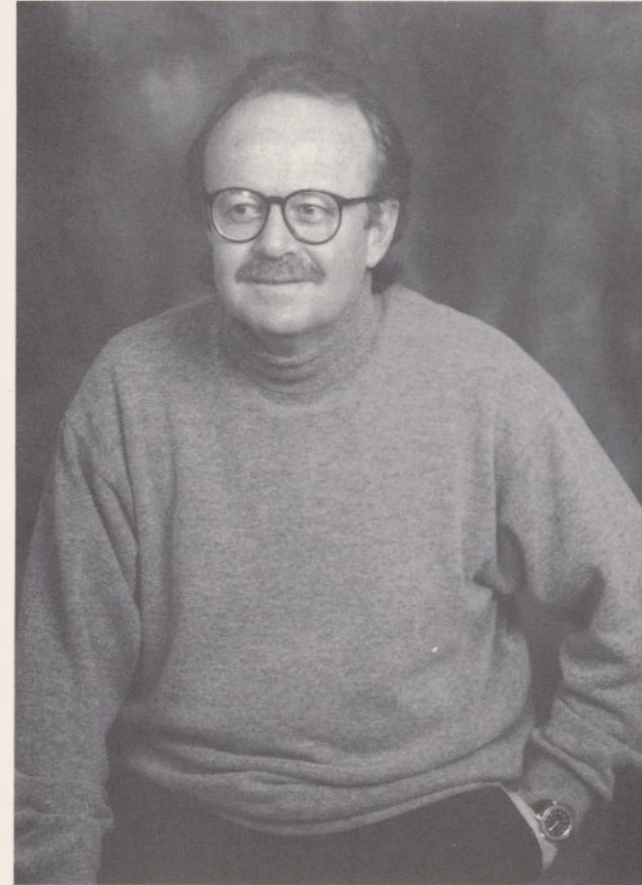
The image features a teal-colored background with several large, thick, black brushstrokes. These strokes are curved and somewhat irregular, resembling the letter 'C' or 'G'. They are scattered across the page, with some overlapping. In the lower right quadrant, there is handwritten text in black ink. The text consists of two lines: the first line reads 'Samer' and the second line reads 'Tabbaa'. The handwriting is cursive and somewhat informal. There is also a small, faint signature or mark in the bottom right corner, which appears to be 'S. Tabbaa'.

S. Tabbaa

(Front Cover)
Suspended Bridges
Graphite pencil on paper
L 95 x W 120 cms

Samer Talbana



Samer Tabbaa (B. 1945 Taif)

" I seek elemental power in the material that I am using at the time . I collaborate rather than subjugate , seeking maximum freedom by establishing a dialogue whereby all options are open , but only one is optimum . "

Born forty seven years ago in Taif , Samer Tabbaa holding an MFA degree from Kent State University U.S.A entered the art scene in Jordan with a tremendous impact on the public , bringing a message of a totally different approach to sculpture .

At that time , our minds had been taken over by the impressive stone carvings found in Jerash and Petra , to which we relate almost naturally as part of our heritage apart from the fact that contemporary art was almost non-existent .

So my first encounter with Samer in the 80's was a memorable one . His grey green eyes were sparkling with a steadfast clarity that seemed to reflect the bliss of solitude he saw with his observant sculptor's eyes , His austere abstract sculptures made visible his awareness of beauty and truth - a wordless awareness unattached to any external object or event . His work like his presence radiated and articulated the sense of wonder that made him what he is today - Samer husband , father and sculptor , sensitive and cool , deeply involved in expressing his inner feelings through wood , metal and stone . An avant - grade sculptor , his work relied on simple self contained " geometry " or divisions , intuitive , plainly comprehensible but rather coolly calculated in a complex concept . Abstract expressionism was still somewhat of an agitated emotion amongst the public , but Samer refused to com-

promise his own sublimities which were plain spoken and almost minimal . An admirer of the late Japanese American sculptor Isamu Noguchi , Samer brought to the viewer a taste of simplicity . This was witnessed in his first exhibition held at the Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts , by a visiting journalist Carla Bramm , which inspired her to write the following :-

" We should recognize so far the main points of reference concerning this artist . Samer the sculptor is not a narrow parochialist , adding to the endless anthology to Middle Eastern cliches portraying , the struggle or war and destruction . He is unmistakably and creditably International and universal . That he is also more of a formalist than an illustrator will instantly strike the general viewer . Perhaps for many others his work will prove to be too abstract to be entirely accessible on first confrontation . The material is stone and his sculptural sensibility manifests itself overwhelmingly in this particular medium , transforming it so that the ultimate shape fits the concept he has in mind . He is an artist who thinks in terms of masses and volumes , a carefully treated surface and balance always in three dimensions . In his work we can feel and see associations with earlier periods in history , and here one would detect the inspiration his native ground has always been . There is a neolithic aura about his " Gathering of Monoliths " . The public can easily identify the

menhir-like mini columns appearing monumental in their roughmythic quality . The primitive scratchings on the surface add to the quasi-archaeological tone of this work " .

Flashing back to his student days , Samer's journey into the realm of hammer and chisel began without tacit parental approval . " Because of our background you never have the urge to pursue an artistic subject , so to please my parents I tried to study business administration which did not keep my interest so I moved on to sociology and anthropology . I took up art purely by accident and the minute I experienced it , I knew I had found the missing link in my life . I enrolled in the Fine Arts Department and suddenly cutting classes seemed meaningless and attending university became one of my main pleasures " , says Samer .

While at Kent State University he met up with a professor Ira Matteson , who made him aware of his immense potential , his extraordinary talent that had remained dormant all along . His teacher advised him to experiment in jewellery making , and sculpting in different materials like wood , clay , bronze and stone . " I loved working with my hands and working in stone had a powerful individuality which ignited a flow of ideas between sculptor and sculpted " , adds Samer . Another friend and associate at Kent State university Dr Ninos Georgopoulos , a professor of philosophy summarised Sam-

er as , " An artist who not only had sacrificed or undermined , but had positively dismissed figurative expression and formal articulation and values for the sake of the elemental power of primordial association of stone . He seemed to thrive not on his ideas but on the stones resistance to them . His marks and carvings recorded his struggle with a material more telling and more potent than himself " .

After working as its director and helping to set up the Jordan National Gallery Fine Arts , Samer decided it was time to move on into a new and more stimulating environment . He chose Madrid and spent three years working and sharing a studio with the well-known Spanish sculptor Feliciano Hernandez where he did some of his best work . How he survived is an example of staying power of a man with vision - someone with clear goals " I didn't speak a word of Spanish and Feliciano didn't speak a word of English . We used to work and eat together in complete silence . So eventually I was forced to learn Spanish and expended all my emotion and energy into my work " , recalls Samer .

Returning back to Jordan life changed . The sculptor got married , settled down , had two children and continued to work in his field only to find his work had taken a more exciting turn but the viewers still lacked response to his even more daring concepts and ideas . His work started to become

more streamlined and less emotional , being less concerned with the challenge and more absorbed by the idea .

On the occasion of H.M King Hussein's 50th birthday Samer was commissioned to erect a monument to mark the event by the chamber of commerce and industry . His monumental creation in Amman's second circle imprinted his style on the Jordanian landscape . A riveting and powerful statement consisting of a wheel , man's first invention , that seems to be in motion and across from it a waterfall over a massive stone structure , the serrated edges and the encircling daubs of green slate - like marble coming together in a magnetic center piece , thus amalgamating the wheel of progress with the power of water to run industry .

" I would like to do more public sculptures but right now I am content with my latest exploitation of materials " . Adds Samer .

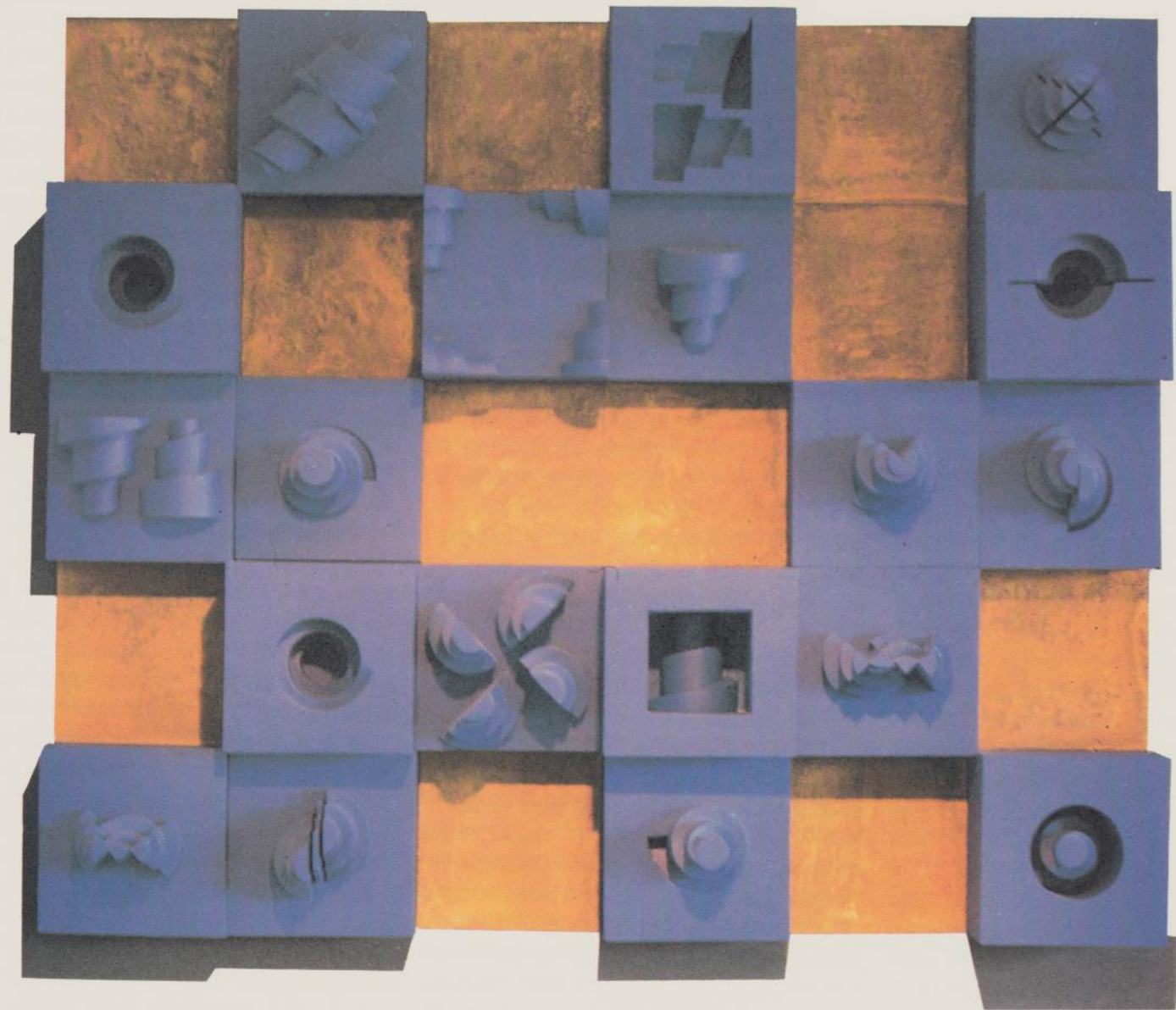
The almost alarming clutter of his studio speaks for him : a firm belief in the concise power of the visual makes him disinclined to burden visitors with words , as it is the silent working routine which transmits the messages he is relaying in his work of the 90's. His intimacy with abstraction gives him pleasure and true enough the almost minimal purity of his carved lines in wood , the graphite scribbings on metal or the many layers of tar seems to be a cele-

bration of his liberation from the rigors of the more conservative chiseling on stone that he was turning out in the 70's and 80's. His present work is a formula blended together with vulnerable innocence and sophistication . But purified and calculated .

Samer's work stuns the layman , confuses other artist and inspires the writer . It brings about an emotion which remains embedded in the minds and souls of those who believe in the words of Keats , " Truth is Beauty ' and Beauty is truth " , as well as possess an absolute respect for simplicity , that can be recognized in his expansive and mature ability to incorporate his vulnerability into his art .

To us here in Jordan modern art is still new , but Samer Tabbaa will patiently continue his work as one of the finest sculptors in the Middle East by exhibiting his work at home and abroad which is taking a recent upsurge by his newly found application of different materials like tar and graphite pencils , keeping the un-erring sense of seriousness and integrity , conveying tranquil uncomplicated beauty in his art . Samer who is most eloquent when it comes to sculptural language , seems destined to carve his name on the future of this country by engaging himself in the flexibility of abstraction .

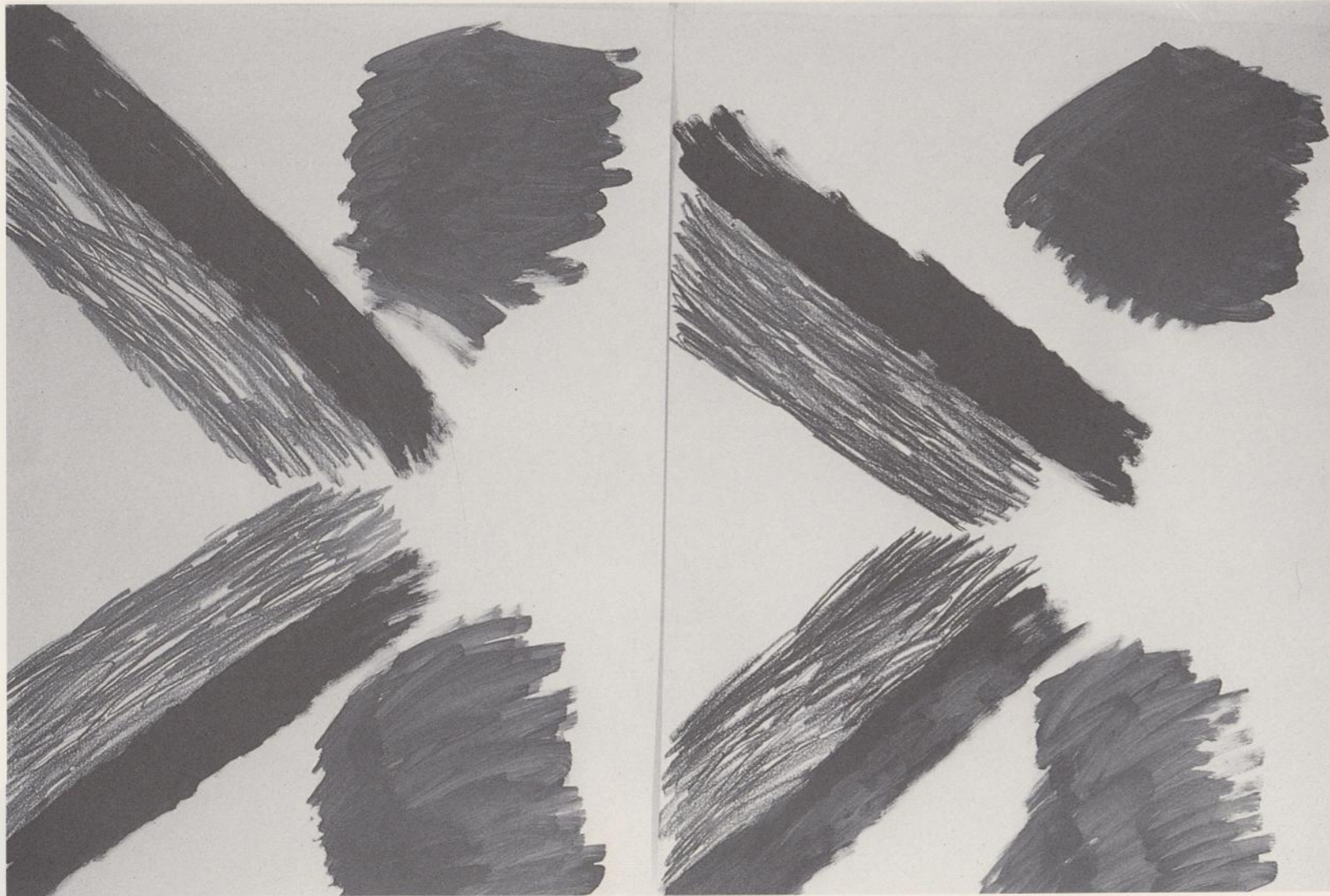
Dodi Karim 1993



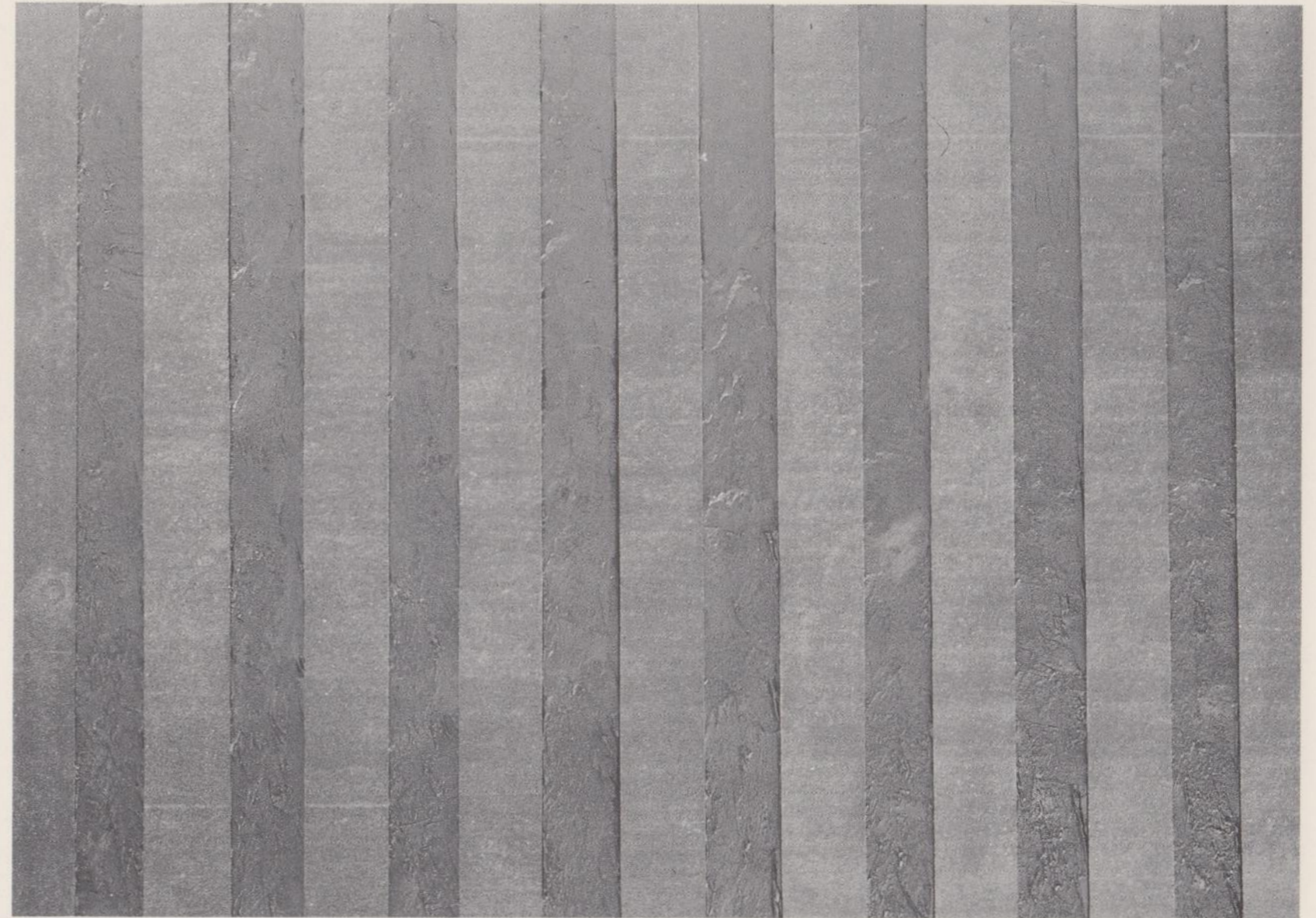
Malweiyah
Rusted steel , casted plaster
L 120 x W 140 x D 14 cms



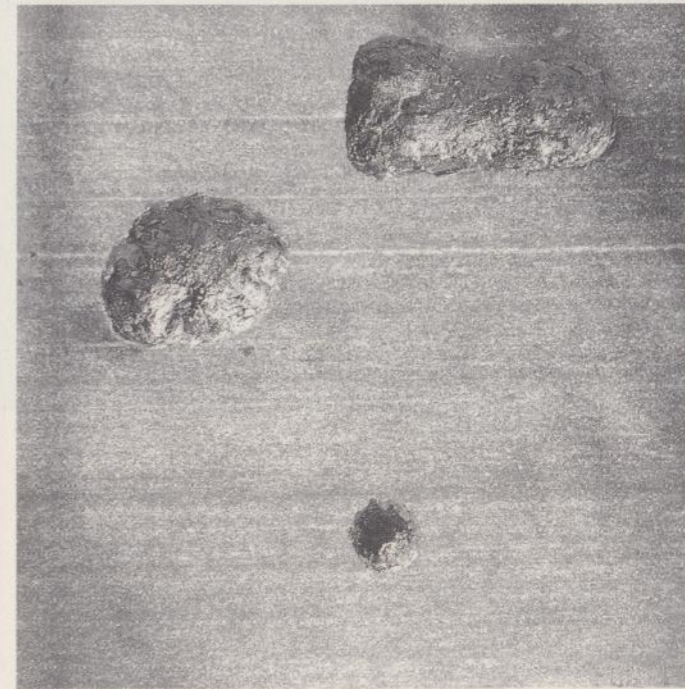
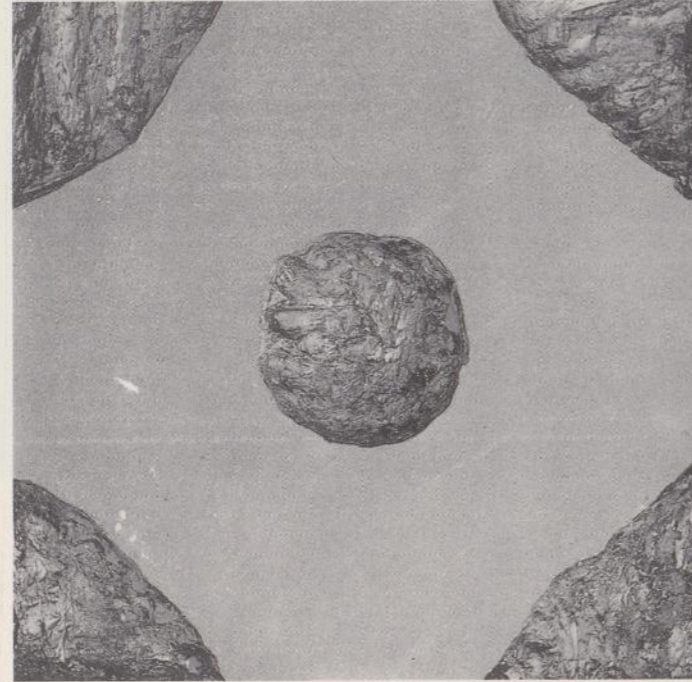
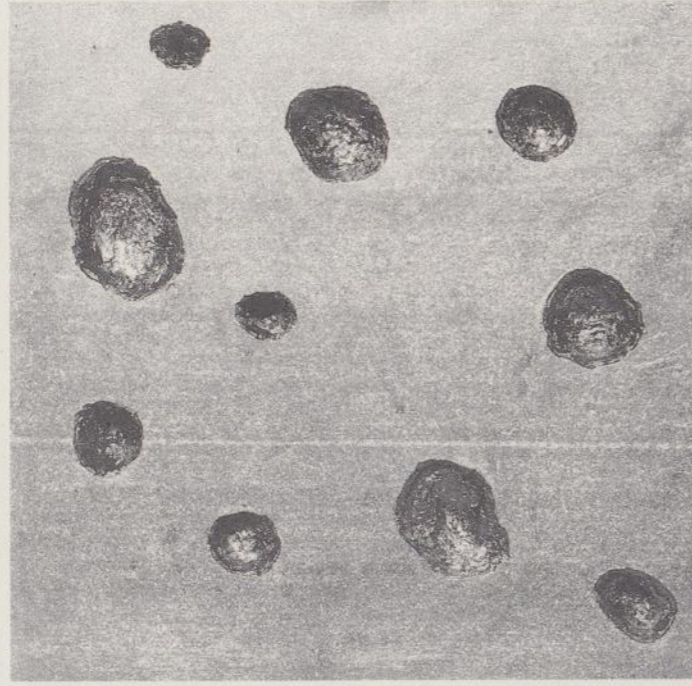
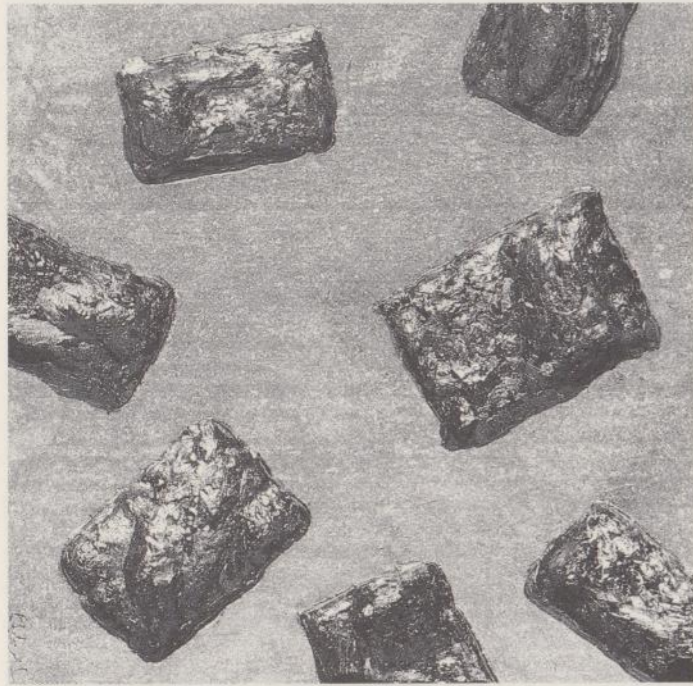
Figures in Motion
Acrylic and graphite on paper
L 78 x W 118 cms



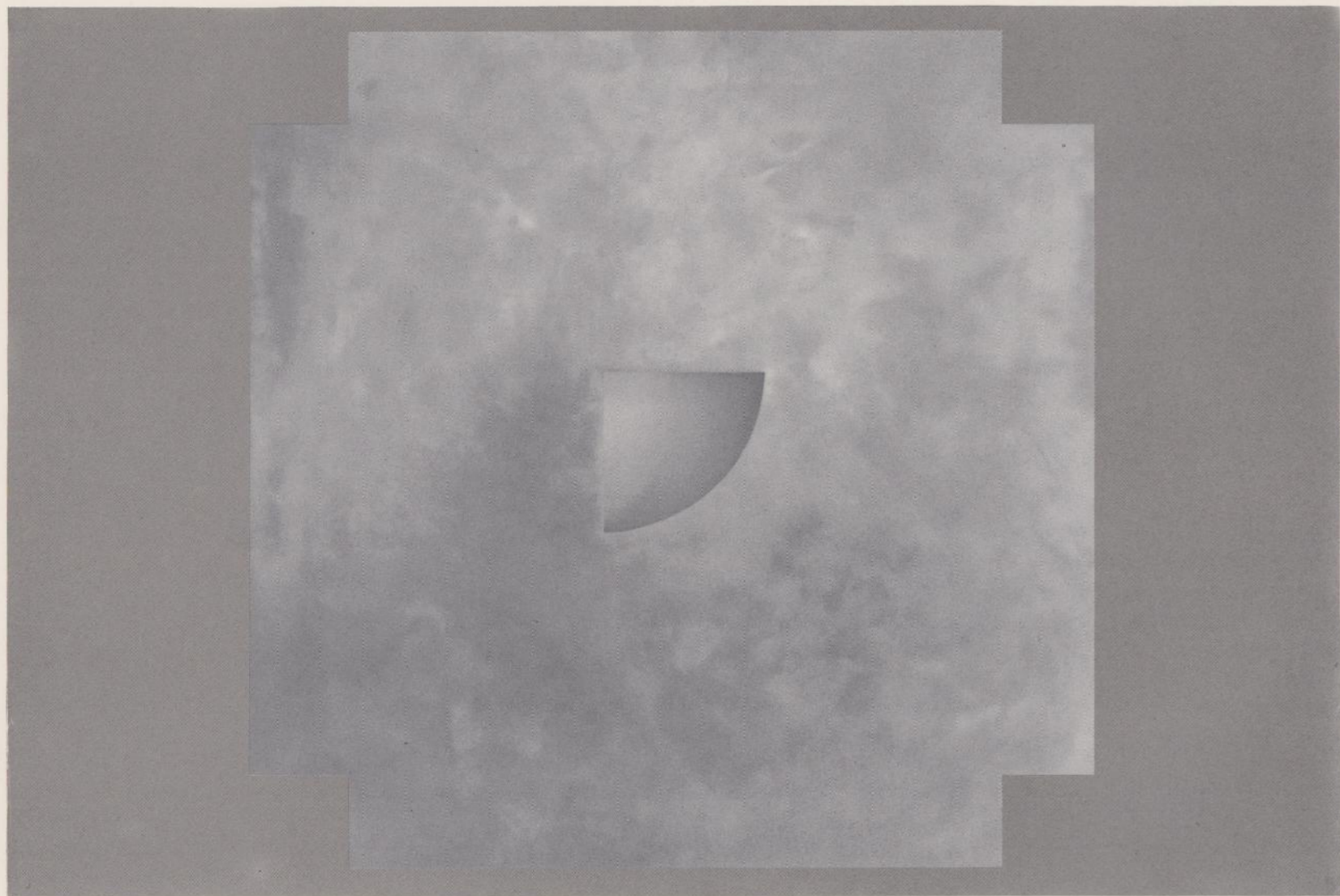
In the eye of the hurricane
Acrylic and graphite on paper
L 92 x W 130 cms



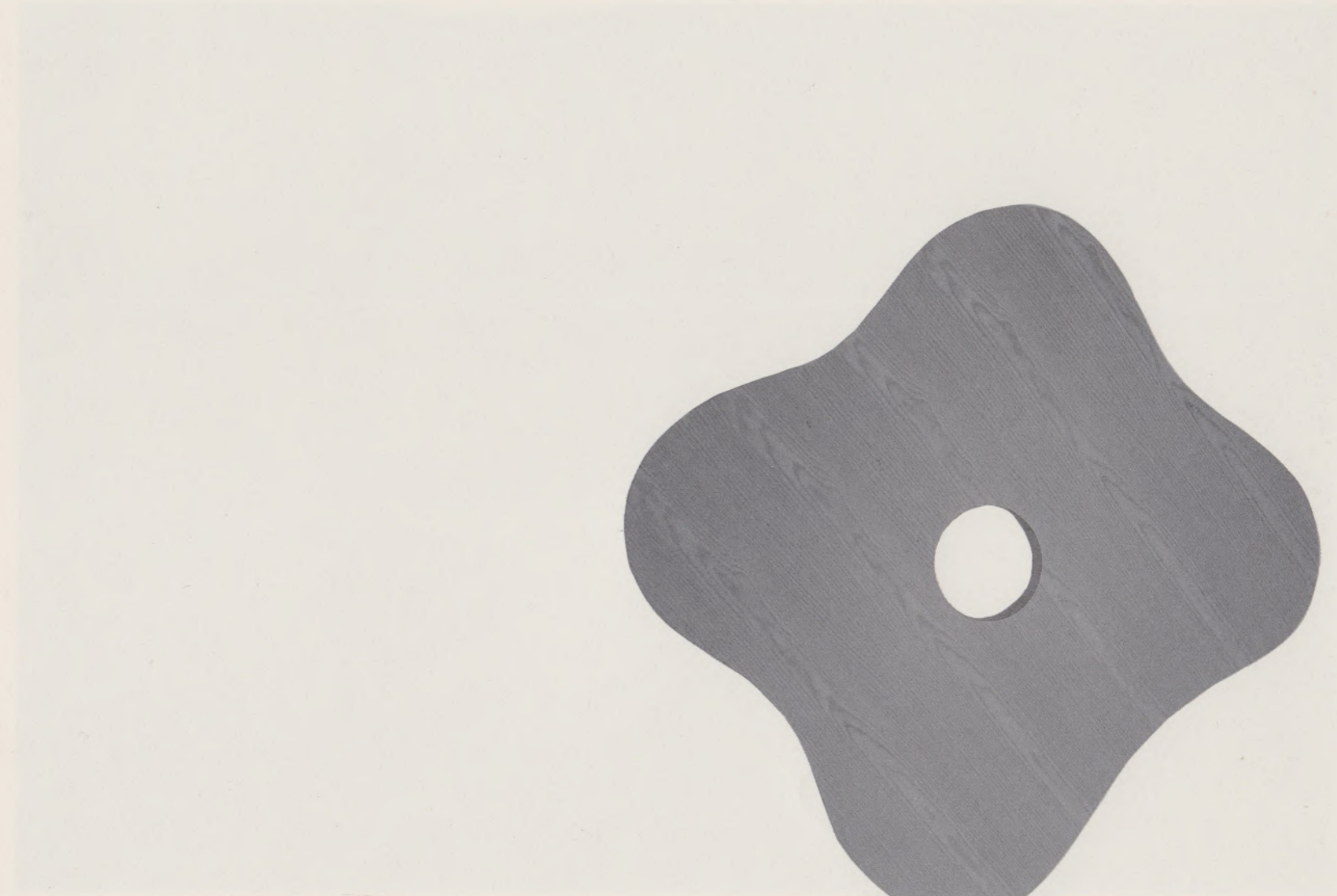
Blue and Red
Tar on wood , metal and acrylic
L 79 x W 115 cms



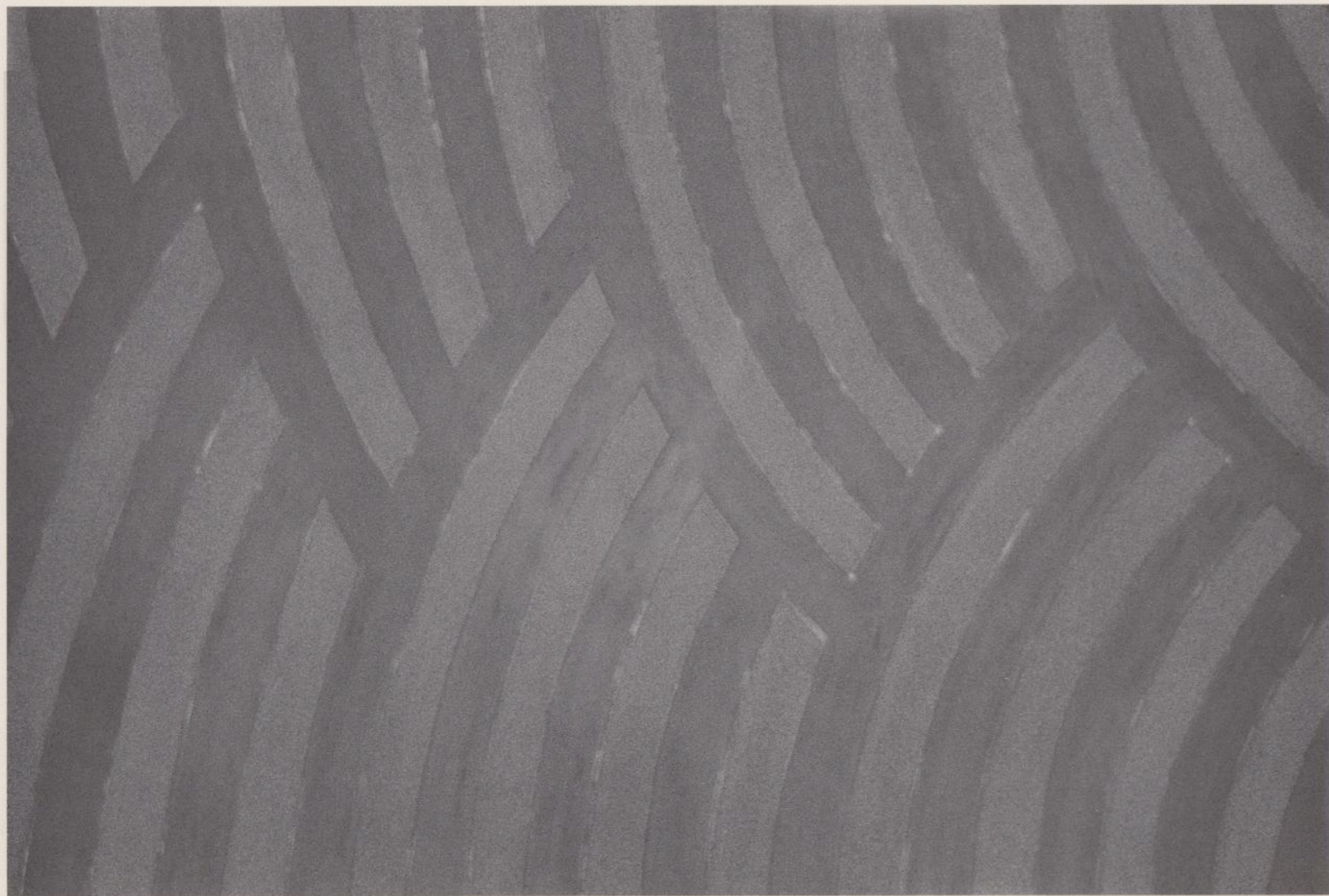
Crater
Tar on wood
L 50 x W 50 cms



Cutting Corners
L 94.50 x W 94.50 cms



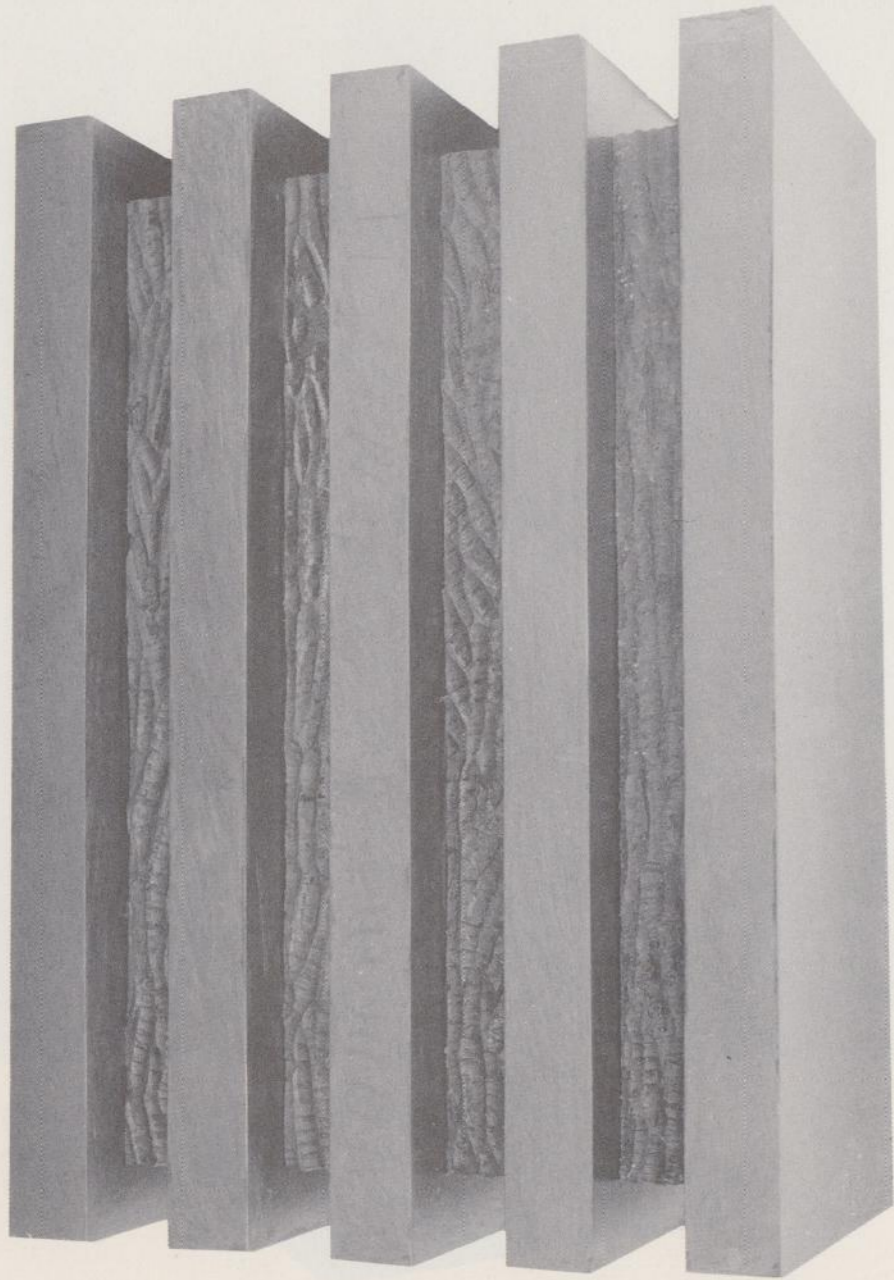
Clover
Oakwood
L 121 x W 126 x D 4 cms



Blue Landscape
Acrylic and graphite pencil
L 73 x W 108 cms



Two figures at right angle
Painted wood and cement
L 180 x W 64 x D 54



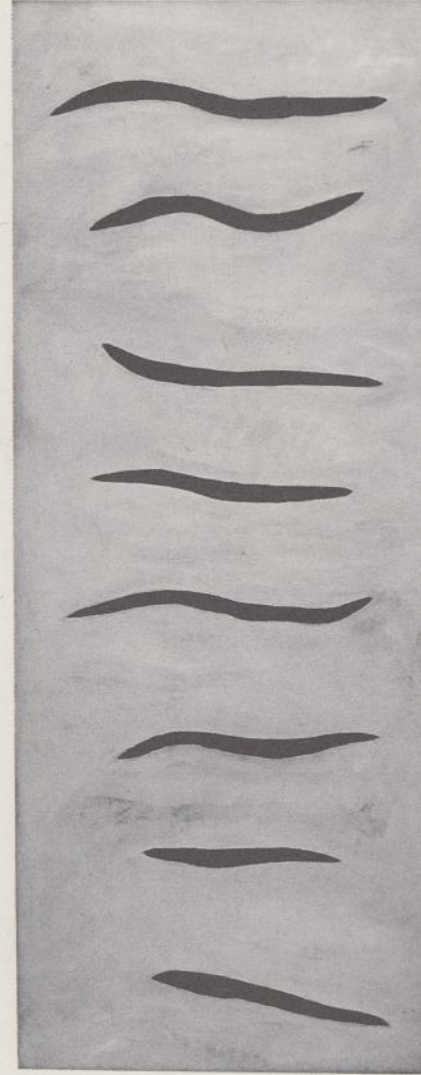
Graphite and Tar KitKat
L 75 x W 52 x D 30



Gold Rush
Tar, wood, stone,
gold pigment
L 100 x W 100 cms



Blue Line
Acrylic and graphite on paper
L 110 x W 75 cms



Bangali Tiger
Tar, wood, gold pigment
L 180 x W 69 cms

(المحرس) التونسية حيث كلف الطباع بتشبيد عمل نحتي فيها ، كان يطارد افكاره ولا يلمس المادة ، فالمادة بالنسبة اليه موجودة لكن بعد صورتها في افكاره ، نحات من هذا النوع لا يمكن ان تنتظر منه تراجميات اجتماعية او سياسية بقدر ما نستعد لتقبل مقترحاته الجمالية .

... « تجريدي بقاء »

ذلك ما يمكن ان نصف به سامر الطباع ، فهذا النحات الذي أعادنا الى النحت ، واكتشف ، عرييا ، النحت مجددا ، لا يمكن سوي ان يتعلم من الطبيعة ، صحيح انه لا يحاكي ما صنعته ولا يستمد من مظاهرها مصدرا ، غير انه في ذات الوقت لا يتنكر لنظامها ، هذا النظام الذي لو تمنعنا فيه جيدا لاكتشفنا عمقه التجريدي ، مثلما كان نظام الطبيعة تجريديا من غير غطاء نظري يدافع عنه ، فان سامر الطباع تجريدي من غير تحفظ ، هذا الموقف هيا له قدرا من الحرية جعله في منأى عن اي تحفظ مسبق ، الامر الذي جعله قادرا على ان يدير عجلة النحت الحديث في الوطن العربي في الاتجاه الصحيح حيث النحت ، فنا خالصا ، وهو الامر الذي كدنا ان ننسائه في خضم معاشتنا للاعمال النصبية ، التذكارية ، الشخصية منها والجماعية ، التأريخية منها ام تلك التي يقف وراءها الانفعال المفاجيء .

... لقد استطاع سامر الطباع ان ينتج اعمالا نحوية لا تلحق بنا كما تفعل المنحوتات الزخرفية مع العمارة ، بل تسبقنا لكي نراها دائما وهي في حالة تجدد ، لا لشيء ، الا لانها استطاعت بحس إشراقي ان تختبر مزاجنا المستقبلي وانفعالنا بالغد .

لقد القى سامر الطباع بكائناته بين عواصف الطبيعة وهو يعرف جيدا انها قادرة على العيش طويلا فذلك هو مجالها الحيوي .

دراسة ذهنية وبصرية ليس لاحوال الكتلة ولا لتحولاتها في الفراغ ، حسب ، بل ولا حوال الفراغ نفسه ، حيث نجح في عدد من اعماله الى خلق ما يمكن ان اسميه بـ « وهم الكتلة » ، هذا الكيان الذي يجد مأواه ومغزاه في الفراغ ، فالفراغ بالنسبة للطباع لا يعبر عن حالة تعارض مع الكتلة بقدر ما يعبر عن حالة توافق .

... يضيق سامر الطباع ذرعا بالاسلوب ، كونه من مخلفات الانصياح للشكل ، بينما نراه يولي المادة اهتماما استثنائيا ، بل هو يقيس كفاءته التخيلية ليس على مستوى السيطرة على المادة تقنيا واكتشاف اسرارها ، حسب ، بل دفعها الى ان تشارك بما تحمله من حيوية داخلية في صنع وصياغة مصيرها وهي تتعرض للازاحة من كونها مادة خام الى كونها العضو الرئيس في عائلة العمل الفني .

... يقيم سامر تعارضا بين المادة في الطبيعة وبينها في العمل الفني وهو وان كان لا ينفي جوهرها غير انه يجعلنا تجاور مظهرها بهدوء ويرفق ، فالمعادن لديه لا تفارق جوهرها بقدر ما تخلق من هذا الجوهر علاقات مظهرية جديدة لم تكن لتولد تلقائيا . انها علاقات مصنوعة من قبل فنان شاء ان يعترض طريق الطبيعة مستخدما الياتها وموادها .

خشب وحديد وزجاج ورقائق معدنية تقف قبالة نحات يفكر ، هذا النحات كما يخيل لي لا يتبع نصيحة برانكوزي التي تقول « يدك تفكران وهما تتعقبان افكار المادة » بل وضع كلمة « عيناك » محل « يدك » وهذا الفعل ينطوي على مفهوم مختلف (بعمقه وما يمكن ان يؤدي اليه) للنحت .

نحات يفكر بعينيه وأمامه المادة . وهذا ما تؤكد اعماله ، وما كنت قد رأيت في مدينة

من كتابة نقدية بعنوان كائنات سامر الطباع للشاعر والناقد التشكيلي فاروق يوسف

... تأتي محاولات النحات الاردني سامر الطباع (١٩٤٥) وكتابتها تبتكر النحت من جديد ، أو على الاقل تجعلنا نستعيد التفكير في النحت باعتباره فنا قائما بذاته ولذاته . ولا مبالغة في القول : اننا مع أعمال سامر الطباع نستعيد فنا ضائعا . فجراً هذا النحات تكمن اولاً في انه استطاع ان يفلت من الانتساب الى حالة النحت الراهنة ، ولذلك لا يمكننا سوى الاعتراف بان اعماله انما تعبر عن نقله تاريخية سيؤدي الاطلاع عليها وادراك ما تنطوي عليه من مغزى فني الى انقاذ النحت من النسيان .

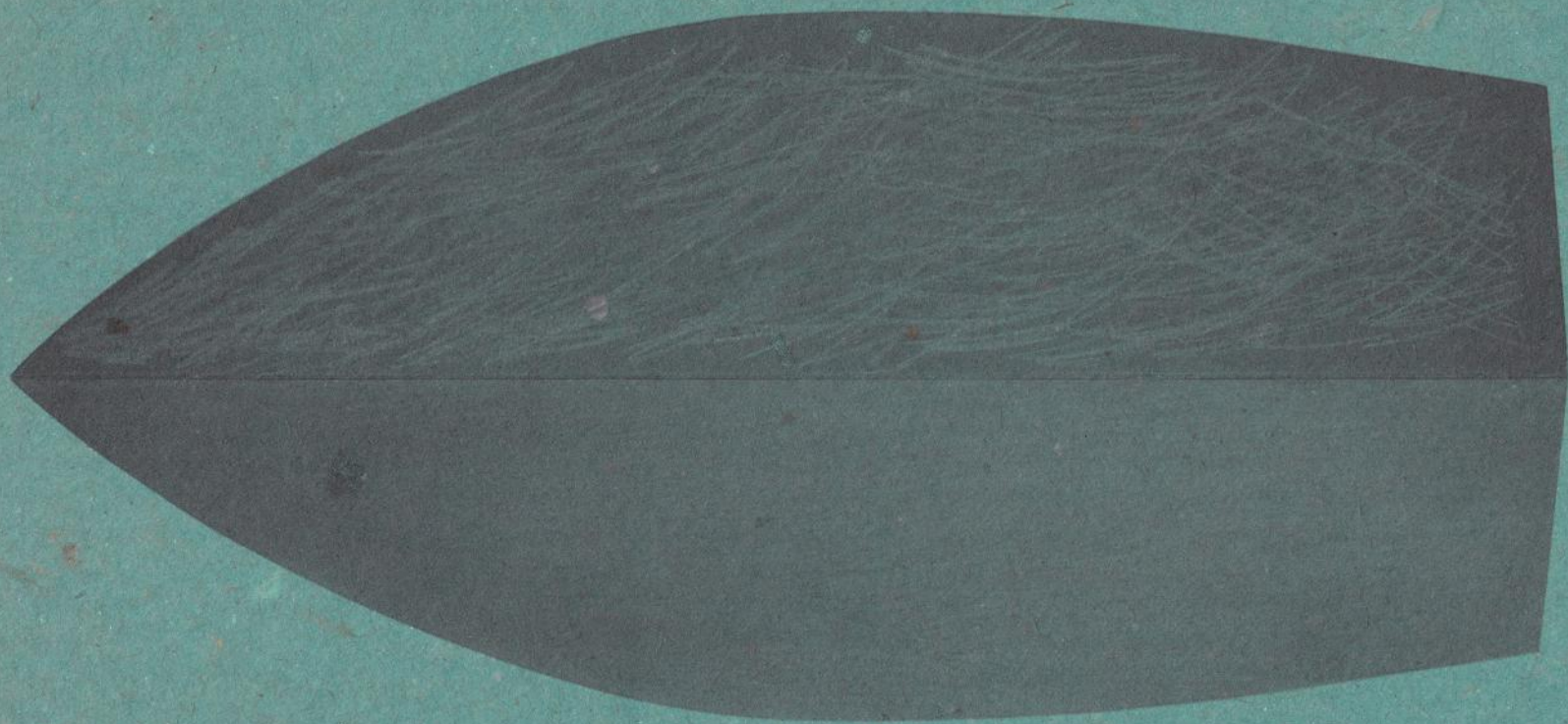
سامر الطباع (رؤيويًا وبصريًا وتقنيًا) حرص ومنذ البدء على ان يعمل في منطقة بعيدة كل البعد عن تلك المناطق الضيقة التي انهمك النحت الحديث في الوطن العربي ، بدءا بمختار وجواد سليم في استهلاكها ، لذلك فان اية تجربة بصرية يمر بها المشاهد ازاء اعماله لا بد وان تؤدي بالمشاهد وبسهولة الى اكتشاف ان هنالك قلبا للمفاهيم ، فالنحت بالنسبة للطباع لا يقدم خدمات جاهزة ، وهو لا يستمد مغزاه من قوة او معان تقع خارجه ، انه ببساطة ليس فنا اجتماعيا ، بل على العكس من ذلك تماما ، فهو يعبر عن تجربة فكرية وبصرية فردية تسعى الى تكريس نوع من الجمال الخالص الذي لا يمكن ان تتوصل اليه الا اعمال من نوعها ، لذلك فان امكانية اكتشاف هذا الجمال وادراك عناصره لا يمكن ان تتم الا بالمعايشة .

وهذا هو سر من اسرار تفرد الطباع بين النحاتين العرب في عصرنا .

... إن نظام العلاقات بين الاشكال الذي يجسده الطباع في اعماله يرتكز في جانب مهم من جوانبه الى



Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation - Darat al Funun
P.O.Box 910406 Amman , Jordan Telephone 643251/2 Fax 643253



Arrow
Graphite on steel
L 60 x W 100 x D 15