

Noise Visions by Mihkel Kleis

Posted By *Helen Merila* On December 14, 2016 @ 6:43 pm In Review from Estonia | [No Comments](#)



Saturday, three o'clock in the afternoon. Arriving at the Temnikova & Kasela Gallery after a short walk by the central market in a cold rainy Tallinn seems misleadingly calming. The warmly smiling gallerist has also just arrived and opened the doors to the public. She welcomes me and a few other early guests by offering us Estonian apples, which taste so good, so familiar. And here the calming well-known reality is abruptly suspended.

The gallerist has turned on some loud experimental noise music as we dig into Mihkel Kleis' solo exhibition *Sotto Forte*. Mihkel Kleis (1977) is an internationally renowned Estonian artist, musician, composer and DJ, operating with elements of pop, dystopia and post-human realities. Since his first exhibition in 1998, his work has developed in a certain direction; his main interest seemingly remaining more or less the same; balancing between the intellect and the unreal, the recognisable and the unknown. Kleis has described his working method as jumping from one concept to another, disguising the traces, while making illustrations that can be seen as a puzzle without the right answer.^[1] ^[1]

With every exhibition, he is apparently diving more deeply into some other kind of psychedelic reality, far from everyday trivialities. The *Sotto Forte* graphic series in the Temnikova & Kasela Gallery rises above the ominous, featured, for example, in the exhibition *Guts n Roses* (2011), offering absent excerpts from the 'other side' that expose themselves indifferently, forcing us to accept their undeniable existence. The golden-silver exquisitely catered images with ambivalent titles such as *Energetic Crusher*, *Nosebleed*, *Drainage Vegetation*, *Saturated Sour Cream Channelling*, and so on, push the viewer with the invisible hand of dark noise music to a post-human dimension.

The silver-gold-black distorted graphic visions on white paper expose unreal stories that blow the mind. These mystical images reveal something that lies below the surface of the everyday pretty pink cover, carefully designed by the hedonistic consumer society.

The *Sotto Forte*, literally meaning light, offset lithography series of ten dystopic compositions still carry some hints of recognisable objects, but no matter how hard you try to find any inner logic inside these formations, you are ultimately forced to surrender to the far-reaching nothingness, yet linked to everything.

Kleis seems to know more than he reveals. These fragments of images from the other world are documents of his vision. In this universe, all beings eventually become one: hints of human and animal existence, Archaeopteryx creating the world, binary oppositions, tubes and lines, secret codes and even everyday trivialities melt into the void. This kind of chaotic restlessness could also represent everything that is beyond our knowledge, basically the end of our existence. Kleis playfully cancels all the borders and world order that the ordinary eye is used to believing in. Usually we see something and define it only by what it seems, without going any further. Kleis dares to try. This post-human universe beyond the ordinary understanding of the essence of things can also be perceived as a call to learn how to die. What comes after death? Everything or nothing? What is the soul and our consciousness? Do we actually see? Or are we acting like fleas on the back of a bear that never know anything

about the bear?

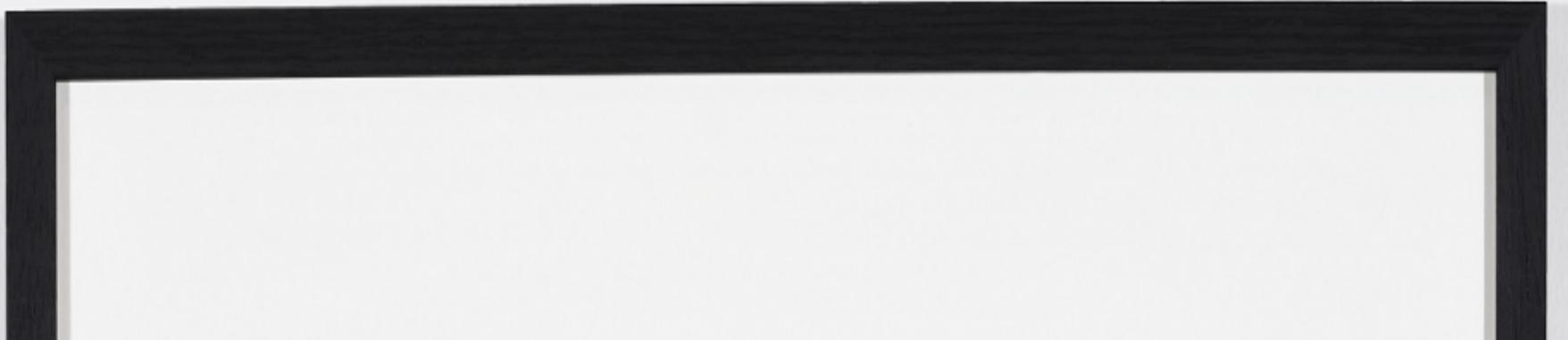
Besides graphics, there are also music releases by Kleis and his band EDASI (Mihkel Kleis&Veiko Rebane) available, and books by the ;paranoia publishing group in the gallery. By looking at the book *In a Room Next to the Plane (Lennuki kõrval toas)* by another Estonian multimedia pop-artist Kiwa, with Kleis' earlier period illustrations, it is clear that it has been a longer process of seeing and forming the unreal images that are shown today in *Sotto Forte*. The text-sound book *TKUN ORHA PNUL – Color Your Intellect ('Värvi oma mõistus üle')*, written in a fictional language by Kleis, and the voice-improvisation vocalist Roomet Jakapi, is probably the closest link to the *Sotto Forte* universe. It can be used as a colouring book, which together with the soundtrack becomes a key to the other kind of logic and reality.

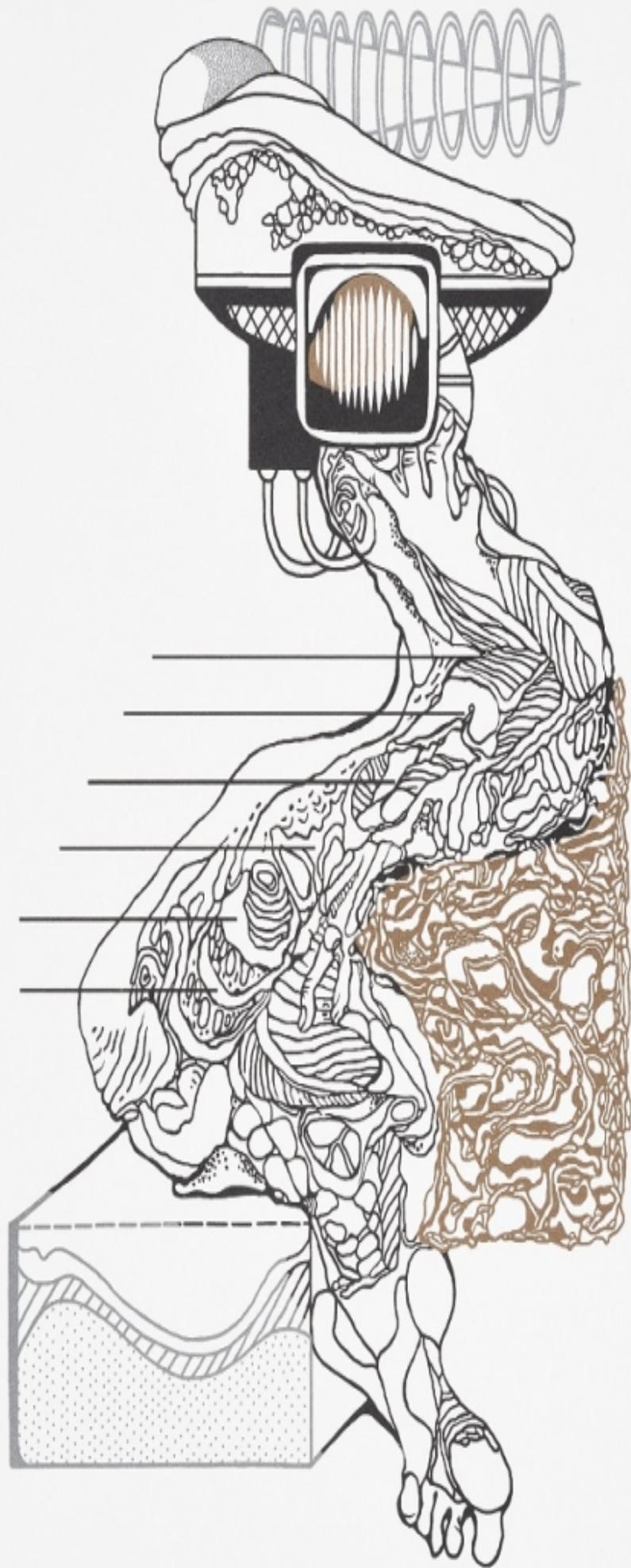
Kiwa states that with time, Kleis has moved away from recognisable images and their specific meaning. An important role is definitely played here by noise music, which accompanies his dystopic visions. Furthermore, in the *Sotto Forte* series, the alchemy of experimental noise music has become somewhat prolonged images.

Before we leave Temnikova&Kasela, the gallerist informs us that in a couple of weeks there will be a special edition tape release linked to *Sotto Forte*. For now, it is available for pre-listening here: <https://ratkiller.bandcamp.com/album/sotto-forte> ^[2]

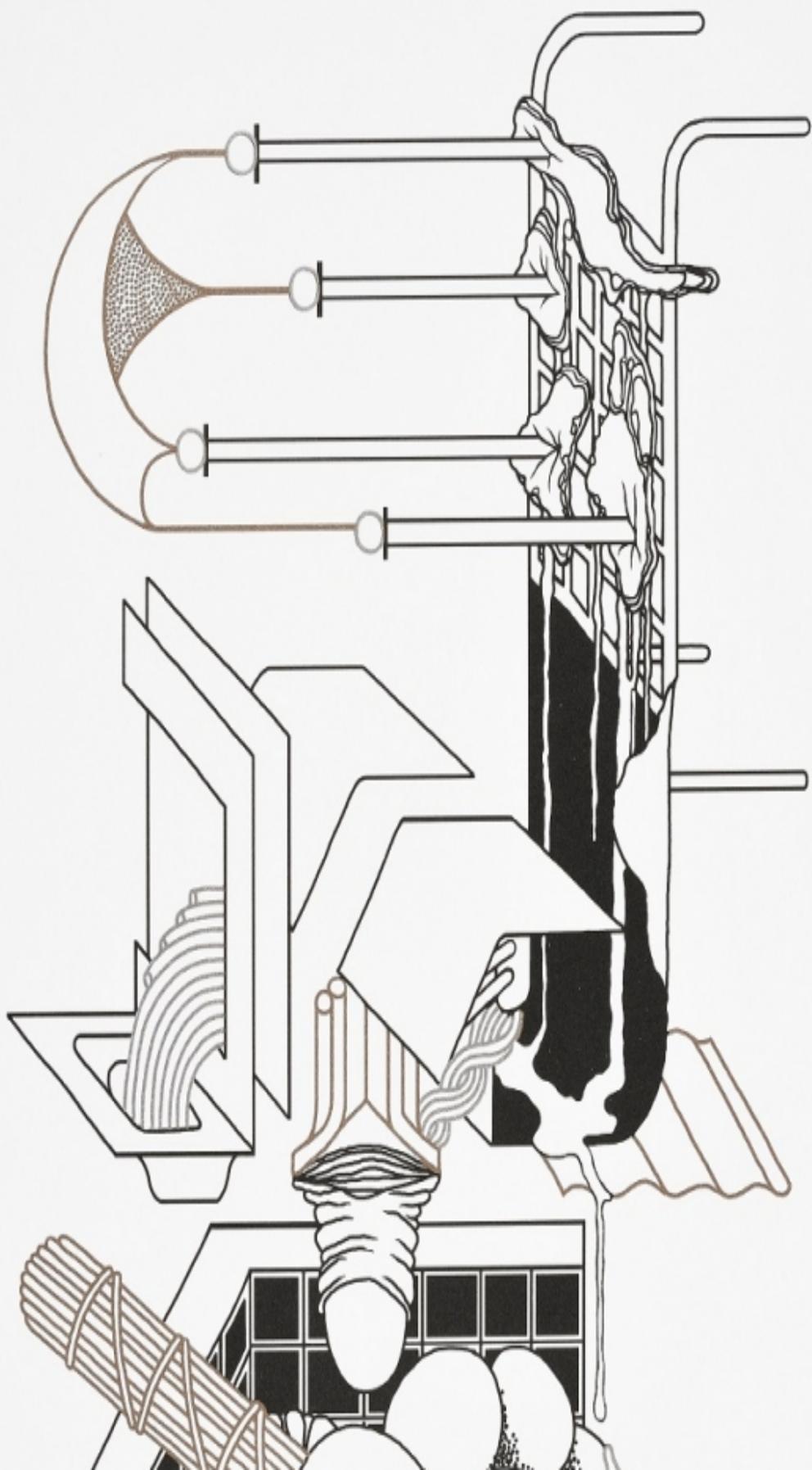
Exhibition will be open at Temnikova & Kasela gallery until January 7, 2017

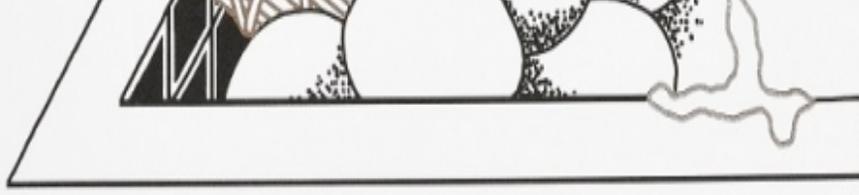
Photography: Courtesy of the artist and Temnikova & Kasela gallery





ANIMATED LUMP OF FLESH - BEST UTOPIA 2/5 M. Miller 1966





OBSOLETE & FERTILE

OFST LITERANFIA

2/25

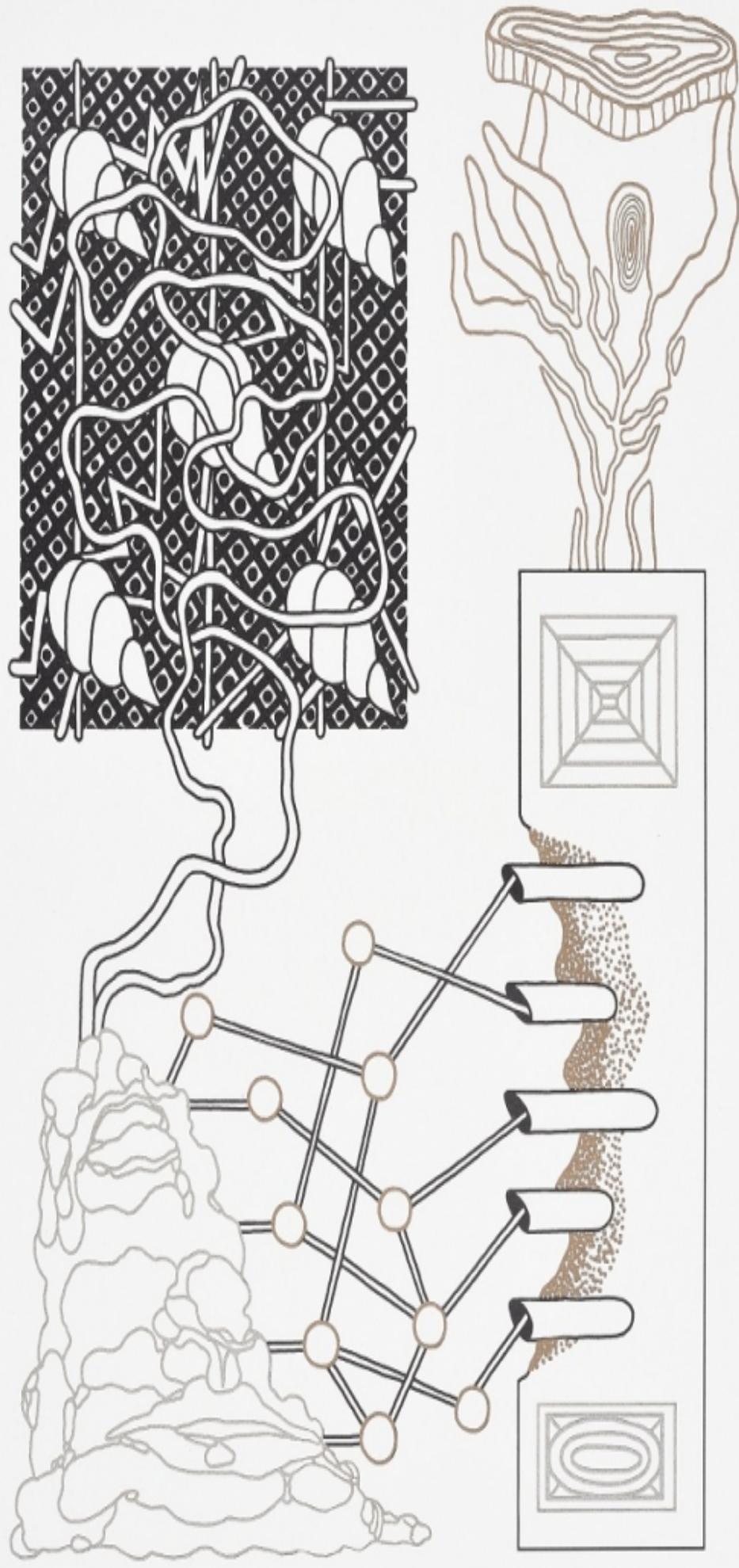
Milina 2016



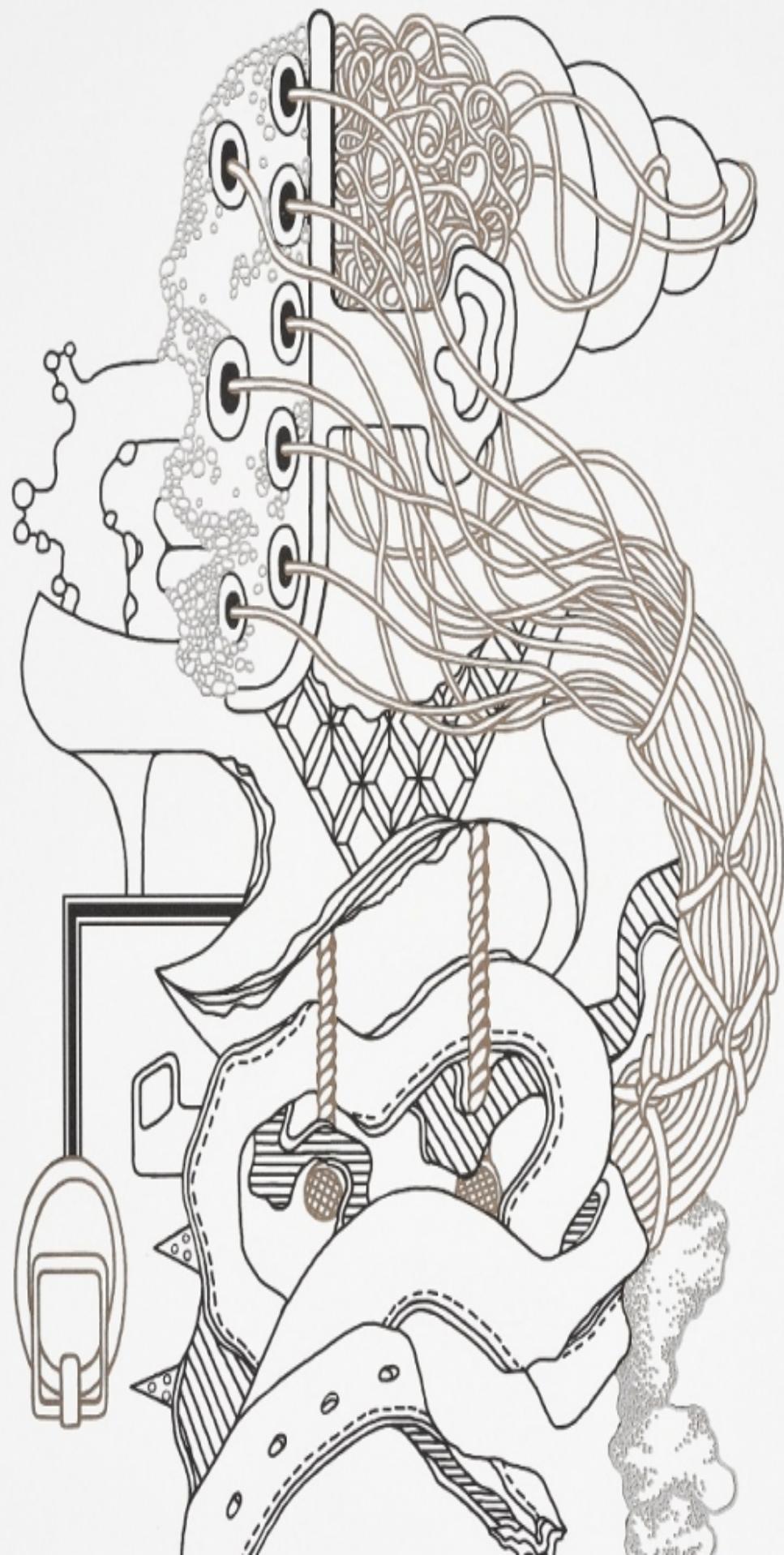








FRANSU6 SIRTUETTE 02ST VTOGRAFIK 7/25 M/11/16 2016



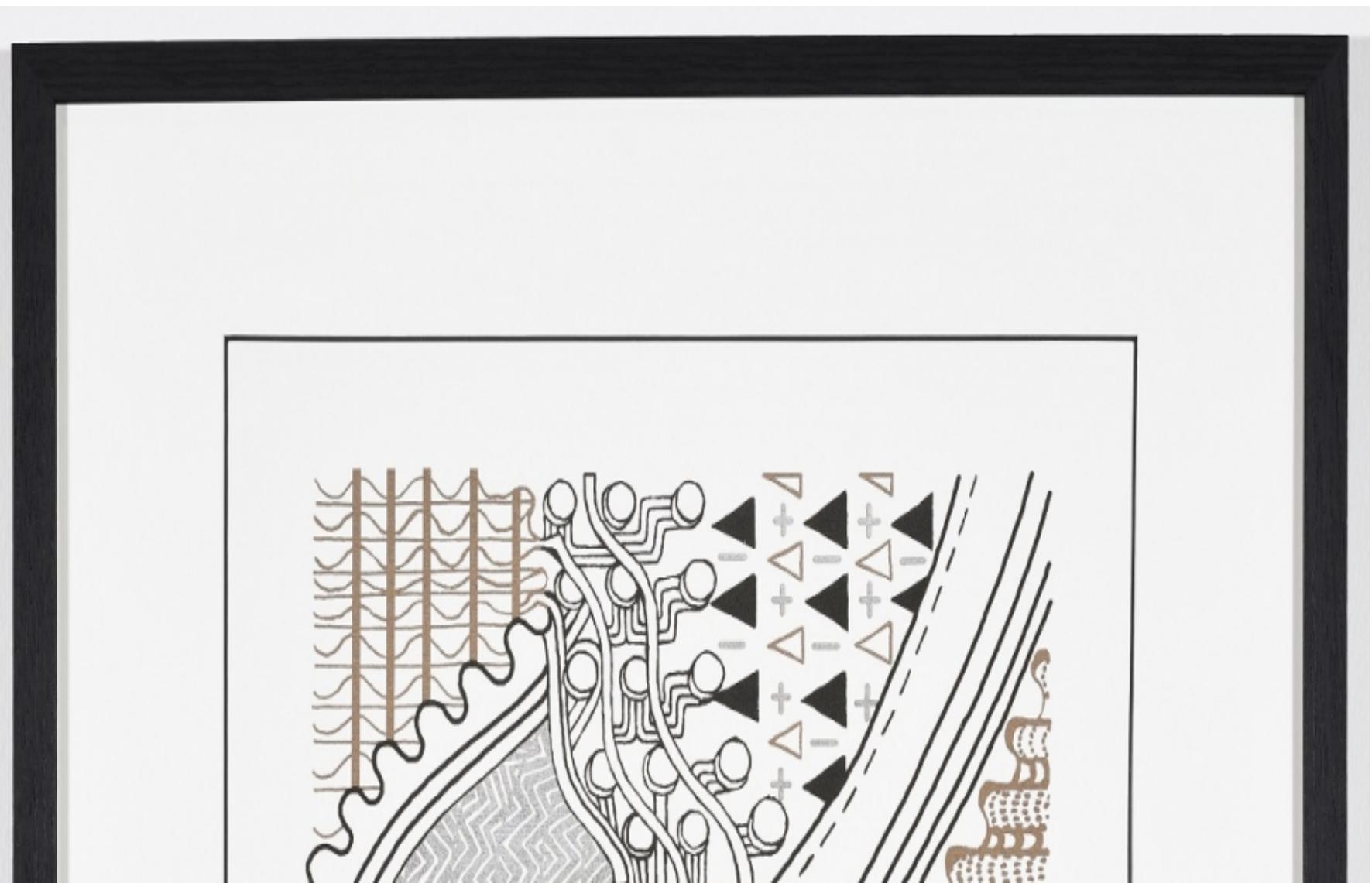
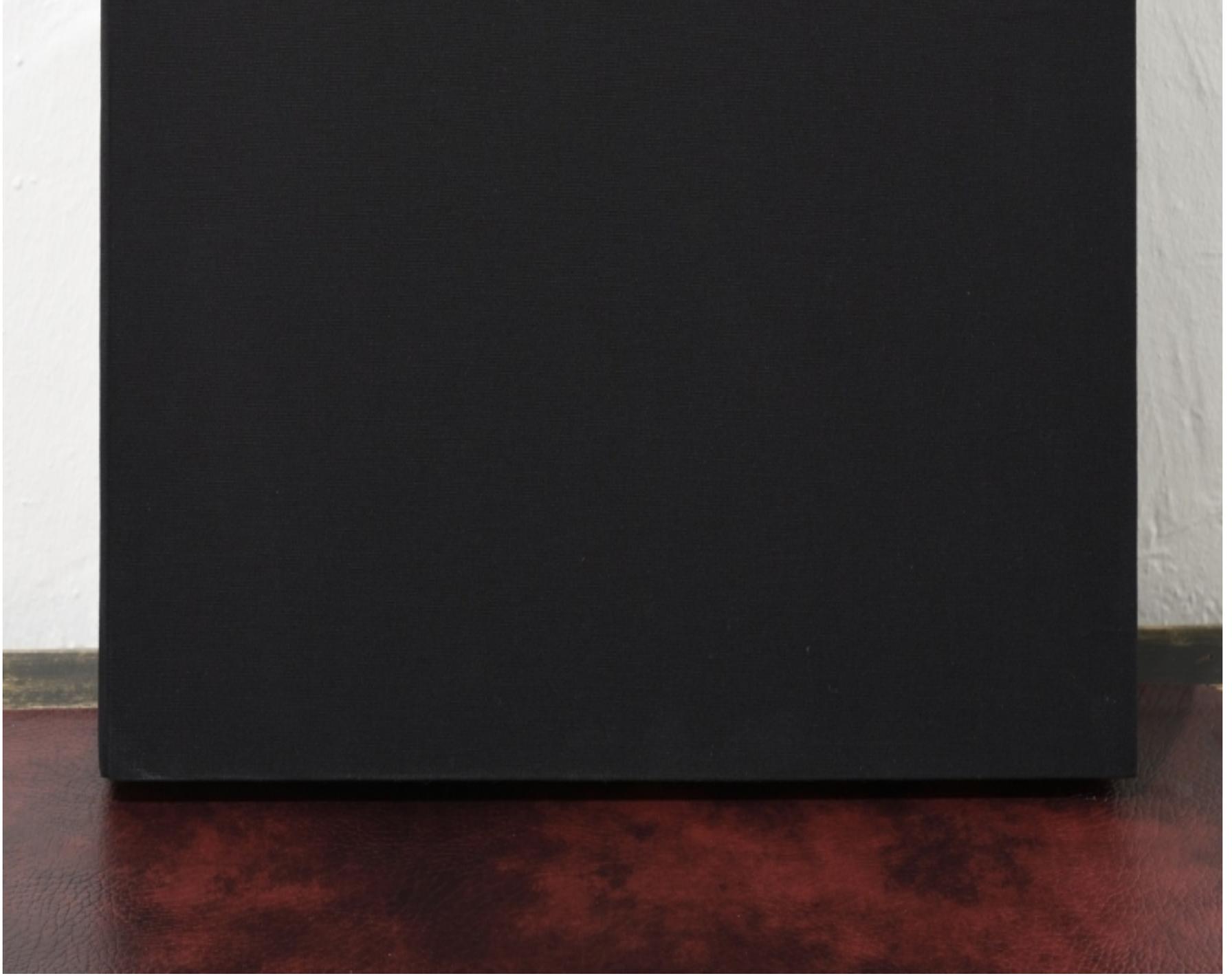
SATURATED SOUR CREAM CHANNELING UPSET LITHOGRAPHIA 2/5 M. W. 2016













ENERGETIC CRISPER

OFST LITHOGRAPHA

2/25

M. M. 2016

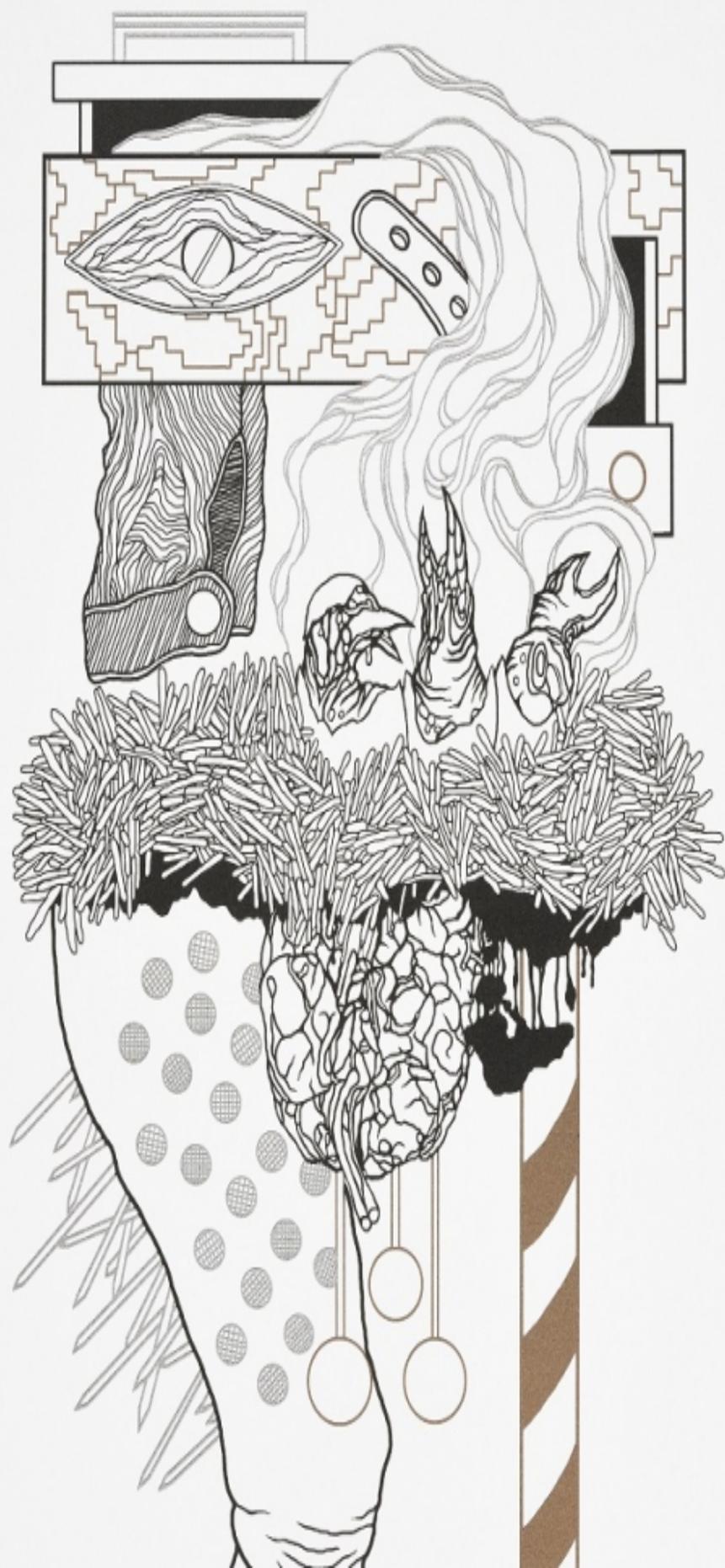


DRAINAGE VEGETATION

CEST LITOGRAFIA

2/25

M/Am/Edk



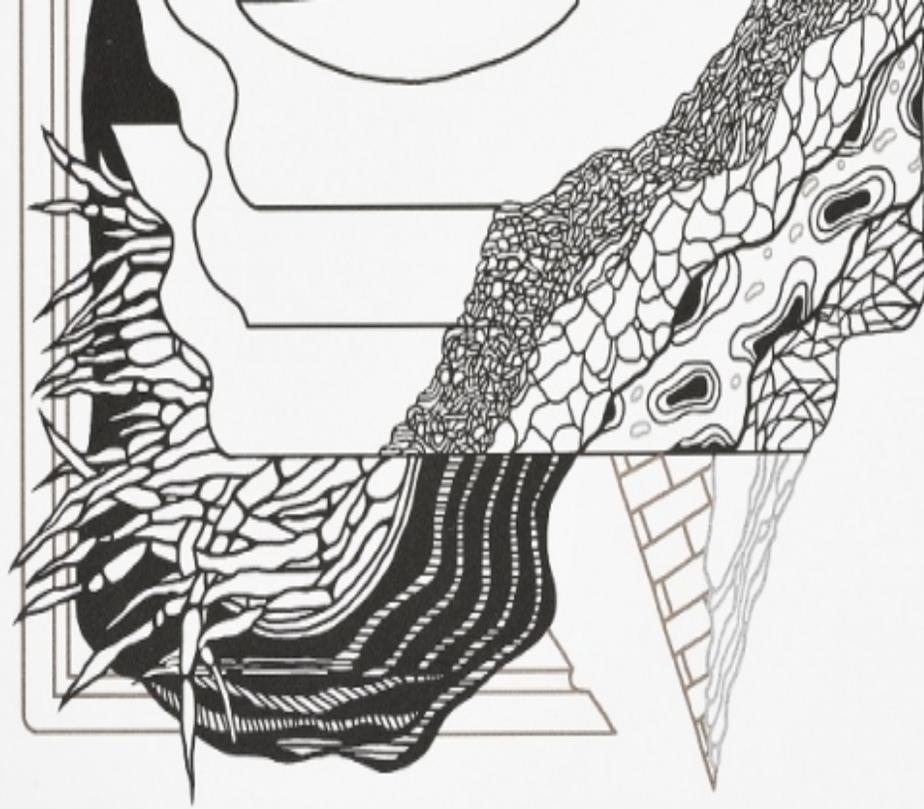
SELF-MUMMIFIED COMPOUND

CBST LITOPANFA

2/25

MU/Mini 2016





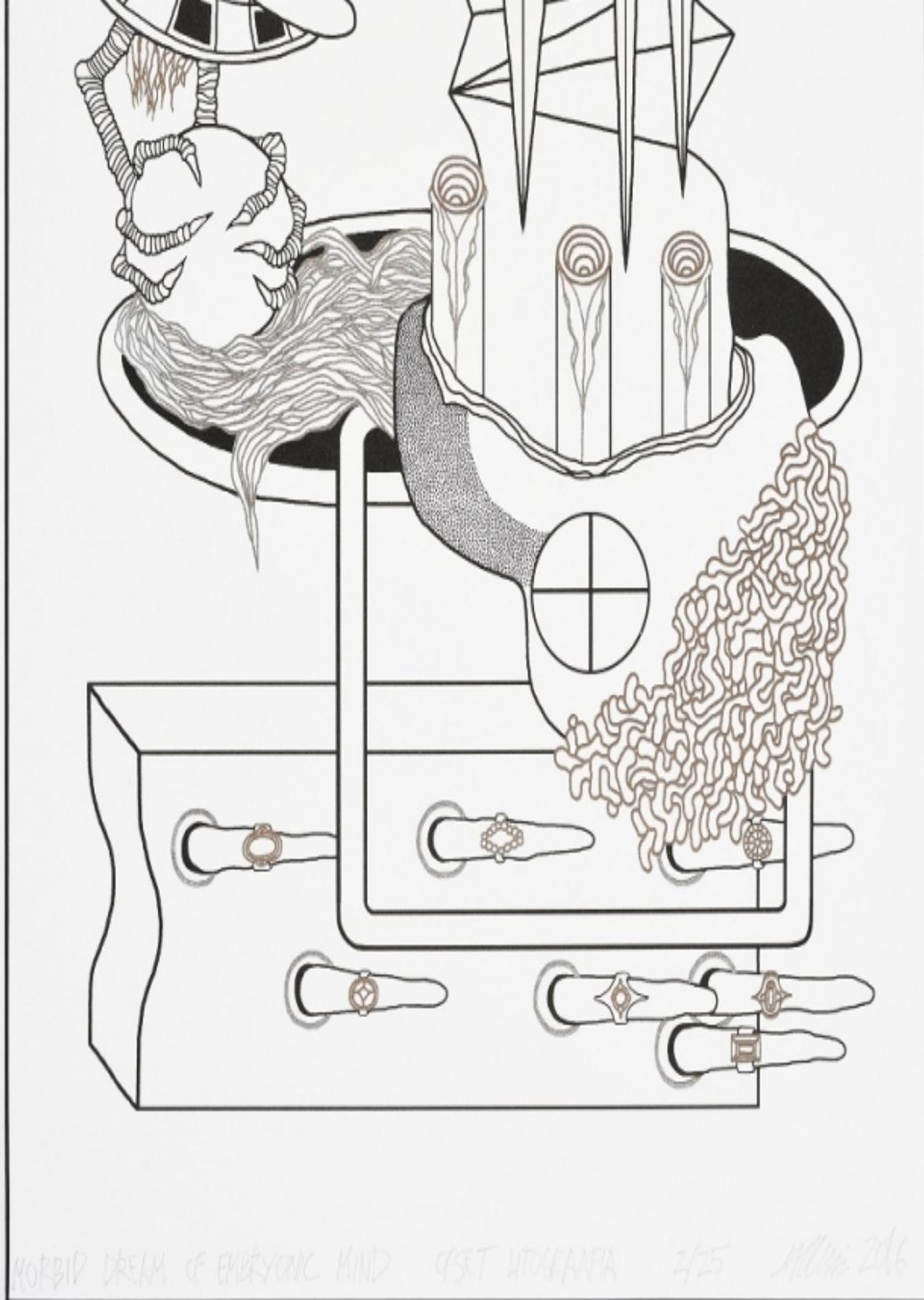
BOSNIA MONOLITH

OFFSET LITHOGRAPHY

2/25

1/10/16 2016





[1] [3] <http://www.paranoia.ee/kleisjakapi/>

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[1] [1]: **#_ftn1**

[2] <https://ratkiller.bandcamp.com/album/sotto-forte>:

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[3] [1]: **#_ftnref1**

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