TRACINGS

UNRAVELING *HOME* IN THE DIASPORA

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A thesis
presented to the University of Waterloo
in fulfillment of the
thesis requirement for the degree of
Master of Architecture

Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, 2019

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis including any required final revisions as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

ABSTRACT

Tracings: Unraveling Home in the Diaspora presents works that contemplate the notion of home, post-migration. Inspired by my family's journey from the Middle-East to Canada, the thesis examines ways in which the juxtaposition of memories and spatial encounters can explore the hybridized domestic identity of an Iraqi-Canadian, living in the suburbs of Southern Ontario. For migrants, spaces they leave behind are solely accessible through memories, photos, and video calls with loved ones back home, whereas spaces they confront upon arrival remain distant and unfamiliar. Through the lenses of memory, experimentation, sensation, and encounter, I revisit the domestic spaces of my past and present, and respond to them using sketches, video recordings, photos and making ventures. Aiming to unravel a layered perception of home today, I juxtapose gauzy childhood memories where I play in the shade of the trees in my grandparents' garden in Baghdad, with a recent encounter with Cooksville Creek, a landscape feature adjacent to my first Canadian home in Mississauga.

Striving to resolve the paradox of home in the diaspora, *Tracings,* a four-piece textile series, explores the relationship between my recalling mind and my sensing body. In deterritorializing memories of a past home and sensations of a familiar landscape, in each season, and reterritorializing them into each work, I uncover fragments of home. Within each piece, as I unravel coloured thread on a mould of the rocks at the creek, I capture the forces of my encounter with a landscape that is physically accessible to me today. Simultaneously, as I lay down each layer of thread, I dwell upon the garden I played in as a child, a place I no longer experience, yet unceasingly retreat to in my mind. As I complete each piece, I peel away the mould of the landscape, leaving only the forces of my interaction with it behind, made visible through color.

Throughout the process, I negotiate the contours of my home in the diaspora, as each piece becomes a temporal, open-ended map of its terrain. My aim, as I create the series, is not to merely represent my memories and the landscape, but to create works that evoke a sense of ambiguity and express the nagging feeling of "in-between", caused by

migration. The work, an intimate and personal endeavor, aspires to speak universally to migrants today, *to anyone who ever had to leave home.*

In addition, the thesis unfolds alongside an analysis of contemporary artists who, in their bodies of work, address issues of displacement and the search for home. Furthermore, the concepts that guide the research are distilled from the works of philosophers who, in their writing, focus on art and architecture's affect on the beholder and the inhabitant as intrinsic arbitrators between humans and the cosmos.

Throughout the thesis, I reflect on *what* home means to me
and *where* home is today.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To my supervisor Richard Andrighetti and TRDII instructor and committee member Dereck Revington: thank you for your guidance along the process and your patience, as I continuously experimented and failed and tried again. This work would not have been the same without your valued input.

To mom, dad, Sadik, Salman, Sarah, Nur and Ban, and my extended family in Ontario, Michigan, and Baghdad: thank you all for always being there for me and having my back whenever I needed any of you. None of this would have been possible without your incredible support, patience, and interest in my work.

To my friends at UWSA: thank you all for making this an unforgettable experience, it was more fun with all of you around.

Special thanks to Paniz Moayeri for editing my book, to Victor Zagabe and Suhaib Bhatti for the insightful discussions whenever I got stuck, and to Heinz Koller and David Correa for your valuable input and suggestions while I made the pieces.

Many thanks to the UWSA administration office, the custodial staff, the librarians and the ACM staff: thank you all for all the help, kind words and encouragement along the way.

To my grandmothers Su'ad and Ameera and my grandfathers Sadik and Salman: thank you for inspiring many parts of this work. I look up to all of you and I know you would have all loved to see my work.

DEDICATION

To all Iraqis across the Diaspora.
To anyone who ever had to leave *home*.

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INTRODUCTION

Humourously reposing in the shade, in the east corner of my grandparents' garden, the bald patch in the grass drew me across. Grass that had been exposed to the scorching Baghdadi sun all summer crunched under my bare feet as I paced back and forth, plotting and gathering all the tools needed for the process. After finding everything I needed, I dug a hole in the middle of the patch using a stick I found in the ditch under the olive tree. Then, I carefully placed the small cigarette butt I found in the driveway inside, buried it, and proceeded to water it. Like *Nana's*[1] roses, this cigarette tree would blossom if I water it daily.

We left Baghdad the year after.
I do not know if my cigarette tree ever sprouted.

Prompted by an ongoing search for home following my family's migration, my thesis begins with a broad question concerning displacement: how does displacement affect the identity of the individual? Moreover, how can a displaced individual's layered notion of home be discerned through making?

I begin by reflecting on two of my most memorable homes preceding, and following, the migration. Through the lenses of memory, experiment, sensation and encounter, I examine domestic spaces of the present and the past. The memories I recall are of a significant place from my childhood in Baghdad: my maternal grandparents' house in Al-Kadhimiyah, adjacently west of the Tigris river. Though not the house I resided in as a child, it is the place in which I have formed my most vivid childhood memories. The experiments I carry out next are, in a way, a process of uncovering the materials and making methodologies I later use for the making of the pieces presented in the fifth part of the thesis. These ventures allow me to test out the intensity of the affect[2] that each combination of materials and processes produce in response to the questions I have

proposed. The sensations I experience are of the landscape that surrounds my very first home in Mississauga, Canada: Cooksville Creek. Despite living next to the stream for four years, it remained a picturesque view I would observe from my ninth-floor living room window, a physically unexplored territory. Finally, the works I present are objects not of recognition, but of encounter. Each piece is a window onto another realm, a tracing of home that, rather than representing what already exists, challenges the beholder by disrupting preestablished images of what home can be.

Of Memory

As we drive around the roundabout that leads to my grandparents' street, my mother warns my brother and I to behave throughout our visit, otherwise, we would not be allowed to stay the night. In the centre, the roundabout features a statue of Abdel-Mihsin Al-Kadhimi; a famous Iraqi poet and a native of the neighborhood.

Today, the only thing that connects me back to that

Figure 1: the statue of Al-Kadhimi adjacent to the Tigris river

house, where I spent much of my childhood weekends, are video calls with my aunt's family. During these calls, I see fragments of that house on the screen. Still lingering in my mind are memories of my cousins and I attempting to climb the two palm trees that *Jiddoo*[3] planted, getting scoulded for picking green tangerines, and sliding down the limestone stairs on thin mattresses. In their book "What is Philosophy?," Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari state,

> "The house takes part in an entire becoming. It is life."[4]

Unable to visit since my family's migration (due to war and political instability in its aftermath), I enjoy hearing stories about my family members' lives growing up in Baghdad. *Mama*[5] shares memories of her family and her sleeping on the rooftop of that very house every night during the warm months of the year. She recounts *Nana* making sour orange blossom jam using the flowers that grew in the garden. She describes life during the Gulf War and the sanctions that followed, memories that I faintly recall.

Figure 2: The limestone staircase hallway in my grandparents' house, Baghdad

As I listen, I reminisce about my memories in that same house. I remember the living room carpets being washed on the rooftop. I remember *Nana* packaging dates in plastic bags and asking me to sit on them to compress them before storing them away. I recall drifting in and out of an afternoon nap on the garden swing as my family drank steeped cardamom tea, ate *ka'ak*[6], and discussed politics I could not understand. I distinctly remember the shimmering colours in a noxious-smelling puddle I found in the driveway one afternoon. "Don't touch that, it is dangerous!" someone exclaimed from the kitchen right before my fingertip touched the surface of the gasoline puddle.

The most vivid memories I have of that house take place in the garden, the driveway, the portico, the roof; outdoor domestic spaces that are open to the sky, yet remain private, occupying a middle realm that is not entirely indoor or outdoor. Intrigued by the commonality of this paradox in contemporary domestic life in Baghdad as I remember it, I consult the traditional courtyard houses of Al-Kadhimiyah,

Figure 3: The driveway of my grandparents' house, Baghdad

the very same houses that my grandparents and their families occupied before the spread of modernity in the city. These houses offer clues to the origin and structure of many daily rituals that Baghdadis still embrace in their routines today.

Upon researching the traditional courtyard houses of Al-Kadhimiyah, I discover that each of these dwellings encompasses a central courtyard, a private outdoor space that acts as the heart of the home; a space that all rooms face. The courtyard is open to the sky and the elements, and typically features a water fountain in the centre along with planted gardens. This beautiful embrace of a small parcel of the outdoors in each home is perhaps the reason behind the significance of similar spaces in contemporary Baghdadi houses, the same spaces of resonance stoutly withheld in my memory, where I draw inspiration as I begin to experiment with materials and making methodologies.

Of Experiment

Inspired by the rhizomatic method of Gilles Deleuze and

Figure 4: A section of a courtyard house in Al-Kadhimiyah, Baghdad

Felix Guattari[7] (Colebrook, p.xxvii-xxviii), the next part of the thesis consists of a series of material and methodology ventures that rely on decision making through experiment. One by one, these undertakings lead me to arrive at the final material and methodology combination that most intensely captures the affect of displacement I seek to express through my work. In his book "Art Encounters Deleuze and Guattari: Thought Beyond Representation," Simon O'Sullivan says,

> "A rhizome, as a map, is to do with experimentation. It does not trace something that came before (again no representation) rather it actively creates the terrain it maps – setting out the coordination points for worlds-in-progress, for subjectivities-to-come."[8]

I begin by analyzing the work of contemporary artists who, in their work, address the issue of hybrid cultures and the search for identity. Artist Brian Jungen constructs ironic pieces that consist of juxtapositions of North American indigenous art forms and objects of consumerism found

in contemporary department stores in North America. Cal Lane torches scrap metal pieces that appear to emerge from the aftermath of a car bombing, into delicate, lacey creations. Mona Hatoum creates tension using everyday objects made to appear like torture devices, to tell her story of displacement away from her homeland of Palestine. These artists help me navigate the challenge of contemplating displacement and the search for home, through making.

In the first phase of my investigation, I focus on the concept of juxtaposition. I set out to create objects that are hybrids of the two cultures, places, and lives I have come to know before and after migration. In the second phase, I focus on materials that each possess different affects and require specific making processes. Finally, I consider both the concept of juxtaposition and the combination of materials and making methodologies that would allow me to simultaneously express my memories of the past and my sensations of the present.

Figure 5: Chiharu Shiota, *A Room of Memory, 2009*

Installation

Of Sensation

In this part of the thesis, I go back to my very first home in Canada and the landscape that surrounds it: Cooksville Creek, in the heart of Mississauga. This place, which I observed daily from the ninth floor, becomes the physical site I use for my sensory investigations. The creek, a feature that quietly meanders by the building, is the backdrop of my living room windows for four years.

Parallel to the second, this section of the thesis looks at the work of contemporary artists who, in their pieces, address the concept of displacement and the loss of the home or land. Do Ho Suh creates an ephemeral world of nested memories as he drapes his childhood home in Korea inside his very first residence in the United States. Chiharu Shiota challenges her feeling of both belonging to, and simultaneously feeling estranged from Japan and Berlin by erecting a structure out of uninstalled windows taken out of context. Vanessa Dion Fletcher walks along land formations in locations that are of significance to her family's history with copper plates strapped to her feet.

Inspired by these works, I decide to confront my reservations about settlement post migration. With cameras in hand, I return to the creek and work with it physically and intimately for the first time. Throughout my venture, this landscape becomes the raw canvas that saturates my senses and upon which I map out my memories.

Of Encounter

As I begin to reflect on home throughout the process, I struggle to identify what or where that is today. After years of moving, calling many dwellings, cities, and countries home, the notion of home begins to blur. Instead, home is a collection of juxtaposed memories: images of palm tree shadows and snow-covered driveways, scorching hot tiles and icicle trimmed pitched roofs, sandstorms, and blizzards. Home has become an archive of layered moments of intensity where I momentarily feel like I belong – *a fleeting place.* Gaston Bachelard states in his book "The Poetics of Space,"

> "A house constitutes a body of images that give

> mankind proofs of stability. We are constantly re-imagining its reality…" [9]

After recalling memories in the first section, carrying out with experiments in the second, and sensing familiar, yet unexplored, landscapes in the third, the final part of the thesis then presents a series of textile sculptures that explore the relationship between my recalling mind and my sensing body. As the research unfolds, I set out to examine ways in which spatial experiences, through narrative, material, and methodology can explore and express the hybridized identity of an Iraqi migrant living in the suburbs of Southern Ontario. In other words, the thesis juxtaposes memories of a childhood home in Baghdad, and sensations of a landscape encounter near my first Canadian home in Mississauga, to express the nagging feeling of the "in-between" caused by migration. In reference to art as a practice that prompts change, O'Sullivan states,

> "Art practice might involve the positioning of an object in such a way that it disrupts the situation that surrounds it. It is in this sense that art can

Figure 6: Rocks at Cooksville Creek in the fall, Mississauga

> have such a disproportionately large effect on its 'context'."[10]

The objects I present in this section seek to challenge the pre-conceived notions that both Iraqi and non-Iraqi Canadians may have about each of the two cultures. The works act as physical and conceptual disruptions in each context. The pieces further elaborate on, and embrace the idea of the migrant's home as an "in-between" place that is neither in their homeland nor in the lands in which they have finally settled – *a hybrid space.*

Tracings

The last section of the book presents a series of four textile sculptures that seek to engage with home in the diaspora. Through physically tracing a series of rocks at Cooksville Creek, using thread, fabric stiffener, a mould of the rocks, and my hands, I begin to create *tracings* of home. As I layer the thread on a mould of one of the rocks at the creek, I simultaneously reminisce about the trees in my grandparents' garden. I recall their shadows, colours,

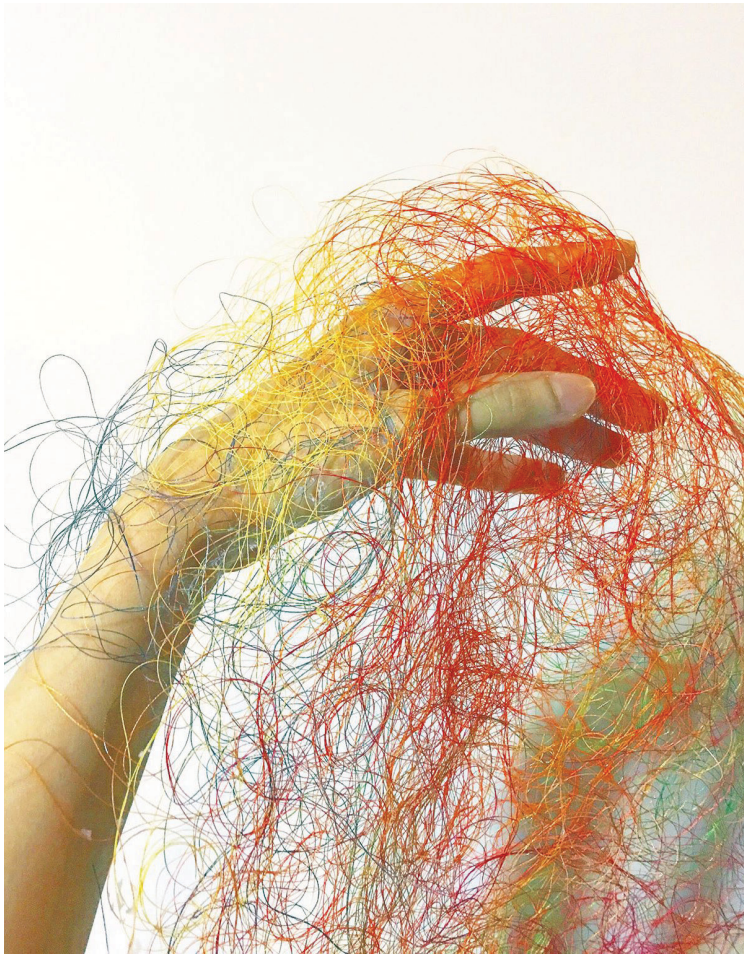

Figure 7: A thread sample of the fall palette

OF MEMORY

> "We write not with childhood memories but through blocs of childhood that are the becoming-child of the present."[11]

I recall going to work with *baba*[12] and crossing the Tigris on a small motorboat. This is perhaps one of my fondest memories in Baghdad: realizing how wide the river was, watching seagulls glide above the deep teal water, dipping my hands in the river, and the excitement of being on a boat for the first time. In another memory, *Nana* threw small, carefully wrapped sacs into the river, each small parcel contained a handwritten prayer. A young man broke away from a group of people swimming off a sandy bank in the distance, approached, and asked *Nana* what the sacs contained. With a sly look on her face, she quietly blurted, "gold." Without hesitation, he jumped into the river.

Figure 8: A photo taken by *Jiddoo* of the Tigris river flooding near my grandparents' house in Al-Kadhimiyah, Baghdad, 1953

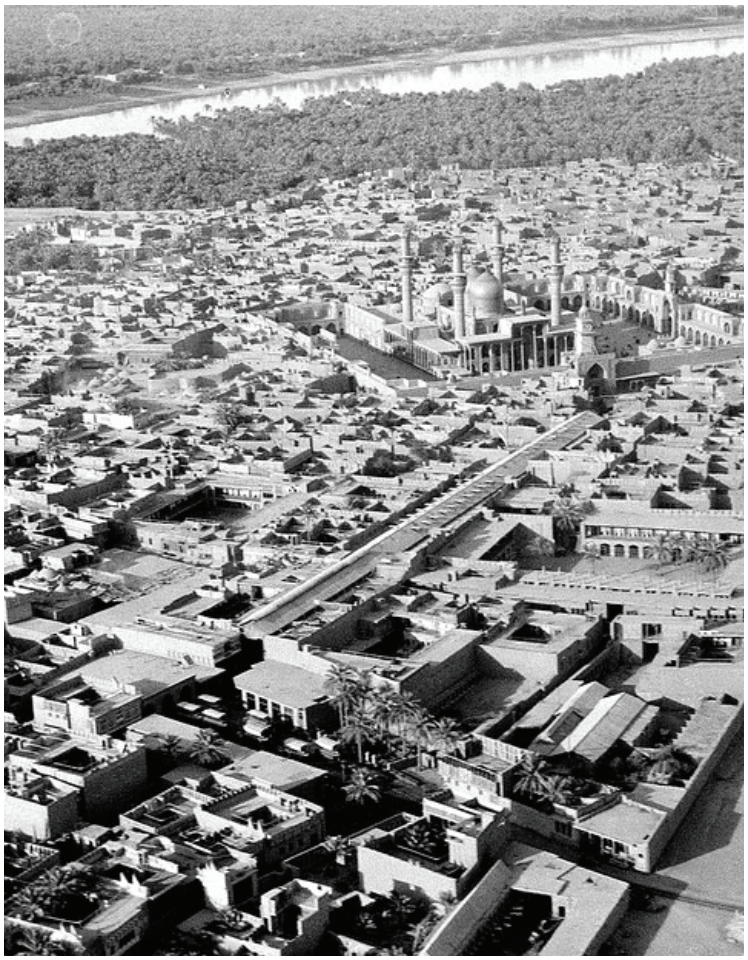

Figure 9: Traditional courtyard houses surrounding Al-Kadhimain shrine, west of the Tigris, Khadimiyah, Baghdad

The courtyard house

Al-Kadhimiyah, a northern neighborhood in Baghdad, adjacently west of the Tigris, is a historical district that unfolds around the shrines of two prominent Shiite Imams. The area is also home to some of the few surviving traditional Baghdadi courtyard houses today.[13] The houses, most of which are abandoned or neglected due to war and a lack of maintenance funding, are typical of the region's vernacular Islamic architecture; they offer both privacy and protection against the elements.

This typology of housing begins at the scale of the neighborhood; the houses are attached from three sides, then connected to the alleyways along the forth. Furthermore, the alleys are narrow and shaded by the protruding second-floor rooms, also known as the iconic Baghdadi *Shanasheel*, which help create a shaded environment for pedestrians below.[14]

At the scale of the house, the courtyard, known in Iraqi dialect as the *hosh*, is the center of the home; a sanctuary

Figure 10: A Traditional street, known in Iraqi dialect as a *darboona*

that is open to the sky and commonly featuring natural elements like fountains and plantation. This typology was perhaps most effective at offering a private outdoor space for the family to use comfortably, made possible due to the uniform height of all the houses and the strategic placement of the courtyard in the center of the house. Due to the abundance of privacy in all outdoor areas of the dwelling, these spaces were used daily, predominantly in the warm months of the year.[15] In the summer, for instance, the courtyard provided a shaded space for families to have meals, sit, and socialize. During the hotter summer months, the rooftop becomes a sleeping area, as the cool night breezes from the Tigris riverbanks provided relief from the heat. Residents would typically head up to the roof after dinner, following evening prayer, and wake up to the dawn call to prayer as the sun rises.[16] One of these houses, a corner dwelling that looked out onto the shrine, was home to my great maternal grandparents.

> "The house is a kind of scaffolding, a structuring schema of planes, its walls, roof, floor, doors and windows functioning as so many 'frames'." [17] -Gilles Deleuze

Figure 11: Aerial view of Al-Kadhimain Shrine and the courtyard houses that surround it, Al-Kadhimiyah, Baghdad

What I find most intriguing about these houses is the daily connection between the interior and exterior spaces of the home. With the outdoor corridors, or *tarmas,* as the only option for circulation year-round, occupants walk outside daily, to move from one room to the other, despite the elements. These semi-outdoor spaces are sensory oases. Water ripples in the fountains. Palm tree leaves rustle in the breeze. Birds are aflutter in the sky. The call to prayer, corresponding to the movement of the sun throughout the day, echoes from the shrines. The air is perfumed by the scent of fruit trees, flowers, and shrubs planted in the courtyard. From the centre of the home, the occupants are in-tune with the sunlight, temperature, humidity, precipitation and the occasional sand storms. Simply put, spaces like the *talars* (private porticos), the *tarmas* (outdoor corridors), the *hosh* (courtyard), and the roof act as intermediaries between the dwellers and the cosmos.

The childhood playground

As modernity took over Baghdad in the '50s, my mother's family moved to a newly built, modern house, close to the

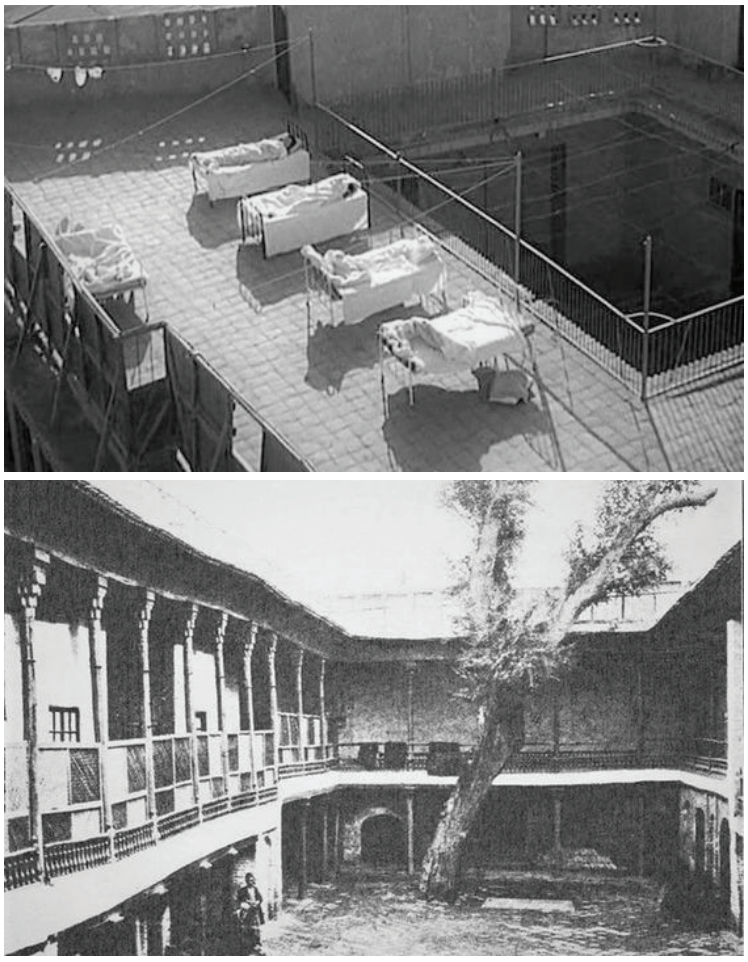

Figure 12: Baghdadis sleeping on the rooftop in the summer

Figure 13: A courtyard featuring a tree

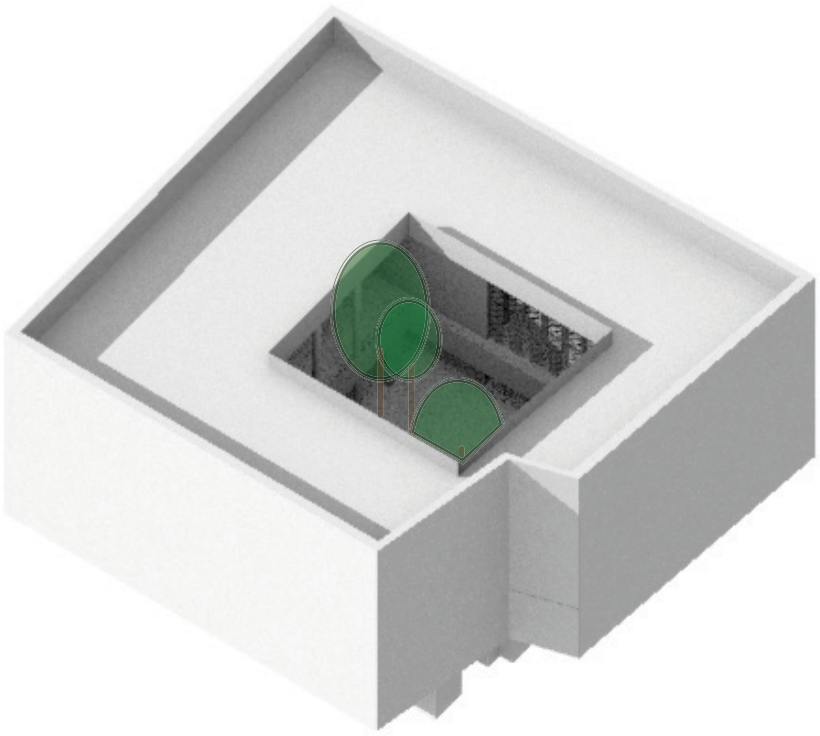

Figure 14: Massing model of a courtyard house in Kadhimiyah, Baghdad

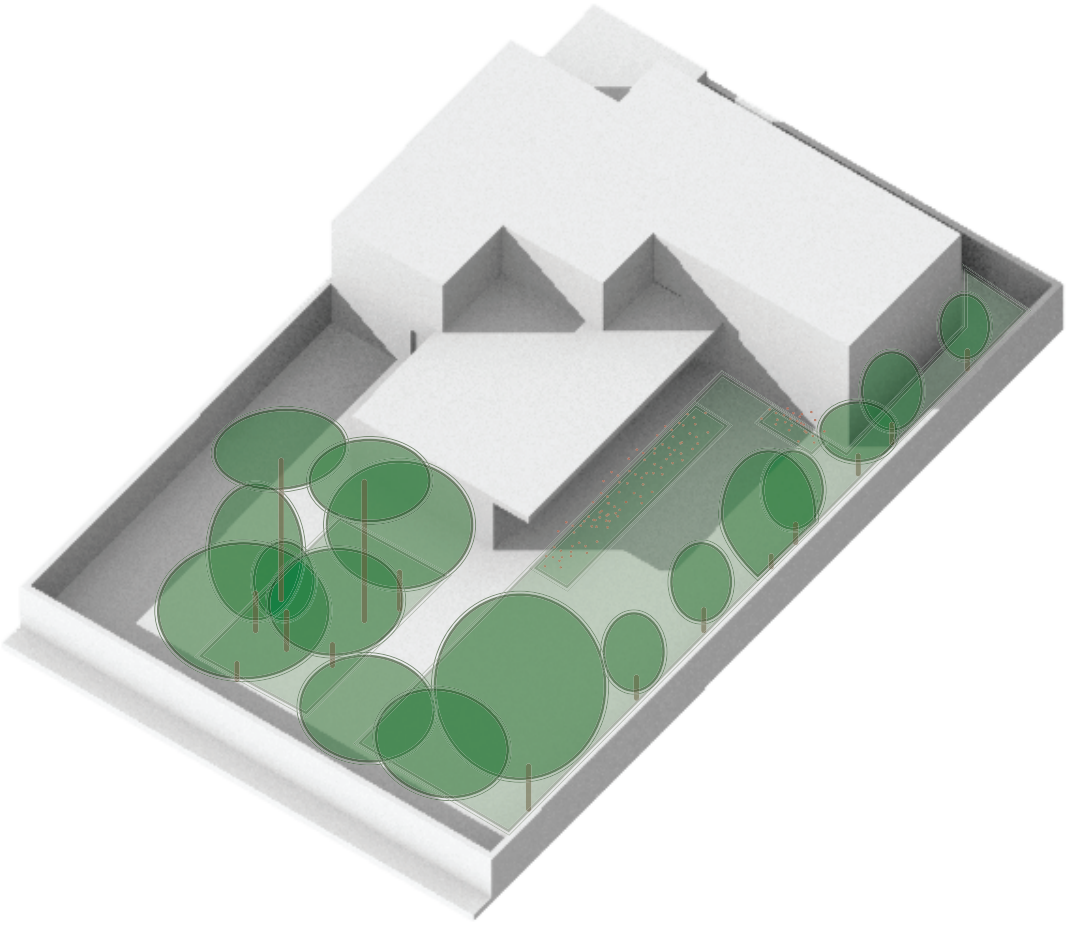

Figure 15: Massing model of the author's grandparents' house in Kadhimiyah, Baghdad

river banks. The house that *Jiddoo* built for his new family did not feature a courtyard. Instead, it unfolded alongside a garden, made private via a six-foot solid concrete fence, surrounded by thick, fruit-bearing tree canopies. Within this modern house, *Mama's* family, along with most residents of the city, continued to practice sleeping on roofs during the summer months. Deleuze and Guattari state,

> "The house does not shelter us from cosmic forces; at most it filters and selects them. Sometimes it turns them into benevolent forces."[18]

As Deleuze and Guattari suggest, the house is not merely a shelter; it is a breathable layer between the body and the expansive cosmos beyond. The ritual of sleeping on the roof in the summer months demonstrates how the house sometimes profoundly frames the forces of the universe, providing an open, yet private, platform on which occupants can enjoy the cool, night breeze coming from the river as they fall asleep under the stars.

As *Mama* narrates, when the weather warmed up in April,

Figure 16: The portico of my grandparents' house with *Nana*'s roses in the bottom right corner, Baghdad

Figure 17: A teapot steeping on the stovetop in my grandparents' kitchen, Baghdad

her parents, siblings and she set up their beds on the rooftop. The person elected for the task that day would head up to the roof to prepare the space for the night. They began by hosing down the sleeping area of the roof using cold water to cool off the space. Then, they set up the foldable beds, stored in the roof shed, before the sun set. Following dinner and evening prayer, the family would then head up to the roof for an evening tea, with trays of fruit (some of which are harvested from the garden) that they savored over lengthy conversations.

As I listen, I remember my childhood memories in that same house; winters in the living room, huddled on the carpet around the gas heater as a kettle of tea steeped above it. Cupping my hands around a warm bowl of *lablabee* (boiled chickpeas) dressed in salt and *narinj* (sour orange) harvested from the garden. Making sour orange blossom necklaces with my cousin, around the end of winter, as the blossoms turned the grass under the tree white. Watching my grandmother water her roses in the spring, counting trays of dates that were carried from the garden to the kitchen during harvest in the summer, and reinstalling the

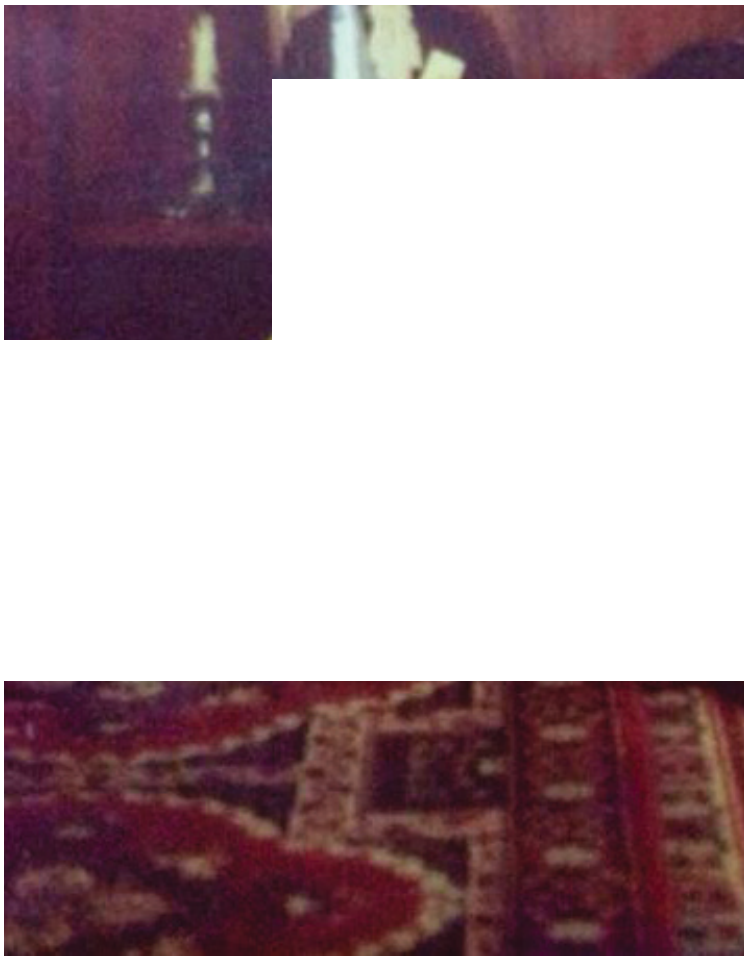

Figure 18: The living room carpet in the winter, Baghdad

Figure 19: The living room stone tiles in the summer, Baghdad

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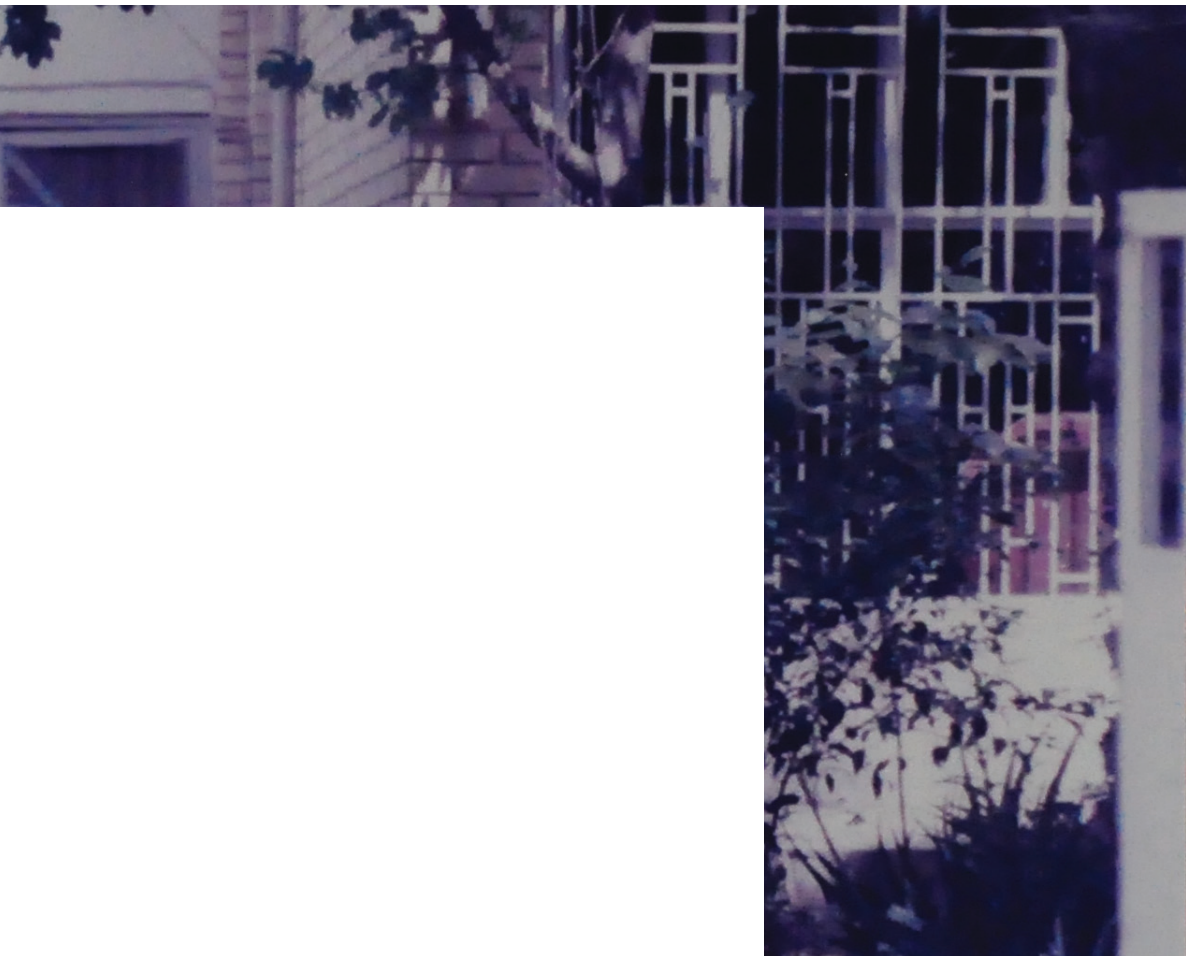


Figure 20: The driveway of my grandparents' house, Baghdad

carpets in the fall in preparation for winter. "In the fall," my mother recounts, "after harvesting the ripe olives from the tree in the garden, *Nana* would soak them in vinegar until they were tangy, then serve them with slices of fresh lemon. They were exquisite."

This house, as Deleuze and Guattari describe, exchanges and adjusts "the compound of non-human forces of the cosmos," and "man's non-human becomings." [19] From the forces of life within it to the forces of nature around it, to how these forces connect, capturing these forces is what I set out to achieve throughout my work.

As he speaks about the childhood house and its components, Bachelard states,

> "even when it is forever expunged from the present, when, henceforth, it is alien to all the promises of the future, even when we no longer have a garret, when the attic room is lost and gone, there remains the fact that we once loved a garret, once lived in an attic. We return to them

> in our night dreams. These retreats have the value of a shell."[20]

I remember playing on the large carpets in the living room for hours. I would imagine (as I am sure many kids who grew up in households with Persian carpets also did) that the borders within the carpet were roads and pavements. My toy cars would drive through this imaginary, ornamented cityscape lined with vines, leaves, and flowers. As the weather warmed up in April, my family would roll the carpets, take them to the roof and wash them, before storing them away for the summer. The roads got rolled up, and that imaginary world would momentarily disappear, before it strangely reappeared on the roof directly above the living room.

I remember watching this process unfold: an operation that involved garden hoses, cleaning brushes, floor wipers, and soap. What struck me the most was this odd feeling that the living room, and that whole imaginary world that the carpet encompassed, had migrated to the roof and was suddenly outside. As the water slowly

saturated the carpet, the colours grew vivid and glossy. The carpets, these precious, luxurious textiles, were suddenly in this rustic, vulnerable state. They were exposed to the elements, subject to confronting gravel, leaves, and water. These surfaces, which *Nana* only allowed us to walk on barefooted, were up against the cosmos.

I remember how the carpets transformed the roof itself, it suddenly seemed vital and rejuvenated. For one day, between spring and summer, this space was transformed into a temporary colourful realm that provided a brilliant backdrop for the imagination. It felt neither indoor nor outdoor, it was open and exposed, yet intimate and private. The unpolished, cement tiled surface of the roof, with magnolia tree branches gracefully leaning over its concrete fence, was absurdly contrasted by the brilliant sheen of the delicate textiles. In conjunction, an in-between space that was horizontally bound, yet vertically limitless in both directions was created, one side extending into the sky, the other a window onto the infinite.

Figure 21: The main solid wood door to my grandparents' house, hand carved by artist Mohammed Ghani Hikmat, 1950's, Baghdad

This sense of infinity was evident in other parts of the home: from the gold inscribed *Surat Yaseen* (the first verse of chapter 36 of the Qur'an) hanging in the living room, to the cover of the Quran in *Nana's* bedroom, the calligraphy transfigured every surface and material it overtook. Perhaps the most memorable part of the home that Arabic calligraphy transmuted was the main door. The composition featured the abstracted names of each of *Mama's* family members, beautifully engraved on wood. The letters formed an abstract pattern that, yet again, transformed the middle part of the door into a window onto the infinite. In his article entitled "The Evolution of Style," David Wade describes,

> "Much of the art of Islam, whether in architecture, ceramics, textiles or books, is the art of decoration – which is to say, of transformation. The aim, however, is never merely to ornament, but rather to transfigure. Essentially, this is a reflection of the Islamic preoccupation with the transitory nature of being. Substantial structures and objects are made to appear less

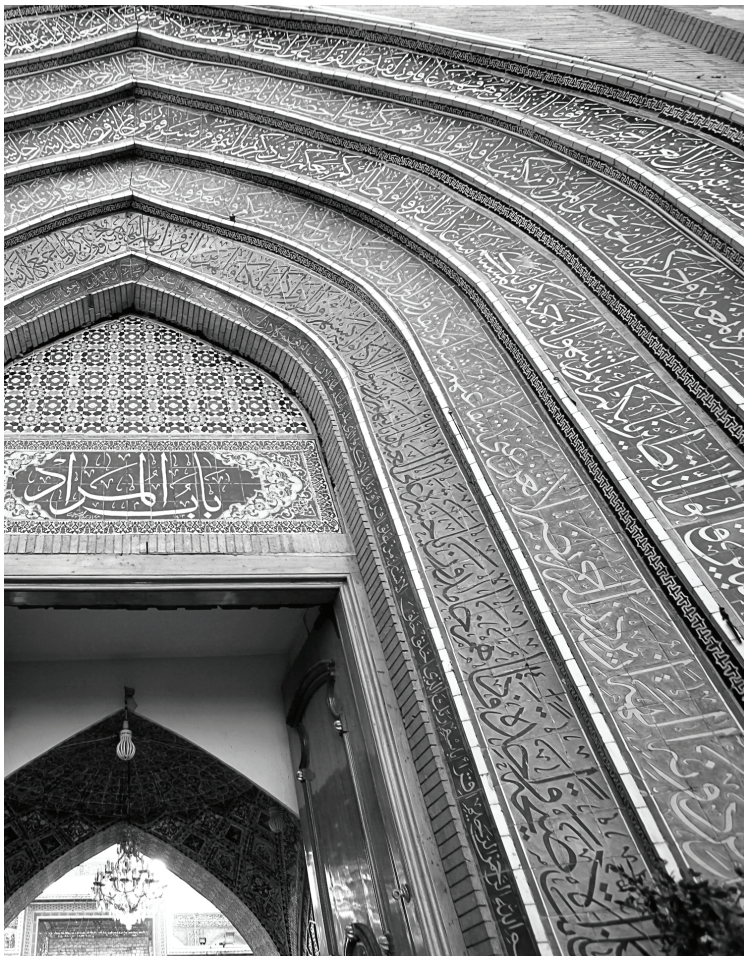


Figure 22: One of the gates of the "Kadhimain" Shrine, Al-Kadhimiyah, Baghdad

> substantial, materials are de-materialised. The vast edifices of mosques are transformed into lightness and pattern; the decorated pages of a Qur'an can become windows onto the infinite. Perhaps most importantly, the Word, expressed in endless calligraphic variations, always conveys the impression that it is more enduring than the objects on which it is inscribed."[21]

As the quote suggests, one of Islamic art's main appeals is its deconstruction of the object. The Persian carpet, the calligraphy on a page of the Quran, or a door are, therefore, beyond mere representation, they are windows onto another dimension, a spiritual realm – *a paradise*. In her piece, *Fana'a*, artist Afruz Amighi uses regional patterns, featuring flowers and vines, to weave intricate screens made of polyethylene and plexiglass. She then projects light onto them, casting soft, slightly hazy shadows onto the wall behind. The patterns projected transfigure the wall they fall onto, giving it a sense of lightness and rendering it delicate and ethereal, almost intangible. This movement from the artist's materials

Figure 23: Afruz Amighi, *Fana'a*, 2011

woven polyethelene, plexi-glass, light

to an elusive world of light and shadow, the move from the house to the cosmos, is, as Deleuze and Guattari describe, "a passage from the finite to the infinite"[22], a moment that was daily emphasized and embraced in the traditional courtyards of Baghdad and carried over to the city's contemporary homes. Deleuze and Guattari argue,

> "Perhaps the peculiarity of art is to pass through the finite in order to rediscover, to restore the infinite." They add, Art wants to create the finite that restores the infinite: it lays out a plane of composition that, in turn, through the action of aesthetic figures, bears monuments or composite sensations."[23]

Mama watches me fold the carpets for my research. They look like how we folded them thirteen years ago. "You should always roll carpets, never fold them," she says to me. "The harsh fold lines may damage them over time." We placed the carpets in this vulnerable state to transport them. They were the only figment of place from the houses

Figure 24: My current prayer rug, Mississauga

Figure 25: Carpet 1, the largest carpet, Mississauga

Figure 26: Close up of carpet 1, Mississauga

Figure 27: Close up of carpet 1, Mississauga

Figure 28: Carpet 2, the medium carpet, Mississauga

Figure 29: Close up of carpet 2, Mississauga

Figure 30: Carpet 3, the smallest carpet, Mississauga

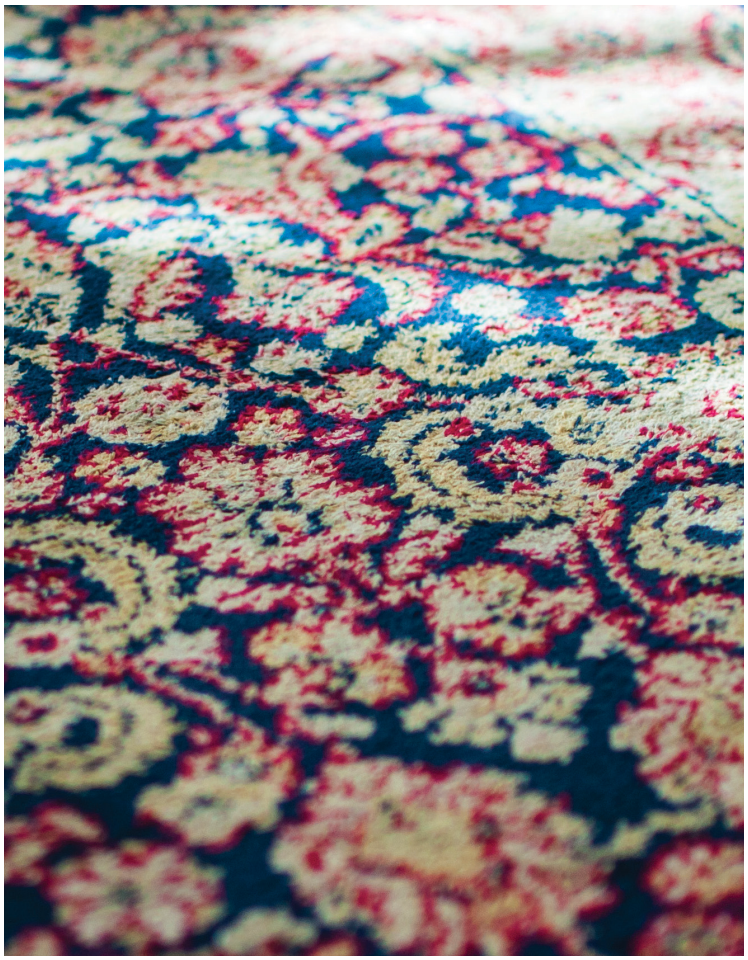


Figure 31: Close up of carpet 3, Mississauga

Figure 32: Carpet 4, the one Mama later brought back with her after visiting Iraq, Mississauga

Figure 33: Carpet 4 rolled, Mississauga

Figure 34: Close up of carpet 4, Mississauga

Figure 35: Snapshots from a video of the author folding one of the four carpets that the author's family brought to Canada , Mississauga

we left behind, capable of being brought along on our journey. When my family immigrated to Canada, clothes and these carpets took up most of the space in our luggage. As the years went by, the gardens depicted in each carpet, covered in vines and leaves, became a constant reminder of my grandparents' garden in Baghdad. Though far from ideal due to political instability, their garden lives within me and serves as the stage for my most memorable childhood moments. It is an ideal place that, as Bachelard previously stated, I
perpetually retreat to in my mind as a haven and a refuge.

The carpet

In his piece, Seoul Home, Do Ho Suh nests a life-sized replica of his home in Korea, fully rendered in fabric, inside of another replica of his home in Providence. The large piece, a hybrid of ghosted spaces and distant physical realities, is not solely a physical replica of his two homes. It is the artist's attempt at transporting the memory of the spaces he once occupied with him.[24] The work is a juxtaposition of the two worlds that he came

Figure 36: Do Ho Suh, Home Within Home Within Home Within Home Within Home, 2013
Installation

to know and call home – two parallel universes. Do Ho Suh's body of work expands to include other spaces he once called home. His delicate, sheer fabric sculptures are flexible and light, making them easily portable. Michel Foucault states in his essay entitled "Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias,"

> "The heterotopia is capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible. Thus it is that the theater brings onto the rectangle of the stage, one after the other, a whole series of places that are foreign to one another"[25]

As home becomes an overlay of moments of intensity from several places, I set out to create a physical space that communicates this perception. I think of my grandparents' garden in Baghdad, my favorite childhood playground. In conjunction, I think of my first home in Canada post-migration: an apartment with a view of one of the busiest streets in downtown Mississauga on one side, and a view of a quiet creek on the other. The creek,

running through a small wooded area that unraveled for a distance behind the building, is visible from the large living room windows. It is a place I never physically explored during the four years I lived in that building.

I watched the snow building up in the winter, yet people still walked their dogs (an absurd sight for someone who grew up in the U.A.E. where weather extremes do not encourage walking outside year-round, nor are dogs domesticated). The creek slowly disappeared as trees blossomed in the spring. I would marvel at the thick, vigorously green tree canopies, through which the sound of the creek permeated in the summer. In the fall, the warm tones of ochre, umber and crimson blazing through the canopies would transform the view entirely. I would stand on one of my family's Persian carpets and look out the window at the creek for hours. Foucault furthers states,

> "As for carpets, they were originally reproductions of gardens (the garden is a rug onto which the whole world comes to enact its

> symbolic perfection, and the rug is a sort of garden that can move across space). The garden is the smallest parcel of the world and then it is the totality of the world. The garden has been a sort of happy, universalizing heterotopia since the beginnings of antiquity (our modern zoological gardens spring from that source)."[26]

The garden will always be a symbol for an ideal place of contentment for man, and Persian carpets typically depict The Garden of Eden – a symbol of paradise. Ironically, the one Persian carpet *Mama* later brought with her from Baghdad was just that for me. Once it unfolds in my home in Canada, it becomes a portal to Baghdad. Within its boundaries exists an imaginary space that is both in Mississauga and Baghdad simultaneously, both here and there. This kind of resultant space is amongst the closest places to a home that I have known. In a way, the same vine lined roads in my childhood are this time folded, placed in a piece of luggage and flown to my new home in Canada via air.

> "Each one of us, then, should speak of his road, his crossroads, his roadside benches; each one of us should make a surveyor's map of his lost fields and meadows."[27] -Gaston Bachelard

Throughout the thesis, I set out to create maps of my crossroads: not roads that lead to home, but roads that in themselves have become home. Intrigued by the affect of the inside-outside spaces in the traditional courtyard houses of Baghdad, in the memories of my childhood in my grandparents' house in Al-Kadimiyah, and within the carpets that have migrated along to Canada, I begin to experiment through making. Through the materials I investigate and the methodologies I test, I seek to express the ambiguous domestic reality of the migrant. In the courtyard house, this notion is manifested through the connection between indoor and outdoor spaces. They offer the privacy and security of an intimate indoor space, yet open to the sky and are invariably transformed by the elements. In my grandparents' house, spaces like the garden, the stone tiled portico, and the roof, all evoke a curious sense of in-between, as they host daily activities that are commonly

practiced indoors. Similarly, the carpet, a parcel of an ideal, unrooted space, is a heterotopia. Within its horizontally bound, yet vertically infinite planes, it deterritorializes and reterritorializes the garden. These spaces have all inspired me to explore what this in-between, domestic realm that perfectly captures the affect of displacement for a migrant, may be.

OF EXPERIMENT

Early-spring sun rays slowly melt the absurd looking icicle chunks, washed up on the banks of the Grand river near my university campus. With the soil still wet, I dig and collect some of it in a box. After compressing the collected soil down with my hands, to flatten its surface, I take a piece of task-board, laser-cut in a geometric pattern, and use it to stamp the surface of the soil. Within the grooves of the resultant imprint, I pour some resin, then tilt the box in different directions: this ensures that all the grooves throughout the shape are filled. Within a few hours, the resin is dry, and the process of extraction begins. With my bare hands, I dig out the cured resin. Then, I dip the piece in water and scrub off the soil residue. Some chunks come off easily, others are partially embedded in the cast. As I hold the piece up against the light, I admire the way the resin captures the texture of the sand particles. The piece, successfully capturing details from the site of extraction, still lacks an element of delicacy and flexibility.

In "Art Encounters Deleuze and Guattari: Thought Beyond Representation," O'Sullivan states,

> "A rhizome is a system, or anti-system, without centre or indeed any central organizing motif. It is a flat system in which the individual nodal points can, and are, connected to one another in a non-hierarchical manner...The rhizome is a paradigmatic example of the invention of a concept."[45]

In the next phase of the thesis, I investigate different materials and methodologies through a series of rhizomatic experiments. The process, purely based on trial and error, is an attempt at capturing a semblance of the affect of displacement. Artists who attempt to address similar issues of migration and/or a search for identity become the mediators between myself and the experiments I carry out. After sifting through dozens of artists and hundreds of artworks, several of them seem to clearly and powerfully evoke a sense of tension, disorientation, and confrontation: feelings that are all applicable to the experience of the displaced migrant. The pieces that move me the most all

Figure 37: Brian Jungen, *Prototype for New Understanding #21,* 2005

Nike Air Jordans

embody these affects through juxtaposition. For instance, in his piece, "Prototype for New Understanding #21", Brian Jungen creates tension by juxtaposing Nike Air Jordans with the colours and forms of North American indigenous masks. Similarly, Jungen's other pieces are hybrid objects that consist of products obtained from large, sports equipment stores. The products are arranged in a way that, from a distance, appear as figments of North American indigenous culture. Jungen's works collectively appear to connect to one another through the shared concept of juxtaposition, despite the variations of materials and the different depictions of indigenous culture within each piece. Similarly, works by other artists, in this section of the thesis, seem to connect to one another through their success in capturing tension using juxtaposition. Speaking to this connectivity across art, O'Sullivan says,

> "On a broader level we might position the system of arts in general as rhizomatic, each of the arts, and indeed each individual art work, connecting, or having the potential to connect, to every other. In fact, the arts themselves might be said to be in

> rhizomatic contact and communication with other man-made, or indeed 'natural' systems."[46]

With this knowledge, I begin to experiment. As I consider each artist, their artworks, and the materials and methodologies they use to create each piece, I become more aware of the ones that capture the affects of displacement most intensely. Furthermore, as they beautifully address the desperate search for home through their work, some of the artists I stumble upon become an inspiration for my own pursuit of home throughout the thesis. As O'Sullivan confirms, it is through experimentation that connectivity through art is manifested, and new concepts that can escape societal confines and transcend representation are born.[47]

Objects

Goalie Mask with Islamic Geometry

Material: task board.
Advantages: easy to laser cut.
Disadvantages: non-durable: fell apart shortly after being made.

Making methodology: laser cutting.
Advantages: easy, quick, and allows for complex geometries to be cut.
Disadvantages: I feel distant from and disconnected with the material, since most of the process is computerized.

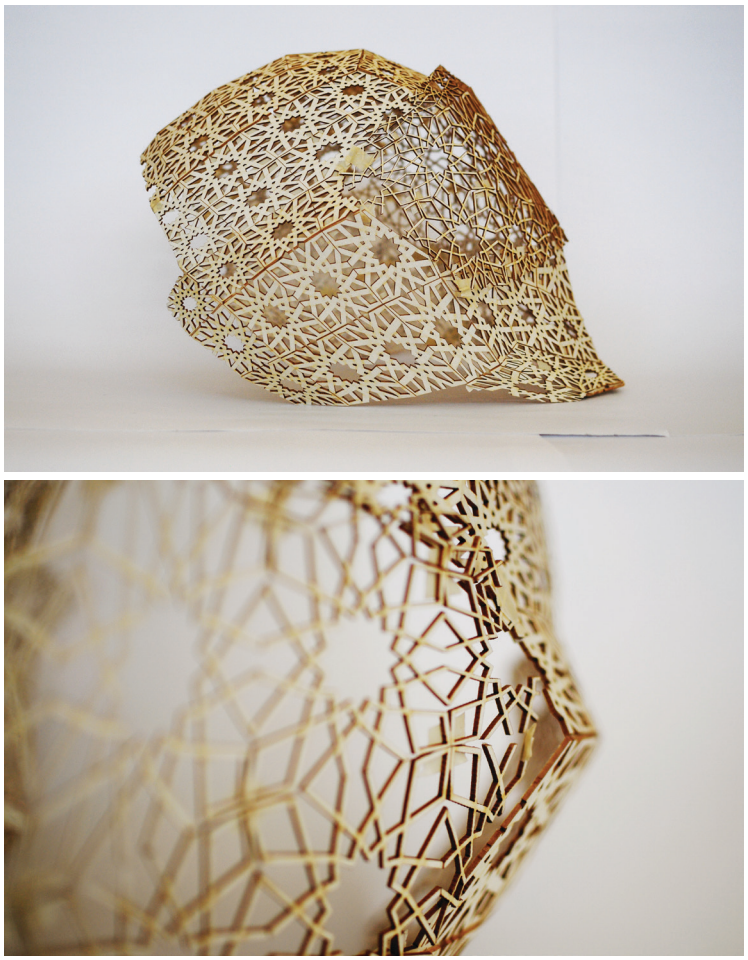


Figure 38: By author, *Goalie Mask with Islamic Geometry,* 2017

Laser-cut task-board

In her piece, “Car Bombing,” Cal Lane creates tension by carefully arranging scrap metal, delicately torched and transformed with lacey patterns, around the room. The metal pieces, appearing to be a product of a deadly bomb attack, are contrasted by the fragility and elegance of the patterns. In much of her work, Lane, a female welder in a male dominated trade, plays with gender roles. She produces tension by juxtaposing elements stereotypically associated with femininity, such as lace, with harsh metal pieces native to the male dominant industrial field.[48]

Figure 39: Cal Lane, *Car Bombing, 2007*

Torched scrap metal and sand

Timbits box

Material: basswood.
Advantages: durable and beautiful.
Disadvantages: lacks a sense of lightness and ephemerality.

Making methodology: laser cutting.
Advantages: easy, quick, and allows for complex geometries to be cut.
Disadvantages: I feel distant from and disconnected with the material, since most of the process is computerized.

Figure 40: Haneen Dalla-Ali, *Timbits box with Regional Patterns,* 2017

Laser-cut basswood

Teapot and Cup

Material: 3D printer PLA filament.
Advantages: cheap and available in a variety of colours and finishes.
Disadvantages: the hard PLA is easily breakable when drawn thinly.

Making methodology: hand-drawing using a 3D pen.
Advantages: the process offers more connection with the design and objects being traced. The hand drawing aspect adds an artistic, hand-made touch to the final product.
Disadvantages: though faster than 3D printing using a 3D printer, the process is still time consuming and highly fussy, as the pen often jams.

Figure 41: Haneen Dalla-Ali, *Tea Set,* 2018

Hand-drawn PLA filament using a 3D pen

Snow Shovel

Material: 3D printer PLA filament.
Advantages: cheap and available in a variety of colours and finishes.
Disadvantages: the hard PLA is easily breakable, especially when drawn thinly.

Making methodology: hand-drawing using a 3D printer pen.
Advantages: the process offers more connection with the design and the objects being traced. The hand drawing aspect adds an artistic, hand-made touch to the final product.
Disadvantages: though faster than 3D printing using a printer, still time consuming and highly fussy to work with as the pen often jams. This is especially inconvenient the larger the object created gets.

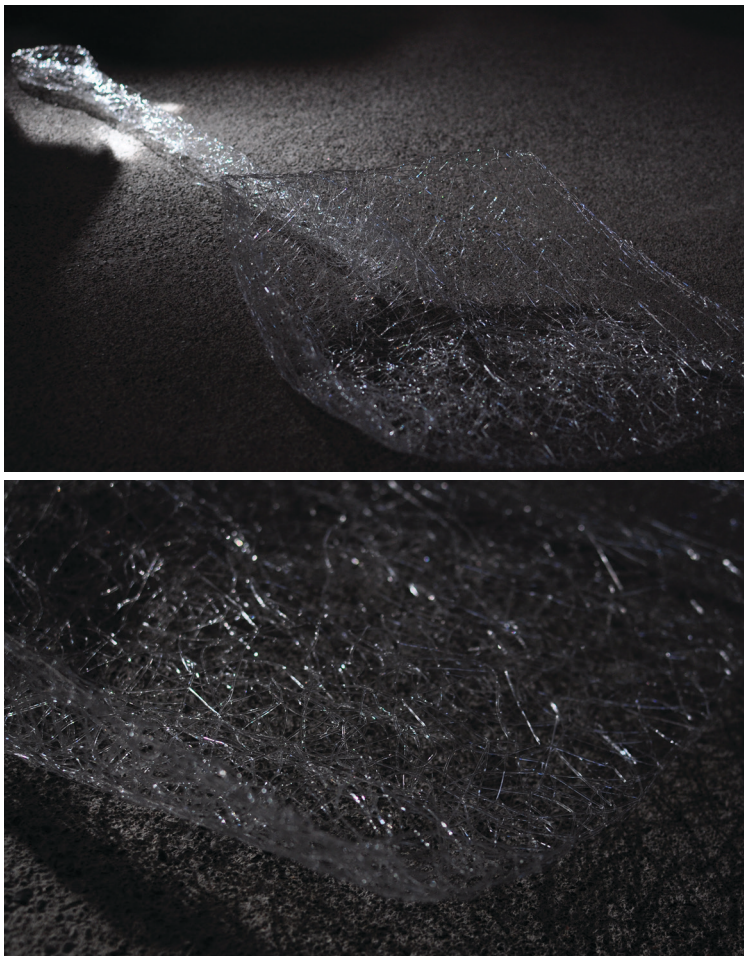


Figure 42: Haneen Dalla-Ali, *Snow Shovel,* 2018

Hand-drawn PLA filament using a 3D pen

Material Samples

As he works with his sand-cast molten pewter pieces, Max Lamb recalls his childhood memories of playing on the beach in the sand in Cornwall, South Western England. Through his piece "040 – Hexagonal Pewter Stool", Lamb physically reconnects with the land on which he spent his childhood, while simultaneously reminiscing about his memories in the same place. The result: a monolithic, metal stool created through the sole use of a steel rod (to dig the form in the ground), and molten pewter melted in a pot, in a sunken fire pit nearby.[49]

Figure 43: Max Lamb, *040 – Hexagonal Pewter Stool,* 2008

Sand-cast molten pewter

Soil-cast resin

Materials: soil and resin.
Advantages: the soil is a direct reference to the garden and my memories of digging in it as a child. The soil provided the potential to create the pieces entirely on-site. The resin is versatile, as it dries flexible at first, allowing it to be woven or bent into the desired shape. Once it is hardened the next day, it is beautiful and highly durable.
Disadvantages: working with the soil on-site creates limitations based on the season and the weather, as the soil freezes in the colder months and gets buried under snow. The resin is very pricey, creating a limit for how large the pieces can be.

Making methodology: soil-cast resin.
Advantages: the result is unique and has a profound connection with the idea of connecting with a site and a land.
Disadvantages: the product lacks a sense of ephemerality, lightness and flexibility.

Figure 44: Haneen Dalla-Ali, *Regional Pattern in Earth,* 2018

Soil-cast resin

Across her body of work, Mona Hatoum cleverly juxtaposes domestic objects, typically associated with comfort and security, with materials that have a threatening and painful affect. In her installation piece, "Impenetrable", Hatoum creates a soft, sheer cube that appears ephemeral from a distance. However, up close, the barbed wire, made using fishing wire, appears to be dangerous and threatening. Through her juxtapositions, Hatoum creates a sense of desire to be free: to escape the entrapment of these seemingly confining objects and threatening pieces, that reflect society's social and political restrictions on her.[50]

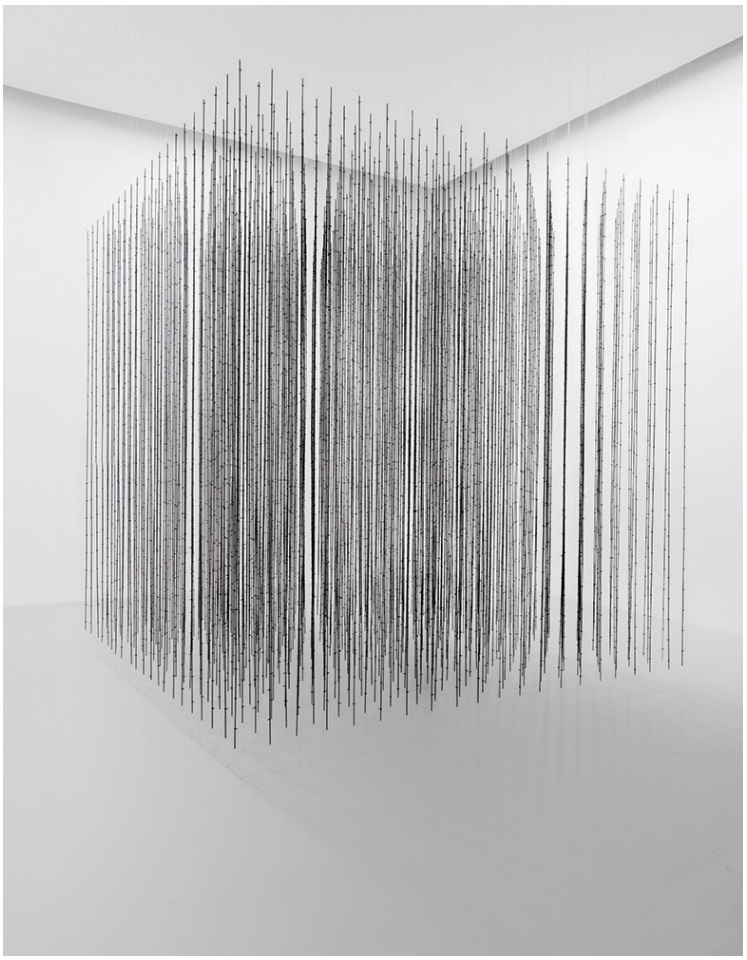


Figure 45: Mona Hatoum, *Impenetrable,* 2009

Fishing wire

Metal

Materials: copper, galvanized steel, and brass wires.
Advantages: the metal wires are highly durable and light, yet still maintain a delicate appeal. Create a similar looking, quicker made and stronger result compared to the 3D printing pen creations.
Disadvantages: non-flexible weaves: they are easily bent out of shape.

Making methodology: hand weaving.
Advantages: I feel a strong connection to the design and material, due to the highly involving making process.
Disadvantages: It is difficult to work with the metal when creating small details. The result, resembling chicken wire rather than barbed wire, does not appear as threatening as Hatoum's pieces.

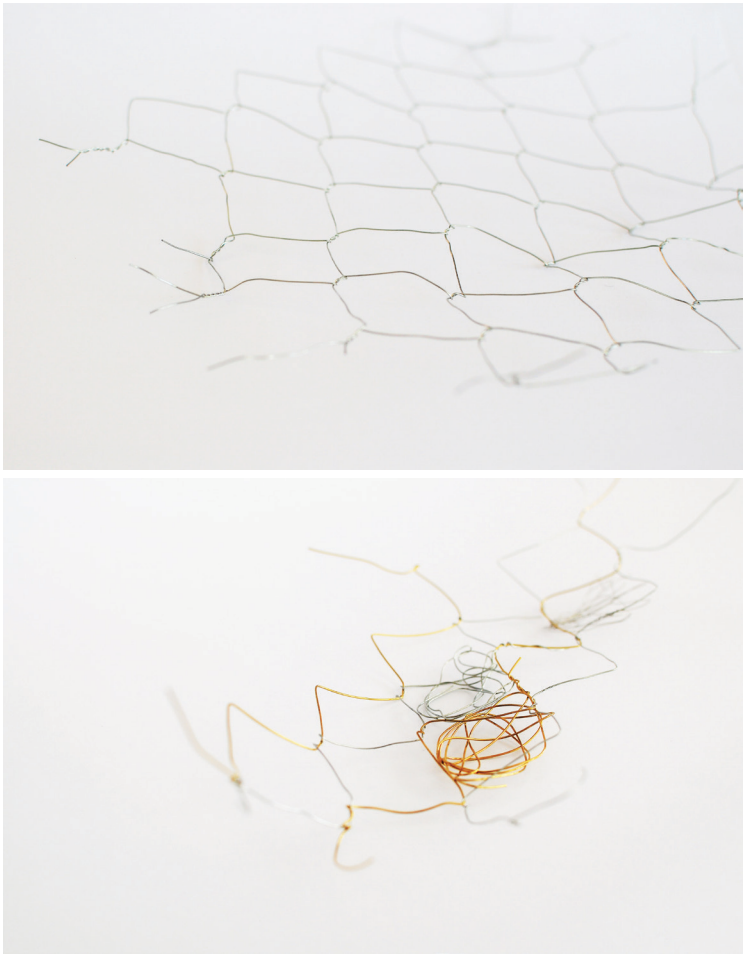


Figure 46: Haneen Dalla-Ali, *Barbed Wire Sample #3,* 2018

Brass and galvanized steel wire

Chiharu Shiota's most notorious body of work consists of sprawling webs created using coloured yarn. The colours typically express concepts and emotions that she wishes to communicate: each piece evoking a feeling – a mood. In her piece, "Beyond Time", Shiota creates a sense of ephemerality and lightness through her use of white yarn, paper, and a piano. The piece, appearing like a dream, overtakes the space, and transcends its boundaries. The room appears endless, its corners, and walls blurred. Beyond representation, Shiota communicates a sense of purity, death, and renewal.[51]

Figure 47: Chiharu Shiota, *Beyond Time*, 2018

Metal frame piano, note sheets, white wool

Crochet string and fabric stiffener

Materials: crochet string and fabric stiffener.
Advantages: The result is a strong weave that is flexible and easily folded, just like the carpets mentioned in chapter one. There are more colour options to choose from than previous materials.
Disadvantages: the string looks bulky, and it is only available in a matt finish.

Making methodology: layering.
Advantages: quick and fuss free.
Disadvantages: time consuming.

Figure 48: Haneen Dalla-Ali, *Crochet String Rock,* 2018

Crochet string and fabric stiffener

Thread and fabric stiffener

Materials: thread and fabric stiffener.
Advantages: A large variety of colours and finishes to choose from. Thread is light, delicate, and durable once stiffened, yet flexible.
Disadvantages: the thread may need support using a heavier textile (like the crochet string) in certain areas to maintain the shape.

Making methodology: layering.
Advantages: quick and fuss free.
Disadvantages: time consuming.

Figure 49: Haneen Dalla-Ali, *Thread Rock,* 2018

Thread and fabric stiffener

Through each of these experiments, with the artists acting as intermediaries between myself and the materials, I finally arrive at the combination of material and methodology that strongly evokes the affects of displacement and a search for home. The thread samples I create, stiffened and made to appear like a sheer, light textile, prompt a sense of ephemerality, portability, yet a desire for connection and rootedness. Furthermore, inspired by Max Lamb's reconnection with the land he once spent his childhood playing on, I decide to reconnect with a site that has significance to my life directly after migration: Cooksville Creek.

Figure 50: Haneen Dalla-Ali, *Thread Rock #2,* 2018

Polyester thread and fabric stiffener

OF SENSATION

> "A landscape, by contrast, is sensory; it is a perspectival world, enclosed by a horizon that moves as our body moves. In a landscape, we do not so much move in space as space moves with us."[52]
> -Gilles Deleuze

In the distance, a hazy, blue ribbon cinches the clear sky that stretches over the lush green treetops below it for kilometers. The tall trees make the stretch of land between my home on the 9th-floor and Lake Ontario seem devoid of houses and streets. Directly below is a forested area with a winding creek. In the summer, the surging water is audible, yet the creek itself disappears under the lush canopies. In the winter, the creek is visible again, as the trees gradually lose their leaves, yet becomes silent as its water freezes. This dynamic, visual and auditory performance was the backdrop of my living room for the first four years of my life in Canada, post-migration. For four years, I felt a strange connection to this landscape: it was familiar yet distant, beautiful yet threatening.

My hesitation to investigate the site for years was largely a consequence of my fear of becoming attached to this peaceful place, while my family's stability in the country was still unclear. In a way, I was afraid of having to part ways with yet another place I felt attached to – just like my grandparents' garden. In "What Is Philosophy," Deleuze and Guattari state,

> "The house is a scaffolding that delimits and frames forces, but the landscape is ultimately unframed and without limits, a plane that extends into infinity."[53]

As I make my way across the creek, I am careful of where I place my feet. The glistening rocks in the center are slippery and covered in moss, others are sharp and slanted, forcing my feet to twist as I walk over them. The place has a subtle earthy aroma, vaguely reminding me of the smell of my grandparents' freshly watered garden late in the afternoons. I jump from one rock to another, with a tight grip on my camera, before I finally turn around and look back. In just a couple of months, I will likely not be able to cross over the snow and ice-covered rocks as I did just now.

Figure 51: Rocks at Cooksville Creek in the fall, Mississauga

Figure 52: View of the apartment building my family and I lived in for the first four years of our life in Canada from the creek, Mississauga

It has been nine years since my family moved to our current home in Mississauga, a twenty-minute drive away from this place. Even though I can no longer go back to my first home in Canada: the 9th-floor apartment in the building adjacent to the site, the creek will always be here whenever I need to come back and reconnect with that transitional period of my life.

> "For my project Writing Landscape I developed a technique of marking copper plates by wearing them on my feet and walking. It is a kind of writing where my body and the topography of the land over which I walk are both author and subject."[54]
> -Vanessa Dion Fletcher

In her piece, Writing Landscape, Indigenous artist Vanessa Dion Fletcher attaches copper plates to her feet and walks across landscape features in three Canadian locations. Each location she treads is of personal and historical significance to her. "This work began in my mouth with my voice and moved down to my feet, and the earth. My art practice explores themes of communication, identity and

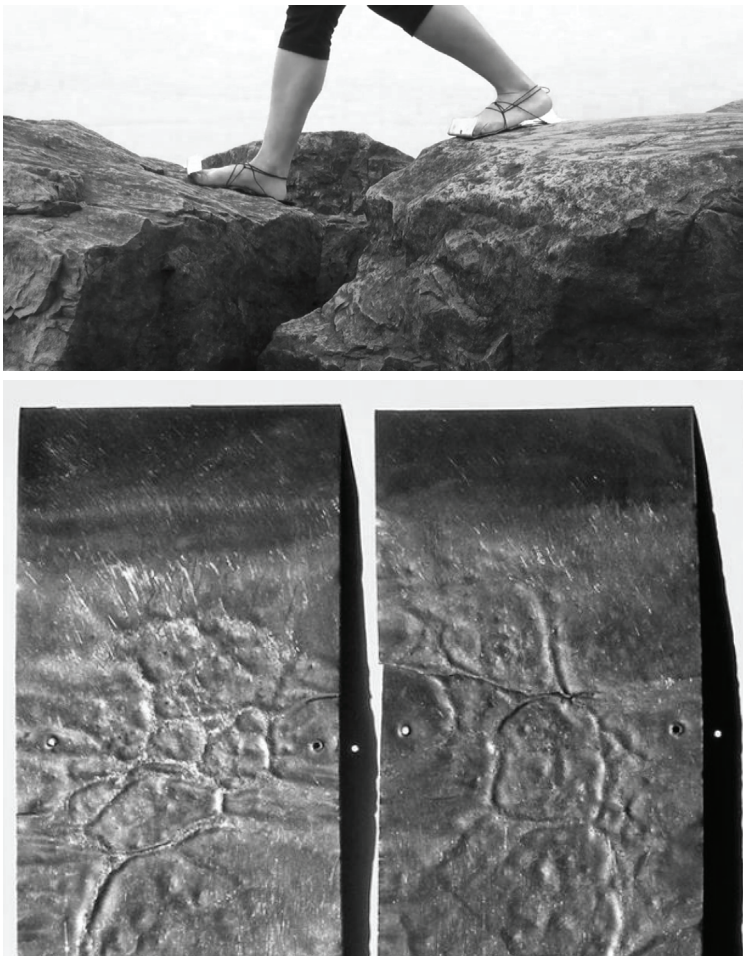


Figure 53: Vanessa Dion Fletcher, *Writing Landscape*, 2012
Copper plates and film

the body."[55], she explains. Through her method, which is inspired by intaglio and lithography, two European methods of printmaking, the artist allows her body, mind and the land she walks upon to become reacquainted. She begins by exploring the site without the copper plates, allowing her to roam freely and scan the site while reflecting on her relationship with each setting she has selected. First, she examines the surfaces under her feet; she studies how the topography and weather both influence the movements of her body. Then, she films herself moving across the land, with copper plates attached to the soles of her feet. She appears to move toward and away from the camera, as the plates pick up the texture of the ground under her feet.[56]

The initial site visit

> "We are not in the world, we become with the world; we become by contemplating it."[57] -Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari

Being at the site feels surreal. I had only looked at it from above before for so long, which made it look small and flat.

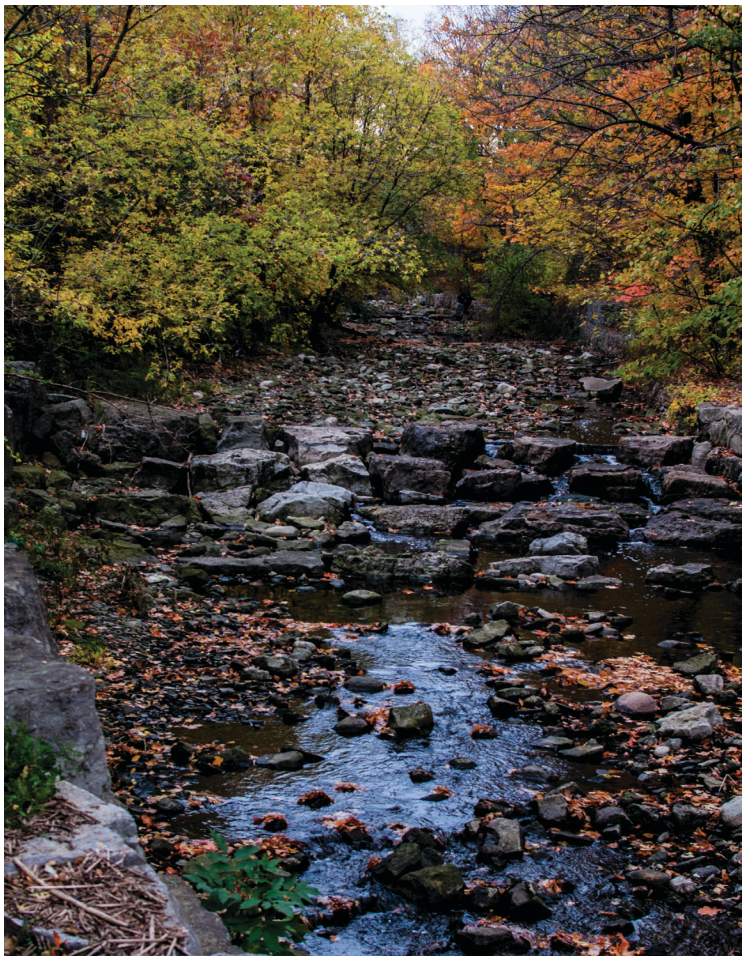


Figure 54: Looking upstream at Cooksville Creek in the fall, Mississauga

Figure 55: Site overview, Mississauga

Figure 56: Locations of Rock 1, 2 and 3 across the site relative to the apartment, Mississauga

Figure 57: Location of Rock 1 relative to the apartment, Mississauga

As I walk around, I rediscover its beauty and serenity from a new perspective. I begin by walking along the site with my cameras in my hands. I occasionally snap a photo here and there, but mostly, I just allowing myself to reconnect with the place. The rocks spread beautifully throughout the creek and the place is, at once, both familiar and new territory. After walking the whole path, I go back to a few areas that pique my interest along the way, climb down the edge of the rockface, jump over a few boulders until I am standing in the middle of the creek. The water rushes past me peacefully, and the rhythmic sound drowns out the noise of the busy street adjacent to my old building. I mentally laugh to myself as I look up the creek and notice its comical resemblance to a typical postcard you would expect to receive from Southern Ontario. Despite the partially moss-covered, wet rocks, I sit down and watch this modest piece of Canadian landscape quietly force its way through my city.

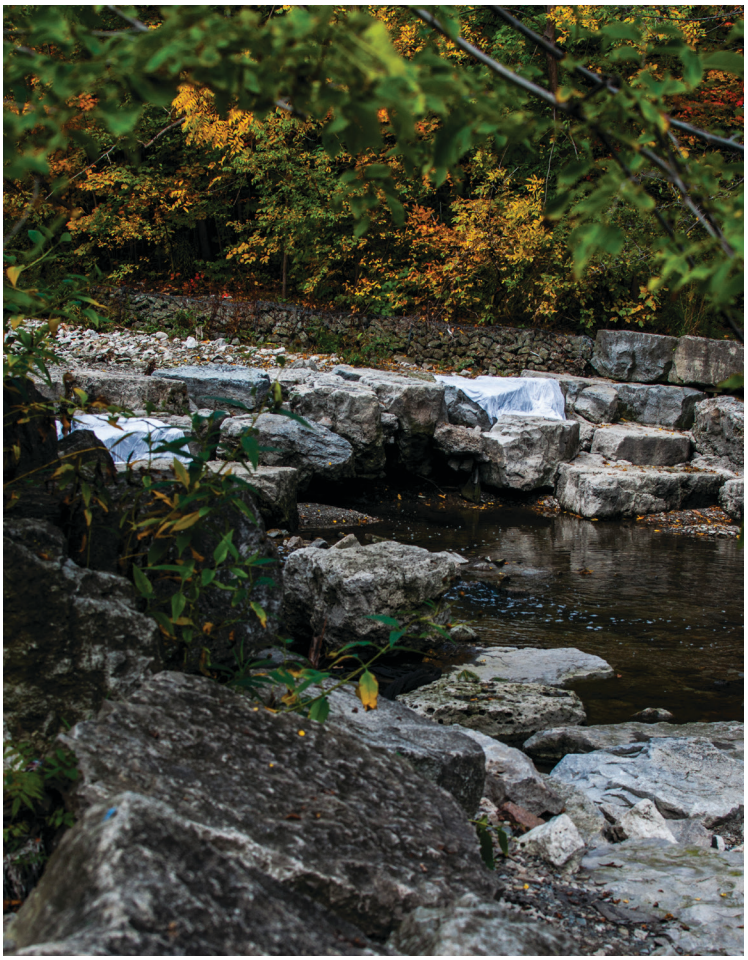


Figure 58: Experimenting with taking a mould using fabric and fabric stiffener, Mississauga

Figure 59: Cooksville Creek in the summer, Mississauga

Mould-making using fabric

> "In sensory experience," "there unfolds both the becoming of the subject and the happenings of the world."[58] -Erwin Straus

The texture of the rocks within the creek, and their strong material presence, inspire me to conduct the first on-site experiment. First, I dip a small piece of linen in a fabric-stiffening solution. I then lay the piece of fabric on a dry rock and proceed to press every inch of it onto the rock's surface, making a mould that captures the gesture of the rock, along with some of its texture. Once dry, I then rip the fabric away, leaving me with a light, soft and flexible replica of the rock. In his essay, "The Landscape of Sensation," Ronald Bogue states,

> "Maldiney argues that this Strausian primary space of sensation is what Cézanne is describing when he remarks that as he begins to paint, he is one with the world that surrounds him: 'We are an iridescent chaos. I come before my motif, I lose myself there. .

Figure 60: Experimenting with taking a mould using fabric and fabric stiffener, Mississauga

> . . We germinate' (Cited in Maldiney, p. 150). At this moment, says Cézanne, man is 'absent, but entirely within the landscape' (Cited in Maldiney, p. 185)."[59]

Next, I carry out the same fabric moulding experiment once again, this time with the bigger fabric sheets I have pre-cut at home. After carefully selecting five rocks that feature the texture and form I wish to capture, I first begin by identifying North using my phone: this ensures that all pieces have the same orientation. Next, I lay down the fabric piece that has been soaked in fabric stiffener and, using my bare hands, I begin to shape and mould it onto the rock. Vanessa Dion Fletcher explains, "In Writing Landscape, I am taking steps to record and listen to the land that I come from, the land that supports me, and the land that inspires me. I think this work is an affirmation that I am not fixed in the past or the future but can adapt and create new relationships and connections with new landscapes."[60] Equivalently, I carry out a physically involving process of making a mould of each rock, using my bare hands, as I attempt to renew my connection with the land that I now call home.

Figure 61: Experimenting with taking a mould using fabric and fabric stiffener, Mississauga

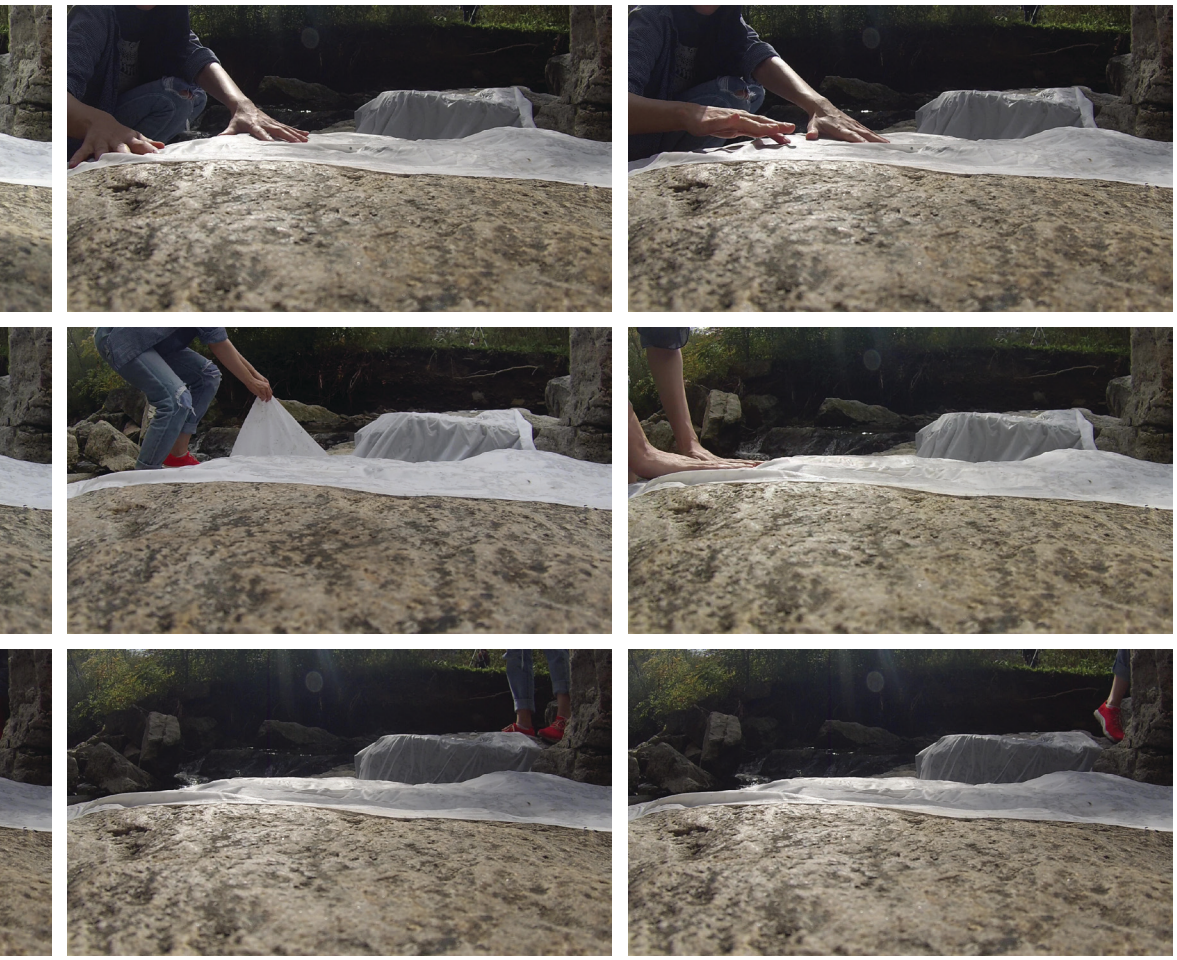


Figure 62: Snapshots from a video of the author taking a full-scale mould of a rock on site using fabric and fabric stiffener, Mississauga

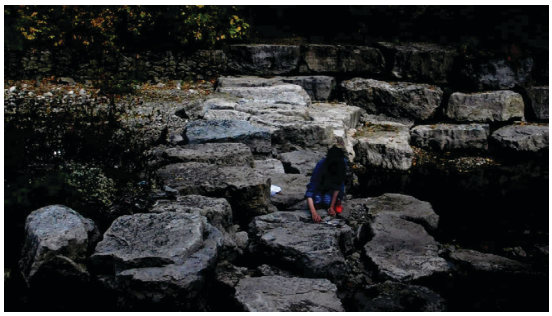
Figure 63: Fabric moulding experiments at the site of Rock 1, Mississauga

In his series, "Rubbing/Loving", Do Ho Suh covers his old apartment in paper and proceeds to bring back the texture on every surface by caressing it with drawing tools, a gesture that he refers to as loving. Suh describes, "The interesting part about rubbing is you place the paper on the part you want to rub, which is an act of erasing, then you rub to bring it back."[61] The apartment, turned studio, holds many memories for him: as he covers and rubs every inch of it, he reminesces about the memories he once had in those spaces. Upon completion, he peels the paper and exhibits the tracings in a gallery space, a recreation of the space in a different location.

As I feel every nook and cranny of the rocks while shaping the fabric around each of them, I feel as if I am renewing my relationship with the creek. The mere physicality of being able to explore the site with my senses. Using my flesh as a thermometer of sensations. Feeling the temperature of the rocks, and the sharp and smooth edges and forms. Sitting under the filtered light that pierces through the tree canopies above. Hearing the soothing sound of the water stream by. Breathing the thick air. In a way, this highly

Figure 64: Do Ho Suh, *Rubbing/Loving,* 2016

Coloured pencil on paper



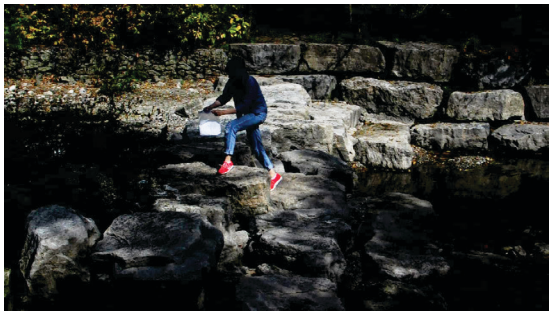


Figure 65: Snapshots from a video of the author laying the fabric down on the rock to be moulded, Mississauga

tangible, sensory connection reflects my desire to physically reconnect with places of my past: an act that allows me to project my unattainable desires to re-experience past places onto this powerfully present, material landscape, that is in front of me now.

The mould I attempt to create is the result of the tension between the push of my hands and fingers and the resistance of the rock surface. Unfortunately, however, the experiment is unsuccessful: the indoor samples I have created earlier were able to dry due to the warmer temperatures indoors. However, as the temperature drops outside, the samples are unable to dry completely. As a result, upon peeling them off, the fabric, not completely dry, is unable to retain the shape and the texture of the rocks. Consequently, I must find other ways to capture the gesture and presence of the rocks. Despite its failure, the experiment allows me to, as Suh may say, "caress" each rock I chose. The result: a strange physical connection, in contrast with the distant, strictly visual one I previously formed with the same landscape, while viewing it from above.

Figure 66: Close up of the fabric moulding experiment, Mississauga

Figure 67: Snapshots from a video of the author taking a full-scale mould of a rock on site using fabric and fabric stiffener, Mississauga

Figure 68: Fabric starting to partially dry during the fabric moulding experiment, Mississauga

Sketching

Another way in which I study and become better acquainted with the site is through sketching. As I draw, I am forced to notice every detail, but more importantly, I attempt to capture the live forces within each rock. In Mick Maslen and Jack Southern's drawing guidebook, "Drawing Projects: An Exploration of the Language of Drawing," artist Dryden Goodwin states, "The activity as a means to record the encounter is in some respects more important than the drawing itself."[62] As I encounter each rock, I begin to explore its form and character. I record myself getting familiarized with it as I make an ink tracing of each second of the interaction as it passes. I try to not do this solely with my eyes. Instead, I let me hands feel the rock's surface, as I make each tracing of what I see and what I sense. As the encounter comes to an end, I am left with a map of markings that encompass the temporality of the encounter. Goodwin further states,

> "...so the process can become about the whole experience, the drawing, the looking, but also

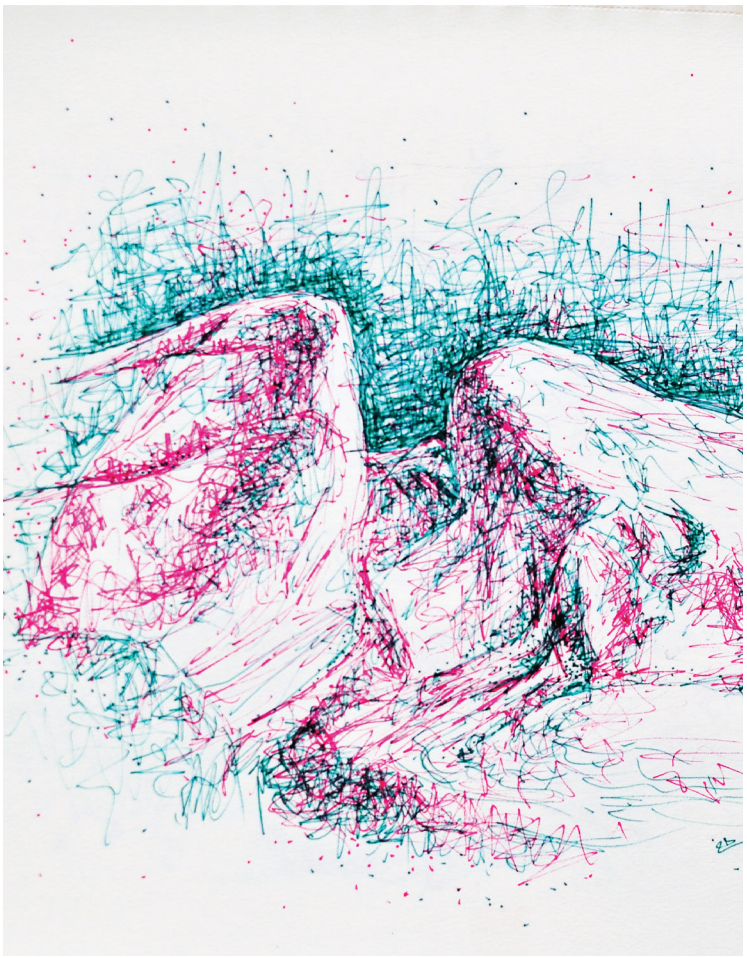


Figure 69: A sketch of the fabric moulding experiment, Mississauga

> the sensing. The drawing is the visual record, but the drawing can become the vehicle to allow the encounter to become accentuated, giving you a sense of what is beyond the visual. So for me the entirety of the encounter and the potential of what that can create is really important. Making the drawing is often like a kind of strange attempt to comprehend the encounter, it can be quite euphoric in a way, the sense of something that is very concentrated."[63]

In his large-scale video installation, "Breathe," Goodwin collaborates with lung biologist Frank Kelly to produce a series of drawings that aim at bringing awareness to air pollution. They do this through making the issue more visually legible using drawings. The installation, consisting of 1300 drawings of Goodwin's son inhaling and exhaling, is projected onto the upper façade of St. Thomas Hospital in London. In his drawings, Goodwin captures the effect of air, an invisible force, on the human body. As each stroke marks the movement of his son's body as he breathes, the force of air becomes visible. [64]

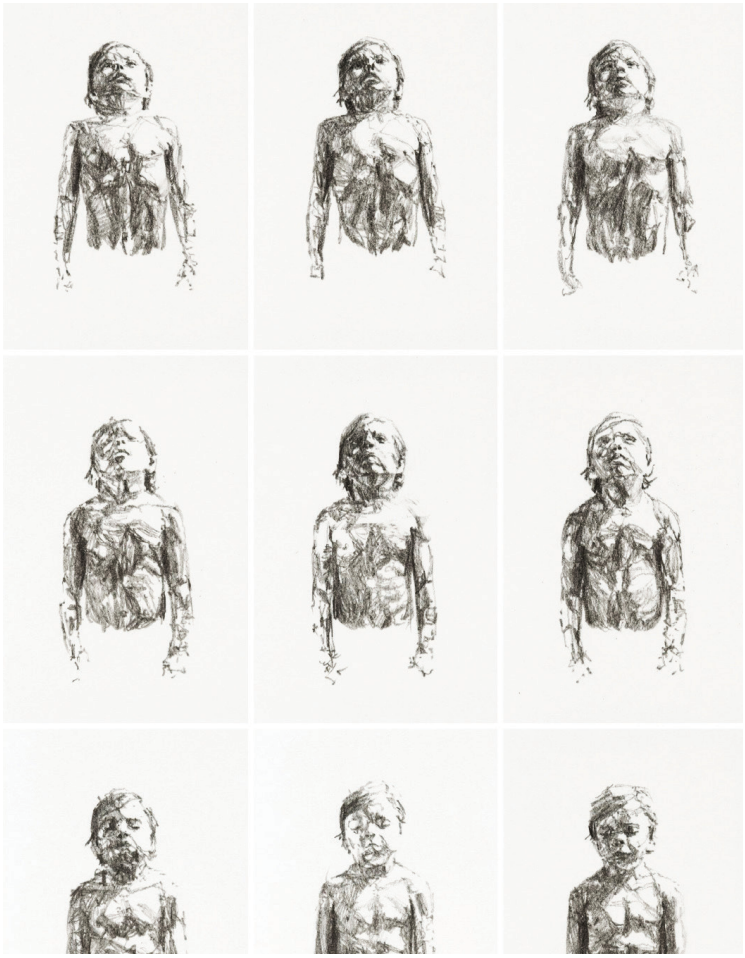


Figure 70: Dryden Goodwin, *Breathe Composite,* 2012

Video installation using sketches

As I draw each rock, I attempt to render the forces of each formation visible. In a sense, I filter the complexity, chaos and rigidity of the rock's surface, using pen and paper, into densely varying, overlapping, yet light, tracings. The result: a ghost of each rock that selectively captures its form yet transforms its materiality from solid stone to ink meshes with ephemeral demeanors. The sketches, appearing like coloured threads that strategically cover the rock forms, begin to inspire a making methodology. This becomes a step in the development of the process of constructing the final pieces, as well as the inspiration for the crochet string and thread experiments in chapter two.

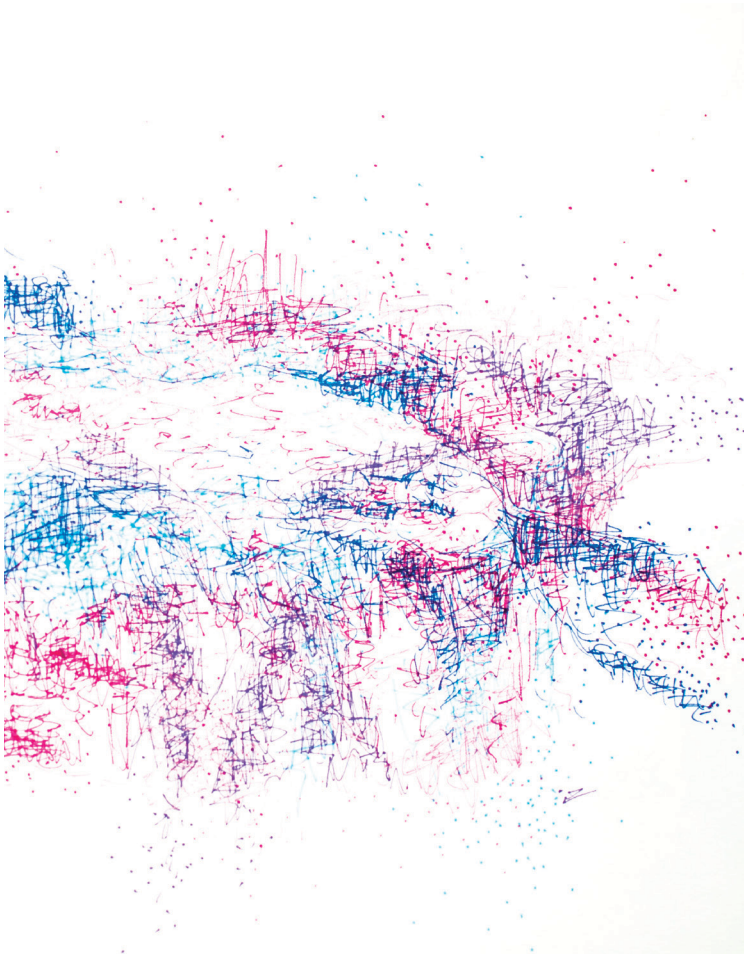
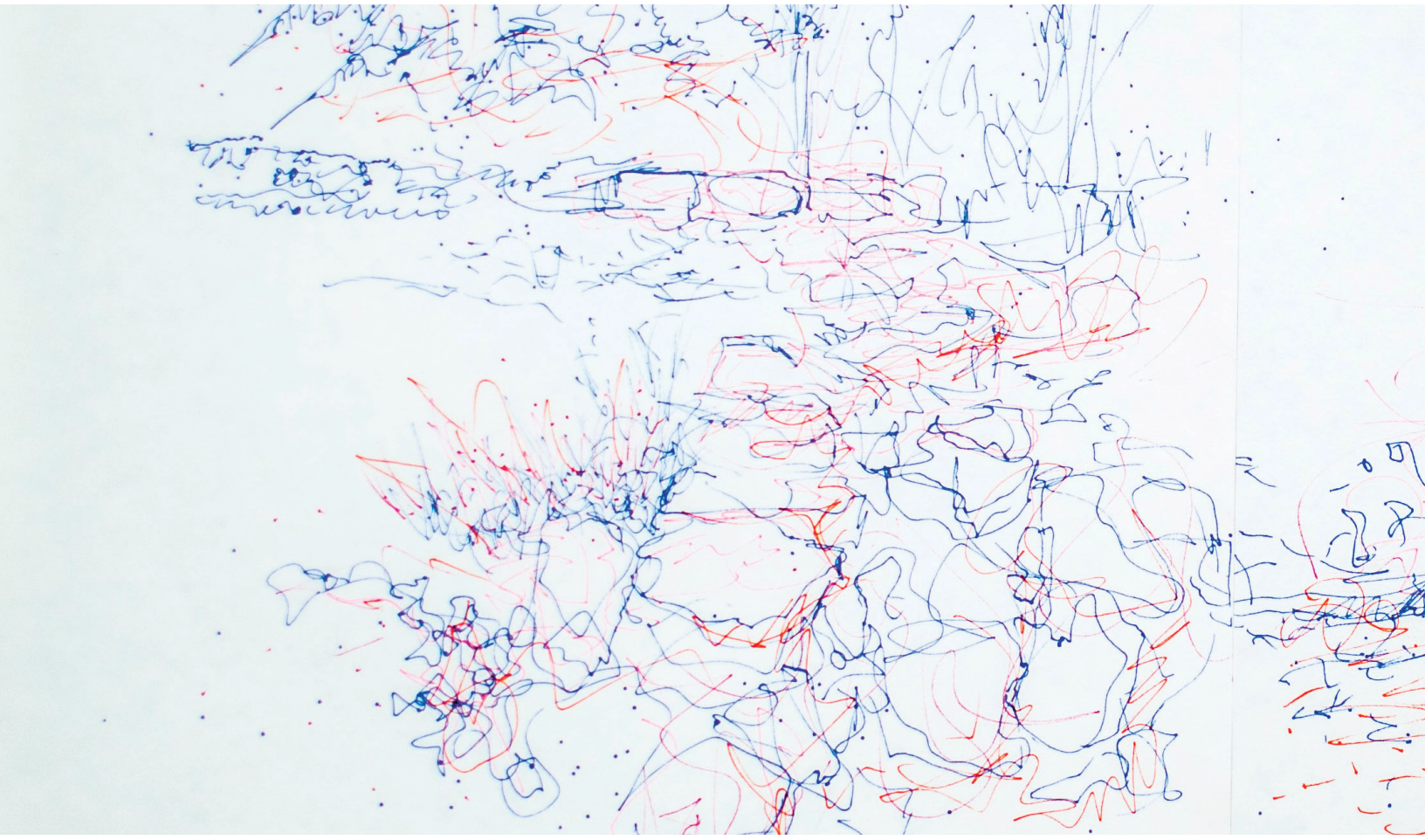


Figure 71: Overlaid sketches of Rock 6 from multiple angles, Mississauga



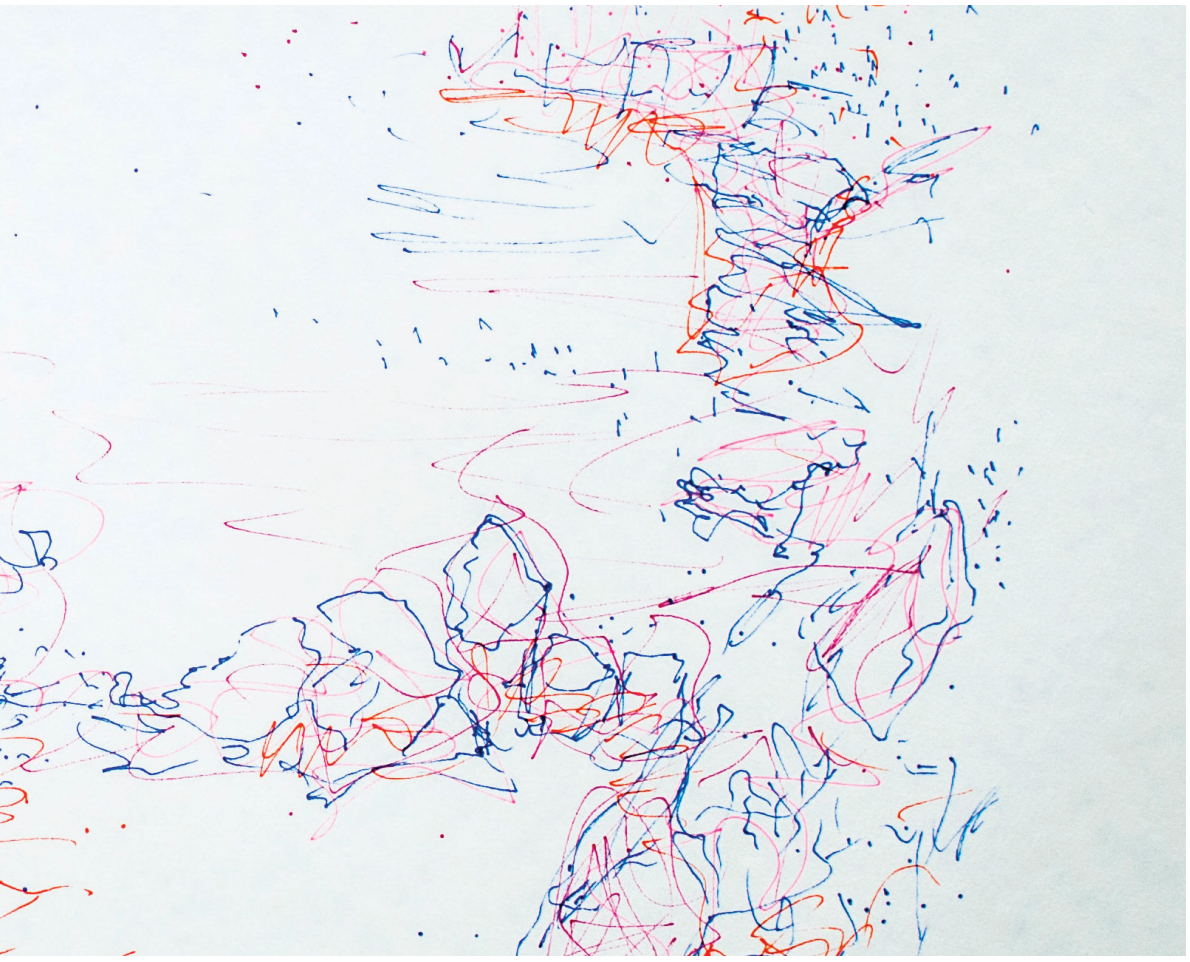
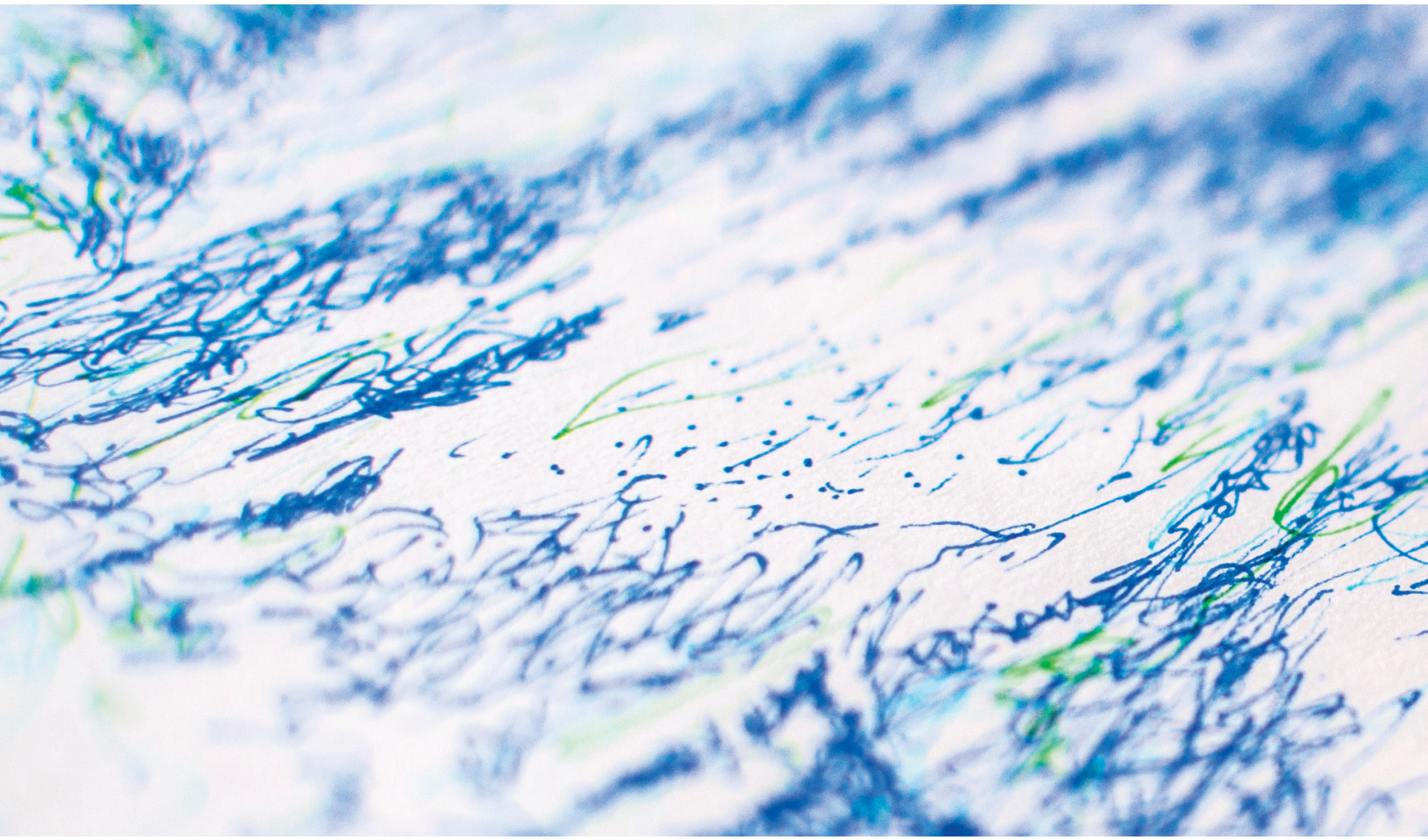


Figure 72: Panoramic ink sketch of the site near Rock 1, Mississauga

Figure 73: Ink sketch of Rock 6, Mississauga



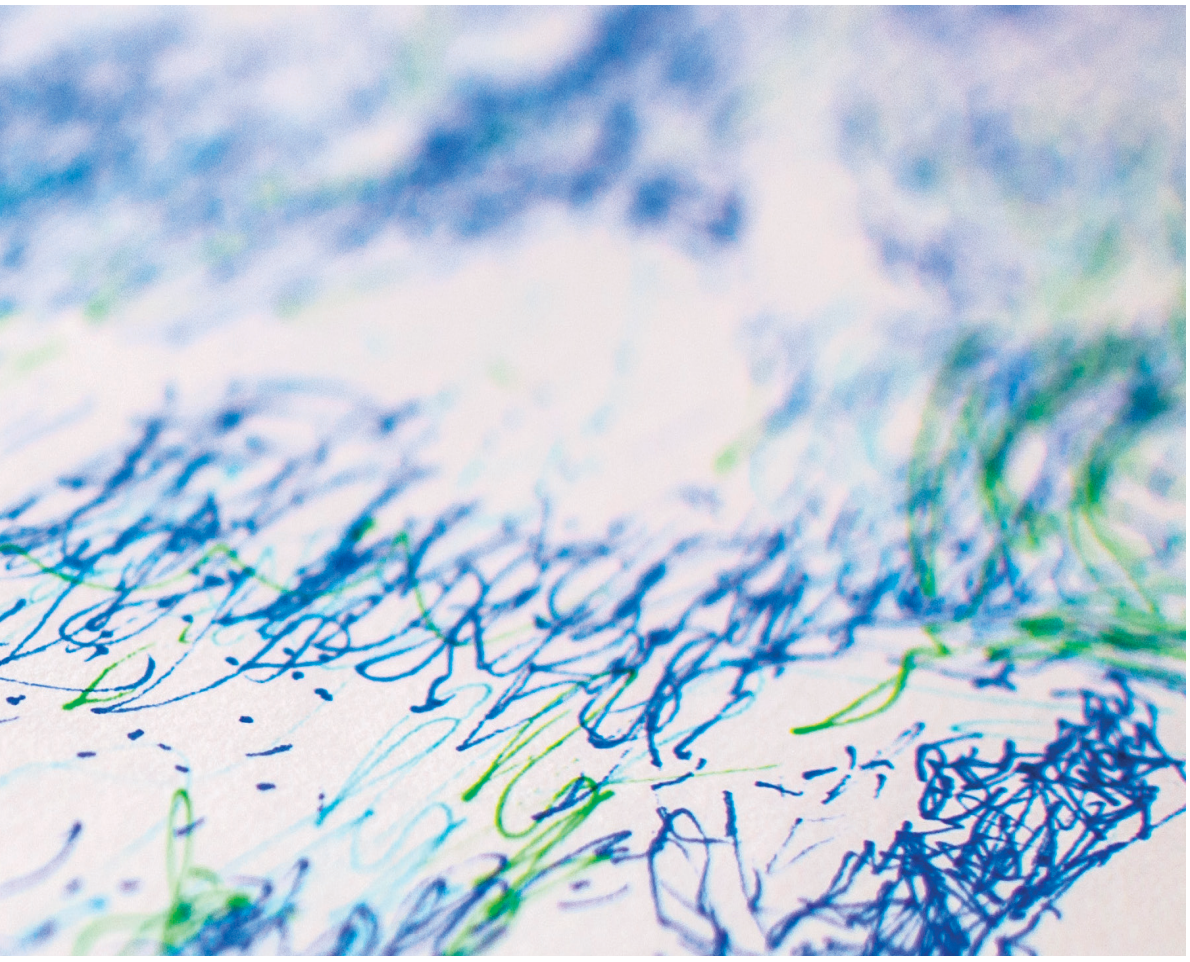


Figure 74: Sketch of Cooksville Creek in the summer, Mississauga

Figure 75: Overlaid sketches of Rock 6 from multiple angles, Mississauga

Digital documentation

> "what I found in their writing was a different conception of what intellectual work might involve; no longer the endless critique of previous bodies of knowledge (or not just this) but the creative invention of concepts and the intensive mapping of affects and events."[65] -Simon O'Sullivan

After the failure of the first fabric moulding experiment, I set out to find an alternative method of capturing the forms of the rocks at the site. The method I stumble upon next is photogrammetry: the process of scanning an object, or landscape, using a digital camera. With my Nikon DSLR, I take an average of 300 photos, from different angles and heights, of seven rocks throughout the site. I begin by placing a folded letter-sized paper pointing North on each rock: this ensures that the digital models created in the next stage can be scaled and oriented accurately. Using a photogrammetry computer software, I then generate a model of each of the seven rocks I have previously photographed at the site. First, I generate a sparse data point cloud layer using the

Figure 76: Paper indicating the direction of North on Rock 1, Mississauga

Figure 77: Snapshots from a video of the author taking the mould of Rock 7, Mississauga

photos: a set of data points that reconstruct the exterior surface of the rock (similar to the output of a 3D scanner). Next, I create a denser data point cloud model that captures more of the surfaces of each rock. Finally, I create a textured mesh that captures both the exterior surface of the rock along with the detailed texture and colours of the surface taken from each photograph. The resultant models are replicas of the rocks I have documented at the site. The dense data point cloud layer of the model allows me to view the rocks, as the sketches previously did, as a light and airy object, rather than the rough and solid real rocks at the site. Just like the ink sketches, this layer inspires me to capture the rocks in this dreamlike manner. The dense data point cloud model is a dematerialization and transfiguration of the original land features: it allows the rocks to resemble the gauzy memories I have of my grandparents' garden and its trees.

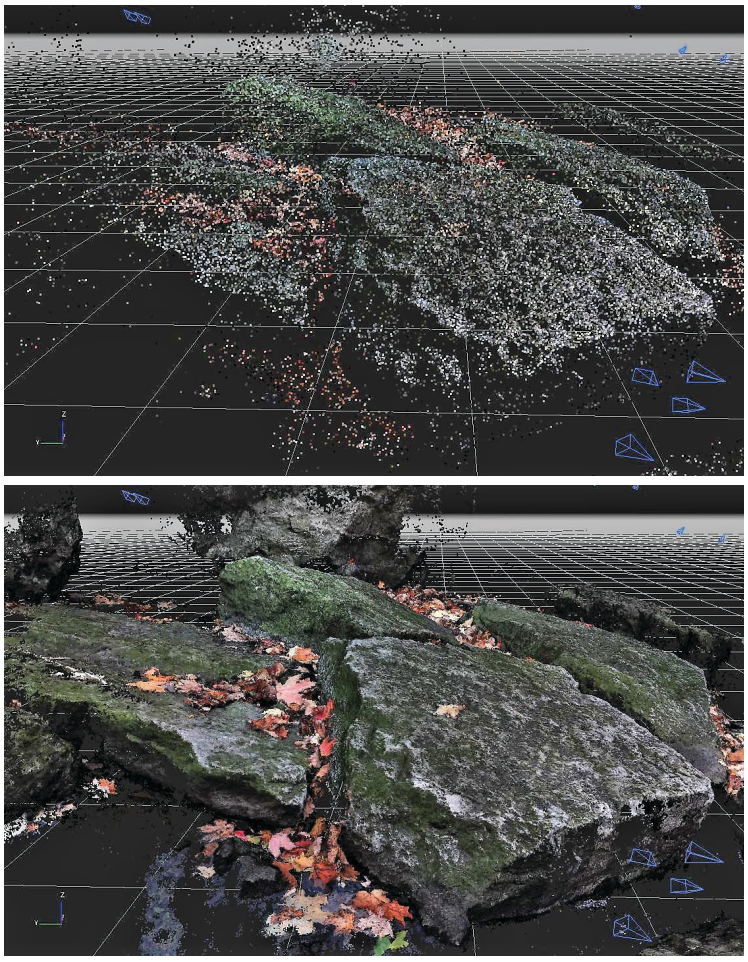
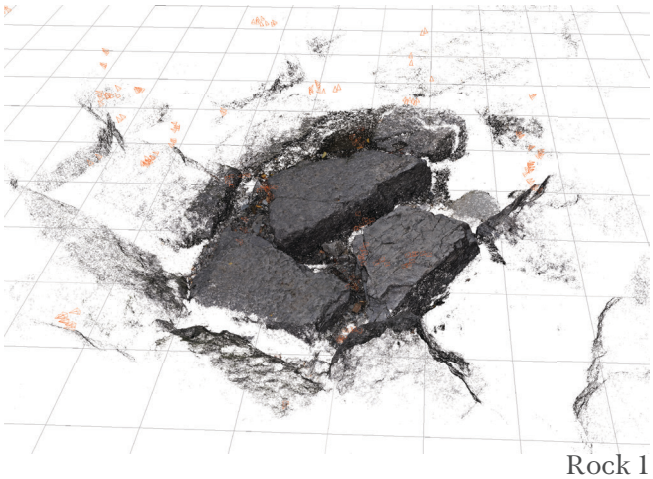
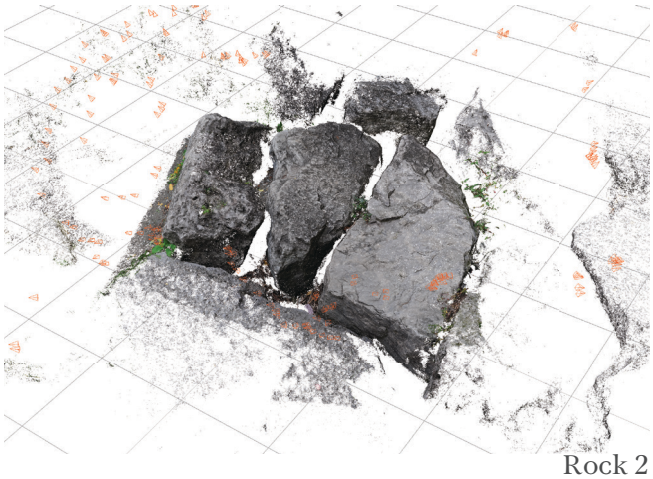


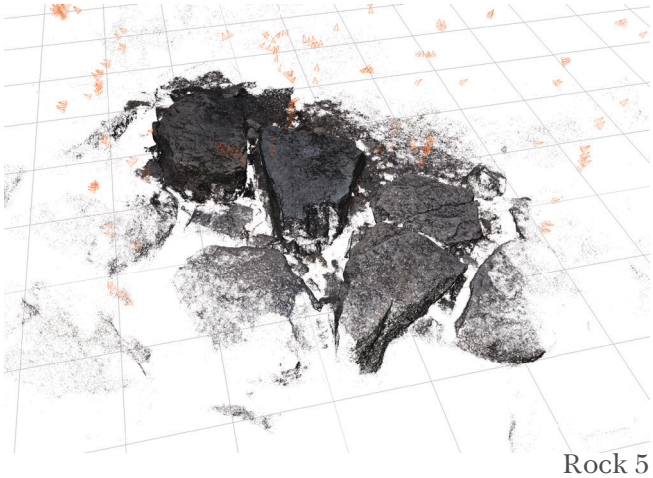
Figure 78: Data point cloud model and mesh of Rock 6



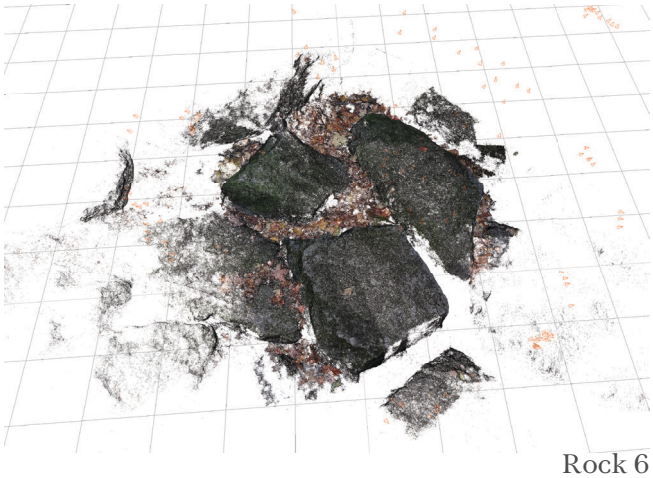
Rock 1



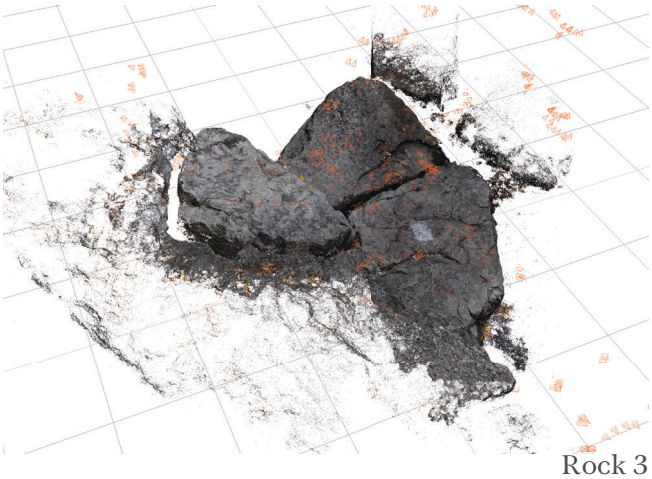
Rock 2



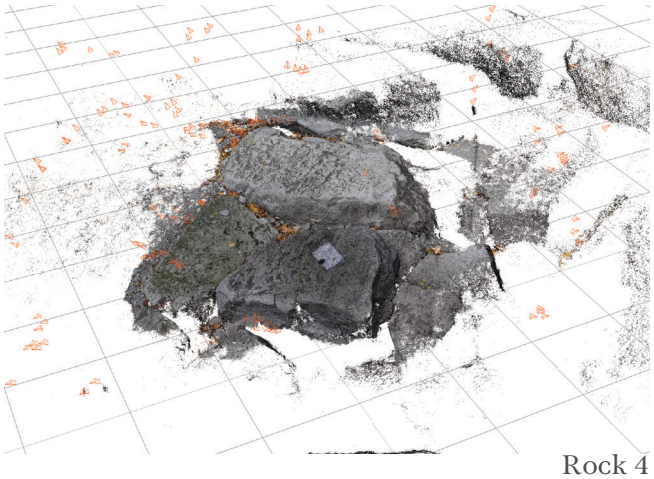
Rock 5



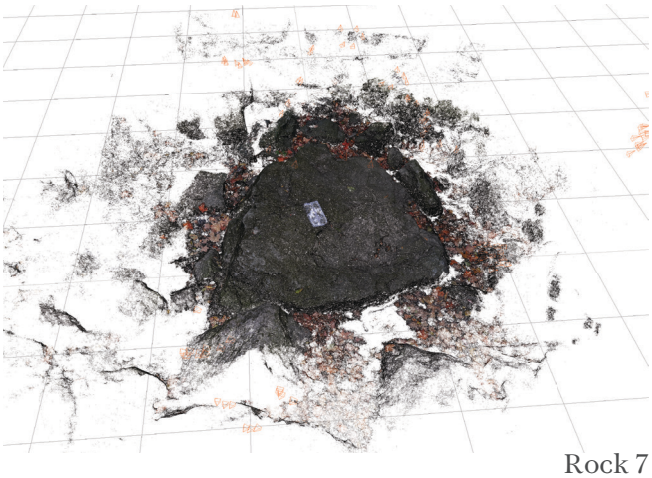
Rock 6



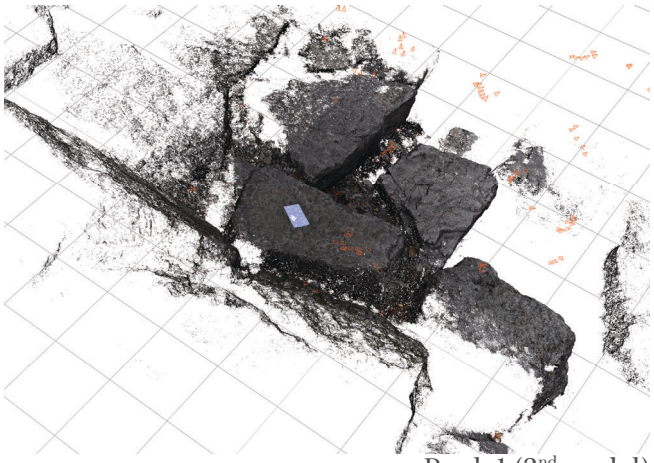
Rock 3



Rock 4

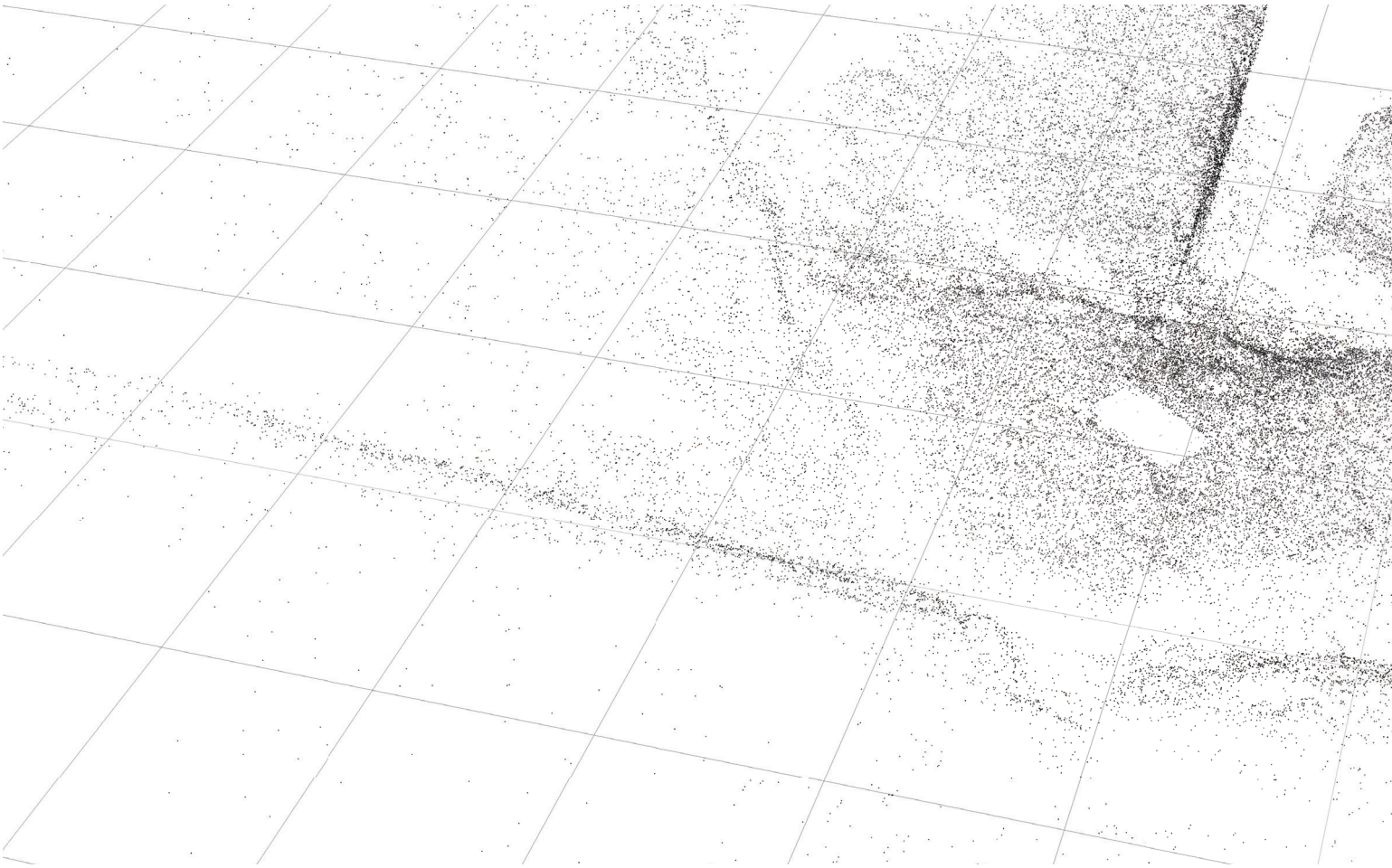


Rock 7



Rock 1 (2nd model)

Figure 79: The dense cloud layer of each of the seven rocks



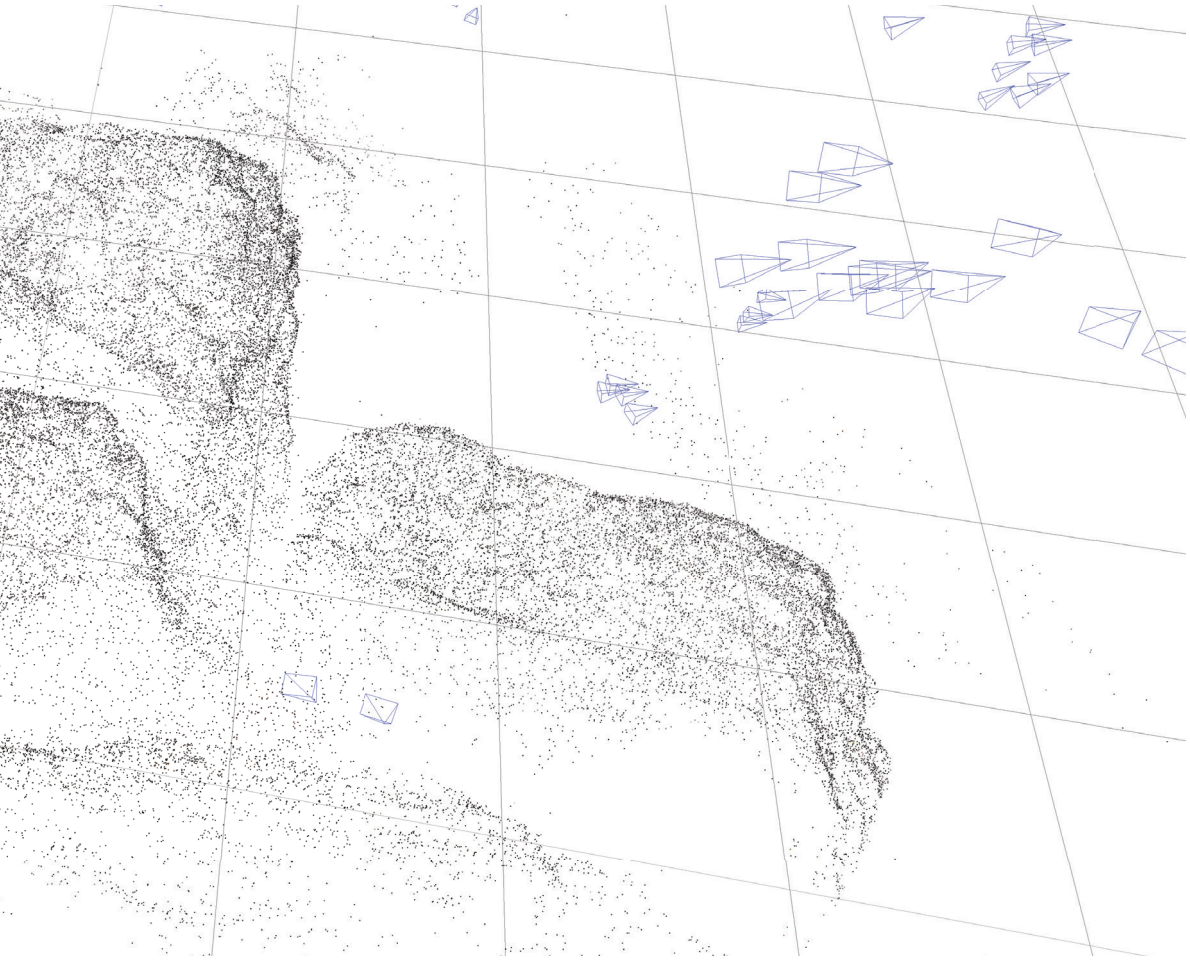
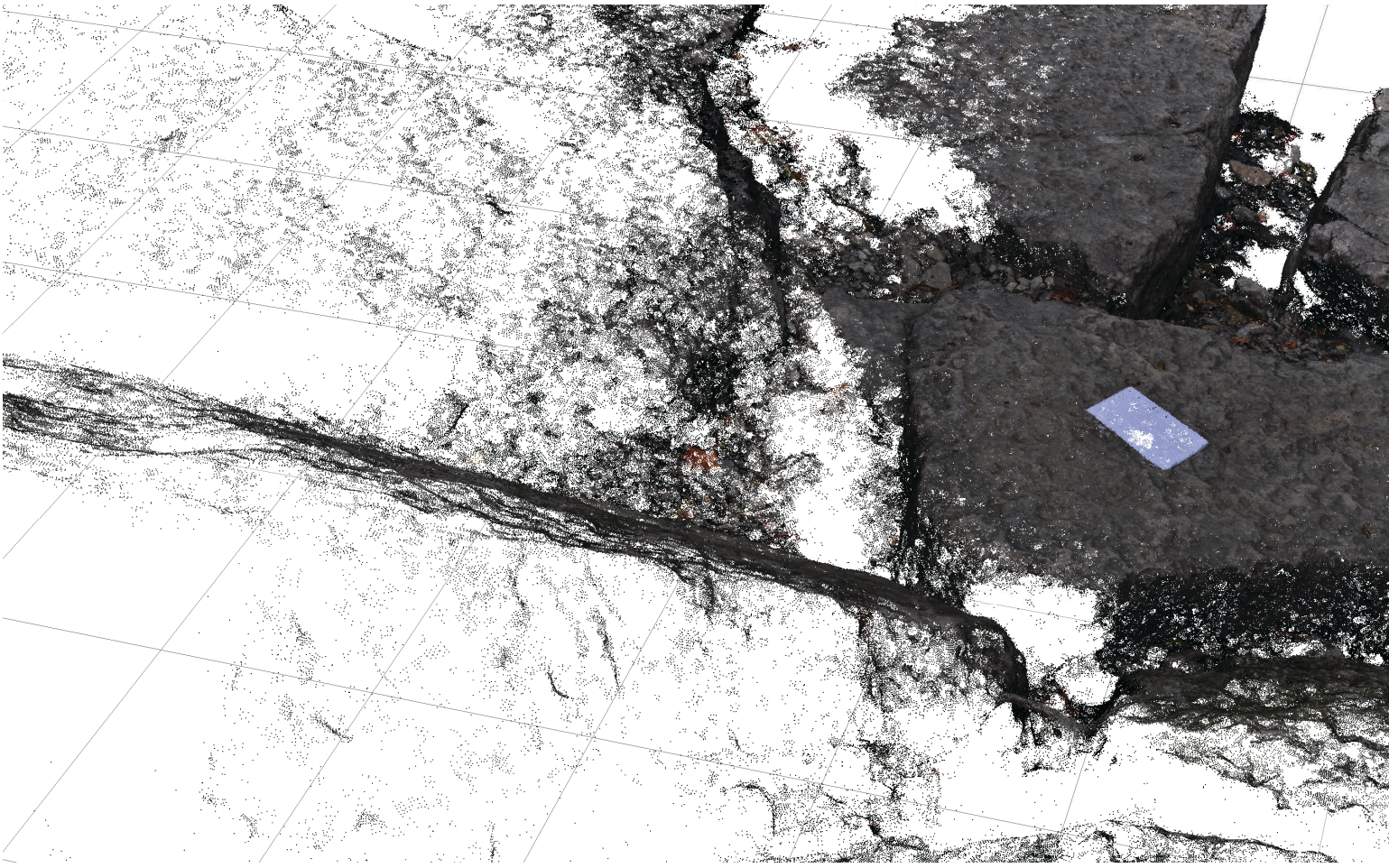


Figure 80: Sparse point cloud of Rock 1



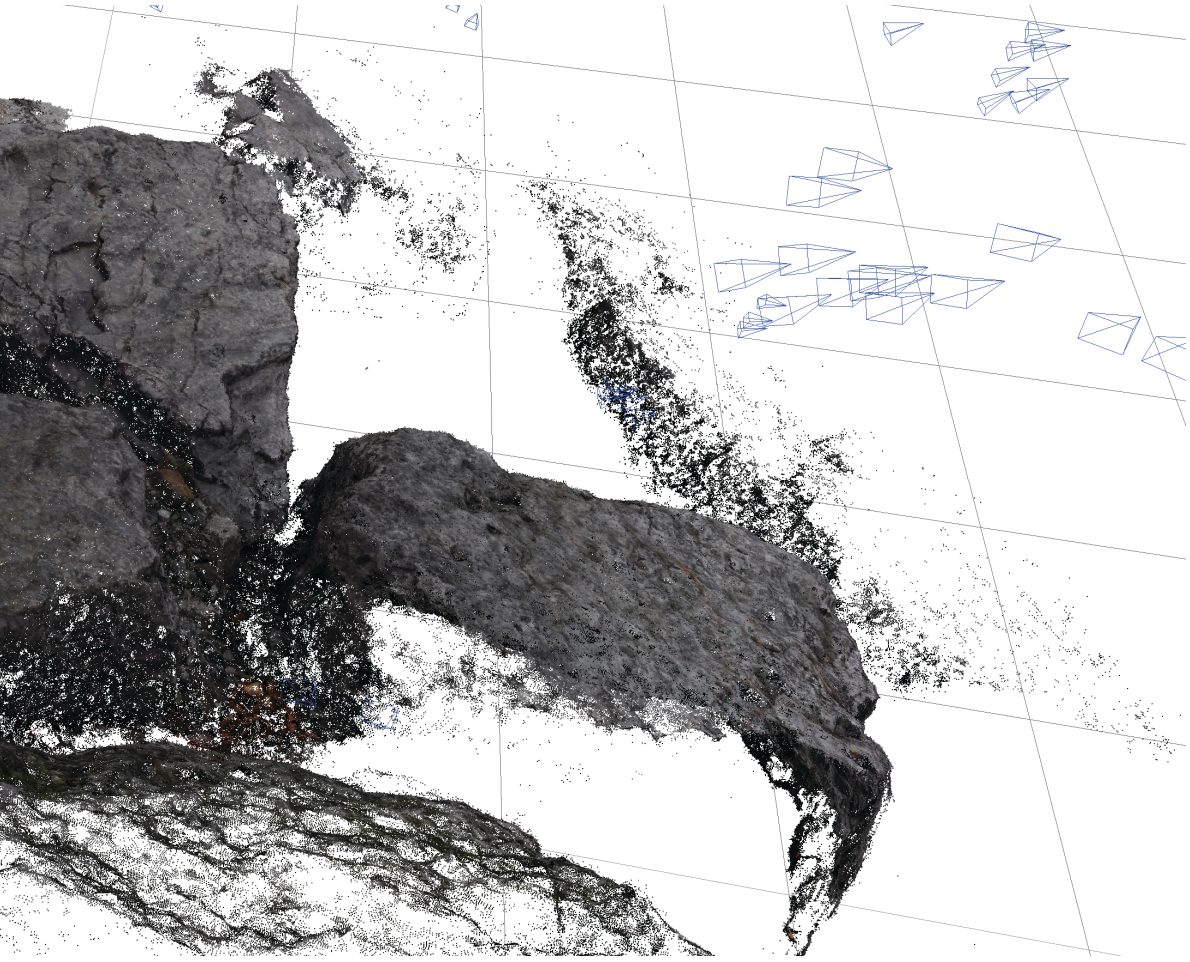
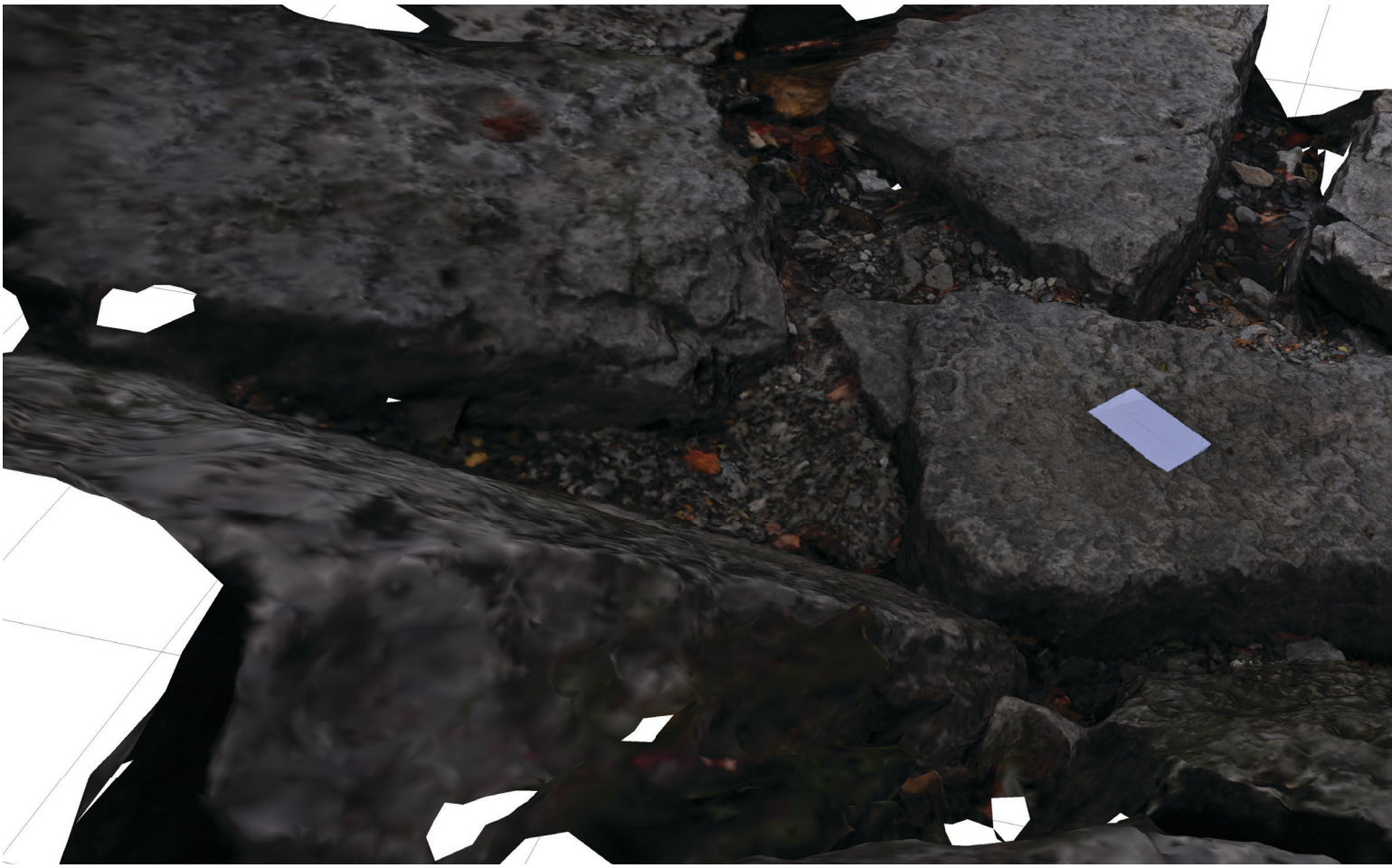


Figure 81: Dense point cloud of Rock 1



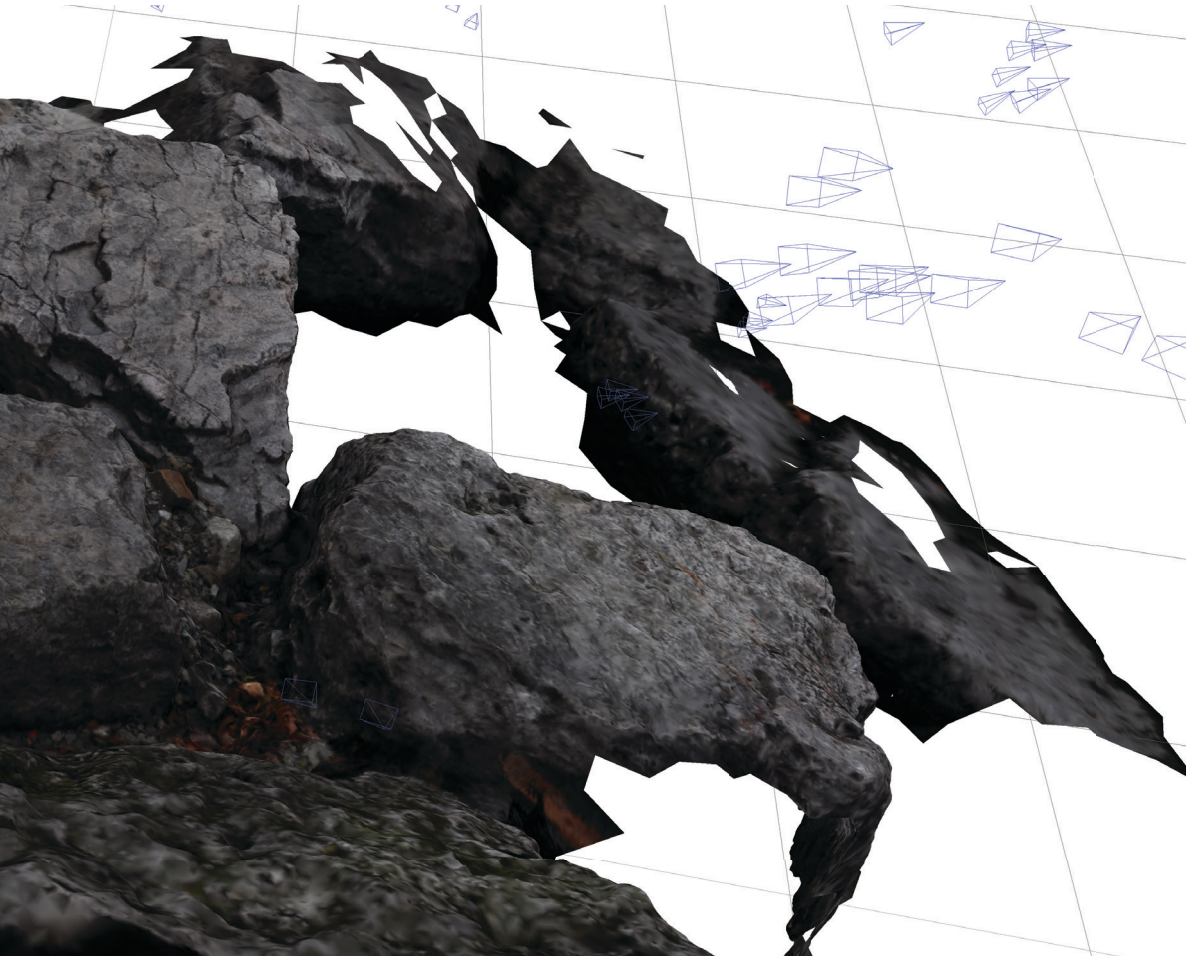


Figure 82: Textured mesh model of Rock 1

Creating the structure

> "Scientists discovered that because it's colder in the deepest part and because of the tidal flow, water is flowing in that river. So in a lot of ways it's an underground river. I'm trying to get you to see things that are quite literally under your feet but you had no idea were there."[66] -Maya Lin

In her piece, The Hudson Bight, artist Maya Lin recreates a physical model of the seafloor of the Hudson Canyon. The 30-foot piece, consisting of a square grid that captures the form of the topography, is Lin's way of allowing this natural landscape, otherwise hidden under the surface of the water, to be brought to the surface. The piece, made from webbing wires, allows the natural, underwater formation to be displayed in an indoor space, in turn, transforming it.

Inspired by Lin's approach, I begin to think of similar fabrication methods that would allow me to reconstruct the rocks once again: to create a life-sizes physical mould of each. I decide to limit the scope at this stage to three rocks

Figure 83: Maya Lin, *The Hudson Bight*, 2018

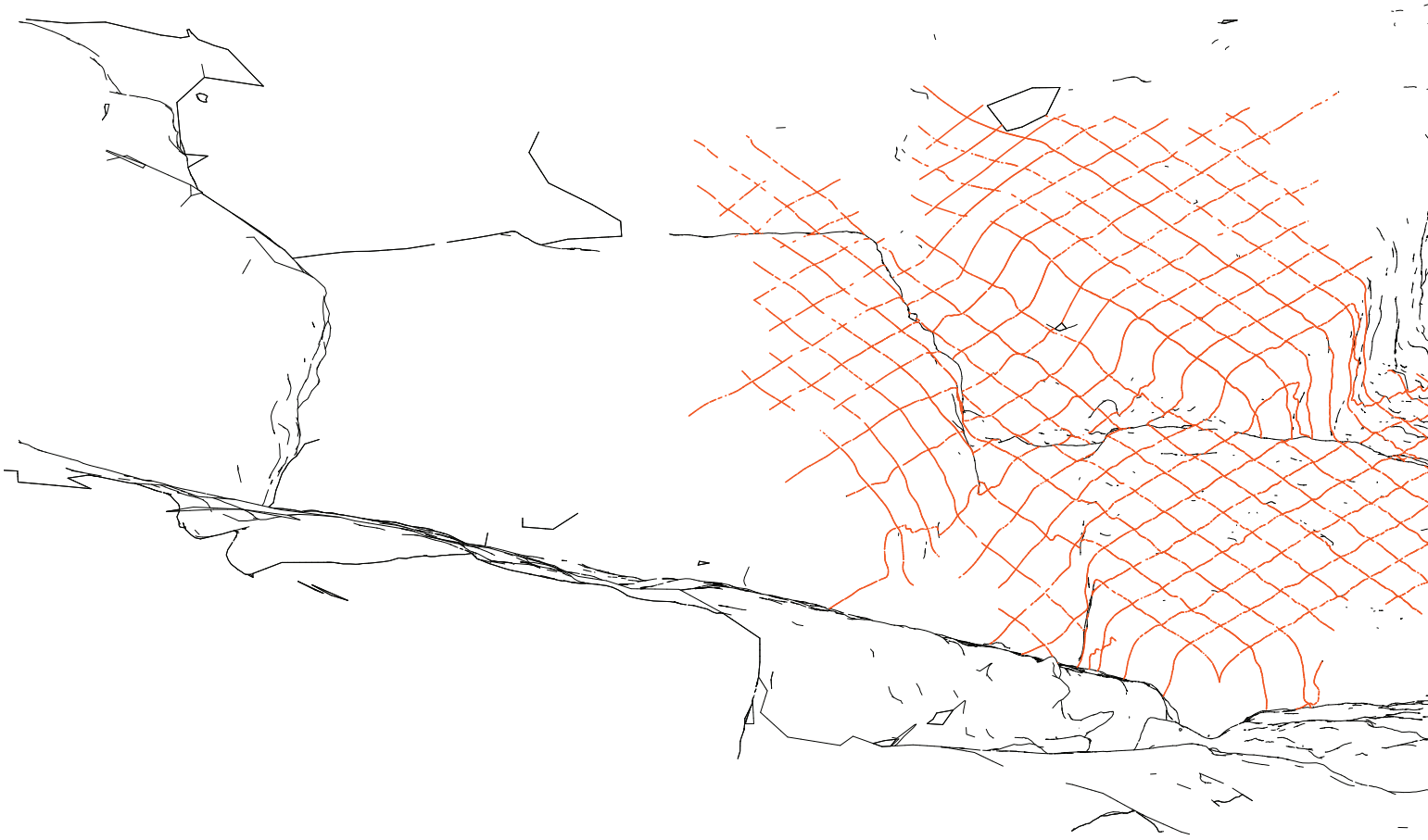
Webbing wire

out of the seven I have modeled. I then proceed to create a cardboard structure that captures the skeleton of each rock's form. To achieve this, I project a square grid that is the same size as the medium carpet my family brought with along from the U.A.E to Canada (1170mm x 1590mm) onto the surface of each model. Then, I take a section of the profile of the model at each grid line. The resultant mesh is the sum of the profiles that starts to reference the rocks on site. Using a laser-cutter, I cut the profile strips and assemble them to form the skeleton of the mould.

A second attempt at moulding

Once I assemble the cardboard skeleton and see it come together, I begin to feel the presence of the rocks from the site once again, this time, in the basement of my current house in Mississauga. When I look at the structure, I remember the fabric moulding experiments I have previously conducted, as the large model now captures the gesture of the rocks in a different material. As I reflect, I begin to think of other materials that I can use to replace the fabric used in my previous attempt at capturing the texture of the rocks. A

Figure 84: The cardboard structure from pieces to assembled, Cambridge (ON)



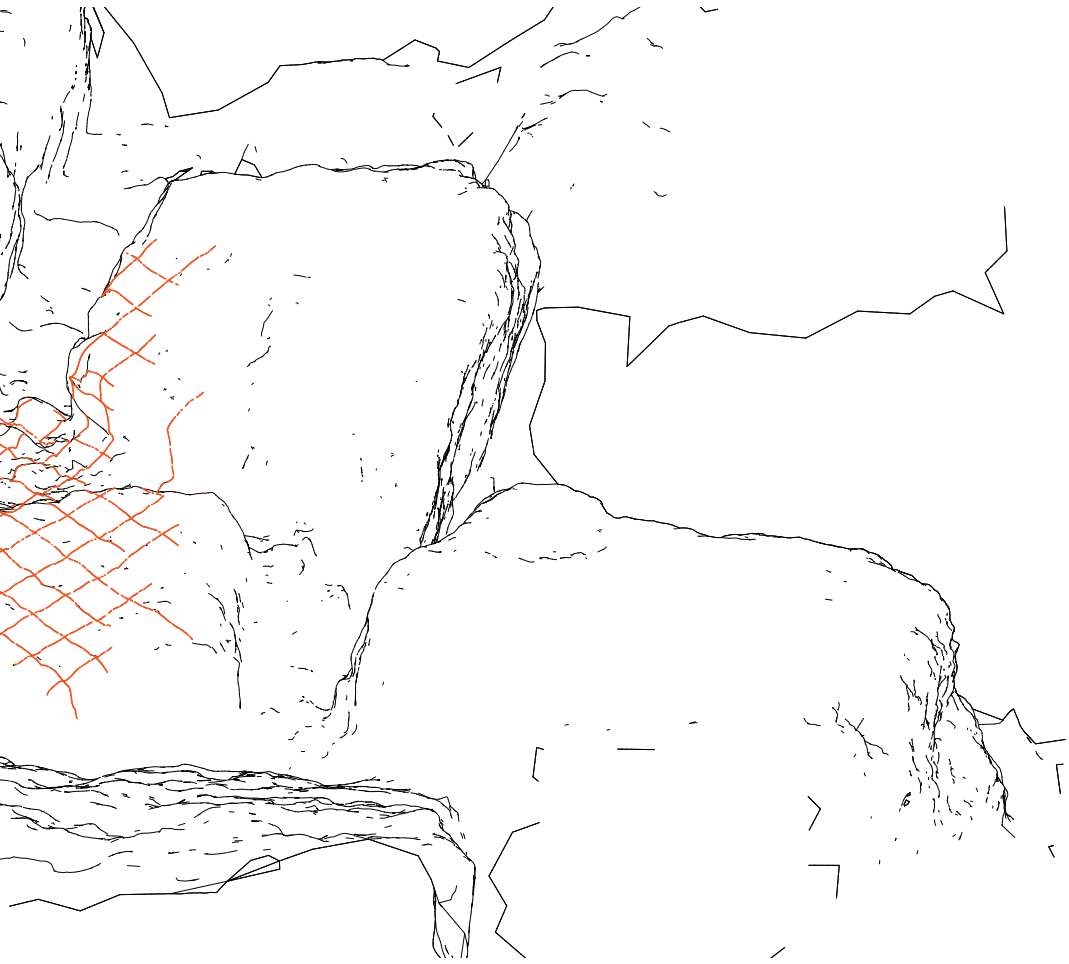


Figure 85: Grid projection on Rock 1

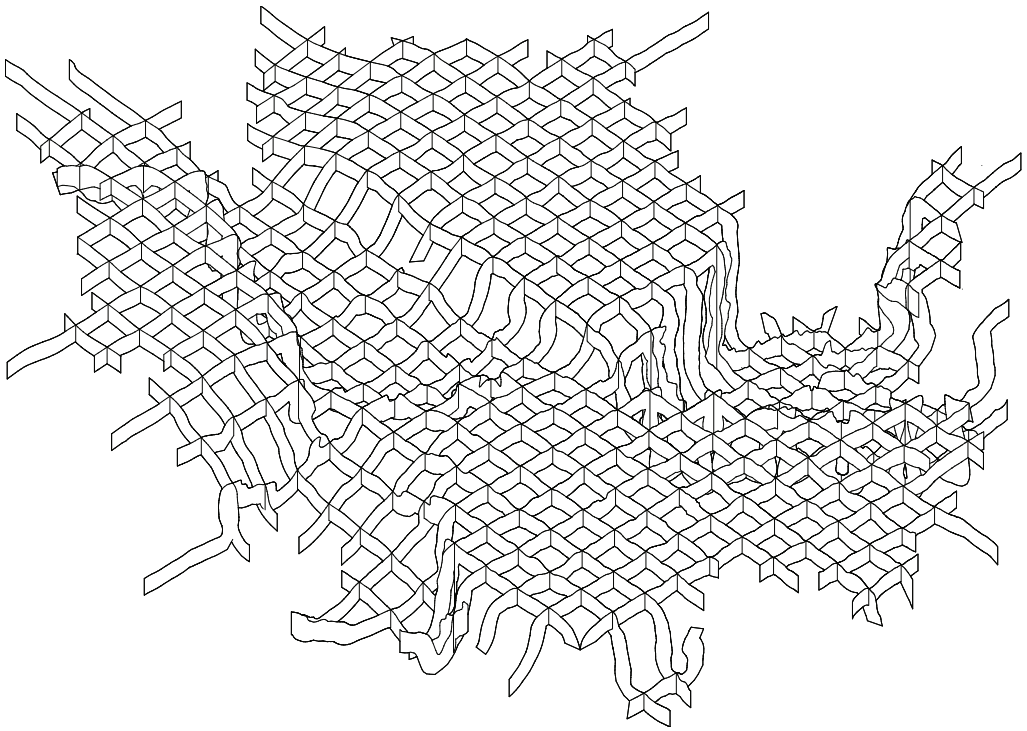


Figure 86: Mould structure from grid projection

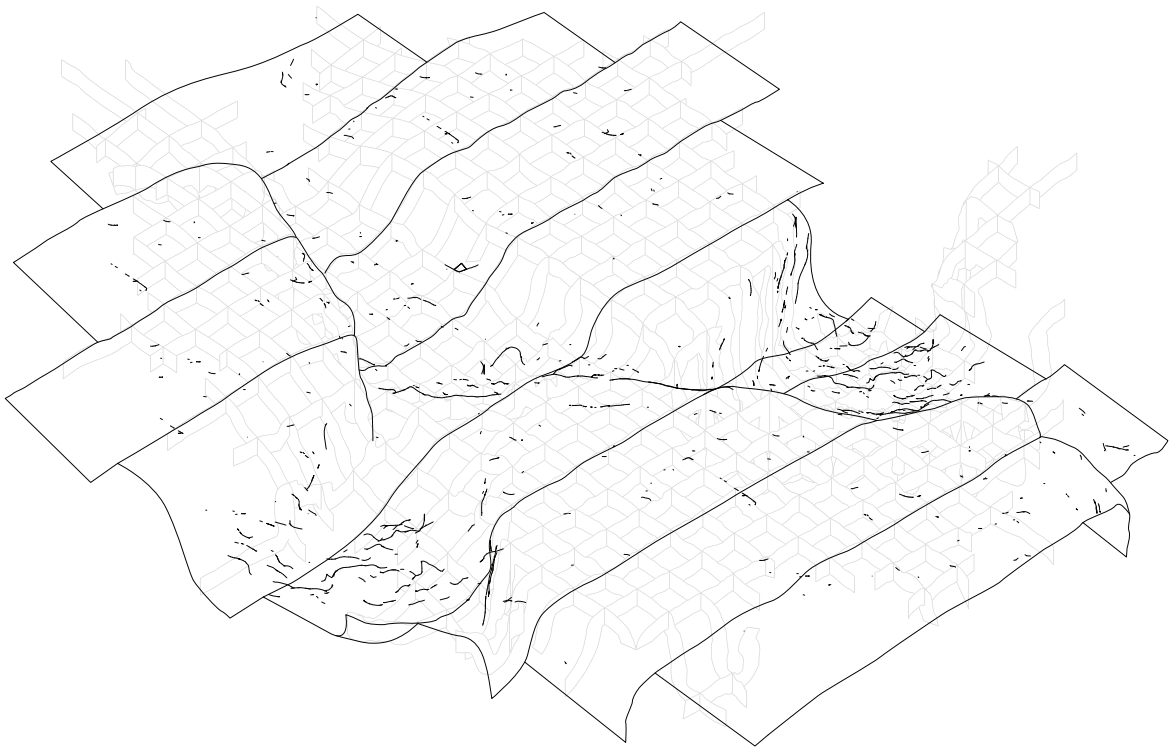


Figure 87: Copper mould capturing rock texture

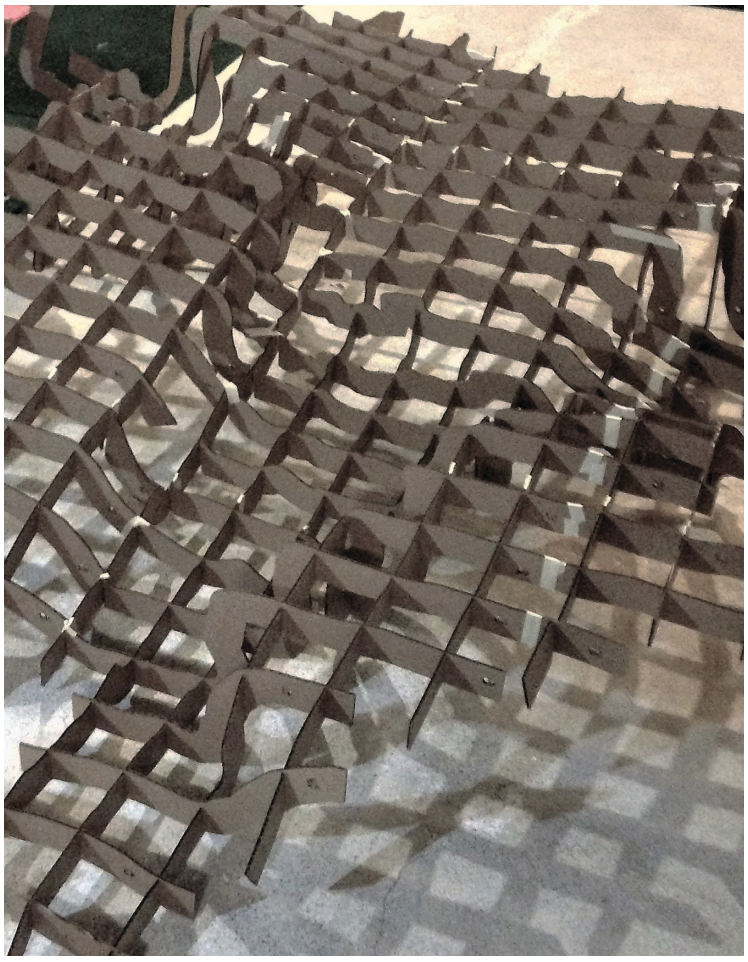


Figure 88: Cardboard frame of Rock 1

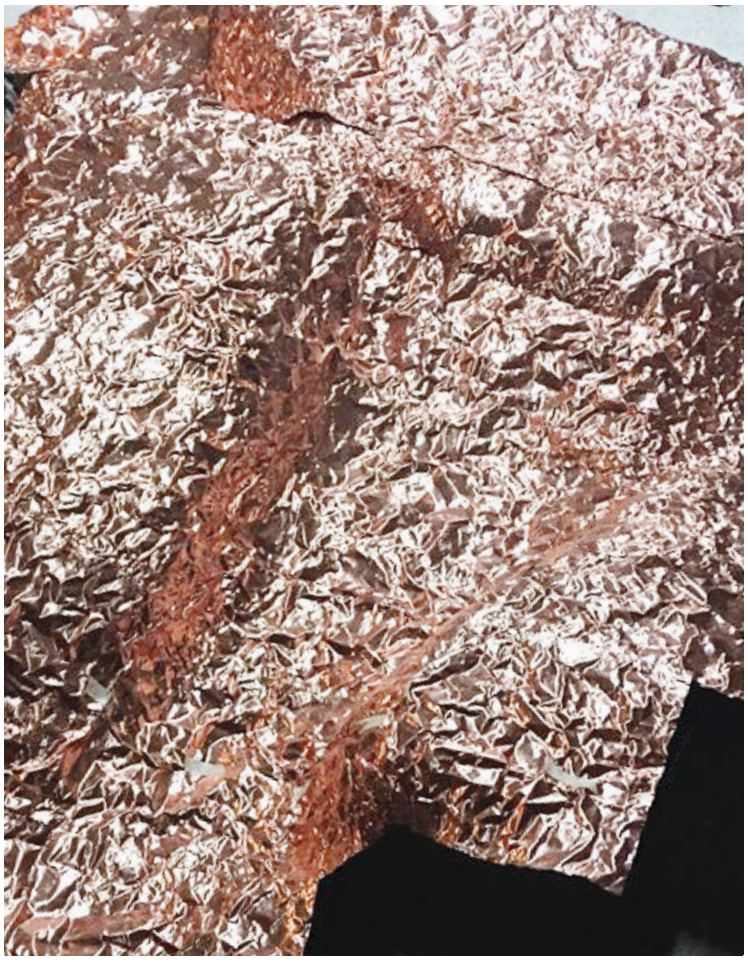


Figure 89: Cardboard frame used to shape copper foil before taking it to site to record texture

material that can withstand the harsh conditions at the site now during winter. As Vanessa Dion Fletcher's lithography inspired process comes to mind, I decide to carry out the same fabric moulding process using copper foil; the same crafting material she uses for her copper plate slippers.

Mould making using copper foil

As I head back to the site this time, I am confronted by the cold weather and snow: Canadian winter has fully taken over the site. As I walk around, I remember the view of the creek from my old apartment during winter. After tree leaves fall off, the frozen, much quieter creek is exposed. The snow that covers the rocks this time poses new challenges. As O'Sullivan states,

> "We might think of the artist's 'meeting' with his or her materials, a more complex encounter perhaps, but of the same fundamental nature. This is a confrontation between a specific artist-subjectivity and specific materials, each of which themselves are already the envelopment of a potential."[67]

Figure 90: Copper mould of Rock 1 on site, Mississauga

Figure 91: Snapshots from a video of the author making a mould of Rock 1 using copper foil sheets, Mississauga

In heavy, Canadian winter gear, I place the copper foil mould strips I have partially pre-moulded using the cardboard rock skeleton at home. I begin to press the thin metal sheet down on the rock using my hands. The sheet begins to record the texture as I press my way around the rock. As I work, the copper begins to remind me of the many photos I have seen of Souq Al-Safafeer: a historical copperware market and landmark in Baghdad in which coppersmiths use tools to emboss copperware with beautiful patterns. This is perhaps what Deleuze refers to as the skeleton-space, a space that "is constructed piece by piece, from action to action – not, however, in a random fashion, but following a vector that reveals a 'line of the universe', a cosmic zigzag of vital energy."[68]

As I touch and press the surface of the rock now using my gloved hands, I reflect on how different the rocks and the site were just a few months ago. In a sense, revisiting the site, over the summer, fall, and winter, allowed me to experience different physical sensations, textures and temperatures in a place that was once a purely visual, distant realm.

Figure 92: Close-up of copper mould of Rock 1, Mississauga

Figure 93: Copper mould of Rock 1 , Mississauga

OF ENCOUNTER

Occupying an awkwardly large area within its new setting, the bulges and curves of the seemingly disoriented rock stand out against the flat cement floor. As I glance at it from the desk, I witness the way the spotlight directly above interrogates every wrinkle on its surface. The rock is now void of snow, hidden from sunshine, and deprived of the water that bathed it daily. Rather than reflecting the sky, as it did on site, the shiny copper now reconfigures the timber grid of the basement ceiling. Contrary to being partially submerged in freezing cold water at the creek, this copper replica of Rock 1 is now dry, yet the basement of my Mississauga home is quietly flooded with a hypothetical stream of pure force that I can almost hear in my head.

Layering

> "In some cases, the Figure is dissipated entirely, leaving behind nothing but a sand dune or a jet of water-a pure Force that replaces the Figure."[69]
> -Gilles Deleuze

The rocks at the site have a strong presence. Over the years, they have asserted their physical existence in the site and secured a space for themselves in this place. The more time I spend at the site, and over different seasons, the stronger my admiration grows for their stability, their materiality and their poise within the landscape. With each encounter, through sketching, photography, mould making, observing and listening, all measured by my body through my senses, I begin to extract the forces of the landscape. I record my sensory connections with the rocks as they interact with the water coursing between them, gushing through the faults and fractures. Simon O'Sullivan says,

> "the value of art is no longer measured except in terms of decoded and deterritorialized flows ... It

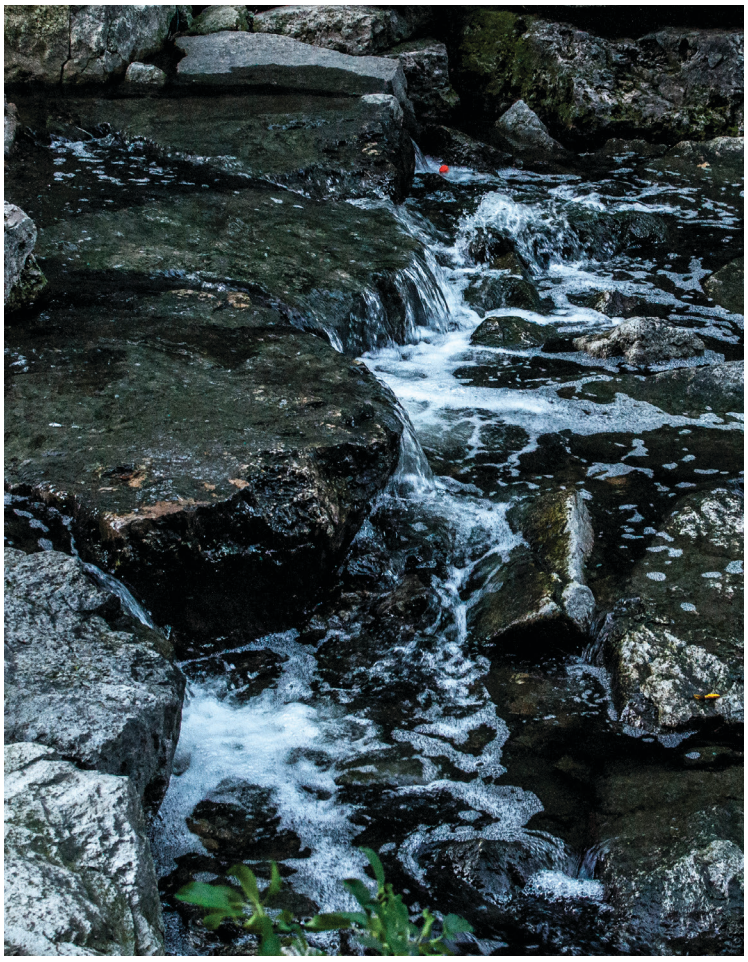


Figure 94: Water cascading on rocks at the creek in the summer, Mississauga

> is here that art accedes to its authentic modernity, which simply consists in liberating what was present in art from its beginnings, but was hidden underneath aims and objects, even if aesthetic, and underneath recordings or axiomatics: the pure process that never ceases to reach fulfilment as it proceeds – art as 'experimentation'."[70]

As the water flows by, the rocks are enduring canvases, they withstand its force in different states, season after season. After visiting the site at different times of the year, I notice that their surface and texture slightly transform every time, yet their forms remain the same. Their material gestures are the powerful canvases upon which the seasons mark their passing. As I contemplate the presence and the permanence of these landscape features, measured through my senses earlier, I begin to think of the temporality of my childhood memories. Contrary to the solid landscape features of this site, my grandparents' garden is hazy, intangible and fragmented in my mind. As I work my way around the site physically, becoming more familiar with each experiment, I feel a surprising sense of fulfilment. The spaces where my

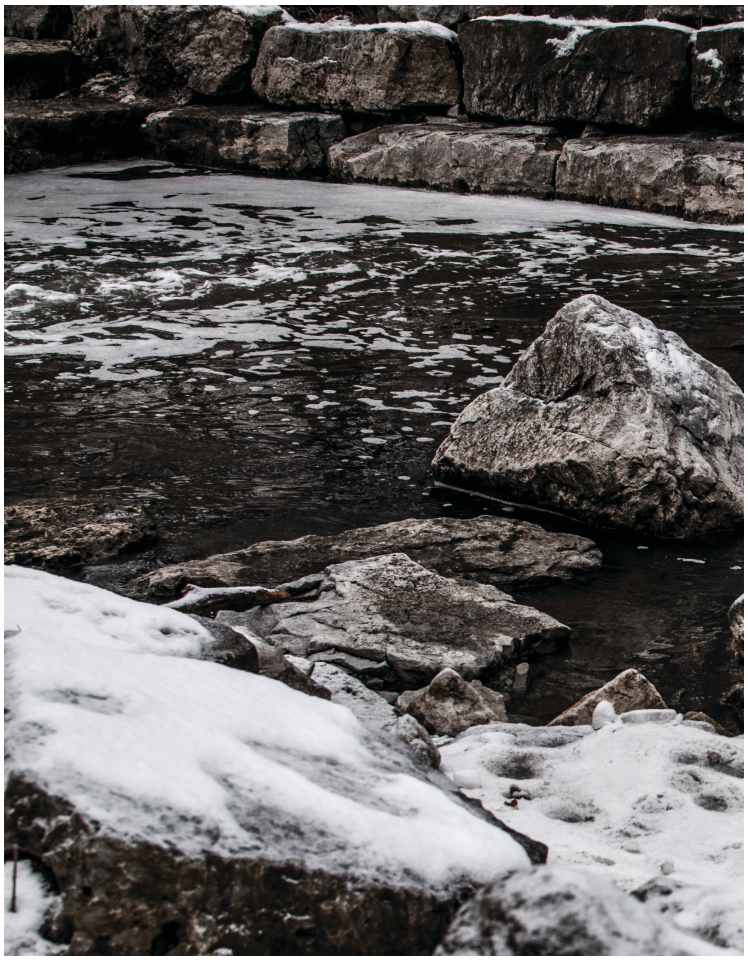


Figure 95: Rock 1 covered in snow in the winter, Mississauga

earliest life experiences took place may be distant, slowly changing in my memory as time goes by, but this physical landscape becomes the raw material upon which I am able to honour those very memories.

In her woven pieces, "A Key in Hand, Uncertain Journey, and A Long Day", artist Chiharu Shiota creates spaces that are charged with emotion. Touching upon themes of life, death, displacement, loss, absence and fear, her work is abstract and poetic, often evoking the same emotions in the viewer. As Deleuze states, "the artist is the presenter of affects, inventor of affects, creator of affects, in relation with the percepts or visions that the artist gives us.'"[71] Made using repetitive movements and a play on light and density, the pieces are animated only once the viewer occupies the space. Through her long-winded, tedious process of weaving the yarn, the pieces encompass a theatrical, performative quality within them that gives meaning to the work. As she creates ideal spaces for reflection, where people are invited to stay for hours, the art becomes open to interpretation, at the mercy of the beholder's imagination. Each beholder projects his/her personal experiences, memories and

Figure 96: Chiharu Shiota, *A Long Day,* 2015

Installation

emotions onto the work. Her pieces often appear to be haunted by the noticeable absence of the subject.

Similarly, my aim as I create my pieces is not to merely represent my memories and the landscape, but to create hybrid pieces that evoke a sense of ambiguity, an in-betweenness, and a desperate need to physically map out my heterotopia of migration. I set out to deterritorialize[72] my memories of home and the sensations I experience of the forces of nature at the site, in each season, and reterritorialize them into each piece. Through this process, I create objects of encounter. O'Sullivan explains,

> "An object of an encounter is fundamentally different from an object of recognition. With the latter our knowledges, beliefs and values are reconfirmed. We, and the world we inhabit, are reconfirmed as that which we already understood our world and ourselves to be.", "With a genuine encounter however the contrary is the case. Our typical ways of being in the world are challenged, our systems of knowledge disrupted. We are forced to thought."[73]

After experimenting with several materials and methodologies (exhibited in chapter two), the process I settle on, inspired by the migratory carpets that most Iraqi households proudly and nostalgically exhibit, is layering. As I layer coloured thread on the rough surface of the copper mould, in turn, capturing the texture of the rock, I connect with the rock remotely from my current house in Mississauga. I lose myself in this private performance. As I layer, I feel a sense of relief: the sensation of the thread passing through my fingers before settling in the nooks and valleys of the mould feels therapeutic. Layer by layer, the form of the rock begins to re-emerge, but this time in vibrant hues and expressive tones. It begins to resemble my early sketches of the rocks and the site.

Colouring

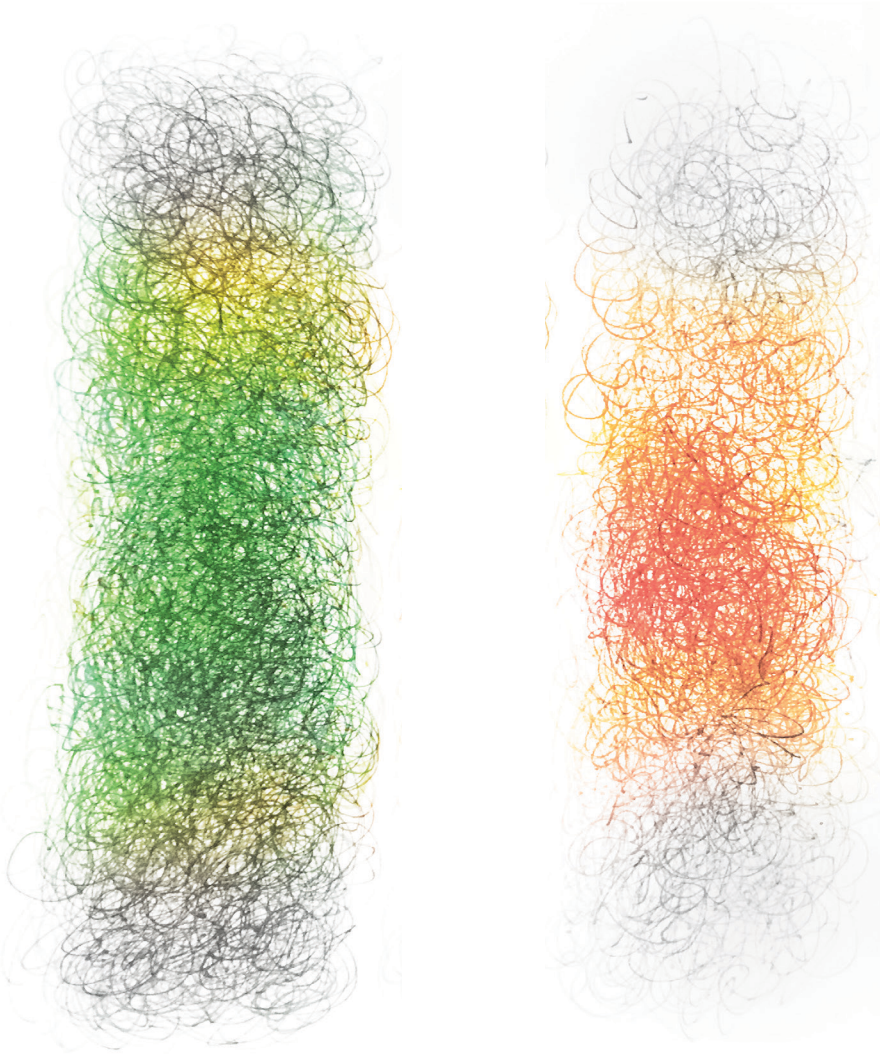
> "...this, first of all, is what makes painting abstract: summoning forces, populating the area of plain, uniform color with the forces it bears, making the invisible forces visible in themselves,..."[74] -Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari

Colour, according to Deleuze and Guattari, is the sensible tool that brings forth invisible forces within the world into the light, once again, for us to experience with our senses. These invisible forces of time, gravity, or perhaps trauma, are abstract concepts. Through colour, these concepts find a way to be physically manifested, measured and quantified, revealing intensities that are otherwise imperceptible. Post-Impressionist artist Cezanne claims,

> "Afterward, in the act of painting, the earth emerges, with its "stubborn geometry", its "geological foundations" as "the measure of the world" – but with the perpetual risk that the earth in turn may once again disappear in a second catastrophe, in order for colors to arise, for the earth to rise to the sun."[75]

The rocks, now, becoming drenched in colour, wearing the vivid sheen of the wet carpets being washed on the roof of my grandparents' house, reappear in a new form. This new vibrant rock draws its colour inspiration from the site. Each season I have spent at the creek has painted the landscape

Figure 97: The leaves changing colors at the site in the fall, Mississauga



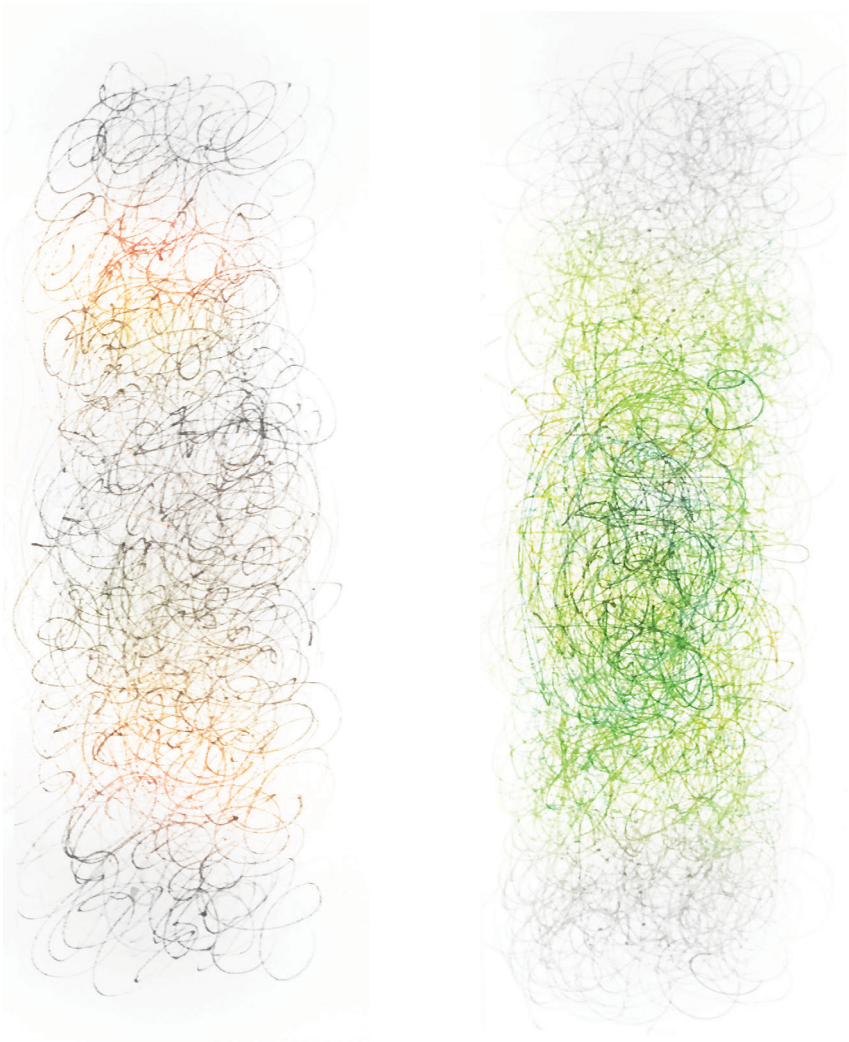


Figure 98: Sketches of the color palette for each piece based on each season

with a different palette, just as I had previously observed from the window of my first home in Canada year-round. In the summer, the site is overtaken by green: from the moss-covered rocks, to the thick trees above the creek. The greens are complimented by the bright blue summer sky as a brilliant background. In the fall, the trees begin to warm up in tones: reds, oranges, and yellows overtake the leaves on the trees, on the ground, and in the creek. These bold hues, in a large variety of tones, render the site fiery, despite the gradually cooling temperatures. In the winter, the landscape, peaking through the white veil of snow here and there, is a blanched vista. The frosty surfaces highlight the colours of the bright winter jackets of those walking the path. As I layer the thread samples, then drench them in a fabric stiffener solution, I remember the process of washing the carpets, carried out by my family in Baghdad throughout my childhood. When wet, the pieces appear dark and vibrant, just as the soaked carpets did on the roof.

Figure 99: Haneen Dalla-Ali, *Coloured Thread Sample,* 2019

Thread and fabric stiffener

Carpet 1 palette

Season: Summer.
Featured tree: Palm tree.
Colour palette:
From the site: green, blue, grey and brown.
From my memories of the tree: red, yellow, green, and brown.
Weather conditions on day of experiment:
Temperature: 26 °C.
Precipitation: none.
Sunlight: sunny.

Figure 100: Moss and grass growing on rocks during the summer, Mississauga

Figure 101: Cooksville Creek in the summer, Mississauga

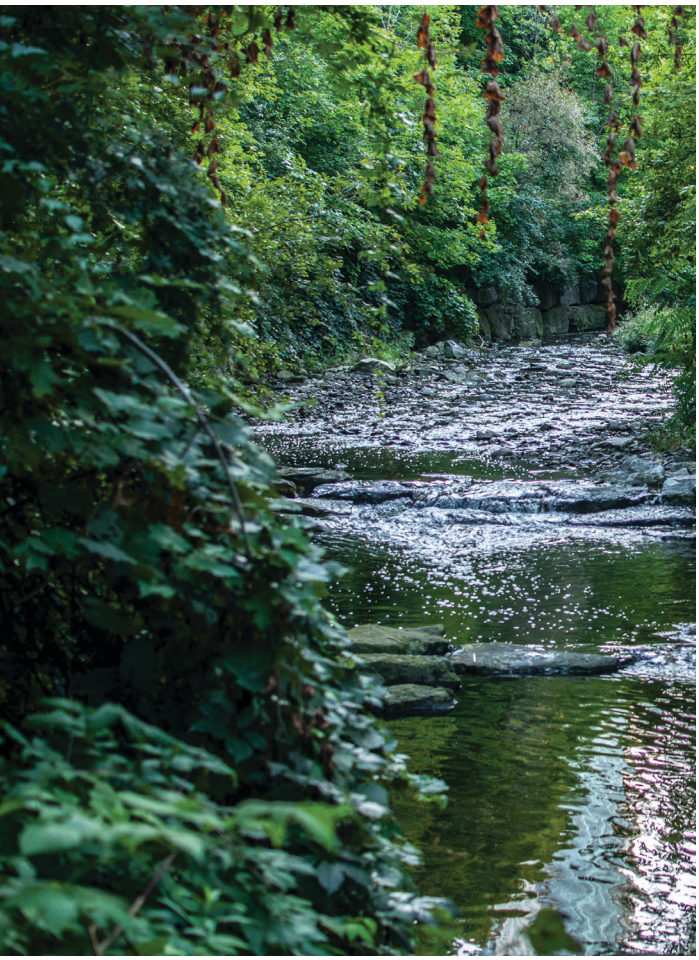
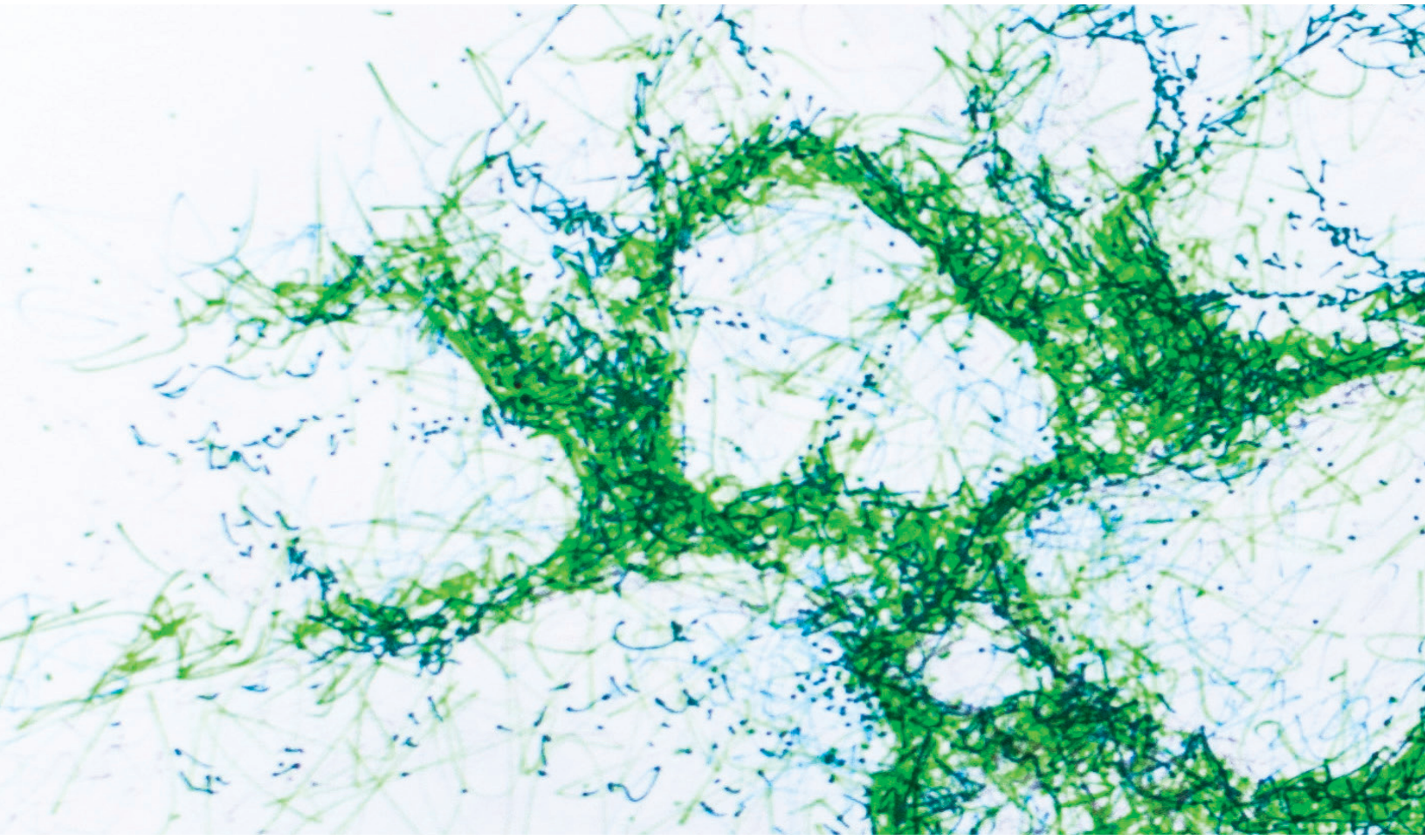


Figure 102: Colour palette of the site during summer, Mississauga



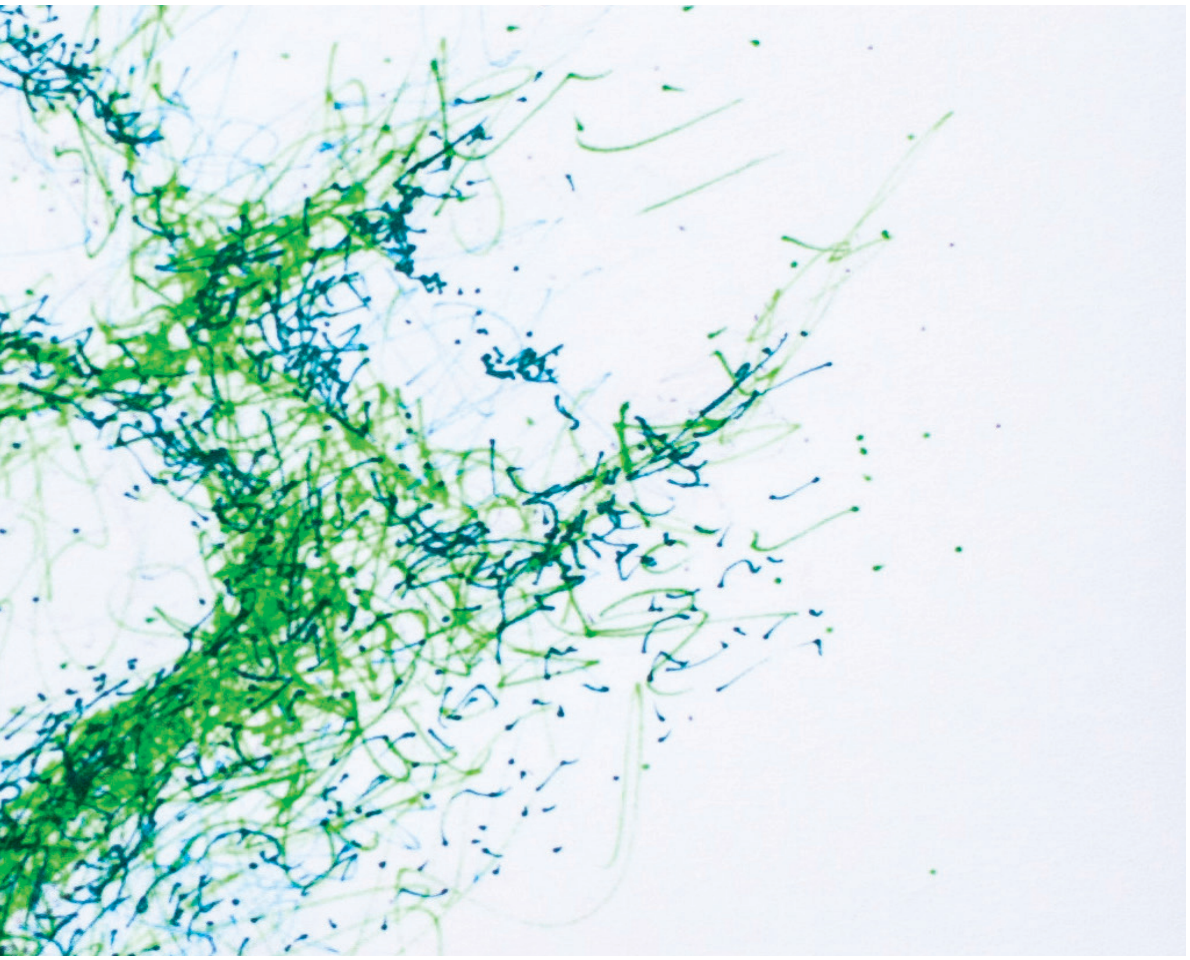


Figure 103: Sketch of Rock 1 during summer, Mississauga

Carpet 2 palette

Season: fall.
Featured tree: olive tree.
Colour palette:
From the site: yellow, orange, red, brown, grey, green, and blue.
From my memories of the tree: yellow, green, brown, and black.
Weather conditions on day of experiment:
Temperature: 16 °C.
Precipitation: none.
Sunlight: partially cloudy.

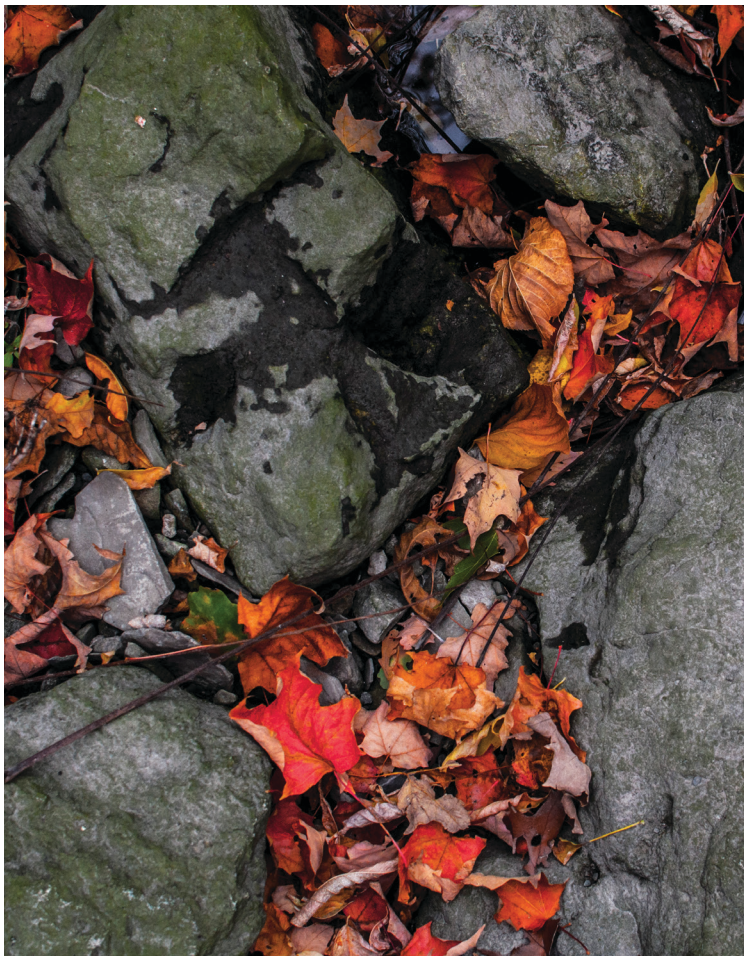


Figure 104: Fallen leaves on rock 6 during fall, Mississauga

Figure 105: Cooksville Creek in the fall, Mississauga

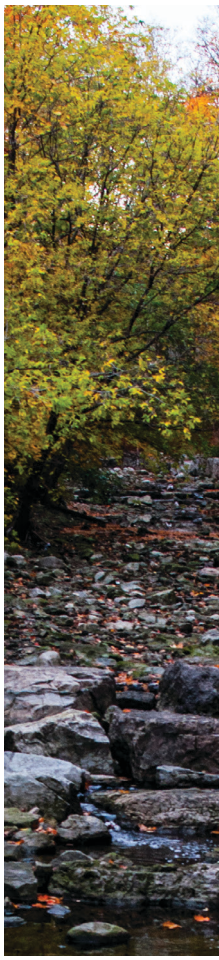


Figure 106: Colour palette of the site during fall, Mississauga

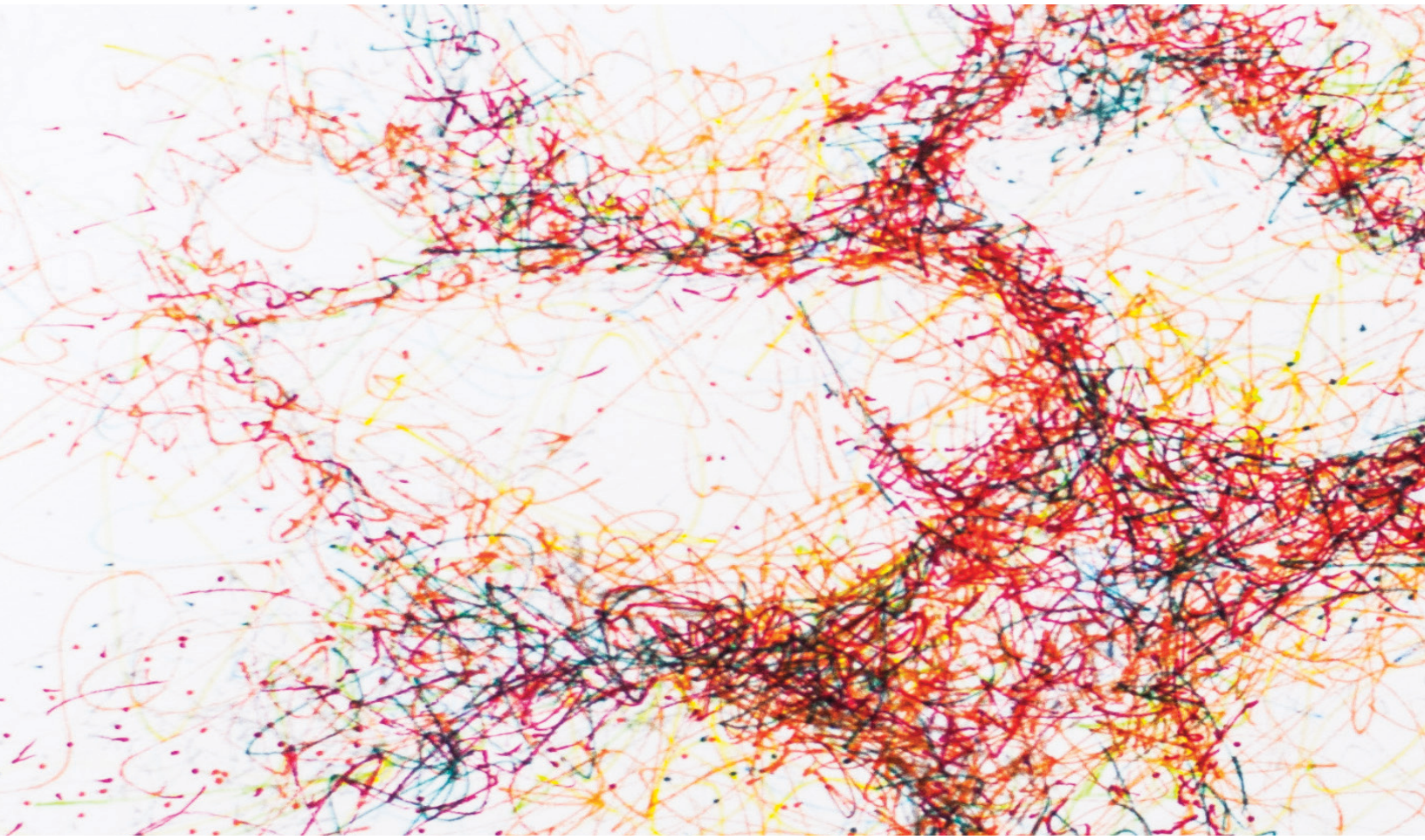


Figure 107: Sketch of Rock 1 during fall, Mississauga

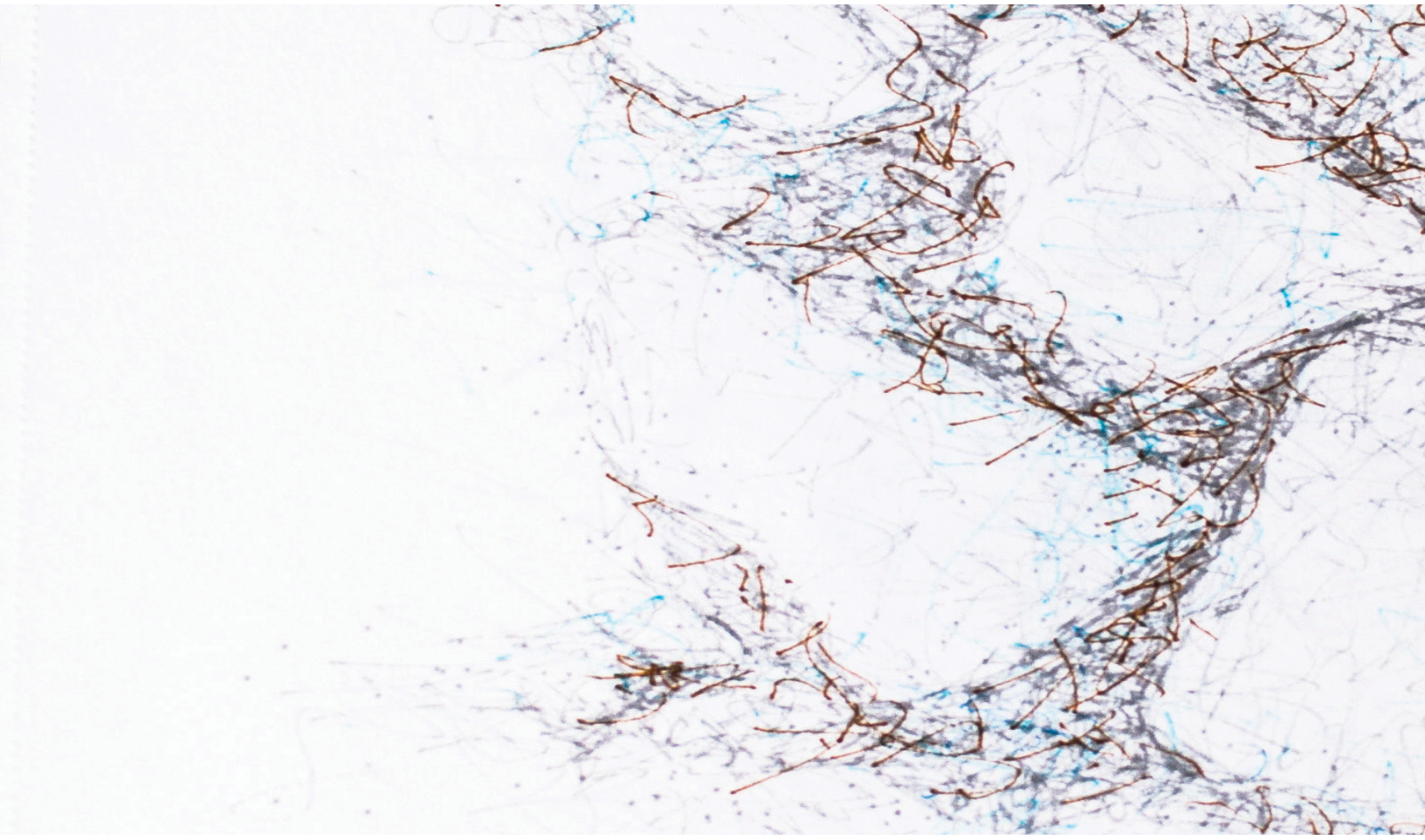
Carpet 3 palette

Season: winter.
Featured tree: sour-orange tree.
Colour palette:
From the site: white, grey, blue, and brown.
From my memories of the tree: orange, white, and green.
Weather conditions on day of experiment:
Temperature: -1 °C.
Precipitation: snow.
Sunlight: cloudy.

Figure 108: Snow covering the rocks during winter, Mississauga

Figure 109: Cooksville Creek in the winter, Mississauga

Figure 110: Colour palette of the site during winter, Mississauga



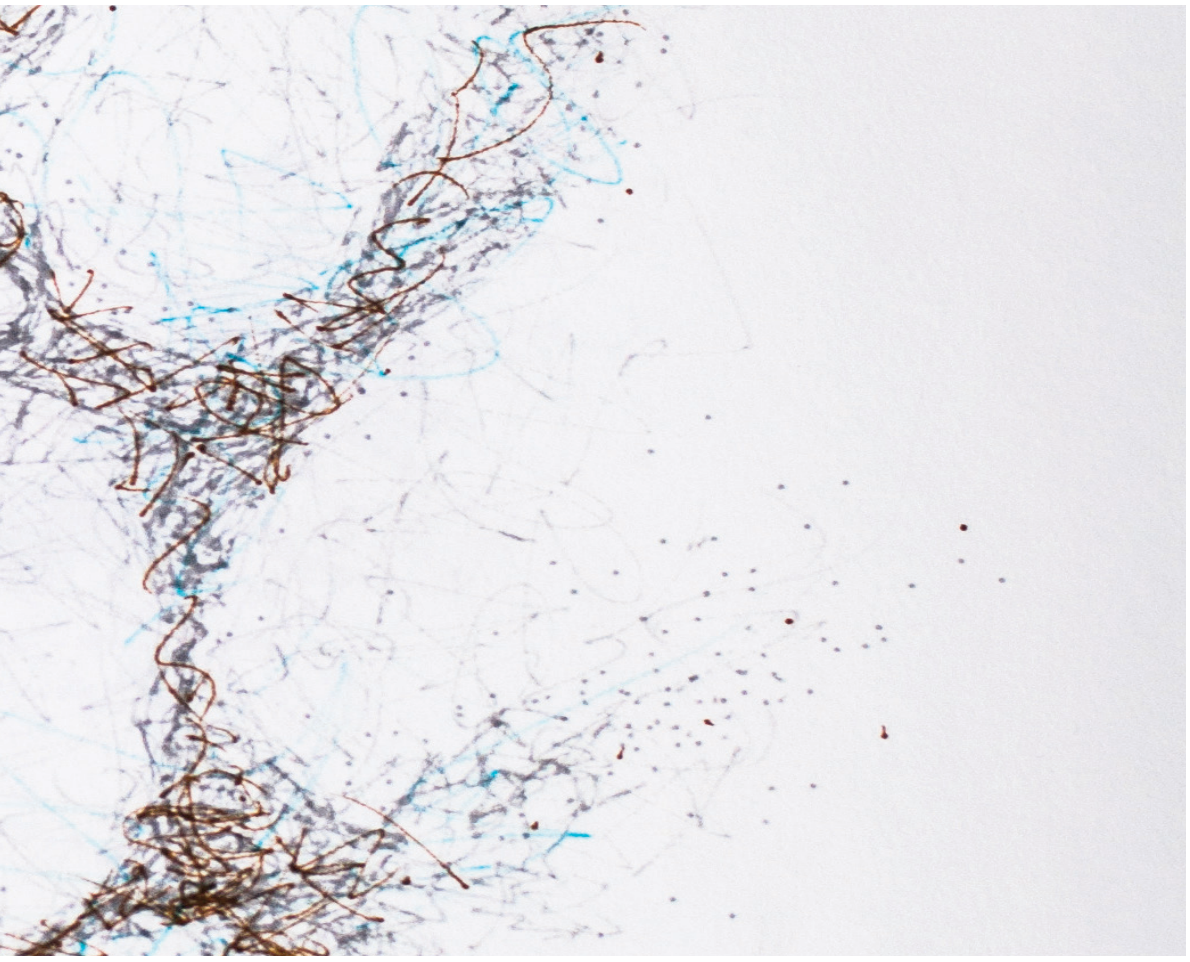


Figure 111: Sketch of Rock 1 during winter, Mississauga

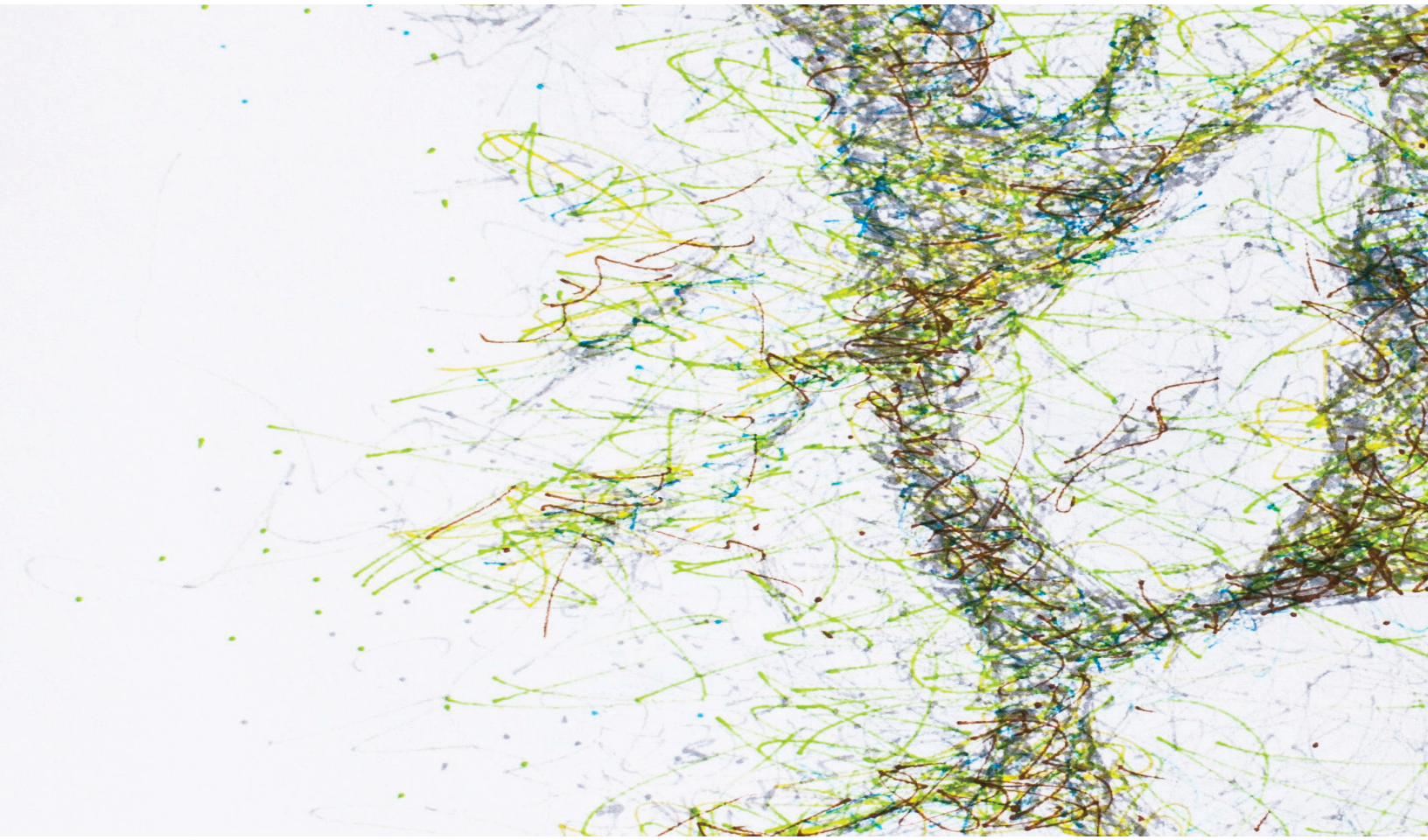
Carpet 4 palette

Season: spring.
Featured tree: roses.
Colour palette:
From the site: green, yellow, pink, red, blue, brown, and grey.
From my memories of the tree: white, red, pink, yellow, and green.
Weather conditions on day of experiment:
Temperature: 10 °C.
Precipitation: none.
Sunlight: cloudy.

Figure 112: Tree branches during spring, Mississauga

Figure 113: Cooksville Creek in the spring, Mississauga

Figure114: Colour palette of the site during spring, Mississauga



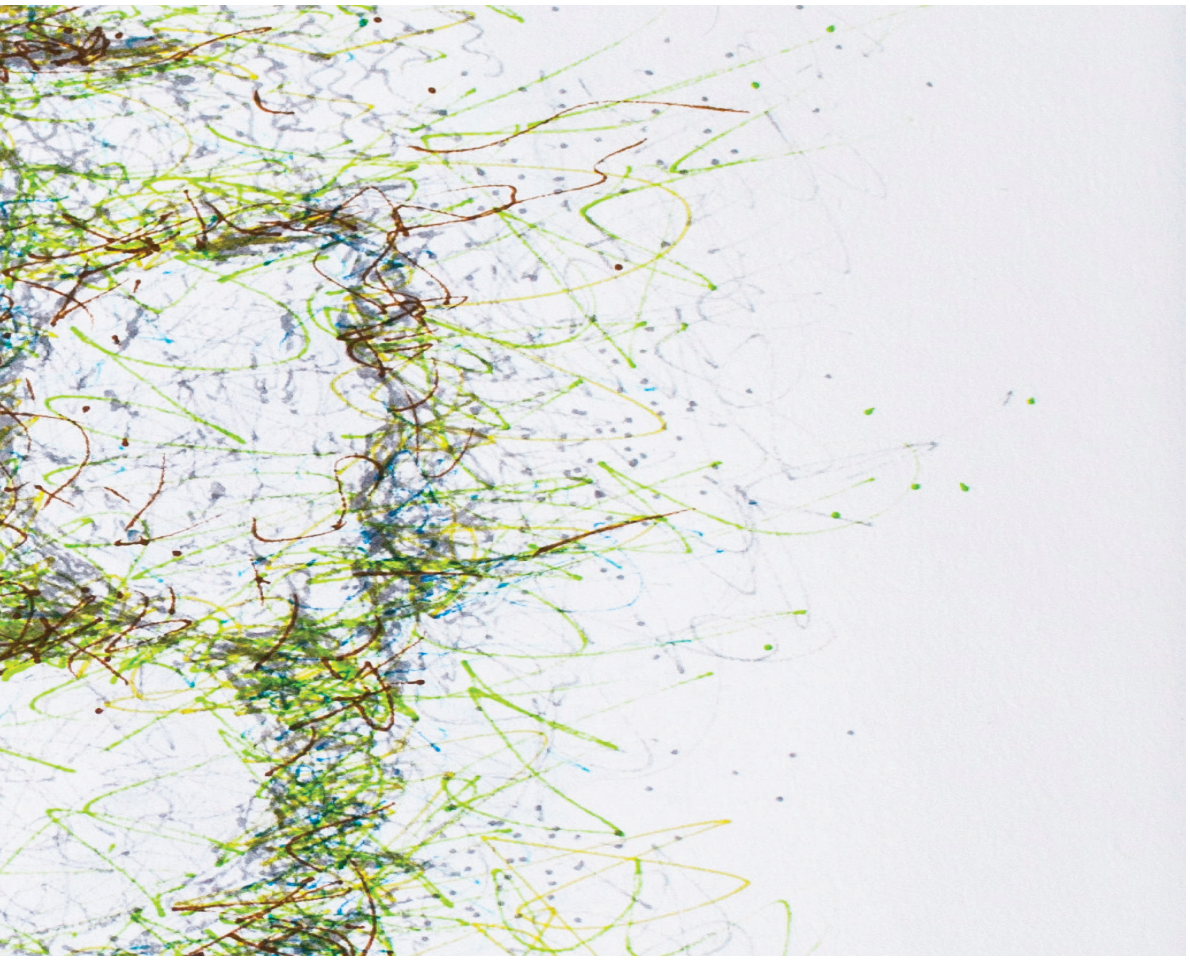


Figure 115: Sketch of Rock 1 during spring, Mississauga

TRACINGS

As I chat with my aunt, currently residing in my grandparents' house, I ask her about the trees in the garden. "We cut the olive tree due to termite damage, but a new branch is growing again, I will send you a photo." she assures me. Often featured in the background of the screen, during our video calls, these trees are not unlike childhood friends. On their branches, under their canopies, and in their shade, I once played.

In the fall, I recall the thick, gauzy canopy of the olive tree in the corner near the fence. In the winter, I remember white sour-orange blossoms delicately invading the ground underneath the tree, as my cousins and I made fragrant, white necklaces and crowns. In the spring, my grandmother watered her roses as they dotted the garden in brilliant hues of red, pink, yellow, and white. In the summer, palm tree leaves gracefully swayed as their branches were shaken, and red, yellow, and brown dates drizzled onto the tarp below. It is these memories of a childhood garden that I often retreat to in my mind. Each tree a figment from the past that I long for today – a distant, subliminal paradise.

In her article, "The Ungrateful Refugee: We Have no Debt to Repay", Iranian-American writer Dina Nayeri states,

> "No one ever asked what our house in Iran looked like, what fruits we grew in our yard, what books we read, what music we loved and what it felt like now not to understand any of the songs on the radio."[76]

The author's struggle is sadly and undoubtedly a common

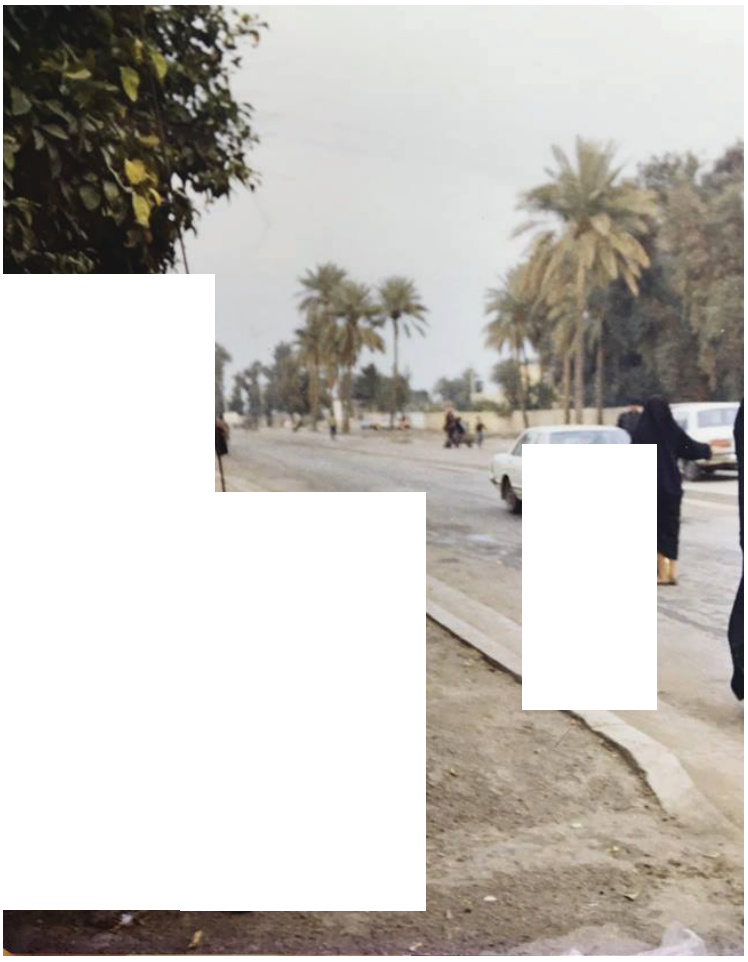


Figure 116: Trees on the street outside my grandparents' house, Baghdad

experience for a migrant in their new home, and it certainly was for me upon arrival. When looking at migrant crises today, the media's coverage mainly highlights the mere number of those fleeing. The focus is typically on number of refugees being taken into a country, the number of people displaced in another, and the struggles they may face along the dangerous journey. The coverage rarely ever discusses the details of the lives that these migrants have left behind. Things like their homes, gardens and daily routines are rarely ever talked about or shown. As a result, the migrant is reduced to a plain number, stripped of any hint of identity.

When I think of my personal account of migration, the saddest part is not the number of family members who have fled Iraq in the past three decades, due to war and political instability. It is the pre-sunset tea conversations on freshly mown lawn in the garden when the weather is breezy. The feasts that my family used to prepare during Ramadhan that we all gathered around the *sofra* (a plastic table cover laid on the floor) and enjoyed. The sound of the call to prayer echoing through the city every few hours. The fresh dates, sour-orange soaked olives, countless jars of date

molasses, and sour-orange blossom jam. The tangerines, apples, magnolia, and gardenia blooms. The polka-dotted pink roses. The many memories in spaces of the past that are no longer accessible and safe. These memories, which every migrant bares a version of, often in silence, are the hardest to forget.

As a new migrant arriving in Canada mid-winter in 2005, I remember watching the snowfall from the window of my home for the first time; the stunning view was threateningly unfamiliar. Though graceful, it did not feel like home yet. For a migrant, as time passes, the fear of losing the original identity of the place of origin grows. As memories begin to fade, real ones, indistinguishable from stories told by family members years later, along with the struggles of integrating into a new life, highlight this growing sense of living in this new home as the other.

As I observed Cooksville Creek from above for the first few years post-migration, I was fascinated by the seasonal changes that transformed the landscape entirely every few months. For the first time, I saw snow. For the first time,

I witnessed trees slowly losing their leaves. For the first time, I watched tree canopies change colour. In "What is Philosophy," Deleuze and Guattari state,

> "Sensory becoming is otherness caught in a matter of expression. The monument does not actualize the virtual event but incorporates or embodies it: it gives it a body, a life, a universe."[77]

Throughout my research, as I explored the site through my senses in each visit, the forces of my body were determined by the circumstances of the landscape on a specific day, and at a specific time. My movements were always determined by the season, the weather conditions, the thickness of the grass under my feet, the slipperiness of the moss on each rock – the forces of life on a specific day. By consulting the photographs I have previously captured of the landscape conditions in each season, I reconstruct the colours I see within each piece.

As I build up the layers of thread in each tapestry, I remake a temporal fragment of the landscape features I chose. After

Figure 117: The fall piece before being peeled off the mould

each piece is complete, I peel the tapestry from the mould, taking the landscape away, and in turn, taking place away. As a result, only the forces of my body and its movements, rendered visible using colour, are left. These vivid residues trace my movement around the landscape and its features. They materialize my interaction with the rocks I have once seen, touched, and smelled, and my response to that fragment of the site, through colour. Deleuze and Guattari write,

> "This emergence of pure sensory qualities is already art, not only in the treatment of external materials but in the body's postures and colors, in the songs and cries that mark out the territory."[78]

As I repeat this physically immersive process for each tapestry and each season, I reflect upon a tree in my grandparents' garden that would have been harvested around that time of the year. I visualize the tree in my mind: the colours of its leaves, the thickness of its canopy, the smell of its fruits and blossoms, the shadows it casted on the ground, and I allow these images to guide the movements of my hand. As I recall each detail, I pick up a thread spool in

the colour I remember and add a layer of it to the palette I have previously captured at the site during each season.

As I construct each piece, I confront past concerns: fears of losing touch with my previous homes and where I came from, and fears of growing attached to a new home then forcibly leaving everything behind once again. In a way, the pieces become a reflection of my understanding of home. They act as the contour and the skin between the cosmos and me. Between displacement and me. Between my pursuit of home and me. Just like the house to Deleuze and Guattari represents a territory that frames, each tapestry I create captures a territory that frames my thoughts about displacement, and my current notion of home.

O'Sullivan states, "The map expresses the identity of the journey and what one journeys through. It merges with its object, when the object itself is movement."[79] As windows select and frame the bigger cosmos, the pieces begin to frame the affects of migration: each a map of my experience, a layout of where I used to live and where I live now. As a result, I create pieces that resonate and capture

live forces: forces of memory, of experiment, of sensation, of encounter, and of home. As I work my way around each tapestry, the more layers of thread I cast on the mould, the more the form of the rock begins to emerge. The colored mesh resurrects the rock's form, while the rock's form gives shape to the thread. The result: an object that is a vivid ghost of the rocks from the site. As colour flows between my fingers, then onto the rocks, slowly filling the cracks and valleys in each piece, I recall the past, while simultaneously and physically connecting with the present.

In the end, each piece is a window of connection between the past and present: between my grandparents' garden in Baghdad, and the landscape that surrounds my first home in Canada. In other words, each tapestry frames a moment of me feeling at home, a scaffolding upon which the home of the migrant within the heterotopia takes shape, colour and form – a physical reality of the in-between home and all the roads traveled that connect it. The tapestries, in a sense, each evoke a fragment of that elusive domestic reality, and together, within this ephemeral, unraveling, rhizomatic system, they begin to reveal home.

TRACINGS: SUMMER, 2018

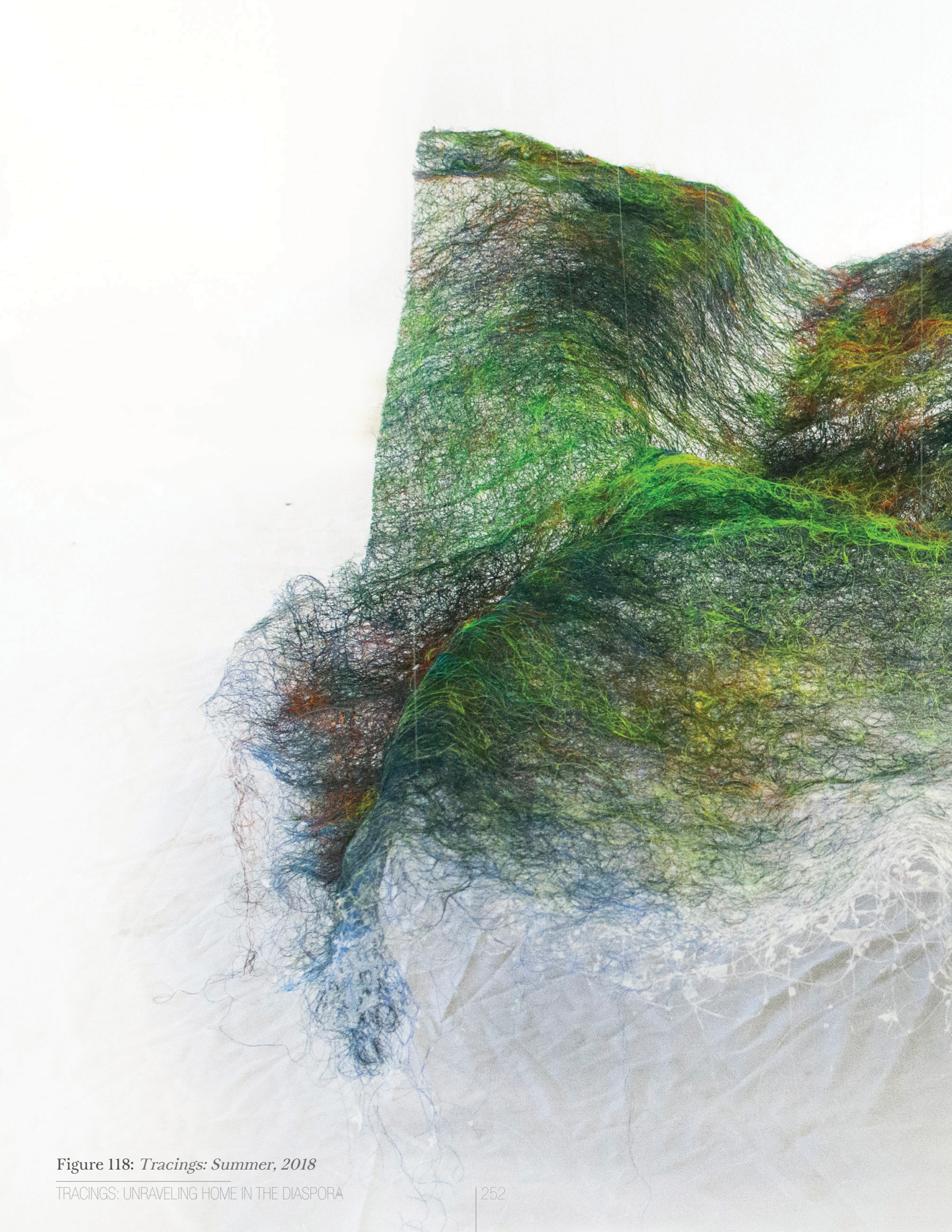


Figure 118: *Tracings: Summer, 2018*

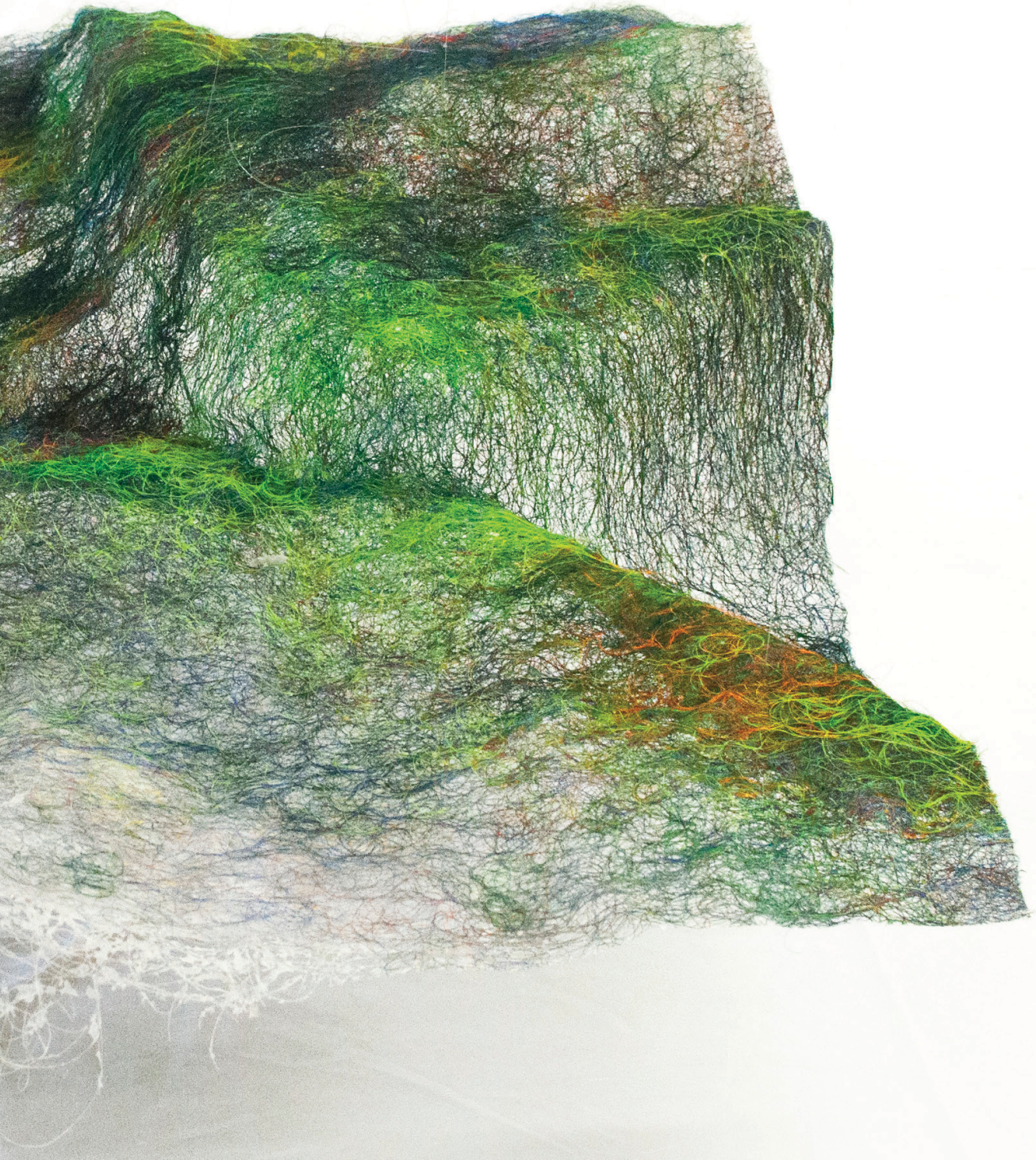


Figure 119: By author, *Tracings: Summer, 2018*

Thread and fabric stiffener

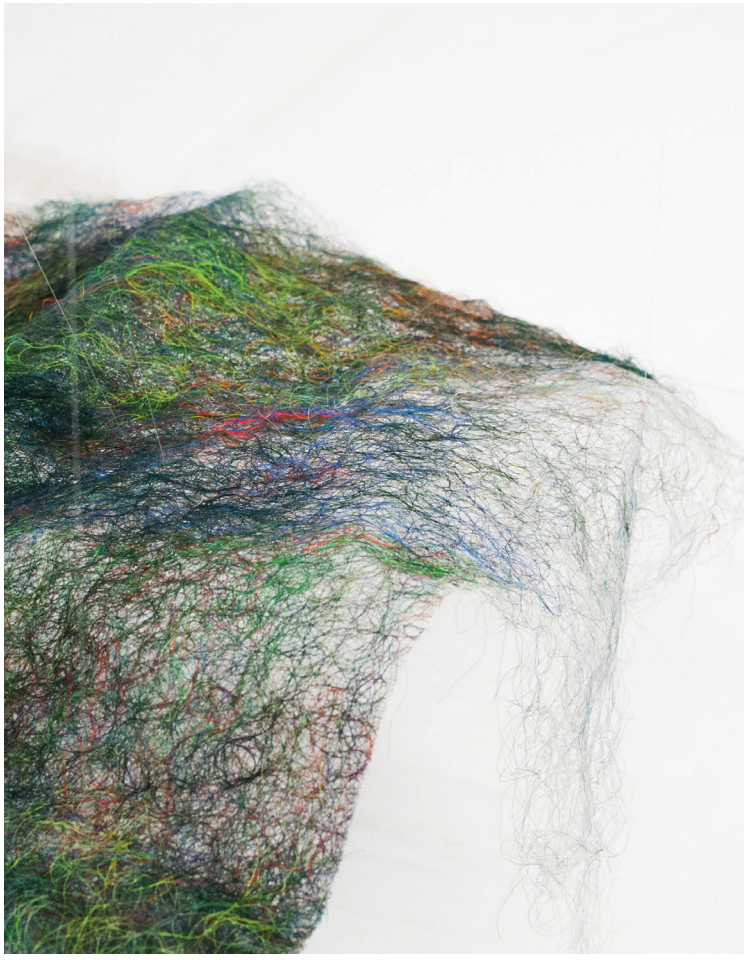


Figure 120: By author, *Tracings: Summer, 2018*

Thread and fabric stiffener

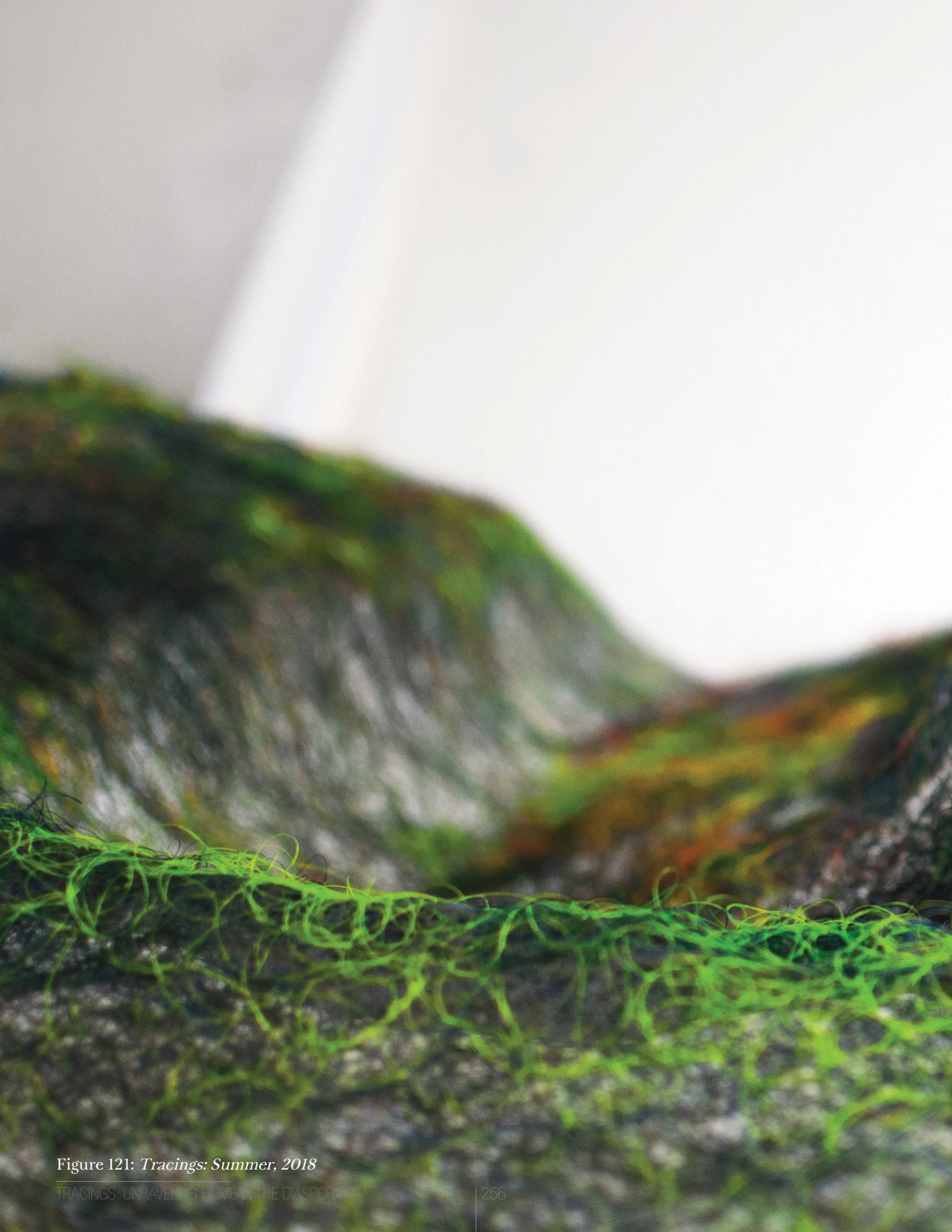


Figure 121: *Tracings: Summer, 2018*

TRACINGS: FALL, 2018

Figure 122: *Tracings: Fall, 2018*

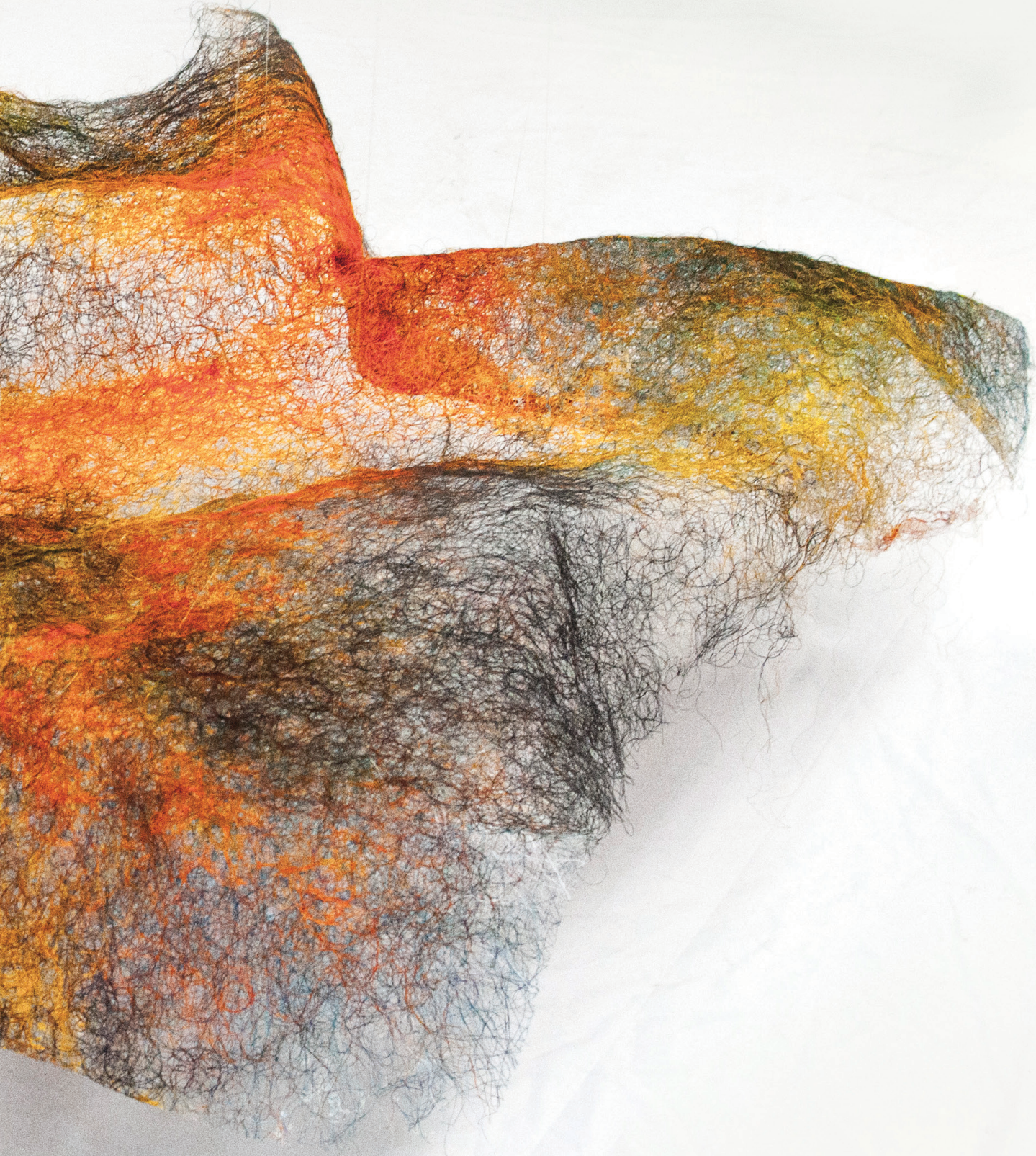


Figure 123: By author, *Tracings: Fall, 2018*

Thread and fabric stiffener

Figure 124: By author, *Tracings: Fall, 2018*

Thread and fabric stiffener

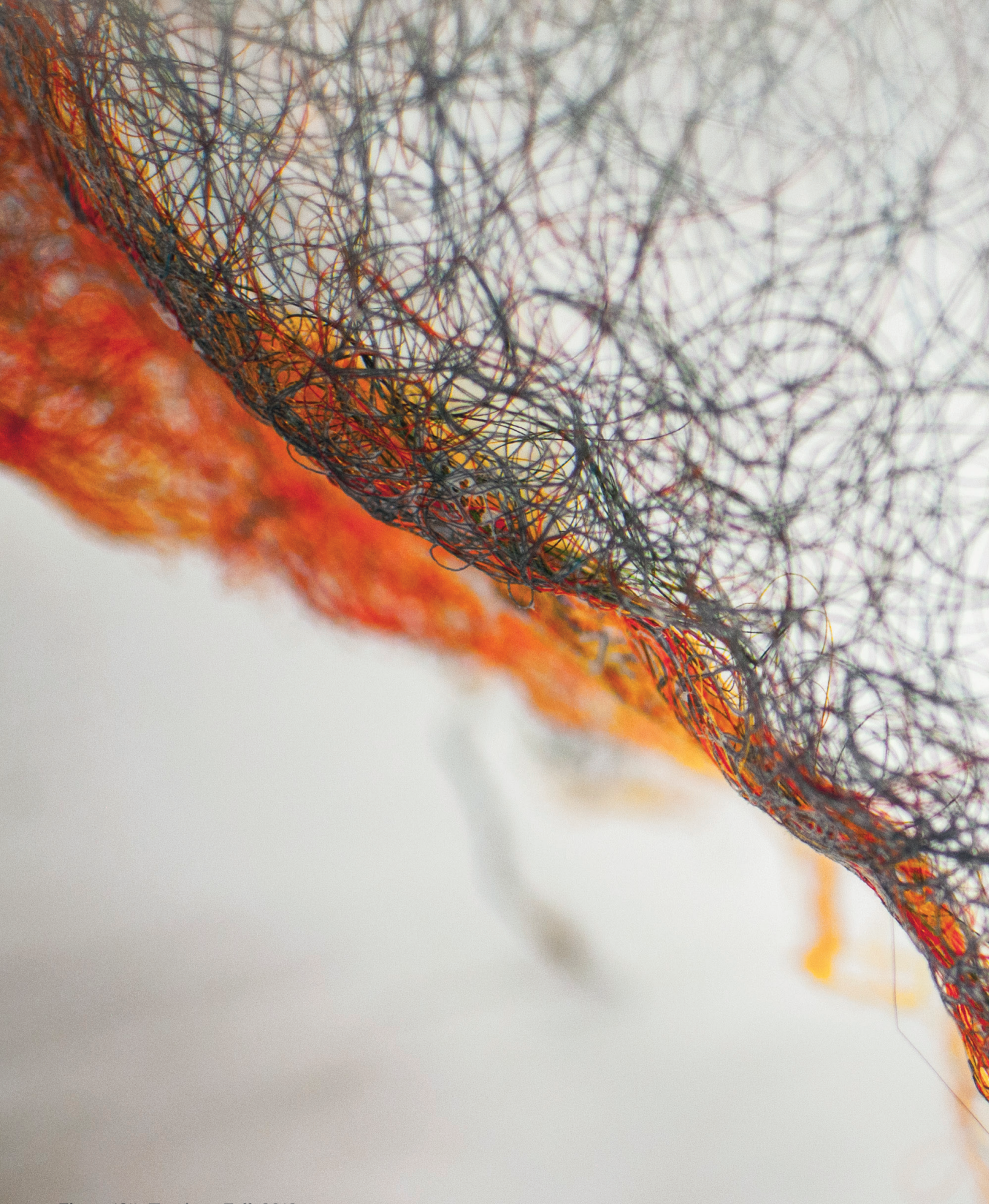


Figure 125: *Tracings: Fall, 2018*

TRACINGS: WINTER, 2019

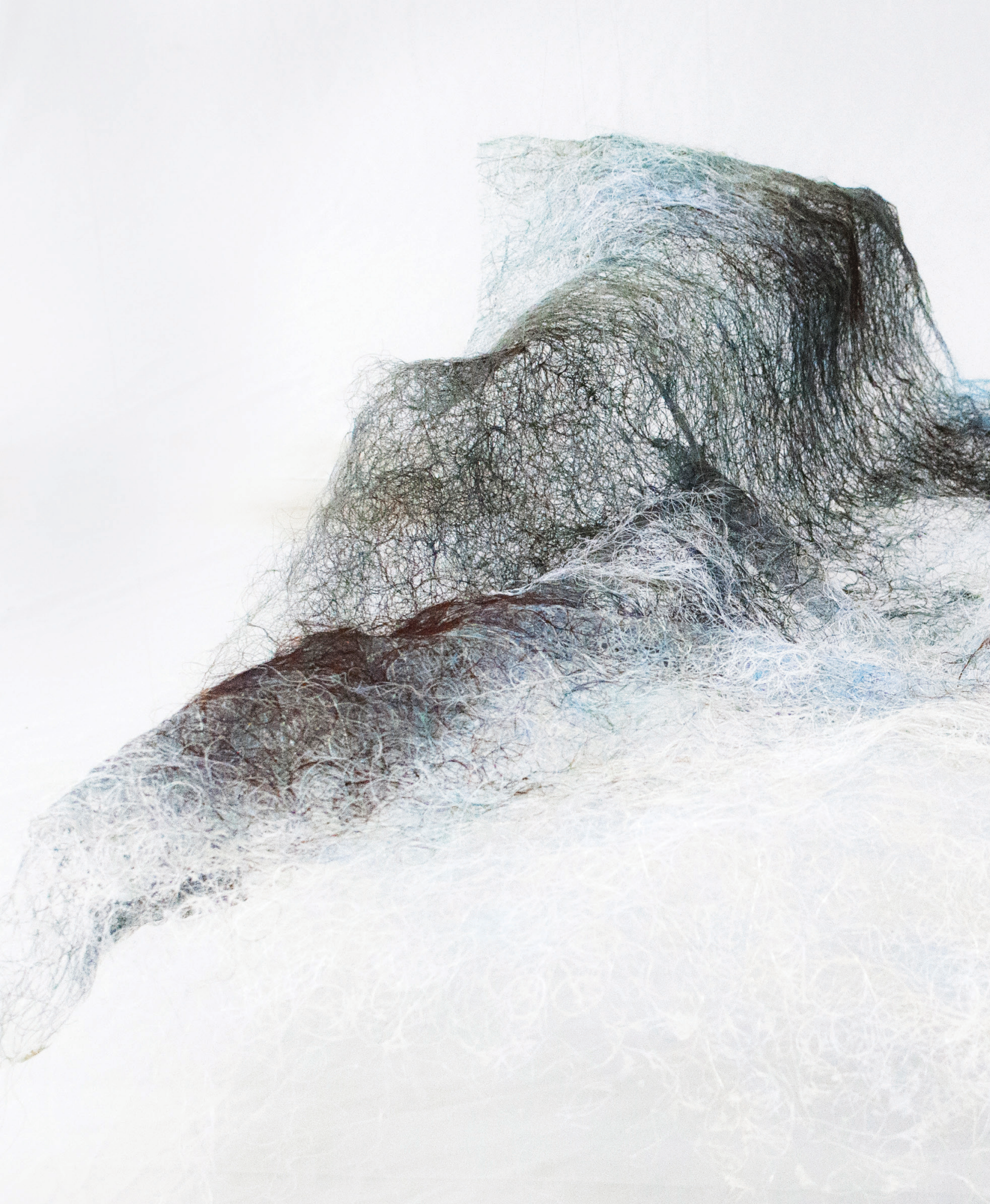


Figure 126: *Tracings: Winter, 2019*

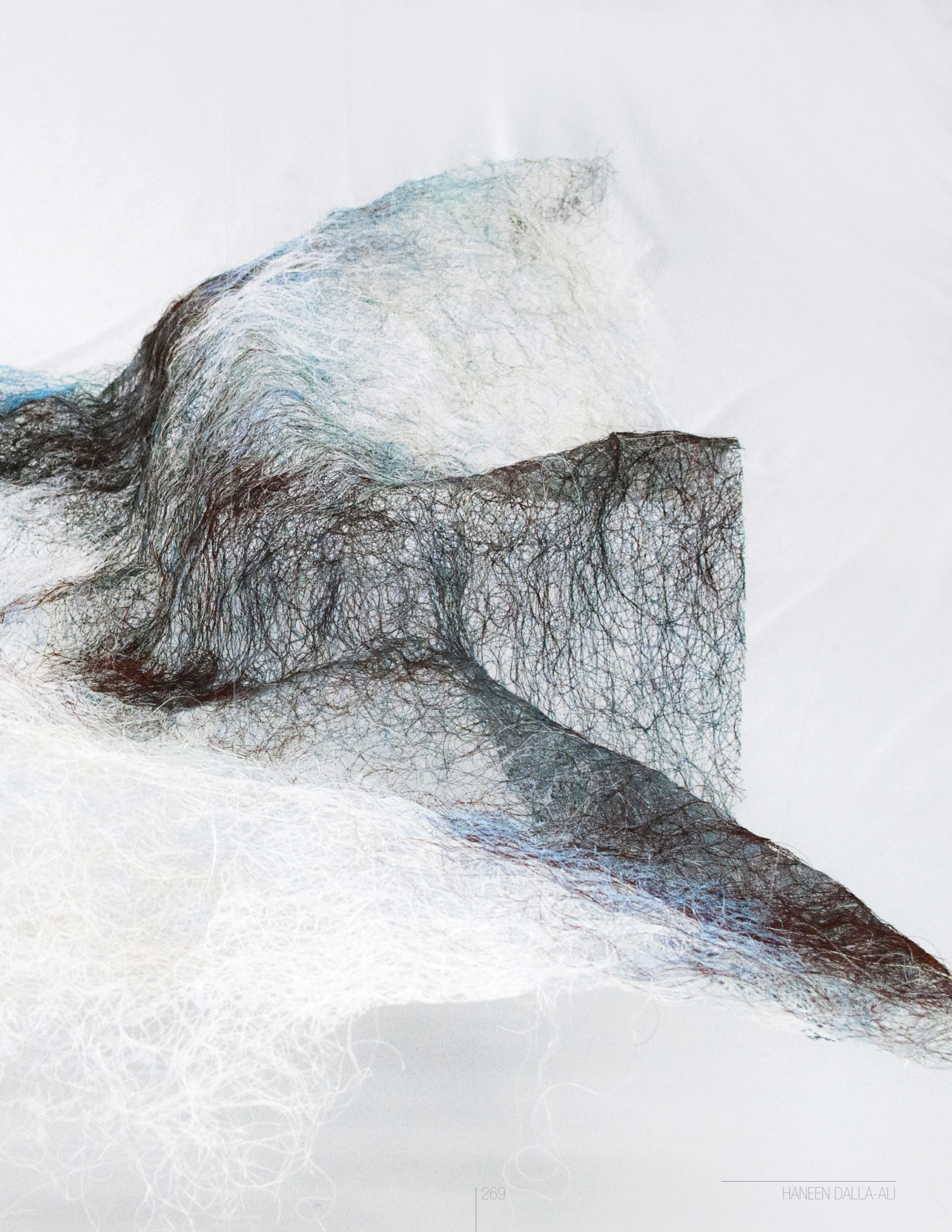


Figure 127: By author, *Tracings: Winter, 2019*

Thread and fabric stiffener

Figure 128: By author, *Tracings: Winter, 2019*

Thread and fabric stiffener

Figure 129: *Tracings: Winter, 2019*

TRACINGS: SPRING, 2019

Figure 130: *Tracings: Spring, 2019*

Figure 131: By author, *Tracings: Spring, 2019*

Thread and fabric stiffener

Figure 132: By author, *Tracings: Spring, 2019*

Thread and fabric stiffener

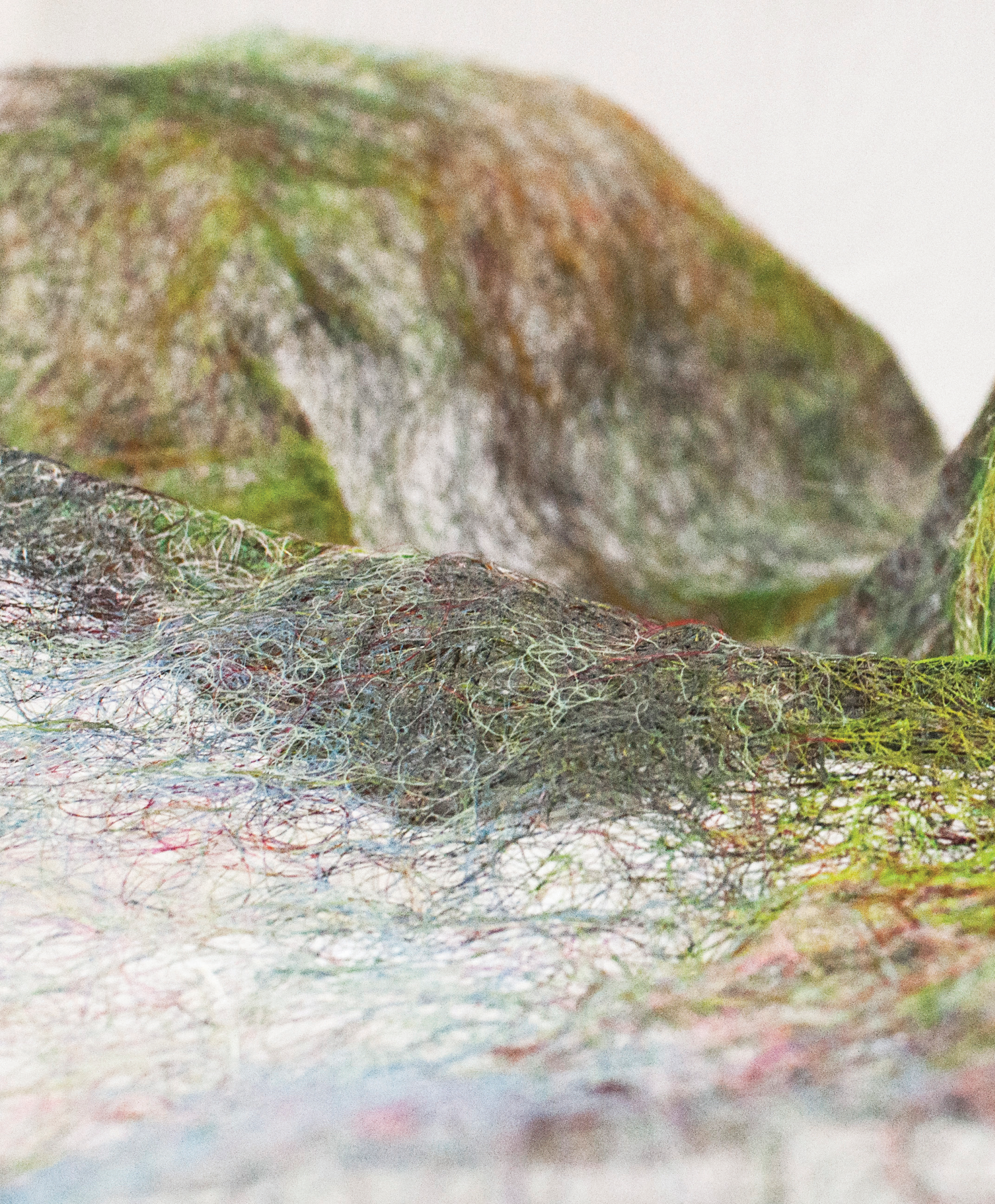
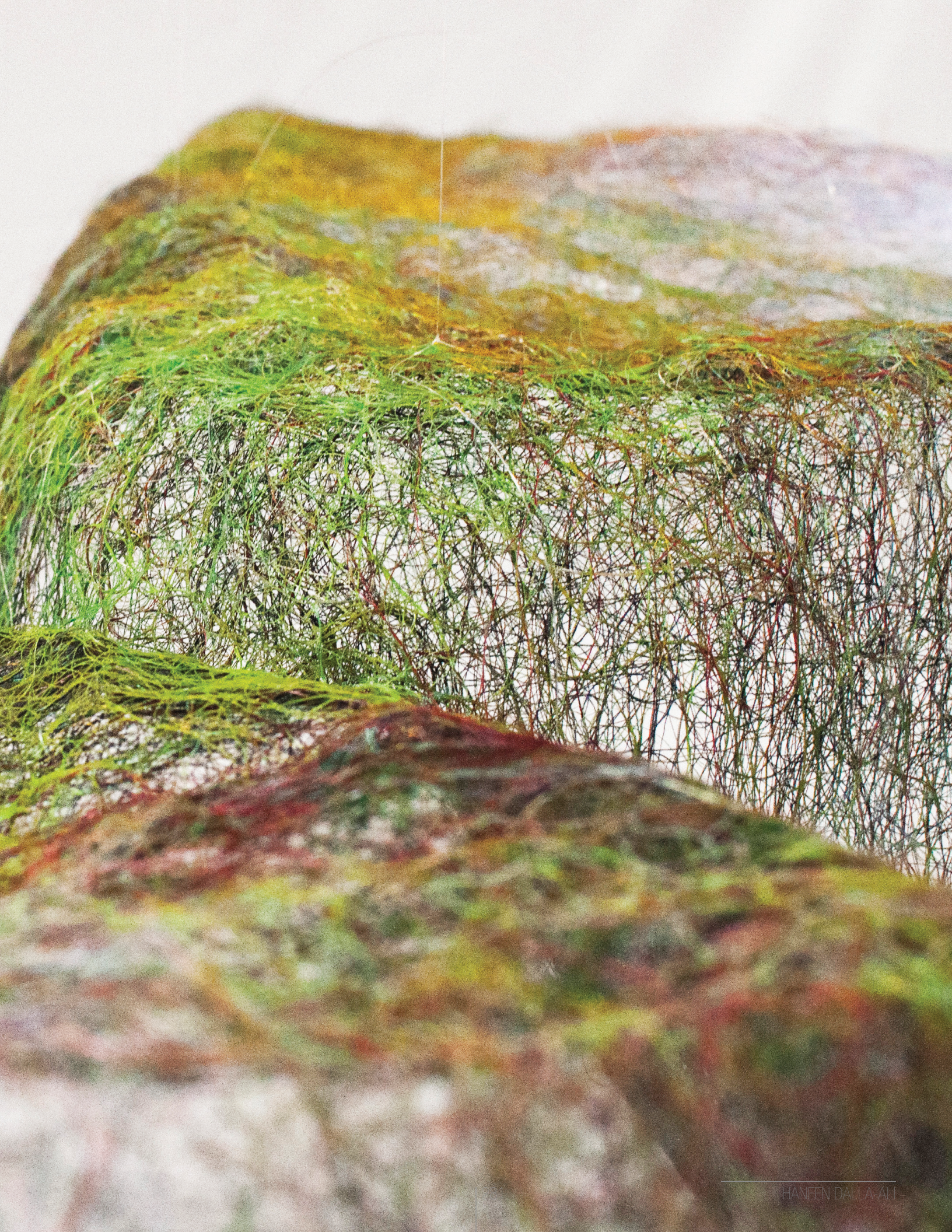


Figure 133: *Tracings: Spring, 2019*


HANEEN DALLA-ALI

CONCLUSION

> "Art then is the name of the object of an encounter, but also the name of the encounter itself, and indeed of that which is produced by the encounter."[80]
> -O'Sullivan

As I encounter the pieces I created as a beholder now, I begin to understand that as a migrant, my home is solely present, in its entirety, in my mind. It is a placeless space that is accessible when the forces of the physical domestic spaces of my present are contrasted by the elusiveness of the memories of the spaces of my past. This space sits in-between explorations of an unexplored familiar landscape and reflections upon a place that is left behind. The domestic spaces that a migrant once occupied and those that are now a refuge are neither home, it is the connections between them, the roads travelled, the journey from one to the other, and then back, or in some cases never again, that are home. An unsettling reality with merit that is only to be seen if the migrant actively, or at times passively, engages with it. O'Sullivan concludes,

> "An art practice is then a specifically open system in this sense, one that changes its nature as the number of its dimensions increase (as it crosses into other milieus). In this place art is less the name for an object or a discipline as such but again a name for a function of deterritorialisation."[81]

The series of seasonal tapestries is, in a way, a desperate attempt at rendering that heterotopian, in-between space that many migrants feel, physical. As I engage with each piece, during construction or after completion, I am confronted by the transitory reality of home and what it means to me today. These objects challenge my preconceived notion of home, and what it is commonly understood as: a single space that is quantifiable, measurable, and perceivable, through all senses. The pieces I create, as an attempt to map out my terrain of home in the diaspora, are an open system that is gradually grasped, the more of its fragments I unravel with my hands.

In a sense, this encounter with each piece post production somehow alleviates the mixture of anxiety, confusion, and

pain that I often feel every time someone asks me where home is. As the thread passes through my fingers, the form of the rocks begins to re-emerge, the colours of the site and the trees in my mind start to appear. Home becomes present. As the pieces are displayed in an exhibition space far away from the site, they become an embodiment of my experience as a migrant – they are equally displaced. Each piece, therefore, becomes a recording of my encounter with home: a coordinate and a point of reference that is added to my map of crossroads.

After completing the first tapestry, I hang it below a spot light in my basement. The colourful canopy of thread casts shadows that resemble those of foliage below. A little nudge sends the tapestry into oscillation, its shadows, in turn, sway along the cement floor. As I observe, I remember the shadows of the olive tree in my grandparents' garden. They gracefully fell on the ditch below, as I retrieved the stick I used to dig a hole in the bald patch of grass I found. As the tapestry sways back and forth, I see shadows of palm tree leaves, of a sour-orange tree in full blossom, of rose bushes and flower buds.

I see shadows of my cigarette tree.

Figure 134: *Tracings: Summer, 2018*

ENDNOTES

1 The word "grandmother" in Iraqi dialect

2 As defined by Claire Colebrook in her book Understanding Deleuze, "'affect' is what happens to us when we feel an event; fear, depression, laughter, terror or boredom are all possible 'affects' of art."
Claire Colebrook, Understanding Deleuze (Crows Nest, N.S.W.: Allen & Unwin, 2002).

3 The word "grandfather" in Iraqi dialect

4 Gilles Deleuze et al., What Is Philosophy? (New York, New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 180.

5 The word "mother" in Iraqi dialect

6 Iraqi tea biscuits typically eaten in the afternoon during tea-time

7 As defined by Claire Colebrook in her book Understanding Deleuze, a rhizome/rhizomatic "makes random, proliferating and de-centred connections. In the case of languages, we would abandon the idea of an underlying structure or grammar and acknowledge that there are just different systems and styles of speaking, that the attempt to find a "tree" or "root" to all these differences is an invention after the fact. A rhizomatic method, therefore, does not begin from a distinction or hierarchy between ground and consequent, cause and effect, subject and expression; any point can form a beginning or point of connection for any other."
Claire Colebrook, Understanding Deleuze (Crows Nest, N.S.W.: Allen & Unwin, 2002).

8 Simon O'Sullivan, Art Encounters Deleuze and Guattari: Thought beyond Representation (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 35.

9 Gaston Bachelard, Poetics of Space (Boston, Massachusetts: Beacon Press, 1994), 17.

10 Simon O'Sullivan, Art Encounters Deleuze and Guattari: Thought beyond Representation(Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 26.

11 Gilles Deleuze et al., What Is Philosophy? (New York, New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 168.

12 The word for "father" in Iraqi dialect

13 "Https://www.cemml.colostate.edu/cultural/09476/iraq05-011.html," Cemml.colostate, April 7, 2007, , accessed May 20, 2019, https://www.cemml.colostate.edu/cultural/09476/iraq05-011.html.
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15 Hayder J.S. Haraty, Mohammad Y.M. Raschid, and Mohd Y.M. Yunos, Assessment Of Morphological Analysis Of Iraqi Traditional Courtyards Houses, proceedings of IConBEE2018 - Enhancing Construction Industry Through IR4.0, Hotel Jen Puteri Harbour, Johor Bahru, accessed February 25, 2019, https://www.matec-conferences.org/articles/matecconf/pdf/2019/15/matecconf_iconbee2019_06007.pdf.

16 Aziz Jasim Hajjiyah, Baghdadiyat (Baghdad: Ministry of Culture, 1967), 72-74.

17 Holland, Eugene W., Daniel W. Smith, and Charles J. Stivale. Gilles Deleuze Image and Text. London: Continuum, 2009, 17.

18 Gilles Deleuze et al., What Is Philosophy? (New York, New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 182.

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Continuum, 2009, 24.

20 Bachelard, Gaston. Poetics of Space. Boston, Massachusetts: Beacon Press, 1994, 10.

21 David Wade, "The Evolution of Style," Patterninislamicart, March 01, 2006, accessed April 22, 2019, https://patterninislamicart.com/background-notes/the-evolution-of-style.

22 Gilles Deleuze et al., What Is Philosophy? (New York, New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 180.

23 Ibid., 197.

24 Bloomberg, YouTube, October 10, 2016, , accessed June 15, 2018, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jbL4jsC0itw.

25 Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias," Architecture /Mouvement/ Continuité, October 1984, , accessed May 3, 2018, http://web.mit.edu/allanmc/www/foucault1.pdf, 6.

26 Ibid., 6.

27 Bachelard, Gaston. Poetics of Space. Boston, Massachusetts: Beacon Press, 1994, 11.

28 Gilles Deleuze et al., What Is Philosophy? (New York, New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 168.

29 The word for “father” in Iraqi dialect

30 "Https://www.cemml.colostate.edu/cultural/09476/iraq05-011.html," Cemml.colostate, April 7, 2007, , accessed May 20, 2019, https://www.cemml.colostate.edu/cultural/09476/iraq05-011.html.

31 Ali Naji, prod., "Heritage Houses in Baghdad / ||||||| |||||||| || |||||,"

Al-Mada TV, 2015, July 22, 2015, accessed October 6, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BjVCEQyoq4Q.

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34 Holland, Eugene W., Daniel W. Smith, and Charles J. Stivale. Gilles Deleuze Image and Text. London: Continuum, 2009, 17.

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39 Gilles Deleuze et al., What Is Philosophy? (New York, New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 180.

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45 Simon O'Sullivan, Art Encounters Deleuze and Guattari: Thought beyond Representation (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 12.

46 Ibid., 13.

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