

Unprecedented Times

A presentation of works from the
Pier Arts Centre permanent collection selected by
Caitlin Brodie, Jamilla Garret & Vicki Redpath-Watson
Orkney College UHI third year fine art students

The on-line exhibition forms part of the BA Fine Art Professional Practice module
delivered by Orkney College in partnership with the Pier Arts Centre

The students have chosen works that reflect their personal and collective feelings and experiences of the global pandemic of 2020 to 2021.

Their choice includes works by Roger Ackling, Kenneth Armitage, Michael Broido, Lesley Foxcroft, Mark Francis, Alan Reynolds, Edmund de Waal and Sylvia Wishart.

The works have been grouped within three main themes: *Social Bubbles; Virus, Hope & Calm* and *Confinement & Repetition*.

Excerpts from poems were chosen to accompany each section and engage the viewer with the ideas and concepts behind *Unprecedented Times*.

The exhibition was created in isolation with the students working via online meetings and the exchange of emails during the lockdown period.

Social Bubbles



Kenneth Armitage 1916-2002
Maquette for the Krefeld War Memorial
1956
bronze
33.5 x 19.5 x 12.1cm



Edmund de Waal b1964
Oir-Thir
2016
6 glazed porcelain vessels in steel,
corain and plexiglass vitrine
32 x 30 x 7cm



Roger Ackling 1947-2014
Weybourne
1996
sunlight on wood
57.5 x 21.5 x 0.8cm

We have selected this first grouping of artworks to collectively express our view of social bubbles and the normalisation of seeing people in dwindling numbers.

Images produced pre-Covid are now starkly odd in their representation of crowds and gatherings and suggest an edginess when we consider their proximity to each other in current circumstances.

These works are reflective of our growing sense of isolation. In their use of linear motifs and forms the artists have expressed ideas about space (or lack of), distance, and the formation of particular relationships and groups. Something with which we've become all too accustomed.

Kenneth Armitage 1916-2002
Maquette for the Krefeld War Memorial
1956
bronze
33.5 x 19.5 x 12.1cm



Crow and the Birds

When the eagle soared clear through a dawn distilling of emerald

When the curlew trawled in seadusk through a chime of wineglasses

When the swallow swooped through a woman's song in a cavern

And the swift flicked through the breath of a violet

When the owl sailed clear of tomorrow's conscience

And the sparrow preened himself of yesterday's promise

And the heron laboured clear of the Bessemer upglare

And the bluetit zipped clear of lace panties

And the woodpecker drummed clear of the rotovator and the rose-farm

And the peewit tumbled clear of the laundromat

While the bullfinch plumped in the apple bud

And the goldfinch bulbed in the sun

And the wryneck crooked in the moon

And the dipper peered from the dewball

Crow spraddled head-down in the beach-garbage, guzzling a dropped ice-cream.

Ted Hughes, 1972

Edmund de Waal b1964
Oir-Thir
2016
6 glazed porcelain vessels in steel,
corain and plexiglass vitrine
32 x 30 x 7cm



They sat. They stood about.
They were estranged. The air,
As water curdles from clear,
Fleshed the silence. They sat.

Geoffrey Hill

from: *Of Commerce and Society :The Apostles: Versailles, 1919*

Roger Ackling 1947-2014
Weybourne
1996
sunlight on wood
57.5 x 21.5 x 0.8cm



A unity of time and place with other times and places.

Margaret Tait

from *Now*

originally published in *origins and elements* (1959)

Virus, Hope & Calm

At the beginning of the pandemic there was an overwhelming feeling of chaos that overtook every aspect of our lives.

Within this group we wanted to select works that reflected that initial panic, but then as things became more 'routine', and we adopted and adapted to new customs, we wanted to include works that looked forward and provided a sense of stability and calmness.

These three works, invoke literal as well as more abstract concepts, suggesting feelings of interior and exterior, the micro and the macro, with Sylvia Wishart's dove providing a symbol of hope to lift our feelings of despondency.



Mark Francis b 1962
Untitled
1992
monotype on paper
59.8 x 59.8



Sylvia Wishart (1936-2008)
Bird on Window 1
c 1980s
oil on canvas
80.8 x 106.7



Michael Broido (1927-2013)
Granite 1
1962
Collage and pencil on board
38 x 50.9cm



Mark Francis b 1962
Untitled
1992
monotype on paper
59.8 x 59.8

Impossible Glove

An Impossible glove
for an impossible situation

the

IM POSSIBLE
is the Pulse
of the possible

IM POSSIBLE

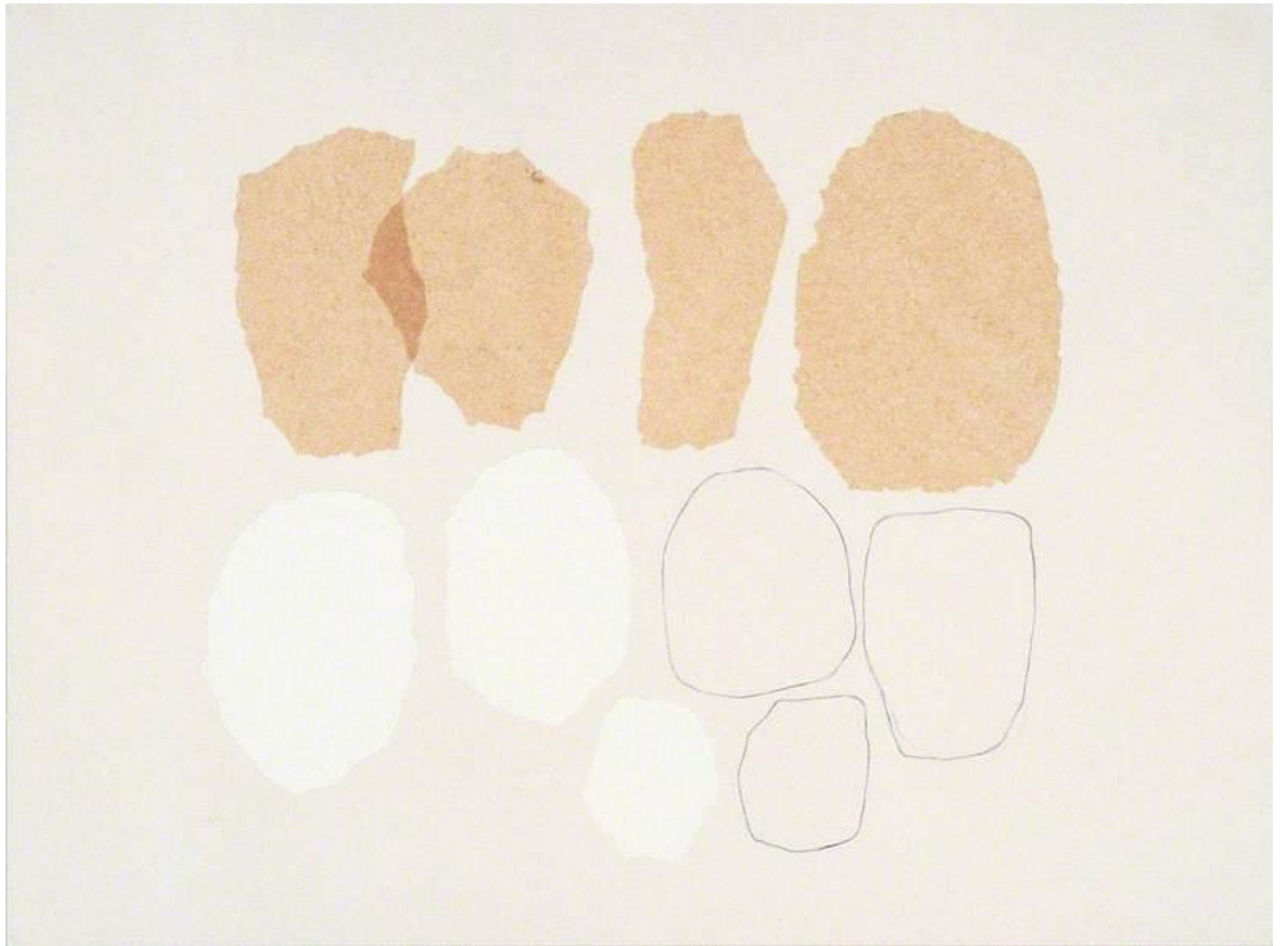
open up let the healing
come in.

Text from:
Part of 'In the Beginning of Covid-19', a series
of poems curated by Jason Dodge in 2020
<https://www.nationalpoetrylibrary.org.uk/online-poetry/poems/impossible-glove>

Cecilia Vicuña, 2020



Sylvia Wishart (1936-2008)
Bird on Window 1
c 1980s
oil on canvas
80.8 x 106.7



Michael Broido (1927-2013)
Granite 1
1962
Collage and pencil on board
38 x 50.9cm

I had to get nearer the sky,
For the city was too full of rooms
And I can't be content with a window.

Margaret Tait
from *A Poem for a Morning*
originally published in *Subjects and Sequences* (1960)

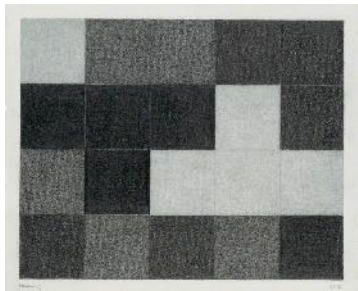
Confinement & Repetition



Roger Ackling 1947-2014
Voewood
2004
sunlight on wood
33.5 x 32.7 x 2.6cm



Lesley Foxcroft b 1949
Stackwork
1993
corrugated cardboard
250 x 25 x 25cm

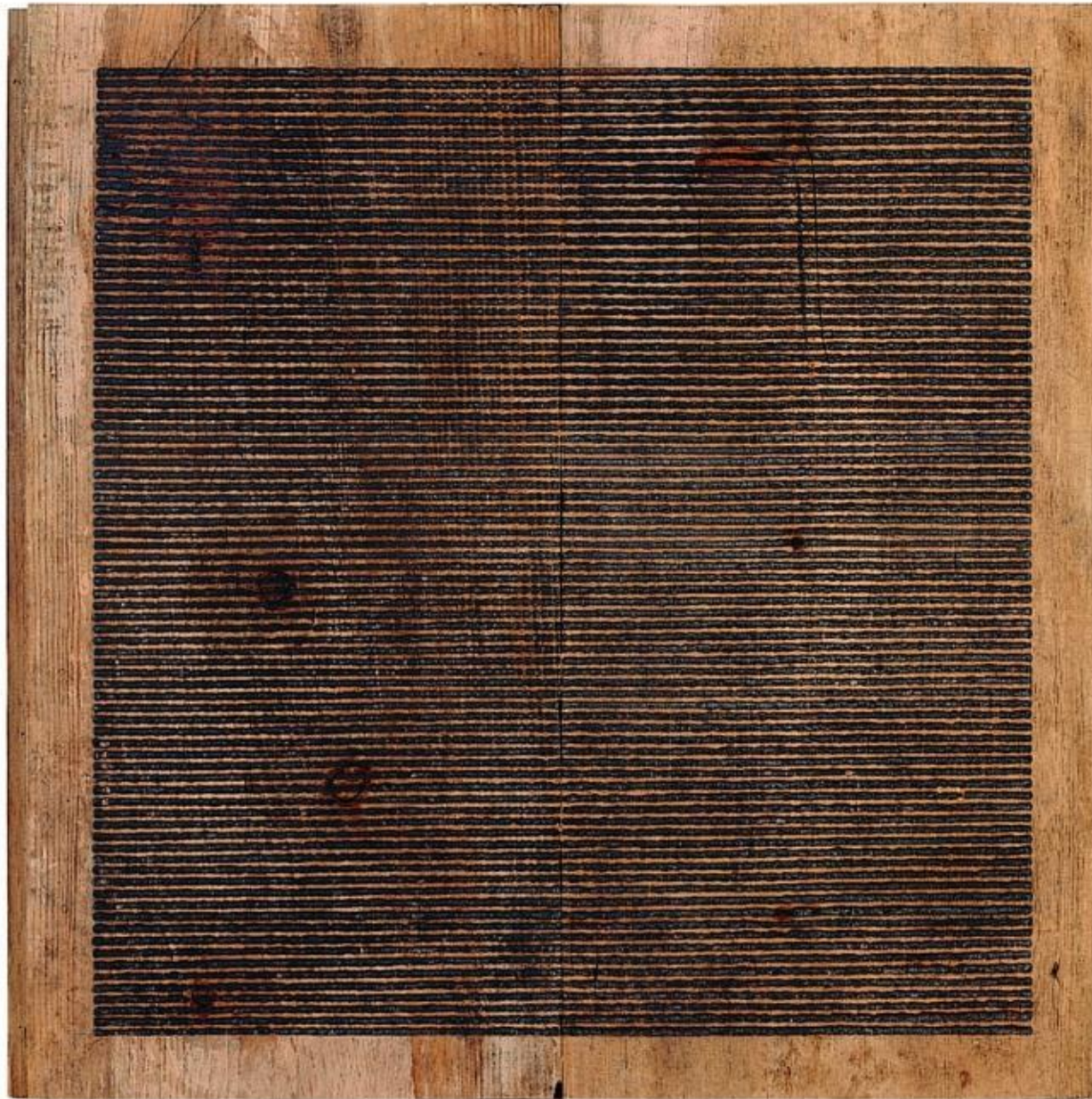


Alan Reynolds 1926-2014
Modular Study (1)
1981
lead pencil on paper laid on card
30.4 x 24.2

For this last grouping, we wanted to choose artworks that through their modularity and repetitiveness of mark making and pattern might enable us to explore the sense of monotony and routine experienced as a result of confinement during lockdown.

These works have all been made in a slow, methodical, and contemplative fashion, with a limited, monochrome, neutral colour palette.

This deceptively simple and pared back approach is something for us to reflect on and consider in a positive and purposeful way, as we continue to adapt to a 'new normal' in our daily and domestic lives and take stock of what we have garnered over this time.



Roger Ackling 1947-2014
Voewood
2004
sunlight on wood
33.5 x 32.7 x 2.6cm

Time Today

I sit down
to tie
my sneakers
and Honey
floods &
flows
to my other
side

I'm unwrapping
time
today
no I'm re
wrapping it.

It's been loosed
& I need
the strictures

back because
fear's out
here in
its ambling
tooth

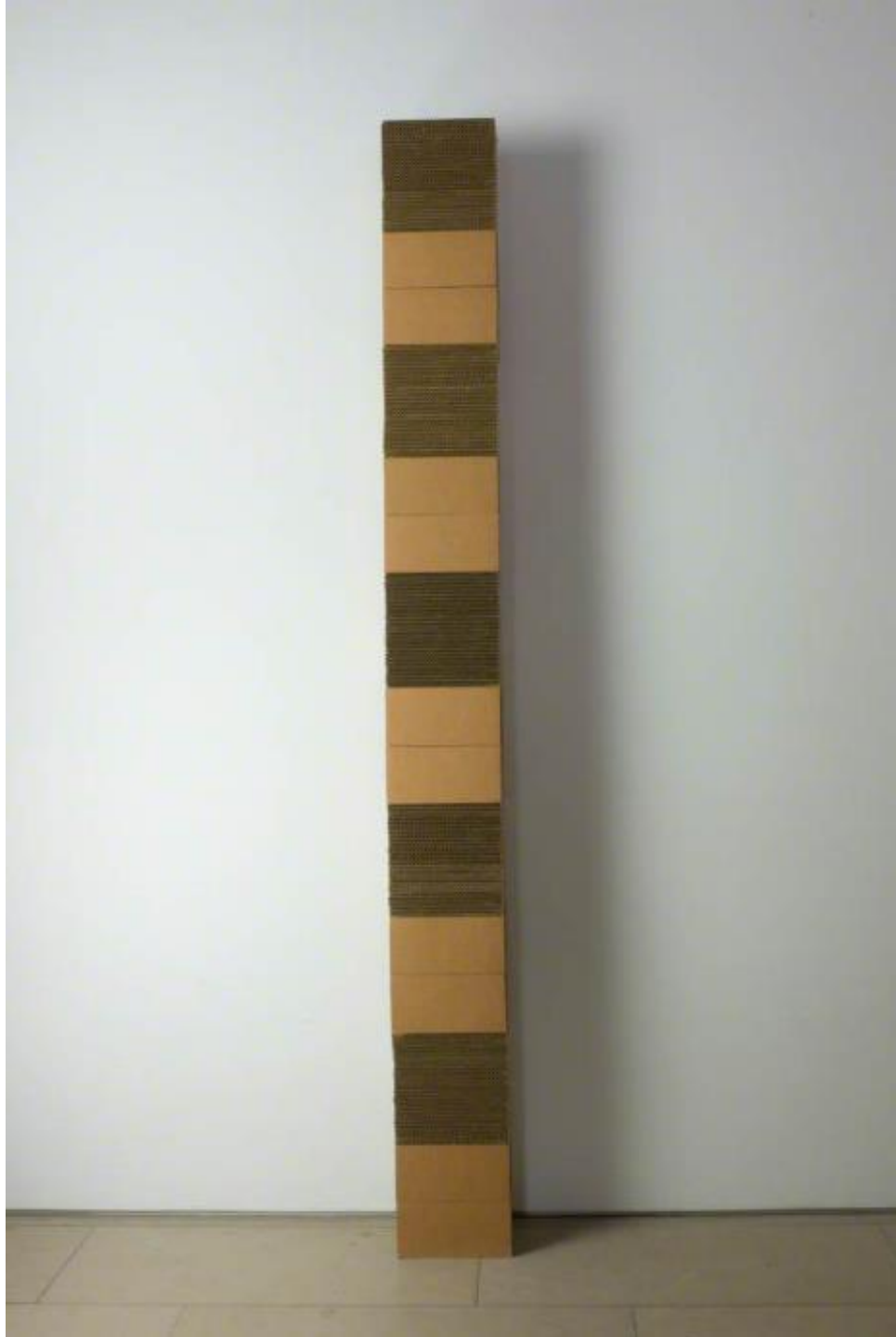
Eileen Myles 2020

Part of 'In the Beginning of Covid-19', a series
of poems curated by Jason Dodge in 2020

Text from:

<https://www.nationalpoetrylibrary.org.uk/online-poetry/poems/time-today>

Lesley Foxcroft b 1949
Stackwork
1993
corrugated cardboard
250 x 25 x 25cm



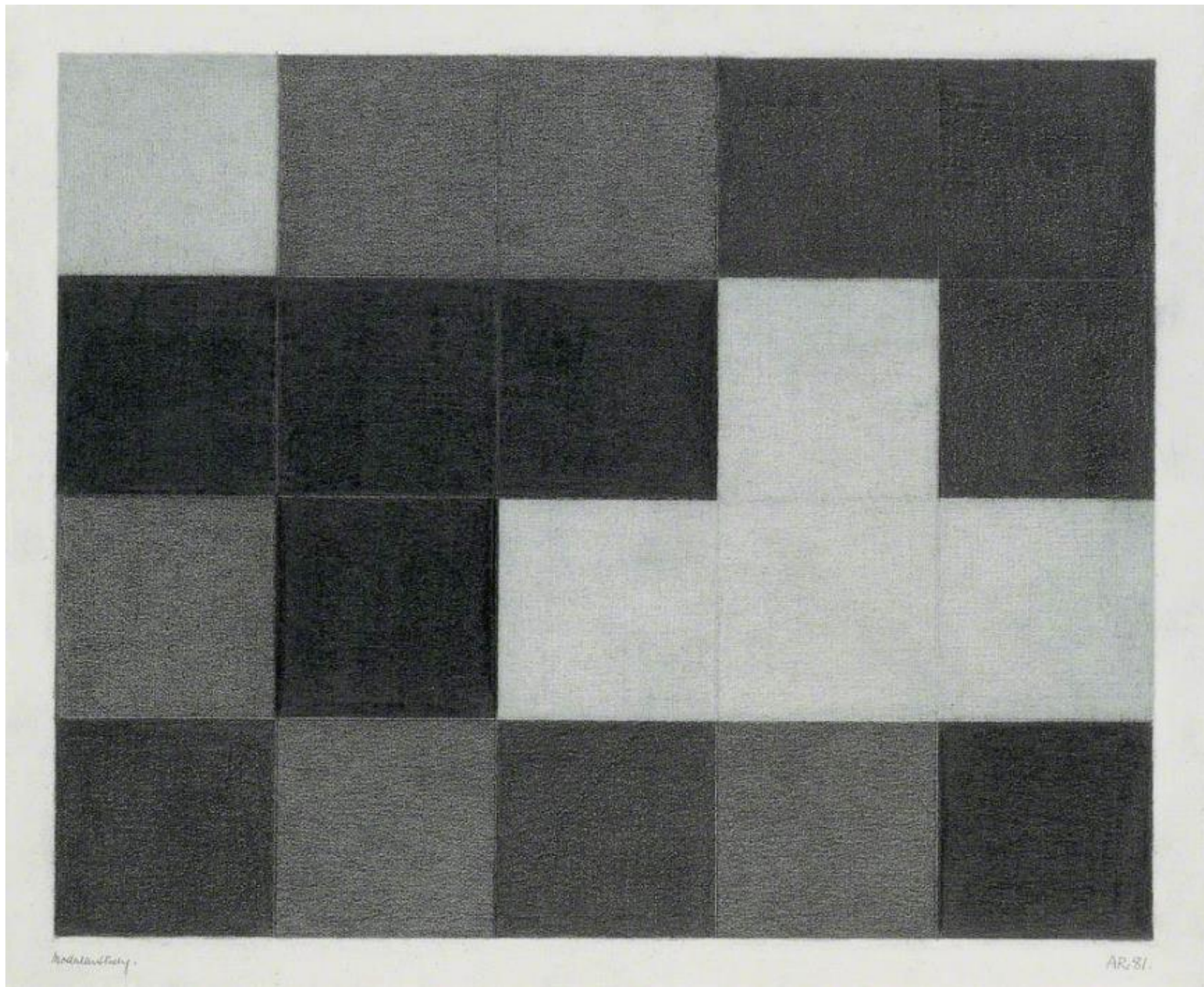
Minute after minute, aeon after aeon,
Nothing lets up or develops.
And this is neither a bad variant nor a tryout.
This is where the staring angels go through,
This is where all the stars bow down.

Ted Hughes

from *Pibroch*

published in *Wodwo*, 1967

Alan Reynolds 1926-2014
Modular Study (1)
1981
lead pencil on paper laid on card
30.4 x 24.2



Rhythmical movement which is the inherent
essence of all things.

Ultimately, there's only movement,
Nothing else.

Margaret Tait

from *Light*

Originally published in The Hen and the Bees, 1960

Unprecedented Times

For this educational project the students have made every effort to locate and credit all original sources for their selected texts



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