

**PERROTIN**

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**Elizabeth GLAESSNER**

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# Holding the Sky

## Elizabeth Glaessner Ksenia M. Soboleva

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Elizabeth Glaessner's paintings feel like traveling instantaneously to a world where figments of the imagination dissolve into dreamlike panoramas, much like the spectral figures from Symbolist traditions. Elizabeth's process, layering paints over poured pigments, results in scenes through a series of perpetual illusory variations. Channeling psychological affect, Elizabeth's use of color and form awakens the viewer's response in its primal manner. Dr. Ksenia M. Soboleva is a writer and art historian based in New York, with a focus on queer art and culture who earned her PhD from the Institute of Fine Arts at NYU. She is completing her book manuscript, *What Happens After: Art, AIDS, and Lesbian Histories*, and co-editing the first monograph on TRIAL BALLOON—a lesbian-run gallery and project space active in the early 1990s, which will be published by Karma.

Their collaboration approaches an enormous topic: the sky. Elizabeth and Ksenia began their collaboration after discussing Soboleva's essay *To Watch the Sky*, published in BOMB Magazine. Glaessner's intuitive drawings were met with Soboleva's textual descriptors based on personal history and myth. These exchanges evolved into a call-and-response: Glaessner reacted to Soboleva's prose with new visual threads, while Soboleva reacted with new prose, writing directly on the drawings in some cases. In their words, "Ksenia finds the fluidity in words, bending them to create new meaning. In the way that a painter might bend a mountain until it becomes a head," Elizabeth on Ksenia. And Ksenia describes what it feels like looking at Elizabeth's work; it's, "[...] like watching the sky, knowing that what I'm seeing is only one layer of a larger reality that I will never fully comprehend, and that's why I want to keep looking."

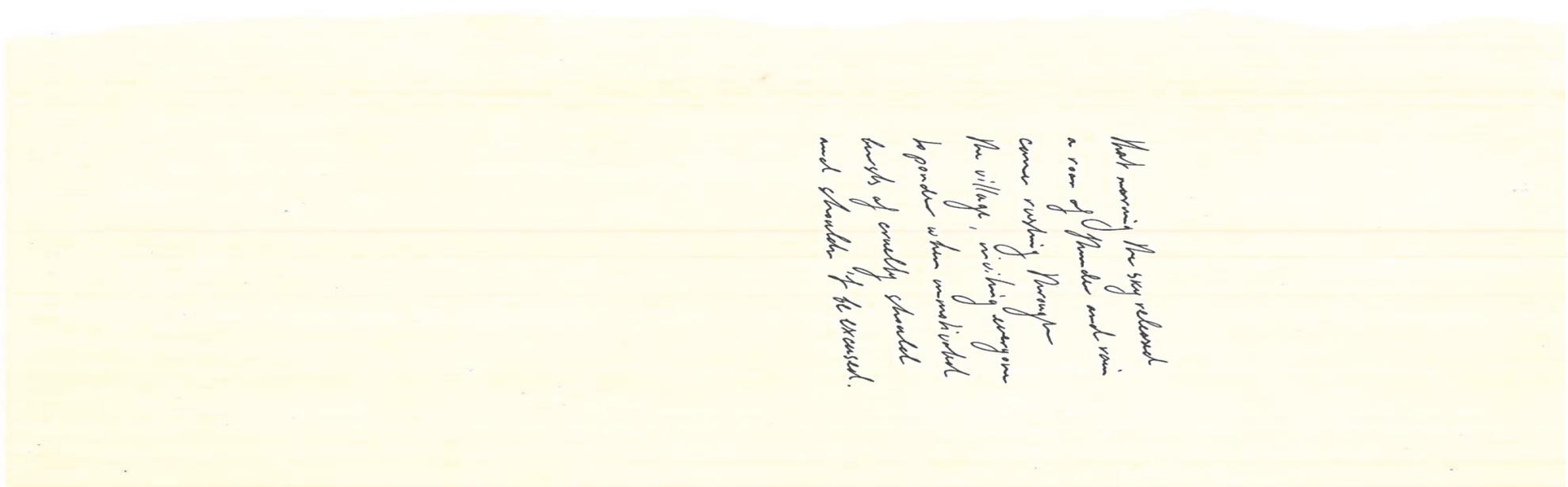
what could be more sacred than the damp soil that feeds the plants  
... growing on the mountainsides

Elizabeth Glaessner, *Out of the woods*, watercolor and gouache on paper. 11" by 15". Courtesy of the artist and Perrotin.

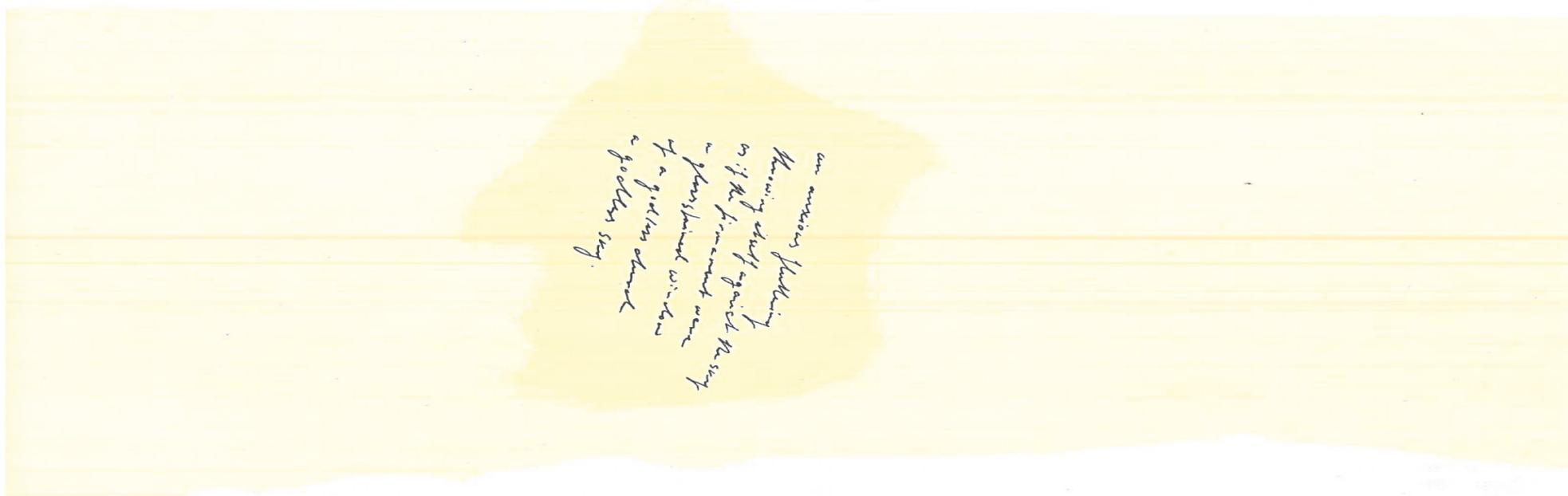




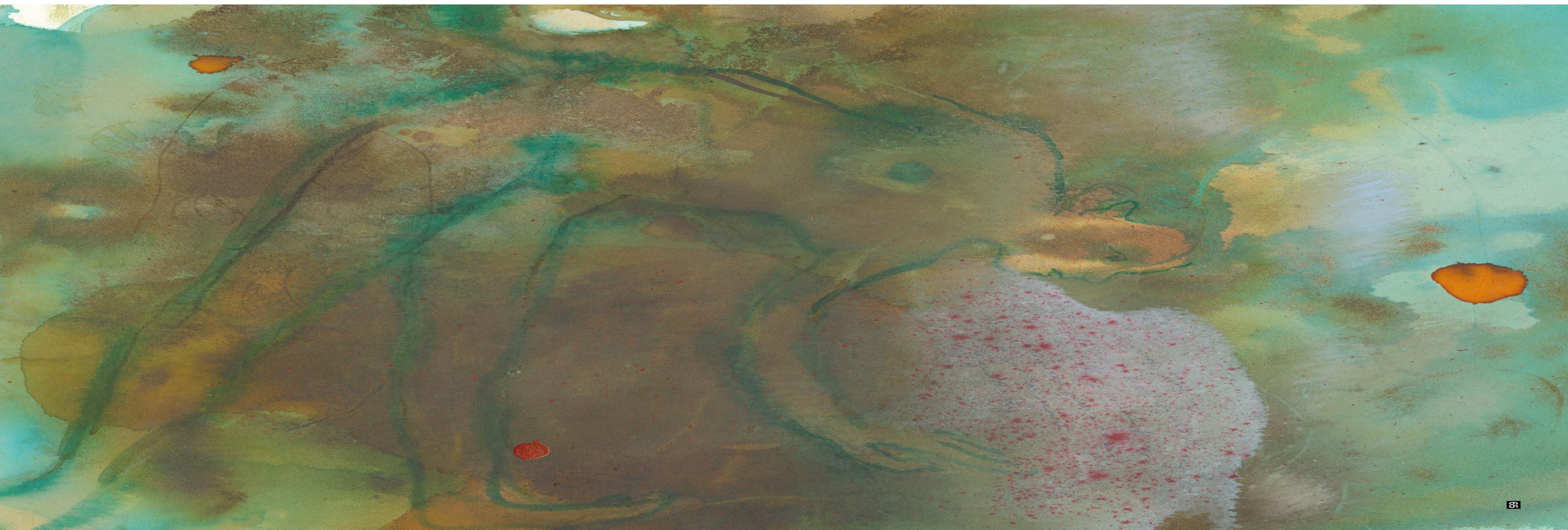
Elizabeth Glaessner, *Staining a Lake*, watercolor and gouache on paper. 11" by 15". Courtesy of the artist and Perrotin.



Most morning the sky released  
a rain of flowers and rain  
came rushing through  
the village, washing everyone  
together when everybody  
knew of somebody should  
and shouldn't be crossed.



Elizabeth Glaessner, *Touching a Cloud*, watercolor and gouache on paper. 11" by 15". Courtesy of the artist and Perrotin.



smudges of milky clouds  
 appear across the horizon  
 in clusters of three  
  
 here an ellipsis in the sky  
 reveals a power that  
 isn't always obvious  
  
 but more often  
 an unexpected search  
 in silence

for long forgotten words.

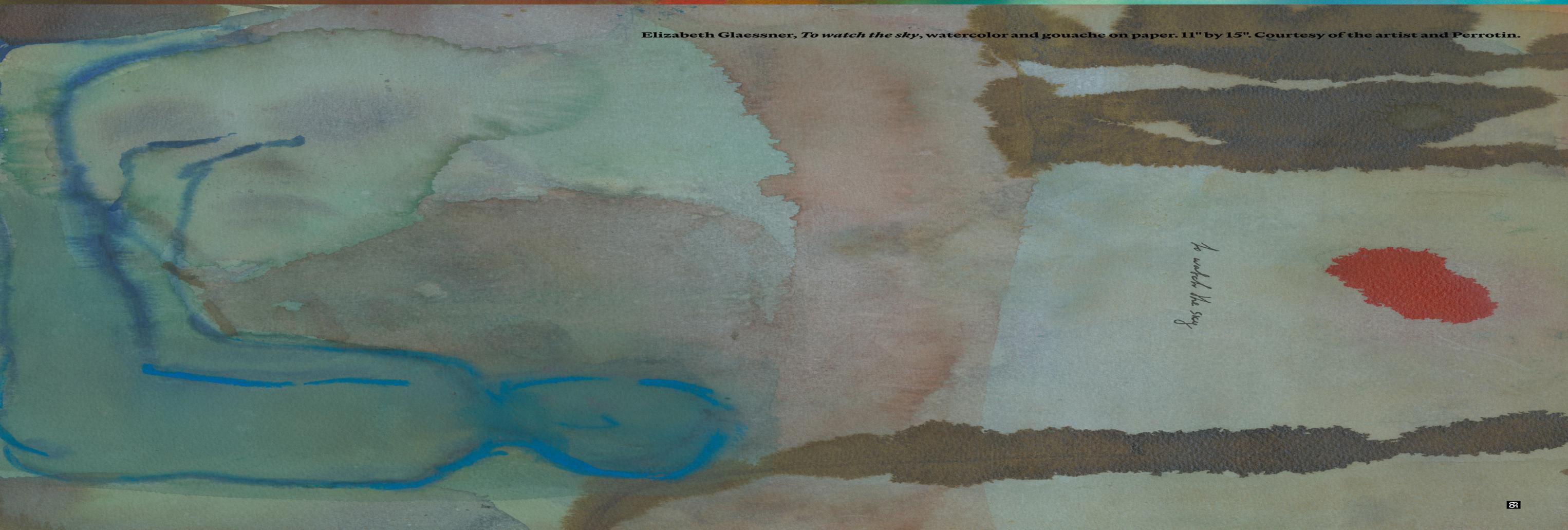
Elizabeth Glaessner, *bleeding cloud*, watercolor and gouache on paper. 11" by 15". Courtesy of the artist and Perrotin.





Elizabeth Glaessner, *dog in mask*, watercolor and gouache on paper. 11" by 15". Courtesy of the artist and Perrotin.

a happy line knows in between how clouds, creating a space of luminous...

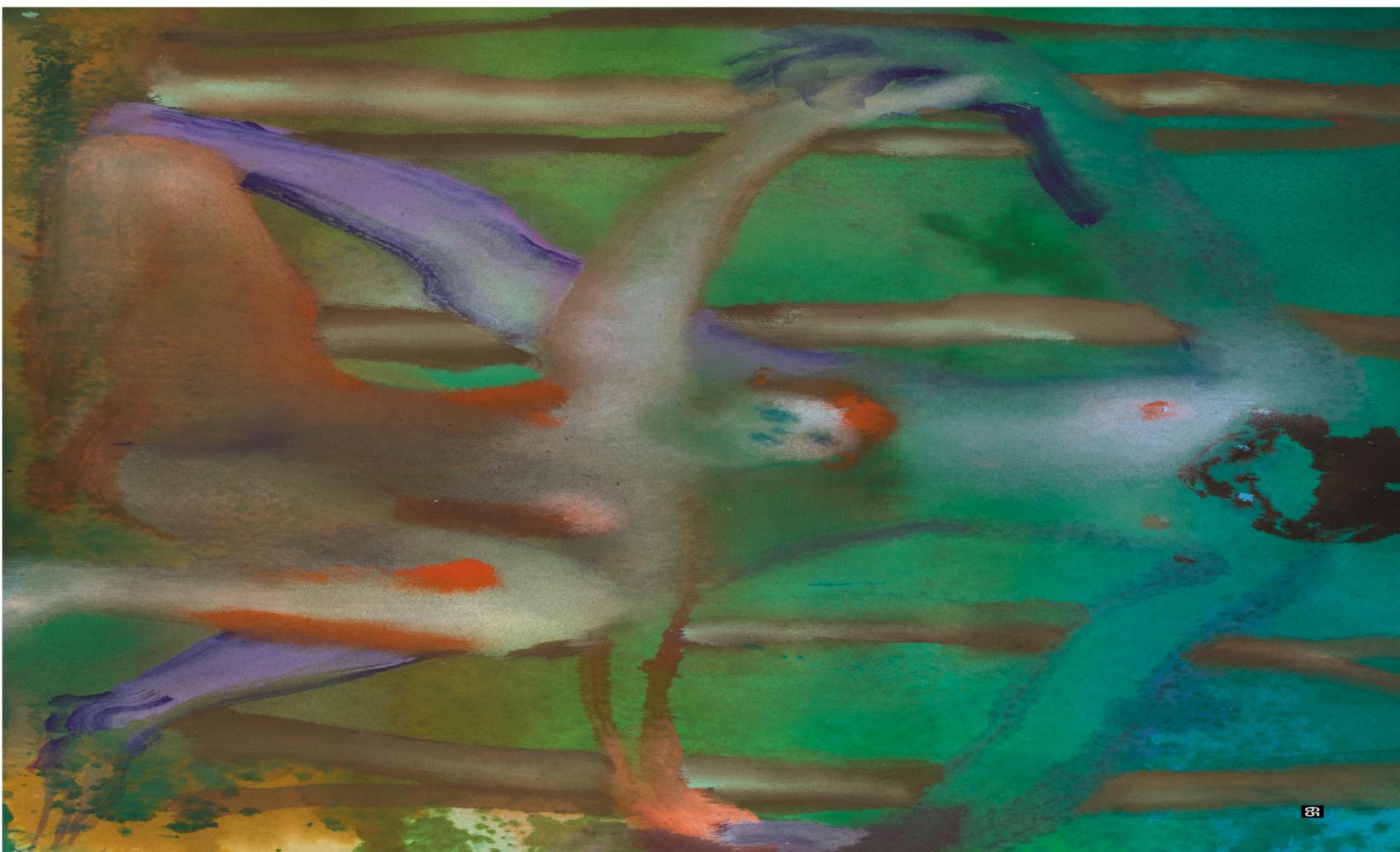


Elizabeth Glaessner, *To watch the sky*, watercolor and gouache on paper. 11" by 15". Courtesy of the artist and Perrotin.

To watch the sky

she reaches her arms up  
toward the sun  
the memory of carrying her mother's weight  
pushing through her muscles  
like often holding up the sky.  
In the grand scheme of things  
— what is so  
if not so short, mostly read  
suspending two towers, joined.

Elizabeth Glaessner, *Spread*, watercolor and gouache on paper. 11" by 15". Courtesy of Elizabeth Glaessner and P•P•O•W, New York. Photo: JSP Art Photography.



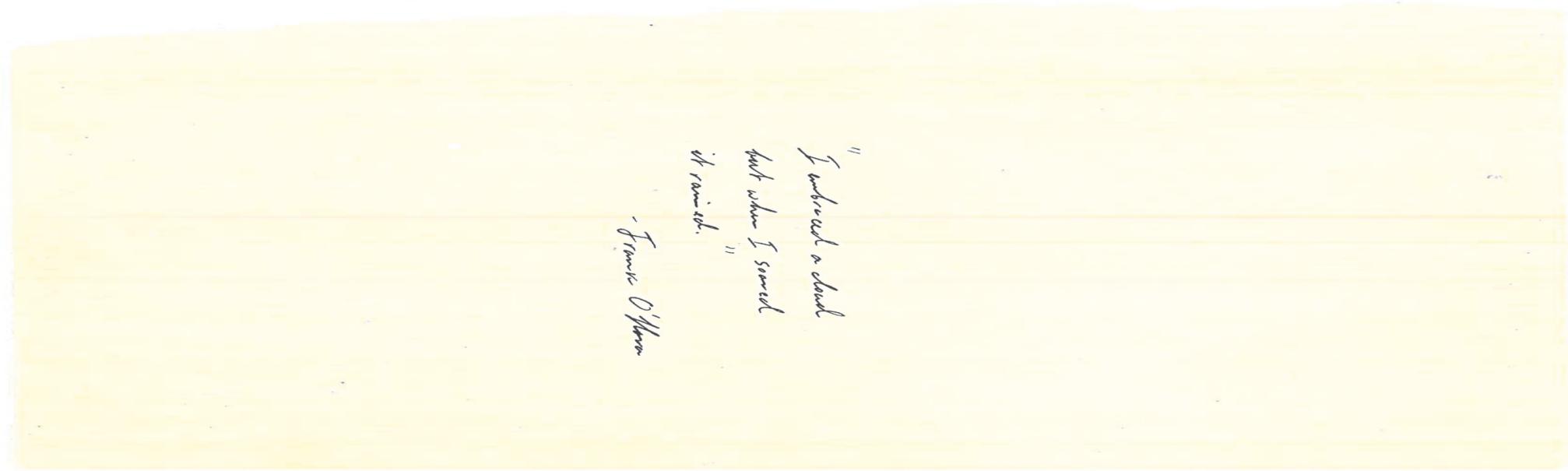


Elizabeth Glaessner, *Strange Loop*, watercolor and gouache on paper. 11" by 15". Courtesy of Elizabeth Glaessner and P•P•O•W, New York. Photo: JSP Art Photography.

she imagines  
what she says  
would love her  
we could open  
exposed, like a lover's body  
caught by desire  
off guard

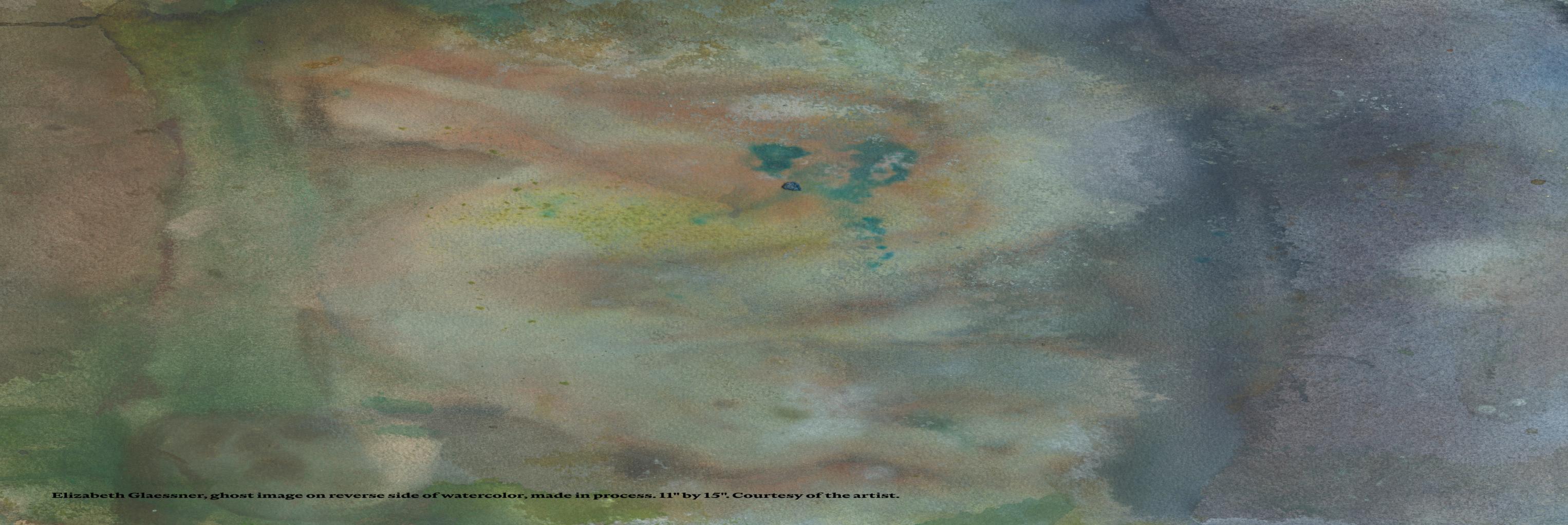
with a determined  
finger  
severely

how many repetitions of history  
are present in a single finger  
of skin?



Elizabeth Glaessner, *Sublimation*, watercolor and gouache on paper. 11" by 15". Courtesy of Elizabeth Glaessner and P•P•O•W, New York. Photo: JSP Art Photography.





Elizabeth Glaessner, ghost image on reverse side of watercolor, made in process. 11" by 15". Courtesy of the artist.



Elizabeth Glaessner, watercolor and gouache on paper. 11" by 15". Courtesy of the artist.

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Ksenia M. Soboleva

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