

adrift: graphic notations for watermusic ii
2025
pigment, ink, graphite, and vinyl on paper
20.32 x 25.40 cm (series of 12)



i started making these drawings while i felt adrift in my life. at the same time, i kept listening to watermusic ii, which in many ways provided an atmosphere to what i was feeling. the drawings are the residue of that drift. at the same time, i was reading various texts, whatever held my attention—another kind of drifting.

i had a day job at a museum where, as part of curatorial work, we would write alt text and image descriptions. my colleague, and later friend, passed her obsession with alt text and image descriptions to me and she kept saying, isn't this like poetry? the texts are descriptions of various sensations and sensoriums i had and want to share with you, my reader. these texts were written while listening, drawing, and drifting.

watermusic ii is an hour-long, one-track album by William Basinski, released in 2003. this work is imagined as a triad: to be heard, read, and seen together.

i want to thank Vaishnavi for sharing her obsession with me. to Sarasija, Shveta, and Vrishali for their comments which helped me see the work anew, and for being patient with me when i was not. to William Basinski, for their music and for this album. thank you William for making music that is deep within us, like melody cut in a disk of flesh.

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citations:

3. the Anne Carson quote is from *Wrong Norma*, published by New Directions Publishing, 2024.
4. quote from *Prisoner of Love* by Jean Genet, published by New York Review of Books, 2023.
5. Etel Adnan: love is a form of heat... quote from *The Beauty of Light: An Interview*, Etel and Laure Adler, published by Nightboat Books, 2023.
6. Etel Adnan from *Arab Apocalypse*, published by Post Apollo Press, 1989.
8. Jarman's BLUE: *Blue*, the film by Derek Jarman, 1993.
9. *late fragment*, by Raymond Carver in *A New Path to the Waterfall*, published by Atlantic Monthly Press, 1989.
10. the Basho haiku: i used to follow a Basho bot on Twitter (now X) that posted one haiku every day. at times, i would screenshot the haiku for myself. this is one of them.

1.

an eight by ten inch, standard portrait size drawing.

a deep breath. a beginning.
the sea—water—floating
the sun kisses me while i am underwater. moving
rhythmically.
the sensation of water on my fingertips; surface to texture
and texture to surface.

waves that form arcs. constant rhythmic arcs.

atonal waves.
minor fluctuations in tone, creating
cascading
ripple effects.

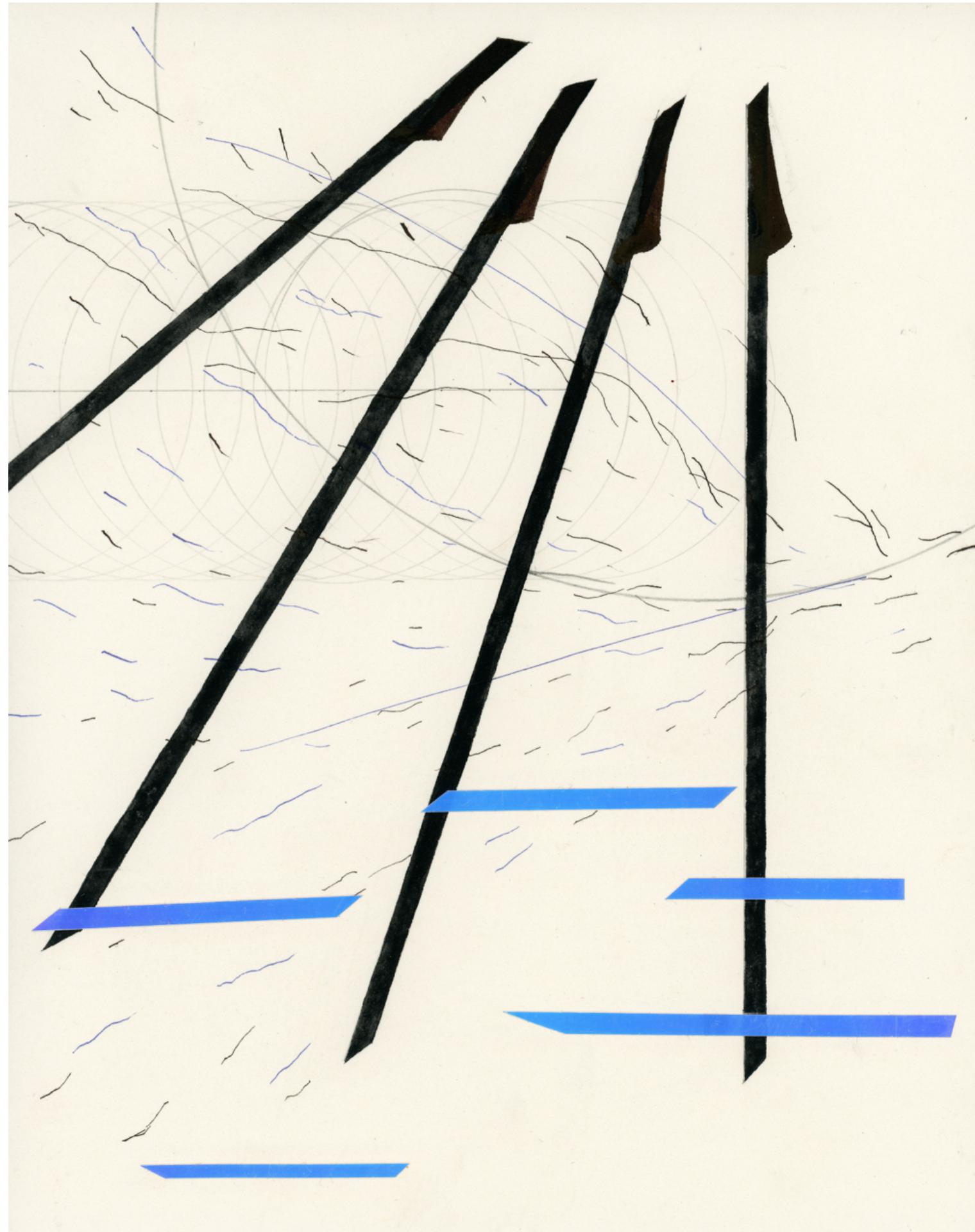
- a shimmer
- revolutions in and out of tone
- a sound shower and being cleansed

blue mixed with grey, mixed with brown, mixed with
green. muddy sea green.

the angle of light is 19 degrees off the horizon. the sky:
brilliant blue like ink.

four lines fill the frame. the top edge of these lines are
thicker than the bottom edge, similar to the *alif* in arabic
typeset. these lines swoon like a pendulum and occupy the
centre-left of the frame. at the lower-half are five horizontal
dashes, iridescent, swooning; of varying lengths. floating.
repeating. behind them, in the background, are delicately
drawn lines that flow from the centre right-corner and
fill the frame. a faint horizontal line stabilises these
movements, and around it are concentric circles covering
the centre top-left of the frame.
an inverted arc cuts the top-half.

waves that form arcs. constant rhythmic arcs.



2.

a portrait.

his shimmer.

a shimmer that is cold but sets me ablaze.

compressions.

crystallisations.

synthetic impulses: weird sensoriums.

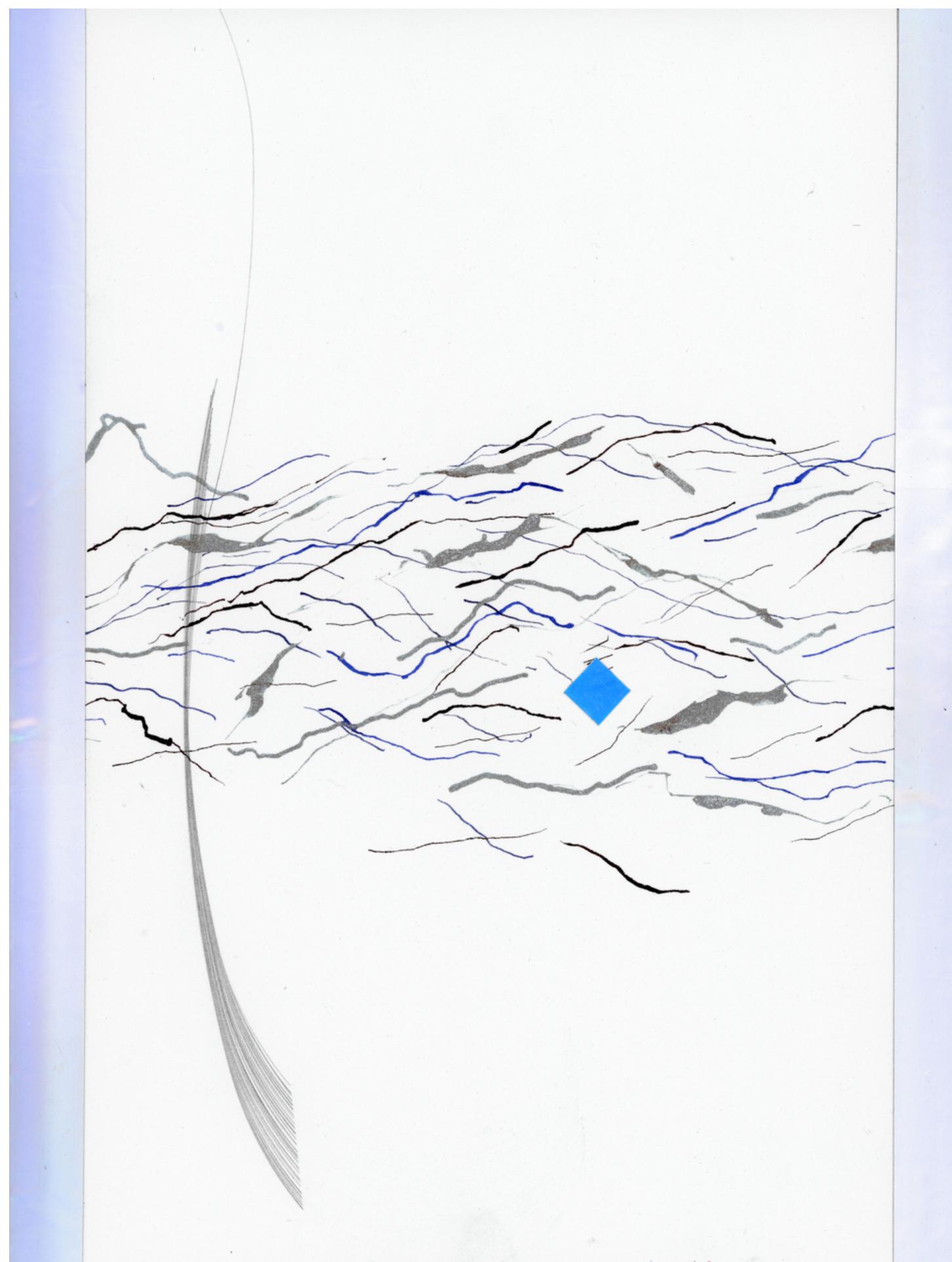
hesitant

ambivalent

fluid

-

an eight by ten inch drawing. at the centre is a horizontal band of lines in varying thicknesses and movements. the lines are in blue, black, and silver ink. a small iridescent diamond occupies the centre-bottom of this horizontal band. a curve floats on the right side, covering almost two-thirds, and on the bilateral corner sides are thick iridescent vertical lines, heightening the sense of the frame.



3.

a slight-slant yet erect position;
hunting.
hunting to be hunted.
hunting tactics that are outside scopic regimes. to tell
him: i am here, come: lick me with your mouth.

i tell him, everything feels angular.
i wonder if angularity is soft, deviant, and recluse
or
does it remain sharp, pointed, and certain.
light travels in straight lines but it does not feel angular.

he replies with an Anne Carson quote:

She recalled studying Pythagoras in school. Early philosopher. Not existentialist. He made a list of everything in the world in two columns. He put Good, Male, Light, Limit, Straight, Accurate in one column, on the right, and Evil, Female, Dark, Unlimited, Bent, Lost in the other, on the left. There's fear in rules.

Oh that Helen of Troy!

the angle of the sun: 90 degrees from earth.
the path of the sun: slant, curved.
light travels in straight lines but it does not feel angular.

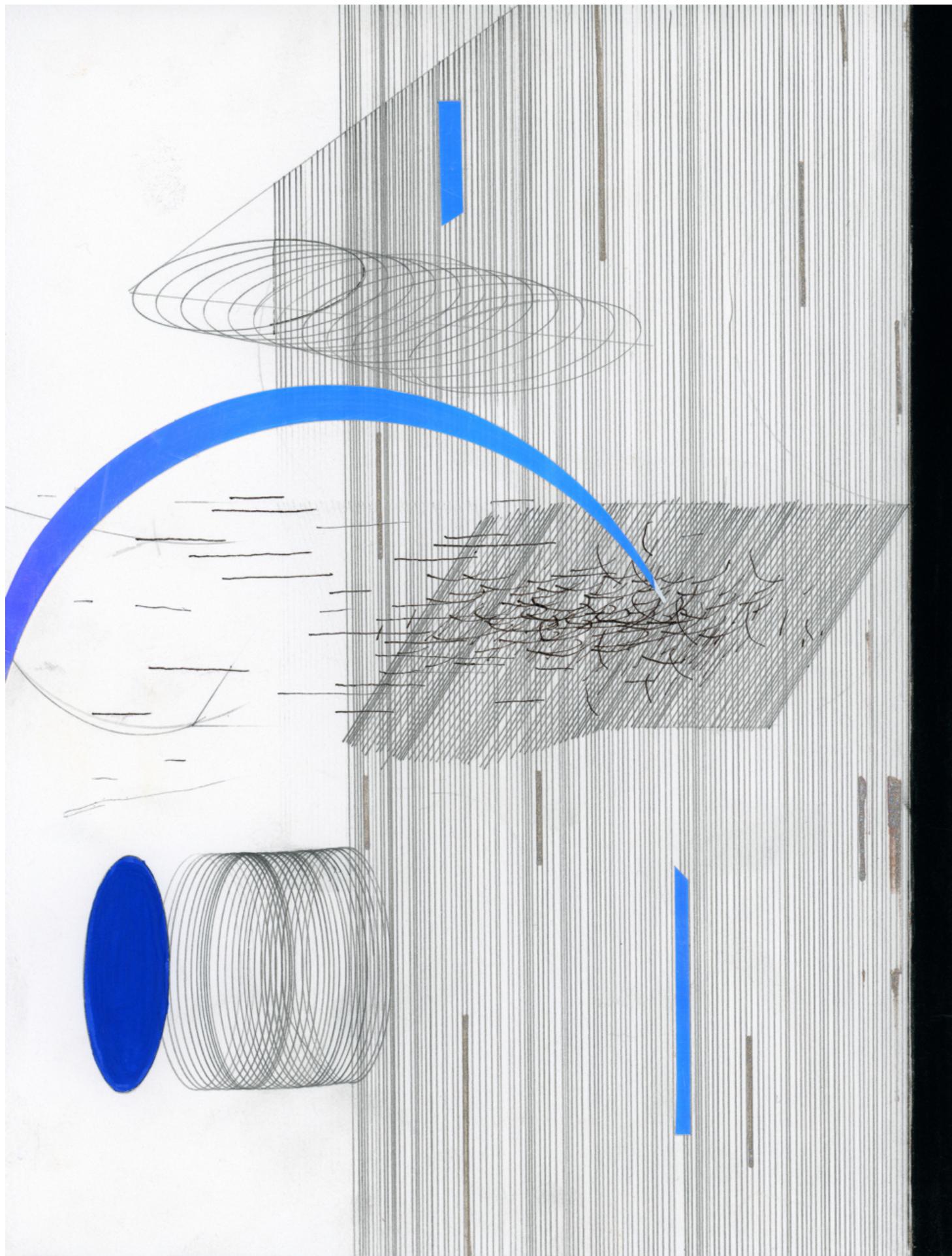


4.

an image, a description:
a calligraphic line
gradients
saturations

i read *Prisoner of Love* by Jean Genet, and there are moments within it that shine like bright sunshine on a cloudy day.

here is one:
perhaps all music, even the newest, is not so much as something discovered as something that re-emerges from where it lay buried in memory, inaudible as a melody cut in a disc of flesh. A composer lets me hear a song that has always been shut up silent within me.



5.

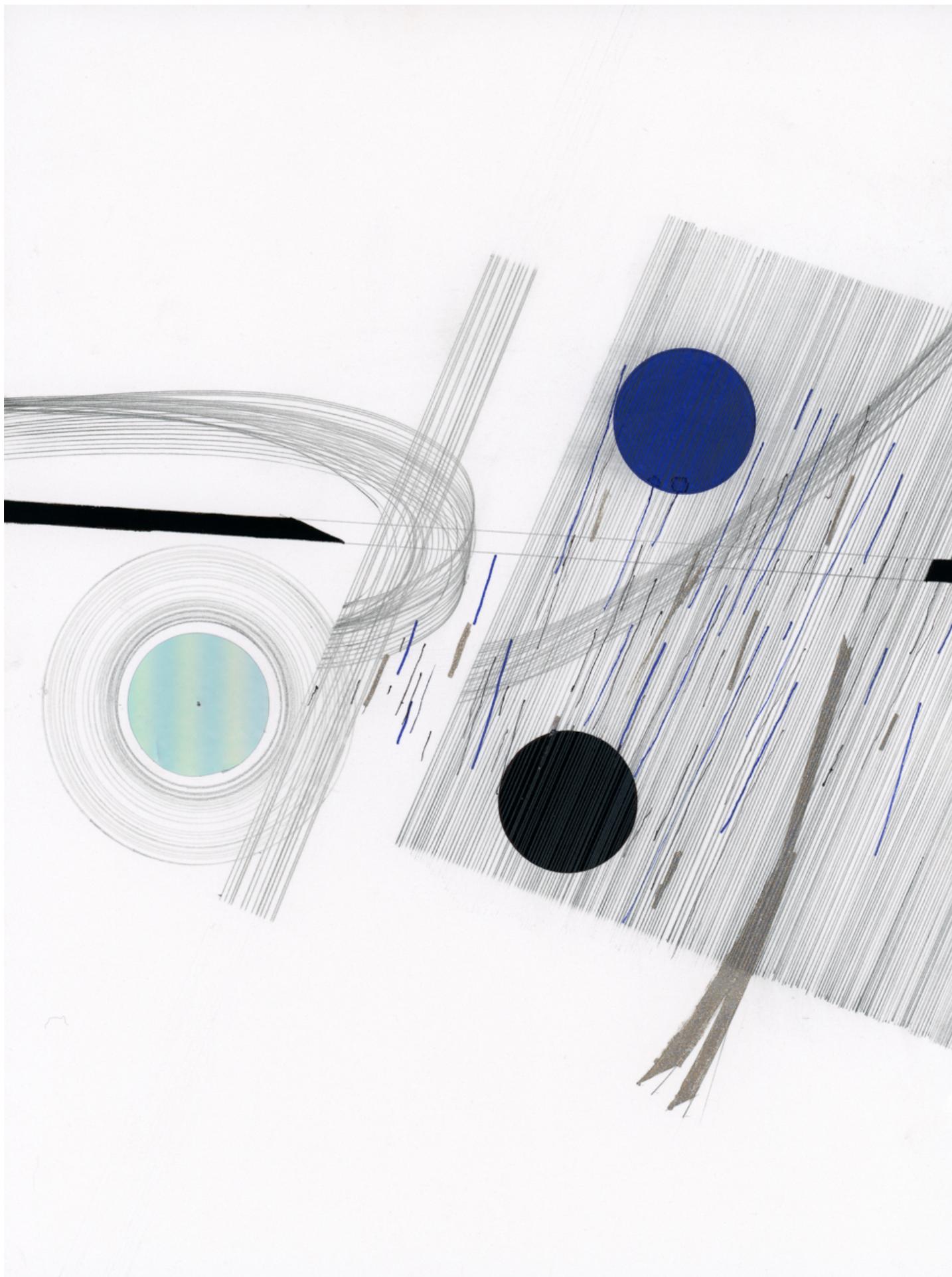
an eight by ten inch drawing.

openings. constant, continuous openings.
a hole within a hole, ad infinitum. it opens up gently, a
body collapsing in,
with,
by,
from,
and
through
its heat.

i tell him, belonging feels like twilight and gradient heat.

-

Etel Adnan: *Love is a form of heat, really. We don't know what it is. It's a state of grace. Why? Sometimes it's very irrational. And why does a person's presence produce a state of grace that becomes a need? It has a lot to do with the imagination.*



6.

a painted drawing.

cascading ellipses in overlapping contour lines,

moisture. sensations of it.
being enfolded, engulfed, by it,
by him.

- glistening
- moonlight.

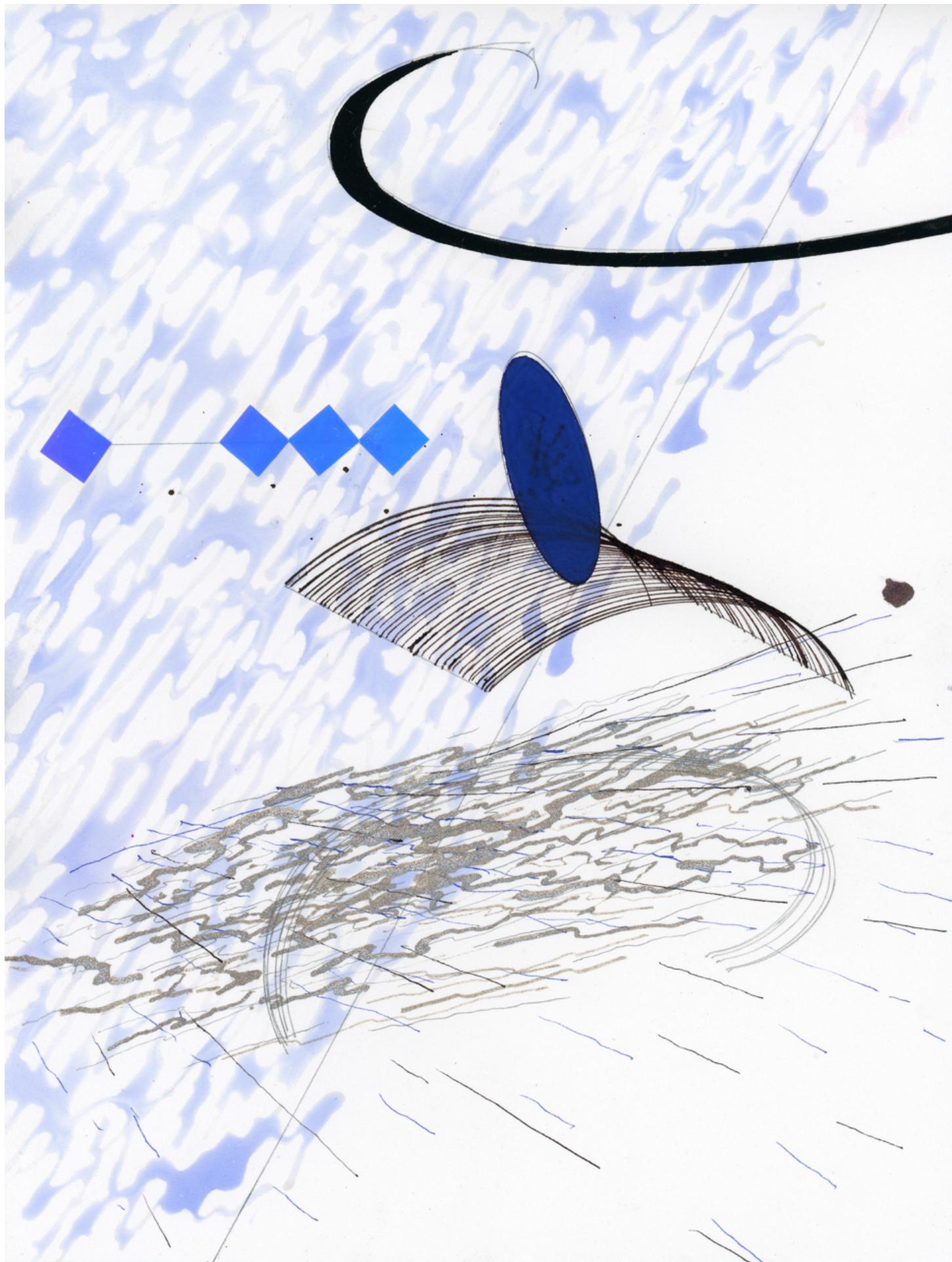
Etel Adnan:
XLIV

*Where do you want ghosts to reside? /
In our wakeful hours there are flowers which produce
nightmares /
Imaam Ali dances over a nuclear blast /*

-

on the left half are flowing lines in blue, covering half the frame. these lines are soft blue, suggesting the texture of water. the other half is white. in effect, a sense of dimension is created. there are five dimensions within this frame:

the first: the flowing, water-like, blue lines.
the second: at the bottom part of the frame, is an inclined horizon; horizontal squiggles and perspectival squiggles in silver ink.
on top of it is the third dimension: a dark blue ellipse floating on an arched dome. the dome is drawn in ink.
beside it, floating is the fourth dimension: four iridescent diamonds. one, by himself, on the left and the other three, the crowd, on the right.
and the fifth: a curve, an edge of a letter; painted black.



7.

the insides and outsides are frames of reference, just as much as time and space are. what time is for you, can be space for me, and this circle can keep moving ad infinitum. and so can the insides, and the outsides. everyday life with all its concocted convolutions.

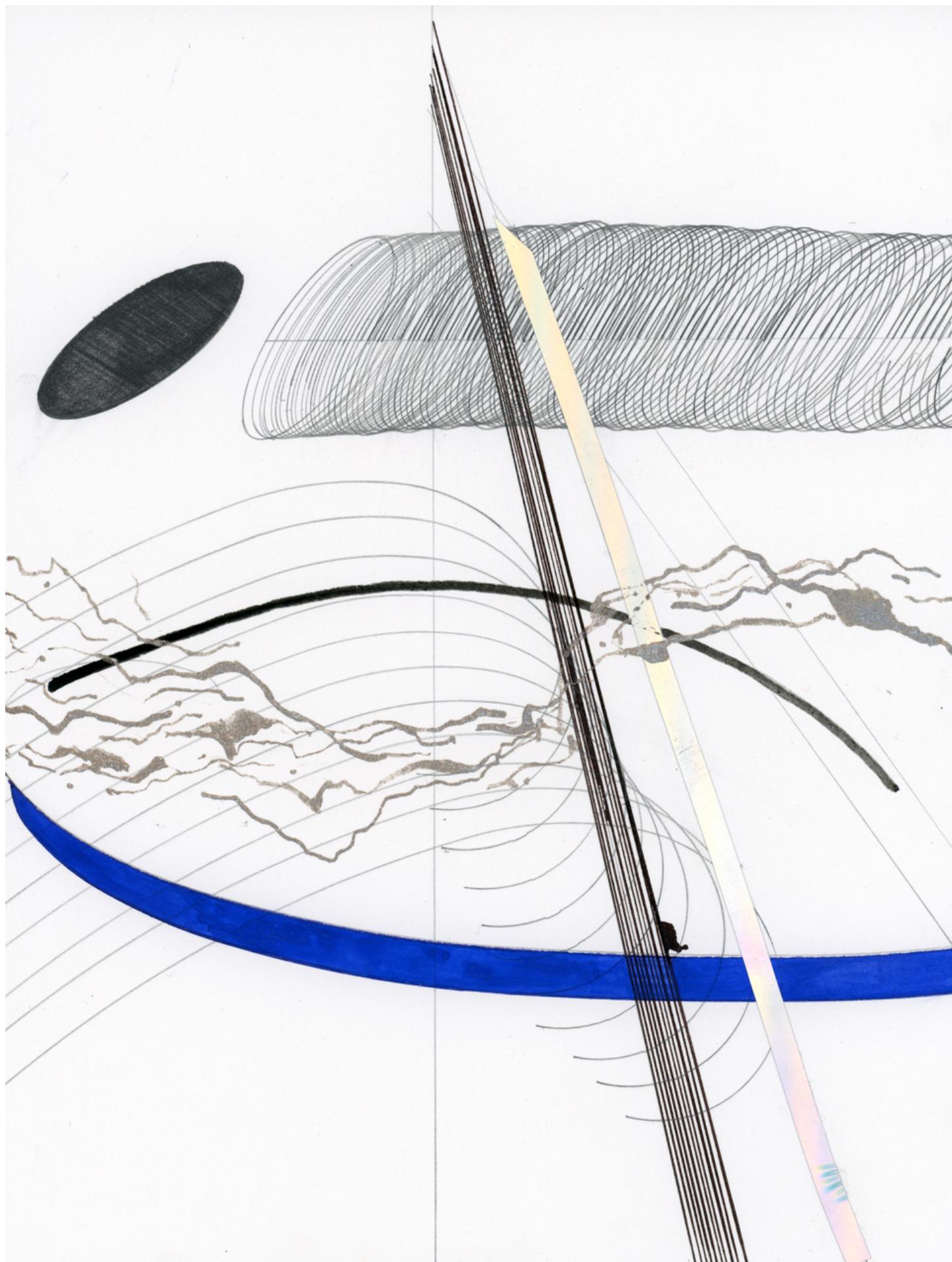
- haze
- silver dust
- a passing hormonal spike

the portrait frame is divided equally.
at the bottom is a thick, curving, horizontal blue line.

zulfikar; the sword.
his blade sharp, shimmering.

we are walking in the park and he makes me stop. i scrunch up my face, bewildered, baffled, borderline angry. how can he even say such a thing? i look down, at the red granite pavement, half covered in dust—what did he just say? he stops to see me and smiles, and then moves, so that he is right in front of me. so that i look at him. he has a smile on his face. a smile wide enough for a hug, wide enough to be held.

he said: there is no such thing as time.



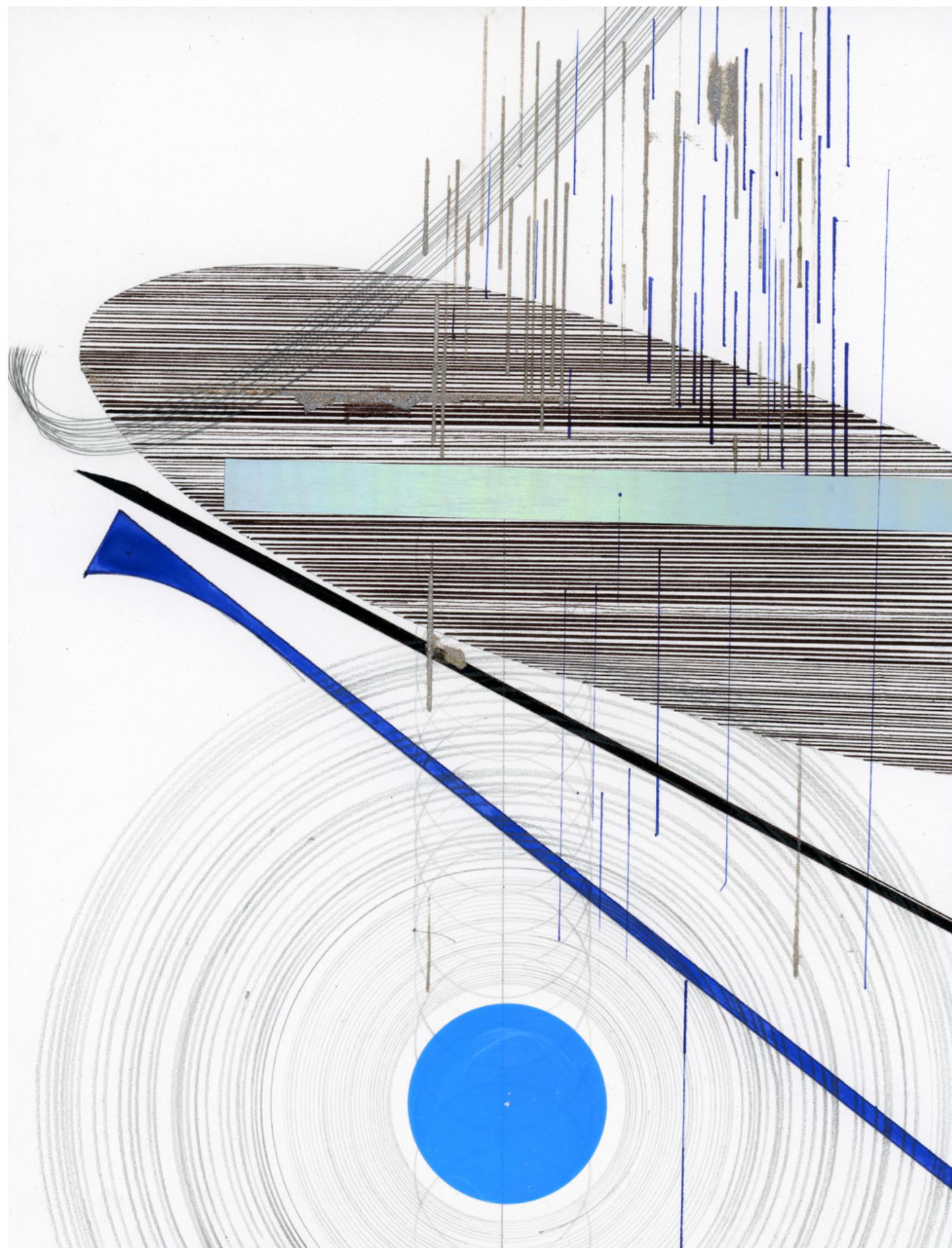
8.

the frame has an unseen point of focus.

vertical, uneven, broken rain-like lines in silver and blue

amplifications
microscopic revolutions
blue silver blue black
peacock blue
ultramarine blue
indian blue
mediterranean blue
indigo
summer blue
tarpaulin blue
jarman's BLUE

shift in rhythms.



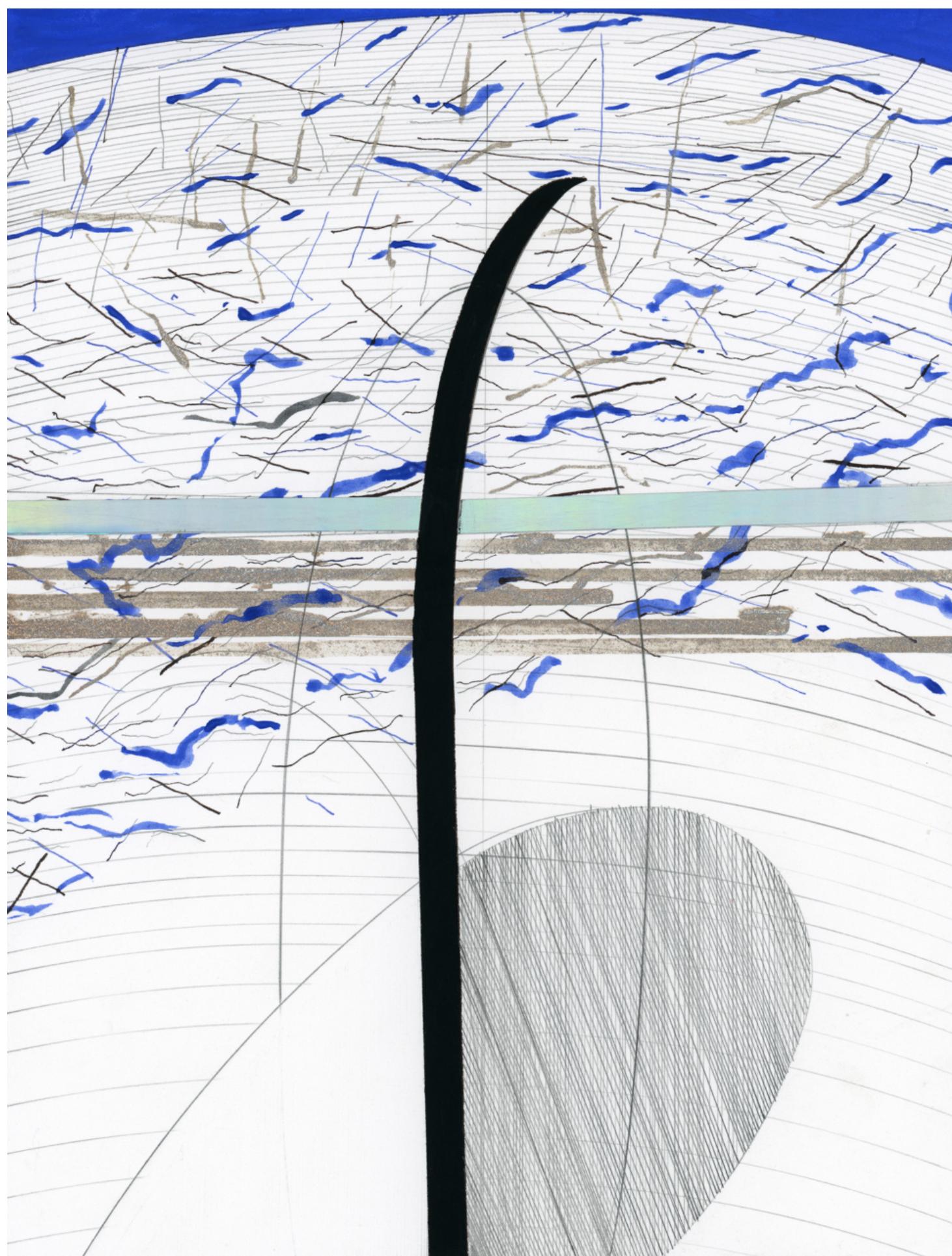
9.

a standard portrait-size drawing;

polyrhythmic
polyrhythmic

structures
protuberances

water and submission
islam and submission
submission and queer life
queer life and resilience
resilience and water



10.

*the ocean
welcoming
the full moon*
—basho

a painted drawing.

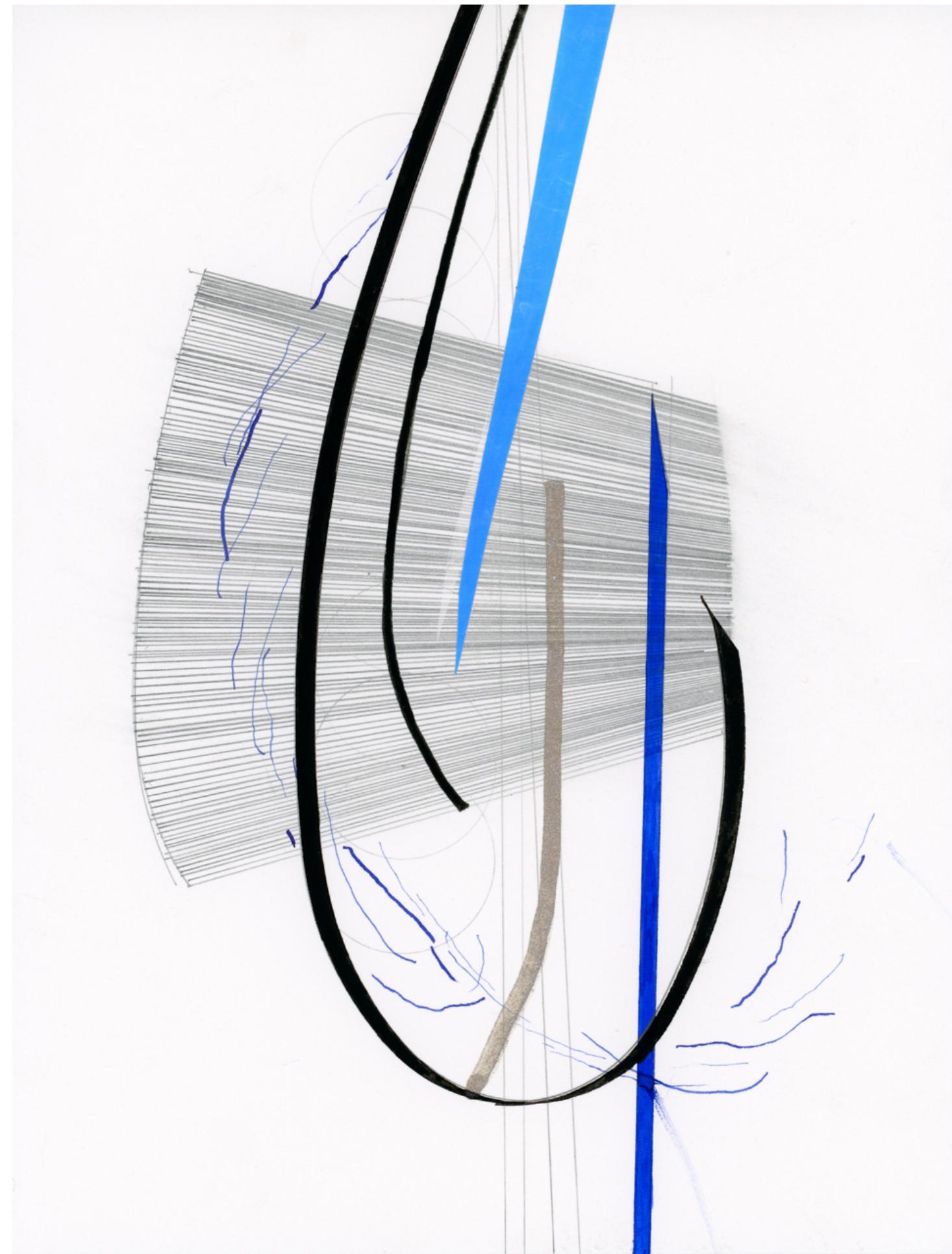
my parents follow the lunar calendar. my mother, to mark our birthdays, sits at the beginning of every new year, and laboriously, adds annotations to the dates that correspond to on the Gregorian calendar. she does this because the date changes every year. our every day lives are attuned with the sun. however, the way we move is bonded with the moon.

i ask: what is it with being lunar and being more, wanting more?

he says, more of?

—everything.

[a synth tone that sounds as broken speech]



11.

a portrait.
a portrait of an object of desire,
a centre of gravity.
they are the same, are they not?

and then,
a wish:

*and did you get what
you wanted from this life, even so?
i did.
and what did you want?
to call myself beloved, to feel myself
beloved on the earth.*

—late fragment, Raymond Carver.

—

enter: him



12.

an eight by ten inch, standard portrait size drawing. at the centre is a diamond filled in with evenly inked vertical lines, covering most of the frame. on the centre-right, is a small iridescent diamond. besides it is a horizontal cut, as if cut with a sharp blade; a line painted in black. in the background of this line is a splash, oozing out, in silver ink and brilliant blue, and behind it is the vertical diamond. towards the left corner is a fading ellipse, in blue, like the moon.

an atmosphere that forms and un-forms its own edges.

- ambient edges
- meditative edges
- contemplative edges
- amorphous edges
- expanded edges
- atonal edges
- edges that shimmer
- edges that modulate
- flickering edges
- edges that constantly vary
- edges that invoke
- edges that drift
- elevated edges.

nothing changes, but the edge moves.

