

ESTATE PHILIPPE VANDENBERG

PHILIPPE VANDENBERG : CROSSING THE CIRCLE

21 september - 13 november 2016

at the Drawing Room, London, UK

Artist: Philippe Vandenberg

Title: Crossing the Circle

Date: 21 September – 13 November 2016

Preview: 20 September 2016

Location: Drawing Room, London

Concept: This will be the first exhibition in the UK of the drawings of Philippe Vandenberg (1952 – 2009), who is considered one of the foremost painters in Belgium. He was an accomplished and prolific draughtsman, filling hundreds of sketchbooks with drawings and watercolours and this exhibition includes a selection spanning the years 1990 to the year of his death in 2009.

A drawing is inflexible and offers just a single possibility, a single chance. One does not catch a drawing by the tail: it either is or is not. A drawing is a pure sparkle, a glass splinter that cuts, while a canvas is rather a plot of cultivated soil.

Drawing was Vandenberg's salvation, an activity that fueled his quest for authenticity and a means to express his personal experience and perception of the world. His extraordinary drawings, distinguished by fluid draughtsmanship in pencil, ink, sometimes blood and richly coloured watercolour, possess an urgency and economy alongside a playful sensibility.

It was viewing Hieronymus Bosch's 'Christ Carrying the Cross' in Ghent that inspired Vandenberg to become an artist. His catholic upbringing left a deep impression on him, explicitly the imagery of the crucifixion of Christ, the Stations of the Cross, the Madonna and the pieta. He used drawing to abstract these symbols of Christian faith which he found increasingly empty and meaningless. His use of recurring motifs of the cross and the circle appear in the figurative and abstract works; the cross as crucifixion, the sarcophagus, the circle as a place of refuge or a void, a halo or a crown of thorns, symbolising the innocence, guilt and sacrifice of man or the tortured self-destructive artist himself. In his abstract works the figurative and narrative coincide, but by contrast the pages are filled with repetitive geometric shapes of the cross and circle; the circle as labyrinth, the circle as eternity, the cross turns swastika - his reminder of the historic-political fragility of our world as much as its original significance as a sign of peace. Repetition was a quest for change, for a way out of his creative impasse, and the cross and the circle stood as metaphors for hope and salvation.

The work selected displays radical stylistic and thematic shifts, that combine highly personal images about life, sex, death, good, evil, as well as powerful responses to the political and social upheavals which he perceived around him. They explore difficult confrontational subjects of personal suffering and brutal depictions of human cruelty that express an existential disgust and despair with the world but equally can contain humour.

Vandenberg's remarkable output is comparable to contemporaries Walter Swennen (Belgium), René Daniels (Holland) and Martin Kippenberger (Germany) and his reputation is currently being re-affirmed with recent museum and gallery exhibitions in Europe, Korea and Brazil. His drawings have rarely been shown and this will be the first comprehensive exhibition of around 40 works. The themes his work explores resonate with a generation of artists today who are reflecting on humanity and psychological states of being in the world.

Works: 36 framed drawings
3 drawing books

Format: A4, A3 and A0

Collaboration: The exhibition is in collaboration with Hauser & Wirth, London and the Estate Philippe Vandenberg, Brussels.x

Biography: After a brief academic study in Literature and History of Art, Vandenberg graduated in painting in 1976 from the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Ghent. Recent exhibitions include museums and galleries in Europe, Japan, Korea and South America.

Works by Philippe Vandenberg are in the collections of the Guggenheim Museum, New York; the Municipal Museum of Contemporary Art, Ghent; the Royal Museum of Fine Arts of Belgium, Brussels; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Antwerp; Mu.ZEE, Ostend; Museum De Pont, Tilburg and La Maison Rouge, Paris.

Philippe Vandenberg is represented by the Estate Philippe Vandenberg (Brussels) and Hauser & Wirth Gallery (Zurich, London, Somerset, New York and Los Angeles)

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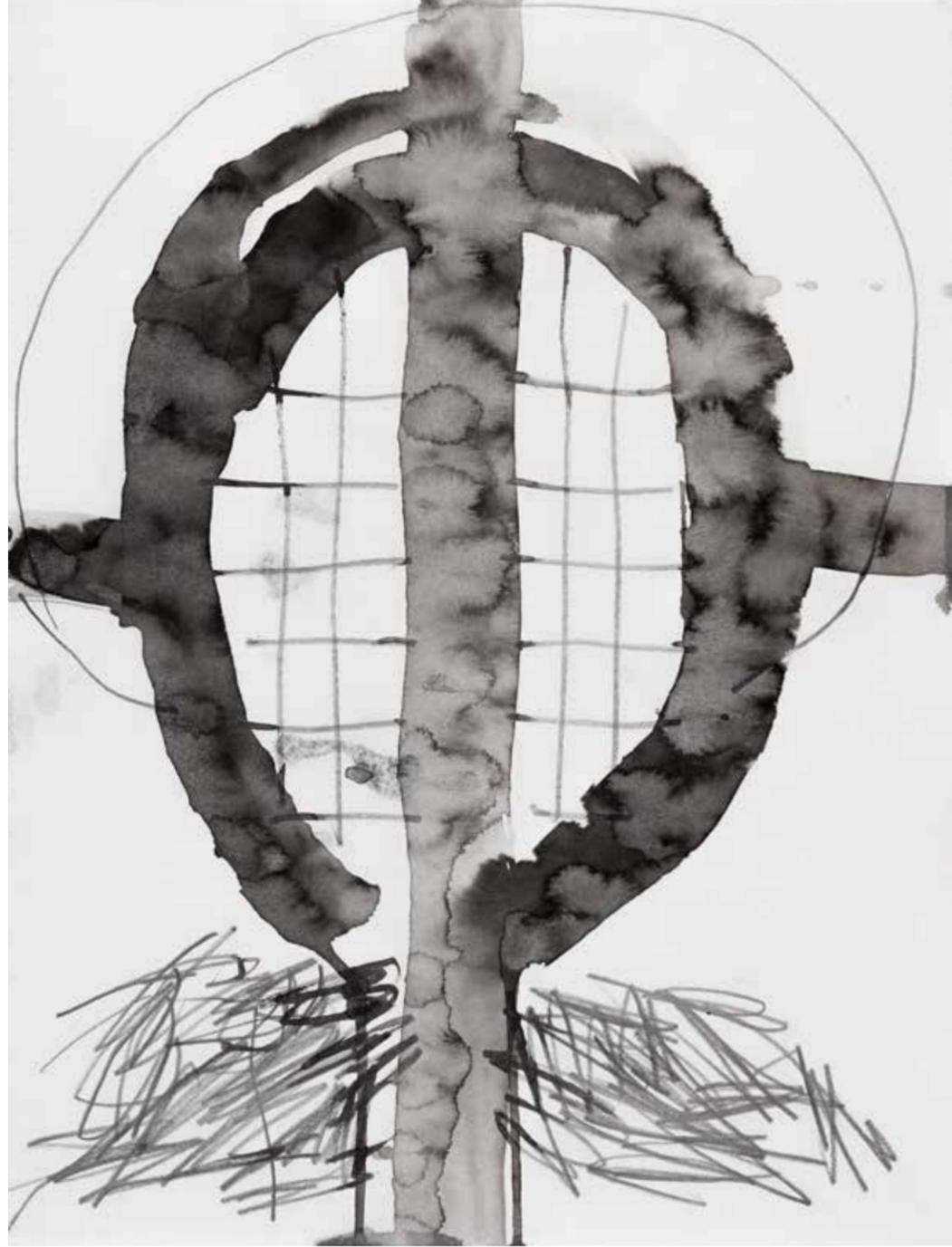
Content: 2 texts

80 drawings

Dimensions: 234 x 245 mm (vertical)

Edition: 1000 ex.

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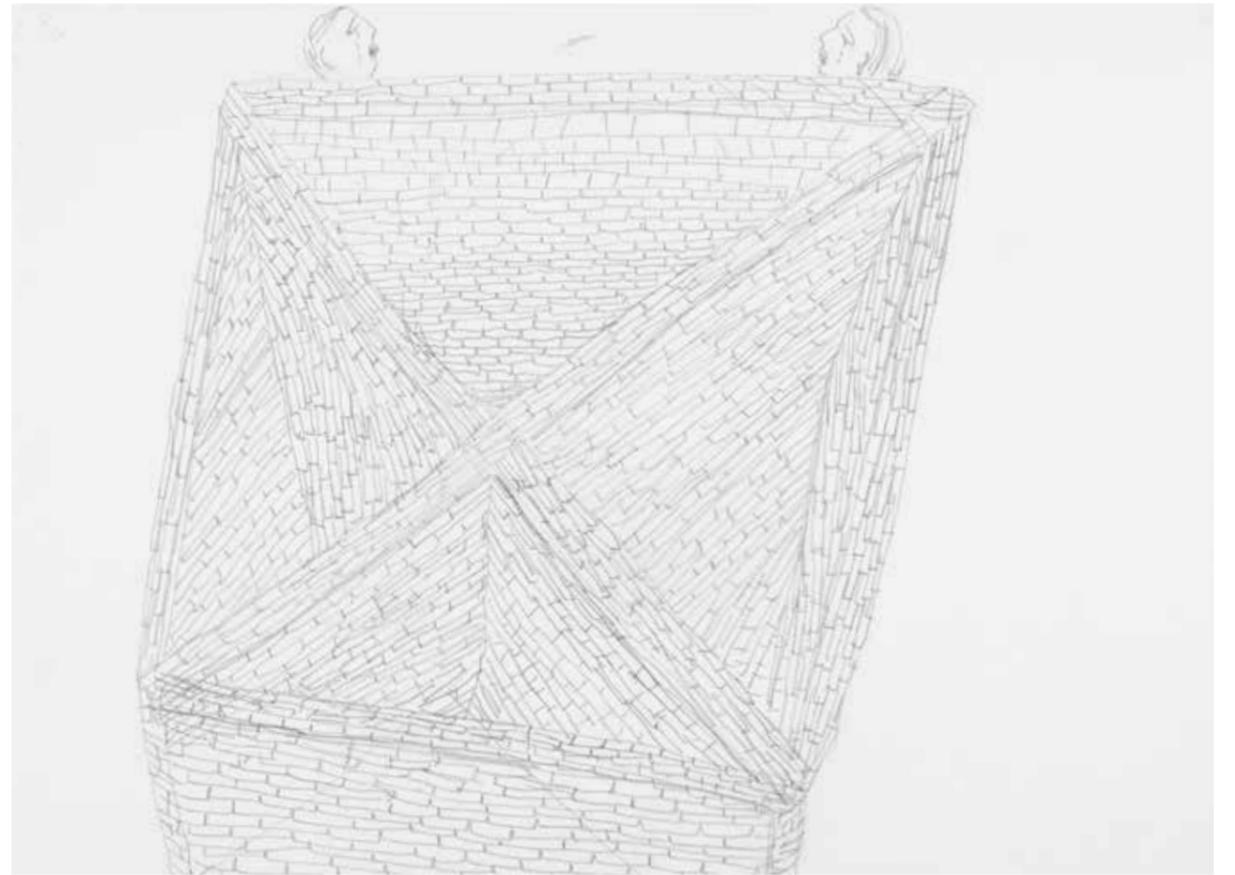
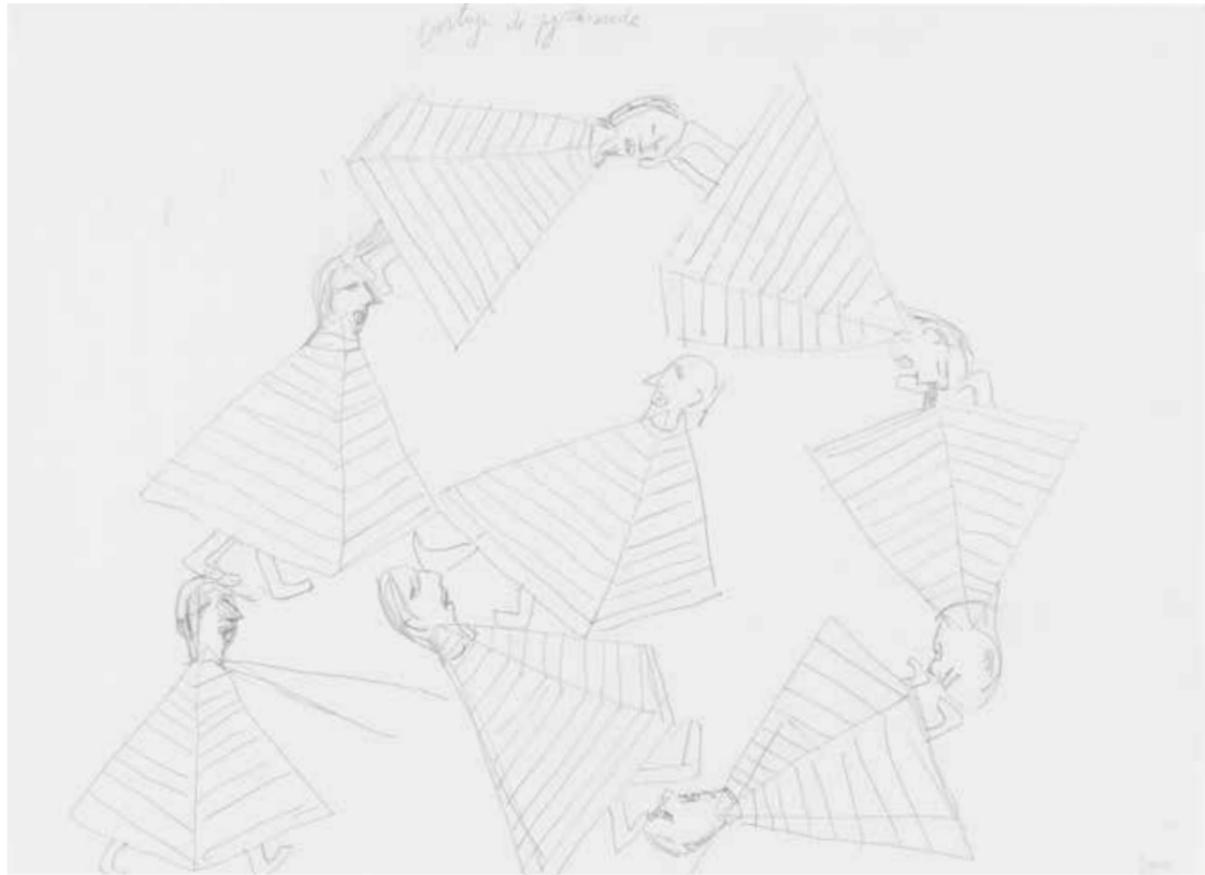
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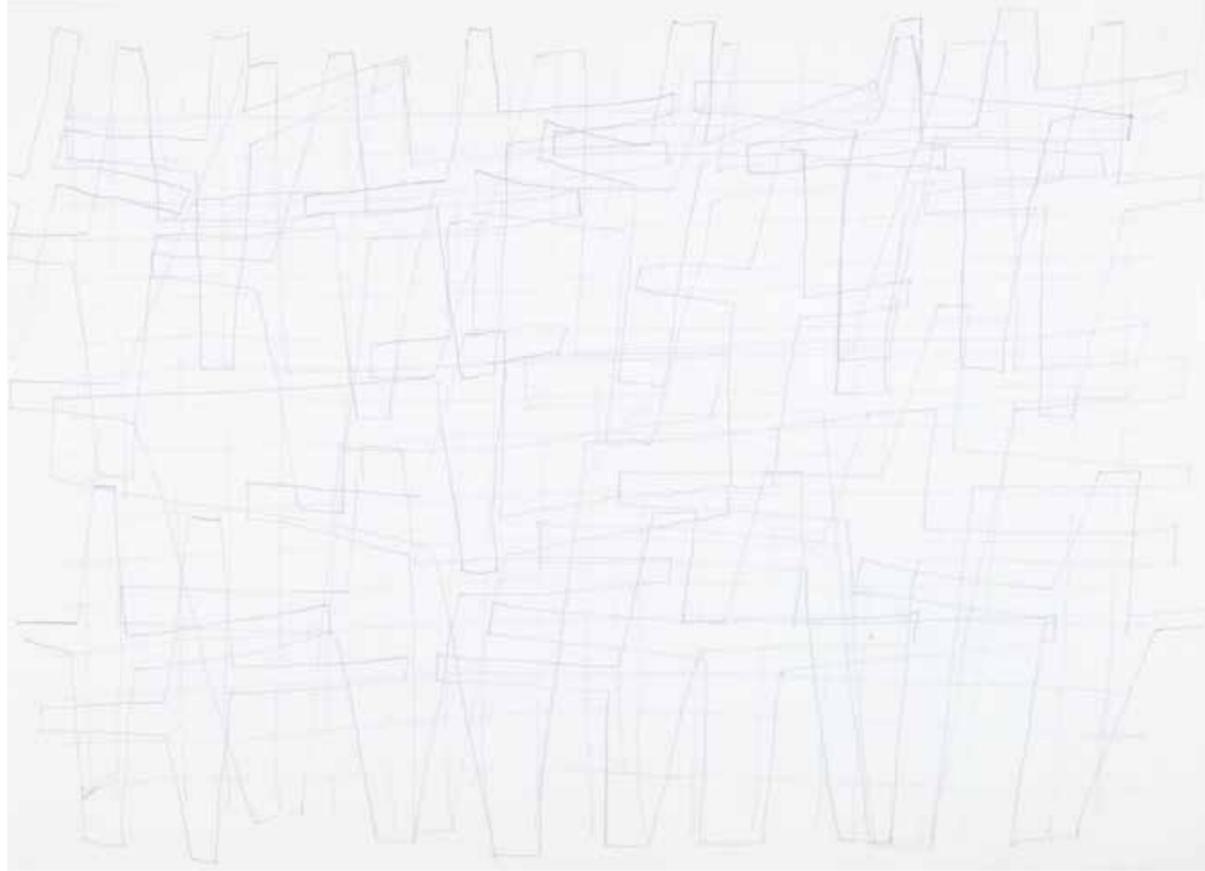
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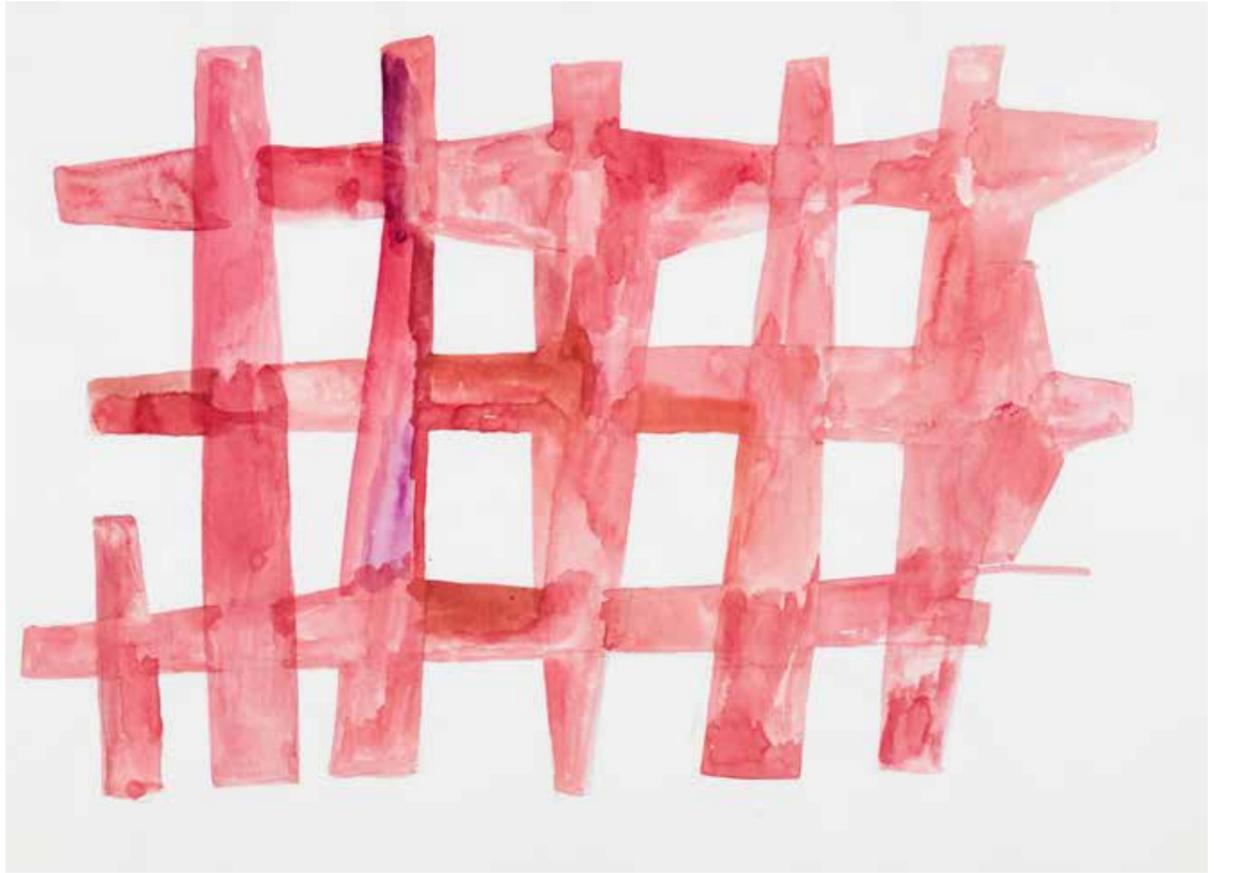
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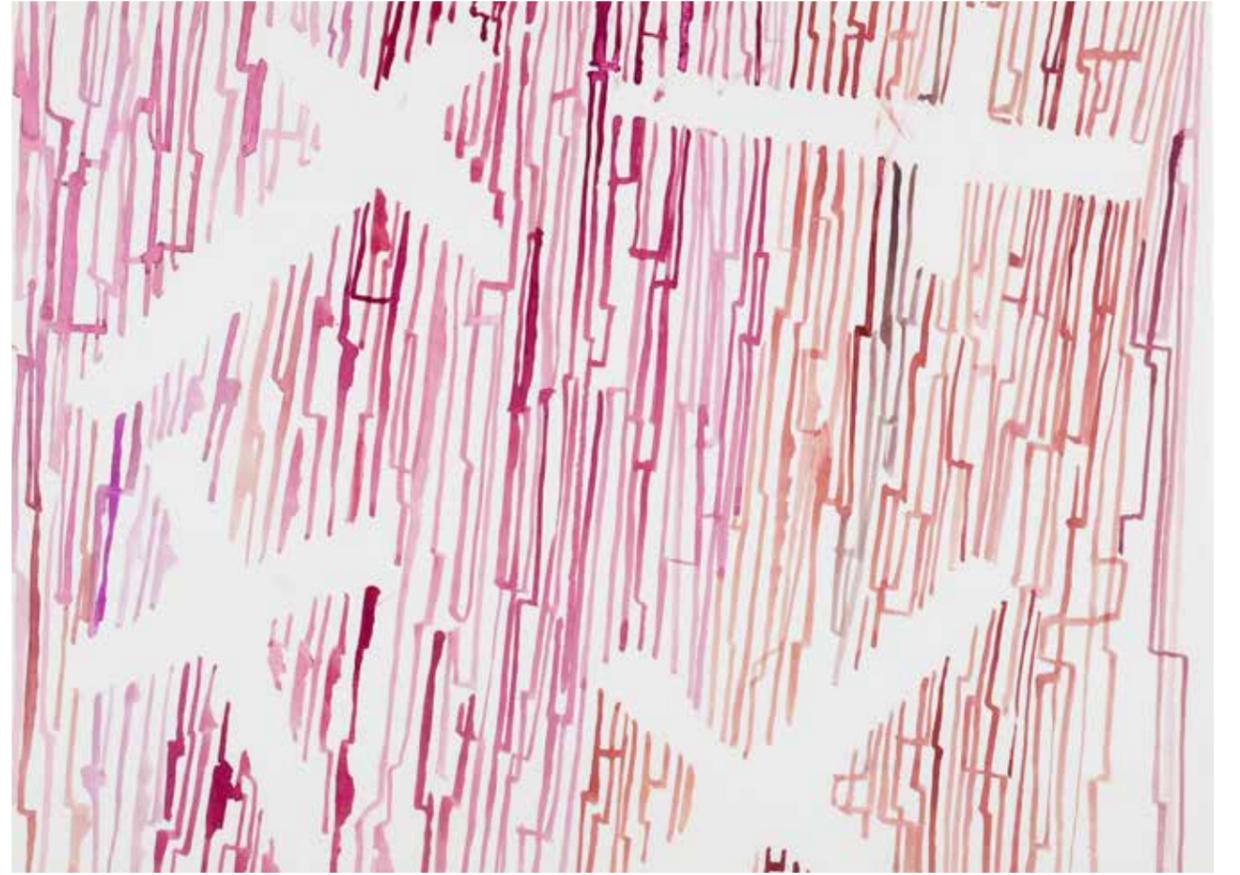
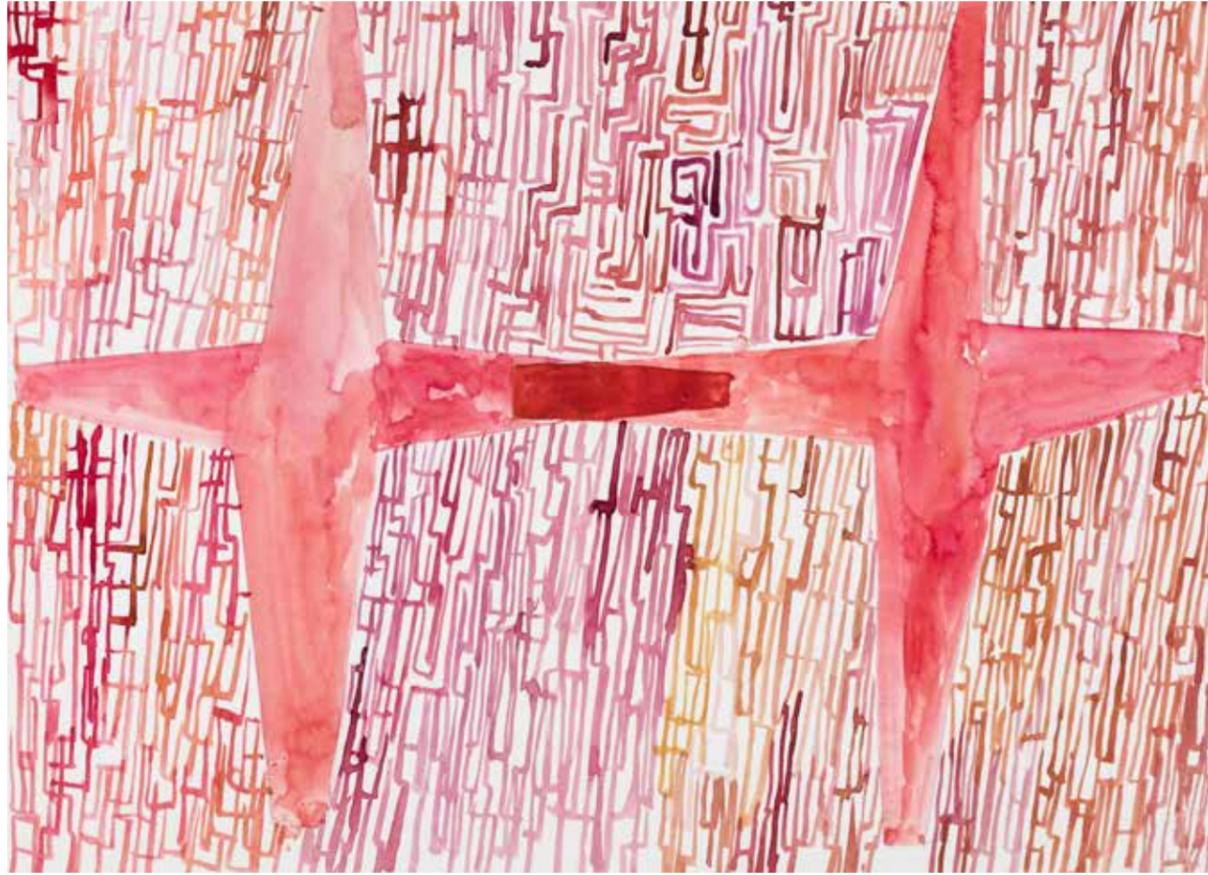


















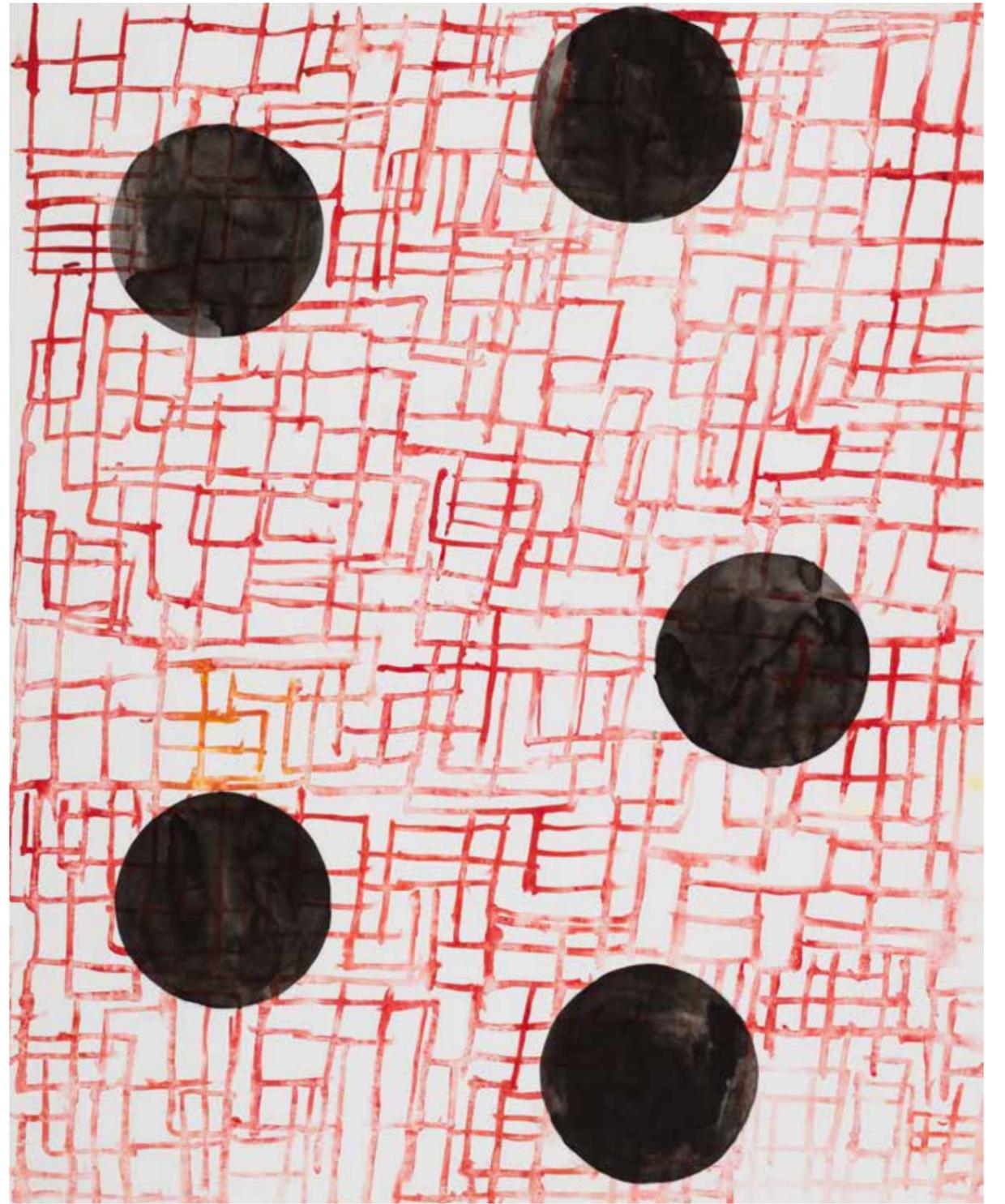
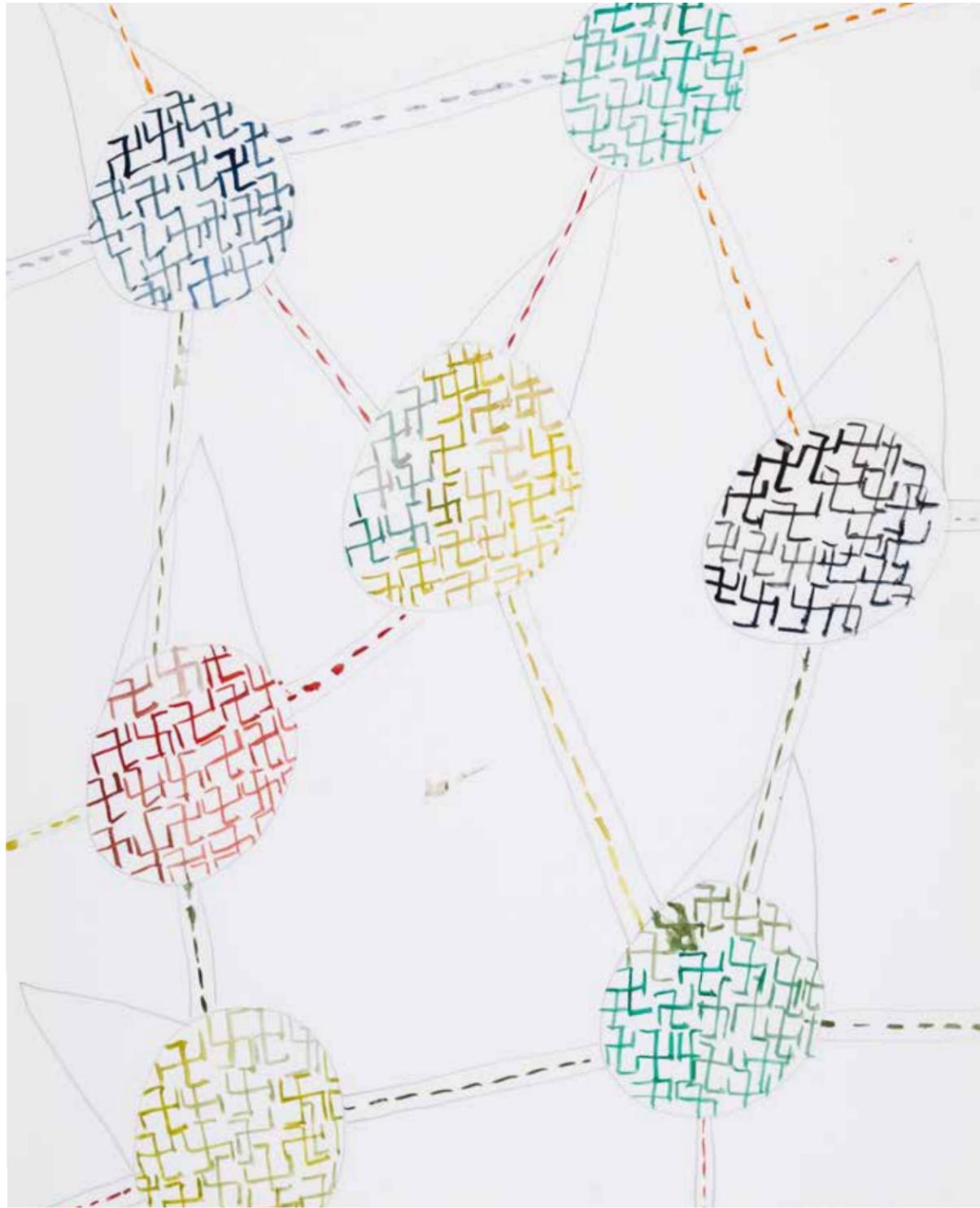


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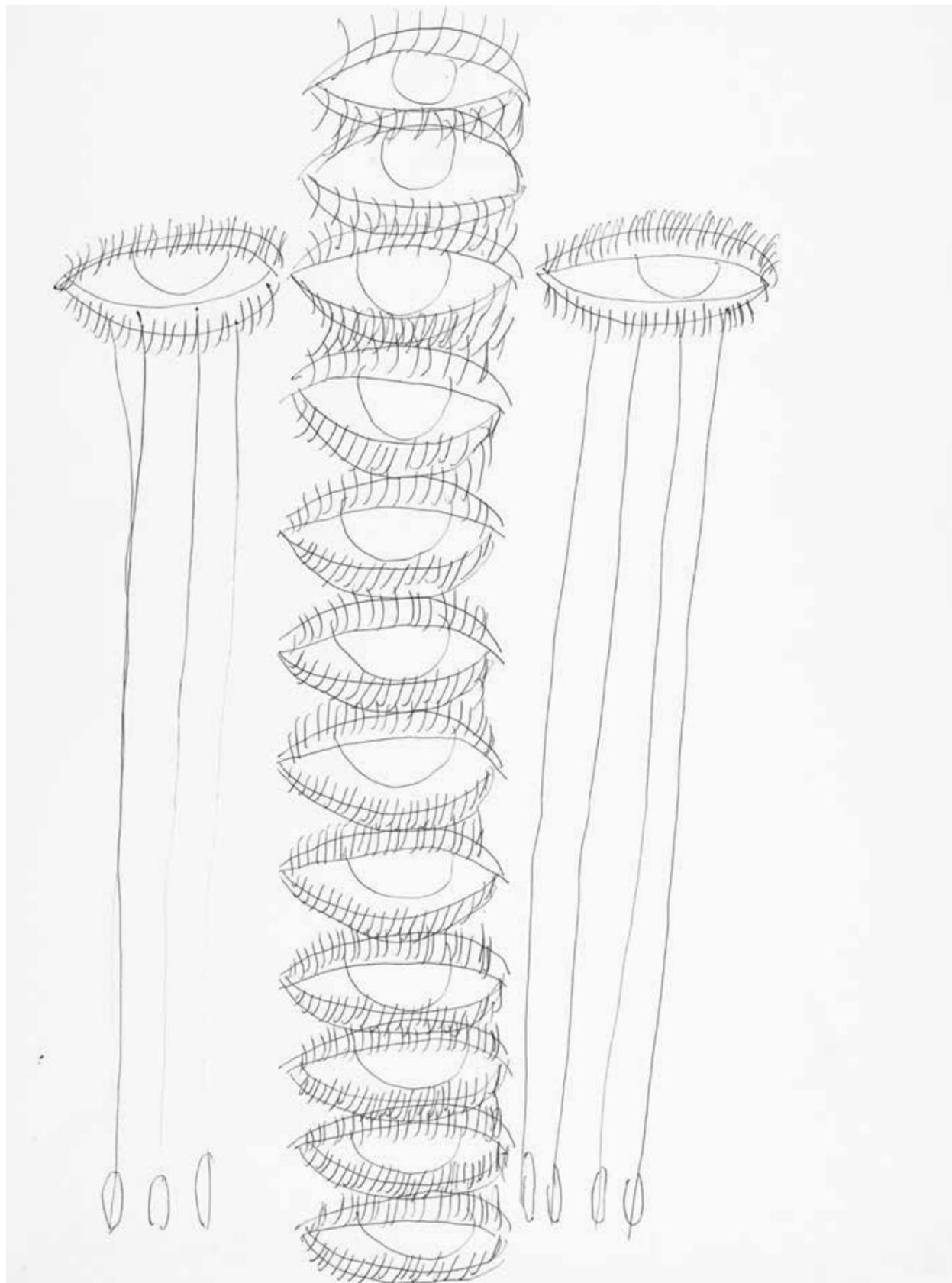




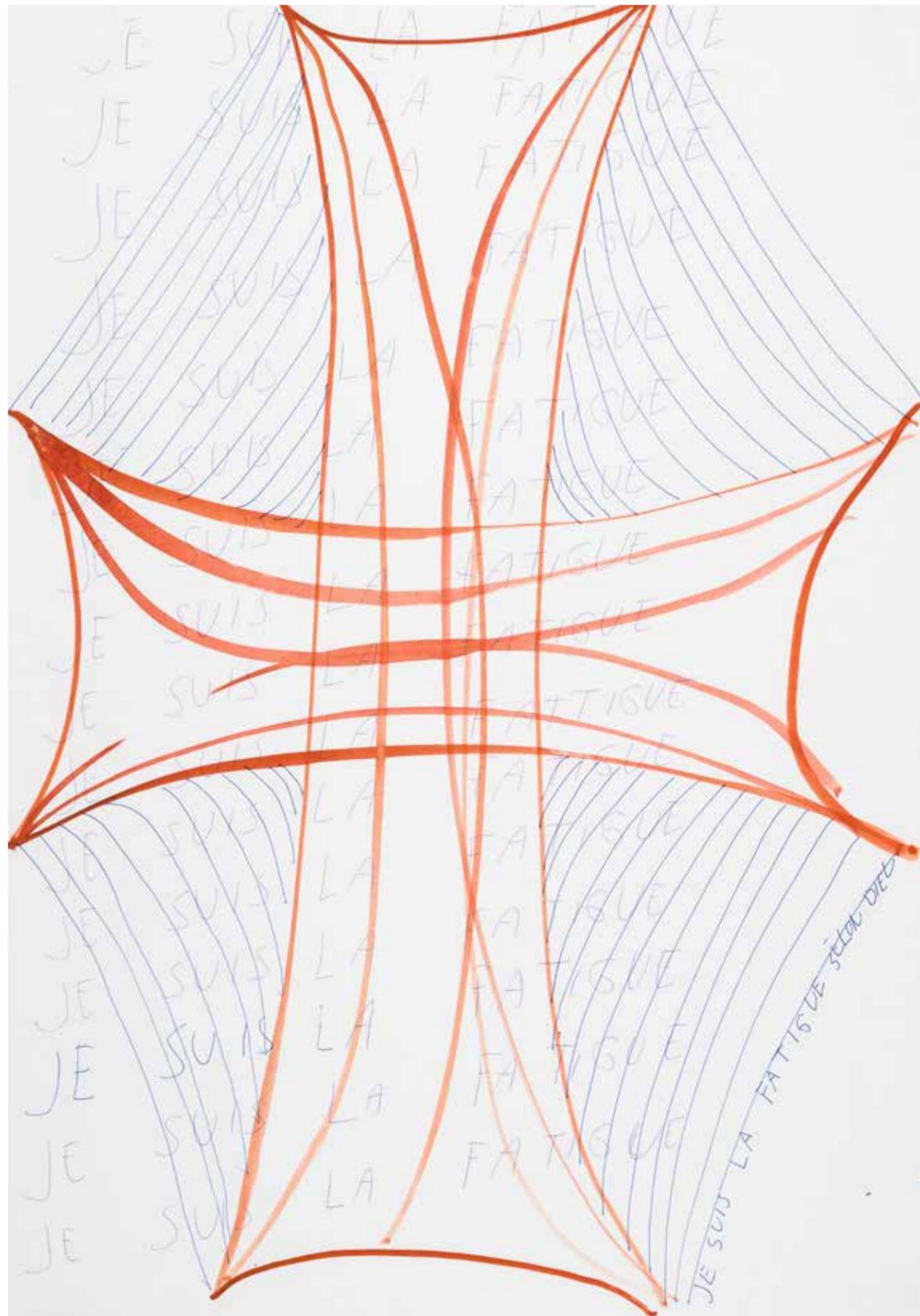




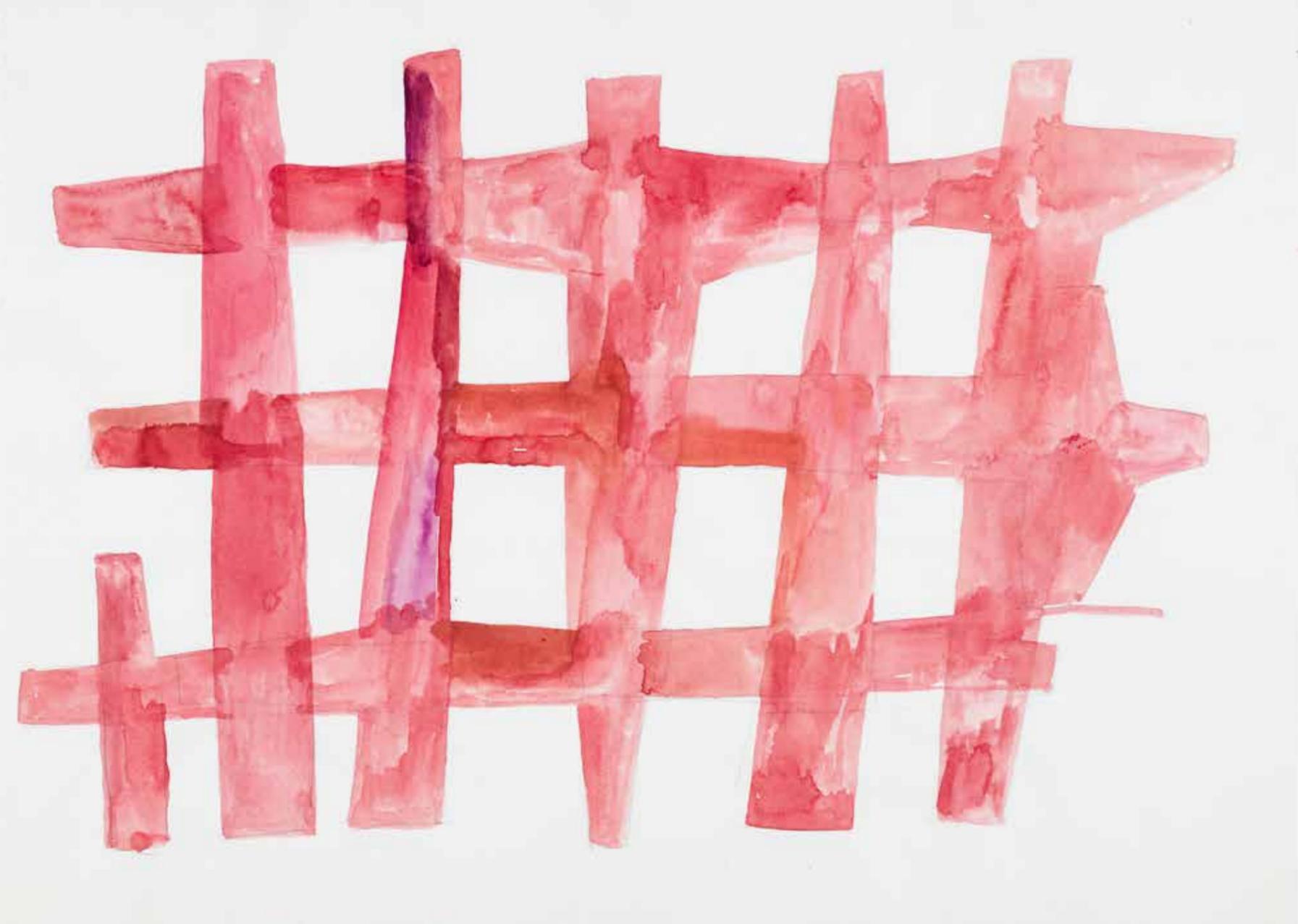


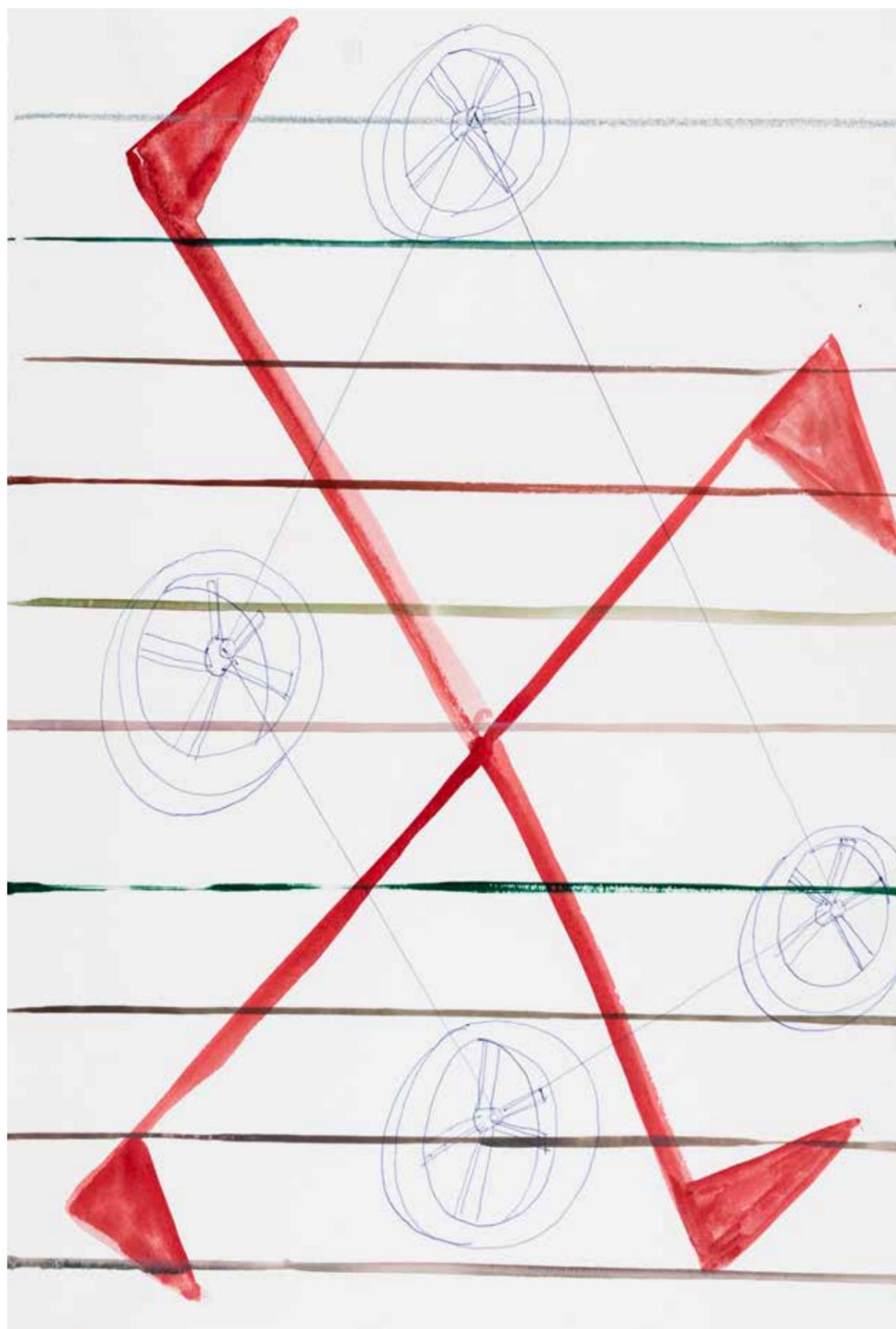


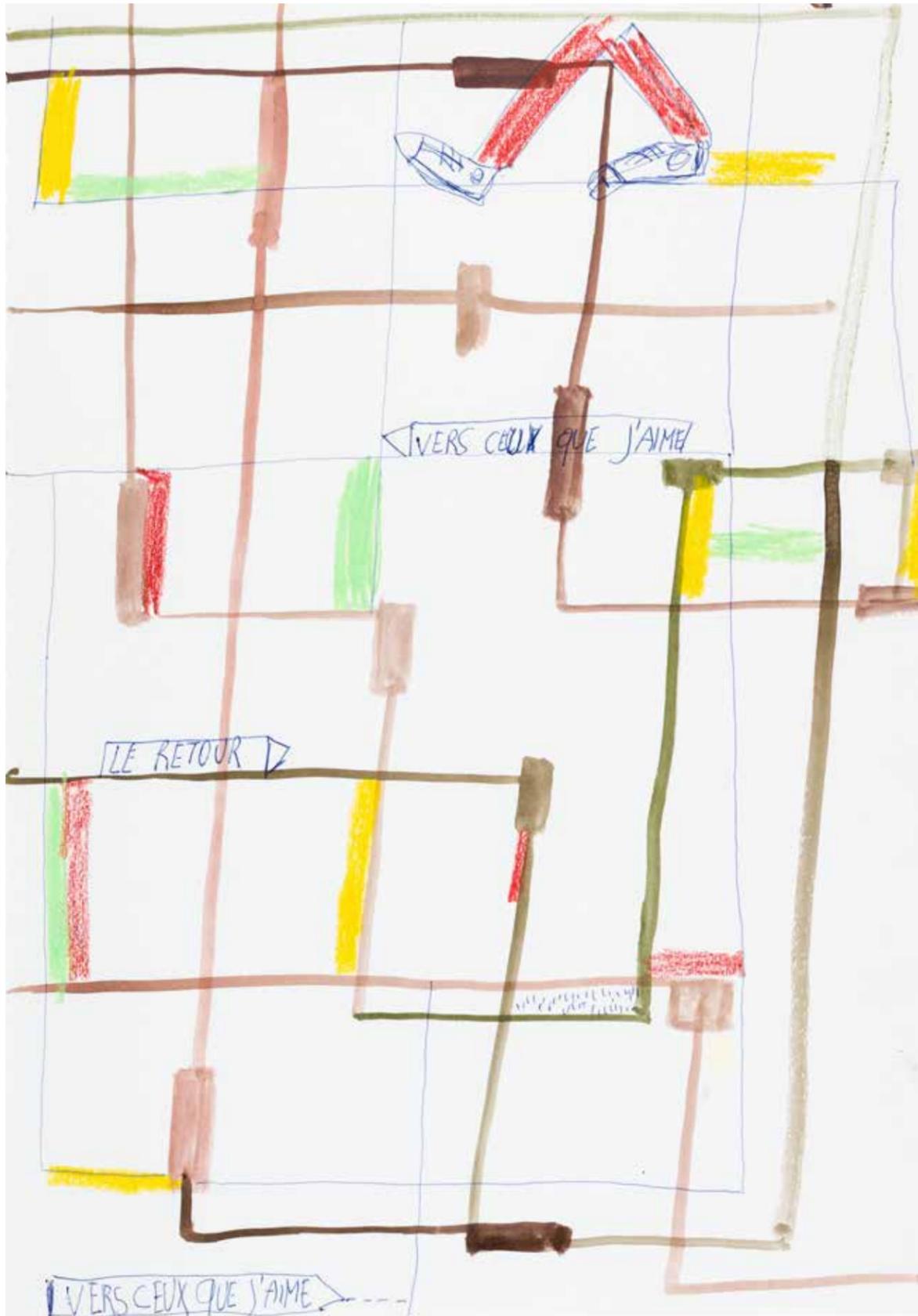






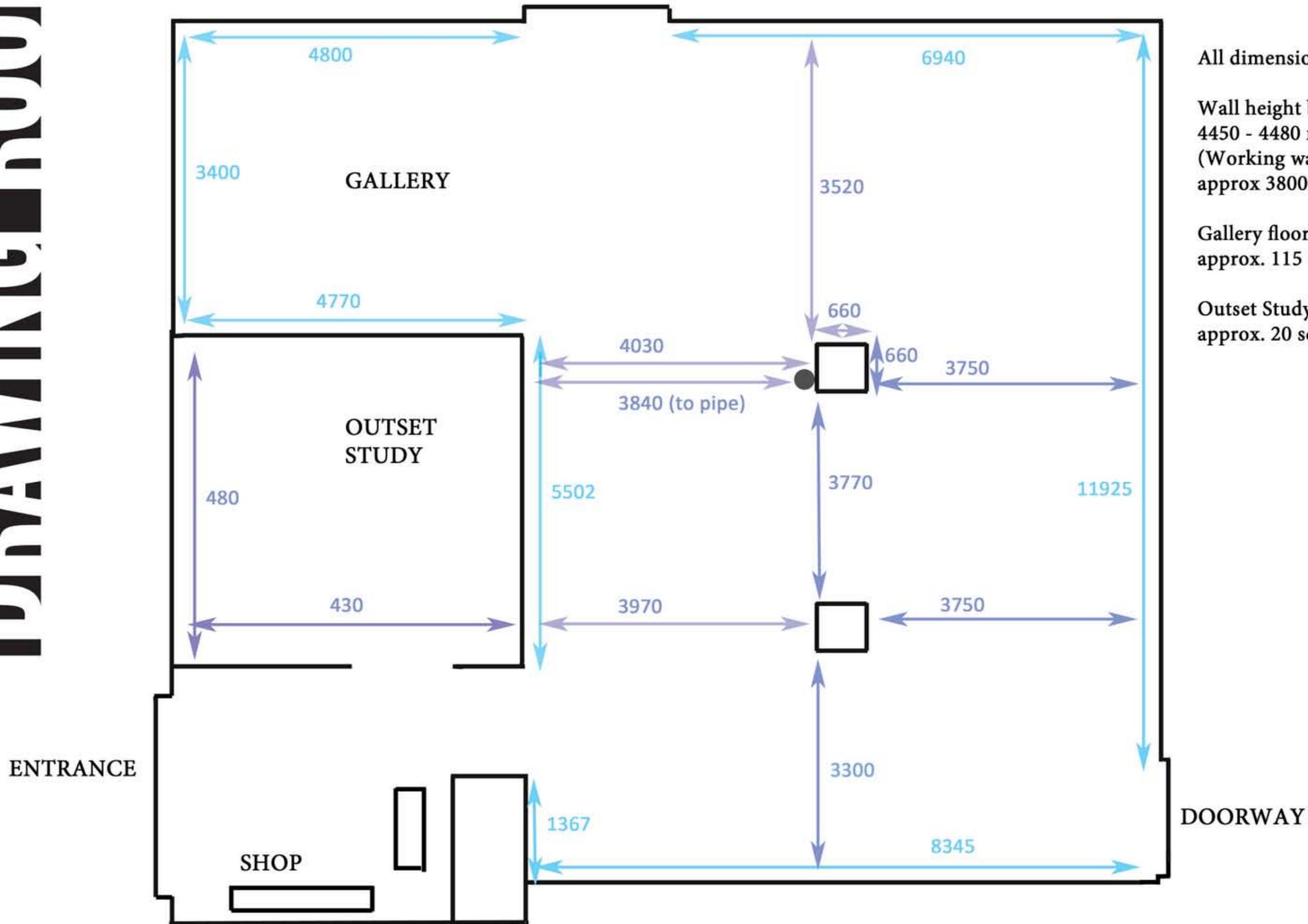






DRAWING ROOM

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All dimensions in mm

Wall height between 4450 - 4480 mm
(Working wall height approx 3800 mm)

Gallery floorspace approx. 115 sqm

Outset Study floorspace approx. 20 sqm

PREVIOUS INSTALLATION VIEWS



Installation view at the Museum of Fine Art, Ghent - "Visite" - 2008



Installation view at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Antwerp - "Philippe Vandenberg works 1995/1999" - 1999



Installation view at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Ghent - "Job XIII, 12" - 1995



Installation view at the Museum of Fine Art, Ghent - "Visite" - 2008



Installation view at the Museum of Fine Art, Ghent - "Visite" - 2008



Installation view at La Maison Rouge, Paris - "Il me faut tout oublier" - 2014