

Surrealism, Chance, and Process

Jessica Walton

The Community College of Baltimore County

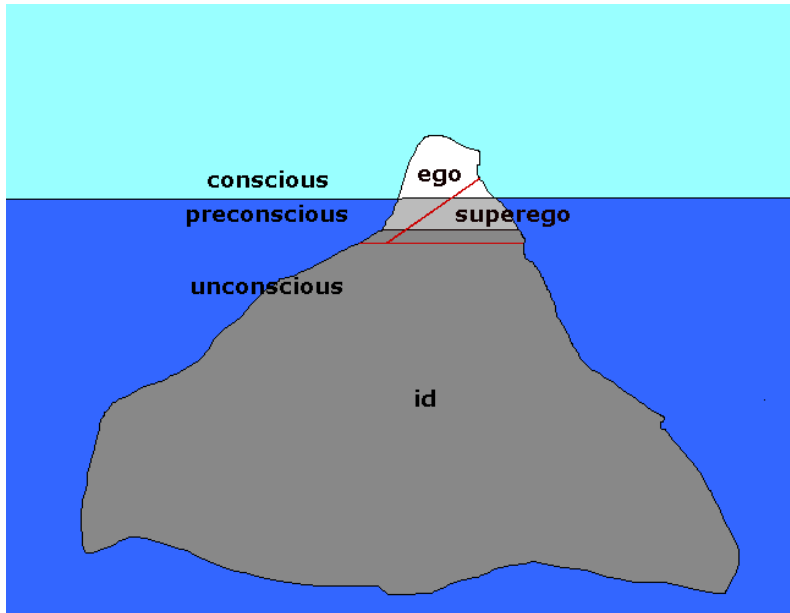
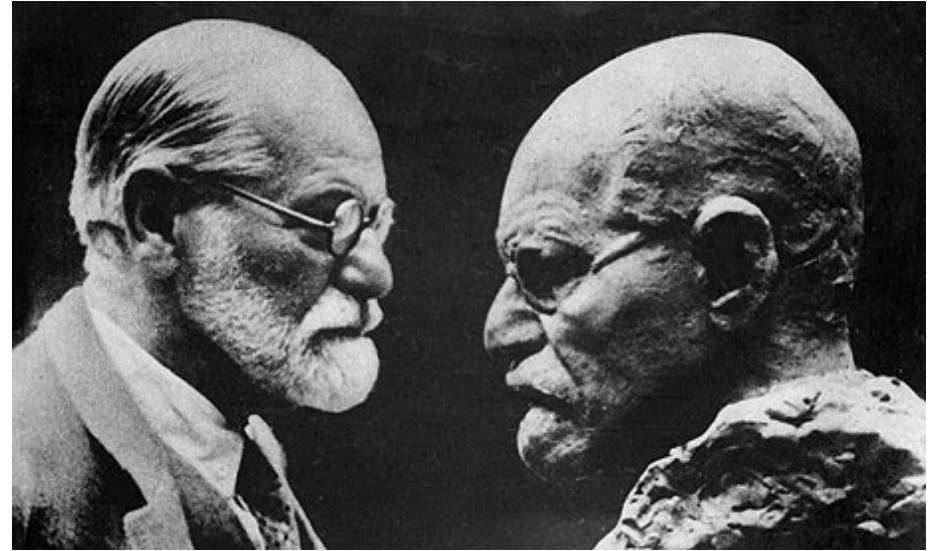
<https://www.ccbcmd.edu/adim/howearefac.html>

Surrealism originated in the late 1910s and early '20s as a literary movement that experimented with a new mode of expression called automatic writing, or automatism, which sought to release the uninhibited imagination of the subconscious.

With the the publication of the Manifesto of Surrealism in 1924 in Paris by the poet and critic André Breton (1896–1966), Surrealism became an international movement.



Surrealism was influenced by Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytical theories, but the movement was also very much a reaction against the "reason" that had led Europe into the devastations of World War I (1914 – 1918).



Freud's theory is that the human psyche is a battleground where the rational civilized forces of conscious mind battle the irrational, instinctual urges of the unconscious.

Freud derived a three-part structure for one's personality:

- 1) Id – the unconscious region of the mind where all the hidden desires and obsessions reside.
- 2) Ego – the conscious part of the mind responsible for perception, cognition, and action
- 3) Superego – an individual's conscience, which, based on moral standards, governs the actions of the ego.



Salvador Dalí, *The Persistence of Memory*, 1931, oil on canvas

The Potato, 1928
Joan Miró (Spanish, 1893–
1983)
Oil on canvas



The Satin Tuning Fork, 1940
Yves Tanguy (American, born
France, 1900–1955)
Oil on canvas, 39 x 32 in.





The Barbarians, 1937

Max Ernst (French, born Germany, 1891–1976)

Oil on cardboard, 9 1/2 x 13 in.



Roberto Matta (Chilean), *Invasion of the Night*,
1941; painting; oil on canvas, 38 in. x 60 1/8 in.



Dorothea Tanning, *A Little Night Music*, 1943



Meret Oppenheim, Object, 1936

The Doll, 1934–35

**Hans Bellmer (French, born Silesia, 1902–
1975)**

Gelatin silver print

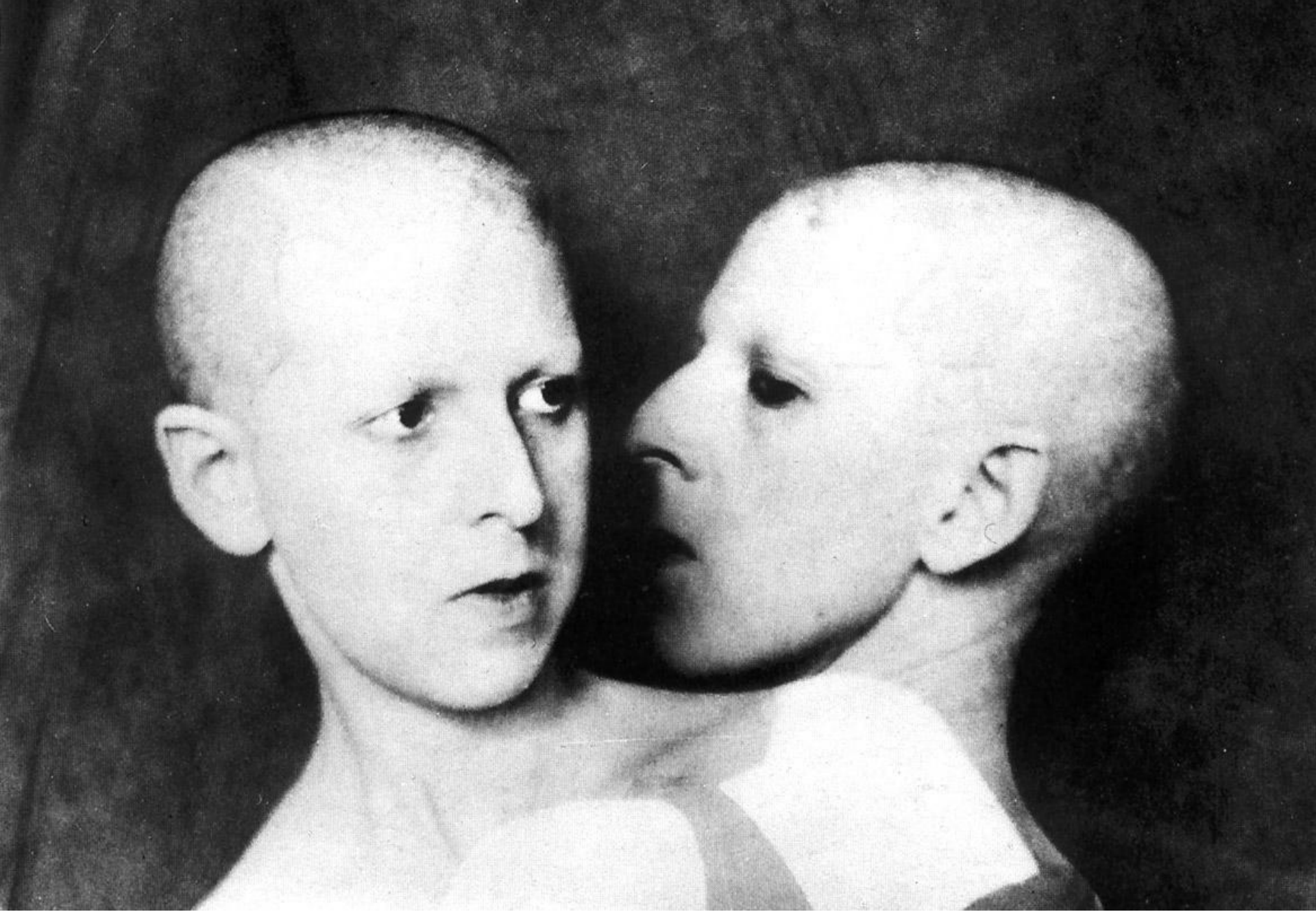
11 5/8 x 7 5/8 in.



Dora Maar
Pere Ubu
1936

(photo of an armadillo embryo)



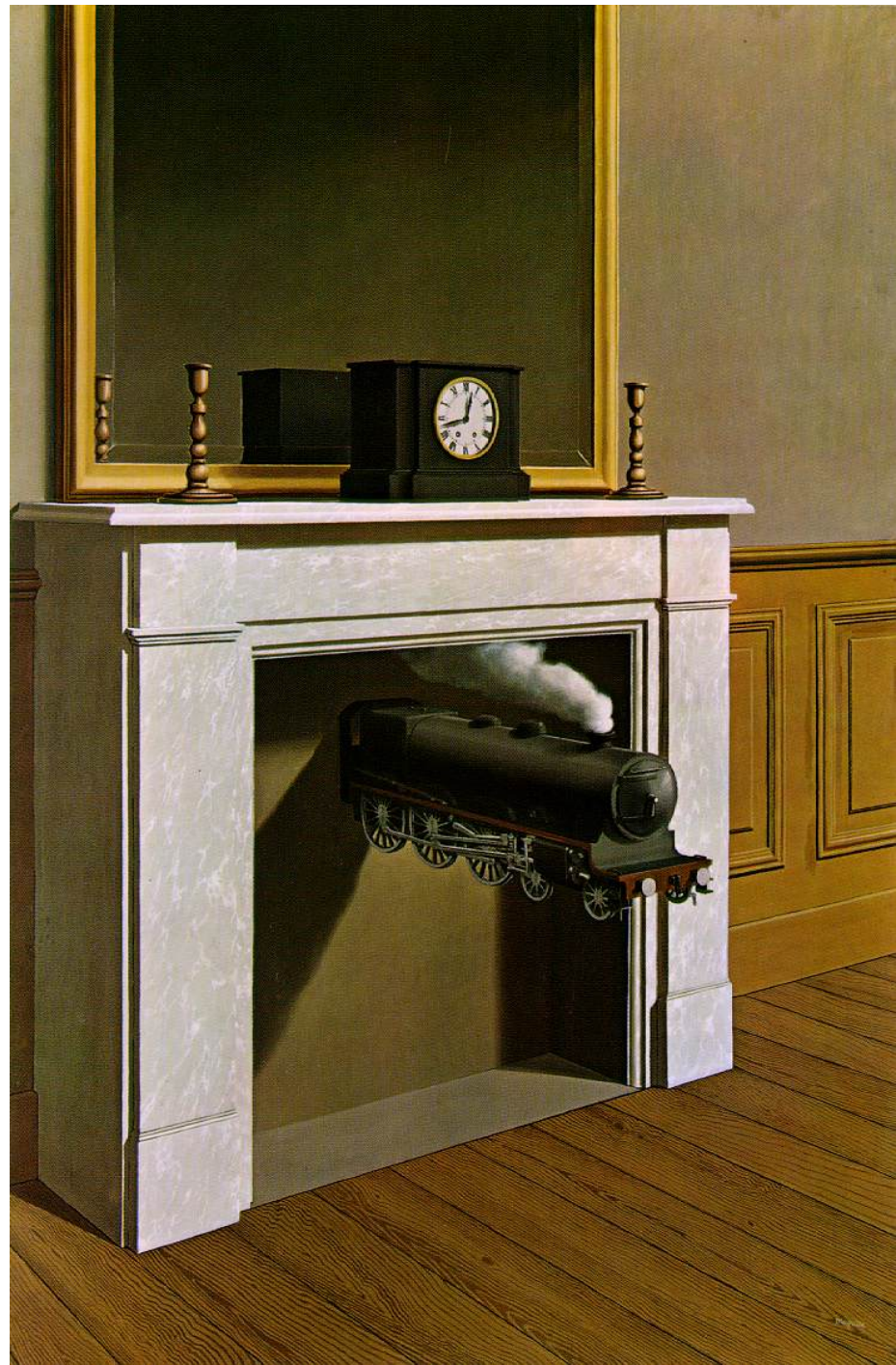


Claude Cahun, What do you want from me?, 1928



Rene Magritte, Belgian, 1898 – 1967
La condition humaine
1933, oil on canvas
39 3/8 x 31 7/8 x 5/8 in.

Magritte, Time Transfixed





Andre Masson, Tauromachie, 1937



Leonora Carrington
(Mexican, born England, 1917)
Self-Portrait, ca. 1937–38
Oil on canvas; 25 5/8 x 32 in

Frida Kahlo
The Two Fridas
1939
Oil on canvas
68 x 68 in.



Surrealist Games: Surrealists practiced many creative group games to intentionally stimulate nonlinear, unconventional thinking and imagery.

Automatic, non-rational juxtaposition (placing disparate things together) is one of the prime techniques.

Surrealist artists made use of chance, automatism, juxtaposition, and dreams as strategies to express unconscious thoughts and desires and to achieve a creativity and expression beyond conventional modes.

The Exquisite Corpse: The game acquired its name from the first sentence obtained through the use of the game.....

“The exquisite corpse shall drink the new wine.”

Game #1: The Exquisite Corpse (written form)

Person One: Write an Article and an Adjective:

Fold to conceal the above word

Person Two: Write a Noun:

Fold to conceal the above word

Person Three: Write a Verb:

Fold to conceal the above word

Person Four: Write an Article and an Adjective:

Fold to conceal the above word

Person Five: Write a Noun:

Now, unfold and read the statement.

Game #2: The Exquisite Corpse (drawing form)

Take a piece of paper and, starting at the top, fold it into four equal sections.

Each person will draw something different on each section.

Fold your section back so it cannot be seen. Pass it to the next person.

Person One: Draw a head on the top section.

Person Two: Draw a body on the second section.

Person Three: Draw legs on the third section.

Person Four: Draw feet on the fourth section.

Now, unfold and look at the drawing.

One of the oldest Surrealist games is Exquisite Corpse.

This game can also be played using collage and/or drawing.

Examples of Exquisite Corpse drawings online done by Surrealists:

[http://www.exquisitecorpse.com/definition/Morgue %5Bthe corpses %5D.html](http://www.exquisitecorpse.com/definition/Morgue%5Bthe_corpses%5D.html)



Andre Breton, Man Ray, Max Morise, Yves Tanguy, *Exquisite Corpse*, ca 1927

Y. Tanguy, Joan Miro, Max Morise, Man Ray, 1927



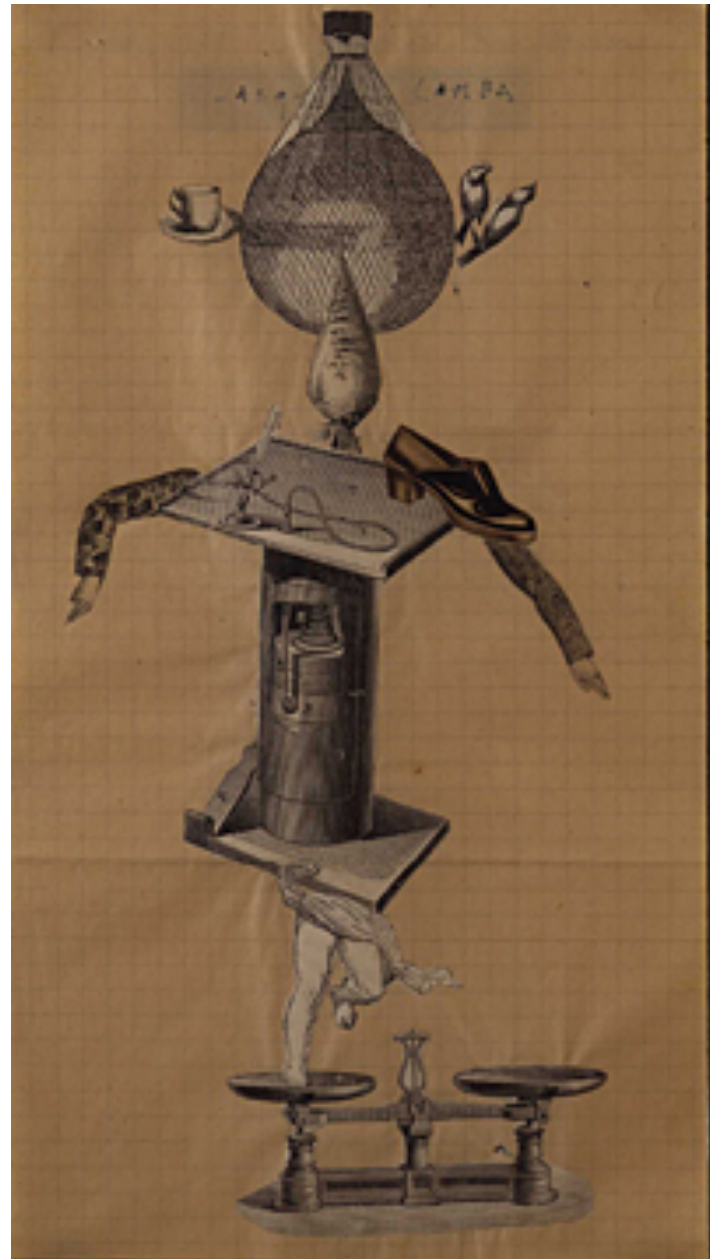
Ray, Miro, Morise and Tanguy, ca 1927



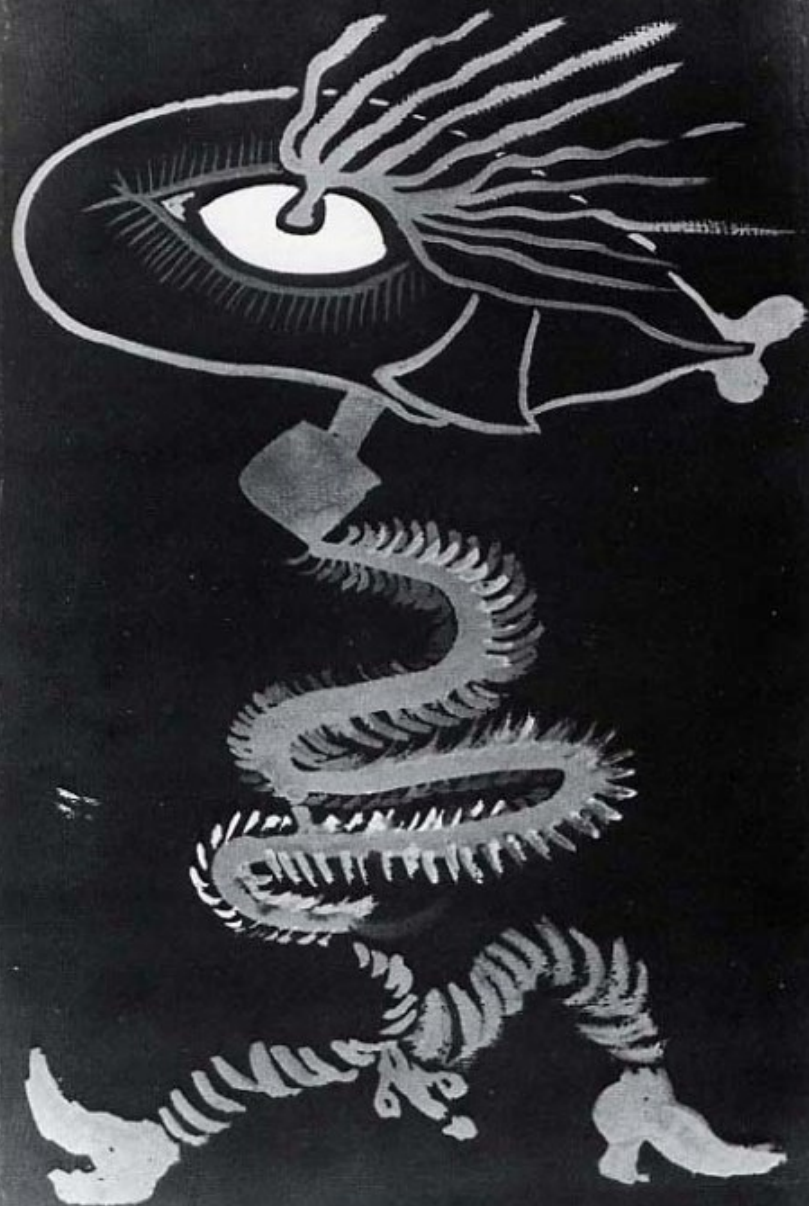
Victor Brauner, Jacques Hérold,
Violette Hérold, Yves Tanguy and
Raoul Ubac

Untitled "Cadavre exquis" ("Exquisite
Corpse"), 1938.

Graphite and collage on paper
10 3/8 x 8 1/16



Megret, Suzanne Muzard, Georges Sadoul, 1929



A. Breton, V. Hugo, P. Eluard and N. Eluard, 1930



Automatic Writing was developed by the Surrealists as a means of expressing the subconscious.

How to do it: Sit at a table with pen and paper, put yourself in a receptive frame of mind, and start writing. Continue writing without thinking about what is appearing beneath your pen. Write as fast as you can.

Automatic drawing – As with automatic writing, put yourself in a receptive frame of mind, and avoid conscious control over the image.

How to do it: In automatic drawing, the hand is allowed to move ‘randomly’ across the paper. In applying chance and accident to mark-making, drawing is to a large extent freed of rational control.

The first visual artists who worked with Surrealist techniques and imagery were the German Max Ernst (1891–1976), André Masson (1896–1987), the Joan Miró (1893–1983), and the American Man Ray (1890–1976).

Masson's free-association drawings of 1924 are curving, continuous lines out of which emerge strange and symbolic figures that are products of an uninhibited mind.

Breton considered Masson's drawings akin to his automatism in poetry.



Andre Masson
Automatic Drawing
1924

Andre Masson, Automatic Drawing
1924



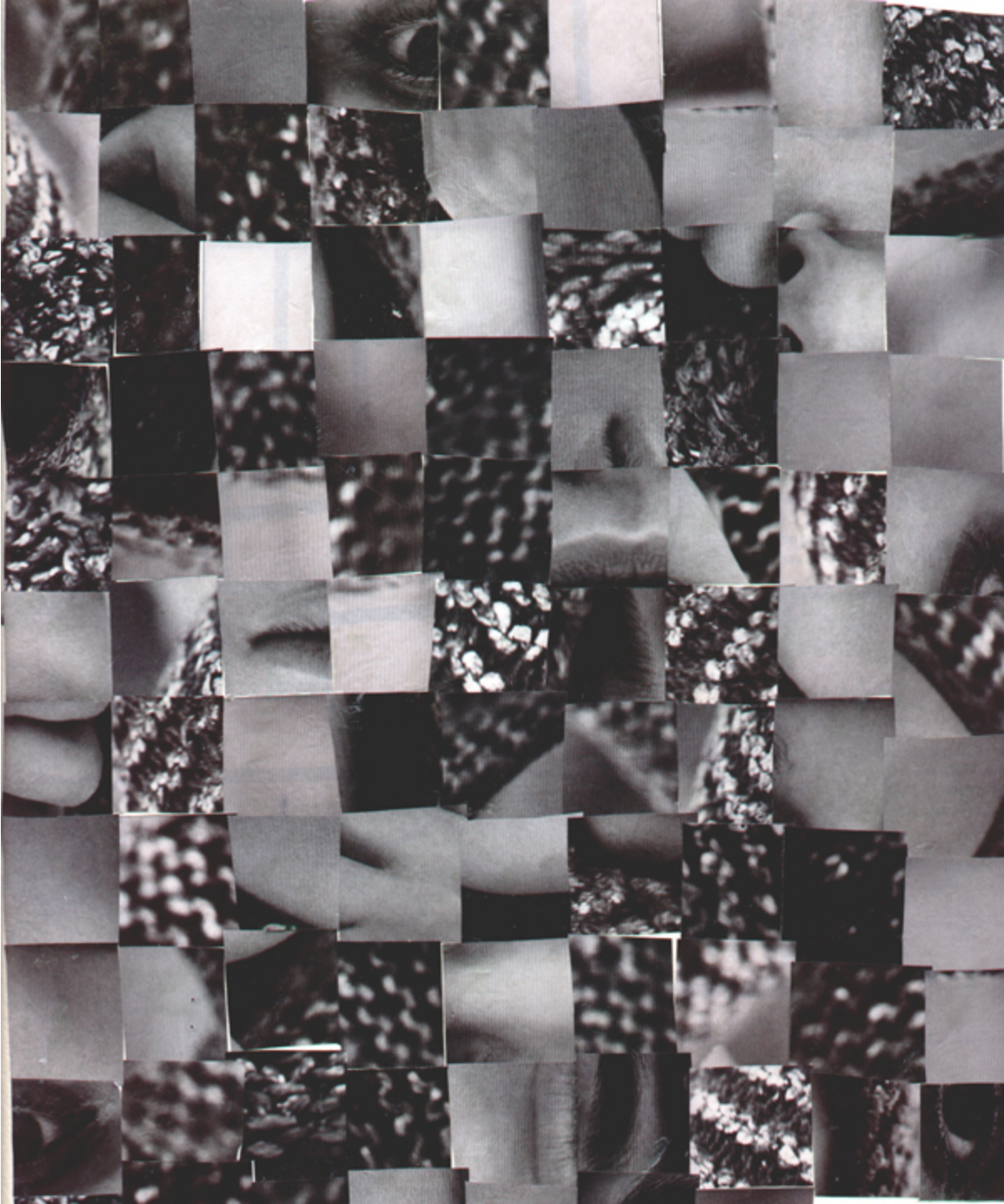
Cubomania is a technique whose creation is credited to Romanian Surrealist Gherasim Luca.

Take a photo or other image on a piece of paper and cut it into squares, making sure all the squares are about the same size.

Mix up all the squares and reassemble them randomly, gluing them onto a piece of board or heavy paper.

Try not to think about which square you're picking or if it's upside down/rightside up, etc.

Just pick a square, glue it down, and see what happens.



Jean Arp

*Collage with Squares Arranged
According to the Laws of Chance*

1916-1917



How to make a Dadaist Poem (method of Tristan Tzara)

To make a Dadaist poem:

- Take a newspaper.
- Take a pair of scissors.
- Choose an article as long as you are planning to make your poem.
- Cut out the article.
- Then cut out each of the words that make up this article and put them in a bag.
- Shake it gently.
- Then take out the scraps one after the other in the order in which they left the bag.
- Copy conscientiously.
- The poem will be like you.
- And here you are a writer, infinitely original and endowed with a sensibility that is charming though beyond the understanding of the vulgar.

-Tristan Tzara



Collage

Collage is the assemblage of different forms creating a new whole. For example, an artistic collage work may include newspaper clippings, ribbons, bits of colored or hand-made papers, photographs, etc., glued to a solid support or canvas.

Inimage

Sections are cut away from an already existing image in order to create a new one.

Hannah Hoch
The Beautiful Girl
1919





Wangechi
Mutu

Wangechi Mutu

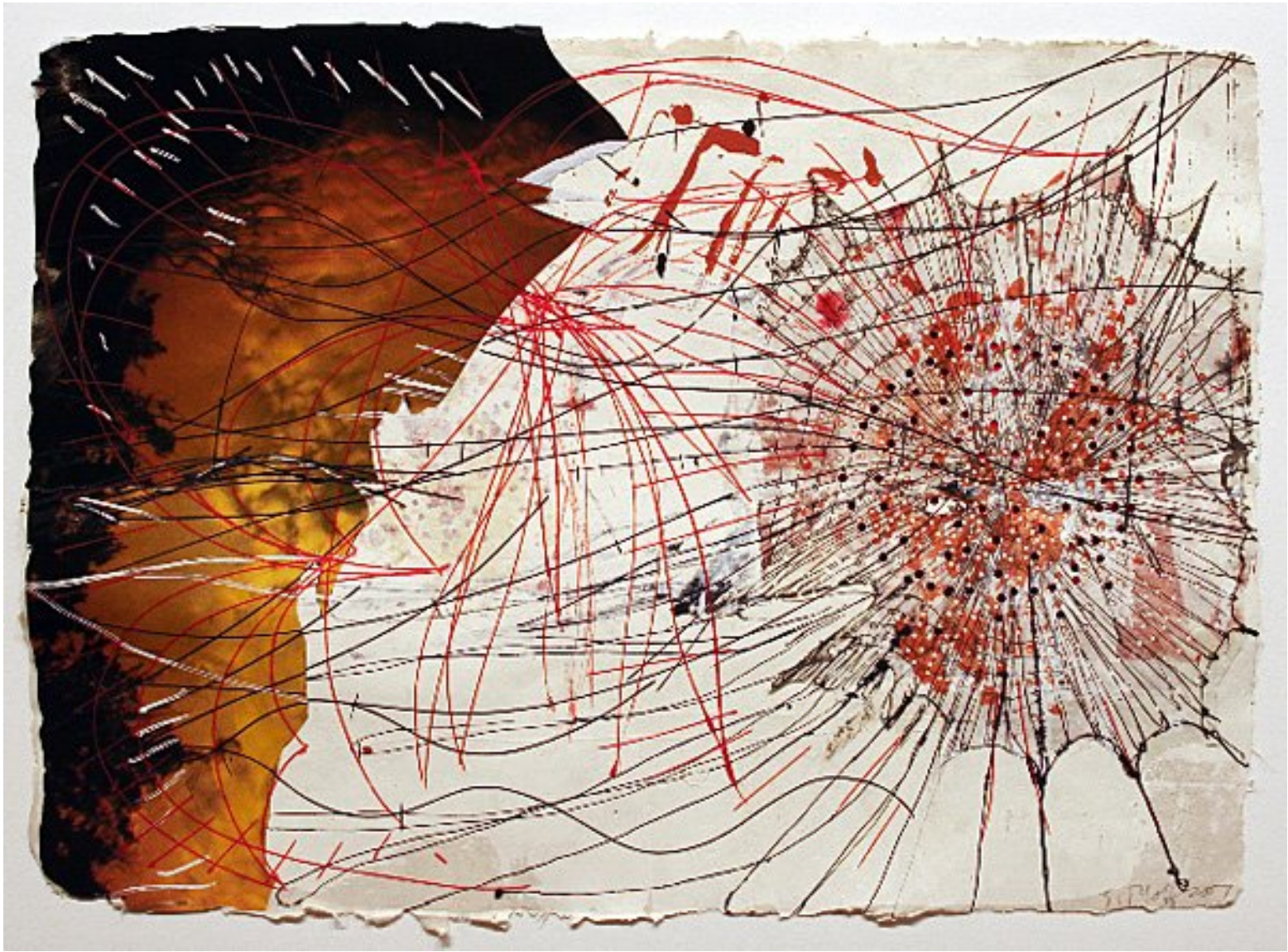


Romare Bearden



Fred Tomaselli





Judy Pfaff

Judy Pfaff



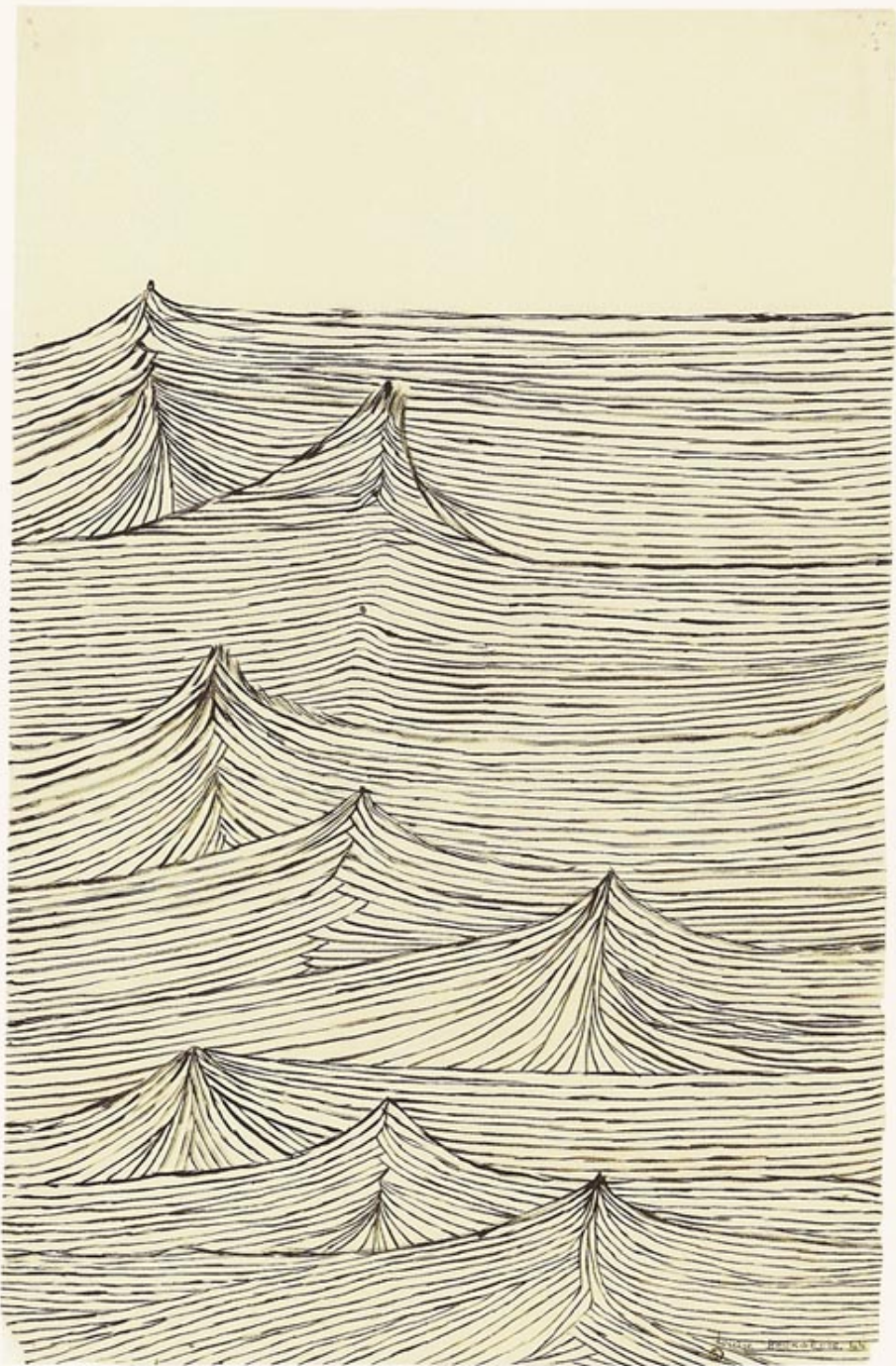


Judy Pfaff

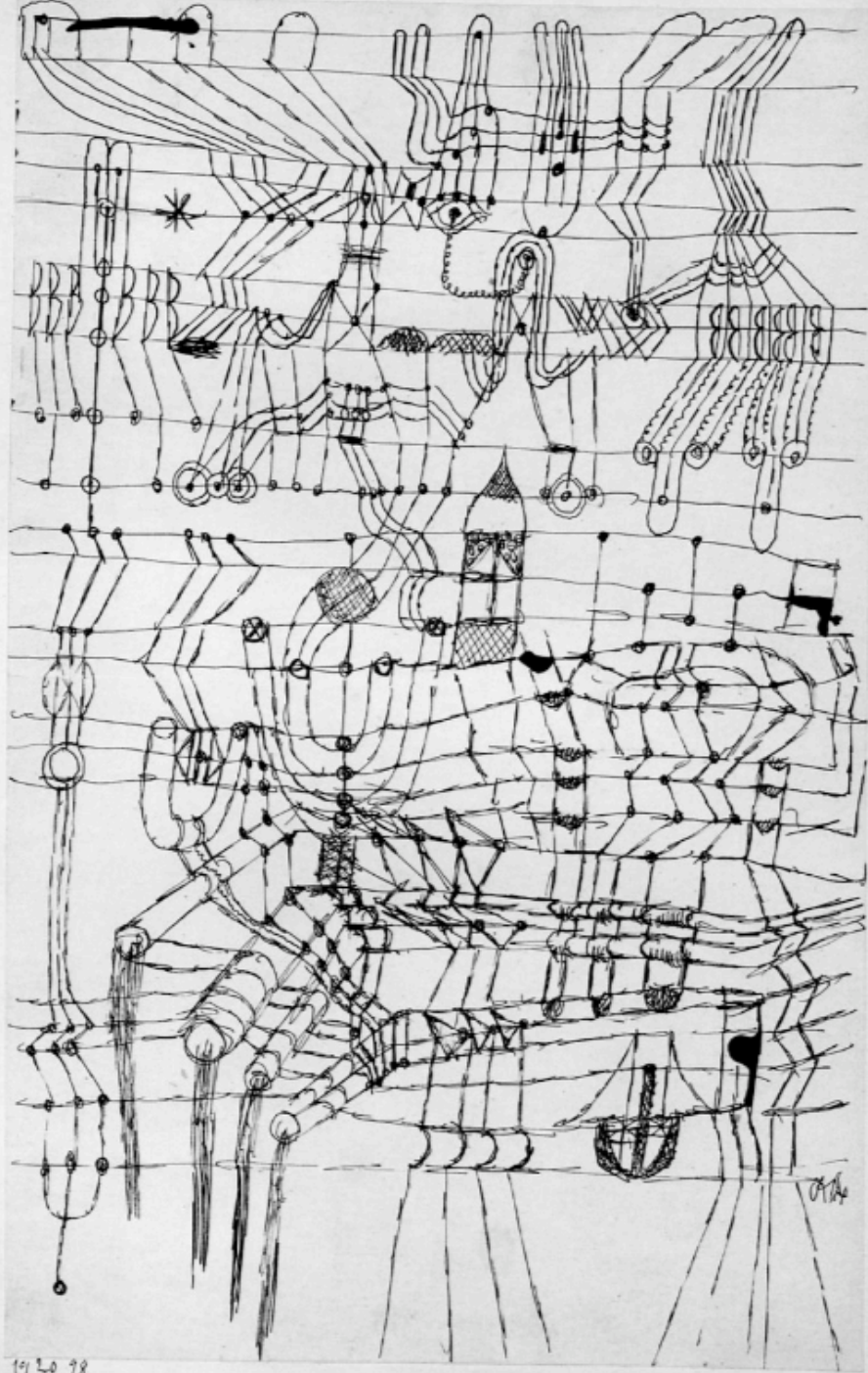


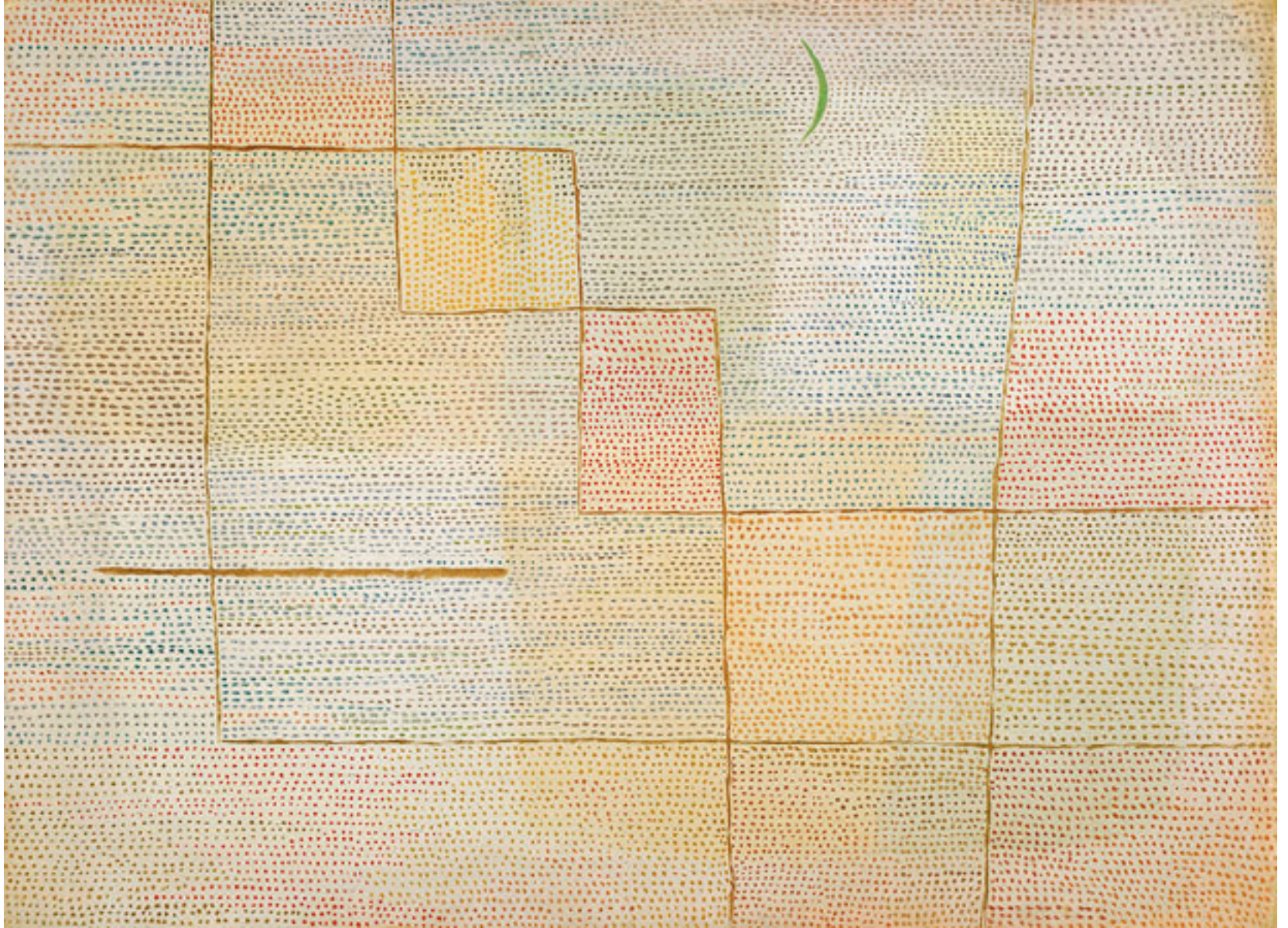
Louise Bourgeois

Louise Bourgeois



Paul Klee, Drawing Knotted in the Manner of a Net (1920)





Paul Klee, Clarification, 1932, Oil on canvas, 27 3/4 x 37 7/8 in

Paul Klee, Highway and
Byways, 1929, Oil on canvas,
32 5/8 x 26 3/8 in.





Battle of Fishes by André Masson (French, 1896-1987) 1926. Sand, gesso, oil, pencil, and charcoal on canvas, 14 1/4 x 28 3/4"



Max Ernst
Fishbone Forest
1927
Oil on canvas
54 x 65 cm



Max Ernst, *The Entire City*
1933/36, Oil on canvas, 97 x 145 cm



Untitled (Basketball Drawing) is a classic example of an ongoing series of works on paper. In each instance, the drawing is made by repeatedly impressing a basketball against the surface of the paper. Hammons adeptly handles the ball and the graphite, which leaves the final mark. Parts of the surface are dark and others barely there, as if he wields the chance material with the precision of a finely sharpened pencil.

David Hammons, Untitled (Basketball Drawing), 2006-2007, Courtesy L & M Arts, NY



David Hammons, Boy with Flag, 1968, Body print and silkscreen, 40 x 30 inches.

Read more: <http://www.wmagazine.com/w/blogs/thedailyw/2011/10/12/la-object-david-hammons-body-prints.html#ixzz2OpoSjilt>



David Hammons, *The Wine Leading the Wine*, c. 1969, Body print, 40 x 48 inches.



Janine Antoni, Loving Care

Janine Antoni. Butterfly Kisses
(right). (1996-99)

(American, born Bahamas,
1964)

Cover Girl Thick Lash mascara
on paper, 29 3/4 x 30" (75.6 x
76.2 cm). Purchase. © 2006
Janine Antoni



SOL LEWITT

American, 1928–2007

Wall Drawing # 65. Lines not short, not straight, crossing and touching, drawn at random using four colors, uniformly dispersed with maximum density, covering the entire surface of the wall.

first installation, 1971

red, yellow, blue, and black colored pencil

Dorothy and Herbert Vogel Collection 2001.9.25

Drawn by Hidemi Nomura, Karlisima, Kristin Holder, and Kathryn Morales

Installation made possible through the generous support of

The Fifth Floor Foundation







Lynda Benglis, *Blatt*, 1969.



Lynda Benglis pouring
a latex floor painting,
1969

Casey Reas

*Still image from generative
software*

Process 6

2005

Software

Variable Size

http://reas.com/media/p6_s.mov



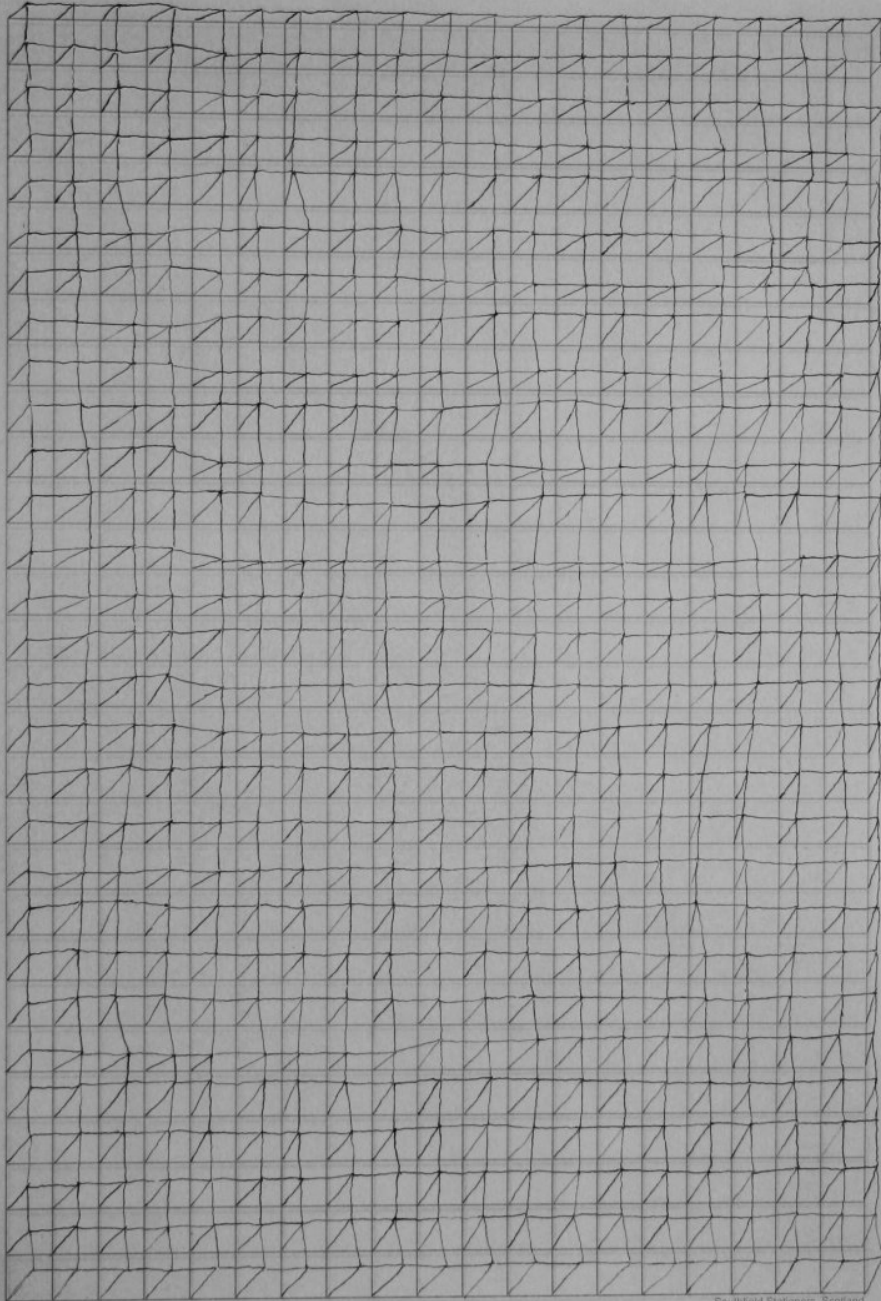
Casey Reas

Twenty-eight
prints derived
from the
Tissue
software.
Tissue Type
A-012002
Archival
Epson paper
with archival
Epson inks
11"x14"



<http://reas.com/category.php?section=works&view=0>

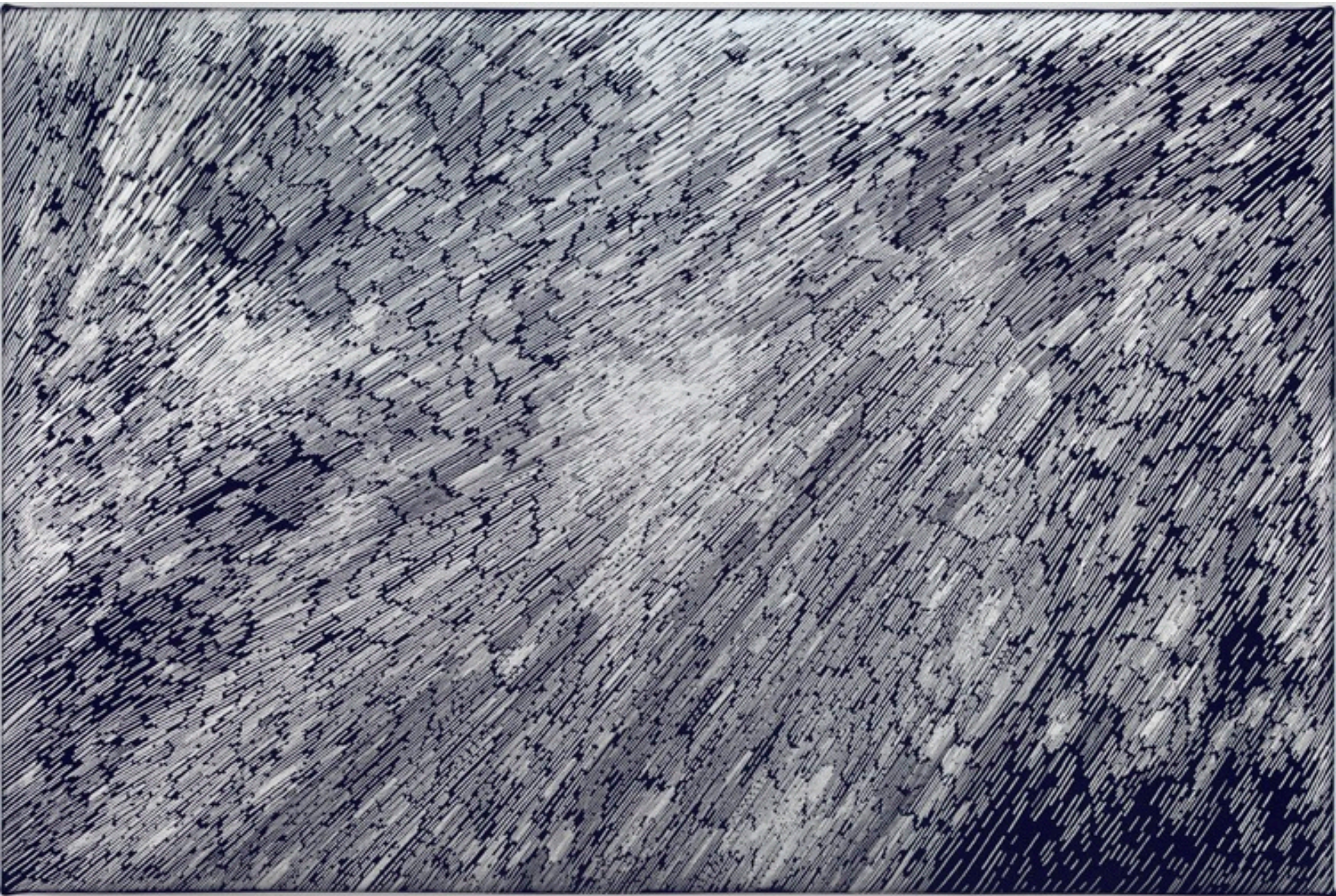
**Louise Hopkins - UNTITLED
(GREY GRID 04), pencil on metric
graph paper, 50 x 41cm**

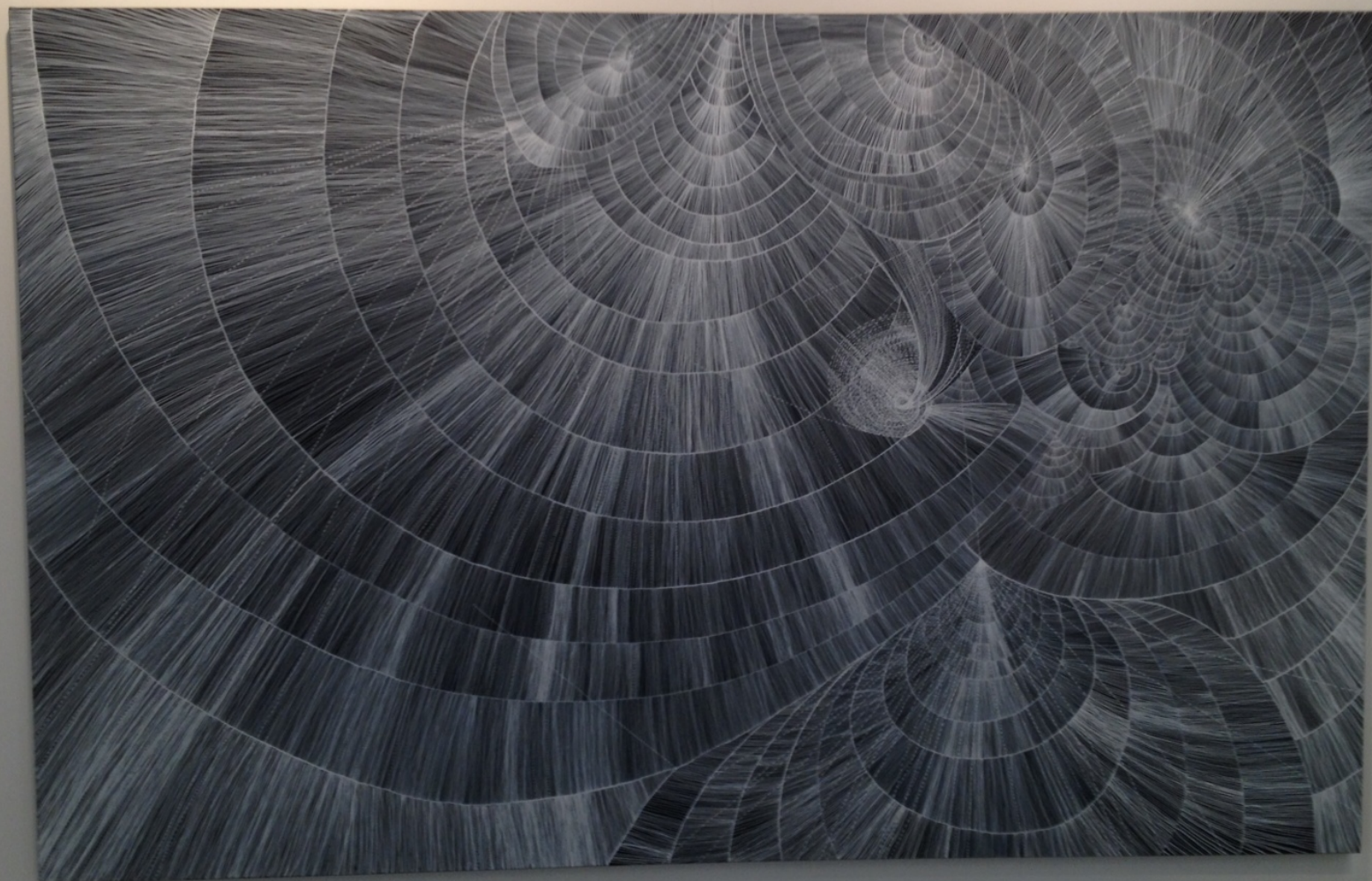


Louise Hopkins
Untitled (0100), 2000
Pencil on partially crumpled
paper

Sandra Cinto







Yayoi Kusama

Net Infinity - TW20, 2004

acrylic on canvas

80.3 × 100cm



YAYOI KUSAMANETS-INFINITY OPQR,
2007 Acrylic and enamel on canvas
102 x 76-3/8 inches

YAYOI KUSAMA

Compulsion Furniture (Accumulation),
1964



Yayoi Kusama (Japanese, b. Matsumoto,
Nagano prefecture, 1929)

Baby Carriage, 1964, repainted ca. 1966

*Baby carriage, cloth, stuffing, silver metallic
paint*

38 x 23 1/4 x 40 in.



Yayoi Kusama drawing – still from film “Kusama: Princess of Polka Dots”

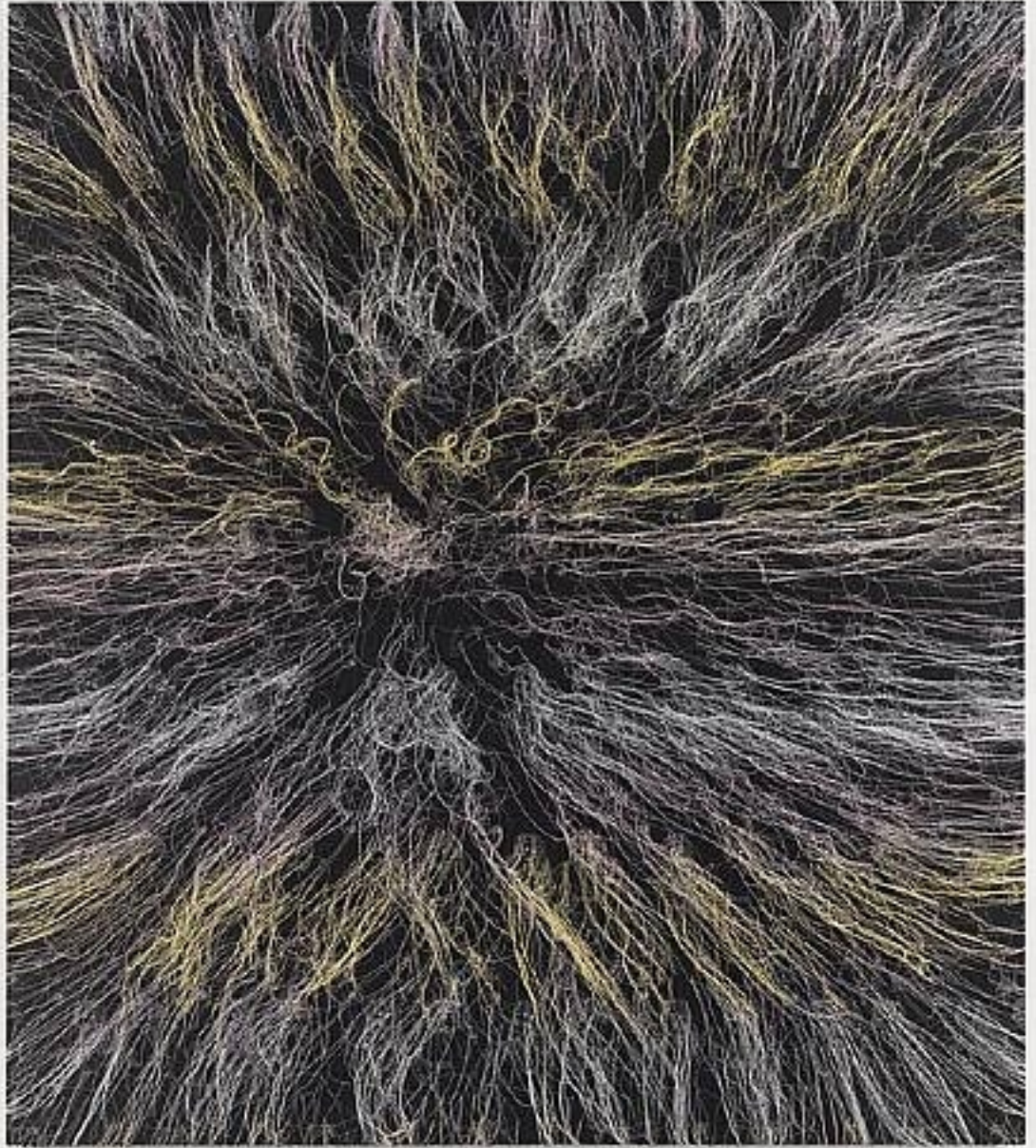
Ghada Amer

(American, born Egypt, 1963). *The New Albers*, 2002. *Embroidery and gel medium on canvas.*

Amer stitches and knots loose threads on the face of the canvas and then uses transparent gel and glue to paste them to the surface, thus creating an appearance likened to paint drips.



Ghada Amer
The black bang
2010
Acrylic, embroidery and
gel medium on canvas
h: 72 x w: 64 in





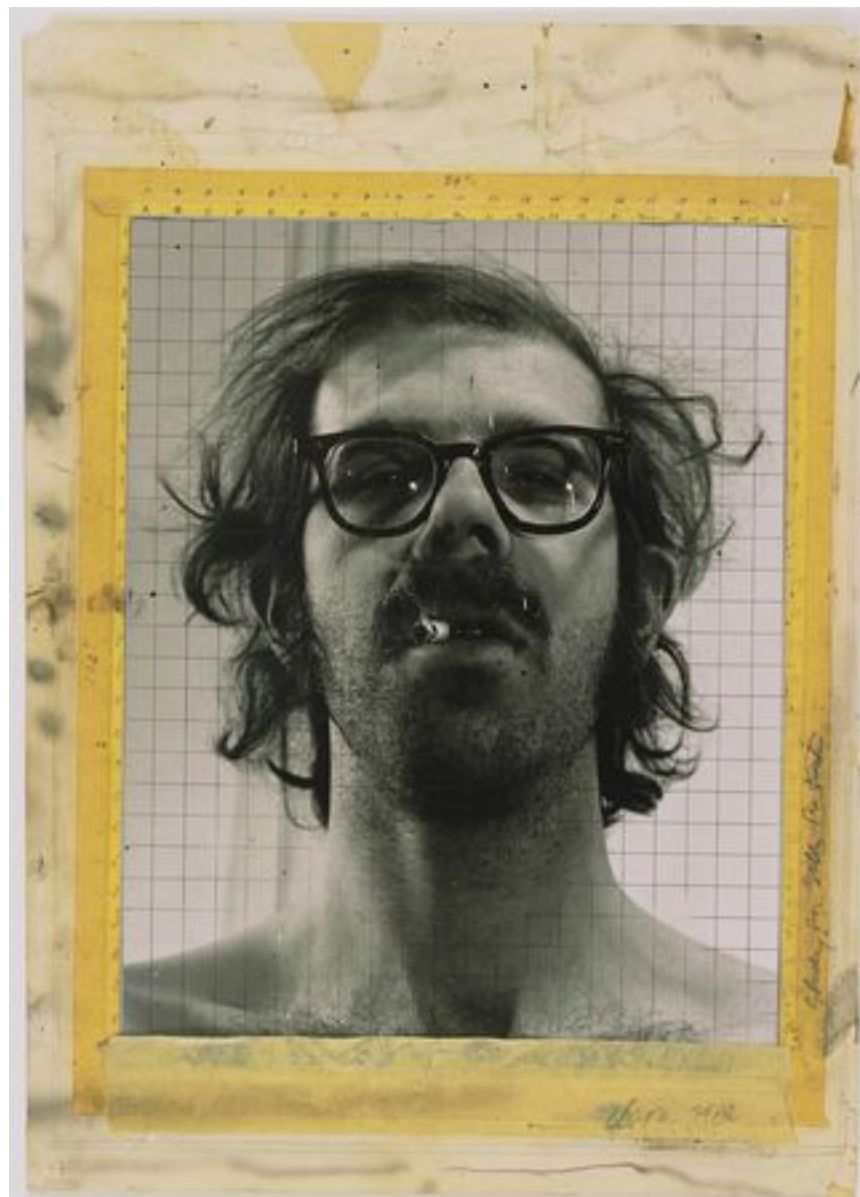
Cai Guo-Qiang doing his gunpowder “drawings”

<http://www.pbs.org/art21/artists/cai/index.html>

Cai Guo-Qiang
Drawing for Transient
Rainbow
2003
Gunpowder on paper
198 x 157 inches



Chuck Close, *Big Self-portrait*, 1968, acrylic on canvas
107 1/2 x 83 1/2 in.





Chuck Close, American, born 1940
Fanny/Fingerpainting, 1985
oil on canvas
overall: 102 x 84 x 2 1/2 in.



Very Cool time-lapse video of the making of a Chuck Close Hand-made paper portrait of Roy Lichtenstein

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NrOPAleHwnQ>





Robert Rauschenberg, Untitled 1968
Transfer drawing using watercolor and pencil.

Robert Rauschenberg
Yellow Body, 1968. Solvent transfer on
paper with graphite, watercolor, gouache,
and wash, 22 1/2 x 30 inches

