

David Oates

Paintings

Published on the occasion of an exhibition,
Avivson Gallery at Highgate, September 2019

For VV

The assumption of being an individual is our greatest limitation

Pir Vilayat Khan (Sufi teacher)

In a world where high visibility, pastiche and irony are the hallmarks of so many contemporary artists, there is something invigorating about the quiet minimalism and lack of ego in David Oates' approach. All too often, in our consumer society, life and art present themselves as an endless accumulation of meaningless spectacles that lack a unifying narrative. In the layered and slippery space of postmodernism so much lacks coherence.

In contrast, David Oates' concerns are serious and focused, both painterly and philosophical. There is a potent charge to his layered surfaces, which give a sense of illusionistic, inchoate space that is physical as well as metaphysical. Time and the cosmos are evoked, as are questions of our place within the matrix of the universe. The paintings in the *Kiss* series are made on bare, sized canvas to emphasise their physicality and allusion to industrial mass-production. Not only are a series of eclipses implied but also a relationship to the body, in the semblance of a spine and the emotive title. The dark red/grey *Kiss 8* is an exception to the general run of this group, being made painstakingly from thinly built layers of glazed paint.

In other works, such as the *Vampire* series, carefully executed circular holes penetrate the canvas, reminding us of the literal reality of the painting's surface, whilst also calling to mind the

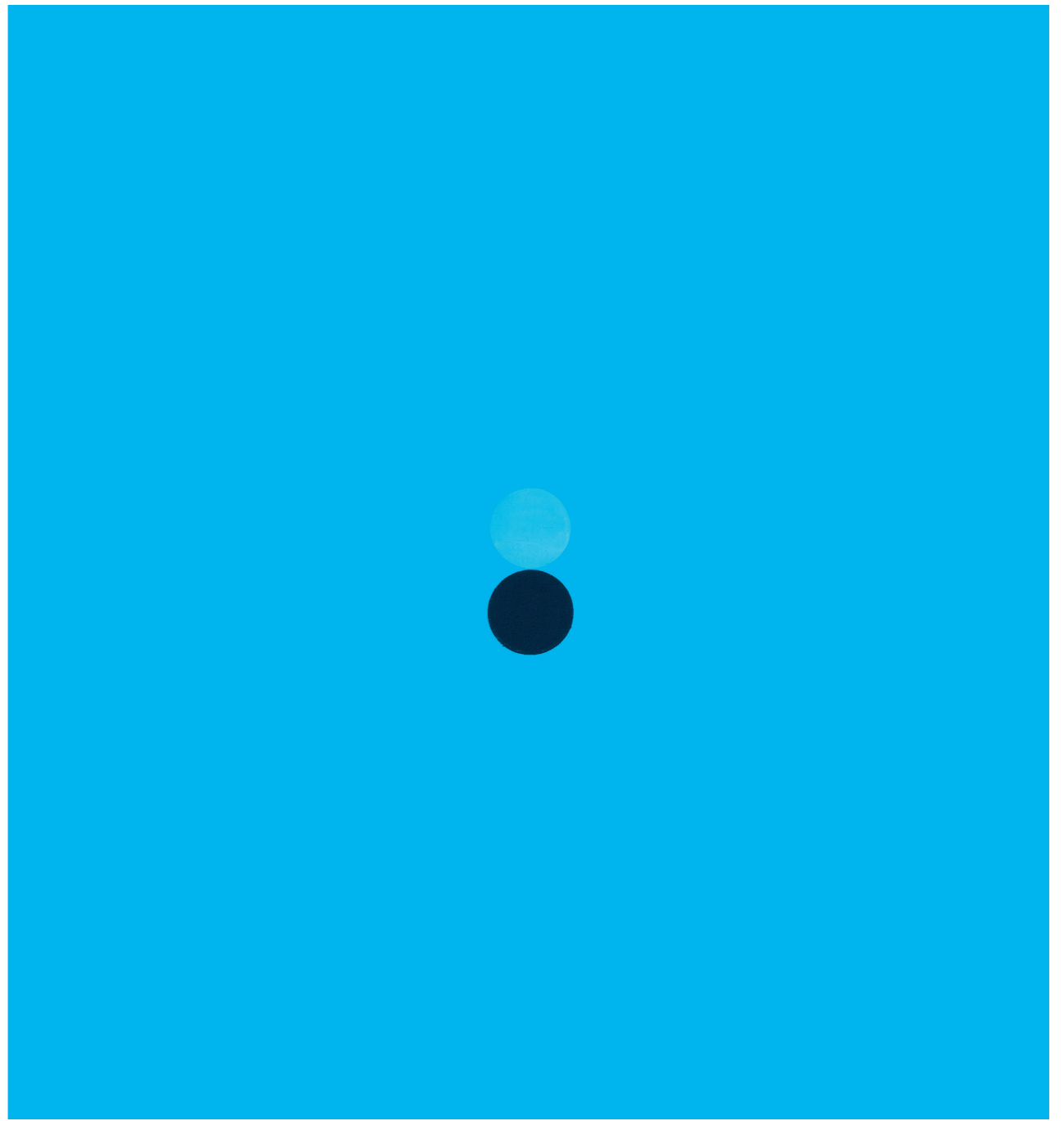
illusion of skin or a membrane, of the difference between inside and outside. What is entered through these cut-outs is another dimension, a void; an implicitly transformative space. The traces of paint left on the edges of the canvas attest to the history of the works' making.

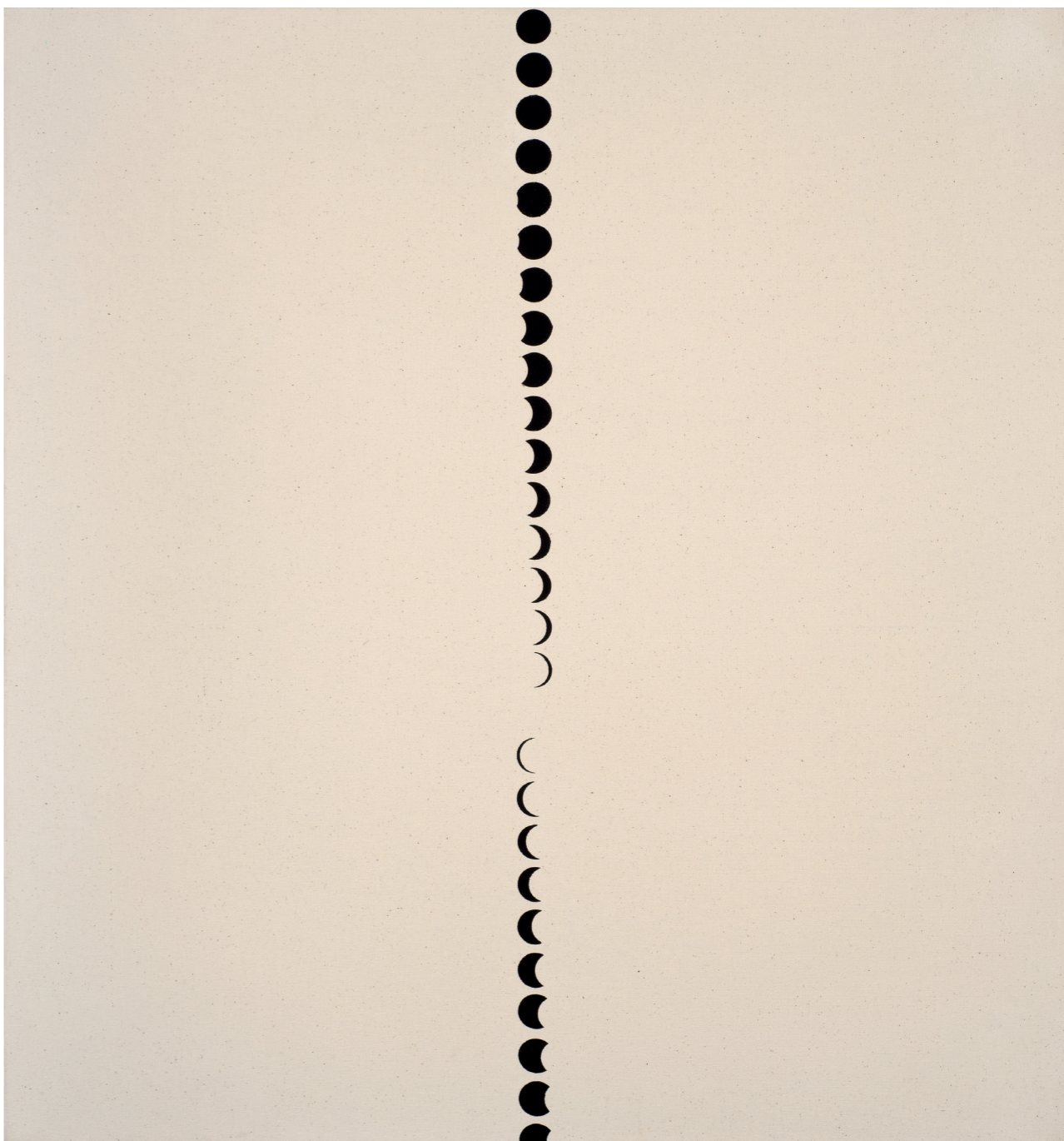
A line or slash appears to hover vertically on the canvas in the *Janus* series. Though often barely perceptible, the mark seems to float on the surface, whilst also functioning as an aperture into a different realm, similar to Barnett Newman's zips or Lucio Fontana's slashes.

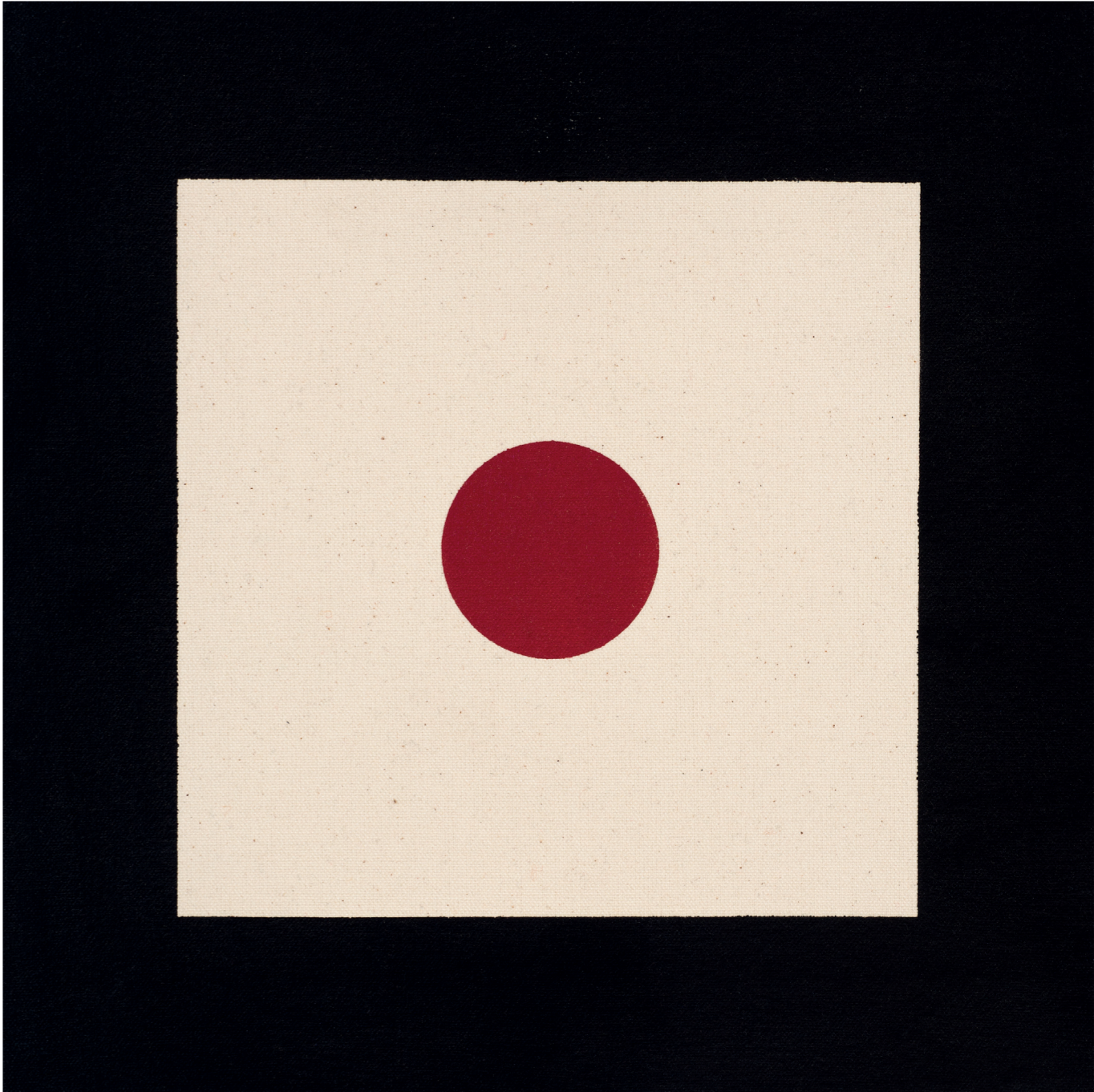
History has always been important to David Oates. In the 1980s he created a series of figurative works entitled *Prototypes*, images of a generic Everyman from the First World War that carried the weight of our collectively fading memory of those catastrophic events. Metaphors of archaeology permeate his spare, lyrical paintings and drawings. In what is covered up and forgotten, along with what is half-remembered and tentatively revealed, he creates a series of poetic palimpsests.

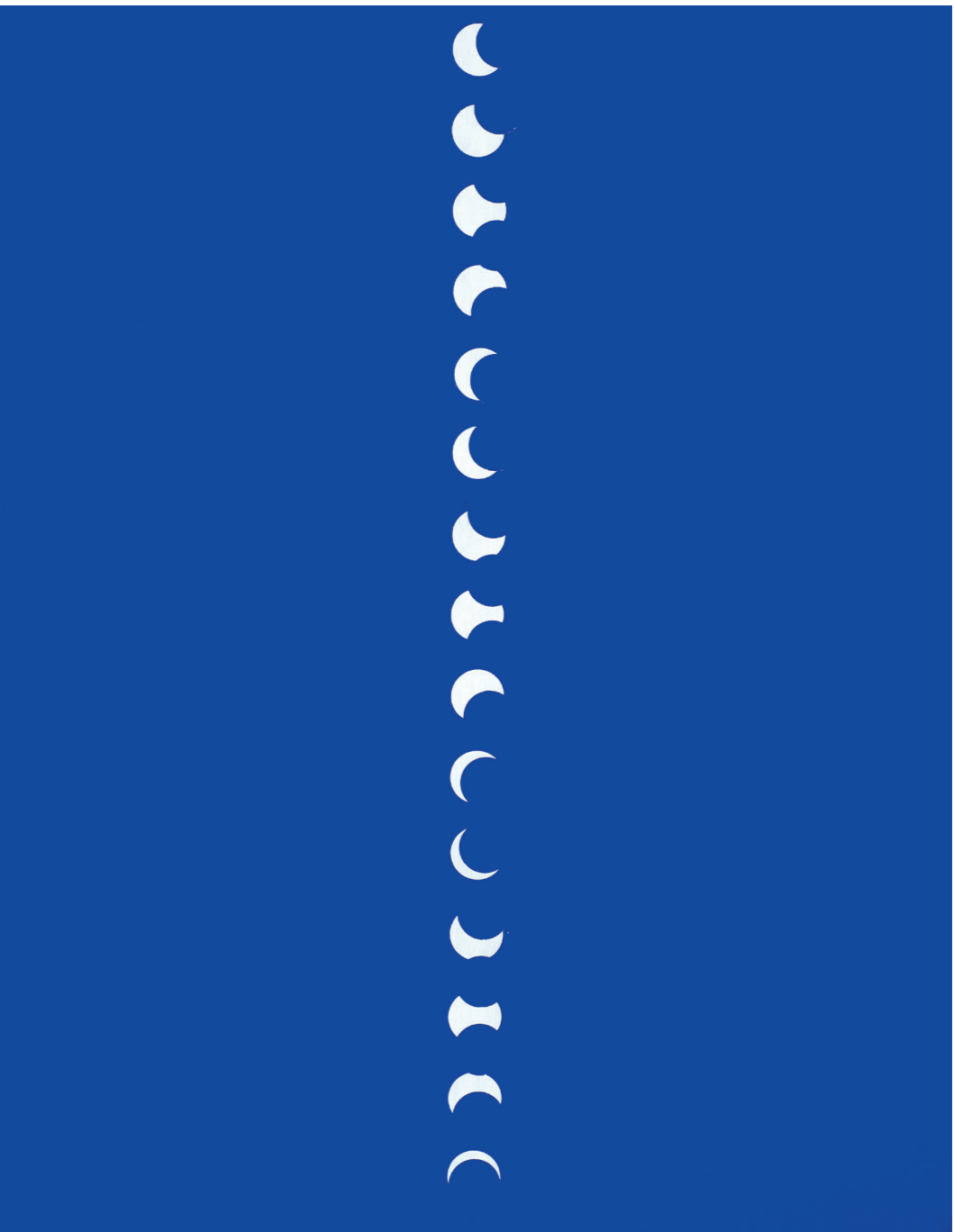
Sue Hubbard
September 2019

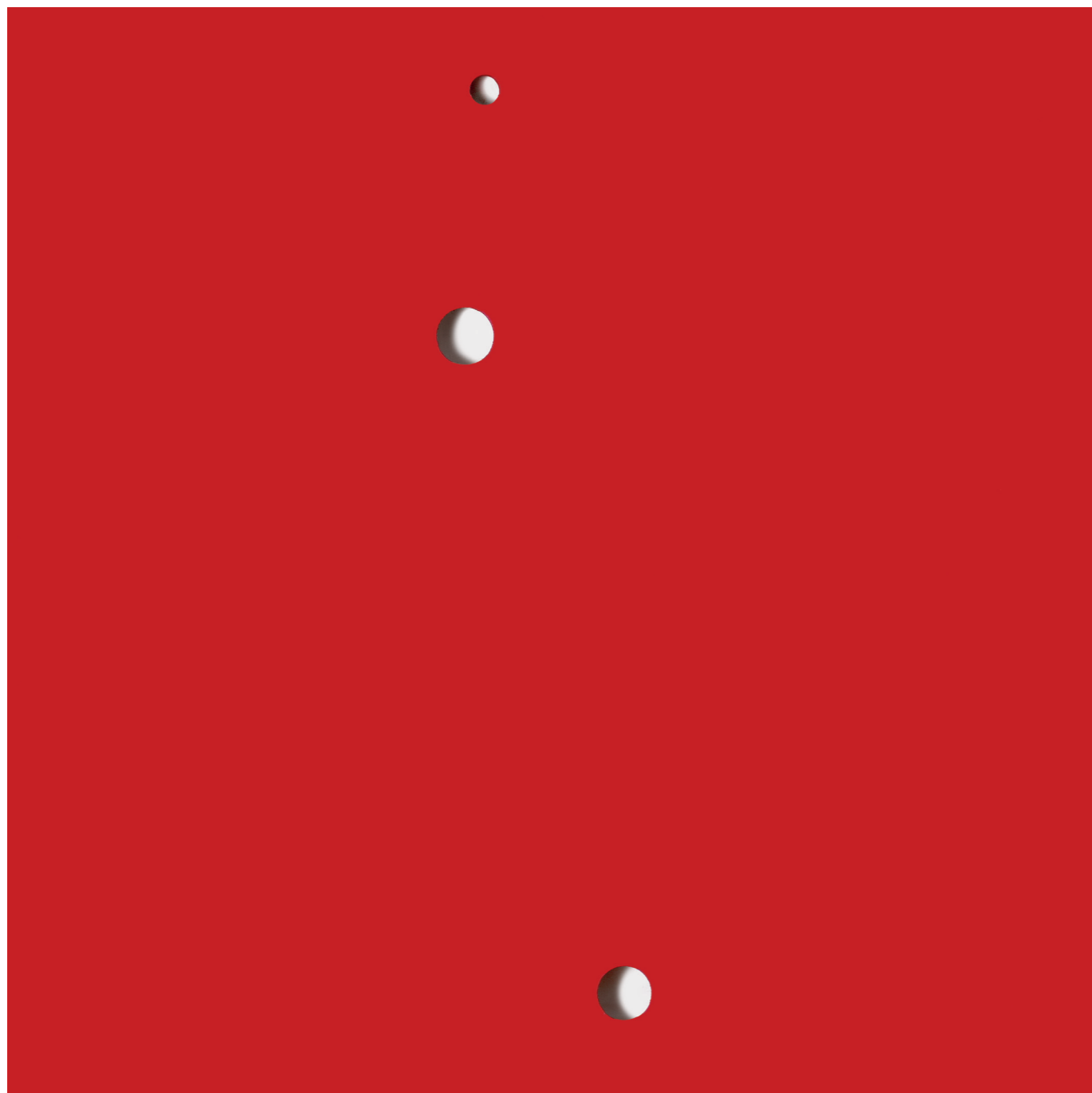


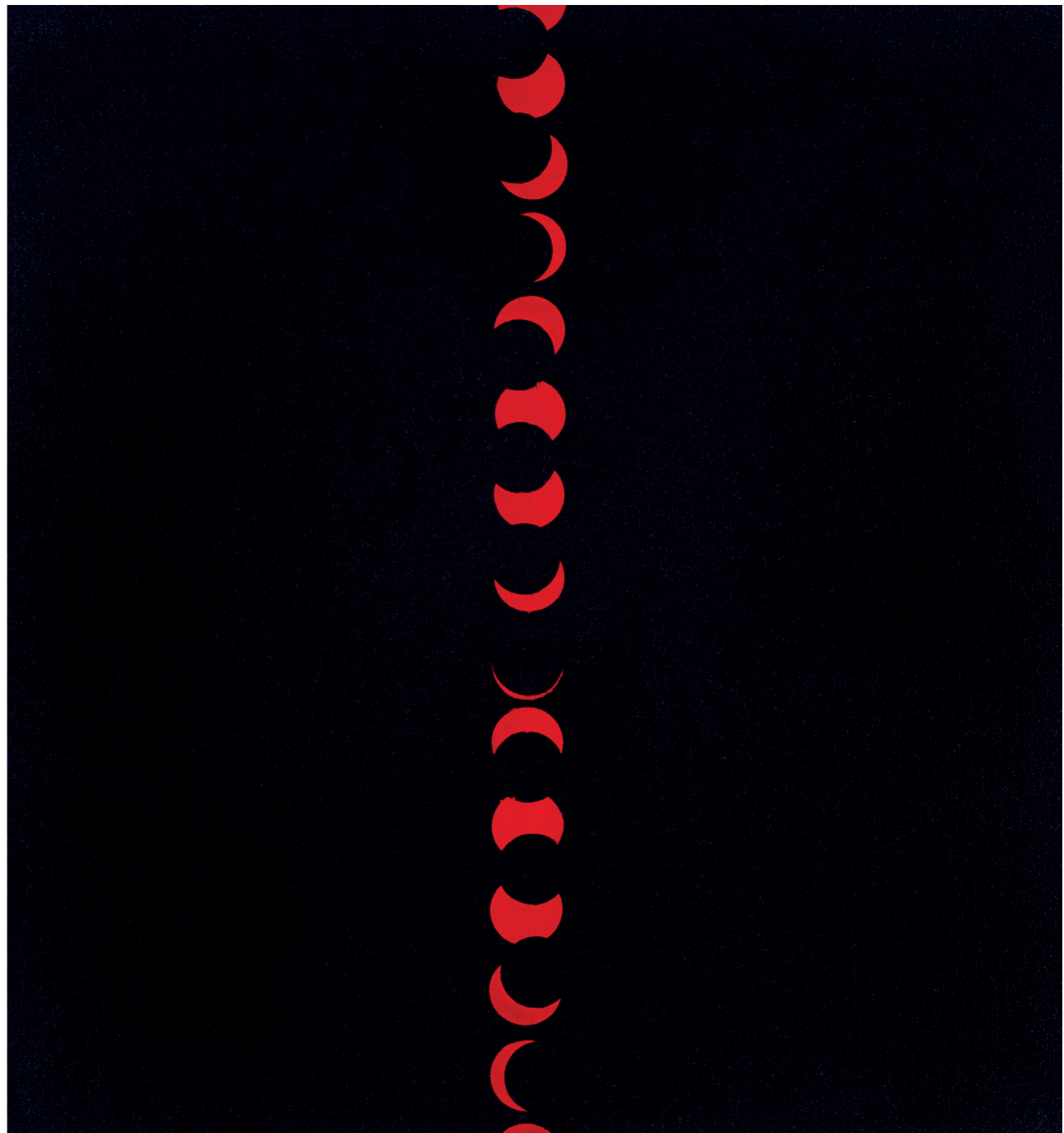
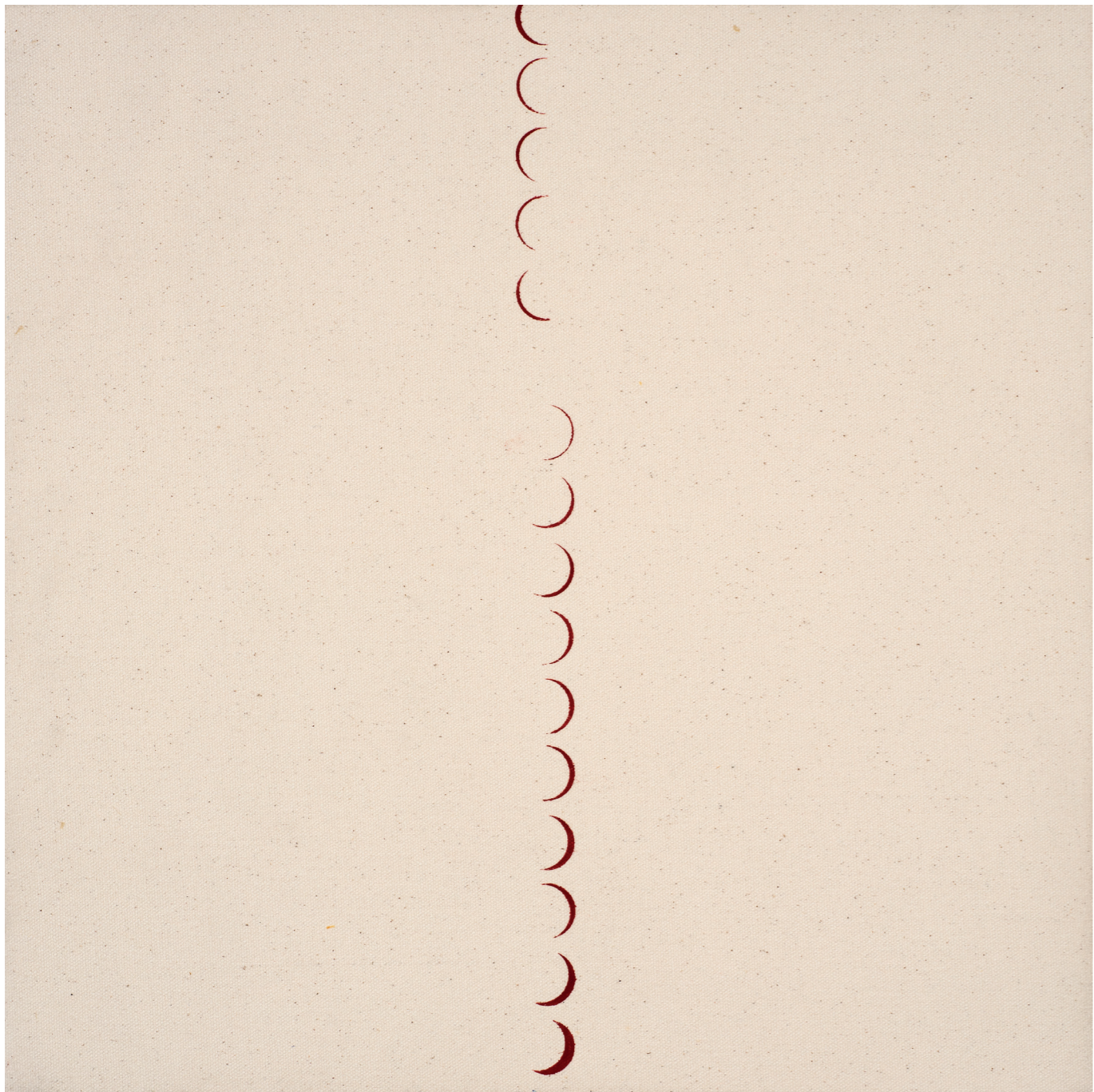




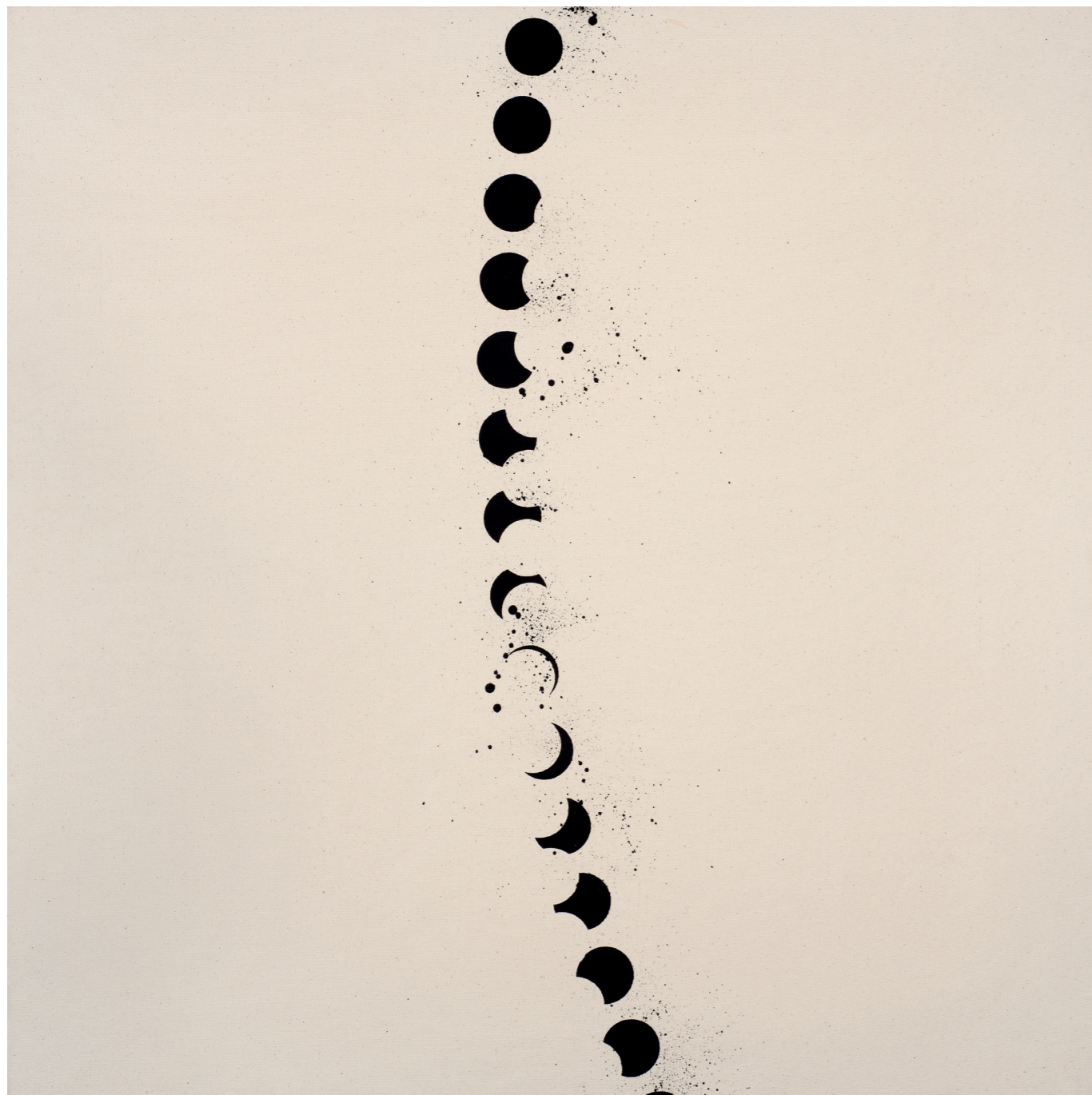


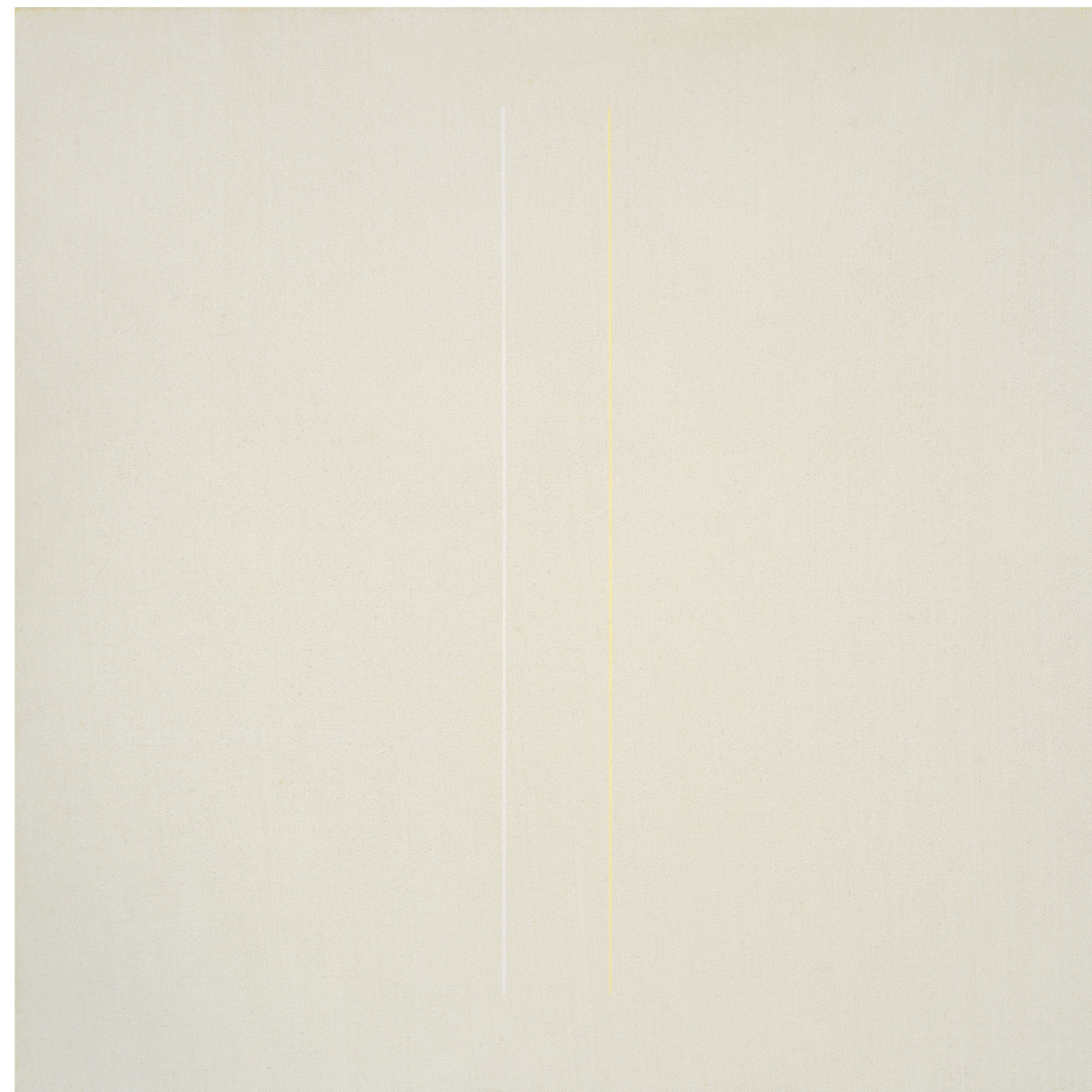
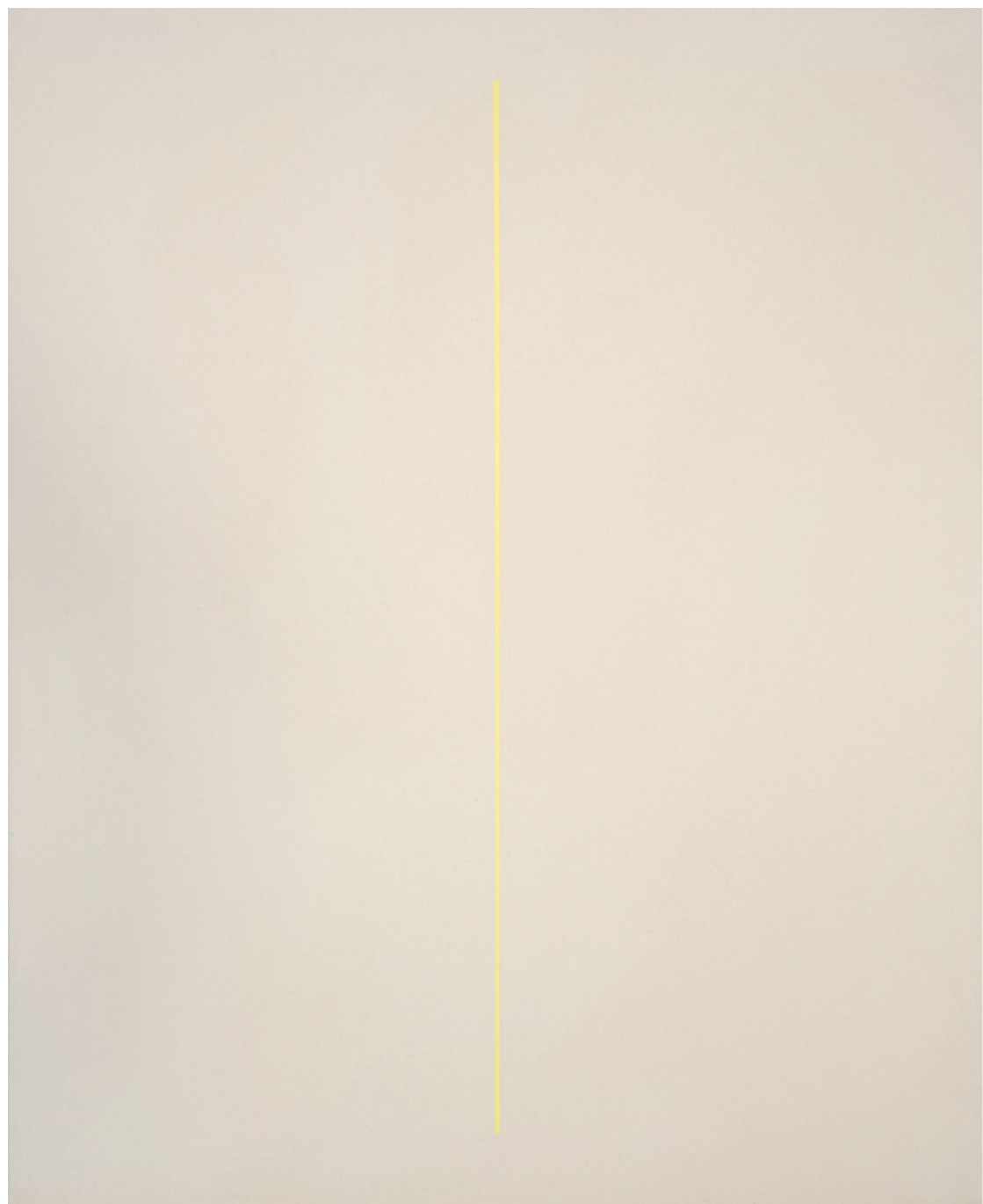




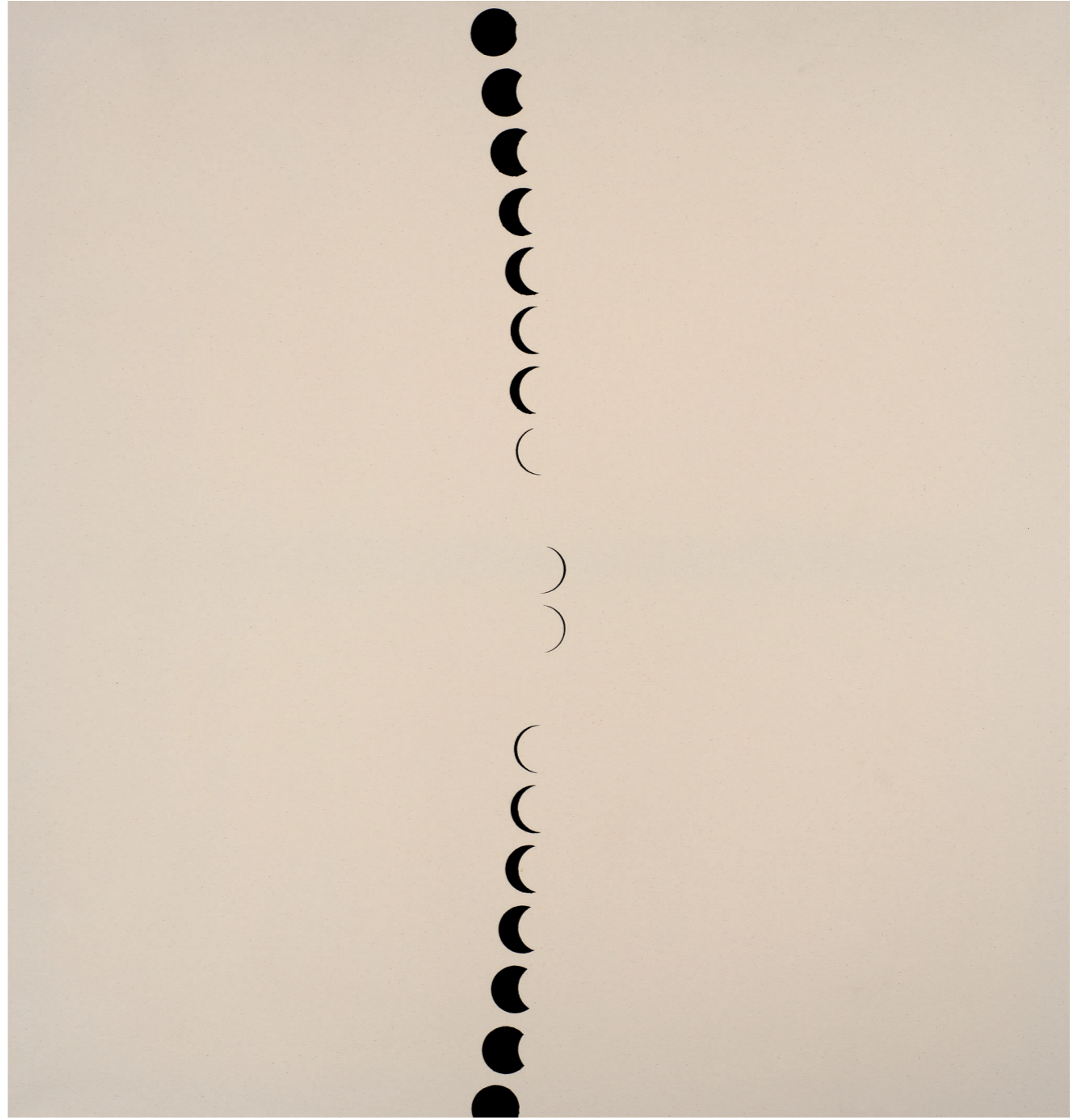


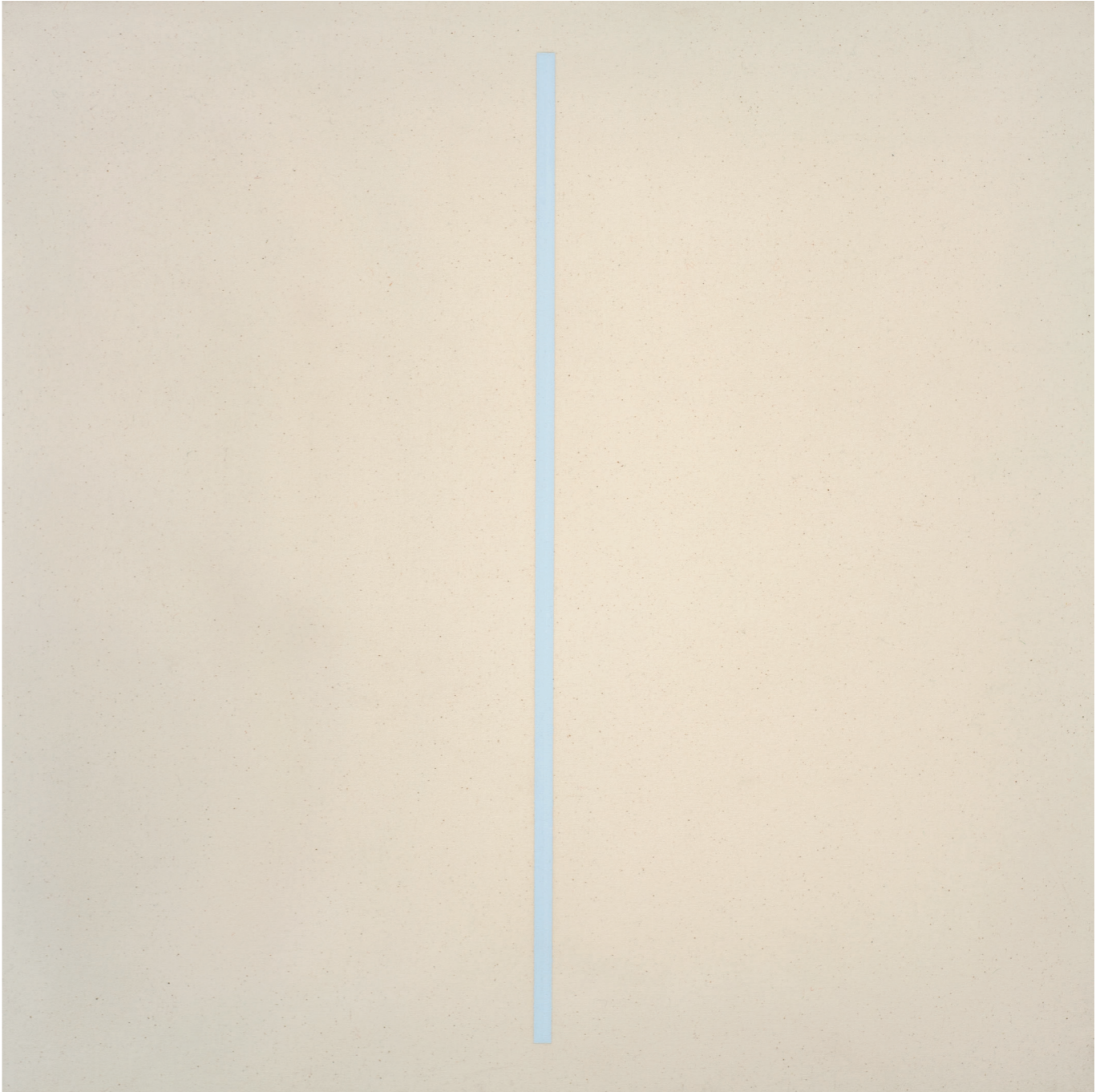


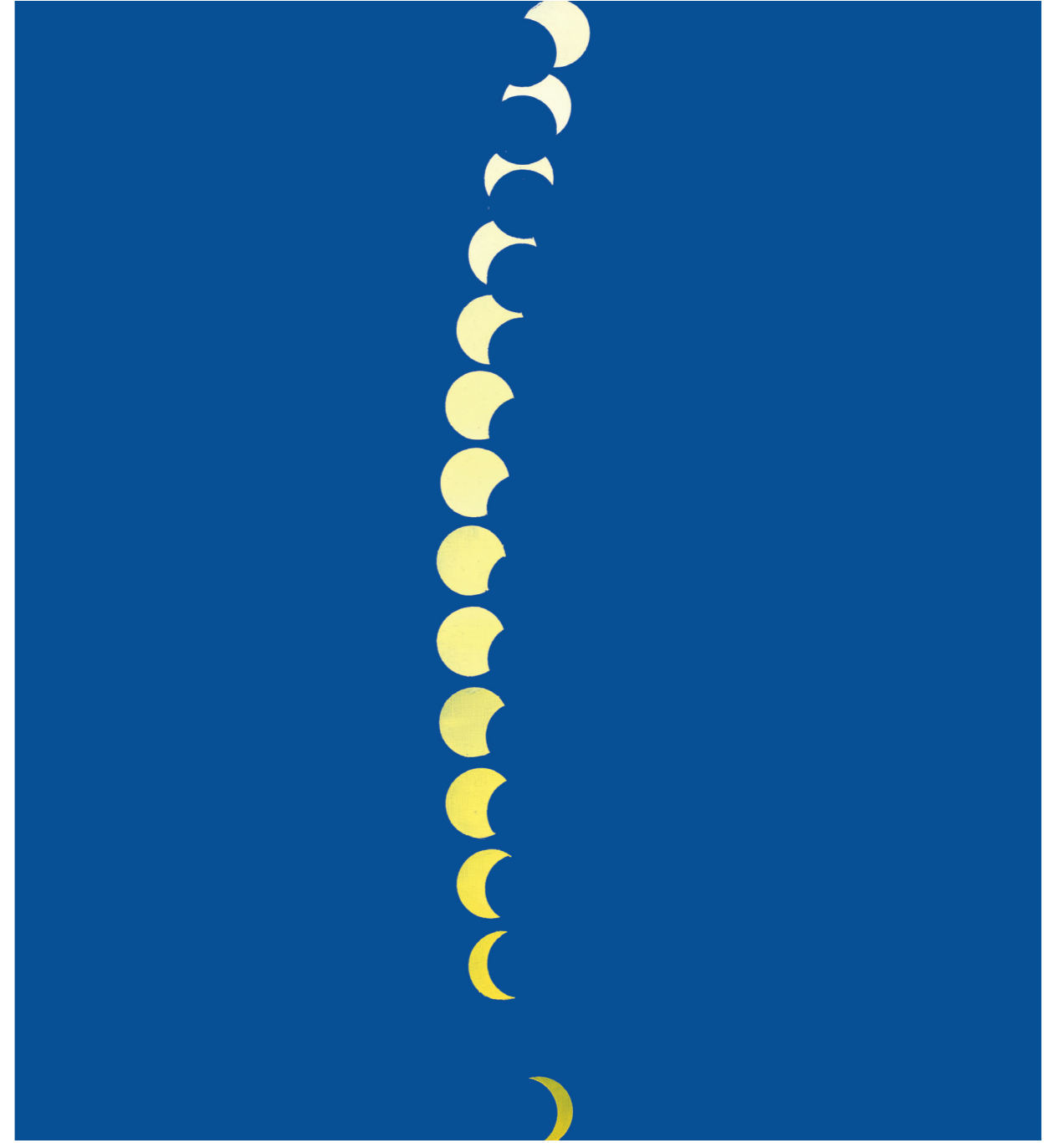
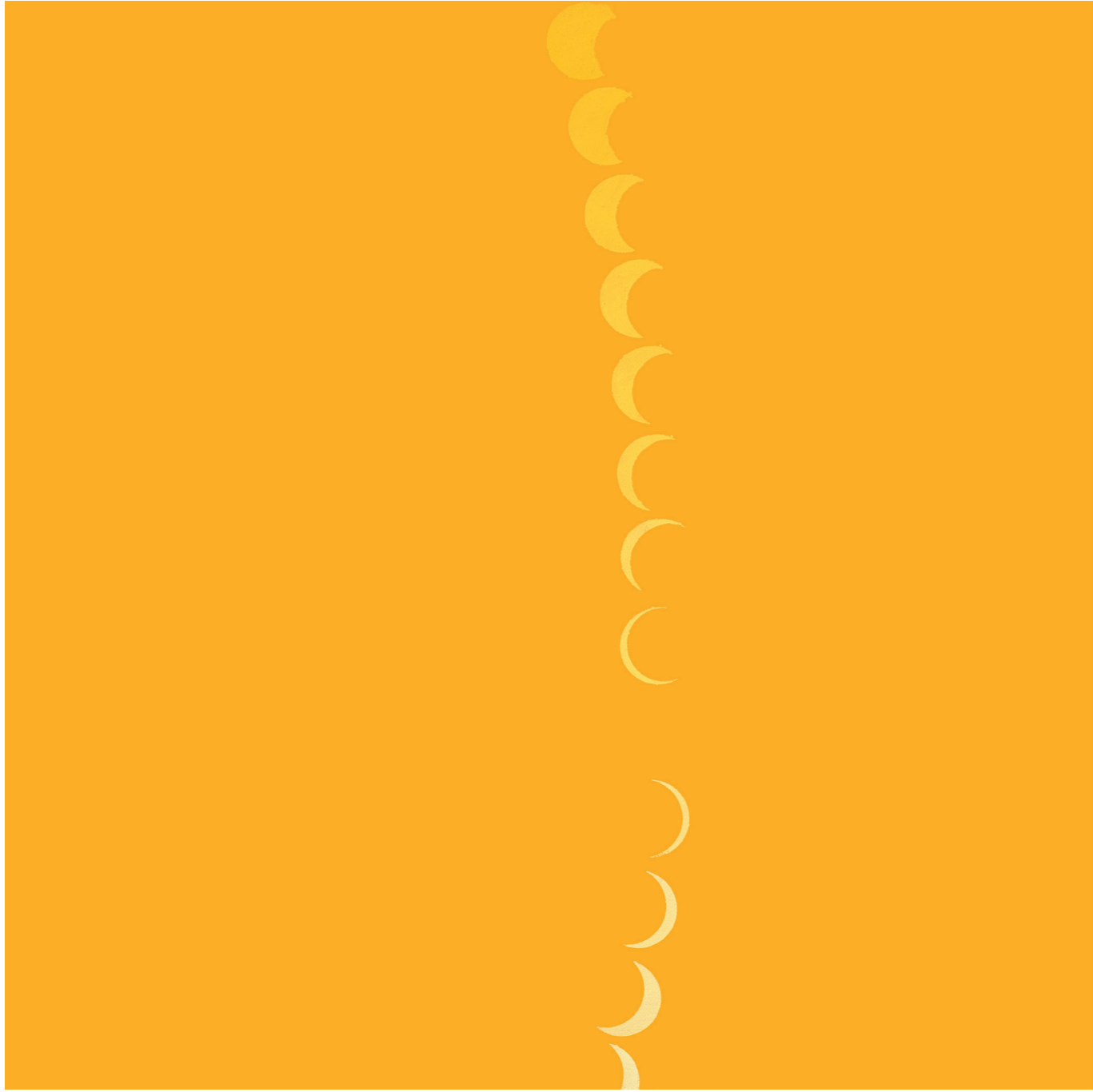




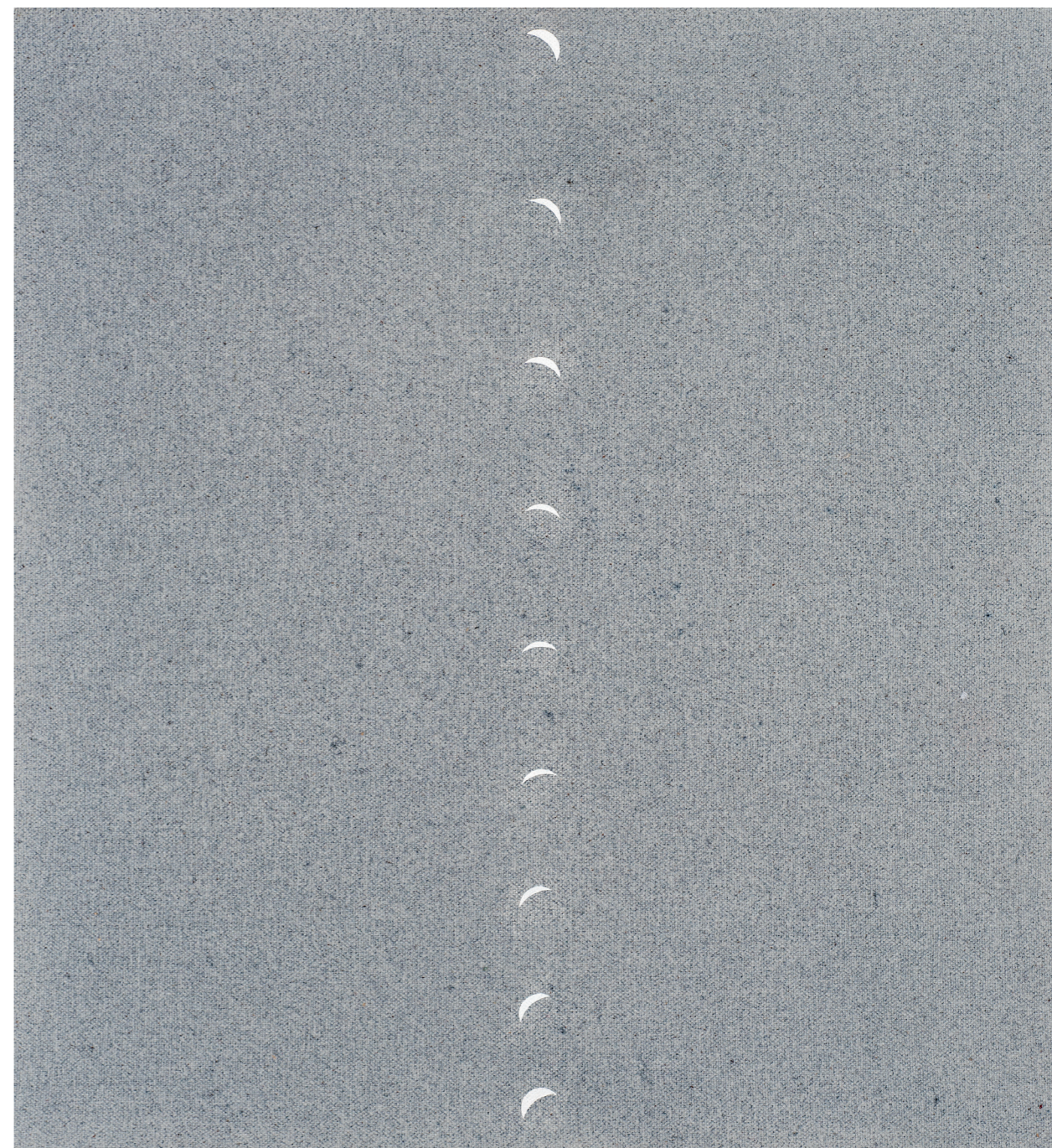
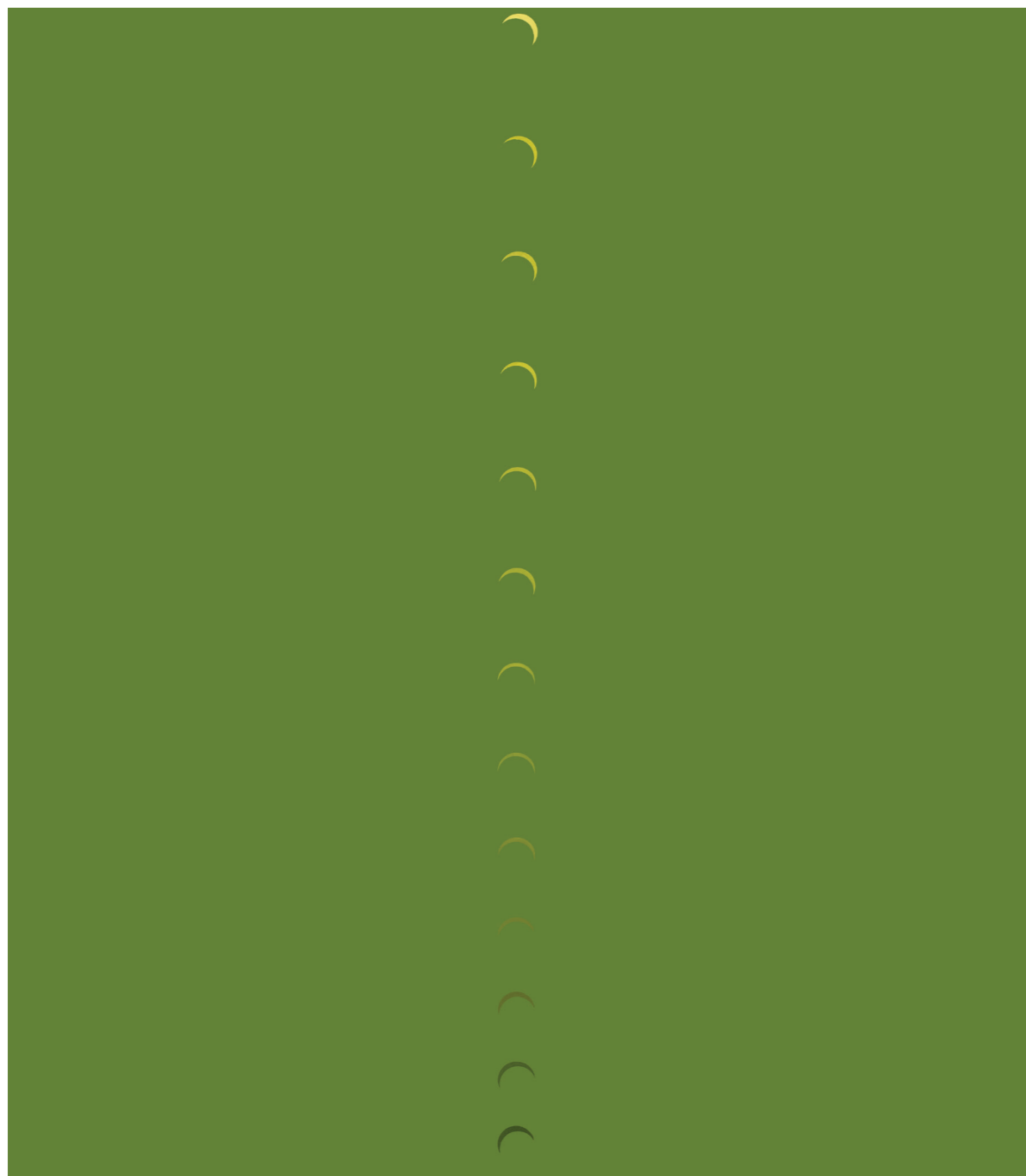


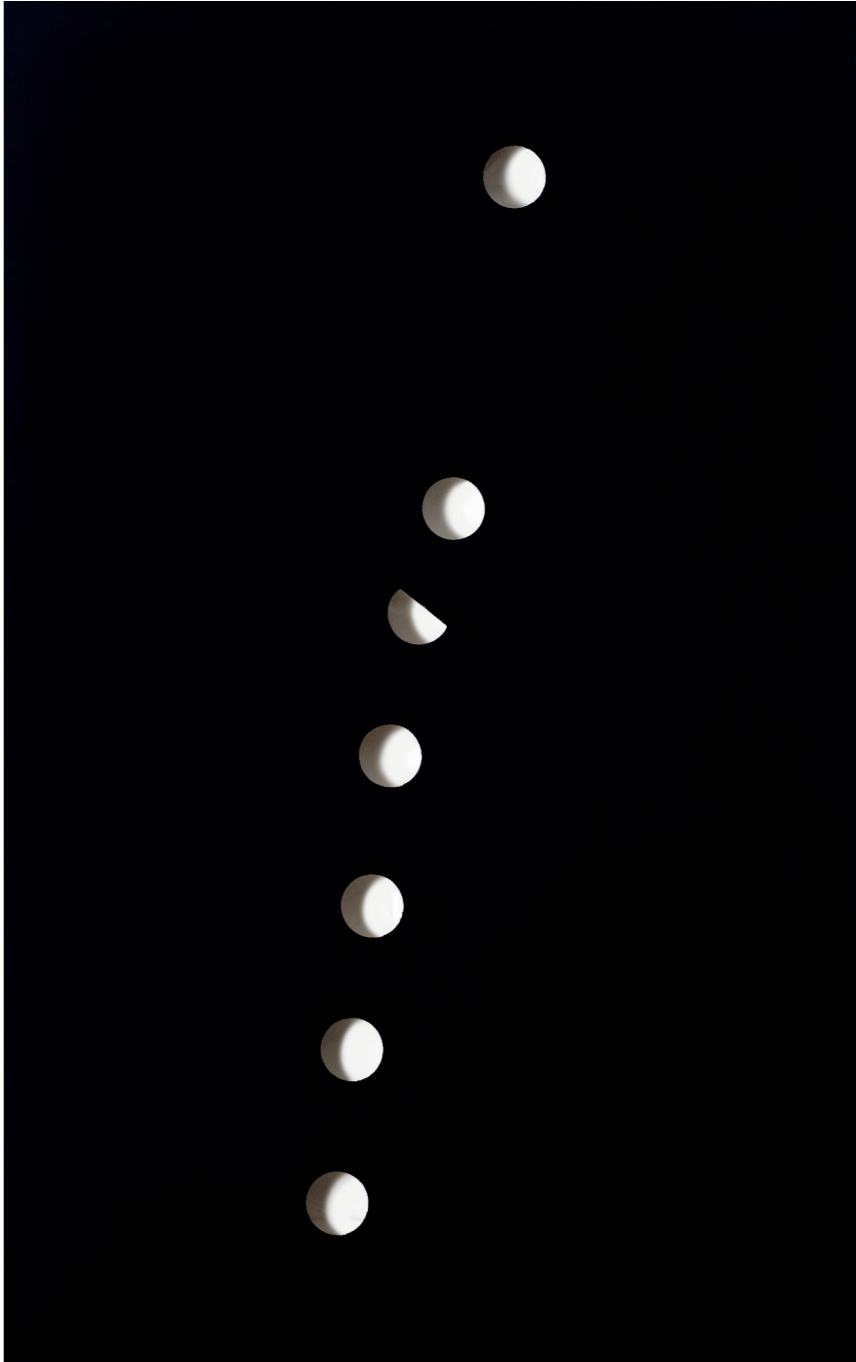




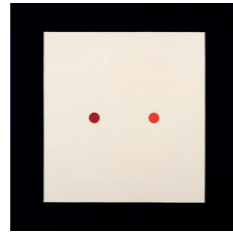




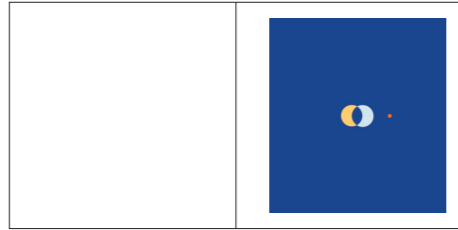




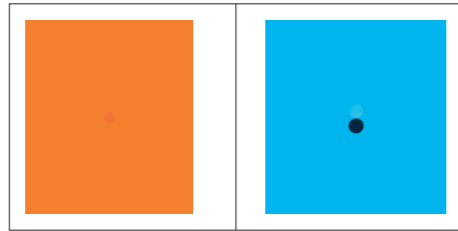
Paintings



Iris 5
2005 / 2012
Oil on canvas
30 x 30



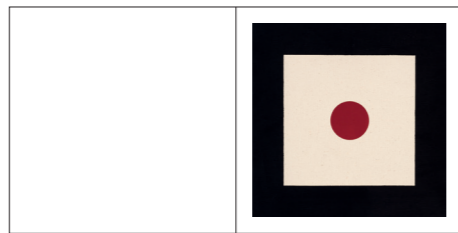
Fatal Attraction
2006
Oil on canvas
135 x 122



Lid 1
2007
Oil on canvas
34 x 32

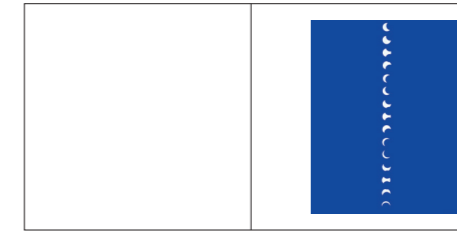


Kiss 23
2012
Oil on canvas
76 x 71

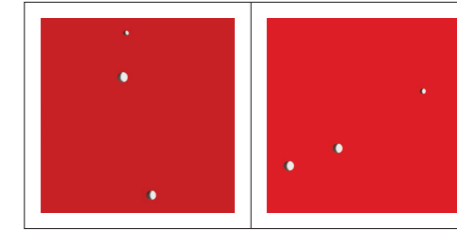


Iris 5
2005 / 2012
Oil on canvas
30 x 30

ORANGE orange
1998
Oil on canvas
97 x 84

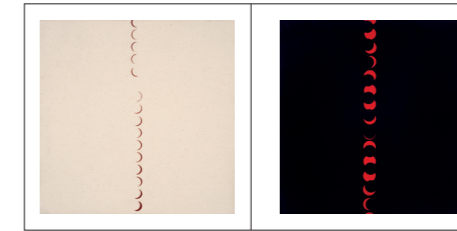


Kiss 10
2007
Oil on canvas
117 x 91



Vampire 4
2009
Oil on canvas
122 x 122

Vampire 5
2009
Oil on canvas
122 x 122



Kiss 30
2012
Oil on canvas
41 x 41

Kiss 8
2007
Oil on canvas
34 x 32



Janus 21
2015
Oil on canvas
76 x 76



History Painting 6
2013
Oil on canvas
91 x 91

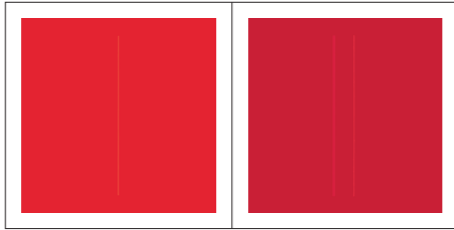
History Painting 12 (Isandlwana)
2013
Oil on canvas
150 x 132

Janus 18
2015
Oil on canvas
79 x 65



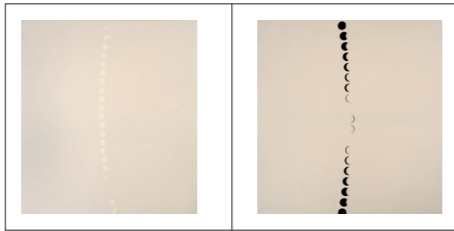
Janus 6
2014
Oil on canvas
41 x 41

Janus 10
2014
Oil on canvas
41 x 41



Janus 9
2014
Oil on canvas
41 x 41

Kiss 37
2015
Oil on canvas
135 x 122



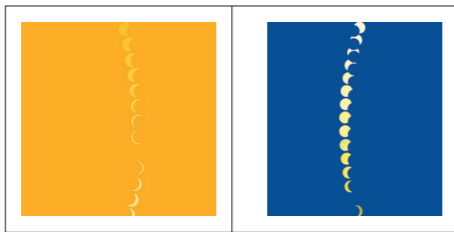
Kiss 29
2015
Oil on canvas
119 x 114

Janus 4
2010
Oil on canvas
71 x 71



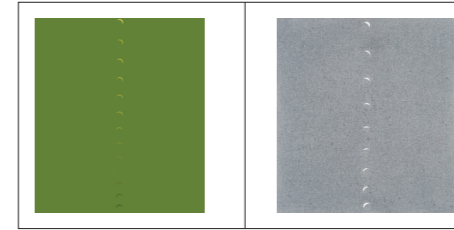
Janus 4
2010
Oil on canvas
71 x 71

Kiss 41
2018
Oil on canvas
41 x 41



Kiss 40
2018
Oil on board
41 x 36

Martinet Moon 1
2018
Oil on canvas
150 x 130

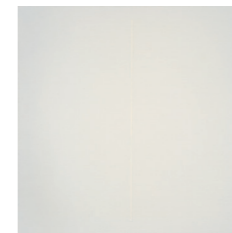


Martinet Moon 3
2016
Oil on canvas
34 x 32



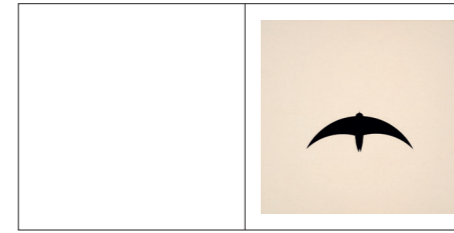
The Fifer
2018
Oil on canvas
150 x 94

Janus 25
2014
Oil on canvas
41 x 41



All dimensions
are in centimetres

From the South
2016
Oil on canvas
51 x 51



David Oates

b. 1954

Art education:

Berkshire, Exeter Colleges of Art

Winchester, Norwich Schools of Art

Exhibitions include:

White Space Islington, solo show 1985

City Artists founder-members show 1986

Whitechapel Opens 1987, 1989, 1994

EAST National Open 1993

Hunting Prizes 1993, 1996, 2004

New Contemporaries 1994

Cheltenham Drawing Competitions 1994, 1996

Janus Avivson Gallery solo show 1995

Fitzrovia Open (1st Prize winner) 1996

Marking Presence, Artsway, New Forest 1997

What It Is, with John Butterworth, Jan Malaszek, Whitstable 1997

1731, solo show Medcalf, Exmouth Market EC1 1999

Songlines (rebuses) *Granta* 76, 2001

Colourspace (curator Clyde Hopkins) APT, 2003

A21 International Exhibitions, Osaka, 2004, 2009, 2018

Fox-Williams, City of London, solo show 2005

Artist of The Day, Flowers 2006

Creekside Open 2007

Redchurch St, Shoreditch, with Virginia Verran, 2007

“Her Sisters’ Notebook” performances by Lola Perrin, 2011–15
(premiered in Plymouth, 2011)

RA Summer Show 2012

Art at the Blithehale (The Agency) 2012

Discernible, ZAP, New Cross 2013

SWITCH, The Hague (co-curator Steve Lewis) 2014

astroLAB (curators Paul Malone, Nicola Rae) APT Gallery 2014

Autocatalytic Future Games, playpaint, 2015

The Tim Sayer Bequest, Hepworth, Wakefield, 2016

Imperfect Reverse (curator Laurence Noga) Camberwell Project
Space and Anglia Ruskin, 2016

From the South, with VV, Ms Gallery, Wakayama, 2017

Plus One (with John Carter) group show, APT 2018

David Oates

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Gallery: avivsongallery.com

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