



DONG DAWEI

GALLERY YANG 杨画廊

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Dong Dawei was born in Dalian, China, in 1980. He received his Bachelor of Arts in 2004 from the Lu Xun Academy of Fine Arts, Shenyang, China, and a DNSEP with congratulations from the jury from ENSA-Bourges in France in 2011. He currently lives and works in Beijing. His works have been shown at Space Station Gallery, Beijing, China; Gallery Perrotin, Hong Kong, China; Taikang Space, Beijing, China; Chengdu MOCA, Chengdu, China; A4 Contemporary Arts Center, Chengdu, China; K11 Art Space, Hong Kong, China; CAFAM, Beijing, China; Hubei Art Museum, Wuhan, China; Wuhan Art Museum, Hubei, China; Guan Shanyue Art Museum, Shenzhen, China; AMNUA, Nanjing, China; UCCA, Beijing, China; MMOMA, Moscow, Russia; House of Culture Bourges, Bourges, France; and Musée Saint-Roch, Issoudin, France.



INSTALLATION VIEWS

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The Common Reader, Gallery Yang, Beijing, China, 2016

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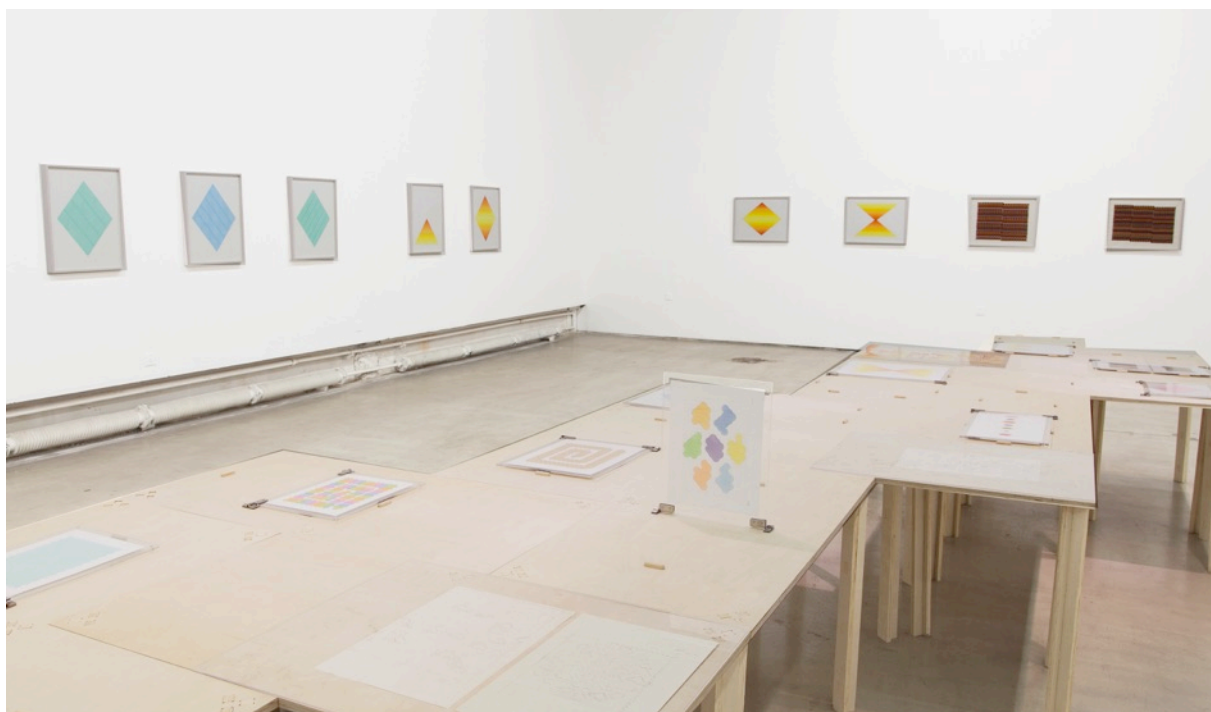
The Common Reader, Gallery Yang, Beijing, China, 2016



The Common Reader, Gallery Yang, Beijing, China, 2016



The Common Reader, Gallery Yang, Beijing, China, 2016



The Theory of Clouds, Space Station Gallery, Beijing, China, 2015



A Singular Point, Gallery Perrotin, Hong Kong, China, 2015

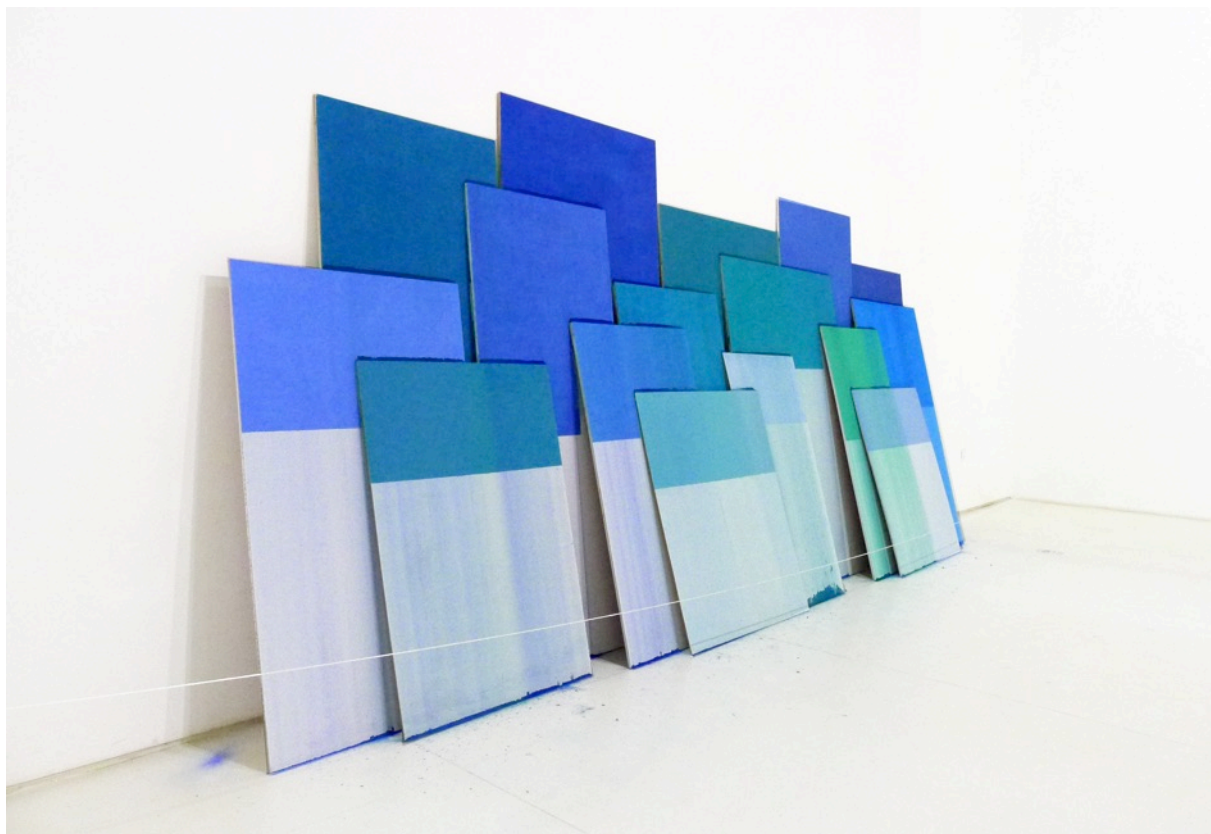


A Singular Point, Gallery Perrotin, Hong Kong, China, 2015

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Repetition and Multiplicity, Space Station Gallery, Beijing, China, 2012

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WORKS

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I THE COMMON READER

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The uniqueness and sophistication of Dong Dawei's past artistic practice is very impressive. And yet, perhaps in spite of the connotations of the term "sophistication", Dong Dawei tends to employ ordinary tools, plain techniques, and easily understandable forms. Turning unique and specialized ideas into plain forms is a method which Dong Dawei maintains in his artistic practice.

The phrase "the common reader" originally sprang from an essay by the British writer Samuel Johnson, who held that views of writers should be in concert with those of common people, for common readers still retain a common sensibility not yet contaminated by literary prejudices. Dong Dawei uses this phrase as a metaphor in his efforts to restore the simple, pure perspective in his artistic practice.

It is as a common reader that Dong Dawei has undertaken a rich and colorful practice. In this exhibition the artist takes a step further with this series of works, which encompass words, language, books, and literature, and he moves to complete the transformation from common reader to creator.



Room of K's Assistants

Following works relating to letters and typesetting, this work is the artist's delving into Kafka's *The Castle*. In this book, the protagonist, simply named "K," has two assistants. Though the author did not concretely describe the assistants, they play important roles. The artist imagined their ways and their individual differences, and created an absurd-yet-real room to give them dimensions. Because the room was double-occupancy, all of its items are doubled. When being prepared, the items were given special consideration: they needed to be absolutely useless and utterly absurd.



Room of K's Assistants, 2014-2016, Installation, Cell Room, Furniture, 340×360×230 cm



Room of K's Assistants, 2014-2016, Installation, Cell Room, Furniture, 340x360x230 cm



Room of K's Assistants, 2014-2016, Installation, Cell Room, Furniture, 340×360×230 cm



Room of K's Assistants, 2014-2016, Installation, Cell Room, Furniture, 340×360×230 cm

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My Yellow Book Collection

Ordinary libraries arrange books logically, such as by genre, country, and so on. The artist instead arranged according to color. In Chinese, “yellow book” is a double entendre. With this intention, the artist searched for numerous books with yellow spines to make his library, forming his personal collection of yellow books.



My Yellow Book Collection, 2012–2016, Installation, Books, Dimensions Variable

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My Yellow Book Collection, 2012–2016, Installation, Books, Dimensions Variable

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Metamorphosis

Metamorphosis is a Kafka novel that tells a story of a man's transformation into a beetle. In this work, the artist changed the novel's written letters into visual symbols, making its content immediately discernable to the eye. First, he used the 26 alphabet letters to make rectangular-shaped forms, creating letters that were block-shaped. For example, "a" was given a big form, where as "i" got a slender one; punctuation got very small forms. Then, he plugged the letters into an RGB color palette. After matching each letter with one of the three colors, the system assigned each a specific shade within the RGB continuum. Thus, "a" became red, "b" became red-orange, "c" became orange, and so on, until "z" became purple. From this, the text's linguistic symbols changed to visual symbols. At the sametime, they could be reverted back to their original letters.



Metamorphosis, 2011, Book, 98p, 19×12 cm; 2016, Digital Print, 70×50x6 cm

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Metamorphosis, 2011, Book, 98p, 19x12 cm; 2016, Digital Print, 70x50x6 cm

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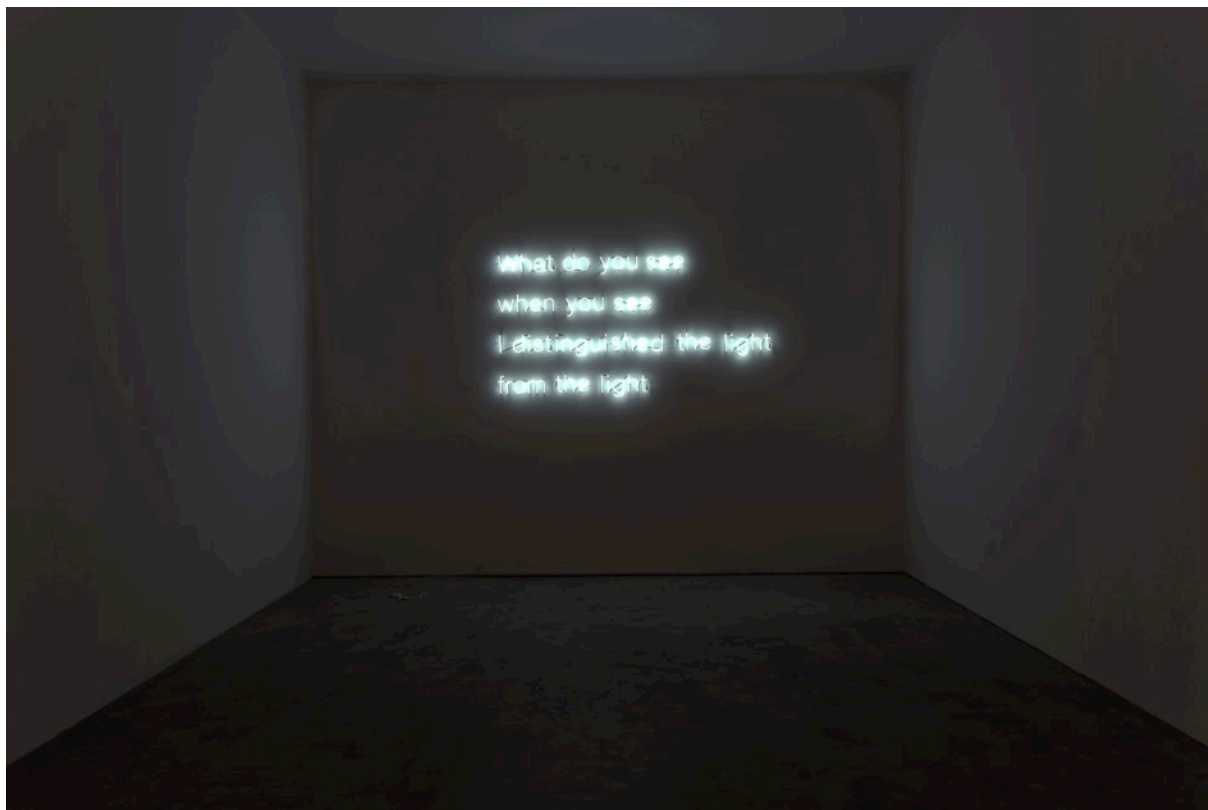
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Distinguish the Light from the Light

The work's text originates from a poem by Joachim Satorius. Poetry essentially lacks inquiry into the visual and observed, yet the artist read into these two sentences' signals and designata, from which he pursued an inquiry into visual essences: light is at once what we see in front of us, and can also serve as the object of sight. What's more, the media itself is light-emitting, allowing the work and its content to mutually identify its experience.



Distinguish the Light from the Light, 2013, Neon Light, 130x240 cm



Ways in the History of Painting

Differing from Chinese, Western languages from Latin roots have words that vary in length, and within a book's type setting the spaces between words become disorderly gaps. The artist used straight lines to thread together different gaps, sometimes going through two or three, other times five or six, even. Then he concealed the letters, and the gaps within the book became complicated lines. The original book, published in French, was *history of painting*; the artist search through the text's gaps could be seen as a metaphor for finding his own path within painting.



Ways in the History of Painting, 2011, Book, 130p, 17.5×12 cm; 2016, Digital Print, 88×120×4 cm

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Ways in the History of Painting (part)),
2011, Book, 130p, 17.5×12 cm; 2016, Digital Print, 88×120x4 cm



Verse by Google

This work is an ongoing project dating from 2013. The artist entered a set of pronouns (“you,” “I,” “he,” “we,” and “they,” and so on) into Google search, upon which Google automatically presented the 10 most-relevant search options, which were also the most sought-after, so to speak. The artist took these 10 options and made them into poems by Google. He selected the 40 most ingenious stanzas and called them *Verse by Google*.



Verse by Google, Book, 2012–2016, 54 pages, 21×15 cm

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Verse by Google, Book, 2012-2016, 54 pages, 21×15 cm



Double Stereo

The artist used there productive ability of reflection to turn sound's doubling (the characters for which in Chinese also mean Dolby Stereo) into double vision.



Double Stereo, 2011, Signboard, Mirror, 51x26x33 cm



My Loneliness is a Hotplate

When he first saw the book *My Loneliness is a Flower Garden*, the artist associated it with a hot plate's design. After an extensive search, he bought a hot plate highly similar to the book, and he juxtaposed the two.



My Loneliness is a Hotplate, 2016, Book, Frame, Hotplate, 40x30x2 cm

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Envy and Environnement

Integrating into the space of the exhibition, *Envy and Environnement* is installed in the café area. The word the work presents fundamentally means “environment,” yet also contains “envie” as its root. Environment recently has become a hot topic of discussion for everyone, not excluding the artist. The artist believes that the environment will become dim as envy multiplies.



Envy and Environnement, 2011, Handmade Light box, LED Lights, Lambency Paper, Board, 16×140×11.5 cm



AI Cinema

AI (Adobe Illustrator) is a type of editing software. When installing updates, the words already entered into the program would incessantly flash on screen. The artist uses the software's flaw in combination with a concise-yet-distinctive word to produce flickering phrases—the type of effect seen in old-fashioned black and white American movies.



AI Cinema, 2012, Video without Sound, 03:00



One Hundred Years of Solitude

Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* was published by various Chinese publishers nearly every year from 1982; to date there are over 50 versions. *One Hundred Years of Solitude* as a phrase is deep in meaning. A work of art after the death of its creator is left to the world, left to experience its own, drifting fate. In the process of collecting these books, the only legal copy the artist obtained was incidentally the very last one he acquired. All of the previous copies, despite being published by legitimate publishers, had not been granted permission by the author and were in fact pirated.



One Hundred Years of Solitude, 2013–2016, Installation, Books, 25×93×17 cm

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Revolutions

Because their spines are of different heights, books aligned along a bookshelf form a cityscape-like horizon. The artist used the smallest book as a standard of measurement to cut off the tops of the larger books, making them all identical. Protruding towards the center of the gallery, this standard transformation of thought is related to the national ideology of centralized power—one of the very aims of revolution.



Revolutions, 2016, Installation, Books, 20x58x70 cm



II DUST TO DUST

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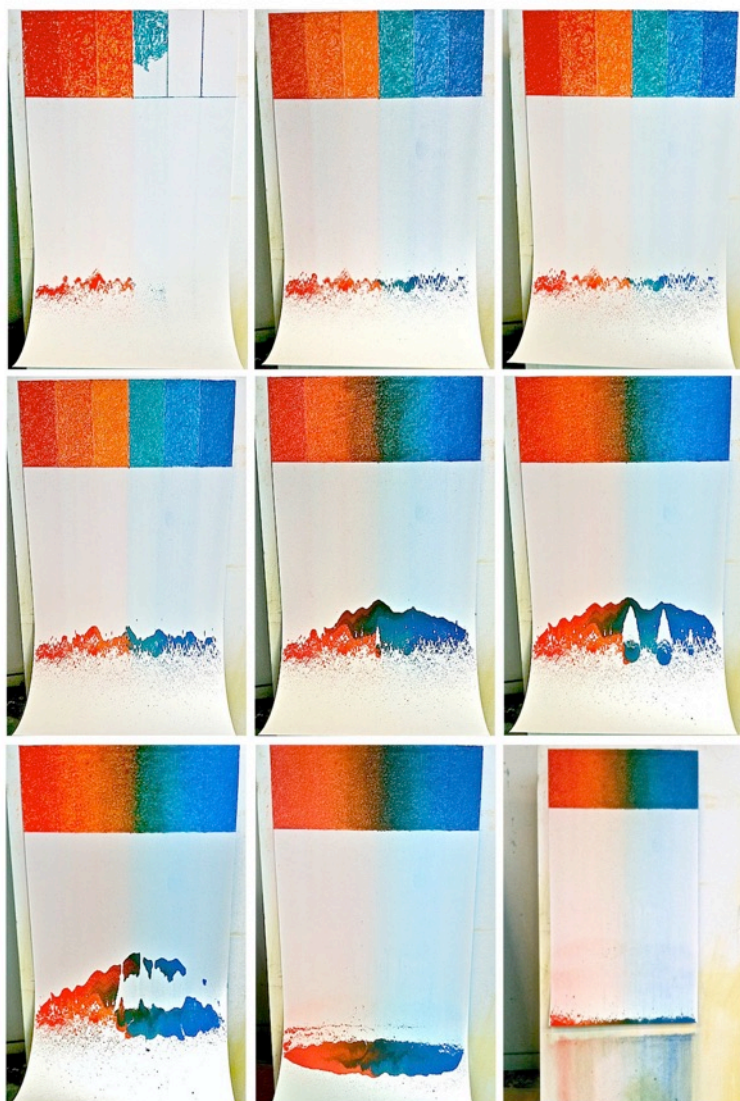
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Ordinary people will avoid generating excess powder when using pastel because it can fall on the floor or land on their clothes. But this excess powder is an unavoidable byproduct, for pastel is originally made from it. I have attempted to acknowledge this characteristic of pastel, to not see the byproduct as excessive and troublesome; instead, to see it as part of the artwork. This way, the powder also gives nearby feedback to my images, listed as follows:

1. Powder reminds us of the original pastel, revealing the transformation of substance in the process of painting.
2. Powder points out in painting's process as not being a product of the present moment.
3. In the conversation between powder and the image's surface, the work becomes an independent, self-explanatory system.
4. Powder results from gravity pulling it to the floor, from air currents disseminating it across the space, and two dimensional painting naturally becomes a work with the space's character.



A Work in Process

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Dust to Dust 3.0, 2016, Pastel on Paper, Aluminium Plate, 350×180×100 cm

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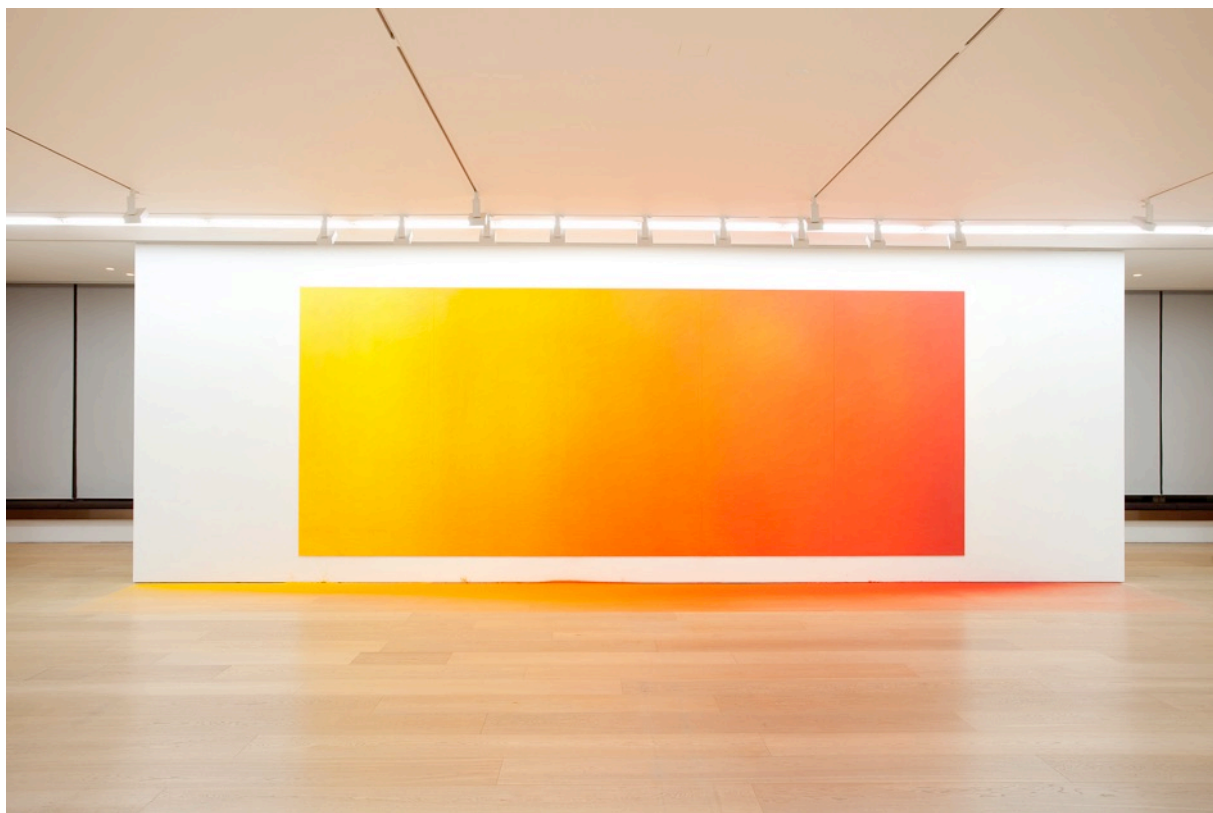
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Dust to Dust: Slim, 2016, Pastel on Paper, Mounted Aluminum Plates, 55x200x10 cm



Dust to Dust: 17A, 2015, Pastel on Board, 244x610 cm



Dust to Dust: 201D, 2015, Pastel on Paper, Wooden Frames, Easels, Dimensions Variable



Dust to Dust: 201C, 2015, Pastel on Paper, Wooden Frames, Dimensions Variable

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Dust to Dust: 701a, 2015, Pastel on Paper, Wooden Frame, Easel, Dimensions Variable

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Dust to Dust: 201a, 2015, Pastel on Paper, board, 244×122×50 cm

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Dust to Dust: 201d, 2015, Pastel on Paper, Board, 244x122x50 cm

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Dust to Dust: 201b, 2015, Pastel on Paper, Frame, 80×100 cm

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Dust to Dust: Single Tone, 2014, Pastel on Board, Frame, Dimensions Variable

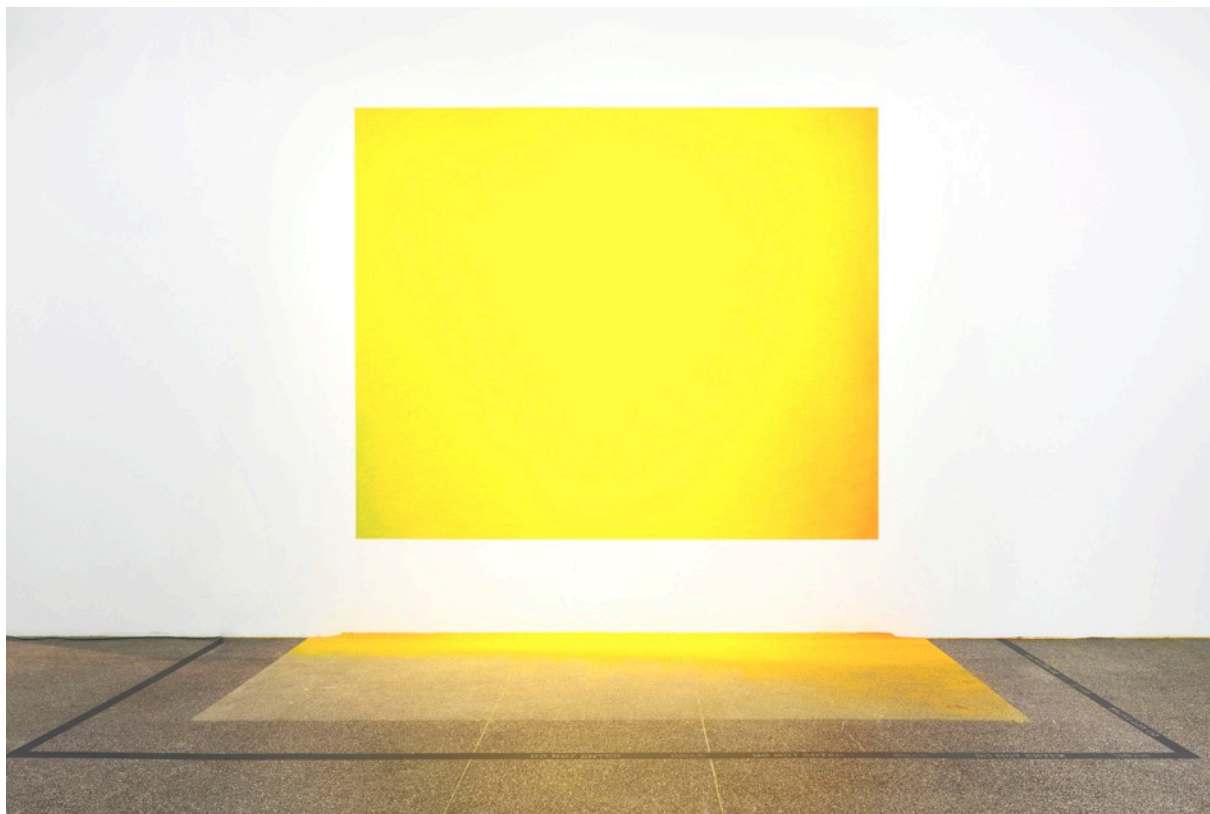
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Dust to Dust: Antenna, 2014, Pastel of Board, Frame, 450x510x200 cm

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Dust to Dust: Distant Mountains 2, 2012, Pastel on Board, 240x500x100 cm



Dust to Dust 12a, 2012, Pastel on Paper, 200x244 cm



Dust to Dust 2.0, 2012, Pastel on Paper, Aluminum Plate, Shelf, 60x45cmx2cm

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III MARKER ON PAPER

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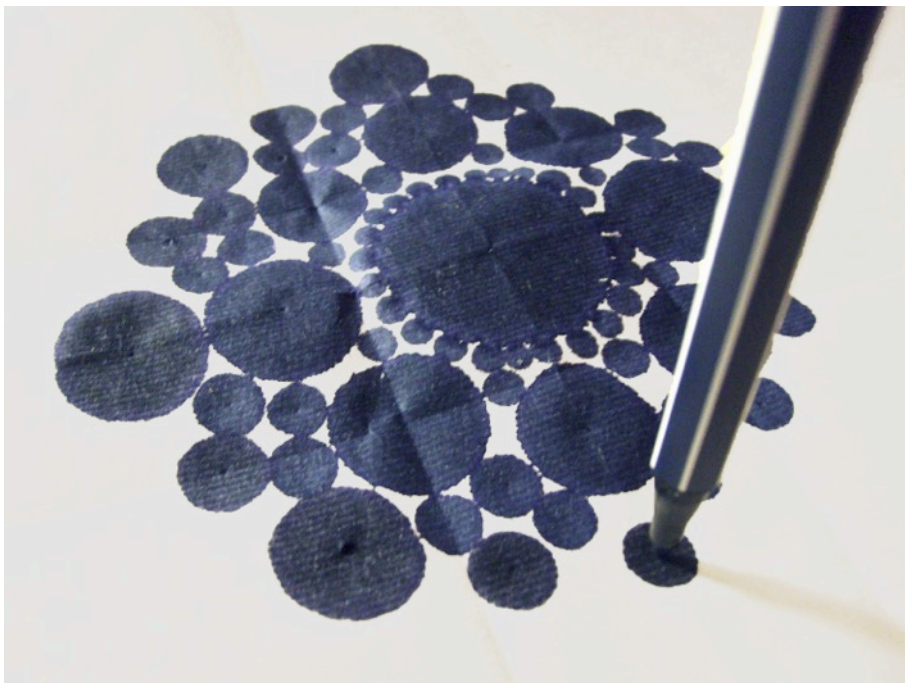


Dong Dawei's works use painting as a source of nourishment. Through exploring the richness of his media and forms of expression, his works energetically enter the realm of contemporary art. His works are concerned with expressions of form and concept alike, and ultimately make both of these elements perceivable by using simple yet effective ways of materialization.

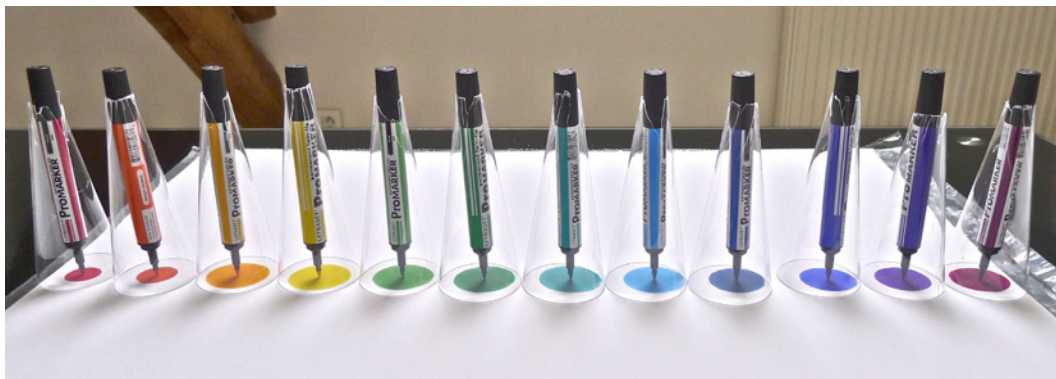
That paper will absorb water when water-based marker is systematically applied to it is a characteristic which, beyond recording water marks on paper, will cause color to naturally spread in halos, composing the painting's surface.

Water-based color not only spreads in halos, but also permeates vertically. The longer a water-based marker is applied to a flat piece of paper, the larger its spot of color will be. On folded paper, the spots on the paper's exposed region are larger. When two spots meet in the process of expansion, a boundary of color will form between them. When a spot remains static as another spot expands, the latter will slowly intrude into the former; the result is a fusion the colors. Equally of note is that different ways of folding will provide a different composition, one that is organic. This organic structure not only helps the artist organize a work's basic elements (i.e. spots of color) but also allows the artist to build a framework across many works.

The artist consciously makes use of these characteristics of his media through two simple actions, placing and folding. He thus successfully introduces time, space, and structure into his works, and, by simply using paper, extends concept and makes a breakthrough in form.



A Work in Process

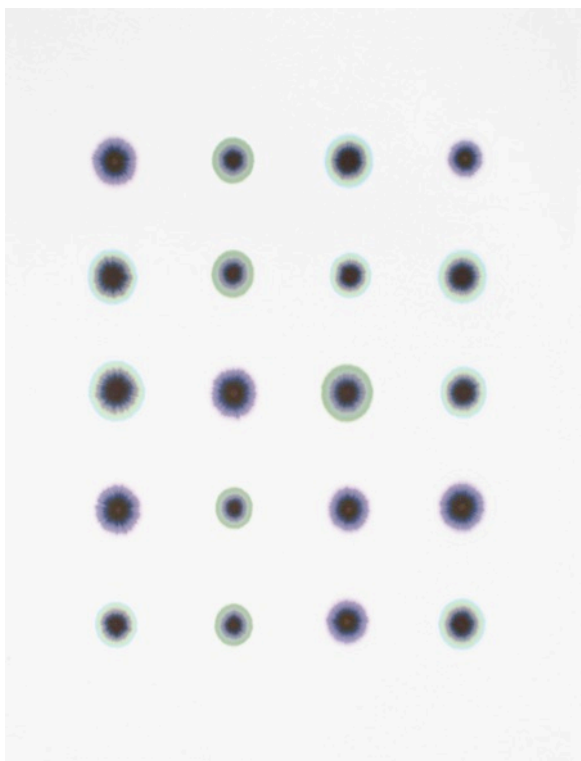


Works in Process

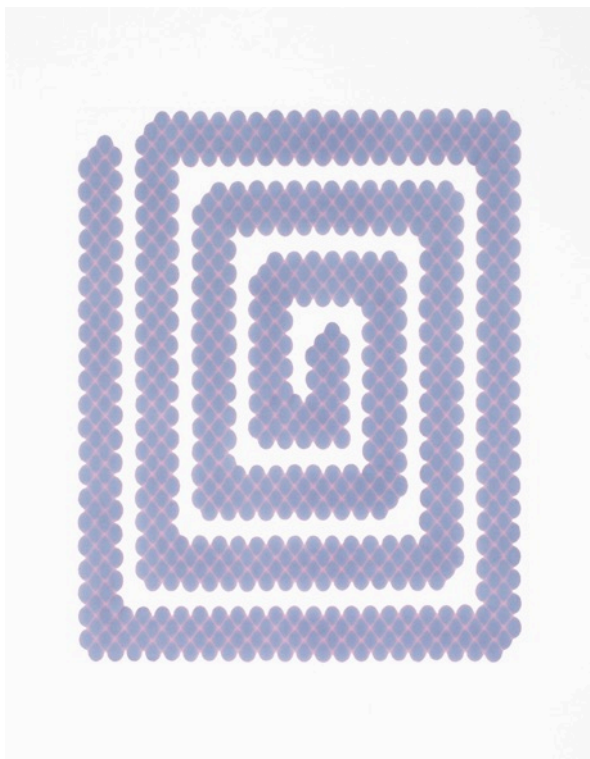
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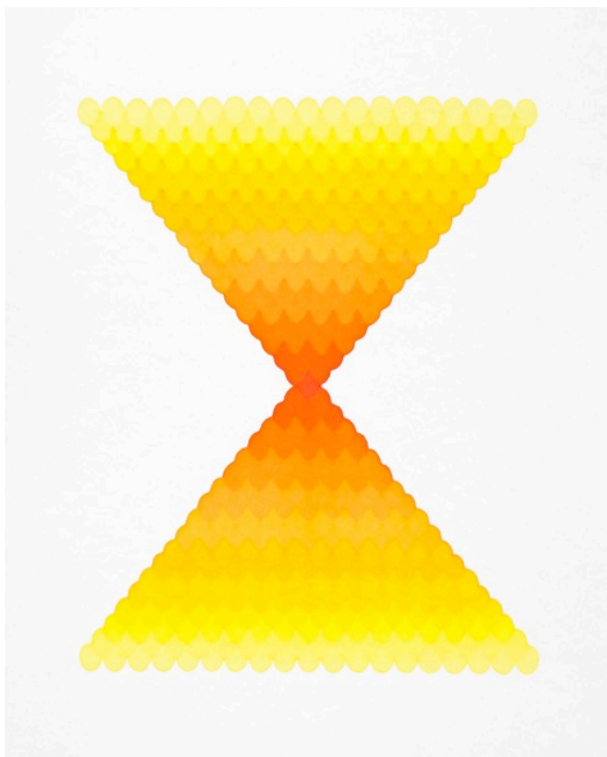
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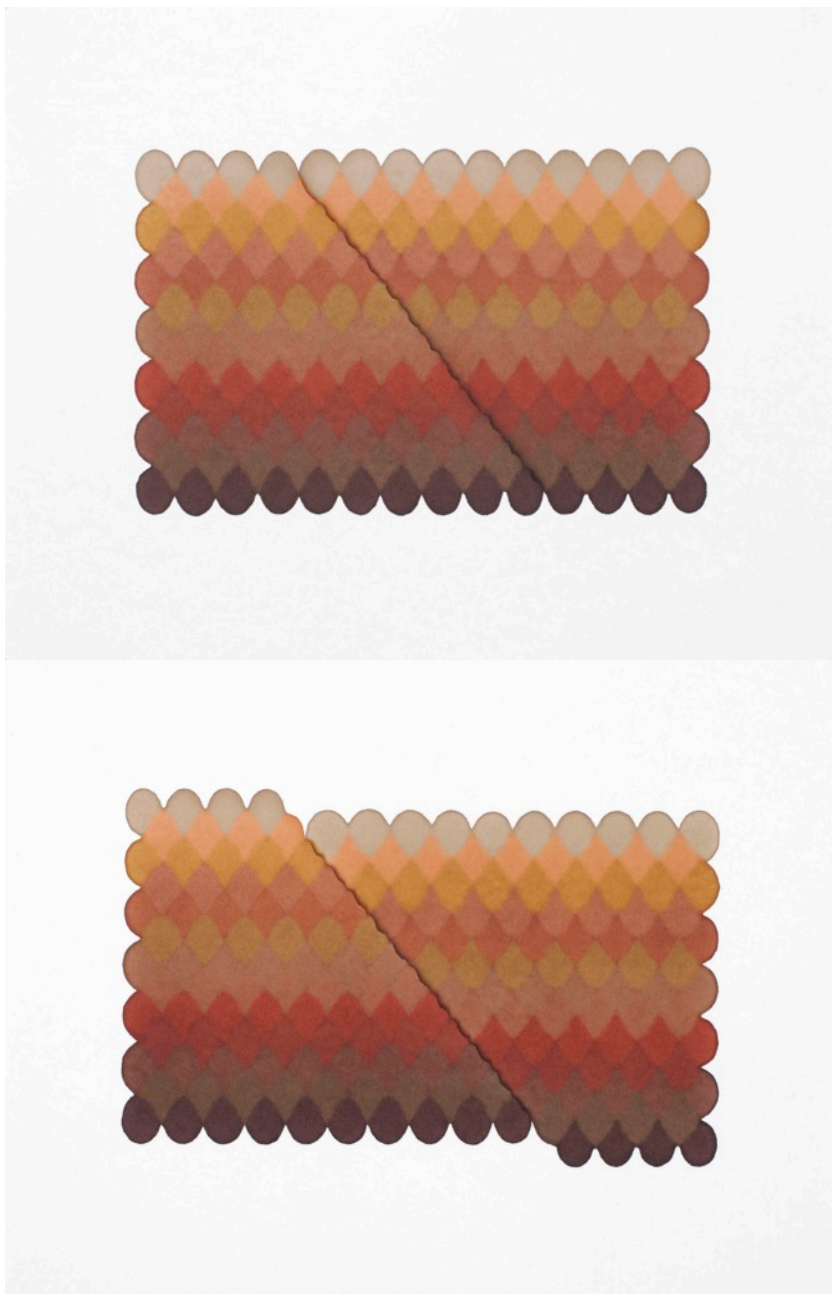
Dark Galaxy S1, 2015, Marker on Paper, 65x50 cm



Voracious Snake 20-S1, 2015, Marker on Paper, 65×50 cm



Volcano s1, 2015, Marker on Paper, 50×40 cm



Fault ss1-2, 2014, Marker on Paper, 25×32.5×2 cm

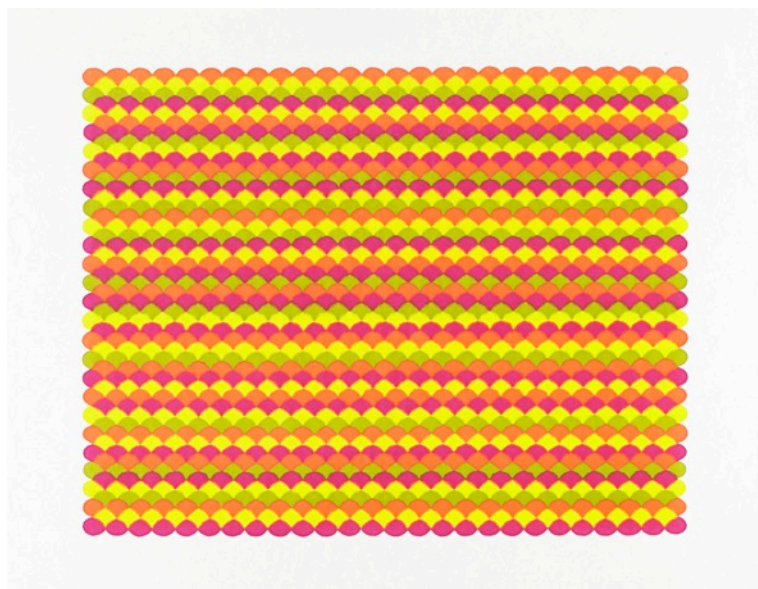
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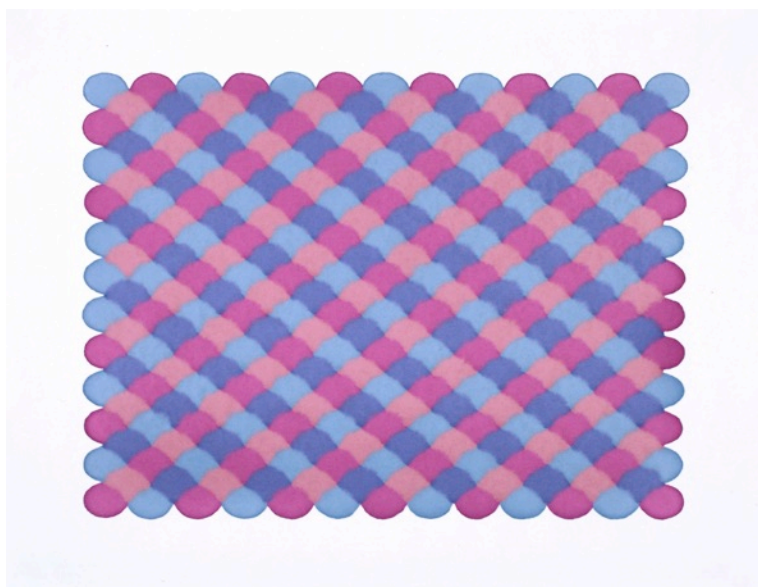
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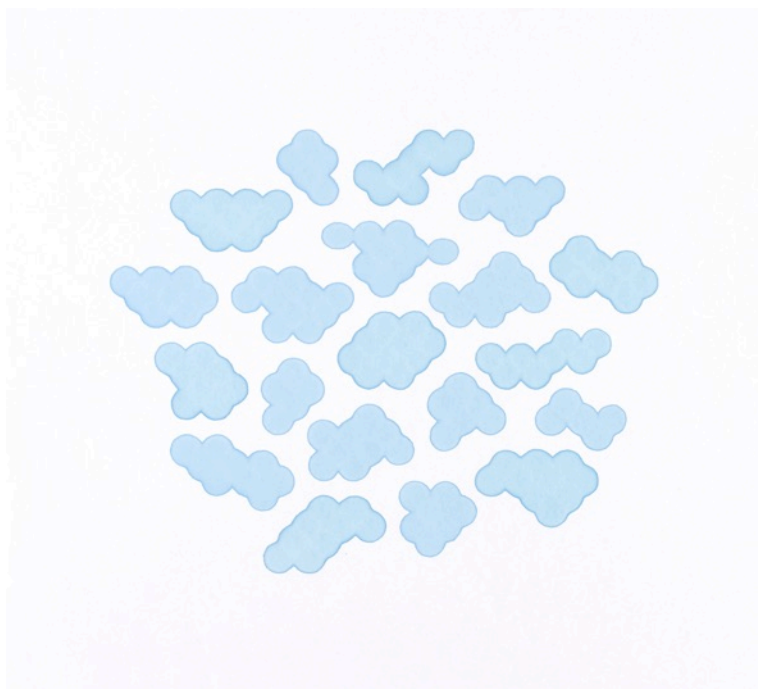
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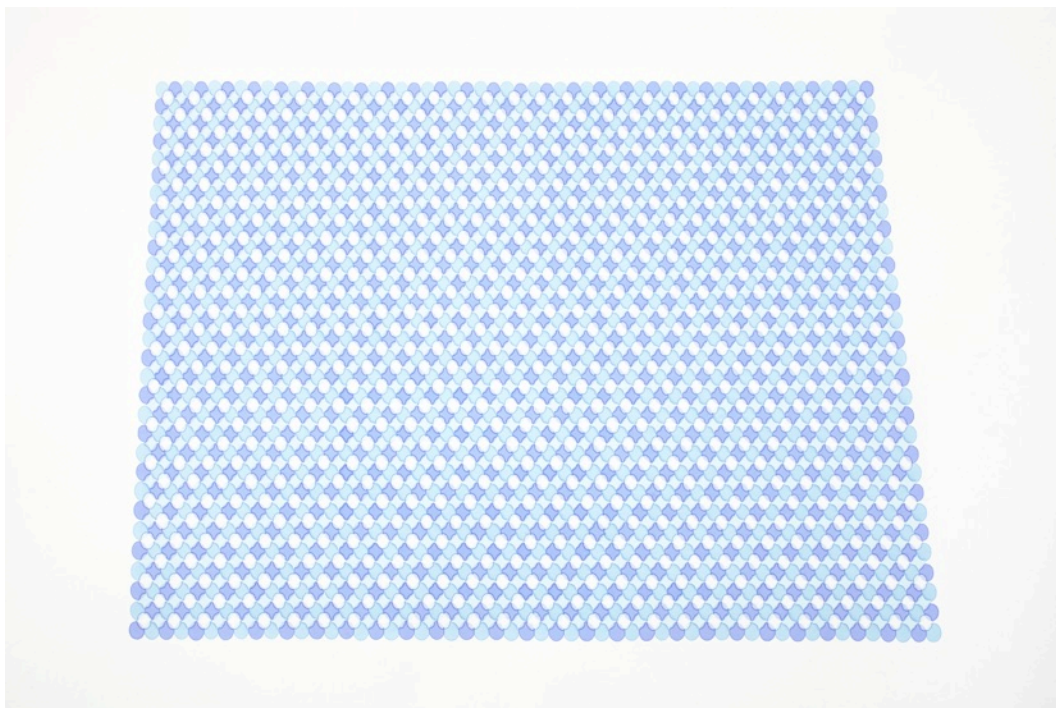
Flag, 2014, Marker on Paper, 50x60cm



Four Color Weave, 2014, Marker on Paper, 25x32.5cm



Cloud Theory, 2014, Marker on Paper, 40x50cm



David Hockney's Pond, 2014, Marker on Paper, 80x120 cm

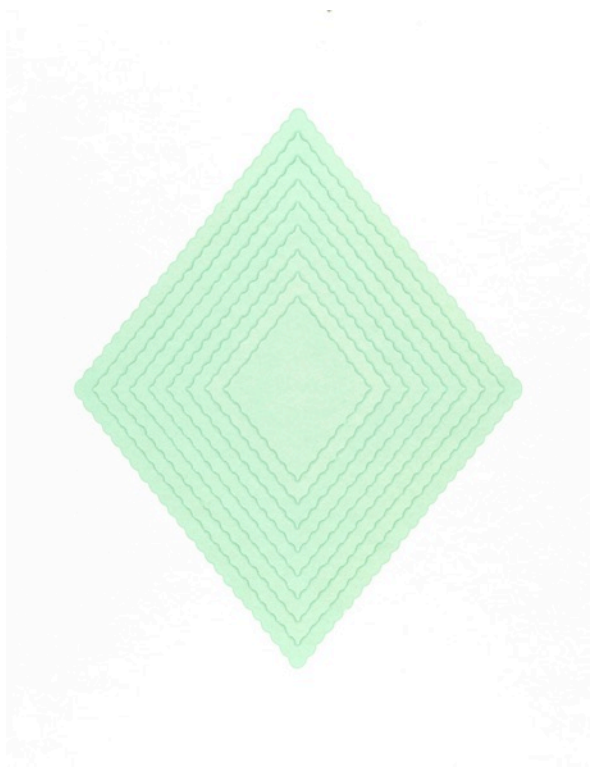
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Diamond, 2014, Marker on Paper, 65x50 cm

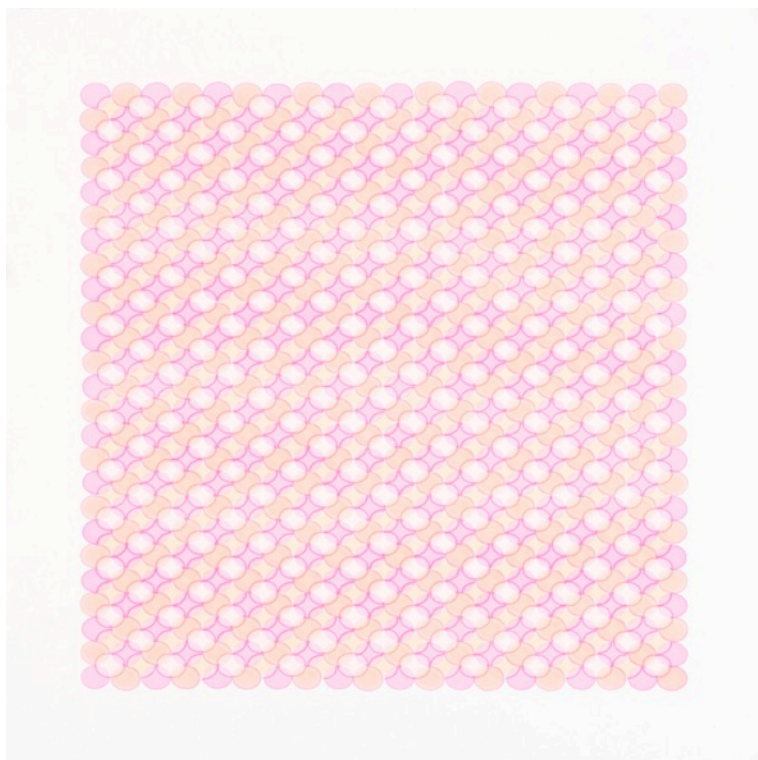
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Four Shades of Peach Interwoven, 2014, Marker on Paper, 55x50 cm

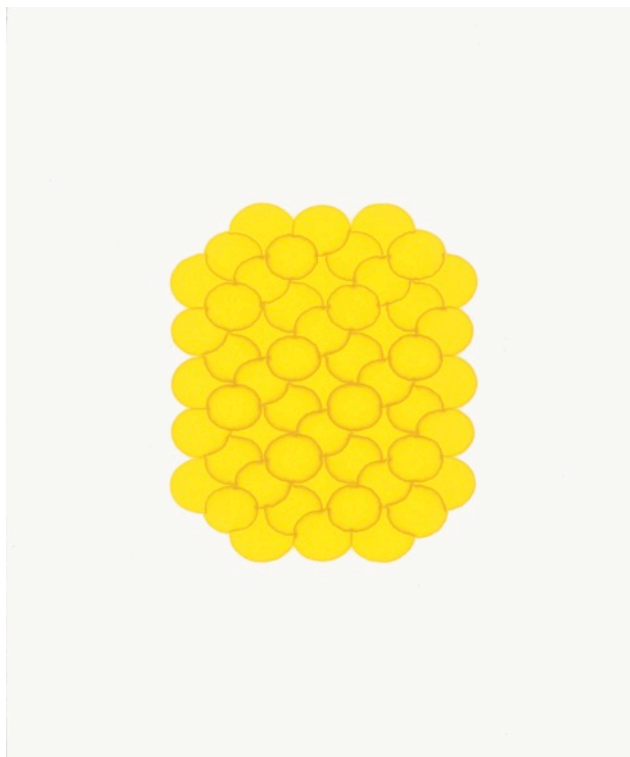
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Pineapples, 2013, Marker on Paper, 25x32.5 cm



4 Water Cubes, 2013, Marker on Paper, 32.5x25 cm



Spring of Eden S18, 2013, Marker on Paper, 65x50 cm

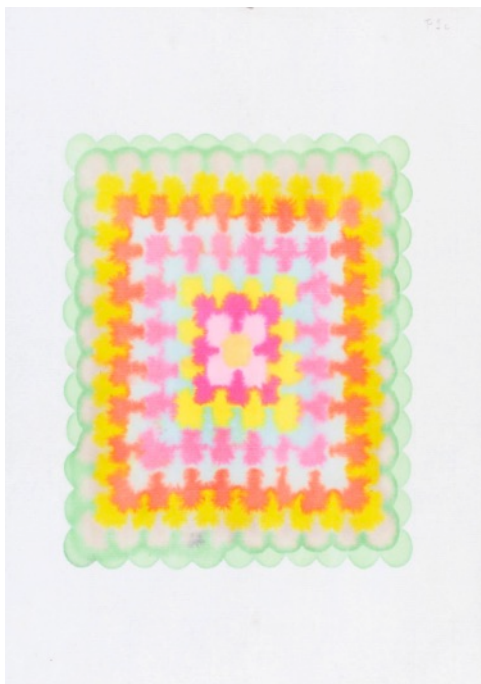
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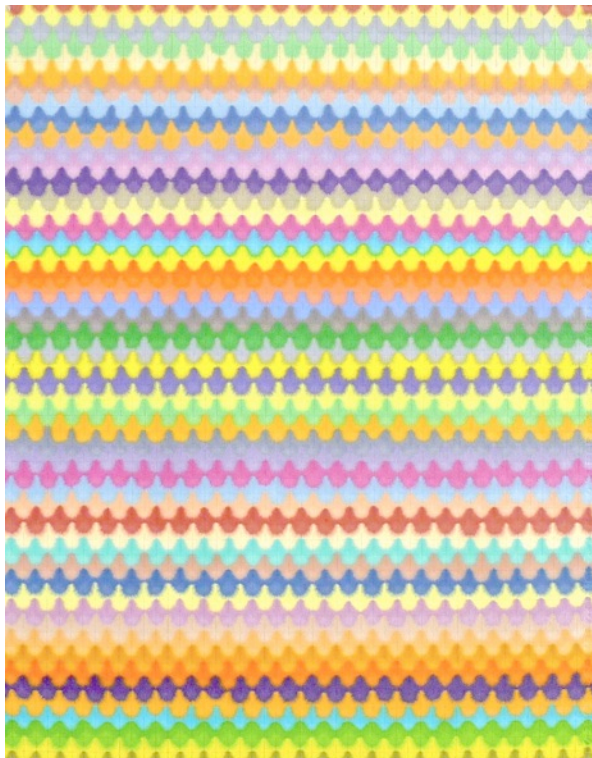
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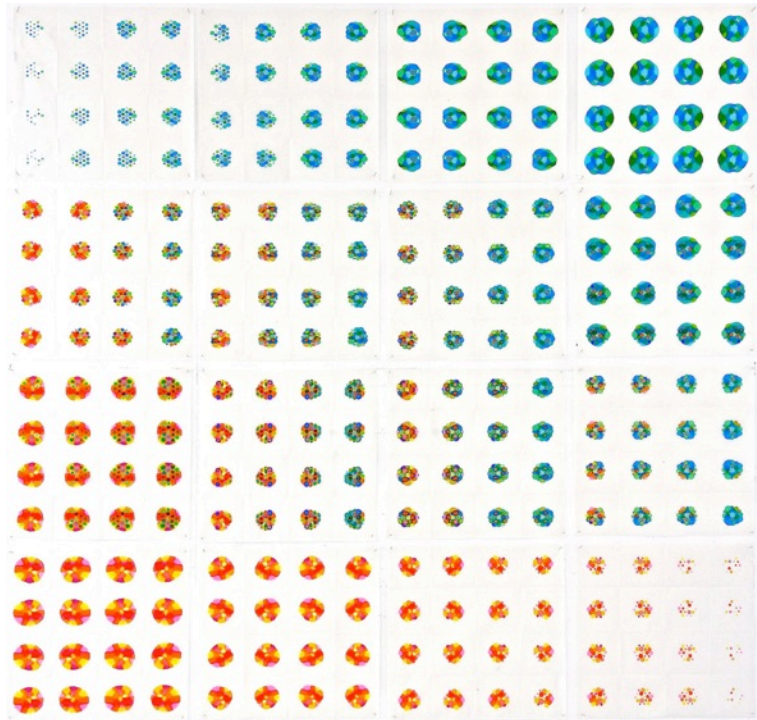
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FIC, 2014, Marker on Paper, 35x25 cm



No Spring in Beijing, 2010, Marker on Paper, 50x65 cm



Spring of Bourges, 2008, Marker on Paper, 16x34.5x34.5 cm each