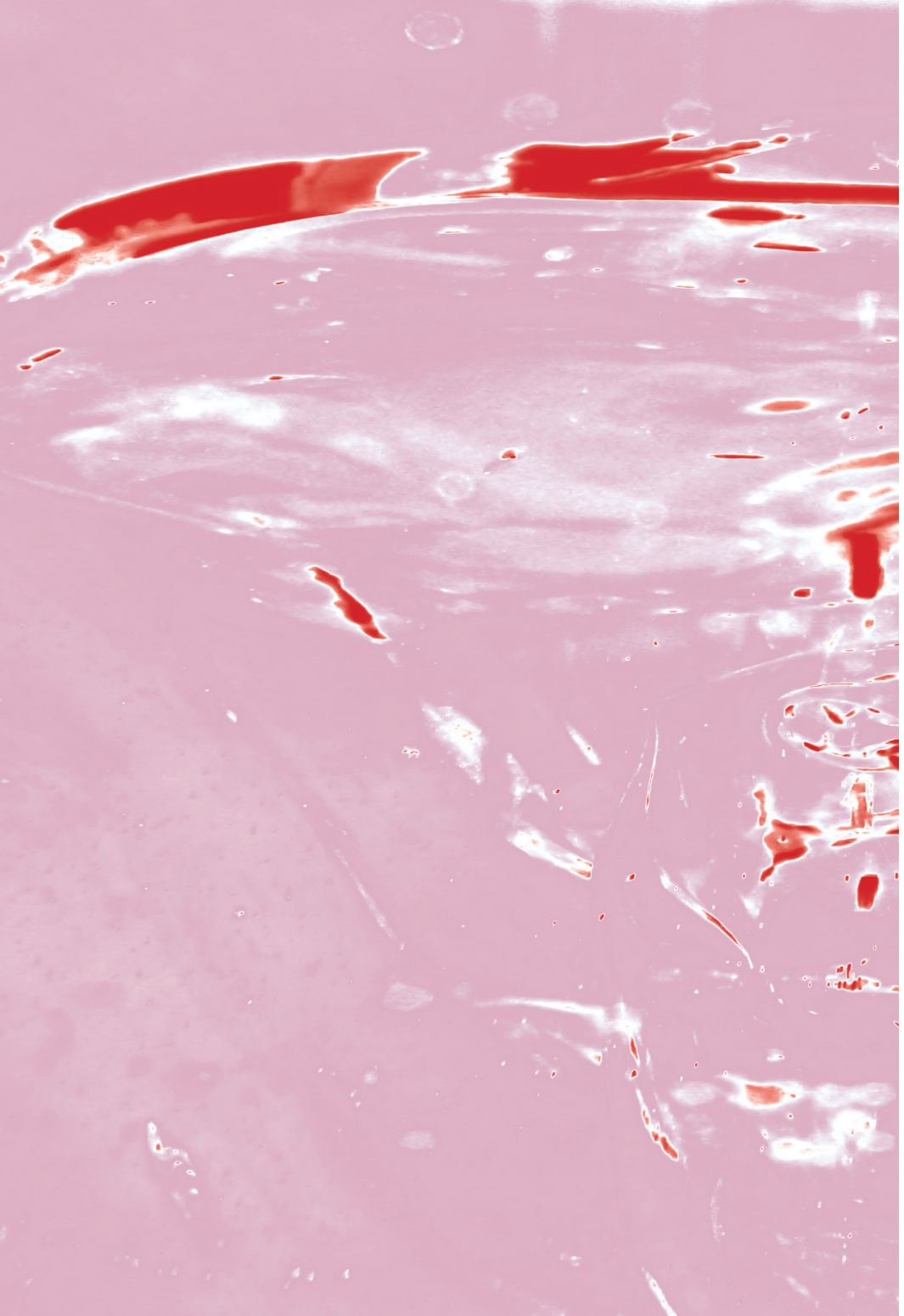
TRANSPARENT

an excavation of the body-self

LEONOR LIMA



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Title
Transparent: an excavation of the *body-self*

Author
Leonor Lima

Graphic Design
Roberta Miranda

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Autore
Leonor Lima

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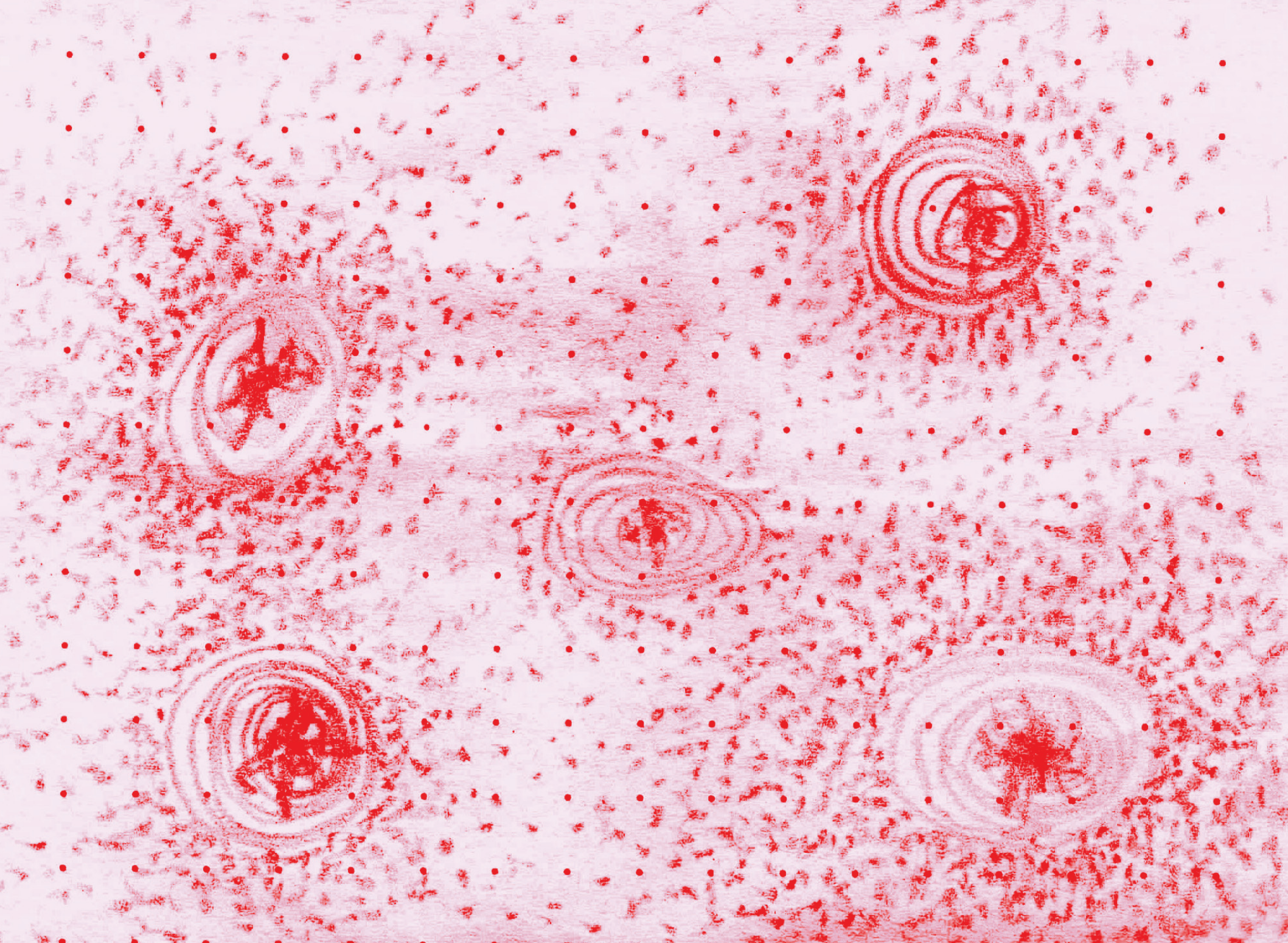
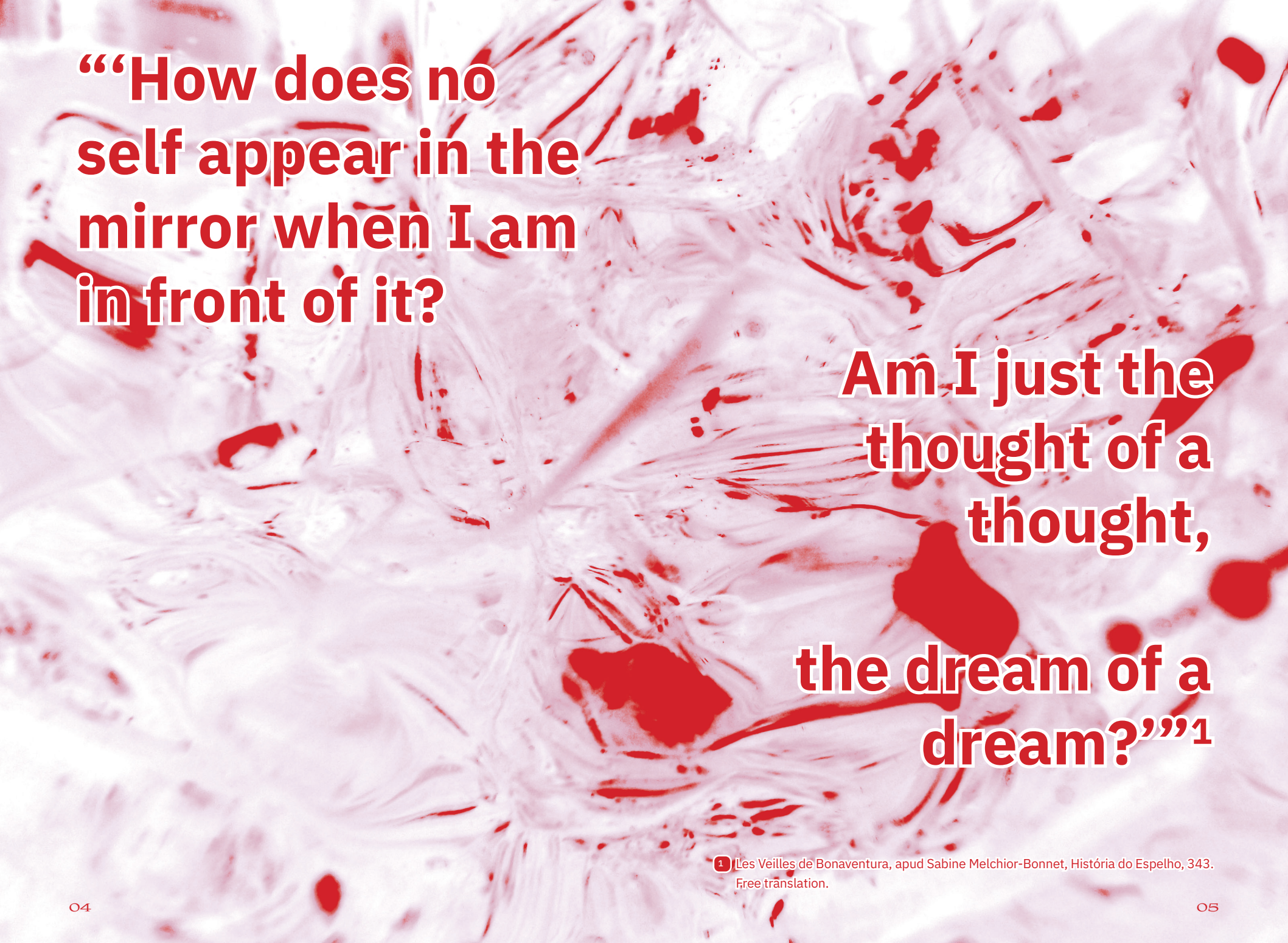




1 Les Veilles de Bonaventura, apud Sabine Melchior-Bonnet, História do Espelho, 343. Free translation.

Trigger Warning:

This work contains mentions of mutilation, self inflicted pain and acts of gender based violence.

ABSTRACT

The *body-self* relationship is the starting point of this research, questioning how a *body* might be repossessed and (re)connected with the *self,* in a process of chipping away the time that has stuck to it. This investigation explores the fracture of *self* from *body.* Questioning how pain, love and mutilation might harm or help this rupture and how these might affect and be affected by gender deviance, both in and outside of the self. The artistic practice uses the *body-self,* taking it outside of itself and exposing it to external and exteriorised internal stimuli. This expresses itself through interactions with the *body-self* by foreign entities or even by the facing of itself. There is a strong focus on spirituality, philosophy and scientific findings and theory, the latter particularly in themes of dissociation and of human connection to pain. Time, Humanity and the transgender body and its tumultuous relation with the *body-self* also have a significant presence.

Additionally, this research explores a neutral *body,* one outside of gender. It looks at the *body-self* relationship through a lens of time, glass and mirror shards. Addressing issues of bodily transcendence and connection through mutilation and their forced separation via the medium of pain. It further poses questions such as to what extent can pain be used to manipulate the *body-self*? How might the *body-self* connect back to and be affected when coupled with society's imposition of gender roles? Could it be that through the transcendence of rebellion and non conformity to constricting social norms and preconceived ideas, connection may be recovered?

This exploration mixes grotesque, tender, aggressive, and fantasy. It experiments with materials like glass, mirrors, needles and wires, weaving them with fabrics such as tulle and organza, and utilising elements like fire and blood. It reflects on ideas of childhood fantasy, cis-heteronormative concepts, trauma and cleansing destruction. Hereby subverting thematics, through combining contrasting concepts of softness and violence, and creating discrepant and dichotomous situations.

Keywords: Body-self; Time; Mutilation; Fracture; Pain; Transparent; Gender Theory; Humanity.

RESUMO

O ponto de partida desta investigação é a relação corpo-self, questionando como poderá um corpo ser reapossado e (re)conectado com o self, num processo de lascar o tempo que se acumulou. Esta investigação explora a fractura entre o self e o corpo. Questionando como dor, amor e mutilação poderão ferir ou ajudar com esta ruptura, e afetar e ser afetados pelo desvio de género, ambos dentro e fora do self. A prática artística usa o corpo-self, tirando-o fora de si e expondo-o a estímulos exteriores e interiores exteriorizados. Isto expressa-se através de interações com o corpo-self por entidades externas ou até pelo confronto consigo próprio. Há um foco forte em espiritualidade, filosofia, e teoria e descobertas científicas, esta última particularmente em temas de dissociação e de conexão humana com a dor. O Tempo, a Humanidade e o corpo transgénero e a sua relação tumultuosa com o corpo-self também têm uma presença significativa.

Adicionalmente, esta pesquisa explora um corpo neutro, um exterior a género. Ela observa a relação corpo-self através de uma lente temporal, de vidro e de fragmentos de espelho. Abordando questões de transcendência corporal e conexão através de mutilação e a sua separação forçada através do medium da dor. Pondo questões como até onde poderá a dor ser utilizada para manipular o body-self? Como poderá o body-self estar conectado com e ser afetado quando combinado com imposições sociais de papéis de género? Poderá conexão ser recuperada através da transcendência da rebelião e da não conformidade a normas sociais e ideias preconcebidas restritivas?
Esta exploração mistura o grotesco, delicado, agressivo, e a fantasia. Experimenta materiais como o vidro, espelhos, agulhas e arames, tecendo-os com tecidos como tule e organza, e utilizando elementos como fogo e sangue. Reflete sobre ideias de fantasia de infância, conceitos cis-heteronormativos, trauma e destruição purgativa. Subvertendo assim temáticas, através da combinação de conceitos contrastantes de ternura e violência, e criando situações discrepantes e dicotómicas.

Palavras-chave: Corpo-self; Tempo; Mutilação; Fractura; Dor; Transparente; Teoria de Género; Humanidade.

NOTE OF SUBJECTIVE RELEVANCE

The foundation of this research is a temporal theory of identity[2] I entitled *The Divide*. This is a personal theory developed over time through a collection of various inputs from diverse sources, the most relevant of which can be found under *References*. I strove to clarify and simplify it as much as possible as it is key for the understanding of my work and its process. It revolves around complicated and expansive concepts, as such, in the interest of ease of comprehension and communication,

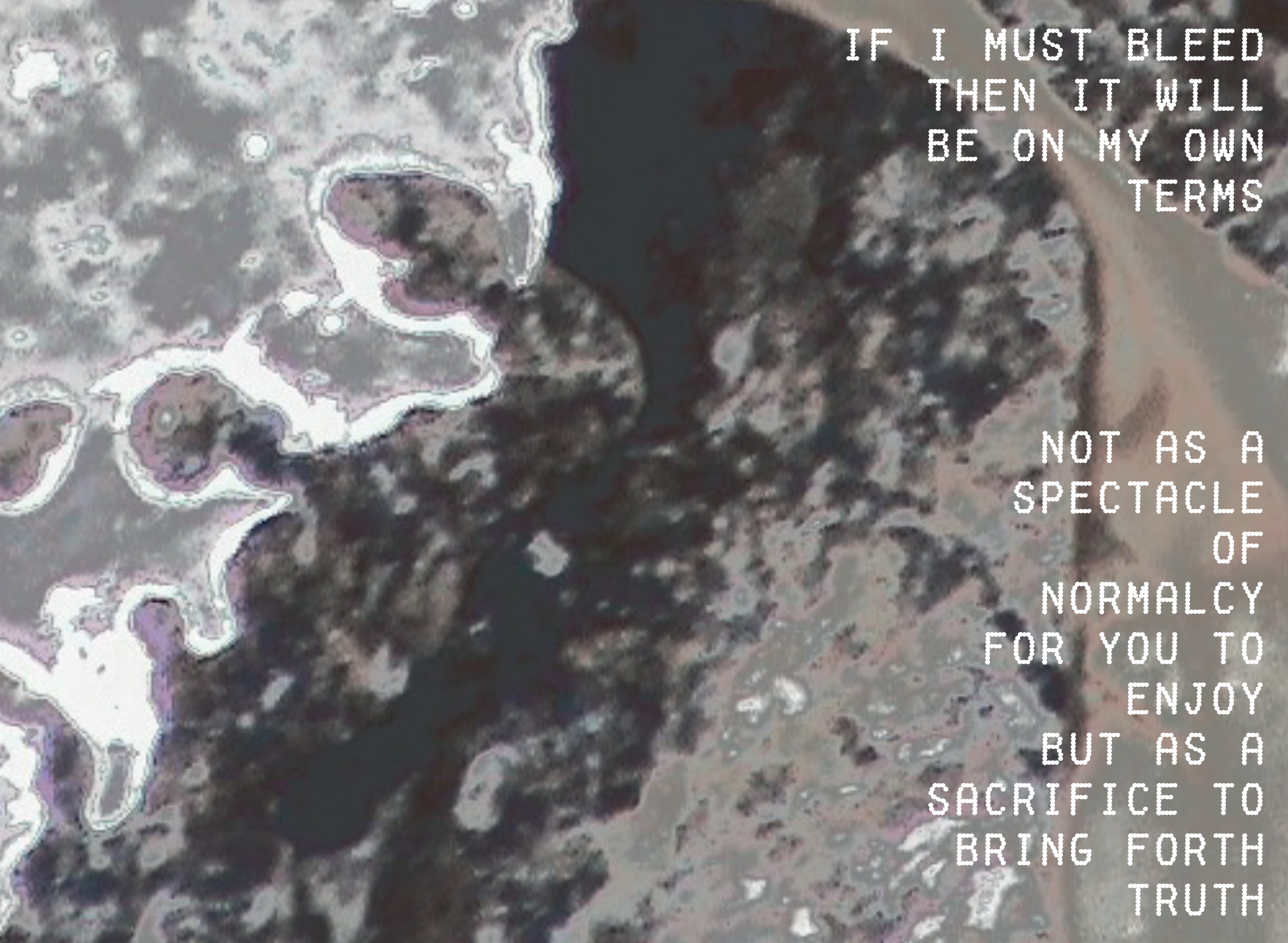
I have chosen to include a *glossary*.

The *glossary* will be defining the most pertinent notions for this text,

specifying the appropriate interpretations necessary for its reading. In this book you will find a

compilation
of texts of
different natures, ranging
from poetry to manifesto. Although
eclectic in nature, what unites them
is the theory of *The Divide*. Some will focus on
gender, queerness and the necessity of community, while
others will bring up the subject of dissociation and pain. All of these
naturally touching and influencing each other. Another crucial aspect of this research is *Humanity*, as in the quality of what is human. This is present throughout the entirety of the text. One cannot discourse on any human subject without it permeating every word. Ultimately, this is the true subject of this research. What it is to be human, what is innately ours, what has been brought to disrupt that, and a search for what is missing, as is so deliciously human.

(2) See *The Divide*


IF I MUST BLEED
THEN IT WILL
BE ON MY OWN
TERMS
NOT AS A
SPECTACLE
OF
NORMALCY
FOR YOU TO
ENJOY
BUT AS A
SACRIFICE TO
BRING FORTH
TRUTH

I have no particular desire to write this project report. I believe in transparency and honesty, so I deemed this to be the first item to note. I do not want to lead you in delusion or misconstruction. The reasons for this can be boiled down to two main aspects. The first one is my opposition to the educational institution as it stands. It is among many things, a perpetuator of hierarchy, classism and ableism[3], all of which, as you will soon find out, I morally oppose. I am a firm believer that a full educational system reboot is needed. The institution must be torn down and destroyed so it may start anew with fresh foundations rooted in humanity focusing on the true improvement of human kind. We must bring back connection and let empathy flourish.

The second reason is much less altruistic. Simply put, I do not see my work as needing this sort of exposition. I view my written work and my practical work as separate entities which overlap. I don't consider my practical artistic work to need more writing to illustrate it as my voice is already in its foundation. I believe that the verbalising of the meant feeling of something that is a whole magnitude is to lessen it, taking away its meaning, *resignifying* it. In a way, it is to kill it, to destroy it and rebuild. It is to create something new, rather than the intended expansion on what already exists. Thus I have decided to treat this report as an extension of my work. Instead of the simple explanatory expositive piece that is conveyed to be its purpose. However, fear not, for as a written extension of my work, it will assuredly be shedding light on the entirety of all that I do.

My biggest motivator for joining this Masters was something which you will come upon leaking from every crevice of these texts. A burning desire to build community and find connection. Where better for this pursuit than a place brimming with sensitive people seeking growth and nourishing each others creative endeavours? At this point I would like to make a small detour to acknowledge the most important event of these past years. An enormous number of specific circumstances and factors was needed for this situation to occur. It was no small feat, and chance was most definitely on our side. Many people had to be willing and open for this to be possible, which is, unfortunately, not very common. I found what had called me to this place. I found a loving community, united by a desire to explore and understand, held together through mutual support and care. Helping each other grow and bolstering one another. I am overjoyed to have spent these years with them and to have them in my life. My deepest gratitude for all the love.

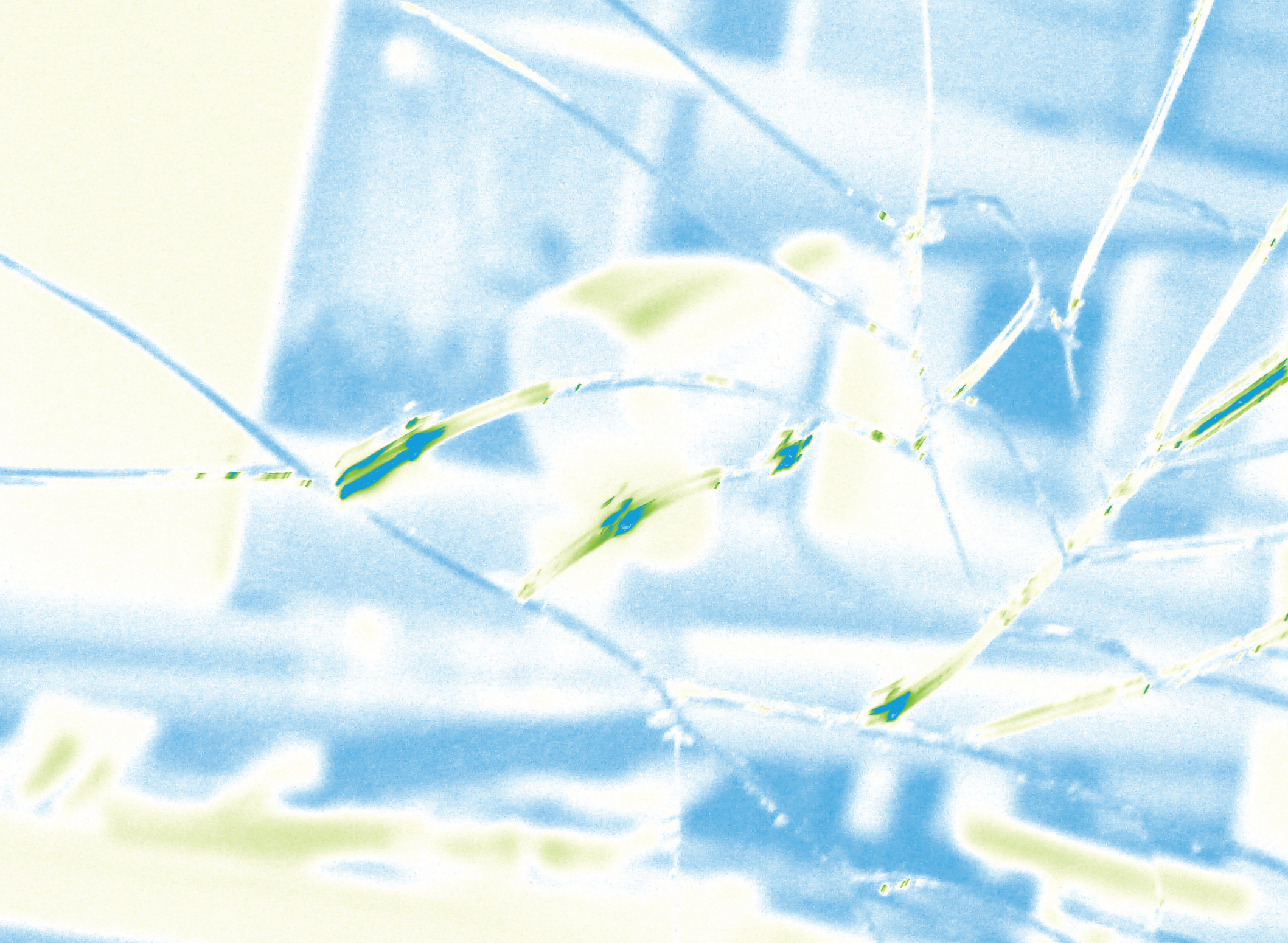
To facilitate immersion and give a better understanding of my practice and from where it stems, I have chosen to write this book in the format of an anthology. It is therefore composed by a series of texts of varying genres. In it, I will be exposing (and sharing) my world. I want to unbury humanity from the ruins under which it's been buried.

I have this very clear image of a blizzard in my mind. It is white and in a constant violent flux. Completely silent. Inside this storm is peace, and if you can see it, so is around it. At its core, unseen, only felt, is a *child*. Well, not exactly a *child*, but that may be the closest representation of the core one can reach, so let's call it a *child*. In this *child* is all that you are, your truest humanity.

Embrace the *child*.

Find it. Hold it. Feed it.

(3) Michel Focault, interview.



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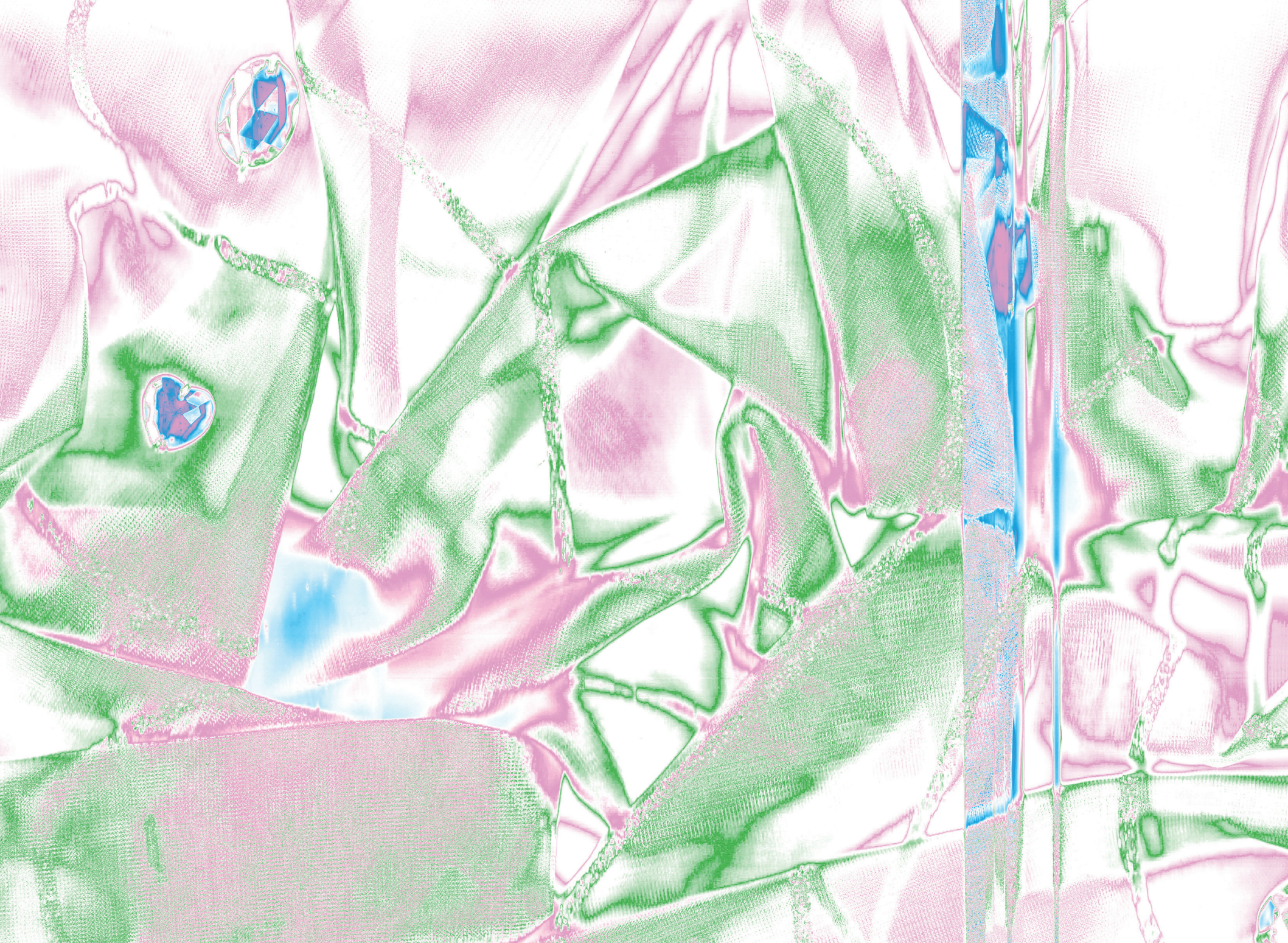


GLOSSARY

This work touches on broad ranging concepts open to many varied interpretations. In this glossary are specified the definitions relevant to its clear comprehension.

I. MIRROR

"THE REVERSIBILITY OF REFLECTIONS
PREFIGURES TOTAL UNREALITY: ONLY
SURVEILLANCE OF THE CONSCIOUS
MAY ASSURE COHESION."[4]

A mirror is a portal between this world and another. It contains three dimensions: the other side, this one, and the liminal space between them. It therefore exists in all time and none. It is the primary source for the the *self*'s viewing of its *body*. We glimpse it in reflections. It lives in the liminal space between the world as we inhabit it and the mirrored image.

Mirrors are one of the oldest magical mysteries enchanting humanity through the years. They provide a whole new world of possibility, a seductive alternate reality. Visible and untouchable. They hold a parallel, immaterial world. Entirely made up of space. Through them we find our *selves*, we perceive our *body* and the connection between them is facilitated, as can be its breakage. They evidence the illusion of *body-self* unity.[5]

They facilitate the connection with our *selves*, necessary for the knowing of another, while also providing the space to reflect on our *selves* in connection to the other. Mirrors provide a new understanding of the elements that surround us and compose our existence and so, an openness for the *other* may arise. It would, therefore, stand to reason, that they can be facilitators of connection and empathy.

As claimed by Foucault, mirrors are a *heterotopia* as they unite reality with a non-reality.[6] The *self* jumps between these two realities separated by the liminal space of the glass and mercury (more recently, silver or aluminum) barrier, gaining the ability to observe its physical manifestation. It travels between the two realms, one of illusion and space dependant on observation to manifest itself and this one. It is an enchanting world, full of nothing and thusly, everything.

What happens to a mirror when it goes unobserved? If I were to turn my back would I still be watching *myself* from inside the mirror? Does my reflection watch me in the dark? It is an obscure world crawling with terrifying and exciting potential. Calling for us to step inside, prevented, or protected, only by its layer of glass, it lets the *self* wander in-between this barrier, its blind spot, that unobservable space separating the two realms. The liminal space. Mirrors show a fragmented world, one unaffected by time, for they exist on its edge. Due to their existence outside of time, they take the *self* keeping it in both a dissociated and present state, split between the now and the timelessness of the mirror. It is this ability of inhabiting the two realms of time that grant the *self* its timeless quality.

Mirrors reflect possibility, emptiness and (un)reality. A space wherein that lacking we find our *selves*. It is a portal of communication and a perpetual mystery. An inversion outside of time inviting us in, calling for us to get closer. It deceives and creates, enchanting us in its power. It shows us that we, too, are reflections. We reflect the other. They are reflected in the small gestures, thoughts or actions, there is where we retain them as extensions of *ourselves*. One may find their mother in the way they close their eyes, a friend in a small unconscious gesture or even an old school mate in a certain posture. We are all the same, unified as single entity repeating itself through eternity, preserving one another in perpetual reflection handed down over this time we inhabit. In this way perhaps mirrors are copying us. We have become mirrors travelling through time.

(4) Sabine Melchior-Bonnet, *História do Espelho*, 344. Free translation.

(5) Sabine Melchior-Bonnet, *História do Espelho*, 364.

(6) Michael Kokora, *The Mirrored Projects of Foucault and Smithson*

"'BECAUSE
NOW HE
WAS THE
STRONGEST,
AND IT WAS
I WHO WAS
THE MIRROR

I KNOCKED
AGAINST
EVERYTHING,
I DIDN'T
KNOW
THE HOUSE

[...]

I LOST ALL
CONSCIENCE

[...]

I BEGAN TO
RUN,

BUT NOW
IT WAS HE
THAT WAS
RUNNING.

[...]

I CRIED,
BUT THE MASK
WOULDN'T LET THE
TEARS OUT'."[7]

7 Rainer Maria Rilke, *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge*, apud Sabine Melchior-Bonnet, *História do Espelho*, 353. Free translation.

II. BODY

The *body* is a broad concept, encompassing many meanings, making it a prime receptacle. It is the earthly tether of the *self*. It is what stays on this side of the mirror and thus, visibly touched by concrete time[8].

The *body* is the physical receiver of the *self*. It is through it that the self may experience physical sensation and contact with the world. It is a vessel which allows for visible expression of the *self*, intentional or not, and for physical connection between other *body-selves*. This expression facilitates the search for connection with those with one akin to it. A *body* can also be inhabited by multiple *selves*.

Being the visible expression of the *self*, the *body* is subject to internal and external projections, befitting it or not. This of course, also makes the *body* a malleable tool.

III. SELF

The *self* is an abstract concept holding one's sense of identity. It is the consciousness and perception of the core of the being. It is holder of *self-image* and identity. It is tethered to the *body* and has its own abstract personal time. Like the *body*, it is free to roam and inhabit or be inhabited by others[9]. The *self* travels in time, watching the *body* accumulate time exterior to both. It is an entity immaterial, intangible, untouchable. Outer time moves through it, leaving it untouched. Only its own time (inner time) can affect its being. Barring interference on the *body*, nothing outside of the *self* may touch it.

IV. BODY-SELF

The *body-self* is the experience of owning a *body*. The unity of *body-self* comprises the human individual. It is a connection, more or less tenuous, subject to external force, weakened by the exercise of time. They are by nature in a state of constant mutual mutation. They are intrinsically connected. What affects the *self* must also affect the *body*, and vice versa, always remaining tethered to some degree. The *body* and the *self* cannot exist without one another. Even under the extreme circumstance in which their connection has been entirely severed, they are still existentially linked, in a mutually influential relationship.

They form as one and are severed on birth. This is not a negative action, for they must be separated in order to enter other *bodies* and experience other *selves*. However, the separation should not be too great, there need always be room for them to cohabit as they wish.

The *body-self* is regulated, imprisoned and affected by external factors. Their link begins unbroken and splits further as they become more exposed. They are a canvas onto which expectations and meanings are attributed. These will shape them, their perceptions and their divide. Due to their low levels of temporal contamination, children are the purest form of the *body-self*.

The sense of *oneself* as united depends on others as well, for the *body* and the *self* are a shared experience, influenced and influential of the other. The *body-self* relies on others to exist. There is no *self* without the other, there is no *body* without another to interact with it, we only exist in relation to others. It is through observing and relating to others that we are created, through the understanding and sensing of otherness that one knows *oneself*. We share our *bodies* not only as pleasure or care, but necessity. The *body* craves the touch of other *bodies* so that it can know itself and its workings, so that it can place, relate to and position itself in the world. The *self* leaves the *body* in time, making space for other *selves* to inhabit it, so that it can become a shared experience. The rejoining of the two parts does not intend to imprison or make the *body* exclusive but to reconnect so it too may feel the shared and renewed connection.

8 See Glossary, Time

9 See Glossary, Time

V. TIME

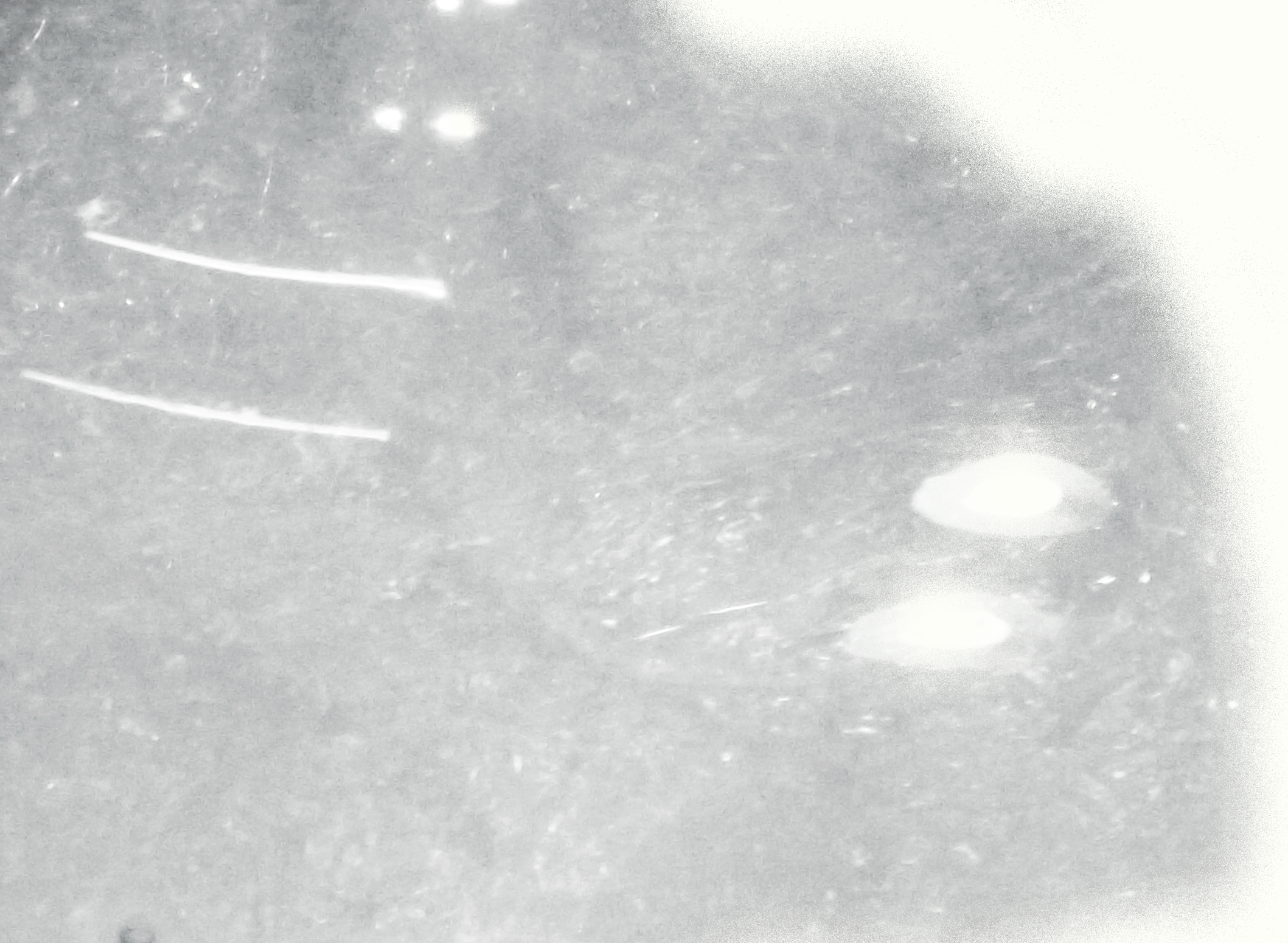
There are two main times, the outer (social) and the inner (personal), each with their respective branches.

The inner (personal) time is a natural occurrence inherently unique to each individual, creator of a current which surrounds the *body*. Within it exist the abstract time, which is mostly experienced by the *self*, and the concrete time, the one primarily experienced by the *body*. They both influence each other, as stated earlier. Inner time is not linear or regular like outer time, but rather a fluctuating spiral. This is a time that speeds up, slows down, stops and moves at its own individual pace. It fluctuates with the *body-self*'s mutation. This time, being perceived by the *self* and felt by the *body*, lives both inside and outside of it. It is a subjective manifestation of the processing of both internal and external influences. Straying from outer time, it is the pace at which the *body-self* lives.

The social time is the one outside of the *body-self*. This time will be referred to as outer time. Outer time is composed of all external factors impacting the *body-self*. This includes personal lived experience inflicted upon by outside influence. It is the exterior environment that surrounds the *body-self*. Within this time there are the individual and the collective. The individual outer time is the one closest to and most directly impacting the *body-self*, while the collective is the one which affects a larger group of individuals. These will naturally gather into groups of shared experiences. Collective outer time is the most violent. It is imposed on the individual by the society in which they are inserted. This is the time dictated by calendars and clocks and ruled by norms and expectations, forcing projections onto the *body-self*. This shared time is (purportedly) linear and clashes directly with inner time. It is inhuman.

This time is not real. Not in the sense of reality as it is commonly defined. It is very much a made up concept created to provide a better understanding of life in this world and could just as easily be registered in any number of different ways. That *real* time is linear is an illusion, it is not linear, it has merely been designed to be perceived as such. The (outer) time referred to in this work is the human perception of it, not its reality.

Finally, another temporal concept is introduced in this work, that which exists outside of time. This is somewhat analogue with *heterotopias* in the sense that it refers to something which exists in its own reality within this one. These are things that exist in a different temporal state to the present whilst simultaneously inhabiting it. For example, an abandoned house exists in both past and future but not present. It has had a past and will have a future, but its present is a state of nonexistence, idling in limbo.



Nothing can be constructed without a prior stage of destruction.[10]

[10] Aldo Pellegrini, *Destruction*, 72.

At birth this paradox is created and thus must be nulled, the process of destruction will therefore begin.

GENESIS

Gestating, *in utero*, the *body* and the *self* form, homogenous. Upon birth, as the umbilical cord is cut, severing us from our Mother[11], among all the blood and screaming, so is the *self* separated from the *body*. This is the first instance in which the *body* and *self* separate, as they are ripped from their reality and brought into this one. *Self* from *body* cease uniformity and become free to navigate outside of each other. From that moment a spiral begins to form around the *body*, distancing it from the *self*, and so time begins to accumulate. It is only after a few ages[12], however, that this spiral grows to a significant enough size to start entombing all future ages outward, trapping the original *body* within its eye. Its growth rate varies through the ages. This spiral is the result of two distinct currents of time crossing one another's path. Inner time and Outer time. It is as a consequence of this collision that debris accumulates outward from the center of this storm, in the likeness of a blizzard.

Every person is composed of *body* and *self*, while the outside is made of time. We live in a symbiotic relationship with this storm. It inhabits us and we it. Growing out from our birth, encircling the body keeping it from the *self*, it generates from the clash of outer time upon encountering inner time. This creates a vortex which accumulates time and feeds the storm.

CURRENTS

The first current, inner time, is perceived by the *self* and felt by the *body*, living both inside and outside of it. The outer time, being a diverging force, upon encountering this current, originates a whirlpool. These opposing currents then get stuck in a spiralling movement and so time starts accumulating on the outside of the *body*, surrounding it, like snow in a blizzard. The more alike the two times are, the less time gets dragged into the current shrouding the *body*. Conversely, the more distinct they are, the more enclosed the *body* becomes. This accumulation creates a barrier which hinders the *self*'s connection to the *body*. There is, therefore, a clear link between the increment of outer time and the separation of *body-self*. The greater the accumulation, the greater the divide. The same principle applies to the speed of the process. Starting slow and gaining traction with age. Ergo, at the center of this spiral resides a child, in its walls, still close to it, an adolescent, and so forth, accumulating *body-selves* as it grows. The amount of which directly correlates to the thickness of the walls, which is in turn dictated by the strength of the currents.

As a countercurrent, outer time runs interference between the now and the core, where the child lies. The components of outer time including inhumanity, indicate that the purest forms of humanity will live at, and close to, the core. Hence, children are closer to humanity, the older the farther. At the core is the purest, least contaminated *body-self*. The thicker the barrier between the *body* and the *self*, the more disconnected is the human, both from themselves and others. Ideally, one will strive to strengthen this weakened connection.

DECONSTRUCTION

To begin to chip away at the time stuck to the *body*, one must first become aware of this accumulation. The younger one is, the less time they will have to clear out[13]. This process will not stop the accumulation as it is a continuous motion intrinsic to life, but it will slow its speed and lower its volume. One must be destroyed to unearth the *self* and begin construction of the deconstruction of the storm.

"A SLOW AND CONCEALED CURRENT OF DESTRUCTION CIRCULATES THROUGH NATURE ALL AROUND US, AND ALL THIS WORK OF DESTRUCTION CONVERGES IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF LIFE."[14]

(11) Ew, gender! The word Mother is capitalised as a symbolic ungendered *resignification* of carer and birth giver.

(12) Exceptions apply as specific conditions may vary.

(13) When compared to their future.

(14) Aldo Pellegrini, Destruction, 72.

In the clearing one is confronted by their own living cadavers. In the destruction of the walls of this spiral there will be corpses one must grieve, consciously, in order to continue the excavation. Like inner time, this is not a linear process[15]. The remains will likely not be in order, they may be from the past as well as the future. All who are trapped in these walls are to be mourned equitably and empathically. Through this process the distance between the *body* and the *self* will shorten, therefore improving their connection.

Via the strengthening of the *body-self*, one may become more closely connected to humanity, both their own and that of others. By regaining connection, the *body* and the *self* are freer to move unencumbered by their lacking and so are able to inhabit and be inhabited by other *bodies* and other *selves*. This in turn helps break down the walls of time in a symbiotic relationship.

It is uncertain wether clearing, or even becoming conscious of, this time is a personal necessity. One may live a life without ever acknowledging this phenomenon and still feel some level of contentment, or they may feel a perpetual lacking and experience misunderstood negative symptoms. I would argue, however, that it is a life which did not reach its full potential, maybe even not had a taste of true freedom, one more distant from pure humanity. To never see one's *body-self* as they are is to live without a real sense of identity and subsequently, a lack of agency. Additionally, it is to live a life separate from others. To not know one's *body-self* is to close the door on occupation of and from others. Seen as the *body* and the *self* are a shared experience, I would claim it is life with untapped human potential.

The *self* is not one singular thing, but a multitude. In the quest to find it one is not looking for one thing but for its many facets, liberating it through its different parts. So, how does one excavate? First and most crucially, one must find out what the walls are made of so they may begin tearing them down adequately. There are many ways in which to begin this search. Meet the child at the center and start from the inside out, face the closest corpse digging from the outside in or blindly throw a line into the snow and follow it. There is no correct order or method. One must find all their corpses, listen to their spiral and embrace it.

(15) Outer time is also not linear, it is illusionarily linear.



CURRENTS OF A RAPIDLY SATURATING SOCIETY

The workings and consequences of contemporary temporal and social currents of rapidly growing oversaturation and wide-spread commodification.

PART I: IMMEDIACY

Since industrialisation, society has been evolving at an increasingly faster pace, unlike any other time in history. A velocity with which our biology can not possibly compete. The natural process of biological adaptation takes several years and generations to occur, hardly a number able to be matched by the current rate of modern technological advancement, population growth and climate change. The human body has, therefore, not had enough time to adapt to the current reality it inhabits. This of course brings with it consequences which must be acknowledged so that appropriate adjustment mechanisms can be developed in order to deal with the arising issues. Consequently, as a society, systems to properly respond to these problems should be put into place. This, however, is a situation that seems to go unnoticed. Humanity has developed a god complex, where it believes to be above and separate from nature. The speed at which society is moving is rapidly increasing and generating a myriad of issues. As more symptoms of this maladaptation arise globally, this cause still appears to go largely unrecognised and ignored.

For the first time in the history of humanity, with the rise of the internet, the majority of the people on this planet now have access to each other. Humans are more aware of one another than ever. Access to people all over the globe has become incredibly easy and nearly unavoidable (a great deal of reclusive effort would be required to avoid this altogether). Countries, cities, and with them the population, have grown exponentially, not only well beyond this world's resource capabilities, but beyond the mind's processing ability as well. Humans never evolved to experience this amount of excessive access to people, nor have we had time to adapt to this present circumstance. People still enclose them*selves* in their social bubbles, surrounded by their likeness. The brain remains craving community in this world of immediacy. A world where everything has become commodified, everything is readily available and prime for reaping. The problem with immediacy, however, is it only allows space for superficiality, it does not permit the necessary time to dig deeper. It is shallow and leaves with it a lingering sense of hollowness. Modernity with its expected immediacy generates a paradoxical lack of time and stronger craving for fulfilment. It admits no time for connection.

Dead times have been eliminated. There is no need to do nothing when there is always something mildly captivating one click away. The time of existing and taking in the boring little details of life has ended. No more living in the slowness of the now. We are inhabiting not this world but the world of the online.[16] Paying no mind to the touch of rain on the skin or the warmth of the sunlight. We stopped looking up at the sky, at the moon and the stars, we even stopped looking forward at the people in the street. Directing our attention instead to moderately entertaining instagram post after moderately entertaining instagram post, to our TikTok feed or, ironically, the endless swipe of Tinder, where we instead get to look at the people around us on the screen. Perpetually preferring an opportunity to dissociate and disconnect from this overwhelming reality and be rewarded for it. The abhorrent activity that is thought is now more easily avoidable than ever before. In fact, its avoidance has become increasingly encouraged. Technology-ruled western society has an intense disdain of suffering,

(16) It is important to remember that we are profoundly influenced by our surroundings, the circumstances of our growth and those of our daily life. I grew up during the internet takeover, I saw flip phones turn into smartphones and the fast expansion of the internet. It is the truth in which we live and it must be recognised as it shapes our reality, changing us with it. If we are to reflect on social dynamics or simply the world, these must be acknowledged.

especially that of thinking[17]. There is no need to face the boredom and the pain of stopping, thinking, and processing, when there is quick and easy access to a hit of dopamine. It has become optional to face the unknown of our mind. So, of course an oportunity to turn away from such grief is readily embraced.

It has become commodified to ignore reality and take refuge in the cyber. To stay busy at all times and avoid the discomfort of thought. We've created a society where avoiding one's *self* has become incredibly normalised, commodified and encouraged. There is always something available to fill every waking moment, from social media to Grindr, where you can shut off your brain, scroll and cum together. Straying further from the meaningful connection we crave and sinking harder into the comfortable, safe, shallow waters of those quick immediate fixes of others. A numb population, to their *selves*, and consequently, to others, for without the facing of one's *self* how may one begin to face another[18]. We need time, time to think, to enable empathy. Time has been capitalised, it has turned currency, and with it, our lives. We are made of time, without it we are nothing, it is our single most valuable asset. We are not if not the time we have and what we make with it. Without time we become machines of flesh, empty of feeling, waiting to burst. First came the work week, 8 hours, 5 days a week at best, imposing with it the same biological schedule for all, regardless of individual difference. Taking away the sunlight hours, stripping most of one's available time and energy and leaving little to no time to recover from the tiring, unfulfilling, mandatory for survival, jobs on which most of time is spent. This naturally generated a miserable population. Luckily, came the screens to help solve the discontentment problem.

Tired of using your free time to rest and recover from an exhausting week of work? Try *screens*, with its addictive new feature, you now have the option to dissociate through vice!

(17) Jean-François Lyotard, *The inhuman: Reflections on time*, 20.

(18) bell hooks, *All about love: New visions*, 53, 57.

(19) Consumerism feeds on spiritual hunger. It draws away from community and love keeping the perpetual cycle of lack through alienation and deflection from human interdependency. bell hooks, *All about love: New visions*, 72, 73.

Needless to say, this constant stream of content consumption has become much more appealing than its *self* reflective counterpart. They keep the mind occupied enough to stop reflection that might lead to enlightenment, while generating a dependance, which, due to its being wide spread (and profitable), became a normalised and nearly unavoidable outcome. Instead of investing in building the *self* and community, the cyber world promises with it all the fulfilment our nature craves while still turning a profit. All time has now been successfully stolen and monetised. There is no more time to be human, to simply exist, to connect with each other and with our *selves*, the hole inside our souls growing larger.[19]

Worry not, however, for with this toy featuring the infinite scroll you can get an infinite amount of vacuous dopamine hits quickly and easily! You will never even know the difference! Wake up, scroll, go to work (get some scrolling done while there) and finally scroll yourself to sleep. Any discontentment found may be soothed with another effortless mindless scroll.

A society which does not practice reflection is one lacking in empathy. Without *self* reflection there is no reflection of the other. Permanently lacking, humans will become stuck in a loop of hate, confused and unaware, placing the blame for their pain on everything and anyone but them*selves*. They will become prime targets for manipulation, malleable enough to believe nearly anything they may be told. When nurtured, this lack of empathy may be easily turned into a weapon, especially with the worldwide connectivity that is available today, it has never been easier to feed misinformation to such a colossal mass of people. All that is required is to get them stuck in a spiral of focused, misdirected hatred so they remain compliant and easy to manage.

Given screens to keep docile despite a growing lack, people have been made fully optimised for capital online machines harvested for time to be enjoyed by others. This lack of time is inhuman. Our humanity is being deleted as we are turned into monetary profit. The time to exist and to connect with each other and with our *selves* is no more. There is no time to create community, to explore our *selves*, to indulge in our humanity.

PART 2: OVERSATURATION

Society is over-saturated. There are too many people in this world and everyone has access to each other. The human brain is still living in villages, still enclosing itself in small social circles, seeking community. We crave it, our brains unable to process the amount of everything to which we have access. Nature racing against the fast expanding society to keep up with challenges to which the human body has not had time to adjust. As a consequence, it has registered other people as commodities and numbed itself to their human quality.

An oversaturation[20] of people has been created, commodifying and removing the human aspect from them. The more exposure one has to something, the more desensitised they become, images lose power and meaning, and by this principle, so do people. Creating a dangerous, easily escalated situation. People cease being people, they lose their essence, they go through an objectification. This abundance of resources turns people into commodities. The greater the access one has to people the more meaningless they become, there is always a replacement. Take this example: Rue has lived in a small village for several years. They are walking home when suddenly they see someone struggling to carry their groceries. The likelihood of them helping this person with their groceries is quite high. Now imagine this scenario in a metropolis. The likelihood of them stopping to help goes down exponentially. The importance of the person's life remains unchanged, but Rue's perception of it has changed drastically. In smaller communities people remain much more connected to each other and to love.[21]

The lower the amount of people one is exposed to, the more value their lives hold. The other retains their worth close to my*self*, we are one and the same. Such is true for the inverse. This oversaturation therefore generates a lack of empathy. It turns us away from our origin, from our core humanity.

Enter dating apps. Scroll through the (apparent) infinite catalogue of people near you and find lifelong love <3 ... or a quick shag. Suppress the emptiness in your heart by browsing the most (un) available bachelors in your area, you will never have to face your lacking again!

Dating apps hatched the process overpopulation and the internet had incubated. Creating a seemingly endless resource of people, they have furthered the oversaturation and commodification of humans.

On this search for others, for community, this putatively infinite resource generates a contradiction. It has turned people into worthless dopamine hits, stripping away their humanity. How may one quench the thirst for meaningful connection when people have lost their meaning. There is this prevalent feeling that there is always someone better, perhaps with whom one may be more alike or whose taste is preferable, someone more worthy of one's time. As though there is this phenomenon of constantly missing out on something better. If there is a small disagreement, as simple as displaying a difference of opinion on something superficial, this person may likely be discarded in favour of the better unknown.

A lack of effort being put into relationships has become normalised, everything has become depthless, as soon as a minor inconvenience appears the relationship loses its appeal. Things now stay on a surface level for there is surely something easier,

20 This idea is based on the concept of image oversaturation of which Joan Fontcuberta speaks in The Fury Of Images. He argues that the excessive bombarding of images of modernity generates a desensitisation. Weakening the meaning and impact of individual images, as they have become ephemeral and disposable.

21 bell hooks, *All about love: New visions*, 100.

better, perhaps even perfect, where the self needn't attention, awaiting somewhere else. This generalised misconstrued belief, fostered by popular media, that no effort is needed when a relationship is "right" is simply untrue and damaging to everyone involved. It nourishes an illusion of perfection attained through chance devoid of grief, and takes away from the beautiful infinite spectrum of human relationships. Instead of nourishing connections, diving and embracing them in their entirety, one is much more inclined to skim or even end them over this illusion of abundance.

PART 3: CONCLUSION

Mix this plenteous influx of resources with a society ample with any and all distractions one could possibly desire, where a hit of dopamine is a simple click away and well over 5 billion people (a number incomprehensible by the human mind) are connected, and watch the human mind fold in on itself. A desire for fast and easy pleasure is nurtured and brought to fruition. Effort drops as an immediate and addictive hit of dopamine is more enticing than the one which requires work, and more relevantly, time. The issue with this is that such a pleasure is fickle, empty and dies as quickly as it came, leaving an insatiable need for more. It grows the longing under the guise of cure. The need for connection remains and grows larger.

So this standard of quick reward becomes projected onto everything, including people, especially due to their rampant commodification. This insatiable hunger grows larger and with it, the mind's impressionability. An idea of an attainable perfect life is fed to it and perpetuated through most consumable popular content and subsequent culture. A life gained through consumption of goods and seeking of a soulmate. A person who will make us happy, cure us of our ailments, who will give them*selves* to us, body and mind, someone completely in synch with us. The reality of effortful hardship that brings with it the meaningful loving relationship craved, then crumbles and disappears. At the end of the day, you get home and scroll the deep set loneliness away. Mindless dopamine hit after mindless dopamine hit until you fall asleep, wake up the next morning and the cycle renews itself. Successfully removing all of one's time.

Through this temporal erasure, not only are we our*selves* erased, but the other with us. Perpetuating the commodification of human life and erasing us all. There is no time to dedicate oneself to another, if there is no time to dedicate to our own *selves*. There must be time to be alone, without dissociative stimulus. Time to sit, breathe and think. To observe, learn and feel. To create, reflect and empathise. Dedicated time is needed for improvement and evolution. Without it we shall remain stagnant, with no hope for betterment of our*selves*, and, consequently, the world. Time is necessary for the enabling of empathy.

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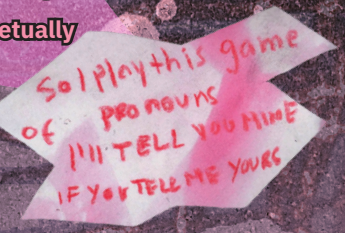
TRANNY MANIFESTO

THE PRONOUN GAME

As a transgender person, vulnerability is forced upon me at all times on everyone's terms but my own. I go about my life constantly misgendered and the pressure is put on *me* to enforce corrections. I don't want to. I shouldn't have to. An assumption was made with the carelessness of a child catching a frog. Now wriggling in their hand I must break free from their grasp through an exposure far beyond their understanding. I must move past the shock, gather my body and, using all my strength, fight this recurring cage perpetually following me and hop back to my pond.



At best I can expect an "I will try" or a "please correct me if I get it wrong in future" in return (which should not be my job, it is tiring and painful, they have the information, I should not need to constantly remind them of it). Often they will try but more often than not, the effort will slowly stop and so, I am vulnerable only to continue being misgendered.



To have your pronouns respected you need either be speaking to a fellow queer, an open minded close friend or relative or an open minded respectful and empathetic individual.

Do not expect to have your identity respected and/or recognised if you do not meet these requirements![22]

If you find yourself speaking to a conservative close minded binary thinking person please refrain from further interaction and head for the nearest exit, your wellbeing, perhaps your life, may be in danger.

It should not be my job to be in a permanent state of righting the way in which I am treated. I should need only ask once for respect. In fact, I should not need to ask. This should be extended freely.

The true problem lies, of course, with the lack of widespread awareness through the general public, which can be traced back to a failure of the education system and heteronormative propaganda.

[22] DISCLAIMER: Exceptions apply. Even if you *do* meet these requirements, respect and/or recognition are not guaranteed.

That said, realistically, assumptions will always be made. Let us imagine the ideal situation: we have moved beyond gender bias and binary thinking as a society. Even the initial potential misgendering would presumably be less emotionally damaging as the connotations and presumptions made would carry little underlying meaning beyond an individual's personal bias. In this situation, there would be no anxiety coupled with the correction of pronouns, it would flow off the tongue without a hitch and the correction perpetuated through the remainder future interactions. It is not the correcting itself that is the problem, it is the anxiety it generates. An anxiety arising from the internalised stigma associated with deviating from the norm resulting in too wide an array of possible reactions consequently generating an impossibility to gauge a reaction from the receiver without access to a lot more information.

How will this be received? Will it be fine? Will it be received matter of factly? Will it be received with confusion and ensuing probing questions? Will these be well meaning? Will my identity be respected? Will they see me as I wish to be perceived? No, so does it matter? Would it not be easier to continue being misgendered? Will I have enough interactions with this person to warrant the emotional toll of outing myself? Has too much time passed now for this interaction to not be overly awkward? Will they put in the effort to switch now that so long has passed? Will they care? Will I be shown empathy or indifference? They will perceive me as they wish, so does it matter?

Look into my eyes and lie to me. You don't believe in *me*. I am not real. I don't fit within your reality of this world and you will not try to sail beyond your horizon to find me.
So you treat me instead as you want me to be, as you perceive or decide me to be. Pompously disregarding who I actually am.

Living in a binary world programmed to cast out all outliers, in the true worst case scenario, I correct the wrong person and end up dead. I ask only to be shown the same respect freely extended to pets[23]. This is where instinct and intuition play a crucial part, so instead of sharing the way in which I would like to be referred, I simply erase myself. I become a mirror.

Expending vital energy into discerning wether I am in a life threatening situation brought on by my existence. Unlike many of my trans brethren, I am able to pass, which allows me to stay sufficiently safe in the majority of situations, albeit erased. To the unqueer eye, the way I present myself still looks sufficiently adherent to the gender role expected of me. I do not take hormones nor have yet had top surgery and I often wear clothing commonly associated with women. This results in a feminine perception within the binary tamed mind.

(23) I want to clarify that I do not condone the subjugation of animals. This comparison is used solely because, unfortunately, they are generally held on the lowest social tier.

I am tired of being invisible, of being only what the other sees because what I am is too difficult for them to even attempt to grasp. It is too difficult to learn new words. It is too difficult to expand one's understanding of established concepts. We grow up and by the end of mandatory school we have learned all the words there are to learn and will cease learning new ones. There are no more new ways to express oneself. Truly a difficult situation the other is put into. It is too demanding to adapt and grow empathically for each other.

Where has empathy gone?

Move beyond your discomfort and into my arms.
See the AllMother.

Please just play this game of pretend with me.
Let's play it long enough to forget.

see me

I too AM DESERving of my NaME.

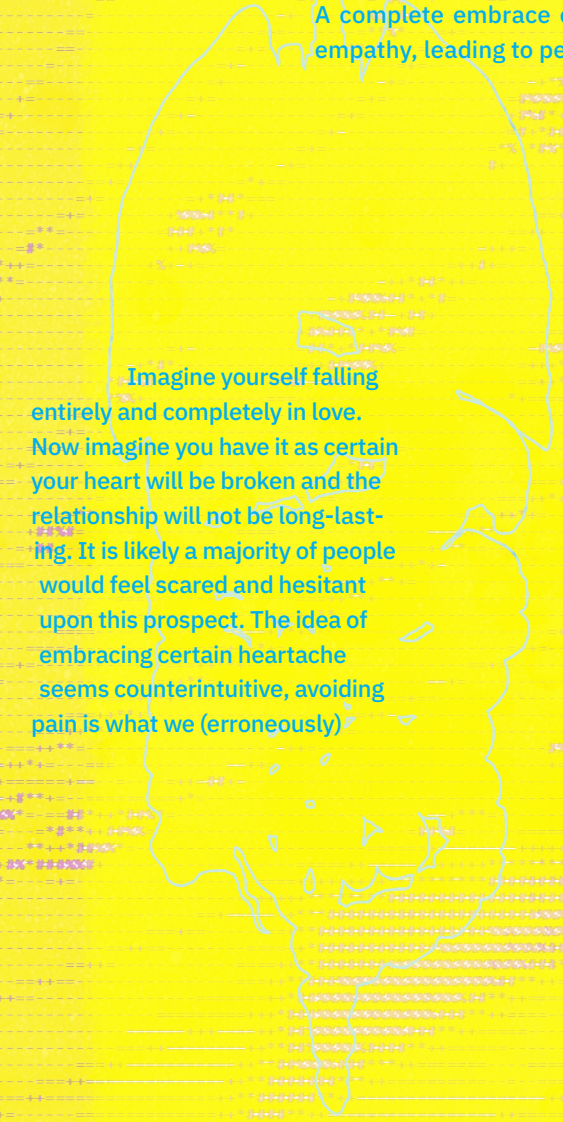
I ExiST, I AM REAL.

JUST LiKe YOU.

EXERCISE OF HAPPINESS

HYPOTHESIS THE FIRST:

A complete embrace of feeling may bring about empathy, leading to peace and happiness.



Imagine yourself falling entirely and completely in love. Now imagine you have it as certain your heart will be broken and the relationship will not be long-lasting. It is likely a majority of people would feel scared and hesitant upon this prospect. The idea of embracing certain heartache seems counterintuitive, avoiding pain is what we (erroneously) spend our lives attempting as "suffering doesn't have a good reputation in the technological megalopolis."[24] I propose this pursuit to be paradoxical and the bringer of ultimate, chronic pain. True happiness lies with having the knowledge that sorrow is unavoidable, that the more pleasurable the feelings, the stronger the grief, and yet indulge in ecstasy all the same. To be happy the heart must be open to hurt.

To float in apathy is to not swim in happiness. To dive deep into its waters is to risk running out of breath. Therefore, the avoidance of suffering is its ultimate bringer.

We live in a chronically apathetic society. So devoted to avoiding pain it forgets to live. Pain is an integral part of humanity, it is a teacher, a carer, a Mother. It takes us in its arms and holds us until it's time to let go, keeping them open for when it is time to return and embrace us again. If apathy is adopted as a mode of living, it will keep love at bay. The exact thing for which we so deeply long. I remember an episode my mother told me when I was struggling with apathy.

(24) Jean-François Lyotard, *The inhuman: Reflections on time*, 20.

She regaled me with a story of the time she felt alive again after a stretch of apathy had taken her heart. The sun shone amid the clear skies as she was sat in the backyard peeling an orange. As she popped that first segment of orange in her mouth, it was as if the juicy sweetness of that orange had awakened her senses. A burst of feeling ran through her for the first time in a long time. Suddenly she could taste the depth of flavour in the orange, she could feel the sun shining on her face embracing her in its warmth. I love this story, it is such a pure sensation she holds so dearly, that when she told it to me, it was as if I, too, was there with her, revelling in this divine feeling. I find love in this story, one of the simplest, purest forms of love. It is love in the connection to the *self*, to earth and to core humanity.

Think of the unexpected kiss of sunlight in the middle of winter, while the trees lay bare and all is gray. The first drop of rain in a hot spring day, colouring the sky in a magical display. The odd butterfly flying from tree to flower and making a stop to rest on your hand. The taste of a meal cooked for you by a friend making sure you have something to eat when living gets too hard. It is in this mundane beauty that love, and consequently, happiness and fulfilment can be found. Of course, as with absolutely everything, all of these things will end. Only in their end may something new flourish. It is this change intrinsic to all that exists, that makes up life, its meaning and worth. Without them, what is left? There can be no love without pain, no construction without destruction. One must accept and embrace this mutation of life, in spite of its painful nature. Avoiding it will not make it go away, only rot the spirit. Closing oneself within will keep out not only pain but every beautiful thing that comes with it. This deprivation of feeling will create a greater inaccessibility to empathy.

We keep evading, staying as busy as possible, numbing our brains in an effort to avoid any and all discomfort, particularly that which may lie within us. We want everything easier and faster, and it has spread to feeling. We want easy feelings, quick dopamine hits to numb the brain and not allow introspection. Everything must be easily digestible and immediate. We have left slowness behind and with it, the willingness to feel complex things. Complex feelings take time, they take up space and they are not comfortable. Without them, however, there is no space for growth and understanding. And without these, no space for empathy, for how can one truly empathise with another if they cannot empathise with their *self*. One must face the discomfort of the unthought, to connect with their *self* and consequently with all.

The pursuit of the *self* is, in itself, a pursuit of humanity as well, only upon this discovery may the *self* be unearthed. One can not go on this quest alone, it is with and in others that the *self* may be found.

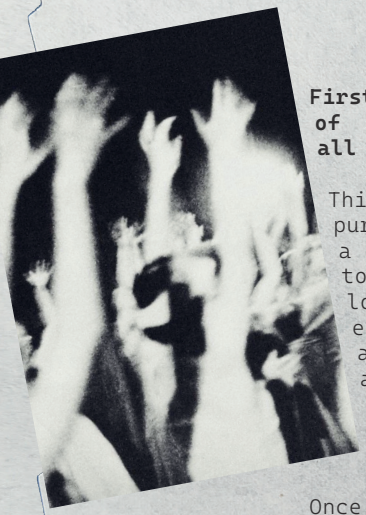
"SELF-LOVE CANNOT FLOURISH IN ISOLATION."[25]

(25) bell hooks, All about love: New visions, 54.

Hypothesis the second:

Who has the most to gain from keeping love at bay?

A RECIPE FOR HATE



1.

First, take the sense of longing innate in all humans.

This discomfort will naturally lead to a pursuit of fulfilment. Make sure you provide a quick and easy solution. It is important to remember that this solution can **NOT** work long term, it must work merely as a quick ephemeral fix. The solution can range from a purchasable object or blind devotion to a consumerism grounded idea, so long as it allows for escapism. This will make sure the person remains committed to their daily task so they may obtain whatever token necessary to keep this evanescent fix alive. Once in this loop, it will be easy to maintain the illusion of free will and keep the person from noticing the theft of their time.

2.

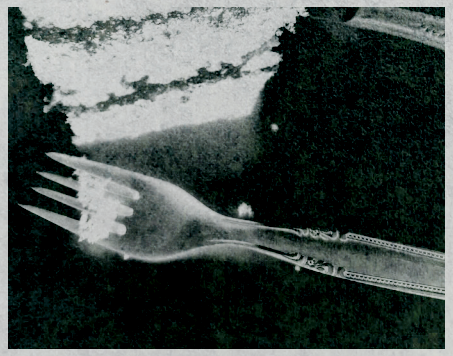
From here the consumer will be too busy maintaining their constant stream of quick dopamine masking the sense of isolation to attempt the building of community.

This will allow its growth which in turn will increase consumption. Due to their lack of community to help with the feelings of uneasiness, they will find them*selves* lost, unsure of how to cope and in search for answers. It is here that they are in the ideal stage to engage the cycle due to a malleable state of mind, predisposed to falling into fear and pain.

3.

Desperation will start to set in and hate becoming prosperous.

The fire is already lit thanks to the amazing work done in the previous stages (round of applause to you!). Through the creation of desperation due to removal of basic rights and necessities and the growing distance to each other, now all that is left to do to ensure the perpetuation of this cycle is to keep adding kindling. At this stage escalation may be used, outrageous deceptions are sure to work wonders. Make sure to turn them against each other for best effect, get creative with it! Now just remember the 5 basic rules to make your own hateful society, enjoy your hard earned time and don't forget to have fun!



Preventing the feeling of love will keep people apart, community from being built and hate on the rise. Who could possibly benefit from this? Nurturing the fall of humanity, keeping people suffering and desperate?

Those in power want us to remain this way. Hate builds a wall before love for its existence is a threat to power. There can be no power when love is present. This patriarchal society has become evermore power-hungry, individuals rummaging through their realities to find anyone over whom to hold power. Be it in their jobs, or, more commonly, possibly due to its accessibility, in their personal relationships.[26] Holding power over those they mean to love, a more comfortable action to undertake in no small part due to its widespread prevalence over love in this culture where entertainment entails images of dehumanisation. However, no power can fulfil the longing for love for it is a violent endeavour[27]. To gain power one must manipulate and imagine them-self to be above another. Unfortunately, power has the fame of blinding, the more power one has, the more blind and power hungry they become. Maintaining said power at any and all costs, feeding their ever growing longing.

We have fallen from nature. Why is there such a fierce pursuit of power over another? Perhaps a need to feel in control in this unfair, abusive, going off the rails world, or what could be perceived as a way to fight back and hold onto ourselves, protecting them from abuse. Whatever the reason may be, clinging to the belief power will lead to fulfilment will serve only to further derail this same pursuit whilst maintaining the power with those who yield it and emptiness with those under it. To fight back is to let go of the lust for power. To embrace our selves is to embrace love. Instead of being in a constant power struggle, we must hold one another up, commune with each other and revolt against the plague of lovelessness.

*

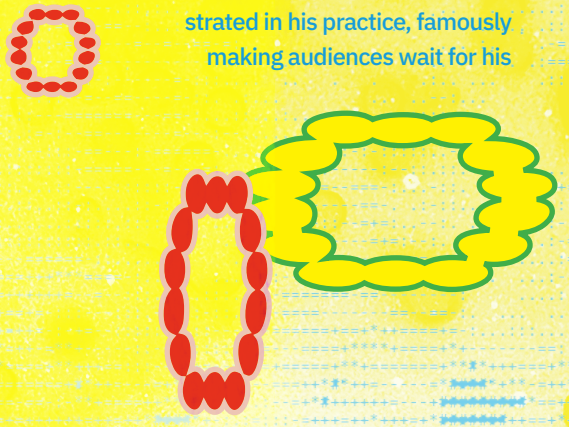
(26) I would like to acknowledge that men holding power over their families, children and girlfriends/wives is the most common, accepted and normalised form of everyday abuse of power.

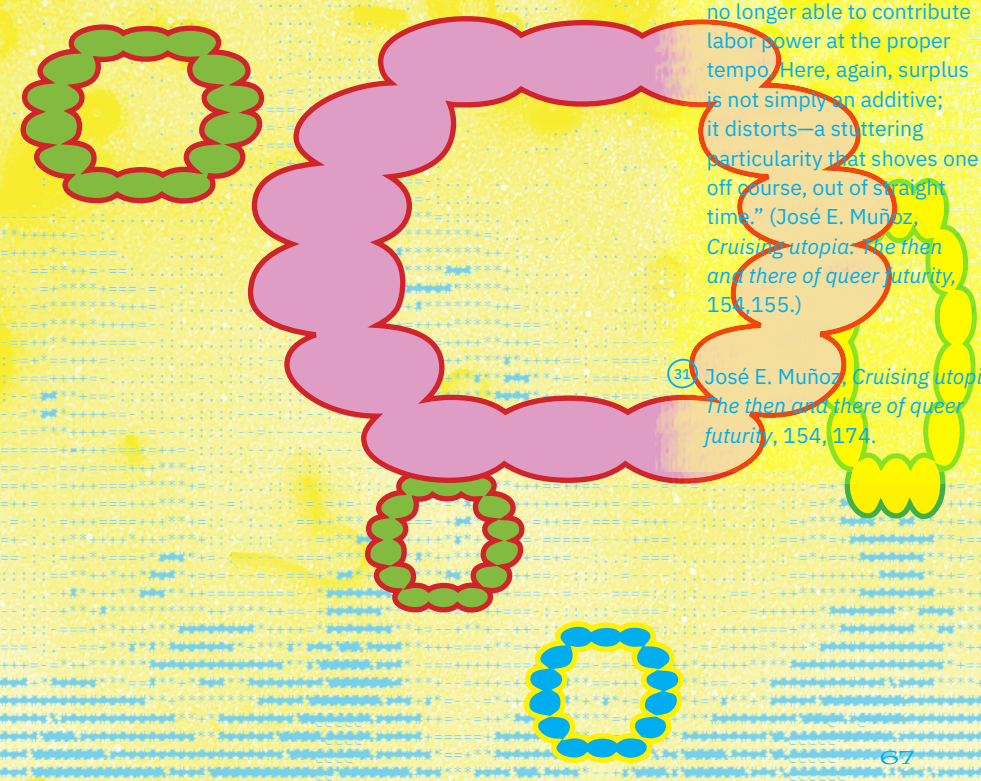
(27) bell hooks, All about love: New visions, 22, 40, 96, 97.

HYPOTHESIS THE THIRD:

The rise of the people will foster community invoking true happiness through connection and rebellion.

Dictated by *straight time*[28], society comes with its set rules and expectations. You may be born provider or child bearer. Destined for monogamous marriage and parenthood. The individual must accomplish the timely achievement of certain milestones and experiences so as to be considered a normal well functioning person, able to be embraced by their peers as an equal. Finish mandatory school, either go to university or not (depending on birth given circumstances), get a job, a spouse, children, and work to death. Only then may you rest and live as you please. Arbitrary expectations which define the individual within society's eyes. The most one can expect to ever be free is at early childhood when these are at their most lacking. This of course industrializes and commodifies the human experience, removing humanity from the equation and perfecting us into machines. This is one cost to living in a world ruled by *straight time*, these getting particularly higher for those who do not fit it. Walking through life becomes harder, this world was not created for you, and you must not forget it. Anyone failing to abide by the preset law will automatically become an outcast, with an unsynchronised life and raised hardship. This is the home of the queer. "The poem imagines another collective belonging, an enclave in the future where readers will not be beset with feelings of nervousness and fear. These feelings are the affective results of being outside of straight time."[29] Deviant from these cisheteronormative expectations, queer people are sufferers of chronic timelessness, doomed to fail meeting the imposed guidelines. Welcoming this condition in favour of conformity and erasure, increasingly, queer people began embracing the slow[30], reclaiming the time which was generationally robbed through the systemic erasure of our ancestors and culture. As Jack Smith demonstrated in his practice, famously making audiences wait for his consistently late arrival to his loft performances.[31] To be queer is to live in a different concurring time to that by which the world is ruled. In a world ruled by speed, to be queer is to be slow. It is a defiance of the world's order, a temporal rebellion. In order to farm time you need devoted obedient individuals.





(28) A *temporal stranglehold* without future beyond reproductive heterosexuality. (José E. Muñoz, *Cruising utopia: The then and there of queer futurity*, 32.)

(29) José E. Muñoz, *Cruising utopia: The then and there of queer futurity*, 25.

(30) I believe it to be worth mentioning that drug use is one of the ways queer people have historically reclaimed this time. A practice shunned by *straight time* that remains a big part of queer culture. "Certainly by the criteria of straight time a junky is a failure. Drugs are a surplus that pushes one off course, no longer able to contribute labor power at the proper tempo. Here, again, surplus is not simply an additive; it distorts—a stuttering particularity that shoves one off course, out of straight time." (José E. Muñoz, *Cruising utopia: The then and there of queer futurity*, 154,155.)

(31) José E. Muñoz, *Cruising utopia: The then and there of queer futurity*, 154, 174.

Preferably healthy, able bodied, neurotypical, cisgender and heterosexual people[32] to ensure productive propagation, each with a specific role to serve this society, worker and child bearer. Where once this control was kept through religious devotion, with the rise of atheism and the consequential increasingly defunct institution of christian marriage, it was superseded with the (utopian) prospect of the perfect *one true love*. Spirituality has been highjacked, *Fear hell and the rules will be followed or Hope that one day true love will find and save you*. No longer a place of comfort, reckoning with nature and inner expansion, it has become a tool for power. Ensuring the chasing of a specific life purpose, it generated a fear to keep in line or a hope to keep light in the heart that used to be kept by the intangible. Thus began the growing prevalence of the *one true love* permeating all consumable content and taking cultural roots in the west. *One true love* will cure all your ailments, be easy, perfect and entirely fulfilling. You will be left wanting no more. However, in the unlikely event you find your*self* among the majority of the population and have not found it by the beginning of childbearing years, grab whoever's closest to you, endure the lovelessness, settle for the ever honourable goals of parenthood and a successful, financially fruitful career to fuel healing consumption, and hope they will drown out the emptiness inside. Form a nuclear family, trap your*self* in wedlock, isolating entirely and becoming a (tractable) model citizen. Community is left behind in favour of a pair centric life, but the nagging hollow remains. If one believes that two halves make a whole, soon they forget the many segments that make up the orange.

As shunned timeless pariahs, queer people have acted accordingly and in defiance, effectively prompting the creation of divergent resistant communities, and leading to deviation becoming essentially synonymous with queerness. In this resistance to the nuclear family supremacy and the normative expectations imposed, we have been able to find the love and the time denied by cis-heteronormative society. Community was found once more, in a search for self and in the search for love; humanity returning to its roots. Desiring to live a life of authenticity, they found love abundant within themselves and among those who like them, wished for an honest life. This show of dauntless in the face of adversity by stepping into the light and publicly living a life of candour inspired many others to follow in their footsteps, leaving fear behind in the pursuit of loving truth. This community is one found by force, faced with a lack of options[33]. If you deviate you find your*self* stuck with two choices, to lie and conform or to live genuinely and become an outcast. One is then forced to confront them*selves* and make a choice, noting that ignoring is in and of itself a sort of acknowledgement. Those that naturally adhere to societal impositions rarely find themselves in a situation where they are made to confront the depths of their *selves*, begetting a lack of awareness that

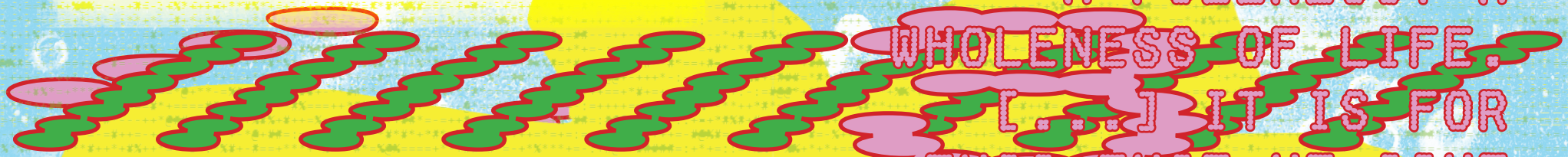
fosters the destruction of craved community. How may one find what is missing when lacking the resources to even realise the craving, much less what it is for which they must search. Realising or not, the heart keeps longing nevertheless and we keep trying to quiet it as best we are able.

Isolated, unfulfilled and constantly occupied, we are left empty and desperate for anything that might fill the void, rendering the mind susceptible and spawning the perfect consumer. Alone, unsatisfied, with a void to fill and no time to bear it witness, a predisposition for hate flourishes and one is turned against another, growing insatiably hungry in a spiral of avoidance and misplaced desire. Unfortunately, this is maintained by design, for the taking advantage of this vulnerable state optimised for another's accumulation of power. In this condition it is easy to forget that it is in love and in the other that survival and humanity lies, and to allow the ancestral reliance in community to wither. It is imperative that this truth is not erased from the collective mind, as this generates a complete detachment from love, keeping it the furthest away possible and the path back to it longer and more trialed. One must open to love once more, to understanding and bridging the space that sustains separation.

(32) Asexual bodies are monstrous, they are not productive of human coherence. Casting aside the crippled bodies, the intersex and all those that do not fit the binary mould, from the quality of human. (Paul B. Preciado, *Manifesto Contra-sexual*, 158.)

(33) When luck and conditions allowed for its existence. Many are not so lucky as to find it and several communities end due to the untimely hate-related death of their members. The queer community is witness to a lot of death and suffering within itself.

Love is a slow endeavour, there is no longer a place in this world for it. The return to loving community is rebellion against the powers that wish us machines. Loving is defiance. It is necessary to acknowledge the divine power of love and human connection, to begin to adequately value our time and make a conscious choice of how it is spent. Not to let it get highjacked by the constant stream of consumption frothing at the mouth to get it on their grubby hands. We must regain consciousness long enough to make the active choice to spend it investing in community and engaging in love. Humanity can not go without them for long, the collective instinct will always be to return. Return to community and return to love. We just have to listen. Let go of complacency and become defiant.



"'LOVE IS, IN FACT AN INTENSIFICATION OF LIFE, A COMPLETENESS, A FULLNESS, A WHOLENESS OF LIFE. [...] IT IS FOR THIS THAT WE CAME INTO THE WORLD – THIS COMMUNION AND SELF-TRANSCENDENCE. WE DO NOT BECOME FULLY HUMAN UNTIL WE GIVE OURSELVES TO EACH OTHER IN LOVE.'"[34]

(34) Thomas Merton, *Love and Need*, apud bell hooks, *All about love: New visions*, 75, 76.

I sometimes realise how I live in a secluded bubble, filled with love. I sometimes am confronted with the outside, parched for it. I walk in, standing with my chest out, and find everyone on their hands and knees.

How my chest aches when I look in your eyes and your soft lips find mine. My lungs deflate leaving my heart racing,

away from me.

In the corner of your room I see a closed box under the cold glare of the fluorescent lamp,

and you

and you

There was a house once. Filled with empty space, where the windows let the sun shine

through it all.

I used to sit and look at the dust floating in the air,

thinking of you.

You now sit at the piano, curtains drawn,

playing in the beam shining through the narrow gap. I sit atop it and stare.

She played.

You hear the rain hit the glass

see the shadow falling on

the waves of it crashing on the keys

Your faint breath,

the cloud of dust got thicker. You don’t seem to notice.

Please.

The piano nearly takes up the room.

In

Dusty boxes pile up to the ceiling

while stacks of old books sit on chairs

made walls of narrow corridors mazing away from the piano

their pages move lightly with the faint breeze

blowing in from the small crack in the window

You sit at the piano. I
stare.

Out

In the skylight the clear blue sky peeks through and the song of
seagulls knocks

Please.

In the corner of your room there is a box. I am not in it. I glimpse it through the corner of my eye

as you close your eyes and move your lips closer

He played the piano.

She loved him.

In

I step down my bare feet pressing the deafening weight of my aching body down on the cold sharp keys

your gaze remains fixed on the

empty shelf.

I slowly creak my way through the old floorboards

across the stuffy room

out

Some of them played the piano. Not all. Not him.

the stars shone across his eyes

the shore washed up on our feet

the tide was rising, it was a full moon.

you touched me.

still,

held my hands

up to our waist

I licked your body while

you held me down by the neck

hold my chest down

as they fell, I wished him true.

your fingers etched into my chest before you slid your

hand down,

teeth sunk into me,

our necks

pressing me down through pleads I
sung into your ear,

You opened your secluded hand as the sun began to peer
through the gaps in the blind the light
reflecting back on you.

a mirror shard.

Take me.

Back
up on the tree, our legs swinging on the tree branches,

now fully submerged

I ran, full of wind and stardust, light streaming from my every orifice,

bare feet through the

dirt,

your face dry with my blood
to her.

In

The leaves rustle on the glass window

They hold my carved flesh.

the smell of salt finally granting it comfort. Against the wall,
blistered fingers push up the hot rusty metal frame,
with the full puissance of a battered body,

I allow my body to linger, relishing in the fall, the sharp edges of its stone
scraping my back

hot and wet, dripping

He’s not real.

E major

Out

Undressed, I walked in. You were sitting at the bar waiting for me.

At the table, your teeth pierced my bare skin. Your hands found mine and
I want to kiss you.

I told her I would be alright. You told me you weren't romantic, so you gave me your coat. and walked home.

through gritted teeth,

Yes, I remember.

(I didn't, you told me)

You reached into my coat pocket, with closed fists you handed me your eyes.

I placed them into my perfectly fitted sockets and shoved my tongue into yours. Your room was blue. My song was playing. Our clothes fell from the chair. I pressed your chest against mine. Your hands found my back as mine found your— I'm sorry. So I grab your face and your thighs and your neck and your neck and I push you back

This is unnecessary, you would agree.

Our hands find each other and no I don't know why, because well you're right, it shouldn't. and, my eyes staring back, at me your fingers enter my body

my air fills your lungs and my voice echoes back

quickly replacing hers

You're right. you were right. but I was too.

the silence of our breath grows out of your eyes

and into mine

He is real. He is real. I am real.

In

They turned to face the salty air. The rain started pouring in through the windows

Hold me.

wind moving the dust sending papers flying

out

The doorstep, it’s always the eyes

gazing endlessly

not you.

The shore

the grass, her not me.

The station

just don’t.

devoid, their face full

boxes mouldy with dry blood decomposing into dust

a birdsong lulls calm clear waves onto the shore outside

in

the corridor,

the hallway, the streets and the doorframes, the sidewalks, the rocks, the ocean and the waterfalls, the river the dirt road the blazing sun the

sweat the stairs the moonlight the streets the park the swings the bench.
the pizza parlour. the oranges and the tea and the refusal.

water streams down my lathered body with its healing salt,

They stare

Please.

sore muscles trudge

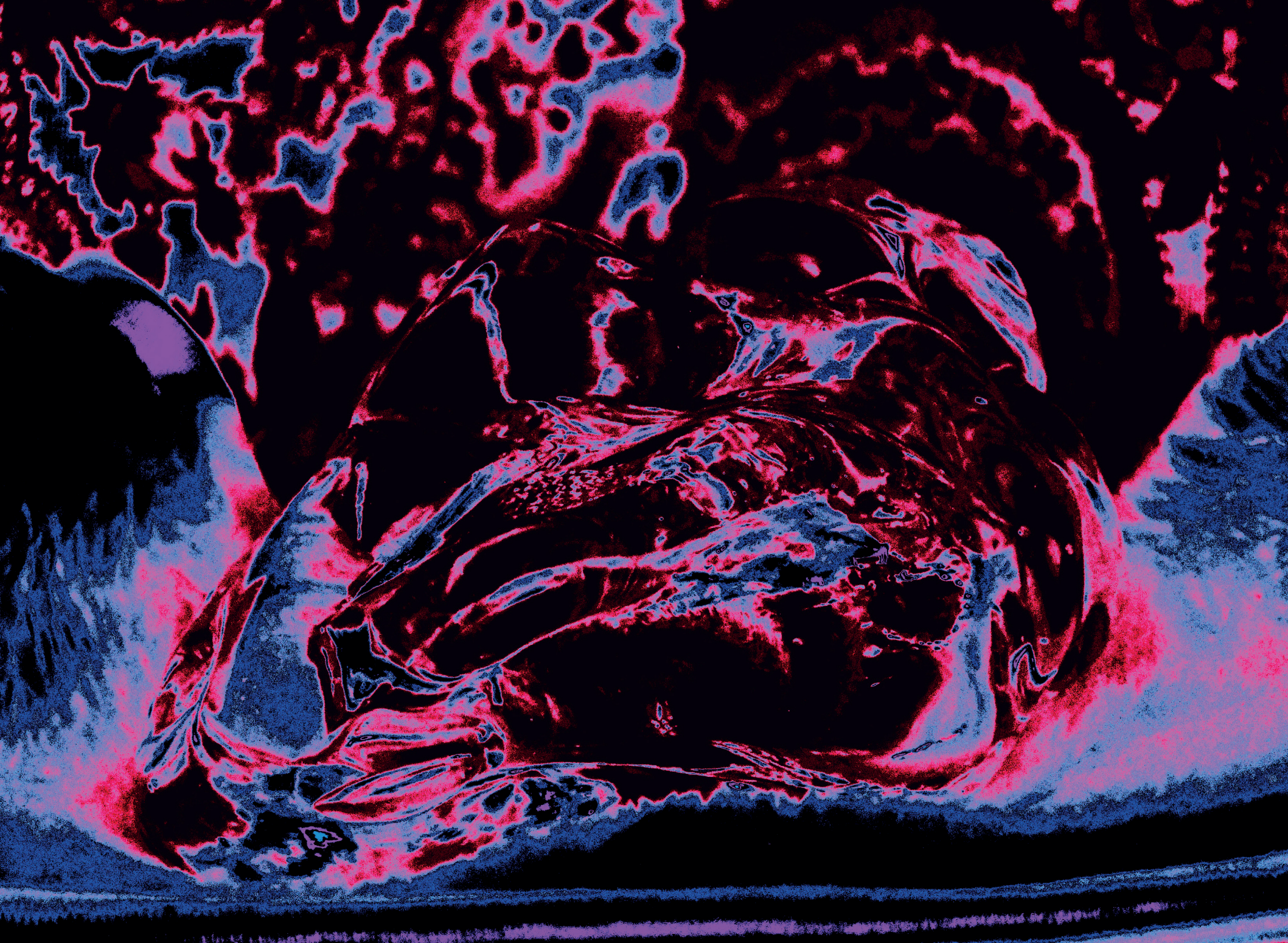
slogging the song carried by the now gentle breeze settling in the spacious room

they stand

staring out the window, their dismembered hands
playing the piano

out

You’re the love of
my life.



ARTISTIC PRACTICE

"'WHAT SECRET ARE YOU SEARCHING FOR IN YOUR CRACKED MIRROR?'"[35]

My work here stemmed from the exploration of memory in relation to the *self*, a topic from which the research has diverted, though its ghost remains. As stated earlier, I believe each of us is surrounded by a spiral of time separating *body* from *self* due to temporal accumulation. What I wanted to know was how to chip away at these walls of time keeping them apart. I began by trying to understand the nature of the spiral and its components. What is the *self*, the *body*, the *body-self*, *time* and why this accumulation happens. In this process I saw myself faced with questions of how divergent social realities may affect *inner time*, how industrialisation may have impacted the *body-self* relationship and the potentially differing link between the trans and disabled *body* to this phenomenon. The latter originating from the distinction at the moment of birth[36], where our *body-self* is thrust upon with the first of many instances of violence, as we are arbitrarily categorised for capitalist patriarchal conservation and stripped of humanity[37].

Speaking personally, as a child I never really felt I had any gender, the pronouns attributed to me felt meaningless, serving only a linguistic purpose[38]. I just felt like me. Later in life, upon coming to the realisation of my own *transness*, I realised that growing up, I had been playing a part I was handed, one which the more I played, the more I believed it true. I said and acted in ways that were mere mimic of my surroundings, whilst inside I was just, and have always been, Leonor.[39] This living play weighs heavy on our time, while other cisgendered heterosexual children and teenagers look in the mirror experiencing their *body-selves*, ours hide, from others and even from *ourselves*. In this play, years are lost, years that will later have to be reclaimed, by which time the branding of failure has already marked us.[40] This lie increases the distance between the *body* and *self*, a life of love and growth is one of truth. This is the most important conclusion I reached in my research. If we are to chip away time, it must be done with love.

Among many things, *bodies* are the restraint of the *self*. The *self* may wander from it in an exercise of dissociation, but like Icarus, it can not stray too far, lest it burn the path. To connect the *body* there need be a mix between dissociation and association, which can be achieved through various methods. One of particular interest to me is pain. Through an exercise of pain, both physical and psychological, connection can be strengthened. The art of *Kinbaku* or *Shibari*, which I explore in my practice, has been around for centuries allowing a spiritual experience for the *body* and *self*. It is an art form adopted by the BDSM scene of deep intimacy and vulnerability where one gives up control, putting their trust in another, as they are bound by rope. Through the (often painful) restraining and manipulating of the *body* one may observe a closer bond between *body-self* and with the divine. Even potentially reaching a state of transcendence beyond the regular confines of *time*. The restraint and manipulation of the *body* is a "suffering" transgender people are intimately aware of and connected to, through the practice of binding or tucking[41], where a closer union of *body-self* is sought.

(35) Jorge Luis Borges, "Les Mirroirs", *L'Auteur et Autres textes*, apud Sabine Melchior-Bonnet, *História do Espelho*, 363. Free translation.

(36) "A primeira fragmentação do corpo, a atribuição do sexo" Paul B. Preciado, *Manifesto Contra-sexual*, 157.

(37) The designation of gender stemming from the binary of what *is* or *is not* (a woman is a woman by definition because she is not a man) is a grave aggression upon the *body* and the *self* as it is a violent act of dehumanisation which furthers the distance between them. (Legacy Russell, *Glitch feminism: A manifesto*, 9, 86, and Judith Butler, *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*, 27.)

(38) Although with the gaining of greater awareness, nowadays I go by gender neutral ones.

(39) I considered changing my name to some other word unbearing of the weight of gender, but I love my name, it never felt heavy, it has always felt synonymous with my being.

(40) José E. Muñoz, *Cruising utopia: The then and there of queer futurity*, 172, 178, 183).

(41) Chest binding is the practice of compressing one's breasts into a flat(ter) position to simulate a masculine or androgynous chest. Tucking is a technique where the crotch bulge is hidden for a feminine or androgynous appearance. Both of these practices carry health risks, either rib and chest damage or fertility issues, respectively. There are different techniques, as well as devices to make these safer and more comfortable.

Perhaps due to personal familiarity, my path to *stitching*[42] the *body-self* began with the method of pain. I started playing with it through exercises I found mentally tortuous and putting my *body* through some physical distress, quickly realising that something was missing. Although able to create both association and dissociation, the effects were short lasting. I expanded my research to reading and conversing on the issue, which eventually lead me to the same conclusion to which everything has lead me so far. Love must be present. Through suffering one can find epiphany, though there must be loving intent behind the conception and reception of this pain.There need be an open heart to be able to listen to the *body*, else there can be no healing pain.[43] As Xana Novais speaks of during their performance "#Electra vai ao #Techno", their public undergoing of physical torment is a way of sharing and demonstrating love. A show of vulnerability through and through as they bring socially assumed private affairs into public view, such as pain, nudity and sex. They explore the plasticity and limits of the *body* through painful electrical shocks dictated by the sound of a drum kit.[44] In this sharing of graphic vulnerability, permeated with gore and shock, the audience is permitted a sense of intimacy with the performer. Pain and sharing would be nothing without the presence of love to bind them. The intention of love must be present in all endeavours of reunification. "Pain is the only sensation belonging to the eternal present [...] At one moment everything is pain, but at the next moment everything is love."[45] Pain moves beyond temporal constraints, it transcends the confines of time as a timeless loving force[46]. In this way, too, pain is an inherent part of the queer[47].

In "Cruising Utopia" José Esteban Muñoz speaks of the concept of *straight time* and its queer counterpart, *ecstatic time*. An all encompassing horizontal time, beyond the *temporal stranglehold* enabling fearless honesty.[48] *Queerness* does not beget deviation from *straight time*, its rejection must be a conscious choice. Therefore, anyone may step outside it. Doesn't it seem so much better to partake in ecstasy? To reject the taught linearity and see time in its entirety is the exercise I undertook. Time is such a plastic and subjective experience that can be so easily altered, be it with a shift of perspective or with chemical interference. In the destruction of my time spiral, I decided to explore as much of it as I could, so I time travelled. I held my own 5-year-old hand and my 60-year-old held mine. This was possible through several practices, the most powerful of which, once again, proving to be love. I took a physical manifestation of my memories and ripped them apart and into the present so as to allow my *body* reception of its past in its present, nurturing the union between them. By applying this in conjunction with a painful practice of *self* disciplined meditation while tightly holding onto the love planted in me, I was able to embody all my past forms and transcend my experience of time[49]. In another instance I held all my past and present forms within me and let them guide me into their future, so as to be able to embody their infinity and reach my truest form. Using this, I imagined how a human transcendence might look. A form that would go beyond the confines of what a *body-self* restricts and of what restricts a *body-self*, one that transcends gender or sex.

(42) An operation of reconnection for healing and creation. Legacy Russell, *Glitch feminism: A manifesto*, 78.

(43) Ariel Glucklich, *Sacred Pain: Hurting the Body for the Sake of the Soul*, 40.

(44) "It is a manifestation done by one sole person, where the body is sacrificed entering a trance state in favour of its longing for rebirth through painful situations, of muscles in tension, and finally, in favour of their art." Xana Novais, *#ELECTRA VAI AO #TECHNO*.

(45) Ariel Glucklich, *Sacred Pain: Hurting the Body for the Sake of the Soul*, 38.

(46) Not only as its existence resides in a time of its own, or as an aforementioned vehicle for transcendence, but as one of

(47) As has likely become apparent throughout this book, queer people are, unfortunately, intimately familiar with pain. From untimely deaths, to institutional violence and promotion of *self hate*. Daily acts of micro-aggression and several acts of grave aggression. We have been victims of conversion therapy, hate crimes and rejected by our own families. Told we are not real, we are sick and we are crazy. Grief is a cross we have and will continue to carry for generations to come, as we fight for our rights, our lives and our futures.

(48) José E. Muñoz, Cruising utopia: The then and there of queer futurity, 32, 25.

(49) Practical Body of Research 3

history, for it can be a cultural inheritance, as well as stored generationally in the *body*. (Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart et al., "Historical trauma among Indigenous Peoples of the Americas: concepts, research, and clinical considerations," 283-84, and Mark Wolynn, interview).

If we are our own gods, then what may the appearance of our divine form be? What organs, if any, would reside inside it?[50] Girl of Swords proposes this ability to alter our *body's* biology is proof of human godhood. The bodily dissociation that leads to a search of biological transformation is a reach toward divinity. That in the surgical and chemical alteration of our *bodies* we make *ourselves* gods, unbound by natural circumstance, able to create our own biology. Affirming surgery is therefore an act of the divine. The manipulation of one's biology is to act as god of the *body-self*. It is to truly act as and for *body-self*, entwining and uniting them as a single entity.

However, it is not only the ability to alter biology that makes us deities. Glucklich would argue that empathy, too, is one of our godly gifts. We are our own gods, craving communion with the earth.[51]

Upon seeing the fast technological development of recent past, our divinity has become more apparent to individuals. Unfortunately, whilst the conclusion is sound, its reason has been dangerously misplaced. We are not above all, much less one another, and yet a desire to rule has taken precedence over one of connection. A tragic sickness sprouting from the patriarchal capitalist society that has taken root. We erroneously believe to have tamed nature instead of seeking communion with it and others, and quickly forgot the source of our divinity. Empathy. Love. Combined with the conversion of time into capitalist currency, this began to foster an ideal of individuality quickly turning humanity away from communal spending and toward singularity.

"And doesn't capitalism make human relationships except for sex all but impossible?"[52] The subsequent death of community took with it the vast diversity of profound human relations leaving behind only a handful. Nevertheless, sex, too, became commercialised, stripped of its reality and potential for connection to be a tool for profit driven by empty consumerist desire. Consequently reinforcing the commodification of people, which in tandem with fear mongering wrought by individualism and the capitalisation of sex, has widely stripped it the meaning of connective possibility. Sex opens a space where people are able to integrate and realise instinctive desire that they would otherwise be unable to express or even access. Not only due to the repressive norms of society, but also due to the essence of the act itself currently being the closest contact to our animalistic and intuitive nature. It is one of the only spaces where people are allowed access to this rawness. This permits a more honest communication between the *body-self* as well as with the other. The institution of marriage, with its heteronormative roots, is a play, dress up, one more restraint on love, keeping it from becoming free.[53] We are starved, living in a love hierarchy where there is an ideal love, a best love, most worthy and important. A love rooted in desire and lust, fleeting superficial feelings. The love we share nurtures the *body* as much as the *self*. The love we receive, the love we give and the connections this sharing creates. The *body* exists in relation to others, it is in and through the perception of other *bodies* that we perceive our own[54]. The *self* binds to the other. The *body* is not bound to the *self*. It is in connecting to others that the *body* and the *self* join and separate, travelling between *bodies*, experiencing different *selves* in a dance of humanity. True humanity, outside of gender and social imposition, all as one. We are reflected in the eyes of those we love.[55] To destroy the walls of the spiral,

(50) Practical Body of Research 2, Images XLII, XLIII, XLIV

(51) Ariel Glucklich, *Sacred Pain: Hurting the Body for the Sake of the Soul*, 64.

(52) Jack Smith, "Statements, Ravings and Epigrams", 29.

(53) "Love can now be free, but to make it completely free, it must be liberated from sexual frustrations imposed by society." Be these monogamous heterosexual marriage, the modesty imposed, or the forced distancing of natural desires. Yayoi Kusama, "Homosexual Wedding (Press Release)", 103.

(54) Legacy Russell, *Glitch feminism: A manifesto*, 28.

(55) Sabine Melchior-Bonnet, *História do Espelho*, 159–161.

loving is essential. It is in communion with one another that *body-self* may (re)unite. This was a key realisation I came to during the course of t his research, that the *body* and *self* are meant to be a shared experience. Without ties to other *body-selves* true unity can not be achieved, and to do this one must embrace honesty.

To chip away the time is in itself a search for the child within and for a potential merging or connecting with them, seen as they lie at the centre of the storm which would make them closest to our base origin. As such, it is also a search for a more crude state than that of present.

Hence, to reach the centre of the storm, one should embrace their more natural instincts, a lot of which will evidently be childlike. For instance, giving into the impulse to run around, jump or roll in the grass, to talk openly with one another or closely observing and questioning one's surroundings. These are innate traits largely discouraged by social norms, leading to their erasure from our conscious. One needs to listen to them and nurture this contact so they may slowly return, to embrace true humanity. This was another exercise I adopted in my research. Attempting a rawer state of being, finding the *child*. It is a substantial exposure and vulnerability to embrace one's instinct, to let go of the masks and the safety of their concealment. You have to be open to being seen and let go of the fear of perception to find community. Unfortunately, modernity has been cursed with a fear of the vulnerable. Even if just to oneself, to embrace one's truth is a daunting endeavour of exposure. In the labour of chipping away the time, however, it is a necessary one. Only then may the body-self unite. Loss of community is loss of humanity. Reflected in ourselves is the other. All others. In small gestures one may find another within them. In thoughts, actions, we contain each other. We are all the same. I am you as much as you are me. We are made of parts of each other, indistinguishable from the other. A single entity separated by the body which binds us and the time which surrounds us[56].

The *body-self* are timeless for they reside in a place where all time exists as one and not at all. To step into their world is to step into a place outside of time. A *non-space*[57], a *heterotopia*. Akin to *ecstatic time*, it is a place of past and future, holder of possibility. Of dream. A place that, like ruins or mirrors, doesn't exist. I enjoy this paradoxical existence, I feel it reflects the soul. A condition of perpetual mutation and thereupon inexistent in time. Only caught in a glimpse. This is where I work. In a *non-space*, in a *non-time*, in a speculative hypothetical. Time is so vast and varying. I prefer to work on the outside of it and experiment with its plasticity. I step out into the storm, into this transcendentally timeless place, existing in all of time at the same time as outside it. The mirror offers a reflection of a hypothesis in this liminal space that makes up its constitution. It offers a new perspective of the *body-self* and aids communication with them, granting them a strong presence in my methodology. Through this empty inexistent space, it is able to offer the power of metamorphosis. It helps dissociate from the present by offering an alternative one based on ecstasy, breaking the barrier between *body* and *self* and acting as a medium of communication between realities. It allows for deeper *self* knowledge and realisation. Its allowing of metamorphosis can be a truly powerful and transformative tool in (re)connection. One may gaze upon their truth unencumbered by the weight of *straight time*, imagining a freeing potentiality through their projection upon this other space.[58] It creates a space where the queer can take shelter in the exploration of their *body-self*, safe from straight time, allowing the partaking of questioning and defying activities such as drag[59]. This can lead not only to the finding of a path of connection but incite the finding of community. The *body-self* grow closer by sharing presence in *ecstatic time*. We must reject the binary and relearn the limits of our *self*, embrace the transparency of being.

(56) Practical Body of Research 1

(57) Unlike Marc Augé's *non-places*, which are typically functional environments characterised by transience, *non-spaces* are more alike *heterotopias*, as they are spaces which reside outside of time. *Non-places* highlight the alienation of modernity, which brings more places of circulation and consumption than of dwelling and communion. *Non-spaces* live in an alternate reality where all time is one, they sit idly as we witness their lack of time, their past and future potential. They are places of possibility. Ian Buchanan, *A Dictionary of Critical Theory*

(58) Sabine Melchior-Bonnet, *História do Espelho,* 254, 255.

(59) Legacy Russell, *Glitch feminism: A manifesto*, 58.

"WE ALSO WORK TOWARD DISSOLVING OURSELVES, MAKING THE BOUNDARIES THAT DELINEATE WHERE WE BEGIN AND END, AND THE POINTS WHERE WE TOUCH AND COME INTO CONTACT WITH THE WORLD, DISAPPEAR COMPLETELY.

[...]

IF EXISTENCE WITHIN A HEGEMONIC CULTURE TODAY REQUIRES THE GENDER BINARY TO DELINEATE THE SELF AND EVEN TO BE RECOGNISED AS HUMAN, THEN IS CEASING TO EXIST WITHIN A GENDERED FRAMEWORK THE MOST SKILFUL OF DISAPPEARING ACTS?

[...]

IN BECOMING, WE SHAPE-SHIFT, DEEPEN, EVOLVE, AS WE LEAVE THE EDIFICE OF A GENDERED ARCHITECTURE. THUS, OUR MOVEMENT OUR ABILITY TO GHOST ON THE IDEA OF THE BODY, MOVING AWAY FROM IT IS A KEY COMPONENT OF BECOMING. THE MOVEMENT OF GHOSTING CREATES A GENERATIVE VOID THAT MAKES SPACE FOR NEW ALTERNATIVES."[60]

(60) Legacy Russell, *Glitch feminism: A manifesto*, 68.

I like to play with this temporality of ecstasy. To invoke these *non places* into the present and juxtapose them with contrasting sensations. I take a particular interest in the use of dichotomies, often working with them in my process, as I believe these to be inherently human. In the end, I suppose this search was for humanity. A true form of humanity, removed from all the inhumanity modernity has brought. In my search I reached into my *child*, embraced them and attempted to merge. During this process, the possibility of healing is opened and one may choose wether or not to attempt this. Although my primary focus is on finding the *child*, I do find it helpful for the excavation to embrace healing. Ultimately, my research is about wading through the walls of time, discovering, seeing and understanding them, as well as the process by which they were found. Approaching it through the perspective of my own spiral, I explored the *body-self* relationship through emotionally evocative materials, how it intersects with the problematic of identity, addressing such issues as bodily transcendence through mutilation[61], their forced separation or unity via the medium of suffering and how their interaction with others might affect this relationship.

I took the impulse of bodily "destruction"[62] and explored it as a search for and divinity itself. I worked the *body* in many facets, exploring limits and expanding boundaries, with a particular interest in the cycle of destruction-creation. For instance, the reassignment of sex at birth (i.e. in the case if intersex individuals) is an act of violence in the service of social normativity[63].

(61) Actions of transformation and manipulation through the damaging or destroying of something thus creating a space of rebuilding. Confronting situations of dismay, discomfort and incrementally pushing my boundaries (within reasonable comfort, there is no point in forcefully creating pain, this only generates further dissociation. The process must defy limits whilst retaining some sense of safety).

(62) The destructive impulse to reconstruct and mould it to the *self*, the impulse to cause the *body* hurt as connection with the *self* and its transcendence, *l'appel du vide*. Enacted consciously not as escapism, driven by desperation and pain, but as a tool of and for love.

(63) Paul B. Preciado, *Manifesto Contra-sexual*, 164.

Therefore, to rebuild one's own sex in service of their *self* is a loving act of constructive violence. I came to find that any effort of (re)unification, be that what it may, must be informed by love, making it a spiritual process, for love is the divine[64]. It is through this spiritual quest that unity is found. From the loving process of gender affirming procedures to the creation of community.

Evidently, my work is strongly seeded o processual methodology over productive finality. The focus is on the practice of the search and its workings much less than on what artistic situations this might produce. Unhindered by constraints of time, letting it guide me, generating what is often a lengthy creative process. Follow ing intuition, I make objects or arrange situations that resonate with my *self*, in an attempt to progressively create a deeper connection to my humanity. The work I explore always creates a connection with either one or between several *body-selves*. Beginning with mine as a starting point and aiming to share it or partaking in another(s). In this manner I have created several objects, some which may, or even need, be displayed. These include an assortment of needles, personal clothing, and transcendental *bodies* and organs of different materials, among others, duly identified in the annex of this book. I work with materials of personal significance in the making of artistic objects, as part of trying to explore all facets of love and *humanity* to which I have access or which make their presence known to me. I also utilise evocative religious imagery and associations, such as reliquaries and the invocation of saintly ascension. Religion is a way of spirituality that can lead to community. In my culture, catholicism is the most common and widely accepted form of spirituality, begetting its use in my work. I believe the community it leads to is tainted by all the oppressive and exclusionary rules masking its loving foundation. A community and spirituality built on exclusion could not be pure and lead to *humanity*, it needs to remain true to its loving nature through acceptance and compassion. In the use of religious association I create a new spirituality of my own founding, one built on love and its pursuit. Through creating interactive situations with this basis, a space for loving community is opened[65]. For my exhibition, I wanted to utilise a *non-space*, one left to abandon, that was connected to me in some way. This way I could enable the creation of community through cultural sharing. Reutilising a defunct space, near to my heart, and bringing it life once again, in favour of connection. A way of loving rebellion against the capitalist enabling of spatial and communal death.

Concluding, there are many factors one must take into account when attempting to chip away time, but a loving foundation is paramount. I believe that to reach the centre one must strive for pure humanity, untainted by social norm. Community is an undeniable necessity to achieve connection and its creation one of the most noble causes of modern times. In my work I strive to create room for people to reflect by facilitating a dissociation from *straight time* wherein they might find clarity and space which our society is lacking. I hope to make people stop and experience time differently and intensely where, perhaps through a feeling of discomfort before a new reality, they might
question their own and that which resides outside them. Embracing the queerness that is to be human, subsequently rejecting any proposed guidelines whose sole objective is to turn profit whilst perpetuating hierarchical patriarchal power at the ultimate cost of humanity.

I wish to bring to a close (if such a thing proves possible) the series of works I have begun with an (already ideated) exhibition. Fortunately, time did not allow me to bring to fruition all the works I dreamt during the course of this Masters, so I hope one day to be able to realise this vision. Thanks to the journey of learning I underwent in the past four years especially, in future endeavours I will continue to focus on the creation of community around me, particularly where I find it lacking. I now aim to found community oriented, sex positive, inclusive parties and a queer focused cultural association, as well as a small commune of sorts, with a strong link to nature, where I intend to live. Always guided by the divine force of love. I will likely continue artistic creation and research, although perhaps as a footnote to communal or *human* aspirations, as it has proven to become. To rebuild a humanity with people at its core, first we must share, only then can we love and on its path reunite the *body-self*. It is a path that opens a myriad of amazing possibility for human and social betterment, one where I found love abundant.

(64) bell hooks, *All about love: New visions*, 75, 76.

(65) Which to flourish, must be nurtured.

Is it not a search for divine love to be transgender?

"MY SECRET:

I AM ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE MIRROR."[66]

[66] Jacques Rigaut, *Écrits*, apud Sabine Melchior-Bonnet, *História do Espelho*, 358. Free translation.



AUTHOR'S NOTE AND FINAL REMARKS

Firstly, I'd like to address the fact that despite being natively portuguese, I decided to write this text in english. This was not only due to a personal preference of habituation, but also because many of the topics I broach in my research are underdeveloped in portuguese. This made finding texts and references with which to nurture my research much easier in english. Another reason for my linguistic choice was its global reach, making it accessible to a broader audience. Regrettably, it is an opportunity that could add inclusive language to the portuguese academy that is lost.

I would also like to comment on the unusual format of the text. I find that everything is always very serious, when it really needn't be, so I like to add a dimension of play to my work. We are all going around playing pretend, just as we did as children. In a way, that is all consumerism is, play. Be it playing pretend by vacationing in fake homes, playing dress up through purchase of fancy clothes or even swiping through an endless catalogue for a pretend relationship. It is all just play, we use the exceeding money we have available to buy new toys with which to play. Yet somehow, we treat it all very seriously. This takes a toll on happiness and peace. Everything becomes much more dire and anxiety inducing, lightness is a virtue that shouldn't be lost to time, even when speaking of serious matters. In the end, we are all here to share in nature and each other, I find it important to not forget that.

Towards the end of my Masters I realised I focused mostly on the *child*, this is because I do believe that the *child* is, indeed, the closest contact to the purest form of humanity. However, when searching for *body-self* unity, the sole focus should not be on the child. I found it better to begin with finding the center, as it would grant me the necessary tools for an easier path to connection. Suspecting that a close contact to pure humanity could prove to be significantly advantageous in this quest. Having acquired the tools, it becomes easier to equitably distribute attention through all the corpses in the spiral. All hold within them the keys to *body-self* connection. One must lovingly focus on each as required.

Finally, my closing remarks. We are all a storm. Time exists all at once in a single entity. Our perception of it as past, present and future are constructs created to better understand and live our individual and collective lives. Queerness is a future and the search for *self* is a search for love. To live is to share.

I LEAVE YOU WITH THIS.

FIGHT FOR EACH OTHER, LOVE WITH ABANDON. BE BRAVE.

DECLARATION

I would first like to thank my supervisor, Filipa, for her continued guidance in this project. To my classmates, who I now have the immense pleasure of calling friends. They have accompanied me through these four years, deeply influencing my work, as, I hope, is evident through these texts, and without whom it would certainly not be what it is today. Thank you for all the joy, care and love which you have shared with me. I love you all.

To those who have shared in this suffering of writing in tandem with me, Davide, thank you for your encouragement when it was seemingly never-ending. And, of course, Serafim, thank you for being there for me and sharing in the despair, and most of all, for your friendship, I love you.

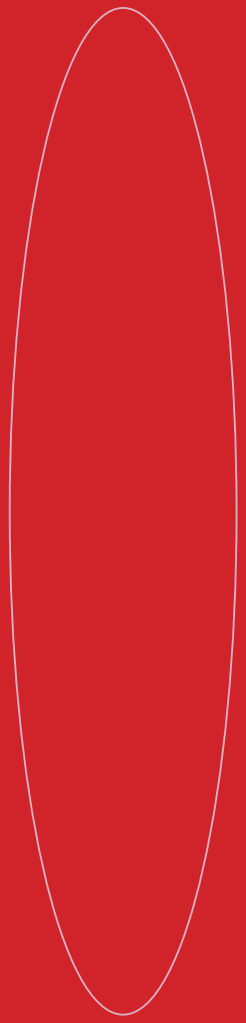
To Alex, whom I will always love.
To Luísa, thank you so much for everything you have done for me, for listening to my insanities and helping me through this exhausting and long journey in the many ways that you have. From the bottom of my heart, thank you for making my life brighter and queerer. I love you.

Thank you to Aura, grandmother in my heart, and to Vizoa, my grandfather, for all their support. Thank you to my Mom and Dad for always believing in me and bolstering me through life. Thank you to my sister, the strength of our love could never let us be apart. I love you.

My deepest gratitude and love to all the people I found on this quest, who accompanied me and who continue to brighten my life every day. I am overjoyed to have spent these years with you and to have had you in my life. I have grown beyond my wildest dreams and my gratefulness for all these amazing people transcends words. This has been a long, messy road filled with so much of everything, which a lot of you have witnessed, and I count myself lucky to have you taken part. You have shaped me and changed my life in ways I could never have imagined. You have helped me in ways I can scarcely express and I am eternally grateful to all of you for continually shaping and changing my life into the beautiful mess it is today. To all of the unnamed friends, it is an absolute privilege to share my time with you. Thank you all, so much, for everything, and an immeasurable thanks for all the love. This has truly been a galguic time. I love you.

"THE CROSSING
RESEMBLES THAT A SWEET SUICIDE DEVOID

They exert violence onto our *bodies*, they force us into names which they call us as weapons, stone us with words and shout us into the shadows.

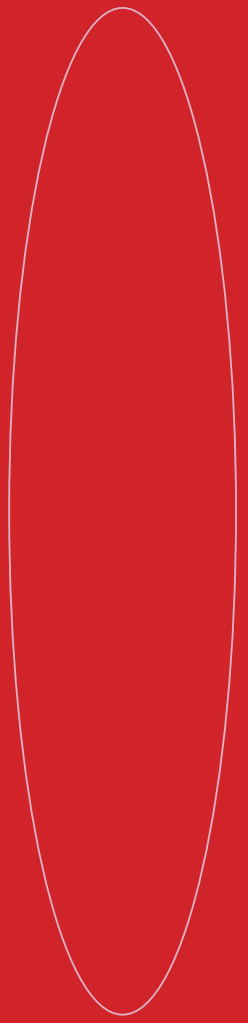


We are raped and murdered and terrified into distancing our *selves* from our *bodies*. They lock the *bodies* into shapes of their acceptance and trap the *selves* outside.

(END)

OF THE MIRROR
OF TRAGIC DIMENSION:
THE WOUND IS IMPERCEPTIBLE AND FATAL."[67]

As they cut us from our mothers so do they begin to cut us from our *bodies*. They sever screaming bodies. So screaming they may return.



They sever humanity, wearing the soul down through overexposure, fear and apathy.

(67) Sabine Melchior-Bonnet, *História do Espelho*, 359. Free translation.

Oppressing the core of our humanity to fit into a society built for a few. We must nurture these screaming *bodies,* feed them touch and care. They separate us from our *selves* and others, they teach not to touch, not to feel, not to be. We must care for one another, it is through caring that we defy and transcend. We must heal, collectively. Help each other, be present, touch, love and care. Nothing else in life matters. We are each other. We share one body. Love without reservation. We are all the same. There is no your body or my body, it is collective. We are one. I am you as you are me. I am my friend and the person across the street. And so are you. We are one body with the earth. I am the child that smiles, the tree that grows from the ground and the bird nesting on it. I am my lovers as they are me. It is through community that we may find peace and unity.

I got a text from my friend the other day. They told me they and their boyfriend narrowly avoided getting run over by a man who proceeded to yell homophobic and transphobic slurs at them. They were holding hands while crossing the street after a date. When they told me this, I felt the man's hatred, I wanted to throw a brick through his windshield. I let that hate permeate my body into a boiling rage fuelled instinct to protect my friends. I let his hate contaminate my love. I played at his hand. I thought, what could possibly drive a person to commit such a heinous act, one that would not only end the lives of two innocent people, guilty of nothing but love, but of his own life as well (if one is to trust the judicial system, this man would be abdicating his freedom for hatred). All for hatred. How could someone possibly be so empty of love.

Upon hearing the results of elections I cried. I felt my very existence being put into question, not my freedom, but my right to life. I look around me and I see so much love. These people that they wish dead are filled with love. I often find myself crying at the sight of this world. At the prospect of a lack of future. I am not certain that future is a luxury which I will be afforded. I weep thinking the tragic crimes of which my ancestors fell victim will once again come to pass and yet another generation will fail to age. I've stopped watching the news. I can't bear it. All this pain, everywhere.

I lay in hope that love wins. Kindness, empathy, kinship. Humanity. Though I fear it will not. So I express my love everyday. Through the branches and roots of the trees, the wind and the birds, crossing oceans and traversing all land, I hope it finds the farthest reaches of this earth. It is not meant for a single soul to bear. This amount of fake connection is unnatural

and our brains have not yet developed to adapt to such overexposure. I do not need the news to see how the world around me crescively fills with hatred. I need only speak with friends or walk the streets.

To live in a world with, by all accounts, no future, dreading every day will be the beginning of an earlier demise is certainly an interesting position to be in. To look around and see that no matter what I do, this world will soon end. That I may have no future to build. To know that nothing is a given. To feel helpless. And to have this tenfold, for I am queer. I find myself living almost exclusively in the present. It is the only certainty I have. Though I do like to dream of a hypothetical future for myself. One where I have not died of heatstroke or a hate crime. One where there is no genocide and my town has not been engulfed in water. One where my family is prosperous and love filled. It does good to dwell in *ecstasy*. Keeps love in the heart.

This collective experience we share as a generation, of an absolute uncertain future, of an overdose of information, an overexposure to tragedy, is a unique one. It binds us together in a web of passion. Be that hate, love, hope or despair. We are bound.

I fear for my loved ones often. I pray love will shelter them. Hoping the days spent wondering if they are still alive will not arrive. Looking at the news and seeing them closer than ever.

I want to make people uncomfortable, uncomfortable people move
I want to share pain, people in pain fight
I want to show people a new reality, so that they better see the one they are desperately trying to
ignore

A reality of social erasure, a reality of danger and suffering, but also of beauty and transcendence, of death and rebirth, of blood and beauty, a reality where pain and pleasure walk hand in hand, a reality that every day is in more and more danger, increasingly erased and ignored, a reality that wakes up every day to its criminalisation and murder. A reality that tells us we don't matter, a reality that wants us gone, murdered by our own hands and those of others, a reality that refuses to admit our existence.

This is real, we exist, in suffering we are born and through pain we transcend. You can never erase us and you will never erase our reality. The non binary body is a political stance, our bodies are weapons[68]. We must not forget. The non binary body is a revolution, stare it down and let it consume you.

"COME CELEBRATE WITH ME THAT EVERYDAY SOMETHING HAS TRIED TO KILL ME AND HAS FAILED."[69]

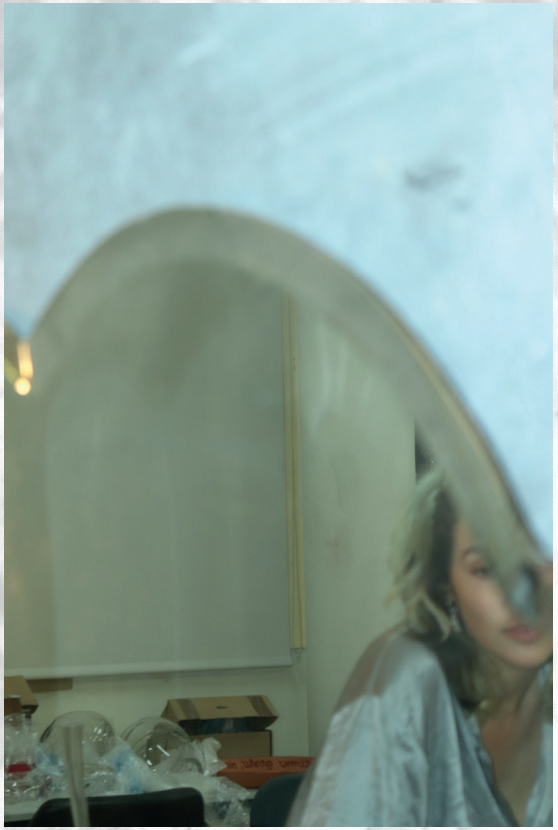
(68) Legacy Russell, *Glitch feminism: A manifesto*, 7.

(69) Lucille Clifton, *won't you celebrate with me?*



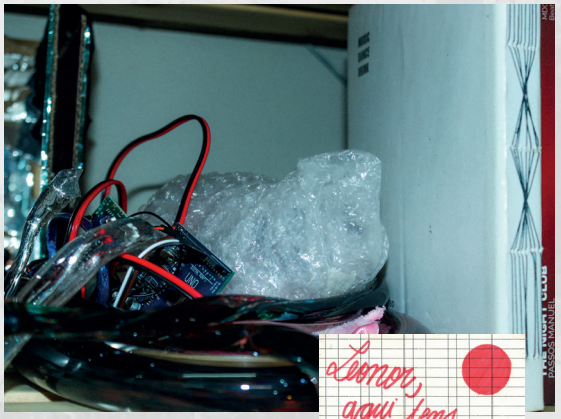
PRACTICAL BODY OF RESEARCH

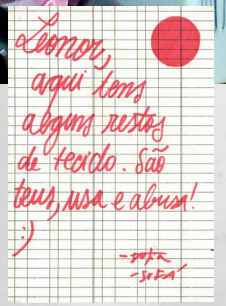
My work resides in a *non-space*, outside the apparent linearity of time. It feeds on the connections created through the excavation of my surrounding spiral. I explore the different ways in which I can destroy it and approximate my core humanity as I face the several living cadavers that lie within it. Considering thematics of identity and queerness, their possible affinity with dissociation, and inserting them in the context of contemporaneity. I see my work as a collective, instead of individual pieces. They work as a whole, made of the instruments of destruction-construction I acquire during my excavation. In my practice, I explore *non-spaces*, using them to allow me access to a different plane of existence and connection to my *body-self*. Mirrors being a particular favourite. I am partial to glass, especially blown glass, and tend to conjugate it with other elements, such as bodily fluids, metal and fabric. I also work with performance, attempting to create spaces of *body-self* connectivity. When it comes to fabrics, especially, I prefer them to be woven with love in some form, so my choice of materials tends to involve symbolic history. Finally, I sometimes allude to religious association, as my research has a strong link to spirituality. The entire collection of my work embodies my spiral and everything I make is transparent. I strive to create visceral reactions or moments of connection in its receptors. Hoping to provide a *non-space* for those who see it and a safe space for those who need it.





I felt it important to show a glimpse into the exteriorised expression of my mind,
the place I built and inhabited as second home for the past four years.

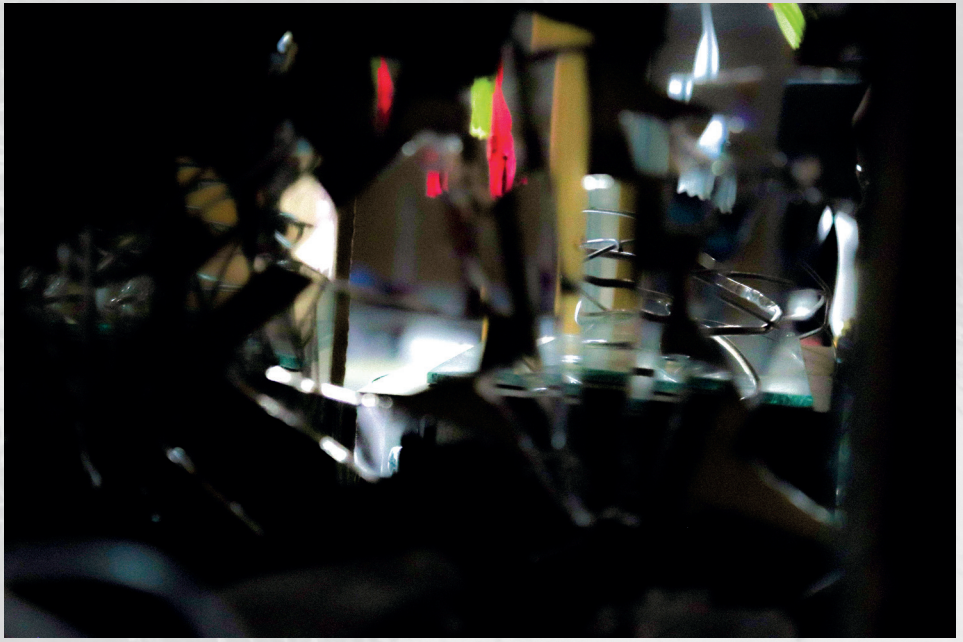






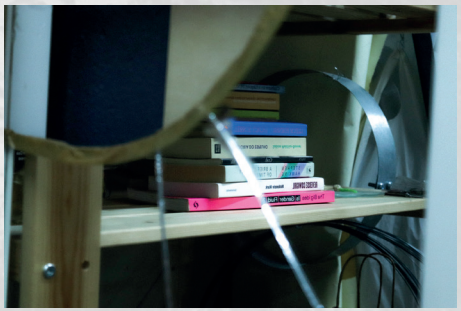














(I) Sou uma Constelação, 2022
Video loop

Looped video composed of several of my unconscious gestures. Through a process of finding *self*'s hidden expression in the *body* I brought these unconscious movements into view, giving way to a *degesturalisation* and achieving a gestural *hyperconscience*.



(II) Metamorphic Body, 2023
Glass, Blood and Steel Cable
24x21,5x7,5cm

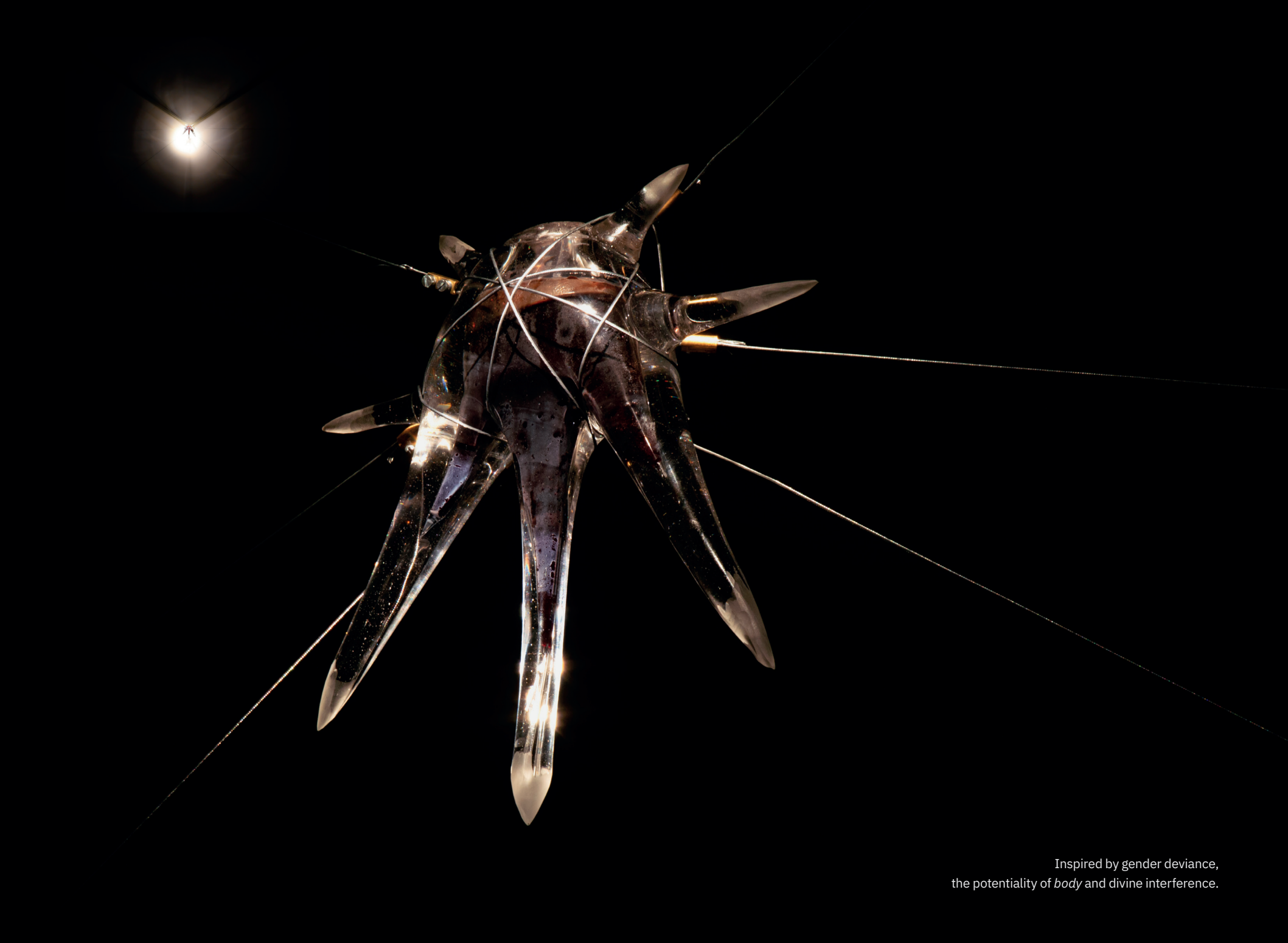


Let the blood run and cleanse the body, cut the ties of time in which it is bound.
May the body become its own gestative womb, deviate as it transcends.









Inspired by gender deviance,
the potentiality of *body* and divine interference.

(III) И, 2024
Repurposed textile, steel, glass
198 x 151 x 165 cm







Let sacrifice be the foundation of fantasy so that it may join body and soul.

This work touches on themes of love, pain and *ecstasy*. It is an installation featuring a rug, lamp, chest, clothing and glass reliquary, with an accompanying performance where I wear the clothes and lay static in a fetal position inside the trunk while holding the reliquary to my chest. Taking the remainder of my childhood costumes and some relevant objects, I reconstructed them into clothes befitting the child's dream that would fit my current *body* and *self* and allow regular wear, including a corset binder and a crinoline.







(IV) Untitled, 2025
Glass and fabric
22x22x13 cm







Rip apart the flesh and become consumed. Look into my eyes and see the AllMother.

A lavish cushion displaying an assortment of glass needles encased in a glass reliquary. This is a play with the contrast between the delicateness and hostility of the needles and the sumptuousness of the cushion, pulling from religious imagery and creating a visceral sensation deriving from a supposition (and perhaps invitation) of their use.





(V) **Drafting a body**, 2025
Cast and glass fiber
170x68x25 cm





An excavation in search of the *body* through its physical manipulation via a plaster replica, as a sort of sculptural draft, with the use of a cast.
The process of casting was an interesting experience of physical challenge, composed of different phases. It was a demanding state of endurance, where the *self* existed in a fluctuating state of unity and separation, during which it fused and nurtured the *body* as well as inhabited other *bodies* until it was finally time to return to its own. The *body* then ready to receive it entirely, they were able to enter a state of blissful meditative *body-self* unity. Encased in my chrysalis I emerged reborn. And as I turned to my side, I found the hauntingly perplexing sight of my own body.

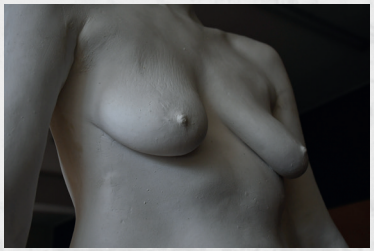


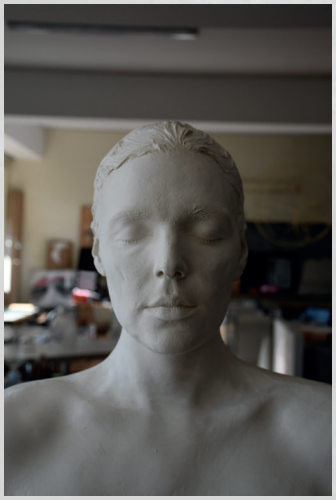








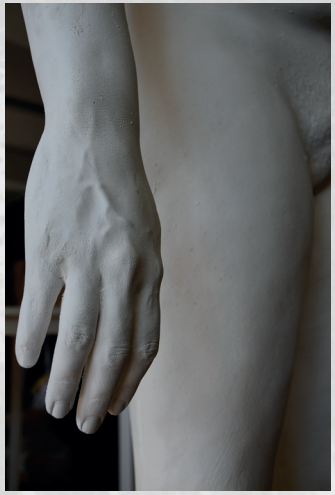


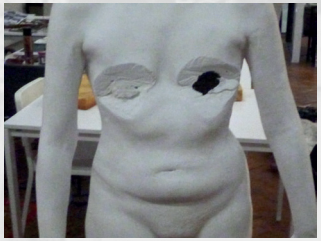












(VI) Scream (In development)



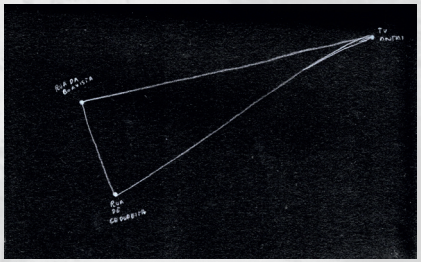
In this participative performance there will be a large circular translucent white fabric with constellations, draped over the ground. I will be under it at its center expunging energy via screaming, a medium castrated by social norm, wearing clothing which binds the *child* to its present, calling forth its *humanity*. The large circular fabric offering a comfortable cover and permitting union is an invitation for the audience to join in this rebellion of embracing instinctive nature while creating a new constellation.

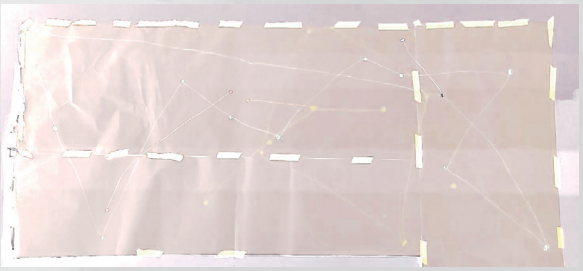


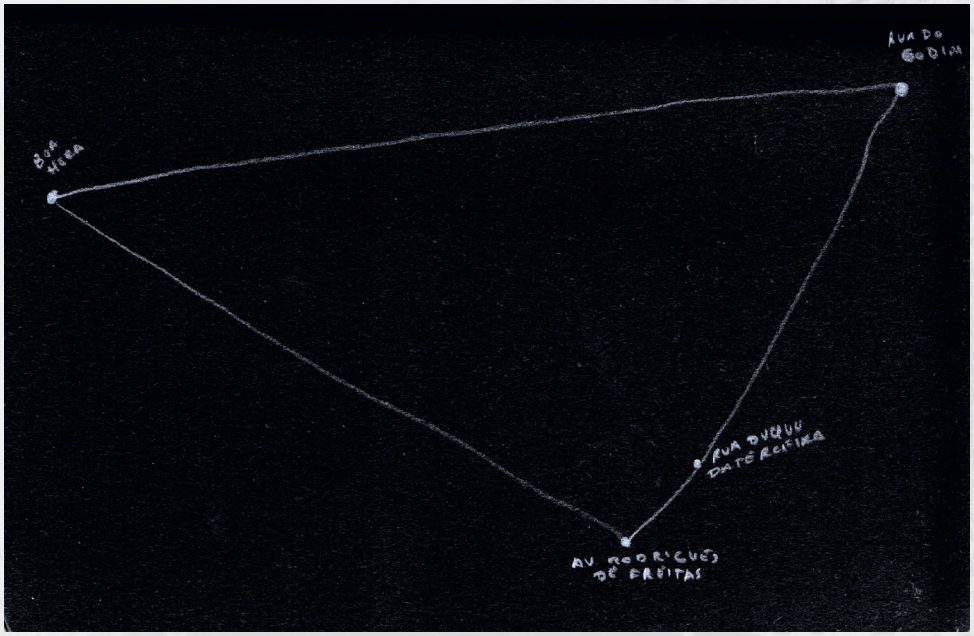


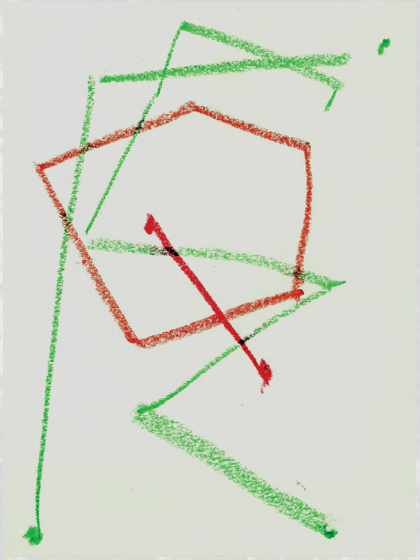
(VII) **Constellations** (In development)

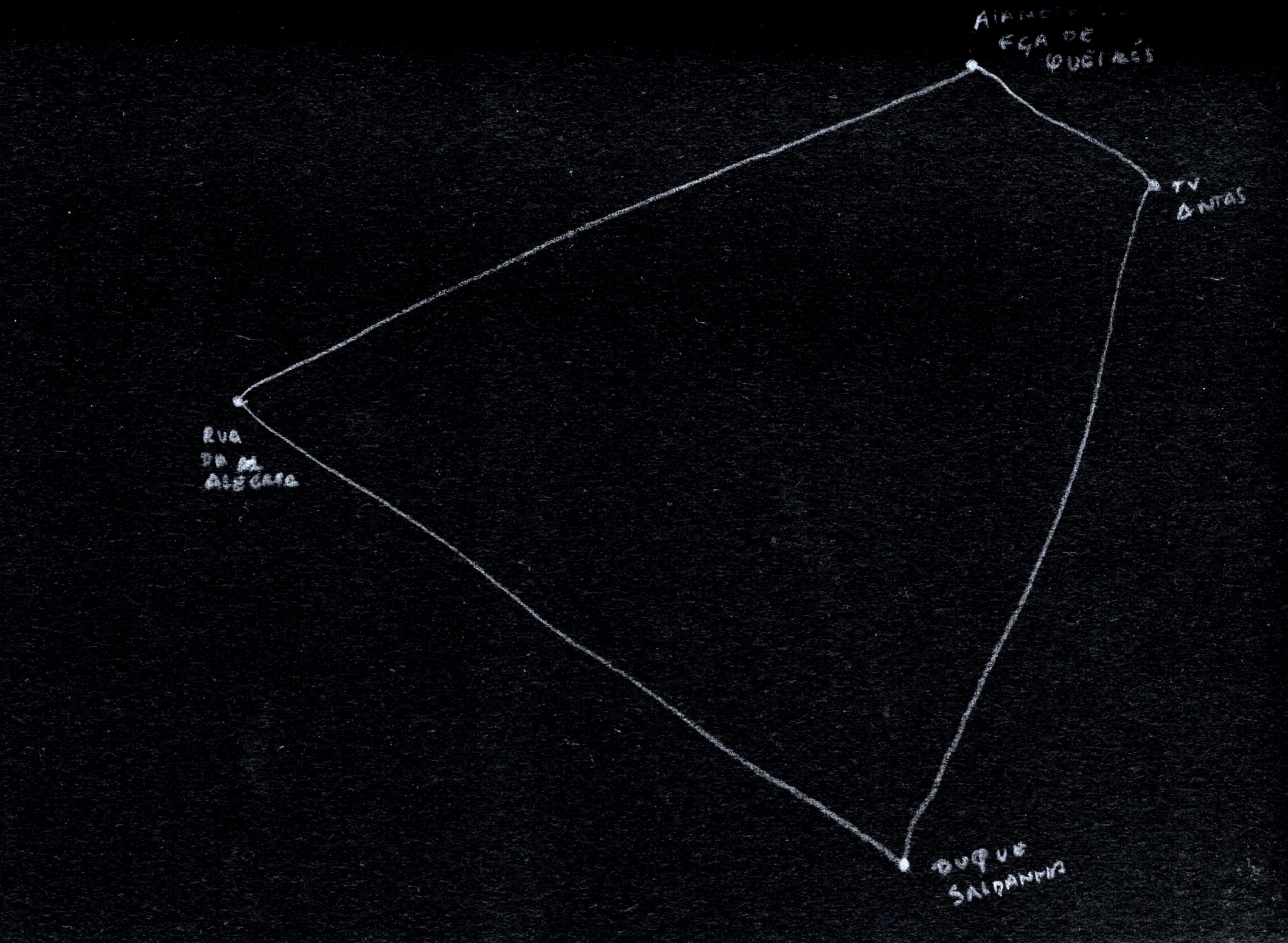
A large translucent fabric with painted constellations of affection, either to be draped on the ceiling or utilised as an object of union in performance.







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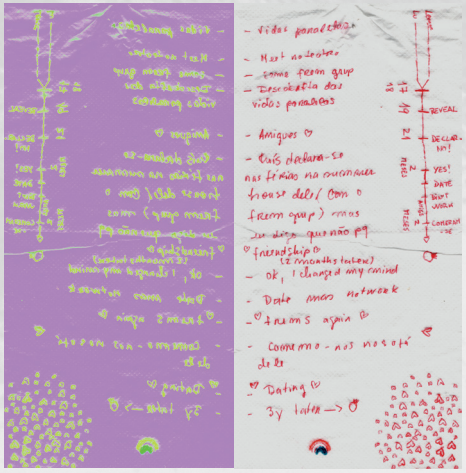
(VIII) Amor Fati, 2025
Video

Their broken union brought to ecstasy in sacrificial bliss.

A video where I and a group of friends, visit a wedding dress shop under pretence of my upcoming wedding. I try on wedding dresses as they watch, collectively playing a part. Inspired by not only a connection to childhood but a challenge of *straight time*'s imposition. Bringing the *child* into the present and re-contextualising them in this communion while remaining in an embrace.

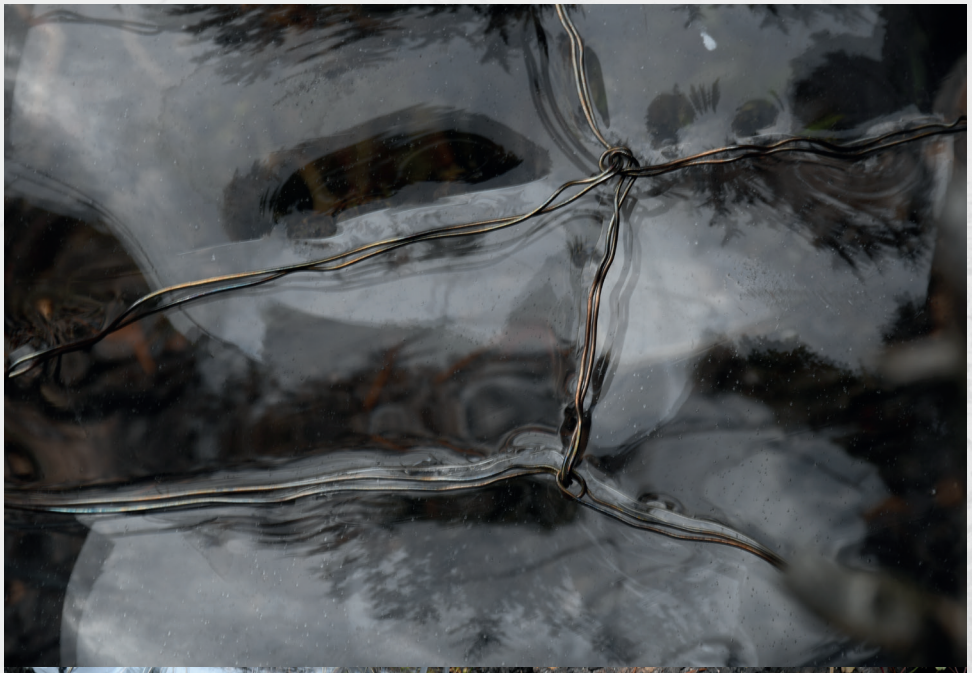






(IX) Restrained body (In development)

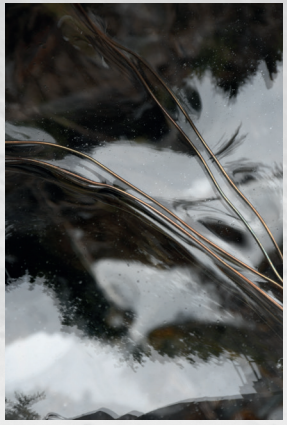
A body born out of and into restriction.













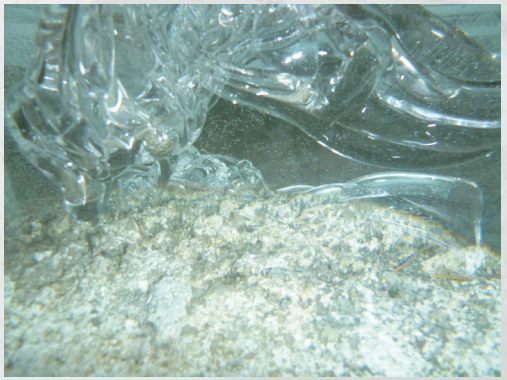
Images 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70

Study in blown glass of the inter-mutability of two bodies in opposite flux.



























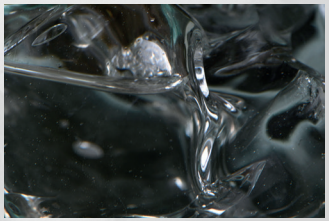
Images 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88

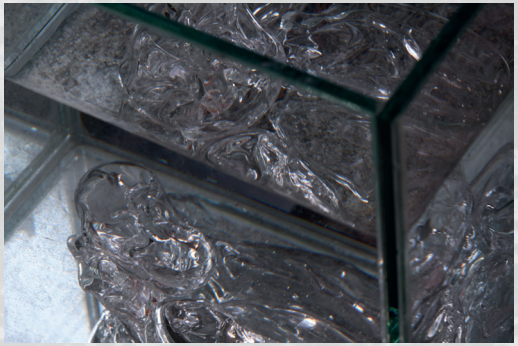
Exploration and development of organs in blown glass with and without colour.



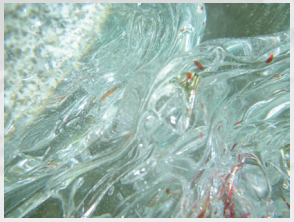


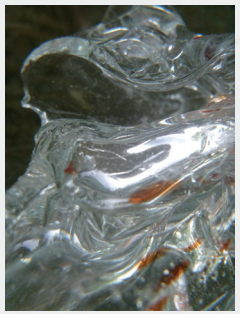


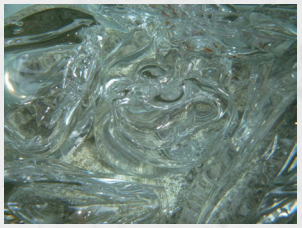




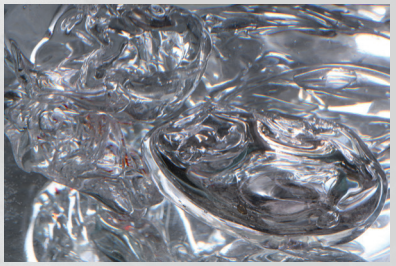




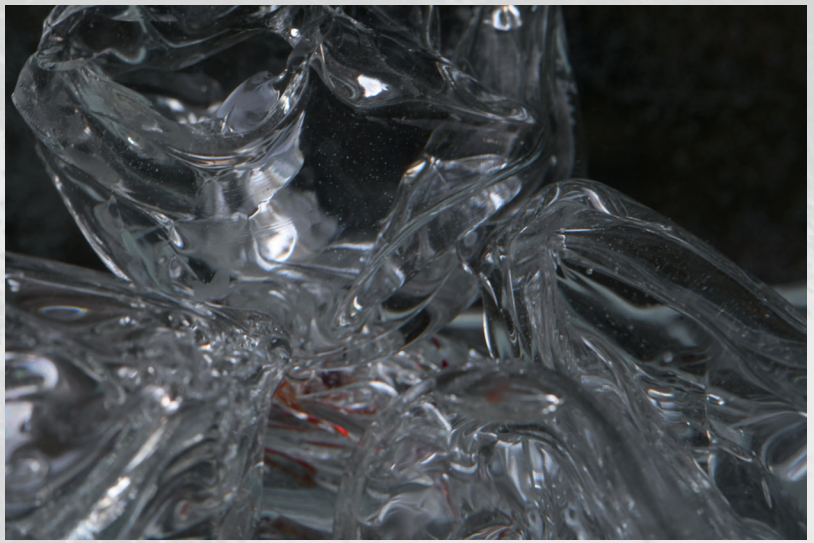


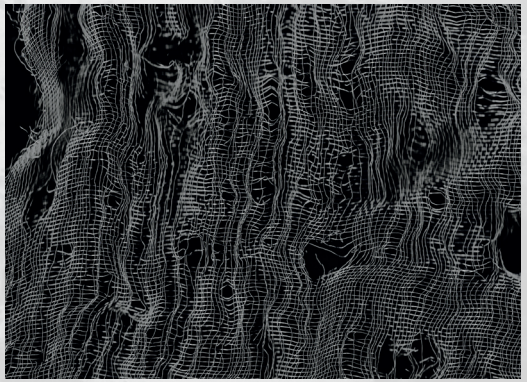


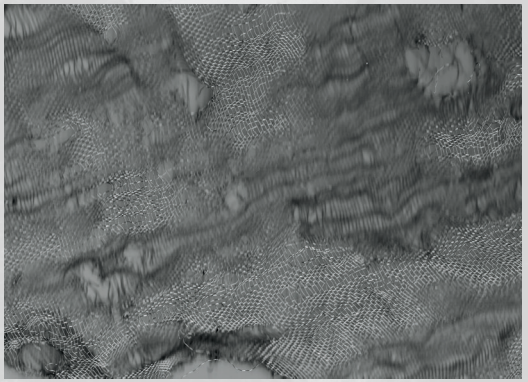






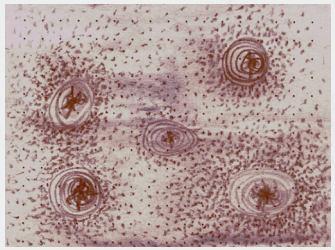






Images 89, 90, 91

Development of a metallic mesh manipulated into a physical representation of the fabric of time.

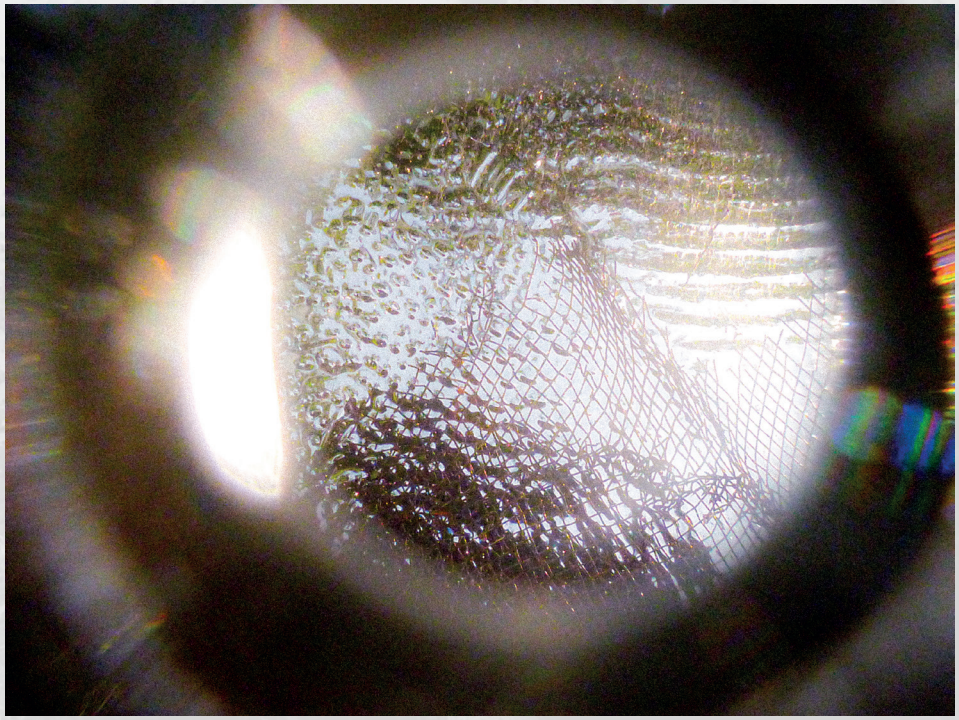




Images 92, 93, 94

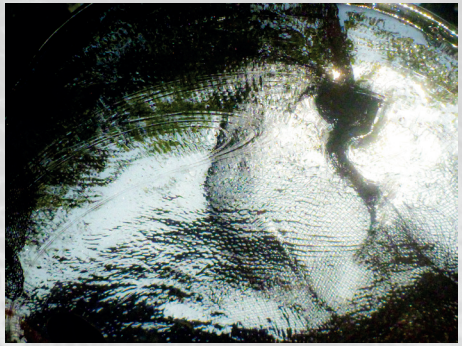
Sketches of the fabric of time.

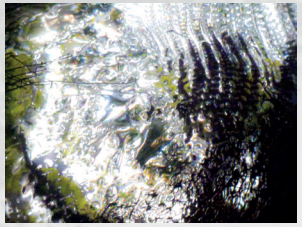




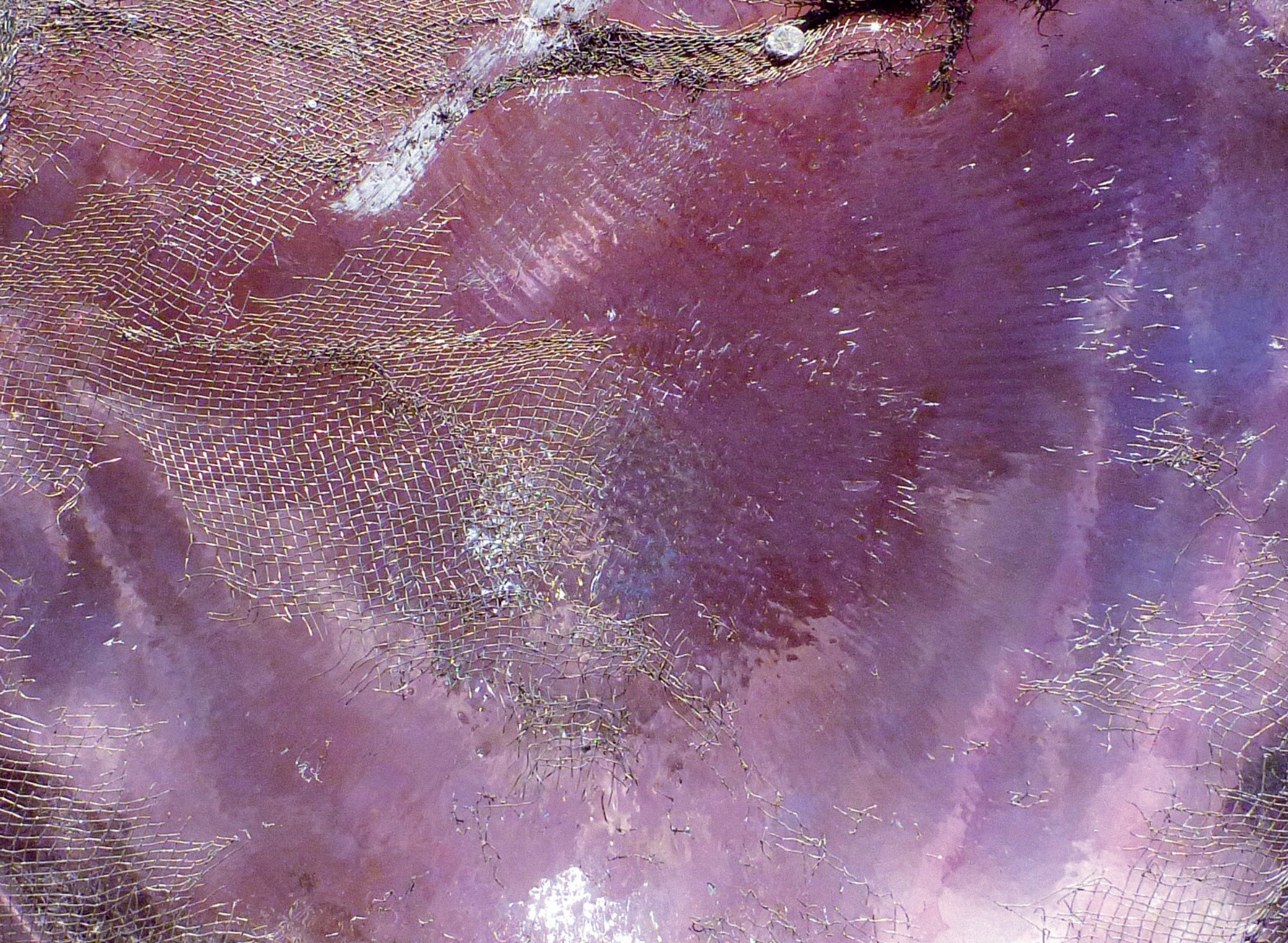
Images 95, 96, 97, 98, 99

Exploration of the fabric of time through imprinting its texture onto blown glass.













Images 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108

Items of upcycled clothing, some of which were developed for performances.





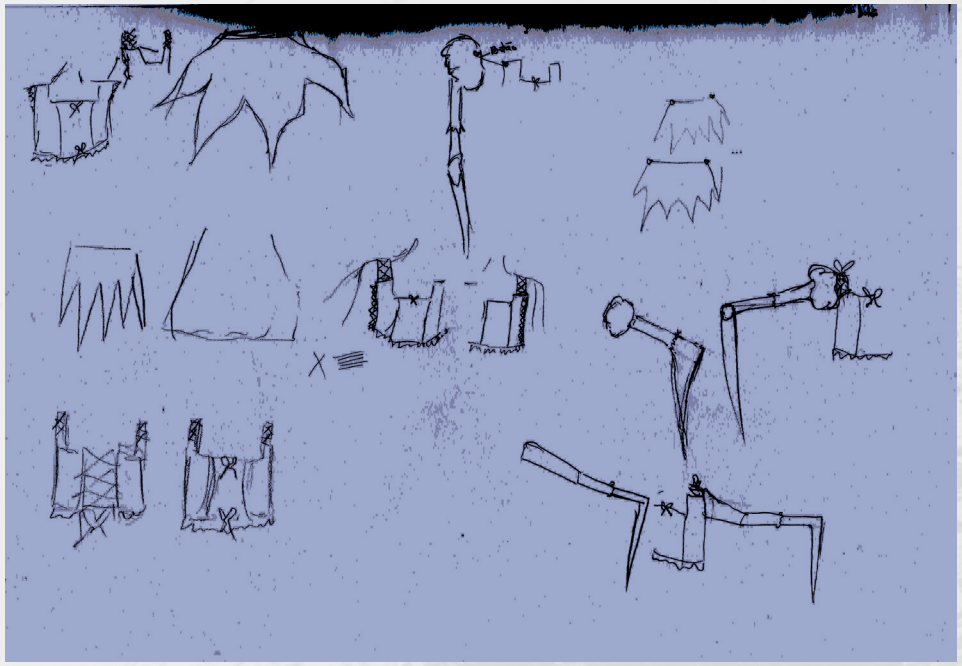




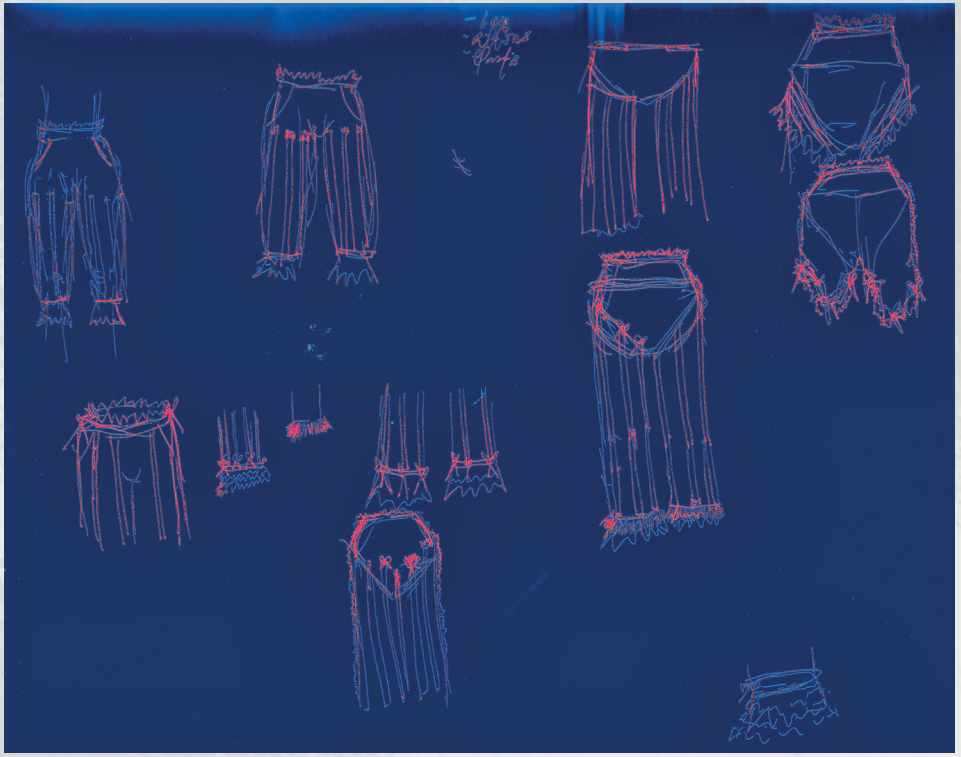






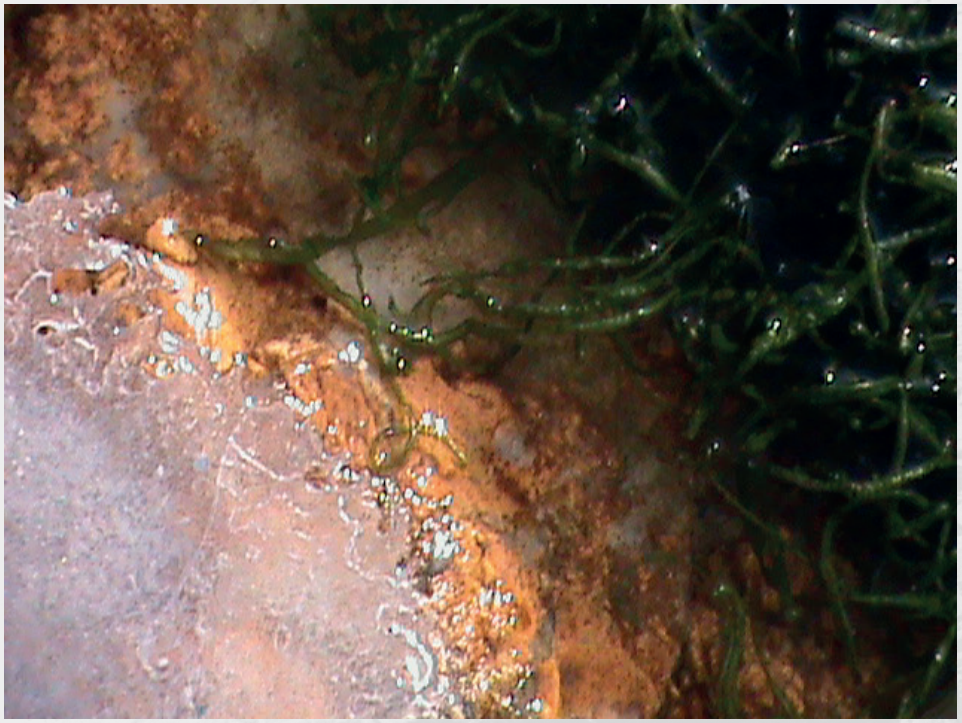






Images 109, 110, 111

Sketches of the clothes for the performances “*И*” and “Scream”.







Images 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121

Experiment with kinetic tape used for binding in pâte-verre.















Images 122, 123, 124, 125, 126,
127, 128, 129

Studies for the metamorphic body.







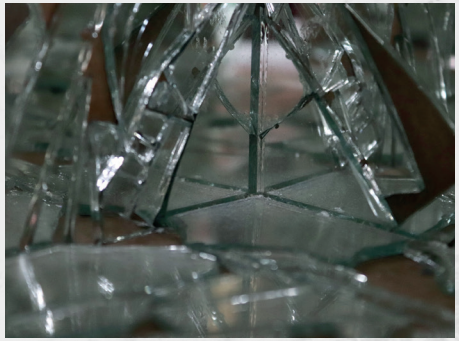












Images 130, 131, 132, 133, 134

Model of a box of broken
mirrors in development.

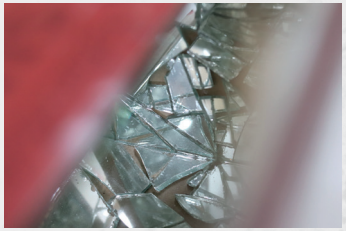










Image 135

Exploration of divine drag.





Images 137, 138

Studies of crowns.

Image 136

Experiment with making
a mannequin in duct tape.





Image 139

Crown in wire, hot glue and broken mirrors.

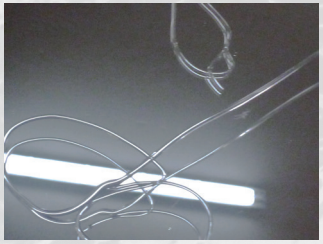




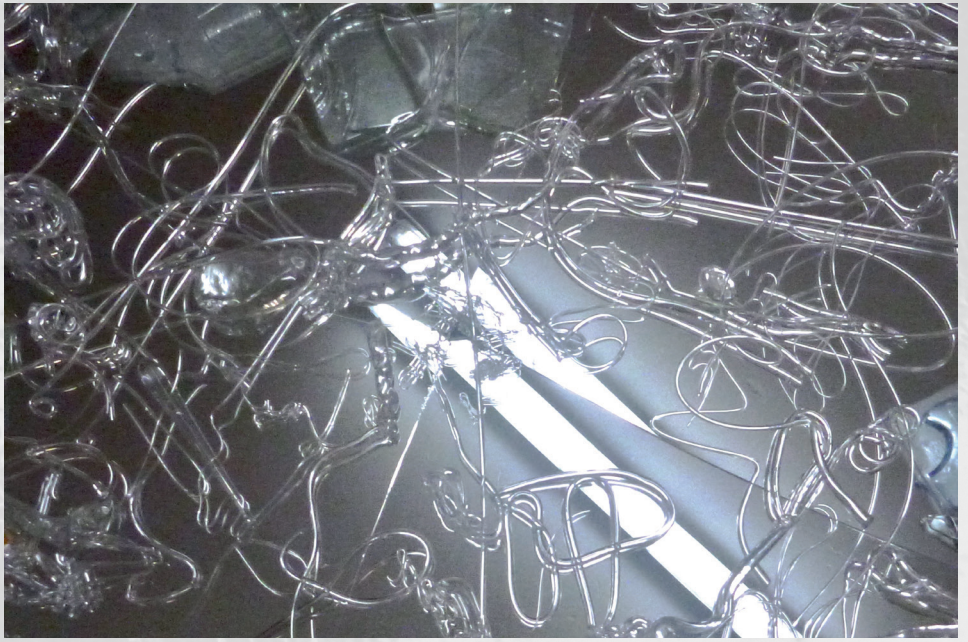


Images 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146

Exploration of glass in different techniques.









Images 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152

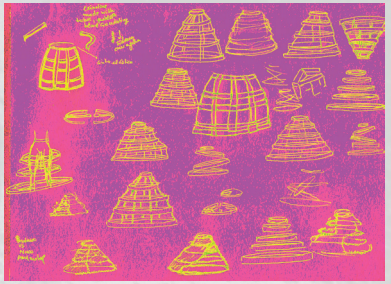
Study of crinolines in different materials.











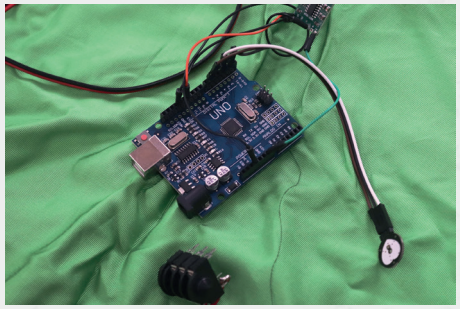


Image 153

Arduino for conversion of heartbeat into sound.

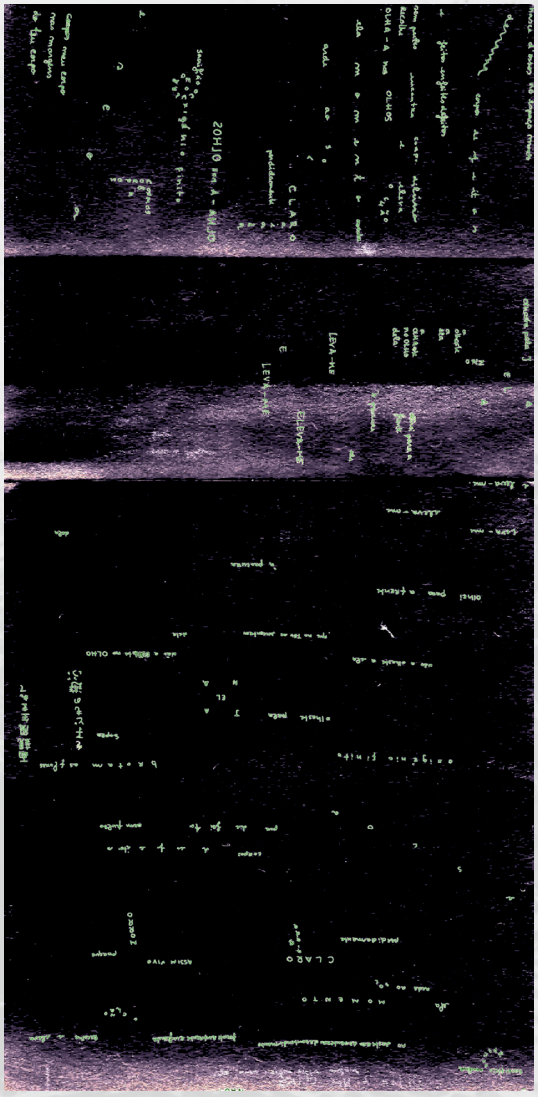


Image 155

Study of a poem.

Image 156, 157

Study of identity and memory in photocopy and drawing.





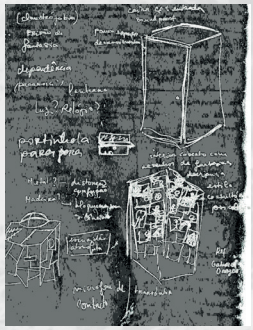


Image 154

Sketch for a project of a box later developed into cardboard prototype.



Image 158

Notes.

Transparent, 2025 (Final Exhibition)





















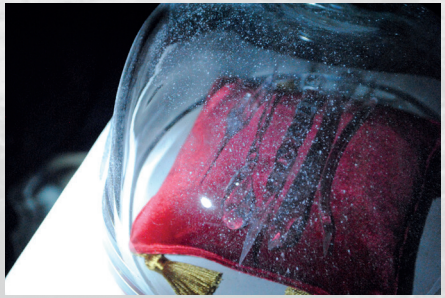




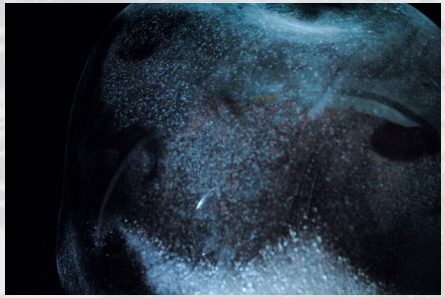










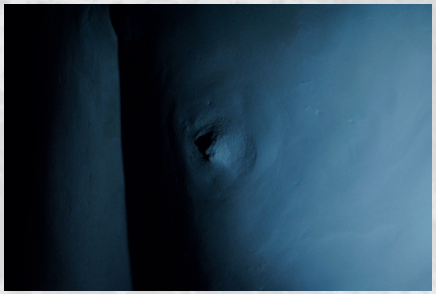
































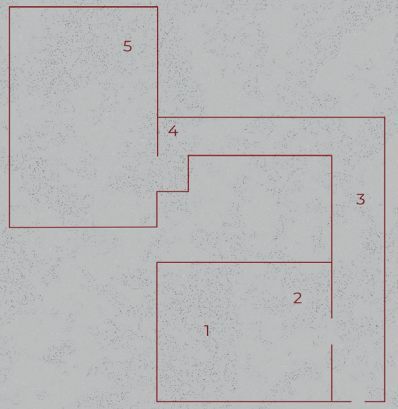


1. И, 2024
Repurposed textile, steel, glass
198 x 151 x 165 cm

Let sacrifice be the foundation of fantasy so that it may join body and soul.

2. Amor Fati, 2025
Video

Their broken union brought to ecstasy in sacrificial bliss.



3. Untitled, 2025
22x22x13 cm
Glass and fabric

Rip apart the flesh and become consumed. Look into my eyes and see the AllMother.

6. Organs, 2025
Variable size
Glass



4. Drafting a body, 2025
170x68x25 cm
Cast and glass fiber

Encased in my chrysalis I emerged reborn. And as I turned to my side, I found the hauntingly perplexing sight of my own body.

5. Metamorphic Body, 2023
24x21,5x7,5cm
Glass, blood and steel cable

Let the blood run and cleanse the body, cut the ties of time in which it is bound. May the body become its own

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