

I am a tool,
My body and my mind.

I am a tool, run by my anxiety and my desire.

My mind brings things up and works them out by itself.

As a system it is used to propose strategies
to reach the goal to feel better.

It always drives me to somewhere, out of control,
And sometimes, it goes nowhere.

Whatever the mind comes up with, it guides the body.

Following the mind, the body reacts.

Let go of the control with my body; express my inner world.

The boundary of my territory shows automatically.

Uncommon in the generation of repetition.

I desire to know that I am alive.

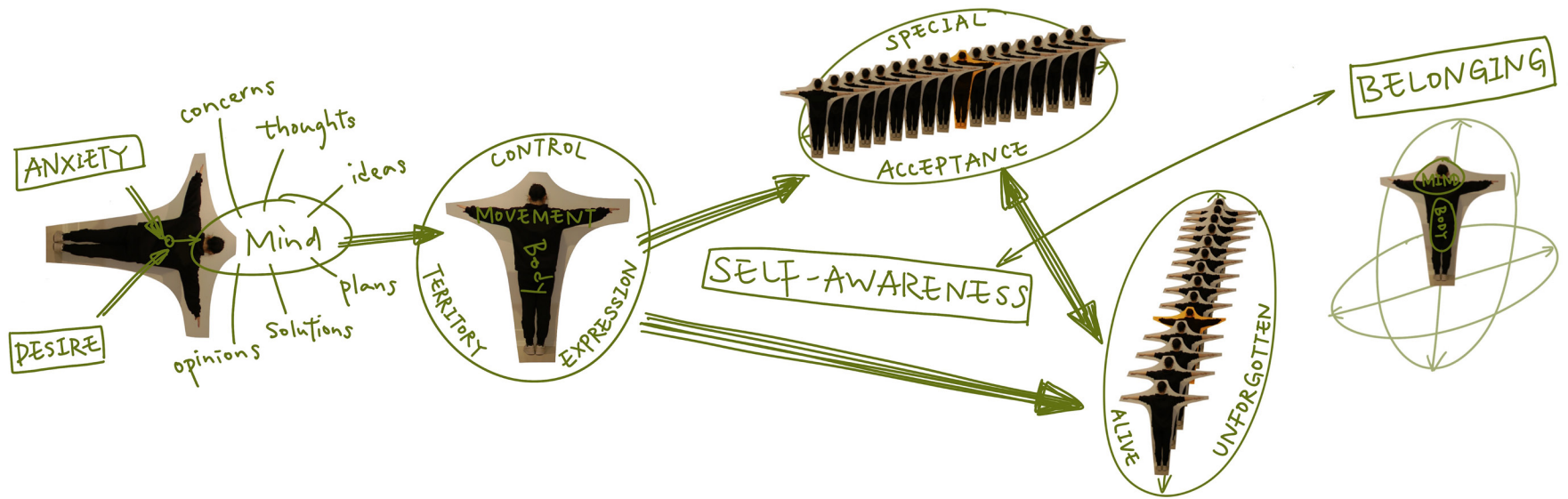
And I am special.

But I am afraid of being isolated and
becoming nameless in history.

I need to prove my existence, so I can find my identity.

My mind is mapping while I type.

My anxiety is controlling when I breathe.



Miao Sun

I DON'T HAVE
A CLUE
HOW TO BECOME
AN INTERNET-
BASED

CERAMICIST
2020

Oslo National
Academy of
the Arts

Art AND CRAFT

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Today is Saturday, April 4, and by the lunar calendar, Thursday, March 12. It is the first day of the solar term Qingming, when the sun reaches the celestial longitude of 15° . The weather grows warmer and rainfall increases; plants start to thrive. It is a suitable day for travel and marriage but not for funerals. The best hours of the day are 09–13:00, 17–19:00, and 21–01:00.

I gather those from the calendar, along with tacky color combinations and the weekend treat: a color print of a flock of birds. I tear this page from the calendar, open the cap of a fountain brush, set up the timer, and go. I start from the left corner of the color print, stretching the point and moving toward the right. I then make a curve, continuing the line and finishing the tracing until I reach the opposite corner. The time I spend on this exercise is 6 minutes, 53 seconds, and 93 centiseconds, from 17:31 to 17:38. I stamp the numbers in order and tape them on the wall.

I began this project *Time Practices: Calendar* on January 1, 2020, to set up a new ritual throughout the year. This type of daily calendar is an ordinary object that can be found in every Taiwanese household. It is a lunisolar



calendar with loads of information that is not necessarily followed by people nowadays, but is still common knowledge, and my grandmas follow it. They tear off one page per day as a reminder of the date and sometimes follow the tradition. They don't throw away the old calendar pages, but keep them for later use. They fold them into small dumpster boxes for fish bones and fruit peels, or let their grandchildren do their math and learn how to write Chinese characters on the back of them. For me, these negligible actions become sacred,

4月 兒童節 清明節

4 星期六

農大 3月12日

節氣 本日清明 胎神占方 丁丑日 倉庫廟 外正西
 宜 節前：出行 嫁娶 節後：吉事少取 忌 開渠 設醮
 日煞 東方 日冲 羊30歲 喜神 正南 財神 正西
 01~03 03~05 05~07 07~09 09~11 11~13 13~15 15~17 17~19 19~21 21~23 23~01
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5 星期日

農大 3月13日

節氣 廿七穀雨 胎神占方 戊寅日 房床爐 外正西
 宜 出行 嫁娶 入宅 開市 納財 牧養 忌 祭祀 祈福
 日煞 北方 日冲 猴29歲 喜神 東南 財神 正北
 01~03 03~05 05~07 07~09 09~11 11~13 13~15 15~17 17~19 19~21 21~23 23~01
 吉 中 中 中 吉 吉 吉 凶 中 吉 吉 中



both as a celebration of the dawning new day and a mourning of the passing of a day. In this exercise, I take up this act and sculpt it into my ritual.

The act of counting days has recently become significant. I spend most of my time in my room and don't strictly follow the clock. Time seems stretched, and I can look into those blank spaces. The almost seven minutes that I spent on my ritual today remind me that something has passed; and changed, too, as does the wall full of old calendar

pages, reminding me that the lockdown began on March 12.

Thanks to the calendar, which has two weekend days printed on one page, I will have my Sunday memory mixed with that of today. But on Monday, a much simpler typographical design with the same amount of information (without the tasteful and colorful weekend treat) will give me a new start and a longer tracing time that I am allowed to break apart, to ponder, to enjoy.

The idea of writing a text together was hatched even before we knew what was to come. There was a desire to articulate something common to what is too often, focused on the individual. To us, the form of a collaborative text made up of individual contributions that refer to each other seemed suitable for picking up small threads—threads that accompany us, that connect us, and that we would like to share. These threads are as much a part of our individual practices as of the collective psyche. In the course of the evolving events, the threads running through this text were woven into a rope which we could hold on to, and into which we could integrate those particles that seemed to dissolve everywhere else.

My friend Sarah told me the other day: “As an artist I find myself totally unable to respond to these circumstances as they are unfolding, but I know that this is the challenge. All I can do is gather.” I write these words from my cabin in the Alps, where I’m lucky to be. I’m safe, I’m (relatively) warm, and I have lots of books as well as the mountains, where I’ve been going on long walks every day.

I once wrote an essay on the subject of stones. I wrote about how, in one particular indigenous tribe in Canada, stones are viewed as animate objects, that



some stones are alive. We, in complete contrast, have quarries where stones are cut into slabs and cubes for efficient transport. In this world, stones are purely a resource, viewed only through the lens of economic growth.

On my daily walks in the mountains, I’m seeing this landscape in a new way. How exciting! While for the most part we are forced to stay indoors these days, the creatures up here are just starting to come out of hibernation.

The marmots are popping their heads out of their holes to say hello. The deer are beginning to graze again. The once frozen ground is turning mossy green and sprouting tiny blades of grass and hardy spring flowers.

And then there are the geological remnants of winter. Mountains form through shifts in tectonic plates, through volcanic eruptions. But stones break away, they wander, descending slopes under their own weight or carried along by ice, water, or ocean waves. On my walks I have seen many such stones moved by the snow; stones displaced from their place of origin.

In our group crit last week, Alessandro spoke about how walks are now becoming political... In Italy new policies have swiftly been put in place, allowing walks outdoors only under certain conditions. Each country is handling the new rules of walking in a different way. It is only because of this crisis that I'm here, in this place, and in this landscape;

observing my surroundings through walking, and pondering which stones might be alive.

The snow melting/ The spread of the virus has displaced us all from the lives we were used to. It's a challenge for me to connect to the practice I had going at KHiO, and at the same time, I don't have a clue how to become an internet-based ceramicist. To return to Sarah's comment about not knowing how to respond to this crisis, except to use this moment as a time to gather—I'm glad that we are gathering our thoughts, together.

In certain areas and at certain times of day, walking in Oslo these days can be a lot more crowded than usual, despite the quarantine. When out jogging yesterday I skipped my planned interval running on a staircase in Tøyenparken because the lines to use it were too long!

I don't know how to be an internet-based printmaker or painter either; it's all very contradictory. I do hold on to the thought of this being temporary, and I tell myself that I don't need to change my practice to make it internet friendly. The time for physical encounters will return, I'm sure.

Reaction time might be the time we are spending now. I'm used to responding and reacting more or less instantly, now I find it impossible: a lot of factors that were certain in my life just two weeks back are now undecided. I realize what a privilege that certainty was.

While out running I bumped into a few friends walking Vova, a borzoi one of them owns. Usually, Vova recognizes me from a distance but now it took him a moment, even though I was standing next to him. I guess it was the excessive activity in his surroundings, a lot for him to take in; but the moment of recognition came, and he jumped at me, and our noses touched (quite a hard bump; mine is still numb from it).

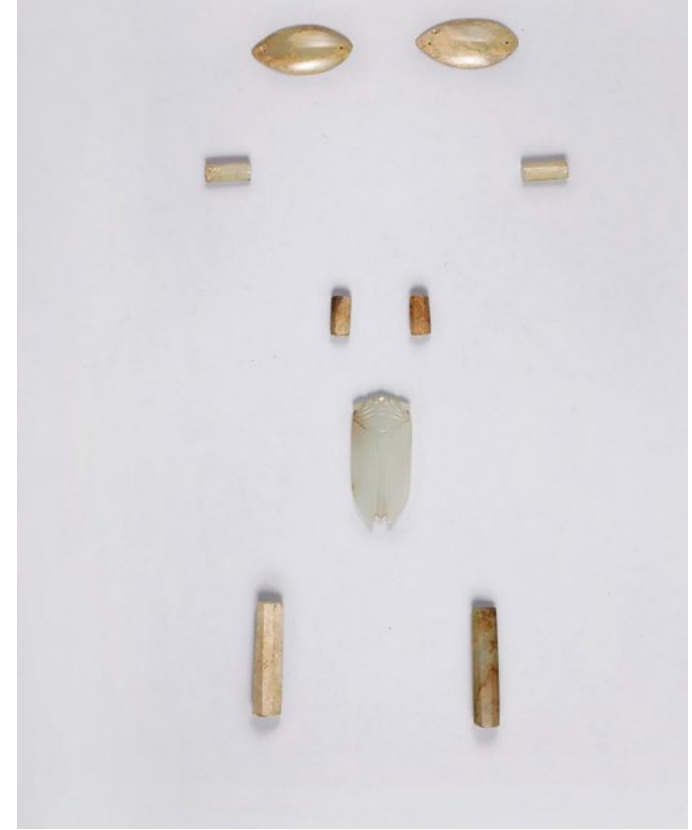
I'm walking a lot these days: I need to air my thoughts. Luckily, I share a studio space with another artist, and I'm so glad of her company. Life feels so normal in the studio. We had a discussion about life not being that different. As artists we are used to changes occurring and uncertainties being present.

I grew up in Bergen with many mountains around me, and I walked a lot in them. From the house where I grew up, I could see both the ocean and the mountains.

I often walk by the River Akerselva on my way to my studio. I love looking at the river—it is as it always has been. The birds sing, the trees are there, soon to be green, and the river flows, making the same sounds, just passing over obstacles. My feet make the same sound as always when touching the ground, the wind blows through my hair in the usual ways.



Two kinds of stone caught my attention recently. The first one is *Scholar's Rock* (供石). The Chinese have appreciated strange natural stones for hundreds of years, and the basic criteria for selecting them are thinness, wrinkling, openness, and perforations. Openness means the stones have holes in them. Inter-connected holes can be seen from all angles and they maximize the stones' surface area. We enjoy seeing multi-shaped stones, appreciating the interacting effects of light, shadow, and holes, forgetting ourselves, and getting lost in the shape.

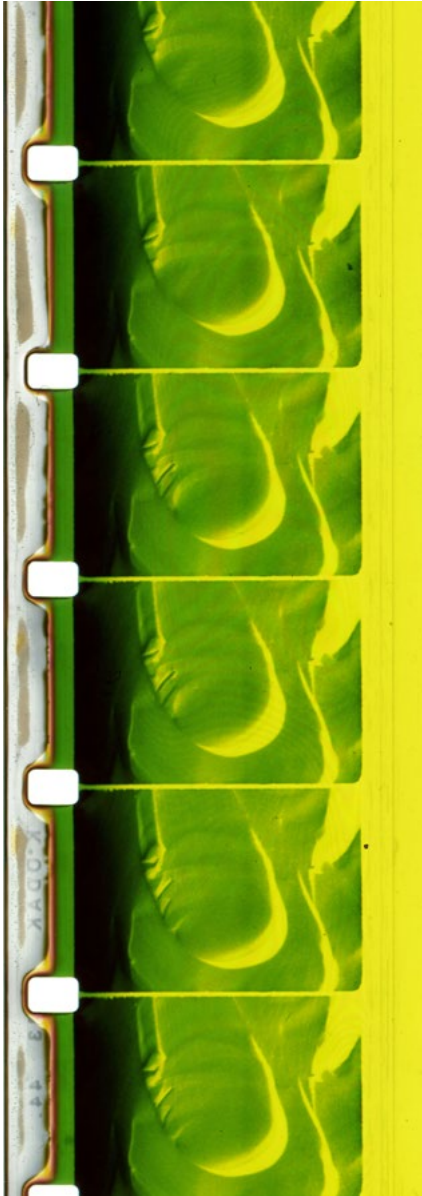


The second kind of stone is the *Nine Holes' Plugs* (九窍塞), a set of nine stone pieces that are always carved from jade.

In Ancient China, people believed that if they covered a dead person's eyes, ears, nostrils, mouth, genitals, and anus with nine jade pieces, the body would not decay.

I have talked a lot about life and death with my friends recently, in light of COVID-19. I've become intensely curious about the culture of death and the afterlife. In Ancient China, people put those stone pieces into the nine holes of a corpse to ensure that the soul would not escape the body, in hope of thus assuring the deceased a wonderful life in the hereafter.

(A digital hug)

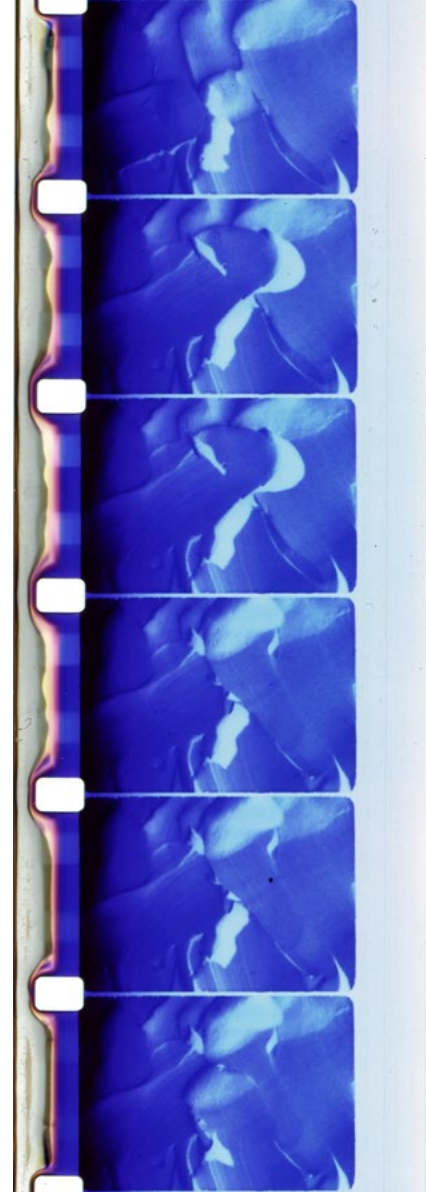


Touch

Much like skin, analog film is divided into layers. When searching for it, the emulsion on top grabs on to your fingers and lips, asking to be touched. Film is what skin would be, if it had the ability to reflect what it has been exposed to and project itself onto a screen. Showing the fabric of everyday life in close ups. As a projection the hands are no longer involved. Instead eyes become like sensory organs, touching what your hands cannot see.

Film is sensitive and decays over time. It likes to be stored cold but enjoys a warm bath. When hung to dry it dances, as if shaking itself back to life. Its body tends to fight whatever wants to hold it in place, happily turning itself into knots when lost from your grip. A slippery species between your fingers, like a snake. It's alive. You can't make film

without touching it. Sensitive to light, it forces you to know it with your hands. If I only focus on what film is showing me I might miss what it could be saying. To be seen is to be felt. Once I lost hold of it, 20 meters of printed film falling to the floor. I could hear it unraveling, folding itself into a pile upon landing. In my mind's eye I saw this snake and I was left to navigate it from head to tail, in complete darkness. I spent the rest of my afternoon undoing the knots, in the fumbling and hand-seeking process of finding a manual method to produce, print, and color the film. I kept the arm with the film raised high, so the twists and turns moved down towards the end. With my other hand I started rolling it onto the spool. The film quivered, with a sound like rattlesnakes.



After some time,
the pitch-black room I was in no
longer seemed quite so dark. A
little light from beneath the door
suddenly helped my eyes make
out the contours of my arms.

As a result of COVID-19
there was suddenly no more
time to work in the studio but
more time to feel. I sensed
myself feeling for an illness
in my body, convinced I
was becoming sick but
without it happening.

A medical technique called
palpation is the process of using
hands to feel out illnesses in the
body. And I had been feeling
for changes in my body, which
I no longer knew was there or
not. It made me think of that
afternoon spent fumbling in the
darkness with my color test.



I read your notes, and I read some other things: among them, Ocean Vuong's *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous*. I'm not through it yet, but the protagonist's struggle—which is most likely autobiographical fiction—is something bigger, something that really threatens the body and life. And yet I understand the languages and linguistics he uses, as well as his references, as a desire for artistic and aesthetic production. This reading may not be appropriate, but it complements what has been articulated so far. Vuong writes:

Two languages cancel each other out, suggests Barthes, beckoning a third. Sometimes our words are few and far between, or simply ghosted. In which case the hand, although limited by the borders of skin and cartilage, can be that third language that animates where the tongues falters.

Urgent needs to formulate something, to express it from a different context, have physically and psychologically affected bodies, and yet still do not provide a safe space. This resonates in what Vuong writes a few pages earlier, but maybe it also helps to put things in relation to one another and to us. In order to then work on and process the urgency of picking up a silken thread and forming the soapstone in parallel to the urgencies at large, the social inclusion and exclusion, which the current crisis did not produce, but merely reveal:

No object is in a constant relationship with pleasure, wrote Barthes. For the writer, however, it is the mother tongue. But what if the mother tongue is stunted? What if that tongue is not only the symbol of a void, but is itself a void, what if the tongue is cut out? Can one take pleasure in loss without losing oneself entirely? The Vietnamese I own is the one you gave me, the one whose dictions and syntax reach only the second-grade level.

I regard it as important to engage in debates on both a

small and a large scale with similar urgency. What do the state, institutional, and social restrictions triggered by the spread of COVID-19 mean for the environments and societies we live in? And, too, who gets access to these spaces and societies, and to whom are they not available or closed off? Also, what does all this mean for various artistic practices? What do these restrictions mean for a Medium- and Material-Based Art practice and Art in Public Space practice? Thinking these two distinct art programs together seems to me a fascinating touch in this debate and is anyhow a gift of our current collaboration and joint project. (And I would like—solely in this one case—to distinguish between a general practice and our own individual concerns with these restrictions).

I understand your desire for a degree show very much! I also understand how important it is for you to bring together different artistic formulations in one space. And I am very happy about that! Because it could be less important to you, especially in consideration of all the restrictions on your own practice and on the exhibition as such, which the essence of a degree show can also have. You not only aim to set your practices in relation to one another and ultimately, to the Academy, but also understand the degree show as a part of your ongoing artistic practice.

And even more, I understand you reclaiming lost workshop time! Regardless of how much each of you actually depends on kilns, printing presses, looms, tools, processors, technical support, and diverse materials, you very clearly indicate that the Academy is a laboratory, a resource, and a melting pot for very diverse forms of knowledge and, hence, of immense importance to all of us: to your practices as well as those of your teachers and tutors.

And now all of us are suddenly and indefinitely deprived of these forms of handling, testing, supporting, exchanging,

displaying, as well as of a certain degree of safe space. Zoom conferences, online pads, and the other alternative means we are now using are helpful and they do us (me, at least) some good; but they also make us feel the loss of physical encounters and sharing. And we feel the loss even more deeply than if we were to devote ourselves to completely different rebalancing activities such as hiking, gardening, skiing, dancing, or bathing in the sea and lakes. And our sense, our perception of this void cannot be grasped as an opportunity for alternative means of expanding our own practice, especially if we have to spend energy on taking care of others, on home-schooling, on cumbersome video conferences, to say nothing of the burden of social distancing, of contiguousness, or just of being on our own.

The whole thing is a caesura. And we should allow ourselves and others space to respond to it in diverse ways. If there is any *Überschuss* [surplus value], it is important to name this void precisely, to make it palpable, to give it form in words and images, artistically, personally, in abstraction, as a class, and individually. This is important, for us, in order to once again make evident the urgency of our artistic work; and, too, in order to articulate what it means to restrict access to (free) spaces of artistic knowledge production that, while obviously not essential to life, are certainly *systemically* relevant.

In this way, we could also make explicit the necessity of the physical, social, and discursive spaces that are currently closed, also in order to handle and safeguard them with greater care in the long term! We could make it clear why, more than ever in the digital age, we need looms, workbenches, kilns, printing workshops, and physical encounters in shared spaces. And that's exactly what we are doing right now, isn't it?







Shaking, anxiety, disconnection, rain, sleeplessness, homelessness, constant bad news, an increasing number of deaths, cracks on the roof, tears, lies, congestion, running ... All of these are part of my childhood memories of a devastating earthquake in my homeland in 2008.

After the earthquake, I suffered whenever I encountered shakes or cracks, fearing the ground I was standing on was not safe and stable anymore. Whenever I entered a new space, I imagined that space crashing down. I have talked to others who experienced that earthquake, and they all feel the same. So, I projected onto clay this negative perception of the ground. With clay, everything turns out fine if there are no cracks and explosions. Therefore, I tried to improve



my techniques, to avoid these happening. I tried to control the material as far as possible, regarding it as a tool helping me achieve my goal. Although the material and I interact with each other every day, we don't trust each other.

When I stand on Scandinavian ground, a piece of the Nordic continent that I know from my junior high school geography textbook—coincidentally, the earthquake happened at the beginning of a geography class—I feel that the nature of this land is very different. Landforms, altitude, groundwater, mineral content, the color of the soil, the land's softness and hardness, and the creatures living on it—I finally recognize the magnitude of what I am up against. I have to rethink my relationship with the earth.

Beirut—Oslo—Beirut

Latent threads are emerging on the surface

Patterns of partition are turning out sharper

Weaves “knotted grass-like” are growing clearer

All the elements hooked up in one piece, the Persian carpet: my playground, my roots, and my Bastille.

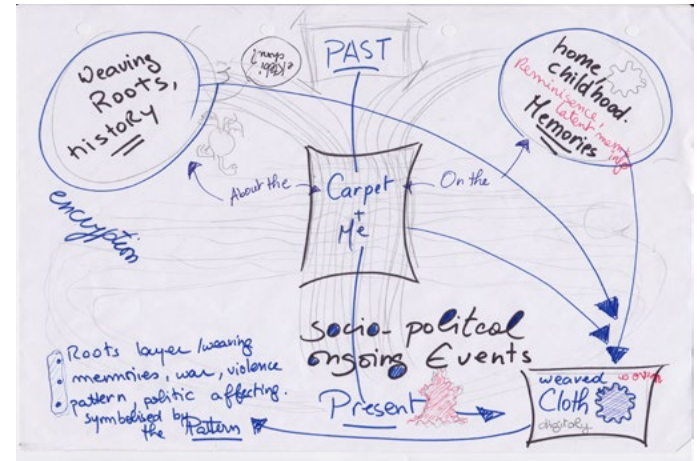
Notes, December 2019



Maryline Nassar
Al Hayek

The project revolves around a personal history threaded with conversation on techniques of weaving: reflection on the hand-woven carpet and the re-creation of fragments and patterns, combined with an exploration of a Lebanese geo-political and social identity.

My interest lay in weaving and re-creating some of these patterns anew, from blurred, distorted memories and accurate postwar scanned photographs, as well as in lending them different thematic meanings. In more practical terms, my objective was to use concrete craft techniques to create a piece of work and thereby draw on less-concrete impressions and gaps in memory. The project was inspired by the recent sociopolitical revolution that took place on October 17, 2019. That was the catalyst for this engagement.



Do you pick up the music in the carpet, Mom? Do you hear the flow coming from the Naqshe? Alongside the visual, the tactile, there is a melody, a rhythm, a repetition. Definitely! answered the mother and smiled at her child seated on the woven Persian carpet, the child's favorite playground.

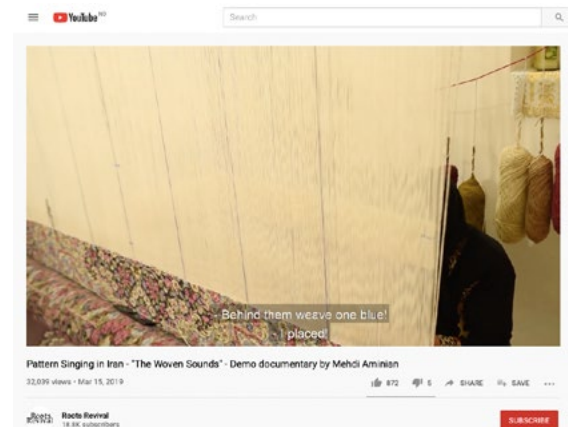
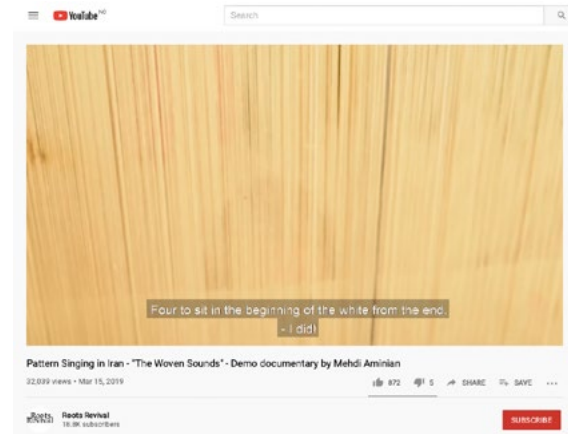
Children are encouraged to dream in a limitless universe. However, what the mother did not doubt was the plausibility of her daughter's vision.

Thirty-five years later, I encountered the practice of *Naqshe Khani*, Pattern Singing.

- Two “almond” nodes before the next one!
- I did!
- One “chehreyi” node on the same place!
- I did!
- The first white node to be from the last!
- I did!
- Leave four and one white from the first!
- I did!
- Four to sit in the beginning of the white from the end.
- I did!

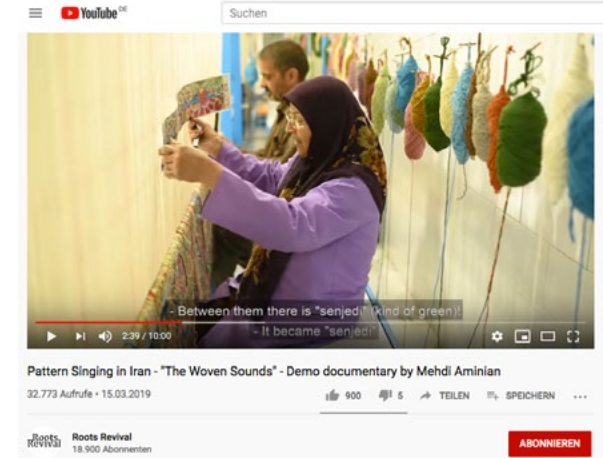
As sung by two weaving women

A narrow room, light streaming through the window, colored yarn suspended from above. Weavers sing as they place and cut one thread at a time: place and cut, place and cut, place and cut. The weavers sing a song I've never heard before. Are they chanting, praying, recalling the pattern, or losing themselves in a hypnotic trance? Place and cut, place and cut, place and cut.



In the one hand, the thread, in the other, the weaving knife; the feet on the pedals; the eyes on the loom; the thoughts on the pattern, or possibly on one's colleagues, one's own children even, or simply on what's for lunch.

The parts of the fragmented body synchronize—only to fall out of exactly this synchronicity of limbs, feelings, and actions, the very next moment. Here, following the weaving pattern, they give rhythm to the machines. They place themselves at the service of their own passion as well as of the loom, the employer, or the customer, and they cross the given pattern with their speaking and singing: often invisible, but nonetheless inscribed.



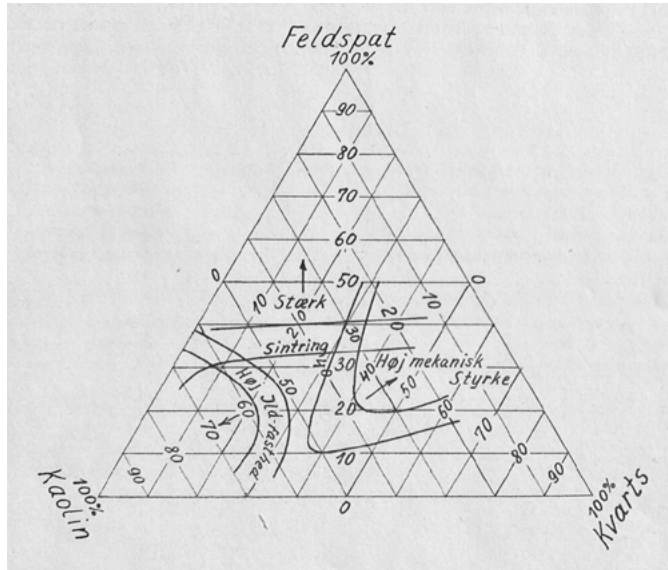


Pyro-

"Over here, gold digger," the man called out from the distance. We were in an abandoned quarry in Otta, a village five hours north of Oslo. When I reached him at his post, he held out a few golden pyrite nuggets sitting in the palm of his hand. He saw no value in these pyrite pieces but knew that I did.

The pyrite was embedded in the silky-grey soapstone scattered across the quarry floor. I collected a few of these stones along with some loose silver mica, enough for a plastic bag to hold without tearing.

Back in the studio, I take apart the fused soapstone and pyrite. It crumbles easily. The tricky part is not to crush the pyrite when extracting the nuggets, piece by piece. Pyrite forms slowly, over deep time and sedimentary pressure. My act is one of reverse geology. Removing the time, releasing the pressure, separating the parts that only exist because of the others. Arranging while estranging.



A startling bang from kiln number 8. Don't tell Knut, the workshop manager. One shouldn't put explosive minerals in a high-firing kiln, as I had. With one eye closed, I slowly pull the door open to reveal the debris of a small blast. The azurite and the malachite have shattered, but the pyrite is intact. It has been changed in the firing. It has puffed and expanded, releasing the sulfur. The mica flecks have turned to gold.



Collective Thinking Machine

Arely Amaut, Sigrid Espelien,

Irma Alvarez Ccoscco, Tatjana Kolpus,

José Dominguez, Liisa-Ravna Finbog and Karl Swinehart

Tatjana: Arely approached me after I'd taken part in a talk with the title "Healing by Making—Duodji,* A Way Of Life." She showed me a piece of paper on which was a poem written in a language called Runasimi,** along with its translation into Spanish. Spanish is my third language and I could easily read and understand the words. But Runasimi—this was completely new to me, and stirred my curiosity. Especially when Arely told me that clay was her means of expression and that she'd like to find similarities between her art, Andean cosmology, and duodji. Liisa-Ravna had presented some of her research during the talk already, so I could see there is a connection between the Andean Mountains and Sápmi.

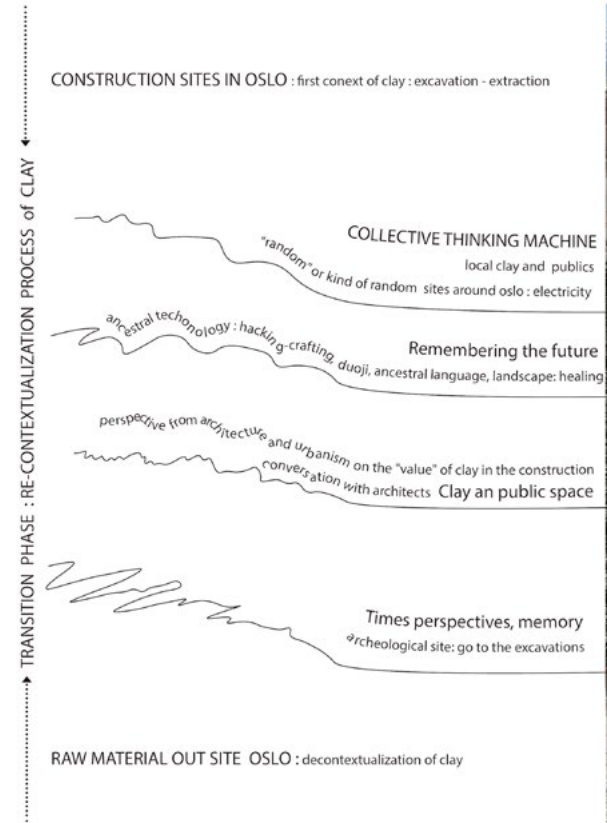
Within minutes, we had found common ground to meet and share on. Also having two languages in which to share and talk lends our dynamic a different flavor, I believe, with regard to some of the cultural connotations hidden in language.

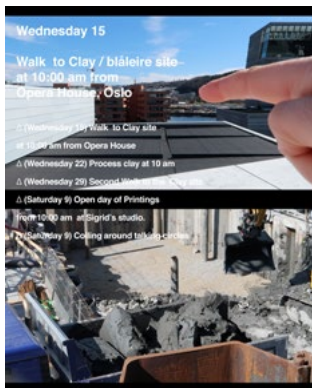
Sigrid: The starting point was a shared interest in 3D printing with clay. From that point on, we began learning from each other through conversation: about Peru and the previous mountain research Arely had done, as well as about mapping as a tool, local clay research, archeology, folk science, ancestral practice, and digital fabrication. These exchanges made us want to create a space in which we could continue our conversations.

Arely: We wanted to create a structure that would combine ancestral practices and contemporary technology and allow us to share: and we called the result our Collective

* Finbog explains in her writing BÅASSJOERAEJKEN TJİRR: returning (to) the language of our ancestors: "Traditionally, the term has been translated to mean craft, but it is more in line with the concept of a creative and aesthetic activity related to practical skills."

** Composed of *Runa*, meaning being, male, female, both, and *simi*, meaning mouth, Runasimi is a popular term for Quechua, an indigenous language family spoken by the Quechua peoples primarily living in the Peruvian, Bolivian and Ecuadorian Andes but also in other highlands of South America.

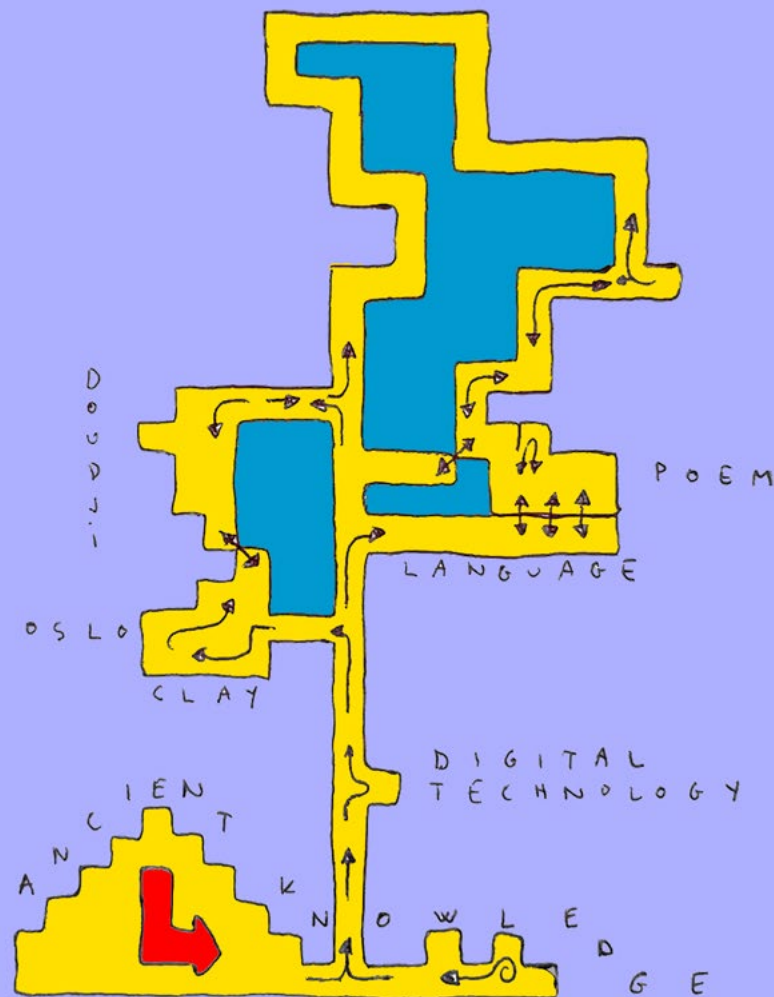




Thinking Machine. The machine operates with two tools. The first tool is a hacked machine, a Clay 3D printer to be used for different purposes. The second tool is a poem about ancestral practices with clay, which was written in Runasimi. The name of the poem is "T'uruwan Quillqaq, Escritor de Barro, The Clay/Mud Writer." Irma: The idea is that to hack-

craft a hegemonic language and its concepts is to cross the barriers of translation and even of interpretation—usually by using literalism or re-phoneticization; but more than that, it is to pass from the source language to the end, carrying over its semantic field. Words have power. A concept that comes from a binding language like Runasimi, even if correctly translated into the target language, could lose its semantic field and, hence, also the cultural worldview it connotes.

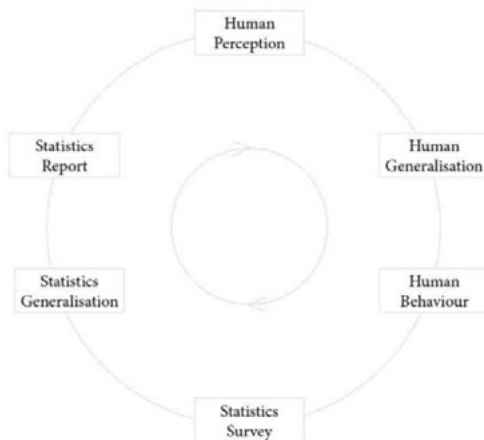
Tatjana: In any meeting between two or more people, there will be a sharing of sorts, energetically. If there is a mutual willingness to share, I take it as a sign to continue the process. A safe space for sharing was the premise of these meetings from the start and this, I think, is what enabled us to open up. The intent behind passing on our knowledge, stories, and perspectives is always to learn from and get to know one another.



Walking against the feedback loop

Walking in a city is like submersion in a liquid that leaves stains and changes our tissues. A new place puts us in alert mode, hones our attentiveness, and brings us closer to the primitive ancient beings we carry around in our molecules. The primordial soup boils inside us when we are exposed to life in new urban labyrinths: through walking, the soup has been stirred for millions of years.

The urban landscape is filtered through the stereotypes that have become embedded in our minds. It is an endless feedback loop.



In each cycle of the loop the stereotype gets stronger and reality gets lost. Furthermore, because the statistically enriched stereotypes become part of our minds' landscapes, reality, too, is formed, in a very real sense; our mind's landscape becomes the urban landscape.

Alessandro Marchi

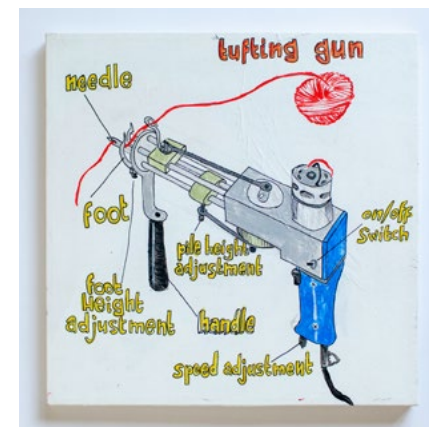
Walking through the landscape and feeding the mind with sensorial first-hand impressions is a way to break this loop, weaken stereotypes, and create a direct knowledge based on subjective experience.



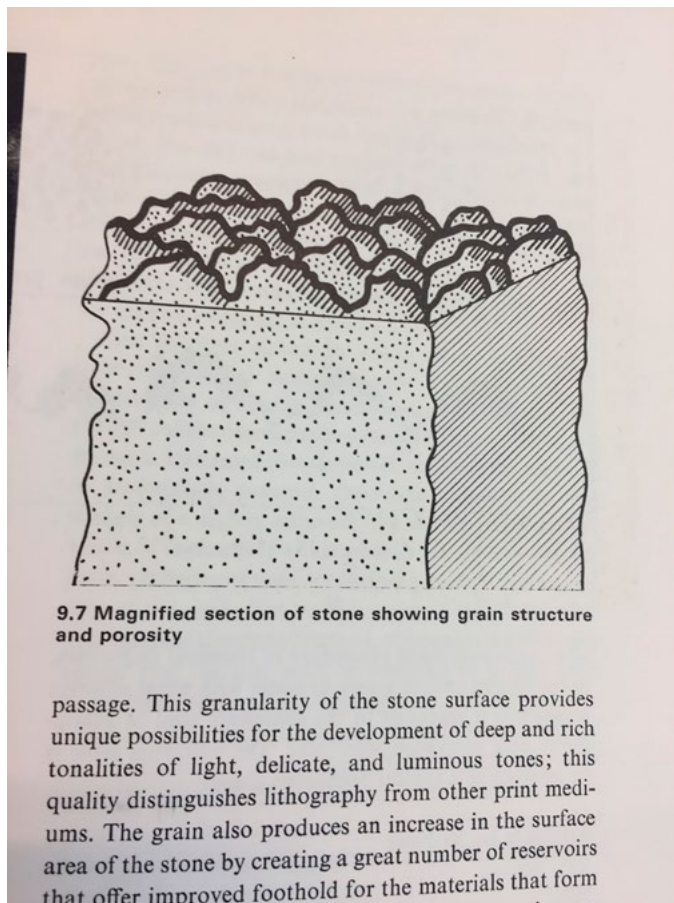
Walking helped me identify critical aspects of the city of Oslo, and this led me in turn to conversations and encounters that could influence future communities.

As I am writing this, there is a certain suspension in time,

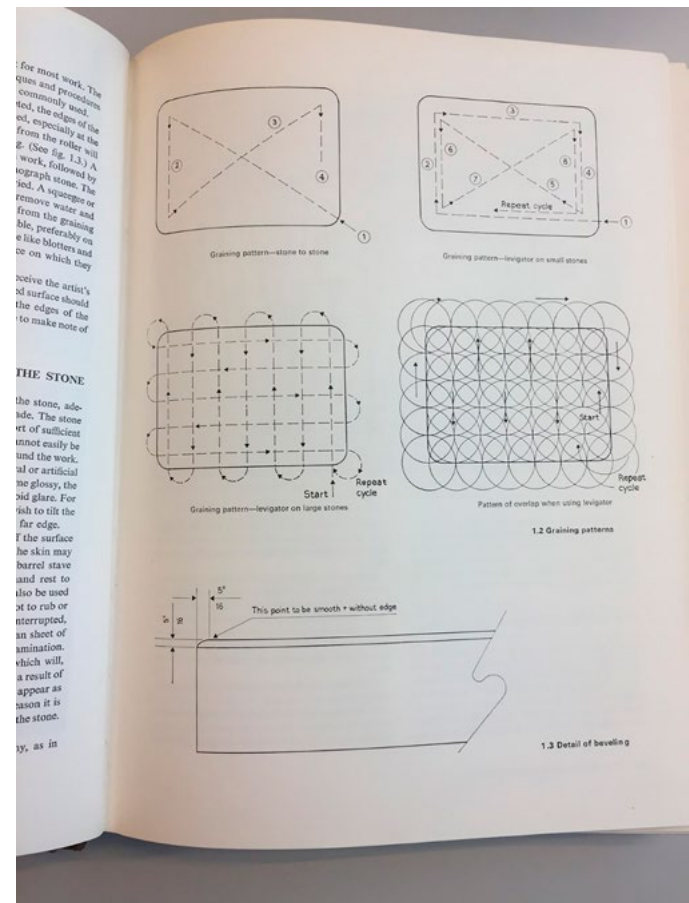
our daily activities have abruptly changed and so, too, has our sense of passing time. Before leaving the school because of the pandemic, I was working on a carpet inspired by the walks. It is a double-sided carpet that shows research findings on population division in Oslo, as well as statistical factors that contribute to this division.



In the meanwhile, forced to be out of school yet able still to take a walk, I have been thinking about how to keep on working on an imaginary carpet in the streets. That is how a walk about inequality became a project drawing containing a set of proposals that could possibly be performed in public.



A representation of the structure of lithographic stones. The grain structure allows the stone to become a vessel of information. This is from the Tamarind Institute's *The Tamarind Book of Lithography: Art and Techniques* (1971).



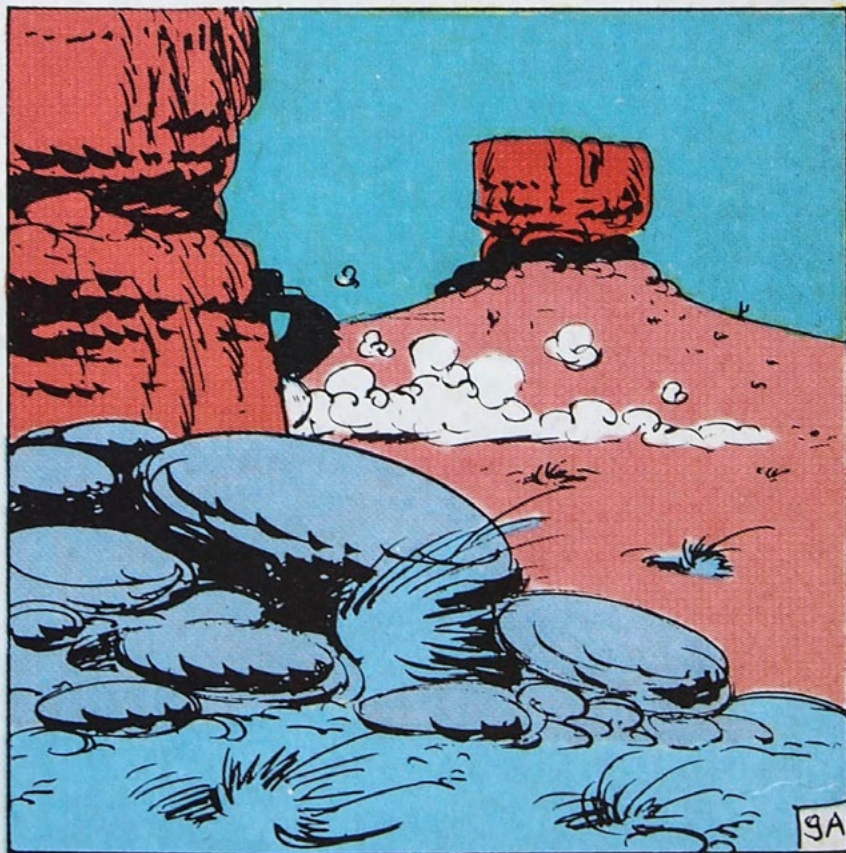
Also from the Tamarind Institute, a drawing showing ideal grinding patterns for grinding the stone evenly. By grinding the stone you erase the information it once held, and you prepare the surface to receive new information.



A Canyon Landscape

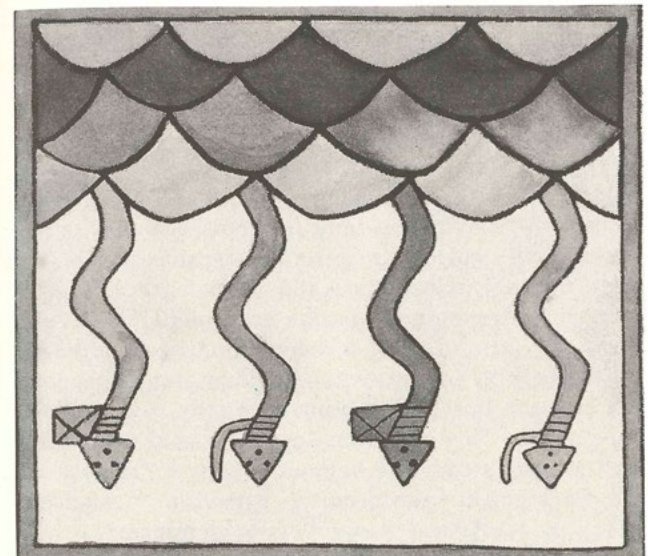
I have brushes for applying varnish, and needles for removing said varnish and exposing the copper. Then there are loupes to examine the surface of the acid-bitten plate. "Walking through the canyon landscape" is a phrase I remember Jan Pettersson using in an intaglio demonstration a few years back. It stuck with me, for a long time as a joke and then as an adopted routine.

The loupe really is my favorite tool. It has no direct effect on the materials in question, but opens up a micro landscape otherwise unexplored. Labeling it a canyon landscape—not an urban or luxuriant one—heightens the sense of adventure. The canyon landscape belongs to the "wild west" of comic books already outdated in my childhood yet that nonetheless completely absorbed me. Take, for instance, Lucky Luke and Silver Arrow: Sølvpilen in Norwegian, Zilverpijl in its original Flemish. I used to look at these before I could read, and so singular images, not narratives, stand out in my memory now. It's a thick soup of cultural appropriation; stories of indigenous groups in America, imagined by a Belgian, and filtered through Scandinavia of the 1970s and 80s.



Back to the loupes. I've two at the moment. One is a double lens that focuses only at a certain angle to the material examined. This gives me the airplane view. My other loupe has a flashlight and sits right on the plate, giving me views enlarged up to one hundred times. With this one I get a sense of the depth of the valleys and rivers, the structure of each plateau and plain.

During my studies I've encountered another canyon landscape: that of the Mesa landscapes of Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah, as described by Aby Warburg on his travels among the Pueblo peoples. I realize I'm still seeing this landscape through European eyes, but at least Warburg attempts to understand the people he visits on their own terms, and likewise their relation to the landscape. For a description of the dances and rituals of the Pueblo peoples I recommend Warburg's *Lecture on Serpent Ritual* (1923).



"Suddenly a bee booms in my ear," said Neville. "It is here; it is past." I am green as a yew tree in the shade of the hedge. My hair is made of leaves. I am rooted to the middle of the earth. My body is a stalk. I press the stalk. A drop oozes from the hole at the mouth and slowly, thickly, grows larger and larger. Now something pink passes the eye-hole. Now an eye-beam is slid through the chink. Its beam strikes me. I am a boy in a grey flannel suit. She has found me. I am struck on the nape of the neck. She has kissed me. All is shattered. Now I will wrap my agony inside my pocket-handkerchief. But she is blind after the light and trips and flings herself down on the roots under the trees, where the light seems to pant in and out, in and out. I have eyes that look close to the ground and see insects in the grass. Things are huge and very small. "This is here," said Jinny, "this is now. But soon we shall go. Soon Miss Curry will blow her whistle. We shall walk. We shall part." That is where I am going, and Susan and Rhoda. This is only here; this is only now. Now we lie under the currant bushes and every time the breeze stirs we are mottled all over. My hand is like a snake's skin. My knees are pink floating islands. Your face is like an apple tree netted under. Water pours down the runnel of my spine. Bright arrows of sensation shoot on either side. I am covered with warm flesh. My dry crannies are wetted; my cold body is warmed; it is sluiced and gleaming. Water descends and sheets me like an eel. Pouring down the walls of my mind, running together, the day falls copious, resplendent. Now I tie my pyjamas loosely round me, and lie under this thin sheet afloat in the shallow light which is like a film of water drawn over my eyes by a wave. But look—he flicks his hand to the back of his neck. For such gestures one falls hopelessly in love for a lifetime. Under B shall come "Butterfly powder." If, in my novel, I describe the sun on the window-sill, I shall look under B and find butterfly powder. That will be useful. The tree "shades the window with

green fingers." That will be useful. ... through the trembling grasses. Their world is the real world. The things they lift are heavy. Alone, I often fall down into nothingness. I must push my foot stealthily lest I should fall off the edge of the world into nothingness. I have to bang my head against some hard door to call myself back to the body. I dash and sprinkle myself with the bright waters of childhood. Also I wish to add to my collection of valuable observations upon the true nature of human life. His solitude shows signs of cracking. Crowding, like a fluttering bird, one sentence crosses the empty space between us. It settles on his lips. Having dropped off satisfied like a child from the breast, I am at liberty now to sink down, deep, into what passes, this omnipresent, general life. to make one thing, not enduring—for what endures?—but seen by many eyes simultaneously. I am like the foam that races over the beach or the moonlight that falls arrowlike here on a tin can, here on a spike of the mailed sea holly, or a bone or a half-eaten boat. I am whirled down caverns, and flap like paper against endless corridors, and must press my hand against the wall to draw myself back. All are merged in one turning wheel of single sound. All separate sounds—wheels, bells, the cries of drunkards, of merry-makers—are churned into one sound, steel blue, circular. ... ruthless. The waves were steeped deep-blue save for a pattern of diamond-pointed light on their backs which rippled as the backs of great horses ripple with muscles as they move. ... We deserve then to be tripped by molehills. Alone I should stand on the empty grass and say, Rooks fly; somebody passes with a bag; there is a gardener with a wheelbarrow. I like to hear the soft rush of the lift and the thud with which it stops on my landing and the heavy male tread of responsible feet down the corridors. If I press on, I shall inherit a chair and a rug; a place in Surrey with glass houses, and some rare conifer, melon or flowering tree which other merchants will envy. All for a

moment wavered and bent in uncertainty and ambiguity, as if a great moth sailing through the room had shadowed the immense solidity of chairs and tables with floating wings. I have seen the windows run with heat, I have smelt the sink. I admit for one moment the soundless flight of upright bodies down the moving stairs ... women whose hair is dank, whose long breasts sag, with children tugging at their long breasts. There are no commas or semi-colons. The lines do not run in convenient lengths. I am like some vast sucker, some glutinous, some adhesive, some insatiable mouth. ... and in this unconsciousness attain the utmost freedom from friction and part the weeds that grow over the mouths of sunken channels. ... the most naïvely surprised; ... how you stand embedded in a substance made of repeated moments run together. But now listen; tick, tick; hoot, hoot; the world has hailed us back to it. One cigarette end is the only point of emphasis among us. Life is not susceptible perhaps to the treatment we give it when we try to tell it. With dispassionate despair, with entire disillusionment, I surveyed the dust dance; Heaven be praised for solitude that has removed the pressure of the eye, the solicitation of the body, and all need of lies and phrases.

A collage of excerpts from Virginia Woolf's *The Waves*



I made a short visit to my friend Amanda the other day, to deliver a print of mine in exchange for a bowl of hers. We kept some distance between us, skipping our usual greeting and goodbye hug. She lent me John Berger's *The Red Tenda of Bologna* (2007), and while reading it this morning, longing for Bologna, I also longed for travel in general.

As much as Berger's text is a portrait of the city of Bologna and its citizens, it is also a portrait of his beloved uncle. He describes their travels to Normandy and Brittany, John at fourteen, seeing the cyclists of the Tour pass by. It took me back to a trip I made with my parents in the same area; also watching the Tour for a brief moment, but a lot more time spent in medieval fortresses, on D-day beaches, on looking at the Bayeux tapestry, on looking at cows.



A street in Los Angeles. Eyes as tools, devouring the landscape, objects; studying, in search of material to be processed. My camera is a prosthesis assisting me in picking out compositions in colors, contrasts, lines. Moments I wish to be able to keep in my bank of visual memories.

Collected items, glaze tests, and other materials are tools. I need to have them around me, like a part of the landscape, the road to work before starting off every day. Be able to look at them, touch them, think with them. To constantly arrange and rearrange them. A tactile and ever changing mindmap of my process that I can revise and revisit forever.

My body, my limbs, my senses are tools. With the presence of my body, my hands in the material, I experience myself being the most intelligent me. My hands are receiving and sending. I am here.







I work with textiles and I focus at the moment on passages. When I think of passages, I envision all the doors I have passed through in life, transitions that have led to something new and, at the same time, let me put something behind me. Sometimes it takes courage to pass through.

Themes like birth and death preoccupy me, not just the physical aspects, but also the symbolic and the ritual. This entrance into life and the exit from it distinguish between what we know and what we do not know, the visible as well as the invisible, the physical as well as the immaterial; this is something I explore and take up in my artistic expression in terms of passages. I feel a kinship with the Ashlad in Norwegian folk tales, the poor hero



who succeeds because he helps people and picks up things along his way, which come in useful later on. I also collect what I find along my way. It may be textiles or objects I come across, words I read or hear, but also feelings and incidents, what I understand and, above all, what I cannot comprehend. Just as the Ashlad's brothers are critical of him, I, too, have a saboteur within me who occasionally pops up full of criticism and a thinly veiled contempt. The Ashlad does not let anything stop him, but continues to pursue his hopes, dreams, and desires.

I actively use stream of consciousness, intuition, presence, and silence. The loom becomes a metaphor: the threads of the warp become threads of the life I live, and the threads of the weft turn into my way of working. Together they form a way of life.





One on One

A brief exposition of the art of surviving the hour of the wolf

The art of evasion or stealth is my hallmark. One minute I am captured and the next I am free. You can grab me and take firm hold, yet within a split second I will turn the tables on you, and your arm will be twisted into a painful lock. This is the skill that I try to polish so that even if I am accidentally captured, no one can restrain me for long.

1. *In a "ready" position, take hold of your sword, hand reversed on the hilt.*

At night we meet, me and my nemesis, the hidden one. Like Sisyphus we push the rock. We gather strength and prepare for battle. We are black and white. Armed with swords and the star, shaken. With fear and disgust we take up our positions. Hope is nothing but the earth's law of rotation and the impending dawn. We know the same tricks and techniques, we mirror each other like a Rorschach test, we are batmen and moths. We each know the other's next move. The situation picks up at the warriors' avenue, as the horizon eats the sun in one last gulp. Game on, anaconda.

2. *Draw the sword straight out of the scabbard.*

Our night's youth are dominated by overpowering and straight backs. We have done this before. Trying our best to impress with sensual movements. The pinkness of sun-down asks for it, like a slut. One mistake and our orders will turn to dust and to roads made of good intentions. Again and again. We are the one who endures.

3. *Then as the blade emerges, twist your wrist to point the sword to the front.*

The sound of iron against iron gives jazzy rhythms to the cloth-clad feet that traipse back and forth. I can see.

Through a slit in the solid cover the cuddly eyes
gleam. I see growth and destruction. We come pre-
pared, once again. Try not to drown in the mirror.

4. *Raise the sword until the back of your right
hand is close to your forehead, and take the
bottom of the hilt into your left hand.*

The darkness makes it hard to see. Compact sounds
overwhelm the blackness. I can hear. The ground vi-
brates. Quivering heart, trembling hand. One powerful
blow is enough to divide one across. A cut and a slice.
I am a filet. This is not insomnia. White narrow clouds
under dark skies. Oh, mother, give me the sun. Time is
of the essence now, under a strong moon. Capsulizing.
Captivating. Catchy. This is our perpetual penalty.

5. *Change your right hand to a conventional
grip with the fingers pointing forwards.*

As usual, it now burns in the East, flames licking natural
brutalities. The land swallows our sacrifice, ferrous nour-
ishment with intent of future growth. We are shrinking,
limbs are being cut, blow by blow. I can feel. Two new
ones are sprouting where one had been. Two pounds
of flesh for one. I feel you. We have tentacles now.
We carry a thousand dirty, diligent swords. Blades cut
through air, then flesh; it gasps for clean air, free from in-
fection and horror. But here are bad remedies only.

6. *Put your left foot forward.*

The forces are waning, they are being drained. The wind
carries a whisper that you can't win, you can't lose. The last
quarter moon mocks us. Why are you here? Show me the
door of the meadow and I will surrender. The ridiculousness
of the dichotomy amuses me. The terror is complete. I am you.

7. *Complete the sword-drawing movement by cutting
straight down to finish in a front mid-level stance.*

Dark figures on the ground meet in a kiss under the weak
moon. Our faithful iron splits bodies, Sorry. Parted in two
and two we kneel on humid, humble ground. Sorry.



In a Collection of Egyptian Sculptures

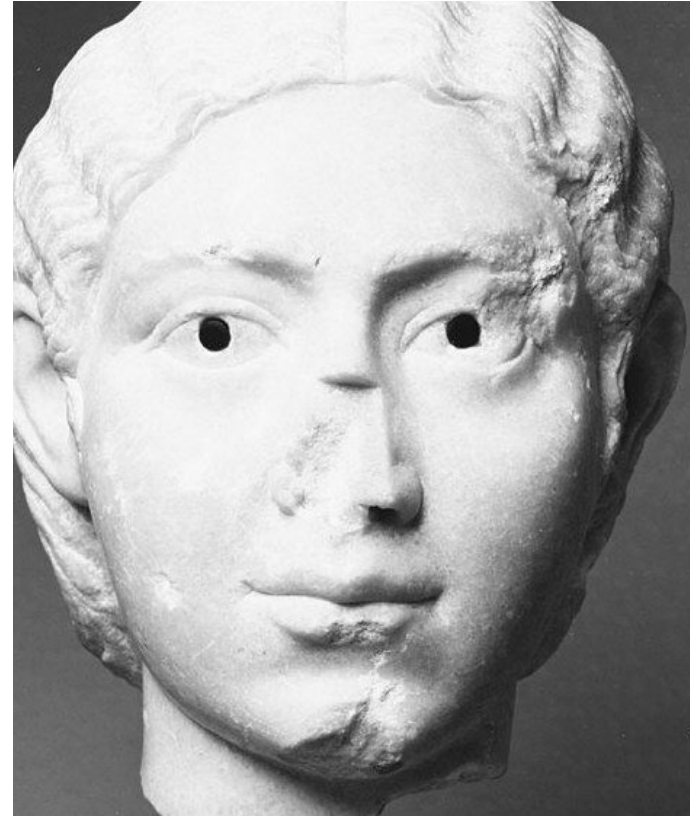
*A poem by Hermann Hesse, written in 1915
Translated from German by James Wright, 1974*

Out of jeweled eyes
Silent and eternal, you gaze away
Over us late brothers.
Neither love nor longing appears to be known among
Your smooth gleaming procession.
Once, inconceivably, you walked, majestic
Brothers and sisters of constellations,
Among the temples.
Even today, holiness like the distant fragrance of gods
Drifts round your brows,
Dignity round your knees:
Your beauty breathes calmly,
Your home is eternity.

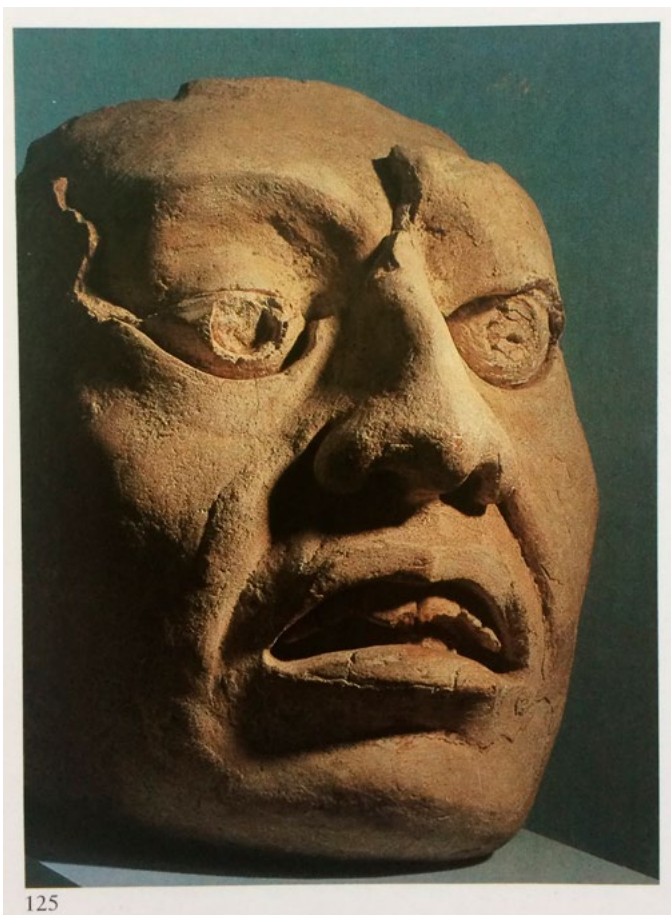
But we, your younger brothers,
Stagger godless through a confusing life,
Our trembling souls stand eagerly, opened
To all the sufferings of passion,
To every burning desire.
Our goal is death,
Our belief is belief in what perishes,
No great distance of time defies
Our fleeting faces.
Nevertheless, we also
Bear, burned into our very souls,
The sign of a secret affinity to the spirit,

We have a foreboding of gods, a feeling for you,
Images of the silent past,
A fearless love. Look:
We hate nothing that exists, not even death,
Suffering and dying
Does not horrify our souls,
As long as we learn more deeply to love.
Our heart is the bird's heart,
And it belongs to the sea and the forest, and we name
Slaves and wretches our brothers,
We still name with loving names both animal and stone.
So also the images
Of our perishing lives will not survive us
In hard stone:
They will vanish smiling,
And in the flickering dust of sunlight
Every hour to new joys and unhappiness,
Impatient, eternal, they will rise.

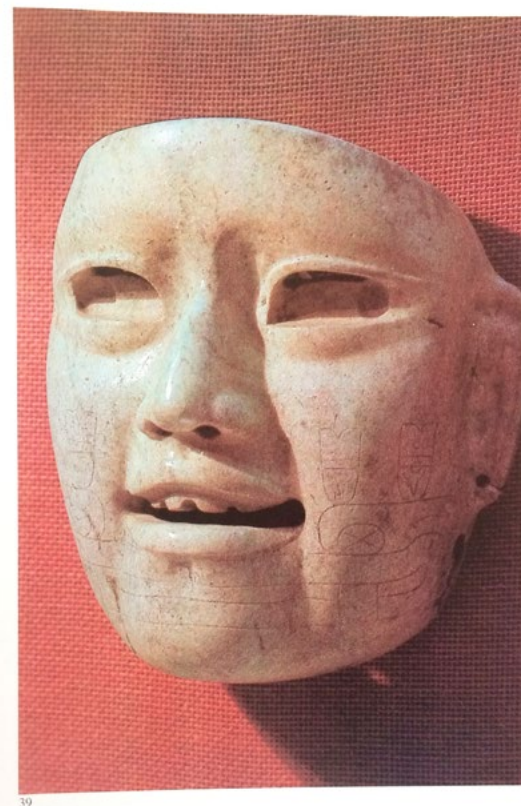




I took a book from my bookshelf:
The Art of Maya by Henri Stierlin.



125 Stucco head from Piedras Negras, on the Usumacinta river: it will be noted that this sculpture, in a style similar to that of Palenque, shows two distinct layers, as though a second decoration overlaid the first in the manner of Maya architectural superimposition (National Museum, Guatemala City).



39 Olmec mask from Las Choapas: this very fine piece, of light jadeite, shows a smiling face with fine features and beautifully formed slit eyes. Its delicate engraving is similar to that on the Las Limas statue (*Plate 33*). The mask is dated 500–400 BC (Jalapa Museum, Veracruz).

I began art school at the age of fourteen. We were supposed to practice life drawing and sculpting, but the model was seldom present. Plaster replicas of antique sculptures, or parts of them, were then arranged in the center of the room. We used to draw with lead pencils in chiaroscuro, and to model with raw clay which we couldn't fire; each finished piece was molded and cast in plaster. Years of clay, plaster, and graphite. Graphite, plaster, and clay.

Everybody seemed to pretend to know nothing about the polychromy of sculptures from classical antiquity. The Renaissance and Neoclassical traditions were deliberately favored over the classical period, despite the former's misinterpretations of the latter.

It seemed every measure was taken in order to avoid the sculptures coming alive. When drawing eyes, we were supposed to focus on the morphology of the face: the brow ridges, the eyelids, the proportions of all the elements and the distances between them. Irises and pupils were considered of secondary importance, not to mention their color, movements, texture, and translucent quality.

Now, as an artist, I draw very little. For many years I have not drawn a single figure. Yet since my daughter was born, this is obviously no longer possible or even desirable. I enjoy drawing with her. She asks me to depict animals, words, inanimate objects, family members, and rainbows. I sometimes include small variations which, in this period of social distancing due to the COVID-19 outbreak, are met with her vigorous objections. Most of the time I doodle the figures unpretentiously. Still, it is instructive. It turns out that when I depict a face, I never include the eyes' irises and pupils.

I am drawing empty-eyed portraits now. Perhaps I am not drawing faces but masks, ready to be donned, ready to come alive. What do portraits want? Some look at us, calling for an emotional response.



Others look so vivid that it seems they lack only a voice to become alive. At times they do come alive, as in the many myths featuring image-making episodes. Maybe we need new myths, rituals, and meanings. Maybe we need new masks to wear, to take off, to exchange with one another, to animate, and to be animated by. If we are to follow directives and protocols to protect our most vulnerable fellow beings, it is vital also to find ways that allow us to come together, even in this time of social distancing measures, sanitary masks, and computer screens.

Portraits can travel even when people can't. In the past, the exchange of portraits was practiced as a token of mutual appreciation, companionship, and friendship. Maybe we should start there; but we should also keep looking for ways to come together in sitting situations, taking the time to listen to each other, borrowing each other's eyes.



I work with virtual reality (VR). Wearing a head-mounted display (HMD), I create installations consisting of transparent materials and images such as 3D models, animations, video-recordings, photographs, and VR-sculpted parts.

Binary codes are numbers. Numbers can be translated into words. Words can be written images. Images are information. In my virtual installation I am surrounded by information—information both captured from reality and produced solely within VR.

This is a glimpse of how the digital is blending more and more into our “real” life and thereby raising the question of where reality lies.





Wood is often perceived as a tough and rigid material, and that may very well be true. However, once you familiarize yourself with the chisel and learn the nuances in the technique of carving, wood behaves as soft clay does, and takes any shape you choose to give it. Like most artistic pursuits, woodcarving has an inherent rhythm and a dance in its creation process. It is dichotomous, being both easy to shape and strong enough to last.

I have portrayed my experiences and those of other Iranian women who have migrated, to show the challenges inherent in integrating into our new societies. I had conversations with these women, and heard their stories: I listened to them. I carried paper and pencil with me to every interview, to capture their pleasant and traumatic experiences in lines and letters, writings and drawings. I transposed these various impressions to preliminary sketches for pieces later made in wood using the traditional Iranian art of woodcarving known as Monabat Moaragh. Dating back to the sixth century, it involves separately carving little pieces of wood then ultimately bringing all of them together as one.



The Isfahan school was the last great school of Persian miniature painting, reaching its zenith in the early seventeenth century under the patronage of the Safavid ruler Shah Abbās (1571–1629).^{*} The Isfahan school's leading master was Rezā Abbāsī, who was greatly influenced by the Kazvin school of portraiture, particularly the work of Sādiqī Beg, which flourished in the late sixteenth century.

Various schools have existed throughout the history of Iranian art, but I was prompted to use and borrow the Isfahan school's figures owing to the independence of the women in the work of Rezā Abbāsī. As Behzad Mohebi noted, Abbāsī portrays women as autonomous, and not in the service of men.^{**} Women had previously played only a complementary role in Persian miniatures, but Rezā Abbāsī strove in his art to depict women going about their daily lives, so as to give them back their personalities.



YOU PLANT A SEED
IT NEEDS HELP FROM THE WIND
THE RAIN AND OTHER CREATURES
GALLERY OF EMPLOYEES - TEN QUESTIONS*
YOU GIVE IT AWAY YOU GIVE IT BACK
CREATION COMES BACK AS A SURPRISE AGAIN

- 1) Who are you?
- 2) How did you end up working at this institution?
- 3) As the artist you, provide, properly acknowledged by the institution and the people that benefit from it?
- 4) Is there anything in your job you would like to be different (e.g. tasks, working environment, benefits, relationship with colleagues, professional students, ...)?
- 5) Can you tell me about the most surprising episode that has happened to you in the institution (e.g. an accident, a strange coincidences, an object you found, a person you met, something you really liked or disliked, ...)?
- 6) Is there anything else you would do as a job? If so, what would be your ideal occupation?
- 7) Is there any passion or interest you would like to continue beside your job?
- 8) What is your relationship with art (e.g., artistic activities in your spare time, an artist in your family, an artwork you own, a project, exhibition, theatre piece or concert that has been particularly significant for you, ...)?
- 9) Can you tell me about something you have lost and wish you could get back?
- 10) Could you think about a question that you would have liked to be addressed to you?

*These questions are instrumental in defining and collecting useful elements and information to be used in the composition of the portrait. The employee must be free to reply to the extent she/he feel comfortable about it. For instance, she/he could use her/his own identity or present a fictional persona, her/his name or an invented one, and decide whether she/he want or doesn't want to include biographical details such as, for instance, the place she/he was born or grew up in, her/his cultural background, her/his family history, her/his previous education, training, working experience, and so on. In any case, the employee will be given the chance to review and edit her/his replies, before approving.

NICHOLAS
GRAFICHOLAS
DRIFTOLAS
ELEKTROLAS
ENGINEEROLAS

WHEN YOU
GIVE AND
WHEN YOU
TAKE

BELIEVE
HOPE
LOVE

AMERKJENNELSE
(WE NEED BOTH?)



GREEN
LIGHT GREEN
PETROL
RED SUN
YELLOW

Gallery of Employees - Samtykkeskjema

ADVENTURE!

Gallery of Employees er et prosjektt av Andrea (Kunstneren*). Prosjektet består av en serie portretter som avbilder de ansatte ved avdeling for Service, Brukerstøtte og Læring ved Kunsthøgskolen i Oslo. Portrettene blir stilt ut til publikum i et utvalg av følgende avgangsutstillinger i mai 2020.

Avtalen:

Kunstneren og en ansatt arrangerer et møte for en samtale, enten på kino eller et annet sted foreslått av den ansatte, gjerne i løpet av februar og mars 2020.

Kunstneren skal levere en skisse ("Designet") av portrettet til de ansatte, som brukes på emner diskutert i samtalen nevnt ovenfor.

Ansatte får muligheten til å foreslå ønsket endring til Designet. Ønskene blir videre diskutert av kunstneren og eventuelt godkrevet eller avslått av de ansatte innen 1. april 2020.

Ansatte kan når som helst velge å trekke seg ut av prosjektet og kunstneren vil da destruere og sette omfattende materialer tilknyttet deltageren.

Portrettet blir produsert av kunstneren etter Designet de ansatte og kunstneren har blitt enlig.

Det ferdige portrettet blir stilt ut i forbindelse med verket Gallery of Employees. Ved nedmontering av utstillingen, blir verket tilbudt Kunsthøgskolen i Oslo. Ved avslutning fra Kunsthøgskolen deles eventuelle gevinster fra salget av de individuelle portretter jevnt mellom kunstneren og deltageren.

Etter to kalenderer, en utstillingens terminsdato, utløper betingelsene til delt eierskap av verket. Kunstneren overtar deretter eierskap av verket og retten til eventuelle videre bruk eller gevinst fra salg.

Som form for kompensering vil kunstneren følge deltageren gjennom arbeidsdagen, for å få et innblikk i den daglige arbeidsprosessen, på et avtalt tidspunkt for 15. juni 2020. Alternativt kan kunstneren tilby å hjelpe til på en annen måte etter avtale (som f.eks. teke bilder, skrive eller annen tjeneste bestemt av deltageren), som også må skje før den 15. juni 2020. Eventuell tjeneste skal være tiden brukt i den opprinnelige samtalen, eventuelt for om Designet.

Kunstneren

Deltageren





Beyond the Aquarium

All of a sudden encountering an unprecedented global situation, living through this historical moment, takes me back to that moment of transit when I began developing my project. But this time, the impact on me is not the same, though being in a studio and a situation of material crisis (yet still more privileged than many others) makes me extremely conscious of the world outside my tiny room—if that doesn't sound paradoxical in any way.

Some major plans and events may have been canceled but we cannot cancel the spring! On this positive note, I try to continue with my practice in some ways, hoping, if not to get back to the same life, then to a more meaningful one instead.

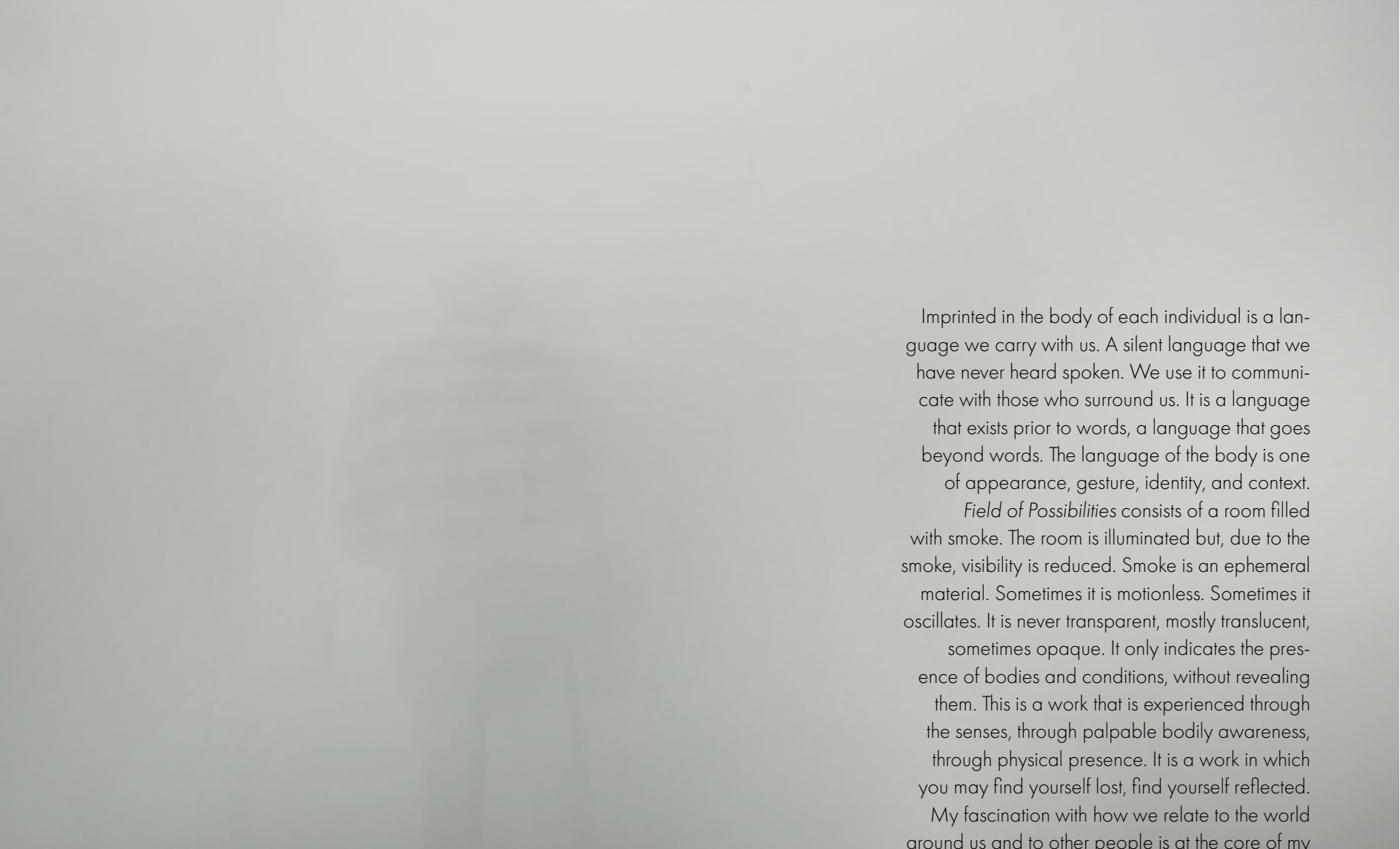
This journey starts with a pond in India, followed by the small jar of an aquarium and the mesmerizing experiences I have had with it. And then the sudden guilty feeling that made me decide to give up my aquarium, to give it back to the pond. And this was where my work *Beyond the Aquarium* began.

After coming to Oslo I started to experience a transition period, one I could best relate to the aquarium I owned a couple of years back. It became a seed. I started with an image of an aquarium. This further expanded to encompass ideas of origin, culture and, finally, it became spatial. After entering the installation one is surrounded by tactile, cyanotype walls, transparent or opaque; and gradually one starts to find traces of familiar forms and objects from everyday life.

You are going to enter my space,
A space I have dreamt of.
No, I don't encourage you to dream,
I want to encourage you to feel,
Feel something which is beyond reality
Yet which is not unreal.



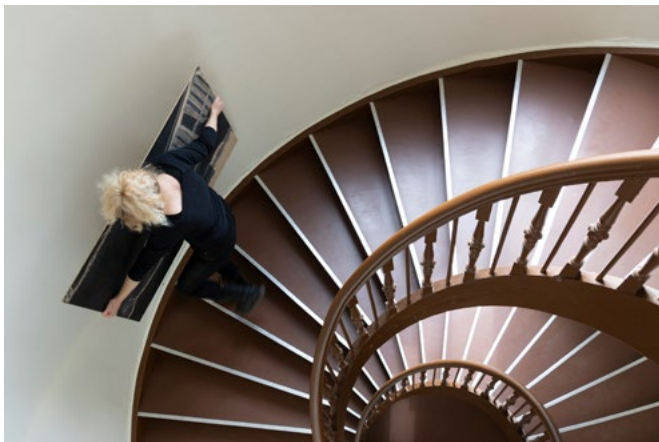




Imprinted in the body of each individual is a language we carry with us. A silent language that we have never heard spoken. We use it to communicate with those who surround us. It is a language that exists prior to words, a language that goes beyond words. The language of the body is one of appearance, gesture, identity, and context.

Field of Possibilities consists of a room filled with smoke. The room is illuminated but, due to the smoke, visibility is reduced. Smoke is an ephemeral material. Sometimes it is motionless. Sometimes it oscillates. It is never transparent, mostly translucent, sometimes opaque. It only indicates the presence of bodies and conditions, without revealing them. This is a work that is experienced through the senses, through palpable bodily awareness, through physical presence. It is a work in which you may find yourself lost, find yourself reflected.

My fascination with how we relate to the world around us and to other people is at the core of my practice. The body is our primary contact with the external world and any meeting with what surrounds us holds a multiplicity of interesting mechanisms.



the flies just lie there motionless black big
I hold the vacuum cleaner in my hands

naked in the bathtub and suck in one and one fly

one and one fly one and one fly one and one fly

they lie there alive vibrating without movement

my toes cling to the bathtub slippery moist

it happened in another time and the window was open
and the wind touched my skin naked in the room
with the tiles and the blue bathtub

and everything happened
while the vacuum cleaner drank water
and the portable record player moved around and around

and I sat on the floor listening to unknown future
little did I know then and only then
everything was motionless motionless

and sound and rock 'n' roll
and the record player stopped playing

and I looked deep into the water
and said everything will be all right
everything will be all right

Foreword

In the extraordinary and unforgettable year of 2020, it is a pleasure to welcome you to this special MFA Degree Publication that presents and celebrates nineteen artists graduating from the MFA programmes *Medium and Material-based Art* and *Art and Public Space*.

Produced during the escalating corona pandemic, it is the result of intense activity despite the disruptions and distractions of lockdown. It contains diverse imagery and visual documentation, collaboratively written texts and individual contributions. It is a pertinent challenge to find alternative and parallel ways of meeting the public. A particular challenge lies in trying to convey the spatial and temporal dimensions, the physical and tactile qualities of individual art works, when real exhibitions and public gatherings are out of bounds. What we need to develop is other ways to reach out into the world, to rethink, readjust, and expand our idea of the public, of where we meet, and of how we meet. Creating a publication involves the digital techniques of making, communicating, and acting in a virtual world in order to produce something tangible that we can hold in our hands, and read time and again, as a real and lasting memento.

Since the closure of the KHiO campus on March 13, 2020, a working situation characterised by remote online meetings and the solitude of isolation has been imposed. The Master students have had no or only limited access to the studio spaces and workshop facilities they usually rely on. Even installation of their final degree



show was abruptly cancelled for the foreseeable future. Everyone has had to adjust to a new reality, to different ways of living, making, and communicating. In its broadest sense crisis is a natural part of all creative endeavour. The urgency of crisis leads to radical solutions, inspires renewal, and defines new beginnings. An important element of any art practice is the ability to navigate crisis.

I don't have a clue how to become an internet-based ceramicist is a souvenir of a precarious time, one that serves to accomplish an essential part of artistic practice: the meeting with the public. It represents and engenders another space for public encounter in which the readers can give their imagination free rein, form their own opinions, and articulate their own thoughts.

The two Master programmes thrive on their unique mixture of specialisations and the cultural diversity of the students and staff. This year's amazing group of graduating artists comes from Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Italy, Lebanon, Iran, India, Egypt, China, Taiwan, the USA, and Peru. Perhaps what defines and unites these artists the most is their readiness to work together, exchange ideas, and solve problems, even at a distance. As they come from the world at large, they forge relationships for the future across the entire planet, weaving Oslo and KHiO into their long-lasting network. Is this the last time we will experience such a multiplicity of languages being spoken at our art academy? Is this the last time that cultural differences will be celebrated here, and learned from? Is this the last time that the world will come to us?

Hopefully not, but we will definitely need to re-think the present to become our future.

At this pivotal moment we can only speculate about what is on the horizon and what will emerge in the coming months. The long-term impact of the pandemic on society, local and global, its influence on the arts and the art world, the consequences for life on earth, post COVID-19, remain to be seen.

In these strange and unpredictable times, the manifold expression of art and the perspectives of artists are more important than ever.

Sunniva McAlinden
Professor and Head of Programme,
MFA in Medium and Material-based Art

Apolonija Šušteršič
Professor and Head of Programme,
MFA in Art and Public Space

1 May 2020

The teaching staff and guest teachers are a crucial part of the Master programmes. Tiril Schrøder, Merete Røstad, Hans Hamid Rasmussen, Caroline Slotte, Jan Pettersson, Steinar Elstrøm, Trine Wester, Olga Schmedling, Line Ulekleiv, and Arve Rød have been the principal tutors and mentors to this year's group of Master graduates from the Art and Craft department.

A special thank you to the curator and editor, Joerg Franzbecker, for his knowledgeable and enthusiastic collaboration, and to the publication's designer, Vibeke Luther O'Rourke, for her keen involvement.





I don't have a clue how to become an internet-based ceramicist

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Map of Utopia. Engraving by Abraham Ortelius, dated to 1595–96. Now
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Informal Housing Expansions: Transformation of Multi-Story Housing in
Egypt
Multi-story Incremental Housing at the 6th World Urban Forum, Naples
2012

Dr Graham Tipple, consultant in housing and urban policy in rapidly
developing countries; Visiting Fellow, School of Architecture, Planning and
Landscape, Newcastle University, England
Summarized by Lilith Kreiß, Department of Architecture, TU Darmstadt

Text Credits:

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I'm on Google Street View, revisiting my old neighborhood in Madrid. Throughout my stay there, the tiled pictorial street signs helped me navigate the city. For me, they were a constant input of language and history, an expansion of the act of walking.

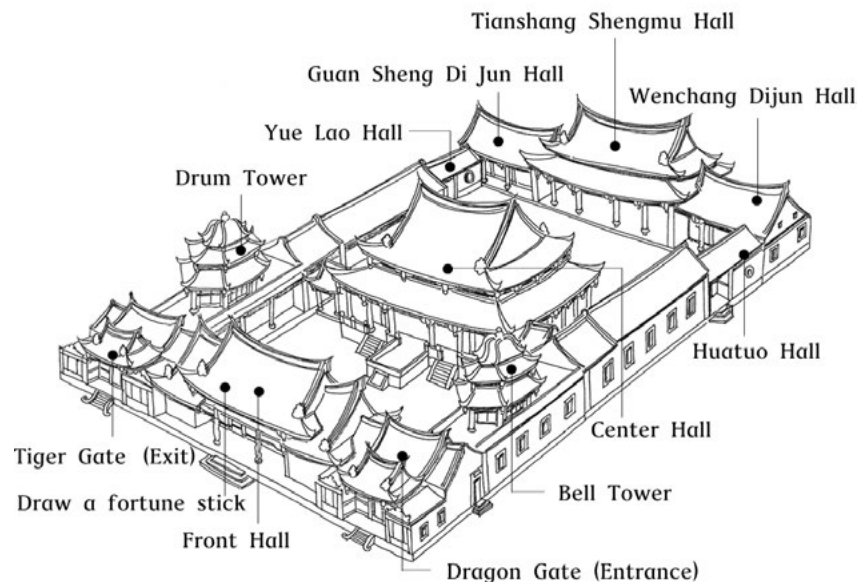
I wish I were in Madrid right now. Not really right now—a year ago, let's say—I would walk out of the flat on Calle Lavapies, and down to the square, have a slice of pizza at the corner store, walk up Calle Argumosa, observe the tables, the people having a morning cortado, eating porras, and maybe get a vermouth before turning left into Dr Fourquet, on second thought, maybe not; it is a bit early in the morning. I would then turn right into Santa Isabel, walk toward the Cinema Doré, and

maybe stop at a bar that's on the left, halfway down.

It's comforting to read all these names again; I'm walking these streets with you. The lack of plans, the flow of each day unfolding—on good days I could really enjoy it. I was lonely in Madrid, but walking its streets always made me feel better.

I walked past Cinema Doré many times, often on my way to Reina Sofia. I'd walk from the flat on Calle de Toledo, next to La Cebada, through narrow streets, passing a small square I can't remember the name of, and onto Tirso de Molina with its flower stands and, I believe, some of those bow-tied waiters too. Take off at the right-hand corner of Tirso, following Calle de la Magdalena, at Antón Martín take Calle de Santa Isabel, in which you'll find Cinema Doré with its Art Nouveau facade.

I went to some screening at the Doré. It was during my last stay in Madrid, in January–February 2017. They were screening *The Deer Hunter*, the epic war drama directed by Michael Cimino and starring Robert De Niro, amongst others. Three hours of psychological violence and tension. We were defeated and destroyed after that. Inside the cinema they have a little record shop and before heading out I bought this record:



I received a postcard a few days ago from Sung-wan, a friend who is on an exchange semester in Prague.

"I stumbled upon the Kafka Museum on my 20th day in Prague. There are images from the early 20th century (streets, people, shops), allowing everyone to go through the routes that Kafka mentioned and lived."

The last time she and I met was in January, when I went back to Taiwan to vote. We and a mutual friend were walking around Wanhua, Taipei's oldest district. We wandered through the night market with sausages and fried sweet potato balls in our hands. We walked past Lungshan Temple and decided to go into this massive religious building with its twenty-five gods.

I'd lived in this city for four years, but I'd never set foot in one of its best-known attractions. It's like a maze crowded with locals and visitors. I'd describe the Lungshan Temple as an all-you-can-worship buffet with quite a quantity of selections of gods to meet your every need. If you are single and looking for a partner, then look up Yuelao Shenjun; if you want a baby, then talk to Zhusheng Niang Niang; promotions and good grades? No problem, Wenchang Dijun will cover that. But for a full good luck package, a map would be needed to maintain a particular order and make sure you are on the right track.

Starting from the right-hand entrance, we all held incense in our hands, followed the entire route, and exited on the left.

I haven't been to Prague yet, but I think I will; and I'll walk the Kafka route with her, just as we did in Wanhua, like a pilgrimage.



Here is an excerpt from Neil MacGregor's *A History of the World in 100 Objects* that stood out to me:

What the map shows above all is rivers... where the people are grouped together, not the land over which they roam and hunt. This is a map about communities, not geography, about habits of use, not patterns of ownership. [...] If the Indians didn't understand the notion of exclusive land ownership, the Europeans could not grasp the Indians' intense spiritual relationship to their land, the notion that the loss of earth was in some measure the loss of heaven.

A map, roughly 100 x 126 cm, defined by the deerskin it is drawn on (and currently held in the British Museum). The deer itself is palpably present, for we can see exactly how it died: there are holes in the skin from a musket ball that passed from the animal's right shoulder to its rear flank, almost certainly going through the heart.

The map was made in 1774 by a Native American (a skilled hunter) and provides insight into the thirteen years between 1763, when the British threw the French out of the American north, and the outbreak of the American War of Independence in 1776.

The map is a record of one of the many conversations between these invasive settlers and the Native Americans. Near the center of the map is the phrase "Piankishwa Sold" and suggests that the map is a record of an already agreed land transaction (but in fact this deal was never ratified by the British colonial authorities). The Piankishwa were a tribe of Native Americans living in an area that now includes modern Indiana and Ohio.





The Kangxi Taiwan Map, the earliest known painted scroll of the island, is dated to 1699–1704, during the reign of Emperor Kangxi of the Qing Dynasty. It is 64 cm wide and 523 cm long, and depicts the geographical and cultural landscape of western Taiwan. Taiwan was under Qing rule at the time and hence the birth of this map: it was made for political and military purposes and enabled the imperial court to govern the island.

What attracts me most to this map is its unusual perspective. The left part of the map is the geographical north and vice versa. On a satellite map, we can see that the main island of Taiwan consists of mountain ranges running parallel to the east coast. The Kangxi Map only depicts the western part of the island, since the eastern part beyond the mountain ranges was difficult to see or explore. Moreover, it was home to indigenous groups. Their cultures differed significantly from that of the majority residing in the west of Taiwan, immigrants from mainland China, the sovereign ruler at the time. The east part of the island became a “forbidden” place on account of the natural barrier and the constant conflicts stemming from misunderstandings and differences. This is why the east is not featured on the map.

Often, in the history of China, groups of painters portrayed the imperial court. In this map, it looks like an anonymous royal painter perceived the distant island from a palace across the Taiwan Straits or at the least from the perspective of the mainland. This is reflected both in the look and the mindset of the map.

Apart from the political aspect, the map is also considered an important resource for understanding the social and cultural life of that era. There are detailed depictions of human figures, animals, houses, economic activities, transportation, and nature.





Alone when I walk,
 I feel more breeze,
 I hear more sound
 And my senses are more activated
 I alone become a witness
 Of the magical power.
 The feeling of winter may be cold but
 These delicate touches of the wind on my face
 Wake me up,
 Remind me
 Of the bitter sweetness
 Which our beloved nature holds.
 Though being the most intelligent being on earth,
 Still fails in front of you.



Some days ago, I dreamt I was travelling along a beautiful coastline. I don't know where exactly, but I remember it was a warm and sunny Mediterranean landscape, not my usual chilly surroundings in Oslo.

On August 20, 1781, a group of around one thousand citizens from the once Swedish island of Dagö in the Baltic Sea set off on a nine-month long march through Belarus to the Black Sea coast in Russia. Dagö, which now belongs to Estonia, had by that time become a part of Russia. The Swedish inhabitants were offered free land and homes on the mainland, which was probably a way for the Russians to inhabit the island themselves.

Free land and homes may have seemed like a good offer to the poor peasants. But on their arrival on the Black Sea coast on May 1, 1782, only 135 of them were still alive: the children and the old people had not survived the nine months of harsh travel. The Swedes settled in the village of Zmievka, which has been known ever since also as Gammalsvenskby (Old Swedish Town). A century and a half later, many of the inhabitants migrated to Sweden. One of them married and fathered four children. Three of these children later settled down in Norway. All of these distances travelled are now a part of my family line.

Travelling gives impulses. Suddenly not being allowed to travel, which is the situation as I write, means I must create other impulses with words: as with this mind-travel through the map, and the landscape in a forever mysterious part of a family tree.



Map of Utopia

Engraving by Abraham Ortelius, dated to 1595–96. Now on display in Antwerp. Based on Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516).



Auroville. I have a lot of mixed feelings about this place, but its landscape is beautiful, peace-inducing, and very intuitive to navigate—yet still easy to get lost in.

“Auroville wants to be a universal town where men and women of all countries are able to live in peace and progressive harmony above all creeds, all politics, and all nationalities. The purpose of Auroville is to realize human unity.

...

Auroville is located in south India, mostly in the State of Tamil Nadu (some parts are in the State of Puducherry), a few kilometers inland from the Coromandel Coast, approx. 150 km south of Chennai (previously Madras) and 10 km north of the town of Puducherry

....

Auroville is a universal township in the making for a population of up to 50,000 people from around the world.”

from “Auroville in brief” on the Auroville website:
auroville.org, retrieved February 8, 2020



A Study of Informal Public Housing Expansions:
Transformations of Multi-story Public Housing in Egypt

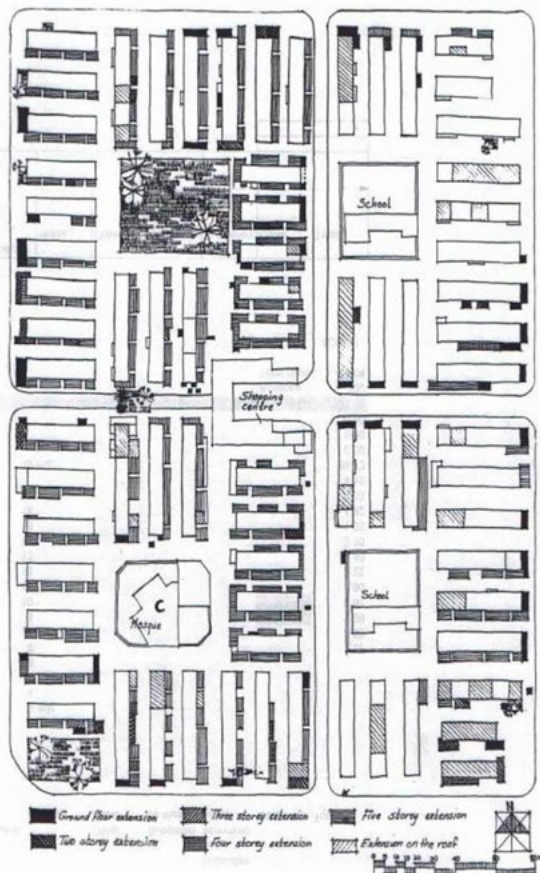


Figure 3: By 1993 the large majority of buildings have been incrementally extended: the plan shows the original buildings with a white footprint; expansions are hatched, with variations by the number of floors, (by Hala Kardash).

Incremental expansions

Despite the deteriorated conditions, many residents had transformed their living space and constructed rooms. The transformation had to take in account the neighbors beneath and above. Remarkably, up to an additional 50 percent of living space was added, and only one in five of the owners did not transform their space (Figure 3).

According to Dr. Tipple, security of tenure of the apartment was a precondition for the incremental process to occur. After securing tenure, the families spent the equivalent of one annual household income to transform their homes. The inhabitants hired informal private sector contractors who added a concrete frame with brick in-filling construction and individualized it according to the families' needs (Figure 4).

Overall, the strategies used for expanding the dwelling unit may be categorized as follows:

- Plans break out through balconies
- Alter kitchen space (becomes a pass-through space)
- Add new room(s) and often a larger balcony
- Often results in unventilated and unit rooms
- Often express individual personality with decoration, etc.

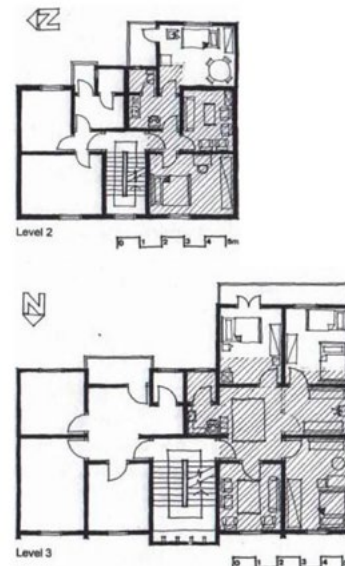


Figure 4: Examples for additional rooms (some unventilated and unit) and the kitchen as a pass-through space. (Shaded areas show the original apartment in the extended unit.)



In Egypt in the early 1960s, under the rule of President Gamal Abdel Nasser, my grandfather moved from Upper Egypt to the suburb of Helwan in the city of Cairo, to work in a military factory. The job benefits included a small and modest two-bedroom apartment in social housing close to the factory, in an area known locally as "Economic Housing." This apartment was a very low-cost rental. At seven years old, I moved in with my grandmother after my grandfather's passing.

Ten years later, the occupants felt an urge to expand the apartments. They wanted a larger space for the family since their offspring were now of a marrying age. The buildings were located in front of empty land plots that were far enough from the main street to allow for a building extension. The occupants of the building rallied to collect enough money to go ahead with this construction, although well aware that it was illegal, with no permits or papers to verify or legalize it. In the middle of the night, for months, workers would build the extension, allowing for two extra rooms in each apartment.

Four years later, there was a second move to create more space; two more rooms were added, making these six-bedroom apartments. This had an extraordinary impact on the way I understood structure, necessity, and collectivity. The modest people in these apartments had a problem,

worked together, and found a collective solution of benefit to all, despite the problematic and disorienting final layout of the apartments, and the small matter of legality.

How do systems and laws affect certain people more than others? How do they bring about alternative and continually changing economies that are calibrated to appear legitimate to the government? What happened to the social housing of the mainly government workers in the suburb of Helwan was not specific to that particular locale. It is a portrait of how a community addresses bigger questions, and how certain policies affect them.

The changes to the apartments in the suburb in Helwan not only affected the occupants, but the urban landscape of the suburb, the city, and the country as a whole. The growth of the population at that time, and local migration from different areas of Egypt to the metropolis of Cairo, changed dynamics and movements within the city. From architectural buildings to public spaces and general infrastructure, the city built itself of its own free will.

My work series "coalition/cooperative products," which draws on "hybrid objects," stems from the assemblage of two or more objects, generating an added value.

