

One Thousand Prayer Gloves

Project Description & Information for Collaborators



The Concept

This project is formed and focused around the act of prayer. As I scroll through social media, I consistently see posts from people requesting prayer, usually accompanied by a short description of their need. I find myself very engaged in these posts, I click on them, read the request, and scroll down to see the replies of others. I often click on the photograph of the person in need, lay my fingers across my handheld screen, and offer my own short prayer. I see these posts shared hundreds, sometimes thousands of times. I think often about the power of such an act—a single prayer request, in only a few days, may be received and responded to thousands of times, and mostly by total strangers living all across the country, even across the world.

I began to think about what such an act might look like if I was able to somehow make evidence of it, attempt to quantify it, and make visible the invisible spoken words of thousands of prayers using the language of visual art. If the prayers are made visible through simple gestures of making, through tiny offerings, and physical records, I could collect them, curate them into a sculpture or installation piece, and photograph the collaborative work. I believe the finished photographs will be evidence of individual acts of peace and good will, love, and compassion. All people who pray are welcome to participate in this project, regardless of specific faith affiliation, practice, or denomination.

The Prayers

For this piece, Prayer Gloves, we will be praying on behalf of Lori and David Funnell, and their four year old son, Caspian, who suffers from epilepsy and frequent seizures. The family is traveling to Arizona to meet with specialists and seek further treatment.

Lori and David have asked us to pray for Caspian in specific ways. Their prayer requests are below.

Prayers for Caspian Funnell

Caspian is undergoing major brain surgery during the second week of May, and faces a long and delicate recovery period. Please pray specifically for wisdom and clarity as decisions are made on Caspian's behalf. Pray for a successful surgery and a healthy recovery, and for peace during this extremely difficult time.

The Distribution

My hope is to mimic the action of the prayer request on social media. A need is voiced, a prayer requested, then is shared virally through personal circles, families, and small groups. I give a person 12 gloves, or 24, or 48—and they find their way through a community by word of mouth, and the simple act of sharing. In the end, the gloves find their way back to me, most created by people I have never met, and that the Funnell family have never met. The result is much like the prayer request that circulates on social media, finding its way to hundreds of otherwise unrelated people.

When you pick up gloves for the project, consider others in your life and close circles who might be interested in taking part. Take enough gloves to distribute to them, and for them to distribute onward. Gloves will be picked up from a central location, and dropped off at the same location when completed. You may also mail your finished gloves to me if you like. Just be advised that the gloves must be posted as a package, not a letter, and will cost about \$4 to mail.

When returning your gloves, please place them in an envelope or folded paper, and include your name on the paper, so I can list you as a collaborator in the work. Also, if you'd like to include an email address, I will keep you updated on the project, send finished images, and any press and exhibition information so you can see the finished work! Please return your gloves to the specified location by May 31, 2021.

My address is below:

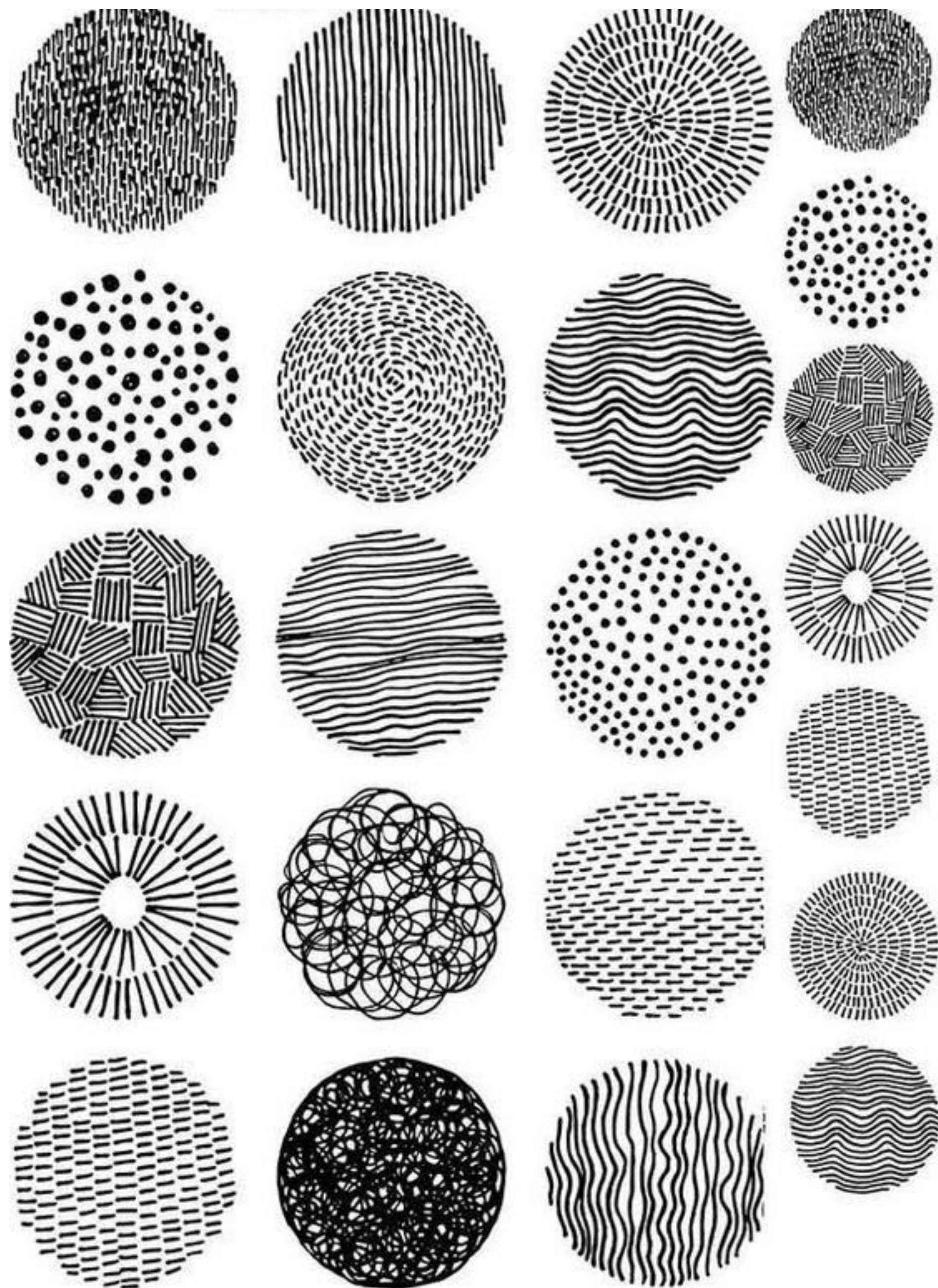
Jennifer Thoreson
5120 Drake Court NW
Albuquerque, NM 87114

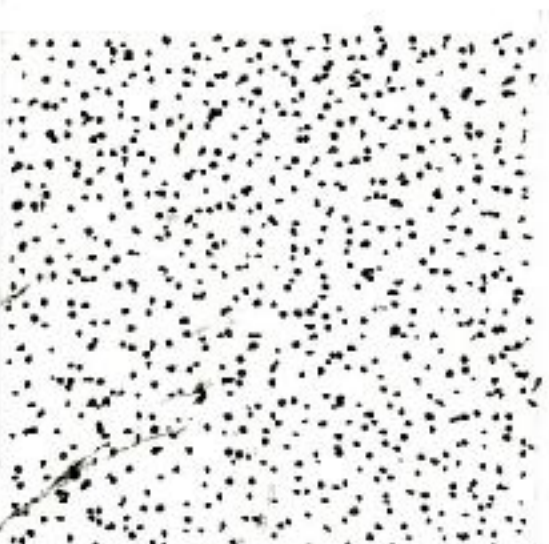
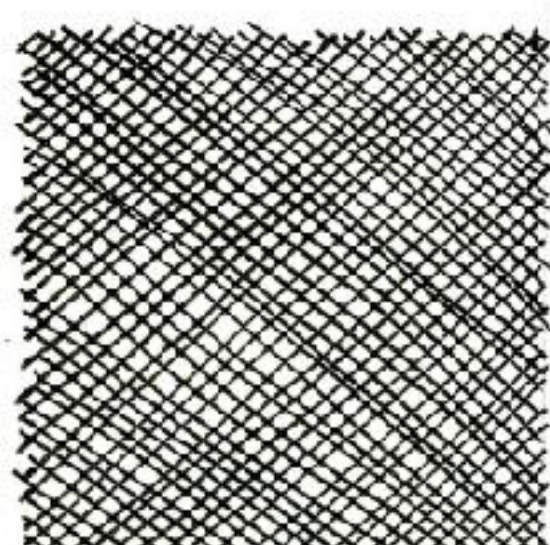
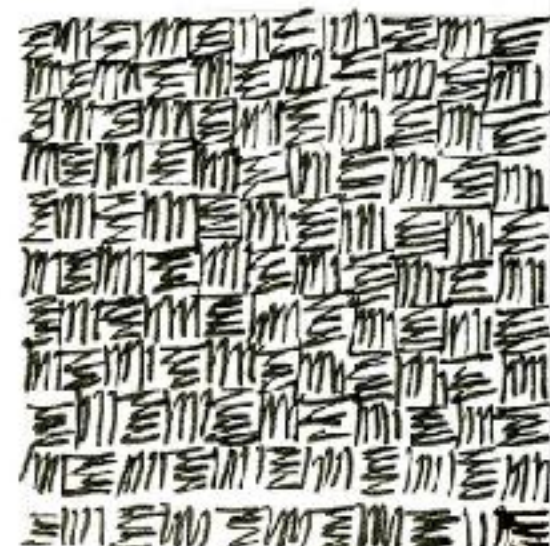
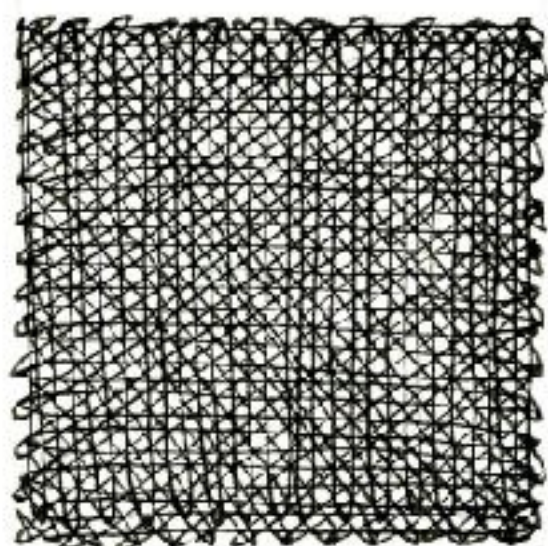
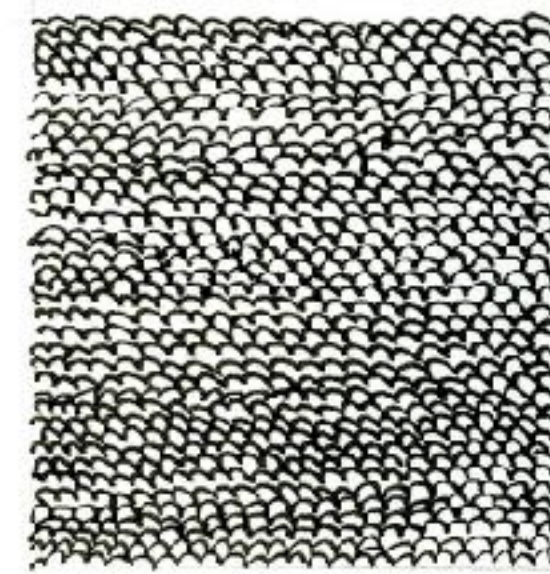
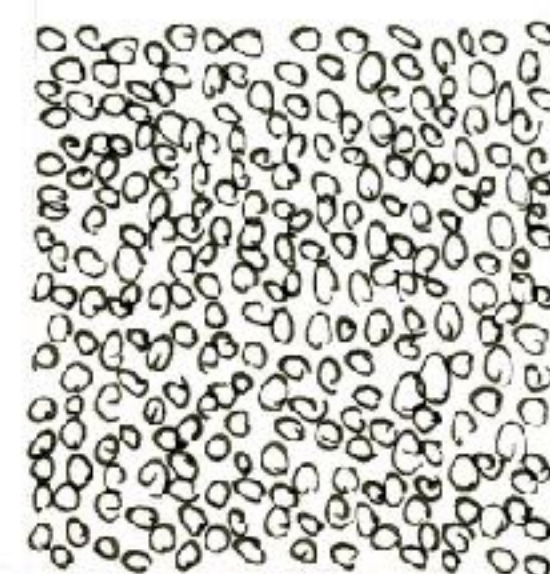
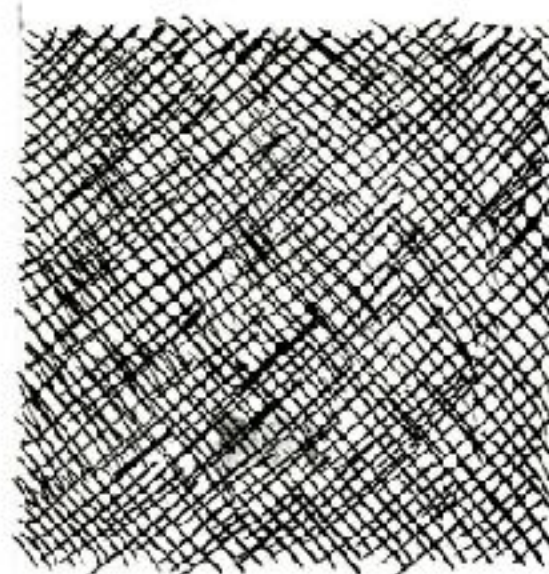
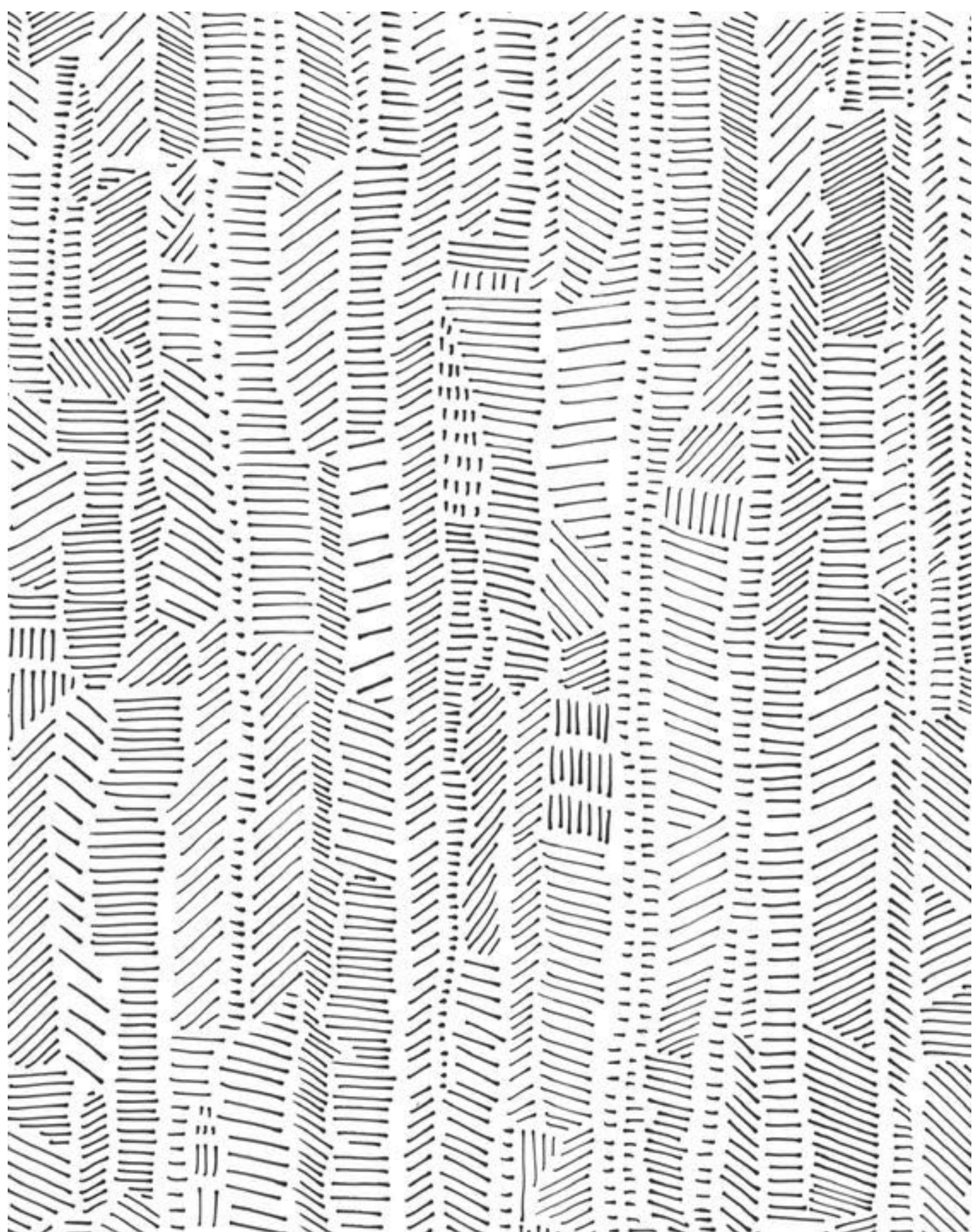
The Gloves

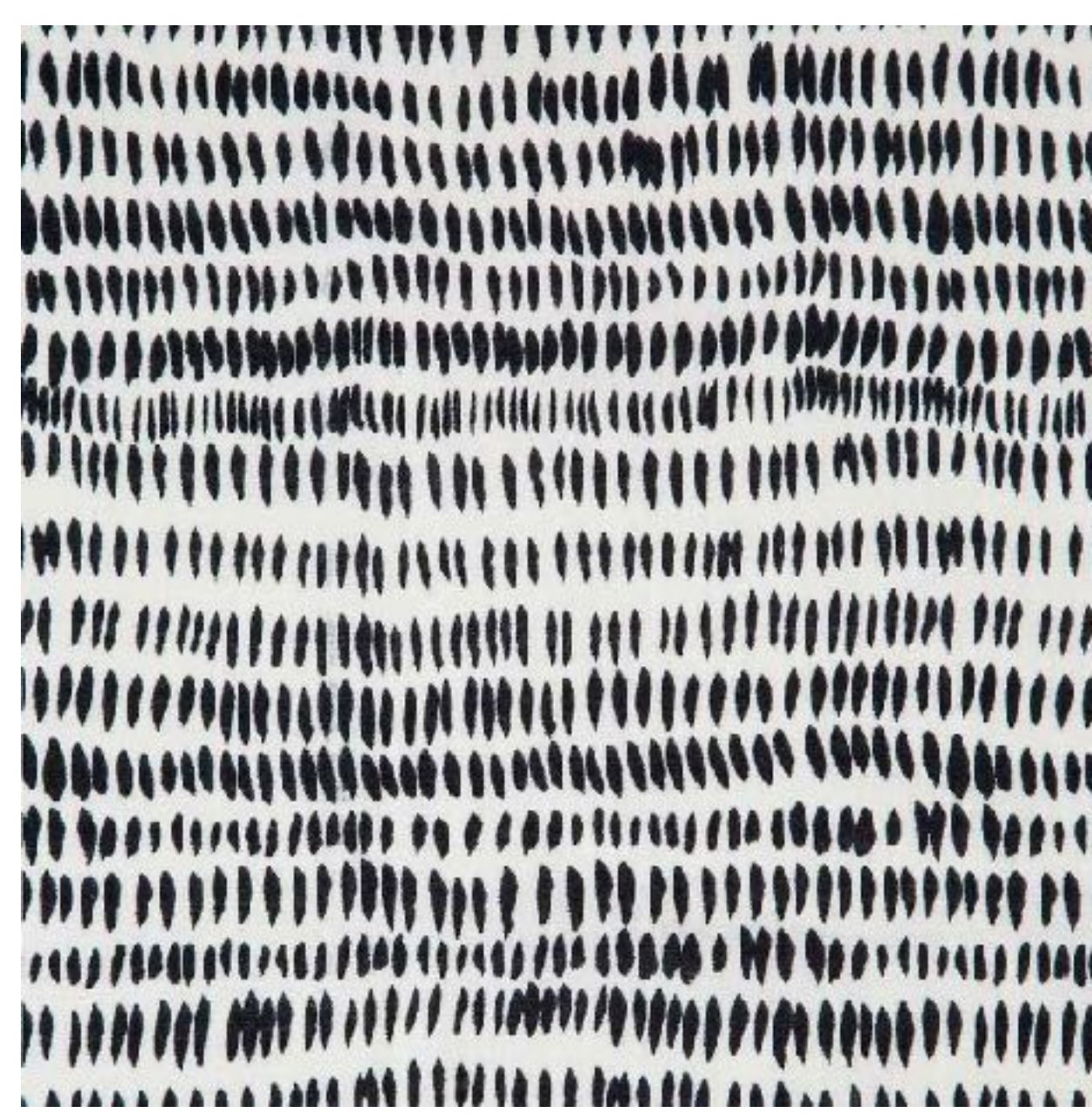
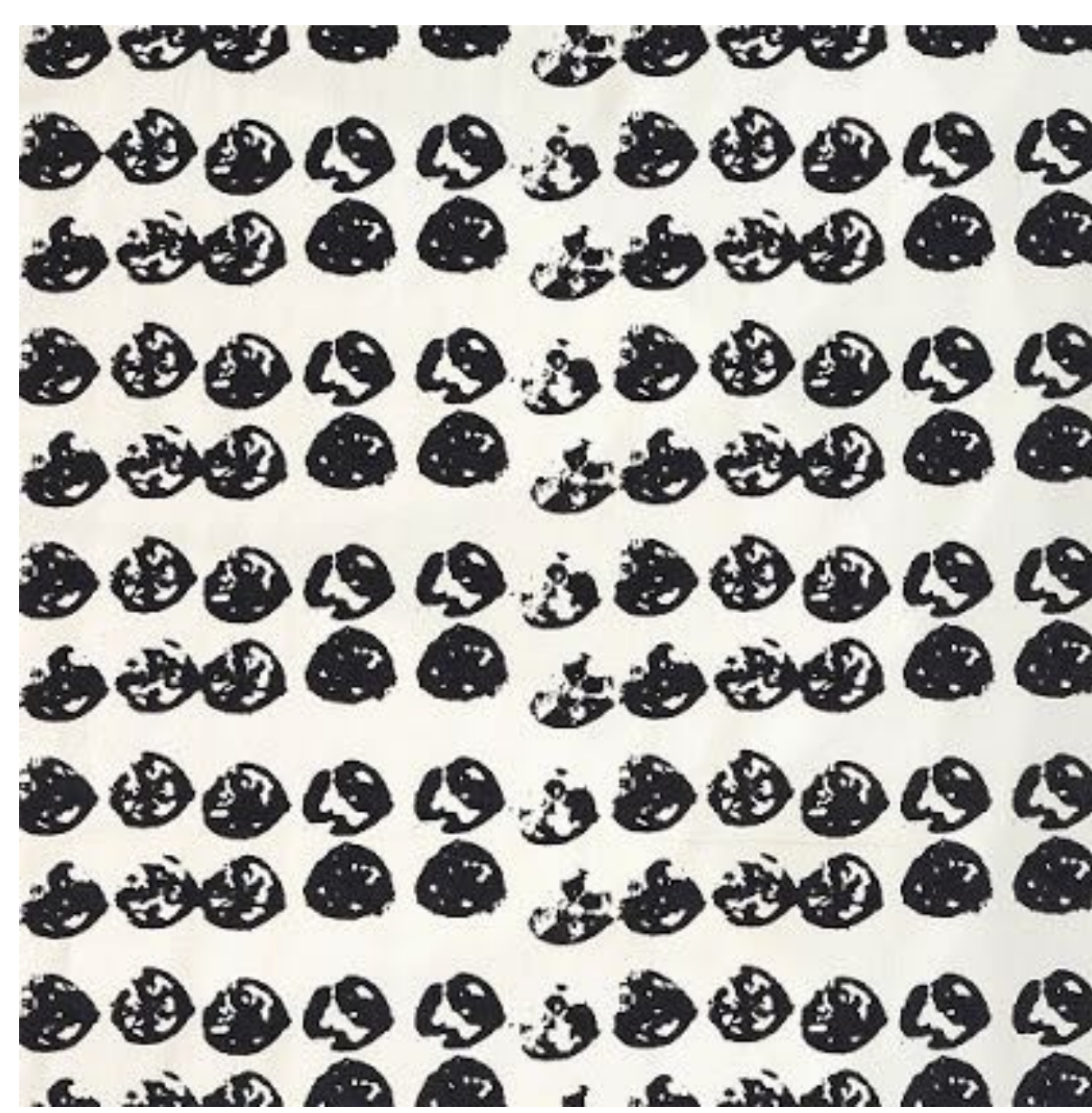
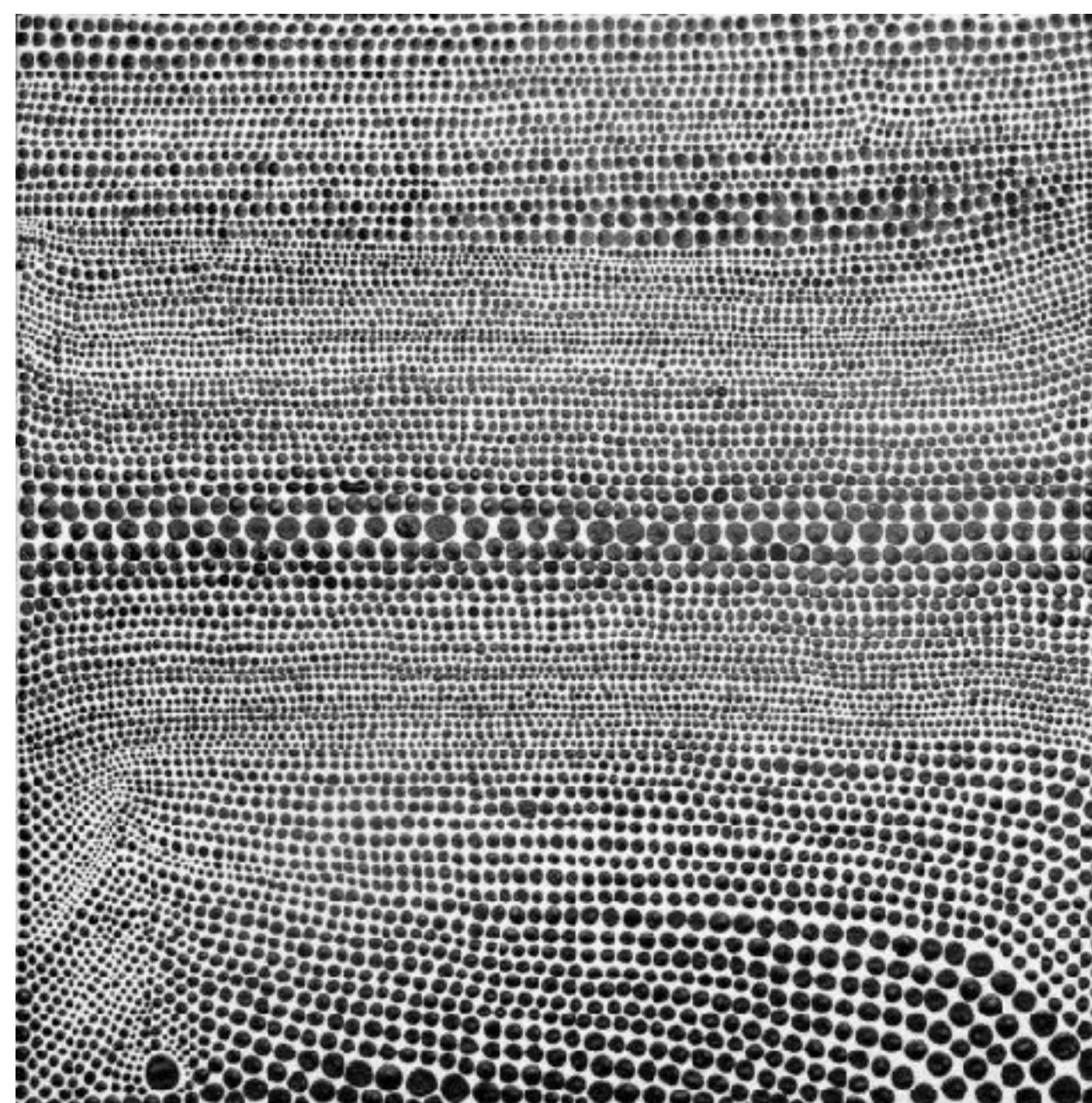
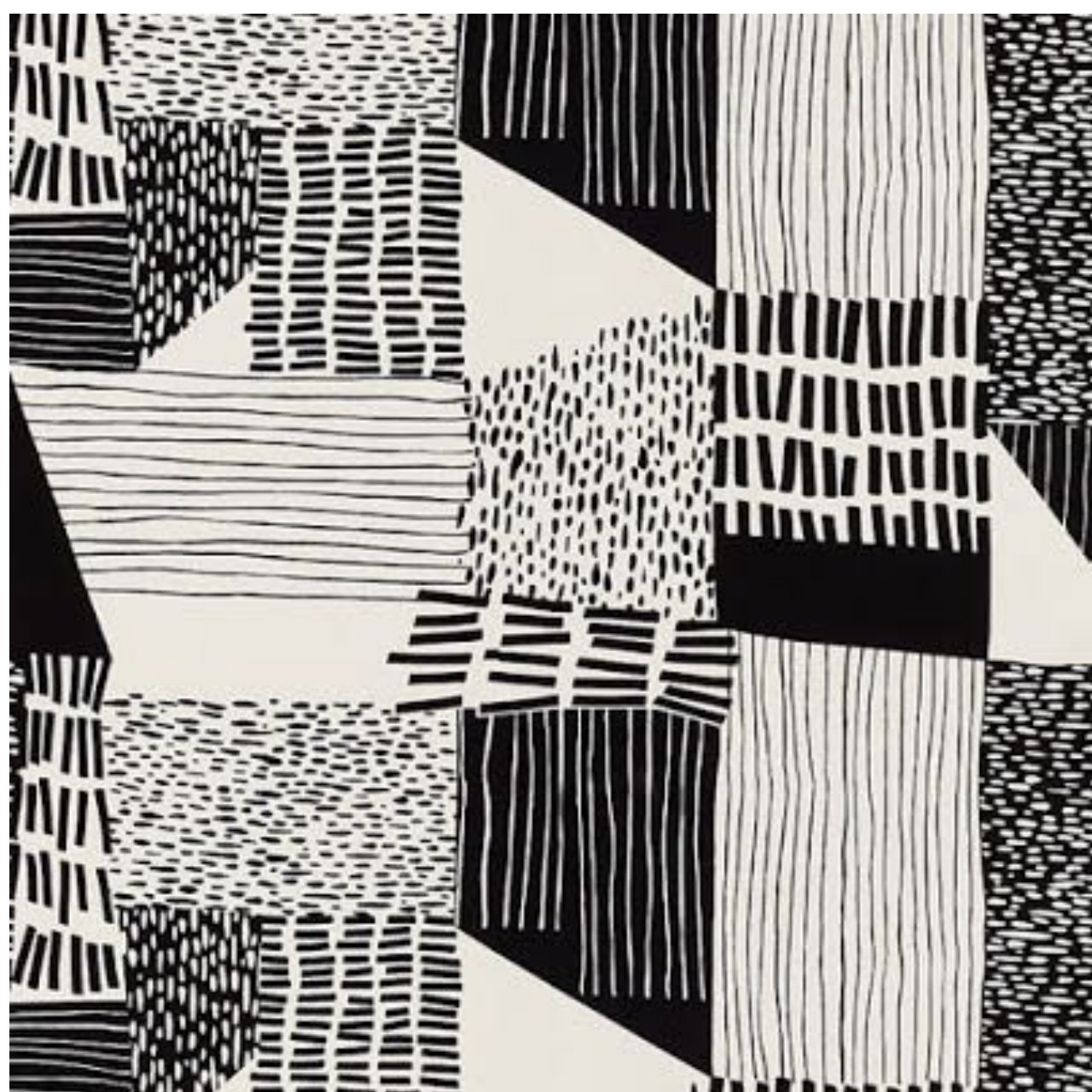
Each person offering prayers will receive one pair of white cotton gloves. Your task will simply be to pray, either aloud or silently, while making simple, repetitive marks on the gloves using the provided acrylic paint. You'll find in this document some examples of mark-making, and a few ideas for making patterns. You do not need to be an artist to make a pair of gloves, or have any painting expertise whatsoever. If you can doodle and make marks on paper, you can make marks with paint onto fabric. In these examples, I used a couple of different paintbrushes, a silicone straw, the tip of a wooden clothes pin, and a pencil eraser. You can choose literally anything that is smaller than your pinky fingertip—anything that can be dipped in paint to make an imprint. Look around your home and see what you can find that might make a unique mark to represent you as the author. A cotton swab, a stick, a tiny piece of sponge on the tip of a toothpick, a tiny ball of paper, or fabric, a nail head, a scrap of rubber. The mark-making should be very simple and repetitive, so that it can be done as a meditation during prayer. Also see below a link to a couple of videos that show my experimentation with a couple of different mark-making strategies. This should be fun and expressive, and by no means perfect! Allow the blips and blobs to be a beautiful part of the 'human' fabric you create, the hand-made feeling of each glove is what makes the work so richly authentic to each individual who is offering prayer. The mark-making is meant to represent the passage of a period of time, like a cadence.

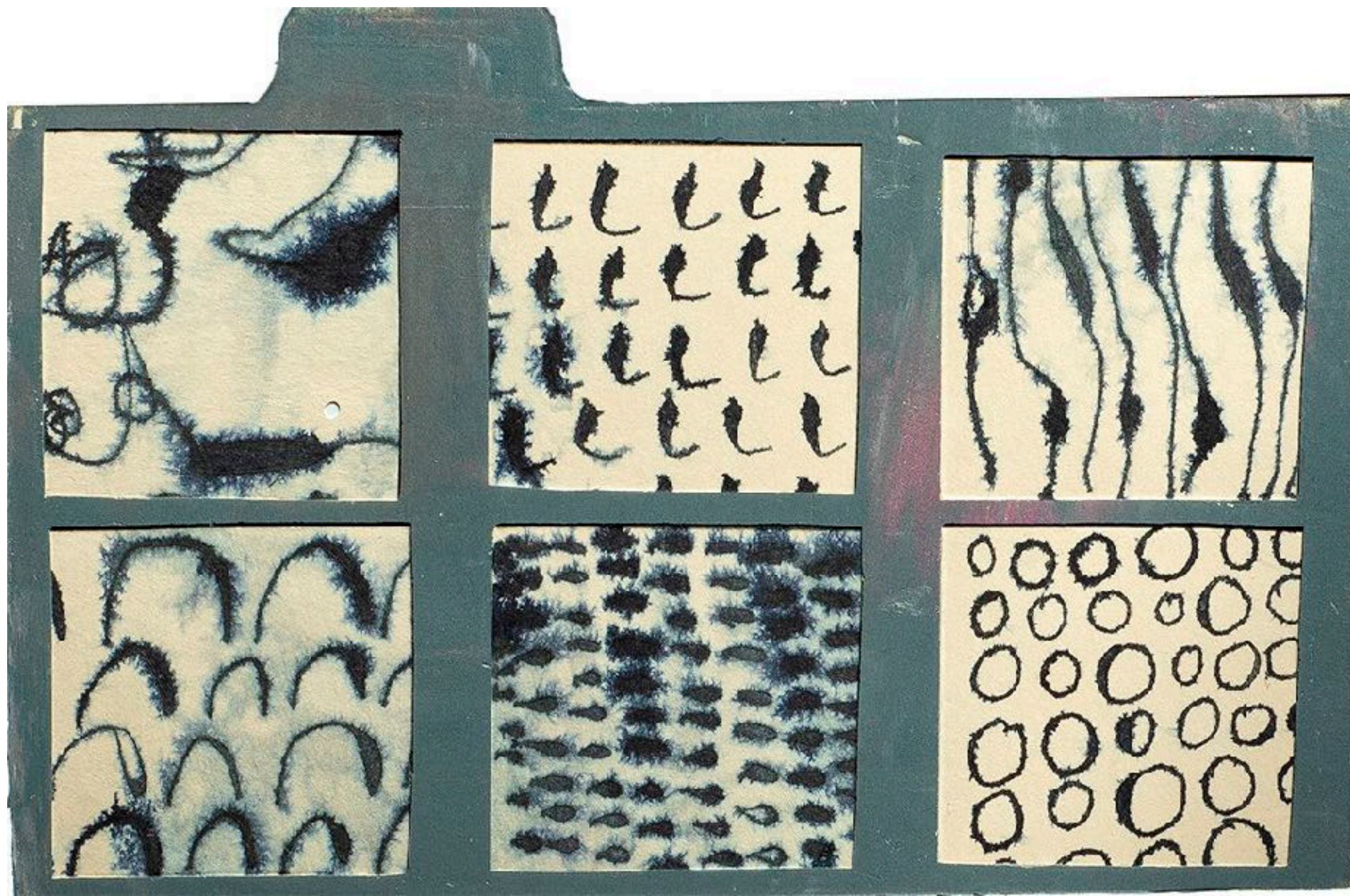
Mark-making Samples & Ideas











Painting the Gloves

- Please paint both sides of the gloves. It's okay if the paint soaks through to the other side a bit as you work. The little 'accidents' make the gloves more personal and more beautiful.
- Find an object or utensil to make your marks that is easy to use, so you are able to pray while effortlessly making repetitive marks on the gloves. When I made my gloves, I really enjoyed reciting a few lines of a prayer repeatedly as I made marks. At other times, I just allowed myself to pray silently, freely, and meditatively while I made marks. I found the mark-making really helped keep me focused, attentive, and present.
- To mix the paint and make more of an ink, try equal parts paint and water. I found this was easier for making repetitive marks, as I could make about 10 marks before needing to dip my brush in the paint again.
- Feel free to personalize your marks, create designs, or unique patterns. I've included some examples and inspiration for mark-making techniques in the following slides that might help spur some ideas. For further inspiration, google 'mark-making' and view images, or search for 'mark-making' on Pinterest. There are tons of wonderful ideas out there!
- Please keep the marks abstract, and refrain from making recognizable symbols, figures, or words.
- You may choose to paint an entire glove in one sitting, or break up the process into several sessions. I found it took about 20 minutes per glove with simple mark-making.



Marks made with the end of a silicone straw.



Marks made with a small paintbrush.



Marks made with a tiny piece of folded paper
taped to a toothpick.



Marks made with a sliver of dish sponge
attached to a toothpick.



Marks made with a pencil eraser.



Marks made with the ends of a wooden clothespin.

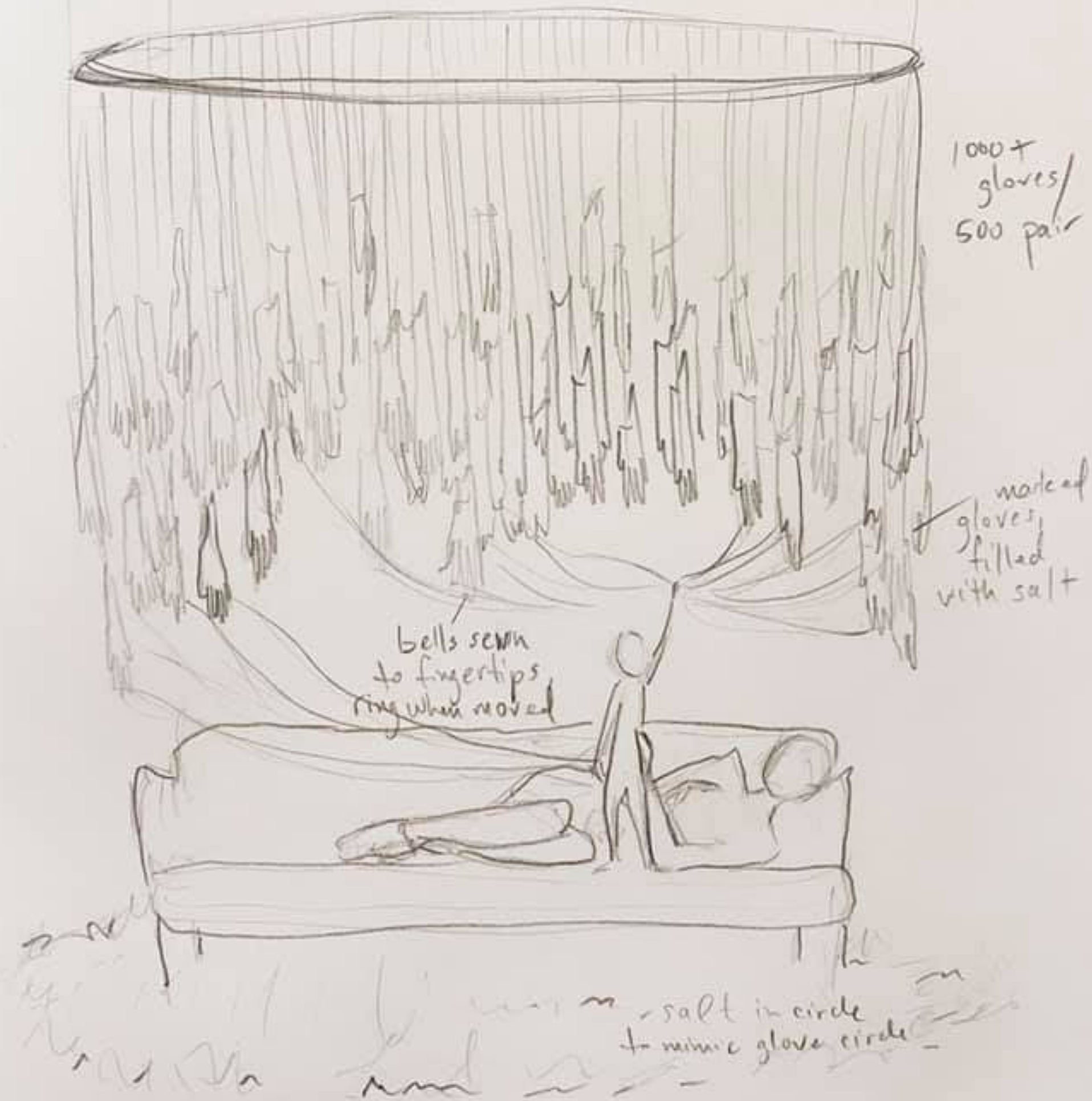


Marks made with a red sharpie.

The Installation

For this photograph, I would like to collect around 1,000 gloves, or 500 pair. Below, you can see a sketch of what I would like to create for the final installation. I plan to suspend each glove in a circular form using red wool yarn. I will fill each glove with salt, representing each individual, and referencing the salt of the earth. I will sew tiny bells to the fingertips of the gloves, so when they are gently moved, they will emit a soft sound, mimicking the words of spoken prayers. Below the gloves, I will create a 'shadow' of salt that mimics the circular form above. Inside the circle, there will be a bench or sofa, where Lori, David, and Caspian will sit. There will be strings attached to each glove, gathered together in a few knots, so little Caspian can gently pull them to move and shift the gloves above him, and hear the bells ring. When I spoke to Lori about Caspian, she told me he loves jingle bells. When he hears the bells ring, and sees the gloves hanging together, he'll be able to hear and see a representation of the many prayers spoken on his behalf.

Prayer Gloves



The Photograph

I plan to make one finished photograph of the installation with the Funnell family as they witness and experience the installation. The photograph will be printed large, so that the individual marks on the gloves will be visible to the viewer. A visual representation of the prayers spoken, alongside the family they were spoken for, will come together in one photograph.

The Project

I plan to make about twenty total photographs for this series, utilizing different materials and methods in collaboration with hundreds, perhaps thousands of people across the country. I envision the project taking a few years to complete. The Prayer Glove photograph is very special to me, as it is the first image of the series, and a sort of experimental, fertile space for the concept and complex meaning of the project to grow.

A review of your part in the project:

- Pick up your gloves from the specified location. When completed, return your gloves to the same location by May 31, 2021.
- Distribute gloves to others in your family, friend circles, or groups who might be interested in participating, and forward them this PDF for instructions.
- If you are a member of a small group who is meeting in person, arranging a group prayer session where everyone paints gloves together could be a fun and unique experience for the group members.
- Make marks on your gloves using the paint provided while spending time in prayer for the Funnell Family.
- Collect the gloves from your family and friends if possible, and return them to the specified location. Family and friends may also return them to the location themselves, or are welcome to mail their gloves directly to me.
- When returning your gloves, please place them in an envelope or folded paper, and include your name on the paper, so I can list you as a collaborator in the work. Also, if you'd like to include an email address, I will keep you updated on the project, send finished images, and any press and exhibition information so you can see the finished work!

A Few Ideas for Sharing Gloves with Others

- Share a few pair with a close friend or family member, ask them to participate themselves, then pass another pair or two of gloves to their own families, friends, or groups.
- If you're a member of a small group that is meeting in person, consider this project as a unique activity to do as a group. Everyone could sit in the same room, or around the same table, and spend 20 minutes in prayer, painting gloves together. One person could pray aloud at a time, or the time could be spent silently.
- If you are a member of a group who meets via Zoom, you could share this project with the group, and set aside part of your meeting time to each pray aloud as everyone paints gloves in their own homes.
- The project could be a unique prayer experience for families. Everyone could sit around the family table and paint as each person prays, or it could be a silent prayer time. Older children are welcome to participate.

Jennifer Thoreson Artist Biography

Jennifer B. Thoreson is a photographer, teacher, lecturer, and mother of two boys who lives and works in Albuquerque, NM. She holds an MFA from the University of New Mexico. Her work is heavily metaphorical, and delves into the nuances of human relationships, human fragility, and the ephemeral, temporary nature of human life. Through her exploration of questions surrounding faith and religious practices, she critically conceptualizes different themes to produce images rich in allegory, engaging with her viewers as they question and explore the themes for themselves. The complexity of her work is rooted in her practice. She carefully orchestrates each image by manipulating symbolic materials, constructing site specific installations and sculptures, and meticulously staging every scene to imbue each element, from the smallest to the largest, with meaning and significance. The elements and spaces she fabricates and captures in her images play as important a role in her art as the finished photographs themselves.

Jennifer's work has gained an international audience through inclusion in museum and gallery exhibitions, spanning the United States, Canada, Mexico, Brazil, China, Russia, Australia, France, Switzerland, Lithuania, and the United Kingdom. Her work is held in museum collections at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, and the Musee de l'Elysee, Switzerland; and has been shown in numerous solo and group exhibitions, including at the Houston Center for Photography (solo), the Blue Sky Gallery (solo), and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Jacksonville, FL (group). In addition, her work has been published worldwide, in well-known publications, including Black and White Magazine, Diffusion Magazine, and Installation Magazine. In 2011, a monograph of her work, entitled *Medic*, was published. Awards include Photo Star Award (Kaunas, Lithuania); International Center of Photography (ICP) Leadership Medallion; Photolucida Book Award; Residency at the Santa Fe Art Institute, and the Franks Memorial Grant.

I have created a Facebook group for anyone interested in taking part in the project. You can join and get updates on the progress of the work, get ideas, and see posts from others who have participated. It's a good way to share the project with others, they can read about the work and have a clear vision of the project. It'll also be a nice space to build a community around a unique shared experience.

Join the group or share the link:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2807278689600441/>

Lastly, a heartfelt THANK YOU for gifting your time and your voice to this project! I will keep you all in the loop as the work progresses, and let you know about exhibitions and publications where the work is shown.

If you'd like to view some of my previous work, please take a look at my website,
www.jenniferthoreson.com

Feel free to contact me with any questions!

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