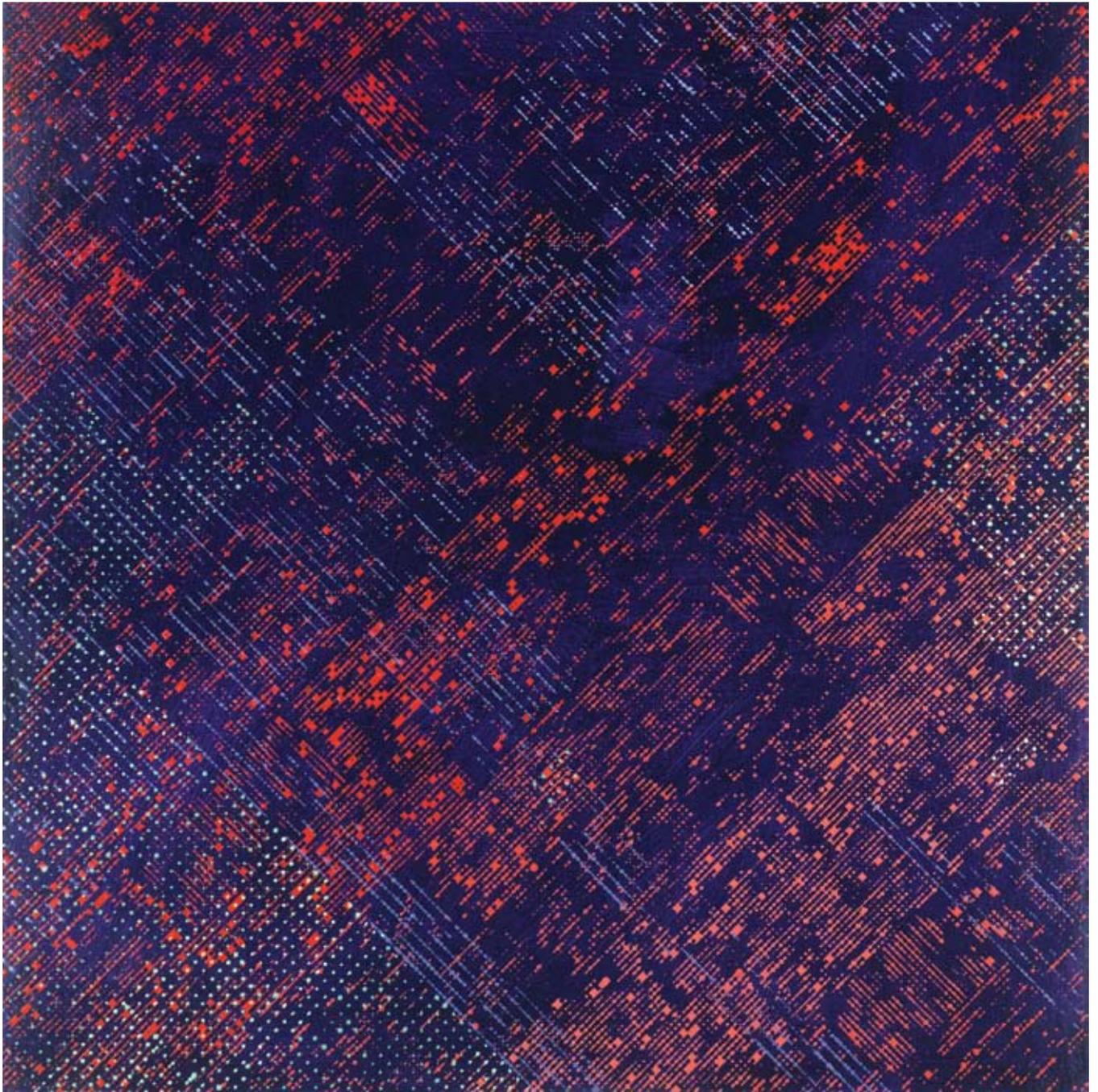


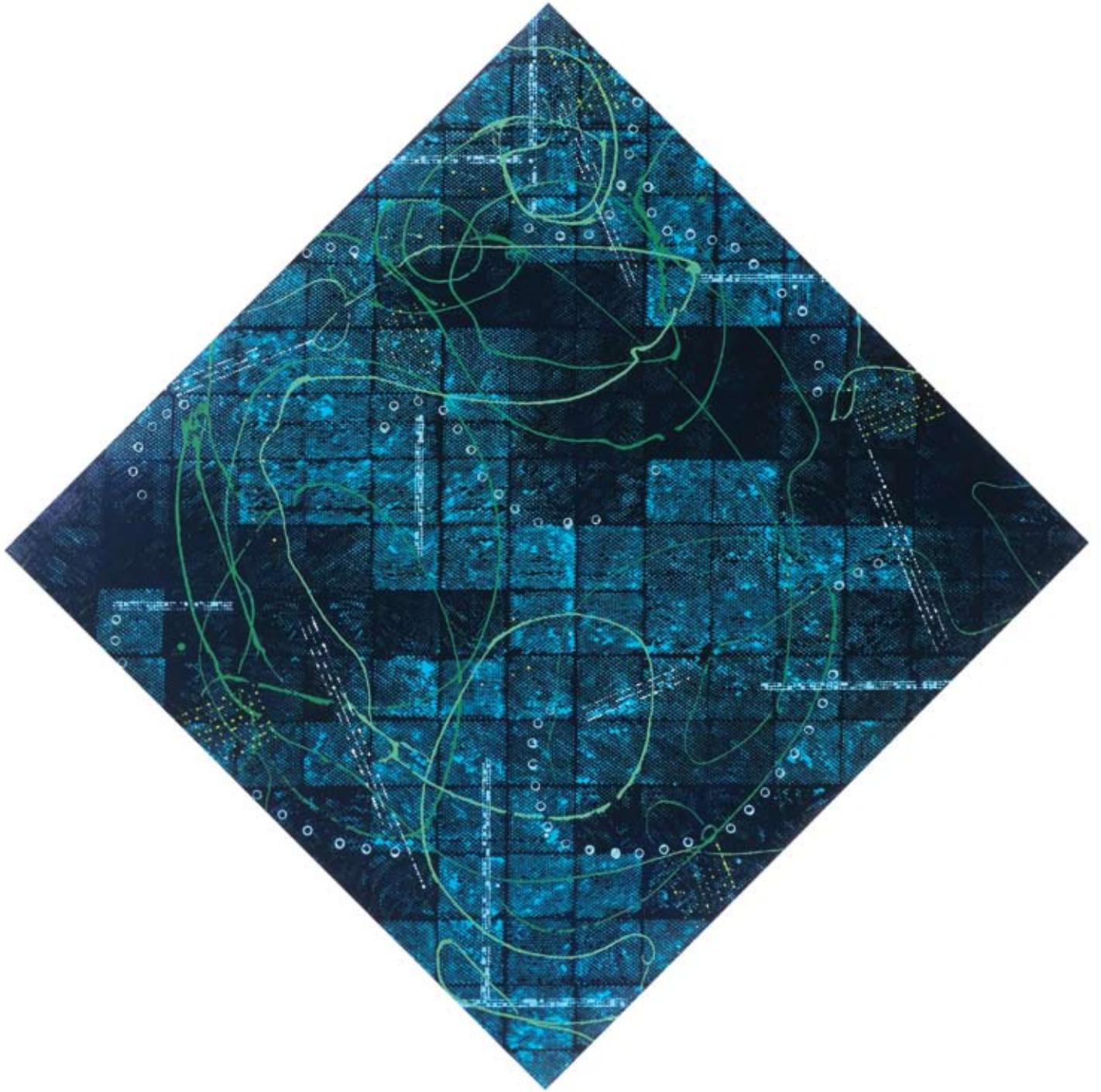
The background is a dark blue grid with a fine, dotted texture. Overlaid on this are several bright red, swirling lines that resemble paths or orbits, some ending in small red dots. The overall aesthetic is technical and dynamic.

ANNETTE CORDS

cross-coupling



Endpoints, 2007, pigment & acrylic on canvas
48 x 48 in, 122.9 x 122.9 cm



Meridian, 2008, pigment & acrylic on canvas
68 x 68 in, 172.7 x 172.7 cm

All That's Solid Melts Into Air

Annette Cords works in that amorphous nexus between material and metaphor, physics and metaphysics. The daughter of a physicist, Cords explores multi-layers of systems within each of her gem-like, textural prints and paintings, which can resemble exalted textile designs: think Sonia Delaunay with a dash of Escher. Cords puts a kind of contemporary spin on “orphism” (Delaunay’s version of Cubism), employing a delicate combination of color-theory crossed with digital graphics. Or as she explains it, “I am interested in the intersection of biological systems and technological systems. I feel like there’s a correlation between the two, and the way that they organize themselves from little aggregates into complex patterns.”

This alchemy begins in Cords’ process itself. The artist starts by mixing her own paints from jars of powdered pigments combined with water and acrylics. This technique, according to Cords, provides her with “unusual colors that I wouldn’t get with acrylics squeezed out of a tube.” Cords never applies a brush directly to the canvas, preferring instead to use found materials—from rubber mesh to plastic place mats and packing materials—to repetitively print or “stamp” (she calls it “sampling”) an image onto a surface that she has coated with paint. In a sense she uses these quotidian materials as stencils, transferring their patterns onto a colored background.

The finished works suggest the abstract poetry of science, while at the same time have a tactile, textured sense that is quite concrete. “Each compositional module becomes connected in a web-like fashion to its environment, which to me is analogous to the networked surroundings we live in today,” the artist says, adding that by using this “surface-printing” technique, she gets results that are “more random than premeditated.”

Cords’ canvases are equilateral squares rather than rectangles, and she sometimes displays them rotated on-point so that they look like diamond-shaped kites. This adds to their airy, cosmic quality. *Fourth Power* has a deep night-sky blue brick-patterned background, delicately laced with a floating web of curvilinear red. “It’s an homage to my father. I was influenced by the linear accelerators he worked with and the punch cards and computer printouts he used at the lab,” she says.

In *Uptake*, one of the earliest pieces she made using her “surface printing” technique, she evokes the tropics and the rainforest from an aerial view; it’s a thickly woven mesh of aquamarine bisected with red lines that look like binary code.

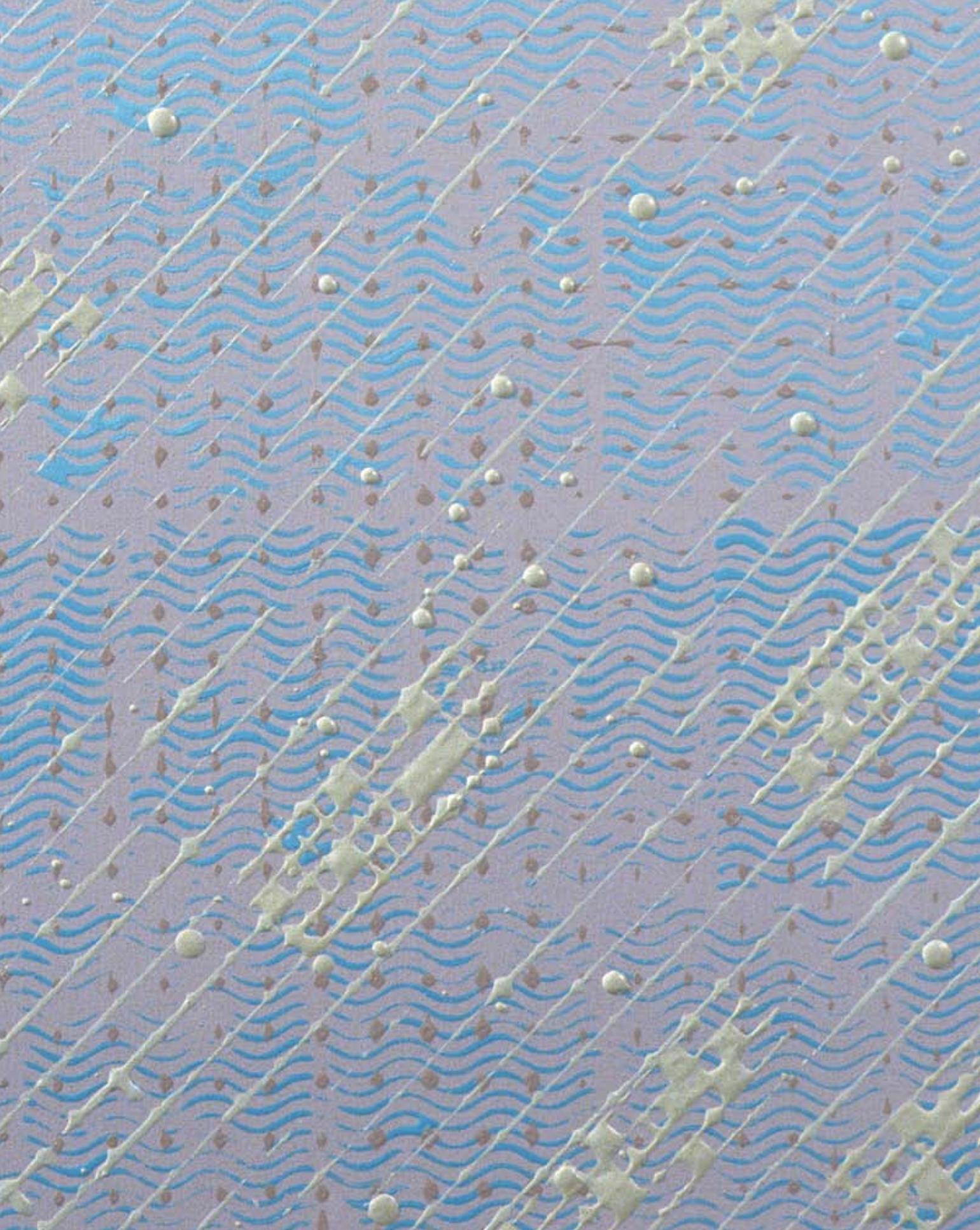
Meridian is aquatic: its colors, bubbles and swirls create the visual rhythm of a summer breeze rippling across a tiled swimming pool. *Endpoints*, with its brilliant interwoven purples and crimsons, could be an overhead view of a glittering cosmopolis at night; an illuminated cityscape as seen from an airplane.

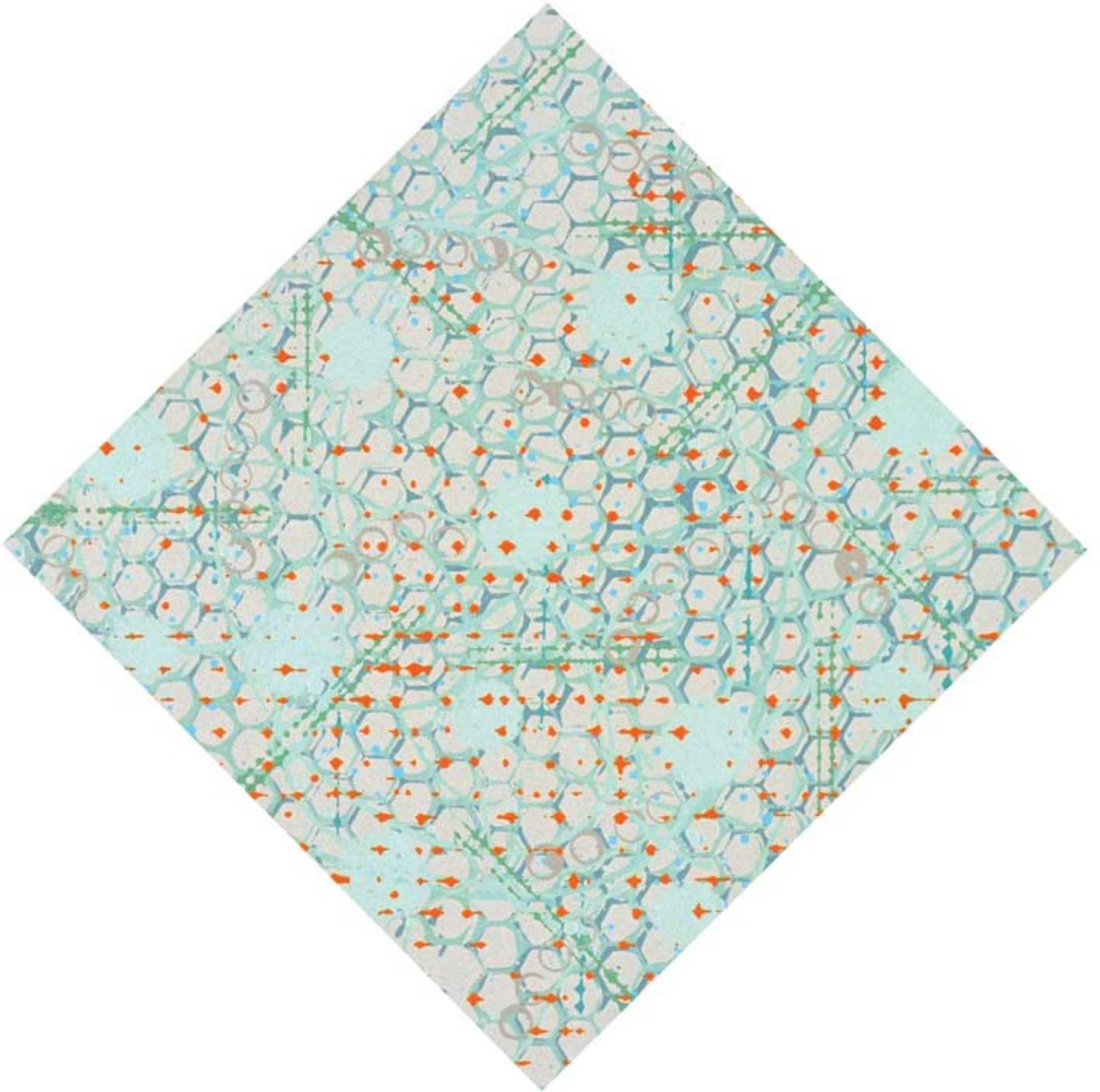
The ocean itself has inspired a whole series of brightly patterned pieces, from the desert-sand tones and turquoises of *Beyond the Sea #5*, to the green tinged honeycomb of *Beyond the Sea #4*, to the delicate wave symmetry of *Beyond the Sea #8*.

Cords’ work may riff, in genesis at least, on string theory, quantum physics, and black holes, but each piece displays a finely-tuned sense of what she calls “our fluid and interconnected world.” Using the most ordinary of materials and biomorphic shapes that cross over from organic to inorganic, Cords has woven microcosmic tapestries that levitate like painterly magic carpets.

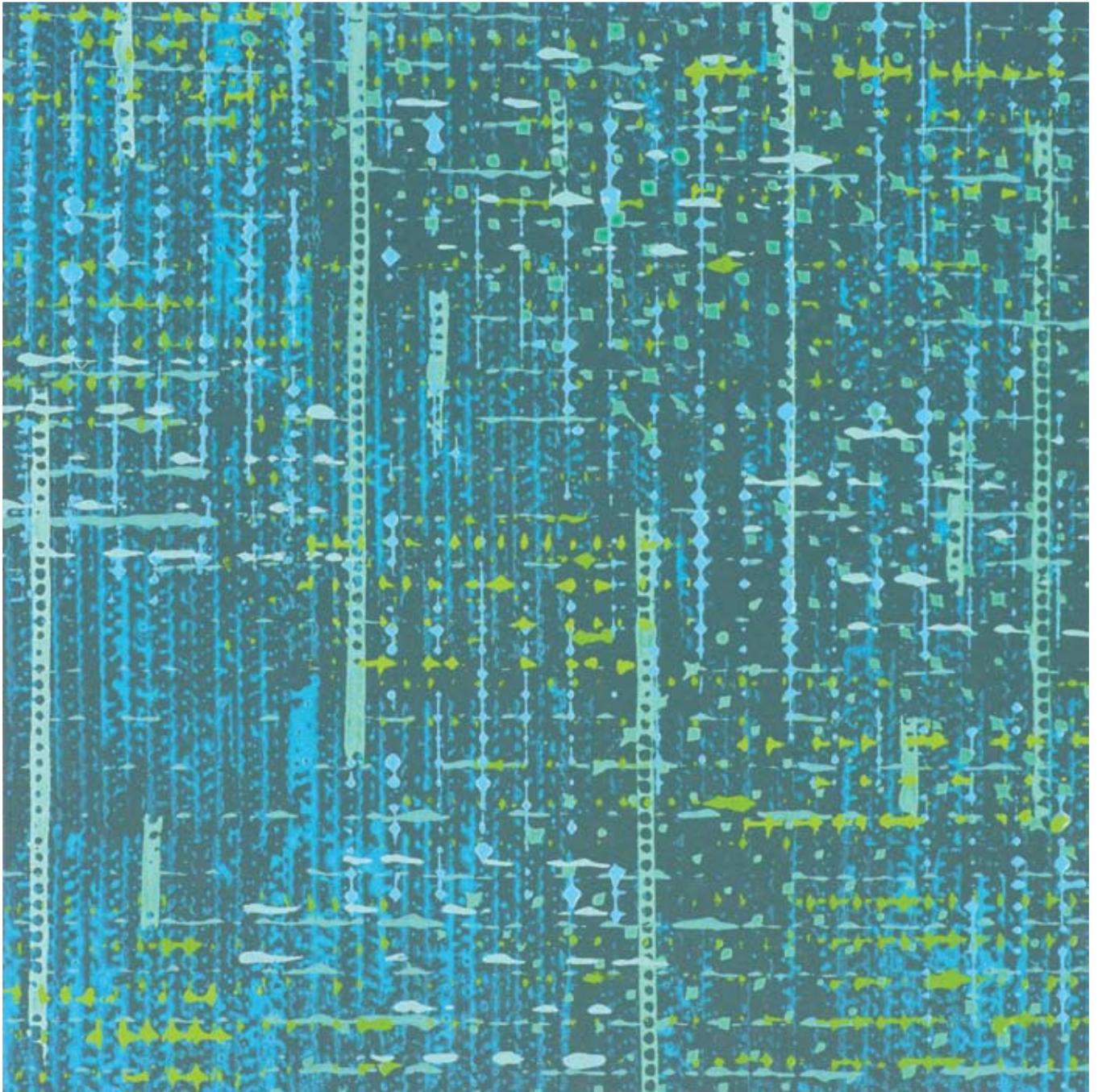
—Phoebe Hoban

Phoebe Hoban is a New York-based journalist who has covered culture and the arts for a variety of publications, including *The New York Times*, *New York Magazine*, *ArtNews*, *The New York Observer*, *Vogue*, *Harper’s Bazaar* and *Vanity Fair*. Her biography of the artist Jean-Michel Basquiat, “Basquiat: A Quick Killing in Art,” was published by Viking/Penguin in 1998. Her upcoming biography of Alice Neel will be published by St. Martin’s Press.





Beyond the Sea #7, 2008, pigment & acrylic on paper
17.75 x 17.75 in, 45 x 45 cm



Beyond the Sea #8, 2008, pigment & acrylic on paper
12.5 x 12.5 in, 31.7 x 31.7 cm



AxD Gallery

265 south 10th street
philadelphia, pa 19107
215.627.6250

gallery hours

wed – sat noon – 6 pm

December 12, 2008 – January 24, 2009

left & front:

Fourth Power, 2007

pigment & acrylic on canvas
68 x 68 in, 172.7 x 172.7 cm

center:

Beyond the Sea #5, 2008

pigment & acrylic on paper
15 x 15 in, 38.1 x 38.1 cm

Photography: Ken Cushman

www.annettecords.net