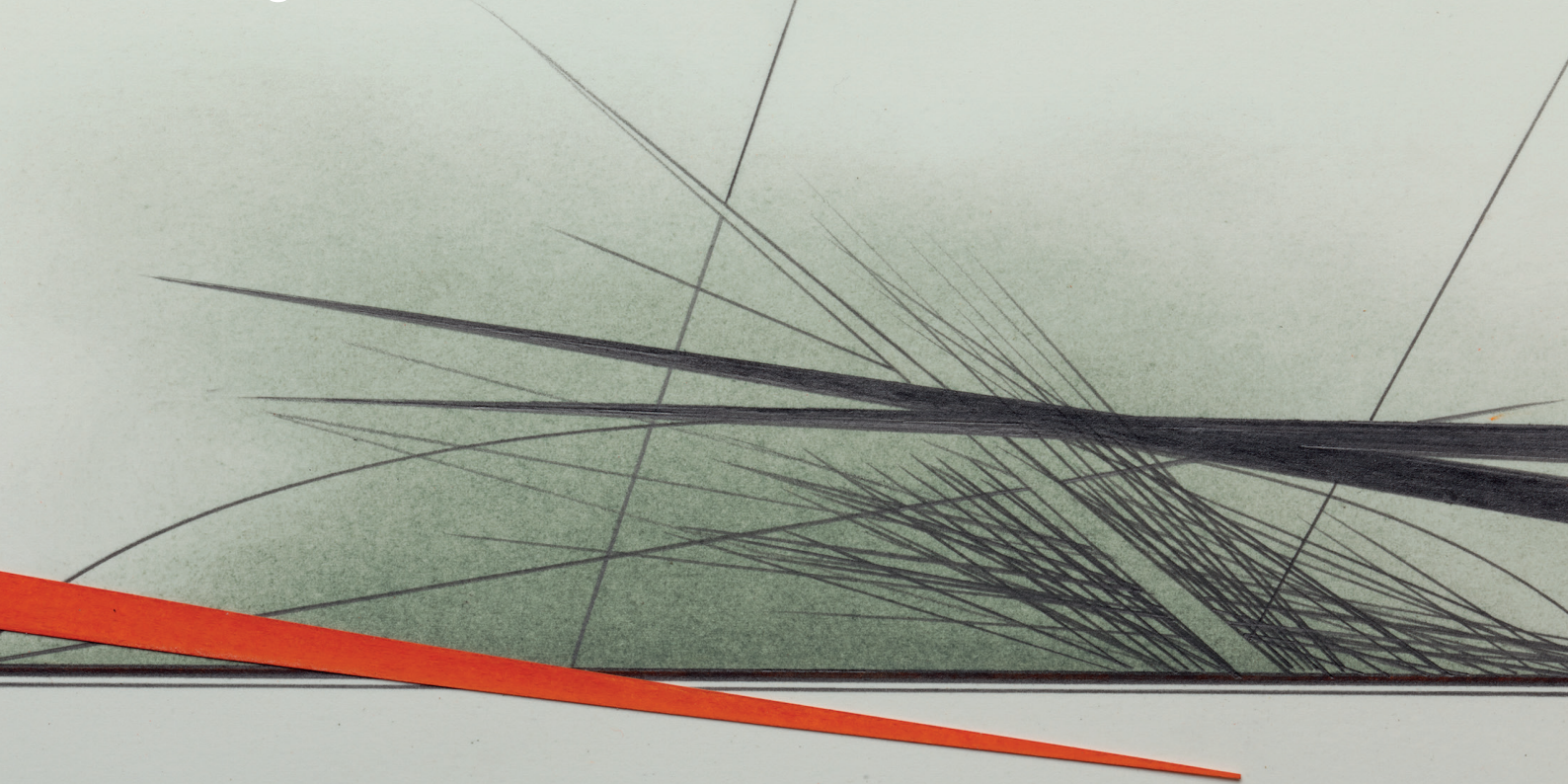


Ann Christopher RA

Drawing – The Lines of Time



RA Royal
Academy
of Arts



Cover image: *The Lines of Time – 10* (detail)

Left: *The Edge of Light*, 2002
Photo: Pete Chinn

Ann Christopher RA Drawing – The Lines of Time

‘A line is something to hang on to, or something to follow. I tend to work in series, so in a sense it’s my line at the moment, my journey of discovery because I don’t know what’s coming next. We all have our own personal journey of experience that affects what we feel and do, and currently I am seeing lines everywhere.’

Ann Christopher, 2015

This exhibition brings together *The Lines of Time*, a recently completed series of 26 drawings by the sculptor Ann Christopher. She began the project in 2014 during a residency in southern France, near the town of Albi, and describes these works as a kind of ‘visual diary’ that evolved from her experience of the ‘ever-changing effects of the climate and light on the landscape’ in that area. Christopher is best known for her elegant and enigmatic abstract sculpture, represented here by the imposing, textured bronze *The Edge of Light* (2002). This 2.2-metre-high sculpture is an earlier work but one that has particular resonance with *The Lines of Time* as it too was conceived in the studio near Albi.

The Lines of Time is one of several series of prints and drawings that the artist has produced in recent years, and it continues her exploration of the properties of line, in both a formal and conceptual sense. As the title suggests, this line of inquiry is united with another enduring preoccupation: the visual expression of the passage of time and memory.

Christopher rarely draws while she’s making sculpture, and her works on paper therefore tend to develop during transitional phases between sculptural projects. She refers to this as a natural, almost involuntary progression, observing that ‘a series of drawings will suddenly end and sculpture will start again’.



Work in progress in the studio near Albi, France. Photo: Ann Christopher

Following this pattern, *The Lines of Time* began as a sudden outpouring of work. The series evolved rapidly, allowing little time for reflection. Even the dimensions of the paper were unanticipated: Christopher had been given some sheets that she liked but found that they were creased, so she cut them down to a uniform, almost square format that, as she puts it, 'looked right'. This small size meant that she was able to complete a drawing relatively quickly, 'contemplating addition of more colour or tone and varying the positions of the lines – repeatedly until it felt right'. She worked on several drawings at once, sometimes starting on a new sheet before returning to complete work that had been put to one side.

All the drawings in the series are executed in a combination of pastel, crayon and graphite. Christopher chose these media for the 'great variety of mark-making' they allowed. Indeed, several distinct types of line develop in this series, and each is used to considerable effect. There is a powerful contrast, even a tension, between the strong, clear, apparently structural lines in the drawings and the masses of smaller, more diffuse or frenetic ones; this can be seen clearly in *The Lines of Time – 3*. The artist introduced a further juxtaposition, by applying lines of collaged material to some of the sheets. These are made from the same paper as the drawings, coloured and cut to make what she refers to as 'spikes'. She explains: 'I like the differences between the weight and strength of a graphite pencil and the sudden imposition of a collaged three-dimensional line, as if the applied lines were projecting towards the viewer.'

The translucent qualities of pastel and the extraordinary range of tones it can produce were also important to this project. *The Lines of Time* uses more colour than Christopher's previous series of prints and drawings, even those produced in the same French studio. Christopher suggests that this may be an expression of the specific quality of light she observed while at work in 2014. The weather near Albi was constantly changing from torrential rain and dramatic electric storms to intense, bleaching sunlight. Vivid bursts and incisive lines of colour are particularly striking in *The Lines of Time – 1* and *18*.

Whereas she would not describe these drawings as landscapes in a conventional sense, Christopher retrospectively recognises certain shapes and colours from the surrounding environment that had impressed themselves upon her memory, including the lines formed by cloud formations, plane vapour trails and the harvesting of crops in the fields. The relationship between art and memory is a recurring theme in Christopher's work, and she describes her

creative process as 'an expression of some of the visual experiences stored in my subconscious. Unlike a computer I cannot "search and find" – the images emerge seemingly at random, it is only once these visual experiences appear in the works that the origins can sometimes be traced.' One of Christopher's recent exhibitions, *To Know Without Remembering* (Pangolin, London 2013), engaged specifically with these subliminal forms and images.

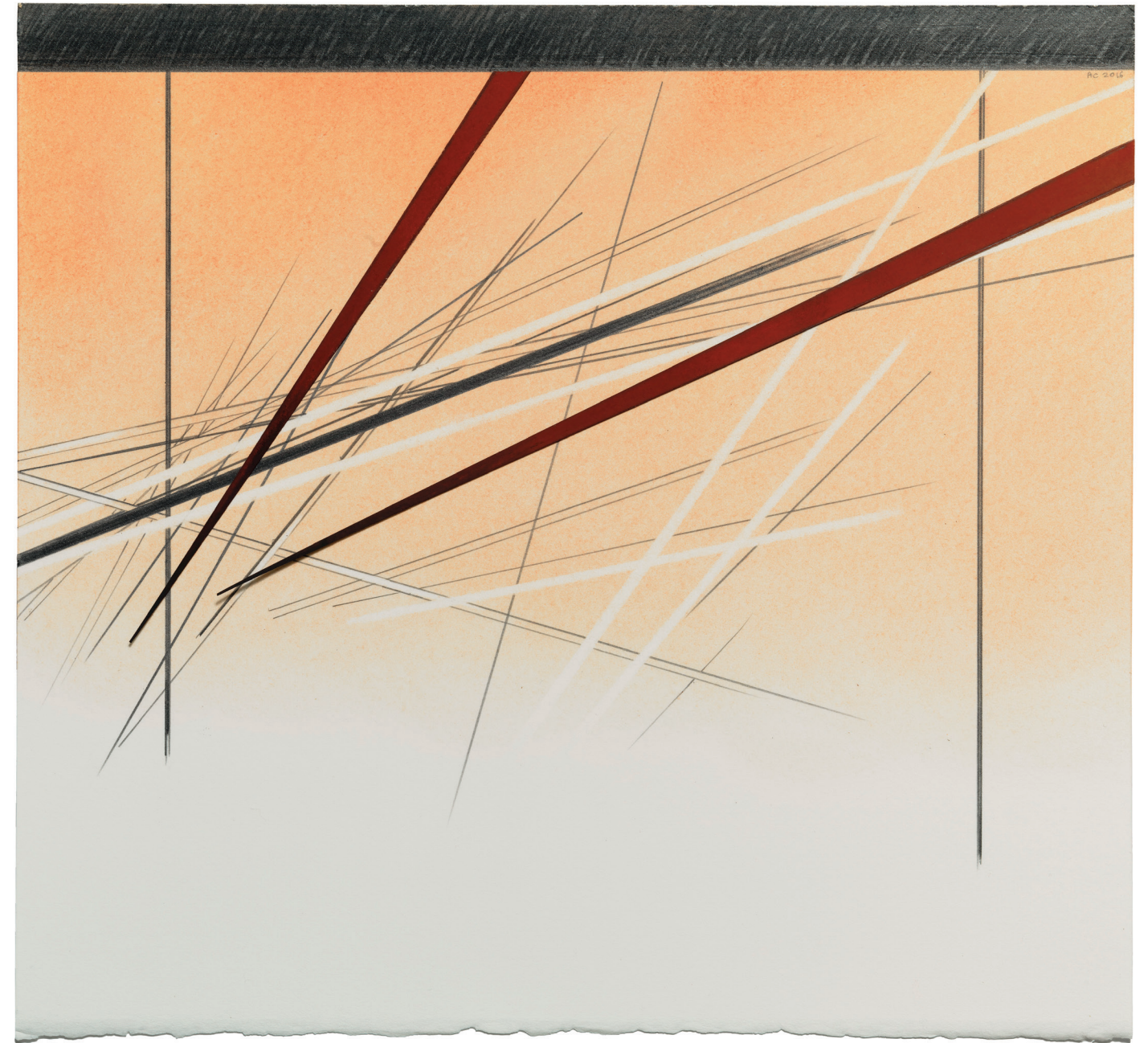
Although Christopher does not produce sculpture and drawing concurrently, the two evidently have an integral and mutually informing relationship in her creative vision. Intriguingly, the titles of many of her sculptures relate to qualities traditionally associated with draughtsmanship – line, light and shadow – while the drawings and prints she produces feature those long connected to sculpture – texture, presence and three-dimensionality. Christopher's view is holistic: she does not see a 'massive division' between sculpture and drawing. She adds that 'sculptures need light to make shadows – their shadows are like drawings – and drawings can have texture and three-dimensionality. They both convey some form of presence – which could be my presence. This series hopefully draws all those elements together.'

Christopher observes that during this current transitional phase, the lines she habitually cuts into her sculptures have been developing, becoming 'more positive – no longer just incised into the sculptures but wrapping around them, containing the forms – I am curious to see what happens next'.

This Tennant Gallery exhibition – with *The Lines of Time* drawings hung in a single row, set against lines that extend onto on the walls themselves – further highlights the relationship between Christopher's drawing and sculpture, their viewers and their surroundings. The display has been designed by the artist to create a dynamic dialogue between the series and the architecture of the gallery. Christopher envisaged not only presenting the series chronologically within a contained area, but also extending lines into that space. She welcomed this as the 'ideal challenge' for her project, explaining that taking the theme of her series out and into the Tennant Gallery enabled her to 'acknowledge the historic architecture of the room with its own lines of time'.

Annette Wickham

Quotations taken from conversations with the artist, October and November 2015



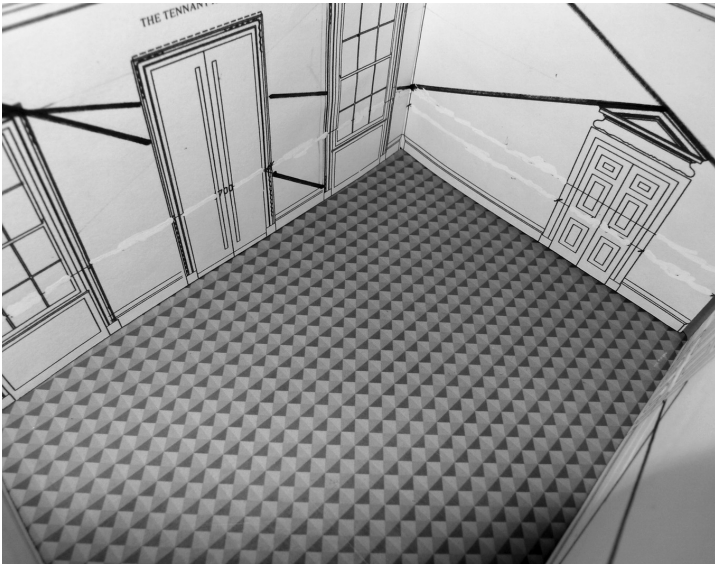
The Lines of Time – 24

List of works

The Lines of Time – 1 to 26, 2014–16
Drawings in pastel, graphite and crayon on Arches Platine
310 gsm, 270 x 290 mm (framed 290 x 310 mm)

Numbers 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6: Charles and Mandy Irving
Numbers 9 and 12: Private collection
All other works courtesy of the artist

The Edge of Light, 2002
Bronze, 220 × 45 × 14 cm
Edition of 5
Courtesy of the artist



Left: Gallery mock-up showing the artist's design for lines applied to the walls. Photo: Ann Christopher

Following pages: *The Lines of Time – 1 to 6*;
The Lines of Time – 14 to 19

Biography

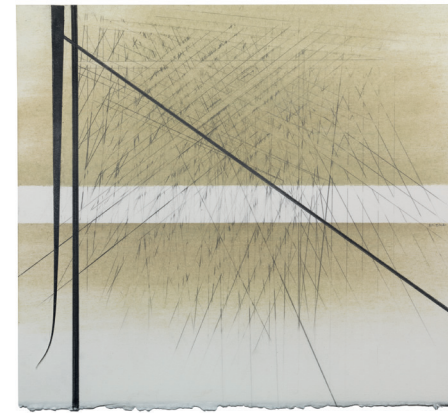
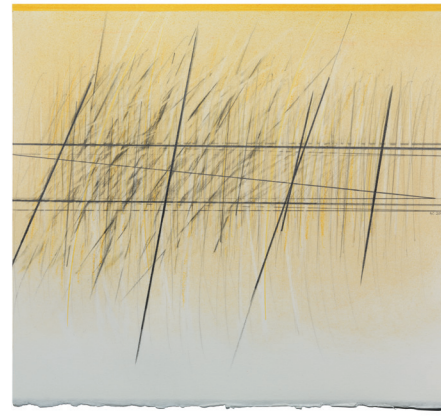
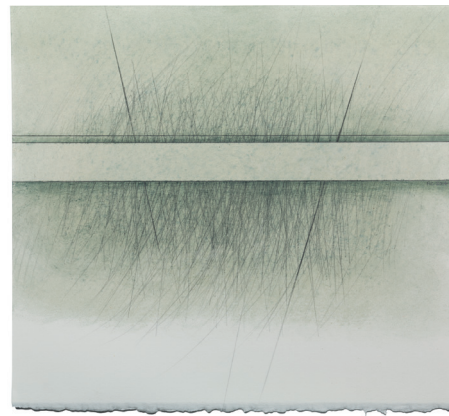
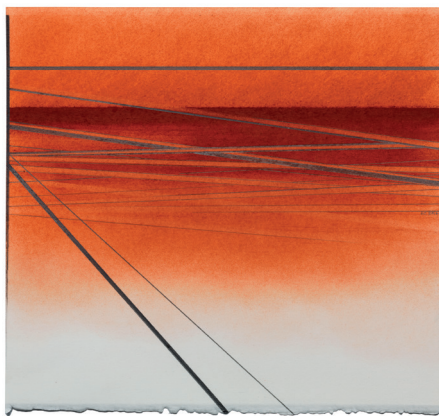
Ann Christopher is a non-figurative sculptor working primarily in cast bronze, stainless steel, silver and fabricated Corten; her work comprises both large and small sculptures, site-specific commissions, drawings, prints, etchings and photo assemblages.

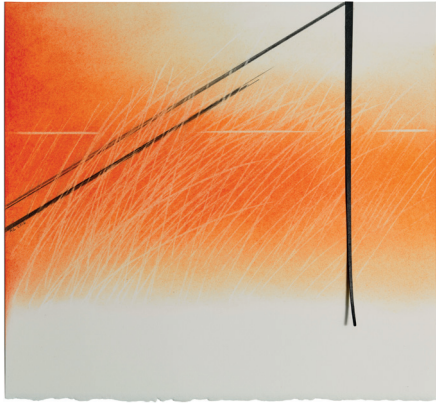
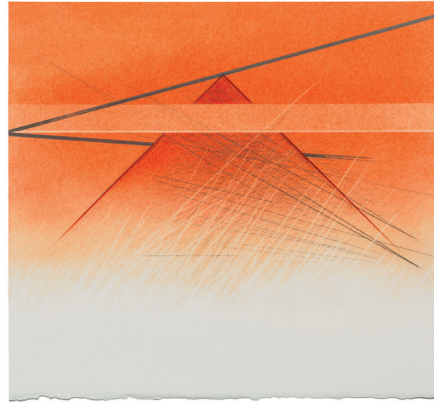
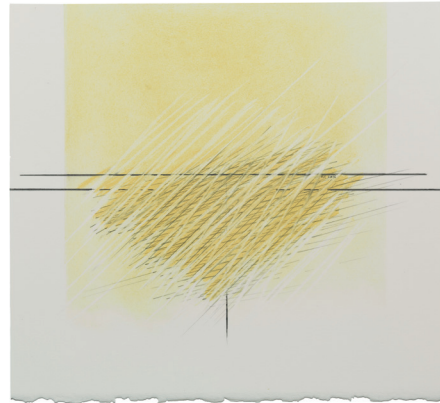
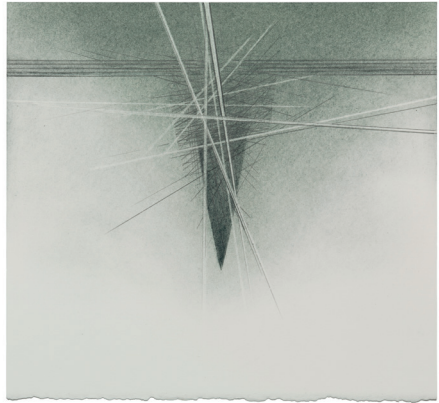
Born in Watford in 1947, Christopher attended Harrow School of Art from 1965 to 1966 and the West of England College of Art in Bristol from 1966 to 1969, where she studied sculpture under Ralph Brown and Robert Clatworthy. Her first solo exhibition was held at the Mignon Gallery, Bath, in 1969. Christopher has since exhibited widely in solo and group exhibitions around the world, and has completed numerous commissions, both public and private.

Her work has won awards and prizes throughout her career. These include the Harrison-Cowley Sculpture Competition (1968), the Peter Stuyvesant Award and the Daily Telegraph Magazine Young Sculptors' Competition (both 1971). More recently, she received the Silver Medal for Sculpture of Outstanding Merit from the Royal Society of British Sculptors (1994) and the Otto Beit Medal for Sculpture of Outstanding Merit (1997).

In 1980 Christopher was the youngest female sculptor to be elected an Associate Royal Academician. She was elected a Royal Academician in 1989. Christopher is also a Fellow of the Royal Society of British Sculptors. She is represented by Pangolin London, and lives and works near Bath.

To find out more about Ann Christopher's work visit annchristopher.co.uk





Recent solo exhibitions and commissions

2014
Marks on the Edge of Space, Rabley Drawing Centre,
Wiltshire

2013
To Know Without Remembering, Pangolin London

2010
Marks on the Edge of Space, Pangolin London

2007
Beyond the Edge – series of 46-cm-high bronze sculptures
commissioned by Parabola Land Ltd. (edition of 12)

2004
In the Sky there is no East or West, bronze medal
commissioned by the British Art Medal Society (edition of 36)

2002
The Edge of Light, a 2.2-m-high bronze commissioned for and
installed at a for private site near Albi, southern France

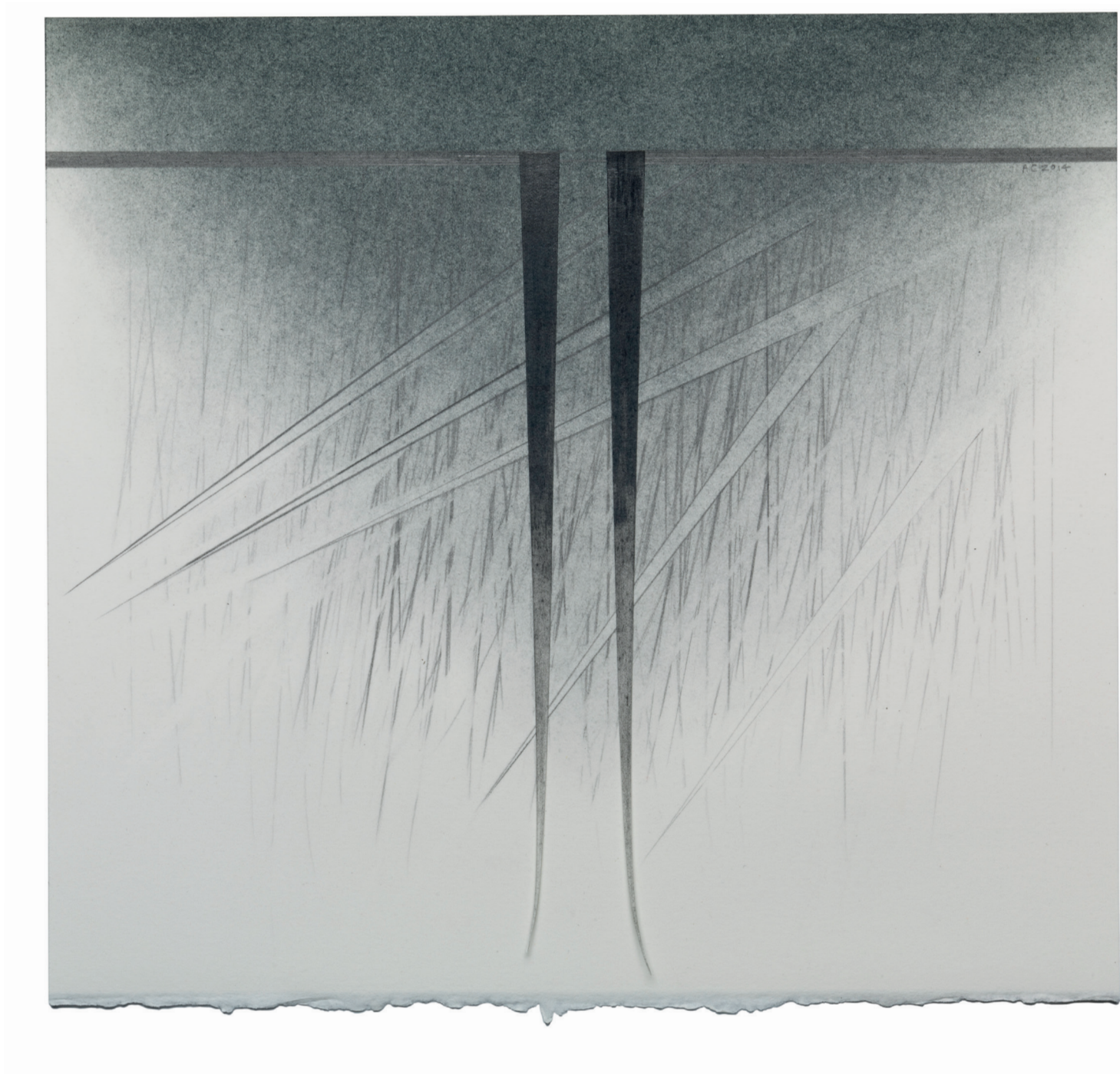
2000-01
Towards the Sky, a 5.5-m-high Corten steel sculpture
commissioned by Crest Nicholson (South West), installed at
Portmarine, Portishead

1999
Sculpture, Drawing, Prints, Courcoux and Courcoux,
Stockbridge;

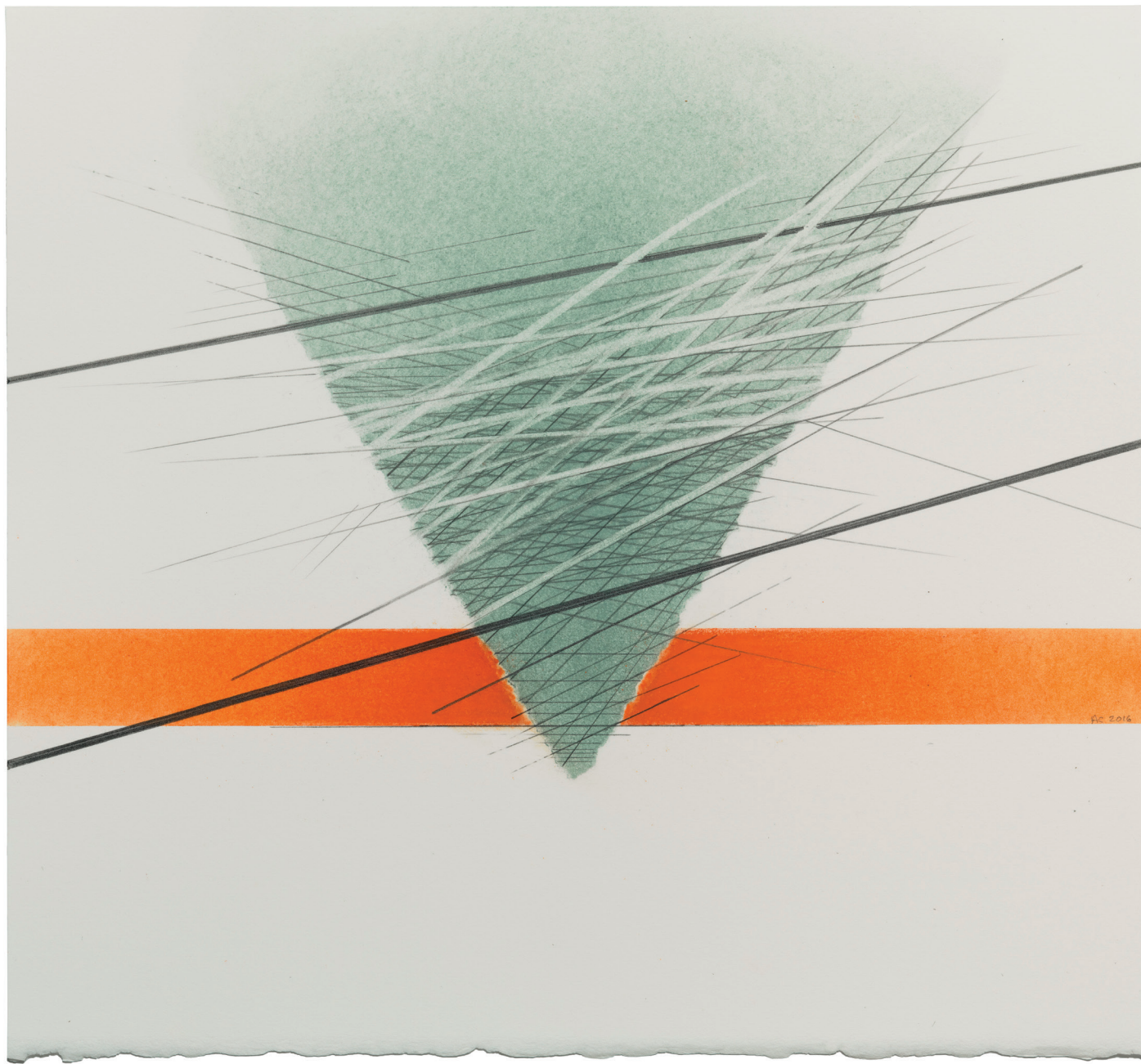
Works on Paper, Royal West of England Academy, Bristol

Still Lines, a 2.3-m-high stone and stainless steel sculpture
incorporating water for St. Peter's Hospice, Bristol (funded by
John Pontin Trust)

1998
The Silence of Shadows, a 3.3-m-high bronze commissioned
for and installed in a private garden in Great Barrington,
Massachusetts, USA



The Lines of Time – 8



Selected Collections

Ballinglen Arts Foundation, County Mayo, Ireland

Bristol University

Bristol Museum and Art Gallery

British Museum, London

Chantrey Bequest, London

Contemporary Art Society, London

Corcoran Gallery, Washington DC

Glynn Vivian Art Gallery, Swansea

Granville Holdings Plc, London

Gruss & Co., New York, USA

The John Creasey Museum, Salisbury Art Gallery

Linklaters, London

Evelyn Stefansson Nef, Washington DC

Pallant House Gallery, Chichester,
Golder-Thompson Collection

Prior's Court School, Newbury, Berkshire

Royal Academy of Arts, London

Royal West of England Academy, Bristol

Sharjah Art Museum

Talboys Bequest, Bristol

Victoria Art Gallery, Bath

Harrison Weir Collection, London

Publication

Ann Christopher, featuring an introduction by Richard Cork, is published by the Royal Academy of Arts and is available online at shop.royalacademy.org.uk and from the RA Shop in hardcover priced at £29.95 (£27 to readers of RA Magazine).

Events

To book, visit royalacademy.org.uk or call 020 7300 5839

Curator's talk

Tuesday 1 March

Curator Annette Wickham explores some of the themes and ideas behind this exhibition.

Tennant Gallery, 3–3.30pm.
Free with an exhibition ticket (no booking required)

Ann Christopher RA in Conversation with Richard Cork

Monday 7 March

Ann Christopher RA discusses her exhibition and extensive body of work with Richard Cork, who has written the introduction for a new publication about the artist. The event will be followed by a book signing.

Reynolds Room, 1–2pm.
Free (seats must be reserved online or by telephone;
unclaimed seats will be released at 1pm that day)

Acknowledgements

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