



Artist Statement

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11/17/13

At the end of the day, one of the most important aspects of my artwork is accessibility. I loathe the pretentiousness of artwork that can only be fully understood by those who have had formal educations. Art should be for everyone. This aspect influences my work deeply in that I tend to stick to themes that are potentially familiar to a wide audience. Coupled with my sociological and social justice background, my themes tend to focus on pop culture and/or social problems within the United States.

When coming up with a new piece, I tend to start with an idea or theme I am interested in and want to explore more. For example, the drawing *oneline 00006 (superman)* by Thomas Eller was a particular source of inspiration for my project, *The Obscurity of the Renowned*. As the title suggests, it is a simple continuous, blind contour line that depicts the torso and head of Superman. What struck me about this piece was how such a simple drawing could depict a complex and complicated character. For those who are familiar with the character, that simple line could evoke everything they have ever known or thought about Superman. This made me think of how pop culture celebrities

are so recognizable to so many people and how being in the public eye makes the general population feel like they know a celebrity intimately even if they have never met them before. Even children are not immune to this process. My professor's two-year-old son, who was just learning to speak at that time, began calling every elephant he saw "Dumbo" after seeing the Disney cartoon movie of the same name. In his mind, every elephant was Dumbo, someone he felt like he knew and loved. I then decided to make ink blind contour drawings of five different well-known musicians. Each celebrity had a profile picture as well as a full body image. In my showing, I also gave the viewers clues to each one in case they had a hard time recognizing the images.

My second project, *Gossip*, was inspired, perhaps silly enough, by the fact that I had started watching the television show *Gossip Girl*. In it, gossip is the main driving force of anything that occurs. This, of course, tends to happen a lot in real life social circles as well: people talking about each other or chatting about some dramatic event that happened. For this particular project, I was not so interested in assessing an opinion on the idea of gossip, but rather how it spreads and the role each individual plays in the transfer of that information. I was then drawn to the series *Fields, Charts, Soundings* by Emma McNally. On The Drawing Center's Viewing Program, these works are described as, "dense layers of carbon on paper fields which offer themselves up to meaning: planes,

vectors, topoi are overlaid, or coexist with swarms, shoals, marks laid out in a rhythmic sequence.” I loved how intricate each piece looked and the details in all of the layers. They seemed to be so simple yet incredibly elaborate at the same time and I loved it. Inspired by this, I created abstract, organic clusters with charcoal and connected them with red pins, red thread, and red Sharpie marker.

Artistic neighbors that I have been inspired by, and continue to be inspired by over the years are Lorna Simpson, Yinka Shonibare, and Kara Walker. What all of these artists have in common is their emphasis in their works on the culture in which they are a part. Yinka Shonibare focuses on how colonialism has affected African culture by dressing mannequins in Victorian era garb made out of traditional African fabrics and patterns. I created a similar work in which I drew “before and after” pictures of immigrants first in traditional clothing from their home country and then in westernized clothing after moving to the United States and becoming assimilated. Kara Walker focuses on stereotypes and tropes of black culture in the United States by creating caricature shadow-like paper cutouts. Lorna Simpson does similar work but focuses on the black female experience within our systemically racist culture. One of her pieces, *Stereo Styles*, is a series of photographs of the back of a black woman’s head who sports different hairstyles in each. Simpson then

has a list of words listed between the photos that invoke either positive or negative imagery. The works of both Walker and Simpson remind me of a series I made entitled *Id, Ego, Superego*. It was a triptych depicting different stereotypes of societal pressures that women face from the United States' pop culture.

Each of these artists are heavily influenced and fascinated by culture. So am I. Simpson and Walker in particular are also interested in the nitty-gritty of society: racism, sexism, patriarchy, colonization, and so on. It is topics like these that I am intensely interested in, am drawn to, and have explored in most of my works. I used to be interested in just making art for art's sake. Now, however, I cannot seem to be able to make something without some sort of commentary. Society fascinates me too much to leave it alone. I want my work to make people think without being too pious. I want it to move people. I want it to be intentional and meaningful. I want it to whisper in people's ears, "Listen to me, for I have interesting things to say."

<u>Title</u>	<u>Media</u>	<u>Dimensions</u>
Figure 1: <i>Id, Ego, Superego</i> (series)	mixed media	
Figure 2: <i>Id</i>	graphite, oil pastel, glitter, paint	18" x 24"
Figure 3: <i>Ego</i>	graphite	18" x 24"
Figure 4: <i>Superego</i>	graphite, paint	18" x 24"
Figure 5: <i>Loved</i> (series)	chalk pastel	
Figure 6: <i>Oatmeal Bear</i>	chalk pastel	18" x 24"
Figure 7: <i>Toft</i>	chalk pastel	18" x 24"
Figure 8: <i>Bunny</i>	chalk pastel	18" x 24"
Figure 9: <i>The Obscurity of the Reknowned</i>	permanent marker	
Figure 10: <i>TOotR: Head Shots</i>	permanent marker	18" x 67" (each)
Figure 11: <i>TOotR: Body Shots</i>	permanent marker	18" x 73" (each)
Figure 12: <i>Head Shots</i> (close up)	permanent marker	
Figure 13: <i>Body Shots</i> (close up)	permanent marker	
Figure 14: <i>Gossip: Exploration 1</i>	charcoal, ink, permanent marker, thread, pins	60" x 18" and 22" x 4"
Figure 15: <i>Gossip: Exploration 2</i>	charcoal, permanent marker	

Figure 16: <i>Exploration 1</i> (large detail 1)	charcoal, ink, permanent marker, thread, pins	
Figure 17: <i>Exploration 1</i> (large detail 2)	charcoal, ink, permanent marker, thread, pins	
Figure 18: <i>Exploration 1</i> (small detail 3)	charcoal, ink, permanent marker	
Figure 19: <i>Exploration 1</i> (small detail 4)	charcoal, ink, permanent marker	
Figure 20: <i>Exploration 2</i> (detail 1 - <i>Secret</i>)	permanent marker	18" x 12"
Figure 21: <i>Exploration 2</i> (detail 2 - <i>Whisper</i>)	permanent marker	18" x 12"
Figure 22: <i>Exploration 2</i> (detail 3)	charcoal, permanent marker	18" x 18"
Figure 23: <i>Exploration 2</i> (detail 4 - <i>Talk</i>)	permanent marker	18" x 12"
Figure 24: <i>Exploration 2</i> (detail 5 - <i>Rumor</i>)	permanent marker	18" x 12"



Figure 1: *Id, Ego, Superego* (series).



Figure 2: *Id.*



Figure 3: *Ego*.

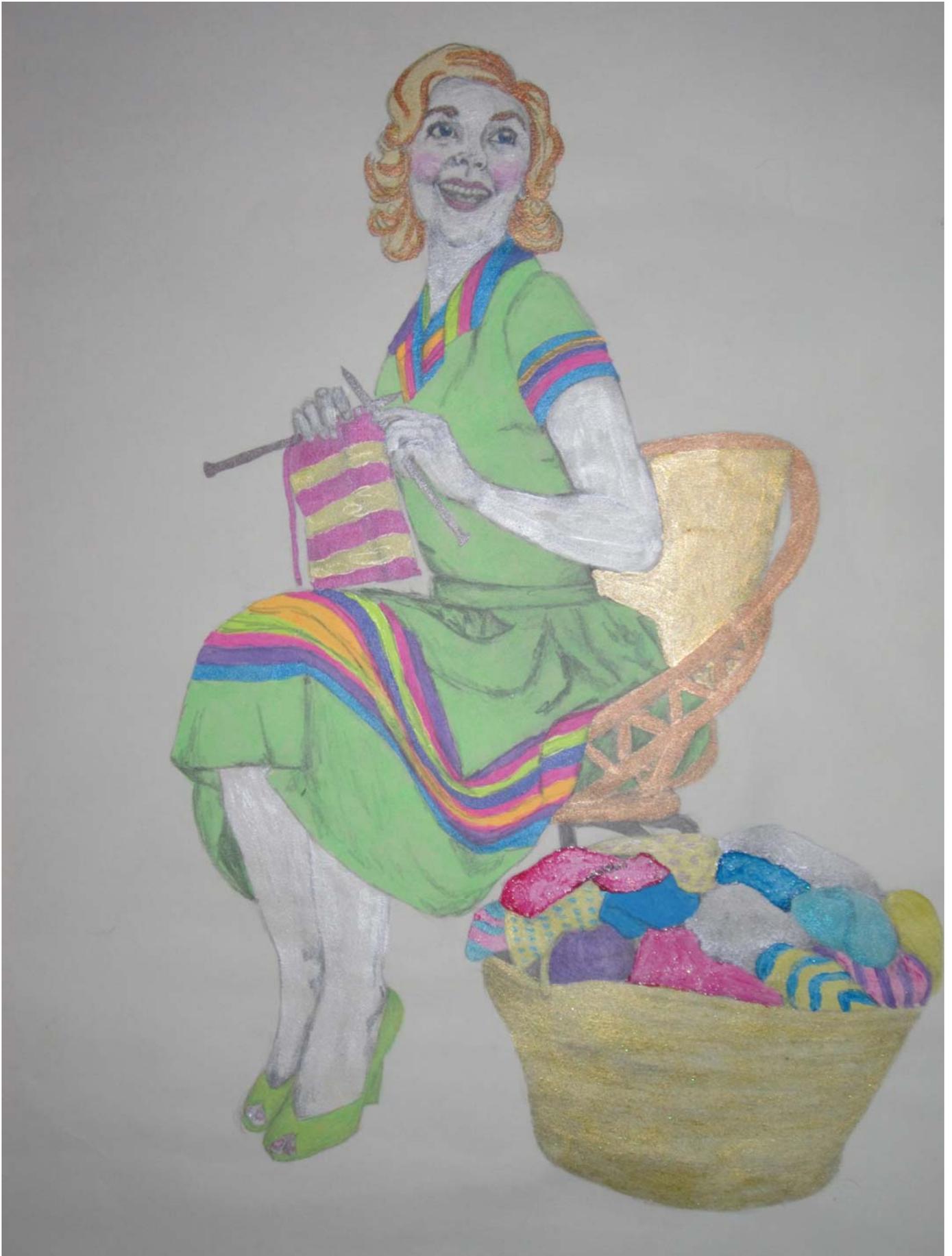


Figure 4: *Superego*.

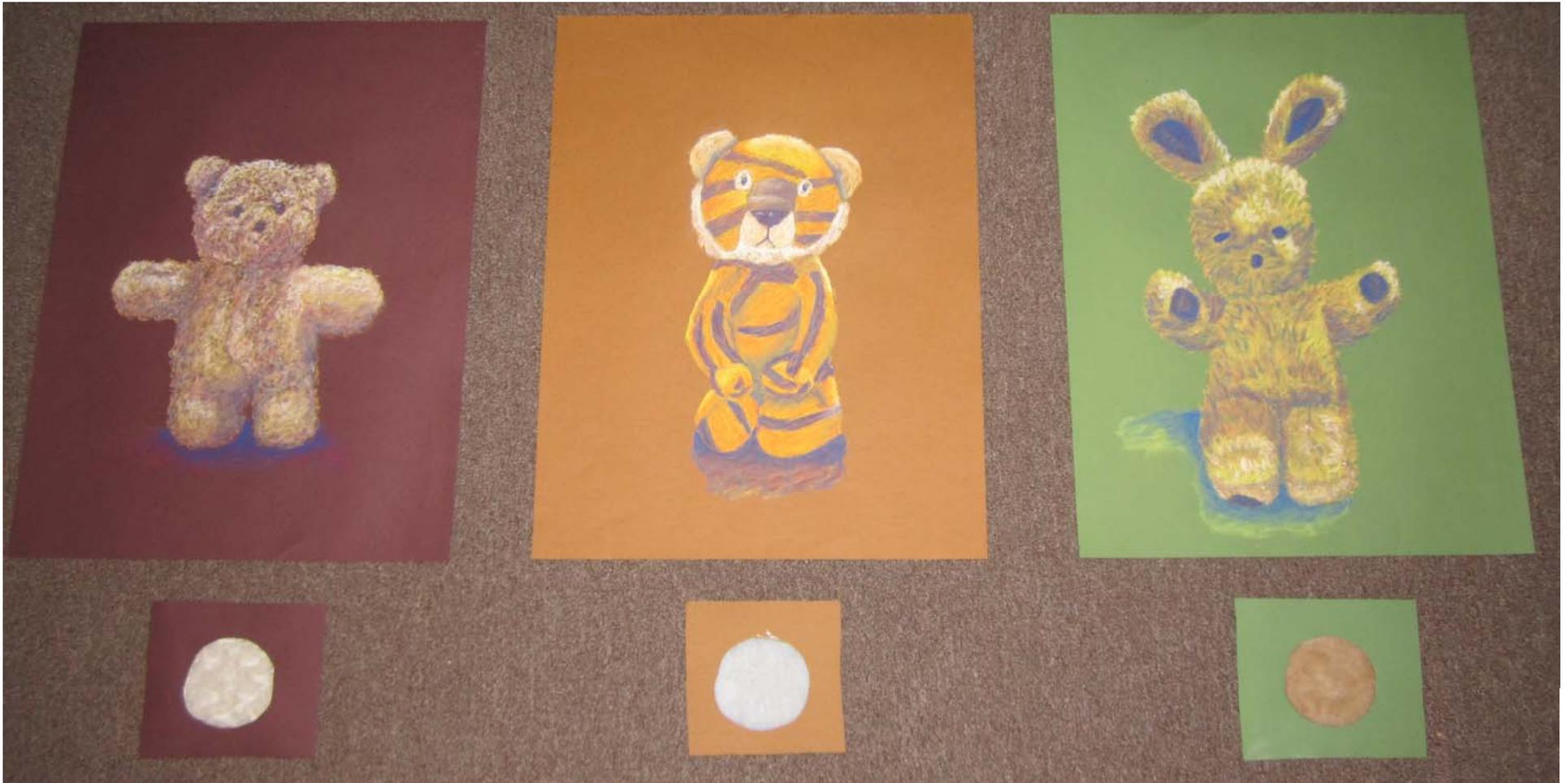


Figure 5: *Loved* (series).



Figure 6: *Oatmeal Bear*.



Figure 7: *Toft*.

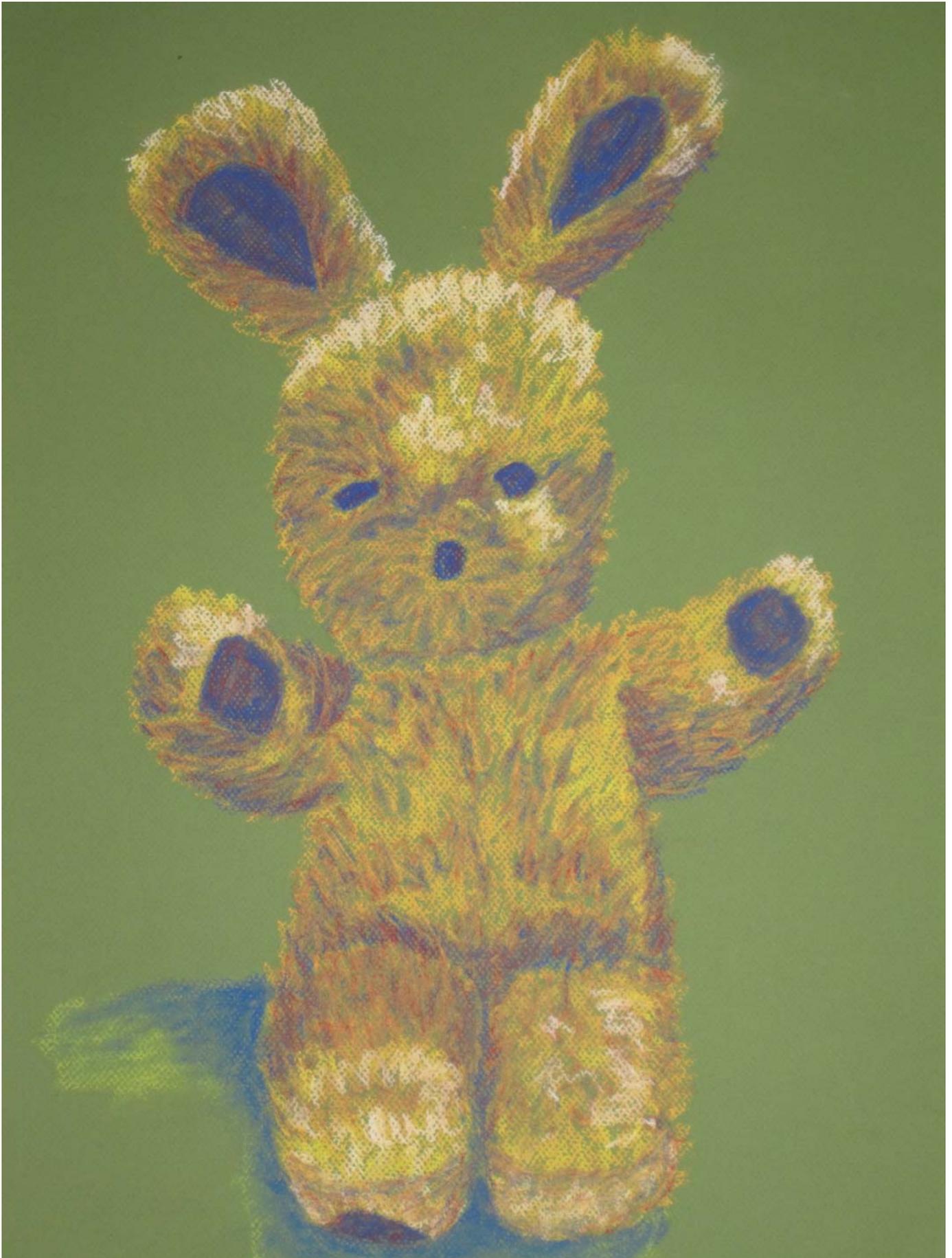


Figure 8: *Bunny*.

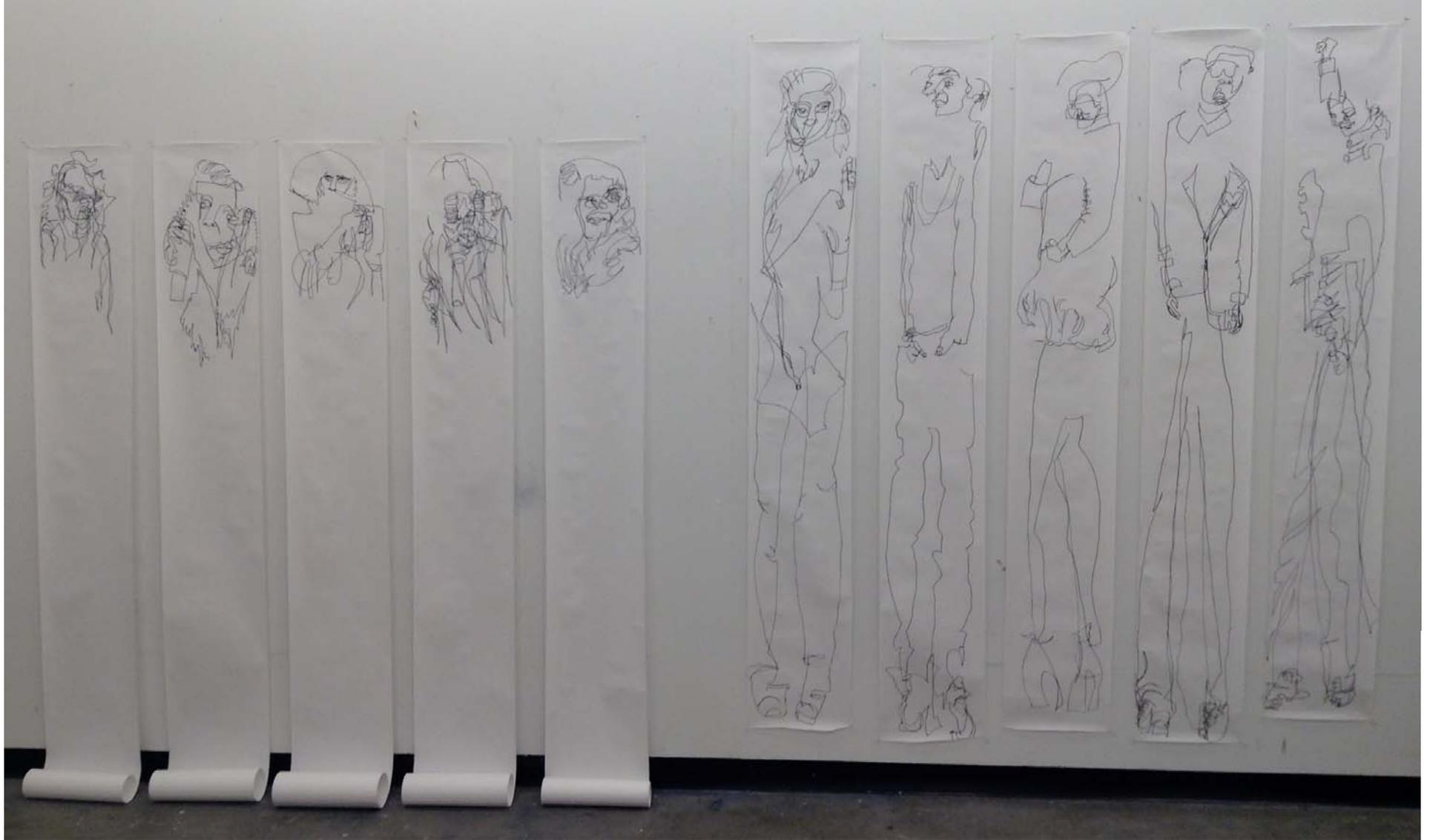


Figure 9: *The Obscurity of the Reknowned.*

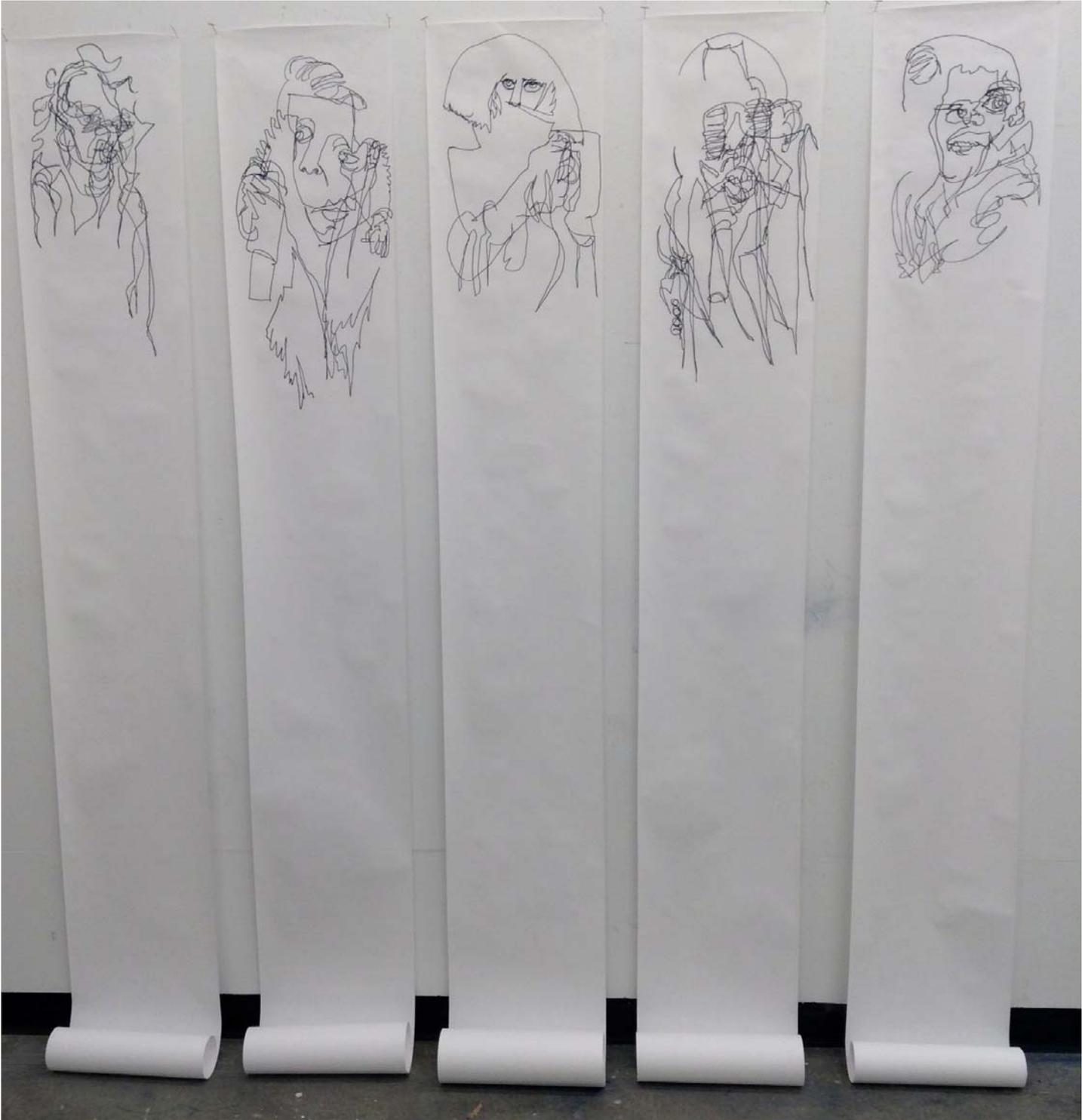


Figure 10: TootR: Head Shots.



Figure 11: TootR: Body Shots.

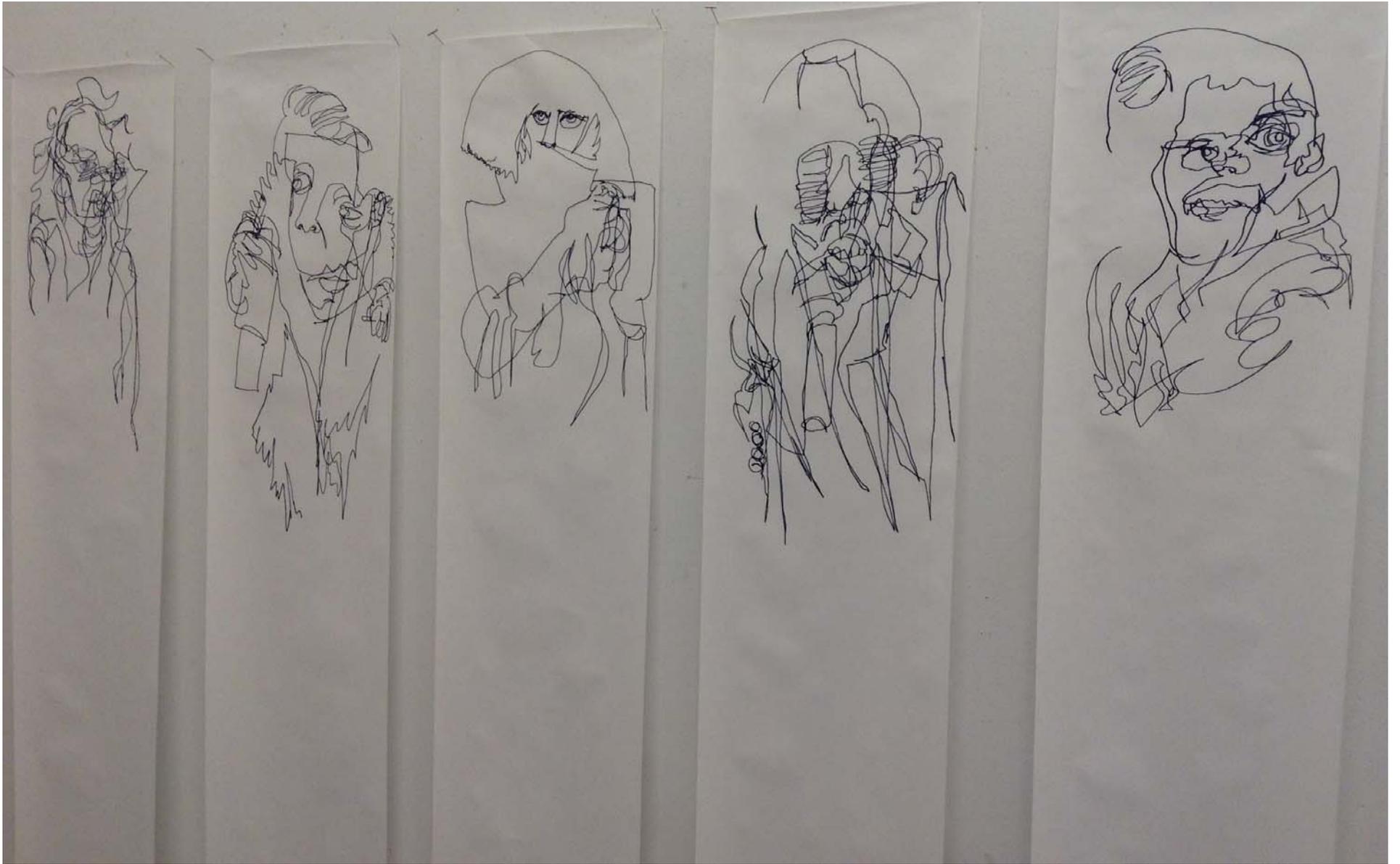


Figure 12: *Head Shots* (close up).

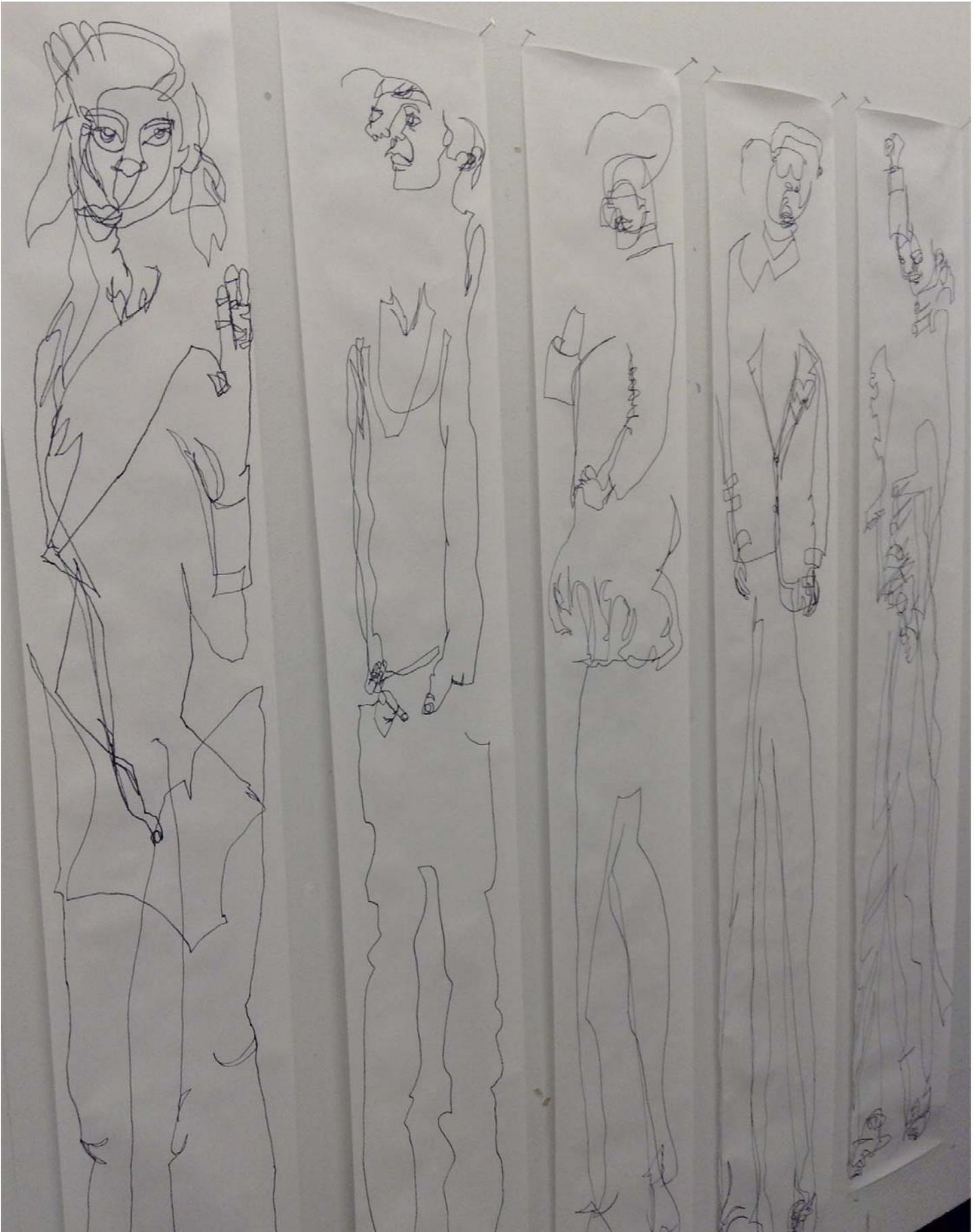


Figure 13: *Body Shots* (close up).

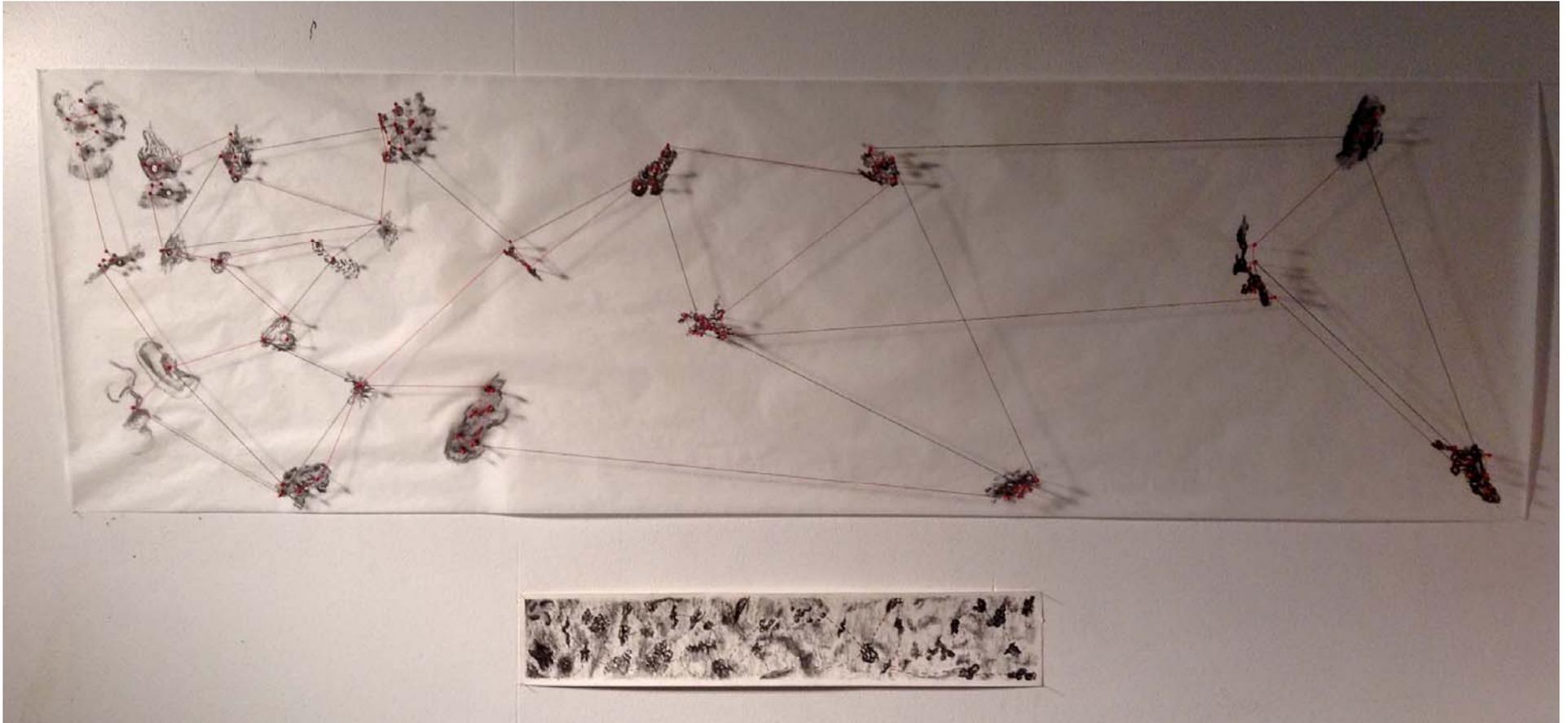


Figure 14: *Gossip: Exploration 1*.



Figure 15: *Gossip: Exploration 2.*

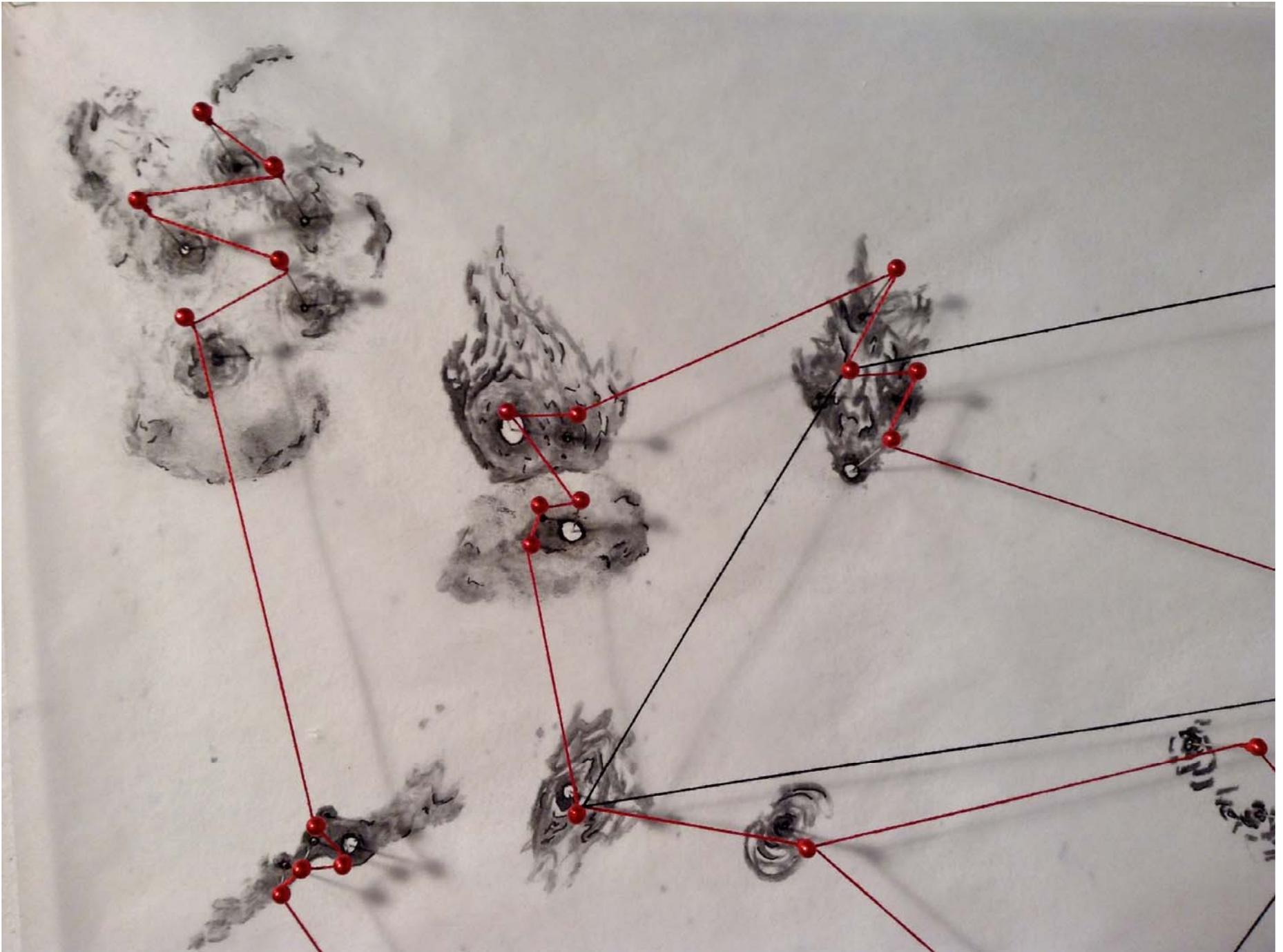


Figure 16: *Exploration 1* (large detail 1).

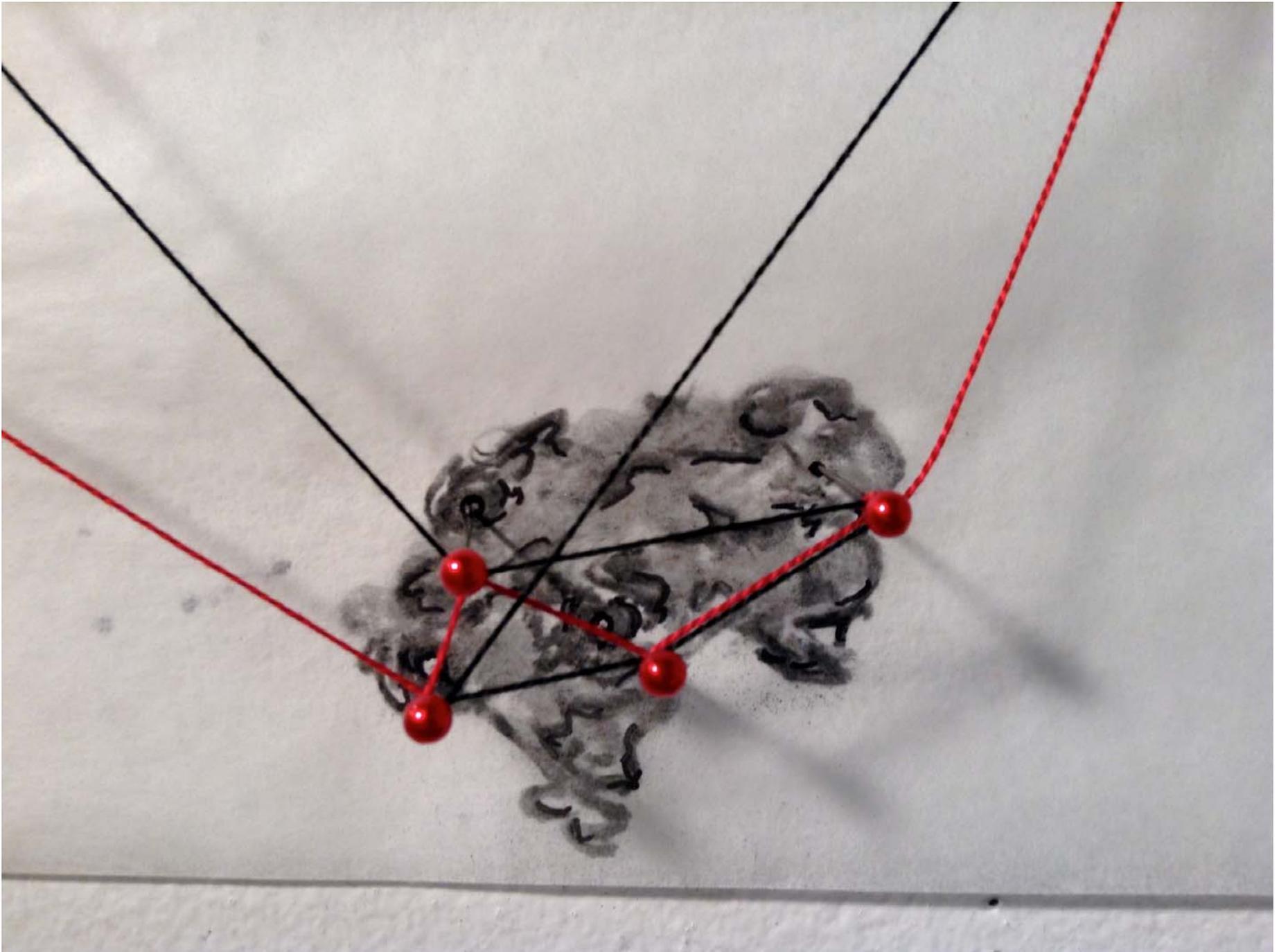


Figure 17: *Exploration 1* (large detail 2).

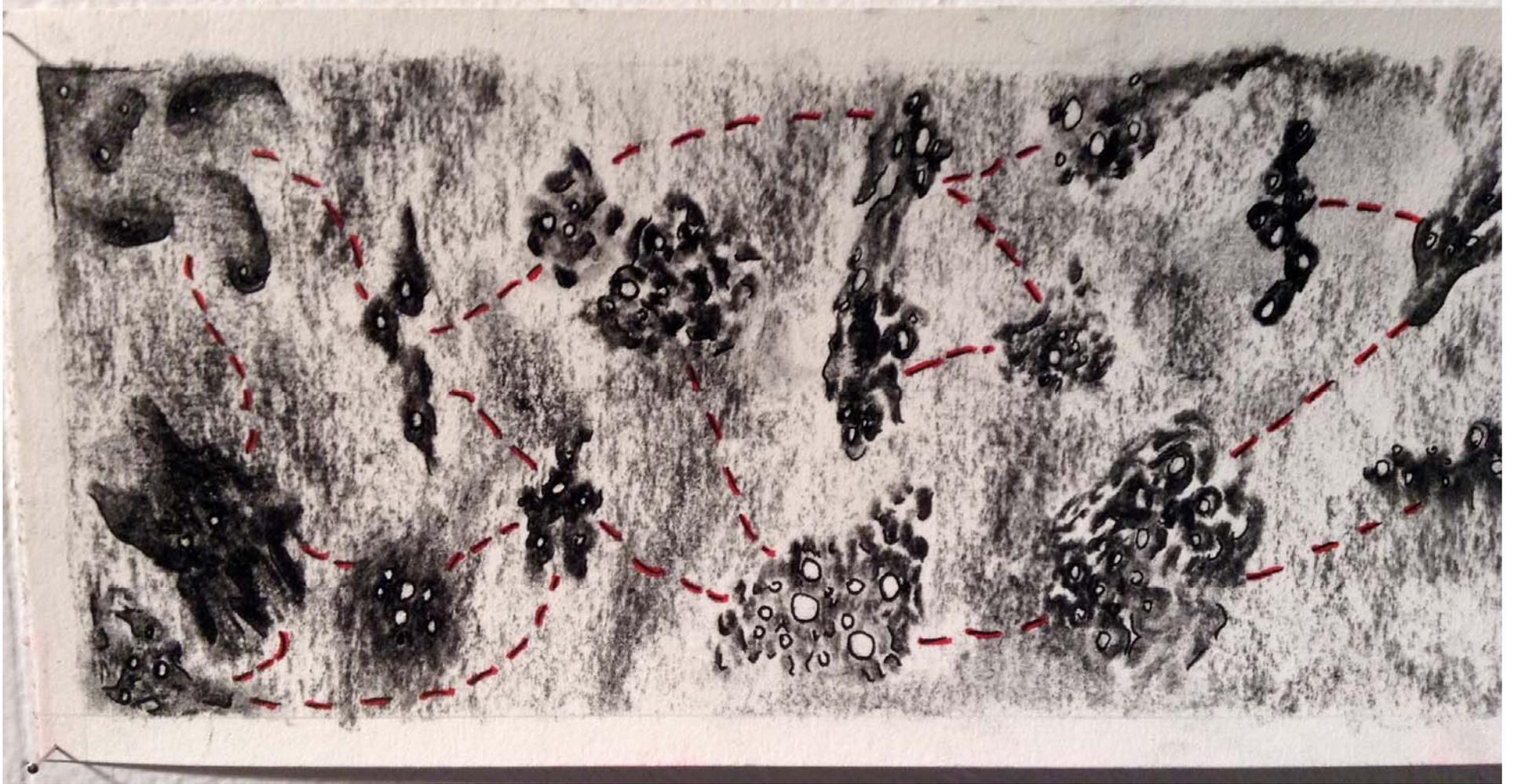


Figure 18: *Exploration 1* (small detail 3).



Figure 19: *Exploration 1* (small detail 4).

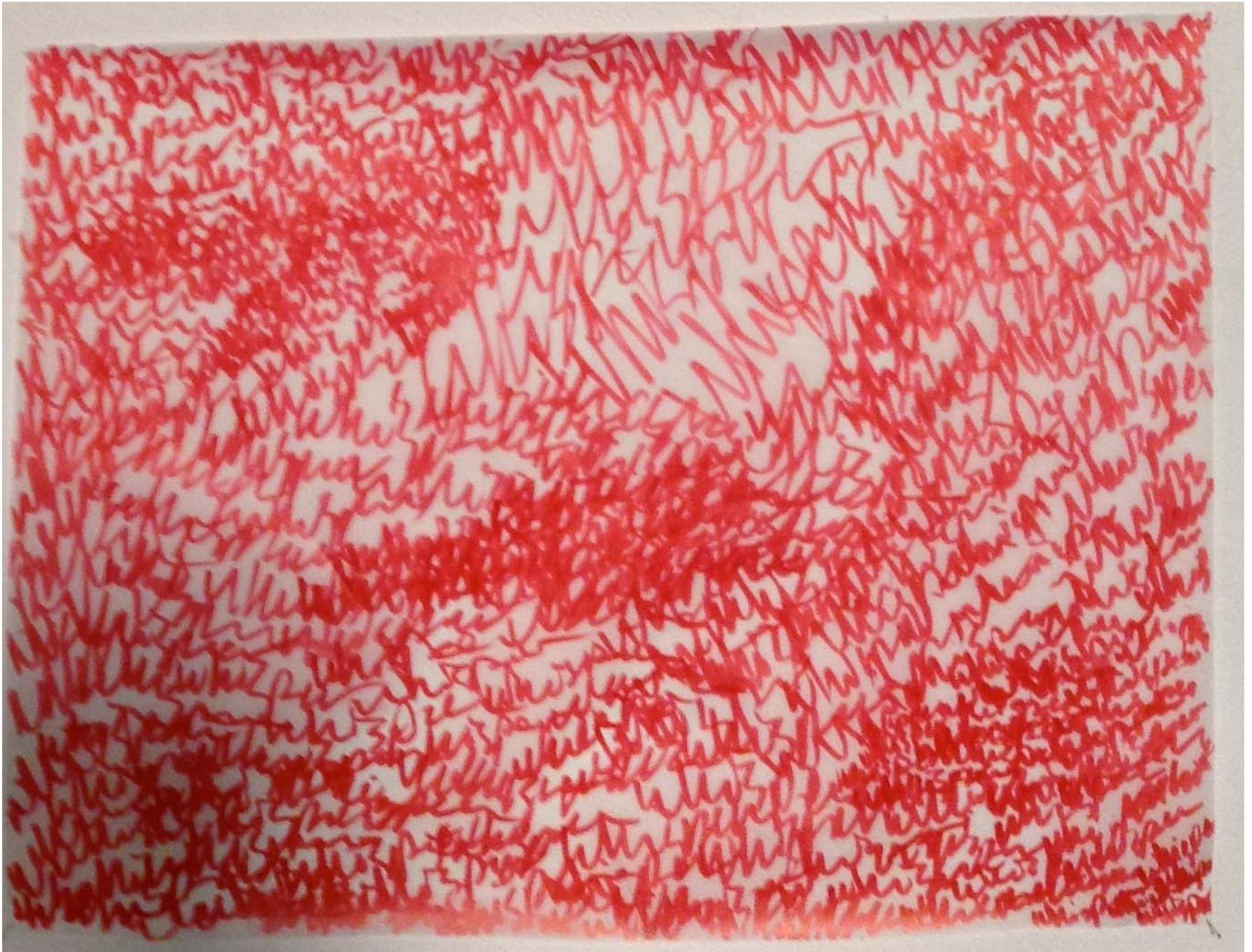


Figure 20: *Exploration 2* (detail 1 - *Secret*).

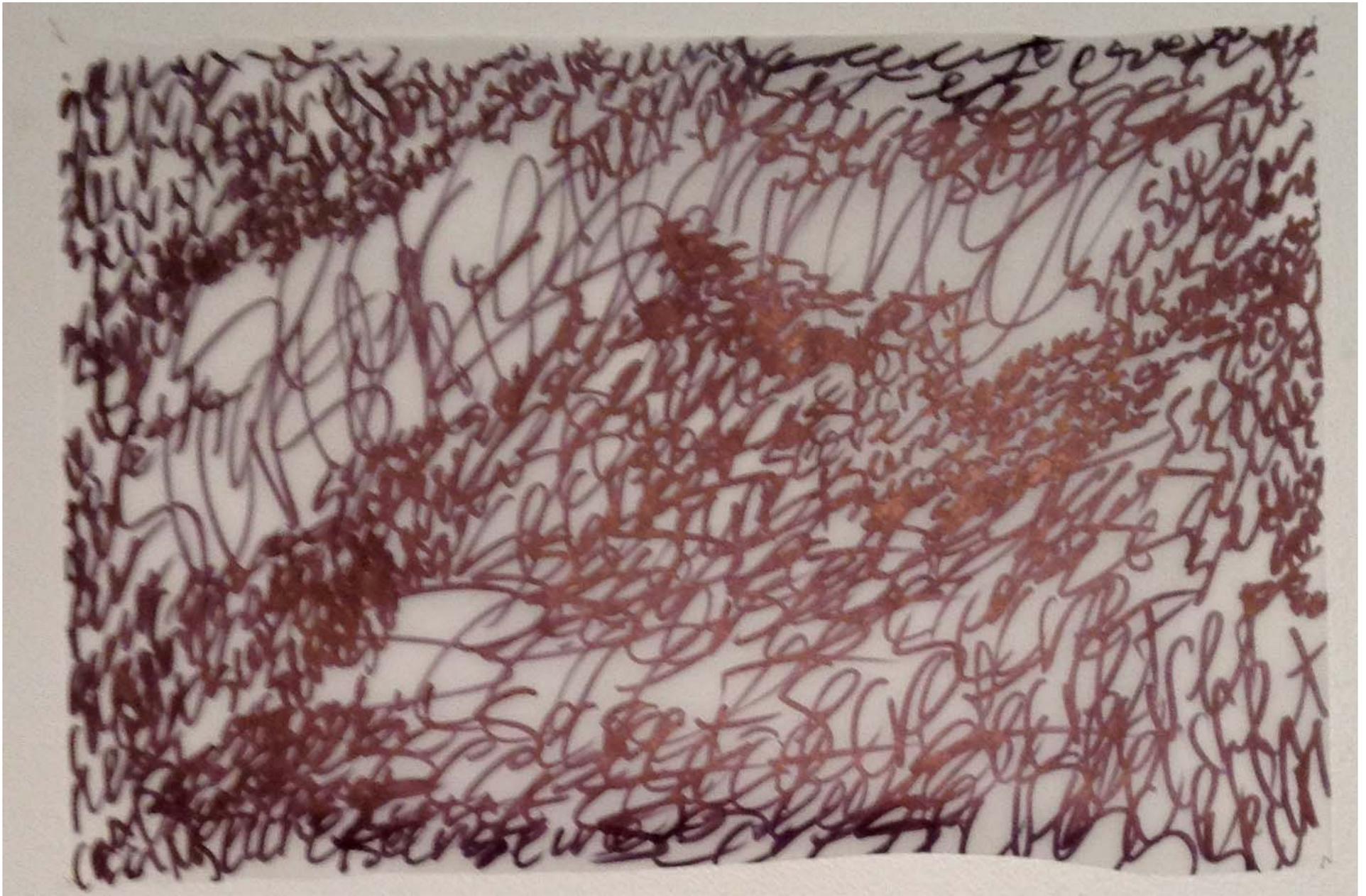


Figure 21: *Exploration 2* (detail 2 - *Whisper*).



Figure 22: *Exploration 2* (detail 3).

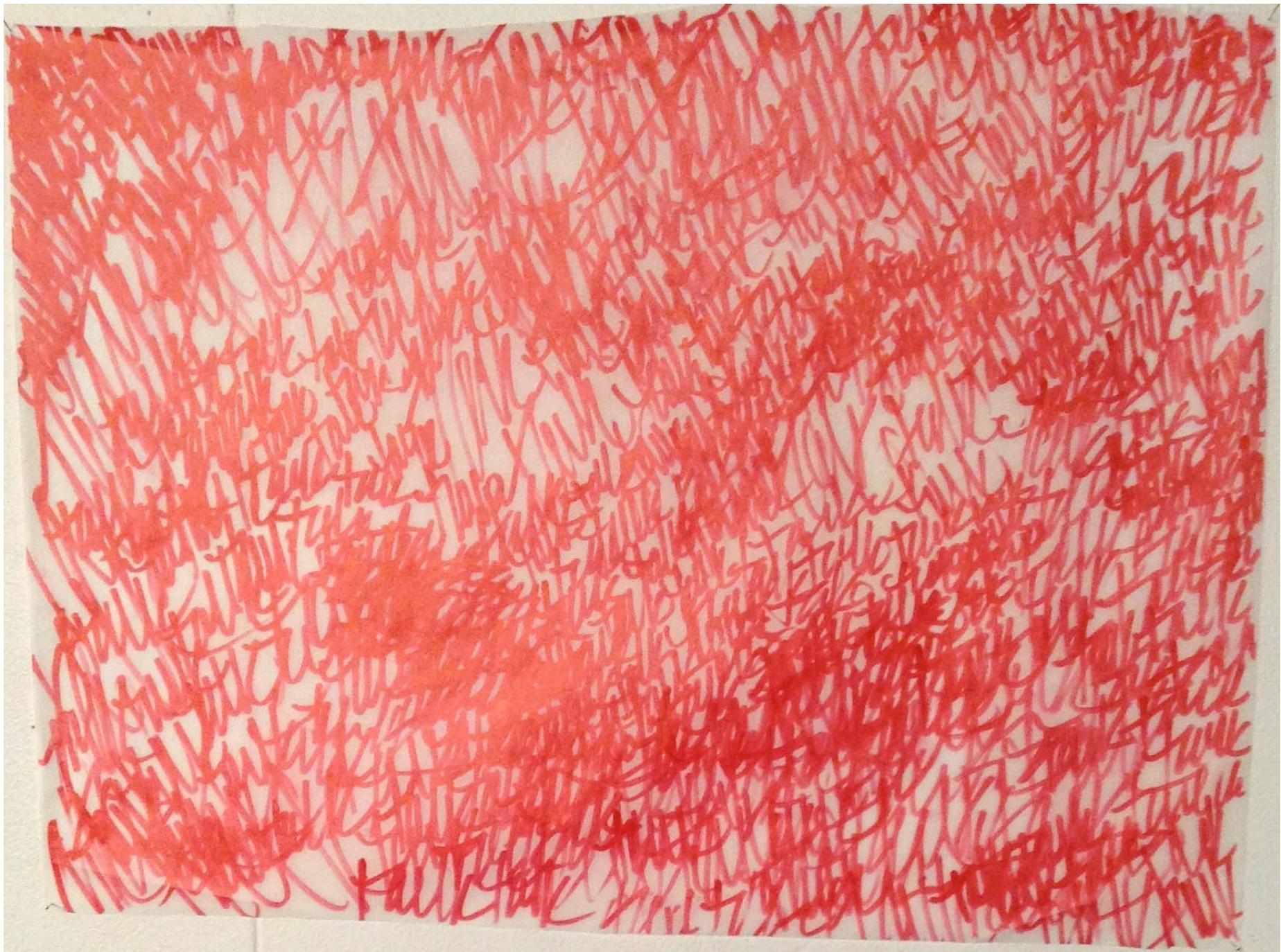


Figure 23: *Exploration 2 (detail 4 - Talk).*

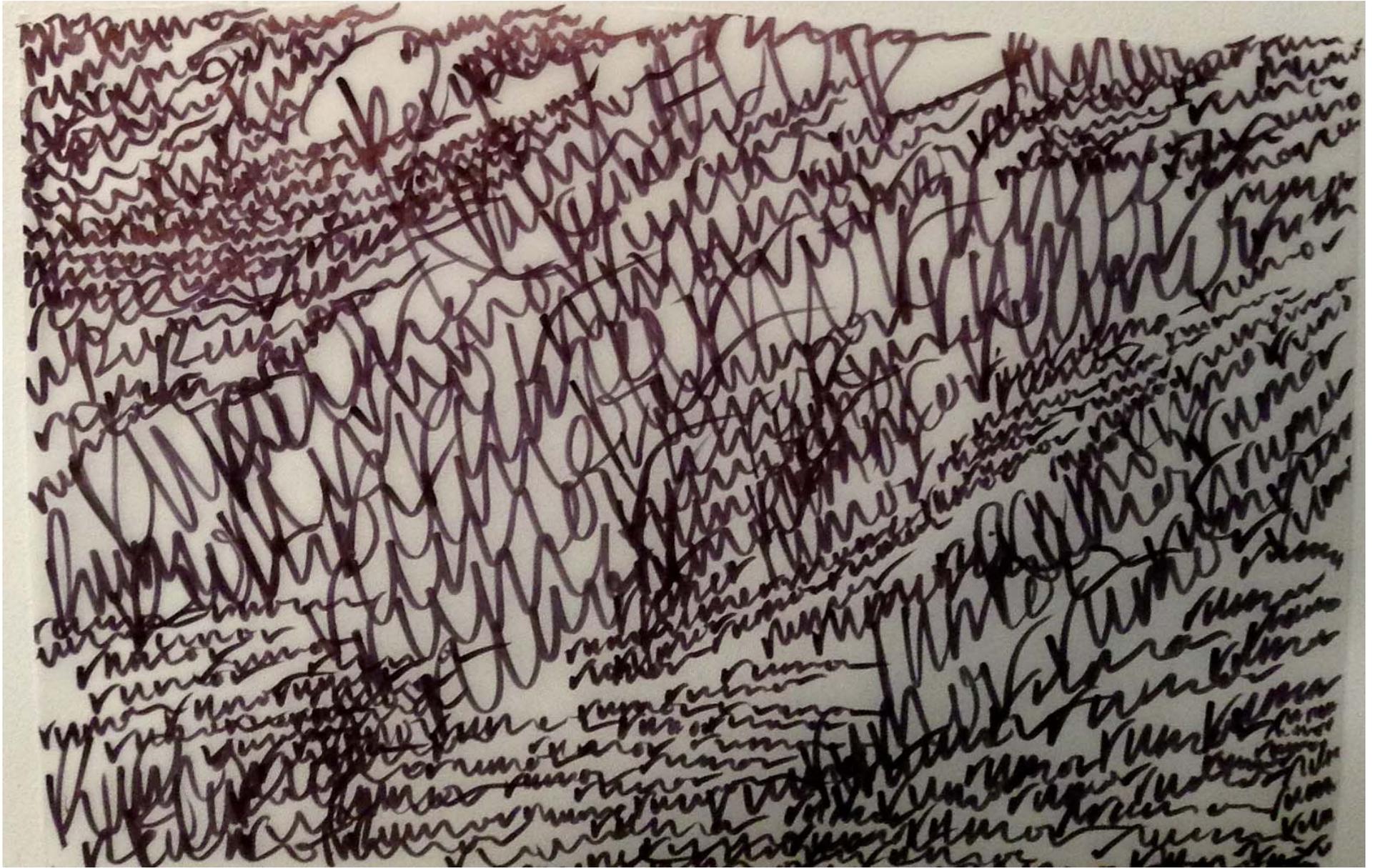


Figure 24: *Exploration 2* (detail 5 - *Rumor*).