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DAVID RUETER

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A LINE, A MOLLUSK  
Ditch Projects  
2021



The given elements of the exhibition are: a roughly square gallery space with a garage door (approximately 34' x 38' feet, or around 1500 square feet, of floor space, with an estimated 24' maximum ceiling height with an estimated 30 degree slope); and fluorescent lights. Within the exhibition space are a small sculptural installation and drawings.

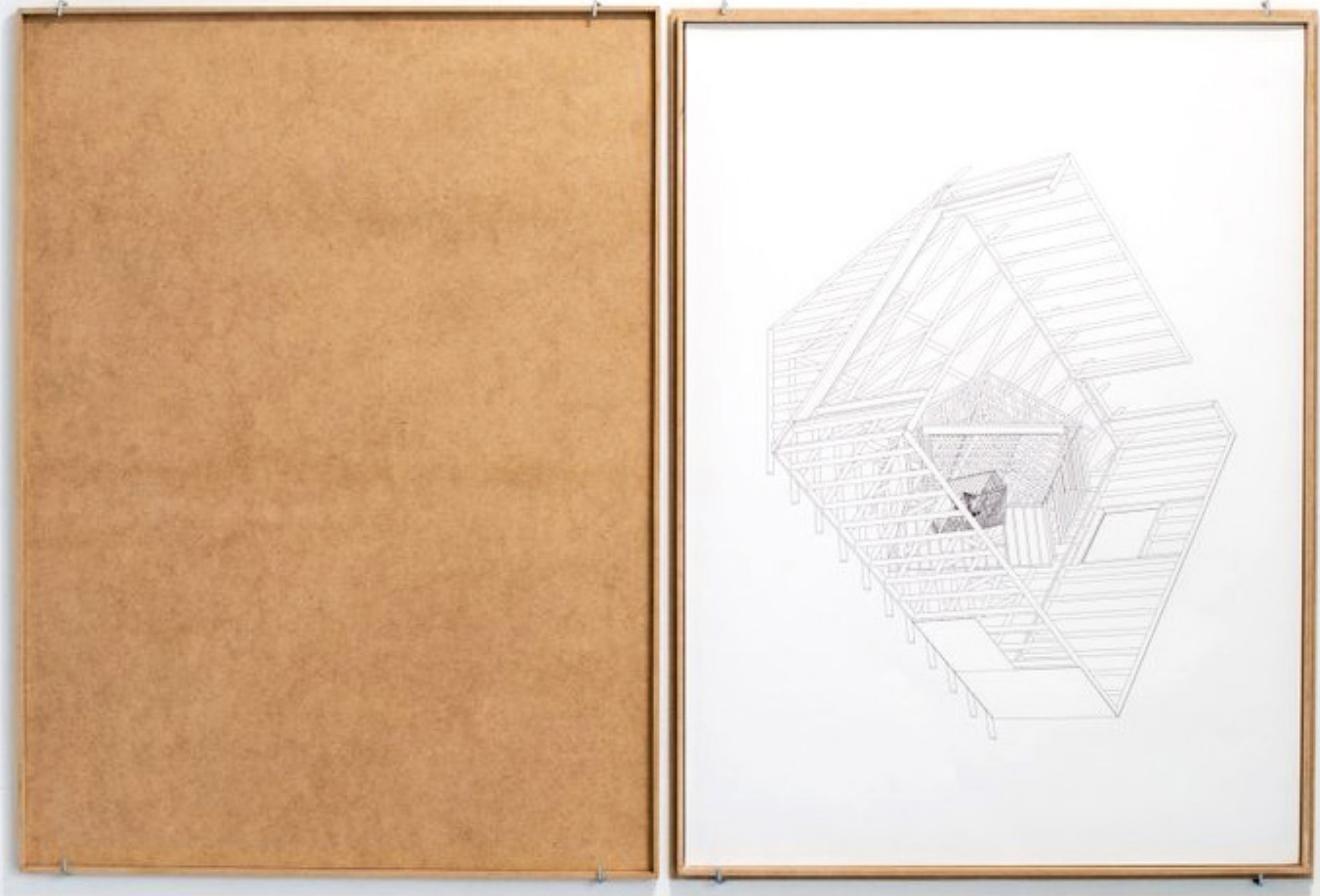
The drawings are produced by machine and by hand. They are executed with fine pen on absorptive mixed media paper, or on Rite in the Rain waxed or PET paper with layers of water, calcium carbonate, and oil based materials. Some are partially enclosed or mounted on panel. All are open to the air.

The drawings address conditions more than subjects. They refer to visual rhetorics and material grammars of enclosure, from cadastral systems, fortifications, accident theory, industrial process flow, hardware and software architectures, and blueprints (for a garage). The drawings are intimate with the violence of the lines that shape them. Some are chalky, and some are chalked. A few of the drawings are fugitive. The drawings work within, against, and through written logics of encapsulation and permeability. The drawings are inscriptions. The drawings are containers.

Solo exhibition at [Ditch Projects](#) (Springfield, Oregon, US).

Forthcoming exhibition publication with text by Dr. Cameron Hu, cultural anthropologist.





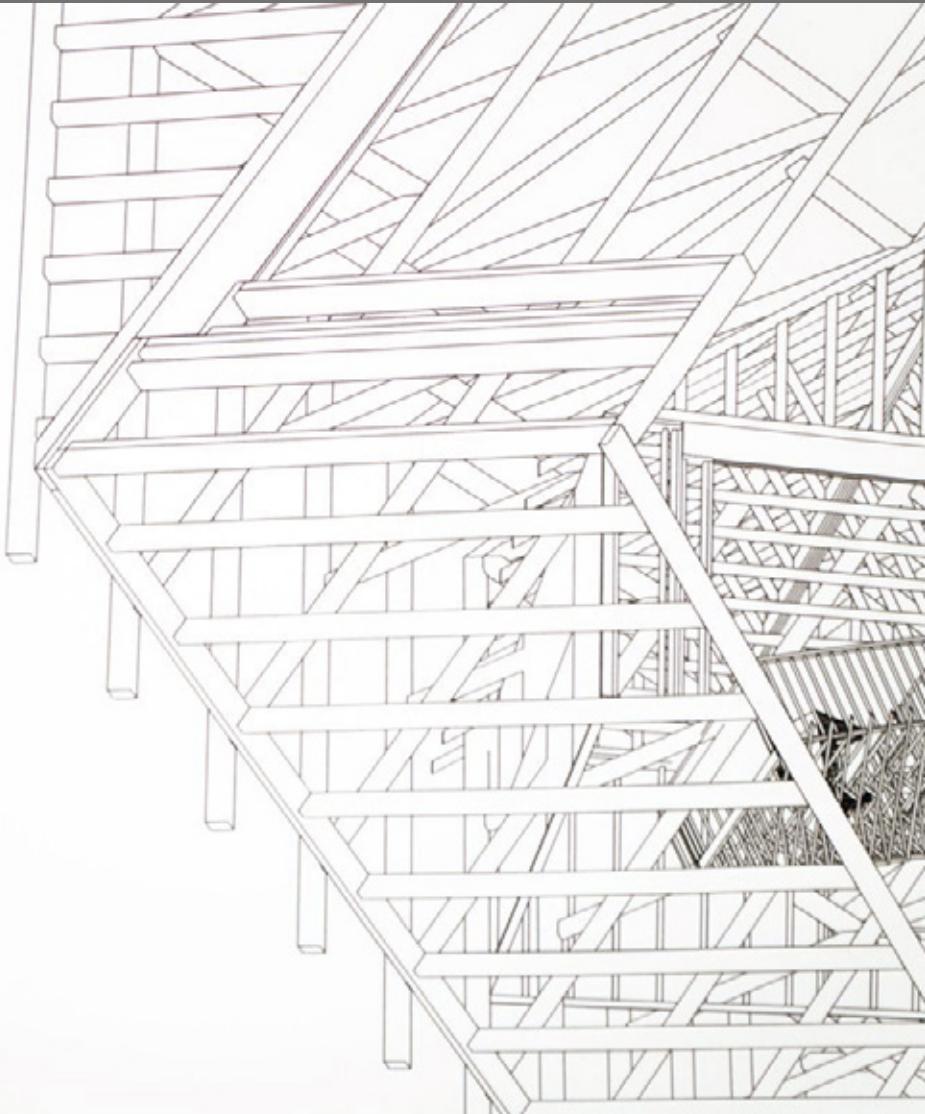
*Concentric garages*

2021

Pen on paper in MDF box

22" x 30" (56 cm x 76 cm)

Walking through the front door of Ditch Projects you will find, immediately to your left, a drawing mounted in the bottom of a shallow box with its lid hanging to its left. Built from a downloaded and manipulated CAD model, the series of timber framed garage plans nest one inside the other in tighter and tighter rings until they are nothing but an indefinable stack of black lines.





### *Mussels*

2020

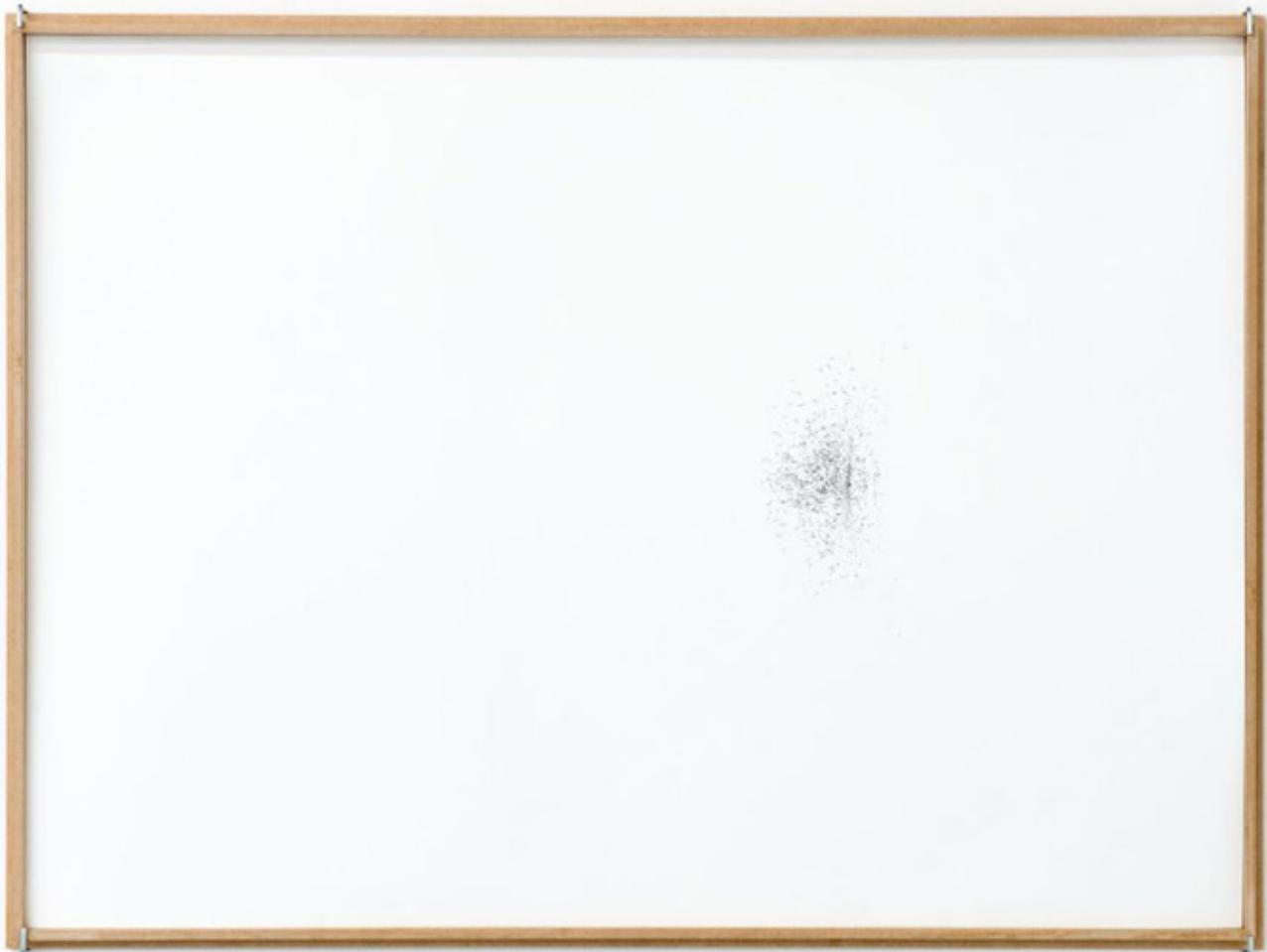
Oil pastel and EXPO marker on Rite in the Rain paper mounted on foam and archival cardboard mounted in a folded architectural board clamshell box

8.5" x 10" (22 cm x 25.5 cm)

The drawing is mounted on the right side of a delicate yet industrially designed clamshell box that is clamped, open, to the wall with zinc coated square bend screw hooks. In the upper half of the drawing EXPO marker pigment, suspended in silicone lubricant as it disperses from the felt tipped pen, adheres to the Rite in the Rain paper. The doubling loops of the diagram reference the curves of a material fatigue test (fatigue testing being a process of testing progressive, localized, permanent structural change in a material as it is subjected to cyclical, fluctuating levels of stress; this process may result in cracking or fracturing the material after a sufficient number of cycles).

In the lower half of the drawing layers of oil pastel are delicately carved away by the tip of a needle sharp pencil that was dragged across the drawing's surface by an AxiDraw machine, producing traces of a blue mussel's anatomy, here doubled and offset.





*Delamination (Willamette Stone)*

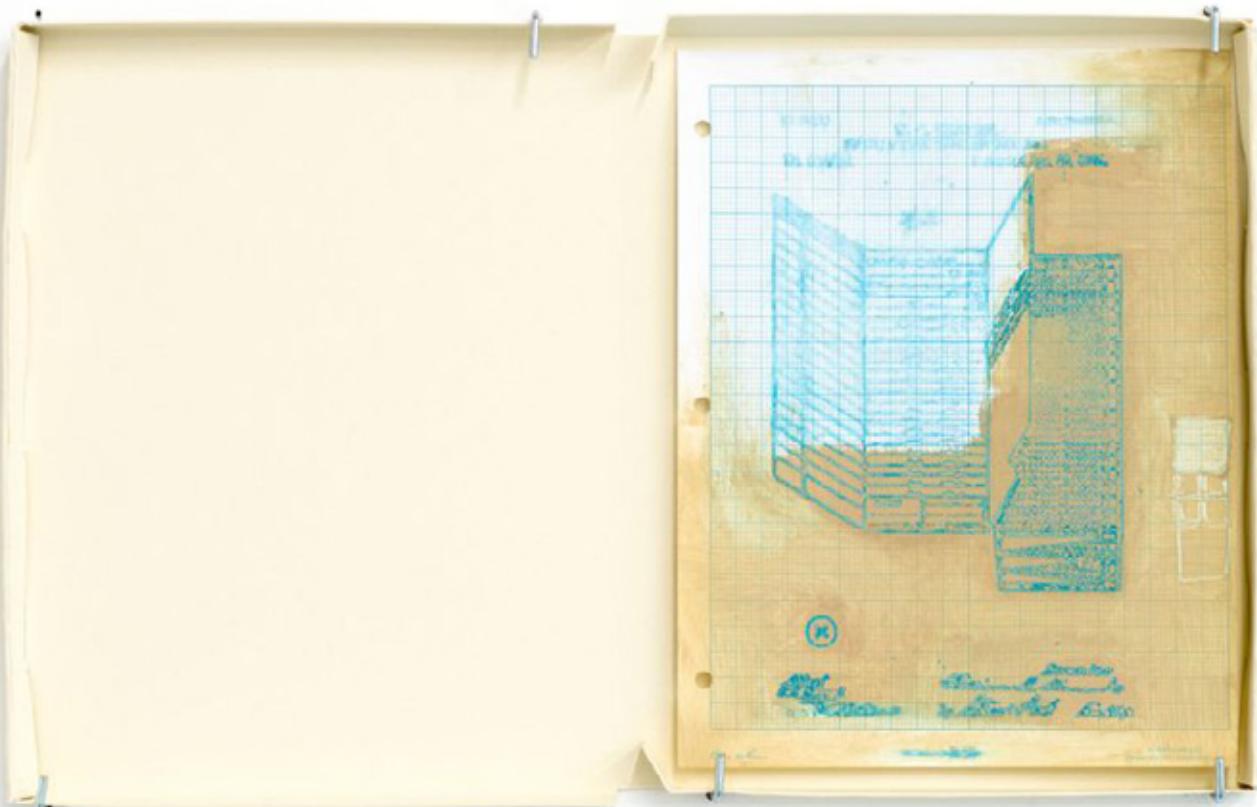
2021

Pen on paper in MDF box

30" x 22" (70 cm x 56 cm)

Working with publically available data collected by the United States Public Land Survey System, this machine-made, pen on paper drawing is a spatial rotation and "delamination" of a grid of property lines that emanates from a point in western Portland, OR. Marked original by a cedar stake, then an obelisk, and now a stainless steel plaque laid in concrete, the Willamette Stone defines the beginning of the survey of Oregon and Washington; a survey that initiated in Ohio some 66 years earlier with the "Northwest Territories" and Thomas Jefferson's standardized cadastral system laid out in the Land Ordinance of 1785. The Willamette Stone marker was placed by John B. Preston, the first Surveyor General of the "Oregon Territory" on June 4, 1851. From this point, marked by the Willamette Stone, the US government records for all sections and townships (named as "real property" by the states of Oregon and Washington under the Donation Land Claim Act of 1850) are taken.



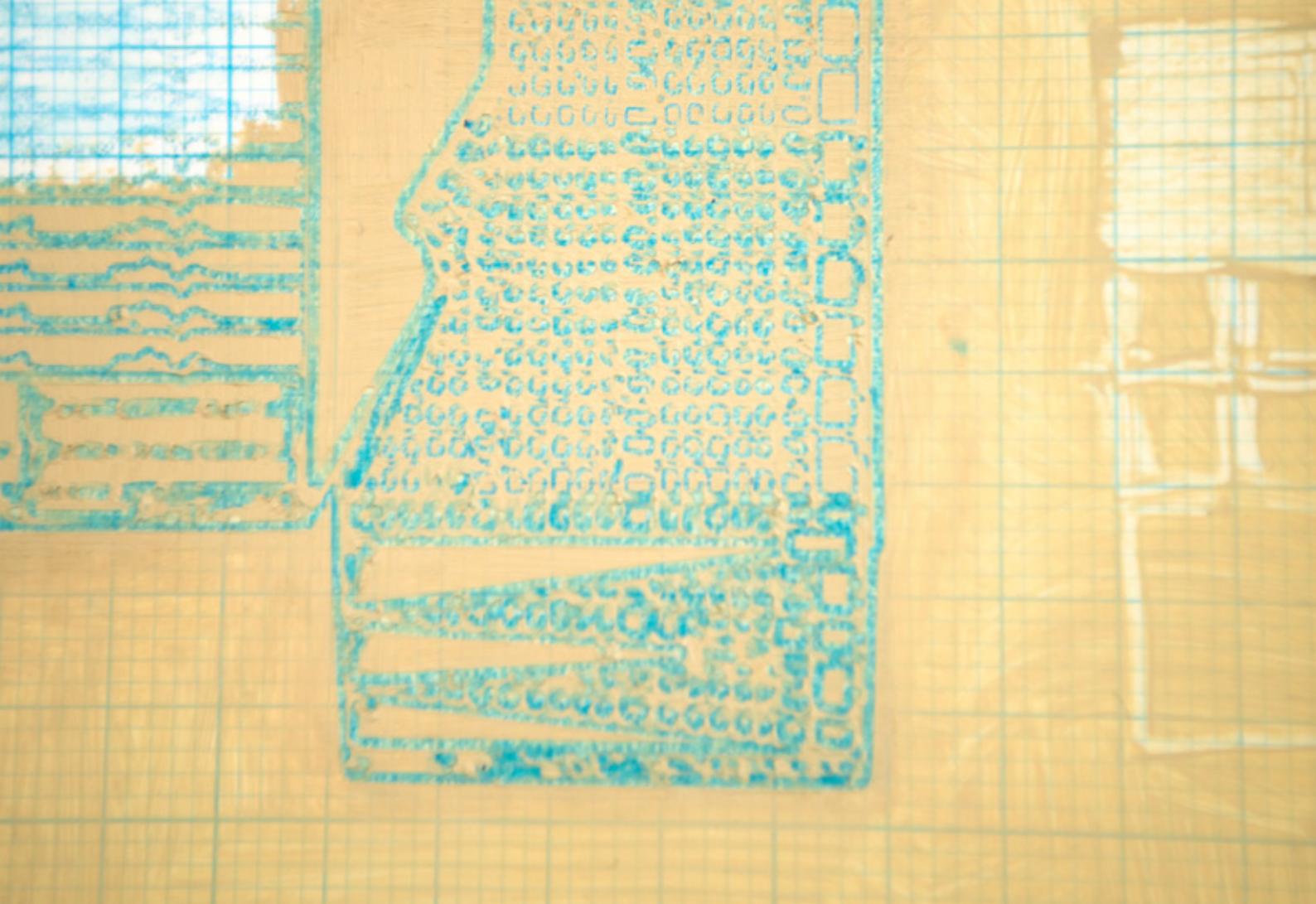


*Logging patent*

2021

Wax crayon and oil on 2mm gridded Rite in the Rain paper mounted in a folded architectural board clamshell box  
8.5" x 11" (22 cm x 28 cm))

Part machine drawn, part hand drawn. With reference to a digital image of *Figure 5* of W. M. Kinnard's 1886 patent No. 340,218 for a combined tally sheet and poll book.





*Liquid management*

2020

Oil pastel and graphite on vellum backed with archival cardboard  
12" x 18"" (30.5 cm x 46 cm))

This drawing consists of two layers of vellum and one of archival cardboard mounted to the wall with large black nails. Vellum has highly hygroscopic properties, and tends to bend and buckle dramatically with moisture levels in the air. The drawing's top layer of vellum is buckled (damaged) by drops of water. The damage areas were then coated with layers of oil pastel. The bottom layer of the drawing's vellum is drafted with pencil and mimics the visual grammar of an engineering diagram for industrial piping.



*Divider (Eileen Gray)*

2021

Oil, wax pencil, and graphite on Rite in the Rain paper stapled to a gessoed MDF board and mounted in a folded clamshell architectural board box

9" x 12" (23 cm x 30.5 cm)

Drawing into a beige ground, the work blends the lines of a two-tiered, slightly curvilinear Eileen Gray room divider with those of a diagram illustrating the position and orientation of mound, stake, and cornerstones to be erected by a surveyor at a property dividing line.

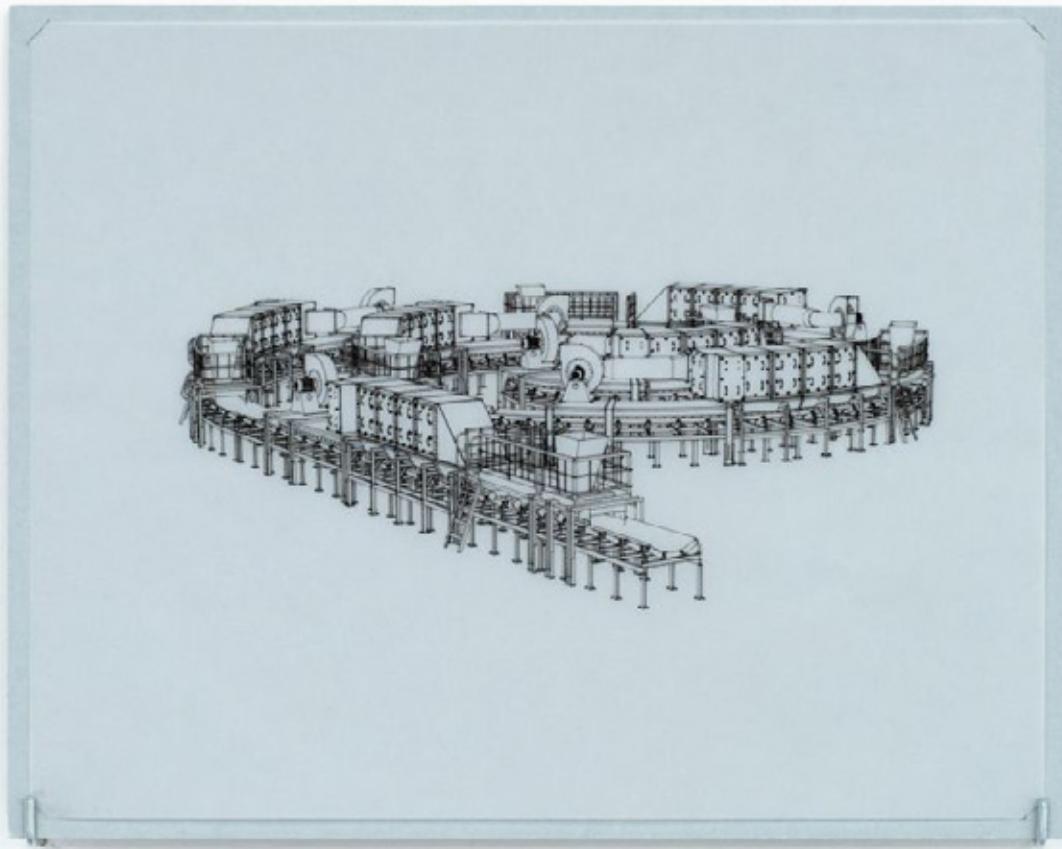


***Inverted Twittering Machine***

2020

Graphite, oil pastel and carbon paper mounted on Rite in the Rain paper, mounted on archival foam core  
9" x 12" (23 cm x 30.5 cm)

The image is created by a piece of carbon paper placed face down on oil pastel. Even with minimal pressure, the carbon paper face tends to pick up the lubricated mineral oil of the pastel. The pressure in this instance was created by the passage of a fine tipped tool, mounted to an Axidraw machine, tracing along the backside of the carbon paper. The lines of the image were created by an algorithm mapping Paul Klee's 1922 watercolor, pen and oil transfer work "The Twittering Machine."



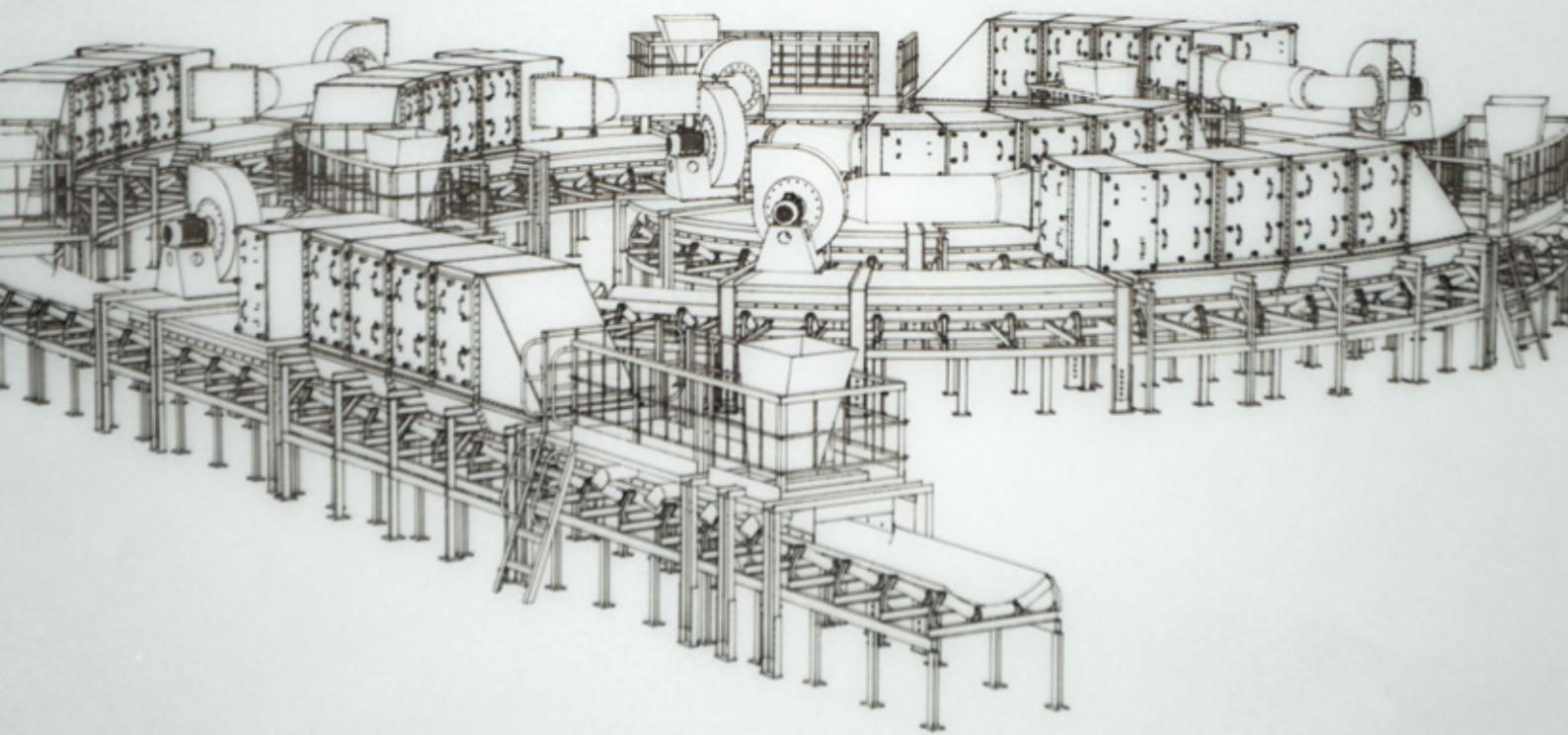
*Spiral Dust Collector*

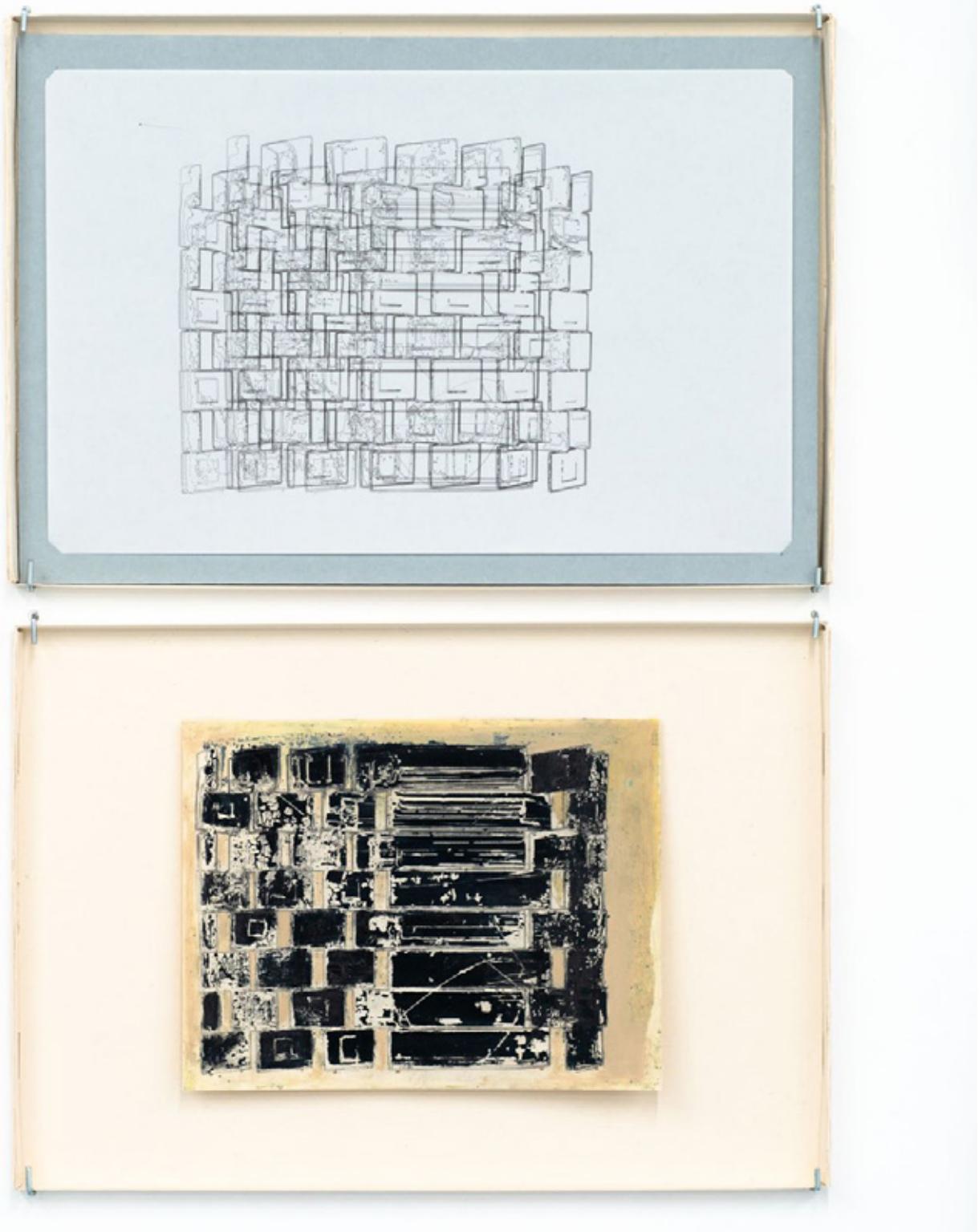
2021

Pen on vellum backed with archival cardboard

11" x 14" (28 cm x 36 cm)

This drawing is generated from a downloaded and manipulated CAD model of an industrial air filtration system for tunnels. Machine rendered, virtually and then physically, the spiral is situated such that it might be the enantiomorphic partner of a video still from Robert Smithson's 1970 film "Spiral Jetty."





***Brick Screens, Circulating and Stretching (Eileen Gray)***

2021

(top) Pen on vellum backed with archival cardboard; (bottom) Oil pastel, oil, and acrylic on Rite in the Rain paper in architectural board box

11" x 17" (28 cm x 43 cm)

Referencing Eileen Gray's 1922 "brick" room divider, which was made of several stacked horizontal rows of pivoting lacquered wood panels, the digitally stretched and multiplied screens in the two drawings entangle the, previously rigid, variations between solids and voids in Gray's original design. The top drawing was executed by machine, the bottom by machine and hand.



*Too*

2021

Gouache, methyl cellulose and watercolor pencil on PET paper mounted on MDF panel

9" x 12" (28 cm x 43 cm each)

"Bas Jan Ader blues" meet matte yellow ochre edges as water based materials are coaxed to flow and sit, tentatively, atop waterproof paper, mouthing words.





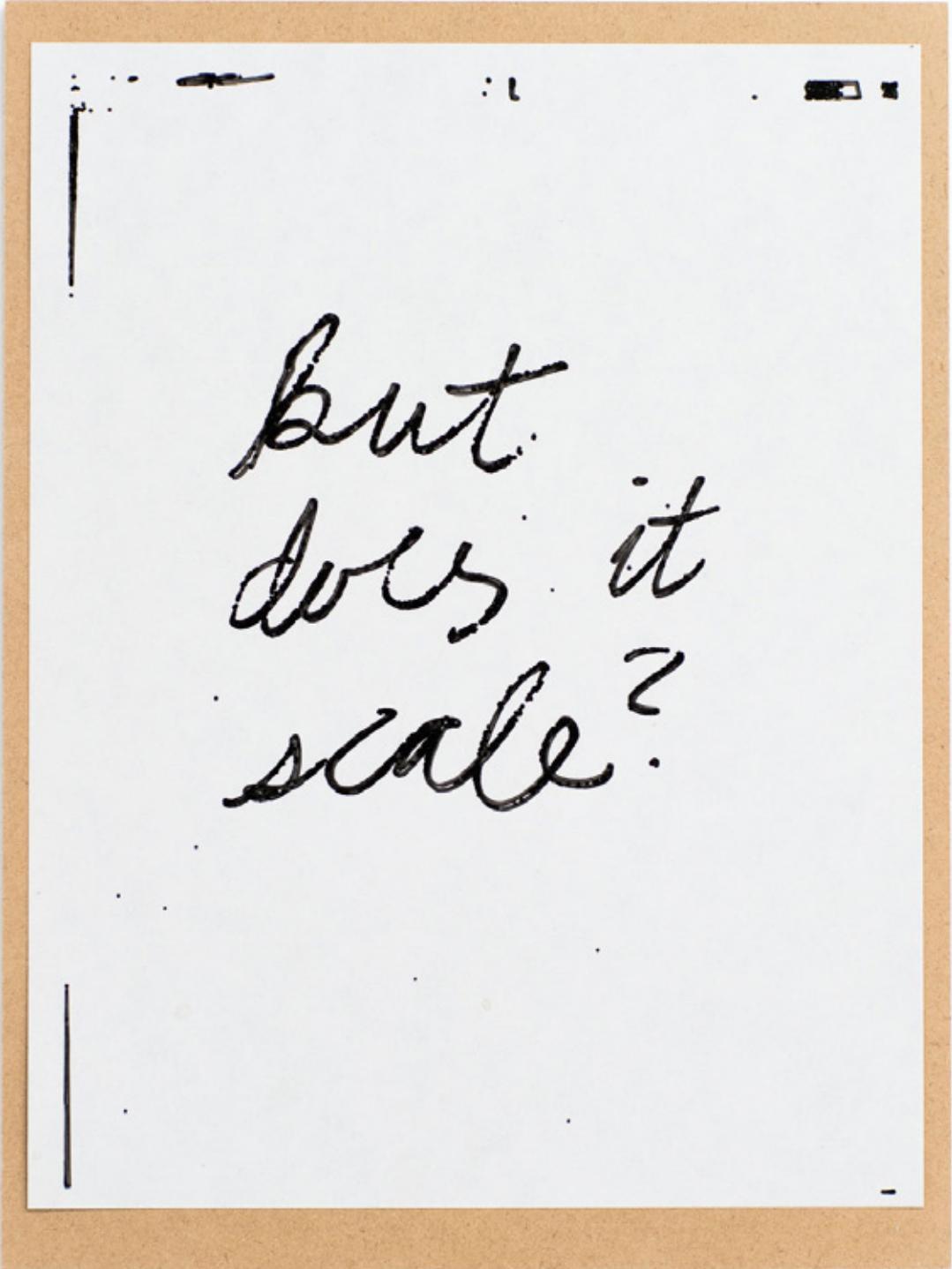
*Delamination (Eugene)*

2021

Pen on paper mounted in MDF box

30" x 22" (70 cm x 56 cm)

Created with a pen and plotter and a refusal of the aerial perspective native to the grammar of mapping, the drawing is composed of the property lines immediately surrounding Ditch Projects. The lines were originally surveyed in the early 1850s.



but  
does it  
scale?

*But does it scale?*

2021

EXPO marker on Rite in the Rain cardstock, mounted on MDF panel

9" x 12" (23 cm x 30 cm)

Handwritten, scanned, and output at a 1:1 scale by an AxiDraw machine dragging an EXPO marker, the drawing scrawls a common phrase used in business, economics, design, and tech industry circles. The phrase, a ubiquitous one in management strategies and the logistics of production - from industrial supply lines to climate change disaster management models - becomes pointed at once outward and inward, towards the exhibition site and away from it.

In the case of the drawing itself, it did not scale.

*but  
does it  
scale?*





*Out of Scope*

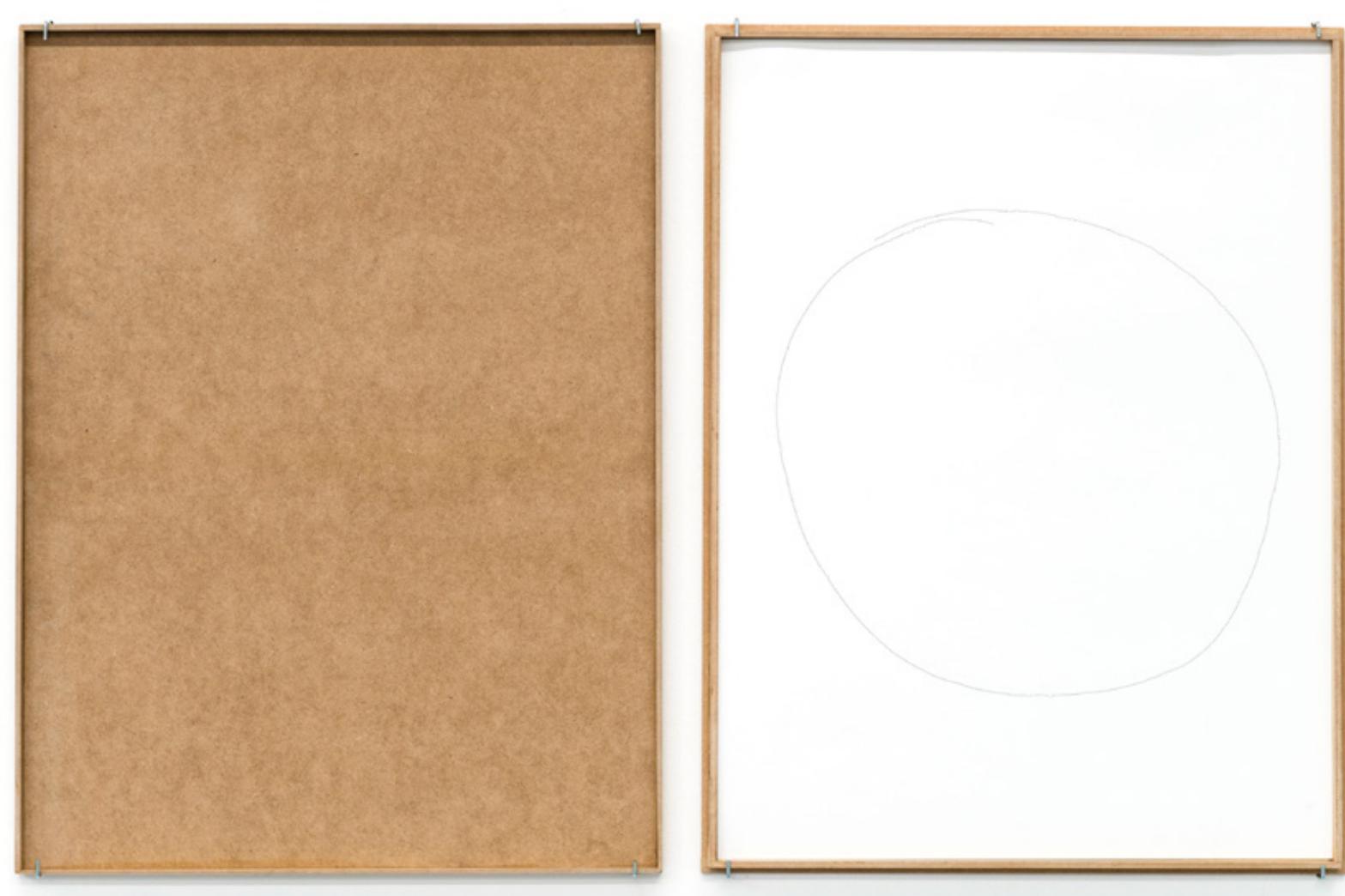
2021

Oil pastel, EXPO marker, oil, and graphite on Rite in the Rain paper mounted with industrial clip  
8.5" x 11" (22 cm x 28 cm)

Folded paper and layers of oil based materials here enact the material stress diagram (seen earlier in "Mussels") as much as inscribe it. Lines of spreadsheets and engineering parameters become at once vessels of containment and a landscape.







***Fortification Theory #1***

2021

Pen on paper in MDF box

20" x 30" (56 cm x 70 cm)

The drawing began as a quick, gestural circle, with open ends, made at the scale of a body. The gesture was then scanned and run through a custom "fortification" algorithm that generates geometries based on a 1597 text by Cristobál de Rojas titled "Theory and Practice of Fortification." The resulting "fortified" line was output by a plotter and pen, before being mounted in a MDF box.





*Jackdaw drowning*

2021

Graphite, linseed oil and pigment on PET (waterproof) paper in a folded architectural board clamshell box  
8.5"x11" (22 cm x 28 cm)

A machine drawn reenactment of a 14th or 15th century Italian drawing by a medieval inventor of infrastructure and war machines known as Taccola, or Mariano de Jacopo. After the machine finished drawing, the surface was modified by hand with graphite and tacky, liquid titanium white oil paint, thinned with linseed, which ran down the surface, now speckled with dust, caught while drying.





*Oblique sextant*

2020

EXPO marker and oil pastel on Rite in the Rain paper, stapled to a linen panel, in a particle board and MDF case  
8.5"x11" / 18"x23" (22 cm x 28 cm / 46 cm x 58 cm)

Composed of lines, digitally traced from a photo image of an etching, the obliquely stretched contours of the EXPO marker sextant, pictured here, are carved, resisted and erased by layers of oil pastel. A sextant is a marine navigation instrument that employs the measurement of angles between the horizon and a celestial body (the Sun, Moon or a star), along with an exact measurement of time, to calculate a navigator's exact coordinates (longitude and latitude). The calculation of longitude was a technology produced and replicated through the colonial projects of Britain and Europe as they sought to cross the Atlantic and Pacific oceans.

MANAGE THE MARKET  
THE MARKET WILL MANAGE IT

*The Market Will Manage*

2020

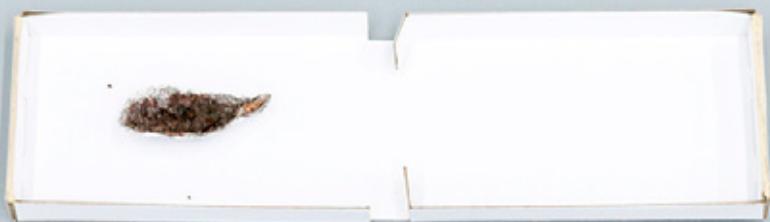
Pen on vellum mounted on archival board, tyvek tape and nails

11" x 17" (28 cm x 43 cm)

Machine drawn, interrupted.



— — —



*Inverted blue mussel*

2018 / 2021

Aluminum foil, copper deposition and paper board clamshell box

7" x 4" x 1" (30.5 cm x 10 cm x 2.5 cm)



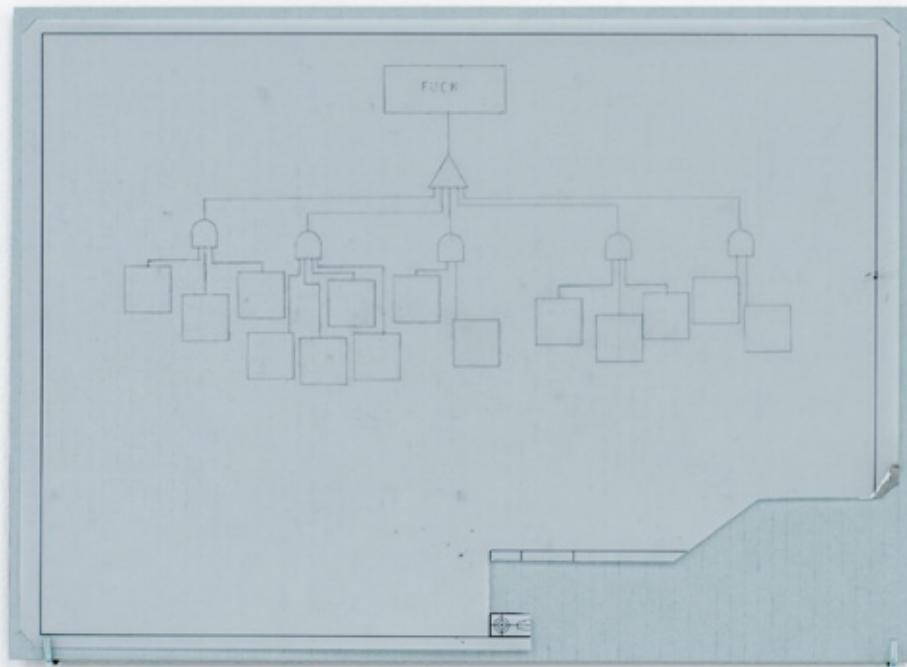
*Foiled Again*

2021

Aluminum foil, rabbit skin glue, MDF, nails

12" x 16" (30.5 cm x 40.5 cm)

Thin skin, metal casings; old hide wrapping new glue, allowing the water through.



***Fuck***

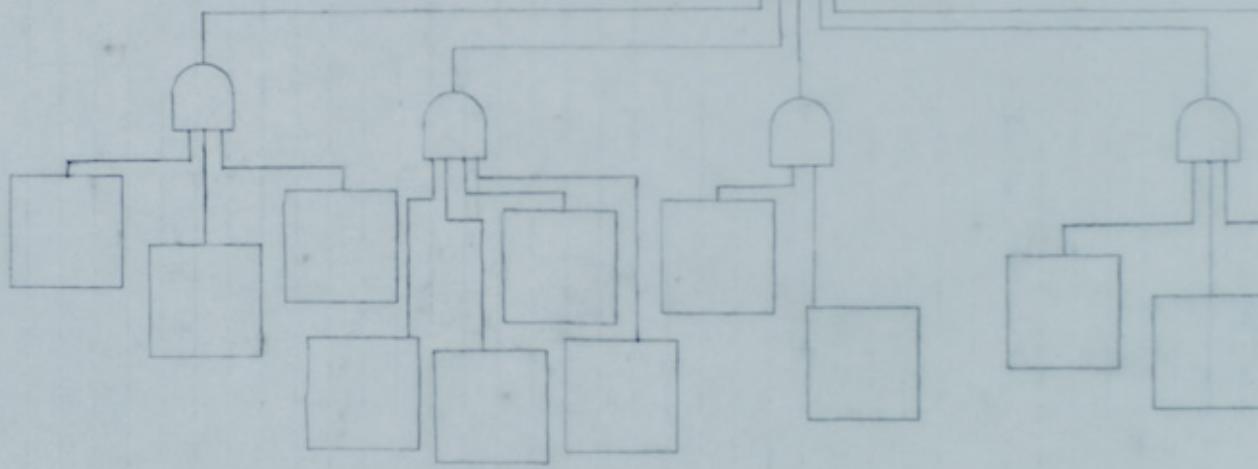
2019

Graphite on vellum on archival cardboard

16.25" x 11.8125" (41.275 cm x 30.00375 cm)

With reference to incident management flow diagrams.

FUCK



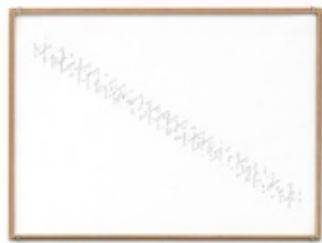
*Broken perimeter*

2021

Found PVC pipe (UV damaged), found particle board

Dimensions variable (site adapted)







### *Swiss cheese | Waterworks*

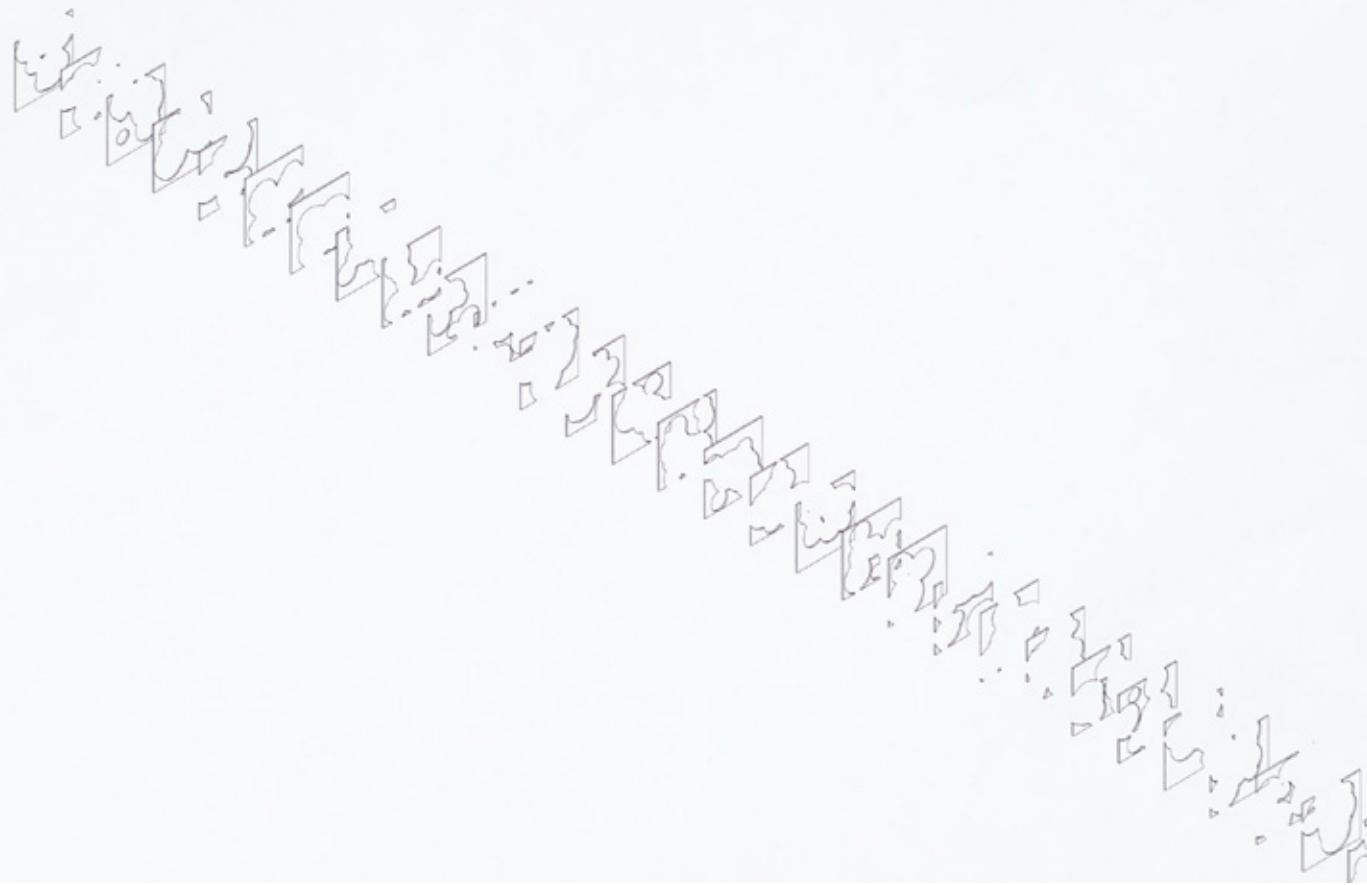
2020

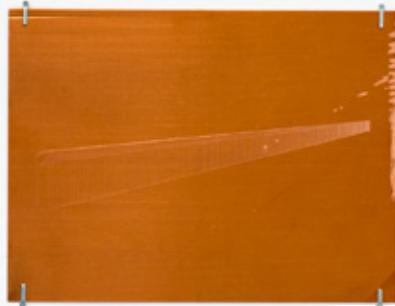
(top) Pen on paper; (bottom) oil, watercolor pencil, carbon paper, and pen on Rite in the Rain, aluminum foil, oil paint, rabbit skin glue, foam board mounted in MDF box

30" x 22" (70 cm x 56 cm)

(top) Plotter drawing of a manipulated swiss cheese model of accident causation. The model was generated parametrically, allowing for a single incident on a set path to pass through all layers of defense.

(bottom) Machine "under drawing" with hand work over top, the piece reenacts pictorial and spatial relations from early water pumps designs by German architect and engineer Georg Andreas Böckler in his 1664 book of etching "Architectura Curiosa Nova". Böckler's book discusses the theory of hydrodynamics, presents a dizzying array of water pump systems and designs for water fountains, and elaborates on numerous geometrical pleasure garden plans.





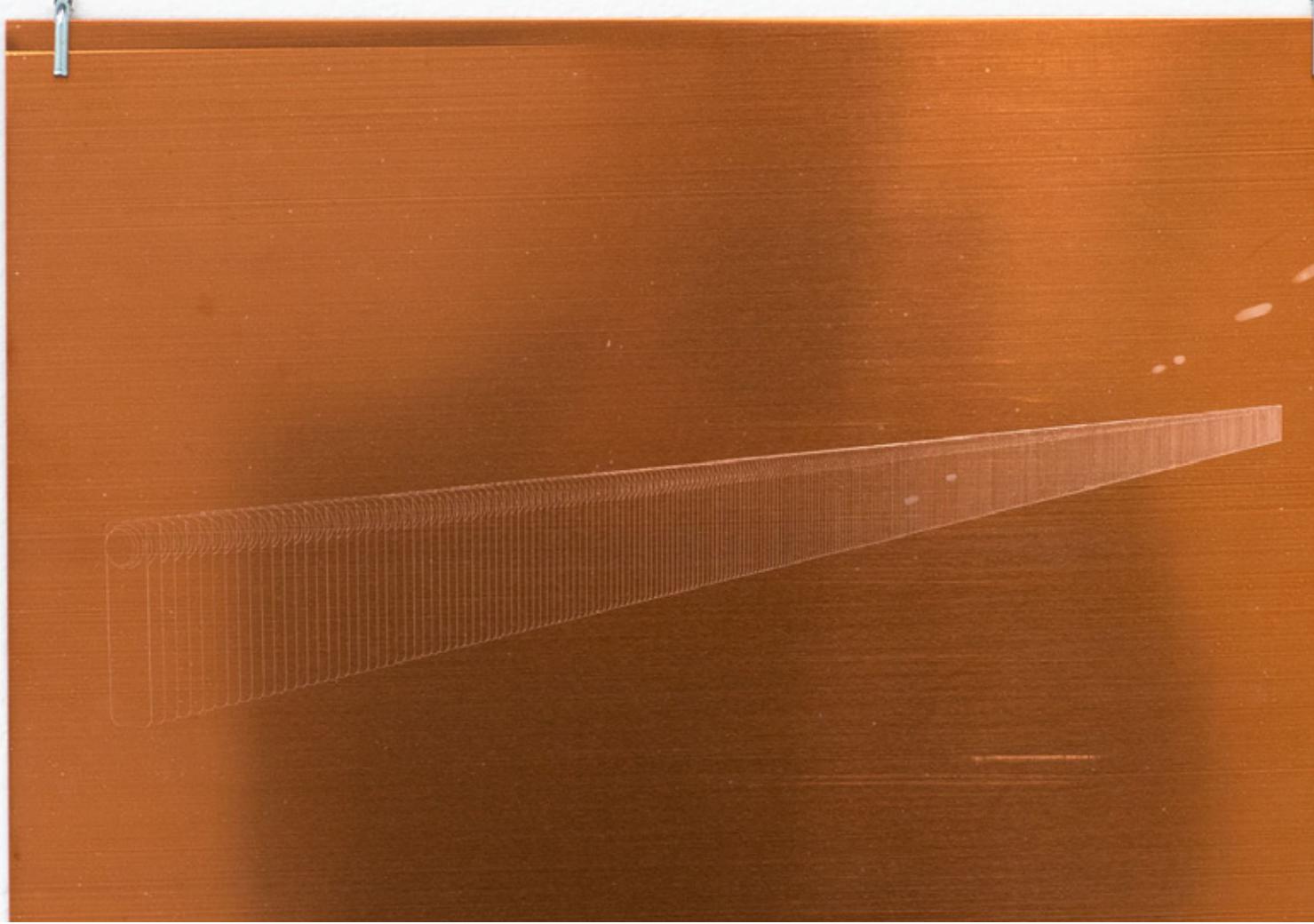
### *Infinite radiator*

2021

Engraved copper plate mounted with zinc plated hooks

12" x 9" (23 cm x 30 cm)

CAD rendering of an iron radiator subtly etched into copper. With moisture in the air, the copper plate and the zinc hooks will slowly react, the one eating away at the other via a process of galvanic corrosion.





*Accident/Incident*

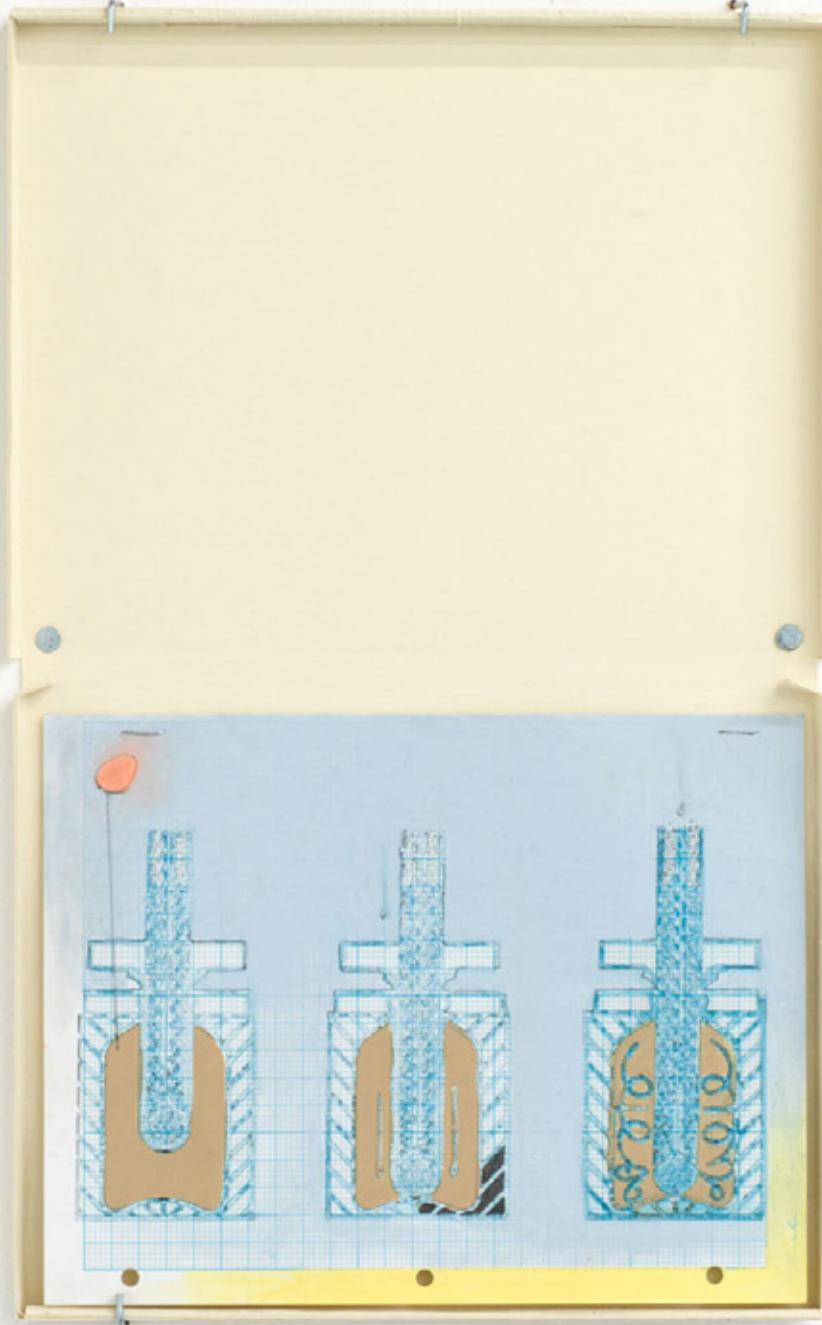
2021

Pen and oil pastel on paper mounted in MDF box

22" x 30" (56 cm x 70 cm)

Diagrams drawn and overdrawn, sourced from a nuclear reactor accident (incident). Machine drawn in multiple layers and passes, with a singular hand scrawl in the bottom third.





***Blow mold***

2021

11" x 8.5" (28 cm x 22 cm)

Tracing the lines of found diagrams depicting industrial plastic water bottle blow molding techniques (using PET preforms), the drawing is at once still and animate. The multiple cross-sections were drawn in a series of passes by a machine, interrupted by hand colored interventions and accidents.



*Something I scrawled*

2021

Pen on vellum on archival cardboard in architectural board clamshell box

12" x 18" (30.5 cm x 46 cm)

Thousands of stippled dots, meticulously and precisely drawn by a machine that was interrupted and reset many times, push in and out of focus. The lines of the text are taken verbatim from a hurried sketchbook scrawl that was photographed and algorithmically traced.



***Shellac***

2018

Shellac and gouache on 2mm grid Rite in the Rain paper, mounted in a custom archival cardboard box  
8.5" x 11" (22 cm x 28 cm)

A layer of water-based (resolvable) gouache floats and crackles, suspended between a bottom layer of waxed, water-resistant, industry specified, Rite in the Rain paper and a washy top layer of protoplastic shellac polymer. Resisting and holding and cracking, the piece curled and moves, reacting to subtle changes in humidity in the gallery atmosphere.

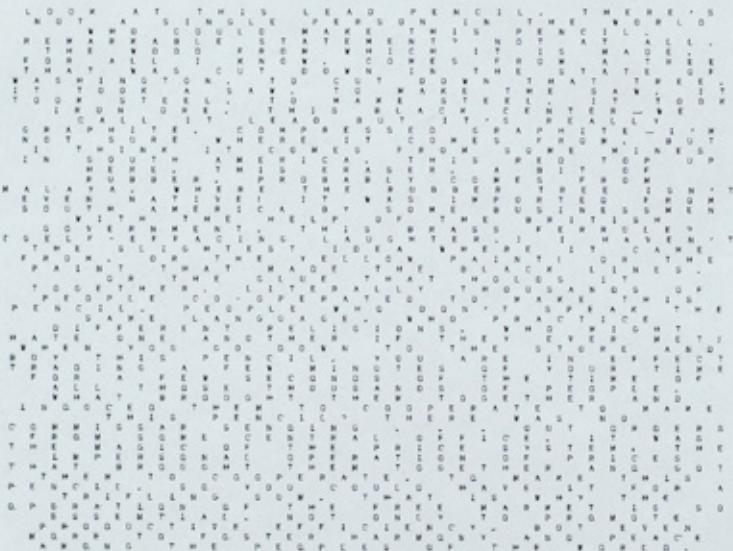


*Chalked stain*

2021

Linseed oil and calcium carbonation on vellum, mounted on archival cardboard

12" x 18" (30.5 cm x 46 cm)



**MF**

2021

Pastel and pen on vellum on archival cardboard

18" x 12" (46 cm x 30.5 cm)

An airy machine made drawing of Milton Friedman's rendition of "I, Pencil." The surface bears accidental specs of red wax pencil that interrupt the soft hygroscopic surface, minutely distracting from the circulation of the text.

A L L I K N O W C O M E S  
W A S C U T D O M I N T H  
N G T O N . A T O C U T D O K S  
O K A E S A T O C U T D O K S  
S T E E L . T O C U T D O K S  
N L O R E L . T H I S B U T A C I  
A L L I T L E A D B U T A C I  
H I T E . C O M P R E S S E D G  
S U R K E W H E R E I S C O M M E S  
I N K I T C O M E S F R O M M  
O U T H A M E R I C A R E S T H I  
E R E T H I S R O B A R E S T H I  
B B E R E P R O B A R E S T H I  
A N A T H E R E I C A B Y W A S O  
H A M E R I C A B Y W A S O M E  
T H T H E H E L P O F T H E E  
E R N M E N T T H I S B R A S E S  
- E F F A C T I N G L A U G H T E R  
S L I G H T E S T I D E A W H E I R  
O R T H E Y E L L O W P A I L  
T H A T M A D E T H E B L A D  
O R T H E G L U E R T H A T H O D  
T H E R . L I T E R A L L Y T H O  
P C E C O - O P E R A T E D T O  
L - P E O P L E W H O D O N T  
A M E L A N G U A G E W H O D O N P  
F E R E N T R E L I G I O N S + W  
O N E A N O T H E R I F T H E E Y  
X O U G O D O W N T D O T H E E F



*Vertical sextant*

2021

Graphite, carbon paper, and oil pastel on Rite in the Rain paper, mounted on linen and housed in a custom MDF, particle board, and plywood box

19" x 23" (48 cm x 58.5 cm)

The partner of "Oblique Sextant," the work cuts and copies the lines of a etching plate.



