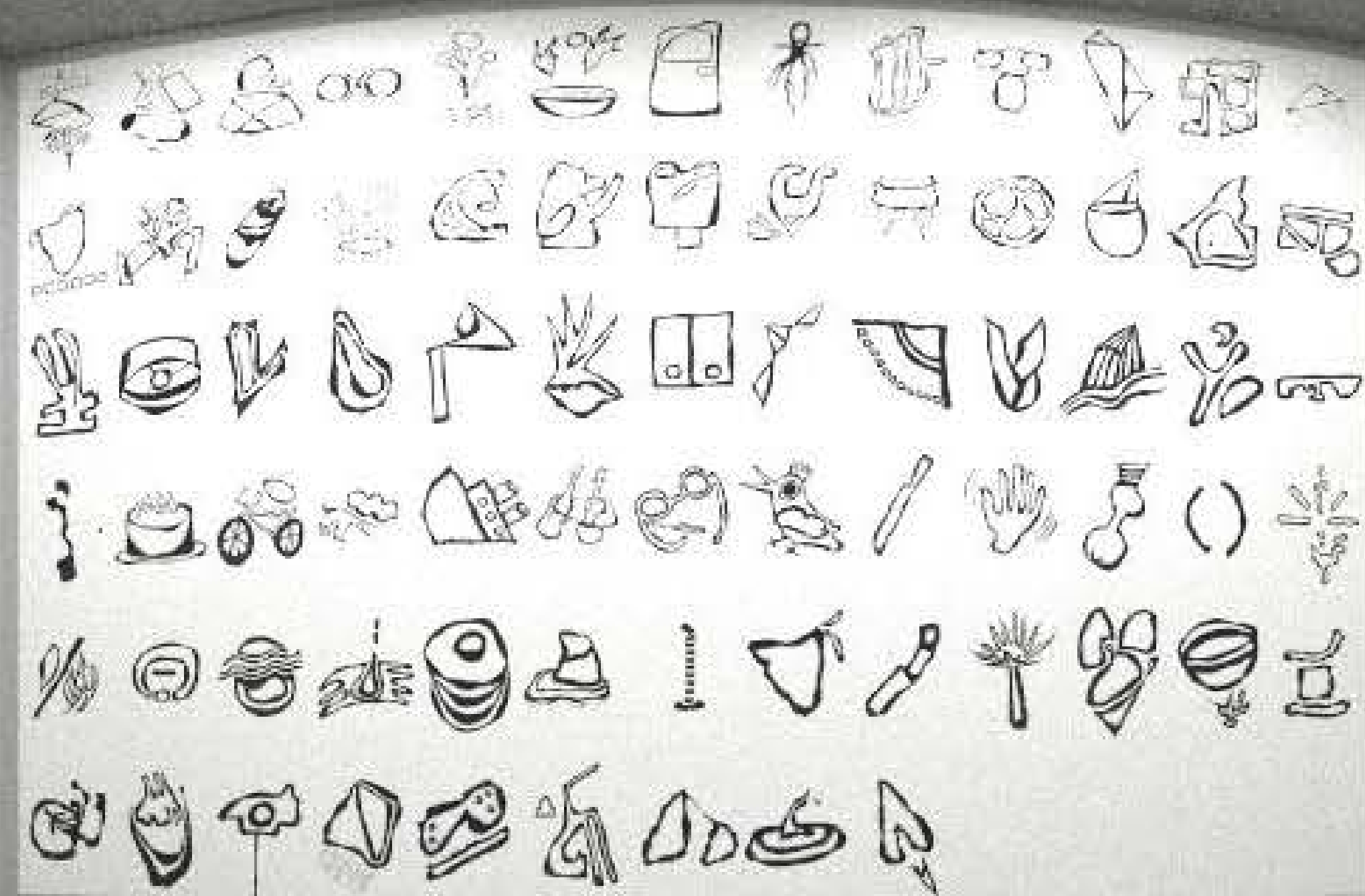


Portents



Jared Pappas-Kelley

Notebook 2: Portents - Jared Pappas-Kelley

INVERT **EXTANT**

Portents

Portents: Cycle 1

Dear X,

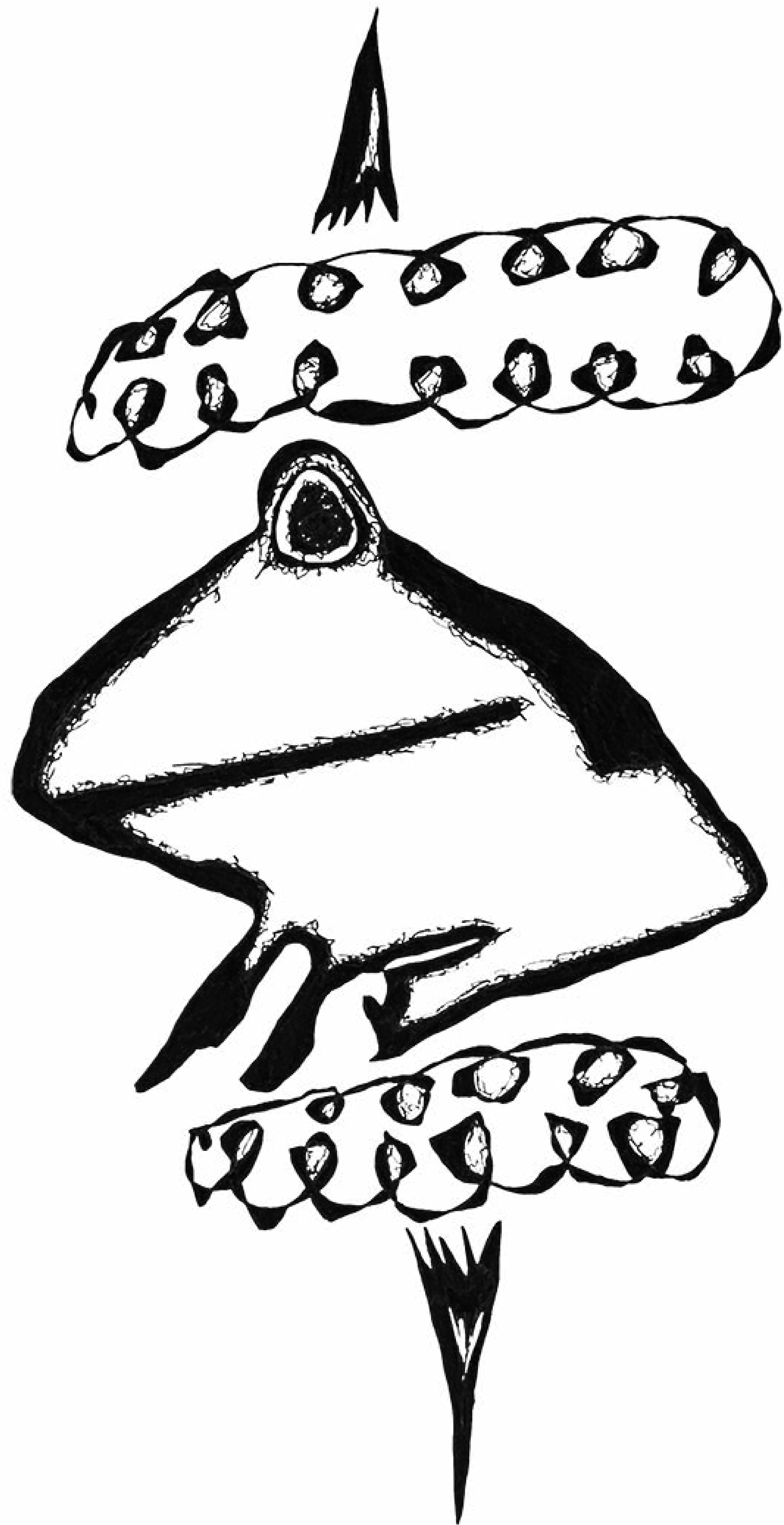
The notion of a portent is intriguing in that it attempts to make a perceived truth in some way visible—one might say it points like a finger (but with a portent there is also a sort of assumption toward *certainly* or that it is something that is even possible). As an artist, that is often what I find myself attempting, to make a truth visible and to bring it into proximity, so that it might be perceived before sticking my finger in your eye (oops, sorry I never said it always works, but there must always be a risk involved). Holding up a thing and saying silently this is important, it means something, and if you look in just a certain manner, reframing it, you might see something previously imperceptible.

Notebook 2: Portents contains the complete field guide to the original portent project with the 74 initial drawings from cycle 1 and the accompanying texts for each. These form a [guide book](#) as well as source material for several compositional scores and video pieces including the score [Transition Cycle 1 to Wooden Portent](#) [One Year of Portent Expressions] that explores the sequencing of these images, text, and sound compositions as a durational piece over the course of one year. Included here is also the interactive piece [Portent Generator](#) designed as an oracle for mapping insights as well as an [interview](#) with Dec Ackroyd about my recent book *To Build a House that Never Ceased* with some of the elements that eventually became part of the project.

Related artworks are available through [Invert/Extant](#) and a new series of prints are also underway. These prints each feature one of the portent images in white on various monochrome backgrounds (based on chance operations) and each is unique (designated as 1/1) and signed. Each print is a bespoke object calculated through our interactions. If you are interested in commissioning one, drop a [note](#).

This machine kills bureaucrats.

Thanks,
Jared Pappas-Kelley



1 :

Sometimes it is amphibial, the ability to inhabit two environments. Seeking perspective, standing on a hill to perceive the lay of the land. It feels hidden, that it is buried down below, the notion of the subconscious knowing more. Shit. But it's clear, stand on a hill and see it all, the town over, a link between someone known once and the one before you, no need to conceal it from yourself like infants doing repetitive tasks to keep safe from attacking bears through habit. Keeping protected through distractions. Instead stand on firm ground while likewise inhabiting somewhere else, a coil and spindle that ramps along, inclines just for a moment until you see both at once.



2.

Drawing you closer, unsettles within from established routines. This pulls: can't be wrong even as wreaking turmoil. It is the conversation that appears about one thing. They are standing back towards you, but a stage whisper over the shoulder that brings you in on whatever is going on there. Turns. It's not deep, but it is necessary. Awakens and flustered. Not wise, but it wouldn't spark so if it wasn't true.

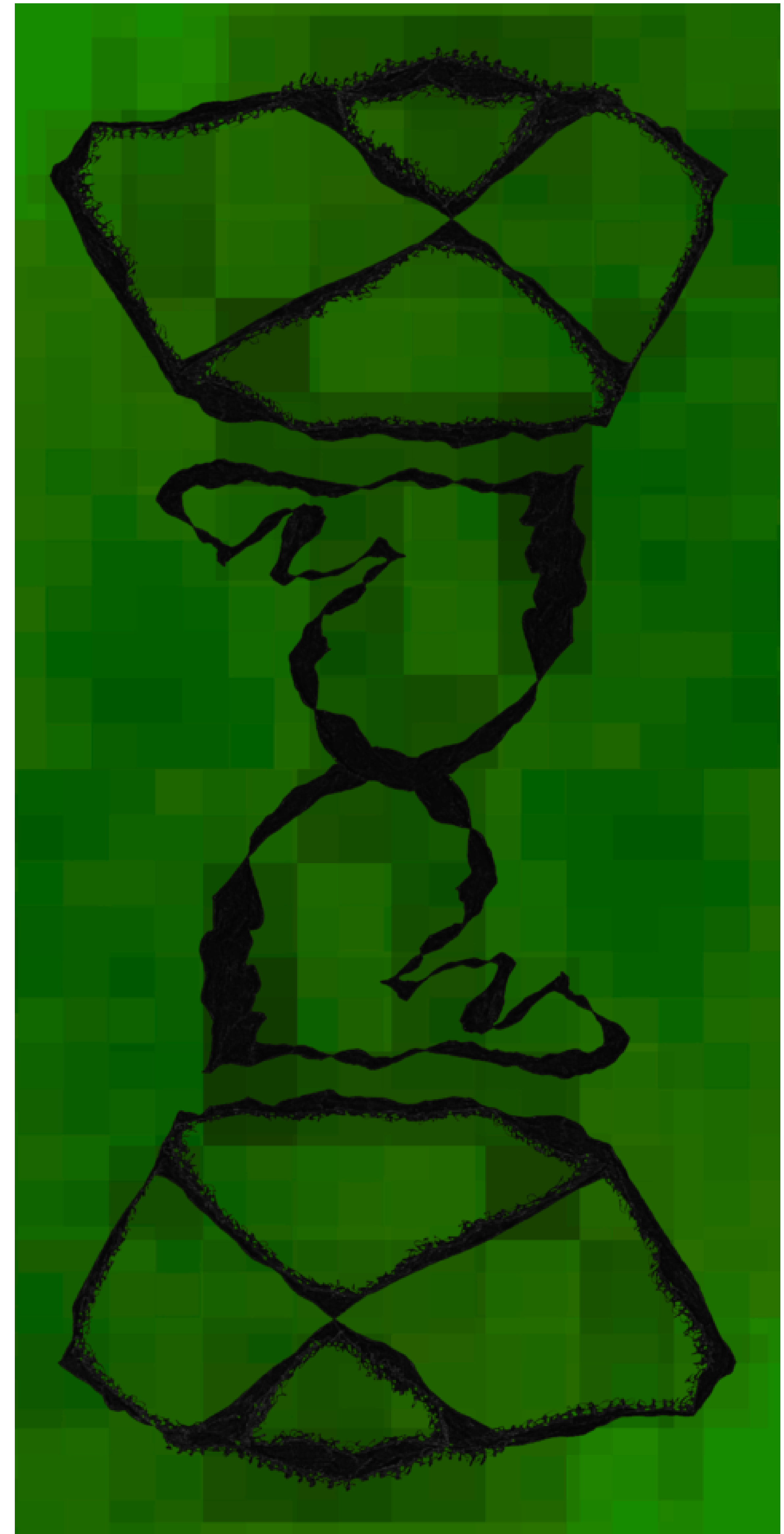


3:

The plume rises heavily and abrupt, miles into the sky, bellows outward, erupting more black than grey with lightning strikes, and sifts to the ground in drifts, clogging everything it comes in contact with. It is dark, smothering and falls like aggressively silent snow as the cataclysm unfolds. It ushers an abrupt end of scene in its directness. Interrupts. Catastrophe is simultaneous and all at once. Oddly luminous in its dusk; heavily diaphanous as baroque fabrics in old paintings. The mountain disintegrates, losing structural integrity, mini-burst and untangles as posset gasses, crumbles and liquefies. It stains the landscape, moves it out of the way before suppressing it. Air is colloidal and solid becomes airborne.



Jared Pappas-Kelley, "Wooden Portent 3, colour: 4", raw mineral pigment, enamel, wax, on wood, 50cm x 50cm x 7.9cm



Jared Pappas-Kelley, "Portent 3 (bottle green)", animation is [viewable as NFT format here](#)



4:

Going down the contour, what is normally merged is oddly two that hover near one another. Pushed aside and prolapsed. Horizontal with a tension of compartments that split into fabricated prophase. It is a divide that juts to keep from conceding like for like—a made-up distinction preventing intimacy in this moment. A wall built from protest and resource intensive to maintain, attempting a complex stereoscopic image from cohesion. Too much effort to maintain the divide and why would you—like and like. Engage the partition and reverts to near, loses distance and unwinds into stasis.



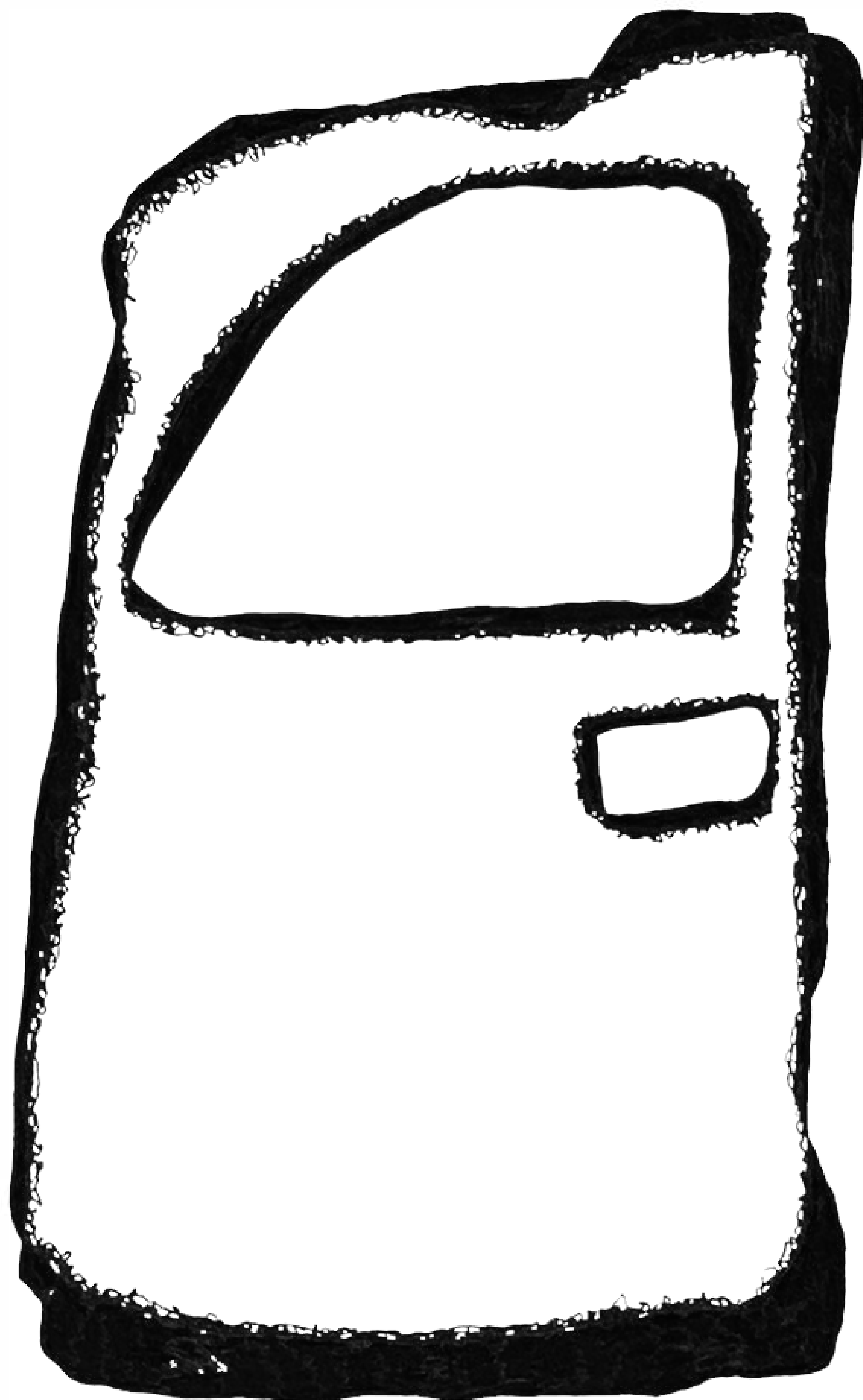
5:

A bit sentimental, but sometimes the truth is a bit sentimental. What takes away the bits that no longer belong is above the sensations where body and thought merge. They carry it here and now it begins to rebuild. Let it do what it needs to do and then disentangle. It gives varieties.



6:

Sun and urge above a bowl of water. Swaying flames between the two. Intensity above liquid but contained, reaching up towards the attention.



7 :

Close one eye and open the other. Makes a third. When they see these gaps it comes together, but if they forget they essentially brackets it away. Games of self-preservation, but in the urge, there were also several doors that they keep locked tight at all times and never go into those parts as well. Whenever they walk past, it emits a low rustle of vacated space or the remoteness of closed off rooms.

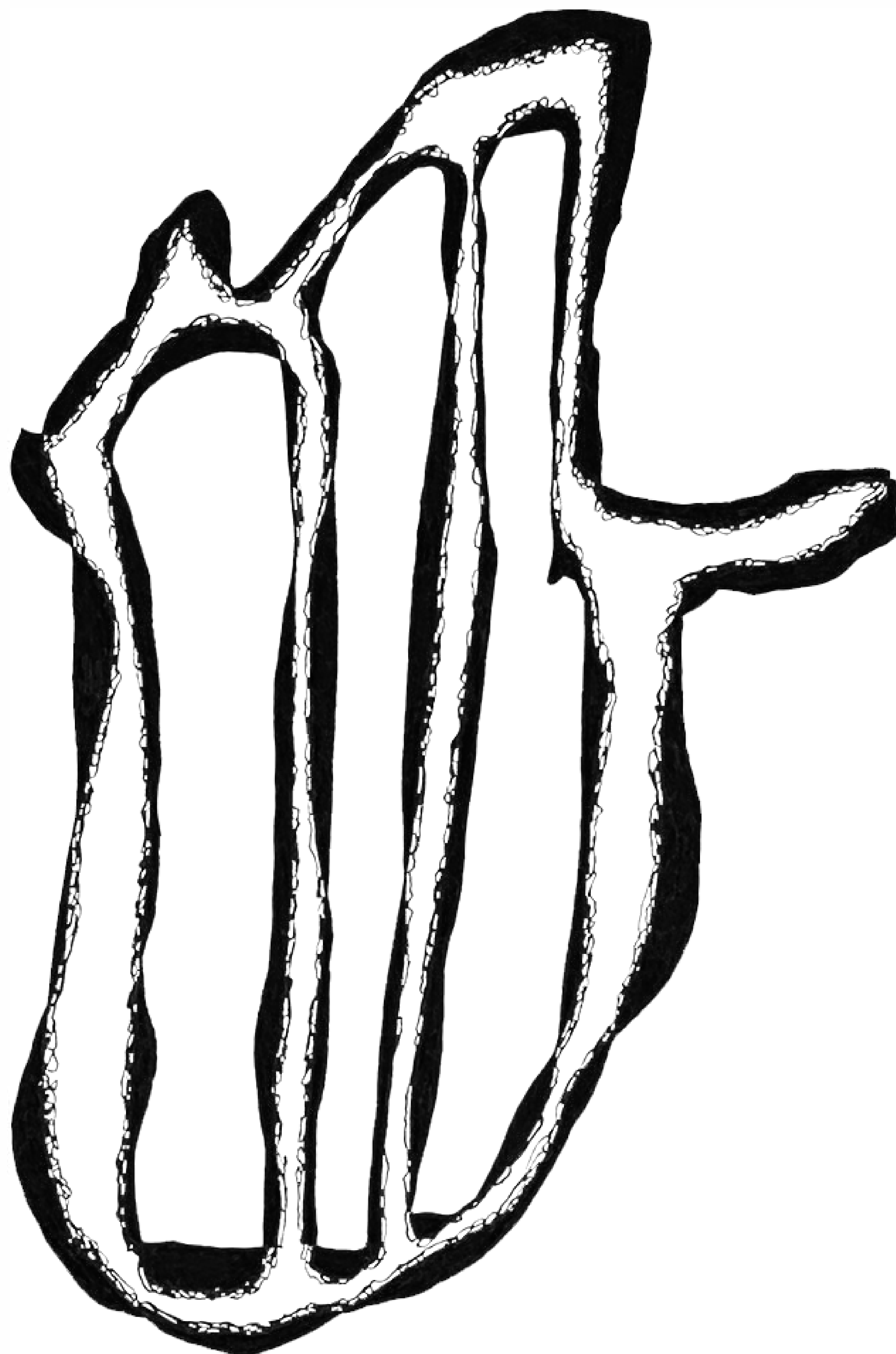


8:

Connecting two approaches, what was before is brought back into the assembly. Dawns out and put into a new moment. Draws one membrane into another that intensifies into a new beginning that breaks these divides. It is the start that rises from what has fallen away but would never be possible without what was. It is the pip when the light passes through that allows what is external to mirror what could be within, as a dew saturated gob of light beneath a concealed sheen.

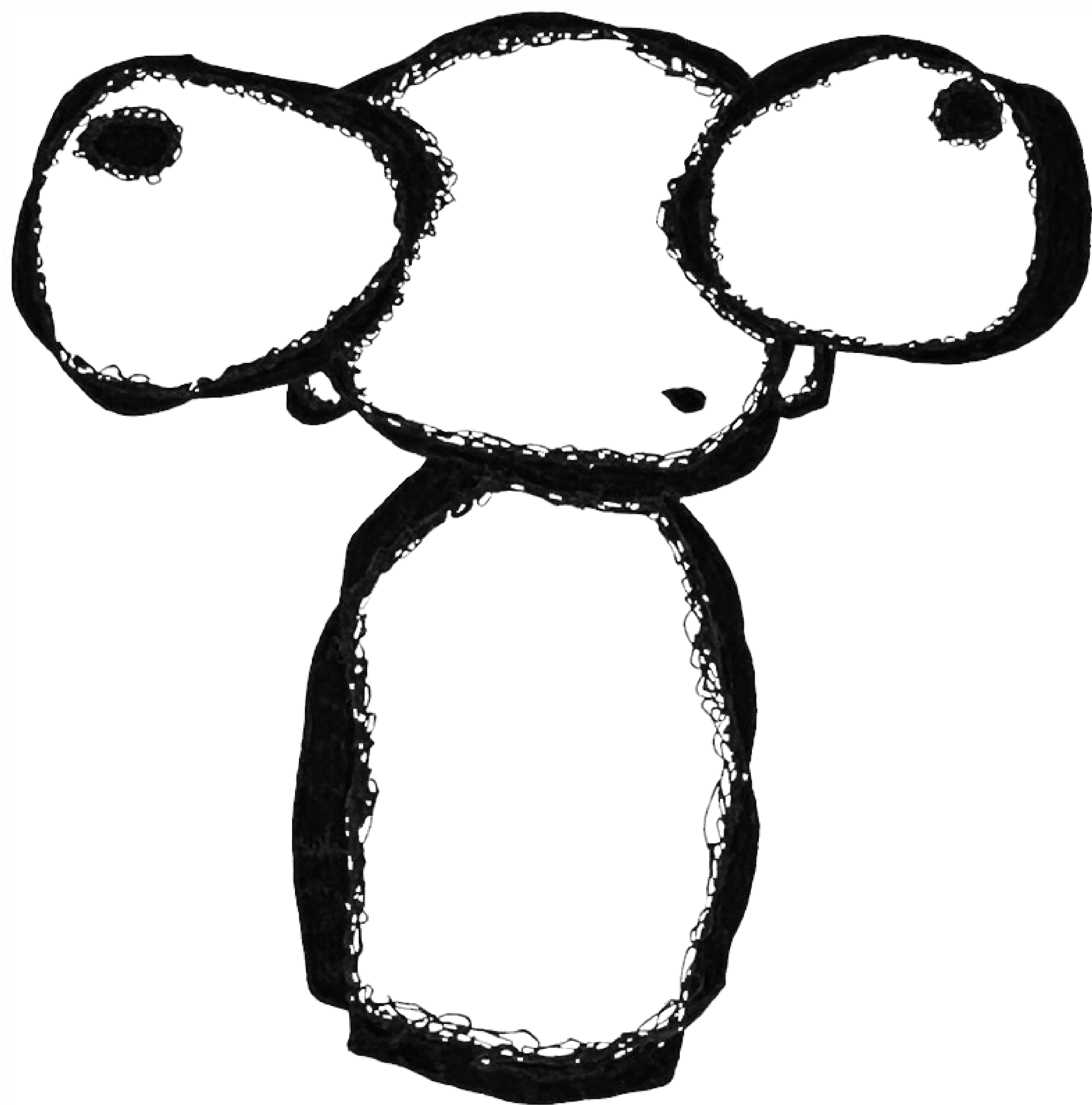


[Jared Pappas-Kelley, "Portents: Cycle 1", Dovetail Joints, install view, 2020](#)



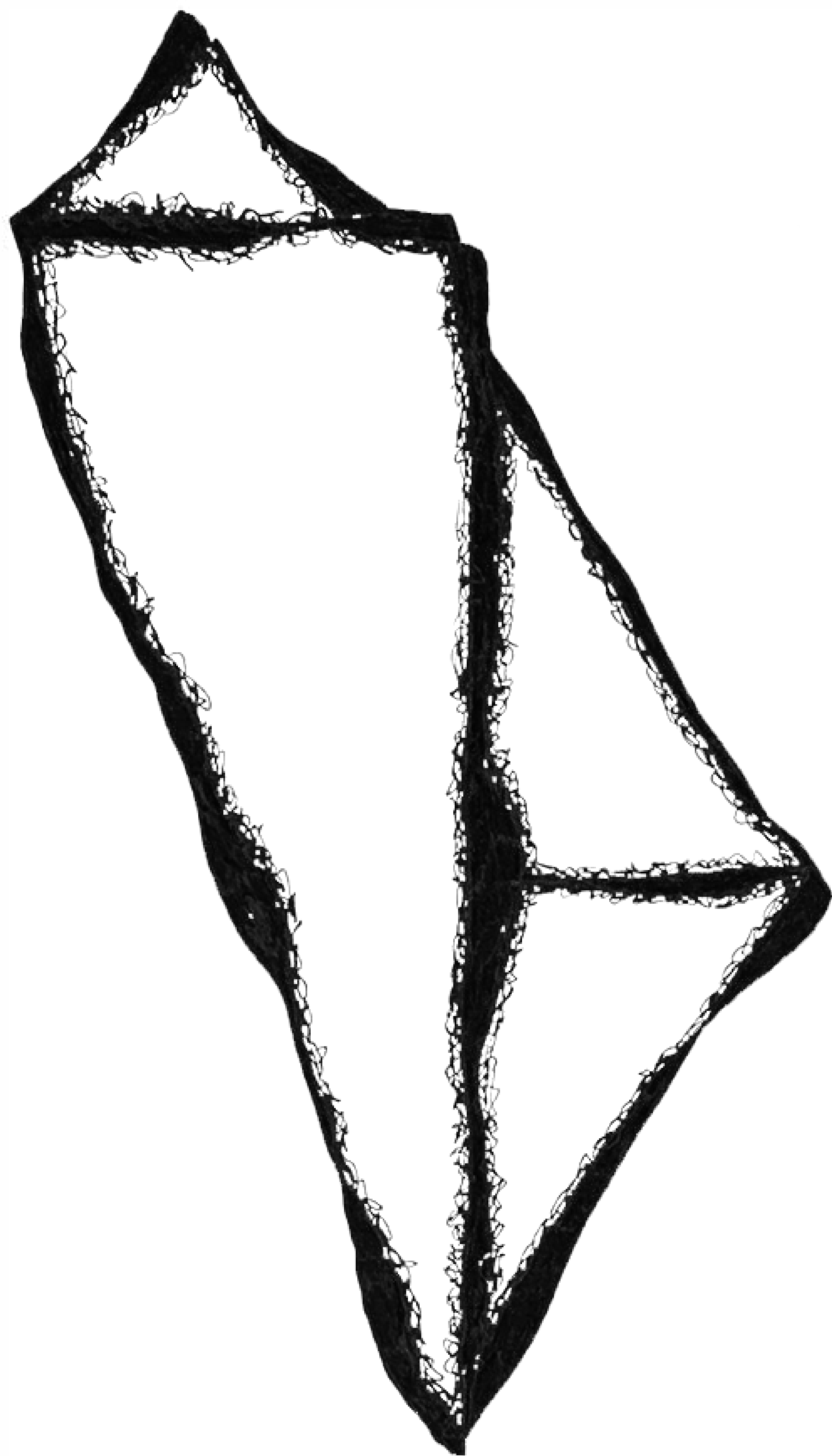
9:

Coral imitates an inner structure, permits water and porous mid-course or permeable episodes of life. Creates accommodation, but also the piping or wind reeds like a tabby that has passed across a well into someplace unidentified, just the sound of air passing over an opening.



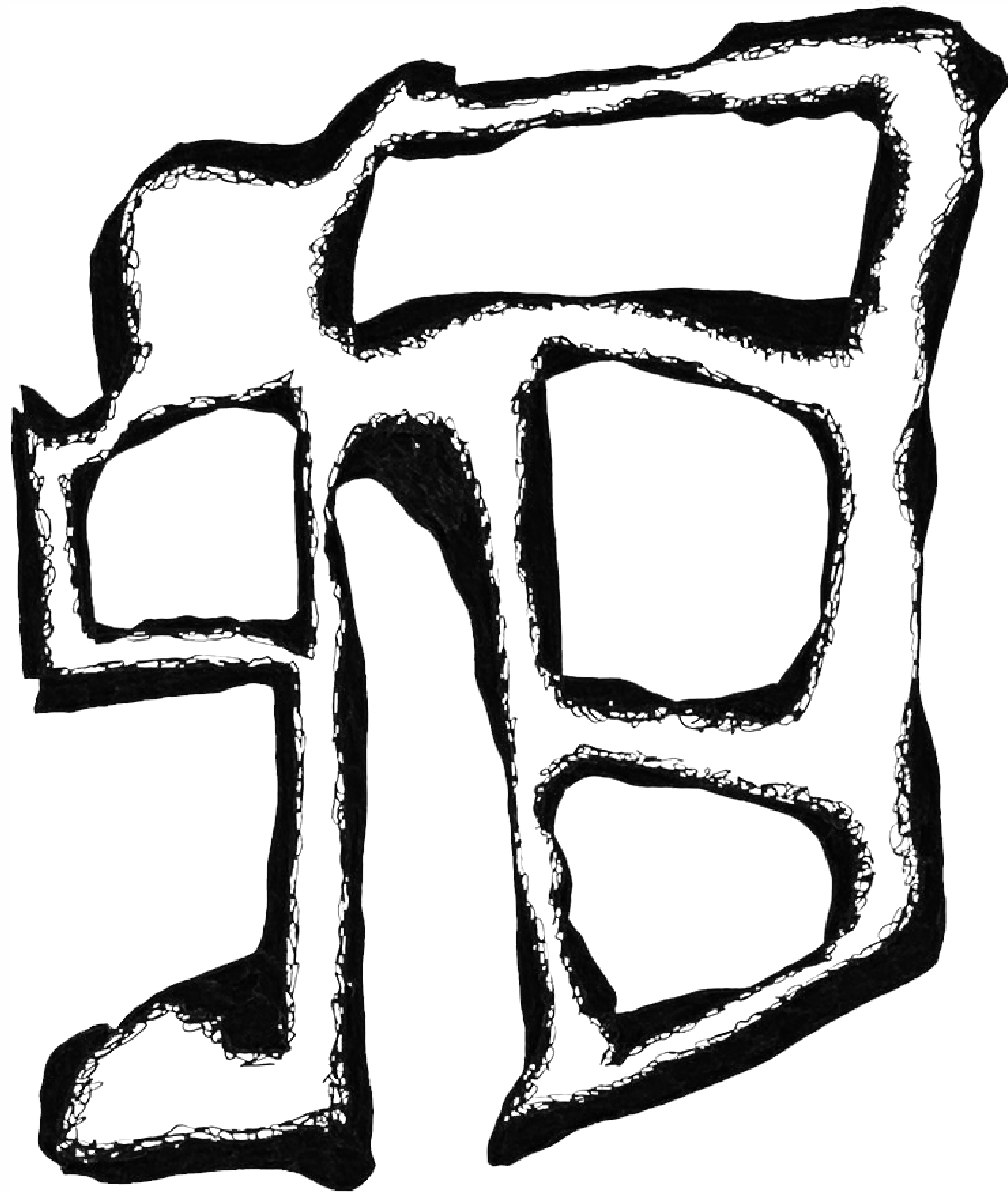
10.

Three spread apart on another. Like a flounder, the senses all begin on one side of the pate, but as it develops, drift gradually to opposite vantages and beyond. This allows to see depth, to compare one thing to another—as duration can only be known from without and can never be known from the single point unless that single point eventually becomes all. Dumb little thing, you squeeze it and its eyes pop out. It is a game of perspective—one and then another—then returning back again through perception.



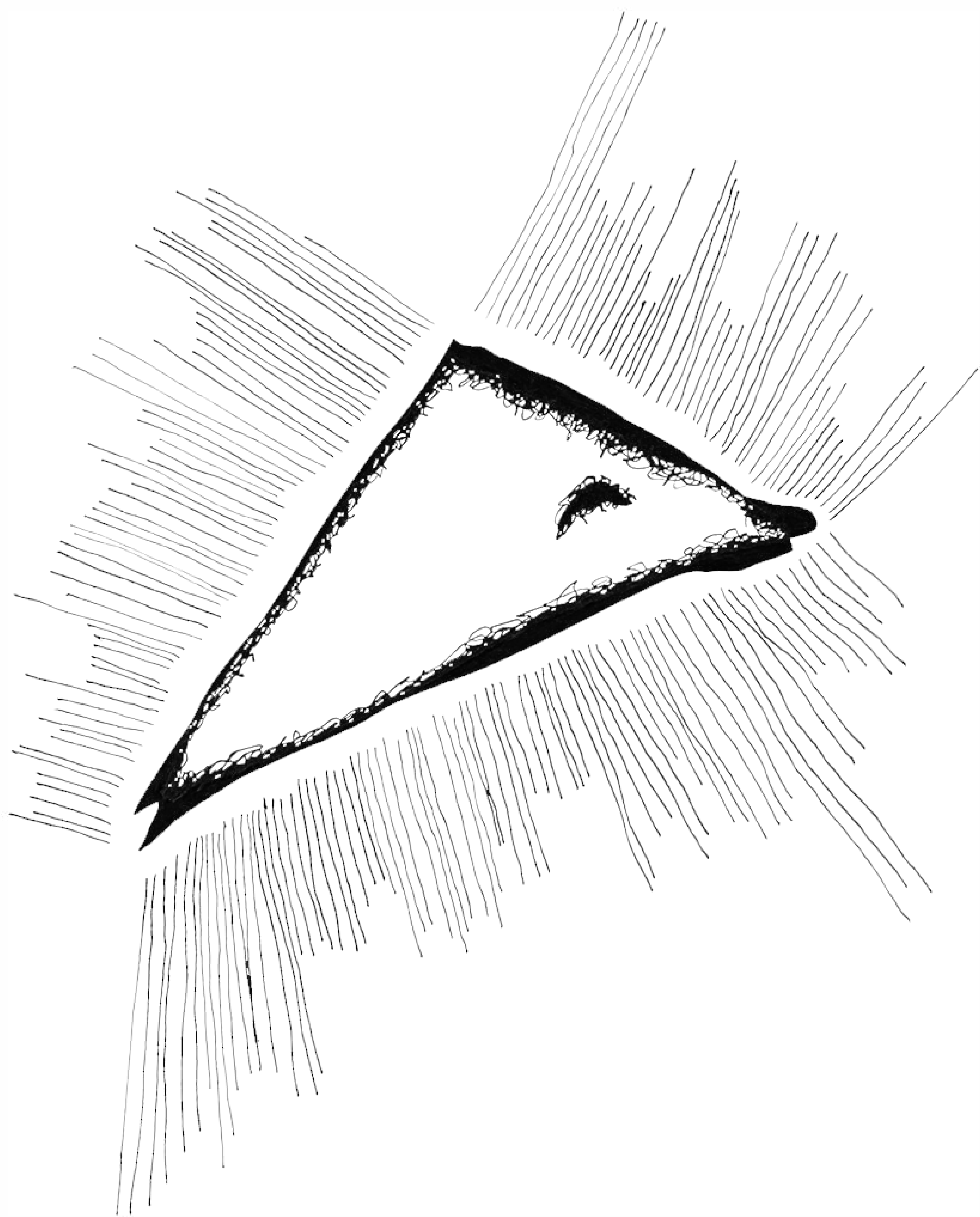
11 :

One, fold, then over like the shell that gives a mean and balance. Left over right, creased in from underneath. One parallel of horizontal above another. It is an envelope or container or skin in which to enclose something. If it wasn't, we would have no means of perceiving what is before us. It would not be tangible and have no presence, yet still it would exert a force—but better to perceive it and engage as we can, and when it is done unfold it and let it on its way.



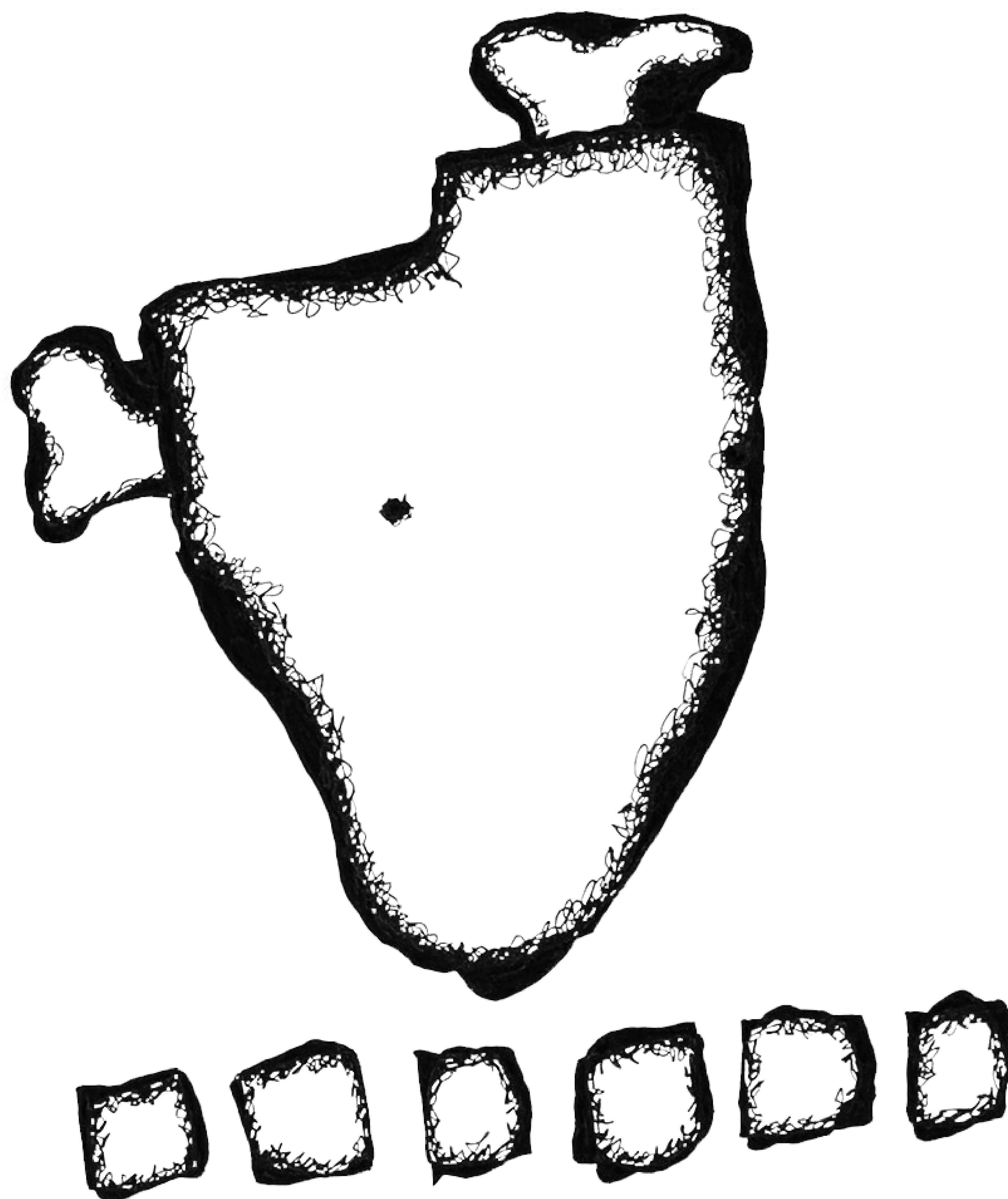
12.

A house once all its windows are removed, sits in the weather as it erodes. Demarcating where exterior meets internal, but with passing, the differentiation is only vanity as both are in truth alike. It passes freely so that the structure—if it ever was one—is instead an artifice. The tendency to see faces or shapes in inanimate objects is pareidolia, but at the same time what does it mean when the shape we perceive was actually there but so much time has passed that the connection is now only incidental? A rock that was a house that now resembles a house.



13:

Between three rocks exist a gap, and from that gap, traces broadcast out like a camera obscura cut into the side of a mountain. Upside done and cast onto a wall. It bounds out, content, vibrant but momentary. Catch it in your fist and keep it in the crevice of the hollow space you acquire as a wedge. Follow it to where it contacts, even if only implied.



14.

Torn away but still physical. Cut off from perceptions and palpable sway. When the demonstrable has been detached there is still a bond of the implied apparatus of the breaths that link wedges into vibrations that might connect as—aaaahs, eeeeeee, aye, ooooo, etc. The commonality of a thought to a breath that travels. An idea or thought can persist and assemble beyond the frame, even when shorn.



[Jared Pappas-Kelley, "Wooden Portent 14, colour: 2", raw mineral pigment, enamel, wax, on wood, 50cm x 50cm x 7.9cm](#)



Jared Pappas-Kelley, "Portent 14 (red ochre)", animation is viewable as NFT format here Jared Pappas-Kelley, "Portent 14 (red ochre)", animation is [viewable as NFT format here](#)



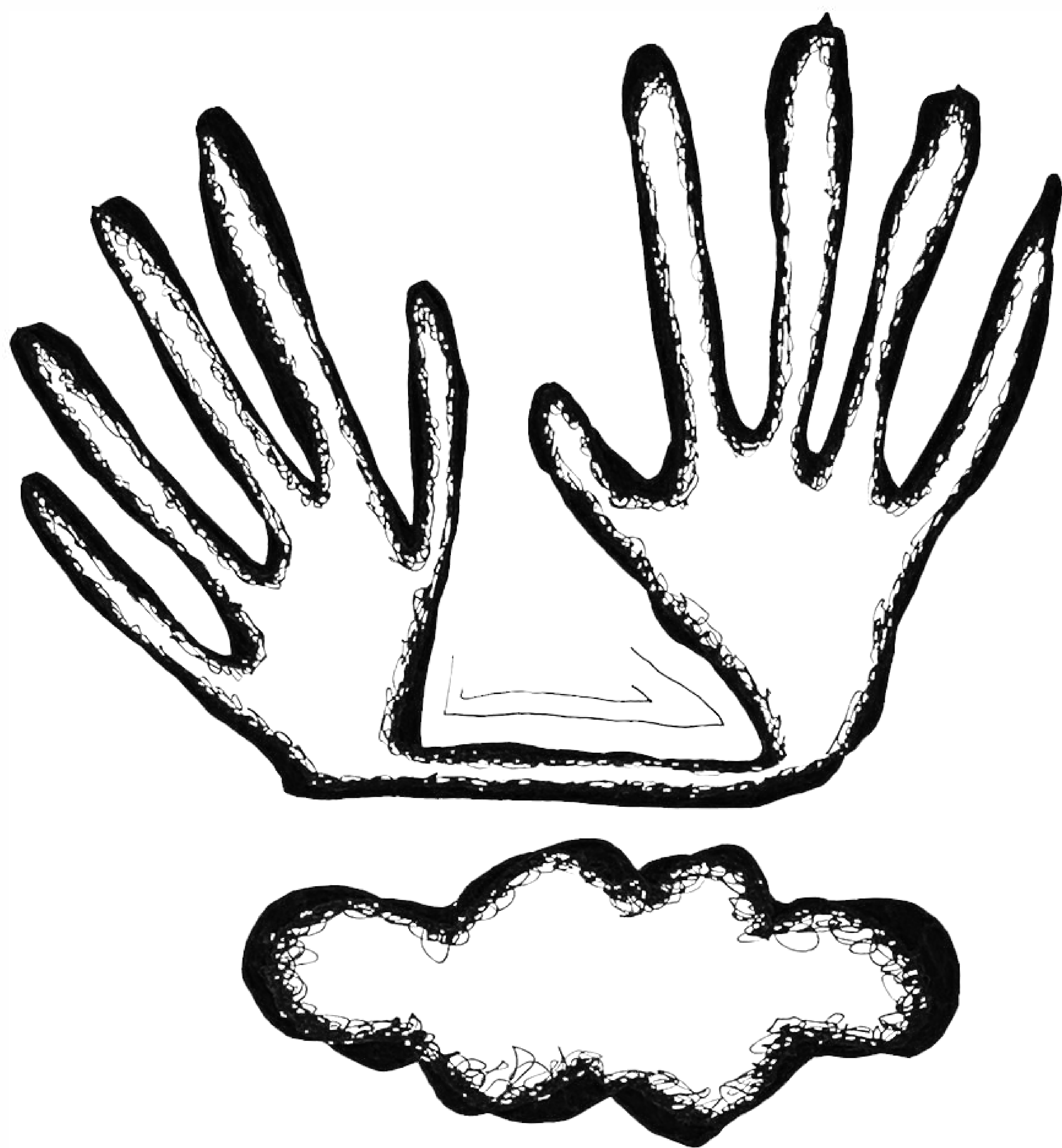
15.

Sometimes we smash something just for the experience, to see it go away in the flames of menace. It is comforting to know that we aren't tempted to venture down that path again, a challenge. When it calls out for our attention, we need decide a conscious choice to return. Not tempted by gentle heartedness to put a few crumbs of biscuit swept under the door for the mice to nibble out of sight, but with plausible deniability. Oh, I didn't know that I was accidentally feeding pests and now they have depleted my stores when I wasn't looking. Better to set match to kindling amid the linking footbridge path with a bit of glee and be on the way. Burnt bridges burn brightest. And fascinate.



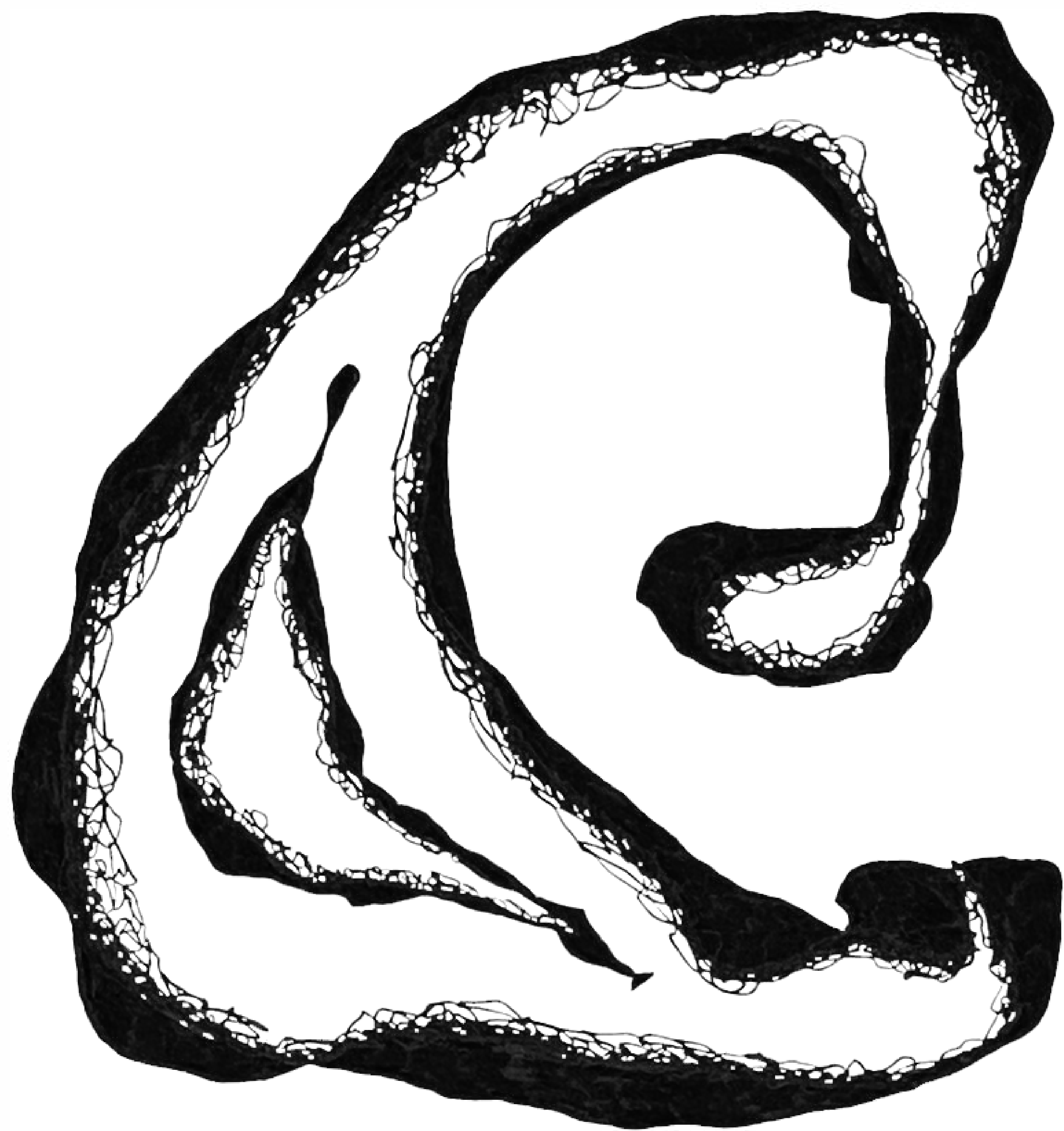
16:

Laid down in layers of sediment over time then cut and polished into new form. The object is cool to the touch but warms gradually with contact, drawing out a convection and clarifying a process. It forms a channel, wicking what becomes stuck and letting it rise. Drawing what warms and laying it back to rest. It churns and penetrates, connecting a stagnation and driving it into the next zone as it swirls like the devil's punchbowl beneath a cliff where the Pacific waters catch with the tides just off the coastline, clearing out a hole over time with a roiling motion.



17.

What do you want? What do you actually want? Not what you think you should or ought to want. As the cloud parts you can see it there for you to make tangible. Glimpsing. Decide, but not the impulses that you want from someone or for someone. Your own and uniquely such. Just that act of wanting, an alignment, and then putting through hands and working it into a substance from idea.



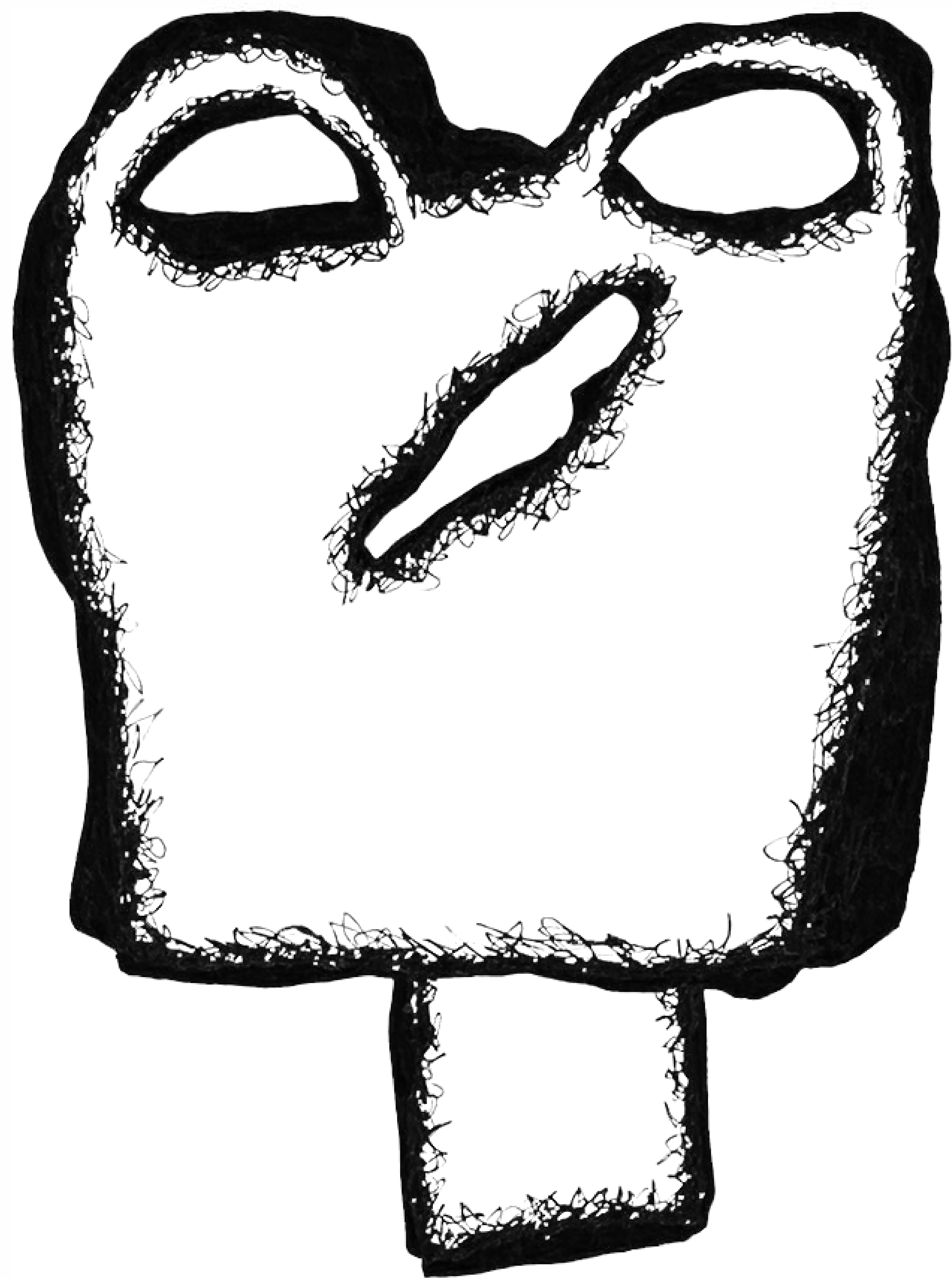
18.

With soft serve ice cream I was always fascinated with how they made that little curly-cue at the top each time. That small swivel of the wrist that executes a loop and declares the action complete. After the first bite I'd always try to put it back. Return. Morphing mouth and palette, like tying cherry stems in knots with tongue to demonstrate wanton abilities, looping the substance into a new whirl with each bite... but never capturing the suchness of that initial coil. Second rate re-enactments striving towards some supernal model. People marvel at snowflakes and how no two can ever be alike, but secretly you have always wanted to manufacture some apparatus or machine to produce snowflakes each like the other, all intimate and corresponding in every regard. The homo-flake. A conveyor belt that rolls out identical snowflakes, each true to form. Now that's art in its artifice and scale.



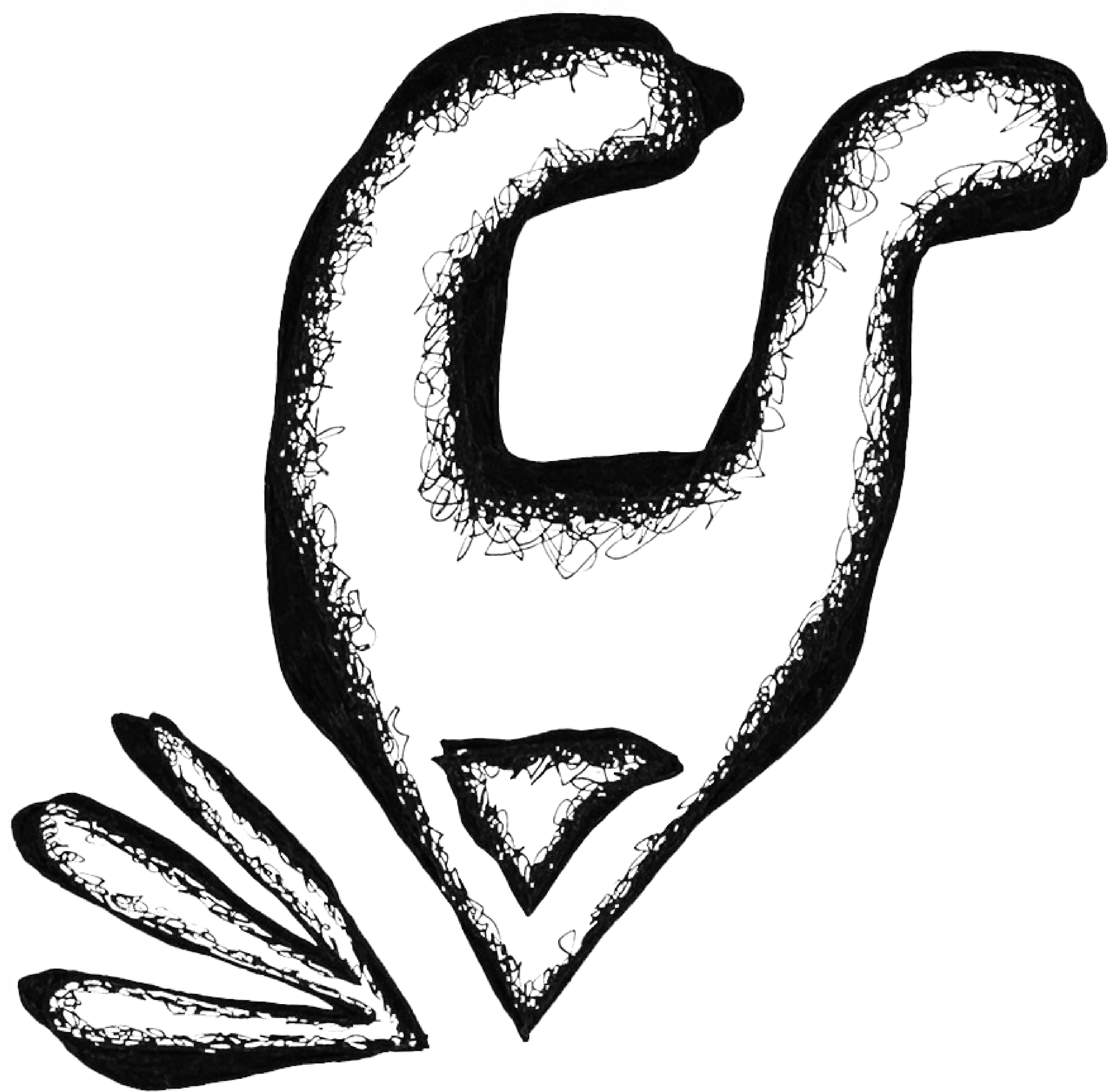
19.

A polar bear waves come forward; head turned to right looking over the shoulder. Implies there is something just over here, and if you follow, you too will see. My mother-in-law once told her husband that if he were gay, he would be a polar bear. We interjected: or a silver fox. He made a mental note to himself and nodded solemnly, if I were gay, I would be a polar bear.



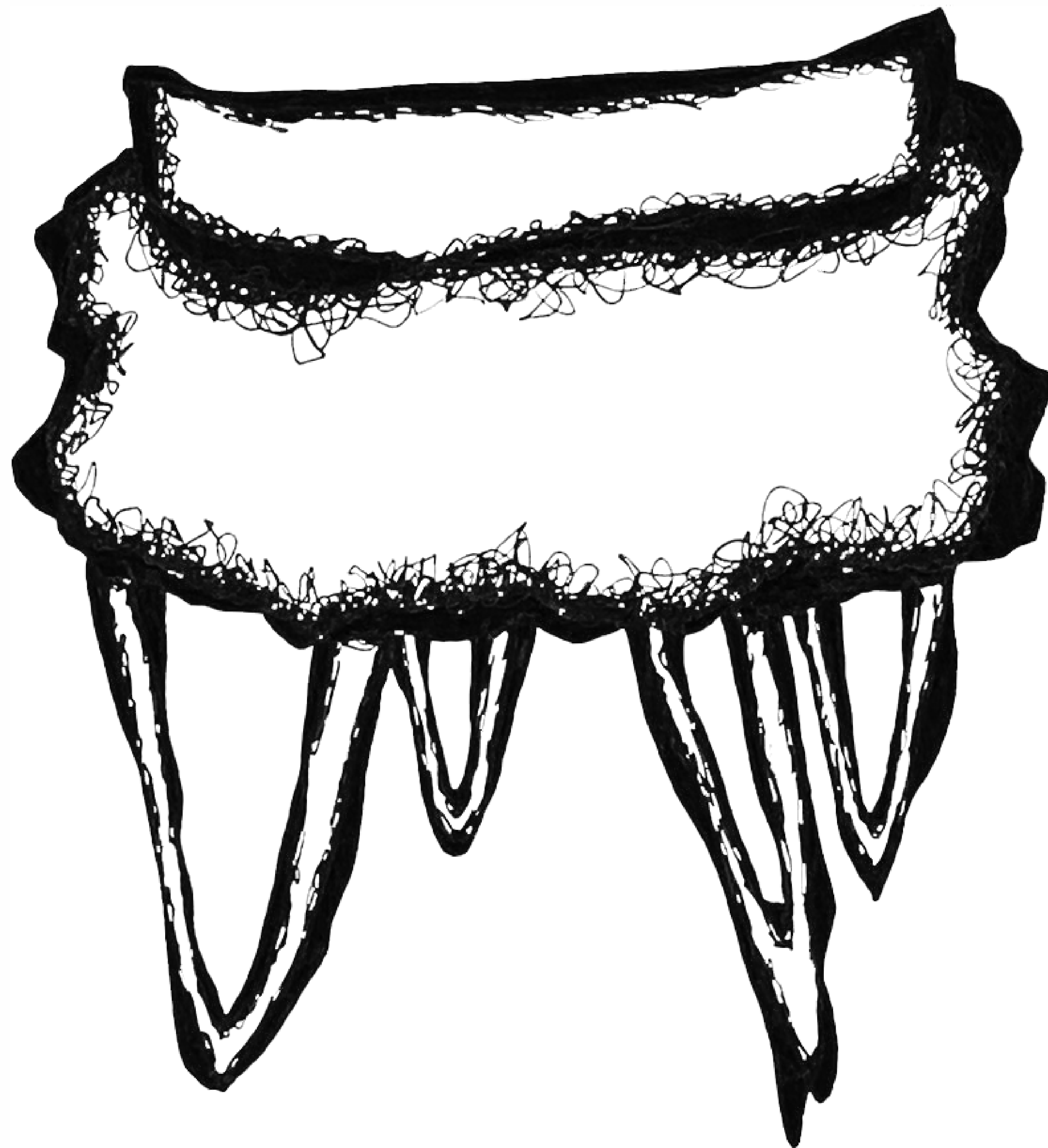
20.

Everything has an allotted time and when the dime runs out you receive a penalty. Once, you ran around town and painted all the parking meters to look like candy hearts on valentine's day. So that when people paid to use a bit of space, it instead appeared they were paying a toll to receive love. Twenty-five cents bought you ten minutes, but nothing changed except you received a debt when it ran out—showing how even gestures sometimes appear transactional.



21 :

Distracted by something off in the future while overlooking the space to rest. Luring something from the past to entice it forward. Everywhere but here.

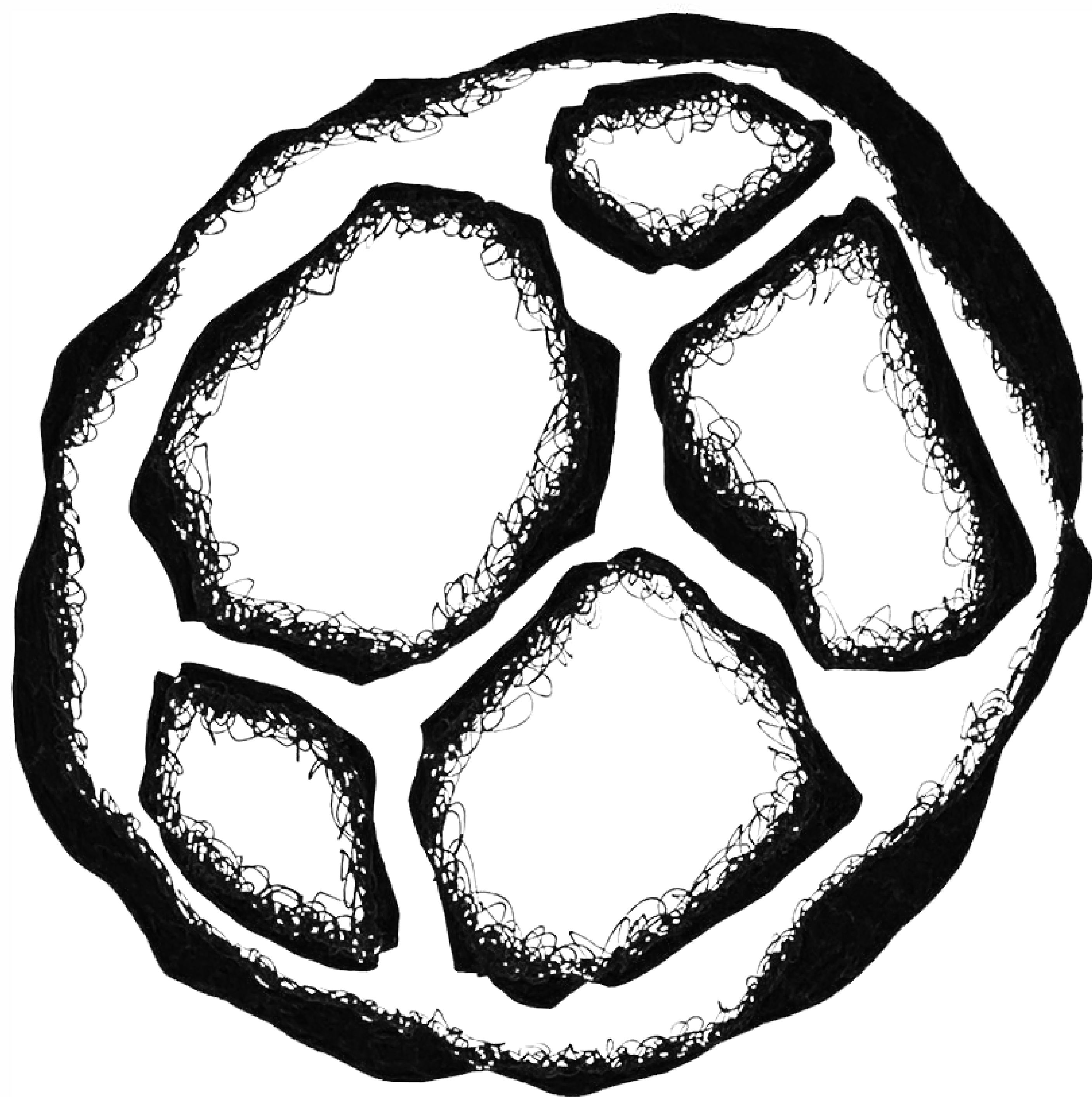


22:

Closed so that no utterance emerges. The surface holds whatever is placed there, structured as a place to loosen, but perhaps not the best design for this purpose. What was downy becomes coarse and clumped down, matted. Can't support the weight of everything. The intent is correct but needs to be repurposed so that not so corporeal but a support upon which other elements stand.

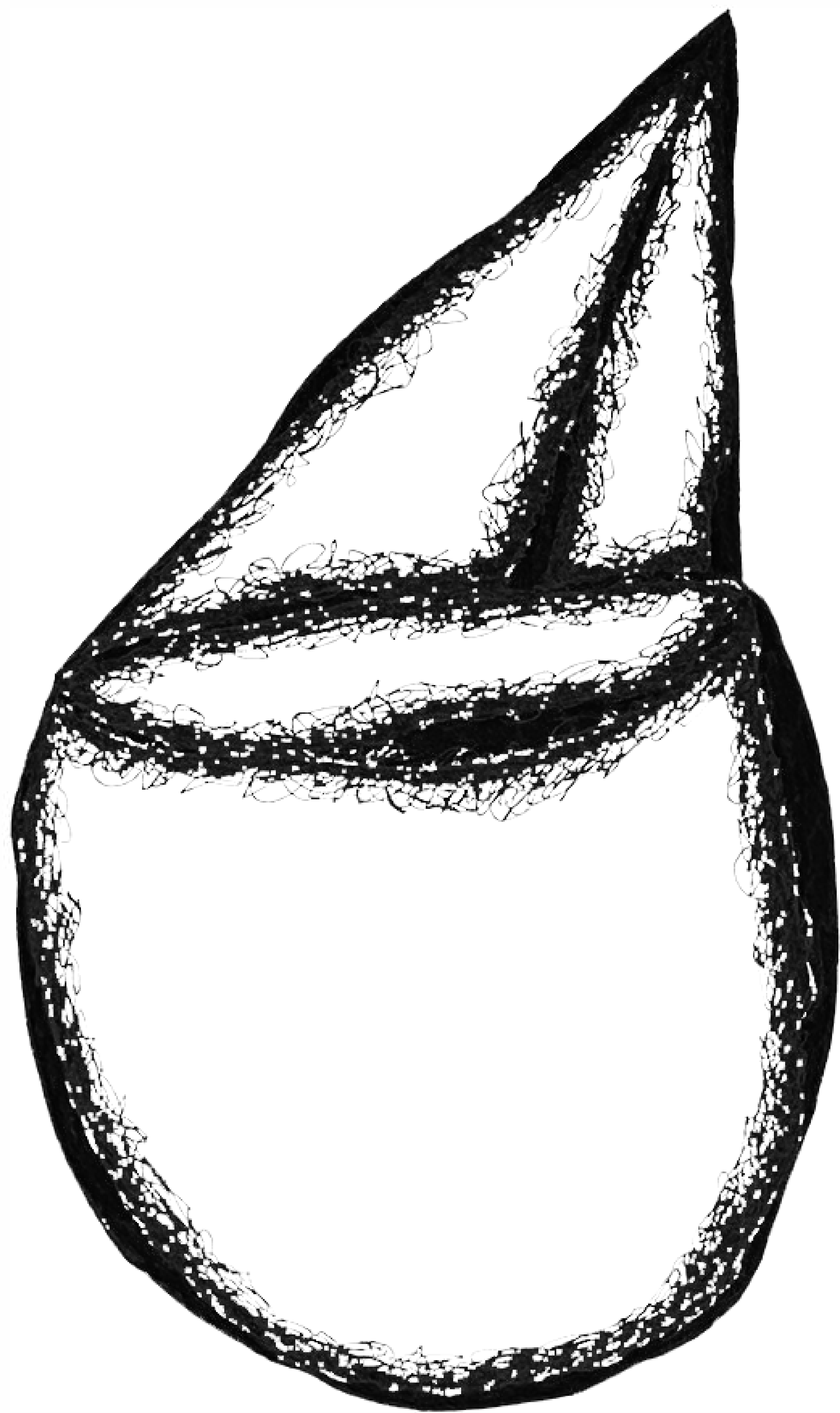


[Jared Pappas-Kelley, "Portents: Cycle 1", Dovetail Joints, install view, 2020](#)



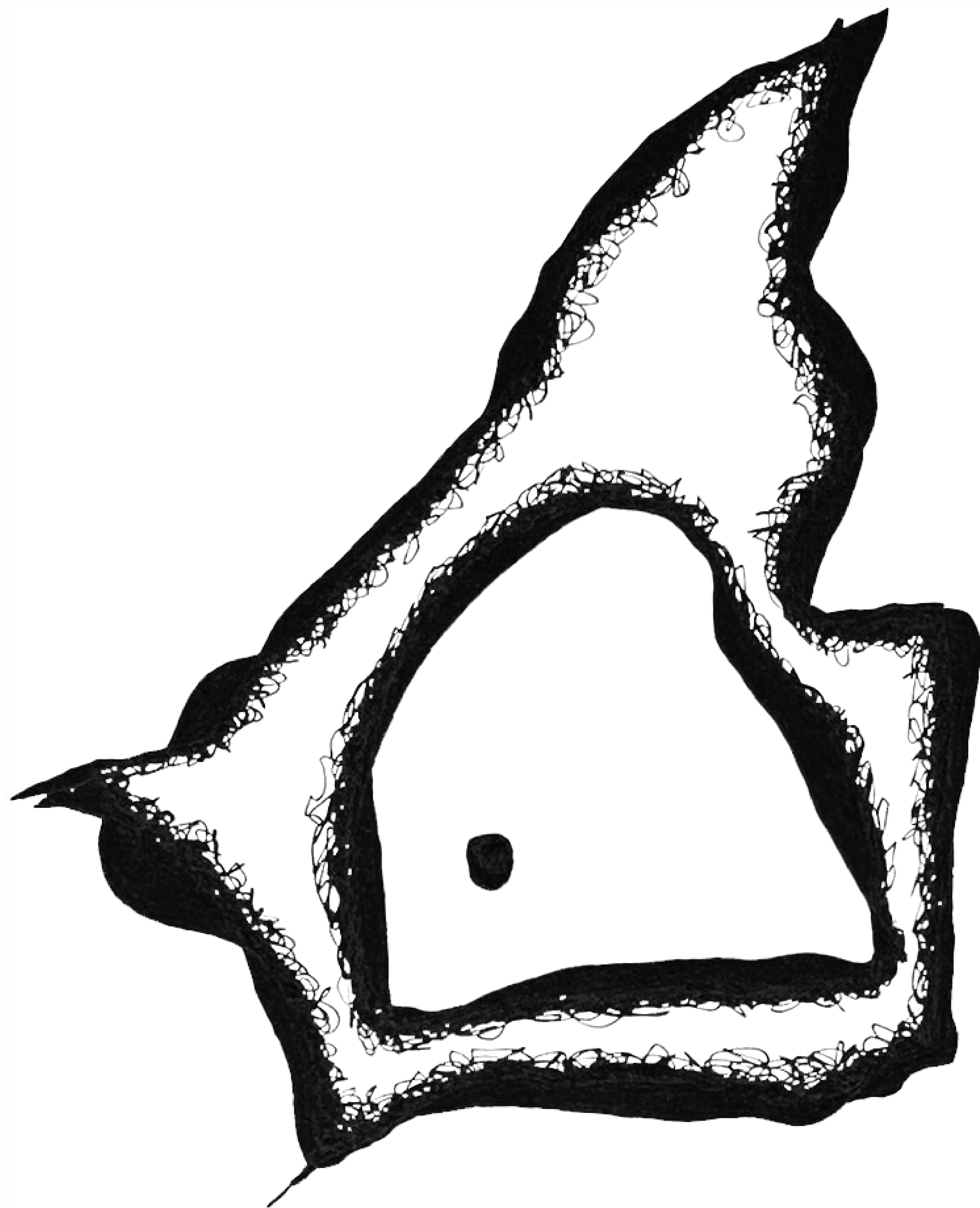
23.

An object that is mostly open space but still holds form. The vacancies fill up and must be careful about what is allowed to reside within. Someone once described a net as a collection of holes tied together with string.



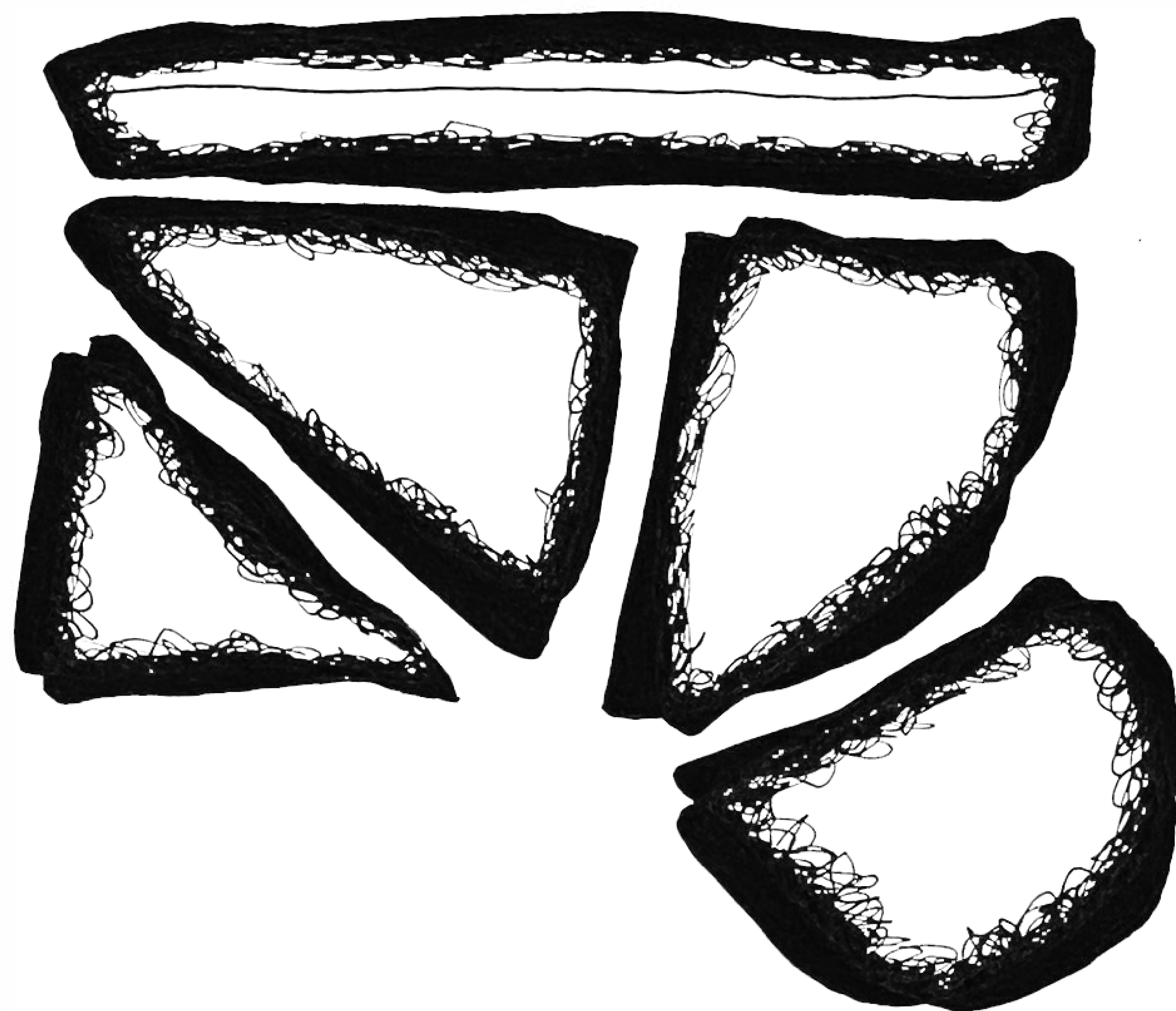
24.

An eyeless zebra finch looks up, a sail, a seed. A shining light
down into an open head, a ray upward, a hat.



25.

A door in the back behind the heart. It is flamboyant but closed. Must be opened and restoked, and then fastened again to encourage the updraft that feeds the process. Watching backward and pointing accusingly. Behind or upward.



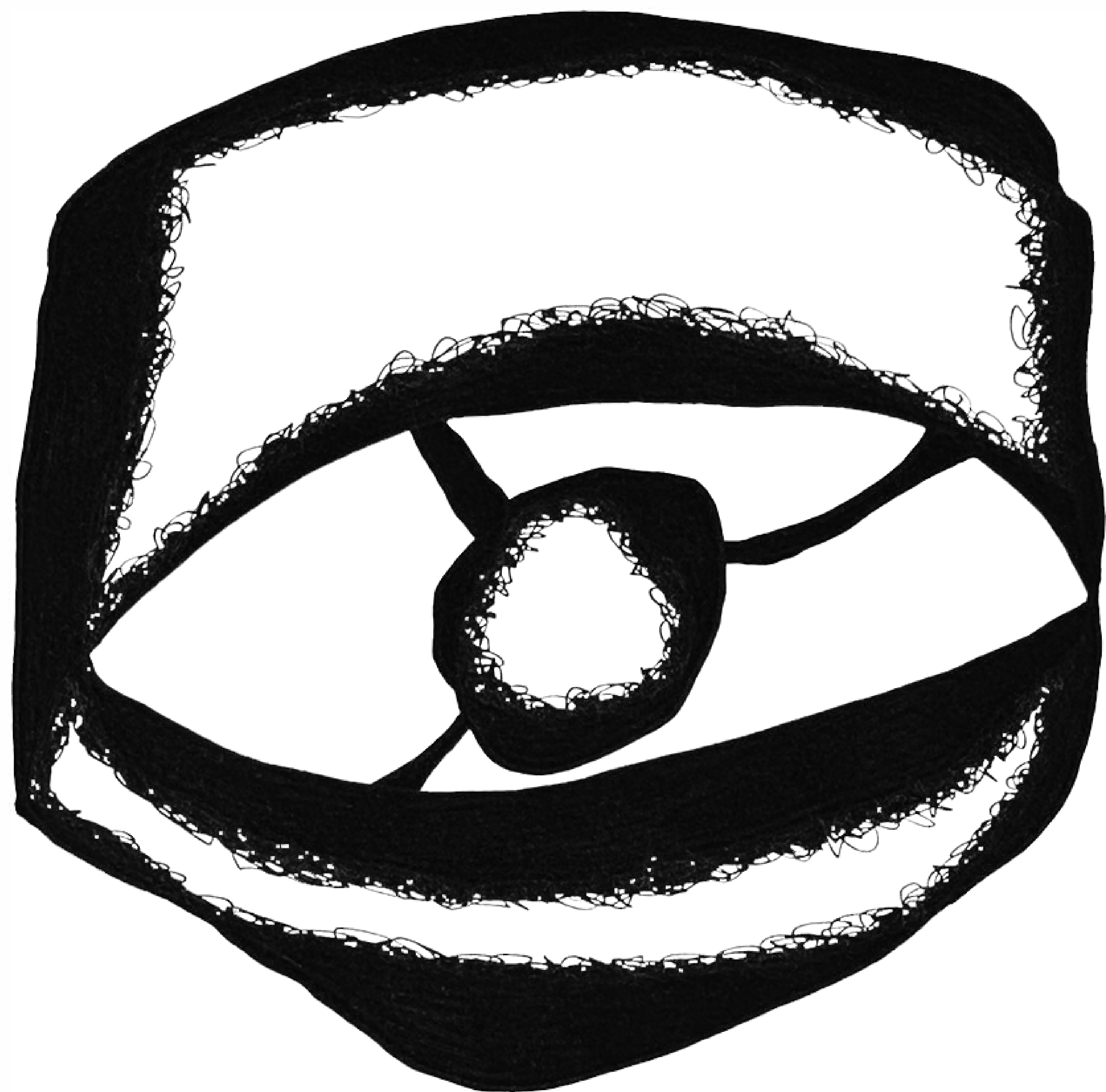
26.

Divided into pieces to prevent what is already there. Binding. Attracting but cut off to frustrate communication and manifestation. Split the pieces, salt the earth, cover eyes, and shallow breaths so that no one else might see. Playing dead so that a bear won't take notice. But there is no movement until it reawakens and re-joined, it can wait all day, so say what you want.



27 :

Floret limbs that appear manifold, stamen, forceps that a beetle manoeuvres, hearing apparatus. It bounds forward as a puzzle piece released from enigma, relocate, and able to adjust to what is on hand. Connects to temperament as artery that brings the stimuli or sensory to the core with not much need of consideration.



28.

Above. It sits there and hue changes with every detail transmitted. It mimics the apparatus for receiving itself but only a surface echo. Like and like. It directs its focus so that it is not just a general sense but presents a utility as well as atmosphere. My mood dictates the image I choose, which directs the atmosphere it follows, and the ether I inhabit, which again guides the image I choose. Each in increment and prescribing an implied circuit, out and back, that can all be stepped away from and recentred.



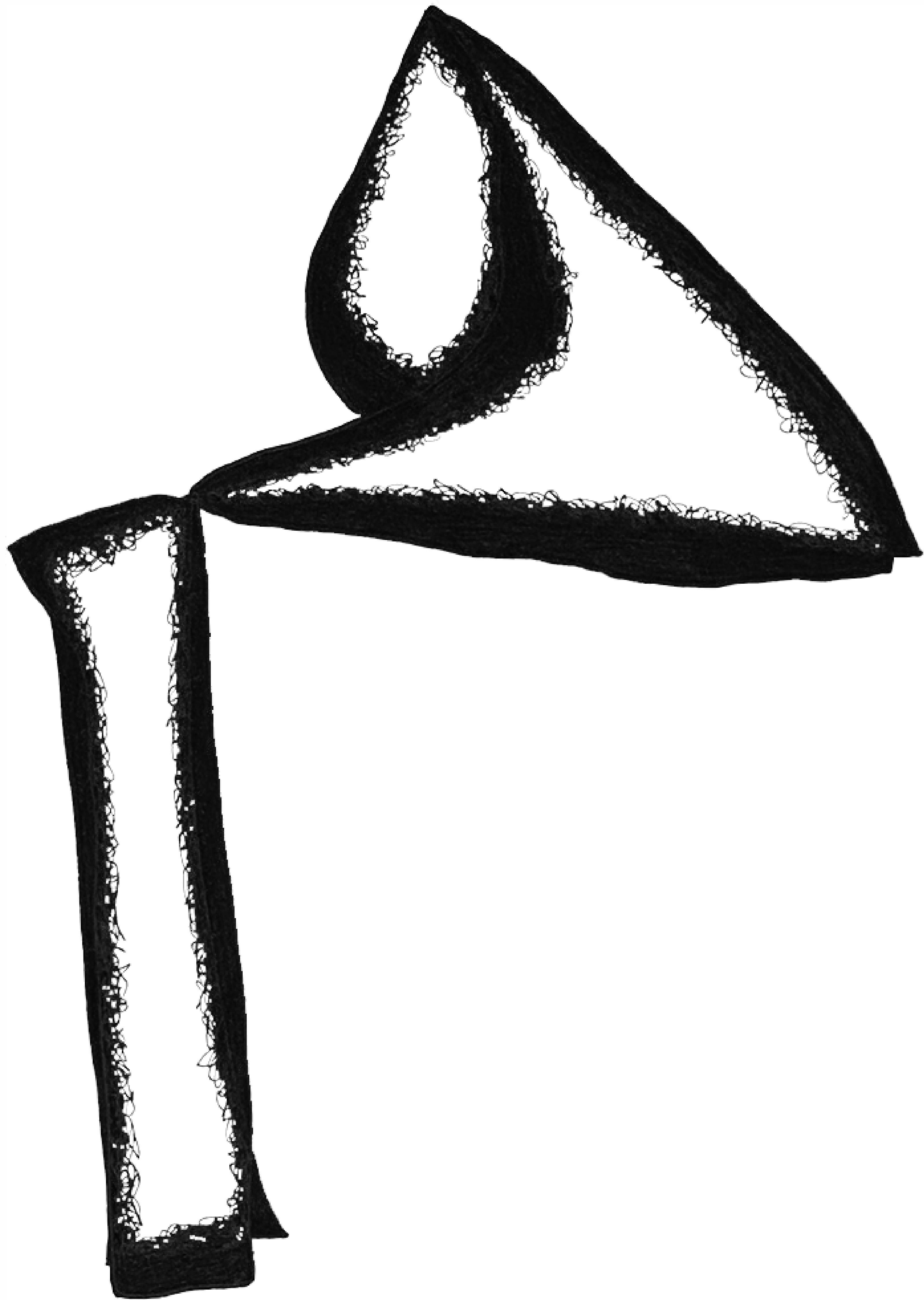
29.

When two things overlap it presents a third, a channel that aligns to both and transmits a passage. When celluloid pauses too long it catches fire, is combustible, but before that takes place there is a passing. Through a keyhole we can glimpse another space, but we are all an immense pack of voyeurs, no really, and perhaps it is better to just step into that room without secrets.



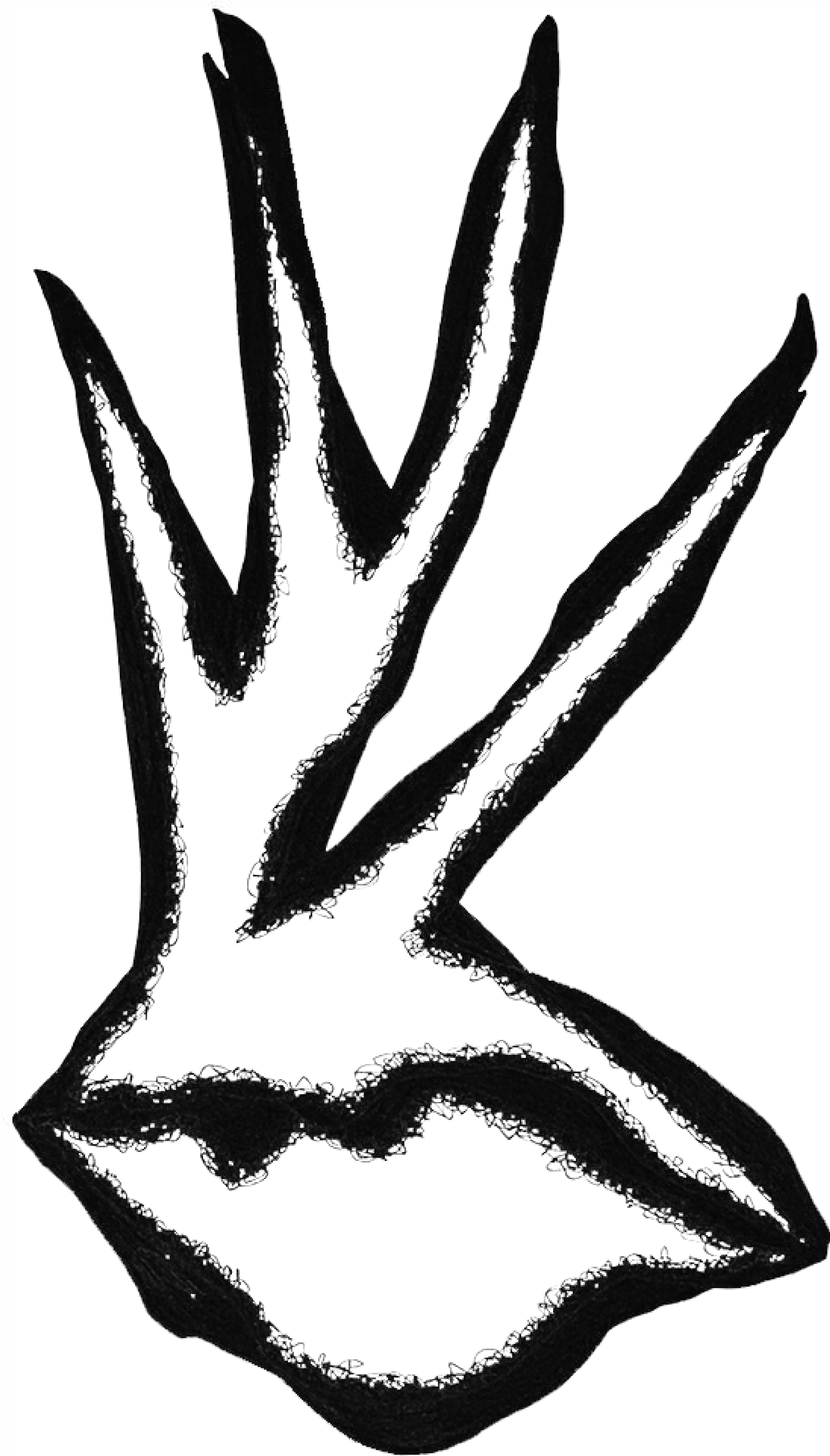
30.

When I was little I was only interested in the opening sequence of a particular show. Every time it came on, I would stop all else and watch transfixed from the moment it started until the instant the show began. I had absolutely no attentiveness for the show itself and as soon as the dialogue began, it held no allure. But for those twenty or so seconds I belonged to it. The ring of truth, but also nonsense. That stone that grows into a tree, but not yet ready for that next bit. It felt like such a betrayal, how could something so transcendent lead to something so mundane, the psychodrama of an expanded domestic routine. I would rather have seen the other story, stretched out forever, not this one.



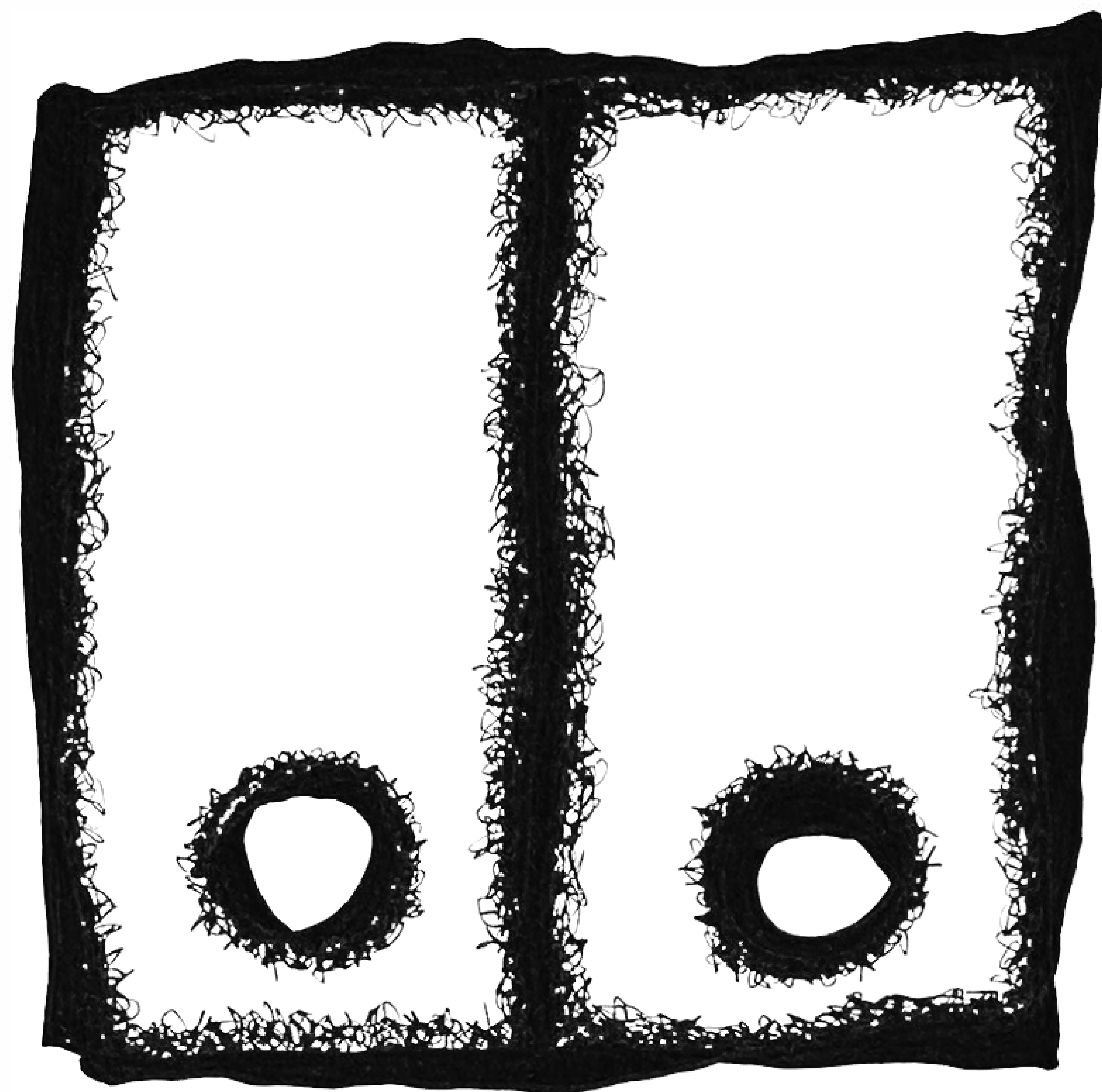
31 :

The settings draw something away tangentially, but it maintains contact and ultimately secures. Sailing ships often tilt farther to the side, looking to capsize, in fairly routine expeditions. It is part of how they couple the wind to propel headlong. What is significant is that they remain grounded in their contact with the water, and this is what a keel provides. If the keel is strong then it lists to nearly any degree while cohesion is maintained as it tests the surface.



32.

Sprouting out from a kernel that becomes something potentially exotic, but first it must just sprout. From a protected place into something signalling precision, it may rest for quite some time until this happens. However, remember that apple trees grow apples and it may simply be our job to ring the bell. That is the thing we do, so let go of the rest and ring the bell.

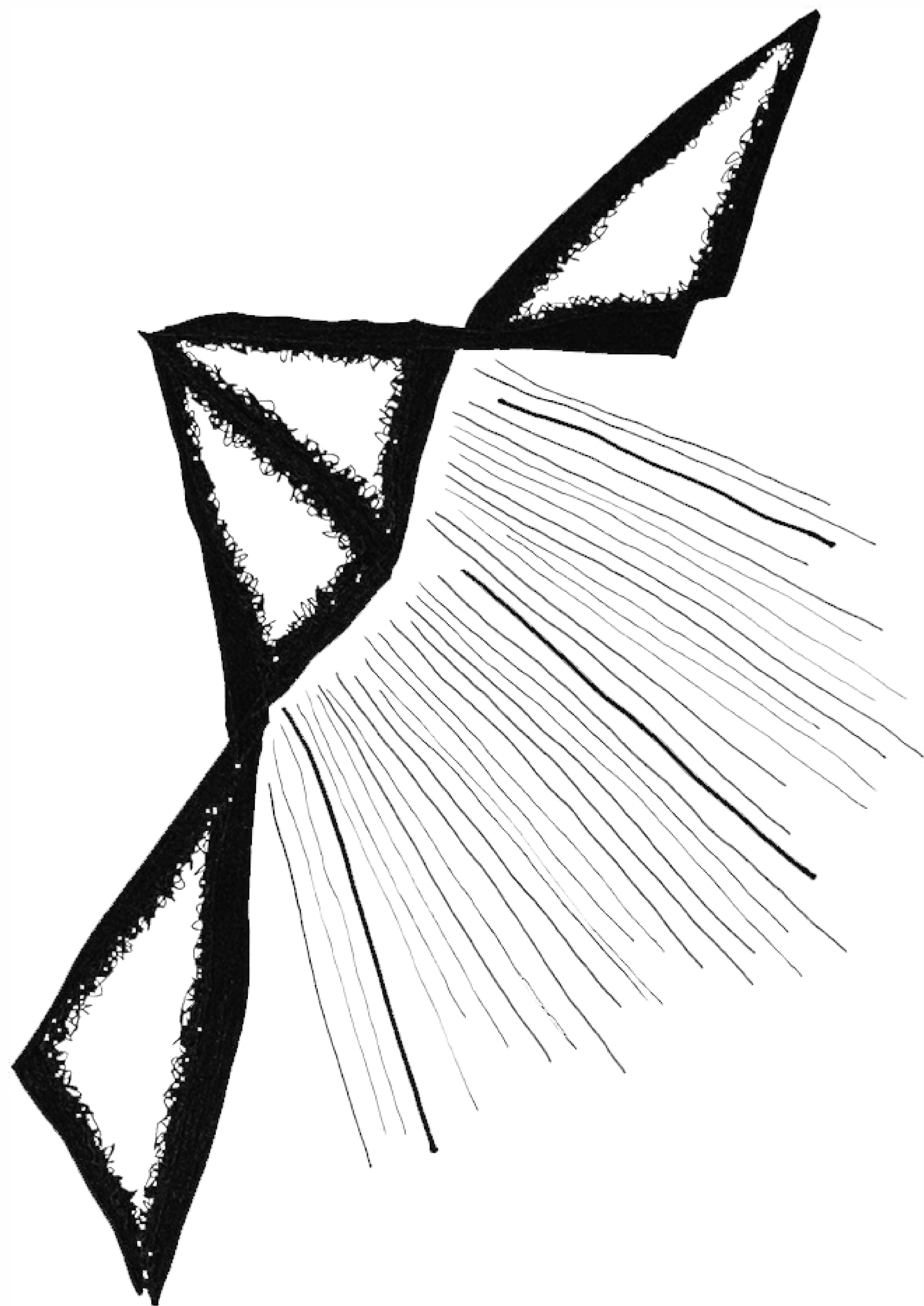


33:

A matched pair forms a larger surface. It might be two individual pieces or one apparatus. It sits across the flame, vaguely flammable in its own right, but it gives dimension to where something might be worked or developed. Lift them up and clean out the muddle that gathers beneath their nooks.

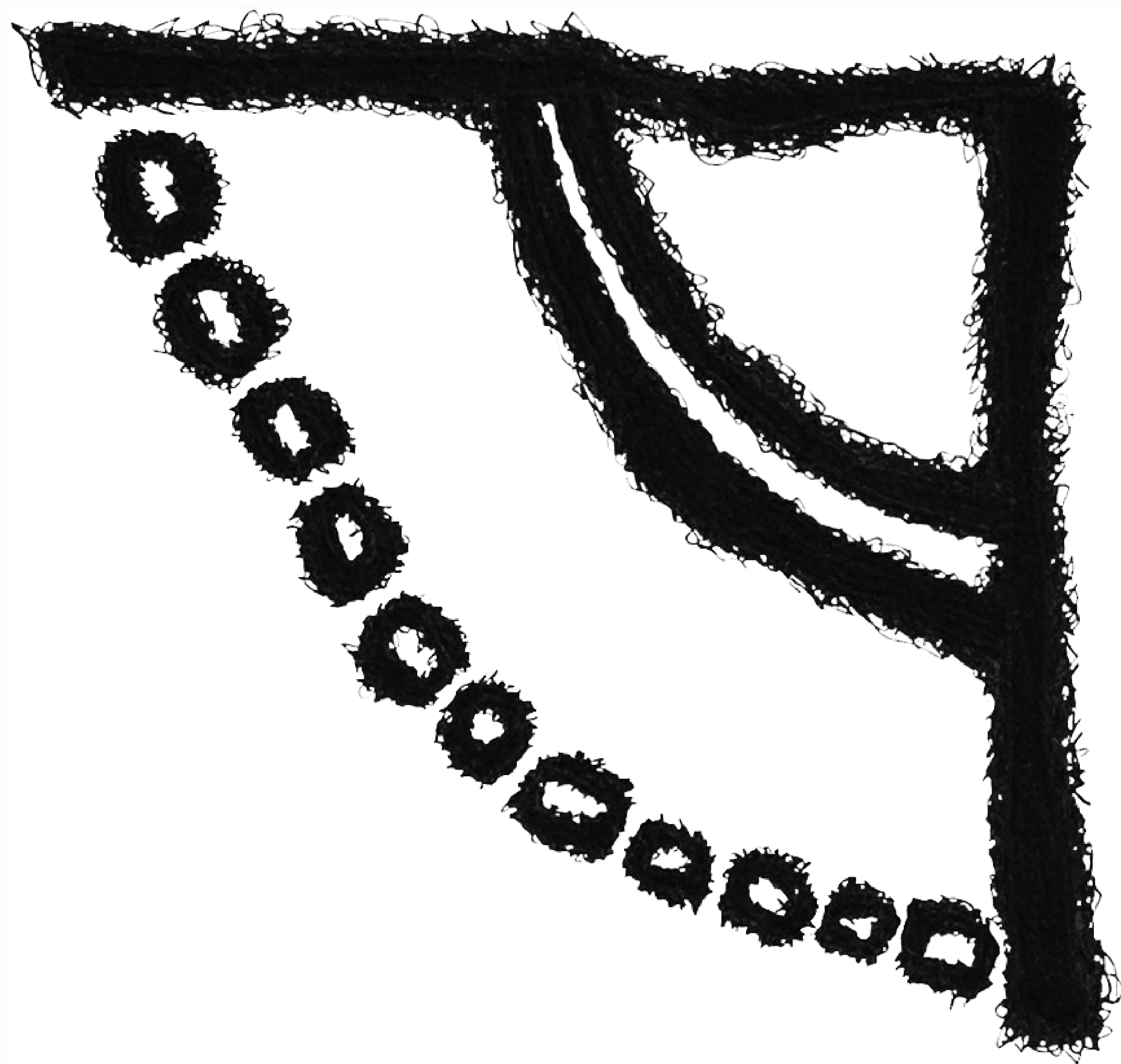


[Jared Pappas-Kelley, "Portents: Cycle 1", Dovetail Joints, install view, 2020](#)



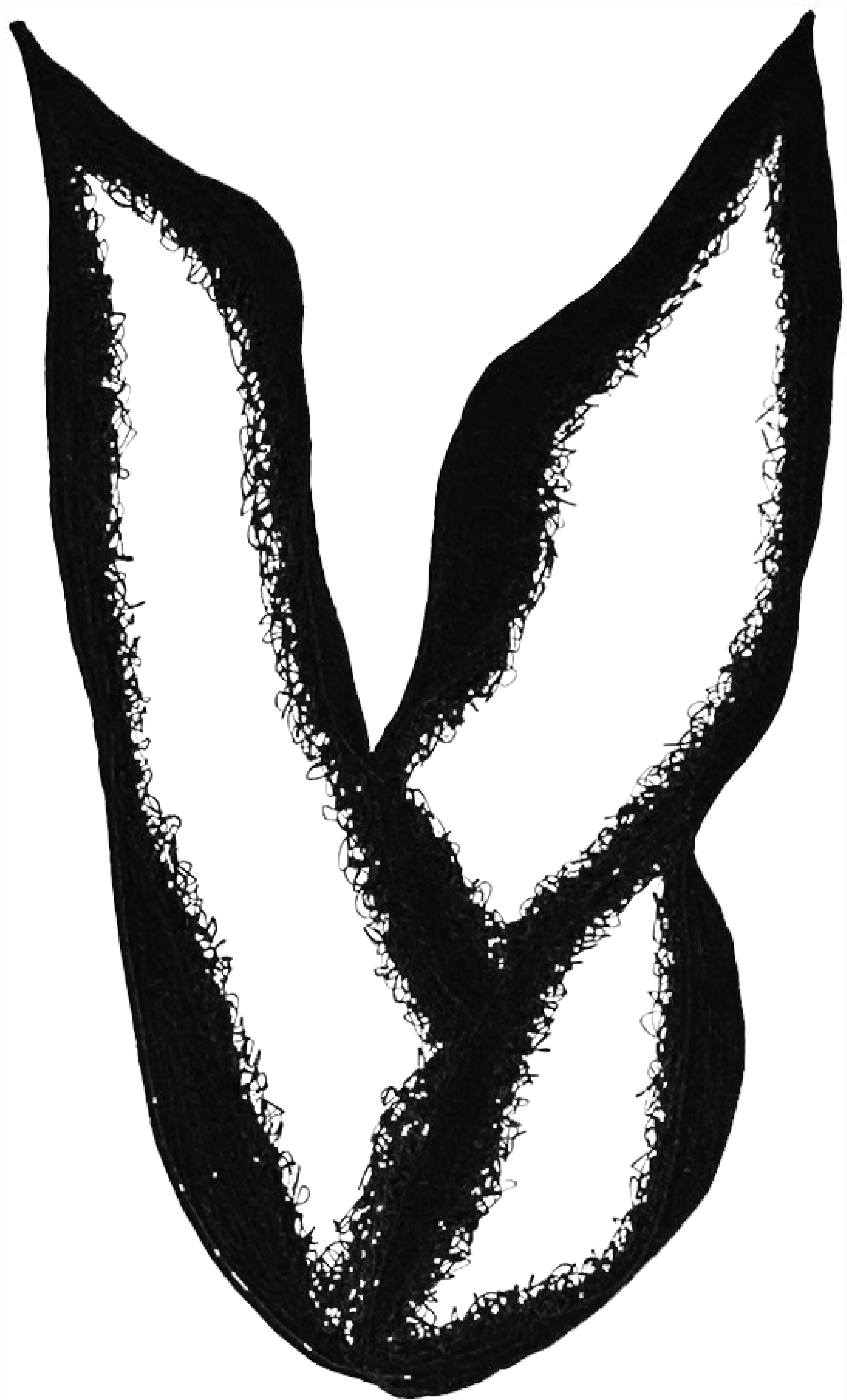
34.

What folds closed can also pleat open. What gives an envelope of sorts for something to be perceived can let it mist down like drizzle. At these times it doesn't need to be cooped up and there is no need to be cautious. Left and right unfold like lampposts and the sparks illuminate what was previously difficult to see. Once you know it's there, the container isn't always needed.



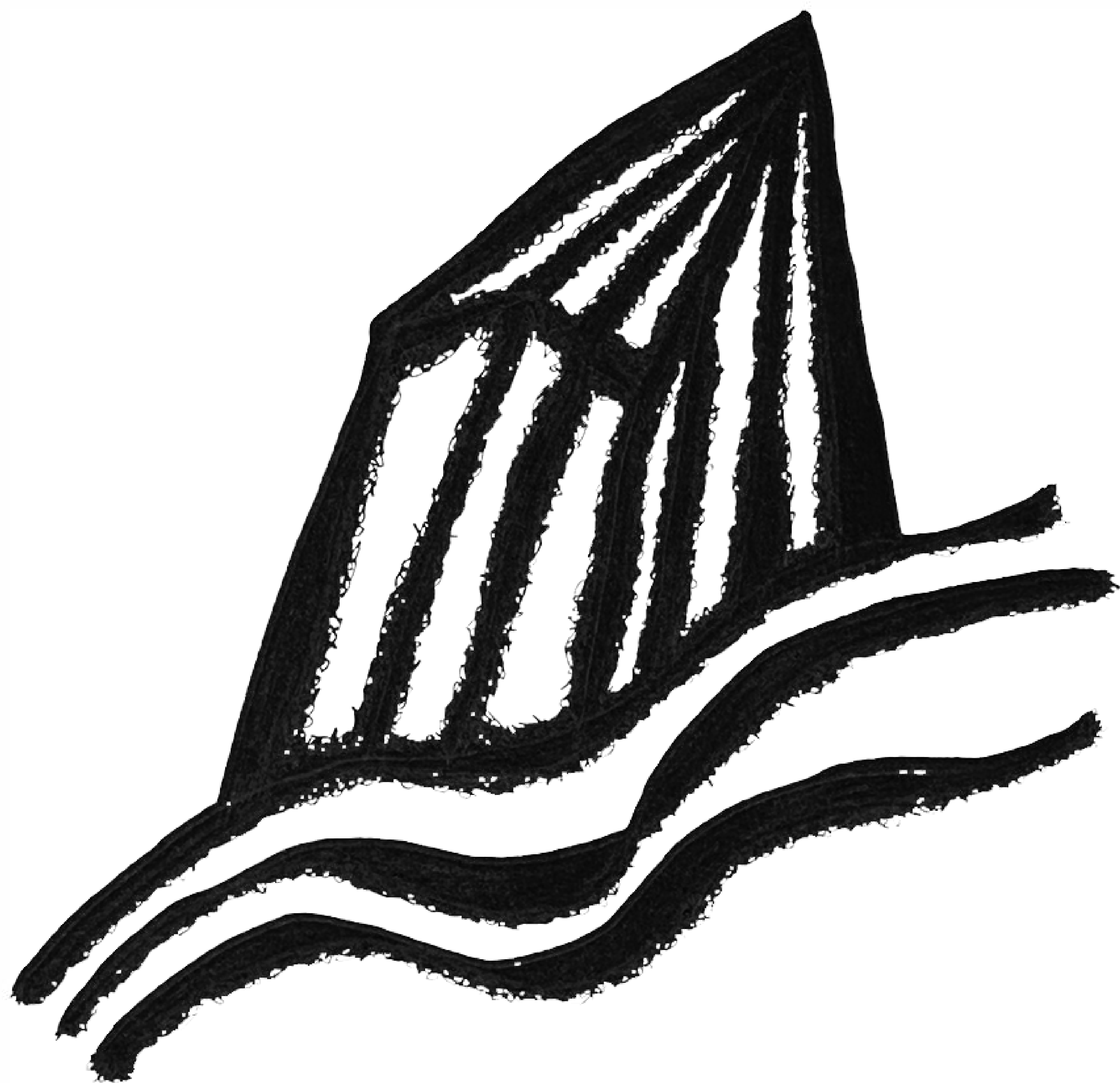
35:

A radial can be measured by what is implied. The areas around imply what is always here in inverted form. The compliment that matches in every way. By tracking how it contests what we might see, the bit that appears in absence is perceived.



36.

In a new phase, first one bit extends and then the other, but if you watch from outside it appears as it is all happening at once. A delicate clambering from the exterior points as area expands, putting forward fresh development that in retrospect always seems inevitable. Like a woven tapestry intertwining away from the centre with each cluster, arcing out and then enclosing into the structure as a cohesion. Circles around, loops, then waits, begins again.



37 :

Each facet rising up to terminate into a contact at the uppermost. The light catches and it smooths into the all at once-ness against the flat surface that the light projects onto so that many can reside on one side with a trick of the eye. It peeks up through the impressions, which mimic its own structures, but not rigid, as it forms contours around the space it displaces with its movement. Three different phases all joining contact.

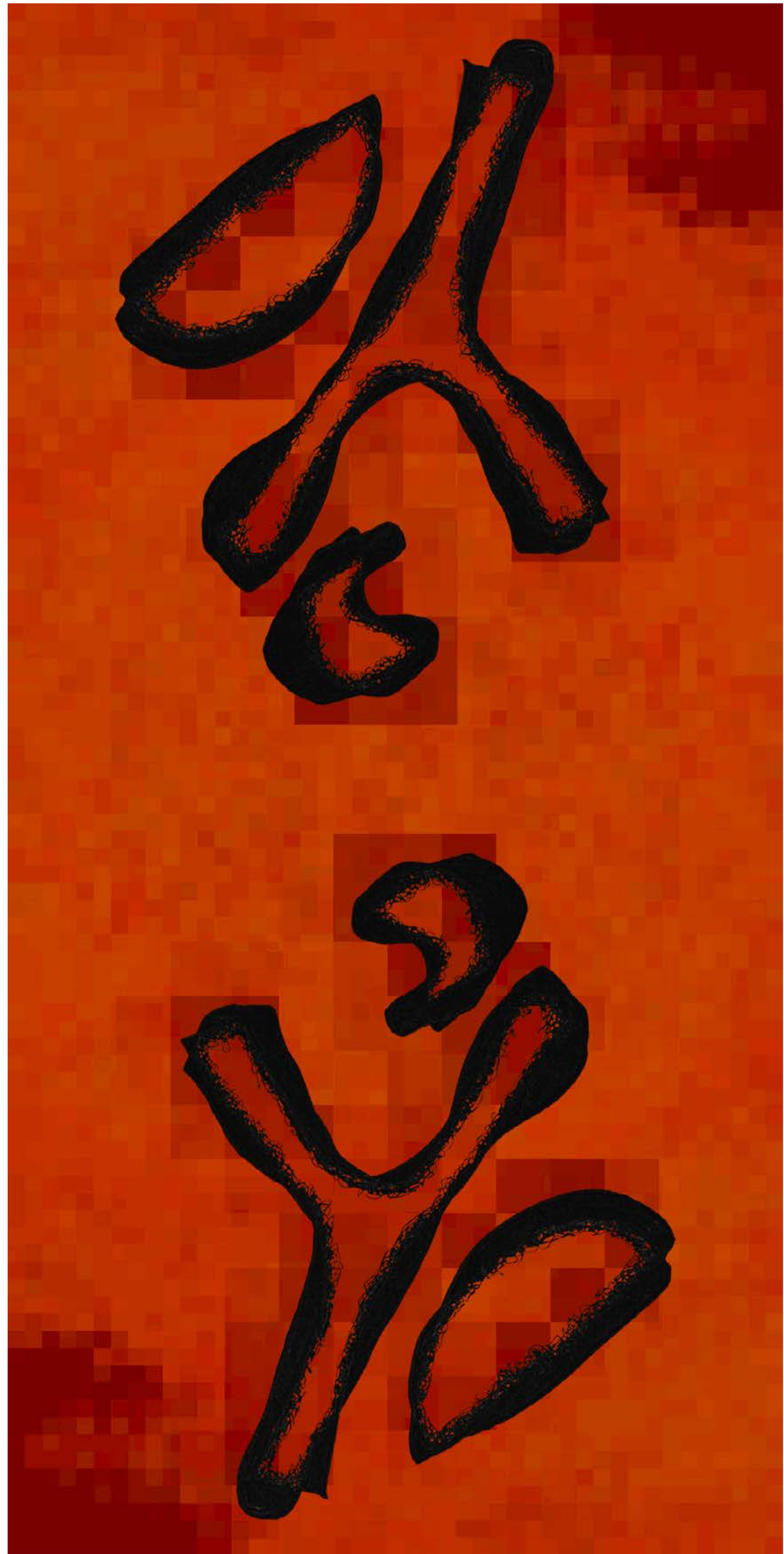


38.

Pieces form together in an overarching structure to enable movement. Sinews and soggy bits wedge in to allow ambulation, slice one piece against another to propel forward. Draw back and fling seedpods on a hot day as they gradually dry out and snap, pull taunt and project forward. These bits, if used correctly will never remain here.



[Jared Pappas-Kelley, "Wooden Portent 38, colour: 2", raw mineral pigment, enamel, wax, on wood, 50cm x 50cm x 7.9cm](#)

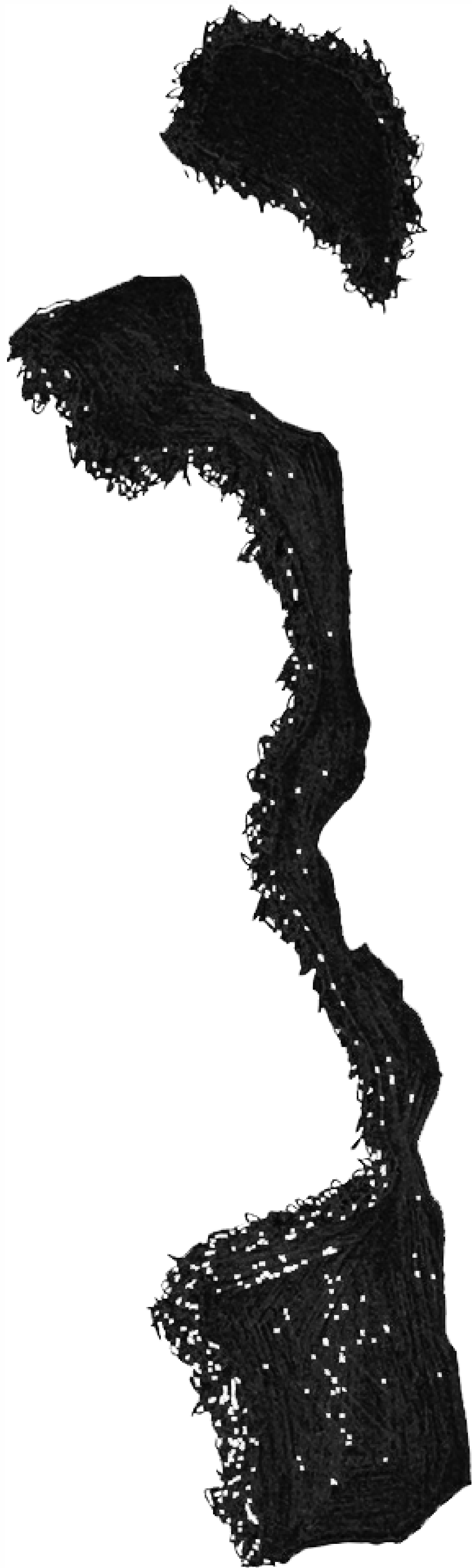


Jared Pappas-Kelley, " Double Portent 38 (red ochre)", animation is viewable as [NFT format here](#)



39:

Beneath a lacquer surface remains a vacated space where each vibration permeates into the sounds that have collected. It itches with each shudder, filled in with sifted structures that mark the absence of these sensitive assemblies. Central pivot allows the axis, drawstrings pulling the surface forward, sending the delicate tremors to re-enact the cadence. Caught forever and reminding of all the cues. The bits that are forever just off stage.



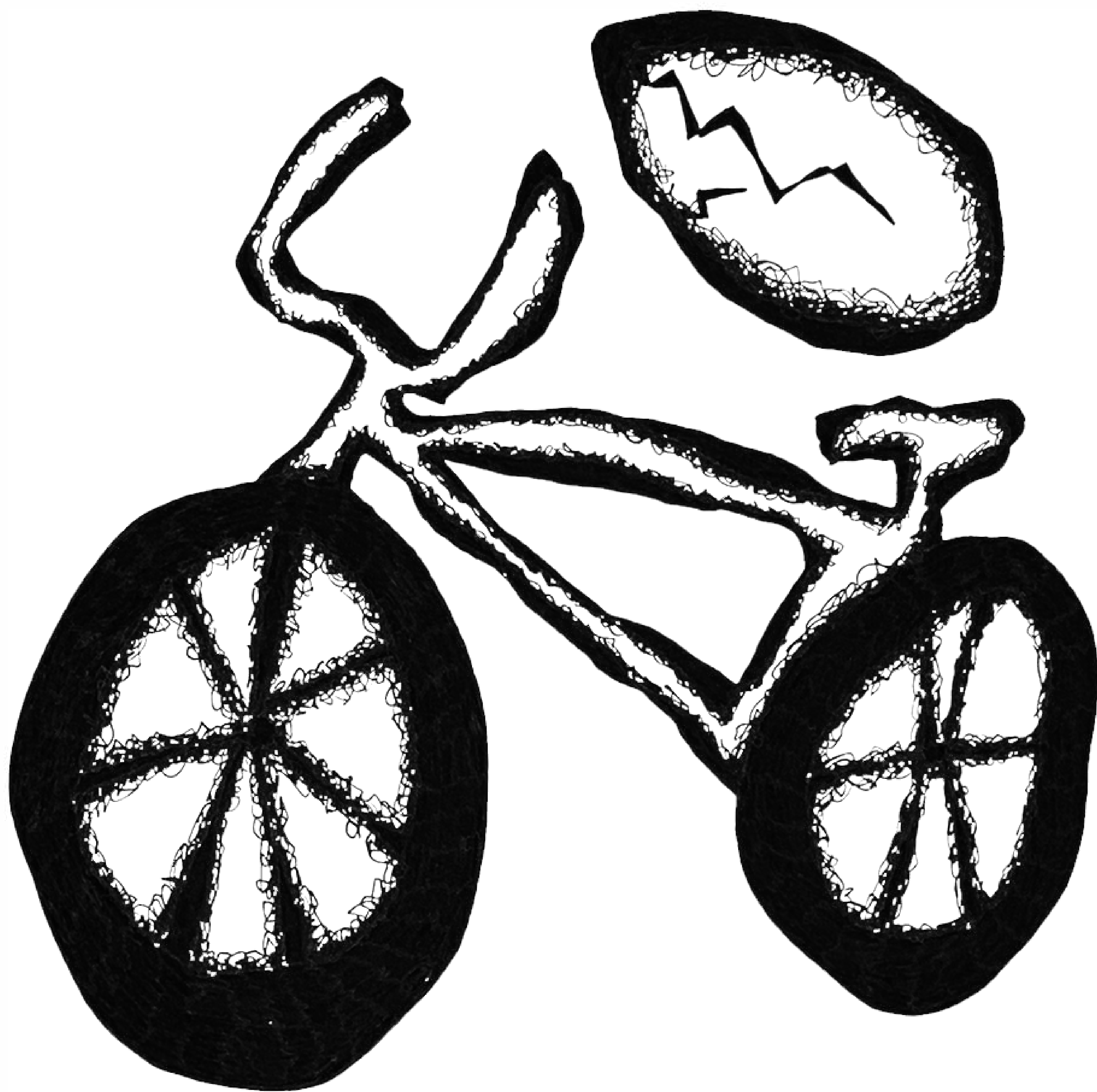
40.

A pause in gestures where the light catches a winding stream against a mostly flush surface when the ambient light glances across. A dimple in plaster, an anomaly of scale in which one becomes disoriented in a smudge or what might now appear immense once inside.



41 :

Here are photos of cakes, lots of cakes, birthday cakes, anniversary cakes, and summer cakes. Every holiday has its own cake. Thirty years worth of cakes, but there aren't any people in the photos, just a close-cropped picture of cake. No clues to whom the cake belonged to or what it commemorated. One has yellow frosting, and you count six glowing candles. Somebody turned six. Another has rows of green globbed clover, and a trail of icing scrawls their name.



42.

Riding a bike in London when a bus hits. Something fragile and sad about a famous person riding a bicycle, like delicate eggs with the yolk sucked out, their fame waiting to be set loose with each passing car.



Jared Pappas-Kelley, "Portent 42 (oxide yellow)", animation is viewable as [NFT format here](#)

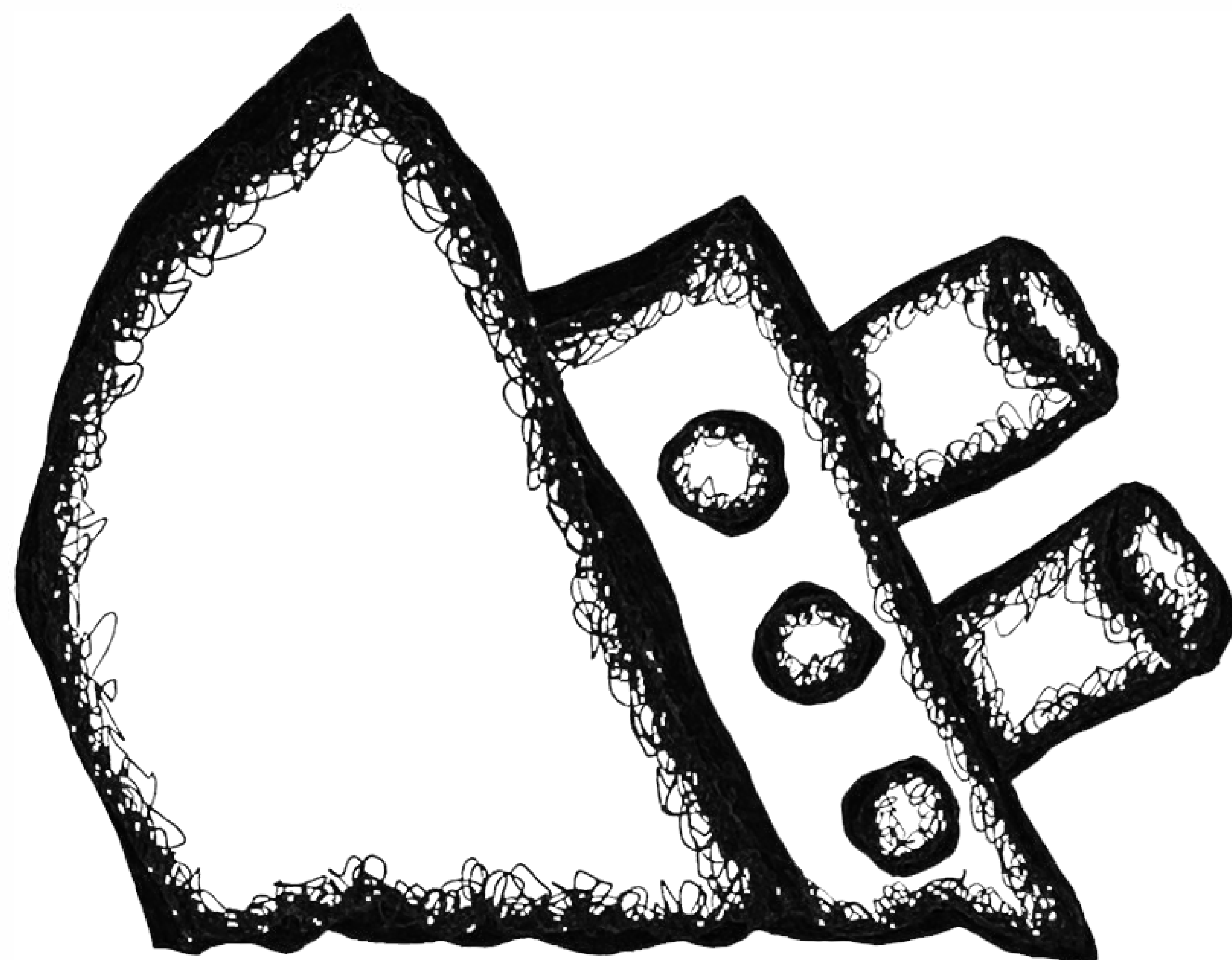


Jared Pappas-Kelley, "Wooden Portent 42, colour: 3", raw mineral pigment, enamel, wax, on wood, 50cm x 50cm x7.9cm



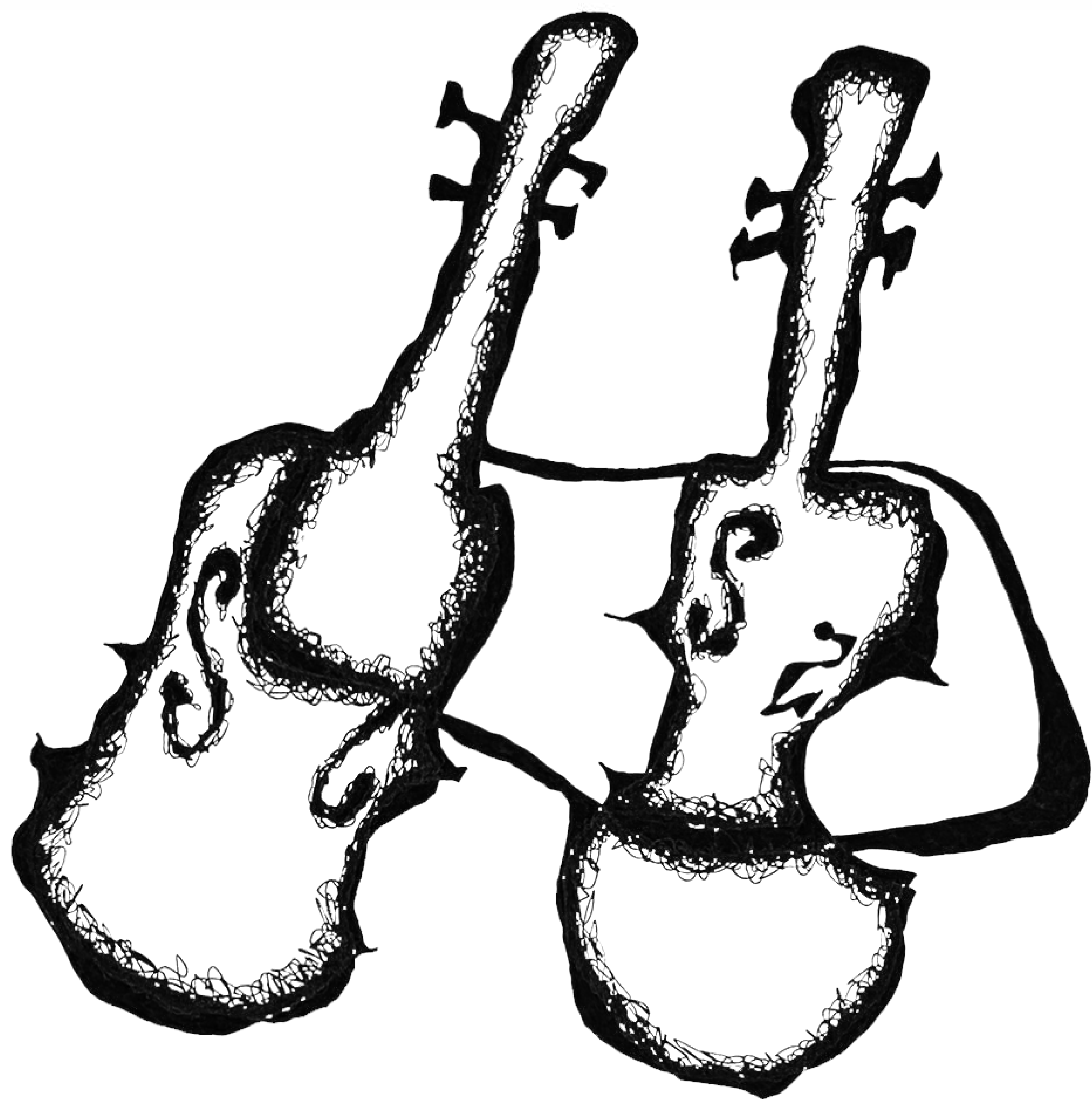
43.

They tell a bunch of birds to drop dead because the chirping is too loud and in the next picture, they show all these tiny bird corpses lying everywhere, in food, with toys, near a cloud. I remember being fascinated by this story.



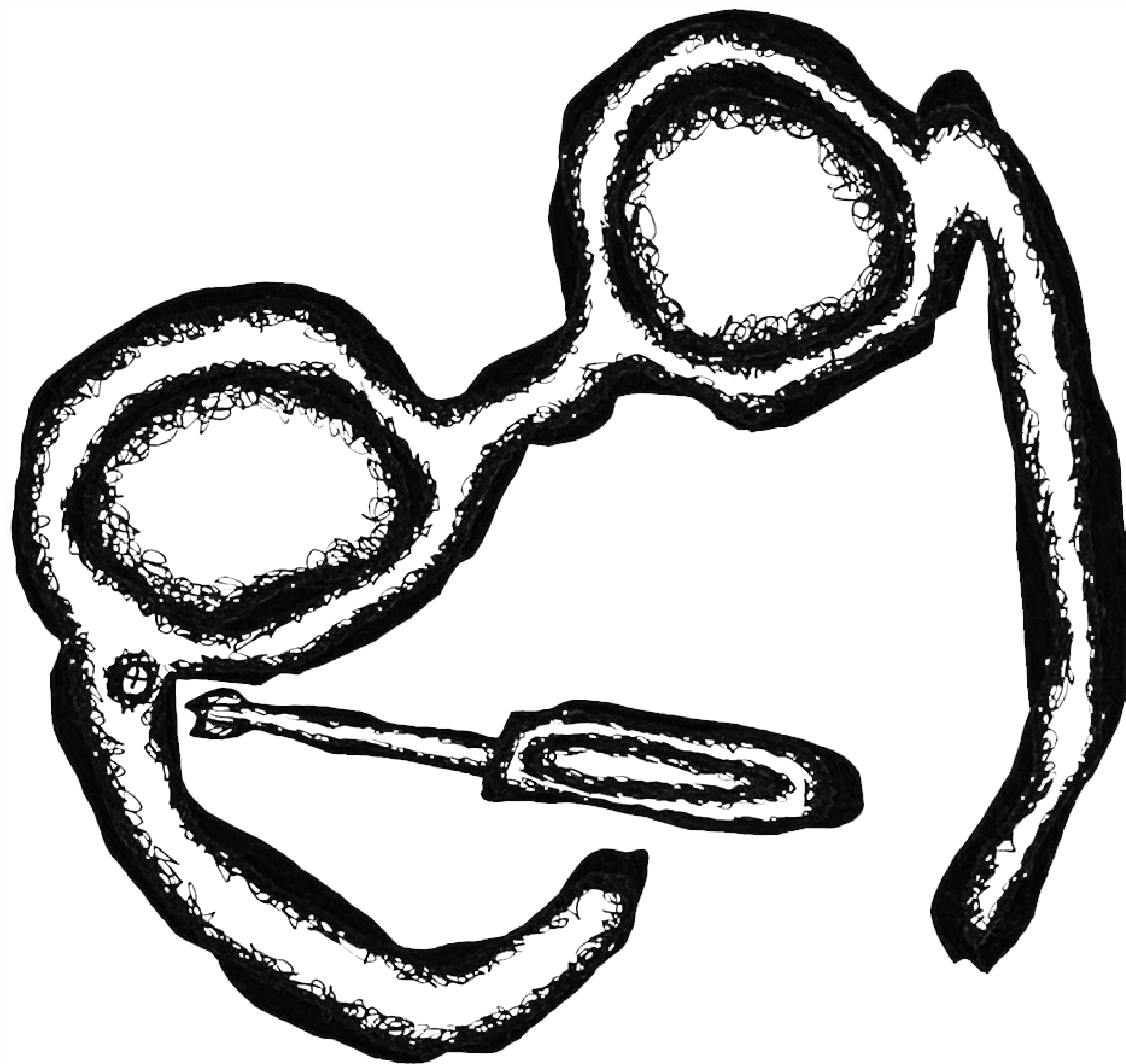
44.

You walked along this meadow, follow the path through the forest, follow the river to this lake to the main building. It comes out above the water, but the back is rotting, so you go down and it opens onto the water. All this is drowning in the lake. You climb through the butt. This is called the Titanic, as it sinks. You go up the floor here.



45.

They grow up secluded, but someone sends them matching violins. One raises violin and begins to play then the other places under chin, points elbow, and begins too. Outside we approach an incline, sparse gold-dead prairie with a few scrubby bushes in the distance.



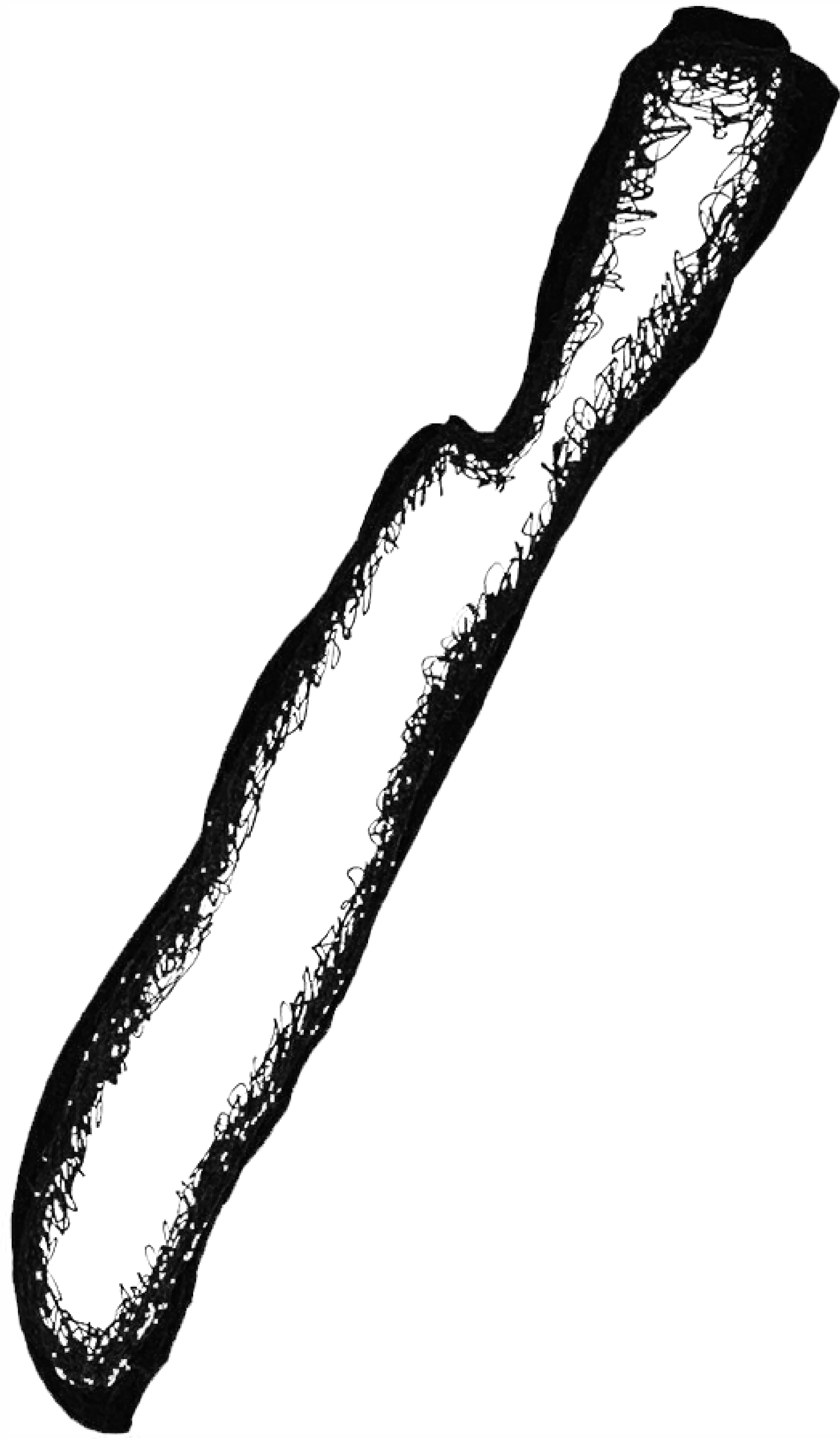
46.

They think that's cool and make awkward polite conversation. They're in the middle of a conversation about glasses and how to tighten the hinge, then stops mid-sentence to ask if they smell something.



47 :

They ate so many that someone told them that the king of grapefruit would take them because they ate all his subjects. They said it was portrayed as a giant crow in a crown.



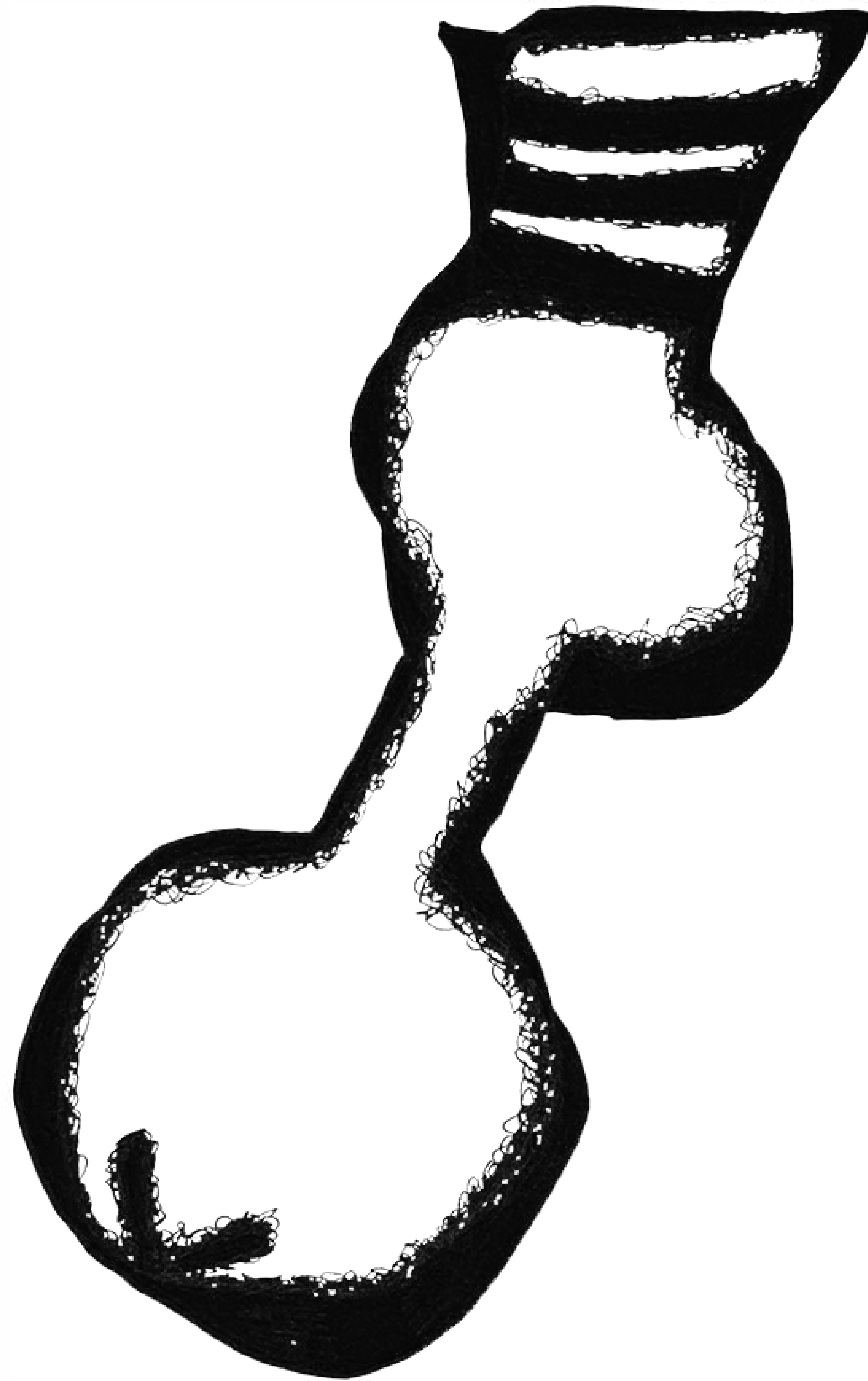
48.

I noticed that they hid themselves at the table alone, quietly. Hair, skin and eyes are quiet, not affected by the nervous rumbling, sitting alone and restrained. Using a butter knife as a mirror, re-applying lipstick. The way they moved, knew something, figured out. Emphasis in the restaurant seems inappropriate, and there is something practical and concise in these actions when putting makeup on at the dining table. Not calculated, but with such intensity as surgeons removing dead tissue.



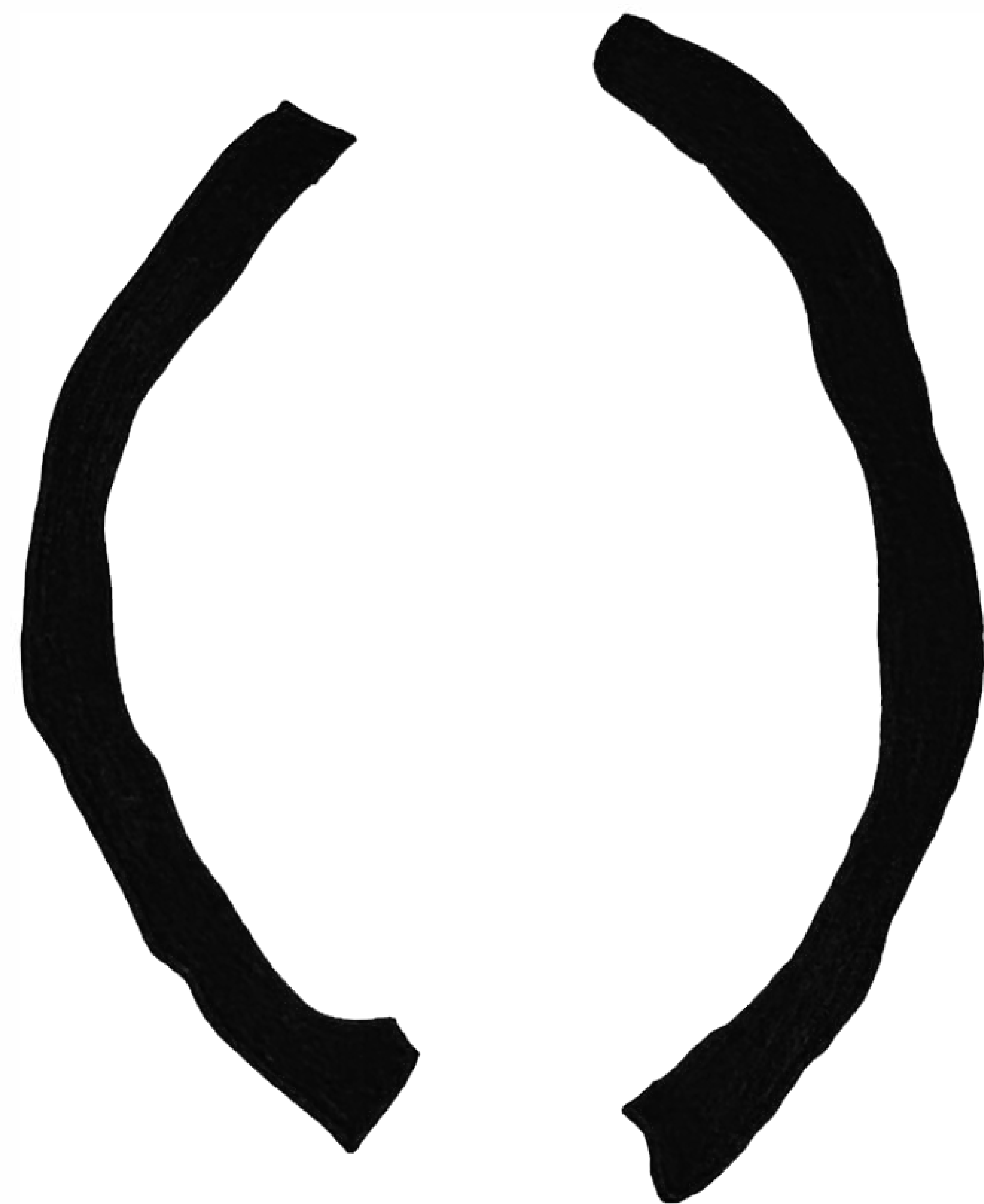
49:

There's a store by my house that sells mattresses and they have this shitty sign painted on the wall outside that's supposed to be a mattress waving its hand or something, welcoming, but it's done really bad so it always reminds me of a giant ice cream sandwich with sonar coming out of its hand.



50.

Grannies swim around with saggy boobs that look like tennis balls in a tube sock, and old men with dicks hanging out all flapping around, floating in the middle of the water so everyone can watch, like they don't care. Maybe that's freedom, but it's one that comes with age.



51 :

I watched something special recently about a part of the brain called the default mode network or DMN. They explained how the brain goes active when it's reflecting or wandering and integrating personal experiences from a certain time or place when nothing else is going on, like a room that opens into a smaller brain within the brain, a room within the room or the view outside of a window.



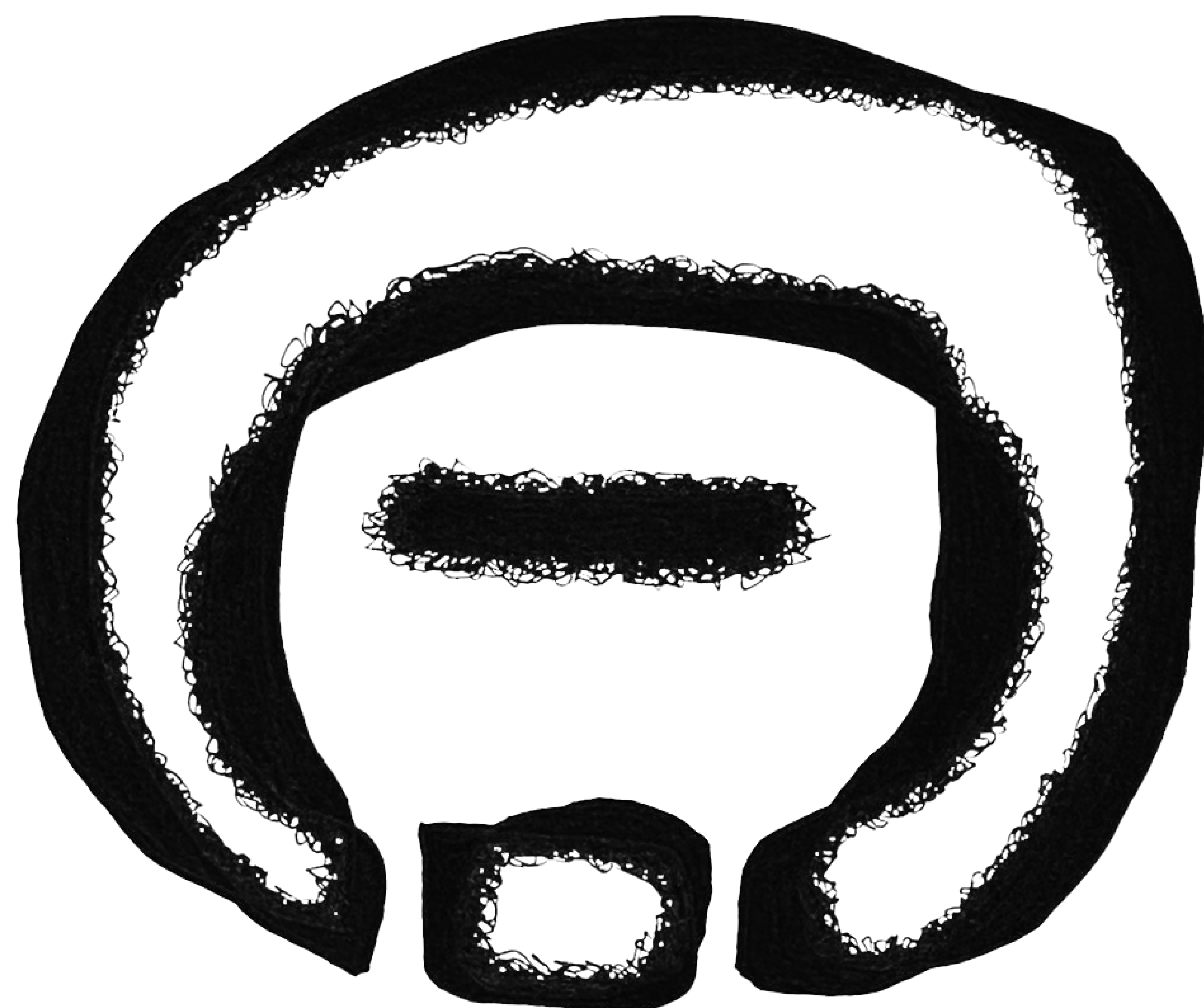
52:

The more we walk a pathway, the more it leaves trails through the underbrush. Over lifetimes it creates a schematic of sorts and indirectly as a record of a type of knowledge. Wandering this path leads to water, or here is shelter or things sought or avoided over there. We might come into contact with the people down this road if we continue that way. By wandering them we inscribe a certain pattern and bring it into use and connect it across time. Becomes easier to access. Wider. The grid of a city is a means of communicating and transmitting the dynamism in how it directs and channels the movements of its inhabitants and the pathways it keeps open through their usage.



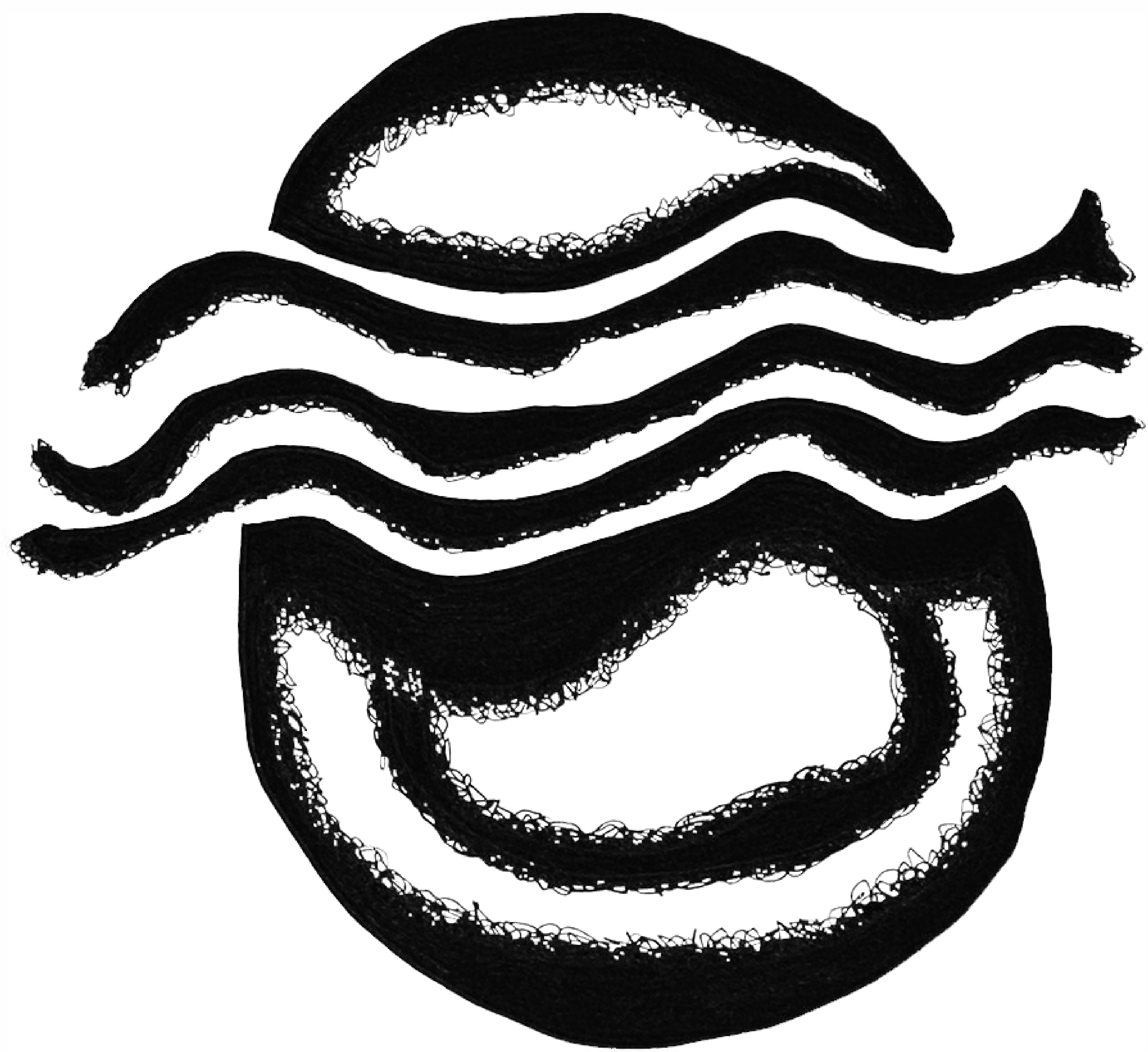
53.

Steam; stick; fire. What happens when brought together. A dynamism is staged, and it depends on the order. A division to keep each in place, but also a hierarchy.



54.

A helmet and speaking apparatus, a captive bead. A circle that is interrupted, but the piece that inserts to contain the flow of perimeter. What is contained within the boundary? The first to close a field and say this is ours...?



55.

Water slowly cuts a path through earth, slices through the band over many years. It is patience, determination without apparent intention, but also part of this development when the two are brought together as soil deposits to a new location with the movement of a river, brings new potency as it declines, but also gradually closes in.



56.

Draws it out, what has become enclosed. If the implied snare can be joined together it might subtract what has obstructed into or silted over. Will hopefully fill in with proud skin, regenerate and slide back into the larger composition.



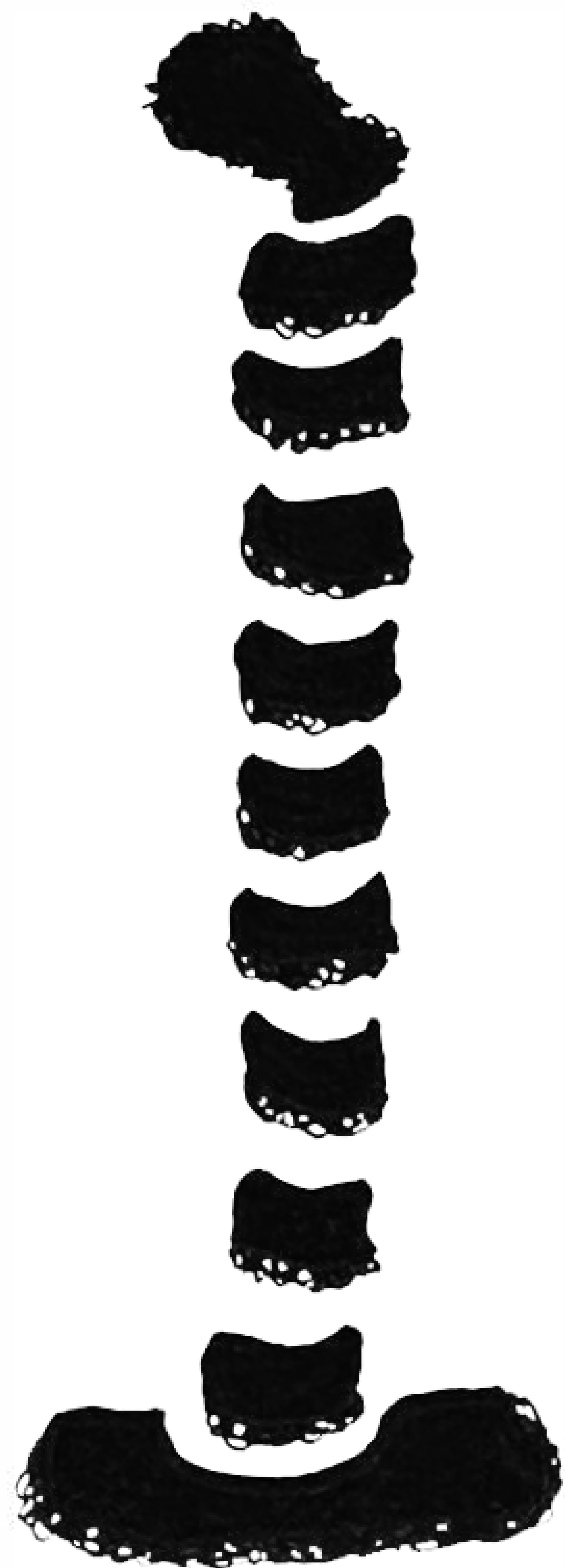
57 :

The atmospheric clarification does not shine out directly, but is behind a shield or cornea of sorts. It reflects back against the contemplative aspect that subtly vaults it out into this space. The surface is carefully determined with many metallic squares, all applied by hand to create a more or less uniform surface. Stand up on a pivot to direct the focus out into where I am.



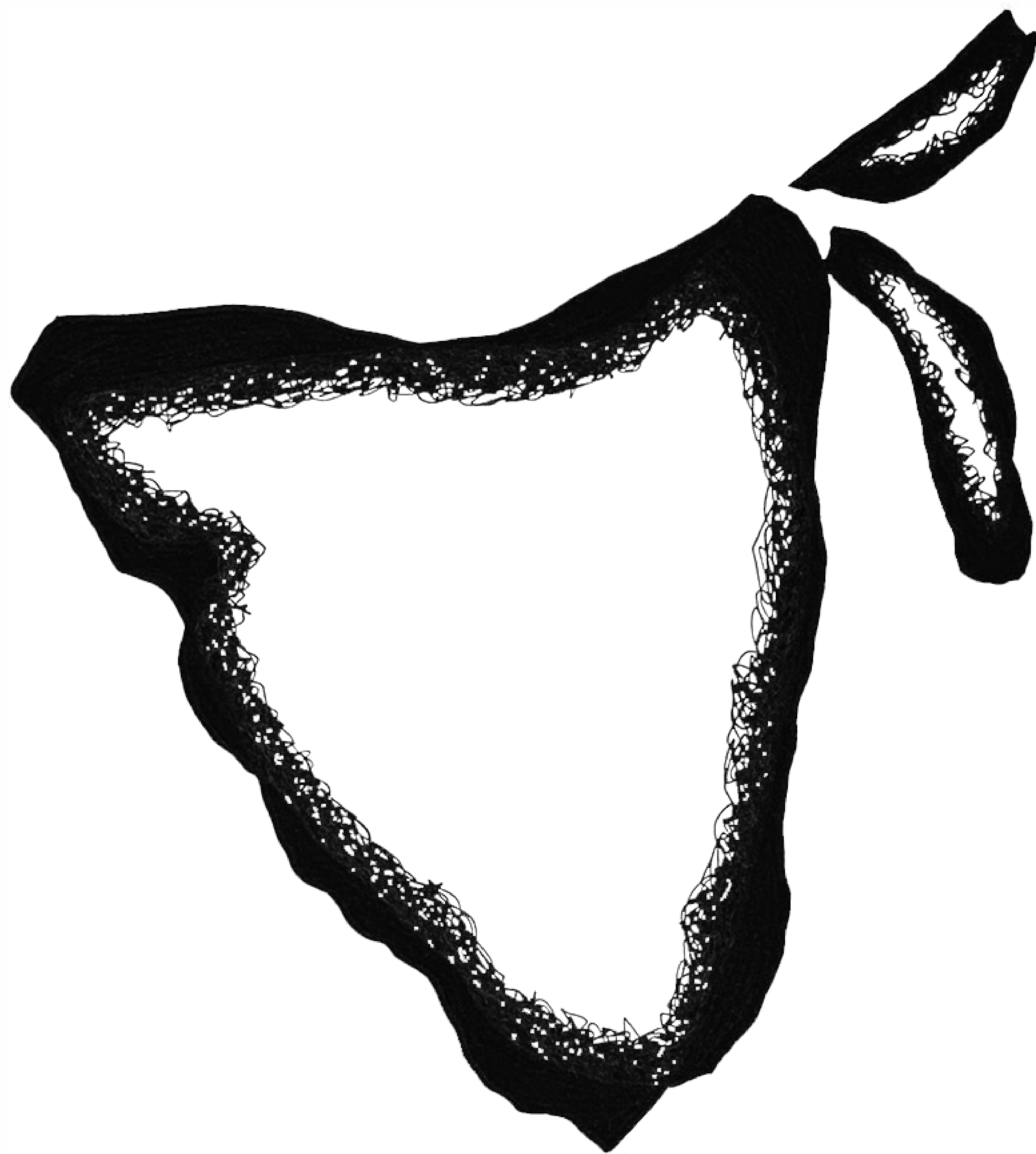
58.

There is a rock that stands high up above the water. When the tide is out, one can walk out to its base and climb up to the peak from the beach. If you sit up on the top the wind blows, and it is a warm day. If one looks westward one sees only sea. If one looks toward land, there is forest and a small but broad stream that changes course with each high tide. To the south is coast and sand that ambles as far as the eye sees. It is the best place you have ever been.



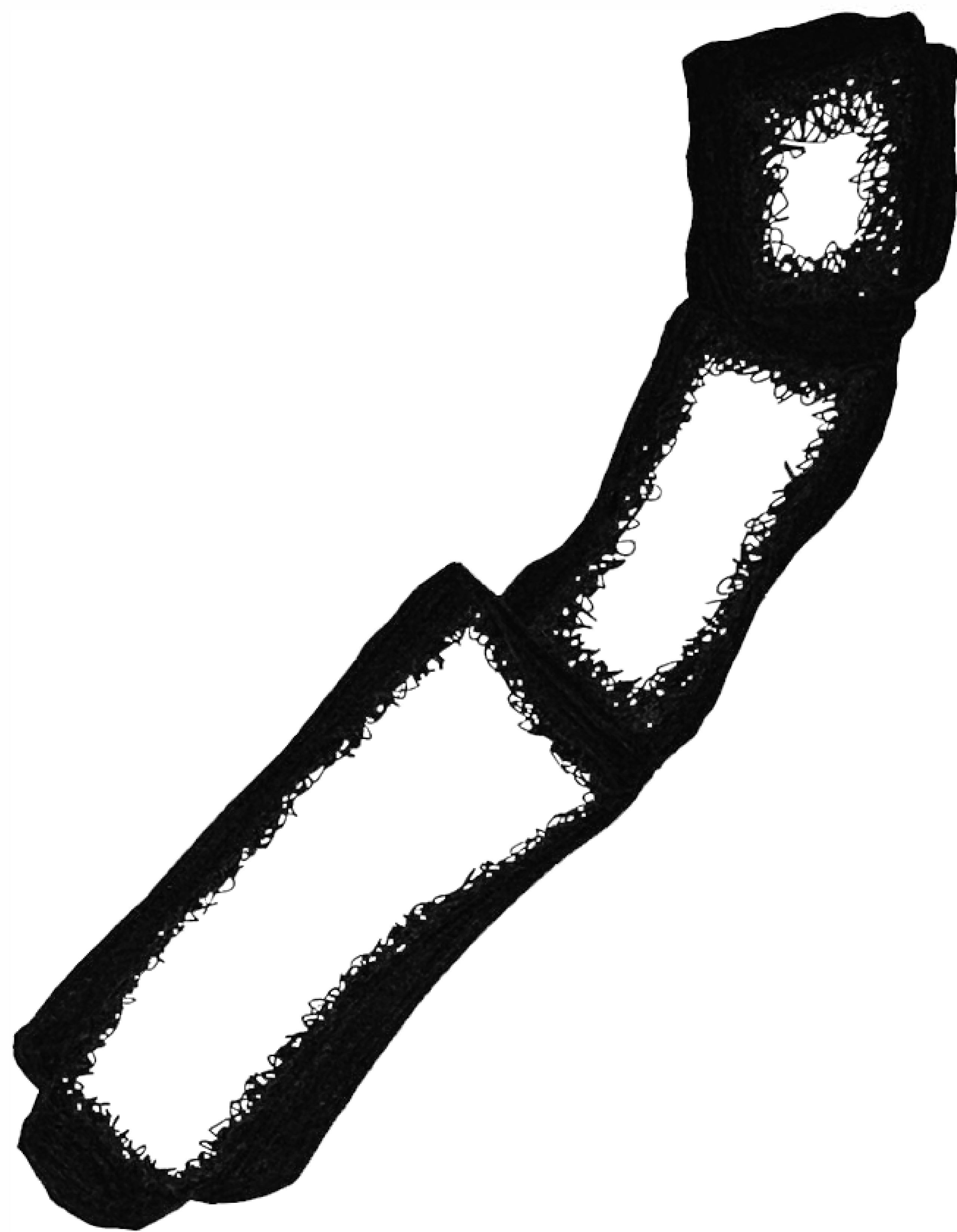
59:

A hinge upon a series of hinges allows flexibility while maintaining structure. All ten of the increments allow a chain to posture, radial, so that an outlook can be maintained even among what is shifting. A simple apparatus repeated becomes a machine for augmentation into line or arc and building upon.



60:

A houndstooth of fabric shelters as a talisman or else forms a membrane from which to reside apart. As a stone it forms a stalactite that drifts over time downward to points and fortifies as it is swayed across an entrance as permeable obstruction.



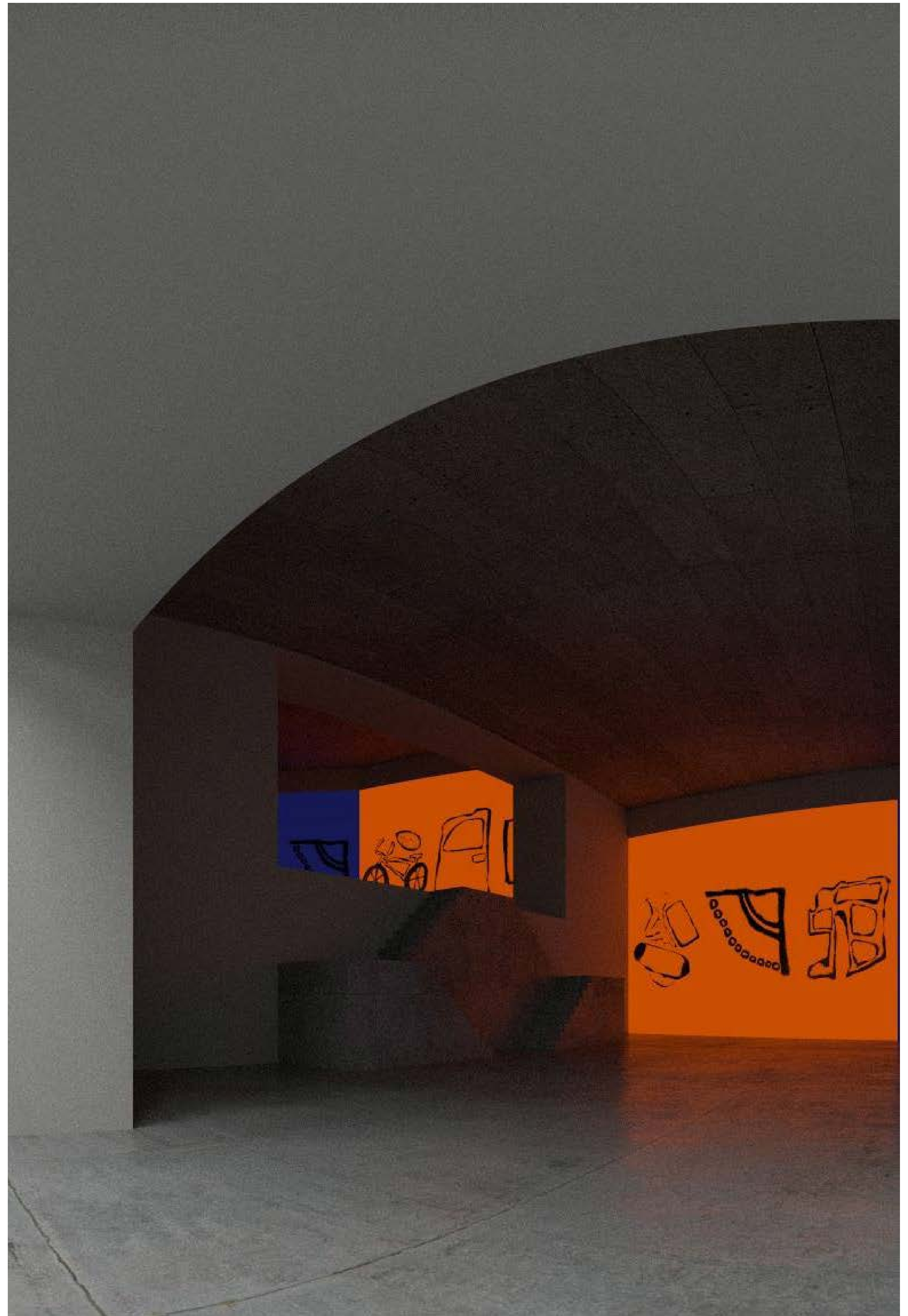
61 :

Plant-based cells catch light and form rigid bonds that still sway. Armoured joints that amble and glisten. Hollow conduits that burn and pass through the membrane and carry from outside to inside, producing dust as by-product. Aged and aging as transition, as token, as escape.

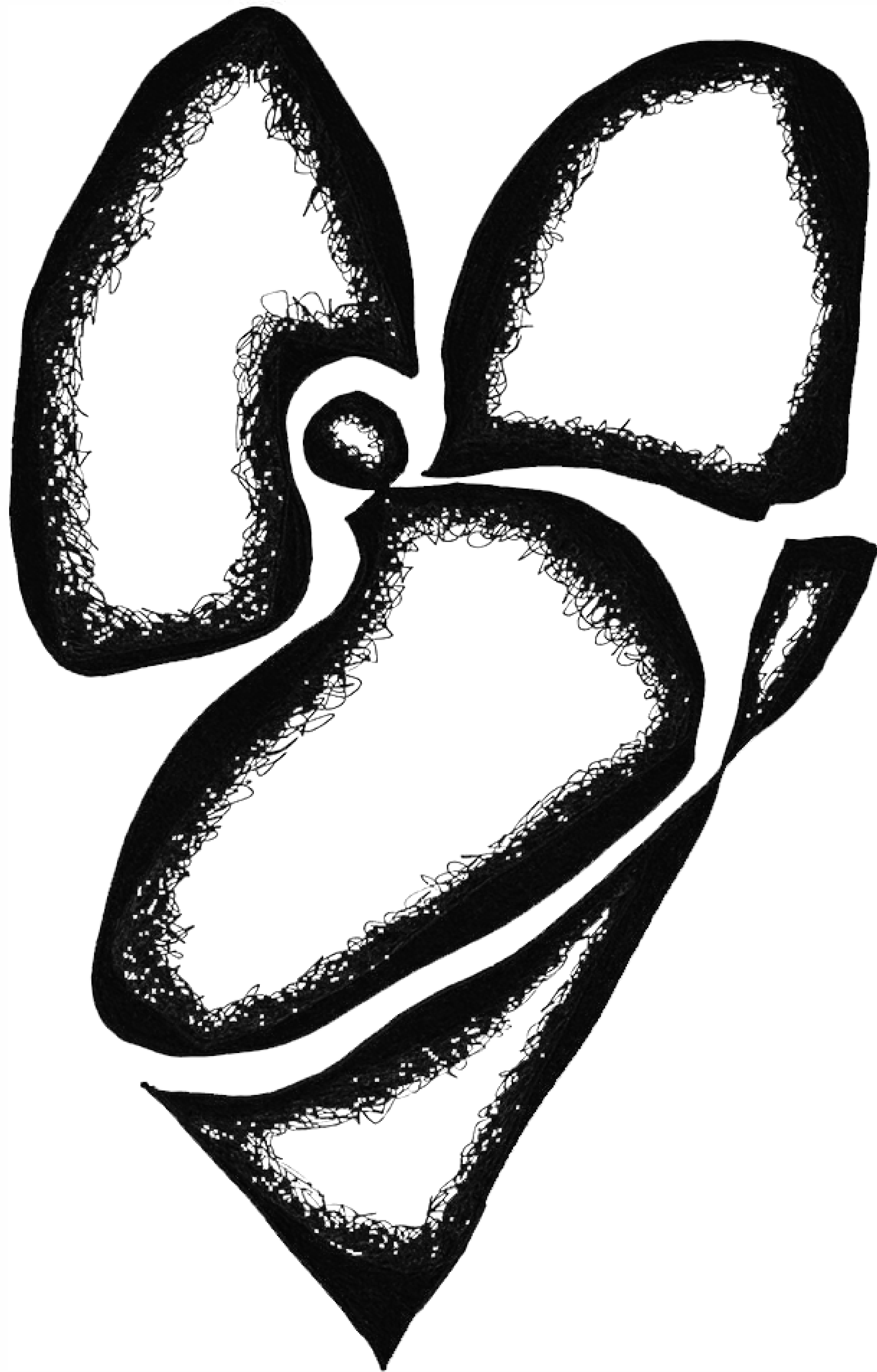


62.

Beneath the sea there is strange wildlife that looks something between plant and animal. They convene and gather the necessary nutrients from what is around them. Capable of drawing back into themselves, but also thrust outward and collect what sustains from the currents around them.



[Jared Pappas-Kelley, "Portents: Cycle 1", Dovetail Joints, install view, 2020](#)



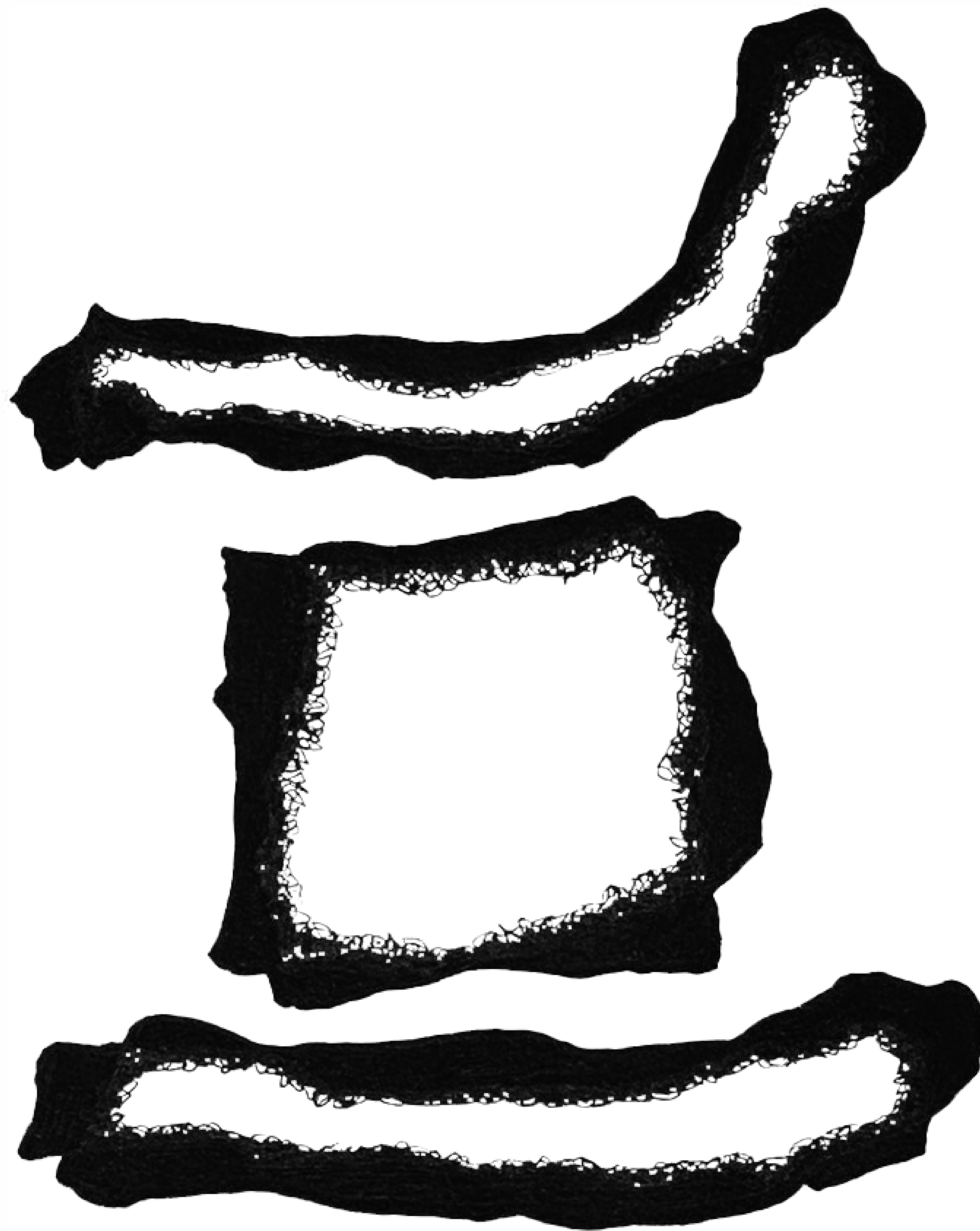
63:

When I was little, we lived next to a stream as it emptied out into the bay. When the tide was low, or if you chose to cross by walking across a tree that had fallen many years before, you could reach the other side. You climbed the opposing bank into a forest that was mostly left alone and hard to access. There was an old house that had long ago rotted away, so it was just doorframes and the outlines of walls with no roof. But out there, a certain kind of flower grew that had three petals and you were not allowed to pick them. Child folklore was that they only bloomed every seven years and if you picked the flower they wouldn't grow back. It was even supposed to be against the law to pick them, but who knows if that was only something that kids say.



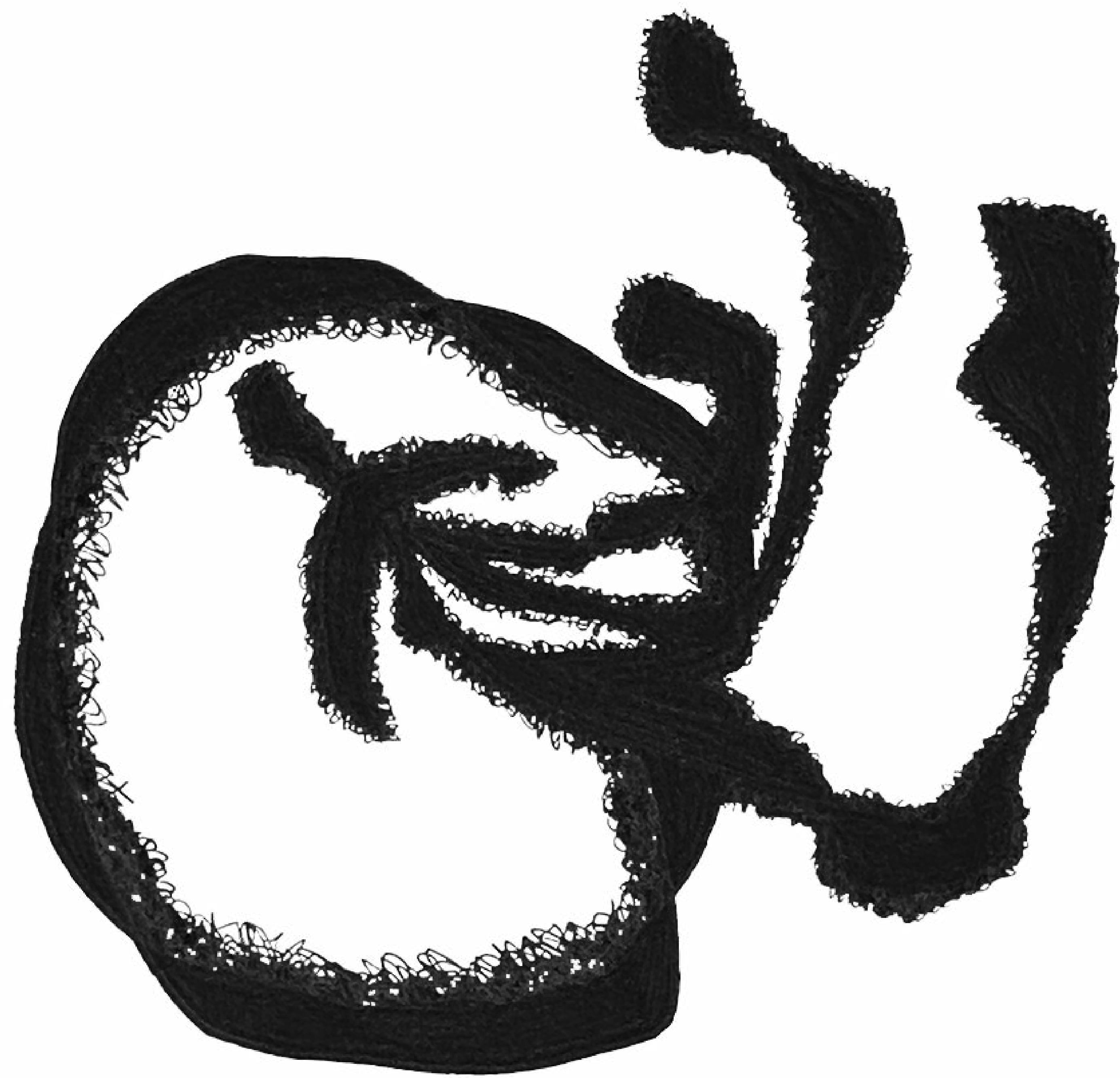
64:

We have seen this before, but there is a bowl or inverted arc of liquid, now above a flame that impersonates plant life. Three things brought together in a tableau, or actually four if you want to consider it. What does it mean when brought together in this combination?



65.

When the artist Richard Serra constructed his sculpture Tilted Arc outside of a federal building in New York it was eventually de-commissioned because people were unhappy with the way the immense steel structure interrupted their path and apparently made the plaza into a wind tunnel. The site-specific piece was designed as an intervention into the site, as a reconsideration of how public spaces operate or a means for considering. He said that he wanted it to “encompass the people who walk on the plaza in its volume.” But the workers in the neighbouring buildings said it was unsightly and oppressive and petitioned for its removal. When suggesting that they simply relocating the structure, Serra responded, “to remove the work is to destroy it.”



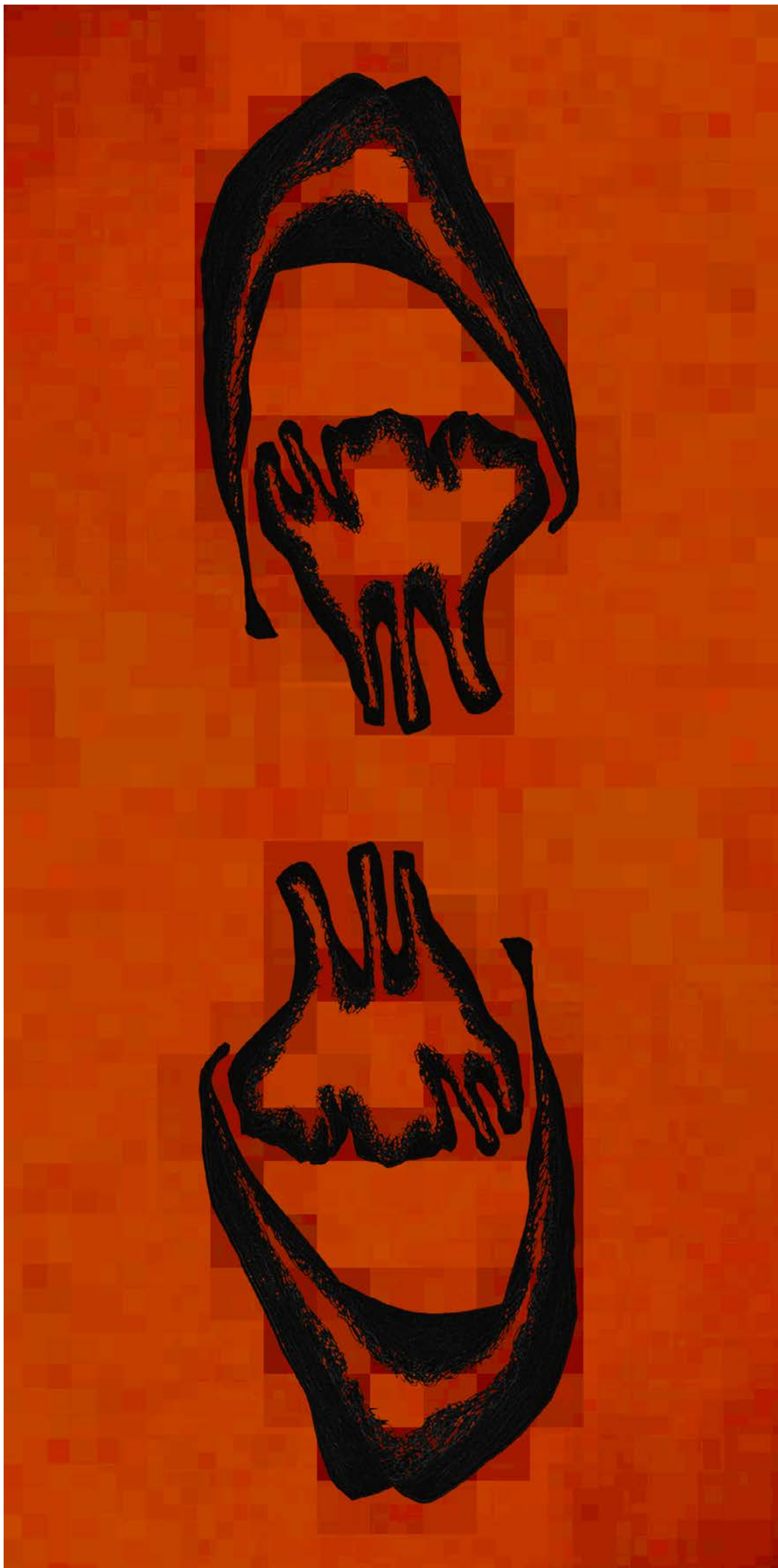
66:

What germinates in the centre gradually develops and passes through the coat and out into the world. It is like a streamer that unfurls, riding the wind and connecting an inner veracity into something made manifest but still in transition. How it behaves determines the form it will take, like a fruit ripening.



67:

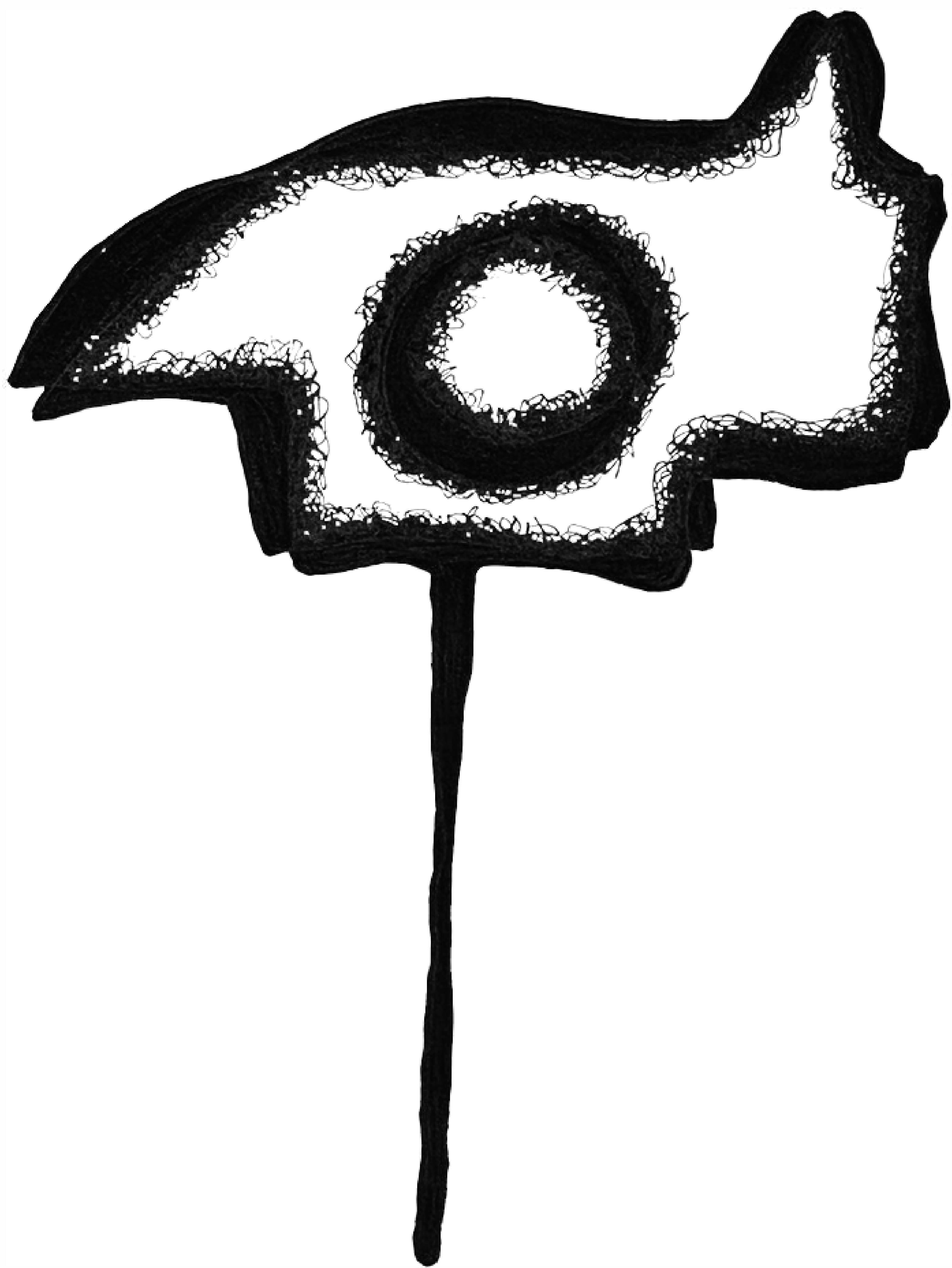
Roots are where energy is stored, but also what draws resources from below and transfers it into new growth. However, there are roots that rest just above the surface, in that they are not yet trunk and not hidden below the soil. They sit like knuckles flexing between the bits that pass away and process light and the bits that draw out moisture or minerals from what has decayed. They give tapered form to both of these impulses.



Jared Pappas-Kelley, "Portent 67 (red ochre)", animation is viewable as [NFT format here](#)

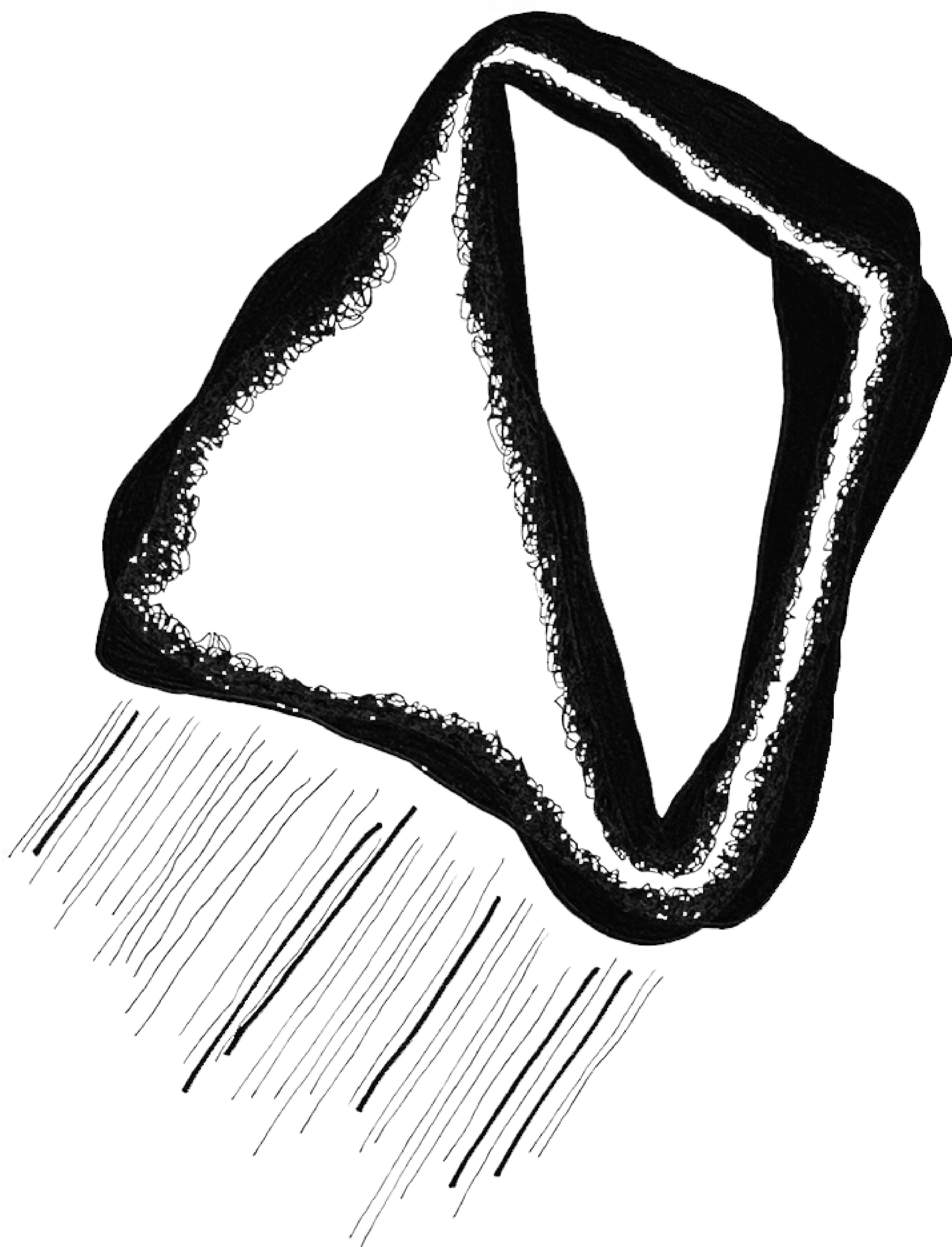


Jared Pappas-Kelley, "Wooden Portent 67, colour: 2", raw mineral pigment, enamel, wax, on wood, 50cm x 50cm x 7.9cm



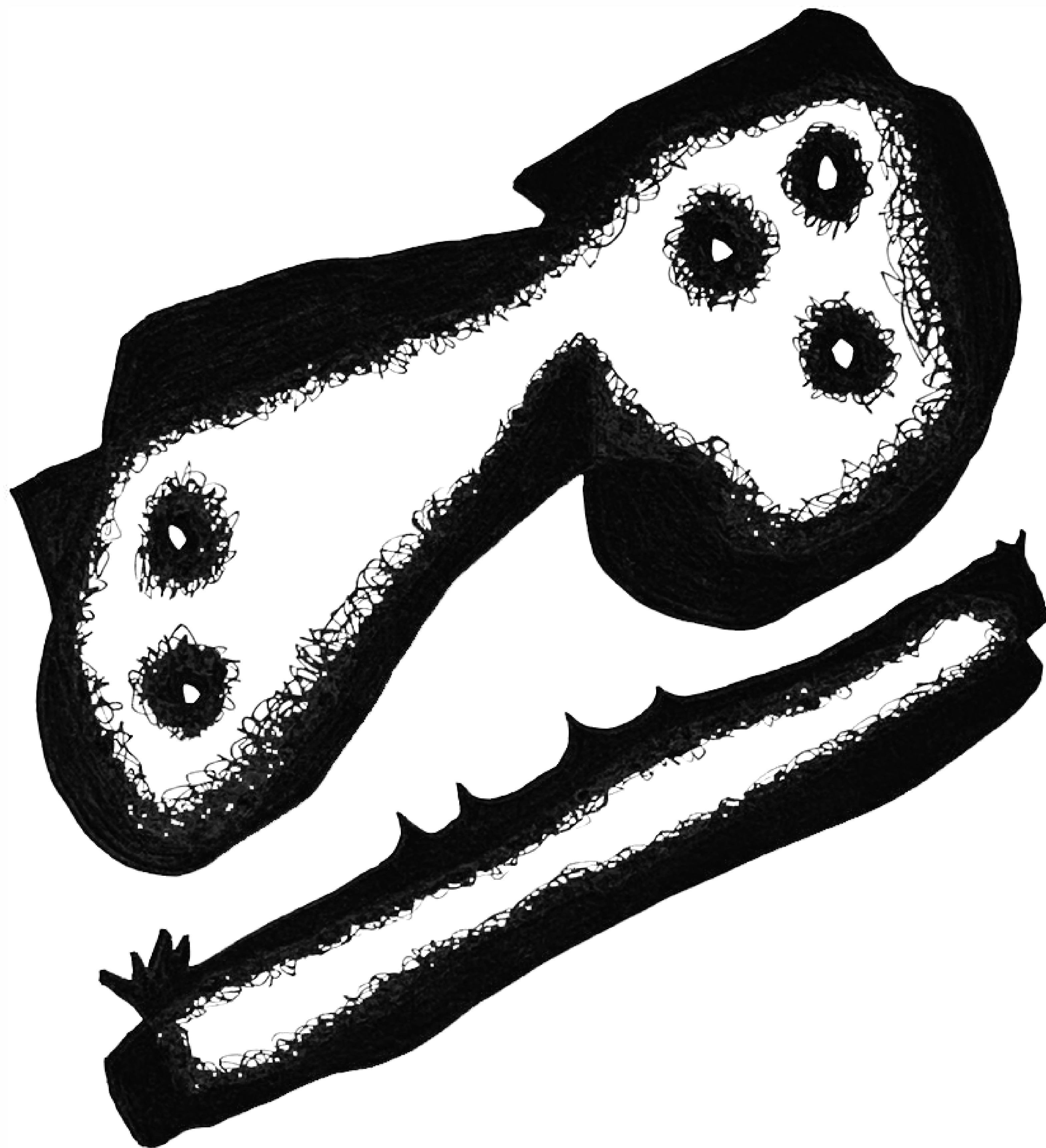
68:

There is an automatic mallet designed to drive things without having to consider. Diodes mark when it achieves its task and sign it out in rhythm. The strike must be balanced exactly to keep it weighted and operative, but at the same time it resembles determination of a rhinoceros in form. Barb out and thrusting. When disoriented though, it inverts, is like a ship that has capsized, sunken, and it does not stir.



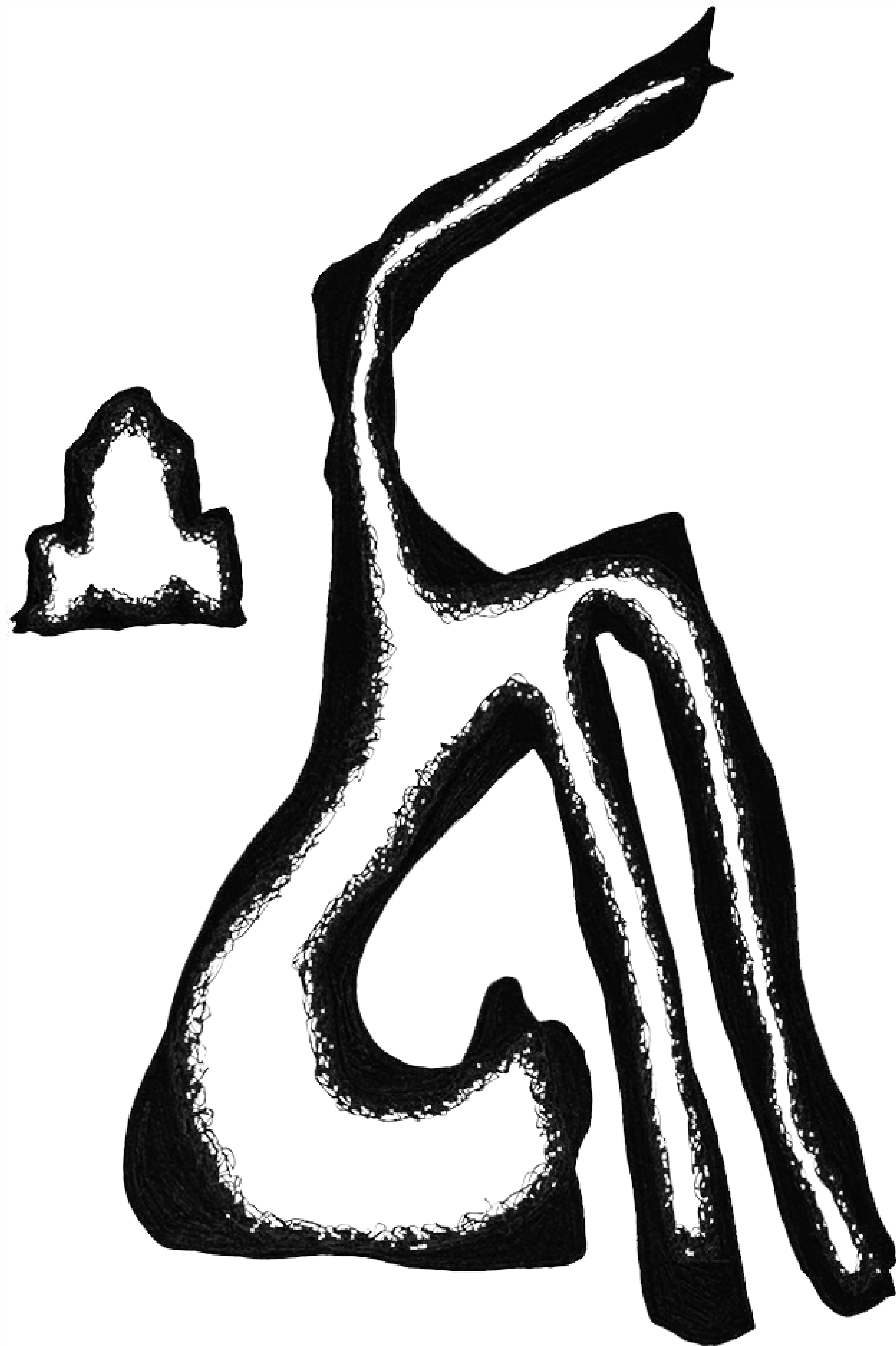
69:

Bounding upward into an arc, one part solid and the other open and permeable to the elements. The bit that is solid anticipates the bit that is vacated and that is where the energy for this thrust comes from. One aspect fits the other and that's where its propulsion is most felt, but don't overthink it. Look at what is here so that you might apprehend what is not and let that carry you forward.



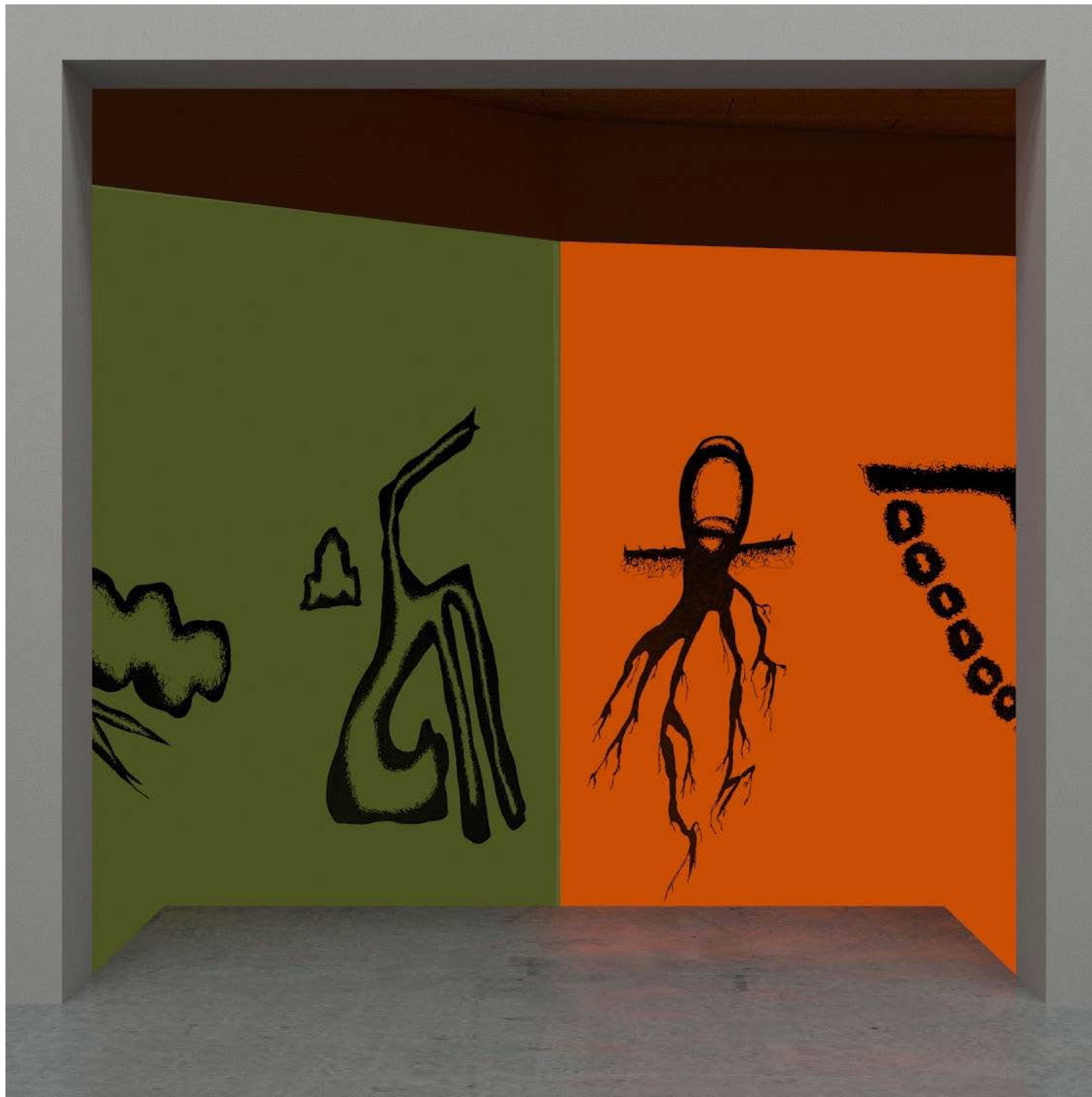
70.

Two structures that accept the other as a binary of sorts, like a cactus or bramble meeting a Mostera plant, also known as a swiss cheese plant after Emmental cheese for its holes in its leaves. Two different approaches to solving a problem.

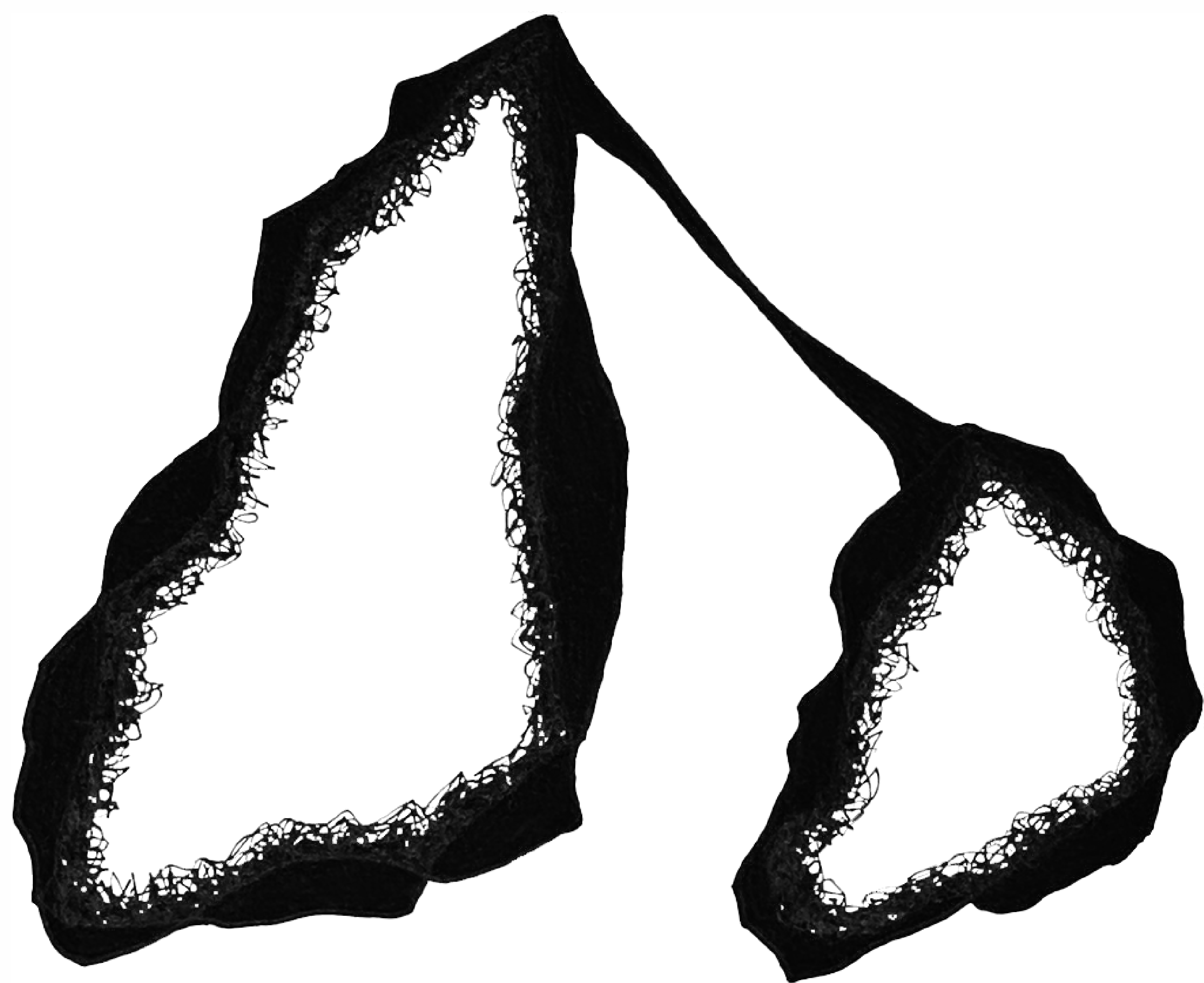


71:

This is not some coyote or such howling at a moon, but an uneven structure that has grown too much on one side so that it could no longer balance itself and instead had to grow two additional appendages in order to prop itself up. It is not the most elegant structure, but it works in the end. Perhaps what is behind it is more of what it was going for, more streamlined and lithe, able to bound upwards, reel down beneath waves or crawl up on the shore. Our translations do not always match the prototype, but they are here and vaulted nonetheless.



[Jared Pappas-Kelley, "Portents: Cycle 1", Dovetail Joints, install view, 2020](#)



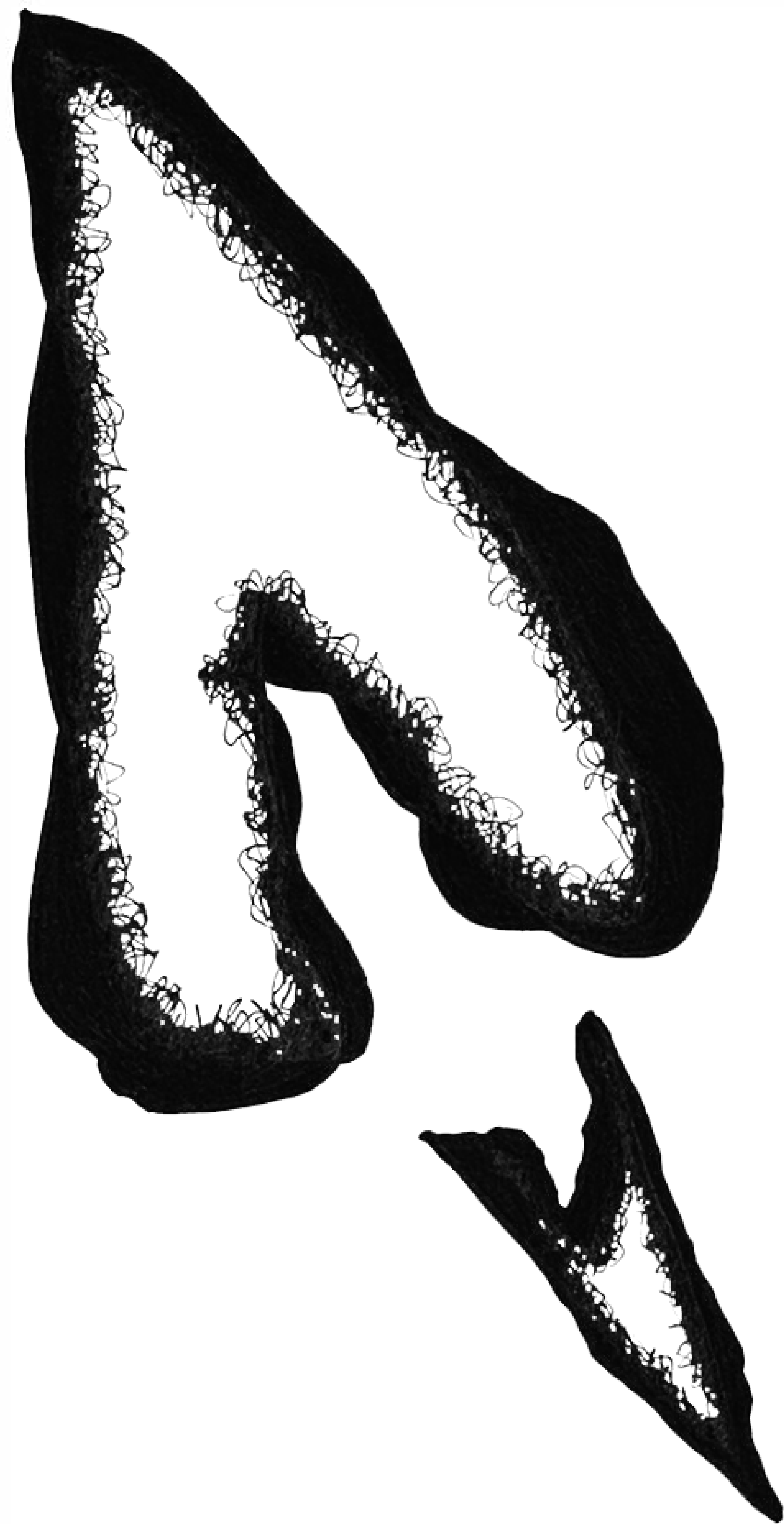
72:

One object unravels another. Creates a taunt link between. They are one object while appearing two and across the tightrope one transmits what was before to what follows.



73:

A little bit grows out of a circlet of soil, or perhaps it is just the budding of some vast subterranean structure with what is visible. There is the cliché of what is observable above water with an iceberg. Tell that to the iceberg. But that gets the metaphor wrong. What about the green that protrudes from soil with a carrot or some turnip? The tuber is almost inseparable from the soil, yet it projects up into air. That is the real image, and similarly the iceberg (ice) is almost inseparable from the water that surrounds it. In fact, they are both the same (water), just in different phases. So where is this catastrophe it harbingers? It is the change in phase that jolts or seems incompatible, so it is better to consider what is there in potential as the verdure from soil.



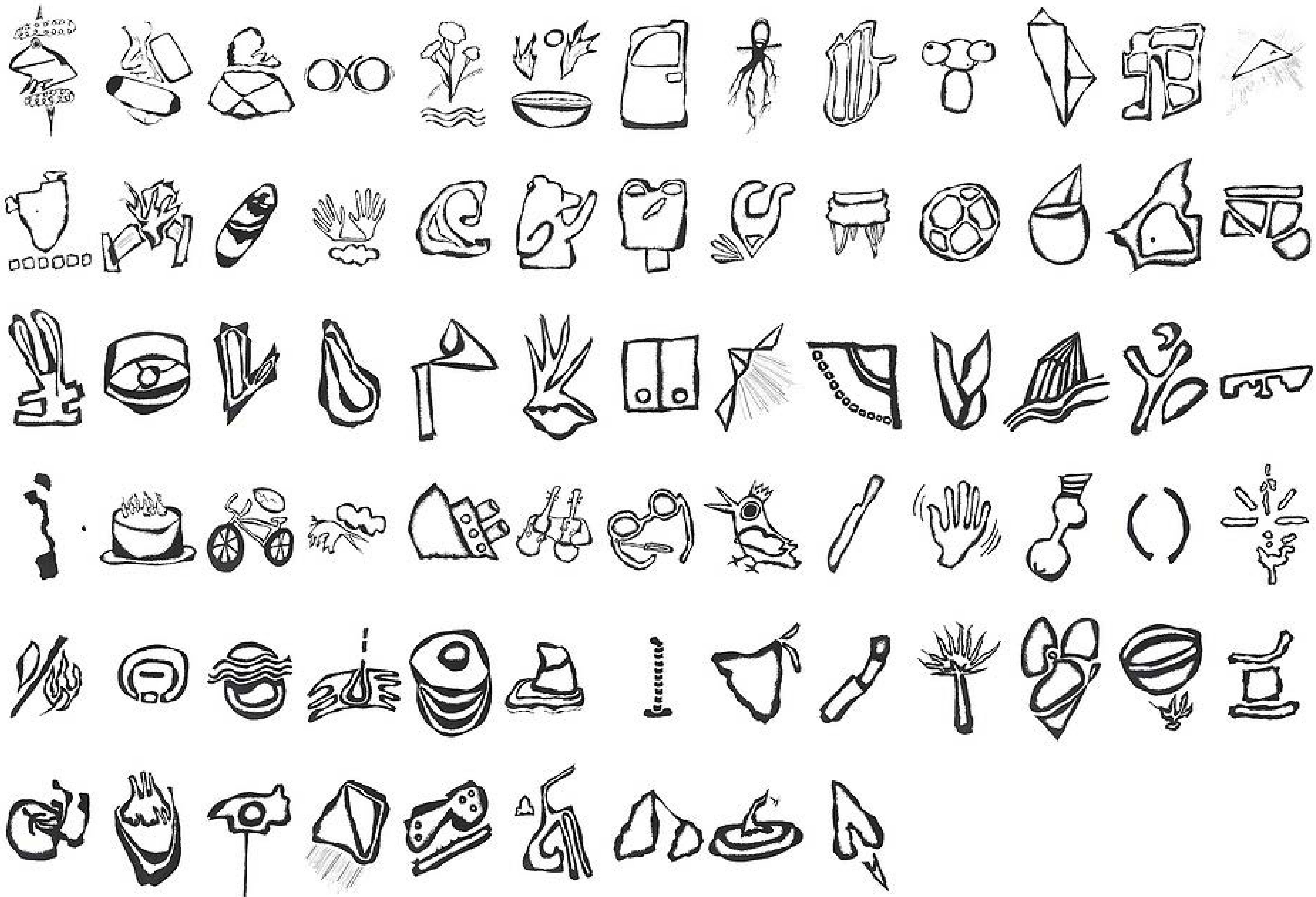
74.

Going in opposite directions. This is the next stage. Exterior launches upward as internal presses down. They slot one into the other, but now upstairs guides downstairs—like magnet and iron crumbs guiding through a thin surface of what we perceive. Iron redistributes and the lodestone wanders under its influence, but this influence might always be negotiated from the other vantage and that is the thing to know.

Instructions

On the following page is a template of all 74 Portents from cycle 1. After reading through each of the corresponding portents/texts, return to this page and then close your eyes and place your finger toward the screen and then click on the image that your finger lands on (which will take you to that portent). That is your portent for the day. Do this for seven consecutive days. If you miss a day, start the process over until you have completed the seven days. This becomes your roadmap. After seven consecutive days the collaboration is complete, but return to the [Portent Generator](#) anytime you may feel stuck.

[Note: as a shortcut during these seven days, you can also click on the image of the template wall on the front cover and it will take you to the following page as well.]



Compositional Score

Transition Cycle 1 to Wooden Portent [One year of Portent expressions]

One part shipping forecast/oracle/number station in format, another part enigmatic image and sound composition as a series of [projects](#) by Jared Pappas-Kelley.

It is intriguing to think of a year as a composition; the order of images witnessed, ideas, interactions, or sequences, as an after the fact mapping. For *Transition Cycle 1 to Wooden Portent* the idea was to cast a series of images, sounds and texts that corresponded to the first of each month as well as the beginning of each week.

This score is shorthand for mapping out these sequences. Each weekly composition (or month commencement) begins by casting the number of steps that the sequence contains (for this composition the numbers ended up being between 2 and 44). Then the number corresponding to each portent is cast and laid out in its specific arriving-order and the number for each colour (between 1-6) is assigned to that step. Each string consists of the numbers corresponding to the portent and followed by the specific colour in parenthesis. Over the course of a year a series of wooden portents are also introduced into the mix of sequenced portent images and once this happens the initial images are superseded by the wooden counterparts.

Colour Key:



1/01/21 - steps: 10
51 (6), 36 (4), 43 (2), wooden portent 38 (1), 41 (4), 61 (1), 26 (2), wooden portent 3 (1), 24 (1), 63 (2)

**First appearance of wooden portent 38 and first appearance of wooden portent 3*

4/01/21 - steps: 7
13 (4), 59 (3), 36 (5), 68 (2), wooden portent 38 (3), wooden portent 14 (1), 49 (3)

**First appearance of wooden portent 14*

11/01/21 - steps: 8
72 (2), 7 (2), 33 (1), 8 (1), 47 (4), 58 (2), 32 (5), 68 (3)

18/01/21 - steps: 13
Wooden portent 38 (6), wooden portent 42 (2), 61 (5), 47 (2), 1 (3), 63 (1), 11 (1), 52 (4), 46 (6), 31 (2), 7 (4), 49 (1), wooden portent 42 (3)

**First appearance of wooden portent 42 (double appearance)*

25/01/21 - steps: 2
73 (2), 36 (1)

1/02/21 - steps: 34
44 (5), 31 (4), 74 (1), 5 (2), wooden portent 7 (6), 45 (4), wooden portent 34 (1), 13 (2), 32 (4), wooden portent 49 (2), 6 (6), 52 (2), 26 (6), wooden portent 14 (2), 47 (4), 33 (1), 61 (2), 23 (2), wooden portent 67 (6), 15 (4), 71 (1), 8 (5), 64 (3), 22 (5), 28 (4), 72 (2), 11 (5), 37 (3), 36 (3), 59 (2), 9 (3), wooden portent 42 (5), 18 (3), 12 (2)

**First appearance of wooden portent 67 and first appearance wooden portent 34 and wooden portent 7 and wooden portent 49*

8/02/21 - steps: 9
wooden portent 62 (2), wooden portent 14 (1), 8 (2), wooden portent 42 (3), 43 (2), 32 (1), 12 (5), 33 (3), 24 (3)

15/02/21 - steps: 7
Wooden portent 38 (5), 8 (1), wooden portent 39 (3), 54 (2), wooden portent 14 (2), 58 (4), 21 (3)

**First appearance of wooden portent 39*

22/02/21 - steps: 27
74 (5), 54 (3), 41 (3), 1 (2), 33 (1), 8 (1), 9 (2), wooden portent 39 (2), 63 (3), wooden portent 38 (5), 18 (2), 53 (3), wooden portent 3 (1), 35 (1), 18 (1), 44 (1), 26 (1), wooden portent 49 (2), wooden portent 39 (3), wooden portent 62 (6), wooden portent 14 (3), 12 (4), 31 (1), 40 (4), 36 (3), 37 (2), wooden portent 49 (3)

1/03/21 - steps: 12
63 (1), 46 (4), 69 (5), 48 (1), wooden portent 38 (4), wooden portent 14 (3), 40 (3), 58 (5), 12 (1), 8 (1), 32 (1), wooden portent 7 (2)

8/03/21 - steps: 7
Wooden portent 38 (2), 18 (4), 53 (3), 37 (6), 13 (2), 8 (4), 64 (2)

15/03/21 - steps: 9
28 (4), 41 (1), wooden portent 7 (2), 17 (4), 23 (3), wooden portent 39 (5), 41 (3), 74 (3), 19 (3)

22/03/21 - steps: 18
10 (6), 63 (2), 17 (4), 65 (2), 43 (4), wooden portent 62 (2), 44 (1), 32 (2), wooden portent 7 (6), 11 (4), wooden portent 38 (3), wooden portent 42 (1), 74 (3), 56 (2), wooden portent 14 (2), 50 (1), 68 (4), 19 (2)

29/03/21 - steps: 11
36 (3), 70 (2), 59 (3), 32 (2), 12 (2), 16 (4), wooden portent 7 (2), 18 (2), 8 (2), wooden portent 62 (2), wooden portent 34 (3)

1/04/21 - steps: 19
10 (4), wooden portent 67 (1), 64 (5), wooden portent wooden portent 39 (4), wooden portent 34 (3), 70 (3), 33 (5), wooden portent 49 (2), 9 (3), 43 (4), 50 (5), 41 (2), 13 (4), 40 (4), 32 (3), 44 (3), 63 (1), wooden portent 38 (1), 35 (3)

5/04/21 - steps: 8
8 (3), 2 (3), 4 (3), 43 (4), 13 (2), 33 (2), wooden portent 3 (3), 9 (4)

12/04/21 - steps: 5
43 (3), 44 (3), wooden portent 14 (1), wooden portent 39 (2), 17 (3)

19/04/21 - steps: 29
58 (3), wooden portent 38 (3), wooden portent 49 (2), 65 (4), wooden portent 34 (1), wooden portent 14 (3), 2 (2), 36 (4), 43 (1), 51 (6), 29 (3), 63 (4), wooden portent 62 (4), 40 (3), wooden portent 14 (2), 32 (3), 72 (5), 45 (2), 1 (3), wooden portent 42 (4), 54 (5), 53 (2), wooden portent 3 (6), 61 (4), 22 (2), 18 (5), 13 (1), 52 (2), 36 (3)

26/04/21 - steps: 44
43 (2), wooden portent 67 (3), 44 (2), wooden portent 14 (2), wooden portent 42 (2), 63 (4), 69 (2), 74 (3), wooden portent 3 (5), wooden portent 34 (3), wooden portent 7 (1), 13 (4), 2 (2), 45 (5), 31 (6), 6 (3), 28 (5), 15 (2), 27 (2), 9 (3), 48 (4), 33 (2), 41 (4), 65 (6), 29 (2), 64 (2), 12 (3), 40 (1), wooden portent 62 (3), 37 (4), 30 (5), 64 (3), 4 (4), wooden portent 34 (2), wooden portent 3 (5), 64 (4), 37 (2), 65 (1), wooden portent 42 (1), wooden portent 14 (3), 68 (5), 1 (1), 4 (1), 16 (5)

1/05/21 - steps: 8
45 (4), wooden portent 49 (3), 63 (3), 51 (3), 19 (4), 26 (6), 12 (1), 1 (3)

3/05/21 - steps: 4
69 (2), wooden portent 3 (2), 44 (2), 72 (3)

10/05/21 - steps: 11
wooden portent 14 (1), 13 (1), wooden portent 3 (2), 57 (4), 33 (1), 22 (5), wooden portent 39 (3), 56 (2), 10 (4), 54 (6), 6 (1)

17/05/21 - steps: 5
33 (5), 19 (4), 40 (6), wooden portent 34 (2), 73 (4)

24/05/21 - steps: 3
59 (1), 32 (4), 25 (5)

31/05/21 - steps: 9
35 (5), 40 (3), 68 (3), 9 (6), 24 (4), 41 (2), 20 (3), 6 (3), 63 (3)

01/06/21 - steps: 8
44 (6), 47 (4), 20 (2), 19 (4), 72 (1), 20 (2), 6 (1), 37 (3)

7/06/21 - steps: 10
wooden portent 42 (4), 35 (5), 12 (1), 1 (5), 74 (5), wooden portent 67 (2), 32 (5), 33 (2), 26 (2), 4 (1)

14/06/21 - steps: 13
52 (1), 47 (4), 63 (1), 12 (4), 28 (1), 36 (1), 1 (4), 68 (2), 6 (5), 12 (1), 19 (6), 32 (2), 26 (3)

21/06/21 - steps: 4
5 (4), 9 (6), 52 (4), 36 (3)

28/06/21 - steps: 14
36 (6), wooden portent 39 (2), 9 (4), 20 (3), 58 (1), 60 (3), 43 (6), 52 (3), 29 (3), 6 (3), 56 (2), 70 (2), 2 (3), wooden portent 49 (1)

1/07/21 - steps: 4
64 (1), 4 (4), 13 (2), 63 (5)

5/07/21 - steps: 13
69 (2), 64 (2), 45 (2), wooden portent 34 (1), 17 (3), 37 (4), 4 (5), wooden portent 3 (3), 66 (3), 26 (4), 18 (4), 5 (3), 70 (3)

12/07/21 - steps: 3
31 (3), 5 (5), 65 (3)

19/07/21 - steps: 9
27 (2), 57 (1), 8 (4), 56 (3), 16 (2), 43 (3), 9 (2), 12 (1), 28 (6)

26/07/21 - steps: 15
wooden portent 67 (2), wooden portent 14 (3), 58 (3), 13 (1), 9 (3), 37 (5), 64 (1), 19 (3), 32 (4), 16 (1), 24 (3), 2 (1), 63 (1), wooden portent 38 (3), 4 (5)

1/08/21 - steps: 5
41 (3), 12 (3), 1 (6), 36 (2), wooden portent 39 (2)

2/08/21 - steps: 7
27 (3), 61 (4), 4 (3), wooden portent 38 (5), 43 (4), 9 (3), 36 (2)

9/08/21 - steps: 6
9 (6), 64 (3), 37 (1), 40 (2), 18 (3), wooden portent 62 (5)

16/08/21 - steps: 27
4 (3), 50 (5), 63 (4), 51 (4), 66 (6), 69 (3), 41 (4), 36 (3), 17 (4), wooden portent 7 (1), wooden portent 34 (2), wooden portent 14 (3), 33 (2), 43 (1), 12 (3), wooden portent 42 (2), wooden portent 3 (5), 33 (2), wooden portent 67 (1), 41 (2), 70 (1), wooden portent 7 (4), 26 (4), 52 (2), 50 (3), 26 (4), 63 (3)

23/08/21 - steps: 12
wooden portent 34 (5), 32 (4), 74 (1), wooden portent 14 (3), 4 (2), 6 (1), 17 (2), wooden portent 62 (4), wooden portent 39 (1), 28 (4), 30 (3), 17 (5)

30/08/21 - steps: 8
33 (1), 1 (5), 71 (2), 70 (1), 31 (6), wooden portent 3 (3), 52 (2), 11 (2)

1/09/21 - steps: 9
7 (3), 6 (3), 13 (6), 15 (1), 28 (4), wooden portent 42 (3), 8 (4), wooden portent 42 (5), 44 (3)

6/09/21 - steps: 5
32 (5), 4 (3), 66 (2), 63 (4), wooden portent 3 (1)

13/09/21 - steps: 12
wooden portent 42 (5), 68 (1), 48 (5), 27 (4), 4 (2), 11 (4), 29 (3), 60 (4), 19 (3), 22 (3), 16 (1), 58 (1)

20/09/21 - steps: 8
8 (3), 51 (6), 8 (1), 37 (1), 11 (4), 12 (3), 43 (2), wooden portent 49 (4)

27/09/21 - steps: 6
wooden portent 38 (3), 26 (1), 28 (4), wooden portent 39 (5), 40 (3), 32 (5)

1/10/21 - steps: 9
wooden portent 42 (4), 63 (1), 4 (6), wooden portent 3 (1), 8 (4), 44 (4), 16 (4), 27 (3), 48 (3)

4/10/21 - steps: 12
4 (5), 11 (6), 2 (3), 36 (2), wooden portent 67 (5), 19 (4), 40 (4), wooden portent 3 (2), wooden portent 38 (4), 53 (1), 66 (4), 59 (1)

11/10/21 - steps: 7
32 (4), 1 (5), 5 (4), 70 (5), 17 (4), 57 (2), 24 (2)

18/10/21 - steps: 4
48 (3), wooden portent 14 (3), 41 (4), 26 (1)

25/10/21 - steps: 10
7 (2), 2 (4), 11 (2), wooden portent 49 (4), 58 (1), 31 (4), wooden portent 39 (2), 1 (4), 65 (2), wooden portent 38 (3)

1/11/21 - steps: 18
wooden portent 62 (3), 40 (3), 43 (4), 6 (1), 44 (3), 47 (2), wooden portent 14 (2), 36 (2), 56 (3), 6 (5), 64 (2), 26 (1), 11 (3), 46 (4), 2 (6), 10 (3), 51 (4), 15 (2)

8/11/21 - steps: 13
66 (2), 30 (6), 18 (4), 33 (1), 10 (2), 19 (2), 25 (3), 1 (4), 63 (4), 41 (2), 26 (1), 69 (2), 40 (4)

15/11/21 - steps: 4
31 (4), 16 (1), 55 (3), 61 (6)

22/11/21 - steps: 12
26 (2), 57 (4), wooden portent 3 (5), 1 (4), 43 (4), 45 (5), 51 (2), 10 (2), 71 (6), 45 (6), 74 (2), 26 (3)

29/11/21 - steps: 12
2 (2), 29 (6), 61 (2), 30 (3), 71 (2), 31 (4), 25 (4), 19 (4), wooden portent 7 (2), wooden portent 38 (6), 47 (3), 5 (2)

1/12/21 - steps: 34
36 (3), 13 (2), 25 (3), 70 (3), 18 (3), 11 (1), wooden portent 3 (6), 20 (2), 32 (3), 66 (6), 11 (4), wooden portent 39 (3), 4 (5), 22 (3), 61 (2), 6 (3), 51 (4), 17 (3), 53 (2), 8 (5), 65 (3), 31 (1), 1 (3), 16 (3), 50 (2), 56 (3), 26 (4), 37 (2), wooden portent 62 (2), 51 (4), 2 (6), 28 (1), 54 (3), 71 (5)

6/12/21 - steps: 6
wooden portent 14 (2), 16 (5), 68 (2), 27 (4), 37 (2), 71 (3)

13/12/21 - steps: 5
wooden portent 38 (4), wooden portent 42 (6), 53 (2), 9 (2), 29 (4)

20/12/21 - steps: 27
wooden portent 14 (4), 23 (3), 26 (5), 43 (1), wooden portent 3 (1), 24 (3), 66 (4), 11 (2), 26 (1), 29 (6), 48 (5), 22 (1), 35 (3), 27 (3), 1 (1), 70 (6), wooden portent 39 (2), 4 (1), 40 (3), 5 (2), 17 (1), 68 (3), 16 (3), 2 (3), 44 (2), 41 (2), wooden portent 3 (1)

27/12/21 - steps: 35
32 (3), 12 (4), wooden portent 14 (4), wooden portent 42 (2), 37 (2), 1 (5), wooden portent 67 (6), 30 (3), 26 (2), 21 (1), 8 (2), 68 (2), wooden portent 14 (3), 50 (3), 66 (4), 52 (3), 30 (4), 32 (6), 74 (3), 10 (3), 25 (2), wooden portent 7 (3), 33 (1), 15 (5), wooden portent 42 (2), wooden portent 34 (2), 52 (5), wooden portent 7 (2), 10 (4), 36 (3), 59 (2), 6 (4), 31 (4), 37 (3), wooden portent 42 (2)

1/01/22 - steps: 5
28 (4), 11 (1), 1 (3), 43 (3), 16 (3)

HOW WE OPERATE IS ALREADY BROKEN: JARED PAPPAS-KELLEY AND TO BUILD A HOUSE THAT NEVER CEASED

Dec Ackroyd

In this conversation I chat with Jared Pappas-Kelley about his new book and its context to whatever it is that currently seems to be happening in the world around us. [*To Build a House that Never Ceased*](#) is a collection of writings by Pappas-Kelley, seeking to take apart ideas of solvency in art and building on his other recent book *Solvent Form: Art and Destruction*. Following a tradition of artist writers, the collection presents an opportunity to reflect and re-examine existing thoughts—bisecting and dissecting the metaphorical rooms of writing, to see how they might collapse or build something new. We talk about his new book and its connections between The Winchester House and Gordon Matta-Clark, we also chat cultural exhaustion and Jack Halberstam, and what the problem is with the term contemporary in the art world. We also discuss his new publishing imprint Invert/Extant press, our mutual love of Auto-destructive art and Gustav Metzger, as well as our dislike of gatekeepers, and how instead we should support and collaborate with those still starting out. These ideas and others are framed around the current era of social justice movements like Black Lives Matter, and of course the global effects of Covid 19.

Dec Ackroyd: I suppose the first question ought to be somewhat topical and since we’re coming to the end of it, I may as well ask how have you found lockdown’s impact on your creative output?

Jared Pappas-Kelley: Are we coming to the end of it? It’s been really exhausting. In a selfish way it allowed me to finish editing and proofing *To Build a House that Never Ceased* and I am also now in the final stages of another book project called *Stalking America*. But I think the thing it has highlighted for me were the things that already appeared broken. Like Covid-19 put a lot of the systems that we had been struggling with collectively on display so you couldn’t really ignore them anymore and certain things suddenly didn’t seem as important when up against a pandemic, but it also underscored some of the same issues with what’s been happening with Black Lives Matter, this general exhaustion and collapse. These separate things are not happening in a vacuum.

I wrote about some ideas from Jack Halberstam in this new collection and it’s the idea that we had all been basically running on empty when the pandemic hit and that it has perhaps allowed us to see this, so as a metaphor, maybe we should thank it, but as a reality it has been horrible and really sad. Writing before all

this happened, Halberstam noted, “Even as we are drowning in the more, the extra, the also, we are stuck with systems that commit to less, to expediency, to rigor and to discipline.” And that really resonates with how I was already feeling. He talks about the James Bond film *Skyfall* as a metaphor for our times, where even James Bond looks exhausted and needs a break from all these systems and anxiety—noting that Bond uses his presumed death as a vacation of sorts—and meanwhile I am using a pandemic to attempt to meet my obligations and deadlines... something is wrong with that.

Halberstam:

What is this exhaustion that saturates both leisure and work time in an era of collapse? Why does our James Bond, the Bond of 2012, find himself tired and disoriented while previous Bonds have been hard to keep up with let alone hard to kill? Have we, at the beginning of the 21st century, expended all creative, natural, spiritual and political energy so that, like the overstretched economy, humanity is twisting in the wind, too tired to move, too exhausted to stay still, too selfish to die?

Sorry, that was a bit long for a first question, I guess it’s something I’ve been sitting on or stewing about during all of this. Reconsidering how we operate or what was broken already.

DA: That’s a fair point, “the end” was maybe hopeful yet the wrong turn of phrase. It’s good to hear you’ve been creative during this time though. This idea of using a



something horrific like faking your death, or a pandemic has got to be some sort of dark comedy! But I understand entirely where you’re coming from, would you consider that evidence of just how broken the way we live is? Do you just see everything returning to business as usual or are you more hopeful that there might be a drastic societal shift?

JPK: Well if you look around, there is a lot going on, and it would seem like on all fronts at once in many ways. But in the lead up to these things happening, it looked a bit like the walking dead as you looked around, people were really running on empty, or what are they saying now with covid-19—that it makes zombie cells, like something was just waiting for a spark on underbrush? I think things need to change or have to in many ways, and I don’t know how much of a role in dictating the terms we might ultimately have, but at the same time don’t underestimate the force to maintain the status quo... The ability to make it look and behave the same even if what is inside is completely gutted. Sort of the mirror image of something like Artaud’s body without organs, but now packed with even more stiff upper lips. That could be the new slogan, “now with up to 70% more upper lips!” But there is an arrogance and entitlement in that... don’t talk about how you are being killed or disenfranchised or how things around you are failing or breaking down. Mustn’t grumble. It’s a shaming, phrases like “man up”.

DA: Kind of like the “Britain soldiers on” shit from *Children of Men* or something. It’s a difficult thing to broach, this idea of how things can change, how people can be reached in that sense, that idea of what we have now is all we can live with, which is a massively depressing prospect, but it’s seeming like there’s some glimmer of hope, even after the momentum on the left seen in Corbyn and Bernie’s backing has burnt out, but that’s sort of reflective of that continuation you’re talking about in that they’ve been replaced by Starmer and Biden respectively, so to the left it reads as that “neoliberal business as usual”...

JPK: Strange, that’s the second time *Children of Men* has come up recently... that probably means something? Yeah, it’s a bit scary, but also, I’m optimistic... or trying to be? Although I don’t really know what optimistic would look like in the current situation, that’s bad right?

DA: One of the reasons we initially bonded was through a mutual love of “destruction” namely discussing the Auto-destructive art movement, you talk a lot in this book about the Winchester Manor and Sarah Winchester’s constant tearing down and rebuilding etc,

would you like to elaborate a little on what it is that really attracts you to destruction as practice?

JPK: Sarah Winchester or the Winchester house is one of those stories that lets you see two impulses as wrapped up into one action, and also I think as a metaphor shows a way that art often operates. I framed this in terms of an idea of solvency which has a sort of dual meaning in terms of making fixed or secure (a business is solvent) and well as dissolving or undoing. After Sarah Winchester’s husband and child died, the story is that she spoke to a medium who told her that she was haunted by the spirits from decimating the indigenous populations in the clearing of the American west by Winchester rifles, and that if she ever stopped building on her house she would die. Keep in mind, this is a very folktale version of the story. So the story is that she began building onto her home in an attempt to build a house that never ceased, so that when a room was completed, it often was simply torn down or cannibalised to make room for new construction. The more I began looking at it, the more it became clear that art was engaging with this sort of destruction even if it was simply the clearing away to make room for creating.

And you brought up Auto-destructive art, which was the brain-child of Gustav Metzger. He wrote a short text for a collection of new manifestos I am currently putting together, and it was probably one of the last things he wrote before his death, but his approach was about making something visible in the world that we might otherwise overlook. He saw it as a way of making all these destructive forces in the world visible through his actions of destruction in art.

DA: Like that Donnie Darko line ‘destruction is a form of creation’ or something along those lines. I feel like there’s something very human in that idea of clearing things away to replace them with something new, constantly revisiting, erasing, revising and so on. You always seem to be doing this yourself, revisiting older works, be they your own or those of other people, do you consider what you do to be rooted in collaborative practice?

JPK: Yes, pretty much everything I do is collaborative in some way, although not always intentionally. I enjoy holing up and working by myself for hours at a time, but also really need that give and take with other people and other ideas, or in a broader sense it is all collaboration with the world as we find it. That is sort of the idea of the publishing press I’ve recently launched - Invert/Extant, to be able to flip or rethink what already is here. But about collaboration, that is something I’ve kind of always instinc-

tually done... sometimes I would work with people in name only as a collaboration as it gave me a bit of the latitude to approach these ideas.

DA: Could you go into Invert/Extant a little bit more? It would be nice to hear about some of the people you’ve got on board?

JPK: Sure, I have a new collection of writings by Bill Dietz who is a sound composer and the co-chair for the Music/Sound MFA at Bard, as well as a book called Art is Autism by Zak Ferguson coming out. I’m also working on a collection of writings by artist and writers talking about their work in their own words and that book will be called *Transmissions 1* and will also be showcased online and so far includes artists like: Maureen McAdams, Douglas A. Martin, Steve Finbow, Ang Bartram, Paul Curran, Pam Booker, Jordan Rothacker, Mary Edwards, Chris Zieschegg, Chris Kelso, Gary Shipley, Love Kolle, Marc Beattie, and Liam Gillick has expressed interest as well as Bracha Ettinger. It should be an amazing project and timely. Also, the manifesto book should be coming out late next year and includes people like: Simon Critchley, Jack Halberstam, Thomas Hirschhorn, International Necronautical Society, Michael Lent, Jean-Luc Nancy, Santiago Sierra, Geert Lovink, Lev Manovich, Gustav Metzger, Rebecca Brown, and Dennis Cooper. We will be putting out a call for novels and manuscripts next year, and that info will be available soon.

DA: One of the lines that really struck me in your most recent book was in the essay “Thinking on Contemporary” in which you state, “Contemporary as a term often goes unquestioned in art, functioning more or less as a placeholder without understanding what it designates.” We’ve talked at length before about pseudo-intellectualism and snobbery in the art world, I often feel like a bit of a fraud at shows when people start talking about shit I just don’t understand, do you feel as an artist and particularly as a lecturer you’ve got a responsibility to open this often insular world up to people?

JPK: At some point contemporary became a distinct category, but we don’t really consider what that means, and it is often a throw away term. People think it means that it is just art of now, what’s happening now-ish—and that’s a very passive view, but there is more to it as a sort of ideology and the thinking around it doesn’t go much deeper than that. So, I became interested in what people like Hito Steyerl, Simon Critchley, or Giorgio Agamben had been saying, but there is something much deeper at play and I wrote about that a bit in this book.

At shows or exhibitions, I think everyone gets a bit like that, especially at openings. You get to a point, or at least I did, where you begin to realise that those conversations aren't really for your benefit or about art. The person is just trying to show off, or uncomfortable and blowing off steam. Give yourself credit, you're not a fraud, it's more about them and usually they don't know what they are talking about either, so I tend to just sort of listen and see where they are coming from or find an excuse to move to another part of the room.

I don't really understand this gatekeeper tendency that people get, as a lecturer I'm not interested in that. For me it's about opening doors for students whenever I can or looking at what sort of barriers people are actively putting in place to keep themselves in a position of authority. There needs to be more of this multigenerational crossover, and that's probably why I often work on projects with people who were my students in the past or to develop these pools of approaches and ideas that make things happen or people who are doing intriguing things.

DA: 100% agree with that, some of the most fruitful relationships for my own practice have been with my generationally older tutors. Would you consider the overuse of academic language to be problematic at all, in terms of gatekeeping etc?

JPK: Oh definitely, it's used to control access to who is invited into a conversation, but at the same time I'm guilty of this. Not in trying to gatekeep with my ideas, but like my last book had a very narrow focus and I remember when people like my mom or casual friends were like, "oh you wrote a book, can I read it?" Er, yes but it's very densely written... I try not to get too academic and in reality, a lot of academics wouldn't really acknowledge what I do, but then that makes it this whole other thing. What is it? I actually frame it more in a legacy of really rambling conceptual art. The books are a sort of poetic installation for inside the reader's head or world building as a collaboration to what's already there (inside a head). That was the goal with this new book *To Build a House that Never Ceased*, to make something that was more informal in a different way, and in places at least, more conversational but that opened something up with the reader. And this is a really broad place that ranges from artists like Gordon Matta-Clark or Thomas Hirschhorn, but also the idea of questioning the term contemporary, or dick pics culturally... their significance, Brexit, or the Winchester House in San Jose. And how does this relate to this thing we call art?

DA: As an aside here I've just remembered; so my undergrad degree is in CLM Contemporary Lens Media, and I'm constantly asked "what is that then?" so that really illustrates your comments on the use of the word contemporary.

But also, I think we've got to draw distinctions between gatekeeping and opting for a, maybe, obscure subject matter, right? Like my issue with gatekeeping is the sense of belittling you get, and

this is massively prominent in the art scene "oh you don't like X? You're just not clever enough" etc, whereas your writing is simply unpacking an unusual subject, it borders on philosophy crossed over with popular culture, sort of a trans-Atlantic Slavoj Žižek. If it's any consolation my parents tend not to get my writing, or my frames of reference either.

Have you got any other ideas for future books in the pipeline?

JPK: I'd actually be really into a course of old-timey lens media, like with those archaic cameras where a person needs to sit still for an hour and with glass plates and toxic chemicals. Do they offer that? What would contemporary be... on your phone? Oh nice, I'll definitely take that as a description of my writing. Thanks. Yes, I'm just finishing a new book called *Stalking America* that I am hesitant to call a novel... more like a fake memoir merged with installation art like I mentioned before? I was thinking a lot about Alain Robbe-Grillet when I first started working on it, but obviously it is nothing like that... but was an interesting way to calibrate my thoughts as I went into it. It's also a bit about boredom and what perception does when allowed to be bored... which is something that we don't experience in the same ways these days with social media and screens everywhere. Ha, I'm not selling this very well am I? Now, I'm at that stage where I'm just getting ready to shop it around to a few publishers, so wish me luck.

Other than that, I have been working on a series of simplistic but enigmatic drawings called Portents. I'm playing with the idea that they are to be installed as full size wall drawings that function almost like an oracle where the order and those included are selected through chance operations. I have a show of them coming up, but because of the logic structures they will be different every time installed.

Jared Pappas-Kelley is an artist and writer. His recent book *Solvent Form: Art and Destruction* was published by Manchester University Press and his newest collection *To Build a House that Never Ceased: Writings, Interviews, and Letters on Art* was released in August of 2020. His visual work has exhibited internationally.

Special thanks to C. Lister Wood and Connor Clements.

If you are interested in any of the work from Notebook 2, they are available through [Invert/Extant](#) or drop a [note](#).



Jared Pappas-Kelley, "Portents: Cycle 1", Dovetail Joints, install view, 2020