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*Marine Models. Drawing Regeneration.*

MAMAC—Musée d'Art Moderne et d'Art Contemporain (Nice, France)  
September 2022 – April 2023

Irene  
modèles m  
dessiner la  
la régénération

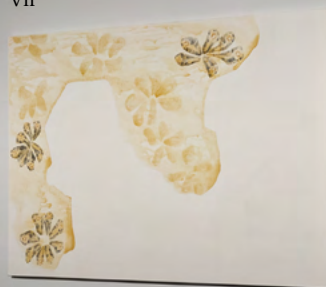
Après la fin de la guerre, la France a connu une période de reconstruction. Cette période a été marquée par une volonté de renouveau et de régénération. L'art a joué un rôle important dans ce processus. Les artistes ont cherché à représenter la vie, la nature et l'humanité. Ils ont utilisé des matériaux et des techniques nouvelles. Ils ont créé des œuvres qui ont marqué l'histoire de l'art. Ces œuvres ont été exposées dans des musées et des galeries. Elles ont été achetées par des collectionneurs et des institutions. Elles ont été conservées dans des musées et des galeries. Elles ont été étudiées par des chercheurs et des étudiants. Elles ont été admirées par des millions de personnes. Elles ont été une source d'inspiration pour de nombreux artistes. Elles ont été une partie importante de la culture française. Elles ont été une source de fierté pour les Français. Elles ont été une source de joie pour tous les amoureux de l'art.

MAMAC

VI



VII



VIII





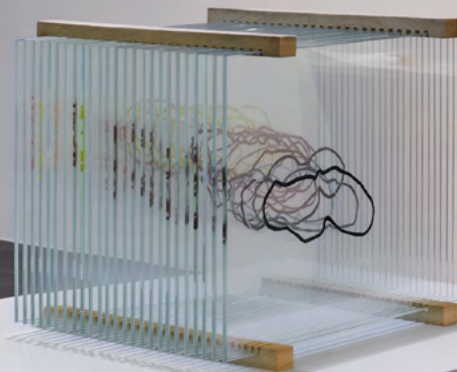
VII



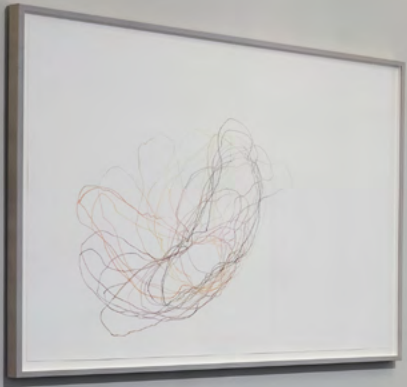
X



IX



III



IV





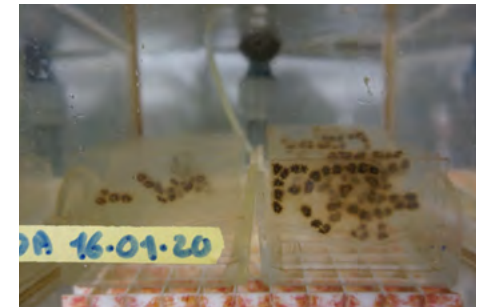
This project had a long trajectory. It was initiated in 2018 by MAMAC—Musée d'Art Moderne et d'Art Contemporain in Nice where I had my solo exhibition titled *On Growing: Intertwined, knotted, coiled Landscapes*. While preparing for the show, an idea of developing a long-term research-based project in the region started to germinate. Our discussions with MAMAC director Hélène Guenin opened up a conversation with Stefano Tiozzo, the principal investigator at the Laboratoire de Biologie du Développement de Villefranche-sur-Mer (LBDV). Soon after, I met Éric Röttinger, the principal investigator at the Institute for Research on Cancer and Aging in Nice. Together we embarked on a journey which entailed several visits to the research laboratories assessing the possibilities for working together and finding resources for the project. Both laboratories use marine invertebrate models to study regeneration, non-embryonic developments (such as whole-body regeneration and asexual development) and their evolutionary trajectories. At the beginning of 2019, once everything was in place, I moved to Nice. With the support of the Advanced Research Program at the Université Côte d'Azur, the project took on as an artistic-scientific collaboration between myself, the Tiozzo Lab (IMEV—SU, CNRS) and the Röttinger Lab (IRCAN—UCA, CNRS, INSERM), with an ongoing dialogue with Hélène Guenin and Laura Pippi-Détrey at MAMAC.

For a period of 18 months, I worked with the researchers to develop responses to their work and to make new observations through

drawing as a mode of investigation into the visual characteristics of the scientists' field of study. We established a fruitful dialogue while appreciating our individual disciplines and work areas. Each lab is guided by a set of scientific quests, and an artist's practice is driven by themes and processes that trigger the creation of drawings and paintings. Both sides performed within their respective fields and took on this project with the belief that we could find something new together. The idea of an artist working in the lab for a sustained period was meant to allow the necessary time to find an organic rhythm and therefore an original response to the workings of scientific research. In the same way, MAMAC took on the challenge to accompany the adventure, sharing the process and becoming involved in all aspects of the project.

Right from the start, we all agreed that to a certain extent the project *itself* was the experiment. Creating the conditions for our work to converge—and being keen participants throughout the process—laid the groundwork in which the results remained to be seen. At first, I entered each lab following its protocols in order to learn about the research focus, the organisms studied, and to understand the details of how each lab functions both independently and in the context of the wider institution of the UCA. While the project launched with me delving into an unknown environment, my presence eventually began to make an impact on Stefano and Eric and their teams. The introduction of a different training, perception and knowledge started influencing their research ecosystem. My visual approach

process



represented a productive complementary approach to the researchers' interests in the mechanism of the marine organisms' development and regeneration. But where the scientists saw regeneration, I saw colour variations, movements and textures.

The durational nature of the project was essential to properly study these organisms and to allow for new ideas and approaches in a truly collaborative way. We were all engaging in lively discussions and gave regular input on each other's work during our time in the labs, which had a significant impact on the outcomes. We knew that working long-term would allow the process to be richer for all involved. While discussing the transitory results during the first few months, we came across certain ideas which we explored in the ensuing months. I became an integral part of the scientific research teams, asking questions that might feel unusual in the context, and infiltrating the work that was being made through such an investigation. Gradually, my work began appearing in the space, both in the form of a conceptual engagement as well as drawing materials I was engaging with. Having Hélène and Laura from MAMAC involved enabled fruitful feedback to the work from both the artistic and museum perspectives.

As part of the process, in 2021 we created a Workstation at MAMAC in which drawing was applied as a tool to gain knowledge about the extraordinary capacity of these organisms to regenerate. You can read about this project in more detail in my text [here](#). From various series of works produced ever since the project

took off in 2019 and all the way through to September 2022—both those made on site in Nice as well as in my Amsterdam studio—the MAMAC curators and I made a large selection which went on display at the Museum.

Tiozzo Lab  
*Botryllus schlosseri*

I made a short first visit to the Tiozzo Lab in 2019. Just a week to do a few drawing tests. I wanted to check whether drawing *Botryllus* would work for me before embarking on a long journey at the lab. The tests were successful and therefore I decided to go for it. It took a while until we got the logistics organized and it was in February 2020 that the project started. I had a grant to work at the lab for eighteen months. Afterwards, the project continued with shorter work trips, to carry on with some of the drawings experiments, up until the exhibition at MAMAC which opened in April 2022.

At the Tiozzo Lab there is a permanent team, and there are students doing Masters, doctorates and post-docs. The Principal Investigator is Stefano Tiozzo, Alexandre Alie (Alex) is a researcher, Sonia Lotito is lab technician. These team members were always there, throughout my different stays as well as Laurent Gilletta (Lolo), a technician who among other tasks, looks after the *Botryllus*. When I arrived Federico Brown, a Professor at the University of Sao Paulo, was a visiting researcher. Marta Scelzo was conducting research for her PhD, and Rita Andreoni was a Master student. I was given a desk downstairs,

Workstation  
at MAMAC,  
June 2021





where Federico and Rita were. Stefano and Alex share an office upstairs, next to the room with the stereoscopes.

With the help of Stefano, the institute allowed me to use a former student dormitory; an attic that we set up as a studio with lights and easels, where I could work on a larger scale or in techniques that didn't suit the lab environment. Writing and drawings unfolded and the project developed throughout this time.

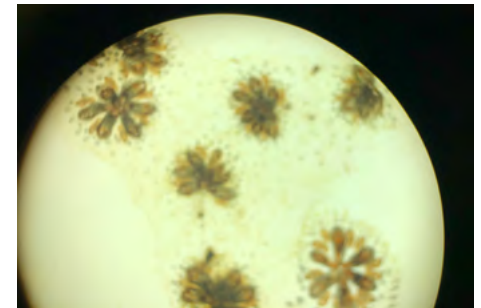
Röttinger Lab.  
*Nematostella vectensis*

I arrived at Röttinger Lab in February 2020, when the project grant had started. The lab is located inside the Faculty of Medicine, on the seventh floor. The last thing you imagine when you enter this building, is a lab for the study marine animals, but there they are. In this lab, Eric Röttinger is the Research Director. Since the beginning of this project, Aldine Amiel (Research Engineer) was part of the collaboration. The team here is quite large, there are several research projects, also focused on other marine models. The list of members is too large to name here. Everyone was warm and welcoming. I had spent many hours on the "bench", as they call it, with João Carvalho, a post-doc researcher.

Because of the various projects and processes that took place at the lab, I spent the first weeks talking to the lab members, trying to understand what they did and how they did it. I was given a desk in an office with several students.

The *Nematostella* are kept in a separate room, a lot colder, but most of the time I spent in a room looking at *Nematostella* under the microscope. When I needed to work on larger material experiments, I would work at my studio in Villefranche. I organized my research trips in such a way that I could combine work at both the Tiozzo and Röttinger Lab, spending a week in each lab. But this was flexible and adjusted to the needs and experiments I was working on.

*Botryllus schlosseri*



*Nematostella vectensis*



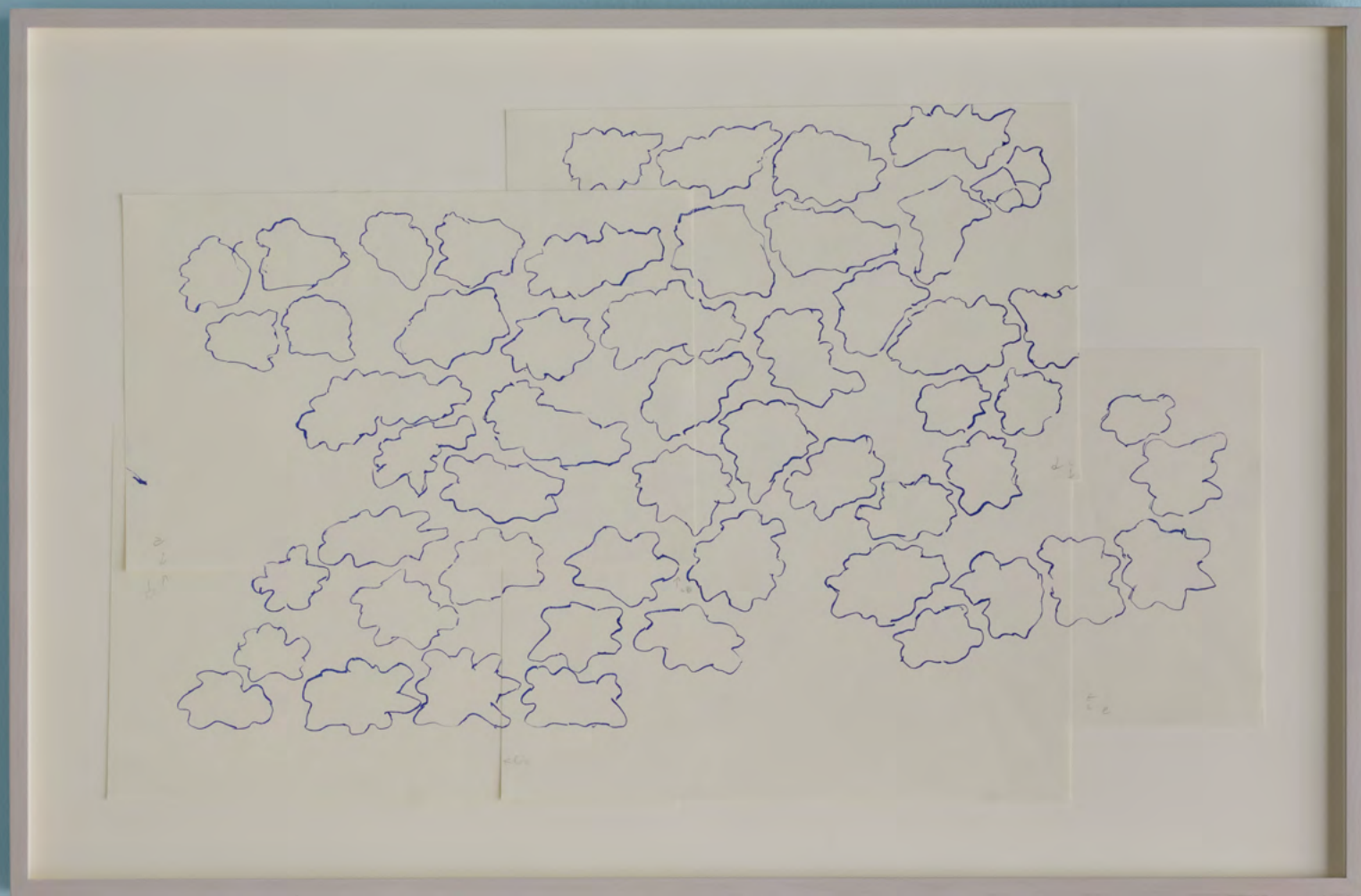
I

*Botryllus Collage — From the Port, 2020*

marker on paper

approx. 45 × 70 cm assembled

5 individuals 21 × 29.5 cm each





II

*Botryllus Watercolors — Cold System*, 2021

series of 11 watercolors

watercolour on paper

26 × 36 cm









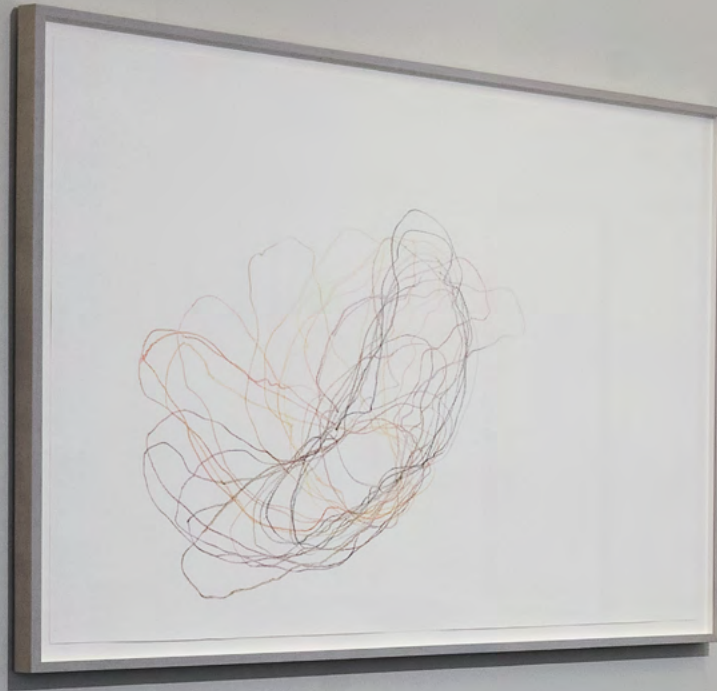
III

*Nematostella Movement Experiment — Large*, 2021

series of 15, 1 on display

oil pastel on paper

100 × 140 cm







IV

*Nematostella Regeneration Experiment*, 2021

series of 50 drawings

colour pencil on paper

19.5 × 29.8 cm each







Day 0 (26 Feb)

Day 1 (27 Feb)

Day 2 (28 Feb)

Day 3 (1 Mar)

Day 4 (2 Mar)

S1



S2



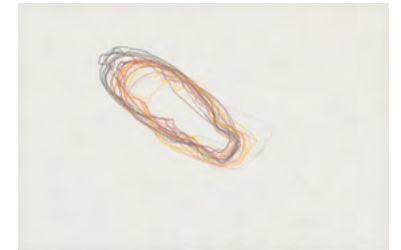
S3



S4



S5





Day 5 (3 Mar)

Day 6 (4 Mar)

Day 7 (5 Mar)

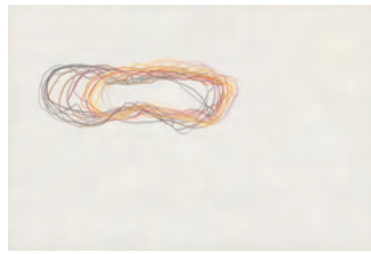
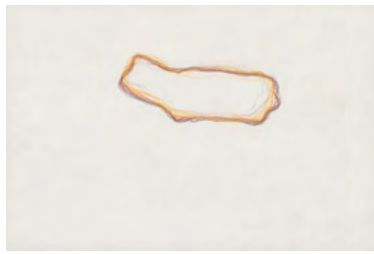
Day 10 (8 Mar)

Day 11 (31 Mar)

S1



S2



S3



S4



S5



V

*Botryllus Fluorescence*







V-i

*Botryllus Fluorescent Green (BSA Alexa Fluor 488)*, 2022

series of 7

pencil on paper

21 × 29 cm





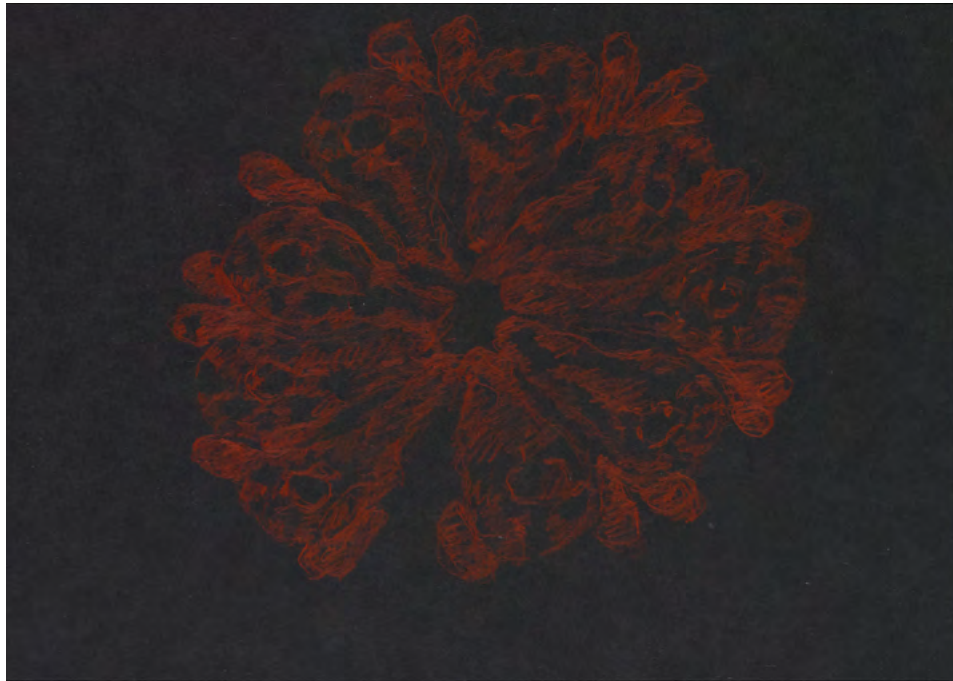
V-ii

*Botryllus Fluorescent Red (BSA Alexa Fluor 594)*, 2022

series of 7

pencil on paper

21 × 29 cm



VI

*Nematostella Regeneration — Fluorescence*, 2022

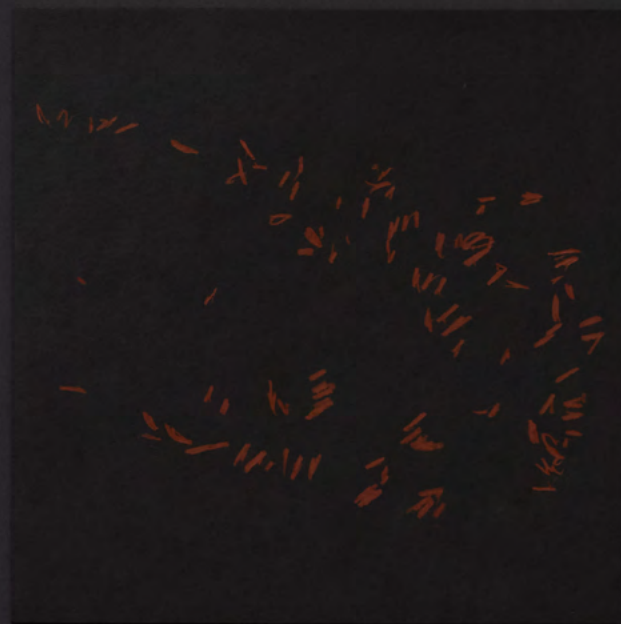
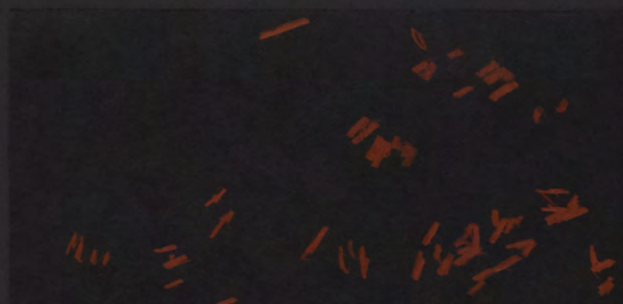
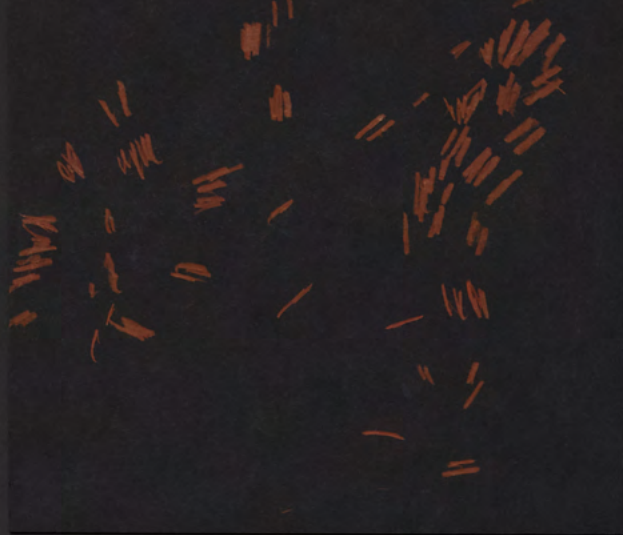
series of 7, 3 on display

pencil on paper

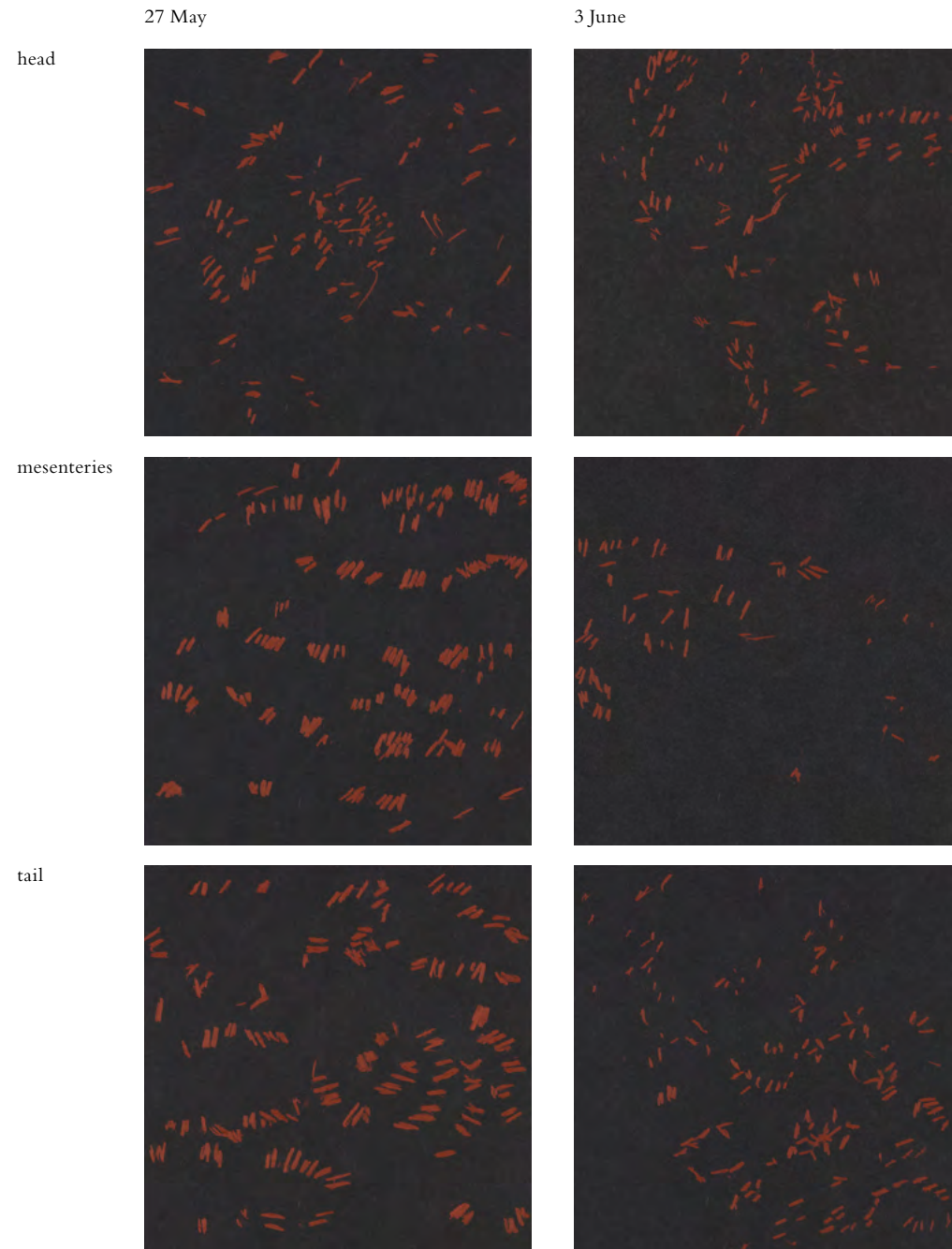
21 × 21 cm each, polyptyque / polyptych





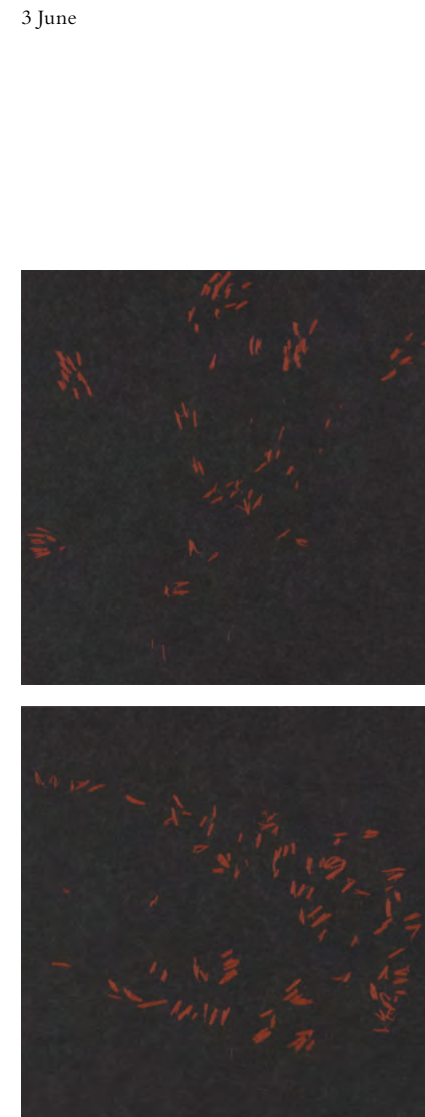
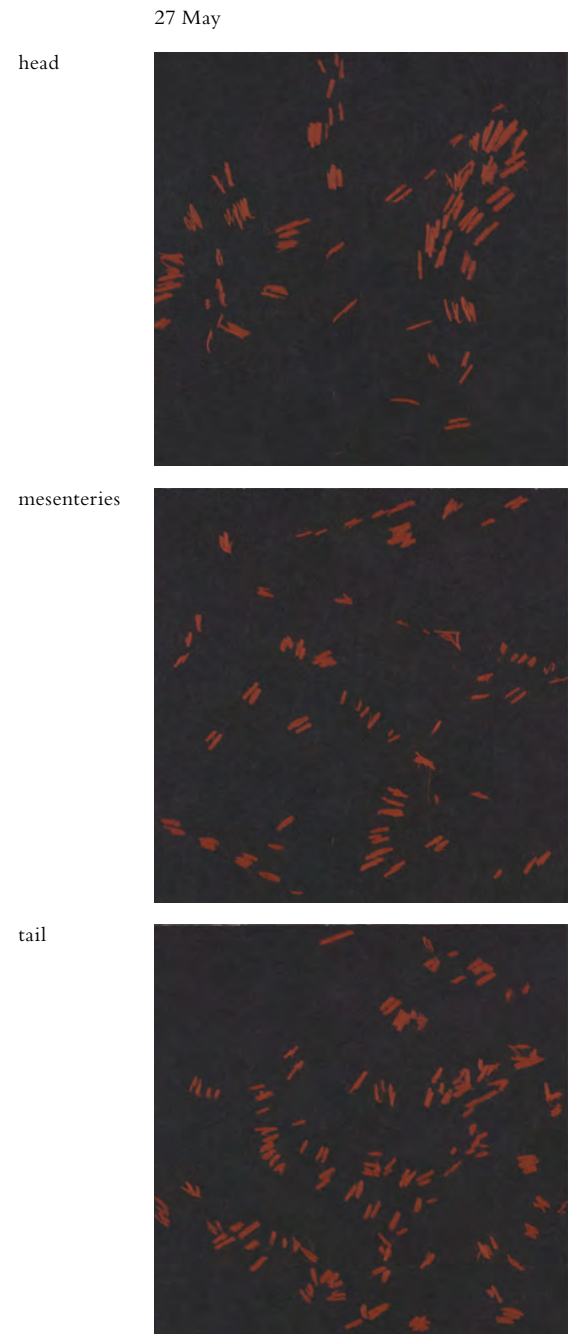


VI  
Sample 2





VI  
Sample 3



VII

*Botryllus Paintings*, 2022

series of 9, 3 on display

acrylic on canvas

100 × 154 cm





E



DD







VIII

*Botryllus Porcelain*

series is of 8, 4 on display





VIII-i  
*Porcelain Botryllus* – BU, 2022  
42 sculptures/systems  
porcelain, 96 × 186 cm



VIII-ii  
*Porcelain Botryllus* – CB, 2022  
10 sculptures/systems  
porcelain, 96 × 186 cm





VIII-iii  
*Porcelain Botryllus* – DF, 2022  
35 sculptures/systems  
porcelain, 96 × 186 cm



VIII-iv  
*Porcelain Botryllus – DI, 2022*  
19 sculptures/systems  
porcelain, 96 × 186 cm





details



IX

*Botryllus Regeneration Experiment Phase 2*





IX-i

*Botryllus Regeneration Experiment*

Phase 2 / DJ, 2021

watercolour and graphite on paper and cut outs

approx. 220 × 75 cm

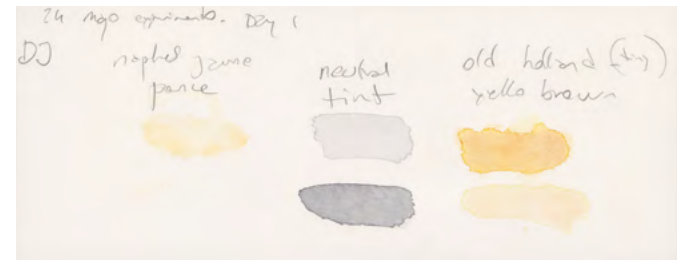


IX-i

DJ - Phase 1



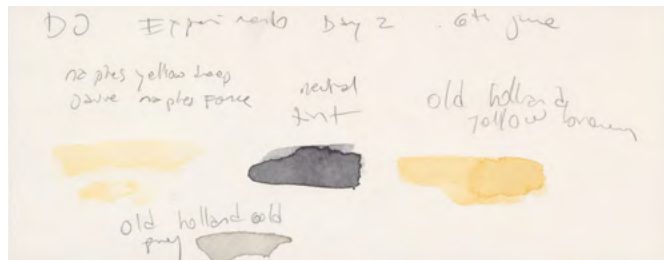
DJ - Phase 1.1





IX-i

DJ - Phase 1.2



DJ - Phase 2



IX-i

DJ – Cut-out tool





IX-ii

*Botryllus Regeneration Experiment*

Phase 2 / BU, 2021

watercolour and graphite on paper and cut outs

approx. 230 × 75 cm



IX-iii

*Botryllus Regeneration Experiment*

Phase 2 / DI, 2021

watercolour and graphite on paper and cut outs

approx. 260 × 75 cm





X  
*Glass Pieces*





X-i

*Glass Botryllus*, 2021–2022

series of 3

silkscreens on glass

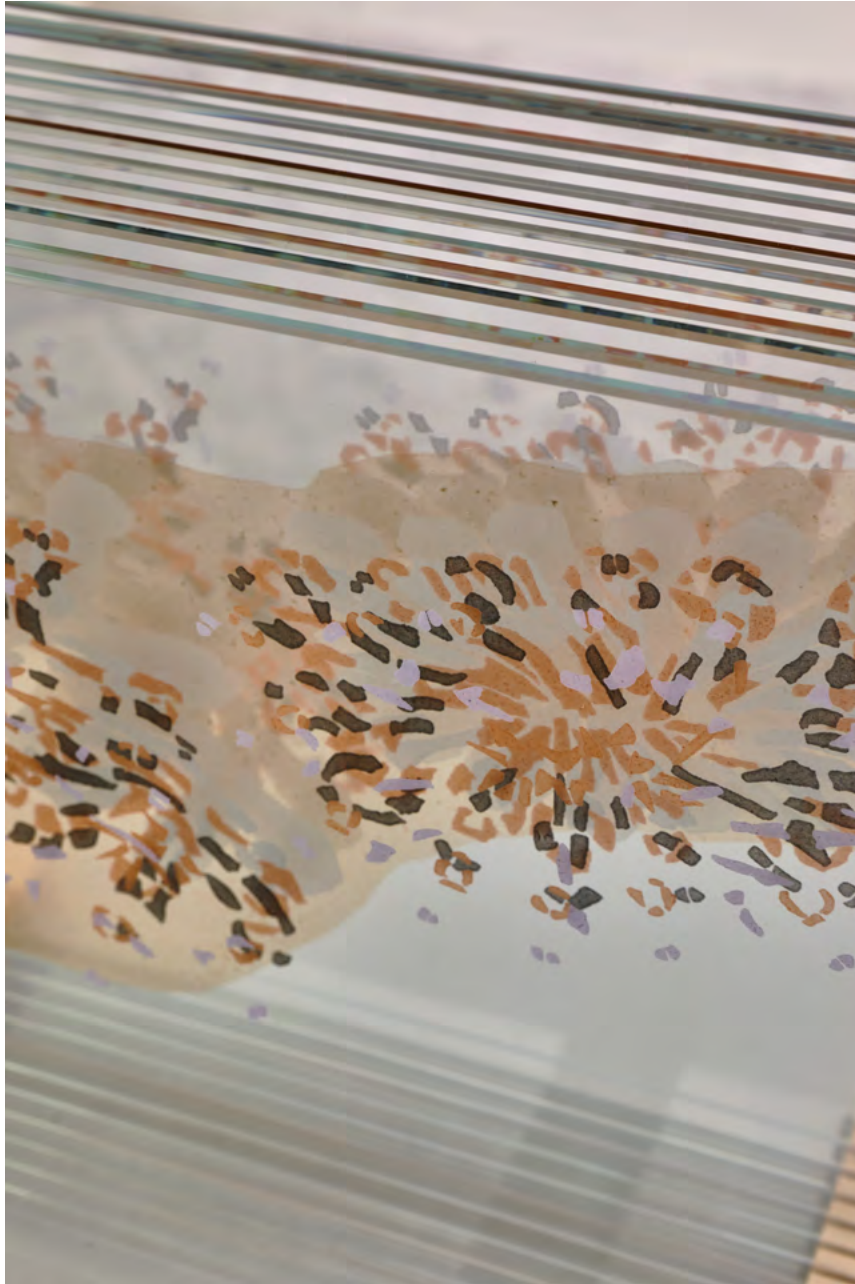
21 × 31.5 × 10 cm







details





X-ii  
*Glass Nematostella*, 2021–2022  
series of 3  
silkscreens on glass  
21 × 31.5 × 10 cm



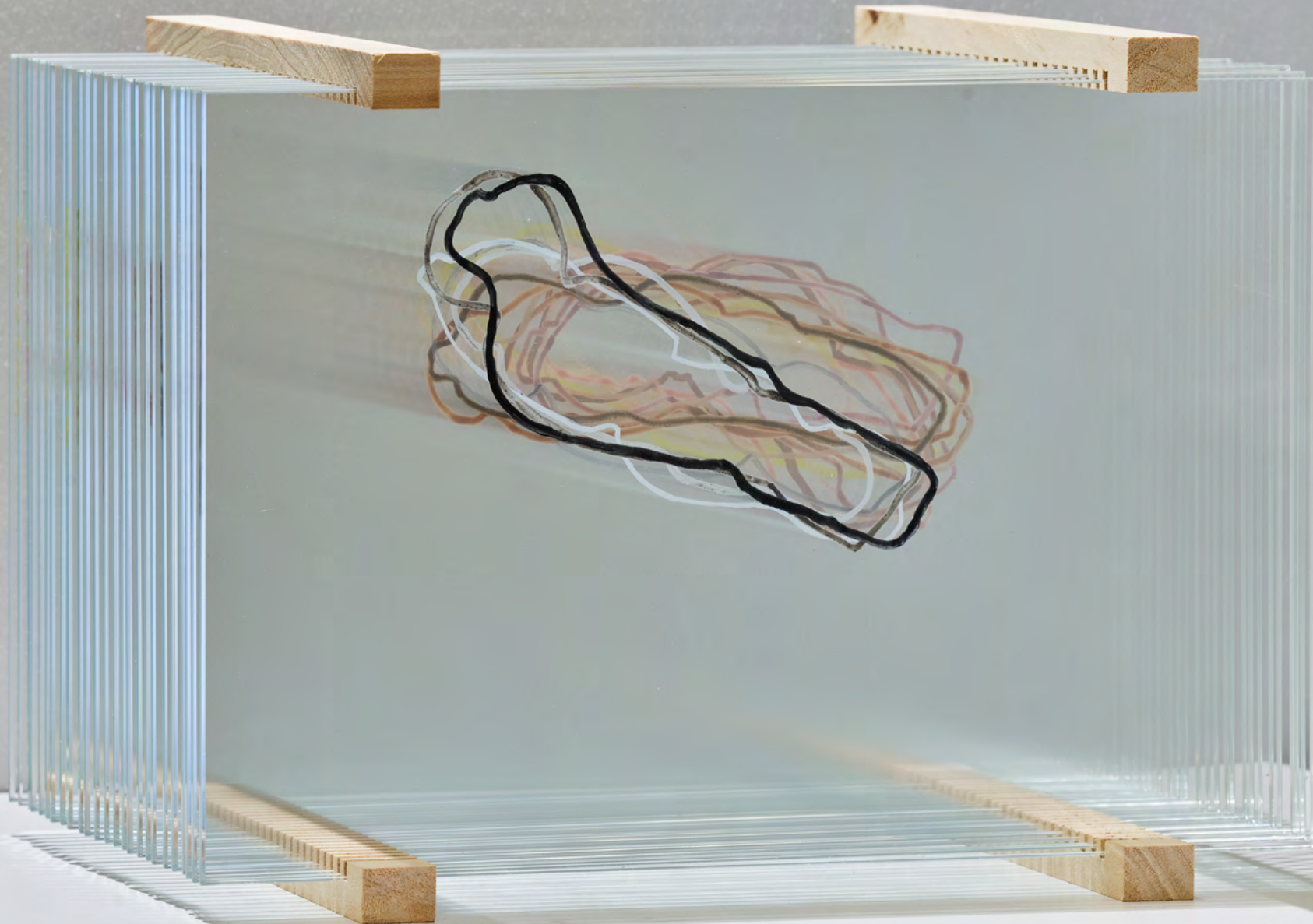




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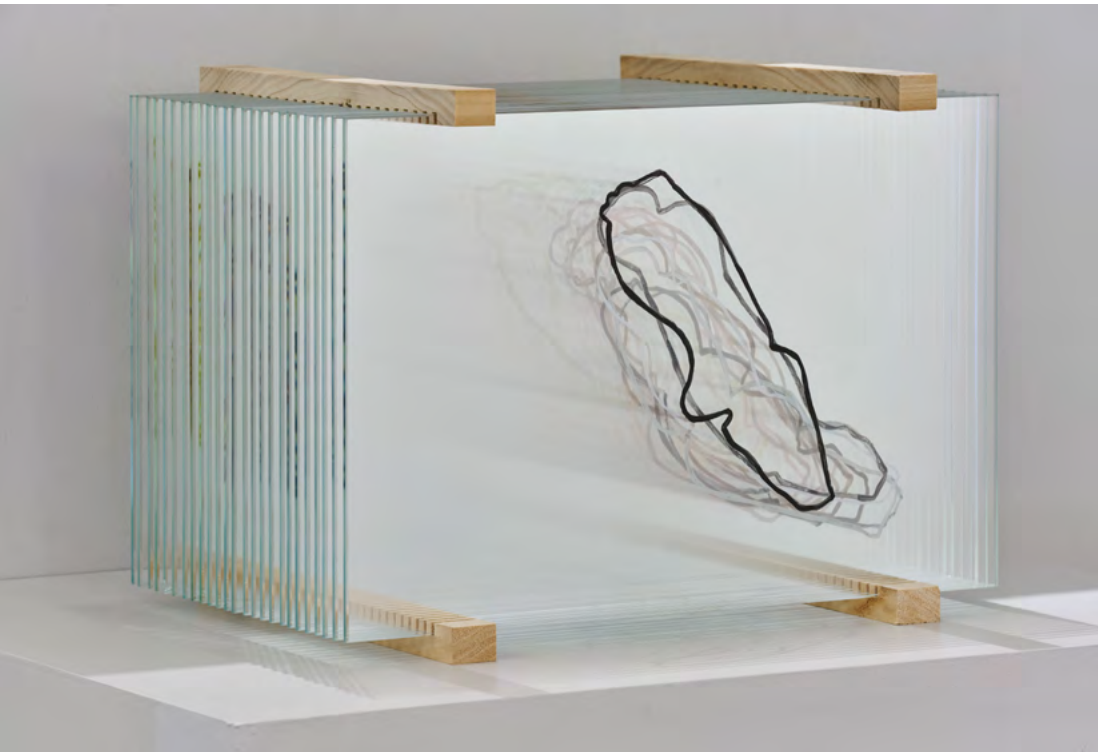


X-iii  
*Nematostella in Motion*, 2021  
series of 5  
enamels on glass, 21 × 31.5 × 19 cm

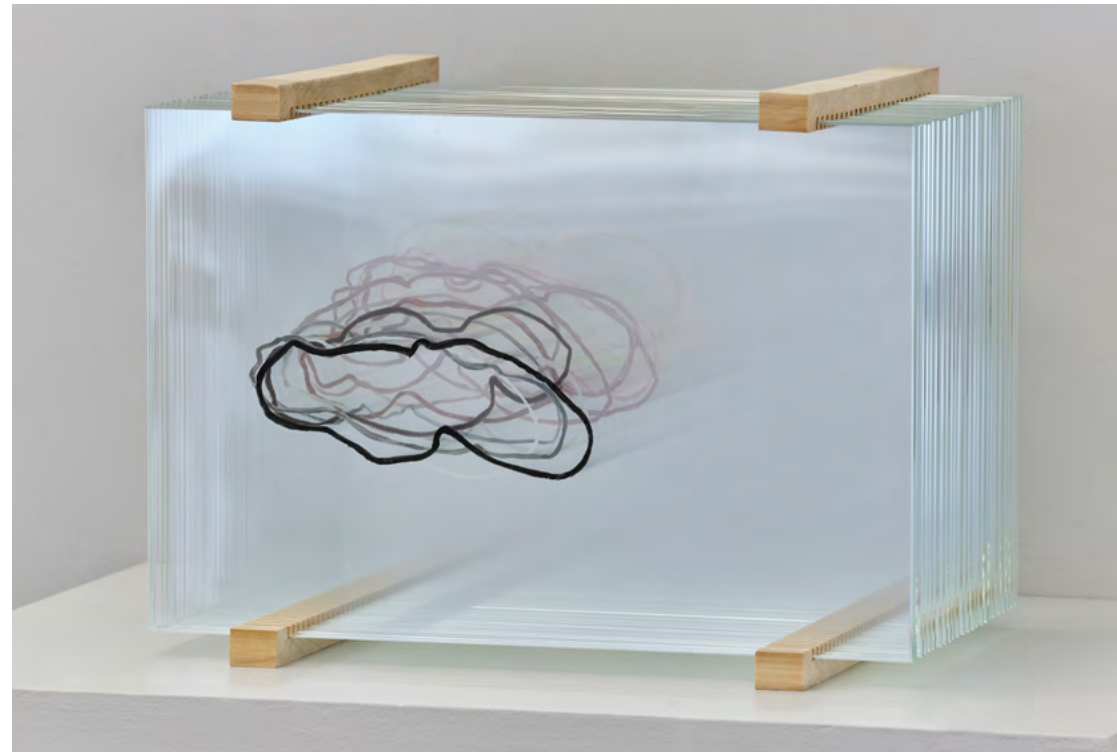




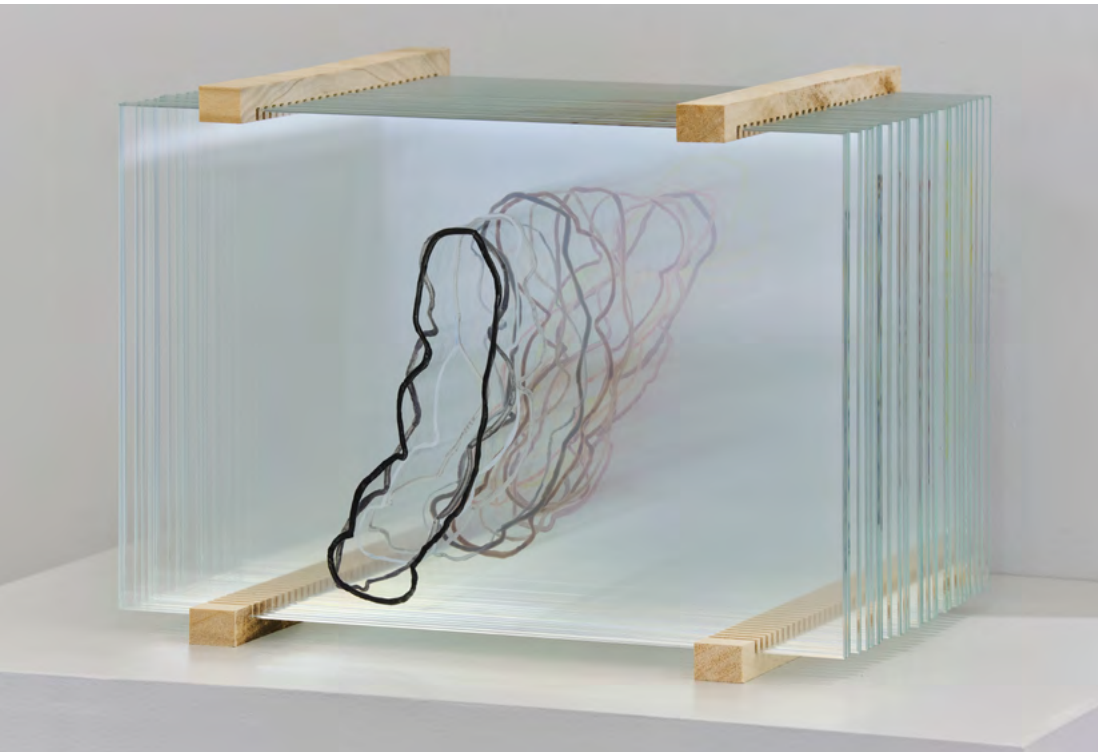
S1 13 April



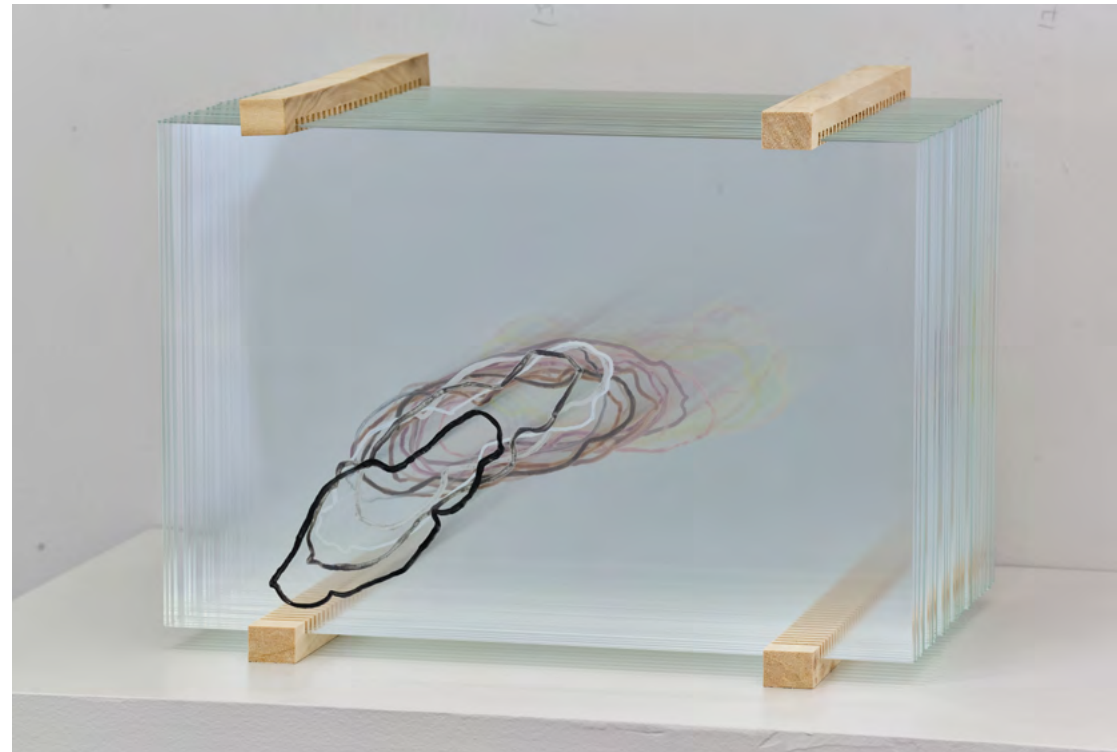
S5 13 April



S2 13 April

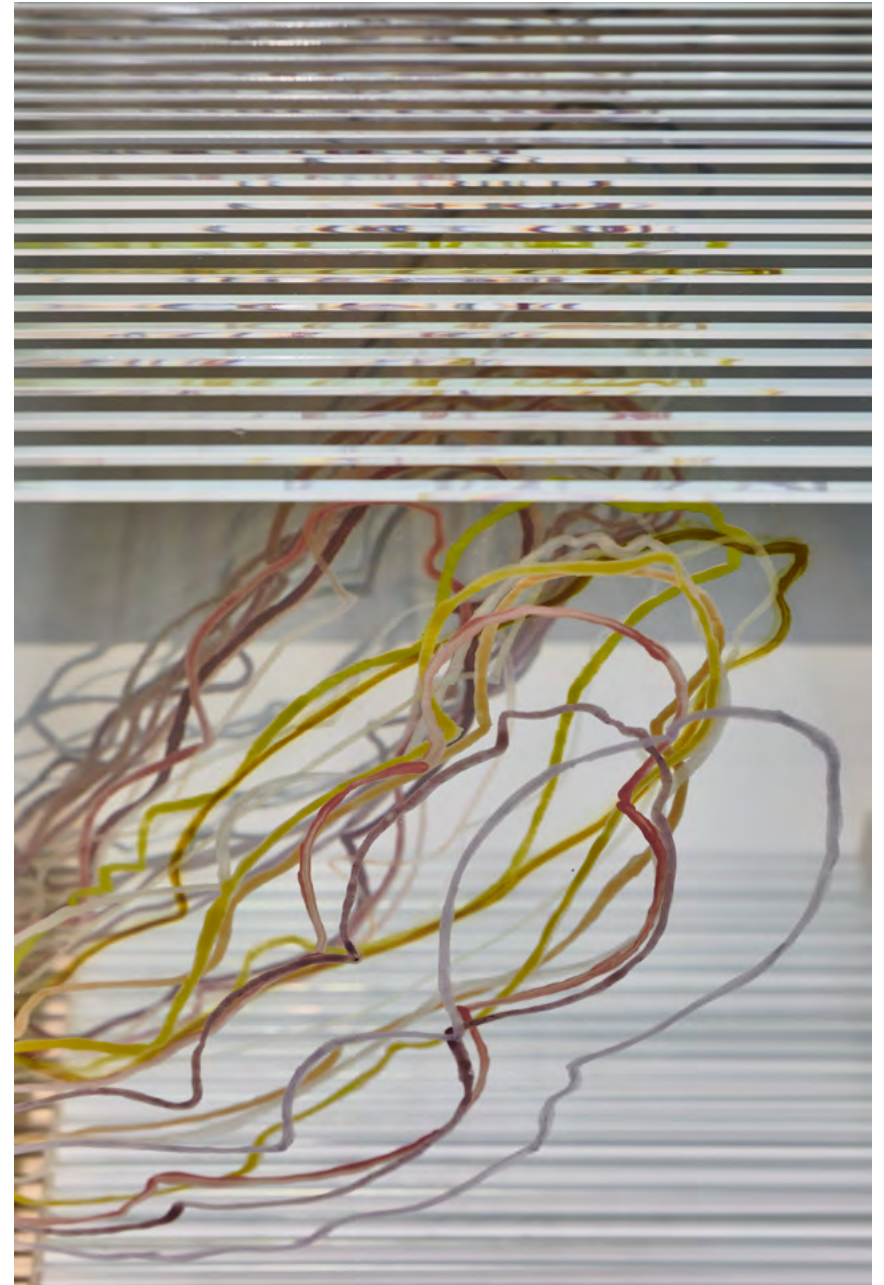
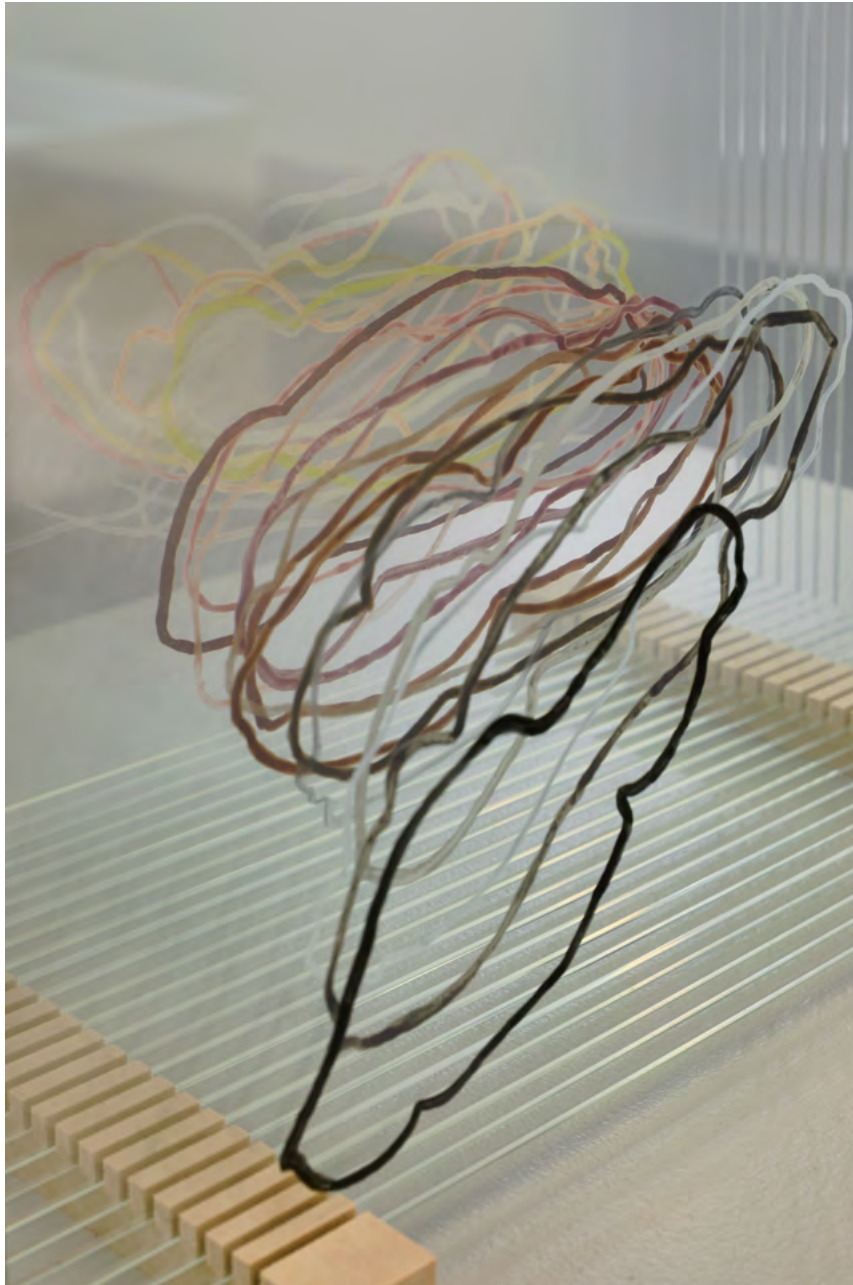


S3 13 April





details



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*Marine Models. Drawing Regeneration.*

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Art in Print/Zeeuws Archief

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Production *Porcelain Botryllus*:  
Keramiekwerkplaats Koloriet

Production *Nematostella in Motion*,  
*Glass Botryllus* and *Glass Nematostella*:  
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