

**HONESTY
PRINTED ON
MODESTY**

Haegye Jang

Raw, Unsentimental Dignity

H. G. Masters

4

Haegue Yang's Allusive Truth

June Yap

28

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Raw, Unsentimental Dignity

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We shall never get a rose to understand that five times seven are thirty-five, and there is no use in talking to an oak about fluctuations in the price of stocks. Hence we say that the oak and the rose are unintelligent.

—Samuel Butler, *Erewhon* (1872)

a.

Maybe when you were younger, you made a potato print. Maybe it was your first piece of art or your third, after you learned to color in between the lines and to make finger paintings. Maybe you gave your print to your parents, and they taped it on the refrigerator, where it stayed for years.

b.

Haegue Yang hates potatoes. The fourth-largest food crop in the world, potatoes in all their varieties have a round, lumpen shape, no matter which way you slice them.

Mini eggplants, lotus, mushrooms, shanghai greens, okra, peas, marrow squash, corn—now these are distinctive vegetables. Each one is unique—uniquely (de)formed. These are vegetables to slice into different shapes, to cover in ink and press into paper to produce dancing duos, dynamic spirals, and textured rows or to disperse over paper along with noodles and rice and to bathe in colorful fields of vegetable dyes.

In one of the many new series of prints Yang made in her time at the Singapore Tyler Print Institute (STPI), using the decalcomania process, we see the jagged green edges of sections of pressed marrow squash, dyed with natural dyes from the vegetable itself, arranged in rows, going up and down in size—a movement that in various interpretations could be likened to ascending and descending a musical scale, a cinematic zooming in and out, or figures gliding in formation across a stage—all roughly contained within the edges of a rectangle.

Similar kinds of motion are at work in *Vegetable Prints—Violet Eggplant #1* (2012), the two split halves of a mini eggplant, printed in a deep red ink on twelve sheets. The two halves perform a duet, a spinning partnership, as if each print were a single cel in a stop-motion animation. Yang choreographs movement elsewhere, with the anise seeds that are embossed in a radiating spiral in *Spice Print—Anise Spiral Natural* (2012) and in a starburst from the center of *Spice Print—Anise Star Natural* (2012), created by the natural pigment secreted from the majestic spice. Yang takes simple, basic ingredients—one aspect of the “modesty” in the exhibition’s title—and makes them into something demurely pleasing, as flat and abstract forms take on dynamic motion.

This is home cooking as art making, arts-and-craft projects as riffs on the hermetic perfection of abstraction, as the humble and homely insinuate themselves into a high-modernist lexicon. The boxes and shapes of twentieth-century modernists have been occupied with the humorous, and strangely humane, imperfections and weaknesses of vegetables and spices.



1.

1.
Vegetable Prints—Violet Eggplant #1
 2012
 Relief print, 100% cotton paper,
 water-based ink, eggplant, framed
 12 pieces, each 35 x 35 cm

2.
Spice Print—Anise Star Natural
 2012
 Embossing, natural dye,
 STPI handmade paper, star anise, framed
 168 x 132 cm



2.



3.

3.
Spice Print—Anise Spiral Natural
 2012
 Embossing, natural dye,
 STPI handmade paper, star anise, framed
 165 x 132 cm

C.

From the *Slow Food Manifesto*, signed in 1989 in Paris—a sentimental progressive movement if there ever was one:

This century [the twentieth], which was born and raised under the sign of industrial civilization, first invented the car and then modeled its lifestyle on it. Speed has enchained us, we are all prey to the same virus: “Fast Life,” which has overturned our traditional habits, is even attacking us in our own homes and subjecting us to eating in “Fast Food” restaurants. But *Homo sapiens* must regain his wisdom and free himself from this speed that may make him an endangered species.

(Note that *Homo sapiens* is considered male.)

d.

Cooks toil at home. Chefs work in restaurants. Both prepare food, but only chefs are considered professionals, much less revered as masters of their trade or even as artists. Yet spend any time with chefs, and they will tell you—in fact, it’s a well-worn cliché—that the best food they’ve ever tasted was their mother’s or grandmother’s.

This harks back to what is perhaps an anachronistic formulation about professional trades: that men are celebrated in the workplace for what women have long done at home. This gendered segregation delineates the divide between the people we call cooks and those we call chefs, between dressmakers and fashion designers, craftspeople and artists.

Although many professionalized workplaces are increasingly egalitarian—at least in gender terms—old hierarchies endure in the forms of labor undertaken. The vestiges of the old order lie embedded in the traditions, techniques, and materials of making things.

The demi-glace of a French-trained chef is a highly augmented gravy; the haute couture wedding dress is handmade not by one great-grandmother but by forty skilled seamstresses; the marmalade or chili paste at the table is not your aunt’s but the coproduction of engineers, chemists, and agriculturalists (and that is not even to mention those who package and haul these products and ship them around the world).

Patriarchy’s legacy is industrialization, moving labor out of the home permanently—in fact, entirely destroying the idea of the home as an autonomous sphere of ingenuity and received know-how—and returning itself in the form of consumer products. Generations of noodle makers have been transformed into supermarket shoppers; yesterday’s dress stitchers are today’s outlet-mall bargain hunters.

e.

In a 2012 interview with the art historian T. J. Demos, Yang observed about her own practice, “I can’t stop myself from examining the figures and events that seem significant to comprehend the elusive aspects of the colonial circumstances in which we are living today.” These “colonial circumstances,” for Yang, assume different appearances these days, “disguised in economic form.”

Does this point need further elaboration? If so, consider that it is easier for a shipment of eggplants to arrive in central London from its native India than for an Indian citizen to do so. Or that the “aubergine” is today considered a quintessential English garden vegetable.

f.

In one sense, vegetables and spices are natural products. As distinct species they could be said to express the natural variations and ecology suggestive of an antihumanist, alternative worldview. But we shouldn't be so romantic.

Plants cultivated by humans are subject to the same historical and present-day economic forces as any other raw commodity. Eggplants came from India to England in the seventeenth century; tomatoes from Mexico to the Mediterranean, corn from South America to the midwestern United States and Europe, where it was bred to its generic, homogeneous yellow perfection.

As with all plants globally circulated today as commodities, genetic variations and supposed imperfections were long ago bred out of vegetables in the name of standardization and "quality." Now variations and "heritage" characteristics have to be bred back into fruits and vegetables to return quality (namely their original taste and nutrition) and aesthetic variety—and also to stave off the collapse of whole agricultural industries that created these highly unnatural, disease-prone, energy-consuming agricultural products.

Vegetables are plants on which we have forcibly imposed our will, a kingdom in which our own purported ingenuity is now linked to our, and their, mutual future survival or demise. Where plants are our potential redemption, they are also a symbol of our hubris and failures of stewardship.



Several lines from the radical pamphlet *Animal Liberation and Social Revolution: A Vegan Perspective on Anarchism, or An Anarchist Perspective on Veganism*, written by Brian A. Dominick:

The radical, literally speaking, is one who seeks out the root of a problem so that she may strike at it for a solution.

At the root of oppression, contends the radical, is alienation.

The role of the revolutionist is simple: make your life into a model of the alternative, revolutionary society you envision.

Male dominance in the form of patriarchy and speciesism [has been] brought about by anthropocentrism.

Feminism and veganism have much in common.

People would not be able to live the way they do—ie, at the expense and suffering of animals—were they to understand the real effects of such consumption.

The national and global distribution of food is a political tool.

Only a perspective and lifestyle based on true compassion can destroy the oppressive constructs of present society and begin anew in creating desirable relationships and realities.

The only thing we can learn from animals is how to live in a sane and sound relationship with our environment.²

h.

Even more precious and rare than vegetables are spices—that ancient commodity that came to define “the East” in numerous cultural stereotypes and whose value is inexorably linked to the history of Asia’s trade and eventual colonization by European powers. Looking at Yang’s *Spice Sheets* (2012), we see that the spices still reveal the network of global trading links to Singapore.

At Yang’s direction, a variety of spices were procured from a market in Singapore and incorporated into paper pulp, on the surface of which the packaging information is screen-printed. Clove powder, we learn, is “Net WT. 35g / Sheet” and “Produce of India,” whereas ginger powder is “55g / Sheet,” “freshly ground,” and a “product of Pakistan”—and accordingly its packaging features text written partially in Urdu.

The garam masala found in Singapore is a product of the United Kingdom, yet its packaging features text in German, French, Italian, Spanish, Dutch, and Arabic. Cinnamon and cardamom come from Malaysia; the ocher-yellow turmeric powder and cardamom are from India. Licorice root powder—its label in Chinese and English, with a warning that it is “for cooking purposes only”—comes from the former English colony Hong Kong. Root of tuber fleceflower, with Chinese characters, lists no point of origin.

Like the quasi-natural products they are, the prints will age and change color over time, as oxygen has its effect on the materials, but the markings of this moment, of their commodity-ness, will remain.

i.

The honesty of Yang’s work, with its tinges of melancholic fatalism, is often to be found in her unsentimental approach to mass-produced objects, which she frequently gives a spirited reincarnation as quasi-anthropomorphic figures—whether in the *Non-Indélicables* (*Non-unfoldables*; 2006/2009–10), clothes-drying racks tightly outfitted with fabric coverings, or the *Warrior Believer Lover* (2011) series of clothing racks from which lights as well as artificial plants, wigs, various knitted objects, pinecones, stones, venetian blinds, and other objects are suspended.

After the delicateness of the vegetable prints made at STPI, there is something mildly disgusting about *Seasoning Papers* (2013), about seeing the logos of the “chicken curry” package on top of paper made from the prepackaged blend. The flecks of red pepper and herbs from the spice mix of the instant kimchi-flavored Korean noodles or *tom yam* flavor represent with a wry irony the “Korean” and “Thai” cuisines, respectively, and utterly stereotypically. They are humorous, if cynical, rejoinders to the purported wholesomeness of the vegetable prints, or whatever aromas of romanticism exist in the spice prints.

Just because Yang doesn’t like potatoes, and grows vegetables in her own Berlin studio, doesn’t mean that she wouldn’t eat prepackaged noodles.



1.



2.



3.

Non-Indépliables

2006/2009-10

Photo: Nick Ash

1.

Non-Indépliable, jaune

2010

Drying rack, fabric

123 x 130 x 55 cm

Courtesy of Galerie Wien Lukatsch, Berlin

2.

Non-Indépliable, pastel

2010

Drying rack, knitting yarn

100 x 150 x 66 cm

Gregorio and Valeria Napoleone Collection

3.

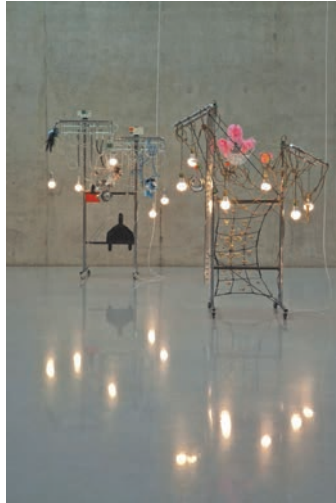
Non-Indépliable, rouge

2009

Drying rack, knitting yarn

90 x 82 x 52 cm

Courtesy of Galerie Wien Lukatsch, Berlin



Warrior Believer Lover

2011

33 light sculptures, mixed media

Dimensions variable

Courtesy of Galerie Wien Lukatsch, Berlin; Greene Naftali, New York; Kukje Gallery, Seoul; and Sammlung Kunsthaus Bregenz, Bregenz

Installation view at *Arrivals*, Kunsthaus Bregenz, Bregenz, Austria, 2011

Photo: Markus Tretter





Seasoning Papers

2013

Screen prints, STPI handmade
seasoning paper, 5 powder
seasonings, framed
5 pieces, each 41 x 41 cm

j.

Once, in a casual conversation with Yang, I lamented the placement of a large LED billboard on the roof of a building in the center of a market area here in Istanbul. Her response, with its inflections of wisdom and stoicism, stayed with me: “Why get upset about it?” she said calmly. “It is only going to get worse.”

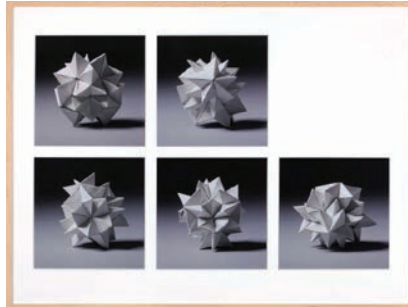
k.

While at STPI, Yang continued to make origami-based works, a part of her practice since at least 2004 and a concerted series of works since 2007. Is there an organic connection between origami and vegetables and spices? In Yang's case, yes. The origami shapes that she makes, as photographed in the series *Imperfections* (2010), are slightly irregular, each minutely deformed despite the traditional art form's insistence on perfection and complexity—much like vegetables themselves or animals and people.

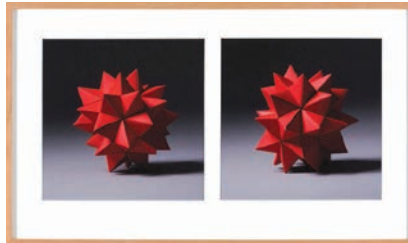
In *Geometric Tippings* (2013), the geometric forms are captured in motion with spray paint applied around them as they are tipped over, sprayed, tipped over, and sprayed again. They roll around like domesticated creatures. Their traces, their shadows, are all that we get to see of their beautiful forms. Elsewhere, in *Non-Folding—Scenarios of Non-Geometric Folding #3* (2013), the crushed origami shapes are adhered to the paper itself. The origami here unavoidably resembles roadkill—creatures crushed by an automobile as they move from one part of the natural or human-made landscape to another.



1.



2.



3.

Imperfections

2010

1.

Imperfections – Sassy Loaf

2010

C-prints, framed

44 x 99 cm

Courtesy of artist; Galerie Wien Lukatsch, Berlin;
and Kukje Gallery, Seoul.

2.

Imperfections – Two Times Frontal in Heat

2010

C-prints, framed

30 x 49,5 cm

Courtesy of artist; Galerie Wien Lukatsch, Berlin;
and Kukje Gallery, Seoul.

3.

Imperfections – Vicious Laughter

2010

C-prints, framed

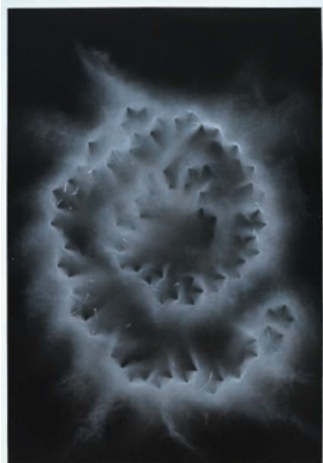
53,5 x 71,5 cm

Courtesy of artist; Galerie Wien Lukatsch, Berlin;
and Kukje Gallery, Seoul.

Photo: Mathieu Bertola,
Musées de la Ville de Strasbourg



1.



2.

1.
Non-Folding—Geometric Tipping #39

2013

Stencil, white paper, spray paint, framed

178 x 123 cm

2.

Non-Folding—Geometric Tipping #41

2013

Stencil, black paper, spray paint, framed

178 x 123 cm

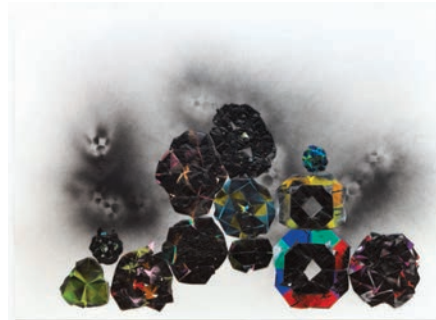


1.

1.
**Non-Folding—Scenarios of
Non-Geometric Folding #3**

2013

Collage, folded origami paper, STPI handmade paper,
archival PVA glue, spray paint, framed
80 x 80 cm



2.

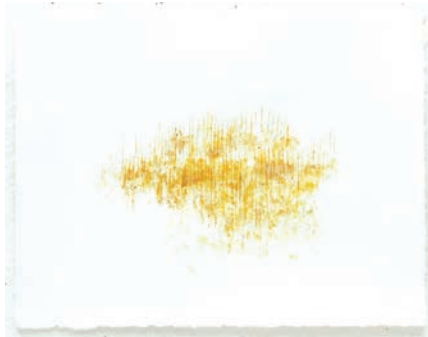
2.
**Non-Folding—Scenarios of
Non-Geometric Folding #4**

2013

Collage, folded origami paper, white paper,
archival PVA glue, spray paint, framed
90 x 123 cm

l.

On the other end of the same anti-sentimentality spectrum are the *Cutting Board Prints* (2012), made from paper on which the vegetables for other prints were sliced, scored, and stained slightly by the vegetables themselves. These are the simplest scraps from the process of making the vegetable prints. They are self-declarations of honesty, of bearing witness to the simple labor—in all its resonant complexity—of the works that Yang made while at STPI. However “marginal” these artworks may appear in their refusal to be monumental or transformative as pictures, we as viewers should remember that Yang, since the beginning of her career, has refused to participate in the creation of mindless, beautiful spectacles. Whatever dignity of things remains in this world lies squarely in their making and in their history of having been made—somewhere, somehow.



1.
Cutting Board Print—Yellow Ginger #2
2012
Natural dye, 100% cotton paper, framed
23 x 30 cm

1.



2.
Cutting Board Print—Eggplant #3
2012
Natural dye, 100% cotton paper, framed
24 x 37 cm

2.

m.

As a coda, I should say that there is, in fact, a philosophy of vegetables.³ One of its most prominent voices lived in the era of Charles Darwin. This was the Victorian philosopher and novelist Samuel Butler, who, writing in his 1872 utopian novel *Erewhon*, returns us to the potato:

Even a potato in a dark cellar has a certain low cunning about him which serves him in excellent stead. He knows perfectly well what he wants and how to get it. He sees the light coming from the cellar window and sends his shoots crawling straight thereto: they will crawl along the floor and up the wall and out at the cellar window; if there be a little earth anywhere on the journey he will find it and use it for his own ends. What deliberation he may exercise in the matter of his roots when he is planted in the earth is a thing unknown to us, but we can imagine him saying, "I will have a tuber here and a tuber there, and I will suck whatsoever advantage I can from all my surroundings. This neighbour I will overshadow, and that I will undermine; and what I can do shall be the limit of what I will do. He that is stronger and better placed than I shall overcome me, and him that is weaker I will overcome."

The potato says these things by doing them, which is the best of languages. What is consciousness if this is not consciousness?⁴

Notes

Epigraph: Samuel Butler, *Erewhon; or, Over the Range* (London: Penguin, 1985), 237.

1. T. J. Demos, “Accommodating the Epic Dispersion: Haegue Yang in Conversation with T. J. Demos,” in *Haegue Yang*, ed. by Julienne Lorz, Haegue Yang: Der Öffentlichkeit – von den Freunden Haus der Kunst (Cologne: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König), 2013.

2. Brian A. Dominick, *Animal Liberation and Social Revolution: A Vegan Perspective on Anarchism, or An Anarchist Perspective on Veganism* (Syracuse, NY: Critical Mess Media, 1997), <http://zinelibrary.info/files/animalandrevolution.pdf>. As a zine, the publication is scanned page by page, meaning that some of the pages are out of order and the page numbers not visible. Therefore the quotations here are not ordered as they appear in the zine.

3. For a survey of philosophy’s relationships to plants, see Christoph Cox, “Thinking Like a Plant,” *Cabinet*, no. 6 (Spring 2002): 95–98, <http://cabinetmagazine.org/issues/6/cox.php>.

4. Butler, *Erewhon*, 200–201.

Haegue Yang's Allusive Truth

June Yap

Pepper was envisioned by Europeans growing in a bamboo forest, on a plain near Paradise. Ginger and cinnamon were hauled in by Egyptian fishermen casting nets into the Floodwaters of the Nile, which in turn carried them straight from Paradise. The aroma of spices was believed to be a breath wafted from Paradise over the human world. No medieval writer could envision Paradise without the smell or taste of spices. Whether the poetically described gardens served saints or lovers, the atmosphere was inevitably fused with the rare, intoxicating fragrance of cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger and cloves. On the basis of such fantasies, it was possible for lovers and friends to exchange certain spices as pledges of their relationship.

—Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *Tastes of Paradise* (1992)

After an impressively productive few years that saw her representing South Korea at the 53rd Venice Biennale in 2009 and presenting solo projects in the United States at the Walker Art Center (*Integrity of the Insider*, 2009–10) and the Aspen Art Museum (*The Art and Technique of Folding the Land*, 2011), Haegue Yang began her sojourn in Singapore with some circumspection, curious to see what the Singapore Tyler Print Institute (STPI) and the region of Southeast Asia might have to offer. The institute’s residency program, which is known for bringing artists from abroad to encounter local culture and custom, in some ways may be read as an extension of the island’s history as a nation no stranger to the winds of exchange. As documented during the explorations of the fourteenth-century Chinese trader Wang Dayuan, historically Singapore (then called Singapura or Temasek), located at the turning point between the northeast and southwest monsoons, was critical to a thriving sea trade that plied China and India, as much as it was then also the domain of the pirates that followed in its suit.

Yang’s residency at the institute, which began in November 2012, was approached by the artist in an exploratory vein; she was uncertain of what to expect but then quite aptly focused on a material and subject close to the history of the region, namely its spices. That “nearly all spices are of Asian origin” delineates an exoticism that dates, at least for Europeans, to the arrival of the explorer Vasco da Gama in 1498 with the Portuguese takeover of the “vital chokepoint” of the Strait of Malacca and Southeast Asia, and thus the route to the Spice Islands.¹ Arriving as a contemporary intrepid voyager, as Christopher Columbus and Ferdinand Magellan once did in search of the then-elusive spices, Yang was to seek and experiment with the nature and significance of the idiosyncrasies of the locale and its bounty. In an e-mail conversation, she shared her surprise at the cultural variety she discovered, a change from Korea’s “monocultural” homogeneity, with her explorations first taking her to the markets of Little India, the site of remnant colonial ethnic segregation transformed into contemporary cultural concentration. The exoticism of the spices, vegetables, and herbs that she was to enlist would be paralleled by the novelty of transforming these in her printmaking process.

The *Spice Sheet* series (2012), consisting of twenty screen prints of herbs and spices mixed into handmade paper, with their ingredient labels dusted upon these variegated surfaces, on first look seems to suggest a feminized reading of domesticity that dogs the artist’s oeuvre in her employment of venetian blinds and clothing racks,

albeit objects of contemporary industrial production, in past installations. The intimation of the private and the domestic via spices, viewed as culinary supplement and signaling local custom quickly gives way, however, even if obliquely, to possible critique. Just as the generic moniker referenced in the series *Seasoning Papers* (2013)—featuring present-day Asian flavorings for chicken curry, *tom yam*, and *char mee* (fried) instant noodles—eclipses the underlying piquant struggle and contest of taste inherent in their constitution, Yang’s representation of these elements may too be read as revealing the historical struggle and politics behind these delectable facades.

In the series of prints that Yang produced with the printmaking team at STPI, these delicate powders, pliant vegetables, and enigmatically shaped pods are featured with a fragile subtlety characteristic of her previous works exploring themes of mobility, transitivity, and vulnerability. And it is through such a quality of permeability of aesthetic state and form that the subjects of history, culture, and economics quite naturally become intertwined into these works. Singapore—a transshipment center from the early nineteenth century for spices such as clove, nutmeg and mace—was one of a number of independent ports of the time—including Aceh, Banten, Makasar, Batavia, Manila, Hoi An, Ayutthaya, and Bangkok²—and was to become entangled in “a high-stakes commercial battle for control of maritime Southeast Asia.”³ Yet in the same way that Yang’s use of venetian blinds, such as in the work *Blind Curtain—Flesh behind Tricolore* (2013), achieves substantiality in enclosure, inherent in its structure is the inevitable redirection of sight toward that which appears concealed. Accordingly, belying the prominence of the European encounter and the narrative of spices in occidental founding, there existed a “thriving parallel universe” to this Eurocentric worldview, in which Asia was a “hotbed of spice trading” spanning from Asia to Arabia and Africa via the Silk Road,⁴ including a Clove Route traversing the region through the East Indies to the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea during the Roman Empire.⁵

The clove, an element of Yang’s prints that was mentioned by Pliny the Elder and recorded as shipped in a gift by Constantine the Great,⁶ was originally cultivated on the small volcanic islands of Maluku (previously the Moluccas Islands, now part of Indonesia). However, its soaring trade prices in the fifteenth century sparked feverish European expeditions for its source. Similarly, less frequently mentioned in such a narrative is how the European expansion was also a critical attempt to wrest control of existing trade



Blind Curtain - Flesh behind Tricolore

2013

Aluminum venetian blinds, aluminum hanging
structure, powder coating, steel wire
460 x 700 x 150 cm

Courtesy of Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris

Installation view at *Family of Equivocations*,
Aubette 1928 - Modern and Contemporary
Art Museum, Strasbourg, 2013

Photo: Mathieu Bertola, Musées de la Ville
de Strasbourg

between the Middle Eastern Arab-Muslim world and East Asia, underscoring the struggle not only for dominance of the spice trade but also for cultural hegemony. Nevertheless, the tale continues with the Dutch, and then the British, riding the coattails of the Portuguese. In a combination of gunboat diplomacy, price fixing, and even extirpation (as in the case of the clove, shifting its production center away from the islands of Ternate and Tidore, to Ambon), as well as the expansion of production and exports, the Southeast Asian spice trade was forcibly brought to a “global” level,⁷ in part through an inflation of prices not entirely to the benefit of the locals. Emerging most favorably in the lucrative battle was the Dutch East India Company (Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie, or VOC), which established a monopoly that lasted until the eighteenth century. In the fray between the VOC, the Portuguese, and the British East India Company (EIC), the earlier Muslim trade was superseded, not to mention the division of the region into European enclaves that influenced subsequent political state formation after World War II.

However, this bloody history, which would prompt the Portuguese chronicler João de Barros to describe the clove as “an apple of all discord,”⁸ also had unexpected turns. The Dutch, who had gained a monopoly over nutmeg (native to the Banda Islands of present-day Indonesia) would in response to British attempts at securing one of the islands (Pulau Run) devastate it, only to then, in a momentary overestimation of British firepower, cede New Amsterdam (which, according to legend, they had bought with a few trinkets from the Canarsie Indians) to the British, who then renamed the island New York.⁹ A further consequence of the expansion of the spice trade was not merely increased distribution of the spoils of Asia but also the regional introduction of chili peppers, native to Central and South America and the Caribbean islands, and coffee, originally cultivated in the Arabian Peninsula, which are now associated with Asia’s cultural fare as well.

Distant as these histories of corporate and political intrigue and jockeying may seem, their ramifications stretch into the present. For instance, the production of the clove in its smoked form of kretek (clove cigarettes), unique to Indonesia, is supported today paradoxically by Indonesian imports of cloves and concurrently subject to an arguably protectionist import ban by the United States. The clove powder in Yang’s work originates from India and, as a constituent of the peppery mix of garam masala, from London. Throughout history and in Yang’s body of work, the lines of influence and effect converge



1.



2.

1.
Color-Blown Craters and Dunes #2
2012
Stencil, embossing, STPI handmade paper,
natural dye, cel-vinyl ink, framed
166 x 132 cm

2.
Color-Blown Craters and Dunes #15
2012
Stencil, embossing, STPI handmade paper,
natural dye, cel-vinyl ink, framed
127 x 102 cm

and intersect, folding and unfolding as do her eponymous origami-based prints, leaving shadowy trails behind them. Layer upon layer, the sweeping constellations of these histories aggregate, akin to Yang's *Color-Blown Craters and Dunes* (2012), even as their details of spice pods, vegetable parts, and grains become subsumed. Yang's ephemeral selections, according to STPI's chief printer, Eitaro Ogawa, filled the print studio with the smell of food and spices and made its atmosphere very convivial despite the daily necessity of procuring fresh produce. Such congeniality recalls the less-documented precolonial trading networks of the region, including Admiral Zheng He's unprecedented voyages prior to the arrival of the Portuguese, in which rapacity was curtailed by an embrace of Confucian philosophy.¹⁰ The traces of these historical journeys are almost as slight as the marks left behind in Yang's process of slicing vegetables in the *Cutting Board Prints* (2012) and are as elusive as the spices once were. Such are the vagaries of history, and even more so of the cultural representation that deigns to take on its burden. Yet in Yang's hands, the value of these spices and what they might represent is given a lightness familiar from earlier works such as *Gymnastics of the Foldables* (2006), and in *Vegetable Prints – Eggplant Natural Décalcomanie #1* (2012), two halves of the nightshade are seen as if in a waltz.

Notwithstanding the fact that increased circulation and availability have diminished the novelty and mythos of spices, a certain exoticism is still expected of the region, and in Yang's encounter, much of it came in the form of the printmaking process, which was unfamiliar prior to her residency in Singapore. She acknowledged that she could not within this brief period become, in her words, an expert printmaker, yet she was inspired by the systematic and straightforward nature of the process, and an honesty of engagement with materials and methods surfaces in her works. Even so, it is a symbolic act, just as the process of attempting to portray the spices also deprives them of their aromatic quality. Honesty coincidentally is the name of a flowering plant with circular seedpods, which has led to its nicknames of "money plant" and "silver dollar." One factor in the Dutch success in monopolizing a substantial part of the spice trade was their use of silver coinage for exchange. Currency, which exemplifies the circulation of fancy, is materialized in Yang's *Golden Singular* (2013) series of larger-than-life screen prints of vegetables. The use of metal foil suggestively accentuates the fetishization of these otherwise ubiquitous items, imbuing them once again with an allure that speaks to the thrill, demand, and exoticism of the unfamiliar, to say nothing of the exchange it spices.



Gymnastics of the Foldables

2006

Black-and-white photographs, framed
15 pieces, each 35.7 x 30.7 cm

Courtesy of Galerie Wien Lukatsch, Berlin

Installation view at *Family of Equivocations*,
Aubette 1928 – Modern and Contemporary
Art Museum, Strasbourg, 2013

Photo: Mathieu Bertola, Musées de la Ville
de Strasbourg



**Golden Singular—
Okra Spiral**

2013
Screen print, black paper,
metal foil, framed
125 x 90 cm

**Golden Singular—
Instant Noodle Natural**

2013
Screen print, black paper,
metal foil, framed
125 x 90 cm

**Golden Singular—
Eggplant Divided**

2013
Screen print, black paper,
metal foil, framed
125 x 90 cm

**Golden Singular—
Shanghai Green Divided**

2013
Screen print, black paper,
metal foil, framed
125 x 90 cm

**Golden Singular—
Planet Instant Noodle**

2013
Screen print, black paper,
metal foil, framed
125 x 90 cm

Notes

Epigraph: Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *Tastes of Paradise: A Social History of Spices, Stimulants, and Intoxicants*, trans. David Jacobson (New York: Vintage, 1992), 6.

1. Fred R. Czarra, *Spices: A Global History* (London: Reaktion, 2009), 9, 71.
2. David Bulbeck et al., eds., *Southeast Asian Exports since the 14th Century: Cloves, Pepper, Coffee, and Sugar*, Data Paper Series: Sources for the Economic History of Southeast Asia, no. 4 (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1998), 7.
3. Mark Ravinder Frost and Yu-Mei Balasingamchow, *Singapore: A Biography* (Singapore: Didier Millet and National Museum of Singapore, 2009), 46.
4. Czarra, *Spices*, 20.
5. *Ibid.*, 27.
6. *Ibid.*, 31.
7. *Ibid.*, 7.
8. João de Barros, quoted in O. H. K. Spate, *The Spanish Lake* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1979), 87.
9. Czarra, *Spices*, 90–91.
10. *Ibid.*, 93–94.

Introduction

“Honesty Printed on Modesty”, Haegue Yang’s new body of printed work, emerged during her residency at STPI in November 2012. The project was inspired by her impression of the materiality that she encountered while working at STPI. Yang said that she felt “humbled” by the materials and tried to carry out something simple yet significant, to remain direct and faithful to the materials. The resulting works may appear unstudied, but they were in fact difficult to achieve. For Yang, printing is a direct act, yet that directness does not always lead to honest and authentic expression.

The prints integrate everyday elements such as foods and spices, which are at once familiar and miraculous as they originated from an evolved civilization and make reference to a broader history and contemporary life. The works include vegetable prints, spice papers, and spice prints on different kinds of sandpaper. In a sense, these prints offer the viewer sensory, tactile, personal, and historical experiences.

When experimenting with materials sourced from our domestic world, especially from the kitchen, Yang transforms the most mundane ingredients, such as vegetables and spices, directly into colors and textures for direct transfer printing. Because most of the works are monoprints, meaning that each print is unique in its use of color and its arrangement of materials, the sequential development of the series is evident in the subtle variations that occur over time.

An immediate association can be made here with feminist art practices, in which the home and the kitchen are actively interpreted, reenacted, and presented to share. By selecting essential elements of culinary practice from this everyday site as her materials, Yang expands our understanding of ingestion and nurturing to encompass the historical and political experience of colonialism. Moreover, she aims to rediscover aspects of what Rabindranath Tagore called “passive quality,” which he argued had “given woman that large and deep placidity which is so necessary for the healing and nourishing and storing of life.”⁷¹

Here Yang’s domestic reference is subtle and carefully considered, even if the materials are approached with a subversive and experimental playfulness that results in a rich variety of printed works. These prints can be seen as an outgrowth of the artist’s earlier works that addressed themes of domesticity, such as *Sallim* for the Korean Pavilion at the Venice Biennale (2009), in which Yang directly transposed the dimensions of her own kitchen into the exhibition space, or the two versions of *Doubles and Couples* (2008, 2010), which are sculptural incarnations of appliances.



Sallim

2009

Steel frame, perforated metal plates, casters, aluminum venetian blinds, knitting yarn, acrylic mirror, IV stand, light bulbs, cable, fan, timer, dried garlic, plates, hot pad, scent emitters (*Curry, Freshly Brewed Coffee, French Bread, Hot Apple Pie, Vomit, Dinosaur Dung*)

310 x 250 x 420 cm

The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Fund for the Twenty-First Century and gift of Agnes Gund, Glenn Fuhrman, and Jerry I. Speyer

Condensation, Korean Pavilion, 53rd Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy, 2009

Photo: Pattara Chanruechachai



Doubles and Couples – Version Turin

2008

Aluminum venetian blinds (colored with gradient), steel frame, powder coating, perforated metal plates, casters, light bulbs, cable, knitting yarn, cord, plates, cardboard packaging for light bulbs, dried ginger, dried garlic

Boiler: 110 x 63 x 58 cm

Gas stove: 105 x 70 x 65 cm

Refrigerator: 150 x 195 x 61 cm

Shower: 290 x 174 x 150 cm

Washing machine: 105 x 100 x 65 cm

Los Angeles County Museum of Art Collection. Purchased in honor of Lynn Zelevansky with funds provided by The Broad Art Foundation, Hyon Chough, the Korea Arts Foundation of America (KAFA), Wonmi and Kihong Kwon, The Hillcrest Foundation, Tony and Gail Ganz, Terri and Michael Smooke, Judy and Stuart Spence, Steven Neu, and other donors through the 2009 Collectors Committee (M.2009.79a-e).



Installation view of *50 Moons of Saturn*, 2nd Turin Triennial, Italy, 2008

Photo: Paolo Pellion

Notes

1. Tagore's views on men's and women's roles are evident in this passage from his essay "Woman," which he wrote as a lecture for his American tour in 1916: "Woman is endowed with the passive qualities of chastity, modesty, devotion and power of self-sacrifice in a greater measure than man is. It is the passive quality in nature which turns its monster forces into perfect creations of beauty—taming the wild elements into the delicacy of tenderness fit for the service of life. This passive quality has given woman that large and deep placidity which is so necessary for the healing and nourishing and storing of life. If life were all spending, then it would be like a rocket, going up in a flash and coming down the next moment in ashes. Life should be like a lamp where the potentiality of light is far greater in quantity than what appears as the flame." Rabindranath Tagore, "Woman," in *Personality: Lectures Delivered in America* (London: Macmillan, 1917), 172–73.

純天然中草藥
100% natural raw Chinese herb

外用 沒藥
Mo Yao
Commiphora Myrrha

40g / sheet

開心的 健康的

首烏粉

Root Of Tuber Fleeceflower

天 然 藥 材

50g / sheet

**PRINTING
CIVILIZATION:
LOCALITY
AND
CONTEMPORANEITY**

Spice Sheets

Seasoning Papers

Spice Moons

Triptych Moon

Since antiquity, spices have allowed for a certain refinement of human life and culinary culture. As one of the first commercial luxury items, they were transported across Asia, Northeast Africa, India, and Europe. Diplomatic conflicts over the monopoly on the spice trade provided the impetus for the exploration of new colonies. Spices are now cultivated widely and transported to all parts of the globe, making them readily available everywhere. With an understanding of this history, Yang has gathered spices that originated from Central and South Asia and India yet were easily obtained in Singapore. The selection was purchased in Singaporean markets, where a variety of historical and cultural influences remain intact, reflecting Singapore's diverse population and its colonial history as a commercial port city of Southeast Asia.

Each *Spice Sheet* (2012) depicts the label of a packet that held the spices used for the printing process. What can be seen are details such as the name of the spice, the ingredients, the weight, and the place of origin. This simple work focuses on the natural color and subtle variations in density between the spices, which were mixed into the paper pulp. The various fonts used for the product descriptions on the packages as well as the slightly different types of product information included on each packet are retained and positioned at the center of each square sheet of paper. The use of the same minimalistic format throughout the *Spice Sheets* calls attention to the nuances of the twenty different color tones, which are complemented by various organic effects (both olfactory and visual). The smell and color of each print, which presumably change over time, are integral to the work.

Seasoning Papers (2013) could be considered an ironic pairing with *Spice Sheets*. Here the artificial seasonings for instant noodles are indicative of regional dishes from neighboring cultures that are now internationally appreciated, such as Korean kimchi or Thai *tom yam*. The seasonings are industrially blended mixtures of natural ingredients and chemical flavorings. By replicating the logos from the packages and placing them at the center of the stained paper, Yang visualizes the realm of flavor, highlighting the difference between the material consistencies of each seasoning. The “authentic and distinctive” quality of the flavors is doubled through the graphic presentation of the package label and text, which corresponds to the country of origin for each dish.

Yang chose sandpaper as the background for a set of 160 prints titled *Spice Moons* (2013). She used screen-printing methods to apply acrylic adhesive in a circular form and then applied the spices to the sandpaper. Each print combines one of twenty spices with one of eight different varieties of sandpaper. The combination of the tactile quality of the background material and the printed color particles of the spices—namely, the bringing together of the touchable and the olfactory—builds a peculiar minimalistic universe of circles and squares. *Triptych Moon* (2013) is made using the same method but with different substances: tea, coffee, and cacao, three common drinks that are brown in tone yet have different textures and flavors. The use of sandpaper is carried over from Yang's ongoing collage series *Facing the Untouched* (2013–), in which she explores the globally standardized varieties of sandpaper, categorized according to grit sizes developed solely for their functionality.

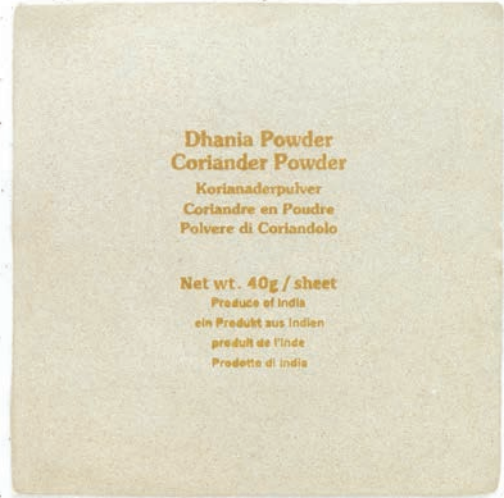
Spice Sheets

2012



CLOVE POWDER
NET WT. 35g / sheet

Produce of India



Dhania Powder
Coriander Powder
Korianaderpulver
Coriandre en Poudre
Polvere di Coriandolo

Net wt. 40g / sheet
Produce of India
ein Produkt aus Indien
produit de l'Inde
Prodotto di India



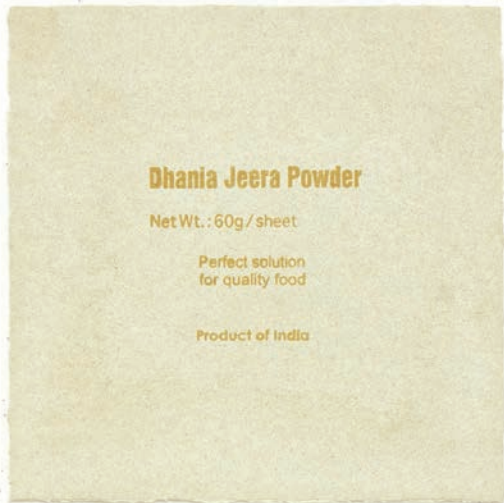
Haldi Powder
Turmeric Powder
Karkumapulver
Poudre en Curcuma
Polvere di Curcuma

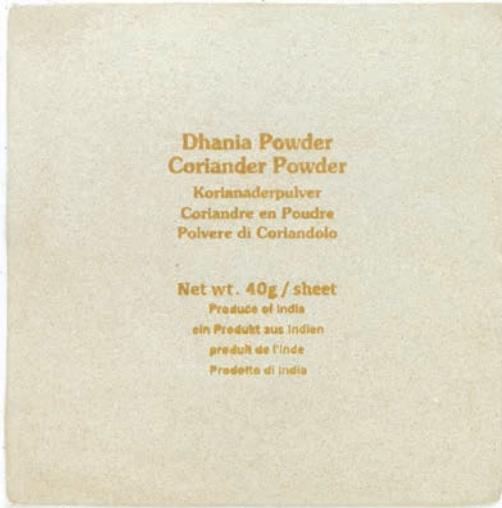
Net wt. 35g / sheet
Produce of India
ein Produkt aus Indien
produit de l'Inde
Prodotto di India



CARDAMOM POWDER
ஏலக்காய் தூள்

NET WT. 30GM / SHEET
PRODUCT OF MALAYSIA





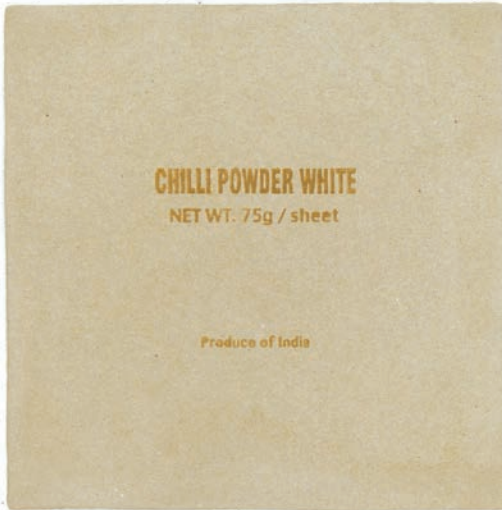
Dhania Powder
Coriander Powder
Korlanaderpulver
Coriandre en Poudre
Polvere di Coriandolo

Net wt. 40g / sheet
Produce of India
ein Produkt aus Indien
produit de l'Inde
Prodotto di India



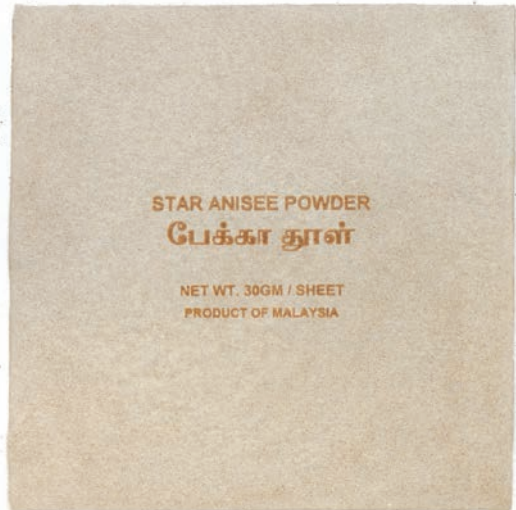
FENUGREEK POWDER
மெந்தகா தூள்

Taste the Tradition
NET WT. 30GM / SHEET
PRODUCT OF MALAYSIA



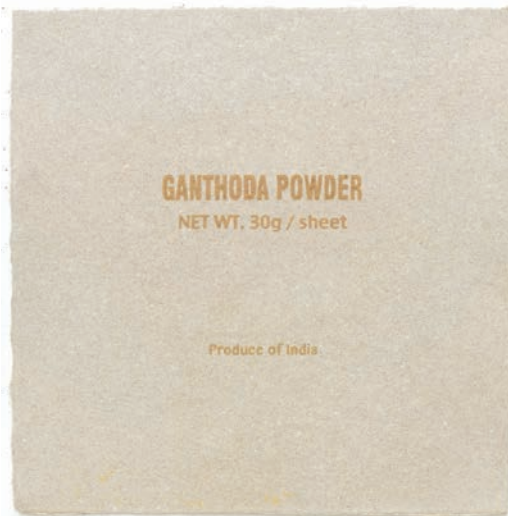
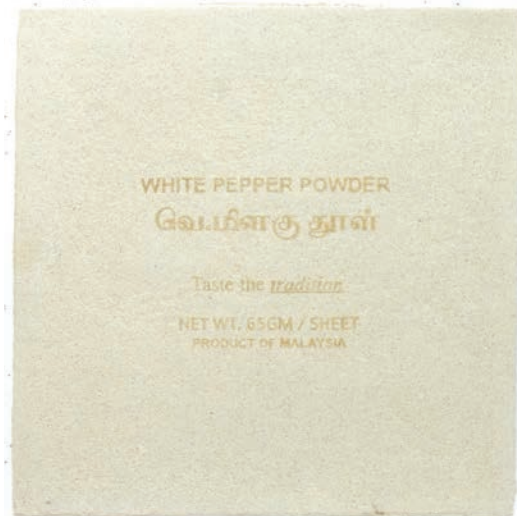
CHILLI POWDER WHITE
NET WT. 75g / sheet

Produce of India



STAR ANISEE POWDER
பெக்கா தூள்

NET WT. 30GM / SHEET
PRODUCT OF MALAYSIA





Mustard Powder

Senfpulver

Poudre en moutarde

Polvere di Senape

Net wt. 45g / sheet

Produce of India

ein Produkt aus Indien

prodotto in India

Prodotto di India



純天然中草藥
100% natural raw Chinese herb

黃 芩

Huang Qin

Scutellaria Baicalensis

40g / sheet



開心的
健康的

首烏粉

Root Of Tuber Fleeceflower



50g / sheet



純天然中草藥
100% natural raw Chinese herb

大 黃

Da Huang

Rheum Palmatum

40g / sheet





Seasoning Papers

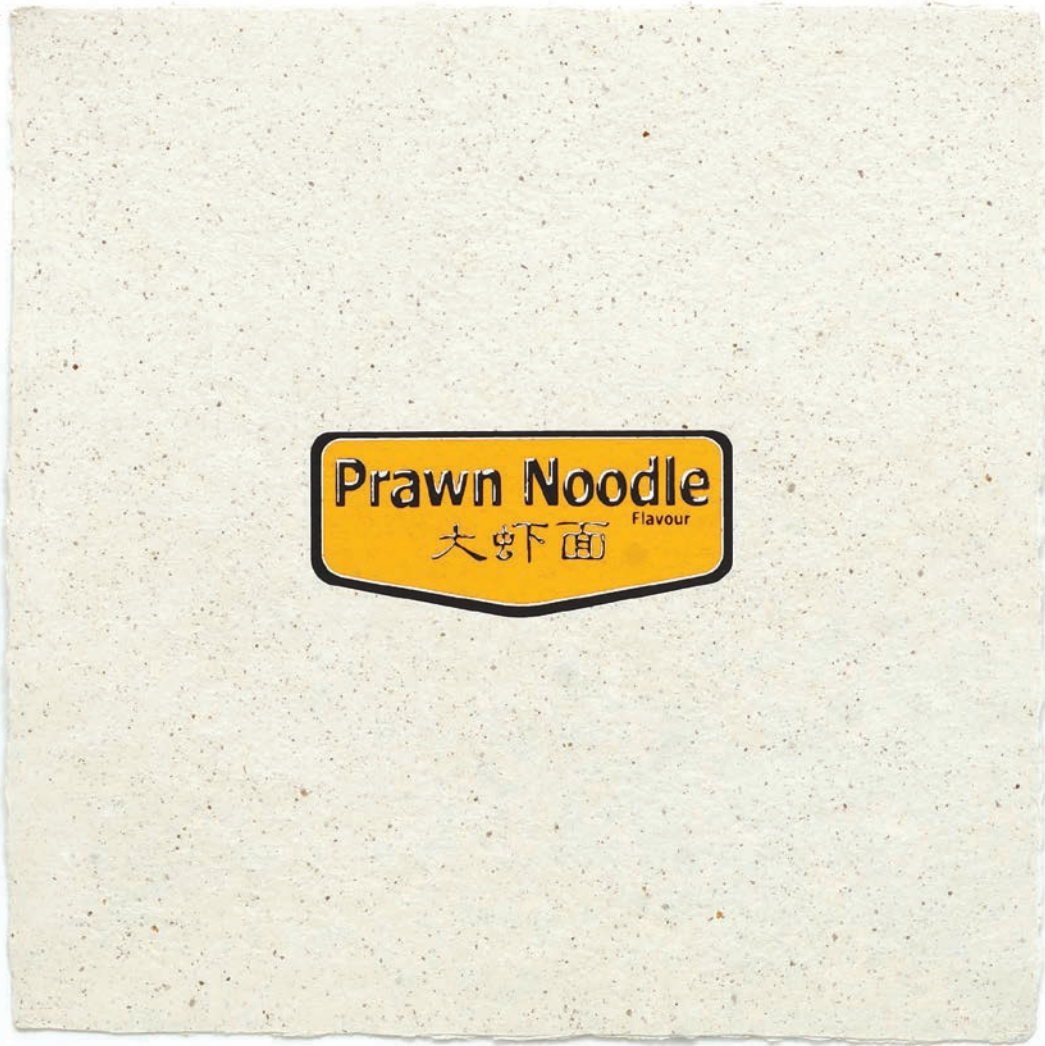
2013





KOREAN KIMCHI
Flavoured Noodles
김치라면

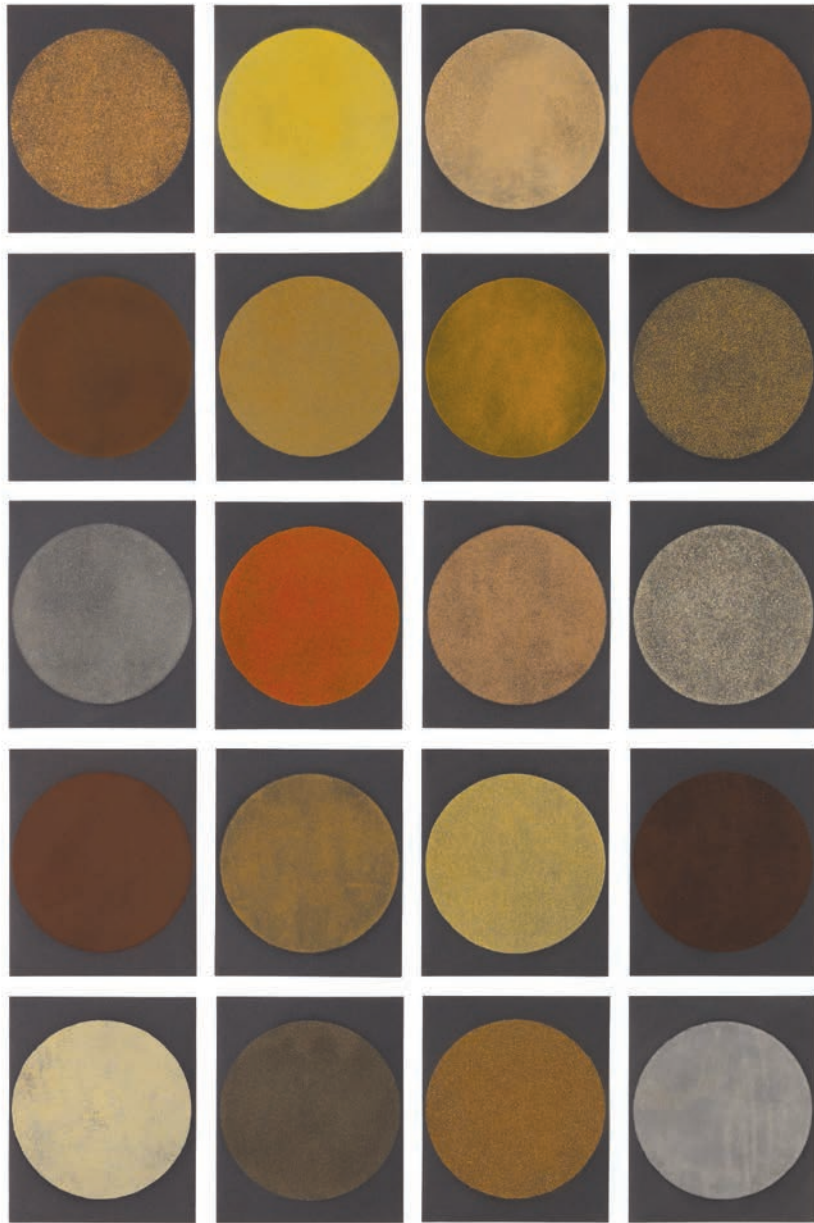




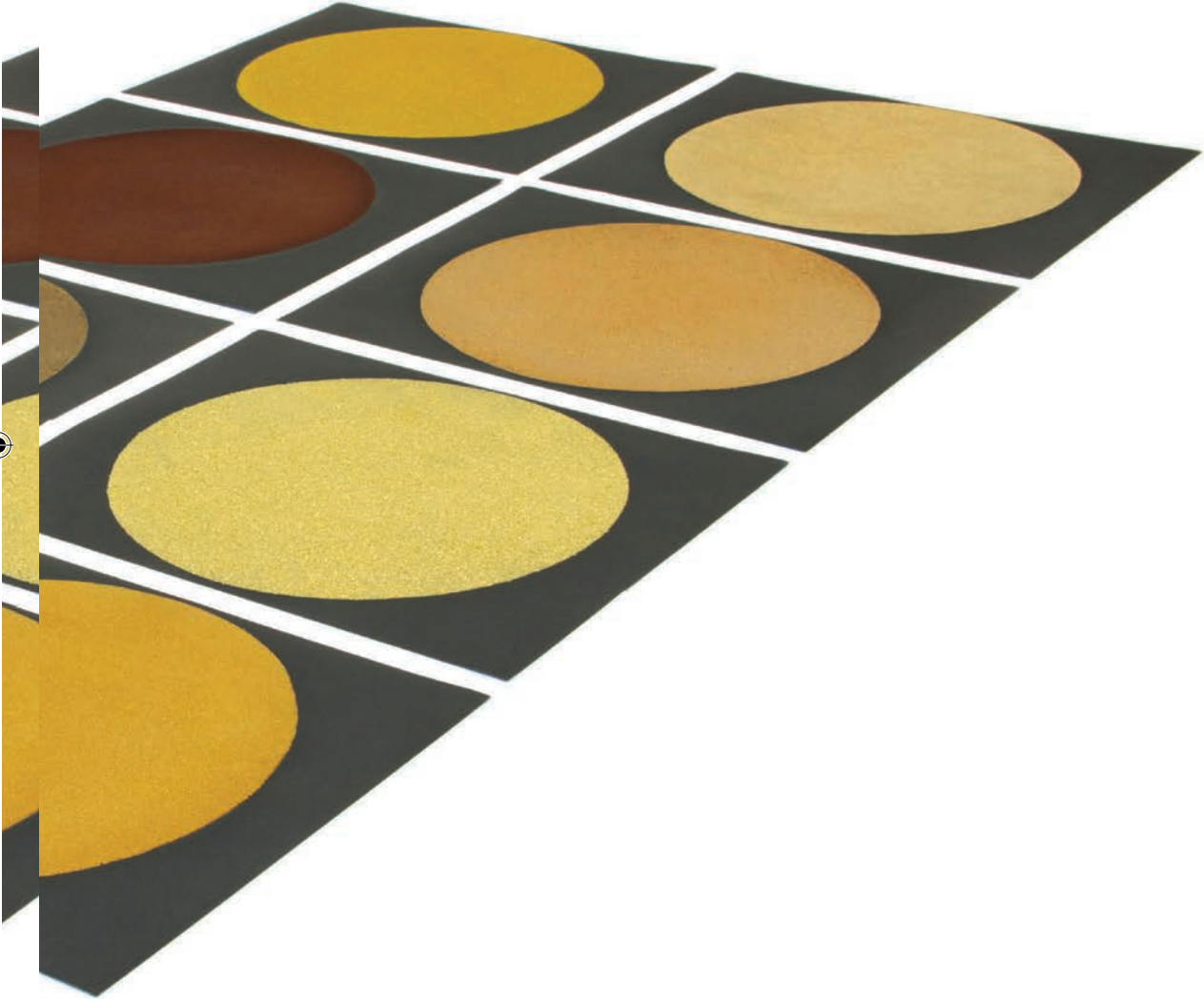


Spice Moons

2013





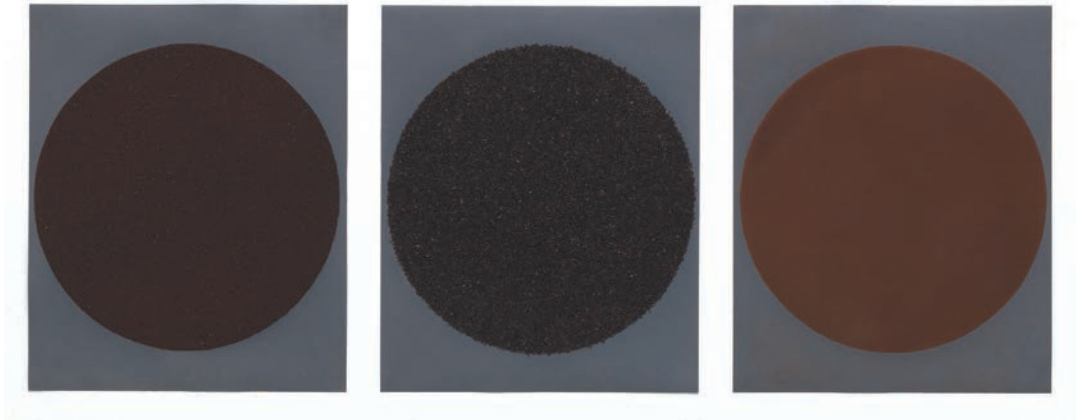


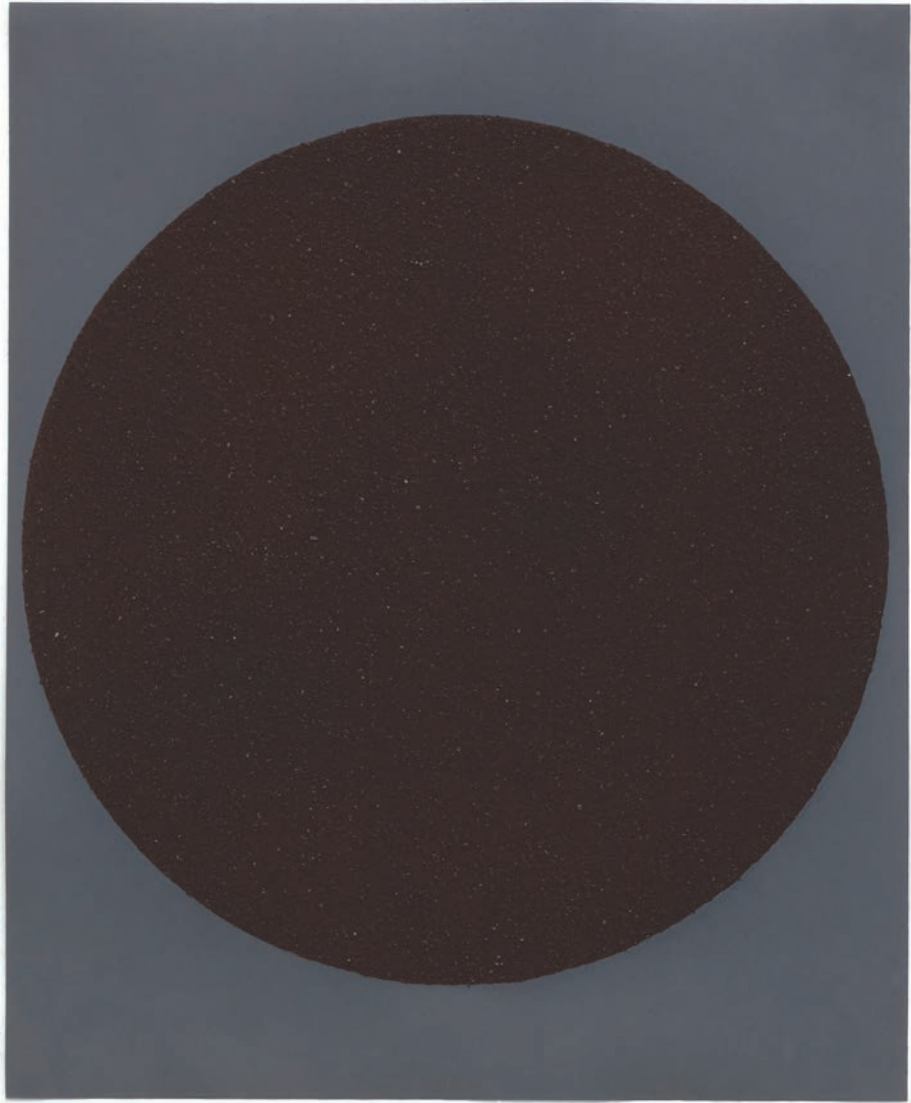
Triptych Moon

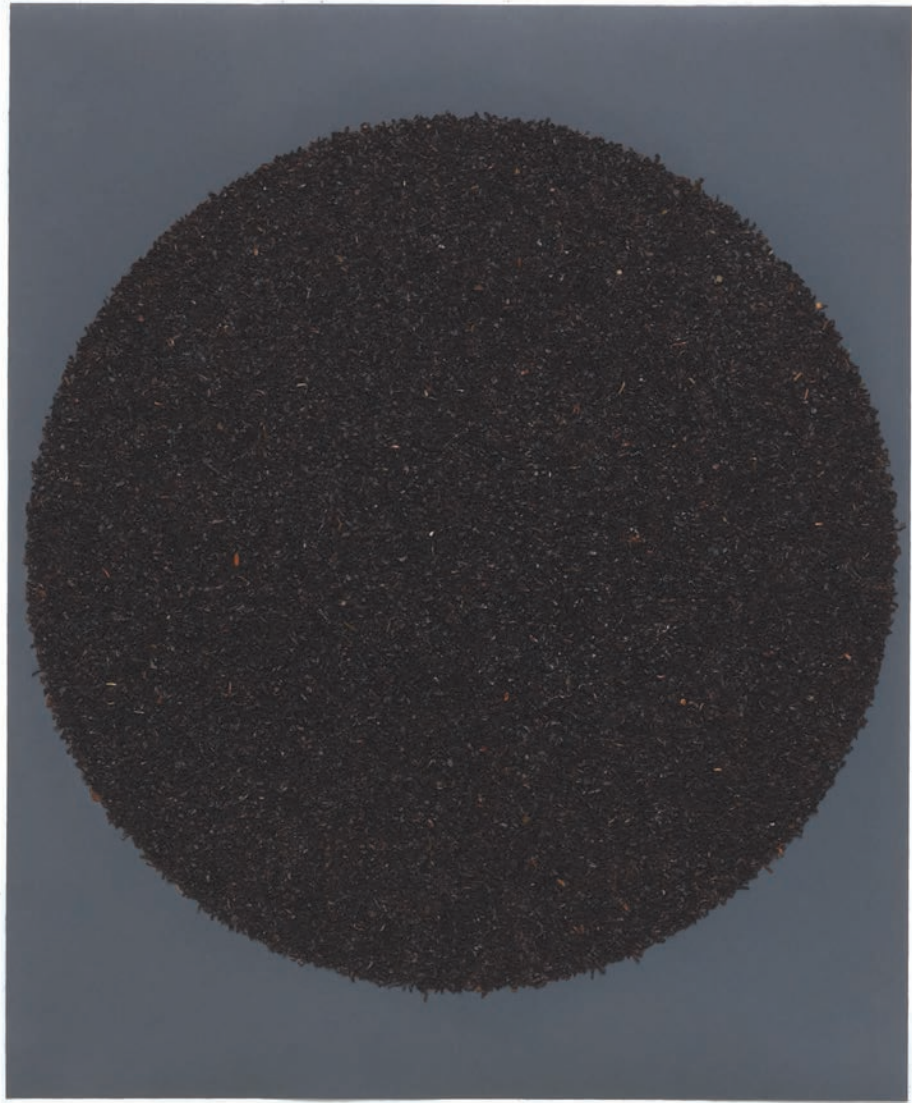


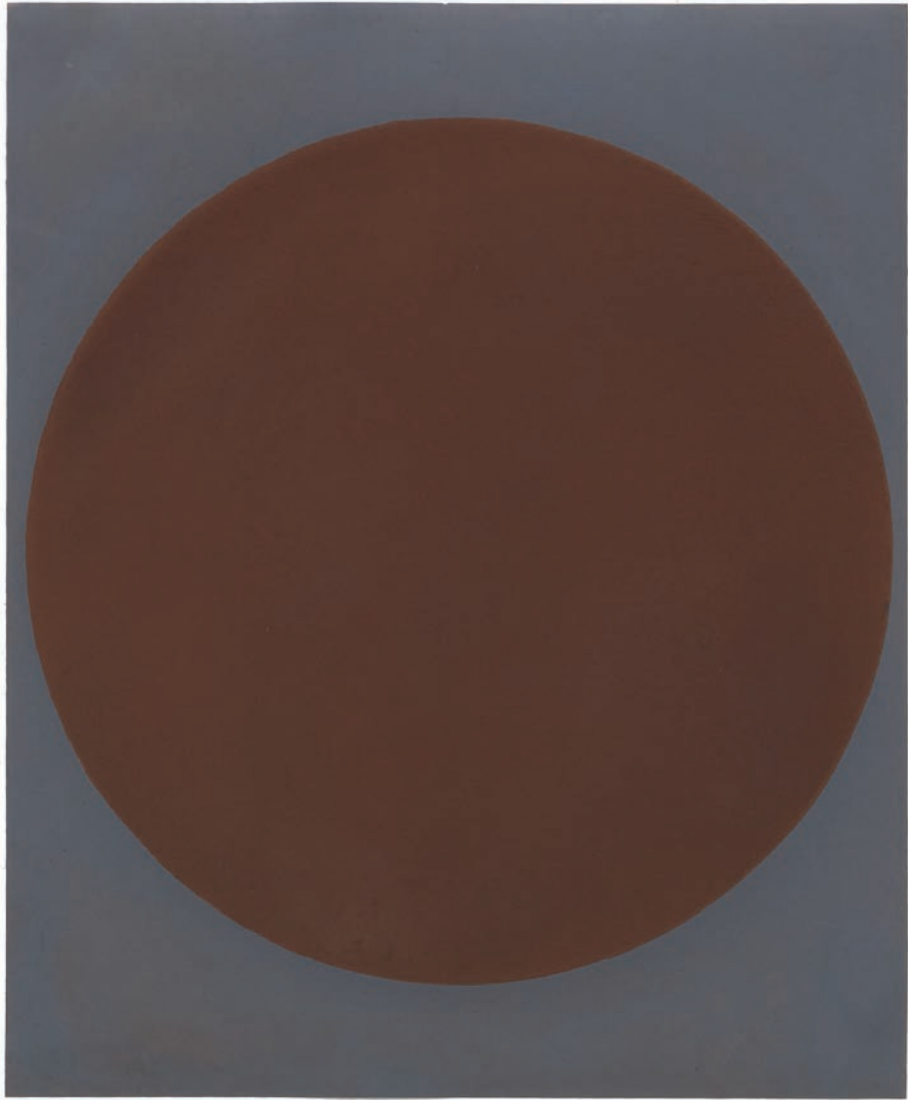
Coffee, Tea, and Cacao

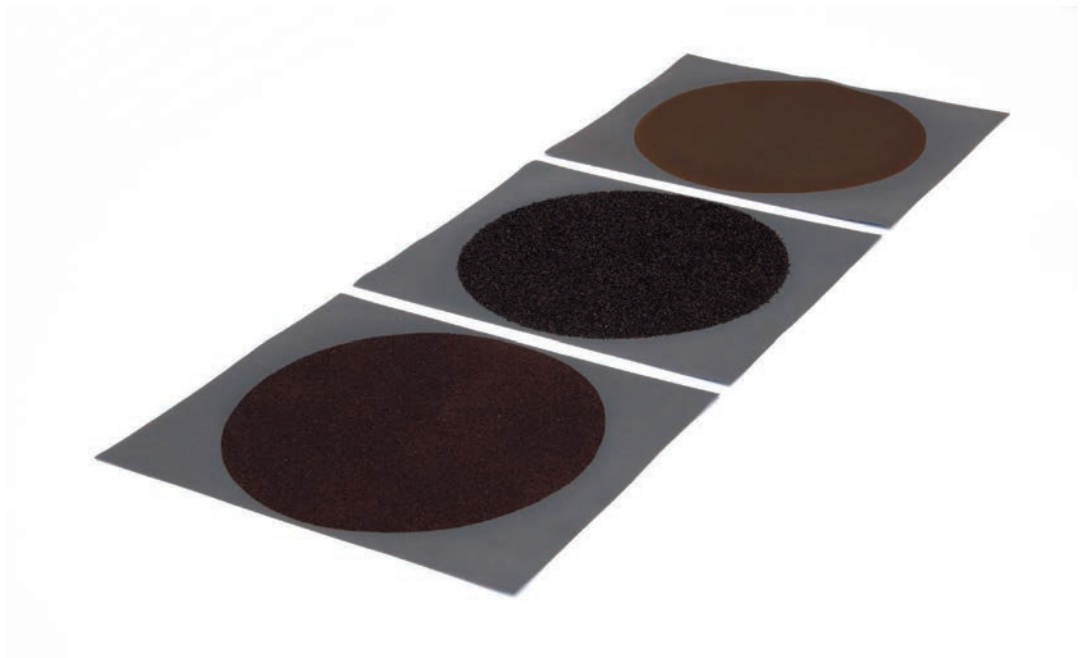
2013

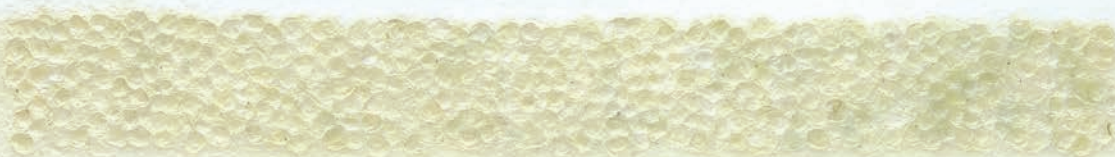


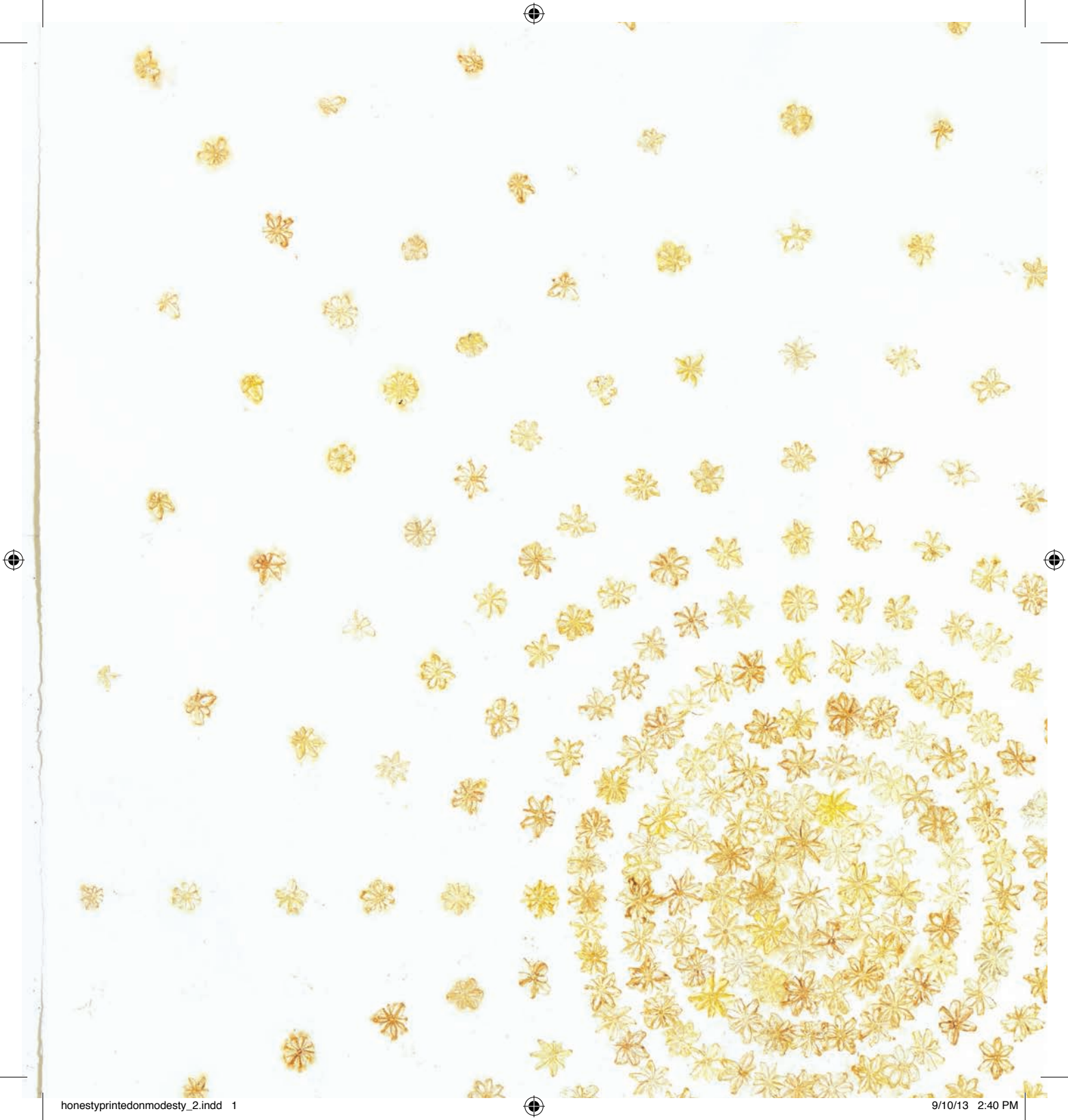












EMBOSSSED
Vegetable Prints
PRINTS,
Spice Prints
JUICE
Herb Prints
DYES
Pasta Prints

Slices of various vegetables, untreated spices, and herbs are pressed into fresh paper pulp, which was produced on-site at STPI. The embossed traces of natural ingredients create small bumps and unevenness on the surface. In this group of works Yang experimented with the diverse possibilities for composition, adapting traditional art techniques such as dying and decalomania. It is important to note that basic methods are used here to propose a countermodel to the ever-growing appetite for sophisticated and complex technology.

***A. Vegetable Prints / Spice Prints / Herb Prints / Pasta Prints:
Embossed and Colored***

Yang used fresh vegetable pieces or dry materials such as herbal medicine and pasta and placed them in assorted arrangements that reflect their various sizes, the methods of chopping the ingredients, and so on. For example, okra slices, which were cut in a ring formation, were then arranged in a spiral form. The imprinted rows of shanghai greens (bok choy) and mini eggplant slices, cut in cross section, are reminiscent of the analytical schemes typically found in biological studies.

Vegetable Print



Okra Spiral #4

2012



Vegetable Prints



Shanghai Green #2

2012



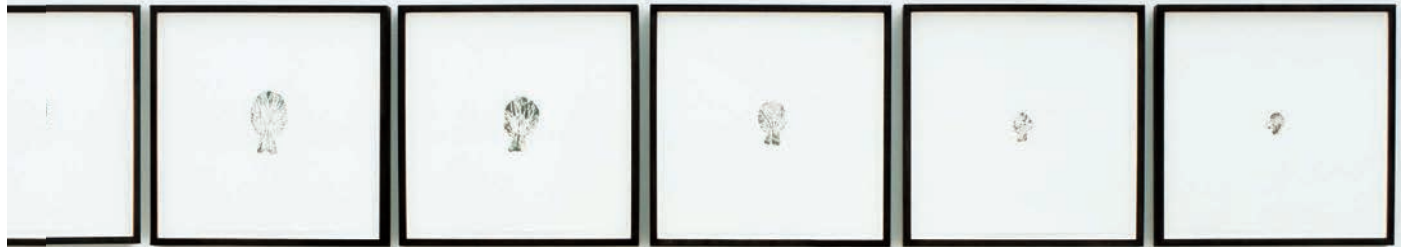










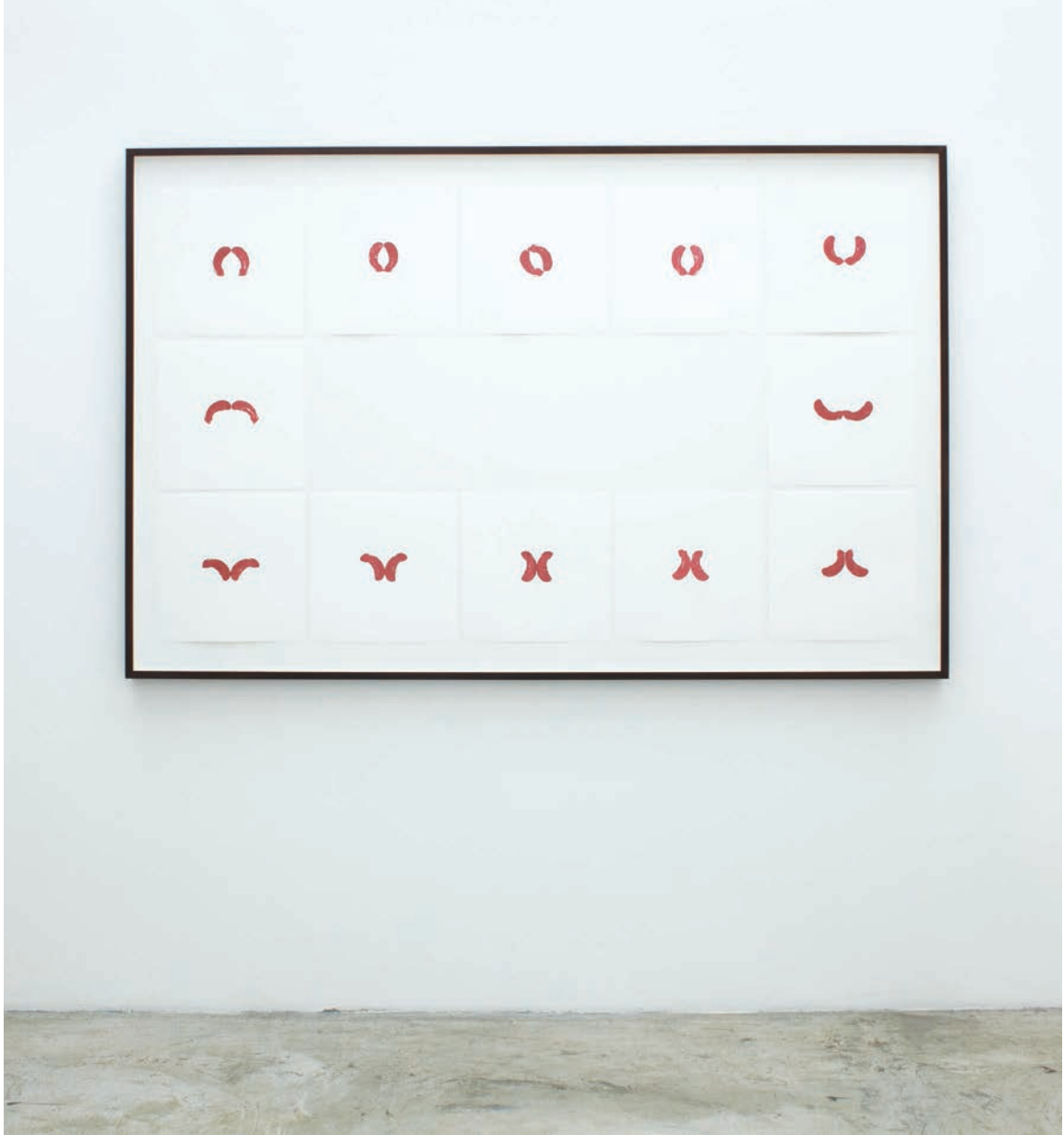


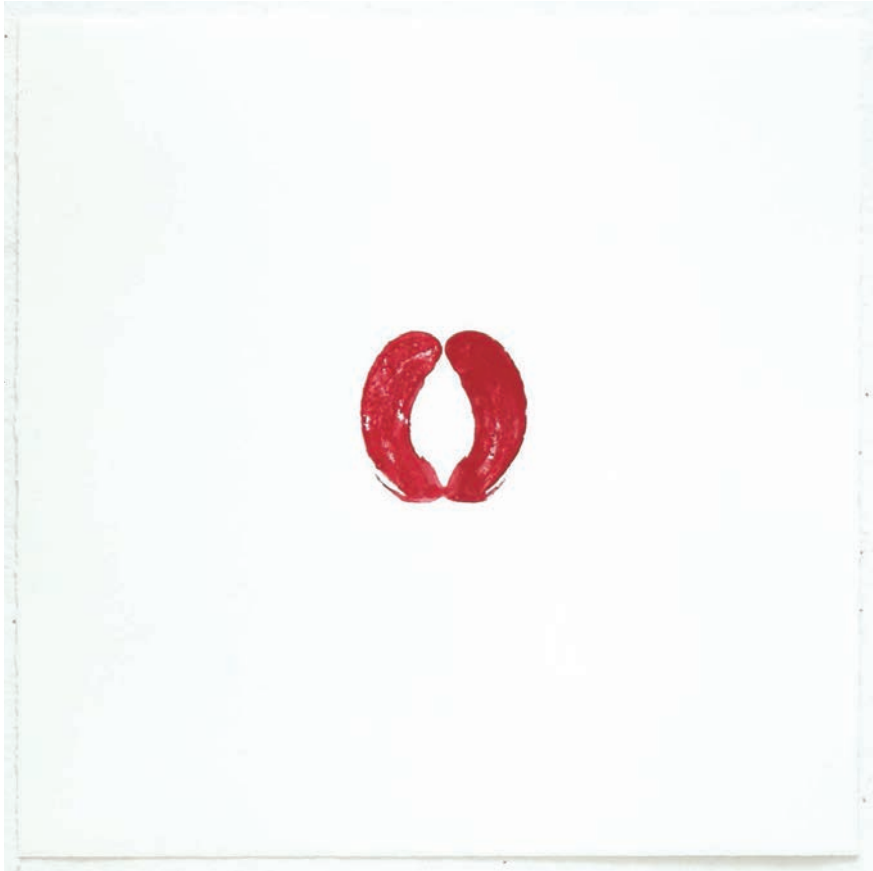
Vegetable Prints

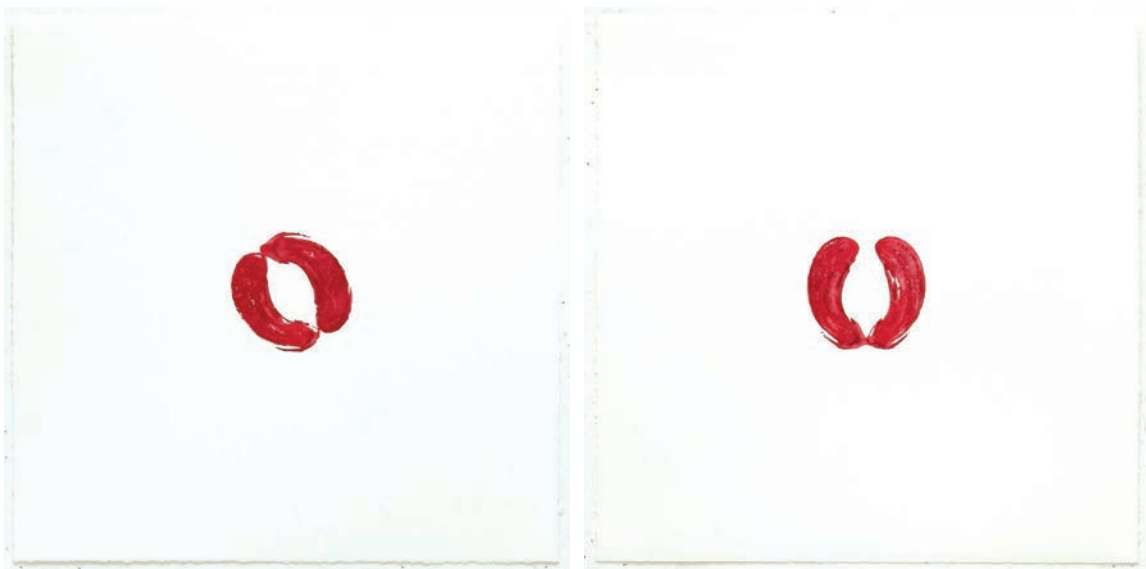


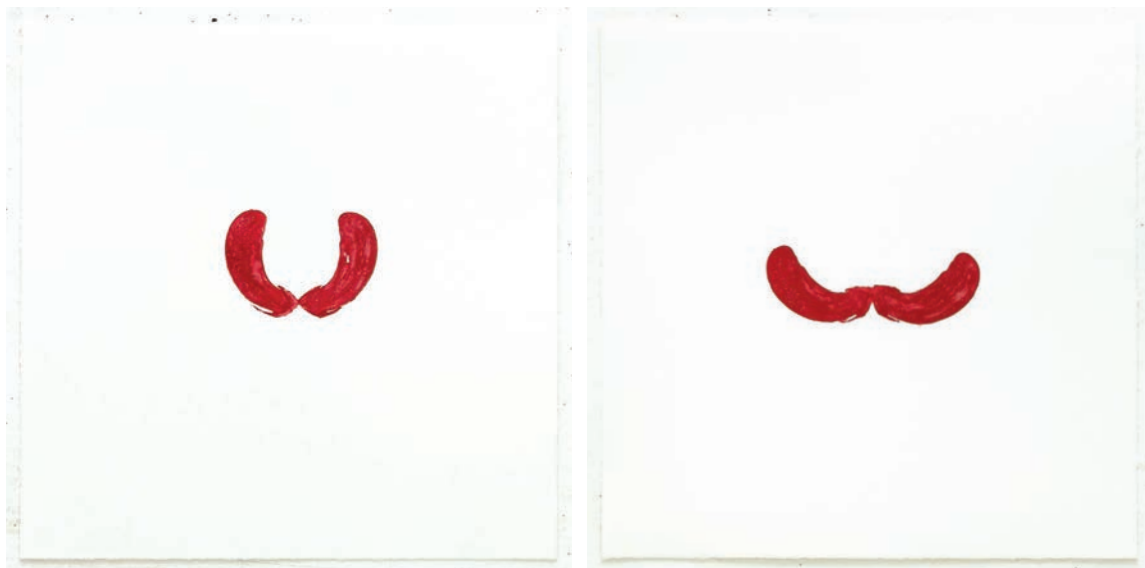
Violet Eggplant #1

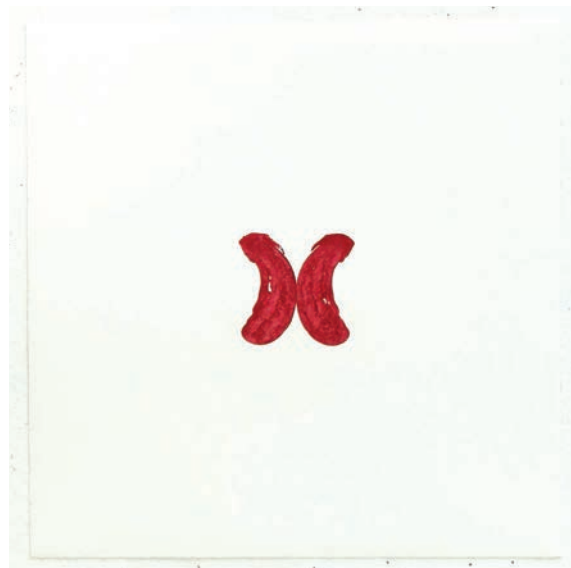
2012

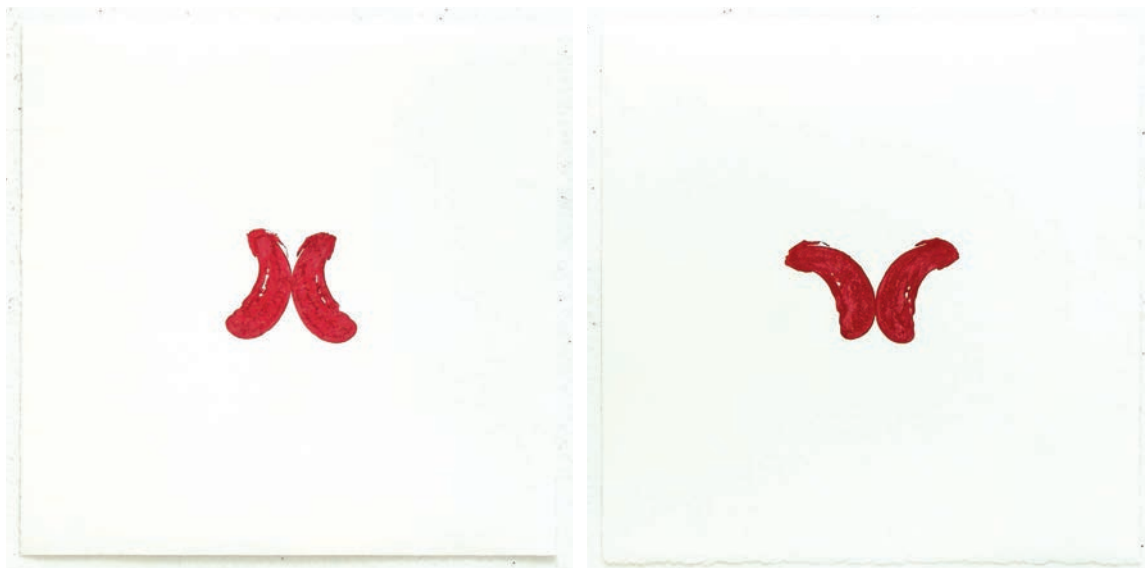




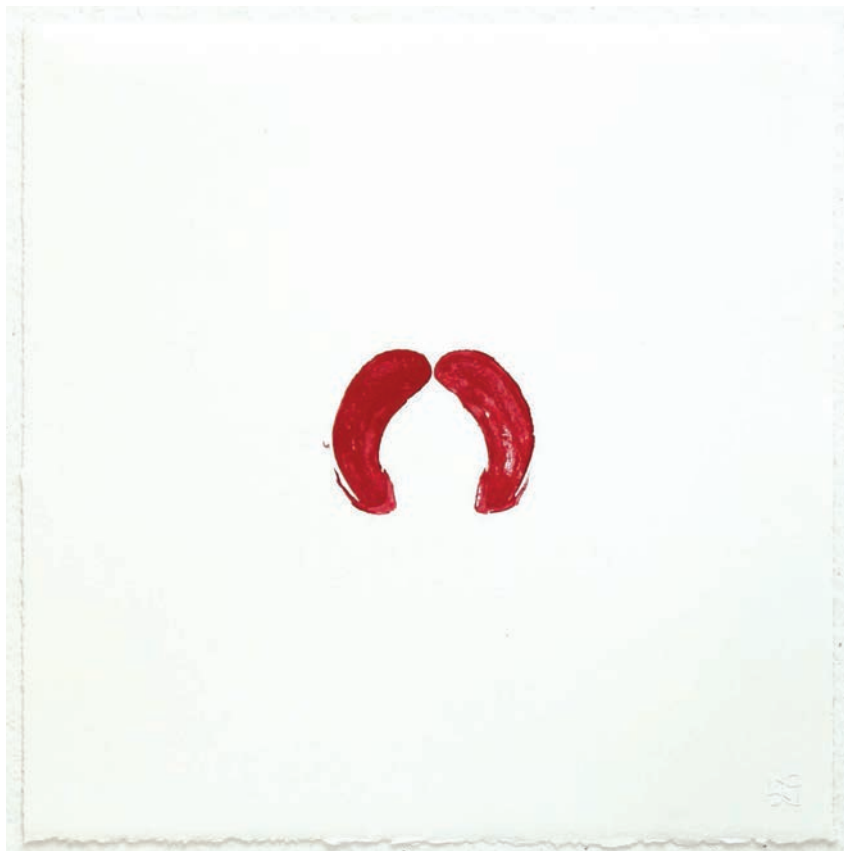










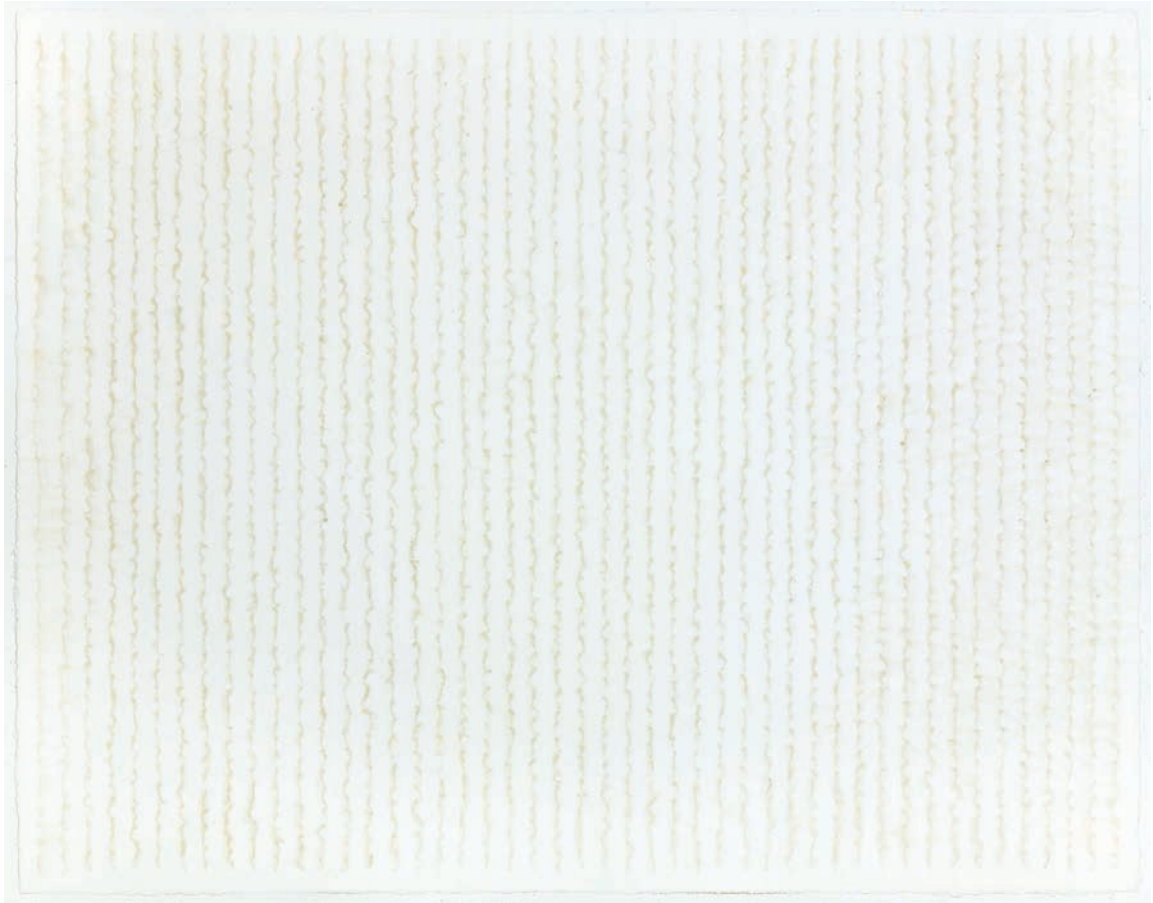


***B. Vegetable Prints / Spice Prints / Herb Prints / Pasta Prints:
Embossed and Natural Dye***

Yang used untreated spices and herbs for these prints, allowing their natural forms to make a singular impression on the paper. These single imprints are arranged in geometric compositions such as spirals or lines, and their inherent and natural detail suggests great freedom in their organically varied forms. In addition, natural colors were extracted from the vegetables and used to subtly dye the fresh paper fiber. This intensifies a sense of redefinition for the printmaking medium and the basic materials used.

Herb Print #2

2012

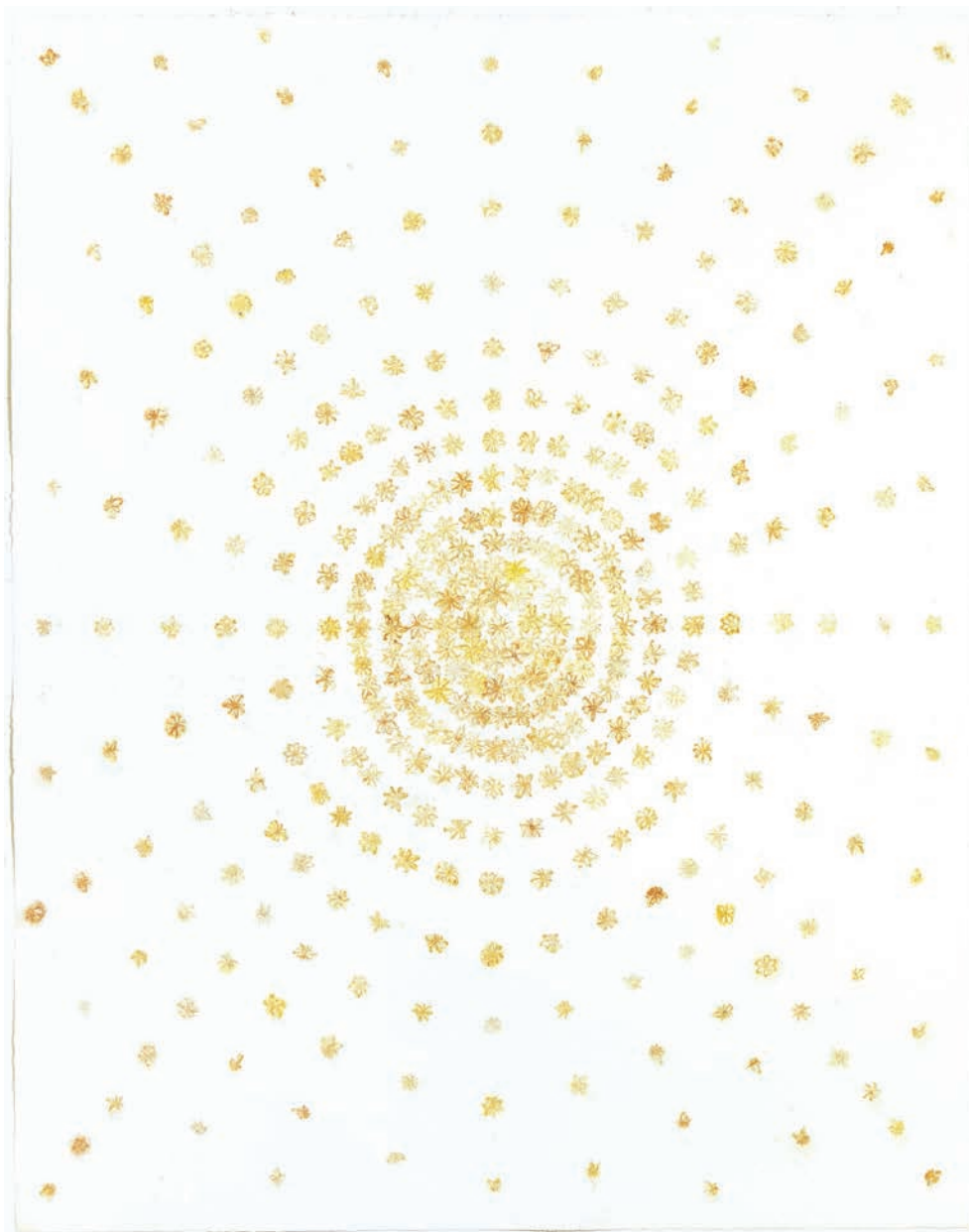


**Spice
Print**



**Anise
Star
Natural**

2012



**Spice
Print**



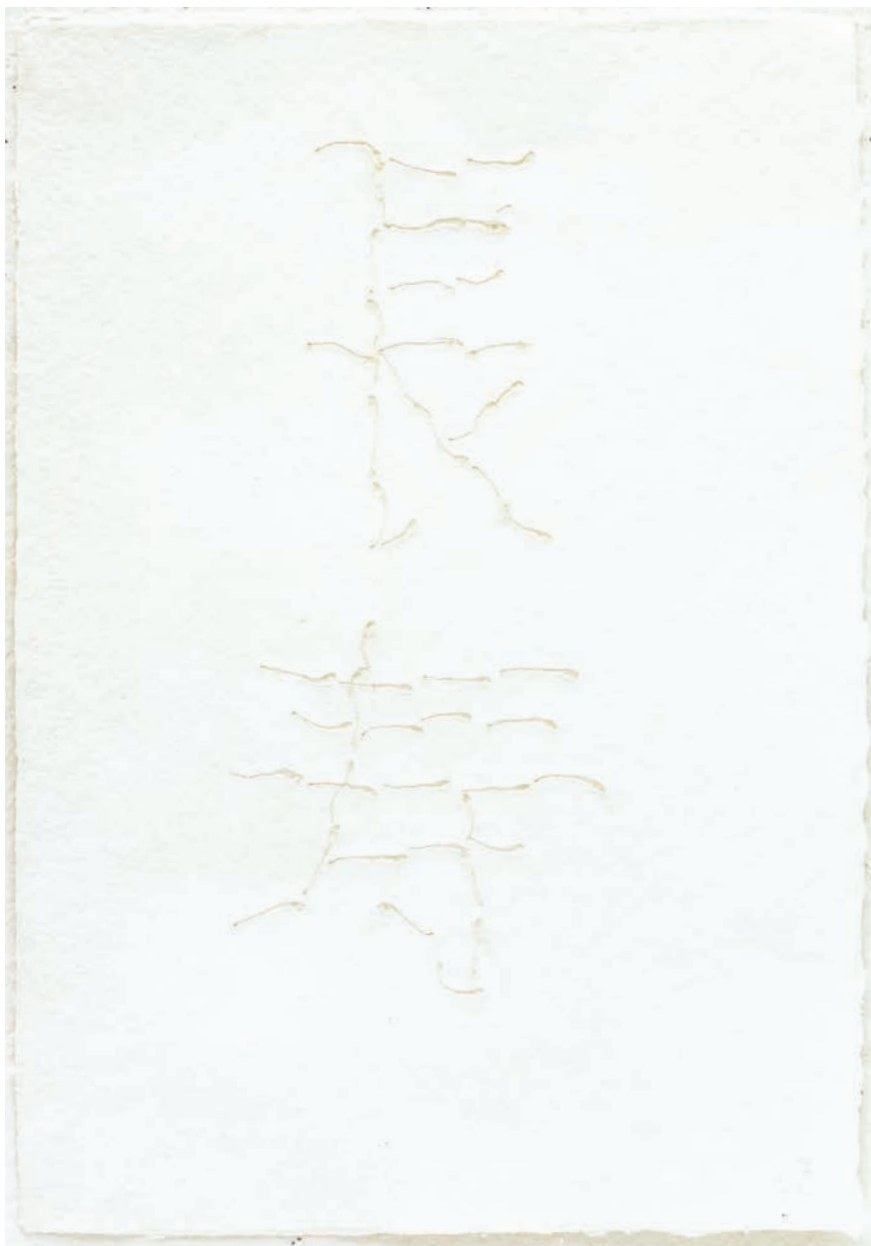
**Anise
Spiral
Natural**

2012



Long Life

2012







INTEGRATING SIDE PRODUCTS: *Cutting Board* THE *Prints* MIRRORING *or* *Décalcomanie* AND *Series* TATTOOING PERFORMANCE

Vegetable prints were developed throughout Yang's residency, with processes evolving naturally along the way. At some point her attention was drawn to the by-products of the printing process, including the paper used under the felt blankets that cushion the printed sheet as it runs through the press, as well as the "scrap" papers that serve as a backing board for cutting. While the former displays the mirror image of each print, in the latter the image emerges from underneath when cutting. This inclusion of the trivial by-products of artistic production reflects Yang's ongoing attentive observation of the minor and the marginal within daily life.

A. Décalcomanie Series: Covering and Mirroring

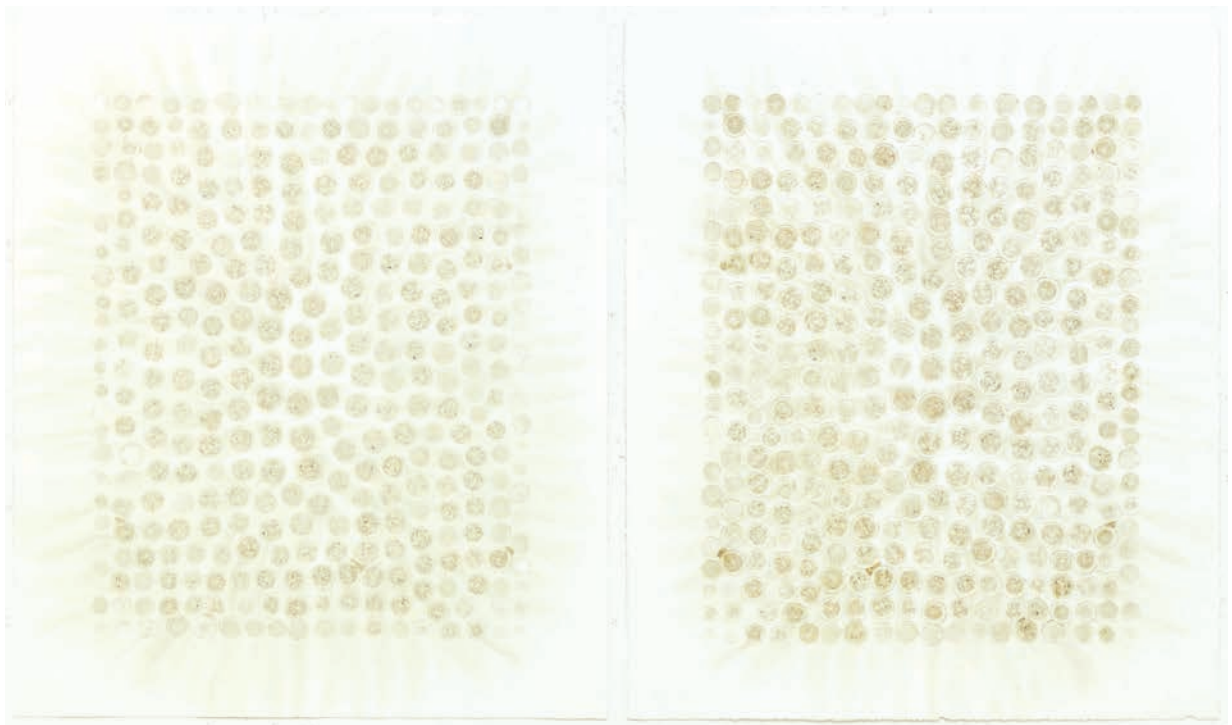
The *Décalcomanie* series emerged naturally during conventional printing processes. While Yang was working with the printing press, the juice of fresh vegetables was pressed and used as a natural dye. During this process she discovered that an embossed record of the object remained on the printed sheet (fresh pulp) as well as on the covering sheet of paper (dry paper). Traditionally one inserts this covering paper for a neat print output, and to protect the press and the felt from dye. This automatically produced mirrored copy is known as a decalomania, commonly referred to as a decal. The distinctive emboss, as well as the natural or artificial dye, is recorded across two pieces of paper at each printing. These imprints were carefully controlled to capture the vegetable from both sides for a symmetrical composition of the one and its doppelgänger.

Vegetable Prints



Eggplant Natural Décalcomanie #1

2012



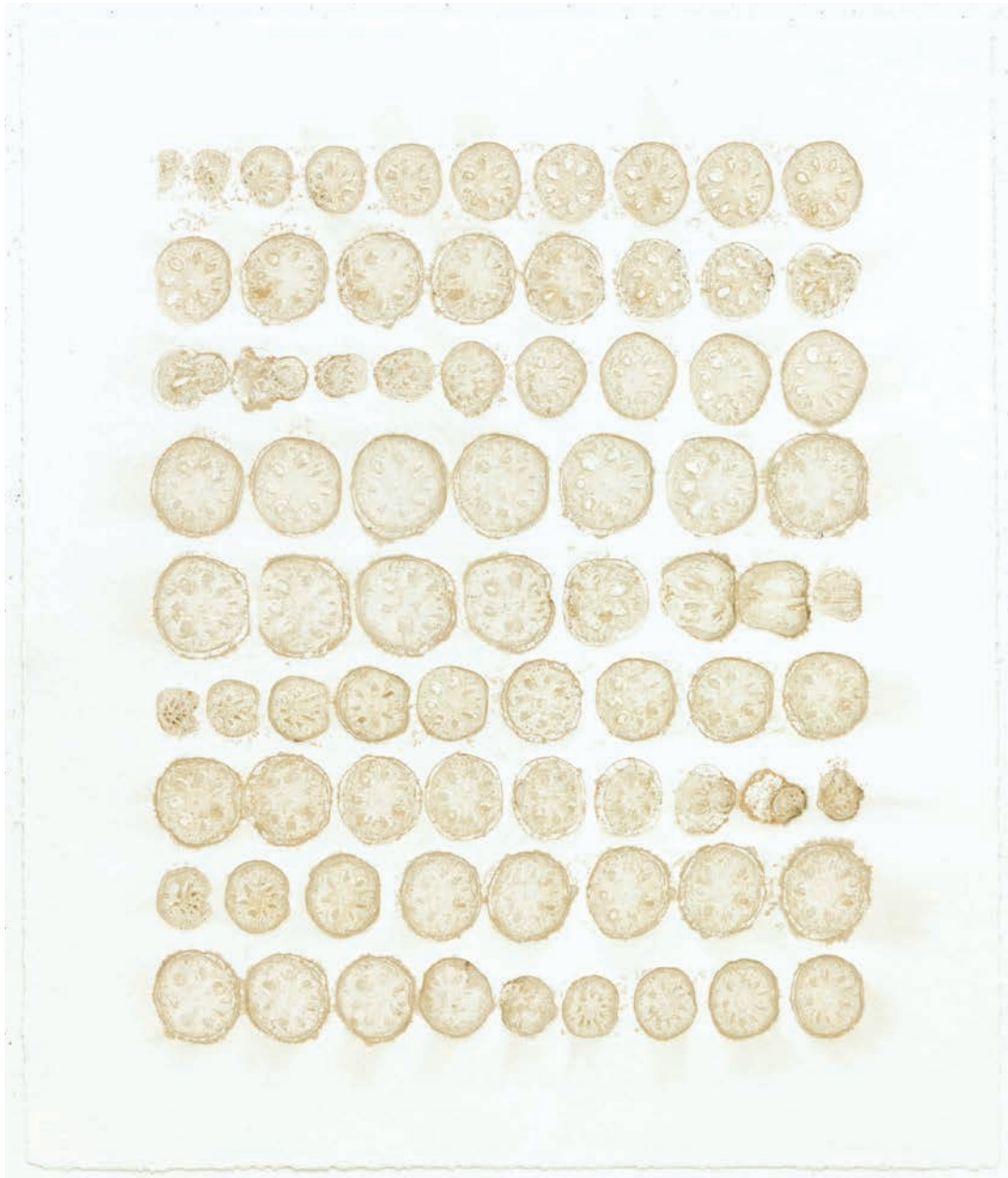
Vegetable Prints



Lotus Décalcomanie

2012





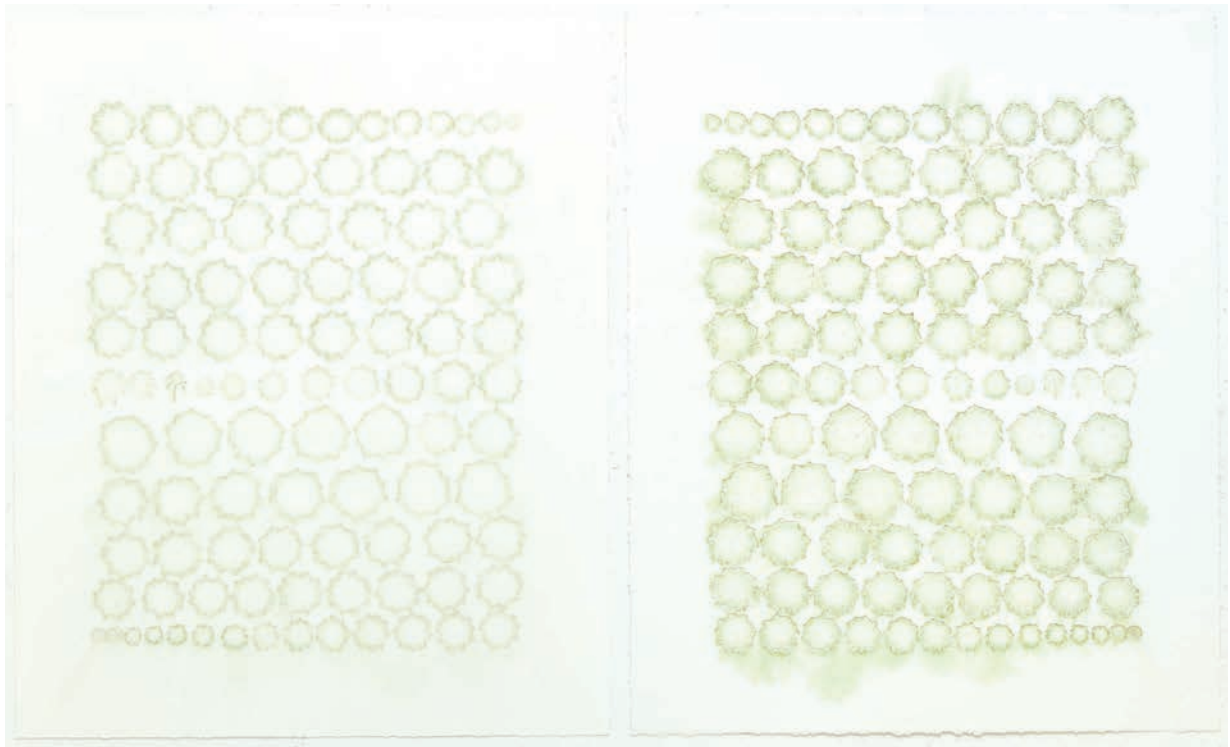


Vegetable Prints



Marrow Squash Décalcomanie

2012

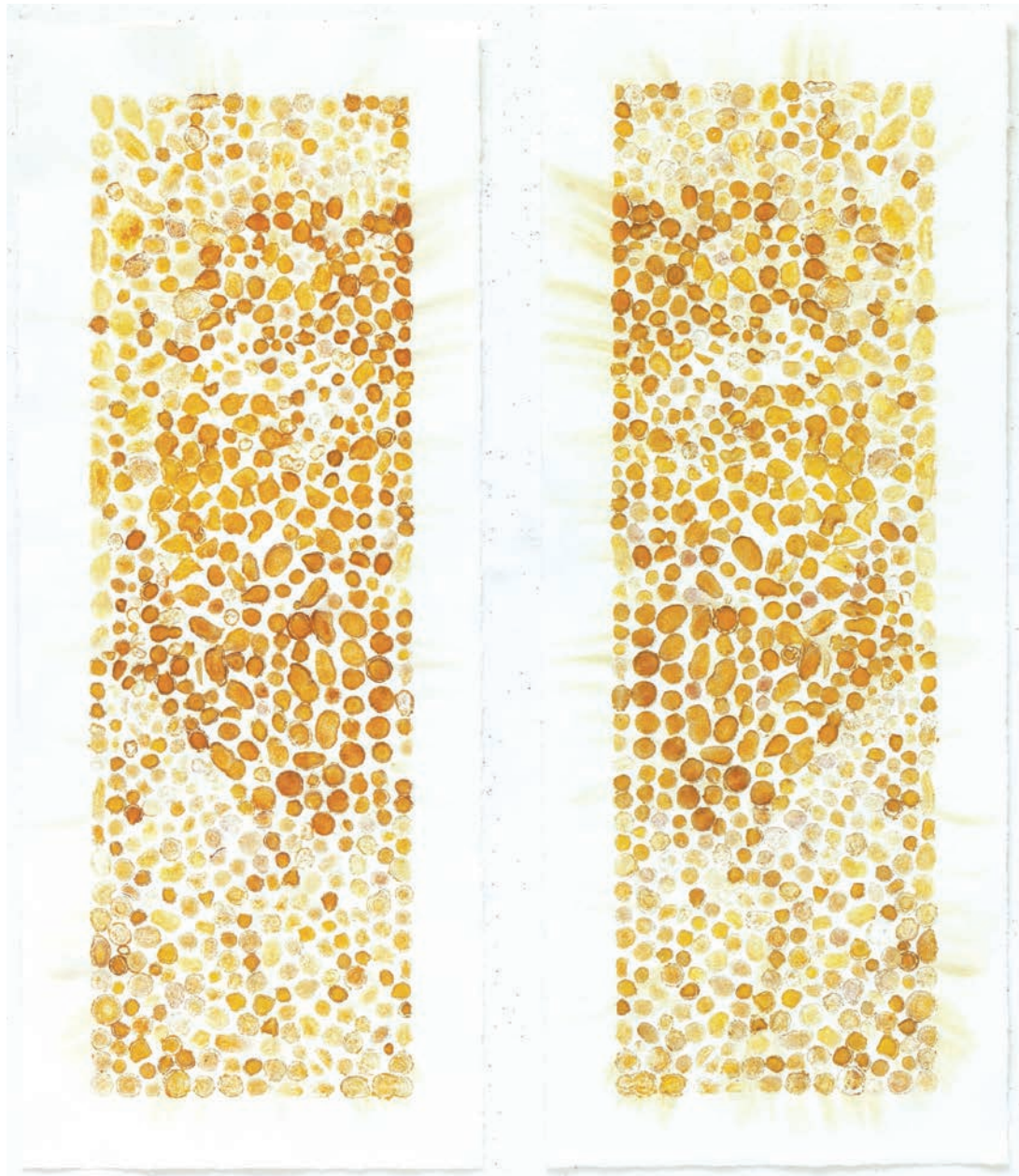


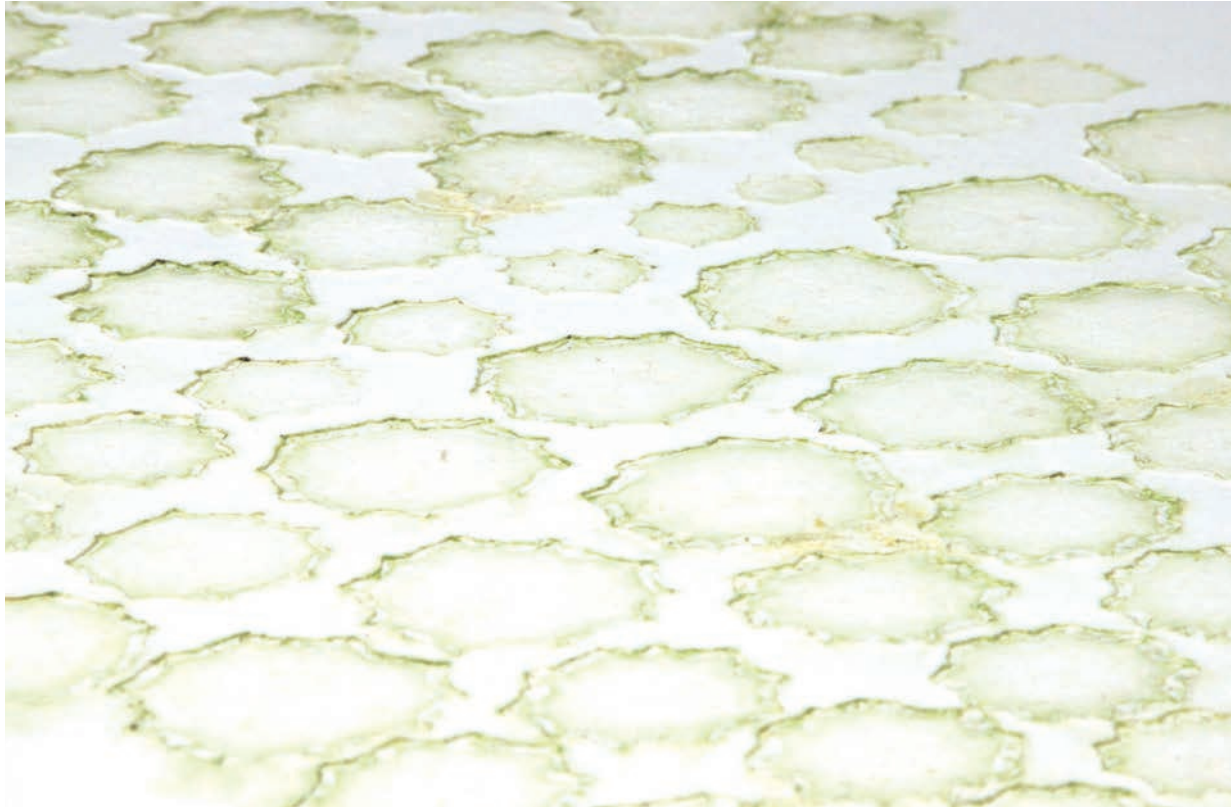
Vegetable Prints

—

Yellow Ginger Natural Décalcomanie #3

2012



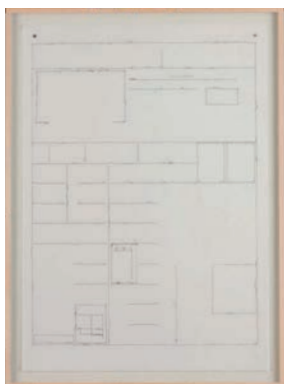




B. Cutting Board Prints—Cutting and Tattooing
Cutting Board Prints: A Tattoo Performance of Knife on Paper

Like the *Décalcomanie* series, the *Cutting Board Prints* (2012) were derived from the process of preparation, namely, neatly cutting the vegetables on scraps of paper. The repetitive cutting of vegetables produces juice, and this juice “tattoos” or intensively dyes the surface of the scrap paper. After discovering the unpretentious quality of these sharp, scar-like lines, Yang produced another independent print series featuring them. In this process, the knife is made apparent, whereas for the other vegetable prints it is only implicated and not treated as an essential aspect of the distinctive visual output. The lines of the *Cutting Board Prints* are simply the vividly stained cuts and open slits, which are evidence of an unpretentious method of production. Yang employed a similar approach in some of her previous works, such as *Traces of Anonymous Pupil Authors* (2001), in which marks made by schoolchildren in their textbooks are featured, or *Carsick Drawings* (2006), which record jagged tracings made by the artist during a bus journey.

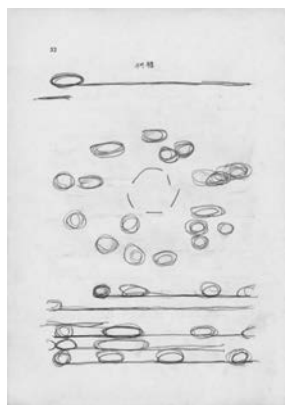
The entire printing process is embedded within a diverse group of artifacts that integrate and make visible the normally unseen aspects of printmaking. The delicate marks left by various chopping actions also reveal a certain performative aspect. Yang values the knife as an object with overlapping dualities, at once a domesticated object used in the practice of cutting and chopping food and an eccentric object capable of “tattooing.”



1.



1.



2.

1.
Carsick Drawings

2006

Ink, tracing paper, framed

10 pieces, each 65 x 47.6 cm

Courtesy of the artist

Installation view at *Family of Equivocations*,
Musée du Strasbourg and l'Aubette,
Strasbourg, France, 2013

Photo: Mathieu Bertola, Musées de la Ville
de Strasbourg

2.

Traces of Anonymous Pupil Authors

2001

16 black-and-white offset prints

Each 41.4 x 29.3 cm

Edition of 30

Courtesy of Galerie Wien Lukatsch, Berlin

Photo: Haegue Yang

Cutting Board Print



**Yellow
Ginger
#2**

2012



Cutting Board Print



Eggplant #3

2012



Cutting Board Print



Eggplant #4

2012



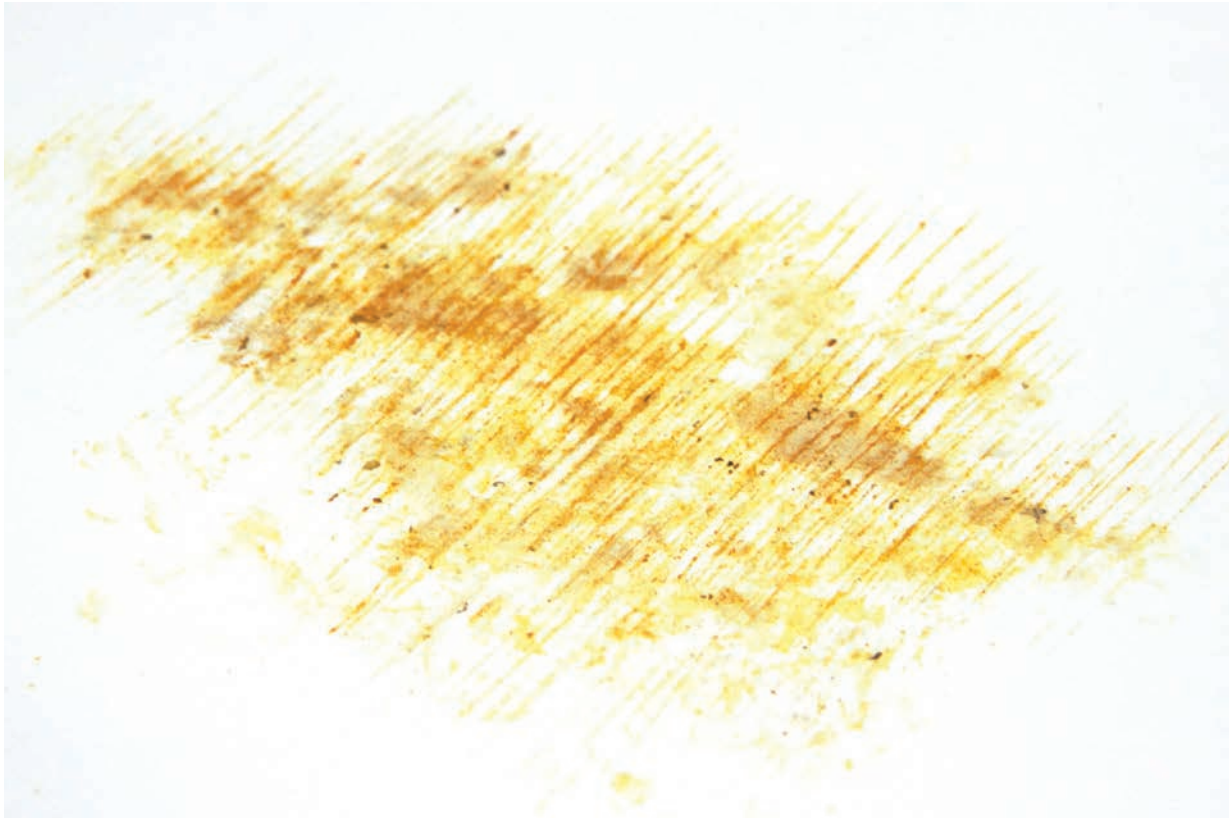
Cutting Board Print

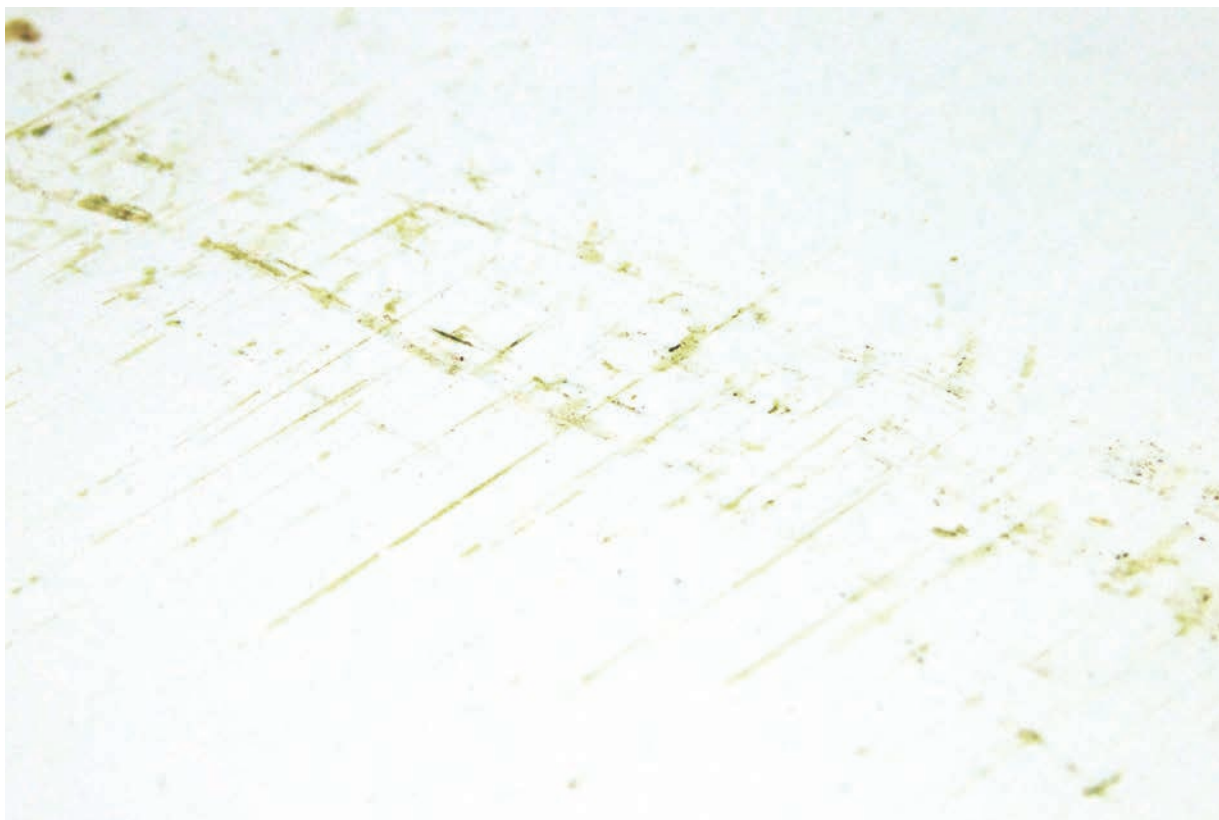


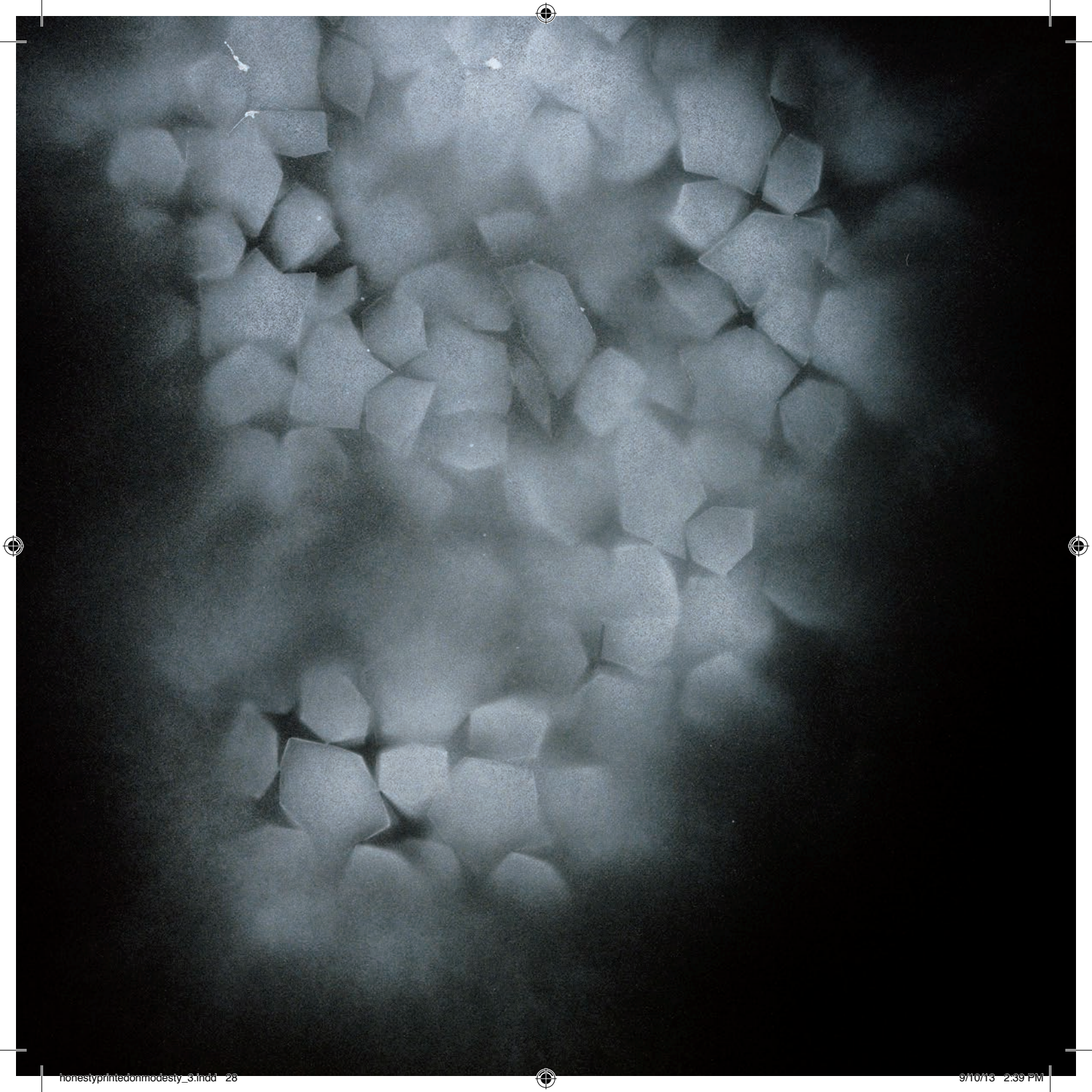
Marrow Squash

2012











**FROM
PRINTING AND
FLATTENING
POLYGONAL
OBJECTS TO
TRACING
THEIR
MOVEMENTS**

Non-Foldings

Yang's *Non-Foldings* (2012–13) is an ongoing series initiated in 2007. It began with origami objects that were created for a scene in her first video essay, *Unfolding Places* (2004). When the objects were prepared for filming, they were strewn across large, stretched-out rolls of paper and then spray-painted. To Yang's surprise, this process left an aesthetically pleasing result on the paper, an unpretentious composition of abstract shadows. She decided to exhibit the spray-painted paper (*Cove*, 2004) next to the video projection. The different intensities of the black spray paint on the paper convey a particular impression, that of a flattened volume, as if the objects were lost yet remain as ghostly shadows. In 2007 Yang returned to these shadow-printing experiments and again sprayed geometric objects with paint to expose their shadows. This time she closely focused on the process of flattening the volume of the origami object onto a surface. The manipulation of the shadow was more carefully and consciously thought out and was achieved by regulating the angle and the force of the spray paint so as to precisely expose various aspects. At different times the paint appears like clouds of smoke or explosions. The delicately nuanced contours of the objects are captured and varied between white highlights on black paper and black shadows on white paper.

In 2013 the *Non-Foldings* series was further developed as *Geometric Tippings* (2013). This time the paths of origami objects in motion were recorded through controlled sprays of paint at different intensities. The result is a trail of the geometry of the object's base as exposed by the spray paint. This translation of motion coincided with Yang's research into movement, working primarily with sculptural pieces, in preparation for solo exhibitions at Kunsthaus Bregenz and Modern Art Oxford in 2011. "Honesty Printed on Modesty" includes works made with both static and moving origami objects in order to demonstrate the evolution of this project.



1.



2.

1.
Unfolding Places
2004
Single-channel video, color, sound, English,
18 mins., filmed in London and Seoul,
voice-over: Helen Cho
Ed. 5 / II A.P.
Courtesy of Galerie Wien Lukatsch, Berlin

2.
Cove
2004
Spray paint, paper
359 x 150 cm
Private collection, Maryland

Exhibition view of *Unfolding Places*,
Galerie Barbara Wien,
Berlin, Germany, 2004

**Non-
Foldings**

—

**Cosmic
Explosion
#5**

2012



**Non-
Foldings**

—

**Cosmic
Explosion
#7**

2012



**Non-
Folding**
—
**Cosmic
Explosion**
#9

2012



**Non-
Folding**
—
**Dragged
Geometry**
#1

2012

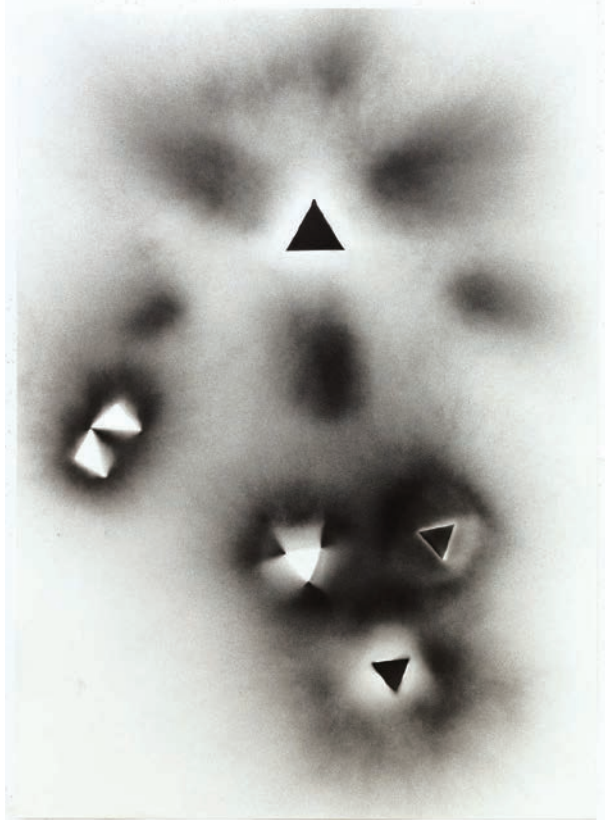
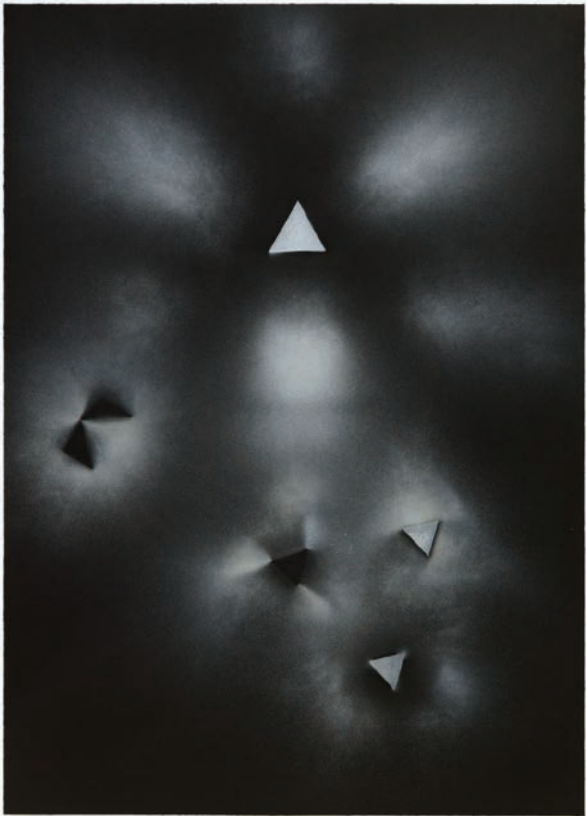


**Non-
Foldings**

—

**Cosmic
Explosion
#2**

2012

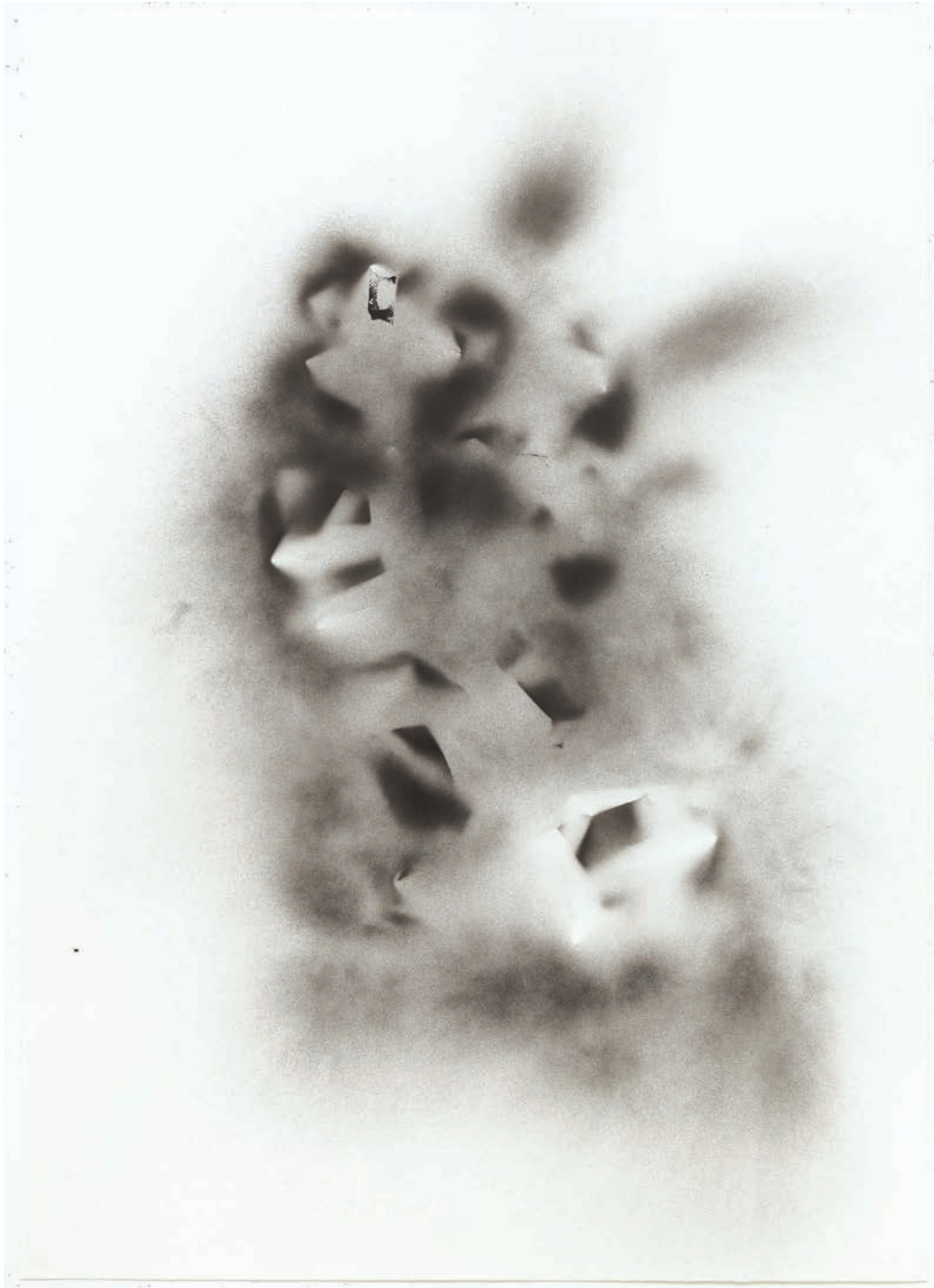


**Non-
Folding**

—

**Dismantled
Geometry**

2012



**Non-
Folding**

—

**Geometric
Tipping
#38**

2013



**Non-
Folding**

—

**Geometric
Tipping
#39**

2013

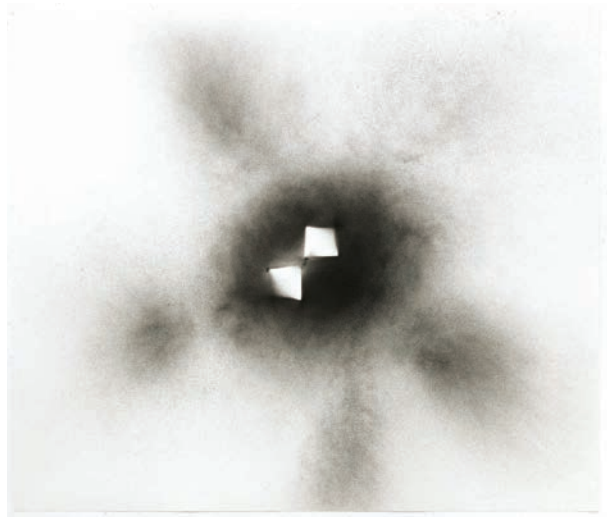
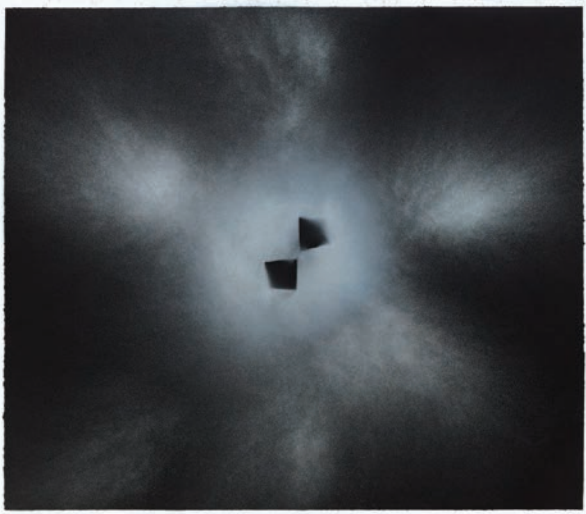


**Non-
Foldings**

—

**Cosmic
Explosion
#8**

2013

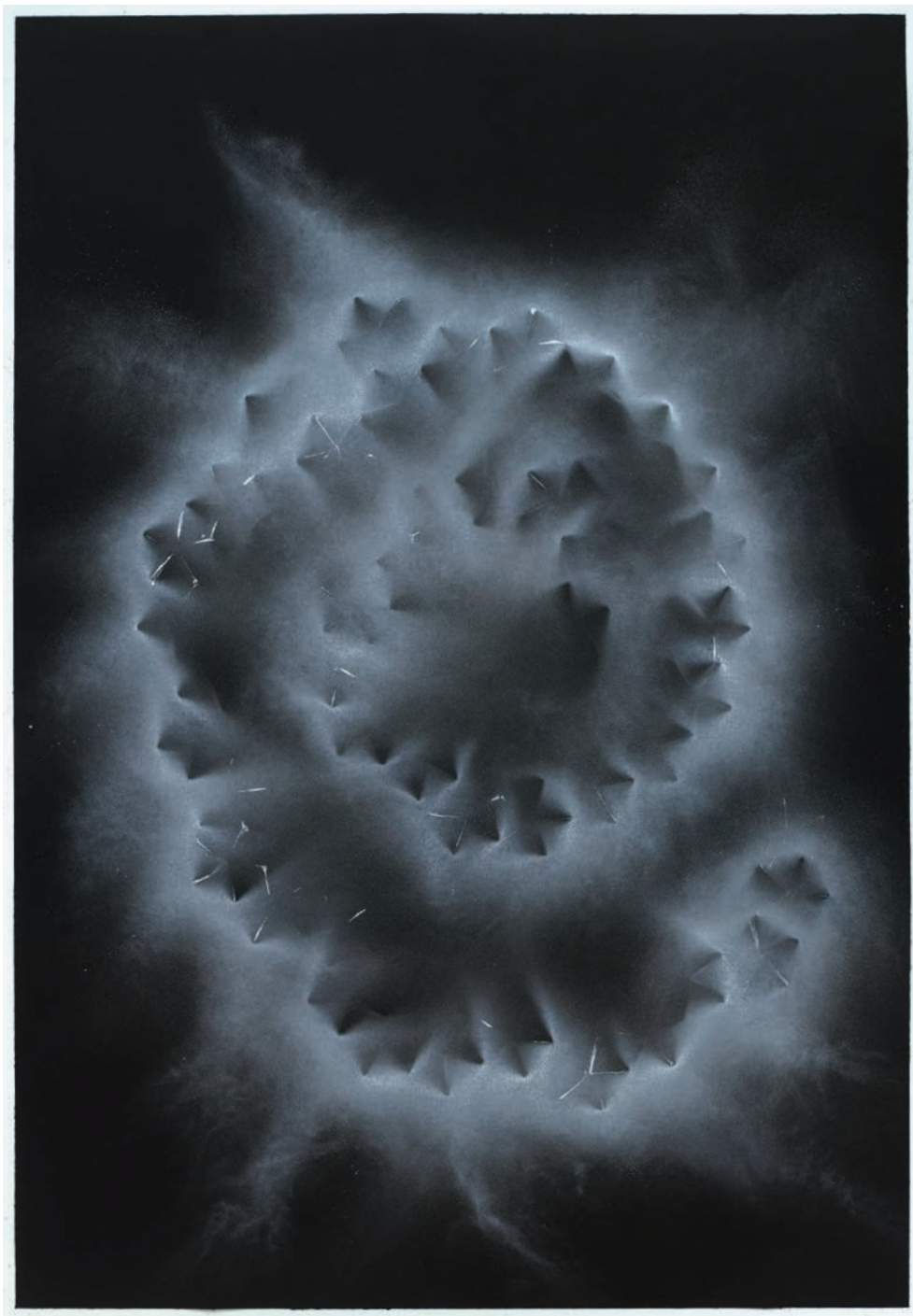


**Non-
Folding**

—

**Geometric
Tipping
#41**

2013

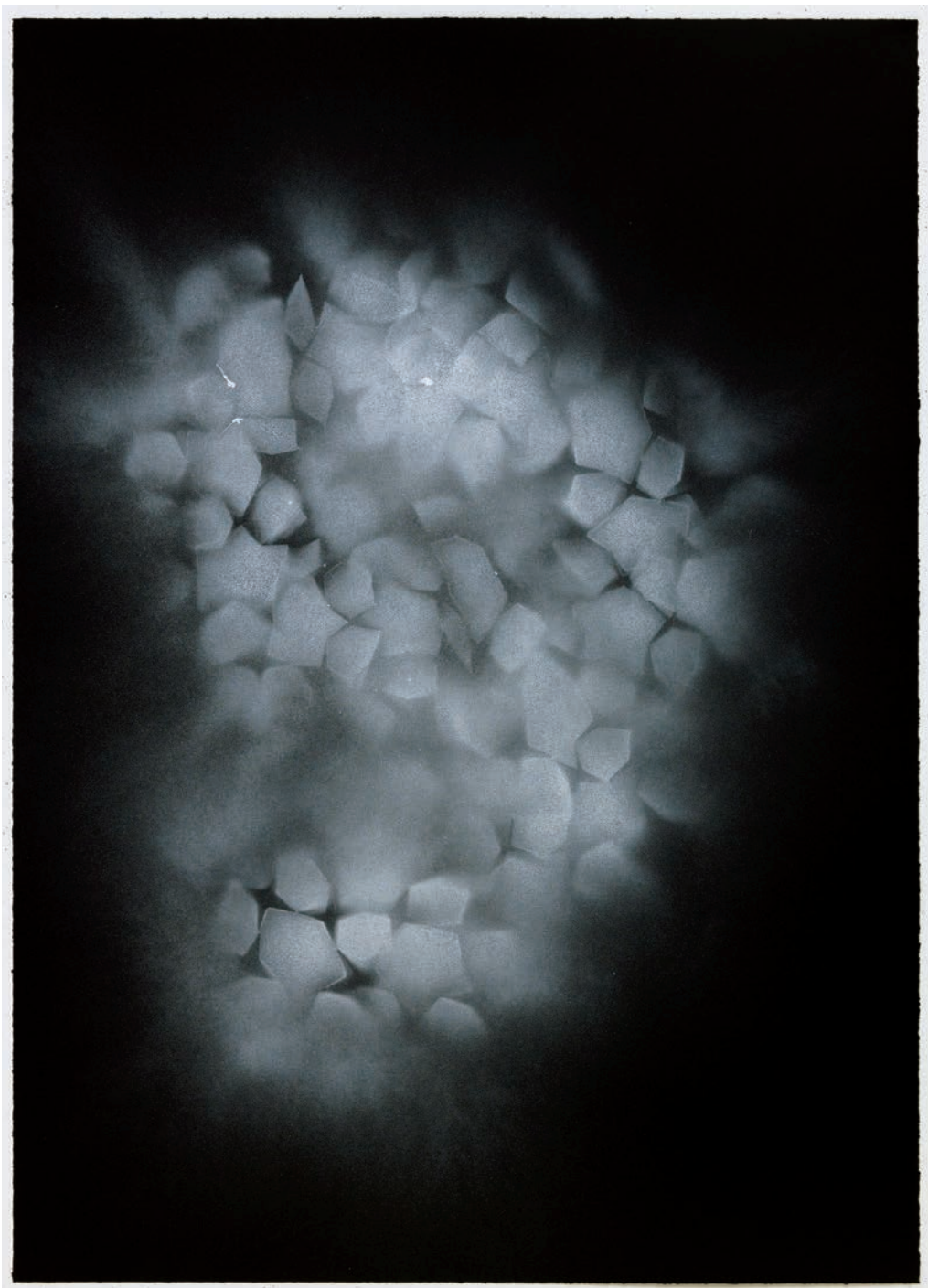


**Non-
Folding**

—

**Surrounded
Geometry**

2012



**Non-
Folding**

—

**Geometric
Tipping
#43**

2013



**Non-
Folding**

—

**Geometric
Tipping
#44**

2013



**Non-
Folding**

—

**Scenarios
of
Non-
Geometric
Folding
#3**

2013

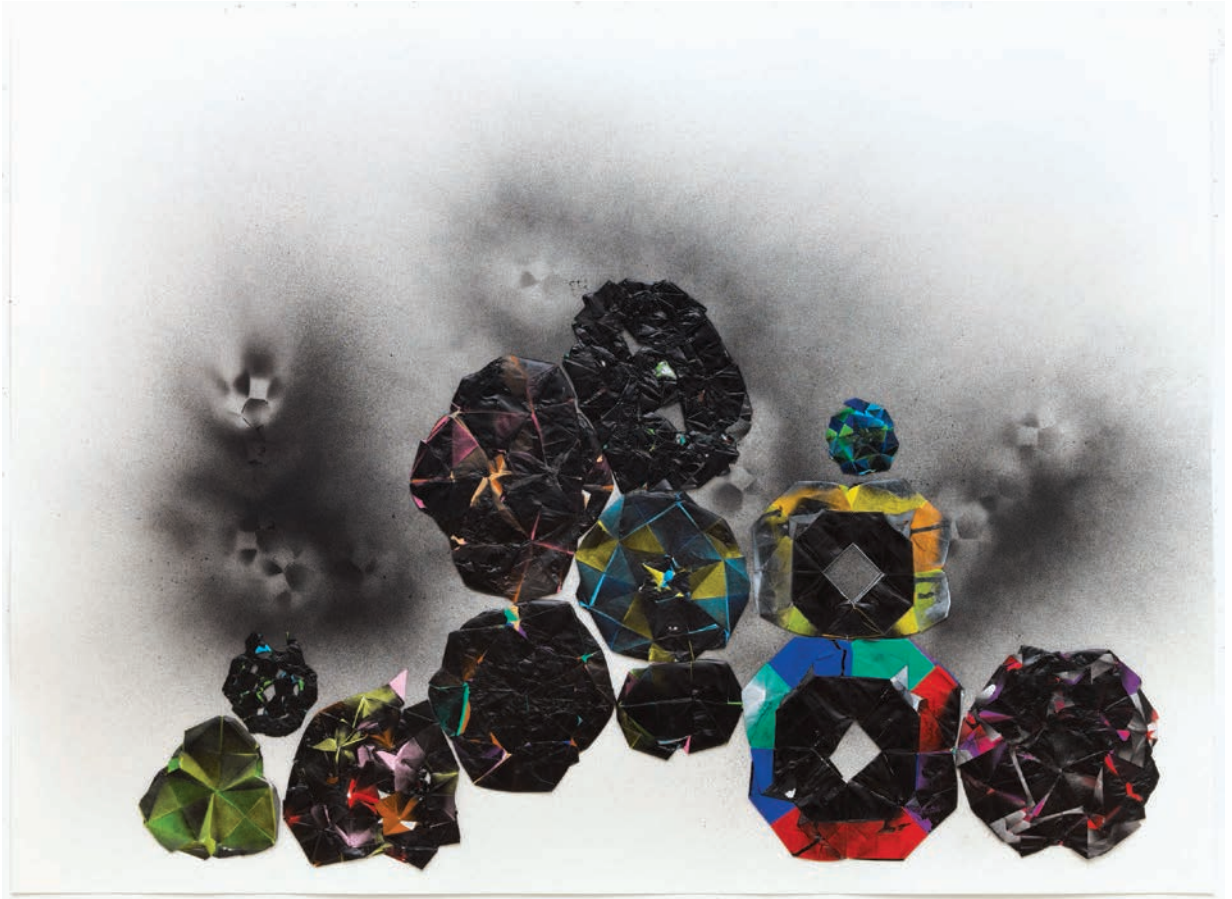


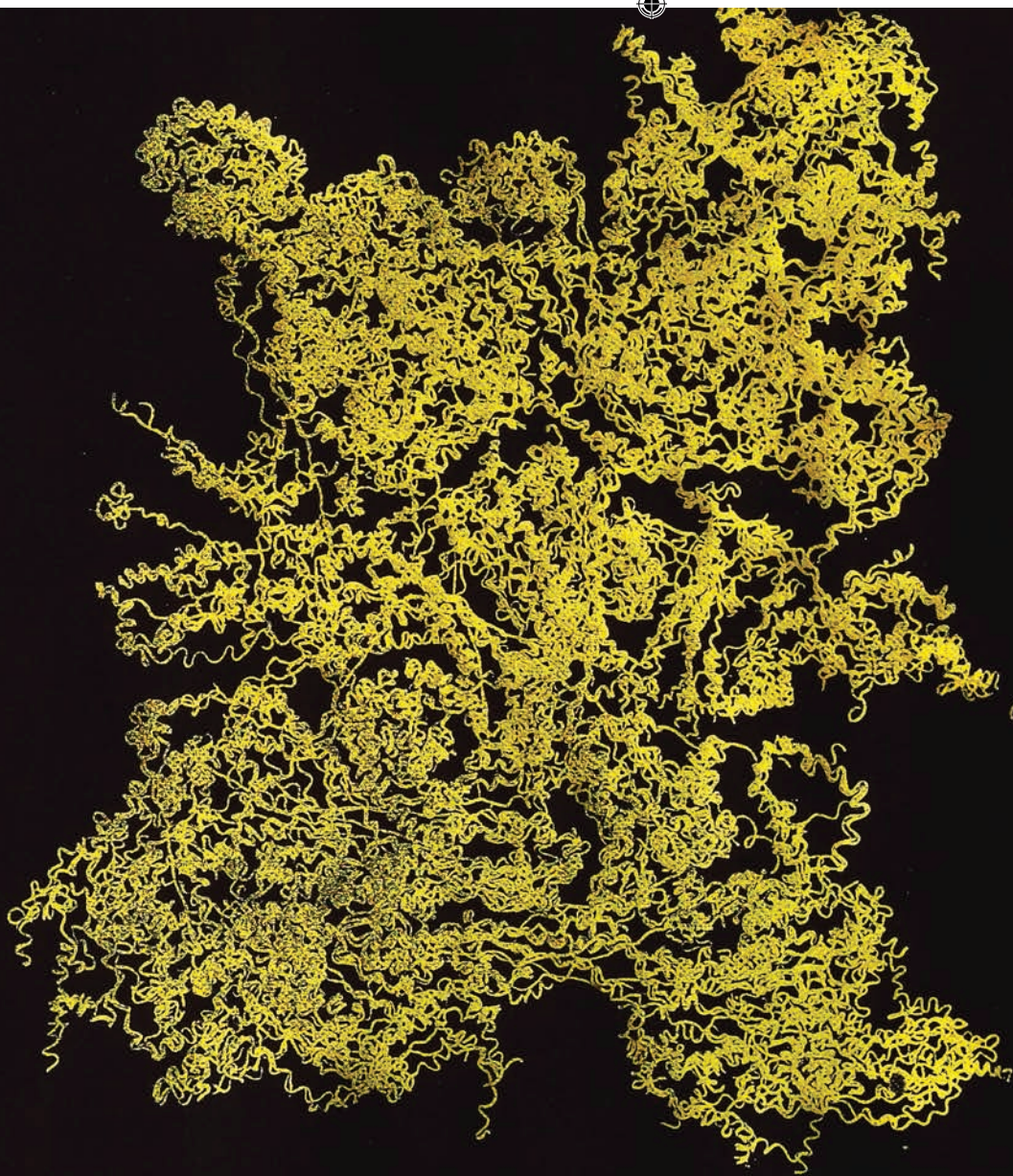
**Non-
Folding**

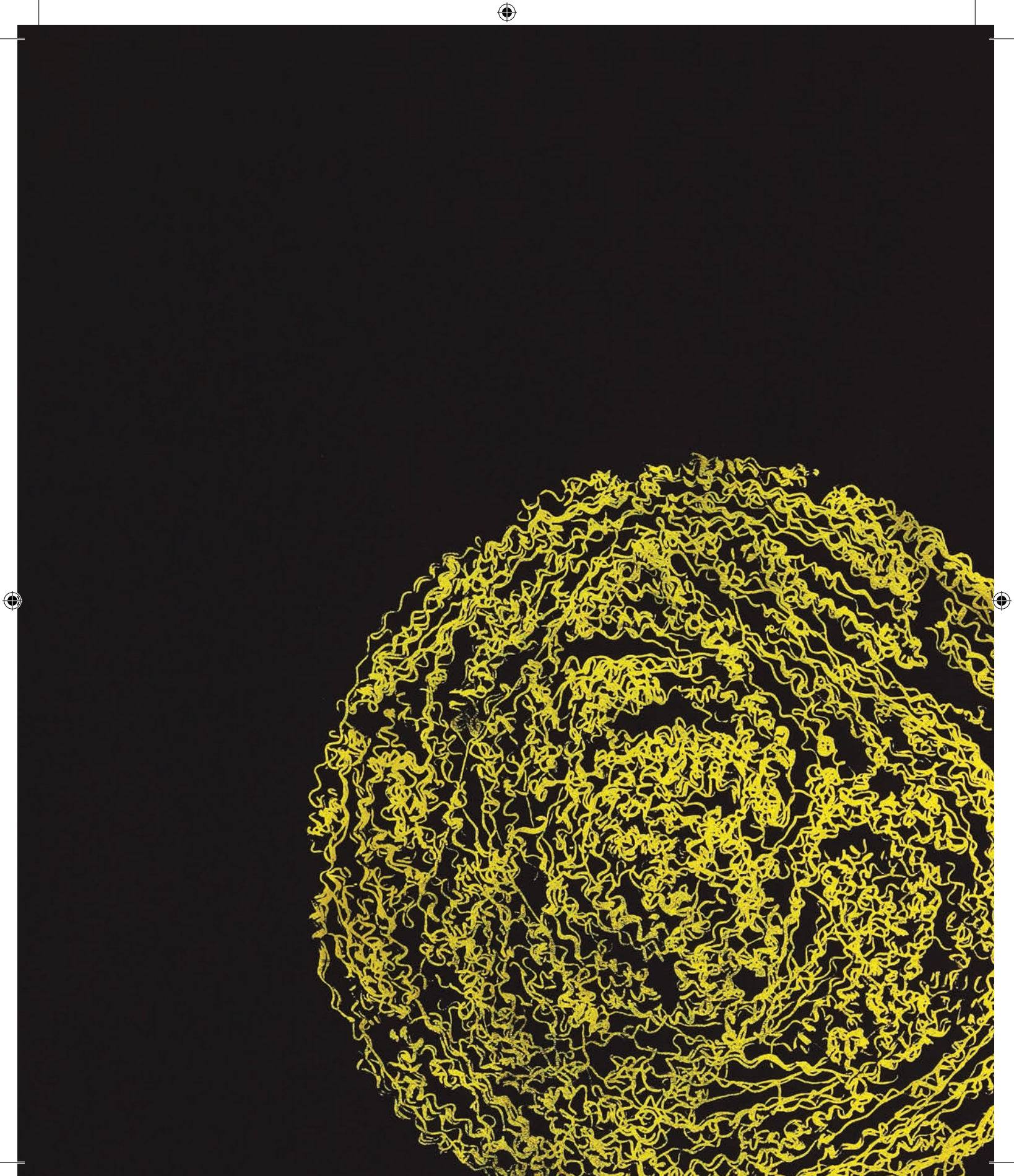
—

**Scenarios
of
Non-
Geometric
Folding
#4**

2013







FETISHIZING
Golden Singulars
MODESTY

As its title suggests, *Golden Singulars* (2013) remains a unique series among the projects generated from the STPI residency, even if some of its materials—such as okra, instant noodles, eggplant, and shanghai greens—appear in other works. But here each type of food was blown up to greater than its actual size.

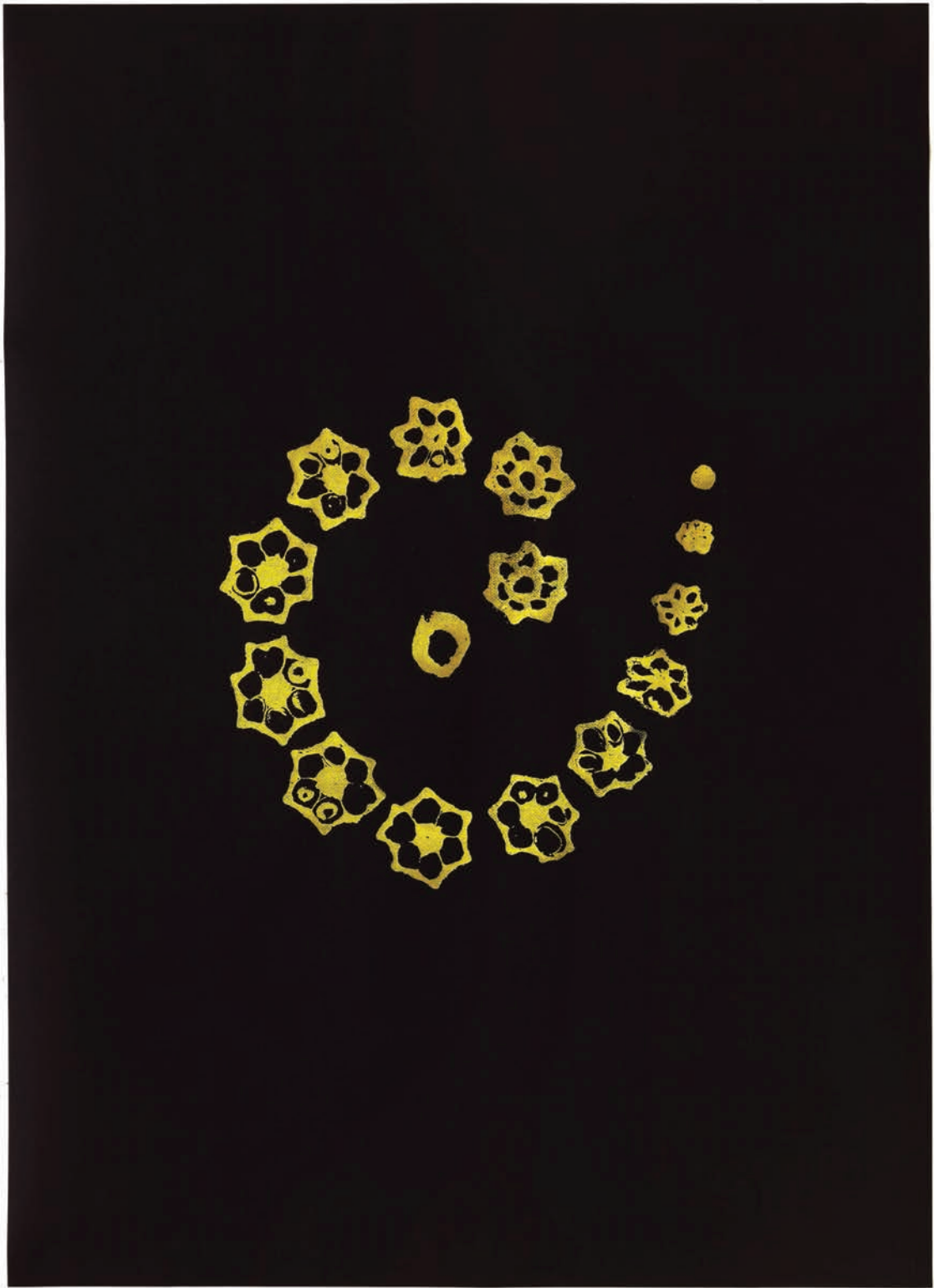
The enlarged screen-printed vegetable slices were heat-pressed onto black paper, leaving a stamped relief in gold. The delicate, glittering color tones emerge like glamorous ghosts, hovering on the surface and imparting a mystical and significant quality to these images of ordinary vegetables. The centralized compositions and the use of gold against a strong, light-absorbing black invokes both Japanese aesthetics and the work of the American installation and performance artist James Lee Byars (1932–1997), who lived in Kyoto from 1958 to 1968. Yang's interest in eccentric and exotic qualities often resonates with her interest in certain historical figures and their biographies, which may not be obvious but is nevertheless an aspect of the work.

**Golden
Singular**

—

**Okra
Spiral**

2013

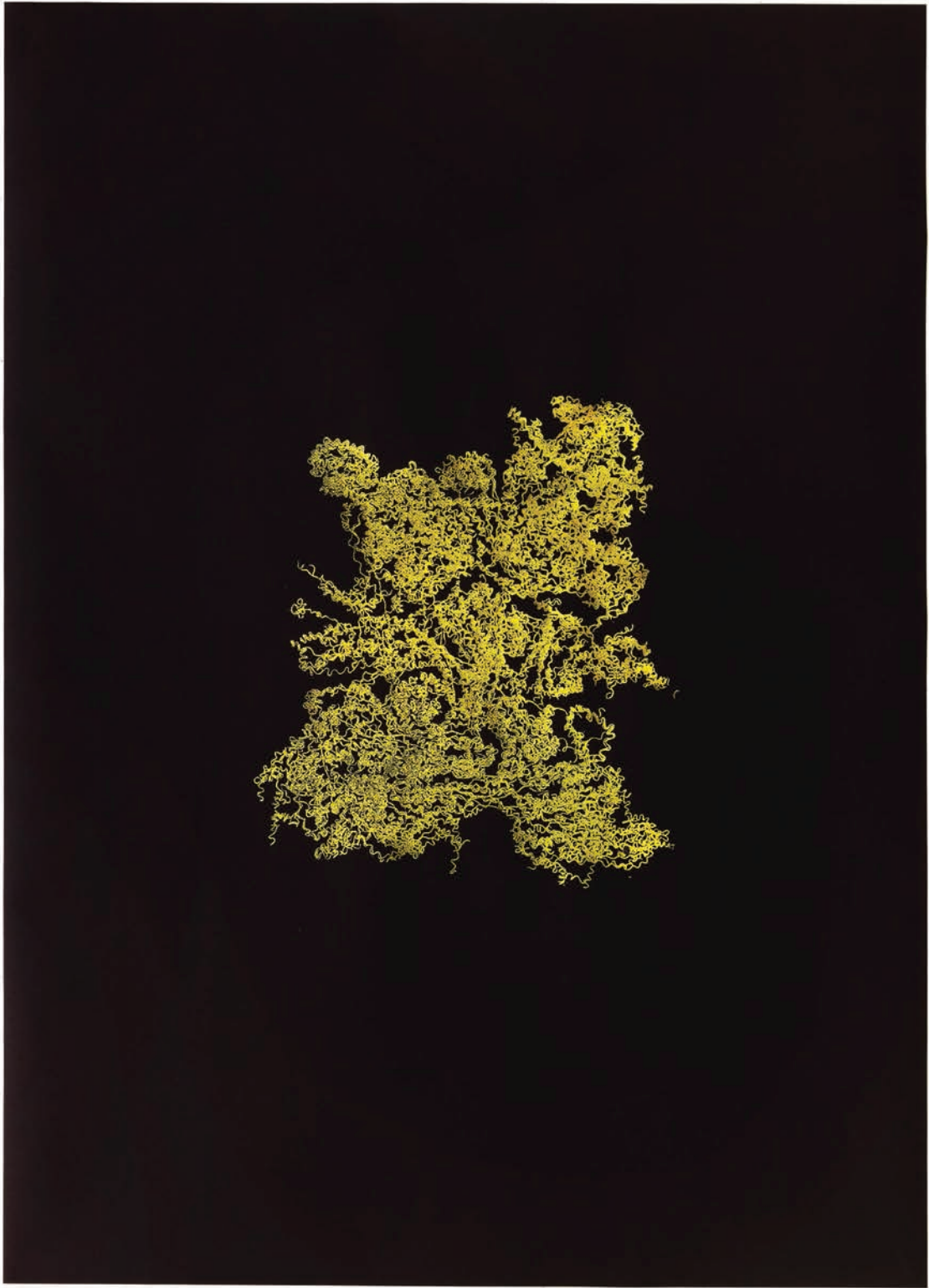


**Golden
Singular**



**Instant
Noodle
Natural**

2013



**Golden
Singular**



**Eggplant
Divided**

2013



**Golden
Singular**

—

**Shanghai
Green
Divided**

2013

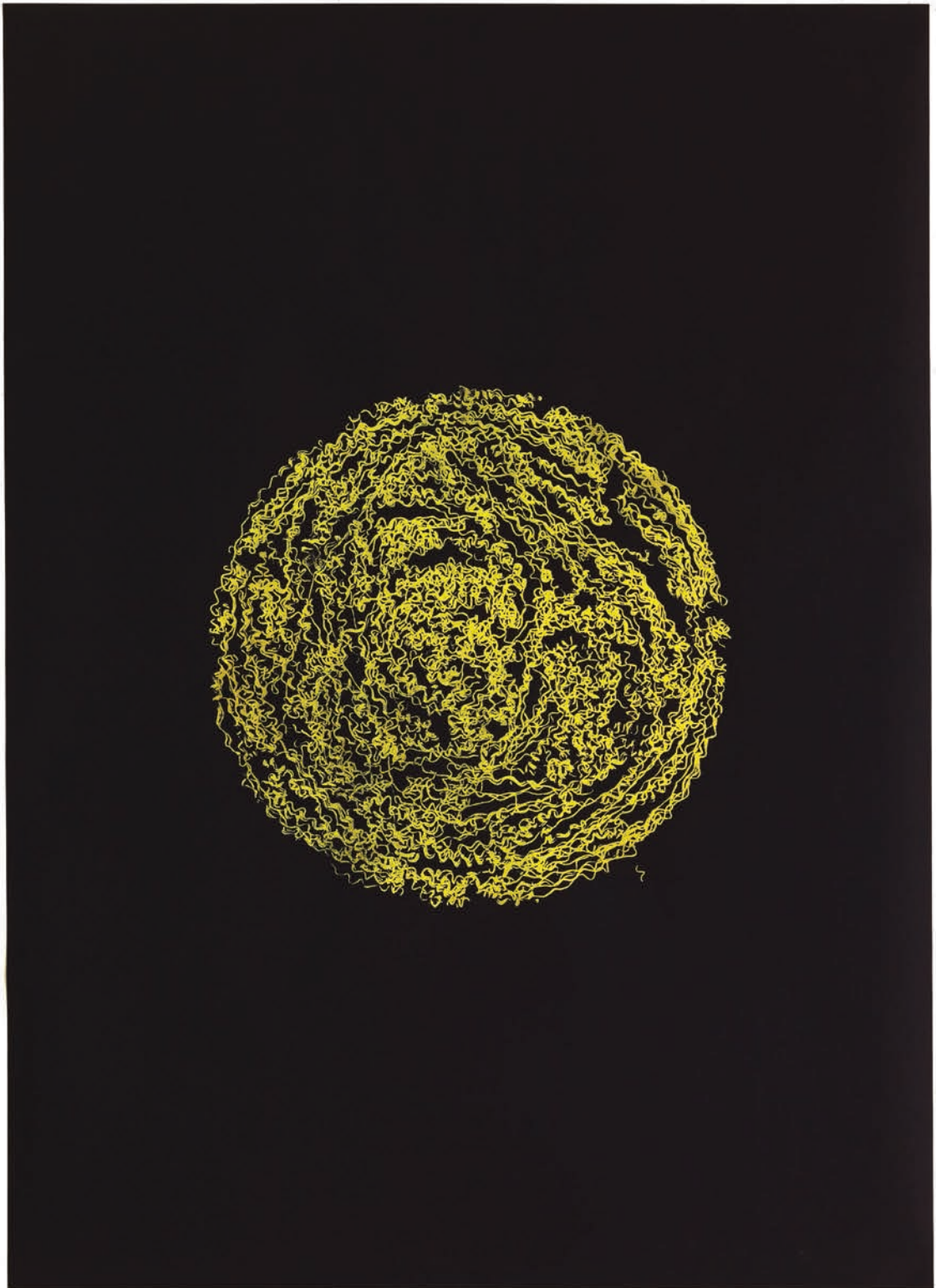


**Golden
Singular**



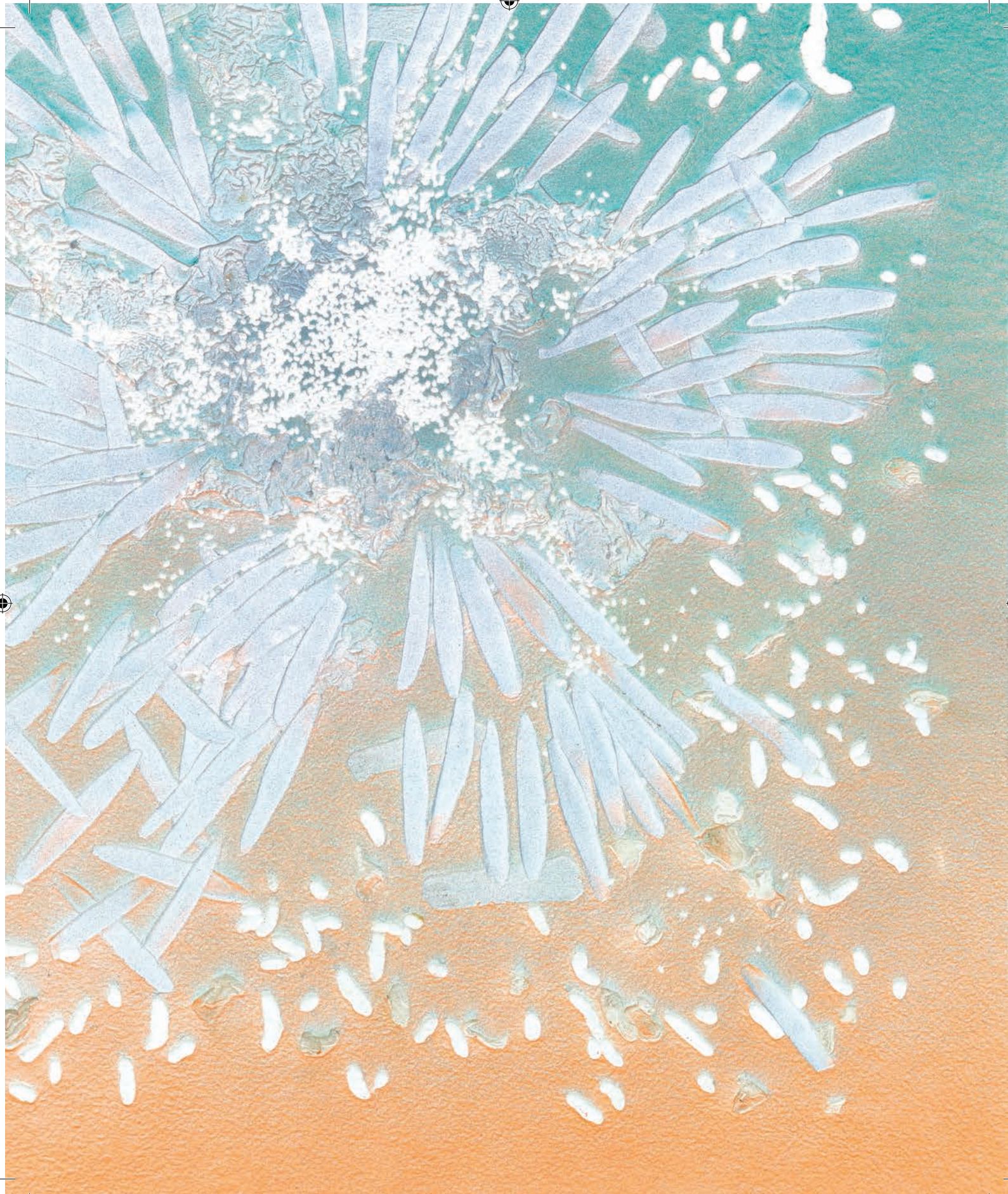
**Planet
Instant
Noodle**

2013











Tectonic
SYNTHESIS
Multicolored
Blowings

The last phase of production at STPI could be summarized as a combination of techniques that Yang had experimented with and the varied vocabularies of printing, which included employing dried materials to make a distinctive embossed and colored surface.

Embossed rice grains, various dried spices, Chinese medicine plants, and dried vegetables were freely yet carefully composed and pressed into the wet and soft fiber of the paper. This resulted in an embossed surface that forms an abstract landscape, termed “craters and dunes” by Yang. The artist was clearly focusing on the organic shapes and forms printed by the materials. This “stained” and “shaped” surface was gently sprayed with water-based cel-vinyl ink in gradations that the “craters and dunes” partially covered and partially revealed, so that the visual effect of the uneven surface was enhanced. Each color was sprayed from a different angle, which maximized the distinctive “shaped” surface, and then the dried materials were removed step by step so that the remaining material, mostly rice kernels, formed pure white dots.

These mundane household materials were acknowledged and transformed into an abstract and unfamiliar world in this phase of the production.

Color- Blown Craters and Dunes #1

2012



**Color-
Blown
Craters
and
Dunes
#4**

2012



Color- Blown Craters and Dunes #2

2012



**Color-
Blown
Craters
and
Dunes
#3**

2012



Color- Blown Craters and Dunes #5

2012



Color- Blown Craters and Dunes #6

2012



**Color-
Blown
Craters
and
Dunes
#7**

2012



Color- Blown Craters and Dunes #12

2012



**Color-
Blown
Craters
and
Dunes
#8**

2012



Color- Blown Craters and Dunes #9

2012



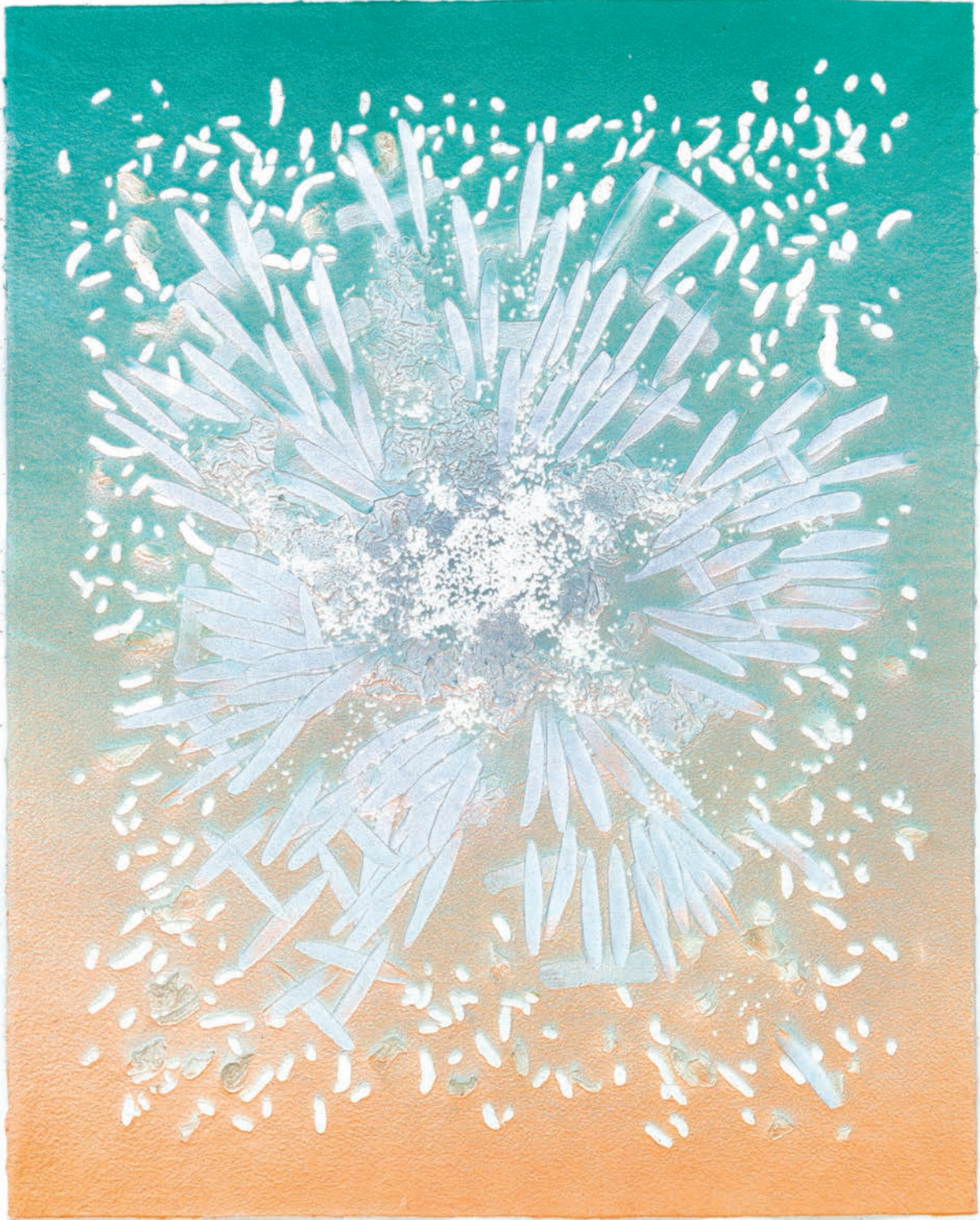
Color- Blown Craters and Dunes #13

2012



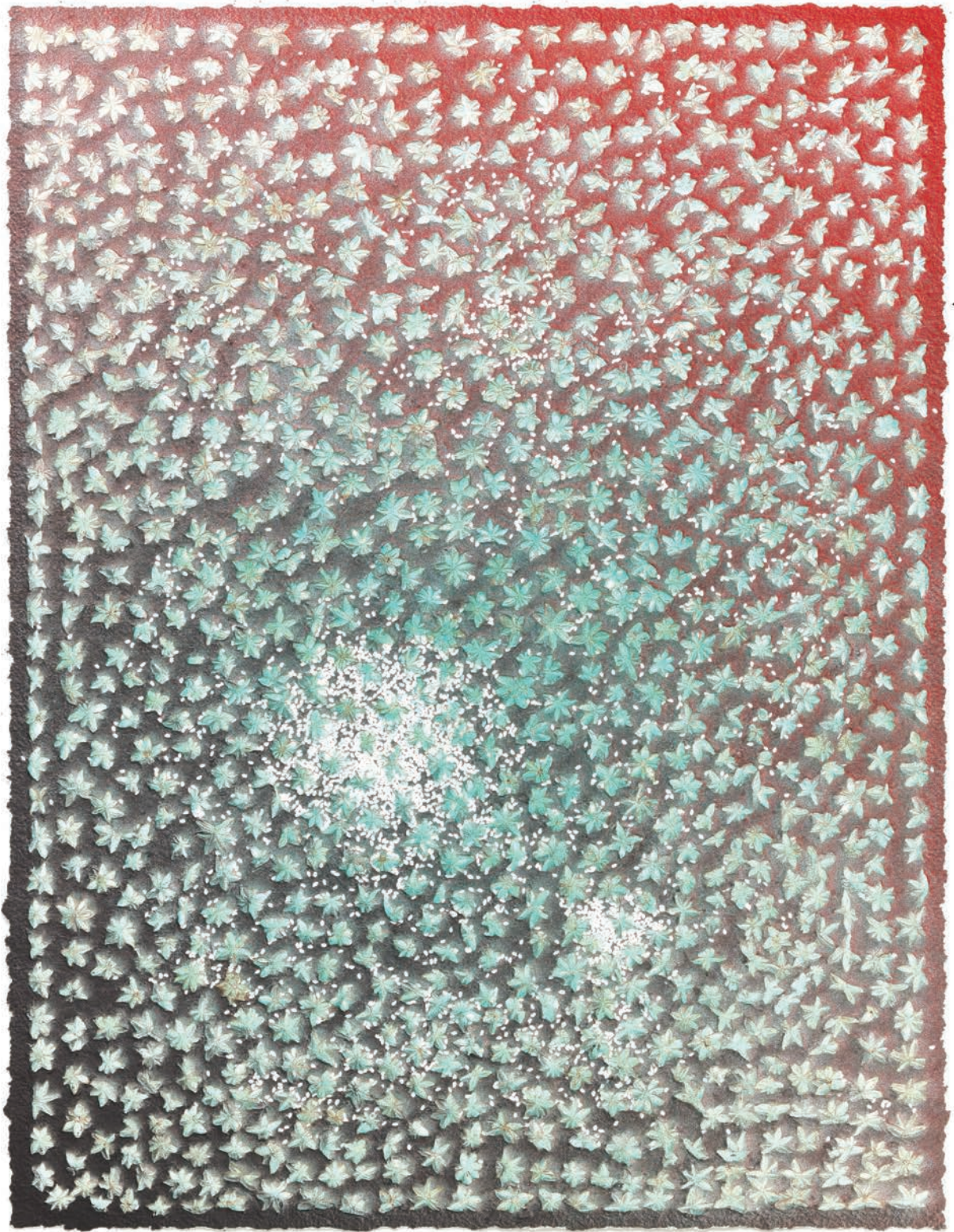
**Color-
Blown
Craters
and
Dunes
#15**

2012



Color- Blown Craters and Dunes #16

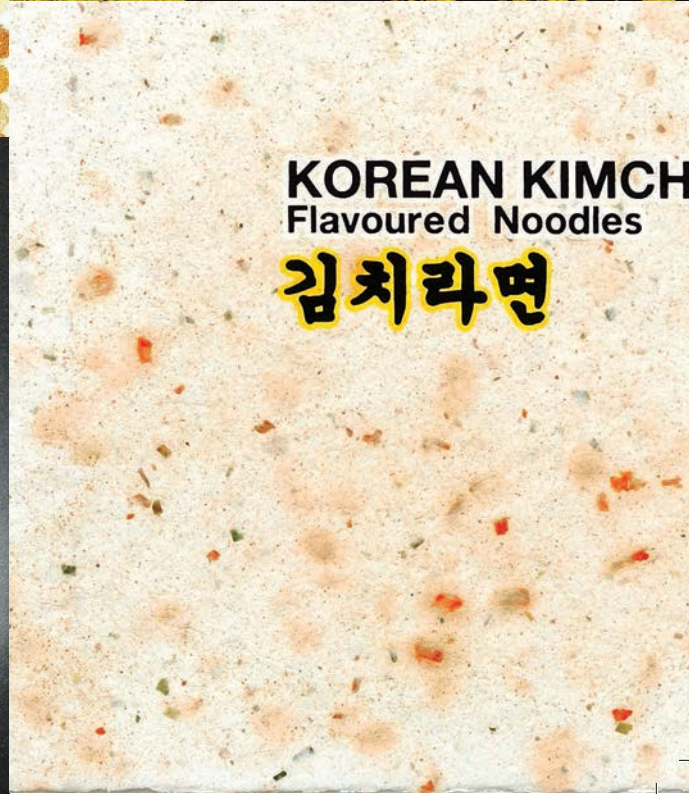
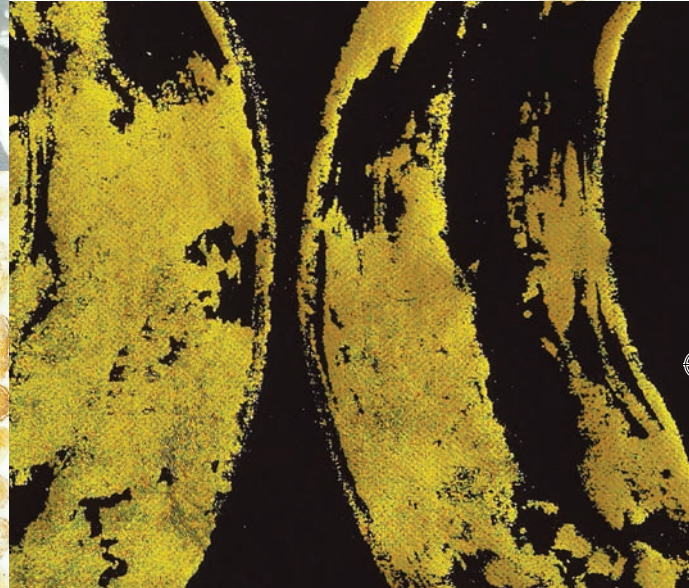
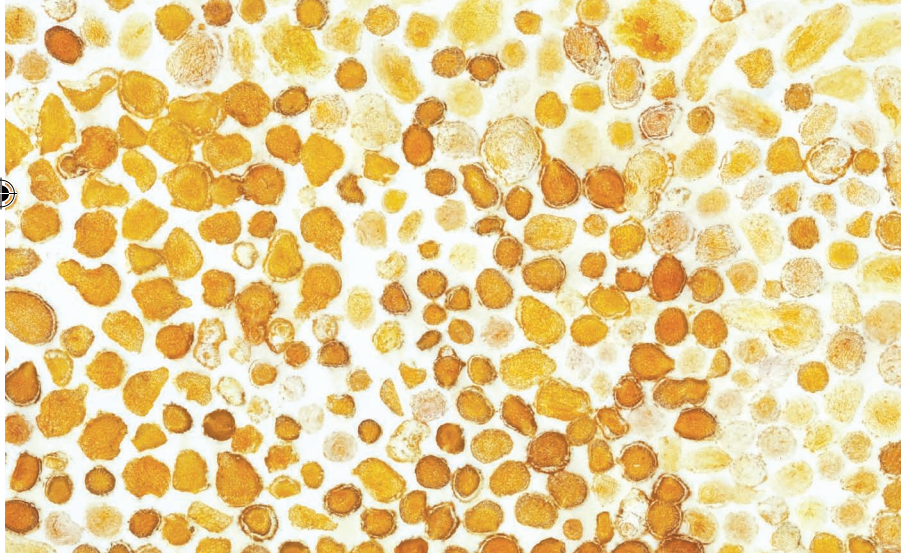
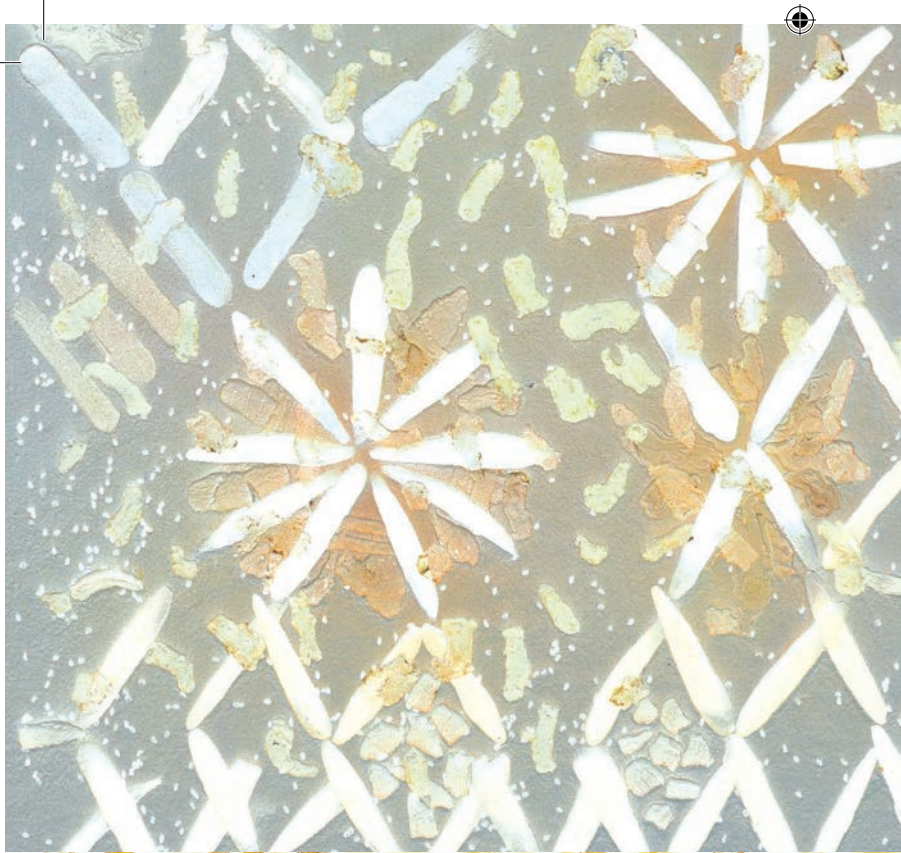
2012



Color- Blown Craters and Dunes #17

2012





KOREAN KIMCH
Flavoured Noodles
김치라면

List of Artworks

(in alphabetical order)

Color-Blown Craters and Dunes #1, 2012

Stencil, embossing, STPI handmade paper, natural dye, cel-vinyl ink, framed
167 x 132 cm
Pg 187

Color-Blown Craters and Dunes #2, 2012

Stencil, embossing, STPI handmade paper, natural dye, cel-vinyl ink, framed
166 x 132 cm
Pg 191

Color-Blown Craters and Dunes #3, 2012

Stencil, embossing, STPI handmade paper, natural dye, cel-vinyl ink, framed
127 x 102 cm
Pg 193

Color-Blown Craters and Dunes #4, 2012

Stencil, embossing, STPI handmade paper, natural dye, cel-vinyl ink, framed
128 x 101 cm
Pg 189

Color-Blown Craters and Dunes #5, 2012

Stencil, embossing, STPI handmade paper, natural dye, cel-vinyl ink, framed
127 x 102 cm
Pg 195

Color-Blown Craters and Dunes #6, 2012

Stencil, embossing, STPI handmade paper, natural dye, cel-vinyl ink, framed
127 x 102 cm
Pg 197

Color-Blown Craters and Dunes #7, 2012

Stencil, embossing, STPI handmade paper, natural dye, cel-vinyl ink, framed
127 x 102 cm
Pg 199

Color-Blown Craters and Dunes #8, 2012

Stencil, embossing, STPI handmade paper, natural dye, cel-vinyl ink, framed
127 x 102 cm
Pg 203

Color-Blown Craters and Dunes #9, 2012

Stencil, embossing, STPI handmade paper, natural dye, cel-vinyl ink, framed
102 x 126 cm
Pg 205

Color-Blown Craters and Dunes #12, 2012

Stencil, embossing, STPI handmade paper, natural dye, cel-vinyl ink, framed
65 x 51 cm
Pg 201

Color-Blown Craters and Dunes #13, 2012

Stencil, embossing, STPI handmade paper, natural dye, cel-vinyl ink, framed
128 x 102 cm
Pg 207

Color-Blown Craters and Dunes #15, 2012

Stencil, embossing, STPI handmade paper, natural dye, cel-vinyl ink, framed
126 x 102 cm
Pg 209

Color-Blown Craters and Dunes #16, 2012

Stencil, embossing, STPI handmade paper, natural dye, cel-vinyl ink, framed
110 x 84 cm
Pg 211

Color-Blown Craters and Dunes #17, 2012

Stencil, embossing, STPI handmade paper, natural dye, cel-vinyl ink, framed
126 x 102 cm
Pg 213

Cutting Board Print – Eggplant #3, 2012

Natural dye, 100% cotton paper, framed
24 x 37 cm
Pg 125

Cutting Board Print – Eggplant #4, 2012

Natural dye, 100% cotton paper, framed
24 x 37 cm
Pg 127

Cutting Board Print – Marrow Squash, 2012

Natural dye, 100% cotton paper, framed
24 x 37 cm
Pg 129

Cutting Board Print – Yellow Ginger #2, 2012

Natural dye, 100% cotton paper, framed
23 x 30 cm
Pg 123

Golden Singular – Eggplant Divided, 2013

Screen print, black paper, metal foil, framed
125 x 90 cm
Pg 175

Golden Singular – Instant Noodle Natural, 2013

Screen print, black paper, metal foil, framed
125 x 90 cm
Pg 173

Golden Singular – Okra Spiral, 2013

Screen print, black paper, metal foil, framed
125 x 90 cm
Pg 171

Golden Singular – Planet Instant Noodle, 2013

Screen print, black paper, metal foil, framed
125 x 90 cm
Pg 179

Golden Singular – Shanghai Green Divided, 2013

Screen print, black paper, metal foil, framed
125 x 90 cm
Pg 177

Herb Print #2, 2012

Embossing, natural dye, STPI handmade paper, honeysuckle flower, framed
132 x 168 cm
Pg 97

Long life, 2012

Embossing, natural dye, STPI handmade paper, honeysuckle flower, framed
46 x 32 cm
Pg 103

Non-Folding – Dismantled Geometry, 2012

Stencil, white paper, spray paint, framed
123 x 88 cm
Pg 147

Non-Folding – Dragged Geometry #1, 2012

Stencil, white paper, spray paint, framed
123 x 88 cm
Pg 143

Non-Folding – Geometric Tipping #38, 2013

Stencil, white paper, spray paint, framed
178 x 123 cm
Pg 149

Non-Folding – Geometric Tipping #39, 2013

Stencil, white paper, spray paint, framed
178 x 123 cm
Pg 151

Non-Folding – Geometric Tipping #41, 2013

Stencil, black paper, spray paint, framed
178 x 123 cm
Pg 155

Non-Folding – Geometric Tipping #43, 2013

Stencil, white paper, spray paint, framed
123 x 88 cm
Pg 159

Non-Folding – Geometric Tipping #44, 2013

Stencil, white paper, spray paint, framed
123 x 88 cm
Pg 161

Non-Folding – Scenarios of Non-Geometric Folding #3, 2013

Collage, folded origami paper, STPI handmade paper, archival PVA glue, spray paint, framed
80 x 80 cm
Pg 163

Non-Folding – Scenarios of Non-Geometric Folding #4, 2013

Collage, folded origami paper, white paper, archival PVA glue, spray paint, framed
90 x 123 cm
Pg 165

Non-Foldings – Cosmic Explosion #2, 2012

Stencil, black and white paper, spray paint, framed
2 pieces, each 123 x 88 cm
Pg 145

Non-Foldings – Cosmic Explosion #5, 2012

Stencil, black and white paper, spray paint, framed
2 pieces, each 123 x 87 cm
Pg 137

Non-Foldings – Cosmic Explosion #7, 2012

Stencil, black and white paper, spray paint, framed
2 pieces, each 123 x 87 cm
Pg 139

Non-Foldings – Cosmic Explosion #8, 2012

Stencil, black and white paper, spray paint, framed
2 pieces, each 88 x 101 cm
Pg 153

Non-Folding – Cosmic Explosion #9, 2012

Stencil, white paper, spray paint, framed
123 x 88 cm
Pg 141

Non-Folding – Surrounded Geometry, 2012

Stencil, black paper, spray paint, framed
123 x 88 cm
Pg 157

Seasoning Papers, 2013

Screen prints, STPI handmade seasoning paper, 5 powder seasonings, framed
5 pieces, each 41 x 41 cm
Pg 57–61

* Ingredients used: chicken curry flavor, Korean kimchi flavor, tom yam flavor, prawn noodle flavor, char mee flavor.

Spice Moons, 2013

Screen prints, sandpaper, spices, herbs*, framed
160 pieces, each 28 x 23 cm
Pg 63–65

* Ingredients used: ginger powder, chili powder, cumin powder, garam masala, ganthoda powder, coriander jeera powder, mustard powder, cardamom powder, white chili powder, clove powder, black pepper powder, white pepper powder, turmeric powder, star anise powder, cinnamon powder, nigella powder, root of tuber fleeceflower, da huan, licorice root powder, mo yao.

Spice Print – Anise Spiral Natural, 2012

Embossing, natural dye, STPI handmade paper, star anise, framed
165 x 132 cm
Pg 101

Spice Print – Anise Star Natural, 2012

Embossing, natural dye, STPI handmade paper, star anise, framed
168 x 132 cm
Pg 99

Spice Sheets, 2012

Spice screen prints, STPI handmade spice paper, 20 various spices and herbs*, framed
20 pieces, each 41 x 41 cm
Pg 49–53

* Ingredients used: ginger powder, chili powder, dhania powder, garam masala, ganthoda powder, dhania jeera powder, mustard powder, cardamom powder, white chili powder, clove powder, black pepper powder, white pepper powder, turmeric powder, star anise powder, cinnamon powder, huang qin, root of tuber fleeceflower, da huan, licorice root powder, mo yao.

Triptych Moon – Coffee, Tea and Cacao, 2013

Screen prints, sandpaper, coffee, tea, cacao, framed
3 pieces, each 28 x 23 cm
Pg 67

Vegetable Prints – Eggplant Natural Décalcomanie #1, 2012

Left: Natural dye, 100% cotton paper, eggplant, framed
83 x 70 cm
Right: Embossing, natural dye, STPI handmade paper, eggplant, framed
83 x 70 cm
Pg 109

Vegetable Prints – Lotus Décalcomanie, 2012

Left: Natural dye, 100% cotton paper, lotus root, framed
82 x 70 cm
Center: Natural dye, embossing, STPI handmade paper, lotus root, framed
83 x 70 cm
Right: Relief print, embossing, STPI handmade paper, lotus root, framed
83 x 70 cm
Pg 111–113

Vegetable Prints – Marrow Squash Décalcomanie, 2012

Left: Natural dye, 100% cotton paper, marrow squash, framed
84 x 70 cm
Right: Embossing, natural dye, STPI handmade paper, marrow squash, framed
84 x 70 cm
Pg 115

Vegetable Prints – Shanghai Green #2, 2012

Relief prints, 100% cotton paper, water-based ink, shanghai greens, framed
10 pieces, each 35 x 35 cm
Pg 79–85

Vegetable Prints – Violet Eggplant #1, 2012

Relief prints, 100% cotton paper, water-based ink, eggplant, framed
12 pieces, each 35 x 35 cm
Pg 87–94

Vegetable Prints – Yellow Ginger Natural Décalcomanie #3, 2012

Left: Natural dye, 100% cotton paper, turmeric, framed
102 x 41 cm
Right: Embossing, natural dye, STPI handmade paper, turmeric, framed
102 x 41 cm
Pg 117

Biography

Haegue Yang

Born 1971 in Seoul; lives and works in Berlin and Seoul

Haegue Yang’s interest in history and literature as well as political realities has shaped her abstract language of sculpture, installation, and video and her diverse performative works. Often working with domestic materials, she frequently combines industrially manufactured and organic materials with sensory effects such as light and scent. Her practice of challenging the classical perception of the visual arts through hidden narratives was developed during her ongoing research.

Yang’s work has been the subject of solo exhibitions at renowned institutions such as BAK—basis voor actuele Kunst, Utrecht, the Netherlands (2006); REDCAT, Los Angeles; Portikus, Frankfurt am Main (both 2008); Artsonje Center, Seoul; the New Museum, New York; the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (all 2010); Kunsthaus Bregenz, Bregenz, Austria; Modern Art Oxford, Oxford, UK; and the Aspen Art Museum, Aspen, USA (all 2011). Yang’s work has been shown extensively in biennales and notable group exhibitions. Among them are Manifesta 4 (2002) in Frankfurt am Main; the 27th São Paulo Bienal (2006); *If I Can’t Dance, I Don’t Want to Be Part of Your Revolution* (2006–7, traveling); *Wessen Geschichte* at the Kunstverein Hamburg (2008); the 55th Carnegie International in Pittsburgh (2008); and *Abstract Possible: The Stockholm Synergies* at the Tensta Konsthall in Stockholm (2012), to name but a few. Yang has participated in Documenta 13 in Kassel (2012), and she represented Korea at the 53rd Venice Biennale in 2009. Her most recent solo exhibitions this year include *Family of Equivocations*, Aubette 1928—Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Strasbourg, France, and *Der Öffentlichkeit*, Haus der Kunst, Munich.

She will also have solo exhibitions at Bergen Kunsthall in Norway, Glasgow Sculpture Studios in Scotland, and at the Henry Art Gallery in Seattle, this year.

Contributors

H. G. Masters is a writer and editor living in Istanbul. He is currently editor-at-large for ArtAsiaPacific magazine, after previously serving as managing editor. Since 2008 Masters has edited the *ArtAsiaPacific Almanac*, an annual review of contemporary art in sixty-seven countries, from Turkey to Tuvalu. In March 2013 he co-organized the Global Art Forum_7, *“It Means This,”* held in Doha at Mathaf: Museum of Arab Modern Art, and in Dubai at Art Dubai.

June Yap is an independent curator, previously deputy director and curator of the Institute of Contemporary Arts Singapore and curator at the Singapore Art Museum. Selected curatorial projects include *No Country: Contemporary Art for South and Southeast Asia* as part of the Guggenheim UBS MAP Global Art Initiative; *The Cloud of Unknowing* at the 54th Venice Biennale with artist Ho Tzu Nyen; the video program *You and I, We’ve Never Been So Far Apart: Works from Asia* for VideoZone5 for the Center for Contemporary Art in Tel Aviv, Israel; *The Future of Exhibition: It Feels Like I’ve Been Here Before* at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, Singapore; *Das Paradies ist anderswo | Paradise Is Elsewhere* at Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen (ifa), Stuttgart, Germany; and *Bound for Glory* with artist Wong Hoy Cheong at the National University of Singapore (NUS) Museum.

STPI Staff

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Established in 2002, Singapore Tyler Print Institute is a catalyst and advocate for new ideas and dialogues in contemporary art in print and paper. Offering exceptional printmaking and papermaking facilities and expertise, it collaborates with emerging and established artists from all over the world to create artworks. Together with STPI’s creative workshop team, STPI Gallery presents innovative exhibitions and programs to a broad audience, offering the opportunity to discover new works by contemporary artists in unique and engaging ways.

STPI

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Colophon

This catalogue is published on the occasion of the exhibition *Honesty Printed on Modesty* at the Singapore Tyler Print Institute, 24 October to 23 November 2013.

All artworks by Haegue Yang

All artworks © 2013 Haegue Yang/Singapore Tyler Print Institute

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Dimensions of works are given in centimeters and inches in the following order: height, width, depth.

Unless otherwise noted, all works are courtesy of the artist and STPI.

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Acknowledgments

STPI is pleased to have this unique opportunity to partner with Platform Singapore to bring dynamic collaborations to our audiences. The newly conceived PlatformSTPI Projects (PSP) aims to identify, engage, and challenge conceptually progressive artists with multidisciplinary practices to realize their creative ambitions through STPI’s Visiting Artists Program. Three artists who embody and represent the very zeitgeist of our moment will be carefully selected for this three-year initiative.

Born in Seoul and living and working in Berlin and Seoul, Haegue Yang is the first artist featured in PlatformSTPI Projects. As a leading artist of her generation, Haegue is no stranger to the international art scene, with notable participations in Documenta 13 in Kassel, Germany (2012), and the 53rd Venice Biennale (2009).

Recent solo shows include *Family of Equivocations* at Aubette 1928—Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Strasbourg, France (2013); *Der Öffentlichkeit*, Haus der Kunst, Munich, Germany (2012); and *Arrivals* at Kunsthau Bregenz, Bregenz, Austria (2011). This October marks yet another milestone for her, with solo exhibitions opening simultaneously in four different cities across the globe—Glasgow, Scotland; Bergen, Norway; Seattle, USA; and Singapore—an occurrence unprecedented in both scale and geography.

As home to this series of residencies, Singapore has become a creative focus for an exciting exchange of perspectives, cultures, and practices. At the same time, we must not forget that PlatformSTPI Projects is truly an endeavor with astounding international resonance.

Once again, STPI is privileged to have this partnership, and I am sincerely thankful to Haegue for accepting the invitation to collaborate with us despite her busy schedule. I would also like to acknowledge her studio for their logistical aid in the production of the catalogue. Lastly, I would like to thank my wonderful team—both the workshop and the gallery—for providing invaluable support to Haegue throughout this very special project.

Emi Eu
Director
Singapore Tyler Print Institute

Platform Note

Platform, in collaboration with STPI, is delighted to have initiated PSP (PlatformSTPI Projects), which invites one Asian artist each year for a residency in Singapore, enabling the participants to challenge their practices, hone their concepts, and rework their methodologies.

The first recipient of PSP, Haegue Yang, of Korean origin and currently living and working in Berlin and Seoul, allowed us unprecedented insight into her art making, which underscores her personal experience of contemporary nomadism and the constantly expanding scope of art by drawing elements from local food, popular culture, and fashion.

Yang’s works highlight the transcultural displacement that migration and nomadism establish. In multicultural Singapore, these shifts are experienced in the nostalgic moments of hearing, smelling, and viewing. Incorporating the colors, appearance, and smells of spices, among other materials, she touches on these layered memories, validating individual experience in this era of globalism.

Yang’s bold explorations, often involving the use and transformation of quotidian objects through the ritual of repetition, dismantle the tenuous boundaries between art and everyday experience. The acts of repetition and accumulation introduce the complex narrative embedded in cultural interactions and address the tension between individual and collective experience while underlining the ability of groups of people to cohere, unite, and integrate. Her extensive investigation of mediums reveals the critical dynamic embodied in hybridity and renders her work poetic.

In affording Platform patrons intimate access during her residency, Yang crystallized our goals in establishing PSP and revealed the rewards of intercultural communication. Platform through PSP is delighted to have facilitated her artistic trajectory.

Platform gratefully acknowledges the support of its patrons and board in making this project a reality. We are most appreciative of our collaboration with STPI and thank Emi Eu and the entire team at the workshop and the gallery for their invaluable guidance.

Savita Apte
Director
Platform, Singapore

About Platform

Platform Projects Ltd (“Platform”) is a non-profit organisation founded in 2011 by Savita Apte, Shareen Khattar and Christine Pillsbury. Platform is dedicated to supporting contemporary art and its awareness in Singapore. Through its various projects and collaborations, Platform aims to create a virtuous mutually reinforcing art ecosystem by supporting independent and internationally focused art projects and commissions that harness the interest and resources of new and existing collectors in Southeast Asia. As of May 2012, Platform was awarded IPC status, and is now a registered charity classified as an Institute of Public Character by the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth.

PLATFORM