



KATE SHEPHERD FWD: THE TELEPHONE GAME

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Working notes between Kate Shepherd and Anees Assali

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This copy is the fifth iteration of the book

Fwd: The Telephone Game

with special thanks for conversations with:

Renee K
Miles M
Prem K
Tony M
Brett L
Peter R
Rachel F
Sara GR
Carol S
Marji V
Gregory V
Anees A
Joanne G
Cameron M
Nancy P
Michael De
Jeffrey W
all at Galerie L
Daniel K
Lilly W
Charles R
John Z
Dm S
Sam M
Jeffrey K
Richard S
Natalie F
Lauren W
Jane P
Michaela G
Kerry S
Ridley H
Barbara S
Lucy I
Molly K
Pip D

On Jul 31, 2014, at 2:40 PM, Kate Shepherd wrote:

This book is meant to explain both the work and the title of this show, “Fwd: The Telephone Game,” and how stories change as we pass them along from one state to another. I started these paintings with a model - or muse - which I transformed by redrawing on the computer, thus leading to an expression of my personal sensibility that has a frame of reference that is not of the digital realm.

Because there was a chain of elements involved, conversations were a big part of the evolution of this work and in order to display that and express gratitude, I've listed the people who visited my studio. It's important to add that this work was a return to a daily discipline of mine in the decade of 1980s. Bridging the gap between figure and portrait painting which I had done in a traditional manner and using my more recent digital “language” was the challenge. In order to go from one to this other necessitated an evolution, a game of telephone.

It's essential to mention the elements that were employed to make these paintings, the “actors” so to speak.

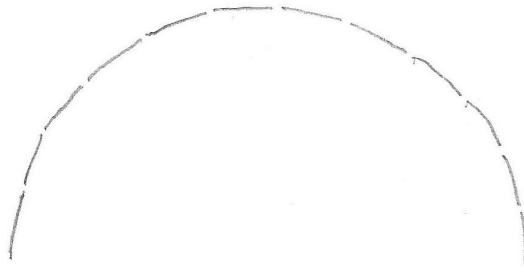
In the interest of depicting more natural imagery, I looked for a way to bring curves into my work which I'd almost never done before. I wanted all drafting to take place in the computer rather than “from life” so I imported the “models” into the computer. I used open-source digital 3D models (virtual human figures in various poses) meant for gaming applications, and a bent plywood chair from 1932 designed by Alvar Aalto. Without knowing what would come of them, I'd chosen the starting points that pretty much played the role of muse and would underlie any subsequent images.

For years I have used Google's 3D modeling program SketchUp, which mainly has architectural applications. I use it in the ‘wireframe’. Based in the Middle East, my technical assistant Anees has a hand in sourcing and preparing the models so I can draw upon them, and putting the images in proper proportion to the panel. We work via Dropbox, Google Docs, iChat and screen sharing. While I direct our work, I am often influenced by his input and our miscommunications.

My selection of these starting points is inevitably an homage to the originals, through the simple act of selection. But it's the differences between the new work and the originals that expose sensibility, intention, and the tools that made it.

To reuse the chair for a painting, I built it on the computer, sliced it in half and pared it down to its curved lines that could then be re-used to act as an obliquely referential sculpture. The divorce from its origin and then again from a potential meaning was the interstice I sought, and the more abstractly suggestive of human sensuality the better. After working with the Aalto chair and bastardizing it at times to an unrecognizable degree, I thought of Wade Guyton's mangled Breuer chair. My inclination in distorting a “model” made by Alvar Aalto was to “humanize” and animate it. Guyton's, I believe, was to render it “abstract.” Nevertheless, we shared the impulse to repurpose an iconic object so that it be no longer be utilitarian or recognizable.

I've used my “tool” for drawing, SketchUp, for a decade. It has many inherent quirks that are both helpful and bothersome. The interface has to be reckoned with on its terms, like a difficult sibling. For instance, with the tools I use in SketchUp, lines can only be straight. This is a very useful way to expose that my hand had not freely or spontaneously drawn and that the program has a direct influence on constructing the imagery of the paintings. Here is a 12-part arc that I drew to show how the computer would make it:



But the straight lines don't have to strictly connote the mechanical or artificial. Warm-up drawings of the figure are often quite rigid; in art school they were called 'envelope' drawings as they merely contained the form without describing it. . Most inspiring was looking at a daddy longlegs spider, which is made up of straight lines. I had an "aha" moment looking at one before starting this body of work, realizing that I could depict natural subjects with the digital tool I was committed to using. Where the form would benefit from approximating a curve, one can subdivide continually until the eye reads a bend.

Here is a rendering of lines in SketchUp, all of equal length, to show how they can create the illusion of depth and organic movement.



Unlike the illustration above, I use the program to "draw" lines on top of images in a virtual 3D space. When that space is rotated, the lines rotate too. They often detach from the original form to become unpredictable rogue elements; with their own agency (like dropped and scattered pick-up-sticks.) The exercise starts akin to life drawing or drafting, but changes when the lines no longer capture what was "there" and instead become the subject themselves. In several of the works, I show more than one image of a figure in rotation; each uses the same exact set of lines, but situated differently from panel to panel. Where a line might describe a knee in the original "sketch," in a different view it separates from the figure and becomes a jagged and meaningless linear fragment.

So while my subject began as body-oriented objects (my muses: a digital nude and a chair), it ceased to be so as the work progressed. After drawing the digital model, I have the option (thanks to Anees and SketchUp) to hide it so that only the drawn contours remain. When rotated, they mutate to become a new "original", and the subject becomes something misconstrued.

A quip by Jim Lewis in Andrew Bujalski's movie "Computer Chess" resonates for its absurdity and relevance: "Real artificial intelligence—is that the same thing as artificial real intelligence?"

Through this process, the mechanical figures reminded me of paintings older artworks which I did not originally seek out. Three-quarters into the process of making a painting, I'd think, "oh, that looks like..." a reference which I then either rejected or embraced. I believe that it is in these moments of adoption that we express ourselves, exposing our preferences and backstory. Some relationships worked to support and some didn't. While one drawing reminded me of Giacometti's walking man, its flatness halted

the progression of the painting. But after seeing that the “carrying” model resembled Georg Kolbe’s “Morning” (1925) from the Barcelona Pavilion, I attempted to tuck the figure into a suggestion of architecture and supply it with a grid floor, referencing not only the one that originally came with the digital model but also Mies van der Rohe’s regulated geometric divisions. In another painting, I noticed that the model’s behind looked a lot like a Picasso poster I knew from my childhood, its very few lines floating on the white page were like mine. With minimal information, they both convincingly describe a volumetric, rounded ass.

In general, I came up against my own parameters, realizing that the figure never worked if it looked alive. Rather, I wanted it to appear like a computer rendering of an artwork, either a sculpture or a painting – both connoting a stilled figure rather than a live model or a photograph of one. This was part of the “handing off” aspect, especially in regards to depicting something recognizable. I often relied on friends to share with me what they saw in the work so I could either push it further or hold it back. “Meaning something” without telling too much was key.

In my paintings, volume is not defined or rendered. Therefore no ‘thing’ is greater than the dimension of a given line, as in a back-of-envelope diagram. I apply the lines to the panel surface where they share a continuous environment with no differentiation between the “body” and the reflective chromatic place that holds and surrounds it.

I want to close with this email from a friend, Charles Renfro, who came to see the work in progress, and who was the only architect among all my visitors.

“Body and space are the same, particularly in the digital realm. The way Mies used his sculpture is classical. Its completeness excludes space. SketchUp equalizes spatial description. It doesn’t distinguish between figure and ground. A new interpretation using digital space as a model merges these two oppositions.”



Samples of prep with Anees // Kinkos templates // Reference Material

Hi Anees. Searching for new models: let's keep the floor grid in some images when it's appropriate. Akin to the grid in an architectural plan and also how the original model is presented

here is a recall of the scenes we looked at today slowly

kate pose
action
carrying 01
carrying 02 YES
carrying 04 -
Lifting 03 (low)
Pulling 02
pulling 03
pushing 02 YES
jumping 01
jumping 02
landing 01
playing 01
playing 03
playing 05
happy talk 04
intimate talk 05
sleeping 05
lying down 02 on side
down hill 03
up hill 01
run 06
(diagonal good)
run 09
on couch 04
on ground 02
waking (walking ?) 01
down stairs 01
univ poses
comic book
Hero action 06 (BATMAN)
fist fight 02

print: woman pose daz3d.3profileD.move2.17line (70x48)

look at: daz woman fighting

hey Anees, I don't think that 'blowing bubbles' is the actual name of this pose, but let's just stick with it for now



Image



Image 1

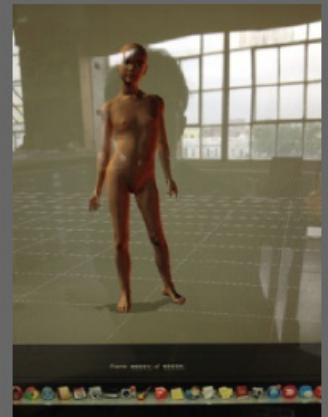


Image 2

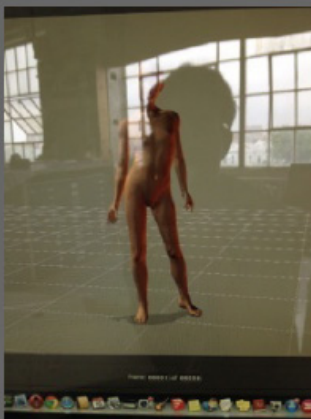


Image 3



Image 4

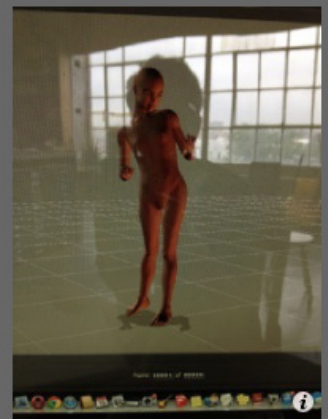
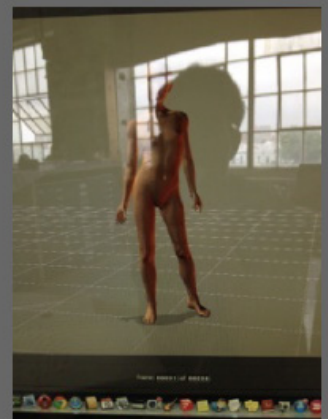
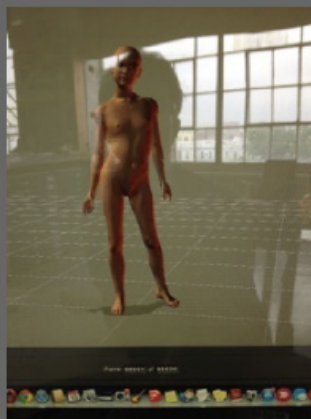


Image copy



Poser.Kate.blowing_bubblesbreasts

could you give me a 'show' option so that no matter what scene I am in , I can work on the corresponding model in 'show ' mode?

also:

I am looking for breasts but in the DAZ they are too generic

the poser, too young, but at least they have some definition

is there a middle ground available with nipples ?

would you look ?

thanks

Pls text me when you read these two here thanks

s20

Poser.Kate.blowing_bubblesbreastsB

on:

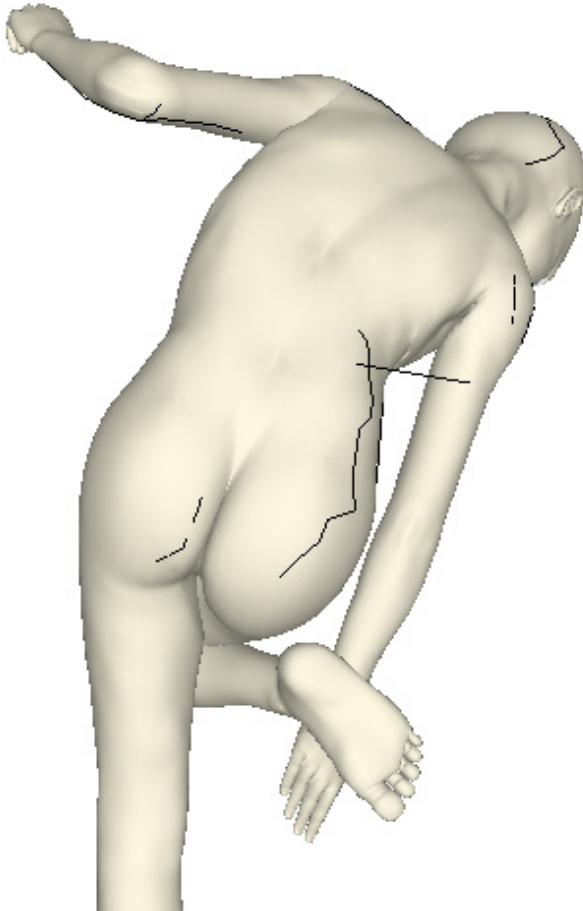
46 x 30 (21,25)

light grey

going to give you new image for it

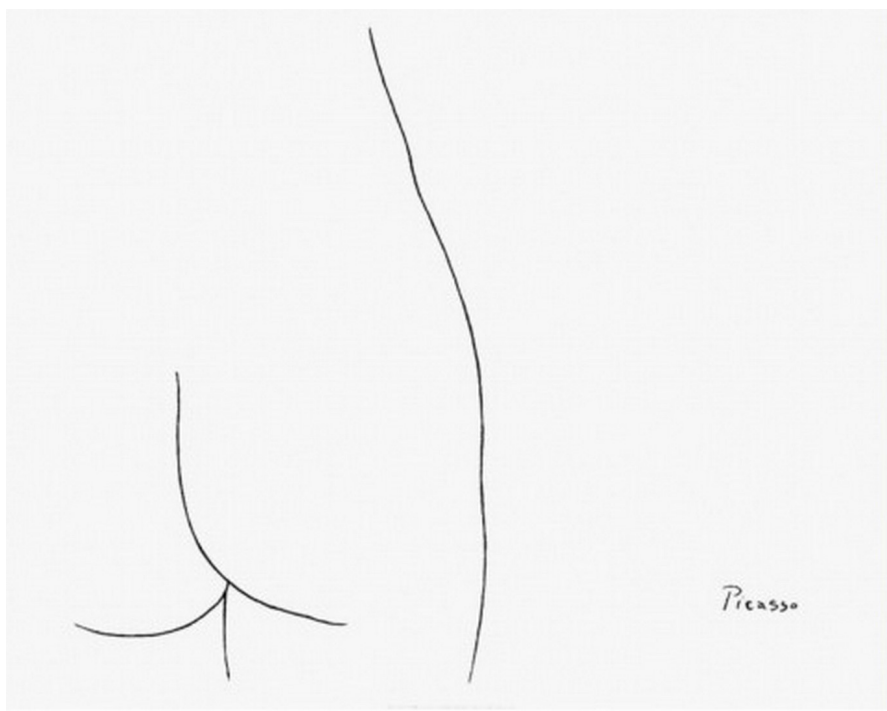
gonna be good

done





Poser.Kate.blowing_bubblesbreasts70x2.hideturned.gridhandsketch (String Figure)





wirethreadAaltohangman2.s6 (Red Wire Line Sculpture)

June , 2014

anees, i took the curves of the chair and broke them as much i could

pls show

80 x 50

24, 30, 26

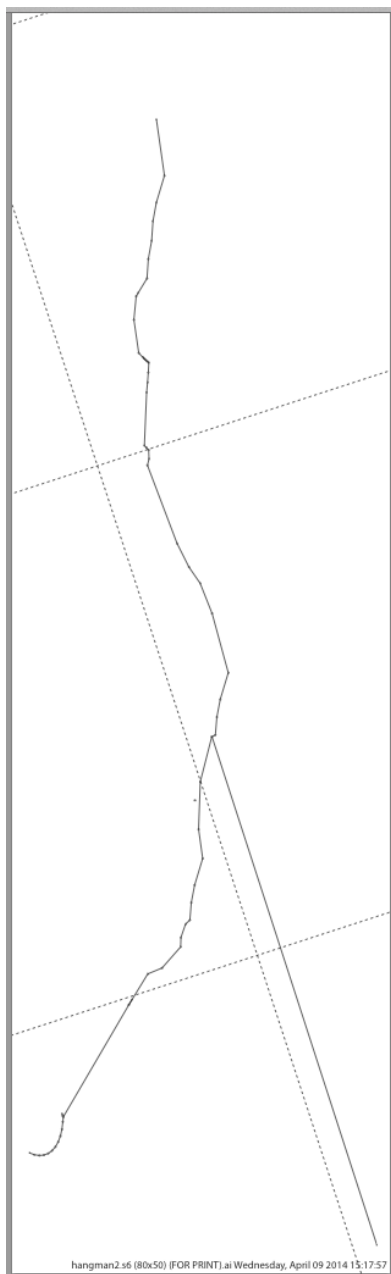
A: wirethreadAaltohangman2.s6

done

anees le't make the bottom darker, keeping it an unnatural color - red- this way the "scuptlure" can stand in a space, on a ground

I put mylar on the screen to show you, here is a pic

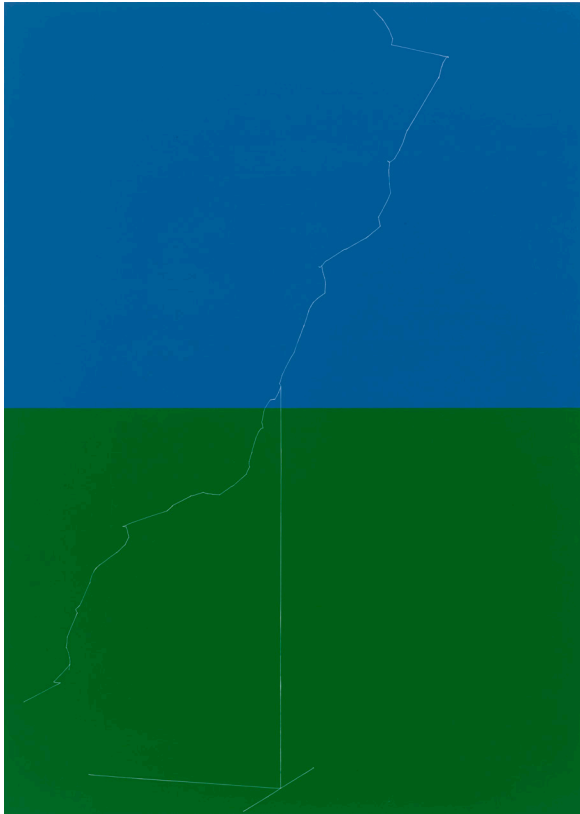
Kate, I formatted the template like this to fit the narrower paper at Kinkos:



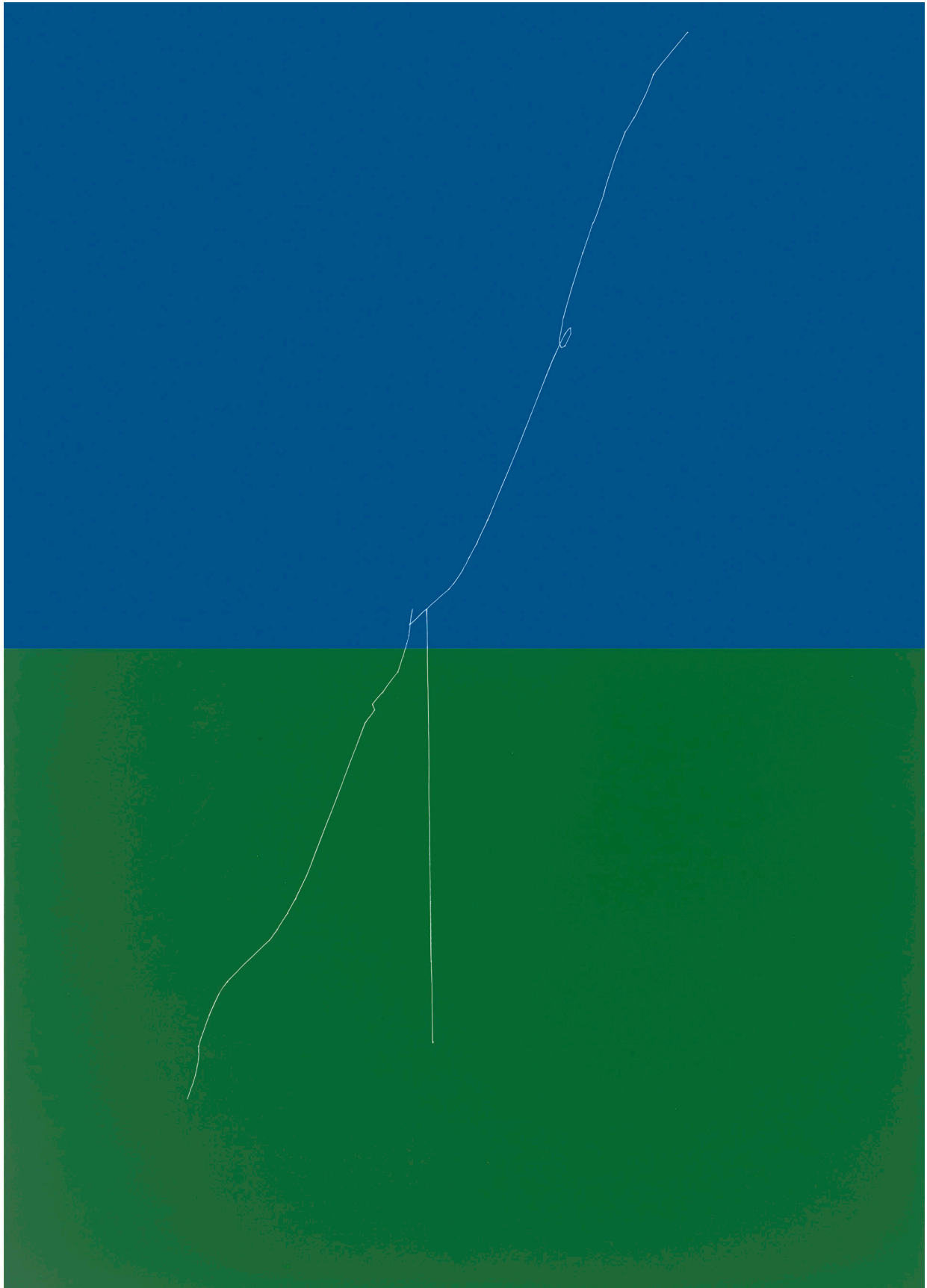


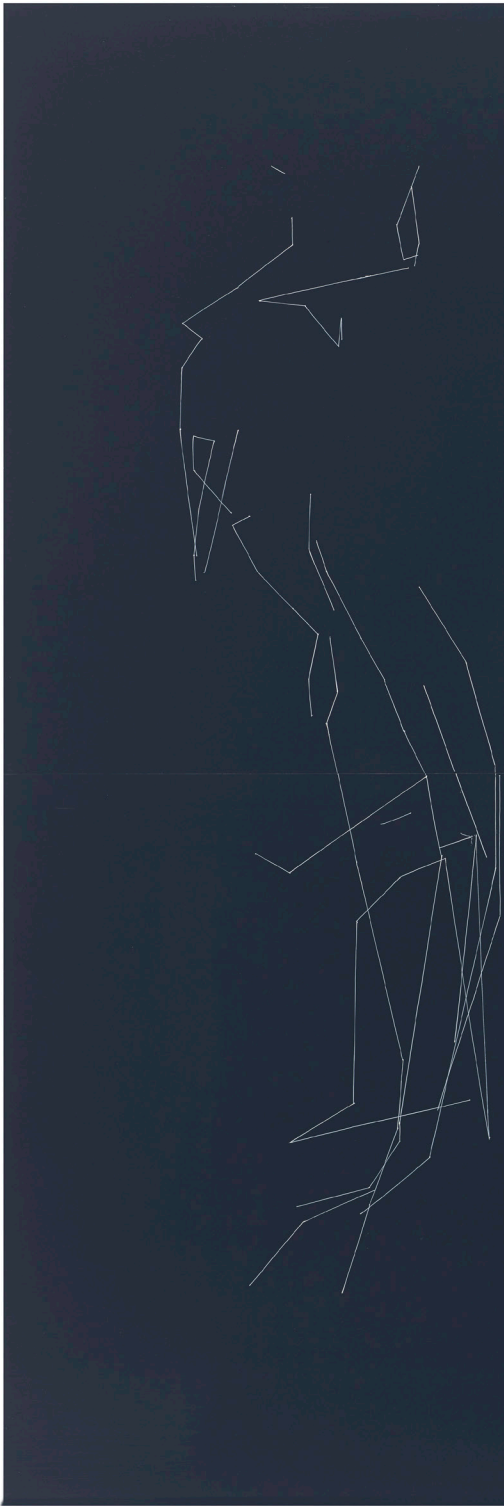
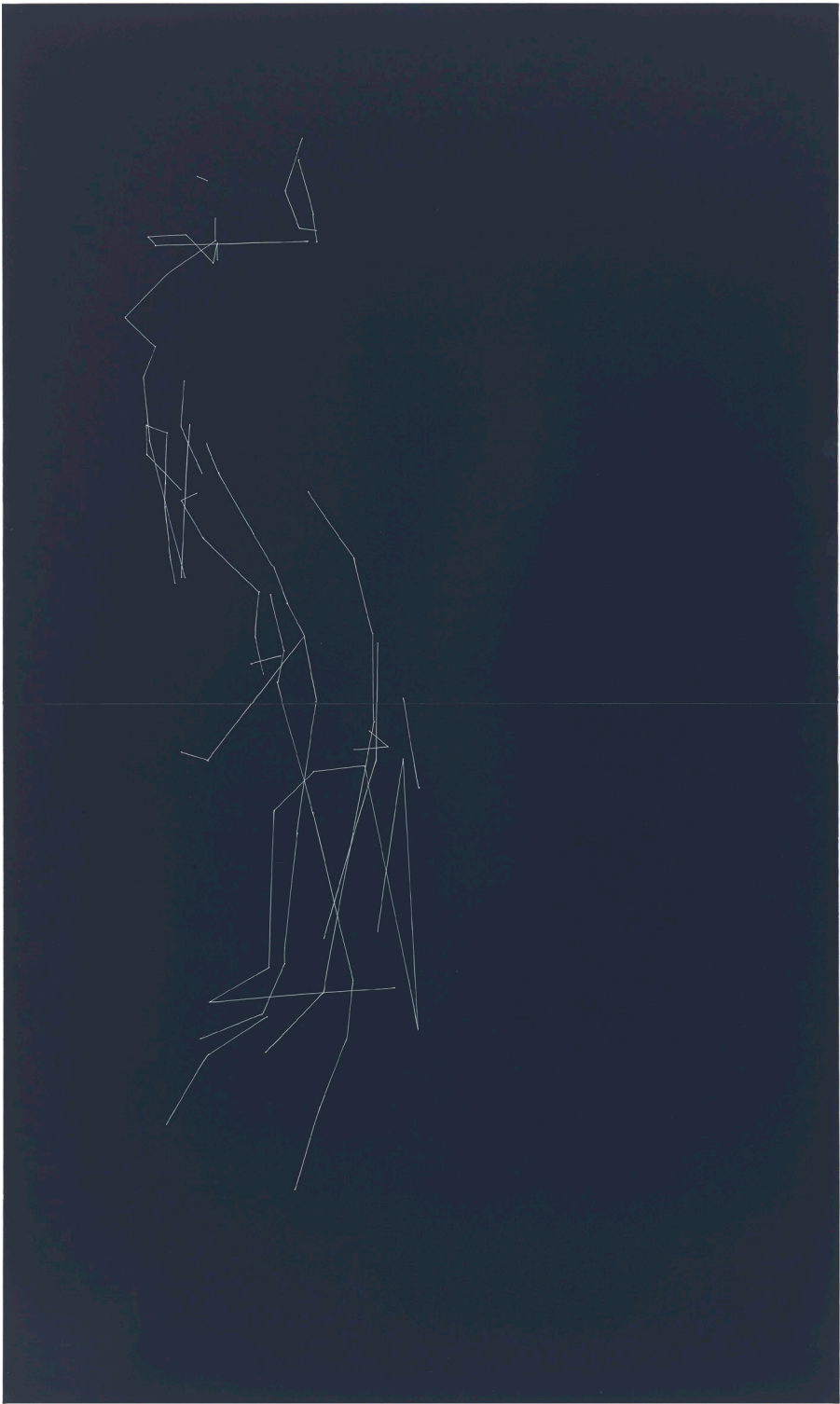
ALVAR AALTO4halvesstacked_thread2nostand.s8 (70x50) (FOR PRINT)-1(Sky Grass)

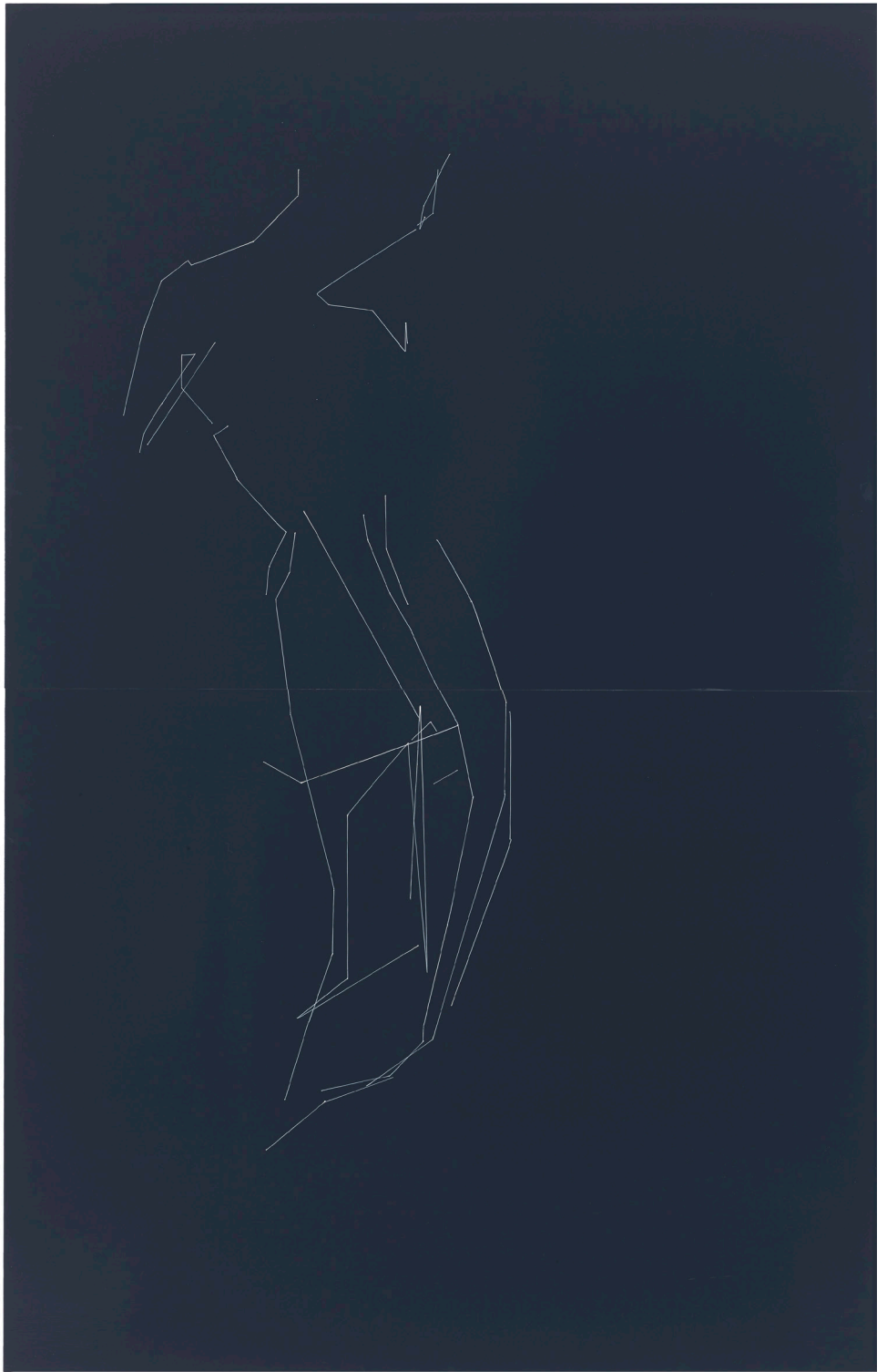
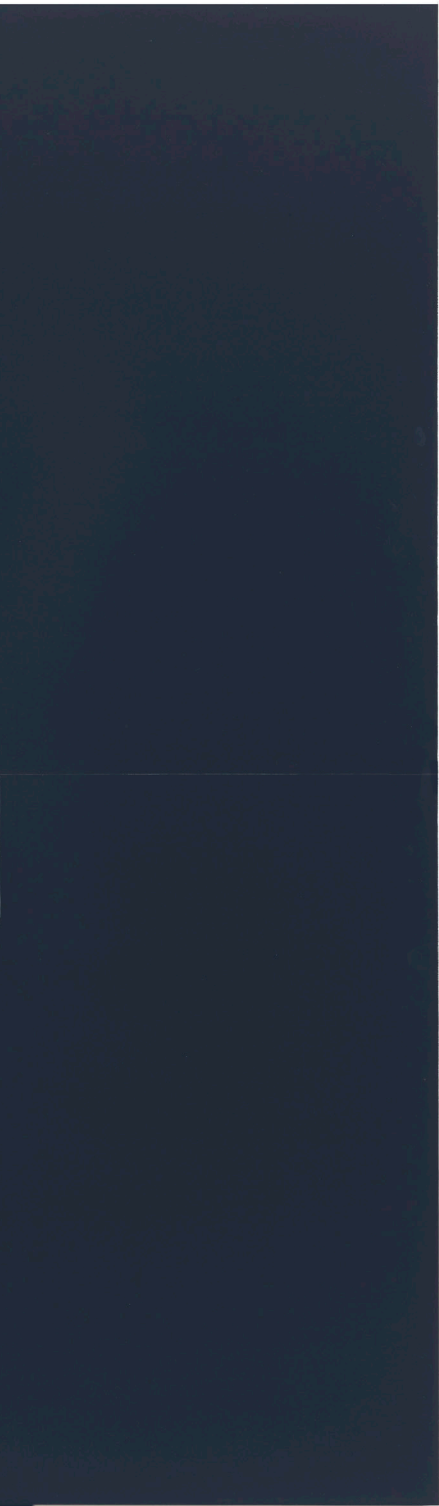
anees, this one we did isn't working
too jagged, not enough air
i've sanded it down and am repainting it
please see new file in dropbox



better:







ALVAR AALTO4halvesstacked_threadodalisque.s9.vStrtch (40x66) Odalisque 1

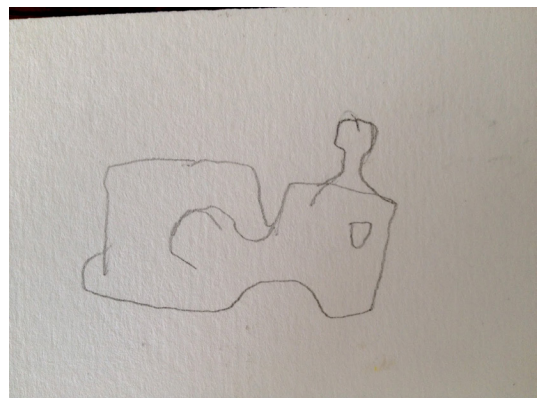
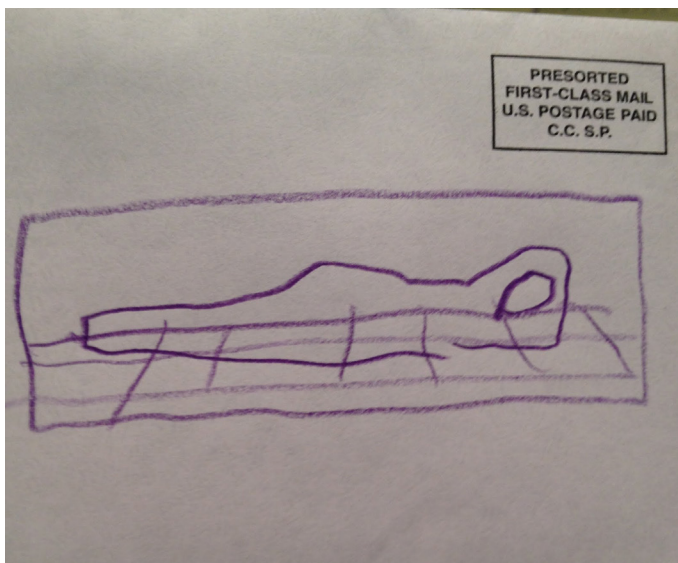


(keep the green blue and red axes lines
in the image)
please see my screenshot of the SU file
ANEEES ARE YOU SLEEPING?

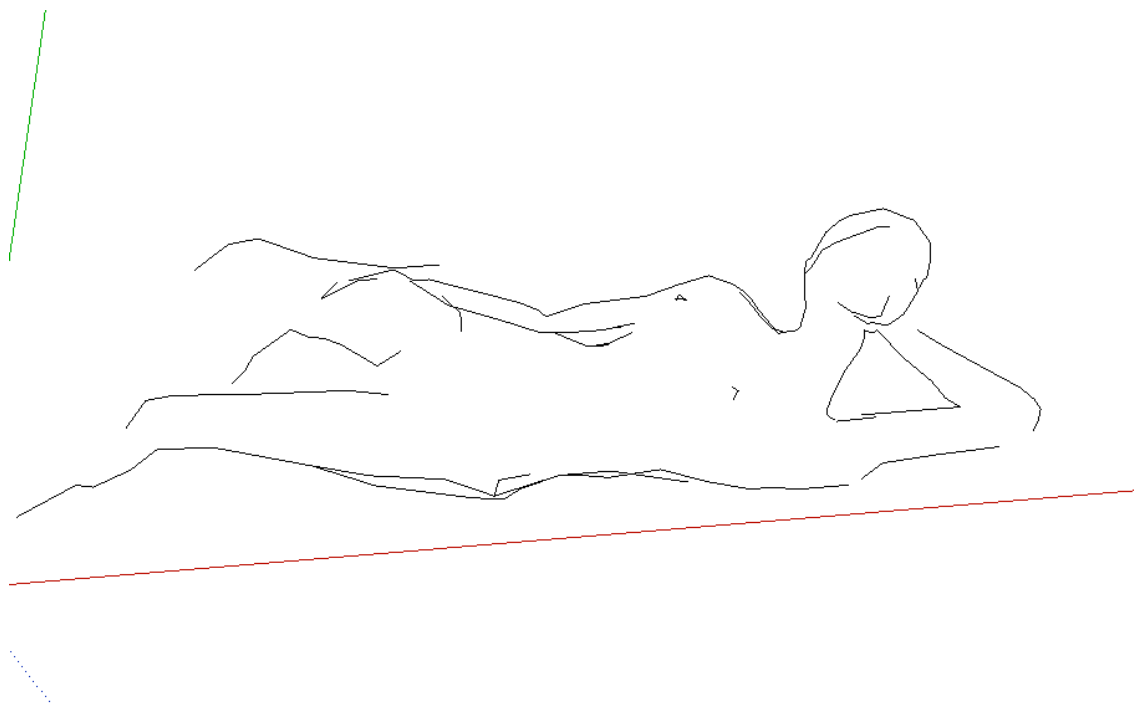
ioops yelling sorry
ok

it must be 2am where you are

TALK TO YOU LATER
ok



anees, i don't think the figure is working as an odalisque. she's scrawny, too literal and not at all sensual. i think i'd be better off to use the chair to make use of its curves. Do you know the Henry Moore figures, lying? He walks that line



maybe something like this -



Poser.Kate.carrying02.pz3Awideropenscaled3.s17.SansColumn (72x49) (BARCELONA 1)

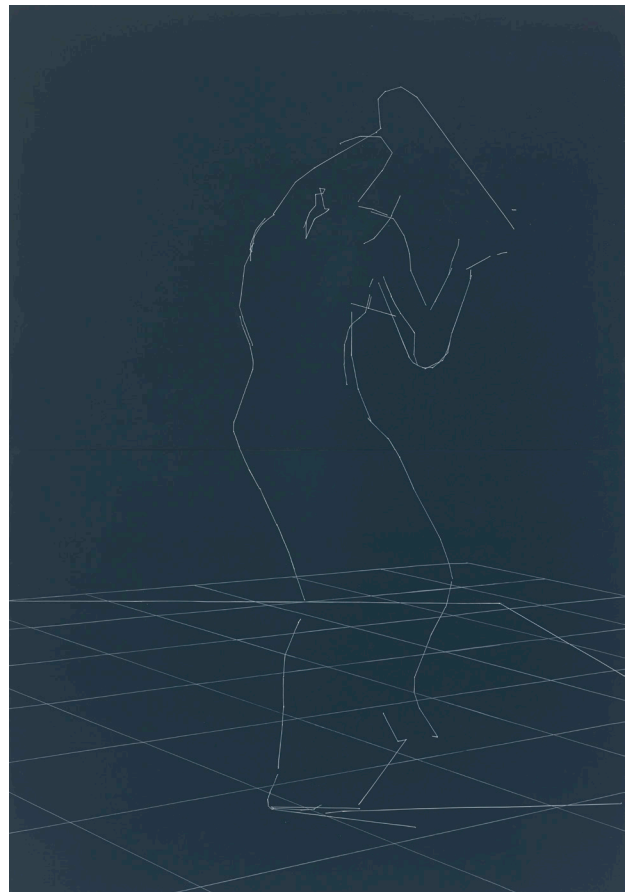
june 17, 14 one scen-

pls put this figure Poser.Kate.carrying02.pz3Awideropenscaled3wall s18
on deep grey dark dark
done

i'd like to put her on a floor...
Although it may be too distracting

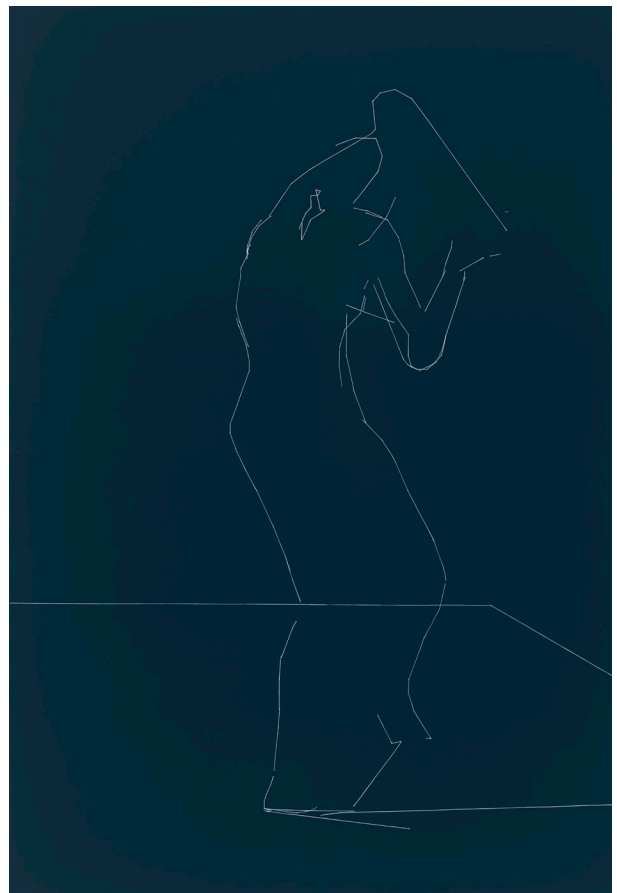
June 23, 14
in the template:
pls use two different line weights to indicate the tiles
and figure
I'll use two different colors for the lines

i noticed a scrape in the painting
had to do the whole thing again
i'm eliminating the floor afterall



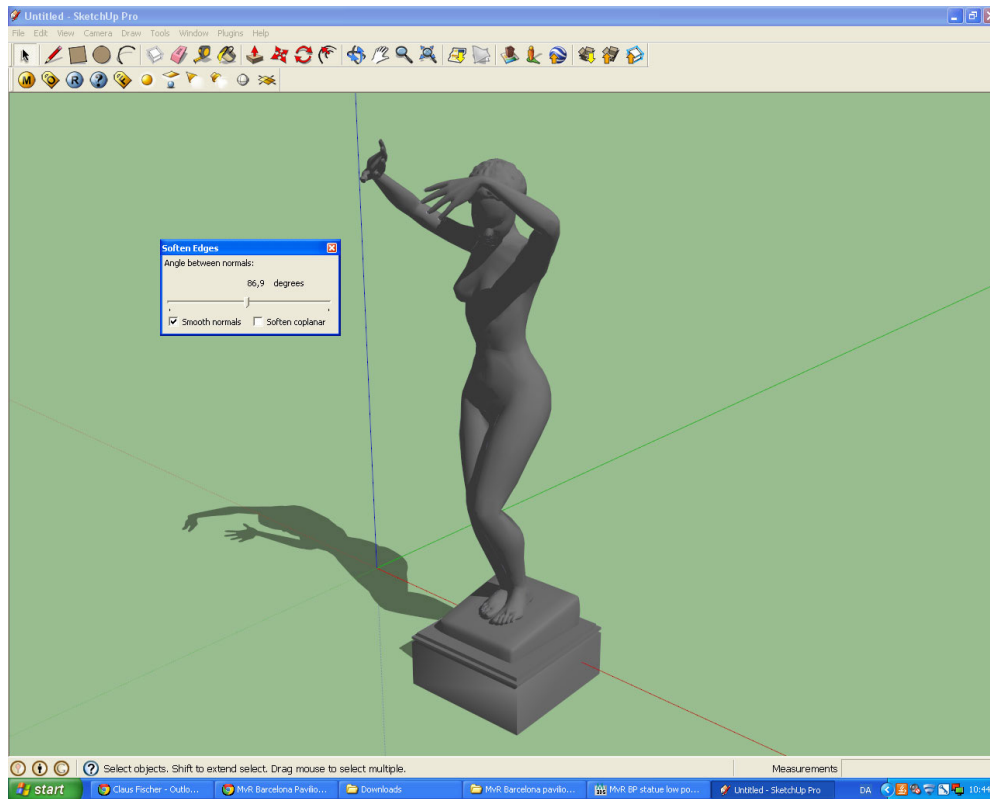
do you see that arcing line that indicates the
head extending past her arm?

my friend Lucy Ives was just here and said
“(it shows that) depiction can occur in excess of
description”
I really like that

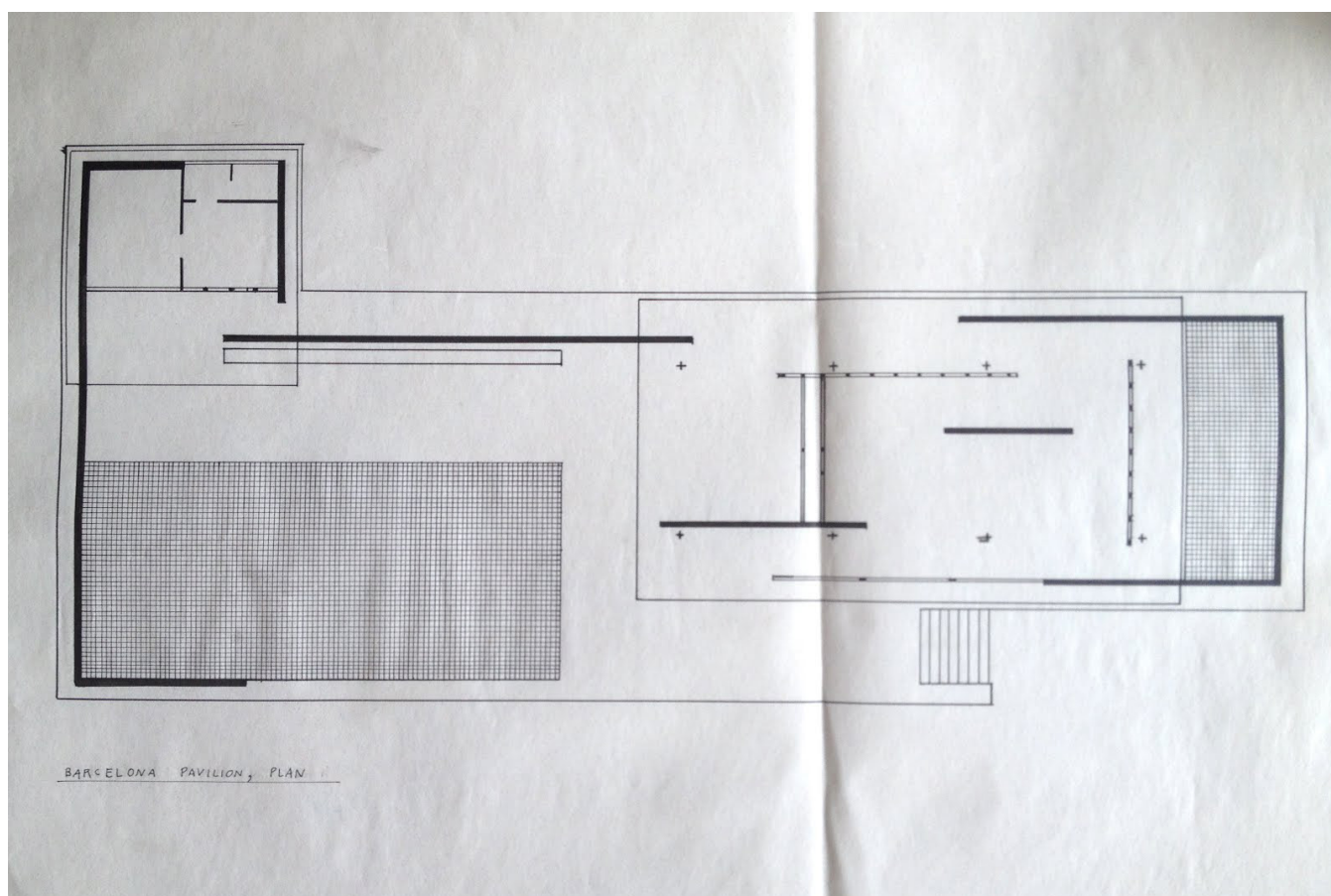


this sense of hiding, shirking, protecting, on a grid (Mies) the virtual figure, how it's found, originally.

anees, look at this model of the georg kolbe sculpture i found in google warehouse
the proportions are a riot
too bad i can't use it



hi anees- check it out I made this drawing of the Barcelona Pavilion when I was studying architecture at IAUS. Briefly. Rapidograph, no bleed even - 1982



Jan 21,14

anees question - where should I save files when you sends them and when I make new ones ? Should it be both places or just drop box ?

pls: convert the duf daz3d files into SU.

New daz model › Maybe we talk about this at the very beginning tomorrow in case we'd like to get a new model, in which case I start the download process early so it's ready in good time. (Buy or snatch, up to you)

› Kate: If you have comments on text here, highlight it and then click the Comments button



an idea:

pls try ALL of the 3 torso images on one panel
scenes 15.12, 16?

› womantorso daz3d2 Draw-On-3

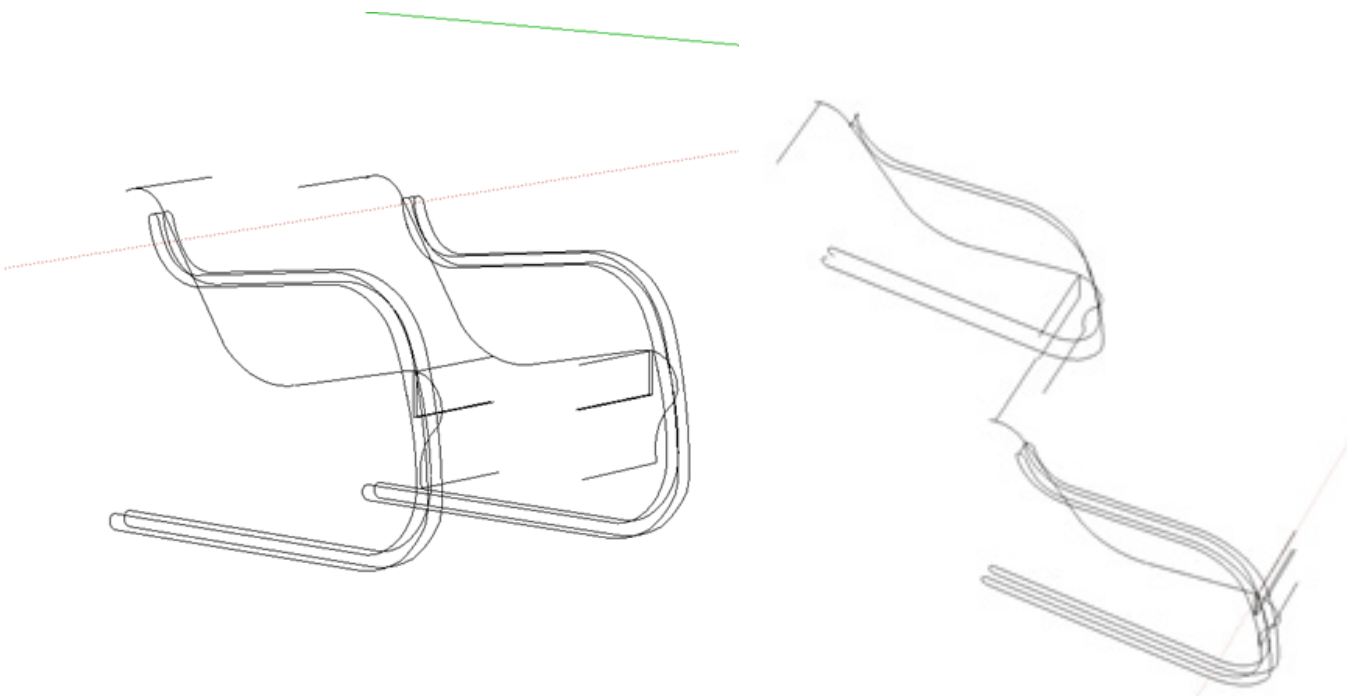


ALVAR AALTO5halvesstacked.charivari.s6.edit1a (Aalto 3, wood color)



ALVAR AALTO paintings:

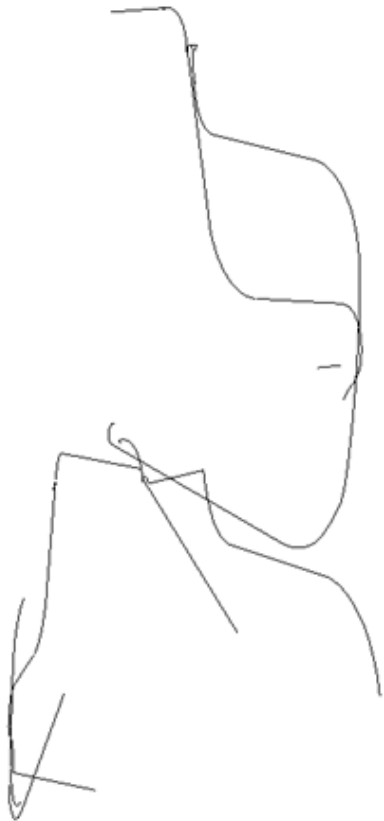
anees - this isn't the chair we worked from, but i wanted to show you the variation
back is more curved, circular
the arms bend in



haha- looks like ice skates:



i'll take it more in this direction:



ALVAR AALTO5halvesstackedsingleline.ROT.MIR.s12.3 (Aalto1)

looks too much like a gaping mouth, funny nose
i'm not doing it



June 12, 2014

hi A, can you show me :

ALVAR AALTO5halvesstackedsingleline.ROT.MIR.s12.3 (74x48) 24, 30, 26

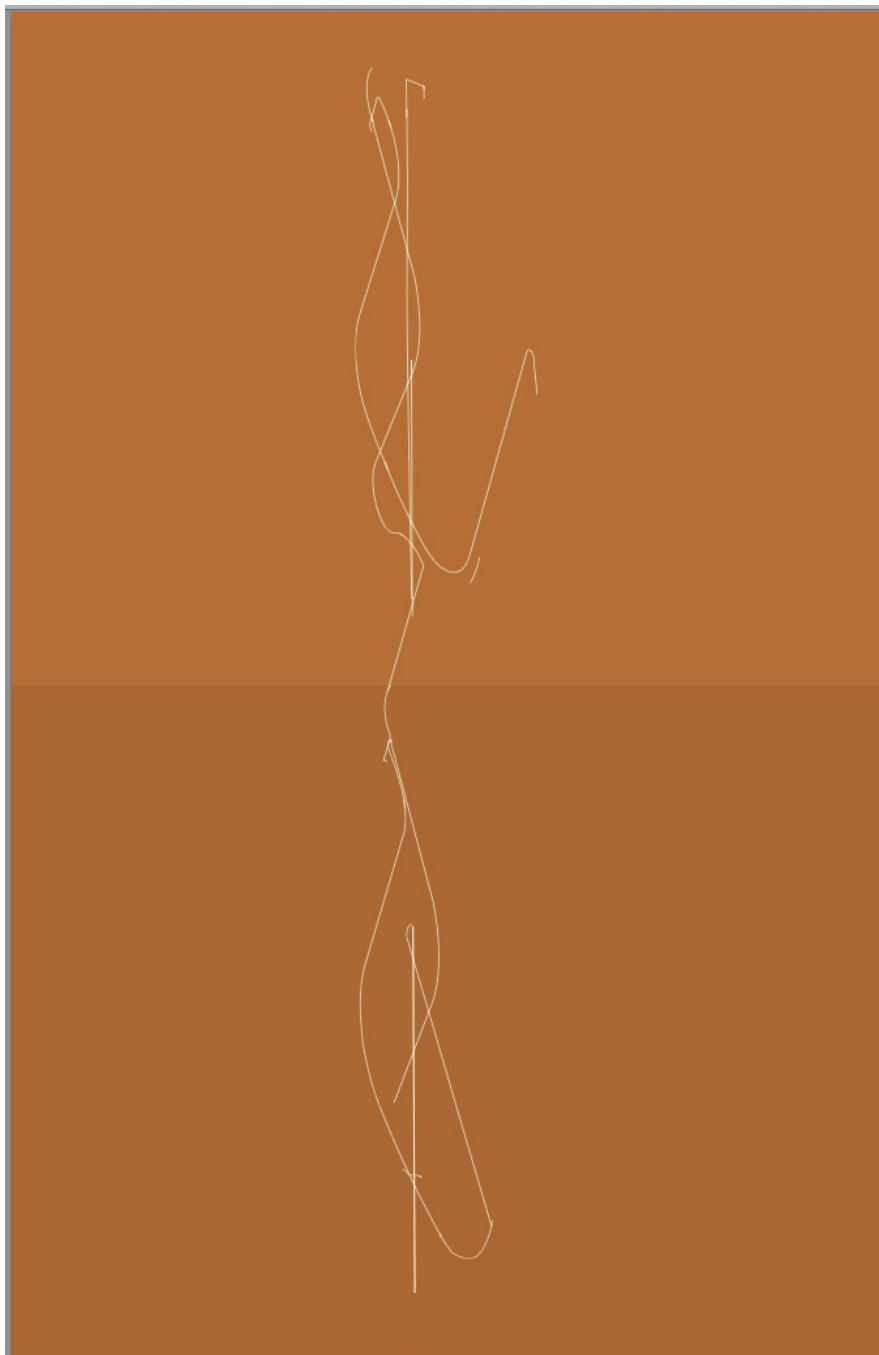
in ... color...- dull orange- like wood ... see photo of chair for color reference

ALVAR AALTO4halvesstacked_thread1stand.s13.1 (Aalto 1,wood color)



ALVAR AALTO5halvesstacked.charivari.s6.edit1a (74x48)

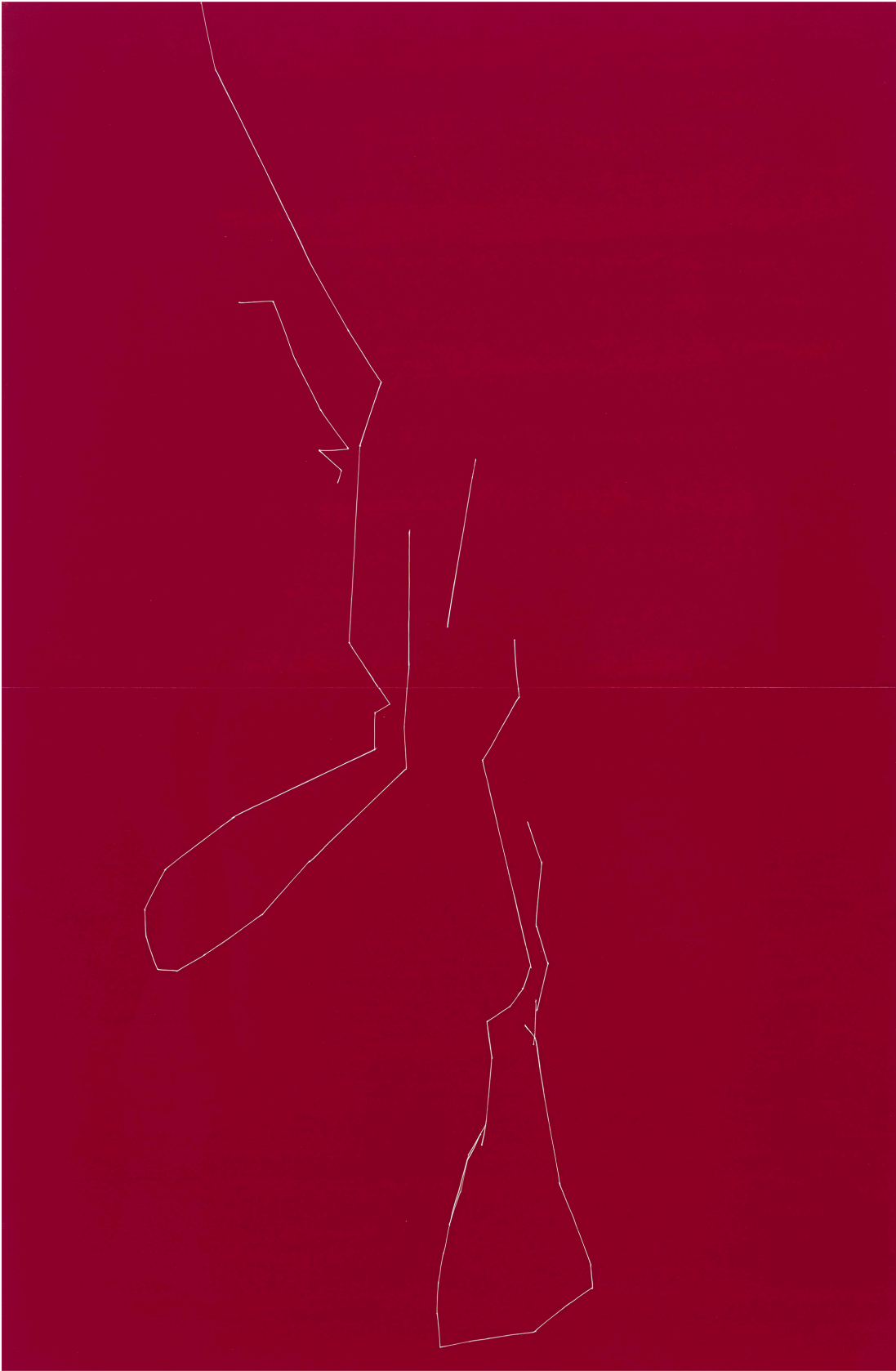
only 3 layers of paint, looks like a keeper but pls increase template size to 103%
also- the thin one- doesn't it look like a praying mantis?



daz woman davidfeetredrawn4s.18

june 23, 2014







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Matthew Deleget

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All other images are taken with an iPhone

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Alvar Aalto
Paimio Chair, 1931 – 32
Bent plywood, bent laminated birch, and solid birch
26 x 23 ¾ x 34 ½ inches (66 x 60.3 x 87.6 cm)
Manufactured by Oy Huonekalu-ja Rakennustyötehdas Ab, Turku, Finland
Gift of Edgar Kaufmann, Jr.
Digital Image © The Museum of Modern Art / Licenses by SCALA / Art Resource, NY

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