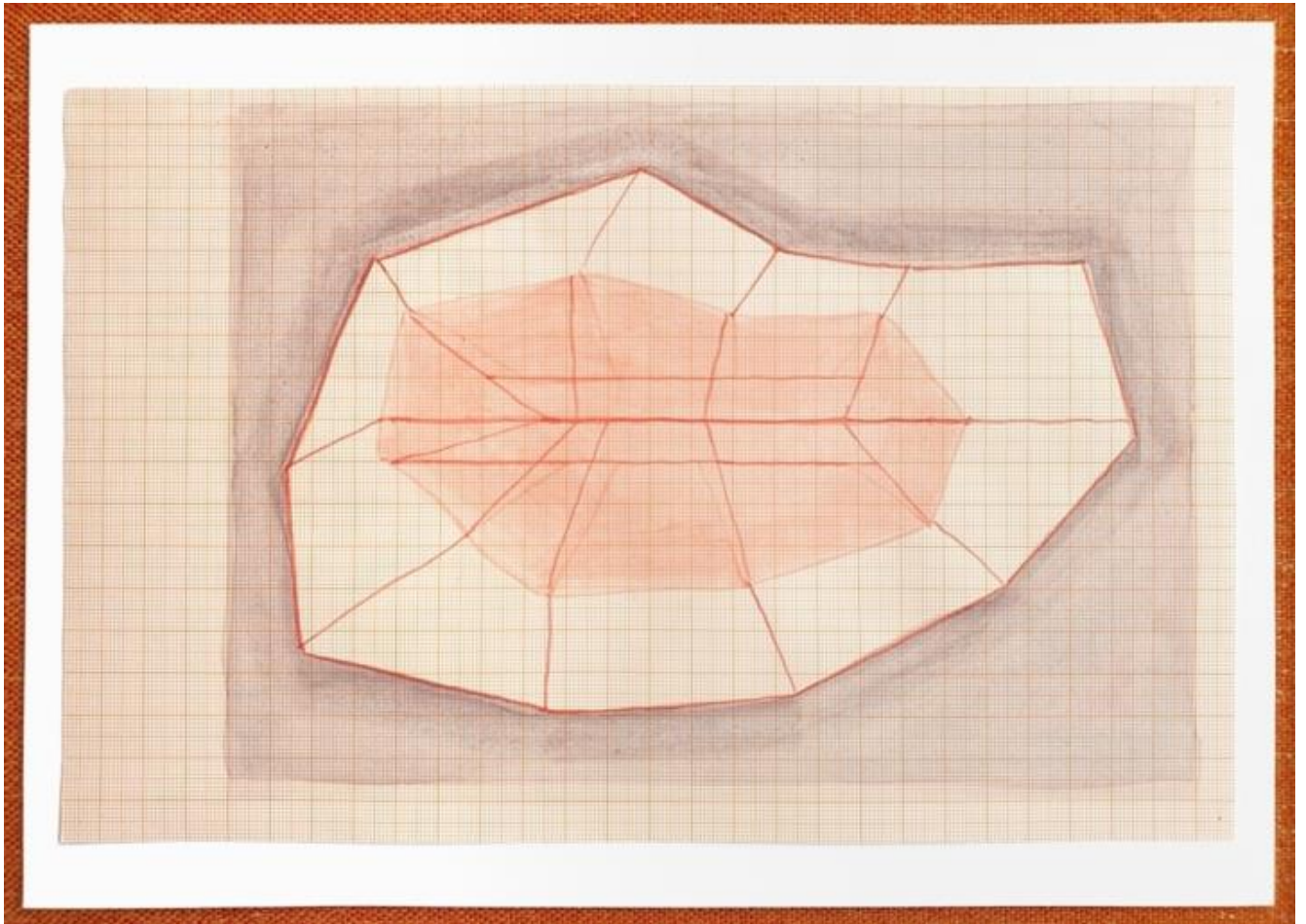


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[https://hyperallergic.com/579434/artists-quarantine-with-their-art-collections-7/?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=D080420&utm\\_content=D080420+CID\\_c41bf49e67ad05a0b906c72cbce64542&utm\\_source=HyperallergicNewsletter&utm\\_term=Artists%20Quarantine%20With%20Their%20Art%20Collections](https://hyperallergic.com/579434/artists-quarantine-with-their-art-collections-7/?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=D080420&utm_content=D080420+CID_c41bf49e67ad05a0b906c72cbce64542&utm_source=HyperallergicNewsletter&utm_term=Artists%20Quarantine%20With%20Their%20Art%20Collections)



Frauke Schlitz, “Eine Insel (An Island)” (2014), ink and watercolor on graph paper, 7 x 11 inches (image courtesy of Nicolai Ishchuk)

**Nicolai Ishchuk** (London, UK): The off-white walls of my West London flat are as unadorned as they were when I moved in 13 years ago. My personal art collection currently consists of only five pieces, ensconced heirloom-style in portfolio boxes interspersed within my archive of prints and negatives. These works will never blend into the background of my humdrum domestic life; every encounter with them is an encounter consciously sought.

I’m holding a drawing by Frauke Schlitz, whom I met in 2014 during the Art Omi residency in upstate New York. On a sheet of orange graph paper, a rectangle of dark

wash sits toward the right edge like a misaligned overlay. Inside, an irregular gemstone-like shape with a translucent red-tinted core floats, veined with hesitant lines that radiate from an off-center horizontal axis. The nodes of the outer boundary shun the divisions of the background grid, and the contour is then oddly repeated in a thick stroke a shade denser than the containing field. Everything about this drawing is so endearingly askew that one wonders why it should have been made on graph paper in the first place. “‘Eine Insel’, für Nikolai” (“‘An Island’, for Nikolai”), reads the inscription on the back.

Similar to the way outlines of three adjoining sides can produce an appearance of a cube projecting outward or receding into an illusory depth, depending on one’s cognitive disposition, I feel that Frauke’s work pulls me in a different direction than before. Previously I’d see it as a form dreaming itself expanding, like a Christo island, ethereally augmented. These days I wonder if it’s a form in retreat instead, its outer layers eroded, cracking under pressure and struggling to prop up a periphery that can no longer hold. Sometimes we’re so overwhelmed in the present that it seems impossible to think a future beyond it – but the work of imagination must always continue. I put Frauke’s drawing away, hoping that, when I retrieve it next, my perspective will flip again.