



Royal Academy Schools Show 2016

The Royal Academy Schools offers a unique environment for a carefully selected group of emergent artists, and this catalogue documents their achievements at the culmination of three years’ worth of intense experience and exceptional opportunities.

We provide an educational experience free of charge to everyone who studies in our very special institution. We are extremely grateful to our lead sponsor Newton, and to all of the donors who make our work at the RA Schools possible.

To reach the level of excellence represented by this year’s Schools Show, our post-graduates have been supported by the dedication of the permanent academic staff, as well as the many visitors to the Schools who represent a truly diverse set of disciplines. I would like to extend my congratulations to those exhibiting and my sincere thanks to everyone who has contributed to the success of this year’s exhibition.

Eileen Cooper RA
Keeper of the Royal Academy of Arts

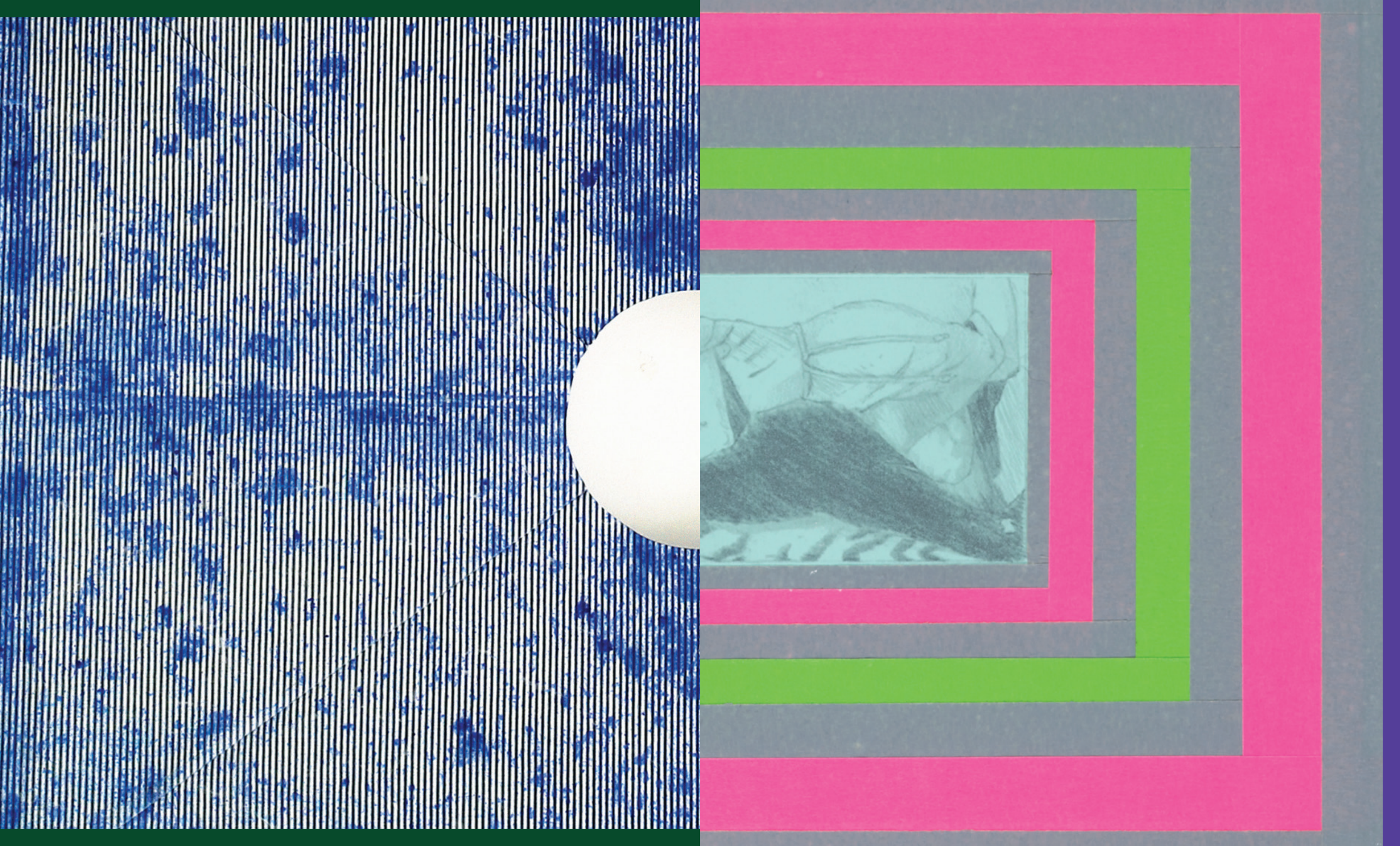
Newton Investment Management is delighted to sponsor the Royal Academy Schools and its end of Year show for the seventh consecutive year. It’s important to us that our sponsorships are meaningful and so we are thrilled to help the Royal Academy support talented young artists.

At Newton, we value the qualities which are at the heart of the RA Schools: diversity, creativity and the power of ideas to challenge the status quo and inspire innovation. Our sponsorship helps ensure that these qualities continue to thrive, and that the School’s students are able to attend on merit alone.

Helena Morrissey, CBE
Chief Executive Officer
Newton Investment Management





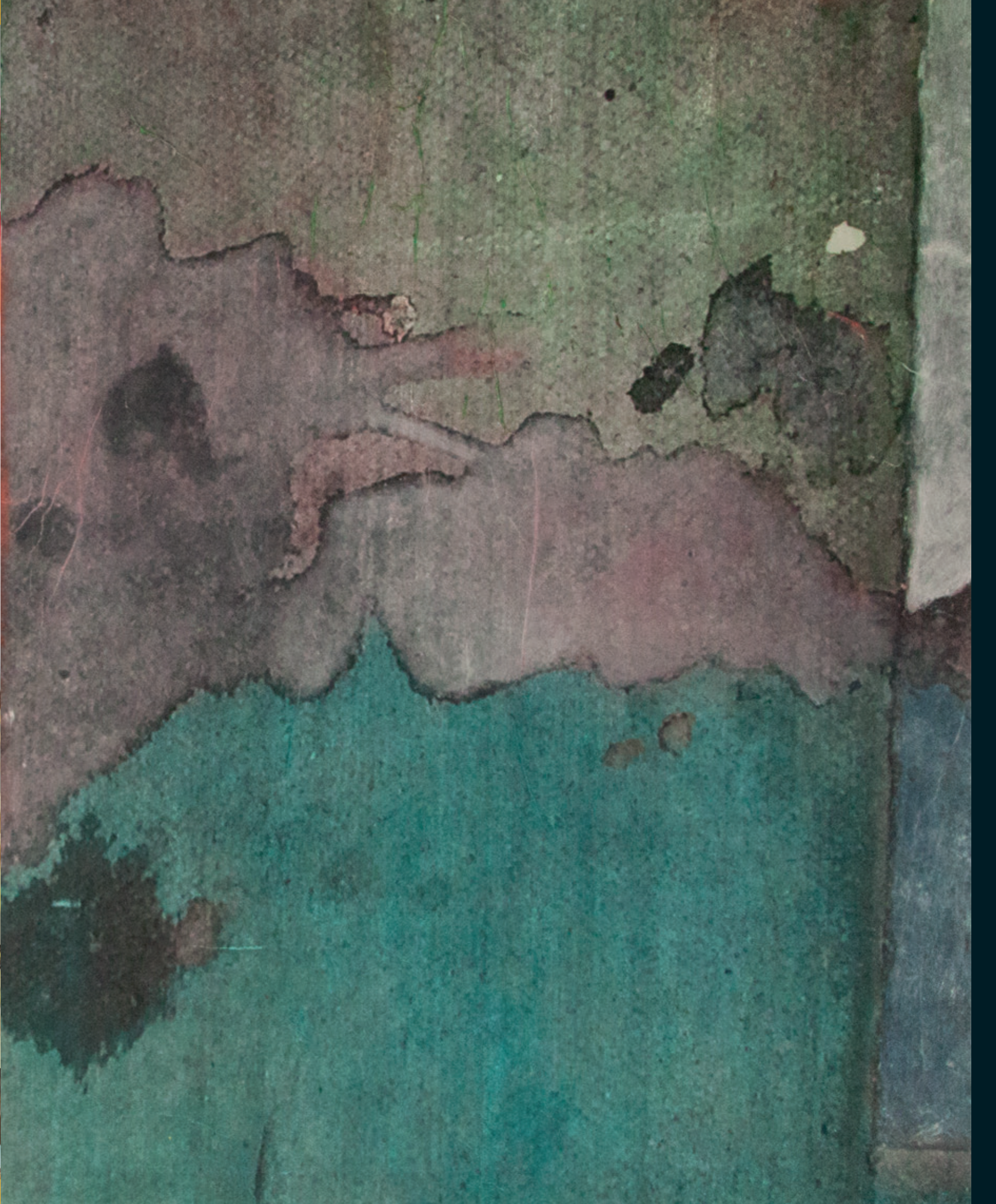




Molly Palmer



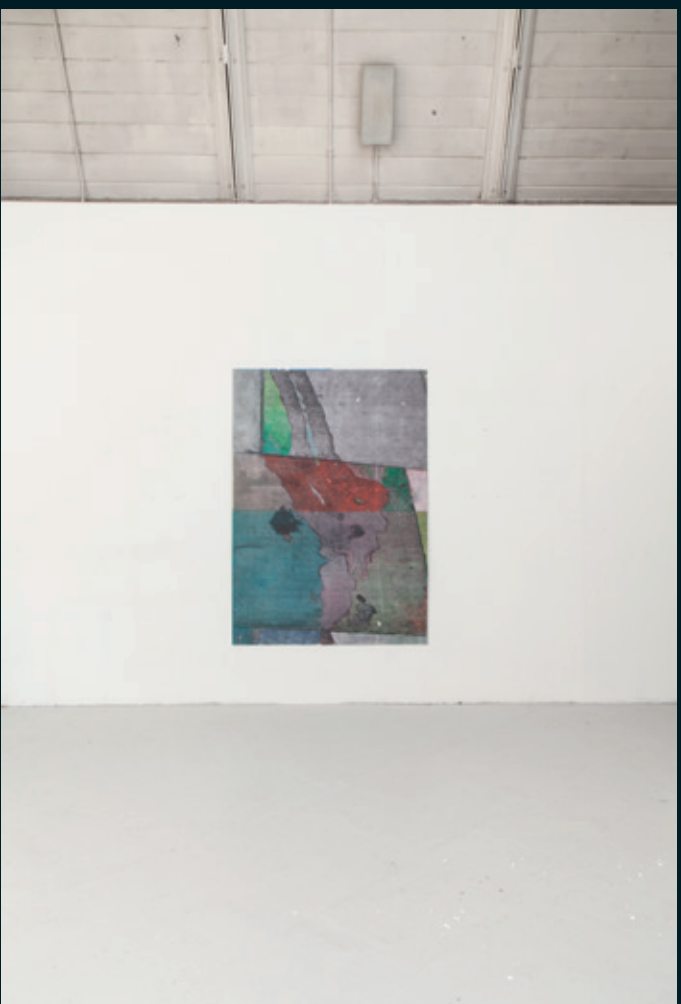






Elliot Dodd

Anna Paterson





Hand over hand I am pulled into being.
Dragging me slowly out of restless unconsciousness
and back into the darkness of the night.
With each beat of my heart a dull thud of pain
reverberates through my skull.
Bone broken, the metallic taste of blood fills
a mouth that cannot move.
Cracked dry lips glued fast.

I am a pair of eyes.

Floating in the darkness,
seeing only what they can reach
within their sockets.
Encased in broken bone,
useless body.

I am a pair of eyes.

Wet bandages press down onto numb flesh.
The trickle of melted ice creeping down my neck,
pooling underneath my head,
soaking through polyester sheets.
It does nothing to help.

Fingers curled around plastic button.
Click. Numb the pain.
Click. Click. Click. Click. Click.
Nothing. Nothing helps.

Suddenly the silence is broken.
A terrible cry from across the room.
Beyond my paper curtain cocoon
a woman’s voice fills the air.

MUUUM. MUMMY. MUMMY WHERE ARE YOU?
HELP ME!

MUMMY.
KILL ME! MUMMY KILL ME!
PLEASE MUMMY KILL ME!

Eardrums hammered by cracking vocal cords.
Someone help her. Please help her.

MUUUM. MUMMY. MUMMY WHERE ARE YOU?
HELP ME!

MUMMY.
KILL ME! MUMMY KILL ME!
PLEASE MUMMY KILL ME!

Why won’t anyone help her. She needs help,
somebody help her! Save her!

MUUUM. MUMMY. MUMMY WHERE ARE YOU?
HELP ME!

MUMMY.
KILL ME! MUMMY KILL ME!
PLEASE

Alana Francis



Claire Undy

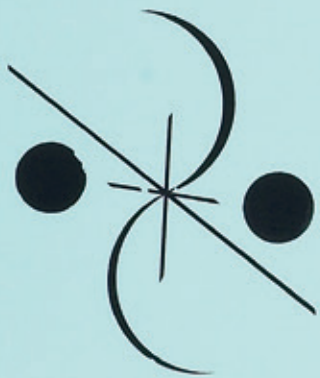


Jack Killick









Gery Georgieva





Postscript to Great Expectations

Jonathan P. Watts

‘Where’s the shame?’ That’s the question Turner Prize-winning artist Mark Leckey let hang at the close of a recent lecture delivered to the third year Royal Academy students. It seems a somewhat perverse, cruelly funny, moment to evoke shame, only a matter of weeks before the third years’ final show opens – what for many should be a cause of immense pride at the culmination of three years of study. When I visited the Schools earlier this year, shortly after Leckey, the question arose again in conversation with a student in their studio, as a question turned back on to me. ‘But what do you think Leckey meant by that?’ I replied. ‘I think he was trying to remind us to take risks.’

There are so many ways to feel shame. So many reasons to feel bad. History is peopled by those who’ve been made to feel shame for their gender, their bodies, the way they have sex. How does art speak to these ways of shaming? How does, or, more counter-intuitively, why *should*, shame perhaps govern artistic practice at the Royal Academy? Let alone artistic practice in general? In what ways is the job of the art critic concerned with shame?

Shame, throughout the centuries, has replaced physical punishment as a punitive device, its operation, in the process, becoming invisible. But shame governs much of our behaviour, even if, or perhaps because, it’s a feeling we tend not to talk or think about – presumably because the things that cause us shame have a propensity to be taboo. We know when we feel it at a certain intensity: we feel bad, perhaps we blush, experience a certain mortification.

The pioneer of affect theory Silvan S. Tomkins considered shame one of the primary ‘negative affects’. Seeking to bring this bad feeling into visibility, Sara Ahmed in her book *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (2004) writes that ‘Shame... is bound up with how the self feels about itself, a self-feeling that is felt by and on the body.’ ‘When shamed,’ she continues:

one’s body seems to burn up with the negation that is perceived (self-negation); and shame impresses upon the skin, as an intense feeling of the subject ‘being against itself’. Such a feeling of negation, which is taken on by the subject as a sign of its own failure, is usually experienced before another.¹

Shame supposes a community – the presence of others – who share in normative judgments. When we feel shame it’s not unusual to want to hide away, turn away from the other, in towards ourselves. As a result of this dynamic of gazes being shamed, Ahmad notes, is to expose oneself. And to feel it or not is, to some extent, to be deemed acceptable or not. Mounting an exhibition is to run a gauntlet of public exposure.

The German artist Andrea Büttner, who works across sculpture, painting, video, performance and print, has speculated on the role of shame in the making and exhibiting of art. She considers shame:

an emotion that indicates what really matters to us, one that is productive and politically valuable as a heuristic feeling: as a feeling reflecting on

cultural conventions regarding what we are supposed to show or hide.²

When I met Büttner last year during the install of her show at Piper Keys gallery in Whitechapel she distinguished between the emotions of shame and guilt, the latter so often a consequence of privilege. Considered a ‘bad feeling’, a critical examination of what produces shame might point towards the normative procedures that enforce it – in other words, what is acceptable. Aspects of art’s institutions are characterised shameless. And a shameless artistic practice would be one that proceeded either without regard for a community, or that lacked the self-critical mechanism – self-negation, embrace of failure – fundamental to shame.

To live a life without shame would be to embrace a contingent sense of normality. There are those who make an ethical decision to live a life *with* shame. For example, in the 1990s the cultural critic Douglas Crimp wrote of how, against the normalising mechanism of gay pride, he chose to live a queer life ‘for shame’; despised and rejected, he accepts that shame can simultaneously be productive and corrosive for queer life (‘Queer scenes are the true *salon des refusés*’³).⁴

Providing the country’s only three year, entirely fee-free postgraduate programme, the Royal Academy Schools can hardly be said to be a *salon des refusés*. In London, a city that’s increasingly hostile to people with even median incomes, RA students have the rarest commodity of all: space to develop as an artist. Because it is fee free, at a time when art education is elitist on the

basis of fees, not ability, the students have an obligation to, to return to Leckey’s question, shame. To be uncomfortable. The schools are a profound institution for artists to turn against themselves.

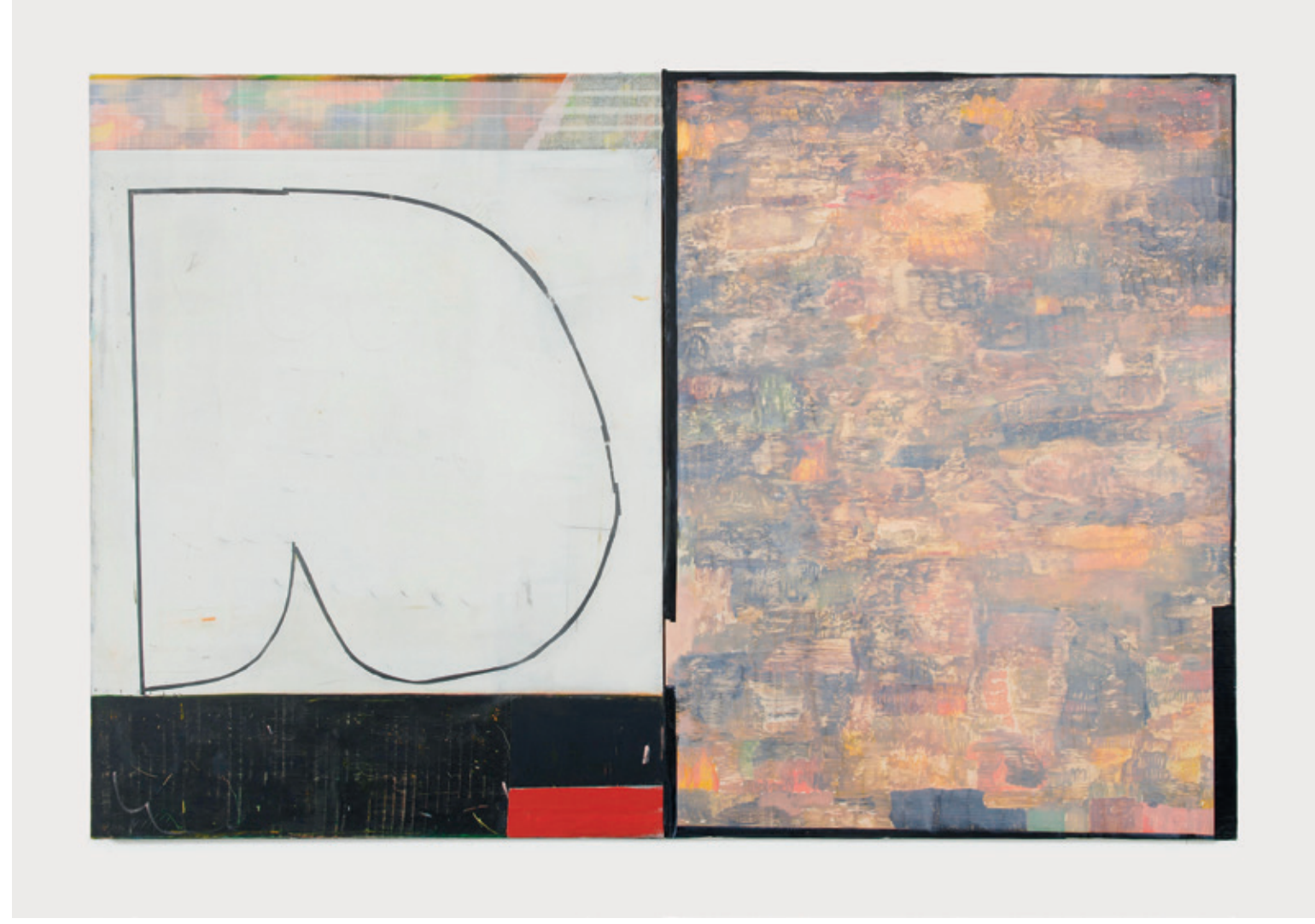
Jonathan P. Watts is a contemporary art critic, editor and occasional curator based between London and Norfolk, UK.

¹ Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, Edinburgh University, 2004, p.103.

² Richard Birkett, ‘Andrea Büttner: The Shame of Culture’, Map #23, 1 September 2010.

³ Douglas Crimp, ‘Mario Montez, For Shame’, *Regarding Sedgwick: Essays on Queer Culture and Critical Theory*, Routledge, 2013, p.66.

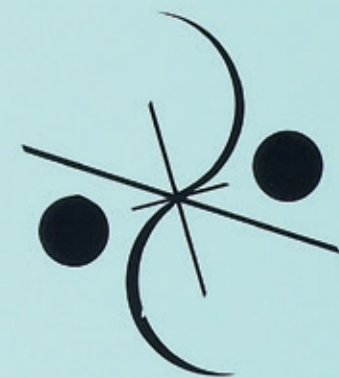
⁴ See, too, Hannah Black’s recent Big Screen Commission for Focal Point Gallery, a video work titled *Credits*, in which the protagonist wears a medieval shame mask as a violent signifier of debt and racialized shame.



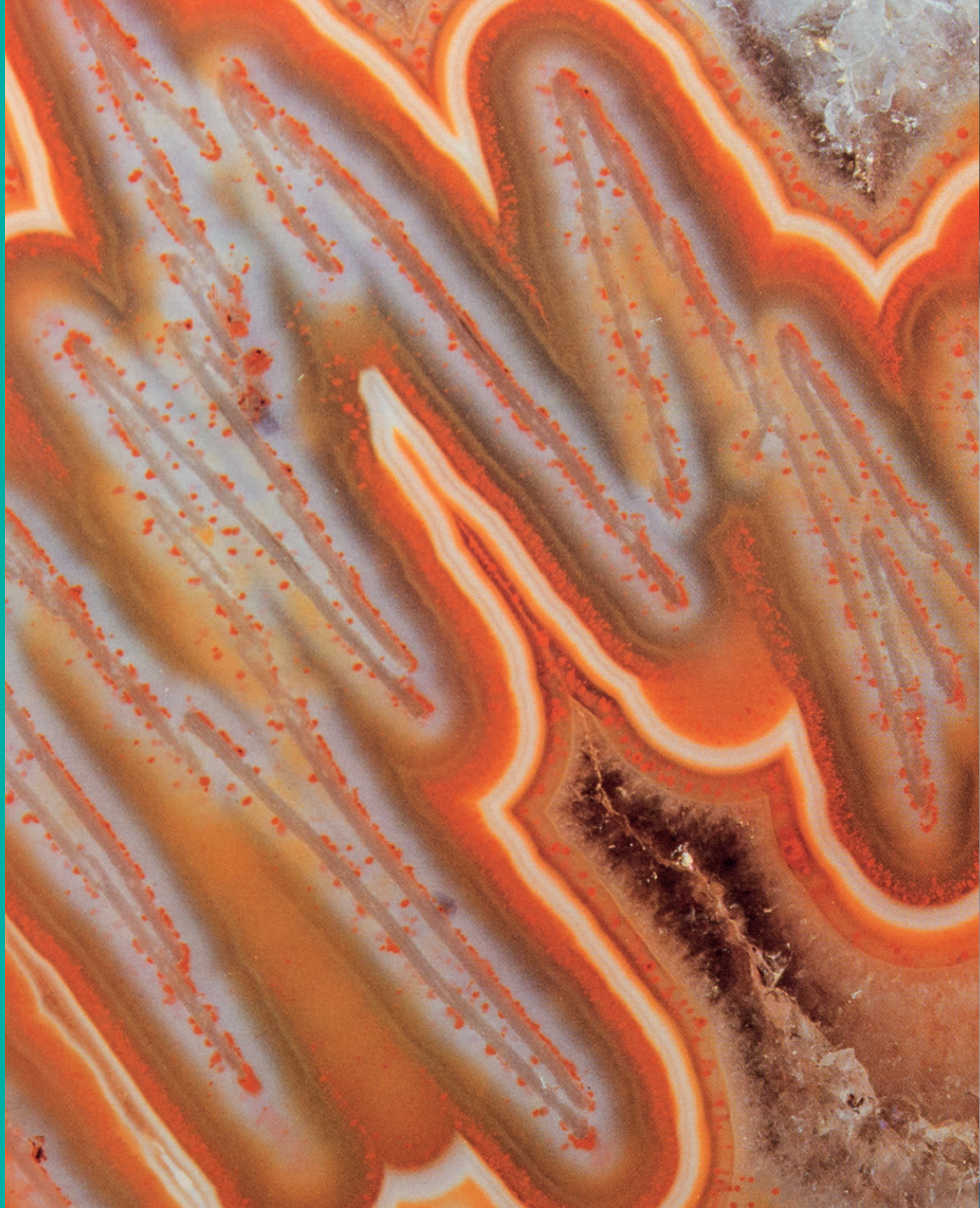




Frank Kent









Rhys Coren



MUMMY KILL ME!
Please stop.

SHUT UP SHUT UP SHUT UP.

I can't listen anymore.
I can't cope.
You need to stop.
Please stop.
Someone just help her.
Stop her.

SHUT HER UP.

Fingers curled
around plastic button.

Click.
Numb the pain.
Block the sound.
Click. Click. Click. Click.
Click.

My feet fly,
a few swift strides across the room.
I'm standing over her.
Looking down at paper-thin flesh,
body contorted with pain.
Hand grabs pillow, neck flung back,
thrust it down onto face,
silence the crying.
Silence the night.

SILENCE THEM.

Arms flailing,
brittle fingers crawling at my flesh,
scratching at skin, legs kicking outward,
upward, anywhere.
And then.
Arms fall back to sides,
stillness, and quiet.

Sweet silence.

Thin woolen blankets
weigh down heavy upon weak legs.
Lay still.
The trickle of melted ice,
pooling under head, soaking through sheets.
The slow rhythmic thump of a heart beat.
The hard ache of broken bone.
The metallic taste of blood fills
a mouth that cannot move.

I am a pair of eyes.

Fingers curled around plastic button.
Click.
Numb the pain.
Click. Click. Click. Click. Click.
Click.





Anna Paterson

Elliot Dodd

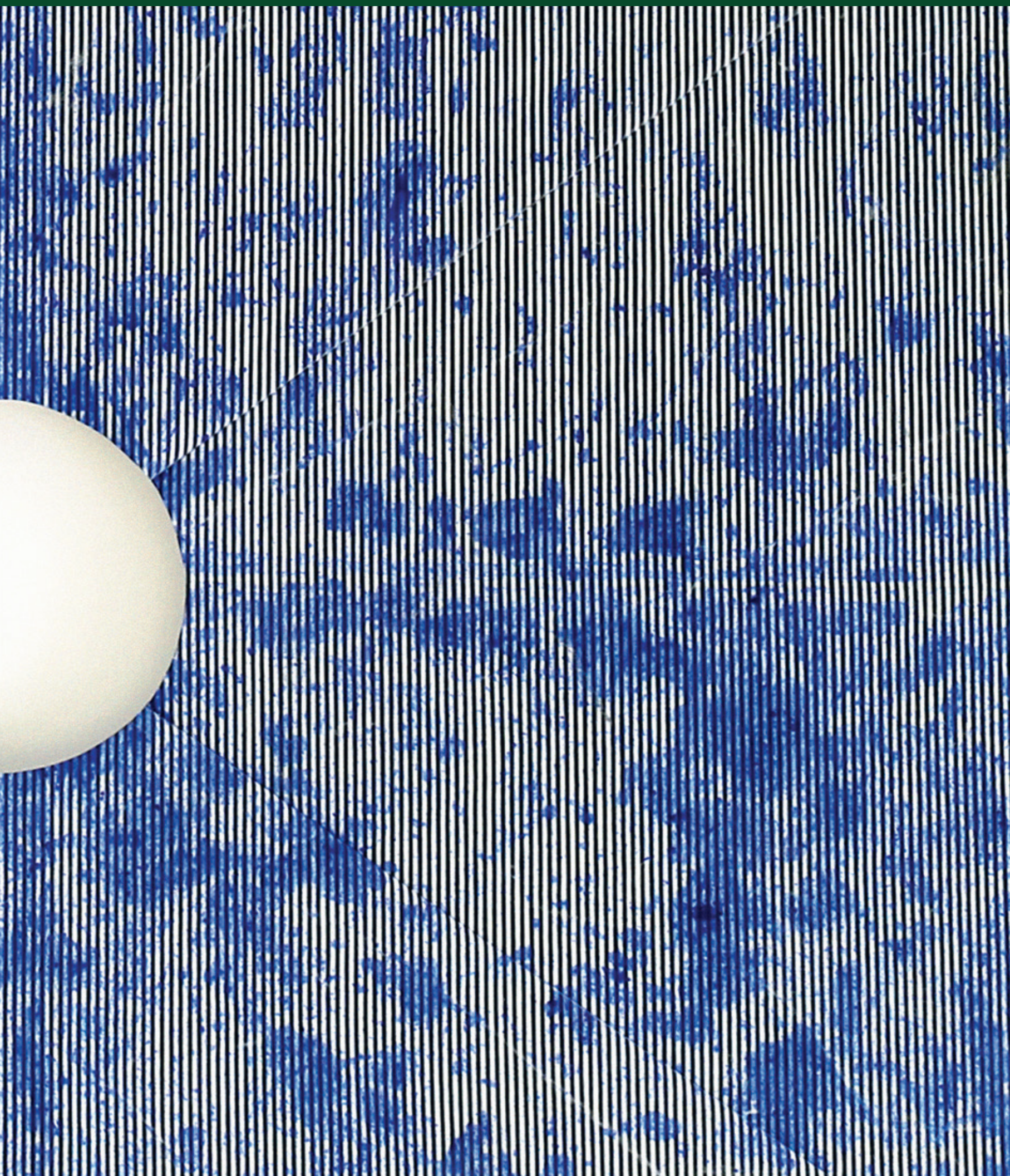
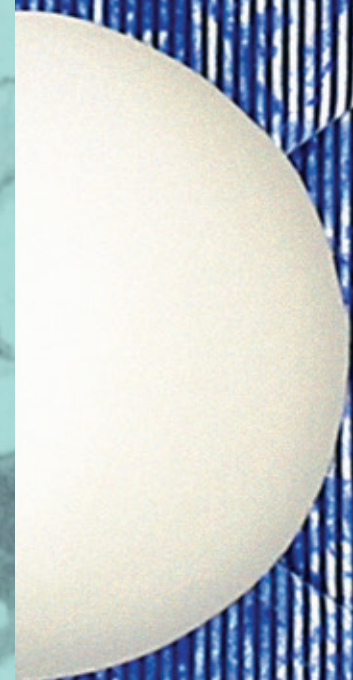
















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