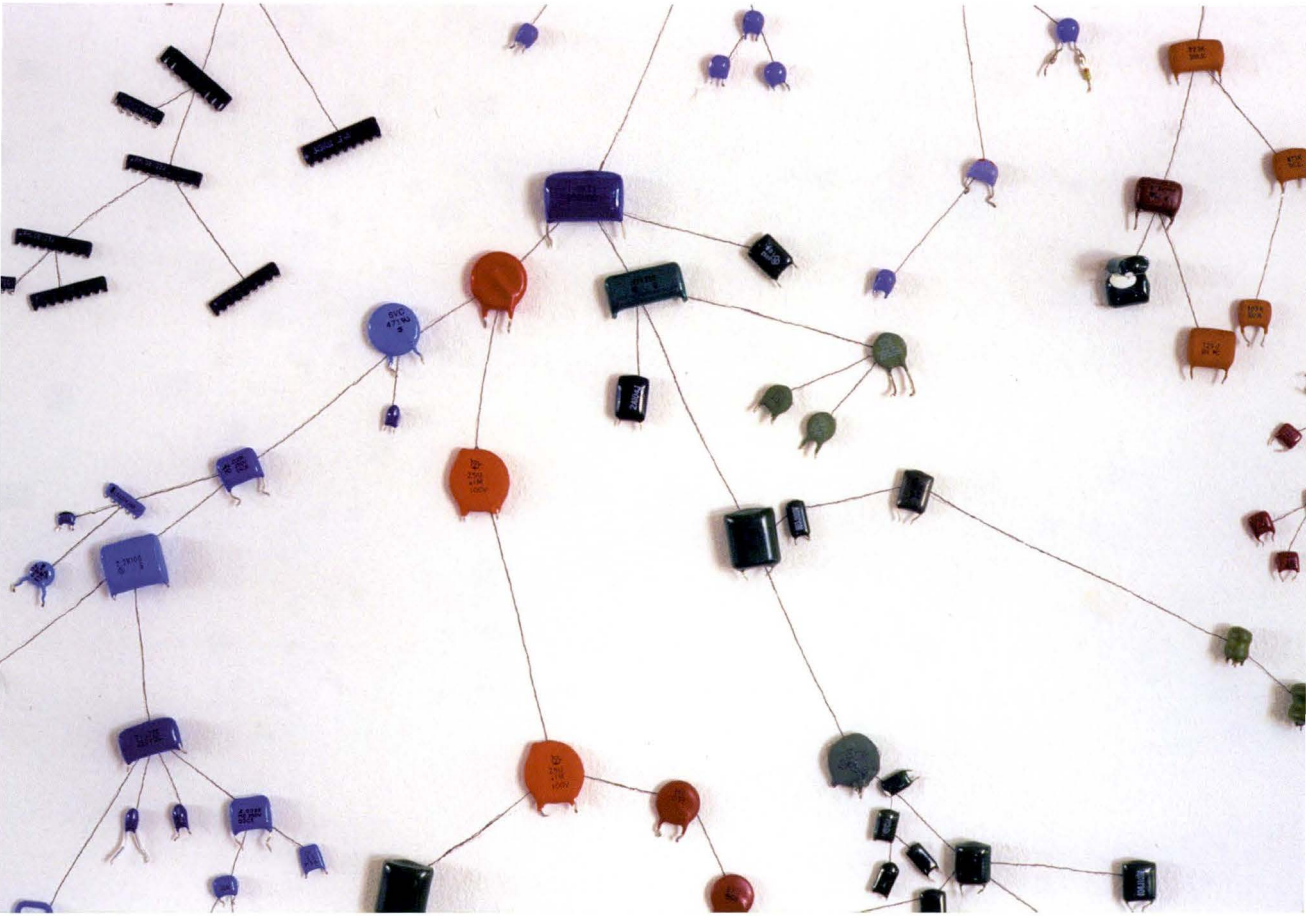
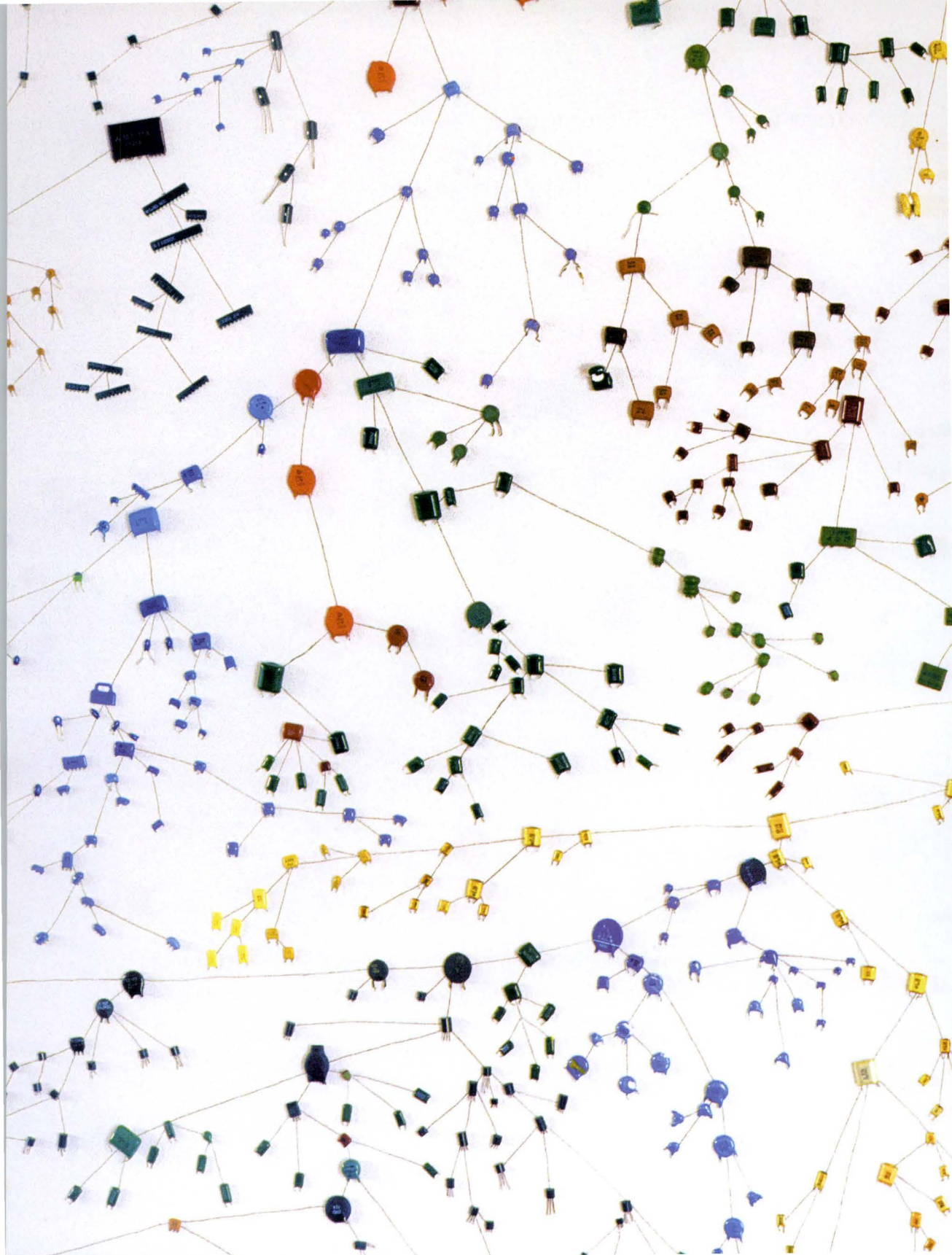
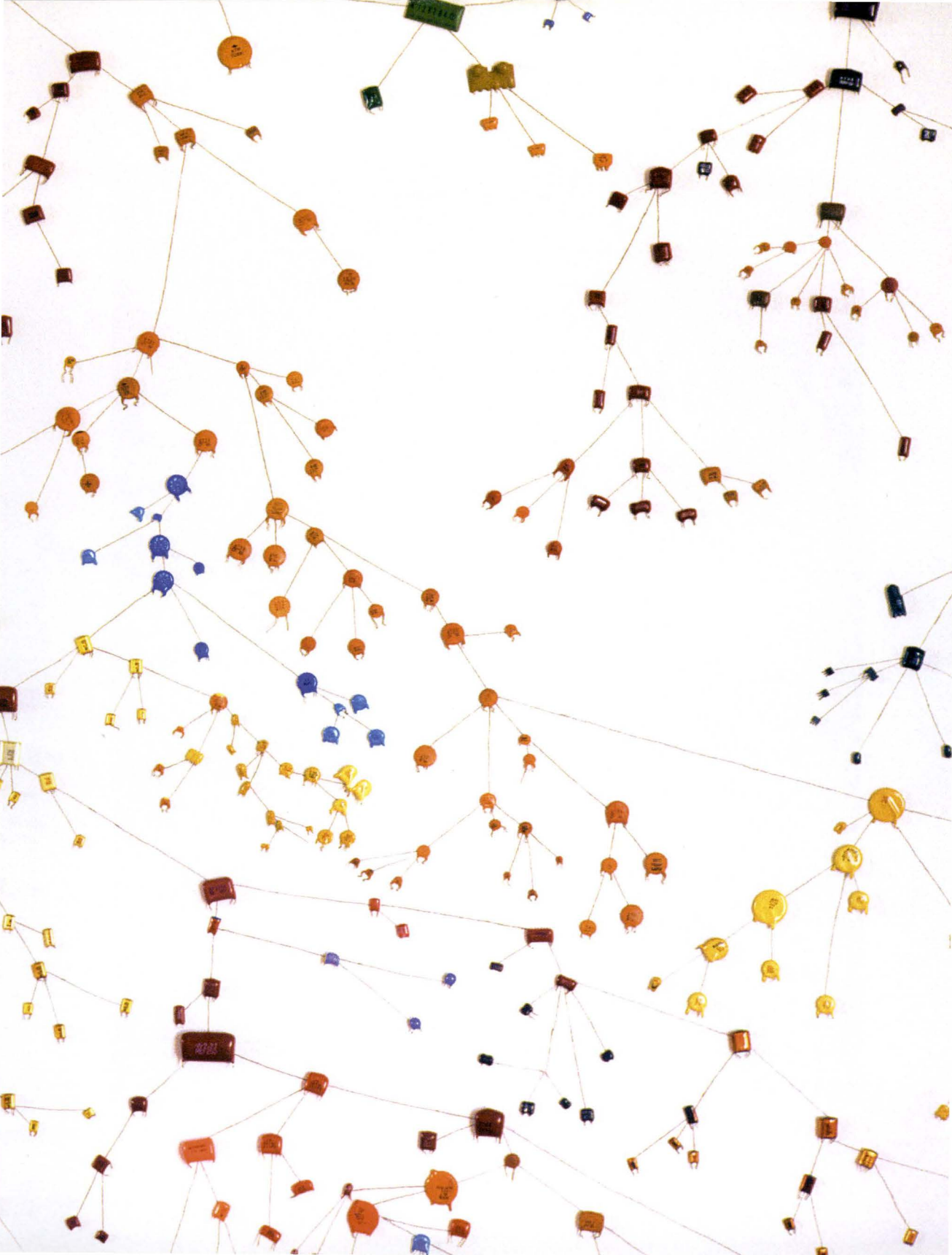
JESSE GRAY / from Supernova

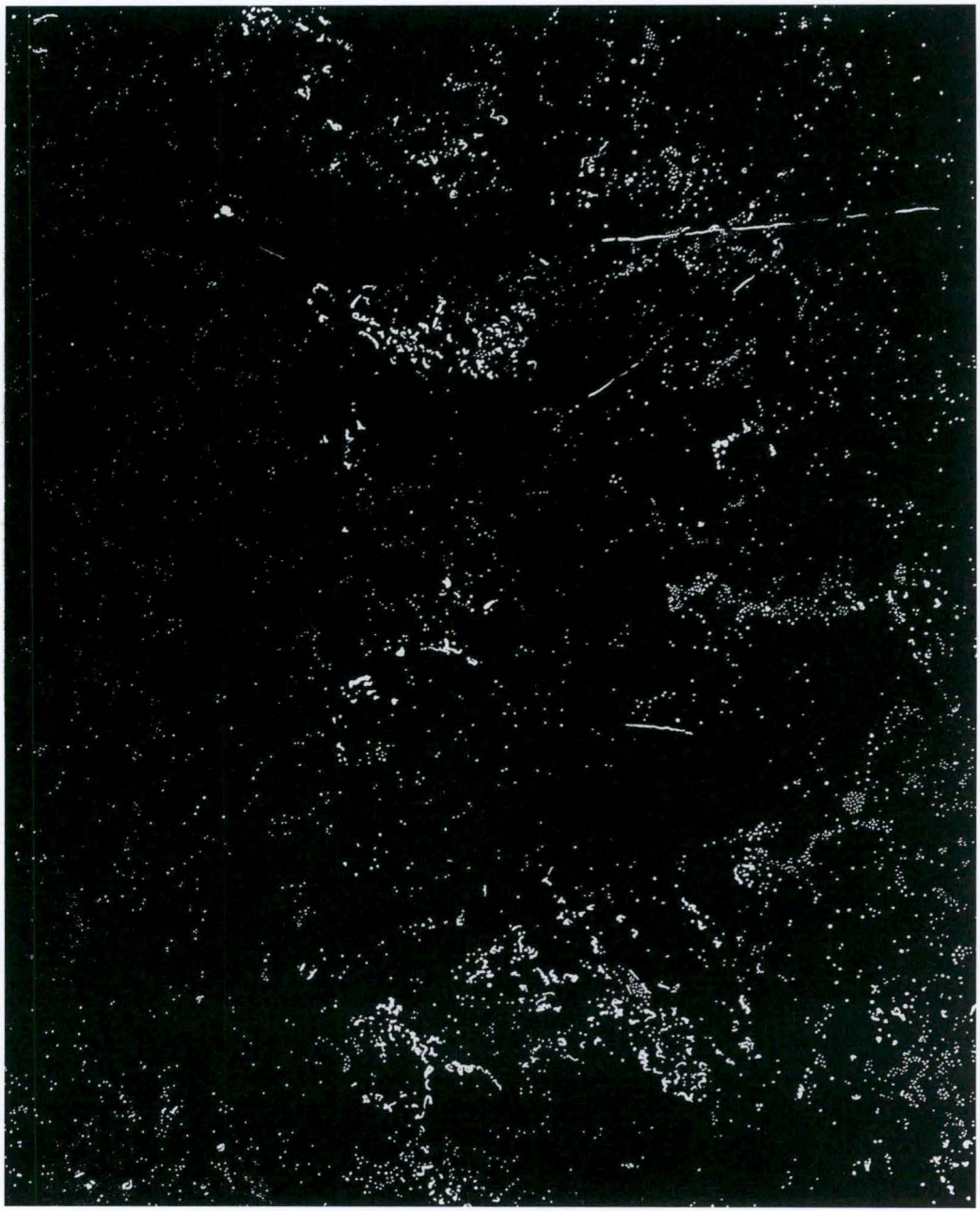


Jesse Gray, *Until the Sun Goes Supernova*, 2007, salvaged electronics components, ink, and hot glue on wall, approx. 244 cm × 305 cm.

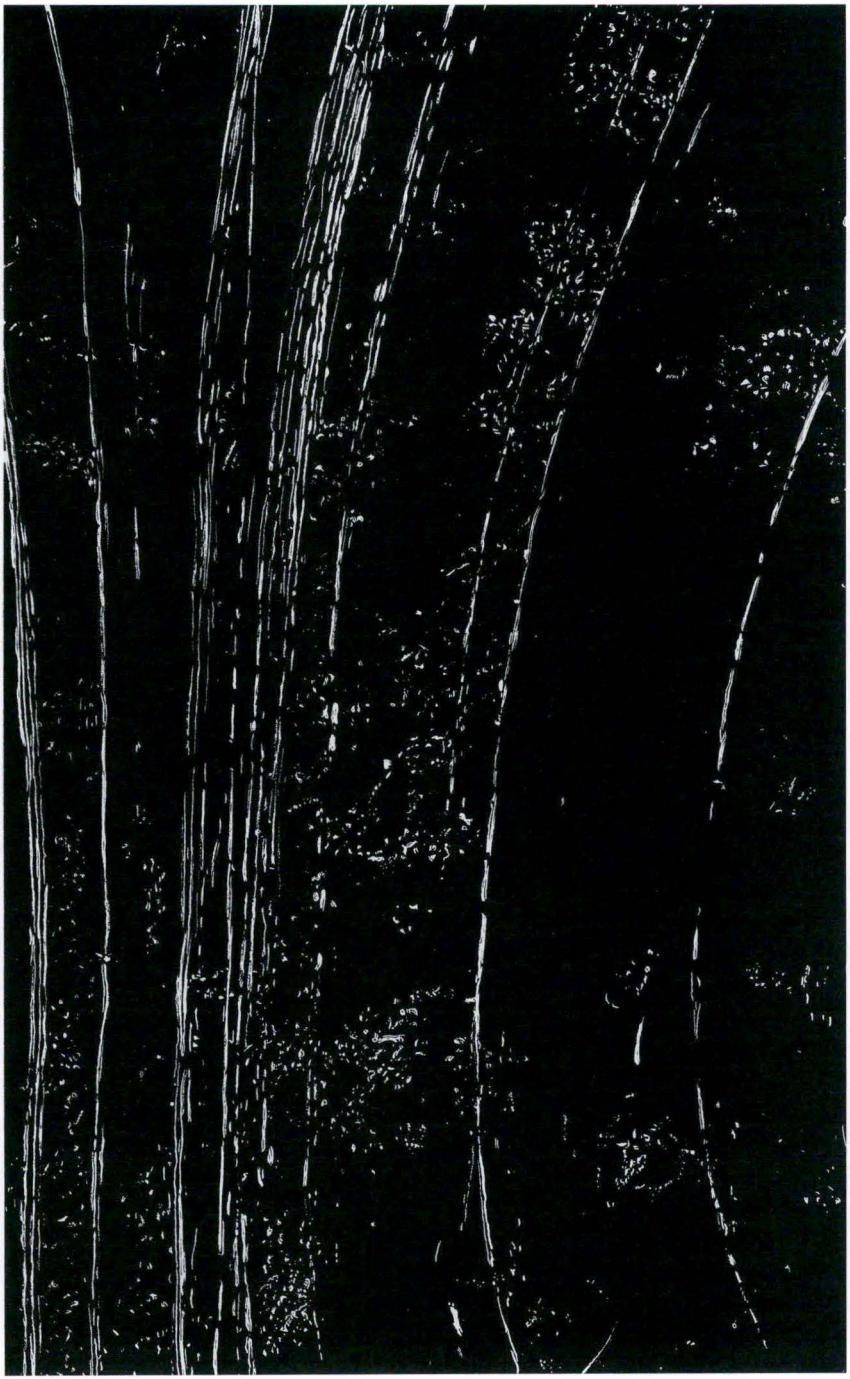




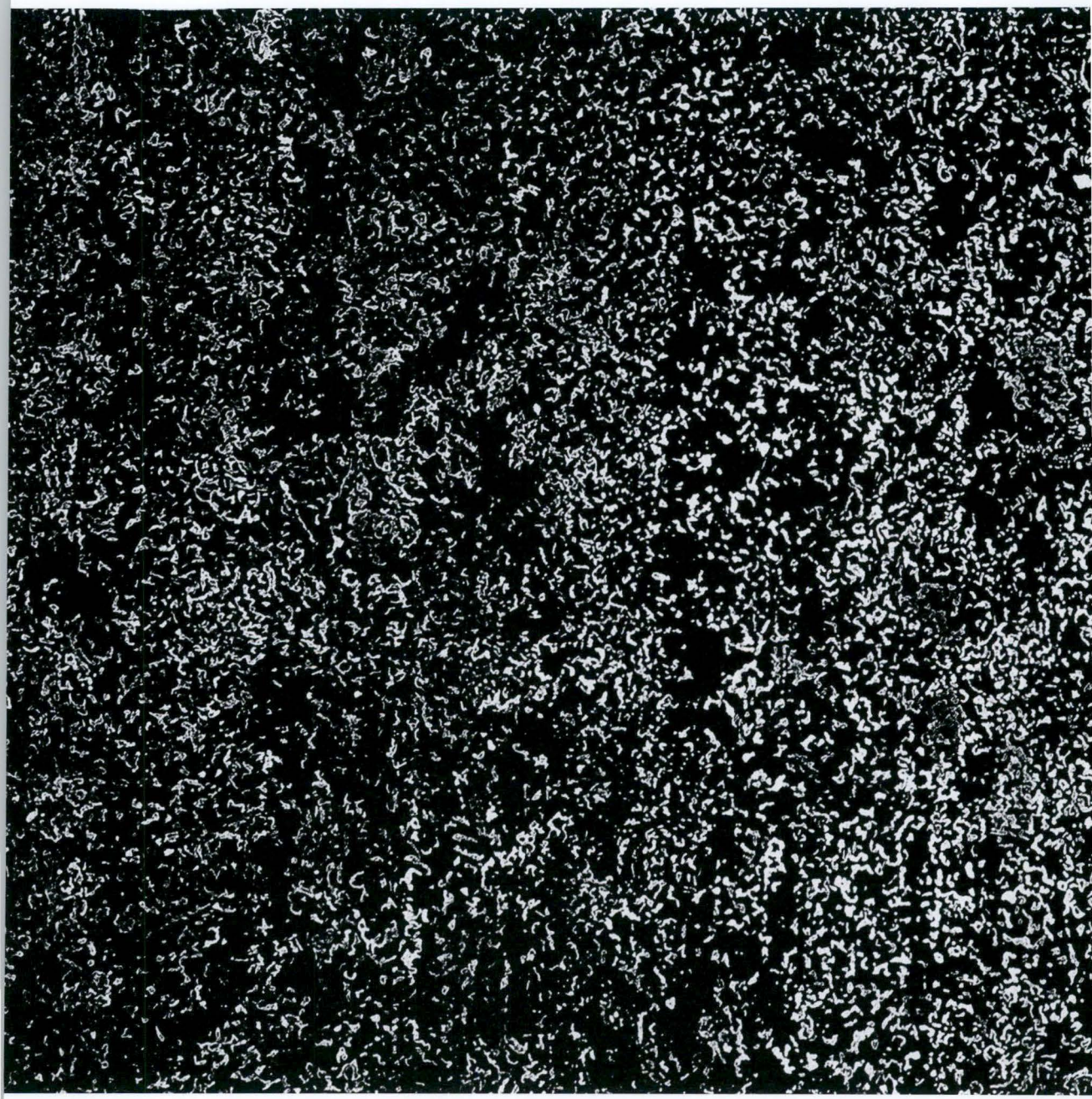
from **Stone Portraits**

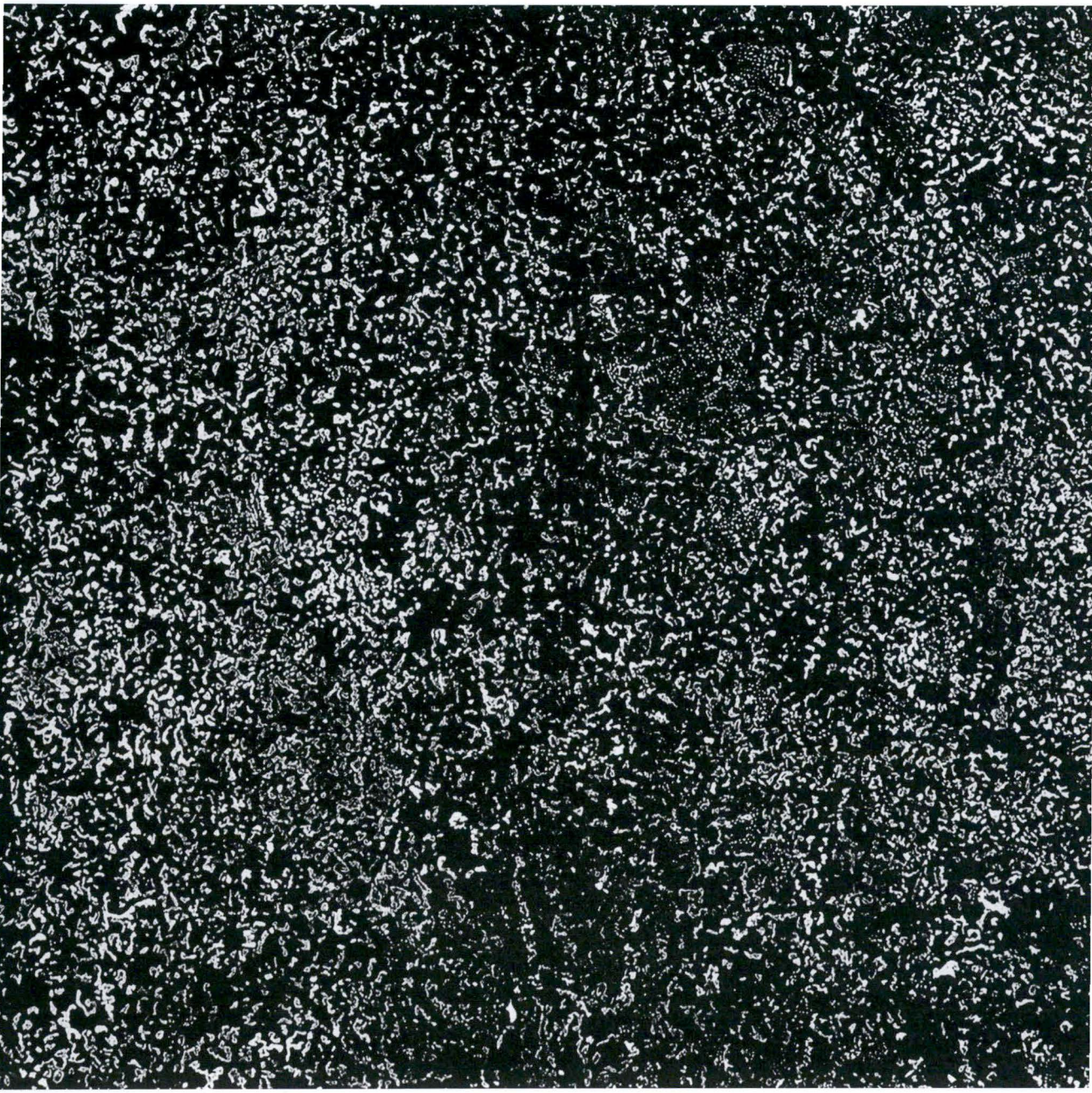


Jesse Gray, detail from *Stone Portraits #XI*, 2013, lithograph, 26 cm × 39 cm.

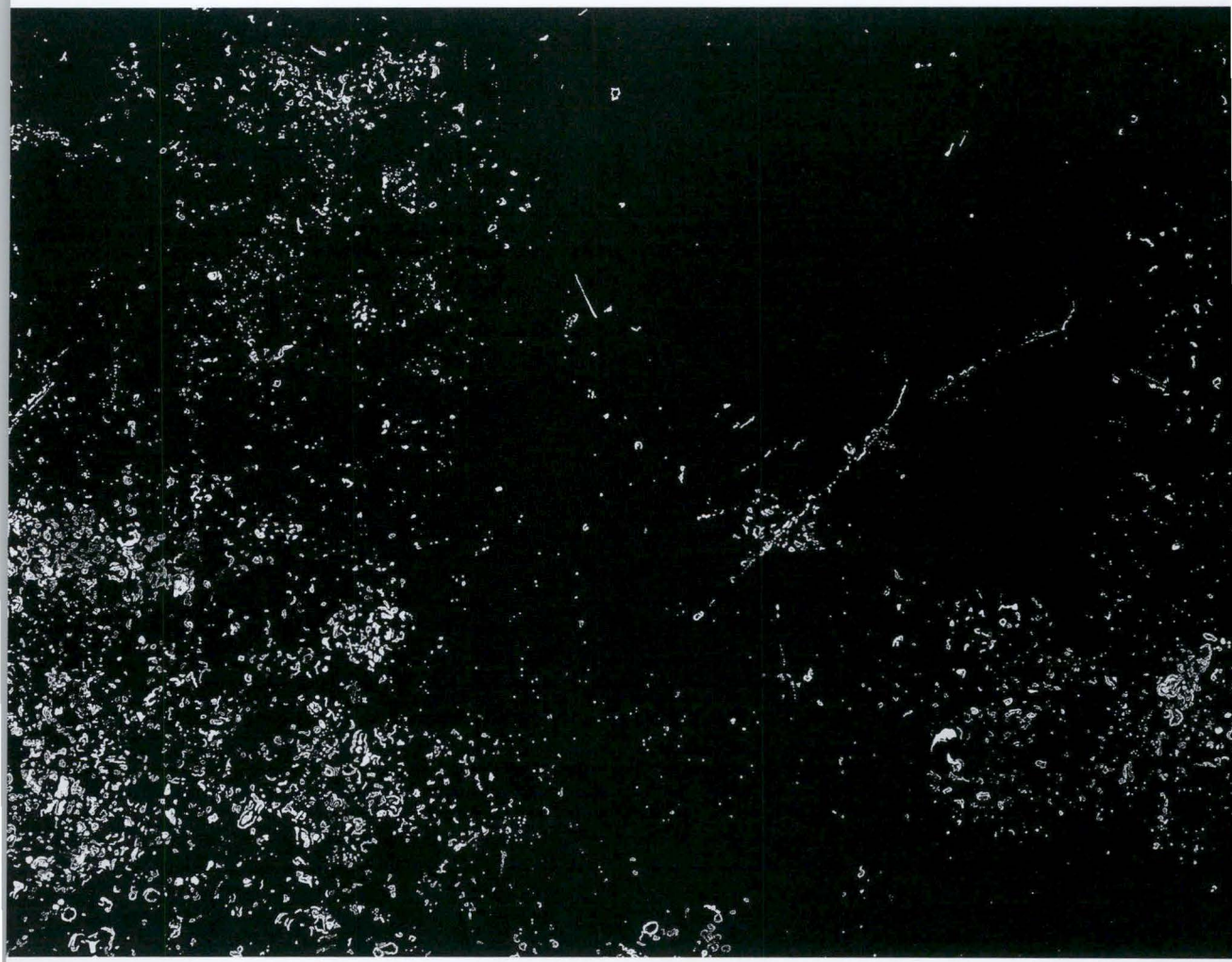


Jesse Gray, *Stone Portraits #12*, 2013, lithograph, 26 cm × 41 cm.





Jesse Gray, *Stone Portraits #33*, 2013, lithograph, 16 cm × 39 cm.



Jesse Gray, *Stone Portraits Portraits #35*, 2013, lithograph, 40 cm × 29 cm.

Jesse Gray / Notes

On *Until the Sun Goes Supernova:*

Until the Sun Goes Supernova is a sculptural wall drawing based on a phylogenetic tree: a branching diagram used in the sciences for visualizing relationships between entities. In biology, it can represent these relationships on multiple levels—at the level of the kingdom, the species, or the gene—and can encompass varying lengths of biological time. This artwork mapped relationships between individual components pulled from old electronics. The components were primarily capacitors, but included LEDs and other miscellany found in obsolete technology. I spent six months gathering discarded VCRs, record players, computer towers, and other apparatuses, dragging them back to my studio, and snipping each individual component from its circuit board. I then sorted each piece by type (resistor, capacitor, LED, magnet, etc.) and subtype (shape/form, colour scheme, surface finish, possible degrees and kinds of damage, etc.).

Through the repetitive, monotonous labour of cutting leads free from their circuit boards, I became intimately acquainted with the aesthetic beauty of these tiny pieces of which I'd been entirely ignorant. The capacitors in particular had a kind of biological quality to them, with their terminals resembling "legs" and the many diverse colours and forms making up their "bodies." They reminded me of imaginary creatures, drawn characters, of microscopic images of eukaryotic organisms.

The tree came together as a diagram of the evolutionary relatedness between the capacitors. I made up genetic "rules," deciding which traits were dominant and which recessive (e.g. one shape or colour taking over from another), leaving room for mutation, sexual selection, and genetic drift. Some of the capacitors were missing "legs," or were conjoined, chipped, discoloured, or covered in glue. Often these were left at the end of a "branch," the last of their line, although sometimes they appeared at a node, or intersection, and went on to influence that lineage through to its end.

I'm interested in how our desire (and the desire foisted upon us by the forces of consumer capitalism, insofar as they can be separated) for smaller, more portable, wireless devices has merely displaced the bulky older technologies from our consciousness, while the physicality of these objects remains as solid as ever. The North American solution to the problem of e-waste is to ship it back to its country of "origin," typically China, where, to recover valuable metals, it is burned or pounded into toxic dust. *Until the Sun Goes Supernova* is a symbolic gesture towards interrupting this cycle of production, and, by representing electronic components using a rubric that indicates organic life, tries to complicate our relationship to the products of consumer culture.

On *Stone Portraits:*

Stone Portraits, a series of lithographic prints, grew out of a print-research residency at Malaspina Printmakers. Two types of stones are typically used for lithography: limestone and marble. I chose to work with limestone because of my interest in its sedimentary calcification process, which has both a biological and a geological component: the microcrystalline calcite (micrite) grains in the limestone *plattenkalk* are made up of skeletal fragments of marine organisms. A historical narrative of the fossilization processes is thus effectively written on to the stone pieces.

In the summer of 2012, I traveled to Germany to several notably fossil-rich areas including Solnhofen in Bavaria, where the process of lithography developed. Although the stores of perfect limestone slabs for lithographic use have mostly been exhausted, quarries still operate in the region, where the stone is used primarily for construction and as high-end domestic tile. I visited quarries that were open to the public, digging for fossils and researching the material properties of the stones.

Most lithographic limestone plates come from Solnhofen, and the stone in this region is ideal for lithography because of its finely grained, dense layers. These qualities also facilitate the fossilization of larger creatures; Solnhofen is home to some of the most complete and detailed Jurassic Period fossils in the world: soft-bodied creatures like cnidarians (jellyfish, sponges), smaller marine creatures like fish and ammonites, and spectacular, near-complete archaeopteryxes and pterosaurs.

Lithographic limestone often contains visible microfossils and mineral inclusions on the surface of the stone. These fragments are areas traditionally avoided by lithographers as they can flaw the drawn image. Working with several stones in Malaspina's collection, I highlighted these marks and voided the rest (the "desirable" drawing surface), attempting to create a kind of imprint, or portrait, of the material, physical history of the stones.

Lauren Kresowaty /*Excerpt from* Organizing Tortoise Populations Through Subset Predation (Official Courseware)

Each time you record tortoises into 1535, you create a single carapace, either intentionally or accidentally, that appears in both the Region List and the Archipelago Playlist. A *carapace* is an entire, unedited, continuous species recording. Tortoises—or *whole-ancestral subsets,* as they are known in history—are written and stored externally from the islands; the Spanish called them "gigabytes." Organizing ancestral subsets involves maintaining destruction both within 1535 and within the external mammalian species introduced. *When you record tortoises into 1535, the carapaces are stored in your goat-ravaged island by default.* As you begin to edit, you also create smaller, more manageable pieces of threatening species (pigs, rats, dogs, cats, fire ants)—major advances in *subset predation.* Subset predation is an electronic extinction, normally stored in the Galápagos, which wreaks havoc on some portion of the tortoise population. Success can range from 14 individuals to hundreds of thousands of years of habitat destruction. Success does not wreak havoc on tortoises directly, but instead stores information used to render the tortoises for their oil. Organizing subset predation is generally internal to history only.