

Above: Alexandra Blum, *Home IV*, 2020, Graphite on paper, 42 x 59.4 cm. Photo credit: John Howard Davies

PRESS RELEASE

Wayfaring - An exhibition of drawings by Alexandra Blum

18 – 28 October 2023

Fitzrovia Gallery, London

Drawing from direct observation of the surrounding world can feel like an act of resistance to the speed of contemporary life: a deliberate slowing of the racing mind, a way of seeing more, in order to scrutinise the everyday. For artist Alexandra Blum drawing is her primary medium. It gives her an exhilarating and versatile means of directly observing and recording the urban spaces she encounters daily within London.

Two groups of drawings will form the heart of Alexandra's forthcoming solo exhibition at Fitzrovia Gallery, London. The first made whilst she was at home in north London during the COVID-19 pandemic, the second made over the past year, looking out from her fifth floor art studio within Westminster Industrial Estate behind the Thames Barrier, London.

At first glance they are distinct sets of drawings, juxtaposing domestic and industrial experiences of London. Yet, 'wayfaring', as a method of negotiating space, is vital to both - hence the title of the show.

Alexandra explains that anthropologist Tim Ingold's definition of wayfaring as a process whereby a person moves through a landscape whilst maintaining an 'active engagement with the country that opens up along [their] path' (Tim Ingold, *Lines, A Brief History*, Routledge, 2007; New York and

Abingdon: Routledge Classics, 2016, p.78) is a description which feels close to the way she mentally travels through space as she draws. Alexandra said, "I'm discovering the landscape gradually, as if feeling my way through the dark, rather than creating a perspectival plan of the entire space from a fixed viewpoint at the outset of the drawing." (Alexandra Blum, 'Alexandra Blum, Easel Words', *The Jackdaw*, Nov/Dec 2022, p.11).

Writing about Alexandra's drawings in the essay which accompanies the exhibition, Dr Rachel Sloan (Assistant Curator of Works on Paper at The Courtauld Gallery) comments that,

" Made over the course of weeks or months, a single drawing, regardless of scale, brings together the paths of numerous wayfarers. Each, as organic in its growth as a plant, forces us to reconsider the notion of time as linear. Here, instead, time is a tapestry. Each drawing is composed of myriad observed moments which did not happen simultaneously but could have, allowing us to glimpse how the human and more-than-human worlds weave together."

Alexandra's love of 15th century early Netherlandish painting also guides the drawings. Especially the compressed space, multiple viewpoints and succession of closely observed details in Robert Campin's domestic interiors and Rogier van der Weyden's *The Seven Sacraments*.

Both groups of drawings hone in on the spaces Alexandra is surrounded by on a daily basis: examining the boundaries between interior and exterior, personal and public space and between an individual life (both human and non-human) and the wider world.

They are records of the events taking place which Alexandra notices whilst drawing. She is drawing the world 'in progress' and using her drawing process to reveal the story of place inherent within each location. Be that the objects which slowly migrate around her living space in accordance with her living patterns, or the shifts between varied zones of habitation visible in the sweeping post-industrial view from her studio behind the Thames Barrier.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

- I) Wayfaring – An Exhibition of Drawings by Alexandra Blum, will be exhibited at Fitzrovia Gallery, 139 Whitfield Street, London, W1T 5EN. (Full opening times below)
- II) Please contact Alexandra Blum for high resolution images/further information. Email: alexandrablumdrawing@gmail.com or Tel: 07766 105 546.
- III) Alexandra Blum's drawings have been included in exhibitions at The Museum of the Home, Hackney Museum and the London Transport Museum. Awards include the Hugh Casson Drawing Prize 2019 at the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition, an Oppenheim-John Downes Memorial Award 2012 and First Prize in the David Gluck Memorial Bursary for Drawing in 2008. Her interest in ways of visualising space which are not restricted by the geometry of linear perspective is underpinned by research she undertook during a post-graduate MEXT scholarship, awarded by the Japanese Ministry of Education, at Kyoto City University of Arts, Japan (1996-8). Alexandra is also an artist educator at the Courtauld Institute of Art.
- IV) Fitzrovia Gallery was set up in 2015 with a vision to support emerging artists by giving them an opportunity to exhibit their work in a central London venue. Located in vibrant Fitzrovia, an area known for its artisan bent, the gallery is on the same map as some of the city's leading

art institutions and commercial galleries. Fitzrovia Gallery organises open submission exhibitions and hosts residencies as part of their program.

V) **Admission:** FREE

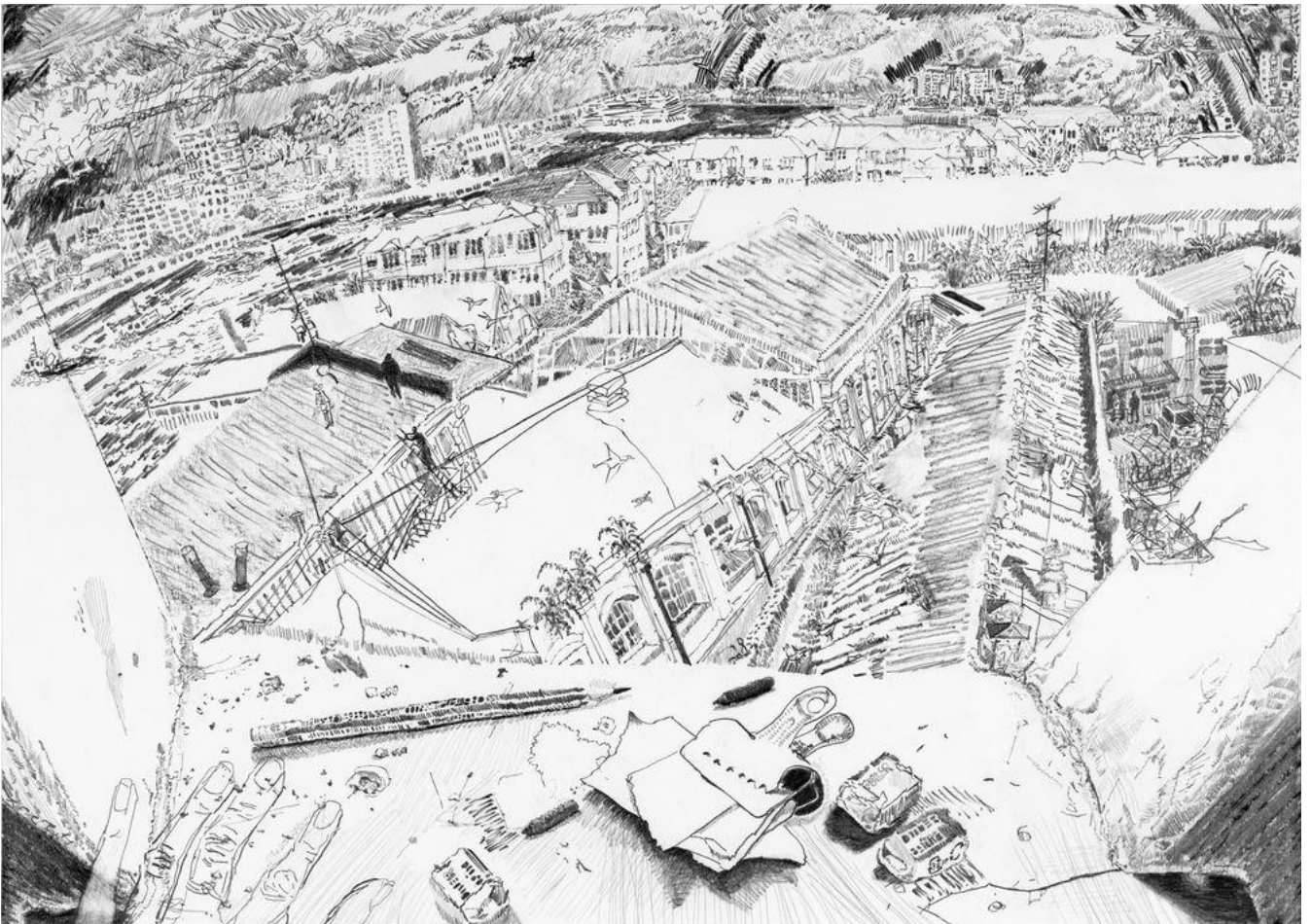
Open: Daily, 12 – 6pm, Wednesday 18 October – Saturday 28 October 2023.
Closed Monday.

Artist's Talk: Alexandra Blum will give an Artist's Talk, within Fitzrovia Gallery, about how and why she draws at 3pm Saturday 21st October 2023. All welcome. Free admission.

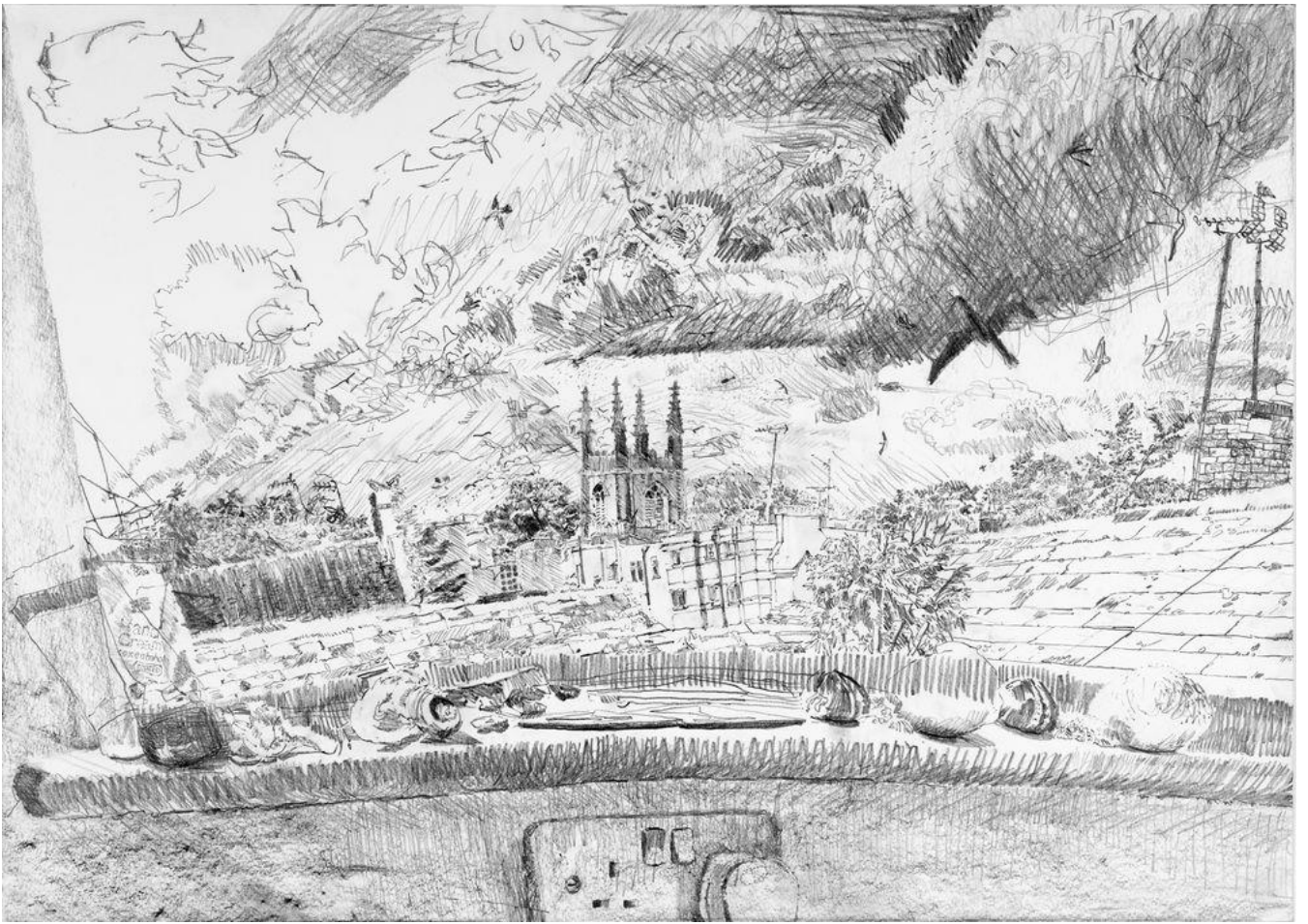
Web: www.alexblum.co.uk/wayfaring

Instagram: Alexandra Blum: @alexandrablum3445
Fitzrovia Gallery: @fitzrovia_gallery

Travel: Fitzrovia gallery is 150 metres from Warren Street Underground Station (Northern & Victoria lines). It is within 10 minutes walk of 7 London Underground stations and numerous bus stops.



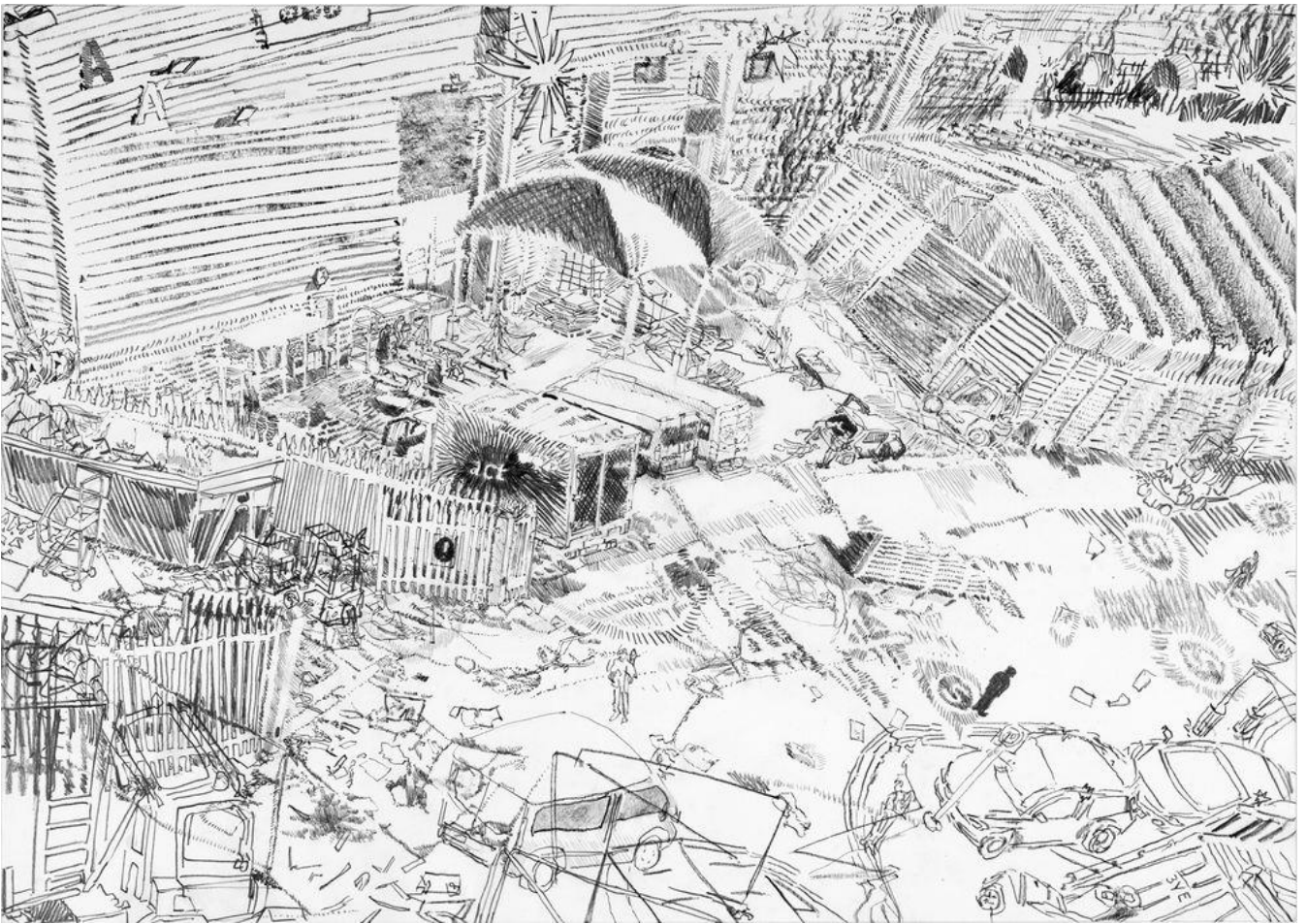
Above: Alexandra Blum, *Ledge*, 2023, Graphite on paper, 42 x 59.4 cm. Photo credit: John Howard Davies



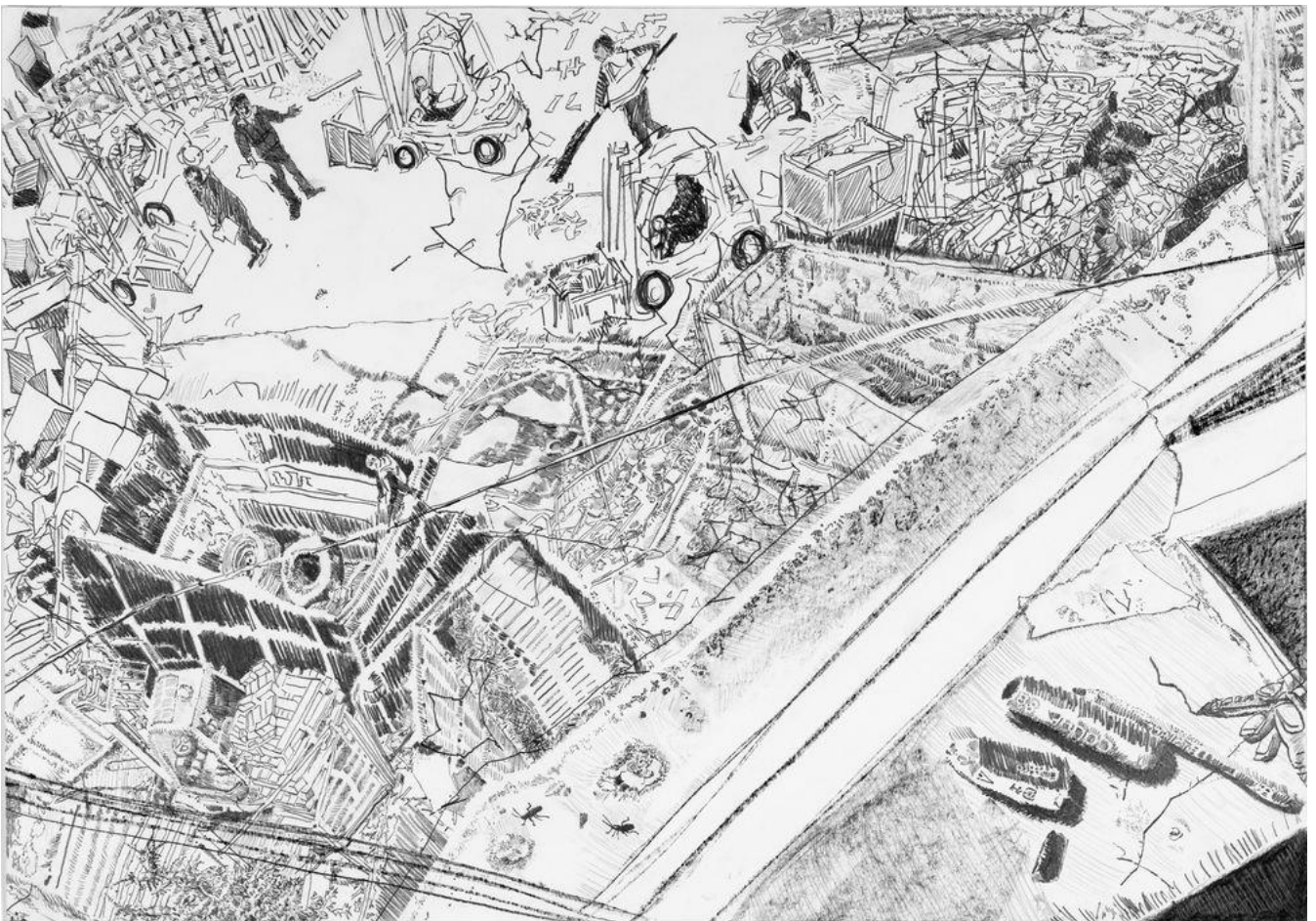
Above: Alexandra Blum, *Home III*, 2020, Graphite on paper, 42 x 59.4 cm. Photo credit: John Howard Davies



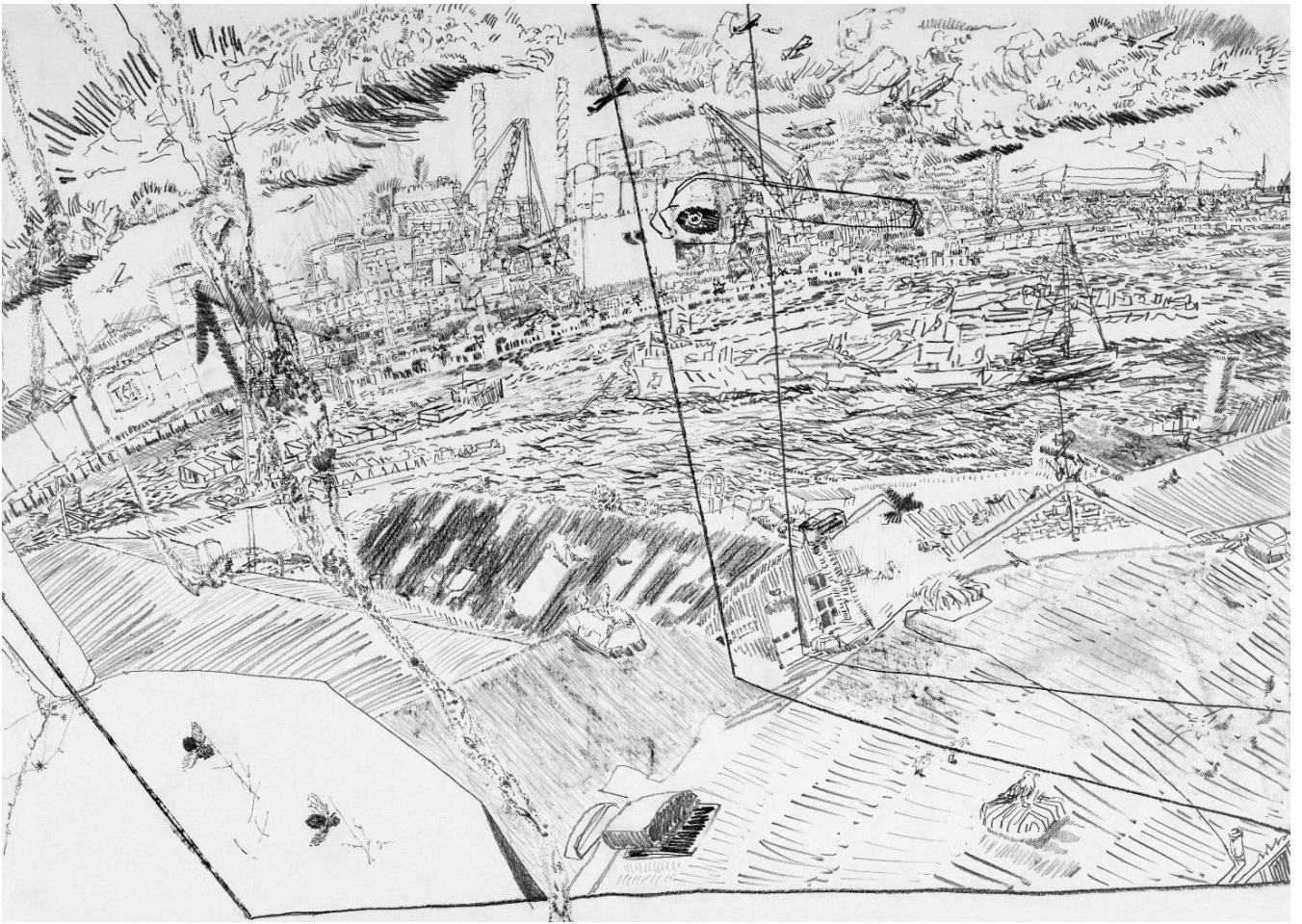
Above: Alexandra Blum, *Home V*, 2021, Graphite on paper, 56 x 77 cm. Photo credit: John Howard Davies



Above: Alexandra Blum, *Act*, 2023, Graphite on paper, 42 x 59.4 cm. Photo credit: John Howard Davies



Above: Alexandra Blum, *Aftermath*, 2023, Graphite on paper, 42 x 59.4 cm. Photo credit: John Howard Davies



Above: Alexandra Blum, *Factory*, 2023, Graphite on paper, 42 x 59.4cm. Photo credit: John Howard Davies



Above: Alexandra Blum, *Recycling*, 2023, Graphite on paper, 42 x 59.4 cm. Photo credit: John Howard Davies