

Essences

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A visual poetic inquiry into the representation
of mindful drawing experiences.

Foreword

Essences

This digital portfolio documents a return to self-practice. Developed after Phase 3 of the project, it presents a series of the researcher’s mindful drawings and poetic works that overview and reflect on what was experienced in the inquiry.¹ Thus, the work aims to provide an overview of the research via an artistic consideration of understandings that surfaced from the inquiry.

The portfolio is divided into two parts.

Part A

Part A comprises 16 of the researcher’s mindful drawings. These were created using a combination of *Blind drawing*² and *Continuous drawing*³ because the methods afforded a release from judgment about the aesthetic quality of visual outcomes. The drawings were then paired with 16 poems selected from the study’s research findings. Presented here are 13 pre-existing participant-voiced poems and three researcher-voiced poems. Positioned adjacent to each other, the poems and drawings constitute the researcher’s artistic reflection on what has been generated inside the research. As such, they create a physical residue; a map of seeing the diverse experiences of mindful drawing practices.

Part B

Part B presents 10 mindful drawings I completed as a conclusion to the study. Each of these is accompanied by a researcher-voiced poem that I created following each drawing experience. The drawings employed activities tested by participants, in addition to several new methods that had not previously been included in the study. Recycled brown paper bags were selected to draw upon because of their availability during the restricted time of online shopping that marked the Covid-19 lockdowns. In using recycled material, a sense of freedom was felt that encouraged the making of unrefined and imperfect marks, due to the paper bags’ paper imperfections. From multiple exercises, 10 pairings of new poetry and new mindful drawings were selected, that I felt offered the richest perspectives of my experience of mindful drawing.

As a portfolio, these drawings and poems speak to the ‘being’ of the study; its quintessence and distilled substance. Accordingly, *Essences* is a body of work created at the end of the study, that artistically, comes to terms with what was experienced.

¹ The contextualising thesis addressed three question: What drawing strategies and methods might facilitate the pursuit of mindfulness? What contingencies and conditions of practice need to be taken into account when engaging with mindful drawing? What benegits can be derived from such practice? In the study I proposed that a creative practice such as drawing might offer multiple ways to experience mindfulness. Positioned as an Art-based inquiry, the study involved reflection on self-practice, thematic analysis of participants’ experiences of mindful drawing, a poetic inquiry into journal and interview data, and the generation of the body of mindful drawings and poetic texts that appear in this portfolio. These physical artefacts, as artistic syntheses, ‘give voice to’ the essence of a mindful drawing experience.

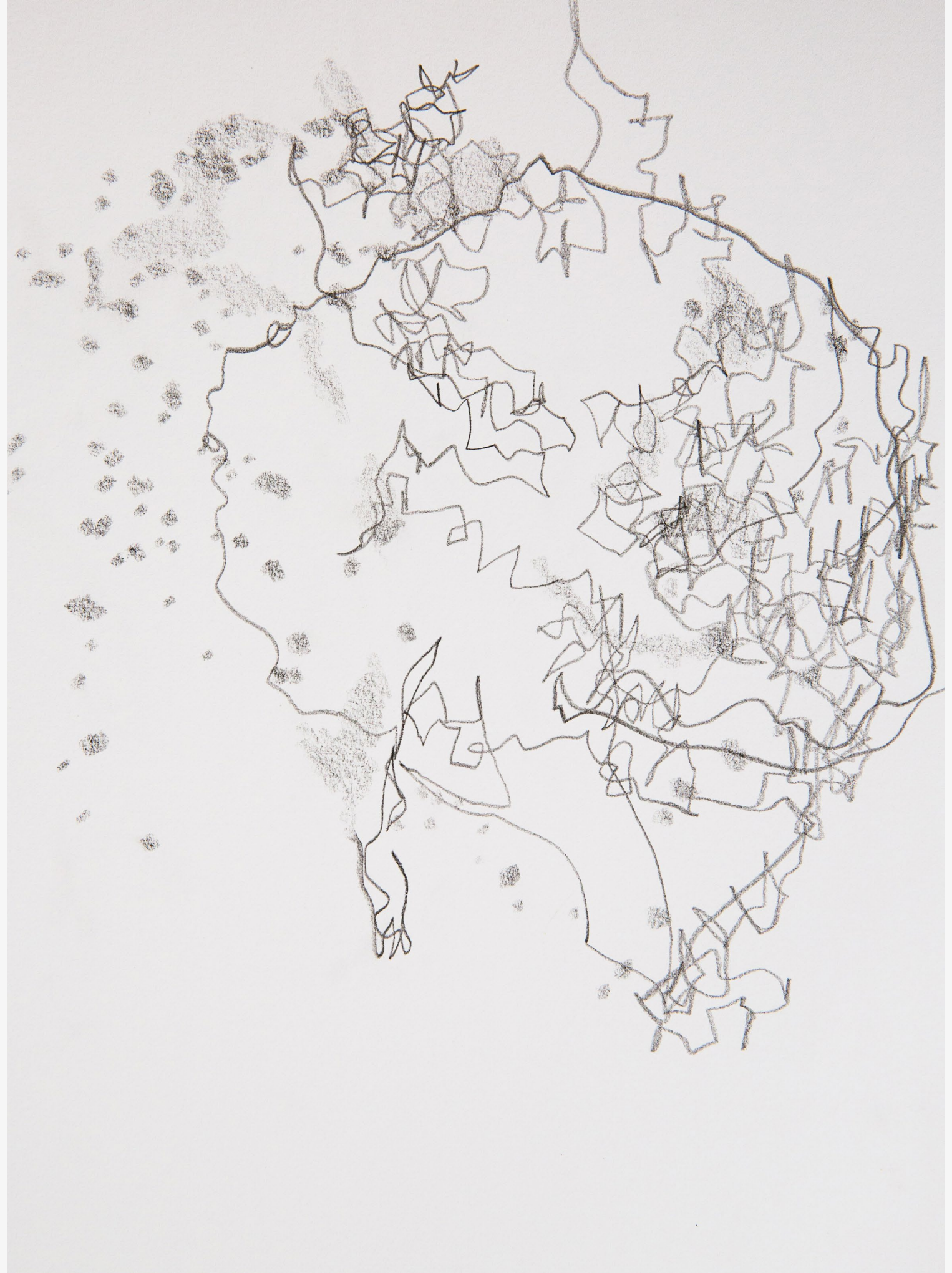
² Drawing without looking at the marks being made, so that focus remains fixed upon the subject.

³ Drawing using a continuous line.

Essences: Part A

wonky, imprecise lines
energy is contained within them
the drawing's alive

Mark value
Pencil on paper
21 x 29.7 cm
2022



absorbed by tree
completely immersed in its presence
I was in a trance

Seeing deeper #1

Pen on paper
21 x 29.7 cm
2022



there is a level
where you really connect with being
you connect with the oneness of everything
observing
appreciating
connecting
being one with it

Seeing deeper #2

Pen on paper
21 x 29.7 cm
2022



two or ten minutes
it didn't make a difference
just two is enough
you can have a nicer day
so much space. it's amazing

Accessibility

Coloured pencils on paper
21 x 29.7 cm
2022



satisfying state
relaxed. calm. focused
no mental chatter

Focus
Pen and pencil on paper
21 x 29.7 cm
2022



I've always had a bias
a preconceived notion
of what drawing means
what arts mean
not surprising I was never good
I didn't particularly enjoy
it felt like a waste of time
it's a form of accepting
recognising your relationship prior

Preconceptions

Pencil on paper
21 x 29.7 cm
2022



overthink process
no flow, no deep, too much head
release and detach
letting my hand go and do
something released in that moment

Control

Pen on paper
21 x 29.7 cm
2022



super intentional
the most slow-it-down
be-here-now
the process was all about being here
being present
and slowing it down

Slowing
Pen on paper
21 x 29.7 cm
2022



drawing brings out
the inner child in me
results don't matter

Judgment and expectation
Pen and coloured pencils on paper
21 x 29.7 cm
2022



lines of a fallen branch
full of twists
knots of imperfections
tiny hills, crevices
dotted holes
hidden shapes and dimensions
cragged, jagged
dried and faded from the fall
there is so much to see
tiny details I missed
drawing, I see the inner world
a tiny world
it remains alive in the marks
in paying attention
I am becoming more alive in my seeing

Nature appreciation

Pencil on paper
21 x 29.7 cm
2022



it's very freeing
to draw without looking
not judge how it looks
it didn't have to resemble anything
there wasn't any need to control
I could do whatever I want

Aesthetics

Pen on paper
21 x 29.7 cm
2022



I was feeling stressed
what was happening around the world
the pandemic
freaking out
hard to be present
and taking time to do these exercises
there was some guilt
trying to find pleasurable things
when the whole world is on fire
tense, frustrated and scared
I wasn't able to find my footing
it's hard to feel positive
in times like this

Obstacles

Pen on paper
21 x 29.7 cm
2022



I surprised myself
actually, this is kind of decent!
I love nuggets of surprising myself
you can do it!
you have that side
you've denied for a very long time
it did unleash a part of believing
I can draw!
I can enjoy the process
have fun with it
it unleashed acceptance of the drawing
maybe you're underestimating yourself
maybe we all can draw
but we don't let ourselves go there

Surprise

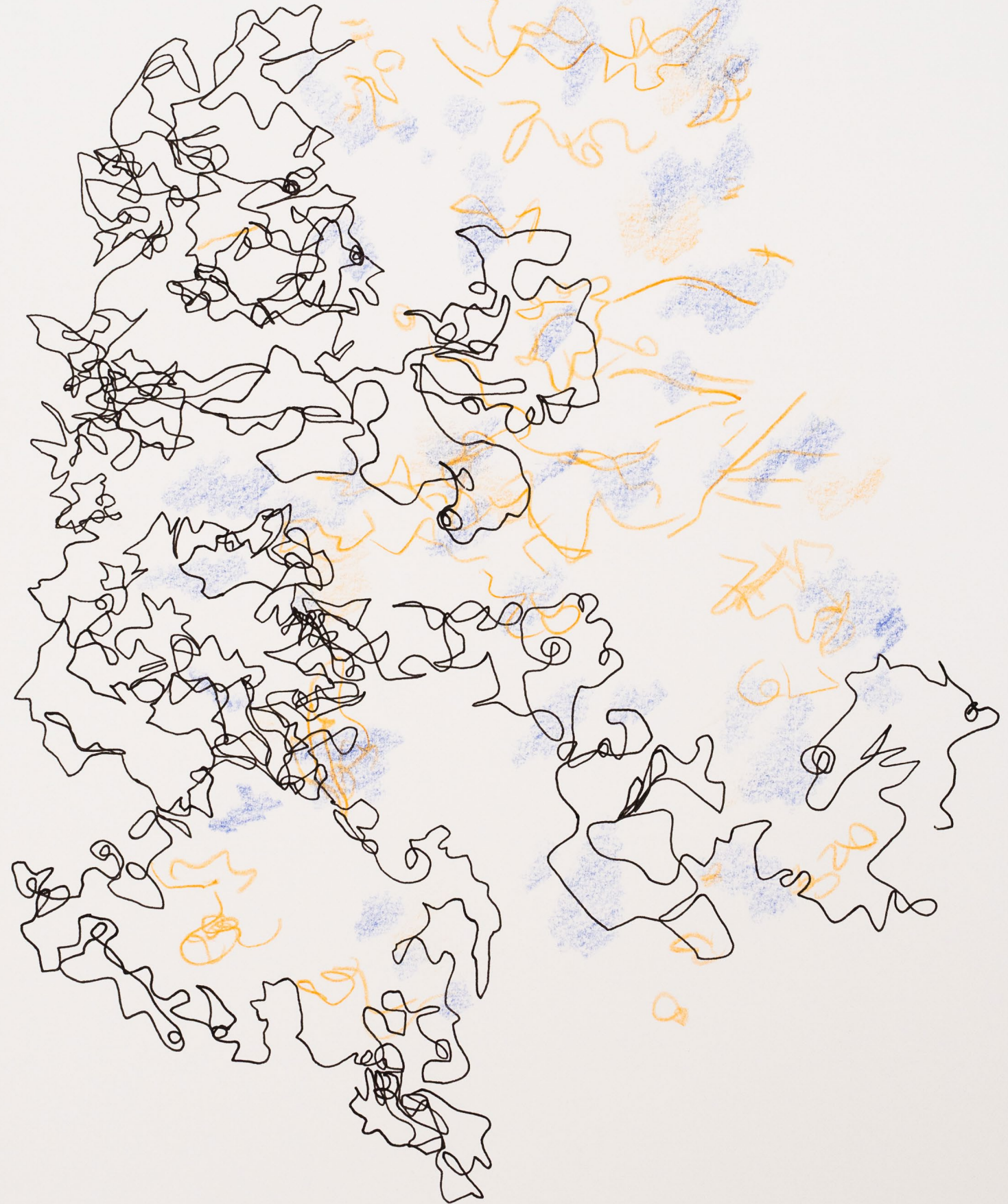
Pencil on paper
21 x 29.7 cm
2022



on the days you do this
you feel more centred
peaceful, fulfilled
then on days you don't
you miss that feeling
you know it comes from
doing something beautiful for yourself
like this

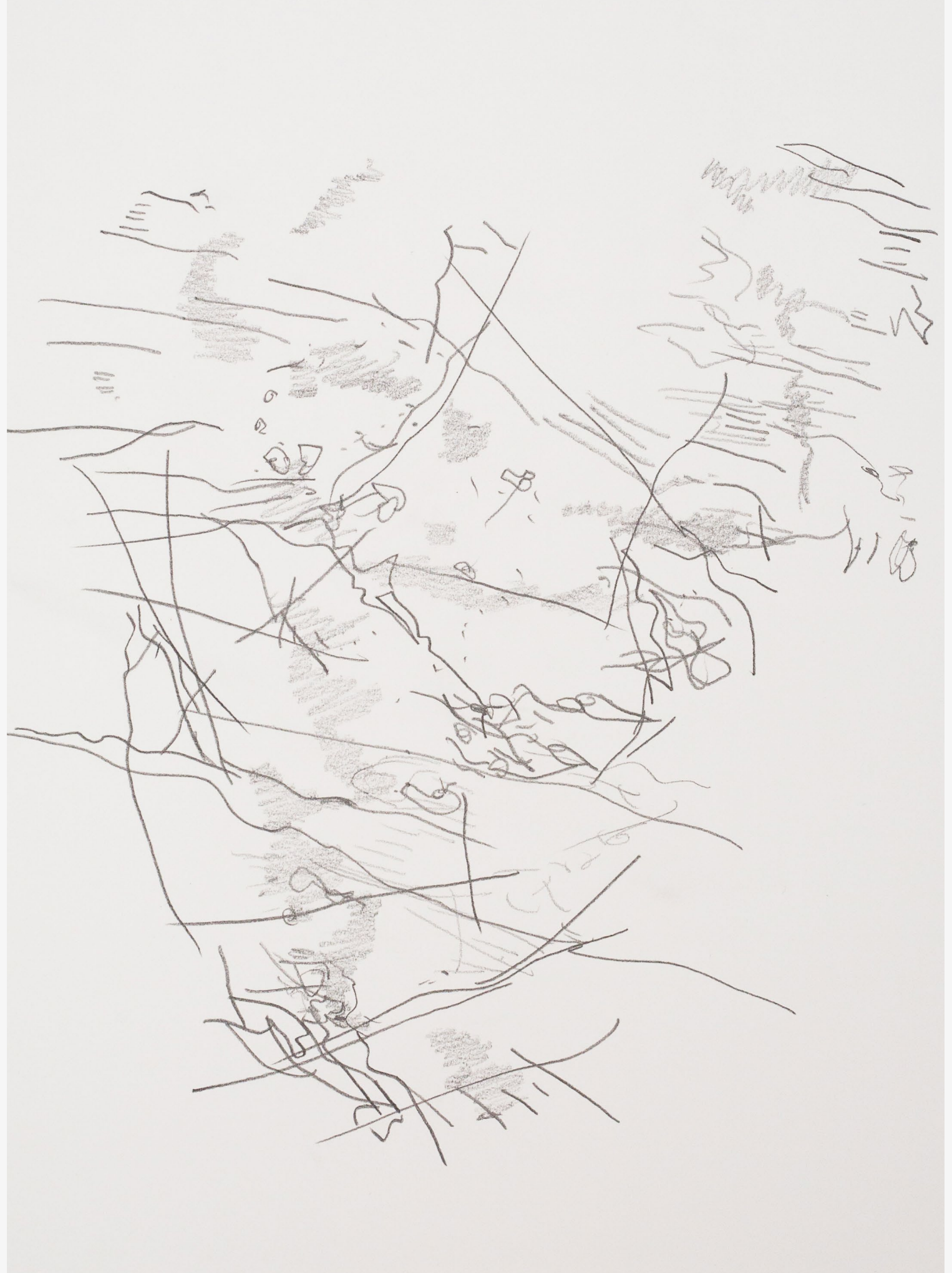
Enjoyment

Pen and coloured pencils on paper
21 x 29.7 cm
2022



the sound of pencil
on paper, very calming
pencil on paper

Sensory
Pencil on paper
21 x 29.7 cm
2022



immersed in practice
moving around veins seen before
I see anew

Sustained practice
Pen on paper
21 x 29.7 cm
2022

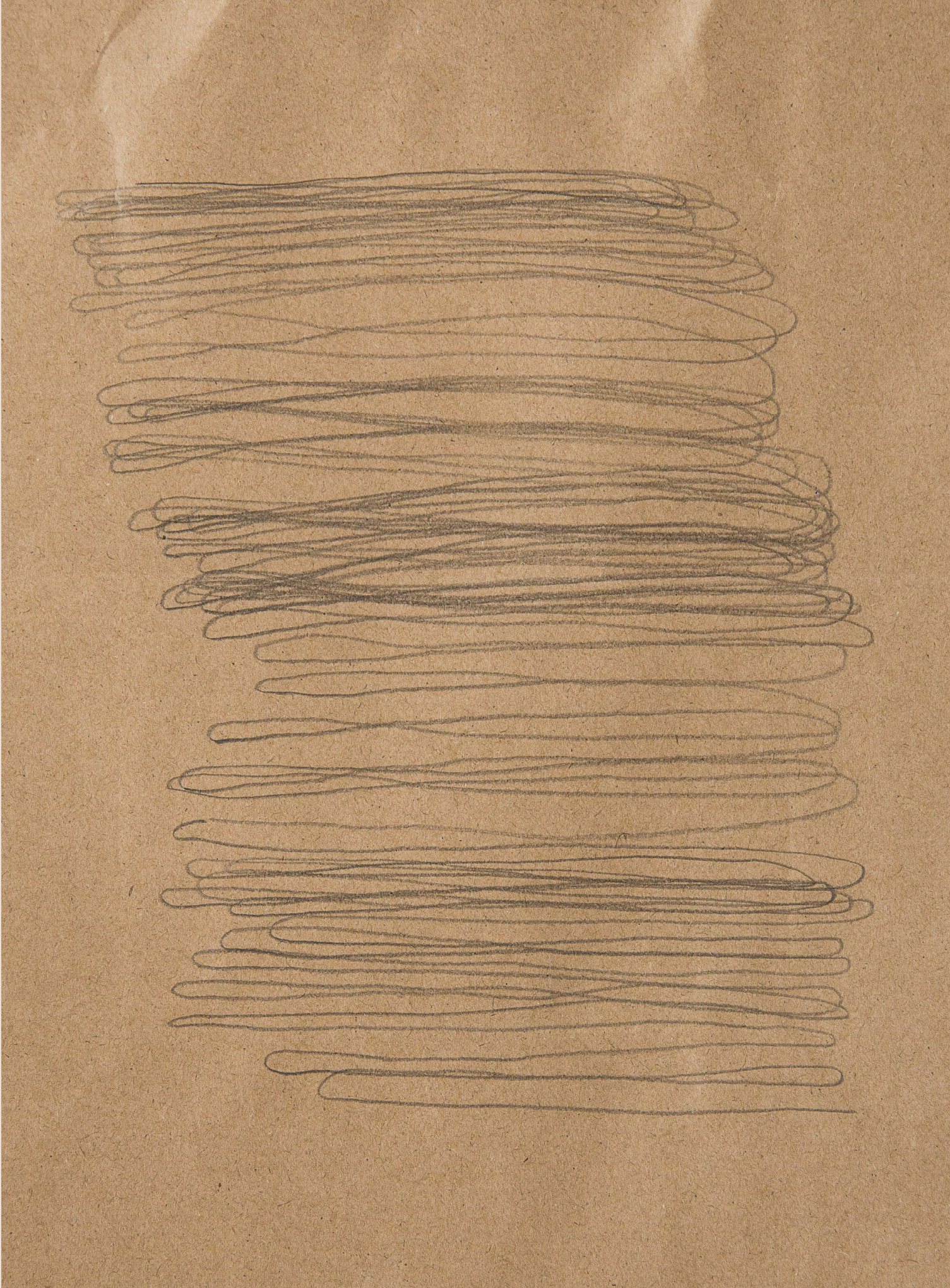


Essences: Part B

the pencil sounds
as if breathing with me
a sound anchor

Drawing the breath

Pencil on paper
30 x 34 cm
2022



engaged making marks from the start
switching between awareness of hands
moving in sync
as one
letting motion dictate directions
moving simultaneously
focused on the hand link
lost within some lines
when all attention was on motion

Drawing with two hands

Pen on paper
30 x 34 cm
2022



guided eye line
travels secretly under the table
delight when seen

Blind drawing under table

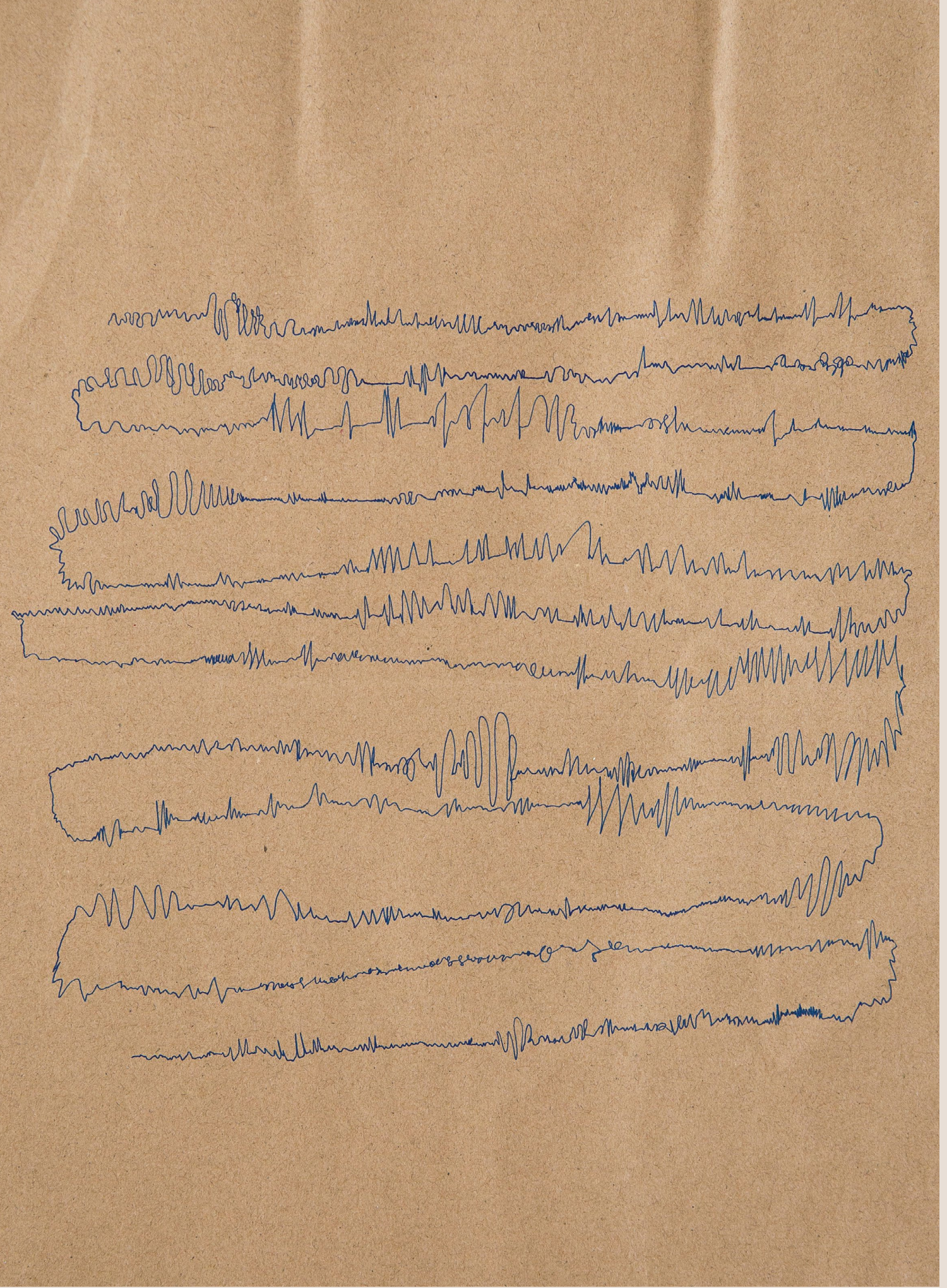
Pencil on paper
30 x 34 cm
2022



a meditation throughout
a stillness to the practice
connected to surroundings

Soundscape drawing

Pen on paper
30 x 34 cm
2022



choosing colours
swirling circles
intuitively shading
lost in the circles
movement flows
freedom to colour wherever
there are no rules
caught up in the motion
the pencil swirls me
inside the present

Travelling while colouring in

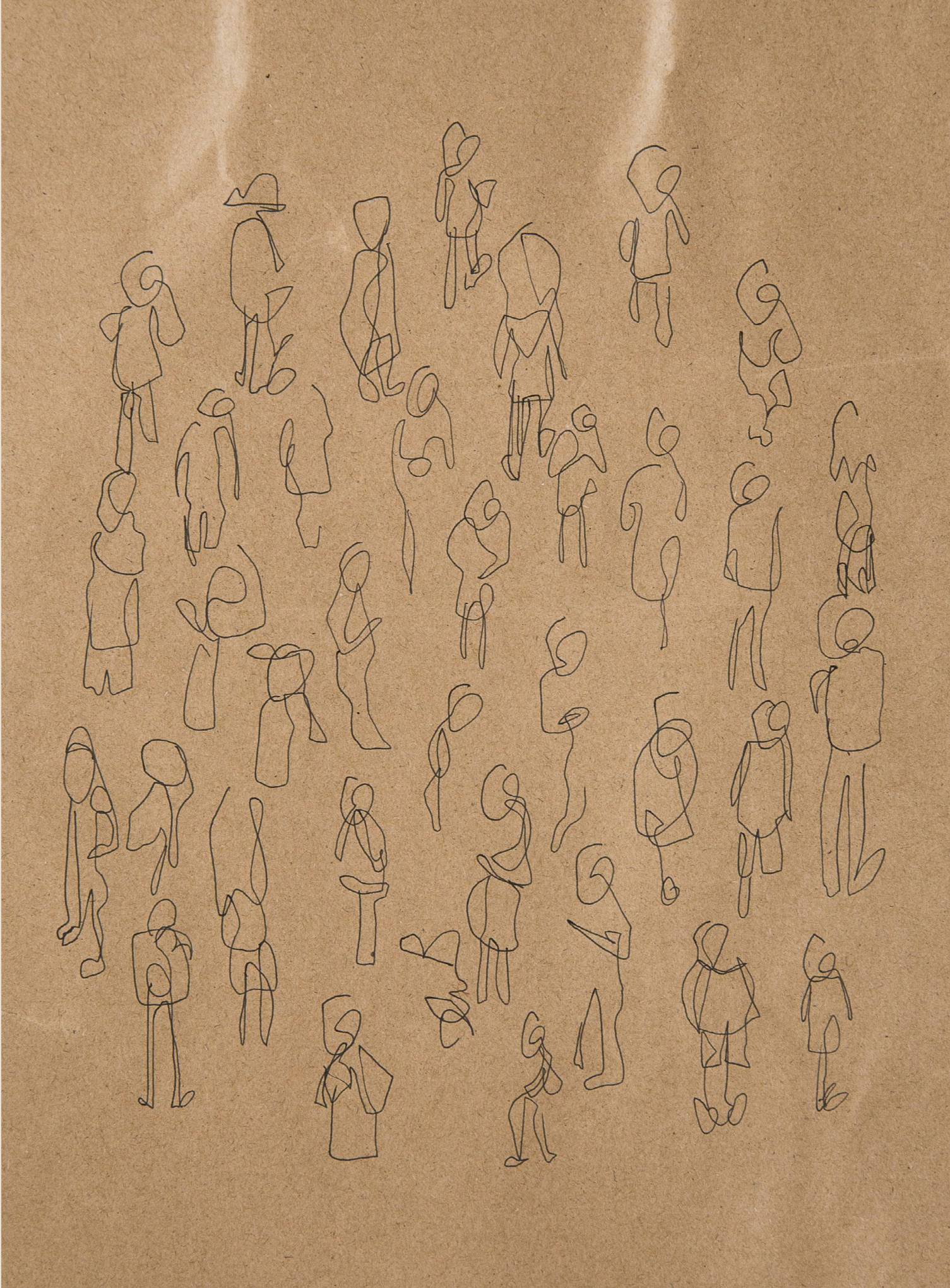
Coloured pencils on paper
30 x 34 cm
2022



a few seconds
moving limbs, hats and backpacks
absorbed capturing life

Rapidly drawn people

Pen on paper
30 x 34 cm
2022



bulky pen grip
a challenging practice focuses attention
no mind wanderings

Drawing with a bundle of tools

Pen on paper
30 x 34 cm
2022



I was immersed
enjoying the playful, experimental approach
accepting all mistakes

Tracing

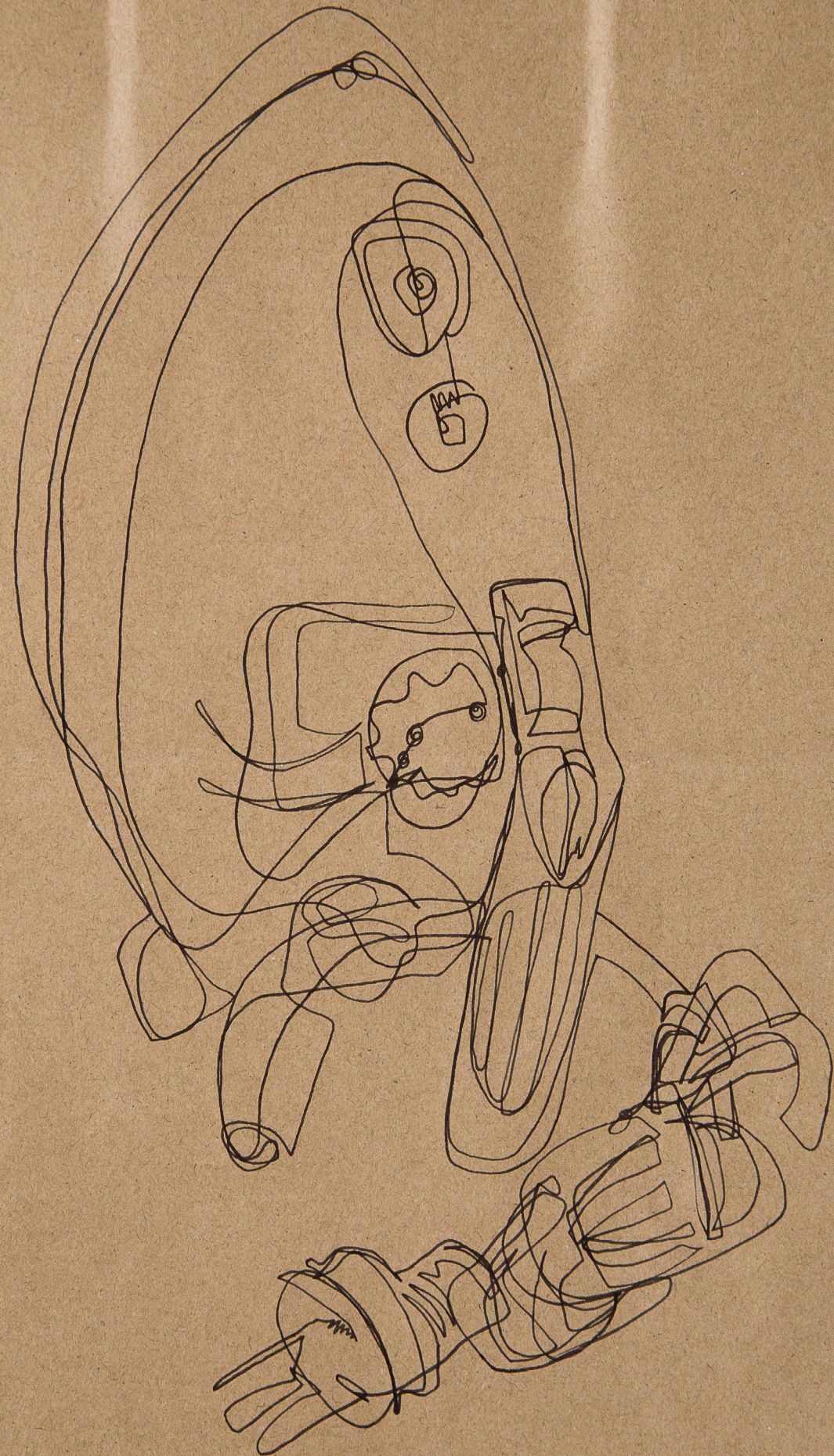
Pen on paper
30 x 34 cm
2022



smooth continuous line
rolls around the ridges and corners
the blind line keeps attention fixed
but no desire to repeat
a preference for less order
and more disorganised details
an unmemorable experience

Continuous drawing of an inorganic subject

Pen on paper
30 x 34 cm
2022



eye guides hand
the intricate stems and branches
witnessing fluttering leaves
suddenly a bird appears
it's gone in a flash
refocus to shrubs
eye tracing leaves
the small pulls me in
holding my attention

Blind drawing

Pencil on paper
30 x 34 cm
2022

