

TAUBA  
AUERBACH  
MEANDER  
YUJI  
AGEMATSU

TAUBA AUERBACH AND  
YUJI AGEMATSU: MEANDER  
July 16 – October 16, 2022

This exhibition follows the indirect line. It pairs new work by TAUBA AUERBACH and YUJI AGEMATSU, across parallel galleries, under the heading of the MEANDER as both noun and verb, motif and method. In plainly different ways, both artists sharpen our perception of the flows of matter and energy around us, oscillating between intuition and analysis, difference and repetition, the quotidian and the cosmic.

All works in the exhibition are keyed to the floorplan in the center spread of this booklet.

Organized by the Clark Art Institute and curated by Robert Wiesenberger, curator of contemporary projects.

Major funding for this exhibition is provided by Agnes Gund and Katherine and Frank Martucci, with additional support from Thomas and Lily Beischer and Margaret and Richard Kronenberg.

TAUBA AUERBACH (b. 1981, San Francisco, lives and works in New York) studies patterns present at all scales in the universe in a practice that blends mathematics and science with art, design, and craft. In particular, Auerbach has focused on meandering lines and moved fluidly between different media to interrogate their properties. As the artist has noted, these lines wind their way through human history and the natural world: known as meanders, frets, or keys, they appear in diverse ornamental traditions (ancient Mediterranean, Mesoamerican, and East Asian among them), but also as waveforms in physics, space-filling curves in geometry, and the helices of our DNA. Auerbach traces and transforms these lines in multiple dimensions; if they resonate with us, the artist believes, it might be at a fundamental, even cellular level.

## 1 LIGATURE DRAWINGS

15 Drawings: January 20–June 20, 2022  
32 1/2 x 27 in.  
Ink on paper with date stamp

Taub Auerbach's approach to the meander here is at once analytical, intuitive, and gestural. The LIGATURE DRAWINGS are a kind of automatic writing stripped of linguistic meaning; the curves themselves are the content. Each drawing is made using a chisel-tip marker or brush-tip pen, in one sitting, and the date is stamped on the paper. With repetitive, calligraphic strokes and a focus on the mechanics of the body, the artist attempts to feel their way into the forms. Auerbach first honed this state of flow while working as a sign painter, a craft that requires a balance of precision and speed. The series title suggests the artist's entwined interests: A ligature is the line that connects letters in handwriting and notes in musical notation; in surgery, it is a thread that ties tissue.

## 2–6 GRAIN paintings

2022  
60 x 45 in.  
Acrylic paint on canvas, wood stretcher

To make these paintings, Auerbach grazes still-wet layers of paint on the canvas with cylindrical tools bearing different mathematical curves. The GRAIN paintings register the direction, force, and speed of the artist's movements. And while the curves Auerbach employs are precise, fixed, and flat, they appear here as painterly, dynamic, and even dimensional—transformed, sometimes beyond recognition, into quivering, seemingly emergent forms.

7 HEAT CURRENT VII  
8 HEAT CURRENT VIII

2022  
110 x 214 in.  
Enhanced infrared photograph printed  
on wallpaper

The ancient ornamental motif of the meander is tied in many cultures to water — whether the serpentine path of a river or the ceaseless churning of waves. Auerbach’s HEAT CURRENT prints visualize the interface between water currents of different temperatures or, as the artist puts it, “the shape of a distinction.” Yet what looks like satellite imagery of an ocean is in fact produced in a bathtub, with the help of pumps, hoses, and strategically placed obstacles. Auerbach uses an infrared camera extension to represent these oscillating flows, then manipulates the image using software. Here, fluid dynamics that would normally be invisible to us are given a form whose logic we might recognize at other scales.

9 A PARTIAL TAXONOMY OF  
PERIODIC LINEAR ORNAMENT  
— BOTH ESTABLISHED AND  
ORIGINAL — ARRANGED BY  
SHAPE, SYMMETRY, DIMENSION,  
ITERATION AND PROJECTION

2017, with ongoing revisions  
17 x 11 x 1/2 in.  
Laser print on paper, Bristol board

This artist’s book represents Auerbach’s research into, and personal reflections on, indirect lines that repeat at intervals—also known as waves, frets, keys, and meanders. Some of the ones included here are well known as decorative forms or mathematical operations, while others are of Auerbach’s own invention. Through their publishing imprint Diagonal Press (est. 2013), Auerbach is responsible for this book’s form, content, and production; the writing, layout, and even typefaces are the artist’s own. Diagonal Press publishes handmade books, banners, ornaments, and other objects in open, unlimited editions that are unsigned, unnumbered, and perpetually undergoing revision.

10–11 AUTUMN-ORIG sculptures

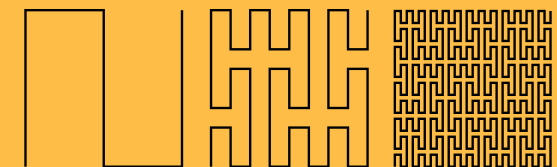
2022  
Dimensions variable  
Glass, nylon-coated steel cord

These sculptures connect thousands of Czech glass beads using a figure eight handweaving stitch Auerbach learned from a chemist in Taiwan, who uses it to make three-dimensional molecular models. These sculptures are fractal, in that they are organized in the same way at multiple scales. They are based on a simple algorithm that, nevertheless, creates increasingly unruly surfaces over time. Auerbach is fascinated by things that can be defined neatly in theory but are less orderly in their natural manifestations.

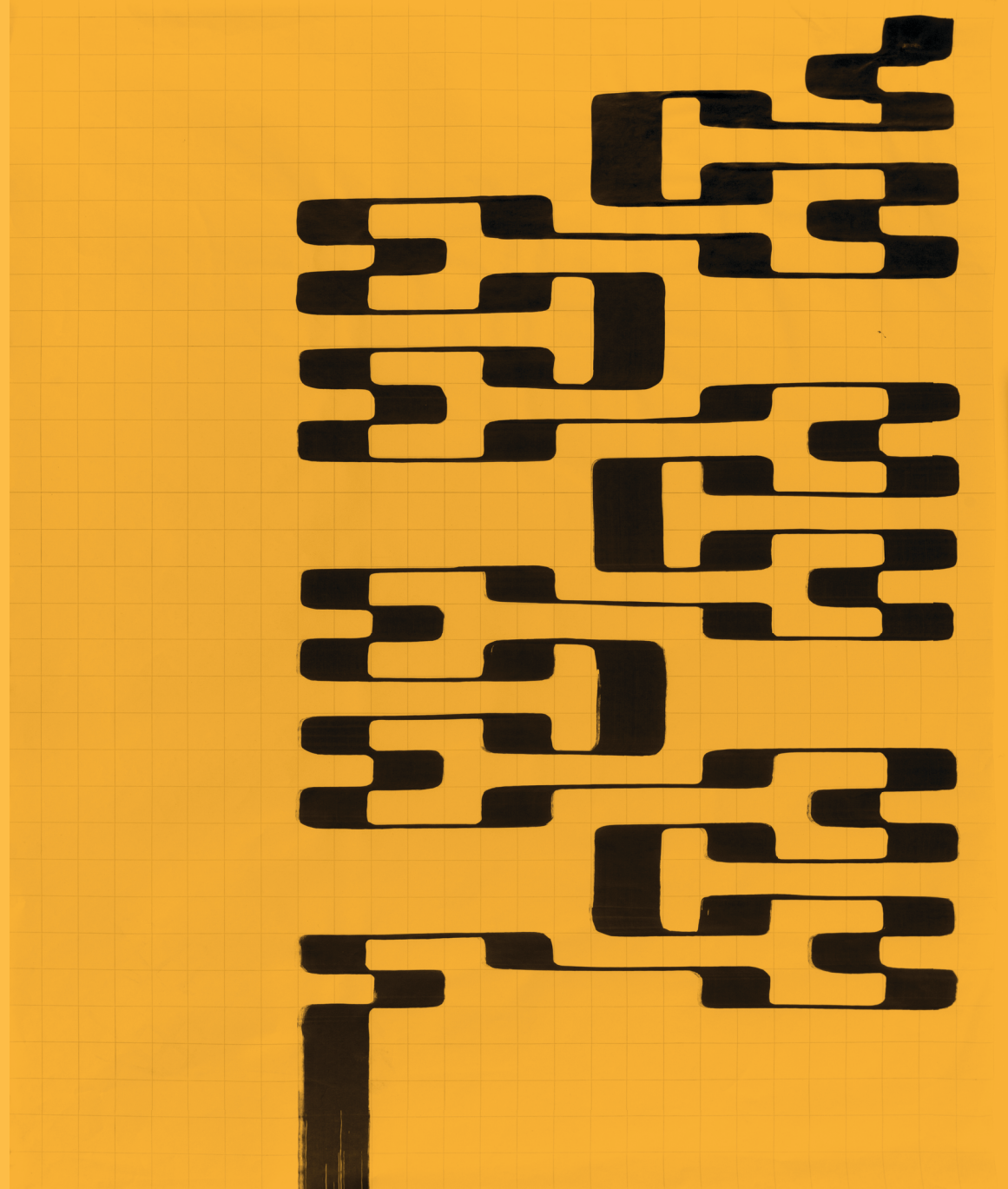
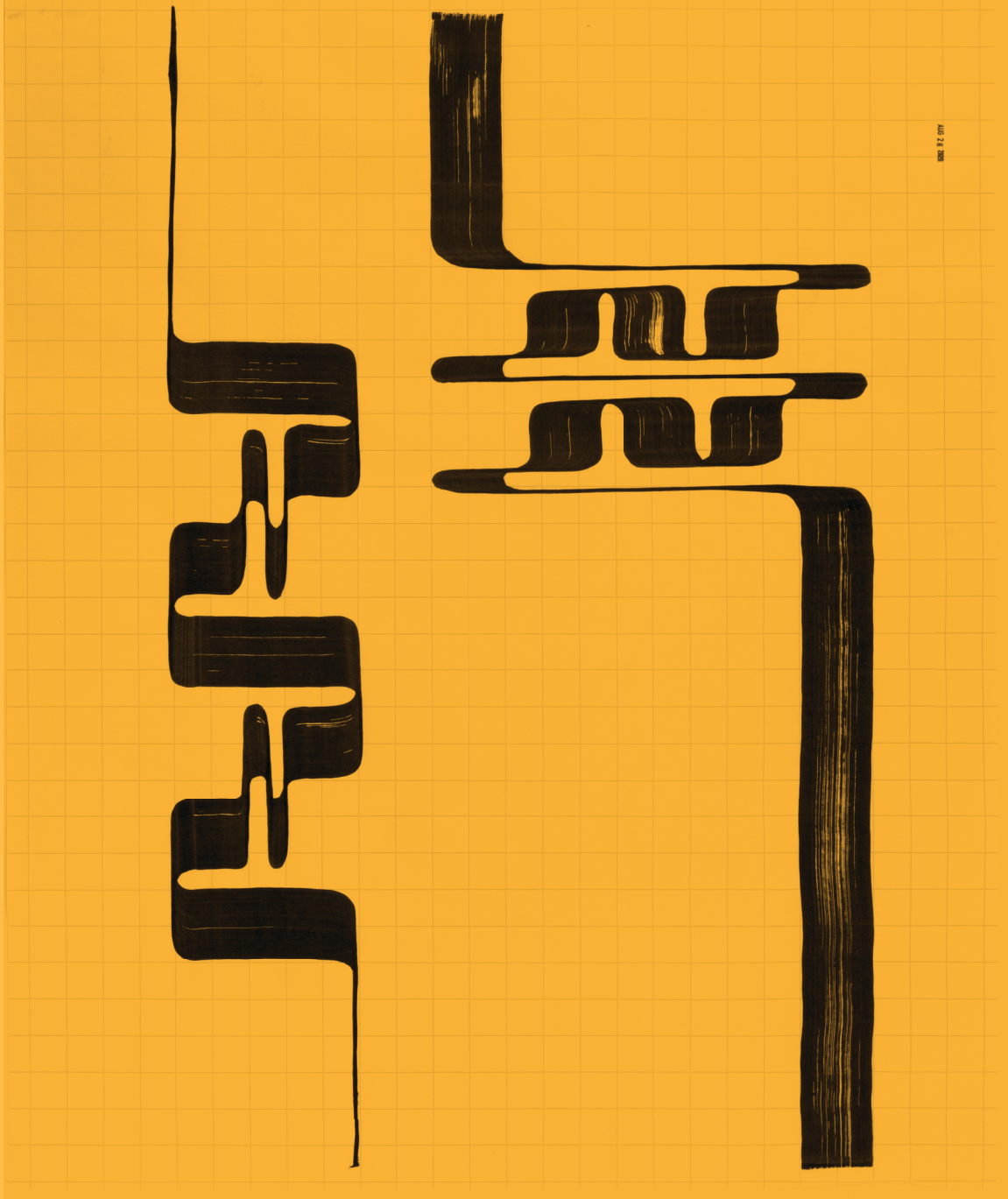
12 PEANOPEPEM I

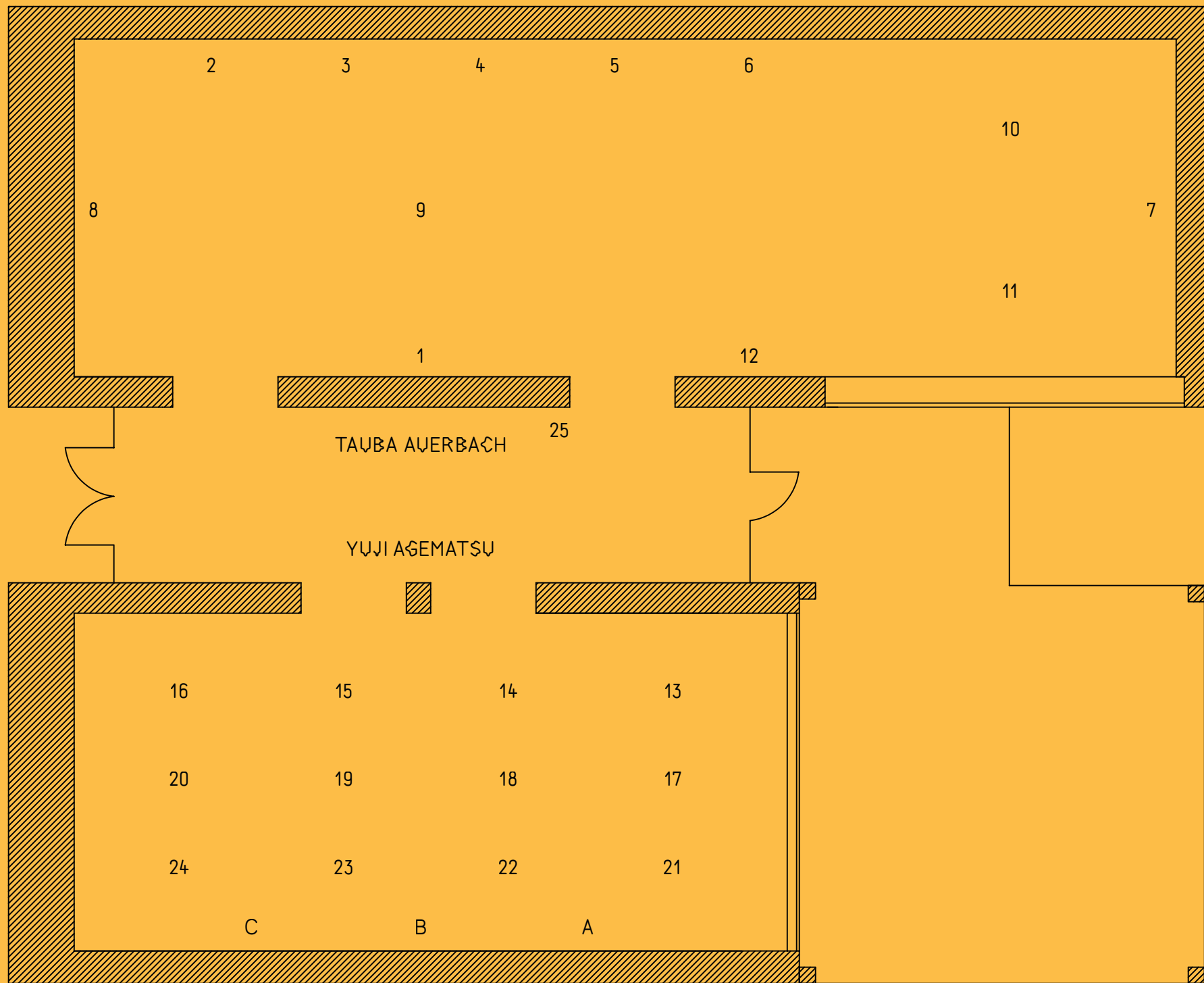
2022  
14 x 8.5 in.  
Offset print on paper

The Peano curve is named for Italian mathematician Giuseppe Peano (1858–1932). It describes a “space-filling curve,” or a line that, if folded infinitely in a particular fashion, passes through every point of a square (see image below). Auerbach here creates progressive iterations of that curve using the letters S and Z, a convention the artist often uses to symbolize opposite directions of rotation. Each cluster of nine letters is expanded in the grouping below, in which S’s and Z’s form larger versions of themselves, creating a symmetry across scales that could continue indefinitely (and is mirrored across the fold of the page). Auerbach’s abstracted poem nods to early twentieth-century concrete poetry, in which the arrangement of linguistic elements conveys meaning, but is distinctive for its mathematical rigor. PEANOPEPEM I is published on the occasion of this exhibition by Auerbach’s Diagonal Press.



Three iterations of a Peano curve construction,  
whose limit is a space-filling curve





Works 1–8 and 10–11 by Tauba Auerbach are courtesy of the artist and Paula Cooper Gallery. Numbers 9 and 12 are published by Diagonal Press. The artist is represented by Paula Cooper Gallery and Standard (Oslo).

Works 13–24 and A–C by Yuji Agematsu are courtesy of private collection, Zurich.

Number 25 is courtesy The Serving Library and published by Roma Publications with the Clark Art Institute.



YUJI AGEMATSU (b. 1956, Kanagawa, Japan, lives and works in New York) has, since the 1980s, taken daily, wandering walks through New York City, collecting small objects from the street as he goes. He is interested in the metabolism of the city and the habits and desires of its residents. The artist, who refers to his finds as detritus — “trash,” he believes, is too disparaging — sees New York as a place of profound pluralism and extends this same courtesy to things. Agematsu’s practice is both rhythmic and improvisational, like that of his longtime mentor, the free jazz and visual and martial artist Milford Graves (1941–2021); his imperative is to keep moving.

|  |  |    |                        |
|--|--|----|------------------------|
| 13–24  | ZIP: 07.01.21 ... 09.30.21   | 13 | ZIP: 07.01.21–07.08.21 |
|  |  | 14 | ZIP: 07.09.21–07.16.21 |
| 2021   |  | 15 | ZIP: 07.17.21–07.24.21 |
| Mixed media in cigarette pack<br>cellophane wrappers |  | 16 | ZIP: 07.25.21–07.31.21 |
| 92 units   |  | 17 | ZIP: 08.01.21–08.08.21 |
| Each approx. 2 1/2 x 2 1/8 x 1 in.                   |  | 18 | ZIP: 08.09.21–08.16.21 |
|  |  | 19 | ZIP: 08.17.21–08.24.21 |
|  | The ninety-two sculptures in this gallery collectively represent three months of daily, wandering walks by Yuji Agematsu around different parts of New York City, from July to September, 2021. The artist calls each piece a “zip,” the word inspired by both neighborhood zip codes and the Ziploc bags he used for many years before switching to the cellophane wrappers of cigarette packs. On each walk, his finds are placed into the carton he carries in his vest pocket and are eventually secured with resin in his studio. | 20 | ZIP: 08.25.21–08.31.21 |
|  |  | 21 | ZIP: 09.01.21–09.08.21 |
|  |  | 22 | ZIP: 09.09.21–09.16.21 |
|  |  | 23 | ZIP: 09.17.21–09.24.21 |
|  |  | 24 | ZIP: 09.25.21–09.30.21 |

The presentation of Agematsu’s work at the Clark is a departure from his usual wall-mounted acrylic shelves, arranged like a monthly calendar. Instead, the artist proposed a grid of twelve plinths built from stacked concrete cinderblocks, one row per month. This approach allows viewers to see each zip in the round and from above, as Agematsu does while collecting. The plinths’ arrangement, which suggests the grid plan of a city, also allows visitors to view the works in sequence or to meander stepwise between blocks. The choice of concrete nods to both the construction sites Agematsu frequents on his walks and the Tadao Ando-designed gallery in which this exhibition appears.



A-C TRANSLATIONS FOR ZIPS

Enlarged, silkscreen on wall  
Original notebooks: 5 x 3 1/4 in.

Agematsu records his daily walks in a small, spiral-bound notebook. On the left-hand page, as he goes, he makes an annotated map of his route and the location of each find relative to local landmarks. At the end of each walk, the artist draws something akin to a concrete poem on the right-hand page: a dense block of English and Japanese lettering cohered by wandering lines that reflects on the conditions and dynamics of the day. Three of Agematsu's notebook drawings have been enlarged on the gallery wall and are translated here.

A ZIP: 07.21.21

A sultry heat, a stifling feel even in the morning.  
The bulging sky, absorbing humidity, damp, hazed in light blue, is stretching out before me.  
Banks of cirrocumulus clouds are sticking tightly to the sky.  
Can't feel the breeze. No one passes by.  
Walking towards McDonald's,  
Swoosh, swoosh. Hearing the muffled sounds of cars going by.

07.01.21 (Thurs)  
AM 9:18 – AM 9:39  
Brooklyn: Crown Heights

B ZIP: 08.23.21

The rainfall that started last night and continued until this morning had stopped, so I stepped outside.  
The oozing heat and humidity had already started creeping up. I kept walking around near a construction site, and began plucking the rabble of things.  
Miscellaneous leaves, weeds, bits of wildflowers, and pieces of glass, etc., as usual.  
I can see the dense light blue sky, cumulus clouds are billowing. Zzzing-zzzing-zzzing, zhaaan, zhaaan, zhaaan, I can hear the sound of screeching cicadas

08.23.21 (Mon)  
PM 2:08 – PM 2:58  
Brooklyn: Crown Heights

C ZIP: 09.26.21

Clouds after clouds, many clouds ballooning. Billows of clouds, of an almost milky white color, are welling up. The intensity of the dazzling sunlight and the sultry heat begins to boil up again.  
Whoooooosh, whoooooosh, I hear the sound of the wind ...  
A breeze blows, but there is absolutely nothing soothing in it. All I can hear is rustling leaves of the trees swaying in the wind.

Out of the blue, something catches my eye, and I touch it.  
I pluck a piece of rotten chewing gum.  
Its gooey tactility.  
Touch the dirt that has changed into a dark color of putrefied pomegranate.  
Its gluey feel.

This is all of who I am now. The bitter end of the rabble.

09/26/21 (Sun)  
AM 1:21 – PM 2:05  
Brooklyn: Crown Heights~Prospect  
Lefferts Gardens

2022

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Edited by Francesca Bertolotti-Bailey,  
Stuart Bertolotti-Bailey, Vincenzo  
Latronico, and David Reinfurt,  
with Robert Wiesenberger

The Serving Library, by its own description, “produces an eclectic cultural journal of mostly new writing in distinct online and print formats.” Each essay is described as a “bulletin,” and each annual issue is devoted to a theme (for example, color, numbers, pedagogy, time, and translation). The theme for 2022 / 23 is meander, in collaboration with the Clark Art Institute, and on the occasion of this exhibition. Contributors approach the meander from archaeological, ecological, mathematical, narrative, neurological, and other perspectives.



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YUJI ASEMATSU: MEANDER  
July 16 – October 16, 2022  
Williamstown, Massachusetts

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ART  
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