

## Knots and knotting

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### Abstract

In summer 2024 I produced a series of drawings on paper that explored aspects of the large island of Crete, and that end of the Mediterranean world as a chaotic system characterized on all levels – physical and metaphysical -- as a kind of knotting. Based on observations and sketches of the sea and wildlife around Crete, specifically the intensity of germination and growth visible in those cold waters, I entangled words and pictures. The drawings and the texts are below. The paper presentation comprises a viewing of the work as an exercise in ekphrasis.

### 1. Heraklion

Swimming with the cold fish off Heraklion we look to the corrugating waves and rumpling stars. They are objects without surfaces, existing in the woof and weft of the mind. We are naïve, stubborn, sometimes drunkenly mistaken, but the tracery becomes a mesh to trap understanding. In fact, there are no coloured vapors and no orbits embroidered, no calabash, no crab nebula, no smudging towards the slow, tiny scribe who marks it all down on paper.

The island off Heraklion is Dia, a 4-dimensional slice of shadow and sinew, quieting for a moment our buzz around

the relations between sea, sky, and hands. It is a tapestry, knotted white and blue; binding moons, planets, eyes and minds; inks and waxes ground finer and finer. The cold-water slews yellow, blue, and fish, wrinkling the page in analogy, inscribing homocentric lines, marking-up the turbulence.

We speak forces and colours. A cascade of ones and twos, reds and blues. The carnal poetics in the back-and-forth of hand and heaven is all. Look Heraklion! The sky is a map; the pencil and the hand that holds it make it so.



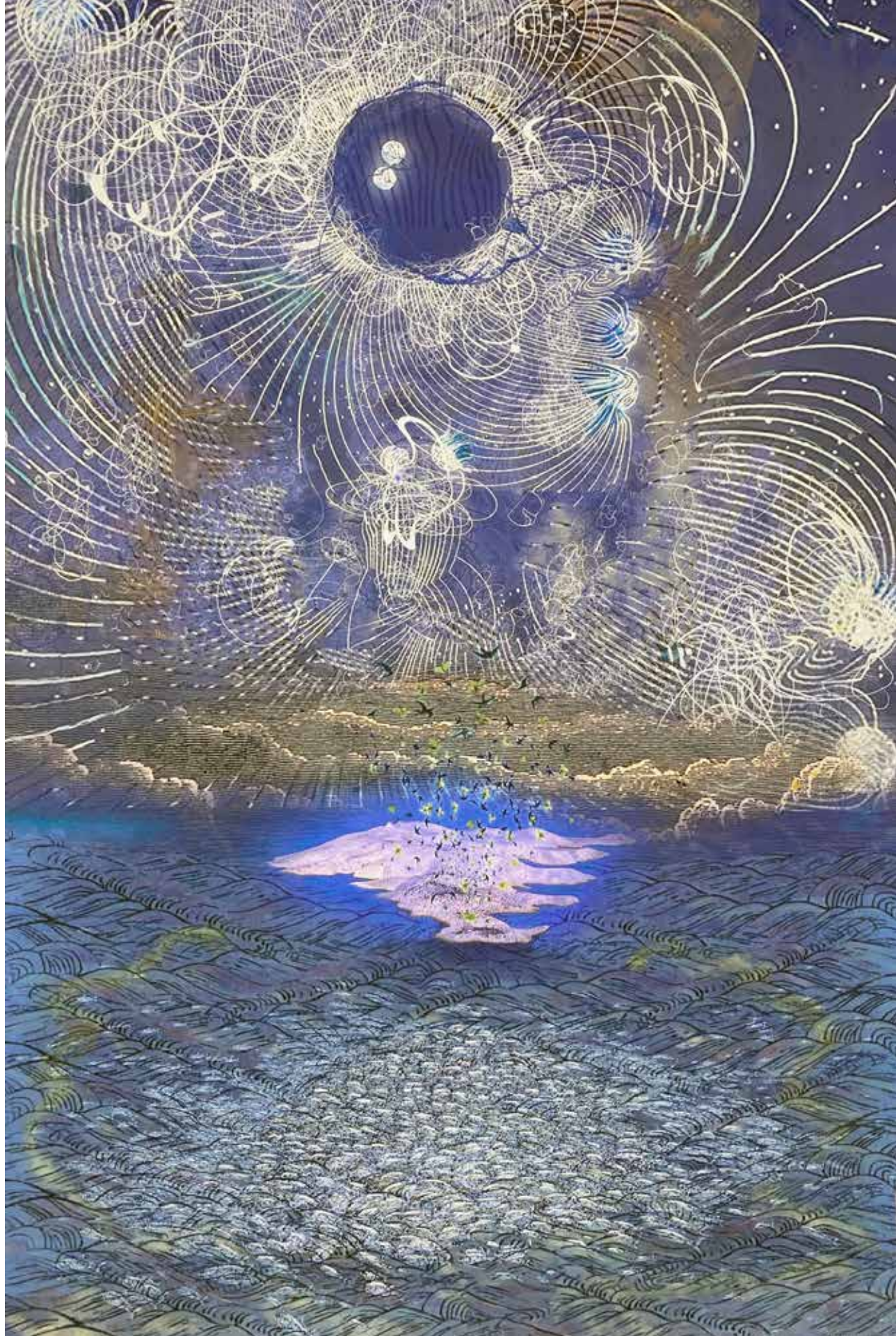


Figure 1. Griffin, D (2024) "Heraklion," 2024, ink, crayon, pencils on paper, 26x39in.



## 2. Coelacanth

The sea off Heraklion overflows with the milt of animals: sponges, anemones, fish, and men. In that embryonic, saturated translucence, the last of its kind – the Coelacanth – headstands with desire. The ragged fish, heavy and

persistent, eats to survive the intermezzo. It looks through the turbulence at the tangle of threads, a quantum superposition of fats and proteins. The fish sees one mouthful after another, and that it will live.



Figure 2. Griffin, D (2024) "Coelacanth," 2024, ink, crayon, pencils on paper, 40x40in.



### 3. Finite Loop

The strange flocking heads of Molas sound the sea, inseminating it with crystalline gametes. Each bit of looping semen and ovules is a murmur of murmurations,

threading knots, gathering complexity. Really, they are bootstrapping Molas. Like these drawings they loop from singular threads. There is no end to the infinite, serpentine movement, but yet they begin.



Figure 3. Griffin, D (2024) "Finite Loop," 2024, ink, crayon, pencils on paper, 39x39in.



#### 4. Cold Meadow

We pivot to look at the smouldering black and blue rhizome -- was it a boat? If yes, it is now fully in pieces and cannot support us; we are in a swelling meadow of splinters and cold cold. Milt coats the sea around Dia and resurfaces us in the bargain. Somewhere below us are animals who see

us for what we are: not scholars or fathers, but mouthfuls, another and another. The water will pull everything apart, in the meantime. The fires too will drown. Still, the colours stun: red, blue, black, and red, and green of all things, drilled into us by our nervous primatology. Hurry, hurry!



Figure 4. Griffin, D (2024) "Cold Meadow," 2024, ink, crayon, pencils on paper, 38x38in.



### 5. Pilgrimage

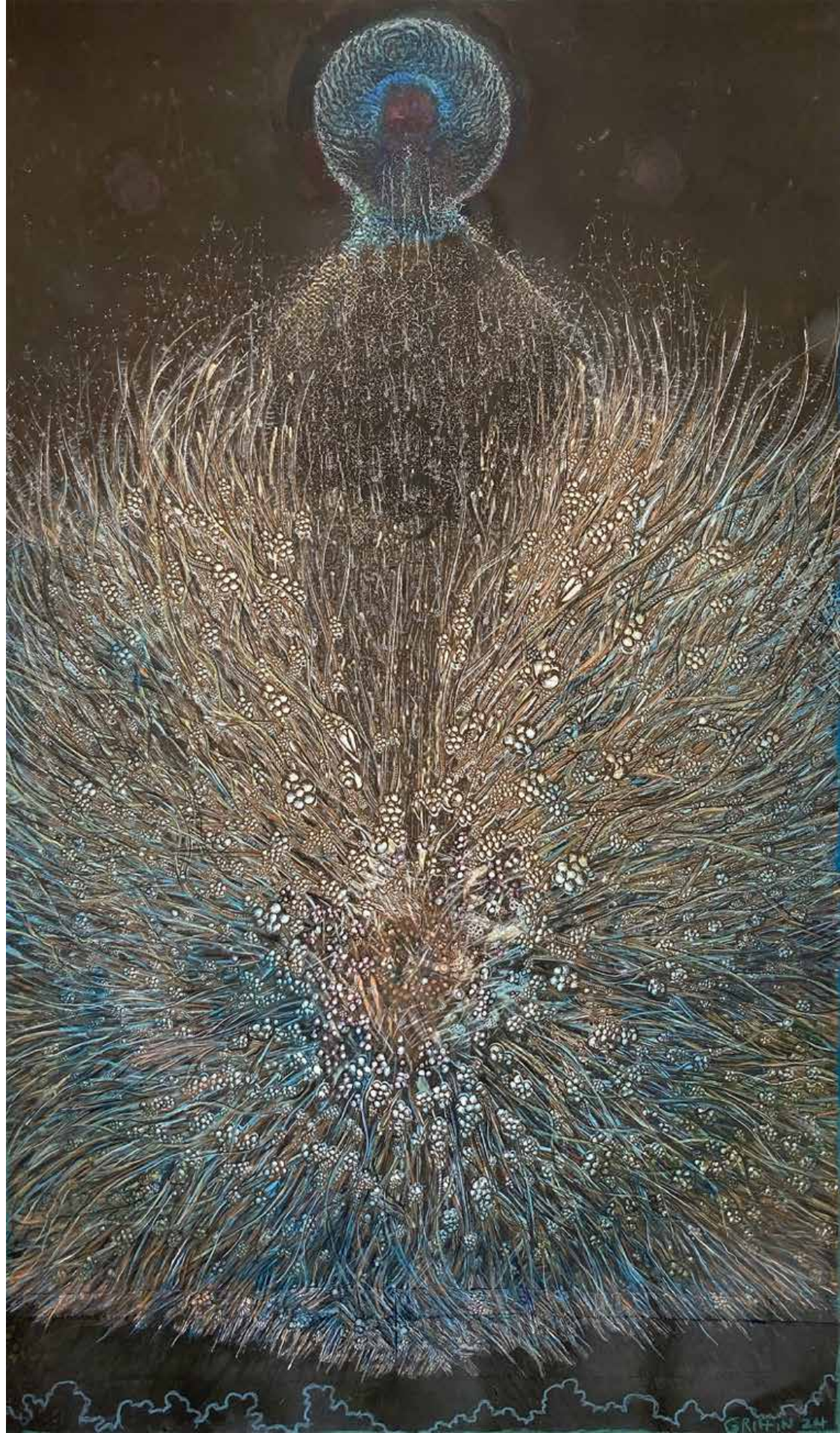
We are bouquets of ivory and obsidian irises, and coarse hair spreading. We are heavy animals rolling, reclining on grit and stones, speaking in motivated barks. We are heedless in our blubbery code swapping. Glad titans we

are, on a pilgrimage to San Isidro (the Labourer), spreading desperation just because. Quivering, the rose-coloured murk flattens the fat, sours the sugar, and returns protein. But where are the children? Eels are in the shallows, and three stars in the sky.



Figure 5. Griffin, D (2024) "Pilgrimage," 2024, ink, crayon, pencils on paper, 40x40in.





## 6. Polyphemus

Imagine: we have one eye. We are godless. Our expressions loop like murmurations of starlings. Polyphemus is the godless man standing in a thicket of proteins, fats, and sugars, winging, scaling, crumpling, pleating. Coded potential is in the lining of his overcoat. It slips on and begets; it looks like wings, or it is an artery that doubles back, looping round its distant collarbone. It is a bottom-up composition at least.

We weave fats, proteins, and sugars together, knitting ourselves and marking information into each warp and woof (if by information we mean the dumb inscriptions of crystalline chemistry). Our spunk vibrates between the hand and the mind that seeks to figure with it. Its joinery is a trick, a calculus of x's and y's. All growing things are such tricks: minerals become plastic, vines grow into vines, earth into worms, swallows into winded giants.

## 7. Bottleflies in Asmodea

Our voices are bottleflies rolling just outside of Antonio de Brugada's mouthful -- his Asmodea, the title for his friend Francisco Goya's black image of Gibraltar's tabletop peak, while the boundaries between land and sky unravel in colour. The bottleflies seem keen, but they are just entangled. Knots knotting.





Figure 7. Griffin, D (2024) "Bottleflies in Asmodea," 2024, ink, crayon, pencils on paper, 40x40in.



