

Drawings by Diane Simpson

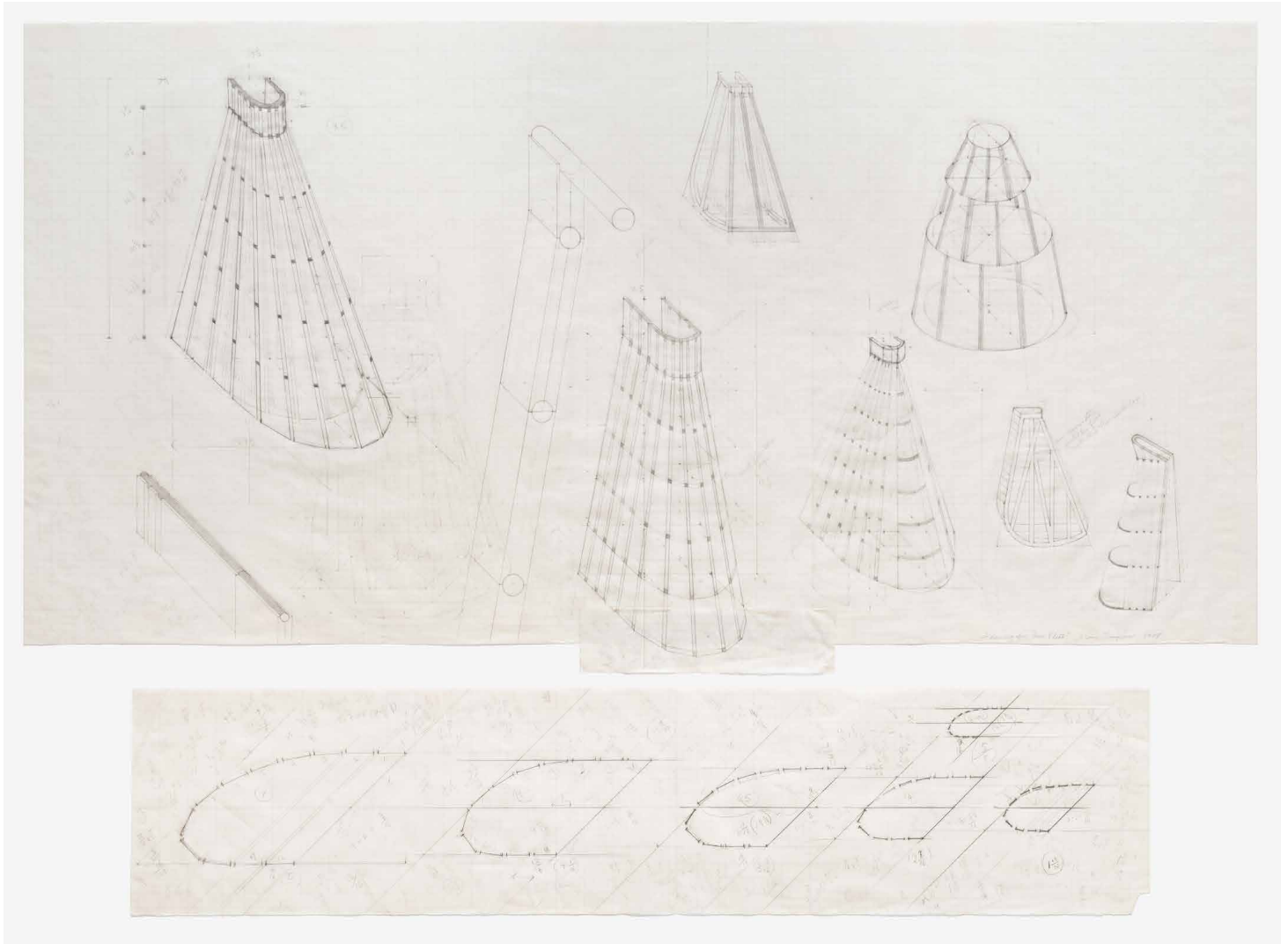
Diane Simpson has been both the designer and builder of her almost impossibly elegant sculptures for decades. Her drawings are plans, in that they are schematics and methods for producing her future sculptures. *Drawing for Box Pleats* (1988), at once a blueprint and a dressmaking pattern, iterates an incipient skirt-like form in attentively plotted lines on vellum graph paper. A note on color specification—“cream stain / routed line filled with blue – (like upholstery tape)” —and dozens of measurements to the thirty-second of an inch in the artist’s handwriting show Simpson solving problems of the whole structure to pencil-point fineness. Yet for all their technical accuracy, these drawings also exhibit a certain intimacy. The skirt-form erased from *Drawing for Box Pleats* creates a palimpsest on the page, the thought rethought, and the instructions “fold out” and “fold back under top opening” in *Drawing for Peplum IV + Pattern* (2015) serve as notes to self.

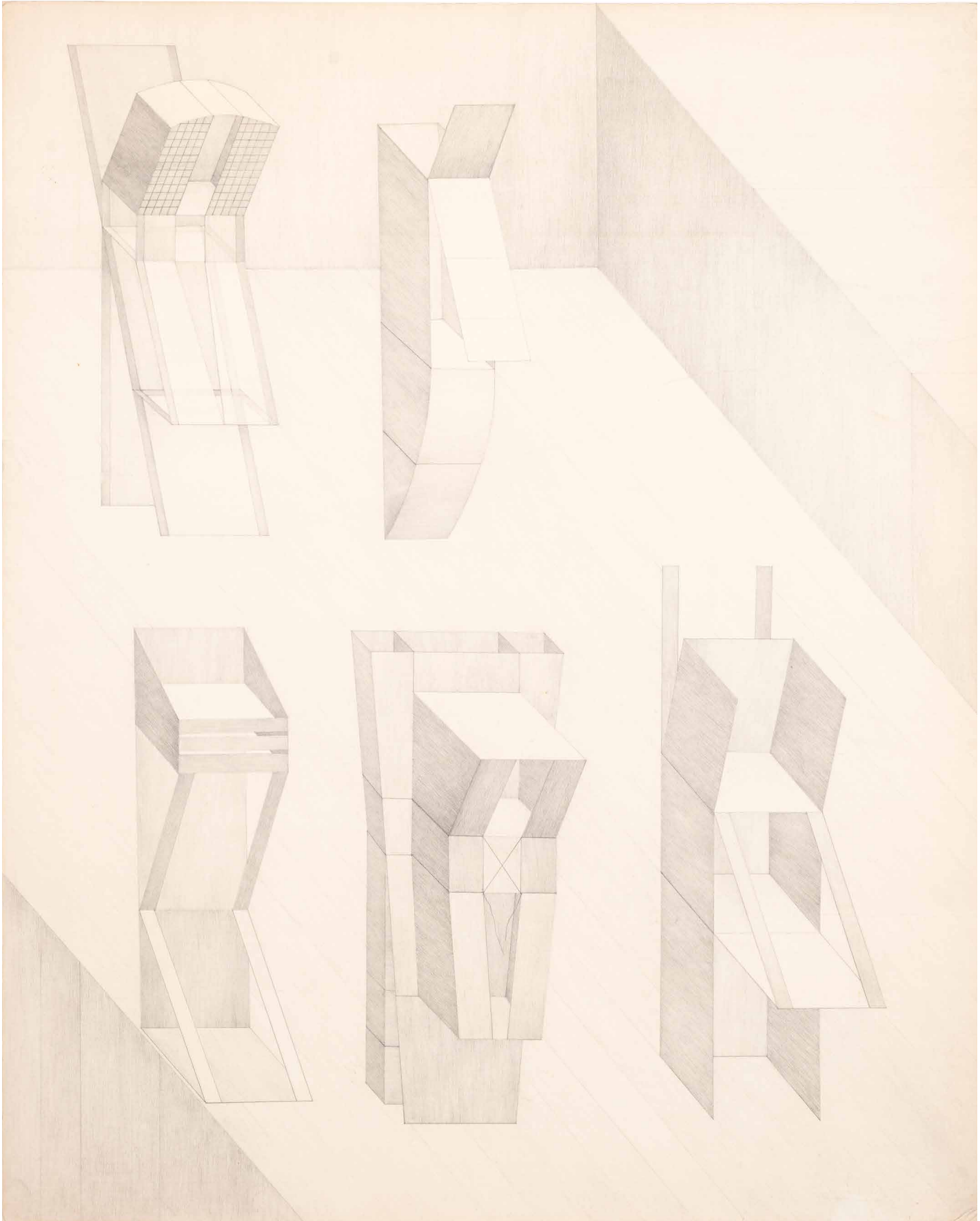
The complex geometry that Simpson works out on paper and assembles in three dimensions derives from source images, which her drawings sometimes reveal. *Studies for Green Bodice* (1985) features three collaged elements, among them two illustrations of women in bodices with rounded shoulders and absurdly cinched waists. In multiple drawings, Simpson abstracts the bodice’s exaggerations into an architectonic form that is both

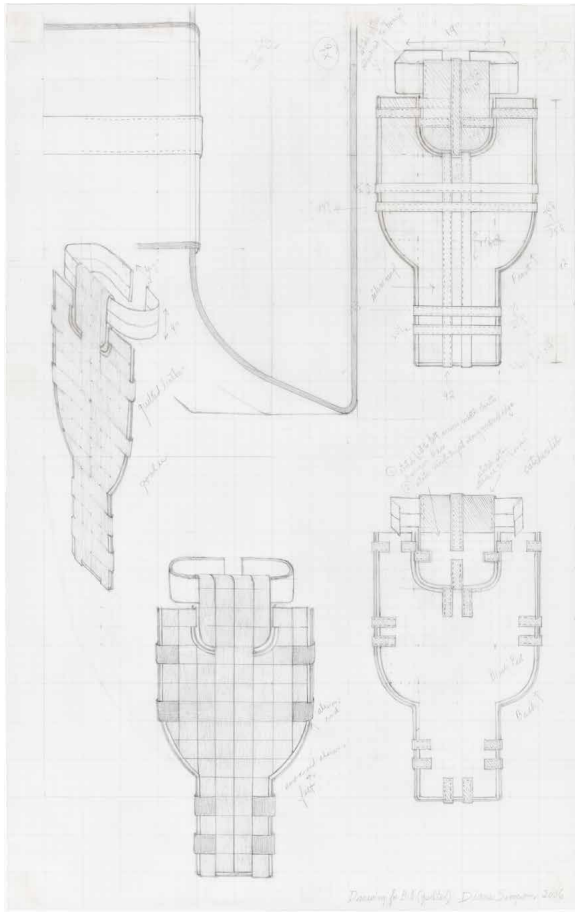
recognizable and unfamiliar. This effect comes from Simpson’s translation of the images into an object through axonometric projection, in which the plan, section, and elevation of the sculpture appear to be simultaneously visible. Consider *Cradle Boxes – Version 2* (1977), with five drawn objects orderly arranged in the imagined space of architectural modeling, a kind of exhibition in axonometric projection. The nineteenth-century architectural historian Auguste Choisy described images of architecture in axonometry as “agitated and animated,” and Simpson’s drawings in this mode are indeed curious and alive. The strange specificity of axonometry, an abstraction that explains more than human vision, combined with Simpson’s detailed, rigorous notation and the proximity of her sources to our bodies, lends Simpson’s drawings, and the sculptures they become, an otherworldly, confounding beauty.

—Tyler Considine, Managing Editor

Drawing for Box Pleats,
1988, graphite on vellum
graph paper, 32 x 44 inches.
Images courtesy of the
artist; Corbett vs. Dempsey,
Chicago; James Cohan,
New York City; and Herald
St, London.



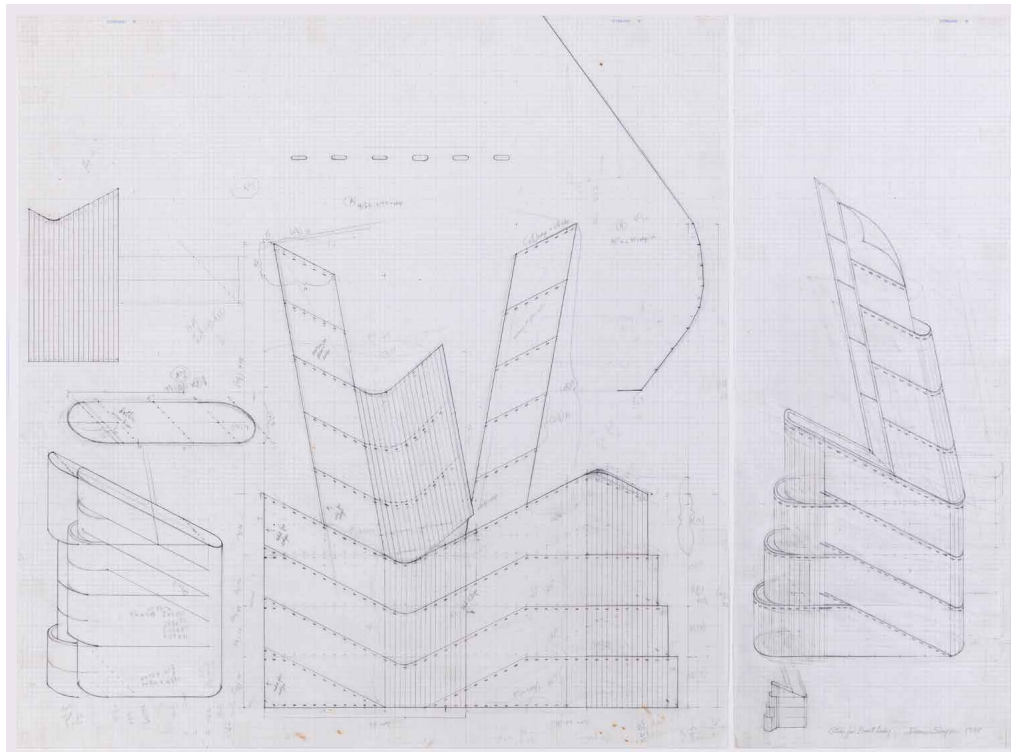
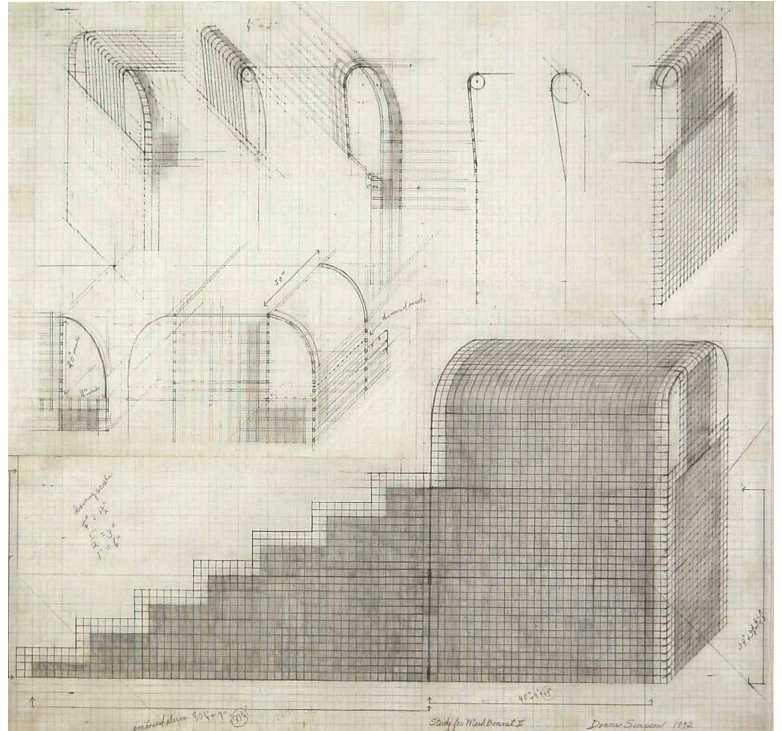




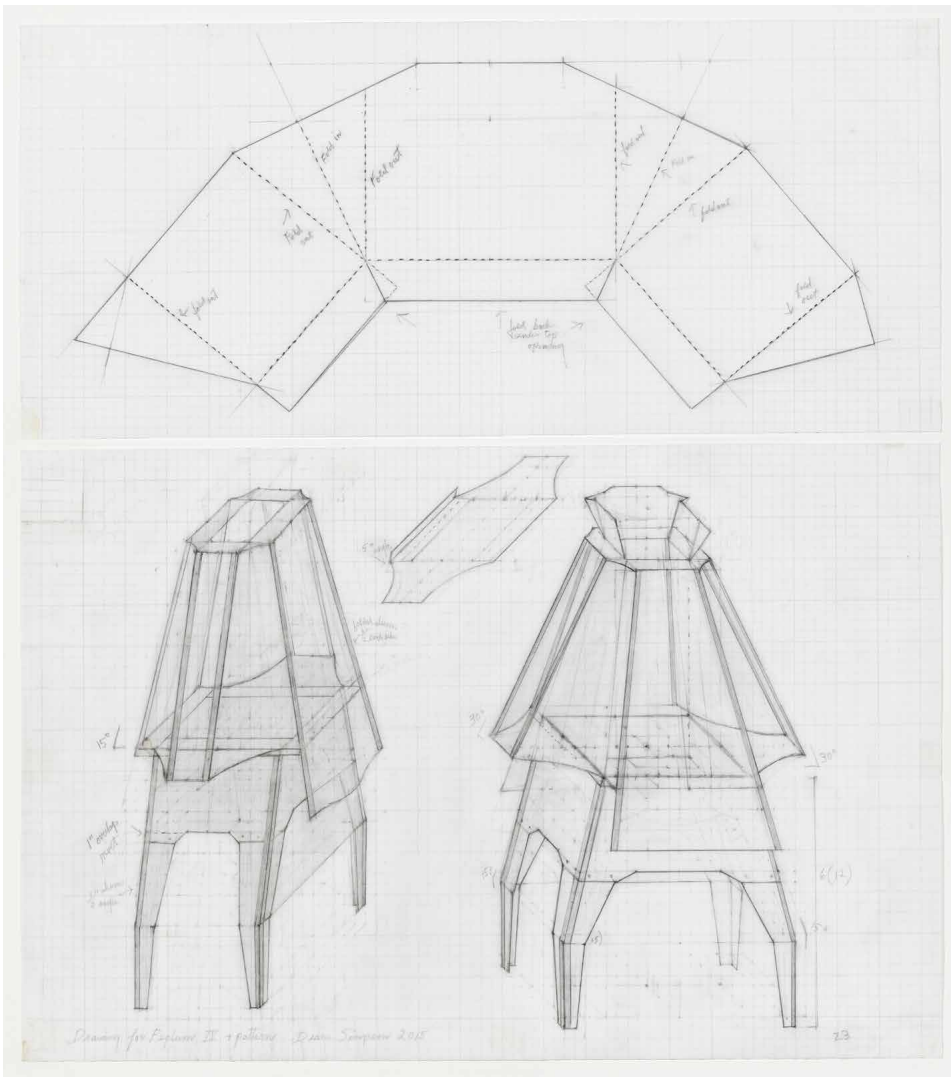
above: *Drawing for Bib (quilted)*, 2006, graphite on vellum graph paper, 29 x 20 inches.

opposite: *Cradle Boxes – Version 2*, 1977, graphite on cardstock, 40 x 32 inches.

Drawing for Mesh Bonnet, 1992, pencil on vellum graph paper, approximately 30 x 40 inches.



Drawings for Court Lady (composite), 1984, pencil on vellum graph paper, 40 x 50 inches.



Drawing for Peplum IV + Pattern, 2015, graphite on two sheets of vellum graph paper, 25 × 22 inches (framed).

opposite: *Studies for Green Bodice*, 1985, pencil on vellum graph paper with collage, 40 × 30 inches.

Folding Forms VII – Variation – hand colored, 1977, 28.5 × 41.75 inches.

