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Ester Fleckner
Selected works
2013-2018

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Biography

Ester Fleckner's work explores language and materials in ways that preserve traces of the process, and privilege the repetitive labour of trial and error. Working from queer epistemology, Fleckner inverts the value of failure, unfinishedness, and displacement to arrive at chaotic and intuitive ways of knowing. Fleckner employs an abstract aesthetic to counteract normative tendencies to produce ever new and false binaries. As such, her ventures are almost always serial and expressly inquisitive; always morphing along the way towards no particular endpoint. Her works can be read as alternative maps for navigating visual and linguistic representation out of rigid categorisation.

Fleckner mostly works with woodcut printing – a simple and immediate technique that allows for differences, errors and a loss of control. As a natural material, wood is apt for Fleckner's exploration of the collisions between the body and various cultural norms. Fragments of text or drawing are often added in pencil as interaction or dialogue with the graphics works. Fleckner's practice expands from the woodcuts to include cast concrete sculptures, drawings, text work and performative readings.

Ester Fleckner (b. 1983 in Denmark) is educated at The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen, Denmark and from Goldsmiths University, London. Fleckner has had several solo exhibitions including at Malmö Konsthall in Sweden (2017-2018), Barbara Wien Gallery in Berlin (2017), Overgaden Institute of Contemporary Art in Copenhagen (2016) and Avlskarl Gallery in Copenhagen (2015). Fleckner's work has been part of numerous group shows including at Galeria Municipal da Boavista, Lisbon, Portugal (2018), Kunstnernes Hus, Oslo, Norway (2016), LWL-Museum für Kunst und Kultur, Münster, Germany (2016), Schwules Museum, Berlin, Germany (2015), National Art Museum of Ukraine, Kiev (2016), Latvian Centre for Contemporary Art, Riga, Latvia (2015), KUMU Art Museum in Estonia (2014) and Dalian Art Museum in China (2014). Since graduation in 2013 Fleckner has been awarded with grants and prizes counting work grants from The Danish Arts Foundation (2014-2017), honorary grant from Aage og Yelva Nimbs Fond (2016), Den Hielmstjerne-Rosencroneske Stiftelse (2016), Art Brussels Solo Prize (2016) and Ole Haslunds Kunstnerfond (2015). Fleckner is living and working in Berlin and Møn, Denmark.

Contraposer

2018

Woodcut on paper, pencil

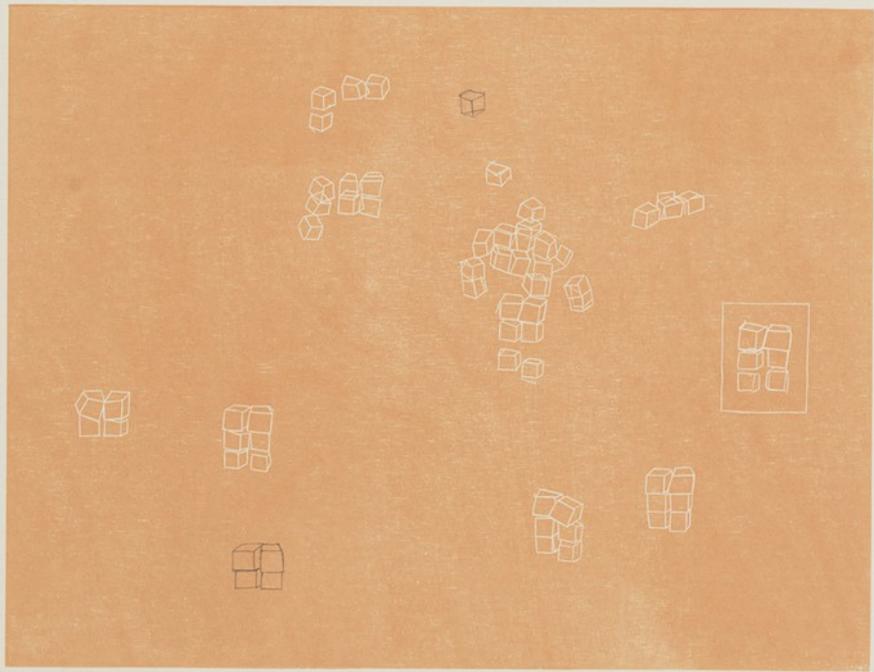
Paper 106 x 78 cm, frame 112 x 84 x 4 cm

Contraposer (Back-facing), 2018, and *Contraposer (Torso Etude)*, 2018, are part of a series of woodcut prints that play with imagery of human anatomy, physical ideals and posing.

Inspired by the generalised body constructed in anatomy posters and physiology textbooks Fleckner has in this series constructed hand-drawn, robot-like figures in different compositions and fragmentations. Fleckner is playing with how images of the 'normal body' can be constructed and deconstructed; how they might fail to represent accurately, or fall outside of expectations, to represent in other ways.

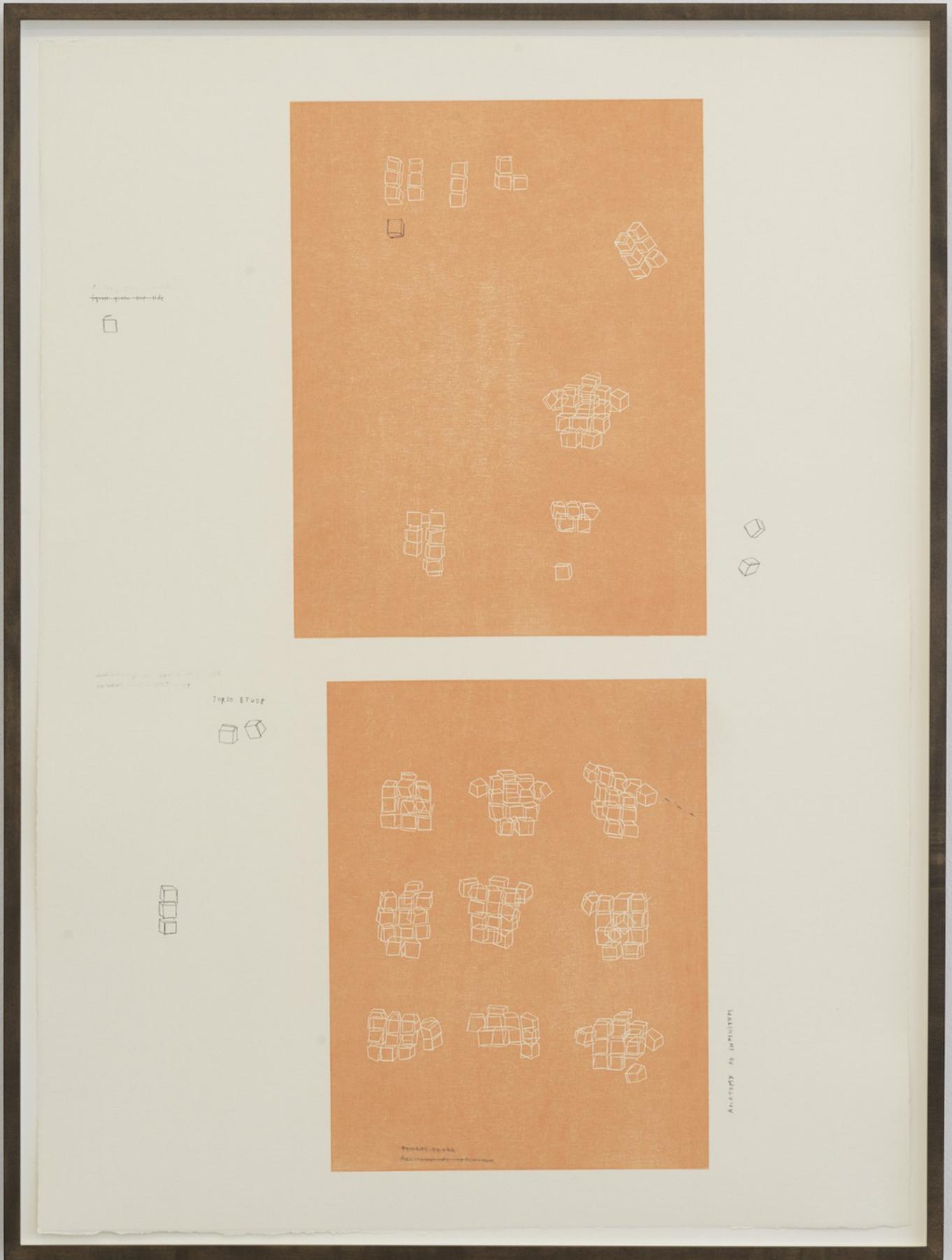
Another reference point in this pursuit, is Mary Shelley's early sci-fi novel, in which Dr. Frankenstein constructs a monster from fragments of many different people. People who according to a queer reading proposed by Elizabeth Freeman perhaps were of different genders and who had lived at different times. In her works Fleckner is taking the idea of the fragmented and rejected body into a meeting with the anatomy poster unfolding failing, sci-fi or otherwise queered gestures and crippled characters posing in a game where there is no ideal endpoint, or final form.

Photos by Nick Ash



slow down - contrast
A 1
Back-facing

Contraposer (Back-facing), 2018



Contraposer (Torso Etude), 2018

All models are wrong, some are useful, 1-8

2017

Woodcut on paper, pencil, concrete

Paper size: 86 x 111 cm

Concrete sculptures Ø: 7-12 cm

All models are wrong, some are useful is a series of works in different media presented at Galerie Barbara Wien, Berlin in 2017. The central trope of the display is the polyhedron, a complex geometrical figure that consists of six or more plane faces.

A row of woodcut prints depict unfolded polyhedrons in imprecise hand-drawings, humorously undermining their claim to mathematical stringency. Comments pencilled in the margins relate to societal expectations of normal and able bodies.

Presented alongside the graphic works are three-dimensional concrete sculptures based on the blueprints from the woodcut graphics. Knotty and uneven, these polyhedrons insist on the productive outcomes of breaking away from linearity and exactitude, championing organic and human imperfections.

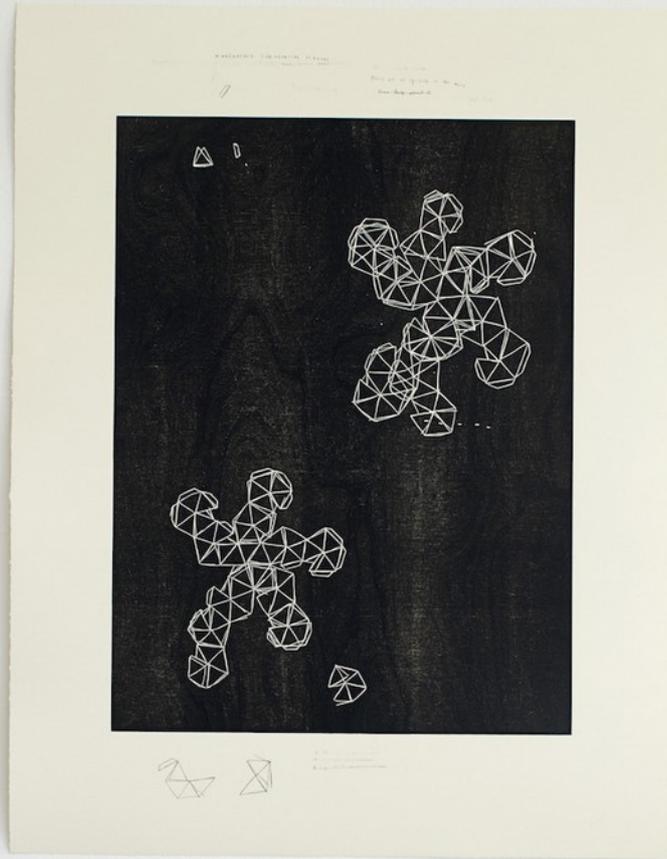
Compounds of convictions, 2017, is a single woodcut text piece that moves away from the abstract formal language of the rest of *All models are wrong, some are useful* to function as a kind of preface. Here, each statement is followed by its own negation, presenting a logic that is at once impossible and real: rules and systems meet bodies and experiences that do not match, yet have, as if in spite, materialised.

Also included in the exhibition was a series of five woodcut prints depicting unfolded geometrical spheres in different sizes entitled *Companions*, 1-5, 2017. Elongated and upright like a crooked spine, these abstract motifs differ from the other series in that each print shows an alternative version of the same figure. Because *Companions* does not feature corresponding concrete sculptures, the wall works address themselves instead to the body of the viewer.

Photos by Nick Ash



All models are wrong, some are useful, 2017, installation view Barbara Wien, Berlin



All models are wrong, some are useful, 1, 2017

Woodcut on paper and pencil 86 x 111 cm, concrete sculptures ø: 9,5 & 10 cm

NAVIGATING GEOMETRICAL SPACES

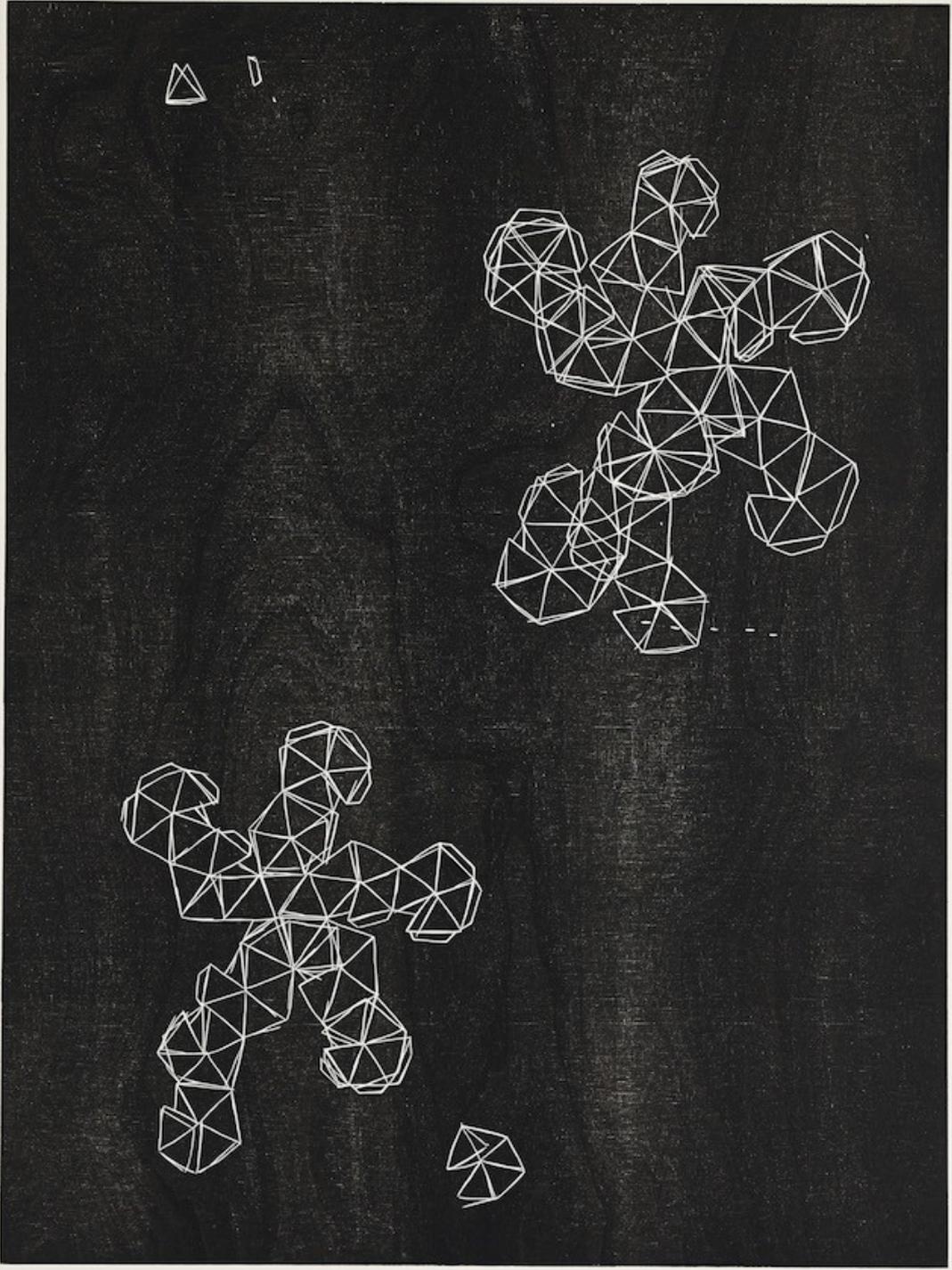
Approximate the shape of a sphere with a polyhedron

How many faces?

How many edges?

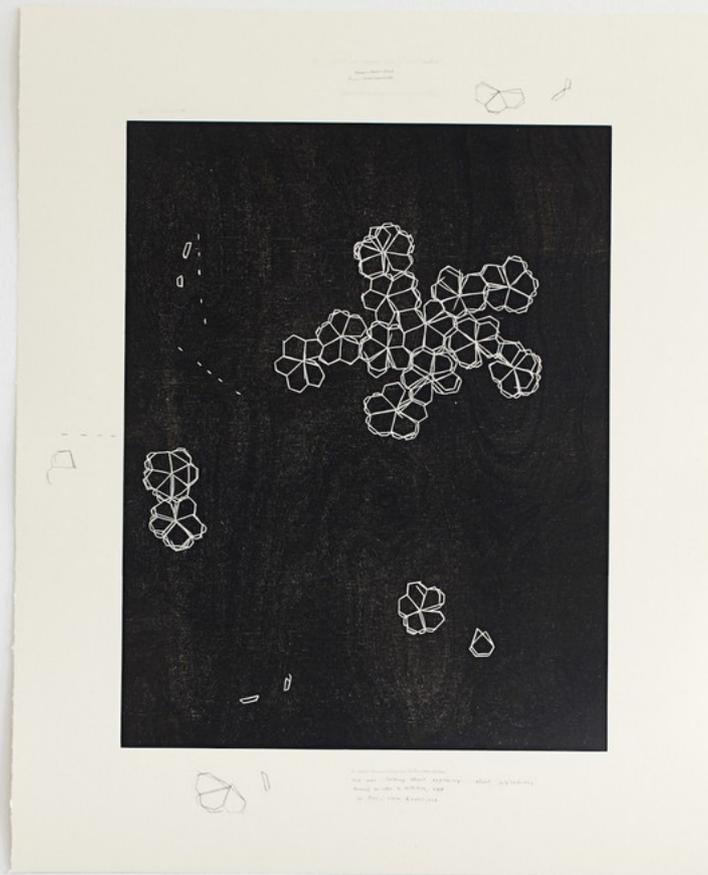
How many vertices?

How many squares?



How many faces?
How many edges?
How many vertices?

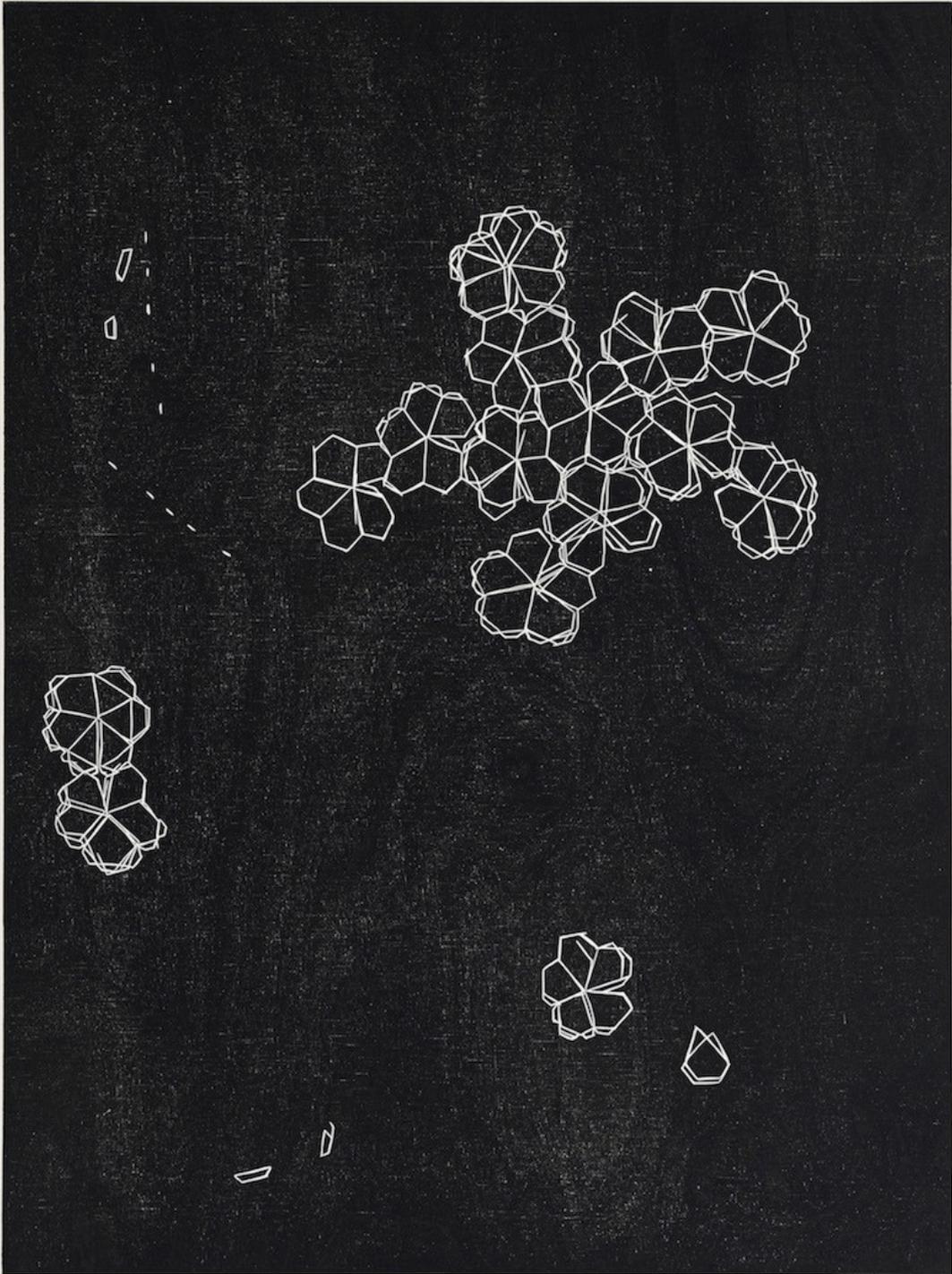
All models are wrong, some are useful, 1, 2017, detail



All models are wrong, some are useful, 2, 2017
Woodcut on paper and pencil 86 x 111 cm, concrete sculpture Ø: 10 cm

Handwritten text at the top of the page, partially obscured.

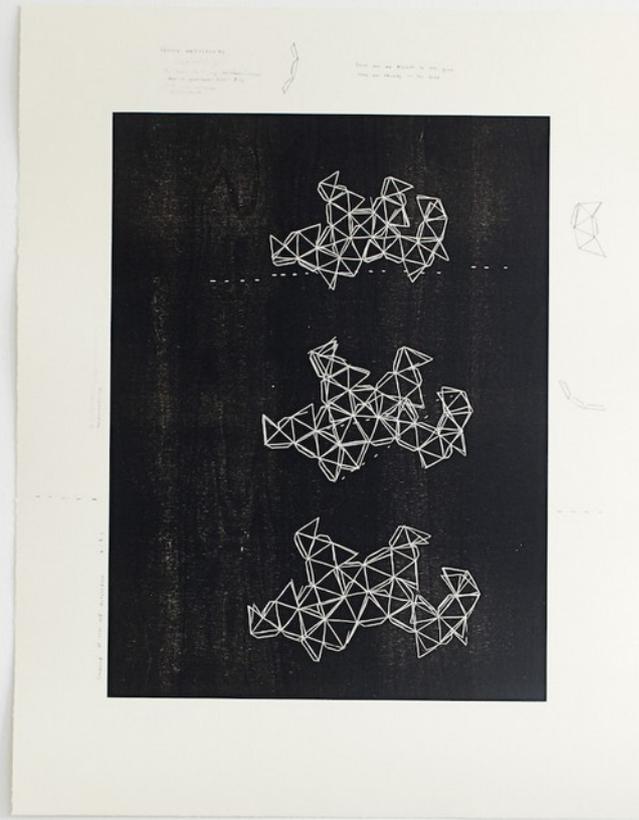
Handwritten text below the top line.



Handwritten text at the bottom of the page, partially obscured.



All models are wrong, some are useful, 2, 2017, detail



All models are wrong, some are useful, 3, 2017

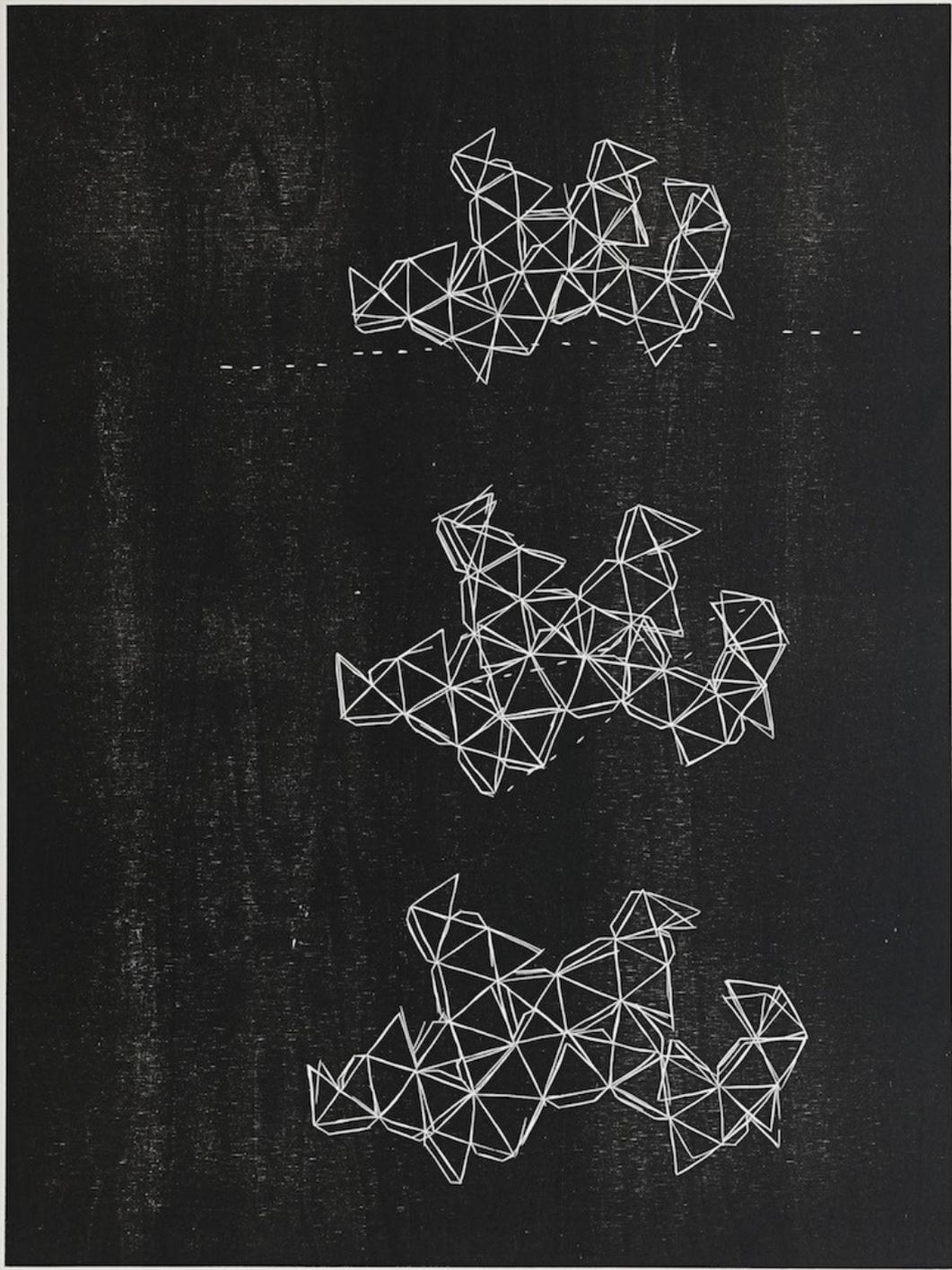
Woodcut on paper and pencil 86 x 111 cm, concrete sculptures Ø: 8, 9 & 10 cm

SIMPLE UNFOLDINGS

[Faint handwritten notes]
The same model by ~~the same~~
How is ~~the same~~ *the*
[unclear]
[unclear]



There are no kinks in the spine
there are kinks in the spine



[Faint vertical text]

[Faint vertical text]

All models are wrong, some are useful, 3, 2017, detail



*All models are wrong,
some are useful, 2
2017, detail
Ø: 10 cm*

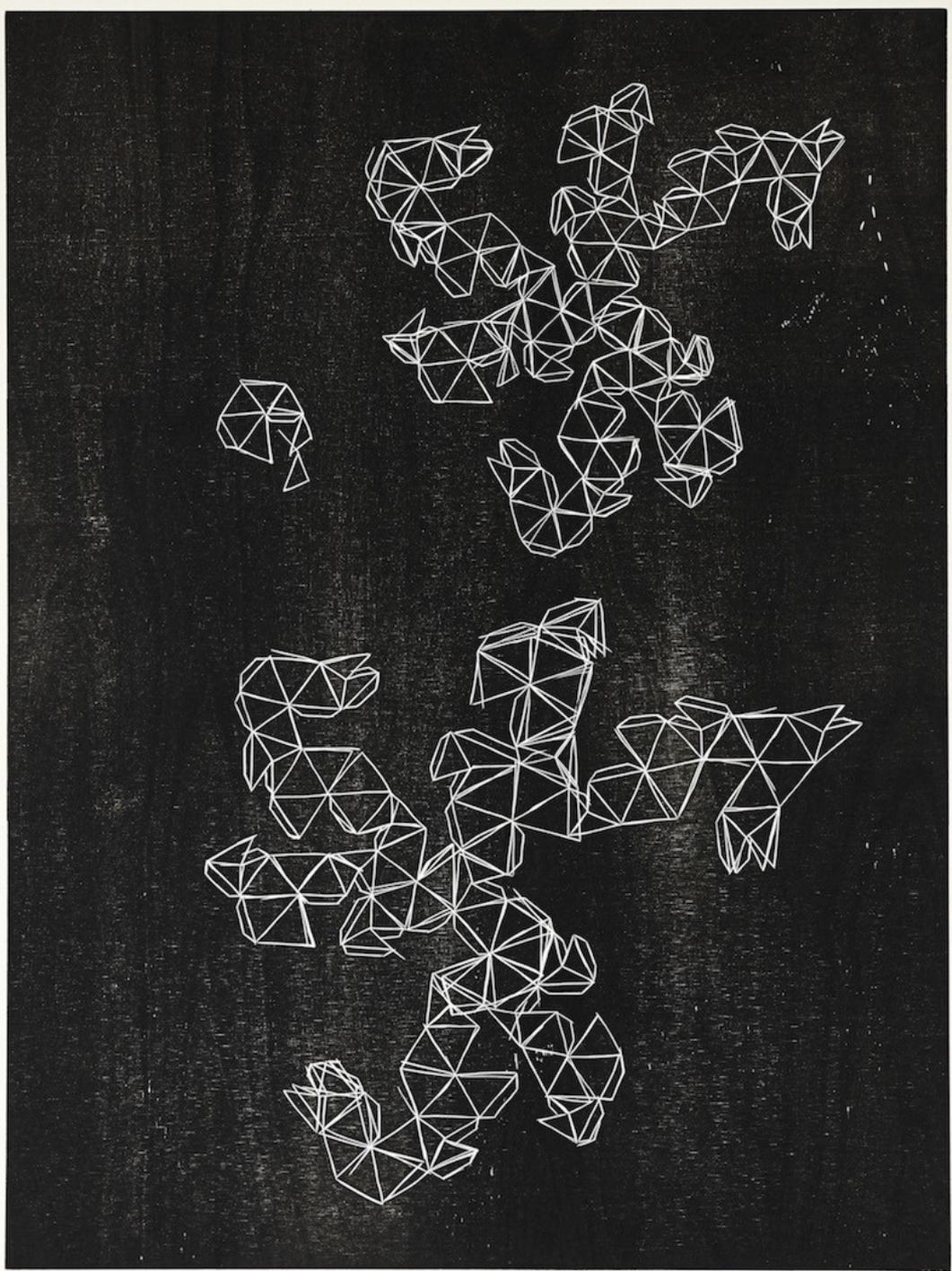
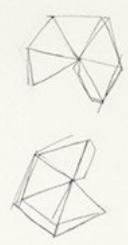


*All models are wrong,
some are useful, 3,
2017, detail
Ø: 8 cm*

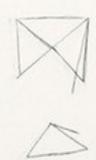
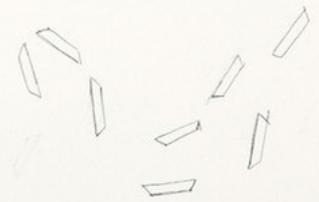
cut and fold

if not

~~from the desire for crisp vertices~~
from the desire for crisp vertices



long continuous



All models are wrong, some are useful, 6, 2017
Woodcut on paper, pencil 86 x 111 cm, detail without concrete sculptures

...
cut and fold

if not.

~~I was transcribing a talk or poem~~
From the desire for crisp arrivals



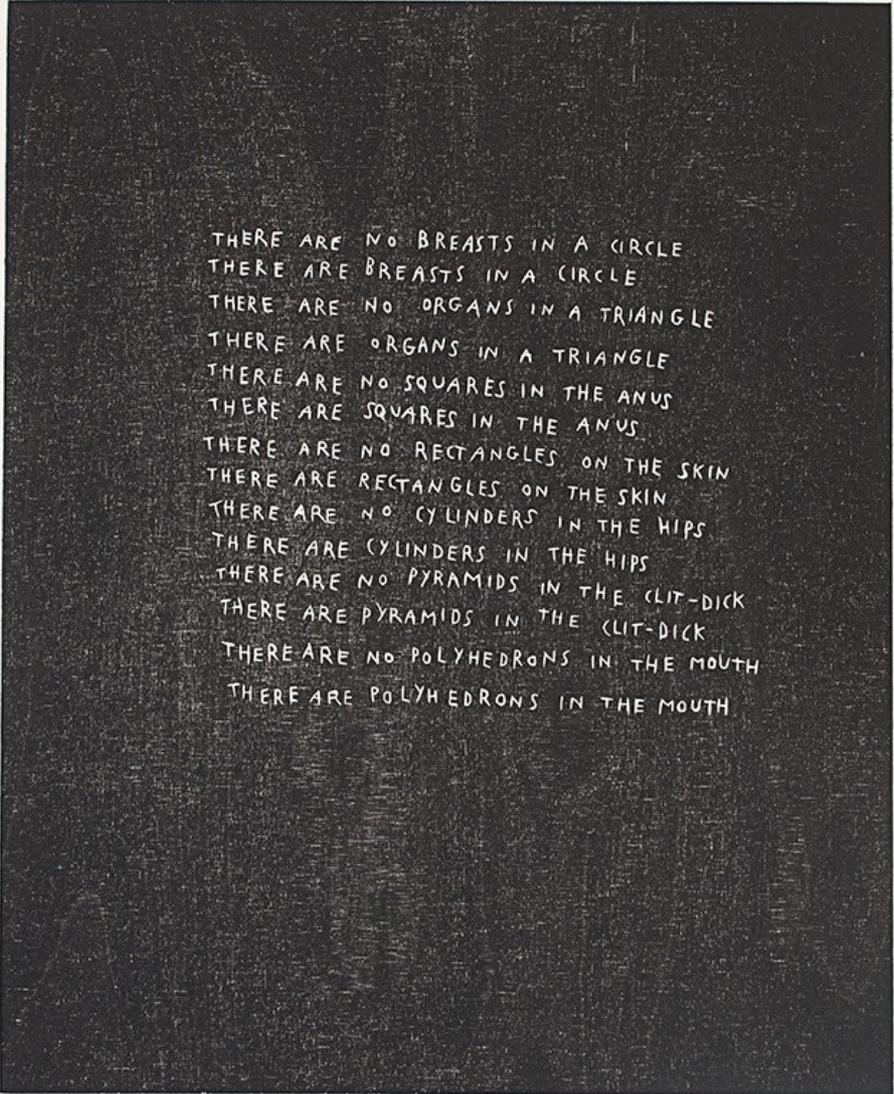
NAVIGATING GEOMETRICAL STANZAS



...
there are no squares in the anus
~~some facts about it~~



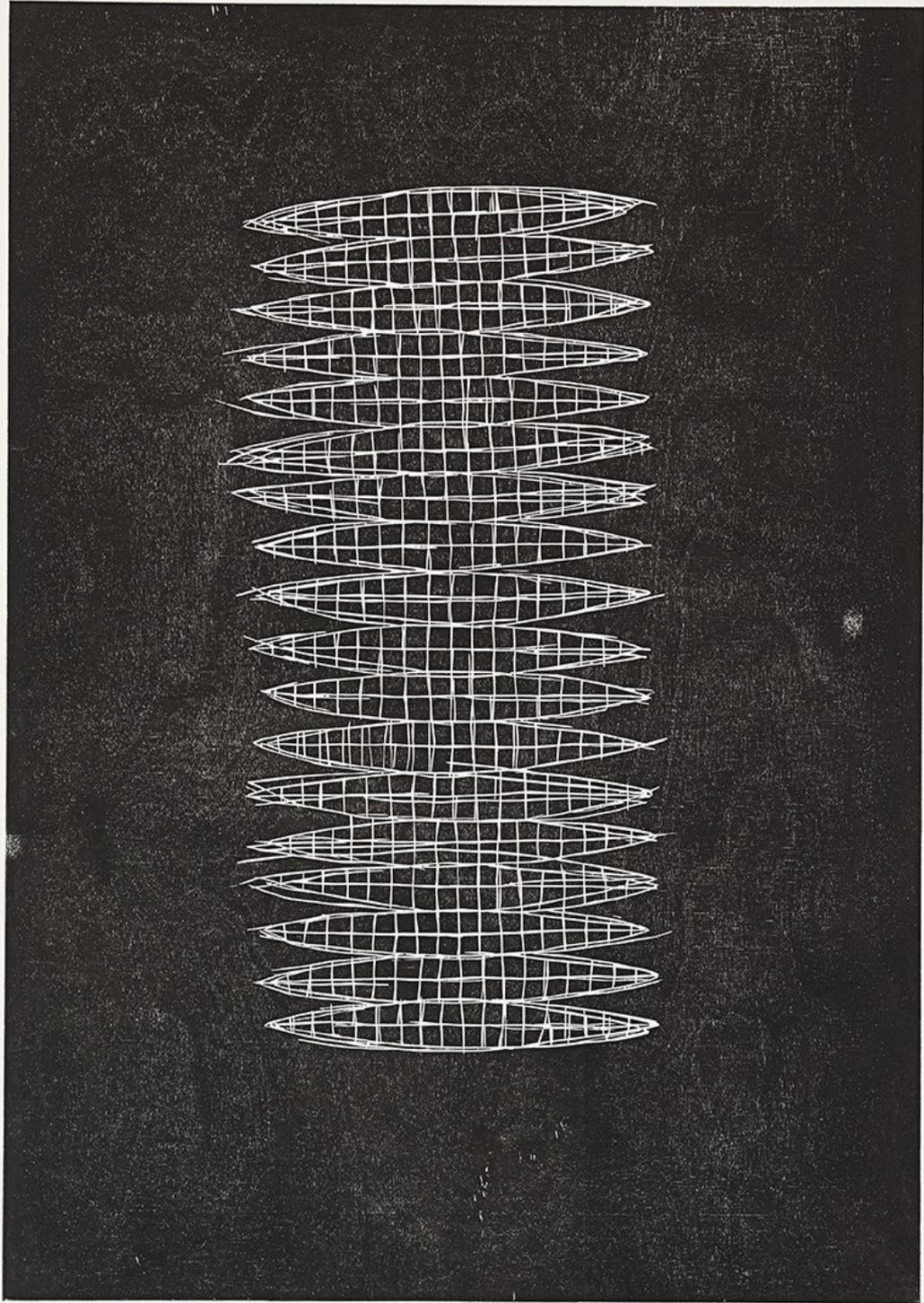
All models are wrong, some are useful, 2017, details



THERE ARE NO BREASTS IN A CIRCLE
THERE ARE BREASTS IN A CIRCLE
THERE ARE NO ORGANS IN A TRIANGLE
THERE ARE ORGANS IN A TRIANGLE
THERE ARE NO SQUARES IN THE ANUS
THERE ARE SQUARES IN THE ANUS
THERE ARE NO RECTANGLES ON THE SKIN
THERE ARE RECTANGLES ON THE SKIN
THERE ARE NO CYLINDERS IN THE HIPS
THERE ARE CYLINDERS IN THE HIPS
THERE ARE NO PYRAMIDS IN THE CLIT-DICK
THERE ARE PYRAMIDS IN THE CLIT-DICK
THERE ARE NO POLYHEDRONS IN THE MOUTH
THERE ARE POLYHEDRONS IN THE MOUTH



Companions, installation view, Galerie Barbara Wien, Berlin, 2017



Companions, 3, 2017, woodcut on paper, 96 x 71 cm

A closet does not connect under the bed, 1-20

2016

Woodcut on paper, pencil

14 prints 104 x 80 cm, 6 prints 74 x 57 cm

A closet does not connect under the bed is a series of 20 woodcut prints that investigates the closet as both metaphor and object. In these works Fleckner deconstructs the furniture piece into squares, lines and rectangles which are reassembled in sprawling compositions. Meanwhile texts relating to desire, secrecy and shame are penciled onto the prints, highlighting the significance of the closet as the metaphorical hiding-place for deviant sexualities and gender identities.

In Fleckner's woodcuts, the familiar shape of the closet disintegrates, and becomes instead wild and fantastic blueprints for something entirely third and unknown. The title is lifted from the poem *A Substance In A Cushion* by the experimental modernist writer Gertrude Stein. Here, abstraction is used to evade straight forward signification, thus protecting the privacy afforded by the closet, while simultaneously breaking down its suffocating constraints, daring to imagine radically different modes of being.

In the exhibition at Overgaden Institute of Art in Copenhagen 2016, the woodcuts were accompanied by an untitled suite of sculptures (also 2016) made up of twelve concrete casts of various elements of old wooden closets.

Photos by Anders Sune Berg

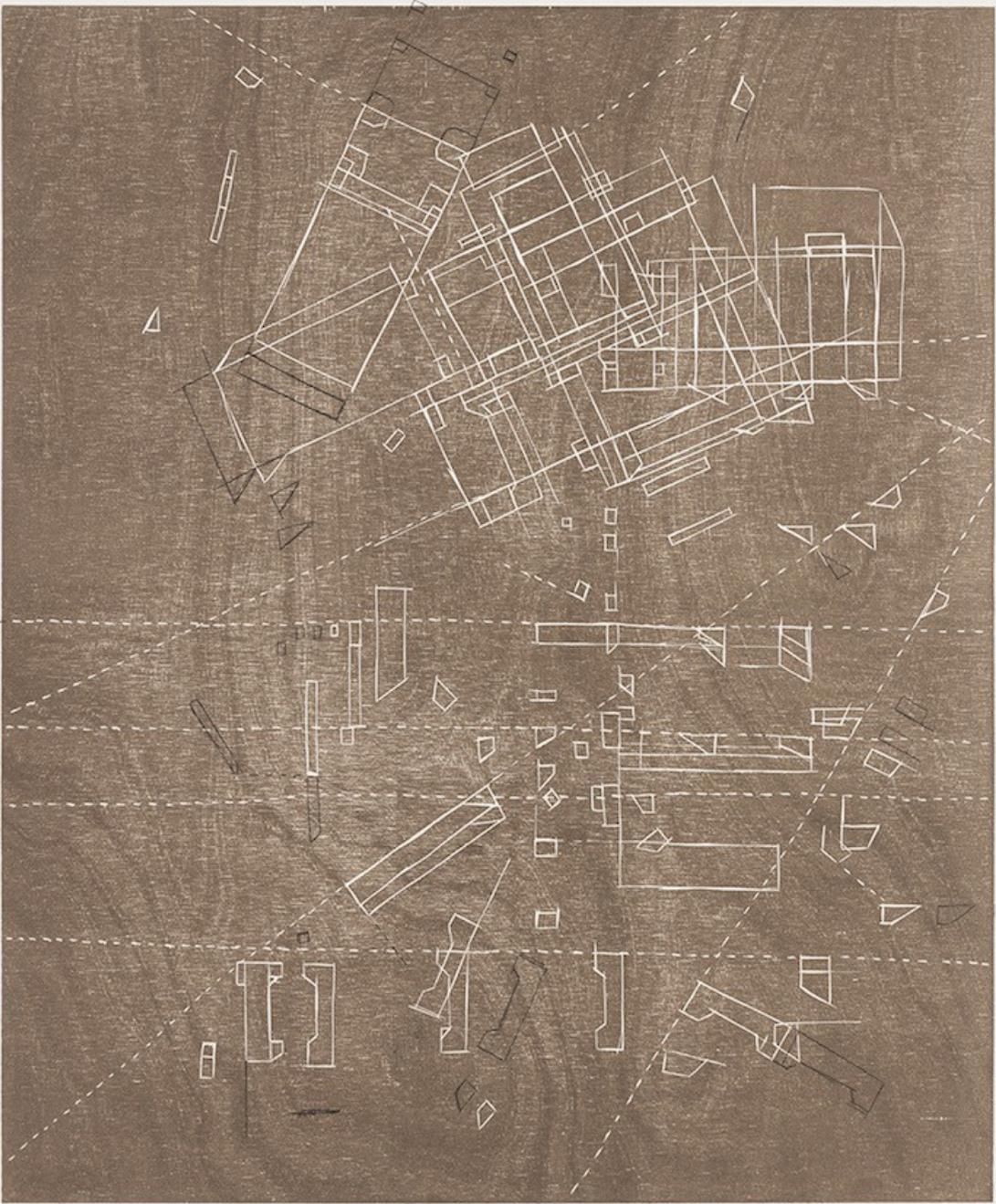


A closet does not connect under the bed, installation view, Overgaden Institute of Art Copenhagen, 2016



Untitled, 2016, details, 12 concrete casts, various sizes

A metaphor has no device
a metaphor has no sense *
a metaphor has no closet
~~a metaphor has no dimension~~
a metaphor doesn't know about it

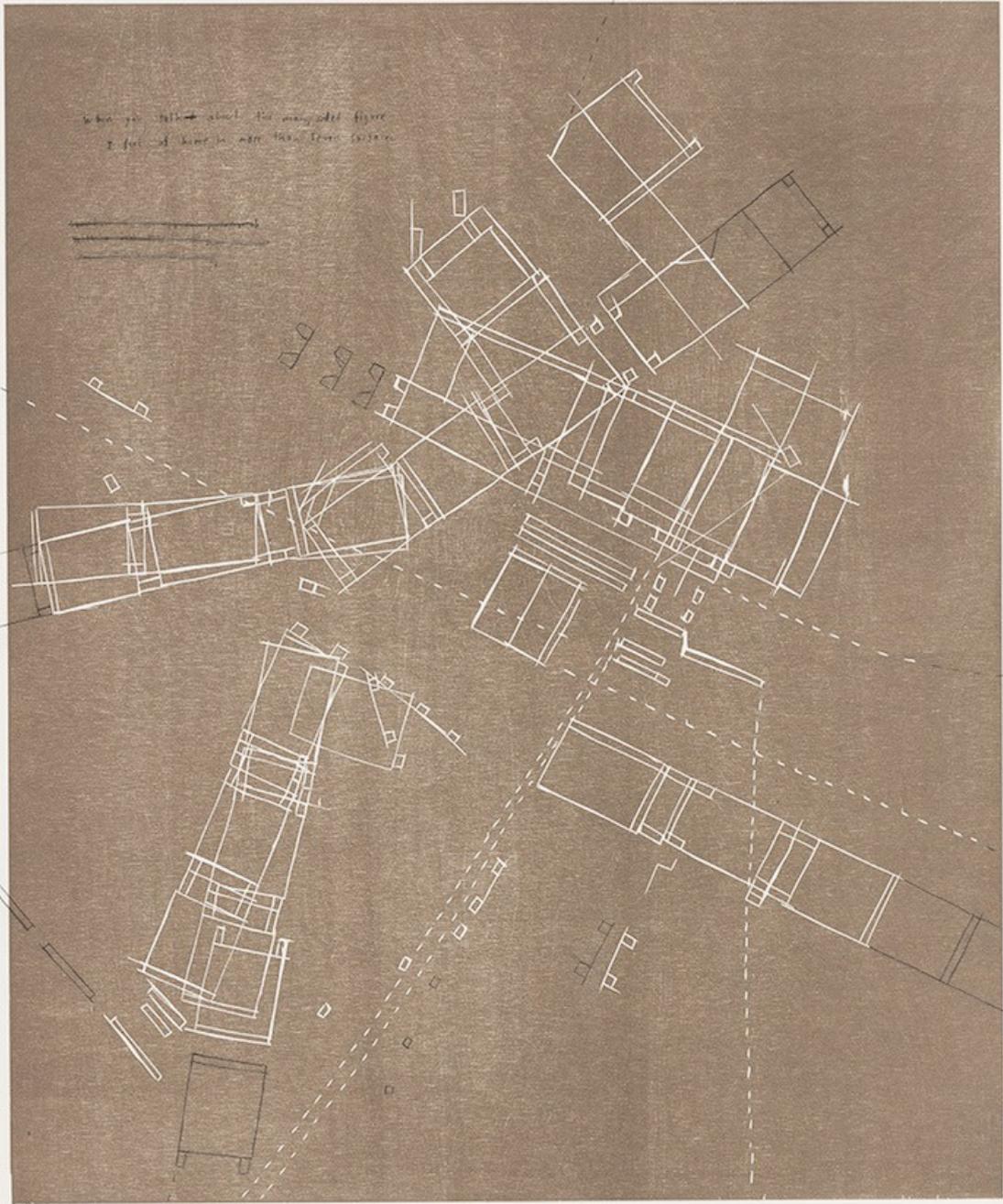


copy of an entry piece by piece
~~A frame in entry~~ *
Human
Forms out to many, many to many and between two
~~and they connect and they connect~~

A closet does not connect under the bed, 2016, woodcut on paper, pencil, 104 x 80 cm



A closet does not connect under the bed, 2016, woodcut on paper, pencil, 104 x 80 cm



When you talk about the many other figures
I feel of home to more than four spaces.

How can I feel me without considering anxiety/pleasure/hor * *

word to discover
word to discover

A closet does not connect under the bed, 2016, woodcut on paper, pencil, 104 x 80 cm

A metaphor has no desire
a metaphor has no anus * *
a metaphor has no closet
~~a metaphor has no desire anus closet~~
a metaphor doesn't know about it



A closet does not connect under the bed
~~a closet does not know about it~~
Everything I know about closets

Muscular dress if you are telling me
where to or ~~in~~ what below ~~I have to~~
~~know~~
I am thriller too

A closet does not connect under the bed
2016, details



Installation view Malmö Konsthall 2017, photo: Helene Toresdotter



Untitled, 2016, installation view Malmö Konsthall 2017, photo: Helene Toresdotter

Manoeuvring Overload

2014

Concrete, iron

9 casts each 62 x 80 x 5,5 cm

In this work, overload is manoeuvred through reduction. In a play on minimalist sculpture, the series of nine clumsy concrete frames were cast from the outline of a standard Danish paving stone. The childish game of avoiding the lines between the tiles becomes inverted, when the space normally considered safe to tread on has been replaced with a void, and the liminal space of the frame constitutes the object itself. Due to the production process, the frames have been pushed by the weight of the concrete, and, as a result, each rectangle comes out slightly crooked. This work is a neat illustration of what happens when the template is determined not by the centre but by what falls outside of it.



Manoeuvring Overload, 2014, Avlskarl Gallery, Copenhagen, photo: Anders Sune Berg



Manoeuvring Overload, 2014, details, photo: Anders Sune Berg



Manoeuvring Overload, 2014, installation view Malmö Konsthall, photo: Helene Toresdotter

How to spell a sound that is physical

2014

Woodcut on paper, pencil

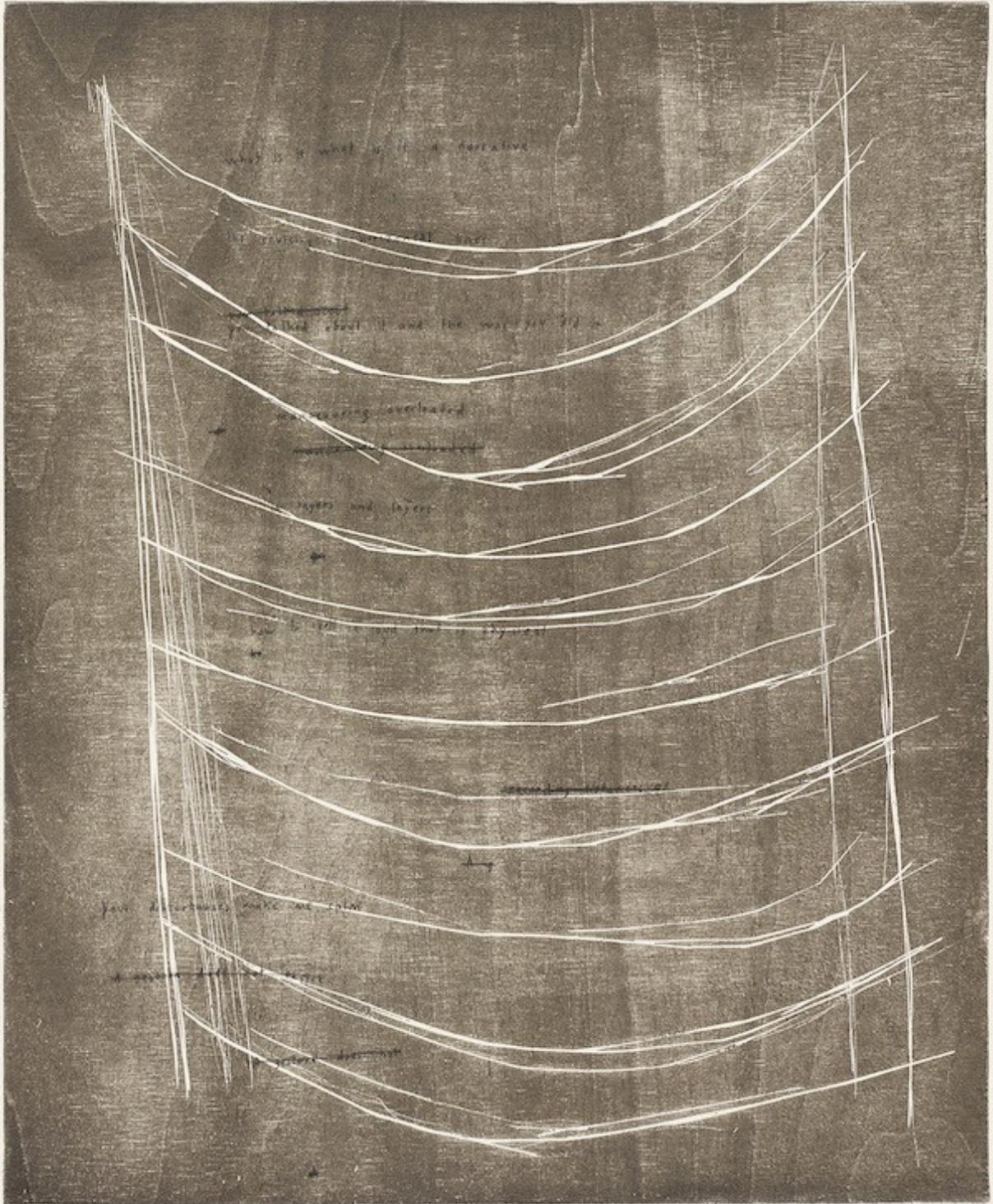
68 cm x 52 cm each

Exhibited together with *Manoeuvring Overload* first time at Avlskarl Gallery, Copenhagen, in 2015, *How to spell a sound that is physical* is a series of 28 woodcut prints. Like the sculptures, the wall works are abstractions of a template, this time that of lined sheets of notepaper. But these lines are not straight, heavy at the middle, they collapse like a clothing line. They are not fit for language, or perhaps it's other way around and your writing does not conform to size. Several attempts to represent blank pages as drawing overlay one another, creating a chaotic and intense pattern. Visible only up close, handwritten text fragments were scribbled directly onto the paper before printing. As such they have no causal or formal relationship to the drawn pages, but instead enter into a dialogue with them as motifs, reflecting on the tendencies of text and language to coerce experience into readymade formats and narrative structures that do not match the disorder and variation of life.

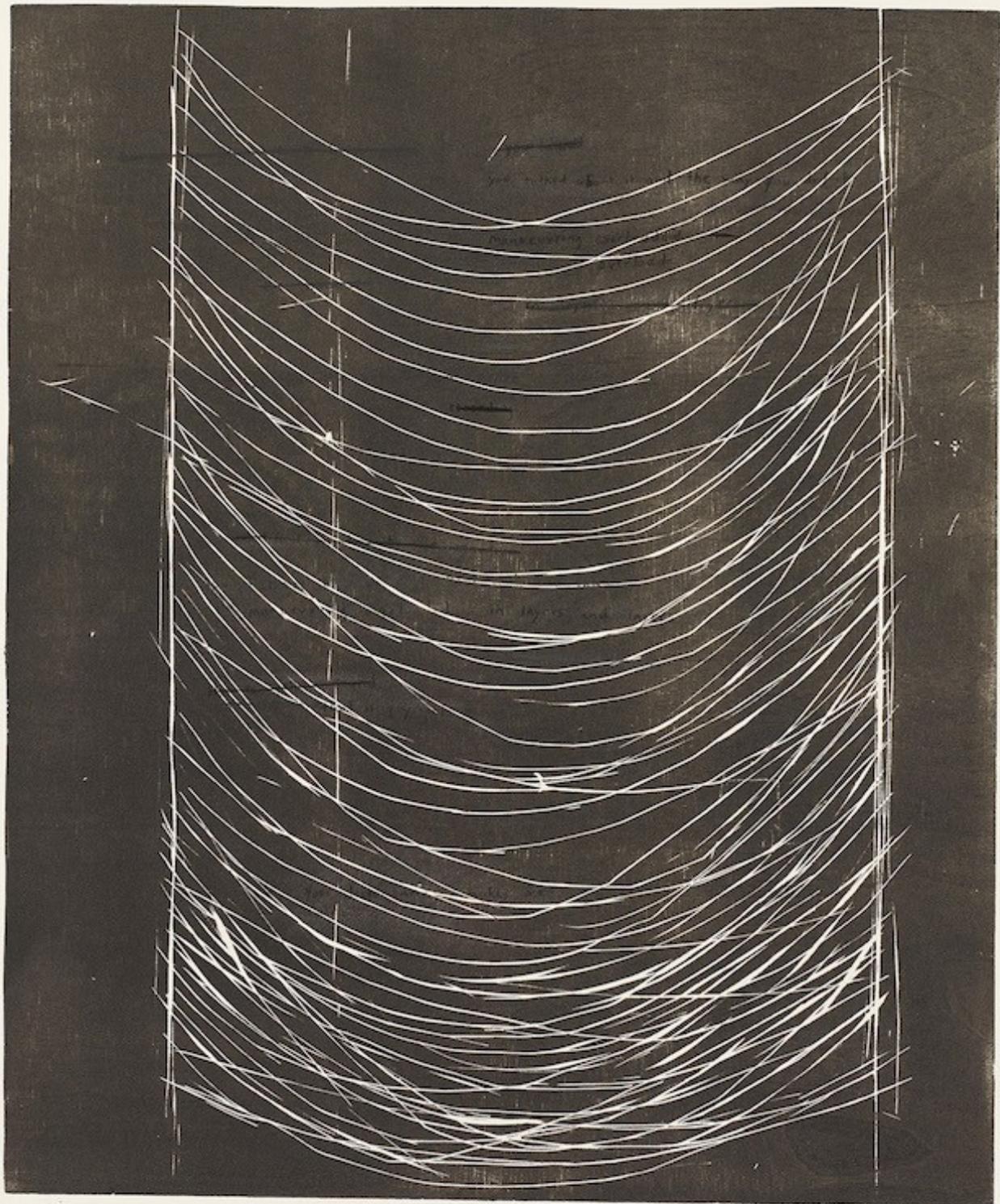
Photos by Anders Sune Berg



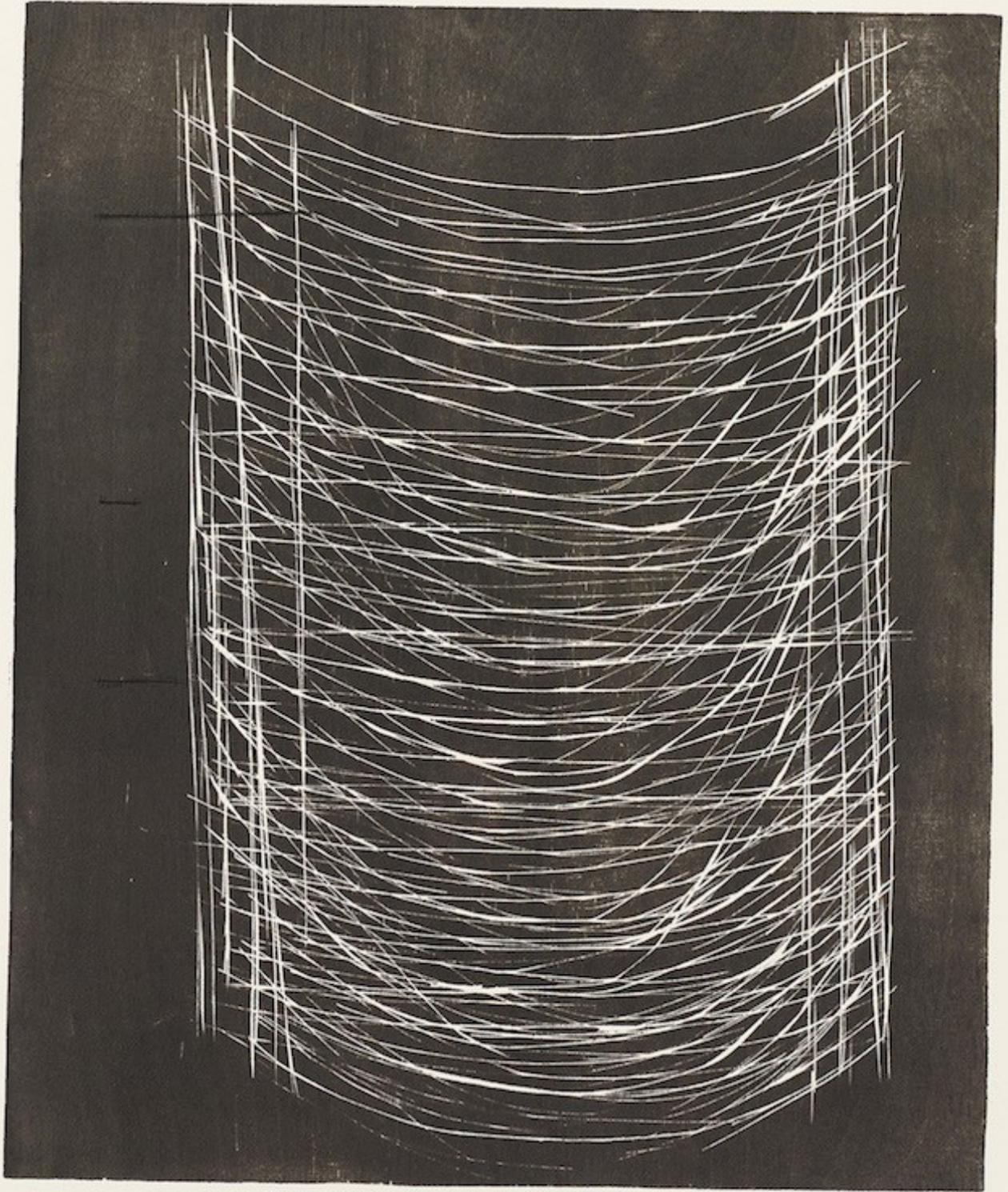
How to spell a sound that is physical and *Manoeuvring Overload*, top photo: Anders Sune Berg at Avlskarl Gallery, Copenhagen, bottom photo: HeleneToresdotter at Malmö Konsthall



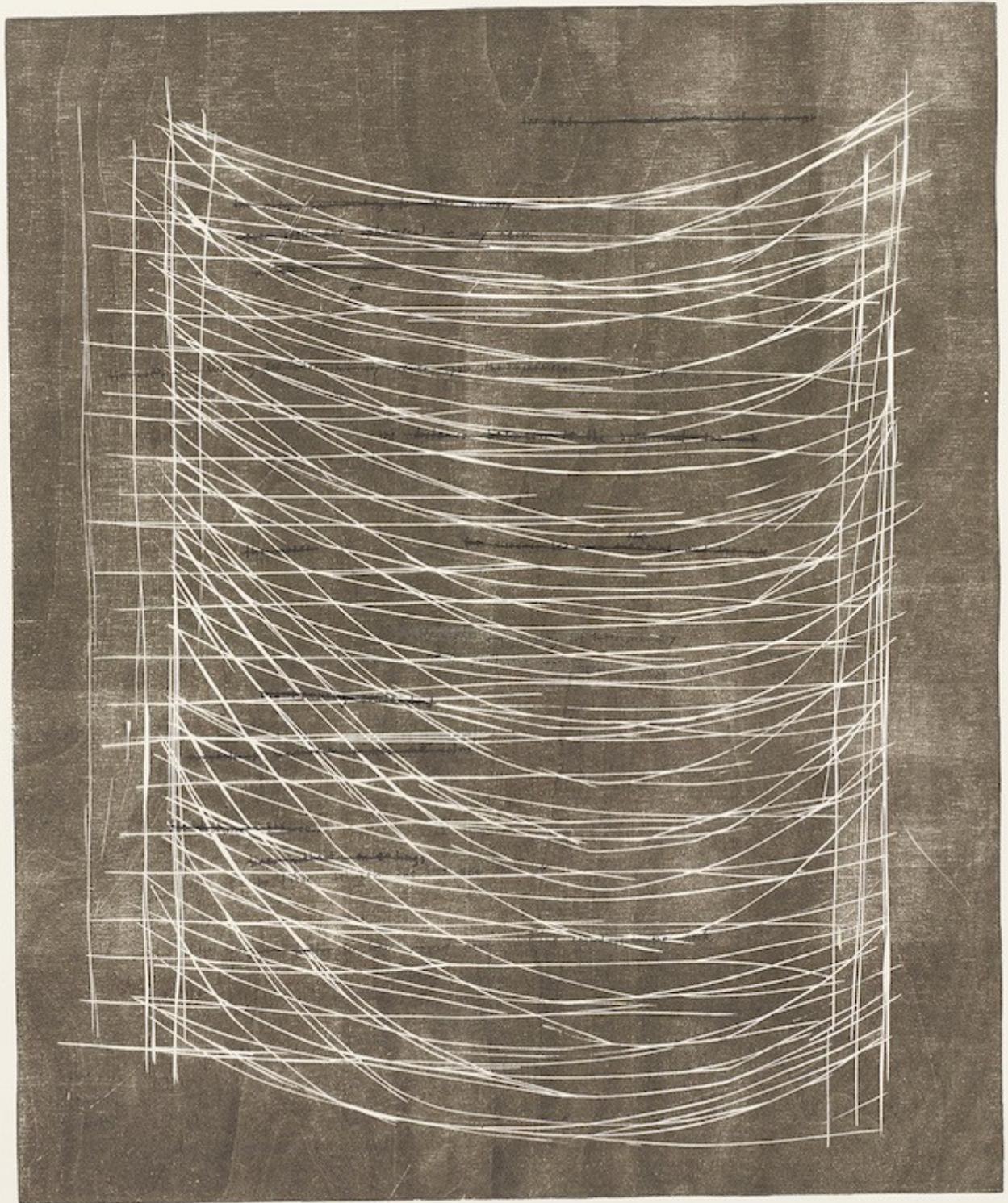
How to spell a sound that is physical, 2014, woodcut on paper, pencil, 68 x 52 cm



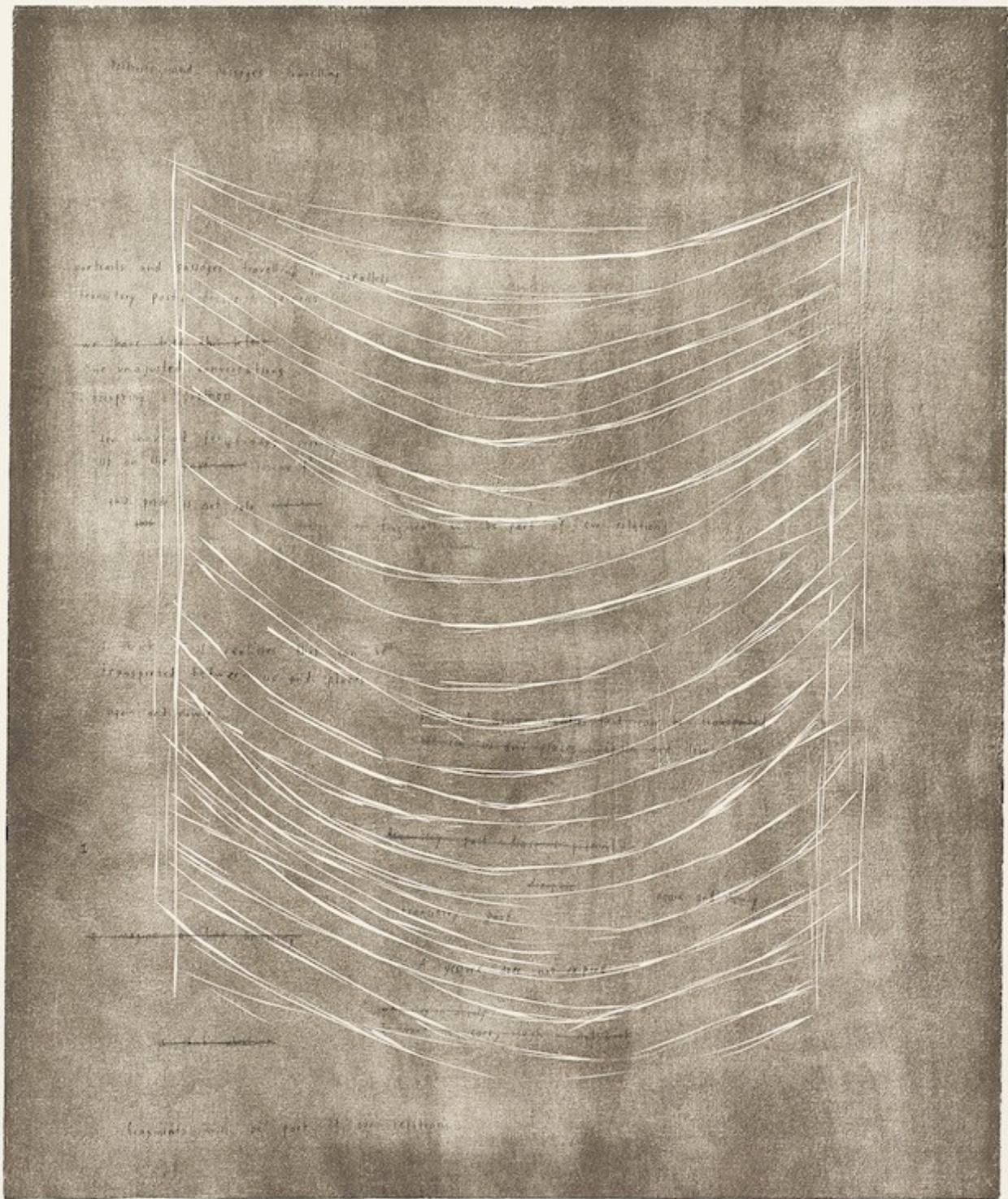
How to spell a sound that is physical, 2014, woodcut on paper, pencil, 68 x 52 cm



How to spell a sound that is physical, 2014, woodcut on paper, pencil, 68 x 52 cm



How to spell a sound that is physical, 2014, woodcut on paper, pencil, 68 x 52 cm



How to spell a sound that is physical, 2014, woodcut on paper, pencil, 68 x 52 cm

I navigate in collisions, 1-12

2014 – 2015

Woodcut on paper

101 x 75 cm

I navigate in collisions (2014-2015) is a series of woodcut prints that plays with the notion of the family tree, drawing into question the assumed naturalness of some relations over others. It is introduced by a poetic woodcut text piece in which Fleckner concludes: "I want to have a relation to you and understand that we already have one." What follows is a collection of pseudo-scientific drawings that purport to map out a system of signs indexing sexual organs – anus-stars and clit-dicks – familiar from elsewhere in Fleckner's practice. While some really take the skeletal shape of a tree, others look more like spreadsheets or charts of the night sky. To navigate in collisions, we begin to understand from this series, is to navigate outside of straight and linear patterns of relationality, in order to forge new and different connections and ways of belonging.

The first prints in the series, no. 1-8, were produced in 2014. The series has been expanded in 2015 with four more prints, no. 9-12.

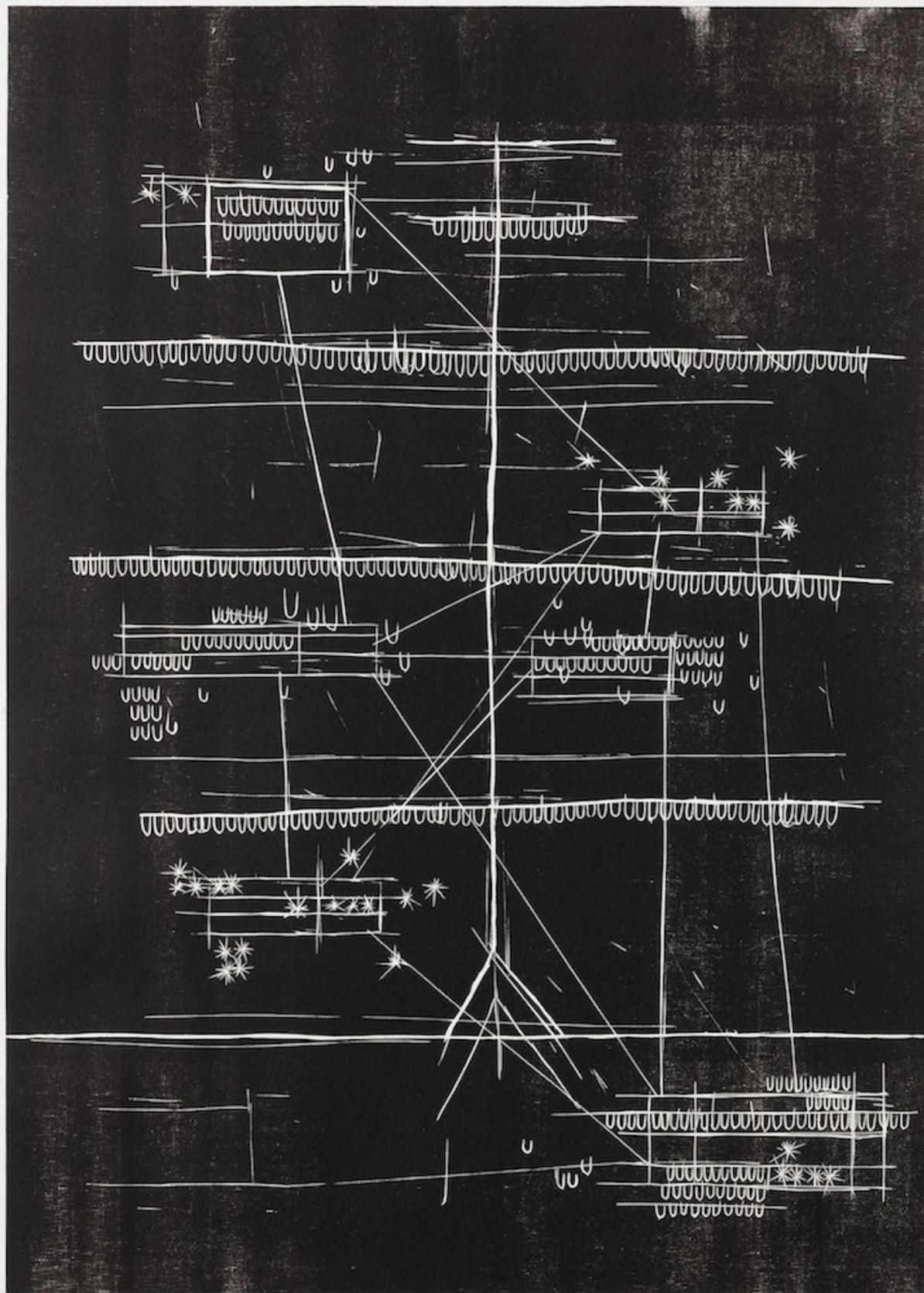


I navigate in collisions, 2014 – 2015, installation view C4 Projects, Copenhagen, photos: Ester Fleckner

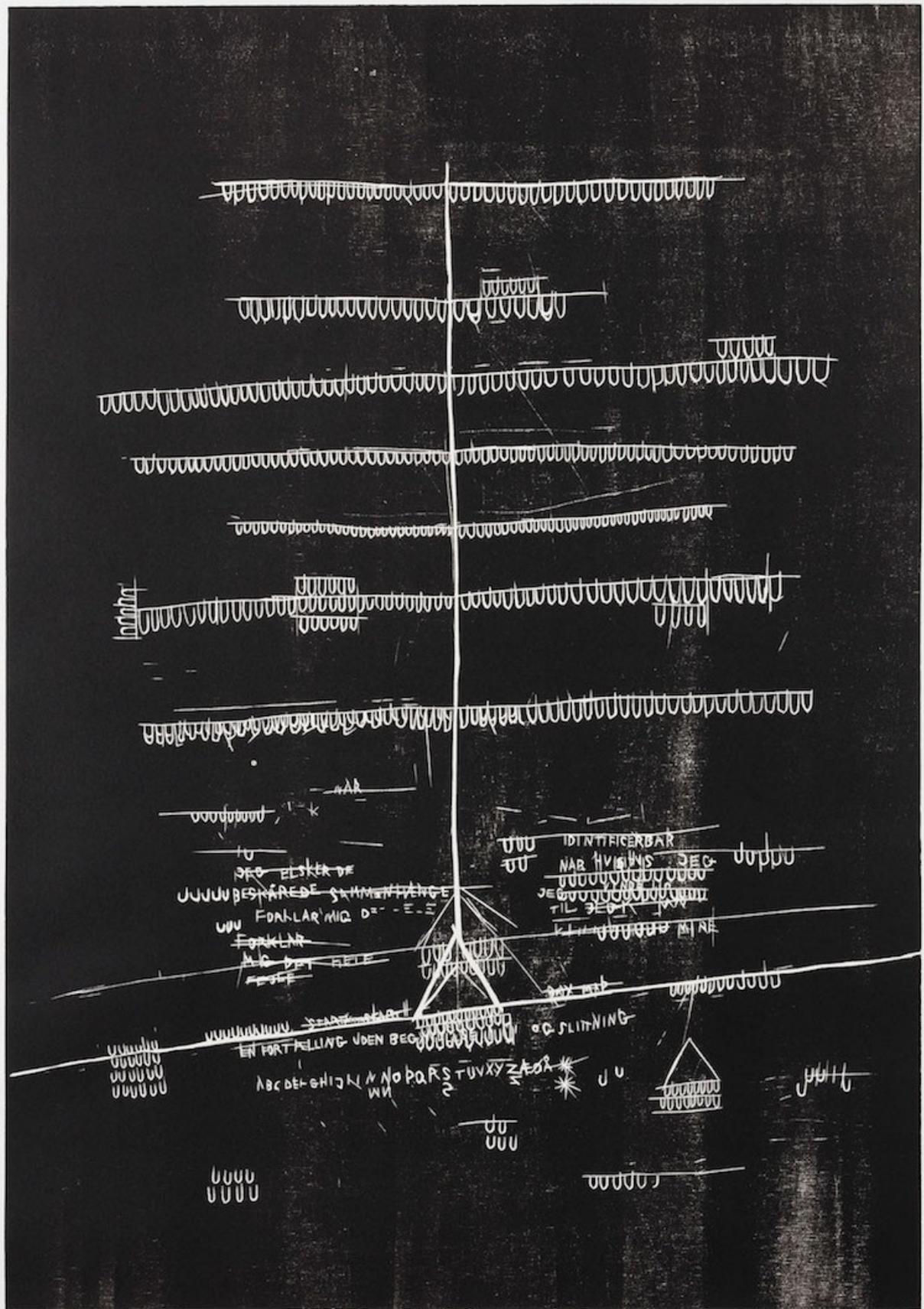
I NAVIGATE IN COLLISIONS

WOODCUTS BY ESTER FLECKMER

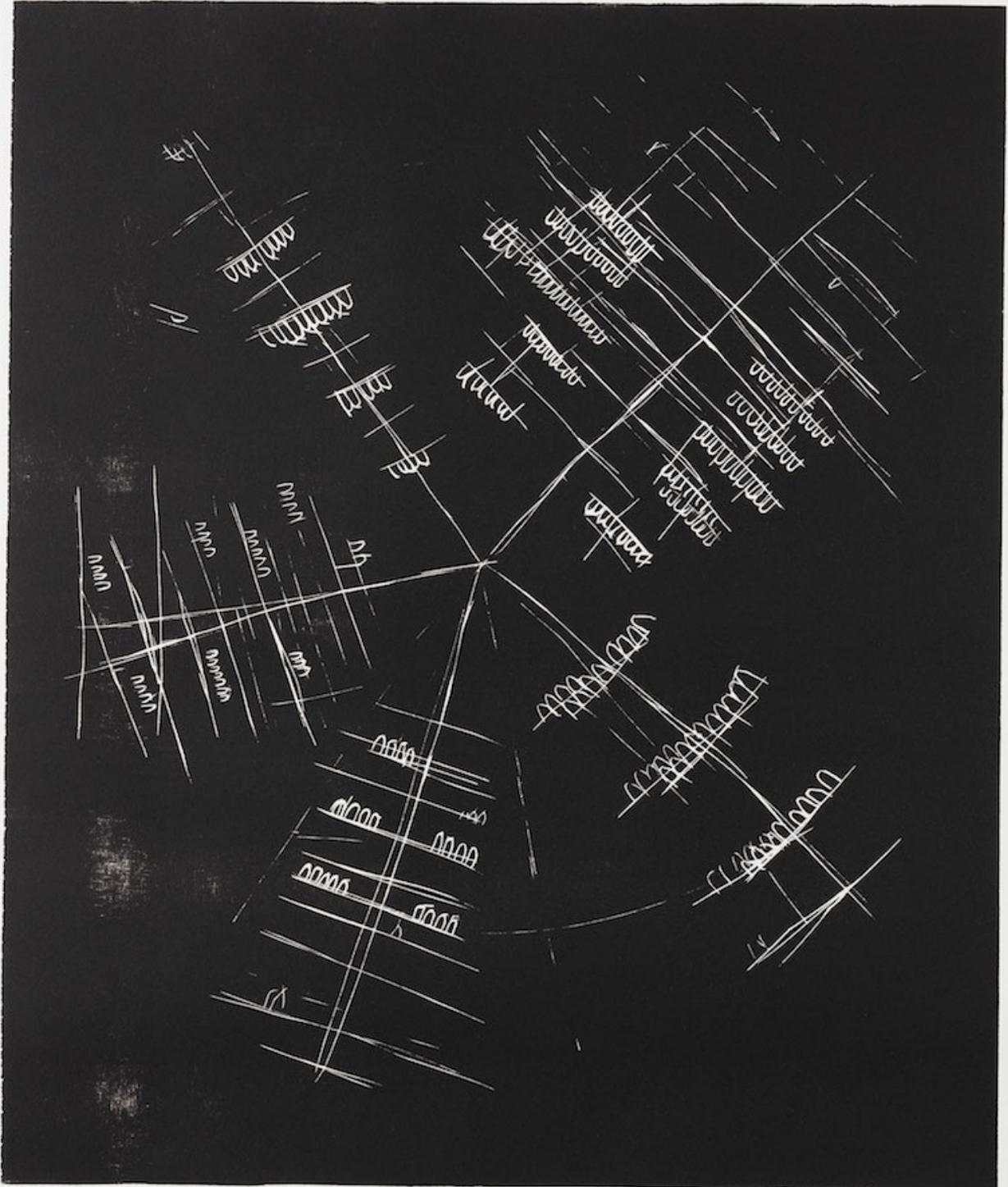
RELATION. YOU TALK IN A WAY ~~THAT~~ I DON'T KNOW BUT
THAT I'M MISSING. YOU TALK ABOUT BELONGING
DIFFERENTLY. I BIKE THROUGH THE CITY WITH MY EYES
CLOSED OR ALMOST. I THINK ABOUT IMAGES ONE
CAN RECOGNISE ONESELF IN OR NOT. I THINK ABOUT
FAMILY TREES. AND HAVING READ THAT IT DEMANDS
SYNCHRONICITY WITH THE PATTERNS AND RHYTHMS
OF A PLACE TO FEEL THAT ONE BELONGS. I WANT TO
HAVE A RELATION TO YOU AND UNDERSTAND THAT WE
ALREADY HAVE ONE.



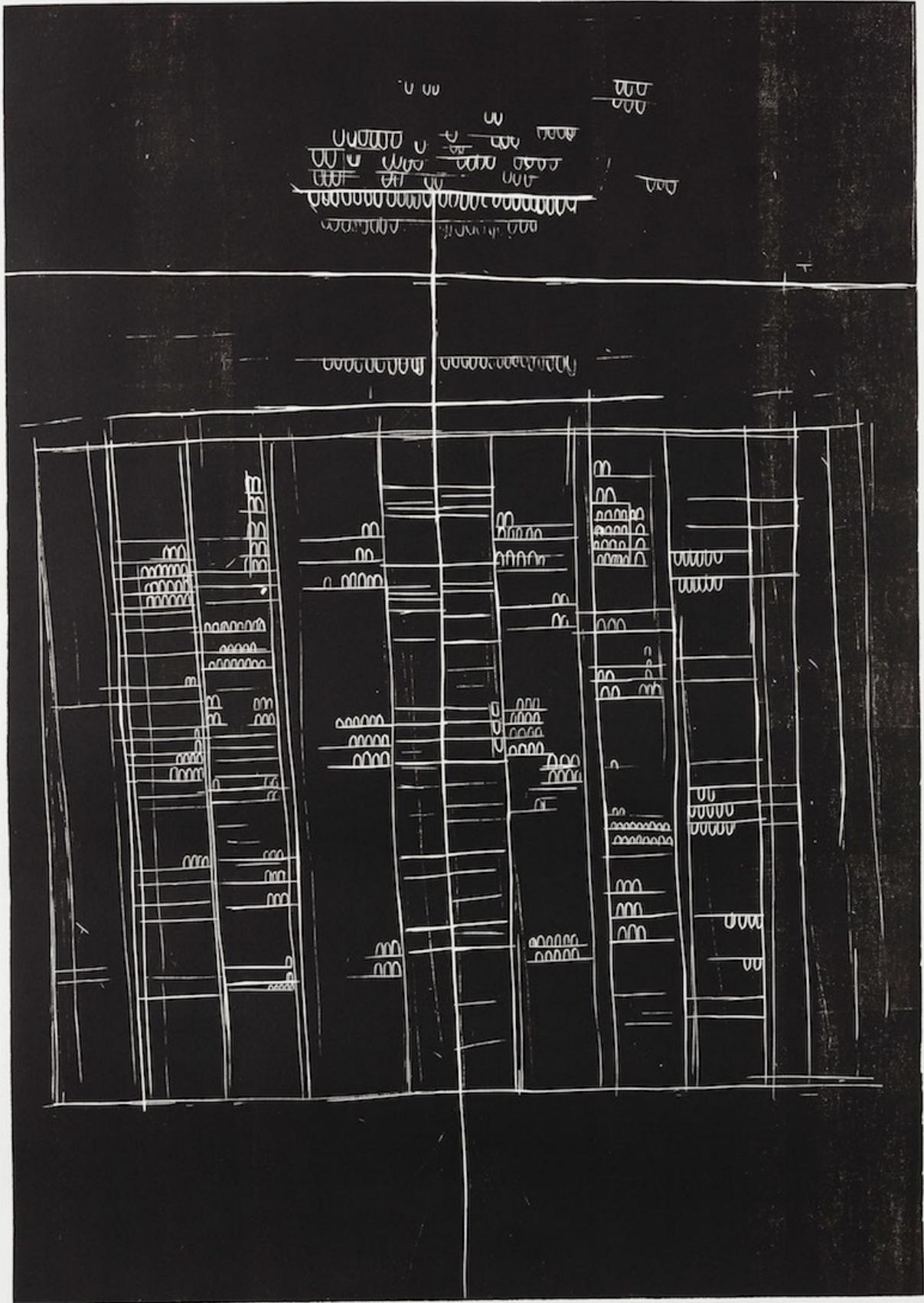
I navigate in collisions, 1, 2014 – 2015, woodcut on paper, 101 x 75 cm, photo: Anders Sune Berg



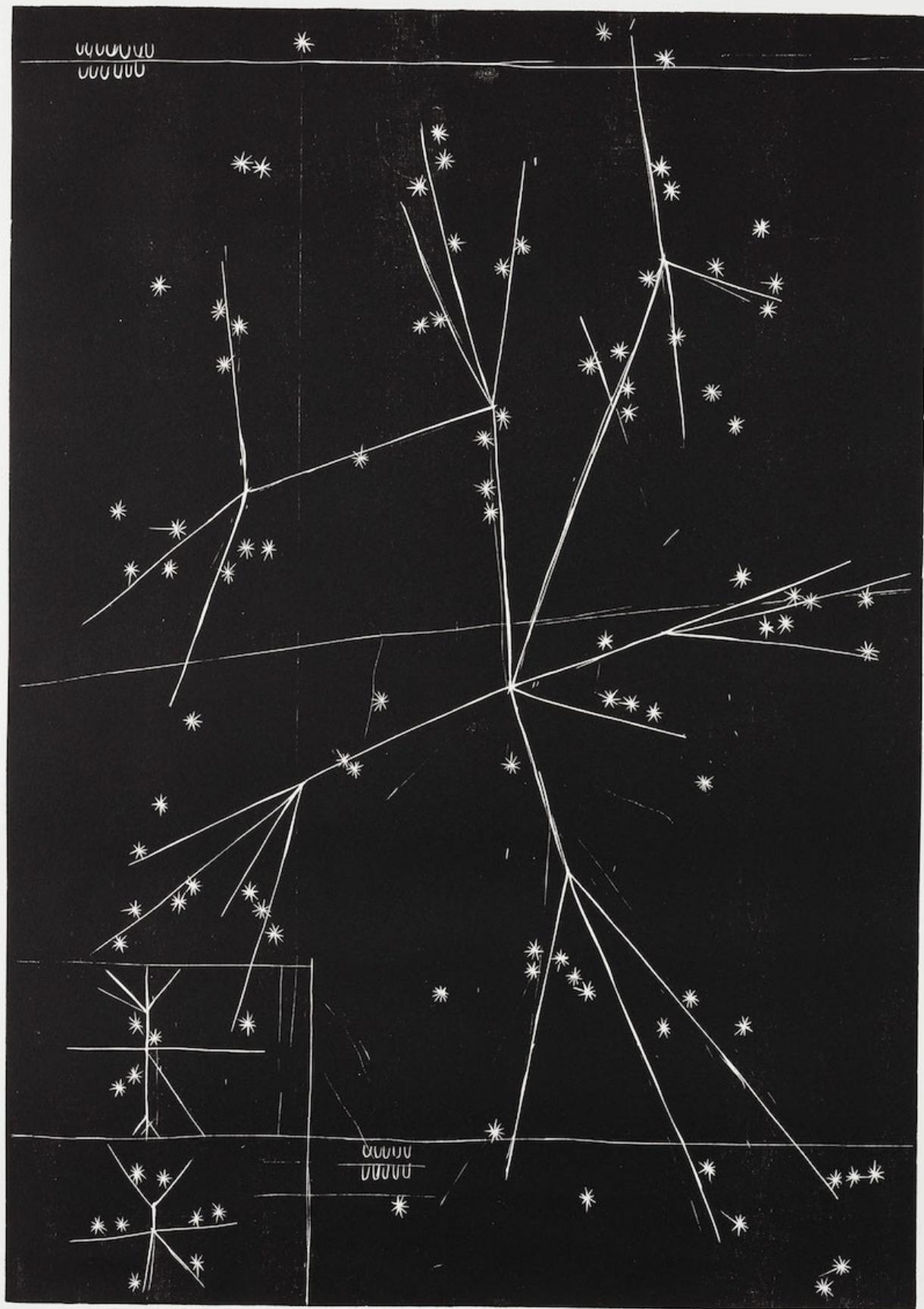
I navigate in collisions, 2, 2014 – 2015, woodcut on paper, 101 x 75 cm, photo: Anders Sune Berg



I navigate in collisions, 5, 2014 – 2015, woodcut on paper, 101 x 75 cm, photo: Anders Sune Berg



I navigate in collisions, 10, 2014 – 2015, woodcut on paper, 101 x 75 cm, photo: Anders Sune Berg



I navigate in collisions, 12, 2014 – 2015, woodcut on paper, 101 x 75 cm, photo: Anders Sune Berg

Arguments for desire

2013 –2018

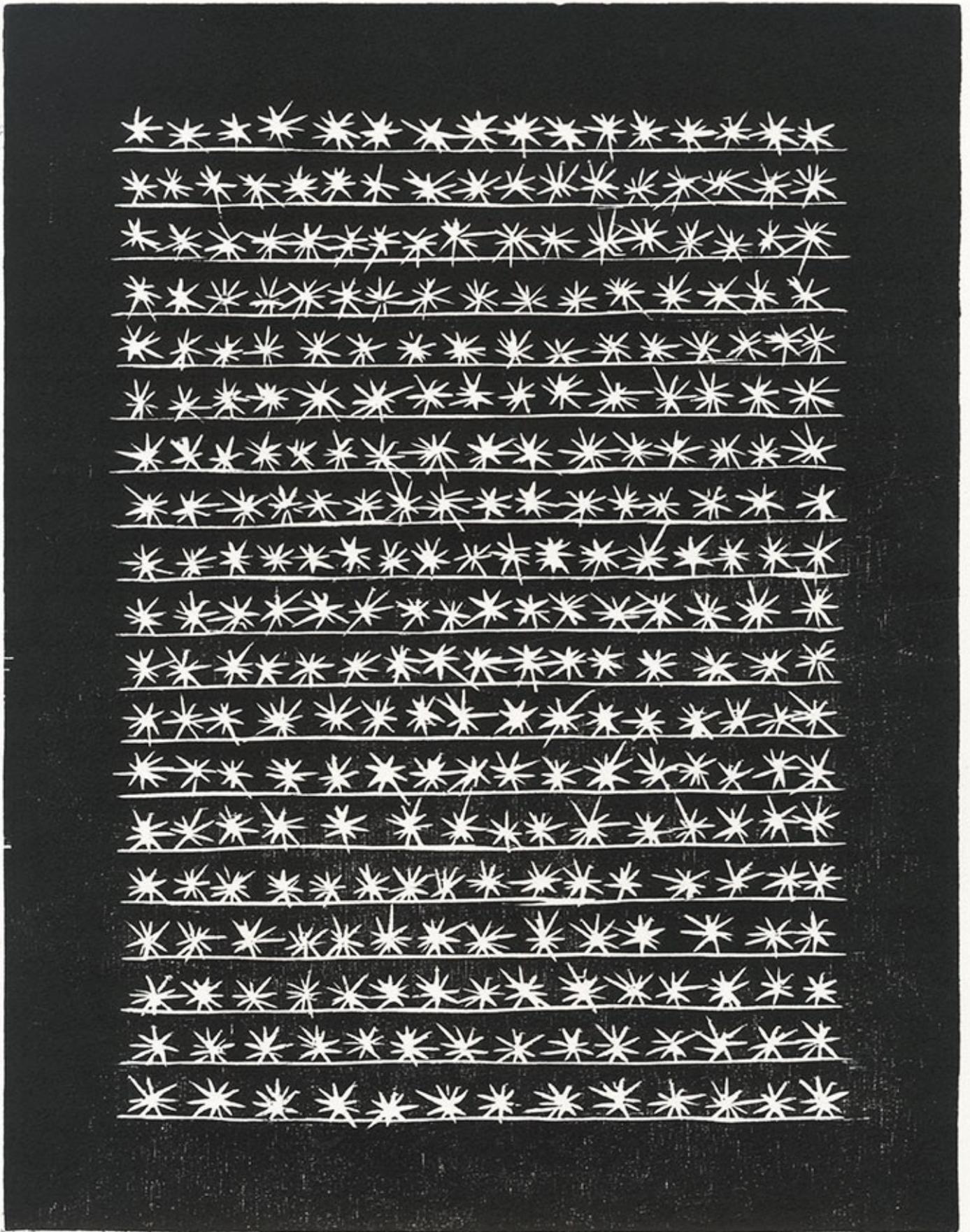
Woodcut on paper

47 x 38 cm

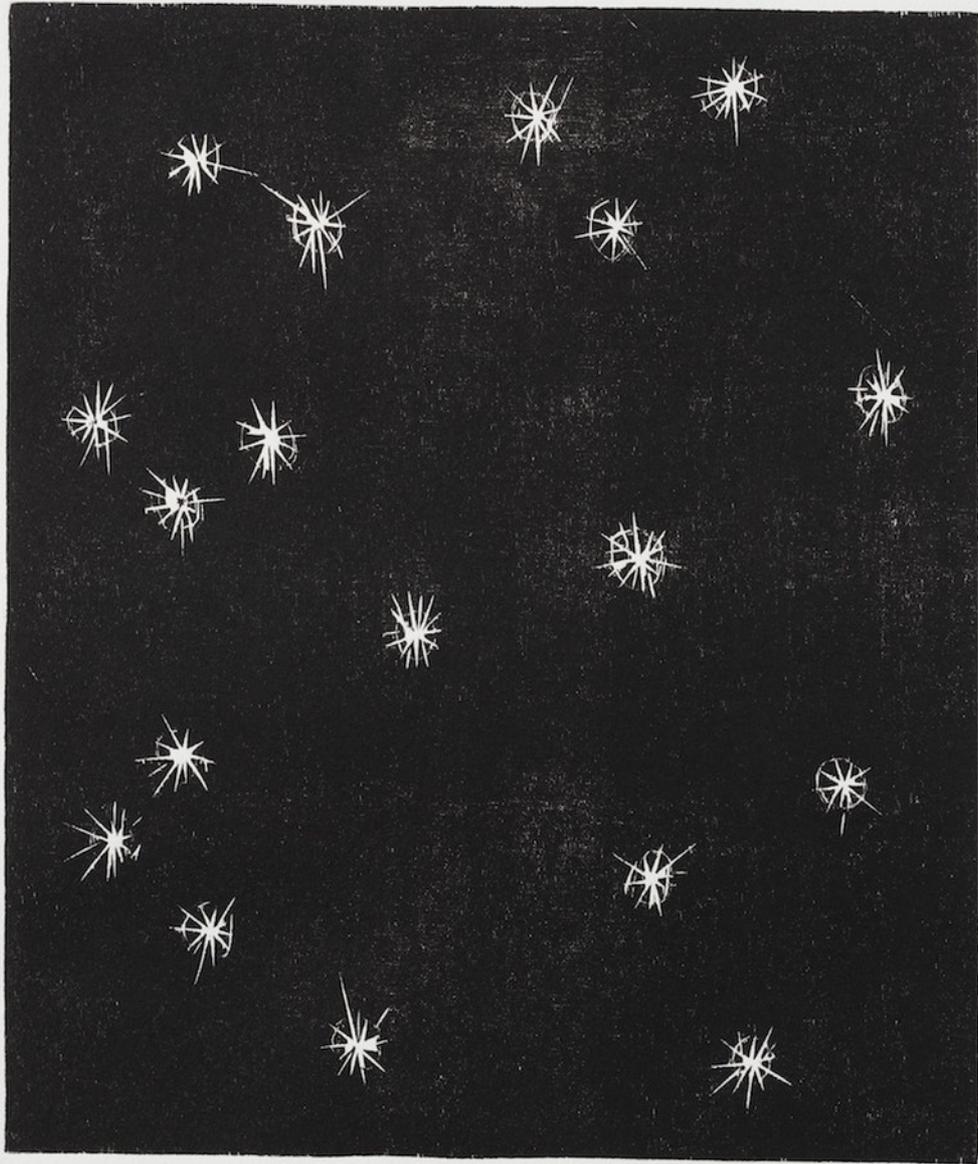
Arguments for desire continues the exploration of a possible alternative system of signs to index non-normative sexual practices and gendered positions. How do we represent the body, or parts of the body, in language, visually as well as literally? In an ongoing series of woodcut prints, Fleckner establishes the star or asterisk as a signifier for the anus, organising it in rows, impromptu constellations, or, like fish, in schools. The asterisk is often used to refer to something else, or more, to be explicated at the bottom of the page, or, as a solution to the interminable row of sexual positions in LGBTQI*, to name that which is not covered by existing terminology. Simultaneously referring to the anus – a place on the body densely filled with meanings, opinions, pleasure, silence, outrage and politics – with this simple little star, Fleckner has found a rich language for desire.



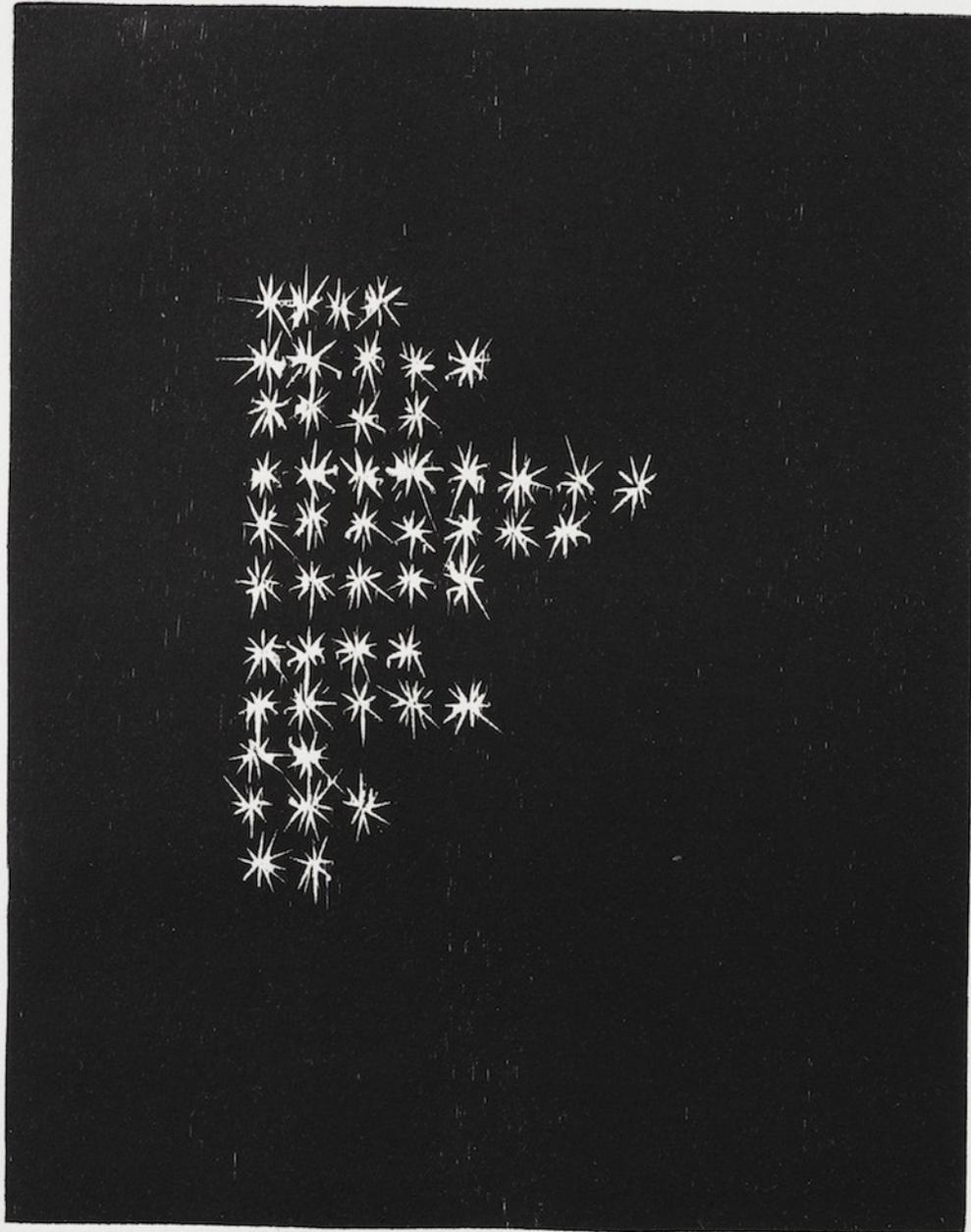
Arguments for desire, 1-5, 2013 –2015, installation view Kunstnernes hus, Oslo, photo: Ester Fleckner



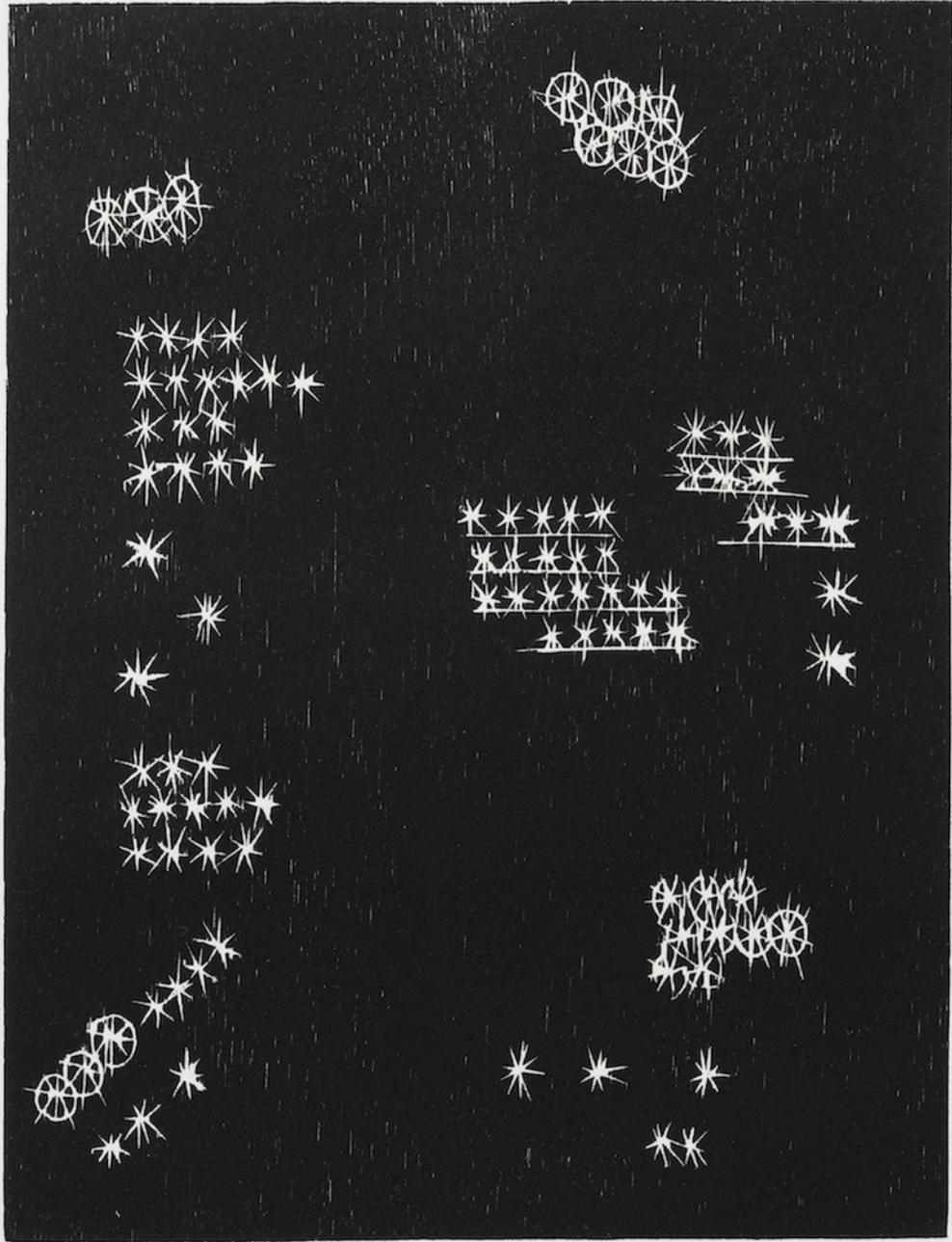
Arguments for desire, 1, 2013, woodcut on paper, 47 x 38 cm, photo scan



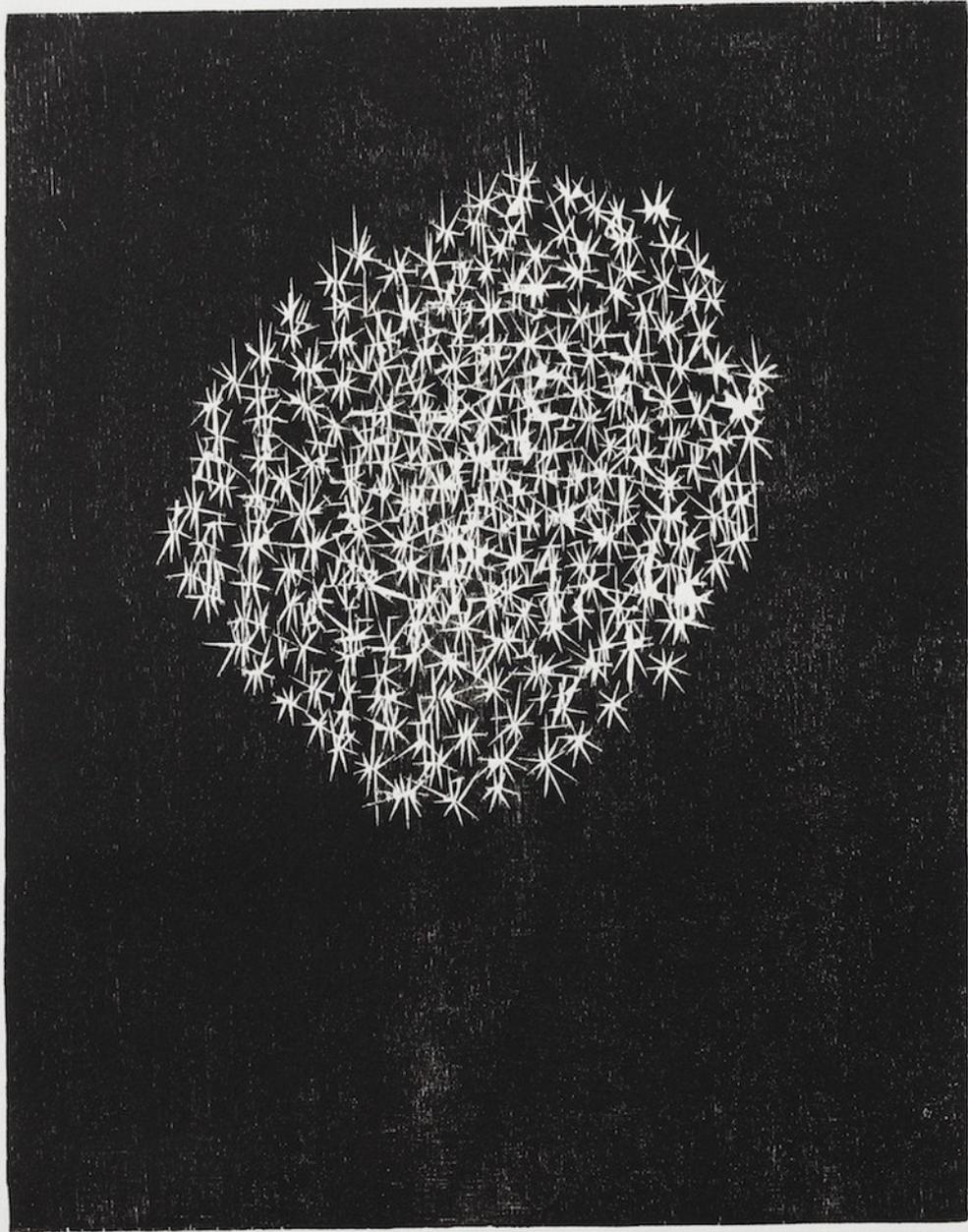
Arguments for desire, 2, 2013-15, woodcut on paper, 47 x 38 cm, photo: Anders Sune Berg



Arguments for desire, 3, 2013-15, woodcut on paper, 47 x 38 cm, photo: Anders Sune Berg



Arguments for desire, 4, 2013-15, woodcut on paper, 47 x 38 cm, photo: Anders Sune Berg



Arguments for desire, 5, 2013-15, woodcut on paper, 47 x 38 cm, photo: Anders Sune Berg

Clit-dick register (English version)

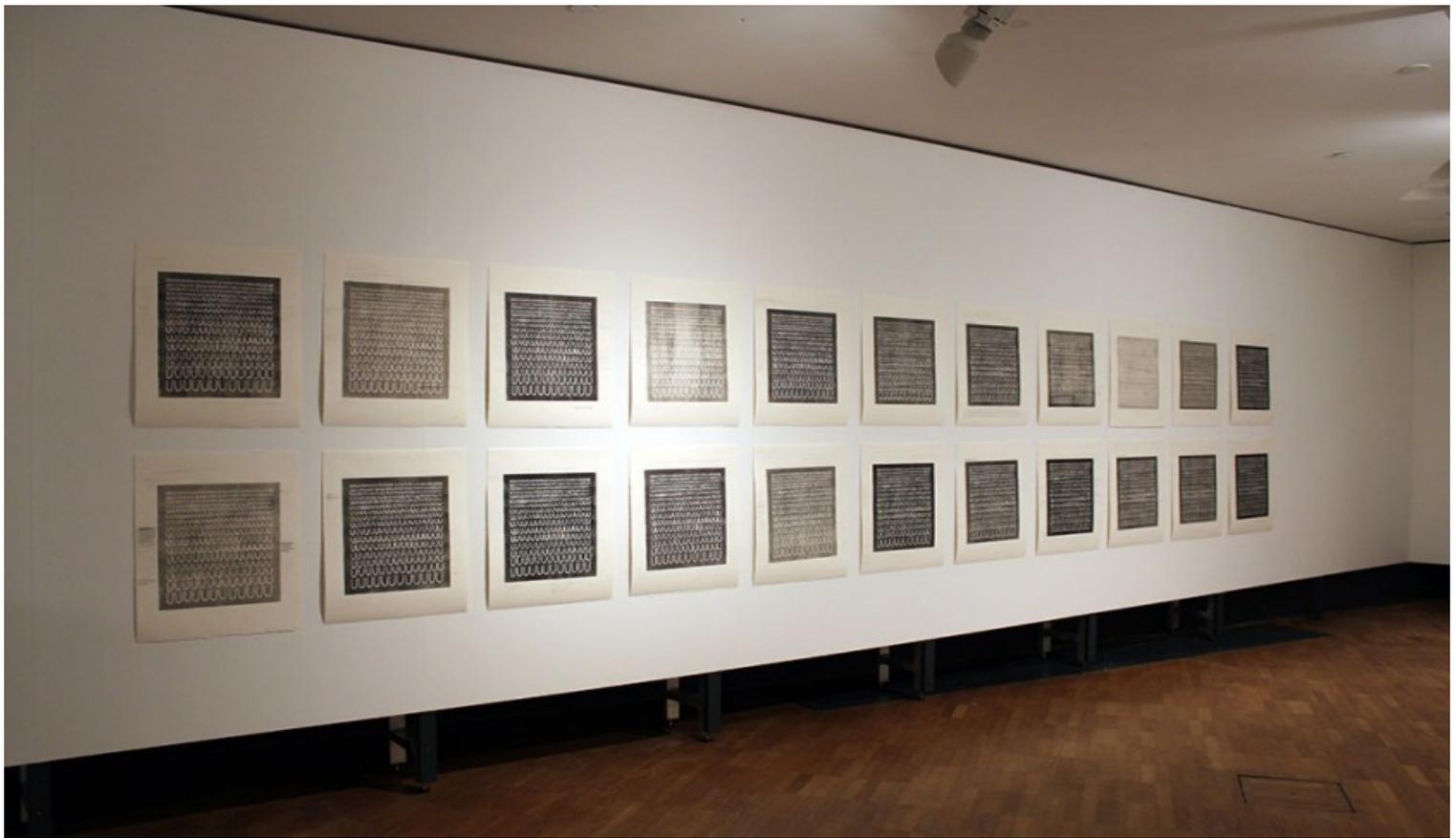
2013 –2014

Woodcut on paper, pencil

65 x 50 cm

The *Clit-Dick Register* is comprised of 22 similar woodcuts each covered with rows of irregular U-shaped figures. Like a naughty pupil repeating their ill-received deed across a blackboard as punishment, or speaking a word again and again until it becomes just a sound, Fleckner's U's, as the title suggests, blurs distinctions between clits and dicks and other matters in between. As ever, the faux-methodological survey is complimented by scraps of pencilled language. "I have no plan", an implicit narrator reveals, as the series continues, print after print, at once to accumulate and destabilise meaning.

Fleckner originally made *Clit-dick Register* in a Danish version as part of her graduation show in 2013, and since in an English version in 2014.



Clit-dick Register (English version), 2014, installation view Tallinn Print Triennial, Kumu Art Museum, Estonia 2014, photo: Ester Fleckner



Clit-dick Register (English version), 2014, installation view Malmö Konsthall 2017, photo: HeleneToresdotter

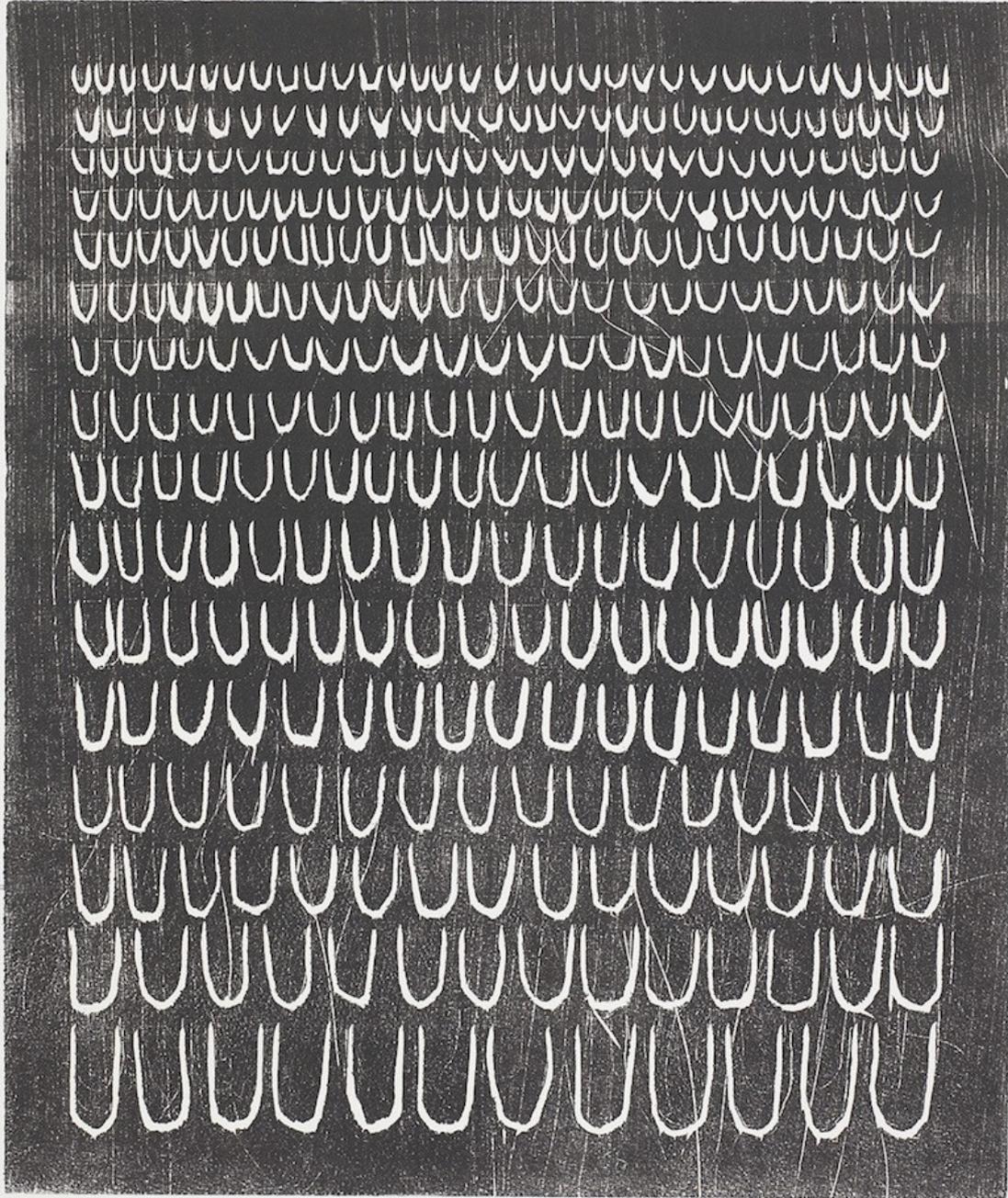
I will cuddle the straight flesh and the components of failure

(A gesture does not just expire)

I want to know you until I don't know you anymore

How I LOVE LOVE THE

collision of correspondences / the intimacy we share



I NEED TO BE WITH EVERYTHING PLACED OUTSIDE

I NEED THE SENSATION OF CHAOS WITH THE HARMONY OF INDIVIDUAL

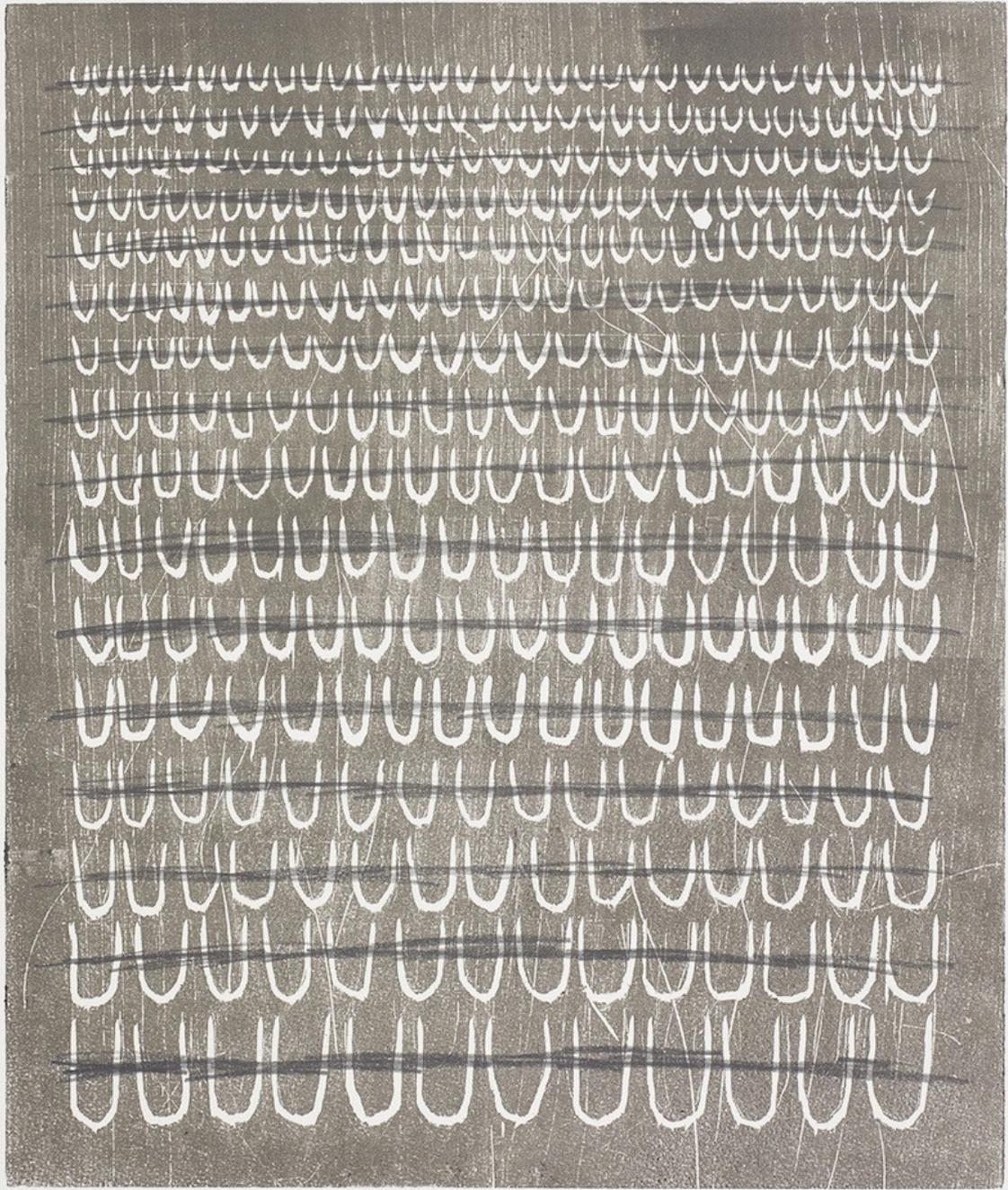
the moulded failures

I will cuddle the straight flesh and the components of failure

~~THE COMPONENTS OF FAILURE~~ UUUUUUUU

I WANT TO KNOW YOU UNTIL I DON'T KNOW YOU ANYMORE

Clit-dick Register (English version), 2014, woodcut on paper and pencil, 65 x 50 cm, photo: Anders Sune Berg



Clit-dick Register (English version), 2014, woodcut on paper and pencil, 65 x 50 cm, photo: Anders Sune Berg

How I love the backward ~~between~~ ~~and~~ ~~the~~ ~~liquid~~ ~~and~~ ~~the~~ ~~public~~ ~~the~~ BELONGING
How I love the collisions BETWEEN THE ~~GRID~~ ~~AND~~ ~~THE~~ ~~PULSE~~
How I love the collisions between the liquid and the public ~~the~~
How I love TRAVEL AS AN IMPROVISED DRESS
How I love THE COMBINATION OF QUESTIONS
How I love THE WIG AND THE HUMMING OF INDIVIDUAL
How I love that ~~between~~ can be negotiated like bodies and ~~paradigms~~

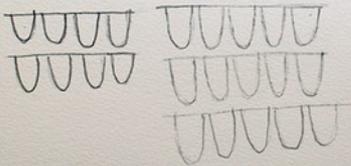
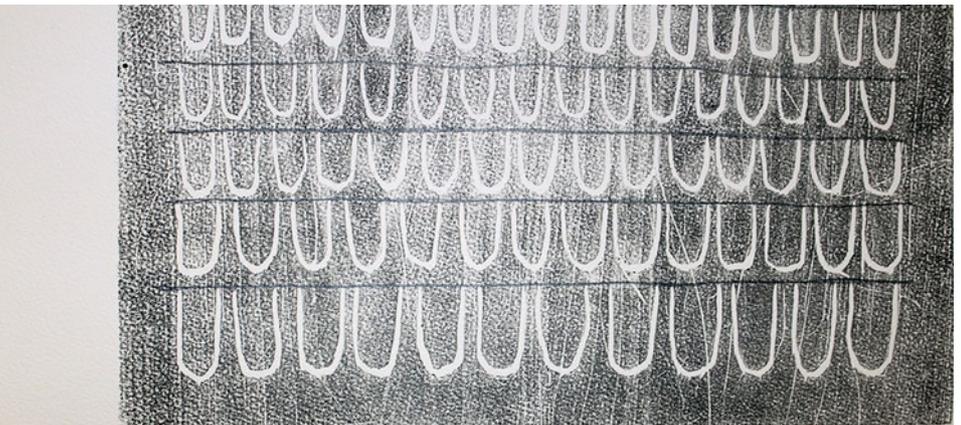


I WANT TO KNOW YOU
UNTIL I DON'T KNOW YOU ANY MORE

Public.
But it was never said.

IMAGINE THE BODY AS ~~SENTENCE~~
HAS OWN OWN PARAGRAPH

The body as a land of wonder
THE BODY AS A QUALIFIED TEXT



Clit-dick Register (English version)
2014, details