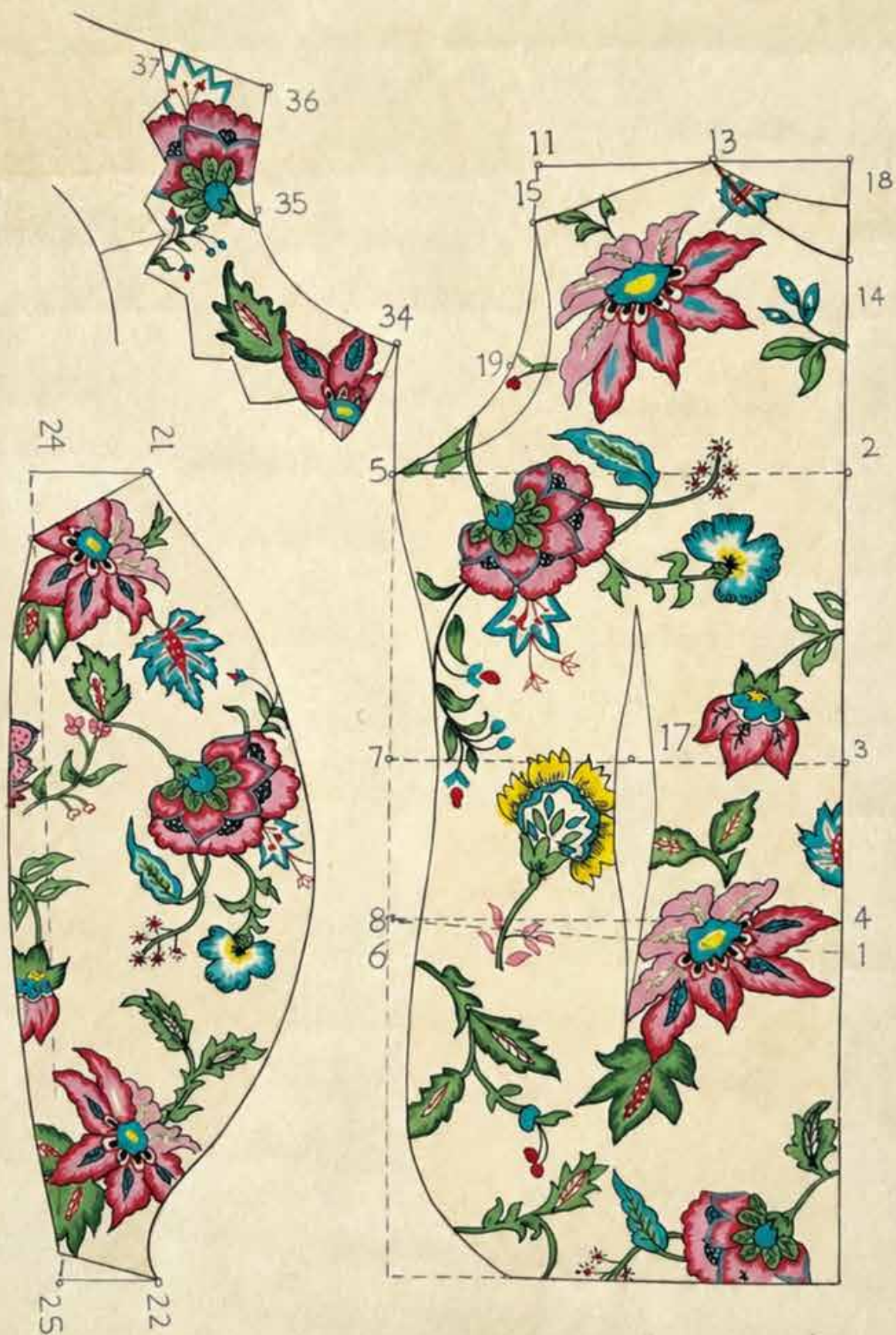


Tazeen
Qayyum

How To Trace
A Pattern

Curated by Sarah Quinton

22 September - 1 October 2026

Curatorial Note

In *How to Trace a Pattern*, Tazeen Qayyum investigates the language of textiles through clothing design, domestic sewing practices, and the circulation of globalized patterns across generations within her family lineage.

As a young girl in Pakistan in the 1970s, Qayyum wore clothes sewn by her mother using European dressmaking books featuring blonde, fair-skinned children. Western children's fashion became a fixture of family life, and her mother carefully assembled sketchbooks filled with sewing notes, magazine clippings, fabric samples, and design ideas. Decades later, Qayyum, a Pakistani - Canadian multidisciplinary artist who immigrated to Canada in 2003, returns to this family archive of dress patterns and sewing manuals, including a collection of her childhood garments, stirring memories and deepening an already rich connection with her mother, Shaheen Qayyum.

Drawn to the architecture of lines, curves, and angles found in these original pattern pieces, Qayyum transforms functional shapes into complex abstract compositions. In her *Tracing Pattern Series* she builds densely layered visual fields that resemble maps, blueprints, and coded systems. The drawings are made on interfacing, an essential structural fabric hidden inside tailored garments. By bringing this unseen material to the foreground, Qayyum highlights an overlooked participant in the making of clothing and memory.

The exhibition's paintings are executed using traditional South Asian and Persian miniature painting techniques, demanding extraordinary precision and patience. A series of three works, titled after names printed on commercial pattern envelopes, such as Alison, John, and Harold reproduces idealized images of blonde, curly-haired children that served as promotional models for the clothing her mother made. Such mainstream Eurocentric beauty ideals, of course, prevail throughout the world, resonating across generations.

A second series of paintings, *Easy Cutting*, extends the artist's critique more pointedly to the floral designs of British designer William Morris (1834-1896), whose work has been criticized for appropriating motifs originating in Indian chintz traditions. In a gesture of reclamation, Qayyum uses a traditional squirrel-hair miniature-painting brush to meticulously copy Morris's floral designs onto tiny Western garment templates, reclaiming visual forms shaped by histories of colonial exchange and cultural extraction.

Through these acts of recuperation, the artist reverses the flow of cultural appropriation: Qayyum reasserts the South Asian origins of these motifs and reveals the colonial histories embedded within seemingly innocent patterns and garments. Her work challenges the dynamics through which Western culture has often been presented as universal while obscuring the non-Western sources from which it drew inspiration.

Sarah Quinton

Independent Curator and Curatorial Director Emeritus,
Textile Museum of Canada



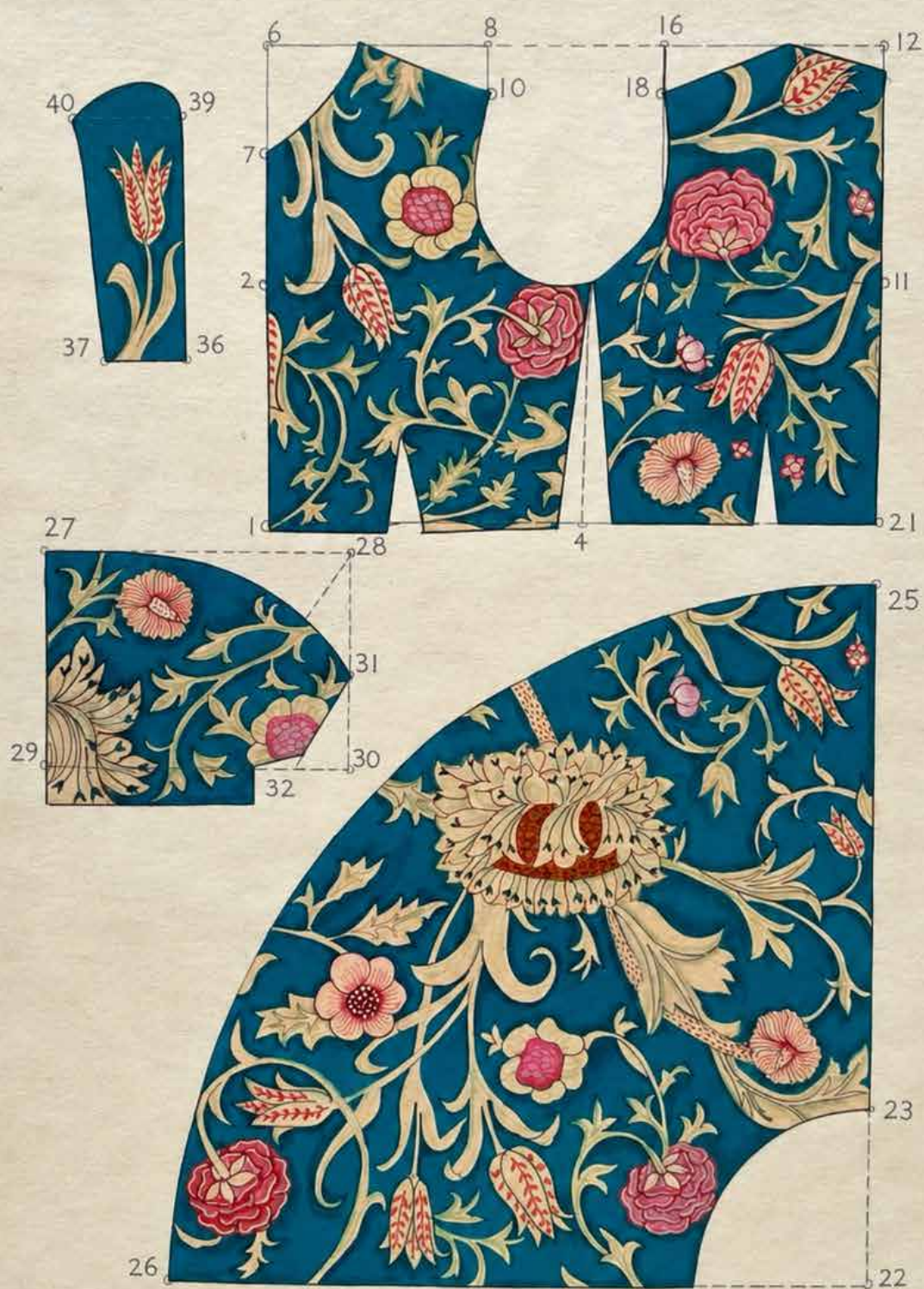
Title: Alison Cynthia

Year: 2026

Medium: Gouache on wasli (prepared archival paper)

Size: 8 x 10 inches





Title: Easy Cutting I
 Year: 2026
 Medium: Gouache on wasli (prepared archival paper)
 Size: 8 x 5 inches



Detail



Title: Easy Cutting II

Year: 2026

Medium: Gouache on wasli (prepared archival paper)

Size: 8 x 5 inches



Detail



Title: Easy Cutting III
 Year: 2026
 Medium: Gouache on wasli (prepared archival paper)
 Size: 8 x 5 inches



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4



27

23

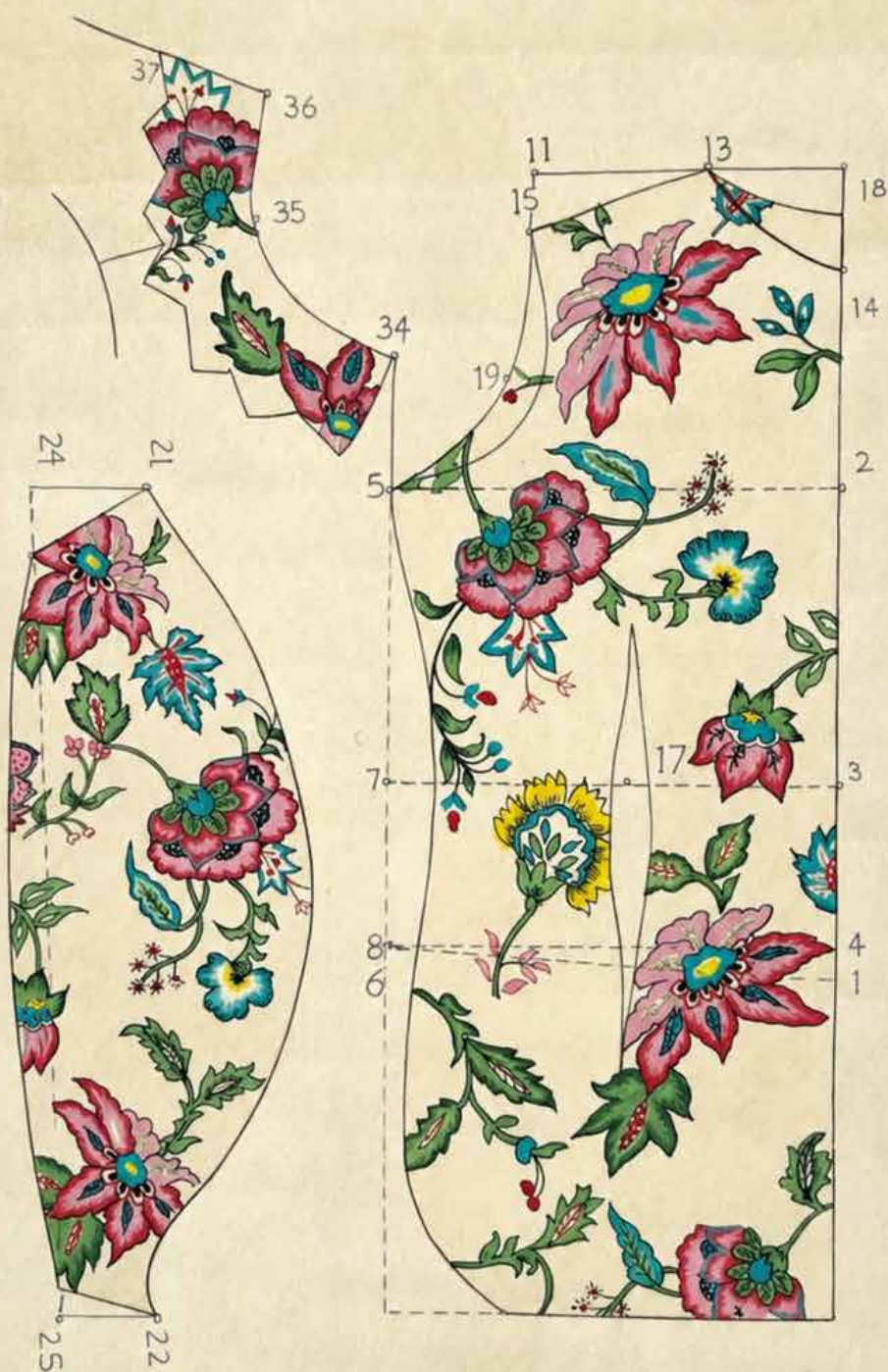
31

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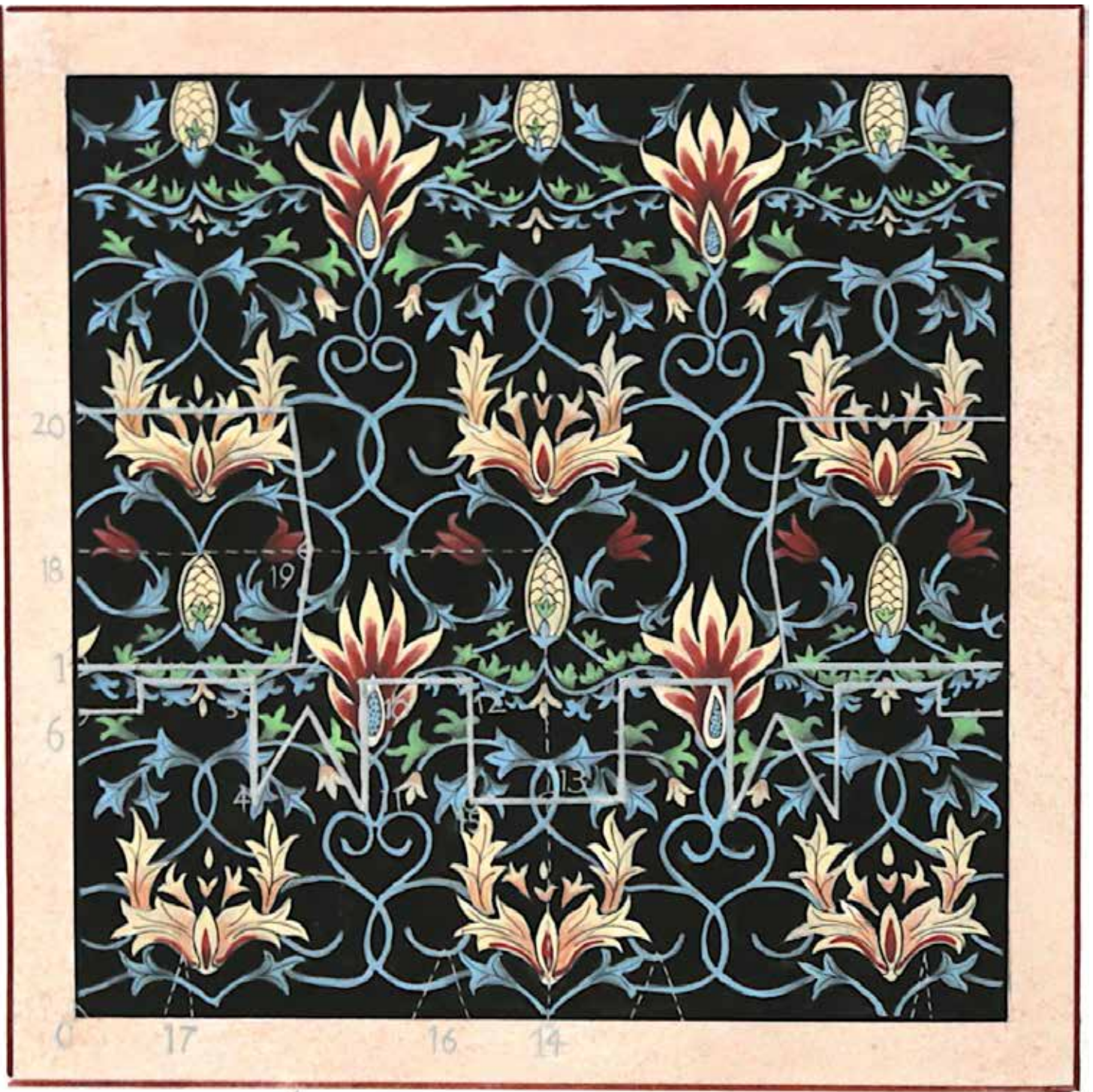
Title: Easy Cutting IV

Year: 2026

Medium: Gouache on wasli (prepared archival paper)

Size: 8 x 5 inches



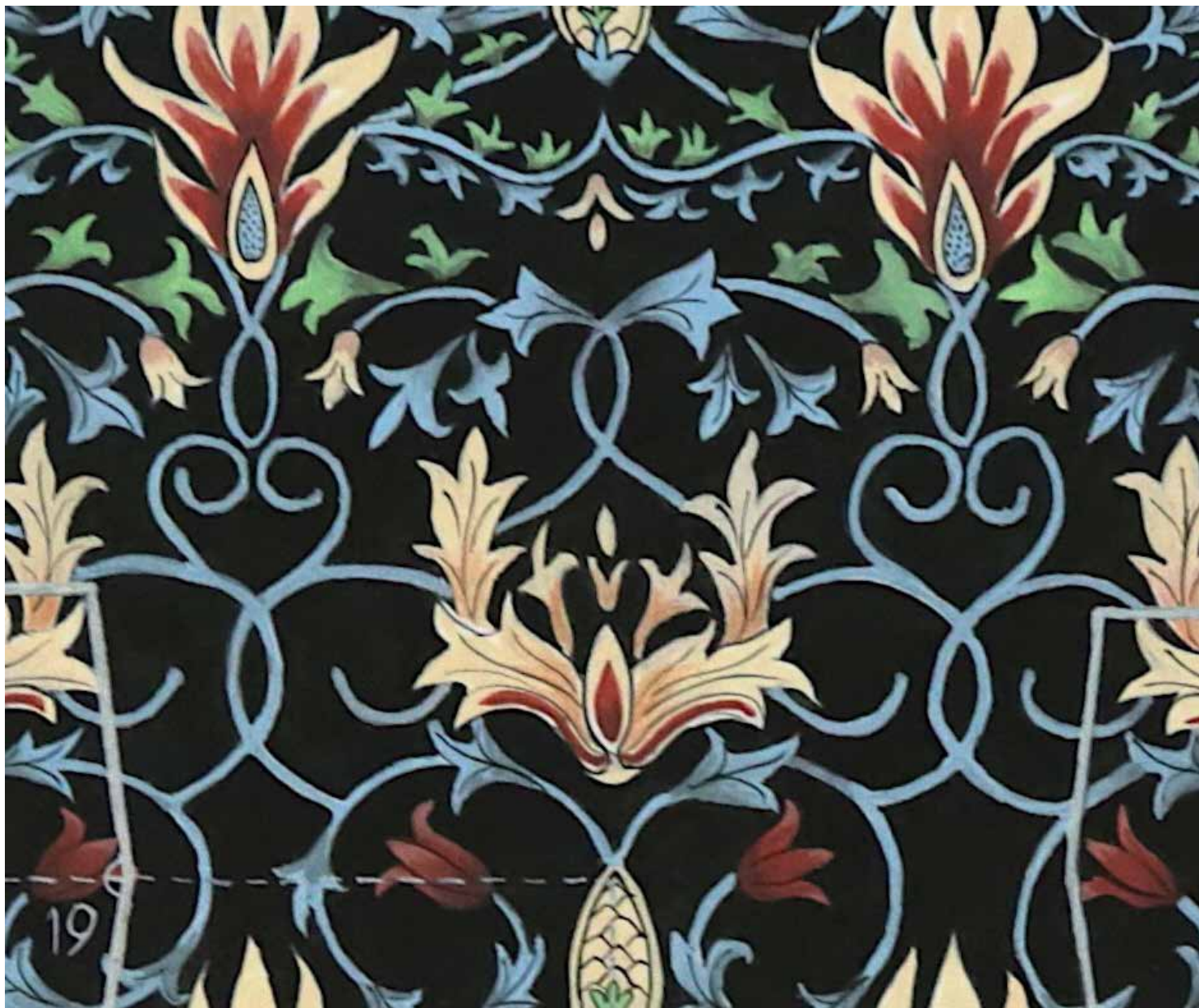


Title: Easy Cutting V

Year: 2026

Medium: Gouache on wasli (prepared archival paper)

Size: 5 x 5 inches



Detail

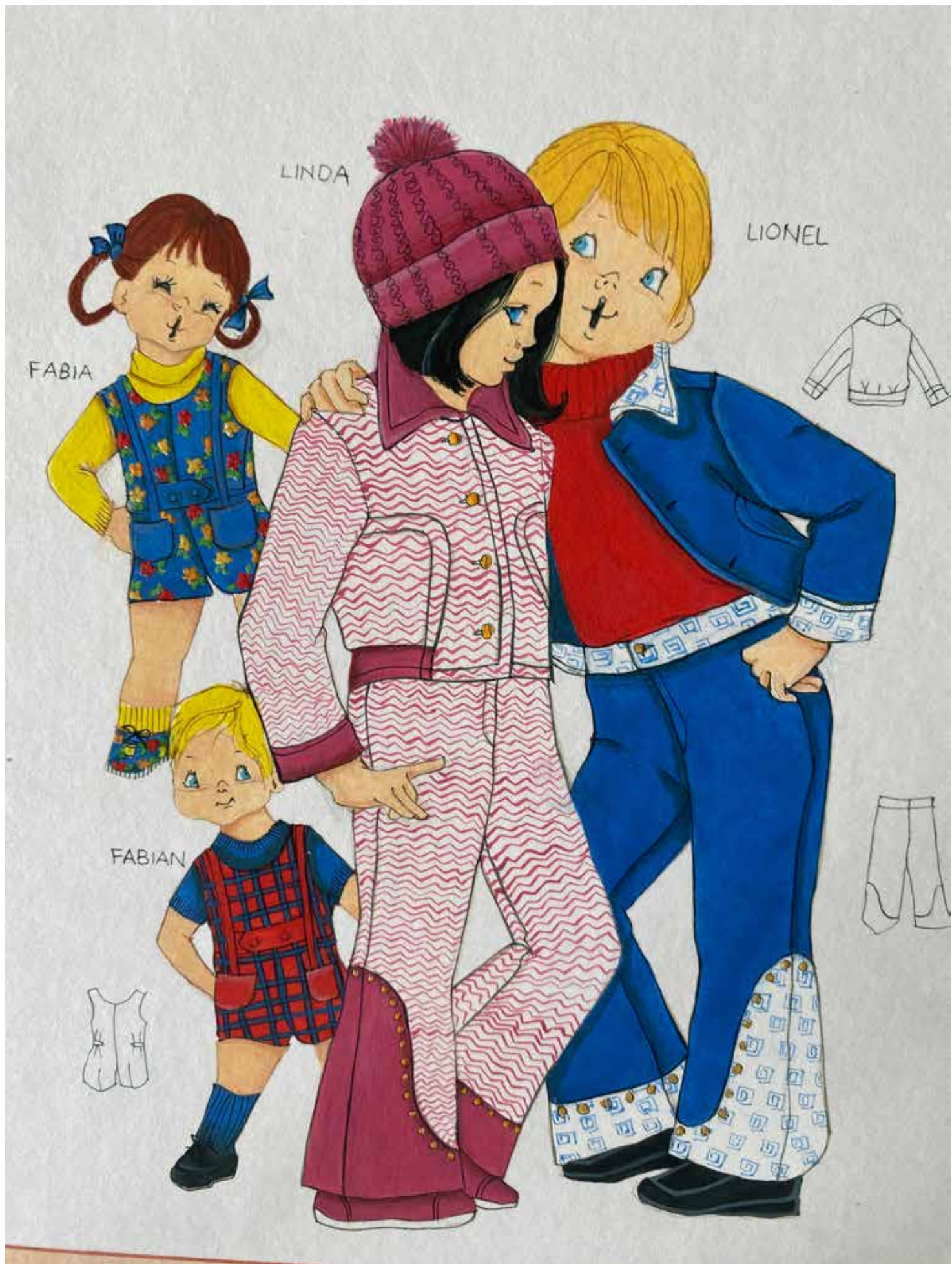


Title: Lionel Linda Fabia Fabian

Year: 2026

Medium: Gouache on wasli (prepared archival paper)

Size: 8 x 10 inches





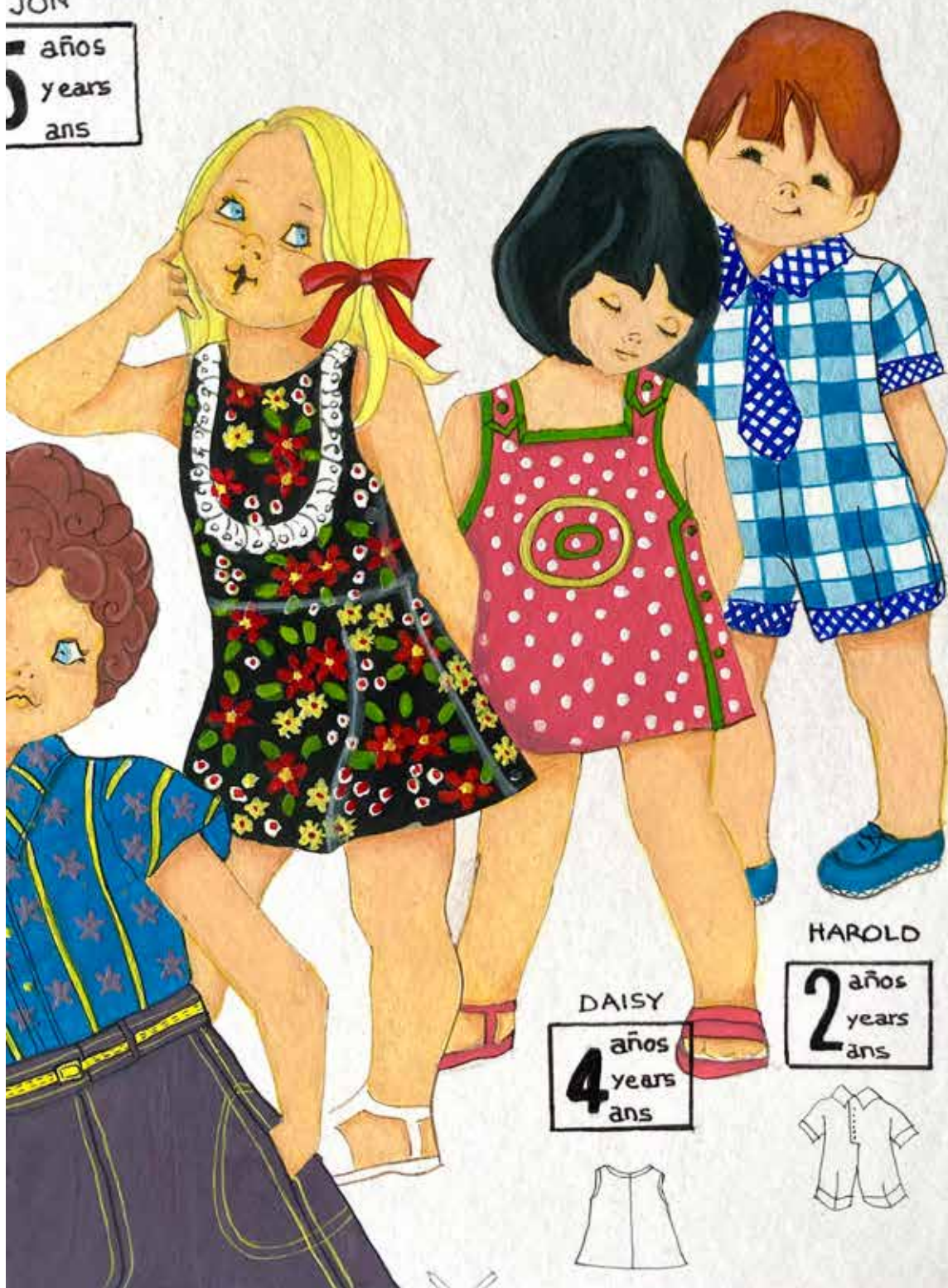
Title: Pamela John Daisy Harold

Year: 2026

Medium: Gouache on wasli (prepared archival paper)

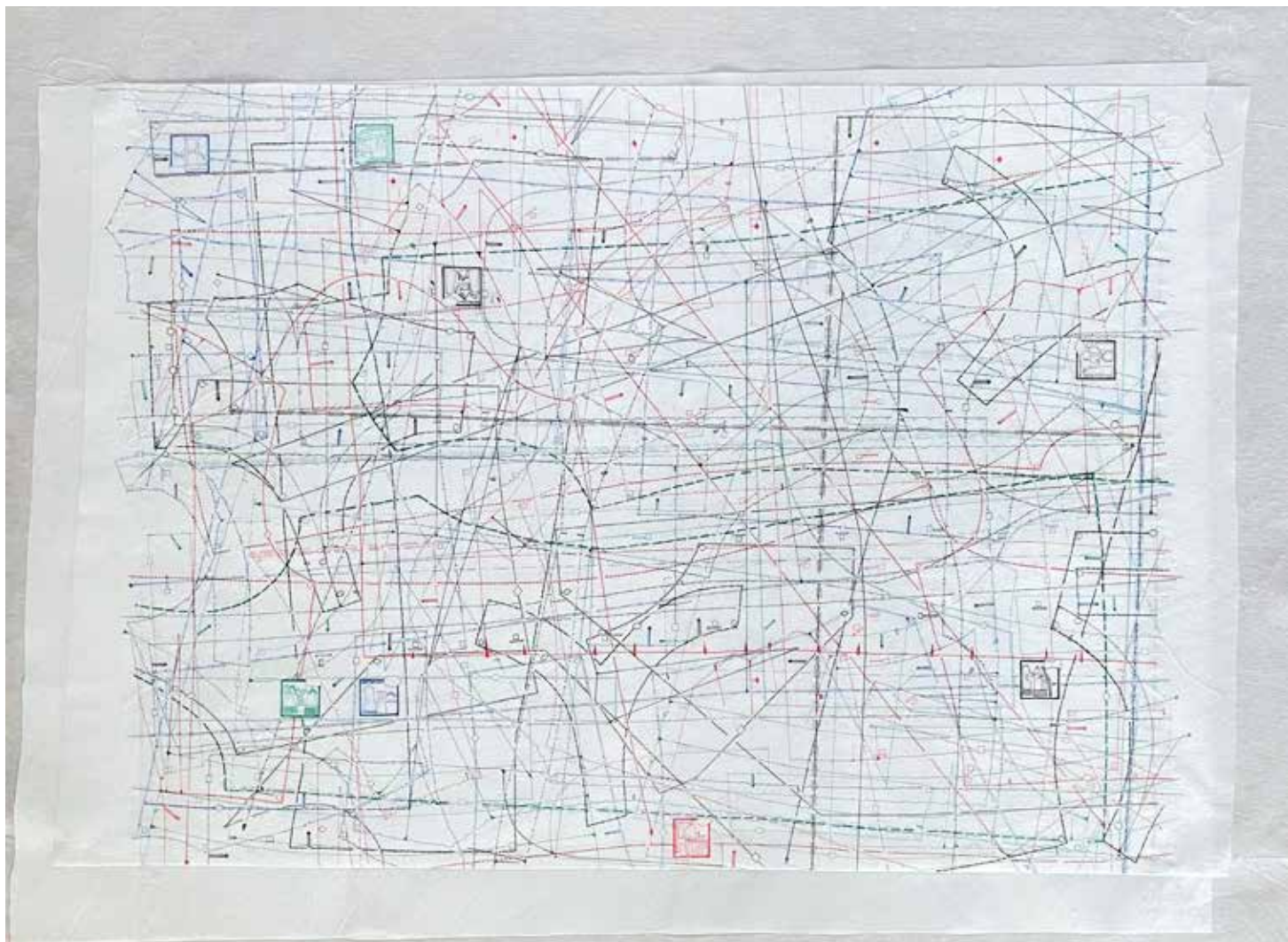
Size: 8 x 10 inches

JON
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years
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DAISY
4 años
years
ans

HAROLD
2 años
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ans

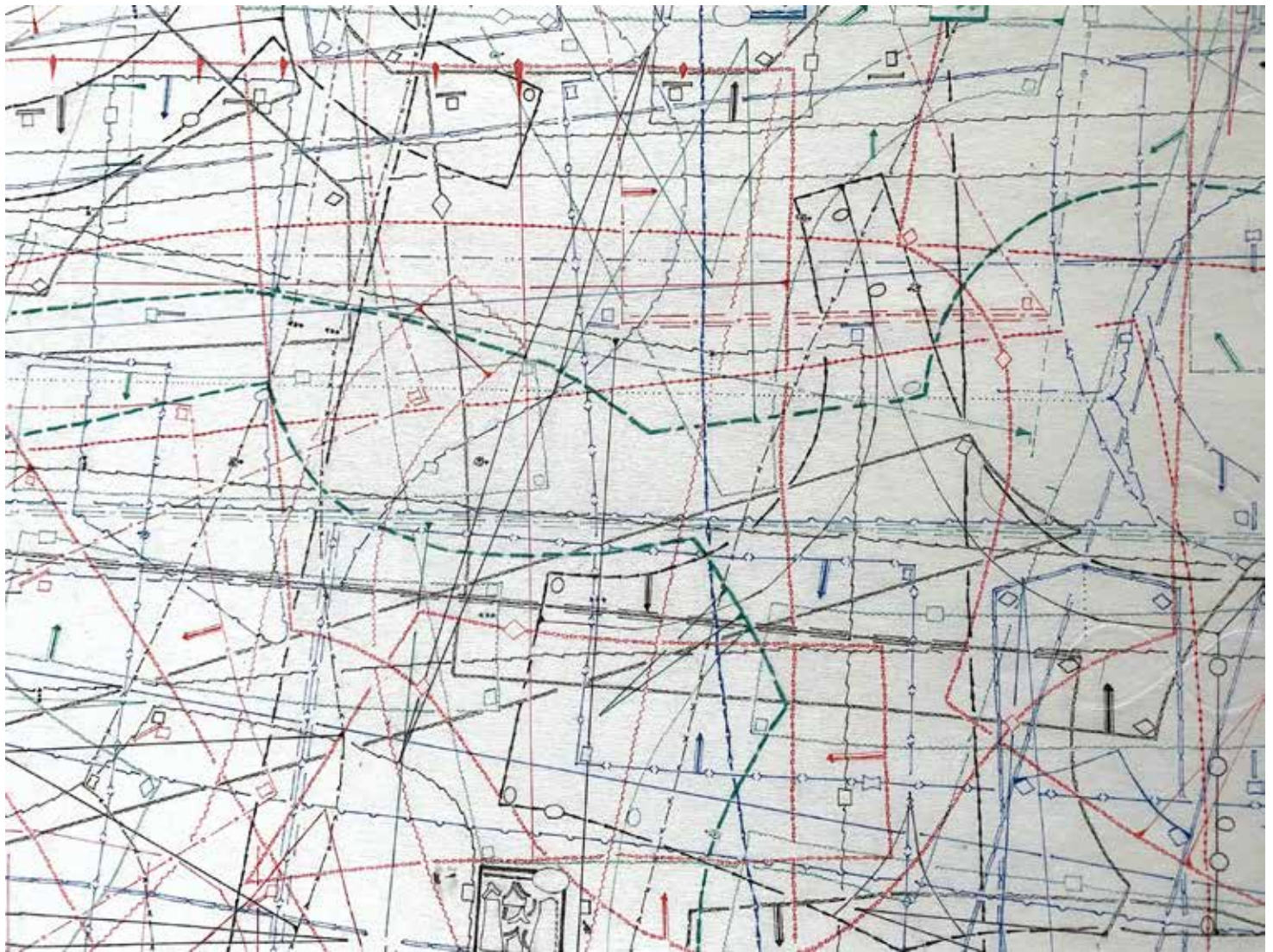


Title: Tracing Pattern Series: Book I_EO1

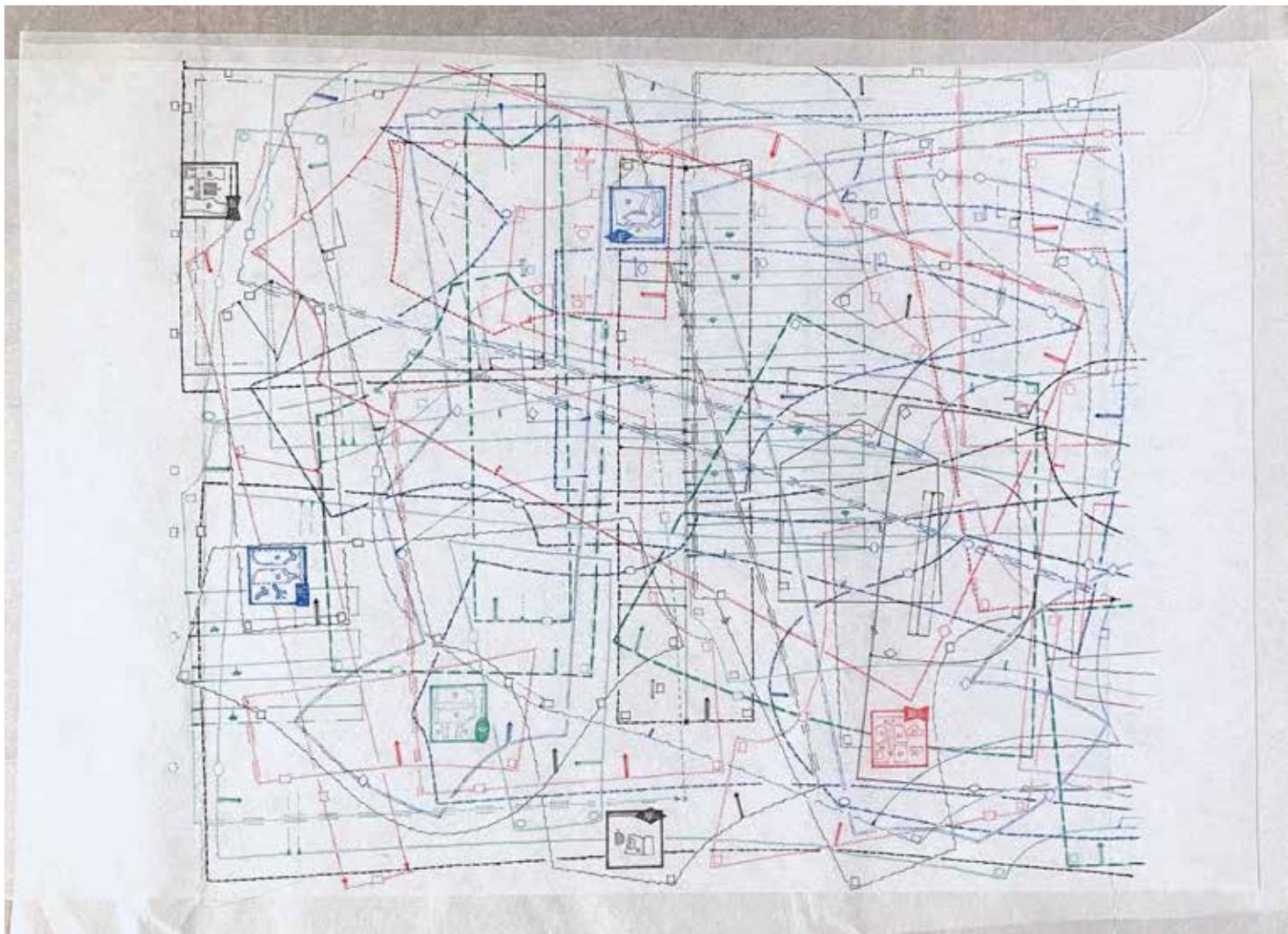
Year: 2026

Medium: Archival ink and cotton thread on interfacing

Size: 34 x 46 inches



Detail

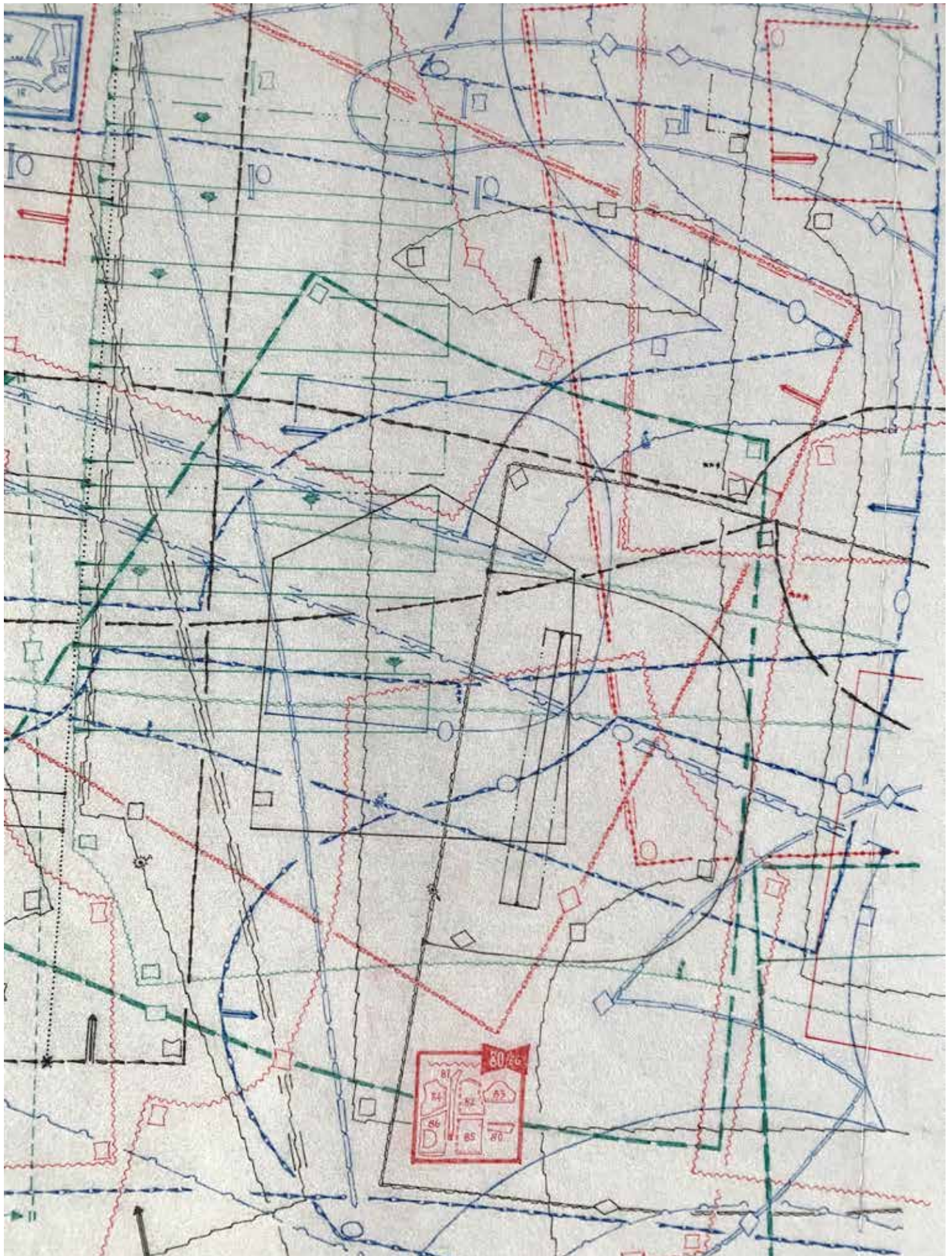


Title: Tracing Pattern Series: Book II_N1

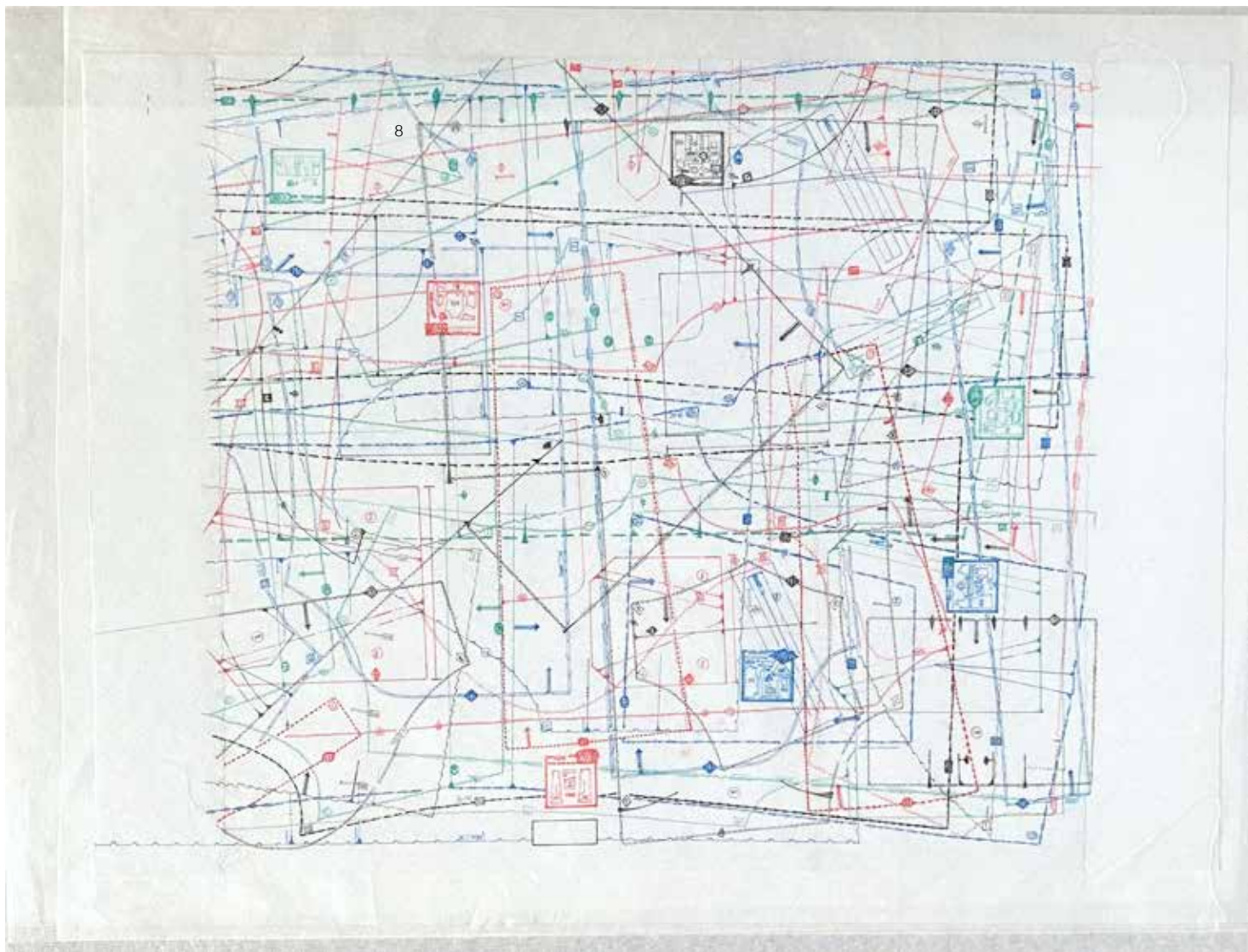
Year: 2026

Medium: Archival ink and cotton thread on interfacing

Size: 23 x 31 inches



Detail

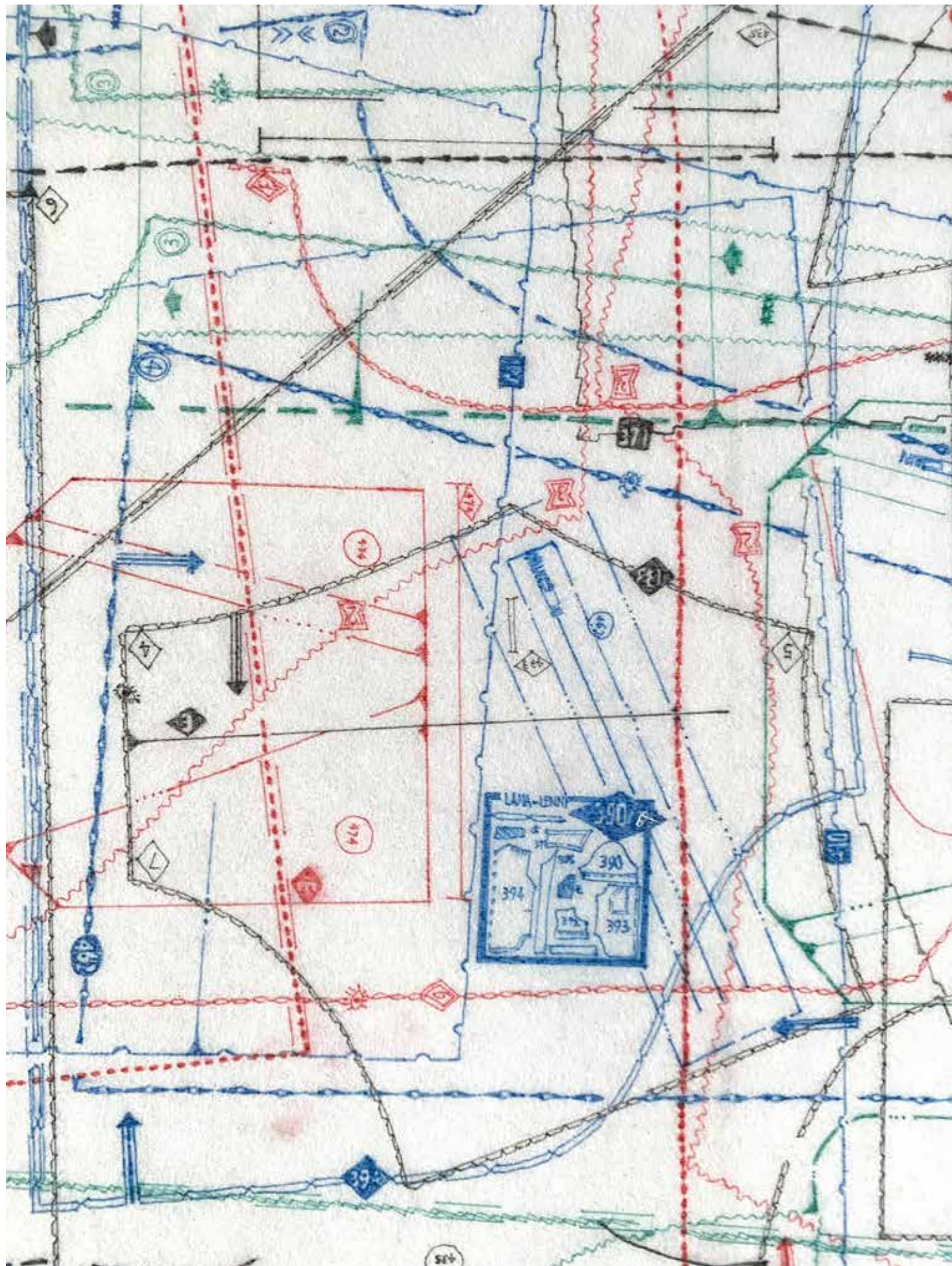


Title: Tracing Pattern Series: Book V_O4

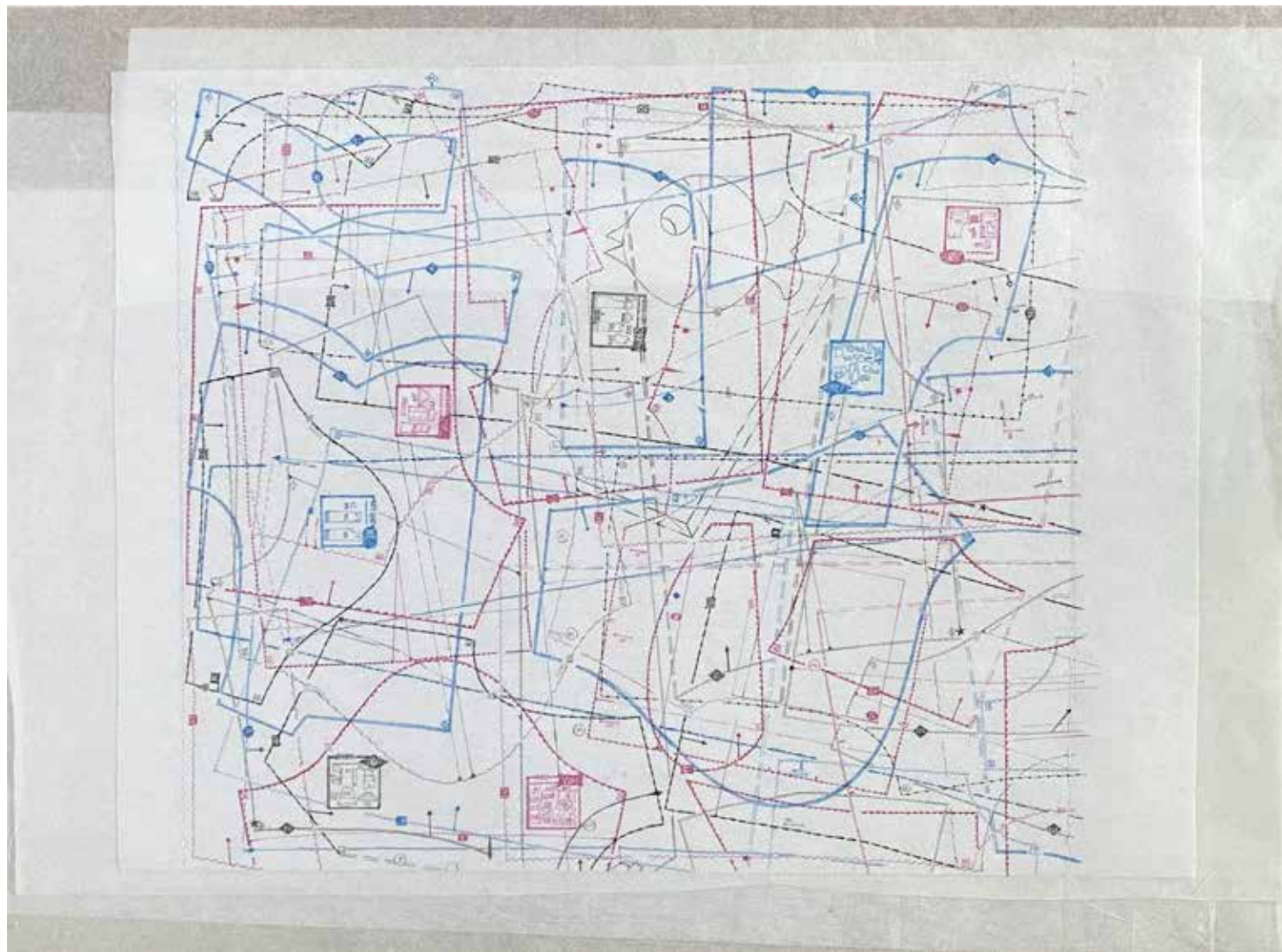
Year: 2026

Medium: Archival ink and cotton thread on interfacing

Size: 23 x 31 inches



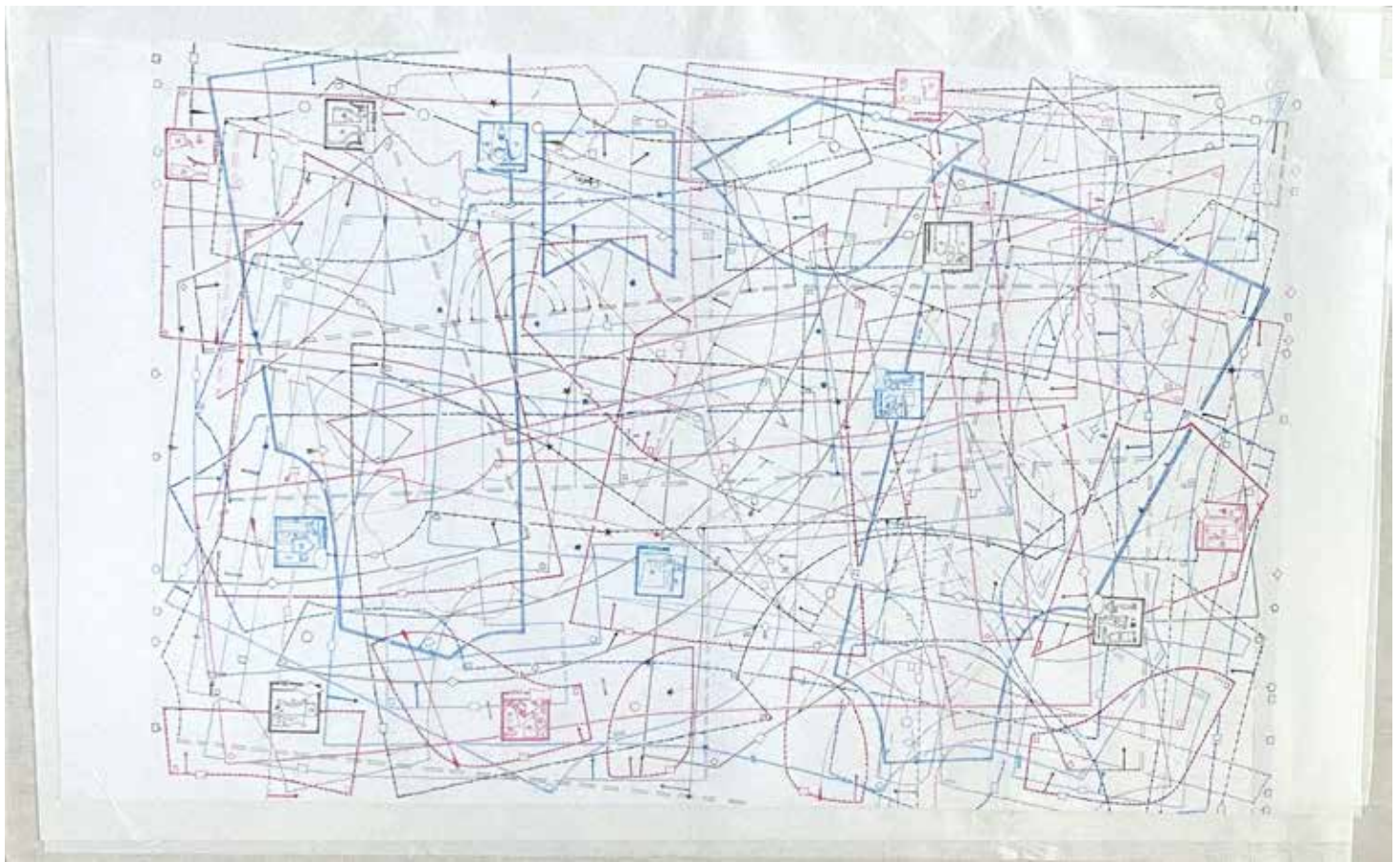
Detail



Title: Tracing Pattern Series: Book VI_E3
Year: 2026
Medium: Archival ink and cotton thread on interfacing
Size: 23 x 31 inches



Detail

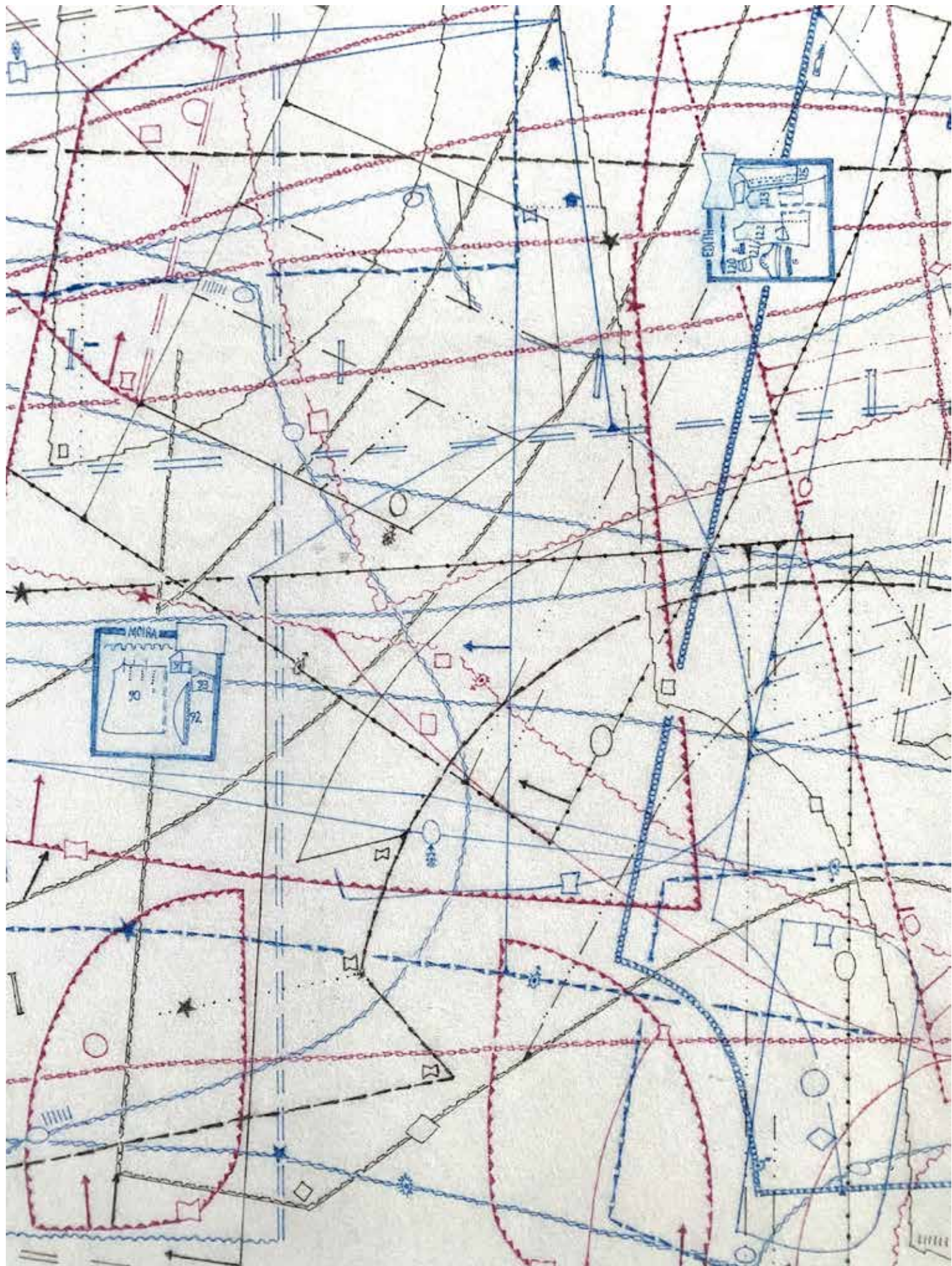


Title: Tracing Pattern Series: Book VI_OS1

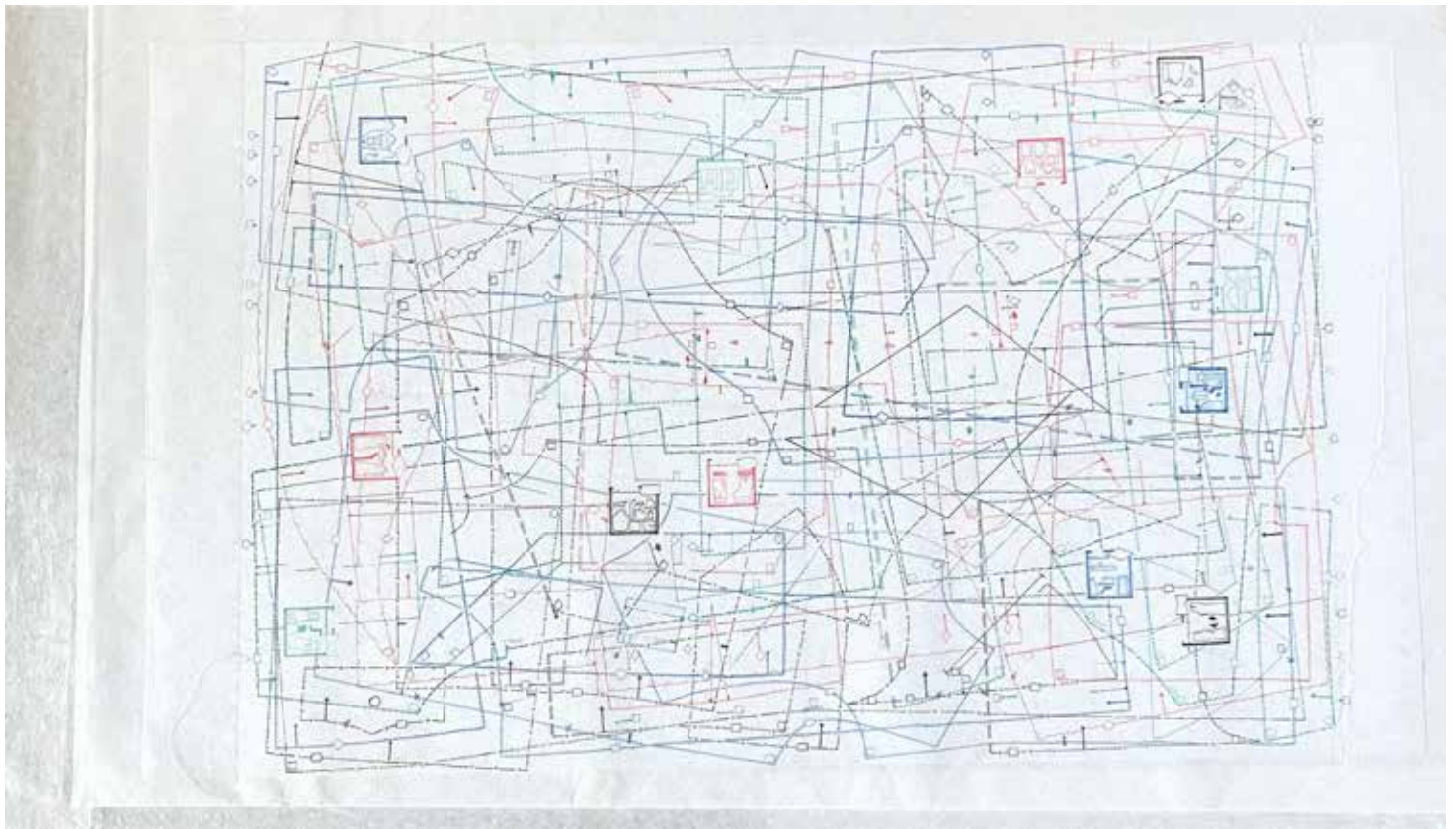
Year: 2026

Medium: Archival ink and cotton thread on interfacing

Size: 23 x 37 inches



Detail

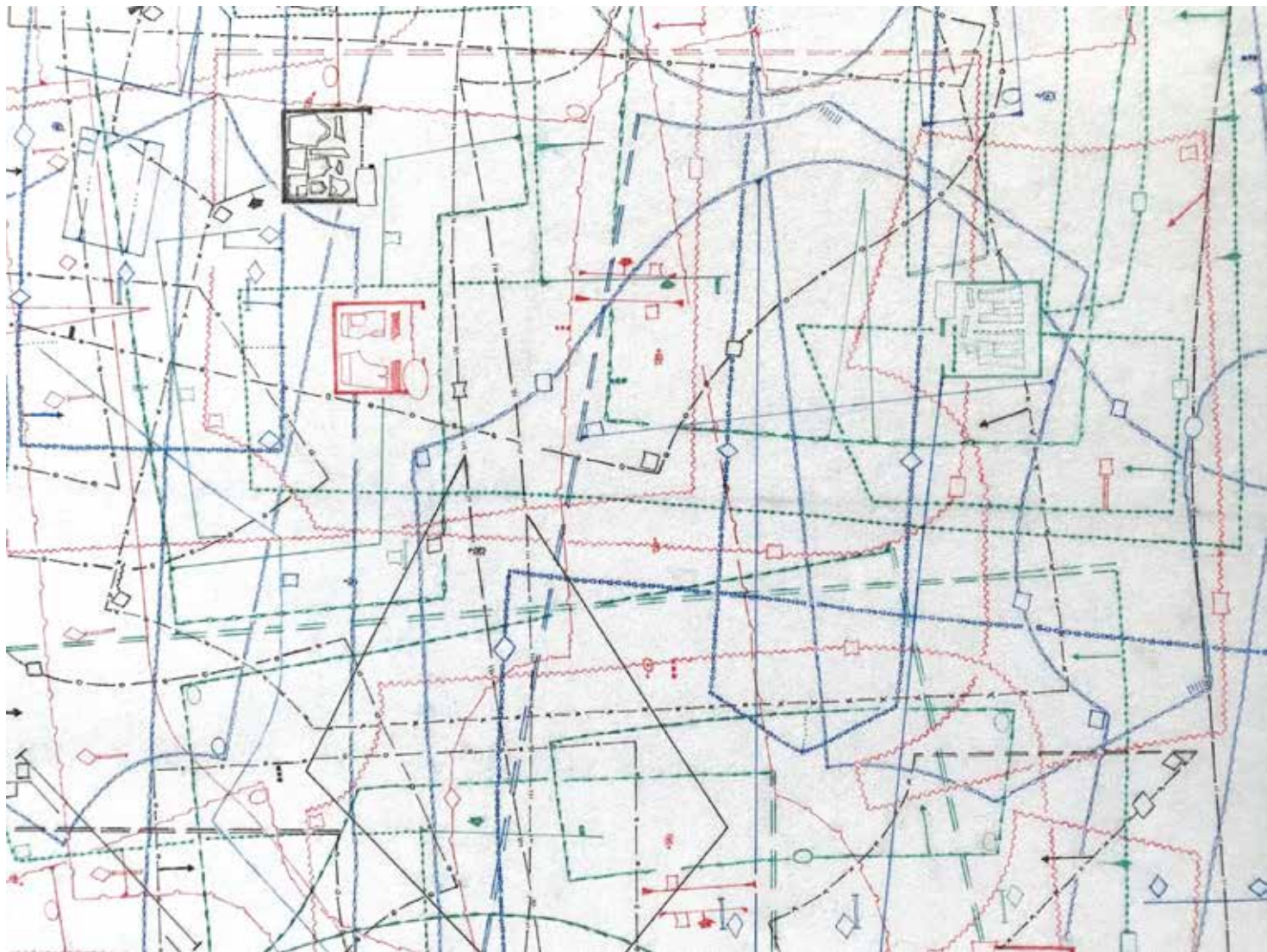


Title: Tracing Pattern Series: Book VIII_ NE2

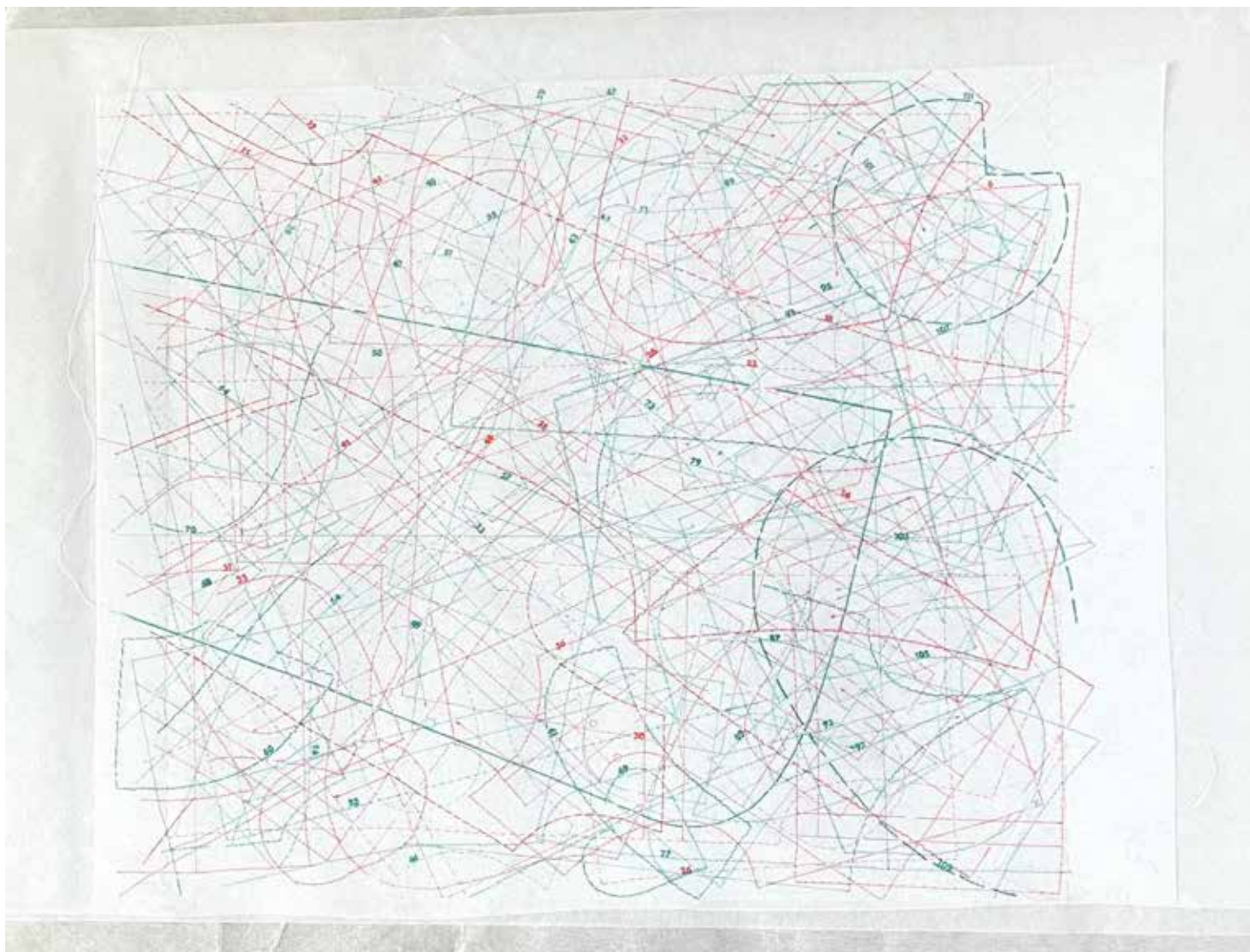
Year: 2026

Medium: Archival ink and cotton thread on interfacing

Size: 23 x 37 inches



Detail

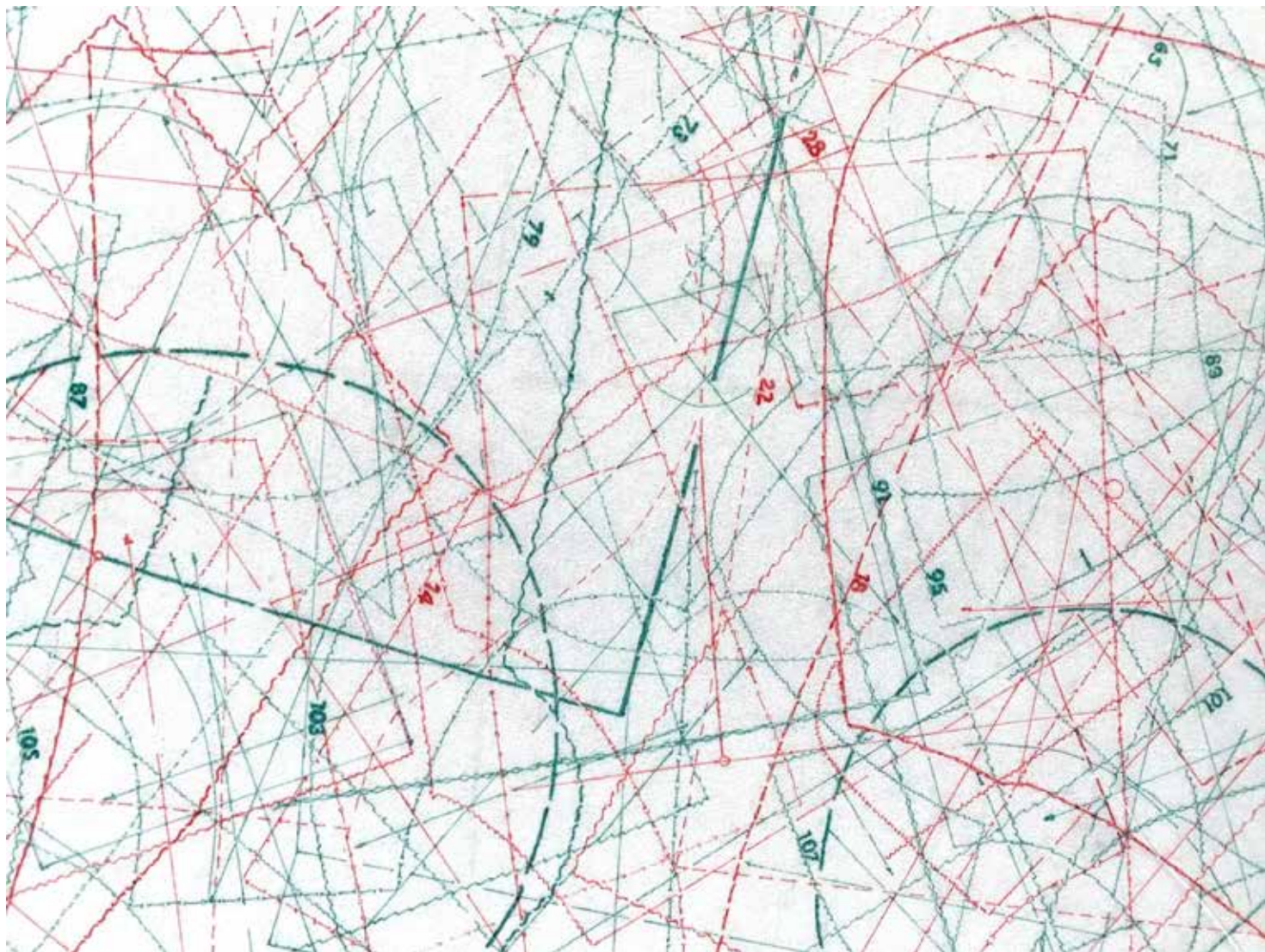


Title: Tracing Pattern Series: Book X_B2

Year: 2026

Medium: Archival ink and cotton thread on interfacing

Size: 23 x 31 inches



Detail

The artist would like to acknowledge and express heartfelt gratitude to curator Sarah Quinton, artist Sophia Kim, her family and the Ontario Arts Council for their support in making this exhibition possible. A special thank you to her mother, Shaheen Qayyum, for lovingly preserving and sharing all the cherished objects and memories, and for her unwavering love and care.



ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL
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Profile

Tazeen Qayyum is a Pakistani - Canadian multidisciplinary artist and among the first to shape the Neo-Miniature movement at the National College of Arts, Lahore. Qayyum continues to explore new materials and processes through various mediums, including drawing, installation, sculpture, video, and performance. Her work addresses complex issues of belonging, identity, and displacement within a socio-political context, emphasizing empathy and compassion as a counterforce to aggression and conflict while acknowledging the evolving realities of our time.

Qayyum's artwork has been exhibited globally at prestigious galleries, museums, international art biennials and festivals, including the Karachi Biennial 2017, the Bangkok Art Biennial 2022, the Edinburgh International Festival 2025 and the Hong Kong International Festivals 2026. In 2013, she was commissioned to create site-responsive work at the Toronto Pearson International Airport. Her works are part of esteemed collections such as the Royal Ontario Museum in Canada; the Art Mill Museum in Qatar; the Robert McLaughlin Gallery in Oshawa; the TD Canada Trust Permanent Collection in Toronto; the HBL Art Collection in Pakistan; the Welt Museum in Vienna; the Doris McCarthy Gallery at the University of Toronto; the National Gallery of Amman in Jordan; and the National Art Gallery in Nepal.

Qayyum co-founded Art Address, an interactive space dedicated to fostering artistic discourse, community building, and mentoring young, emerging, and newcomer artists in Canada. She has served on the Board of Directors for Oakville Galleries and on the Advisory Board of the Blackwood Gallery at the University of Toronto, as well as the Arts Council at Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital.

Solo Exhibitions

2025	ابہی here/now, curated by Ruba Kanaan, Red Head Gallery, Toronto, Canada
2023	Khayaal, Canvas Gallery, Karachi, Pakistan
2023	In Parts, Red Head Gallery, Toronto, Canada
2022	A Facade of Beauty and Integrated Fear, curated by Ignazio Nicastro, Riverdale Hub, Toronto, Canada
2022	Sakoon, Zalucky Contemporary, Toronto, Canada
2020	Cover the Same Ground, Canvas Gallery, Karachi, Pakistan
2018	Descent, Canvas Gallery, Karachi, Pakistan
2018	Drawings by Tazeen Qayyum, Boarding House Gallery, University of Guelph, Canada
2015	Khara Dupatta, mixed media installation, Bradley Museum, Mississauga, Canada
2015	(IN)SURGE(NT), curated by Zarmeene Shah, Canvas Gallery, Karachi, Pakistan
2013	A Holding Pattern, co - curated by Lee Petrie and Stuart Keeler, Toronto Pearson Airport
2012	Coule dans les veines (flows in the veins), curated by Stuart Keeler, XIT - RM, Art Gallery of Mississauga, Canada
2012	Viewer Discretion is Advised, Ross Creek Centre for the Arts, Nova Scotia, Canada
2011	It's Complicated, curated by Nadia Kurd, Thunder Bay Art Gallery, Canada
2009	Viewer Discretion is Advised, Gandhara Art - Space, Karachi, Pakistan
2001	Woven Narratives: New Miniatures, Gallery Rohtas II, Lahore, Pakistan
2000	Contemporary Miniatures, Gallery Jutner, Vienna, Austria

Select Performance Projects

2025	Once More My Mind Wanders in Search of a Word, durational drawing performance, in collaboration with Syed Umar and the students of musicology at the NCA International Triennale, Pakistan
2025	ابہی here/now, durational drawing performance, in collaboration with Aga Khan Master Musicians at the Edinburgh International Festival
2024	Isma'u wa'u (listen and learn), durational drawing performance, in collaboration with Aga Khan Master Musicians at the National Museum of Qatar, Doha.
2023	Izzat (respect/honour), durational drawing performance, in collaboration with Padideh Ahrarnejad and Ali Massoudi at the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, Canada
2020	Ehsaas, durational drawing performance, in collaboration with Marwan Abado, Salam Orient Festival, Vienna, Austria
2017	Unvoiced, durational drawing performance, at the 1st Karachi Biennale, Pakistan
2016	We do not know who we are where we go, drawing performance, for Christof Migone's Mixer Project at The Royal Conservatory of Music, Toronto
2014	ByOb: Bring Your Own Bollywood, collaborative performance and photo - based project, at Parramasala, Parramatta, Sydney, Australia
2013	Lost in Desires, drawing performance at Info Bomb: The Subcontinent, a project with Other Asias, Aam Awaam and SAVAC, Art Metropole, Nuit Blanche, Toronto, Canada
2012	Threading Encounters, The Door to Door exhibition series, Blackwood Gallery University of Toronto, Mississauga, Canada
2009	A Feast in Exile, a collaborative inter - disciplinary performance project, Alliance de Francaise Karachi, produced by Vasl Artists' Collective and Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture, Pakistan
2007 - 06	Double Date, a collaborative inter - disciplinary performance project, produced by South Asian Visual Arts Centre (SAVAC) and AKA Gallery, Saskatoon, Lennox Contemporary Gallery, Toronto, Canada

Select Group Exhibitions

2026	Lines Pattern Action, curated by Ruba Kanaan, Blackwood Gallery, UTM, Mississauga
2026	Daybreak, curated by Erin Szikora, Doris McCarthy Gallery, University of Toronto
2026	Past Comes to Present: Miniature Paintings in Contemporary Times, Aicon Gallery, New York, USA
2026	Drafts 6: Mapping Diasporic Identities, curated by Soheila Esphani, Grebel Gallery, University of Waterloo
2024	Manzar: Art and Architecture from Pakistan 1940s to date, curated by Caroline Hancock, Zarmeene Shah and Aurelien Lemonier, National Museum of Qatar, Doha
2023	Being and Belonging: Contemporary Women Artists of the Islamic World and Beyond, curated by Dr. Fahmida Suleman, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, Canada
2022	Chaos: Calm, Bangkok Art Biennale 2022, Museum Siam, Thailand
2021	Contemporary Chronicles, South Asia Institute, Chicago, USA
2018	Common Borders, curated by Majid Abbasi Farahani, Sanat Gallery, Karachi, Pakistan
2018	Objects We Behold, curated by Amra Ali, Gandhara Art Space, Karachi, Pakistan
2018	Forward Motion, curated by Noa Bronstein, The Small Arms, Mississauga, Canada
2017	1st Karachi Biennale, Jamshed Memorial Hall and NJV High School, Karachi, Pakistan
2016	Greater Toronto: New Artist Textiles, commissioned by the Textile Museum of Canada, Textile Arts Centre, NYCxDESIGN, New York and London Design Festival, UK
2015	Beyond Measure: Domesticating Distance, curated by Ambereen Siddiqui, The Robert McLaughlin Gallery, Oshawa, Canada
2015	Border Cultures: Part Three (Security, Surveillance), curated by Srimoyee Mitra, Art Gallery of Windsor, Canada
2015	Season X: Celebrating a Decade, curated by Shanley Hanlon, OSilas Gallery Concordia College, New York, USA
2014	Arrival/Revival, curated by Abdullah Sayed, Parramata Artist Studio, Sydney, Australia
2012	A Homespun Web: Heather Goodchild, Noelle Hamlyn and Tazeen Qayyum, curated by Cole Swanson, Living Arts Centre, Mississauga, Canada
2011	Veiled: Andrew McPhail, Grace Ndiritu and Tazeen Qayyum, curated by Sarah Quinton, Textile Museum of Canada
2011	The Pill, curated by Avni Doshi, Latitude 28 Gallery, Delhi, India
2010	The Rising Tide: New Directions in Art from Pakistan 1990 - 2010, curated by Naiza Khan, Mohatta Palace Museum, Karachi, Pakistan
2010	Its a Disaster, curated by Anthea Foyer, CodeLive Metro, the 2010 Winter Olympics, Vancouver, Canada
2009	Bazgasht: Traditional Methods and Modern Practices, curated by Ali Adil Khan with Asma Arshad Mahmood and Rob Freeman, Art Gallery of Mississauga, Canada
2009	Failing States: recent works by Tazeen Qayyum and Adeela Suleman, Aicon Gallery, London, UK
2008	Conversations across cultures, South Asian Imaginaries, curated by Maurizio Pellegrin and Razia Sadik, Macy Gallery, Columbia University, New York, USA
2008	Farida Batool, Tazeen Qayyum, and Adeela Suleman, curated by Priyanka Mathews, Aicon Gallery, New York, USA
2008	The Human Dichotomy, Aicon Gallery, Palo Alto, USA
2008	ShContemporary08, Shanghai International Art Fair, Aicon Gallery
2008	HKArt08, Hong Kong International Art Fair, Gandhara Art Gallery
2007 - 08	Urban Myths & Modern Fables, curated by Haema Sivanesan, University of Technology, Sydney and 24Hr Art, Darwin, Australia and Doris McCarthy Gallery, University of Toronto Scarborough, Canada
2007	Homecoming, curated by Atteqa Ali, National Gallery of Pakistan, Islamabad, Pakistan
2007	Women Looking East, curated by Steven Spennel, University of Rhode Island, Providence Campus, USA
2006	Gendering Detail, Contemporary Miniature Paintings, curated by Kristy Phillips, Art Square Gallery and SAGA, (South Asian Gallery of Art) Toronto, Canada
2005	A Thousand and One Days: The Art of Pakistani Women Miniaturists, curated by Enrico Mascelloni, Salima Hashmi and Duccio K. Marignoli, Honolulu Academy of Arts, Hawaii and Musee des Beaux, Rouen, France
2004	JALA - Japan Afro - Asian Latin American Exchange Exhibition, Tokyo Metropolitan Museum, Japan
2003	43rd Suzzara Prize 2003 - Spirit and Body; Between Tradition and Cybernetics, curated by Enrico Mascelloni , Padova, Italy
2003	Negotiating Borders Miniature Paintings, curated by Salima Hashmi, Siddhartha Art Gallery, Kathmandu, Nepal
2002	2nd Painting Biennale, Saba Cultural and Artistic Centre, Tehran, Iran
2002	10th Asian Biennale, Shilpakala Academy, Dhaka, Bangladesh

Select Public Collections

The Art Mill Museum, Qatar
Royal Ontario Museum, Canada
Ali Adil Khan Collection, The Aga Khan Museum, Canada
TD Canada Trust Permanent Collection
HBL Art Collection, Pakistan
University of Vienna, Department of Art History, Austria
Neubacher Collection, Weltmuseum, Vienna, Austria
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Pengzhou, China
The Robert McLaughlin Gallery, Oshawa, Canada
Doris McCarthy Gallery, University of Toronto, Canada
National Gallery of Amman, Jordan
National Art Gallery, Nepal
Federal Chancellery, Vienna, Austria

Achievements and Awards

2026	Finalist, MAX Artist of the Year, Muslims Achieving Excellence, North America.
2024 - 26	Awarded Project Grant, Established Artist, Ontario Arts Council, Canada
2017	Awarded Canada Council Project Grant
2016	Excellence in Visual Art Award, by the Canadian Community Arts Initiative
2014	Nominated for K.M. Hunter Award, Canada
2013	Nominated for Jameel Prize, international award for contemporary art and design
2011 - 22	Awarded Project Grants, Mid - Career Artist, Ontario Arts Council, Canada
2006 - 22	Awarded Canada Council Travel Grants
2008	Awarded Project Grant, Toronto Arts Council, Canada
2006 - 16	Awarded Access and Career Development Grant, Ontario Arts Council, Canada
2006	Awarded Project Grant, Emerging Artist, Ontario Arts Council, Canada
2000	Awarded UNESCO Bursary for a three - month residency in Vienna, Austria
1996	Award of Excellence, performance, National College of Arts, Lahore, Pakistan

Education and Residencies

2025	Artist in residence, National College of Arts, Lahore, Pakistan
2020	Artist in residence, Philomena+, Vienna, Austria
2019	Artist in residence, Bishop Strachan Private Girls School, Toronto, Canada
2018	Artist in residence, Boarding House Gallery, University of Guelph, Canada
2014	2 week residency at Parramatta Artist Studio, Sydney, Australia
2013	3 month residency at Blackwood Gallery, Mississauga, Canada
2000	3 month residency AIR program, Federal Chancellery Vienna, Austria
1996	Bachelors Degree, Fine Arts, National College of Arts, Lahore, Pakistan

Professional Contributions

2018 to date	Artistic Director and co-founder, Art Address, Oakville, Canada
2018 - 26	Member, Arts Council, Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital, Oakville, Canada
2018 - 21	Member, Board of Directors and Acquisition Committee, Oakville Galleries, Canada
2020 - 21	Member, Diversity and Inclusion Action Team, Oakville Galleries
2015 - 18	Member, Advisory Board, Blackwood Gallery, University of Toronto, Mississauga
2005 - 07	Programming Committee member, SAVAC, South Asian Visual Arts Centre, Toronto

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