



What is your starting point for a new drawing or series? Do you plan it ahead?

I don't really plan before I start a new series, because, at that point, I usually don't know it's going to be a new series. Which means anything is possible. As a rule, I begin, at one point, to see a new series forming, and then I start establishing an essential framework. With the 100 x 70 cm ballpoint pen drawings I'm working on now, I had some of the images in my head already, but there are now many more. If I feel that the steps between one work and the next are too great or complex, I reduce these to the most basic elements. The simpler the work is conceived, the stronger it is. But it can sometimes take a couple of years to get that far. The weakest works are usually the ones I did when I thought I was being very clever. I don't set up the drawings on a computer. I just work by hand.

You mostly work with ballpoint pens. What do you appreciate about this basic tool?

I work with everyday materials. It can be normal paint from the hardware store or a ballpoint pen. At the moment I'm only using ballpoint pen in the typical colors of blue, black, red, and green. I like working with a material that has an aesthetic everyone is familiar with. You can buy a ballpoint pen anywhere in the world. Here, they're disposable merchandise. But in Africa, ballpoint pens are a symbol of status and are worn in shirt pockets, so everybody can see. But, they're also a relic, almost obsolete, and are being replaced by more efficient pens.

Ballpoint pens are very limited regarding how they can be used. The thickness of the line and the available colors are restricted. I learn a lot about color from using these four ballpoint pens. And it's interesting that my drawings are more painterly than my painted works. Which is why I'm not at all interested in the traditional

distinction between painting and drawing as categories, which is so important to the art market when it comes to price.

The optical effect in your new works is very present, and the Moiré patterns challenge the perception of the viewer. They remind me a little of op-art, but with a different flatness. How important is the simultaneous blurriness and sharpness aspect in your works?

The works emerge from a mix between perfection and error. Each consists of two layers of parallel, vertical, or horizontal lines that are sometimes more and sometimes less aligned parallel with one another. The less shifted the grid is, the stronger the optical interference. The same goes for the reverse: the greater the angle of alignment of the second line grid, the smaller the pattern. The spatial aspect is more visually dominant in the works with smaller Moiré patterns, the works with larger patterns more evoke movement and speed.

You talk about errors. What kind of errors?

Well, sometimes I deliberately include irregularities, sometimes mistakes just happen themselves. The blurriness of the pattern is created by the lines not being 100% parallel. I work with the colors blue, black, red, and green in combinations of two. This results in 10 different possibilities, which creates a visual blending of colors. The thickness of the ballpoint pen line is always the same, about 0.6 millimeters in diameter. If the distance between the lines is greater than

2 millimeters, the white space of the paper is more dominant and emerges as pattern. If the distance is less than 1.5 millimeters, then the open white space is reduced, and the mark of the pen is more present as structure.

Is it a challenge to document the works?

Yes, actually when I photograph the work, the autofocus of the camera can't focus at all. And when I look at the reproductions on a computer or camera display, I see even more Moirés, because the screen can't read the pattern.

Sometimes it's hard to tell if I drew the Moiré or if it's a result of the screen display.

The real effect of the drawings can't be duplicated in reproduction. The work functions best if the viewer is moving in front of the work. Most people who see the original work for the first time don't realize that it's ballpoint pen on paper. I like that because it's such a simple medium.

In 2012 you had a 6-month residency in Istanbul. Did this influence your artistic process in any way?

Yes. Being in Istanbul changed the way I work. Before, I was working on a series of varnish on wood. I started the ballpoint pen drawings in Istanbul. I walked a lot through the city and took photos: piles of things, tiles, fences and grating, facades of houses city ornaments, and day-to-day structures. I didn't have a specific project in mind when I went to Istanbul, nor did I bring any material with me. And then I started to draw, with ballpoint pen on paper, but small drawings. Which is funny because my live-in studio there was large, 140 m². But, the first Moiré drawings

were made after Istanbul. I initially organized them along radial and linear structures, then with color and geometric elements. The direction of the work now is taking form gradually, but they are still definitely rooted in Istanbul.

Your larger drawings seem to be very work-intensive?

That's interesting you ask, because it's always the first question I get. I guess that's how people's minds work. If something is made with a repetitive, comprehensible approach, people automatically assume or think it must have taken a lot of effort. Which is true, of course. But that can be applied to a lot of other type of work as well. My earlier series of varnish on wood was much more work intensive. But because people can't "see" it, no one asks about that.

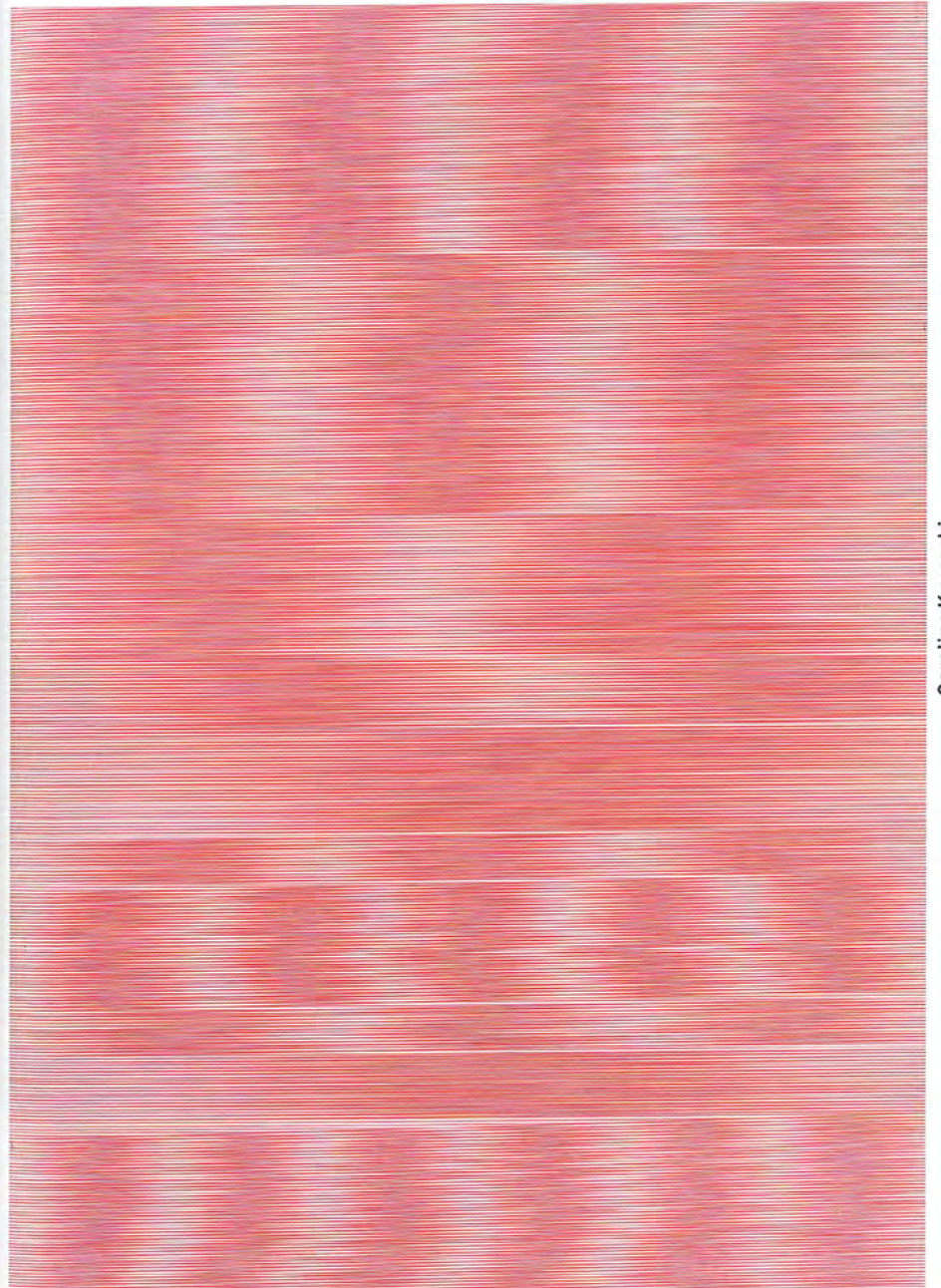
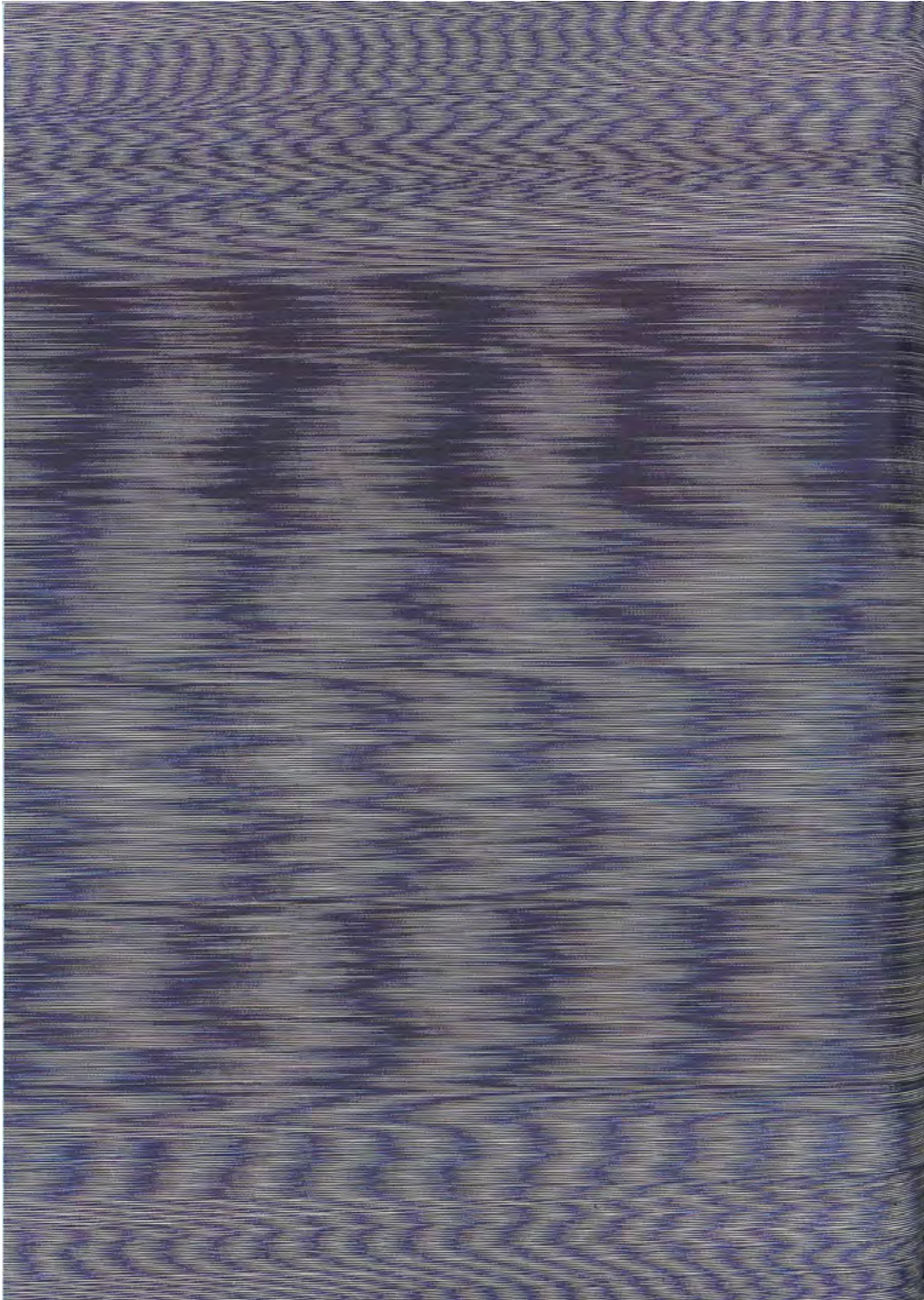
What is a normal day in your studio like? What hours do you prefer to work, do you listen to music, or do you enjoy silence?

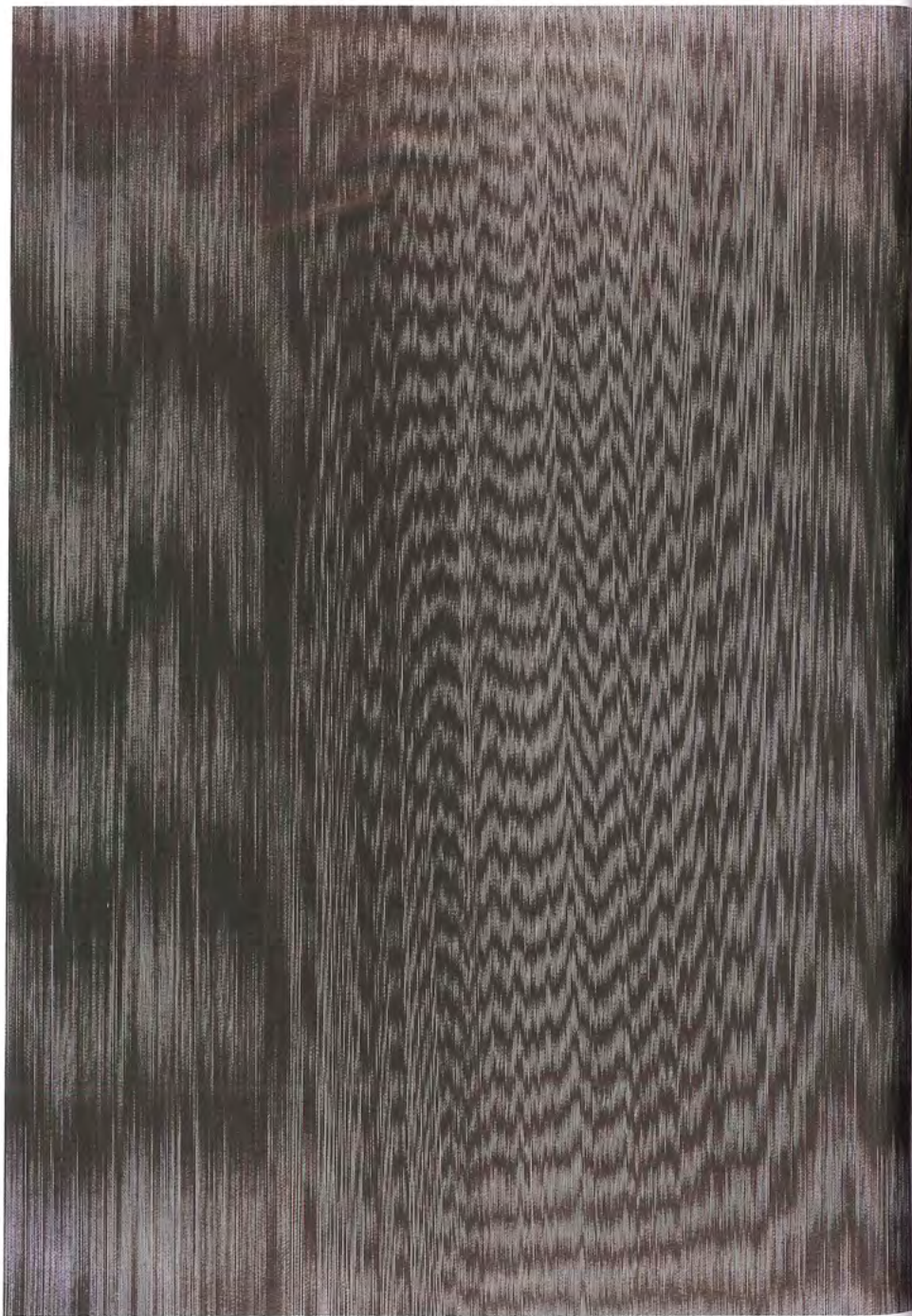
A normal day in the studio is like this: ideally I'll first go jogging, because then I draw better. I always work during the day, and mostly listen to the radio or music. The faster the music is, the faster the drawing is finished. I have

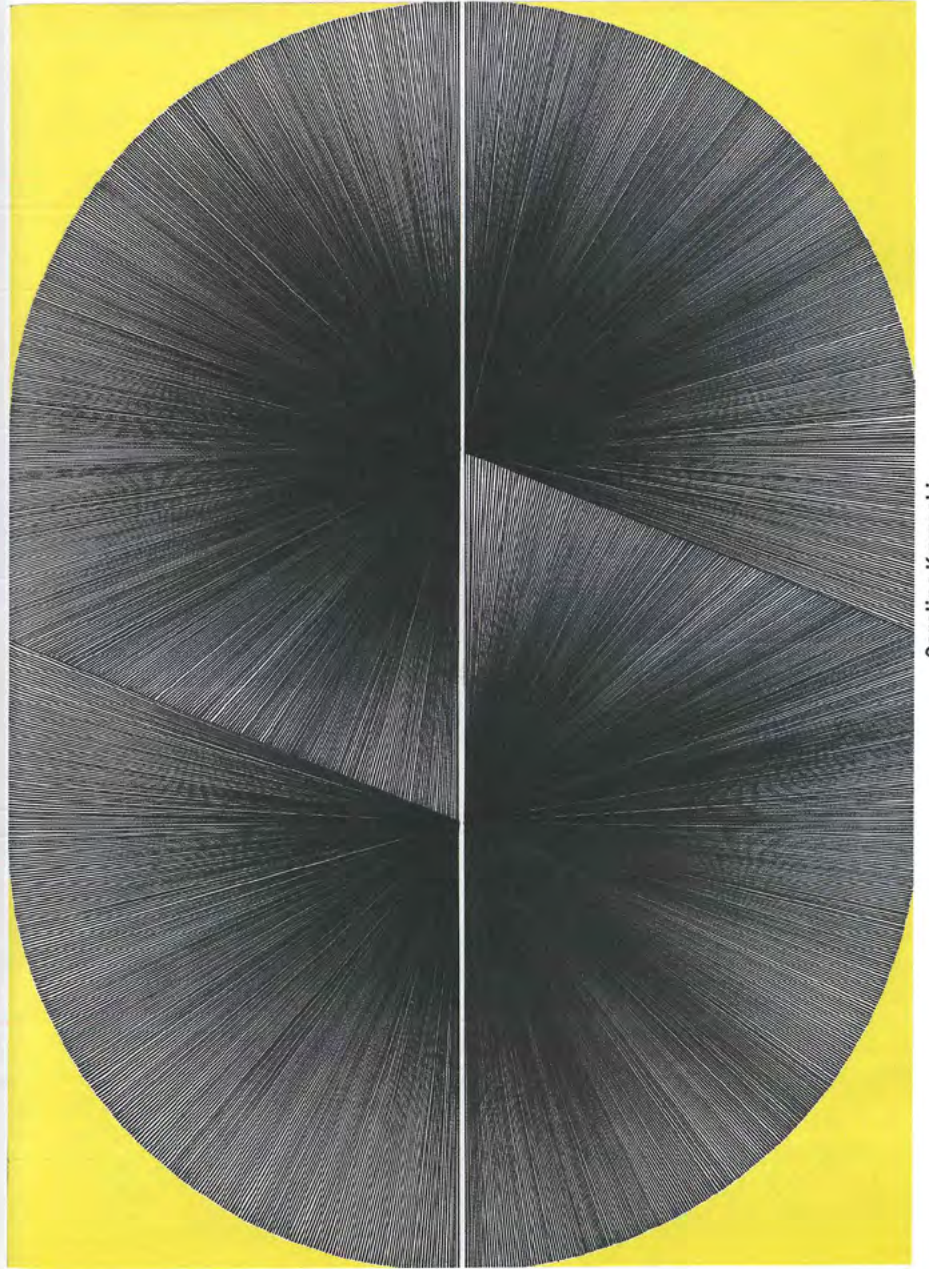
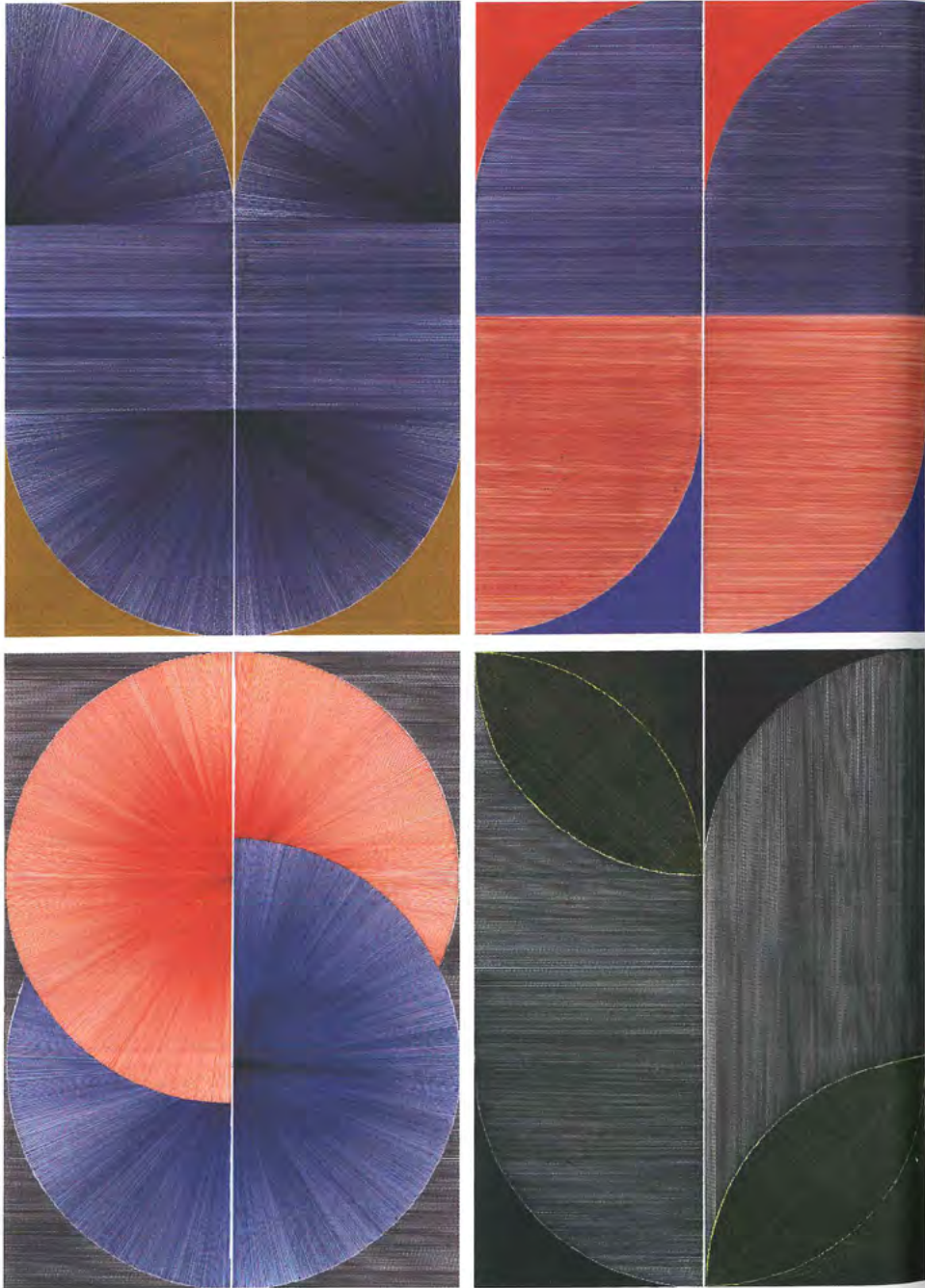
to concentrate when I'm drawing so I don't make too many unwanted mistakes. That works well, sometimes not so well. I work on a drawing table and start in the middle, whether horizontal or vertical. If I lose my concentration, I walk around the drawing table in circles. I'm always excited when I start with the second grid, because that's when the Moiré starts to emerge. My need for any type of meditation classes is, by the way, very low. And: if you add up the length of all of the lines in one 100 x 70 cm work you would come up with about one kilometer. If someone had told me a few years ago that I'd be doing work like this, I would've given them the finger.

Translation from German by Laura Bruce

The works emerge from a mix between perfection and error







Caroline Kryzecki

