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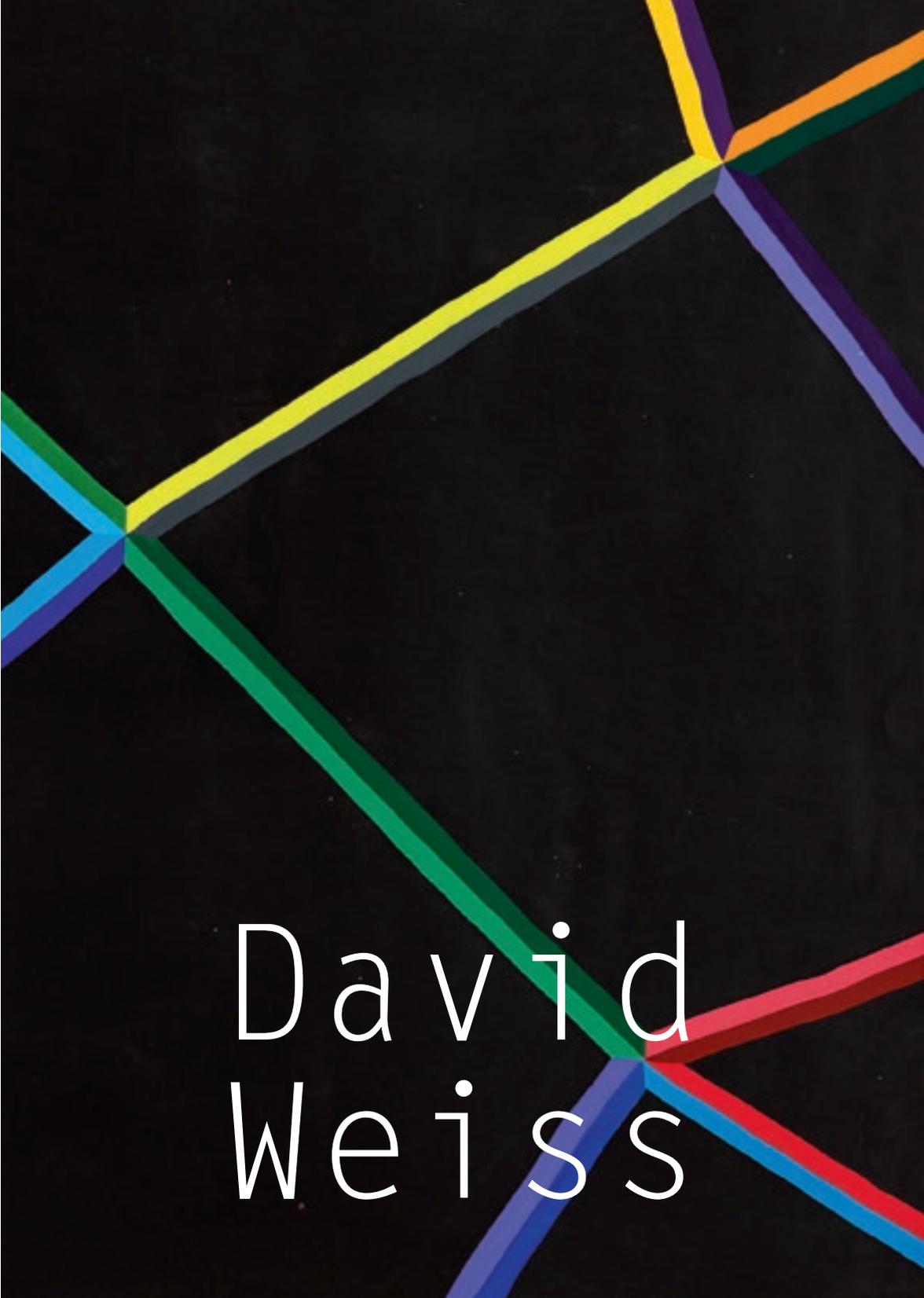
David Weiss: Works, 1968-1979 gives unprecedented insight into the early life and work of one half of world-renowned art duo, Fischli/Weiss. Weiss's rarely seen early works on paper are accompanied here by newly commissioned essays, as well as never-before-published texts by the artist, revealing the genesis of his prolific, irreverent vocabulary.

Douglas Fogle
Urs Lüthi
Hans Ulrich Obrist
David Weiss

David Weiss: Works, 1968-1979

David Weiss

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The image features a black background with several thick, overlapping lines in various colors: yellow, green, blue, red, purple, and orange. The lines intersect at various points, creating a complex, abstract pattern. The text 'David Weiss' is centered in the lower half of the image in a white, sans-serif font.

David
Weiss







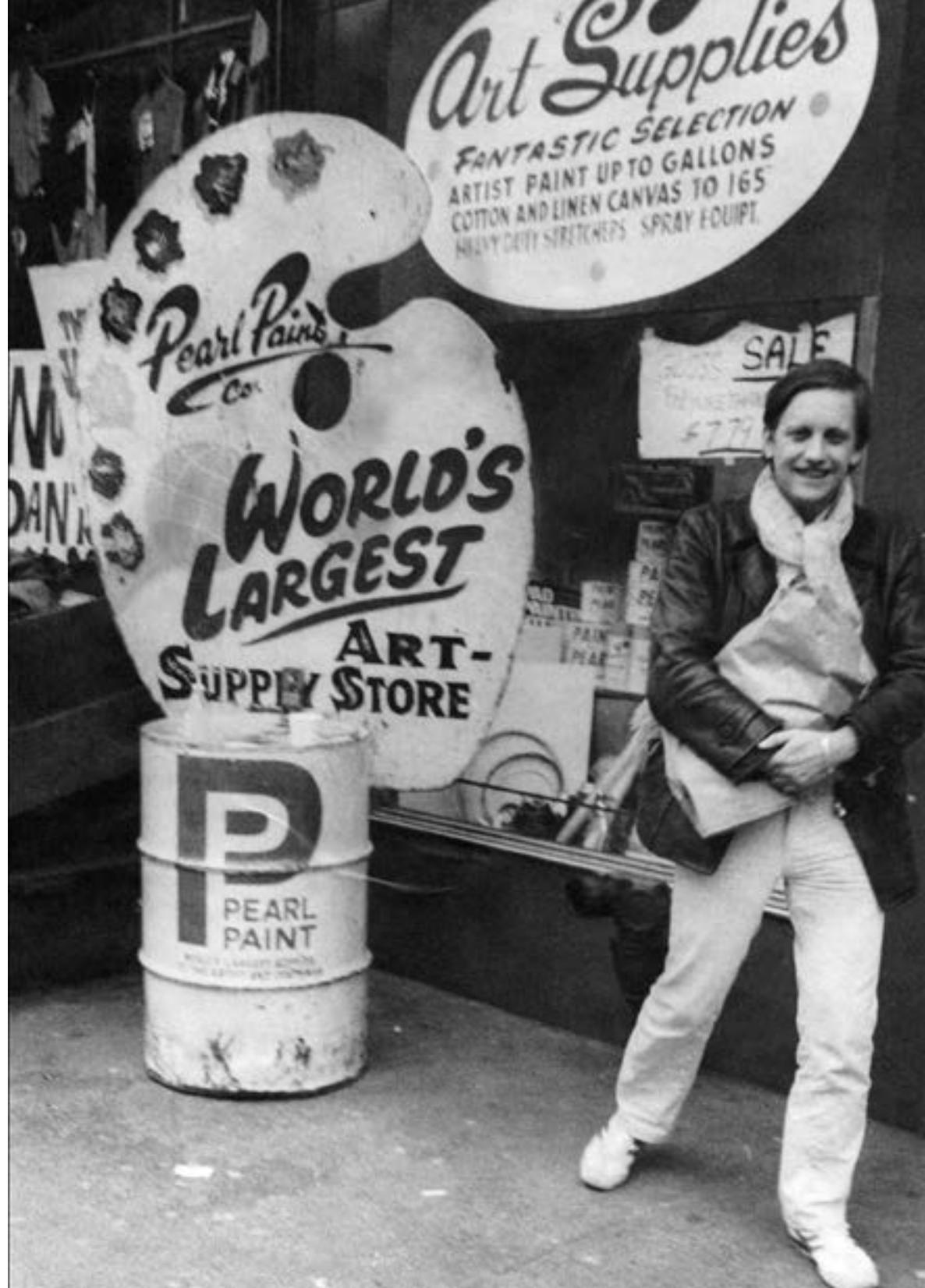
David
Weiss

Works, 1968-1979

SI

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Introduction

The 1979 photograph on page nine captures a young David Weiss blocks away from Swiss Institute in New York, in front of the iconic (now shuttered) art supply store, Pearl Paint. Standing next to a giant palette asserting the shop's status as "the world's largest art-supply store," Weiss grins mischievously, delighted by this emblem of American superlativism. He first traveled to the United States in the late 1960s and was captivated by the dissonant pleasure of American culture.

A central tenet of Swiss Institute's mission is to show lesser-known aspects of renowned artists' work. Conjuring cartoon imagery, abstract compositions, deadpan text, and dreamlike urban scenes, David Weiss's early work conveys the absurd beauty of banality. His works on paper were virtually unknown to the public, yet in his final months, he began archiving his many notebooks, drawings, and other works on paper, culminating in 2014 with the publication of *Nine Books 1973-1979* by Edition Patrick Frey and an exhibition at the Bündner Kunstmuseum in Chur, Switzerland. Knowing that a significant portion of these early works was created during his travels and while Weiss was living in Los Angeles, Swiss Institute was delighted to bring *David Weiss: Werke, 1968-1979* from Chur to New York City. In an ode to Weiss's avid wanderlust, Swiss Institute's walls were painted in the colors found in digital maps—highway yellow, park green, earth beige, ocean blue. The exhibition was organized around the different series Weiss made during this early period: cityscapes, geometric nets, cartoon imagery, and abstractions, along with a dizzying wealth of artist's books.

Nineteen seventy-nine was a crucial moment of transition for Weiss. In that year, he began his remarkable collaboration with Peter Fischli, thereby establishing one of the most significant art duos of the last century. From their earliest work, the *Wurstserie* (*Sausage Series*, 1979), to *Plötzlich diese Übersicht* (*Suddenly This Overview*, 1981), to the seminal *Der Lauf der Dinge* (*The Way Things Go*, 1987), to their Gold Lion-winning *Fragenprojektion* (*Questions*, 1981-2003), they continuously questioned the quotidian with wit and sympathy, until the untimely death of David Weiss in 2012. Fischli/Weiss have a long history with Swiss Institute. When we held an exhibition

of their work in 2007, they organized a hike in upstate New York "as a diversion from the discussion-weary affairs of the art world." This "day without purpose" remains one of Swiss Institute's most cherished memories. The duo was also featured in several group exhibitions, including *Extra*, curated by Marc-Olivier Wahler in 2003, *None of the Above*, curated by John M. Armleder, and *Tracking Suburbia*, curated by Paul Tanner (both 2005).

In addition to containing a significant amount of never-before-seen material, this publication provides Weiss's closest friends with an opportunity to revisit previous collaborations and produce extraordinary new content. Hans Ulrich Obrist gives a personal meditation on his enduring friendship with Weiss, which began when Obrist was a student in St. Gallen. Three early collaborations are recounted by Urs Lüthi: *Sketches* (1970), *The Desert Is Across the Street* (1975), and *Lazy Days*, the latter a series of never-before-published photographs that epitomize the artists' lives in 1973 and 1974—when, as Lüthi says, "we really had nothing we had to do." We are proud to publish—for the first time in English—three texts by Weiss that were inspired by his travels: a rumination on Los Angeles, an article on the very American sport of bodybuilding, and a psychedelic prose poem, "Come Away With Me." Also, Swiss Institute has commissioned a special essay by Los Angeles-based curator Douglas Fogle, who considers the manifold influences, from Robert Walser to Bugs Bunny, found in the exhibited works.

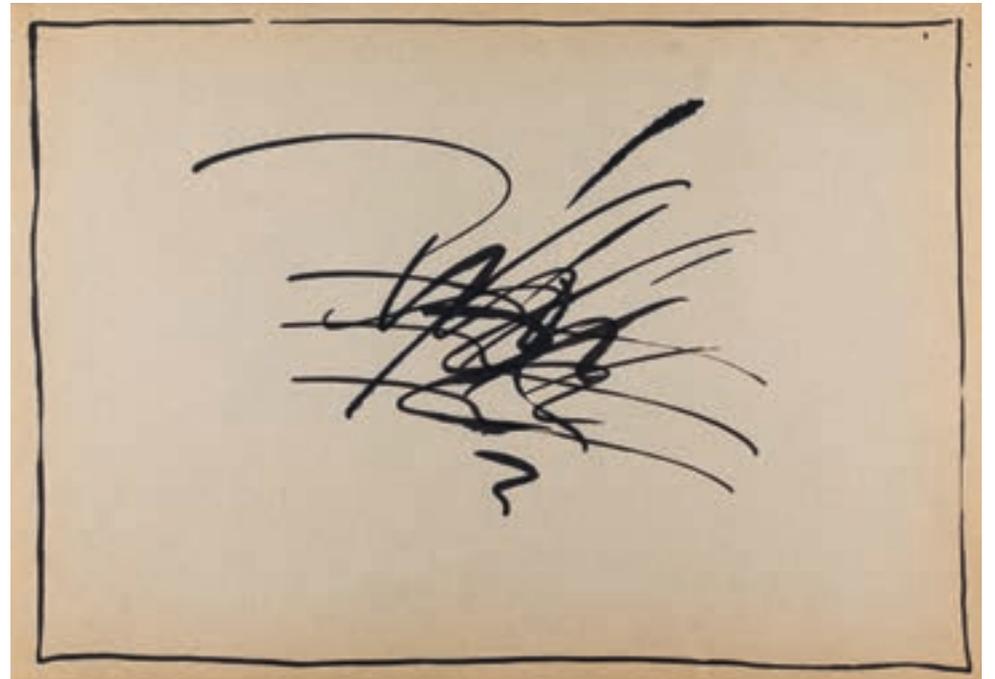
David Weiss: Works, 1968-1979 provides readers with unprecedented insights into the origins of one of the most rigorous conceptualists. Growing from his Helvetic roots, Weiss's early work speaks directly to a sense of melancholy—the complete detachment felt when arriving in a foreign city, the possibility of fashioning a new identity, and the hilarity of having no idea what's next.

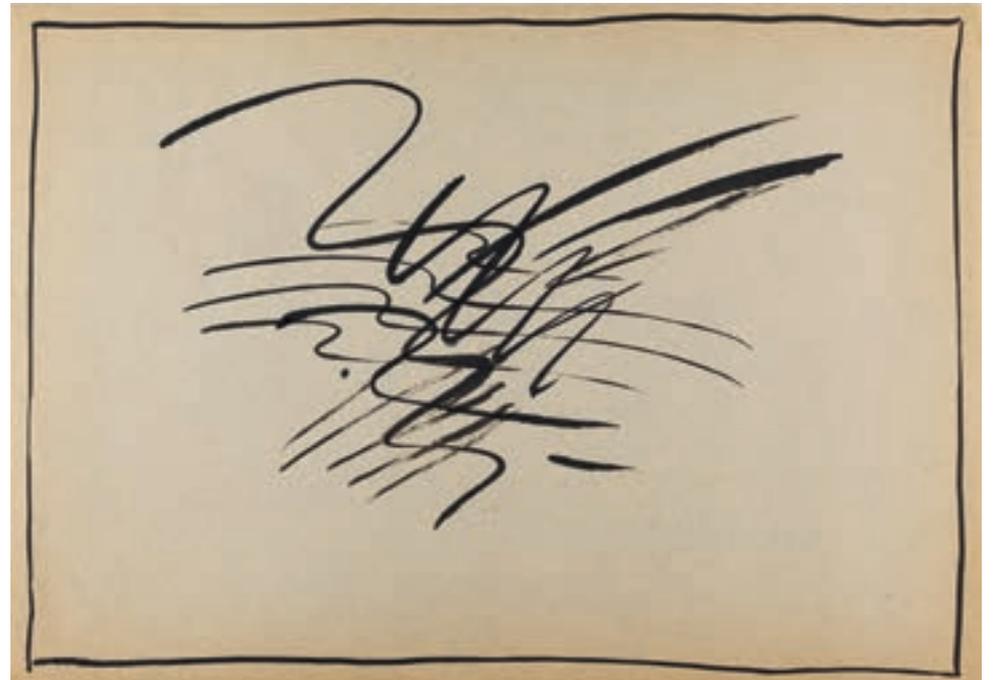
—Simon Castets

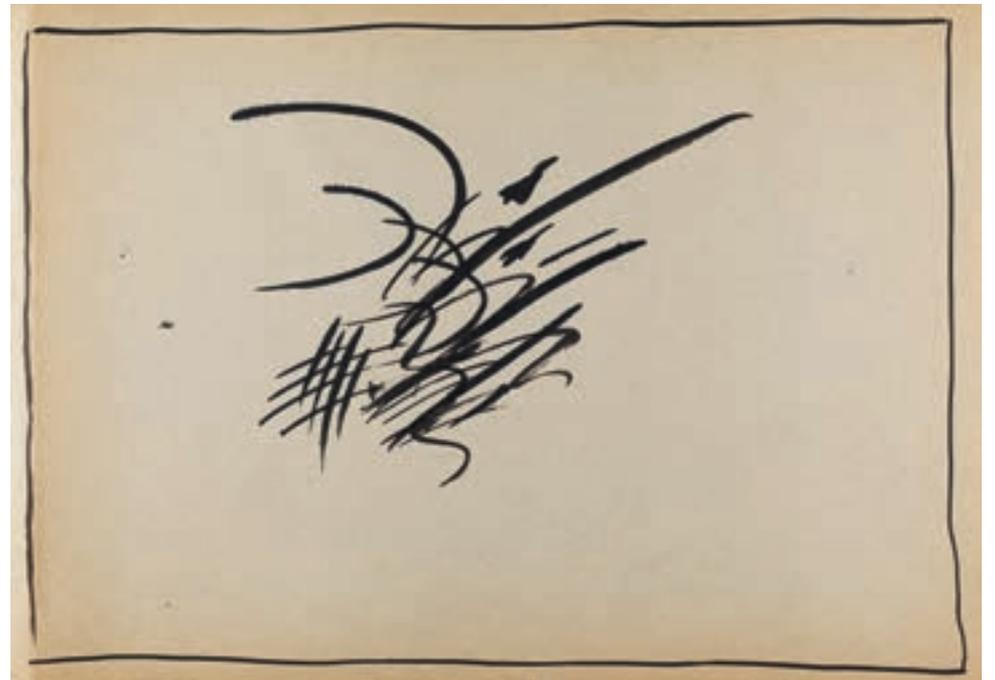
Image on page 9: David Weiss in New York, photographed by Madeleine Dreyfus, 1979



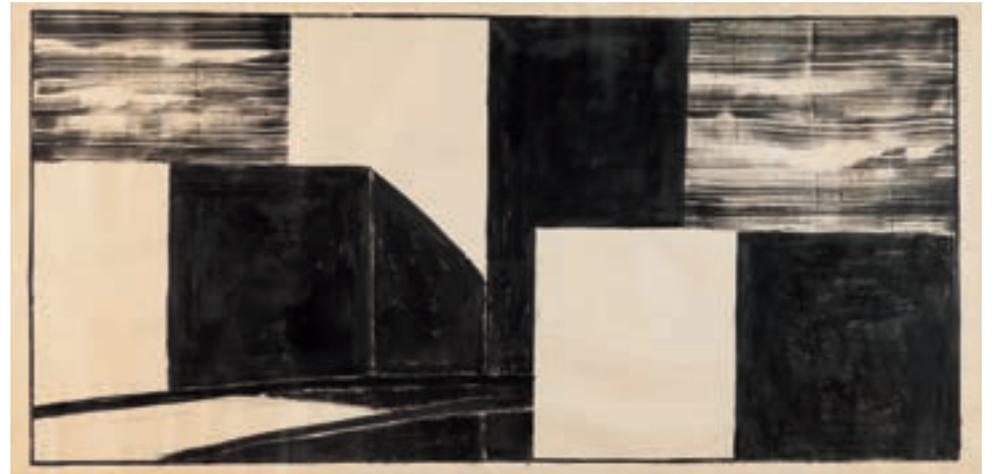








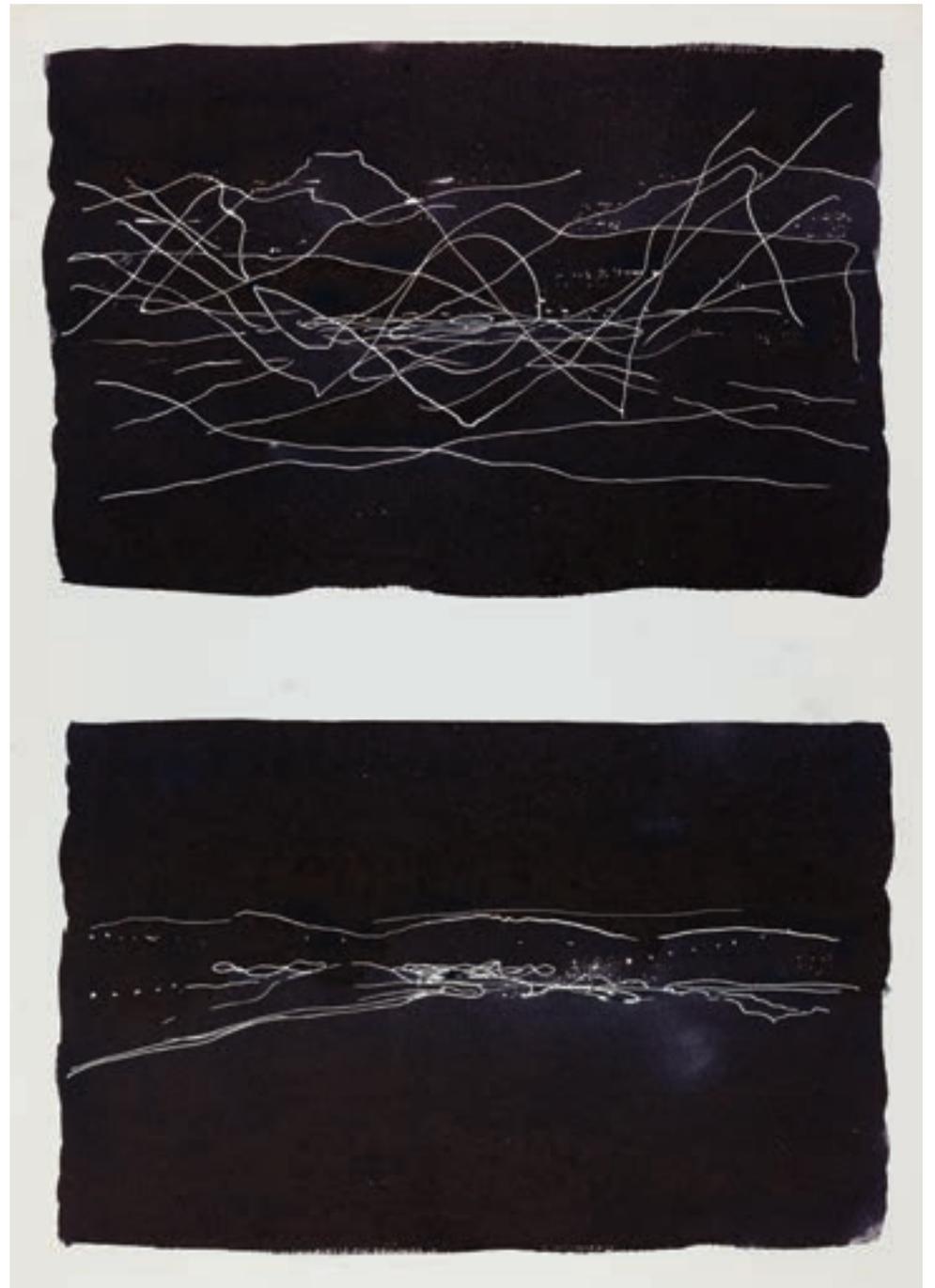


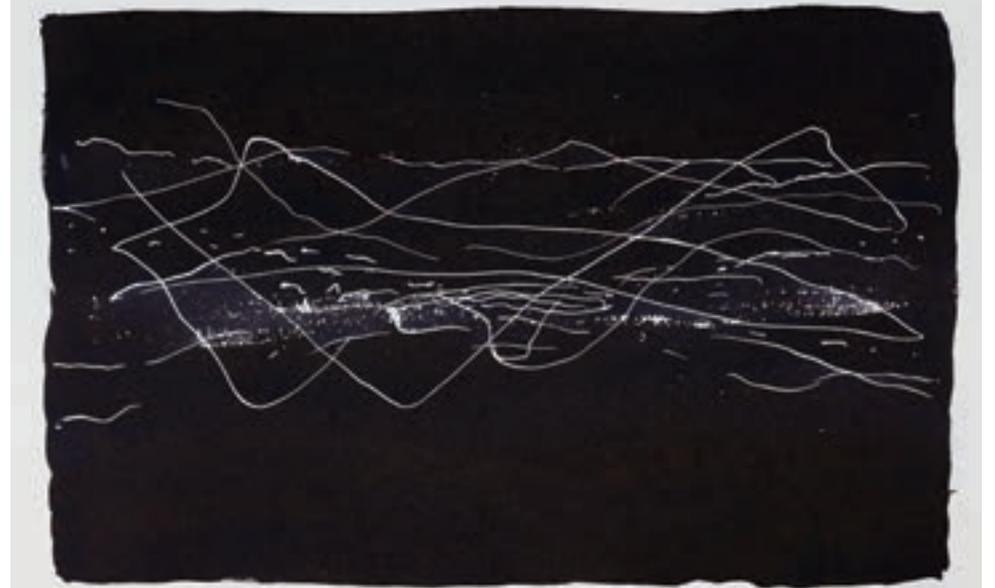


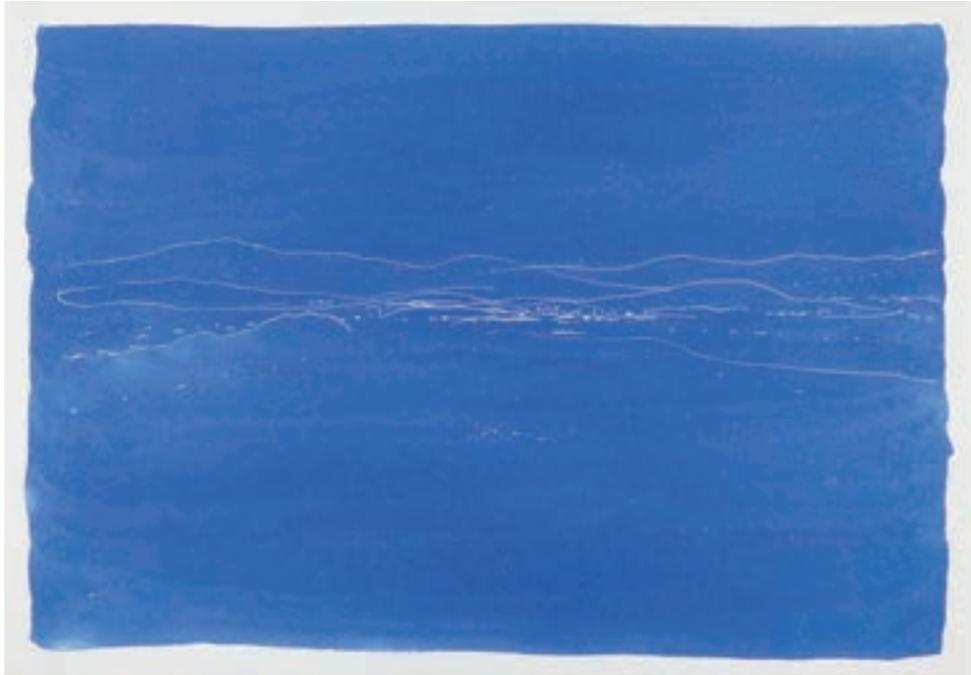


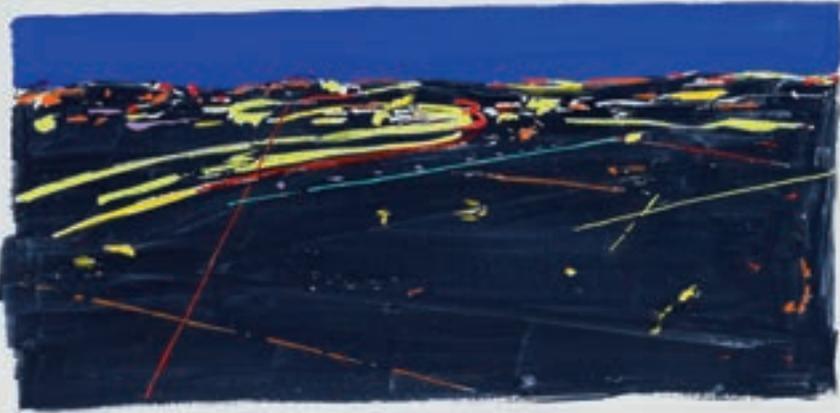




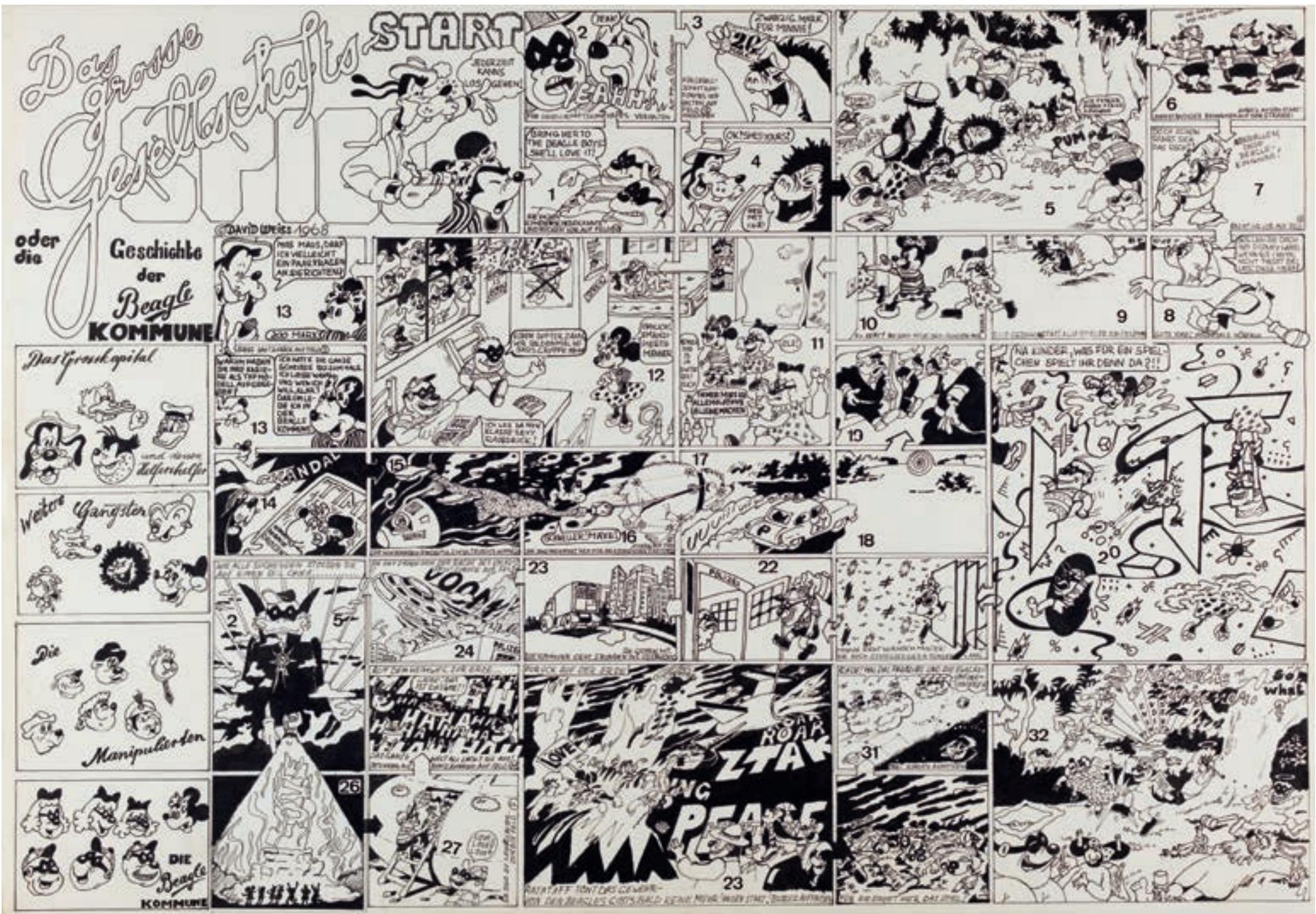








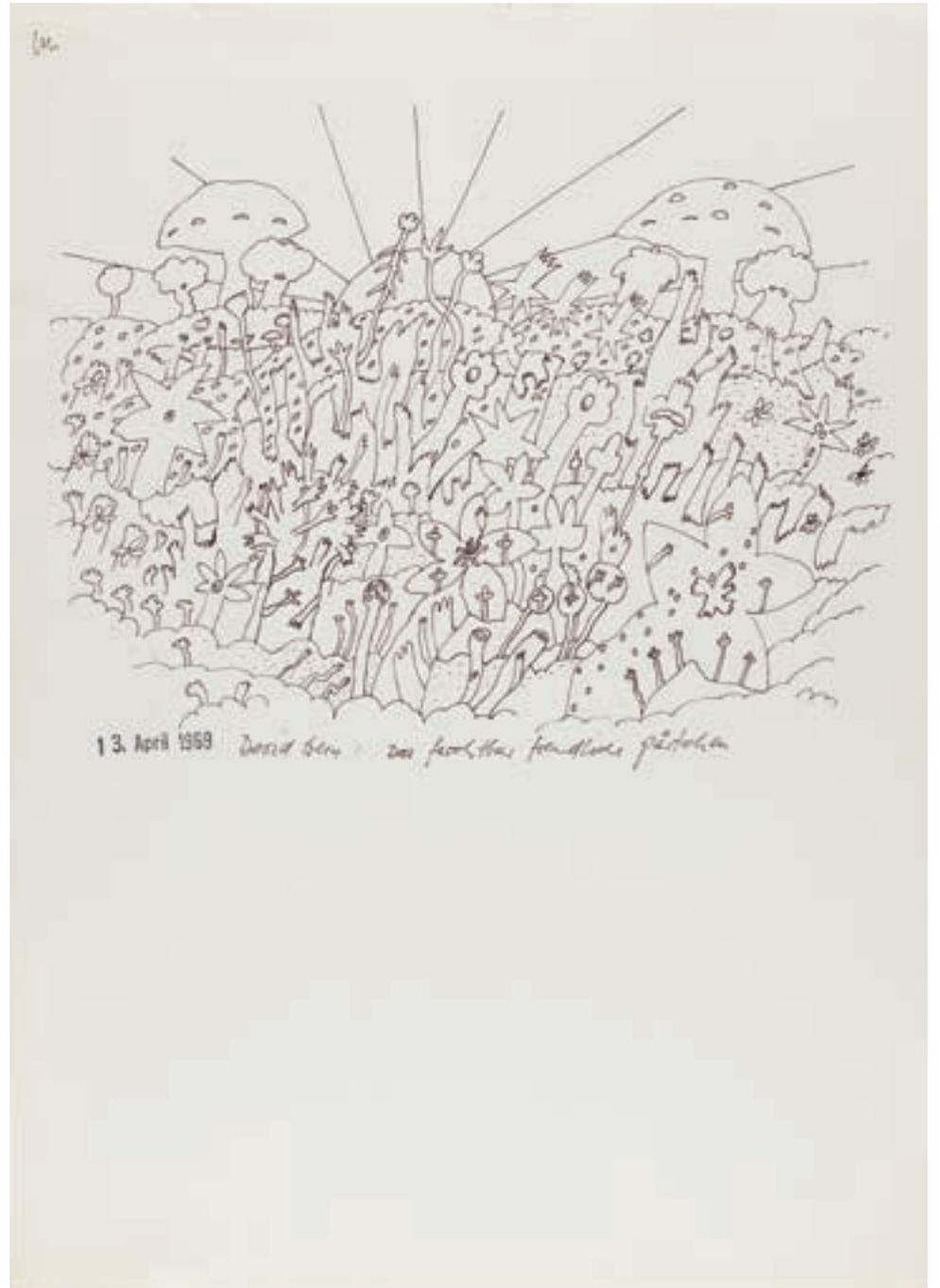




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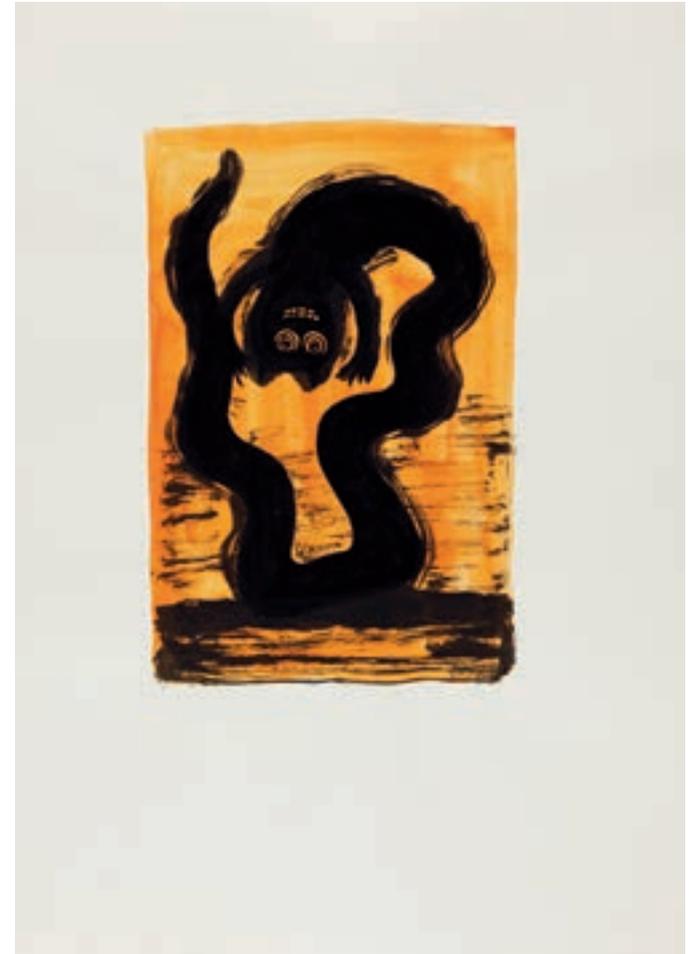


























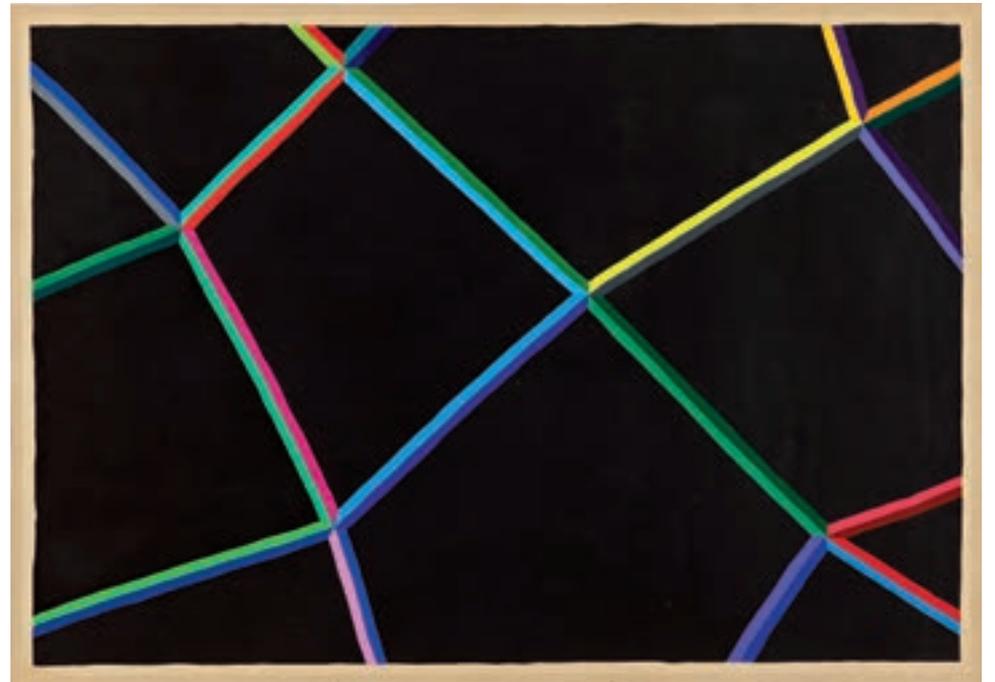


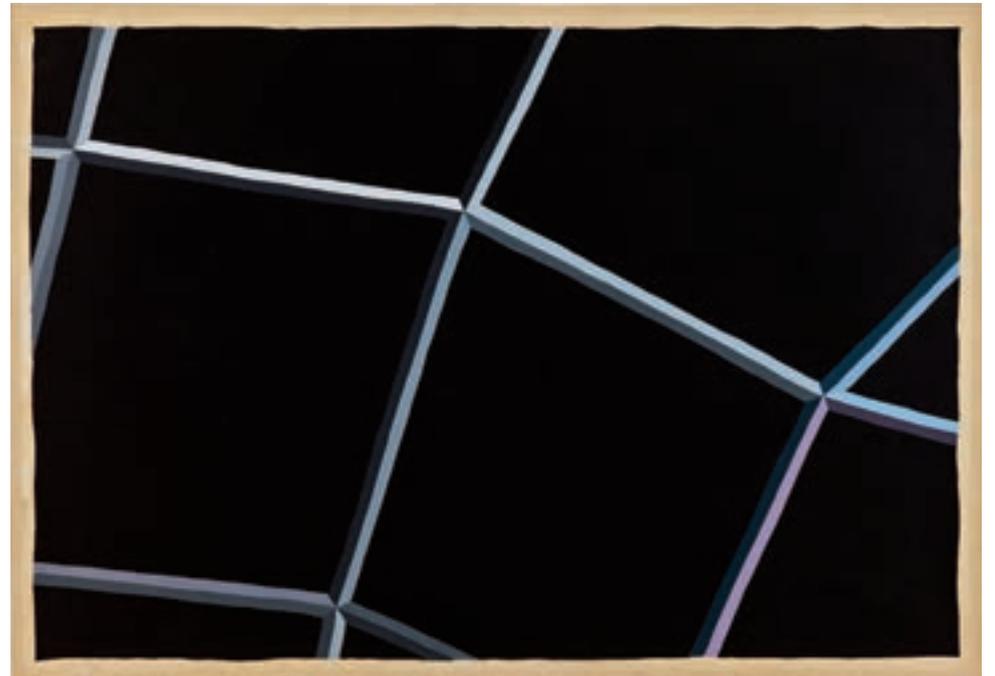






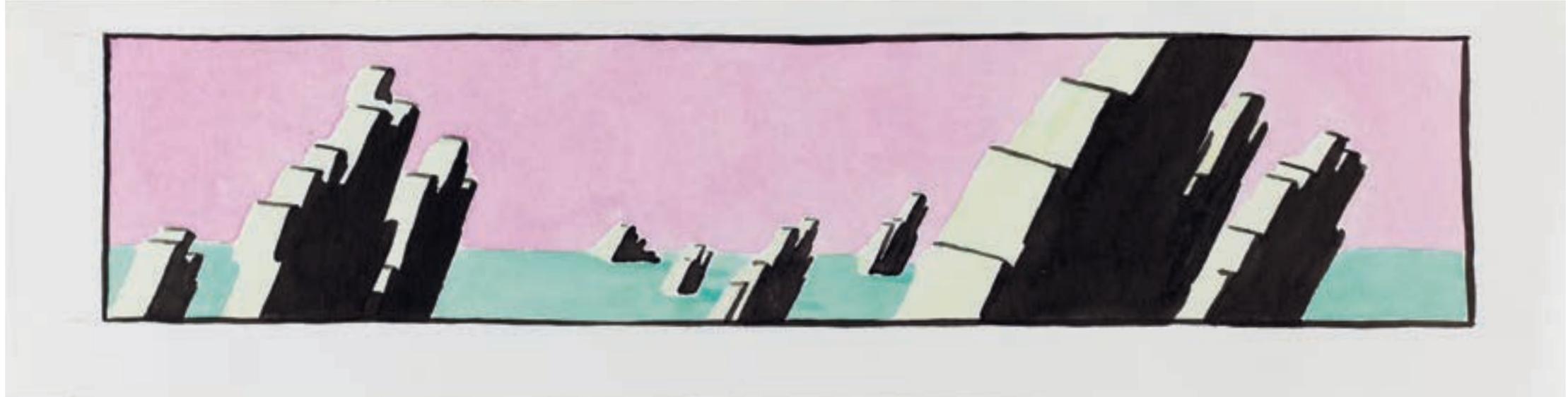










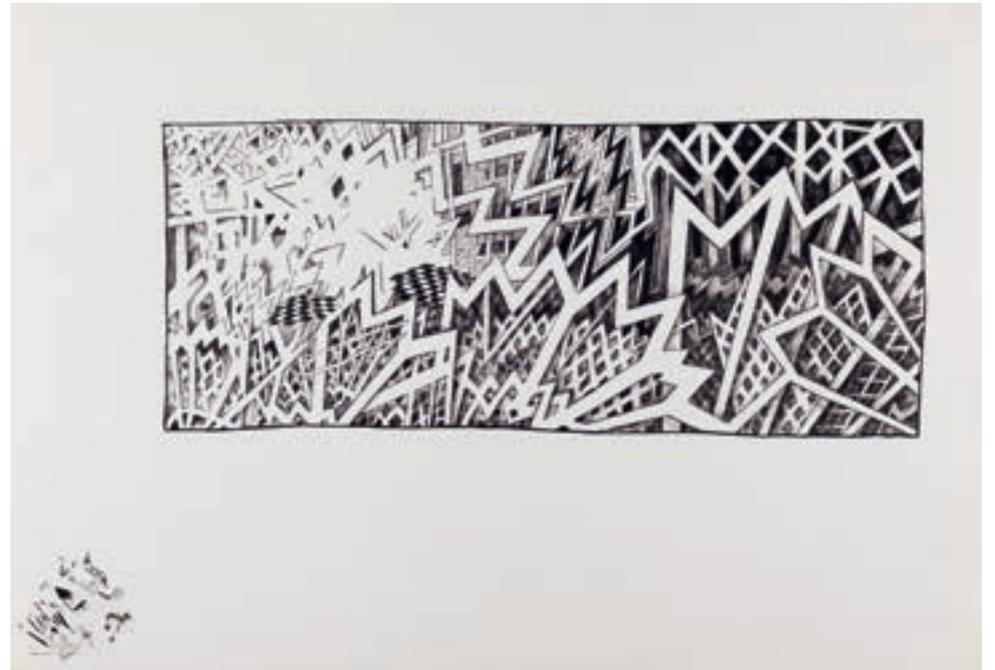




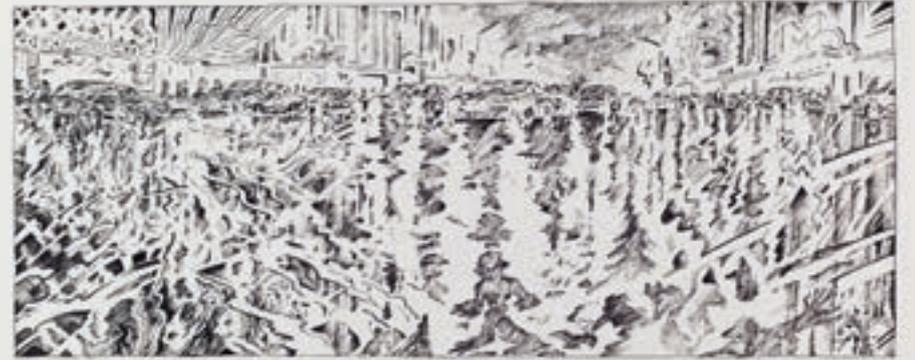




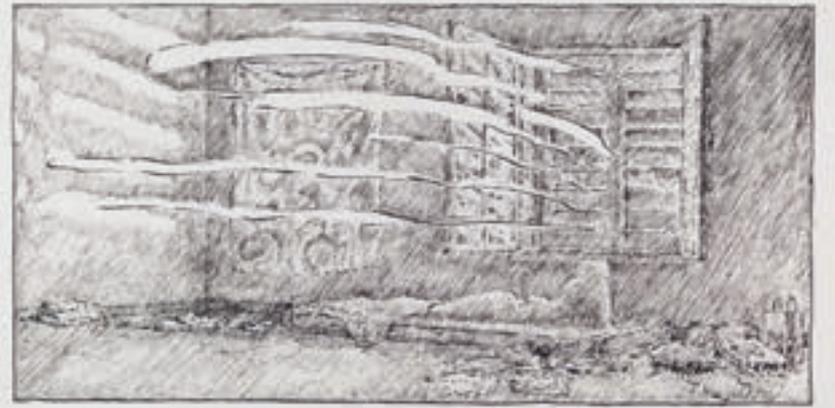
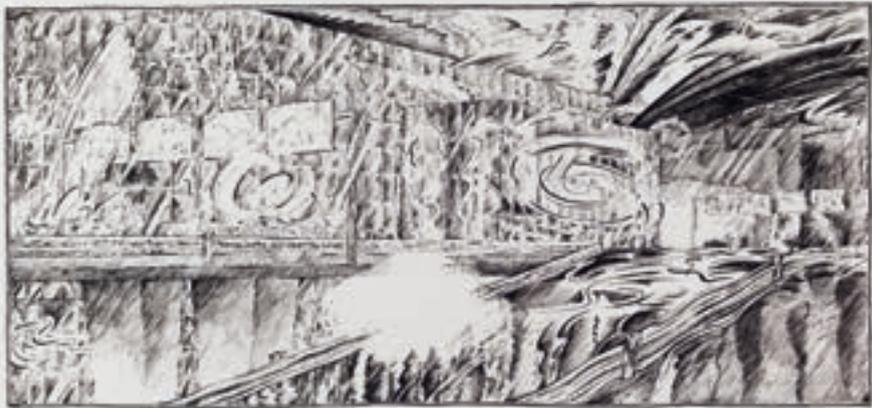


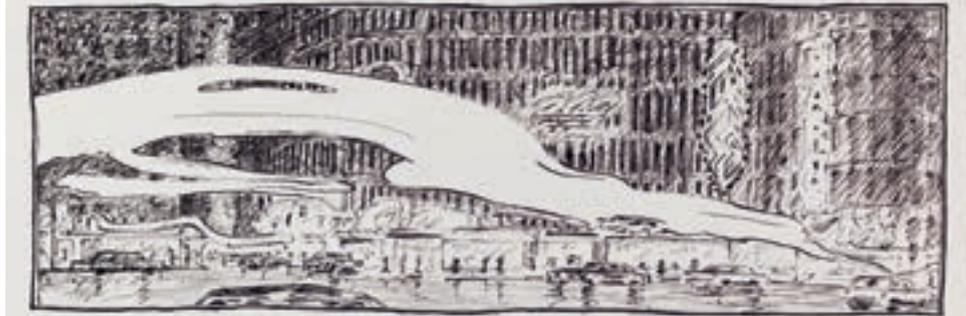








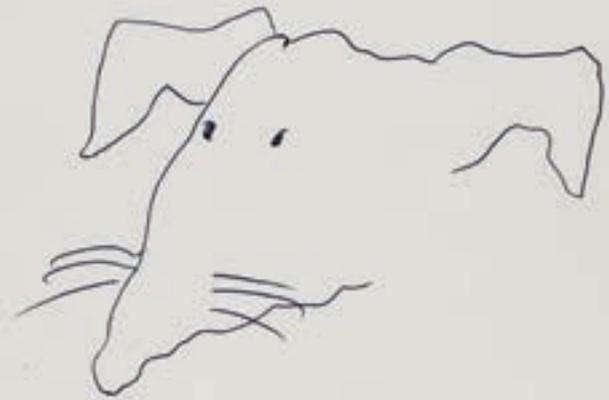












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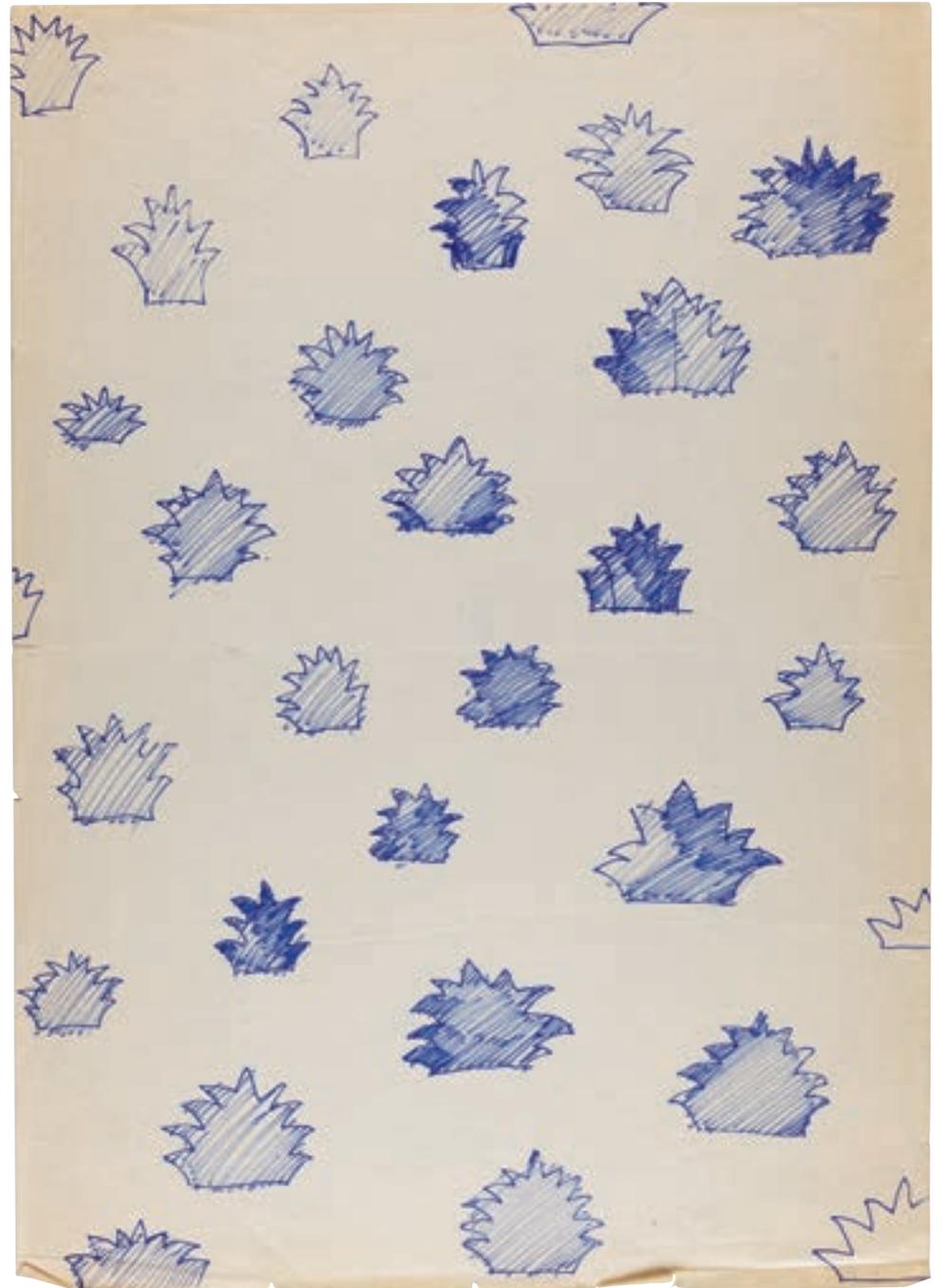


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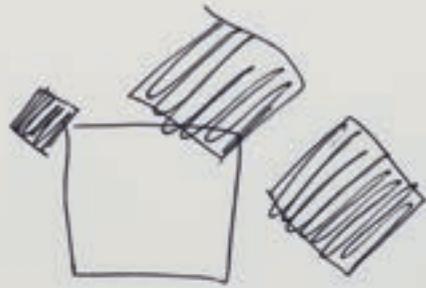
David Stein

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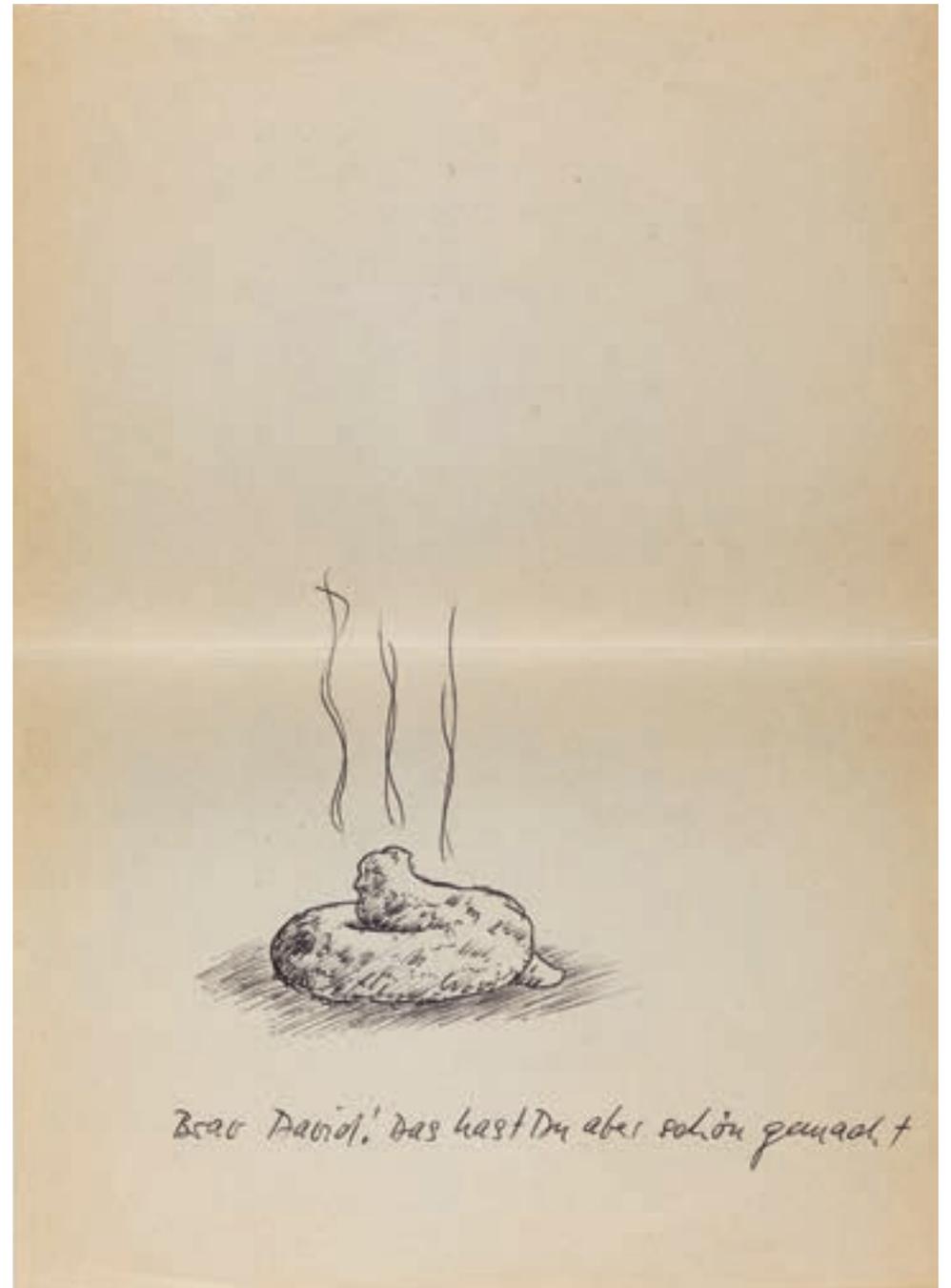
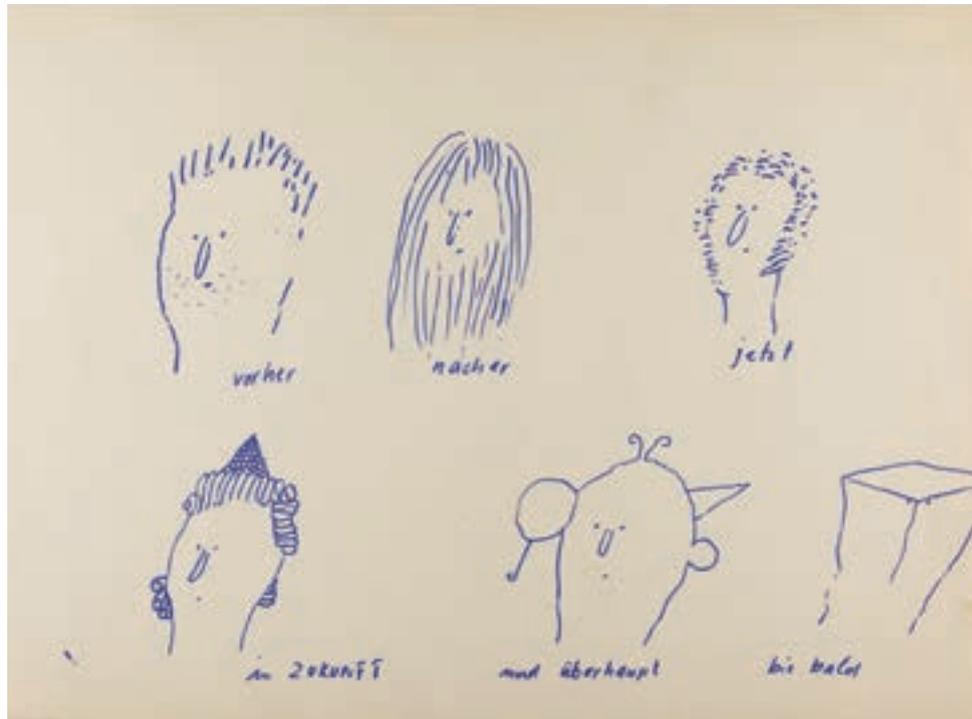


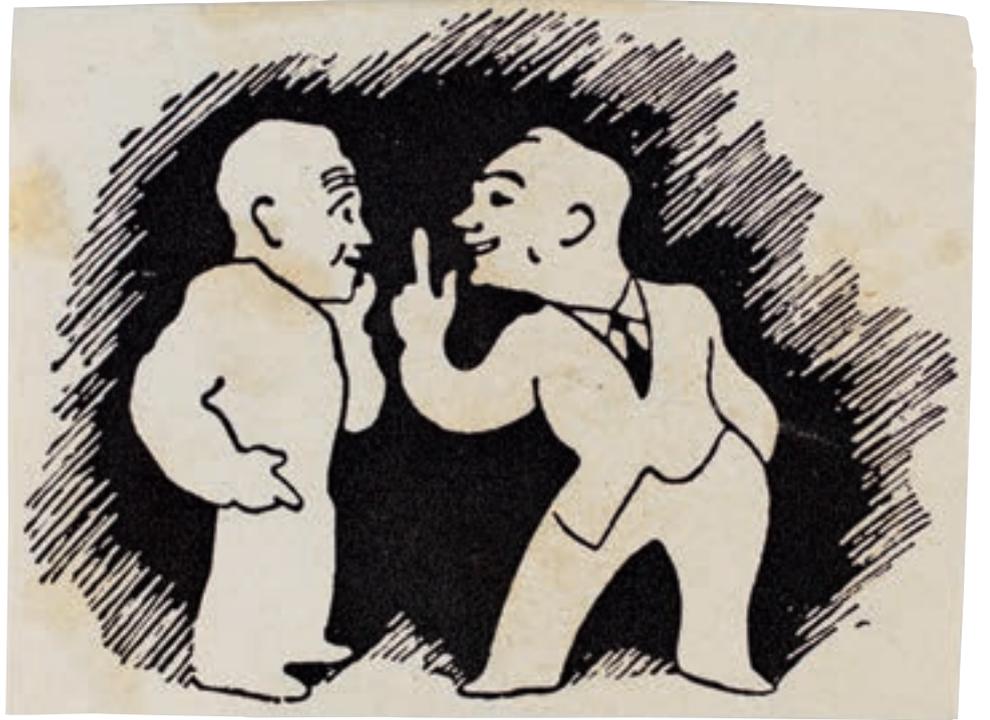




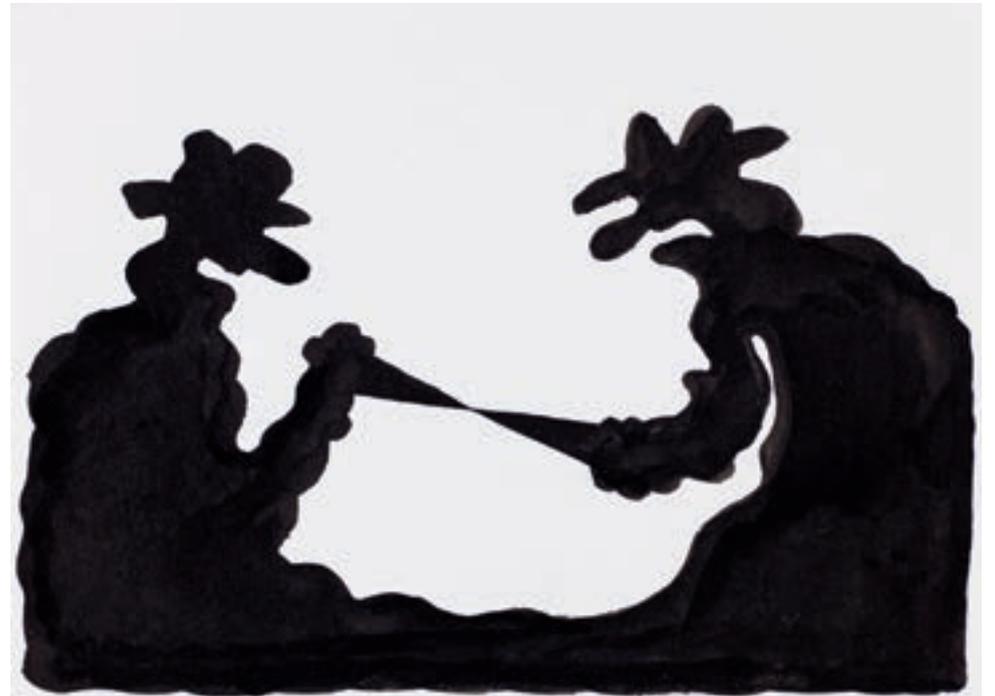


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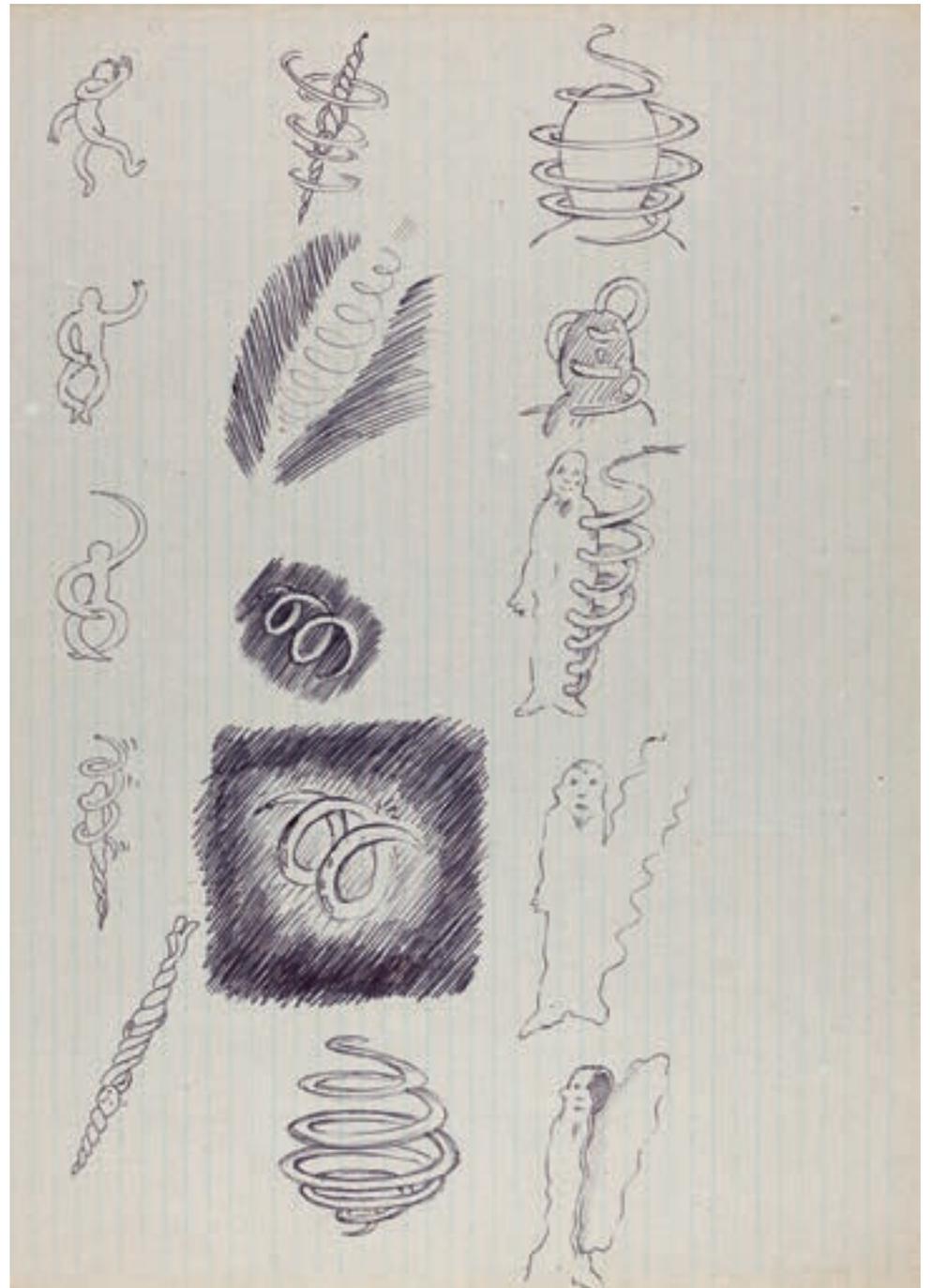
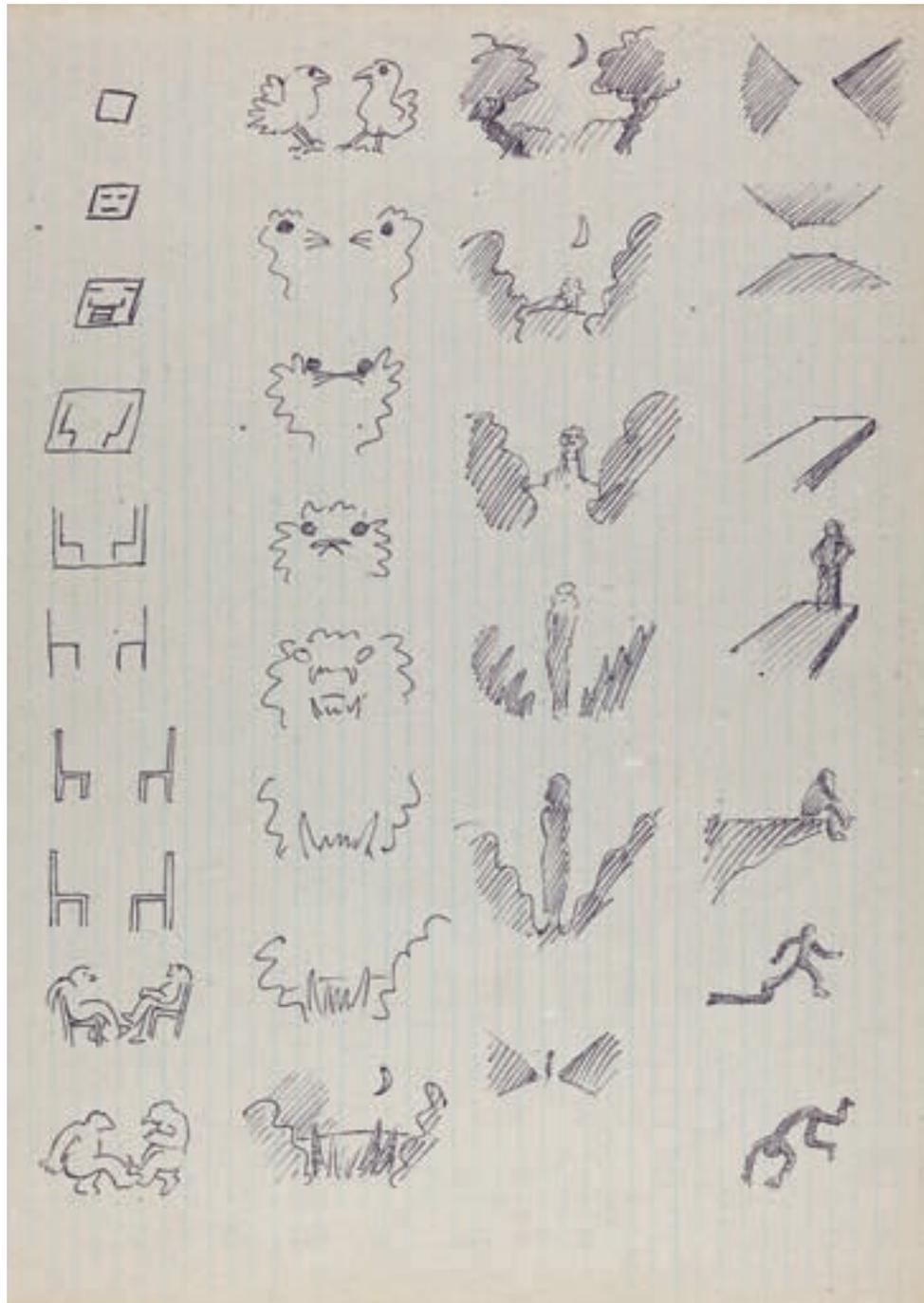


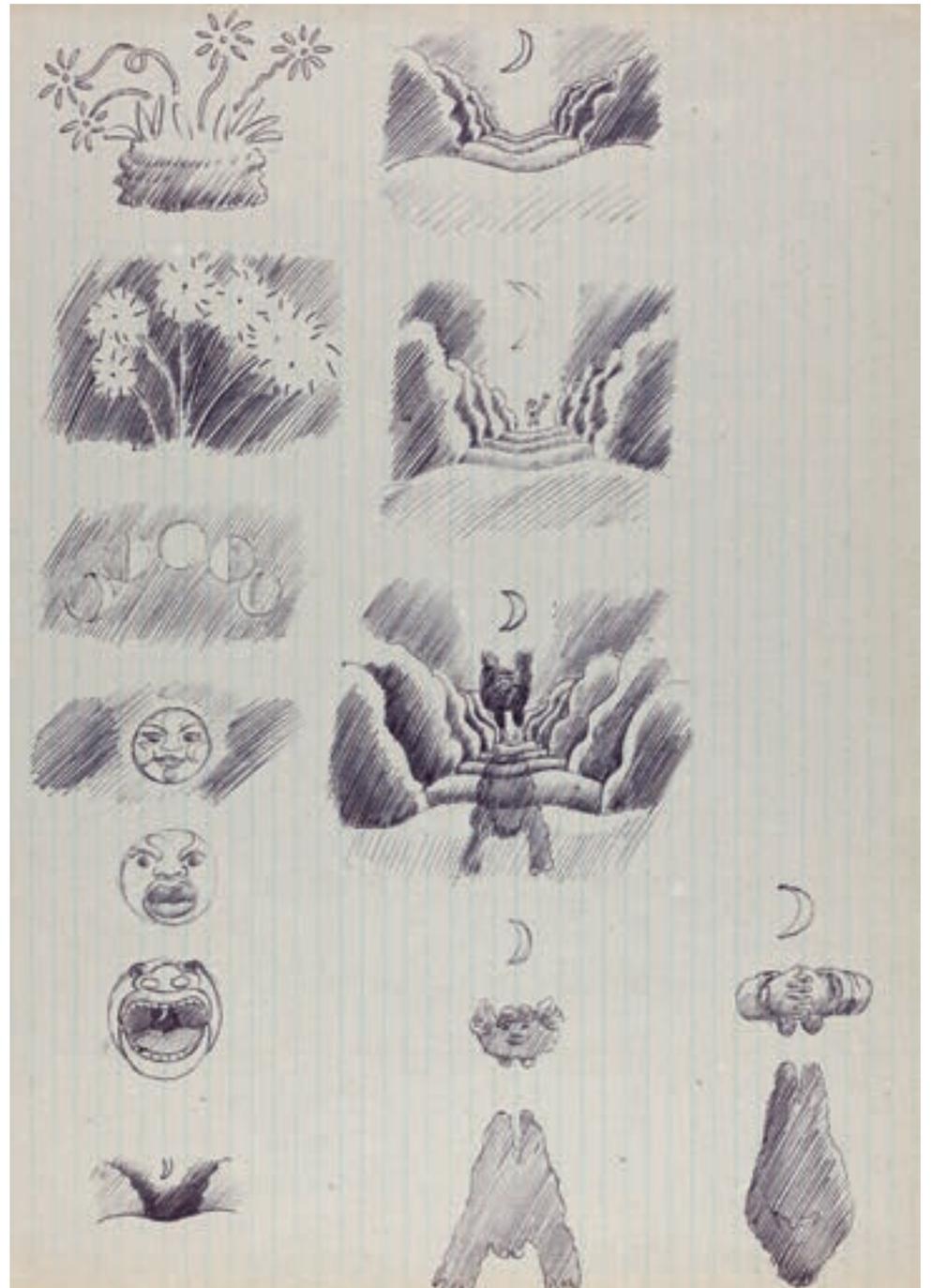
Ich sitze in der Hölle
und lerne Schwarzenmagie
im Halbwegs durchgeröstet
hab niemand der mich tröstet

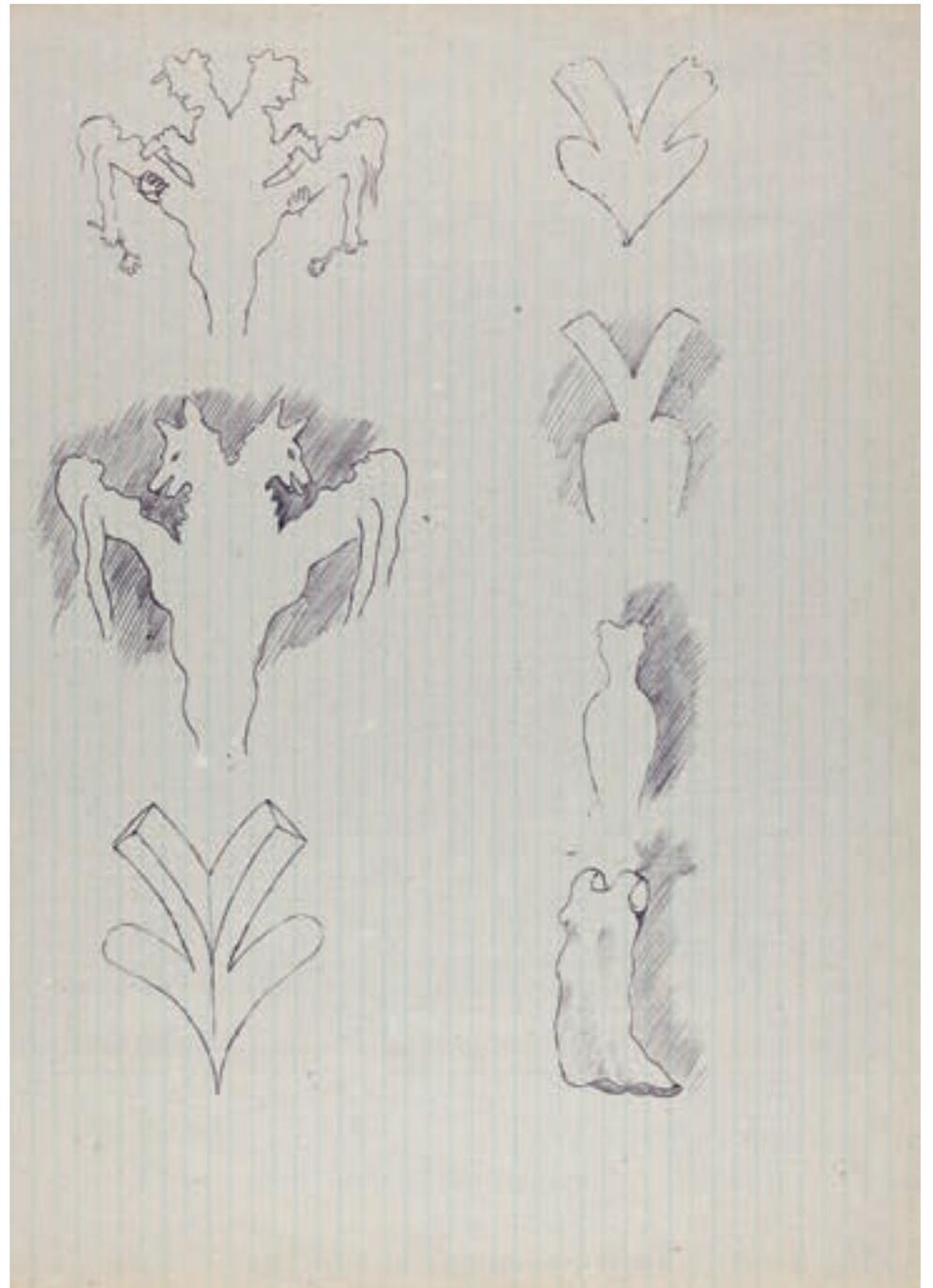
Ich sitze in der Hölle,
mir geht es gar nicht gut
mit Feuer das mich brennt,
+ keiner der mich kennt

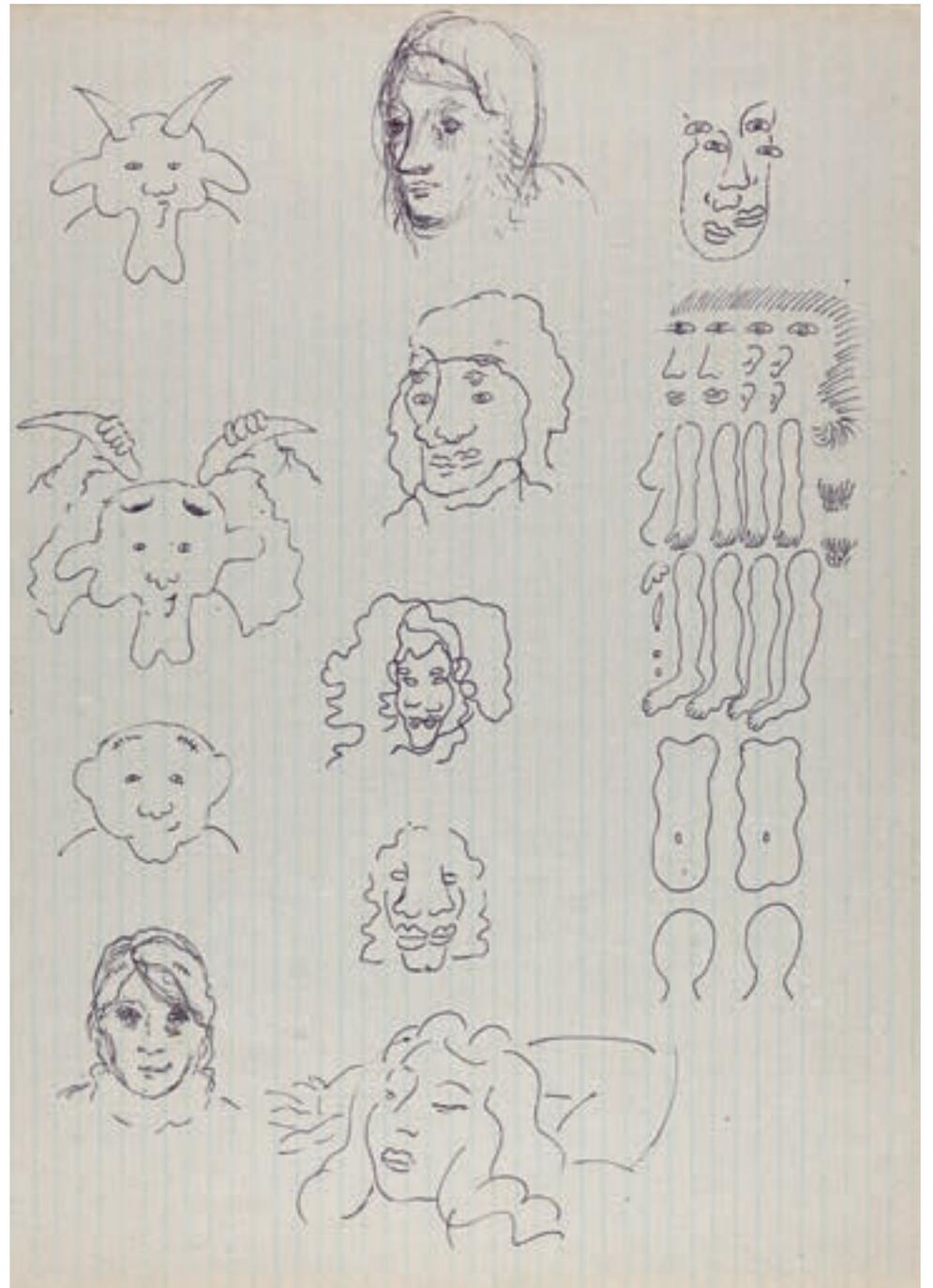
Ich sitze in der Hölle
die seinen Namen trägt,
des Teufel ichs persönlich,
der mich am Spieß brät

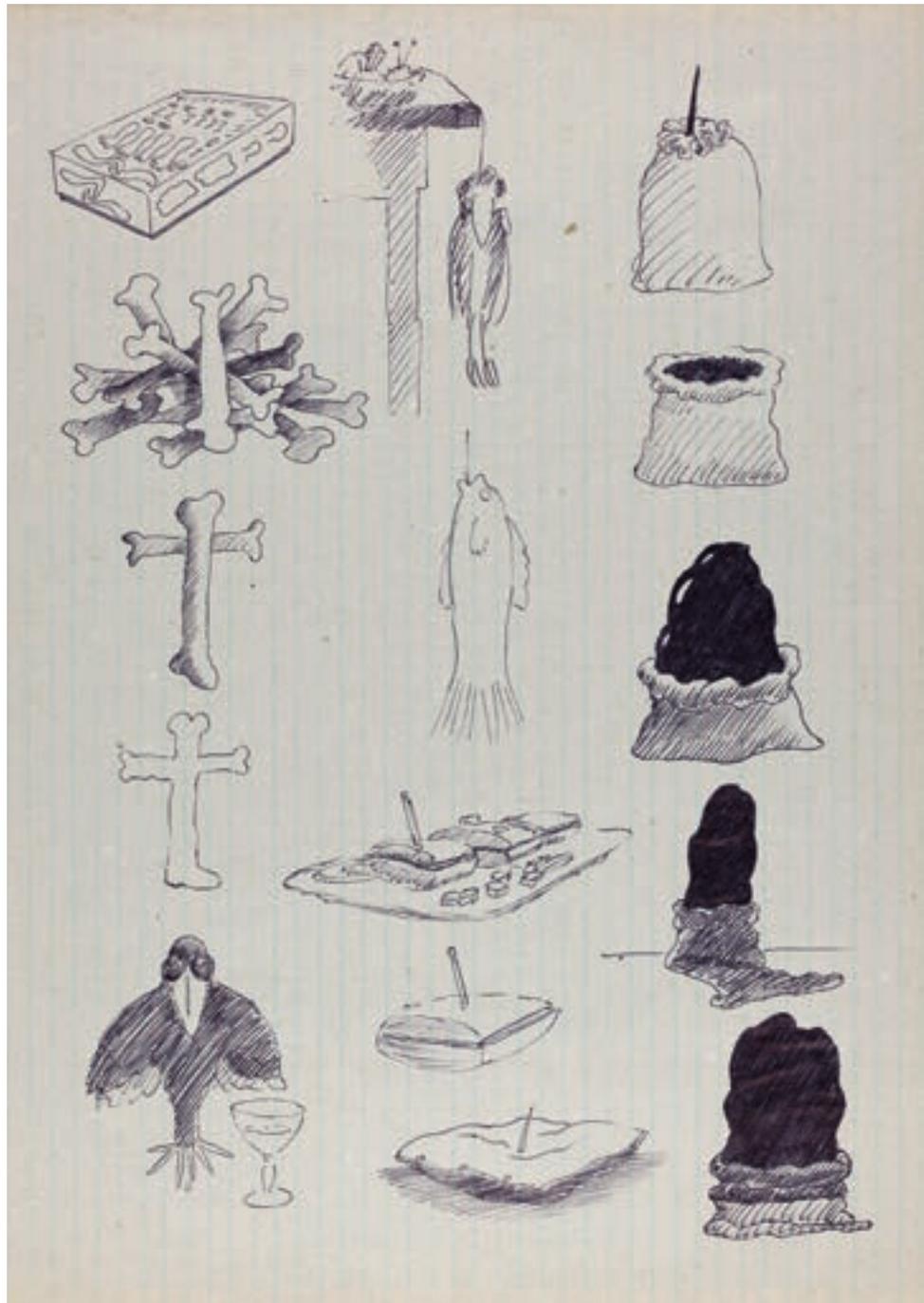
Schneewittchen kommt geflogen,
auf einem Fass Benzin

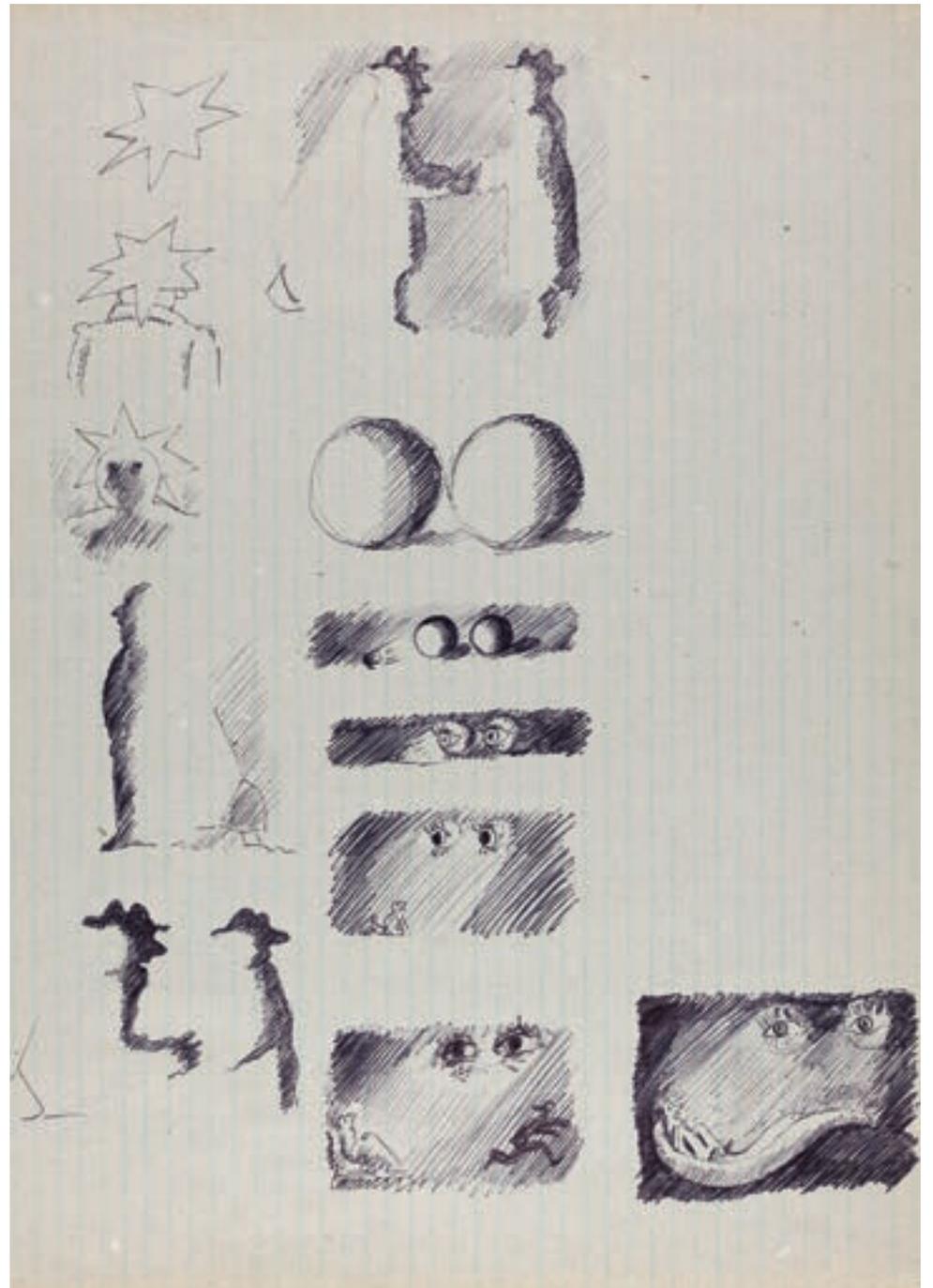
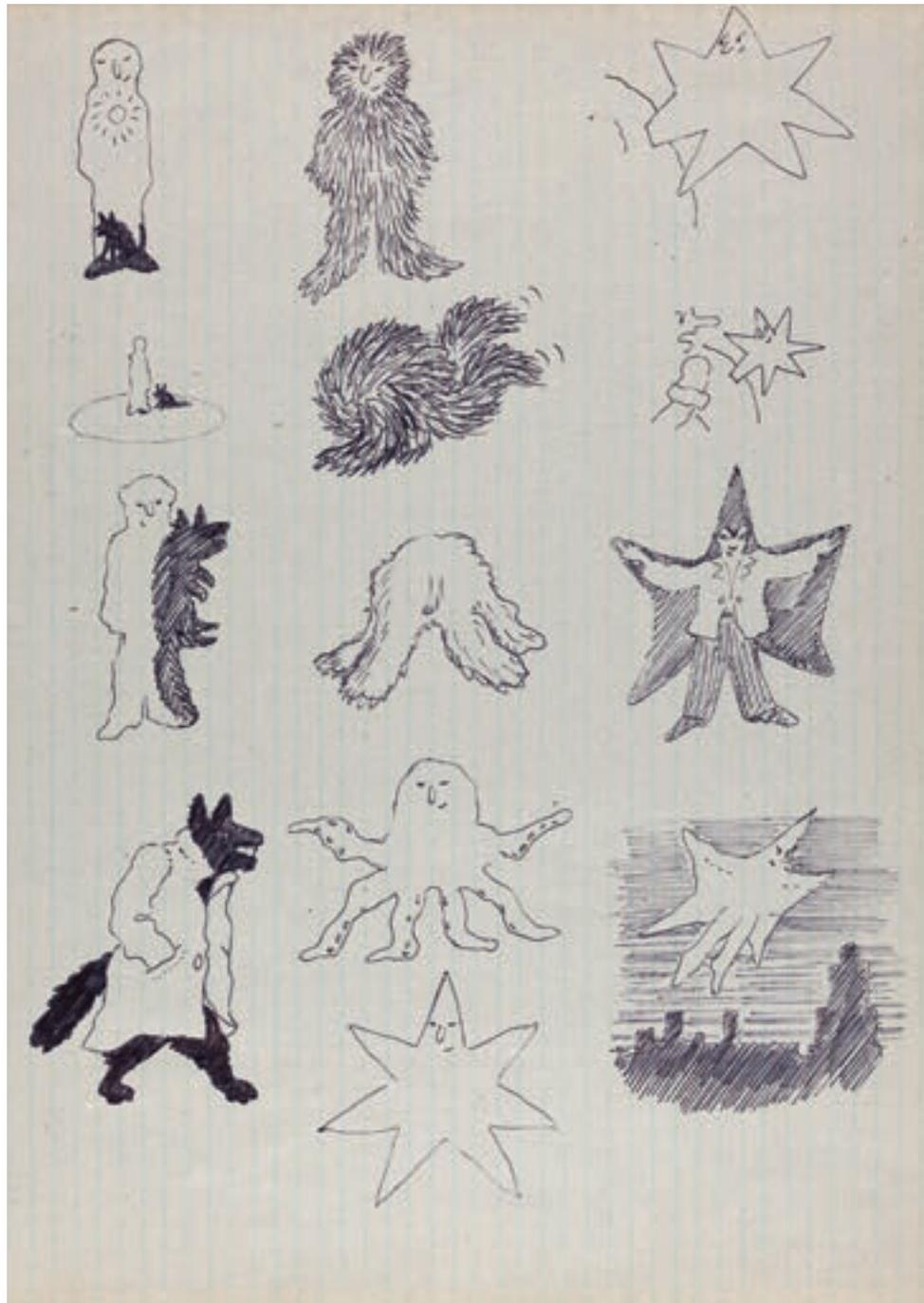


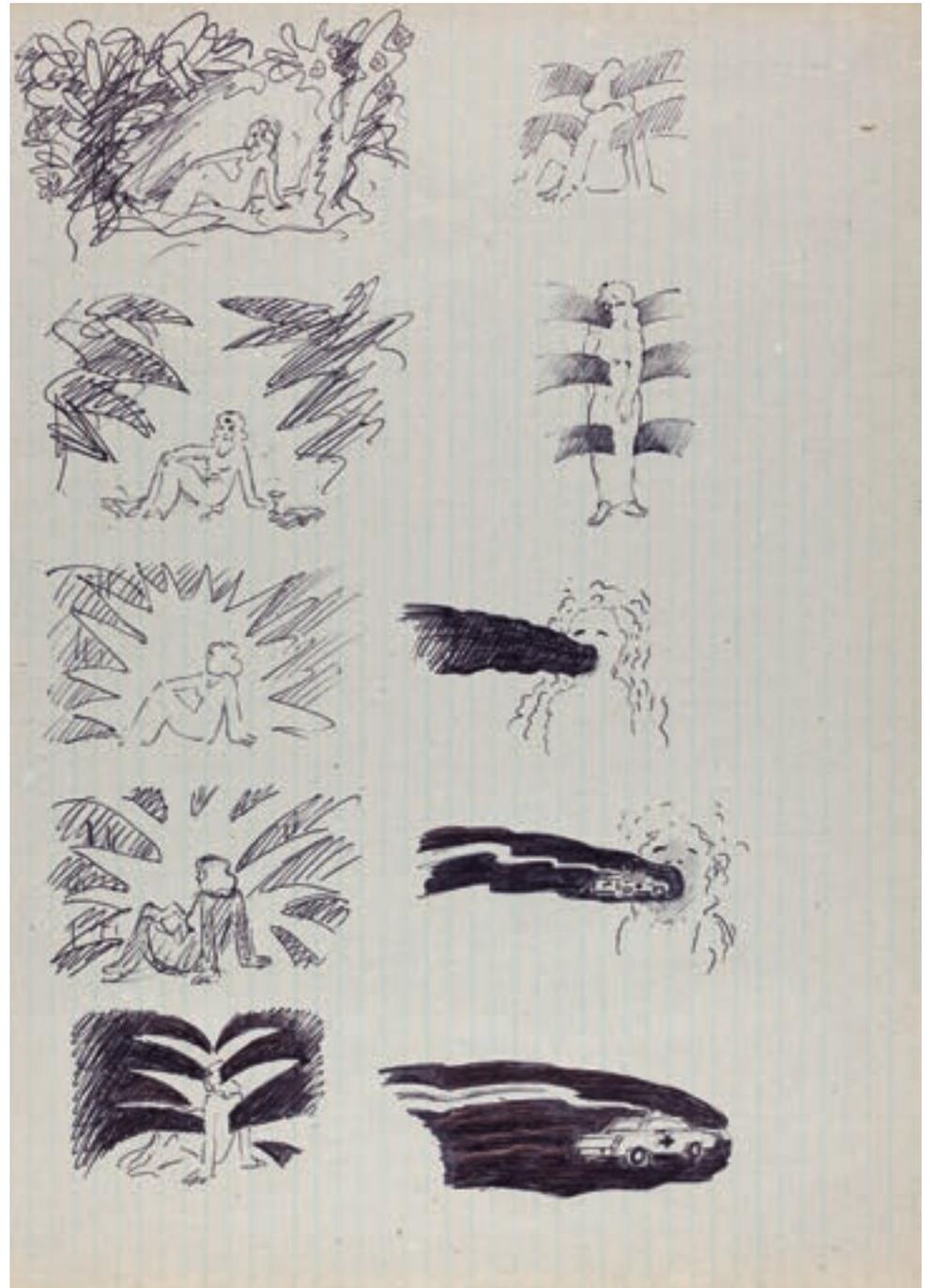
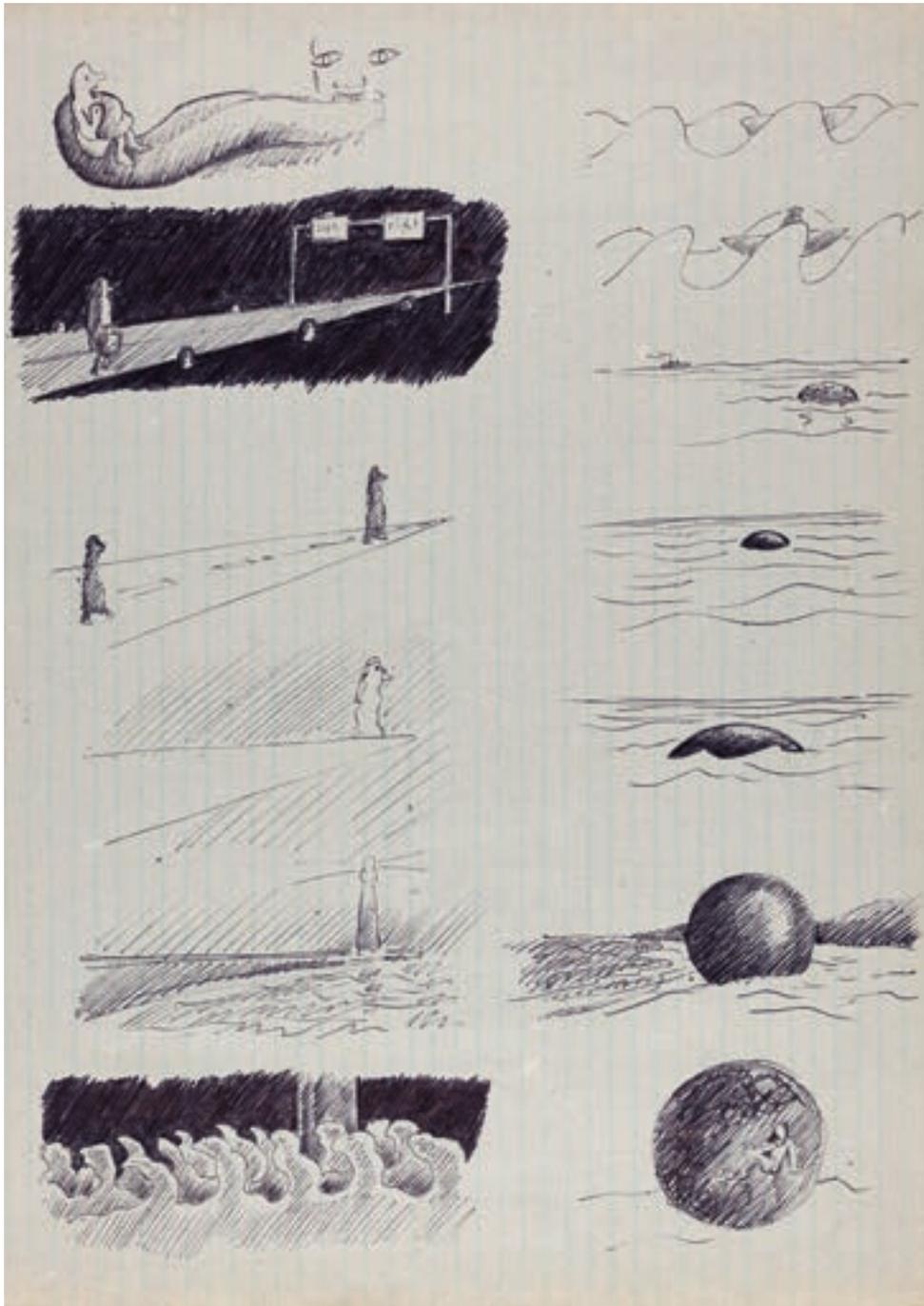


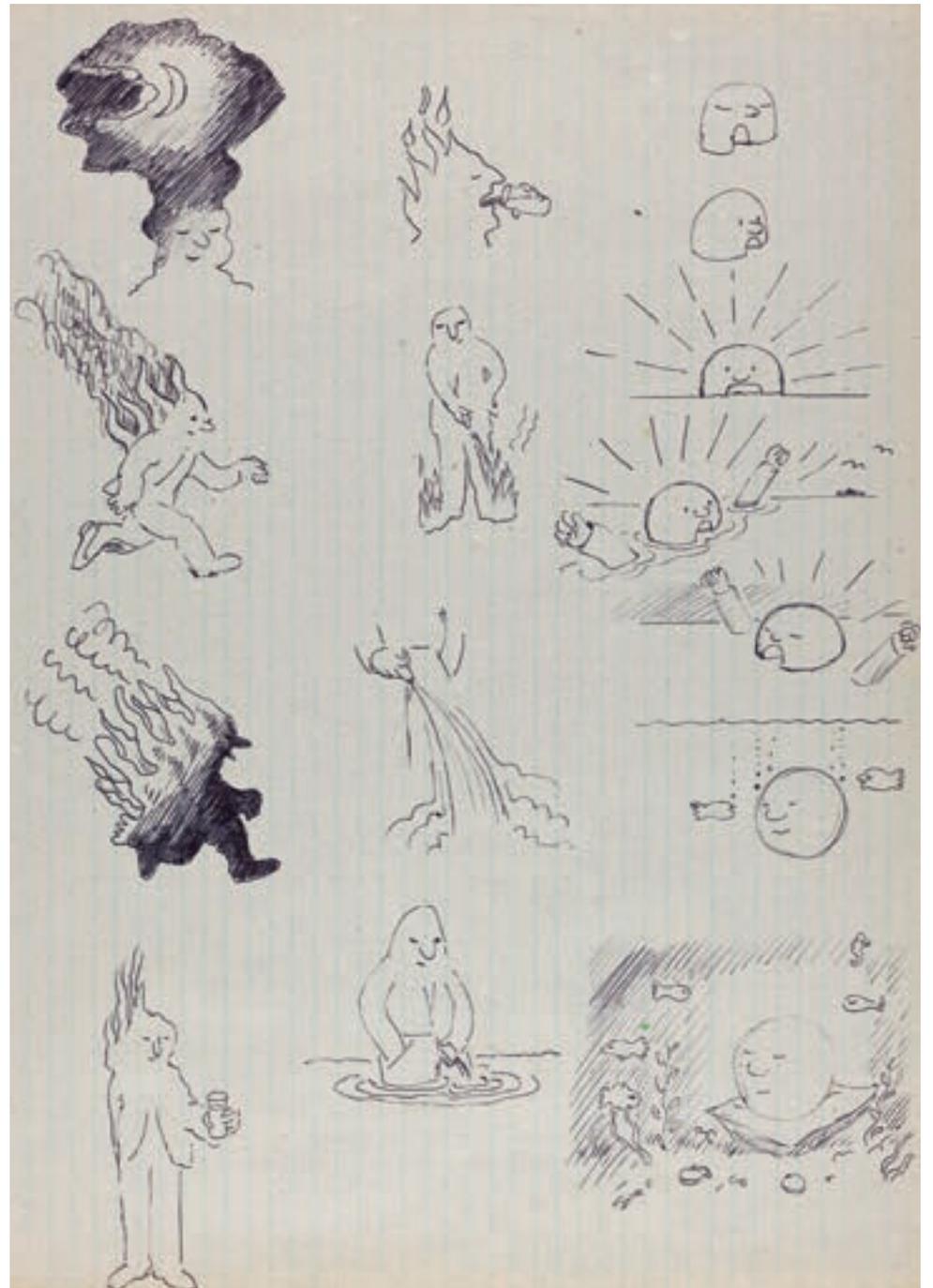
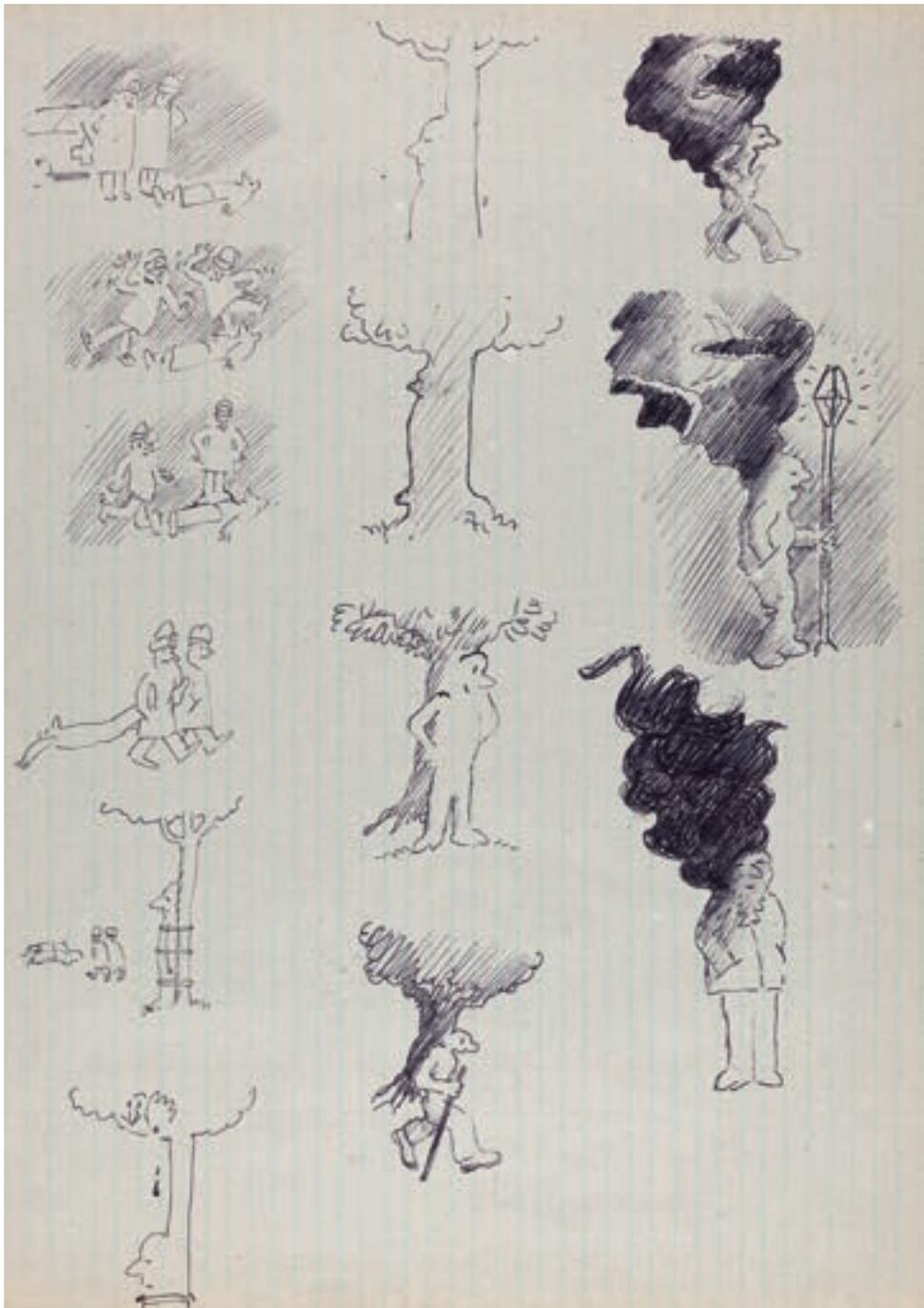




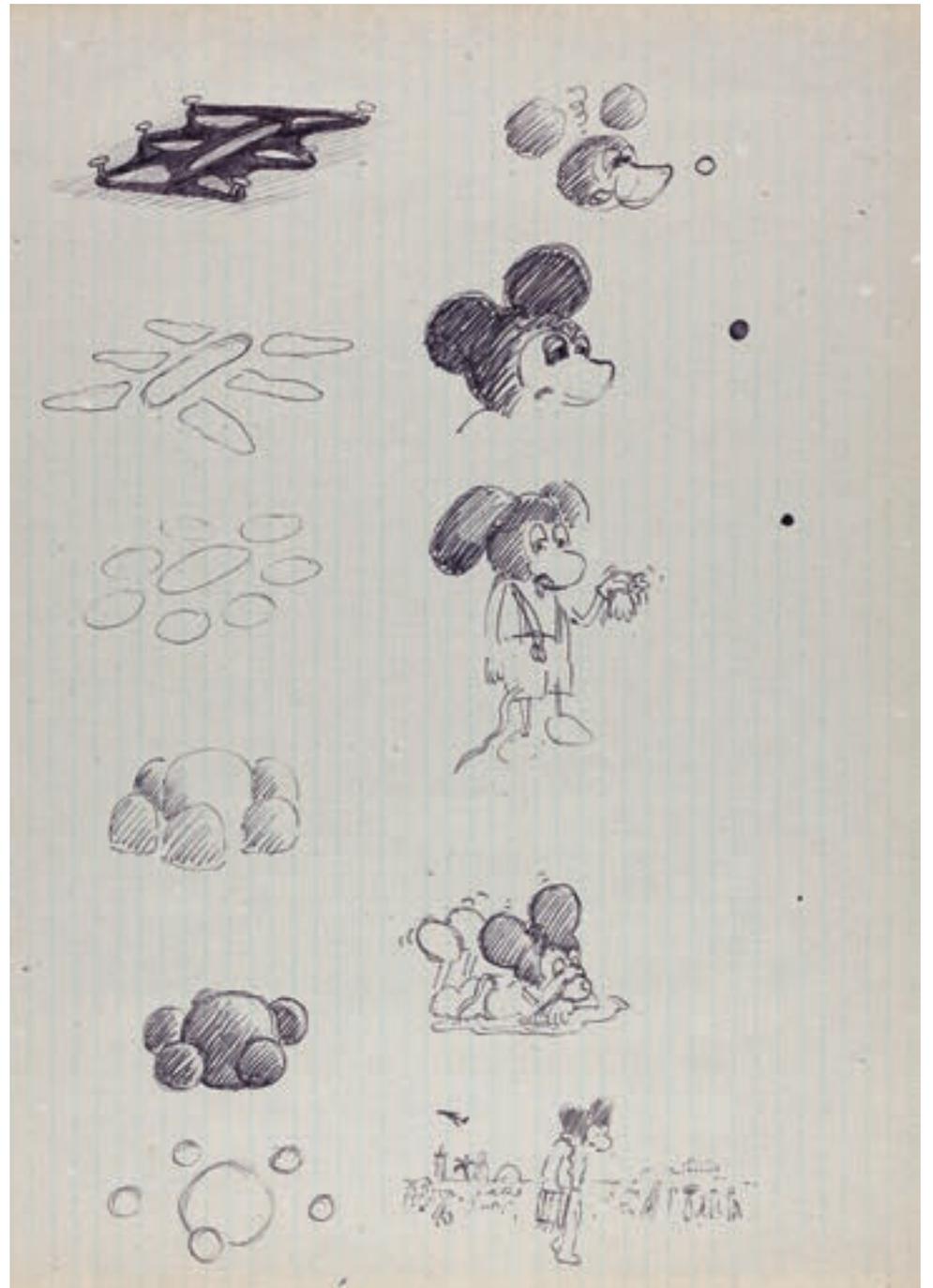


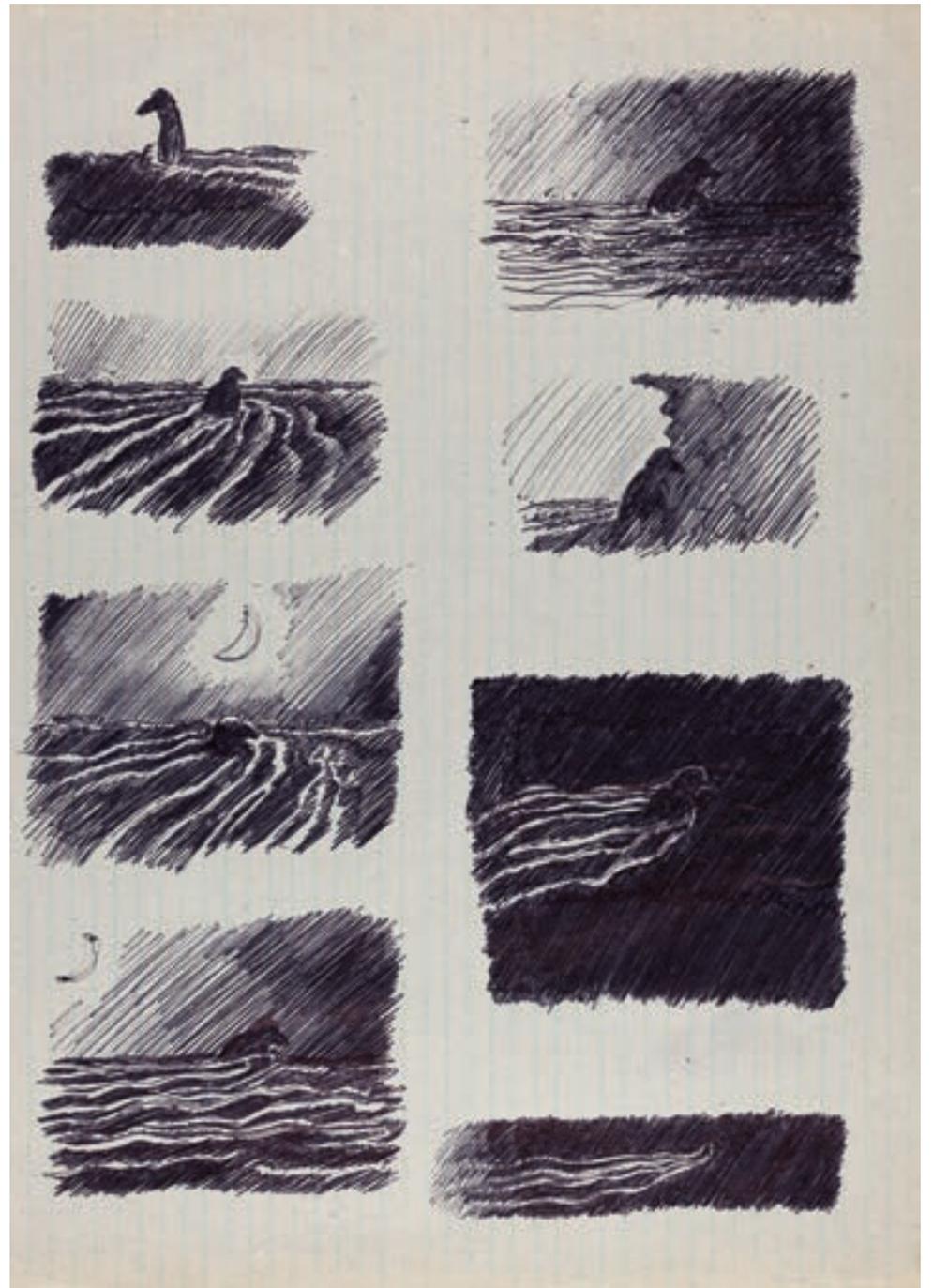


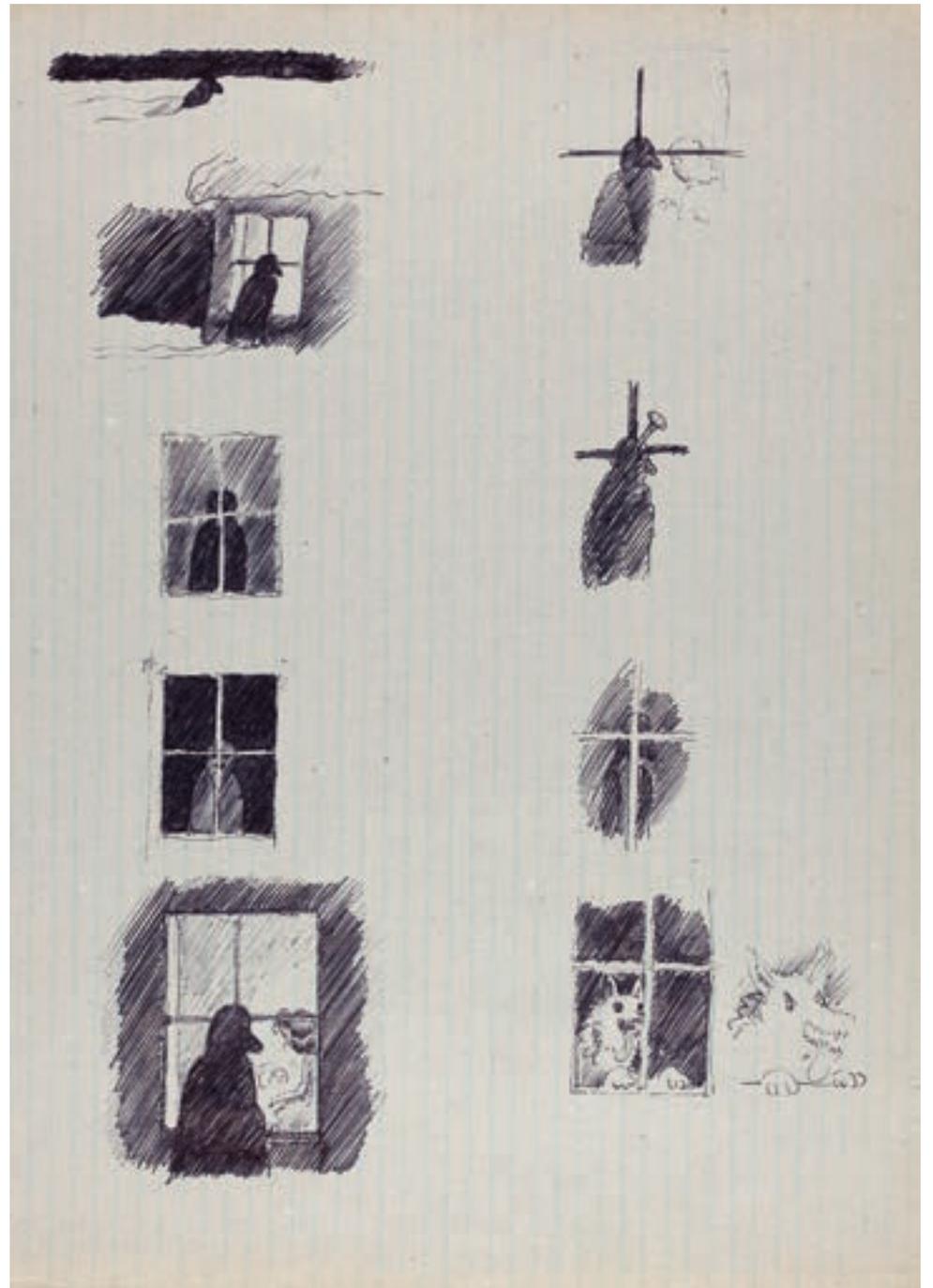
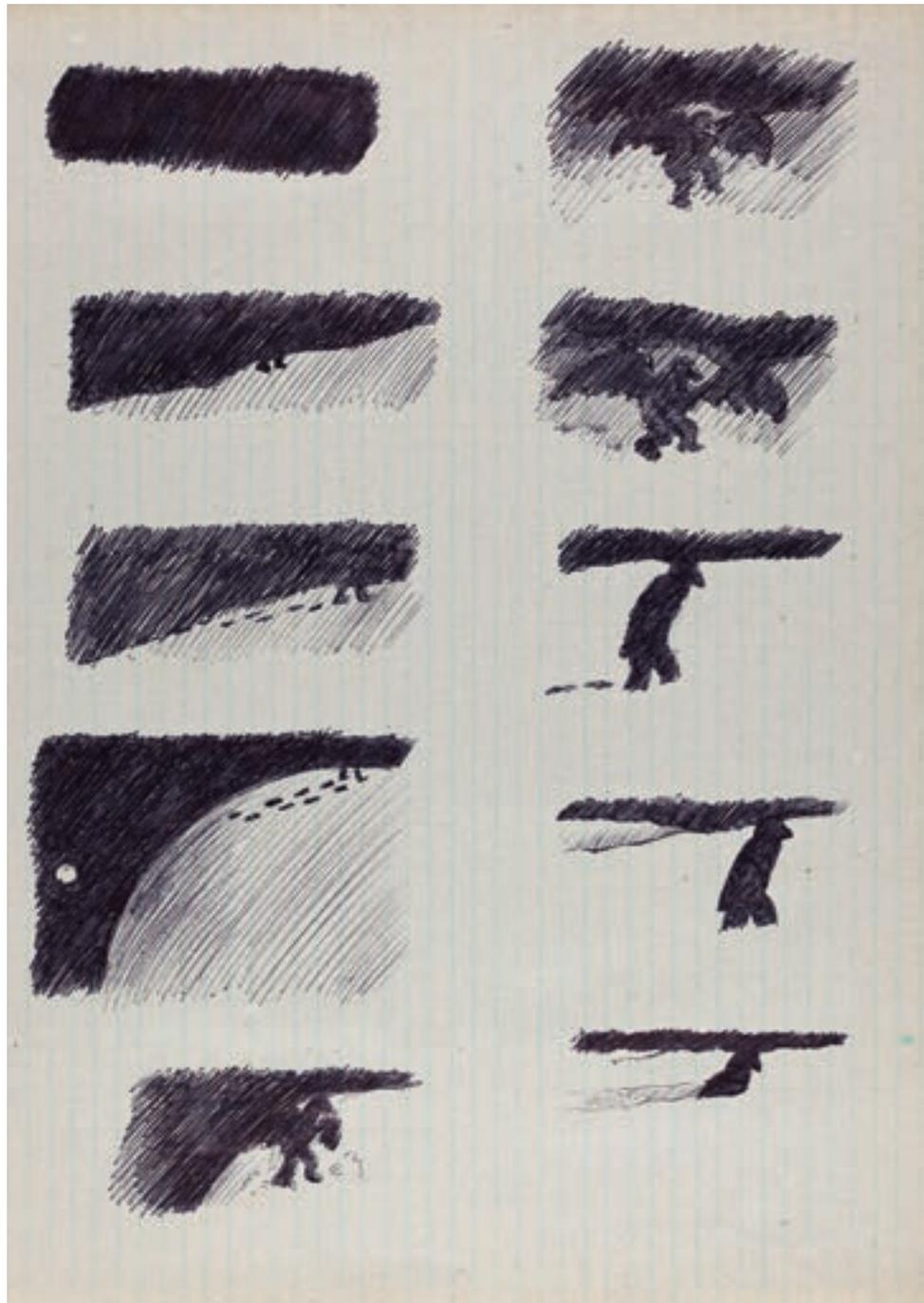


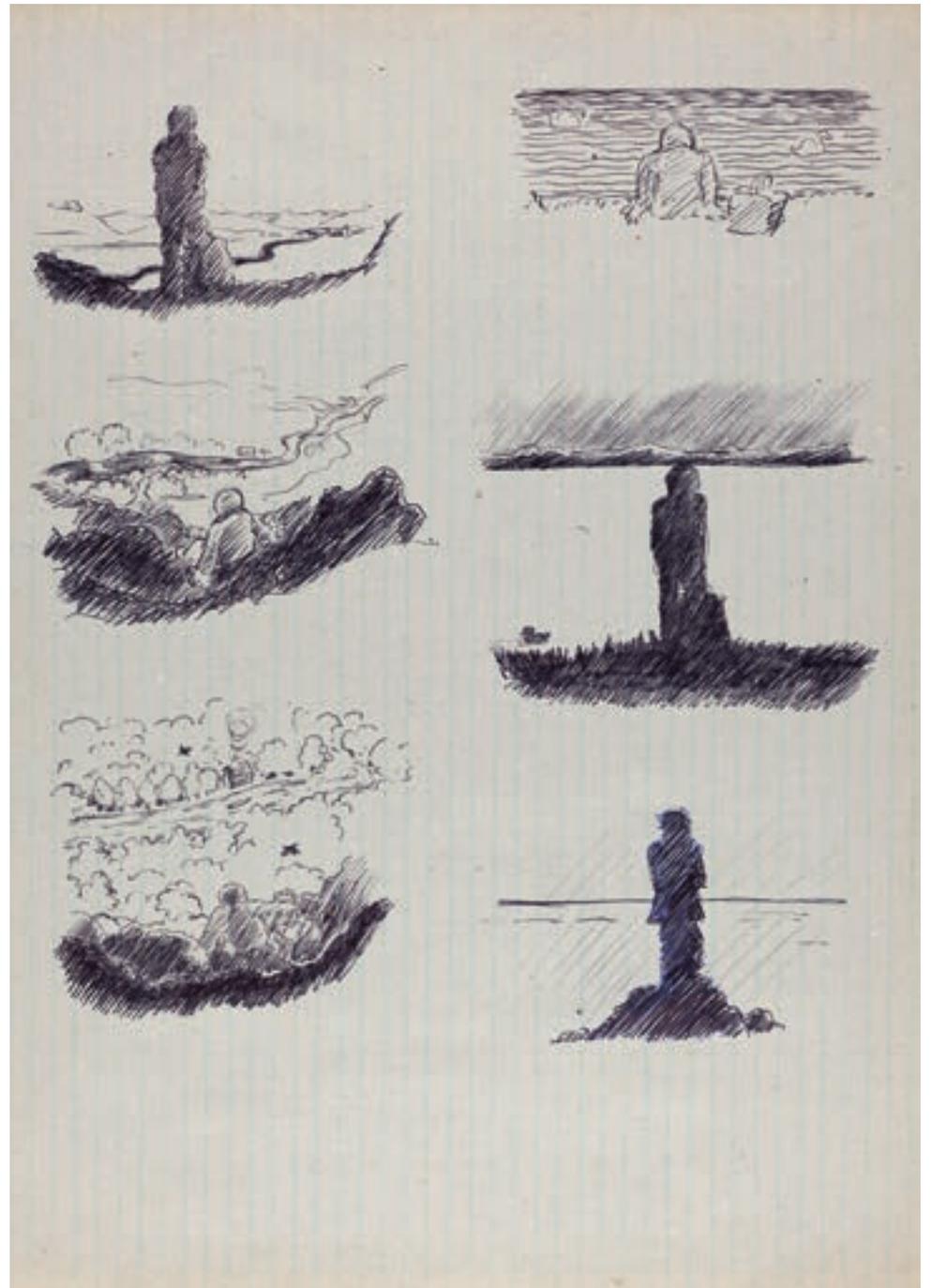


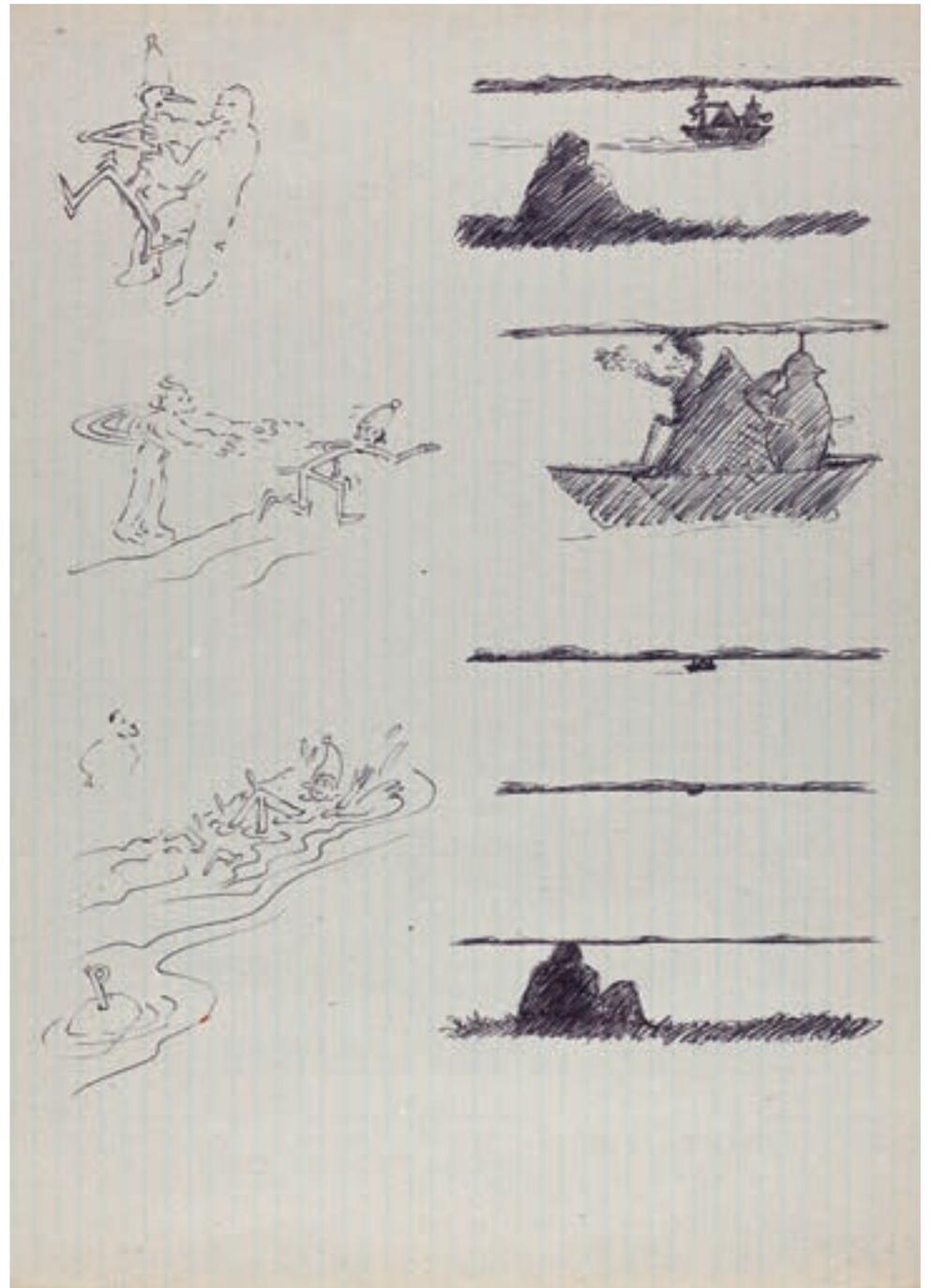


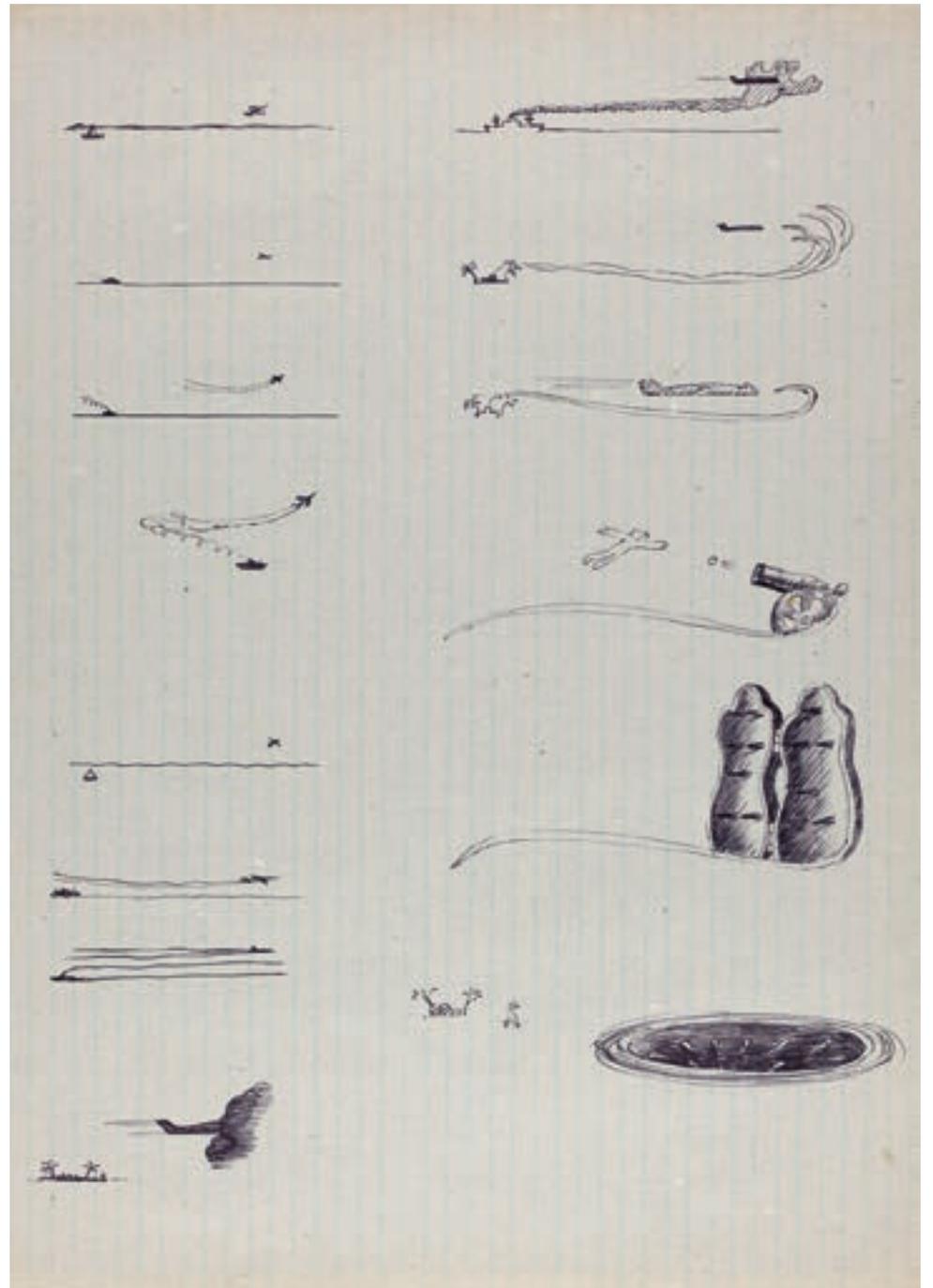
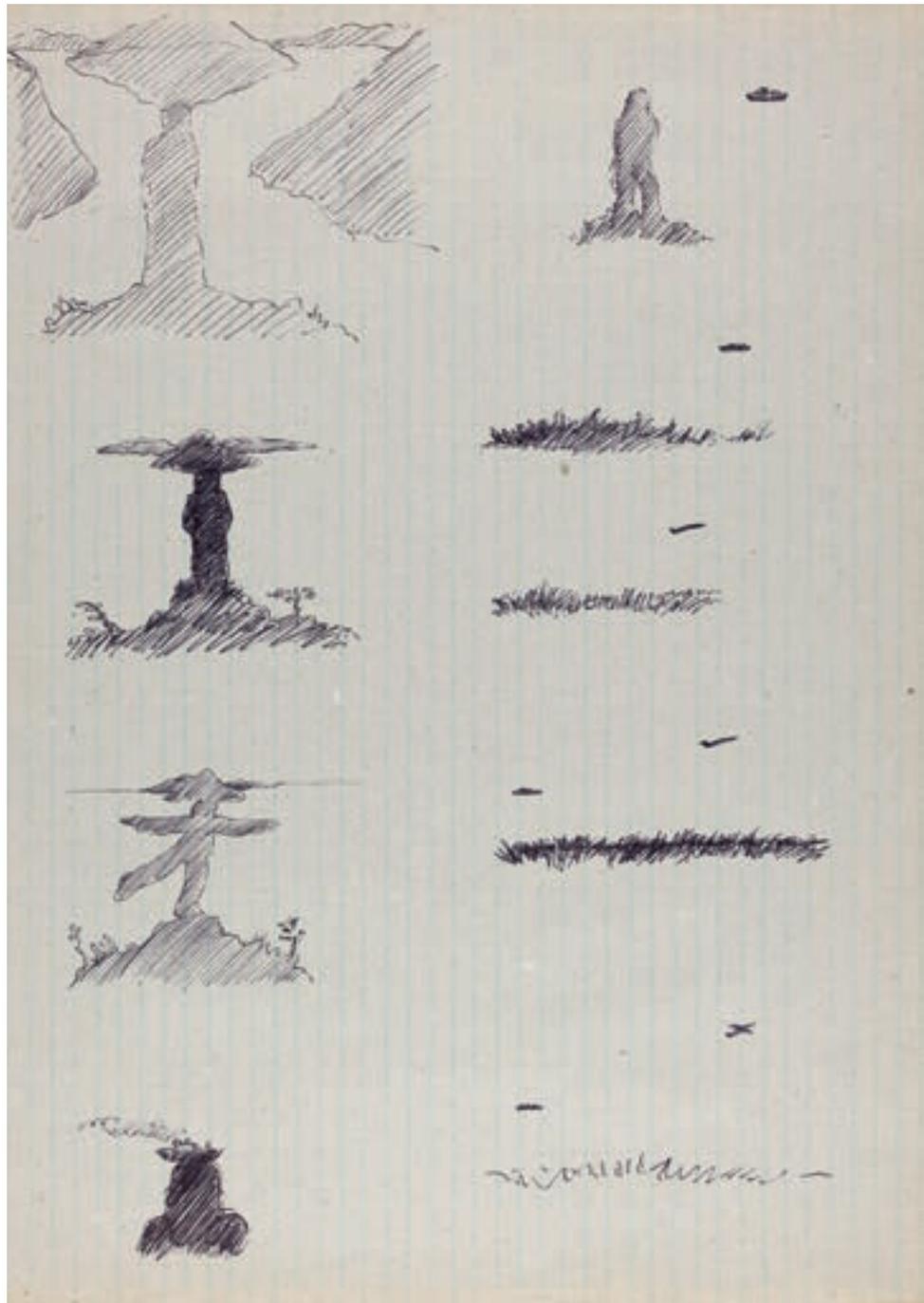


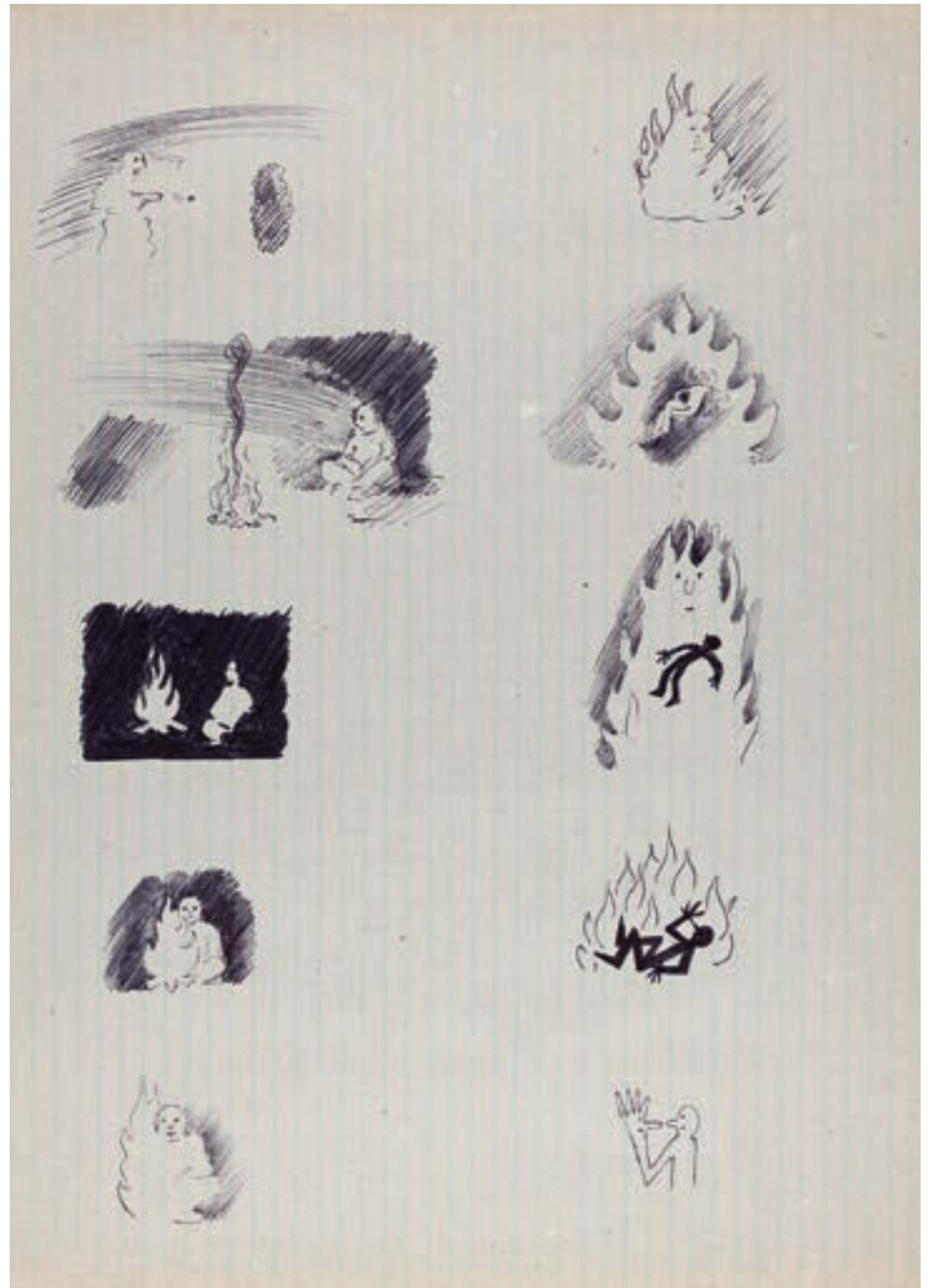
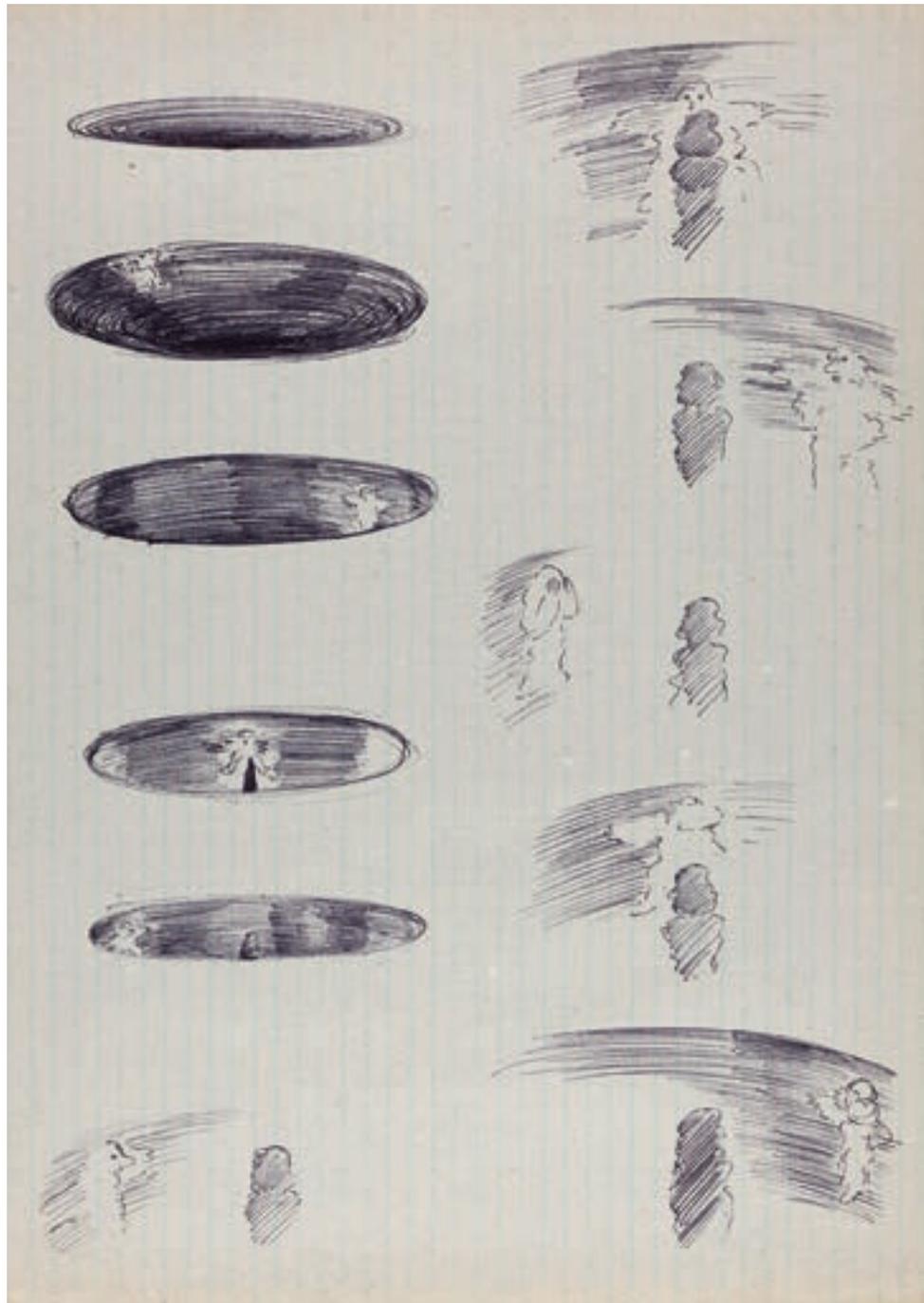


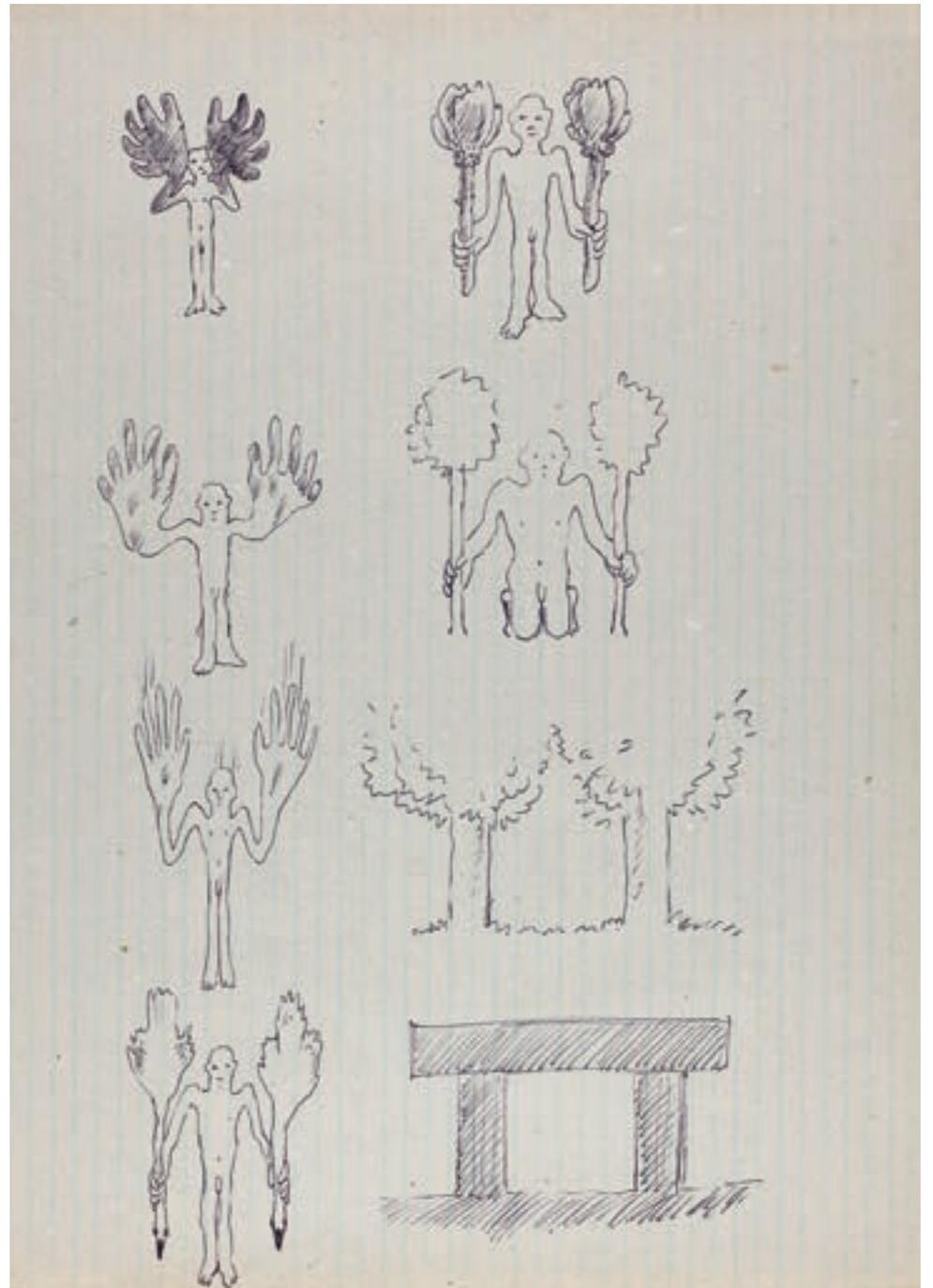
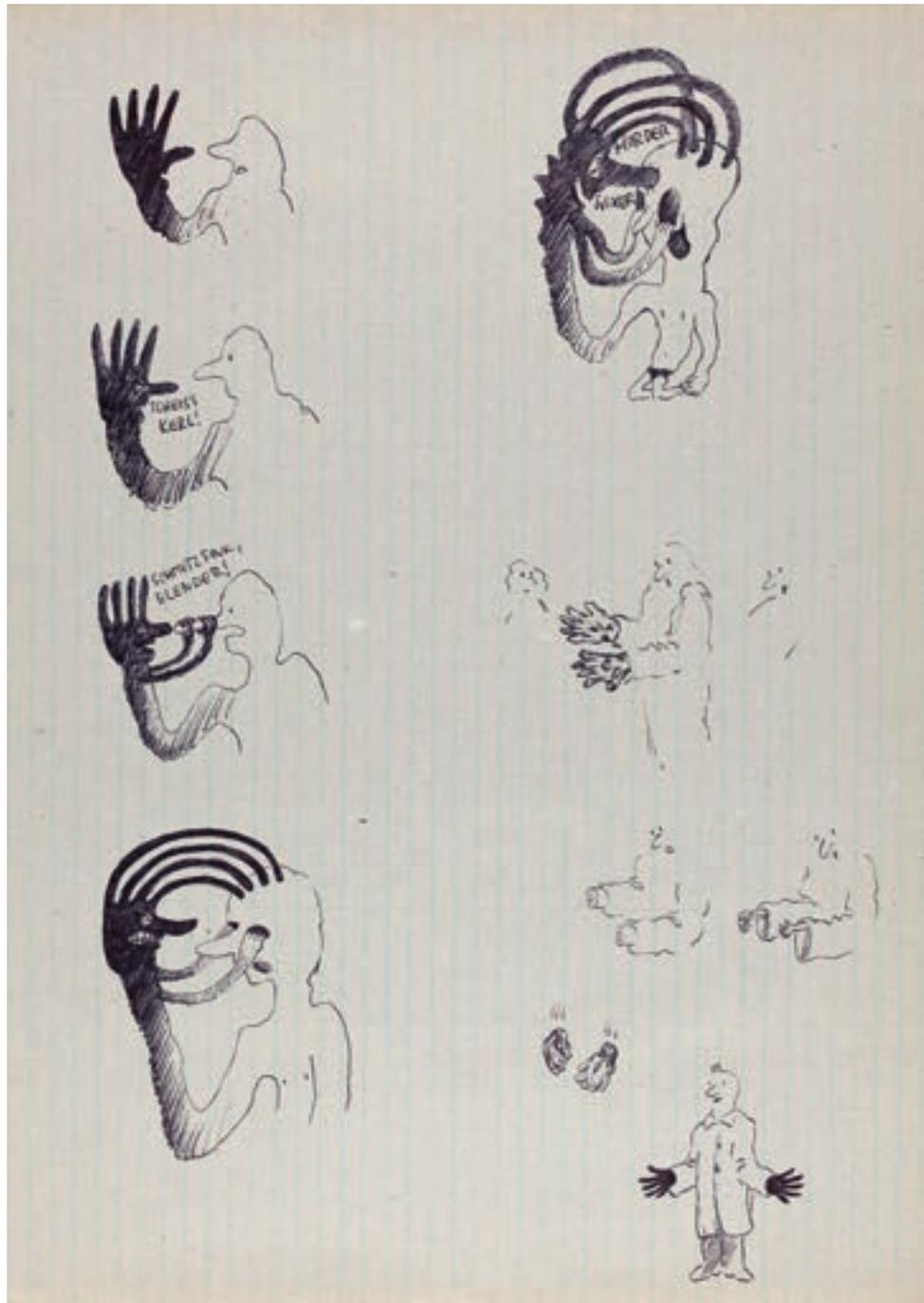


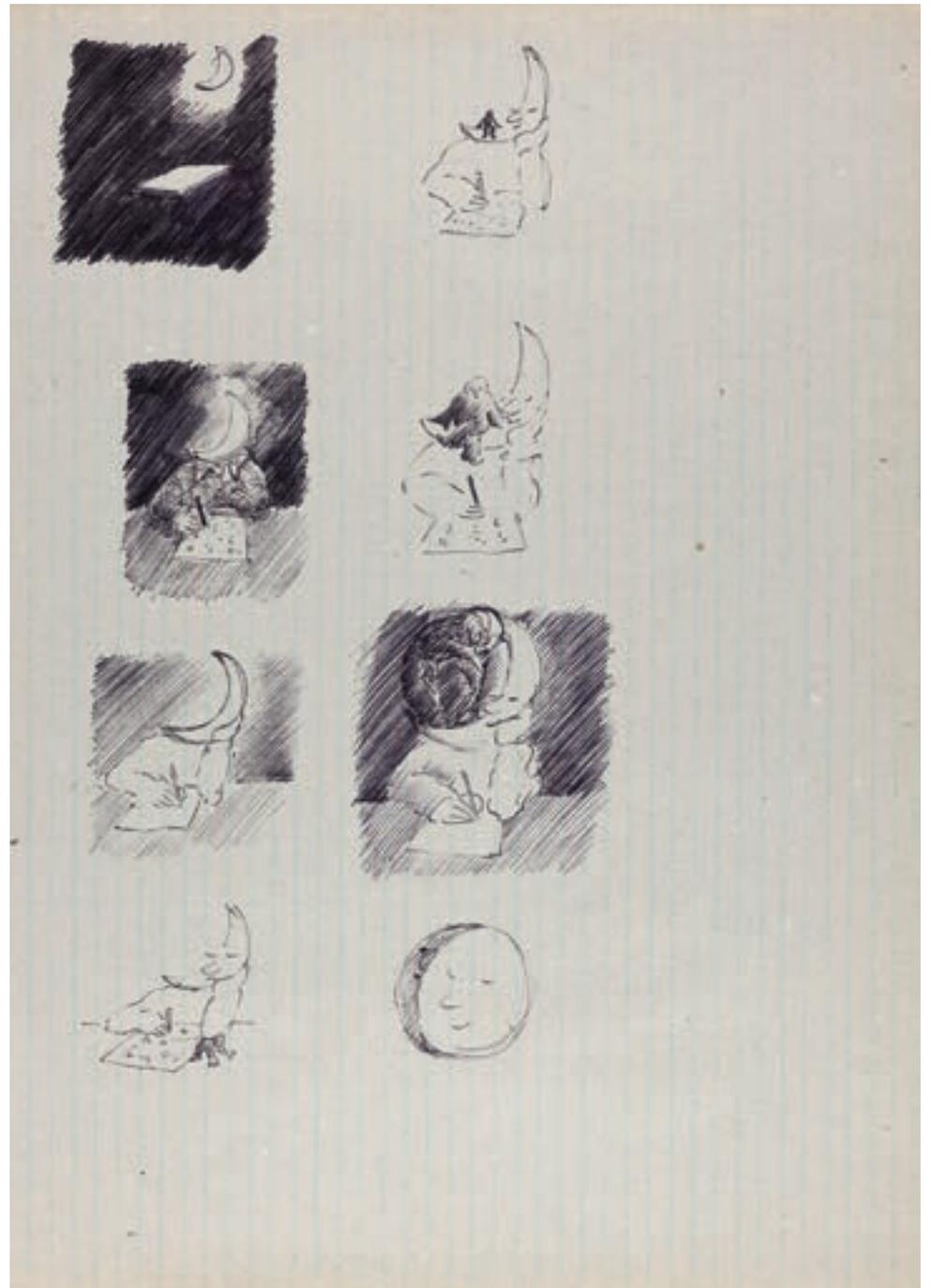


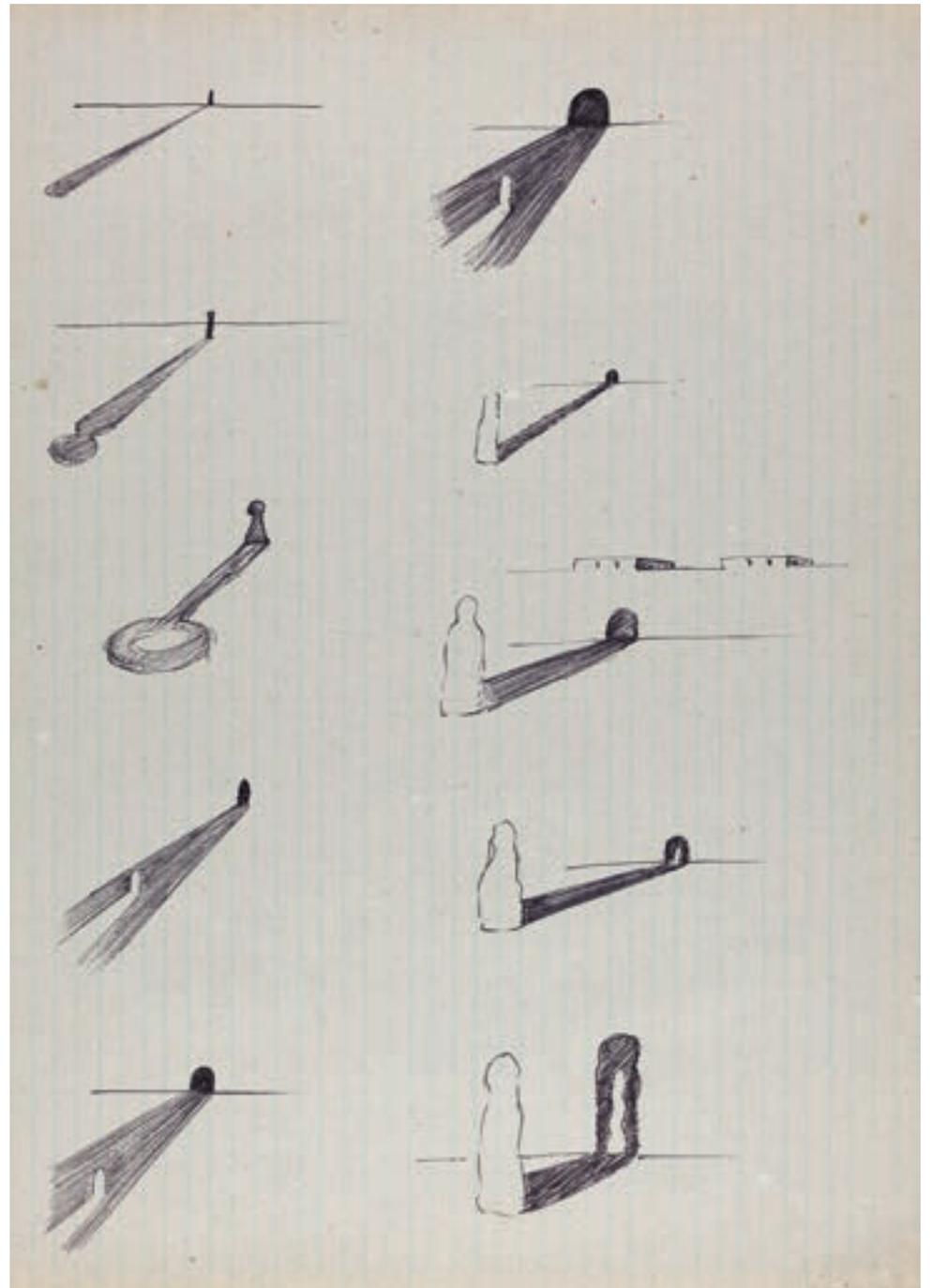


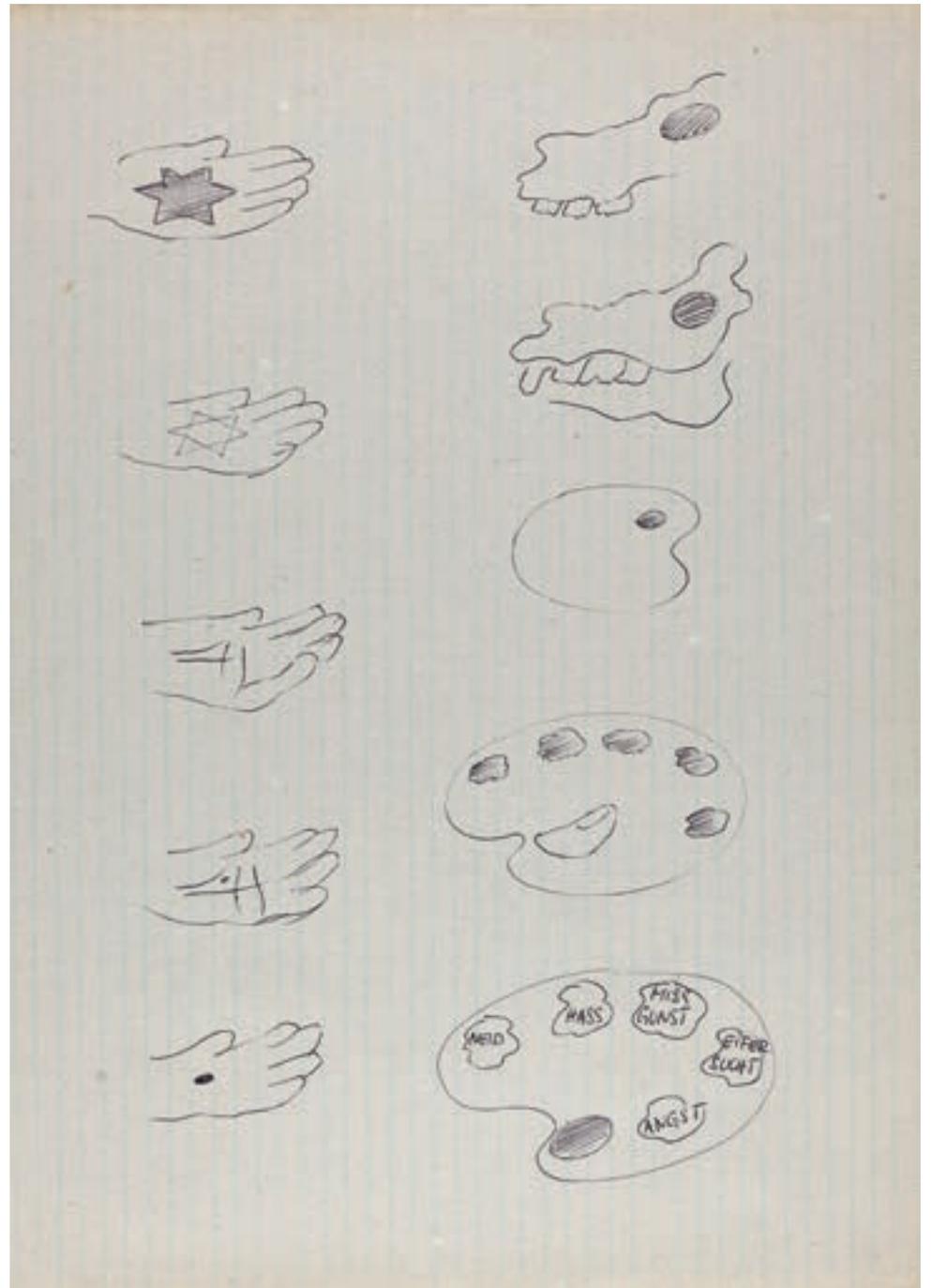
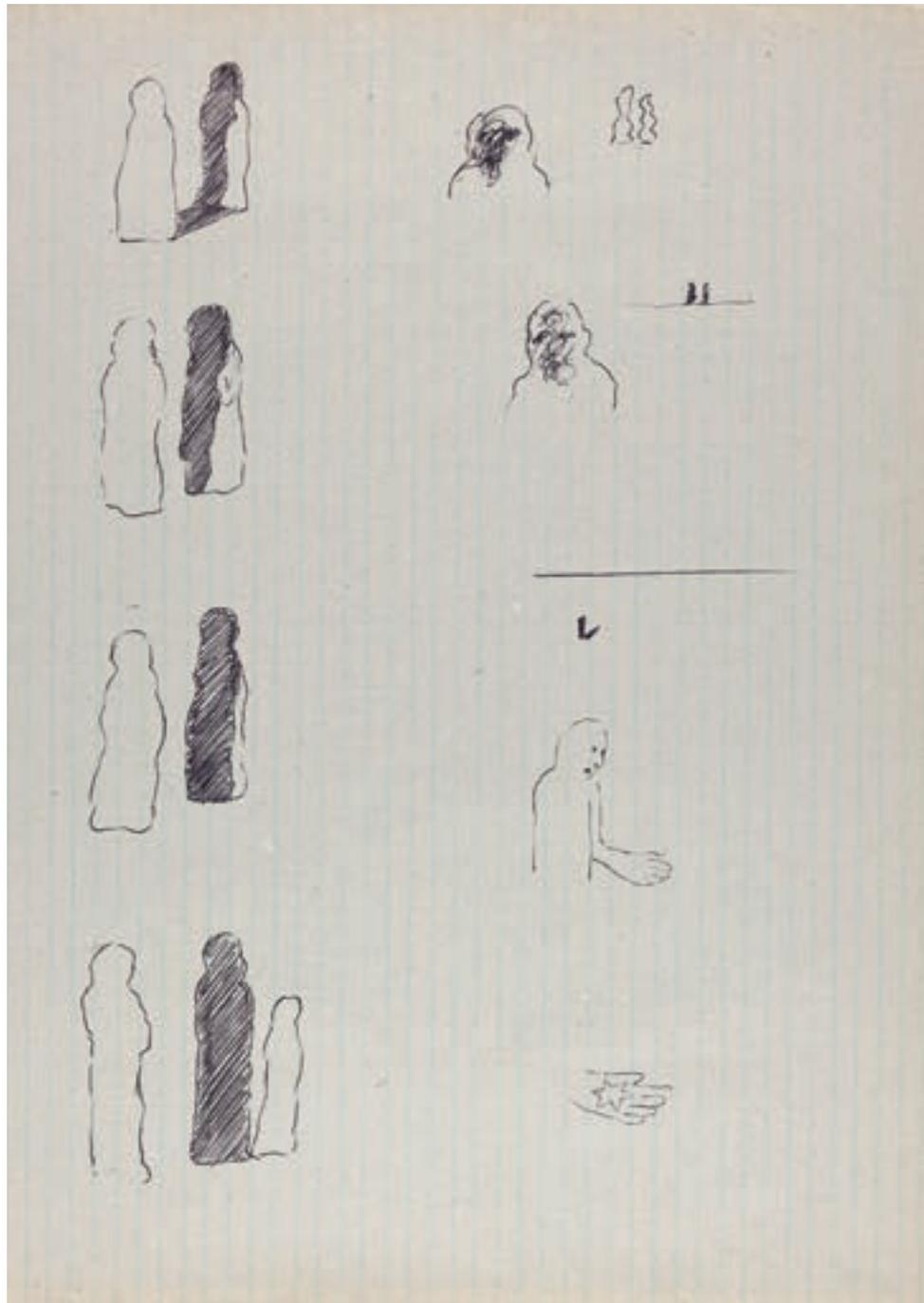


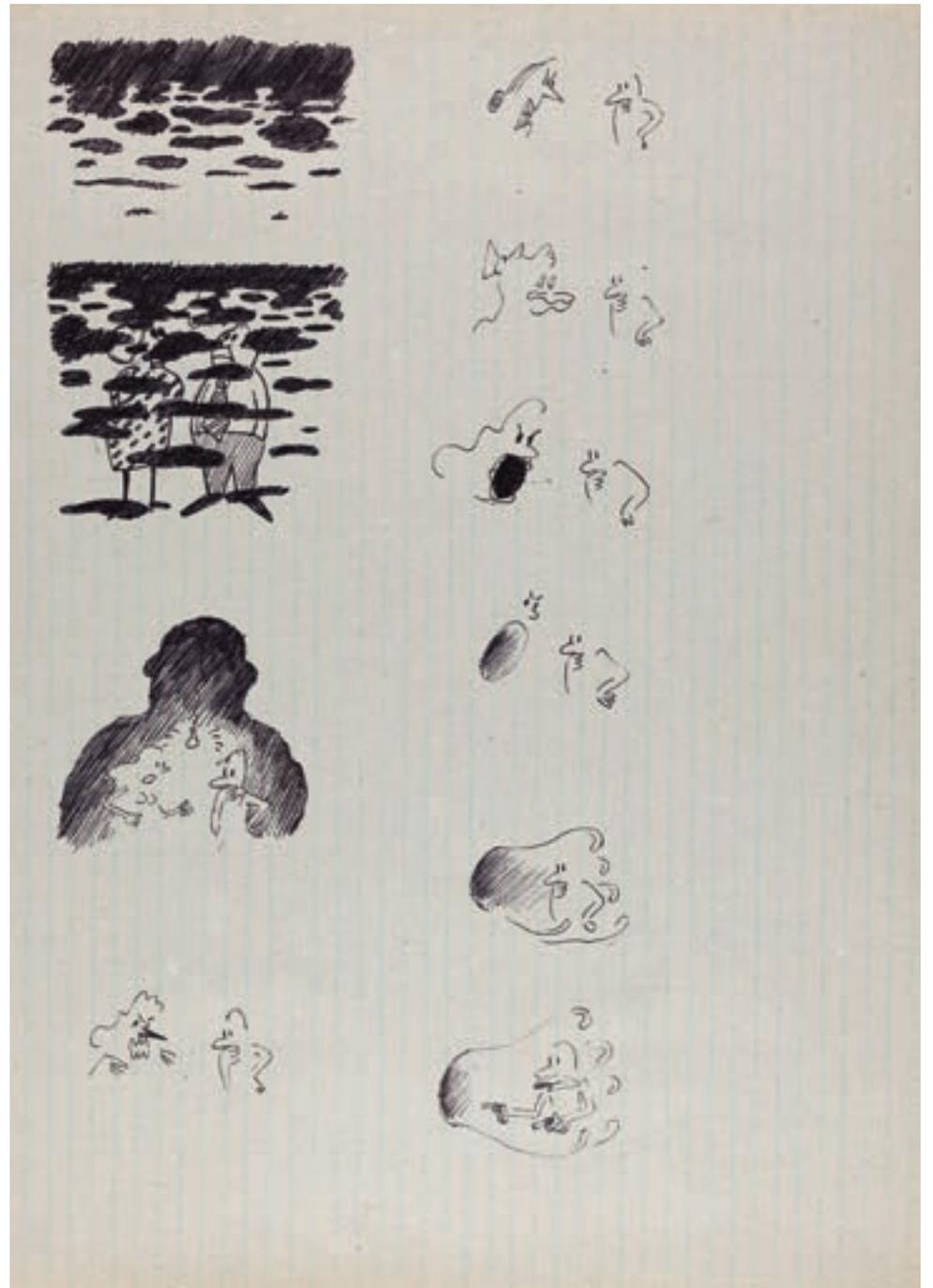
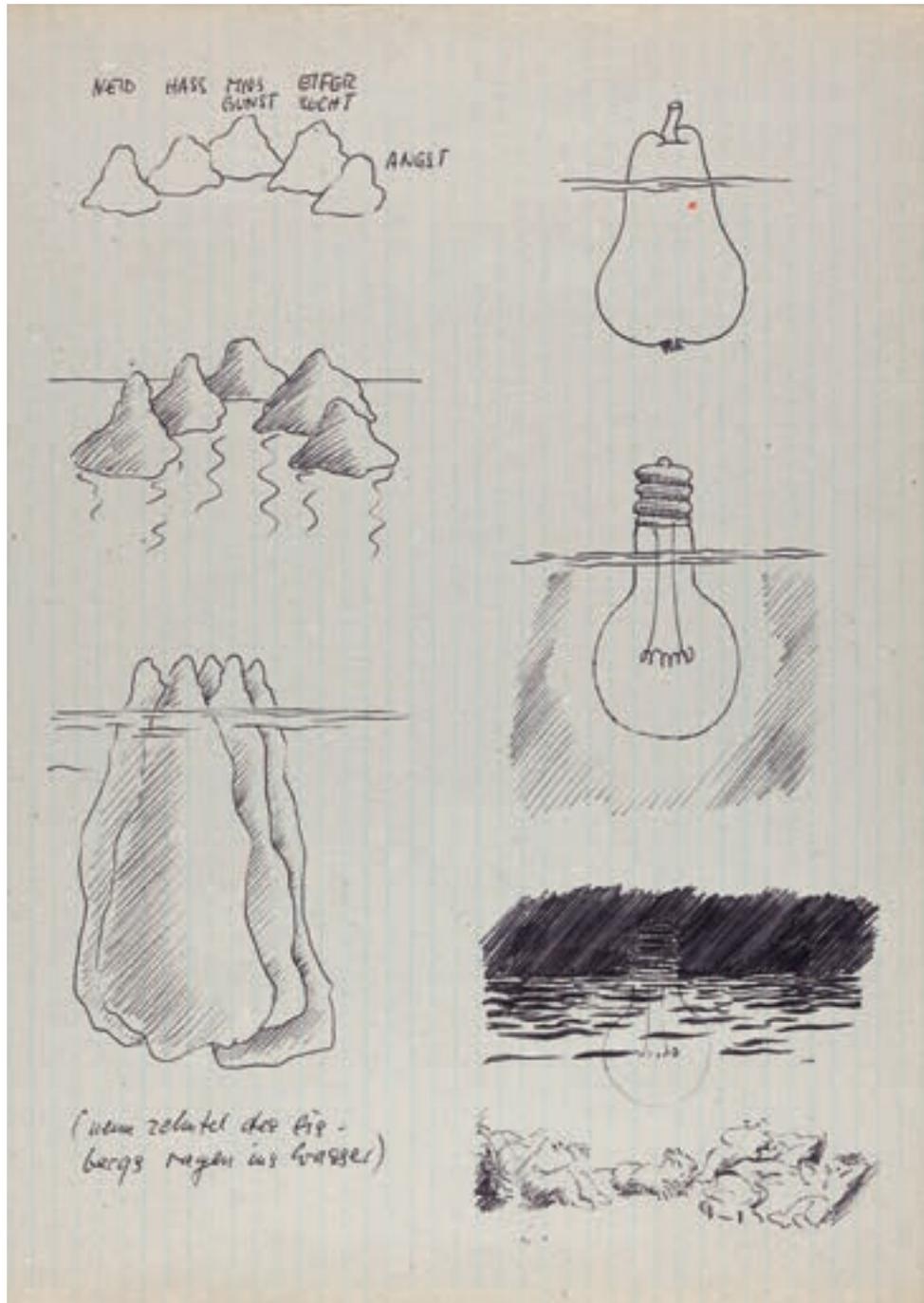


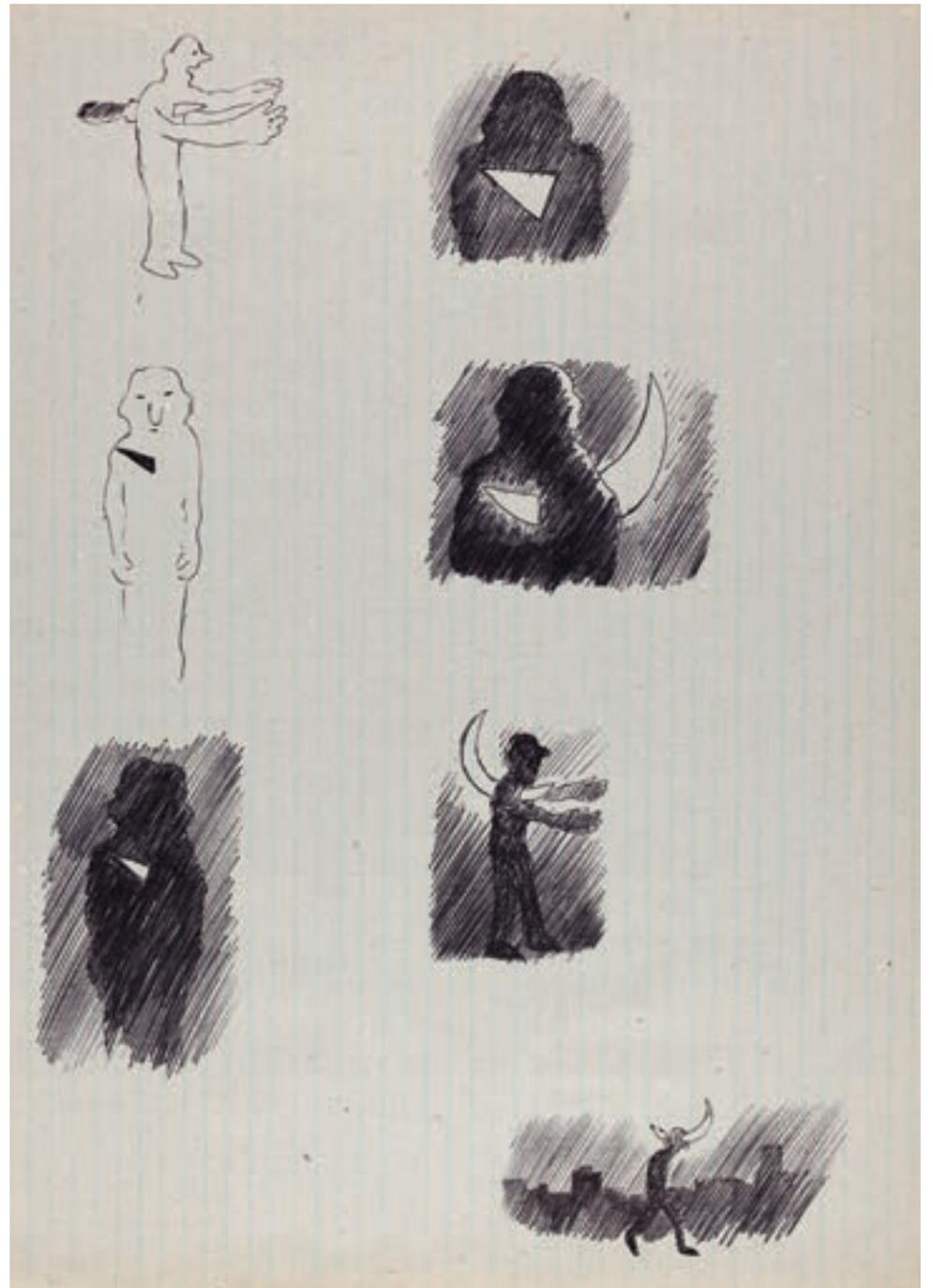
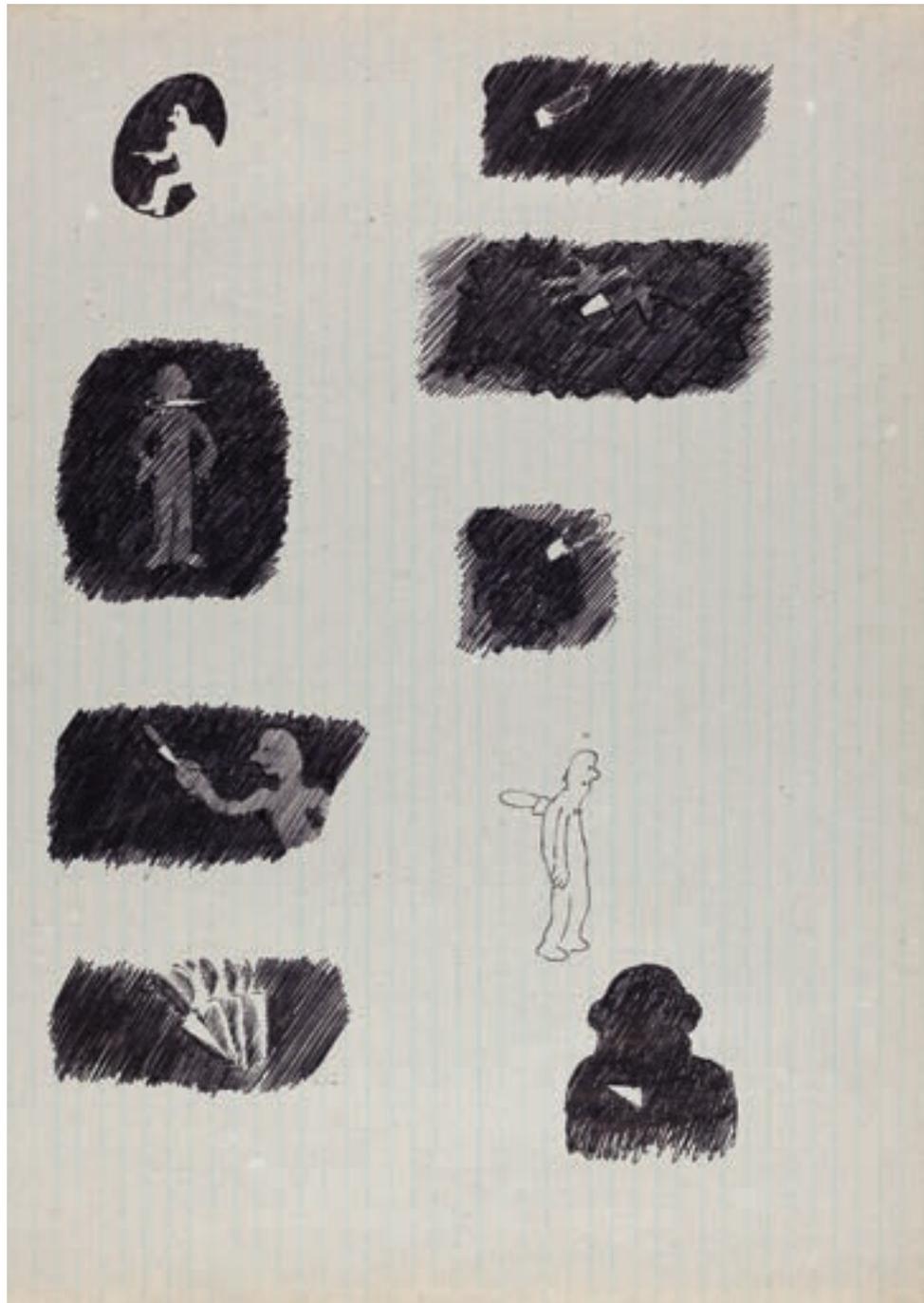


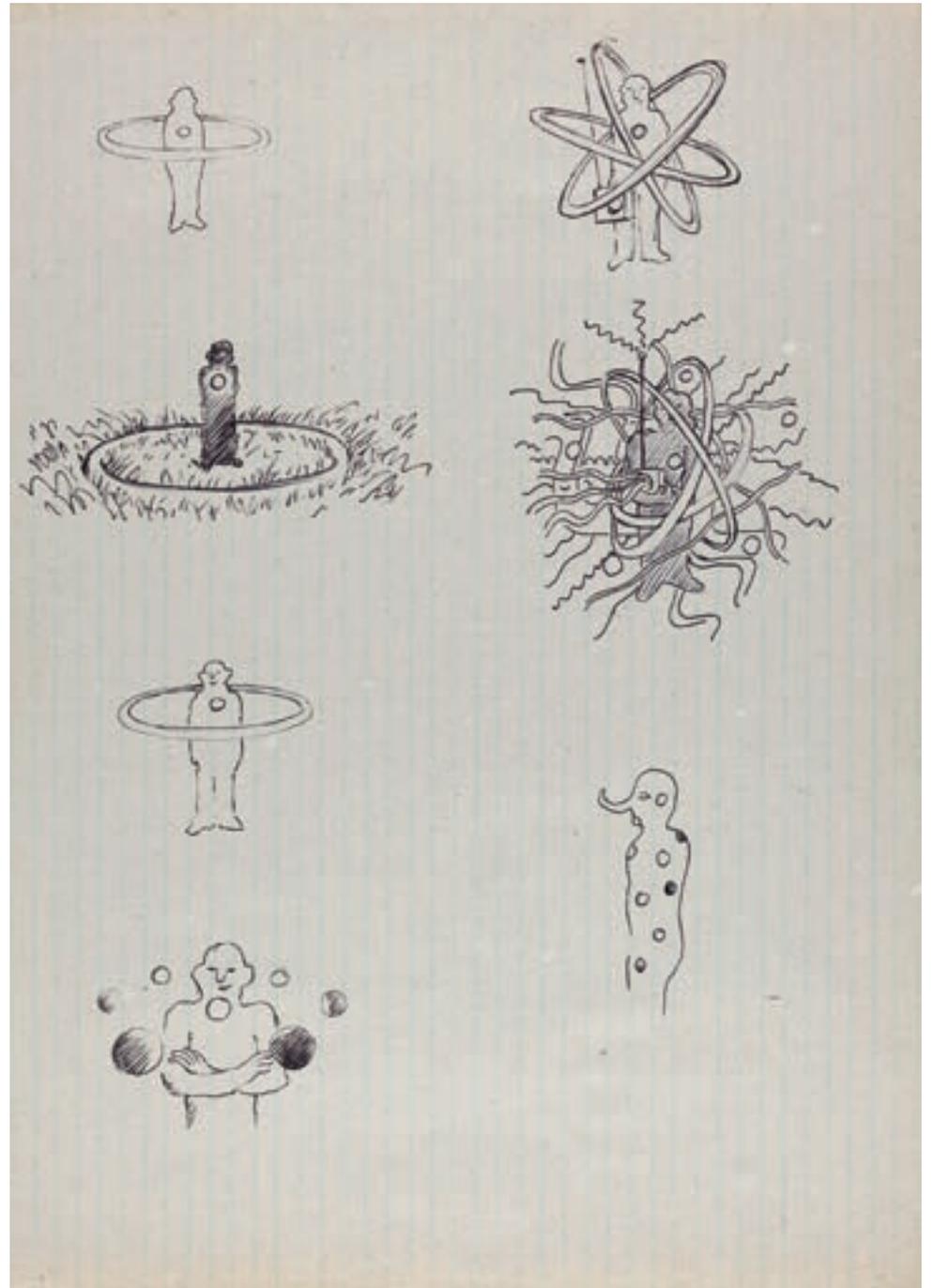
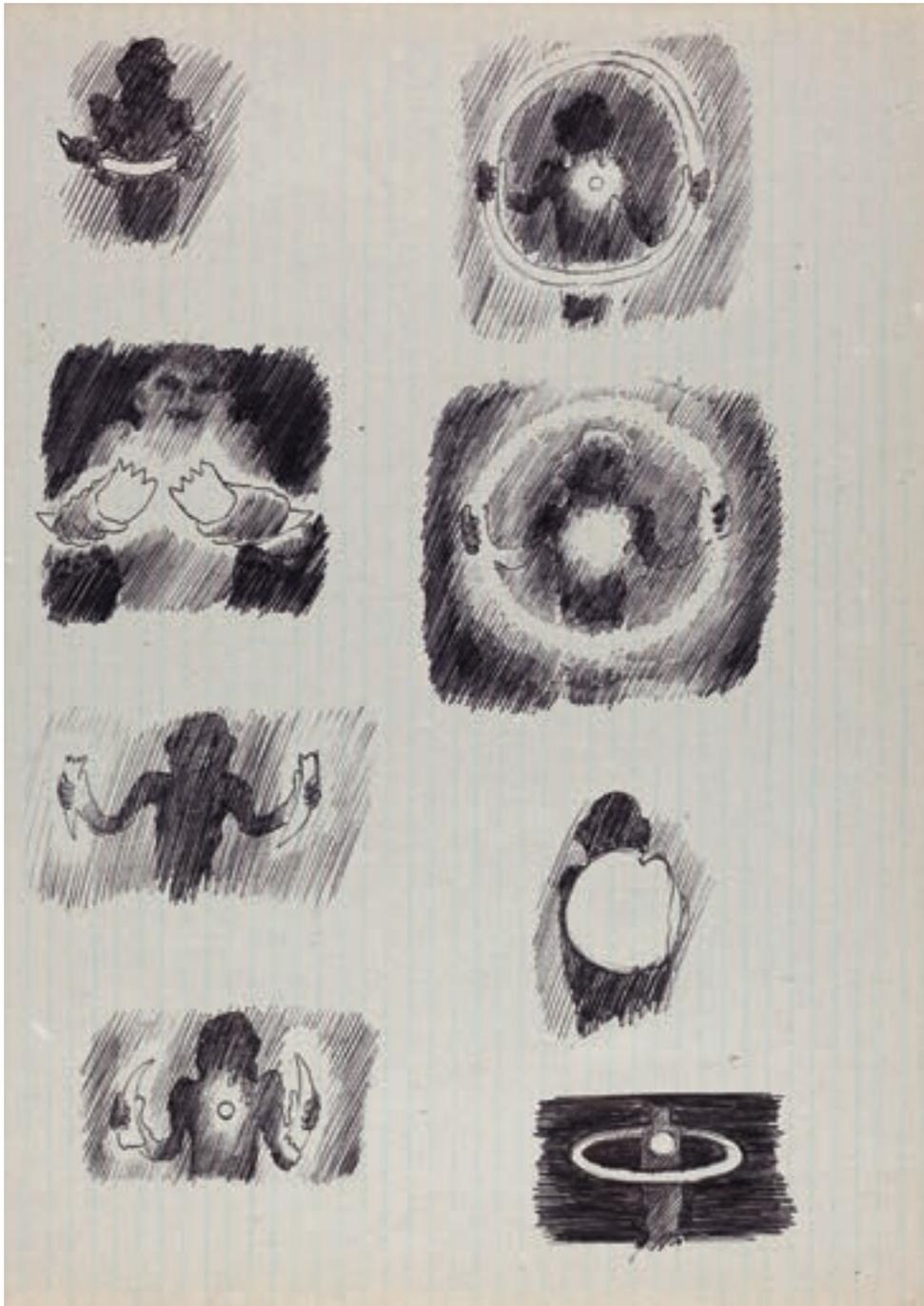


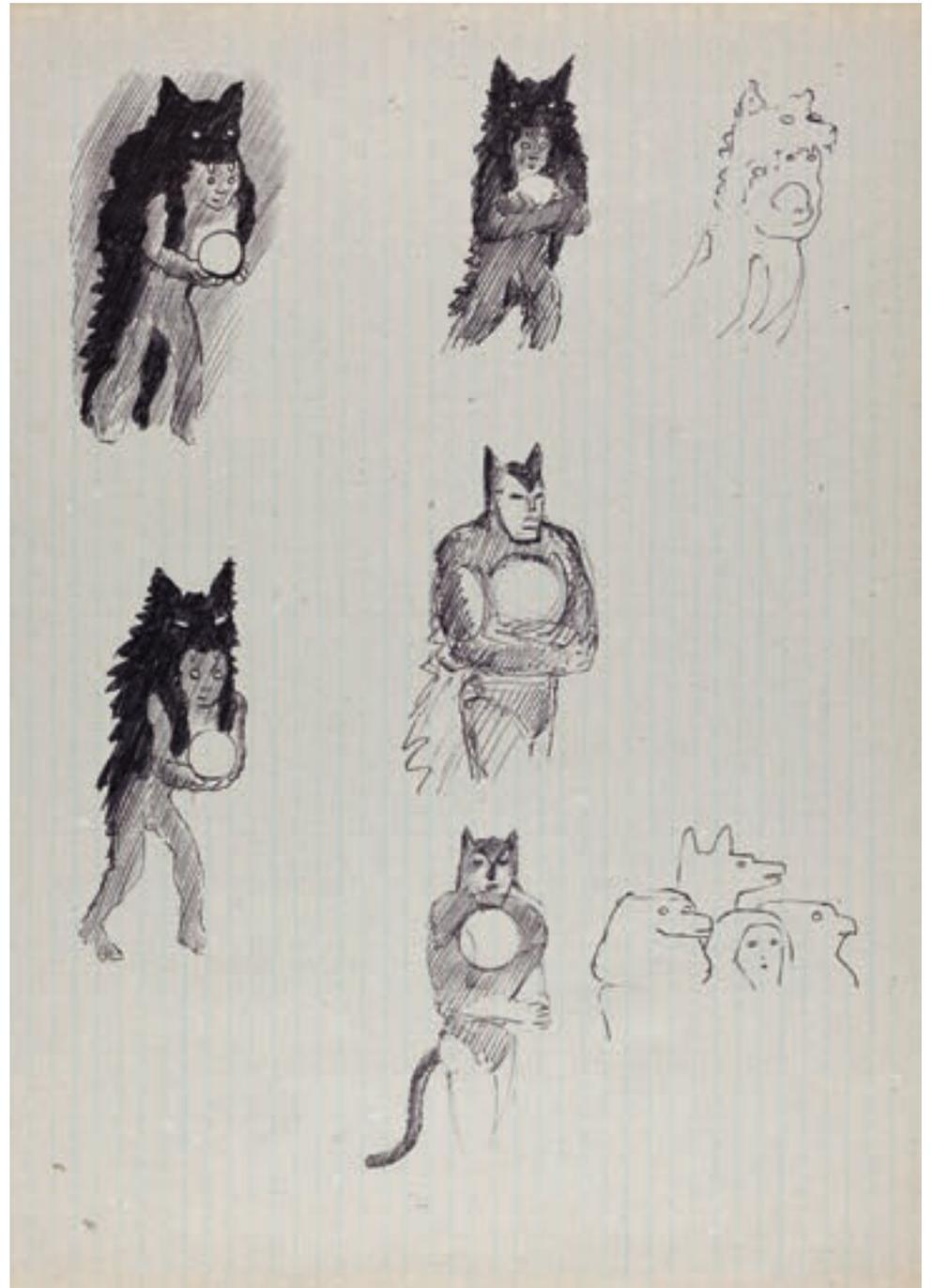
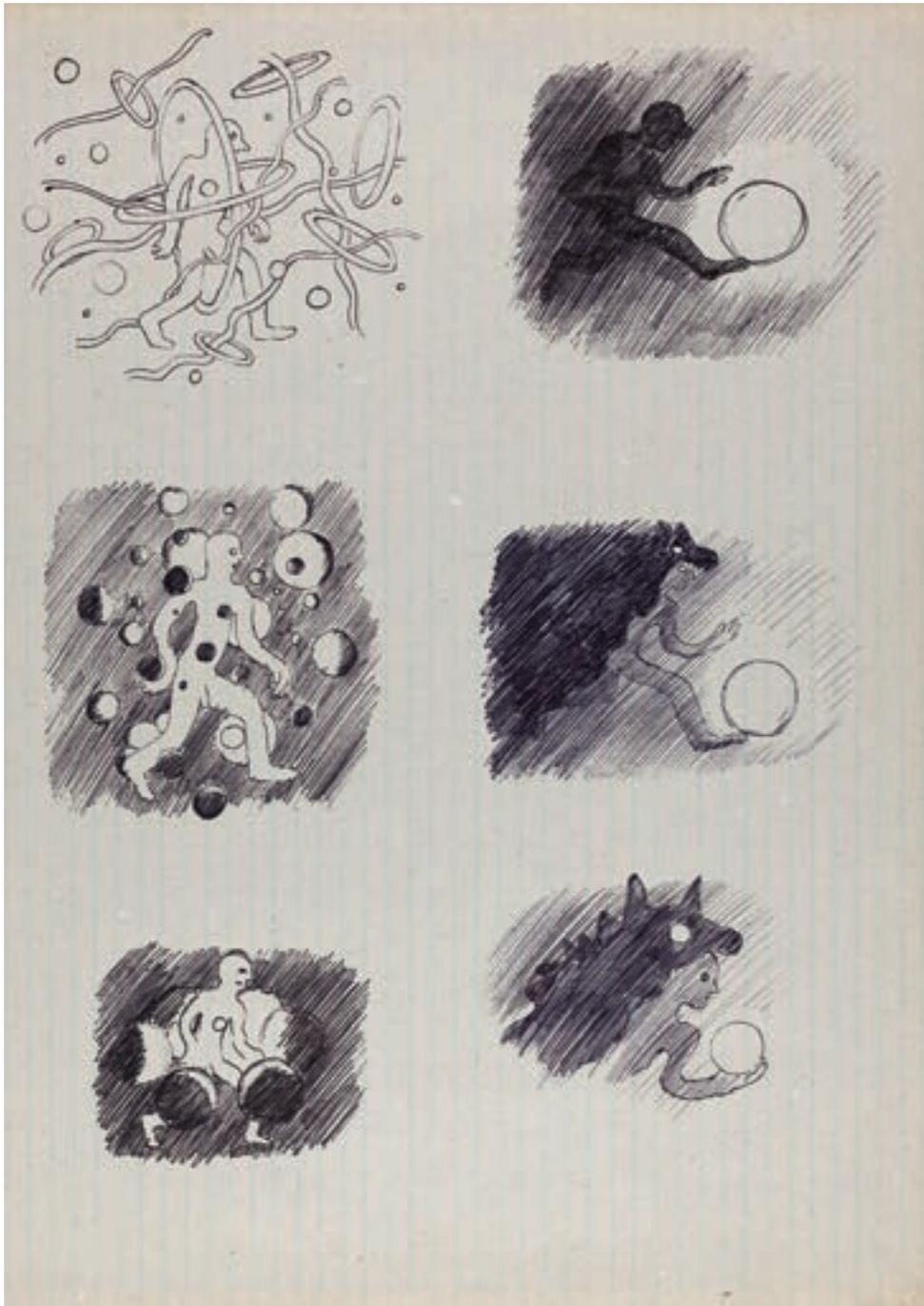


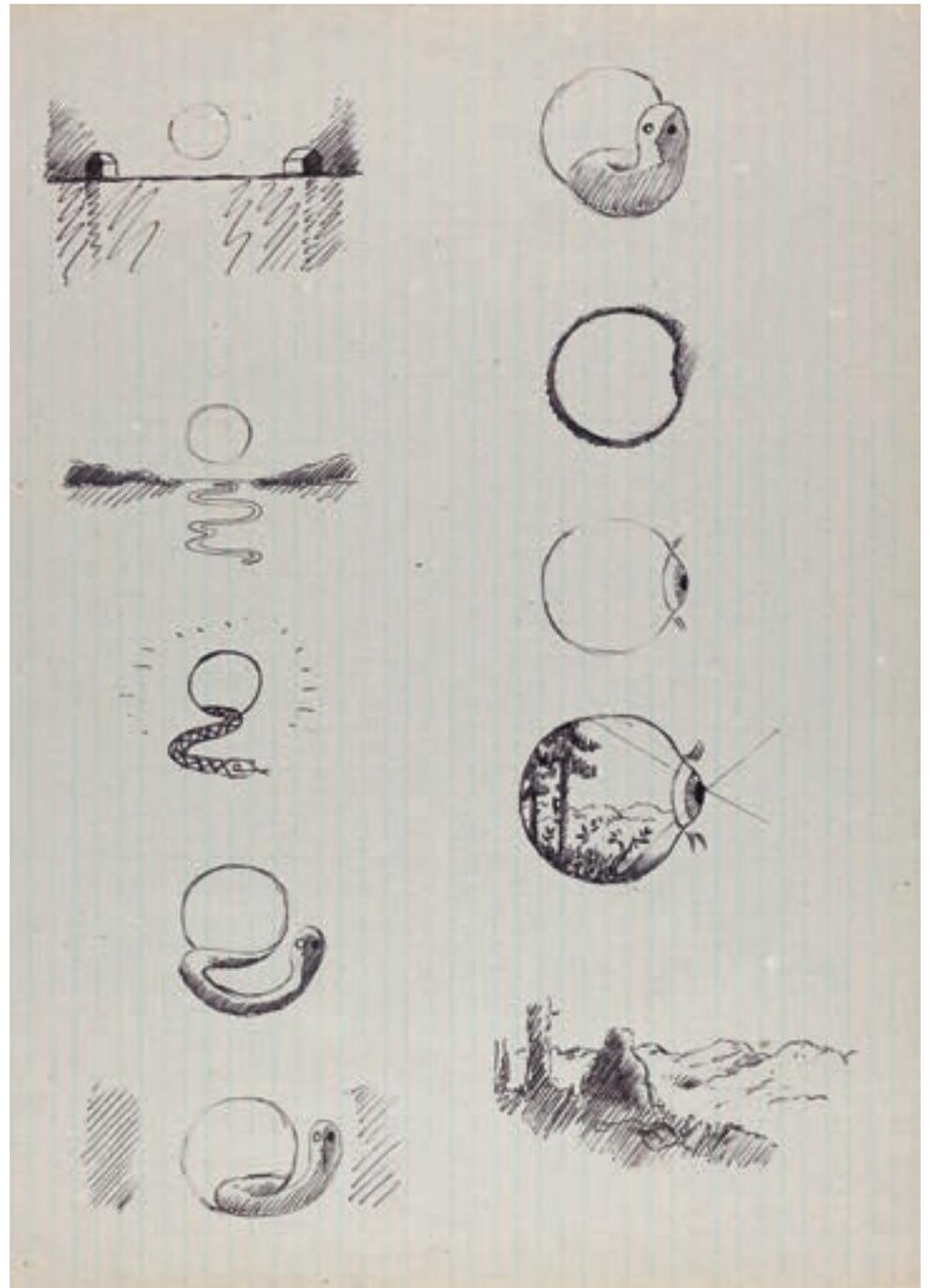
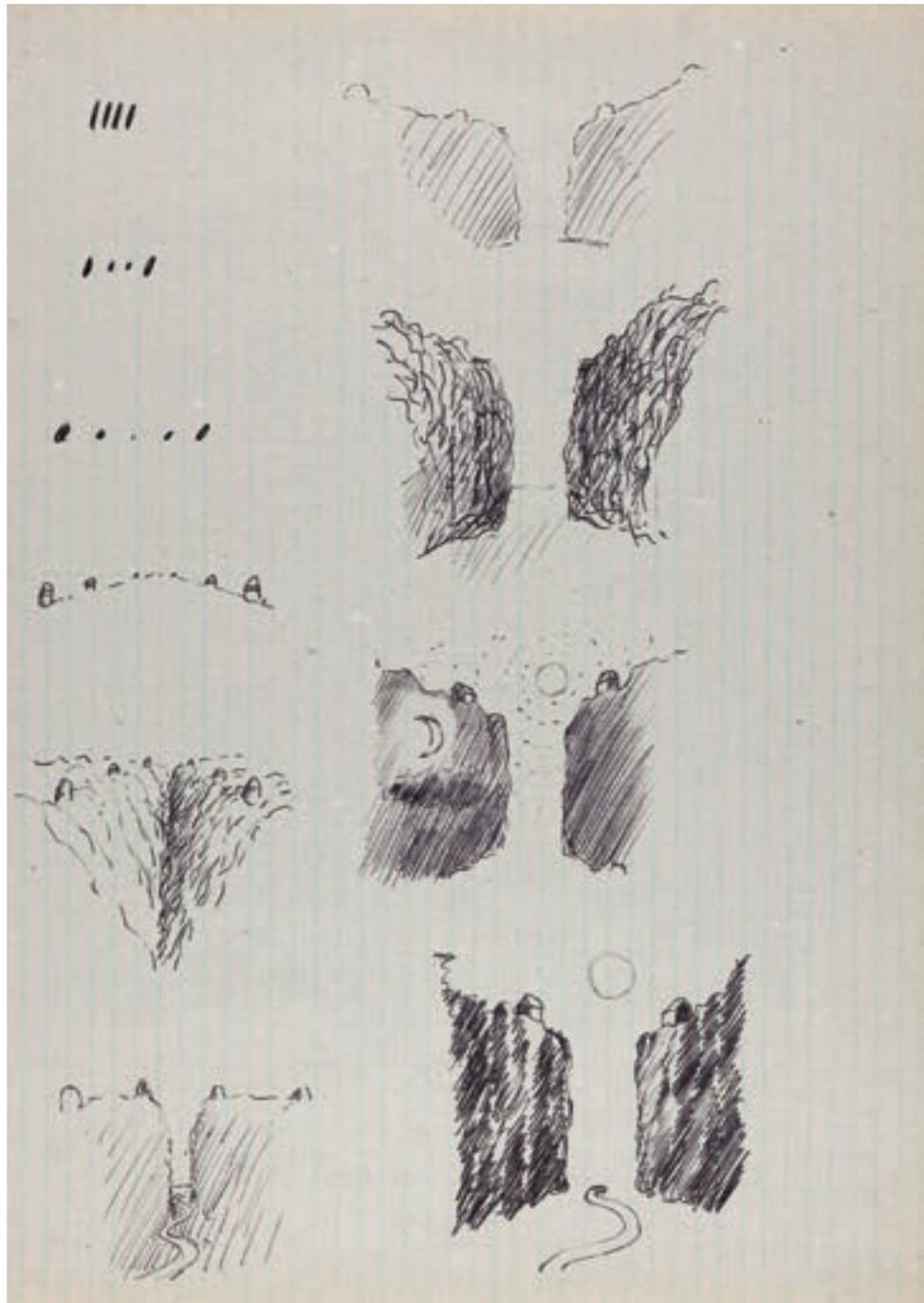


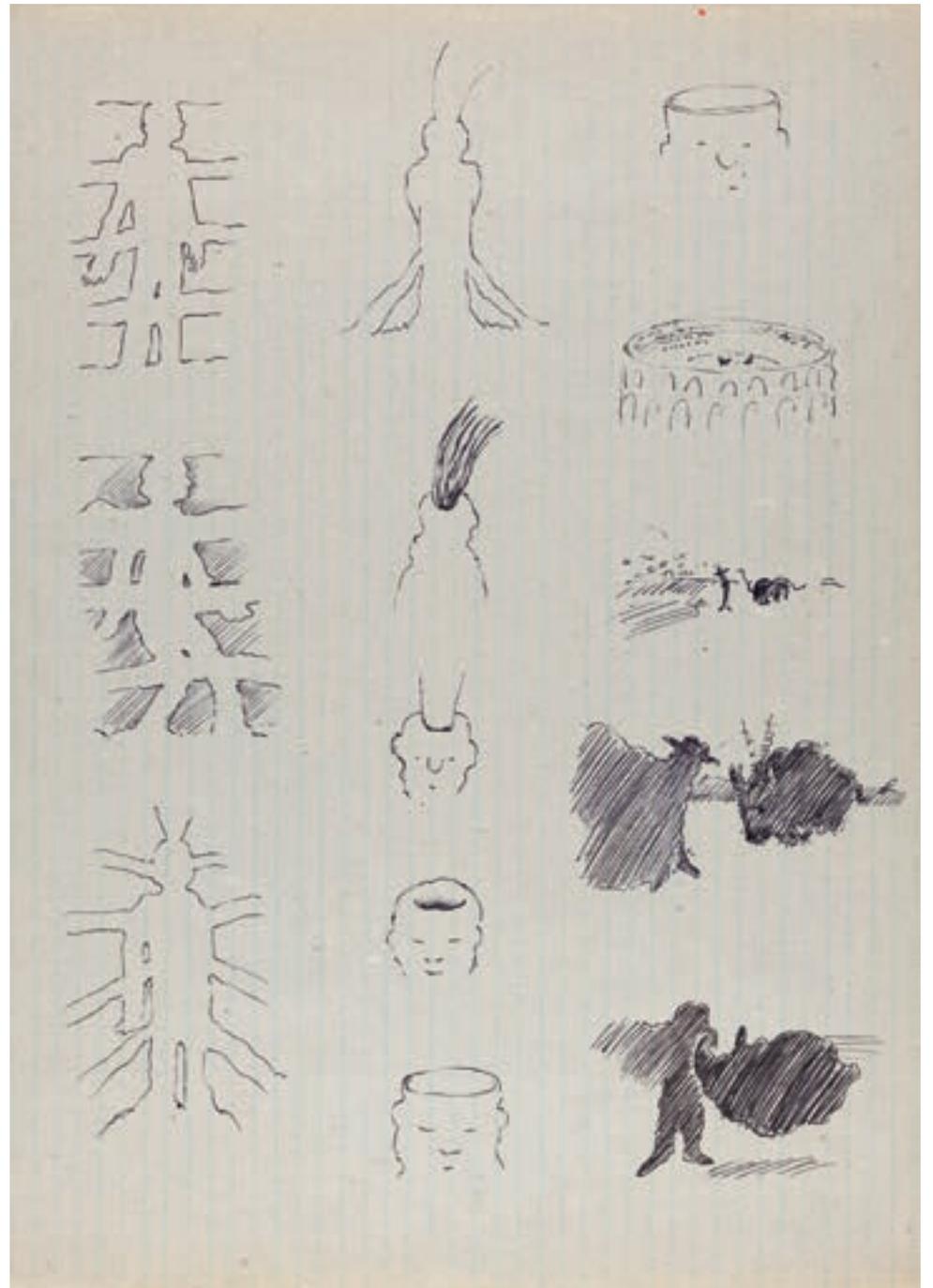
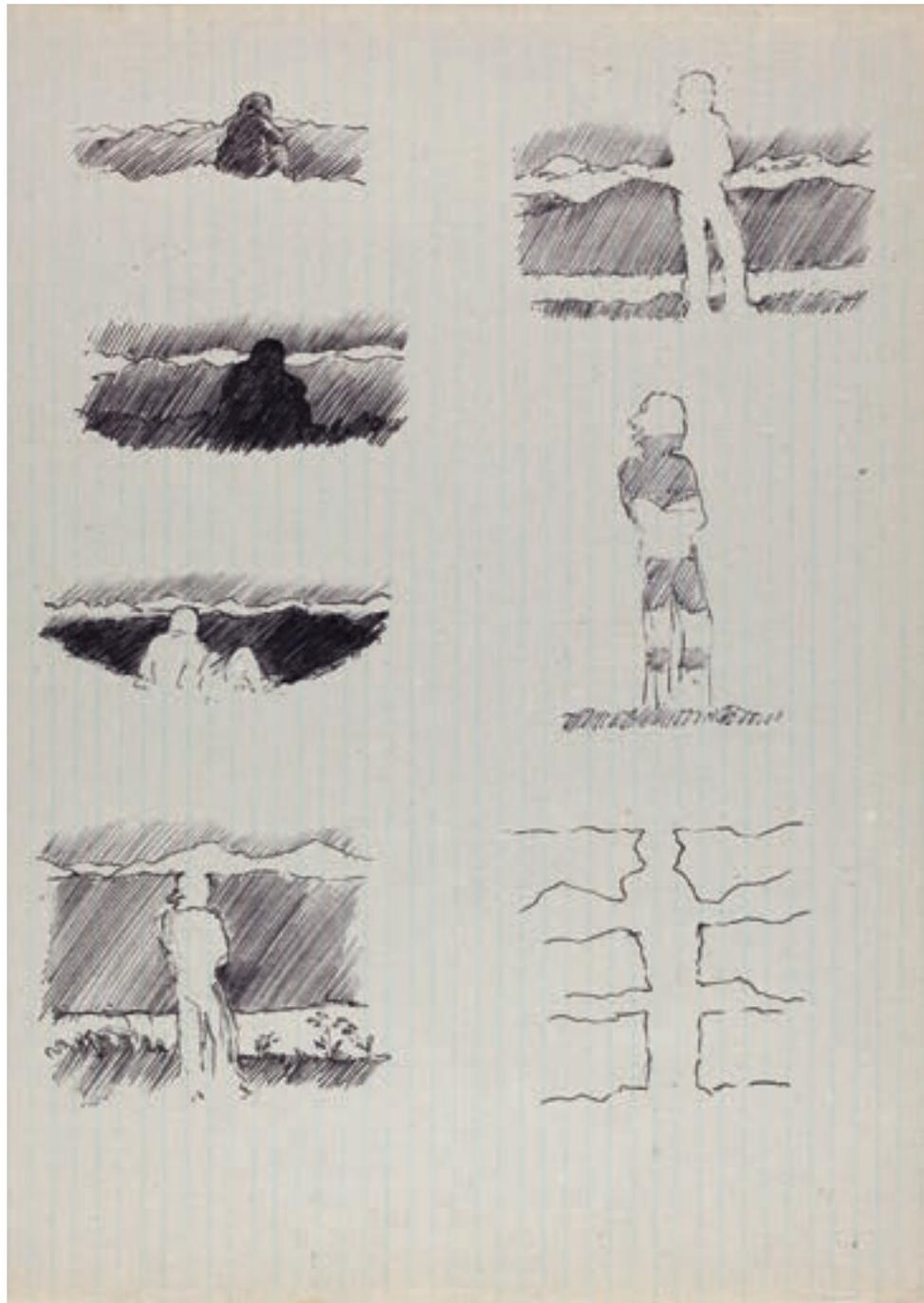


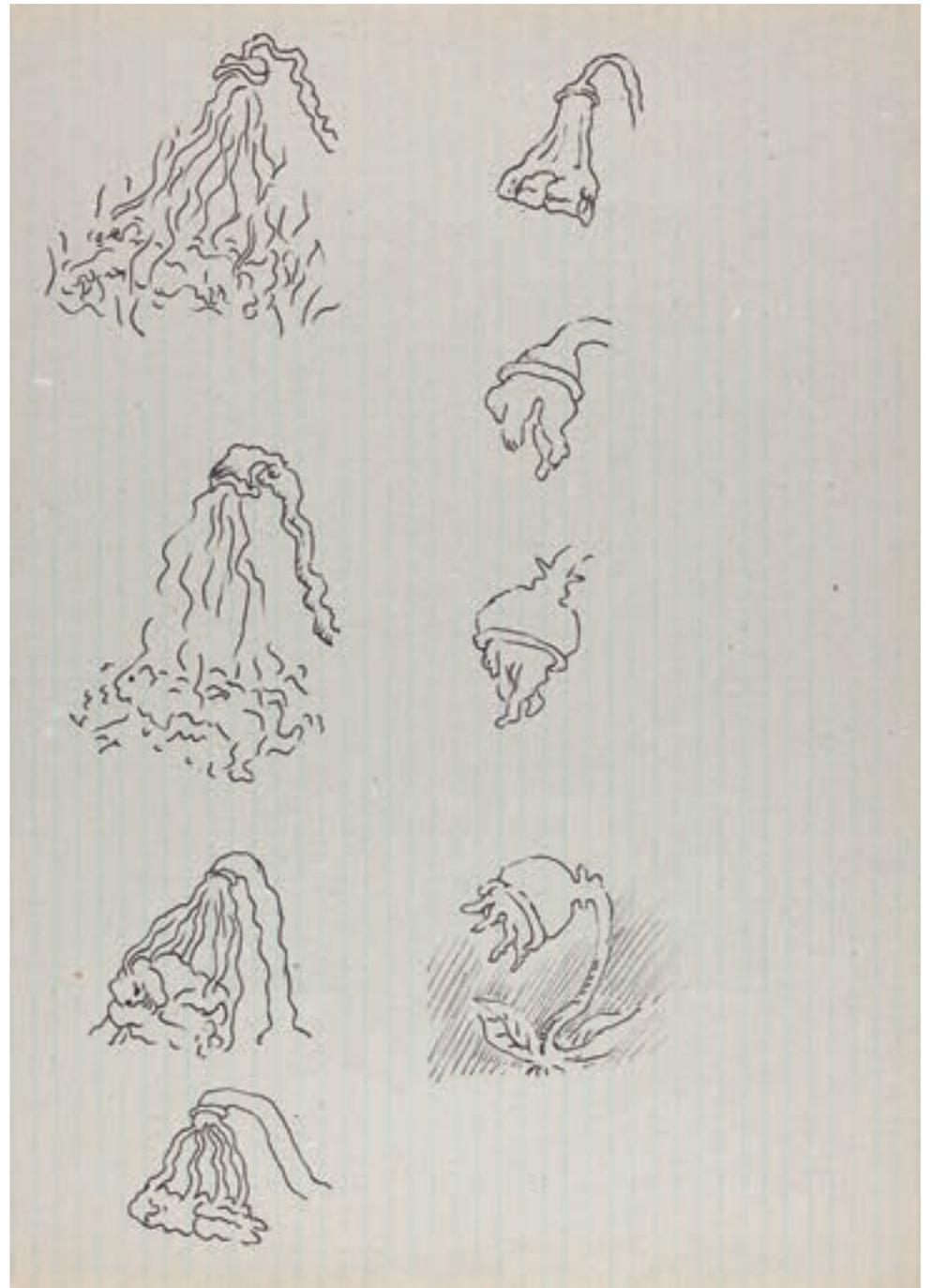
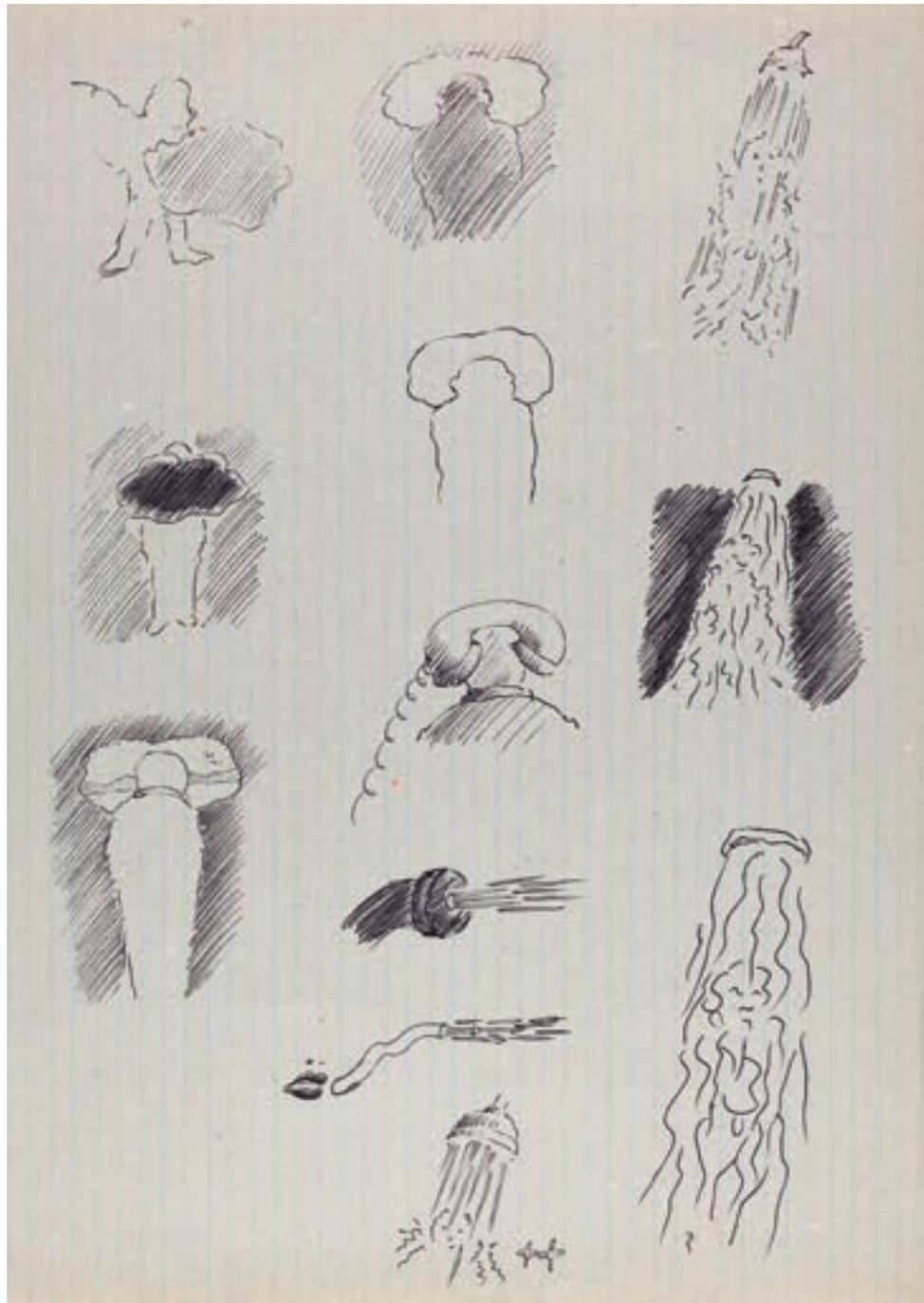


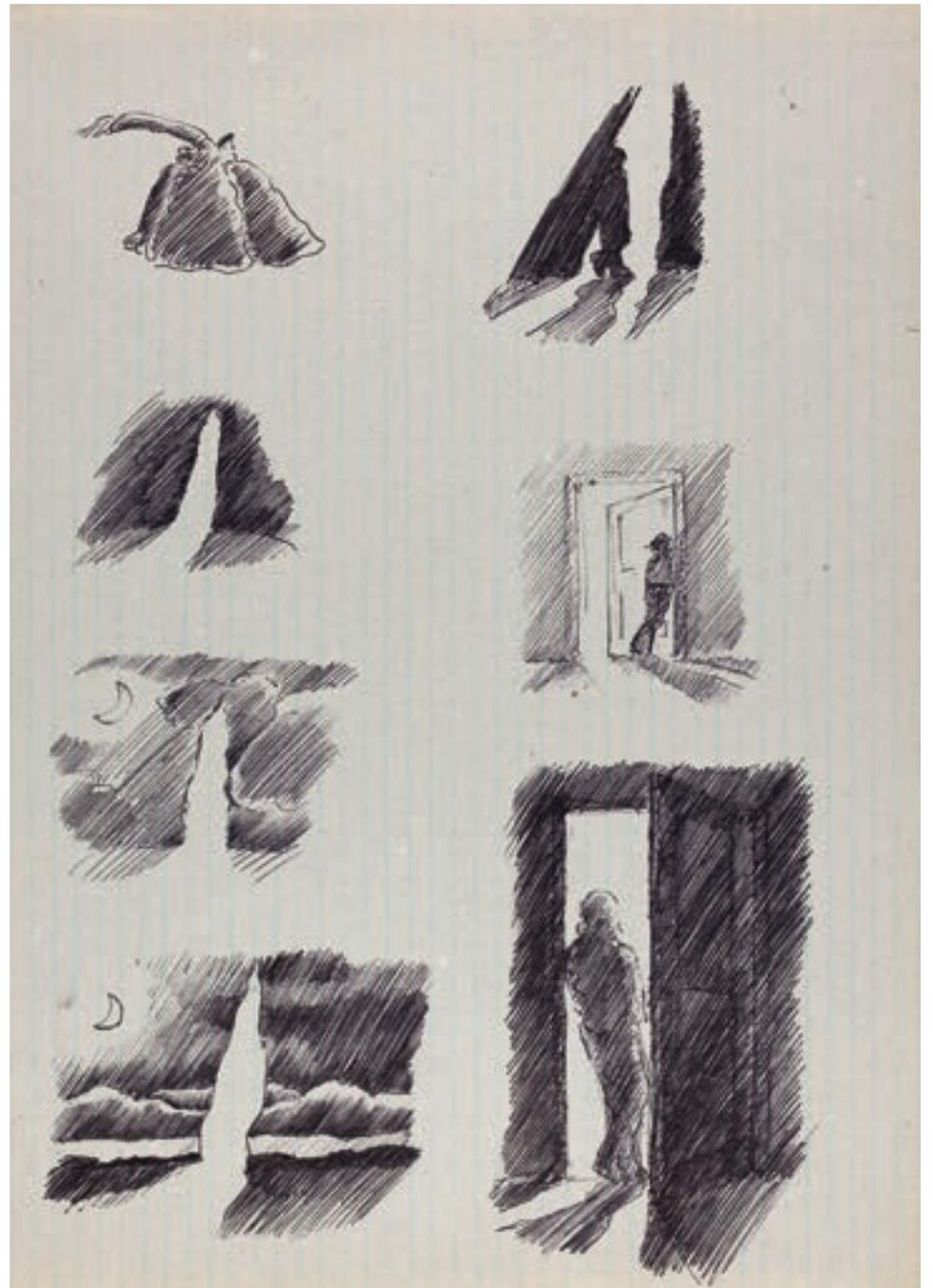
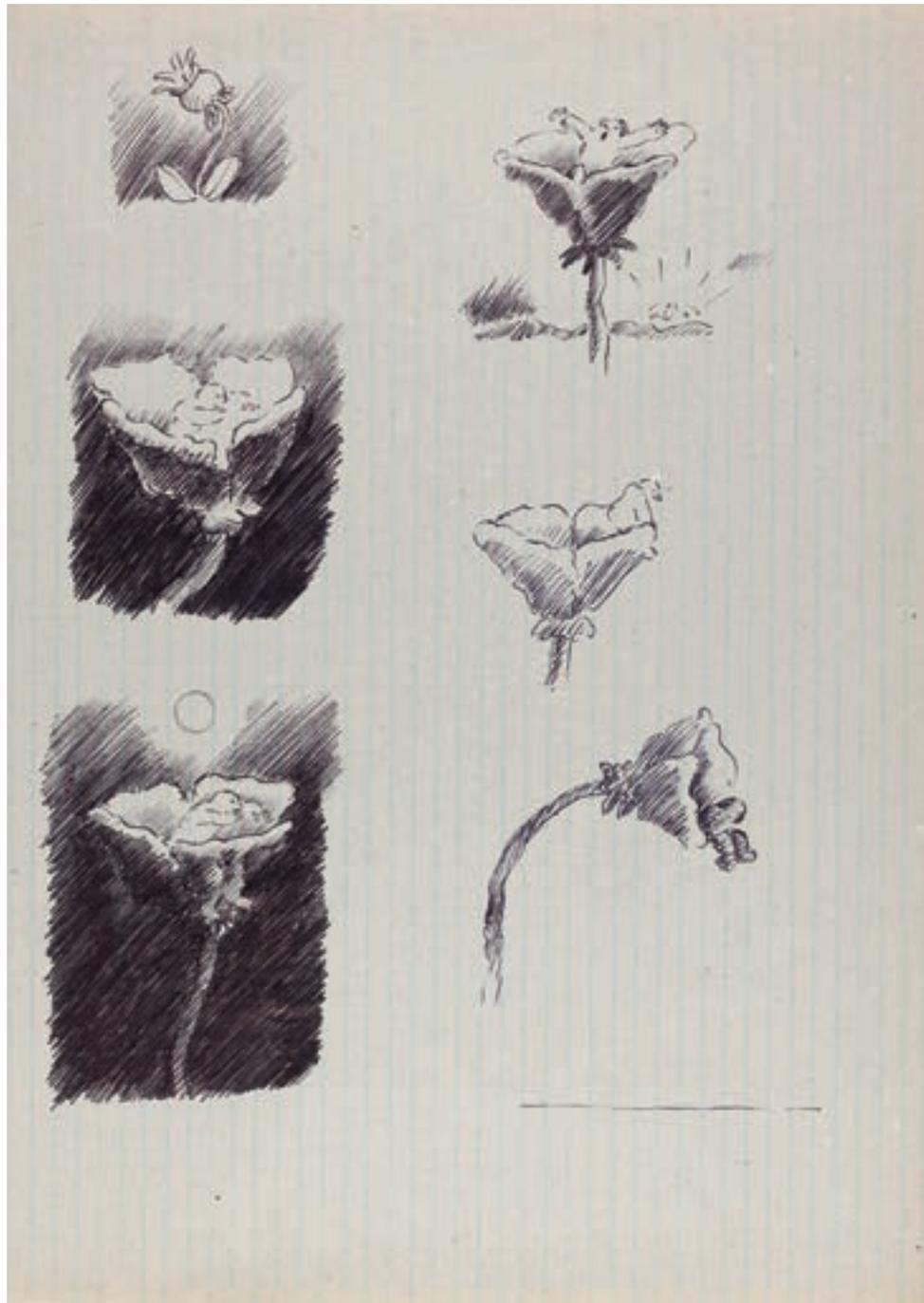


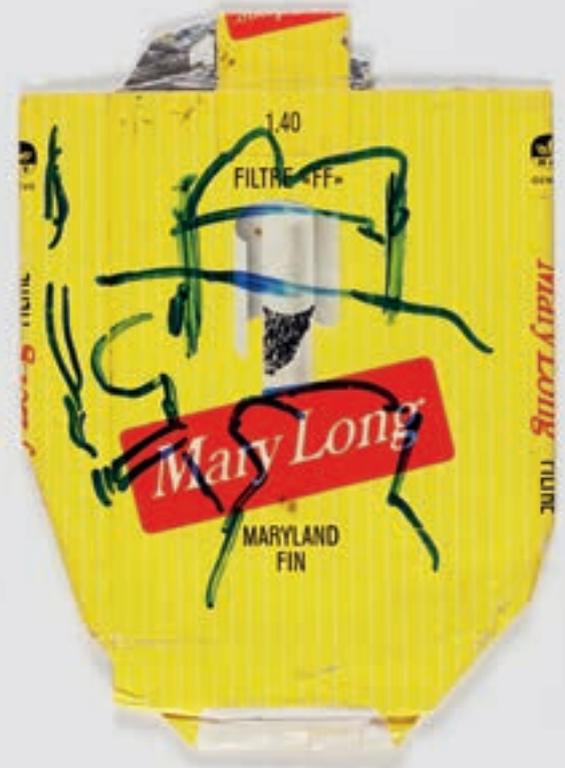














Journey of a Young Swiss Man By Hans Ulrich Obrist

Let's begin at the very beginning. I was born in May '68 in Zurich, but I have always thought that I was really born in May '85 when I entered the Fischli/Weiss studio for the first time. I had just seen their exhibition *Ein ruheloses Universum* at the Kunsthalle Basel, which emboldened me to ring their doorbell, and prompted a dialogue that never ended. I have organized my thoughts about David Weiss around experiences with him that I have never forgotten. The first is a journey into the past that David and I made to the vicarage where he grew up.

It was winter 2011, right after the Christmas holiday. David and I had just come down from the Engadin in the Swiss Alps, spent a week at the Hotel Castell, and were now in Zurich. He took me to his childhood house in Albisrieden, a very small, working-class neighborhood on the outskirts of the city. That day he talked a lot about his childhood and his very difficult relationship with his mother, who had a prodigious organizational talent and ran the household like a CEO. David told me that it would have been much better

if she had lived out her professional passion somewhere other than in the domestic environment. His father, a parish priest, was basically always hiding in his study—it is not hard to imagine him surrounded by his books. As a child, David believed that his father had a direct connection to God, which is probably why he never really felt the need to be religious himself. He had a normal life outside the home, playing football and riding his bicycle like other boys his age. Geography and history were his favorite subjects at school, but it was drawing that opened up a big space into which he could retreat and do something on his own. He spent many hours with his mother's school atlas, which provided him with all kinds of fantasies of traveling.

As he grew older, David admitted that he didn't really like sports, and felt—not exactly like an outsider, but that he was searching for something different. That led him at the age of sixteen to Kunstgewerbeschule (1963-64) in Zurich, which is an incredibly early age to go to art school. It is actually more of a school for the applied

arts, but for David it was a gathering place for other nonconformists in search of *la bohème*. And that is where he met Urs Lüthi. They listened to a lot of music—mostly jazz, because rock had not yet arrived from England. Eventually David left to study at the Kunstgewerbeschule in Basel (1964-65). There, he worked for the Austrian artist Alfred Gruber, from whom he learned all kinds of things: casting, forging, working with wood and stone—probably the first moment that David felt a connection to making art.

In 1966 he started to travel, which was essential for his collaborative work with Peter Fischli. Voluntary exile, as described by Alberto Giacometti,¹ is historically important for artists and curators from the landlocked European country that is circumscribed by the Alps yet remains the crossroads, at the center of the continent. When the writer Paul Nizon left Switzerland in 1970 he wrote *Diskurs in der Enge*, a book-length critique of what he called “a discourse of narrowness,” the idea that Switzerland lacked a metropolitan bricolage.

David left Switzerland with a suitcase filled with books: *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, *The Ginger Man*, *The Teachings of Don Juan*, and other required sixties reading. He went to London for the first time and immersed himself in the music scene. Then he went to Montreal to

work as a dishwasher for half a year in the restaurant at the Swiss Pavilion, back when world expos still mattered (as a matter of fact, Buckminster Fuller was involved in Montreal's Expo '67). With the money he earned he traveled to New York City, where he encountered minimalism. While he found minimal art's lack of connection to life in the streets strangely alienating, he valued its inherent refusal of and resistance to the status quo. David moved on to San Francisco and Berkeley, where he took his first LSD trip and met an entirely different community of artists, poets, and hippies. He hitchhiked to Mexico City, then took a boat to Veracruz, and finally, in 1967, left by cargo ship for Cuba, where the authorities detained him and put him on an East German freighter to Tangier. His journey continued to Algiers, Tunis, and finally Italy. This was really a Grand Tour, perhaps not in the traditional sense, but what is important was the feeling of having an endless amount of time—of, as Philippe Parreno and Pierre Huyghe like to say, “liberating time.”

Not unlike Sigmar Polke, who also went on long journeys that had a profound effect on his work, David entered a very feverish period of writing and drawing when he returned to Zurich. During this time he shared a studio with Urs Lüthi, became a founding member of the H9 commune, and opened a





macrobiotic store named Mr Natural, after the eponymous Robert Crumb character. Eventually he moved to Carona with some friends from Basel and his girlfriend at the time, Carmen Dübi. They lived rent-free and fixed up the house that belonged to the legendary Swiss surrealist artist Meret Oppenheim, where David made many of his early drawings and books. David always told me that his favorite was the *Regenbüchlein* ("little rain book") entitled *up and down town* (1975). It is a book of drawings about life in Zurich that he made and left out in the rain when he was living in Oppenheim's house—at least, that was the limited edition; there was also a regular edition that was not exposed to the rain. Although primarily a sculptor and photographer, Oppenheim also kept notebooks of drawings, and there are a number of interesting parallels with David's drawing practice.

During my first visit to the Fischli/Weiss studio in 1985, David told me to visit the artist Hugo Suter, who spent most of his life drawing Lake Zurich. Although Suter drew the lake, while David drew the rain, they both shared a fascination with how to depict water, and an obsession with a medium that is deployed with an economy of means. This sense of humbleness is, I think, very Swiss. Another important Swiss artist David respected immensely, and who influenced his sense of experimentation, was André

Thomkins, who developed a drawing technique where he floated a coat of lacquer on the surface of water.

According to John Berger, there are three kinds of drawings: those that study and question visible reality, those that function in the opposite direction by conjuring onto paper what is in the mind's eye, and those that rely on memory. The interesting thing about this is that all three are usually found together in a single drawing. Another way of saying this would be that each mark the artist makes on the paper is a stepping-stone to the next, until the artist has crossed the subject as though it were a river they have just navigated. And it is in this sense that reality and the project within the artist become inseparable.² This is certainly true for David's early drawings.

David and Peter met for the first time in 1978 at the Kontiki Bar, which was the center of Zurich's punk scene. There was no master plan: one project flowed intuitively into the next. They began work on the *Wurstserie* (*Sausage Series*) (1979), a group of ten color photographs of the quotidian. Both poignant and absurd, they were shown for the first time in the *Saus und Braus* (*Revel and Riot*) exhibition curated by Bice Curiger in 1980, which was the official coming-out of Zurich's underground art scene.

In late '79, David decided to move to the United States. He drove from New York to Los Angeles, where he fell ill with jaundice after a visit to Mexico and was forced to stay in bed for many long weeks. While bedridden, all he was able to do was read novels and watch reruns on TV. This experience turned out to be a happy one because David ended up with a very nuanced understanding of idiomatic English after his forced immersion into American popular culture. He could speak as easily about reruns of *I Love Lucy* as he could about the Swiss writer Robert Walser, one of his childhood heroes.



Weiss in costume in *Der geringste Widerstand* (*The Least Resistance*), 1981

Peter came to visit him in 1981 and, since they were in Hollywood, they decided to make a film. They were too shy to be in front of the camera so they rented two costumes, one of a rat and one of a bear. Without money or actors, but with the help of their Swiss friend Jürg V. Walther operating the camera, they filmed *Der geringste Widerstand* (*The*

Least Resistance) (1981), a satire of the art world and a spirited contemporary Dada film. They didn't return the costumes before leaving for Zurich and, as a matter of fact, the last frame of the film shows the Rat and the Bear boarding a plane to fly home. The Rat and the Bear famously became their alter egos.

All this is a very long introduction to say that it was David who inspired me to set out on my own Grand Tour. He had gone on his long journey when he was young and I felt I needed to do the same thing. And so, for about five years, between 1986 and 1991, I didn't really produce anything. I just traveled, visited artists, and asked questions. I traveled by night train because I couldn't afford hotels—I would always try to go to the next city at night.

And then, in 1991, I felt the time had come to curate my first exhibition. I wanted to do something intimate because I felt that the art world had grown so much, and that there was a kind of a danger that the very intimate art experience had maybe gone missing. Christian Boltanski had told me about a show that Harald Szeemann curated in 1974 in the apartment of his grandfather, who was a hairdresser in Bern, and about a show in 1986, *Chambres d'amis*, for which Jan Hoet commissioned more than fifty artists to make works in homes around Ghent. But still I didn't really know where to do it.

I was living in St. Gallen, Switzerland and studying with H. C. Binswanger at the Institute for Economics and Ecology at the University of St. Gallen. Peter and David came to visit me and found books everywhere, even stored in my oven. They felt that somehow the kitchen had to be liberated. The next week, they came back with this amazing quantity of packaged food. It was enough for a restaurant, over five kilograms of all the essentials—noodles, ketchup, jam—which they installed very carefully in what they called my kitchen altar. It reminded me of my childhood, when everything seemed larger than life. They joked that by transforming my nonkitchen into a functional one, the exhibition would produce reality, and they were right. I invited other artists to my kitchen, and the kitchen show became *World Soup*. The exhibition lasted for three months, had twenty-nine visitors, and became a kind of rumor.

Collecting and organizing ordinary things has always played a large role in the work of Fischli/Weiss. They have done more than anyone else to legitimize the overlooked things in everyday life, the stuff of art, to make art itself a possibility of the everyday. Over the nearly three decades that I knew him, David showed me that irony and sincerity cannot exist without each other—that, indeed, there *is* no sincerity like irony.



Fischli/Weiss's photograph of their installation at *World Soup* (*The Kitchen Show*), 1991

Notes

1. James Lord, *Giacometti: A Biography* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1985), 189.
2. John Berger, "Drawing is Discovery," August 29, 1953. In *New Statesman*, May 1, 2013. <http://www.newstatesman.com/culture/art-and-design/2013/05/john-berger-drawing-discovery>

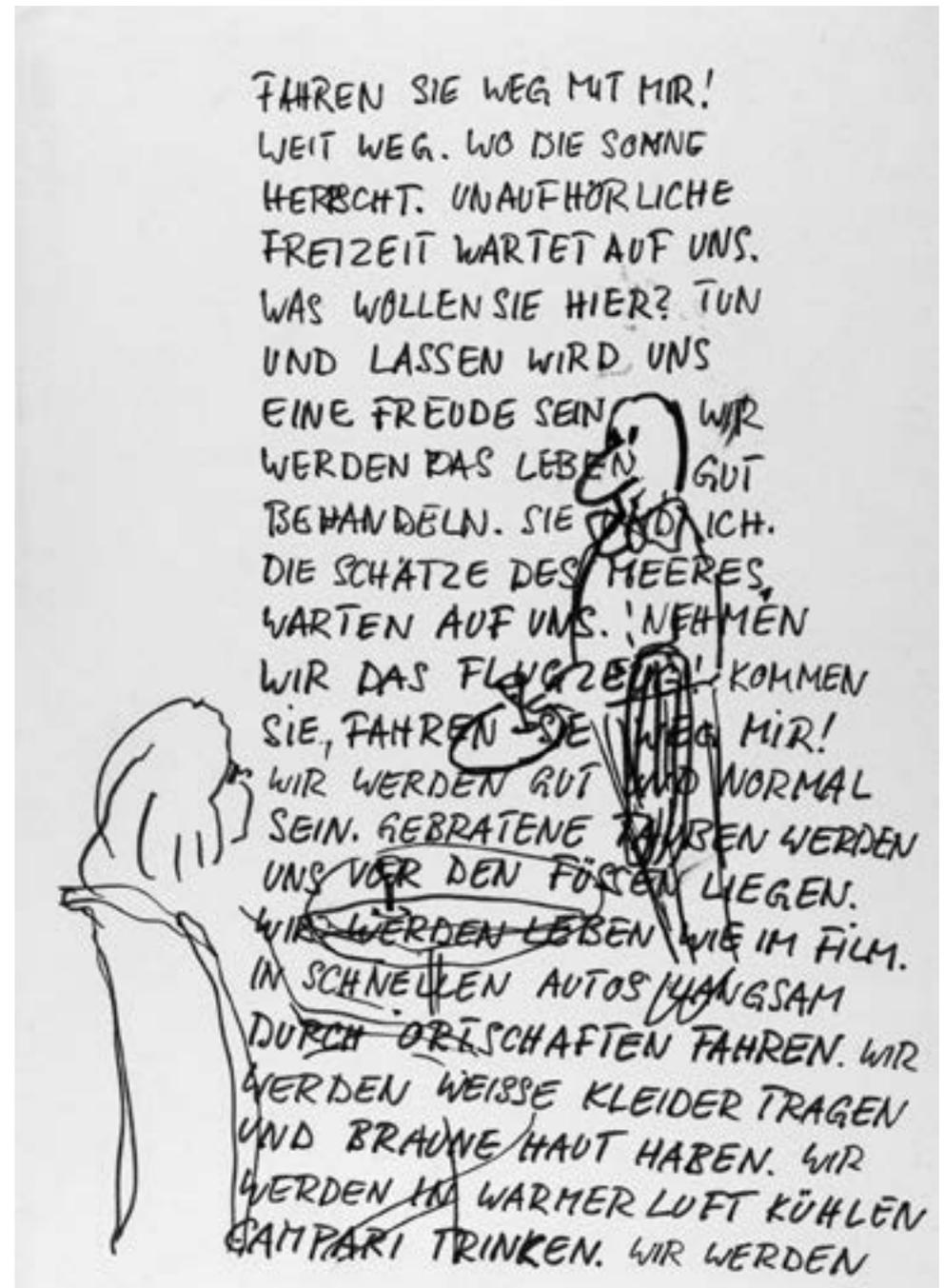
Image on page 206: David with his father Ernst Weiss, photographed by Peter Schweri, c. 1970



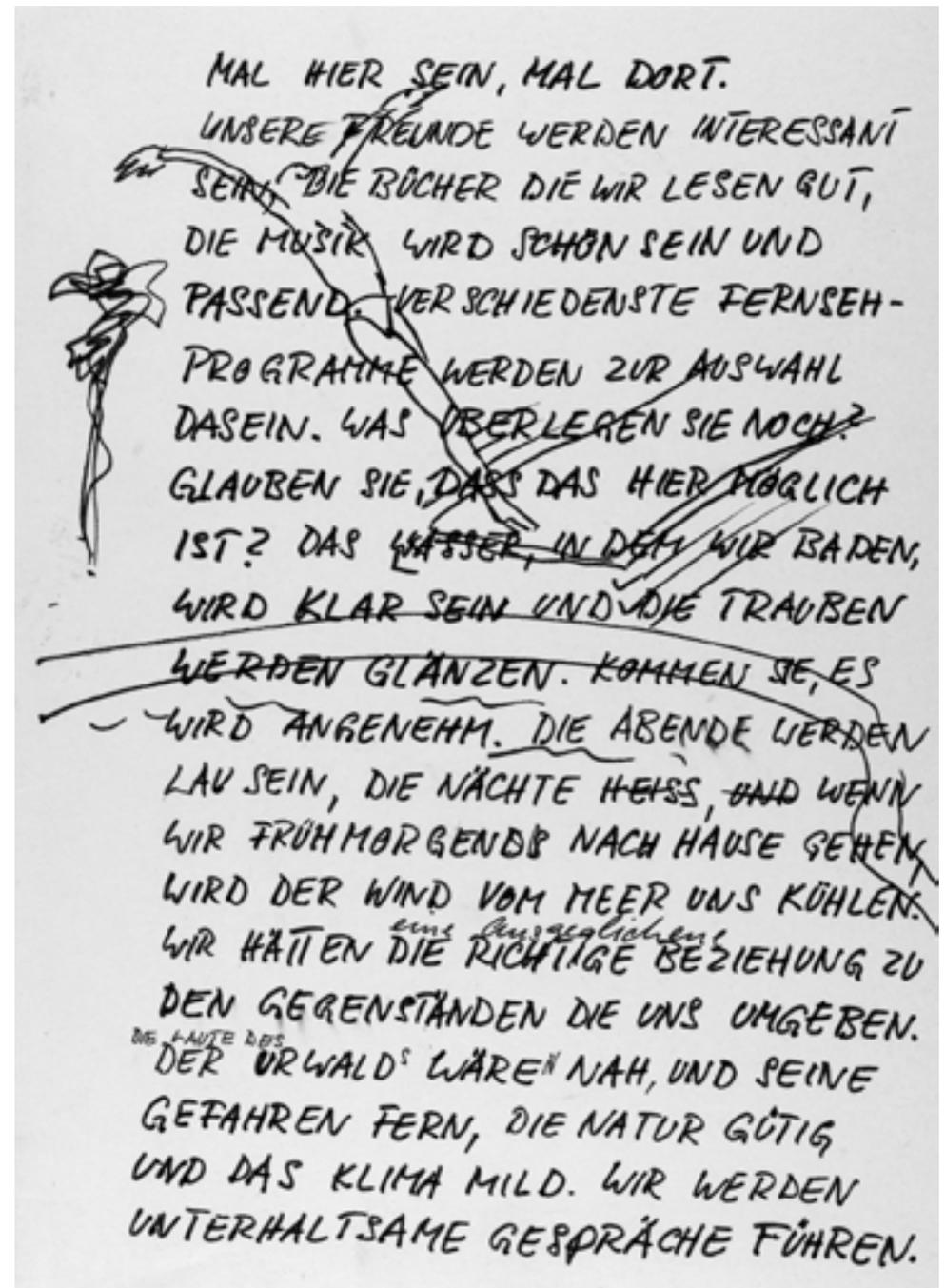
"Come Away With Me"

"FAHREN SIE
WEG MIT MIR"

Come away with me! Far away.
Where the sun reigns. Never-
ending leisure time awaits
us. What are you doing here?
Action and idleness will be
our delight. We will treat
life well. She and I. The
treasures of the ocean await
us. Let's take the airplane!
Come on! Come away with me!
We will be good and real.
Roast pigeon will be laid
at our feet. We will live as
if in a movie. Drive through
slow landscapes in fast cars.
We will sport white clothes
and have tanned skins. We
will drink cool Camparis
in warm breezes.



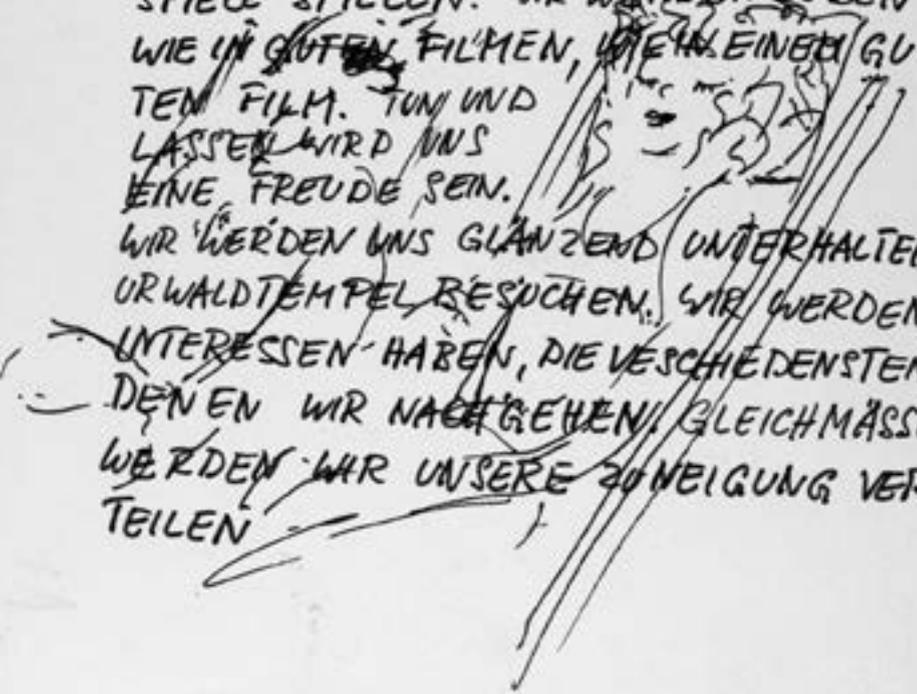
We will sometimes be here. Sometimes there. Our friends will be engaging, the books we read will be good, the music beautiful and fitting. All kinds of television programs will be available. What are you still considering? Do you believe that all this is possible here? The water we bathe in will be crystal clear and the grapes will glimmer. Come with me, it will be delightful. The evenings will be balmy, the nights steamy, and when we saunter home early in the morning, the ocean wind shall cool us. We will have the right (a balanced) relationship to the objects around us. (The sounds of) the jungle(s) near, and its dangers far. Nature will be benevolent and the climate mild. We will hold entertaining conversations.



MAL HIER SEIN, MAL DORT.
UNSERE FREUNDE WERDEN INTERESSANT
SEIN. DIE BÜCHER DIE WIR LESEN GUT,
DIE MUSIK WIRD SCHÖN SEIN UND
PASSEND. VERSCHIEDENSTE FERNSEH-
PROGRAMME WERDEN ZUR AUSWAHL
DASEIN. WAS ÜBERLEBEN SIE NOCH?
GLAUBEN SIE, DASS DAS HIER MÖGLICH
IST? DAS WASSER, IN DEM WIR BADEN,
WIRD KLAR SEIN UND DIE TRAUBEN
WERDEN GLÄNZEN. KOMMEN SIE, ES
WIRD ANGENEHM. DIE ABENDE WERDEN
LAU SEIN, DIE NÄCHTE HEISS, UND WENN
WIR FRÜHMORGENS NACH HAUSE GEHEN,
WIRD DER WIND VOM MEER UNS KÜHLEN.
WIR HÄTTE^{uns} DIE RICHTIGE ^{Ausgleichs-}BEZIEHUNG ZU
DEN GEGENSTÄNDEN DIE UNS UMGEBEN.
DIE LAUTE DES
DER URWALDS WÄREN NAH, UND SEINE
GEFAHREN FERN, DIE NATUR GÜTIG
UND DAS KLIMA MILD. WIR WERDEN
UNTERHALTSAME GESPRÄCHE FÜHREN.

Come away with me. Don't stay here. There's nothing here. None of this happens here. Let's take the airplane. Come with me. Far away we will be in the here and now. We will be ourselves, just us, if you will. Here and now and us, if you like. We will take light meals and play exhilarating games, we will live as in good movies, as if in a good film. Action and idleness will be our delight. We will entertain ourselves radiantly, visit jungle temples. We will have broad interests, the most various, which we shall pursue, and we shall share our affections equally.

FAHREN SIE WEG MIT MIR. BLEIBEN SIE NICHT HIER, HIER IST ES NICHT. ALL DAS GEHT NICHT HIER. WIR NEHMEN DAS FLUGZEUG. KOMMEN SIE. WEIT WEG WERDEN WIR HIER UND JETZT SEIN. WIR WERDEN UNS SELBST SEIN, NUR UNS, WENN SIE SO WOLLEN. HIER UND JETZT UND UNS, VON MIR AUS. LEICHTE SPEISEN WERDEN WIR ZU UNS NEHMEN UND ANREGENDE SPIELE SPIELEN. WIR WERDEN LEBEN WIE IN GUTEN FILMEN, WIE IN EINEM GUTEN FILM. TUN UND LASSEN WIRD UNS KEINE FREUDE SEIN. WIR WERDEN UNS GLÄNZEND UNTERHALTEN, URWALDTEMPEL BESUCHEN. WIR WERDEN INTERESSEN HABEN, DIE VERSCHIEDENSTEN, DENEN WIR NACHGEBEN. GLEICHMÄSSIG WERDEN WIR UNSERE ZONEIGUNG VERTEILEN



When he finished talking, she stood up and walked toward him. They hailed a taxi, drove to the airport, and took a plane. During the drive she spoke: our feelings will be atmospheric, flow into each other like mountain creeks. We will be good and real. Our thoughts will be as birds in the evening sky, our existence as the geckos in the sun. When they arrived at the foreign airport—she had slept for a while on the plane, he read a little—the sun was already falling. In the nearby (still unfamiliar) city, they found a hotel. They were lucky: on the one side they looked onto (enlivened with wholesome lights) the main street, where life pulsed and lights beamed and from which strange smells rose.

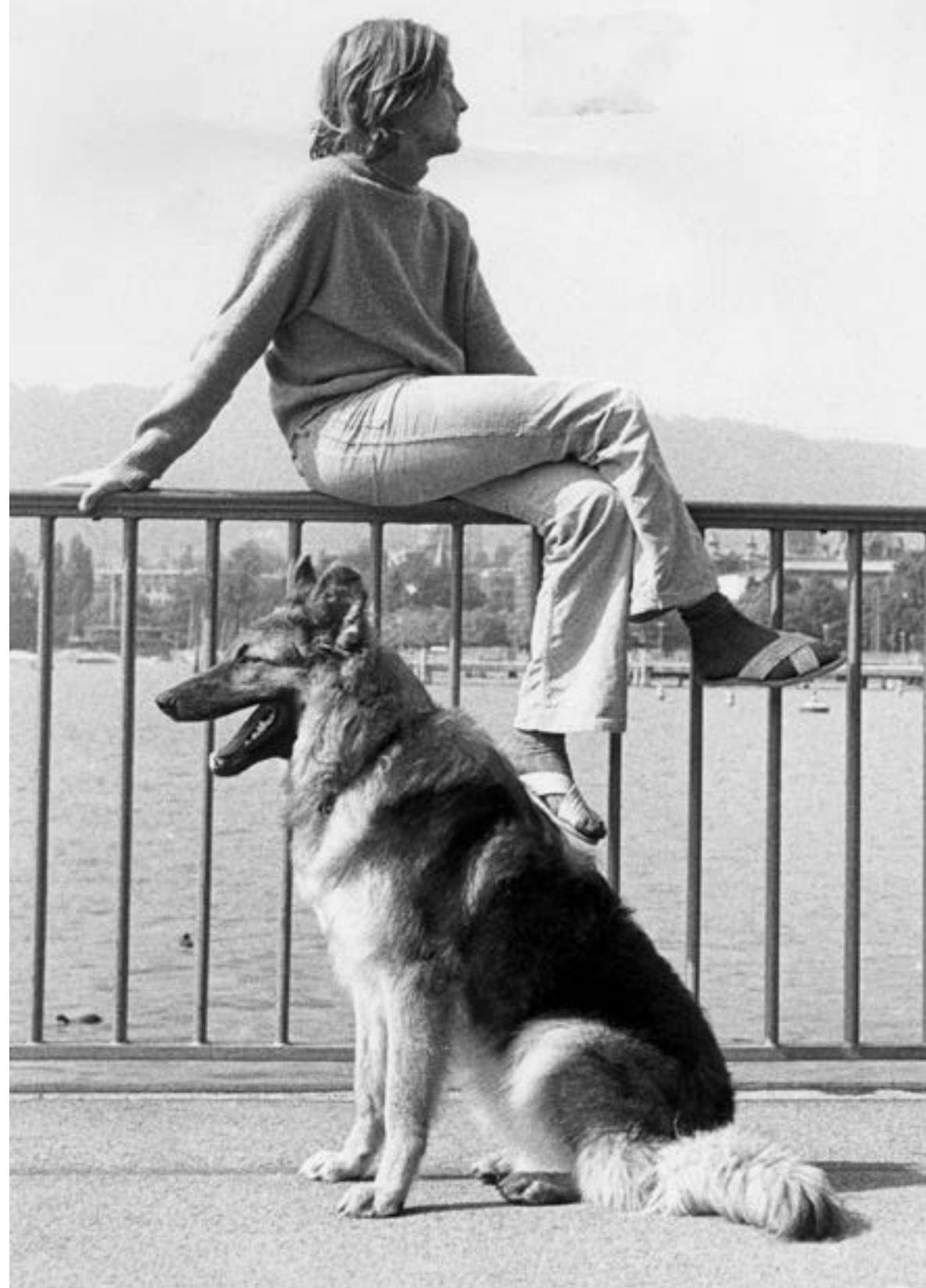
ALS ER FERTIG GESPROCHEN HATTE,
STAND SIE AUF UND GING AUF IHN ZU.
SIE GINGEN ZUM TAXI, FUHREN AUF DEN
FLUGHAFEN UND NAHMEN EIN FLUGZEUG.
AUF DER FAHRT SPRACH SIE: UNSERE
GEFÜHLE WERDEN STIMMUNGSVOLL SEIN,
INEINANDER FLEISSEN WIE ZWEI BERG-
BÄCHE. WIR WERDEN GUT SEIN UND NORMAL
UNSERE GEDANKEN WERDEN SEIN WIE VÖGEL
IM ABENDHIMMEL, UNSER DASEIN WIE DAS
DER EIDECHSEN IN DER SONNE.

ALS SIE AUF DEM FREMDLÄNDISCH WAREN DEN
FLUGHAFEN ANKAMEN - SIE HATTE ETWAS
BERECHNET IM FLUGZEUG, ER EIN RUSCHEN
BELEBEN WAR DIE SONNE SCHON AM UNTER-
GANGEN. IN DER IN DER NAHE LIEGENDEN STADT
NAHMEN SIE EIN HOTEL. SIE HATTEN GLÜCK:
AUF DER EINEN SEITE SAHEN SIE AUF DIE (BE-
LEBTE SICH MIT LICHTERN FOLLENDEN) HAUPT
STRASSE HINAUS, WO LEBEN PULSIERTE UND
LICHTER STRAHLTEN UND VON WO FREMDARTIGE
GERÜCHE AUFSTIEGEN. AUF DER ANDERN SEITE

On the other side they looked out upon the (roaring) ocean, and into the moving sky with its cloud landscape. The bed was large and soft and clean and it was wonderful to rest in. They both lay there, outstretched, sinking into the sounds of the sea and the street, soon even further away, deeper. He dreamed of a rose whose bloom opened as he looked at it. When he awoke she sang gently in the bathroom, showered and made herself up in front of the mirror. When she saw him in the mirror she laughed. He kissed her lightly on the shoulder.

(Previously unpublished text, date unknown, by David Weiss)





I'm standing up to my chest in saltwater. It reeks of spaghetti alle vongole; and from Japan—with all their crashing momentum, with their splendor, brimming with an abundance of metaphysical meaning, in a broad-front volley from Alaska all the way down to Chile—head-high, wet wave walls are arriving. Shortly, you feel the transcendence of creation and the magnitude of the vast distances—to better ride the wave, from beneath, at the foot of the wave, so to speak—otherwise, from time to time, it will thrash you something awful. Floundering and disoriented, you swirl through a kind of deep rinse, arbitrarily tossed back and forth, until at last your head is above water again—drawing breath and cursing are one and the same. No longer a plaything of the elements, you laugh wildly and excitedly because you are still alive. You quickly close your mouth; experience has taught you. The next wave wall is already approaching. You ride them more prudently when you are one with them, and one with their laws and energies, as you attempt to become the beneficiary of their profound powers. And, just beneath that looming crest of foam, you are shot toward America (or to Venice in my case). They call this bodysurfing. This, of course, is truly Zen—although we imagine this more as if the Zen approach is something like a melding of the individual with the rest of the world, or the I with all of its quirks. Who knows? Or perhaps it is the dissolution of the I while simultaneously perceiving the totality of the cosmos. At ease and with a deep serenity, such phrases arrive. Perhaps it's the geography of this place that gives you this feeling of being at the end of the world; it's an atmosphere that somewhat leans toward the intergalactic, that moves toward megalomania, this secret of the date line.



But, in the middle of a manicured afternoon—with an open-minded awareness, ears perked from somewhere inside like Anubis (the black dog whose head is the personification of alertness and whose long tail stretches across the plinth into primordial darkness)—I am attempting to enjoy bathing to boost

my senses—even though I am only a small fish, and likely on the wrong course. The others are far ahead of me; they're also at an advantage. How they stand there in the green-impelled water, in their superbly tanned selves. I, on the other hand, have more of a pinkish hue about

me. They've always been there, through the whole summer and at least for one generation. Although their hair is bleached blond, I share those same blue eyes, the same ones that are now gawking at them. They bathe in my direct proximity. They are well-built and, hence, unblemished warriors. It's mostly when they appear in their sparse herds that they give off something irritating, there's a dull racial congruity, something sci-fi. After a lengthy exodus through space and time, so to speak, they finally discovered this thinly settled strip of land in the subtropics on the edge of the world and created this amusing game with the waves. Here, the bleached-hair lads scatter and disperse for their own ulterior purposes, root around like maggots wiggling on the beach, or, to put it bluntly, they admire themselves and their sun god with the awareness of modest mussels. Here's the motto: *Warm weather has arrived—no more winter and a deep-seated restructuring of the realm of the gods toward the sunshine is to be expected or is already on its way.* Just yesterday at a party, I discovered that the house where Kennedy and Monroe had intimate relations is not far from here. The entire area of town is called Tarzana in honor of that energetic analphabet from the jungle who lived by instinct, spoke several animal languages, and fought the good fight. And, not to forget, in Los Angeles City Hall,



employed in the editorial offices of the *Daily Planet*, a certain Clark Kent who frequently flung himself from the window as god of thieves and journalists (Mercury), and who, in flight, came to be known as Superman. From time to time, you will see other almost-gods in their relevant neighborhoods while shopping.

But I digress. Apparently I still stand in the water with a few tireless Germanic types whom the ocean is expecting will wait patiently for the final wave. They wear black wetsuits. I don't. I freeze and I wade until the story continues. As if drunk, I limp through the shallows past a group of shiny and wet black boys to my towel. The Mexican family is packing up. Strangely, a yearning of sorts appears to oppress them, and they remind me of Italians—perhaps because they come with the entire family, with little collapsible chairs and something to eat, or perhaps because there is always an easily recognizable plump mother figure sitting quietly at the center of the maelstrom. Close by there's a reclining couple who,

with their chic accessories, are almost certainly French. Despite their elegance, there's something imported about their countenance. Many, you can read from their postures, are here simply to soak up the rays. From time to time a helicopter hovers over the scene: they are the flying lifeguards, we know them from their appearances on television. Magnificent lads, frequently entangled in some lifesaving act: as scuba divers or, for example, leaping out of the chopper and running across the surface of the water after a car where a fearful girl, heaving with her last breaths, is snatched from the clutches of the deathly deluge at the very last second and barely survives.

A young Asian woman runs up the beach; perhaps she's going all the way to Santa Monica, where the skyscrapers can barely be seen for all the smog. In general there are several people dashing about; for example, one who looks like an intellectual or an office worker is running down the beach. Over there, in the south and also in the smog, approximately every three minutes an international airplane takes off. You can't hear them, they're too far away, but they come and go from that bustling LAX airport, which I know all too well. Somewhere a Frisbee whizzes through the air. A dog darts half-heartedly into the water, and the sun hovers like a giant red . . . no, I won't write that, something is holding me back. Though by no means is it stupid, but rather beautiful. Very slowly, evening descends and I decide to depart.

* * *

Once I was on the beach at night. I was heavily intoxicated and the journey there was quite a psychedelic experience. My whole being melded with the car and the street and the sparks of light that flew toward me. Fischli was there too with the others at the party. He plunked straight into the ocean along with his trouser cuffs. A little yapping dog ran halfway toward us. He probably belonged to the beach fire behind. You're not really supposed to be there at nighttime: at night the beach turns into a death zone where dimly lit tracks of victims and their murderers tragically crisscross.

I plod across the sand, over a short patch of grass, and come to Venice Boardwalk, a veritable promenade where there is an insane turbulence and chaos. America ends here and somehow frays here and not a soul has attempted to bring a semblance of architectural grace to frame these magnificent sunsets and their wild Pacific Ocean (as has been achieved by the exploitative class in Europe with their seaside resorts and hotels). There are only low,

unimposing houses or shacks facing the vast western front. Yet it must be said that a little further inland you can witness serpentine canals and sprawling bridges to rival those of the other Venice. Eventually, the powers that be



considered some of the canals unnecessary and filled them in again. Either way, this is how the area got its name. But on Venice's Boardwalk, America, in another sense, comes together again: celebrated, long-legged, on wheels, with headphones, radios, bicycles, the joggers, the dogs, the palmists, discos, artisans, and the elderly. They dance, wheel

about, stroll, and reflect. A group of seriously buzzed men are banging bongos, tapping a tabla. One is thumping a bucket. The joggers wear exclusive outfits. Everyone on the go or in motion has his or her own headband, gloves, and kneepads. Almost all races and classes are present as well as various mixed types: for example, a cowboy/hippy dude, a bodybuilding/disco guy. Seriously, what do I know. It also goes without saying that the dedicated and successful Californian conformist is ever-present and finds it delightful to look like he or she stepped straight out of a glossy ad. One old white-haired black man plays and croons the blues, which sends me back to the Southern states—for example, Louisiana—until your back starts to smart from the heft of all the cotton fields. Further on, there's a white guy with faded tattoos on his upper arm. He's also strumming the guitar. He has a great tuft of curly hair, reddish lamb-chop sideburns, and wears a checked lumberjack shirt and blue jeans. He sings about a lonesome crossing of the continent. You can almost hear the grinding wheels of the empty boxcar on the tracks. A black guy with a knitted cap is playing the saxophone with his eyes shut. If you close your own eyes, you're suddenly standing with him in the South Bronx in a cellar as someone passes by with a boom box: *Inside out, boy you turn me, upside down . . .* A blond girl with a harp sits on the edge of the boardwalk and sings through a portable amplifier. On another spot, a young man with a high voice is crooning the newest songs from the radio. He deftly accompanies himself with a vibraphone and adjusts the reverb with his foot. He's playing those decidedly saccharine songs that make California seem a crazy place of excess. Much that is homemade and was developed over the last ten years is for sale here. On mini-islands of fragrance there are hot dogs, tacos, sweet potato pies, falafel, and eggrolls.

But none of this interests me. I walk to my car and drive a few blocks north, then take the right behind Main Street. There's a successful shop here with untainted fare and I am dying for a yogurt and one of those sweet treats with nuts, sesame seeds, figs, or honey. It's pleasant in the locale,



relaxing and somehow calming. The place is furnished in an abundance of wood and both customers and the owner seem to be in agreement about the value of all this ambience. The vegetables make a good impression too, and I buy a salad. It doesn't leave a bad taste in the mouth: I too was once part owner of such an enterprise.

As I'm standing outside with my sticky Danish pastry (it was overpriced, but certainly appears to be handmade and truly dripping in honey—and there's that problem with the yogurt container, which is the same all over the world if you've no spoon but want to eat the rest) the question about which way I'm to drive home arises: there are three possible routes on my shortlist.

I'd be home quickest on the freeway. On the other hand, that is the longest route. I could drive smoothly, line up all snug in the unity of the stream of rush-hour traffic—skillfully switch lanes a couple of times with piped-in music and atmosphere and the like—but the stretch is not long enough for all that. I would still eventually have to drive up Fairfax. I took Venice Boulevard on the way in. Even for LA it's a terribly wide street, six lanes, straight as an arrow, and from time to time there's a middle lane that reminds you of the desert that once ran this place. There's nothing to write home about along this street: low-lying houses, electric cables, the occasional palm tree—nothing really intense except a five-story building (which I discovered once at night due to the fact that the empty, glass-clad stairwell was lit up from the inside like some kind of modernist enigma). Visually there is little here apart from the gigantic sky. The boulevard comes into its own at midday, when it's hot and the light is unbelievably bright. It becomes a runway tailored to the tropics, and you can't move without sunglasses.

I decide to take the artsy Pico Boulevard. Possibly because it takes the longest until I'm home. At first, there's a real Pacific atmosphere embodied by the people

going home or to their cars in bathing suits, on foot or on skateboards. After crossing the Santa Monica Freeway, traces of the beach begin to vanish. Now comes that stretch which surprises due to the fact that it looks like any old dump in America: a motley hodgepodge of billboards, the cables, and their grid in the heavens, the generous use of space, architecture from the '50s, but also the '60s and '70s, still in use, and we accept it as belonging to the present. Beside me, at a red light, a woman stops her car: alone, stunning, on the move. She taps a rhythm on her steering wheel that's in sync with what's on my own radio. It appears we're listening to the same station: KLA, "the station where LA remembers." Along with deep, hot, seductive nightclub music, they play silky-sweet songs from the golden years—when it still was important, beautiful, or terrifying to come to terms with everything, when you were sixteen. The woman in the car turns and looks straight through me. Naturally I also don't show I'm observing her or realize what she's doing. She takes off when the light turns green.



The neighborhood has changed. On each side of the street there are old homes: delicate, minimalist, art deco buildings that are somewhat pompous and self-conscious. They have become futuristic remnants of the past that remind you of that Southern Californian free style that once existed, something like a coherent awareness of a modern aesthetic.

To the right, a park—a flash of tenuously animated golfing range. I have to quickly hook a left where it ends. I glance over for an instant and am generally surprised to see large East Coast townhouses from the nineteenth century, as you remember them from early movies. Beside them on a small incline is an old-fashioned tram station. You know this suburb as a backdrop for 20th Century Fox Studios. Admittedly this backdrop has a far more profound meaning for Los Angeles. You can just drive up and view it from your car. Naturally, I seldom do.

We reach the top of the rise. To the left you can see over the skyscrapers, gathered there for some obscure reason, known as Century City. The music in the car is pleasing, and I'm on time. I know this because the sun is shining straight and perpendicular into my rearview



mirror. The sky behind me is a hue of splendid colors above the dark silhouettes of palm trees and billboards. Beneath lies another part of Los Angeles, spread out and dipped in gold. As you drive down into this delightful view you catch a profusion of stately cars, which means, of course, that you're driving along the southern edge of Beverly Hills. In an instant, the words *deli* and *kosher* are to be seen everywhere. There is a glut of candleholders and Stars of David. Synagogues line the streets. On one billboard a slim woman is kneeling over the houses in the eastern evening sky. Her upright body forms

a kind of suspension bridge supported by her arms. She's wearing a scanty slip and her breasts pop out as if they were in pockets or bags. She is flawlessly tanned and glances and smirks. Were a living woman to look at me in that fashion, I would know she wanted something from me—something very personal, very masculine. Because it's so gorgeous, the glow, which is now taking on the colors of the accumulating neon lights, instead of taking a turn as I should, I drive straight on. In other words: in this dream state I'm in, I completely lose track. When I finally turn into my street it has turned dark between the houses, and in the living rooms of the neighborhood the first TVs are flickering.

It's twenty past seven. On Channel 5 it's time for my favorite show about a half-Chinese man who travels through the Wild West without weapons and in his bare feet. It's on daily between seven and eight. Fischli made fun of me when I told him that I am something like that guy. Of course, I don't mean we look alike or that I act like Caine (that's what he's called), but you can also be like someone in your thoughts. And there are others who are just like me; who, in other words, would act as I do in similar circumstances. At the moment, I like Caine the best. He is supposedly searching for his brother. He doesn't eat meat; rather, he nourishes himself from the fruits of the earth, much of the time with root vegetables, and has a good knowledge of herbs with which he heals the wounded who are (I know this from all the Westerns) left lying around all over the place (along with the unburied dead). He also seeks harmony with peace and nature. It's for that reason that he only has a few scrapes with the Indians—who have similar views. Most of his difficulties come from his dealings with immigrant Europeans who take the form of bad cowboys and have

asocial ways. One knows this whole rotten pack. We constantly want to grab him by the collar, mostly because he always puts himself at risk with his do-gooding, but also because there's a bounty on his head. Back in China (I probably missed the episode) he murdered a tyrant. He beats the hotheaded bandits over and over—and with his bare hands. These are his deadly kung fu weapons. He has this expertise because already as a young boy



(we discover this in flashbacks) he was taken in—his head was shaved and he was outfitted with the appropriate attire—by a wise old man from a Buddhist sect. They called Caine Grasshopper and taught him to fight for all he was worth. He also continuously poses questions about life and the world, questions we would also like to have answered.

In difficult circumstances, in his mind's eye, he goes back to his master, and we with him. There, the old man shares his wisdom to help Caine make the right decisions: whether, for example, he should fight the twenty-strong group of scoundrels or whether this would be too much and whether he should teach them the lesson later, toward the end of the episode. He never fights for the hell of it or just for the sake of it. He always questions his conscience, quite often to the consternation of the good settlers, who see a dreamer or a fool in this softhearted, humble man, rather than a dashing fighter. Frequently, Caine shares his profound wisdom, but never without being asked first.

Today Caine accompanies an old photographer who wants to capture a waterfall, or rather the waterfall's cloud of spray, which is the embodiment of the spirit of a woman who dwells there. In this episode, Caine has to protect the photographer from an Indian whose religion does not permit images of the sacred to be taken. Meanwhile, Caine also has to battle with someone who has been tracking him from China, a man who fights with the same weapons, but whose heart is less pure and who is thus significantly less successful. The tracker pays with his death. The Indian believes that the spirit is trapped in the photograph—we chuckle at such refreshing naïveté—but Caine, after having to thrash the Indian something dreadful in order to prevent a murder, enlightens the man by burning the photo in front of him without fear or consequences.



On another channel, there's a rather unusual documentary about painting, which I skip over due to a deluge of commercials; I stumble upon a report on workaholics (which, apart from the unfathomable gaiety of the word itself, interests me little yet is somehow unsettling). On Channel 2, I discover that Connie Chung

is back from her holidays. As far as I can tell, she spent nearly two weeks in Hawaii. When I was ill, she was always on the news—which I most enjoyed when she was presenting. Did she gain weight? Jenny also thinks that she's not doing so well. She sees it in her eyes. She is a competent and charming Chinese woman who combines warmth and objectivity, and she has a subtle, gleeful, almost a little cheeky smile—which you only realize after thinking about it. As a child she was surely amusing, alert, and aware. Today she is a worldly woman with a grand international flair. You can see it when she fearlessly stares straight into the camera to report the newest, perhaps most gruesome things from the world of news.

In the meantime, I have chopped up, washed, tossed, and eaten that healthy salad. The evening can now take a new turn.

—David Weiss

(Translation of a self-published text, date unknown)



Maciste's Daily Curds and Whey

By David Weiss

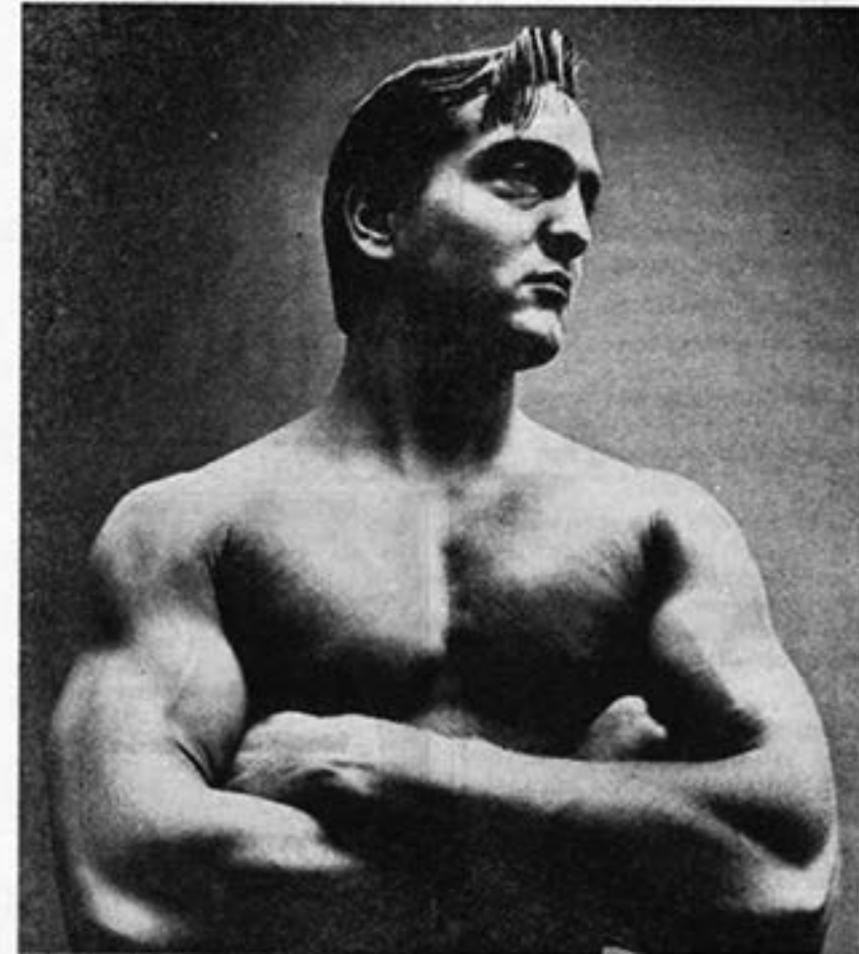
He's eighteen years old and alone, awkward, gawky, and clumsy. That makes him insecure. He's also pale and small and shy. Supermen, heroes, seducers, and secret agents, he believes, are self-confident, strong, and brawny: he would like to be one of them.

Three times weekly he visits the weight-training center, drinks a liter of milk a day, eats a lot of yogurt, curds, cheese, and above all, a great quantity of meat. The training is tough, but you get used to it; you even get used to the pungency of that masculine, sweaty fragrance that spreads throughout the whole bodybuilding institute. He regularly measures his progress: within three months the diameter of his upper arms has increased by 5 centimeters, and 10 centimeters around his chest. The change is certainly noticeable, but if he were to give up now, his muscles would shrink even more quickly than they grew. So he keeps on lifting even though his muscles are not growing as quickly as before. Still, it bothers him little; he's starting to enjoy himself, above all when he stands in front of the mirror—which is never missing

in any decent bodybuilding institute—lifting weights.

THE STRAIGHT AND NARROW

Mr. Weider is delighted with him too. In an open letter, the American was also referring to him, when he wrote: "I should like to shake the hand of every one of you and welcome you into the world of bodybuilding." Mr. Weider, of course, has a reason to shake the hands of all his friends in the world of weight training and welcome them into the fold—as the true father of modern male body awareness and director of a multinational corporation which promotes the development of muscles, he earns rather well on each and every one of them. From humble dishwasher (what American has never washed dishes?) he hauled himself up the ladder: today "the Weider Corporation spans the globe." He has written and placed over sixty magazine articles to serve the cause of muscular beauty: offering complete home studios from just 625 Swiss francs, to books and protein shakes, to 1½-pound dumbbell weights for a mere 2 francs. Mr. Weider knows of what he speaks when he talks of "The World of Body



Mass aller Dinge: der männliche Körper

Photos: P. Schumacher

Er ist achtzehn Jahre alt und einsam, ungeschickt, linkisch und t äppisch. Das macht ihn unsicher. Dazu ist er bleich und schmal und scheu. Supermänner, Helden, Verführer und Agenten, das weiss er, sind selbstsicher, stark und breit; so möchte er sein.

Dreimal wöchentlich besucht er ein Kraftsportzentrum, trinkt einen Liter Milch pro Tag, isst viel Joghurt, Speisequark, Käse und vor allem sehr viel Fleisch. Das Training ist hart, aber man gewöhnt sich daran, auch an die männlich herbe Schweißduftnote, die sich durch die Lokalisation des Body-Buil-

Kraftsportfreunde, es muss einmal gesagt werden: es gibt nicht wenige, die sich abschätzig über Body-Building äussern, sei es aus Eifersucht oder Unwissenheit. Wer mehr wissen will, lese die Interviews mit den Berufsmuskelmännern, die täglich (und schon jahrelang, was sie aber verschweigen) hart «an sich arbeiten», diese oder jene Hanteln, Proteinpräparate und Nahrungszusätze benutzen und das betonen.

Wenn es heute Männer gibt, deren Oberarme über 55 cm messen, so haben wir das Mr. Weider zu verdanken. Als

Durch Aske

Mac

seiner geschickten St frage die Schuld f des Muskelkultes auf trugen seine Traini sentliches dazu bei, einer sagenhaften Fo nervolk zu tragen, d masse aus der Antik erreichbar schienen.

Dass es den Han dem vielgeäusserten sundheit, Kraft und lung der Muskeln u oder Männlichkeit die Tatsache, dass

Building"; he personally built up and helped invent this world. And truly: it is a small world in and of itself, with trade journals, its own star-studded paradise, its science and independent worldview. And in the trade literature, you can read that practitioners of the power sport not only feel "comfortable on the inside" but also "know that they are socially and commercially on the straight and narrow."

Insecure athletes who struggled against criticism were comforted by an article entitled, "Is Bodybuilding Shallow?" In the piece, the following was conveyed: "Yes, musclemen and weight-training enthusiasts, it has to be said once: there are no small number of individuals who dismiss bodybuilding out of jealousy or ignorance." He who wishes to know more should read these interviews with professional musclemen who "work on themselves daily" (even for years—though they keep this very close to their chests), use this or that type of weight, who use protein shakes and supplements and are outspoken about it.

If there are men today who have upper arms that measure over 55 cm, they should thank Mr. Weider. It was he who first attempted to train every single muscle independently from the other in his own body. With this method, the rest of the body does not fatigue; above all this method has the advantage that bulk increases only in desired areas.

The much-heard reproach that large muscle mass is merely engorged but has no real strength is not quite true. Two training methods allow the weight-training athlete to work toward building up either "strength" or "endurance." With small exercises using heavy weights one can achieve strong muscles; if the exercise is repeated several times, the muscles will become firmer. However, these strong musclemen are not to be found among the world's most successful strongmen, weightlifters, and wrestlers.

In an article entitled, "Has the Greek Ideal of Beauty Been Overtaken?" the reader discovers that there are "two quite different ideals," those of "the beauty of the body" and "the beauty of the athlete." "An intellectual would most likely lean toward a harmony of body forms worthy of the ancients; a young athlete, on the other hand, intoxicated in the vitality of our time, will naturally pursue the athletic ideal."

The Greek ideal of beauty was a mathematical mean unseen within nature. The body's harmony found its basis in the ancient mathematical laws that had mystical precedents. And the Greeks, too, reached further back to the ancient Egyptians who perceived man as the sum of all things. A man's height was eighteen fists; the distance from middle finger to middle finger with arms outstretched was precisely the same length as a piece of cord.

Pythagoras is said to have calculated the body mass of Hercules on the basis of the 600-foot-long running track of the stadium near Zeus's Olympus. The track was personally measured by Hercules with his 600 Herculean feet and therefore somewhat longer. Right up to the Middle Ages attempts were made to measure the ideal proportions of man (strangely, it was always the male body).

It would be an oversight to saddle Mr. Weider (and his clever manipulation of the demand for bodybuilding products) with the blame for the flourishing art of the muscle cult. Certainly his training methods significantly influenced the desire for an incredible masculine form. The ancients' ideal body form now seems attainable for the average Joe.

That the bodybuilder (aside from his much-professed wish for good health, superior strength, and optimal muscle development) is more concerned with the concept of ideal beauty or ideal masculinity is evident in the fact that he rarely takes his gluteal muscles into consideration during training; the development of this muscle would tarnish the ideal. The greatest interest in the ancient body form is among the Anglo-Saxon and Germanic countries—which is also where women are the most emancipated and the male role as protector has lost its sway. In Germany, where men in illustrated magazine articles have to endure themselves, in

articles where questions are raised whether German men are studmuffins, over 500,000 of them train "with the purpose of bodybuilding!"

With this extensive training our godlike muscle-boys toss out the real reason for their weightlifting: masculinity. Many develop an almost feminine relationship with their bodies, and a nonmasculine narcissism arises that manifests itself in their poses and their almost dainty body exhibitionism. Ironically, in striving for greater masculinity, feminine traits take hold.

THE SPECIAL CASE OF SWITZERLAND

It is a relief when one realizes that even the thorny road of body-worship that comes with prosperity—it leads over the wooden floor of body culture—is paved with common sense in Switzerland. No one, not even the advanced bodybuilder, would readily admit that he sacrifices two, three, or more hours weekly for a more attractive body. Narcissism is not in demand, even as excessive muscle mass. In Hercules and Maciste films, where star athletes such as Gordon Scott and Steve Reeves play lead roles, it is still tolerated. As figures of myth, fairy tale, and legend, they enjoy the privilege of being supernatural or godlike; additionally, more leeway is given because these films and their stars are foreign. Someone

once imagined that there might be a film in which the hero with his Swiss-German emotional bursts would rip trees from the earth and seduce damsels with his cries of "Hoppla!" Impossible: a Mr. Switzerland would be too much of an insulting blow to the rosy face of Swiss propriety; muscle development as an end in itself (that doesn't serve a greater purpose such as Swiss flag-waving championships, Alpine wrestling [Hosenlupf], or any other useful and admirable activity) is something, well—indecent. Due to this deep-seated aversion toward an ideal beauty, a Swiss newspaper has yet to host a Mr. Helvetia competition.

With all this training, comrades of bodybuilding in Switzerland expect health and fitness above all as compensation for the desk-bound office day. A modern fitness center in Zurich will count on this. In their advertising, the fitness institute will forego (in complete contrast to the more traditional bodybuilding advertisements in the United States and Germany) images of oiled star athletes, and rather aim for the softest and most sensitive spot in the Swiss conscience: the stomach—precisely where laziness and gluttony can be measured in concrete numbers and centimeters. This complicated procedure, the transformation of the abstract into matter, sends shivers down the Swiss spine.

"Do something for your body!" sounds almost liberating and has nothing to do with supermen or even your above-average person; it sounds as healthy and sensible as Kneipp sandals and granola. The success of this kind of advertising has been clearly proven. A Swiss person is constantly being nudged toward the fitness center by his conscience, by his doctor, and by the mass media. Here something idiosyncratic is exposed: at the very heart of this mad dash, the Middle Ages reach out their fingers and prove that the body's well-being has far more to do with conscience than actual fitness training per se. Even at the threshold of space exploration, there are few Swiss people who believe in indulgence. At 300 Swiss francs, they purchase a membership for building their bodies and maintaining a clear conscience. The manager of one institute expresses himself even more clearly: "We earn the most from those who purchase an annual membership and never come to the fitness center at all."

(Translation of an article originally published as "Macistes täglicher Speisequark" in *Die Weltwoche*, nr. 1860, July 4, 1969)



kese und Protein zum vollkommenen Body-Building-Glück:

cistes täglicher Speisequark

n Steuerung der Nach- für das Aufblühen aufbürden. Sicher aber rainingsmethoden Wei- bei, den Wunsch nach Form auch ins Män- n, da jetzt die Körper- antike für jeden Mann en.

Hantelsportlern neben ten Wunsch nach Ge- und optimaler Entwick- in um ein Schönheits- eitsideal geht, beweist as die Gesüssmuskeln im berücksichtigt wer-

Befätigung dient, ist etwas Unanständiges. Aufgrund dieser tiefsitzenden Abneigung gegen ideale Schönheit hat selbst eine schweizerische Tageszeitung noch keine Mr.-Helvetia-Wahlen durchgeführt.

Die Freunde des Kraftsports in der Schweiz versprechen sich denn vom Training vor allem Gesundheit und Fitsein, einen Ausgleich zur täglich abgessenen Bürozeit. Dem trägt ein modernes Kraftsportzentrum in Zürich Rechnung. In seiner Werbung verzichtet das Institut — ganz im Gegensatz zu den schon klassischen Body-Building-Inseraten aus Amerika und

Das «Tun Sie etwas für Ihren Körper!» tönt beinahe befreiend; es hat nichts zu tun mit Supermännern und Ueberdurchschnittlichem, das tönt so gesund und vernünftig wie Kneippssandalen und Birchermüesli. Der Erfolg einer solchen Werbung ist erwiesen. Folgerichtig geht der von Gewissen, Arzt und Massenmedien Getriebene in ein Muskelinstitut. Dort geschieht, es sei vorweggenommen, etwas Schreckliches: mitten in den Rausch der dynamischen Zeit streckt das Mittelalter seine Finger und beweist, dass körperliches Wohlergehen viel mit Gewissen und wenig mit wirklichem Körpertraining



Lazy Days By Urs Lüthi

David Weiss and I went to art school together in '63, which is where we met. We were the youngest two in the class. I was fifteen and David was a year older. We were friends from the moment we met. Then we lost touch for a little bit. He went to school in Basel and I stayed in Zurich and also traveled a lot. From late '67 we shared a studio in the middle of Niederdorf in Zurich, the meeting place for artists at that time. We were lazy guys. We had no money. Nobody wanted anything from us, so it was easy to be lazy. But we tried to work anyway.

We were on the edge of becoming adults, and were uncertain about whether we should be serious or just keep on playing. *Sketches* (1970) was an exercise, an attempt at remembering the fleeting feeling of youth. The idea was, basically, to play childhood games—to make innocent jokes about the pain of living. When you lose your innocence there is something to be gained from the joy of living, but still something is lost. This was during a period between the Vietnam War and the revolution of '68, when men didn't cry and weren't supposed to be soft. The world was full of John Waynes. But we were totally soft boys, not macho men.

The series took us a year, more or less. It was printed and shown in the beginning of '70 but the work was made in '69. It wasn't a clean block of shooting—chop, chop, and then it's over—but all the photographs have a bit of the same atmosphere. We made one or two at a time, and then a month later maybe another one, and so on. We shot them as they came to us. The first photograph is the one where I'm on David's back like a rucksack. Maybe they reflect my thinking a little more than David's because the ideas came more from me, but it was very flowing—everything was very easy. Then Toni Gerber made a portfolio of them and put them in an exhibition.

We didn't have a very intense partnership. Each made his own work, but we spoke about everything. David was very calm and very introverted, and I was a bit more extroverted. He was gentle to everyone his whole life. Sometimes that was a problem for him: he could never get angry. I think that he suffered from his gentleness. At that time he was really isolated as an artist but had lots of connections to political people because of his writings in magazines

and newspapers. He was very introverted but at parties he was always laughing and flirting. When he was working on his drawings and books he was totally in himself, sitting at his table, not speaking a word. He seemed to make drawings just for himself without thinking about exhibiting or publishing them. He was absolutely melancholic, which I think is a good quality for an artist, but at that time I couldn't imagine how he would ever show his work. I always had the feeling that he would end up working with someone else. And then one day Peter Fischli knocked at our door and came to visit us in the studio. From that moment on, Peter was a good friend, and they started to work together more and more. David and Peter were ideal collaborators; they forced each other to work, and they forced each other to go out and do something.

Four or five years later, in '74, we made another work together. We didn't share a studio anymore, but we said, let's do something together, like we did with *Sketches*. *The Desert Is Across the Street* (1975) is more of a crime story set in Zurich. I didn't realize until I saw it afterwards that Scorsese's first movie, *Mean Streets* (1973), which was made at the same time, had the same film noir atmosphere. We ended up showing the work in Amsterdam at de Appel in '75. They made a catalogue from it.

Then we tried a third time. The idea was to just hang out. It was to create the feeling of our earlier daily life, especially in '73 and '74. Those were lazy days. Each day we really had nothing we had to do. All we would do is hang out and make jokes, and then maybe try to make some work out of it. We were both wearing old leather trench coats, which were the stylish peacoat of the period. I think we got them in Amsterdam during our show there. There was an enormous flea market there where you could buy things for nothing. I was the more fashionable of the two. David was very uncomplicated, easy about what he wore. All of these photographs, except for the one inside the restaurant, were shot on the same day. But they were too much like the things we had done before so we forgot about them and they were lost. The photographs have never been published before. We later called the series *Lazy Days*.

The drawings David made during this period of his life were very important for him. He never showed them. They were too private and it wasn't until the end of his life that he started to work on an archive of them. I feel the same way about *Lazy Days*, which was really just a private record of the times and of our friendship. But now I am happy to publish it in a book about David's early work.



URS LÜTHI



DAVID WEISS



WILLY SPILLER

SKETCHES

Alle drei möchten die Serie von acht Fotos als Teamwork verstanden wissen. Darüber dürfte auch kein Zweifel bestehen, denn die Realisierung einer Konzeption dieser Art setzt die Einflügelung aller Teilnehmer in besonderer Weise voraus.

-Sketches- von Lüthi, Weiss und Spiller sind die Erinnerung an Spiele. Die Einbeziehung einer bewussten, reflektierten Dimension verleiht ihnen eine Poesie, die einerseits durch die Spontanität der Bereitschaft und der Sorgfalt im Zusammenwirken, andererseits durch die Ausstrahlung der Teilnehmer begründet ist.

Erinnerung an Spiele heisst ihr Wesen mit dem Verbinden, was ihre Ausführung zum jetzigen Zeitpunkt veranlaßt hat. Ein gemeinsames, zufälliges Wiederentdecken von Vergangenem, das jeder auf seine Art erlebt hat, der gemeinsame Entschluss, diese Erinnerungen in einem neuen, dem persönlichen Empfindungsbereich entsprechenden Zusammenhang zu zeigen.

Dazu braucht es natürlich Voraussetzungen. Denn es geht ja nicht nur um die Spiele, sondern um ihre Verkörperung, das heisst: Sie sind das, was die Teilnehmer aus ihnen machen. Die Voraussetzungen ergeben sich im Wesentlichen aus der Entwicklung des Werkes von Urs Lüthi. Anlässlich der Ausstellung -Visualisierte Denkprozesse- im Kunstmuseum Luzern (Februar 1970) zeigte er einen Raum, in dem an den Wänden seine gesamte Garderobe und in einer Vitrine kleinere Gegenstände vom Armbreite über die Identitätskarte bis zum Hausschlüssel zu sehen waren. Die Arbeit von Lüthi war eine der Möglichkeiten sich mit dem Mythos der eigenen Person auseinanderzusetzen: eine kritische und in der Intention radikale Distanz zwischen sich und die seine Person betreffende, eigene Vorstellung einzubauen. - In seinem Raum hatte Lüthi in Postkartengrösse u.a. auch jene Fotos gezeigt, die die Folge hier konstituieren. Damit schaffte er einen präzisen Gegenpol. Denn die bewusste Verkörperung des Bildes einer Vorstellung seiner selbst - die in Fotos mit ausschliesslich seiner Person noch stärker vorhanden ist - entspricht in der Intensität der Aussage jener, welche die Abkehr von diesem Bild bewirkt. Radikale Verneinung und extreme Befürwortung treffen sich in einer Haltung, welche die Mythosierung der eigenen Person als Objektivierung ihrer Erscheinung in einer Vielzahl innerer und äusserer Wechselbeziehungen verstanden haben will. Dieser Hinweis scheint uns insofern von Bedeutung, als er zum Verständnis des -Klimas- der hier vorliegenden Fotos beiträgt.

Gesamthaft betrachtet können wir zwei Gruppen von Aufnahmen unterscheiden. Die eine wird durch eine ausgesprochene, ironische Verspieltheit bewirkende Symmetrie gekennzeichnet. Die Situationen gehen, im Eindruck, vom Zufälligen bis zum Ausgeklügelten. In allen herrscht die Unbeschwertheit des Spiels, so dass auch das Ausgefallene die Natürlichkeit des Spontanen erreicht. In der anderen wird die Person von Lüthi, gleichsam vom grösseren Bruder David Weiss, unter die Fittiche genommen. Er trägt ihn zum Beispiel auf den Hüften oder hält ihn mit seiner Jacke umfassen. Wir erwähnen bereits die den Aufnahmen eigene Ausstrahlung: Es ist die Versetzung von Bekanntem in ein aussergewöhnliches Licht, verbunden mit einer intensiven physischen Präsenz der Teilnehmer, die eine derartige Einheit zwischen Darstellern und Dargestellten bewirkt, dass man sagen möchte, sie allein, Lüthi, Weiss und Spiller, hätten die Spiele für sich, ein einziges Mal, in einer idealen Konstellation geistiger Harmonie geschaffen.

Jean Christophe Ammann

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In einer Auflage von 100 Exemplaren

Diese Mappe trägt die No. 97/101

Urs Lüthi *David Weiss* *W. Spiller*





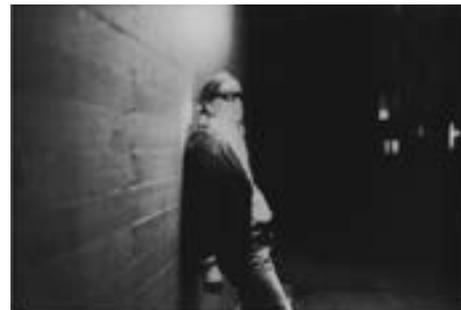
THE DESERT IS ACROSS THE STREET

A WORK BY

URS LÜTHI
ELKE KILGA
DAVID WEISS

EDITION
DE APPEL AMSTERDAM AND GALERIE STÄHLI ZÜRICH

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Lazy Days
Urs Lüthi and David Weiss







Inherent Weiss

By Douglas Fogle

“He threw himself down upon the meadow and began to dream.”
—Robert Walser

In his introduction to Robert Walser’s novel *The Tanners*, W. G. Sebald dubs the Swiss writer “a clairvoyant of the small.”¹ It was no surprise to me, then, when I found out that David Weiss was a huge fan of his fellow countryman’s prose, as the same could be said of Weiss, whose early drawings evoke something of the same gently searching psychic energy and celebration of modesty. It was Walser’s charming if laserlike focus on the seemingly trivial aspects of life, those forgotten or overlooked moments of everyday reverie, that led Sebald to describe the novelist as having an almost supernatural perceptual ability. After a long, lonely, and at times troubled life, Walser’s journey ended with a fatal heart attack while on a walk through a snowy landscape on Christmas Day, 1956, when the young David Weiss was a mere ten years old.

Both Walser and Weiss share a love of absurdity, an embrace of the existential questions posed by the most mundane moments of human life, as well as a deeply vulnerable romantic streak that speaks to the fragility of human existence. One might say that Walser’s focus on the ordinary quotidian experiences of the human condition—the social ecology of a grammar school, a momentary love connection on a train, an unexpectedly amorous piano lesson—set him on a literary path outside of the confines of what we might call world-historical time. In place of the heroic and the monumental, Walser celebrates the playful and the minor, often conveying an entire world of emotions in a few short paragraphs. If Walser’s journey ended on a walk through a snowy meadow, Weiss picked up his trail as a young man in the 1960s and ’70s, cutting a rambling path on a Grand Tour across the world, from Canada to New York, San Francisco and Berkeley, then Cuba, Tangier, Algiers, Tunis, Italy, Berlin, and finally the beaches of Los Angeles. Along the way, Weiss would put pen to paper, composing groups of drawings that would form a kind of abstract diaristic autobiography.

Weiss’s early artistic practice was focused on making drawings ranging from nearly abstract quasi-psychedelic geometric

landscapes, to sadly comedic cartoonish depictions of anthropomorphized flowers, to melancholic renderings of the world seen through the lens of the rain. Weiss created hundreds of ink and watercolor drawings that are at once darkly absurd, deeply humorous, and laced with a Walserian attention to the poignancy of the smallest details of life, while also being intensely prophetic of his later collaborative work with Peter Fischli. Taken together collectively, these groups of cartoon-inspired renderings conspire to document a metaphorical acid trip through the artist’s imagination, on a lifelong journey in search of a kind of slapstick enlightenment.

Looking at Weiss’s blumen (flower) watercolors brings to mind the underlying Dadaist tendencies of the Depression-era *Looney Tunes* and *Merrie Melodies* cartoons by American animators Tex Avery and Chuck Jones, of Warner Bros. fame. Contrary to popular belief, the true American Dadaists did not reside in the avant-garde art circles of New York or attend the salons of Walter and Louise Arensberg with Marcel Duchamp. Instead, they could be found in the animation factories of Hollywood under the guise of widely distributed cartoons that were screened in cinemas across the world. Bugs Bunny in drag singing an opera by Rossini or Wagner and the Road Runner defying the laws of physics as he eludes Wile E. Coyote—these were the figures that populated Avery and Jones’s cosmology, and subtly exuded the absurdist sensibility of Alfred Jarry’s Ubu under the guise of commercialized mass humor.

Weiss’s flowers operate and intensify the dream logic of these mainstream protagonists of the Theater of the Absurd. In one drawing, three sweetly rendered flowers occupy the foreground as a stick-figure rat, strangely reminiscent of Mickey Mouse, strolls across the background with a knife in each hand. This is a hilarious if dark vision of a Disneyland gone wrong—*The Day of the Locust* meets *Fantasia* on a dark corner—with the mouse out for blood and stalking Walt for his back royalties. In another work, a bright orange drawing depicts three cheerfully rendered flowers with the caption, “We Are a Happy Family. Me, Mum, and Daddy” (and indeed they do seem happy), while in another work an anthropomorphized sunflower with a painfully strained grin bends over a fence and waves at us above the caption, “The Function of False Emotions.” The primal family scene of happiness is juxtaposed with the forced facade of false hopes and expectations. What, in the end, is the function or the use value of “false emotions”? This dichotomy between the darkness and the light, which comprises everyday life, is at the heart of Weiss’s drawings. Other works depict flowers lounging at an exotic beach resort, an angry-looking moth carrying a surprisingly cheerful man away from his village, and a very happy-looking moth or batlike creature

carrying another stick-figure man by the head, evoking a rather upbeat version of Goya's *The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters*. In the drawings of David Weiss, when reason sleeps, the party (and the dreamwork) begins.

As a moth carries us away, it becomes clear that the operative underlying logic of many of Weiss's drawings is that of a road trip. In the works from his 1976 drawing book *I Wish That I Sailed the Darkened Seas*, Weiss evokes Lou Reed's lyrics from the Velvet Underground's song "Heroin," in which the meaning of the word trip slides effortlessly back and forth from a journey to a drug-induced vision. Using large swathes of black ink on the ground of these drawings to reveal his forms in white lines created by negative space, Weiss combined figurative drawings illustrating the song's lyrics (a clipper ship on the sea) with abstract geometric forms that seem to morph from drawing to drawing. Taken together, these works almost seem to form cells of an unrealized animation, albeit one that's been put through a consciousness-altering filter. The geometric forms seem to take on the quality of living entities moving through the void of space. At times they seem almost to resolve into landscapes (is that a mountain?), lightning, or even alien creatures. Then Weiss's lines come into focus and do indeed form traditional, idyllic landscapes (although one seems to feature a UFO hovering over a body of water). The Velvet Underground provide the imaginary soundtrack and Lou Reed's words occupy the page: "I wish I was born a thousand years ago. I wish that I sailed the darkened seas on a great big clipper ship going from this land here to that. I'd put on a sailor's suit and cap." As the ship sails on, Weiss's drawings devolve back into the world of loosely rendered abstract geometry that shifts from connecting trapezoids to intersecting circular forms reminiscent of Venn diagrams. This is the architecture of a dreamscape in which two men respectively ascend and descend a staircase while one is either thrown or falls over the side, tumbling into a typically Weissian void. After sailing the darkened seas, this falling man moves through the looking glass and wakes up to find himself in a place called Paranoia City.

An ink drawing shows our little everyman quickly running past what can only be thought of as a street sign advertising a town we've all visited: Paranoia City. If this drawing is the title sequence of a set of storyboards for an unrealized film by Weiss, we then move to a series of establishing shots of the city at night, depicting cars moving down streets illuminated by pools of light from the electric streetlamps. Yet another drawing is rendered negatively in black to reveal the lines of some kind of tropical cityscape (Las Vegas, perhaps?). With some of these works one thinks of a mildly odd acid trip or the famous sequence in Frank Capra's *It's a Wonderful Life* where

James Stewart moves through a montage of the seedy nightspots of Pottersville, the dark, alternate future version of his quaint hometown of Bedford Falls. While navigating Paranoia City, with all its concomitant characteristics and inhabitants, we come across a drawing that itself seems to evoke those bad-trip psycho-montages of classic Hollywood films. In this case the rendered words fill a blackened page and almost seem to be moving outward toward us from the depths of the paper. They enumerate the biblical deadly sins with an added layer of modern existential angst: nothingness, the absolute, madness, beauty, vileness, resentment, greed, booze, murder, money, vice, lechery, trash, schadenfreude, the absurd, and so on. There is something both troubling and funny about this drawing, and in some ways it acts as a kind of legend for the map of the territory of all of Weiss's drawings. This is not the overbearing existentialist grandeur of Sartre or Camus, but more along the lines of the questioning, non-sequitur humor of Ernie Kovacs, or even the absurdist sitcom humor of *I Love Lucy*, of which Weiss had become an aficionado while recovering from an illness in Los Angeles in the 1970s. This drawing also evokes the mature work of the installation *Questions* that Weiss collaborated on with Peter Fischli in 1981 (and again in 2003), and which was later made into a book, *Will Happiness Find Me?* But here the artist is simply laying it on the line as a cartoon enumerating the dark side of the human condition.

In the prose poem "Come Away With Me," the artist speaks about "driving slowly in fast cars through villages." Whether in a fast car or a slow boat, David Weiss's drawings take us quietly and modestly on a personal odyssey through a landscape populated by our most intimate and banal hopes, dreams, and fears. They celebrate the minor moments in life and the absurd questions that rear their heads in the quiet darkness of a sleepless night. Always searching, these works take us along on his journey, making us care.

Note

1. W. G. Sebald, introduction to *The Tanners*, by Robert Walser, trans. Susan Bernofsky (New York: New Directions, 2009).

David Weiss: Works, 1968 - 1979
December 11 - February 22







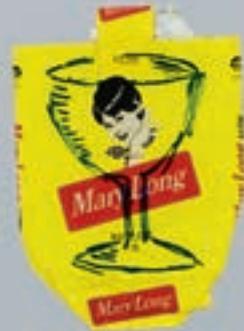












Works

Mickeykosmos, n.d.
Gouache on paper
40% × 56% inches
(102.5 × 144.5 cm)
pp. 13, 273

Untitled, n.d.
Ink on paper
27% × 19% inches
(70 × 50 cm)
p. 15

Untitled, n.d.
Ink on paper
8% × 11% inches
(21 × 29.5 cm)
p. 17

Untitled, n.d.
Ink on paper
8% × 11% inches
(21 × 29.5 cm)
p. 19

Untitled, n.d.
Ink on paper
8% × 11% inches
(21 × 29.5 cm)
p. 21

Untitled, n.d.
Ink and gouache on paper
43% × 67% inches
(111 × 172.5 cm)
p. 23

Untitled, n.d.
Ink on paper
50 × 100 inches
(127 × 254 cm)
pp. 25, 285

Untitled, n.d.
Ink on paper
40% × 57% inches
(103.5 × 145 cm)
pp. 27, 274-75

Untitled, 1979
Ink and gouache on canvas
37% × 52% inches
(96 × 134 cm)
p. 39

Untitled, 1979
Ink and gouache on paper
36% × 52% inches
(93 × 134 cm)
pp. 31, 284

Untitled, n.d.
Ink on paper
13% × 9% inches
(34 × 24 cm)
p. 33

Untitled, n.d.
Ink and acrylic on paper
11% × 8% inches
(30 × 21 cm)
p. 34

Untitled, n.d.
Ink on paper
13% × 9% inches
(34 × 24 cm)
p. 35

Untitled, n.d.
Ink on paper
9% × 13% inches
(24 × 34 cm)
pp. 36, 280

Untitled, n.d.
Ink on paper
9% × 13% inches
(24 × 34 cm)
pp. 37, 280

Untitled, n.d.
Acrylic on paper
11% × 8% inches
(29.5 × 21 cm)
pp. 38, 281

Untitled, n.d.
Ink and acrylic on paper
13% × 9% inches
(34 × 24 cm)
pp. 39, 281

Untitled, n.d.
Marker and pen on paper
11% × 8% inches
(29.5 × 21 cm)
pp. 41, 277, 279

*The Big Board Game
or the Story of the
Beagle Commune*, 1968
Marker on paper
11% × 16% inches
(30 × 42 cm)
pp. 42-43

Paranoia City, n.d.
Ink and ballpoint
pen on paper
16% × 11% inches
(42 × 30 cm)
p. 45

Untitled, n.d.
Ink on paper
11% × 16% inches
(30 × 42 cm)
p. 47

For Carmen From David, 1969
Marker on paper
11% × 8% inches
(29.5 × 21 cm)
pp. 49, 274-75

*The Little Star
Garden*, 1969
Marker on paper
8% × 11% inches
(21 × 30 cm)
pp. 50, 274-75

The Terribly Nice Little Garden, 1969
Marker on paper
11½ × 8¼ inches
(29.5 × 21 cm)
pp. 51, 274-75

Untitled, n.d.
Ink and gouache on paper
28¾ × 38½ inches
(72 × 98 cm)
pp. 52, 274-75

Untitled, n.d.
Ink and gouache on paper
28¾ × 39¼ inches
(72 × 100 cm)
pp. 53, 278, 283

Untitled, 1979
Watercolor and ink on paper
9¾ × 6½ inches
(23 × 16.5 cm)
pp. 55, 283

Untitled, 1979
Watercolor and ink on paper
6½ × 9¾ inches
(16.5 × 23 cm)
pp. 57, 282

Untitled, 1979
Watercolor and ink on paper
6½ × 9¾ inches
(16.5 × 23 cm)
pp. 58, 282

Untitled, 1979
Watercolor and ink on paper
6½ × 9¾ inches
(16.5 × 23 cm)
p. 59

Untitled, 1978
Watercolor and ink on paper
9¾ × 6½ inches
(23 × 16.5 cm)
p. 60

Untitled, 1978
Watercolor and ink on paper
9¾ × 6½ inches
(23 × 16.5 cm)
p. 61

Untitled, 1979
Watercolor and ink on paper
6½ × 9¾ inches
(16.5 × 23 cm)
p. 62

Untitled, 1978
Watercolor and ink on paper
9¾ × 6½ inches
(23 × 16.5 cm)
p. 63

Untitled, 1979
Watercolor and ink on paper
6½ × 9¾ inches
(16.5 × 23 cm)
p. 64

Untitled, 1979
Watercolor and ink on paper
9¾ × 6½ inches
(23 × 16.5 cm)
p. 65

Untitled, 1978
Watercolor, ink and pen on paper
9¾ × 6½ inches
(23 × 16.5 cm)
p. 66

Untitled, 1978
Watercolor and ink on paper
9¾ × 6½ inches
(23 × 16.5 cm)
p. 67

Untitled, 1979
Watercolor and ink on paper
6½ × 9¾ inches
(16.5 × 23 cm)
p. 68

We Are a Happy Family, Me, Mum, and Daddy, 1979
Watercolor and ink on paper
6½ × 9¾ inches
(16.5 × 23 cm)
p. 69

The Function of False Emotions, 1979
Watercolor and ink on paper
6½ × 9¾ inches
(16.5 × 23 cm)
pp. 70, 278-79

Untitled, 1978
Watercolor and ink on paper
9¾ × 6½ inches
(23 × 16.5 cm)
pp. 71, 278-79

Untitled, 1978
Watercolor and ink on paper
9¾ × 6½ inches
(23 × 16.5 cm)
pp. 72, 278-79

Untitled, 1978
Watercolor and ink on paper
9¾ × 6½ inches
(23 × 16.5 cm)
pp. 73, 278-79

Untitled, 1979
Watercolor and ink on paper
6½ × 9¾ inches
(16.5 × 23.5 cm)
pp. 74, 278-79

Untitled, 1978
Watercolor, ink and pen on paper
9¾ × 6½ inches
(23.5 × 16.5 cm)
pp. 75, 278-79

Untitled, 1978
Watercolor and ink on paper
9¾ × 6½ inches
(23 × 16.5 cm)
pp. 76, 278-79

Untitled, 1978
Watercolor and ink on paper
9¾ × 6½ inches
(23 × 16.5 cm)
pp. 77, 278-79

The Phantom of Liberty, 1979
Watercolor and ink on paper
6½ × 9¾ inches
(16.5 × 23 cm)
p. 78

Untitled, 1978
Watercolor and ink on paper
9¾ × 6½ inches
(23 × 16.5 cm)
p. 79

Untitled, 1978
Watercolor and ink on paper
9¾ × 6½ inches
(23 × 16.5 cm)
p. 80

Giacometti, 1978
Watercolor, ink
and pen on paper
9¼ × 6½ inches
(23.5 × 16.5 cm)
p. 81

Untitled, 1978
Watercolor and
ink on paper
9¼ × 6½ inches
(23.5 × 16.5 cm)
p. 82

Untitled, 1978
Watercolor and
ink on paper
9¼ × 6½ inches
(23 × 16.5 cm)
p. 83

Untitled, 1978
Watercolor and
ink on paper
9¼ × 6½ inches
(23 × 16.5 cm)
p. 84

Untitled, 1978
Watercolor and
ink on paper
9¼ × 6½ inches
(23 × 16.5 cm)
p. 85

Untitled, 1978
Watercolor and
ink on paper
9¼ × 6½ inches
(23 × 16.5 cm)
p. 86

Untitled, 1978
Watercolor and
ink on paper
9¼ × 6½ inches
(23 × 16.5 cm)
p. 87

Untitled, 1978
Watercolor and
ink on paper
9¼ × 6½ inches
(23 × 16.5 cm)
p. 88

Untitled, 1979
Watercolor and
ink on paper
6½ × 9¼ inches
(16.5 × 23 cm)
p. 89

Untitled, n.d.
Ink and gouache on paper
40¾ × 56¾ inches
(102.5 × 144.5 cm)
pp. 91, 287

Untitled, n.d.
Ink and gouache on paper
40¾ × 56¾ inches
(102.5 × 144.5 cm)
pp. 93, 287

Untitled, n.d.
Ink on paper
42¼ × 60 inches
(107 × 152 cm)
p. 94

Untitled, n.d.
Ink on paper
42½ × 58¼ inches
(108 × 148 cm)
p. 95

Untitled, n.d.
Ink on paper
42½ × 58¾ inches
(108 × 149.5 cm)
p. 96

Untitled, n.d.
Ink on paper
42¼ × 60 inches
(107 × 152 cm)
p. 97

Untitled, n.d.
Watercolor and
ink on paper
3¾ × 11¾ inches
(8 × 29.5 cm)
pp. 98-99

Untitled, n.d.
Watercolor and
ink on paper
3¾ × 11¾ inches
(8 × 29.5 cm)
pp. 100-101

Untitled, n.d.
Ink on paper
8¼ × 11¾
(21 × 29.5 cm)
p. 103

Untitled, n.d.
Ink on paper
11¾ × 8¾ inches
(29.5 × 21 cm)
p. 105

*I wish I was born
a thousand years ago, 1976*
Ink on paper
42½ × 58¾ inches
(108 × 149.5 cm)
p. 107

Untitled, n.d.
Ink on paper
6¼ × 11¾ inches
(16 × 29.5 cm)
p. 108

Untitled, n.d.
Ink on paper
8¼ × 11¾ inches
(21 × 30 cm)
p. 109

Untitled, n.d.
Ink on paper
6¼ × 11¾ inches
(16 × 29.5 cm)
p. 110

Untitled, n.d.
Ink on paper
7½ × 11¾ inches
(19 × 29.5 cm)
p. 111

Untitled, n.d.
Ink on paper
5½ × 11¼ inches
(14 × 28.5 cm)
p. 112

Untitled, n.d.
Ink on paper
5¾ × 11¼ inches
(13 × 28.5 cm)
p. 113

*And When the Girl Had Taken
the Pill and Went to the
Pond, Everything Mirrored
So Strangely . . . , n.d.*
Ink on paper
5¾ × 11¼ inches
(13 × 28.5 cm)
p. 114

Untitled, n.d.
Ink on paper
6¾ × 11¾ inches
(16 × 30 cm)
p. 115

Untitled, n.d.
Ink on paper
6¼ × 11¾ inches
(16 × 29.5 cm)
p. 116

Untitled, n.d.
Ink on paper
6¼ × 11¾ inches
(16 × 29.5 cm)
p. 117

Untitled, n.d.
Ink on paper
6¼ × 11¾ inches
(16 × 29.5 cm)
p. 118

Untitled, n.d.
Ink on paper
4½ × 9¾ inches
(4.5 × 24.5 cm)
p. 119

An Avalanche in the Tamins Valley, n.d.
Marker on paper
8¾ × 11¾ inches
(21 × 30 cm)
p. 121

Untitled, n.d.
Ballpoint pen on paper
11¾ × 8¾ inches
(29.5 × 21 cm)
p. 122

Untitled, n.d.
Ballpoint pen on paper
11¾ × 8¾ inches
(29.5 × 21 cm)
p. 123

Untitled, n.d.
Ballpoint pen on paper
11¾ × 8¾ inches
(29.5 × 21 cm)
p. 124

Untitled, n.d.
Marker on paper
6¾ × 3¾ inches
(17 × 9.5 cm)
p. 125

Samson, 1970
Ballpoint pen on paper
11¾ × 8¾ inches
(29.5 × 21 cm)
p. 126

La Moolution, n.d.
Ballpoint pen on paper
11¾ × 8¾ inches
(29.5 × 21 cm)
p. 127

So What, 1969
Ink on paper
11¾ × 8¾ inches
(30 × 21 cm)
p. 128

Untitled, n.d.
Ballpoint pen on paper
11¾ × 8¾ inches
(29.5 × 21 cm)
p. 129

Untitled, n.d.
Ballpoint pen on paper
11¾ × 8¾ inches
(29.5 × 21 cm)
p. 131

Untitled, n.d.
Marker on paper
4¾ × 3¾ inches
(12 × 9.5 cm)
p. 132

Untitled, n.d.
Marker on paper
11¾ × 8¾ inches
(29.5 × 21 cm)
p. 133

Untitled, n.d.
Marker on paper
11¾ × 8¾ inches
(29.5 × 21 cm)
p. 134

Lila Cat 1 for Carmen, n.d.
Marker on paper
11¾ × 8¾ inches
(30 × 21 cm)
p. 135

Untitled, n.d.
Marker on paper
9¾ × 12¾ inches
(24 × 32 cm)
p. 136

Good David! You Did That Very Well, n.d.
Ballpoint pen on paper
11¾ × 8¾ inches
(30 × 21 cm)
p. 137

Untitled, n.d.
Marker on paper
2 × 2¾ inches
(5 × 6.5 cm)
p. 139

Untitled, n.d.
Pencil and marker on paper
Diameter: 2¾ inches
(Diameter: 7 cm)
p. 140

Untitled, n.d.
Ink on paper
3½ × 3¾ inches
(9.1 × 9.4 cm)
p. 141

Untitled, n.d.
Ink on paper
5¾ × 7 inches
(13 × 18 cm)
p. 143

Untitled, n.d.
Ink on paper
2 × 2¾ inches
(5 × 7 cm)
p. 144

Untitled, n.d.
Ink on paper
¾ × 1¼ inches
(1 × 3 cm)
p. 145

Wandlugen, 1974
Ballpoint pen on paper
pp. 147-203, 278-79, 286-87

Untitled, n.d.
Marker on cigarette pack
4¾ × 3¾ inches
(4.5 × 8 cm)
pp. 204-5, 289

Up and down town, 1975
Artist's book
Special Edition /
Edition Stähli
1,000 copies + 15 special
editions exposed to rain
in front of Galerie Stähli
pp. 209-10

Come Away with Me, n.d.
Marker and pen on paper
9¾ × 6½ inches
(23 × 16.5 cm)
pp. 216-27

Urs Lüthi, Willy Spiller,
David Weiss
Sketches, 1970
Portfolio of 8 offset prints
15½ × 10½ inches
(39.5 × 27 cm)
pp. 252-54

Urs Lüthi, Elke Kilga,
David Weiss
The Desert Is Across the Street, 1975
Edition de Appel, Amsterdam,
and Galerie Stähli, Zurich
pp. 256-60



Exhibition History

Born 1946, Zurich
Died 2012, Zurich

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

1970
Sketches (with Urs Lüthi and Willy Spiller),
Edition Toni Gerber, Bern, Switzerland

1974
Drei Geschichten, Edition Stähli, Zurich

1975
up and down town, Edition Stähli, Zurich
The Desert Is Across the Street
(with Elke Kilga and Urs Lüthi),
Galerie Stähli, Zurich; de Appel, Amsterdam

1977
Zeichnungen und Bücher, Galerie Stähli, Zurich

1979
Galerie Gugu Ernesto, Cologne
Galerie 't Venster, Rotterdam

2014
David Weiss: Werke 1968-1979,
Bündner Kunstmuseum, Chur, Switzerland
David Weiss: Works, 1968-1979,
Swiss Institute/Contemporary Art, New York

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

1974
Lawineausstellung, Reithalle, Zurich

1976
Mentalität Zeichnung, Kunstmuseum, Lucerne, Switzerland

1979
Künstler der Galerie Stähli Zürich,
Fundatie Kunsthuis, Amsterdam
*Zeichnung heute. 1, Internationale Jugendtriennale
der Zeichnung*, Kunsthalle, Nuremburg, Germany

1981
Bilder, Kunstmuseum, Winterthur, Switzerland

Contributors

DOUGLAS FOGLE is an independent curator and writer based in Los Angeles. From 2009 to 2012 he served as deputy director of exhibitions and programs and chief curator at the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles, where he organized a variety of exhibitions, including *Ed Ruscha: On the Road* (2011), *Mark Manders: Parallel Occurrences/Documented Assignments* (2010) and *Luisa Lambri: Being There* (2010). Previously, Fogle served as curator of contemporary art at the Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburgh, where he organized *Life on Mars: The 55th Carnegie International* in 2008. From 1994 to 2005 he was a curator in the Visual Arts Department of the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, where he organized a wide array of exhibitions. Fogle publishes regularly in a wide range of exhibition catalogues and journals.

URS LÜTHI lives and works in Munich. He has had numerous solo exhibitions, including presentations at the Centre Culturelle Suisse, Paris; Kunstmuseum, Lucerne; Kasseler Kunstverein, Kassel, Germany; Kunstverein München, Germany; and Swiss Institute, New York. In 2001 he represented Switzerland at the 49th Venice Biennale. Lüthi was professor at the Kunsthochschule Kassel from 1991 to 2013, and has received numerous awards, including the prize of honor of the Canton of Zurich in 1996 and the Arnold Bode Prize of the City of Kassel in 2009. His work is featured in prominent museum collections such as the Hamburger Kunsthalle, the Museum of Fine Arts Bern, and the Centre Pompidou and Musée National d'Art Moderne in Paris.

HANS ULRICH OBRIST is codirector of exhibitions and programs and director of international projects at the Serpentine Galleries, London, and cofounder of 89plus. He was previously the curator at the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris. Since his seminal show *World Soup (The Kitchen Show)* in 1991, when he first worked with Fischli/Weiss in a curatorial capacity, he has curated more than 250 shows and projects. His recent publications include *A Brief History of Curating* (2008), *Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Curating* But Were Afraid to Ask* (2010), *Do It: The Compendium* (2013), *Think Like Clouds, Ways of Curating* (both 2014), *The Age of Earthquakes* (with Douglas Coupland and Shumon Basar), *Lives of Artists, Lives of Architects*, and *Conversations in Colombia: ANAÑAM-YOH-REYA* (all three 2015), as well as many volumes of his Conversation Series.

Acknowledgments

Many of the insightful details of this exhibition can be attributed to the meticulous care David Weiss's brilliant children have taken of his legacy since his untimely passing in 2012. Oskar and Charlotte have carefully preserved the archive of their father's early work and made it available for curators and researchers. Oskar's tireless devotion to the development of this project, as well as the time he spent in New York during the installation of the exhibition, were essential to the presentation of Weiss's early works at Swiss Institute. We are immensely grateful for his trust and friendship.

David Weiss: Works, 1968-1979 traveled to Swiss Institute from the Bündner Kunstmuseum in Chur, Switzerland, where it was organized by director Stephan Kunz, whose visionary decision to show these early works has provided audiences with an opportunity to develop an understanding of Weiss's early practice. Stephan's collaborative spirit and encouragement made organizing the New York exhibition a joyous process.

We must express our most sincere gratitude to Iwan Schumacher for his encyclopedic knowledge of the work and life of his dear friend. Throughout the development of the exhibition and the production of this book, Iwan has provided sage curatorial suggestions, along with indispensable practical advice.

I am deeply grateful to Hans Ulrich Obrist for delivering a thoughtful, personal reminiscence about the profound influence Weiss had on his own curatorial career. Their relationship undoubtedly enriched the way art is perceived, and Hans Ulrich's firsthand account of their exchanges is infinitely rewarding. Thanks must also be given to Urs Lüthi, who generously provided an account of the stories behind the projects he and Weiss undertook together when they were both young artists; and to Douglas Fogle, whose essay brilliantly addresses some of the most challenging aspects of Weiss's early drawings. In advance of the Fischli/Weiss major retrospective at the Guggenheim, Nancy Spector and Peter Fischli held a revealing conversation at Swiss

Institute about the duo's long collaboration and friendship, providing an invaluable perspective into Weiss's early work.

The publication of this book was made possible by the generosity of Matthew Marks, Eva Presenhuber, and Sprüth Magers. Their wholehearted commitment to making David Weiss's early work known has been instrumental. We are immensely grateful for their support.

Many thanks must also be given to *Parkett*, who acted as our media partner for the exhibition. Their team, and particularly Jacqueline Burckhardt, Bice Curiger, and Dieter von Graffenried, provided crucial insights into David Weiss's career at every stage in the production of the exhibition.

Deserving of utmost praise are Brendan Dugan, Sinisa Mackovic, and Elizabeth Karp-Evans of Karma for their generosity in designing and copublishing the SI Series. I would be remiss if I did not thank our editor, Karen Marta, and her editorial team, David Torrone and Artrit Bytyçi, whose unyielding commitment to excellence, and editorial wisdom, were integral to this book and to all of the books in the series.

I would like to thank our remarkable Board of Trustees and our chairwoman, Fabienne Abrecht, whose guidance and remarkable willingness to take risks has led Swiss Institute into a new era of growth. I'll never forget our epic journey with Oskar Weiss and Felix Melia through Switzerland to Chur, to its Bündner Kunstmuseum and its infamous Giger-Bar. I am indebted to the skill and enthusiasm of the members of the Swiss Institute team past and present, in particular Clément Delepine, Alison Coplan, Elizabeth Baribeau, Laura McLean-Ferris, Daniel Merritt, Markee Speyer, and Annik Hausmann, whose collective efforts were essential to the realization of the exhibition and this book.

—Simon Castets

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Founded in 1986, Swiss Institute is an independent, nonprofit contemporary art institution dedicated to promoting forward-thinking and experimental art-making through innovative exhibitions and programs. Committed to the highest standards of curatorial and educational excellence, Swiss Institute serves as a platform for emerging artists, catalyzes new contexts for celebrated work, and fosters appreciation for under-recognized positions.

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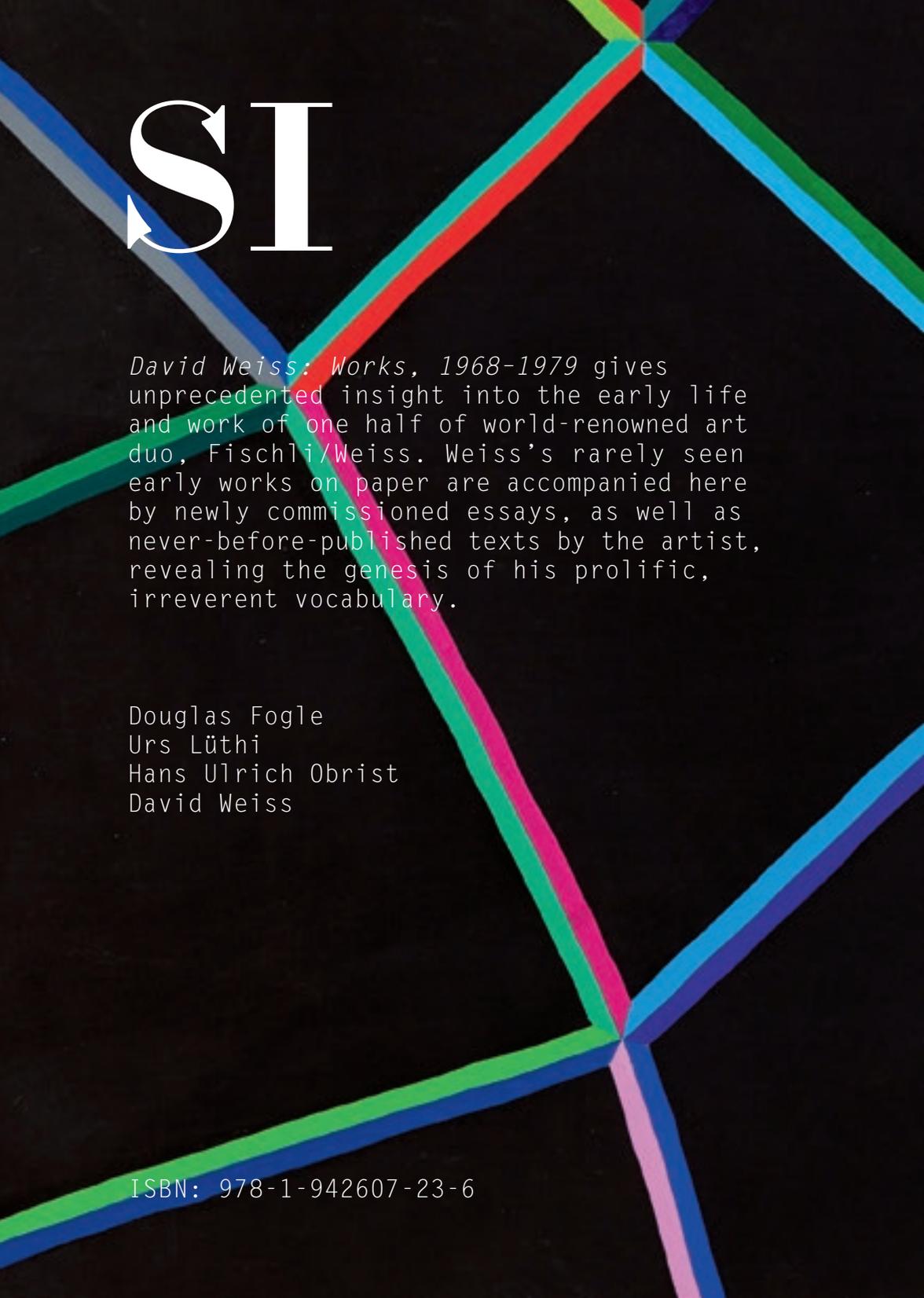




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The background of the entire page is black. Overlaid on this are several thick, vibrant lines in various colors including blue, green, red, cyan, magenta, and purple. These lines intersect at various points, creating a complex, abstract geometric pattern that resembles a star or a web of connections. The lines are not perfectly straight but have a slight, organic feel to their paths.

SI

David Weiss: Works, 1968-1979 gives unprecedented insight into the early life and work of one half of world-renowned art duo, Fischli/Weiss. Weiss's rarely seen early works on paper are accompanied here by newly commissioned essays, as well as never-before-published texts by the artist, revealing the genesis of his prolific, irreverent vocabulary.

Douglas Fogle
Urs Lüthi
Hans Ulrich Obrist
David Weiss

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