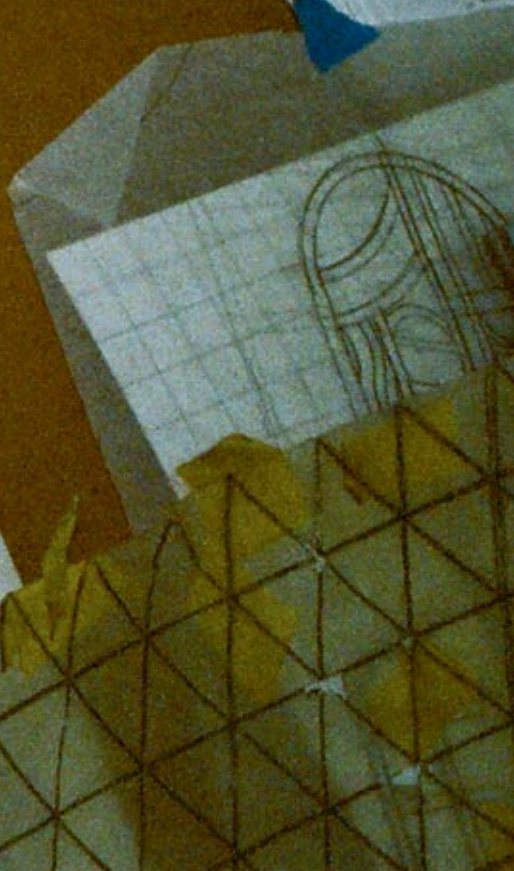
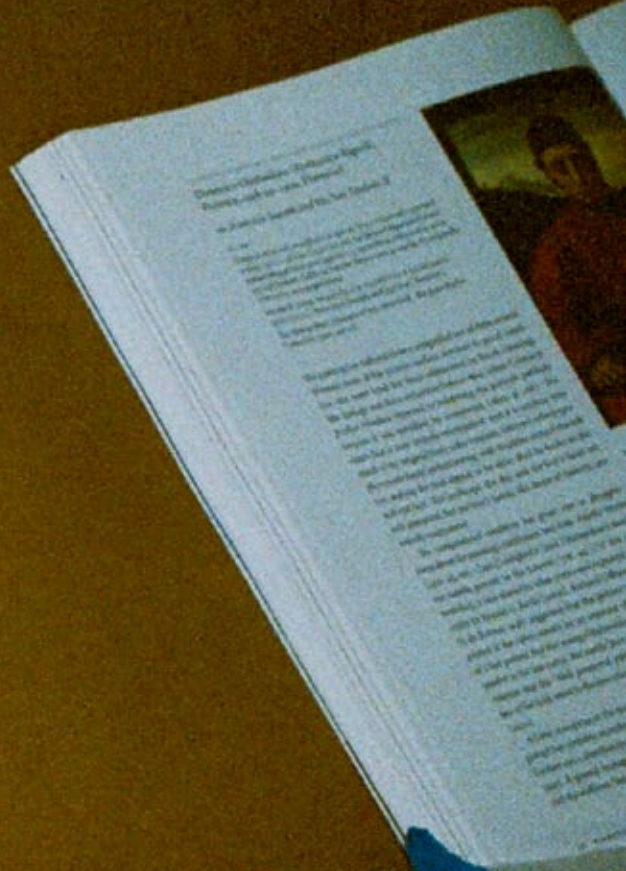


# FATHERS



RUBY SKY STILER

FATHERS

Ruby Sky Stiler

Fathers



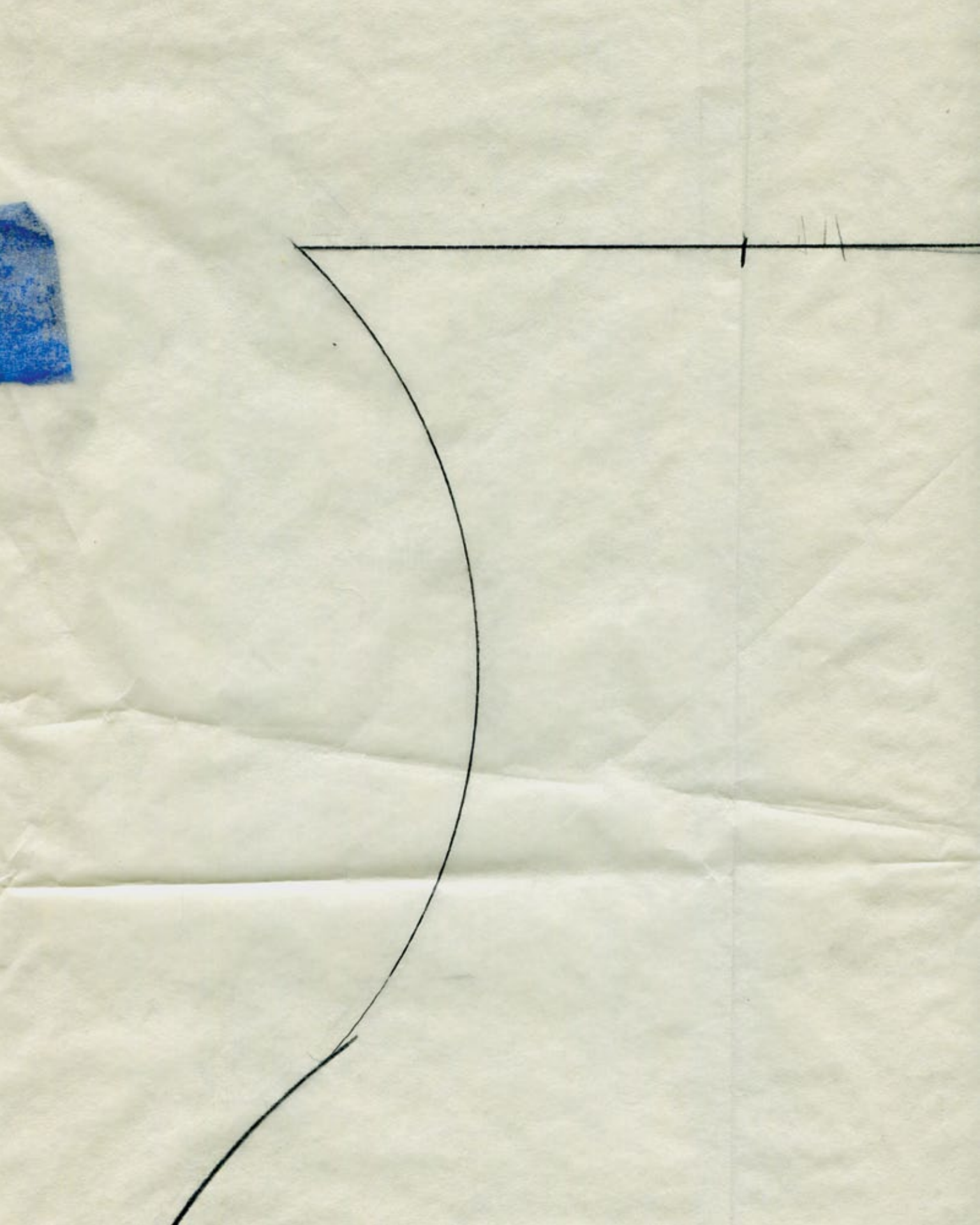
Portrait of Alexander J. Cassatt by the artist's son, Arthur J. Cassatt, 1880. Oil on canvas, 100 x 100 cm. Philadelphia Museum of Art

Hassla

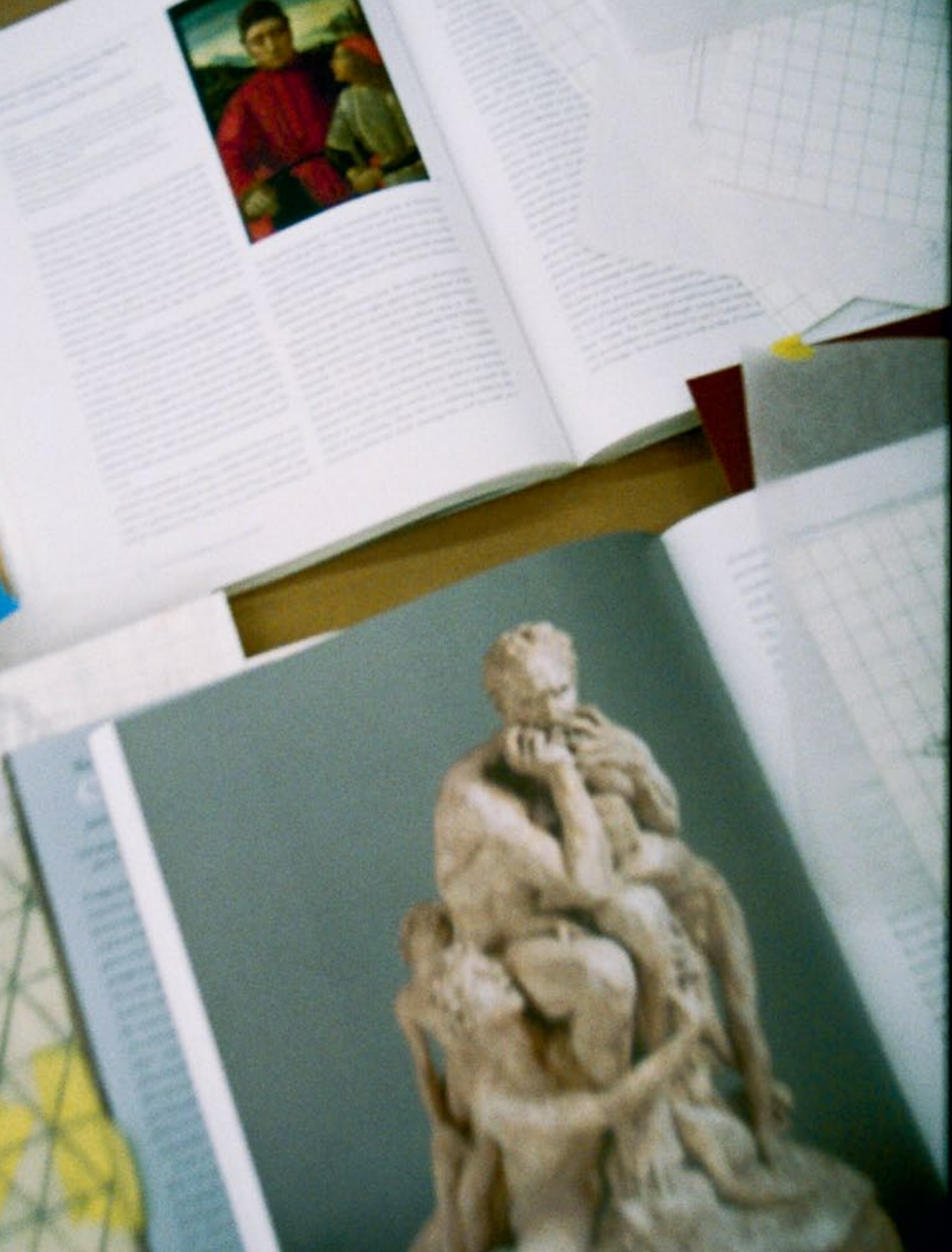


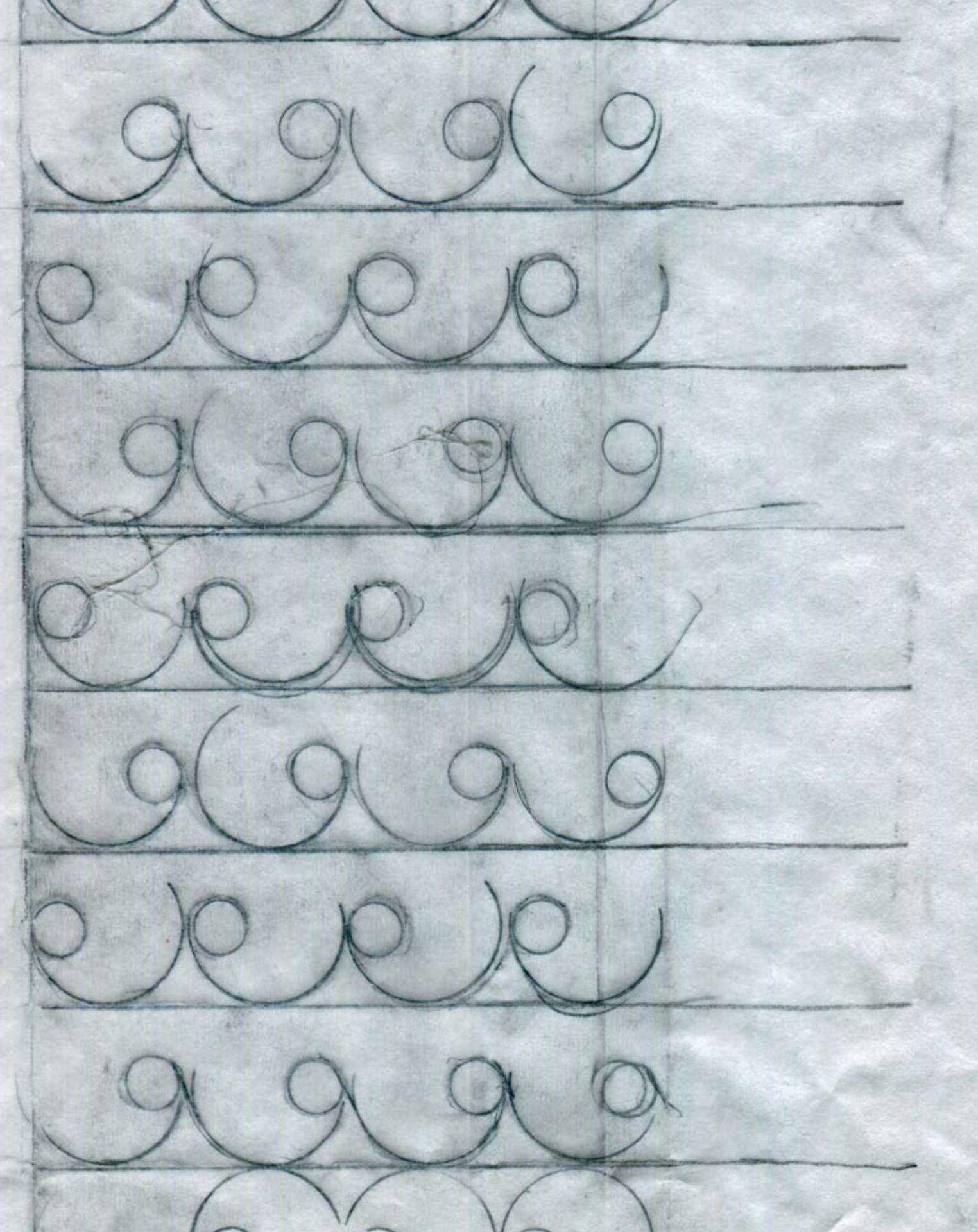




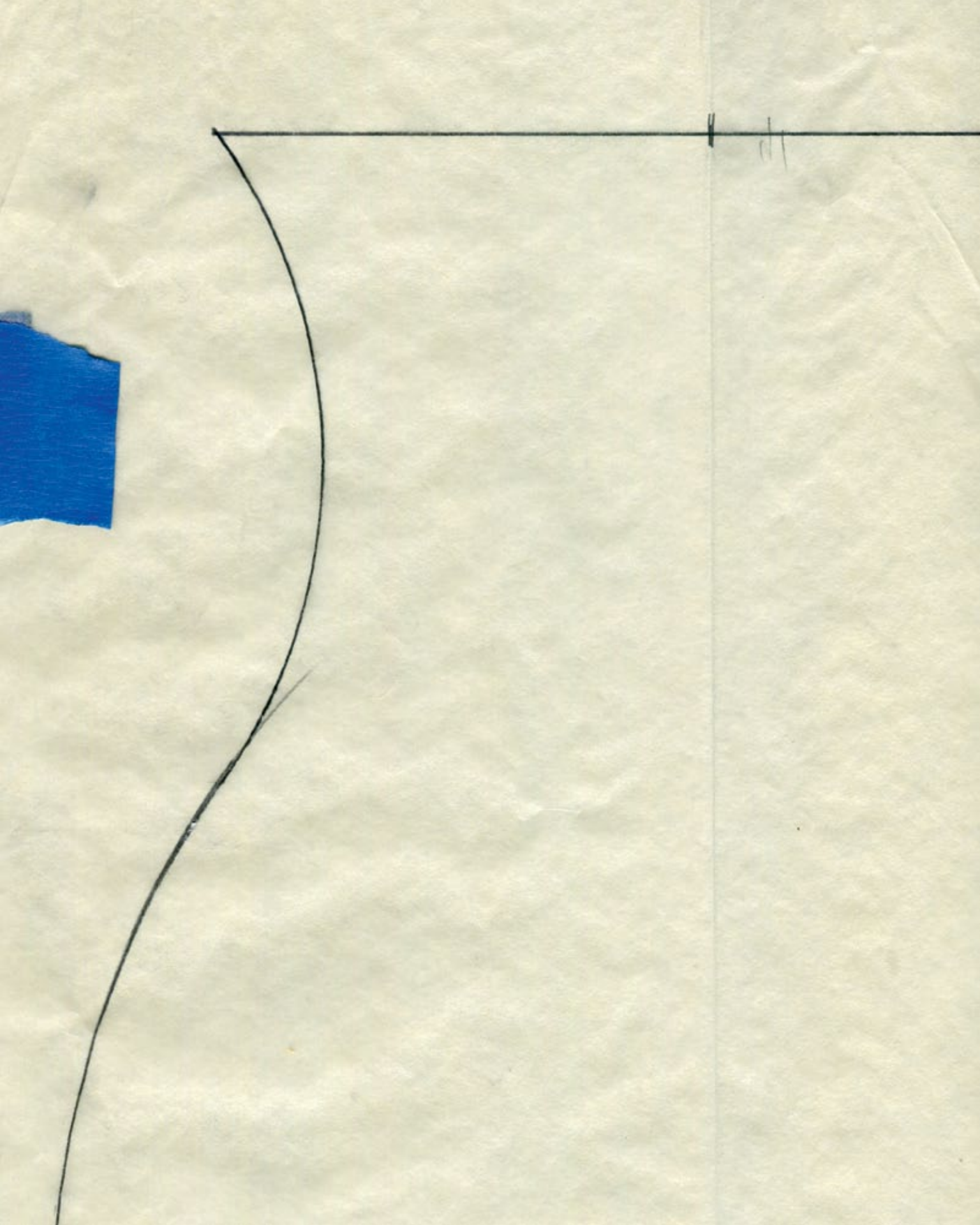


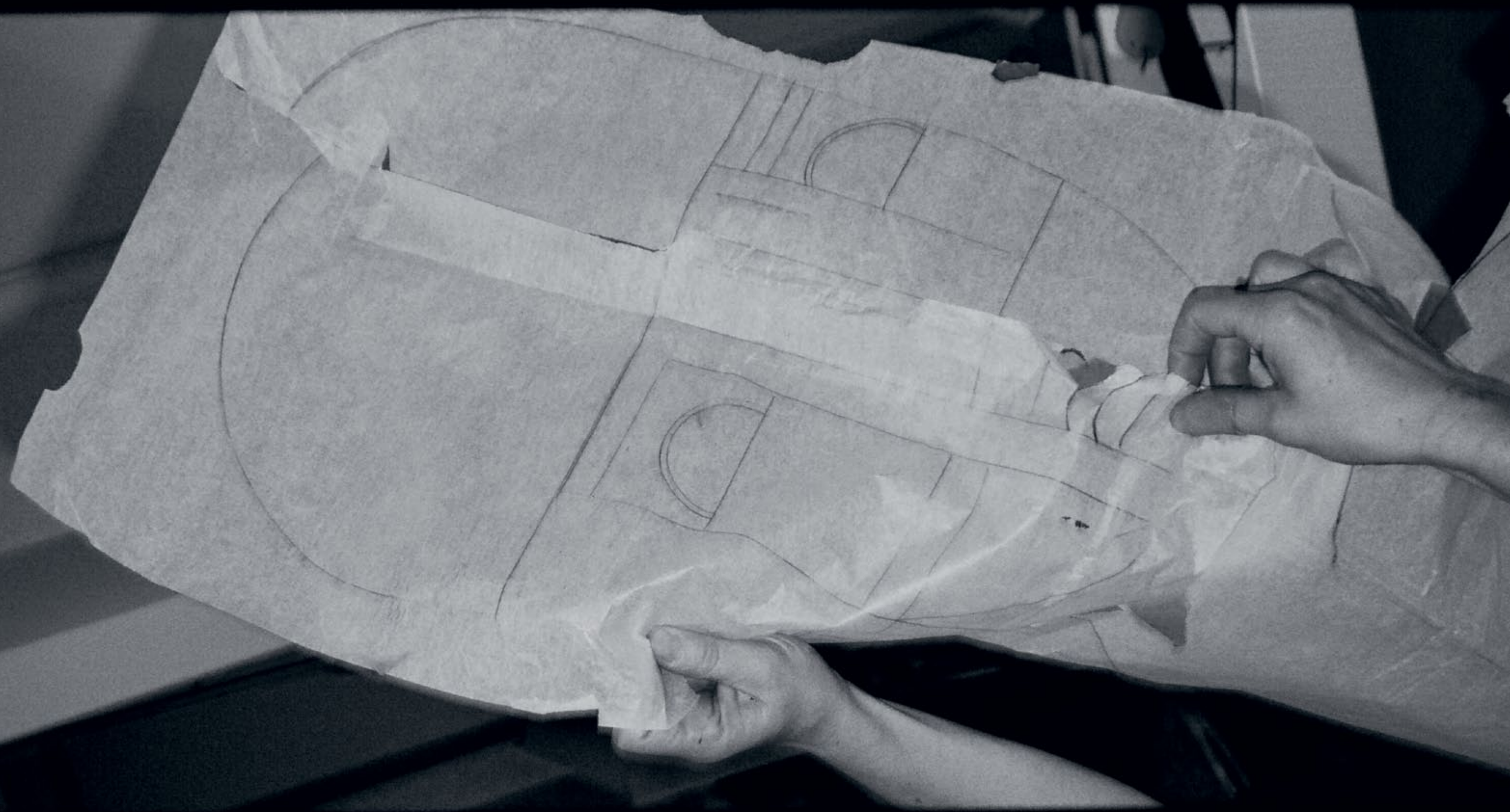


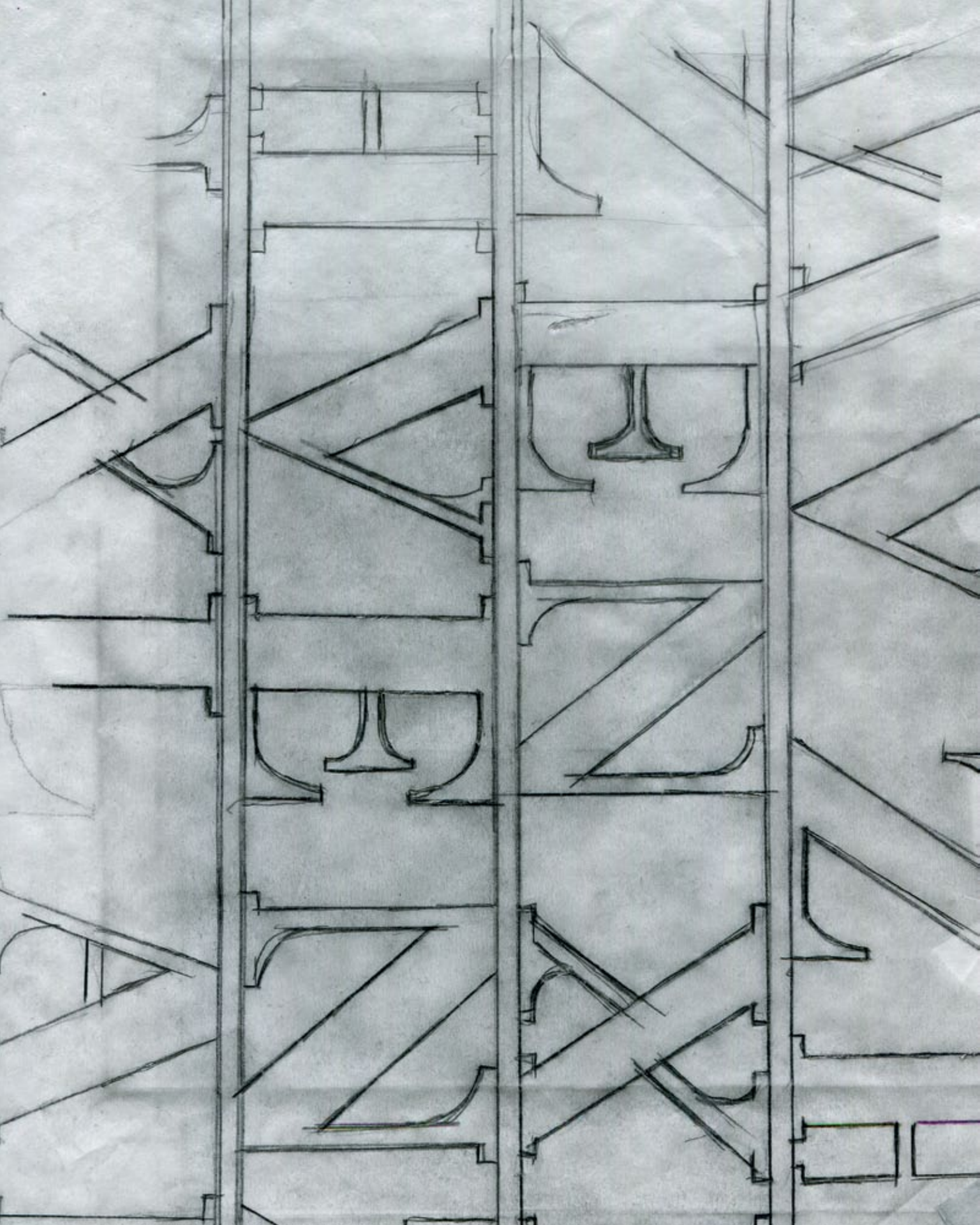


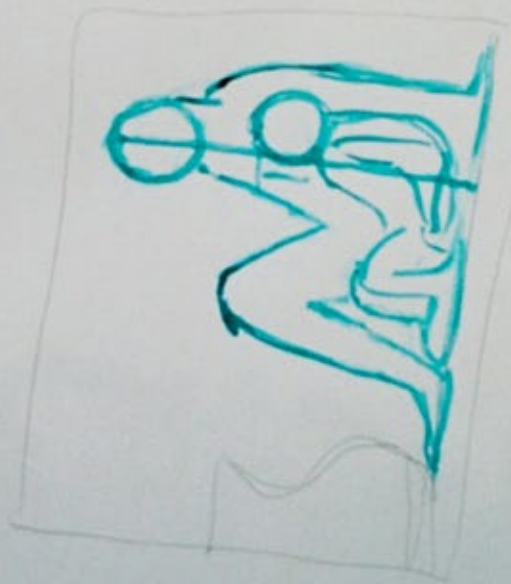






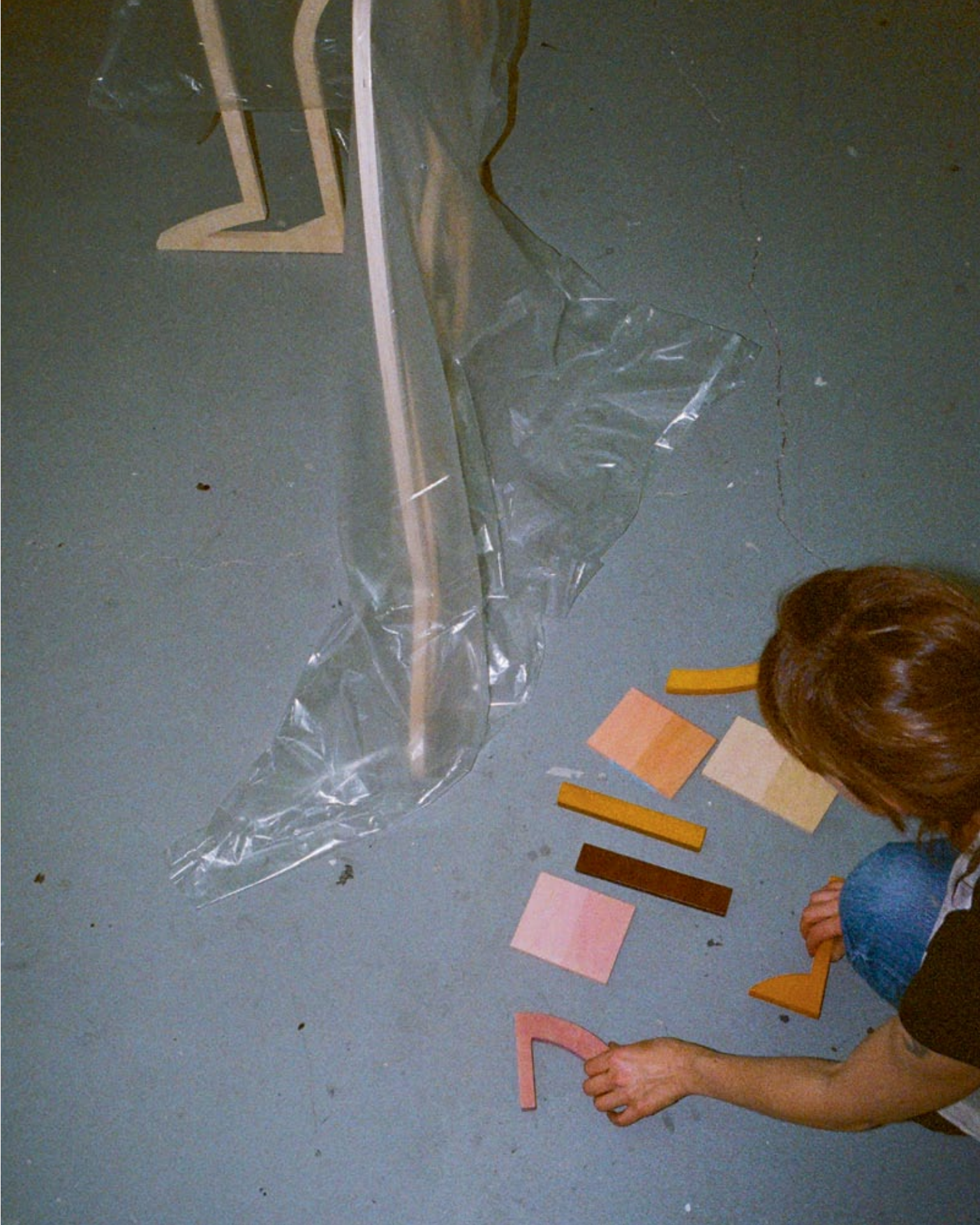


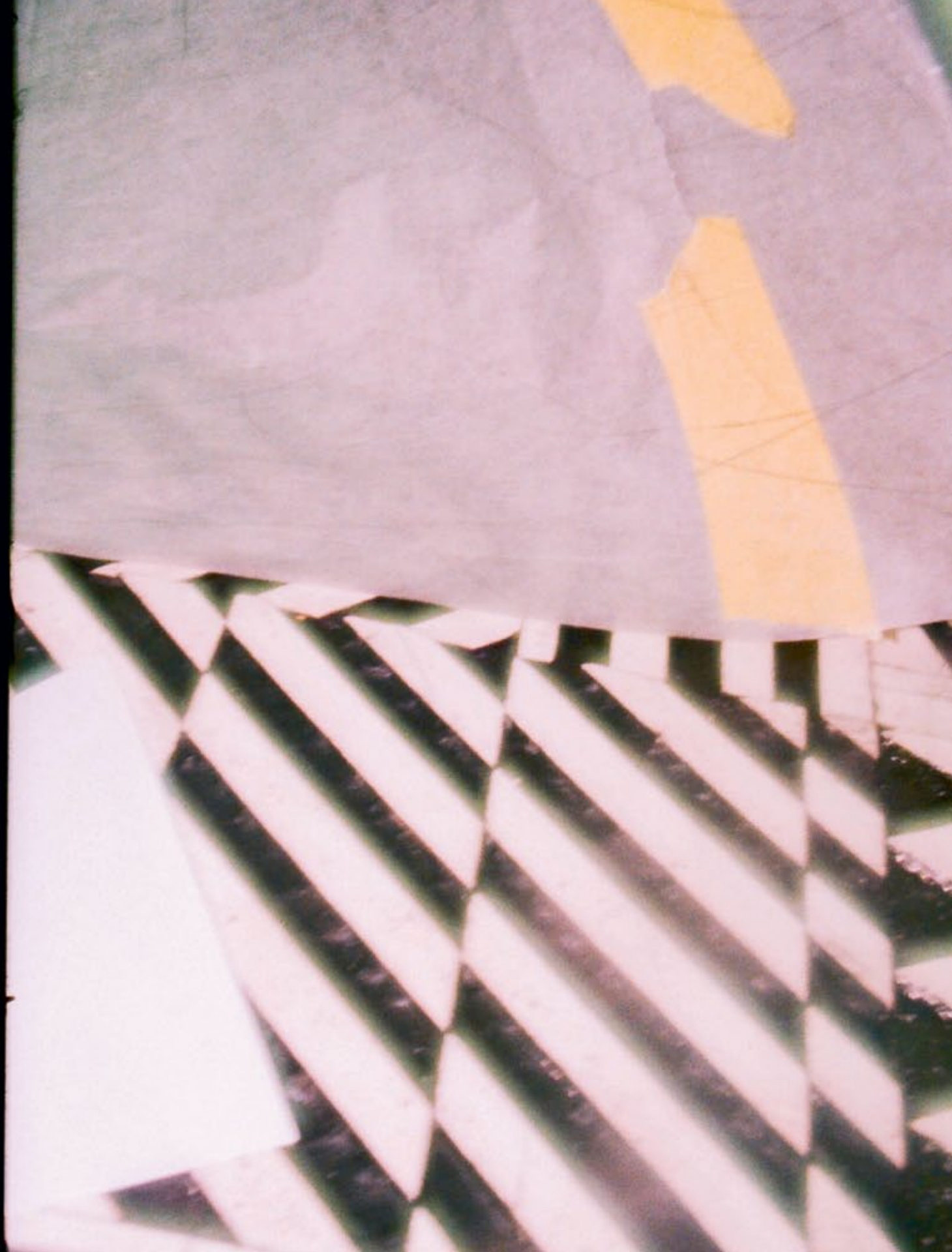














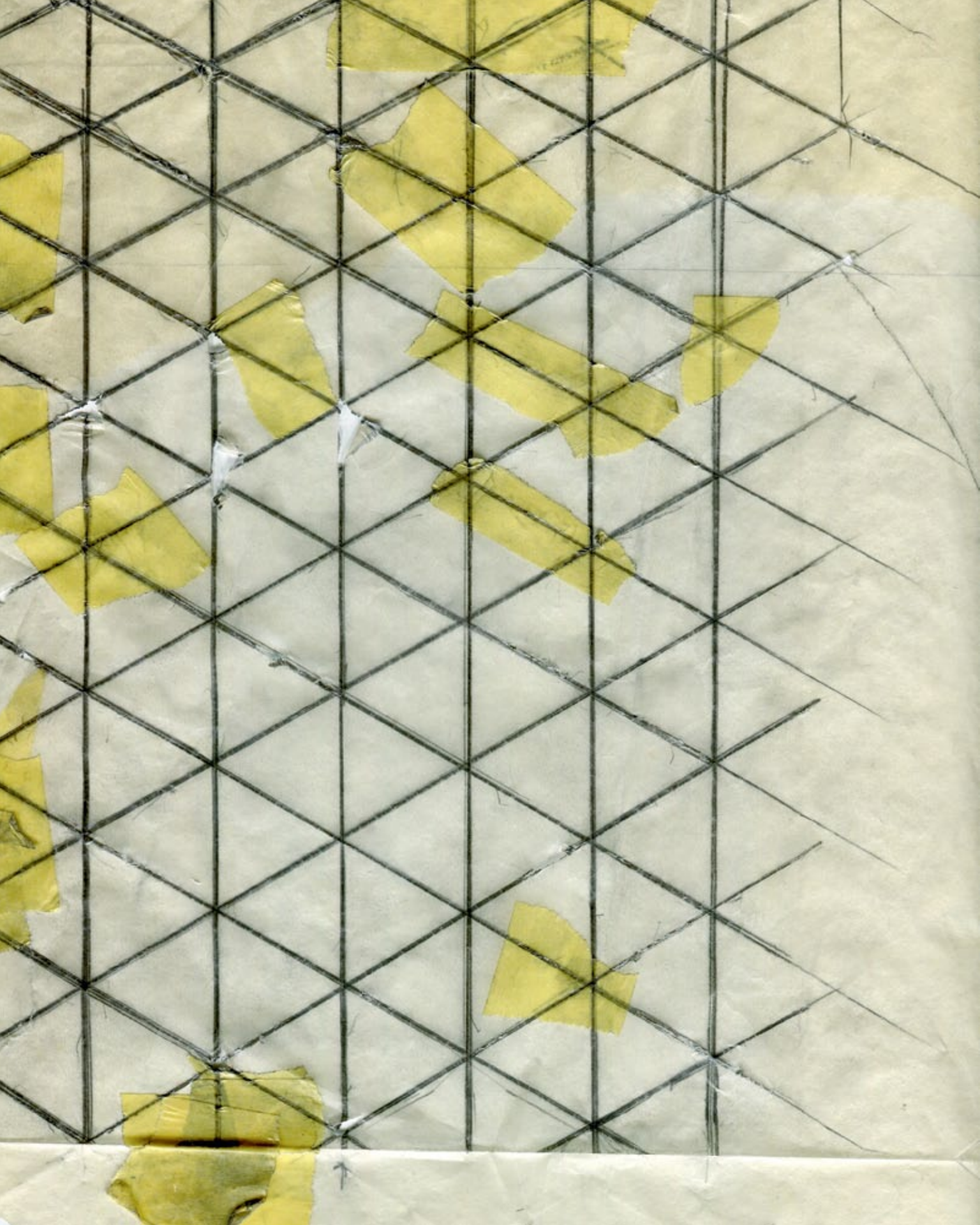




46. *Portrait of Alexander J. Cassatt and His Son Robert Cassatt*, 1876-77. Oil on canvas, 100 x 130 cm. Philadelphia Museum of Art.











45. Fred and Lucille Barnegat, 1906













Mary Cassatt's 1884 painting *Portrait of Alexander J. Cassatt and His Son, Robert Kelso Cassatt*, depicts the artist's brother reading in a floral armchair with his son, perched on the arm. We can see the young boy has drawn his father close, by his small hand next to his father's head; the proximity of their bodies is further demonstrated by their similar faces pressed together, practically cheek-to-cheek. As they both wear thickly painted black tops, their torsos are barely discernible from each other, departing only at the waist where Robert's spindly legs spill off the chair. It's perhaps for this reason that on the website of the Philadelphia Museum of Art (the collection in which the painting resides) that one of the user-generated meta-data tags is "conjoined twin."

Cassatt's double portrait is one of the very few examples of father and child illustrations in art history that Ruby Sky Stiler was able to find in her research; even fewer are those like Cassatt's that convey any sense of emotional intimacy. Cassatt's painting is an inversion of the traditional subject/object relationship within Western art history, in which male artists have long controlled how women are seen. If not portrayed under a lusty gaze, women are often shown with children to demonstrate their virtuousness—the Madonna and Child being the prototype that all mortal mothers must aspire to. At present, when contemporary female artists are still warned by their peers against having children if they want to be taken "seriously," what is the advantage to include them in your art?

For years, Stiler has excelled at imaging women in a visually complex and transformative manner, at once referring to ancient and classical art history, but vastly expanding upon the way women can be imagined. The "conjoined twins" of Cassatt's portrait find formal resonance in the minimal shapes that have determined the female bodies within Stiler's most well-known work; free standing sculptures and wall reliefs in which lines carve into space, with just enough delineation to reveal an eye, a hip, a calf muscle. In this current body of work, Stiler's attention may shift to father and children, but her vocabulary of shapes and patterns do not. In the studio shards that Stiler uses to create her wall reliefs, there are

traces of sketches of ancient Greek vases, one of her long-standing motifs. The male figures on these vases are familiar, even from a few pencil marks: muscular, elongated bodies that are always prepared for action. It has taken Stiler effort to find how her men can share the curves of her women, and how children can also be defined through this economic geometry. These bodies too have eyes, hips, calves, and they too can be nestled inside the shape of their father, just as Cassatt's brother and nephew shared one space within her frame. Clearly, it is not only a formal challenge to construct these everyday men with this dearth of art historical precedents; it is a necessary correction. As women are consistently defined by this relationship, men need to be as well.

Do not assume from this description that the women in Stiler's work have disappeared. In this current state, they exist apart from the father and children, with permission to be unmoored from relations or natural inclinations for caretaking. They rest, observe, but are never far from view.

—Lumi Tan



*Father and Child*, 2018  
Acid-free foam-core, aqua-resin,  
paint, graphite, and thermal  
adhesive on panel  
50 x 60 inches



*Template Stencil in Green  
with Zig-Zag, 2018*  
Acid-free foam-core, aqua-resin,  
paint, graphite, and thermal  
adhesive on panel  
18 × 15½ inches

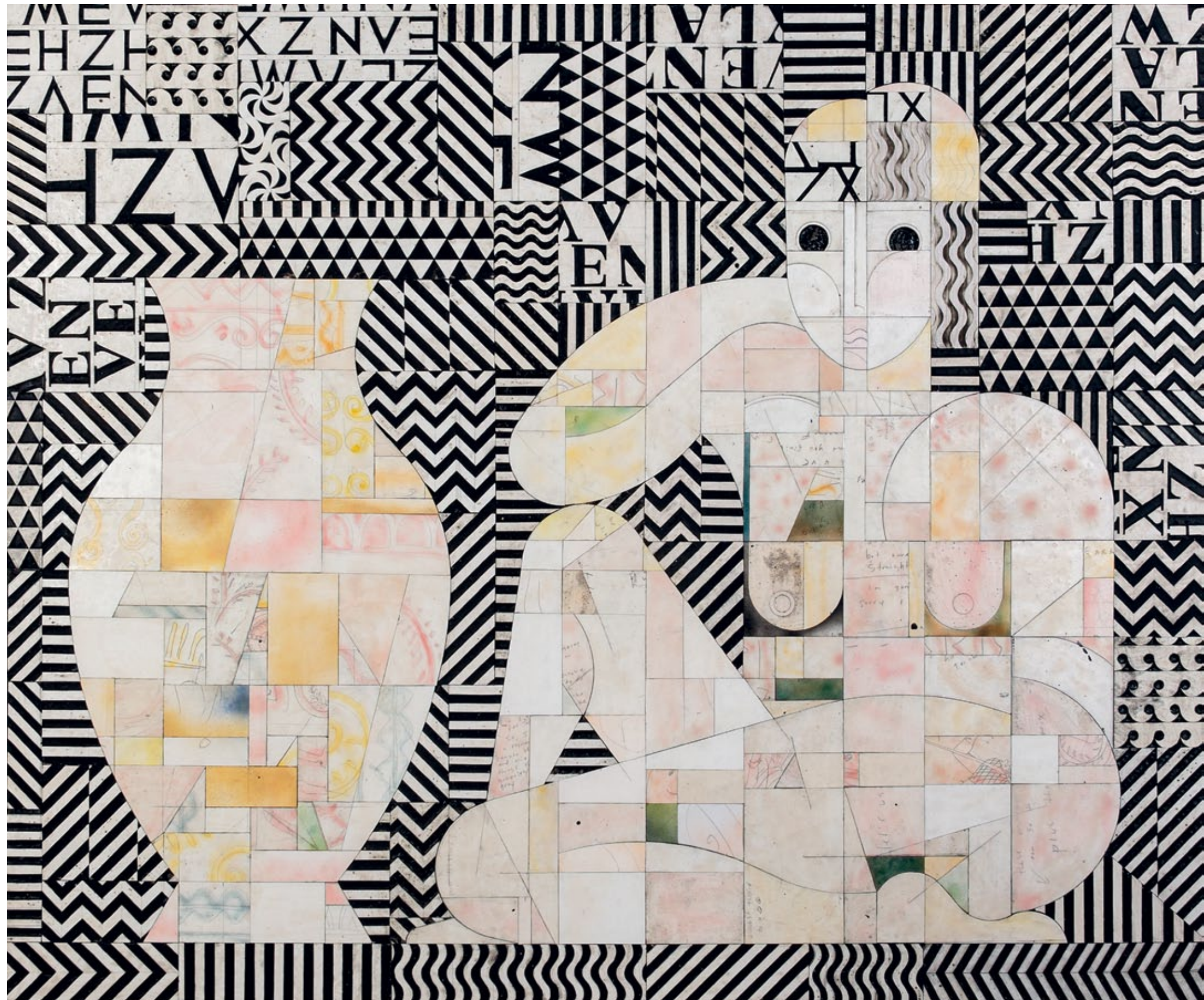
*Seated Woman in Rose*, 2018  
Paint and Baltic Birch  
48 × 37 $\frac{7}{8}$  × 45 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches





*Seated Woman in Rose*, 2018





*Seated Woman (Facing Right)*, 2018  
Acid-free foam-core, aqua-resin,  
paint, graphite, and thermal  
adhesive on panel  
50 × 60 inches



*Wave Fragments with Blues  
and Greens, 2018*  
Acid-free foam-core, aqua-resin,  
paint, graphite, and thermal  
adhesive on panel  
18 × 15½ inches

*Vase with Sienna Handles*, 2018  
Paint and Baltic Birch  
36¼ × 24 × 24 inches





*Siblings with Father*, 2018  
Acid-free foam-core, aqua-resin,  
paint, graphite, and thermal  
adhesive on panel  
50 × 60 inches

*Father and Child in Turmeric*, 2018  
Paint and Baltic Birch  
36¼ x 24 x 24 inches



*Father and Child in Turmeric, 2018*





*Pinks, Purples, and the  
Letter Z, 2018*  
Acid-free foam-core, aqua-resin,  
paint, graphite, and thermal  
adhesive on panel  
18 × 15½ inches



*Pink Vase*, 2018  
Paint and Baltic Birch  
42 $\frac{3}{4}$  × 22 $\frac{7}{8}$  × 22 $\frac{7}{8}$  inches





*Seated Woman (Facing Left)*, 2018  
Acid-free foam-core, aqua-resin,  
paint, graphite, and thermal  
adhesive on panel  
50 × 60 inches

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