

MICHAEL CHANG
The Journeyman

Cath Alexandrine Danneskiold-Samsøe Gallery
Catalogue adapted for screen

MICHAEL CHANG
The Journeyman

2011
Catalogue

Michael Chang – The Journeyman

Works on paper, paintings, folds and appropriation, 2011

Catalogue

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On the cover: Michael Chang, Y, 2010, four panels each: 185 x 68 cm (6' x 26 ¾"), overall: 185 x 272 cm (6' x 9'), chalk on blackboard

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Where *The Man Without Qualities* ends, *The Journeyman* begins

Preface

Cath Alexandrine Danneskiold-Samsøe Gallery is proud to welcome fans of monochromatic painting and Abstract Expressionism to Michael Baastrup Chang's (b. 1973) solo exhibition: *Michael Chang – The Journeyman*.

Set against the decisive innocence of his first solo show^[1], hosted at my gallery in 2010, Chang's follow-up exhibition in 2011 invites viewers to introspection.

Michael Chang – The Journeyman features a body of sequential works in a wide range of materials such as chalk, graphite, beeswax, printing ink and egg tempera. With his new works, Chang introduces a paramount transition: moving from simplicity and innocence to the complexity of cultivable abilities that lie dormant in all of us.

Chang's intention of preserving and renewing traditions in painting are clearly formulated, and his endeavor is both resolute and far-reaching. When asked in which direction he wants to take us, the painter gently replies, "Inwards...". And inwards he takes us, an altruistic and calm guide and an experienced craftsman, presenting his skills and insights in carefully orchestrated and concise measures.

Firmly but kindheartedly, Chang shows us how art can extend to encompass shared experiences and interaction via works of art. In one of the works, simply entitled "Y", Chang invites us to participate in the artistic process by writing with chalk on four monochromatic panels. By accepting Chang's invitation, the observer is momentarily transformed into *The Journeyman*.

Like all qualified artists, Chang has worked hard to get where he is today, and his devotion to uncompromising artwork has brought him the attention of curators and art aficionados alike.

With his second solo exhibition at my gallery, Michael Chang demonstrates how his timeless art transcends the everyday. His artworks allude to the life in all of us without eclipsing it, leading us tenderly to the territory beyond the here and now. Welcome to *Michael Chang – The Journeyman*.

Cath Alexandrine Danneskiold-Samsøe

[1] *Michael Chang – The Man Without Qualities and Symposium*, Cath Alexandrine Danneskiold-Samsøe Gallery, 2010

Regarding *The Journeyman*

By Melissa E. Feldman

Recently Michael Chang wrote about affinities in the work of an unlikely triad of artists--Damien Hirst, Bob Dylan, and Her Majesty Queen Margrethe II--proposing artmaking as a great equalizer between people, be they rich, poor, famous or obscure. He notes that "the chances of us becoming colleagues outside the realm of painting are slim." Last year Dylan, who explains that "If I could have expressed the same in a song, I would have written a song instead", "came out" as a painter with a show at the National Gallery of Denmark. While Hirst's blockbuster art epitomizes the late twentieth century artist, Her Majesty Queen Margrethe II exercises her passion for and considerable gifts in both ecclesiastical embroidery and landscape painting, her royal position notwithstanding. In the case of Dylan and the Her Majesty, artistic identity does not function in its usual elitist manner; on the contrary, has a normalizing, even humanizing, effect on how we view these untouchables.

The works comprising "The Journeyman" might be understood as extending the purview of Chang's dialogue with artistic "colleagues" to include Francis Bacon, Paul Cezanne, Francisco Goya, Edvard Munch, Andy Warhol, as well as a few American minimalist painters encountered

through the artist's armchair and airplane travels. But before we get to them, let's talk about his other colleagues: all of you. You can qualify by adding your marks or words to *Y* (2010), a monumental, multi-panel blackboard. Mine would say, "why not?" Using a blackboard as surface and support creates a role reversal in which the visitor/student becomes the artist/teacher, where touching and graffiti are allowed, confessions become public information, and the picture is always impermanent. Words and images are interchangeable, and the work is always both finished and unfinished. Accordingly, the scale and narrow proportions of the panels underscore the physical (as opposed to cognitive) action of markmaking. The height correspondences to the artist's height and the width of each panel equals that of his extended arm from shoulder to finger tips. For Chang the piece represents "a catharsis, a getting rid of words and thoughts, emptying myself and stop verbalizing everything."

The same can be said of Chang's new monochrome paintings in homemade egg tempera whose satin surfaces show nairy a brush mark. The surface quality is the result of a labor-intensive process of sanding successive applications (at least three) of

chalk and then egg white. If it weren't for the ragged bottom edge revealing its layered history, the works would not appear to have been painted at all. Despite the medium's medieval origins, the egg temperas remind me of the perfect monochromatic fields that California Light and Space artists of the late sixties such as John McCracken and Robert Irwin produced—fields that reflected Los Angeles's clear skies as well as the flawless surfaces of their automobiles and surfboards.

In the works that comprise “The Journeyman” Chang opens up his practice to different kinds of processes and materials, both traditional—the egg temperas for example—and newfangled. As in postminimalism, or so-called process art of the early 1970s exemplified by the work of such artists as Barry Le Va and Bruce Nauman, Chang's new work walks a fine line between the intentionality of a set procedure and the physical limits of the operator (artist) and his materials. In the *Appropriations* (2011) Chang wrangled a large commercial printing press—for what could be more intentional than a machine? Seeking to undermine the reproduction quality of images of works by Warhol, Munch, and Cezanne among a few others, he reprinted the same sheets (all 1168 of them) four times using corrosive liquid to corrupt the image. Paradoxically, the resulting splashing and dripping offset ink resembles running paint. Next Chang covered the image with hand-applied graphite and beeswax, further

obscuring the image while at the same physically and symbolically embedding an artistic ancestry in the signature geometry of his work.

Printmaking is one of the principle ways Chang expresses his interest in elaborate technique and layered mediums and the ultimate mystery of their interaction. He embraces the vagaries of chance operations both in the studio and in life, where he assimilates people and opportunities that come his way. In the series entitled *Folds*, for example, Chang recuperates scraps of lovely Somerset paper leftover from the prints he made at San Francisco's renowned Crown Point Press into a series of bas reliefs made by folding the paper, from six down to one time, and displaying them unfolded. Irregularly shaped with deckled or torn edges, some are a just a sliver at 1/2” by 12”, reminiscent of an archeological fragment. The last reproduction in the catalogue is the single fold, *Irregular Shape folded once*, and as Chang pointed out, then you close the catalogue “which is a little folding as well.”

Melissa E. Feldman
Piedmont, California, 2011

Melissa E. Feldman is an independent curator and writer currently based in the Bay Area, California.
A contributor to *Art in America*, *Frieze*, and *Third Text*, among other publications.

Prologue



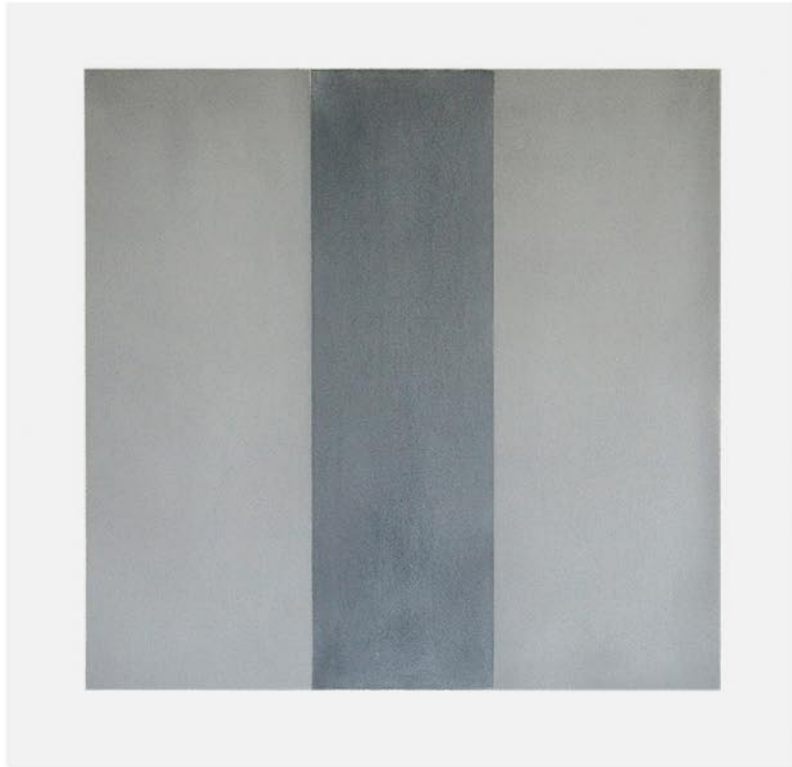
Proem, 2010
Graphite over pastel on paper
47 x 32 cm (18 ½" x 12 ⅝")



Prologue, 2010
Pastel and graphite on paper
47 x 34 cm (18 ½" x 13 ⅜")



Precursor, 2010
Pastel, pastel over graphite on paper
47 x 46 cm (18 ½" x 18 ⅞")

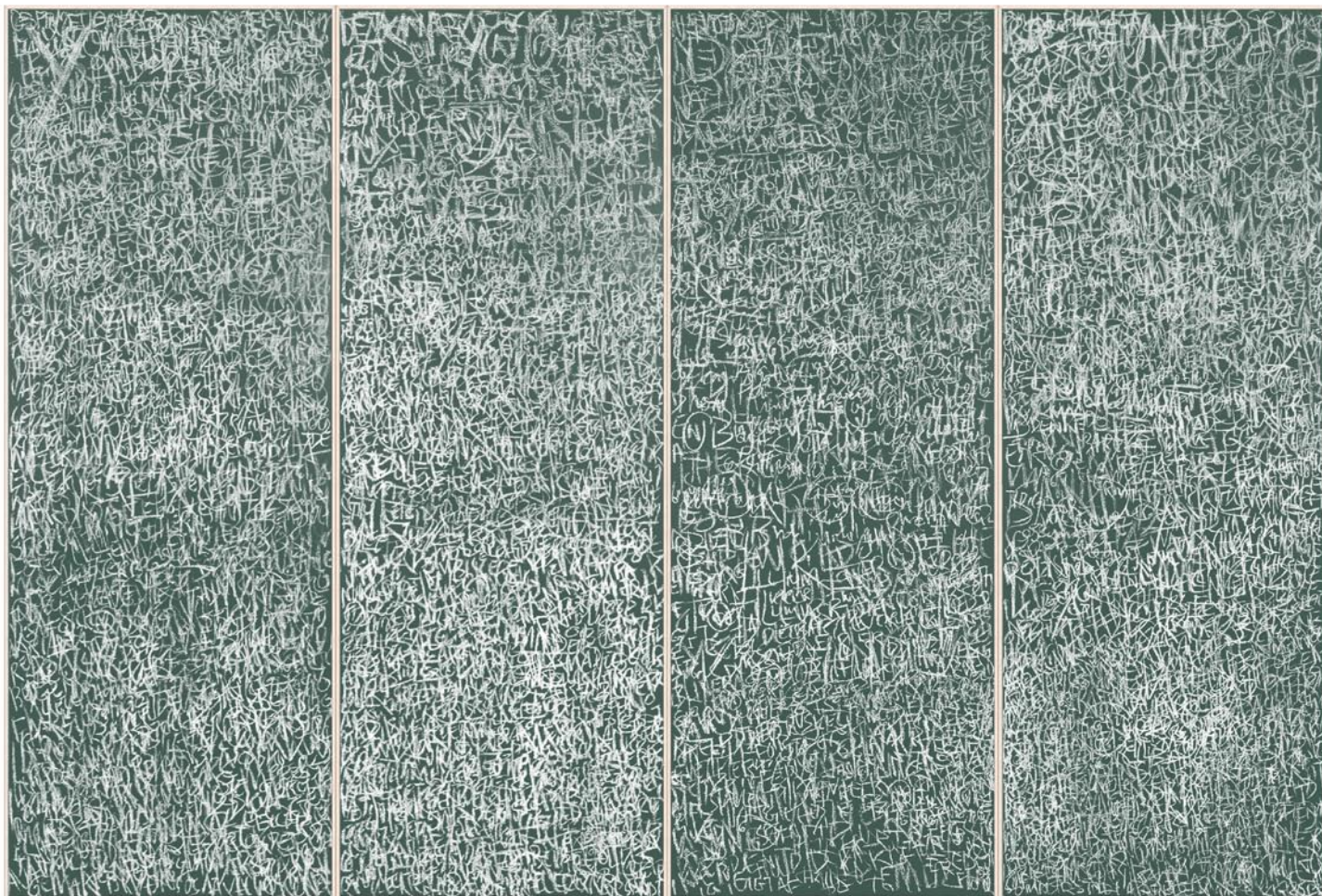


Preamble, 2010
Pastel, pastel over graphite on paper
47 x 46 cm (18 ½" x 18 ⅞")



Prelude, 2009 / 2011
Aquatint, graphite over beeswax on paper
68 x 51,5 cm (26 $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 20 $\frac{1}{4}$ ")

Plates



I, 2010

Chalk on blackboard

Four panels each: 185 x 68 cm (6' x 26 3/4")

Overall: 185 x 272 cm (6' x 9')



Prometheus (Growing back his Liver), 2011
Chalk, egg tempera on canvas
Three panels each: 104 x 25 cm (40 ¹⁵/₁₆" x 9 ¹³/₁₆")



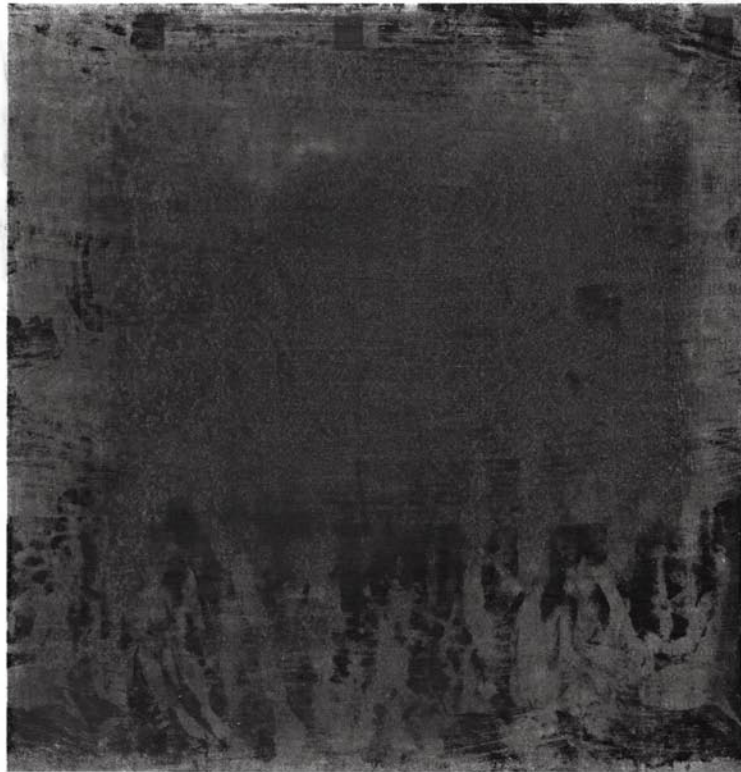
Blind Orion Searching for the Rising Sun (Orion and Cedalion), 2011

Chalk, egg tempera on canvas

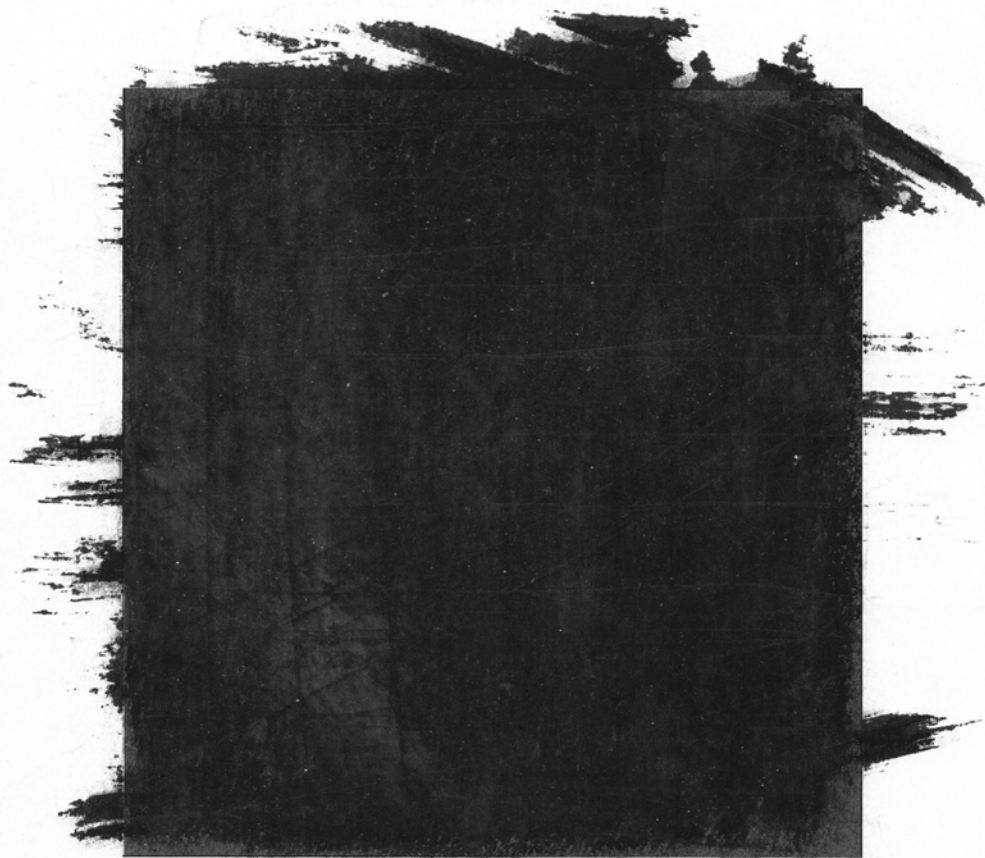
Four panels each: 52 x 50 cm (20 ½" x 19 ⅛")

Overall: 52 x 200 cm (20 ½" x 6' 6 ¾")

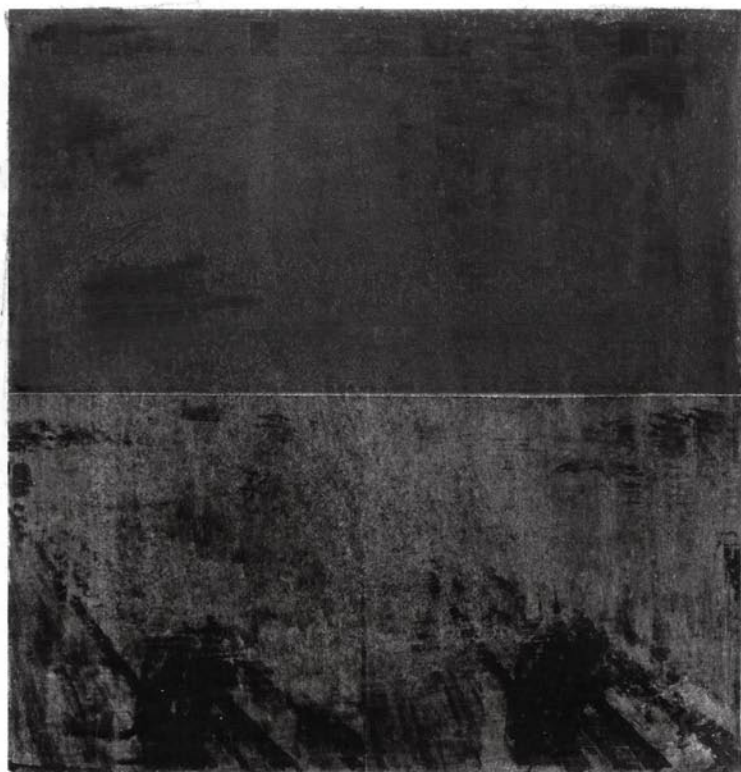
Appropriation



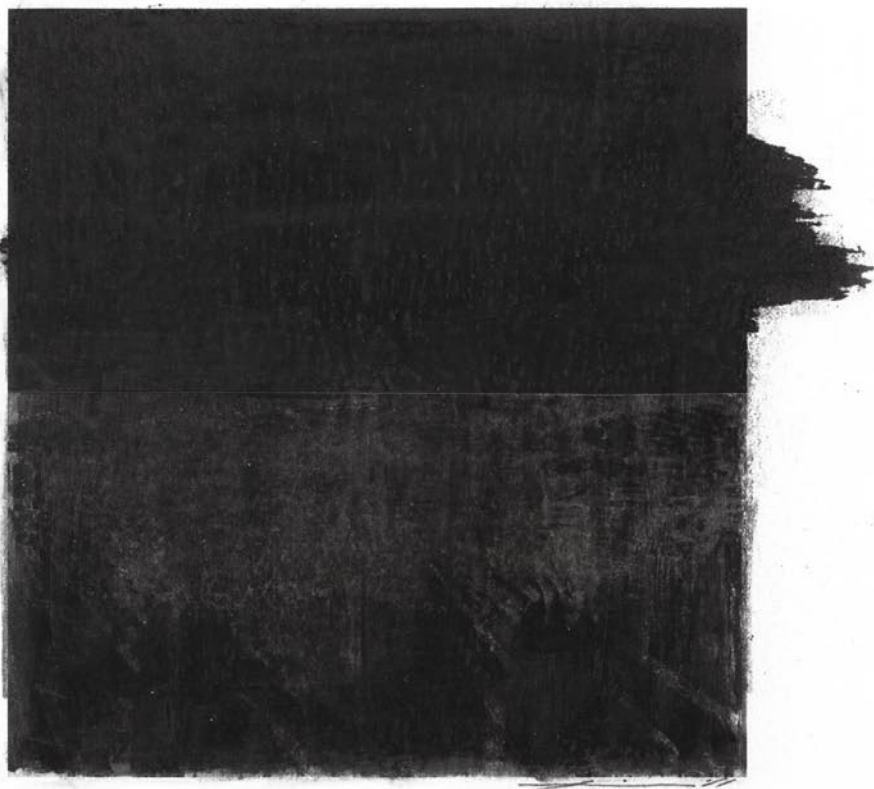
#6, *Les Grandes Baigneuses* after Cezanne, 2011
Offset printing ink, graphite and beeswax on paper
36 x 34 cm (14 $\frac{1}{8}$ " x 13 $\frac{3}{8}$ ")



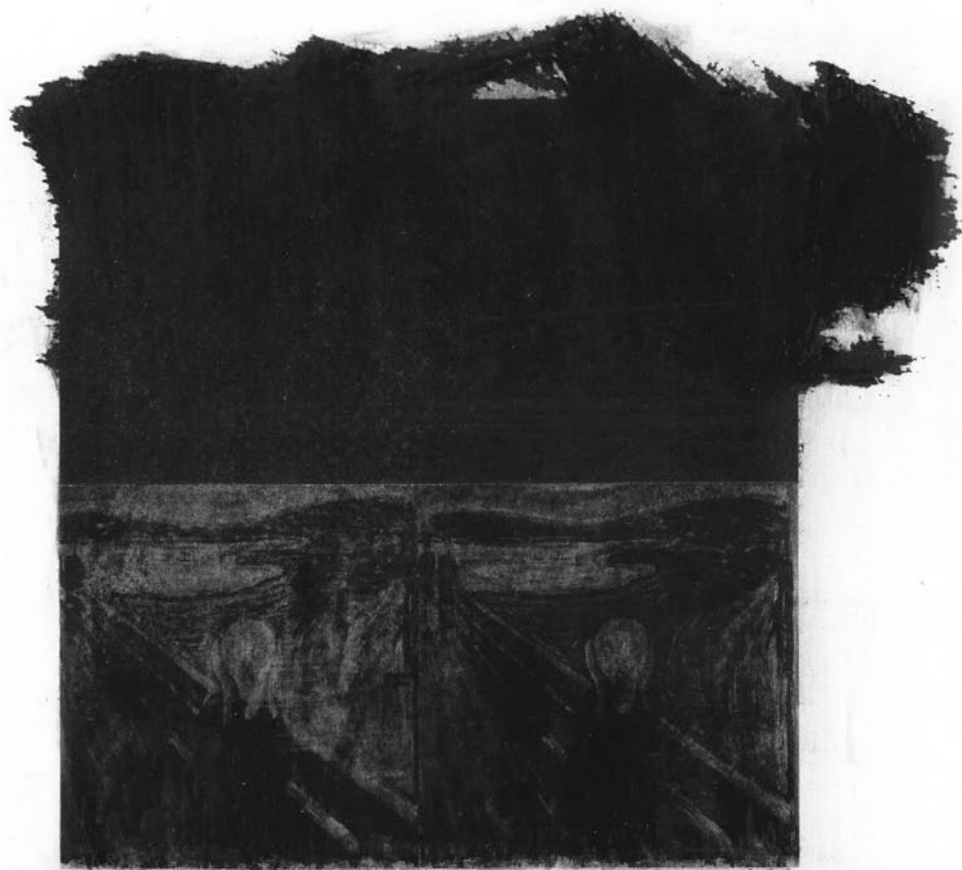
#5, *Les Grandes Baigneuses after Cezanne*, 2011
Offset printing ink, graphite and beeswax on paper
36 x 34 cm (14 1/8" x 13 3/8")



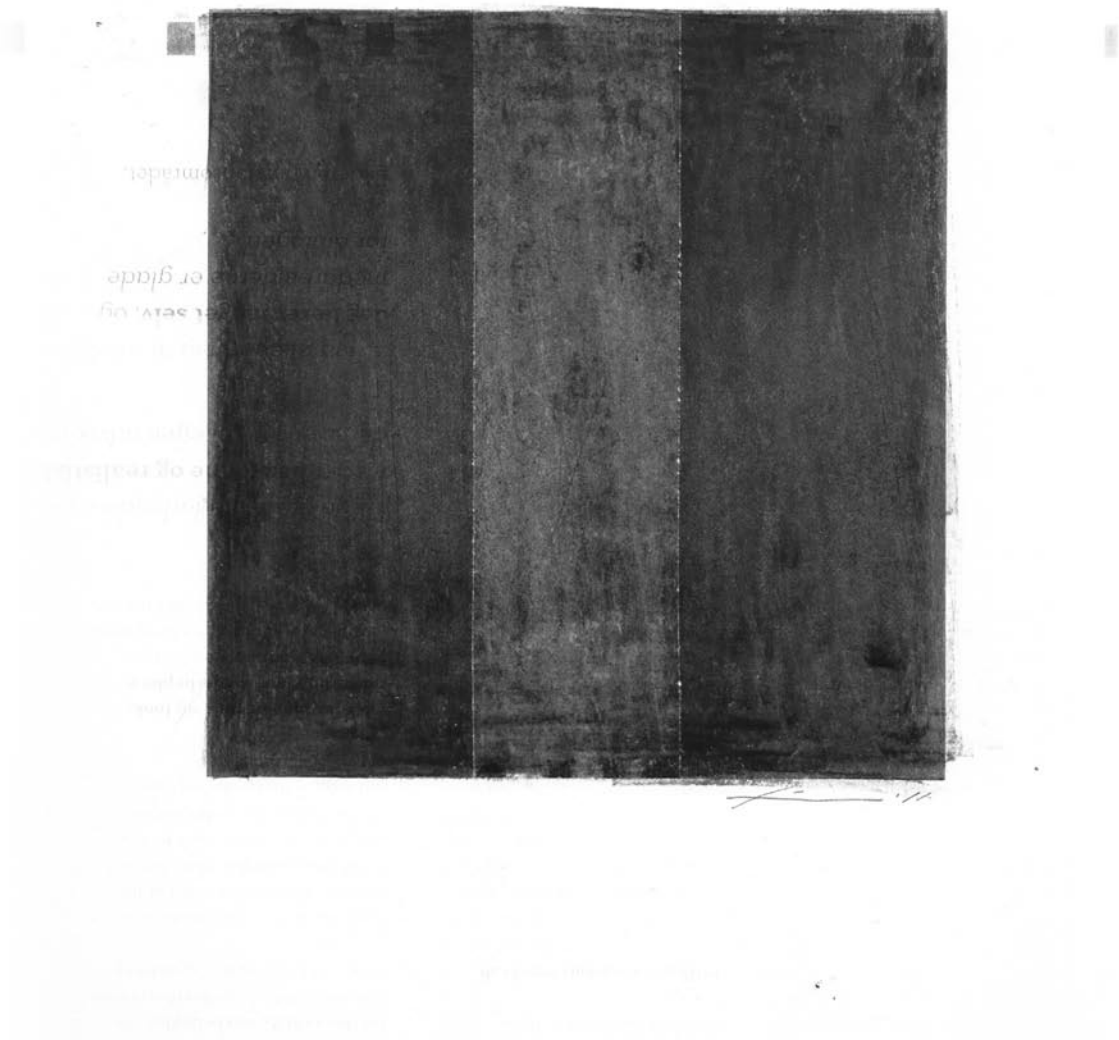
#9, *Skrik after Munch*, 2011
Offset printing ink, graphite and beeswax on paper
36 x 34 cm (14 $\frac{1}{8}$ " x 13 $\frac{3}{8}$ ")



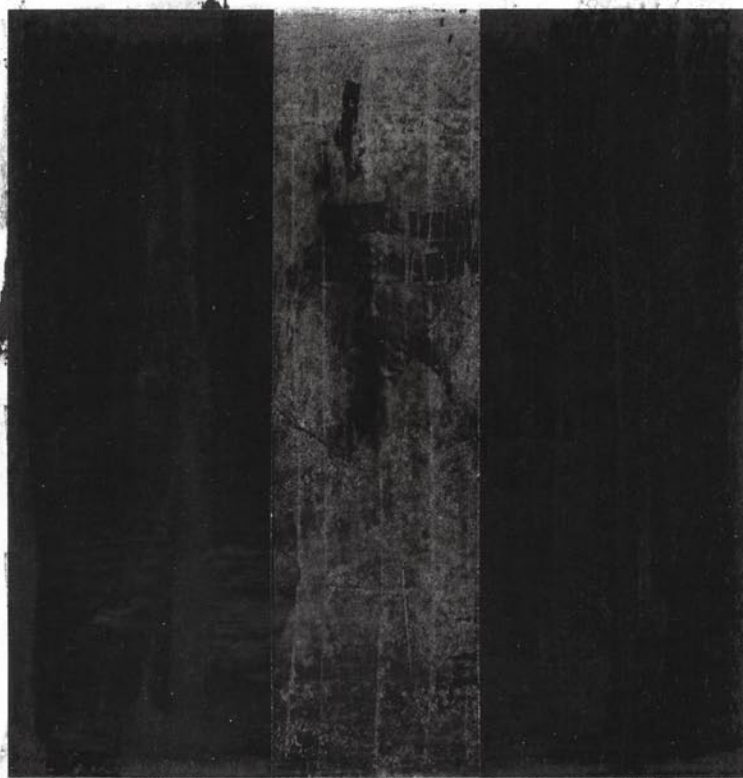
#8, *Skrik after Munch*, 2011
Offset printing ink, graphite and beeswax on paper
36 x 34 cm (14 $\frac{1}{8}$ " x 13 $\frac{3}{8}$ ")



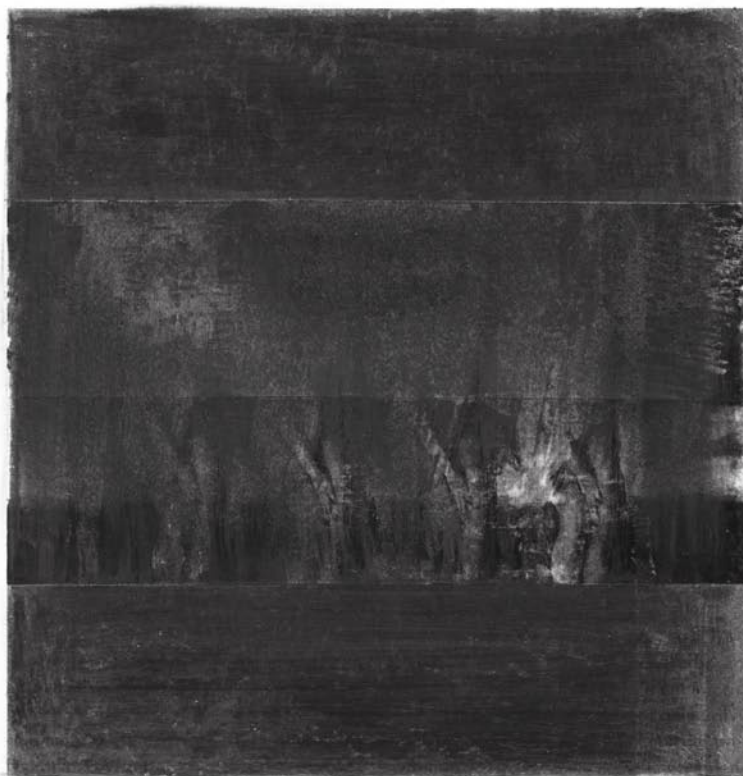
#7, *Skrik after Munch*, 2011
Offset printing ink, graphite and beeswax on paper
36 x 34 cm (14 $\frac{1}{8}$ " x 13 $\frac{3}{8}$ ")



#10, *Triple Elvis after Warhol*, 2011
Offset printing ink, graphite and beeswax on paper
36 x 34 cm (14 1/8" x 13 3/8")

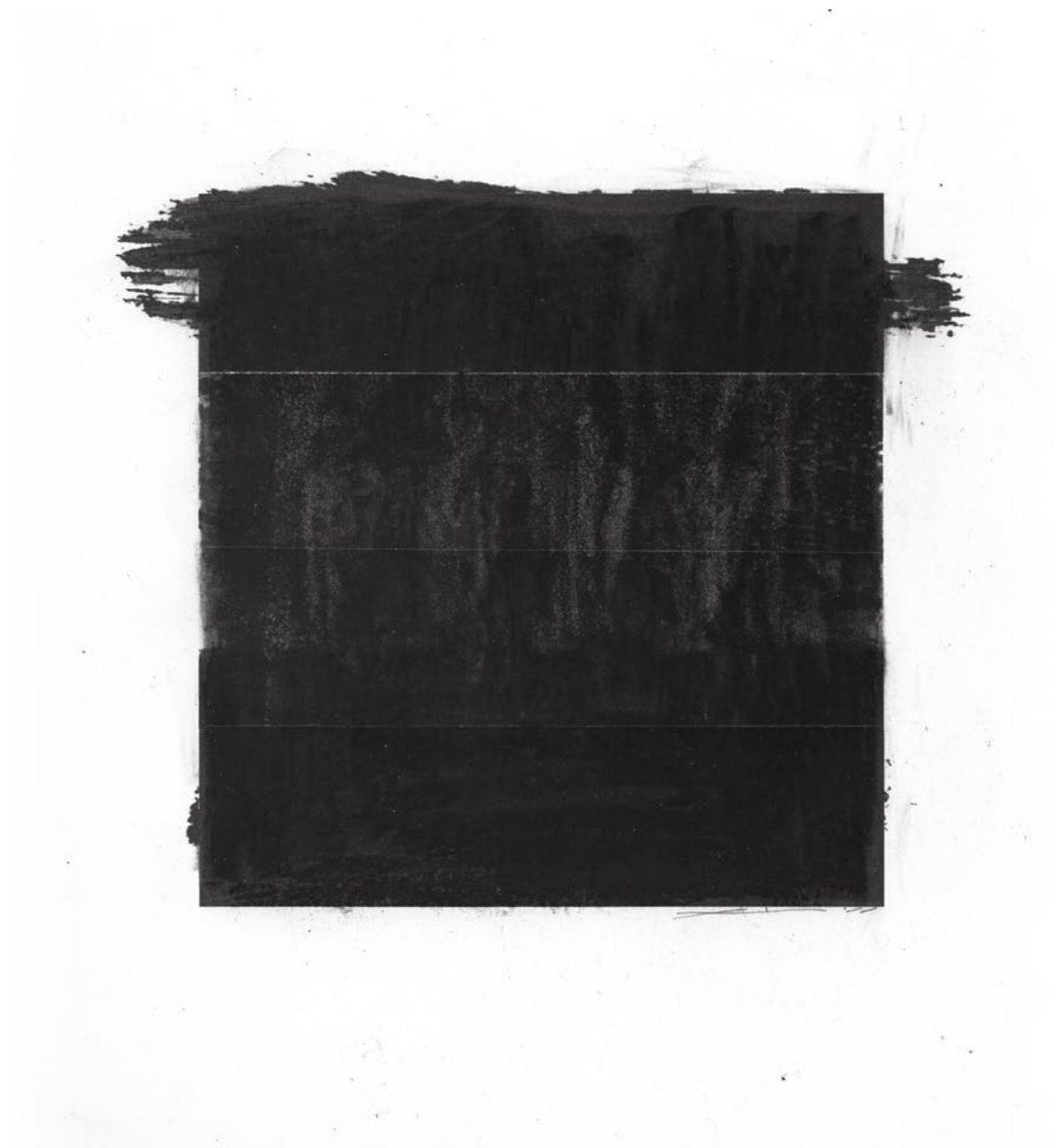


#11, *Triple Elvis after Warhol*, 2011
Offset printing ink, graphite and beeswax on paper
36 x 34 cm (14 $\frac{1}{8}$ " x 13 $\frac{3}{8}$ ")

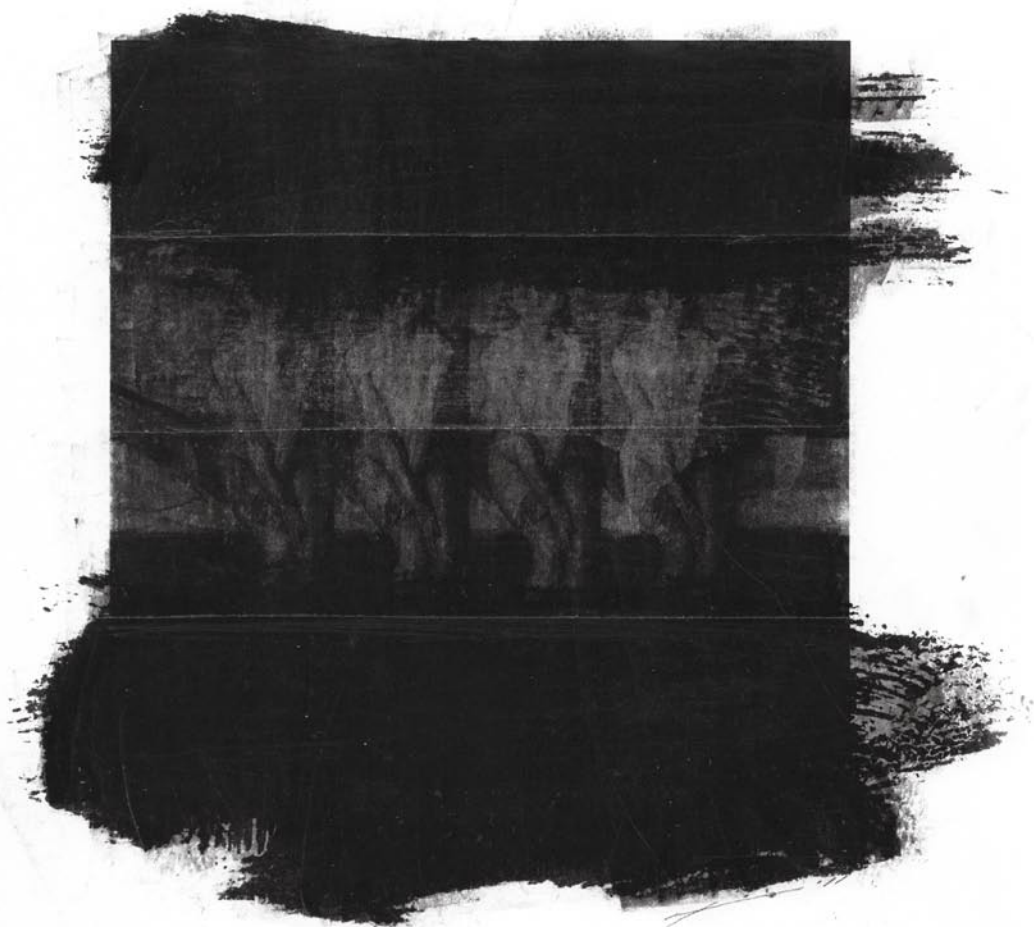


11

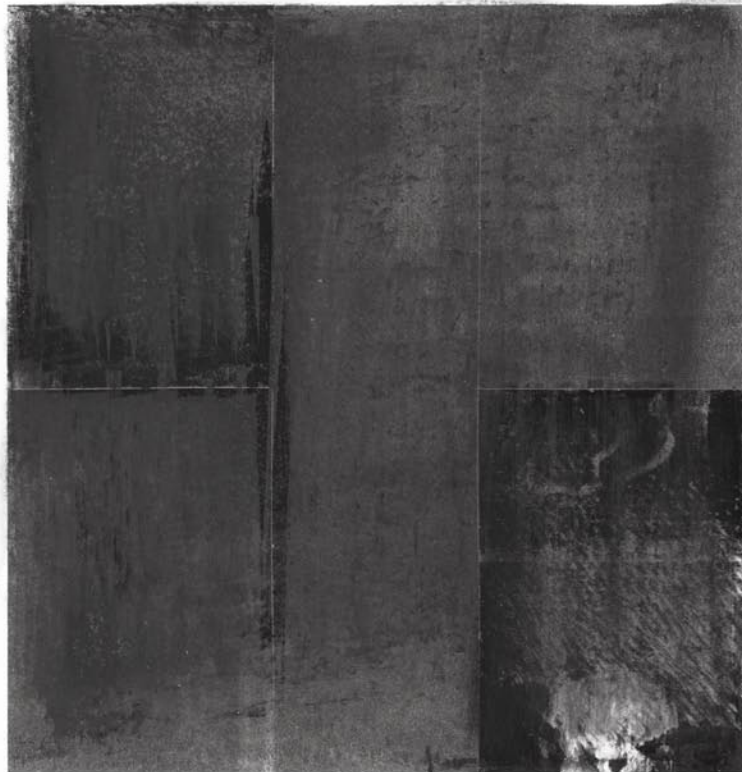
#14, *Pubertet after Munch*, 2011
Offset printing ink, graphite and beeswax on paper
36 x 34 cm (14 1/8" x 13 3/8")



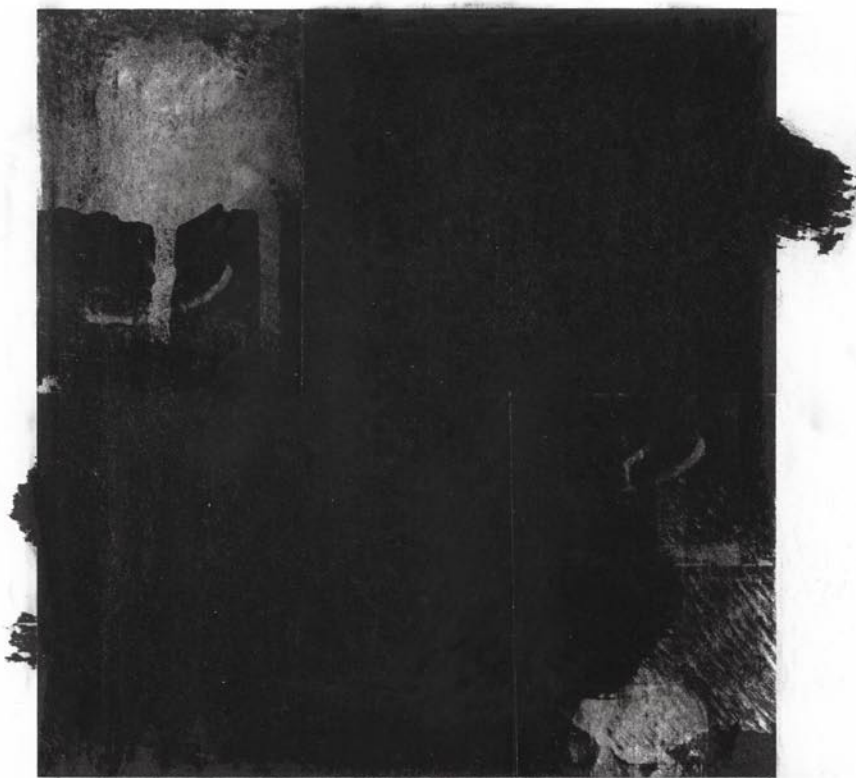
#13, *Pubertet after Munch*, 2011
Offset printing ink, graphite and beeswax on paper
36 x 34 cm (14 $\frac{1}{8}$ " x 13 $\frac{3}{8}$ ")



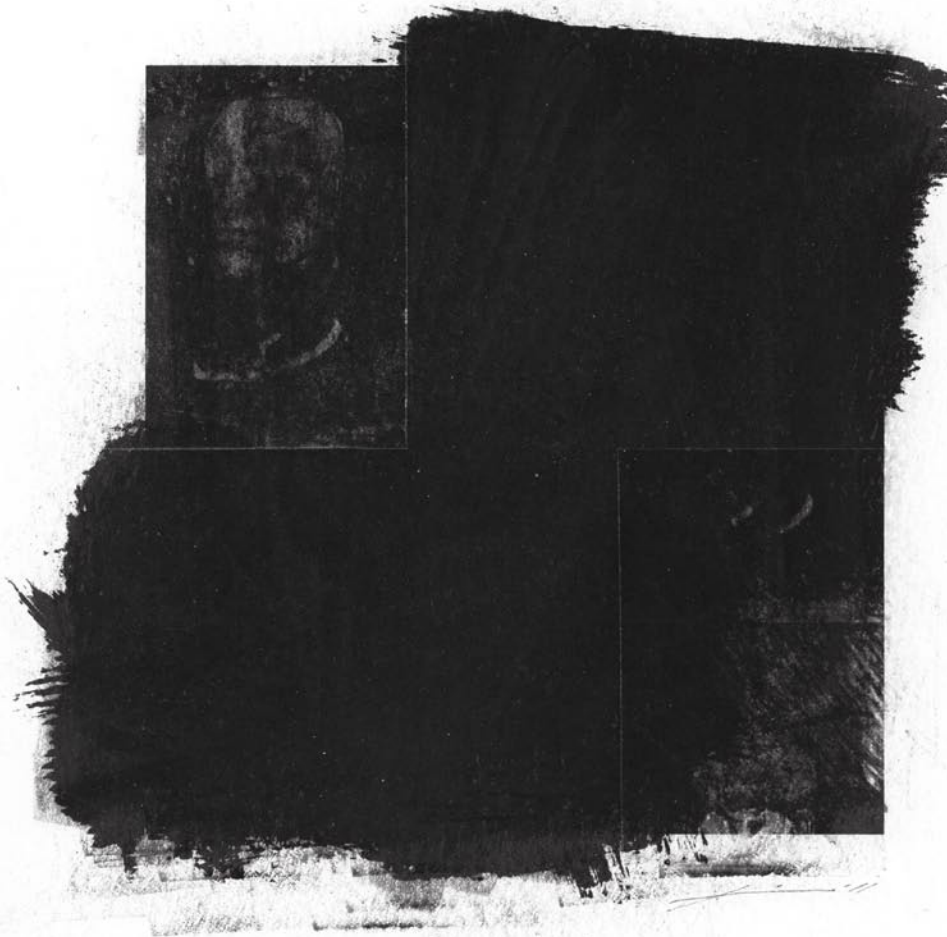
#12, *Pubertet after Munch*, 2011
Offset printing ink, graphite and beeswax on paper
36 x 34 cm (14 1/8" x 13 3/8")



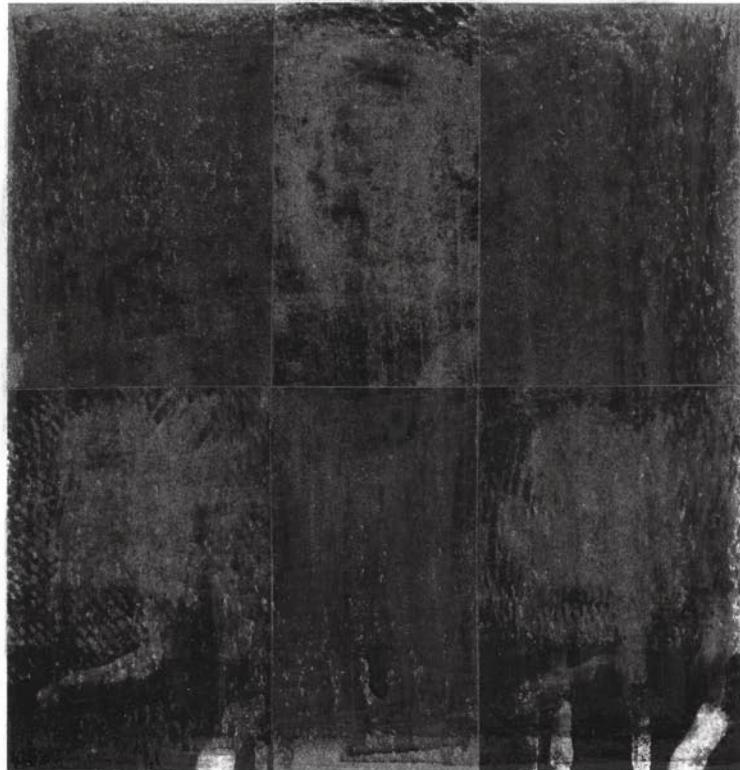
#17, *Study for a Portrait after Bacon*, 2011
Offset printing ink, graphite and beeswax on paper
36 x 34 cm (14 1/8" x 13 3/8")



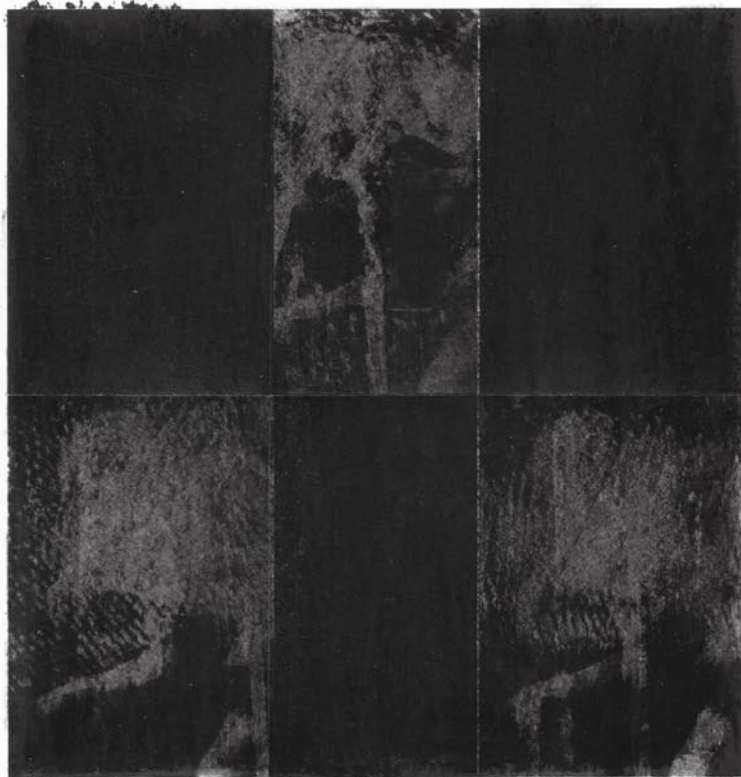
#16, *Study for a Portrait after Bacon*, 2011
Offset printing ink, graphite and beeswax on paper
36 x 34 cm (14 $\frac{1}{8}$ " x 13 $\frac{3}{8}$ ")



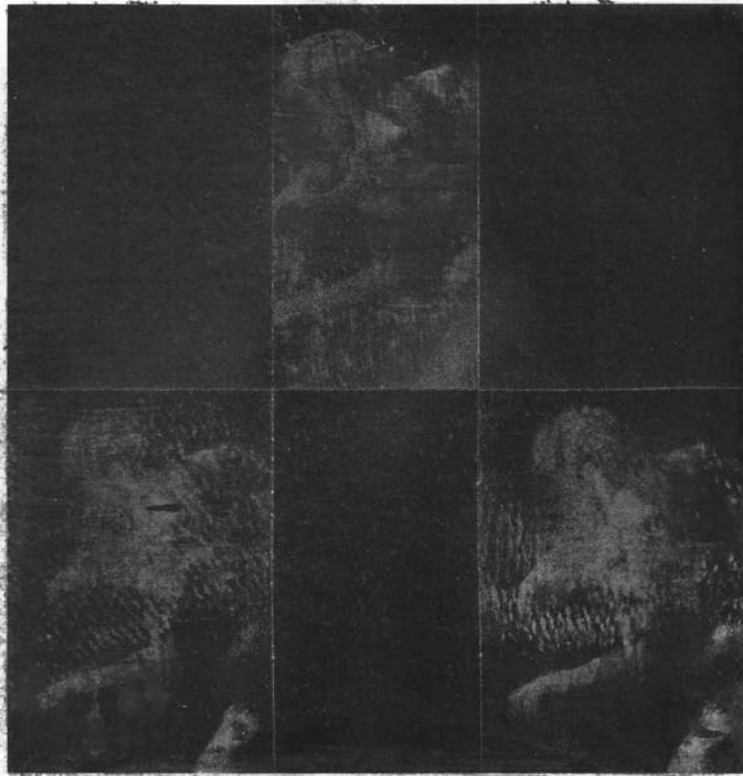
#15, *Study for a Portrait after Bacon*, 2011
Offset printing ink, graphite and beeswax on paper
36 x 34 cm (14 $\frac{1}{8}$ " x 13 $\frac{3}{8}$ ")



#18, *Saturn Devouring One of His Sons after Goya*, 2011
 Offset printing ink, graphite and beeswax on paper
 36 x 34 cm (14 1/8" x 13 3/8")



#19, *Saturn Devouring One of His Sons after Goya*, 2011
Offset printing ink, graphite and beeswax on paper
36 x 34 cm (14 $\frac{1}{8}$ " x 13 $\frac{3}{8}$ ")



#20, *Saturn Devouring One of His Sons after Goya*, 2011
Offset printing ink, graphite and beeswax on paper
36 x 34 cm (14 $\frac{1}{8}$ " x 13 $\frac{3}{8}$ ")

Epilogue



Irregular Shape folded six Times, 2010
300 g. Somerset paper
Between: 2 x 31 cm ($\frac{3}{4}$ " x 12 $\frac{1}{4}$ ")



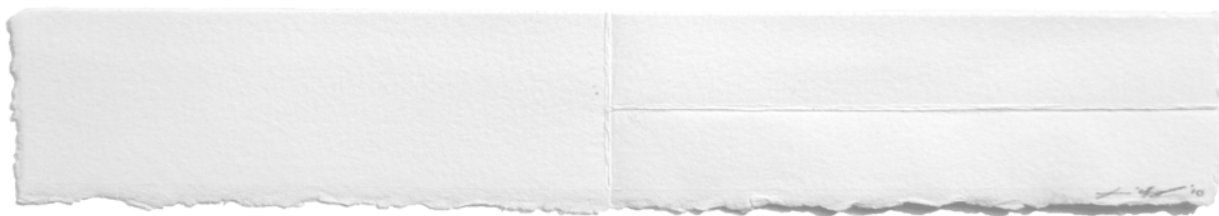
Irregular Shape folded five Times, 2010
300 g. Somerset paper
Between: 11,2 x 17,2 cm (4 $\frac{7}{16}$ " x 15 $\frac{1}{4}$ ")



Irregular Shape folded four Times, 2010
300 g. Somerset paper
Between: 1,5 x 29 cm ($\frac{5}{8}$ " x $11 \frac{1}{16}$ ")



Irregular Shape folded twice, 2010
300 g. Somerset paper
Between: 13,9 x 32,3 cm (5 1/2" x 12 1/16")



Irregular Shape folded twice, 2010
300 g. Somerset paper
Between: 4,7 x 28,1 cm (1 $\frac{13}{16}$ " x 11")



Irregular Shape folded once, 2010
300 g. Somerset paper
Between: 15 x 38,8 cm (6" x 15 1/4")

