

SUH JEONG MIN
Inside the Bark of the Mulberry Tree

FOREWORD

*'Man models himself after Earth.
Earth models itself after Heaven.
Heaven models itself after Tao.
And Tao models itself after Nature.'*

- Lao Tsu

Representing the relationship between man and nature through a meticulous assembly of individually rolled Korean hanji paper, Suh Jeong Min's elegant structures manifest the artistry and philosophy at the root of Korean culture. With 2016 heralding in both a well-deserved focus on Korean artists and a return to the virtues of craftsmanship, Opera Gallery is proud to present Inside the Bark of the Mulberry Tree, a solo exhibition celebrating one of the masters of contemporary Korean art.

Gilles Dyan

Chairman and Founder
Opera Gallery Group

Shirley Yablonsky

Director
Opera Gallery Hong Kong



SUH Jeong Min b. 1962

The essence of a culture is derived from the way its members use and interpret its tangible cultural symbols. Despite its turbulent history, Korean culture has cultivated an essence based on harmony and order that combines influences of Confucianism, community and cyclicity. Its pointed minimalism and monochromatic palette have experienced an unprecedented surge in the current market, giving rise to well-deserved surveys and renewed value in the context of the global art canon. Conscientious, inexhaustibly creative and deeply philosophical, Korean artists are gradually staking their claim as some of the most interesting creators of our time. It is only fitting, therefore, to focus on one of the country's most celebrated and prolific creators at a time when the global art market descends upon Hong Kong.

In his meticulously hand-cut hanji artworks, Suh Jeong Min gracefully interweaves cultural artefacts with the spirit of Korean past and present. Using scrap paper sourced from calligraphic studios around Korea, Suh rolls, presses, cuts and places thousands of layers of hanji paper to produce effects of light and shadow on canvas, with the remaining calligraphic letters forming black lines on the surface of the work. By generating artworks from paper which would otherwise be discarded, Suh practice implies a process of the circle of life.

Using original paper onto which scriptures of Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism are printed, Suh's reconstructions also reinterpret the implementation of ancient texts into contemporary practice. Each piece is handmade using 5,000 to 10,000 small pieces of rolled paper, often taking two to three months to complete. The painstaking, time-consuming activity invested into each piece reflects a persistence and dedication to Korean artistry that encapsulates the spirit of the region itself.

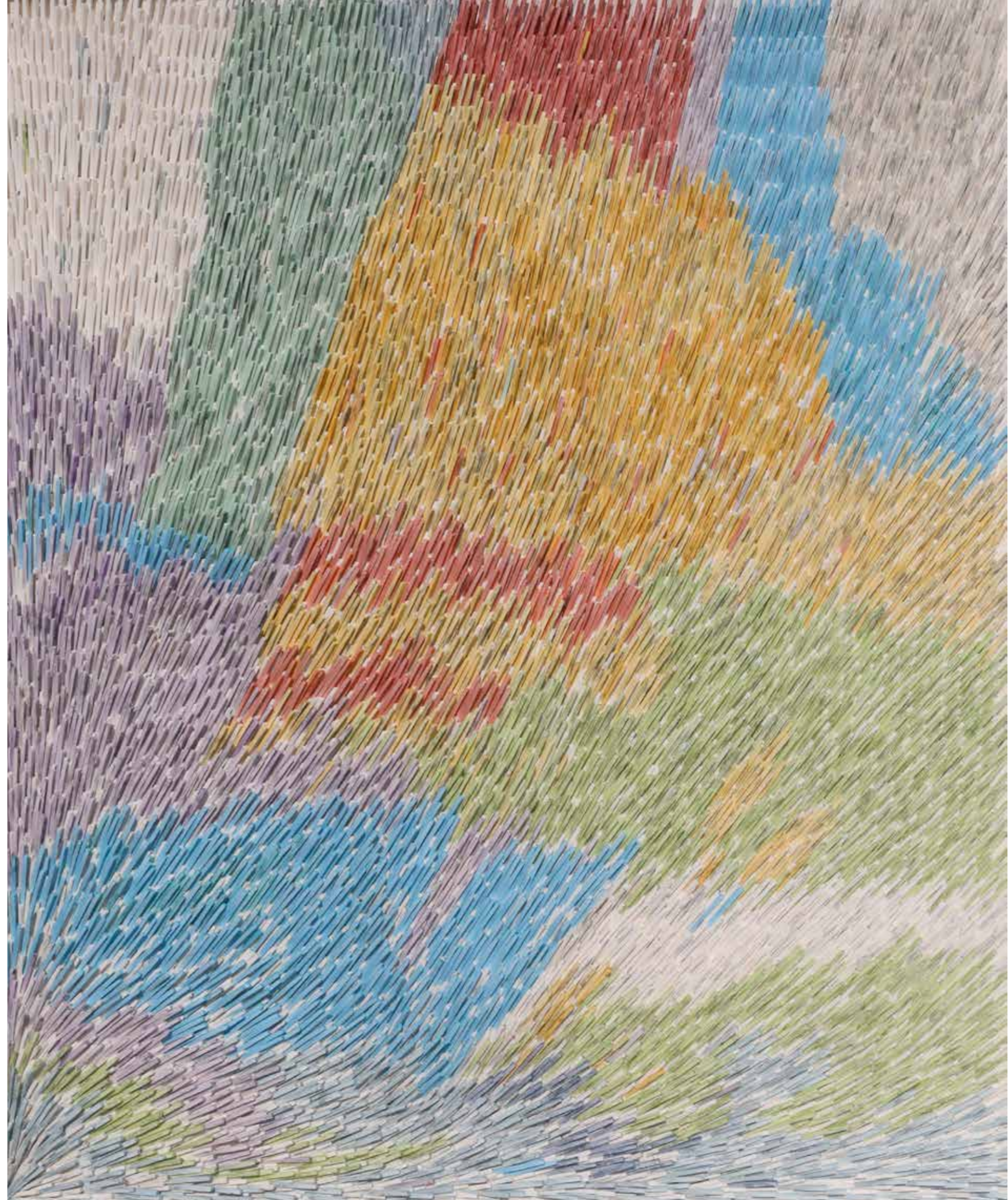
The use of hanji paper can be traced back nearly 2,000 years of Korean culture. Its versatility and durability made it suitable for anything from literature and painting to cabinets, trays and jars. Coveted for its varying array of thickness, colour and translucency, hanji paper was traditionally harvested from the bark of the Mulberry trees and sold to the literati elite. Hanji also played a sacred role in temple decorations and as support for illuminated satras, where it was burned in order for its ashes to rise to the sky. The ingenuity displayed in transforming its fibres into objects of function and tradition are a poetic example of man's relationship to natural materials. Compressing, rolling and cutting hundreds of layers of hanji paper from collection of printed poetry, ink painting and literary discards, Suh's artwork is an informal bridge of creative collaboration across generations of Korean history.

Gili Karev
Art critic and curator

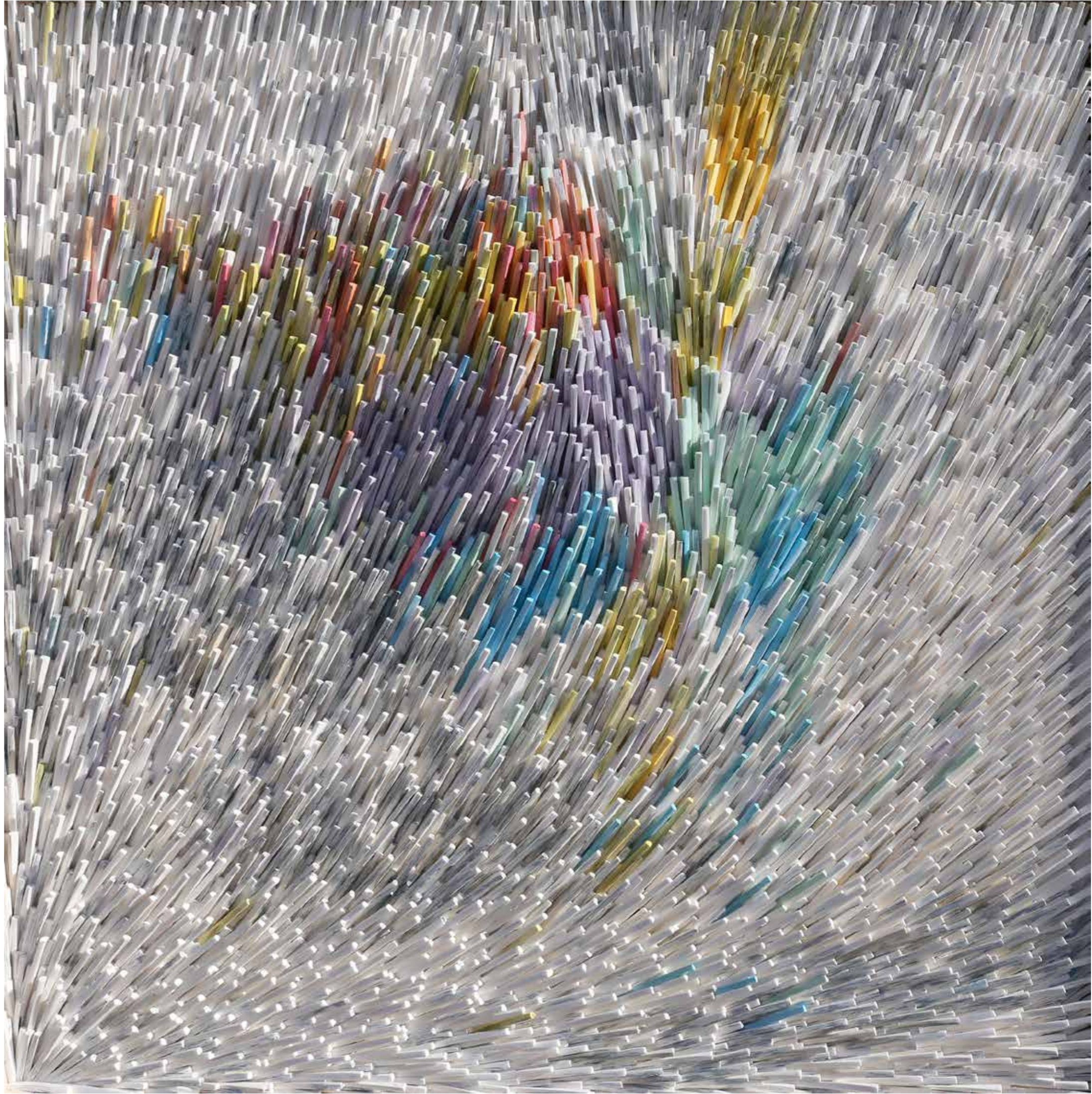
Suh Jeong Min is a Korean artist born in Seoul. He received his BFA in Painting from Chosun University and an MFA in Fine Arts from Kyeonggi University.

Suh's works have been exhibited at the 2013 Venice Biennial, Personal Structures Collateral Event; the Seoul Art Centre; the Gwangju Biennial and the KEPSCO Plaza Art Museum, as well as in numerous solo and group exhibitions both locally and abroad. He is the recipient of the Haengju Art Award in 2011 and 2005, and the Golden Award for Paper Art from the World Gallery of Drawing in 2013. His work forms part of the private collections of Hauser & Wirth Gallery, the Seoul Paper Museum and the Tween Tower Foundation, USA.

Lines of Travel-42, 2015
Hand-dyed hanji paper
182 x 150 cm - 71.7 x 59.1 in.



Lines of Travel-54, 2015
Hand-dyed hanji paper
110x 110 cm / 43.3x 43.3 in.





Lines of Travel-58, 2016
Hand-dyed hanji paper
90x 116 cm - 35.4 x 45.7 in.

Lines of Travel-56, 2015
Hand-dyed hanji paper
110 x 110 cm - 43.3 x 43.3 in.



Lines of Travel-57, 2016
Hand-dyed hanji paper
120 x 120 cm - 47.2 x 47.2 in.



Absence of the Worldly Desire-X, 2016
Hand-dyed hanji paper
140 x 140 cm - 55.1 x 55.1 in.



SUN, 2015
Hand-dyed hanji paper
140 x 160 cm - 55.1 x 63 in.





The Oil Memory, 2010
Hand-dyed hanji paper
60 x 140 cm - 23.6 x 55.1 in.

Lines of Travel-62, 2015
Hand-dyed hanji paper
120 x 120 cm - 47.2 x 47.2 in.



Lines of Travel-59, 2016
Hand-dyed hanji paper
120x 120 cm - 47.2 x 47.2 in.



Lines of Travel-60, 2016
Hand-dyed hanji paper
110x 110 cm - 43.3 x 43.3 in.



Lines of Travel-61, 2016
Hand-dyed hanji paper
120 x 120 cm - 47.2 x 47.2 in.



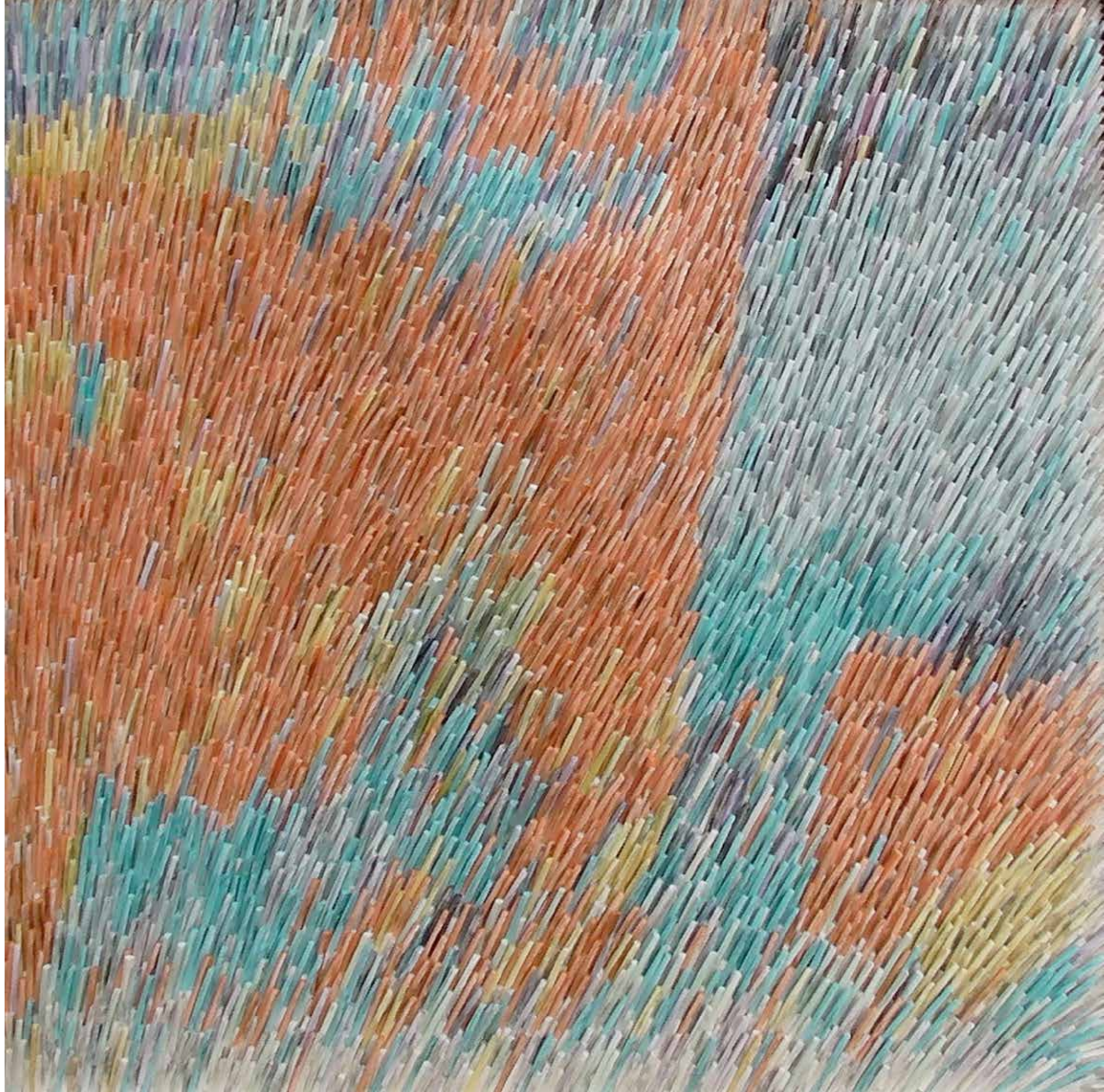
Lines of Travel-20, 2014
Hand-dyed hanji paper
182 x 150 cm - 71.7 x 59.1 in.

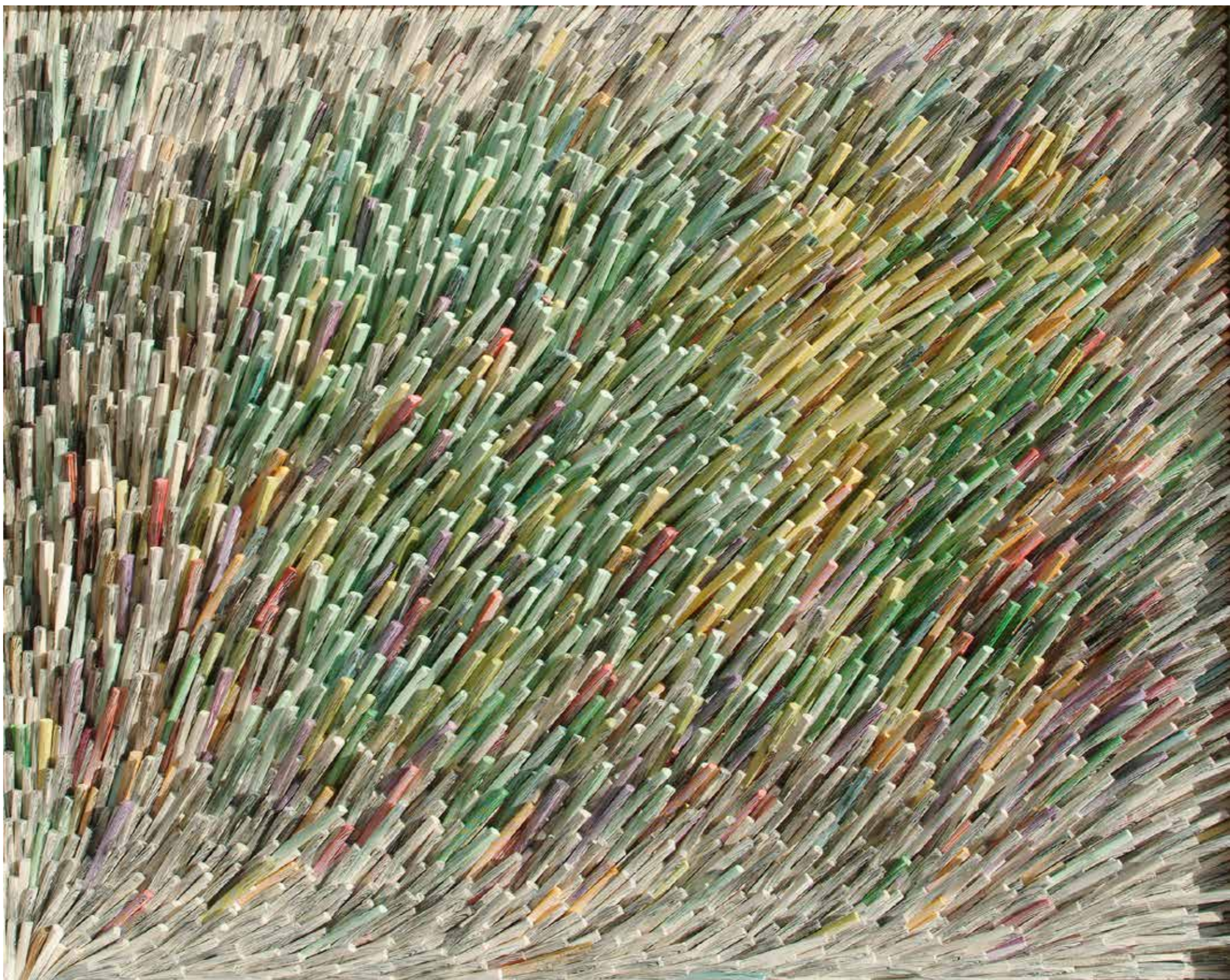


Lines of Travel-22, 2015
Hand-dyed hanji paper
140 x 140 cm - 55.1 x 55.1 in.



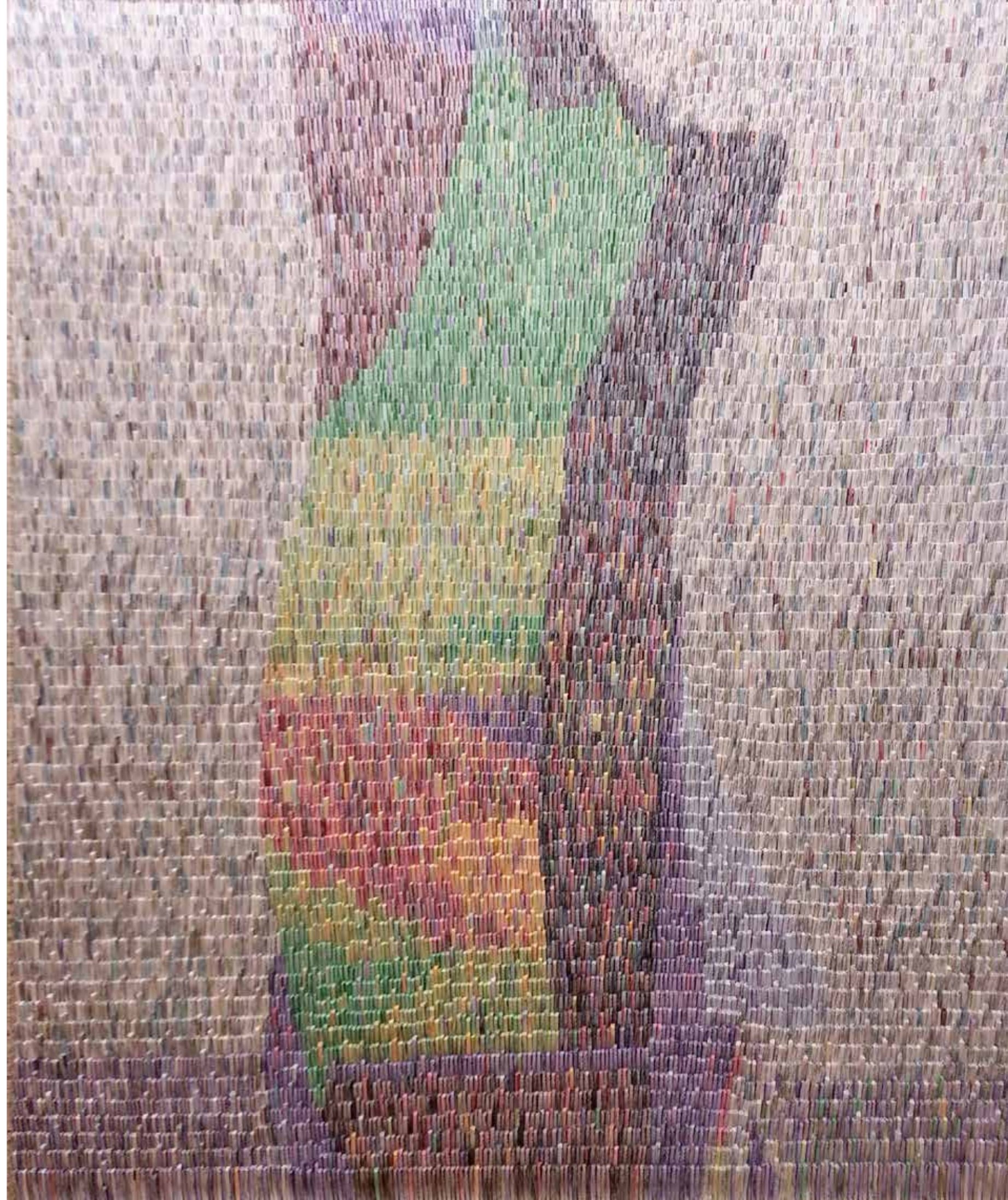
Festival 14-10, 2014
Hand-dyed hanji paper
110x 110 cm - 43.3x 43.3 in.



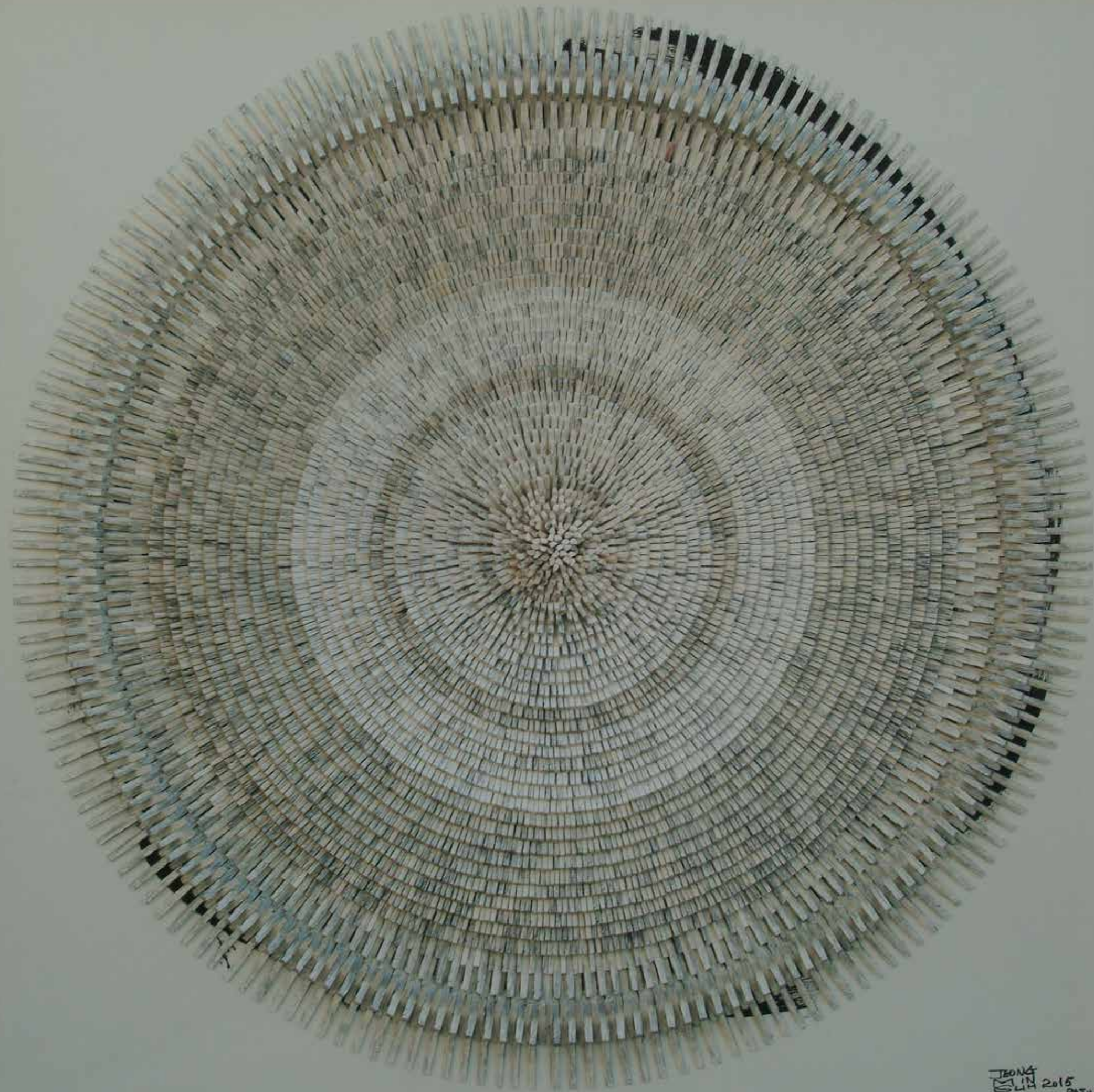


Traces of Sound-12, 2014
Hand-dyed hanji paper
73 x 91 cm - 28.7 x 35.8 in.

The Lines of Whisper VII, 2014
Hand-dyed hanji paper
182 x 150 cm - 71.7 x 59.1 in.



Mandala, 2016
Hand-dyed hanji paper
140 x 140 cm - 55.1 x 55.1 in.



JEONG
LIM 2015
PASH KIR

