

# YOU ARE HERE

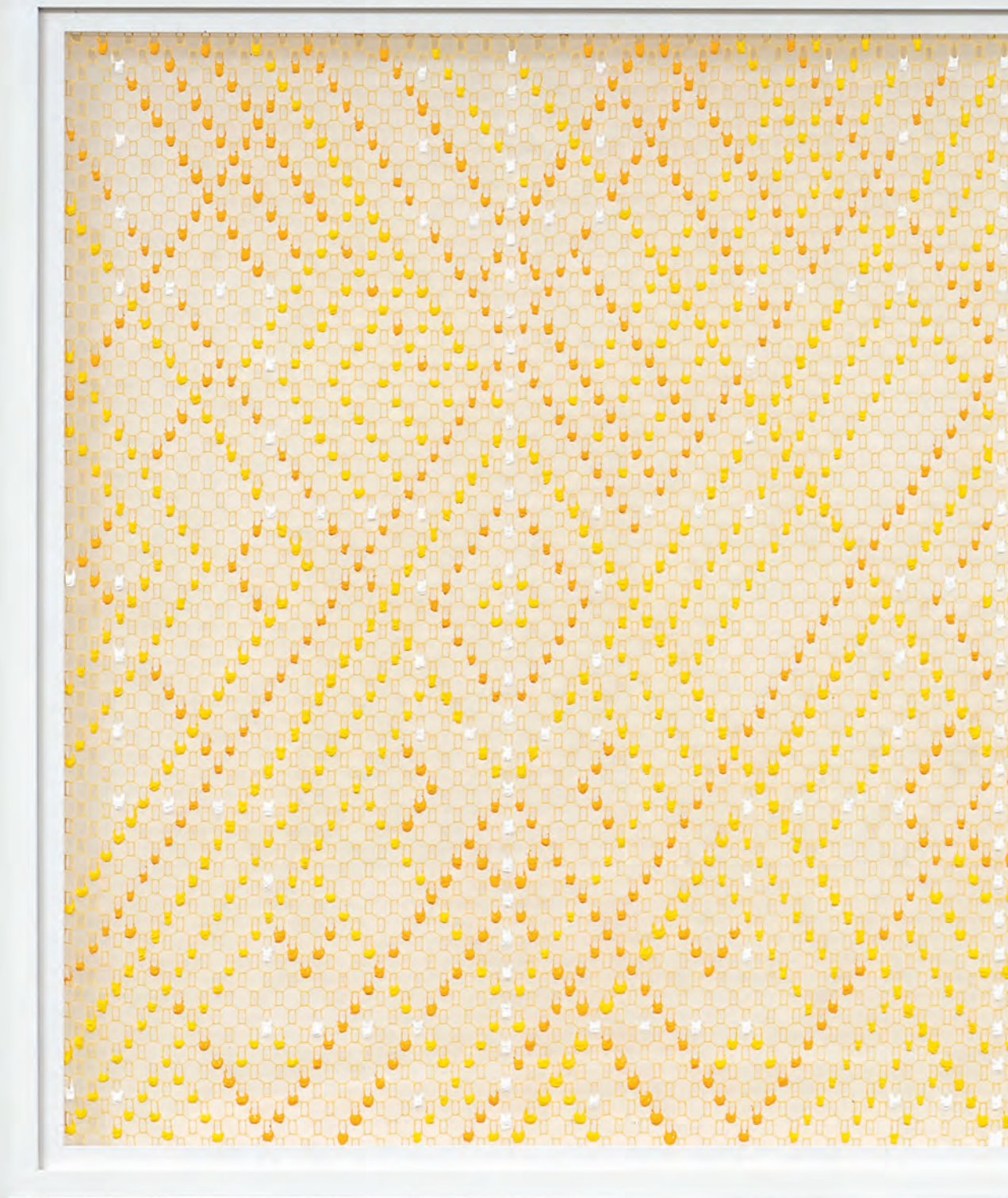
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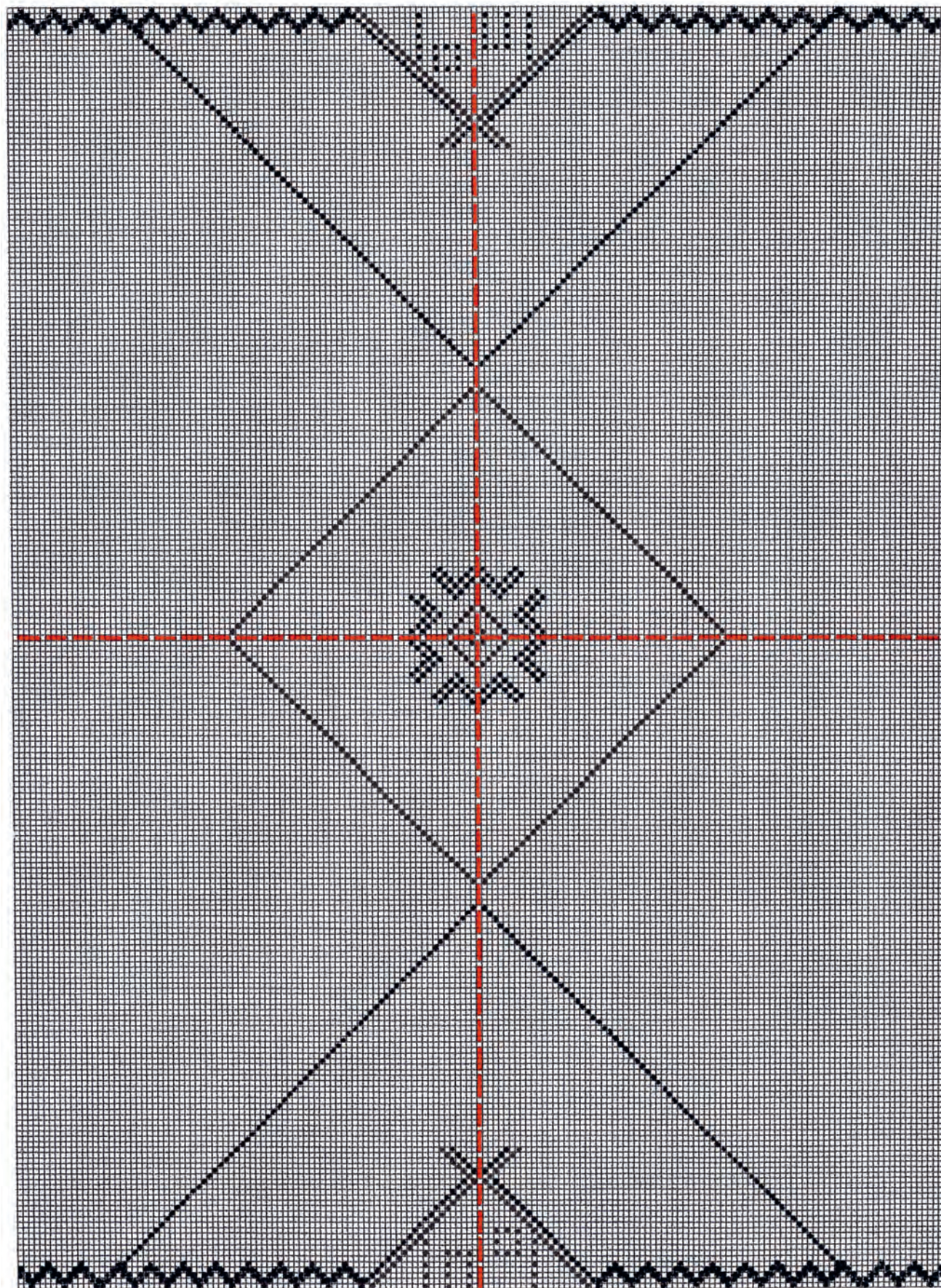






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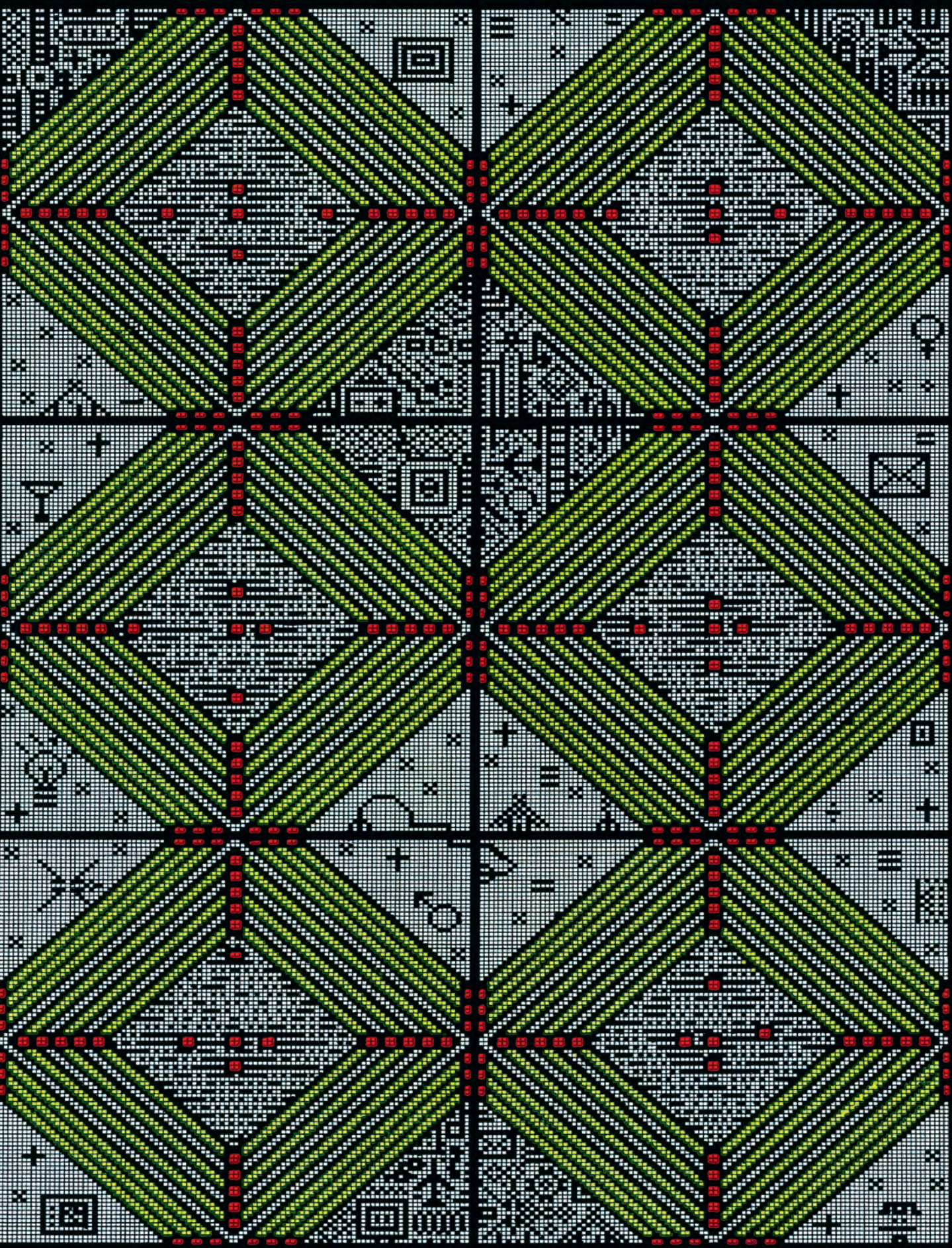




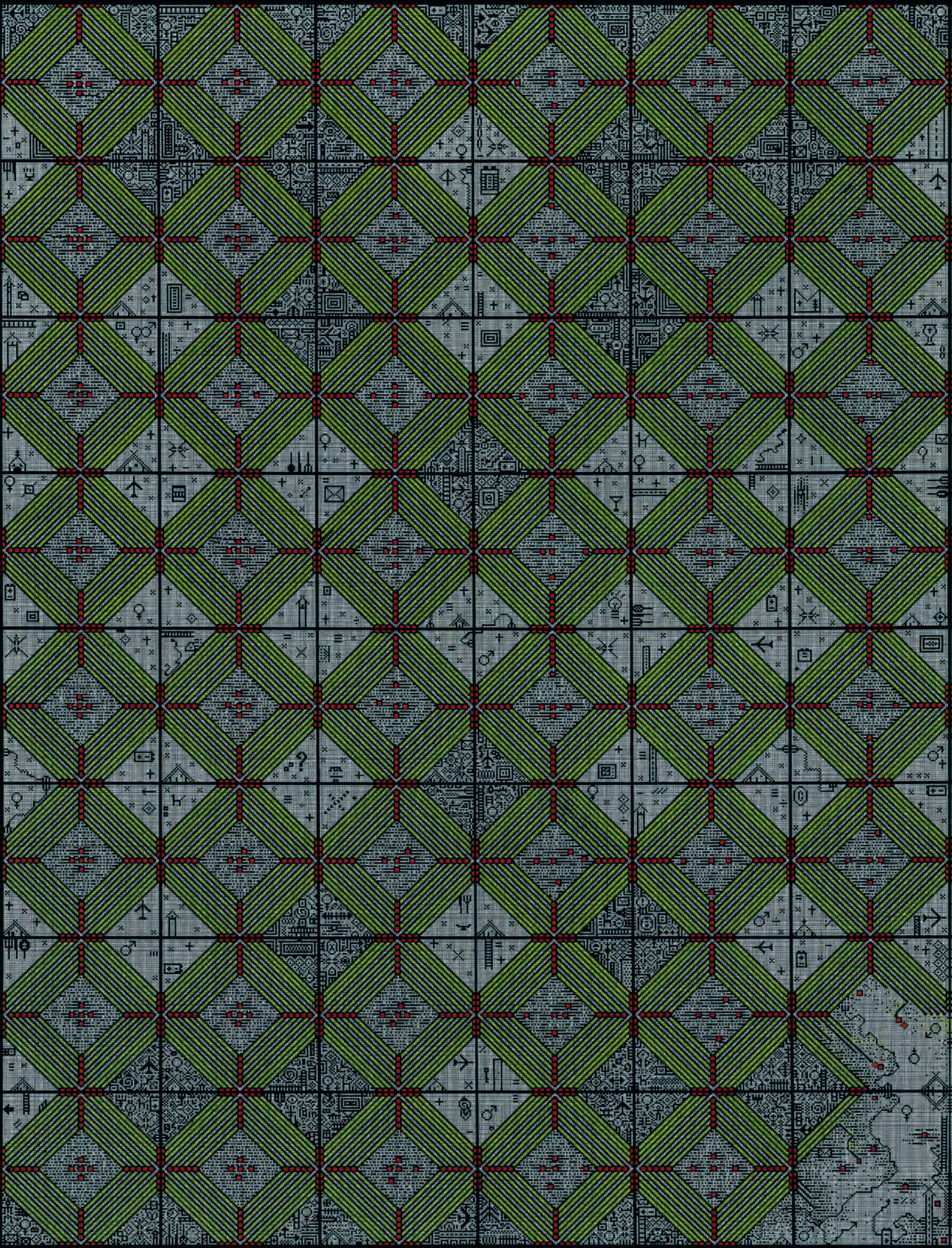


Back at the beginning again.

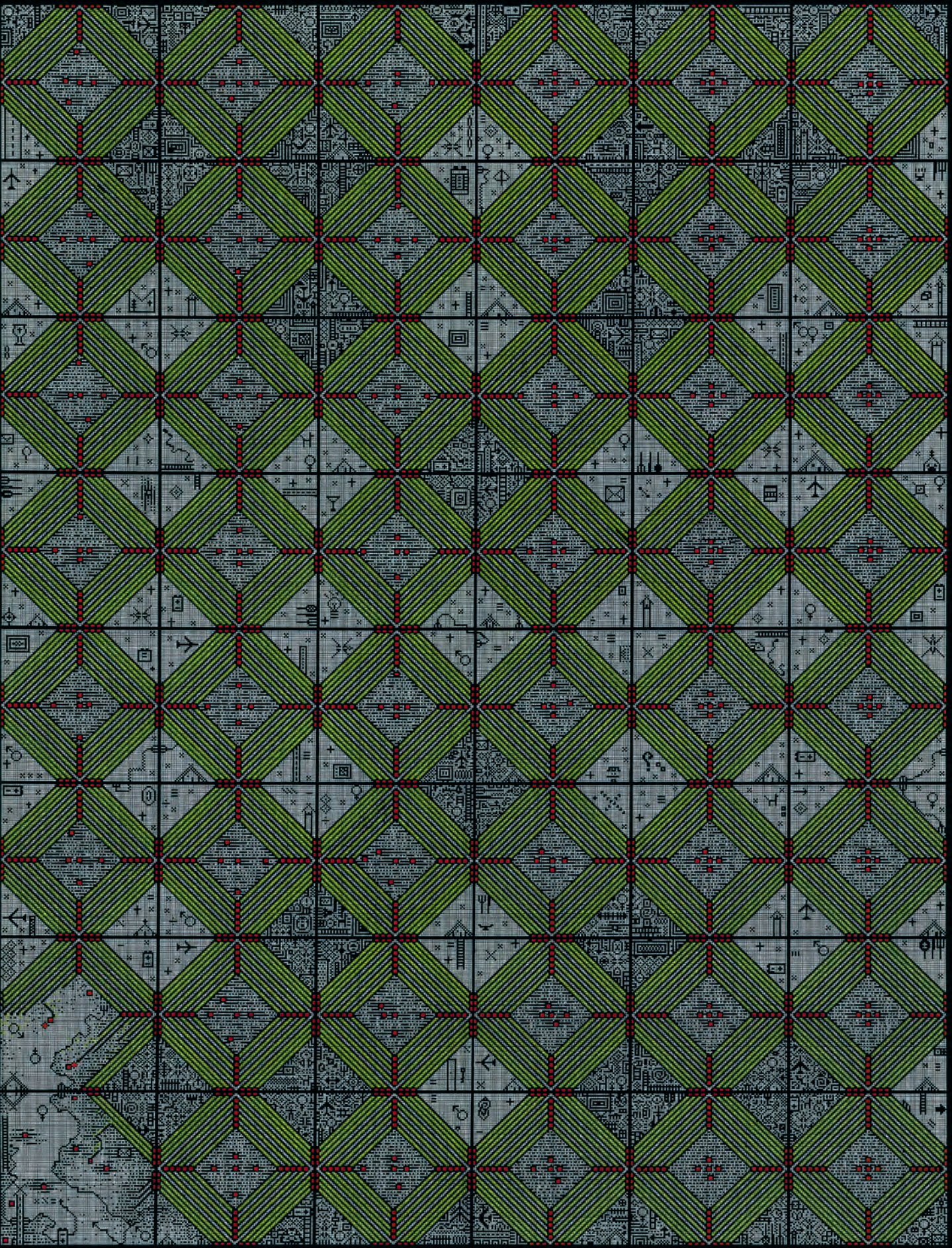










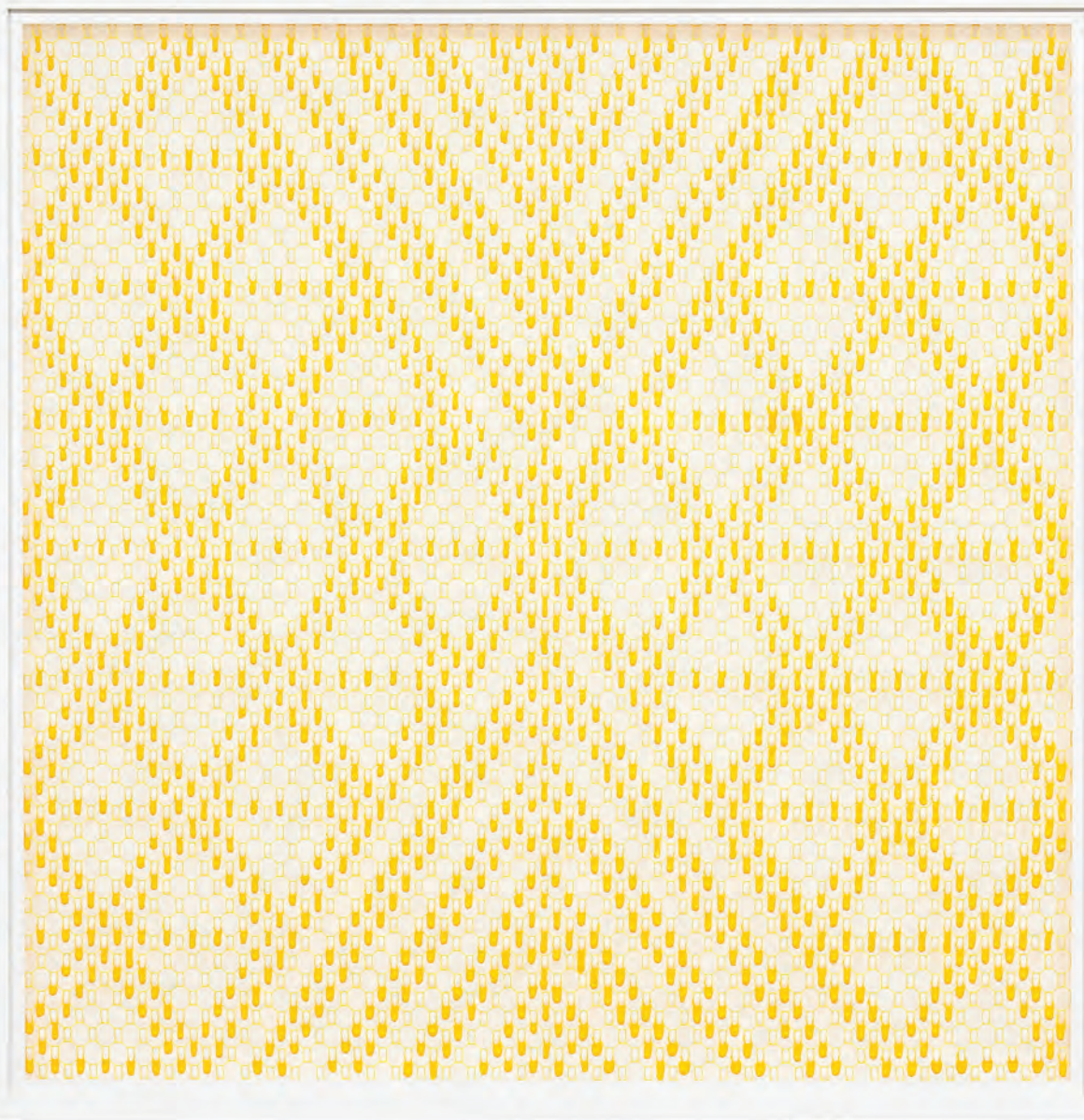




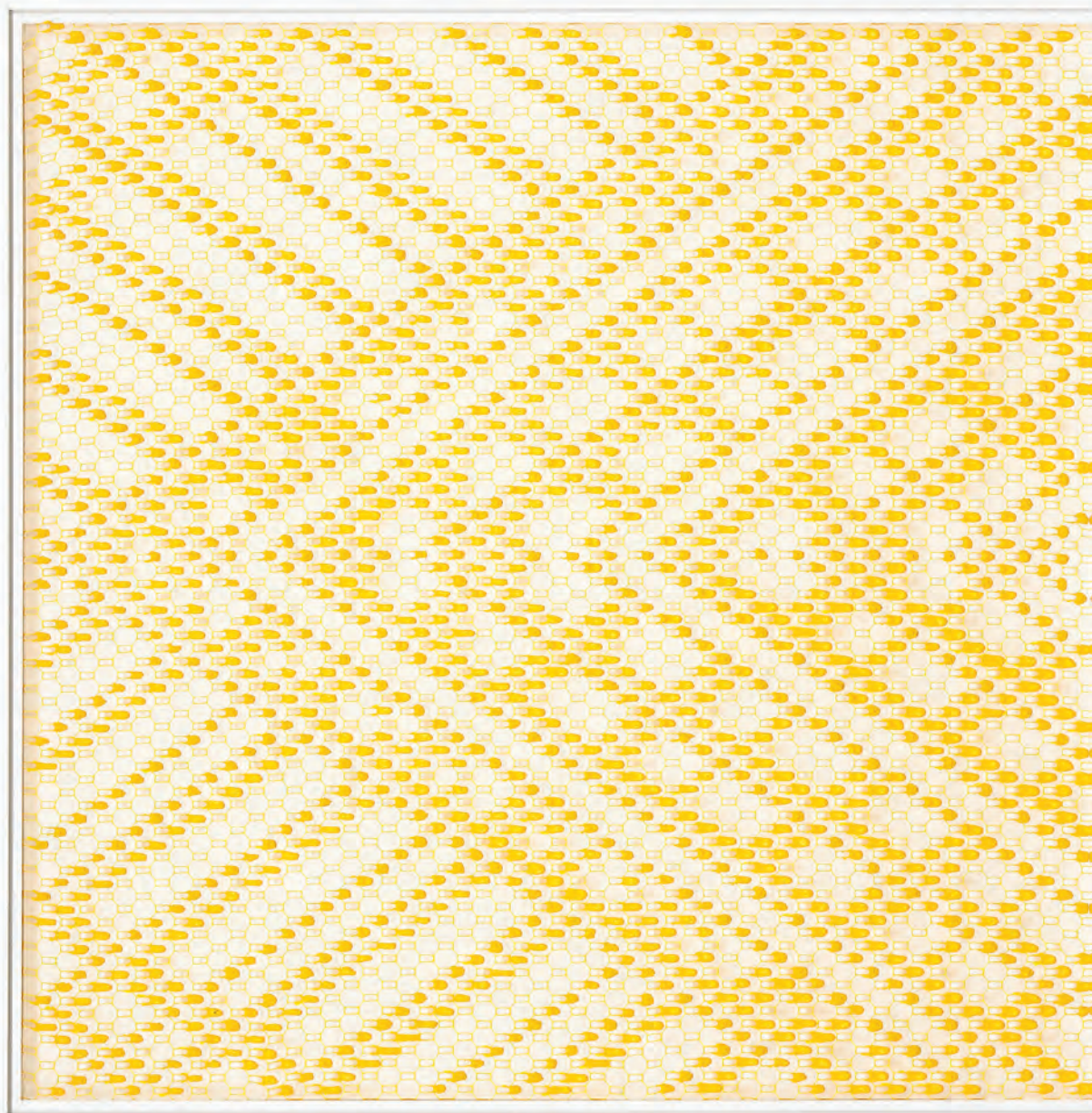


The beginning, yes, but not where you started.

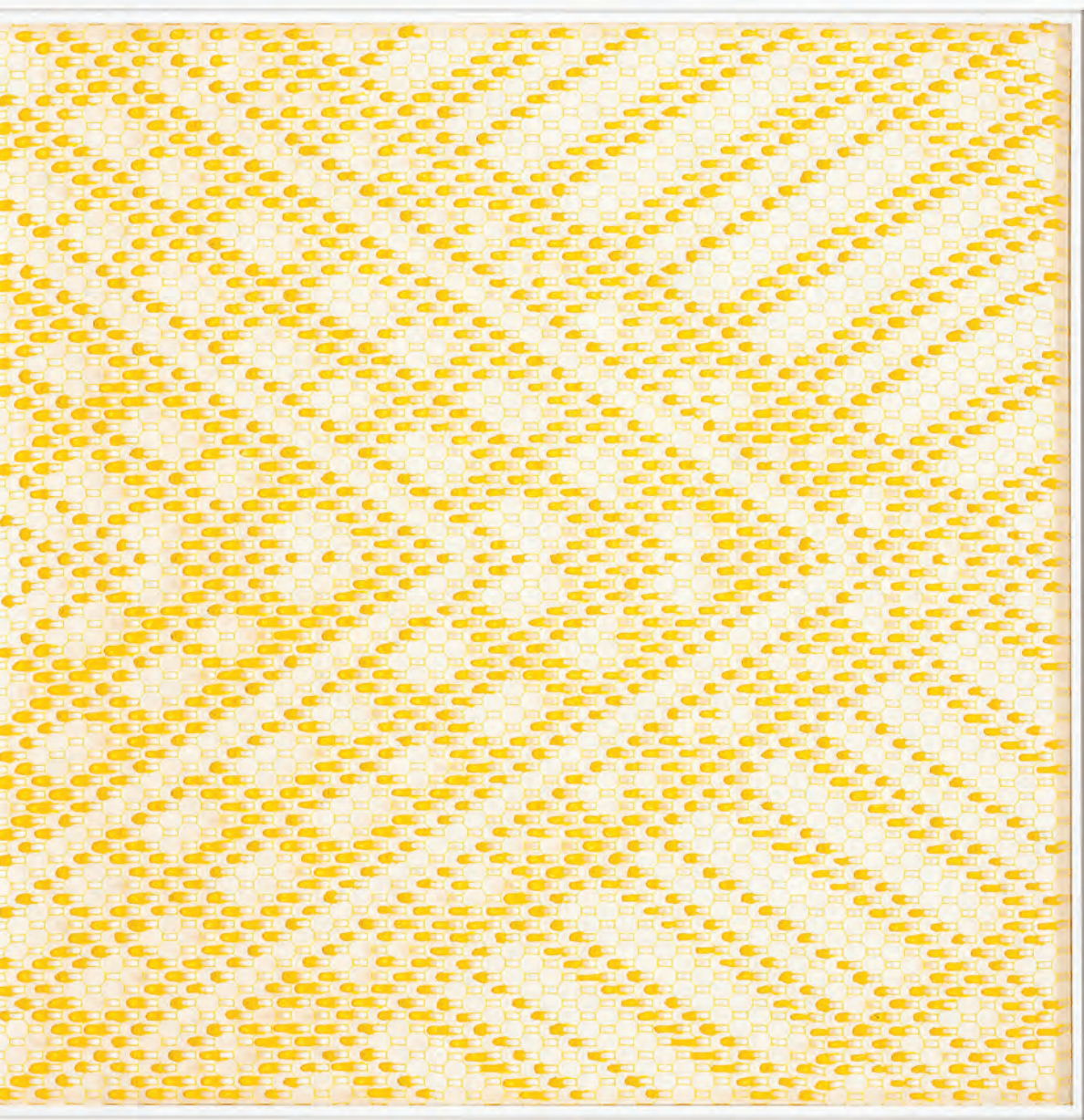




















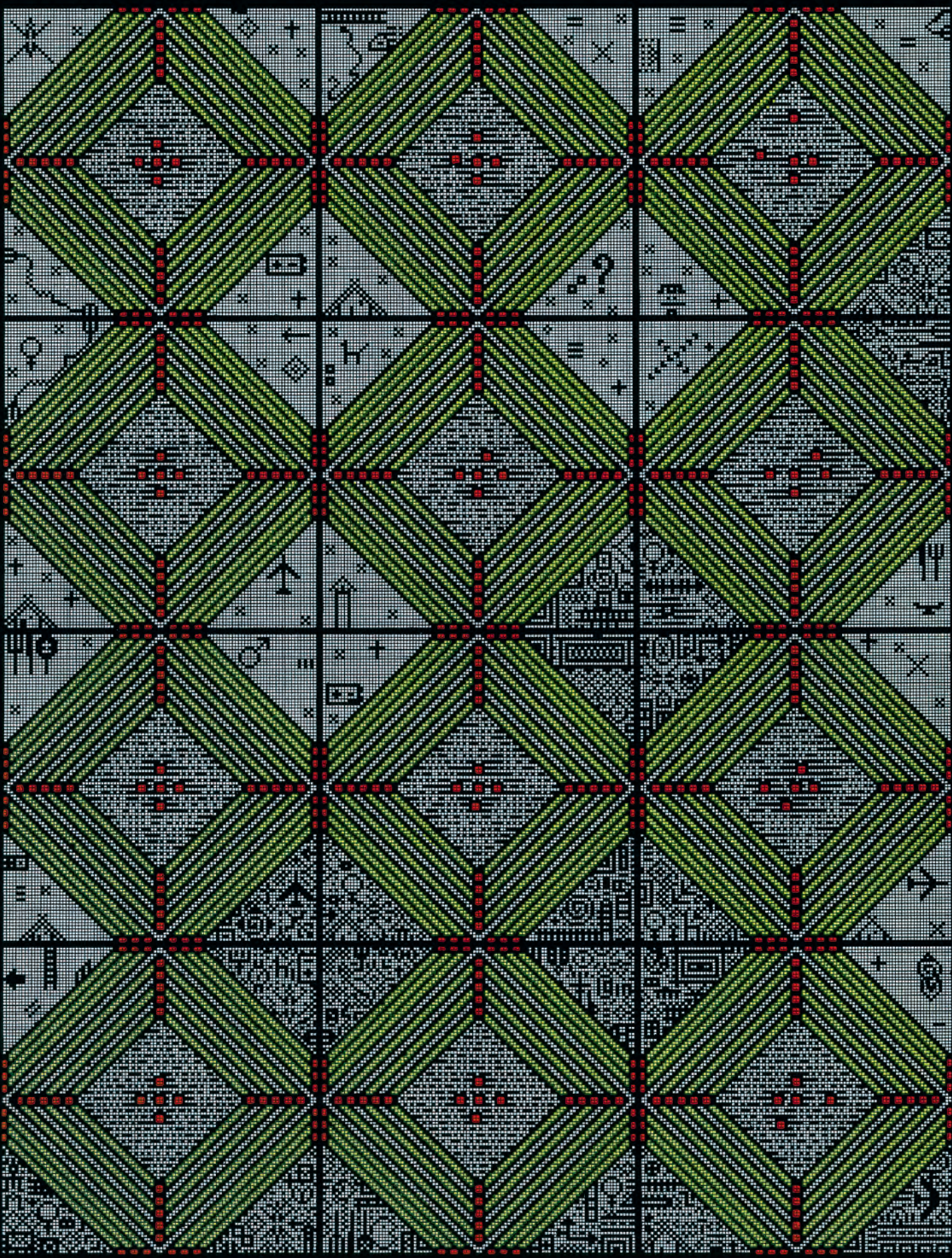
Not that long ago this would have worried you — to be beginning again.



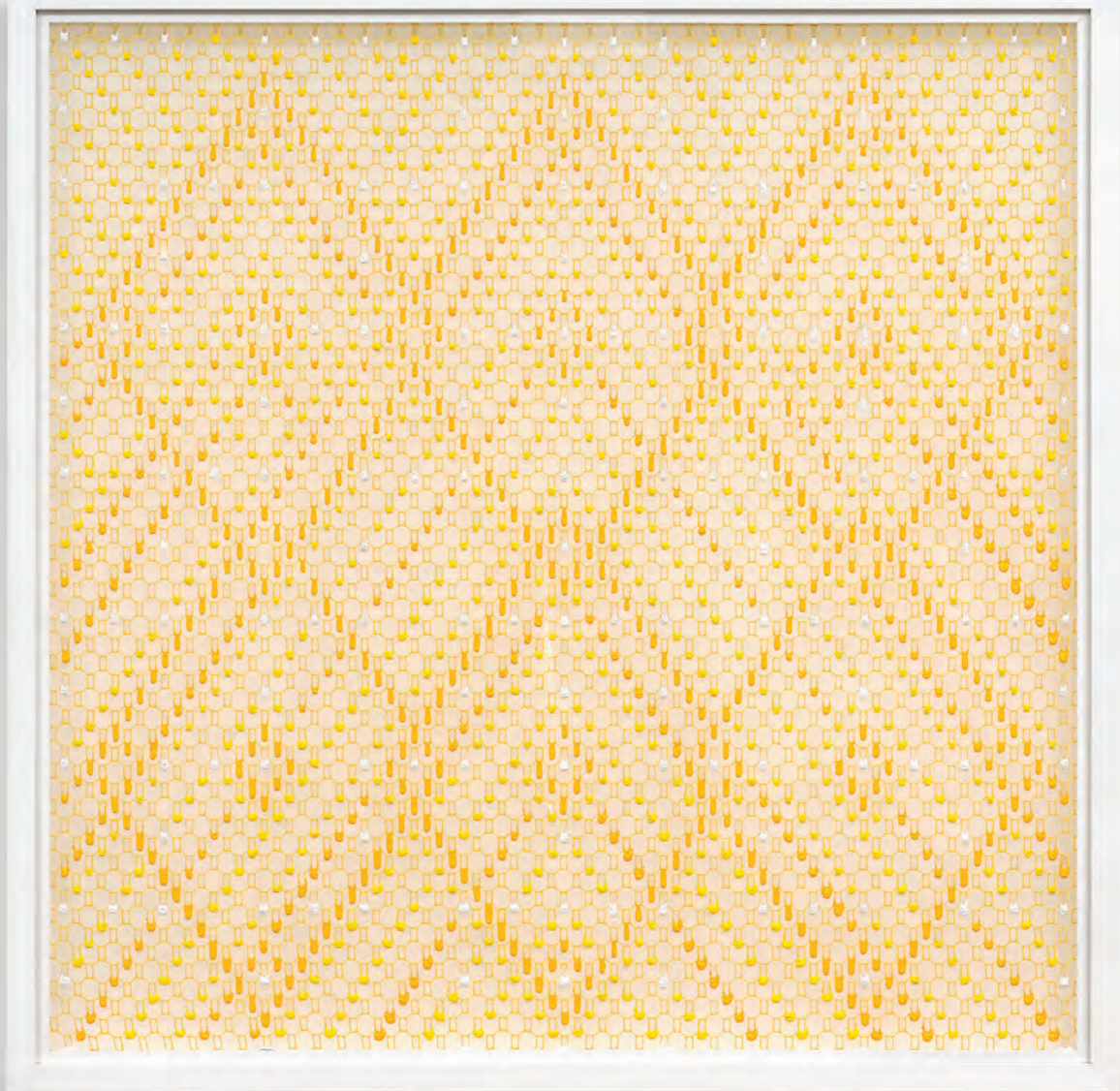


Being back felt like losing ground, and it frustrated you to waste that time — blind to how far you had shifted.

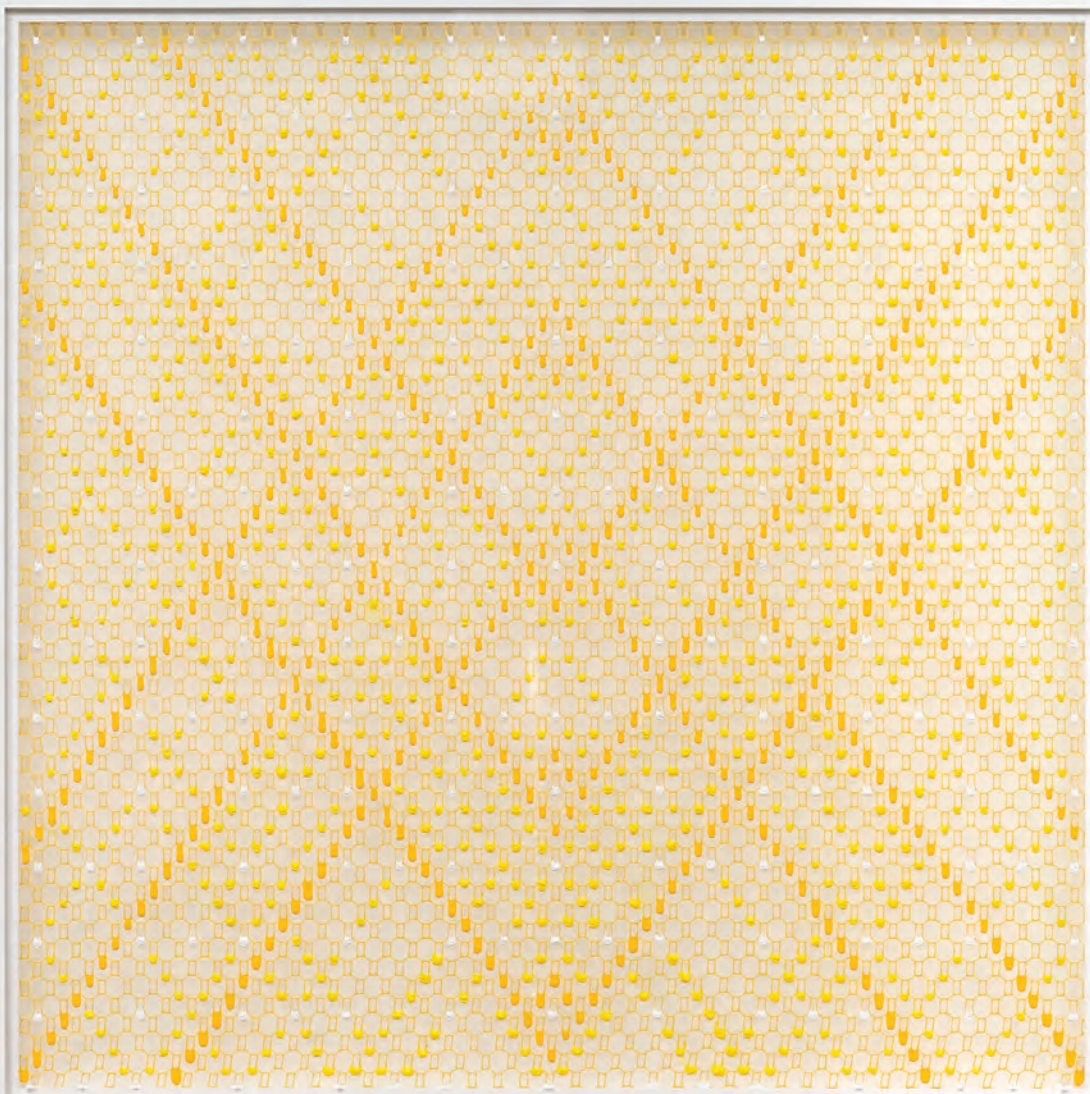










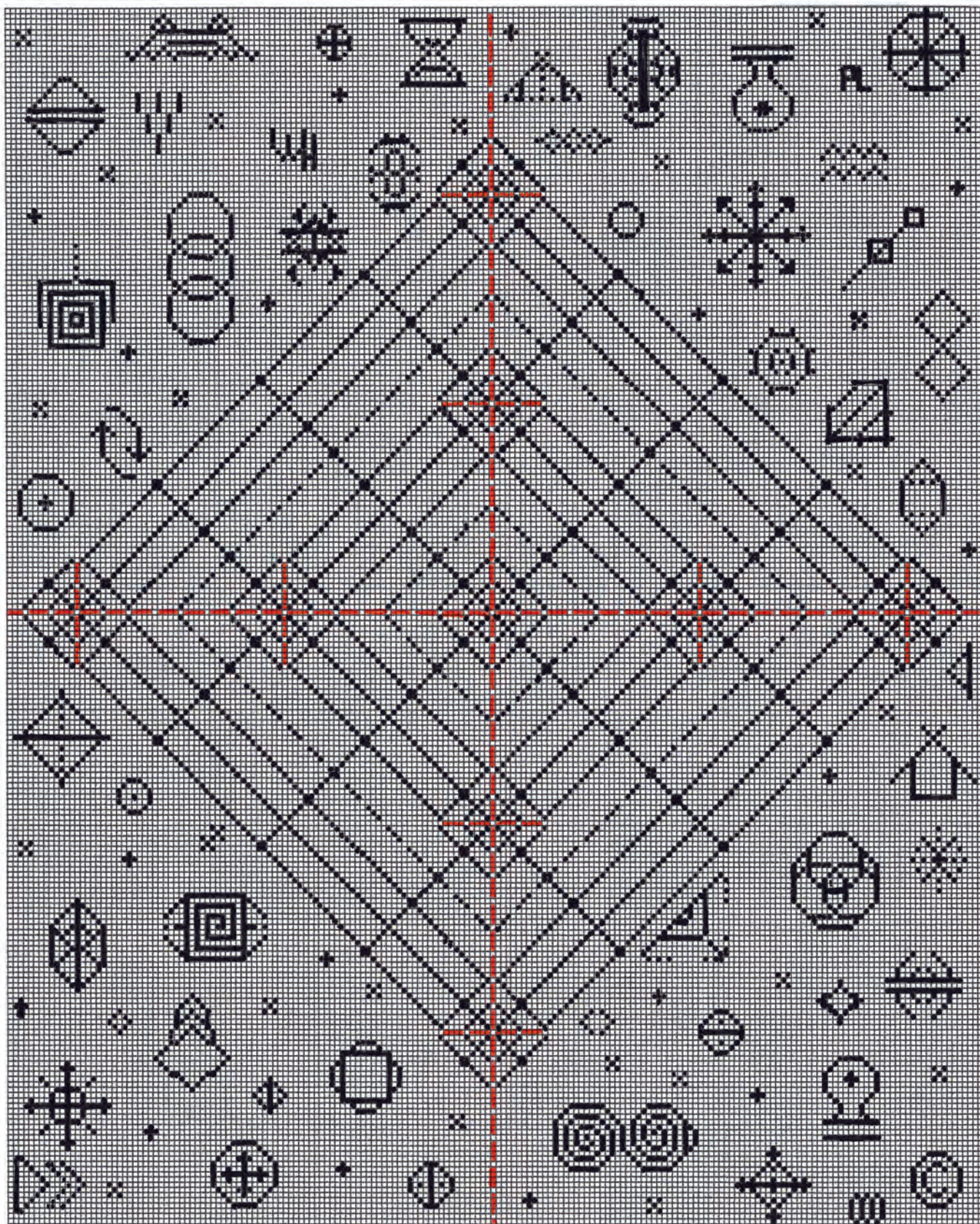






Although you recognise each other, you and this place have both changed. You are here at the beginning but not where you started. How long has it been? Do you count minutes, days, years?



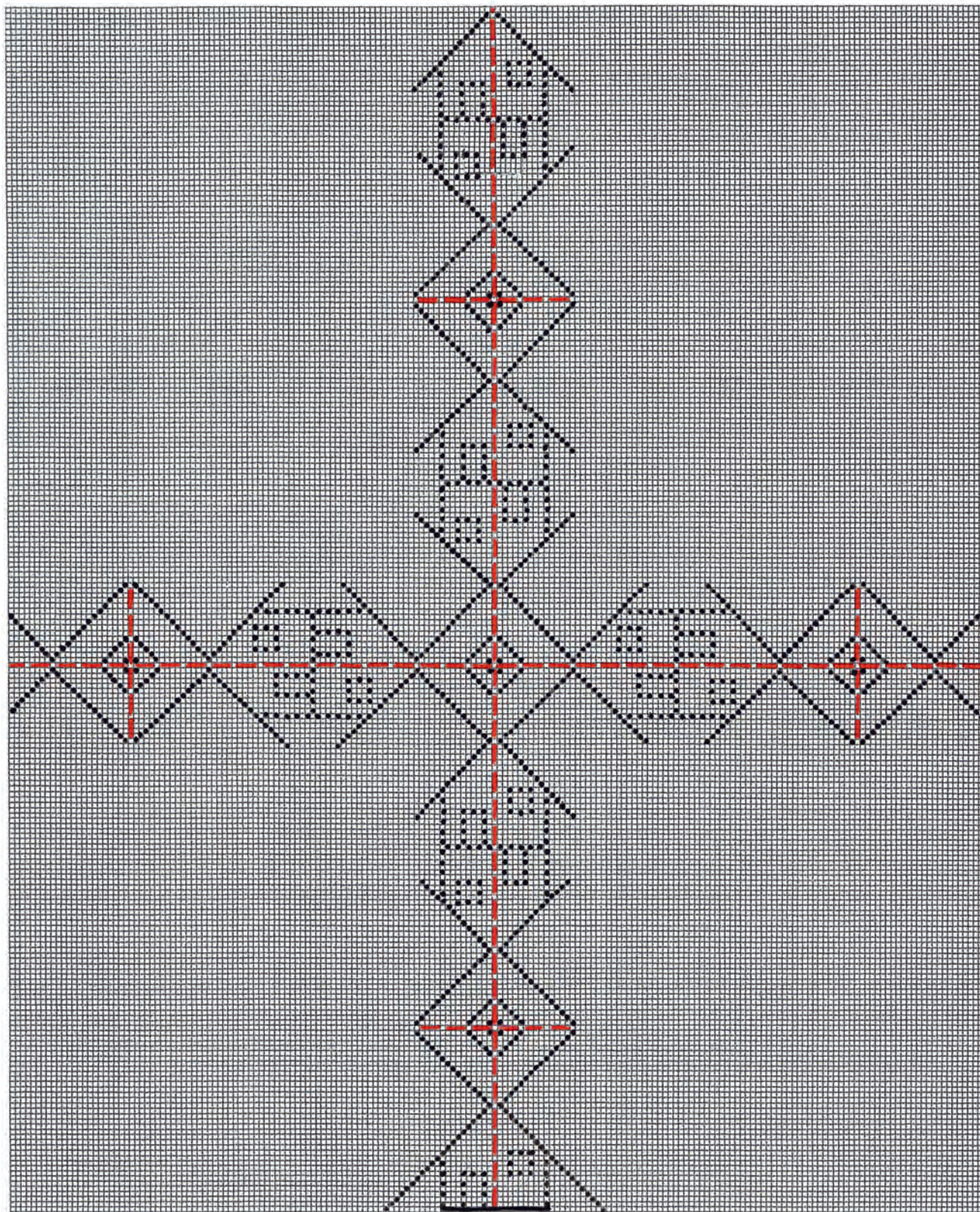




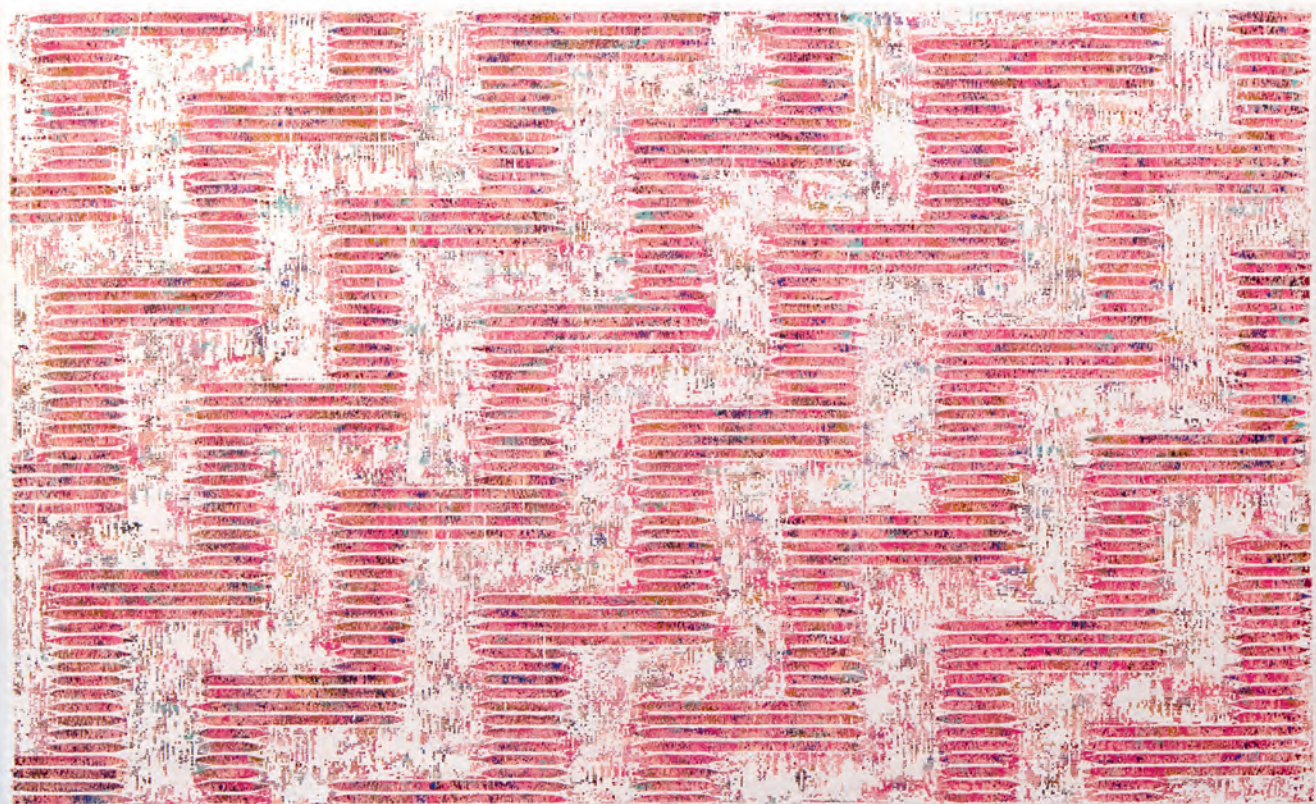


You left this place a while ago, but it has never really left you. Its mark is indelible on you; it shapes your thoughts and language, it colours everywhere else you have been. Even when you do not mean to, you compare every new home to this one, your first home, perhaps your only home.

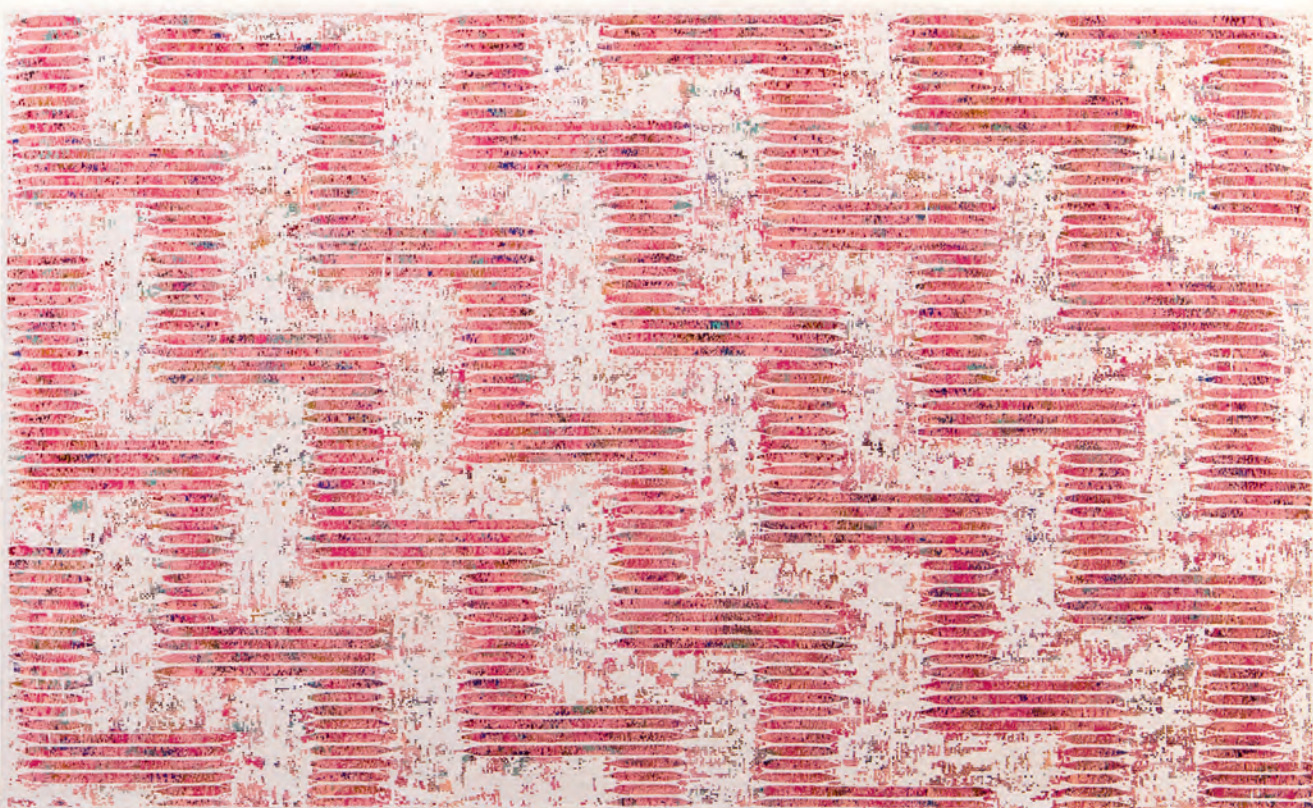










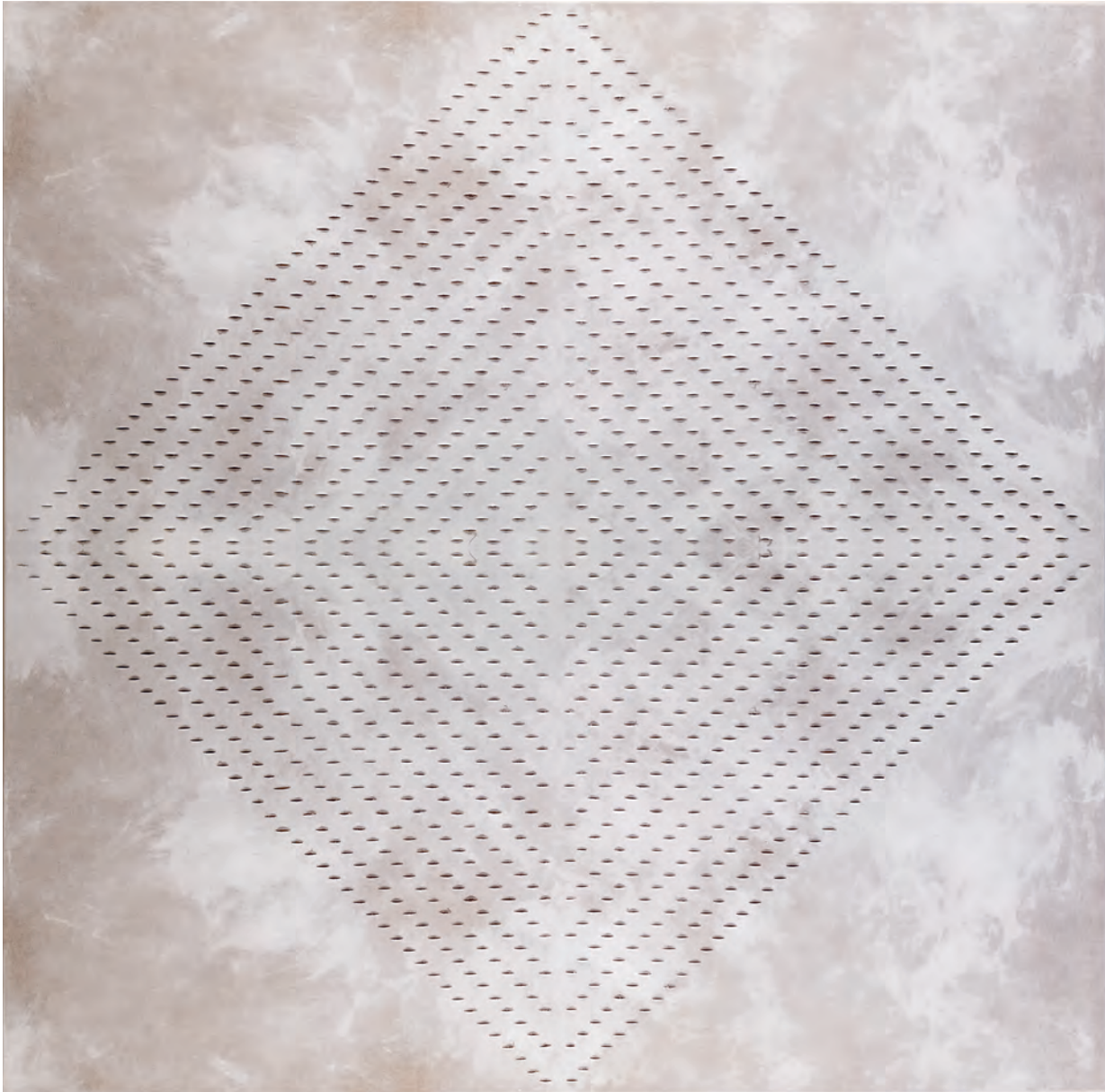






In other places you have been you recognise its absence, contrasting *there* with *here*. This hold on you is strange, because you have been *away* from this place for longer than you lived here. Ahead are the mountains and lake. You used to think of them as yours — and they are — but this inadequately describes your relationship. These mountains knew you for generations before you arrived — they have watched your line grow. You are equally *theirs* — they lay claim to you as much as you lay claim to them.









It might seem strange to go back to find a way forward — that sometimes retracing your steps is the best way to find your feet, to discover the path again. Why does your journey loop back around on itself so often? It seems like other people travel so easily in one direction, but you have always been drawn to the distractions along the way — a stop to take in the view, a seldom-visited place that seems interesting. When you were young, everyone you knew wanted to go abroad to see history, blind to murmurs here. The past in those places was allowed to shout. They had that same feeling of absence — for places their line had left behind generations ago. You left too, of course, but you did not find yourself there as they seemed to. If anything, you were a little lost.



