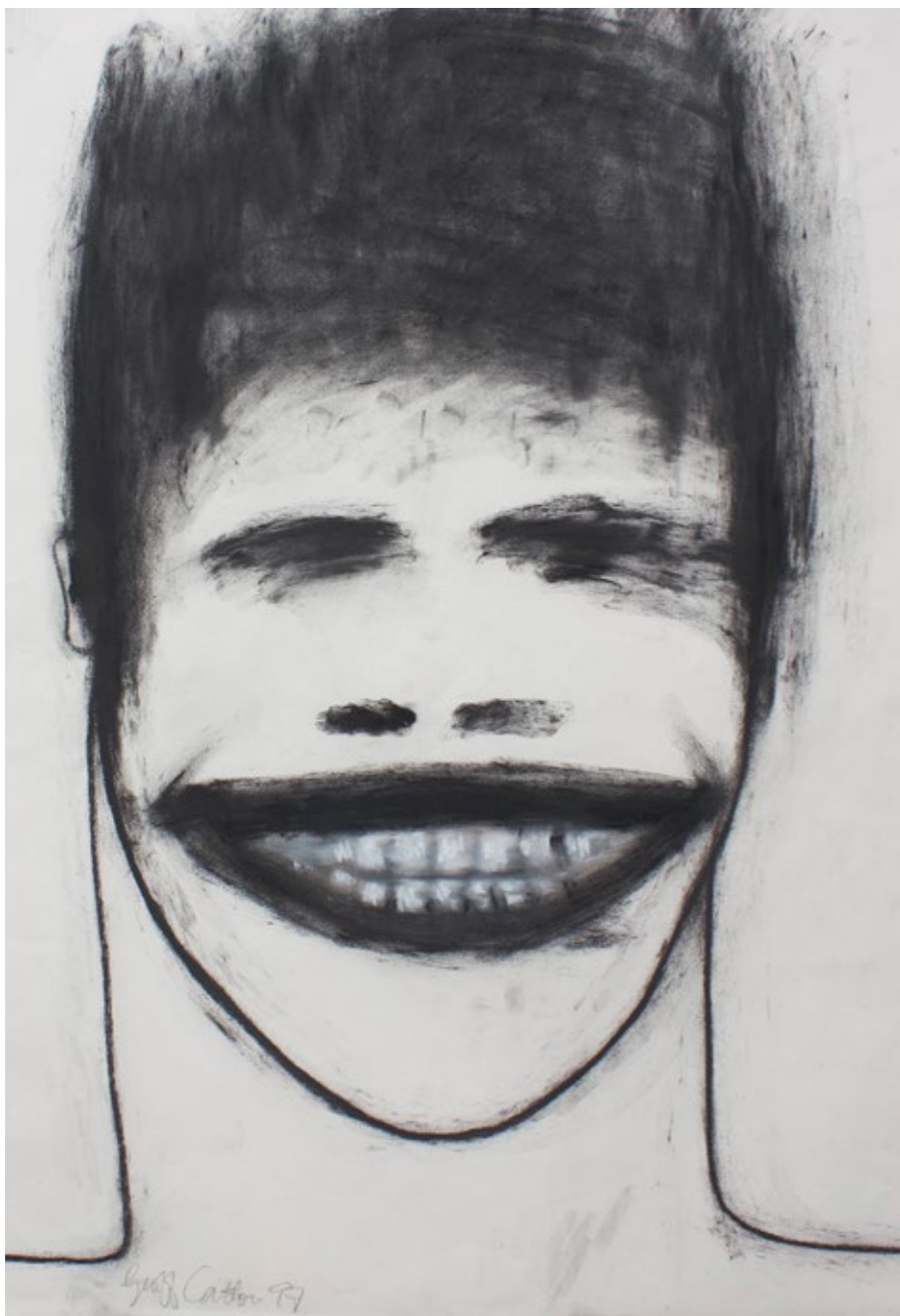
*By the lake with detritus (1993) Pastel, conti, compressed charcoal, pencil on paper. 1018 x 59cm*



*Shadow land (1995) Graphite, compressed charcoal, pastel on paper. 86.6 x 67.9cm*



*Shaman (1989) Black conti on paper. 63 x 50cm*



*Laughing boy (1996) Graphite, compressed charcoal on paper. 84 x 60cm*



*The fight (1995) Graphite, pastel, compressed charcoal on paper. 93 x 70.5cm*



*Small Man (1997) Graphite, charcoal on paper. 30.5 x 32cm*



*Man with medals (1996) Graphite, compressed charcoal on paper. 58 x 55cm*



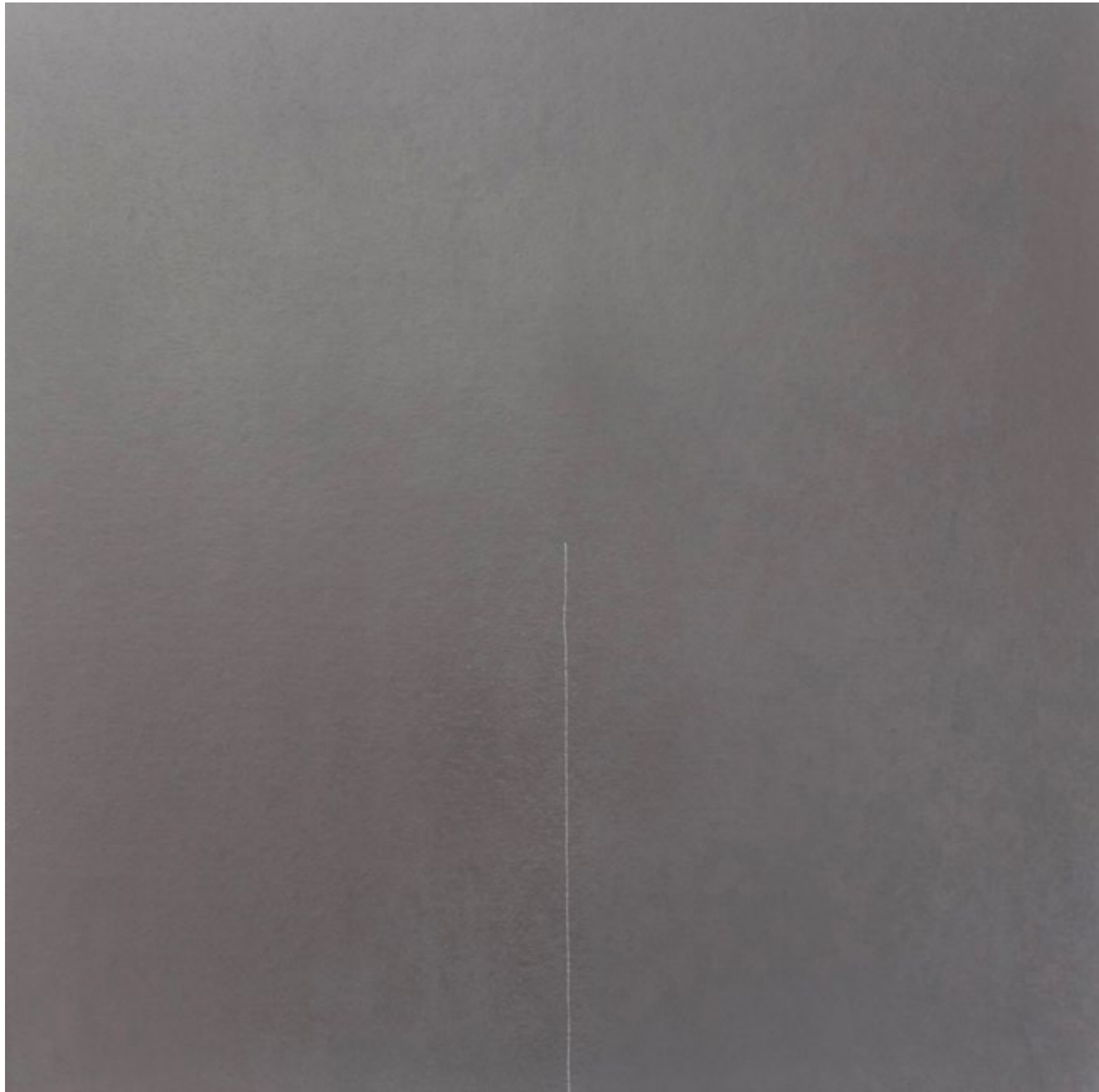
Head (1997) Graphite, compressed charcoal on paper. 58 x 40cm

Now.....

So what was the work consequent to this “new direction” going to look like, and how would it manifest? Well I did a fair bit of playing around, a fair bit of discarding, screwing up, tearing apart. Eventually, I decided on the creative building blocks, carrying forward elements of my old work or drawing in general. Line and tone were the base elements, along with the mediums of graphite, pastel, conti, pencil. It was my approach, and how I used these elements, which constituted the major change in my work.

For this show, the opening of the doors to the main gallery is symbolic of that millennial change, from all the figurative work in the previous gallery spaces, to a calmer, cooler, approach. For this work I set up rules to draw and make paintings by. One: all work to be on a square format. Two: use only straight lines, drawn freehand, with no mechanical assistance. Three: nothing within whatever square to be measured, other than by my eye and judgement. Four: work should be monochrome. Finally, all marks or lines would begin in the centre of an edge or a given area then subdivided, using only straight lines (or as straight as I could make them by hand). For all these apparent limitations the rules were liberating, and in the end allowed me to free myself from my past work: not to disown it, but to be free of it.





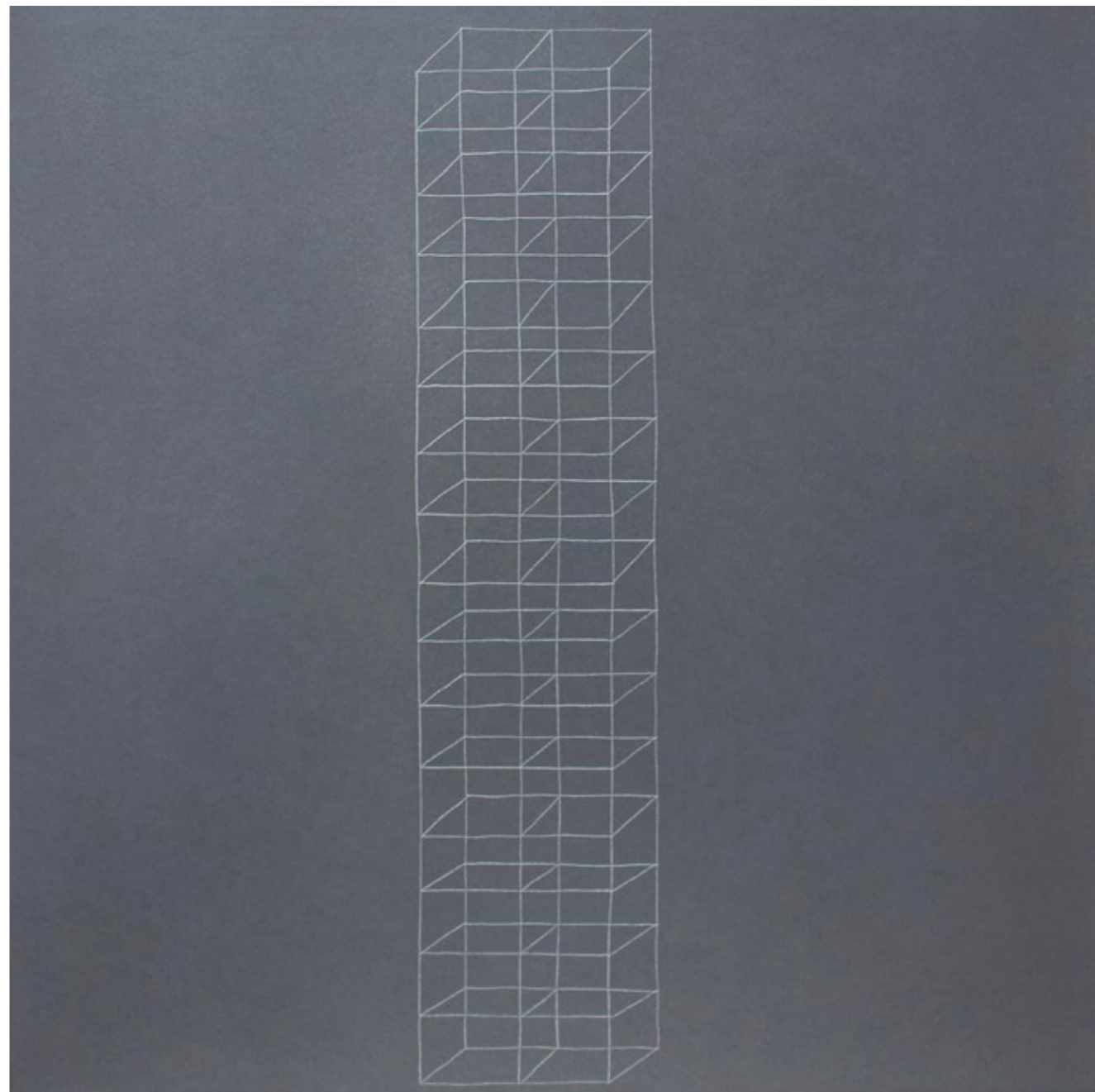
*Drawing 1 (2002) Graphite on paper. 45 x 45cm*



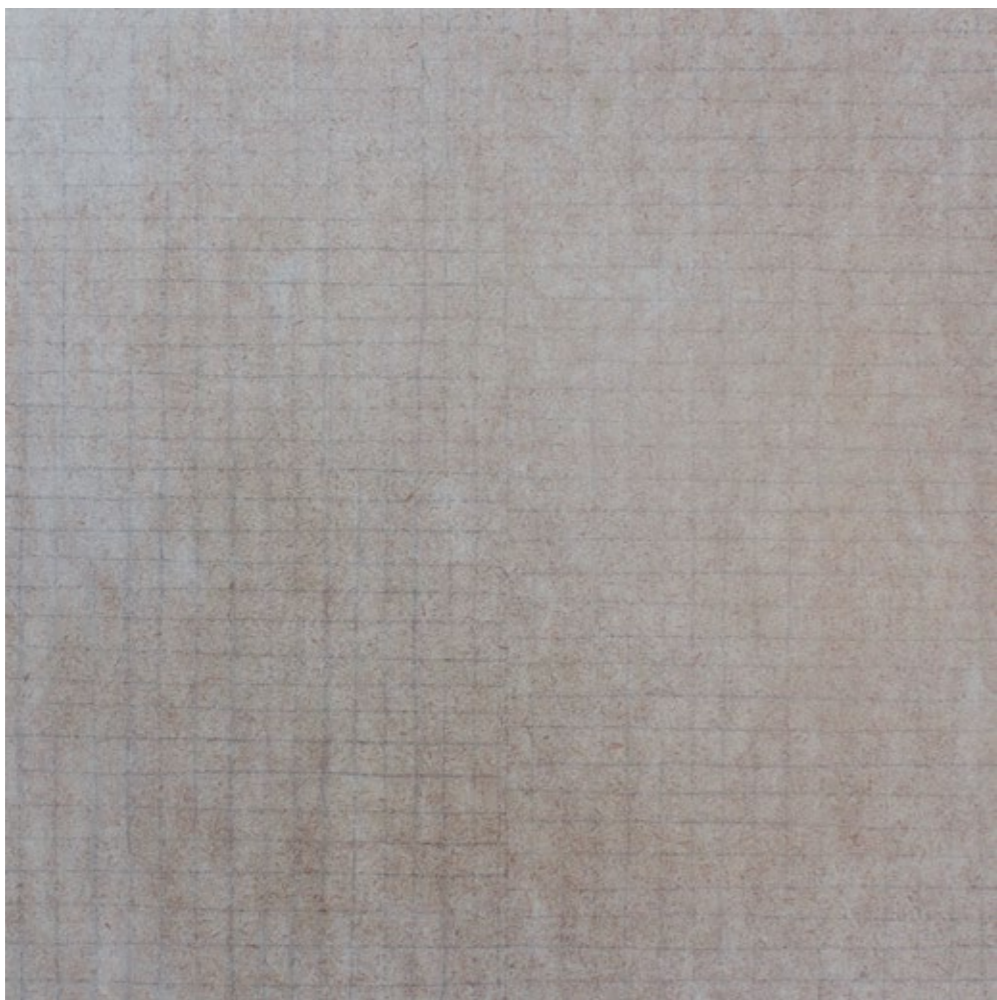
*Drawing 25ii (2004) Graphite on paper. 40 x 40cm*



*Drawing 38 (2003) Graphite on paper. 40 x 40cm*



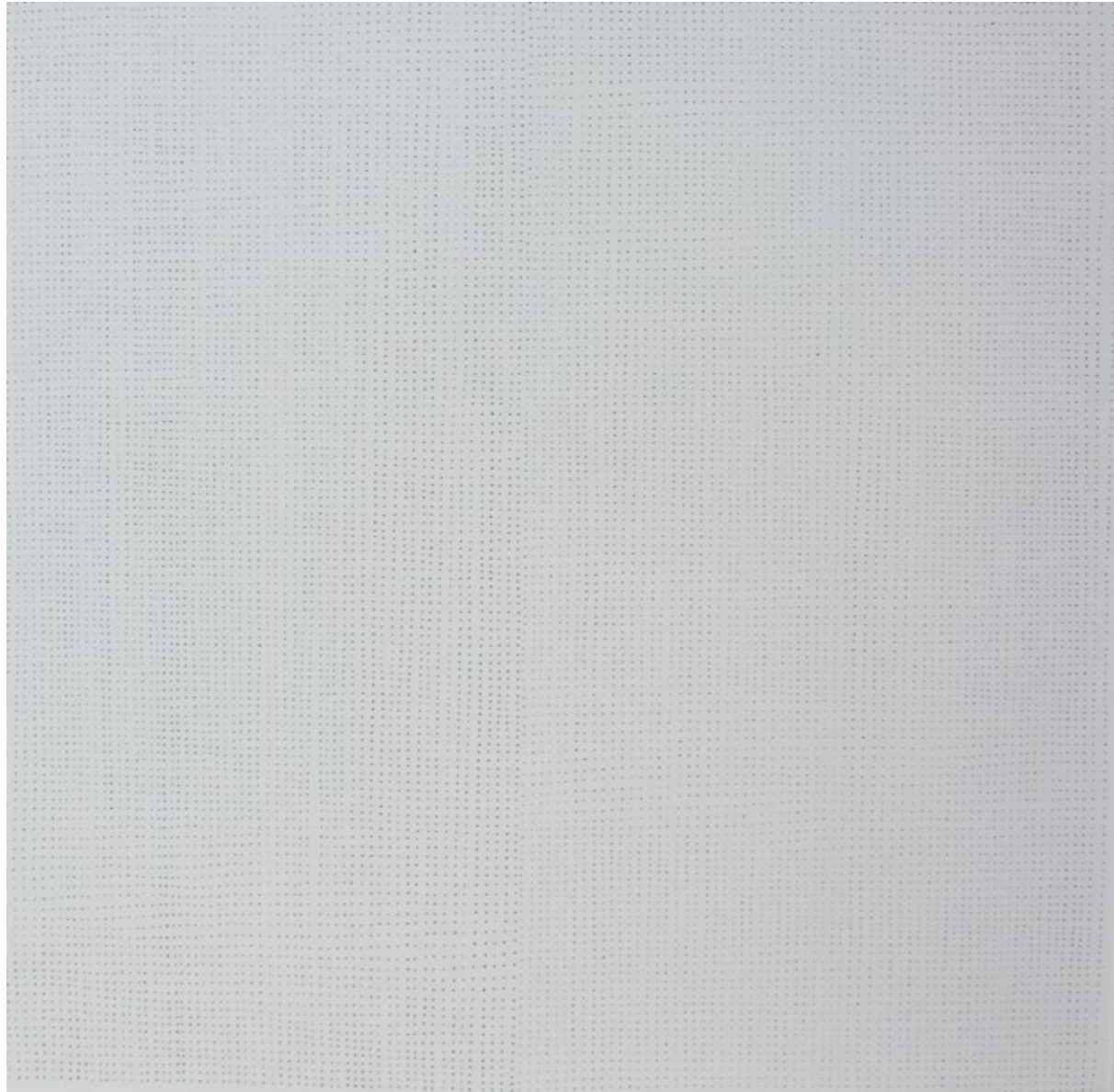
*Flat pack (2006) Graphite on paper. 40 x 40cm*



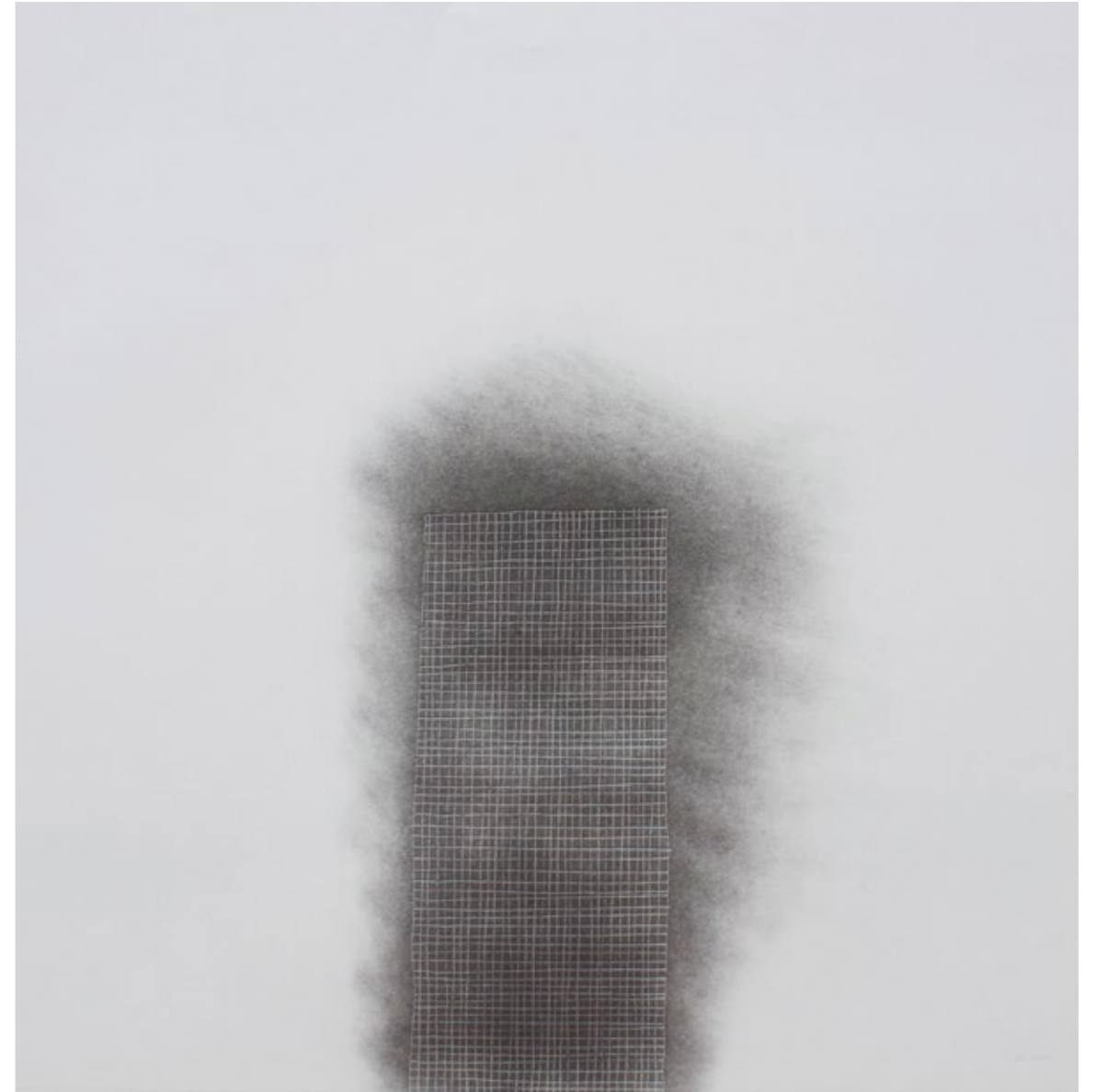
*Misaligned grid (2005) Titanium pigment, graphite on mdf. 30 x 30cm*



*Misaligned lines (2005) Titanium pigment, graphite on mdf. 30 x 30cm*



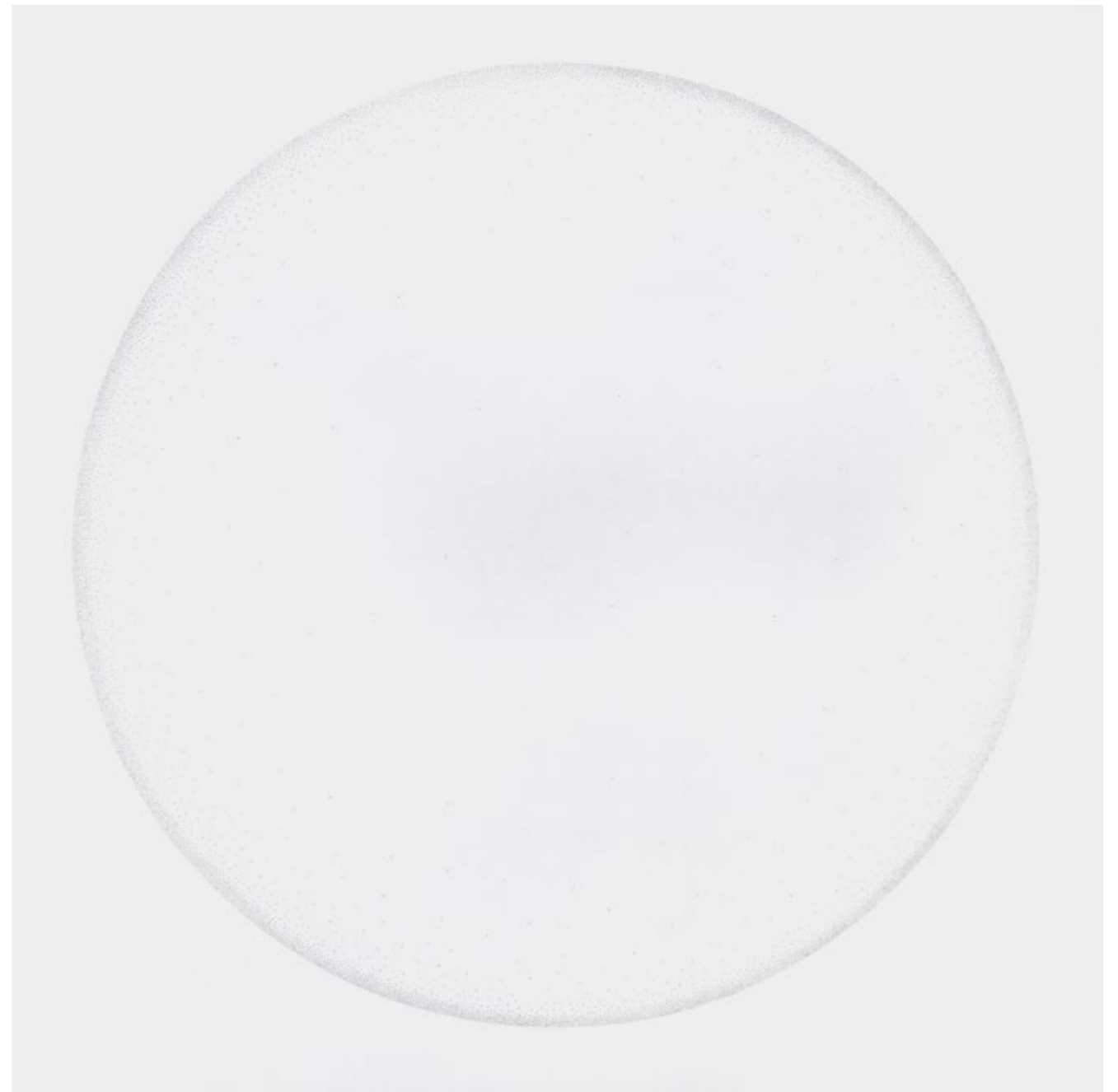
*Things we know (2005) Pencil on paper. 40 x 40cm*



*Grid (2013) Graphite on paper. 40 x 40cm*



*Transcience (2017) Pencil on paper. 50 x 50cm*



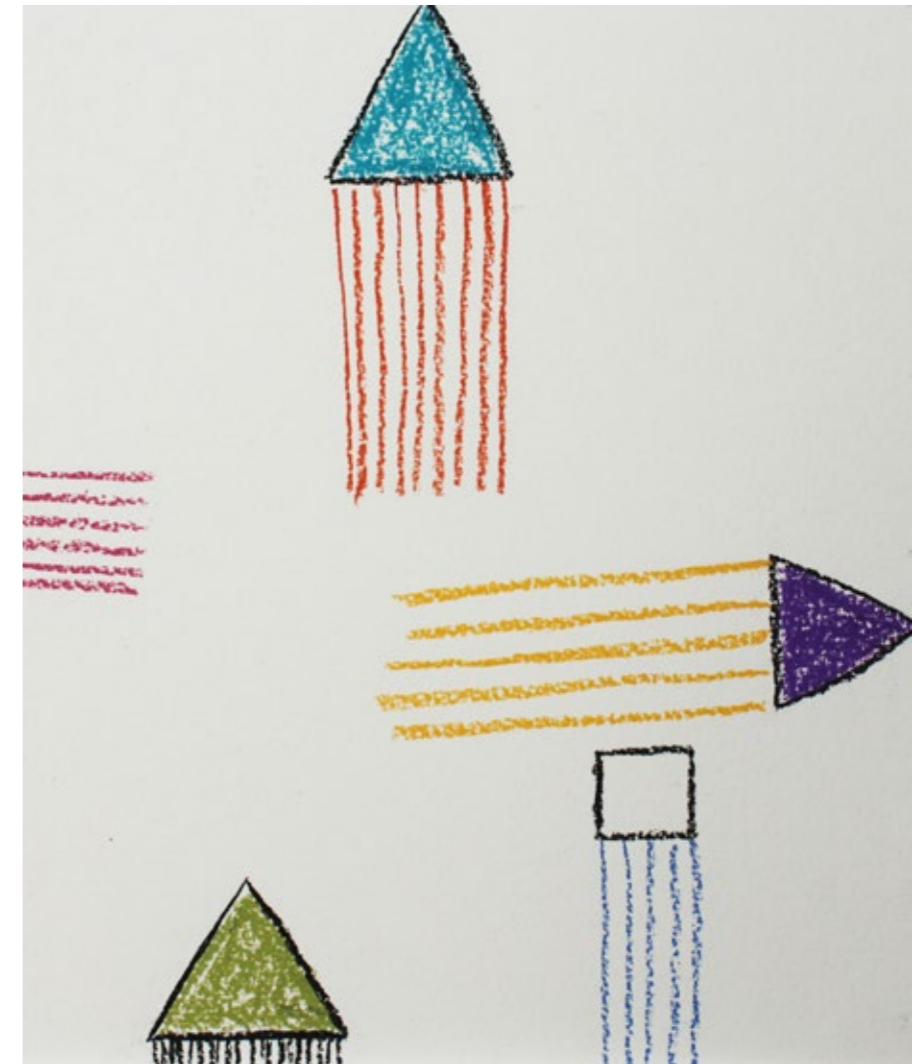
*Steady state (2015) Pencil on paper. 70 x 70cm*

Over the next few years my work moved on, the rules eased. Most of my output revolved around painting, although, of course, drawing is never absent. It can't be, even with a brush, no matter how wide or narrow, the same kind of decisions as those made on paper with a piece of charcoal or an HB pencil.

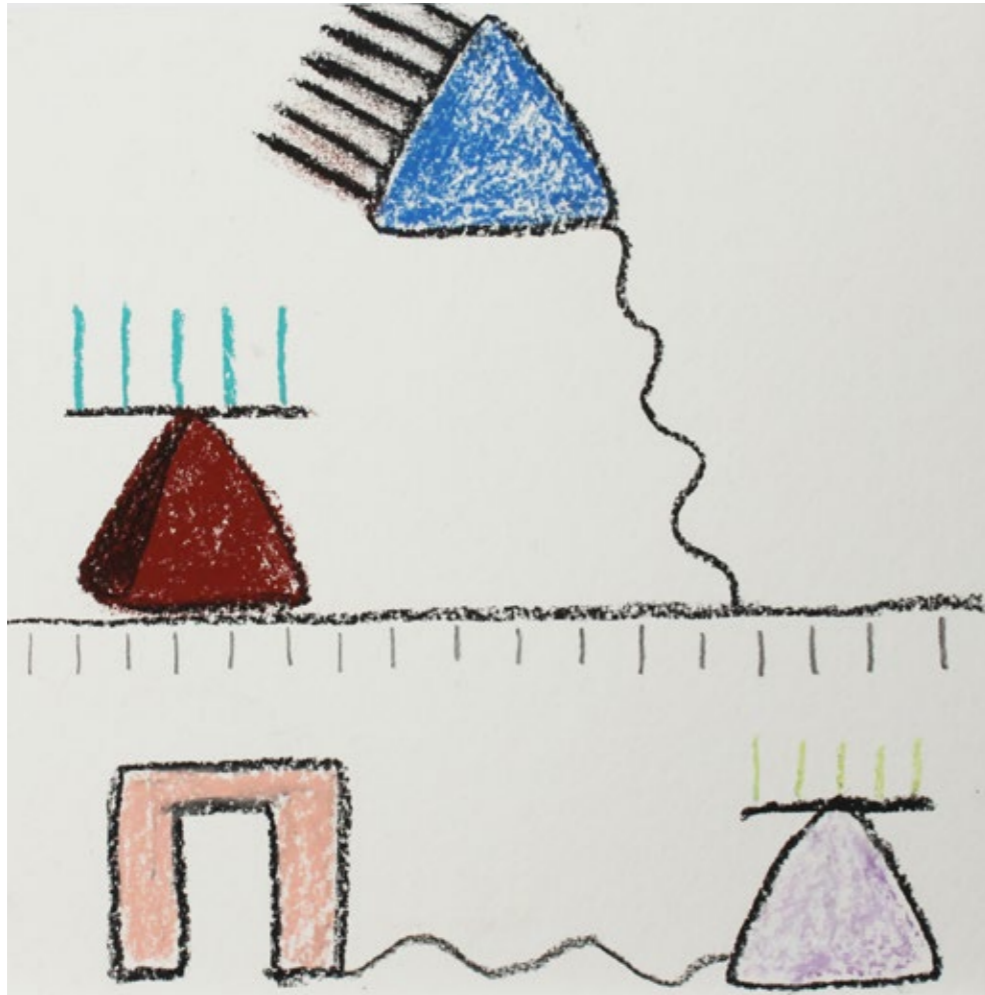
The final section of this show are drawings from 2018-19 onwards, to 2022. They cover my convalescent drawings from 2019. The plume drawings, arising from tragedies such as 9-11, Grenville tower, the various wars we have witnessed and are still living through. There are also groups of works that are almost impressionistic. Very odd, I thought, when they emerged. They are spontaneous drawing events, and what content there is seems to come from remembered shapes and objects, from years walking up and down Southsea sea front. This particular space changes continuity. Sometimes one is almost level with the sea and all the vertical poles, buoys and numerous vessels and lights which demarcate the space. Then, with a change of altitude, one looks down on this space and it all changes again. The changes of light, which is itself a constant, shifts things again. All these elements seem to have lodged in my inner sketch book, floating around, waiting to be retrieved, and consequently appear in some of these later drawings.

Bedrock, the title of my exhibition is, surely, self-explanatory. Drawing, and the various qualities the artist imbues it with, is the foundation on which we build our art. In fact drawing permeates all I do as an artist and as a human. It's an attitude, sceptical and questioning, just as much as it is an activity of mark making.

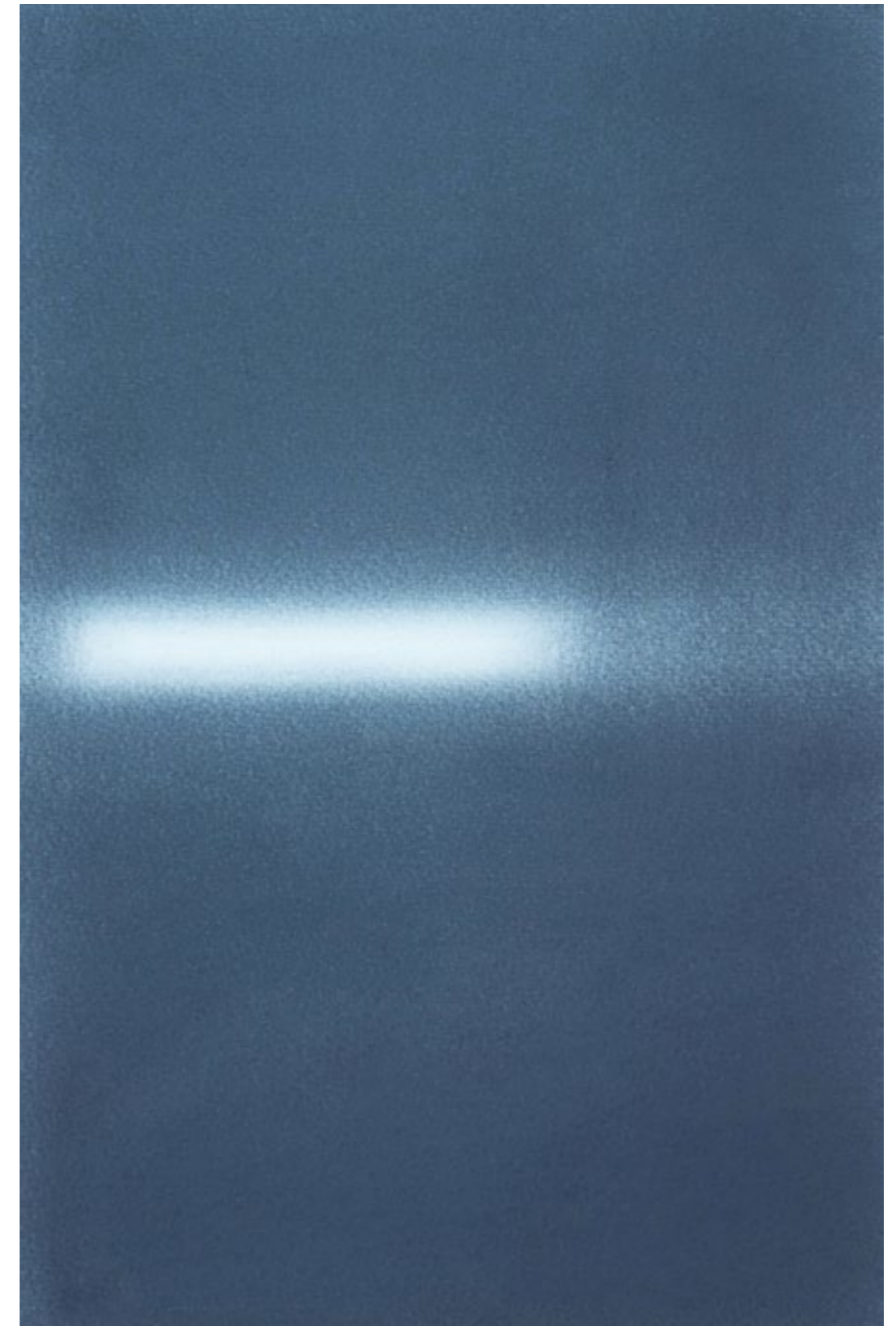
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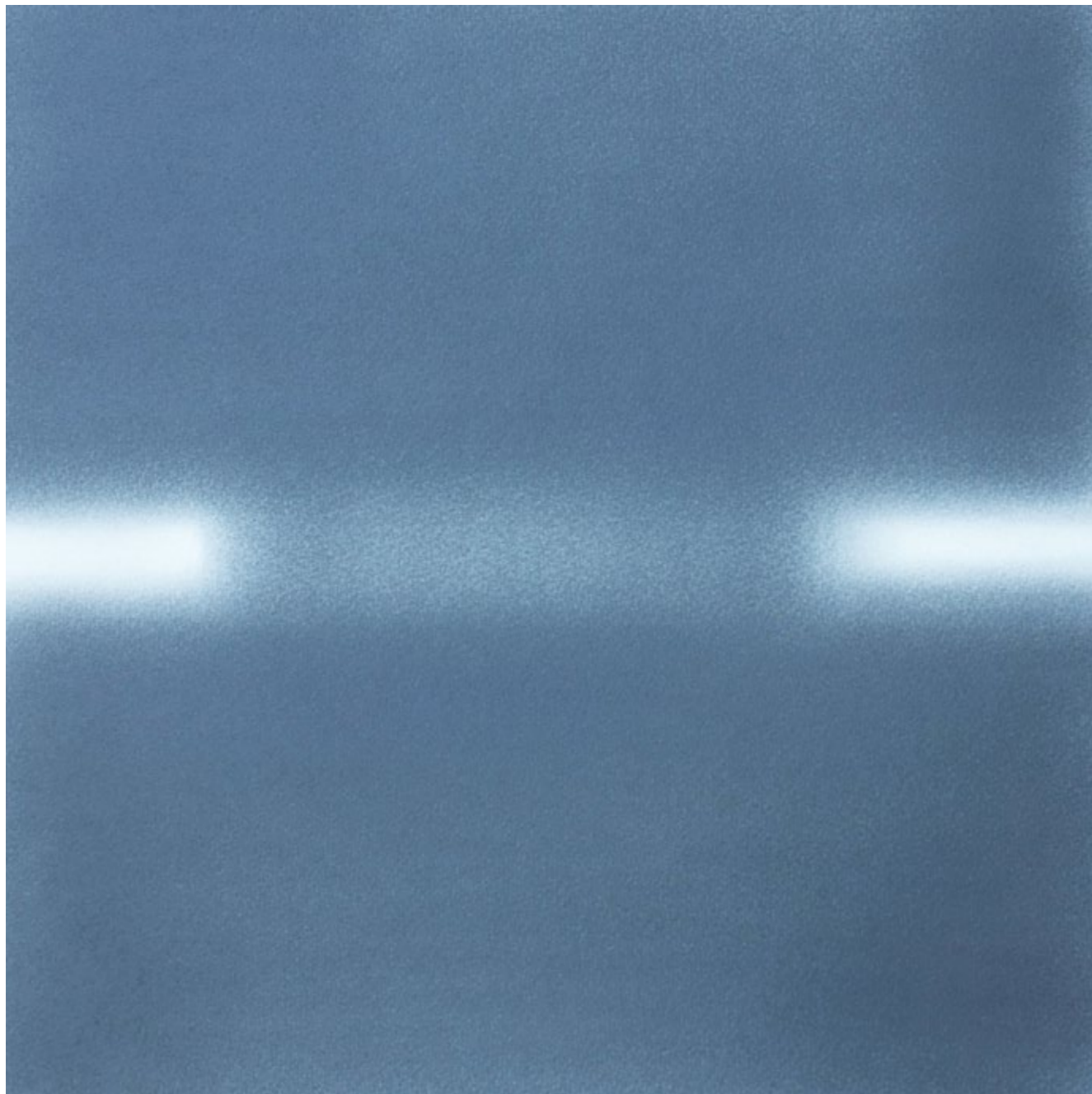
*The 60's (2019) Pastel on paper. 38 x 33cm*



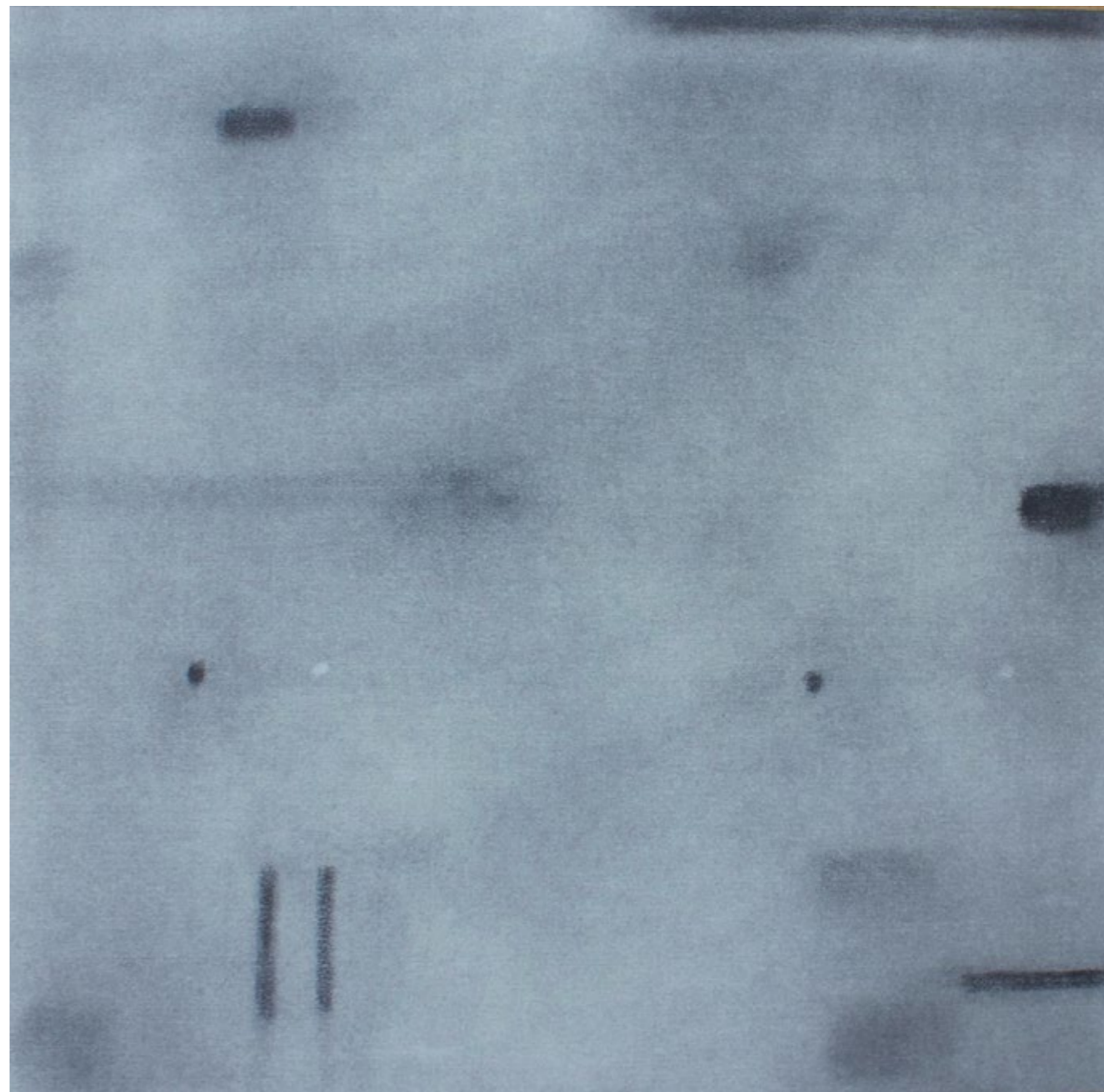
*That explains everything (2019) Pastel on paper. 30.5 x 30.5cm*



*East West (2020) Graphite on paper. 45.7 x 30.5cm*



*Onsett (2020) Graphite on paper. 45.7 x 45.7cm*

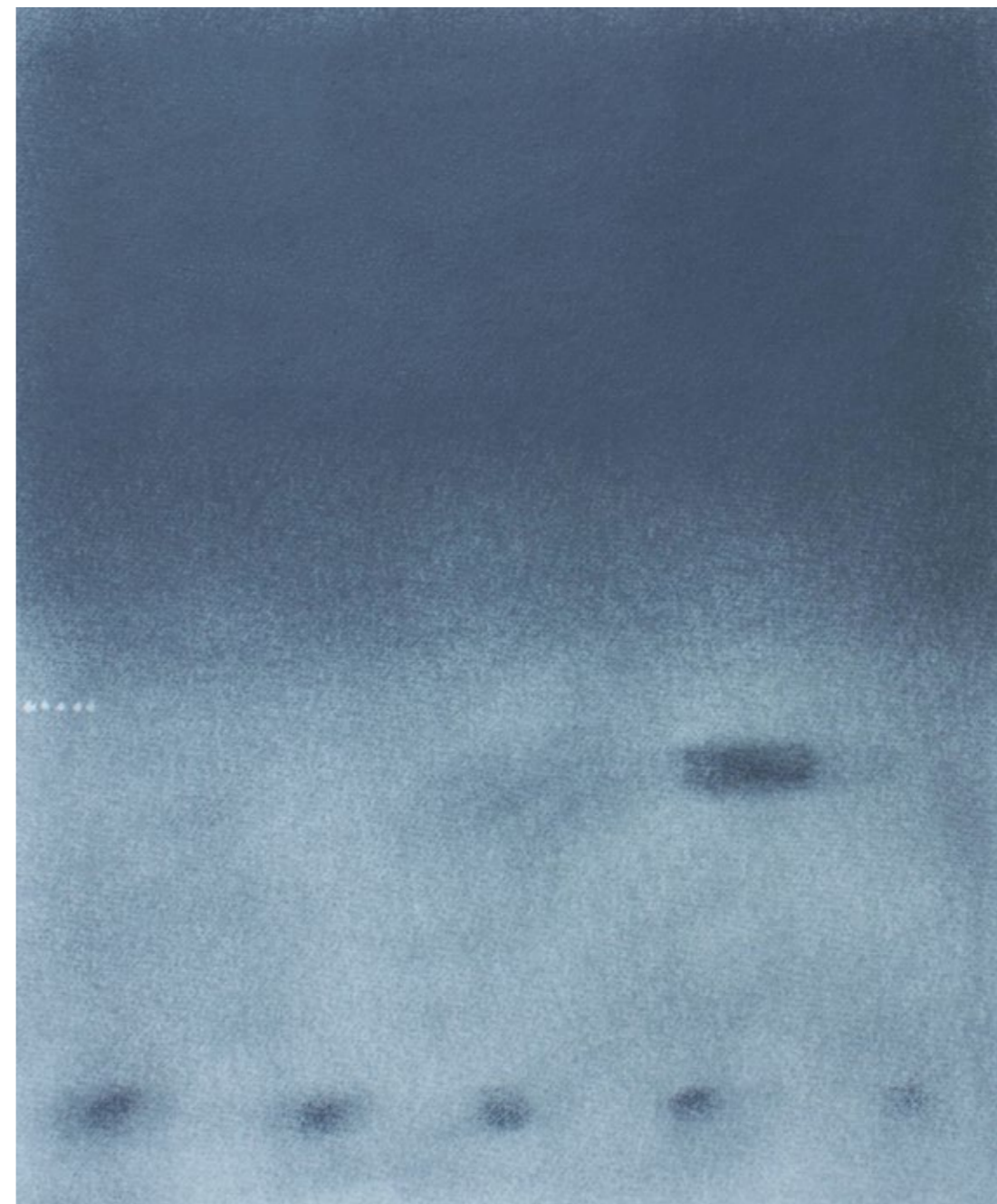


*Marginal (2020) Graphite, compressed charcoal, pastel on paper. 61 x 61cm*

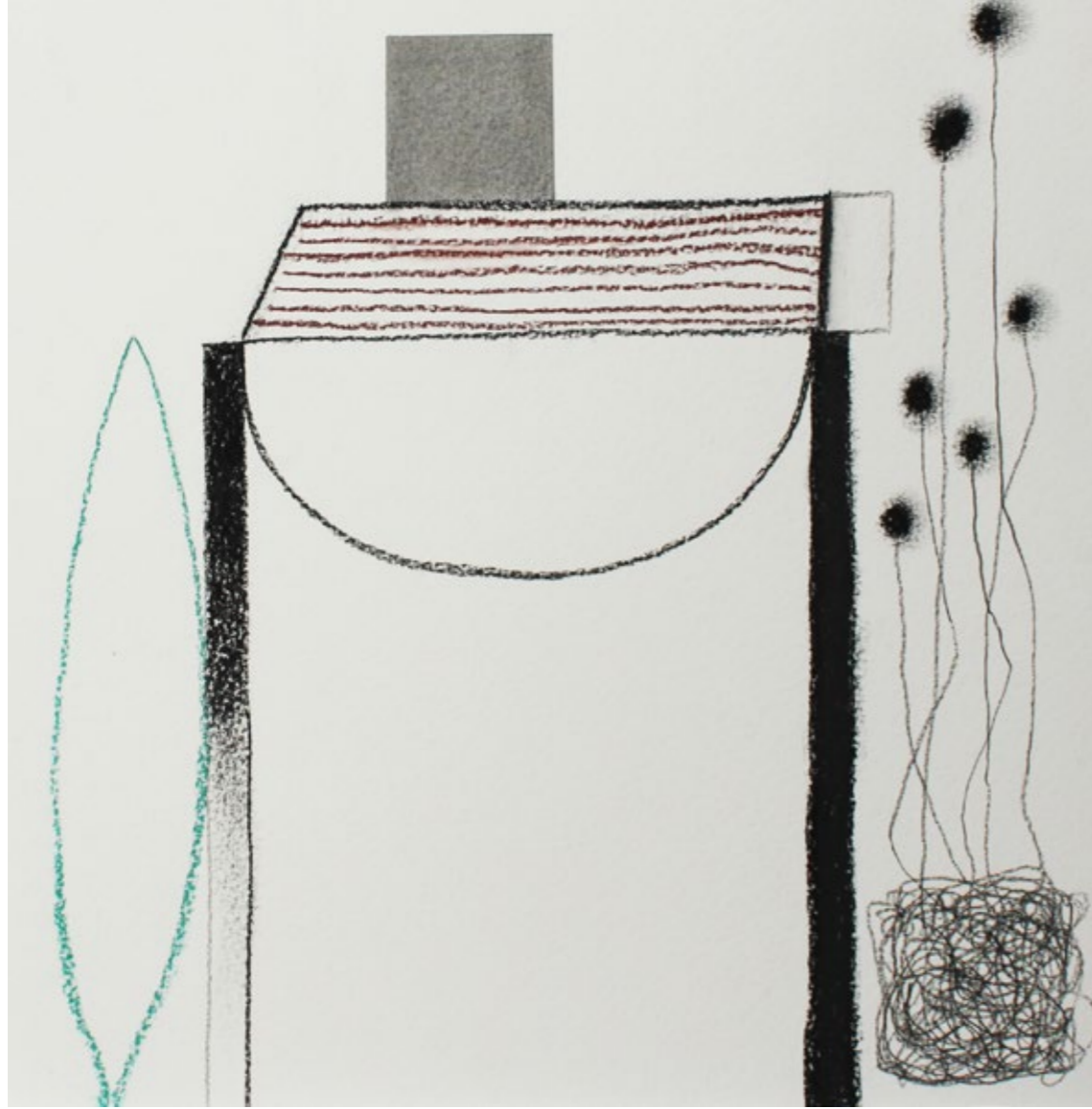




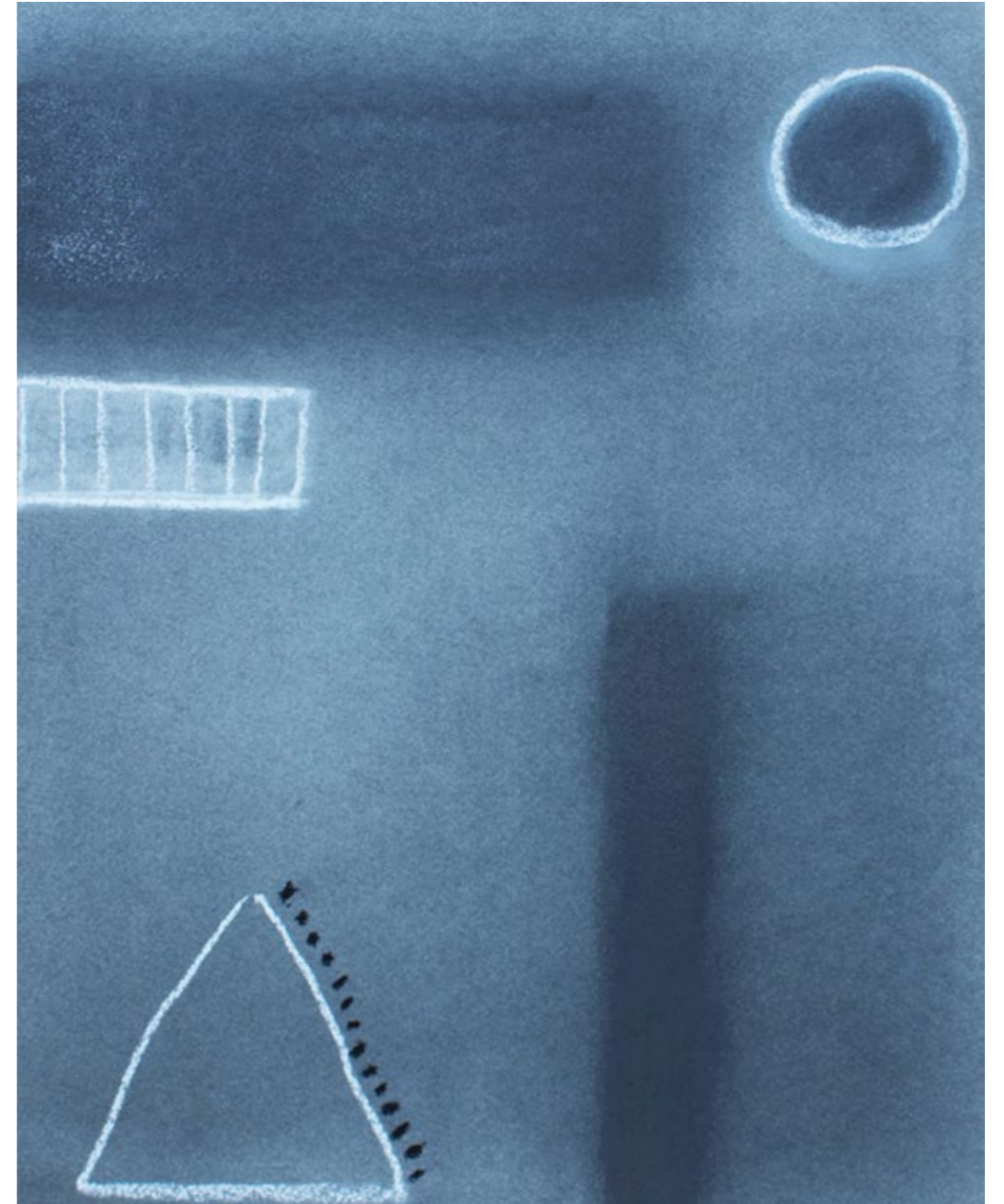
*Plume drawing 1 (2021) Graphite on paper. 50 x 48 cm*



*Nocturne 1 (2020) Graphite, compressed charcoal on paper. 45 x 38cm*



*Still life with grey square (2019) Graphite, pastel, pencil on paper. 38 x 38cm*



*Eclipse (2020) Graphite, pastel, compressed charcoal on paper. 45.7 x 38cm*



*Offshore (2020) Graphite on paper. 76 x 76cm*

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