

## *in two minds.* marcus neustetter



On the last evening of Neustetter's ascent of Kilimanjaro in December 2006 the night was so clear that the lights of the city of Moshi at the foot of the mountain seemed to be reflected in the stars of the sky.

Inspired by this momentary experience and vision, Marcus Neustetter has been collating references, revisiting past installations and mapping new projects which he has compiled in a book titled: *in two minds* published by Art on Paper Gallery and launched at the Johannesburg Art Fair 2008.

Further exploring perspectives and reflections through research trips to the Tswaing Meteor Crater in Soshanguwe, The Observatory in the Cradle of Humankind and SALT Telescope in Southerland, Neustetter has consolidate his thought and ideas in a body of work ranging from drawings, Google Earth tracings, installations, digital traces, drypoint prints, video artworks and photographs, exhibited in a solo exhibition at Art on Paper Gallery 5-26 April 2008.

Introductory text by Wilhelm van Rensburg:

Although Marcus Neustetter's latest exhibition at Art on Paper Gallery invokes processes of mapmaking - representing space by drawing it in two dimensions on a map - it is not about conventional cartography. Rather, he introduces the element of *motion* into the mapmaking process, intimating the aspect of *time* in the exploration of geographical space. In fact, Neustetter's art is about finding a method of referring to our experience of the *coalescence* of space and time.

On the last evening of Marcus Neustetter's ascent of Kilimanjaro in December 2006 the night was so clear that the lights of the city of Moshi at the foot of the mountain seemed to be reflected in the stars in the sky above. The sky could as well have been a map of the landscape below. Neustetter generated digital maps of these reflections exploring the structural similarities of various spaces at specific times.

In another, related series of work, Neustetter traces motion through space by holding a pen loosely in his hand while

flying in a plane over various parts of South Africa. He also captures motion when the plane takes off or lands, and recording the seemingly haphazard, random and arbitrarily made marks caused by the velocity of the plane on small sheets in his sketch book. These marks reference the spontaneous gesture painting of Jackson Pollock, Cy Twombly and Brice Marden. He is often compelled to draw the contours of a mountain range, seen through the window of the plane, or the course of a river, the edge of a forest, or the grid-like layout of a city or a small town.

Neustetter has collated references, revisited past installations, mapped new projects and compiled them in an artist's book, previewed at the Joburg Art Fair in March 2008. The exhibition at Art on Paper Gallery not only presents the artist's book (eighty of which are accompanied by pen and ink drawings and signed by the artist) but also displays Neustetter's new body of work.

He considers his solo exhibition as an opportunity to articulate his ideas and concepts about dealing with a profound personal experience, and searching for the relationship between seemingly random occurrences in his life and subsequent visual 'translations'.

Inspired by aerial perspectives from flights during his travels, Google earth images, his visit to SALT (the largest telescope in the southern hemisphere) at the observatory in Sutherland, the meteorite crater at Tswaing in Soshanguwe and The Observatory at the Cradle of Humankind, Neustetter has been exploring shifting perceptions within the reflections of lights, formal abstractions and visual constellations through his own mark-making processes in drawings and digital experiments. In this regard, Neustetter is akin to Bradford Washburn, the cartographer of the Grand Canyon in the USA, who transcended such conventional cartographic instruments and devices as theodolites and aerial photographs, and explored the area on foot, recording the undetectable such as vertical cliffs, the wriggles of a creek or foot path, that are not captured in aerial photographs. "If you have this kind of accuracy in all detail, the overall *feeling* of the country will be correct" he once observed. "Great precision in detail always yields extraordinary accuracy in the sense of the whole."<sup>1</sup> Neustetter's 'fieldwork', similar to that of Washburn, is essential for the production of his art. In a sense Neustetter enhances the conventional cartographic instruments of remote sensing, the use of aerial photography, navigation, and computation to augment his own work and turn it into mental maps, charting the kind of psychogeography of Guy Debord and On Kawara. Debord labels this mapping, *dérive*, or, as he explains it, drifting, or deliberately losing oneself. "In a *dérive*", Debord expands, "one or more persons during a certain period drop their usual motives for movement and action, their relations, their work and leisure activities, and let themselves be drawn by the attraction of the terrain and the encounters they find there ... From the *derive* point of view [spaces] have a psychological relief, with constant currents, fixed points and vortexes which strongly discourage entry into or exit from certain zones."<sup>2</sup>

This is the kind of map Neustetter puts in the hand of the prospective traveller.

The exhibition includes an installation, digital traces, drypoint prints, drawings, sandblasted glass, photographs and images presented on SANSUI LCD screens. The diversity of media draws attention to various processes of production and fabrication of art works. The fact that contemporary artists use outsourced labour, industrial processes and custom fabrication in the production of their work evokes little comment nowadays. Rather, a shift in theoretical discourse from 'finished artwork' to 'processes that bring them into being'<sup>3</sup> is more evident. The latter process results in a comprehensive production of knowledge, apart from the mere creation of artistic objects for its own sake.

Neustetter draws on the expertise, skills and efforts of many people: he attends a lecture of laser; he visits the SALT telescope; he searches Google Earth; he even climbs a mountain in order to produce the kind of knowledge underscoring the exhibition. But even the sum total of the parts does not reflect the extent of the whole body of knowledge that goes into the production of his work. It is immeasurable. Joshua McElheny proposes a 'taxonomy of production' which includes such ranking orders as 'faking', 'borrowing', and 'stealing' in order to classify contemporary artists' relationship to the readymade and its underlying industrial processes<sup>4</sup>. In Neustetter's case one is more inclined to talk about 'appropriating', or 'accessing information', as mentioned above, than some of McElheny's categories. The processes of production and fabrication that Neustetter employs addresses the 'lag', or, if you will, the 'delay' that exists between 'thinking' and 'making': he expands and contracts this delay at will. The confrontation with each of the various media he uses poses the real challenge. No matter how carefully he orchestrates the production, each medium holds its own inherent potential; each medium requires a sensitive, almost intuitive exploration from the artist; and each medium inadvertently results in elements of chance.

<sup>1</sup> Wilford, J. N. 2002 *The Mapmakers: The Story of the Great Pioneers of Cartography – from Antiquity to the Space Age*. London: Pimlico.

<sup>2</sup> Ford, S. 2005 *The Situationist International: A User's Guide*. London: Black Dog Publishing.

<sup>3</sup> Rothkopf, S. 2007 *The Art of Production*. Artforum, XLVI (No 2), October 2007.

<sup>4</sup> McElheny, J. 2007 *Readymade Resistance: Art and the Forms of Industrial Production*. Artforum, XLVI (No 2), October 2007.



*Night before the summit, Kilimanjaro*  
digital print on paper  
edition 5



*Tswaing reflections*  
*Kilimanjaro reflections*  
*SALT reflections*

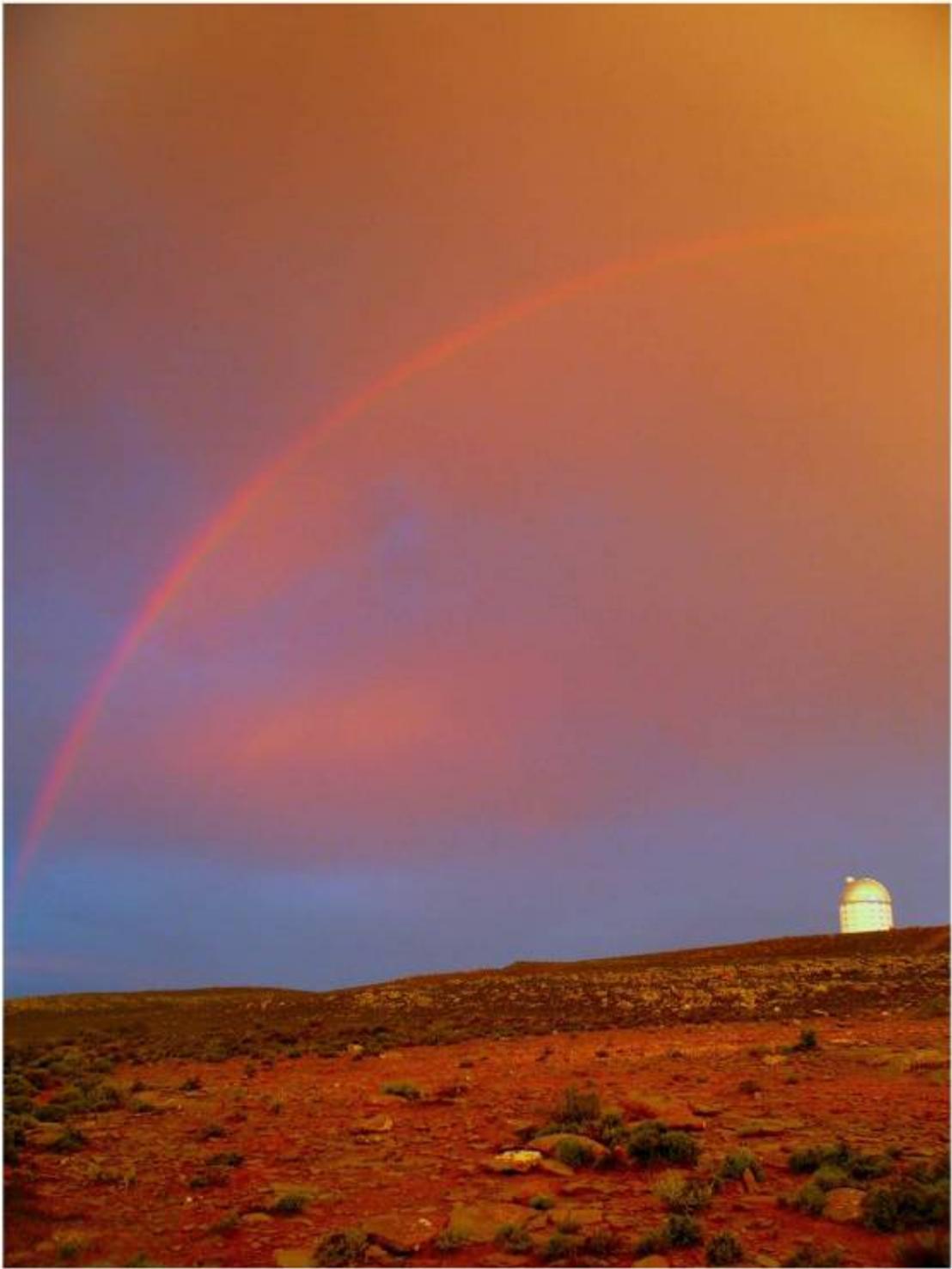
digital print on paper  
edition 5



*Tswaing reflections*



*Kilimanjaro reflections*

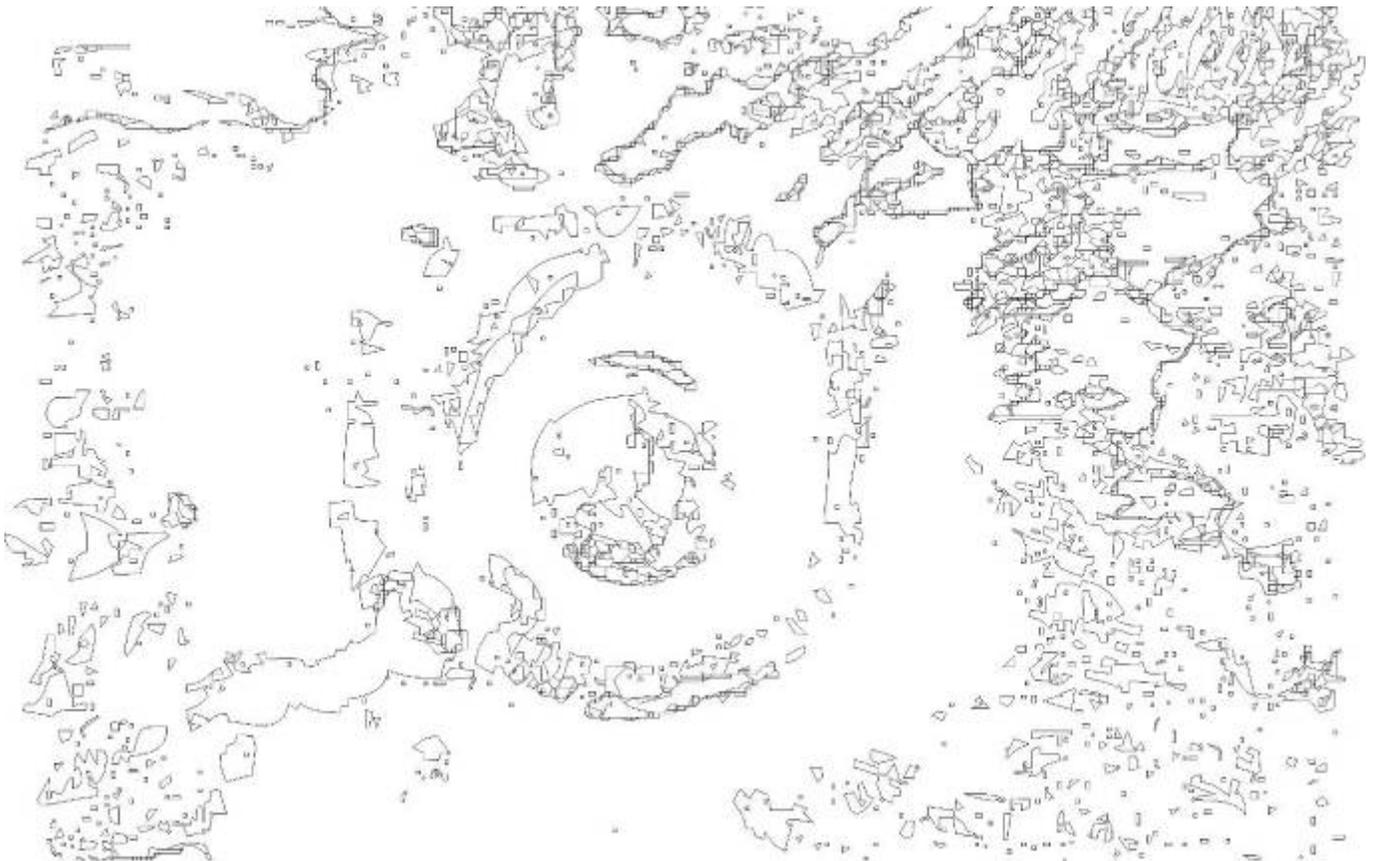


*SALT reflections*

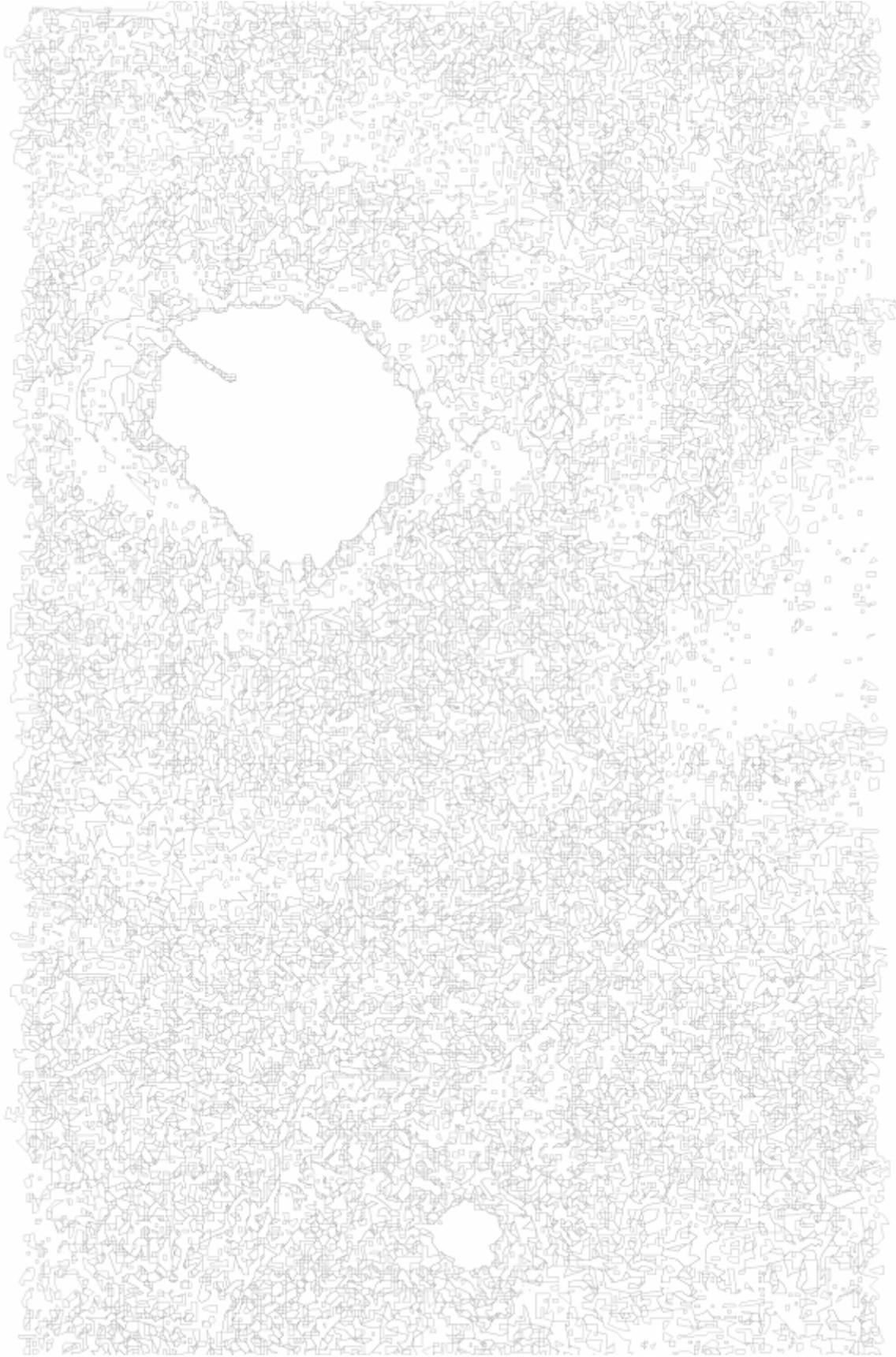


*Tswaing Meteorite Crater Google Earth trace*  
*Johannesburg Google Earth trace*  
*Kilimanjaro Google Earth trace*  
*Telescope Star Image trace*

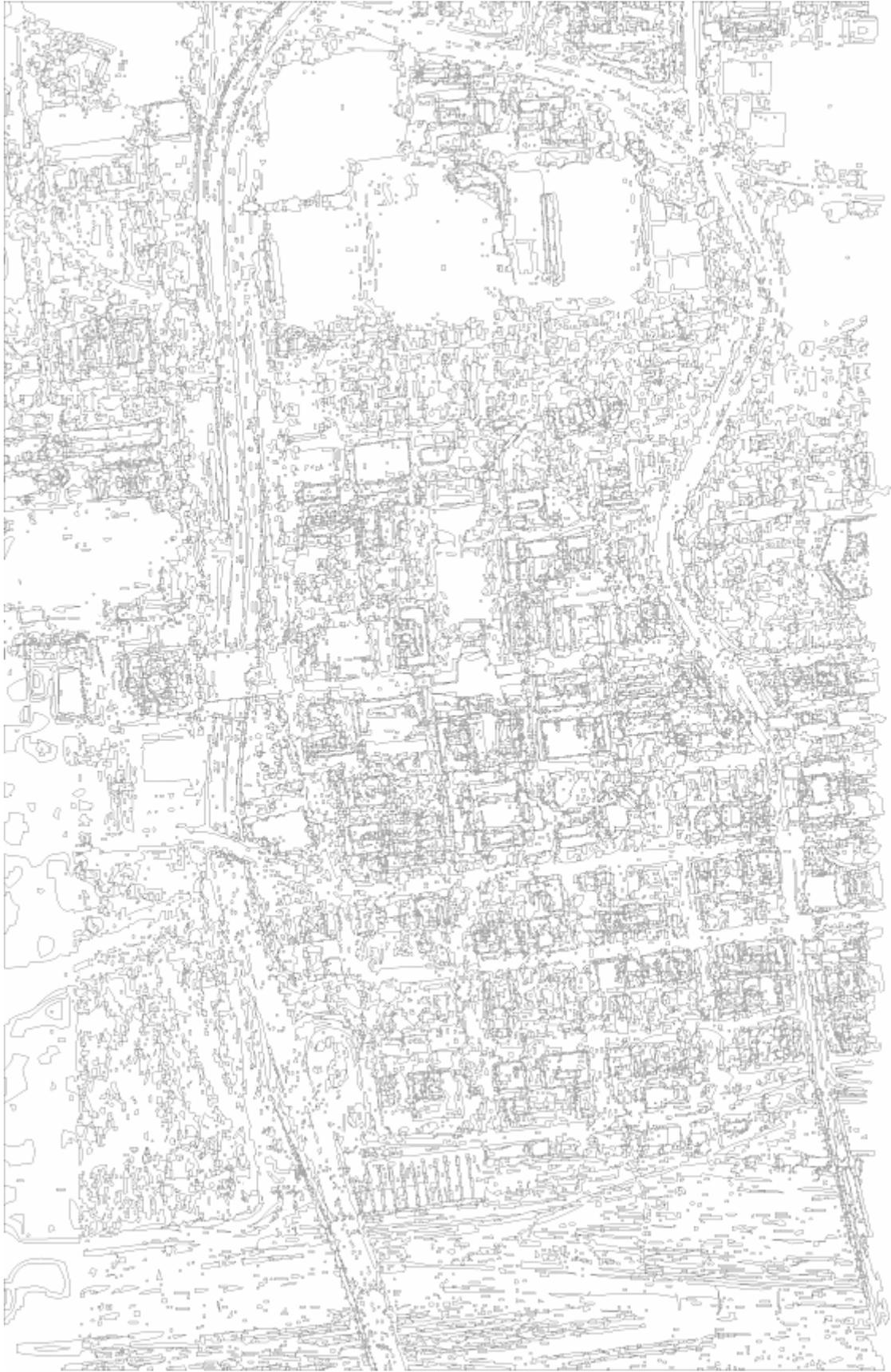
digital print  
edition 10



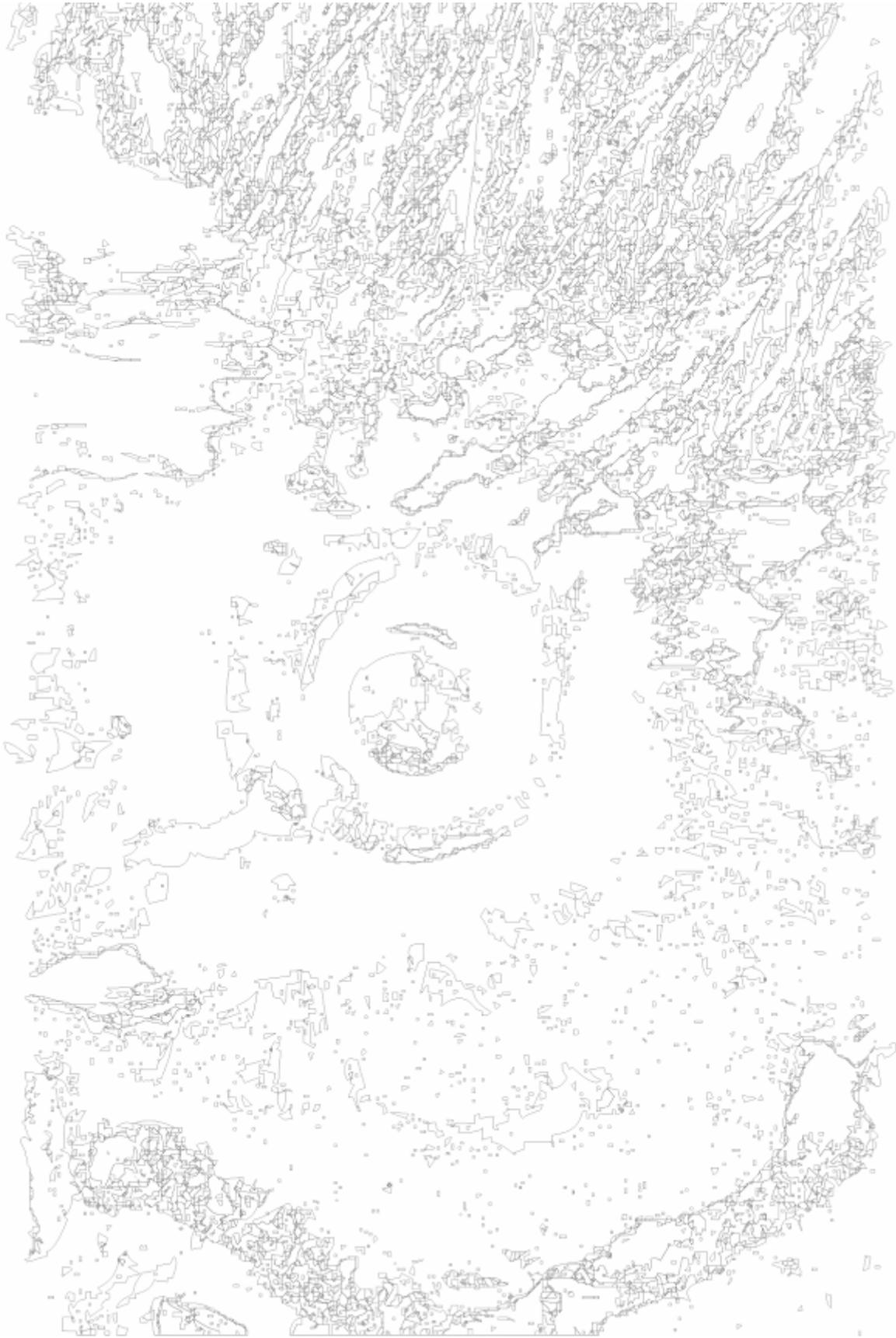
*Kilimanjaro Google Earth trace detail*



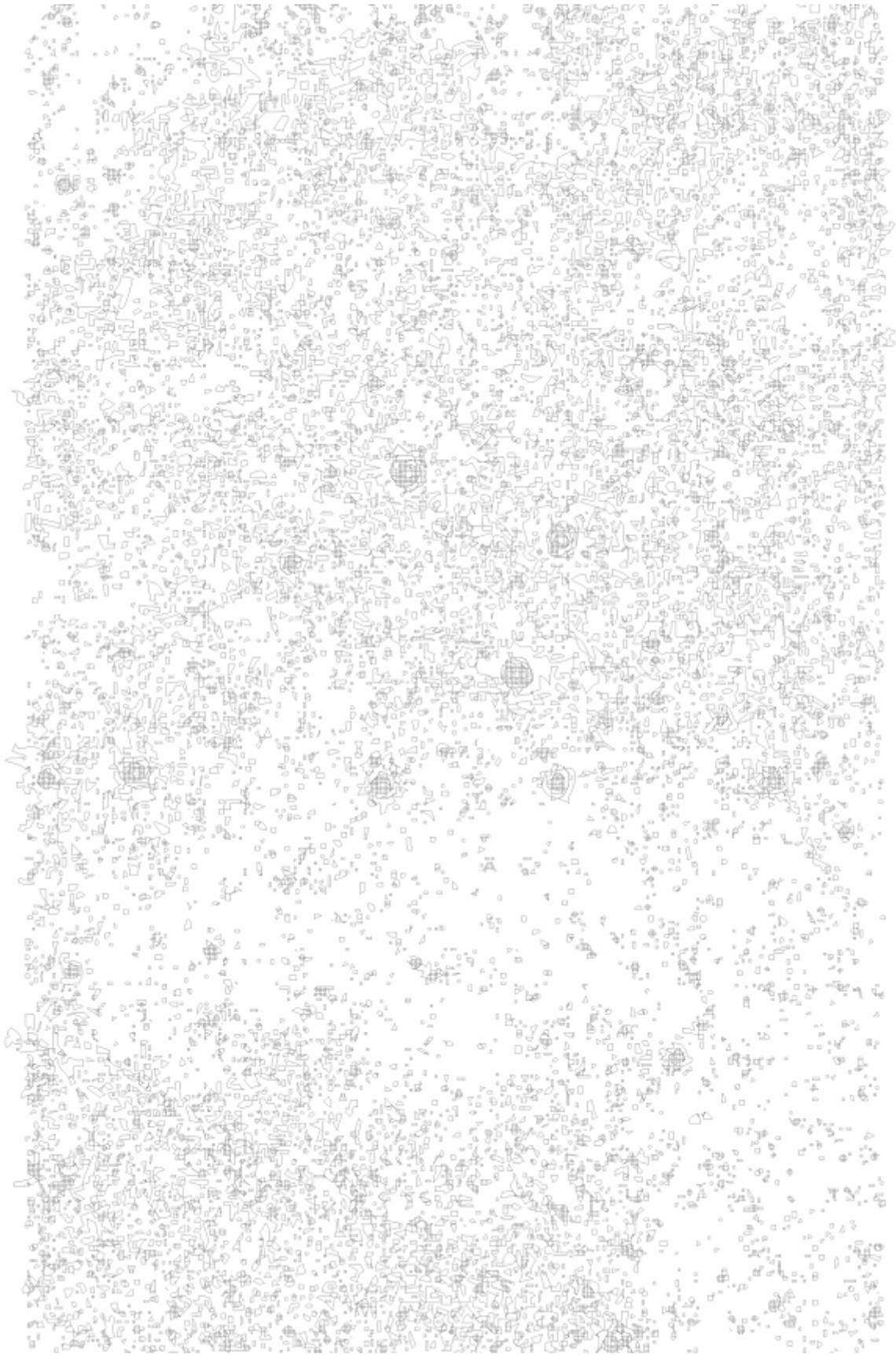
*Tswaing Meteorite Crater Google Earth trace*



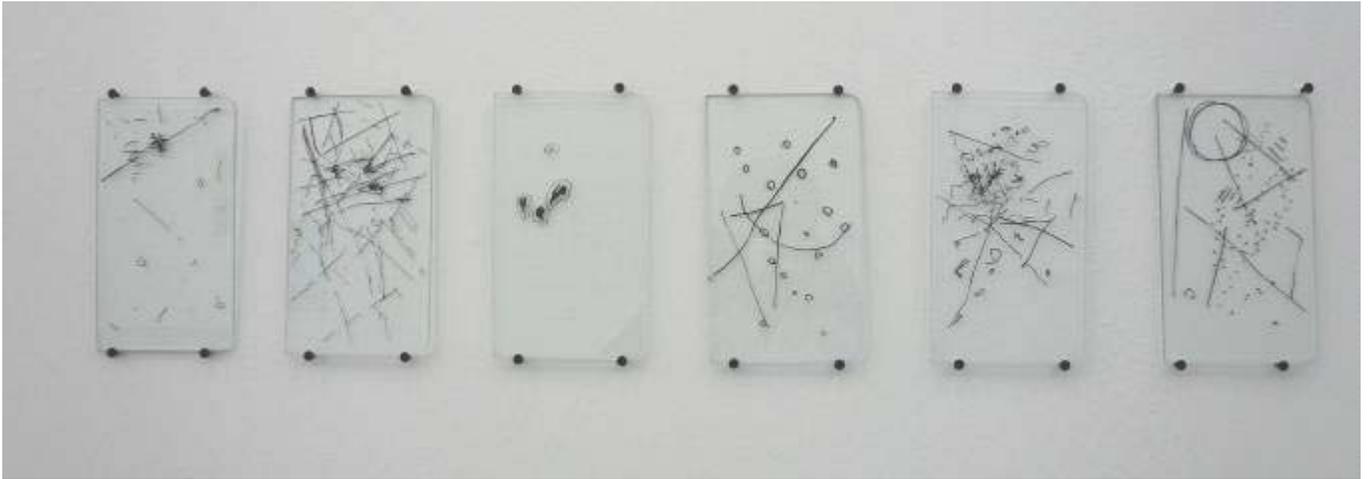
*Johannesburg Google Earth trace*



*Kilimanjaro Google Earth trace*



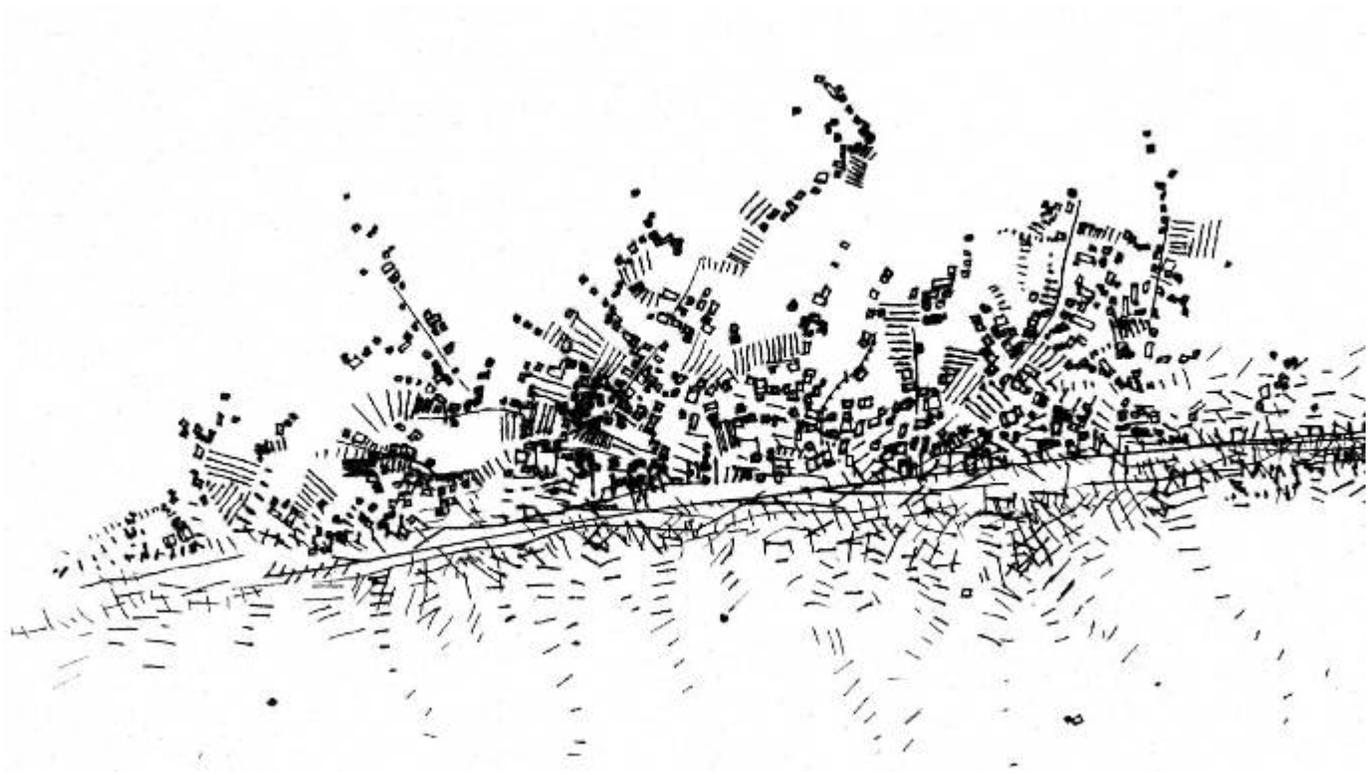
Telescope Star Image trace



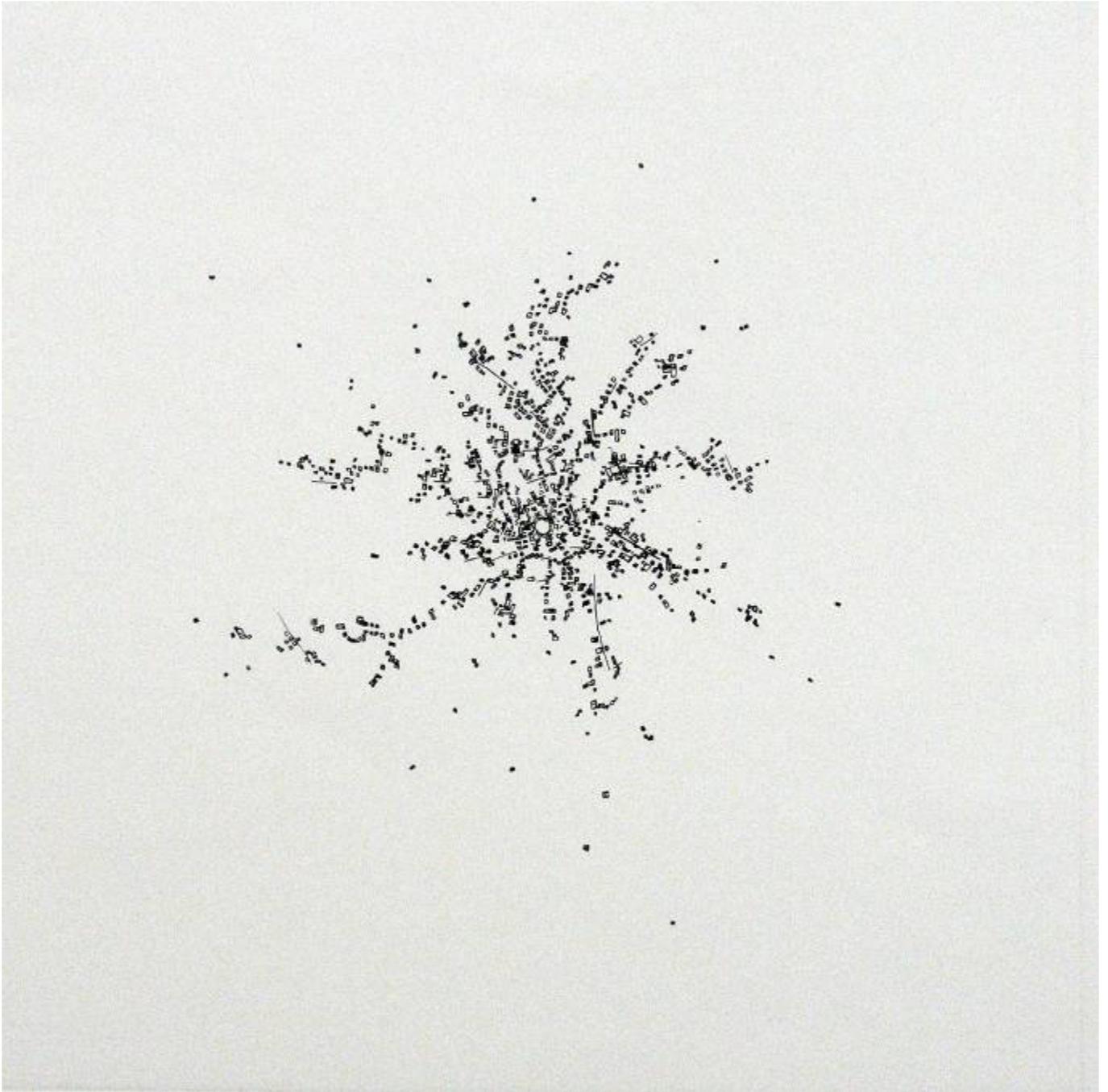
*Flight SA3312/SA232 I - VI*  
sandblasted glass, spray paint



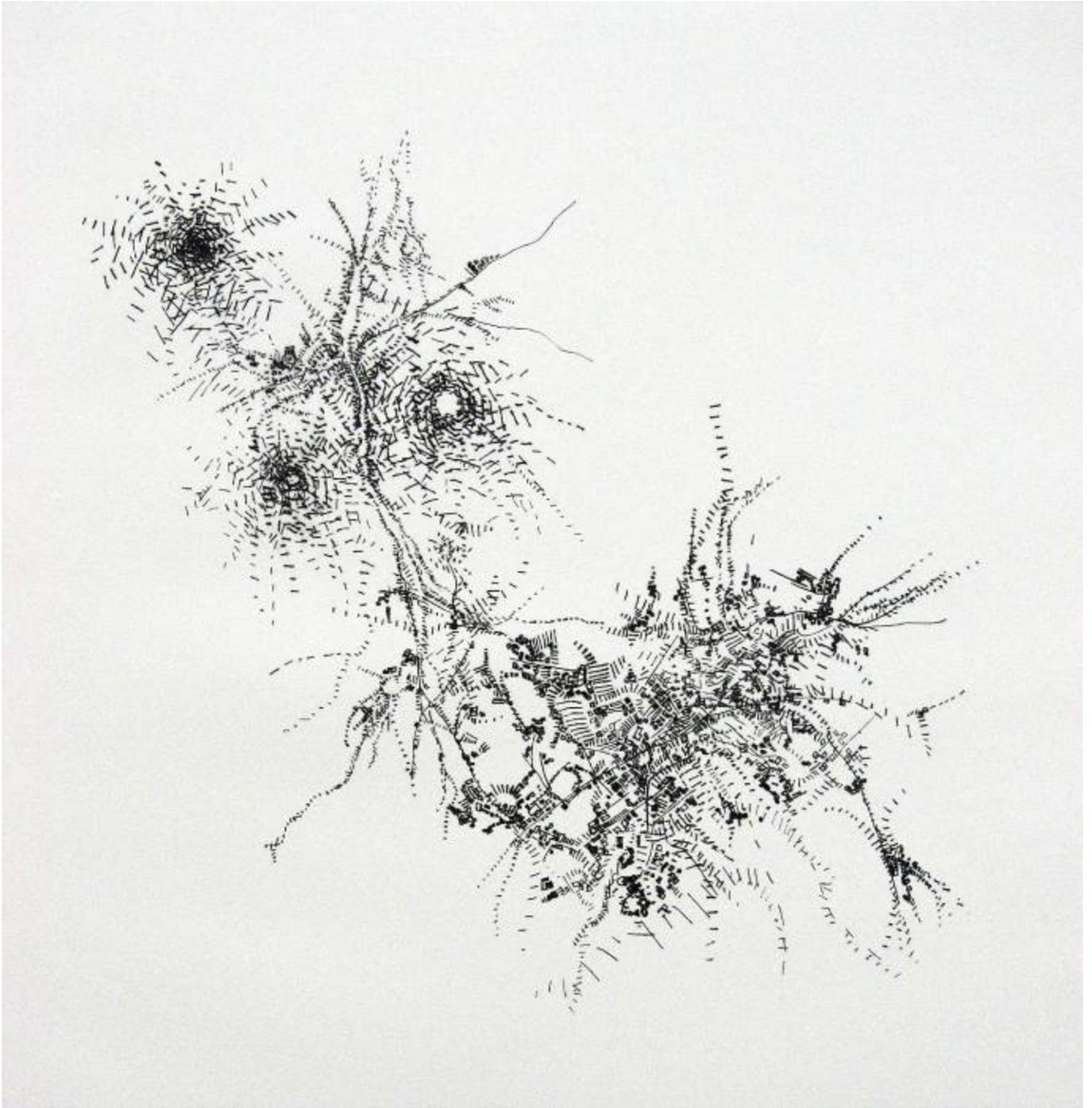
*Flight I - VI*  
drypoint print  
edition 10



*Flight IV detail*



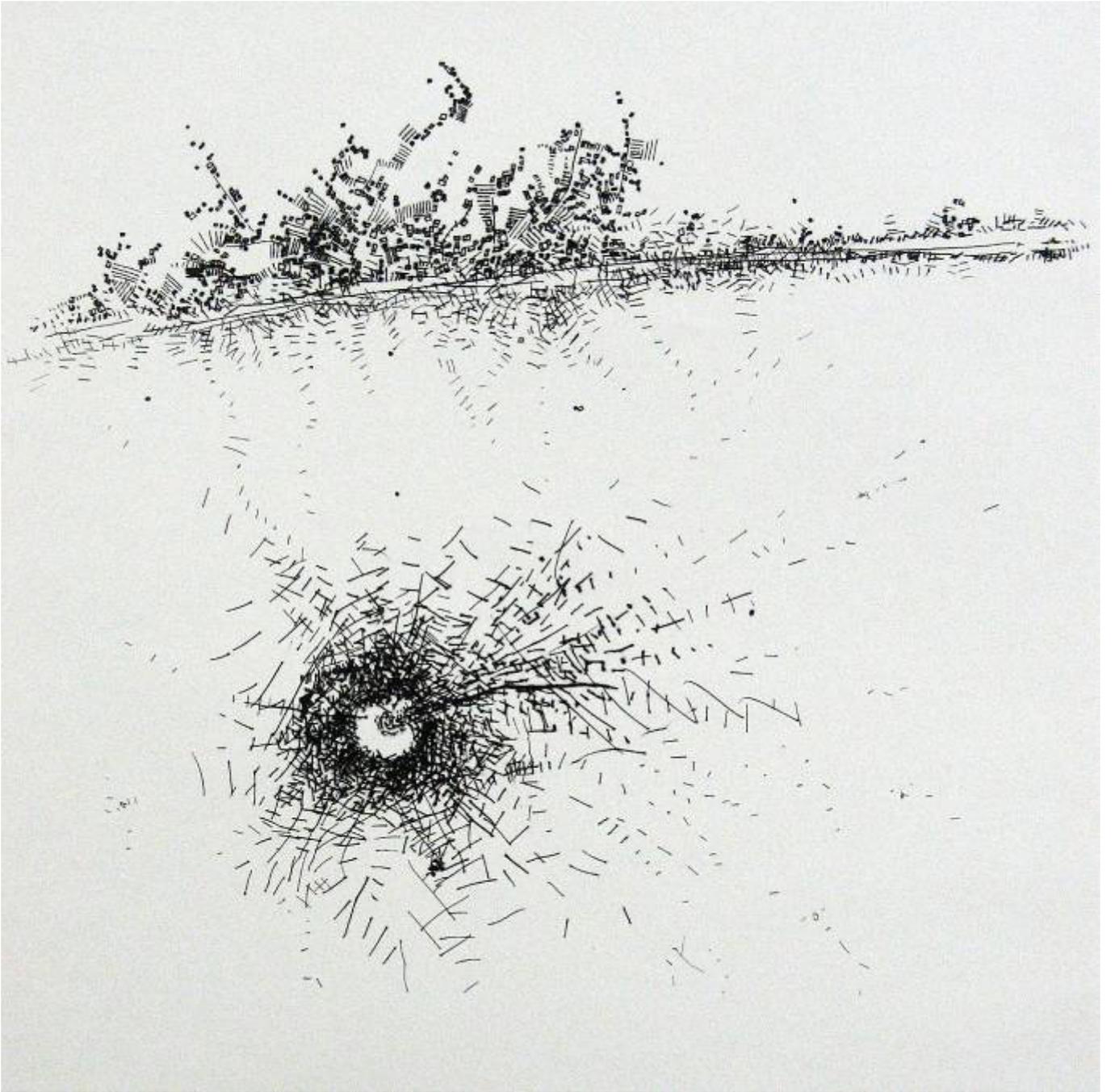
*Flight I*



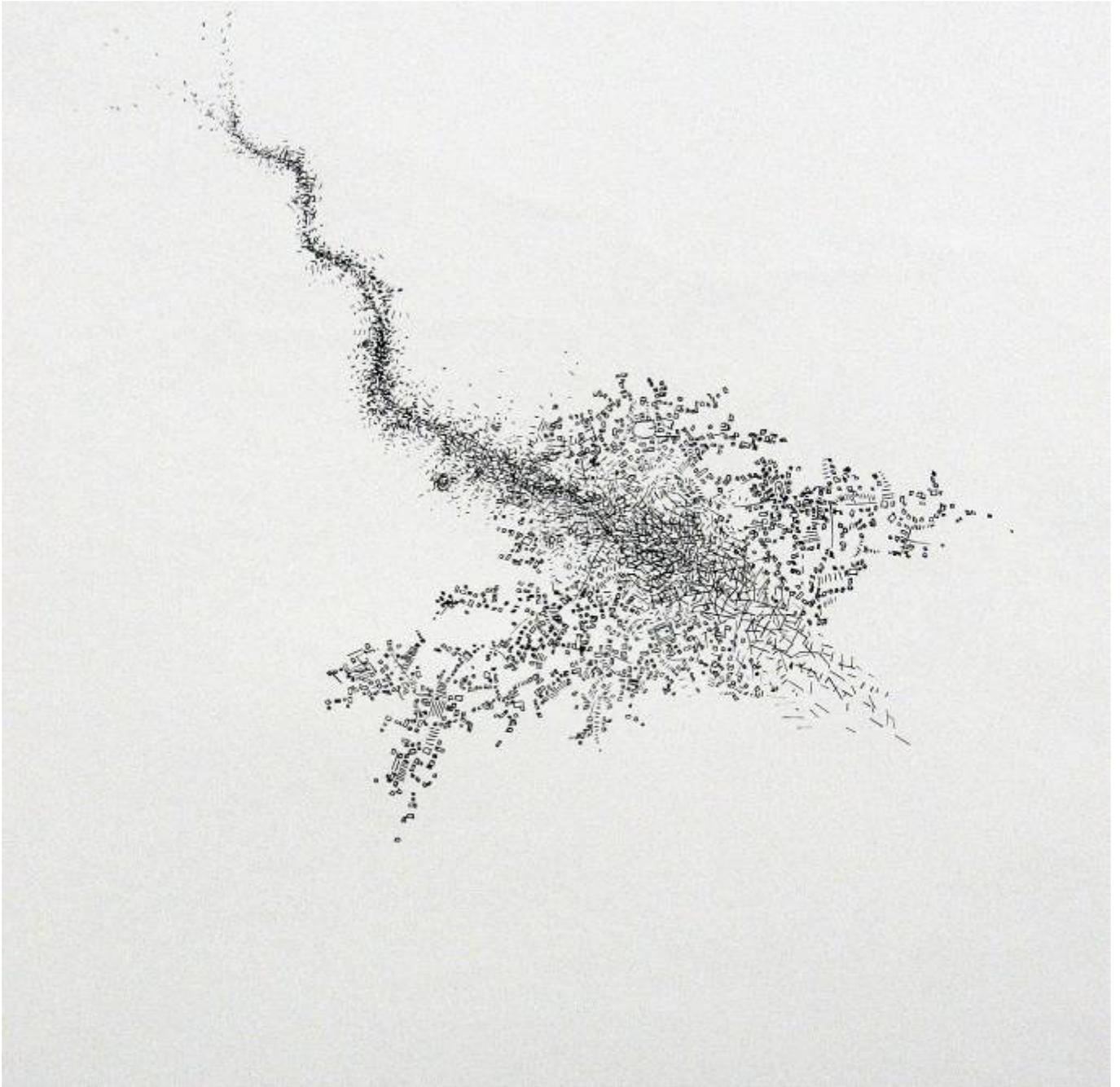
*Flight II*



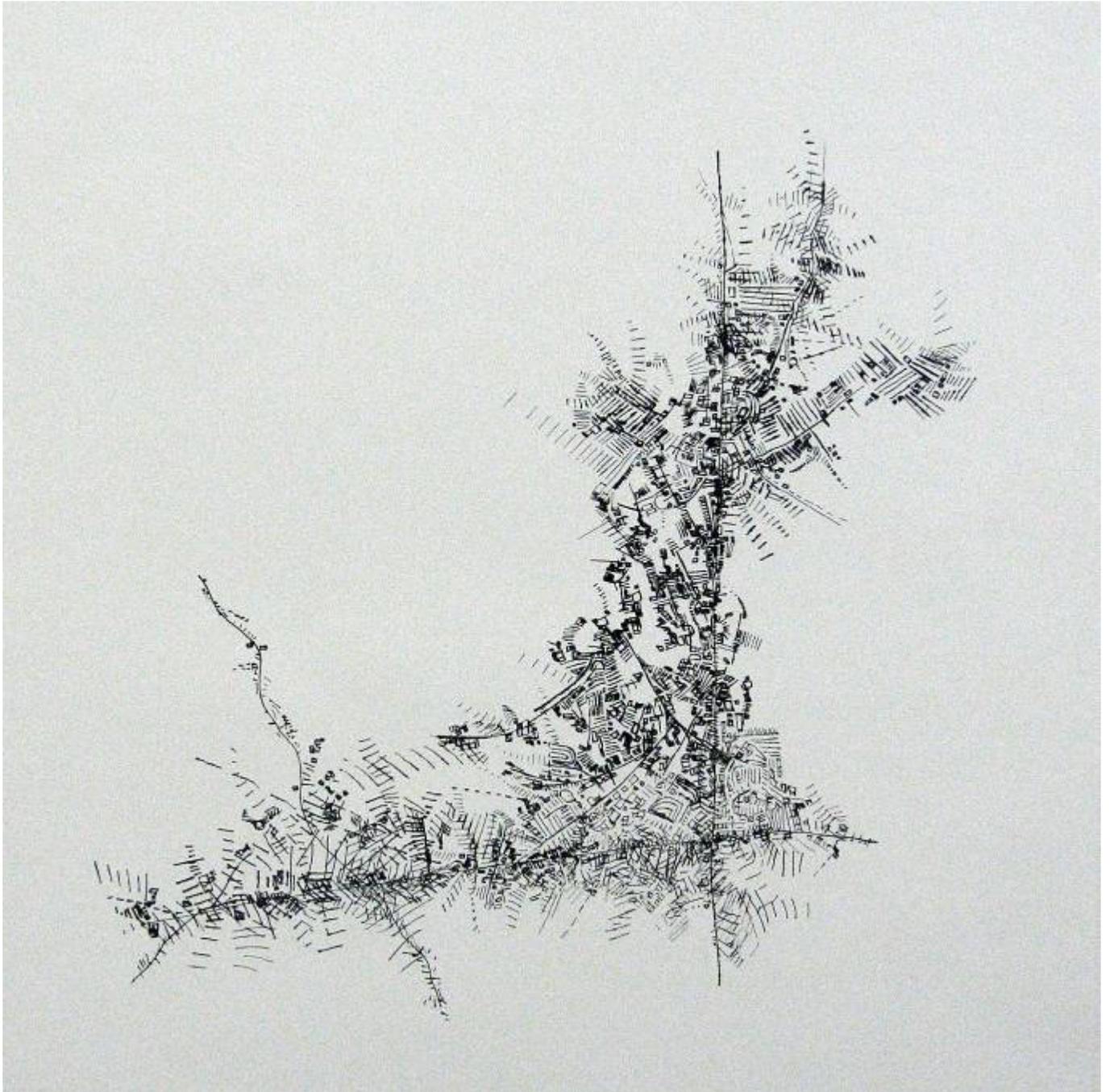
*Flight III*



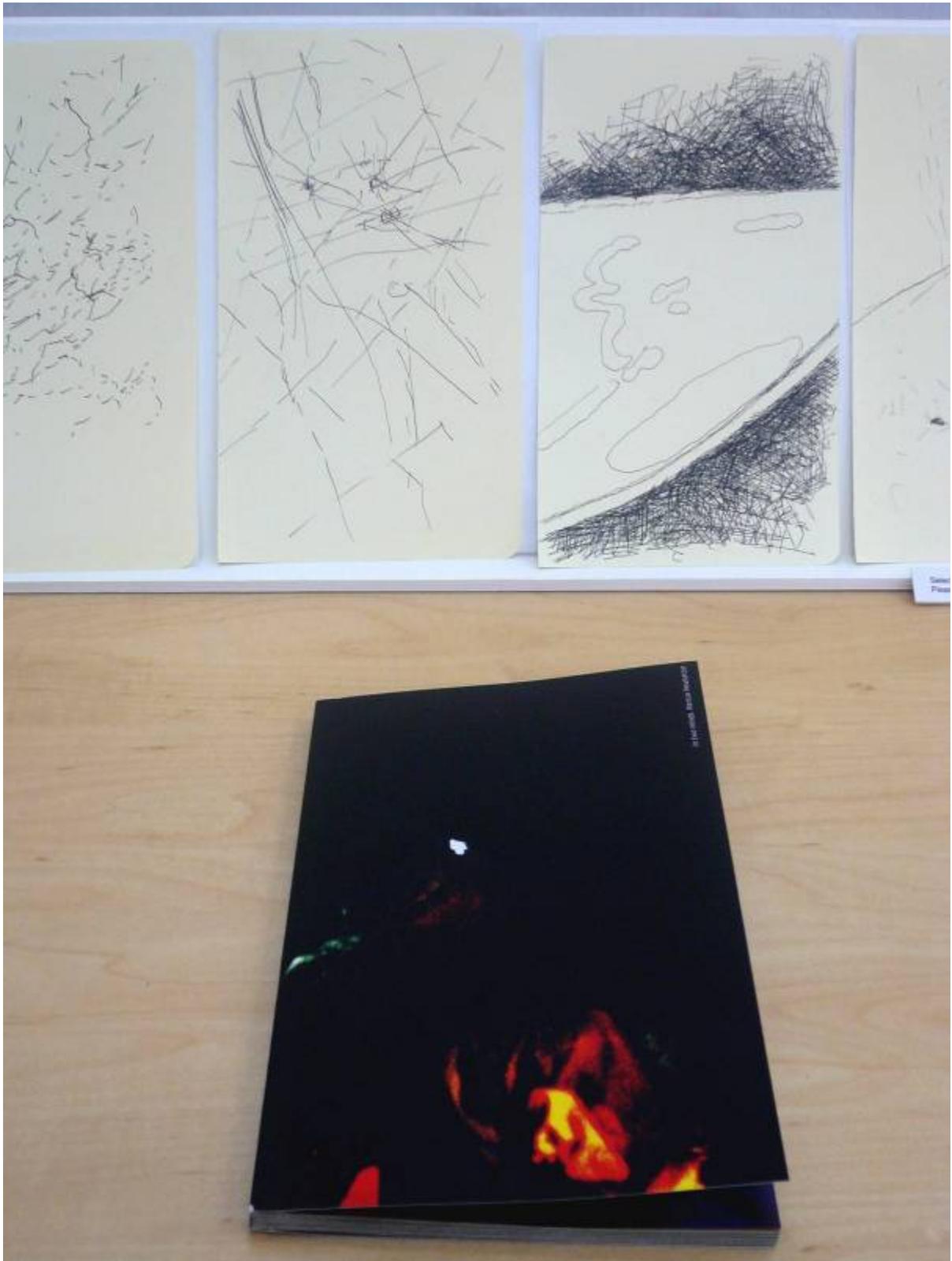
Flight IV



*Flight V*

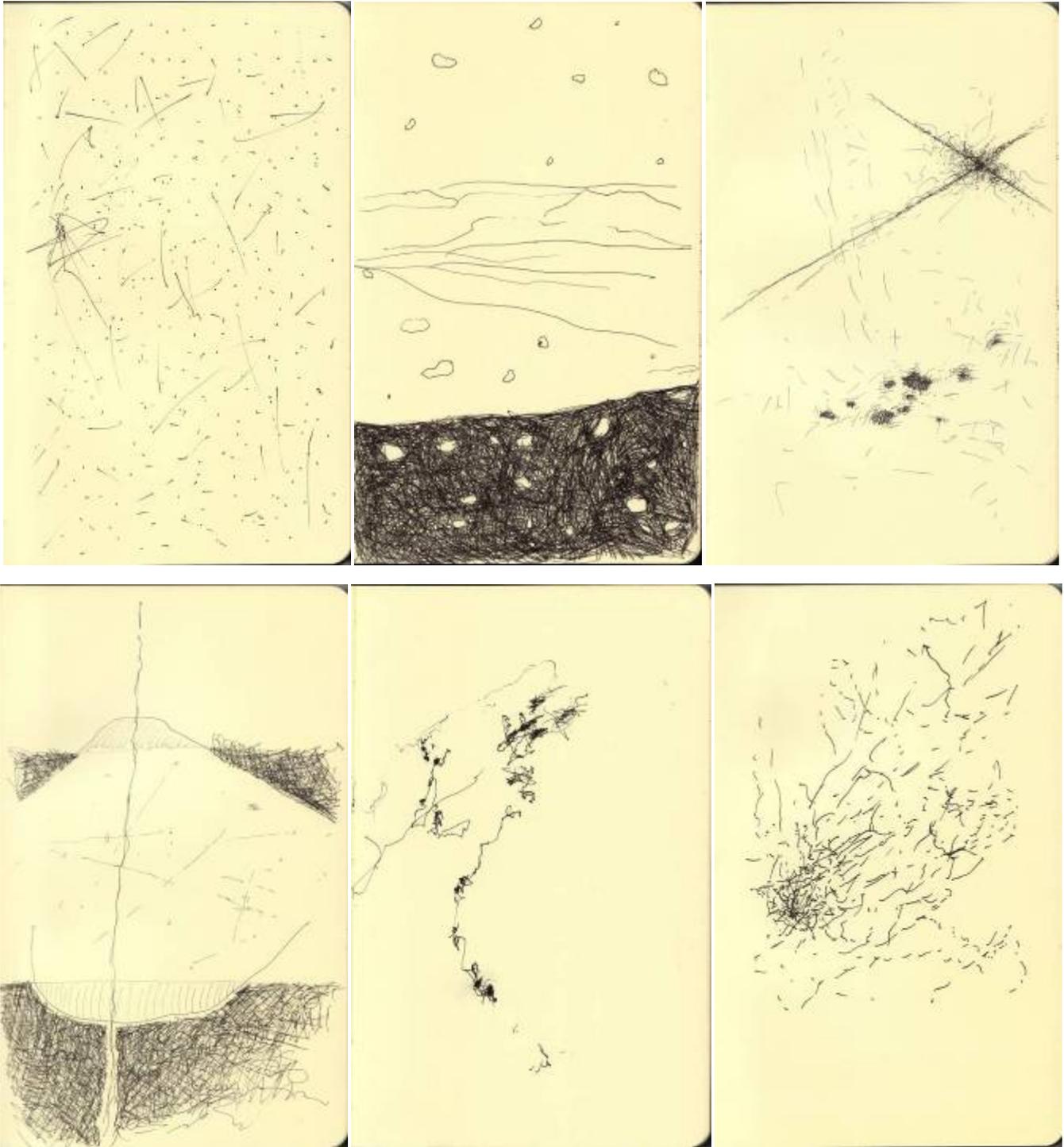


*Flight VI*

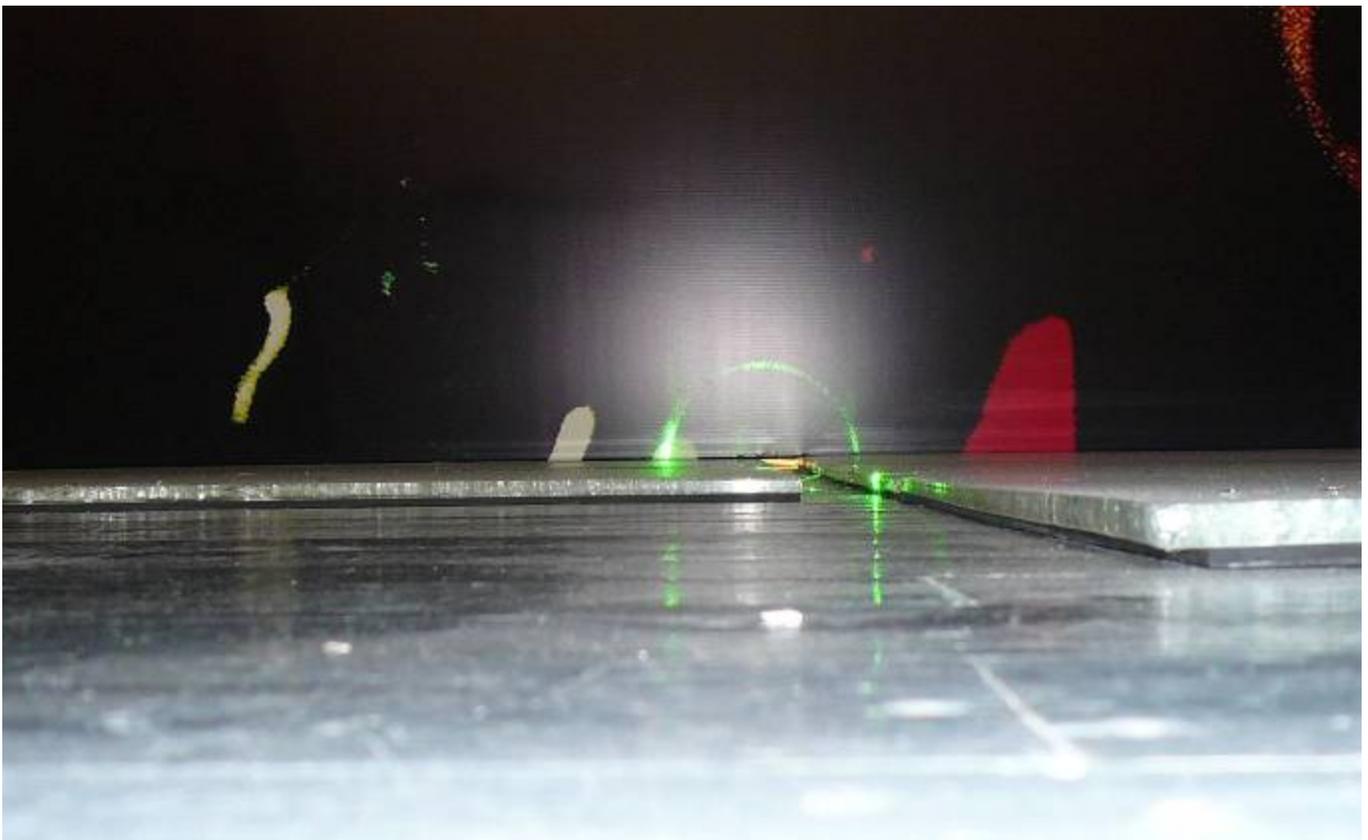


Artist's book: *in two minds*  
300 copies printed, 80 of which are accompanied by a pen & ink drawing from the artist's Moleskine diary

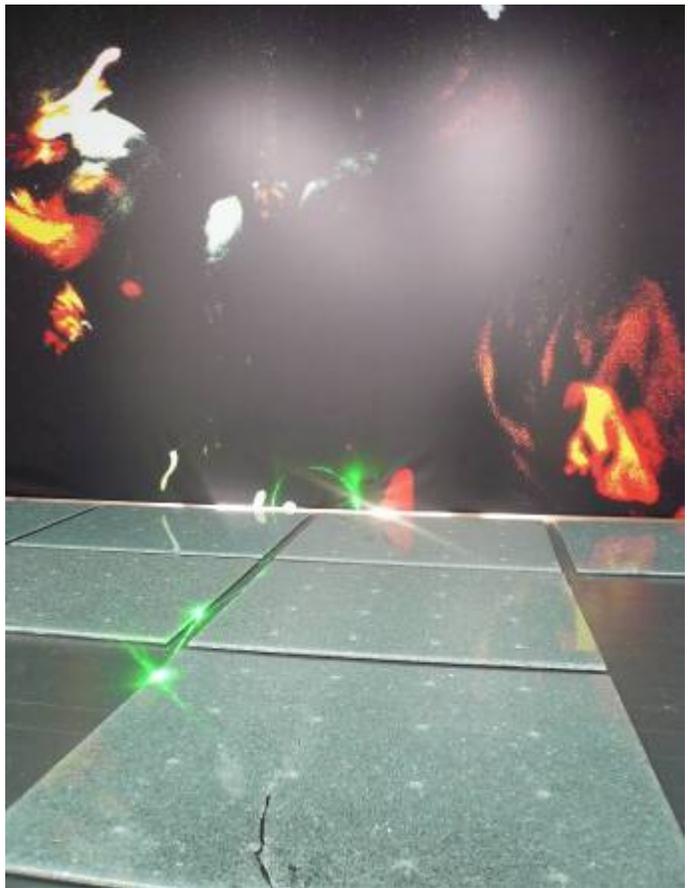
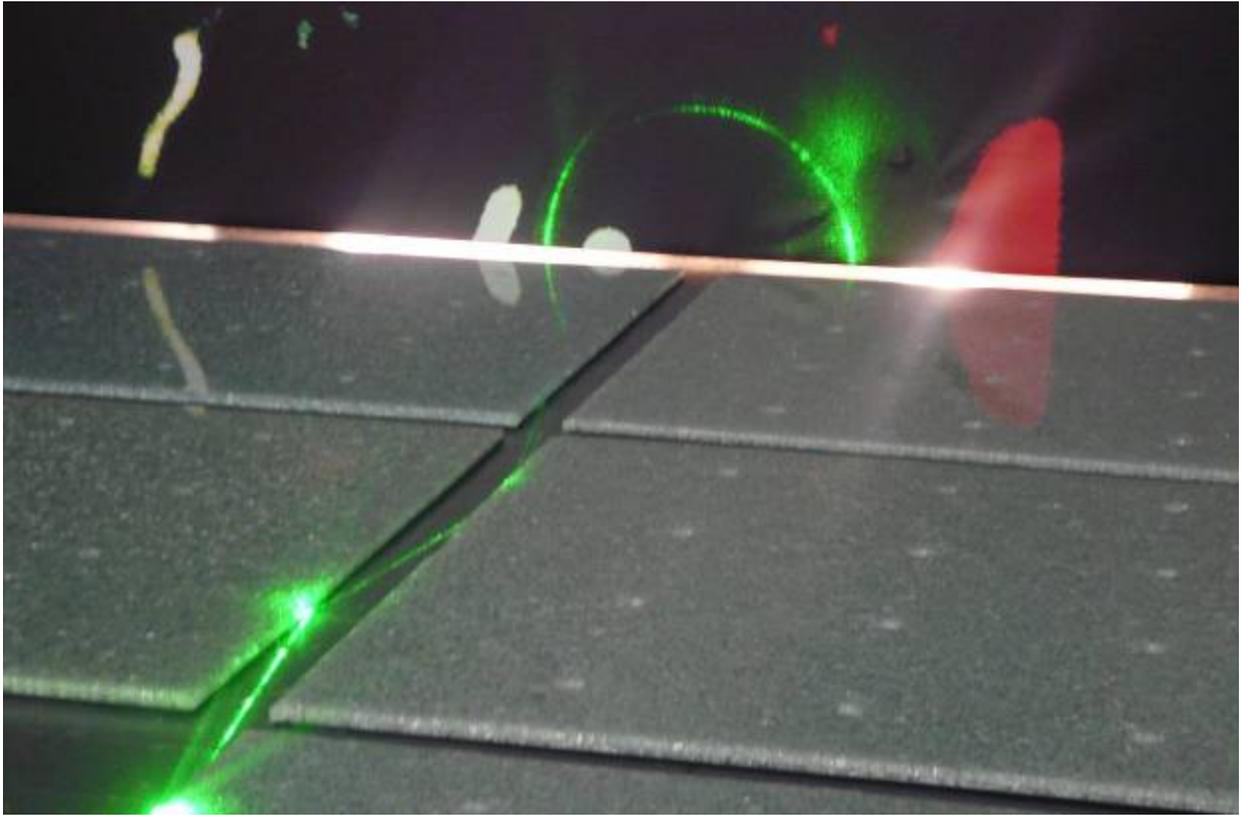




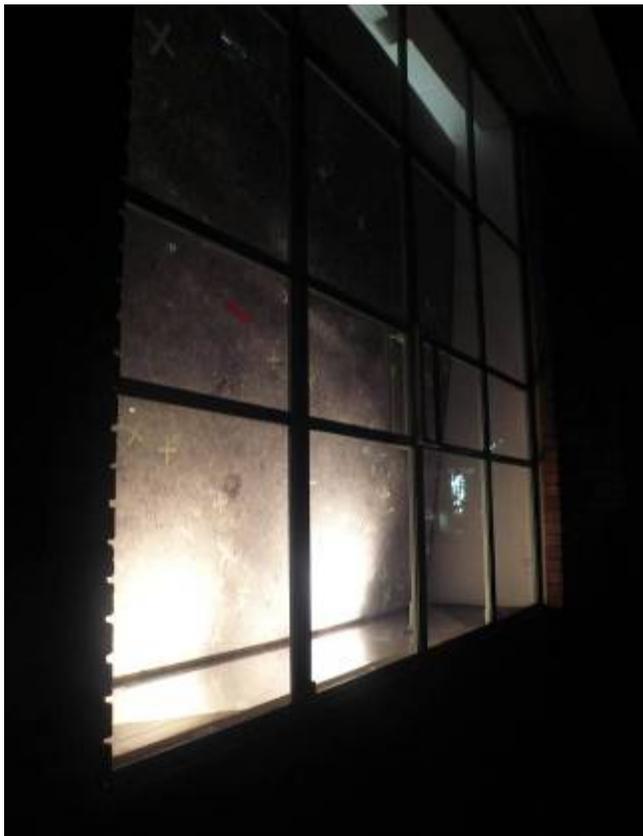
*Flight SA3312/SA232*  
a pen & ink drawing from airplane between Johannesburg and Cape Town in artist's Moleskine diary



*in two minds* (site specific installation)  
backlit pvc prints, lights, wood, glass, rubber,  
laser, DC-FIX clear mirror vinyl



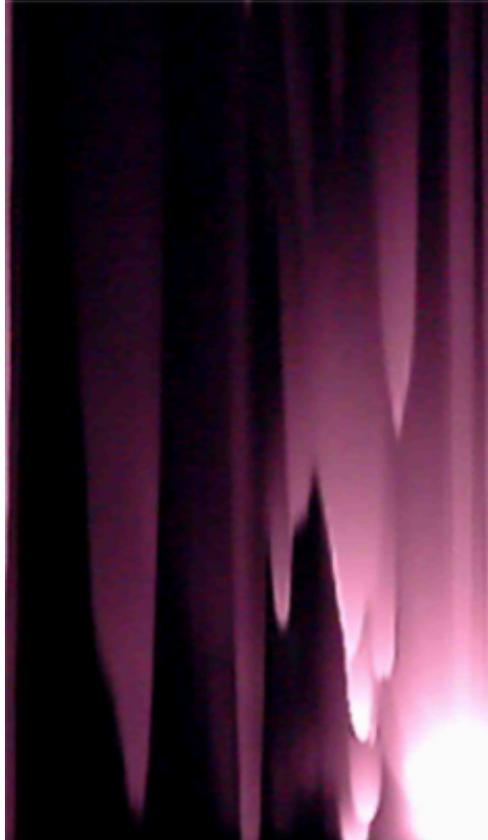
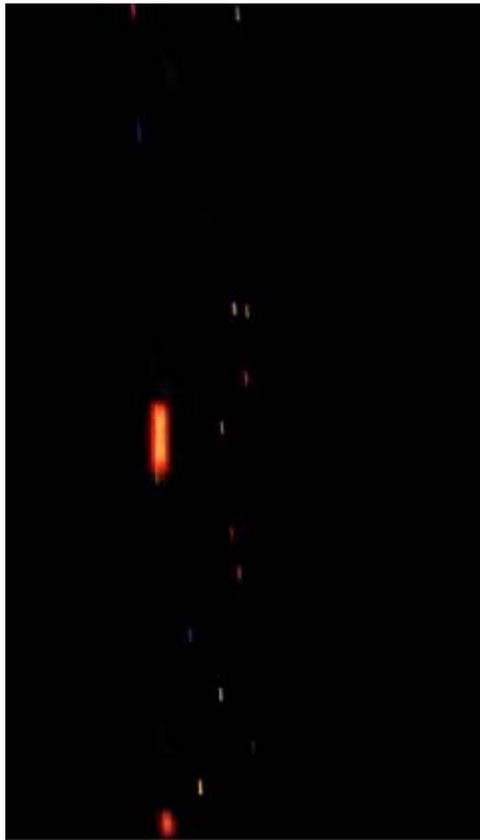
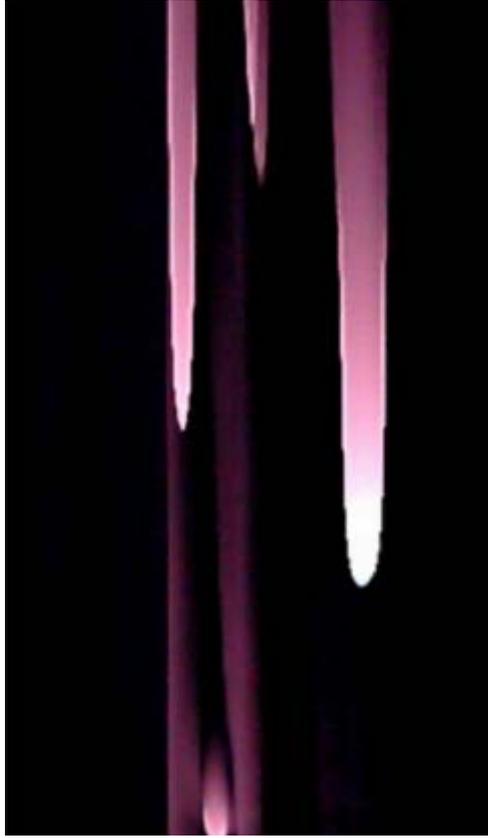
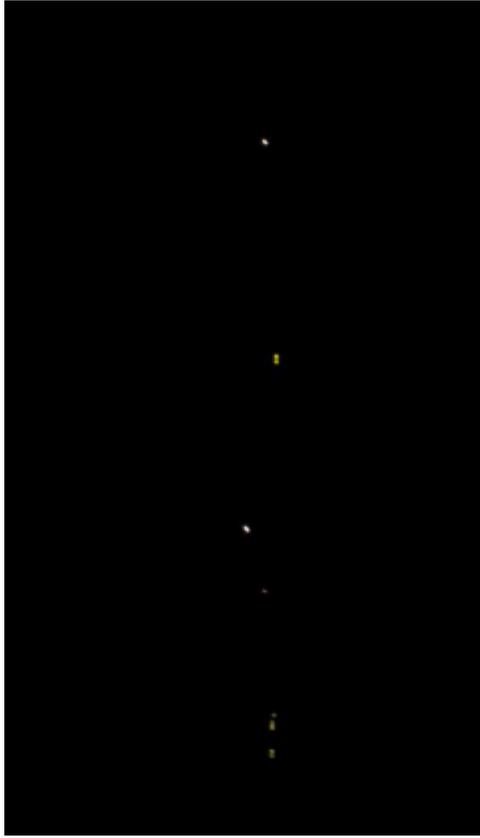
*in two minds* (site specific installation) detail



*in two minds* (site specific installation) street-facing



*on two screens (installation)*  
digital video presented on SANSUI LCD screens



*on two screens (installation) dvd stills*

# Tussen stad & sterre

**In Two Minds -  
Marcus Neustetter  
Art on Paper,  
Johannesburg  
Johan Myburg**

As 'n mens hierdie uitstalling van Marcus Neustetter sy eerste solo-uitstalling noem, sal jy nie verkeerd wees nie. Maar dit sal ook nie heeltemal waar wees nie. Reeds by die taksering van dié uitstalling is 'n mens dus "in two minds".

En uiteenlopende opvattinge van presies wat 'n "solo-uitstalling" is, kom ook ter sprake.

Neustetter het al voorheen solo op installasies en intervensies (onder meer in parkeerruimtes) gewerk, maar nie binne die konvensie van 'n gallery-ruimte nie.

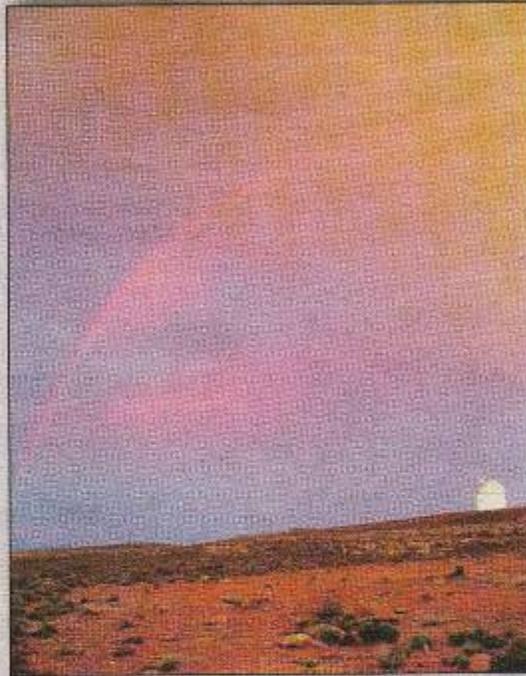
Nou bied hy onder meer twee dimensionele werke keurig uitgestal aan in Art on Paper, maar dié kyker kry deurentyd die gevoel dat dié "kuns op papier" eintlik net die neerslag is van *performance* wat elders plaasgevind het, of dat dit die dokumentasie is van installasies wat elders bestaan (of nie bestaan nie).

Neustetter het nog altyd gespeel met die onvoltooidheid van dinge, en voortdurende eksperimentering. En daarmee saam beperking. Dis hierdie tergende ambivalensie wat so netjies geartikuleerd in *In Two Minds* na vore kom.

'n Foto van die Salt-teleskoop naby Sutherland met 'n reënboog word aanduiding van die moontlikheid om met 'n kragtige teleskoop konstellasies te verken, maar die reënboog dui tegelyk iets van 'n perk aan - 'n verspering getrek bo-oor die teleskoop. Alles kan nie gepriem word nie. Kunde het beperkings.

Selfs al styg jy op - in 'n vliegtuig, of al bestyg jy die hange van Kilimandjaro - jy het altyd beperkte uitsig (en insig). Hoog op is jy iewers, "in two minds", tussen die stad en die sterre.

Neustetter benut visie van bó



**Salt Reflections, Sutherland, 2008, digitale druk, een van Marcus Neustetter se werke op sy In Two Minds-uitstalling in Art on Paper in Johannesburg.**

op verskillende maniere. Die landskap uit 'n vliegtuig word ge-kaart in 'n notaboek, kompleet met bewerige hand as gevolg van turbulensie. Die neerstip van dit wat hy deur die vliegtuigvenster - op sigself ook weer 'n (deursigtige) perk - sien, word 'n klein en private *performance* in die lug. Dis die ervaring van die oomblik waarin die "kuns" juis lê, in die interaksie met die ander ruimte. Sodoende word die tekeninge en gravures die dokumentasie van omstandighede en plekke waar die kyker nie was nie.

En as die kyker toegang het tot Google Earth, word dié blik op die ondermaanse verdoesels. Neustetter span dié nuttige rekenaar-program om plekke te identifiseer - tot op jou eie agterplaas - in om jou te laat besef niks is waar na dit lyk nie. Selfs die herkenbare word in die groter bestel, en uit die lug gesien, onbeduidend en die een kaart begin soos die ander lyk. En die een kaart neem trekke aan van die volgende.

Die "kaarte" wat hy aanbied is derhalwe nie dokumentasie van plekke nie, maar eerder dokumentasie van hoe hy plekke lees, verbind, aan mekaar koppel en in geheel 'n aanduiding wil gee van waar hy hom bevind. Die uitstalling is derhalwe 'n kartering van die oomblik en ruimte wat die kunstenaar tans bewoon.

Die groot foto van Neustetter waar hy in sy slaapsak op Kilimandjaro lê en teken in sy notaboek, onderstreep dié persoonlike aspek van sy werk. Dis sy siening, sy ervaring wat hy deel met intense verwondering.

Neustetter sit met hierdie meer konvensionele uitstalling sy trant van *Still Experimenting Still Playing* voort. Moontlik kom dié uitstalling op die regte tyd - as 'n soort bestekopname voordat hy nog groter eksperimente en nog meer vernuftige spel aanpak.

■ Art on Paper is in 44 Stanley Avenue, Milpark, Johannesburg. Navrae: ☎ 011 726 2234.

■ Tot 26 April.

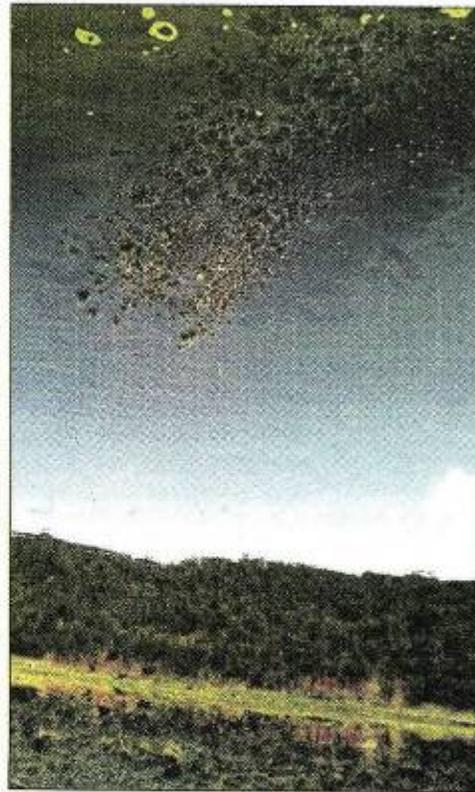
# Capturing a feeling

**P**aul Auster writes in the *New York Trilogy* that "books must be read as deliberately and reservedly as they are written." Some similar adage should govern the viewing of **In Two Minds**, Marcus Neustetter's solo exhibition at Art on Paper — it is unforgivingly dense and subtle, and not for those who prefer diet art.

*In Two Minds* is an exercise in experimental mapping. Rather than merely describing geography, Neustetter adapts satellite maps, draws from life and appropriates images from photographs, installations and previous (and even future) works to create a series of map-like traces of experience.

These works are inspired by a moment of reflection Neustetter had on his way up Mount Kilimanjaro in December 2006. On the night before his ascent to the summit he was struck by the view from the camp of the landscape below: "... the night was so clear that the lights of the city of Moshi at the foot of the mountain seemed to be reflected in the stars of the sky," he recalls.

This view was impossible to record and Neustetter's work since this event has sought a way to recapture the sensation it evoked in him. This impulse translates into a web of dialogues between works included in this exhibition and between new and old works. The installation that is the namesake of the show, for example, features a green laser beam ricocheting off shattered glass plates, which alludes to a series of "laser drawings" Neustetter made in 2007 and also to a land intervention laser drawing he hopes to execute one day soon at the Tswa-



**Marcus Neustetter's Tswaing reflections (Soshanguwe), 2008, digital print**

ing Crater in Shoshanguwe.

A limited edition artist's book accompanying the exhibition continues this complex double vision by pairing mostly new photographic works and drawings with documentation of earlier works. Eighty of these books are accompanied by a set of original pen drawings. — *Anthea Buys*

**At Art on Paper until April 26**

# The transient moment of inspiration

**D**AVID Salle, in his discussion of Julian Schnabel's latest film *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly* in the February edition of *Artforum*, writes of the supremacy of sentiment in Schnabel's work — his "willingness to stake everything on an in-the-moment decision".

Where Salle's observation is applicable is in Marcus Neustetter's preoccupation with a single, transient moment of inspiration.

For Neustetter this moment was the view of the town of Moshi, Kenya, from high up on Kilimanjaro. In the limited-edition artist's book released with the exhibition, he describes his experience: "the night was so clear that the lights of the city of Moshi at the foot of the mountain seemed to be reflected in the stars of the sky". Since then he has been trying to find a visual language to reconstitute the sensation evoked by that view.

*In Two Minds* is a collection of works that searches for the evanescent flash of inspiration through a series of visual narratives that are more about intuition

and metaphor than legibility and order. It revisits many of Neustetter's earlier works, as well as its own processes of production, through a web of abstruse allusions. A flash of light here and a squiggle there are imbued with elaborate trails of references that would make even a stalwart post-structuralist weak at the knees.

One of the more tangible visual motifs Neustetter uses in this show is mapping. He traces the contours of a Google Earth image of the summit of Kilimanjaro, and similar images of the Tswaing meteorite crater in Soshanguve and an aerial view of Joburg. As Wilhelm van Rensburg suggests in his essay accompanying the exhibition flyer, Neustetter's work is "not about conventional cartography" but tries to account for our movement through space and our sense of place as something bound to space and time.

While many of the works quite straightforwardly document specific places, they also point to a far more nebulous phenomenon: the ambivalent moment of attraction

to one route, place or image rather than another. Neustetter resists the kind of certitude demonstrated in Schnabel's epic "in-the-moment decision".

Instead, through a convoluted and often private aesthetic poetry, he "stakes everything", in Salle's words, on an instant of deliberation. This deliberation is echoed in his oscillation between digital and analogue mark-making processes in this exhibition, and translates into the aesthetic and conceptual dialogues created in the book.

The book is ostensibly the kernel of the show's metaphoric agenda, and consists of a series of images paired because of their conceptual or visual harmony. The former is fairly tough to "get" without having Neustetter around to guide you through it, but after a few perusals of this little volume, you should be on your way to having a sense of what he is after in the exhibition. There is something about the book — perhaps partly its understatement in the exhibition — that is

entirely absorbing. Presumably, this is because with enough patience one can become accustomed to thinking in the kind of wordless exchange *In Two Minds* seems to demand of its viewers.

■ *In Two Minds* shows at Art on Paper Gallery, at 44 Stanley Avenue, until April 26.  
**ANTHEA BUYS**

**MAPPING  
MOVEMENT:**  
Artist Marcus  
Neustetter.



# Mapping out how we miss the big picture

Differing views of natural wonders show how a single medium fails us

IN TWO MINDS  
exhibition by Marcus Neustetter

Review: Mary Corrigan

In a sense, *In Two Minds* picks up where Marcus Neustetter and Stephen Hobbs left off with *UrbaNET Hillbrow/Dakar/Hillbrow*, a remarkable exhibition that probed the dynamics and perceptions that govern space in map-making.

A fixation with cartography continues to dominate this solo exhibition by Neustetter, but the art feels more nuanced and has a much stronger aesthetic appeal than before. This is probably because he explores the manner in which aesthetics inform map-making, thereby making a connection between art, perception and geography.

Perception or the multitude of ways of viewing the material world is what drives this exhibition and explains why Neustetter has employed such a variety of media – photography, film, drawing and digital illustration. Each medium offers a completely different perspective of the environment – photography offers an aesthetic and subjective rendition, while the digitised traces of Google Earth maps offer an objective and unseen view. Hand-drawn artworks produced from the random marks executed during a flight offer an incidental perspective.

In this way *In Two Minds* offers a very sensual or sensory experience. From the quintessential landscape photographs that bring the hues and textures of the natural landscape sharply into focus, to the

monochromatic pseudo-scientific and digitised renditions of Google Earth images and to the rough hand drawings executed from an airplane, each series of artworks evoke a different sensory encounter with space.

Of course, a sensual engagement with our environment is what provokes us to create “maps” of the landscape in our minds. It is the beautiful, unusual, or textural minutiae of the environment that we cherish and they become lodged in our memory.

This links up with photography, which, for most, functions as a means of documentation, storing the textures of reality. In *Tswaing Reflections*, *Kilimanjaro Reflections* and *SALT Reflections*, Neustetter presents us with almost trite photographed images of the natural world. They are not amateurish snapshots; they are more like the imagery one would expect to find in the *National Geographic*. In other words, images that revel in the extraordinary presence of the natural environment, displaying it from different angles and thereby furnishing viewers with a fresh view of familiar territory.

The destinations that Neustetter has chosen to photograph are not just arbitrary, beautiful settings; they are landmark natural wonders – Kilimanjaro, the meteorite crater at Tswaing in Soshanguve and Sutherland, where the largest telescope in the southern hemisphere is situated.

These locations are significant not just because of their natural beauty but because they all offer a different perspective on our environment and not just in a physical sense but in a psychological way too.

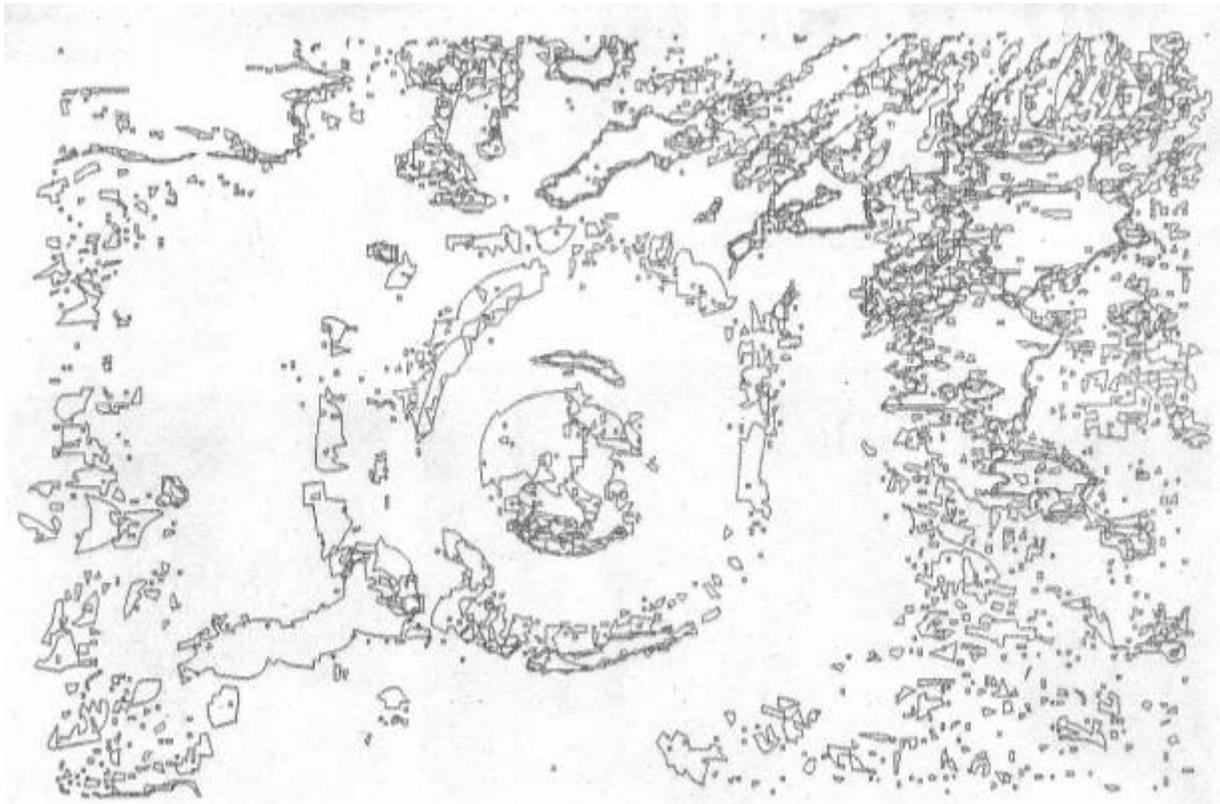
One just has to think of the shifts in perception that take place at the top of Kilimanjaro or through the lens of a giant telescope to comprehend how those sights impact on our physical and psychological perception of reality.

However, Neustetter suggests that these readings of reality are purely subjective and clouded by the beauty of the environment. So, in contrast, he presents very precise, digitised illustrations of those three destinations as well as one of Johannesburg for comparison. These traces of Google Earth maps are aerial views that analyse Kilimanjaro, Tswaing and Sutherland from a completely different perspective. And not just a different physical point of reference but an alternative reading of the environment.

There are no iridescent tones to seduce the eye in these renditions; just angular black lines that describe the contours of the environment.

Although the map of Johannesburg shows a more ordered constellation of lines compared with the organic clusters that swirl in the maps of Kilimanjaro or Tswaing, there appears to be little difference between these rural and urban settings. According to these maps, rural settings are just as populated; not by concrete structures but natural formations that colonise the landscape.

In this way Neustetter implies that the naked eye cannot fully comprehend what it sees and that our vision is shaped by psychological perceptions. The Google Earth traces prove that the underlying structure, the essence of our environment, is hidden from ordinary sight.

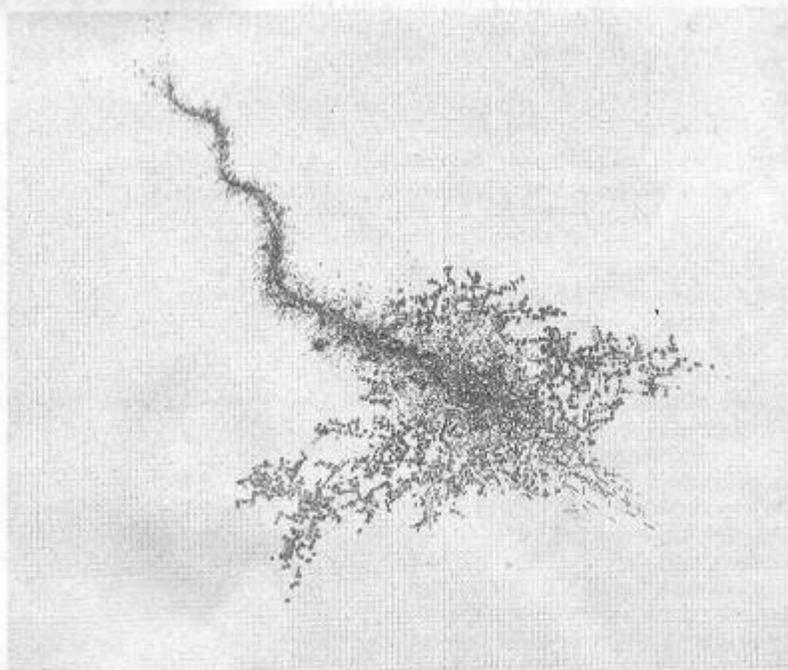


**Kilimanjaro trace detail: Killimanjaro Google Earth Trace shows a digitised and completely objective view of this natural wonder**

The *Flight* series consists of hand-drawings of the landscape as viewed from an airplane. With fine lines and finicky detailing, these are reminiscent of the pseudo-scientific drawings that early colonialists would make of the fauna and flora of the South African environment, alluding to an objective, albeit politicised, approach to comprehending the landscape.

But the vast distance between Neustetter and the landscape below means that the particulars are only broad strokes and they would have no relevance at ground level. With every artwork or view of the landscape that Neustetter offers viewers, he also provides a counterpoint perspective. So even when he draws you closer to the object, you are always cognisant that it is only a fragment of the view and that the complete picture is always eluding our vision.

● *In Two Minds is on at Art on Paper in Milpark, Johannesburg, until Saturday*



**In the *Flight* series, Neustetter tries to create incidental and objective renditions of the landscape**



## Marcus Neustetter

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***In Two Minds*** (Johannesburg: Art on Paper Gallery, 2008), softcover, 78 pages, ISBN 975-0-62040659-8, limited to 300 copies with original drawing, numbered and signed by the artist

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In December 2006, Johannesburg artist Marcus Neustetter scaled Kilimanjaro. On the evening before his final ascent, he paused to take in an expansive, magical scene. His book, *in two minds*, offers a description. "The night was so clear that the lights of the city of Moshi at the foot of the mountain seemed to be reflected in the stars of the sky," he writes. "Inspired by this experience, I have been collating references, revisiting past installations and mapping new projects." Mapping is the operative word here.

In the four years since Google, the ubiquitous search engine, acquired Keyhole Inc, the company that developed the application Google Earth, this online terrestrial globe has become a favourite of bored estate agents and all sorts of online explorers. Neustetter falls into the latter category. His exhibition, *in two minds*, held at Art on Paper, included four digital prints inspired by places mapped on Google Earth – also its sister application, Google Sky. Reminiscent of the minimalist line drawings of Sol LeWitt, these gutted maps were the definite highpoint of a show that experimented with ideas as much as it did with digital technology – often to banal effect. This limited edition artist book, published to coincide with the exhibition, makes better sense of Neustetter's interest in experimental imagery – read blurred digital photography and mechanically produced drawings. For starters, it offers an experience far less contrived than looking at, for example, a barely legible photograph floating inside a wooden frame. While the book denies any obvious narrative, it manages to be somehow fulfilling – whether you choose to use it as a flipbook, or engage it slowly, patiently. For those taking the time, look out for the mini versions of his Google Earth prints, also his straight photograph of a bundle of straw 'bleeding' tiny pieces of blue string.

**Sean O'Toole**