

# L/Inked

a collaboration between  
artists, insects, and oak trees



miranda arts project space

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**L/Inked** brings 11 artists together to forage for oak gall wasp nests, a historical source for black ink, from local and regional nature centers, make ink from these galls, and create collaborative and autonomous drawings for exhibition at miranda arts project space.

miranda arts project space was founded by artist, curator, and educator Patricia Miranda, as a space for curatorial exploration, exhibition, collaboration, and the gathering of ideas across disciplines and art forms.

miranda arts project space  
6 north pearl street, 404e, port chester, NY 10573  
[www.mirandaartsprojectspace.com](http://www.mirandaartsprojectspace.com)  
[www.patriciamiranda.com](http://www.patriciamiranda.com)

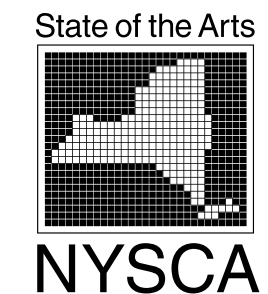
Designed by Amanda Reynolds

December 6, 2014 - January 24, 2015

Artists: Patricia Miranda, Judith Brisson, Leah Caroline, Ellie Irons, Katherine Jackson, Eric Jiaju Lee, Martin Kruck, Jill London, Karen L Schiff, Wendy Small, and Patricia Spergel Bauman

This project is supported by an Individual Artist Grant awarded to Patricia Miranda by ArtsWestchester and NYSCA.

**ARTSW**  
ARTSWESTCHESTER



*The Oak Galls for this project were collected from:*

Massachusetts Audubon, Felix Neck Wildlife Sanctuary, Edgartown, MA

Rye Nature Center, Rye NY

Greenburgh Nature Center, Scarsdale NY

Special thanks to Suzan Bellincampi, Sanctuary Director, Felix Neck Wildlife Sanctuary, and Travis Brady, Director of Education & Living Collections, Greenburgh Nature Center, for collecting oak galls for the project.

Additional thanks to Jill London, in Cobb Mountain, CA, and Robin McLauren in Belton and Georgetown, Texas for collecting galls.

## WHAT IS AN OAK GALL?

Oak wasps are from the Cynipidae family of the order Hymenoptera and are classified with the Apocrita suborder of wasps in the superfamily Cynipoidea. The size of a sesame seed, they lay their eggs on oak tree leaves and branches. The eggs contain a chemical that causes a reaction in the tree, making it form a gall around the eggs. The wasps gestate, and when the eggs hatch, the young wasps drill/eat their way out of this ball and fly away (note the holes in the oak galls). There are many different species of oak trees, making many different kinds of galls. Oak galls are high in tannin and gallic acid. Mixing with Ferrous Sulfate causes a chemical reaction and makes iron-gallic ink.

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF OAK GALL INK

Oak gall ink was one of the two most common inks used throughout history around the world, up to the 20th century. The word ink comes from the Latin word encaustum, “to burn in” or “to bite” (also the origin of “encaustic,” paint made from heated wax and pigment). Iron-gallic ink is caustic, acidic in nature, and so can eventually literally bite into the surface of parchment, paper or cloth, especially badly if not prepared properly. Persian carpets as well as clothing were dyed using an iron-gallic dye; the fraying of the textile can help authenticate carpets. The Dead Sea Scrolls, Declaration of Independence, all European illuminated manuscripts before the printing press Lincoln’s letters, most legal documents, Hebrew Torah (through today) were written using oak gall ink. Palimpsest, a manuscript page on which the original writing has been effaced to make room for later writing but of which traces remain, are mainly possible because of the permanent “biting” nature of iron-gallic ink. Alfred Kinsey, the American sexologist known for research on human sexuality, was also a biologist and professor of entomology and zoology. Before he turned to humans he was the world’s premier researcher and expert on the sex life of the oak wasp. He donated the world’s largest collection of oak galls to the American Museum of Natural History.



“The experience of collaboration in L/inked has brought this process of discovery to a new level. It has freed me from any sense of intention since I know that my marks are mere starting points for the other artists, just as theirs inevitably will open new pathways for me. The sense of dissolving into the flow of collaboration has been liberating and exhilarating. This process, as well as collaborating with so many generations who have used oak gall ink, and further collaborating with wasps and oak trees has brought my own sensibility together with past, the earth, and my fellow inkers in an ever-ramifying sense of interconnectedness through time, space, and art. I am eager to see how my future work will reflect the profound influence of this interaction.” *Katherine Jackson*

ERIC JIAJU LEE

JILL LONDON

JUDITH BRISSON

KATHERINE JACKSON

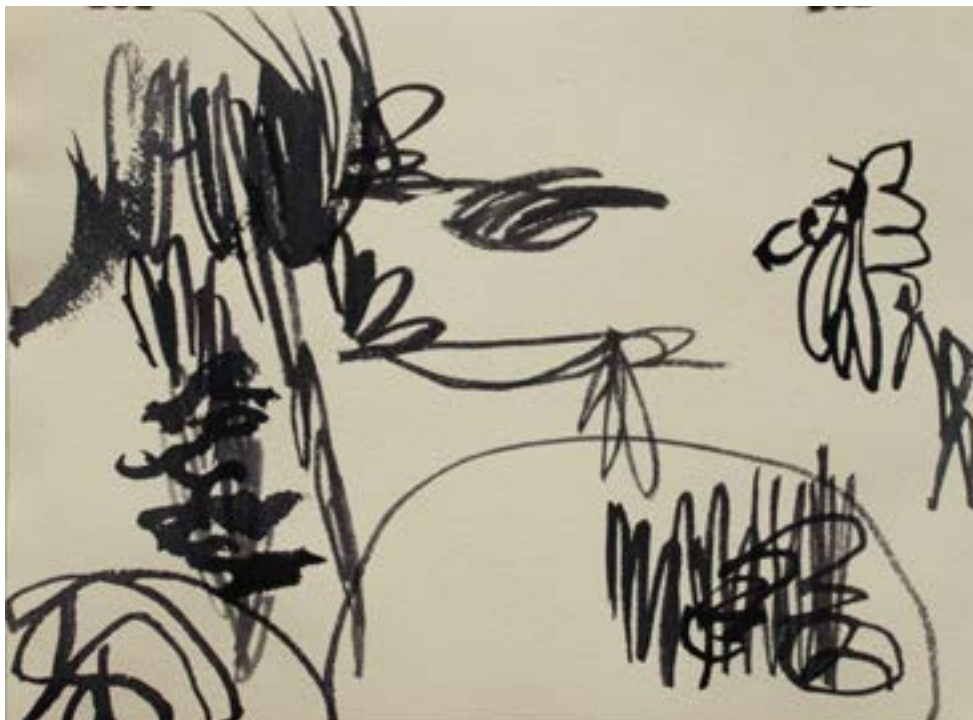


# ERIC JIAJU LEE

Eric Jiaju Lee earned his Master of Fine Arts degree at Hunter College and has based his practice in New York City for over the past two decades. Lee also has worked in Beijing, China where he established a studio practice in recent years. Lee exhibits regularly both locally and abroad, with works belonging to numerous private and corporate collections internationally. Lee is a professor of fine arts, an independent curator and a guest lecturer at museums and institutions in the greater New York area.

<http://www.ericleeart.com>





## JILL LONDON

“The work centers on the energy around drawing and painting. The action initiates a dialogue immediately once the first mark is entered on the page. This action, reaction and movement is all part of the building of the image and the connection to the here and now. Energy and light inform the visual information. The ability to mark time, record movement and detail about a specific time and place are what keeps me focused and centered. Similar to a Tai Ji practice, the drawing and painting practice are both about emptying the preconceived and moving into the unknown and open possibilities of life beyond what we know. Nature is key to the experience and focus of my work. The wild and the uncontrolled are part of what sparks me to keep poking and working on the shape, form or continuity of a drawing.”

Jill London is a visual artist working out of two studios: The Lower East Side of New York and Cobb, CA. She has been working on drawings and paintings over the last 35 years and has shown her paintings and works on paper both internationally and here in the states. Art works are in both private and public collections throughout the country and in Spain, Italy and Japan. The focus of her work is the building of a language of mark making and calligraphy. The Oak Gall Grant is a wonderful direction combining history and art making techniques and visual language. Jill London works in education by focusing classes on technical proficiency with Gold leaf, gilding and painting. She has worked for the Society of Gilders having spent 15 years as the Education Chair, as well as teaching at the Smithsonian and other national conferences.

[www.londongild.com](http://www.londongild.com)



## JUDITH BRISSON

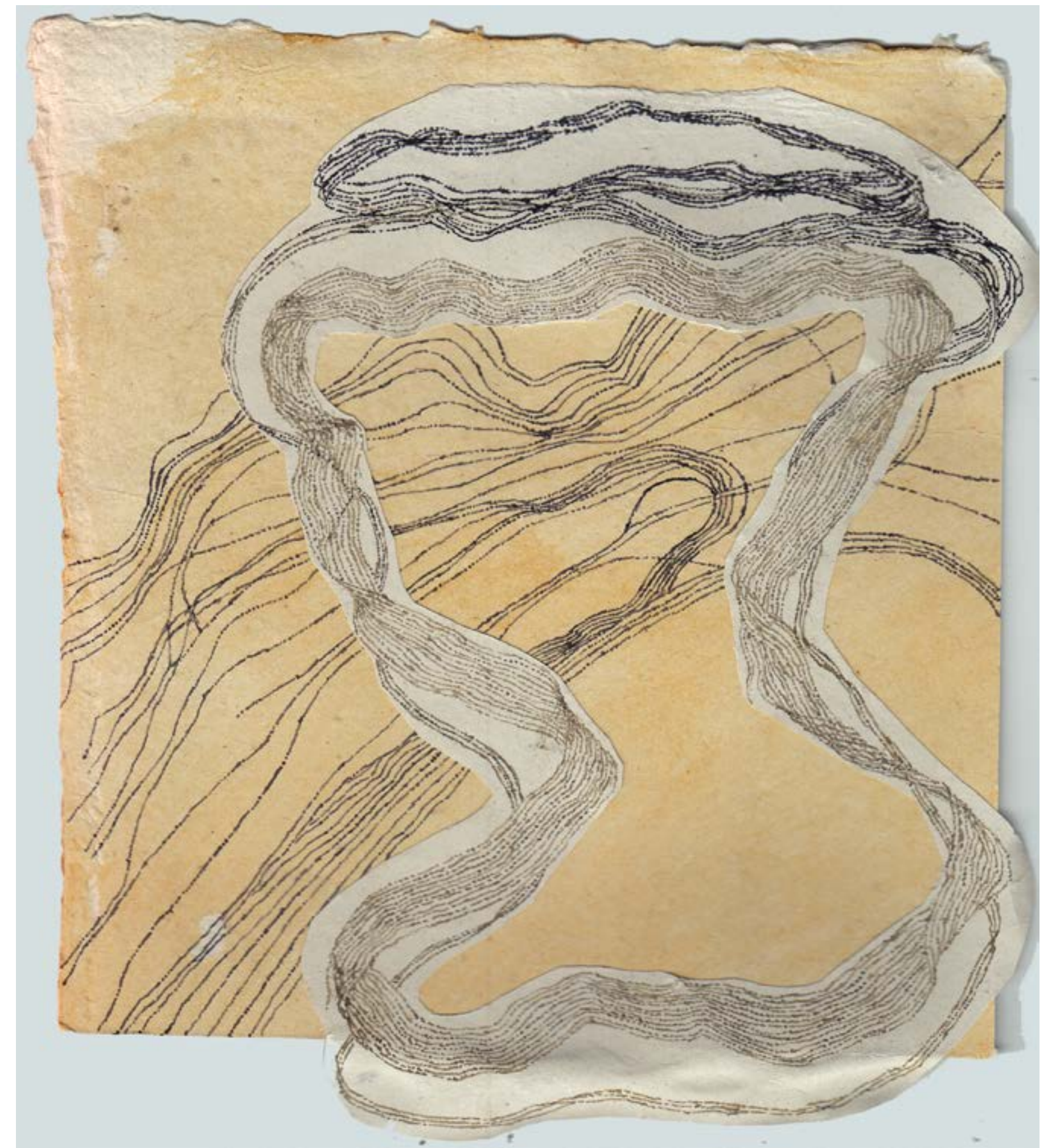
Judith Brisson is a Montreal-based artist, educator and activist whose main preoccupations are painting, photography, dance, movement, guerrilla installations, artistic collaborations and working for social justice. Judith has lived and worked in Mexico, Toronto, Sutton, Montreal and Barcelona. She has a life-long art practice that seeks to challenge complacency and activate community involvement around a variety of social issues and art practices, with engagement that is both artistic and political, and usually at the intersection of both realms.

<http://warinimage.blogspot.ca/>

# KATHERINE JACKSON

Katherine Jackson lives and works in New York. Her work has been widely exhibited in galleries, universities, and public spaces in NYC, elsewhere in the US, and Berlin. Most recently, she was included in STEAM, an exhibition of artists who work with technology. She has had solo shows at Bennington College, and Hobart & William Smith Colleges. Her large scale installation/exhibitions have been placed in various public spaces in Manhattan. Her work has been featured in numerous arts & literary magazines, where she has also contributed image/text pieces, poems, essays, and translations.

[www.katherinejackson.com](http://www.katherinejackson.com)







PATRICIA SPERGEL  
MARTIN KRUCK  
LEAH CAROLINE



## PATRICIA SPERGEL

“The paintings are composed of fluid, organic forms, often derived from the human body or landscape, which crowd together, float or overlap creating eccentric compositions filled with color and light. These abstract shapes hover on the verge of becoming recognizable, tangible objects.”

Patricia Spergel received her BFA from Cornell University in Ithaca, NY and her MFA from School of Visual Arts in NYC. Her paintings are included in the collections of Citigroup, Sanford Bernstein and Bank of America. She currently lives and works in Westchester County, NY.

[www.patriciaspergel.com](http://www.patriciaspergel.com)

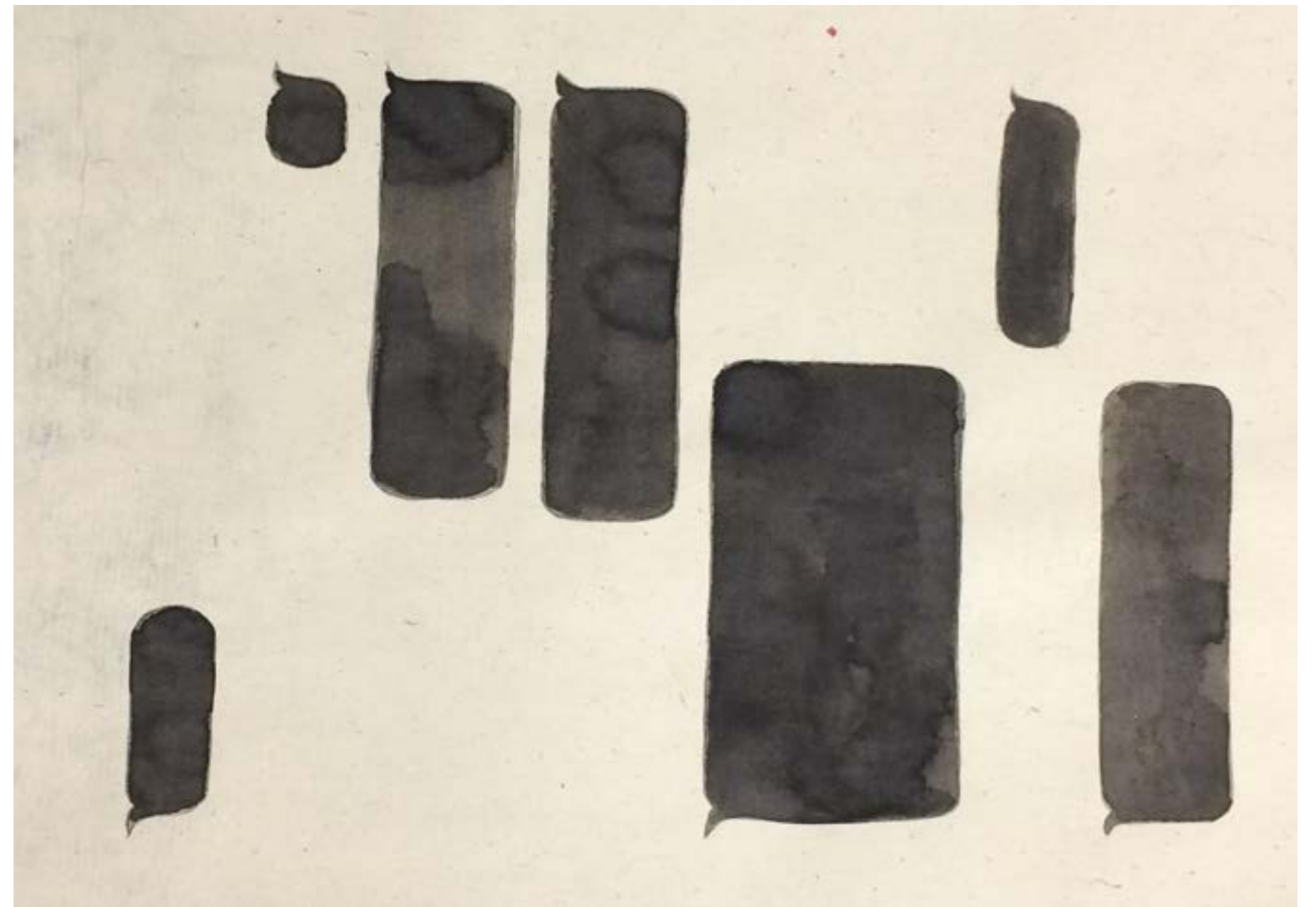




# MARTIN KRUCK

Martin Kruck earned his Master of Fine Art degree from the State University of New York at Buffalo in 1995 and his Bachelor of Fine Art degree from Queen's University, Canada in 1991. To date his work has been featured in 25 solo exhibitions and in over 100 group exhibitions internationally. His work has been exhibited in Germany, Japan, Estonia, United Kingdom, Northern Ireland(UK), Mexico and throughout the United States and Canada. He is currently a Professor of Art at New Jersey City University and lives and works outside of New York City.

[www.martinkruck.com](http://www.martinkruck.com)

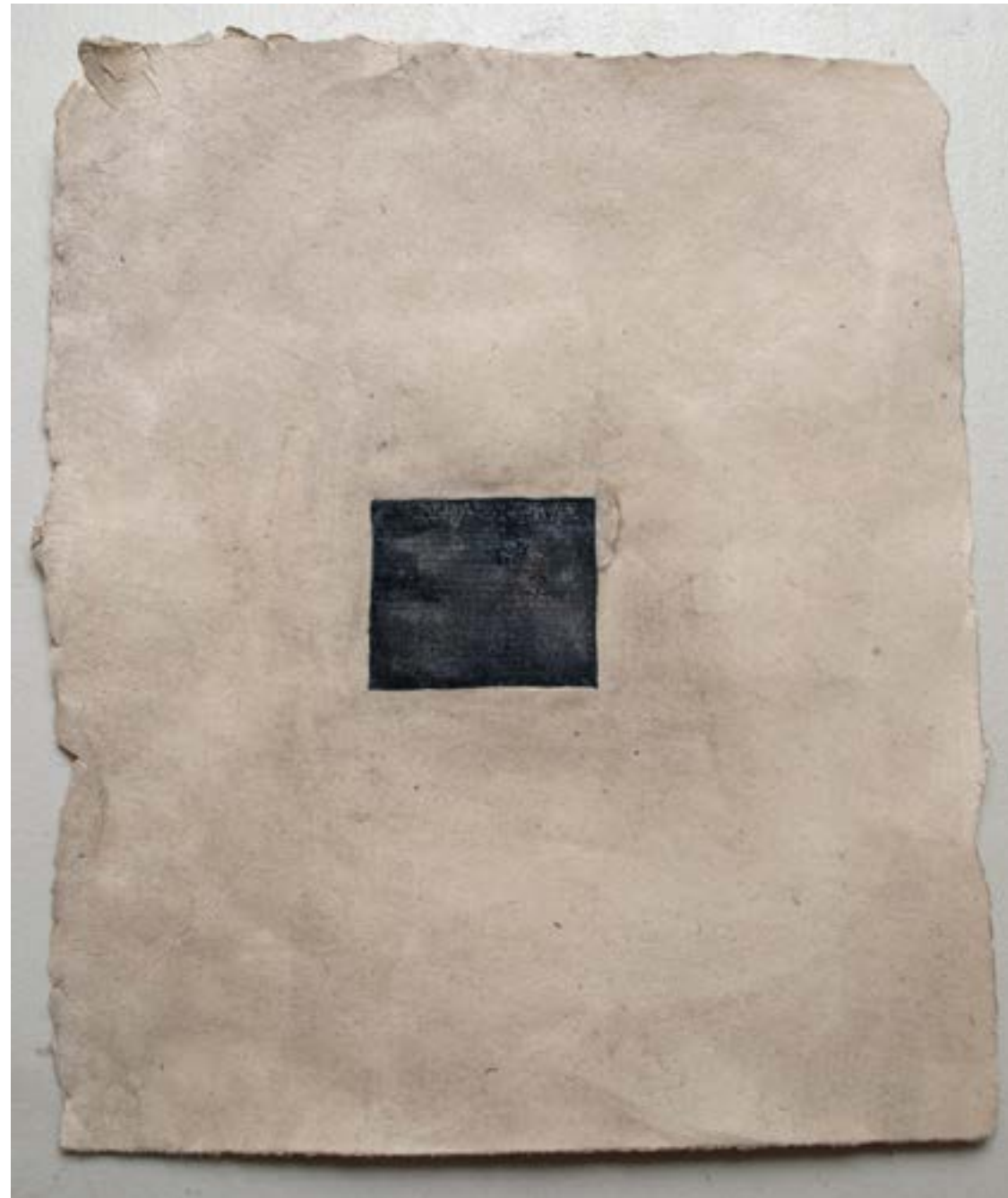


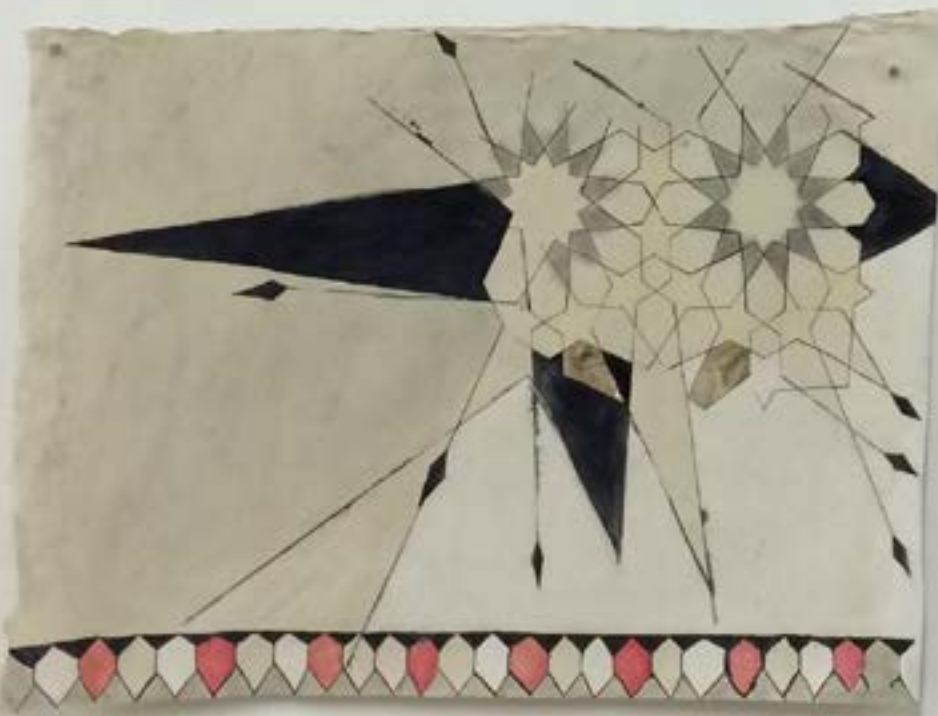
## LEAH CAROLINE

“I explored the materiality of the ink as well as the physicality of texts. Traditional Torah writing is written with gall ink and quills. I practiced with them, and made micrographic images of Hebrew texts—mainly Song of Songs and Lamentations. The micrography is made with tiny black letters over a black background. They are raised shiny letters, that also fade into the matte background. It can be difficult to read yet beautiful as an image.”

Leah Caroline was born in Brooklyn, NY and raised in the Chassidic community of Crown Heights. She received her BFA from Lyme Academy College of Fine Arts in Old Lyme, Connecticut.

[www.leahcaroline.com](http://www.leahcaroline.com)





ELLIE IRONS  
KAREN SCHIFF  
PATRICIA MIRANDA  
WENDY SMALL

## ELLIE IRONS

Ellie Irons is an interdisciplinary artist and educator based in Brooklyn, NY. Her work explores the interplay of humanity and ecology through drawings, environmental sculpture and new media. She studied Environmental Science and Art at Scripps College in California and received her MFA from Hunter College in 2009.

[www.ellieirons.com](http://www.ellieirons.com)





## KAREN SCHIFF

“I was excited to work with oak gall ink because I am compelled by all materials that have to do with writing -- pens, calligraphy brushes, papers, inks. I was also excited by the collaborative project because I might find others who share my inclinations. As I worked, I found that I was seeking strategies that reflect on the medium in some way. My collages are like swatch books of all the ink colors; my patterned drawings are based on a grid of the cursive letter L, written repeatedly like a page of handwriting exercises. (Arrayed across the field of the paper, the letters lose their linguistic association and become drawn forms...or do they?) When I worked on others’ drawings, I felt more flexible in my artistic approaches and that was fun.”

Karen Schiff works at intersections of art and language. She holds an M.F.A. in Studio Art (School of the Museum of Fine Arts / Boston, 2006), and a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature and Literary Theory (University of Pennsylvania, 1998). Her artwork has shown in galleries and museums in New York, around the United States, in Spain and in Iceland.

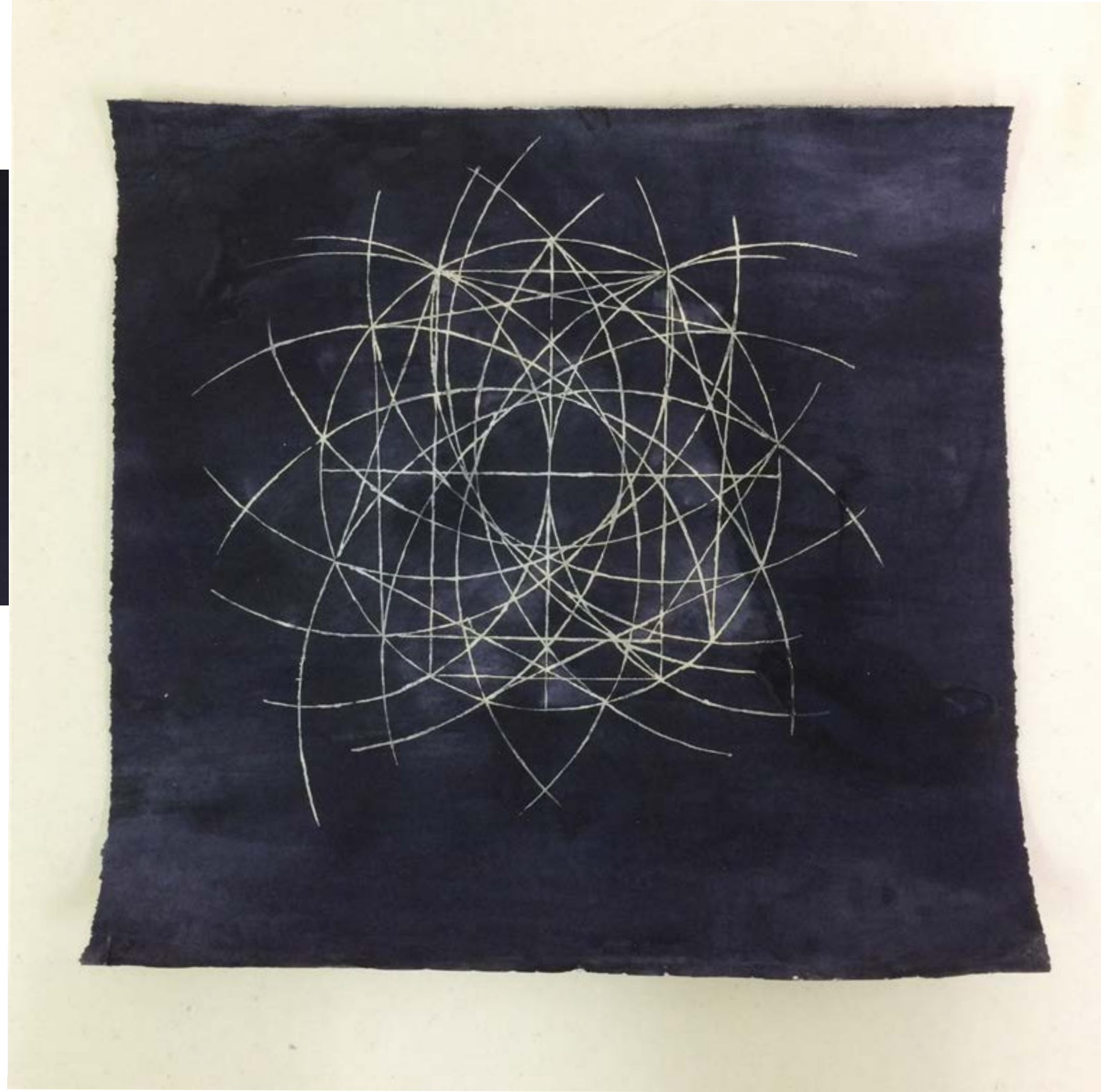
[www.karen-schiff.com](http://www.karen-schiff.com)



## PATRICIA MIRANDA

Patricia Miranda is an artist, educator and curator, using interdisciplinary projects to make connections between art, science, history and culture. She is founder and director of miranda arts project space, an artist-centered exhibition space, where she founded a collaborative workspace residency program. Miranda received her BFA at Purchase College SUNY, and MFA at Vermont College of Fine Arts, and has developed and led art and education programs at The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, The American Museum of Natural History, Wave Hill, and the Smithsonian Institution.

[www.patriciamiranda.com](http://www.patriciamiranda.com)





## WENDY SMALL

“I went to school for painting, and then I was an assistant to Terry Winters for ten years. I always thought I’d be a painter. I thought that I’d make large thickly painted, full arm stroke paintings forever. Then, when I started doing the photograms I almost didn’t notice that I had stopped painting. It was very unusual, because I was very fearful of not painting. You have an identity that’s set up in one medium. I was so excited by learning about photo papers and chemistry, that I didn’t feel the switch. That lasted for twelve years until recently when I started playing around with paint again. I can predict that my photograms will start to absorb my painting again, and now I have started painting with the photo chemicals.”

[www.wendysmallart.com](http://www.wendysmallart.com)



# MAKE YOUR OWN OAK GALL INK



## YOU WILL NEED:

- 3 parts ground, found Oak Galls
- 2 parts Ferrus Sulfate
- 1 part Gum Arabic

- STEP 1** Grind Oak Galls in a mortar and pestle. Or you can smash them in a cloth with a hammer.
- STEP 2** Pour 1/4 cup boiling water into a lidded jar.
- STEP 3** Add the Oak Galls to make a tea.
- STEP 4** After 15 minutes minimum, add two parts ferrus sulfate. Pour mixture through a wet coffee filter.
- STEP 5** Add powdered gum arabic. Allow it to dissolve in mixture. Stir out all lumps. Add small amount of chalk to reduce acidity.
- STEP 6** Create something!

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