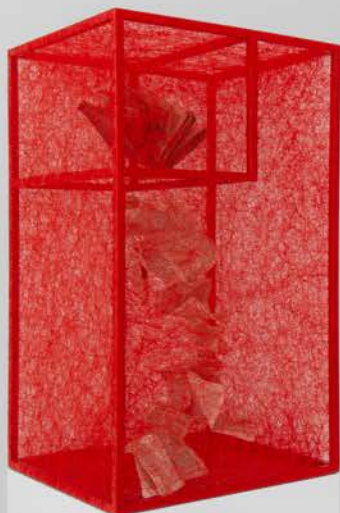


CHI HARU SHIOTA

7 NOVEMBER 2023 - 7 MARCH 2024

SELECTED WORKS



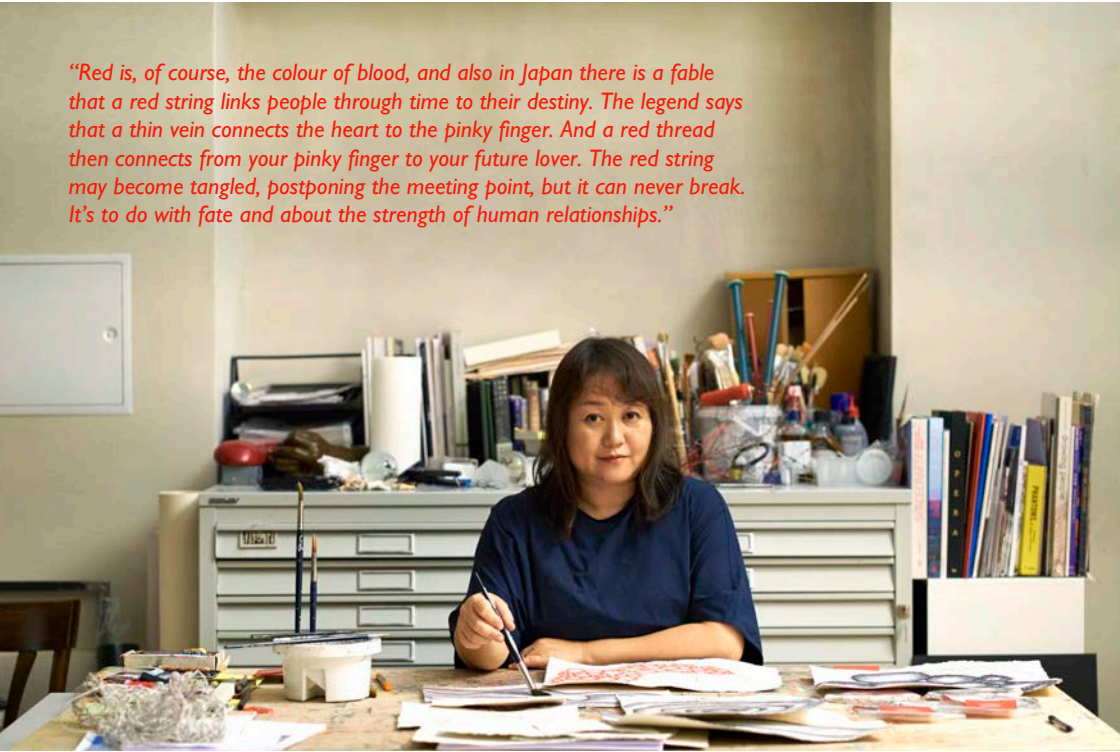
OLIVIER VARENNE
ART APPRENTICE & BOOKSTORE

BIOGRAPHY CHIHARU SHIOTA (b.1972)

Chiharu Shiota is known for her exploration of the intangible. Working with a variety of media her personal experiences are often the starting point, through which she questions universal issues such as identity, boundaries and existence – and thus the relationships between the body, memory, life and death.

Red and black, pastel or thread feature heavily in Shiota's work. Rich in symbolism, the colour red for the artist alludes to our connectedness to each other, the interior of the body and the complex network of neural connections in the brain. Pastel or thread are fluid, expressive and immediate materials – and respond to the emotive associations of the colour.

“Red is, of course, the colour of blood, and also in Japan there is a fable that a red string links people through time to their destiny. The legend says that a thin vein connects the heart to the pinky finger. And a red thread then connects from your pinky finger to your future lover. The red string may become tangled, postponing the meeting point, but it can never break. It's to do with fate and about the strength of human relationships.”



Based in Berlin, Osaka-born Shiota represented Japan at The Venice Biennale in 2015 with her work *The Key in the Hand*. Using red thread to 'draw' in three dimensions, she wove intricate networks of yarn across spaces, incorporating over 50,000 keys. She explained: 'Keys are familiar and very valuable things that protect important people and spaces in our lives. They also inspire us to open the door to unknown worlds'.

Shiota travelled to Germany in 1996 in order to study under Marina Abramovich. She studied painting early on and then used her own body in performance pieces. She later turned to using thread as it allowed her to remove her physical presence from her works yet still address ideas central to her practice.



THE KEY IN THE HAND (DETAIL),
JAPANESE PAVILION, VENICE BIENNALE 2015

OLIVIER VARENNE AND CHIHARU SHIOTA

OLIVIER VARENNE has worked with **Chiharu Shiota** for many years. He first discovered her work on a trip to Japan in 2007 and included her in the 3rd Moscow Biennale which he co-curated in 2009 with an installation called *Traces of Life* made up of 600 shoes and approx. 13.000 m of red thread. These shoes were collected from people who didn't want to use them anymore.



TRACE OF LIFE, 2008

He also worked with **Shiota** with *on & on* at La Casa Encendida, Madrid (2010-2011) which focused on her ephemeral art.



INSTALLATION VIEW OF ON & ON, LA CASA ENCENDIDA MADRID, 2010-11

Human immediacy and presence are at the core of **Shiota's** works – embodied in her own words as 'the presence in absence'. The man-made marks with which she explores this concept can be compared to the immediacy felt in ancient cave paintings, notably those in Australia, a country the artist has long had connections. In 2011 Olivier Varenne curated a show of four new works at *Detached* in Hobart, Australia in association with *Mona Foma* which included a grand piano **Shiota** set fire to,

and around the cooled and transformed charred unfamiliar form, she spun a vast cocoon of black thread. **Shiota** was also part of the exhibition *The Red Queen* at *Mona* from 2013-2014 which posed the question, 'why do humans make art?'. Including over 100 items from Neolithic arrowheads to Egyptian scarabs, funerary art, Bactrian and Indo-Greek coins to contemporary commissions, **Shiota's** work *Red Line XXI* contributed to the focus on evolution and creativity which wove through the exhibition.



PERFORMANCE FOR IN SILENCE, DETACHED, HOBART, 2011

After the Venice Biennale OF 2015 in which **Shiota** represented Japan, Olivier Varenne curated *Rain of Memories* at Patricia Low's gallery in Gstaad, 2015-2016, which included a site specific installation as well as sculptures, paintings and works on paper.

More recently he commissioned *Narrative* in 2022 for *The Little Art Window* in Gstaad.



NARRATIVE 2022, THE LITTLE ART WINDOW, GSTAAD, 2022

CHIHARU SHIOTA SELECTED WORKS

For the upcoming exhibition opening in Geneva, OLIVIER VARENNE will present a group of new sculptures (*State of Being*), works on canvas (*Endless Line*) and works on paper (*Connected to the Universe*), all created in 2023.



CHIHARU SHIOTA

STATE OF BEING

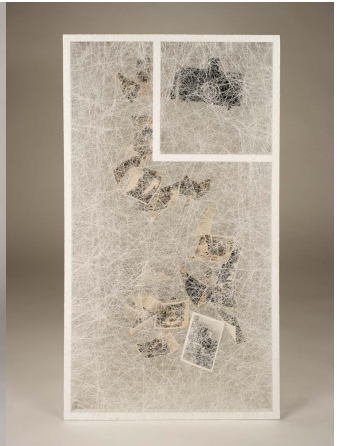
"The objects within the structure emit general human presence but are not connected to a particular person. The black thread separates us from this physical presence, but at the same time this structure allows me to create a new space. Drawing these layers of cut, tangled and knotted thread creates the entirety of the universe bound to this framed space."



A BOOK WITH A PERSONAL NOTE
AND DEDICATION FROM 1920



A DIARY FROM THE 1950S IN VIENNA



PHOTOGRAPHS FROM A FAMILY ALBUM
UNDATED

"I have always had the feeling that we transfer our presence and memory into the objects we own and hold dear. I have always been collecting these small objects, such as old scales, stained dolls, miniature furniture, stones, nuts, small bottles, and more. When I bought an old suitcase at the flea market in Germany, I went home and found an old newspaper inside. I did not know this person, but I felt their presence. It fascinated me that I could feel a consciousness of a person that I have never met. Since then, I regularly visit flea markets and collect mundane objects. Recently also books, diaries, and old photographs. I wonder about these people; these are objects that have been kept by them so dearly, so close to their heart. Saved over years and years. It was their treasure and had much value to them, but now, the person is gone, and the object is discarded."

The different shapes of the frames are just variations, **Chiharu** also often chooses objects that coincide with the topics of her exhibitions. Since she created "Uncertain Journey" in 2016 and "Where are we going?" in 2017 she often uses maps, nautical instruments, compasses, and other tools for navigation to symbolize the impossibility to orient oneself in the uncertainties of life.

Since 2018 **Chiharu** has also created works in bronze. She started with a series of her hands and last year continued with a series of bronze dresses. The dress has been a recurring theme in her work: "Our dress is like a second skin. It can even be more powerful than our skin because it holds the possibility to express more about ourselves; dress goes beyond our skin colour and nationality. And while our dress accompanies us in our daily life, it becomes the accumulation of our memories, which we collect every day."

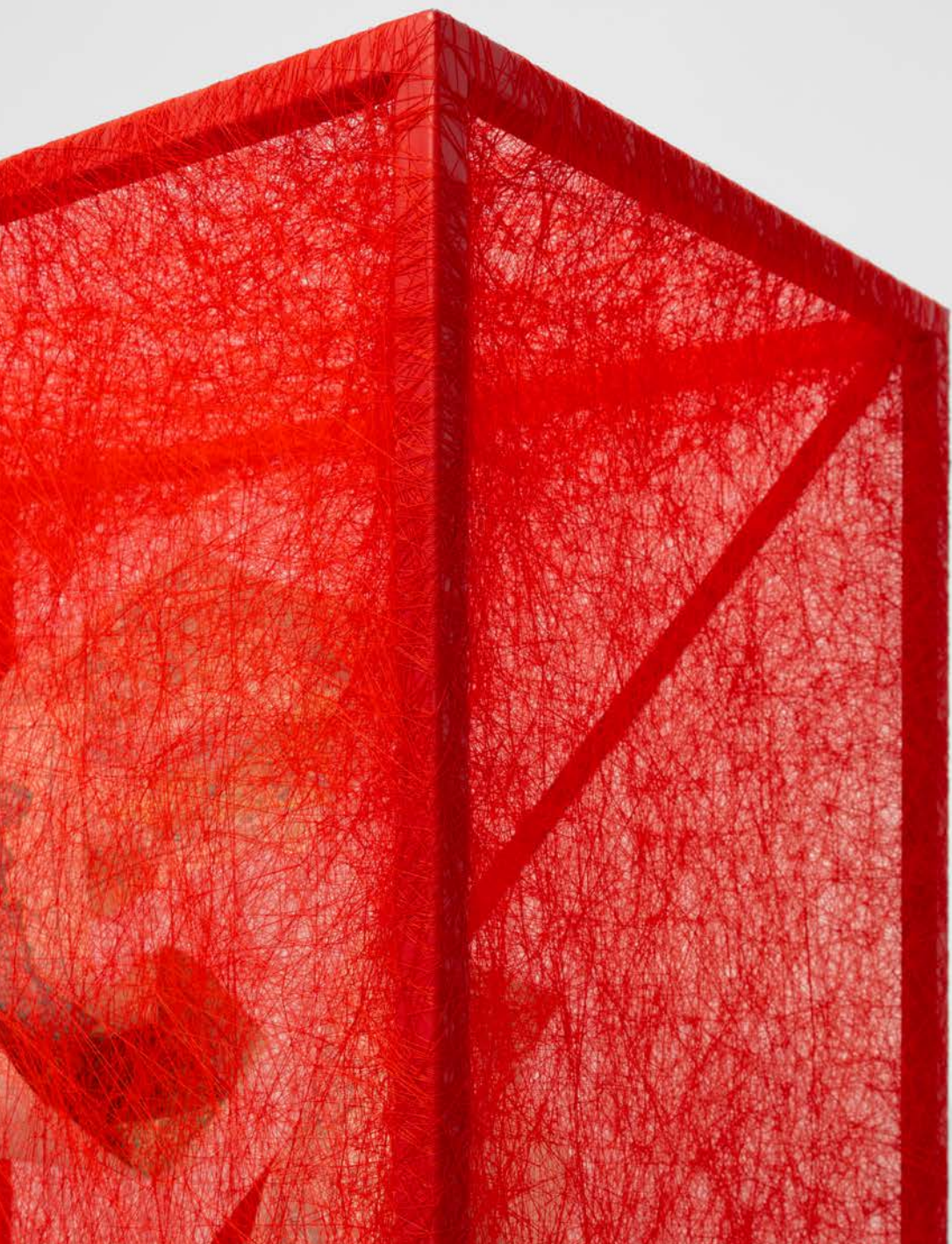
CHI HARU SHIOTA
(b.1972)

State of Being (Book), 2023
Metal frame, book, thread
120 x 80 x 45 cm

CS/S 230720



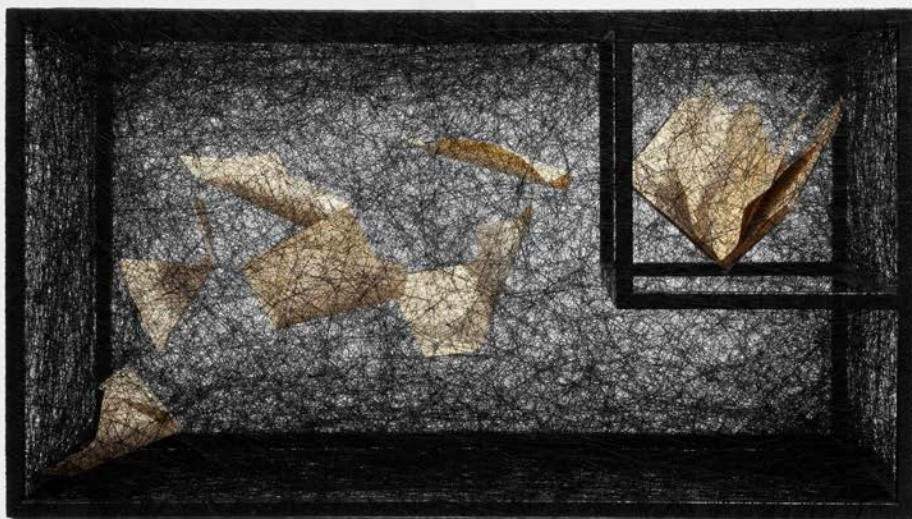




CHIHARU SHIOTA
(b.1972)

State of Being (Book), 2023
Metal frame, book, thread
80 x 80 x 45 cm

CS/S 230725





CHIHARU SHIOTA
(b.1972)

State of Being, 2023

Bronze, brass wire

64 x 53 x 40 cm

CS/S 230801







CHIHARU SHIOTA
(b.1972)

State of Being (Mirror), 2023

Metal frame, mask, thread

78 x 37 x 71 cm

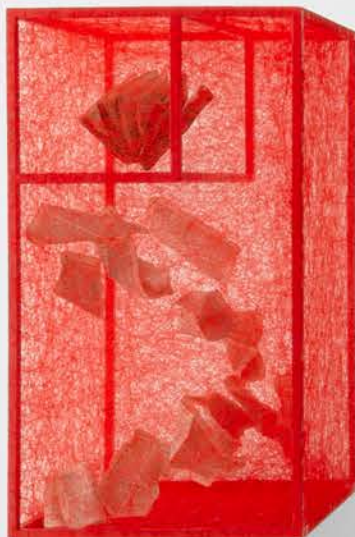
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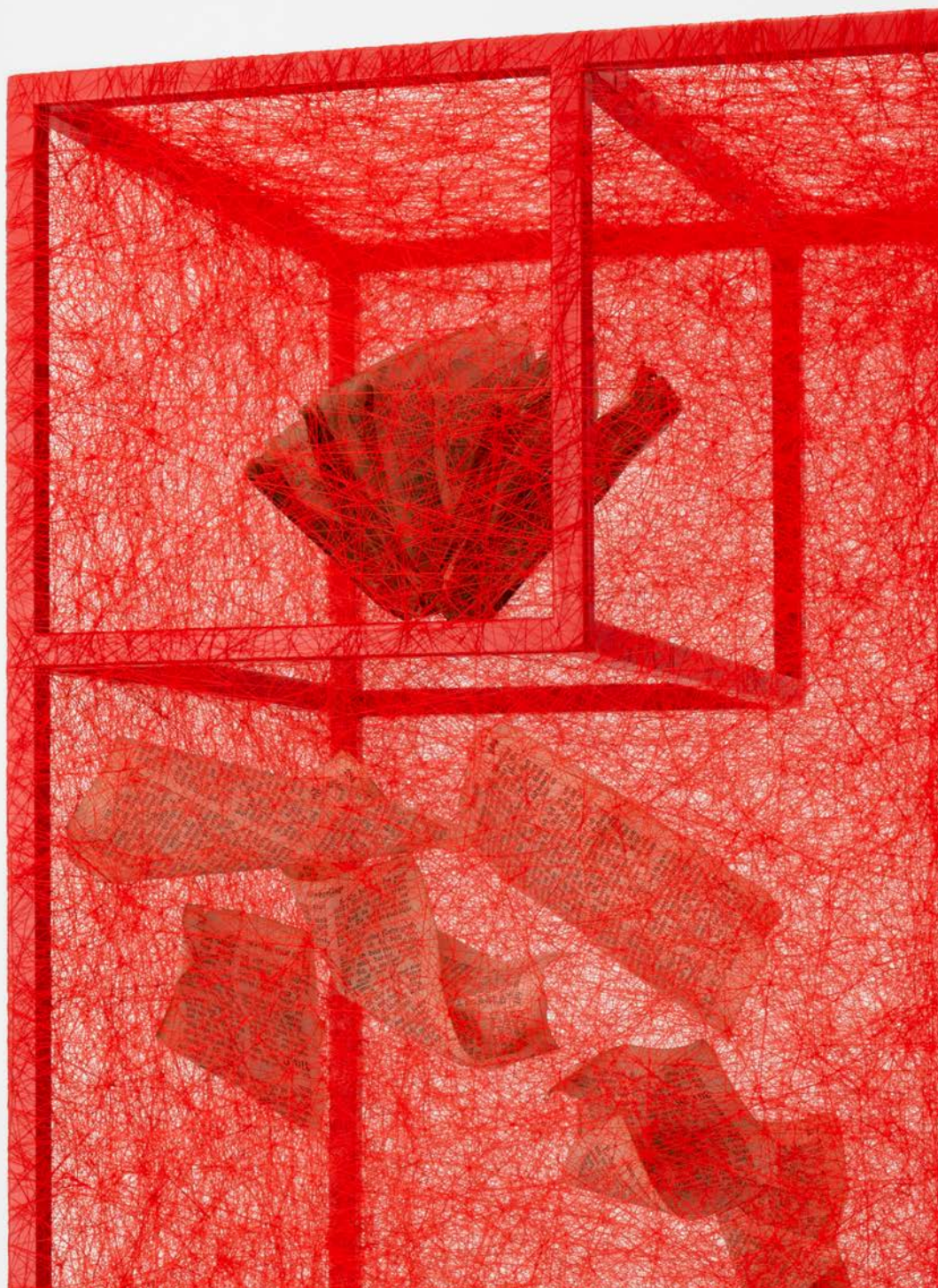
CHIHARU SHIOTA
(b.1972)

State of Being (Book), 2023
Metal frame, books, thread
80 x 45 x 45 cm

CS/S 230729



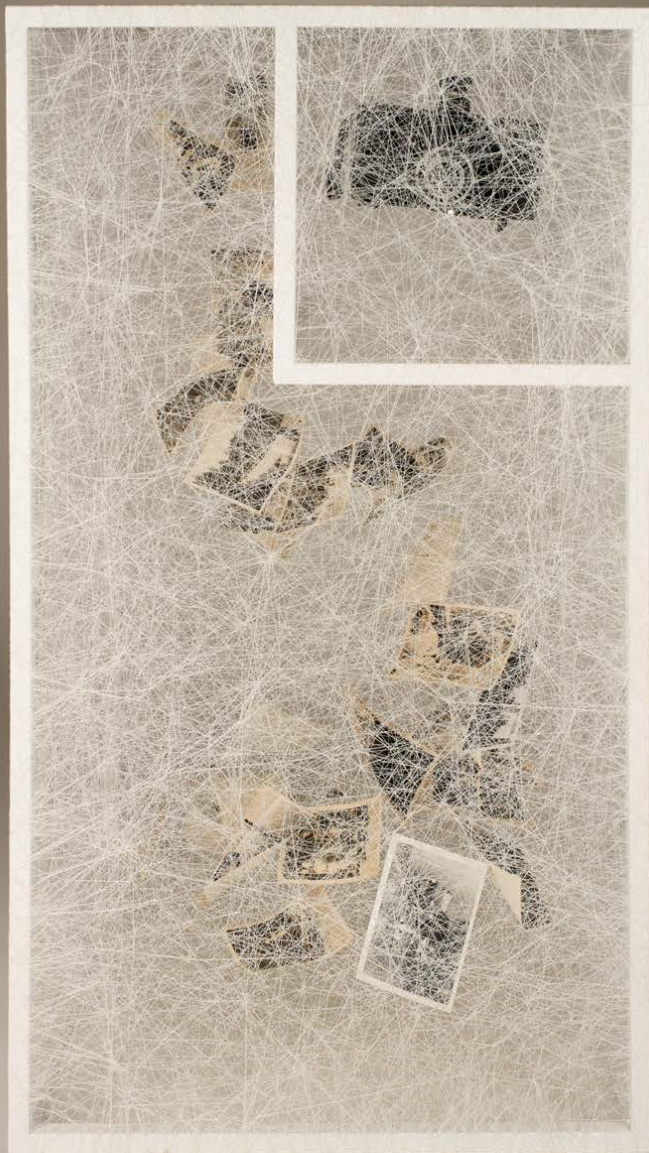




CHIHARU SHIOTA
(b.1972)

State of Being (Camera), 2023
Metal frame, camera, photos, thread

CS/S 230727







CHIHARU SHIOTA OUT OF MY BODY

"My body and my art have changed since I was diagnosed with cancer. When I was in the hospital, everything felt very sterile, like I was on a conveyor belt. My body removed, broken, and put back together. I felt like, where is my soul? and where does it go when my body is gone? I thought my soul would disappear when my body is gone. I wanted to express this feeling of the fragile body with my art, it is often difficult to explain my feelings that is why I need to make art.

My thread installations are usually discarded after the exhibition, they only exist in the memory of the viewers. When I was faced with death, I wanted to work with materials that would remain after my body was long gone. I made casts of my arms, hands, feet, and legs. I wanted to scatter my body parts on the floor. My body is broken, but at the same time every single body part expresses much more emotion than my whole body could. When I was informed that my cancer had returned, the ground fell beneath my feet. In the hospital, my body was not my body anymore, my body was handed through a system, broken apart and put back together until I was whole again. My body has healed again and now when my feet touch the earth, I feel connected to life. I have wondered how often one is able to experience death in a lifespan. But maybe the strength of life is reached by the confrontation of death. To be alive means to endure suffering, it is part of our existence. This is our story. We are all going to die someday. But death is not a limitation of our existence or memory. It belongs to the cycle of life as a new state of being. It is like moving to a bigger Universe where our thoughts and memories remain. In the end, I transformed my suffering to create something new, which made me feel hopeful."



CHI HARU SHIOTA
(b.1972)

Out of My Body, 2023
cowhide leather
variable dimensions

CD/I 231020

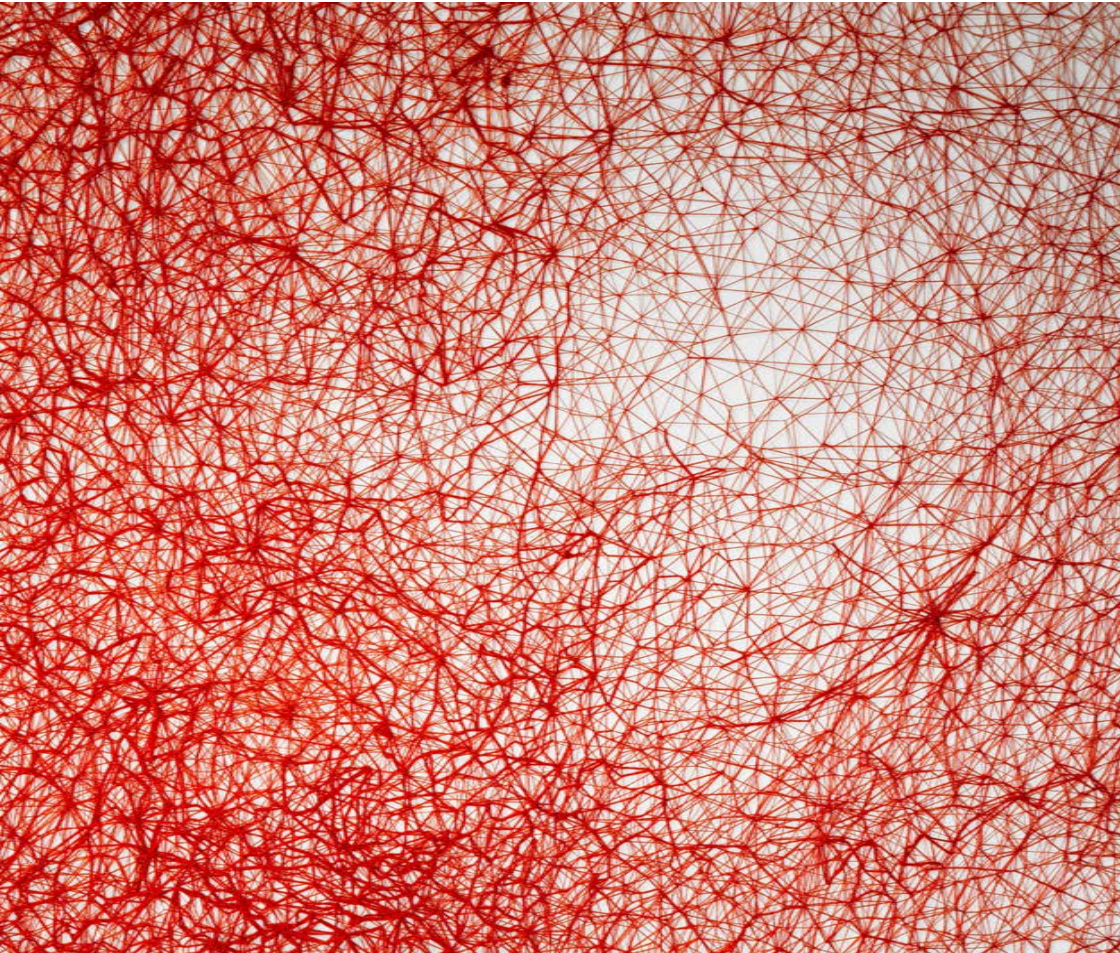




CHIHARU SHIOTA ENDLESS LINE

“After years of creating installations with string in space, I started working with canvases again in 2010. I believe that there is no difference between three-dimensional spaces and a canvas because a single line thread is like a line in a painting. It is like drawing in the air. Using string allows me to explore breath and space, and at the same time, an accumulation of thread forms a surface.

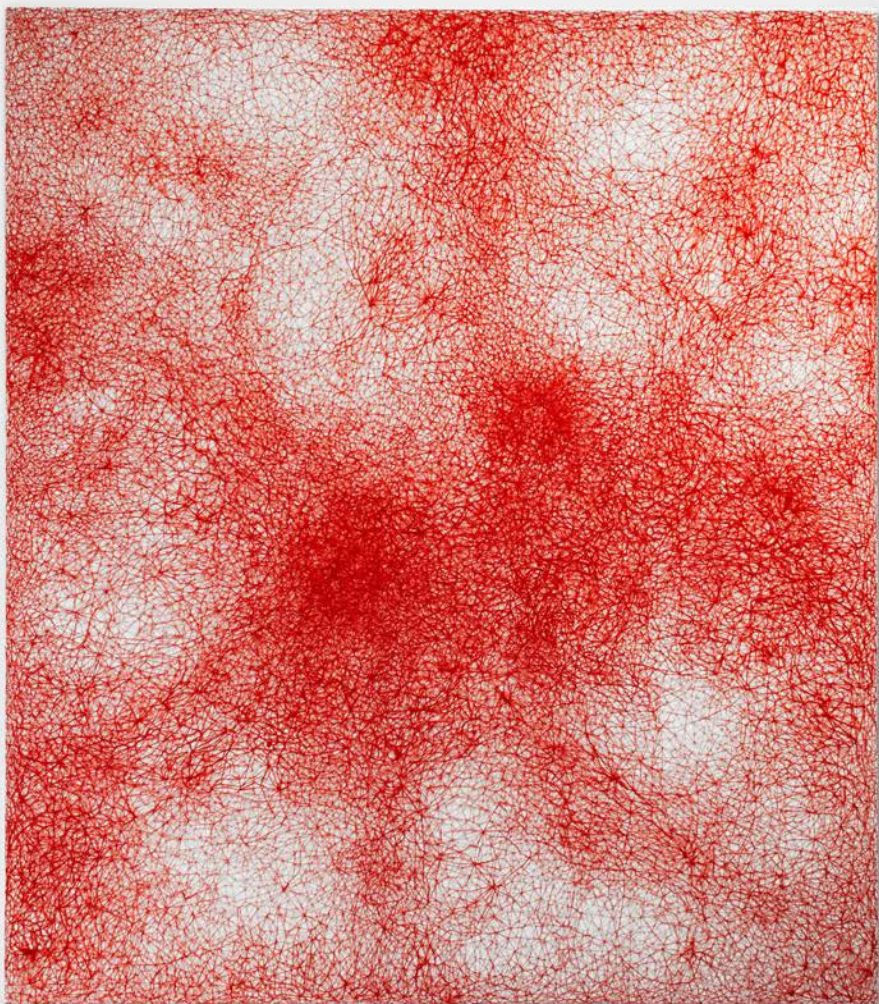
I can then create unlimited spaces that gradually expand into a Universe. When I can no longer trace a thread with my eye, it begins to feel complete. Piling up layer after layer creates a three-dimensional depth on the canvas, a mesh of thread is spread across the surface of the canvas like skin.”

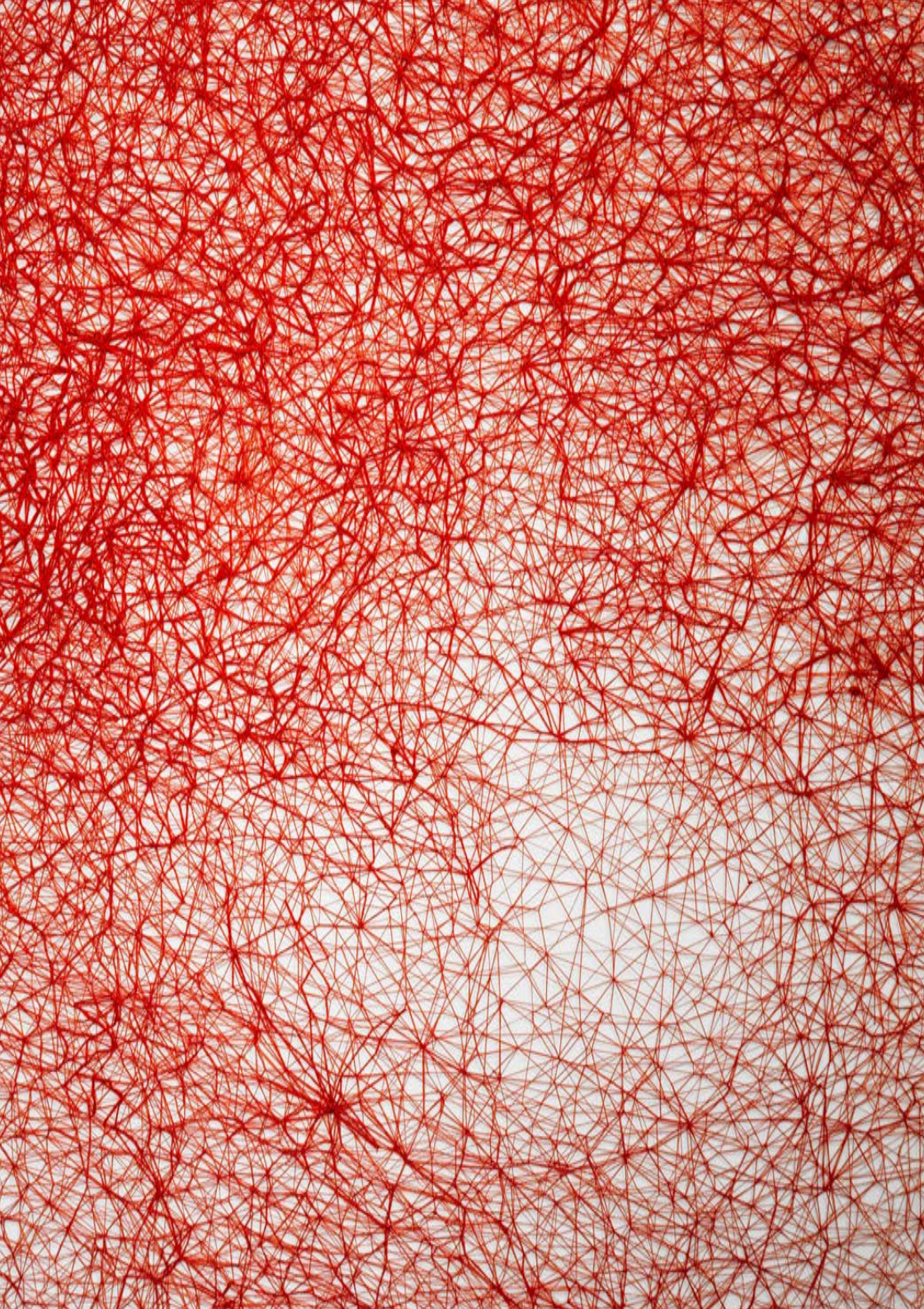


CHI HARU SHIOTA
(b.1972)

Endless Line, 2023
thread of canvas
160 x 140 cm

CS/C 230640

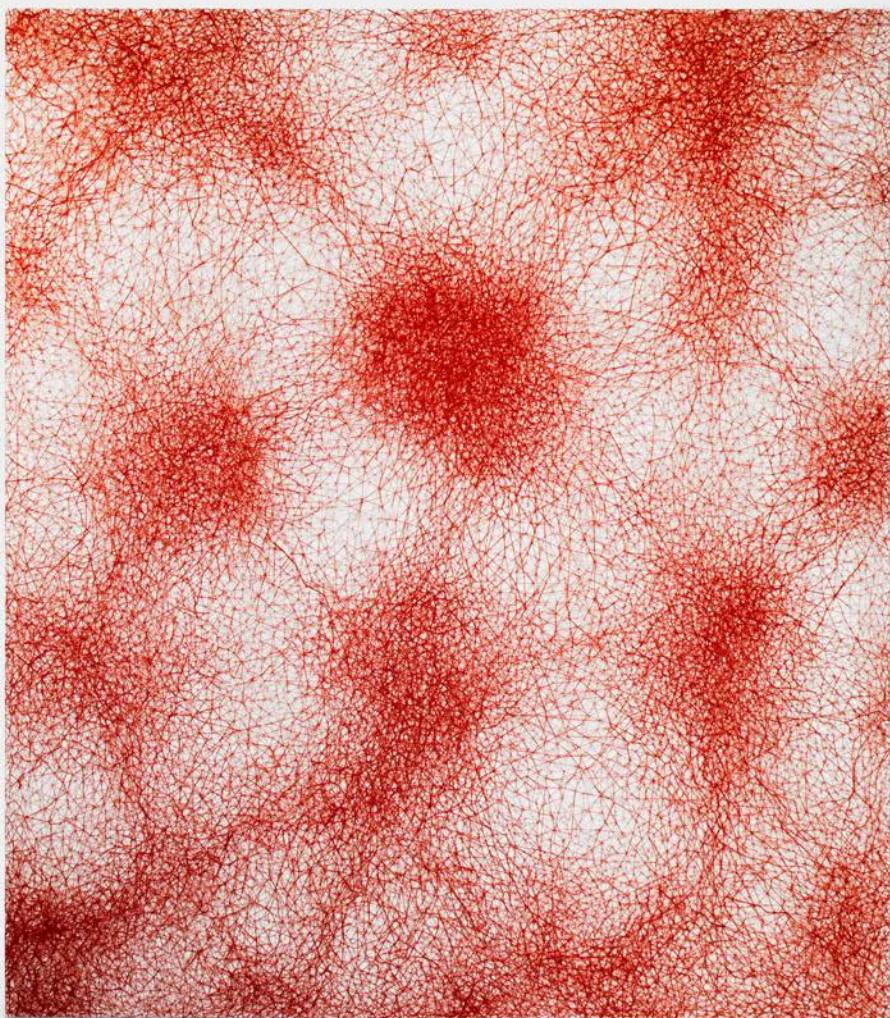


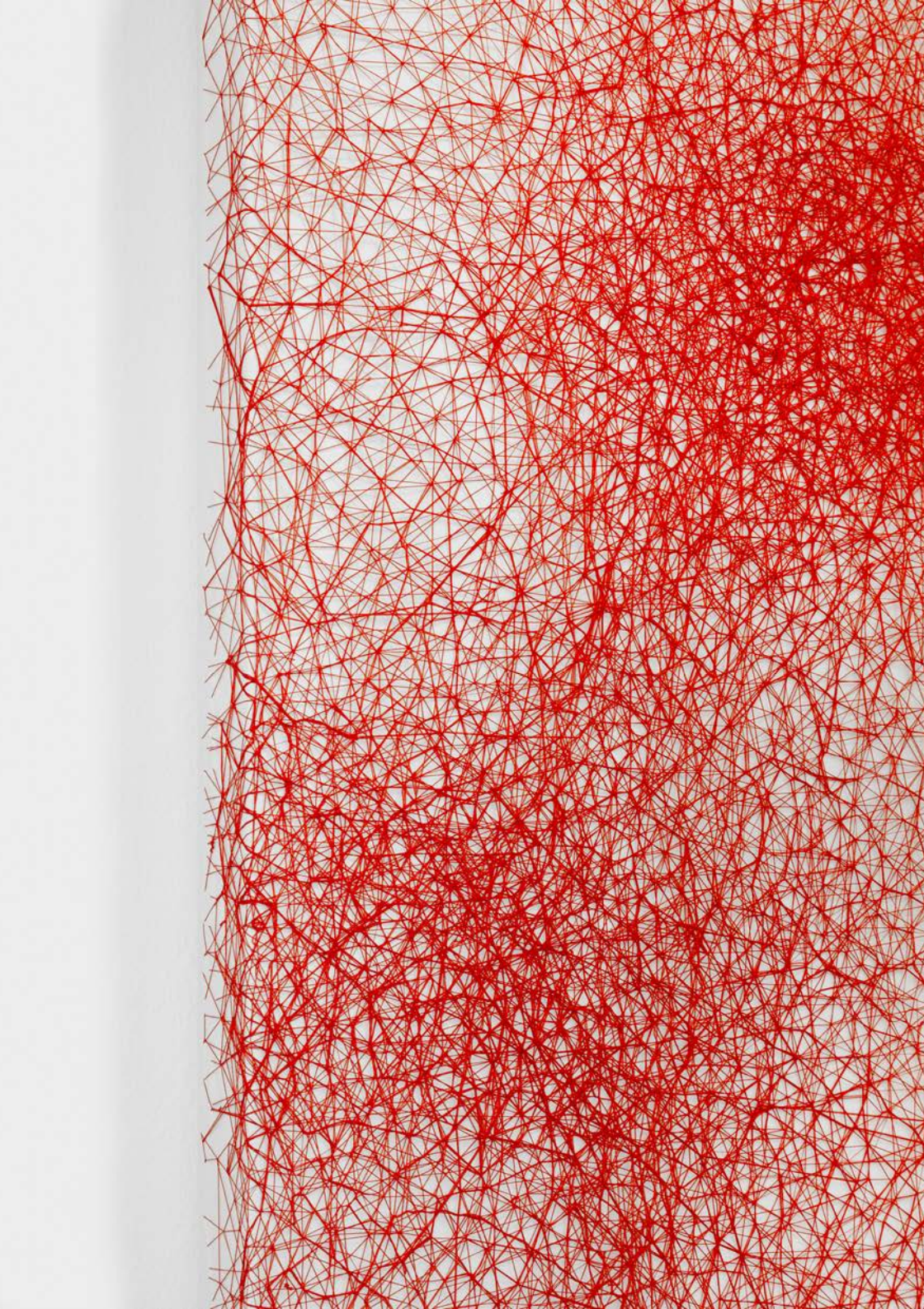


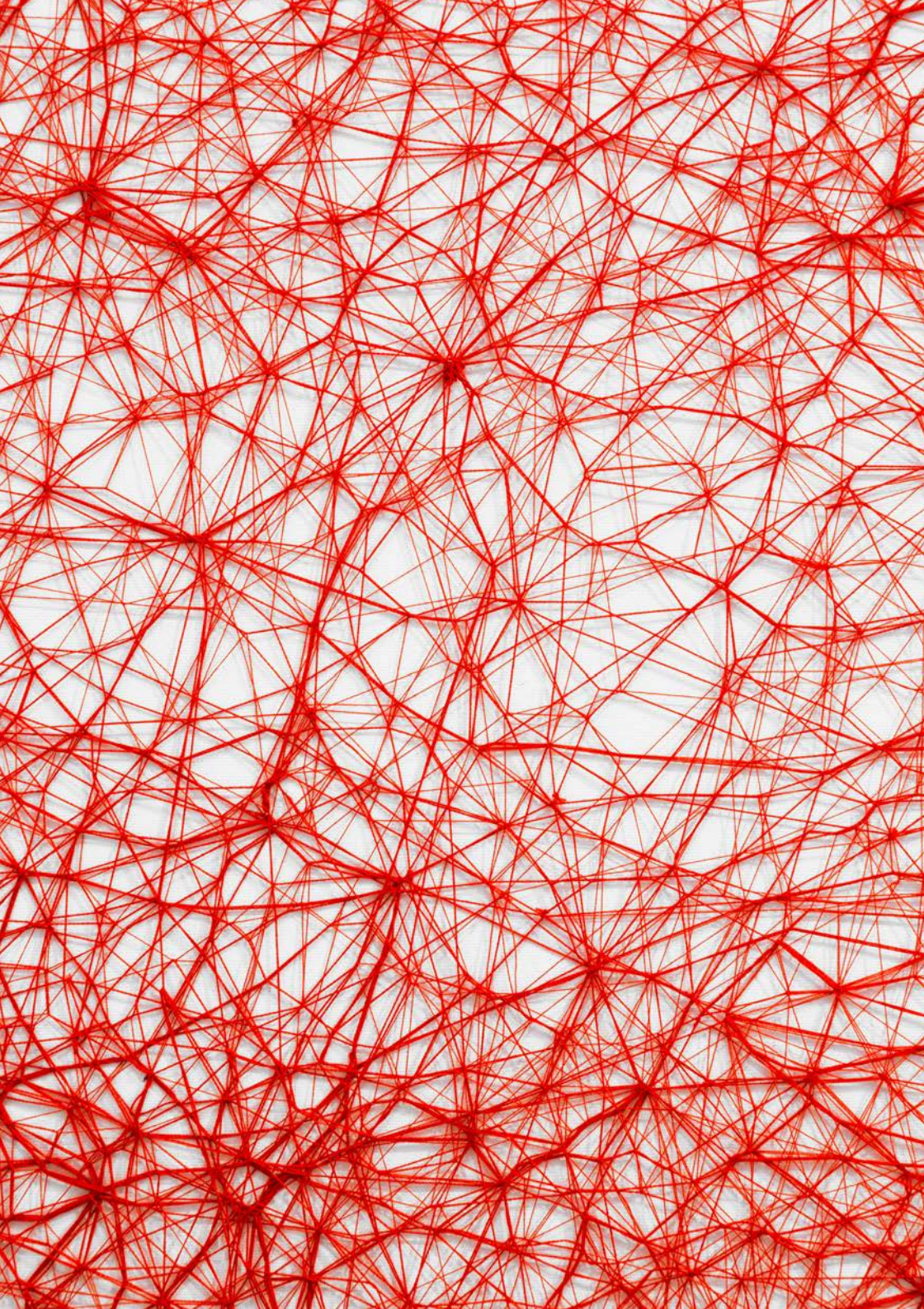
CHI HARU SHIOTA
(b.1972)

Endless Line, 2023
thread of canvas
160 x 140 cm

CS/C 230803



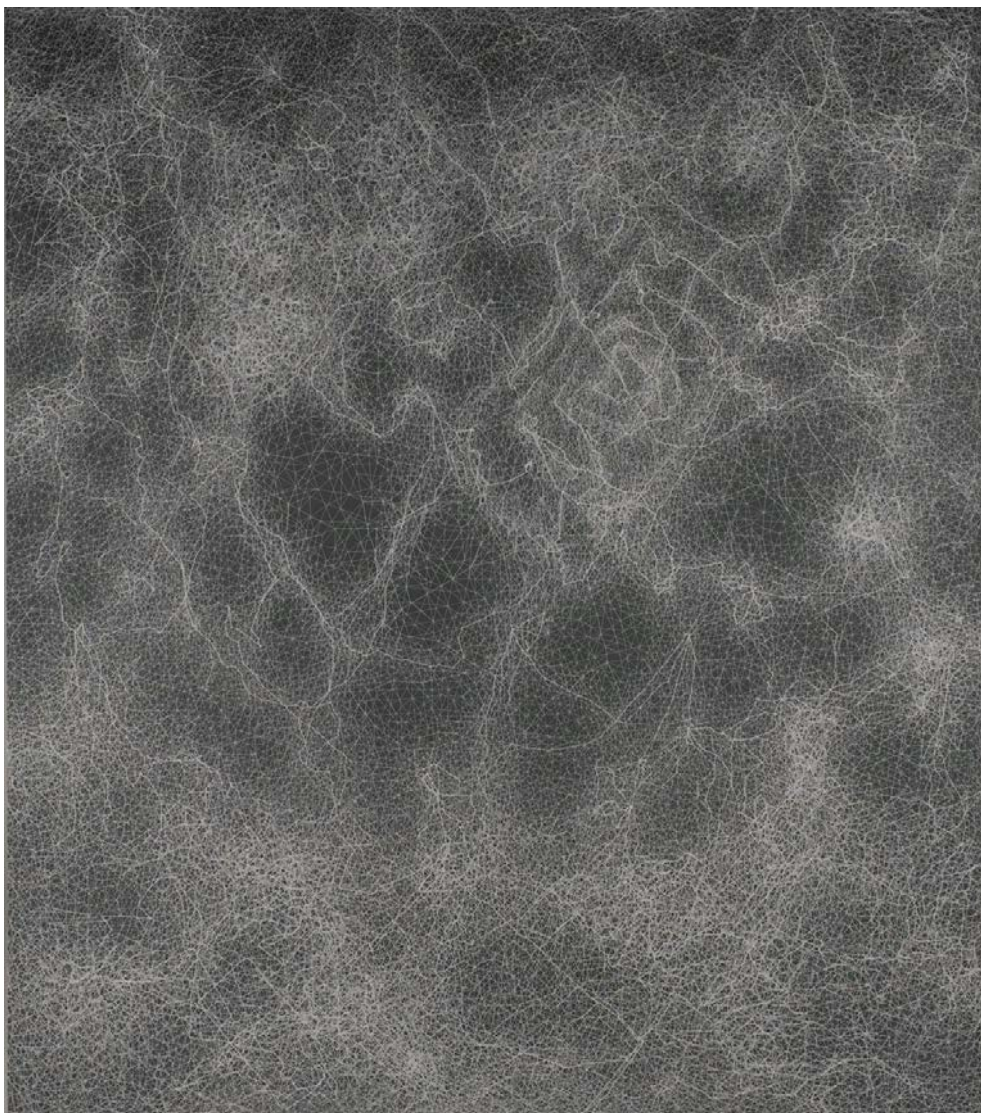




CHIHARU SHIOTA
(b.1972)

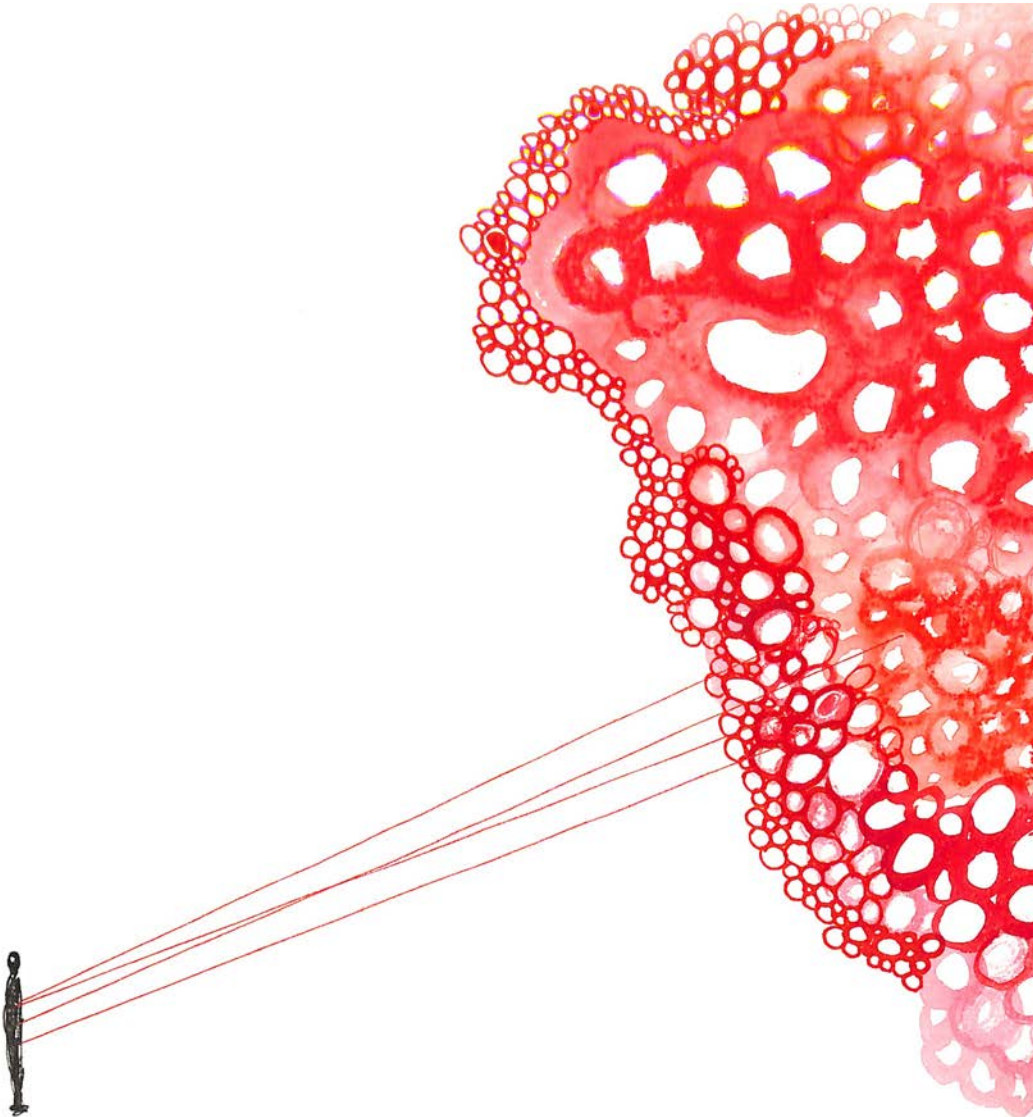
Endless Line, 2023
thread of canvas
160 x 140 cm

CS/C 230604



**CHIHARU SHIOTA
CONNECTED TO THE
UNIVERSE**

"Everyone is connected if you are part of society. People are connected to each other, but we are also linked to the universe. I feel like I have a universe inside of me and it is also connected to the outside universe that is why I paint this vast pattern. It looks organic like the cell in our bodies, but because it is big it also resembles the universe that surrounds us."



CHIHARU SHIOTA
(b.1972)

Connected to the Universe, 2023
water-soluble wax pastel, ink and thread on paper
21 x 30 cm

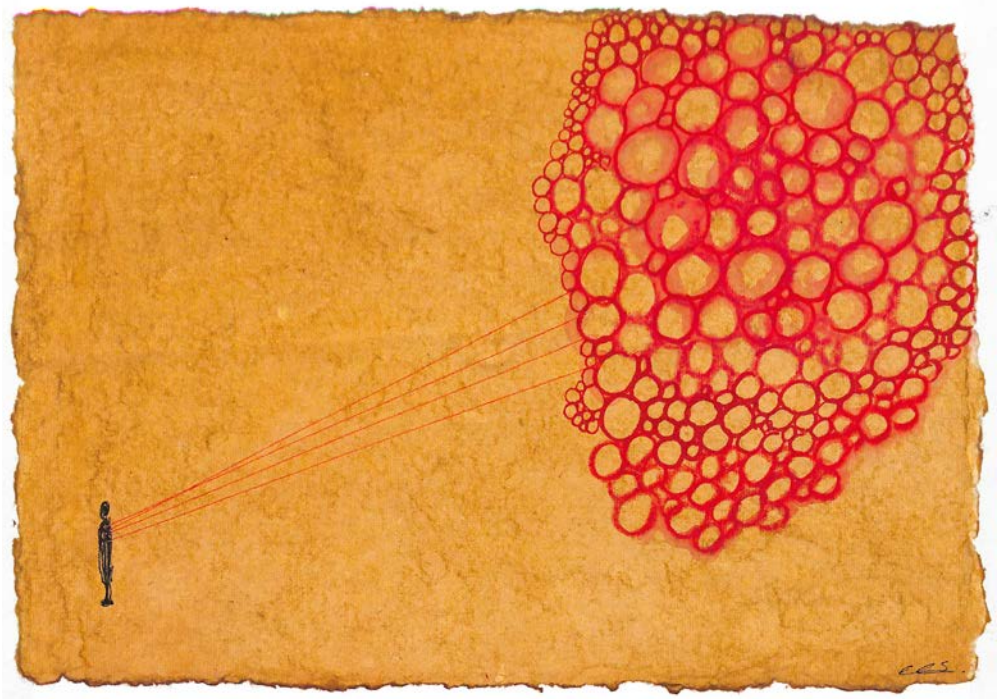
CS/D 231001



CHIHARU SHIOTA
(b.1972)

Connected to the Universe, 2023
water-soluble wax pastel, ink and thread on paper
21 x 31 cm

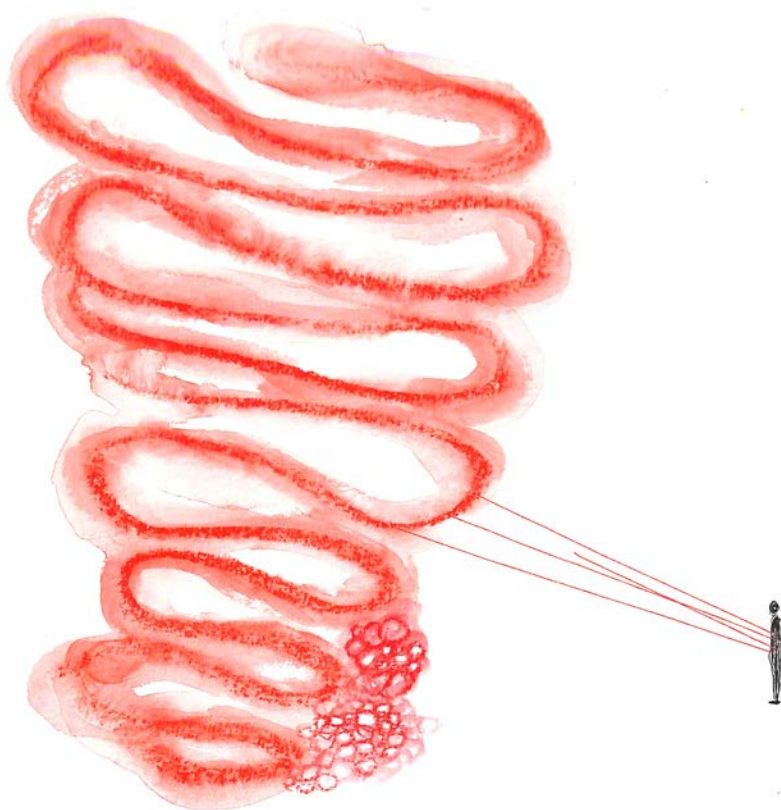
CS/D 231002



CHIHARU SHIOTA
(b.1972)

Connected to the Universe, 2023
water-soluble wax pastel, ink and thread on paper
24 x 32 cm

CS/D 231003

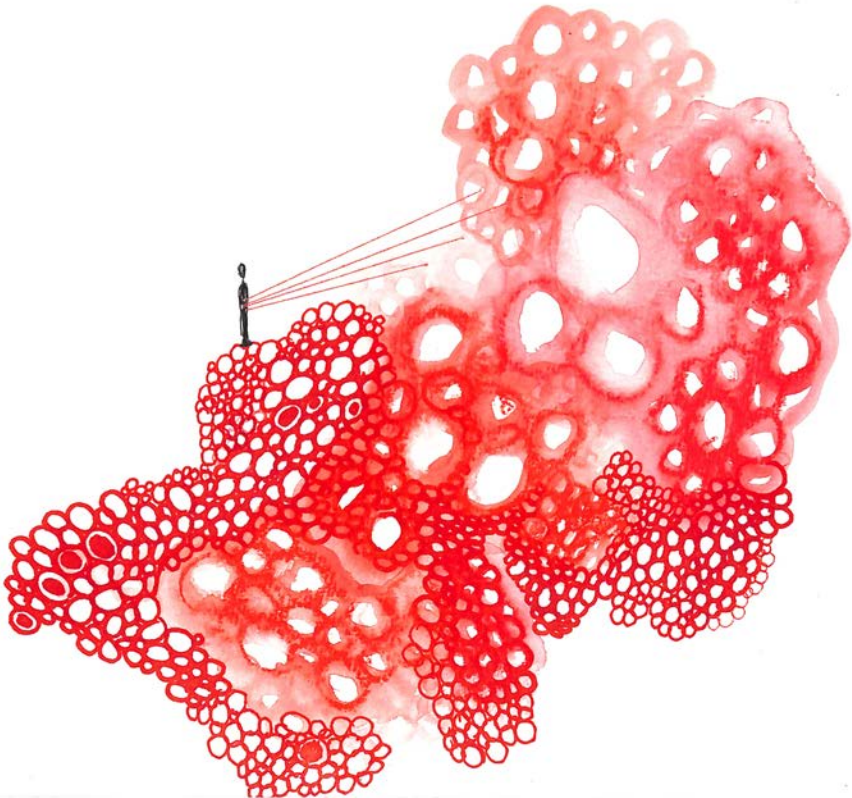


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CHIHARU SHIOTA
(b.1972)

Connected to the Universe, 2023
water-soluble wax pastel, ink and thread on paper
24 x 32 cm

CS/D 231004

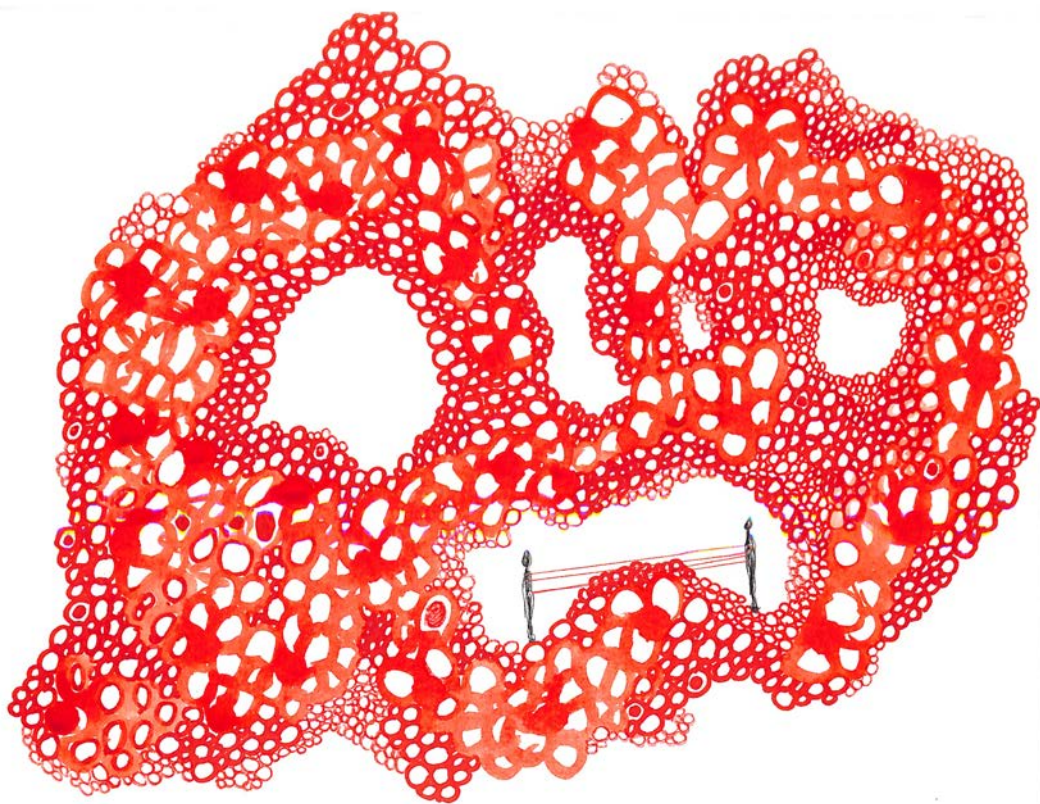


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CHIHARU SHIOTA
(b.1972)

Connected to the Universe, 2023
water-soluble wax pastel, ink and thread on paper
24 x 32 cm

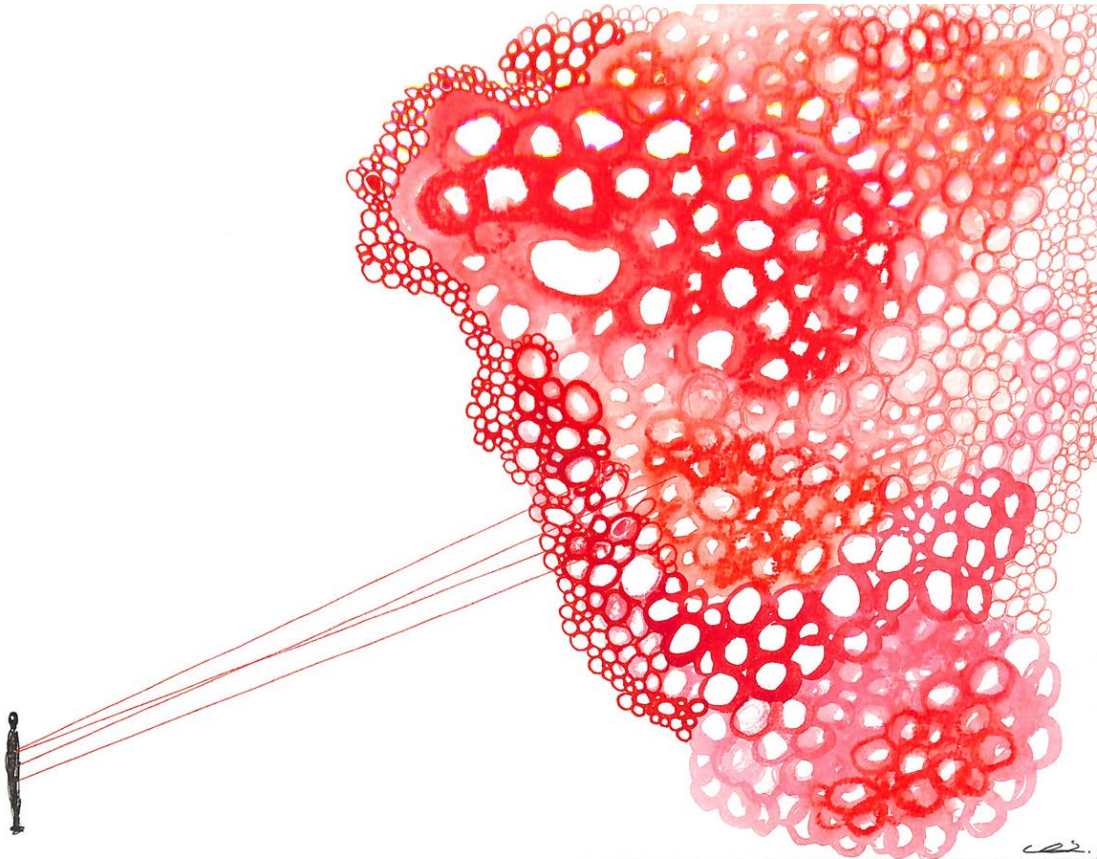
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CHIHARU SHIOTA
(b.1972)

Connected to the Universe, 2023
water-soluble wax pastel, ink and thread on paper
24 x 32 cm

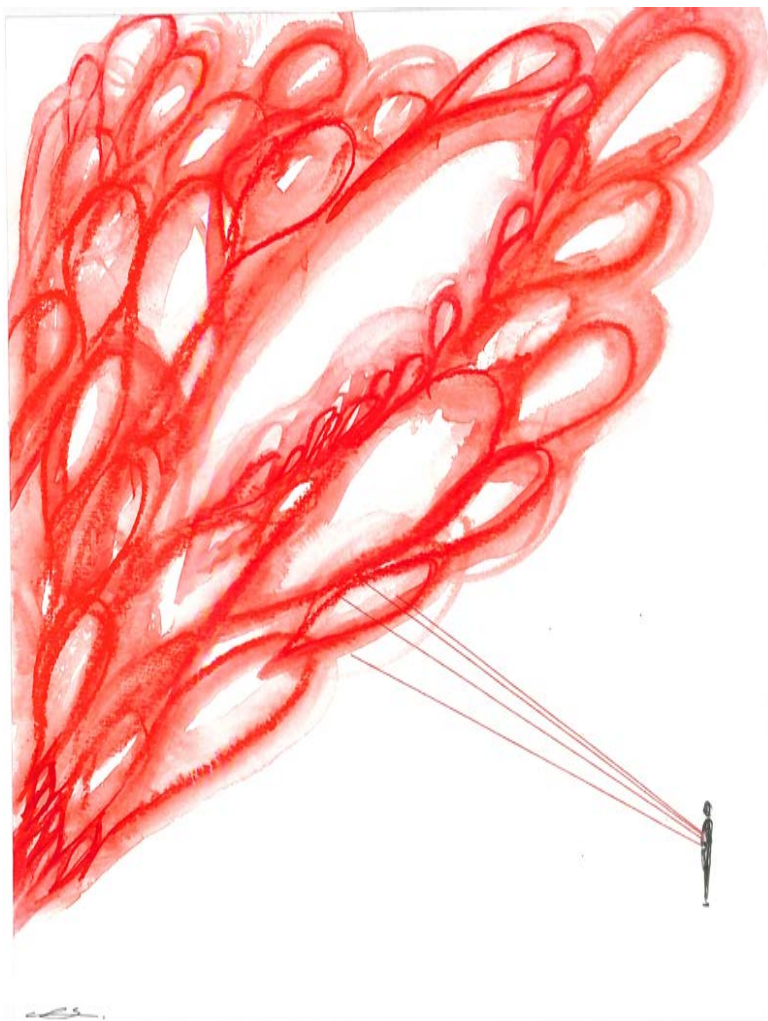
CS/D 231006



CHI HARU SHIOTA
(b.1972)

Connected to the Universe, 2023
water-soluble wax pastel, ink and thread on paper
32 x 24 cm

CS/D 231007



CHIHARU SHIOTA
(b.1972)

Connected to the Universe, 2023
water-soluble wax pastel, ink and thread on paper
32 x 24 cm

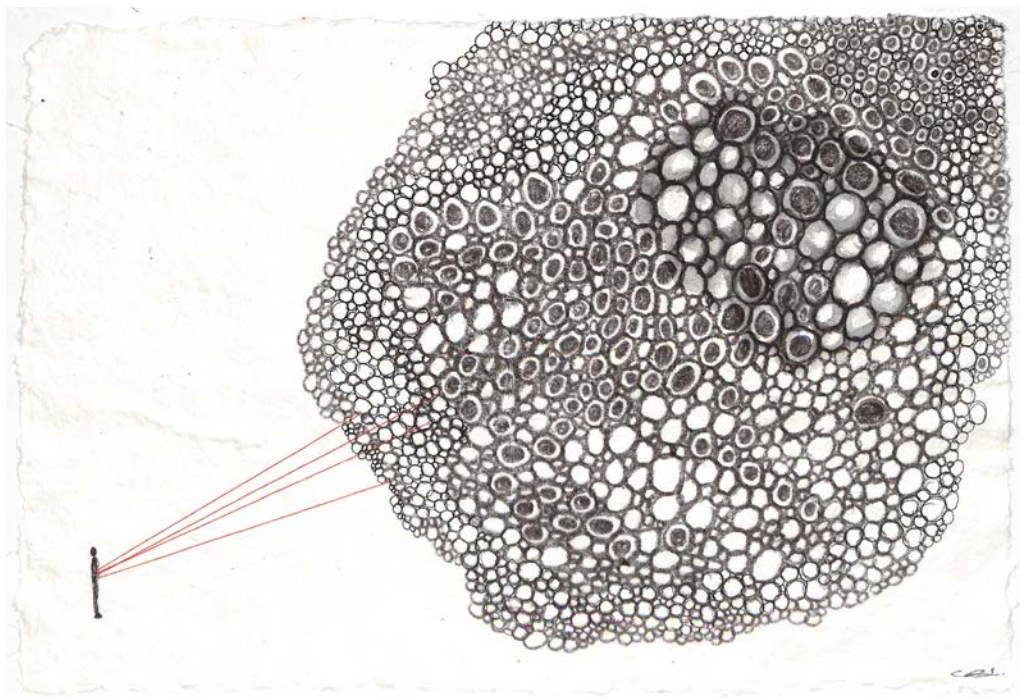
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CHIHARU SHIOTA
(b.1972)

Connected to the Universe, 2023
water-soluble wax pastel, ink and thread on paper
24 x 36 cm

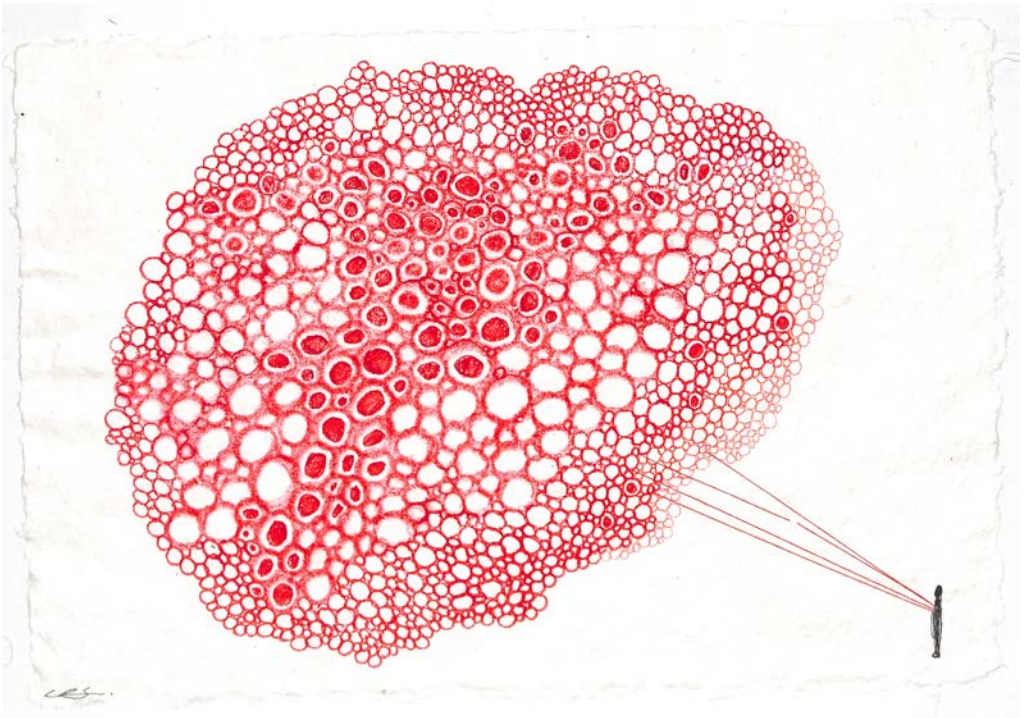
CS/D 231009



CHIHARU SHIOTA
(b.1972)

Connected to the Universe, 2023
water-soluble wax pastel, ink and thread on paper
24 x 36 cm

CS/D 231010



CHI HARU SHIOTA
(b.1972)

Connected to the Universe, 2023
water-soluble wax pastel, ink and thread on paper
30 x 42 cm

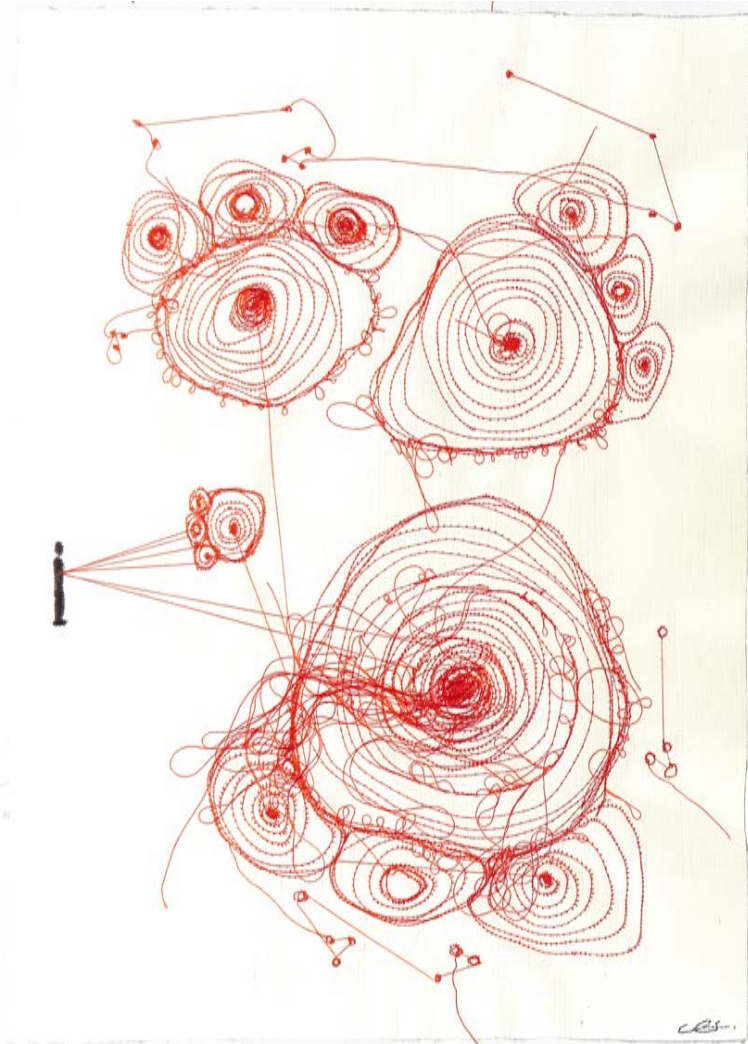
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CHIHARU SHIOTA
(b.1972)

Connected to the Universe, 2023
water-soluble wax pastel, ink and thread on paper
30 x 42 cm

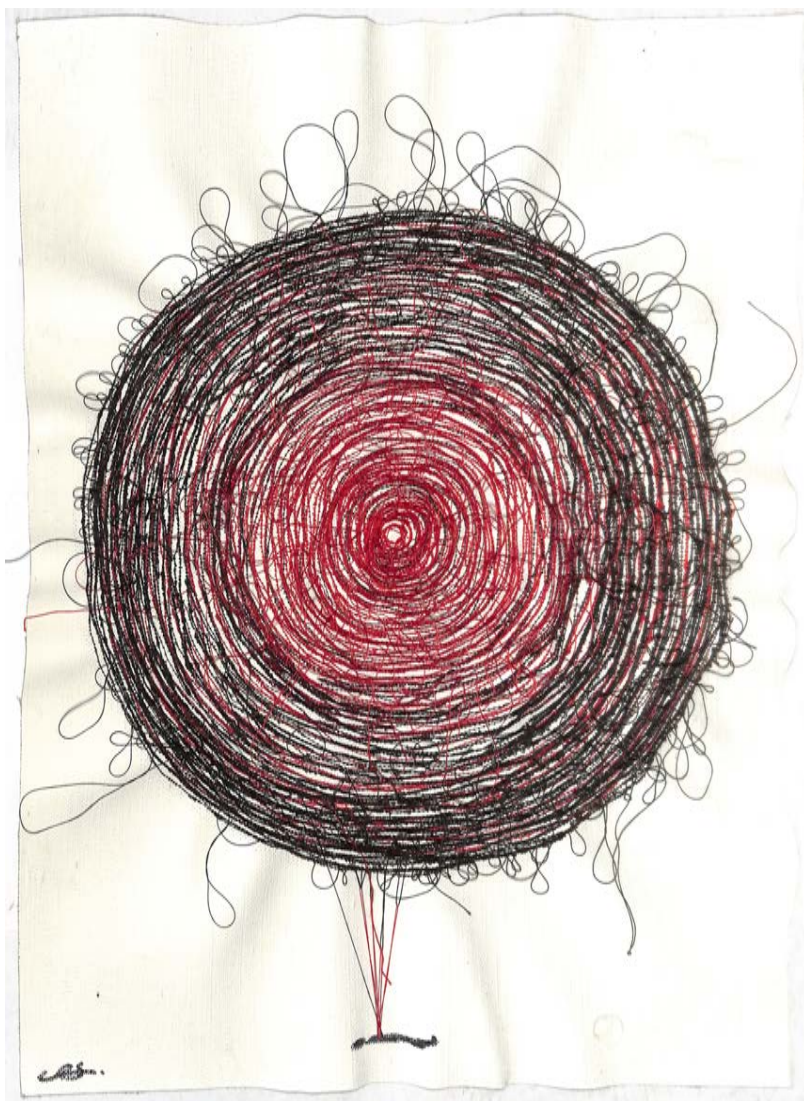
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CHIHARU SHIOTA
(b.1972)

Connected to the Universe, 2023
water-soluble wax pastel, ink and thread on paper
30 x 42 cm

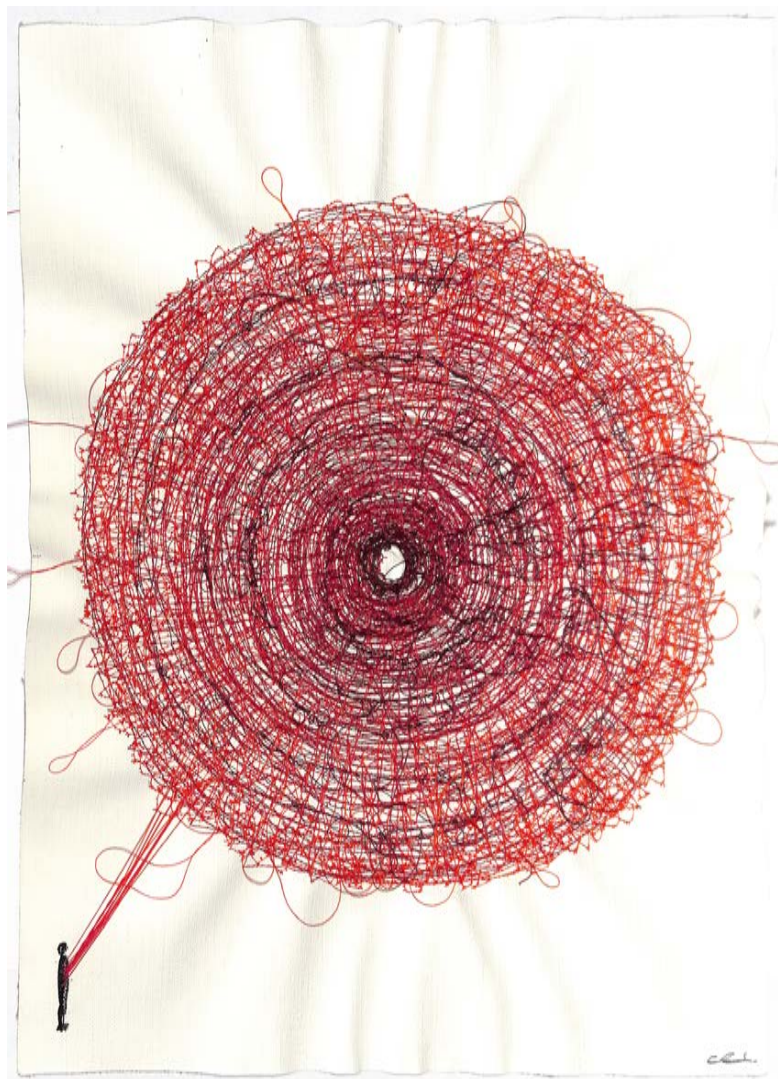
CS/D 231013



CHI HARU SHIOTA
(b.1972)

Connected to the Universe, 2023
water-soluble wax pastel, ink and thread on paper
30 x 42 cm

CS/D 231014



CHIHARU SHIOTA
(b.1972)

Connected to the Universe, 2023
water-soluble wax pastel, ink and thread on paper
30 x 42 cm

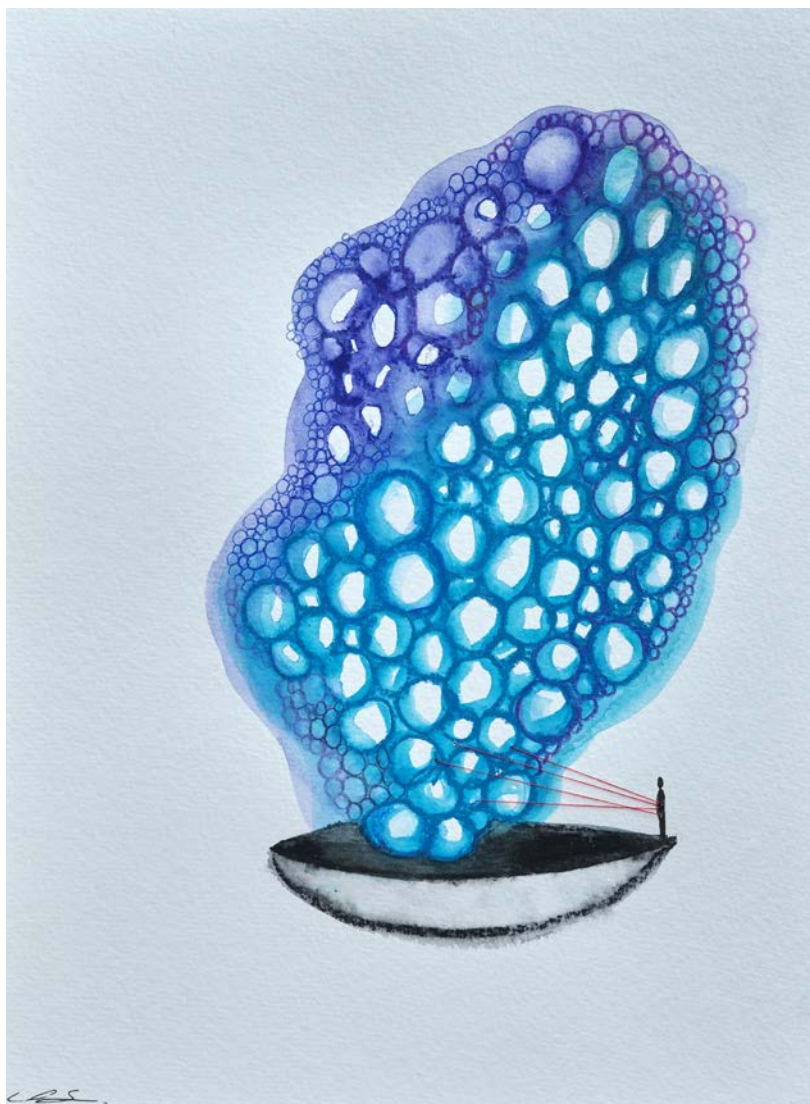
CS/D 231015



CHIHARU SHIOTA
(b.1972)

Connected to the Universe, 2023
signed lower left
water-soluble wax pastel, ink and thread on paper
32 x 24 cm.

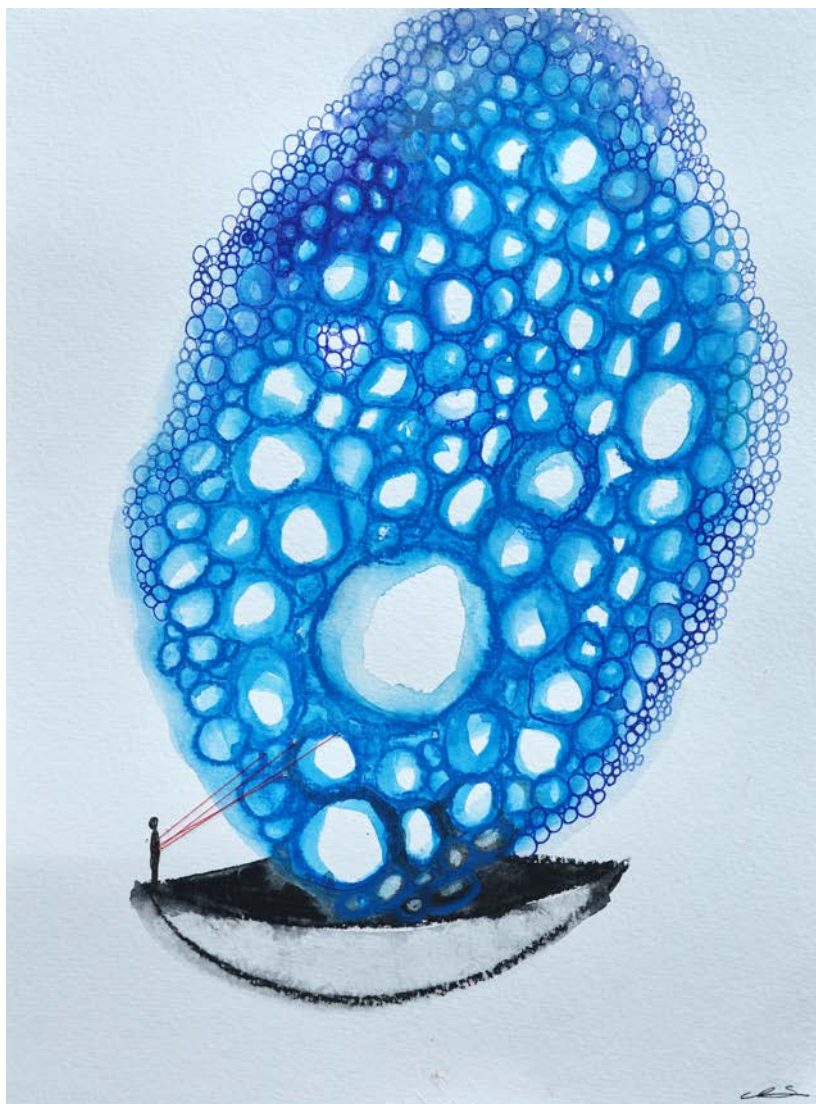
CS/D 231016



CHIHARU SHIOTA
(b.1972)

Connected to the Universe, 2023
signed lower right
water-soluble wax pastel, ink and thread on paper
32 x 24 cm.

CS/D 231017



*“Everyone is connected if
you are part of society.
People are connected to
each other, but we are also
linked to the universe.”*



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