miguel palencia olavarrieta

erosion

ASPA CONTEMPORARY

galería de arte C. Galileo 19 Madrid

miguel palencia olavarrieta: erosion
ASPA Contemporary - Madrid
January 21st to February 20th 2021

The brittle and friable nature of the plaster made it impossible to remove this painting from the wall of the shrine. It is therefore not represented in the collection in the Central Asian Antiquities Museum, New Delhi; nor have I seen it (...) The photograph was taken by him [Sir Aurel Stein] when he discovered the shrine during his first Central Asian Expedition in 1900-1, long before his skill in photography had reached the high level that distinguishes his later pictures. The enlargement now given is based upon a print from his very imperfect half-plate negative, the negative itself having long since disappeared (...) it is greatly to be regretted that much in the left foreground is so vague, but the fault lies in the original print and cannot be helped. (...) Not having had the good fortune to see the painting myself, I had hoped that Stein would have contributed his description of it. But this was not to be and such particulars as follows are compiled from the record embodied in his report of the expedition written after our joint study of the photograph and his contemporary notes.

The wall painting appears to be a confused composition, not fully understood, and for this reason may seem wanting in coherence. It obviously illustrates some legend and has particular significance.

From Wall Paintings from Ancient Shrines in Central Asia recovered by Sir Aurel Stein and described by Fred Andrews, Oxford University Press, 1948
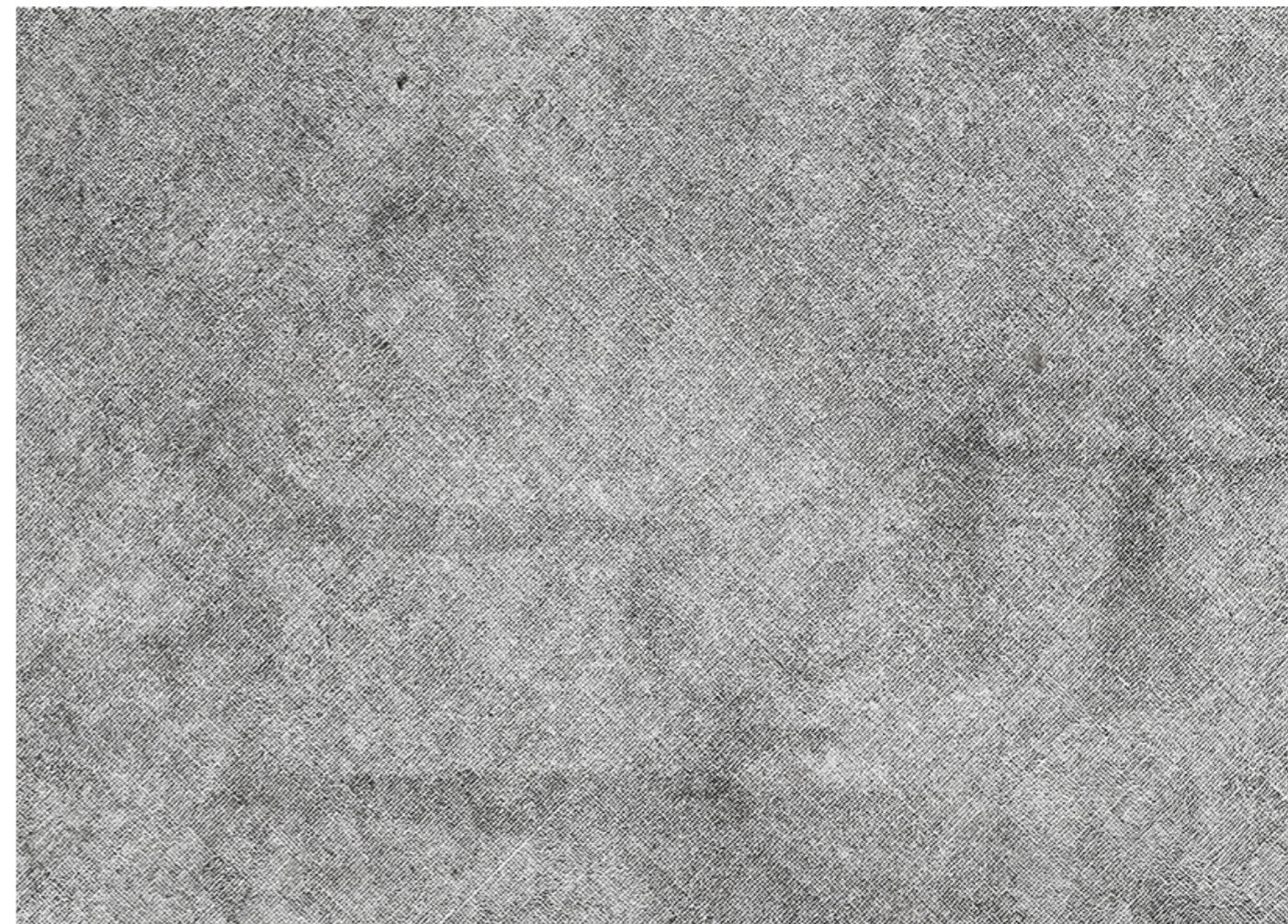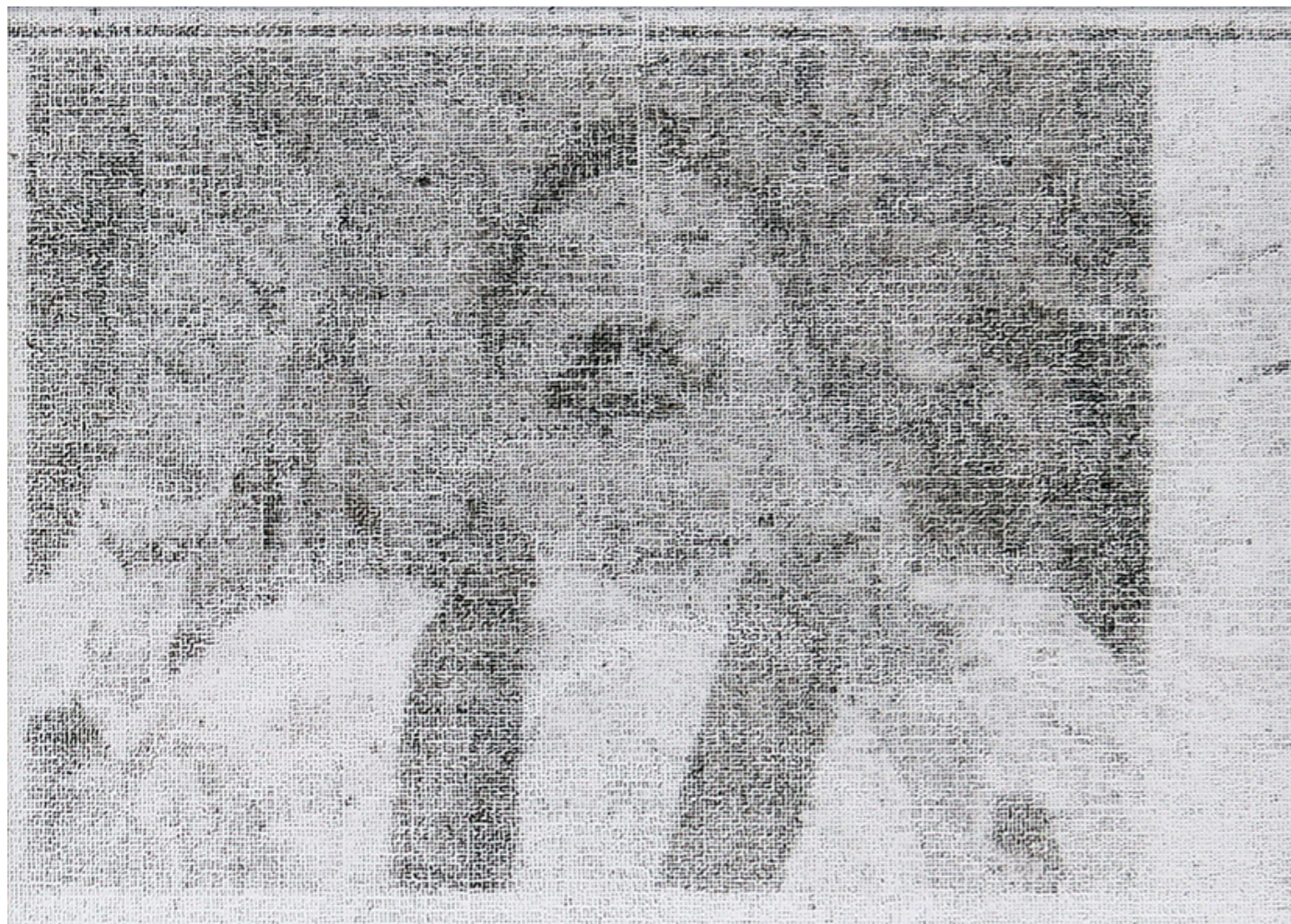
Relief I, II III, 2020

38.5 x 27.5 cm (each)
Indian ink on 90 g tracing paper
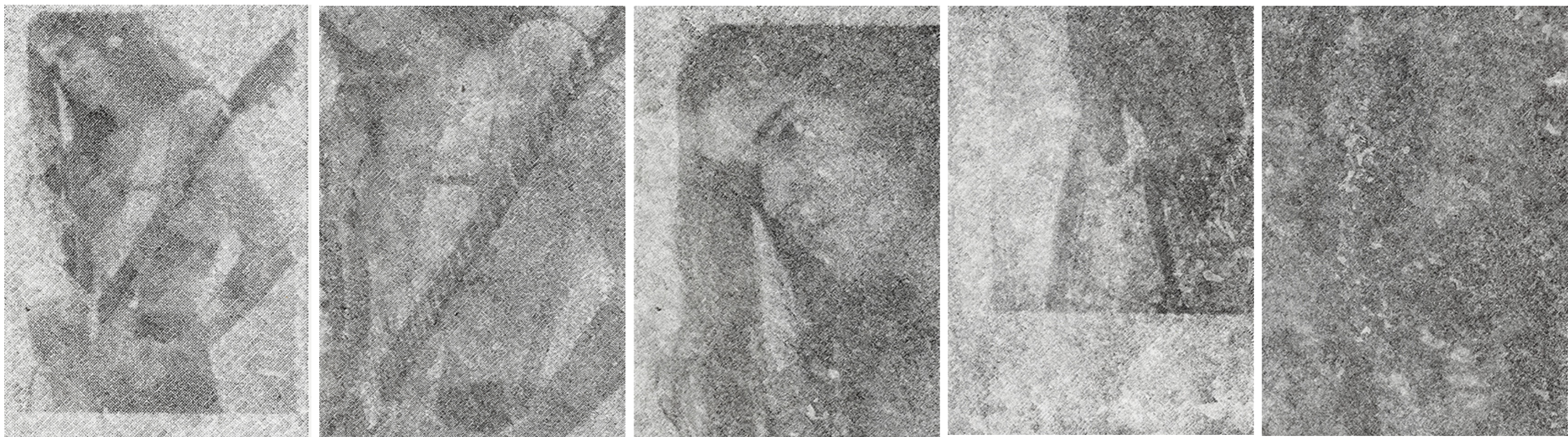
Acéphale I, II, III, IV, V, 2020

40 x 30 cm (each)
Indian ink on 180 g tracing paper

(above) *King,* 2020

54.5 x 38.5 cm
Indian ink on 90 g tracing paper

(right) *Head,* 2020

107.5 x 75 cm
Indian ink on 110 g tracing paper
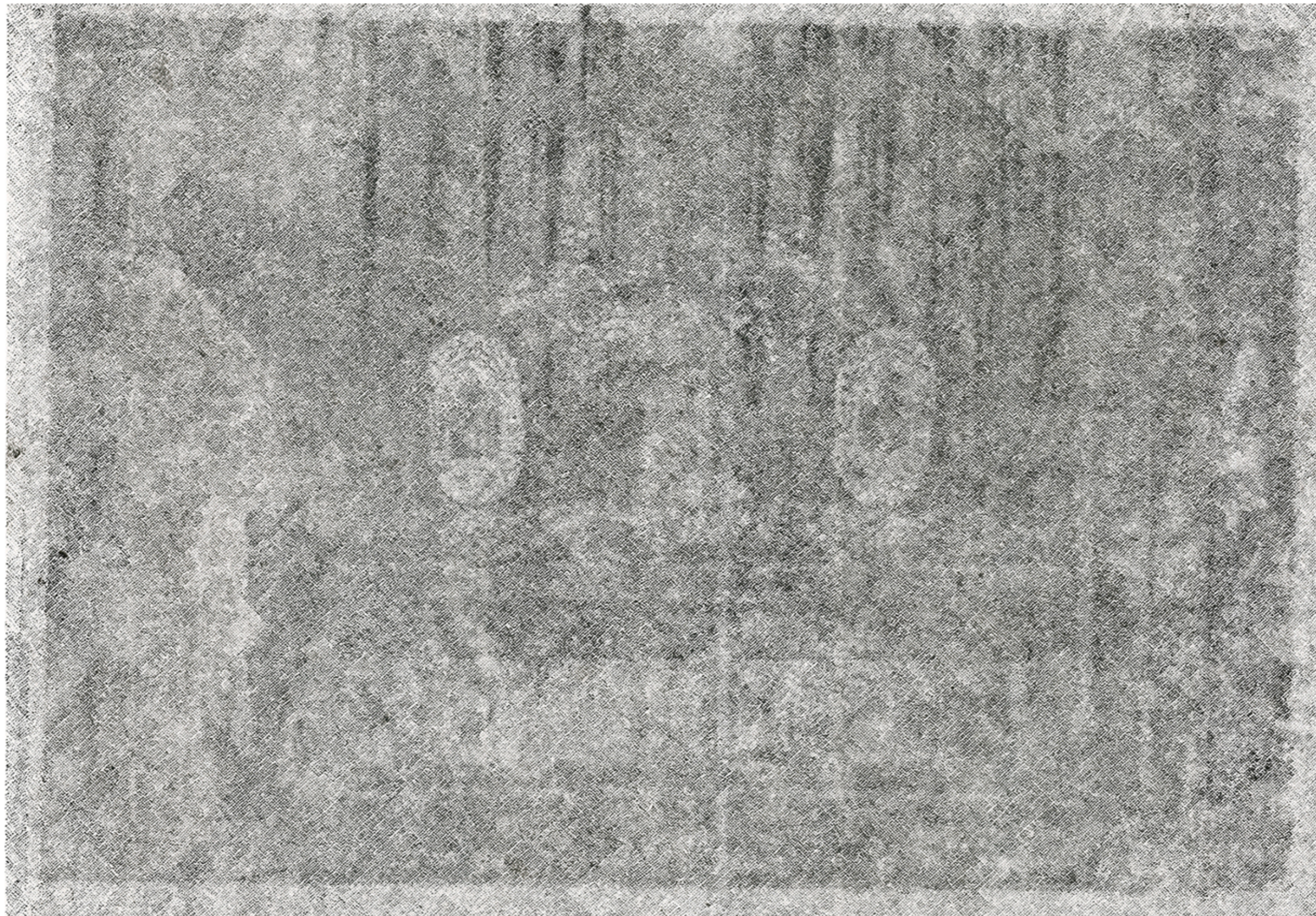
(opposite page) *Jeanne,* 2020

30 x 20 cm
Indian ink on 90 g tracing paper

Transenna, 2020

65 x 50 cm
Indian ink on 110 g tracing paper

Stavronikita, 2020 (upper half)

100 x 70 cm
Indian ink on 280 g tracing paper

Stavronikita, 2020 (lower half)

100 x 70 cm
Indian ink on 280 g tracing paper
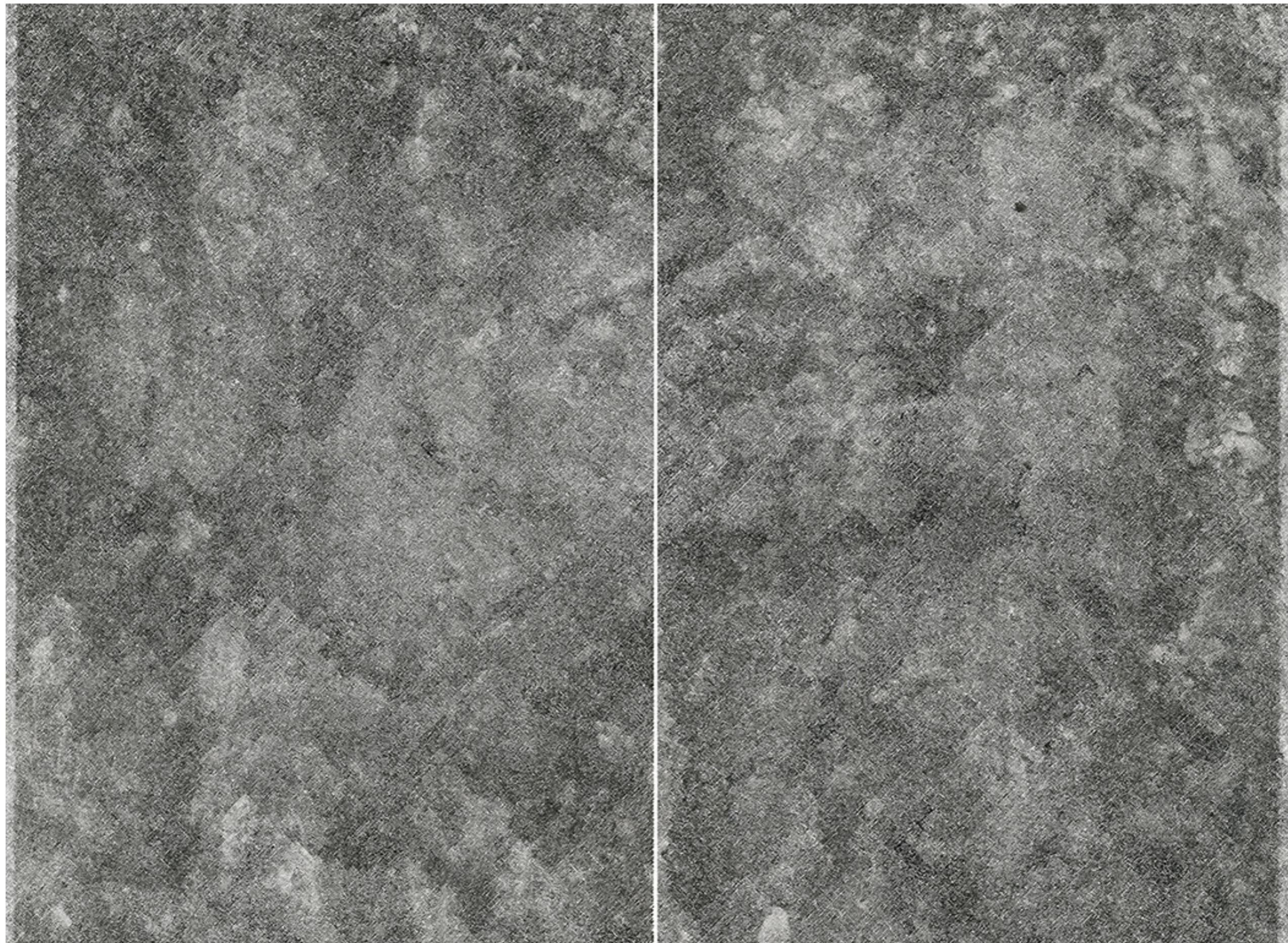
Histoire de l'oeil, 2020

diptych, 2 x 70 x 50 cm
Indian ink on 280 g tracing paper

(above) *Stucco Relief Heads I,* 2020

diptych, 2 x 38.5 x 27.5 cm
Indian ink on 90 g tracing paper

(opposite page) *Stucco Relief Heads II,* 2020

diptych, 2 x 38.5 x 27.5 cm
Indian ink on 90 g tracing paper

(above) *Ilaria,* 2020

30 x 20 cm
Indian ink on 90 g tracing paper

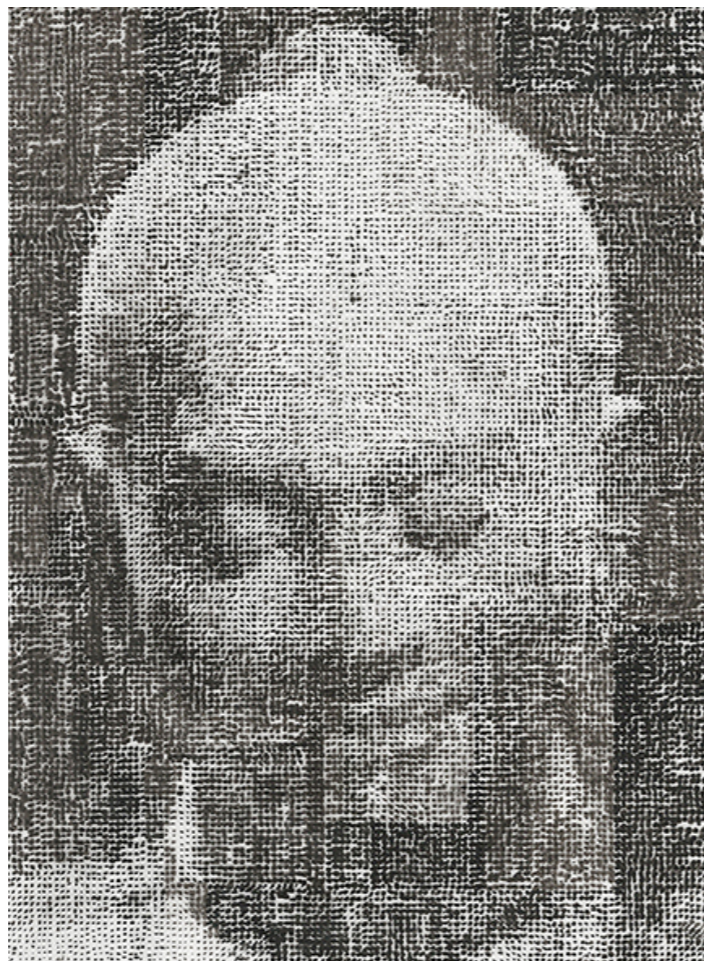(right) *Jayavarman,* 2020
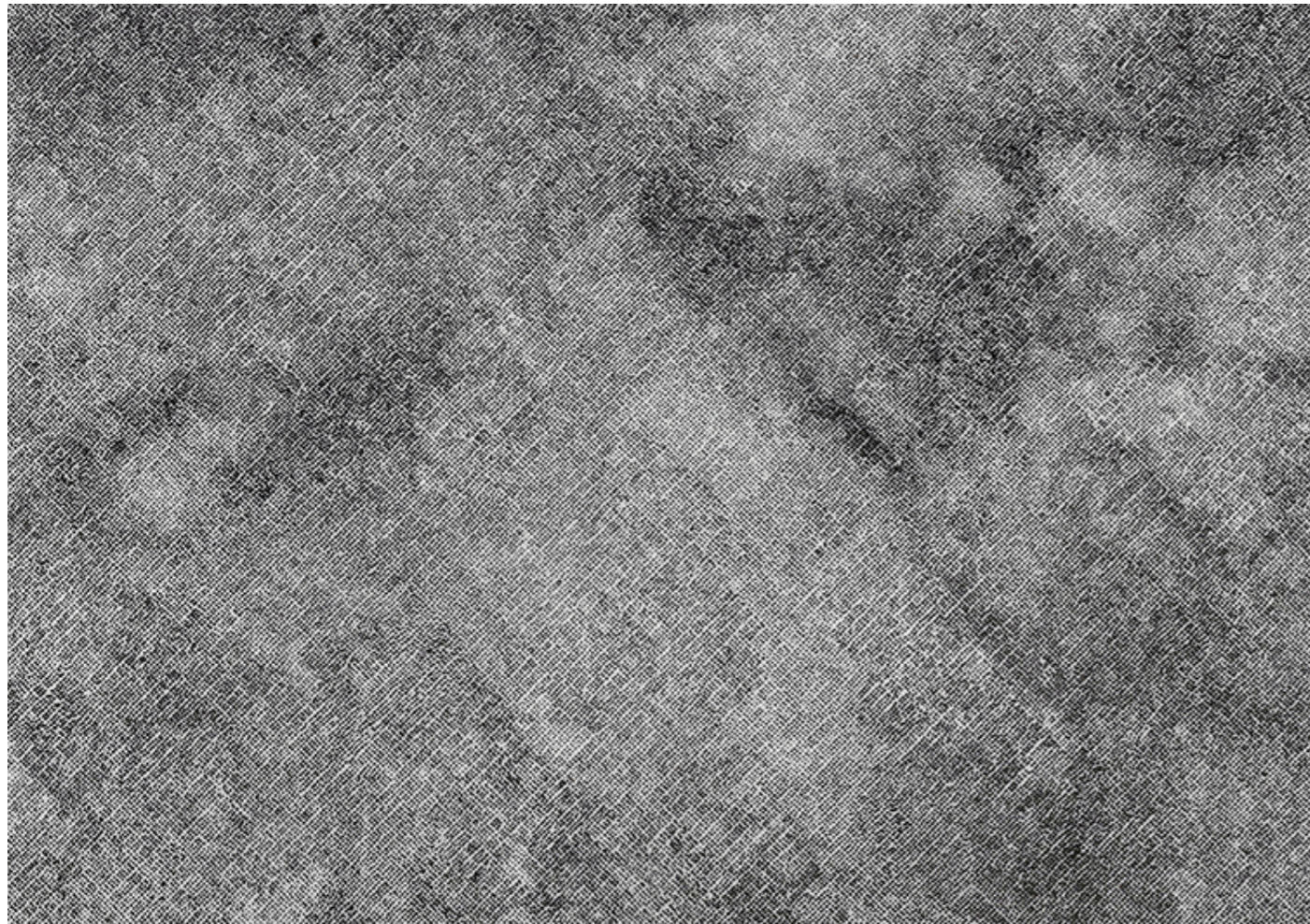
30 x 20 cm
Indian ink on 90 g tracing paper

(opposite page, above) *Malathy,* 2020

30 x 20 cm
Indian ink on 90 g tracing paper

(opposite page, below) *Eliza,* 2020

30 x 20 cm
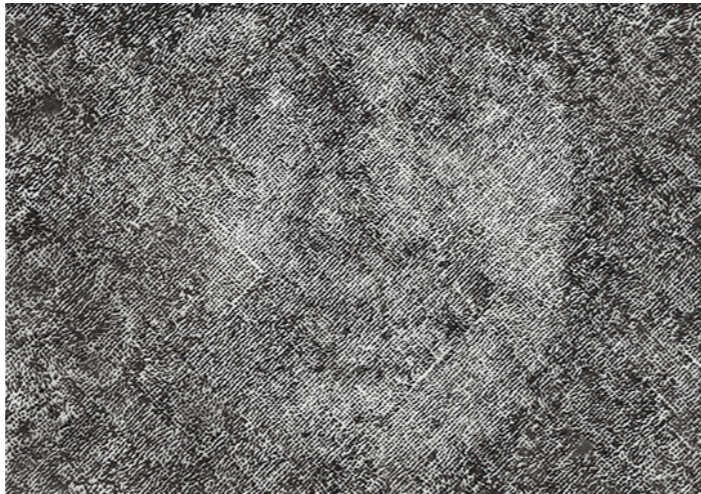Indian ink on 90 g tracing paper

(above) *The Eye and the Knife,* 2020

35 x 25 cm
Indian ink on 280 g tracing paper

(right) *Shamima,* 2020

15 x 10 cm
Indian ink on 90 g tracing paper

EROSIONS

Miguel Palencia Olavarrieta

lost contours, erosions.
Ezra Pound, Canto XIV

The group of drawings that make up *Erosion* (ASPA Contemporary, Madrid, January 2021) takes as referents a number of images of various origins subjected to different types of transformation, and to which the printing effect called halftone is finally applied. This process entails the breakdown of the images into monochromatic circles –dots- of variable sizes, reproducing the impression of relief and depth. The resulting pattern allows us to forget the subject to be represented as such and to focus on its infinitesimal fragments, with a view to reconstructing the image again patiently, leaving aside structures and hierarchies that arise from its direct observation. And when doing it through the accumulation of tiny strokes that entail endless imperfections (understanding as such human intervention as opposed to the digital accuracy of the base image), the resulting image dissolves the representation in varying degrees, turning it into something latent, hidden in the interior of a shaky surface.

The act of drawing is here an exercise akin to that of meditating on a given image. This image is largely a pretext for the drawing, as the work becomes indifferent to it, ignoring the whole to focus on the tiny details. The work distances itself from the object to be represented, which acts as a guide and steers the repetition of an automatic and repetitive motion, although always conscient and alert. The repetition has a rhythmic, cyclical nature. It is this human intervention as transfer of energy –and time- which breathes life into this series of potential embodiments of the image, unifies it and produces* it.

The drawings making up *Erosion* are the sequel to a previous work based on the use of Indian ink on tracing paper, which has evolved from its use as a fragile and auxiliary support to becoming a virtual, transparent plane that allows for direct work on the base image. They consist of a series of essays playing with the basic elements: the grain size, the quality of the tracing paper and the application of ink on it.

This set of works might also be considered more as a search than a predetermined series. I have tried to include different concepts and intuitions, enabling a whole series of possibilities and links between them and the resulting images, starting always from the same point: the paper as a virtual plane between the artist and reality. The projection of the image on this plane is a process along which the image gets degraded, falls apart and becomes obscure, giving birth to another reality of a different nature. The objects to be represented allude in a way to that inception: from images of reliefs that are subjected to a kind of physical erosion, to film stills the grain of which increase in numbers until the whole becomes illegible, and spatial representations of screens as a division and boundary that reproduce the idea of the virtual plane.

THE EYE I_VOLUME/SURFACE

The pointillism that defines the works of *Erosion* bring to mind various movements and artists who have used this graphic resource with different intentions and results: from the breakdown of reality and the optical analysis that Seurat poses at the end of the nineteenth century to the compulsión of Kusama´s polka dots and the ironic reference to Liechtenstein's means of mechanical printing. Something of the spirit of each of the above examples is manifest in the drawings of *Erosion*. In a less obvious way, the use of tracing paper as an auxiliary support that allows for the reproduction and interpretation of a referential image placed behind it is related to several conceptions of the work of art that affect their interpretation. Two of these conceptions have a very close relationship with each other, which is at the same time antinomian: the painting, the work of art as a window to an outside reality, a fundamental concept of the art of the Renaissance, and the icon as an unchanging representation of a transcendental reality in the physical plane. Two examples, which moreover have a very close relationship with the drawings of *Erosion*, coincide with each other -first half of the sixteenth century- and represent the starting point and the culmination of their development respectively.

Reality is broken down in Albert Dürer's etching of 1525 as a previous step to its representation. One loses sight of the associative charge that entails to confront the visual phenomenon directly; through its fragmentation it becomes easier to represent both the detail and its depth –perspective- on a surface. The drawing makes use of a transparent plane –a virtual vertical plane floating in space- between the artist's eye and the reality to be represented –the model- based on a system of grids. Both ends get projected and come together on this intermediate plane, existing without separation and occupying the same extension simultaneously. The drawing is a window where the information that the eye registers at the other end of this plane accumulates, at the same time that its particular viewpoint gets fixed: the drawing reflects in equal measure what exists at both sides of the plane.

In Byzantium the eye is not that of the artist, but that of the believer that recognises

A draftsman making a perspective drawing of a woman,1525
Etching by Albert Dürer (1471-1528)
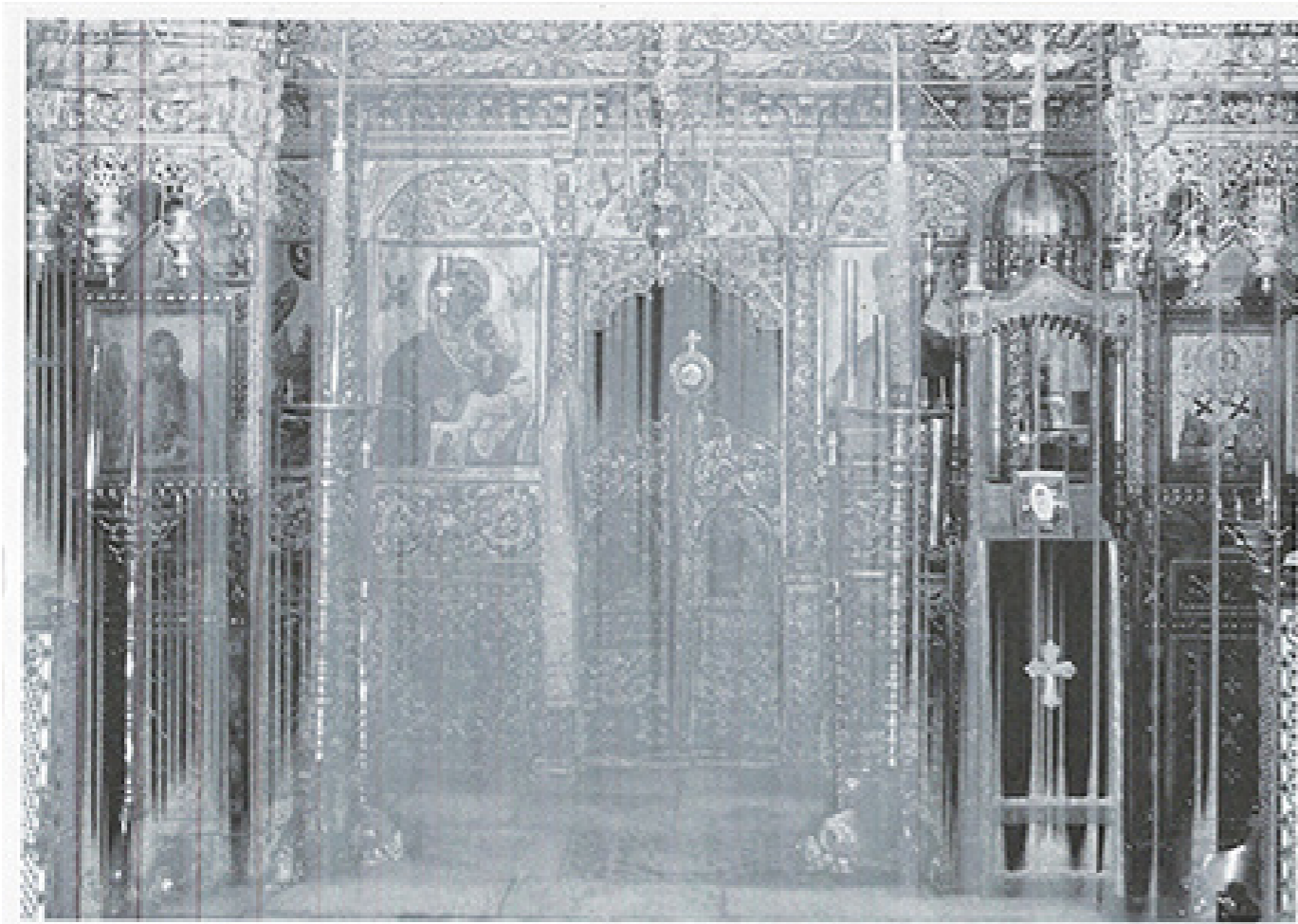
the properties attributed to the representations of icons – and sight is not the only sense used to that end. The icon's depth is not spatial, but of a different kind: the representation follows a set model that has a direct connection with an underlying reality (*hipostasis*), and as such becomes its embodiment and immediate expression in the physical plane. The faithful representation of the model ensures the connection: the artist is not allowed any personal freedom, nor are they allowed to think up any particular innovation; their role is just to give life to the representation through human intervention, through the actions of their hands (*χειρ Δομηνίκου –through the hand of Doménikos*).

Both cases imply in a way a distancing with respect to the reality to be represented and a demystification of the pictorial process, which shows itself to be a mechanical act to a certain extent. The rules of representation are clear and transparent, obvious and available to anyone who wishes to understand them and to use them rigorously. But they don't close any doors: in both cases, the possibilities one faces when surrendering to these rules and taking them to the limit are endless and unfathomable.

If we take 1525, the year of Dürer's etching, as the starting point for an evolution and a conception of art that will prevail in the Western world, we can also consider that year as the culmination of the Byzantine concept, as exemplified by the late example of the interior of the Katholikon (the main church) in the Monastery of Stavronikita, in Mount Athos, painted by Theophanes the Cretan, El Greco's master. A number of determining factors in the building of this space resulted in a particularly vertical interior, with a compact floor plan even by Byzantine standards. In *Stavronikita* the base image is a faulty print of a photograph of its iconostasis - screen that divides the altar from the main space in eastern churches - as a representation of a space without perspective that eventually functions as Dürer's virtual plane, allowing for just two positions –in front/behind (artist/model)-; when both get projected in the drawing's interface, they make it into a representation of something hidden that exists at the other side – as is the case with the iconostasis itself.

A priviledged subject in both pictorial traditions –obvious in Dürer's etching and present and recognizable in Stavronikita's interior– is that of the female representation. In the first case it is subjected to an analytical contemplation as an object in space projected according to the rules of perspective, and in the second case it becomes reduced to an idealization with an established presence in a spiritual and spatial system. An important part of the drawings of *Erosion* is made up of representations of female figures in which form –the portrait- becomes diluted in the background. United by a certain funereal character (*Ilaria, Malathy*), these portraits resist their decomposition tenaciously (*Jeanne, Acéphale I-V*)

Photograph taken from The Cretan Painter Theophanis: The Final phase of his art in the wall paintings of the Holy Monastery of Stavronikita, Manolis Chatzidakis, 1986
Digital printing, HP Design Jet

RELIEF AND VICTORY

Two works are a first trial of the procedure used in the drawings of Erosion: *Jayavarman* and *Ilaria*. The powerful head of Jayavarman VII in the Musée Guimet in París resists the treatment, whereas the portrait of Ilaria del Carretto by Jacopo della Quercia seems to be about to dilute and to blend into the air of the surrounding space. In both cases, the base for the works is a close-up photograph of a sculpture. Taking that as a starting point, the drawing construes a series of properties of mass and volume related to the object and plays with the removal of the distance between the object and the spectator –as in *Stavronikita* - and the dilution of form into its background.

The pair of dyptichs entitled *Stucco Relief Heads I* and *II* reproduce pages from a book on archaeological digs in Central Asia (the area that is now China's Autonomous Region of Xinjiang). The pair of heads in each group are identifiable, although they have lost their original texture, merging with that of the paper sheet, resisting a whole series of displacements, until being again placed on those pages, and separated once more by their division into a diptych. They replace the more basic nature of the pair formed by *Jayarvaman* and *Ilaria* with the creation of a subtle trompe l'oeil related to a whole set of transformations of the image through the drawing.

Both approaches combine in *Head*, where the same image acting as the base for *Jayarvaman* is subjected to several reprintings and scannings until achieving a particularly dense and distilled versión of this thirteenth century royal portrait, persistent in its weight and volumetry, and at the same time detuning its features, contributing that way to the erosion process –which it again withstands relatively intact- that implies the minute reconstruction, in an amplified scale, of the original broken image. The edges of the paper of the original work are kept in the final image, insisting on the interplay of different backgrounds that overlap and merge in turn.

A recurring theme starts to take shape, that of Victory (Jayarvaman translates as Protector of Victory; Stavronikita, as Victory of the Cross). *King* starts from a faulty print of an image of Sri Lanka's President Mahinda Rajapaksa, celebrating ecstatically the definitive victory over the Tamil Tigers in 2011. *Transenna* presents an image of a more ambiguous representation, which disappears merging into the various physical supports that shelter it. The image of an eagle hunting a hare (or leaning on it?) is part of an iconostasis fragment and speaks to us again of the function of the image as a mediator between two extremes: both in Dürer's etching and in the Byzantine icons, the question is to clarify if there is anything beyond the image that it can express. The transparency of the tracing paper and its fragile materiality contribute once more to this idea.

The underlying reality –*hipostasis* - that each of these images conveys sublimates the symbolism of the references, and places in a first plane the structure and energetic distribution that prevails over the uninterrupted surface of each of the drawings.

Presumed portrait of Jayarvaman VII, thirteenth century, Guimet Museum, Paris
Multiple digital printings, HP Design Jet

The final texture reflects the decline of the transient phenomenon that one attempts to capture. The various drawings apprehend a process of appearing and/or disappearing of the image, which is nothing else but the semblance of a process of continuous transformation of reality.

This thematic line has a sequel in *Relief I, II* and *III*, although the figures making up this group are practically unrecognisable. In three successive approaches to the same image with the intention of capturing the representation that fades out, as in a fractal structure, the result is a precise net of dots, with an illusion of depth that becomes blurred with the relief of the fragile tracing paper, looking more like a composition of geological strata than a series of concrete figures.

Relief I, II and *III* constitute a transition between the act of drawing as an erosion, where the avatars of a representation become confused and sublimated in the final result –a concept articulated by the removal of the distance and the space in Stavronikita- and a different approach connected with the image grain, which is manifest in every drawing, but that becomes more obvious in those where the small size of the stroke is taken to the limit (*Shamima, Jeanne, Acéphale I-V*). The result is a filigree where the underlying image and the process of its reconstruction become translucent and merge simultaneously through the irregularities of its complex surface.

THE EYE 2: AT THE OTHER SIDE

The paradigm of this conception anticipated by *Relief I, II* and *III* would be that of the optical travelling of a film camera. As if a paradox was propounded between the possibility of the spectactor's eye moving freely in space and that of the image changing, simulating a displacement that does not actually take place.

Acéphale I-V is made up of five successive approaches to a same image, that of the North American painter, model and performer Eliza Douglas, the model also for the small portrait entitled *Eliza*. Each approach entails a closer, more partial framing and a finer grain, which is however unable to capture the reality described, since as the definition increases, so does the disorder of human intervention. The result is an exercise on tone, which can be extended to the whole of *Erosion* as the main expression of each drawing individually, and as the sublimation of their structure, support and detail.

The door that opens to achieving an endless variety of tones with a minimal number of formal elements, integrating a complex structure into a unit which is perceived directly, without the need to formulate hierarchical compositions, is a resource used in important examples of contemporary music that have inspired these drawings – one mustn`t leave aside the importance of the time reflected in their making-, like Giacinto Scelsi's *Quattro Pezzi su una nota sola* (1959), or Karlheinz Stockhausen's

Inori (1974), paradigmatic works that are open to Eastern influences and in which the composition process is carried out as an exercise of meditation and prayer. Returning to the limitation of the grid and the Byzantium models, it is again a question of outlining the radical reduction of the elements and systems employed in the drawings, and the artist's personal contribution, to facilitate the discovery of new, unexpected possibilities of expression.

In the diptych entitled *Histoire de l'oeil* –a reference to Bataille's novel-, the drawing process reaches its highest degree of disorder. It takes a still from the final scene in Pier Paolo Pasolini's Saló as a starting image. The image is seen from a distance through binoculars. Dürer's or Theophanes´ eye steps onto the other side of the representation and becomes the object, split into two again in the diptych itself: the left eye watches with amazement as a knife pulls out the opposite eye.

* ["to produce" in the sense of the verb "to render": to cause to be, to be responsible for its apparition. In this sense of the term, there is a relationship with the process of graphic representation known as rendering, by which a specific view of a 3-D simulation is selected for reproduction at high resolution with particular conditions of lighting and materiality. This process is carried out through a scanning by which the image is constructed pixel by pixel, without any concern about order: the final result is completely predetermined by a series of parameters, and in a conventional way one tries to achieve the highest degree of realism possible for the view in question. In a way, it is about gettin the computer programm to make an effort in order to achieve a resolution that the computer is unable to show under its normal working power. The *Erosion* drawings follow a process somehow parallel to this, although differing in most of senses. The human intervention during the scanning reverses the tendency of the render as to the achievement of a realist image. Other important differences are the appearance of faults and blemishes, a witness to the process of construction of the image, or the interest for a spatiality opposite to the conventional one that one aims to achieve through the treatment of these simulations. The morphological processing of images on which the rendering process is based involves an operation known as dilation, through which the boundaries of an object become gradually more complex. The opposite of this operation is known as erosion.]
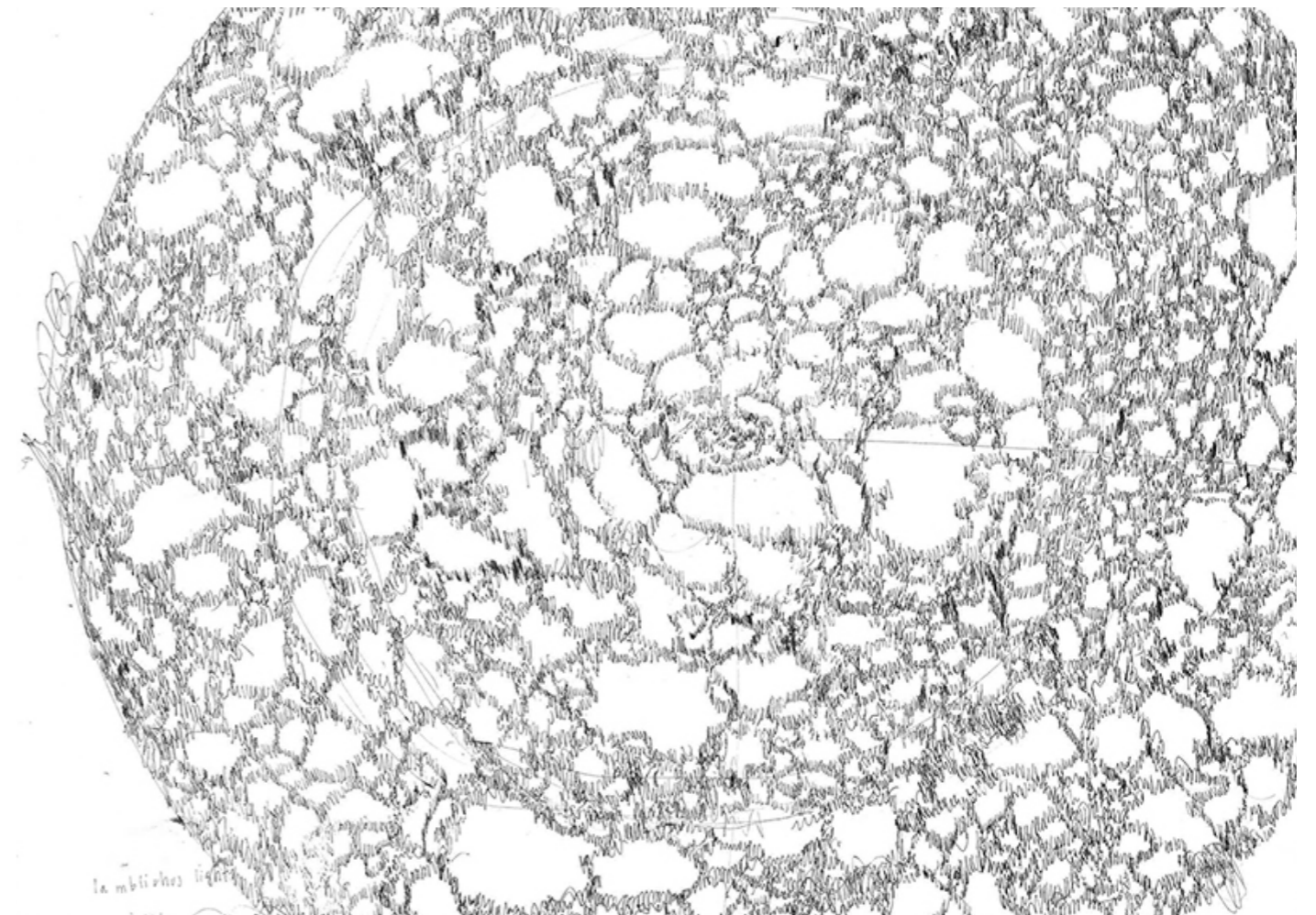
INK ON TRACING PAPER

Miguel Palencia Olavarrieta

Since 2015, in several series and groups of works, I have been exploring the various possibilities offered to me by the use of tracing paper. In general, this material has evolved from its use as an auxiliary and irregular support into which to pour impressions spontaneously, to the advantageous use of its qualities of transparency, which allow for the overlap of images, and, since 2019, for direct work on reference images. The sundry series develop in varying degrees other qualities of tracing paper, such as its fragility, or its role as a manual recipient of different images worked upon on the computer.

THE CANTOS

The use of tracing paper dates back to the series entitled *The Cantos* (2015-2017), when I started to use 50 m *Modulor* transparent sketching paper rolls (40 g/ m2) as support for a simultaneous reading and illustration of Ezra Pound's epic poem*. The texts acted as a script and inspiration for the visual work, which became populated by images and graphic references suggested by the poem, and escorted others born from personal experiences: encounters, readings and journeys. This work developed while living in Madrid, London and Phnomn Penh, until settling down in Berlin. The group of rolls making up *The Cantos* travelled with me to those cities and throughout several Asian countries; the experience of certain aspects of their culture became a key component of my work, just as in Pound's text.

Sketching paper rolls are normally used in architecture as a support in the process of thinking about and development of a project, not just for their quality of transparency, which allows for the tracing of other drawings, but also for their lightness and auxiliary role. Their length allows for a gradual development of sketches and

The Cantos, 2015-2017 (fragment - Iamblichus' light, the souls ascending)
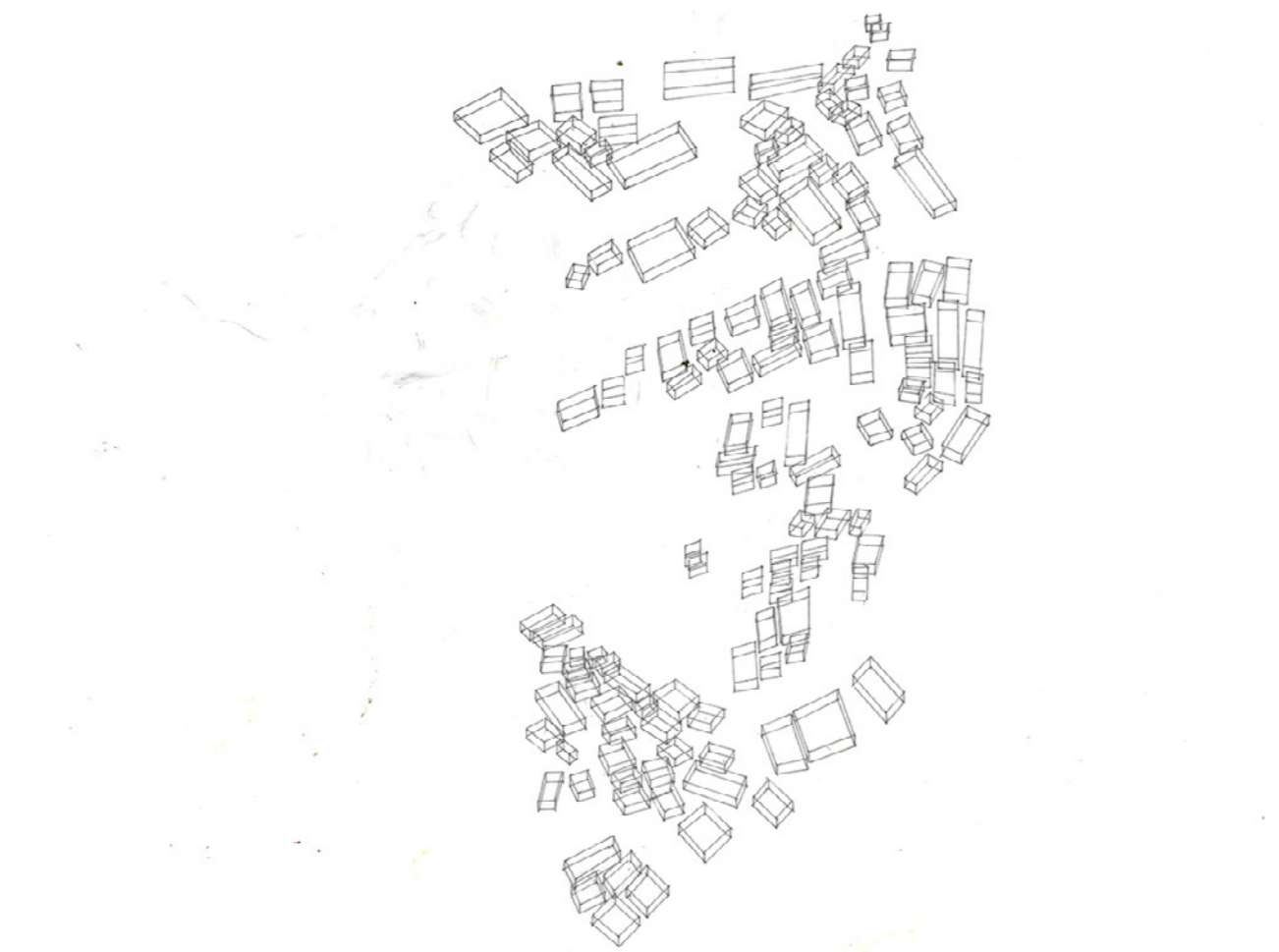Indian ink on 45 g tracing paper

and ideas without the risk of running out of paper; and one can easily select fragments, detaching them from the main roll, keeping the ones you want and discarding the rest. In *The Cantos*, they are used as a direct support for the illustration of a series of concepts and, above all, for a continuous flow of ideas originating from a text which is basically an open work, and which allows for the inclusión of new elements. The fragile nature of the paper rolls reflects the urgent, dynamic character of the process, always essentially unfinished and in progress.

The drawings of *The Cantos* develop mainly two graphic intuitions related to two opposite ways of presenting images in the poem: a schematic way through which a large variery of historical and current characters are introduced with hardly any particular development, reflected in the use of large strokes of Indian ink; and a more precise pattern of strokes that make up a vibrant surface, which translates Pound's effort for bringing vividness to the description of certain philosophical concepts, and which reflect his attempt to establish the totality of the experience he purports to gather. These two styles come together and merge with the rewriting of the original text. Indian ink plays an increasingly more important role and acquires a life of its own as a reviewer of the text and a unifying agent of the various images. The large marks of Indian ink have an effect on the quality of the transparent paper, which develops ridges and a relief that contribute to the perception of the work as a simple physical support, fragile and precarious.

AMDO/ROME

The interest in the open, unfathomable work that motivated *The Cantos* appears again in *Rome* (2017), an unfinished project that attempted to create a huge archive of drawings based in a complete case study of the relationships between the formal units –blocks of houses- of the map of Rome. These relationships were set and adapted to the size of the sheet individually on the computer screen, and were then transcribed manually onto the transparent support, giving rise to an infinite variety of drawings based on the balance between two abstract forms on the space of the sheet.

A similar concept inspires the series entitled *Amdo* (2017), in which the volumes of 64 monasteries in the Tibet región of Amdo, in what is now the Chinese province of Qinghai, are reconstructed through the use of Google Earth and various software of topographic mapping. These monasteries have been rebuilt recently after having been demolished completely during the 1966 Cultural Revolution; they are still undergoing demolitions and transformations due to the convulsive situation in the region. The 64 drawings –abstract representations that reflect the incredible diversity of these monuments- attempt to capture a specific moment of a reality that will continue changing.

Amdo (4/64), 2017
42 x 29.7 cm, Indiank ink on 90 g tracing paper

These two series make clear an aspect that, in a more or less obvious way, affects the whole of my work on tracing paper: the relationship with an image generated on the computer or as the result of a mechanical operation, and the attempt to revive or to reproduce it manually by using a transparent support.

DAMBULLA

In the years after *The Cantos*, between 2017 and 2019, I started to work at a bigger scale on the first intuition already suggested in this series, the more schematic one. In the drawings of the 2017 series *Dambulla* the effect is that of a large sketch that conveys the basic impression of a particular place. Large strokes of dark ink on transparent paper suggest the lines of a dark, indeterminate, cavernous space. The paper reacts by generating creases and a relief related to the irregular surface of Dambulla caves, and which try to suggest their enveloping nature.

The series *Dambulla* is born from the experience of these group of caves in Sri Lanka in 2016. Around that year a number of encounters and journeys (India, China, Mount Athos) took place that nurture the set of references that make up my work, which are continuously appearing and disappearing, and, like in *The Cantos*, blending into one another, and presenting links not always directly and immediately recognisable. There is an underlined interest in the visual expression of great spiritual traditions (Byzantium, Tibet), and in certain belligerent episodes of contemporary history (Sri Lanka, Cambodia), and in the background the intention of bringing together these two worlds, trying to get the images extracted from them to reveal something about them both, as in the 2019 series *Mogao*, in which the schematic, direct representation of the group of figures of the Mogao caves in Dunhuang let us glimpse the gloomy, sordid aspect connected to the dark present of the Xinjiang region in Central Asia.

Other works from this period focusing on portraits involve a more direct use of the possibilities offered by the transparency of tracing paper. The 2018 series *Manada* (wolfpack) overlaps the five faces of the members of The Wolfpack (a group of gang rapists) in every possible permutation. Other series, like *First Woman* (2019), continue this exploration, still in progress. Finally, a group of drawings (*Tamil Tigers*, 2019) use the computer screen as a physical support for the tracing of images directly from the web browser

Dambulla, 2017
180 x 90 cm, Indian ink on 110 g tracing paper

At the end of 2019 a number of concepts start becoming important, until they take precedence in *Erosion*. They have to do with the second intuition that could be detected in *The Cantos*, that which is an attempt to describe a complex physical reality, and in which the different infinitesimal elements of an image coalesce, giving form to a whole, a microcosmos. In the first place, there is an interest in the automatic, spontaneous drawing (*Citera*, 2019), and in the fundamental nature of a stroke reduced to its bare minimum. And in connection to it, there appears a tendency to focus on the image in its most absolute division, the grain. Progressively the spirit of the more schematic drawings through large lines is abandoned, and the search for the construction of a continuous, vibrant surface becomes deeper, through the repetition and accumulation of an infinite number of strokes, which are like subdued, minimal, indivisible gestures. To this current belong the drawings exhibited in *A Dark Forest* (NavelArt, Madrid, july 2020)

The first works in *A Dark Forest* are a pair of drawings seemingly identical: *Great-Martyr* I and II. They are the repetition of the same image in the same technique. The starting point is a photograph of a mural paint in the Protaton (the main church) of Karyes, in Mount Athos, representing Saint George. The bad repair of the painting and the defacement to which the figure of the saint has been subjected give rise to a texture in which the naked eye cannot distinguish the limits between the image and the bare support. The drawing is done with Indian ink on tracing paper, keeping the reference image behind the transparent support during the process. The work focuses on the image grain, losing sight of the global view, going over its shadows and its relief through the compulsive repetition of a tiny, spontaneous stroke, gradually building a continuous, vibrant surface. The drawing entails a work on the abstract, indifferent to the reality represented. There is a certain loss of control over the final result as to the reading of the referential image, owing to both the intervention as a process of disolution of the image and the capacity of the image to resist the treatment. The final result is a testament to a transfer of energy between the artist's work and their experience of the image to be represented, which is not revealed until the reference image is withdrawn.

The other drawings in *A Dark Forest* develop themes connected with the grain of the image and its relationship with the image represented. The referential images have diverse origins: Malevich's Black Square, which, in as much as it can be considered an icon, relates to the modelic representation of the *Great-Martyr;* a photograph of a dark interior in Mount Athos; and several images related to the spiritual tradition and the twilight, decadent nature of Tibetan culture, in direct correspondence with the idea of disolution conveyed by these drawings. Tracing paper, as before, reacts to the application of Indian ink, giving rise to a relief and a number of ripples that fuse with the surface of the drawing and that, as in *Dambulla*, have to do with the theme developed: representations of a dark, rugged inner space.

Great-Martyr I, II, 2019 (NavelArt, A Dark Forest, Madrid july 2020)
59 x 43.5 cm each, Indian ink on 90 g tracing paper

The peak of *A Dark Forest* is *Field*, the surface of which is constructed following the model of a representation of a Tibetan Refuge Field, which shows a particular lineage through an unlimited hierarchy of spiritual guides that eventually form a continuous, uninterrupted surface. These images are used as a guide for elaborate exercises of meditation and inner visualization, the aim of which is to obliterate the separation of the different entities, and, above all, the separation between the outer reality and the inner one, capable of creating by itself a construction as elaborate as that which is represented. In *Field* we perceive a continuous surface built through the accumulation of strokes, and in which one can surmise or feel the underlying compositions that make up the original representation. But as in the meditation exercise, the aim is to blur the separation between the drawing as the expression of an inner landscape and the representation of an outer reality.

The series of drawings that make up *A Dark Forest* pay more attention to the transformation that entails the process of drawing over a given image, which extends to the references, increasingly more vulnerable to subjecting themselves to a whole series of transformations before the final, definitive one. These references show themselves in relation to the physical context from which they originate: a printed image, the pages of a book, a screen, etc. When this context gets integrated into the final result, the drawings become, to a greater or lesser extent, a series of tromp l'oeil images, which refer to the originary sources of the images –and to their direct experience- and to the different transformations the undergo until the final representation.

*[The Cantos is a long poem in 116 sections, written between 1915 and 1962 by Ezra Pound. It deals with diverse topics related to culture, economy and government, and integrates various systems of thought and a large number of voices in several languages. It is the great modernist work experimenting with an infinity of ways of presenting a literary image, using and presenting simultaneously techniques and formats, ranging from haikus to Provençal poetry and Chinese ideograms, or the successive translation of a text into different languages. Occasionally, long segments of The Cantos are made up of reference texts used without any changes to them, as a kind of literary ready-mades. In other sections, the mention of a name or a concept is used to suggest related aspects, to be filled in by the reader with their personal knowledge. The multiple stories in the poem merge with Pound's own life; he wrote the most famous segment, The Pisan Cantos, while in a cage in an Allied concentration camp at the end of World War II, as an amendment to his previous work, and adding it to the whole work.]

Distant Star, 2020 (NavelArt, *A Dark Forest,* Madrid july 2020)
67 x 51.5 cm, Indian ink on 110 g tracing paper

miguel palencia olavarrieta: erosion
ASPA Contemporary - Madrid
January 21st to February 20th 2021

Miguel Palencia Olavarrieta (Madrid, 1987) has lived and worked in Spain, United Kingdom, Italy, Switzerland, Japan, Cambodia and Germany. As an architect he has worked for experimental studios like SANAA in Tokyo and H&dM in Basel. As an artist his work gathers and synthesizes the whole of his experiences, journeys, influences and readings.

miguelpalenciaolavarrieta@gmail.com
+34677353154

www.miguelpalenciaolavarrieta.com
@olavarrrieta

miguel palencia olavarrieta

erosión

ASPA CONTEMPORARY
galería de arte C. Galileo 19 Madrid