

## BERLIN FILES

A collection of texts and images  
written and made during a residency at Air Berlin Alexanderplatz  
by Joris Perdieus  
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FIRST DRAFT

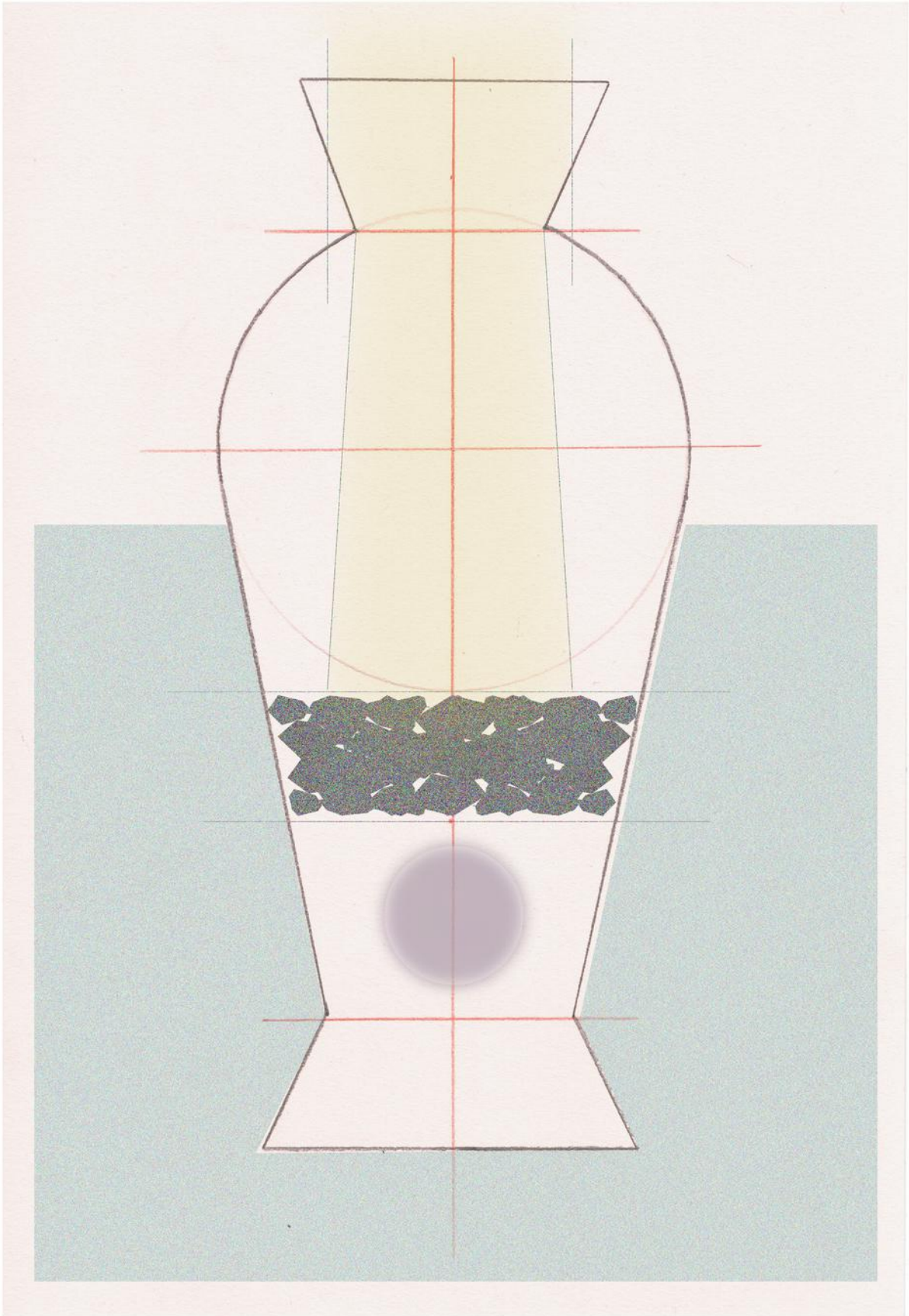


Fig.01

I started thinking from an imaginary place: a subterranean room in a cavesystem, maybe in a mining-shaft under my hometown Genk, maybe a darkroom in a club in Berlin, maybe the exact middle of the scene in the blackbox of a theatre in the middle of the night, after everyone left.

Whatever the context, this was a place of darkness with; to immediately tackle any comparison to Plato's allegory, no information whatsoever of the visual kind.

This however does not render this space empty, I was interested in the nonvisual properties of a space.

The migration of images, discourse and creative strategies between space-oriented disciplines such as installation art, stage-arts and architecture is a complex landscape to navigate. These days the perception of (the concept of) space is closely connected to Science and technology. We have gotten used to the presence of high-tech in every form of environment. On a physical level, spatial perception is an interplay between sensory impulses, psychological precarities and reactions to dynamic atmospheric stimuli. Artistic interpretations of this matter include dealings with space-time-strategies: shared space, dedicated space, ritual space, action, presence, intertextuality, auditive space, dramatic and post-dramatic space, haptic space, metonymic space, symbolic space, transformation, light, dark, silence, noise, temperature, olfactoric stimuli etc. Above all, it is a phenomenological process of translation.

The roots of this project are the perception of metamorphosis, transition, ambiguity and correspondence. To put mysterious forces to work, transforming a space into a place that although it never was homogenous, now becomes a space of isolating moments. Through activation a place can be perceptively connected to a universal history that can manifest as a multicultural, ethnological and sensory kaleidoscope. The approach is always to facilitate the discovery of routes into the artwork. Those routes become paths of discovery themselves: discoveries of collaboration of the senses resulting in a renewed interaction with the world. The research supports Deleuze's view on abstraction as the exploration of an unknown world of possible forms, not yet invented. I do not aim to create or reinterpret representative sceneries. I favor multi-sensory atmospheric landscapes. The artistic territory that I am developing in this context has to be experienced as an "Active Practice" in the sense that I expect viewers to practice as well. The artistic output of this project is fluid, aimed towards experience. Artworks take on the form of temporary transformed environments, the viewer even more temporarily becomes a part of them. Every form of presentation is always time-based, always perceived as an individual and unique experience. My work is purposely directed towards isolated timeframes in which experience connects the (perceivable) historic and geographical reality of the locus to the ultra-subjective. Directed by the strategic deployment of spatial, linguistic, auditive and atmospheric technologies and physical dispositions. A material transformation of the image of the self and of others, through environmental impulses.

This also allows for a transhistorical mapping of the realm of the Black Box and the White Cube from a scenographic viewpoint, in order to knowingly interchange presentational strategies between them. Through specific mappings a method for spatial analysis can be developed, to be used as a tool to implement methods of presentation. Be it abstract or narrative, or depending on time-based or dramaturgical concepts. The output is generated within an autonomous transdisciplinary practice that is itself situated within the audio-visual arts, but it can be useful to an array of media-driven disciplines.

To realize this type of artworks certain aspects of technology and science can not be left untouched. The use of technical instruments in multiple experimental set-ups is key to this practice and to the investigation of the realm of the atmospheric. The artist needs to take on different roles, and switch between them when the work demands it. The mastery of multiple specific media and technics is not only necessary, it provides an artist with a unique and increasingly growing skillset. It ongoingly connects him to other people and their expertise and visions.

Because the project is situated in the realm of the scenographic, albeit it from a visual-arts context, there are relevant connections to the performative arts. This is not at all limited to mere theatrical scenography. The realm of the scenographic comprises atmospheric media, as

well as time-based strategies. There is a need for collaborations and case-studies in the field of sound-art, sound-design, and more specifically to this proposal: the use of text from a spatial and atmospheric viewpoint. Text and spoken word as a structural element of the atmospheric state of things. Spatialization of the physis of the voice, it's arrangement into architectonic patterns and situations and it's technical processing possibilities.

The auditive stage seen as an intertextual frame of reference, the anatomy of auditive space vs. visual space. Or the understanding of every form of language, including the paralinguistic manipulation of the stage by the scenographic, as a changed conception of the performance text as being more of an energy, than information.

In this regard text, and the investigation of it's technical and spatial implementation into architectural environments and experiences, is already critical to my research.

A collaborative case-study with the drama-department would be a logical way to approach the need to work the atmospheric roles of text and voice into my results.

The project is as well with certain fields of architectural theory, more specifically the fields derived from phenomenological approaches. In other words: those approaches that are directly linked to experience. Phenomenology in architecture is understood to be more of an orientation, a way of thinking about constructing space with an emphasis on human experience, background, intention and historical reflection, interpretation and poetic and ethical considerations. This discursive field of interest is closely related to my research.

On a more practical side of the spectrum, the area of the scenographic can not be detached from architecture, in many ways it can even be considered to be a discipline within architecture. There are several practical applications in stage design as well as exhibition design. Atmospheric awareness should, for my part, be a crucial study for any architect.

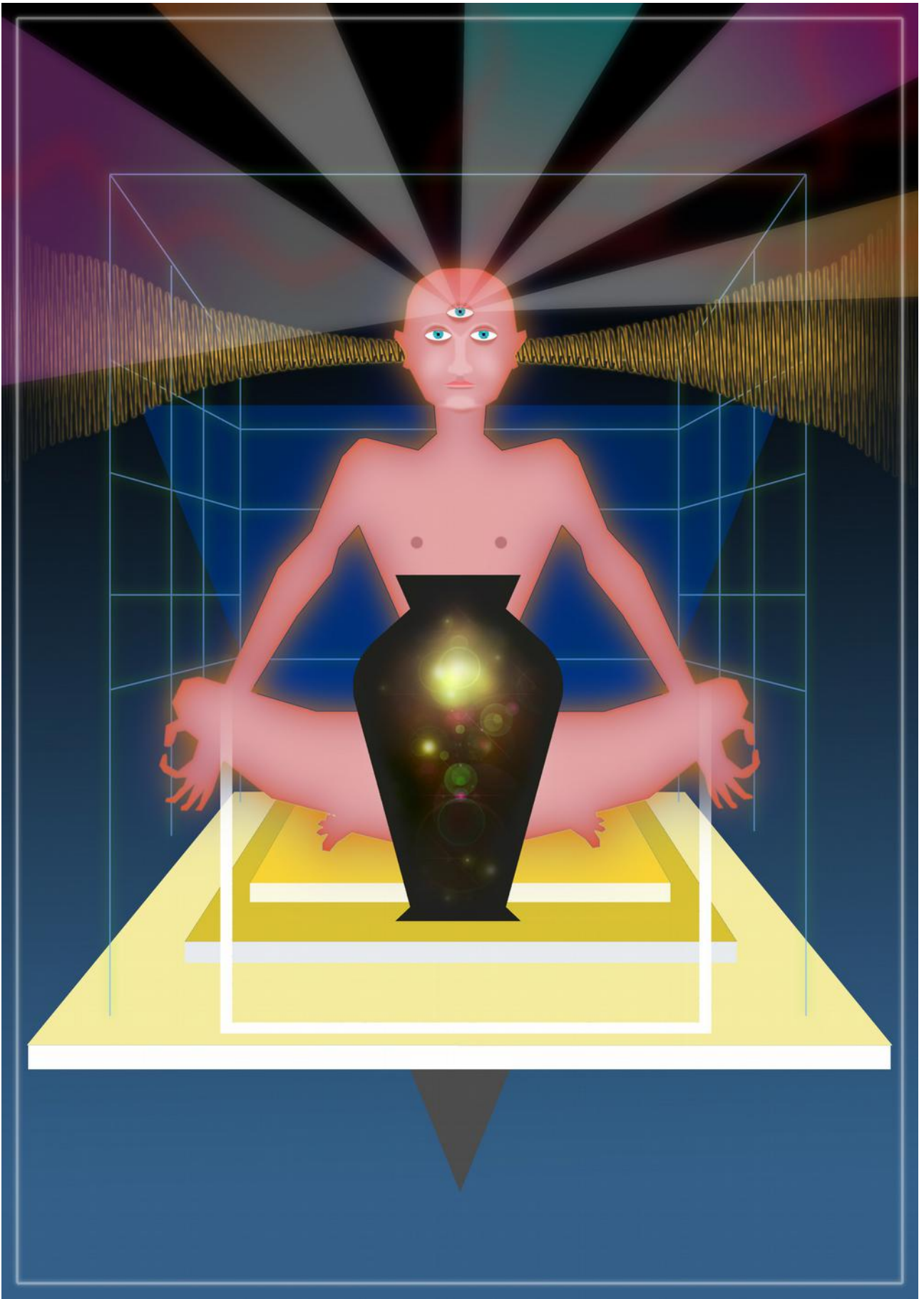


Fig.02





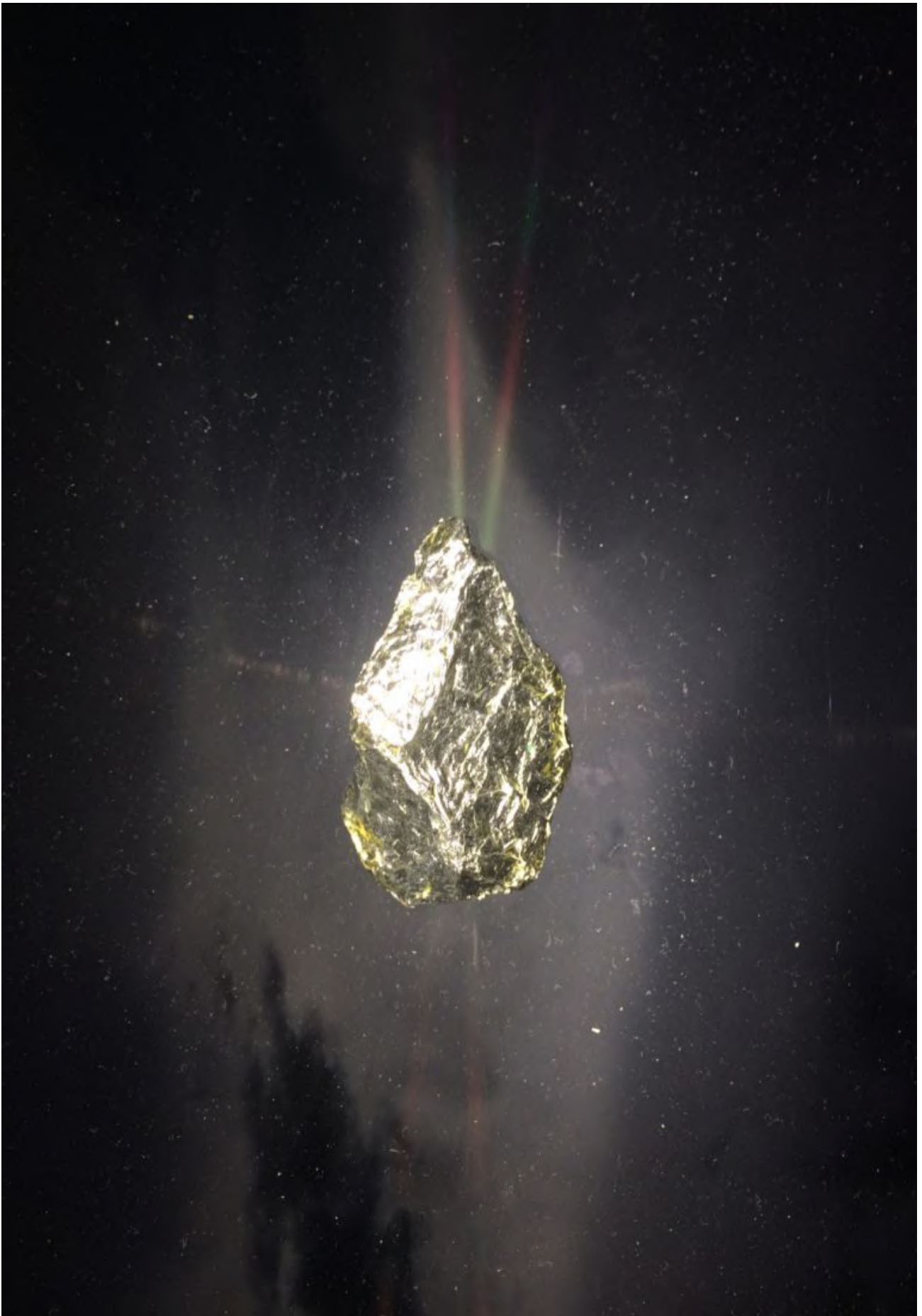


Fig.03

COSMOGONY 01 Brussels-Berlin (Rediscovering The Sky)

Fear crept up on us, latching onto every single one of our hearts, rendering us blind with  
panic.

An invisible enemy attacked the people's bodies, but foremost, poisoned their minds. From  
then onward, the people were sentenced to distrust literally every other human being. Those  
who could, took shelter inside to wait out the storm.

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In those days, I missed the sky. You can hardly see it from our apartment in the center of  
Brussels. It's a beautiful place with high ceilings and a lot of charm, but it is very much  
oriented towards it's own interior. Off course what we see through the windows is interesting.  
We can observe the eclectic crowd of people that are our neighbors in all their glory.

This, off-course, underlines the notion that they are watching us as well. You can't see even a  
bit of green from our windows, no trees grow in our street. Except for a few flowers on one of  
the balconies across, there isn't a sign of any vegetation.

The view from our windows does not show us an horizon. To catch a glimpse of the sky you  
have to stand close to the windows and look straight up.

All this had never really bothered me before. But now it did.

I missed the sky.

One night my girlfriend suddenly pointed out that our living-room was flooded in an uncanny  
deep yellow light. We went outside and above us saw the most spectacular rainbow I had ever  
seen. Only a fragment of it was visible in the small strip of sky you can see between the roofs  
of the buildings. We walked to the square not far from our house and heard the drunks on the  
corner shouting: "Le Soleil! Il a bu, le soleil!"...the sun is drunk!

Coming into the square the rainbow unfolded across the young summer's sky, connecting one  
corner of the square with another. I could now see it consisted of two arches, parallel to each-  
other. The inner arch was very intense, outlined sharply against the grey sky, it's colours  
highly saturated. On it's inside, the sky was a bright light blue. The second arch seemed to  
hover somewhat above the first and was slightly less sharp. Between them the sky faded from  
light to dark grey. The second arch's outer edge apparently adjoined the cosmos itself, in all  
it's mystic glory.

The view left me speechless, feeling small and enchanted like the figure in Friedrich's  
*Wanderer*. Realizing how I'd missed the sky for all those years.

Back in the apartment, I started dipping grey rocks into lacquered varnish,  
so I could see the sky reflected in their shiny surface.

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Hope is a biological necessity. Because of hope happy emotions are more powerful than their  
darker counterparts. After a while the storm lost it's power and the people emerged again from  
their hideouts.

In a damaged landscape we found each-other again. We surfaced in a world that seemed  
smaller, but sharper and more brightly lit. The wonders surrounding us felt more enchanting  
than they did before. This new world was filled with magic. We rediscovered it as a place of  
beauty and we truly experienced gratitude again.

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Only a few days later I travelled to Berlin. I would be living there for four months to conduct  
research and start to work on a publication about my artistic practice. I didn't know the city  
very well, having only visited it once, several years prior to this journey.



Traveling from Brussels to Berlin by train hardly qualifies as an epic quest. Yet in light of the worldwide pandemic that held the world firmly in its grip all borders were closed and travel without an "essential" reason was still forbidden. I had received official documents that would enable me to travel to Germany. I did not need them.

.....

"I turned off the flashlight and it was pitch dark, but I didn't feel scared or lonely. That room was a special place that only I am allowed into. A room just for me. No one else can get there. You can't go either... And what's really amazing about this place is that it's darker than anything could ever be. So dark that when you turn off the flashlight it feels like you can grab the darkness with your hands. And when you're there in the dark yourself, it's like your body is gradually coming apart and disappearing. But since it's dark you can't see it happen. You don't know if you still have a body or not."

Haruki Murakami – *Killing Commendatore* P.252, translated from Japanese by Philip Gabriel and Ted Goossen, 2017, Penguin Random House

.....

Since my arrival in Berlin, now one week ago, my perception has been warped to such an extent that time and space are no longer synced up in any way that I'm used to. Time has been condensed and seems to have become twice as heavy, as opposed to space, that has stretched itself to larger proportions. As a result, this first week feels like half a month. Luckily this perceptual shift also seems to spark a boost in productivity.

I have been reading bits and pieces of an interesting Essay by *Mieke Bal: "Serendipity: The Miracle Of Being Where You Are"*, published in the catalogue for *Ann Veronica Janssens'* solo exhibition "Serendipity" at the Brussels museum for contemporary art WIELS, in 2009.

To sketch this from a personal perspective: this show was the main event of the cultural season in Brussels in 2009, the year I graduated from my post-graduate studies in Transmedia. The show got a lot of buzz and like virtually everyone involved in the Brussels art-scene at the time I attended the opening. At the time this felt like a part of the natural flow of things, but today, about ten years later, I feel like this was the start of a circle, that has been rounded when I read this book. If anything, some aspects of my life in 2009 have reappeared. For instance, one of the professors at the Transmedia program is now my PhD Supervisor. But mostly this period in my life, I am approaching 40 (in 2009 I was approaching 30) feels transitional on an emotional as well as an artistic level. and back in 2009, the same sentiments dominated my life. Artistically I must now credit a great deal of influence to Ann Veronica Janssens' work.

I encountered her work even more closely when I rented a studio space in a building owned by Belgian artist-duo Sarah&Charles for a while and discovered that she rented another part of this building as a studio and for storage. This place was filled with her work. A colourful story in itself, the place turned out to be a former aquarium-factory whose owner almost went out of business because of heavy competition from cheap Chinese manufacturers but managed to save his company by producing high-quality water tanks for the now famous *Cocktail Piece* works by Janssens. This man, his name is Michel, his wife is called Michelle, reinvented the building as an artist's studio, and later on sold it to Sarah&Charles.

Ann Veronica Janssens of course is a pioneer when it comes to artistic practices that include the use of ephemeral media, temporality, staging techniques and perceptual manipulation.

In Mieke Bal's essay I found some notions and reflections that, although they date back more than ten years already, are applicable to some of my recent practices. Some of these notions I had arrived at myself independently, and are in my opinion imperative to the anatomy of Scenographics in visual (installation) art. I would like to talk about three of them here.

For starters she mentions the "principle of the artist always revealing the mechanism behind the miracle".<sup>(1)</sup>

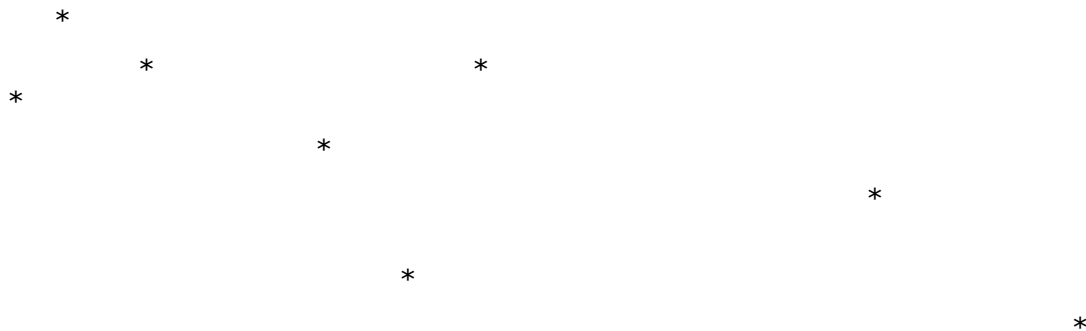
This is an idea that I have referred to in my practice as the "Box Of Tricks" surrounding a work of art, a principle derived from the aesthetics of theatre where it is the technical equipment of the black box that facilitates the magic on stage, a technical shell around the escapist world that is created, always through trickery.

Secondly I would like to underline the author's mention of the phrase "Matter Matters". This is how Bal formulates it: "Matter matters because it helps and forces us to deal with the world on its own terms". (2)

Thirdly Bal refers to Janssens' work as "an arrangement in space that produces a miraculous experience while *simply* being a disposition: a discovery accidentally made, then made sensational, in the literal sense of the word, and given to the viewer." Bal continues: "These sonorous works make visitors aware of the collaboration of the senses, the way one sense perception impacts on another. Thus we discover something about our own bodies as they interact with the world." (3)

These three statements are exemplary to my own view of the realm of *the scenographic* and *the atmospheric*: an artwork doesn't just occupy space, but uses and reshapes it, it becomes a structural part of it. As well as we do with our physical bodies. In this affect Installation art and scenography are very close cousins of architecture, especially architecture in its most haptic incarnations. In one of his lectures Juhanni Pallasmaa argues for the existence of an "Atmospheric Intelligence". (4) A much ignored form of intelligence that nonetheless influences our perception constantly. Pallasmaa also refers to architecture as "An attempt to relate the cosmic world with the human world".(4)

This is exactly what I would include in a job-description for every artist. Any good artwork, however small is a cosmogony and therefore holds the possibilities of not one, but an infinite number of worlds.



This is the reason why even a simple, seemingly useless act of transformation can attach an ordinary object to an array of magical wonders: a grey rock dipped into lacquered varnish turns into a gemstone in which the whole world is reflected, including the sparkles in our eyes.

(1) Bal, Mieke, Serendipity: The Miracle Of Being Where You Are, p17, Catalog Ann Veronica Janssens – Serendipity, WIELS, 2009.

(2) Bal, Mieke, Serendipity: The Miracle Of Being Where You Are, p18, Catalog Ann Veronica Janssens – Serendipity, WIELS, 2009.

(3) Bal, Mieke, Serendipity: The Miracle Of Being Where You Are, p20, Catalog Ann Veronica Janssens – Serendipity, WIELS, 2009. Bal here refers to "The I/You interaction, developed for linguistics by Emile Benveniste in his text "Problems in General linguistics, vol 1, 1966, Translated by Mary Elizabeth Meek, Coral Gables , FL: University of Miami Press. Bal quotes herself for the rework of this theory into a discussion on its visual consequences: Bal, Mieke, 1999, Quoting Carravagio: Contemporary Art, Preposterous History. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, chapter 6.

(4) Pallasmaa, Juhani, Lecture,"How Do we Grasp Space and Place?"10/19/11 6:30PM - 8:30PM Wood Auditorium, Avery Hall, Columbia University, Graduate School Of Architecture Planning and Preservation, New York, United States. Found on Youtube.



Fig.04



## COSMOGONY 02 – A Garden City

*So I plunged deep into the forest in the dark of night, raging across the paths there, smashing into trees, backtracking, unable to know where I was or trying to wrest control from the thing that wanted to control me. But soon I adhered to paths despite myself. Soon I cohered and came to know balance and lifted my hands from the atrocity jutting from my crown. Soon I walked smooth and slow and no root tripped me and no false trail fooled me. I could see in the dark by then, or It could, and what, really, by then was the difference?*

(Jeff Vandermeer, *The World Is Full Of Monsters*, 2017)

### The Entrance To The Garden

My Berlin-apartment is located in the neighbourhood around the Zionskirche, which has its own special story, but I will not elaborate on that now. Anno 2020 this is a vibrant and visibly wealthy part of Berlin's Prenzlaur Berg-region. In the evenings you can walk in the middle of the road, this is a place people come home to, there is hardly any traffic passing through. Large trees line the streets, some of them taller than the five-story buildings. This part of Berlin is full of trees. Walking around you get the impression that there is a park around almost every corner. Renovated *plattenbau*-blocs surround hidden communal gardens that are nothing other than small urban forests. Tall trees flourish in lush courtyards surrounded by high buildings with balconies that either kiss the leaves or overlook the treetops. Underneath paths meander, children play and people gather for a beer on lazy summer evenings. Protected, private parks, intersected by a network of hidden routes that allow for shortcuts that lead you through the buildings instead of around them. The air in every one of these gardens is heavy with its own atmosphere. Every one a unique *Hortus Conclusus*: abstracted from the world of noise, traffic and smells of the city. Harboring its own world, with its own inhabitants, safely hidden within former residential barracks, oozing post-gentrification luxury. Forty square meters of living space cost around two-hundred and fifty thousand euros here.

*"Hortus conclusus is both an emblematic attribute and a title of the Virgin Mary in Medieval and Renaissance poetry and art, suddenly appearing in paintings and manuscript illuminations about 1330 as well as a genre of actual garden that was enclosed both symbolically and as a practical concern, a major theme in the history of gardening."*  
(Wikipedia)

Coincidentally a number of enclosed gardens have been temporary parts of my life. Two summers ago for instance, I rented a studio in an old building in Molenbeek, a neighbourhood in Brussels with a bad reputation. Molenbeek is a poor area. It houses a large northern-African community, it is vibrant, crowded, in its very own way beautiful but full of challenges.

In the middle of this predominantly Muslim neighbourhood stands a large catholic school. Originally run by monks the building houses a small cloister. In its midst lies a spacious and beautiful enclosed garden. It is a modest arboretum, home to exotic trees and plants. For a short while a small community of artists found a place to work-, and a garden to dwell, in this cloister. And I was one of them. This garden is a true urban oasis. Large Red Birch trees grow there, and in their shadow fruit-trees bend over berry bushes and edible herbs. A spikey Dragon-tree stands in the middle, while only a few meters further a large fig tree's branches hang heavy, laden with soft fruit in august. Narrow paths disappear into the foliage, revealing wondrous details to whomever walks their trail. Even kiwis grow there, hidden amidst the struggling city.

All this exotica in a private park, owned by Catholic monks.  
All of it seems decadently inappropriate.





Fig.05



...and the terrain became more floating than fixed, the ground covered with a thin stubble of vegetation while the clouds had come close above and turned sea-green and from them tumbled down a forest that hung wrong, the bird-things that were not birds stitching their way through that cover upside down. The smell came to me thick, in emerald mist, and often my forehead shoved up against the physical manifestation of the smell, which could be like mint or could be like a rotted, mossy animal body.

The leaves and branches itched the top of my skull and brushed my cheek and I tried not to look up too often for fear of what I might see, but also because I grew to be terrified that if I took in that topsy-turvy land I would lose my grip on gravity and, slow and inexorable, take my place up there, my feet glued to the cloud cover and my head hanging toward the ground stubble.

(Jeff Vandermeer, *The World Is Full Of Monsters*, 2017)

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From a fascination for the perception of *The Atmospheric*, I am developing a practice in which *Hyperperception In The Scenographic* is the central notion. To activate a state of hyperfocus with the viewer through the introduction of sensory extreme physical situations is needed to block-out, or in contrast overstimulate the basic senses.

An example: a completely dark space is an extreme situation in which senses other than sight are challenged. A sound-less space is another. The *introduction* of such a situation in an installation-context is a very important factor.

Darkness is part of our natural rhythm, the blinking of our eyes, the transition from day into night. But we experience something completely different when the dark occurs unexpectedly. When it is induced artificially, or when we feel we have no control over the situation.

By developing installations that confront viewers with this type of environments, I investigate the transformative effects of ambience.

No *place* exists without its distinct transhistorical background and one of the questions is whether it is possible, or necessary, to break away from this, to try to arrive at a pure *isolated moment* in which nothing seems to exist but *experience*?

*Atmosphere* is built out of confrontation.

Confrontation with an event that produces new language, a new organization of movement through time and space. (new=what is not known to you)

A stage is not a fixed frame, it is collapsable as well as re-organisable. We are constantly moving from the dark to the light and back to the dark. Experience is only context, context is only isolating: braking up the journey into smaller parts. *Hyperfocus* is an extreme form of contextualization: like looking into a microscope.

*Atmosphere* is a topology of transformation. Within it, time, context and orientation are infinitely interchangeable.

Routes appear, in other ways than we are used to.

Unlocking the theatrical machine (which encloses that magic) remains an obsession. This has led me to equip empty boxes, like the spaces in which I work, with theatrical machines. In the world of theatre-technics we literally speak of *machinery*, and technicians are also referred to as *Machinists*. I rather use the term as a poetic metaphor. Like an installation or a theatrical space is a *machine*: an active space, full of potential to stimulate the senses, that can be activated.



Films and games are the mystical places of today, in which the most fantastic worlds are boxed up. Unlike literature there is hardly any room for a mental continuation of the world that is constructed outside the frame wherein everything takes place. In the case of Blackboxes and cinema-screens, the pictorial framework is the similar: within the boundaries (the walls) of the activated space everything is possible, and everything within the walls is constructed with help from outside. Whether it is a number of strategically placed lamps, a smoke machine or a cross on the floor, there is a strategy behind the means used to achieve a pictorial effect that is usually not intended for the eyes of the audience. The process through which theatrical and cinematographic worlds are constructed intrigues me. It is a spatial strategy that is meant to achieve the opposite of an immersive experience: the fourth wall is always there as the ultimate boundary and the audience is meant to stay behind it. This process, as a visual lie, occupied me to such an extent that the building process became more important than the end product, to the point where the latter lost all agency

Concretely, most of my installations consist of layers of parallel worlds. There is the creative process that forms the basis of my oeuvre and which is now also shown as a performative driving force. There is the machine, which arises from the dialogue with the space in which I work and which usually ensures that that space switches itself off and a smaller active space appears in it: a magic box (not literally!) in which, just like in a game or a theatre play, a frame is drawn around a microcosm. Finally, and probably most importantly, there is this space in which the microcosm is pulled into, so that natural laws no longer apply in it, and concepts like scale and time lose their meaning. There, in the core of the work, you can ask and answer any question, in which poetry as well as responsibility, beauty, ugliness, conflict and harmony arise...and sometimes nothing at all happens. In the core of the work everything is fragile and the viewer sees in the first place what he wants to see.

Time-->Spending Time-->Investing Time-->Undergoing-->The Room You're In

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A small figure entered the space, which was large: an imposing span of thousands of cubic meters in the belly of an immense building.

The figure imagined how a musical note in this place would automatically and independently grow into a symphonic cloud. How the roar of a chainsaw would cause a deadly vertigo.

Sounds are movement that here would reflect forever and fall apart,  
into millions of microscopic bouncing balls.

The smaller something is, the more time it needs to cover a distance. Narrowing sound waves would eventually become hard to hear. Because it would take longer for them to reach your eardrum. But even when they can no longer reach your ear, they will still exist  
and forever keep on bouncing of the walls of this room.

## COSMOGONY 03 – A Matter Of Darkness (And A Short Story About Mining)

Stone speaks of its distant geological origins, its durability and inherent symbolism of permanence.  
Brick makes one think of earth and fire, gravity and ageless traditions of construction.  
Bronze evokes the extreme heat of its manufacture, the ancient processes of casting and the passage of time, measured from its patina.  
Wood speaks of its two existences and time scales: its first as a growing tree and the second as a human artefact made by the caring hand of a carpenter or artist.

(Juhani Pallasmaa, RIBA Discourse Lecture, 1999, p3.)

Matter and the experience of time \* the experience of different dimensions of time simultaneously through matter \* are closely related. The contemporary human has lost all real sensitivity to both time and matter and their interrelation. Matter does not compete with time but is forged by it, where as time itself becomes tangible through it's affect on matter. The perception of the interplay between time and matter takes place on the plane of sensitivity beyond the visual.

We can only imagine the past and the future. We form an image of where something or someone comes from. This image remains hidden to everyone but ourselves, within our imagination.

We know that other people lived in the apartment that we now occupy before we did. We don't know what those people looked like, what their characters were like or even what language they spoke. We get an impression by means of the traces that we encounter in the space that is now temporary ours to live in. Every piece of wood used in the construction of the apartment once started it's life as a small seed and grew into a tree somewhere on the planet. The tree that was cut to produce the wood beneath my feet was probably older then I will ever be. In what forest did it stand for all those years before being cut down to end up in the floorboards of this small apartment?

The way we experience what we call the reality around us depends on an ongoing and dynamic sequence of situations and encounters. Every individual experiences a small particle of reality that nonetheless feels immense and full of detail. Around those details we mostly construct the remaining reality in our imagination. The world outside the small periphery of our perceptive system is largely fiction. A mythical addition to reality that is just as real as it is important: the mythical world in the periphery of our perception.

A while ago I visited an exhibition in Brussels where I was struck by a textual videowork, presented in the form of white letters, projected on a black surface. To be fair, it wasn't the work that struck me as much, but the space in which it was presented. Apart from the projection, the room was completely dark, lined with black carpet on the floors and walls to create a deep disorientating darkness. Sound was launched at me from different invisible points in space, but the dampening effect of the carpet made it impossible to grasp it's acoustic origin. There hung a few small spotlights in the room, projecting heavily dimmed light. Dimmed light is always yellow and in this darknees the light did not carry far. Whoever entered this space could see nothing at first. I experienced a frightening physical disorientation, enhanced by the soundscape. I bumped into objects or suddenly noticed a wall where I had assumed a large empty space. Slowly, much more slow than usual, my eyes got used to the darkness and I began to see the edges of objects, hanging above my head. I could make out technical equipment, speakers and cables, used to create this spatial illusion. The equipment was not hidden, the room was dark anyway.

This brief and seemingly trivial experience was transformative for me.

I experienced darkness as a matter.

The time I spent in this space seemed to break apart into different frames of reference. Finding my way around in the darkness occupied my full attention, but simultaneously I experienced the air around me in a completely new way. As if it had thickened and formed a tactile barrier.

Earlier I wrote about my arrival in Berlin and the effect the new environment seemed to have on my perception of time: "...my perception has been warped to such an extent that time and space are no longer synced up in any way that I'm used to. Time has been condensed and seems to have become twice as heavy, as opposed to space, that has stretched itself to larger proportions."

That experience in this dark room could very well be described using the exact same words.

Intuition and instinct have been crucial to my praxis since the beginning. Intuition allows us to express that which can not easily be described but can be clearly felt. In this fragile and vague territory my work is situated.

So the key is to facilitate situations wherein that particular matter that makes us receptive and intuitive to the indescribable is present, perceptible, triggering our imagination on a basic level.

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*"Light and silence are also materials you don't grow weary of. At least I don't grow weary of them. I don't grow weary of listening to silence and I don't grow weary of the effects of light.*

*I think that working sometimes means doing nothing. Sometimes it's looking at daylight or looking at the light when it's fading or at daybreak or in contrast during a very calm moment in the morning or afternoon. Letting ourselves be carried along by all these things that are imprinted on us. We think we're not working but "that" is working all the time, it's working in us. The elements interfere and intervene and there is a whole host of things that demand to live, that demand to be created. I like letting my mind float in this indeterminate mass of the uncreated."*

Claude Régy, *Du régal pour les vautours*, Les Solitaires Intempestifs (2016)



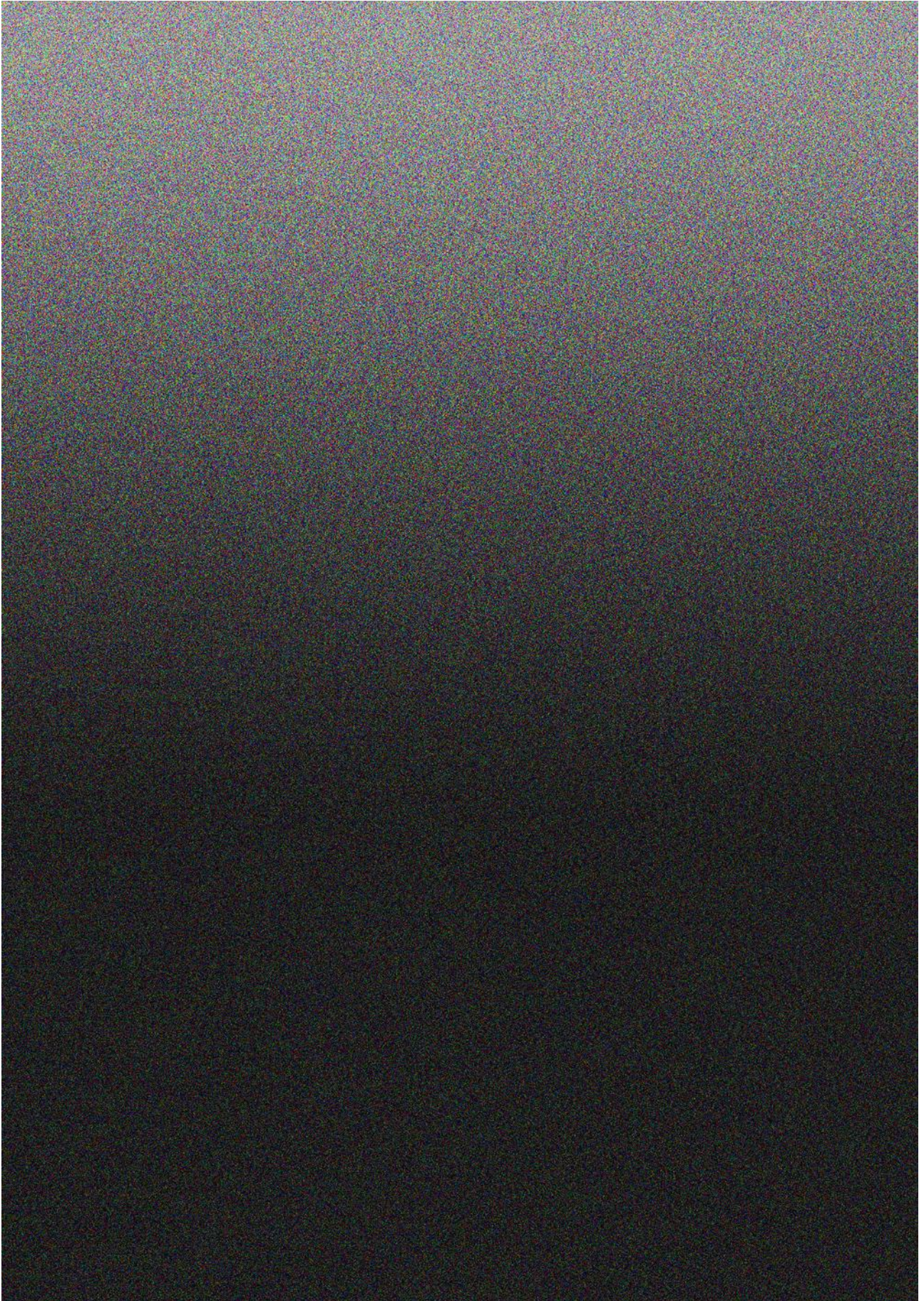


Fig. 06



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I don't remember when I first met *Dark*. But I do remember losing *Light*, which is why I know that black isn't really black, and it certainly isn't empty.

Without *Light* every room is a mystery, even my own room, even my own mind. Without *Light* I am doomed to wander. Routes, no matter how well I used to know them, disappear in the blink of an eye. They do not reappear when I open my eyes again. I don't know when *Light* will return, I have to believe he will. When he left, the space surrounding me suddenly stretched infinitely. Each step now counts as three. My confident tread became a cautious shuffle. When *Light* left, I immediately aged. The richness of the world around me seemed to have vanished, until I slowly realized they were all still present, I would simply have to learn how to perceive them in a different way.

In the weeks to come I would learn to recognize the proximity of edible plants by the shifts in the air's humidity.

I learned to identify a liquid by the sound it makes as it runs from a surface, hearing the difference between drinkable and festering stale water.

After a while I could feel a rock's breath on the palm of my hand and felt the floor's skin stretch under my weight as I walked.

But most of all I got to know the physical properties of darkness.

*Dark embraced me like* a landscape. Wanting to be travelled, intersected and crossed by countless versions of myself that I have not encountered before. They are all here, shuffling around in *Dark*. We stumble around intoxicated, under the spell of frozen architecture, in a labyrinth of only shadows.

I, like most of us, assumed that the earth must still be moving, cycling around in an infinitely unfolding maze of mysterious dark matter. Wherever I find myself on this world, the road ahead never ends, nor does the path behind. Sometimes I decide to leave the path and take one step away from it. Once I do that, my perspective tilts and I find myself standing on another infinitely line. In the meantime, the globe beneath my feet continues to rotate.

Or so I assume. This planet would die fast without it's movement.

But now, because of *Dark* it all seems to have ground to a halt.

I know that there are no real obstacles in front of me, any sound I make vanishes into space, suggesting there is literally nothing but air around me. Still, I often stand paralyzed, do not move at all, because I am convinced I will fall into a deep rift if I take just one more step.

Those are the moments I decide to leave the route.

Like a coat lined with sand, *Dark* hangs around my shoulders. Wearing me down like a load. I have no choice but to carry him, everywhere I go. Everywhere he wants me to go.

Hauling around, I suddenly run into one of the other versions of myself, I can hear him breathing as he stands completely still. He can hear me breathing too

I speak, and I reply.

"So, you finally arrived. I began to wonder if you might have lost your way."

"I haven't. I bumped into myself a couple of times back there, couldn't pretend I hadn't seen me could I? That would have been rude. I kept talking for quite a while though, I apologize for the wait."

"That's alright, no harm done, can't see myself going anywhere soon."

"Did you know people used to throw illegal raves here? In the depth, close to the shaft?"

"Off course I knew that, we all know that, we all have the same dreams about it."

"The bass vibrations made the rocks on the ceiling collapse, that's what trapped us here, that was the moment *Dark* was born."

"And we were reborn within him, cut of from the coloured lightbeams."

"So says the gospel."

"I have been trying to get back to that rave ever since."

"So have I."

"I Know, we talk about that every day."

"You mean you still remember night and day?"

"I do, but I can't tell one from the other anymore, not for a long time now."

"Do you believe we will ever find the wall again? The one with the colourful light behind it?"

"Yes. There's no such thing as a tunnel without walls."

"I have been walking forever without encountering a wall, my hands only ever touch the air around me"

"I know that."

"Sometimes I swear I can feel the air vibrating, like I am picking that bass-tone up again. At times I even think I smell the sweat."

"But it always turns out to be your own scent."

"Yes."

"I know..."

I leave myself and stumble on into *Dark*.

I fall Countless times. I feel the blood flow down my shins after yet another tumble, I can hear it drip onto the floor. Between my ankles and my knees, my legs must have been transformed into a landscape of bumps and craters. Black and blue, but mostly red, dripping red.

As I proceed my senses heighten, I can now smell so sharply I easily pick up on the iron scent of the blood of other Me's. I imagine it falling in thick drops, sailing through the darkness before splattering on the rocky floor to be absorbed by stone, forever staining it with spots of red .

In *Dark* you are forced to listen carefully. I recognize the sound of falling blood, but I have long forgotten what the colour red looks like.



Blackness doesn't just *fall* in your mind once the light disappears. In memory, colours slowly fade. Before black there is grey. Memories are slowly Hollowed out until only their skin remains, too thin for content. Strangely enough, seeing nothing eliminates the concept of abstraction.

In the absence of light even the *idea* of darkness disappears.  
If *Dark* never meets *Light* again, both cease to exist.

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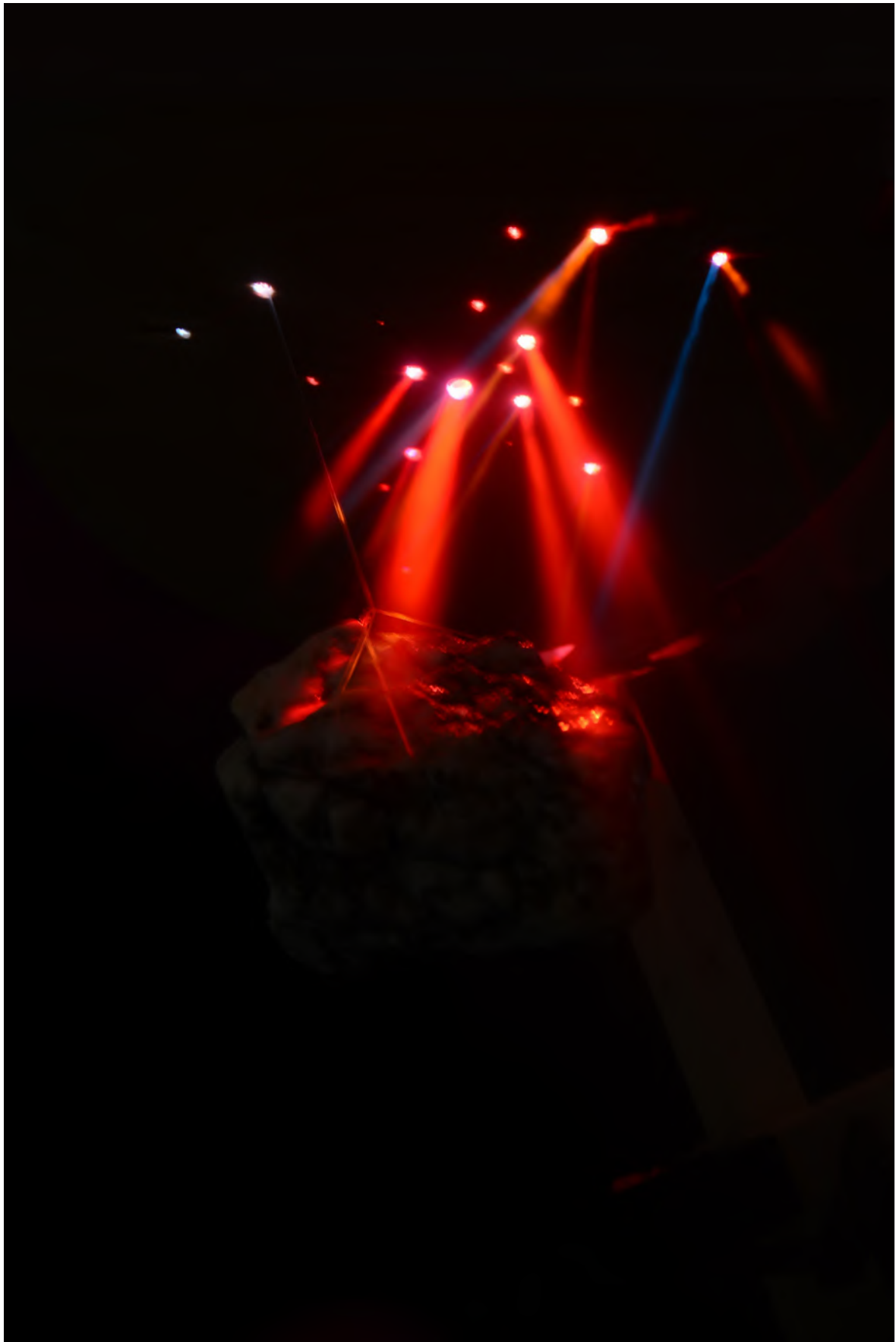


Fig.07

*"Up on wooded ground, where the bracken grows above head height and an old pine plantation has run into what feels like wild wood, we follow deer paths to a small escarpment, at the base of which a cave mouth beckons us under the stone. Ferns mark the entrance, hooped with bramble. Ivy Climbs the cliff. A red admiral basks where light falls, slowly opening and closing its wings. Scrambling under the escarpment, we enter an alarming space. A scree-slope tilts to a flat lower chamber. Big blocks of rock hand from the rift's fractured roof. We descend to the chamber, and crouch there."*

Robert Macfarlane, *Underland*, p.45, Hamisch Hamilton Publications, 2019.

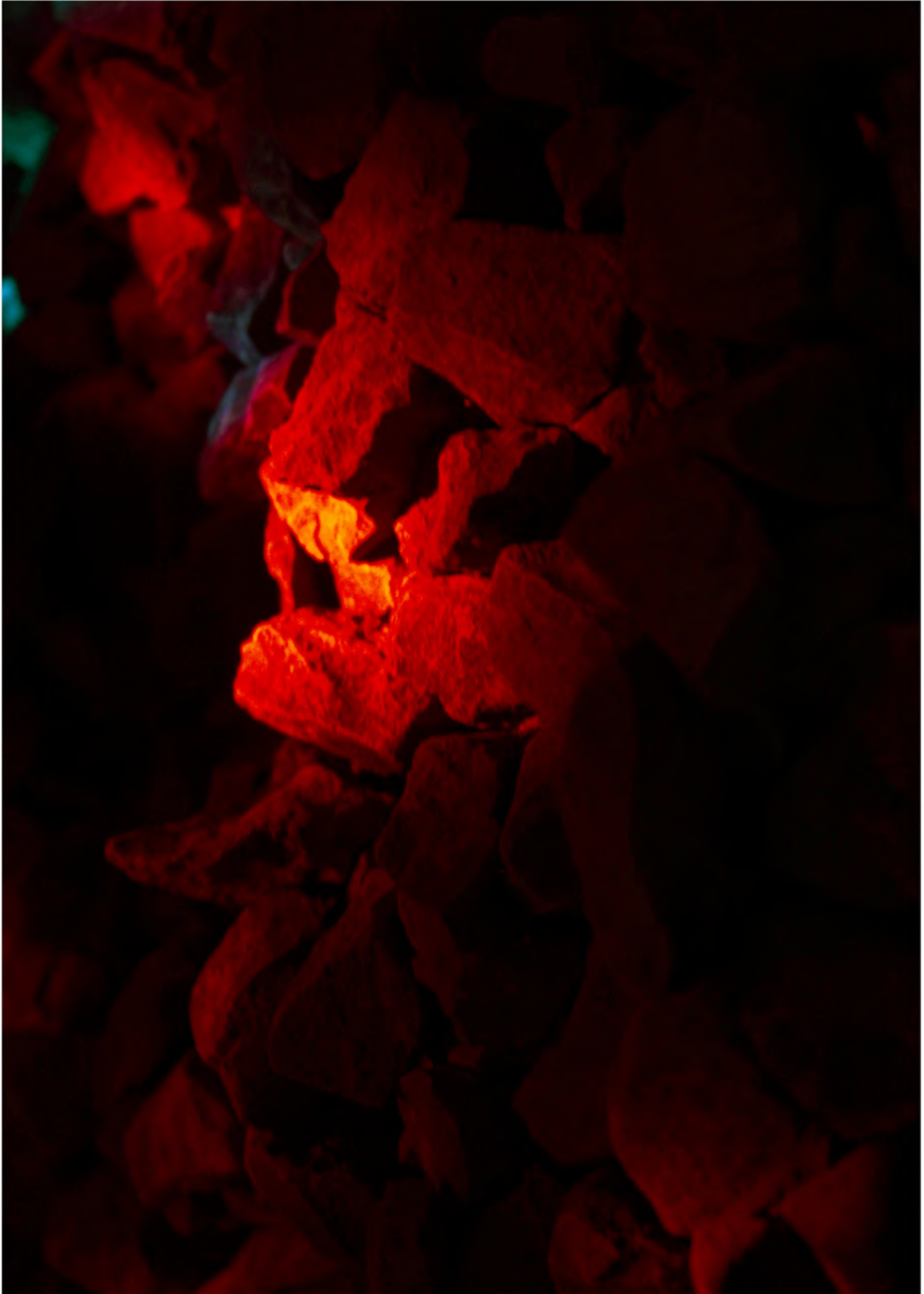


Fig.08

## INTERLUDIUM – Le Marbre De Winterslag

*Winterslag*, (Genk, Belgium) was home to the largest operating coalmine in Belgium between 1917 and 1988. Operational since 1917 it was the first mine on the *Kempen* coal basin. Situated around the gigantic mining site are three workers' quarters, so called *Cités* where workers from many corners of the world settled. The neighbourhood is modelled on the English Garden Quarter. Houses were built in *Winterslagse Brik*, a brick that was baked in the coalmine itself using clay that had to be dug up from deep beneath the areas sandy soil, especially for the construction of the *cités*. The arrival of workers from all over the country and far beyond made *Winterslag* a fast growing multicultural micro-society. In the 1960's, the mine was no longer profitable and in 1988 it finally closed its doors. The site was transformed into a cultural center and a cinema, as well as an "incubator" for small innovative enterprises.

The history of the Winterslag coal mine is fascinating and well known in Belgium and abroad. However, what many will not know is that next to coal another rock was mined as well in Winterslag, a kind of marble that was named *Marbre de Winterslag*.

Around the turn of the century the Kempens Plateau in Belgian Limburg had been the scene of a genuine Coal rush. After the discovery of oily coal by André Dumont in As, in 1901, the heathland landscape flooded with drilling companies and private entrepreneurs who all chased the black diamond.

It was during drilling nr.15, started on March 1st 1902 by drilling company Raky commissioned by S.A.Limbourgeoise de Recherche et d'Exploitation Minière, that a layer of rare white marble was accidentally discovered, at a depth of 797m.

Excerpt from national newspaper *De Eendracht*:  
(source: Coal and Petroleum drilling in Limburg and the Antwerp Kempen – p.77)

De Eendracht, Year33, nr. 86, Sunday 17 March 1901. The article reads as follows:

*"Great news!  
Marble layer discovered in Genck!*

*Winterslag, Genck.- on thursday afternoon, two banners flew on the drilling-tower of the S.A. Limbourgeoise de Recherche et d'Exploitation Minière, operated by supreme jigmaster M.A. Koutonc. A rich white marble layer has been discovered. The very same drills that made the first discovery of coal here in the village, now again make this surprising discovery. In 4 days the drills will be placed a 1500 to 2000 meters higher, at a distance of 350 meters from the drills of Cockerill. So this time the honor is to S.A LREM, but the discovery concerns genes of coal.*

*Huzzah! Hooray! All cheer!  
One more tower is expected to be erected today, the drillmaster and his workmen have already arrived."*

The discovery coincided with the discovery of coal in the Genk strata, in which four drillings were carried out in 1902, drillings nos. 7, 11, 12 and 15. The massive coal mining in Winterslag that followed overshadowed the story of the marble mining that took place only a few kilometers from the coal mine.

Elsewhere in Belgian Limburg, in Eelen, a red marble layer was also discovered, but it was of considerably lower quality than the fine white Winterslag marble.

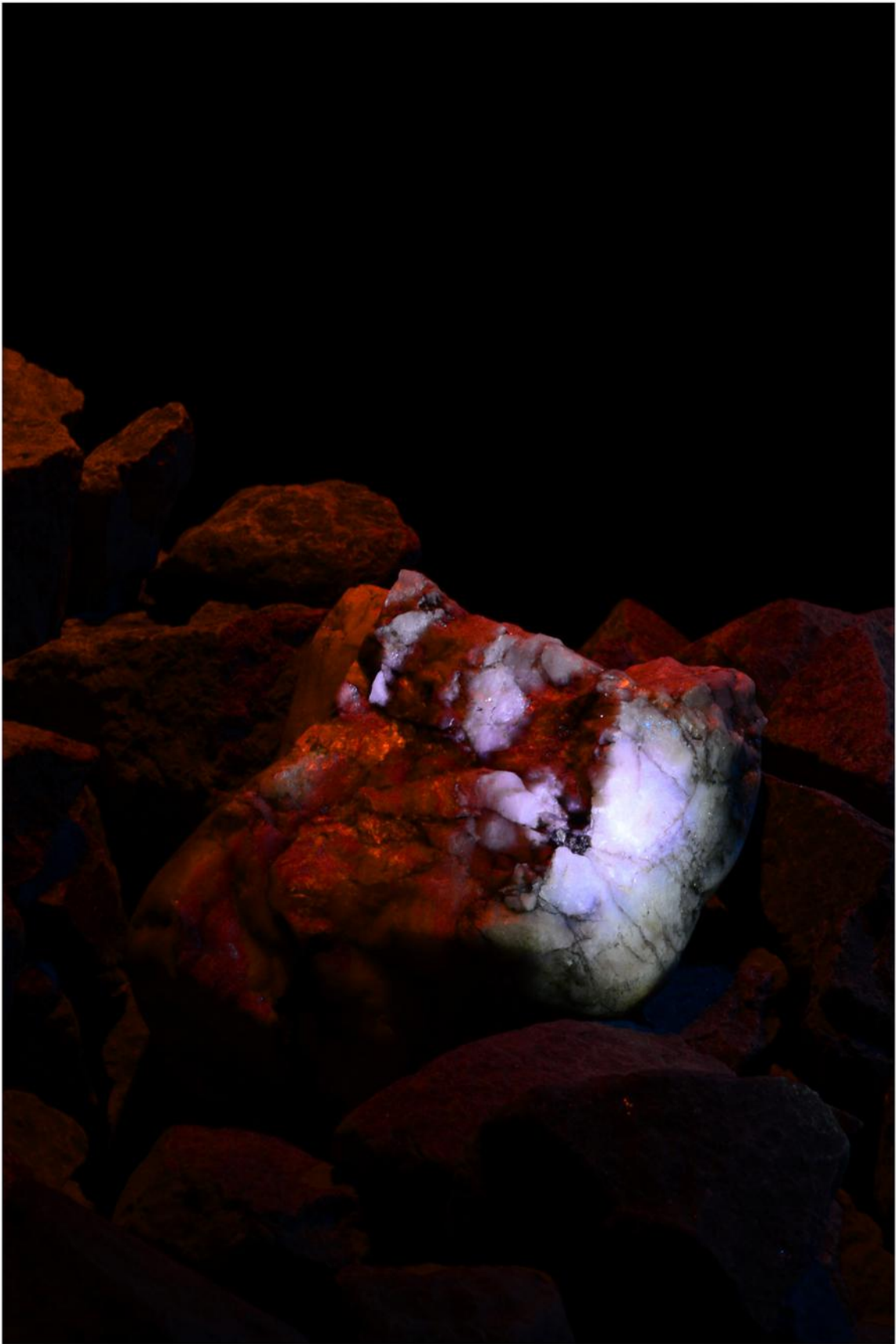


Fig.09



#### COSMOGONY 4. The Story Behind (The Stones In) The Jar.

During my stay in Berlin, from June to October 2020, I decided to start a collection of black stones.

Every stone is unique and therefore every stone is rare, it can only be found once. Stones are seemingly closed capsules of time and closed capsules of darkness, emerged from the underground, brought to light. Each stone has undertaken a voyage from organic life to being trapped underground slowly mineralizing into rock-form. Traveling to the surface again, often by the hands of men, a stone is considered almost indestructible, lifeless and utilitarian. There is an other dimension to this dynamic. Certain stones are appointed the status of mineral, gemstone crystal, ore or salt, and therefore become more valuable. Mostly value is determined from economic viewpoints, and a key feature therein is mass exploitation, which is an act of immanent destruction in any way you look at it.

The notion of Underground has a distinct meaning to people who grew up in a mining-town, as I have. As a child in Genk words like Underground (De Ondergrond) and Pit (De Put) were constantly in the air. Both terms refer to the mysterious working environment of the miners, in this case coal-mining shafts a good 800 meters below the surface. Genk's landmarks can be seen for many miles around. In the manly flat landscape steel towers stand bickering in the sunlight, enabling the lifts to descend into this obscure, hot place of darkness and danger. Great artificial hills now mark the landscape, giant heaps of industrial coal-waste rising up to 163 meters. These remarkable landscapes of industrial waste now provide for a unique biotope for lichen and exotic vegetation. Nowadays, long after the closing of the mines, they have themselves become giant fossils.

Growing up in such a place you are aware of the existence of this world below the earth's surface. Evidence of underground activity is everywhere, even the houses have cracks in their walls because the soil they are built on is slowly shifting on account of the many tunnels dug underneath. Not only do you know men are going down into the darkness to work in trying circumstances every day, you know the people, they are your grandfather, father or uncles.

This also influences the relationship between men and women. There is no image more romantic than that of a man undertaking an almost mythical quest into the underworld every day, literally traveling back in time and space, to endure great risks to provide for his family that stays behind on the surface praying for his safe return.

The underworld is a place of mystery and imagination, a hidden network, a subterranean labyrinth within which are sealed more secrets than one can imagine in a lifetime.

Down there are sounds no one will ever here, smells and flashes of light that will never be perceived by any human.

Some notes made during stone collecting in Berlin:

\* If a tree calls out to you, like it's saying "come have a look here, between my roots see, there might be wonderful things to be found here, in the dirt..." Than all you are really experiencing is actually your unconsciousness' sensitivity to the romanticism of a treasure hunt, and the idea that there really is a gemstone there. To be found only by you, and no one else. \*

\* Such a search off course will lead you to certain types of places that you imagine beforehand. You imagine them to be places where these gemstones can be found. So you go there, and walking around the city you are attracted by other types of places than you would normally be, when not on a search. Barren pieces of land, construction sites, train-

beddings...This forces you to kind of zoom in, on small spaces on the ground. Your gaze is pointed downward at all times and you are moving through the city in a totally different way. \*

\* A graveyard is one of those places where Stone has a completely different meaning than anywhere else really, because of all the monuments for the dead, placed in a landscape, marking the place where a body is buried. \*

\* The idea is not to collect special, or rare stones. These are ordinary stones that only become special when they selected to become part of this collection \*

\* You realize that in a city like this nothing is there because it was there naturally, everything has been displaced, every square centimeter...literally no stone is left unturned. \*

The rocks are encased inside a stone jar to be preserved and, in a ritual process, sealed off from air in oil.

Inside the jar they are conserved, insulated, suspended in a neutral atmosphere a lot thicker and less aggressive than air.

In a lot of ways this is a ritual of re-burying these basic elements that were dug up from the earth and taken from what was their resting place for thousands of years. I am bringing them together to symbolize the reclaiming of the earth's organic history.

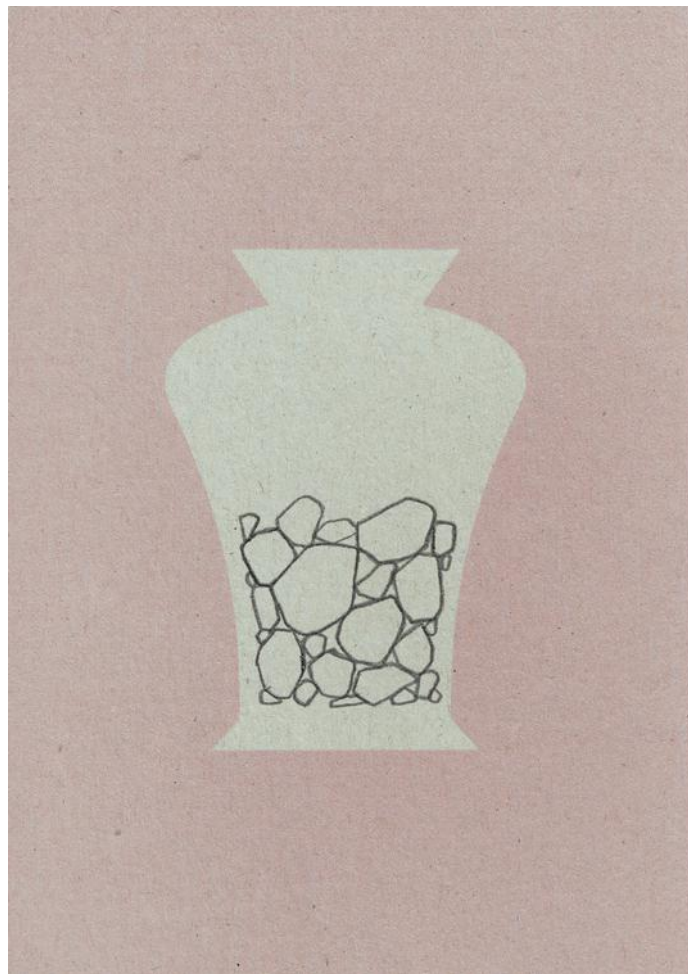


Fig.10





Fig.11

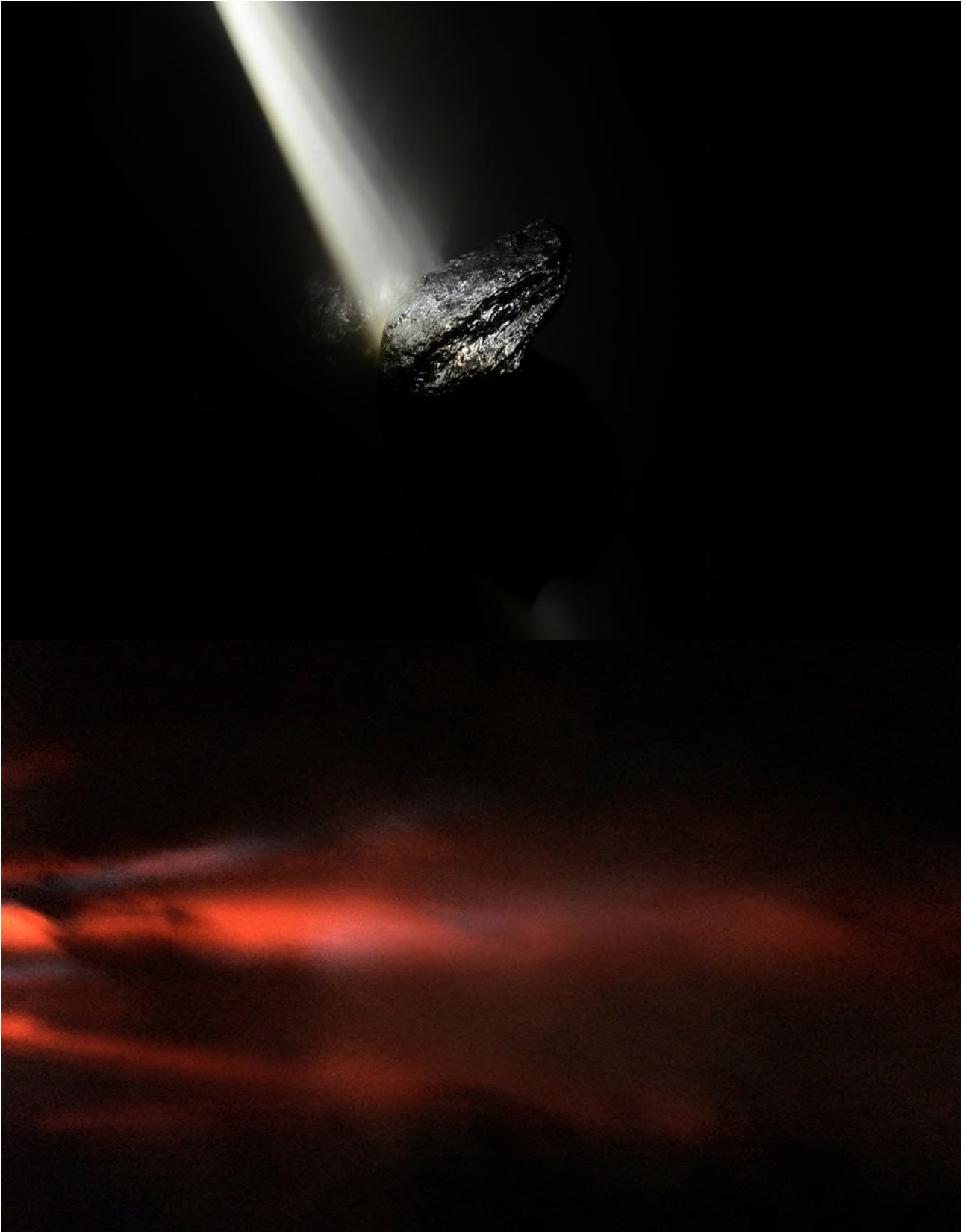


Fig.12



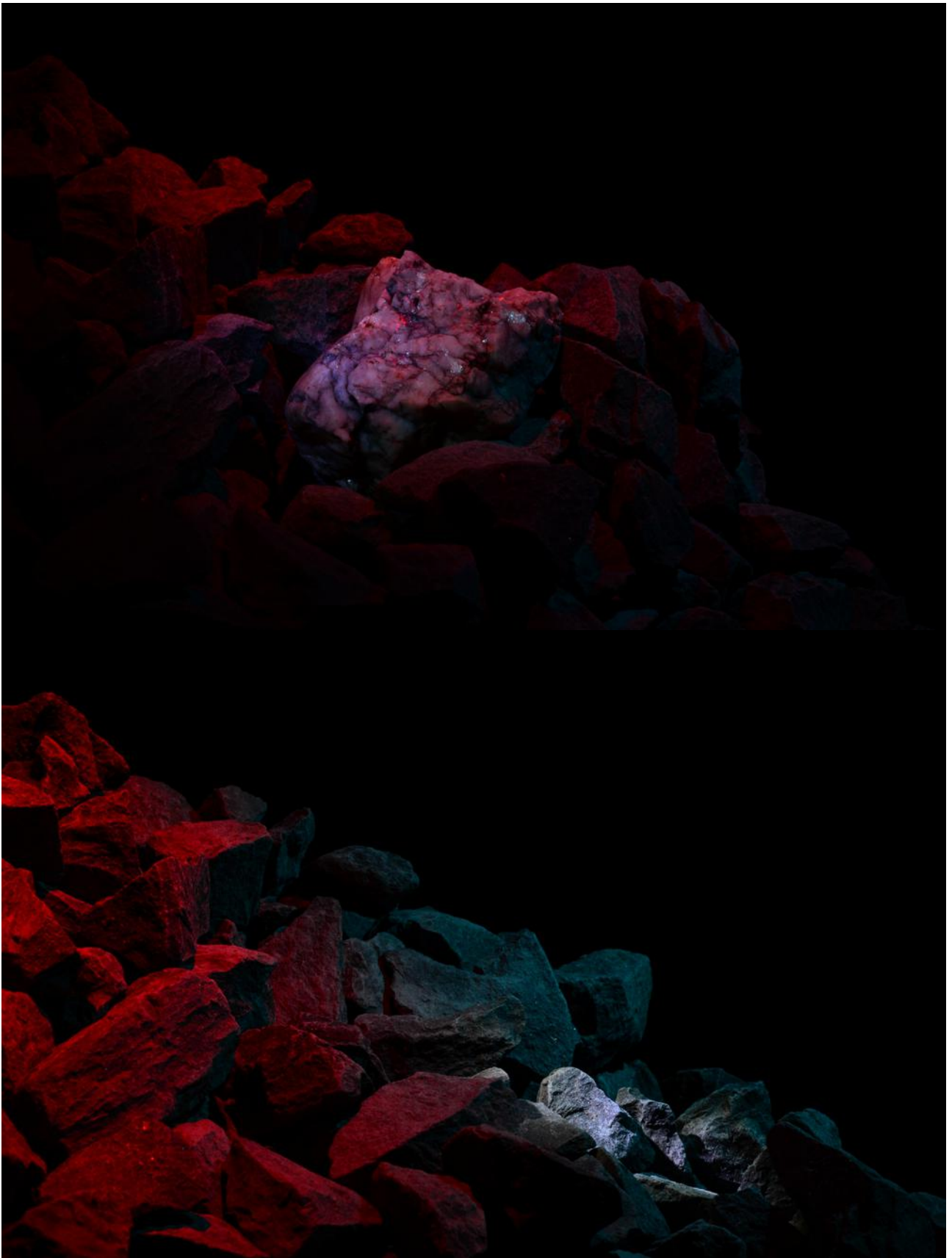


Fig.13





## Interludium – SENSORIUM (A Short Essay)

Before getting into the more philosophical and artistic interpretations of the sensory and phenomenological world, I would like to briefly frame some scientific and biological facts about what is called the sensorium.

A sensorium is the apparatus of an organism's perception considered as a whole, the "seat of sensation" where it experiences and interprets the environments within which it lives. The term originally entered English from the Late Latin in the mid-17th century. In earlier use it referred, in a broader sense, to the brain as the mind's organ. In medical, psychological, and physiological discourse it has come to refer to the total character of the unique and changing sensory environments perceived by individuals. These include the sensation, perception, and interpretation of information about the world around us by using faculties of the mind such as senses, phenomenal and psychological perception, cognition, and intelligence

As I am approaching the sensory system from the realm of the *Scenographic*, and more particularly, from a distinctively non-visual angle, I will first elaborate on *Sound*, followed by a philosophic thought experiment on *Darkness*, to continue by returning to the non-visual from the viewpoint of *Scenographics*.

### Sound

*Sound is created by a vibrating body, thus giving rise to waves which pass through the air by a series of compressions and rarefactions. If this vibration is regular, the sound which results is musical and has a particular frequency. If it is irregular, we hear noise. Sounds move away from their source and have various acoustic qualities: the relationship of a source of sound with the medium through which it passes changes the way we perceive it, its timbre, content, expression, and tone. Sounds and spaces go together like a hand and a glove, space will always change the nature of the sound within it.*

*Some sound waves will reach the listener directly without interruption, whereas others are reflected back by surfaces. The nature of the reflected sound, its spectrum, harmonics, and timbre all depend upon the geometric and physical properties of the inside of the the room, as well as the wavelength of the incident sound. If a surface is flat and smooth it will reflect sound waves like a mirror, but the type of reflection will change as its shape and material change, reflection is also affected by how it is attached to the wall or floor underneath. Concave surfaces can focus sound waves on a particular point, convex surfaces spread sound waves in all directions. Sound waves that are spread out over a wide area will give the impression of enveloping the listener, whereas mirror-type reflections allow one to identify where a sound is coming from and the characteristics of its source. This allows one, for instance, to sense where an instrument is in an orchestra, because it can never be an omni-directional source ,except at very low frequencies.*

*Psychoacoustic specialists confirm that our acoustic and visual perceptions are very closely linked.*

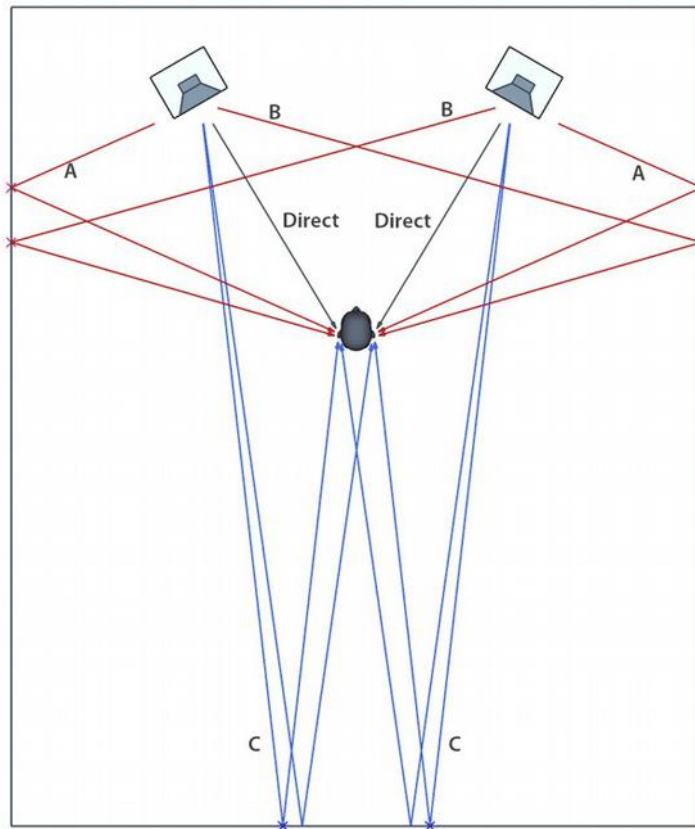


Fig.14

what is left of our mental image the space surrounding us if we take away a major perceptual reference, block one of the senses altogether?

What happens to the body in such an instant? Do our natural reflexes and instincts leave room for genuine experience, or do we become subject to a form of survival-mode, to some extent, depending on the situation?

\*  
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\*\*\*  
\*\*  
\*

In her essay "*Serendipity: The Miracle Of Being Where You Are*", about the work of Ann Veronica Janssens, Mieke Bal argues that the "divesting of perceptual routine" is a "political act of opening up the world that routine had closed of." According to Bal, this is the only way to brake free of already known forms. She is arguing for the existence of abstract art with a political agency without losing the intensity that is capable of producing affect, and speaks of a "paradoxical aspect of abstraction, which indicates the limits of the visual , returning from the *world* to the *self*. Therefore, she argues, the focus of intensity is displaced: from what the work emanates to the viewer's experience of it. (2)

Bal continues by linking to the discourse of Henri Bergson, who's overall concept of Time as a continuüm brought him to distinguish two types of *multiplicity*, to argue for the *continuity* of *DURATION*. -->

1). *A multiplicity of material objects, in which the conception of number is immediately applicable, and 2). A multiplicity of states of consciousness, which cannot be regarded as numerical without the help of some symbolical representation, in which a necessary element is space.*(3)

Bal further deepens her argument with the observation that this approach implies that the forementioned forms of multiplicity "can be said to merge in the occurrence of perception that involves both the materiality of objects and that of the human body." She finishes with the conclusion that this, although Bergson aimed at separating Time from Space, leads instead to a "renewed sense not of time alone, but of spacetime, in which *DURATION* is the over-arching dimension. (4)

\*

Thus we arrive again at the question: What is left of our mental image , the space surrounding us, our *Scenographic Consciousness*, if we are confronted with a situation in which a major perceptual reference is absent?

What if one of the senses is blocked altogether?

The elimination of a sense, be it sight, hearing, touch, taste or smell, is a clear act of returning the experience of the *world* to the *self*.

Furthermore does it, as an action that is imposed upon the viewer as a state of being and not a choice, *FORCE* the merging of the multiplicity of consciousness with that of materiality. A viewer, confronted with a dark space becomes more aware of the material world in which he, she or X finds himself, and of his body, which no longer is a body in space, but a body dissolved in darkness.

Similar phenomena happen when another sense is eliminated.

When a space is experienced with headphones cancelling all sound, the physical awareness of the body's position towards the world shifts just as much.

What occurs is a form of *Hyperfocus*.

We are dealing with ideas that propose situations that are extreme to our perception system. a completely dark space *is* an extreme situation in which all senses other than sight are abruptly challenged in unfamiliar ways. The introduction of such a situation to the physis is a very important factor in the development of performances and presentational strategies.

What the viewer knows and expects greatly determines the emotional and instinctive reaction to the situation.

Darkness is a part of our natural rhythm: the blinking of our eyes, the transition from day into night. But we experience something completely different when the dark occurs unexpectedly. In general, we experience the feeling of having no control over our physical situation if we can no longer rely on one of our senses.

In a presentation context space is always semi-public. Usually with a distinct transhistorical background, for example a museum (whitecube) or a theatre (blackbox). One of the questions is whether it is possible, or necessary, to break away from this, to arrive at a pure isolated moment in which the experience of the physical body urgently merges with the multiplicity of consciousness? And what happens to our PERSONALITY at this point?

Among theoreticians, *André Lepecki* in particular is interested in thinking about what might be *revealed* in the dark, particularly by considering some recent choreographic performances where darkness appears as the key element of an *illumination without light*. Lepecki explores how darkness offers the possibility of a collective modality of experience. To him it is one of five *Singularities* in contemporary dance: Thingness, Animality, Persistence, Solidity and of course Darkness, which to him is a gateway to an experience wherein *depersonalisation* and *speculation* co-assemble a non-enlightened critical stance, in order to propose a more resonant aesthetics, away from photological (the doctrine of light) imperatives. (5)

\*

Depersonalization (can consist of) a detachment within the self regarding one's mind or body. Or being a detached observer of oneself. Subjects feel they have *changed*, that the world has become vague, dreamlike, less real, lacking in significance. A sensation of being outside reality, while looking in.

...and in the process...

\* THINGS ENTER INTO CONVERSATION \*

\*



\* What is Darkness? \*

- Dematerialisation
- A catalyst for feeling
  - Absence of light
- Darkness = becoming space / I don't know exactly where I am
- Where are the limits of my body? / Where are the limits of the outside world?
  - vibrational existence in which no boundaries remain
  - Procedures in the dark
- Presence of the performer and the audience is questioned in the dark (or is at least partly eliminated)
  - Alternate temporalities
- Mystery / as opposed to Permanent Illumination (Jonathan Crarry)
  - Being the most awake as possible to consume
    - a different regime of visibility
    - Dark rooms to experience freedom
  - Escaping surveillance
  - Darkness as a promise for freedom
    - Dark = indiscrete
- temporary (maybe ideological?) and will always be perforated again by emanating light.

DARK , the INTENSIFICATION OF THE NON-IDENTARY

The (personality of the) viewer himself dissolves into the dark and becomes himself (we become ourselves) non-visual, non-identary, he becomes (we become) pure air: all that remains is sound (language), which is moving air, and movement (orientation), which moves air, and smell (identity), which is carried by air.

Darkness is a revealing agent.  
Silence is a revealing agent.  
Stillness is a revealing agent.

(for the non-visual)

\*

\* What is (the) Nonvisual? \*

That what is meant to be out of sight.  
That what is behind the curtain.  
That what is above your head when you are not looking up.  
That what is working while your attention is directed elsewhere.  
That what is present around you, but you cannot see.  
That Smell.

Air (current).  
Humidity.  
Air (pressure).

The No-Face  
The No-Gender  
The No-property  
The No-narrative  
The not-constructed (?)

A Profound activation

The (temporary) escape (a rebellion against)/ from/ the photonic media

What is the Nonvisual in terms of Scenographics?

A shift in the perception of space as an active environment from the predominantly visual to the less dominant other sensory systems, through a constructed enhancement of the perception of sound, temperature, airflow, humidity, air-pressure, olfactory senses (smell) and taste. This perception is closely related to the subject's personality and phenomenological baggage, as well as the trans-historical, geographical and socio-economical context of the locus. A perceptual *shift* is more subjective as an experience than a predominantly visual encounter.

\* A note on Alliestesia \*

Alliesthesia is a psychophysiological phenomenon that describes the dependent relationship between the internal state of an organism and the perceived pleasure or displeasure of stimuli. The internal state of an organism is in constant change, and any stimulus that can help to correct an error or need will be pleasantly perceived. For example, food will be more pleasant when hungry compared to when an organism is satiated. The sensation aroused therefore depends not only on the quality or on the intensity of the stimulus, but also on the internal state of the organism as sensed by internal receptors. The relationship between the perceptual system and physiology is subjective and studied by psychophysics.

- *thermal* alliesthesia: alliesthesia of the thermic perception (heat and cold)
- *olfactory* alliesthesia: alliesthesia of olfaction (sense of smell)
- *gustatory* alliesthesia: alliesthesia of taste - sweet, salty, bitter, acid, umami and calcium
- olfacto-gustatory alliesthesia or alimentary alliesthesia: alliesthesia of tastes/flavors pertaining to food intake
- *visual/optic* alliesthesia: alliesthesia of vision
- *auditory* alliesthesia: alliesthesia of the sense of hearing

A subjective response to an external stimulus that reflects the internal "homeostasis". Any stimulus capable of ameliorating the internal homeostasis will be perceived as pleasant; any stimulus that alters the internal homeostasis would be perceived as unpleasant or painful.  
(6)

\* Re-Enchantment \*

One of the key-ideas behind the artistic choice of constructing environments that aim to shift the focus of perception is to create physical environments of *re-enchantment*.

The dominant visual and photon-oriented cultural- and entertainment systems have detached us from the basic experience of enchantment.

The visual gaze has become highly saturated. Everything is *seeable*, and therefore seemingly possible. To the contemporary brain the visual world has become like junk-food: spectacular and easily accessible, but just as easily forgettable.

An enhanced attention to non-visual stimuli through the use of Scenographics aims at facilitating a new attachment to the sensibility for enchantment.

This is in itself a political action. The manipulation of the visual sense has become an instrument for detachment. We literally no longer believe our eyes.

Never before have humans had access to such an amount of visual information, including acts of violence, injustice and disaster...never before were we so detached from empathy in

witnessing such sorrow.

Vision is no longer a sense connected to the act of *witnessing*.

Because it has become an overly saturated sense, it can no longer evoke true attachment.

To reconnect to the enchantment that makes a sensory experience so valuable, is also an act of reconnecting vision to emotion and to an inner-body experience, as opposed to a purely ocular stimulation.

In an effort to achieve this, the visual temporarily makes place for the nonvisual.

Smell the outside  
Smell something green  
smell the rain  
smell the dust

...

Feel the cold  
Feel the heat  
Feel the humidity  
Feel the dryness

...

Touch the cold  
Touch The heat  
Touch the wet  
Touch the dry  
touch the hard  
touch the soft

...

\* Hear the sounds \*

...

The senses are rich in their colourpalette. As for hearing goes: we can distinguish more sound-frequencies, and therefore variations of sound, than we can see colours.

Furthermore we do not only perceive sound through our ears, we can also feel it through our skin. Our ears don't solely function as auditory organs, they are also crucial to our balance and orientation. The auditory is not the only sense that is processed through the ears, there is also the vestibular sense.

*The vestibular system, in vertebrates, is part of the inner ear. In most mammals, it is the sensory system that provides the leading contribution to the sense of balance and spatial orientation. for the purpose of coordinating movement with balance. Together with the cochlea, a part of the auditory system, it constitutes the labyrinth of the inner ear in most mammals.*

*As movements consist of rotations and translations, the vestibular system comprises two components: the semicircular canals, which indicate rotational movements; and the otoliths, which indicate linear accelerations. The vestibular system sends signals primarily to the neural structures that control eye movement; these provide the anatomical basis of the vestibulo-ocular reflex, which is required for clear vision. Signals are also sent to the muscles that keep an animal upright and in general control posture; these provide the anatomical means required to enable an animal to maintain its desired position in space.*

*The brain uses information from the vestibular system in the head and from proprioception throughout the body to enable the mammal to understand its body's dynamics and kinematics (including its position and acceleration) from moment to moment. How these two perceptive sources are integrated to provide the underlying structure of the sensorium is unknown. (7)*

The *Vestibular Sense* is the combination of the Vestibular system and other senses such as Sight, Touch and the senses connected to the nervous system that processes information form for instance blood flow and the muscular system.

As a whole, and active system, the Vestibular Sense PLACES us in space and enables our orientation.

The Scenographic is very much occupied with the orientation of both object and subjects in space and their complex interrelations .

Therefore Scenographics can not be practiced without taking the sensory system into account as one of it's main mediators.

\*

MIST AND TWILIGHT AWAKEN THE IMAGINATION BY MAKING VISUAL IMAGES UNCLEAR AND AMBIGUOUS. A CHINESE PAINTING OF A FOGGY MOUNTAIN LANDSCAPE OR THE RAKED SAND GARDEN OF RYOAN-JI ZEN GARDEN, GIVE RISE TO AN UNFOCUSED WAY OF LOOKING, ENVOKING A TRANCE-LIKE MEDATIVE STATE.

THE ABSENT-MINDED GAZE PENETRATES THE SURFACE OF THE PHYSICAL IMAGE AND FOCUSES ON INFINITY.

Juhani Pallasmaa – The Eyes Of The Skin

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- (4) Bal, Mieke, *Serendipity: The Miracle Of Being Where You Are*, p25, Catalog Ann Veronica Janssens – Serendipity, WIELS, 2009.
- (5) André Lepecki, *In The Dark*, from *Singularities*. Here: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e\\_FeFhYDvUs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e_FeFhYDvUs)
- (6) Wikipedia: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alliesthesia>
- (7) Wikipedia: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sensorium>





COSMOGONY 05 – Darkness As A Protagonist



FIG.15

SKETCHES...

You enter a dark room.  
No light whatsoever.  
You Don't see a thing.  
Cold.  
The Smell of dust.

You seem to be alone here.  
Or not you are not, you're not certain.  
Maybe you hear other people move around somewhere else.

Your senses tell you this is large space.  
You wander around the vast void, disoriented and slightly panicking.

After a few minutes a loud bang crashes through the space.  
A single techno beat.  
One hard kickdrum.

Simultaneously a small spot of light appeared on the floor somewhere in the room.  
It is about 1.5 c m in diameter.  
You might see it.  
You might not see it.

This process repeats three times, with a three minute interval.

A dim light switches on.  
Revealing the room in dimmed light.

Dimmed light is always yellow.  
You leave the room.

A place of worship

A large room.

Silence.

A Hall.

Almost total darkness.

Cold.

In the middle of the room a structure is vaguely visible...in dim, deep yellow light.

It is an architectural structure, build out of grey concrete building bricks.

You enter it.

Inside, a path leads to a circular space.

In the exact middle of the room.

The space does not have a ceiling.

You are standing in this circular space, in a circle of dim, deep yellow light

After a few minutes a loud bang crashes through the space. A single techno beat. One hard kick drum.

Simultaneously a small spot of bright magenta light, about 1,5cm in diameter appeared on the floor, in the middle of the circular space, in the middle of the room.

Around the structure people have gathered.

When you leave the structure,

they worship you like a god.

\*

The backpack.  
Suspended from a wire.  
Hangs in the exact in the middle of the room.  
Whispers emerge from within.  
Whispers.  
Telling a story.  
Whispers.  
Are only sound.  
Whispers.  
Inviting you to pick up the backpack.  
Carry them out.  
Into the night.



This place is a garden  
indoors  
and dark  
above it hovers a vast grid  
with spotlights  
dimly  
beaming down

light is sparse  
light is focused  
mist  
oozes upwards  
emerges from platforms  
filled with soil  
dead soil  
black as coal

micro  
macro  
this environment is living  
to the rhythm of those who walk it's paths  
from the outside inward  
from the inside outward

the grid in the ceiling  
supports equipment  
creating technical sculptures  
of sound  
light  
and smoke

routes  
appear

but most of them  
you find by yourself



\*  
\*\*

.....

A LARGE ROOM  
EMPTY  
DARK  
COLD

IT TAKES A WHILE FOR YOUR EYES TO ADJUST  
BUT THERE IS SOME LIGHT  
VERY DIMLY  
(GOLDEN)

IN THE MIDDLE (THE EXACT MIDDLE)  
OF THE ROOM  
A CLOUD OF SMOKE EMERGES  
BEARLY VISIBLE

(NO SOUND)

YOU CAN CIRCLE IT  
FEEL IT'S SLOWNESS  
(IT MOVES UNATURALLY SLOW)

FEEL IT'S WEIGHT  
(IT IS EXEPTIONALLY HEAVY)

BECOME SLOW LIKE IT  
SLOW DOWN WITH IT

FEEL IT'S LOOMING MYSTICISM  
DISCOVER YOU OWN  
DORMANT  
MYSTICISM

GROOVY

.....

\*

A pond

In  
a room  
with a  
high ceiling  
and  
a cluster of lights

hoovering above the pond  
beaming down right above it's surface

drip drip dripping

unreachable  
the middle of a pond  
from the  
shore  
(no clear border, more of a beach)

feel the coldness  
washing over the pond  
touching you face  
and hands

this is  
a place of reflection

\* A Room – Darkness – Sound – A Vessel – Coldness – A Voice \*

A Room.  
With high ceilings.  
A Dark Room.

You enter the Room alone.  
The Room is filled with Sound.

The Sound emerges from a Vessel (A Body)  
The Vessel is suspended from the ceiling, in the middle of the Room.

The Sound is immersive, fills the Room, fills your head.  
You can hear it change as you move around the Vessel.

You walk up to the Vessel.  
The Sound enhances when you approach.  
You feel the presence of the Vessel close to you.  
It is encapsulated by Coldness.  
You are encapsulated by Sound and Coldness and Darkness.

You take the Vessel in your hands.  
You feel the Vibrations from the Sound.  
You place the Vessel against you chest.  
You feel the vibrations in your heart.

A Voice whispers from deep inside the vessel.

Do You See me?

In The Shadows?

\* A Room - Darkness - Sound - A Rock \*

A Room.  
A Dark Room.

You enter it alone  
You don't know if you are alone.

There is a mechanical Sound.  
It is not clear where it comes from.

In a corner of the Room, a Rock lies.  
A flashlight lights it up.

It takes you a while to discover it.  
Or you never discover it.





## TUNNELVISION

---

Before you:

A white tunnel, like an arcane arcade...arched and mysterious

The tunnel is approximately 1m in width, 2m70 in height, 10m long.

In the nock, bright white fluorescent lamps hang, & m apart over the total length of the tunnel.

The tunnel is brightly lit.

You can not see what is on the other side, it's dark on the other side.

You enter the tunnel, start crossing over to the other side

As you walk through it the strength of the light takes over your visual perception.

When you exit the tunnel on the other side, you trigger a sensor, the light is abruptly cut □ CU

CUT TO BLACK

(Donkerslag)

You are now in a large dark room, with no light whatsoever, behind you a door must have closed.

For a few moments nothing happens.

You start to feel lost in the dark

A slight fear appears

Suddenly you become aware of a sound, it is a whispering voice coming from a distinct location

This sound is joined by other spatial sounds, coming from different positions in the room

After some minutes a light appears

It is a small and dimmed blue light that is placed directly above a rotating whit marble rock, that is hanging from a wire suspended from the ceiling.

A second light appears, a red light, also pointed at the rock

When you approach the rock you notice sand on the floor, creaking under the soles of your shoes

When you approach the rock, the sounds around you change into a sinister/mystical soundscape

When you reach the rock, a voice appears directly above it, this is what it whispers:

HAVE YOU SEEN ME IN THE SHADOWS?

(A) Silver Rock Garden

---

An indoor setting  
Dimly lit

I am seated, on the floor

In front of me is a large wooden surface, slightly elevated, supported by wooden bars  
Above the surface, a number of dimmed-Fluorescent tubes hoovers

Behind me, a textile bag, full of small rocks

next to me, a pile of aluminum-foil squares

(optional: there is a self-made ambient soundtrack) ---> perhaps an electronic sound-component for which the field becomes a conductor?

\* \* \*

Slowly, in silence and consciously  
I wrap the rocks in aluminum-foil, one by one...I take my time for this, treating each rock like a gemstone, being conscious of it's transformation during this process, the aluminium has to take on the shape of the rock.

I place the wrapped rocks on the wooden platform (if the surface is large enough I step onto it, walk to the middle and place it there.

This process goes on for several ours  
The Silver Gardenof rock grows  
A silver Rock Garden is formed

\* \* \*

A silver zen garden  
A silver field  
An electric field  
A field of magic  
A field of high contrast  
A garden of reflections

A Field of gemstones

A field of waste  
A field of ore  
A field of Mining  
A field of symbolic value  
A field of magnetism  
A magnetic field

- INTERMISSION -

\* A Deep, Dark, Blue \*

DRAFT 01

\*

When we are out here  
nothing can touch us

a deep dark blue  
pierced and pierced again  
by sharp yellow and soft white

a deep dark red  
fluid and slow  
drips up and down

here

there is no up  
there is no down

we touch ground

heavy coloured light-beams  
penetrate the leaves above  
red, blue, yellow and black dots  
crawl across the tree roots  
kissing the herbs that grow on the forest floor

in holes  
and grooves  
we see light reflecting  
and worlds appear

to move around  
we have to constantly push things aside  
leaves and branches  
spider's webs

the ground is covered with rocks

with roots

with thousands of small creatures  
inhabiting thousands of cracks

making their way across the surface

it must feel like an endless mountain ridge to them

we do not walk  
we crawl

along with them

pushing through  
pushing aside



careful

not to disturb  
what's living here

damp  
moist

the smell of iron

above this place  
a vast grid hovers  
with hundreds of spotlights  
beaming down

we touch ground

we rub our faces in the soil  
to blend in  
to smell alike

to feel alike

where does all the water come from?  
filling the air  
absorbed by the soil  
released again by vegetation  
filling the air again  
with particles so small they float up  
forming a cloud on the surface  
mist  
penetrated by golden beams of light  
warm columns

small drops in our hair

everything vibrating  
in the golden glow  
of the spotlights

we are out here

nothing can touch us

the mist  
washes our faces

we no longer smell alike  
no longer feel alike

the water is dizzying  
reflecting the grid in the sky  
in endless ripples  
of golden light

the only way to exist here  
is to become small  
much smaller than we are now

the only way to exist here  
is to find a world that's bigger  
a lot bigger  
then this one

so we keep moving  
we keep pushing things aside  
keep climbing hills  
until we reach the mountains

we can not move mountains

but we can crawl into them  
and disappear

out of the spotlights  
out of the gold  
into the dark blue  
the black  
and white  
into a world of reflections  
and shadows

to move around here we have to  
constantly push ourselves aside  
bend our bodies around sharp rocks  
be careful  
not to fall  
not to cut  
not to bruise

most of the times we don't see anything  
not anymore  
but when we do  
it feels as if we are inside a  
crystal chandelier  
here everything is made of ice

the golden light  
no longer reaches us  
here there is only the light we carry  
fractured and broken  
into spectral cosmology

no more water  
only ice  
all colours  
come from inside

suddenly you enter a great hall  
a cave like a cathedral  
it's even colder here  
the moment you enter this space  
a small blue ball rolls out of the shadows  
up to your feet

transforming the room with it's presence

the ball starts growing  
bursts open  
and sprouts  
long branches of blue veined tentacles  
on which  
new  
small blue spheres  
grow

then crack  
open  
and sprout

a cycle of replication

evolution

all this growth  
happening, unfolding  
in an unstoppable chain reaction

a Rube Goldberg machine  
right before your eyes

very

very fast

groovy

this organism is powerful  
dominant and destructive

a force  
with such resilience

such hunger  
it can not be stopped

and you triggered it

Groovy  
(Far out)

What is this place?  
What has it become  
just now?  
Before us lays a network  
without diversity  
no creatures anymore  
a single dominant organism  
the blue veined creeper  
it's branches now carry tiny golden fruit  
pyramid-shaped  
sharp and hard  
as if they could cut glass  
the fruit bursts open  
silver smoke is released  
it fills the atmosphere  
unavoidable  
everywhere  
you have to breathe it in  
  
but you don't breathe it out again  
and it invokes something in your mind  
makes you feel  
groovy  
this silver smoke  
makes us see truths we know are false  
the moist stone beneath our feet

radiates a coldness that slowly invades our bodies

the cold is all we have left  
to track reality

the cold grounds us

we are lucky to have it as our companion  
right now is not the present anymore  
we have shifted elsewhere

the blue veined creeper slimes around us like a thousand snakes

groovy dude

a dark and hollow beat climbs our legs  
as if someone is banging an empty oil drum in a cave underneath

vibrations enter the soles of our feet

at a steady pace

a jagged heartbeat

an alarm

we can hardly see anything

silver smoke surrounds our senses

only our skin is still transferring information to our nerves

the beat grows

growls  
latches onto us

we don't know it yet

but  
it will stay with us from now on

heavy sound waves affect the silver smoke

vibrations force it into patterns

silver mandalas tear through the atmosphere

in countless fractal variations



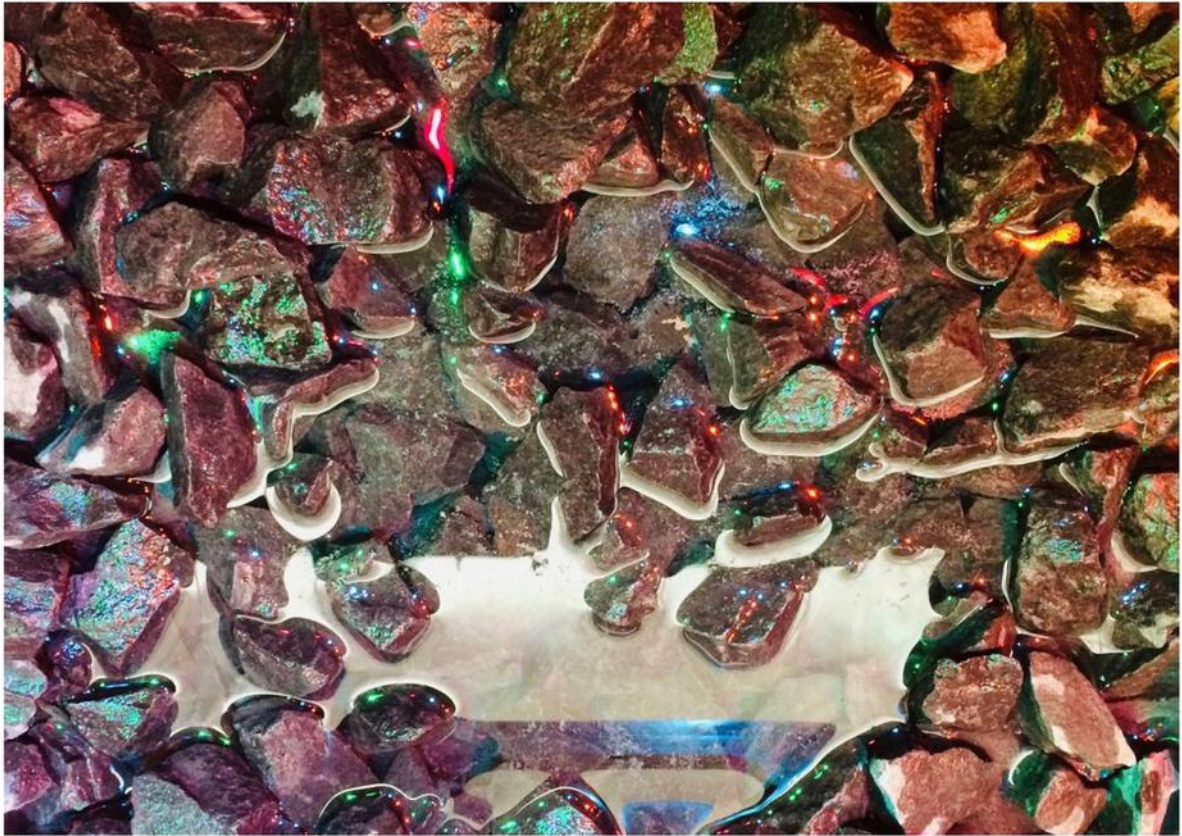
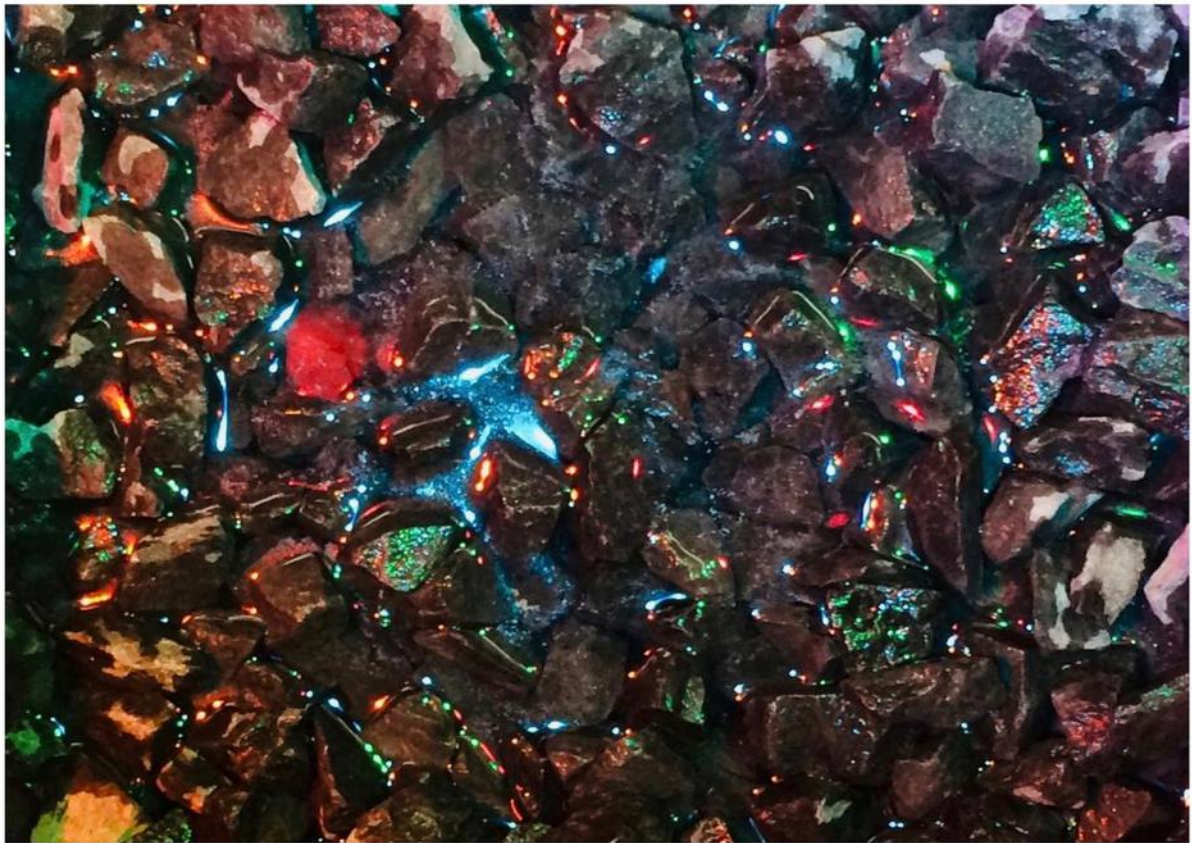


Fig. 15

Proposal for an immersive installation – 001

----->

A LARGE ROOM  
IN A MUSEUM  
WHITE WALLS  
HIGH CEILING

----->

on the floor of the room there is a layer of water  
about 5cm deep  
the floor of the room is a giant pond  
the floor of the room is a giant mirror  
the lights are off, the room is cold

in the middle of the room a module hangs  
suspended from the ceiling  
hanging from two thin cables  
the module contains light  
the module contains sound  
the module contains fog

----->

THE MODULE:

a black circular bar (a tube)  
5 small par-spotlights attached  
randomly it seems

a second black circular bar hangs directly under the first  
through tiny holes in this bar water drips

the drops of water form circular ripples on the water, expanding from under the  
module

the spotlights are lit, sending colourfull light down to the water  
lighting the ripples

a speaker attached  
an eerie soundscape playing

a smokemachine attached  
subtle mist emerging

Proposal for an immersive installation – 002

----->

A LARGE ROOM  
IN A MUSEUM  
WHITE WALLS  
HIGH CEILING

----->

the light is dimmed, a light fog, the room is cold  
centered in the middle of the room  
suspended from the ceiling  
a pendulum turns in great circles  
almost making the room inaccessible

----->

THE PENDULUM:

1.

an acoustic wind-instrument  
an eerie sound

2.

a technical cluster with  
lights  
sound  
smoke

3.

a rock

4.

a bundle of textile

5.

a backpack

WIND...MOVEMENT...SPEED...FEAR...INNER & OUTER...CAUTION...

ABA RESIDENCY OUTPUT:

ABA Air Salon – Joris Perdieu – 18/08/2020 – *Sonic Psychogeography 01 (Berlin 2020)*

## RADIOSHOW

AIRED AT FREIE RADIOS BERLIN BRANDENBURG, 16h00-17h00, 88,6 MHz.

The one-hour radio show is conceived as a collage of electronic sound, found footage and field recordings. It's sonic range spreads from city-sounds over spoken word through ambient textures and *Musique Concrète* to glitchy beats. The entire sonic landscape has been created by Joris Perdieu, sometimes under his sound-design moniker *TEXTILE*.

The opportunity to make a radio show for *Collaboradio* in the context of the artist-residency at *AIR Alexanderplatz* felt strangely appropriate during the full-on Corona crisis of 2020. The sensation of working, enclosed in a Berlin apartment, carefully constructing an hour's worth of sound that would be broadcasted, enter the homes of people through this romantically archaic medium of radio, enhanced the feeling of being isolated amidst some sort of storm. Off course this feeling is for the most part self-constructed. Nonetheless the overall atmosphere of the sound-piece still turned out quite distopic.

*Sonic Psychogeography 01 (Berlin 2020)* is a 60 minute composition of continual sound. It was originally modeled around the idea of a journey through the city of Berlin but ended up to be more of a mental journey transposing the city's impulses into a suggestive realm of magic and wonder. The piece consists almost entirely of electronically synthesized sound, combined with field recordings made in Berlin during the first weeks of the residency. Throughout the piece deformed voices fade in and out uttering fragments of *Science-Fiction*, *Magic Realist* and *Weird* literature. Soundbites are layered over each-other resulting in an abstract haze of text. Throughout the piece the idea of orientation is an important undercurrent, one can imagine it to be the soundtrack to a situationist quest through a city with no place to go and no other choice but to wander around hopping on and of subway cars, surrendering to the urban maze. It's title refers to the concept of *Psychogeography*, introduced by *Guy Debord* in 1950, as part of the *Situationist* artistic and theoretical discourse.

### Credits:

Sounddesign & production: Joris Perdieu.

Novation Mininova synth, Korg Volca Drum, Zoom MS70-CDR, TC Electronics Ditto, iPhone 5S.

Postproduction & Engineering in Logic Pro X.

### Featured Text-excerpts:

Jeff Vandermeer – *This World Is Full Of Monsters*, 2017, Tor Books.

Ursula K. Le Guin – *The Left Hand Of Darkness*, 1969, ACE Books.

Jorge Luis Borges – *Death And The Compass (La Muerte Y La Brújula)*, 1942, Editorial Sur.

Jorge Luis Borges – *The Garden Of Forking Paths (El jardín de senderos que se bifurcan)*, 1941, published in *Ficciones*, 1944, Editorial Sur.

*Psychogeography* is an exploration of urban environments that emphasizes playfulness and "drifting". It has links to the Letterist and Situationist Internationals, revolutionary groups influenced by Marxist and anarchist theory, as well as by the attitudes and methods of Dadaists and Surrealists. Psychogeography was defined in 1955 by Guy Debord as "the study of the precise laws and specific effects of the geographical environment, consciously organized or not, on the emotions and behavior of individuals." It has also been defined as "a total dissolution of boundaries between art and life". Another definition is "a whole toy box full of playful, inventive strategies for exploring cities... just about anything that takes pedestrians off their predictable paths and jolts them into a new awareness of the urban landscape."  
(Wikipedia)

ABA Salon - Joris Perdieus - 19/09/2020- UQBAR Projectspace, Berlin.

An ABA Salon in two spaces, at UQBAR project space, Berlin.

An evening in two spaces.

Joris Perdieus will present the research conducted during his four-month stay with Air Berlin Alexanderplatz in the summer of 2020.

Room A: The Healing Room- A (small scale) Immersive Installation.

You are invited into a dark room.  
You enter it by yourself.  
Inside you are immersed in a healing sound.  
You are immersed in a healing wind.  
You are there for a while.  
To discover the rocks.

The installation is A result of the research Joris conducted on nonvisual atmospheric and scenographic actors in his artpractice. In this room he creates a temporary sensory installation combining a spin on the auditive phenomenon of *Binaural Beats* with reflections on darkness, healing, mining and the human timeline that transforms matter into material .

*In acoustics, a beat is an interference pattern between two sounds of slightly different frequencies, perceived as a periodic variation in volume whose rate is the difference of the two frequencies: a pulsating sound.*

*With tuning instruments that can produce sustained tones, beats can be readily recognized. Tuning two tones to a unison will present a peculiar effect: when the two tones are close in pitch but not identical, the difference in frequency generates a beating.*

*A binaural beat is an auditory illusion. It is perceived when two different pure-tone sine waves, both with frequencies lower than 1500 Hz, with less than a 40 Hz difference between them, are presented. The listener will perceive the auditory illusion of a third tone, in addition to the two pure-tones, the third sound is called a binaural beat.*

*Binaural beats are claimed by some to have healing potential. Benefits of binaural beats therapy may include: reduced stress, reduced anxiety, increased focus, increased concentration, increased motivation, increased confidence, and deeper meditation.*

*Some people even believe Binaural Beats can heal cancer, cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, and yes, even Covid 19.*

*However, research is inconclusive about the clinical benefits of binaural beat therapy.*

The installation makes no claim whatsoever on whether or not it has any healing properties.

Room B: The Reading Room

A presentation of the academic and visual results of the residency.

A talk by Alice De Mont.

A talk by Joris Perdieus.



UNDER THE TONGUE (15min, single screen film)

*Under The Tongue* is a trippy, dream-like short film by Belgian artist Joris Perdieus. The film is an exploration of hyper-visuality as a comment on the unrivaled dominance of the sense of vision. Arguably the most important formal element in filmmaking is the use of *time* rather than the use of images. *Under The Tongue* challenges the consciousness and perception by stacking layer upon layer of over-developed visual and auditive information. Including highly-saturated fast moving imagery, animated frames and moving fragments of abstract text. Scored with an equally complex soundscape, the film is full of sensory referral. Beneath this hypersensory web the film offers a reflection on the time we share with this planet and our connections to it's metaphysical origins. It questions the concept of *mental identity* and the way Humans construct their own realities within it.

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS:

- Fig. 01 – Study for Installation (2020)
- Fig. 02 – Meditation/ Cosmic Jar (2020)
- Fig. 03 – Rediscovering The Sky (2020)
- Fig. 04 – Cosmic Jar (2020)
- Fig. 05 – Entrance To The Garden (2020)
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- Fig. 07 - Untitled (digital photograph, 2020)
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- Fig. 14 – Sound & Acoustics, Illustration of Reverb
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- Fig. 16 – Rock Garden (2020)

All images by Joris Perdieu.

All text by Joris Perdieu.

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