

six frames for absence the sky shows through

A cross-dialogue with urban sceneries, the ideologies which
have produced them, and the effects they have on the bodies
they come into contact with

abridged

This is an ~~abridged~~ version of
the thesis. The full version with
additional chapters is available
upon request.

Master of Fine Arts Thesis
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In gratitude to Minna, for guidance, direction and building blocks for stronger roots. To Mikko for making the classroom a fertile ground. To Silvia & Graeme for sharing and caring. To Joel for all the hours with the riso printer. To Elsa for keeping the home warm. To Elif for all the wine and long talks. To Nabil, with whom the discussion about “the grammar in the city’s walls, codes in its streets, and the body of rules that orientate our movements” never stopped. To my family who have worked so hard to be able to give so much. And many others.

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Abstract

This thesis is the written component alongside the artistic component of the work “six frames for absence the sky shows through,” that was a part of the MFA graduation exhibition in 2024 in The Fine Arts Academy of Helsinki. The artistic component consists of two parts: a video work shown as a part of a screening schedule in the screening room of the Mylly building, and a map of the sources used in the voiceover of the video work, printed in risograph as an edition of seventy, and brought to the public later after the exhibition, at the Under The Leaf Art Book Fair, taking place in Art School Maa in September 2024 as a part of Drifts festival.

The work is based on a longer term engagement of reading literary works from different points of the past century, alongside following the process of a failed construction project that took place in my hometown Tornio, in Northern Finland. Although the specific nature of the construction project has been the original motivation for the direction of the research, the work moves in an associative plain of multiple references and sources beyond the literary, attempting to form a cross-dialogue with the urban sceneries, the ideologies which have produced them, and the effects they have on the bodies they come into contact with.

As a written extension of the work, this thesis can be described to carry on with the same concerns. Its emphasis though, is in trying to create a more heterogenous referential landscape aside of the literary, by including for example public discourse and recent regional or national projects of many scales, which clearest connecting factors may be the requirement for progress. Instead of reproducing the artistic component outside of the compulsory requirements, it will instead focus more on adding to the work: giving context and articulating the background impetuses behind the making, and the process which didn't stop to the KK24 exhibition. The same as the logic of the work itself, the format of this thesis interprets the concept of low theory as a methodology and as a way of doing; attaching theory, literature and other textual and non-textual materials to marginal, personal or collective events of everyday life, fluctuating between scales and planes.

The concepts of societal quests for progress and growth are included through for example an interest towards the ideologies which have pre-dated them and are attached to them, their compulsive formations, the societal systems and the material shapes they produce. Instead of discussing these big, complex themes as such, the text works more as a stroll through a city which it habits in the manner of a hunter-gatherer: picking up anything interesting it may find. What is the end result in the basket, may be a sort of a portrayal of the visited area, or at least a part of it.

Alongside these, the silent narrator of the thesis is the prevalent question of the body; the porous body, the body which is not absolutely and perpetually adaptable, the body which evolution is tied to a different pace than that of the speeding-up cultural evolution, the body which develops symptoms as a response to its surroundings, the body which gets a rash when presented a utopia, and the body which often is denied during the quest for progress.

Tiivistelmä / Kypsyysnäyte

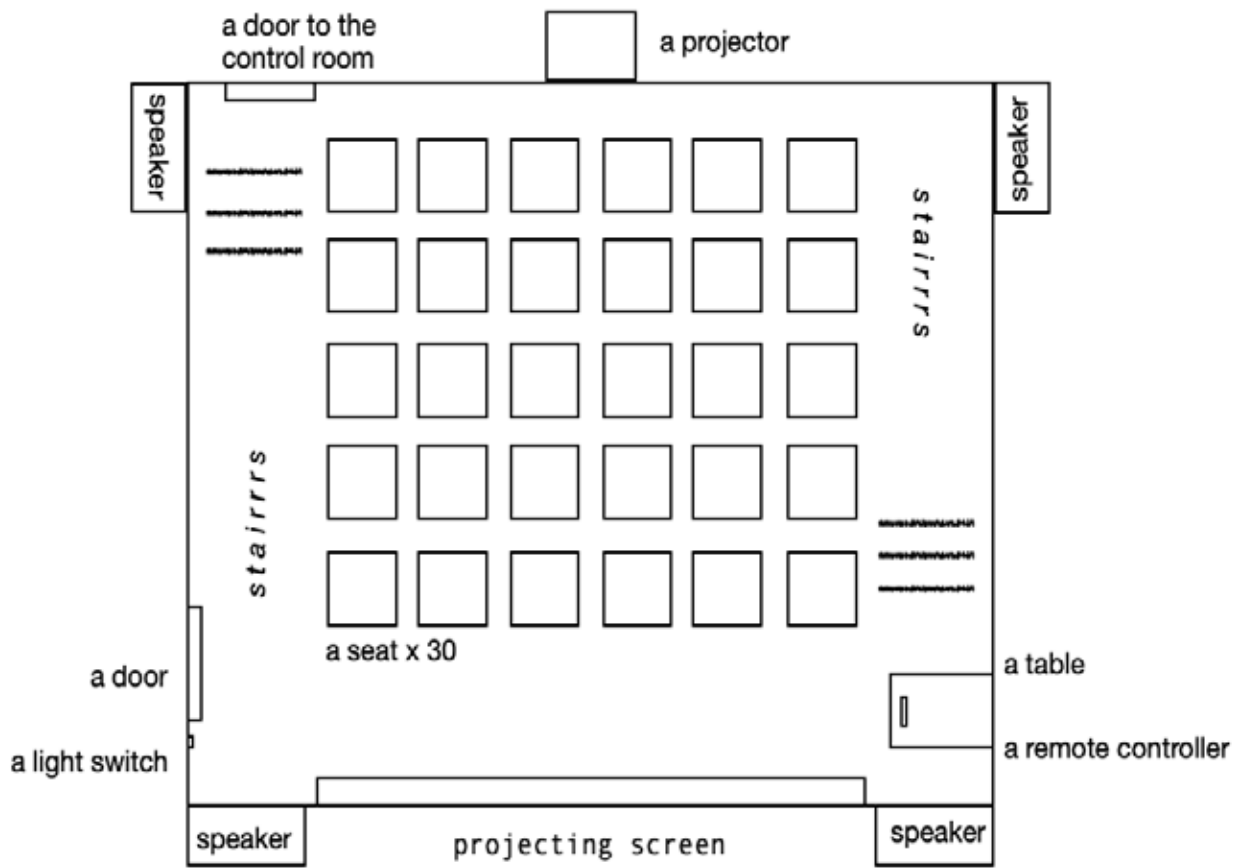
Tämä opinnäytetyö on taiteellisen osuuden ohella osa Kuvataiteen maisterin opinnäytteestä ja sen vaadittava kirjallinen osio. Taiteellinen osuus koostuu kahdesta osasta: videoteoksesta “six frames for absence the sky shows through,” joka oli osana Kuvan Kevät 2024 maisterinäyttelyä Mylly-rakennuksen toisen kerroksen screening-huoneen ohjelmaa kahden muun teoksen rinnalla, sekä videoteoksen äänisaatteesta käytetyistä lähteistä tehdystä kartasta, joka tehtiin risografilla seitsemänkymmenen kappaleen painoksena ja tuotiin yleisölle myöhemmin näyttelyn jälkeen Taidekoulu Maassa syyskuussa 2024 järjestettävillä Under The Leaf taidekirjamessuilla osana Drifts-festivaalia.

Teos perustuu pidempiaikaiseen prosessiin johon on kuulunut viime vuosisadan aikana kirjoitettujen teoreettisten, filosofisten ja yhteiskuntakriittisten teosten lukeminen, sekä kotikaupungissani Torniossa tapahtuneen epäonnistuneen rakennusprojektin prosessin seuraaminen. Vaikka rakennushanke ja siihen liittyvät tapahtumat ovat olleet alkuperäinen motivaatio tutkimuksen suuntaamiselle, teos liikkuu assosiatiivisesti monissa tasoissa jotka koostuvat useista viittauksista ja lähteistä kirjallisuudesta ja muualta, pyrkien muodostamaan vuoropuhelua kaupunkimaisemien, niitä synnyttäneiden ideologioiden, ja niistä aiheutuvien kehollisten vaikutusten kanssa.

Työn kirjallisena jatkeena tämän opinnäytetyön voidaan kuvata jatkavan samoja aiheita kuin lopputyön taiteellinen osuus. Sen pääpaino on kuitenkin pyrkimyksessä luoda kirjallisuuden jatkeeksi heterogeenisempaa viite-maisemaa, sisällyttämällä siihen esimerkiksi julkista keskustelua ja moninaisia viimeaikaisia alueellisia tai valtakunnallisia hankkeita, joiden selkein yhdistävä tekijä on yhteiskunnallisen edistyksen tarve. Kirjallisena osiona tämä opinnäytetyö yrittää välttää ylimääräistä taiteellisen osion toistoa, ja sen sijaan pyrkii antamaan kontekstia ja artikuloimaan työn taustalla olevia impulseja, sekä kuvaamaan teoksen aiheiden ympärillä olevia prosesseja jotka eivät pysähtyneet KK24-näyttelyyn ja kartta-julkaisuun. Mukailen itse teoksen logiikkaa, tämä tutkielma tulkitsee ala-teoreettisuuden (low theory) käsitettä metodologiana ja tapana tehdä; teorian, kirjallisuuden ja muun tekstuaalisen, ja ei-tekstuaalisen materiaalin liittämistä marginaalisiin, henkilökohtaisiin tai kollektiivisiin arkielämän tapahtumiin, jatkuvasti liikkuen näiden tasojen välillä.

Aiheet yhteiskunnallisesta edistyksen ja kasvun pyrkimyksestä ovat mukana esimerkiksi kiinnostuksesta niitä edeltäviin, niihin liitettyihin ideologioihin, ja näiden pakonomaisia muodostelmia kohtaan. Läsä aiheissa on myös yhteiskunnalliset järjestelmät ja niiden tuottamat aineelliset muodot. Sen sijaan, että tekstissä käsiteltäisiin näitä suuria, monimutkaisia teemoja sellaisenaan, se toimii pikemminkin kävelyretkenä kaupungissa, jota se asustaa metsästäjä-keräilijän tapaan: poimimalla asioita jotka esittäytyvät mielenkiintoisina. Se, mitä korista loppujenlopuksi löytyy, voi olla eräänlainen kuvaus vierailuista alueista, tai ainakin sen osista.

Näiden rinnalla tutkielmassa on läsnä hiljainen kertoja, joka liittyy kysymykseen kehosta; huokoisesta kehosta, kehosta, joka ei ole absoluuttisesti ja ikuisesti sopeutuva, kehosta, jonka kehitys on sidottu eri tahtiin kuin nopeutuvan kulttuurisen evoluution. Kehosta, joka saa oireita reaktiona ympäristöönsä, kehosta, joka saa ihottumaa, kun sille esitetään utopia, ja kehosta, joka usein sivuutetaan ja kielletään edistyksen tavoittelussa.



4/5 - 2/6/2024 tue-sun 11AM - 6PM



1. six frames for absence the sky shows through

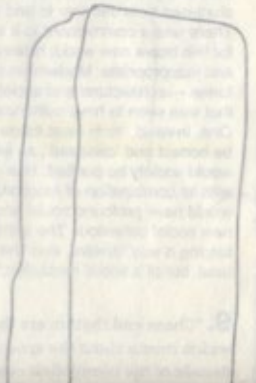
2024

1-channel video, stereo sound, HD, duration 19:22 minutes

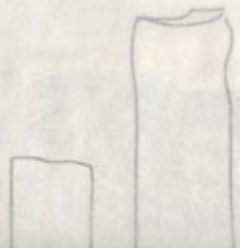
SIX FRAMES FOR ABSENCE THROUGH THE SKY SHOWS (A MAP OF A VOICEOVER)

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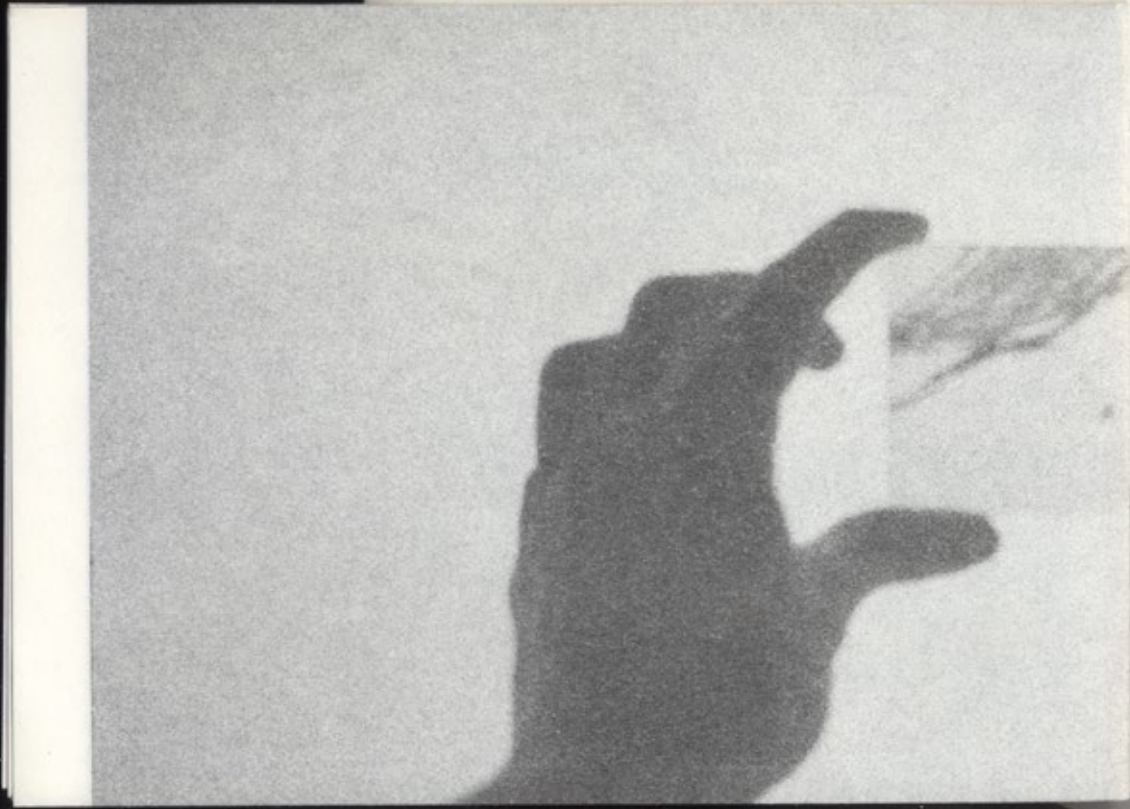
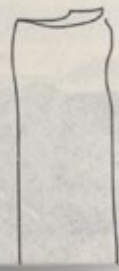
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SIX FRAMES FOR ABSENCE THROUGH THE SKY SHOWS (A VOICEOVER) OF A MAP

SIX FRAMES FOR ABSENCE THROUGH THE SKY SHOWS (A VOICEOVER) OF A MAP

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2. six frames for absence the sky shows through (A map of a voiceover)

2024

2 x A2, 1 x A4, risograph, offset, edition of 70

Introduction

8 / 2 / 2024

“so-called future”
stands on the “Semiotics of The End”
fiction as feed-backed into theory
the feedback of future into the present
exploitation of simulation
the haze of theory and the information melting into
nothingness
warfare melting down into simulation
a semiotic war as in:
the soft combat zone of culture and language
the all burning hell blaze of capitalism
in which light
“it is almost impossible to shut the eyes anymore
it is almost impossible to blink”

*

I’m sitting on my bed
in this language while
nostalgia used to be a sickness
the alarm has sounded already
I would disown my phone
(this awful device which
prevents me from reading more
writing more
no alarms anymore
but an actual clock
somewhere on a stable wall
with enough of cracks to connote
that it’s not all just numerical
to follow the flow of time)
but the stakes are too high

will I also end up on the streets
(I wonder, when I sit at the kitchen table and
the winter is catching up and I go for a smoke with
this book and barely manage to read
a few paragraphs)
but no this is a question
so for the sake of the statement let’s say
I will also end up on the streets
(but why say this
why say such a thing
out of all of the things available
why think such a thing when
looking out the window)
with a warm damp cloth
wrapped around a homesick body

noting newly found absences
nostalgia used to be classified a deadly disease

I travel with my back against
the direction of my destination and
end up with the books of my childhood home
“Leivästä oli kysymys”
my great grandmother’s words
stand as printed letters on a cover of
autobiographical stories from Lautamaa village
in which villagers talk about running into the woods
when the Germans came
(and so years later my grandfather and his oldest brother
from a German father
ran into the woods in the winter
driven by the fits of my great grandfather
but this is not written
this I know because I was told)
so are the US forces coming to Northern Finland
with their military bases?

I’m sitting on my bed
it is a privilege to get to choose ones location
uprooting is violence done to another or oneself but
(they made a plan when the Ukraine war started they said
they gathered together
decided whose car to take
where to go
a cabin, some house
where it wouldn’t take too long to reach the port that
would take to Sweden
a plan, a chosen family in refuge)
a plan is as practical as theory gets

written in a book on “lappish mythologies”
(lappish as in Sámi as in
lapland as in Sápmi as in
words deceive here and
echo in a unified regional past tense)
as a dedication for the expeditions
they said that

“if instead of worship of nature
mythology is meant to mean a poeticization
linguisticization, personification
and mystification of nature
but without any worship
we would have a rich mythology of fantasy and poetry
if only the poets, artists, painters and sculptors

would have taken it as the source of their art
but the development and the process
was interrupted and stopped”

the poets, artists, painters and sculptors though
were hungry and went on
(through the eye, the mouth, the soft spot of hope and the
homesick)
to the state, the law, the classroom and language
to the grandmothers cook book, wardrobe, bookshelf
and the bedtime story in which
a home stands solid and not broken
if determined by drawn lines to indicate walls
but the safety in being together
was born with an abusive father

I skip, do not finish since
(making it to the end of a book breaks my heart a little)
the wind blows too hard against the back of my head
this language has spread within me
eating away
eating away while giving so much
so much access

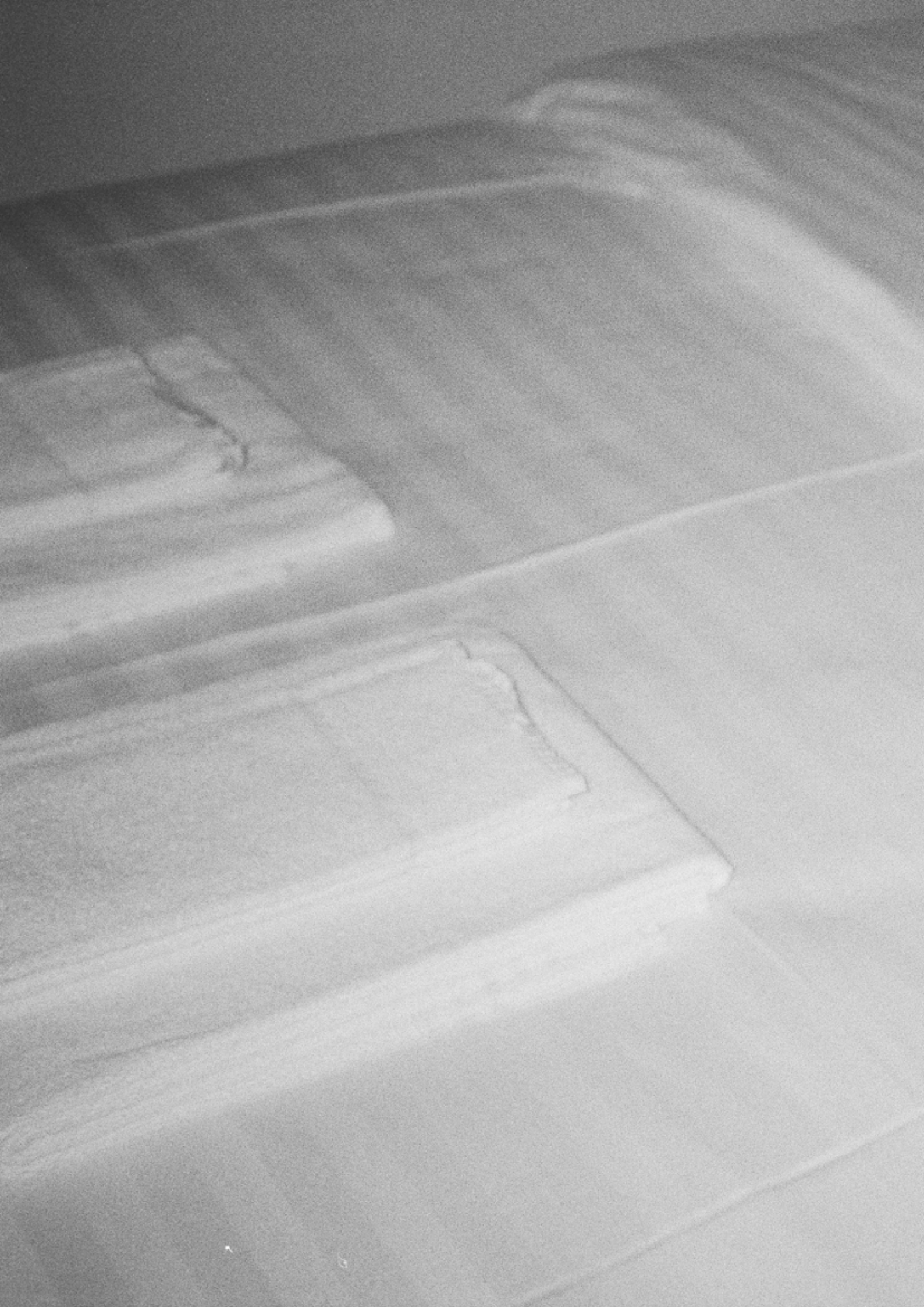
I've been granted so much access
that I hate booking flights
(and romanticise having to move on land
taking ages
sleeping breaks and breakfast in towns
if only there was time
but time has divorced its passage
now instead we have passage
a passage of a world with no time
where for most loitering is a crime)
therefore the despise towards these devices
these blood drenched voids

in the novel “Memory Police”
the time itself too disappears on the island
after the calendars
after the photographs
after the roses
but before the material things themselves
disappears their emotional bond to them
(and I think first world as in extinct in the wild)
and she says
“nothing comes back now when I see a photograph
no memories, no response
they're nothing more than pieces of paper

a new hole has opened in my heart
and there's no way to fill it again
and in the northern hills and the forest park
fruit came down like a hailstorm”

(I trim the edges of meaning with this language
I trim the edges of the things I wish to say and to embed
between the words
I sweep the stairs off of the snow outside
in this language)

I left people behind me embarking on this trip
(of self appreciation as a prelude to servitude)
I still carry the anger resulting from their lost futures
and your fancy parties overlap with the drug apartments
your pretty respectful speeches throw me back to the
remote village teenagers who flock together in a search
for meaning
intoxicated on a winter evening
crawl on their fours near an overdose
jump off balconies imaging the earth is so soft
under the few centimetres of grass
in a town a village which streets are each year more
empty
and shops close while the packaged parcels
of forced labour products are more cheap and handy





Six frames for absence the sky shows through

I lay in a bed in a room in Munich. I look out the window, where a building crane a block away has started to roll up its wires. The window is open, the curtain pulled aside. I take out my phone and start to film, stable, vertical, to get the view fully captured. Behind the houses, a grid rises, dangling in the air. A basic element, the new cell, I think to myself, a frame within a frame. It is 2023 summer, I've ended up here again, the cranes are all over the place. I've spent months thinking about grids, of how they repeat themselves in different proportions all around, online, offline; a door, a post, a block, a paper, a window, a house, a feed, a city. I forget about this video, think about it often though, but don't go back to it to watch it. It shifts shape in my mind and mixes with the memory of the moment. In my memory the grid has only three lines aside the outer frame, making it six in total. I go back to it a year after, and realise the grid is not in fact that of six, but ten fold, many small frames next to each other. The grid which rose from the ground is a different grid which rose from my mind. A grid of six, maybe, is easier to approach than that of a hundred. In spite, the sky still shows through, as it does through my window, as it does through any window, of course.

A brief narration of a past

The way that I described this work during the first seminars isn't exactly what it came out to be, it wasn't supposed to be a moving image work. When going into the process of trying to find the right format and place for it in the exhibition, I realised I wished for this work to move within an undefined zone; between performance and essay, between sculpture and site specificity, between written and spoken. I described it as an invisible architecture within an architecture, painting the walls with words, with gestures. I drew a diagram, in which things lace onto each other.

The initial desire that I had for an undefinable, leaking work of art, was not comforting only for the difficulty of determining its outlines and the challenge it poses on apparent capture through photographic means, but also as it opposes the

easily determined grid, the corners of the walls which have to be followed, the rules coming from someone you haven't met, and the only option of becoming an instrument of predetermined standards. In the planning of this thesis, I hoped for a something I may leave behind for myself as a returning point, something I may understand only way after it is done, something I may follow instead of managing to exhaust with words.

Then, something happened again. The past five years had already been full of events of major scale: the covid-19 crisis had started only a few months after I had chosen to study in the time and space department at the beginning of my bachelors in the Helsinki academy, and continued on for three years, fully re-arranging the social aspects of our lives. While the true extent and effects of that was still unfolding, I was in Munich for my bachelor exchange, when one February morning in the kitchen with my roommates, I was told that Russia has invaded Ukraine, ending up in a war which until now still hasn't stopped, and which has steered the Finnish political discourse even more towards defence and protection. In March 2023 we got the Orpo's right wing government in Finland, bringing the "True Finns" party to power again. And in October 2023 after I just arrived back from Berlin, the occupied Gaza strip's resistance groups attacked Israel, giving it and its allies a reason to attack back with a detrimental force, leading the rest of the world to follow the endless live streamed war crimes, and the residues of what some have called "the most documented genocide in the human history," which still now soon a year after, continues.¹

Already since a few years I had found myself starting to think of something which was quite far from of grids but a kind of a antidote companion of it; that leaky nature of things, of how ideologies, information and political agendas at large, the same as viruses – being of that undefinable substance after all – hibernate in the hidden cracks of the society and cross borders in no time, leaking across space, invisible lines, walls, and eventually skin too.

I got reminded of the time I had experienced something alike for the first time. In 2015 a year after I had finished my vocational studies in my hometown, as a way to make myself useful I had committed to volunteer work with kids, elderly, functionally challenged people, and refugees. One day while at a meeting hosted in the facilities of

¹ On 17th July 2024, the news site Al Jazeera posted a video of the Palestinian UN Ambassador Riyad Mansour telling the UN Security Council meeting on the Middle East, that "What is happening in Gaza will go down as the most documented genocide in history."

the Red Cross, I was asked if I want to be paid for what I do, and said why not. The next day I was brought to my primary school sports hall, filled entirely with displaced people who I was supposed to walk through and count individually. For the next upcoming winter months, my understanding of the familiar things around me had started to change completely.

Of the over 32 000 people coming to Finland at that time many have been sent back, many's time has been systematically stolen, and if still residing in Finland, most likely all are in a way or another experiencing the violence of the current right-wing government and the overall hostility of the Finnish system, which has of course been such also way before the recent government.² The Finnish situation though, is but an extension of the current hostility which is in place in multiple countries simultaneously, this years historical electoral year resulting in a potential resurgence of right-wing governance increase in multiple countries around the world. The Finnish situation though, is but an extension of the current hostility which is in place in multiple countries simultaneously, this years historical electoral year resulting in a potential resurgence of right-wing governance increase in multiple countries around the world.³

A brief narration of a work in process

In the autumn semester I started engaging more with activism again, especially as there was a momentum which had begun after the governmental cuts were introduced. It felt relevant again to simply stick with what is, and to see what form it takes in the process. I had been reading the things relevant for this thesis already for one and a half years, and in a way a lot longer, but during the winter I gained an insatiable willingness to self-soothe by reading, reading everything and simultaneously, following their connections, letting them form other connections.

Before I realised the months had passed and the walls I had been thinking of painting –

although figuratively speaking – had already gotten painted almost as if by themselves. I was in no means of performing anything by myself in the first place, chronically still preferring the back of the stage, but I had been thinking if there were some who'd be comfortable in such a position, and willing to work with me. I realised though, that my comfort blanket might not look quite as comforting to others, the topics I had been dealing with were quite difficult and heavy. On top of that, I noticed how my social energy had started to drain out of my body.

The ambiguity I had wished for before had developed towards an idea of a scriptwriting, a kind of a careful craft of opening the space through re-contextualisation, still drawing from that idea of painted walls, but I didn't anymore know how should they look like, and how to look for someone who would wish to share that blanket which had already become too thick woven. After this, the work went through other possible scenarios of materialisation, before taking the form it did.

Kuvan Kevät is funny in a way, as through those years of study you wonder what will be the final work you will graduate with, the work you wish to carefully craft to be shared, the work that you hope to embed some part of you, and then when the moment comes – which is a kind of a coming out party too – you come out as something so vulnerable, since in the closet – or in the solitude of the editing studio – you accidentally were turned inside out and now that the light hits you, you're fully exposed.

I read until I realised that what I am doing already is the process I wish to have: to read, walk, take notes and find links and cutting points within the material. I took photos with the analogue camera a friend got me at the beginning of my studies, which was the

2 On 1st September 2024, the law on identity verification changed in Finland. Now amendments to the aliens act will introduce stricter identification requirements for residence permit applicants, meaning that when applying for a residence permit, the applicant must have a valid passport issued by their country of nationality, posing more challenges to displaced and stateless people.

3 On 11th September 2024 the AfD politician Lena Kotré gave a speech in Brandenburg, Germany, saying: "We are also calling for a ban on asylum seekers and refugees entering public events. A public event means, for the most part, a public gathering or for example a festival. And such public events cannot be attended by these people anymore" ... "It's time to put an end to this misunderstood tolerance, to finally put an end to the so-called diversity in this country."

single thing that saved my relationship to photography some years ago.⁴ Photography is anyway much alike to reading, as a kind of an underlining practise, saying: this is something, something to come back to.

A brief narration of the underlined

My sister, at the time of making this thesis in the spring, was working as a cleaner in a company which rents out Airbnb apartments. She had just moved to Helsinki last Autumn. I was fascinated by these apartments that she described, which rents were thousands and in which some people lived for months with this type of a weekly room service. I had been interested in this type of housing market for a while already, their specific aesthetics which serve everyone but no one really, the issues which come with their infiltration to the housing system, not even talking about tourism at large. I asked her if I may come with her sometime, just to accompany her and spend time in these apartments while she cleans.

Many of these apartments were just as I imagined: weirdly sanitary, very white, with the odd “cosmopolitan” aesthetic repeating, which you cannot really call American or European, even Western, but more than that it is some idea of a cosmopolitan universality, which is planned to stay without location, aside of the few occasional Helsinki related posters in some. Mostly it takes the shape of fake plants, Ikea furniture, white sheets, cheap “design” items, clear “sane” surfaces, renovated and treated just the past recent years, and located in the most expensive parts of Helsinki.⁵ I got interested in this collision, of her cleaning worker’s position and these spaces which she was traveling in between with a suitcase full of white materials: the sheets, pillow cases, toilet paper, kitchen paper. And at the same time as I accompanied her to work, we mainly just talked, about anything, catching up with each other after all these years having been living

in different cities and countries after I had left our parents house, and at the same time I took some photographs, filmed or recorded.

Aside this, I walked outside looking at the facades of the buildings, trying to re-familiarise myself with the areas where I usually do not go, areas which are under construction, or the areas which attracted me for a reason or another. And at the same, I was trying to grasp in what ways what I’ve read corresponds with what I’m seeing, or where I am taking myself.

At the end, what seemed like a right approach, or most truthful and without gimmick, was to weave it all together to a kind of a suggestive collage in a form of a fiction. I realised I need to make this into a format which supports the experience of gathering the diverse materials, as it was.

4 The one I have is an Olympus XA semi-automatic 35mm film camera. Saara Karppinen whom we started studies with at the same time, found this camera for me during the first year of our studies. After that, I’ve been sticking only with this specific camera.

5 I keep coming across examples of the whiteness trend all the time. Yesterday I met someone who wanted to get rid of an old couch of a red wooden frame and a variegated fabric attached with furniture nails. They had been told by a second hand seller that they do not want it since the couch is too colourful and will not sell, saying that the colour of this moment is white.





The video work

*Erase the traces
they said
and in the northern hills and the forest park
fruit came down like a hailstorm
but with a self-image made of teflon
nothing sticks
and plum blossoms are falling here too*

Structure and content

The video work begins with slowly changing black and white analog photographs from my hometown Tornio, showing the site of the pit left by the Barents Center shopping mall project, and some of an elderly person. The voiceover text describes the architectural images of the mall project, which was to be connected to the Rajalla mall, already existing on the Finnish side of the border. The images then jump to Kalasatama, Helsinki where skyscrapers have already been realised, paired with a narration based on the early modernist writer Paul Scheerbart and the contemporaries connected to him, such as Bruno Taut, an architect who Scheerbarts text served as a great inspiration for. The narration describes their ambitious visions for cities and the world at large, including especially architecture made out of glass.¹

The photographs move into different parts of Helsinki, to Ruoholahti and Jätkäsaari, to buildings which incorporate glass, while the narration quotes from Dan Graham and his writings on architecture, video and television, in which he talks about efficiency in the context of corporate glass buildings. In the extended paragraph he connects the clean, sleek look of a glass architecture, especially in relation to company buildings, to “the myth of scientific progress”.² The text then goes to connect Gill Matthewson’s conference paper about Walter Benjamin writing on glass architecture, Scheerbart and his glass utopia.³ The parts which the text highlights are the vision of an architecture that is “honest and cleansed,” underlining the modernist agenda’s relationship with that of “purity.” Benjamin was affected

by the vision that Scheerbart put forward, it seemed to provoke him and he wrote on glass in multiple of his writings, seeing both the potential and the issues it could bring.⁴

The video then moves to show images of vacant urban spaces paired with partly fuzzy images of moving within the cityscape. These photographs are from Pasilan Asema, Helsinki railway station and Tornio. The tone of the narration changes, responding to the vision which has just been presented, by asking a permission to also be like these glossy visions, which in their materialised perfection near to attributes of a certain God – a line which comes from Franco Bifo Berrardi quoting the German poet Hölderlin, in his *Breathing: On Poetry and Chaos*.⁵ Through Foucault’s *Utopian Body*, the narration starts to express a desire to move from just making things within the world as extensions of the “pure, efficient” mind, to incorporating a vision where they are the body itself, as only then the project would be fully realised.

The body itself dreams of being like these architectures, to reach the same potential as that which it is able to produce outside of it, and flickers between seeing them as its extension, and being them. The body dreams of being a body freed of all which determine its bodilessness: a body without a body, speaking openly of the ultimatum of the utopian vision, where the body itself transforms into a free floating consciousness, leaving vacant its host, freed from the impurity of its earthliness.

The video moves on a new chapter connoted by a small break and a circling sound, after which we are following a black suitcase, ending

1 Scheerbart, Paul. 1914. Glass Architecture. In *Glass! Love!! Perpetual Motion!!! : A Paul Scheerbart Reader*. 2014. Edited by Josiah McElheny and Christine Burgin. University of Chicago Press.

2 Graham, Dan. 1978. Chapter: “Glass buildings: Corporate ‘showcases.’” In *Video-Architecture-Television, Writings on Video and Video Works 1970-1978*, The Press of Nova Scotia College of Art & Design, New York University Press, Ed. Benjamin H. D. Buchloh. p. 74–76

3 Matthewson, Gill. 2009. People who Live in Glass Houses: Walter Benjamin and the Dream of Glass Architecture. Wellington Institute of Technology. In *Cultural Crossroads Proceedings of the 26th Annual Conference of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand*. Ed. Julia Gatley.

4 Benjamin writes for example in “Experience and Poverty” (1933), against the excessive materiality of the bourgeois, and sees in glass a potential for openness, both in literal and metaphorical sense, which could have revolutionary possibilities in regards to class structures. His take on this has a kind of an ascetic feel.

5 Berardi, Franco. 2018. Chapter: “I Can’t Breathe.” In *Breathing: Poetry and Chaos*. Semiotext(e) intervention series. (Berardi on Friedrich Hölderlin’s “In Lovely Blue” from Hymns and Fragments from the years between 1801 and 1806.)

up to white apartments.⁶ The narration loans from the last few pages of Yoko Ogawa's *Memory Police*, a dystopian fiction novel based on an island where everyday items disappear from people's lives under the control of an authoritarian regime, erasing the past. While seeing a person changing the white sheets in a white apartment in the photographs, the narration quotes the last parts of the book, where the disappearances have reached the body of the protagonist, who now finds herself only as a consciousness with a voice, slipping through the cracks in her house.⁷ The photographs from the apartments end with one showing framed black and white images on the wall of an apartment that portray cities with high-rise buildings, while the text moves to quote Clarice Lispector's novel *The Besieged City*, in which the protagonist describes her relation to the fictional city based in Brazil, that is going through a rapid modernisation.⁸

The visuals of the video which has been until now one black and white photographs, change to a coloured, single still shot moving image, which portrays a tree in a large pot in what is an apparent indoor space with full glass walls, advertising lights flickering against the pots as well as outside.⁹

The visuals change back to photographs taken now from a moving vehicle which shows a skyline of a city, buildings, and a view of a long street. The text borrows from an essay sketch I wrote during my BFA thesis, which talks among other things about my grandmother and the different effects our own lived eras have and have had on each of our bodies, or their connection to their surroundings.

The video work enters a long still shot of a person doing dishes with their back towards the camera, apparently talking at times. The text moves to a small part written for this work based on a meeting of a stranger on the street while accompanying my sister to work, after which it visits *The Memory Police* briefly, and links that to questions in Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing's paper *On-Nonscalability: The Living World is Not Amenable to Precision-Nested Scales* that elaborates on scale's relation to progress, framing expansion as progress to which biological and cultural diversity are enemies.^{10,11}

While the person is still washing the dishes, the text connotes a conversation, citing from an foreword written by Denise Ferreira da Silva to for Fred Moten and Stefano Harney's *All Incomplete*, in which she talks about perfection as a threat that the world is to be rescued from. After this there are long excerpts from Walter Benjamin's three page article *The Destructive Character*, which is a kind of a listing of the characteristics of what he calls as the title connotes; a characteristic that brings forth destruction through a need for clearing way for the new. Written in 1931, during the events building up to the World War II, although not directly connoting to fascism and taking a lot wider approach, the text can be read to reflect the ideological driving forces in relation to progress, its tendency towards both a certain absolute renewal, but at the same an inability to vision an actual future in the place of the destruction. This compulsivity feels connected to the same compulsivity which Lispector portrays in her description of the city meeting the forces of modernisation at large, "the state of its perfect system of defence" and the

6 The circling sound was done with a key on a glass table and recorded with a contact microphone. There are other such sounds also embedded in different parts of the work.

7 Ogawa, Yōko. 1999 *The Memory Police*. Translated by Stephen Snyder. London: Vintage: First Vintage books edition. (First published Tokyo: Kodansha Ltd. 1994.) p. 270.

8 The original version of the "The Besieged City" was written in 1949, which mention is missing from the references of the map and the video work, as an addition to the publisher's date of 2019.

9 The building where the part was shot is Sanomatalo in Helsinki, a commercial and office building built in 1999, as the first "glassy" building in Helsinki. The building hosts many of the biggest newspapers and radios in Finland.

10 While going to one of the apartments in the area of Kallio, we came across a man who was carrying a stack of printed out poems, stopping us to ask us if he can read us a poem. He read us one he wrote while being with his young son.

11 Tsing lowenhaupt, Anna. 2012. "Scalability and Expansion." In *On Nonscalability: The Living World Is Not Amenable to Precision-Nested Scales*. University of California, Santa Cruz. Common Knowledge, Volume 18, issue 3, (pages. 505-524) p.506.

thought whether one day armored cars would be posted on the street corners.¹² The text continues with an excerpt from another short text from Benjamin; *Experience and Poverty* from 1933, in which he describes the effects of modernity, claiming in a partly nostalgic tone our impoverishment due to the mechanics and technology having taken more space and affecting for example our ability to narrate, making him question what is the role of our culture, if it is divorced from experience.

During the whole Benjamin part, the long still shot of the person doing dishes is what we see, it ending to a darkness which fills with rumbling, somewhat bodily sounds that fill the screening space subtly. After a while the low sounds are joined by a sentence from a letter Jaques Derrida has written to Peter Eisenman, the deconstructivist architect; “absence like the shadowed sound of the voice.”¹³ The narration continues in darkness through takes from Fred Moten’s and Stefano Harney’s *All Incomplete*, a work which suggests accepting incompleteness as a mode from which to build collectivity and community, to resist oppressive structures. This rings in a bit similar manner as Halberstam, whom I will discuss more in the following chapter, and who suggests failure as a way to bring forth new ways of knowing.¹⁴

We then arrive to the part of Brecht’s exclamatory suggestion of erasing the traces, which his contemporary Benjamin also quotes in his *Experience and Poverty*. Brecht’s erasing, or covering the traces, is also a title of a poem in his poetry collection *Reader For City Dwellers*. The erasure in the poem is within the context of the control of the state, which is tracking down revolutionaries and people of

unwanted political ideologies.¹⁵ This quotation was interesting for me in connection with sanitary surfaces and erasure at large, to ask if this suggestion of absolute hiding as survival and a necessity, leads to the cause and the reaction – the attack and the counter-act – ending up adding to the same result.

The quotation is continued by another take from Ogawa’s *Memory Police* that describes the aftermath of disappearance of all the fruits on the island, which although being perfectly well, one morning falls from the branches. That is paired with a take about falling plum blossoms from a poem *A Letter to Europe* by Athena Farrokhzad, in which sentence by sentence she describes Europe and its paradoxes, illuminating its hypocrisy, illustrating its violence.¹⁶ During these lines, the photographs are showing samples of construction materials and surfaces which I got from an architectural office that was closing down and emptying its storages.¹⁷

The literary excerpts are interrupted by some words from someone, who commented the materials I had gotten from the architectural office as devoid of soul, except for the small piece of glass which is staying intact in spite of being cracked. This is followed by a description of these cracks being the only carrier of potential among these otherwise sane surfaces, familiar from many of our buildings, for something else to stick and grow within.

The video then moves into its last chapter, arriving back to the images from the long street we have seen before, which photographs are taken from Pasila. The gaze moves forward on the street, at times taking a closer look at

12 Lisspector, Clarice. 2019. *The Besieged City*. Translated by Johnny Lorenz. New York: New Directions. Edited by Benjamin Moser. p. 125. (First published in 1949.)

13 This part of the letter is a kind of a spectre for me, which prose-like part in the letter I have also memorised. In the letter which Derrida has addressed to the deconstructionist architect Peter Eisenman, a mention of Scheerbart’s visions is also included. The letter in question is a letter that Derrida sent instead of joining a conference in person.

14 Halberstam has also written the first brief chapter of Moten and Harney’s “The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning & Black Study.”

15 Original title in German: “Lesebuch Für Städtebewohner.” The collection of poems was written between 1921 and 1928.

16 When cross reading and assembling these materials, Farrokhzad’s line about plum blossoms in “A Letter to Europe” found the falling fruits of Ogawa’s “Memory Police.” This line also stands a lot more open to interpretation than the other very straight forward parts of the prose.

17 The architectural office in question was Arkkitehtitoimisto Tuomo Siitonen Oy. The materials are samples of different types of glass, metal surfaces, tiles, flooring and so on. I have an interest towards these materials, which probably has to do with the fact that I’ve had to deal with some of them very practically during my surface treatment studies in vocational college.

the details around, ending up to the bright, white plaza looking up to the Tripla shopping mall in Pasila, which is the biggest in Northern Europe in terms of total leasable units. The narration is bringing in a statement from a lawyer who spent two years with the Barents Center project, saying how there was never a realistic plan or construction financing, and words of Edith Farnsworth from the chapter *People Who Live in Glass Houses* in the book *Women and the Making of the Modern House: A Social and Architectural History*, in which she is contesting the ideologies and the artistic entitlement behind the architecture of Mies van der Rohe and other glass architecture pioneers, basing the commentary on her own lived experience of having had to live in one of van der Rohe's buildings, The Farnsworth House. In the interview she is lamenting how difficult it was to live in the all glass house, in which all necessities of life are stripped to the bare minimum, including privacy:

“Does it work? The much touted all-glass cube of International Style architecture is perhaps the most unlivable type of home for man since he descended from the tree and entered a cave. You burn up in the summer and freeze in the winter, because nothing must interfere with the “pure” form of their rectangles – no overhanging roofs to shade you from the sun; the bare minimum of gadgets and possessions so as not to spoil the “clean” look; three or four pieces of furniture placed along arbitrary pre-ordained lines; room for only a few books and one painting at precise and permanent points; no children, no dogs, extremely meager kitchen facilities – nothing human that might disturb the architect’s composition.”¹⁸

At the beginning of the chapter, Rohe's grandson Dirk Lohan, also himself an architect, comments on the spiritual abstraction and

physical demands of The Farnsworth House on its occupant, explaining how Mies's concern has been more with the spiritual than that of function, and also demanding complete acceptance of this logic from the occupant, while assuming an aesthetic quality from all of their moves.¹⁹

In the book there are interviews of Grete Tugendhat, whose house in Brno is also one of van der Rohe's most famous works. In the interview upon being asked whether it is possible to live in the Tugendhat House, she calls the house “austere and grand,” explaining how the austerity forbids relaxing, and frames the person within to appear like an artwork; set off from their surroundings, to themselves and others.²⁰

This book also includes a part which discusses Peter Eisenman's introduction to Philip Johnson: *Writings* (1978), where he is commenting on Johnson's notations of how the main motive of one of his illustrations for the minimal glass building; *The Glass House*, was a “burnt wooden village I saw once where nothing was left but foundations and chimneys of brick.”²¹ Eisenman questions Johnson's metaphorical motives, especially because of Johnson's fascination and direct involvement with authoritarianism and Nazi Germany, both in Germany and in America. Eisenman is quoted to conclude his reflection on Johnson's architectural motives for *The Glass House*, with being “once a ruin and also an ideal model for a more perfect society.”²²

To return back to the last parts of the video work: The visuals return back to colour moving image, slowly moving through an urban landscape, ending up to the end shots from inside of Pasilan asema, now half abandoned

18 T.Friedman Alice. 1998. “People Who Live in Glass Houses: Edith Farnsworth, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, and Philip Johnson.” In *Women and the Making of the Modern House: A Social and Architectural History*. Yale University Press, New Haven and London. p.141

19 Ibid. p.128

20 Ibid. p.143–144

21 This description of the book interested me not only because of the linkedness of glass architecture with authoritarianism, but also because of Rovaniemi, after being burned by the Germans in the 1944 Lapland war, was called a chimney town after the immensity of the destruction. I've been thinking of the resemblance between the pictures of the burnt town and the concrete pillars standing in the abandoned pit of Barents Center in Tornio, which everyone in Tornio seems to despise.

22 Ibid. p.151

due to the services being moved to Tripla. The narration is from a monologue of the opening scene in Bas Devos' film *Ghost Tropic* (2019), which is set in the nightly suburbs of Brussels. In the film the protagonist tries to get home after work and falling asleep in the metro, and waking up at the end stop at the other side of the city.²³

The opening scene of *Ghost Tropic* is a single five minute shot of a living room slowly going dark, onto which Khadija's voice enters first barely louder than whispers. While becoming more audible, she re-arranges the room slowly through her description of all the intimate memories she associates with the space. In the video work a part of this description is paired with the still view of the public indoor space of Pasilan asema, pairing the half-abandoned space with the monologue which original setting is the private living room, deserted of the family which the protagonist is subtly connoting to by using the words "us" and "we".²⁴

The work ends with another shot from Pasilan asema, showing a long corridor at which end someone is smoking a cigarette, while the narration cites an excerpt from a personal letter which I've written in 2022, which talks about the quality of the light belonging to a sun which paints everything monochrome, shining too high and bright, like a halogen lamp.

Notes on the making

The main technical means of making of the video work have been an Olympus XA 35mm analog camera for the photographs, Black Magic 4k camera for the moving image parts, contact microphones, Soma Ether electromagnetic microphone and a zoom recorder. The editing has been done on Adobe Premiere Pro 2022. Most of the photographs

have been shot within a five months timeframe, from December to April, aside from a few images of the pit in Tornio at the beginning of the video, which are from 2021, if I remember right. The video has been recorded as HD on a few occasions some weeks apart at the beginning of April, and the sound has been collected mostly between March and April.

The voiceover text is a single recording, which was first supposed to be just a preliminary test to help in the editing, but eventually through multiple try outs, ended up being the voiceover which stayed. I would have preferred a voice actor, or someone else instead of myself, and still kind of hope there would have been time for this process. All the HD shots that the work has are all shot on a tripod or otherwise still, except for the slow-motion turning of the camera before the last scene, rendering the overall work into a state of a kind of an aggravating stillness.

Throughout the whole duration of the work, the soundscape is accompanied with small electric clicks and interference, crackling and popping, at times getting more louder. I have a specific affection for these kinds of sounds, and getting to assemble a soundscape of them was also exciting to me. I was hesitant between the thought of making more composition in the sound, and leaving it more raw. As someone who enjoys to listen to these types of sounds as music, I've been wondering about the reason behind my own and other's attraction and fascination towards these sounds which are produced with electric current. For myself, it has something to do with enjoying complex harmony which sometimes presents itself as chaos. The soundscapes in certain types of noise provoke an intimate dimension – the feeling of simultaneously being inside the earth, and its ears; the tymbal of the cicada, and their collective transmitting body.

23 There is a moment in the film when the protagonist comes across a guard who talks about the city's plans to build a "subtropical aqua park." This scene felt to highlight the gap between a person living in the city, and what the city wishes to, or can provide for the individual. If I had access to the film, I could talk about it with more precision.

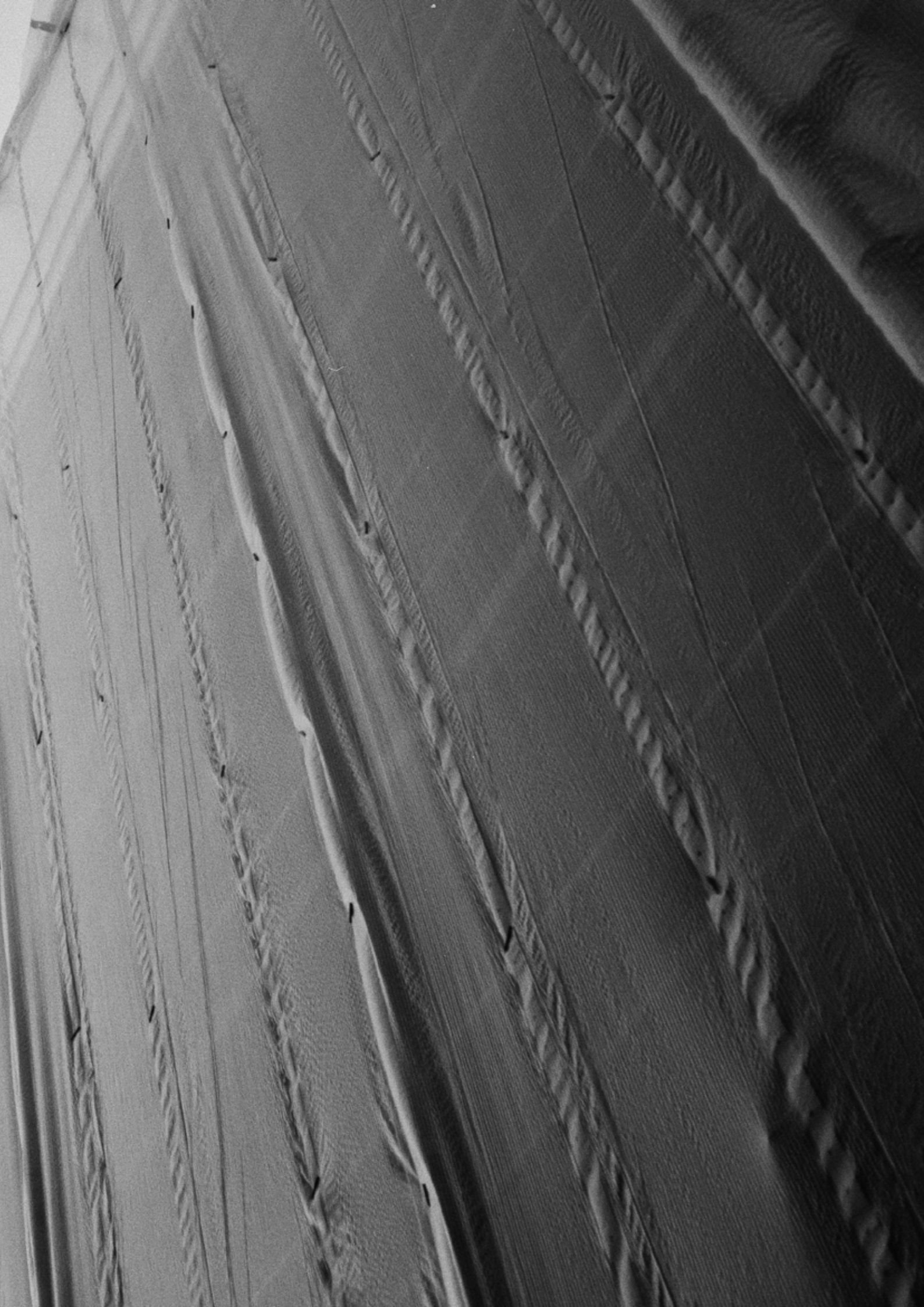
24 I already wrote about *Ghost Tropic* during my BA thesis, during which I learned the film's monologue by heart. The text has stayed with me as a close companion, which I often repeat by myself. I only saw the film once at full length. It is difficult to find Devos's films outside of film festivals. I appreciate his approach to cinema though for multiple reasons – in one of the interviews he says how he plans his scripts so that the films will be as low budget as possible, and that he wishes to work "with" the world, instead of "against" it.

I also come to think of Mark Fisher who in one of his lectures makes the class listen to the artist Burial, whose production he was very fond of. Fisher theorises that the recent increase of music which has an emphasised sense of space – where the space has moved into the music itself – is due to the decrease of actual space, whether for listening to music collectively, or experiencing it in general.²⁵

All in all the video work text mostly consists of thirty seven excerpts from different texts, which I've been reading throughout the last one and a half year or more. The excerpts are sown together by some added words and minimal changes, to be able to make it into a well flowing text.

25 The lecture in question is the first of the DOCH lectures available on youtube. The lecture was a part of a course called Speculative Realism, and this specific lecture Fisher gave, apparently according to the projection in the video, was called "Cyberspace-time crises." The course was held in Stockholm in 2011.





A map of a voiceover

The second part of the work is a map of the voiceover of the video work, which includes the excerpts and the paragraph, or an extended part, around them. Making the map was first something I wished to make just for myself, also to make the process of visiting the work easier in the thesis writing process, and to be able to return to the multiple thematical and referential overlaps between the texts. But when starting to work on it and discussing the idea with the seminar group, I realised there's potential in it to become something that would interest others too. When I started putting the material together, I started making it in a way that would make as much sense as possible to someone who hasn't gotten to see the video work, and from there it was easy to upscale it to be able to make it a bigger edition of seventy copies.

The map consists of three separate parts: two A2 papers onto which the excerpts have been riso-printed with photographs from the work and other visual material, and an A4 offset print with the script of the voiceover. All parts are folded to A5, to fit in a semi-transparent envelope from Museoiden hankintakeskus. The script is in English and Finnish, as are the subtitles in the video work. The Finnish script isn't perfect "book Finnish," and at times uses my own dialect, or the way the language is spoken instead of written.¹ Another reason for including "poorly written Finnish," is that I find my spoken Finnish dialect a way to bring the work down to a familiarity I connect with – my own relation to spoken Finnish being a lot stronger than that of written although I speak it as my mother tongue – where it deliberately meets and clashes with the excessive literary material of this work, which I know inevitably carries its own connotations. I also I wished for the work to accommodate certain class clashes, if they arise.

My own relation to class, status, knowledge production and academic institutions as someone not educated academically and not having a high-school degree, reflects

in this wish to accommodate the clashes. When it comes to the research for this work for example, instead of someone "doing research" per se, I see my self-directed, intuition and curiosity driven research through all the materials as a kind of a cruising that I accidentally got a VIP ticket for because of learning English. Because of this, I am also very distanced from the idea that there is a right or a wrong way to do research, as I simply haven't been introduced to the right ways. I have observed them of course, but as an outsider. I still very much identify with the feeling that the fact that I am studying at an university is an accident of a sort, as if I got here through my audacity to slip through a door someone left open. The way this work also forms itself, with all of its references, is a kind of a result of a compulsive binging of materials which happen to be at hand due to a certain democratisation, or a leaking, of the availability of knowledge.

In the map the parts which are in the voiceover are mostly highlighted in yellow, so that one is able to follow an approximation of the voiceover narration just reading through them. Otherwise the print is black and white. The typeface varies between the different excerpts, trying to replicate the original text as closely as possible, as to visually suggest the multitude of voices, instead of flattening the diversity of the origins of the texts into one. Aesthetically the map is almost a replication of another publication I have made four years ago, called *On Carrying, Containing And Returning to The Cycle: A Dog Named Hannibal*, which was also a two A2 page riso publication on the same paper.²

The few images aside the photographs that the map includes, are from the references or in relation to them. I wanted to include the visual material to make the map less text heavy, and for there to be a possibility to associate something also about the topic of the thesis by just looking through it fast. The first image is the architectural rendering of the Barents Center project, which visual attributes the

1 In the Finnish version the word "voiceover" is translated as "äänisaate," which I came up with to avoid using the only translations that I know of serving the same purpose: selostus or taustakerronta, but which felt to have wrong connotations as words.

2 I made this publication in 2020 in the context of Tuukka Kaila's publication course, as an edition of 30.

voice over is describing. The second image is from the book *Glass! Love!! Perpetual Motion!!!* which gathers together Scheerbart's work, and which also has many of his amazing drawn illustrations of abstracted bodies in connection with the titles and otherwise.³ The third image is a connotative map of functionalism from the master thesis of Henri Haapaniemi titled *Arkkitehtuurin kieli postmodernismin kontekstissa*, the map being: functionalism > white colour > purity > health > progress.⁴

The fourth image is a screenshot of the colophon and the Editor's note from the book *Sensorium*, in which Foucault's *Utopian Body* is included, as this extensive information felt important but difficult to include in another format.⁵ The fifth image is a zoomed part from the cover of *All Incomplete* by Moten and Harney, the full image showing a moving metro with a person sitting inside, behind whom there is an advertisement which says "Improving, non-stop."⁶ The sixth image is a screenshot from the first page of the document that is the notes written on Benjamin's essay *The Destructive Character* during a workshop held in Ramallah in 2015. The text in the image connects a take from Mahmoud Darwish's poem *A State of Siege* with a take from Benjamin's *The Arcades Project*, in which he writes how the word engineer came about in 18th century France to describe "those officers skilled in the arts of fortification and siege."⁷

The last image on the other page is a screenshot I have printed and scanned and now again printed, of the living room view in the film *Ghost Tropic* by Bas Devos.

The map was first supposed to be a part of the

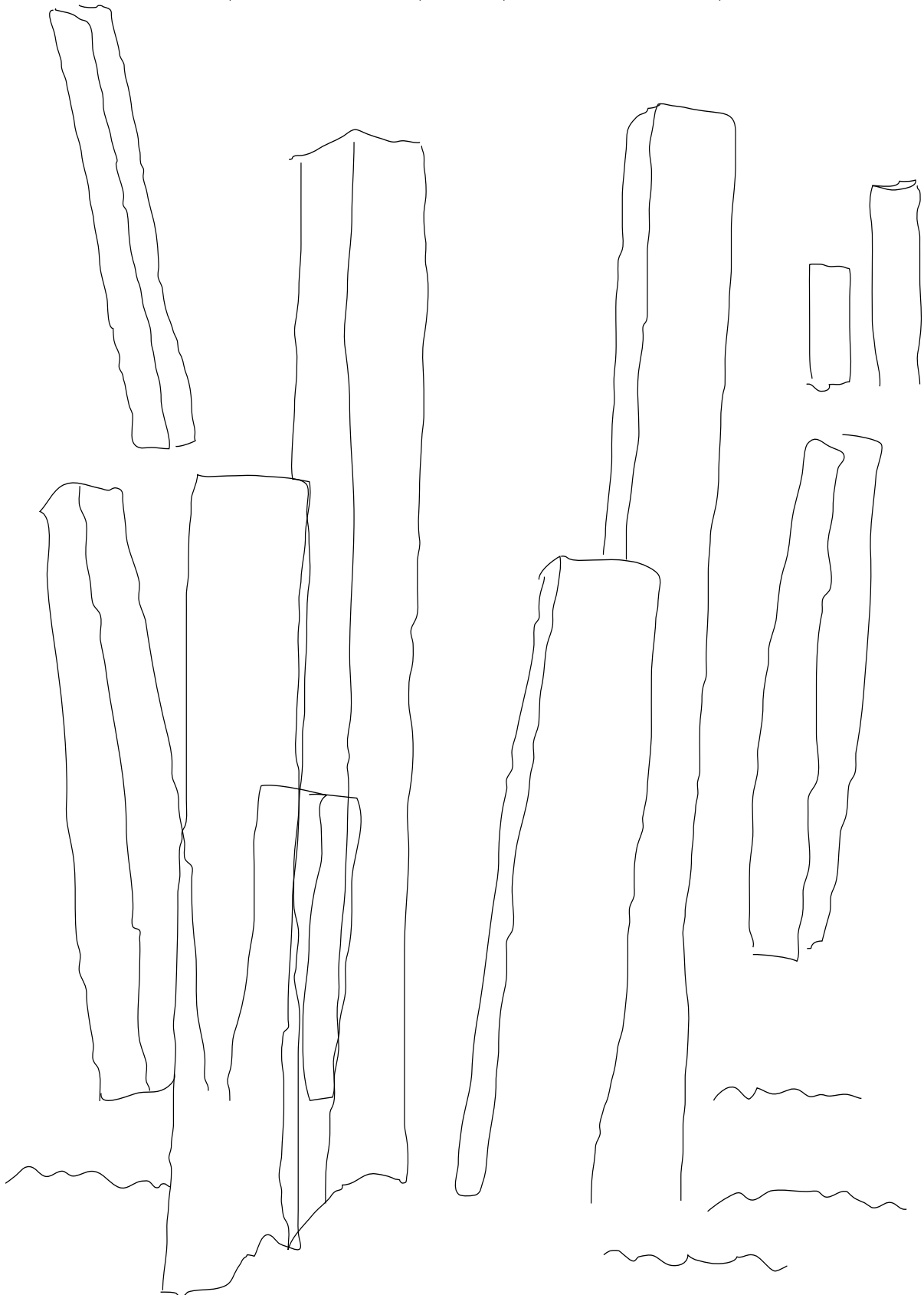
exhibition in some way, for example through an outdoor screening of the video work in the pit behind the academy, which was also a part of the exhibition with other students works. I will discuss the exhibition context itself more in the next chapter, but as a background to that, I was trying to find out if it was possible to have this type of an outdoor event for example on the last week of the exhibition, where the map would also be distributed and the video could thematically be tied to *the pit* of the building site (also of the same name as that in Tornio) but the planning got interrupted as I became sick for two weeks in the middle of the exhibition. Since I had more time, I thought to put a bit more effort in the map, and I received a lot of help from another MA student Joel Hilska-Heikkinen in printing it because although having used risograph before, I am still not fully fluent in it.

At the end I got to bring the map to the public at the Under The Leaf art book fair taking place in the Art School Maa in Suomenlinna.

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- 3 Scheerbart, Paul. 1914. "Glass Architecture." In *Glass! Love!! Perpetual Motion!!! : A Paul Scheerbart Reader*. 2014. Edited by Josiah McElheny and Christine Burgin. University of Chicago Press. p.205
 - 4 Haapaniemi, Henri. 2023. "Arkkitehtuurin kieli postmodernismin kontekstissa." ('Language of Architecture in The Context of Postmodernism'). OuluREPO – Oulun yliopiston julkaisuarkisto / University of Oulu repository. Master's thesis, Faculty of Technology, Degree Programme in Architecture. p. 47.
 - 5 Foucault, Michael. 1966. "Utopian Body" ('Le corps utopique'). Translated by Lucia Allais. From *Utopies et Heterotopies* (CD release, 1966 radio broadcasts Institut National d'Audio- visuel. Paris: 2024.) In *Sensorium : Embodied Experience, Technology, and Contemporary Art*. 2006. Edited by Caroline A. Jones. MIT Press and MIT List Visual Arts Center. p. 231.
 - 6 Harney Stefano, Moten Fred. 2022. *All Incomplete*. Minor Compositions. Book cover photograph by Zun Lee.
 - 7 Notes written between 4th and 7th December 2015 in Ramallah, as an intervention and introduction to a workshop on Walter Benjamin's 1931 essay 'The Destructive Character' at the conference "Benjamin in Palestine: On the Place and Non-Place of Radical Thought", at the Khalil Sakakini Cultural Centre, The International Academy of Arts, and Birzeit University, 6-11th December 2015. 'The Destructive Character' (1931), trans. Edmund Jephcott, in *Selected Writing: Volume 2*, pp. 541-542.

KUUSI KEHYSTÄ POISSAOLEVALLE
TAIVAS NÄKYÄ LÄPI (KARTTA
ÄÄNISAATTEESTA)

SIX FRAMES FOR ABSENCE
THE SKY SHOWS THROUGH
(A MAP OF A VOICEOVER)



While things of mechanic, aerodynamic nature effortlessly glide through space, dilated bodies (of people, buildings and things) with crevices, sieve-like structures and orifices, gather and accumulate the material that the seemingly invisible air is made out of. Accompanied by the passing urban sceneries, a fictive narration consisting of excerpts from various different literary and other sources, is in a cross-dialogue with the spaces, the ideologies which have produced them, and the effects they have on the bodies they come in contact with. This print serves as a physical documentation of a research done for a moving image work, and consists of extended excerpts from the cited works, the voiceover text in Finnish and English, and black and white analogue photographs from the work. As a part of a MFA thesis "six frames for absence the sky shows through" shown in Kuvan Kevät 2024. Time and Space department, The Fine Arts Academy of Helsinki.

Concept and layout : Essi Pellikka Photographs (unless otherwise mentioned) © Essi Pellikka Printing technique : Risograph Paper : Munken Cream 70g A2 Envelope: Museoiden hankintakeskus
Main typefaces : Helvetica oblique, Helvetica light oblique, Helvetica regular, Myriad Pro regular

Edition of _____

Helsinki June 2024

* You're holding a printed path of a voice over which was a part of a 19:29 min video work shown in The Fine Arts Academy of Helsinki during the graduation show Kuvan Kevät 2024.



2. "In 1919, Walter Gropius, who founded the Bauhaus that year, urged a fellow architect, "You absolutely must read Paul Scheerbart... in his works you will find much wisdom and beauty." Gropius was particularly fascinated by *Glass Architecture* (1914), a book in which Scheerbart imagined a new, better crystal world. "If we want our culture to rise to a higher level, we are obliged, for better or for worse, to change our architecture," Scheerbart wrote. "The new environment, which we thus create, must bring us a new culture." Comprising 111 short chapters, this impassioned manifesto elaborates on the revolutionary potential of glass."

3. "The narrator claims to have created a free energy machine that will change the world, and from small beginnings (as in *Glass Architecture*) he imagines that soon nothing will remain untouched by his marvelous invention. It will enable the artificial illumination of the planet; it will power elevators that will allow entire landscapes to be covered in dramatic tower architecture; it will allow the flattening of mountains, the damming of oceans."

4. "The verges of streets and highways will no longer be planted with trees, which are not high enough for the purpose, but columns of light, provided with festoons of lights and shedding constantly changing colour of light, would be highly appropriate for verges."



5. "It will surely appear self-evident that the furniture in the glass house may not be placed against the precious, ornamentally coloured glass walls. Pictures on the walls are, of course, totally impossible. Given the highest intentions, this revolution in the environment is inevitable. Glass architecture will have a tough fight on its hands, but force of habit must be overcome. Ideas derived from our grandparents must no longer be the deciding influence in the new environment. Everything new has to wage an arduous campaign against entrenched tradition. It cannot be otherwise, if the new is to prevail."

6. "First, because symbolic form, ornamentation, is eliminated from the building (form and content being merged), there is no distinction between the form and its material structure; that is, the form represents nothing more or less than the material; second, a form or structure is seen to represent only its contained function, the building's structural and functional efficiency being equated with its real utility for those who use it. Aesthetically, this idea is expressed in the formula: efficient form is beautiful and beautiful form is efficient. This has a 'moral' dimension; 'efficient' connotes a 'melioristic,' scientific approach to an seemingly uncontaminated by 'ideology,' which, pragmatically, has (capitalistic) use value. ('Efficiency' is how well a building contributes to the operations of the company housed within it. The look of a building, this cleanliness and structural transparency thus joins the myth of scientific progress to that of the social utility of efficient business practice)."



Kuva 14. Funktionaalisen konnotaatiivisen viittauksen polku. Kuvio Henri Haapaniemi.

1. [Picture] Hannikainen, Heidi. 2018. From Pirko Kukko-Liedes, "Suomen ja Ruotsin rajalle suositellu Barents Center kuopataan - suoshankkeesta jää jäljelle vain muoturi" (The Barents Center, planned for the Finnish-Swedish border, will be abandoned - all that remains of the megaproject is a pit). YLE "Yleisradio Oy-Finnish Broadcasting Company. Last modified: 15.10.2018. Accessed 15.1.2024.

2. Scheerbart, Paul. 1914. *Glass Architecture*. In *Glass Lovest Perpetual Motion!*: A Paul Scheerbart Reader. 2014. Edited by Josiah McElheny and Christine Burgin. New York City, Chicago: Christine Burgin Gallery. University of Chicago Press. p. 12-13, 13, 32, 89.

3. Ibid. Turner, Christopher. Chapter: The Crystal Vision of Paul Scheerbart - A Brief Biography. p. 13.

4. Ibid. Chapter 109, p. 89.

5. Ibid. (Illustration).

6. Ibid. Chapter 8, p. 32.

7. [Picture] Haapaniemi, Henri. 2023. "Ääkkitehtuurin kieli postmodernin kontekstissa." (Language of Architecture in the Context of Postmodernism). OuluRFPO - Oulun yliopiston julkaisukirjasto / University of Oulu repository. Master's thesis, Faculty of Technology, Degree Programme in Architecture. p. 47.

8. "Although the seeds for Modernism had been planted perhaps centuries beforehand, it was the aftermath of World War One that brought about its first major flowering in Europe. With large numbers of a generation of men dead, and the rest shell-shocked and shattered from this 'war to end all wars', something had to change. There was a commitment to a starting again from clear principles for this brave new world; history was seen as corrupt, inadequate and inappropriate. Modernism therefore marked a search for pure forms - architectural and social - not contaminated by a history that was seen to have culminated in the nightmare of World War One. Instead, 'form must follow function' so that built form would be honest and 'cleansed'; as architecture was purged, then so too would society be purified. Bruno Taut argued that the new housing with its combination of functional planning and the new aesthetic would have profound social and cultural implications, leading to a new social behaviour. The architect was thus seen as the hero, forging a way forward, and 'the protagonist not only of an architectural, but of a social revolution.'"

9. "Chaos and rhythm are the main threads of this book, which roams about the apocalypse of our time; in the second decade of the twenty-first century, the mindscape and the social scene are flooded by flows of unhappiness and violence. In his poetry, Hölderlin foresees the forthcoming chaos of modernity and the coming breathlessness. It's a problem of measure, he says. There is no earthly measure, so our sense of measure (rhythm) is only a projection of our breathing: poetry. This is why man lives poetically, although he 'deserves' differently. Hölderlin: 'Let a man look up / From the utter hardship of his life / And say: 'May me also be / Like these [gods]: Yes. As long as kindness lasts, / Pure, within his heart, he may gladly measure himself / Against the divine.'"

10. "No, really, there is no need for magic, for enchantment. There is no need for a soul, nor a death, for me to be both transparent and opaque, visible and invisible, life and thing. For me to be a utopia, it is enough that I be a body. All those utopias by which I erase my body - well they had, quite simply, their model and their first application, they had their place of origin, in my body itself. I really was wrong, to say that utopias are turned against the body and designed to erase it. They were born from the body itself, and perhaps afterwards they turned against it."

In any case, one thing is certain: that the human body is the principal actor in all utopias. After all, isn't one of the oldest utopias about which, men have told themselves stories the dream of an immense and inordinate body that could devour and master the world? This is the old utopia of giants that one finds at the heart of so many legends in Europe, in Africa, in Oceania, in Asia - this old legend that for so long fed the Western imagination, from Prometheus to Gulliver."

11. "My body: it is the place without recourse to which I am condemned. And actually I think that it is against this body (as if to erase it) that all those utopias have come into being. The prestige of utopia - to what does utopia owe its beauty and marvel? Utopia is a place outside all places, but it is a place where I will have a body without a body, a body that will be beautiful, limpid, transparent, luminous, speedy, colossal in its power, infinite in its duration. Untheatrical, invisible, protected - always transfigured. It may very well be that the first utopia, the one most deeply rooted in the hearts of men, is precisely the utopia of an incorporeal body."

12. "It is beautiful, my soul: It is pure, it is white. And my body - which is muddy, or in any case not very clean - should come to soil it, there will always be a virtue, there will always be a power, there will be a thousand sacred gestures that will re-establish my soul in its primary purity. It will last a long time, my soul, more than a "long time," when my old body comes to rot. Long live my soul! It is my body made luminous, purified, virtuous, agile, mobile, warm, fresh. It is my body made smooth, neutered, rounded like a soap bubble."

13. "There you have it. My body, by the virtue of these utopias, has disappeared. It has disappeared the way the flame of a candle is blown out. The soul, the tombs, the genes and the fibres have taken it in an underhanded way, made it disappear with slight of hand, have blown out its heaviness, its ugliness, and have given it back to me, dazzling and perpetual."

This publication accompanies the exhibition *Sensations: Embodied Experience, Technology, and Contemporary Art*, Bill Aron, Jane Farrow, Yoko Yonemitsu, and Henry Jackson, curators. *"Breathing"* © 2020 Sherry Turkle. English translation of Michel Foucault, *Le corps utopique* ("Utopian Body") © 2024 Lucia Allas, with Caroline A. Jones and Arnold Davidson.

1. Editor's note: "Le corps utopique," translated by Lucia Allas in consultation with Caroline A. Jones and Arnold Davidson from Michel Foucault, *Quêtes et Hétérotopies*, a CD release of two new audio broadcasts produced in 2004 by the lecture *Narrative of Anderson Park*, one of two broadcasts included on the CD, "Le corps utopique" (in the second broadcast December 1) and has never been published in a text. "Le Mitogenesi" was the first broadcast (December 7). "His Heterotopias" generated mixed lectures. "Do you exist alone?" (with Michel Foucault) in Toronto and Montreal at *Conférence on Critical Media and Action*, March 16, 1987. Included in *Don't Give and Published in *Anderson Park*, October 1986, 40-41. It was translated and published in "OF Other Spans," *Dunstan 9 Spring 1986*, 22-23. See <http://www.melb.cba.uic.edu/~mfo/utopia/utopia.html>.*

8. Matthews, Gill. 2009. "People who Live in Glass Houses: Walter Benjamin and the Dream of Glass Architecture." In *Cultural Crossroads: proceedings of the 26th International SAHANZ conference*. The University of Auckland, New Zealand, 2-5 July 2009. 2009. Edited by Julia Galley. Auckland: Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand. p. 2.

9. Hölderlin, Friedrich. 1984. "In Lovely Blue" in *Hymns and Fragments*. Translated by Richard Sieburth. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. 249. Quoted in "Carl Breath: In Breathing: Chaos and Poetry." Franco "Bibi" Berardi. 2018. South Pasadena, CA: Semiotext(e) intervention series, 26-9, 18.

10. Foucault, Michel. 1966. "Utopian Body" ("Le corps utopique"). Translated by Lucia Allas. From *Utopies et Hétérotopies* (CD release, 1966 radio broadcasts Institut National d'Audiovisuel, Paris: INA). In *Sensations: Embodied Experience, Technology, and Contemporary Art*, 2006. Edited by Caroline A. Jones. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press and MIT List Visual Arts Center. p. 231.

11. Ibid. p. 229.

12. Ibid. p. 230.

13. Ibid. p. 230.

14. Ogawa, Yoko. 1999. *The Memory Police*. Translated by Stephen Snyder. London: Vintage: First Vintage books edition. (First published Tokyo: Kodansha Ltd. 1994). p. 270.

15. Ibid. p. 273.

14. "When our left legs first disappeared, we were thrown off balance and didn't know how to manage. But once our entire bodies were gone, no one seemed to notice. They seemed more concerned with the fact that they had fewer parts, and adapted easily to the atmosphere of the island, which was itself full of holes. They danced lightly in the air like clumps of dried grass blown along by the wind."

15. "The hand that had written the story, my eyes overflowing with tears, the cooks that had received them - they all disappeared in their turn, and in the end all that was left was a voice. The citizens of the island had lost everything that had a form, and our voices alone drifted aimlessly. I no longer needed to fall into R's arms to descend to the hidden room. There was no need to lift the heavy trapdoor, since I was now able to slip through the narrow crack around it. In that sense, the complete disappearance of my body was actually a form of liberation. Still, if I was not careful, my unreliable and invisible voice might be swept away with the wind."

16. "That was how the city was keeping up the illumination of two o'clock - now lifting her head at a sound, and now running through the house all the way to the balcony, summoned by the noise of many footsteps in the street."

She opened the doors to the balcony, saw seminarians walking down the sidewalk, lined up by two and vague gestures, the flight of cackles... Could they be happy? She wondered slyly. Sometimes Lucia creña Neves was terribly intelligent. She laughed. She looked at the store across the street. And she looked at a third floor that the sun was fully brightening. One of the thousand bunkers of the stupid illuminated city. But what pride in seeing the state of its perfect system of defense. Maybe one day armored cars would be posted on every corner. That bulwark. The glory of a person was to have a city."

17. "She'd believe in certain facts, not in others - she didn't believe that clouds were evaporated water: why should she? Since the clouds were right there. Neither did she come close to liking anything poetic. What she really liked was people who talked about how things were, enumerating them somehow: that was what she'd always admired, she who in order to try to learn about a town square would make an effort not to fly over it, which would be so much easier. She liked to stay in the thing itself: the happy smile is happy, the big city is big, the pretty face is pretty - and thus whatever turned out to be clear was just her way of seeing. Until, every once in a while, she'd see even more perfectly: the city is the city. Her crude spirit still lacked the ultimate refinement in order to be able to see just as if saying: city."

18. "The mind of Pip Tyler (Purity Tyler, to be precise) is the central subject of Purity. Pip is a twenty-something perfectly proficient in the use of information technology and looking for a precarious job. She has a vague and uncertain sense of the fact that before her time an impure world once existed, but her distance from that world is total. The aesthetic, ethical, and cognitive configuration of her mind would not comply with the impure world of the past."

19. "Compared to my grandmother though, my own hands seem to have a little of the work that she put on a page. I don't feel like making it or moulding it in the same way, although not long ago they too were getting dirty, carrying as much weight as they could, digging into soil and used while impatient waiting for the proper tool. Now, so much movement stays beyond; untraceable, and without a weight that could leave visible, trackable traces on me, or the other way around. It floats through nicely, as I am guided to, too - through streets, entrances, invisible paths that I know to exist anyway through the thin hints given to me which tell me: go here, come here, look here. I tell her how these invisible paths and acknowledging them is of utmost importance now, how I must walk through them instead of just grabbing the handle, and letting myself in. I must keep my eyes and ears open, it is as if survival as always, just in a different form now."

20. "Perhaps these feelings are a proof that I'm becoming more and more attached to this room. Things I felt in the outside world have faded away here, transformed into emotions more suited to these places. I find, too, that my eyesight has recently started to fail. The mountain of typewriters, the bed, the various items in the drawer of the desk - all of it appears only dimly, as though shrouded in a dark veil. As does the outside world, glimpsed through the crack by the clock. Even on a bright and sunny afternoon, the grass in the church garden seems grey and hazy, the people gathered there indistinguishable from the shadows."

21. "Conceptualizing the world and making the world are wrapped up with each other - at least for those with the privilege to turn their dreams into action. The relationship goes both ways: new projects inspire new ways to think, which also inspire new projects. This essay concerns one historically significant link between conceptualizing and making the world: the naturalization of expansion as the way for humans to inhabit the earth. Why have people called expansion "growth" as if it were a biological process? I came to this question not only for historical reasons but also to consider contemporary challenges of how to live well with others - both other species and other cultures. European and North American elites have had trouble living with others, and not just because of prejudice. In the twentieth century, we became used to political ecologies of production - the production of stuff, the production of citizenship, and the production of knowledge - in which unauthorized others had no useful place. Others had no useful place because they got in the way of that expansion imagined as necessary for well-being: expansion was progress. Biological and cultural diversity were the enemies of progress. So it seems important to ask: What was that growth? What legacy has it left us with today?"

16. Lippsetor, Clarice. 2019. *The Besieged City*. Edited by Benjamin Moser. Translated by Johnny Lorenz. New York: New Directions. p. 125.

17. Ibid. p. 126.

18. "Bibi" Berardi, Franco. 2018. "Purity." In *Breathing: Chaos and Poetry*. South Pasadena, CA: Semiotext(e) intervention series, 26: 77-78. (On Jonathan Franzen. Purity. 2015. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux). p. 77.

19. Pellikka, Essi. 2022. "Unlabeled (the word that goes silent in transit)." [Unpublished essay]. Ballka, Eissa. Faculty of Time and Space, Fine Arts Academy, University of Arts, Helsinki.

20. Ogawa, Yoko. 1999. *The Memory Police*. Translated by Stephen Snyder. London: Vintage: First Vintage books edition. (First published Tokyo: Kodansha Ltd. 1994). p. 270.

21. Tsing Iwanaga, Anna. 2012. *On Noncircularity: The Living World is Not Amenable to Precision-Indexed Scales*. University of California, Santa Cruz. Common Knowledge. Volume 18, issue 3, pp. 505-524, p. 506.

22. De Silva, Ferreira. 2021. "Foreword." In *All Incomplete*. 2022. Stefano Harney, Fred Moten, Denise Ferreira da Silva, and Zura Lee. Colchester: Minor Compositions. 8.

23. Ibid. Book cover, photograph by Zura Lee.

24. Benjamin, Walter. 1931. *The Destructive Character*. Originally published in the *Frankfurter Zeitung*. Retrieved 12.09.2021 from www.walterbenjamin.de/ theanarchistlibrary.org on 24.3.2024. p. 1.

24. Ibid. p. 2.

22. "For improvement/usufruct - the Subject's quality and capacity - to be possible it is required that inappropriately be necessary (as a quality of exclusivity to its other), and, the other way around, that is, for it to be possible it is required that propriety be necessary (as a quality intrinsic to the transparent I). Only the proper thing, the one that has and knows perfection, is capable of actualizing perfection in its world - Stefano and Fred remind us then why we'd better watch out of it, both perfection (as the threat) and articulated (to be rescued from it). However, because its property has been articulated in an intrinsic comparison, in contradiction with everything else's exclusive inappropriacy, because it makes no sense without it, res proprim cannot improve all its parts; if it does so, it will transform its trajectory into an eschatology."



23. "It could happen to someone looking back over his life that he realized that almost all the deeper obligations he had endured in its course originated in people who everyone agreed had the traits of a 'destructive character.' He would stumble on this fact one day, perhaps by chance, and the heavier the shock dealt to him, the better his chances of representing the destructive character. The destructive character knows only one watchword: make room. And only one activity: clearing away. His need for fresh air and open space is stronger than any hatred."

The destructive character is young and cheerful. For destroying rejuvenate, because it clears away the traces of our own age; it cheers, because everything clearing away means to the destroyer a complete reduction, indeed a rooting out, out of his own condition. Really, only the insight into how radically the world is simplified when tested for its worthiness for destruction leads to such an Apollonian image of the destroyer. This is the great bond embracing and unifying all that exists. It is a sight that affords the destructive character a spectacle of deepest harmony."

24. "The destructive character is always blithely at work. It is Nature that dictates his tempo, indirectly at least, for he must forestall her. Otherwise she will take over the destruction herself."

The destructive character sees no image hovering before him. He has few needs, and the least of them is to know what will replace what has been destroyed. First of all, for a moment at least, empty space - the place where things stood or the victim lived. Someone is sure to be found who needs this space without occupying it."

The destructive character does his work, the only work he avoids is creative. Just as the creator seeks solitude, the destroyer must be constantly surrounded by people, witnesses to his efficacy."

25. "The destructive character sees nothing permanent. But for this very reason he sees ways everywhere. Where others encounter walls or mountains, there, too, he sees a way. But because he sees a way everywhere, he has to clear things from it everywhere. Not always by brute force; sometimes by the most refined. Because he sees ways everywhere, he always stands at a crossroads. No moment can know what the next will bring. What exists he reduces to rubble - not for the sake of rubble, but for that of the way leading through it."

See Notes on Reading "The Destructive Character" in Palestine

Under sign
time in place
time in place
Under sign
place in time
one of them

- Mahmoud Darwish, "A Year of Siege",
Ramallah, 2002

In 1971 the same sign began to be used
in France for those officers held in the web
of occupation and rage. (P)U

- Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*

26. "We have become impoverished. We have given up one portion of the human heritage after another, and have often left it at the pawnbroker's for a hundredth of its true value, in exchange for the small change of "the contemporary." The economic crisis is at the door, and behind it is the shadow of the approaching war. Holding on to things has become the monopoly of a few powerful people, who, God knows, are no more human than the many; for the most part, they are more barbaric, but not in the good way. Everyone else has to adapt - beginning anew and with few resources. They rely on the men who have adopted the cause of the absolutely new and have founded it on insight and renunciation. In its buildings, pictures, and stories, mankind is preparing to outlive culture, if need be. And the main thing is that it does so with a laugh. This laughter may occasionally sound barbaric. Well and good. Let us hope that from time to time the individual will give a little humanity to the masses, who one day will repay him with compound interest."

25. Ibid. p. 3.

25. S. [Screenshots] Notes written between 4th and 7th December 2015 in Ramallah, as an intervention and introduction to a workshop on Walter Benjamin's 1931 essay *The Destructive Character* at the conference Benjamin in Palestine: On the Place and Non-Place of Radical Thought, held at the Khalil Sakakini Cultural Centre, the International Academy of Arts, and Birzeit University, 6-11th December 2015. "The Destructive Character" (1931), trans. Edmund Jephcott, in *Selected Writing*: Volume 2, pp. 541-542.

26. Benjamin, Walter. 1933. "Experience and Poverty." [Written 1928-1933; unpublished in Benjamin's lifetime. Published in *Die Welt im Wort* (Prague): Gesamtmelchior, 1, 213-219. Translated by Rodney Livingstone. Retrieved 4.2.2023 from playpus1917.org. p. 3

27. "This all brings me directly to the next question. It also concerns a certain absence. Not my absence today in Irvine where I would have so much liked to see you again along with other friends, even more so since I was one of those who had wished for and prepared this meeting (and I must ask you to forgive me and to make others forgive me); but absence like the shadowed sound of the voice - you see what I mean by this. What relations (new or archaic, in any case different) does architecture, particularly yours, carry on, must it carry on, with the voice, the capacity of voice, but also therefore with telephonic machines of all sorts that structure and transform our experience of space everyday? The question of the nearly immediate telephonic address, certainly nearly immediate, and I underline, but also the question of telephonic archivation, as is the case right here, with the spacing of time that telephonic archivation at once supposes and structures. If one can imagine a whole labyrinth like history of architecture, guided by the entwined thread of this question, where would one be today and tomorrow, and you?"

28. "Wasn't it the same logic that, in the global economic crisis of 2007-2008, governments used to justify rescuing major corporations and banks, because they were 'too big to fail'? Though, in this latter case, they had already failed but they were (their share of the world economy is) too big to be let die. What does this mean to the rest of us? The ones too small to thrive? Too frail to live? Who do not count, who in the decision and in the algorithm (in the structure-procedure, algorithm that supports it, that gives it both an end and evidence) figure as null, nothing, no-thing, no-bodies? What about them? How can they possibly exist and persist, knowing that their number is never called because it makes no sense, because it does not fit in the calculation, because it is out of sorts, and up-side-down? Them, who?"

29. "If you enter a bourgeois room of the 1880s, for all the coziness it radiates, the strongest impression you receive may well be, 'You've got no business here.' And in fact you have no business in that room, for there is no spot on which the owner has not left his mark - the ornaments on the mantelpiece, the antimacassars on the armchairs, the transparencies in the windows, the screen in front of the fire. A neat phrase by Brecht helps us out here: 'Erase the traces!' is the refrain in the first poem of his *Lesebuch für Städtbewohner* [Reader for City-Dwellers]. Here in the bourgeois room, the opposite behaviour became the norm. And conversely, the interior for the inhabitant to adopt the greatest possible number of habits - habits that do more justice to the interior he is living in than to himself."

30. "The disappearance of the fruit was much simpler. When we woke in the morning, fruit of every sort was falling from trees all over the island. A pattering sound could be heard everywhere, and in the northern hills and the forest park, fruit came down like a hailstorm. Some were big as baseballs, some small as beans, some covered in shells, some brightly colored - fruits of all kinds. Though the morning was perfectly still, fruit fell from the branches one after another.

They fell on your head if you walked outdoors, and if you failed to watch your step, you trampled them underfoot. Then, before long, the snow began to fall, covering all the fruit."

31. "Europe, why are your libraries full of tears?"

It's been a long summer and the drought is spreading. Not a single store has a fan to sell. Soon you'll no longer have a liveable climate or any welfare. I fantasize about the walls that will greet you when disaster strikes.

Europe, repeat after me: Football players can be French who are African who are French. It isn't complicated. Everyone seems to understand the consequences of colonialism, except you, the cause.

Europe, you are an avocado that rots before it ripens. You are a bomb shelter with room only for the landlord. You have a self-image made of Teflon, nothing sticks.

You are an oversized blot of shame on the map.

Europe, 63 years before Lampedusa, Césaire wrote that you were impossible to defend.

How many dead in the Mediterranean this week? Each refugee who crosses your borders is a declaration of war.

The wretched of the earth want the prosperity they created."

32. "Europe, stop pushing I know what I'm doing. I'm sick of your insane demands. Let a woman live. How can I write a holy litany in your hopeless mood?"

The plum blossoms are falling here too.

You should have seen me come to Paoilini. You should have seen me triumph over windmills.

Europe, my queer shoulder has been dislocated."

33. "The fiasco with the Barents Center has settled like a wet blanket over the development in Haparanda. Although the municipality has not lost any real money in the mess, it has cost both time and energy. Peter Waara (S), who left the post of municipal councillor in connection with the election loss in 2018, today questions whether there was ever an intention to build the Barents Center.

It is an opinion shared by several within the current Concert. There was no realistic plan. There was no construction financing, says Viktor Isero, a lawyer at Concert who, together with CEO Björn Sahlström, spent two years sorting out the tangle surrounding the failed project."

34. "The following month another author, Joseph A. Barry, weighed in the same magazine with his "Report on the *American Battle Between Good and Bad Modern Houses*." Again Farnsworth played the role of outraged antimodernist. Citing the many rave reviews of the house in such journals as *Architectural Forum* and *House and Garden*, Barry asked, "How about Dr. Farnsworth herself on the subject of her house?": "Do I feel implacable calm?" she repeated. "The truth is that in this house with its four walls of glass I feel like a prowling animal, always on the alert. I am always restless. Even in the evening, I feel like a sentinel on guard day and night. I can rarely stretch out and relax..."

35. "So, you see, this well-developed movement has social implications because it affects the heart of our society - the home. Beyond the nonsense of trying to make us want to give up our technical aids and conveniences for what is supposed to be a better and more serene life, there is a social threat of regimentation and total control.

Does it work? The much touted all-glass cube of International Style architecture is perhaps the most unlivable type of home for man since he descended from the tree and entered a cave. You burn up in the summer and freeze in the winter, because nothing must interfere with the "pure" form of their rectangles - no overhanging roofs to shade you from the sun; the bare minimum of gadgets and possessions so as not to spoil the "clean" look; three or four pieces of furniture placed along arbitrary pre-ordained lines; room for only a few books and one painting at precise and permanent points; no children, no dogs, extremely meager kitchen facilities - nothing human that might disturb the architect's composition."

36. "Voici ce que je vois, ce que j'entends. Je vois le temps qui a passé, j'entends le son de la ville, les vies de mes voisins, et le chant d'un oiseau. Je nous vois, nouvelle, non-épuisée. Nous remplissons cet espace avec nos vies. C'est un labeur acharné. C'est le travail plus dur que je connais.

Quand je vois cet espace, je vois ce labeur précieux, je vois notre impression en tout. Les minces couches de souvenirs font cette chaise, font ce cabinet, font le tapis. Mais si soudainement, et venu de nul part, un étranger avait entré dans cette pièce, que verrait-il? Qu'entendrait-il? Et est-ce qu'il sentirait quelque chose en étant ici? Et est-ce que j'aurais honte?"

ENG:

"This is what I see, what I hear. I see the time that has gone by, I hear the sounds of the city, the lives of my neighbours, and the singing of the bird. I see us, anew, and non-exhausted. We fill this space with our lives. It is a relentless task, it is the hardest work I know.

When I see this space, I see this precious labour, I see our imprint on everything. The thin layers of memories which make this chair, make this cabinet, make the carpet. But if suddenly, a stranger appearing from nowhere was to enter this room, what would he see, what would he hear? And would he feel anything by being here? And would I be ashamed?"



37. "I woke up to that sun this morning. The sun which is warming the snow on the trees. Yesterday it shone through the grey cloud and made the scenery monochrome, with the snow that had fallen, but it shone like a halogen lamp, too high and bright for the snow covered landscape. It wasn't the winter sun but the spring sun, and in that moment I enjoyed this absurd overlap.

I hope I will get to send you the letter that I've been meaning to send already for over half a year, or even more. There are some things I couldn't include, but I wish not to make it too hard for myself, you should have those few things I have included, and the other few are just as I have doubts.



27. Derrida, Jacques, and Hilary P. Hand. 1990. "A Letter to Peter Eisenman." *Assemblage*, no. 12, pp. 6-13. The MIT Press. p. 9. (Written in October 1989 in lieu of Derrida's presence at the conference "Postmodernism and Beyond: Architecture as the Critical Art of Contemporary Culture," organized by J. Hillis Miller at the University of California, Irvine. - 64)

28. Denise Ferreira da Silva. *Foreword in All Incomplete*. 2022. Harney, Stefano, Fred Moten, Căciulester. *Minor Compositions*. p. 10.

29. Brecht, Bertolt. 1926. *The Reader for City Dwellers* (Brecht's *Lesebuch für Städtbewohner*). Quoted by Walter Benjamin. 1933. "Experience and Poverty." Written 1928-1933; unpublished in Benjamin's lifetime. Published in *Die Welt im Wort* (Prague). *Gesammelte Schriften*, II, 213-219. Translated by Rodney Livingstone. Retrieved 4.2.2024 from platypus1917.org.

30. Ogawa, Yoko. 1999. *The Memory Police*. Translated by Stephen Snyder. London: Vintage: First Vintage books edition. (First published Tokyo: Kodansha Ltd. 1994.) p. 95-96

31. Farokhzad, Athena. "A Letter to Europe" in *One Word from the Disassembled Dictionary: "Non-Territorial"*. 2020. Praun & Guermouche, [005]. p. 51.

32. *Ibid.*, p. 58.

33. Uppdrag granskning (Mission: Investigate). 2019. *Storbråk efter miljardhaveri i Haparanda* (Big row after the billion-dollar disaster in Haparanda). SVT-Sveriges Television AB. Sweden's Television Stock Company. Last updated: 22.10.2019. Published: 22.10.2019. Retrieved 12.12.2023.

34. Farnsworth, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and Philip Johnson. "People Who Live in Glass Houses: In Women and the Making of the Modern House: A Social and Architectural History." 1998. Edited by Alice T. Friedman. New Haven and London: Yale University Press. p. 141.

35. *Ibid.*

36. Devos, Bas. *Ghost Tropic*. 2019. Directed by Bas Devos. The Cinema Guild Inc. (Opening monologue)

36.5. *Ibid.* [Screenshots].

37. Pellikka, Essi. A personal letter. April 3rd, 2022.



A) [Reference for the illustration on the cover page] Piling for the Sarents Center, a hybrid building of 100 000 sq, planned to consist of a mall, office spaces, cinema, multiplex, a gymnasium, a 20-storey hotel spa and an innovation hub. At the Finnish-Swedish border in Torneå/Haparanda, Piling were hoisted in 2015, after which the construction stopped and the area filled with water and vegetation. The sight has become part of the cityscape and is now called the swimming pool, the castle in the air or simply the pit. A few years after the initiation of the project, the first rumours of fraud started circling. By 2024, the project, its leading company Concert and the key people involved have gone through various legal battles. The photograph has been taken in December 2023.



B) [Above on this page] Lumo One is a 120m high, 31-storey high-rise building in Kalastamäki, Helsinki, built in 2022. It is the third of the plan to build eight buildings alike next to each other and has been called the first "rental skyscraper" in Finland. The building is connected to the shopping mall complex FRED, which is located under and around it. The photograph has been taken in March 2023.

C) [Below on this page] A cleaner is changing the bedsheet at a vacation rental apartment with white indoor surfaces and furniture.





A low theory of an exhibition screening

“I am interested in low theory, which comprise those somewhat rarer moments when, coming out of everyday life, you get a certain milieu that can think itself. It happens when there is a mixing of the classes (another thing higher education doesn’t do). It happens in certain spaces that we used to call bohemia. Low theory is the attempt to think everyday life within practices created in and of and for everyday life, using or misusing high theory to other ends. It happens in collaborative practices that invent their own economies of knowledge.”

– McKenzie Wark in an interview with Verso Books

Condensation

Still quite late on in the process after first giving up the plans of exhibiting in the common facilities of the academy, I was hoping that the pit next to the academy located in Haapaniemenkatu 4, would be the place where the work would take place. I had been researching the plans of the hybrid building which is being planned there, and the Helsinki city plan for the area in general, after we got to know that the vacant space would be used to extend the exhibition outside. The architecture competition had been won by *Vannas*, a suggestion by Skaska CDF OY and Skanska Talonrakennus Oy, which architectural and landscape planning had been done by Anttinen Oiva Arkkitehdit Oy and Nomaji maisema-arkkitehdit Oy.² There was multiple overlaps to the topics I had been dealing otherwise, also including that the plan had received a notice that the plans for the facade of the building are excessive on the usage of glass, and the building planned is a hybrid building.

After talking with the curator of the exhibition Tuomo Rainio about the worries I had in regards to the work and the ideal process I'd wish to have, we decided that the work could take place in the screening room as a part of the screening schedule. Although I had found the coincidence of the plot to add to the multiple other coincidences around the work and as a possibility enrich it also, the decision was a relief for me as I had also held it as a possibility that the work could find form in the video format.

I thought it was a good option to have my intimate process with the work, and perhaps a cinema setting would allow for a more intimate viewing experience too. I would get to indulge myself in the material and research and arranging it, the viewer would get to indulge themselves in the result. The core materials that I had been working with during the process were anyway of a "immaterial" kind, being photographs, text and sound, which all could

easily translate to video.

I know for myself, that I still very much appreciate the simplicity of the cinematic setting, as I found myself also telling to someone after this decision. Although the examples from the expanded cinema, installation and media art at large are often interesting in ways that they may allow for a more complex body-relation to the work, elaboration of the thematics, of the work to the site and so on, the traditional cinema in its bare stripped-to-necessities format is a kind of an empty womb, a pre-state, a familiar and a safe place without decoration, which I have a lot of affection towards. I noticed myself saying how especially nowadays in our era of attention economy, this experience of making the choice of coming into a room, watching, listening, giving (versus paying) attention, without having the option to pause, to press next, is an important one.

The personal economical aspect was also a part of the decision, not only because of the relatively small five hundred euro budget for the work, but also as I do hold a specific affection towards the easily distributable mediums of video, sound and printed matter, which often escape the market value standards in art, which as mediums can be extremely kind and generous, and can be directly experienced wherever without the gallery setting. Personally, my relation to creating physical material which takes space in the world is a process determined by necessity and often requires a lot of time. I still haven't figured how to make this relationship lighter, or how to make sense of it within the general population's excessive expectation of online availability which leaves many artists both poor and distanced from their audience. In spite, in my artistic processes I have a tendency to spend time with things which exist already, condense and disappear like fog, are easy to dismantle, or fit in my hard drive or bookshelf. Things which give as much as possible, and take as little space as possible: things which add to the notion of space.

1 (Chapter title page) Webb, Chris. 5/9/2011. "Long live low theory! – McKenzie Wark on the legacy and continued relevance of Situationism." Blog post. versobooks.com, Retrieved: 10.9.2024

2 Haapaniemenkatu 4, 10. Sörnäinen kortteli 291 Tontti 4. Asemakaavan muutoksen selostus. Helsingin Kaupunki. From: ahjojulkaisu.hel.fi. Retrieved: 13.9.2024

An accidental thematic screening on architecture within capitalism

The exhibition screening consisted of three video works; Siew Ching, Eeti Piironen and me. Me and Siew were in the same seminar the whole spring, so we knew already that there were similarities within our topics, both accessing a wider network of capitalism through inspecting architecture. In Siew's work, this is done through the focal point being a building in China which encapsulates within it the whole life circle of a pig. The building is more than a slaughterhouse, as a total system within which every aspect of a pig's life – brought to life to be consumed – has its own designated area, including the chance for the voyeuristic consumer of their flesh to experience a tour of their brief life.³ Eeti's work approaches oppressive institutional structures through the corridors of the academy building, giving the new academy building as a backdrop for opening up the system which is the University of Arts, but also beyond it, placing it in the wider Finnish context, history and continuum of systematic racism, ableism, sexism and other forms of discrimination.⁴

We soon realised, that all of our works share the similarity of accessing our topics of concern through architecture in a form of another, all of them in some way can be seen to represent the format of an essay, and all of us have written a script in English and have a voiceover, read by ourselves in a voice-of-god-ish manner. This realisation caused different kinds of reactions in us: partly interest as it almost seemed like a "thematic screening," and partly worry, questions of whether the works will get lost and lose their independence because of the similarities and for not being visible enough. The works were already significantly less available and visible compared to the other works of the exhibition, which most took up their own space and were available at any time during the exhibition hours.

Throughout the last weeks and still continuing after the opening, there was multiple discussions about how should we organise the screening as an experience, how to allow each work to have their time and how to minimise the issue of the long waiting time for the exhibition goers who do not have time to view every work, but would for example like to see only one of them. We did spend a significant amount of time in trying to find the right approach to bridge this gap, which unfortunately took place partly after the exhibition had already opened. We ended up creating a screening schedule and a timetable according to which each work was showing, and which was based on having equally long running time for all the works.

I know that for many viewers the combination of the works and listening to direct speech for two hours was most probably draining and possibly also affected the attention span negatively. This would have been the case for sure even if the MA exhibition this year wouldn't have been already a lot bigger than usual. It is clear that in an exhibition of 51 artists, people will not be able to watch all video works, which in this exhibition were six on top of ours, making it all in all about 4 hours of moving image works.⁵ I'm certain that many didn't see the work as it wasn't running on many days during the first few weeks, and I'm certain that many walked out because of the duration, and I'm also certain that due to the combination and the linking factors of the works, the overall impression left the individual works feeling unoriginal and even wearisome. Perhaps for a small amount of people, their combination could have been also interesting and rewarding.

The thematic collision of our works could be of course speculated more. The fact that we all dealt with a similar approach to similar topics made me think whether the reason is a kind of a *forensic architecture* influenced zeitgeist. Other also very understandable options are

3 Ching, Siew. 2024. High-Rise Pigs. Kuvan Kevät 2024. The Fine Arts Academy of Helsinki.

4 Piironen, Eeti. 2024 Gaps. or; reproducing exclusion. Kuvan Kevät 2024. The Fine Arts Academy of Helsinki.

5 The other artists in the exhibition who worked with centering the video format were Saara Karppinen, Annabel Kajetski, Paula Ruusuranta, Annele Lahti, Romance Clermont and Mikko Noroila. There was also other works which incorporated video as a part of the work.

knowing each other, sharing location and resources, all of us being in the time and space department, at least to some extent part of same discourses, and partly sharing our thinking processes as we are friends too. When all these aspects meet the fact that we live in the same world which oppressive compulsions we are all interested in, the outcome is not that surprising.

Instead of going more into discussing these possible reasons for the similarities of our works directly, which would also be very interesting if there was more allowed characters in this thesis, I'd like to take a moment to think about how in general individuality within art making and in our relationship to works of art or their "success" take place. How and why we might respond with a certain disappointment and worry instead of interest in a situation where someone is working with something very much alike ourselves. I wish to also connect through acknowledgement these topics to the fact that my own Kuvan Kevät work is mostly a collage of texts written by other people. This type of working may very well be problematised. I was also dealing with the question of copyright issues in relation to the work, as the academy is very strict on those when it comes to Kuvan Kevät. I'd like to consider the concept of low theory in this context, a topic which I've been very drawn to the past year, and which I also wished to set as a running undercurrent for this thesis.

An artwork as private property

I first became familiar with the terms *low theory* and *high theory* while reading McKenzie Wark's book *Capital Is Dead: Is This Something Worse?* in the summer of 2023.⁶ The concept of "low theory" is perceived to be originating with Stuart Hall, the Jamaican-British sociologist, cultural theorist and political activist. According to my understanding, Hall never used the term low theory himself, but it has been linked to

him later for his focus on making his analysis of popular culture, media, race, identity, and everyday life more accessible, moving away from academic elitism. McKenzie's discussion around low theory is to large part drawing from and building on Situationist International's theory and her own theory of hacker culture which she elaborates in her *Hacker Manifesto* (2004), which criticizes the commodification of information in the age of digital culture and globalization.

There's an article on low theory in the context of one of McKenzie Wark's work, *The Beach Beneath the Street: The Everyday Life and Glorious Times of the Situationist International* written by Andrew McCann. In the context of Wark discussing Debord and the Situationist's "DIY creativity that showed no respect for 'great' works, genius originality or the forms of private property bound up with them," McCann writes:

"Two things are going on here. Firstly, there is an ethos of critical appropriation that turns the spectacle against itself, that draws on cultural materials ready-to-hand and wrestles them free from their complicity with the reproduction of capitalism. Secondly, this form of appropriation is also an assault on the legal infrastructure that turns culture into private property rather than a collective resource, and people into consumers rather than cultural and political agents."⁷

McCann continues to unpack Wark's critique of the public within the context of art, and how she writes against the idea of "passive consumers filing like sheep through galleries and museums" especially as a form of an escapist past-time. Instead Wark, interpreted by McCann, calls for a counter-culture of appropriation and interruption, and in this way also art which sets itself apart from the culture of capitalism which produces culture in its own image, and in which the work then becomes "private property, with the author as the sole proprietor of a soul as property." She

6 Unfortunately I will not be able to bring quotations directly from the book as it spent ten months in a very damp cellar in Germany, after which I finally received it to Helsinki a month ago, but in a very moulded condition. This somewhat fitting accident shall be a part of the context of discussing this theme here.

7 McCann, Andrew. 4.6.2013. "Low Theory: Andrew McCann on McKenzie Wark." sydneyreviewofbooks.com. Retrieved: 3.9.2024

finds an alternative in the Situationist's concept of *détournement*, as a way to utilise material remnants of the past and present culture against the bourgeois culture. The aim being "the destruction of all forms of middle-class cultural shopkeeping."⁸

Another author having taken into low theory as a concept is Jack Halberstam, whom I already mentioned in an earlier chapter, who connects it to concepts of failure, unbecoming, non-conformity and marginality, especially within a queer context.⁹ Low theory is also the title of the introduction chapter in the beginning of the book *The Queer Art of Failure*, in which he discusses various concepts through popular animation films. Halberstam defines low theory as something which "tries to locate all the in-between spaces that save us from being snared by the hooks of hegemony and spread by the seductions of the gift shop".¹⁰ The book too, as he states "darts back and forth between high and low culture, high and low theory, popular culture and esoteric knowledge, in order to push through the divisions between life and art, practice and theory, thinking and doing, into a more chaotic realm of knowing and unknowing."¹¹ Instead of the academic "training" culture, which he says refuses a kind of a "Benjaminian [strolling to the wrong direction] relation to knowing," Halberstam proposes that the goal is exactly to lose one's way, and to be prepared to lose more than one's way. The idea of failure he proposes is based on the project of generating new forms of knowing instead of continuing on the narrow fields of expertise and discipline that have been determined a long time ago as having lost relevance as they are "failing to respond to either real-world knowledge projects," and

in the context of the academia, "the student interests."¹²

Halberstam quotes also Fred Moten and Stefano Harney, and their *The University and the Undercommons: Seven Theses* (2004), a paper in which they develop the ideas preceding the full book dedicated to the idea of the undercommons nine years later. In the paper they pitch for the "subversive intellectuals"; a maroon community of outcast thinkers who refuse, resist, and renege on the demands on "rigour, excellence and productivity."¹³ Moten and Harney's concept of the undercommons can be perhaps seen as a sibling for the idea of low theory, or at least articulating many similar issues and advocating for many same causes and means of abolition of multiple *modus operandi* that either the academic, educational or societal system at large is based on.

Another author Halberstam talks about is James C. Scott and his *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*, written in 1999, which I wish to include here as a mention. Halberstam quotes Scott's description of the book, which "began as a study of why the state has always seemed to be the enemy of 'people who move around,' but quickly became a study of the demand by the state for legibility through the imposition of methods of standardization and uniformity."¹⁴ Halberstam also expands Scott's terms of *metis* over *legibility* to *illegibility* and *antidisciplinarity*, as suggestions for "a way to escape the political manipulation" in which discipline forming institutions, such as the university, are also complicit.¹⁵

8 Ibid.

9 I tried to find if there are people in the Helsinki scene working with these terms directly, and found that the "epäkirjailija" Max Ryytänen has interviewed Halberstam in Helsinki in 2017.

10 Halberstam, Jack. 2011. "Introduction: Low Theory." In *The Queer Art of Failure* Duke University Press, p. 2.

11 Ibid. p.2

12 Halberstam gives credit to Foucault for having pointed out this already in his time.

13 Ibid. p.8

14 Ibid. p.9 (Halberstam on James C. Scott's "Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed," written in 1999)

15 There's a lot which could be said here as to connect this to the thematics of this thesis work. Halberstam also mentions Scott's takes on modernism and even specifically Le Corbusier in connection to "authoritarian preferences for hierarchies" which despises "the complex and messy forms of organic profusion and improvised creativity." I will come back to some of the themes related to aesthetics in the chapter "On Progress: Cosmetic Concerns."

Wark's laments about capitalism producing things in its own image also remind me of how Mark Fisher in one of the recorded DOCH lectures also talks about capitalism engulfing everything by absorbing aspects of life that try to be resistant to it, turning even its critique and anti-capitalist attempts into marketable commodities, resulting in the neutralisation of the intended subversive gestures. Fisher is of course a central figure in the anti-capitalist discourse, being known for his book *Capitalist Realism*, which the topics of the lecture also borrow from.¹⁶

When talking about all these determining factors of capitalism – a concept which has been also contested as outdated by some contemporary authors such as Yanis Varoufakis, who prefers the term technofeudalism instead, and McKenzie who talks of vectoralism – art is of course far from being an exception. Instead it is a perfect example of how not only do the results of our work get engulfed, but also our modes of doing, our imagination for alternatives, our relationship to our work and that of others. The system is after all based on intentional scarcity and competition, which means that to secure our place in it, we are allured to prove the unique nature of our work, a bit in the same manner as natural resources also gain their worth, leading to subtle demands of underlining our own uniqueness as individuals. This function, although one would be against it as a principle, is a difficult one to fight against especially after experiencing competition against other artists on a frequent basis, was it then the entrance exams of an academy, working grants, residency applications, prices and exhibitions and so on. Since the livelihood of the artist who wishes to build their career is dependent on these, it is of major importance that they stand out, and utilise – marketise and commodify – that which could respond to this demand of that rare uniqueness, which often

feels like a continuum for – or has an echo of – the artist as a genius trope.

On the other hand, the benefit of this can be that it adds to the chances of the interpolation of the marginalised narratives and people into the scene and discourses for example, which creates more touching points to acknowledging how much of our historical narratives have been based on purely elitist and homogenous systems. However this is often affected by trendification as a pure assimilative force, which makes the battle of true recognition and change a lot more difficult, as trends are built to be consumed and pass, leaving the system intact and still internally favouring a whole different type of status quo. We know very well how institutions are very fast to pick up on trends and superficial visits to complex topics to stay afloat, to seem relevant and to appease the public, but still fail or directly refuse to change within and in their structures.¹⁷

In spite of the pressure, some artists still choose to put aside the idea of building themselves as a brand and instead engage in collective practises of different forms. Based on my own personal observation though, there is a sense that also the idea of collectivity has been, or is becoming co-opted, and has even become a sort of an art world's peer-review system, where the artists who are part of collectives, are benefitting from the title of collectivity at large, as tokens of alternative systems.

The threat of “of the people” instead of “for the people”

I am reminded here of an example from a recent talk of Sandy Hilal, an artist architect who is known as the initiator of DAAR (Decolonising Architecture Art Research), and who also took part to this years Drifts

16 I've watched many of Fisher's online lectures, including all of the five "Mark Fisher – DOCH Lectures" on Youtube. I don't remember in which of these this specific thought was expressed, but it is quite central to Fisher as far as I'm aware.

17 An example which comes to mind is the "Archive of Silence" project hosted by "The Left Berlin," which is documenting the censorship of German art institutions in relation to artists having publicly shared their support for Palestine. The detailed descriptions of the incidents are great examples of the Institutions trying to tightrope between what looks good and what the state wants.

festival programme in Helsinki.¹⁸ As a part of her lecture, she explained about a project *Al Madafeh / The Living Room* they did with a refugee community in Prästhölm, Boden in the North of Sweden, which idea was to give a chance for refugees to take turns being hosts in a space they had gotten for the purpose. The project was to create a space in which the refugees are allowed to exercise their right to host for example events such as dinners, musical evenings, or any other gatherings instead of being assigned the perpetual role of a “guest” by the state, the locals and the overall system.¹⁹ The space existed for three years from 2018 to 2021, and was discontinued (according to my understanding by the municipality), the most likely reason being, as Hilal described it, the issue that the people became in fact “too empowered.” She went on to elaborate on the difficulty of the state and the locals to share the position of “a host,” as a position which can also be perceived as a position of power. After the decision, she tried to reach the people behind it multiple times to ask for the reasons of why the project was ended, but never got the direct answer.

The case of this project gives a good example of when a work manages to resist the commodifying system and avoids getting hijacked by it, sustaining its subversive potential by remaining open and becoming of the people, instead of for the people, due to not being a “privatised property” of the artist. In this way it becomes a kind of a threat to the system as it addresses the whole function and foundations of it, and does it bottom-up. This is especially interesting as there is simultaneously a clear attraction in the art world – at the moment and of course since a good time – towards political themes, especially from state funded projects, which take place within the hierarchy of top-down; the state determining the interests which the artists are supposed

to work with (again through scarcity and livelihood), by having still major control over how the results are to be framed and used within the society.

As artists have to interact with institutions for their livelihood, in spite of having for example practises that deal with marginalised communities, I can’t help but to wonder how common is the reality-split among the middle class museum goers and the origin of the art they consume, in the form of going to the secure exhibition space on a Saturday to familiarise themselves for example with themes as difficult as homelessness, displacement and state violence, and then when going home, complaining about the plans of the city to establish a supervised drug consumption room in their city area, as having direct encounters with the people who are subject to state violence in their “own spaces” is unimaginable.²⁰

To arrive back to DAAR, Sandy Hilal and Alessandro Petti have also worked with the concept of *Al Masha*, which they describe in a context of a course held in Stockholm as referring to a communal land equally distributed among farmers, which can only exist if people have decided, and are committed to cultivating the land together.²¹ The concept feels similar to that of *lumbung*, which was the curatorial concept of the documenta 15 curatorial team ruangrupa. The concept of *lumbung*, also of a rural origin, is an Indonesian word that describes the system of the communal rice barn where all community members bring their harvest, and use only that which each of them needs, in this way equalising the community resources of food. What happened with documenta 15, could also be seen to have similarities to what happened to Hilal’s project in Boden. The exhibition

18 DAAR is the artistic research practice of Sandi Hilal and Alessandro Petti, situated at the intersection of architecture, art, pedagogy, and politics. It was founded in 2007 in Beit Sahour, Palestine. The talk which took place on 8.9.2024 was titled “Destruction and Reconstruction.”

19 Al Mahdafah, Statens konsttrad. publicartresidencySweden.com Retrieved: 14.9.2024

20 Karhu, Otso. Lehtokari, Rosa. Helpinen, Varpu. 24/5/2023. “Keskelle Helsinkiä ilmestyi huumeiden käyttöhuone – poliisi käski purkamaan sen.” Yle. Retrieved 14.9.2024

21 Decolonizing Architecture: Al Masha – Rural Commons. Royal Institute of Art in Stockholm. Architecture. e-flux Announcement. Retrieved: 14.9.2024

reflected the overall approach that ruangrupa has had as a basis of their 20-year existence, of creating long-term connections and alternative systems of sustaining communities, and went on as a quest to create something beyond the three months of the documenta exhibition itself. The result then, which as far as I've understood was partly accidental, was to become a massive rhizome of collectives and

humans as a part of an ecosystem, preserving the natural rotation and the principle of securing the livelihood of the next generations. In this case too, reindeer herding as a livelihood of the communities has been made increasingly difficult, as the Finnish government does not allow nomadic herding, and keeps pushing with laws and projects which do not respect the land rights of the indigenous.²³

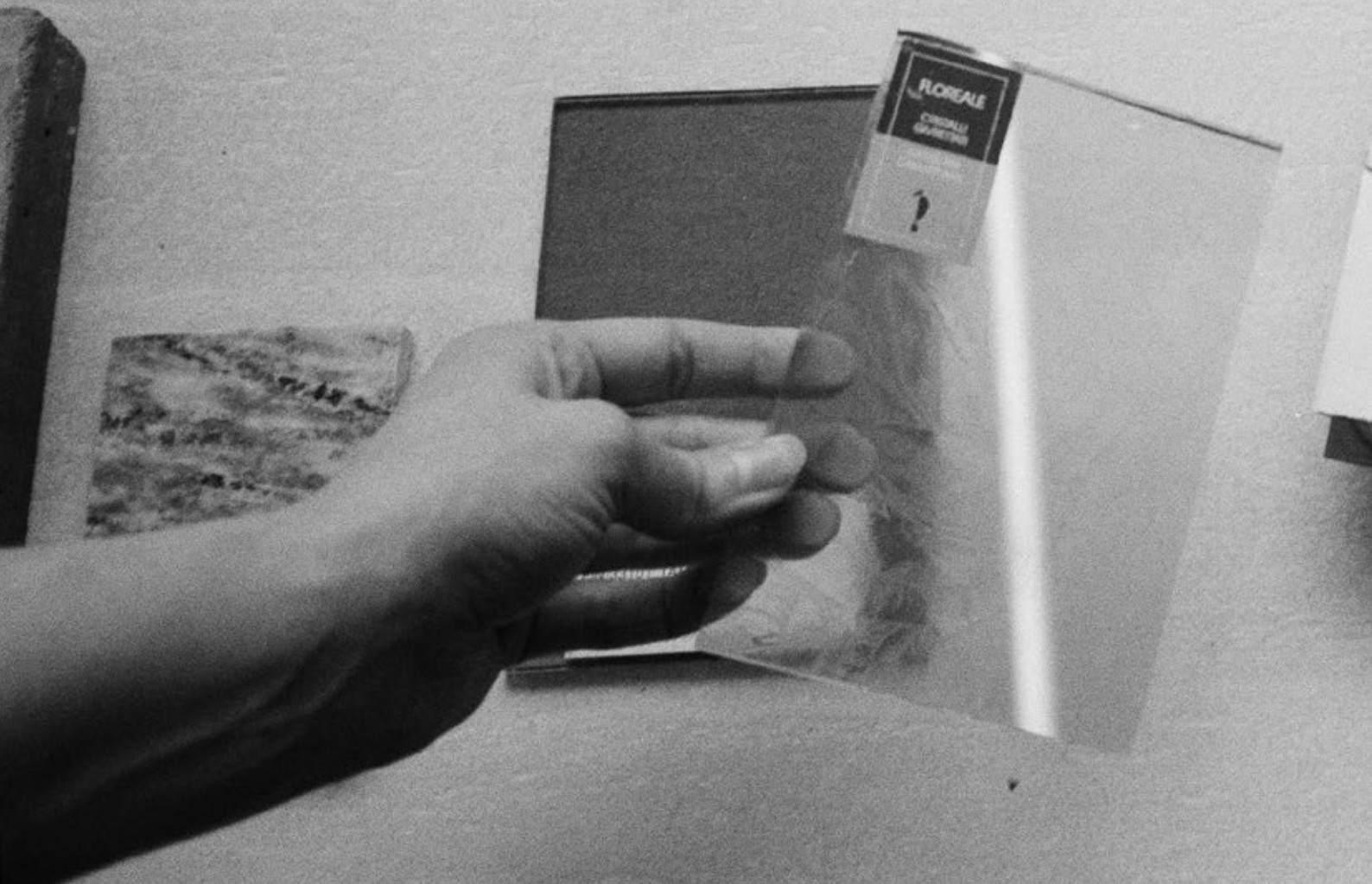
artists from all over the world. The system could not handle or control the result, there was backlash and a difficulty of assigning people who'd be responsible for mishap when issues with the documenta institution – with its ties to the state – came about, since the system internally was based on trust and a certain friendship instead of a top-down curatorial system of control or supervision.

As both examples of these concepts are based on and deriving from rural communities outside of Europe, with their systems being based on sharing as a sustainable source of communal, and therefore also of individual benefit, they challenge the basis of the system which still has so much to do with the state, gatekeeping, intentional scarcity and even diplomatic ties. Their motivation is the sustainability of the system itself and what the system provides to those who participate in its upholding, instead of fighting for the resources, which are all placed at the top of the ladder and available for those who manage to reach it in the expense of others. The course description of DAAR also expands on the reasons for the marginalisation of Al Masha – the common shared lands, being that they were considered unproductive and corrupt: “Founded on local trust and reciprocity, kinship and friendship, rural commons were threatening the centralized and abstract constitution of the nation-state.”²²

When it comes to examples of communal land practises from the Nordic countries and Finland, the closest of what I can come up with are related to the traditions of indigenous Sámi communities where the relationship to land is based on a more wholistic understanding of

22 Ibid.

23 Sámi in Finland. Minority Rights. minorityrights.org. Retrieved: 17.9.2024





Handwritten text on a white paper, including a paperclip. The text is mostly illegible but appears to contain a date and some numbers.

polarit
STAINLESS STEEL
SURFACE FINISH
2 F

TEST:
64722

Conclusion in a form of a letter

I've been putting off the writing of this conclusion for a long time. I wanted to keep it as a moment for myself, to get to read through everything after the other aspects of this thesis are done. I'm sitting at this kitchen table now this morning however, thinking what does a conclusion in this moment mean for myself. I don't feel a conclusion in the air, not the typical kind at least, and I've been waiting whether things would finally form in a shape where it would at least remind of one.

It is autumn now, the time passed. I'm going to Berlin the day after tomorrow, a year after I was there last time. Quite unconsciously, while I am on this page, I notice my body is going through a process of preparing for blows, similar to what I've seen on the screen the whole year. Quite unconsciously, my body is expecting the violence of a safe distance to finally lose its distance. We talked about the physical sensation of tied hands the other day, of what it does, to be rendered un-useful. We talked about being a witness, collectively, and of managing what that does, too.

I'm sitting at this kitchen table, and I didn't have time, or characters, to bring in more examples of video art, essay films or other artworks that would have supported the choice of my medium. I don't see the reason for this being that I wouldn't have any, I've watched many, although I do admit that I go to museum exhibitions way too little. I go to events and galleries though. This might also have to do with a kind of a character limit.

I thought about it, of us jumping off of each other, listing the influences, listing the works. I did write a conclusion before this one, which was in a form of a dialogue with all the names, the ones who come behind every corner like a suspicious neighbour. I wrote about their familiarity, this love hate relationship, and about

the process of clawing through, memorising other things. I wrote about a bus driver in my hometown, who I genuinely think found meaning in his work, and whom I apparently still think about. I wrote another conclusion, in which I thought about the ahistoricity of the working class, of the body which malfunctions, the body a-topos, the atopic condition.

I think I've a conclusion, one at least, in its most banal form: life over art. And no, this is not a renunciation, this is a matter of definition, of naming. An attempt towards these two words which as such manage to be so open to interpretation as to not mean anything. More specifically, I'm thinking of these two things:

"Good art is a form of friendship and intimacy. Even in darkness, this must be true."¹

"Because the state, the system can break us one by one, but if we're coming together, and do not let the system break our joy, to break us..."²

I'm thinking of bridges, these two bridges. And I'm trying to solve this question: The master's tools will never dismantle the masters house; Lispector realised that the people she writes to, will not have time to read her books, because they are too hungry.^{3,4}

I am still thinking of the ahistoricity of the working class. About the lack of time; time to read, time to go to places, time to talk to strangers, time to look for knowledge, time to compare, time to talk carefully, time to free-associate, time to listen, time to think. Time to seek for art which mends: art which shows friendship, in the middle of art which laughs at you with its specific group of friends. I think of mental and physical exhaustion. I think of not having time to connect the dots, to understand that the chances for your opportunities and successes in life – or the lack of them – have been systematically designed generations ago.

1 Hutchinson John. 2015. *The Bridge*, The Douglas Hyde Gallery. (Original written in 2007) p.93

2 Sulti (†) in the panel talk "The Temporalities of Resistance," organised by AATMA on 7th March 2024, in Berlin. *Cartography of Darkness*. dark.society.systems. (Transcribed from the audio by myself)

3 Reference to: Lorde, Audre. 1984. "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House."

4 Reference to: Cynthia Cruz writing on Clarice Lispector's "The Hour of The Star." 1977. In "Melancholia of Class: A Manifesto For The Working Class." 2021. Repeater Books. An imprint of Watkins Media Ltd. Apple Books. p.276.

It is sunny outside. It is getting quite late so I have to get going. I forgot to say something though, and it is that since the work was done – the exhibition opened and closed – nothing stopped: everything continued, the time did not stand still, even for a moment. For a reason or another I seem to find it important to underline: nothing stopped.

Here's a memory: 8th of October 2016, Between Coil & Recoil, Haparanda communal dance festival.⁵ A performer sits across me during the performance. The sounds from the contact microphones on the other dancers bodies and the space mix in my ears. They sit silently with me for over fifteen minutes. The space is dark, covered with theater drapes. The headphones are connected to the centre of the room, which connects to the mixing table and the contact microphones on the dancers bodies. The sounds flow into my brain, I cry a little. I realise I know nothing beyond the immediate.

5 Between Coil & Recoil, Taikabox. 8.10.2016. Haparanda yhteisötanssi festivaali. (Haparanda communal dance festival) Concept and direction: Tanja Råman and John Collingswood. Dancers: Tanja Råman, Sofia Breimo ja Nikolay Shchetnev. Sound artists: Nicholas Davies ja John Collingswood. Video work: Hannu Karjalainen



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