

Monochrome

More than just black and white

Monochromatic Art

A monochrome or monochromatic painting is **one created using only one color or hue**. It can use different shades of one color but by definition should contain only one base color.

- <https://www.cnn.com/style/article/monochrome-national-gallery/index.html>
- <https://magazine.artland.com/the-monochrome-a-history-of-simplicity-in-painting/>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=27KjHVroq58>

Yves Klein

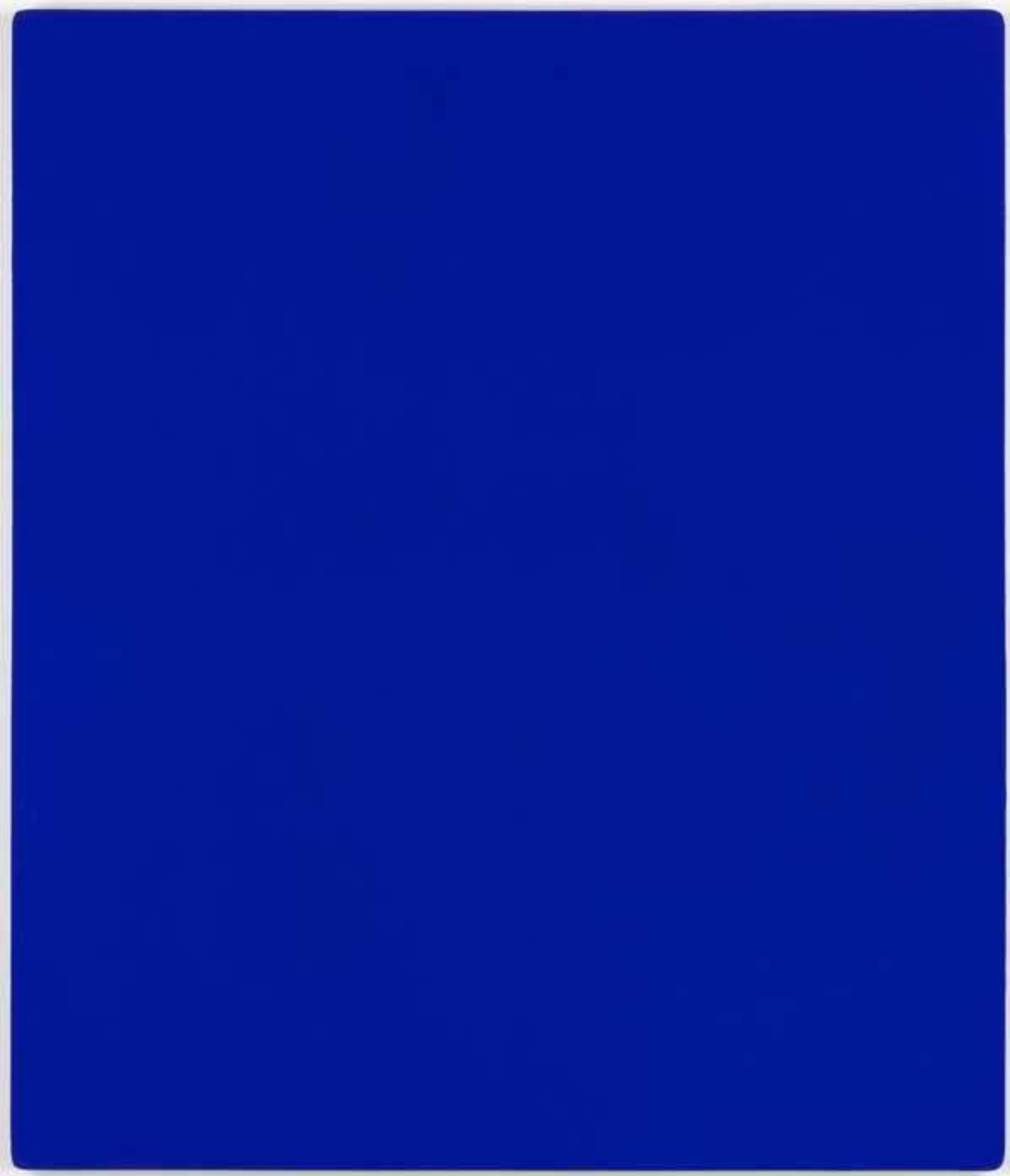
Yves Klein was a French artist and an important figure in post-war European art. He was a leading member of the French artistic movement of Nouveau réalisme founded in 1960 by art critic Pierre Restany.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6m8U4F1nUNE&t=42s>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dZ14kux-lA&t=1s>

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-qpBxBtvMKY>













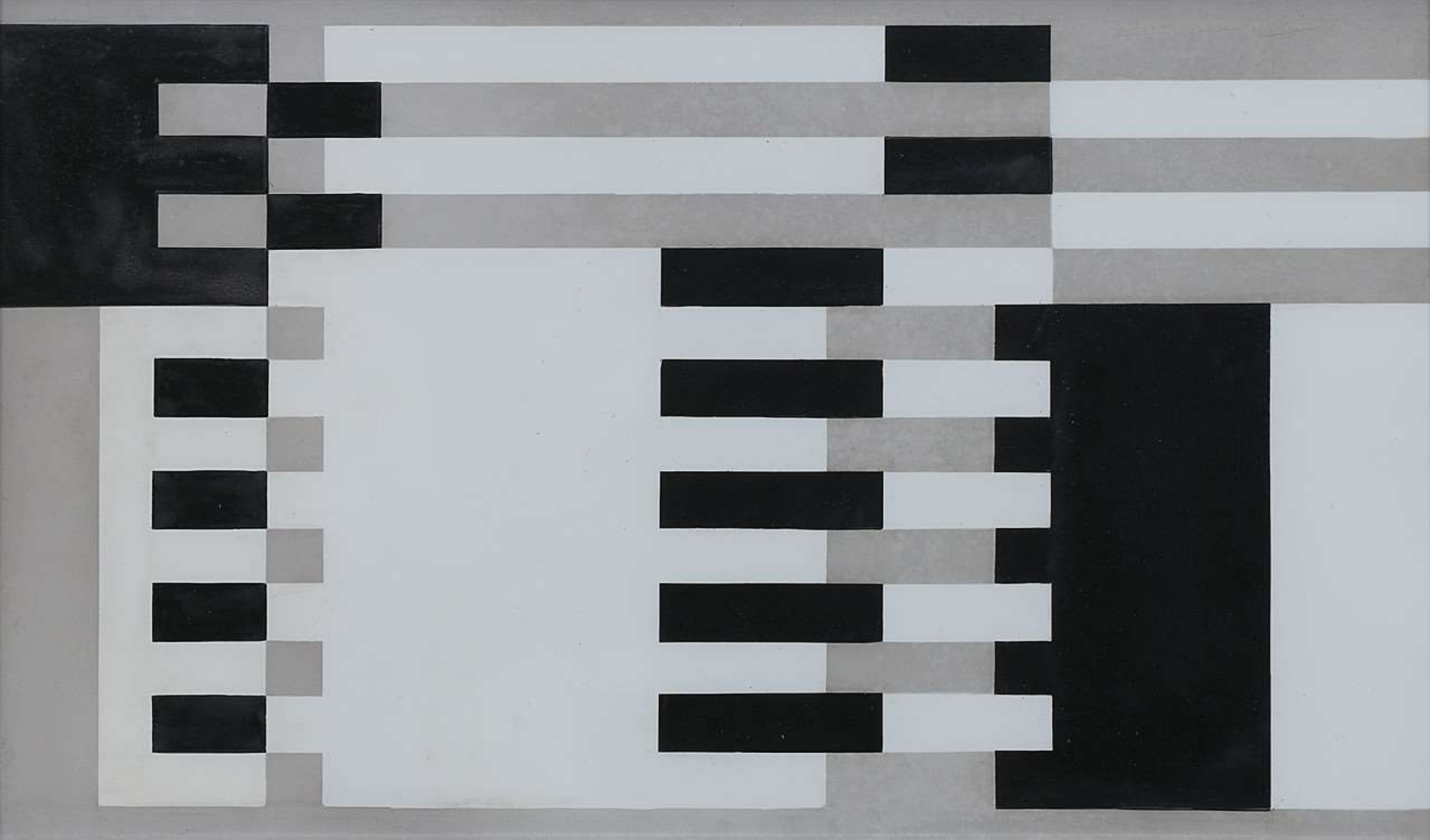


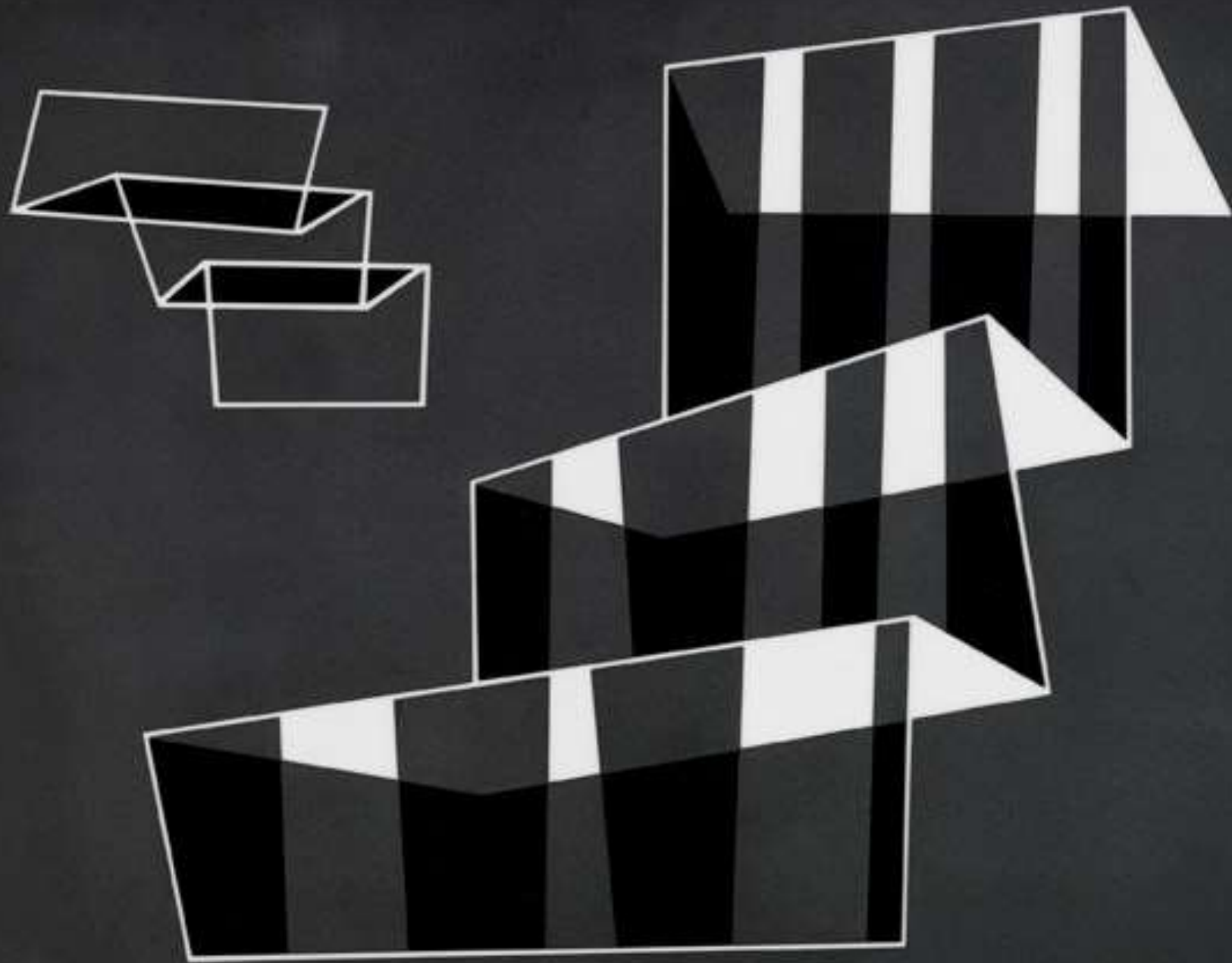
Josef Albers

A Josef Albers exhibition in black and white sounds like a conceptual gag. Albers, after all, is the colour man. [His book *Interaction of Color*](#) even has its own iPad app. A lot of what we understand about colour we understand because Albers made us understand. But, as Albers understood, you can't understand colour if you don't understand black and white.

['Joseph Albers: Black and White' at the London's Waddington Custot Galleries](#), produced in association with the Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, brings together 50 works to explore Albers' adventures in monochrome. The exhibition covers paintings, works on paper, glassworks, photographs and engravings on vinylite, including a set of six Treble Clef gouaches from the 1930s as well as six Graphic Tectonic drawings from the 1940s and Structural Constellations from the 1950s that make clear that Albers was as much a master of line as colour.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l3xpTtn7zo8>
- <https://www.phaidon.com/agenda/art/articles/2016/november/07/why-josef-albers-squares-began-in-black-and-white/>





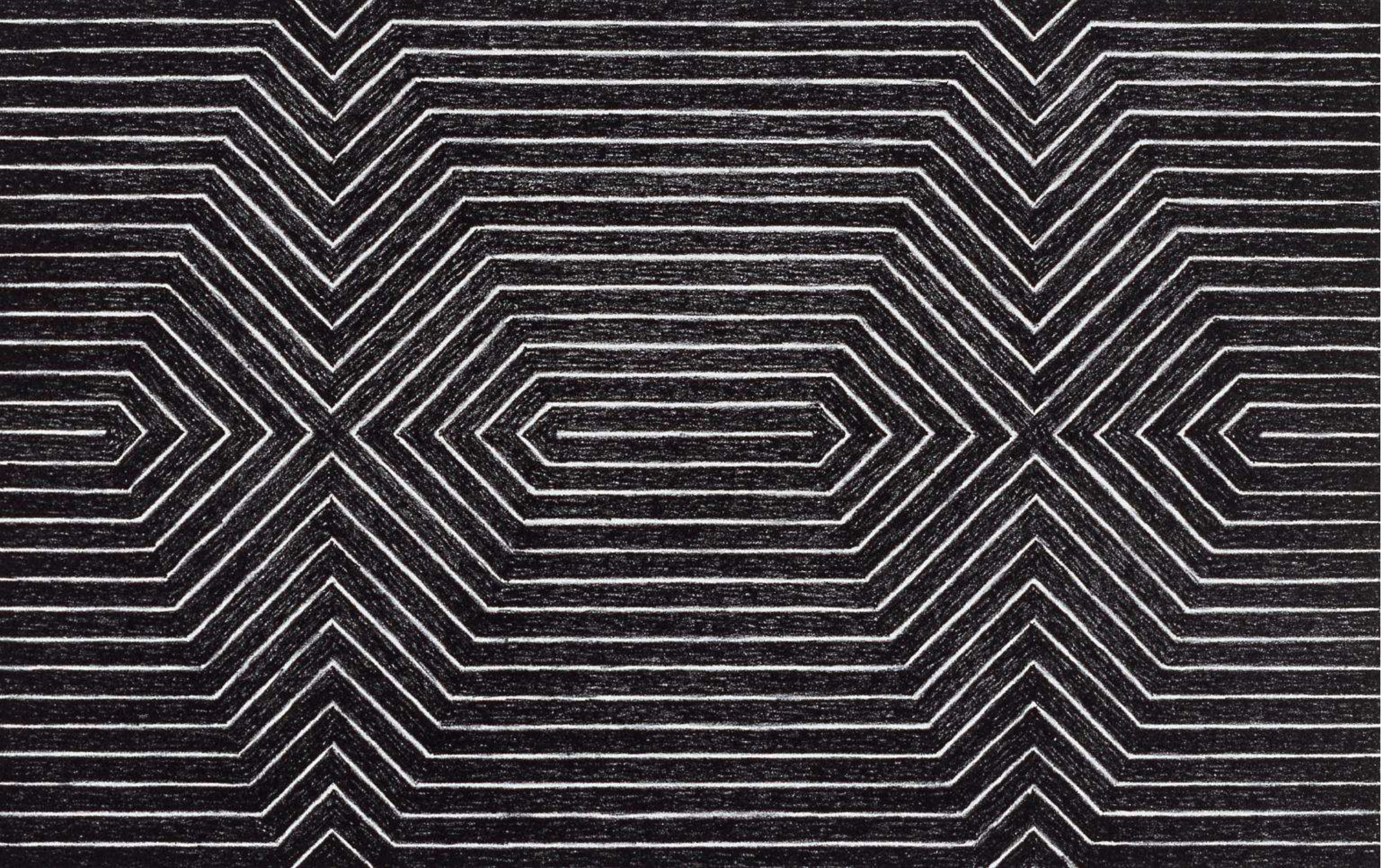


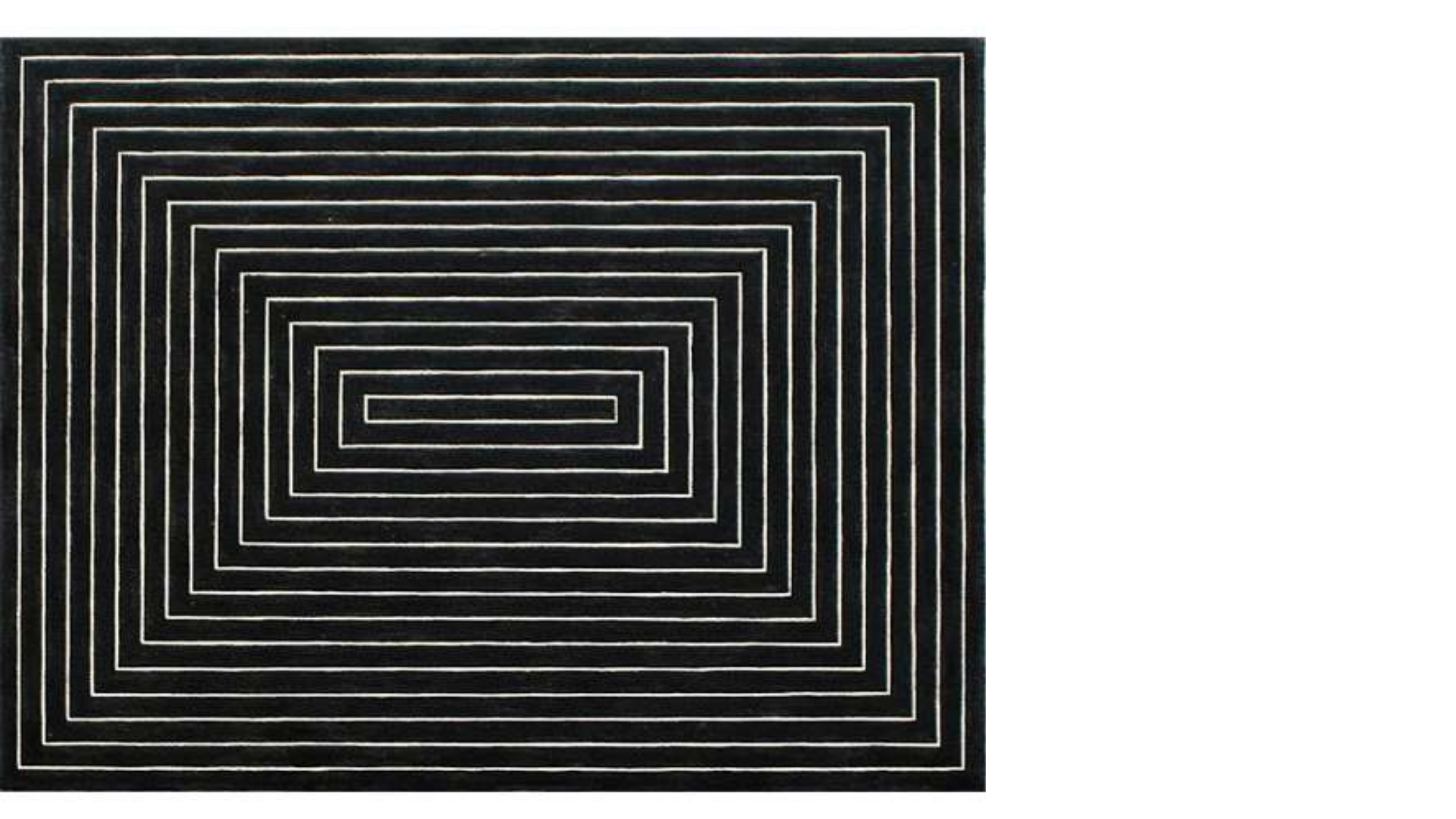
Frank Stella

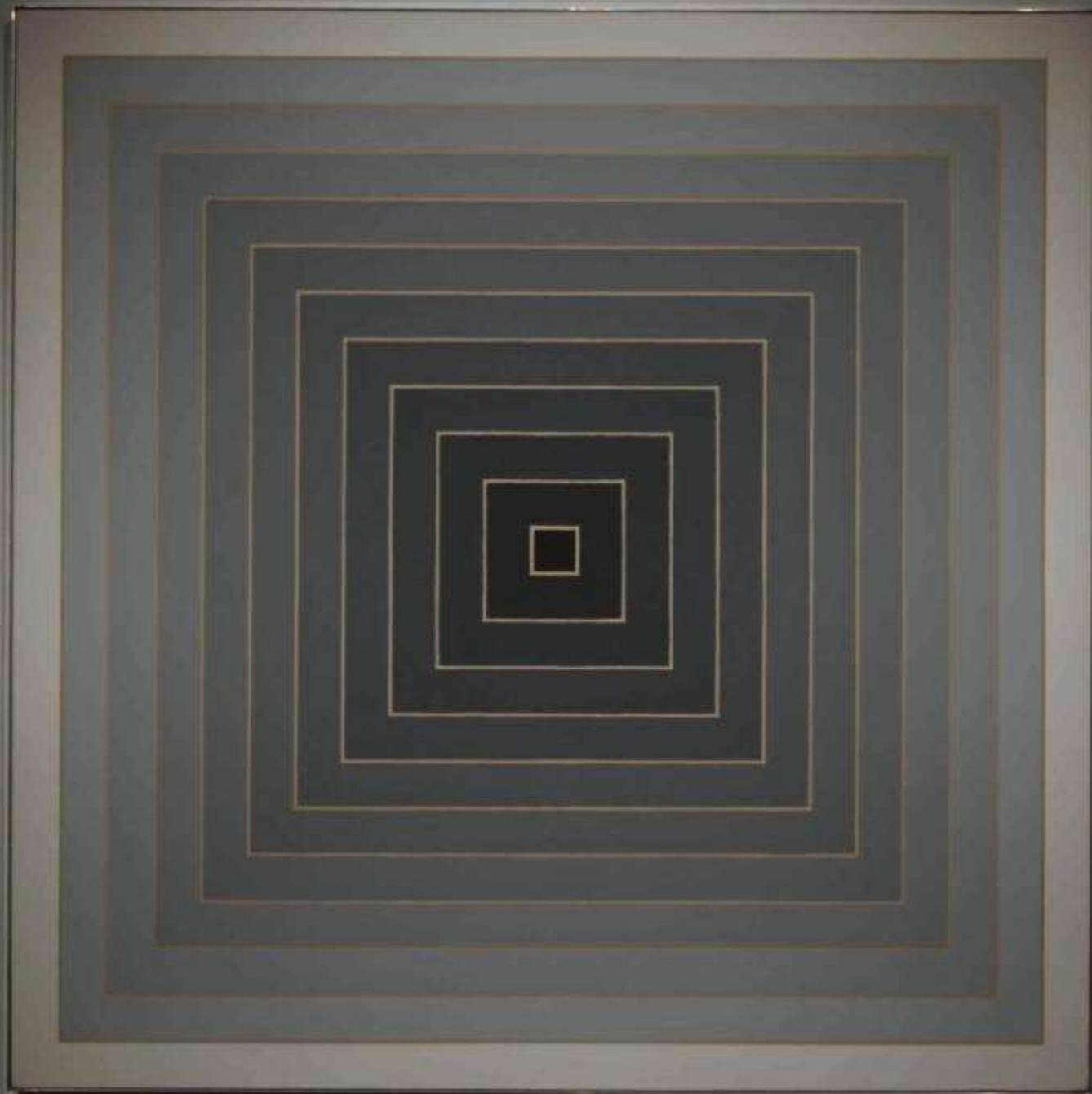
The Black Series I prints closely relate to large, monochromatic canvases known as the Black Paintings, which [Frank Stella \(American, born 1936\)](#) completed between 1958 and 1960. Each lithograph features a pattern of rectilinear stripes of uniform width printed in metallic black ink on buff-tinted paper. In the Black Paintings, the stripes extend to the edge of the canvas support; in the prints, Stella positioned the striped form in the lower left quadrant of the sheet. This format visually unifies the series, and subtly shifts focus from the symmetrical patterning to the asymmetrical relationship between striped field and rectangular paper.

- <https://artincontext.org/monochromatic-art/>







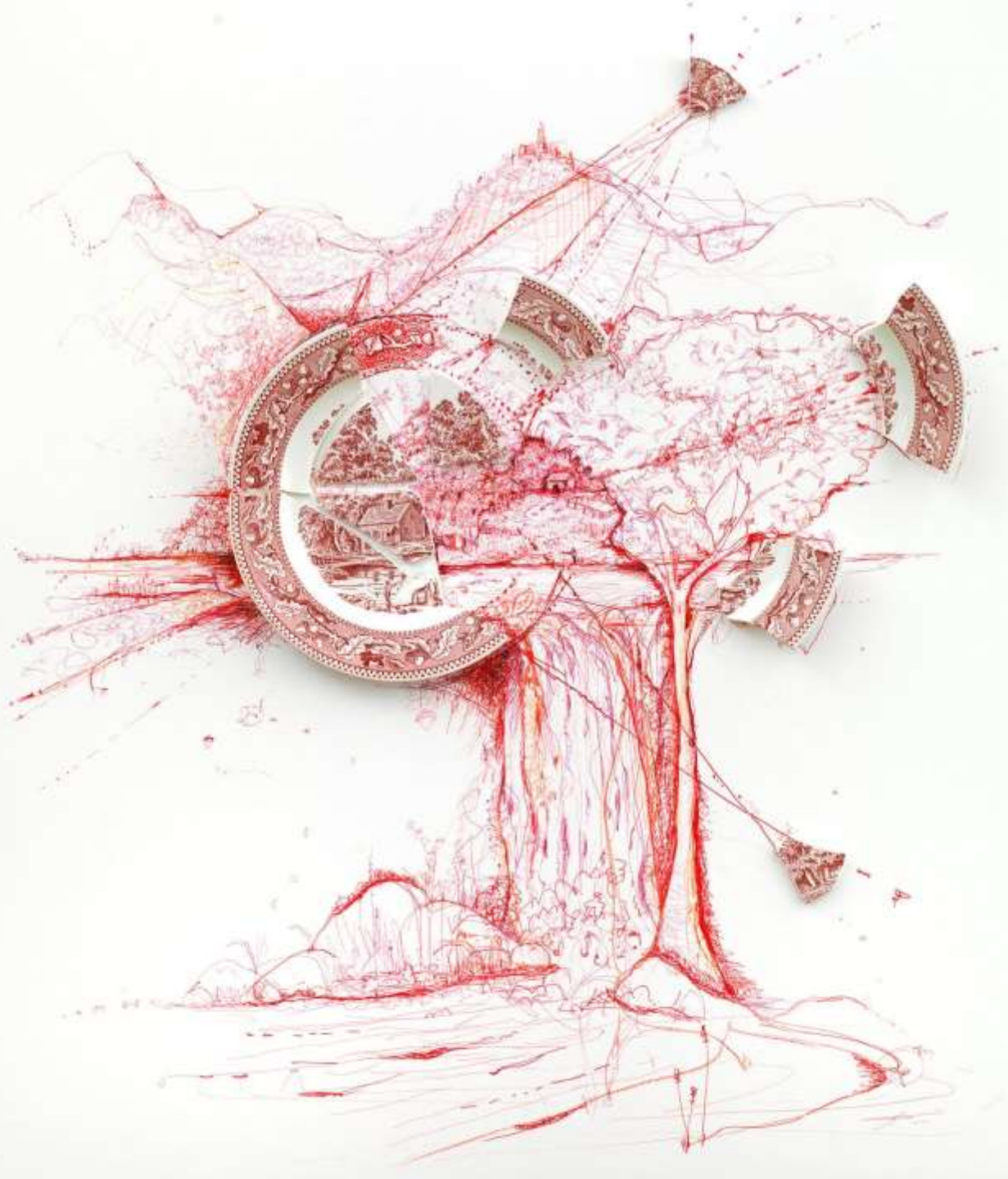


Robert Strati

When an heirloom plate crashed to the floor, rather than trying to glue the pieces back together, [Robert Strati](#) had a more creative idea to preserve the spirit of the object. He arranged the shards on a two-dimensional surface, mimicking the way the pieces scattered when the plate fell, and began to render intricate ink drawings that extended from the original design. The chance occurrence spurred an ongoing series called *Fragmented*, which explores “the possibilities of things broken and the stories that can evolve from them,” he says.

Utilizing ink that matches the original, monochrome colors of antique plates, Strati continues lines and patterns into dreamlike scenarios. Brimming with figures, ships, and animals, bucolic landscapes expand into vast vistas and surreal scenes sprout from decorative edges.

- <https://www.thisiscolossal.com/2023/04/robert-strati-porcelain-plates/>









Robert Longo

Longo is the king of black and white. He made his name in the 1980s with big black and white figures and his latest show contains 12 charcoal version of Abstract Expressionist paintings from Rothko to Pollock.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8kuVlrHmnN4&t=41s>











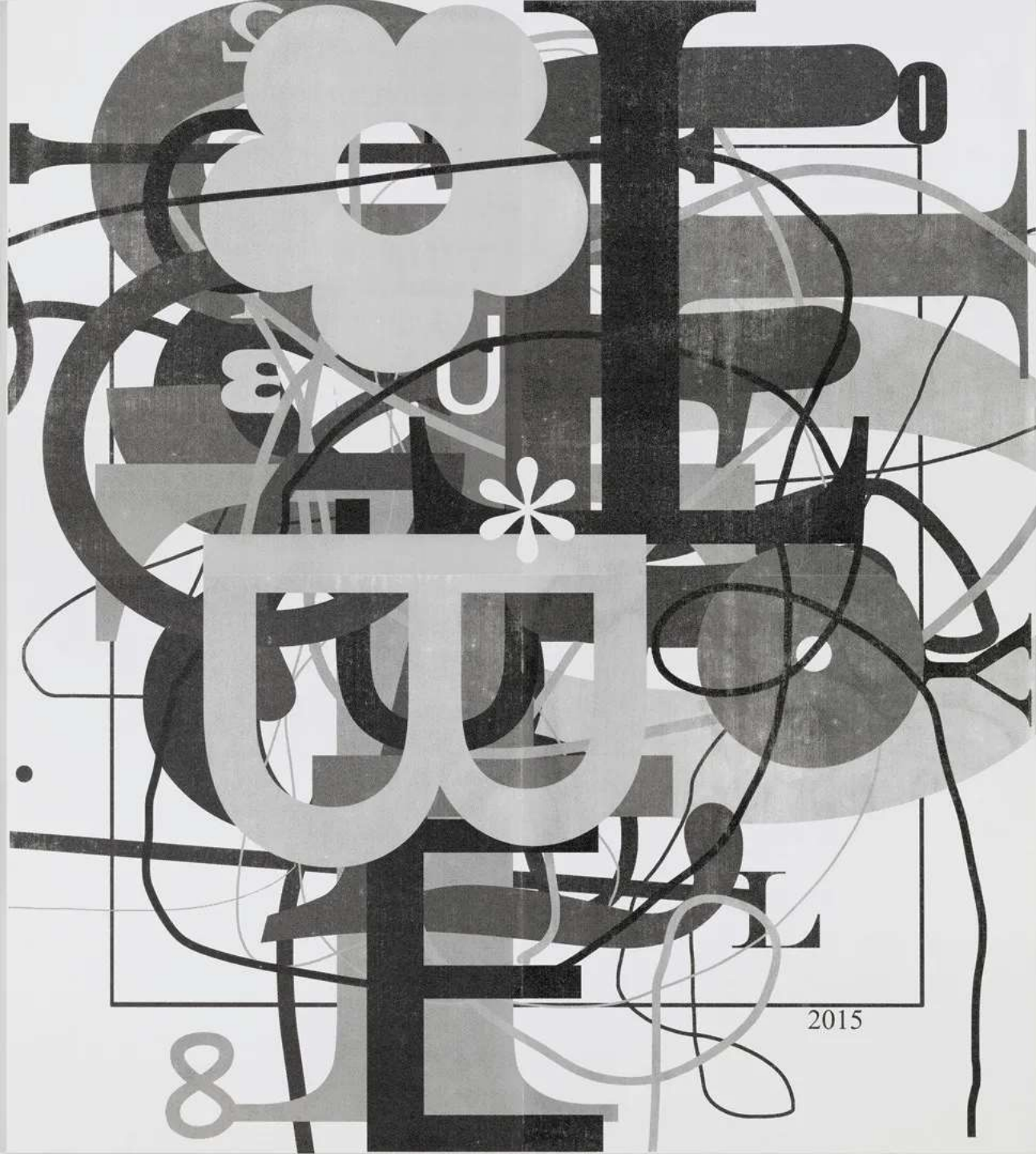
Christopher Wool

Christopher Wool is an American artist. Since the 1980s, Wool's art has incorporated issues surrounding post-conceptual ideas. He lives and works in New York City and Marfa, Texas, together with his wife and fellow painter Charline von Heyl

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8lwdI_YYNO4





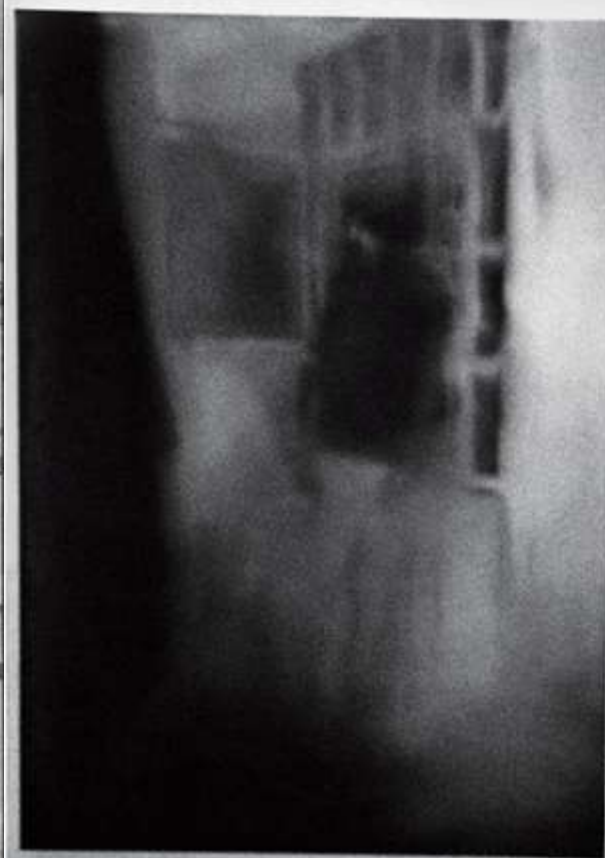


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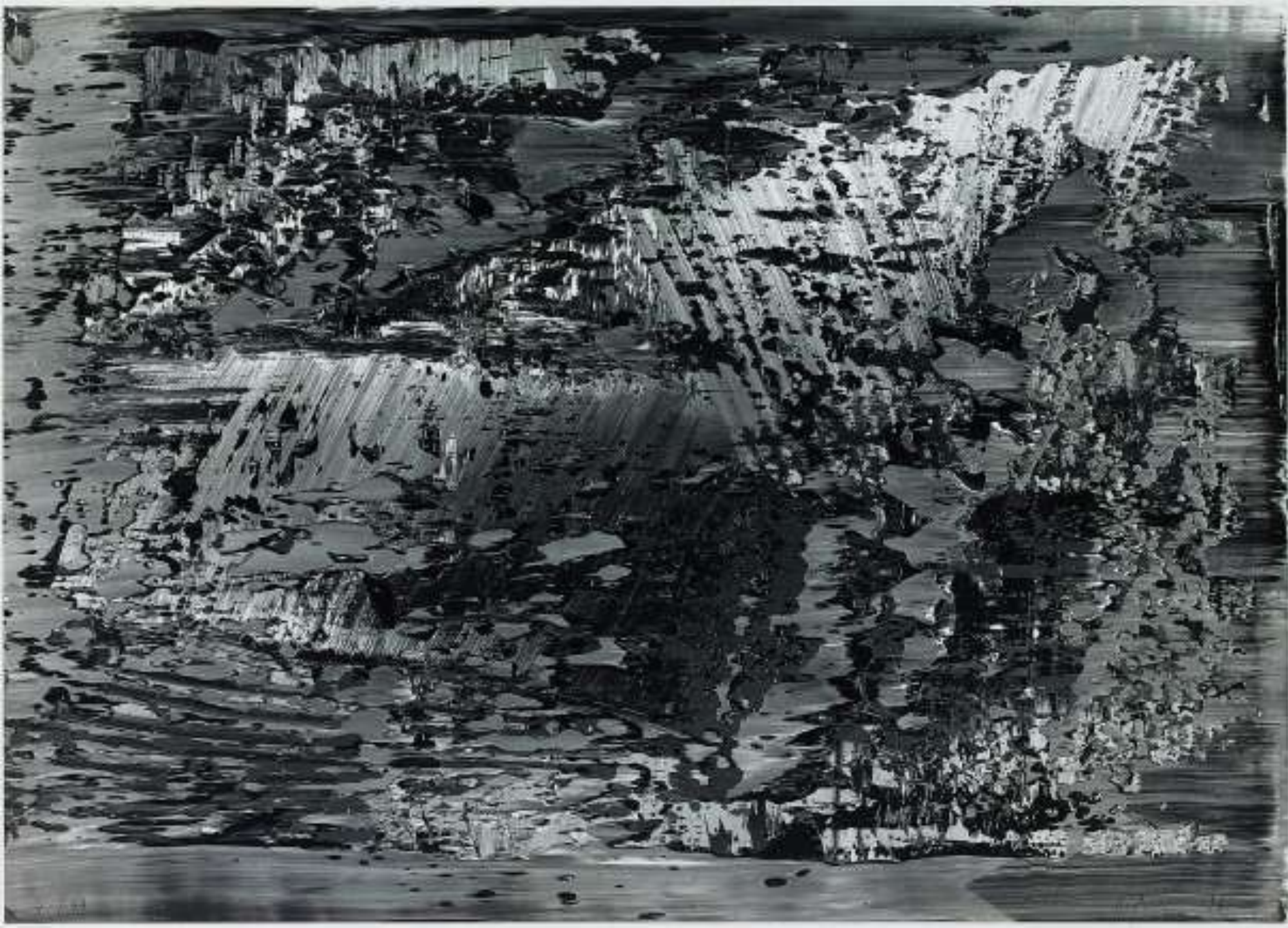
Gerhard Richter

Gerhard Richter is a German visual artist. Richter has produced abstract as well as photorealistic paintings, and also photographs and glass pieces. He is widely regarded as one of the most important contemporary German artists and several of his works have set record prices at auction.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kbLQRMUV8hg>
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ILWOcE91_T4&t=61s
- <https://gerhard-richter.com/en/videos/works/early-photo-paintings-70>







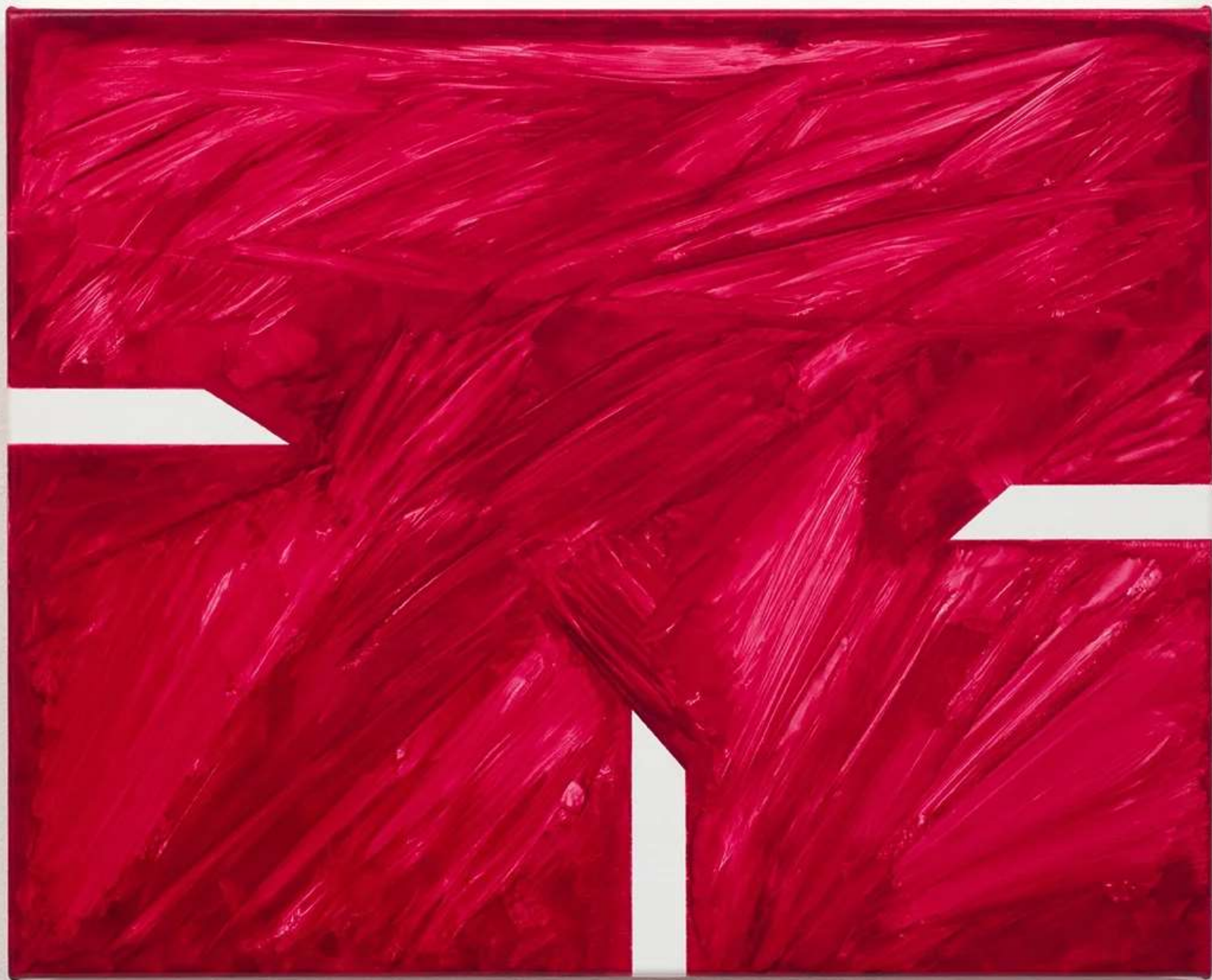




Robert Holyhead

Robert Holyhead is a British abstract artist. He studied painting at Manchester School of Art and completed his MA at Chelsea School of Art in 1997. Holyhead's work is marked by expanses of white ground left uncovered with traces of colour at the canvas-edge where paint has been carefully removed from the surface.

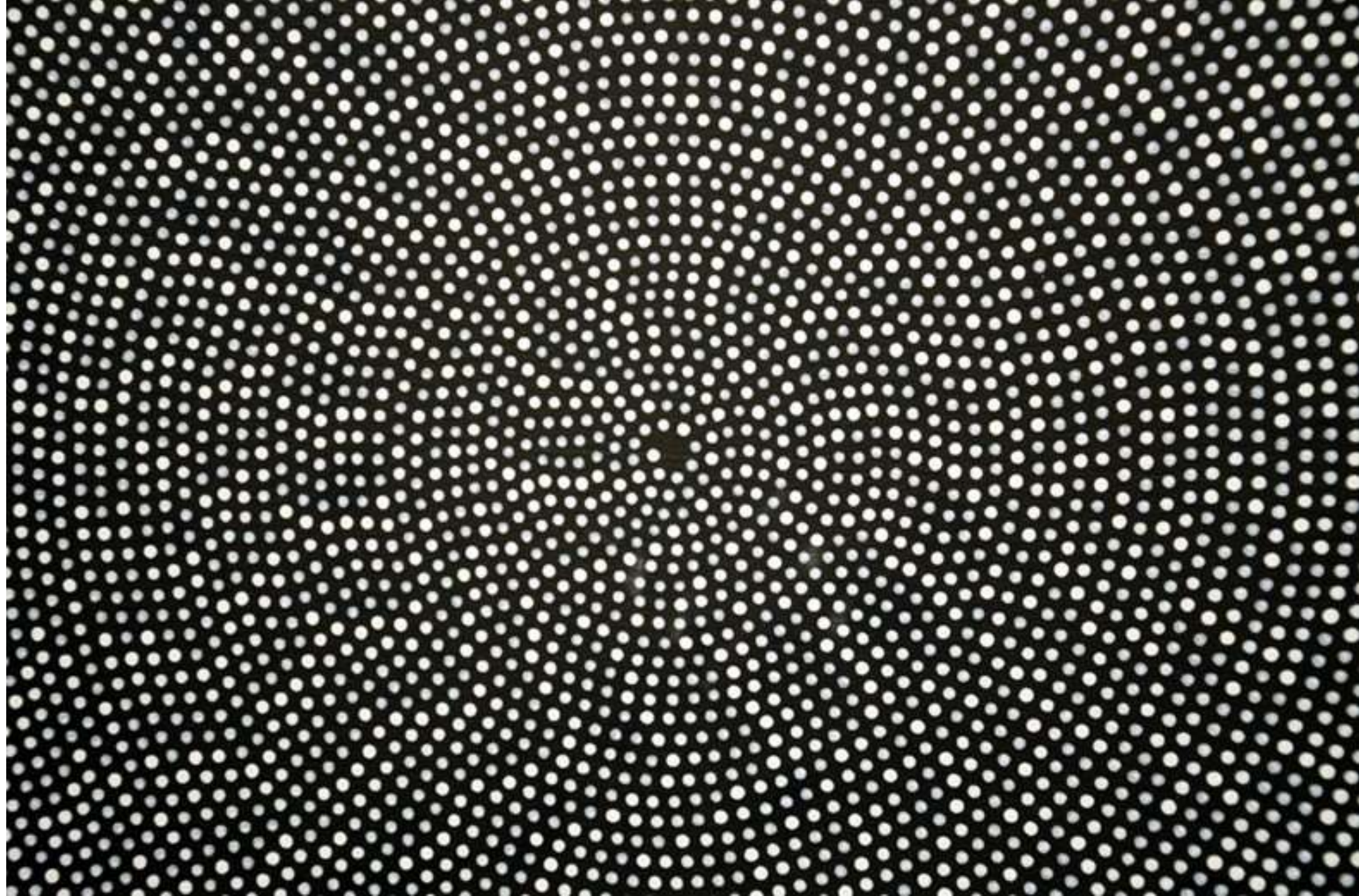




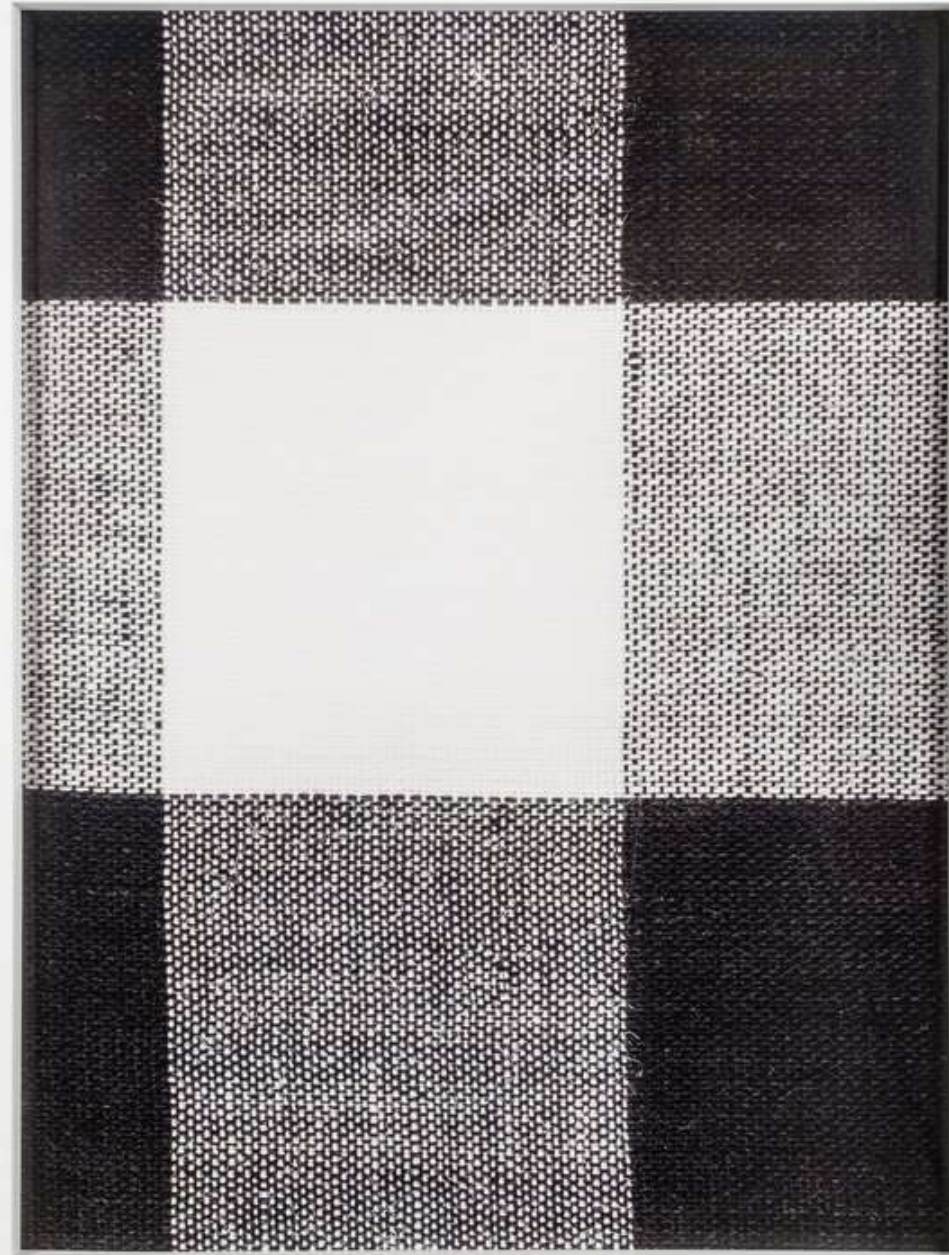
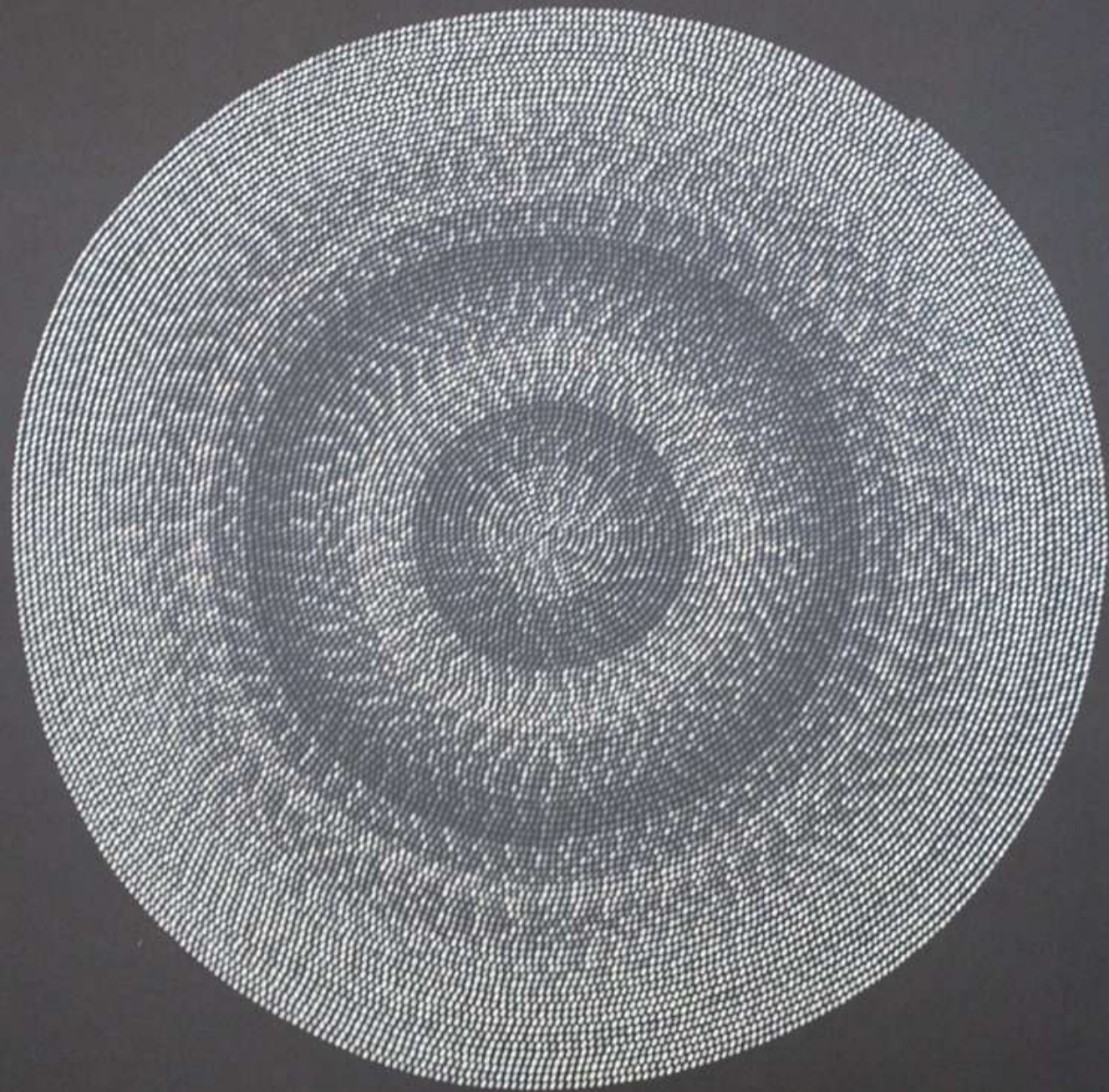


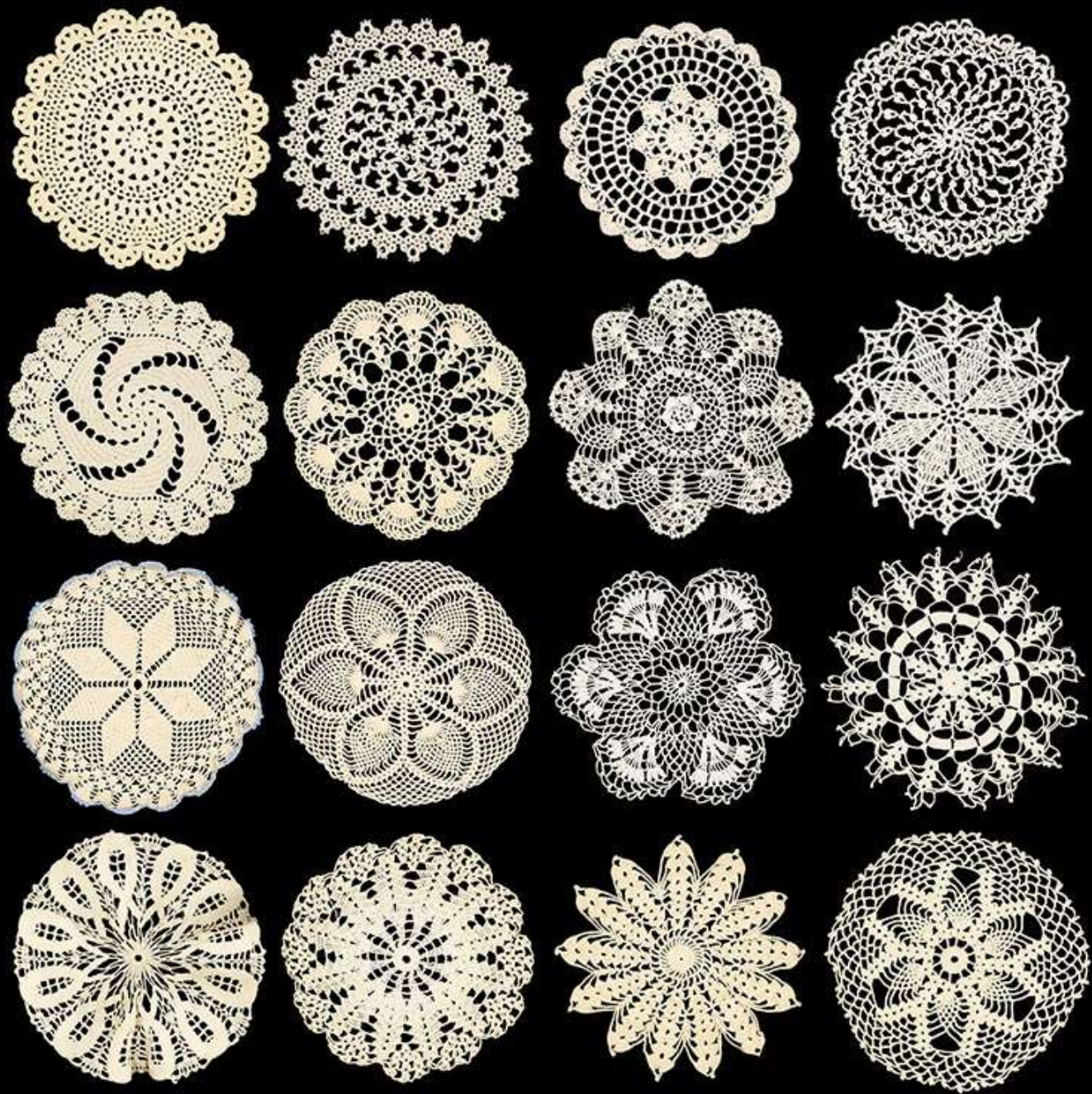
Michelle Grabner

- <https://vimeo.com/523007550>









Marlene Dumas

Marlene Dumas is a contemporary South African painter, whose figurative works have earned her a place among the most influential painters of the 20th and 21st centuries. With an oeuvre of haunting portraiture that depicts the artist's friends, models, and prominent political figures, Dumas consistently explores themes of sexuality, political oppression, identity, and feminism. Her work is informed by her childhood experience growing up in Apartheid, and addresses social struggles of oppressed peoples around the world. Working with gestural brush strokes and thin washes of paint, her works have a distinctly transparent appearance that emphasizes their materiality and intimate subject matter. As an artist deeply concerned with the medium of painting, she once remarked that "no painting can exist without the tension of what it figures and what it concretely consists of—the pleasure of what it could mean and the pain of what it's not." Notable figures Dumas has depicted in her work include Alan Turing, Michelle Obama, Naomi Campbell, Amy Winehouse, and Princess Diana. Born on August 3, 1953 in Cape Town, South Africa, she has been the subject of several major solo exhibitions, notably including representing the Netherlands in the 1995 Venice Biennale and a 2015 retrospective at the The Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=veexrm7BLxQ>

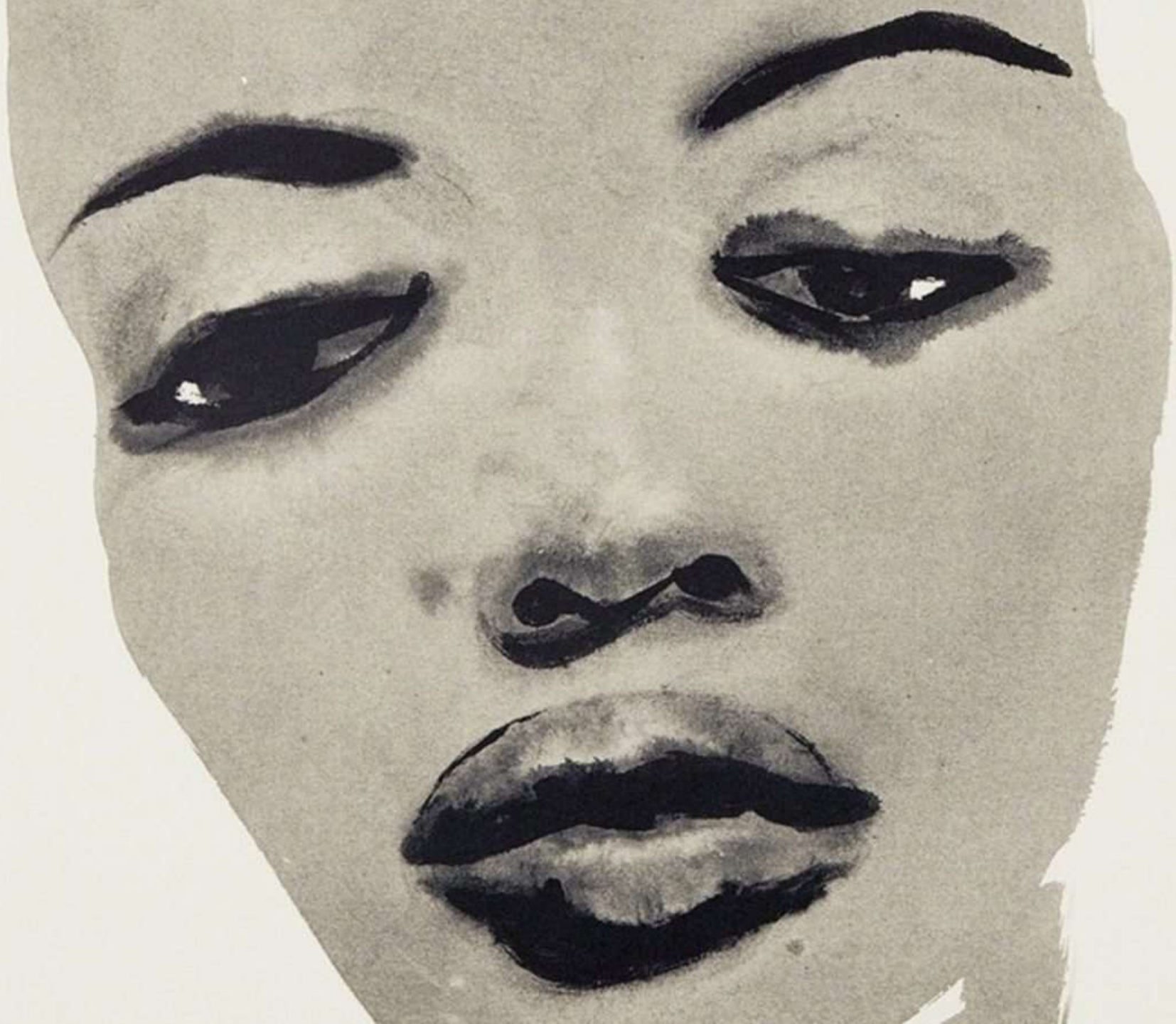
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6vwwJ4uSreo&t=4s>
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E_KniEuhrE0&t=2s

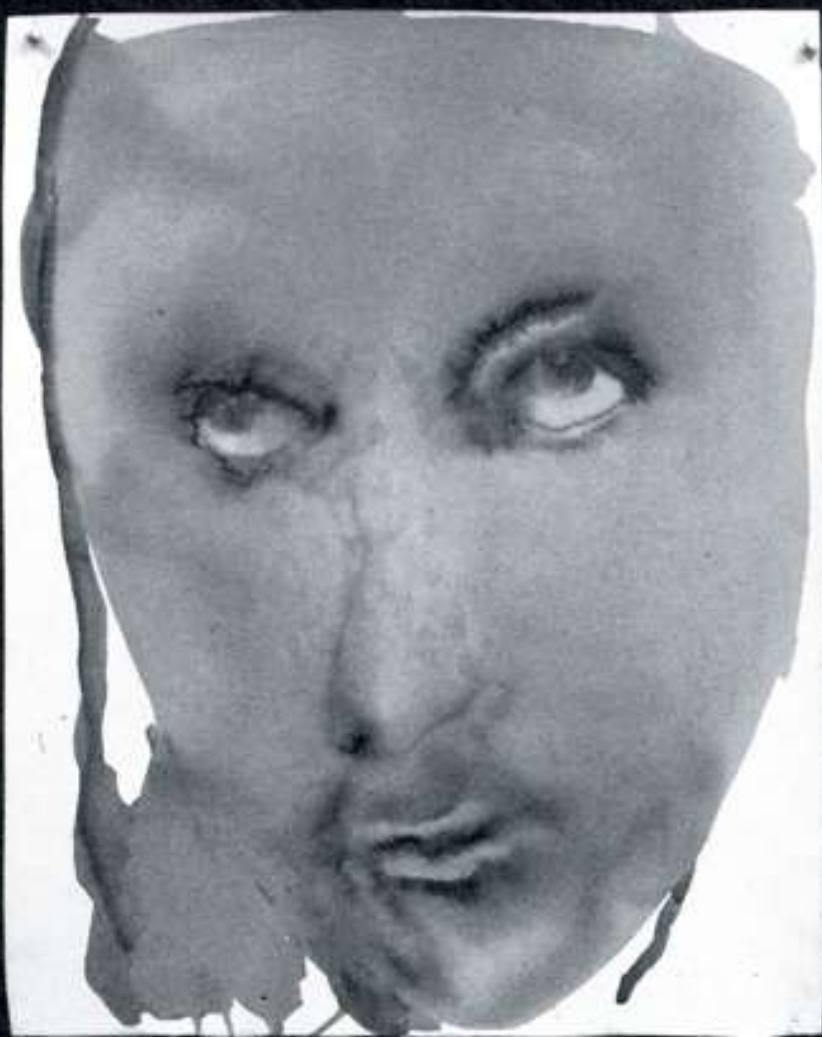




marlene dumas measuring your own grave









Eva Rothschild

Eva Rothschild RA is an Irish artist based in London. Eva Rothschild was born in Dublin, Ireland. She received a BA in Fine Art from the University of Ulster, Belfast, and an MA in Fine Art from Goldsmiths College, London.

Rothschild makes brilliant black metal works - sometimes dropping with black fabric pieces that cut gallery spaces up like a pen on a piece of paper.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aDgRcP-mV5k>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zE8tXaFTgPg>







Olafur Eliassen—Room for One Color

In *Room for One Colour* (1997), he flooded a room with saturated yellow light, causing all other colours to be perceived as black. Conversely, in *360° Room for All Colours* (2002), a circular space changed colours almost imperceptibly.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hd077pa-5CI>





Hans Op de Beeck

Belgian artist [Hans Op de Beeck](#) ([previously](#)) creates dream-like installations that exist between what is real and imagined. The figural works represent realistic worlds that have been shifted slightly with their gray, monochrome appearance. In his new work *My bed a raft, the room the sea and then I laughed some gloom in me*, he depicts a girl fast asleep on a wooden raft with a book draped across her lap and a butterfly perched on her pillow. The raft is placed on a circular pedestal with a glassy finish that imitates a calm pond dotted with floating lily pads. Created in the round, the piece invites the viewer to view it at all angles, allowing a silent observation of the sleeping child's dreams.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zqrR0MIPCq4&t=13s>

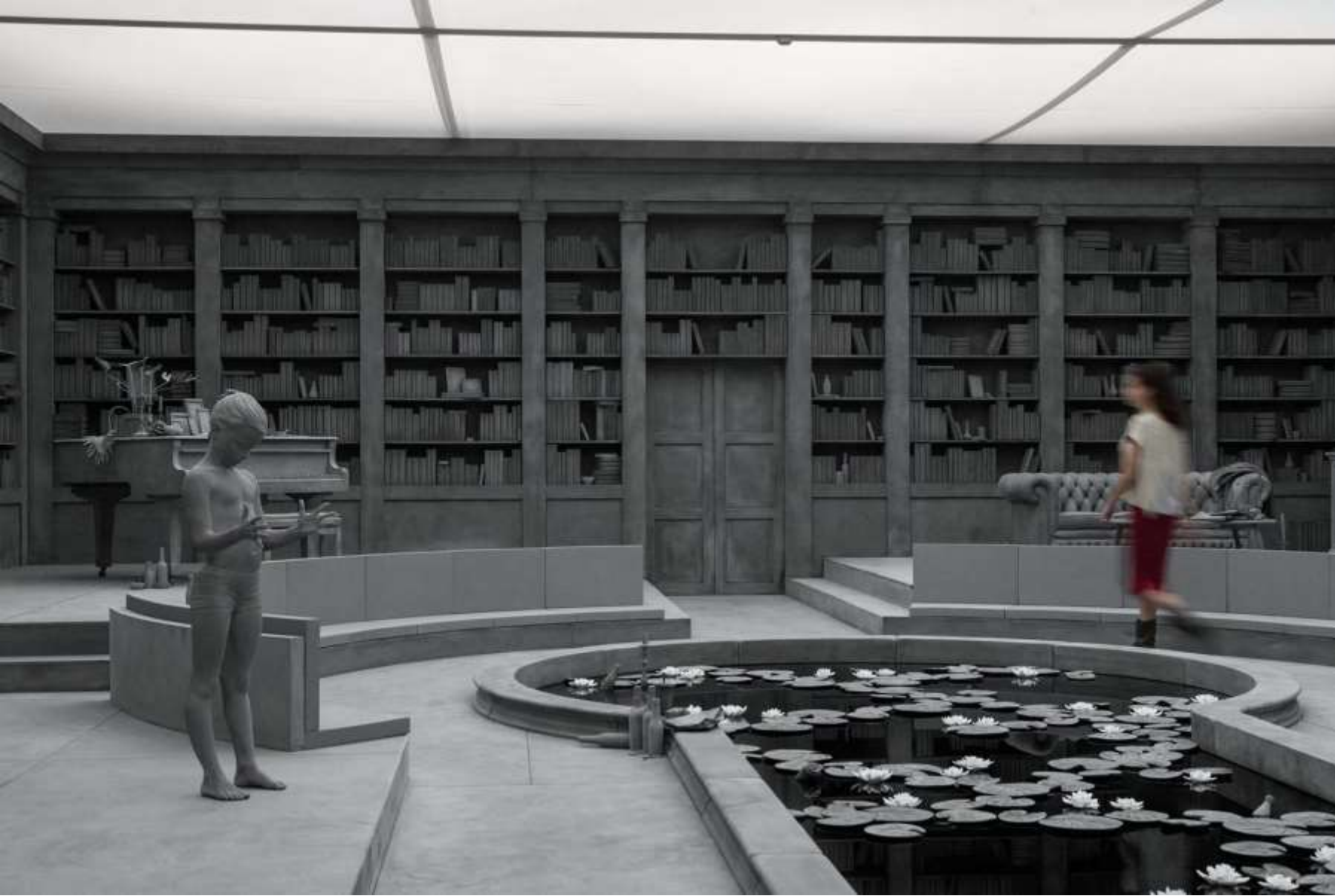






Belgian artist [Hans Op de Beeck](#) creates life-size figural sculptures and immersive environments from materials such as coated wood, polyester, and pigmented plaster. These chosen materials turn his constructed figures and installations into a uniform shade of matte gray, which makes the viewer feel as if the world around them has been zapped of color.

In his 2016 work [The Collector's House](#), Op de Beeck produced a 2,600-square-foot monochrome space in which visitors served as the only element of color. The museum-like installation contained several life-size sculpted figures in addition to a library, grand piano, furniture, scattered still lifes, and a lily pool positioned squarely at the work's center. This work, like many in his practice aimed to stimulate the viewer's senses and to "create a form of visual fiction that delivers a moment of wonder, silence and introspection," he [explained in an artist statement](#).

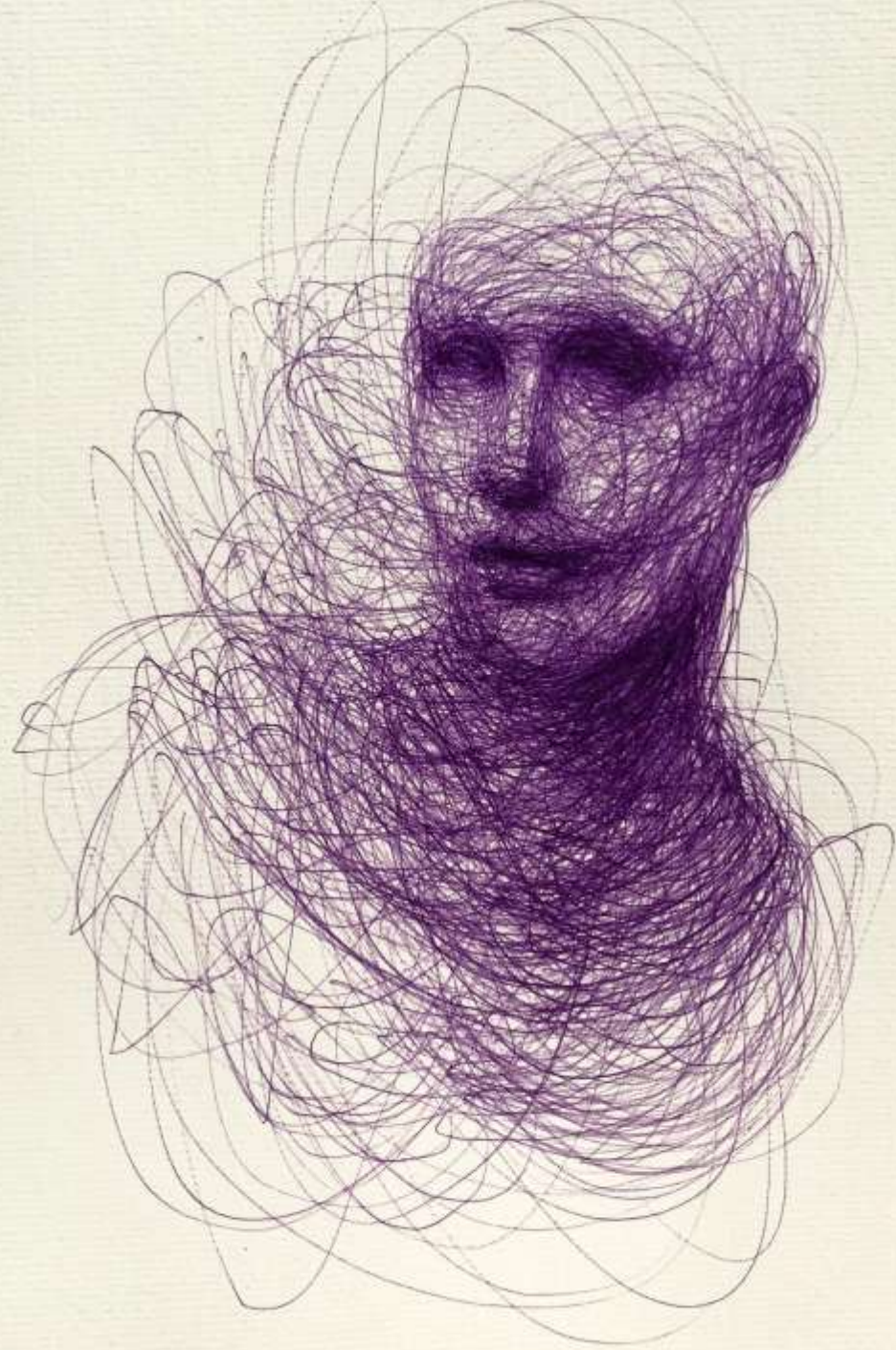


Adam Riches

Artist [Adam Riches](#) uses pen and ink to create frenetic portraits of brooding anonymous figures. The monochrome illustrations emerge out of blank backgrounds, with broad, gestural lines skittering and looping across the paper. Often, pen drawings fall into two stylistic categories: [contour drawings](#) that capture the outlines and edges of their subject, or [super-smooth ones](#) that seem to defy the fine point of the pen with layered hatch marks. In forging his own style, Riches uses highly varied density in his mark-making to create volume and suggest shadows, while also utilizing each line as a distinctive shape. In a recent [video interview](#) with BBC, the artist explains, “the drawings are quite intuitive and are done spontaneously. They reveal themselves as I’m making them.”

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=2727555260808509>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WFriEOJIXi0>







Malin Bulow

Oslo-based artist [Malin Bülöw](#) creates performative installations in which humans resist and submit to tension created by stretchy lycra suits. The monotone pieces have small openings at the stomach that allow participants to crawl in and easily conceal themselves, obscuring their features while highlighting their movements.

When affixed to buildings, the flexible fabric is manipulated and stretched during time-based performances, such as Bülöw's 2017 site-specific installation [*Firkanta elastisitet – Skulptur i spenn \(Squared elasticity – Strained sculpture\)*](#) with Store Salen at [Kunstbanken, Hedmark Kunstcenter](#). For the installation, the artist covered the two entrances to the gallery with the suits, locking visitors inside for the full hour.

Other less claustrophobic installations have occurred outdoors, such as the 2017 iteration of the same performance at a former military building in Ski, outside of Oslo. In an alien-like performance that the artist describes as an “elastic sculpture” or “large-scale performative still life,” five dancers explore the tension of their tethers while attached to the structure.

<https://www.tiktok.com/@theartrevival/video/7301868822884125994>

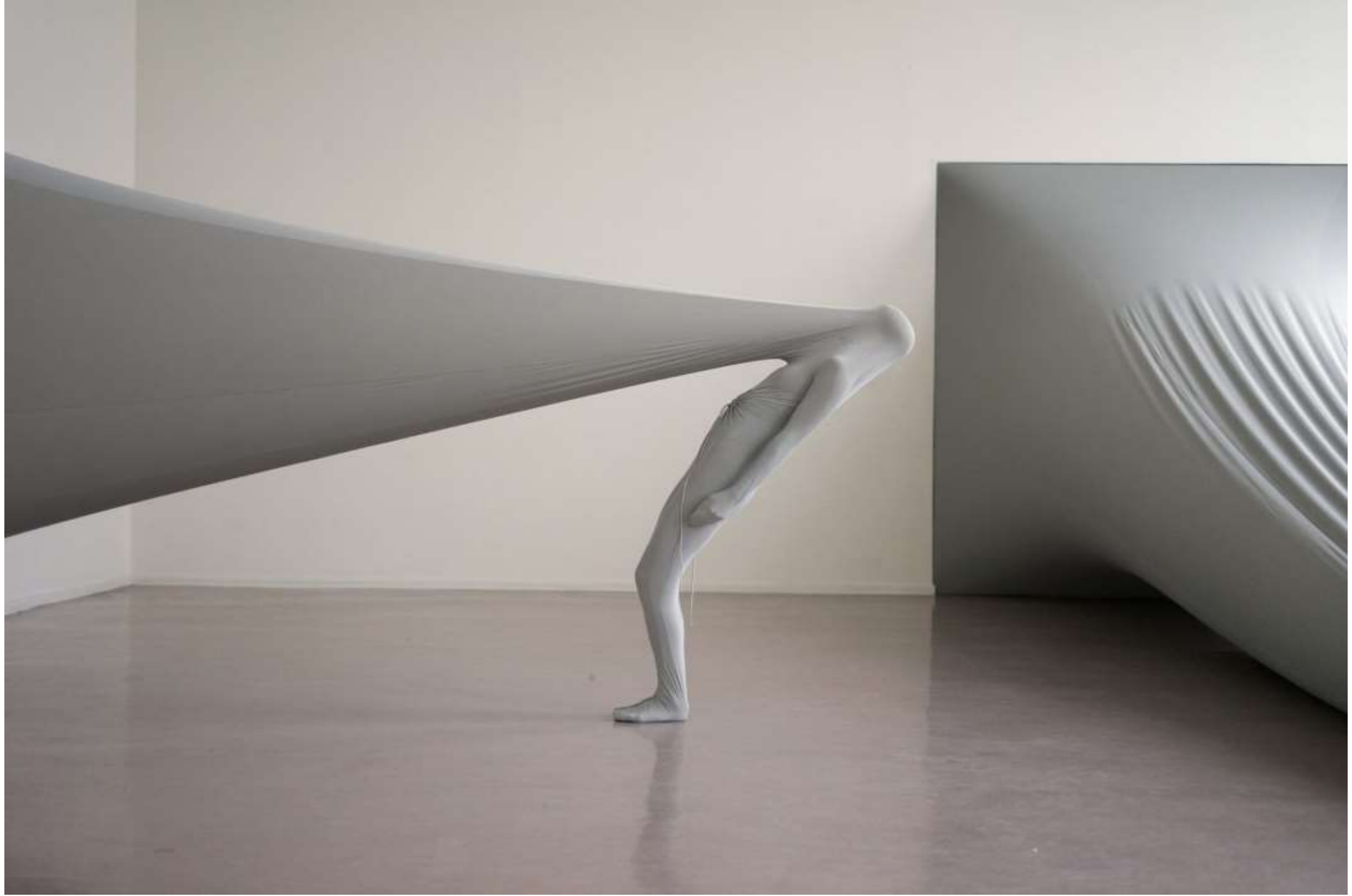
<https://vimeo.com/577167580>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KR14R9KxAPg>





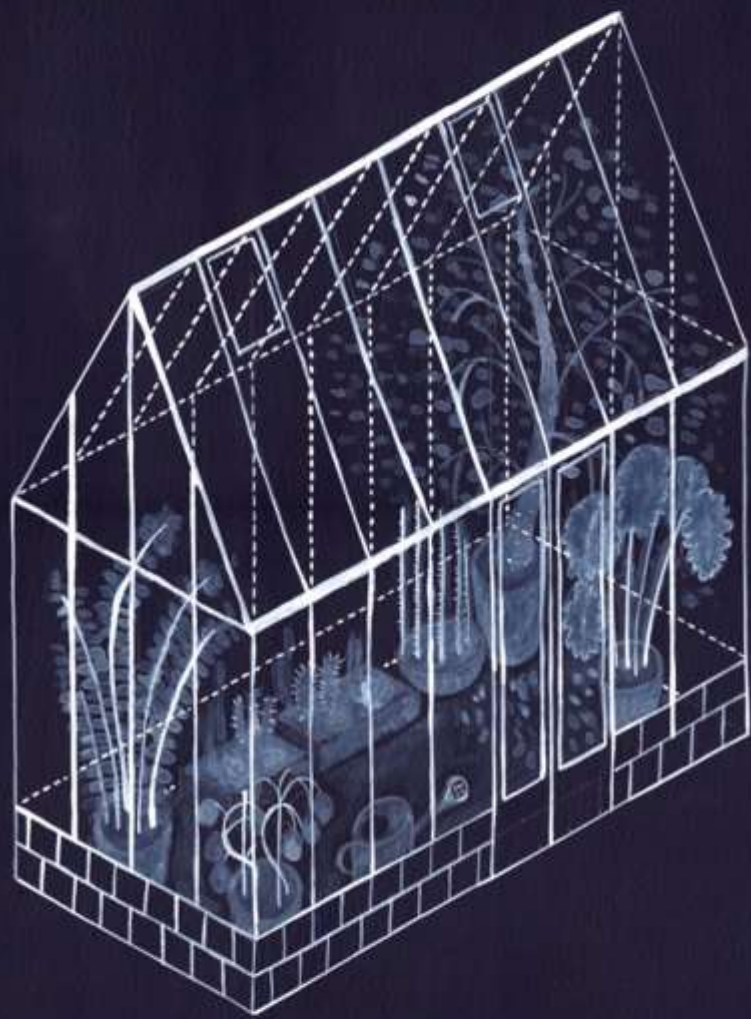




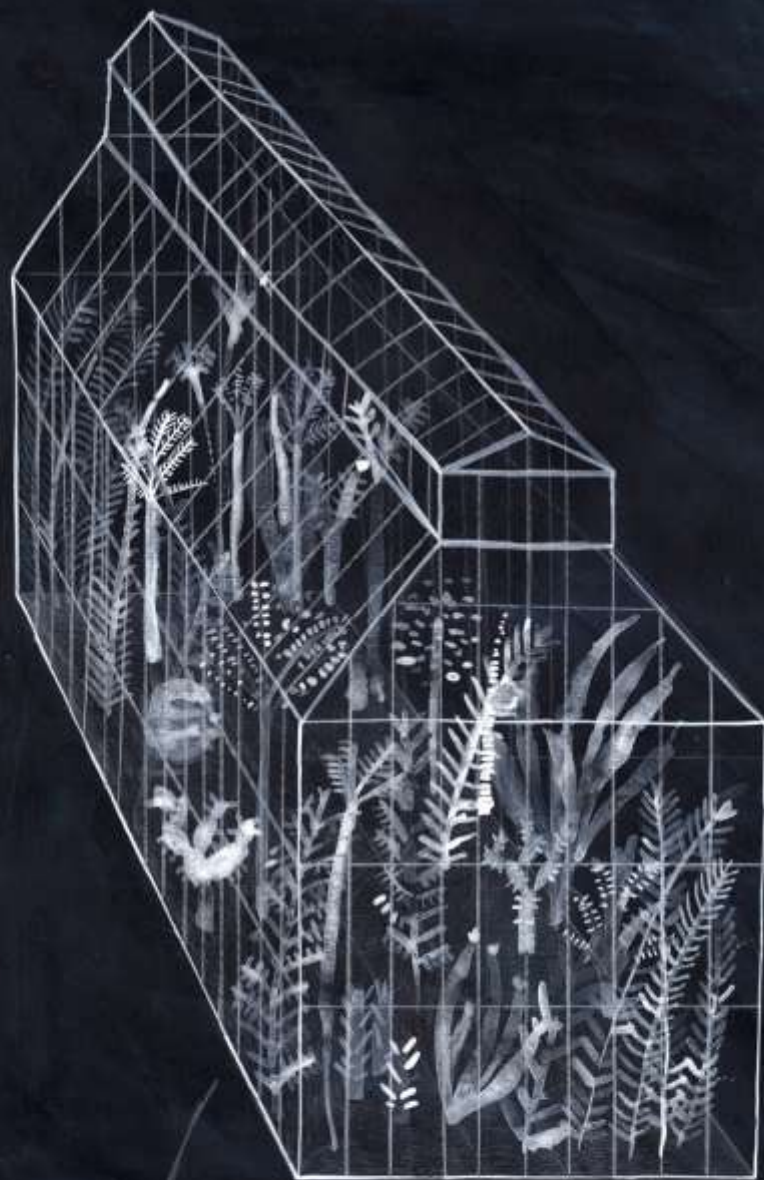


Ana Frois

Portuguese artist [Ana Frois](#) uses her background in architecture to draft precise structures she fills with imaginative monochrome plants and miniature gardening accessories. The series, simply titled [Greenhouses](#), is created with white pencil on top of deep blue acrylic on paper. The ghostly forms are reminiscent of a cyanotype or faded architectural sketch, as if the clean-cut floating renderings are memories from another time.



ama



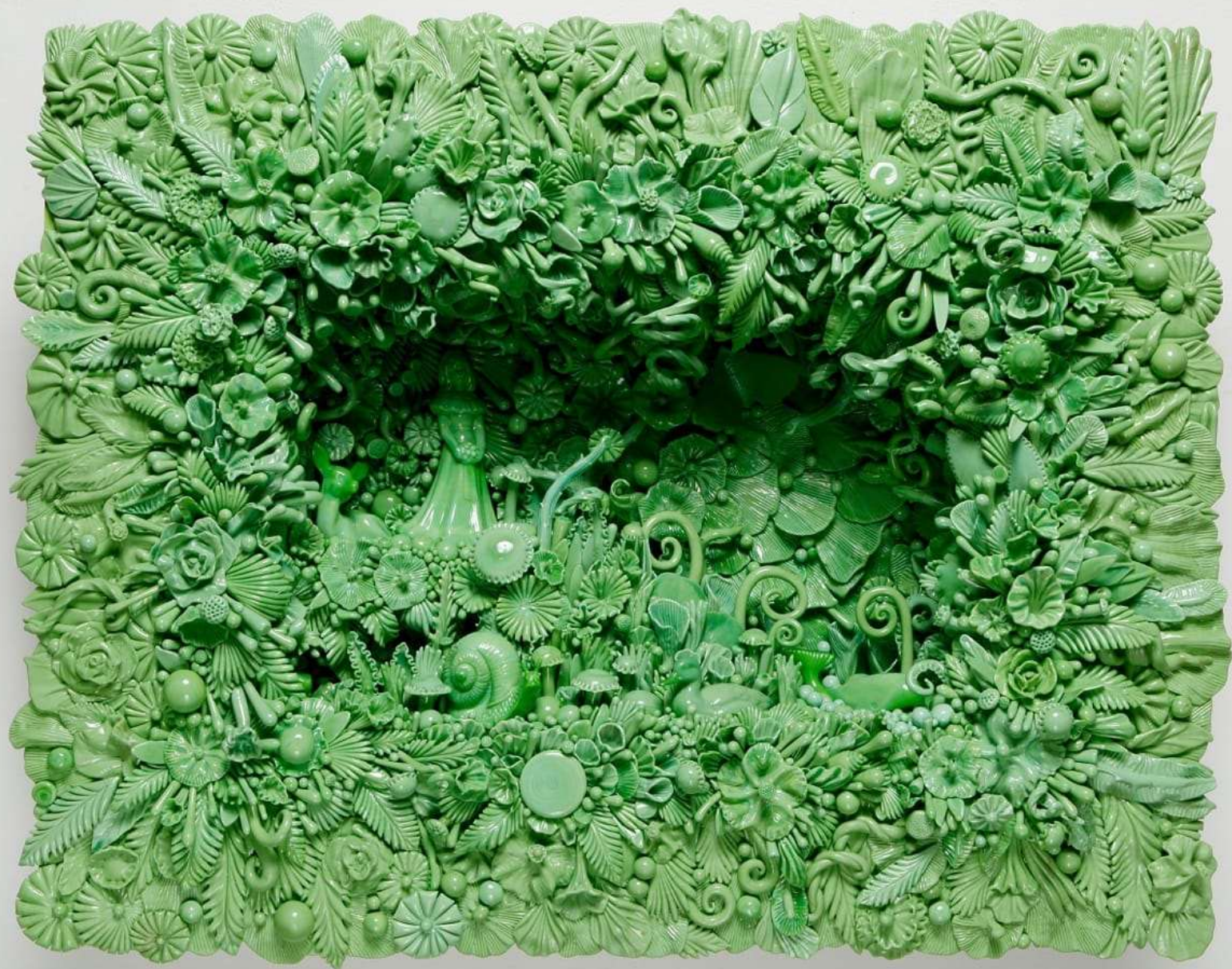


Amber Cowan

In the latest collection by [Amber Cowan](#) ([previously](#)), colorful vintage glass is sculpted into three fairytale stories: *Bridesmaid's Forest*, *Bridesmaid's Search for the Desert Rose*, and *Grotto of the Chocolate Nymph*. Cowan transforms discarded glass from the 1900s into sculptural “paintings” that burst with natural forms, and her latest collection of monochrome scenes effortlessly tempts viewers into their enchanted worlds.

Cowan first curates the color of each piece, collecting specific figurines and animals from vintage glass works. She then melts the rest of the glass through a methodical flameworking process to create the scenery that will surround the found figurines. Leaves, flowers, feathers, and tiny glistening pearls are carefully crafted to fill each dense, botanical world.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kwAZO9F5xZ8&t=4s>









Raku Inoue

[Raku Inoue](#) recently took an extended road trip to several destinations in the American Southwest. During his journey he created a scorpion-shaped arrangement from seeds, sticks, and a pepper found at [Antelope Canyon](#) in Arizona, and utilized a fallen cactus segment near [Horseshoe Bend](#) as the abdomen in a prickly tarantula. Other works created with found natural elements during Inoue's trip include a turtle bug, red ant, and centipede.

Recently Inoue created a monochrome stag beetle and Monarch butterfly for a [short film](#) in collaboration with [CBC Arts](#). The artist has also begun to explore three-dimensional versions of his found flora creations, building armatures for a gorilla, water buffalo, and tiger.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hs4lkGyHi2A&t=17s>





Paco Pomet

Artist [Paco Pomet](#) ([previously](#)) continues to channel old vintage snapshots and historical documentation in his delightfully surreal oil paintings. While all of his paintings capture his unmistakable wit, many of the works seem to straddle a fine line between humor and horror. Using a monochrome base, Pomet selectively adds color to highlight the focal point of the narrative and to heighten the vintage, hand-colored photo aesthetic, while playing with elements of scale, and contemporary technology icons.

Pomet lives and works in Grenada, Spain, and is represented by [galleries](#) in Spain, the US, and Denmark.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P9Ib9FMsisY>











Trenton Doyle Hancock

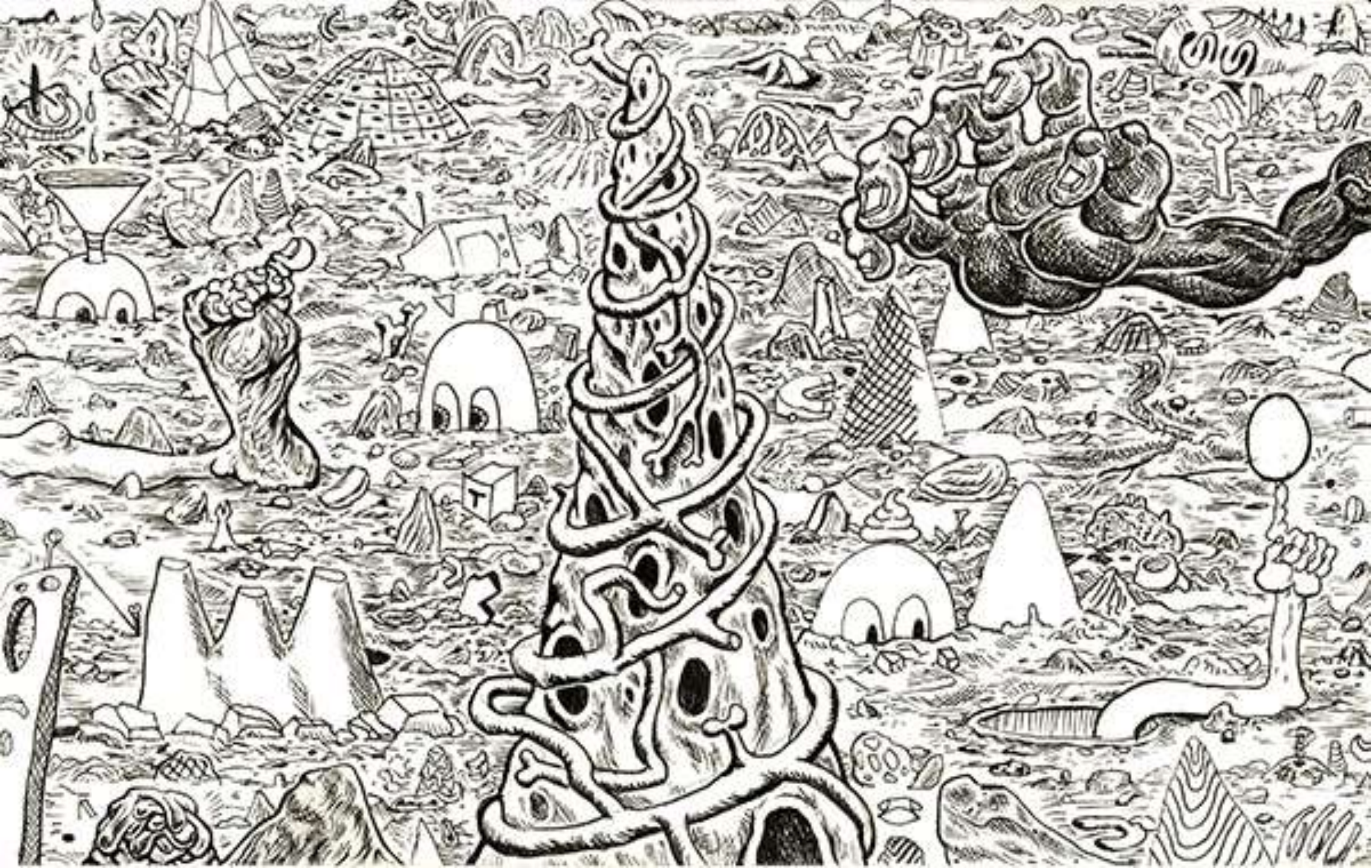
Trenton Doyle Hancock is an American artist working with prints, drawings, and collaged-felt paintings. Through his work, Hancock mainly aims to tell the story of the Mounds, mystical creatures that are part of the artist's world.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X1n-3_lqaco

<https://art21.org/watch/extended-play/trenton-doyle-hancock-real-biography-short/>











Evan Gruzis

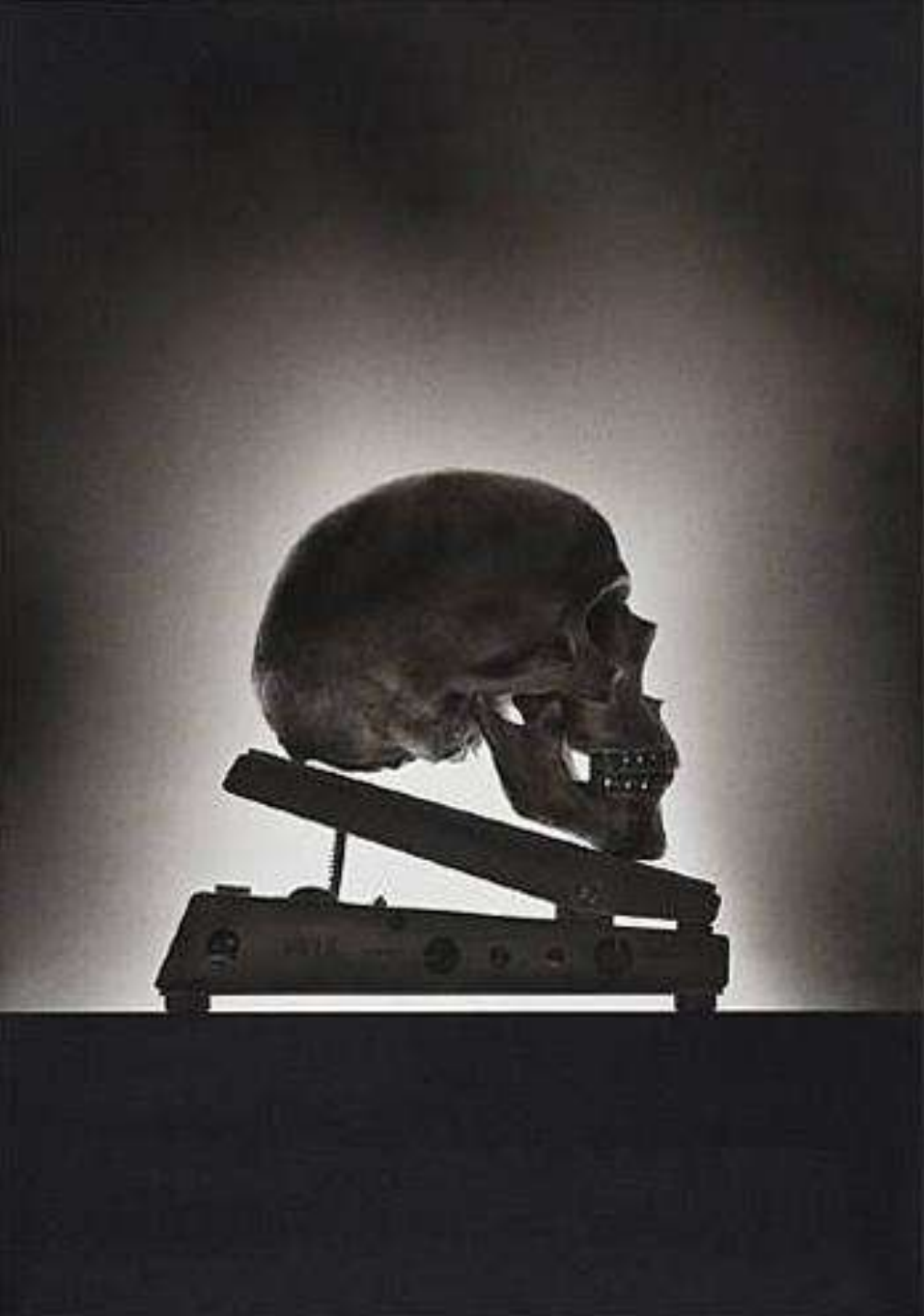
Evan Gruzis is a contemporary artist born in 1979 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, United States. He has lived and worked in Los Angeles and New York City, and, since 2012, has lived in Wisconsin with his partner, Nicole Rogers, and their child.

Gruzis monochrome paintings are so perfectly painted they almost look airbrushed or digital. His use of shadow, shape and 'space grey' paint is in a league of its own.

- <https://rxart.net/blog/rxart-tv-artist-talk-evan-gruzis/>













Assignment Suggestions...

- Create a scribble drawing with a ball point pen.
- [Create a Notan.](#)
- Take a polychromatic image (like a photograph) and paint it monochromatically (shades and tints of a single color)
- Make a collage of using different shades of the same color.
- Paint a background of a single color (or shades of a color) and draw on it with white pencil or ink.