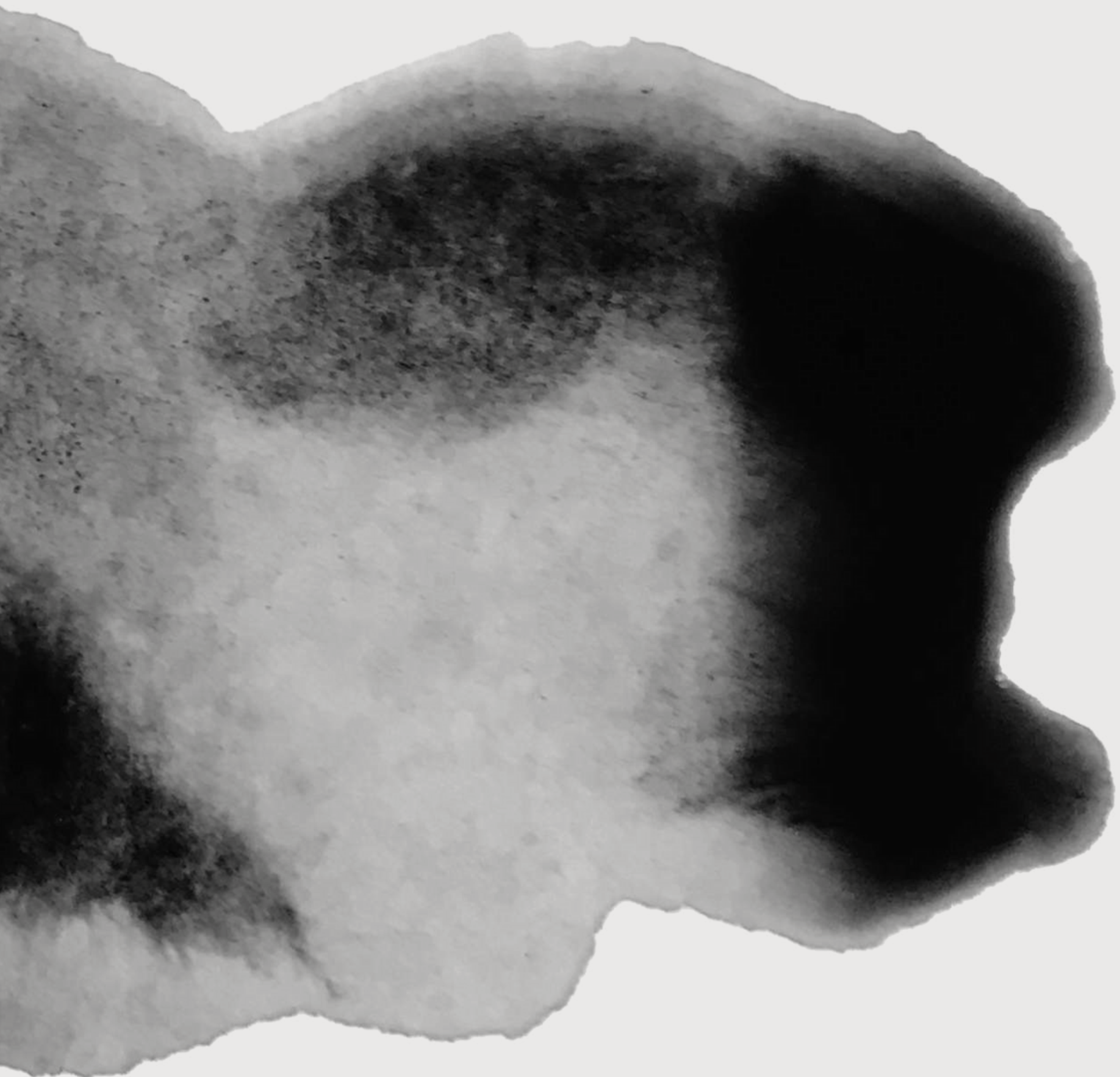


KAYLA ETHERA

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portfolio of selected works



hello, i am kayla ether.

born there, between massachusetts and living in new york with my grandparents, among streets laden with forgotten stories. at eighteen years old, i left for france, in search of a different rhythm—a fresh start. afro-latina, i carry within me puerto rican roots: spanish, taíno, west african, and a touch of italian. a mosaic of ancestors, a weaving of stories that lives within me, no matter where i am.

after arriving in france, i stopped creating art, following the death of my grandfather enrico, the artist from brooklyn who embodied the essence of creation for me.

he passed away, and not long after, my grandmother aurelia did too—taking a part of me with them.

over time, my body constrained by the rare disease, ehlers-danlos syndrome, endured severe physical challenges, leaving me to rely permanently on a cane. art for me, is not an escape from my circumstances.

it is a necessity, a response to the persistent question: am i still here? am i still something beyond the physical limitations that define me? art becomes my survival, my way of proving that my existence still holds meaning beyond this body that betrays me.

i believe that our bodies are but temporary homes for our spirits— our souls.

today, i seek to reinvent this space where art is created in intimacy, where pain and frustration blend with the fragile beauty of existence. here, every gesture, every breath, becomes an affirmation of who we are beyond the visible. art is my testimony— sensitive and subtle, but alive.

ether's withers

all that i am, all that i am not in this body, all that i will become — it is a wither.

the word "**wither**" refers to a movement or a direction — "where it goes", often associated with the notion of decline or disappearance. it evokes the idea of something fading, something lost in time, or something transforming. it is a metaphor for the invisible paths we take, for evolution, mortality, and the unseen changes that shape us. wither is the place we are headed, without knowing if we will return. then, there is "**ether**" —

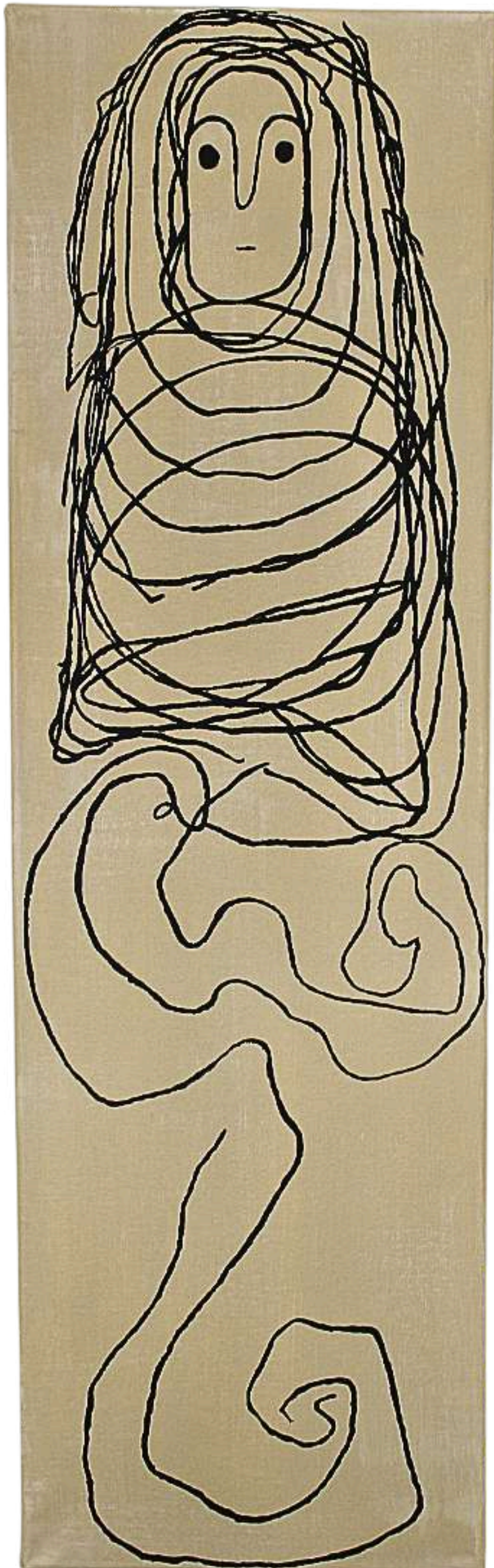
ether, in its ancient sense, represents the void between the stars, the immaterial element that connects and permeates the universe. it is the space, invisible but present, where everything exists without physical form — the idea of the soul, of pure essence that transcends the body, a concept of immateriality and spiritual connection.

within these words, there is a freedom, a fluidity, a space between what we see and what we feel, a space that links souls to something greater than themselves.

my name, ether, is intentional. it is part of a family tradition where each generation begins with an "e," a bridge between my ancestors and me. this "e," my middle name, elisabeth, is a heritage, a way of connecting to those who paved the path before me. the struggles and hardships of immigrants, puerto ricans, history of slavery and the atlantic triangle, speak to a profound suffering, a forced uprooting, and an unyielding resilience in the face of oppression.

all the materials i use in my creations are either recycled or organic. nothing is ever lost, nothing is wasted. everything is transformed. each piece carries within it the story of what it once was, breathing new life into what seemed worn, forgotten.

i am fascinated by imperfections, by the way they reveal their own beauty. this is where my style finds its essence. inspired by wabi-sabi, the craftsmanship and simplicity of mingei, the boldness of sōdeisha, and my spirituality as a buddhist— everything is connected.



qui je suis revenue
organic acrylic on canvas
100 x 30 cm, 2024

title translation : who i came back as



my first return to creation after a long pause.

the lines curl and intersect, reflecting the process of rediscovery and rebuilding after hardships.

it's about picking up threads i thought were lost.

the birth of ether.



obi
illustration in a sketchbook titled "primitiva"
20 x 15 cm, 2024



inspired by the artist lena vandrey, the title "mollasse, molasses" plays on the multiple meanings of the words: on one hand, mollasse in french evokes softness, slowness, or a certain weakness; on the other hand, molasses in english refers to a thick, sweet syrup rich with symbolism.

this captures both the crushing slowness of chronic pain and the deceptive sweetness of moments of respite. the search for understanding and resolving the issue can be rewarding, even if this quest brings about slowness and weakness as complications tied to stomach and intestinal diseases: extreme pain and endless questions in the face of inexplicable symptoms. medical examinations and surgical incisions, which reveal without always providing solutions, become layered strata of uncertainty.

the recycled cardboard, vulnerable and marked, reflects the strained body, while the india ink, dark and fluid, traces the visible and invisible scars left by these medical interventions. the wooden frame, solid yet imperfect, symbolizes the paradox of a quest for answers that, instead of clarifying, only deepens the mystery.

mollasse, molasses

india ink on recycled cardboard, recycled wooden frame
62 x 38 cm, 2024



a deep black, a vast and endless ether swallows everything.

it seems peaceful, as if wandering and solitude were their own kind of rest. a sea of absence and immensity.

in the bottom left corner, fragile and almost fading, a small white house—the heartbeat. a sketch of shelter, a roof for protection, a whisper of refuge, tiny against the overwhelming darkness.

the ether speaks softly, to those who listen between the shadows.

estranged & in peace
organic acrylic on canvas
55 x 46 cm, 2024



time nomads
india ink on recycled paper
21 x 17 cm, 2025





denial, refusing to accept a reality- to ignore or repress a thought and feeling as if it did not exist.
eviting pain is it is one of the most primitive of the self defense mechanisms : denial, fantasy, rationalization, regression, isolation, projection, and displacement.
an acquaintance or close friend of all.

defense mechanism
natural clay & natural acrylic paint
14 x 6 cm, 2024

puerto rico

a selection of experimental work inspired by taino, spanish and west african ancestors of puerto rico.



crafted with barnacle seashell textures and delicate seashell details, this sculpture honors the spiritual heritage of the taíno culture of the caribbean.

a representation of a deity, ancestor, or spirit, this zemi connects to rituals involving the use of cohoba, a hallucinogen used to commune with the divine.

the exaggerated grin and wide eyes evoke otherworldly power and intensity, symbolizing protection and a connection to the spiritual world.

the grounded posture and clasped hands suggest reverence and authority, reflecting the balance between life, death, and renewal—a central theme in taíno beliefs.

cohoba zemi
organic natural clay
11 x 8 cm, 2025





black siren
india ink on recycled cloth and frame
77 x 65 cm, 2025

black ink, deep as the roots of a tree,
spreads in all directions — a silhouette, a tree, a person.

layers upon layers of growth, each one bearing witness to the
passage of time, of evolution and erosion. the branches stretch
out, twisting, like veins connected to the sky and the earth, an
echo of continuity and transformation.

growth resides in a shadow — **xibalba**,
the taíno god of death and disease.

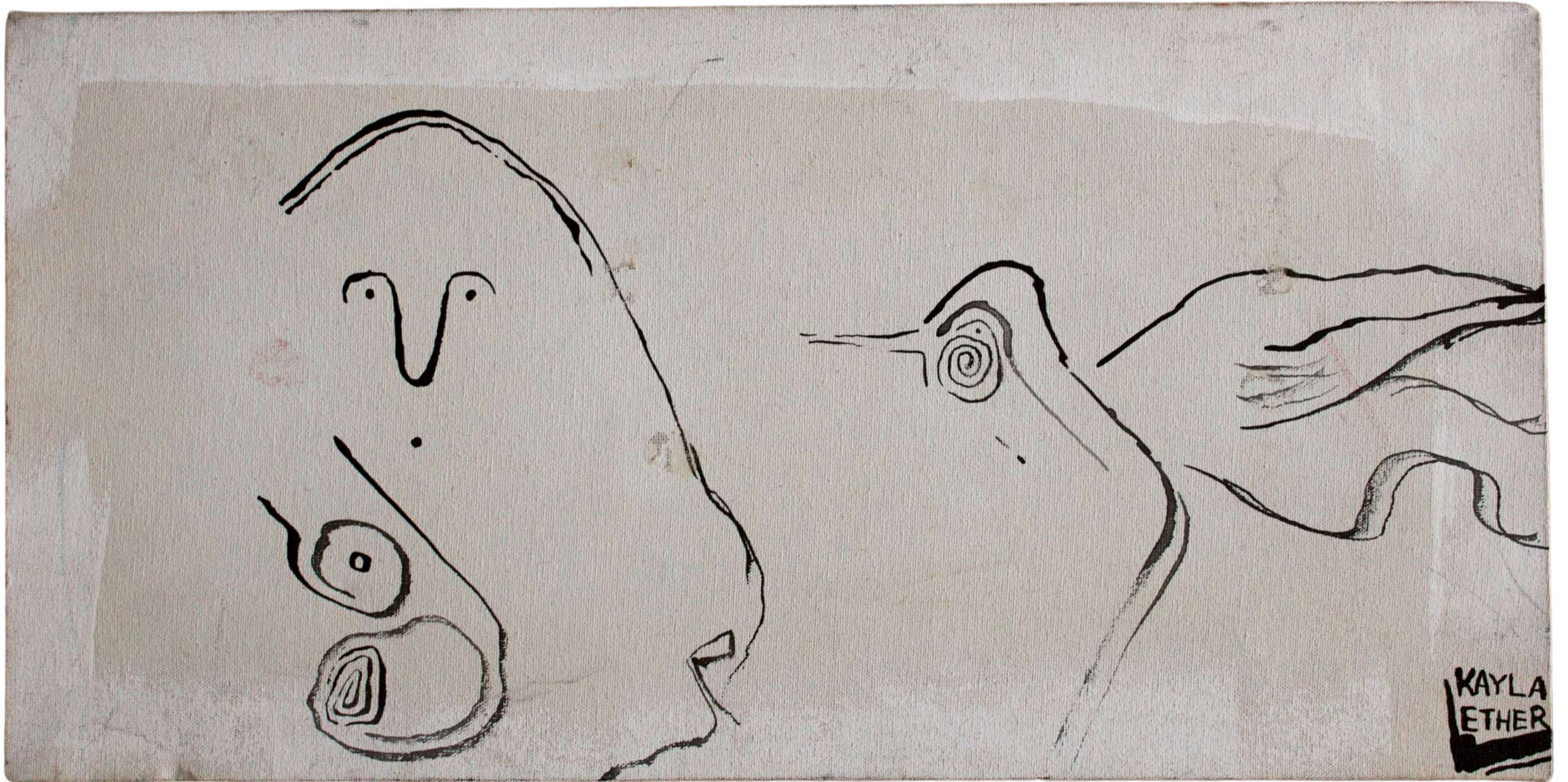
flat as a whisper, an invisible yet undeniable presence. between
life and decay, between renewal and finitude, the tree-person
breathes, rises, and carries within it the weight of mortality and
the promise of eternal change.



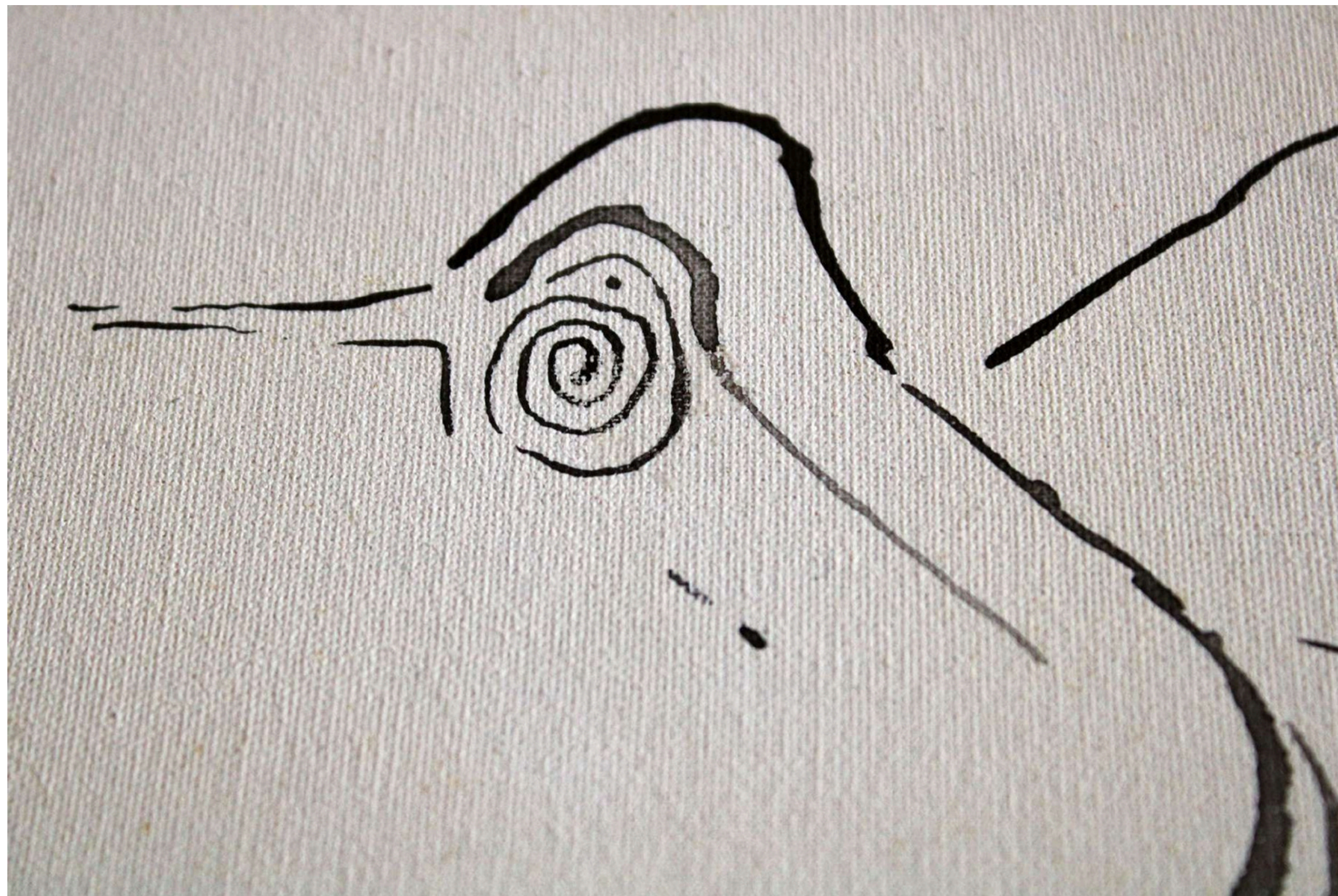
xibalba

india ink on dried tea bag paper on recycled canvas

30 x 24 cm, 2024



guani
india ink on recycled canvas
40 x 20 cm, 2024



guani, in the language of the taínos, means hummingbird, but it is much more than just a bird. before being a hummingbird, it was a fish, a being in search of another world, another form.

the gods, sensitive to its desire, transformed it so it could taste the freedom of the sky. on this canvas, the ink embraces the shape of flight, a fragile freedom, a symbol of metamorphosis. guani embodies this quest for meaning, this freedom to reinvent oneself, unique to the taínos, but also to every human being.

the ink on the canvas captures this movement of transformation, this dance between worlds, existence and the beyond, where every beat of the wings affirms a chosen freedom, a quest for meaning. a bird, a fish, a man, everything is connected in this ceaseless search for reinvention.



seacritter withers
india ink on paper
series of 21 x 15 cm, 2025



totem

dried and burned tea bags, organic acrylic on recycled paper

19 x 13 cm, 2024

series of puerto rican sugarcane plantations

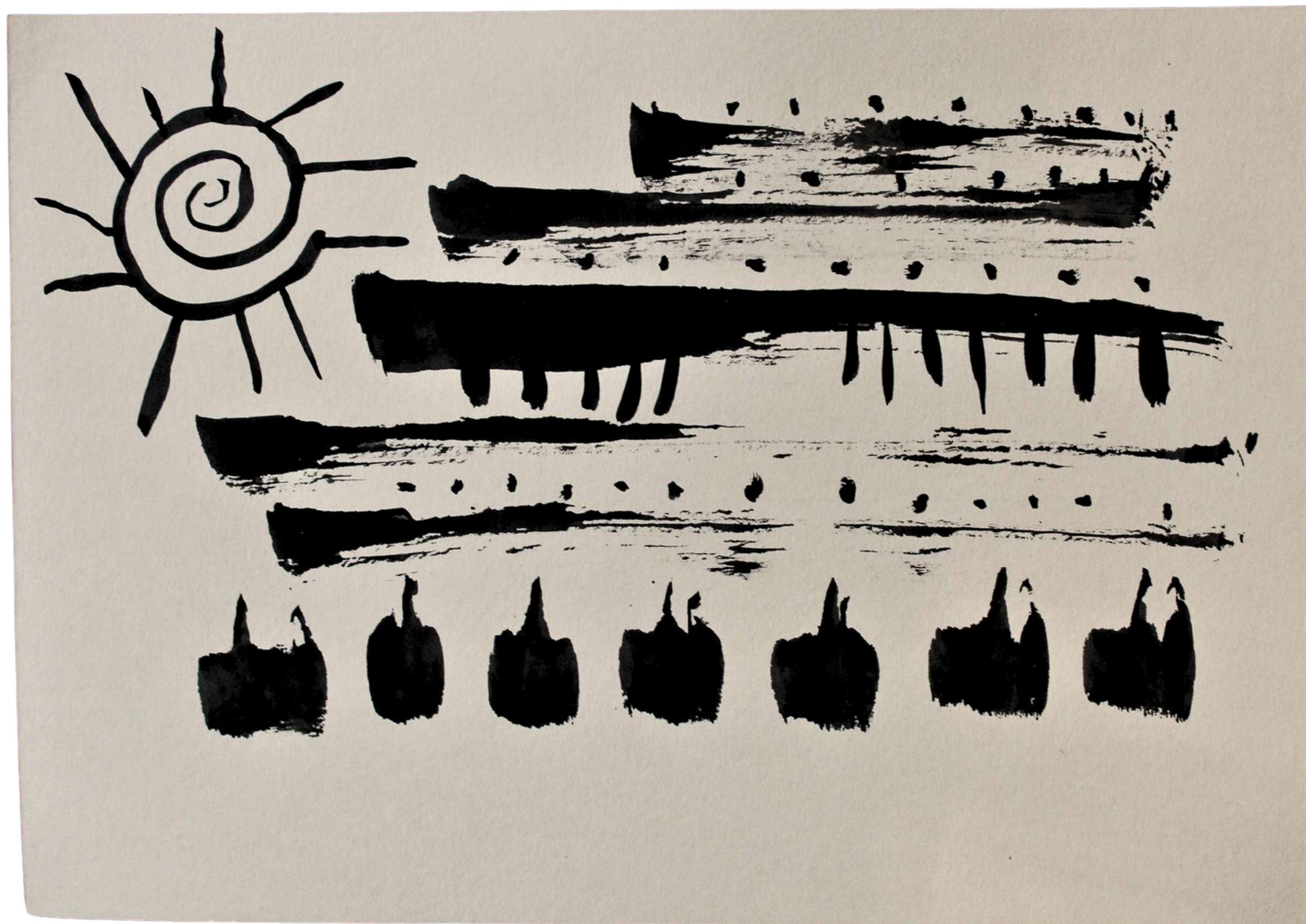
cutting sugarcane is, in every aspect, a brutal task done by hand under a scorching sun. for centuries, it was enslaved africans who provided this labor. after the abolition of slavery in puerto rico in 1873, this task became the domain of the island's working class. the rise of the sugarcane industry is closely tied to a significant increase in slavery in puerto rico in the early 19th century.



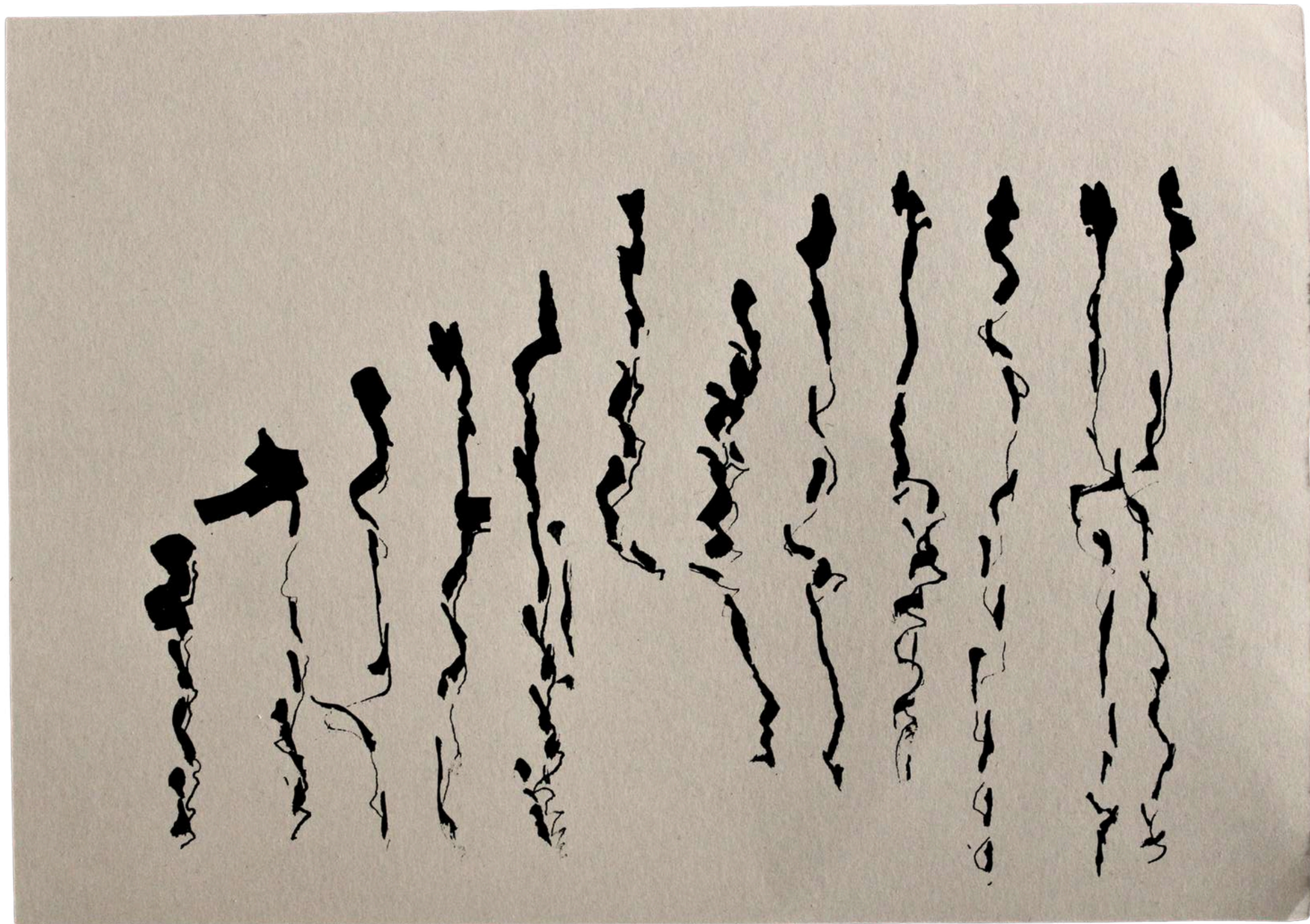
tyrant, servant.

illustrations in a handmade sketch book, titled "human complexities"

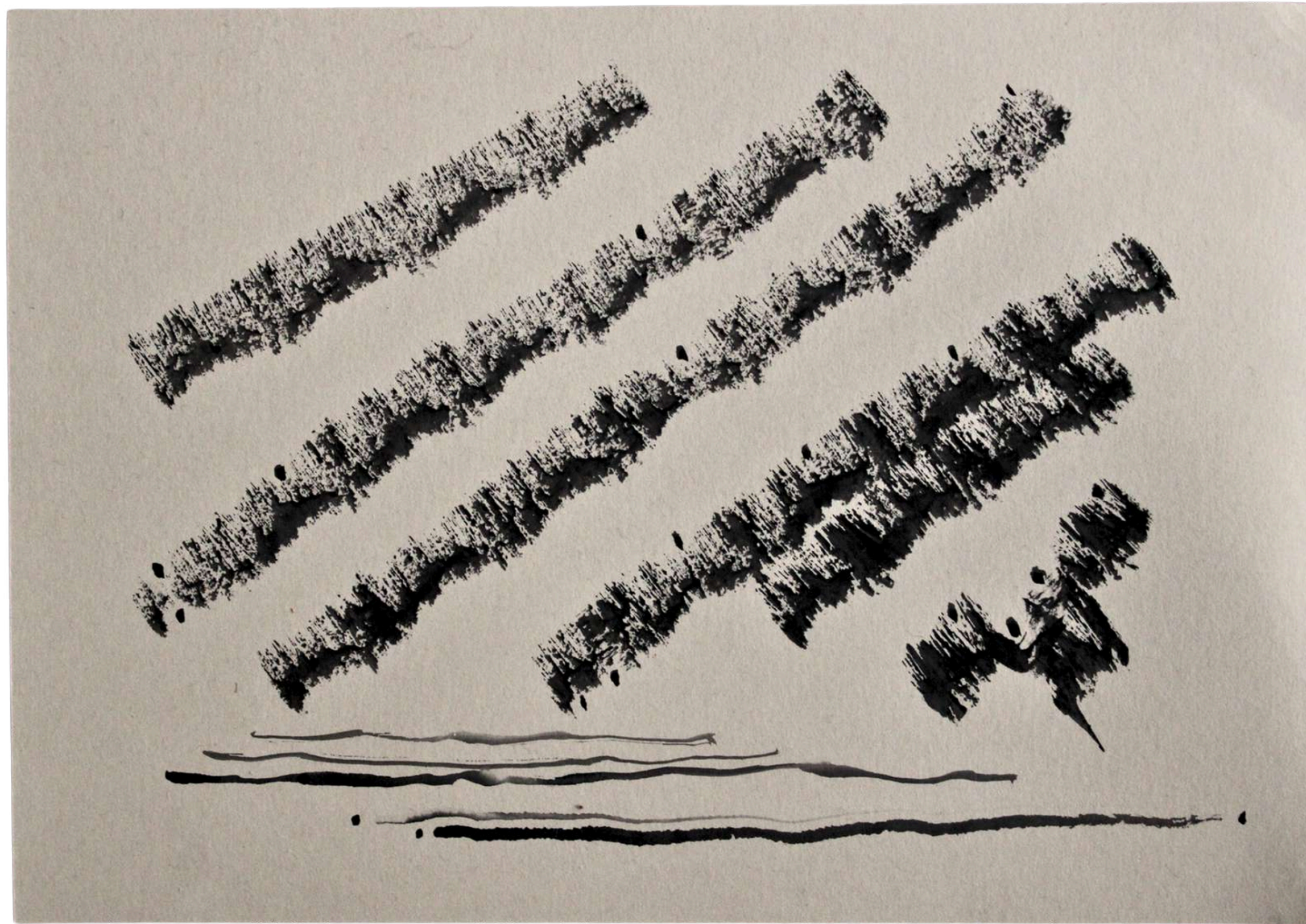
25 x 36 cm, 2024



boriquas
india ink on paper
21 x 30 cm, 2024



seeds
india ink on paper
21 x 30 cm, 2024



coast
india ink on paper
21 x 30 cm, 2024

thank you for accompanying me in my journey.

