

Tazeen Qayyum

In Parts

March 29 - April 22, 2023
Red Head Gallery, Toronto



In Parts

Swirling, processing, marching. Dissected, whole, amputated. Painted, drawn, embossed. Appearing in Tazeen Qayyum's works for the last twenty years, the cockroach has served as an ever-generative muse, supplying the verbs and adjectives for an idiosyncratic language of expression.

Paradoxical symbol of repulsion and resilience, in the past the cockroach has provided Qayyum the means to comment on how immigrants or Muslims ('others', in other words) are viewed in today's politically charged society. Earlier series use the metaphors of gassing and dismembering the cockroach to symbolize the treatment of certain foreign populations, similarly deemed invasive and sinister, in order to defuse their perceived threat. Other works play on the structures of the museum, or the field of entomology, and their practices of pinning and labelling, classifying and categorizing, as methods for neutralization. Yet the cockroaches that inhabit Qayyum's work, with their delicate limbs and exquisite patterning, represent the histories, resourcefulness, and indeed the beauty that these 'newcomers' (in today's immigration parlance) carry with them and that resists such strategies.

Building on this body of work, the new drawings and sculpture in this exhibition present cockroach as syllabary, interrogating the role of language in processes of colonization and immigration, and in the development of a self-identity. On pages that may come from a school child's primer or a calligrapher's exercise book, cockroach parts, like the strokes in letters or characters, are assembled, seeming to form letters and words, though ones that lie just beyond the grasp of comprehension.

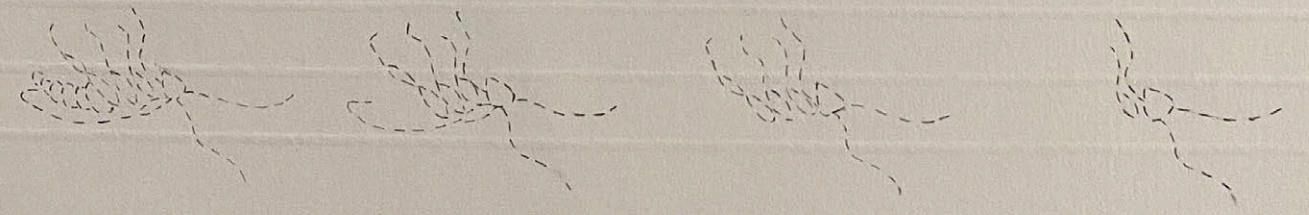
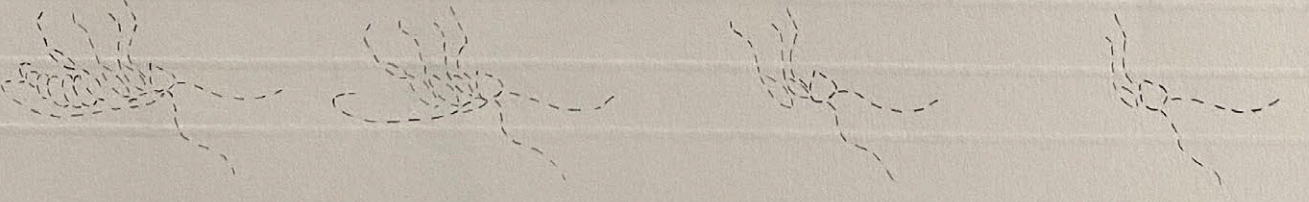
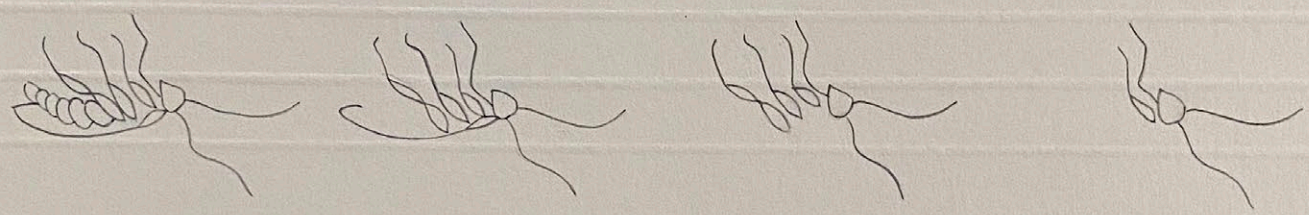
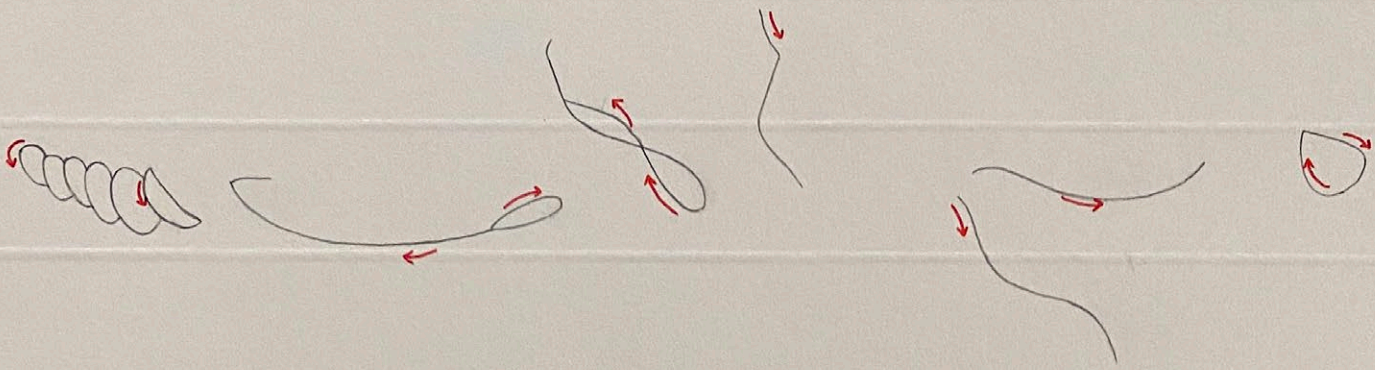
Through these works Qayyum opens many avenues of interpretation. The inscrutable linguistic forms created by the cockroaches hint at the incomprehensibility of languages imposed during the process of establishing colonial rule, through which the conqueror's language becomes the language of administration and governance, mastery of which is required for advancement in the new society. The language comprises sounds and grammars that are foreign to the colonized subject, and its elusiveness is symbolized by the letters that resemble cockroach parts to us but that, we can only assume, have significance to those in power.

The works also speak to the loss of language that surrounds the movement of immigrants from one country to another, and that assimilation often entails. Read one direction, the cockroach letters coalesce from their individual strokes; read in the other direction, they slip away into the ether. Qayyum asks the viewer to consider the language lost in the name of integration, and what else is lost with language. Memories? Personality? A sense of humour? A sense of self? The very essence of what it means to be human is transformed by the capacity for self-expression in the language of the new home.

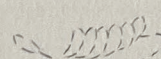
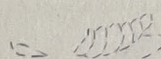
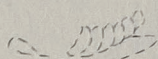
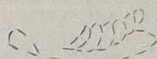
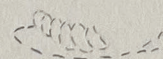
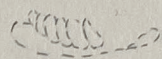
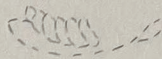
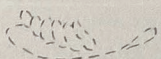
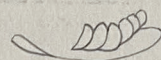
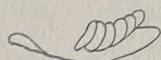
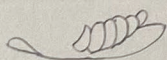
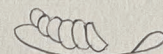
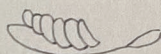
Yet another vein the works explore is the inadequacy of language, especially in conversations around the present-day composite culture of North America. Tortured phrases such as 'people of colour', 'racialized communities', and 'visible minorities' are among the more the egregious transgressions, continuing to centre some groups and marginalise others despite their supposed intention to neutrally describe. In this scenario the cockroaches, symbolizing the foreign and the other, refuse to embody such language, asserting their own identity.

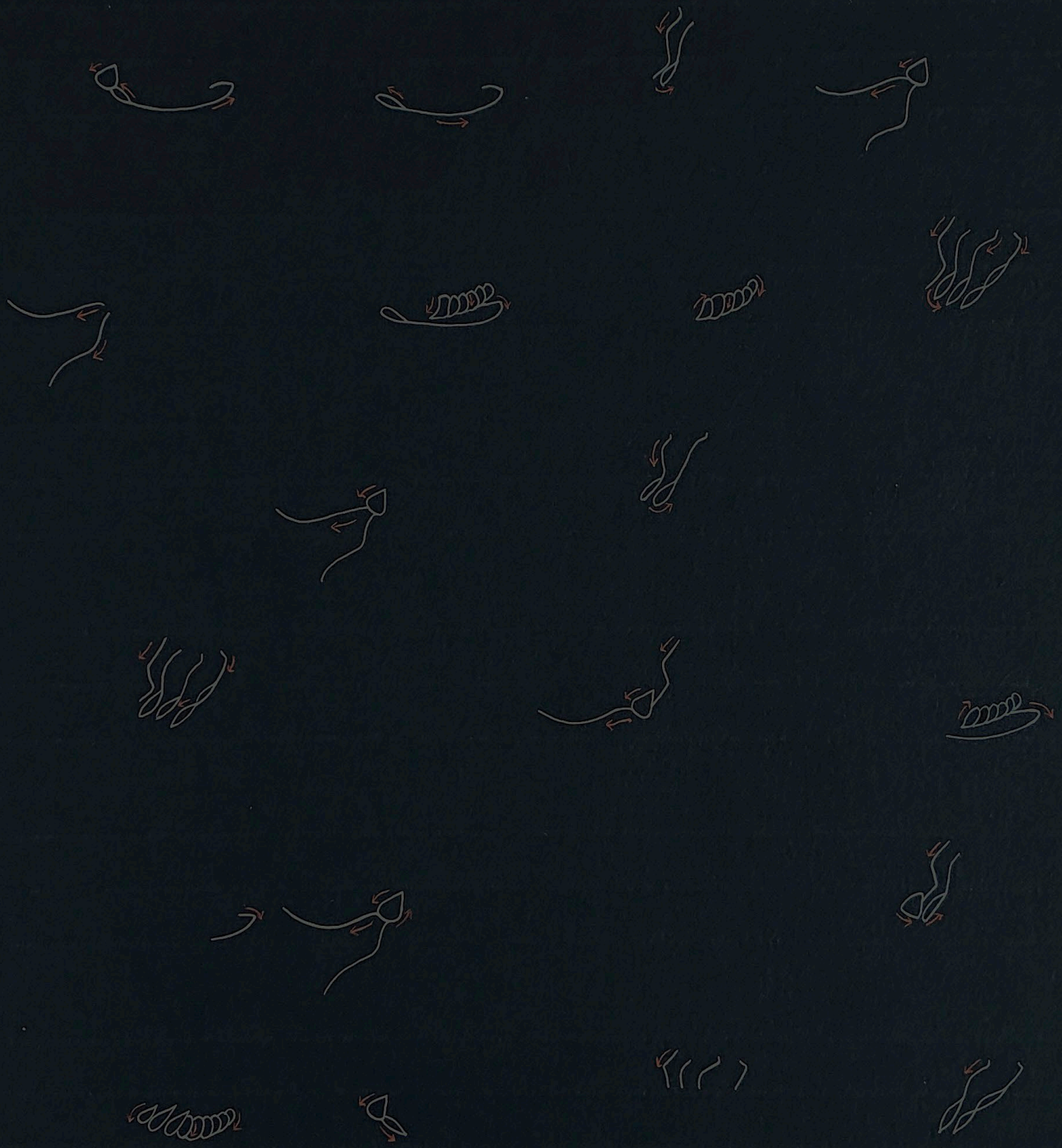
This rich body of work raises endless possibilities, and intersects in complex ways with Qayyum's meditations on language in other aspects of her practice. It also points, with poignancy and beauty, to the condition in which so many find themselves: In Parts, living between cultures and attempting to become whole again.

Marika Sardar, Ph.D
Independent Curator, Scholar of South Asian and Islamic Art



Syllabary Exercise series, 2020 - 23
gouache and embossing on acid-free paper
9 x 12 in.

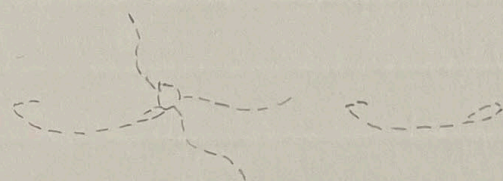
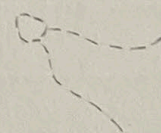
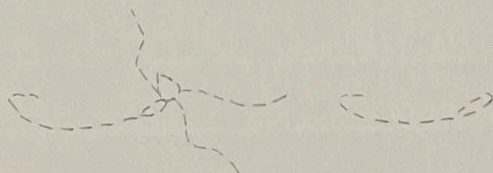
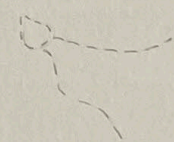
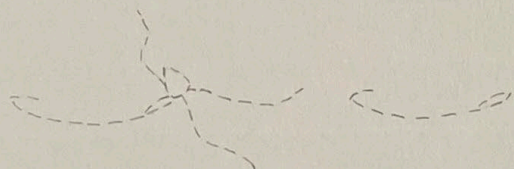
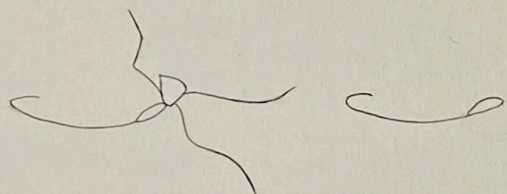


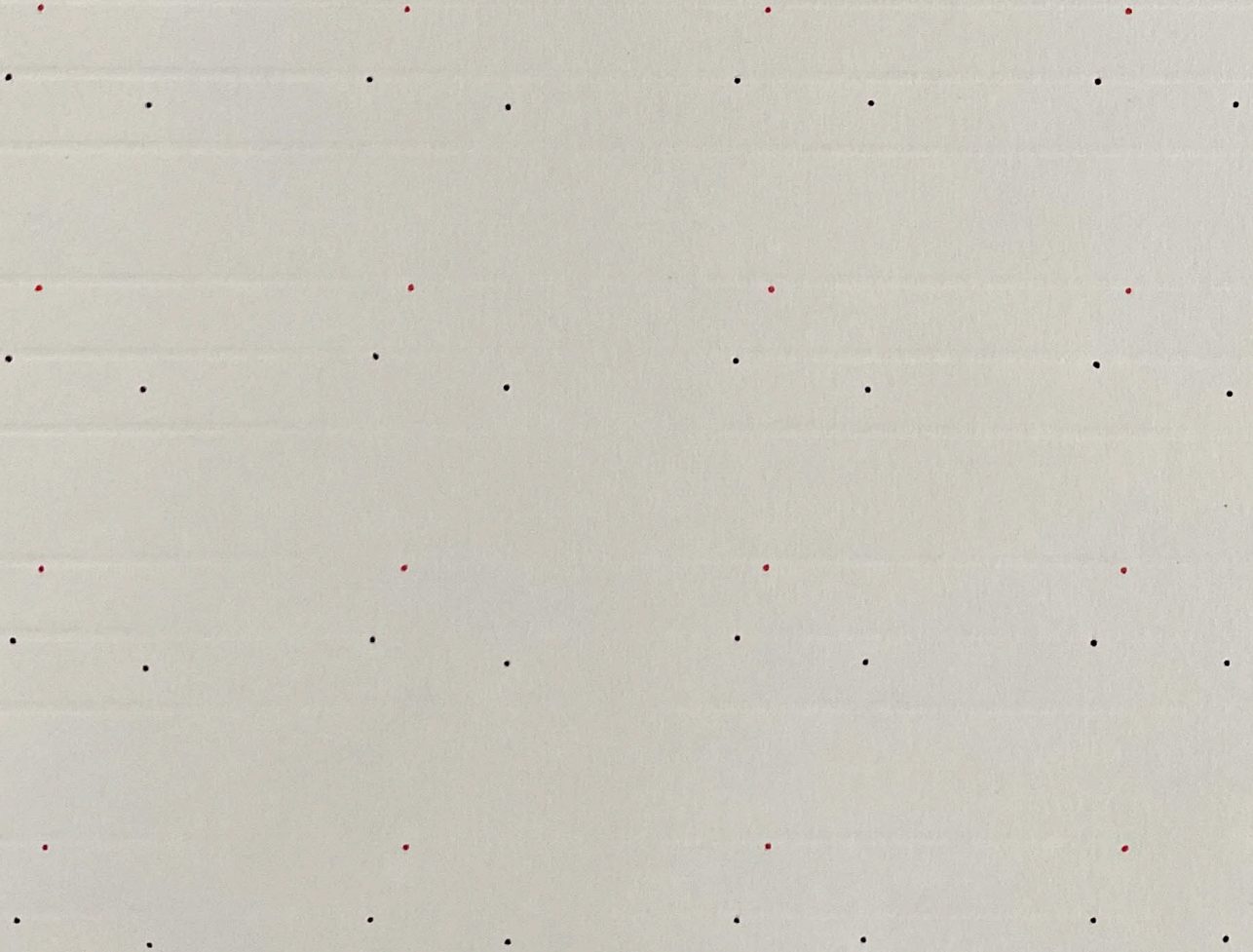
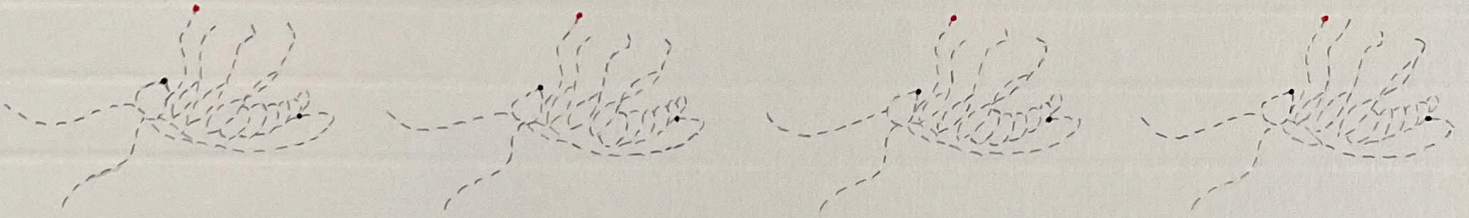
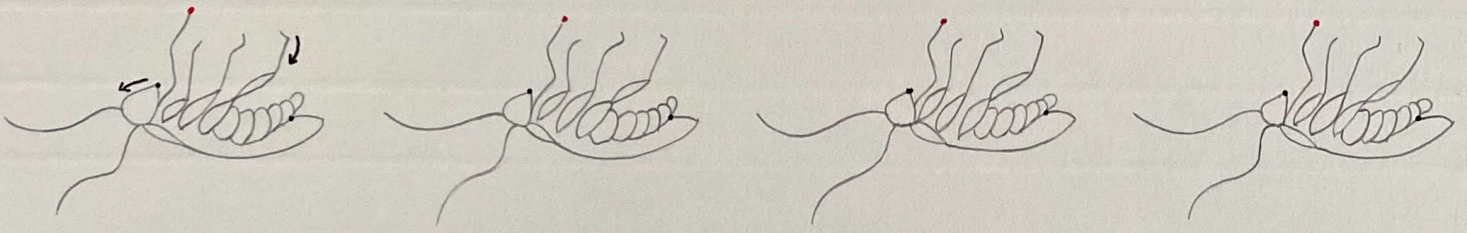


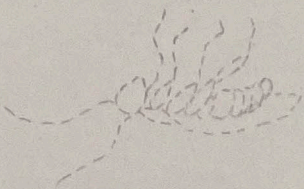
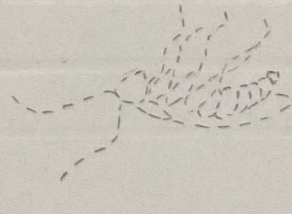
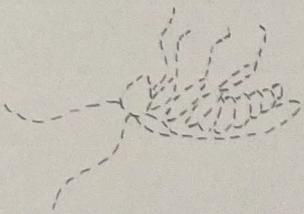
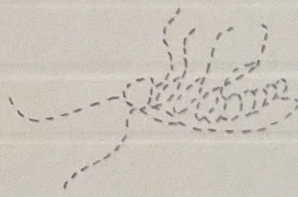
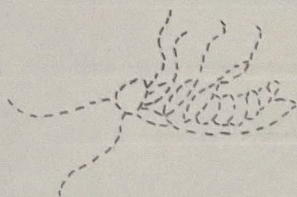
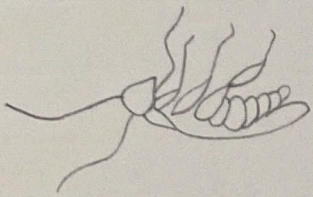
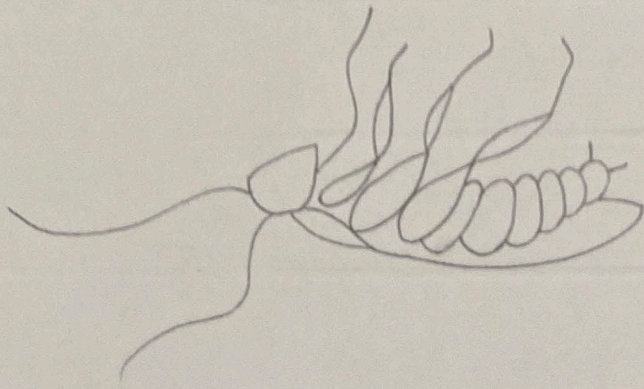
Syllabary Exercise series, 2020 - 23
gouache and embossing on acid-free paper
9 x 12 in.

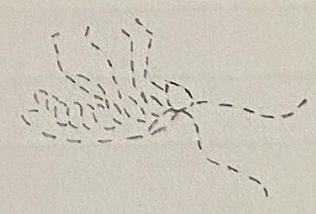
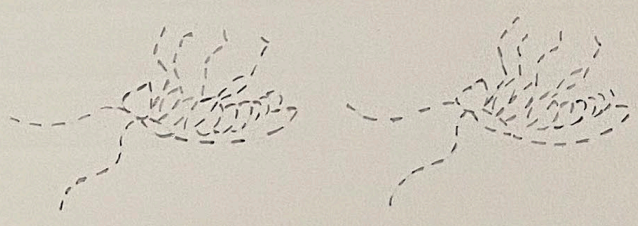
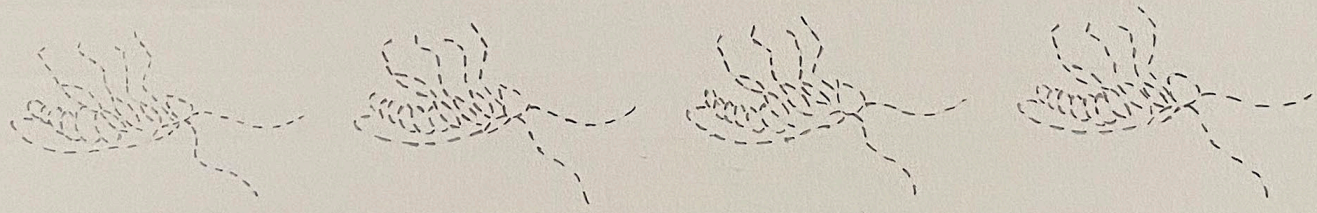


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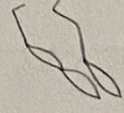
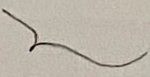
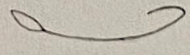
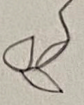
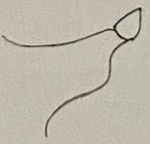
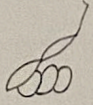
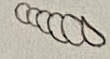
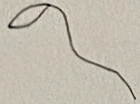
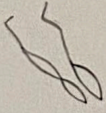
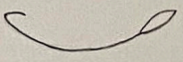
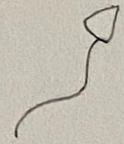
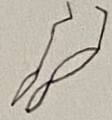
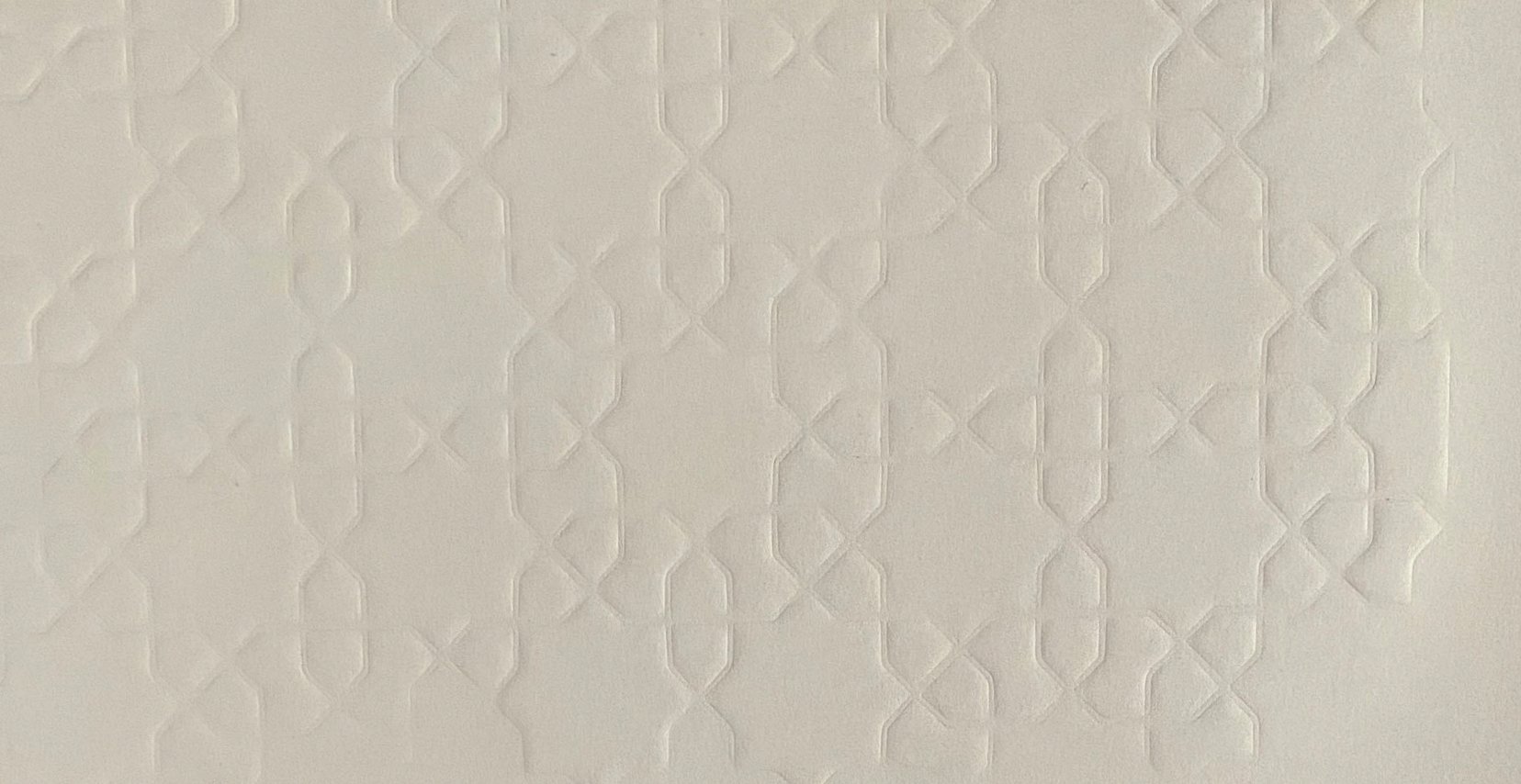




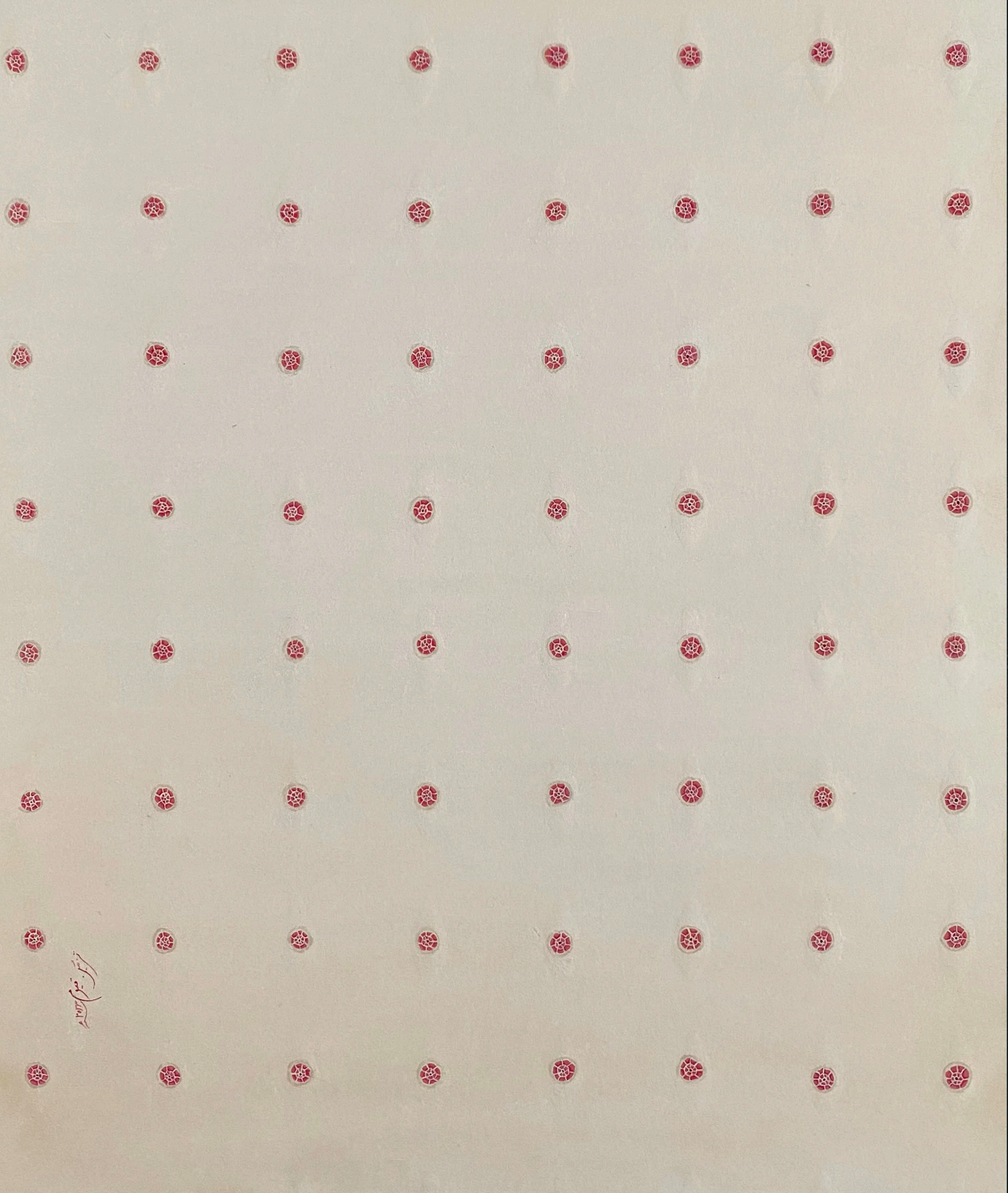




Syllabary Exercise series, 2020 - 23
gouache and embossing on acid-free paper
9 x 12 in.







Wear Eye Protection, 2022
opaque watercolour, tea wash and embossing on paper
9 x 12 in.

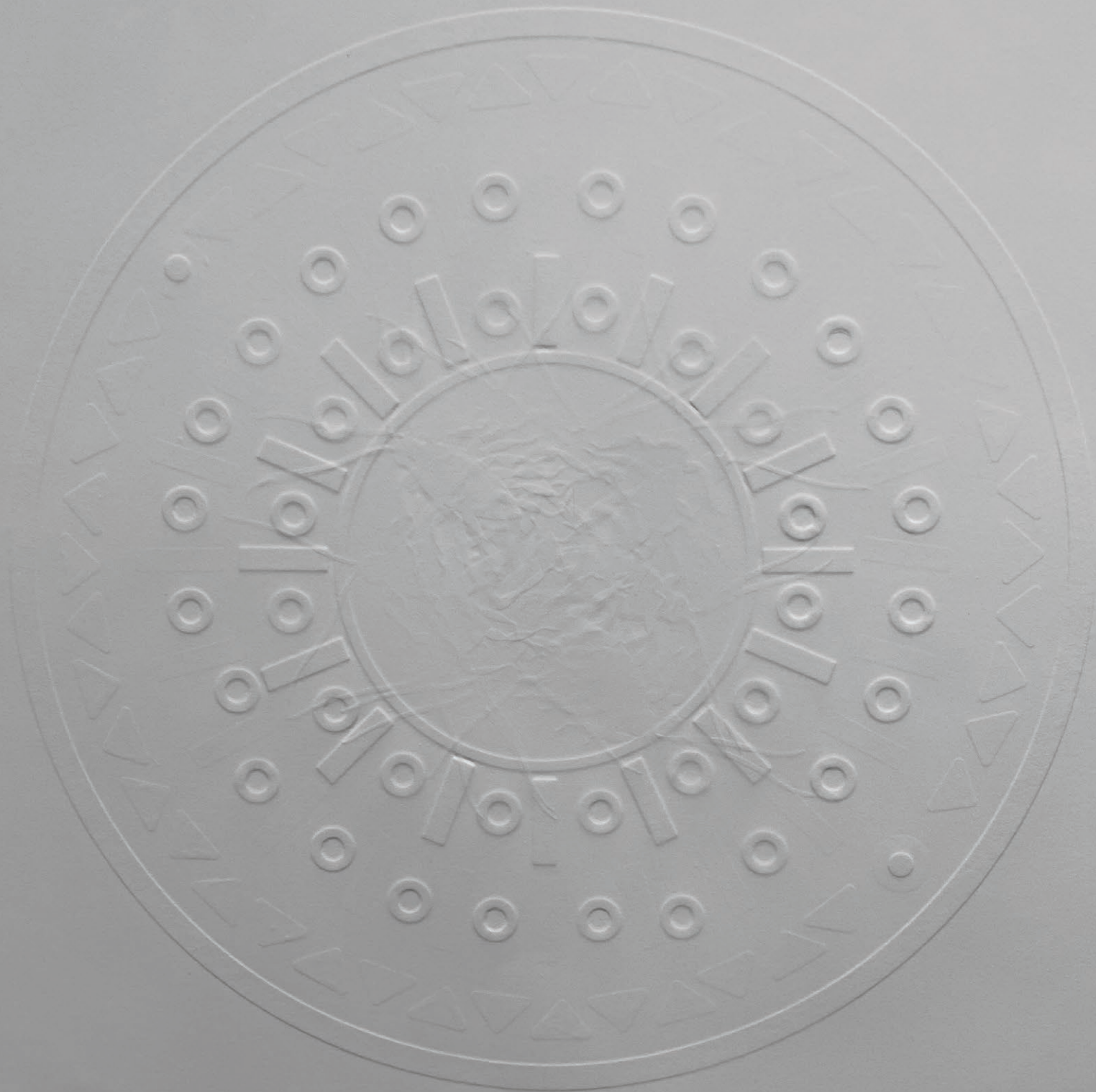


Avoid Release To The Environment, 2023
opaque watercolour and tea wash on paper
11 x 8 in.

توبیخ من (2023)



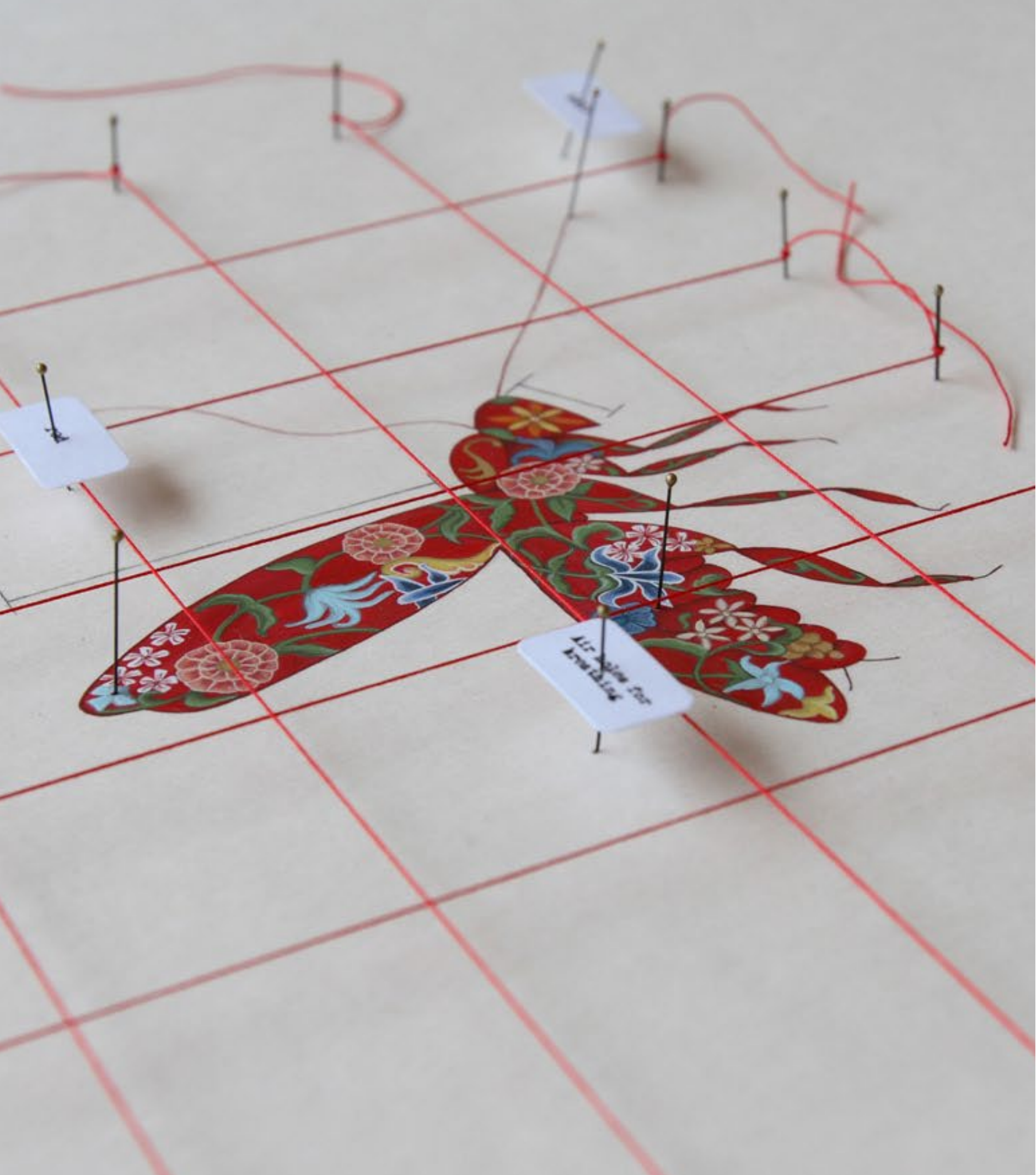
Minimize Exposure - I, 2020
Embossing on Coventry Rag paper
30 x 36 in.



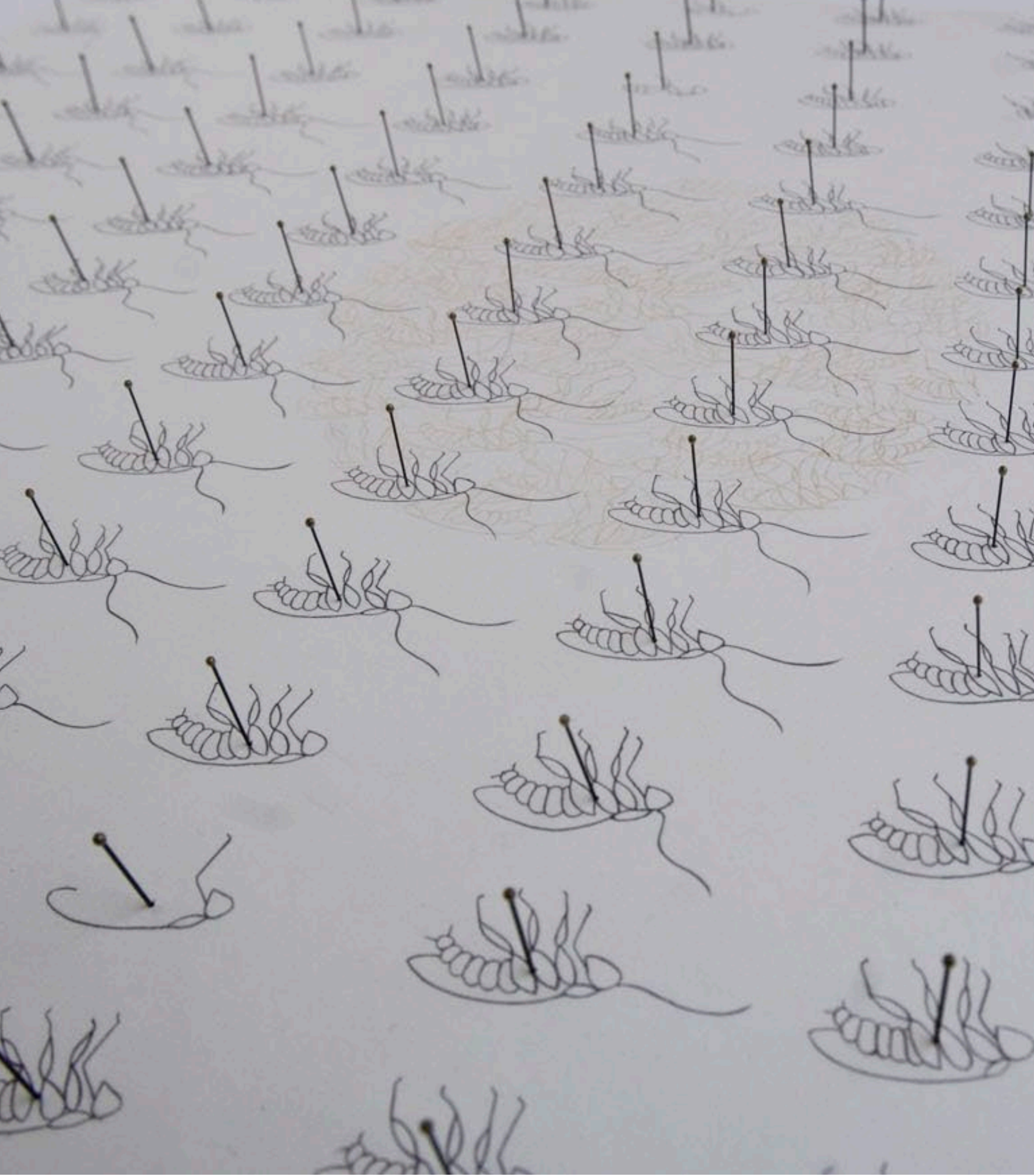
Minimize Exposure - II, 2020
Embossing on Coventry Rag paper
30 x 36 in.



Minimize Exposure - III, 2020
Embossing on Coventry Rag paper
30 x 36 in.



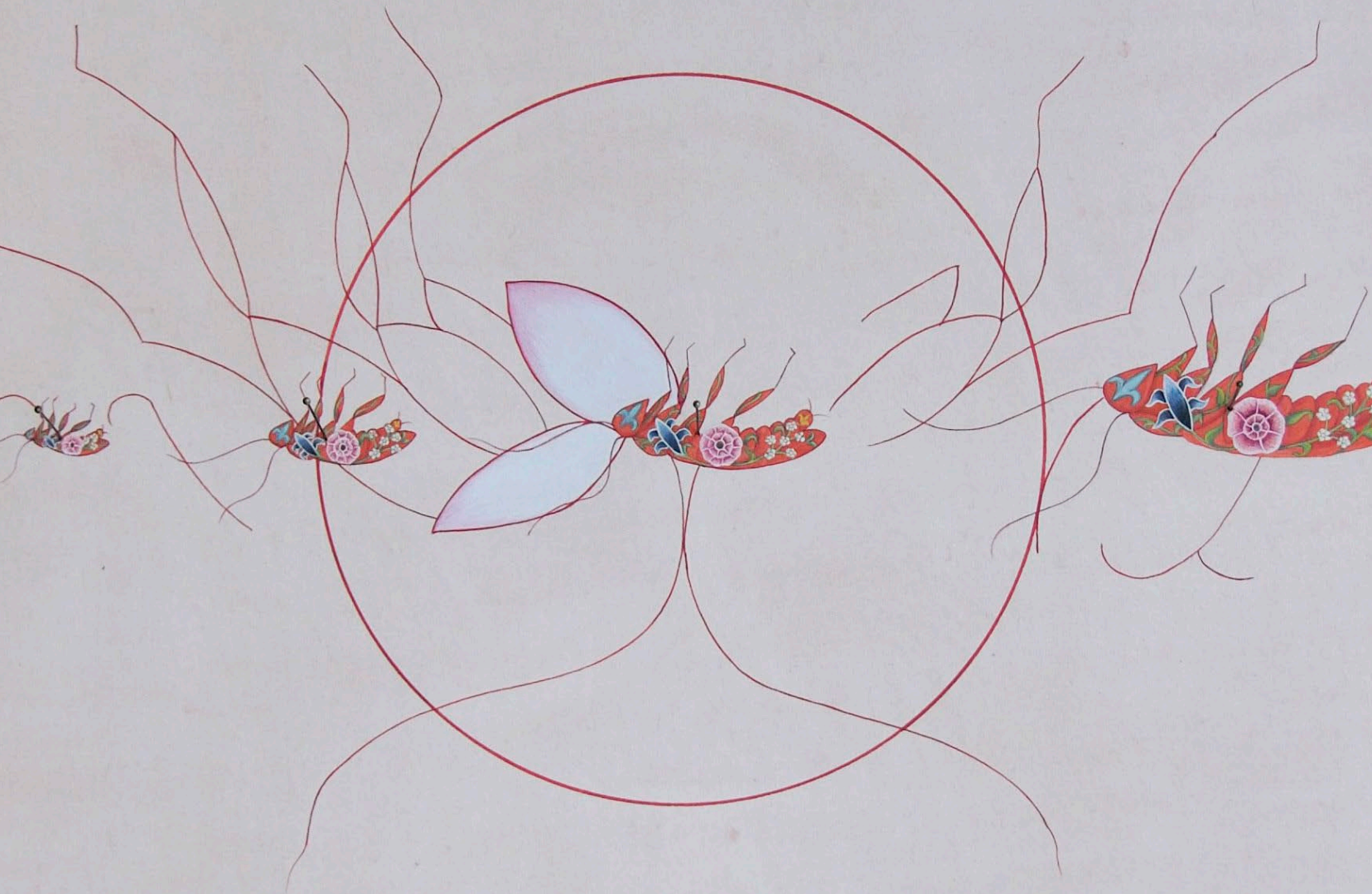
Test on a Small Area Before Use -III, 2007
opaque watercolour, entomology steel pins, paper labels and cotton thread on wasli (prepared archival paper)
20 x 16 x 2 in.



Test on a Small Area Before Use -V, 2007
opaque watercolour, entomology steel pins, on wasli (prepared archival paper)
20 x 16 x 2 in.



Corrosive to Eyes, 2009
Opaque watercolour on wasli (prepared archival paper)
11 x 11 in.



Fatal if Absorbed, 2009
Opaque watercolour and entomology pins on wasli (prepared archival paper)
11 x 11 in.



Dispose with Care-II, 2009
Opaque watercolour and copper wire on wasli embedded in Lucite
11 in. diam x 2 in.
From the collection of Mr. Ali Adil Khan (SAGA)



Mandatory Inspection, Required by Law, 2009
opaque watercolour, cotton thread and entomology pins on illustration board
10 x 12 x 1.5 in.



Broken In Parts -I (detail) , 2023
Acrylic on reflective metal and plexiglass
47 in. diam



Installation view



Installation view



Installation view

Tazeen Qayyum

b.1973, Karachi, Pakistan

Tazeen Qayyum (she/her) is a Pakistani-Canadian, multidisciplinary artist based in Oakville. Trained as a miniature painter of South Asian and Persian traditions, Qayyum continues to explore new materials and processes through drawing, installation, sculpture, video and performance. Drawing from complex issues of belonging and displacement within a socio-political context, her art is a way for her to navigate identity and beliefs while living in the diaspora.

Her work has been exhibited nationally and internationally at the Bangkok Biennale, Thailand; Karachi Biennale, Pakistan; the South Asia Institute, Chicago, USA; the National Gallery of Pakistan; Tokyo Metropolitan Museum, Japan; Museo Diocesano, Milan, Italy; the Textile Museum, Toronto, Canada; the Robert McLaughlin Gallery, Oshawa, Canada; and the Art Gallery of Windsor, Canada; among others. Her work is included in the collections of the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM), Canada; TD Canada Trust Permanent Collection, Canada; The Robert McLaughlin Gallery, Oshawa, Canada; Welt Museum, Vienna, Austria; Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Pengzhou, China; Doris McCarthy Gallery, University of Toronto, Canada; National Gallery of Amman, Jordan; and National Art Gallery, Nepal.

Qayyum received her BFA in Visual Arts from the National College of Arts Lahore, Pakistan, 1996 and currently lives and works in Oakville, Canada. She is a member of the Arts Council at Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital, and previously served on the Board of Directors at Oakville Galleries.

Tazeen Qayyum

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Solo Exhibitions

- 2023 'In Parts', Red Head Gallery, Toronto, Canada
- 2022 'A Facade of Beauty and Integrated Fear ', curated by Ignazio Nicastro, Riverdale Hub, Toronto, Canada
- 2022 'Sakoon', Zalucky Contemporary, Toronto, Canada
- 2020 'Cover the Same Ground', Canvas Gallery, Karachi, Pakistan
- 2018 'Descent', Canvas Gallery, Karachi, Pakistan
- 2018 'Drawings by Tazeen Qayyum', Boarding House Gallery, University of Guelph, Canada
- 2015 'Khara Dupatta', mixed media installation, Bradley Museum, Mississauga, Canada
- 2015 '(IN)SURGE(NT)', curated by Zarmeene Shah, Canvas Gallery, Karachi, Pakistan
- 2013 'A Holding Pattern', co-curated by Lee Petrie and Stuart Keeler, Toronto Pearson Airport
- 2012 'Coule dans les veines (flows in the veins)', curated by Stuart Keeler, XIT-RM Mississauga Art Gallery, Canada
- 2012 'Viewer Discretion is Advised', Ross Creek Centre for the Arts, Nova Scotia, Canada
- 2011 'It's Complicated', curated by Nadia Kurd, Thunder Bay Art Gallery, Canada
- 2009 'Viewer Discretion is Advised', Gandhara Art-Space, Karachi, Pakistan
- 2001 'Woven Narratives: New Miniatures', Gallery Rohtas II, Lahore, Pakistan
- 2000 'Contemporary Miniatures', Gallery Jutner, Vienna, Austria

Performance Projects

- 2020 'Ehsaas', durational drawing performance, in collaboration with Marwan Abado, Salam Orient Festival, Vienna, Austria
- 2017 'Unvoiced', durational drawing performance, at the 1st Karachi Biennale, Pakistan
- 2016 'We do not know who we are where we go', drawing performance, for Christof Migone's Mixer Project' at The Royal Conservatory of Music, Toronto
- 2015 'We do not know who we are where we go', drawing performance, Possible Worlds, curated by Shannon Anderson, at The Oakville Hospital, Canada
- 2014 'ByOb: Bring Your Own Bollywood', collaborative performance and photo-based project, at Parramasala, Parramatta, Sydney, Australia
- 2014 'Do not know who we are where we go', a drawing performance, The 905 Road Show: A Creativity Cabaret, at Sheridan College, Davis Campus, Toronto, Canada
- 2013 'Lost in Desires' Drawing Performance, Nuit Blanche, Art Metropole, Toronto
- 2013 'ByOb: Bring Your Own Bollywood', collaborative performance and photo-based project, Blackwood Gallery, Mississauga, Canada
- 2012 'Threading Encounters', The Door to Door exhibition series, Blackwood Gallery, University of Toronto, Mississauga, Canada
- 2009 'A Feast in Exile', a collaborative inter-disciplinary performance project, Alliance de Francaise Karachi, produced by Vasl Artists' Collective and Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture, Pakistan
- 2007/06 'Double Date', a collaborative inter-disciplinary performance project, produced by South Asian Visual Arts Centre presented at AKA Gallery, Saskatoon and Lennox Contemporary Gallery, Toronto, Canada

Select Two and Three - Person Exhibitions

- 2012 'A Homespun Web: Heather Goodchild, Noelle Hamlyn and Tazeen Qayyum', curated by Cole Swanson, Living Arts Centre, Mississauga, Canada
- 2011 'Veiled: Andrew McPhail, Grace Ndiritu and Tazeen Qayyum', curated by Sarah Quinton, Textile Museum of Canada.
- 2009 'Failing States: recent works by Tazeen Qayyum and Adeela Suleman', Aicon Gallery, London, U.K
- 2008 'Farida Batool, Tazeen Qayyum, and Adeela Suleman', curated by Priyanka Mathews, Aicon Gallery, New York, U.S.A

Select Group Exhibitions

- 2022 'Chaos: Calm', Bangkok Art Biennale 2022, Thailand
- 2021 'Contemporary Chronicles', South Asia Institute, Chicago, USA
- 2018 'Art for Education: Contemporary Artists from Pakistan', co-curated by Rosa Maria Falvo and Salima Hashmi, Museo Diocesano, Milan, Italy
- 2018 'Common Borders', curated by Majid Abbasi Farahani, Sanat Gallery, Karachi, Pakistan
- 2018 'Objects We Behold', curated by Amra Ali, Gandhara Art Space, Karachi, Pakistan
- 2018 'Forward Motion', curated by Noa Bronstein, The Small Arms building, Mississauga, Canada
- 2017 1st Karachi Biennale, Jamshed Memorial Hall and NJV High School, Karachi, Pakistan
- 2016 'Greater Toronto: New Artist Textiles', Commissioned by the Textile Museum of Canada, Textile Arts Centre, NYCxDESIGN, New York and London Design Festival, UK
- 2015 'Beyond Measure: Domesticating Distance', curated by Ambereen Siddiqui, The Robert McLaughlin Gallery, Oshawa, Canada
- 2015 'Border Cultures: Part Three (Security, Surveillance)', curated by Srimoyee Mitra, Art Gallery of Windsor, Canada
- 2015 'Season X: Celebrating a Decade', curated by Shanley Hanlon, OSilas Gallery Concordia College, New York, USA
- 2014 'Arrival/Revival', curated by Abdullah Sayed, Parramata Artist Studio, Sydney, Australia
- 2013 'Info Bomb: The Subcontinent', A project with Other Asias, Aam Awaam and SAVAC, Art Metropole, Toronto, Canada
- 2011 'The Pill', curated by Avni Doshi, Latitude 28 Gallery, Delhi, India
- 2010 'The Rising Tide: New Directions in Art from Pakistan 1990 -2010', curated by Naiza Khan, Mohatta Palace Museum, Karachi, Pakistan
- 2010 'It's a Disaster', curated by Anthea Foyer, CodeLive Metro, the 2010 Winter Olympics, Vancouver, Canada

Select Group Exhibitions

- 2009 'Bazgasht: Traditional Methods and Modern Practices', curated by Ali Adil Khan with Asma Arshad Mahmood and Rob Freeman, Art Gallery of Mississauga, Canada
- 2008 'Conversations across cultures, South Asian Imaginaries', curated by Maurizio Pellegrin and Razia Sadik, Macy Gallery, Columbia University, New York
- 2008 'The Human Dichotomy', Aicon Gallery, Palo Alto, USA
- 2008 'ShContemporary08', Shanghai International Art Fair, Aicon Gallery
- 2008 'HKArt08', Hong Kong International Art Fair, Gandhara Art Gallery
- 2007 and 2008
'Urban Myths & Modern Fables', curated by Haema Sivanesan, University of Technology, Sydney and 24Hr Art, Darwin, Australia and Doris McCarthy Gallery, University of Toronto Scarborough, Canada
- 2007 'Homecoming', curated by Atteqa Ali, National Gallery of Pakistan, Islamabad
- 2007 'Women Looking East', curated by Steven Spennel, University of Rhode Island, Providence Campus, USA
- 2006 'Gendering Detail, Contemporary Miniature Paintings', curated by Kristy Phillips, Art Square Gallery and SAGA, (South Asian Gallery of Art) Toronto, Canada
- 2005 'Ongoing Dialogue', Foresight Art Center, Amman, Jordan
- 2005 'A Thousand and One Days: The Art of Pakistani Women Miniaturists', curated by Enrico Mascelloni, Salima Hashmi and Duccio K. Marignoli, Honolulu Academy of Arts, Hawaii and Musee des Beaux, Rouen, France
- 2004 'JALA- Japan Afro-Asian Latin American Exchange Exhibition', Tokyo Metropolitan Museum, Japan
- 2003 'Bolly>Lolly>Holly>Tolly' a SAVAC member exhibition, Harbourfront Centre, Toronto
- 2003 '43rd Suzzara Prize 2003-Spirit and Body; Between tradition and cybernetics', curated by Enrico Mascelloni, Padova, Italy
- 2003 'Negotiating Borders: Miniature Paintings', curated by Salima Hashmi, Siddhartha Art Gallery, Kathmandu, Nepal
- 2002 2nd Painting Biennale, Saba Cultural and Artistic Center, Tehran, Iran
- 2002 10th Asian Biennale, Shilpakala Academy, Dhaka, Bangladesh
- 2000 'Contemporary Miniature Paintings', Didrichsen Art Museum, Helsinki, Finland

Select Public Collections

Royal Ontario Museum, Canada
TD Canada Trust Permanent Collection
University of Vienna, Department of Art History, Austria
Neubacher Collection, Weltmuseum, Vienna, Austria
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Pengzhou, China
The Robert McLaughlin Gallery, Oshawa, Canada
Doris McCarthy Gallery, University of Toronto, Canada
National Gallery of Amman, Jordan
National Art Gallery, Nepal
Federal Chancellery, Vienna, Austria

Achievements and Awards

- 2017 Awarded Canada Council Project Grant
- 2016 Excellence in Visual Art Award, by the Canadian Community Arts Initiative.
- 2014 Nominated for K.M. Hunter Award, Canada
- 2013 Nominated for Jameel Prize, international award for contemporary art and design
- 2011 to 2022
Awarded Project Grants, mid-career artist, Ontario Arts Council, Canada
- 2006 to 2022
Awarded Canada Council Travel Grants
- 2008 Awarded Project Grant, Toronto Arts Council, Canada
- 2006 to 2016
Awarded Access and Career Development Grant, Ontario Arts Council, Canada
- 2006 Awarded Project Grant, emerging artist, Ontario Arts Council, Canada
- 2000 Awarded UNESCO Bursary for a three-month residency in Vienna, Austria
- 1996 Award of Excellence, performance, National College of Arts, Lahore, Pakistan

Education and Residencies

- 2020 Artist in residence, Philomena+, Vienna, Austria
- 2019 Artist in residence, Bishop Strachan Private Girls School, Toronto, Canada
- 2018 Artist in residence, Boarding House Gallery, University of Guelph, Canada
- 2014 2 week residency at Parramatta Artist Studio, Sydney, Australia
- 2013 3 month residency at Blackwood Gallery, Mississauga, Canada
- 2000 3 month residency at AIR program, Federal Chancellery Vienna, Austria
- 1996 Bachelors Degree, Fine Arts, National College of Arts, Lahore, Pakistan
(major in Miniature Painting)

Volunteer Contributions

- 2018 to date Member, Arts Council, Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital,
Oakville, Canada
- 2018 to 2021 Member, Board of Directors, Oakville Galleries, Canada
- 2015 to 2021 Member, Acquisition Committee, Oakville Galleries, Canada
- 2020 to 2021 Member, Diversity and Inclusion Action Team, Oakville Galleries, Canada
- 2015 to 2018 Member, Advisory Board, Blackwood Gallery, University of Toronto,
Mississauga, Canada
- 2005 - 2007 Programming Committee member, SAVAC, South Asian Visual Arts
Centre, Toronto, Canada



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Gallery Hours
Wednesday to Saturday 12 - 5 pm