

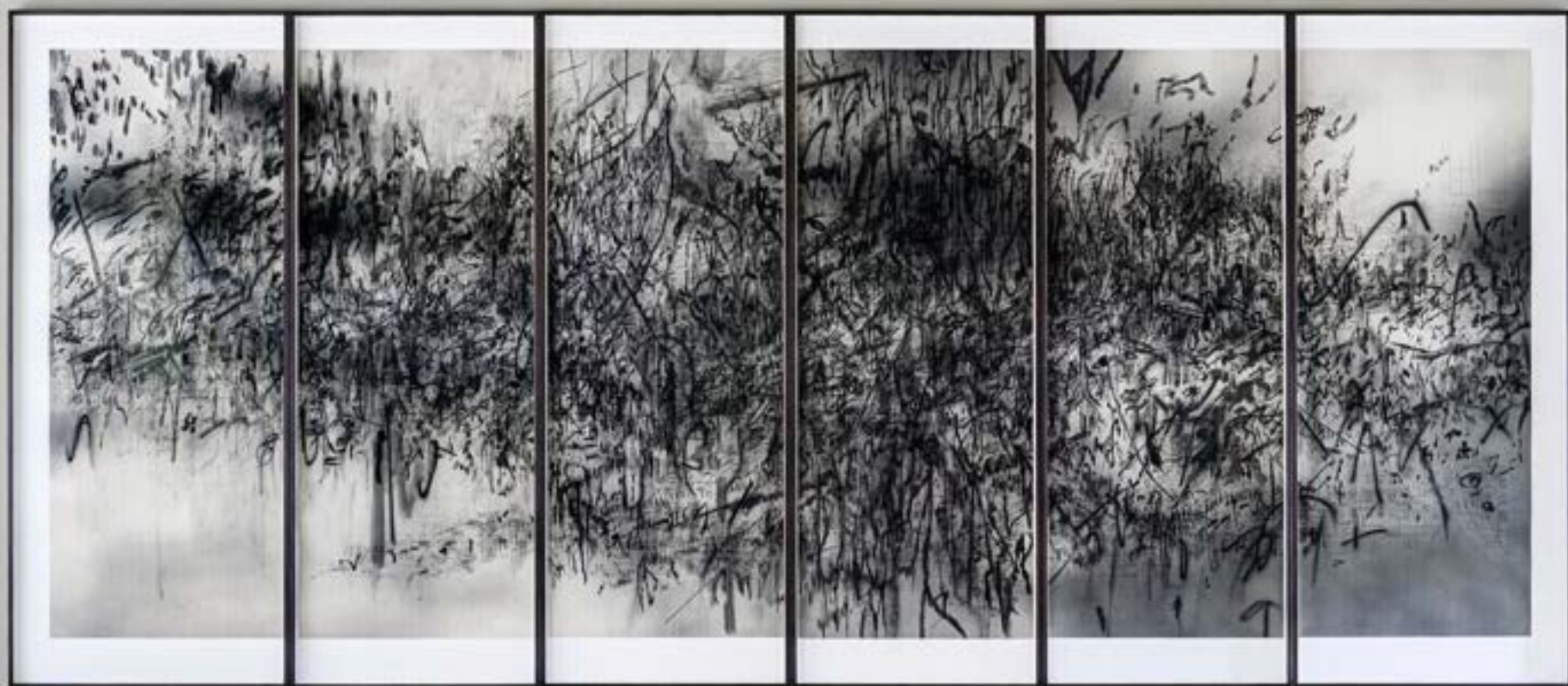
**Virtual**   
**LAVENDER**  
 **Labels**

**JULIE MEHRETU**  
**(American, b. 1970)**

*Epigraph, Damascus, 2016*

Photogravure, sugar lift aquatint, spit bite  
aquatint, open bite Hahnemuhel  
97 1/2 x 40 3/4 x 2 3/4 in.

The Alford Collection of Art, Cornell Fine Arts Museum, Rollins College  
2016.3.17. Image courtesy of the artist and Marian Goodman Gallery



Mehretu, born in Ethiopia to an African father and American mother, practices in the United States and Berlin, negotiating boundaries in myriad ways: location, art movements, identity. She has lived and worked on at least three continents: the Americas, Europe, and Africa and has been associated with three art movements: Futurism, Constructivism, and Abstract Expressionism. She identifies as a queer woman and is married to a woman, Jessica Rankin, who is also an artist.

In *Epigraph, Damascus* Mehretu depicts creative and destructive intersections of human history by blending media of architectural buildings in this monumental portrait – an encounter with the transformations of war in Syria. An epigraph is an inscribed text, sometimes on a building, usually illuminating a theme.

The processes of sugar-lift aquatint, spit bite aquatint, and open bite are methods of etching using acid to ‘bite’ into the metal, creating spaces for ink or paint.

Utilizing these labor-intensive printmaking techniques on copperplate, Mehretu builds an image to express a complex immersion in socio-political landscapes with precise drawing and layering marks. With a range of meanings constituted by presence, absence, and the consequences of human influence, she explores collisions between people and places.

What is this work signaling about how humans are in relationship with the environment and with each other?