

An abstract painting featuring a rich palette of earthy colors: vibrant yellow, warm orange, deep brown, and dark charcoal. The brushstrokes are visible and expressive, creating a sense of movement and depth. The composition is divided into several curved, overlapping sections of color, with a prominent diagonal line separating a yellow-orange area from a darker brown and black area. The overall effect is one of natural, organic textures and tones.

Earth Colors

Jyoti Duwadi



Studio, Bellingham, Washington, 2016



Details of 3 paintings: 2012, earth and shilajit on sanding belts
9 x 48 in.



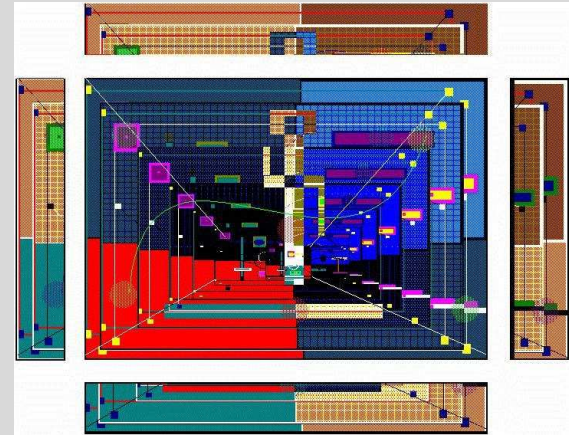
Studio: Earth pigments

In 2012, by chance, I came across used sanding belts whose shape and texture intrigued me. I began transforming them into folded sculptures and paintings. The used belts, in a variety of sizes, contain marks made by the wood during the sanding process. Their patterns often guide my composition. I draw with resin wood and raw earth, still in its rock form, directly on the belts. I also apply ground earth pigments mixed with gum arabic (sap from the acacia tree) as a binder. In some of the works, I incorporate turmeric and shilajit (Ayurveda medicine) as well as beeswax and handmade Nepali paper.

My work is defined by visual poetry, a personal symbolic language inspired by ancient scripts, aboriginal petroglyphs, and Neolithic cave paintings. Sometimes the geometry of Tantric yantras and mandalas emerge, evoking a spiritual quality. I also interpret the rhythms of jazz improvisation. Chance and experimentation ultimately shape my work, which reflects nature's balance through the energy of line, form and texture.

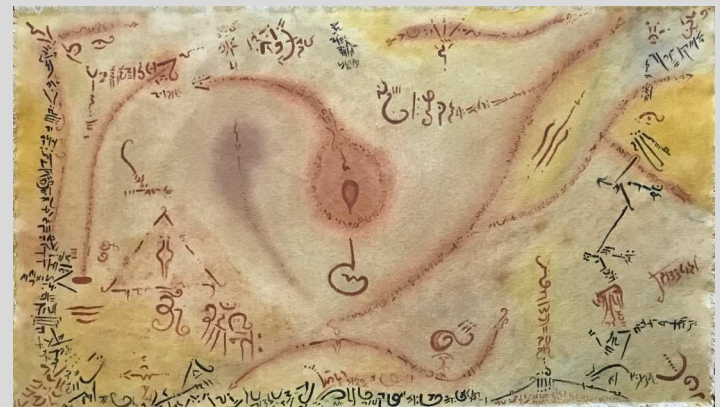
Jyoti

Jyoti Duwadi's recent paintings and sculptures formed from sanding belts represent one facet of a much larger, wide-ranging body of art. His work embraces traditional techniques such as wood carving and painting on canvas, as well as evolving technologies, including digital art. As a self-taught artist, Jyoti relishes the freedom to experiment with a remarkable array of objects and materials. An openness to chance discovery, along with the quest for inner peace (*Sadhana*), guides his practice.



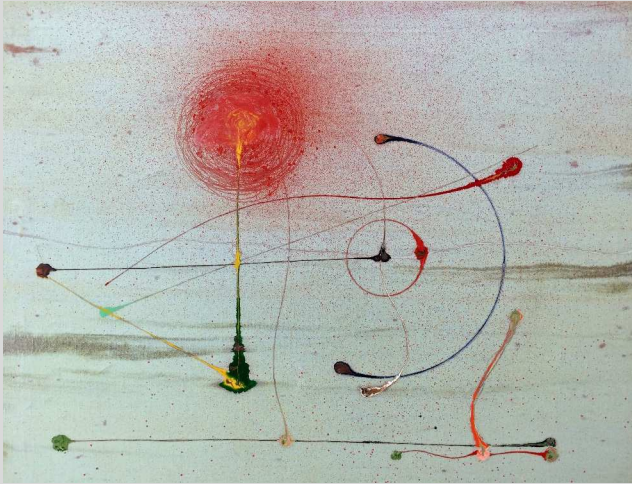
1995, digital image, Microsoft Paintbrush, variable dimensions

Although the work springs from a surprising variety of processes and approaches, one of its distinguishing features is Jyoti's personal calligraphy. These symbolic writings evolved as an artistic expression of his family's literary legacy. Jyoti's father Dhruva and grandfather Dharani Dhar were both distinguished Nepali poets and activists who lived with their families for many years in political exile in Darjeeling, India. At a great personal cost measured in years of incarceration, they spread a message of freedom and social change that inspired generations of Nepali people. Jyoti's art developed as he began translating the power of language into visual form.

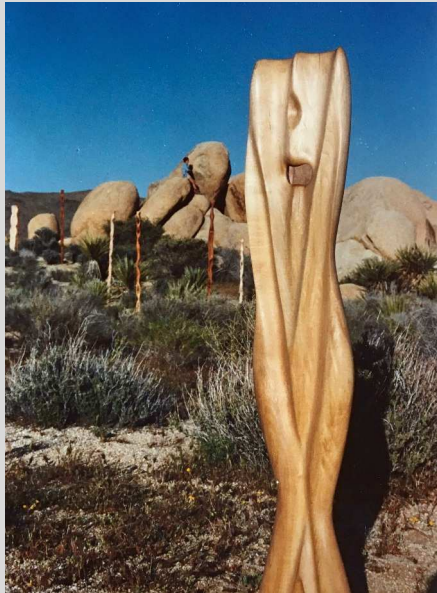


2013, earth, turmeric, and shilajit on canvas, 21.5 x 35 in.

The art and rituals that Jyoti absorbed from his native culture inspired the rich palette of colors and Tantric geometries that permeate his work. As a youth



1975, enamel on canvas, 20 x 30 in.



1988, basswood, 4 ft-high, from *33 Sculptures* installation at Joshua Tree National Park, CA

attending the Besant Theosophical School in Varanasi, India, he was exposed to a fusion of Eastern and Western mystic traditions that seek the divine in humanity's relationship with nature.

Exposure to the art of Wassily Kandinsky, who embraced Theosophy, Paul Klee, and the abstract expressionists Adolph Gottlieb and Jackson Pollock reinforced Jyoti's personal style of abstraction. The improvisational rhythms of jazz also stimulated the lyrical movement of his evolving pictographs.

In 1971, after finishing his studies at Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, Jyoti received a research fellowship to attend the University of Montana, Missoula. He began painting in 1973 while enrolled at Claremont Graduate School in California, and had his first solo exhibition five years later at the Salathe Gallery, Pitzer College. Active in the Pomona and Claremont art communities, he was one of the founding members of DA Gallery. After writing his dissertation, *Kathmandu: Concepts for Regeneration*, and earning a PhD in government, Jyoti devoted himself full-time to creating art.

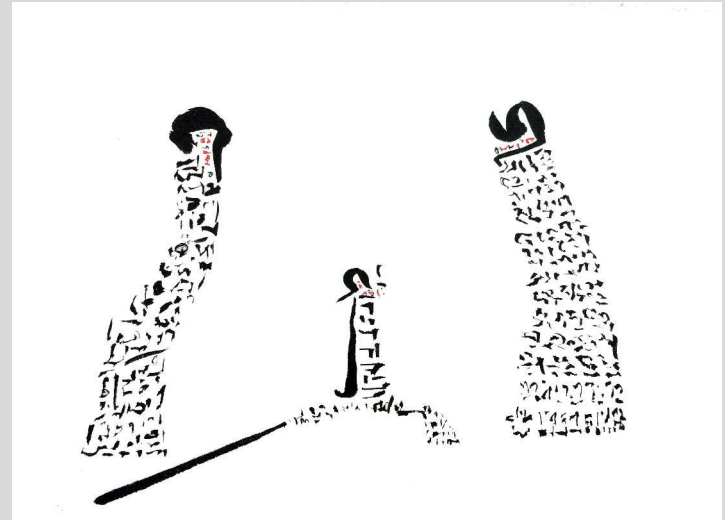
Formative influences on the artist's work during this period included the other-worldly, high-desert landscape of Joshua Tree, Southwest Native

American culture, and the art scenes in Los Angeles and New York during the 1980s and 1990s. In his paintings and tempera-and-ink drawings, Jyoti combined vibrantly colored panoramas with cosmic imagery and poetic script. He often used to great advantage, the cheap, gleaming enamels available at hardware stores.

Jyoti also conceived a series of sculptures from palm fronds, redwood, and other native trees that were rescued by friends. He carved and laboriously hand-sanded each piece to reveal the distinct beauty of its texture and form. The fine craftsmanship and biomorphic shapes of Isamu Noguchi's sculpture informed the artist's work at this time.

Living in a small New York City apartment from 1990 to 1992, Jyoti worked on an intimate scale, filling sketchbooks with delicate pen-and-ink drawings. During this period, his mark-making became more calligraphic and whimsical. Visits to the Museum of Modern Art and Metropolitan Museum of Art offered a wealth of visual sources that enriched the already well-established currents in his art.

Jyoti returned to Kathmandu regularly to visit his parents, exhibit at the Siddhartha Art Gallery, and create public artworks that addressed social and



1990, ink on paper, 4 x 6 in.



Myth of the Nagas and the Kathmandu Valley Watershed, 1993
Kathmandu, Nepal



Shantiki Samjhana (Remembering Peace), 2002-ongoing
villagers clearing invasive species in Parphing



Kali, 2007, earth pigments, turmeric and ink on handmade
Nepali paper, 20 x 30 in.

environmental issues. In 1993, he presented *Myth of the Nagas and the Kathmandu Valley Watershed*, which was sponsored by the Asian Development Bank. In this multi-media installation, Jyoti celebrated serpent imagery in ritual art and its connection to ancient traditions of sustainability as described in Hindu and Buddhist texts. As the first art installation in Nepal, *Myth of the Nagas* was both a reminder of a rich environmental legacy and a call for citizen engagement to help mitigate a deteriorating ecosystem.

Nine years later, Jyoti collaborated with the mayor of Kathmandu and the Parphing village council to develop two separate parks in the city and countryside. The project, known as *Shantiko Samjhana (Remembering Peace)*, revitalized degraded land while offering places of tranquility during the prolonged Maoist insurgency in Nepal. The park in Kathmandu has since become a center for free speech and political activism.

In 1996, Jyoti moved to Chapel Hill, North Carolina, where he began working with red clay found along the shore of a nearby lake. When dried, ground, and mixed with gum arabic (sap from the acacia tree), its deep earth tones perfectly complemented the handmade paper that he brought back from Nepal.

Crafted from the Himalayan lokta tree, this textured paper is enhanced by a translucent grain of natural fibers that often provide the initial catalyst for the artist's composition.

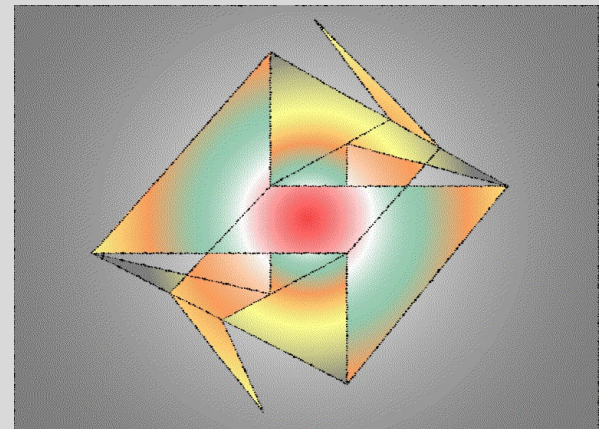
Encouraged by his experiments with red clay, Jyoti began supplementing his palette with found pigments collected on journeys to the Himalayas, Death Valley, and the Kootenay River Valley in Canada. Friends also contributed finds from distant lands. By blending ingredients harvested from around the earth, Jyoti expresses the beauty and harmony of the natural world.

In 2006, Jyoti recontextualized functional objects into artworks by shaping large bamboo mats used for drying grains in Nepal. Taking cues from the flexible woven fibers, he configured graceful and bold origami-like forms. Jyoti also layered beeswax into sculptures constructed from large cane baskets in response to the collapse of honey bee colonies. Its smooth, aromatic properties convey a sense of healing.

Jyoti integrated many of these works into his multi-sensory installations at the Sundaram Tagore Galleries in New York and Hong Kong. In *Red Earth-Vanishing Ice* (2008), he addressed climate change and the global scarcity of fresh water. In 2012, Jyoti interpreted



2007, woven bamboo mat and twine, 40 x 36 x 25 in.



Origami, 2000, digital image, Adobe Flash
variable dimensions



Studio view detail: *Red Earth-Vanishing Ice*, 2008
Installation for the Sundaram Tagore Gallery, NY
Red earth, handmade copper cauldrons, wooden containers,
brass vessels with water from New York and Kathmandu, and
flowers. Painting detail: earth pigments, turmeric, pine tar,
charcoal, and guggul on canvas, 15 x 12 ft.

China's traditional connection to earth, water, fire, metal and wood in *Wu Xing: Five Elements*, which ushered in the Year of the Dragon in Hong Kong. Documented in separate catalogues, the art in these exhibitions inform the artist's current series.

By stretching and folding sanding belts, Jyoti transforms discarded industrial objects into paintings, curving wall reliefs, and three-dimensional sculptures. The surfaces are defined by a mixture of media, including earth, turmeric, beeswax, and resin wood. Jyoti often accentuates his work with shilajit, a jet black, tar-like substance, tapped from Himalayan rock crevices. Best known for its healing properties in the practice of Ayurveda medicine, it boldly animates the artist's meditative and mysterious writing.

Jyoti's recent work reflects his experiences living in Bellingham, Washington, since 2009. In a studio facing the snow-capped, Canadian Coast Mountains, which were compared to the Himalayas by early explorers, he has found new materials and inspiration, including the totemic art of Northwest aboriginal cultures. Integrating the earth colors gathered across the border in British Columbia with recycled sanding belts marked by the trees of Pacific Northwest forests, Jyoti's new paintings and sculptures elegantly convey the duality of energy and balance.

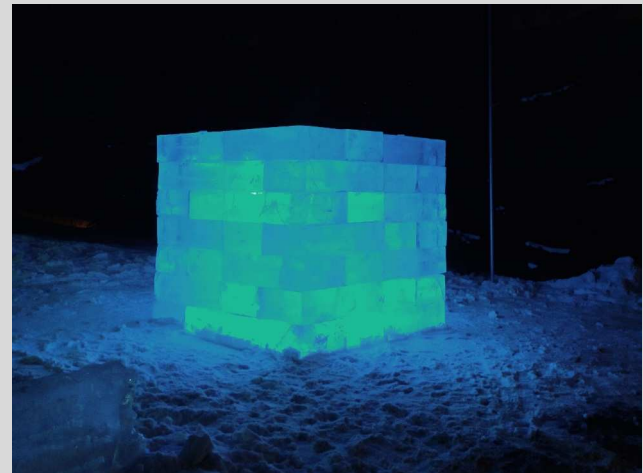
These works coincide with the artist's most recent installations that continue his exploration of climate change. For the traveling exhibition, *Vanishing Ice: Alpine and Polar Landscapes in Art* (2013-2018), Jyoti was commissioned to create *Melting Ice*, which he constructed by configuring frozen blocks into a monolithic cube embedded with glowing LEDs. Reminiscent of the majestic, morphing shapes of disappearing glaciers and icebergs, the sculpture gradually succumbed to the surrounding warm air. Its lifespan depended on the vagaries of the climate where it was installed. At the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, the work endured for over three months, but lasted just four weeks at the Whatcom Museum in Bellingham, and vanished after only a few, brief days at the El Paso Museum of Art.

While Jyoti's art traces a personal journey, it simultaneously calls attention to both nature's beauty and the dangers posed by humans to the environment. In the artist's unique contribution to the cultural dialogue, he follows the path forged by his father and grandfather who dedicated their lives to spreading progressive ideas through art and literature.

Barbara Matilsky
Curator of Art

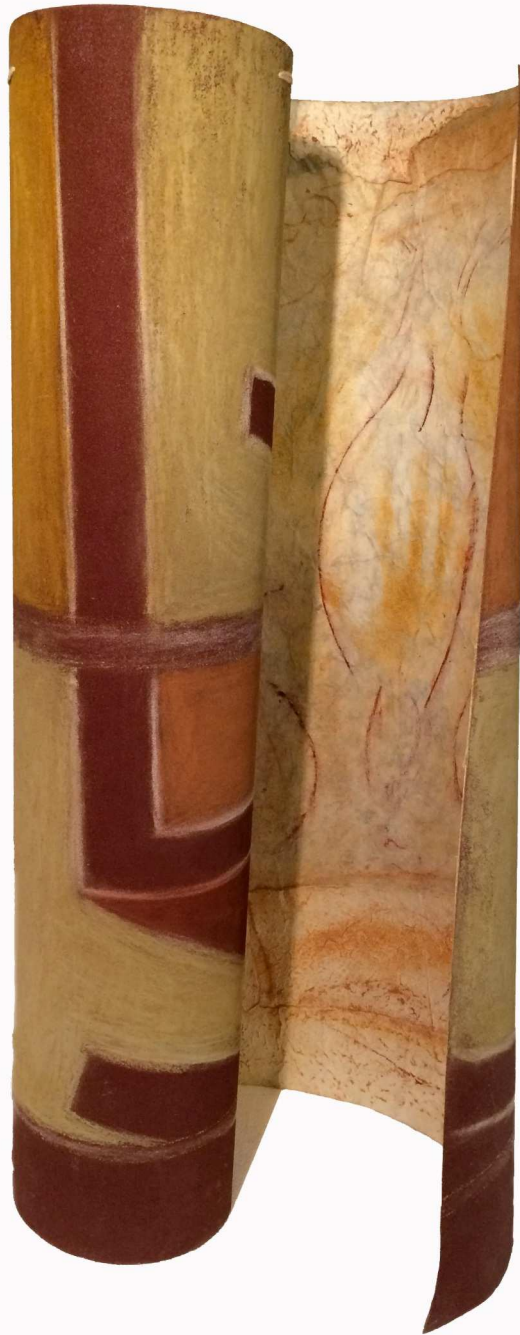


Melting Ice, 2013, Whatcom Museum, Bellingham, WA



Melting Ice, 2015, McMichael Canadian Art Collection
Ontario, Canada

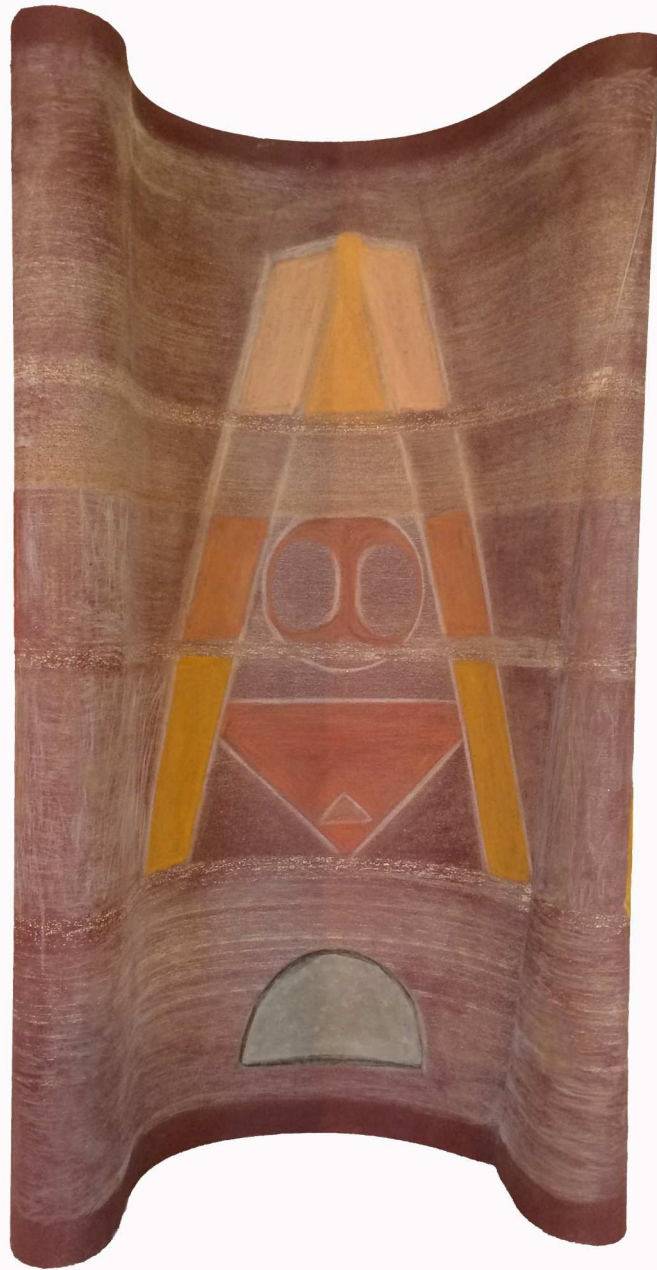




2013, three views

Earth and Nepali paper on sanding belt

37 x 13 x 11 in.





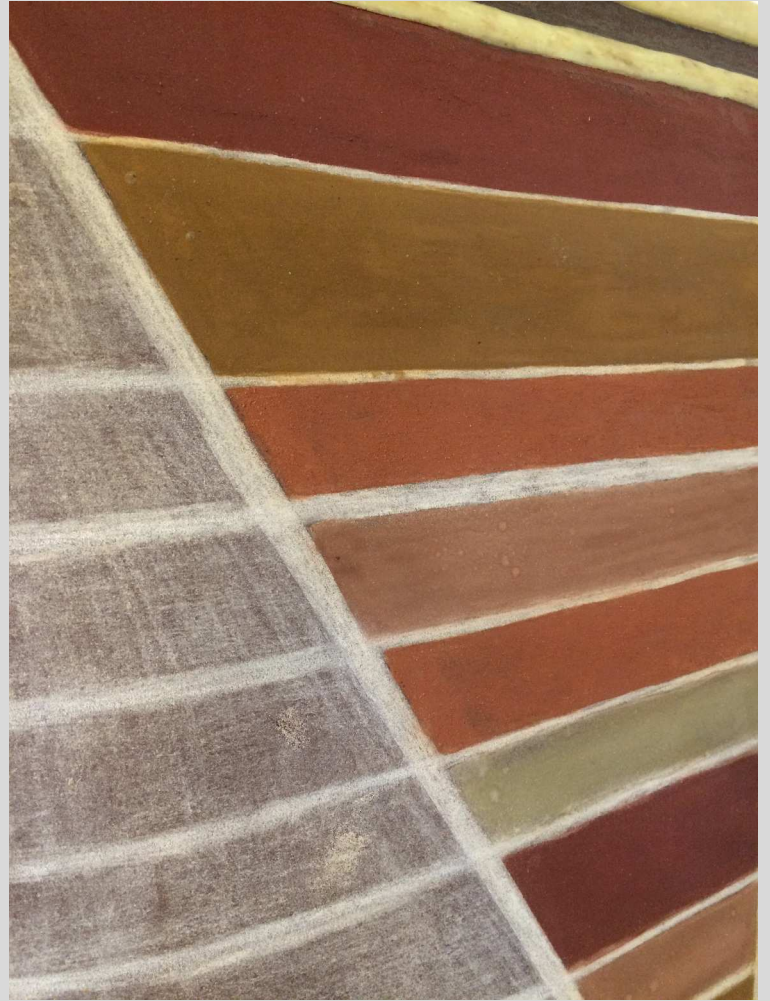
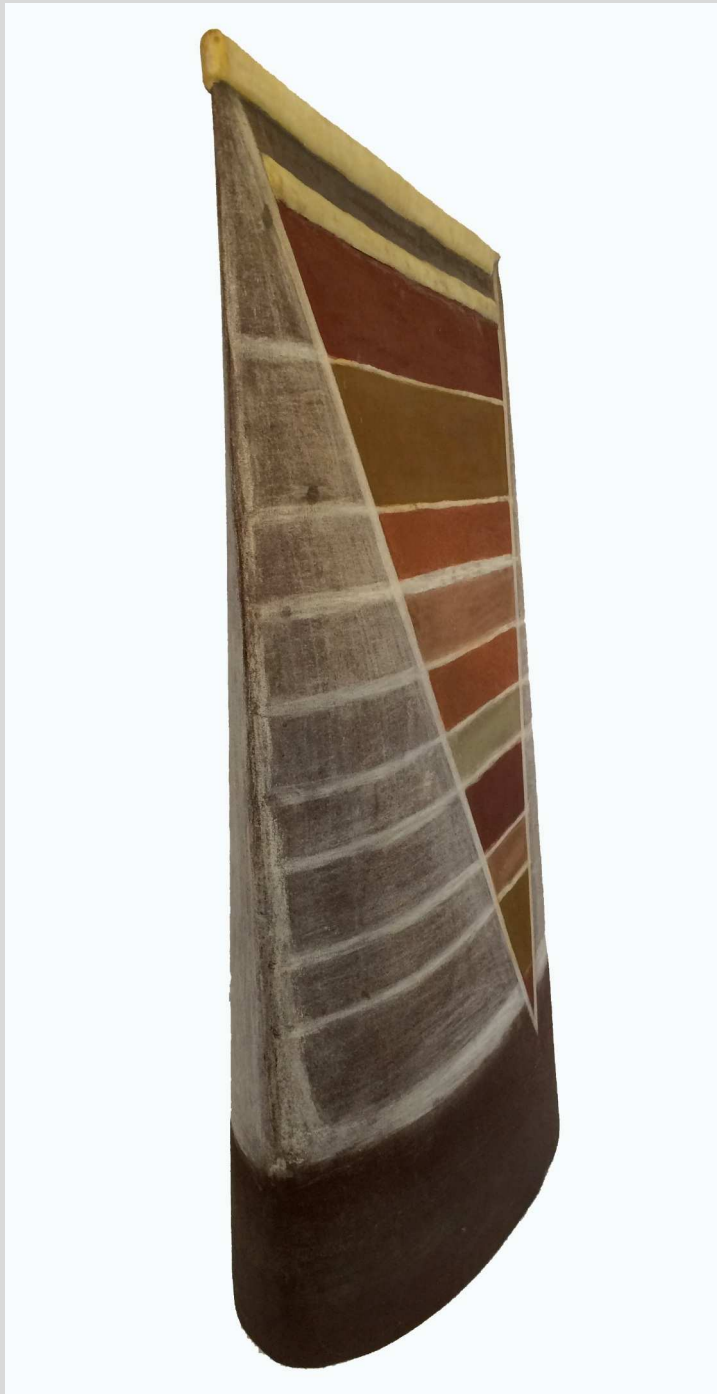
2013, two views

Earth and resin wood on sanding belt

37 x 22 x 4 in.



2013, three views
Earth, resin wood and beeswax
on sanding belt
37 x 30 x 13 in.





2014
Beeswax on sanding belt
37 x 27 x 6 in.



2013

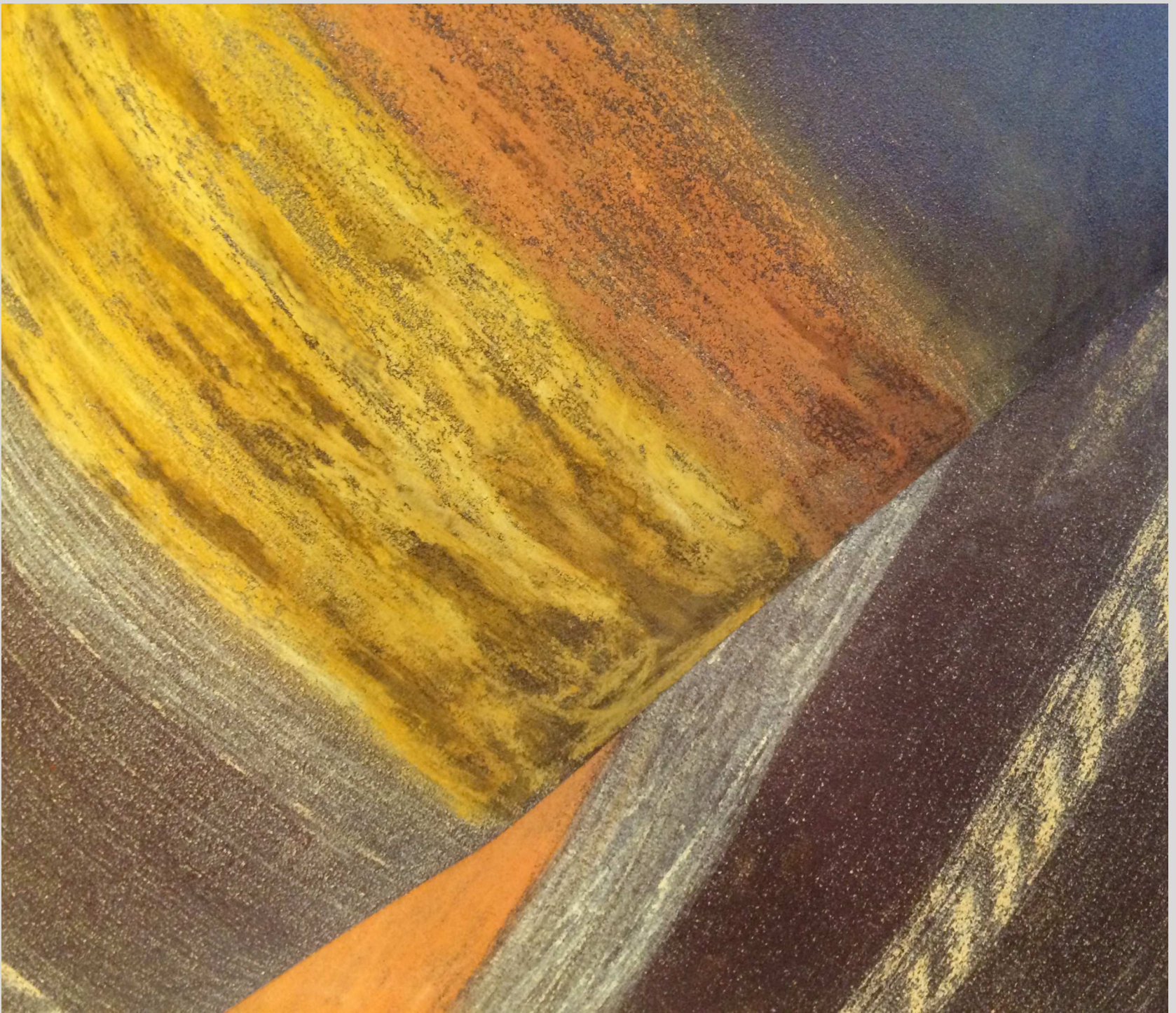
Earth and beeswax on sanding belt

37 x 13 x 9 in.



2013

Earth and twine on sanding belt
27 x 52 x 12 in.



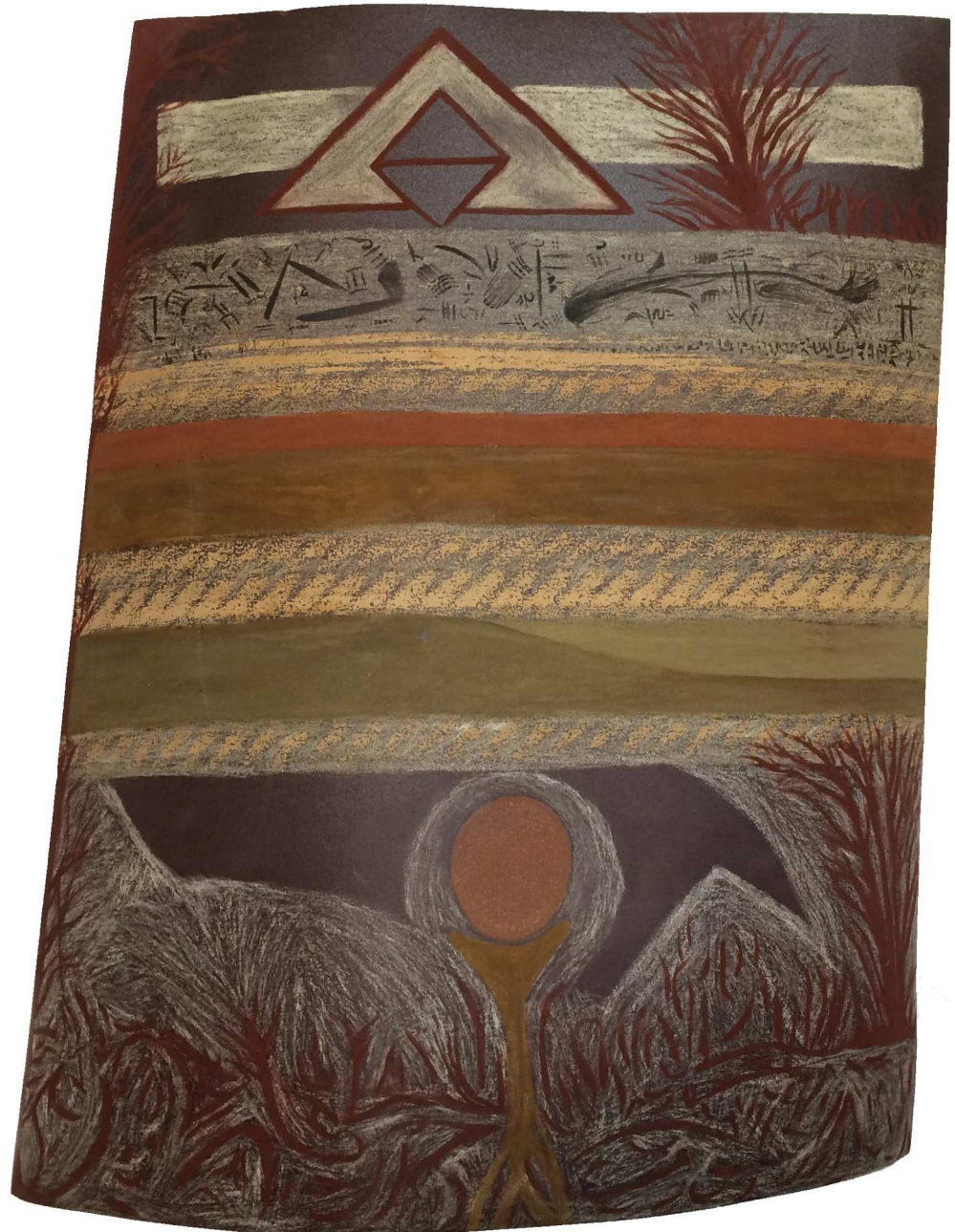


2013, earth, shilajit, resin
wood on sanding belt
37 x 24 x 10 in.





2014, earth, resin wood,
and shilajit on sanding belt
37 x 30 x 10 in.



2015, earth, resin wood,
and shilajit on sanding belt
37 x 33 x 5 in.



2015

Earth, resin wood, and shilajit on sanding belt
28 1/2 x 48 in.





Above: 2014, earth and Nepali paper on sanding belt, 15 x 26 x 9 in.

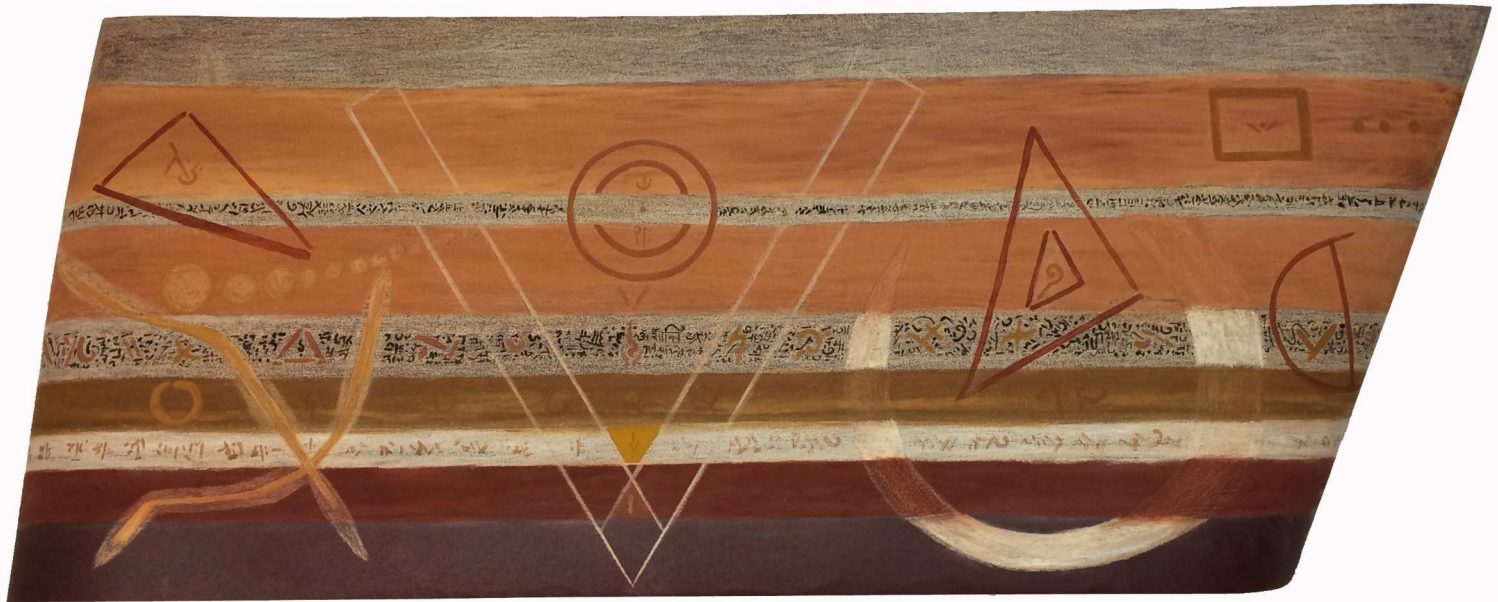
Right: 2016, four views, earth and resin wood on sanding belt, 10 inch-diameter





2015, four relief sculptures
Earth and shilajit on sanding belts
Height: 12 in.

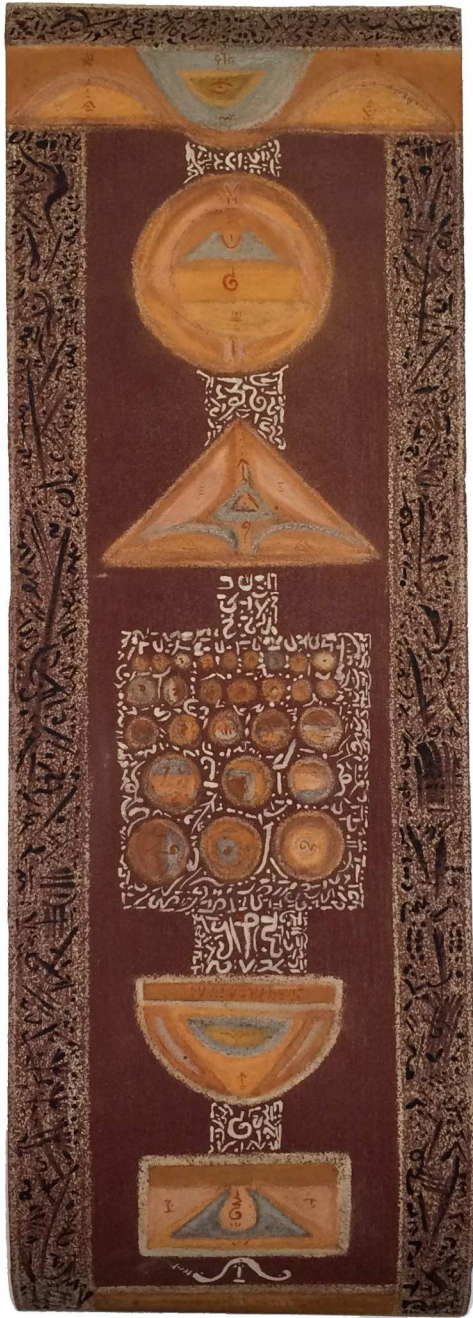




2016

Earth, resin wood, and shilajit on sanding belt
25 x 60 in.





2016, earth, resin wood, and shilajit on sanding belt, 42 x 14 in.

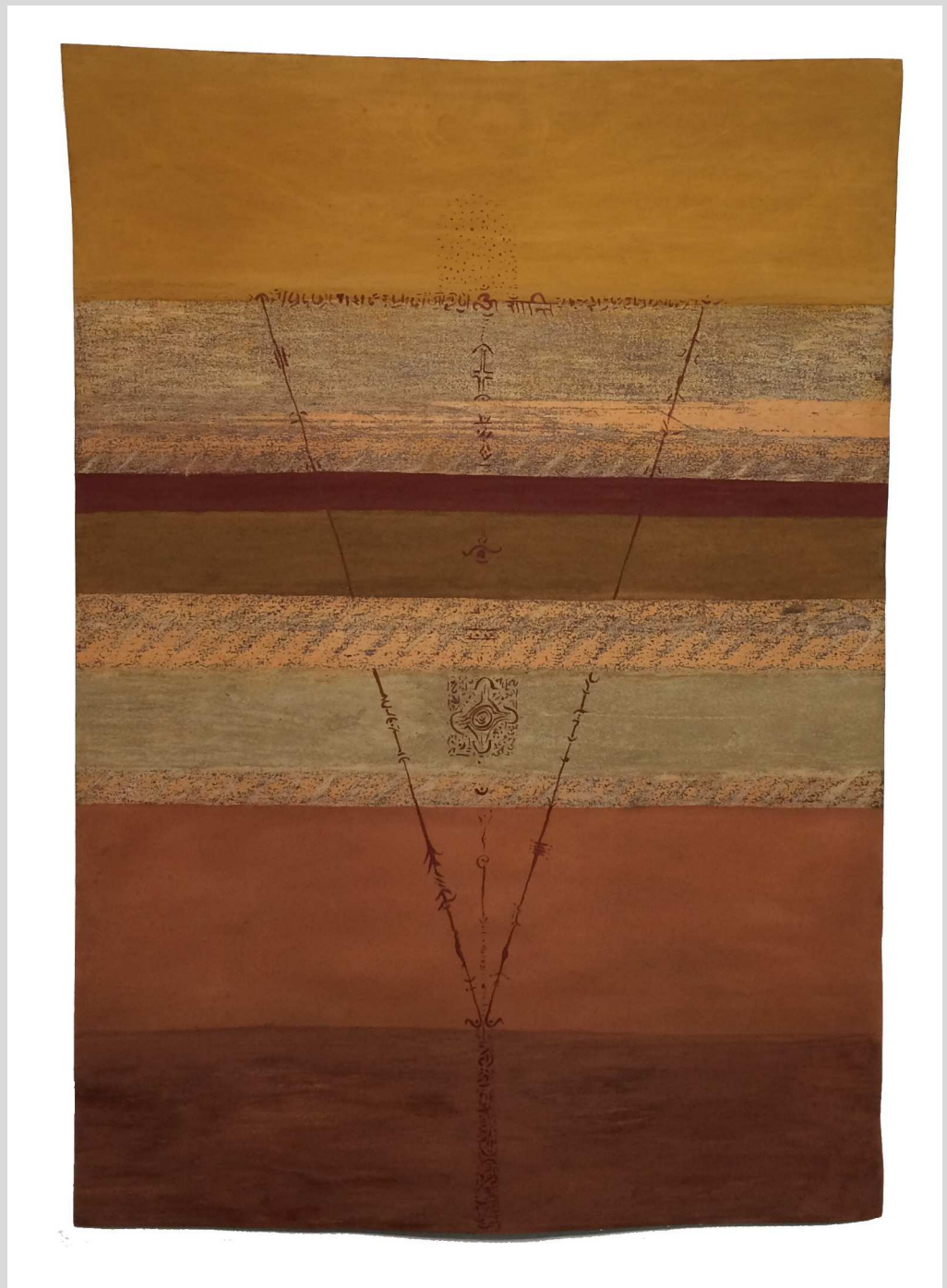


2016, earth, resin wood, and shilajit on sanding belt, 36 x 9 in.

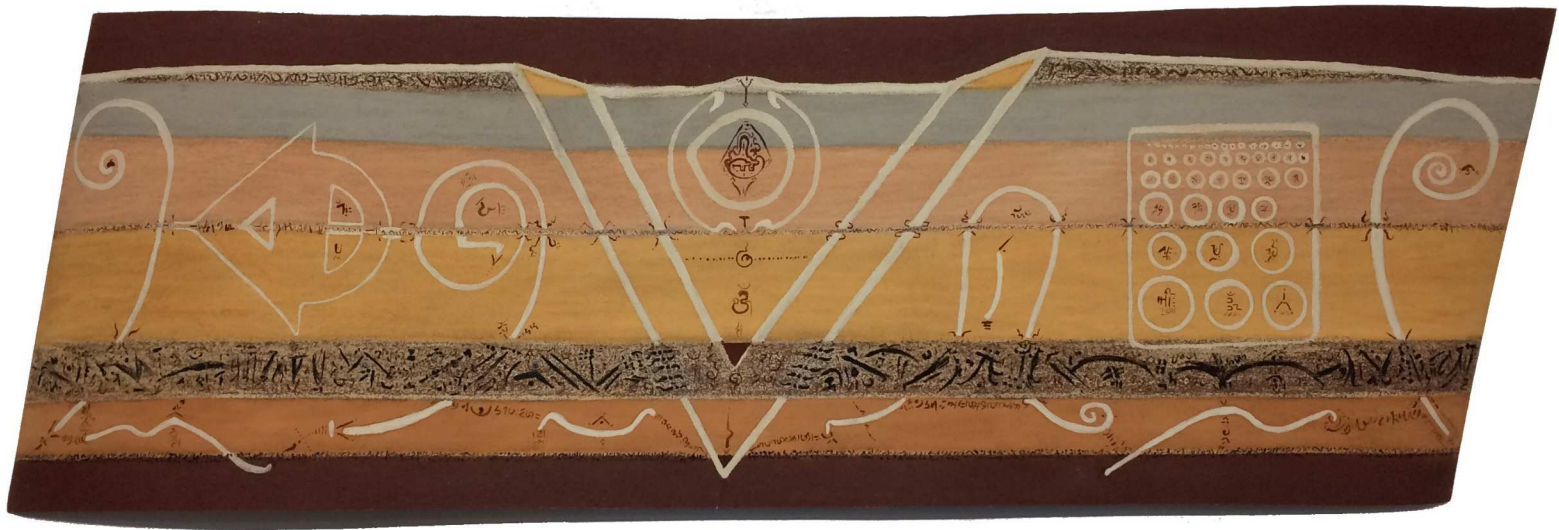




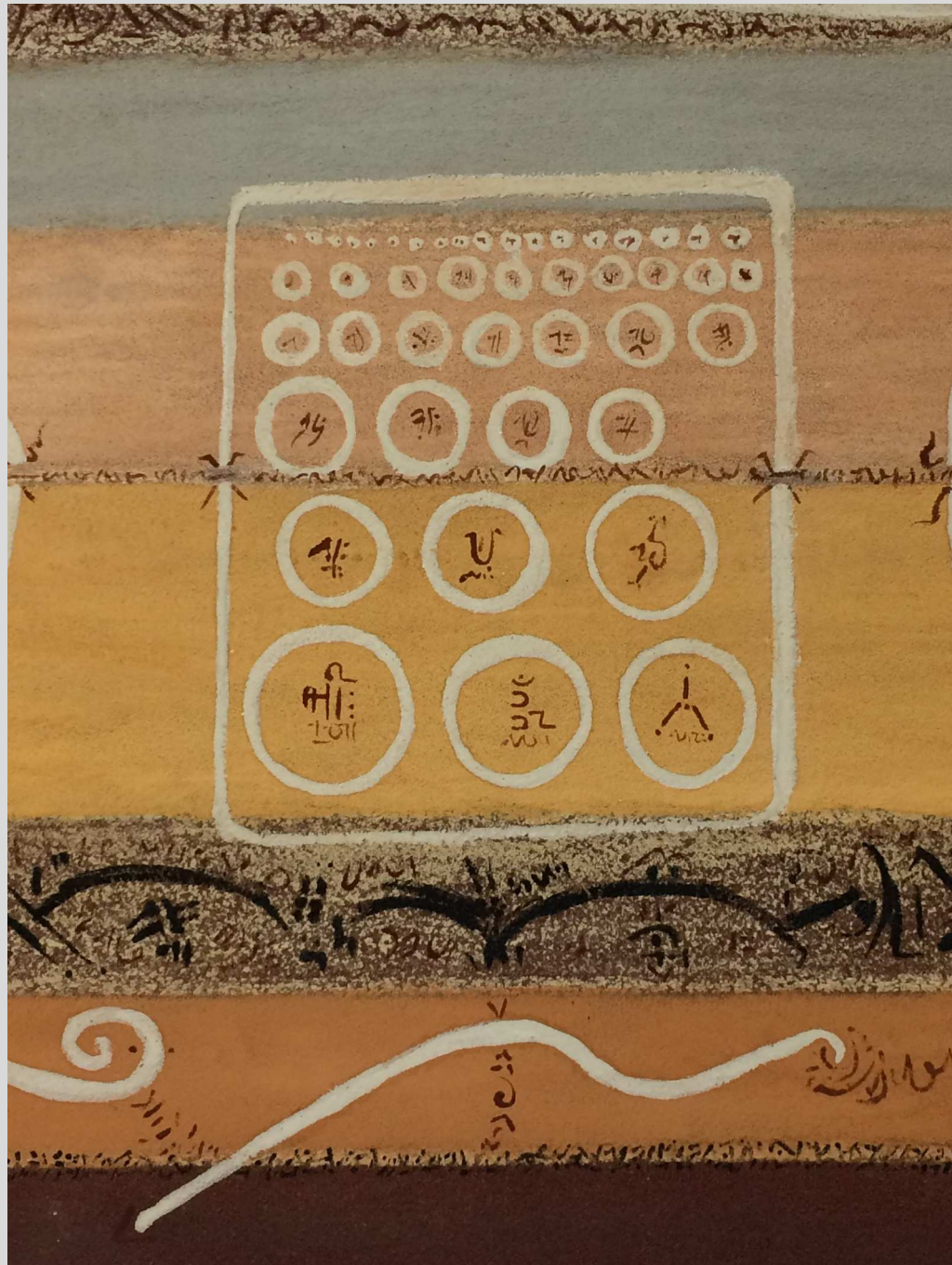
2015, earth, resin wood, and
shilajit on sanding belt,
21 x 53 x 5 in.



2015, earth and resin wood on sanding belt, 37 x 26 in.



Banner for the March, January 2017
Earth, resin wood, and shilajit on sanding belt
20 x 60 in.





2016

Earth, resin wood, and shilajit on sanding belt
18 1/2 x 60 in.



2014

Earth and shilajit on sanding belt

9 x 36 in.





2015, two views
Earth and Nepali paper on sanding belt
26 x 18 x 9 in.



2013, earth, turmeric, and
Nepali paper on sanding belt
31 x 18 x 9 in.



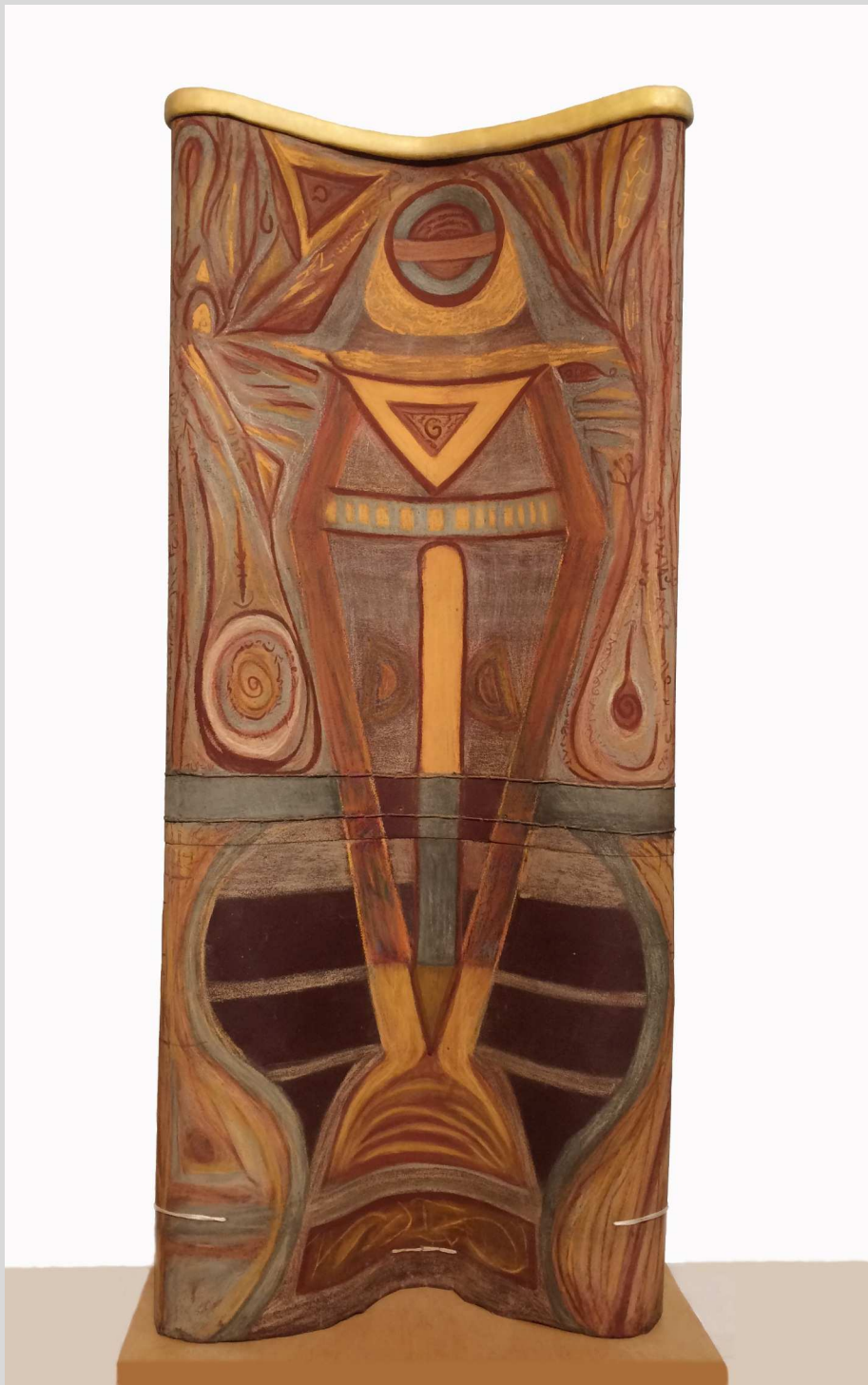
2013, earth and Nepali
paper on sanding belt
35 x 23 x 12 in.

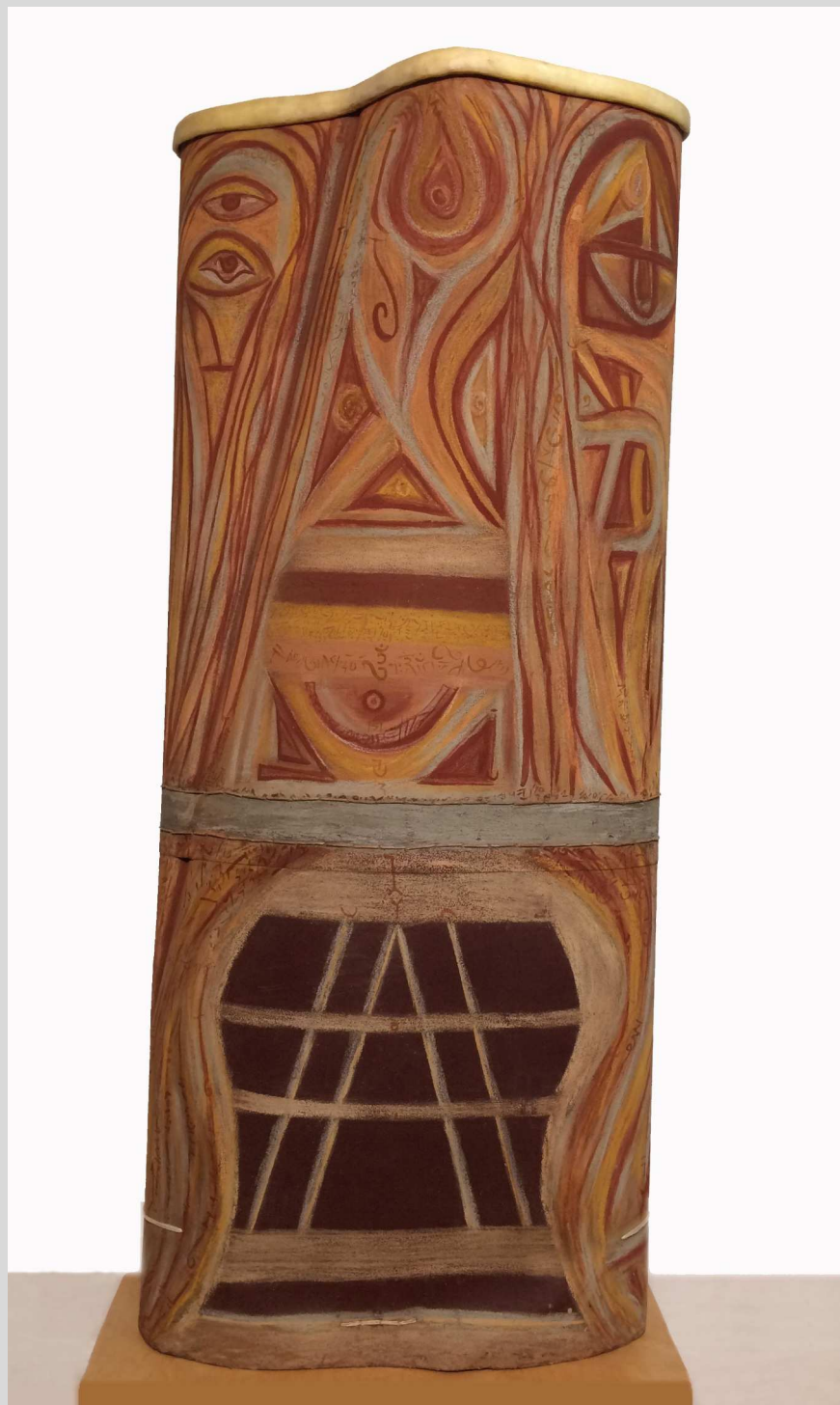


Left: 2016, earth and oil pastels on sanding belt, 60 x 16 x 9 in.

Right: 2013, earth, turmeric, and Nepali paper on sanding belt, 60 x 16 in.







2016, two views
Earth, resin wood, beeswax,
and twine on sanding belt
60 x 26 x 9 in.

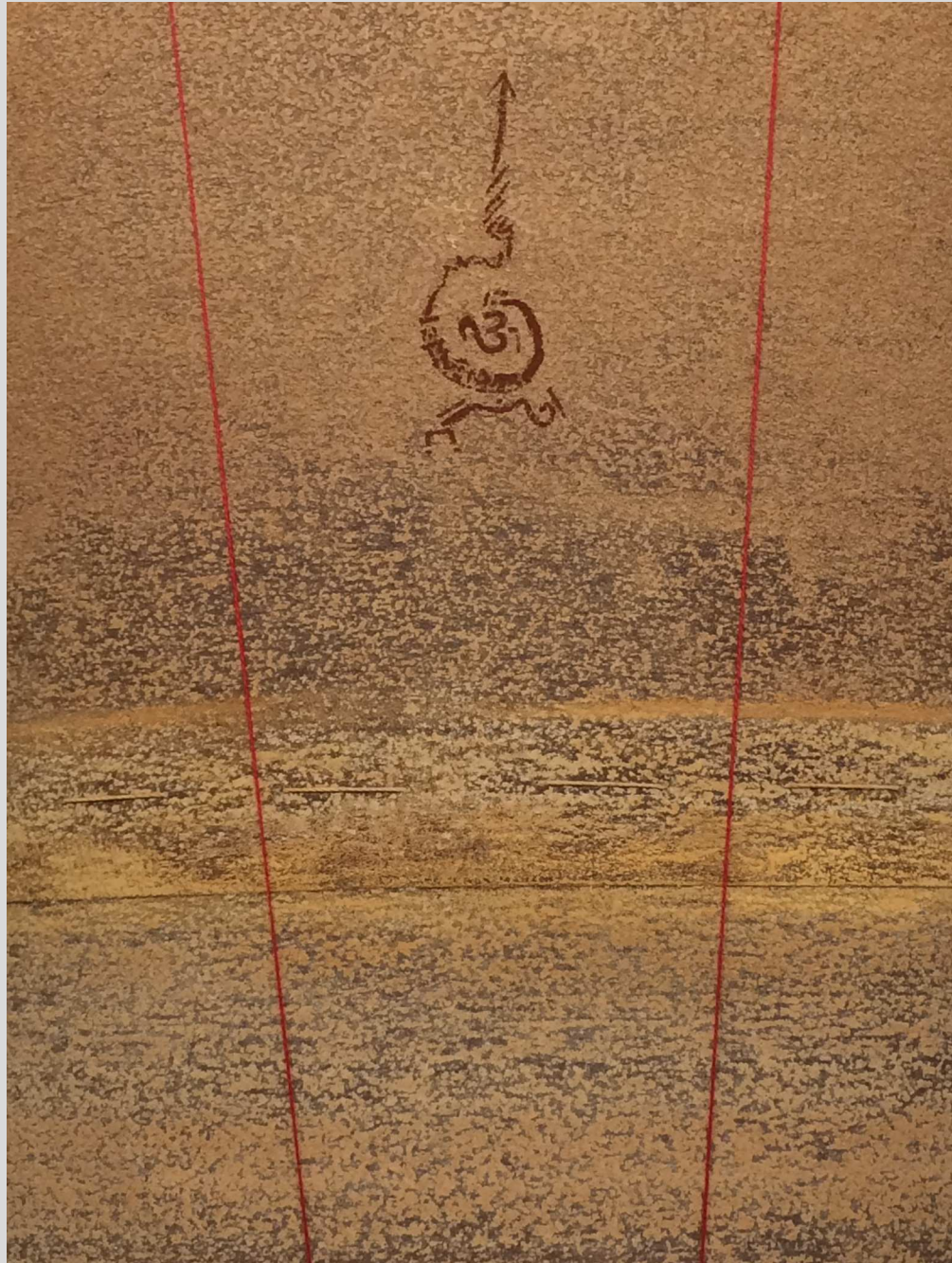


2016, two views
Earth, resin wood, and bamboo
on sanding belt
71 x 26 x 19 in.





2016, two views
Earth, resin wood, twine, Manila rope,
and bamboo on sanding belt
69 1/2 x 25 x 15 in.





Gathering earth, Princeton, British Columbia, 2016



Collected rocks in the studio

Earth Yantra, from the series *Earth Drawings to Digital Prints*, 2000, earth and turmeric on Nepali paper, 20 x 30 in.



Digital Yantra, from the series *Earth Drawings to Digital Prints*, 2001, digital image of *Earth Yantra*, variable dimensions

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With support from Douglas Taylor



Earth Om, 2000, earth and turmeric on Nepali paper, 20 x 30 in.

