

Early *Ruined Score* studies

## SEHER SHAH THE ETCHED LINE

“I have been drawn to the ways that the fragmented and incomplete line falls between a desire to communicate and the inability to do so. It is difficult to convey what drawing and mark-making can provoke over time but it leaves a trace of a language built through intuitive, controlled and visceral marks. The *Ruined Score* etchings speaks to this hermetic language in between architectural abstraction and music notations, but communicates neither in its entirety. The process of intaglio printmaking can preserve the

scratches and acid-bitten marks of the etching needle, to the ways in which the hand moves over the copper-plate whilst covered in wax ground. The etched line has extended the ways in which I think about drawing and abstraction through marks that retain depth and these traces of time. The *Ruined Score* portfolio is a continuation of a long-term relationship with the Glasgow Print Studio in the study of intaglio printmaking under the guidance of Master Printmaker Stuart Duffin.”



Seher Shah at Glasgow Print Studio, Scotland  
Photo by Fiona Watson

8.6 19 This ground. Drypoint + Etching (8 min face down)

Drypoint orange

8 min face down  
silver texture needle

8 min face up  
Diamond point

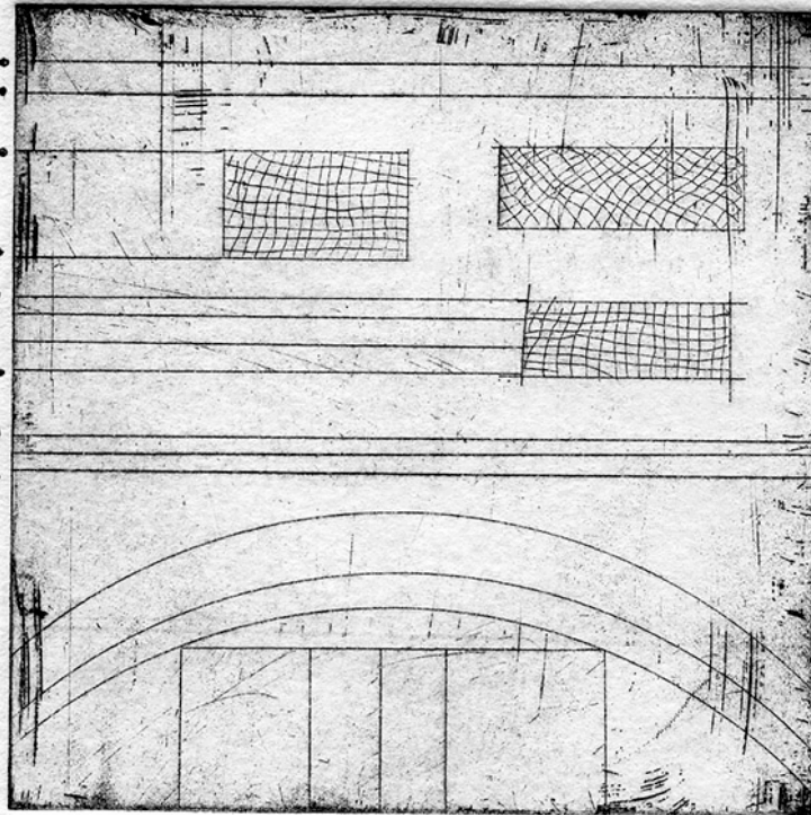
8 min  
regular  
Drypoint  
Diamond  
point

Drypoint Diamond pt

Drypoint orange

Drypoint spiral

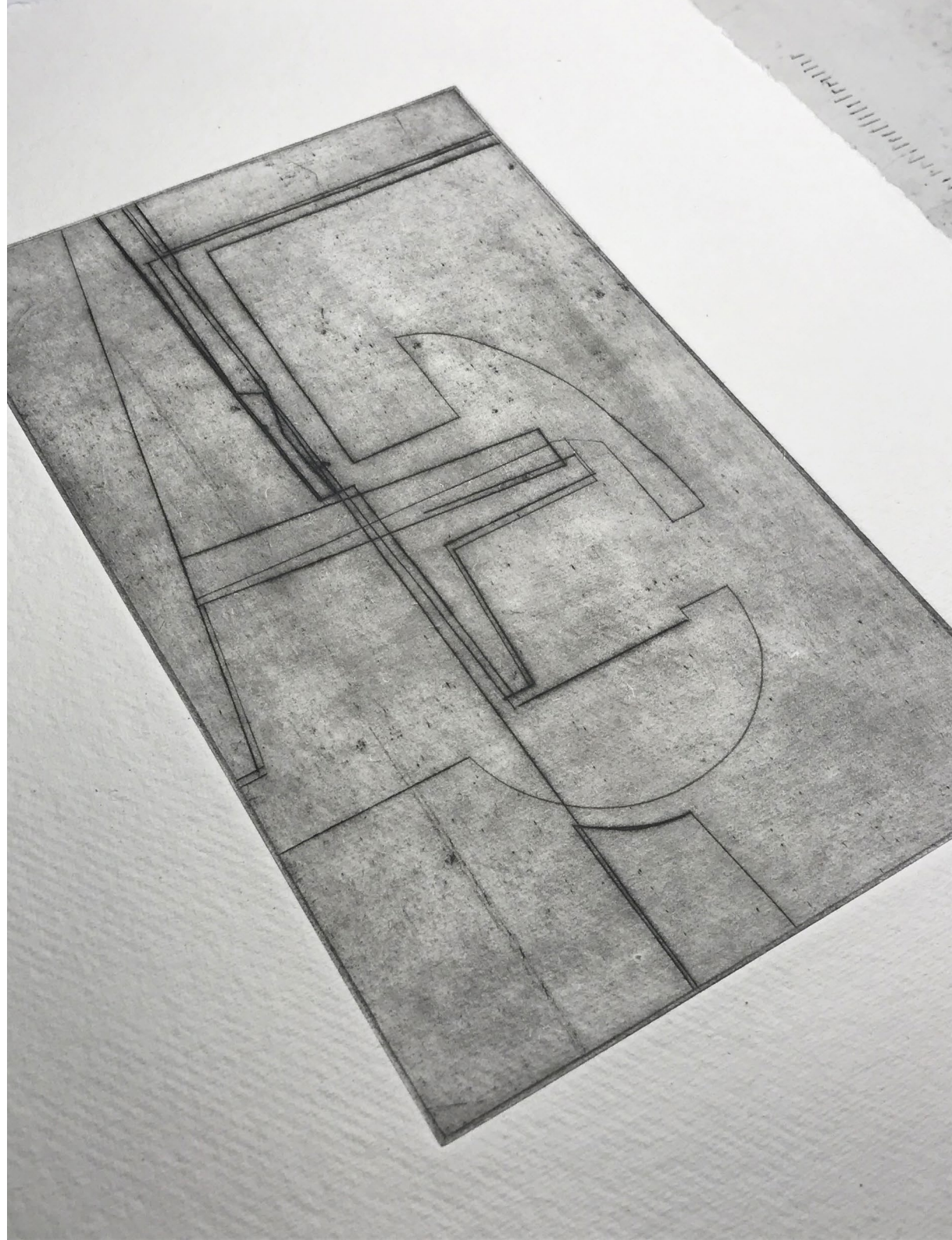
8 min regular  
8 min orange

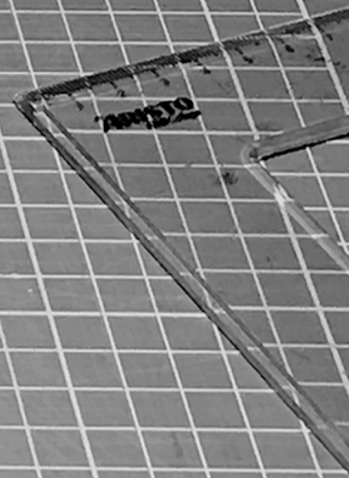
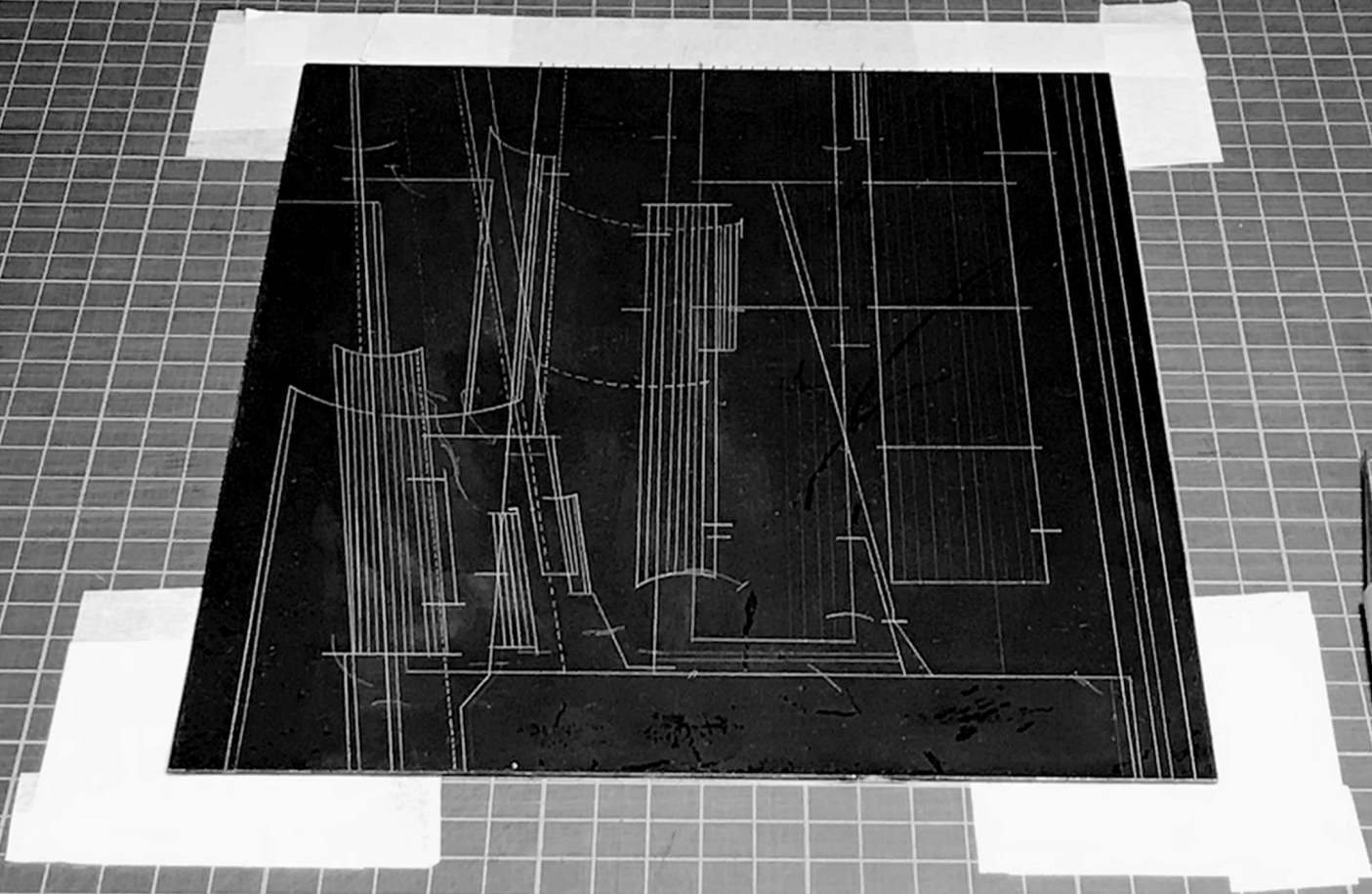
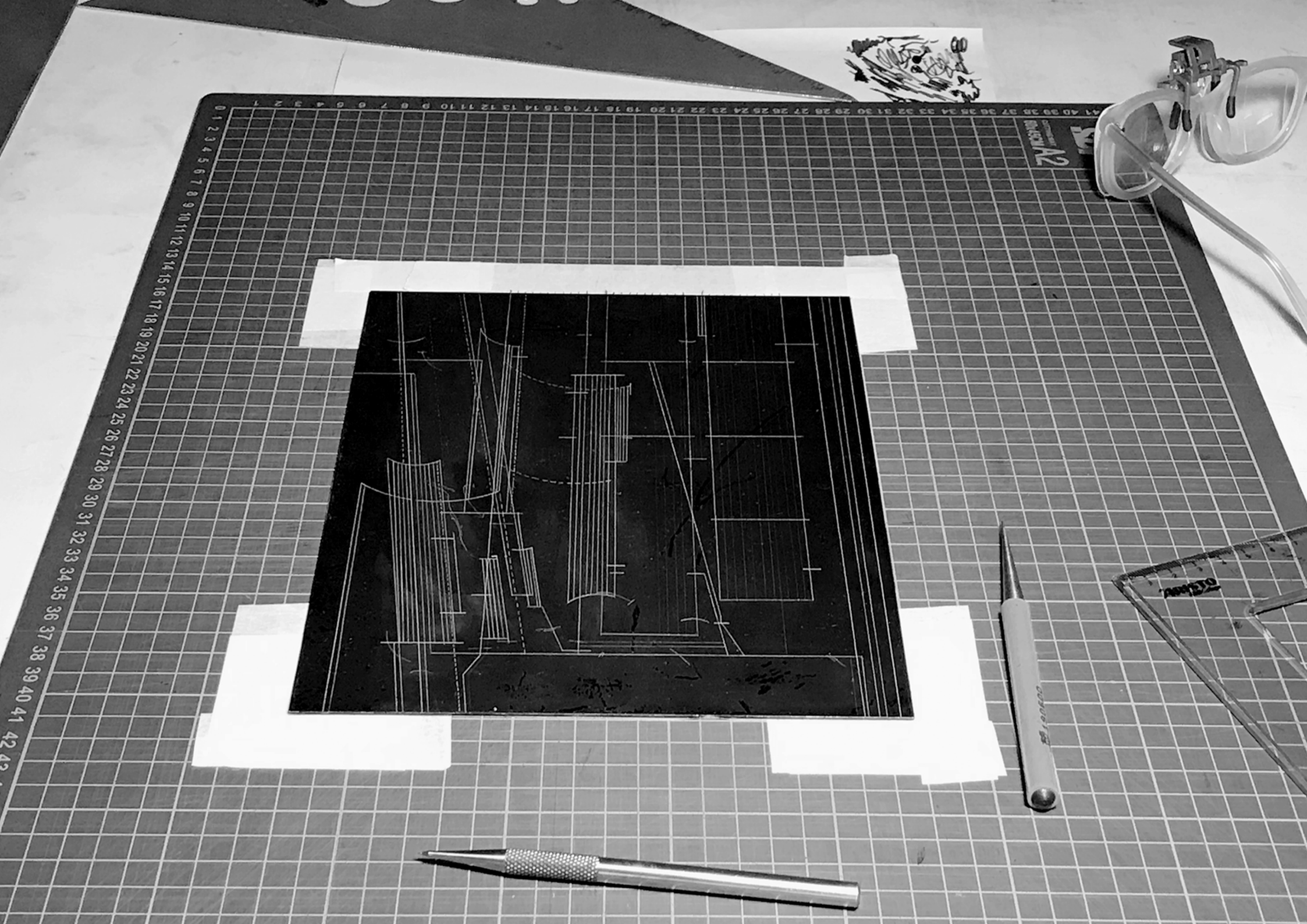


New Delhi Studio: early etching needle and time experiments

"An etching portfolio that began in Glasgow, continued in New Delhi at the Lalit Kala Akademi's Garhi Artist Studios and Print Club Delhi. I eventually set up a small etching space in my own studio and started to etch the *Ruined Scores*."

Copper plate drypoint experiments. Metal sourced from Old Delhi with scars and imperfections. With traces left behind on the metal surface.

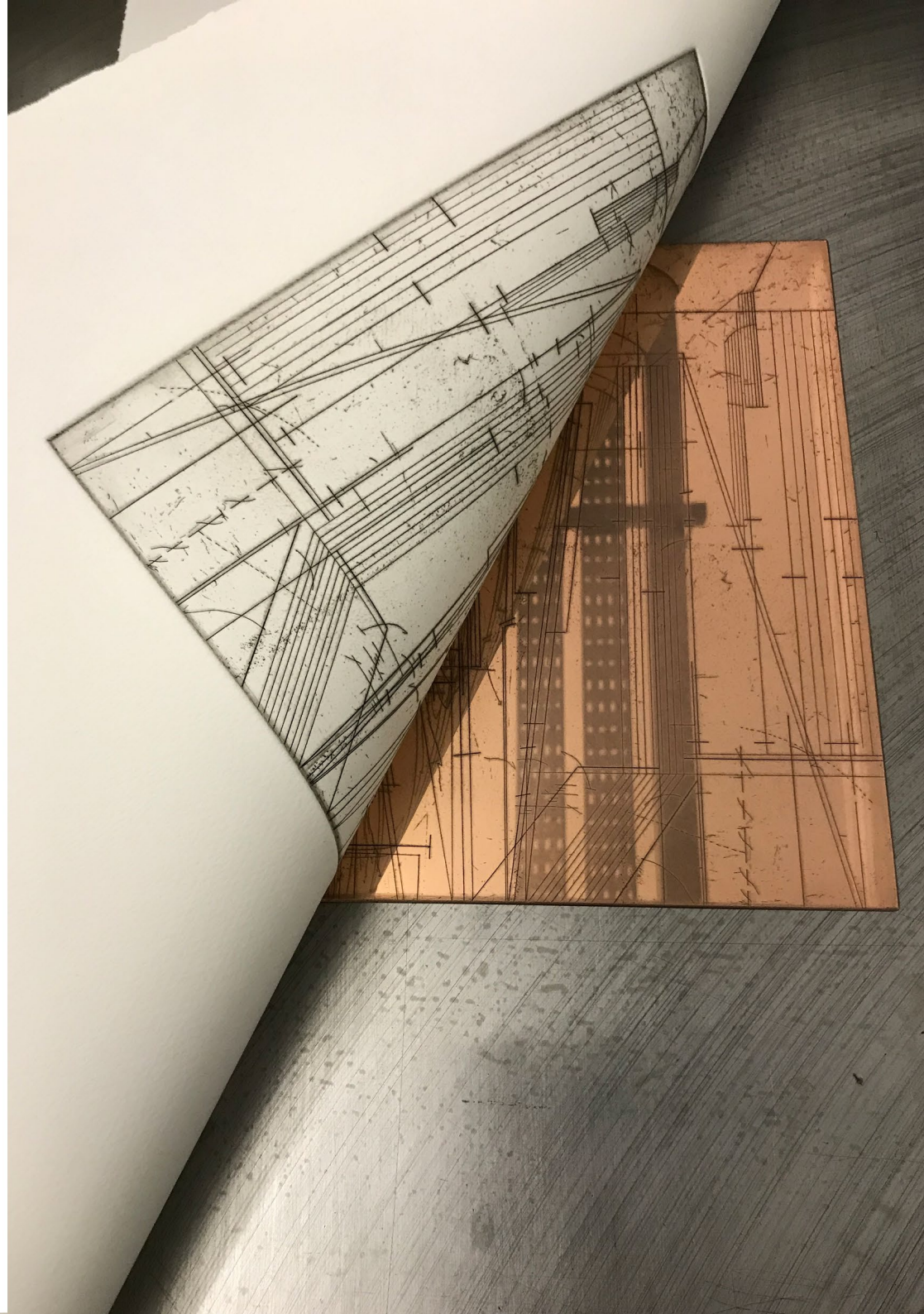
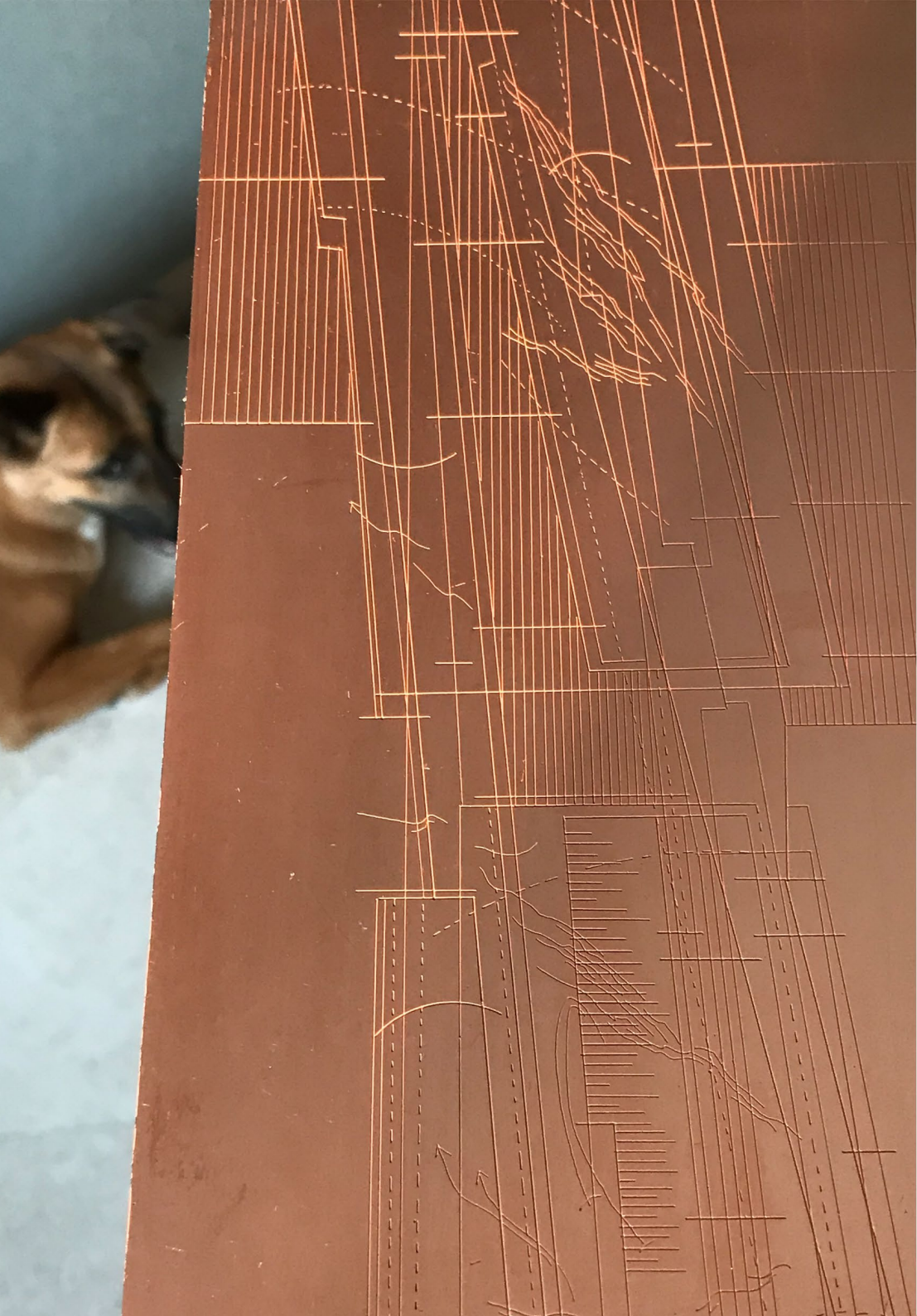


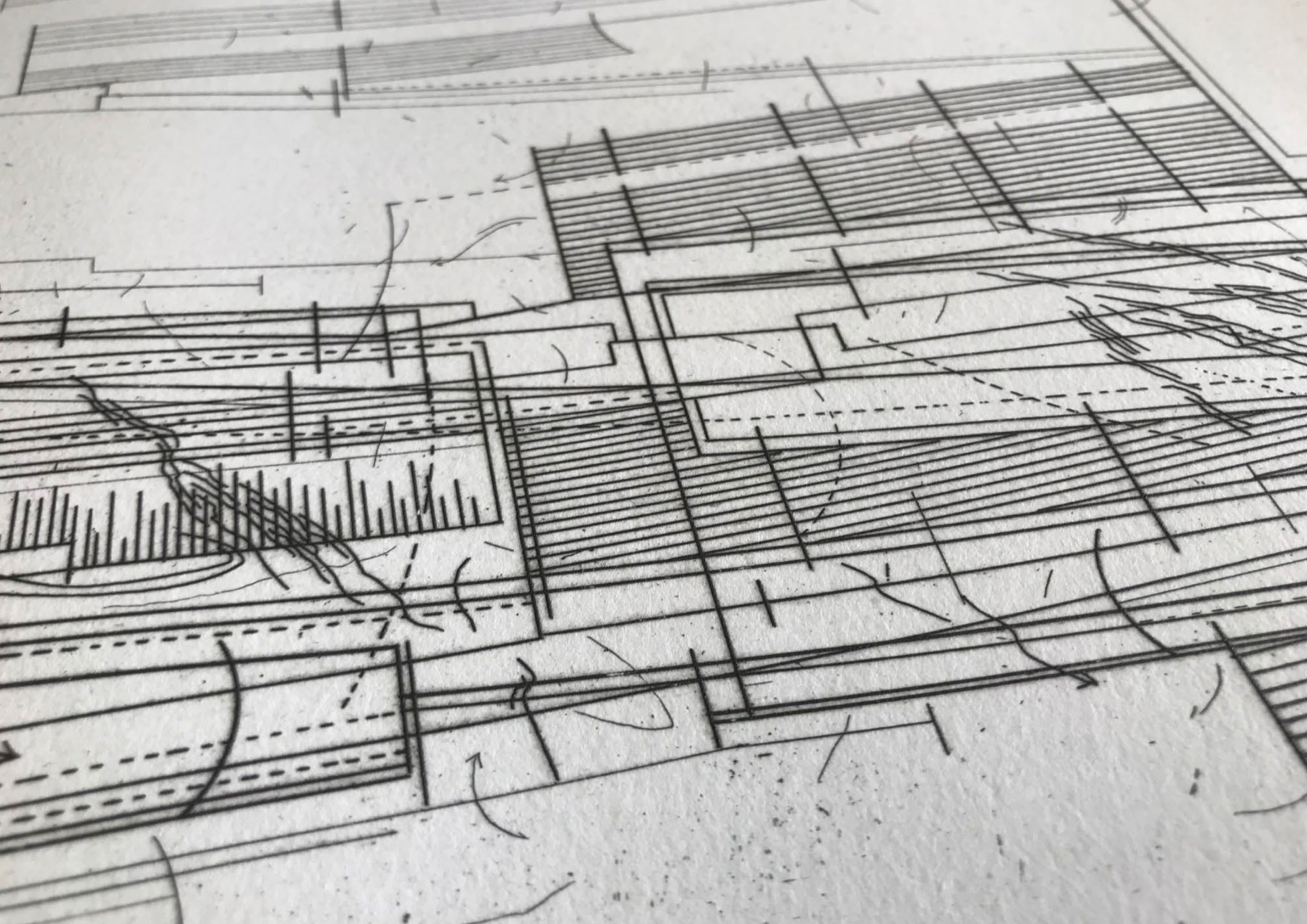


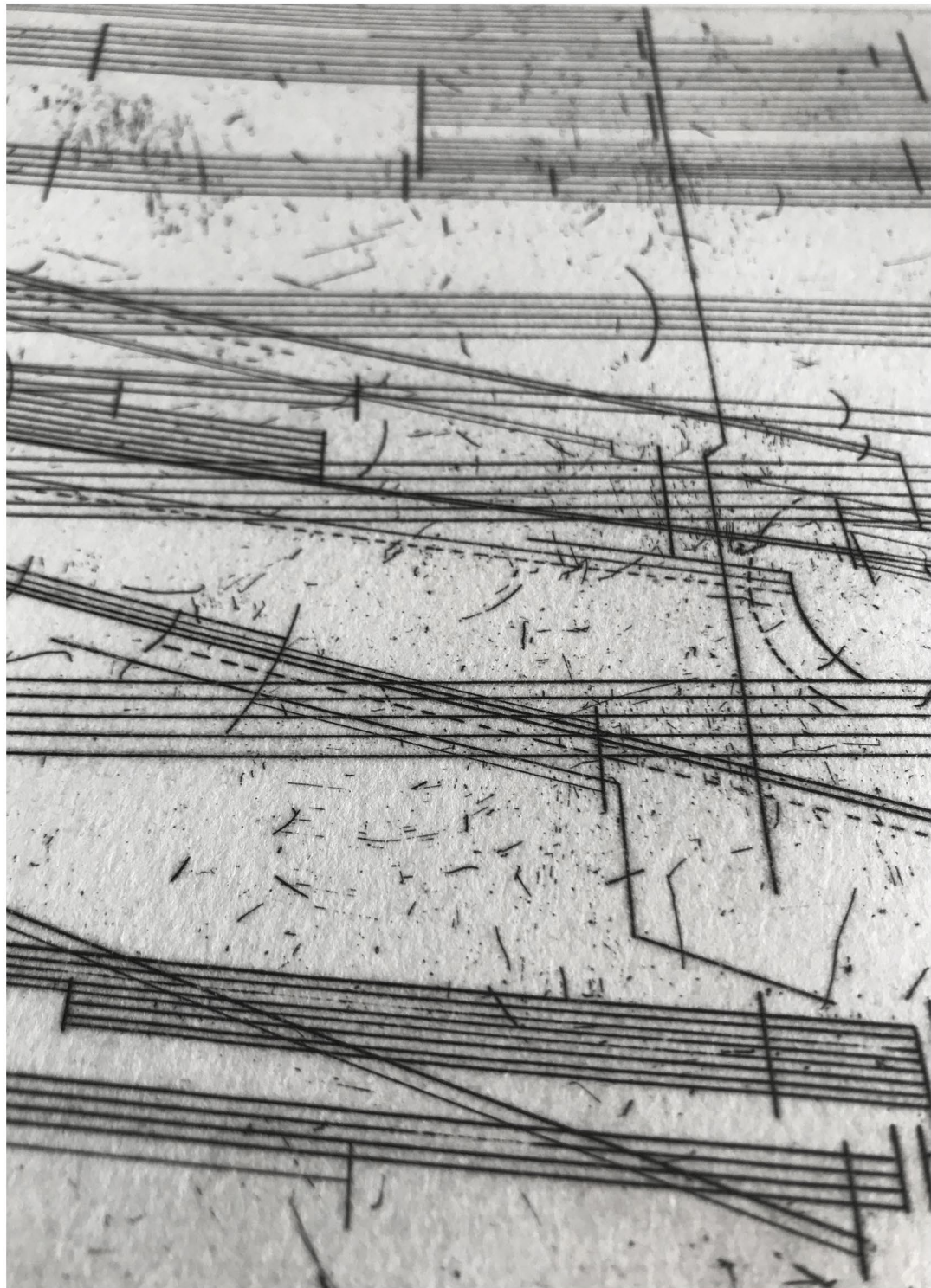
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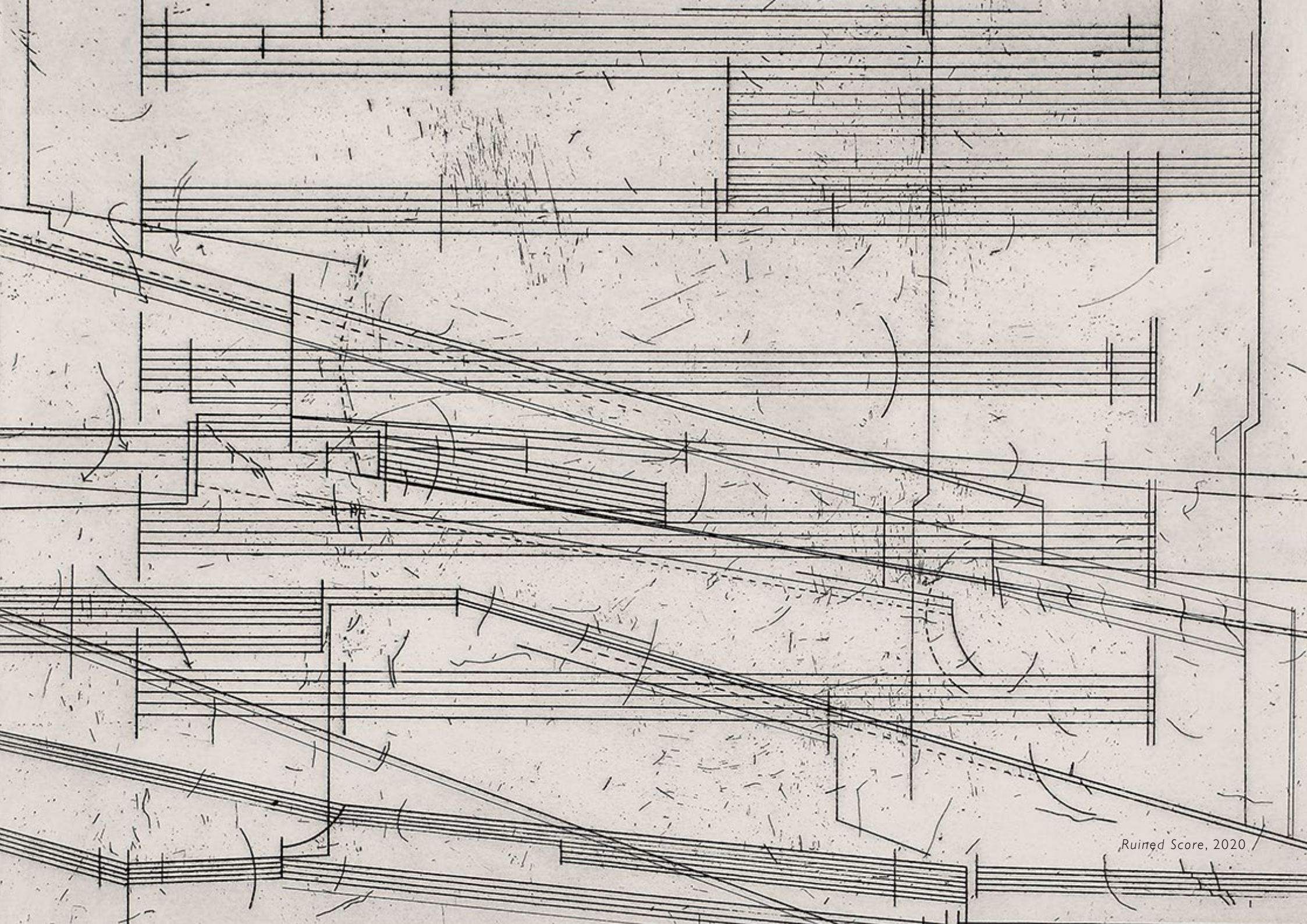
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ARGUMENT FROM SILENCE | *Studies for photogravures*

*Night*

Argument from silence  
Built from fragments and bodies

*Erase*

Stone mislaid and solitary within city foundations  
Invisible lines that connect structures

*History*

When old cities constructs overwhelm  
History makes visible the removal of language within



Early study for *Argument from Silence*

LINE WEIGHT: DRAWING BETWEEN PHOTOGRAPHY AND PRINTMAKING

*Argument from Silence (weight and measure)*, 2019





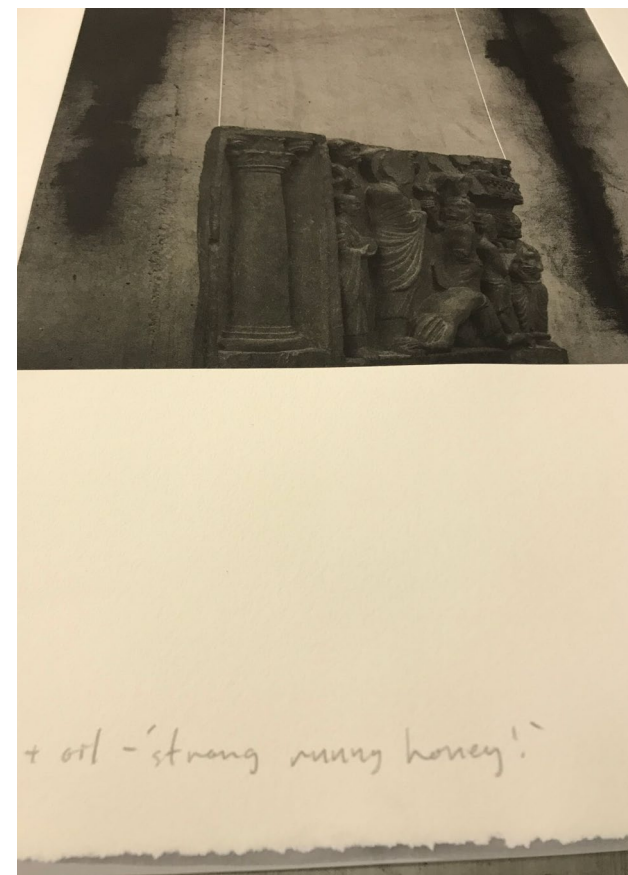
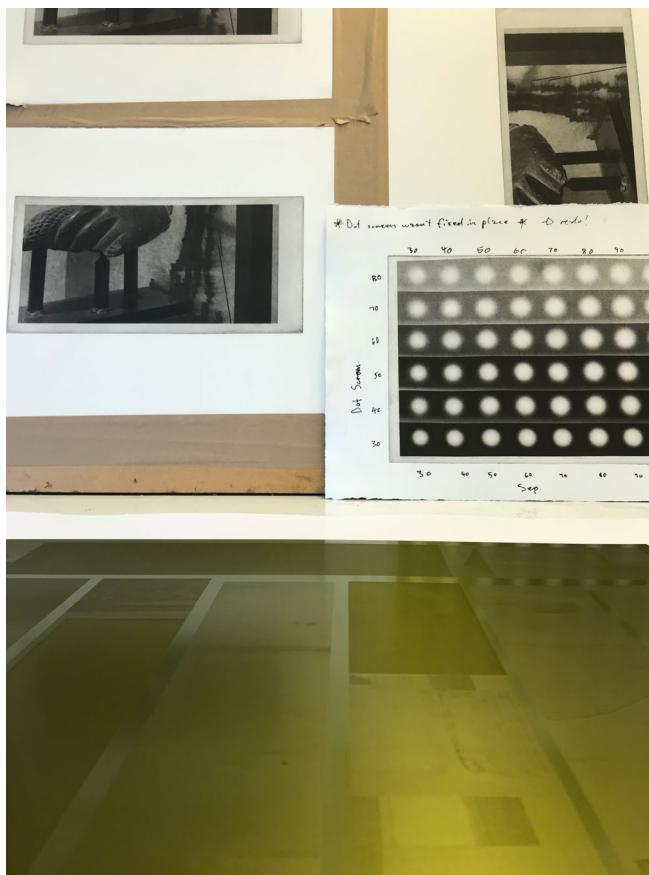
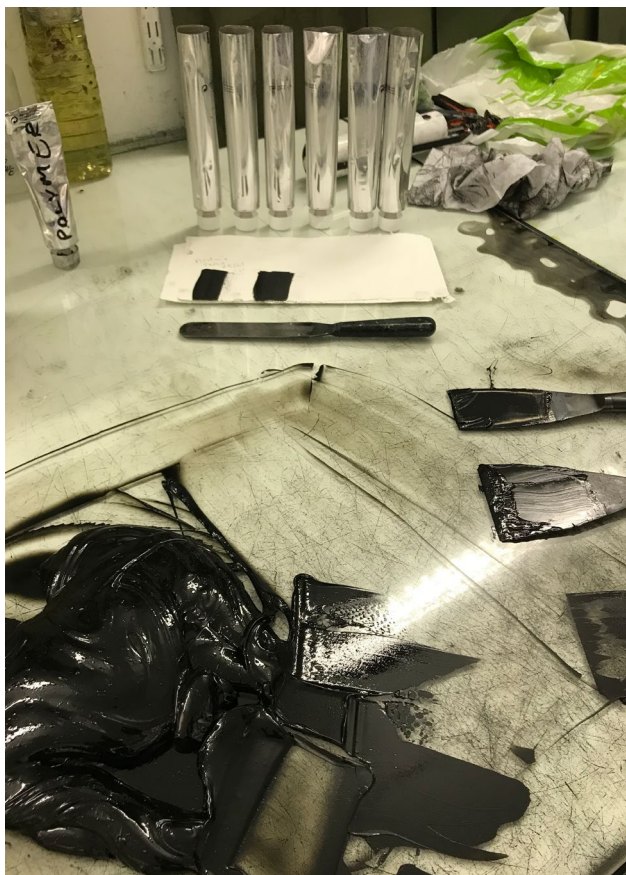
"*Argument from Silence* is a portfolio of ten polymer photogravure prints exploring the ruptures and underlying violence in relationships between object, history, and architecture. The work explores the Gandhara sculpture from the Government Museum and Art Gallery in Chandigarh built in 1967, by working with the photographic image as a site for drawing interventions and disturbances. Gandhara, an ancient region located in present-day Afghanistan and Pakistan was transformed by the diverse, shared and accumulated knowledge of Persian, Syrian, Greek and Indian cultures. I wanted to engage with this collection as I was drawn to the relationships between object and site, and to the complex legacy of the Gandhara works.

The Partition of the sub-continent in 1947 saw the Lahore Museum's vast collection of cultural inheritance divided between India and Pakistan. The two newly created provinces of the Punjab divided these assets of a shared cultural heritage

as 15 million South Asians were displaced and more than a million killed. This collection was eventually housed in the modernist museum designed by Shiv Dutt Sharma, Manmohan Nath Sharma, Pierre Jeanneret and Le Corbusier as a site and symbol of a new capital city.

Many historical arguments and ideological ends have marked the Gandhara narrative over time, from violent and divisive colonial east-west binaries, to reductive Orientalist frameworks, and recent destructive nationalist and extremist rhetoric from Afghanistan, Pakistan and India. It was the erased and re-written histories of the sculptures and their heritage, set against the current far-right nationalist politics in the region that I wanted to reflect on.

Working with the photographer Randhir Singh, we explored how to frame the objects, not as they were conventionally displayed, but through the spaces between the sculpture and architecture.



These negative spaces in-between objects, perimeter walls and corners, plinths and sculptural fragments, framed the fragile nature of the objects within the concrete museum interiors.

How the work is visually read is heavily dependent on the materiality of the print and ink itself, and the rich tonality was developed at the Glasgow Print Studio with Master Printer Alistair Gow. The printmaking process of the photogravures allowed for a material connection between the drawing and the photograph. Heavy drawing lines in oil inhabit the space of the photograph, as well as faint ghostly graphite traces from the

object. The photogravure process allowed for a rich tonality of black and greys to be deposited directly onto the paper.

The title of the work comes from a phrase I read a few years ago in historian Thomas McEvilley's essay *Doctor Lawyer Indian Chief, Primitivism in Twentieth Century Art*, at the Museum of Modern Art in 1984. The phrase, argument from silence, is described as 'an attempt to prove a negative'. In the context of history, it refers to an argument made in the absence of evidence. This profound relationship of erasure, language and history has stayed with me and has found a place in this work."

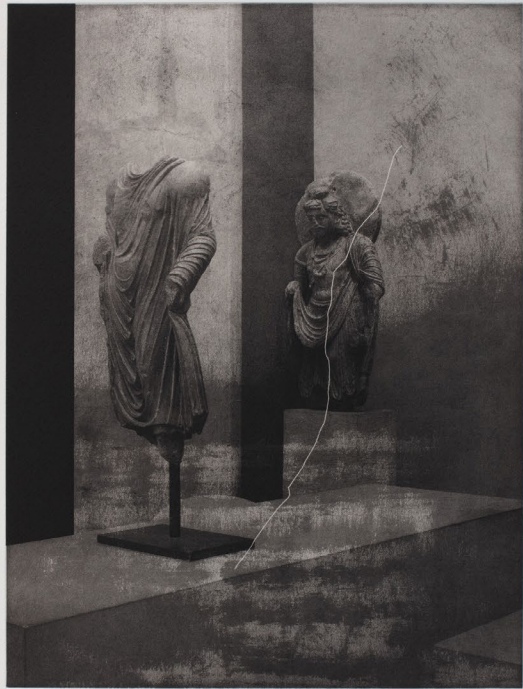


Above: Early study for *Argument from Silence*  
Right: Seher Shah's studio in New Delhi





Glasgow Print Studio, Scotland



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John J. ...



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John J. ...



Left: *Argument from Silence (fragments and bodies)*, 2019  
Right: *Argument from Silence (field measurements)*, 2019