

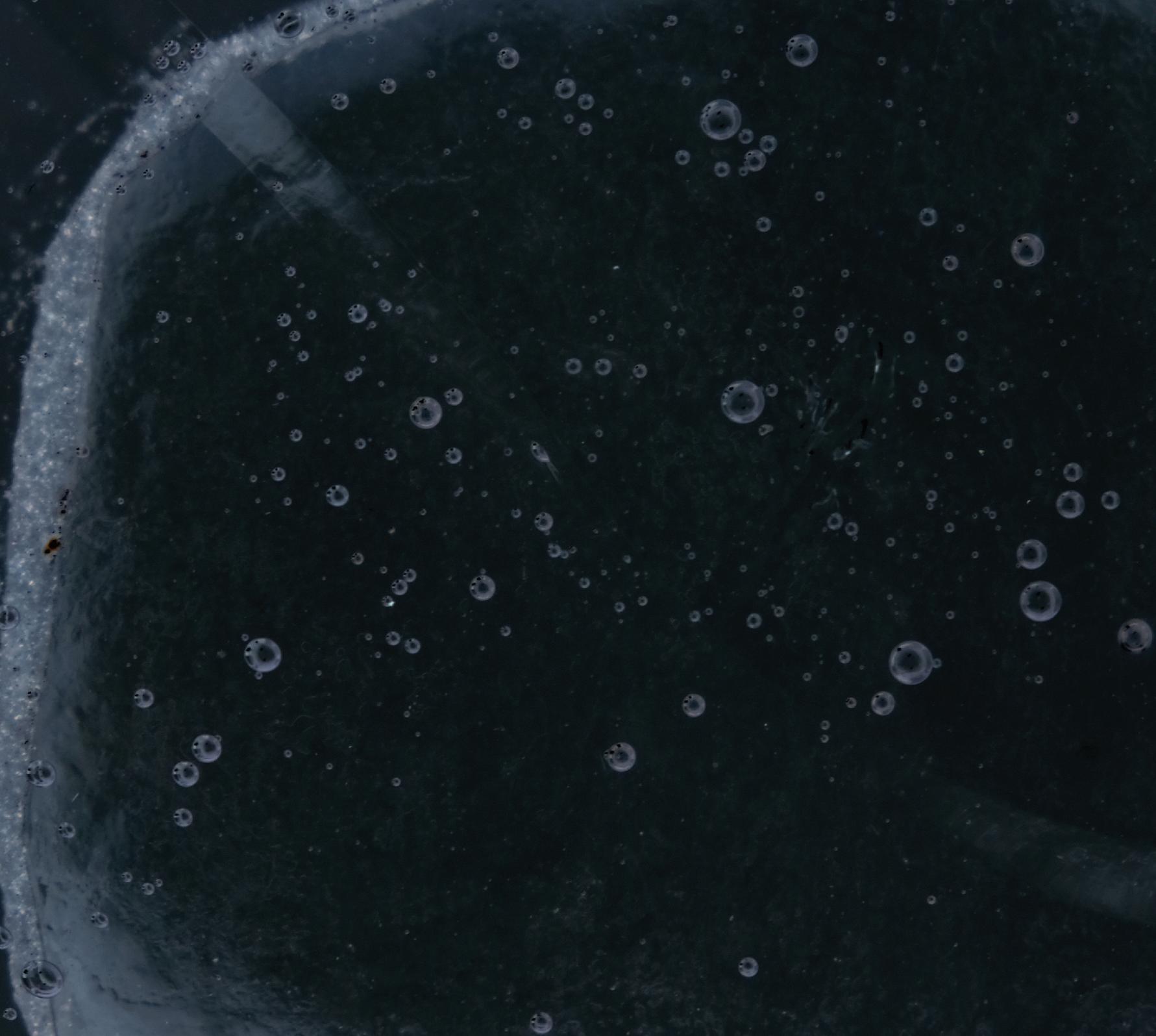
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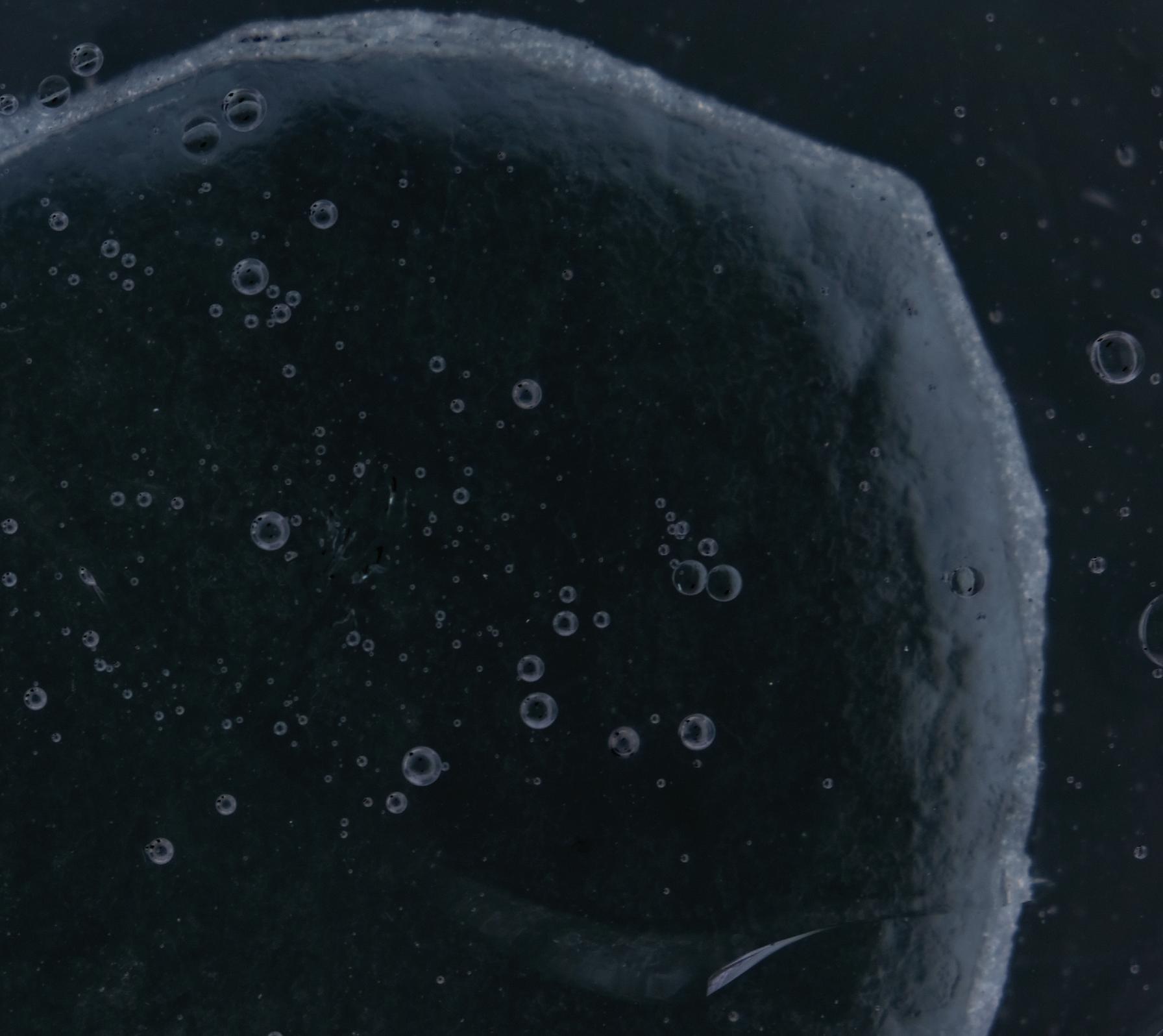
THE THINGS OF MIND

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ABSTRACT

My thesis research shows my thinking and reflection on environmental changes around me in the past and especially the past two years. Through the experience between the city and nature, my research has clarified my different perspectives and explored the expression and reproduction through the print media and glass media.

CONTENTS

CONTENTS

17 DUALITY

17 DUALITY

37 RE-DUALITY

37 RE-DUALITY

47 STONES

47 STONES

65 THINKING THROUGH MAKING

65 THINKING THROUGH MAKING

77 BIBLIOGRAPHY

77 BIBLIOGRAPHY

79 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

79 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

13 TEXT 001

13 TEXT 001

15 TEXT 002

15 TEXT 002

35 TEXT 003

35 TEXT 003

47 TEXT 004

47 TEXT 004

“The soul is like the eye:
when resting upon that on which truth and being shine,
the soul perceives and understands and is radiant with intelligence...”

Plato, Republic, Book VI



Every day I spend thirty minutes, or one-forty-eighth of a day, fleeing from reality.

I leave my Providence, Rhode Island apartment in the morning and walk west along Power Street to the end of South Water Street. Providence River is right in front of me. I usually stop by the river for ten minutes to see the water. Then I set off to my studio located downtown.

I am motivated by the environment. I like places with water. Whether it is a swimming pool, pond, river, or sea, I can feel the water around me. I even imagine being surrounded by trees, and the constant murmur of the wind blowing through the branches, to me as quiet as underwater. I imagine feeling the flow of underwater. Whenever I look at the water, it always calms me down.

The water in each place is different. Different states, colors and appearances, tastes and odors, and the directions of the wind also makes the same area show different waves. When I took a sample of this water from its original source and put it in a glass it was just a transparent substance. I could not recognize any of its personality. It seems recognizable, but not. This reminds me the matrix concept often discussed in printmaking. The printmaker regards the result of each printing as a copy of the matrix (the plates we use to print). In fact, each print is not an exact copy, but represents the matrix again and again.

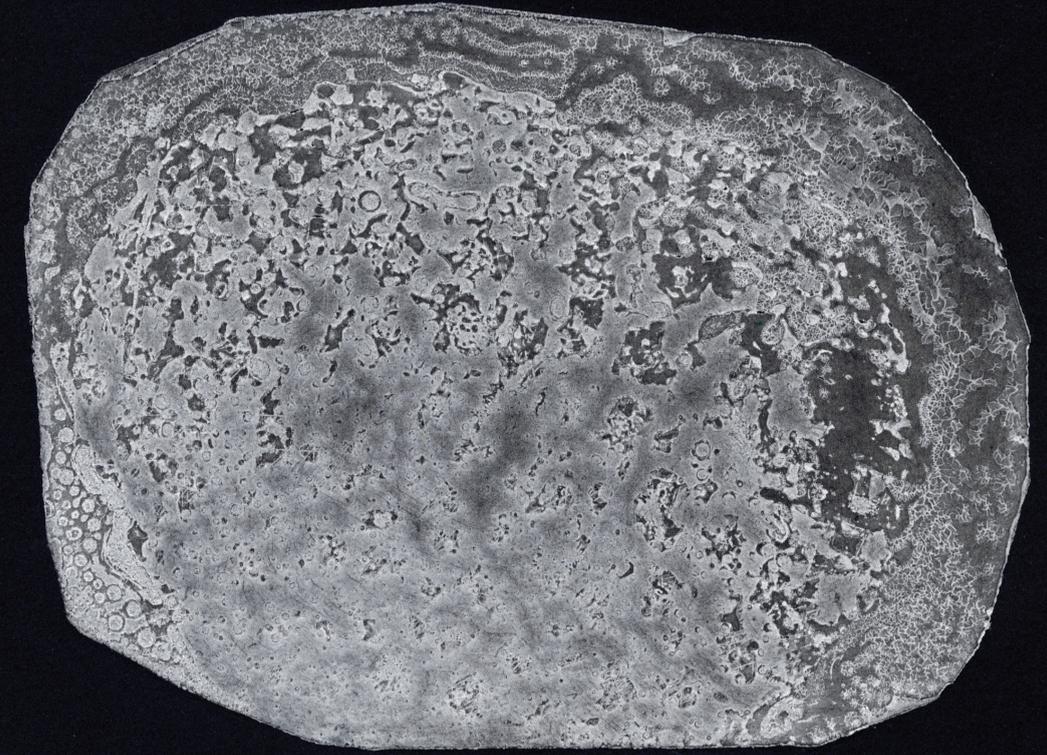
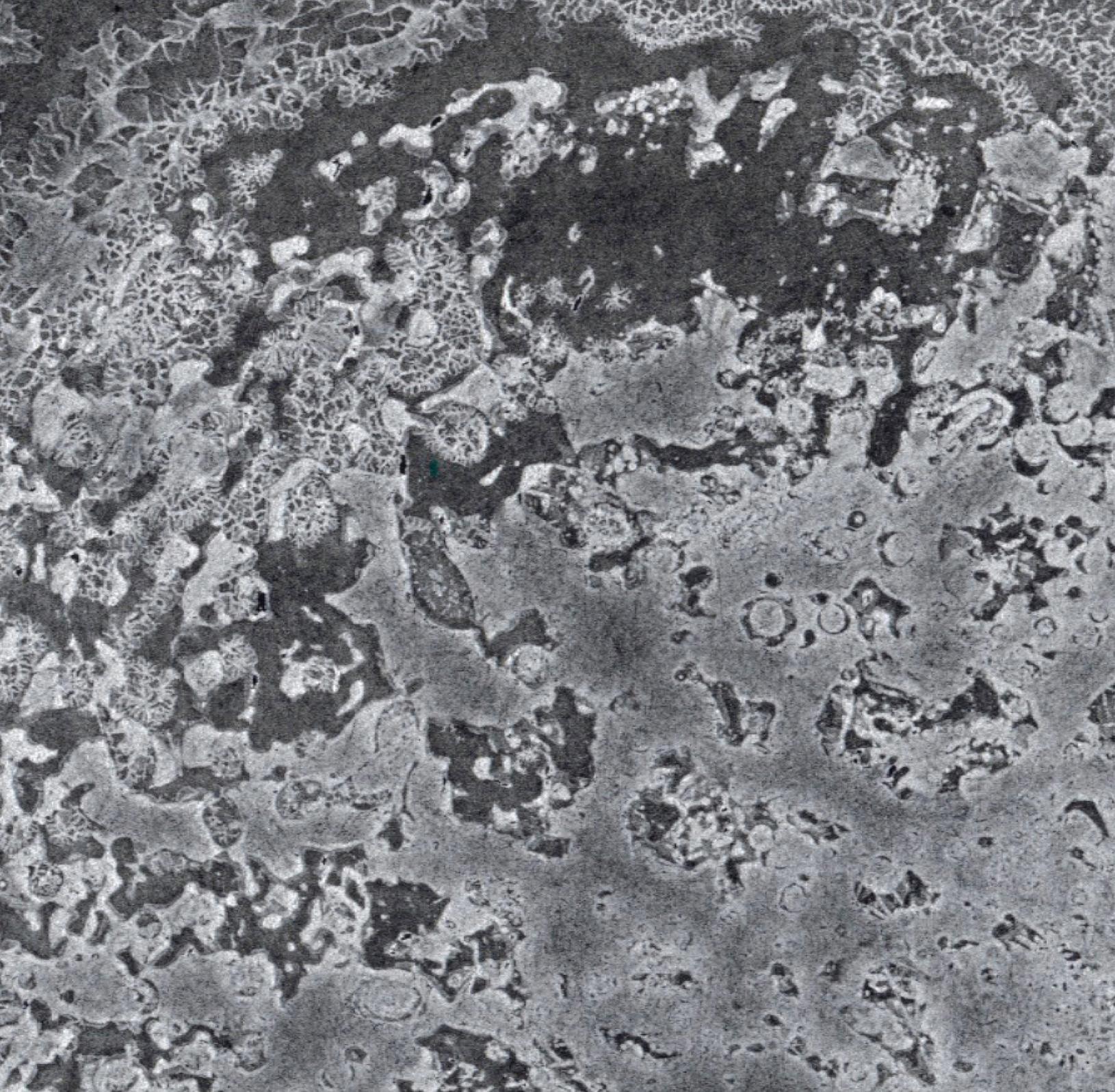


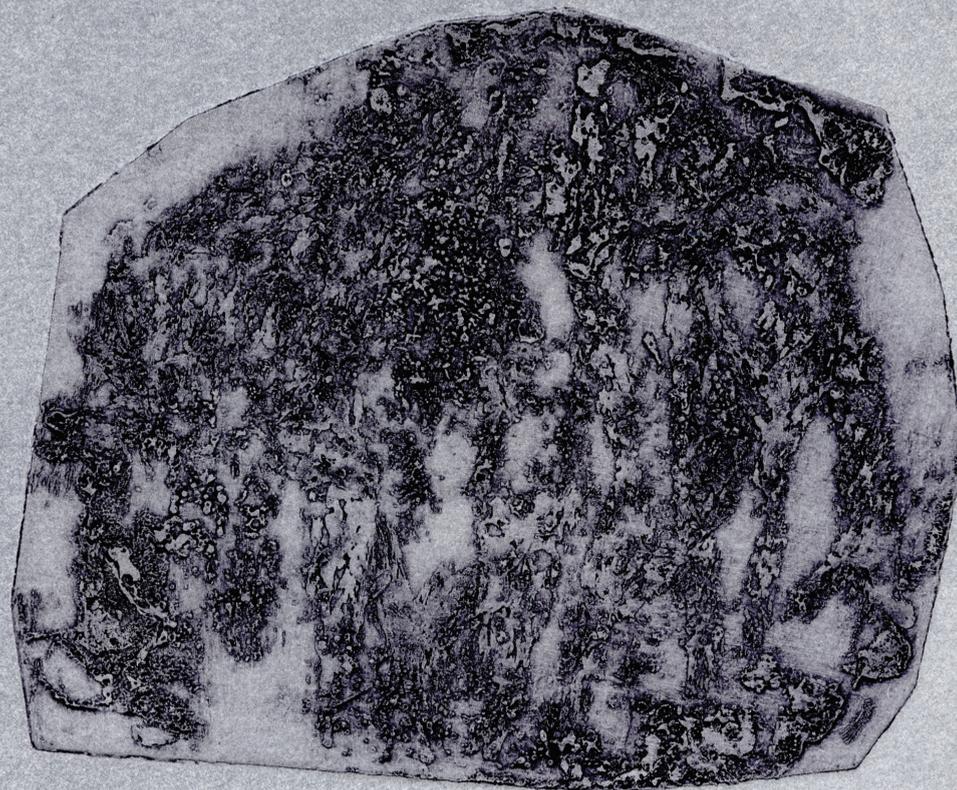
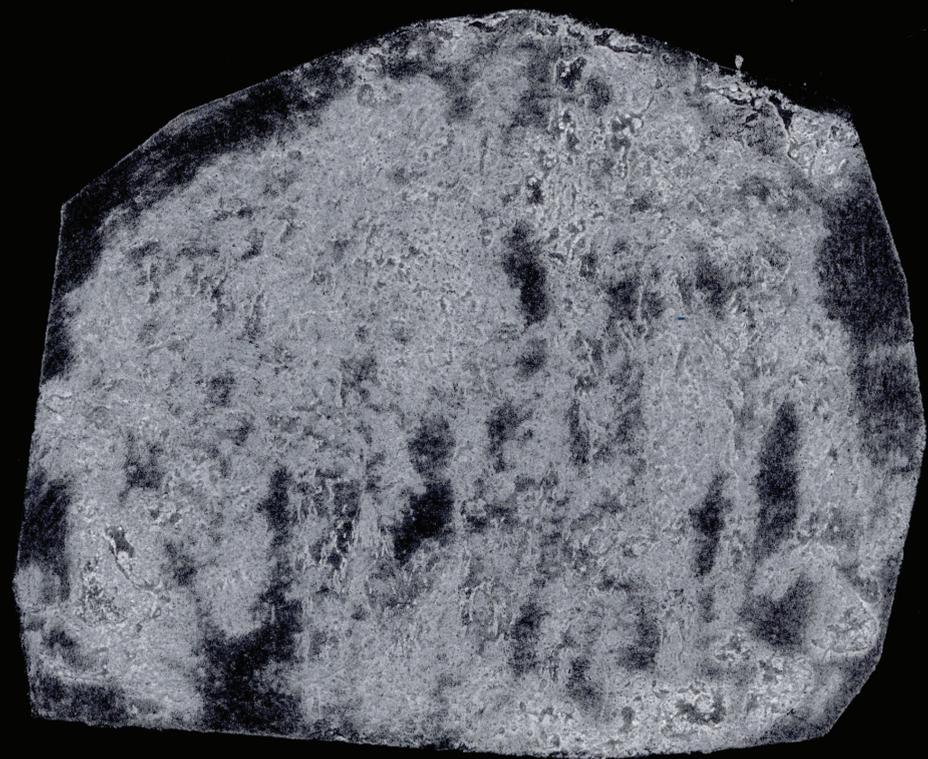
The Scale of Time
 Glasscasting, pine needles
 2019

The line between the central city and nature environment is clear and fuzzy. In my childhood, I lived in a mountain town in southern China. My house was built in a valley. There was only a wall between me and woods, animals, rocks and soils. However, over a decade ago, when I moved to Beijing, real nature faded to just memory. For me the city parks became a boring artificial landscape. When I came to Providence in 2018, the vibrant and exciting natural scenes in my memory continued to emerge. I suddenly realized that something important to me was absent for a long time.

I bring these chance encounters back to my studio. I might bring back a seed, a piece of moss, some bark covered with fungus, a cluster of branches, a photo, or just a daily memory. From September 2018 to May of the following year, I kept collecting pine tree foliage and needles. I brought the branches that fell on the side of the road and rearranged and reshaped them in a new way to preserve the needles. I shaped them into a square “haystack.” And, the form changed from organic to geometrical. After I made these small haystacks, people repeatedly asked me how many pine needles were in each piece. The only way I could answer this was to determine their volume and weight. Surprisingly, I discovered that all together they had as many pine needles as a seven-year-old pine tree.

I also used the parts of a tree that I discovered on my walk in my glass sculptures. I was amazed by how the branches that I found went from green to brown, a decaying process that can take more than a year in my studio. After leaving the trunk, these branches spent a long time “dead”. I poured melted hot glass on them. Perhaps it wasn’t until I burned them and put them into the molten glass like a fossil that I ended their physical life. Did I really kill them? Was it out of guilt that I injected the last breath of that branch with the leaves into the glass? Was it me, my body, my thoughts and actions that disturbed its plan to rot in the soil? I used the glass piece as my matrix to create an intaglio copperplate. The resulting prints look to me like meteorites that are becoming inscriptions.





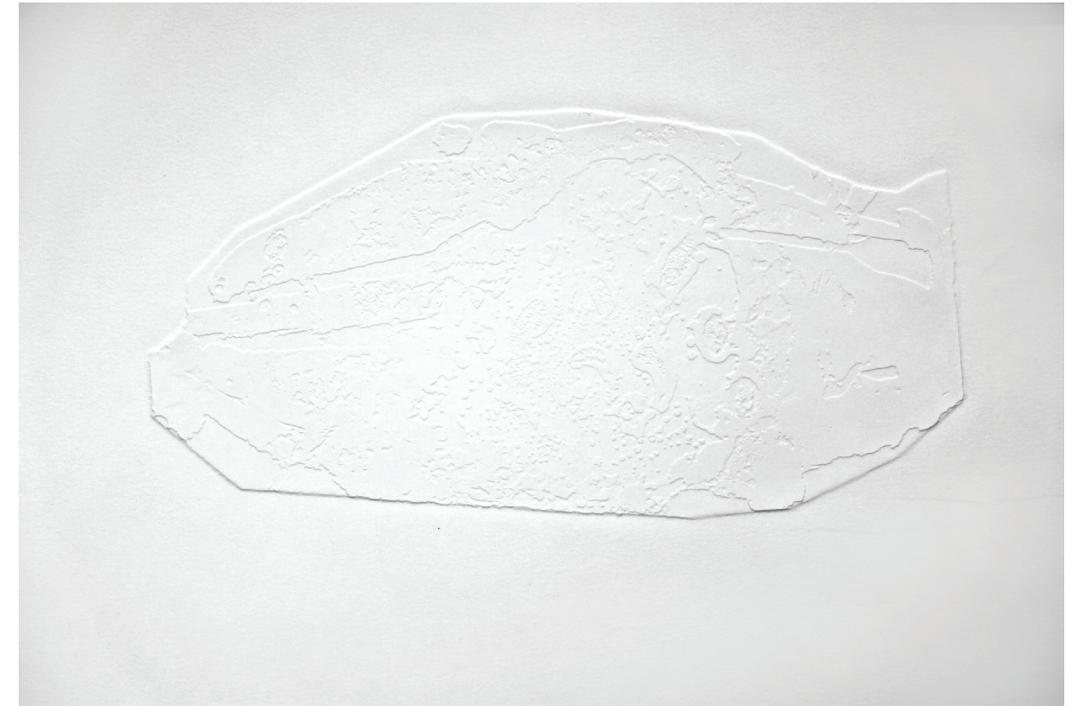
L
Detail of Dark i

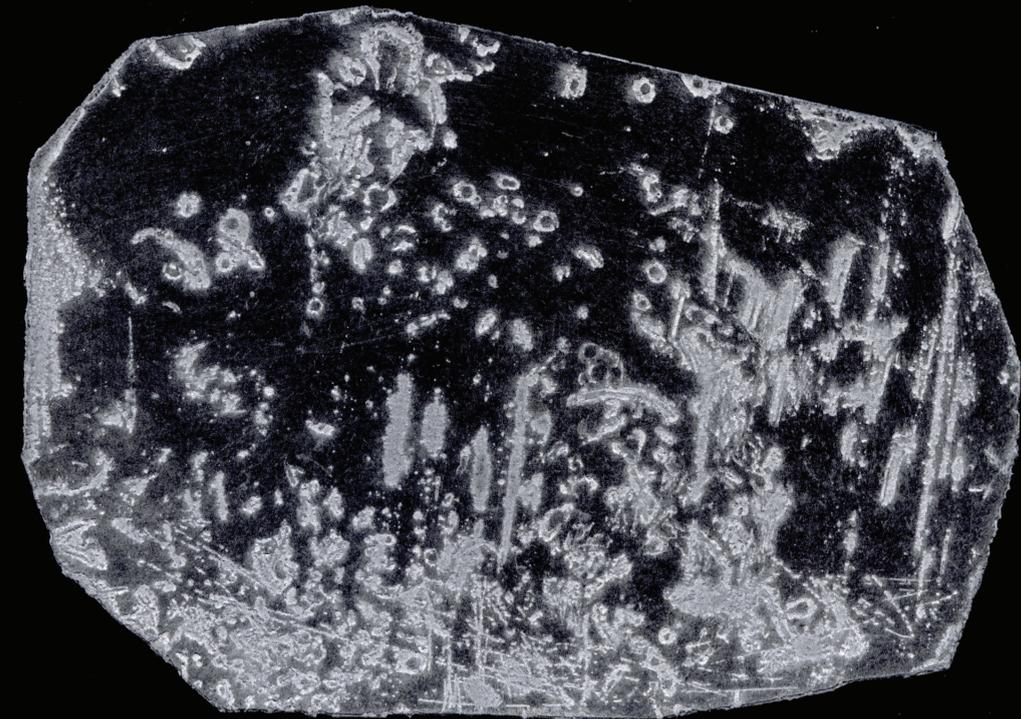
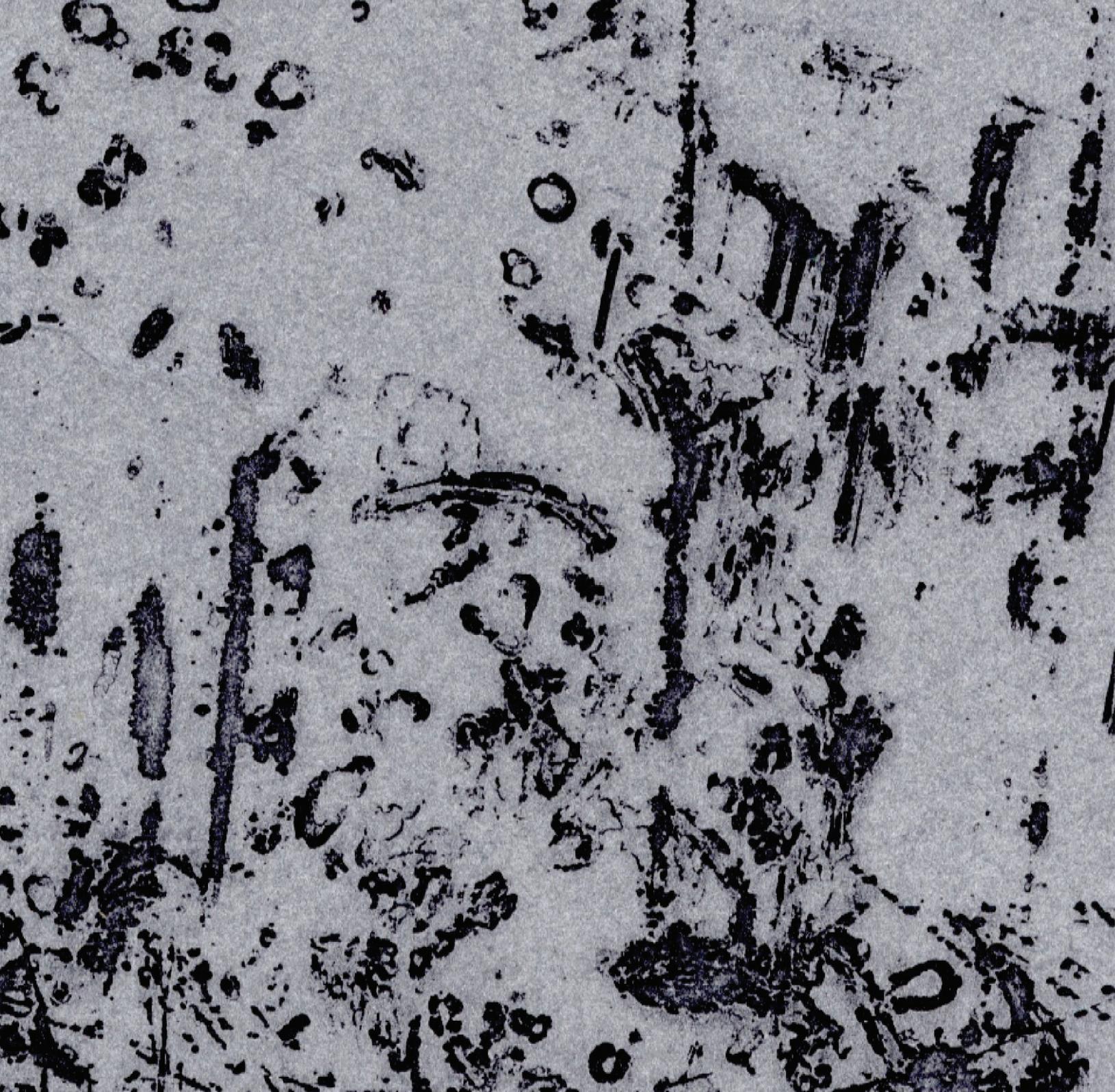
R
Duality, Dark i
Two color etching, aquatint
11x12 in
2019

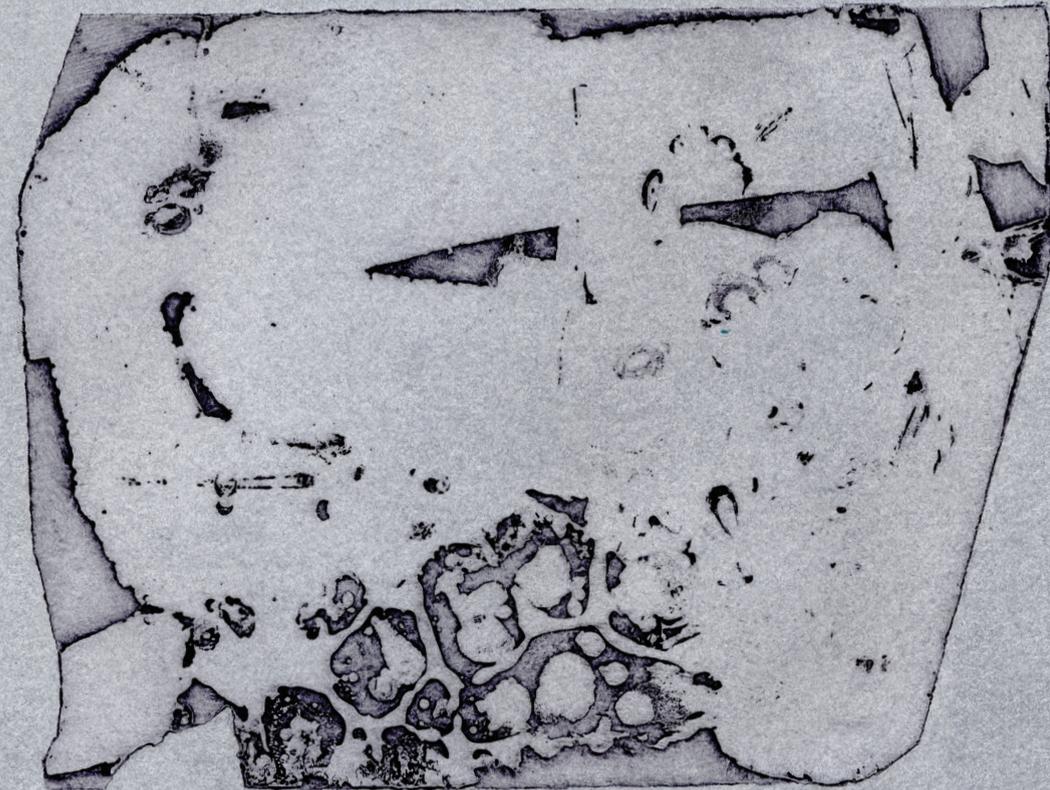
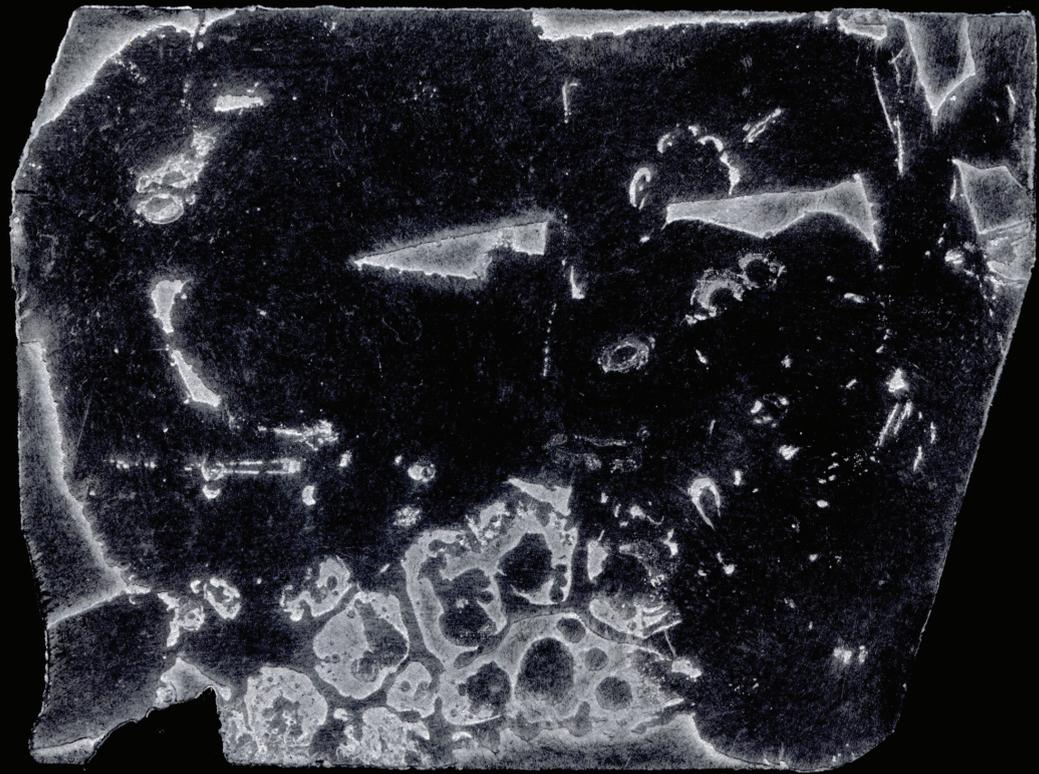
L
Duality, Dark ii
Two color etching, aquatint
11x12 in
2019

R
Duality, Light ii
Two color etching, aquatint
11x12 in
2019

R
Shadow iv
Embossing
11x12 in
2019







L
Detail of Light iii

R
Duality, Dark iii
Two color etching, aquatint
11x12 in
2019

L
Duality, Dark iv
Two color etching, aquatint
11x12 in
2019

R
Duality, Light iv
Two color etching, aquatint
11x12 in
2019

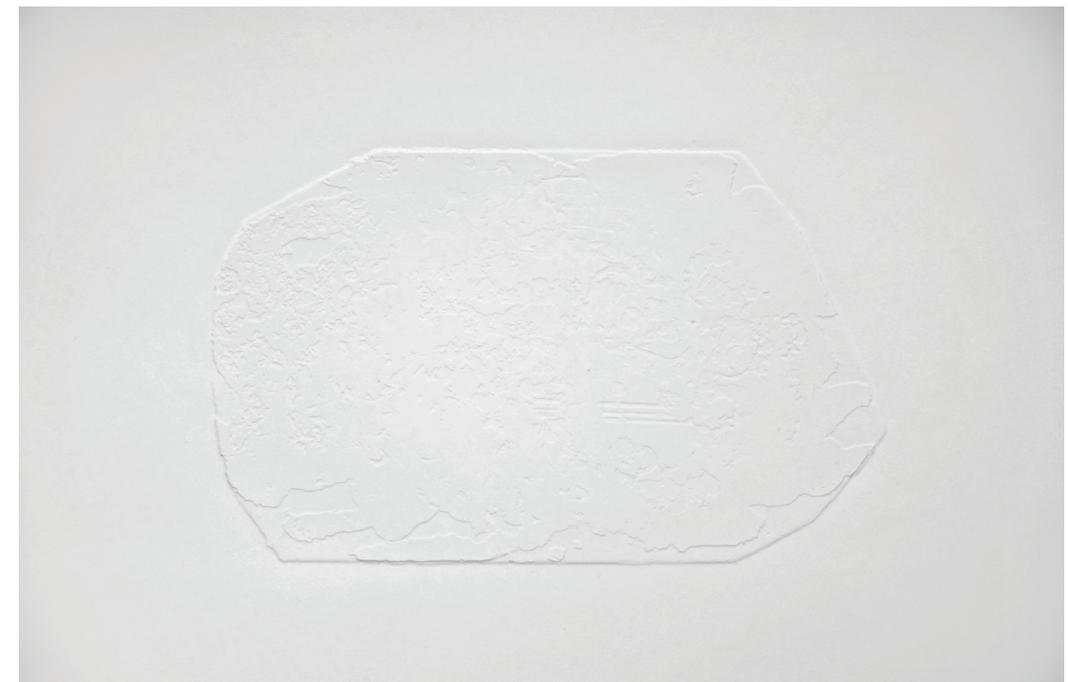
R
Shadow vi
Embossing
11x12 in
2019

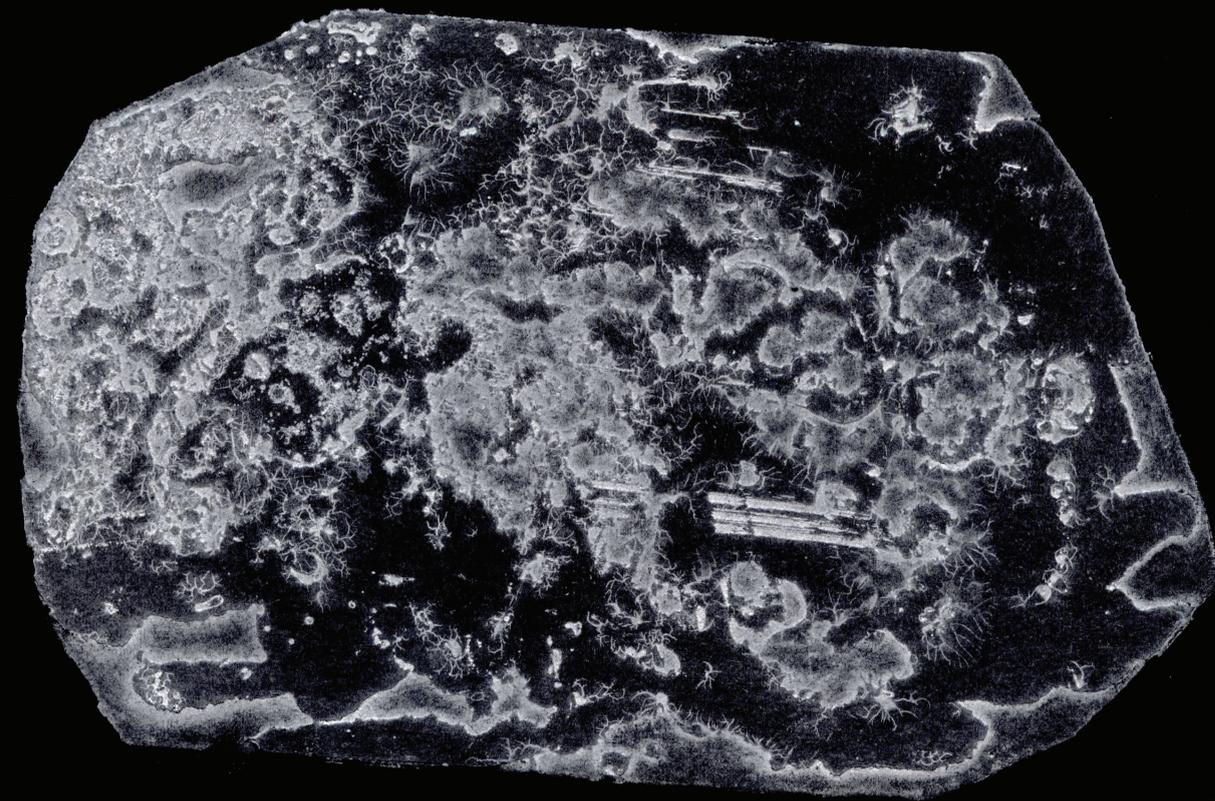
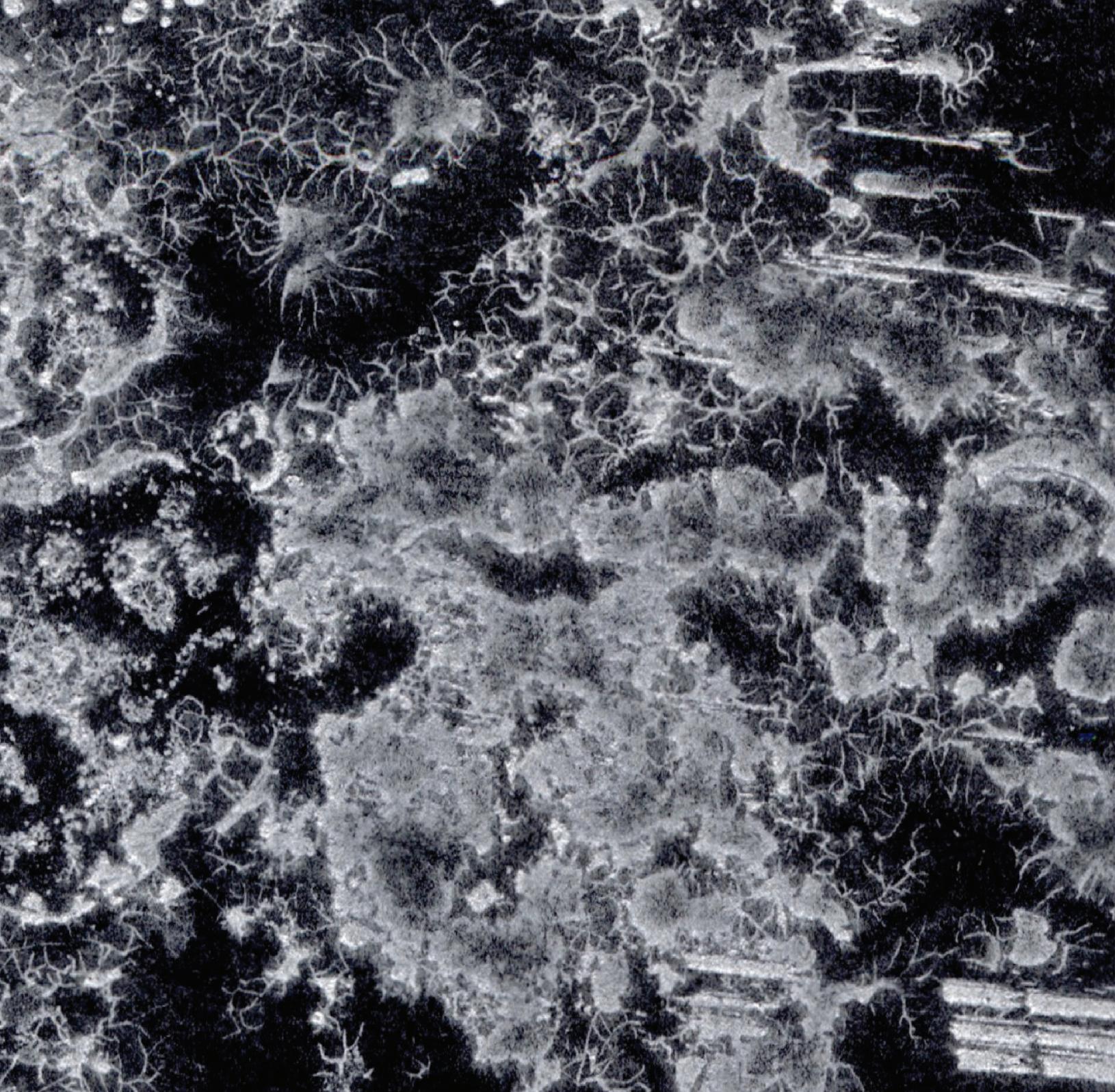
L
Detail of Dark v

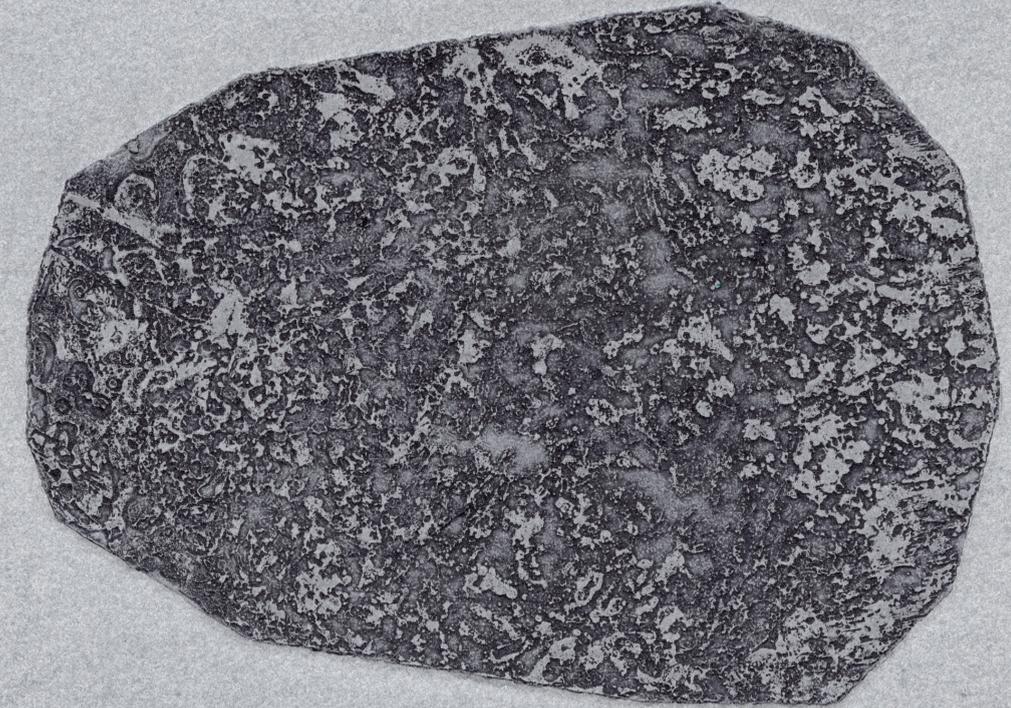
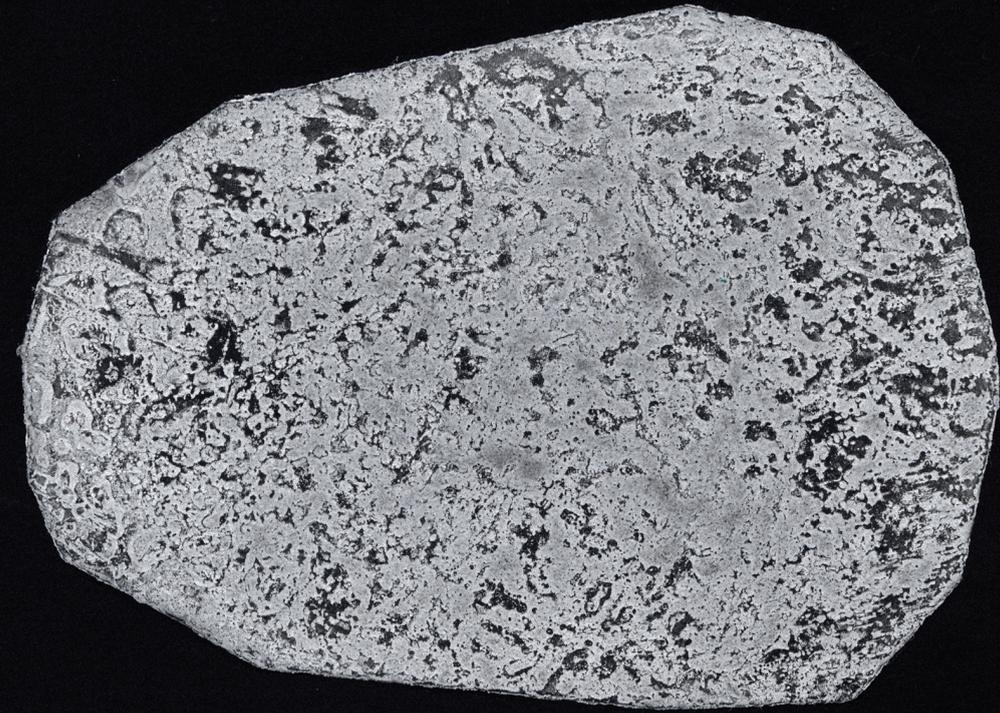
R
Duality, Dark v
Two color etching, aquatint
11x12 in
2019

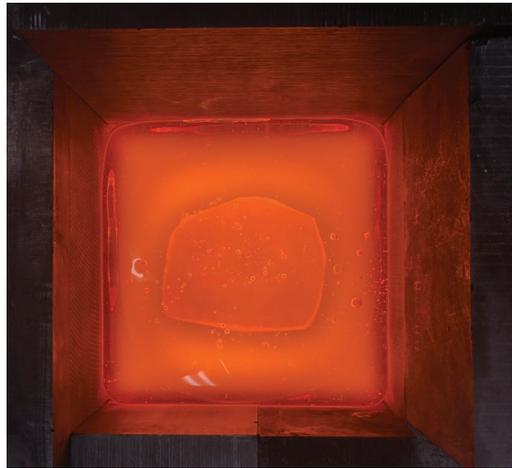
L
Duality, Dark vi
Two color etching, aquatint
11x12 in
2019

R
Duality, Light vi
Two color etching, aquatint
11x12 in
2019









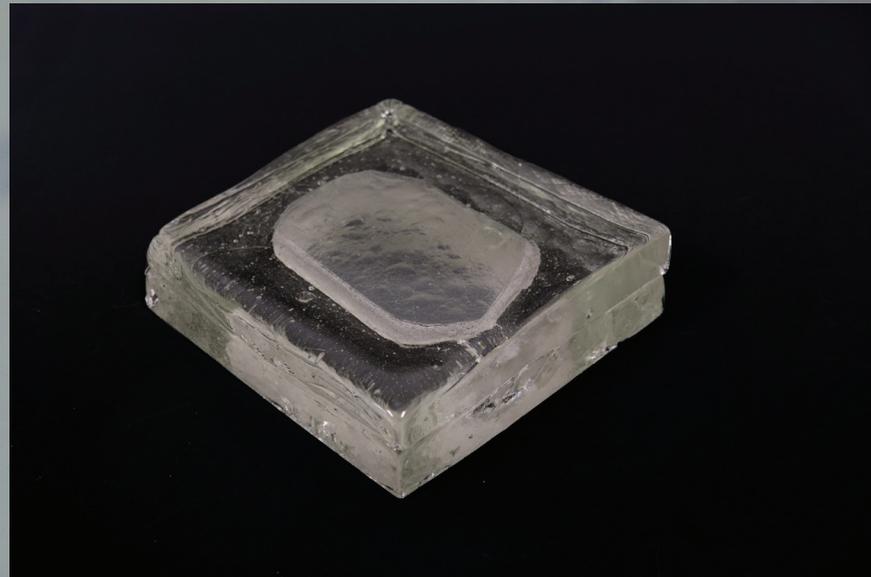
Glass Hotcasting in Hotshop 2020

The firing of glass, from entering the kiln to exiting the kiln, ranges from thirty hours to more than a year: molding, mold firing, melting glass, and then cooling. Until I practiced it myself, I never thought it would take over three hundred hours to make a simple square glass box. The cooling of the box takes two-thirds of the time. Similarly, it takes about twenty-four hours to completely dissolve a two by two copperplate etching in an acid bath at forty degrees. This testing of the limits of the process is the first work I made in the printmaking studio in 2015.

The more I worked with glass as a medium, the more I brought my mindset as a printmaker to the process. Glass casting is positive, but the etched image on the copperplate is negative. The image is also reversed. However, these seemingly completely different processes are actually similar. In order to create the final glass piece, I have to make a series of molds and castings that mirror or invert the original matrix. This way of working and thinking is constantly changing between positive and negative, and the unpredictable results are as exciting as making intaglio prints. Both glass and print making require a specific worksite, specialized equipment, a lot of time and labor, and operating experience.



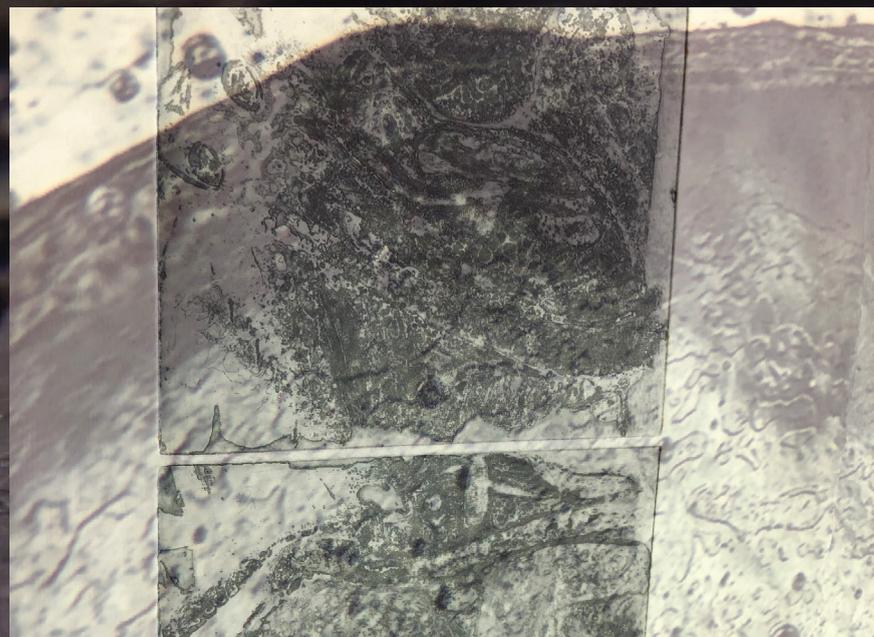
BE-DUALITY
RE-DUALITY



L
Re # 3
Hotglass casting
10x11x 2.5 in
2020

R
Re # 1
Hotglass casting
10x12x 3 in
2020





*Prints and projection of
Re #1 on the wall
2020*

*R
Re #3
Hotglass casting
10x11 in
2020*



Re # 2
Hotglass casting
10x12x 3 in
2020





"Stones" and rocks lined up in studio 2020

When I first lined up the collected rocks on the gray floor of the studio, they immediately were in dialogue with the *Duality* prints hanging on the wall. The resonance between the prints and the rocks prompted me to make the *Stones* pieces. I first make a mold of the rock. Once the glass is melted into the model, the personality of the original, such as its color and texture, disappears. All that remains is its shape. Without knowing about the real original and the process of the mold, it is difficult to define the piece as stone-like glass. Just like those prints, if in our cognition that the stone is not what we know, then we cannot regard the image in print as a rock-like form. In the same way, those glass stones should also be interpreted as glass objects, not stone-like glass.



Stones
Glass Kilcasting, rocks
Variable size
2020

Stones #7



Stones #11



Stones #13





Stones #17





Stones #9



THINKING THROUGH MAKING
THINKING THROUGH MAKING

THINKING THROUGH MAKING



March 21, 2019 19:19
 Providence - College Hill
 Found some branches.



March 21, 2019 19:33
 Providence - College Hill
 Packing the branches.



April 19, 2019 14:20
 Providence - Fletcher Building Studio



May 12, 2019 16:03
 Providence - Fletcher Building Studio



May 13, 2019 10:16
 Providence - Fletcher Building Critic Room



May 11, 2019 01:35
 Providence - Metcalf Glass Coldstop



December 10, 2018 17:03
 Providence - Fletcher Building Studio

THINKING THROUGH MAKING



April 25, 2019 22:59
 Providence - Metcalf Plaster Room



April 26, 2019 13:40
 Providence - Metcalf Kiln Room

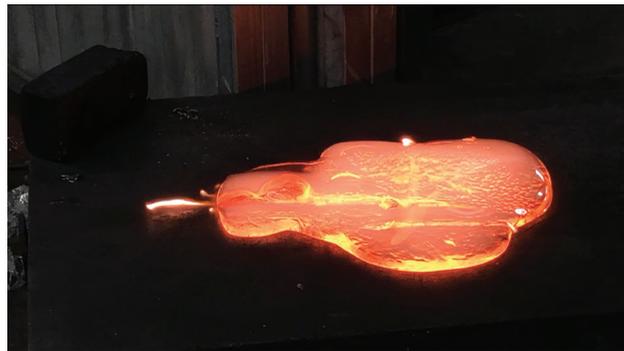
THINKING THROUGH MAKING



September 27, 2019 19:33
Providence - Metcalf Hotshop



May 4, 2019 20:10
Providence - Metcalf Hotshop



May 4, 2019 20:22
Providence - Metcalf Hotshop



September 27, 2019 19:50
Providence - Metcalf Hotshop



September 27, 2019 19:53
Providence - Metcalf Hotshop

THINKING THROUGH MAKING



May 13, 2019 10:16
Providence - Fletcher Buildingn Critic Room

THINKING THROUGH MAKING



October 4, 2019, 19:40
Providence - Metcalf Hoishop



October 4, 2019, 19:42
Providence - Metcalf Hoishop



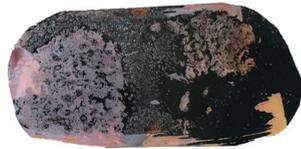
October 4, 2019, 19:43
Providence - Metcalf Hoishop



#1 Burned copperplate



#2 Burned copperplate



#3 Burned copperplate

THINKING THROUGH MAKING



#1 Glass pad



#2 Glass pad



#3 Glass pad

THINKING THROUGH MAKING



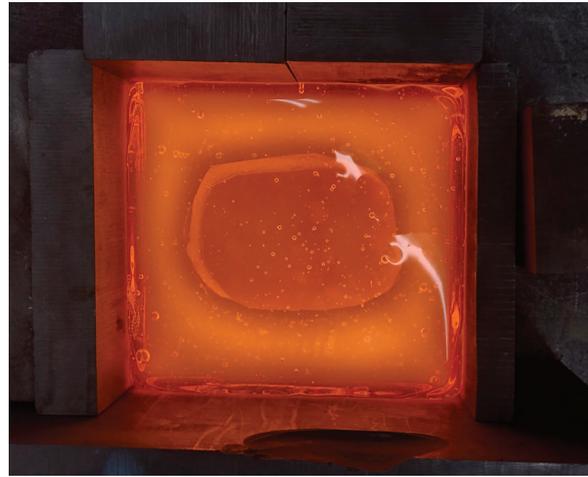
November 15, 2019 20:13
Providence - Metcalf Hoishop



November 15, 2019 20:14
Providence - Metcalf Hoishop



December 2, 2019 9:53
Providence - Fleicher Building Studio



November 15, 2019 20:21
Providence - Metcalf Hoishop



March 1, 2020 18:13
Providence - Metcalf Kiln Room
Breaking down the molds after firing



March 1, 2020 17:40
Providence - Metcalf Plaster Room
Making rubber molds



March 3, 2020 22:59
Providence - Metcalf Plaster Room
Making wax molds

THINKING THROUGH MAKING



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To Heather, Merrick, McKinzie, Camille, Phil, Lilla, Lindi, we did it. We will never forget that we are the COVID class of 2020. You all are so amazing and talented, and I am so proud of everyone.

To Glass Hotshop Team, thank you for all the lades and every productive Friday night.

To Kate, thank you for your hug on the last day we moved out of Flecture studio.

To Class 2021, you are all so talented and amazing. Thank you for being awesome.

THE THINGS OF MIND is a thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree Master of Fine Arts in Printmaking in the Department of Printmaking of the Rhode Island School of Design in Providence, Rhode Island.

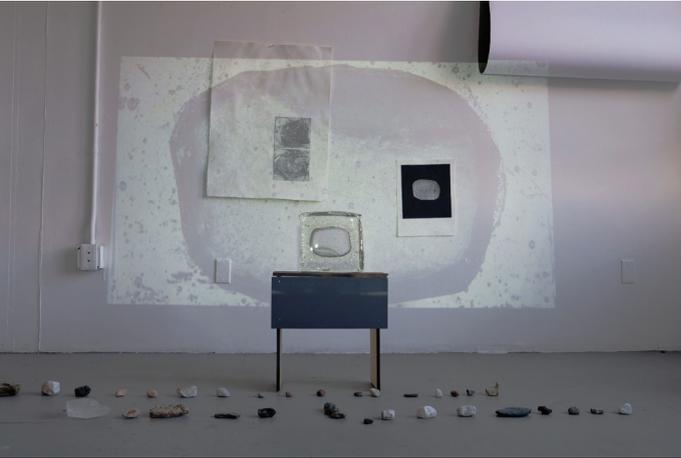
It has been duly approved by the Master's Examination Committee:

Andrew Stein Raftery
Graduate Director of Printmaking, Department of Printmaking
Thesis Chair

Sean Salstrom
Associate Professor, Department of Glass
Thesis Advisor

Donald Keefer
Professor, History Philosophy Social Sciences Department
Thesis Advisor

Jonathan Weinberg
Lecturer, Department of Printmaking
External Thesis Advsiior



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Futura Std

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Uncoated 80lb

PRINT
Mixam

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