



KILLING Vinyl FROGS

Rehearsal 4: KILLING FROGS

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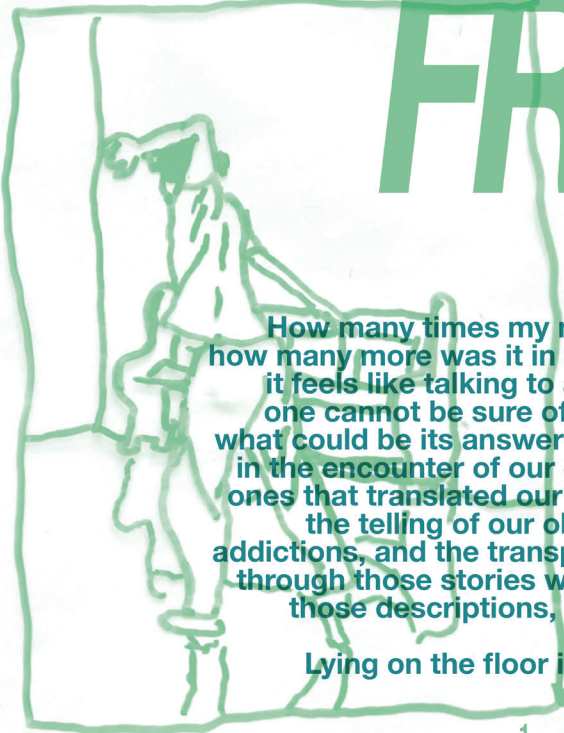
KILLING FROGS

SIDE A

A man lies on the ground,
Open throat
Dry eyes
Smell of cloves.

How many times my name was on your tongue, and how many more was it in your thoughts? Thinking back, it feels like talking to a ghost, where in half disbelief one cannot be sure of the ghosts hearing, neither of what could be its answers. More than finding familiarity in the encounter of our eyes, we found it in words, the ones that translated our worst. Through them, through the telling of our obsessions, the narration of our addictions, and the transposing void they could convey, through those stories we truly had seen each other. In those descriptions, loss was a common language.

Lying on the floor is not a dead man, but a ghost,



whose immateriality reflects its exposure. But what had happened to produce such an image, was carved with the insistence of time and not with the speed of a happening, as the speed of a hammer racing to crack open a mind that once dreamed with the violence of its strike.

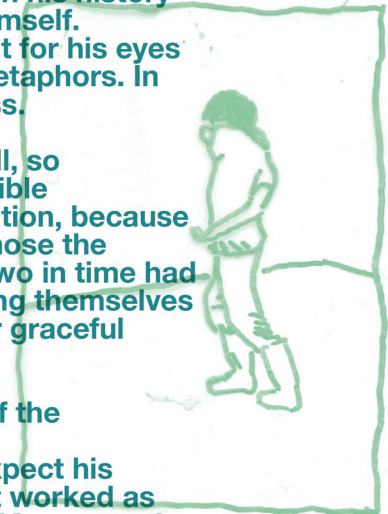
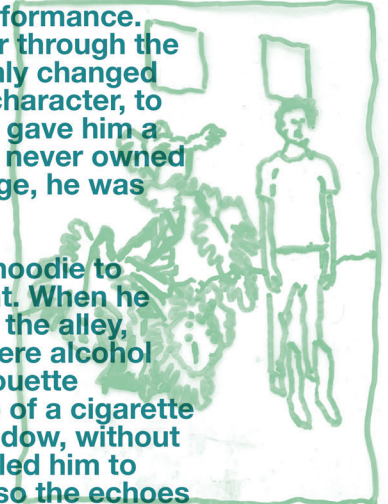
They met on a regular evening, after a performance. The man, lying on the floor, left the theater through the back door with his wet hair. He had not only changed his clothes, but he had also changed his character, to something near to anonymity. His glasses gave him a look of austerity, a layer of intelligence he never owned but wore more or less proudly. Off the stage, he was referred to as M.

M slams the door behind him, pulling his hoodie to cover his wet hair against a February night. When he turns around, walking by the trash bins of the alley, making his way to the closest counter where alcohol could be found, he sees in the dark a silhouette revealing just glimmering eyes, the red tip of a cigarette and the swirls of smoke. There in that shadow, without knowing, M would find not only what had led him to open his throat against the ground, but also the echoes of all his future excuses, because further in his history he would rather blame pain than blame himself. He would start facing the ground, and wait for his eyes to dry, so not to face loss but rather its metaphors. In the shadow, M found the metonymy of loss.

The silhouette name's initial was M as well, so you will need to bear with me on the possible misunderstandings in the story's continuation, because rather than finding a different letter, we chose the complications of confusion, since those two in time had confused their beginnings and ends, mixing themselves into one. And confusion would be a rather graceful feeling to tell their story.

Expecting someone familiar at the sight of the silhouette, M said hi, and smiled.

I said expecting, because he would not expect his own eyes to see. M had a retinopathy that worked as a family inheritance disconnected to will. M was used to not seeing in dim lights, and as a backstory, he was very well aware of the progression of his eye condition, which could one day promptly change his world for a greater blur.



Blind.

Avoiding being seen as strange or unfriendly, M would always say hello to silhouettes. He was so familiar with unfamiliarity that in some contexts, such as this one, at the end of a performance, he would predict, as a fortune teller, that whoever was around was someone he knew.

But not this time.

With his cigarette, stepping out of the shadows M said hi to M. His eyes were swollen as if from bad sleep, weeping, too much alcohol, or all those options at once.

Were you on stage? M asked while taking a drag of his cigarette.

A character was. M answered with a soft smile that revealed he was charmed by the stranger. They stared at one another, seeing in the tear film of each other's eyes the reflexes of the light bulbs partially illuminating the alley.

The show made me think of something about my childhood... not a particular memory but more a feeling, a sensation so far behind that I had forgotten that I had once felt it. The performance made me want to run and jump, to throw my body onto something soft. I can barely believe how energized I feel, considering I come from nights of insomnia. M said.

I need a drink, M replied - either a large or a strong one, maybe both. Something that would function as a disguised sedative. This show reminds me of nothing from my childhood. I used to hunt frogs in a swamp. By age 6 I had learned with my older brother how to dissect them. I was fascinated to see how something would struggle until their insides were revealed. As if what is hidden from daylight could be seen only in stillness. I can still remember the strong smell of clove oil we would use to sedate the frogs. Something that would be monstrous to do these days, since we agonize to hide death from ourselves and the monstrosities that can exist in a child's curiosity and will, often excused by an assumption of the kid's ignorance. As if a child wouldn't understand the act of killing while stomping on snails or smashing fireflies against their own clothes to see the textile glittering. A cruelty we harness from birth, and might become part of our experiments in

relationships...

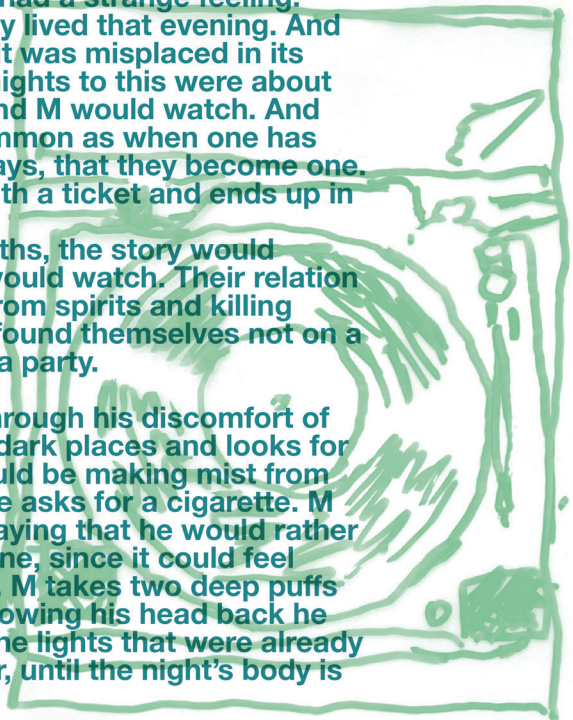
It was the smell of cloves that would keep the mosquitos away from us, that would allow the stillness that gave me access to my childish cruel curiosity.

Do you mind coming with me to the bar? Even though I know my way through these shadows, it wouldn't be bad to have some guidance. I don't see as well as I pretend I do on stage, and if you come I want to hear about what could have hurt you in your childhood to make you associate it with the show you have just seen. The piece deals more with the boredom or despair that rims most dreams. In their softness, dreams are images of something other than what happens to us. Like in a daydream, that takes us away helping us to escape reality. Escaping, rather than using imagination to act on a wish for beauty. Creating something from the dream, and not just staying asleep, numbed by one's own disassociation.

M smiled without showing his teeth, but he wrinkled the side of his eyes, while dragging his last puff, then threw the cigarette butt on the ground and stepped on it to extinguish its flames. He had a strange feeling. The feeling that he had already lived that evening. And his feeling wasn't wrong, but it was misplaced in its chronology, because similar nights to this were about to repeat. M would perform and M would watch. And that repetition became as common as when one has attended too many theater plays, that they become one. A mere protocol that starts with a ticket and ends up in a bar.

Over the course of many months, the story would repeat. M would play and M would watch. Their relation at first had not moved away from spirits and killing frogs. Until one evening they found themselves not on a dark alley, nor in a bar, but at a party.

With his wet hair, M pushes through his discomfort of feeling displaced in crowded dark places and looks for a smoke. Looking for who could be making mist from that night, M is found by M. He asks for a cigarette. M hands the lit cigarette to M, saying that he would rather share that smoke with someone, since it could feel like a strong type of cigarette. M takes two deep puffs with his eyes half closed. Throwing his head back he immediately feels dizzy, and the lights that were already few in his eyes, become fewer, until the night's body is

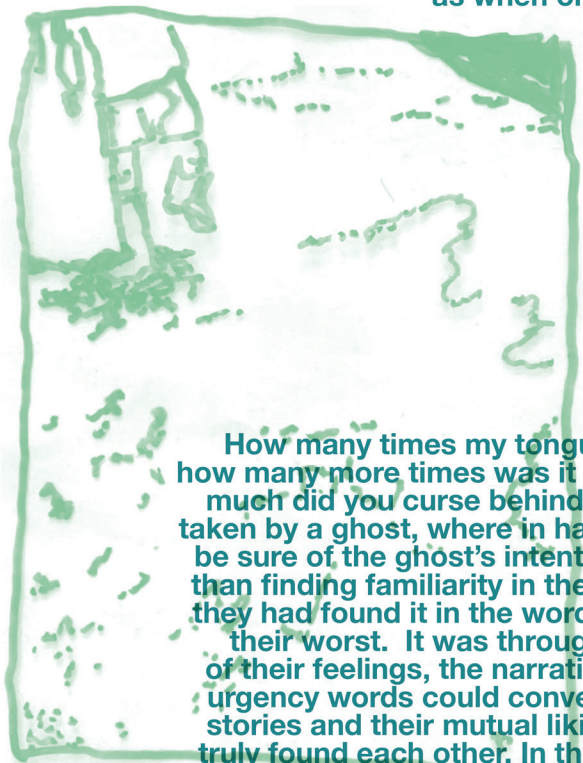


the only thing M could truly sense. From smoke, to pills and powder the continuity of events cannot be tracked any longer by M's memory. M learns that forgetfulness can obliterate loss, being each a container for the other, as when one pledges loss of memory.

A blank dark

SIDE B

M lies on the ground,
Open legs
Dry eyes
Smell of cloves.



How many times my tongue was at your tongue, and how many more times was it between your thighs? How much did you curse behind my back? M felt like being taken by a ghost, where in half disbelief one can neither be sure of the ghost's intentions nor of its power. More than finding familiarity in the encounter of their bodies, they had found it in the words, the ones that translated their worst. It was through them, through the telling of their feelings, the narration of their desires, and the urgency words could convey; it was through made-up stories and their mutual liking for telling lies, that they truly found each other. In those descriptions, their fear of loss was their common language, harbouring their shared taste for tender violences.

Lying on the floor is not a ghost, but a dead person who can walk; its materiality reflects its inhibition, its ability to avoid crowds. What had happened to produce such an image was carved with the insistence of delusion and not with the speed of desire. It was not through the speed of a hammer racing to crack open the mind that once impatiently waited for its violence, for the familiarity of a forceful stroking hand.

The strike of sensation from what happened, the strike of clarity in the one who waits for meaning. It was in what hurts that they found the meaning of care. From an expired smile, which was held for too long, they took its trembles.

Fighting for stillness after wishing each other good night, secretly longing to have their own bedroom door closed to the world. Wishing everything would explode, including their differences. The bad vision and the wish for freedom, the performed bravery and the courage for living, the difficulty of reading and the commitment of focus, the life through fiction and the power of experience, the number of fingers they could really put up their asses and their inability for self-pleasuring.

M wakes up on a regular morning, one of those mornings he should drag himself outside. The other M, still asleep, lies in bed. M's eyes carefully study M's face, as if he were learning lines by heart for a theater play. With dry and blurry eyes, afraid of losing the image of M's face, M asks his memory to maintain those details, like a frog suspended in formalin. M tears up, like someone who misses the life of an animal that lays still with open guts.

M cried at the possibility of losing the sight of that face ageing, of losing the sight of time, of losing the sight of light. For the first time his vision assumed a mystifying quality. M, that had never been afraid of the dark, M, that had always acted as having a regular vision, now felt vulnerable. In M's sleeping face lay M's voyeuristic desire. That morning M had not only changed his mind, but changed his character into something close to subservience.

M puts on his glasses. They give him a sharper sight of what he's about to leave behind. He feels the presence of reality where once only stood fiction.

M slams the door, pulling his hoodie to cover his head against a February sky. When he turns around, walking by the trash bins in the courtyard, making his way to the closest train station, M sees a silhouette in the shadow revealing just glimmering eyes, the red tip of a cigarette and the swirls of smoke. There in that shadow, without knowing, M would find not only what had led him to open his legs on the ground, but also the echoes of all his past failures, because further in his history he would rather blame himself than his sorrows.

He would start facing the ground, and wait for his eyes to dry, so not to face himself but rather his metaphors. In the shadow M found M's metonymy.

The first initial of the silhouette's name was M, so we must bear misunderstandings of the story's continuity. We chose the complications of confusion, since those three Ms in time had confused their beginnings with their endings, merging into one.

Expecting someone familiar at the sight of the silhouette, M said hi, and smiled.

I say expecting, because he would not expect his own eyes to see. M was used to not see in dim light and as a backstory, he was very well aware of the progression of his eye condition, which could one day promptly make him blind.

Avoiding being seen as strange or unfriendly, M would always say hello to silhouettes. He was so familiar with unfamiliarity that in some contexts, as in this one, going to the train station, he would predict, as the weather forecast, that whoever was around was someone he knew.

But not this time.

With his cigarette, stepping out of the shadows M said hi to M. His eyes were wrinkled as if from the effect of age, laughter, too much sun, or all those options at once.

Were you at the Club? M asked, taking a drag of his cigarette.

My ghost was. M answered with a soft smile that revealed he was charmed by the stranger. They stared at each other.

The Club makes me think of something from my childhood... not a particular memory but more a feeling, the sensation of behaving while at the same time being out of control. The darkness of that place makes me want to run and jump, to throw my body onto something soft. I can barely believe how lost I feel, considering I come from nights of set movements, set text and staged performances. M said

I need a drink, M replied - either a large or a strong one, maybe both. Something that would function as a disguised sedative. That place reminds me of nothing from my childhood. I used to hunt frogs in a swamp. By age 6 I had learned with my older sister how to dissect them. I was fascinated to see how something would

struggle until their insides were revealed. As if what is hidden from daylight could only be seen in stillness. I can still remember the strong smell of clove oil we would use to sedate the frogs. Something that would be monstrous to do these days, since our concern with cruelty helps us to hide death from ourselves and the monstrosities that can exist in one's curiosity and will, often excused by an assumption of peoples' ignorance. As if we wouldn't understand the act of killing while stomping on snails or smashing fireflies against our own clothes to see the textile glittering.

M smiled, the answer felt familiar.

M hooked his arm on M's arm. Do you mind coming with me to the train station? Even though I know my way through this city, it wouldn't be bad to have some guidance. I don't see as well in the street, as I pretend I do, and if you come with me I want to hear about what could have hurt you in your childhood as to make you hunt frogs in a swamp. M glanced at M's face - Do you still dissect frogs? M asked.

M smiled without showing his teeth, but he wrinkled the side of his eyes, while taking his last drag, then throwing the cigarette butt on the ground and stepping on it to extinguish its flames. He had a strange feeling. The feeling that he had already lived that morning. And his feeling wasn't wrong, because similar mornings to this were about to repeat. And that repetition became as common as when one has walked too many times to train stations, a mere protocol that starts with validating a ticket and ends up in a bar.

Over a period of time, the story repeated itself. M would talk and M would listen. Their conversations at first had not moved away from train delays and killing frogs. Until one evening, they found themselves not on a train station, nor in a bar but at the club.

M pushes through his discomfort of feeling displaced in crowded dark places and looks for a smoke. M is found by M who is smoking with M. He begs for a cigarette. M hands the lit cigarette to M, saying that he would rather share that smoke with them, since it could feel like a strong type of cigarette. M takes three deep drags with his eyes half closed. Throwing his head back he immediately feels dizzy, and the lights that were already

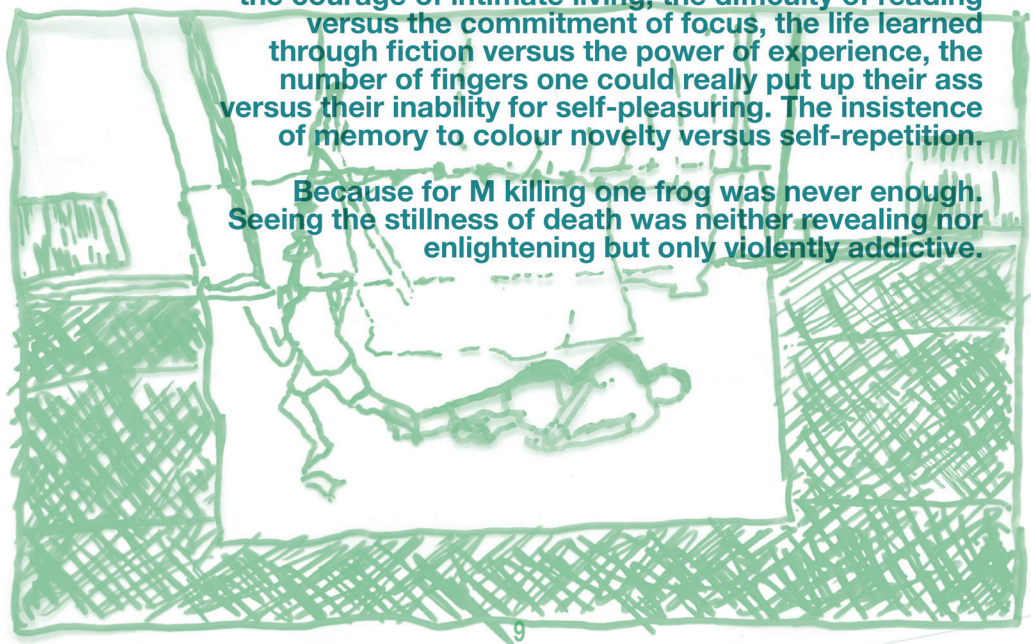
few in his eyes, become fewer, until the night's body is the only thing M could feel. From smoke, to pills and powder the continuity of events cannot be tracked any longer by M's memory. M learns that forgetfulness can obliterate loss, since the former erases the latter, being each a container for the other, as when one pledges loss of memory. The only thing M can still remember is how to dissect a frog.

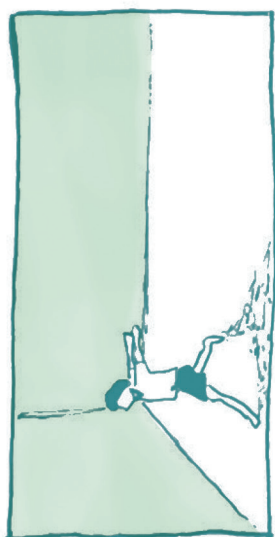
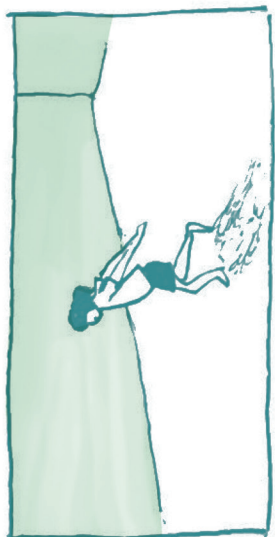
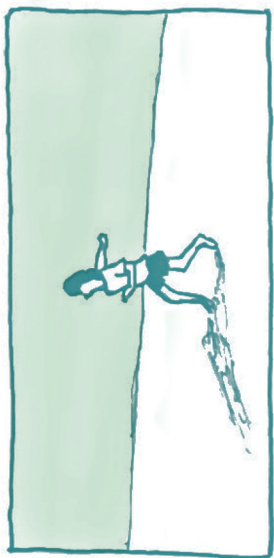
Lying on the floor is M, a dead frog, whose memory reflects its immateriality. Its ability to avoid close contact was lost once it was captured. What had happened to produce such an image was carved with the insistence of childhood and not with the speed of a leap. It was through the speed of a net racing to catch what was patiently waiting for its own prey and strike it with the violence of its tongue.

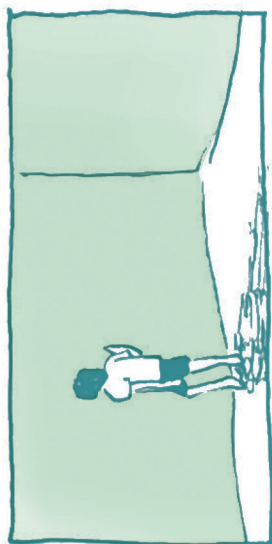
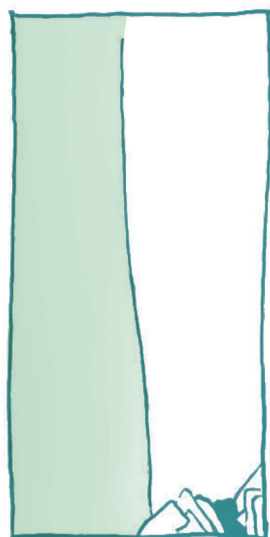
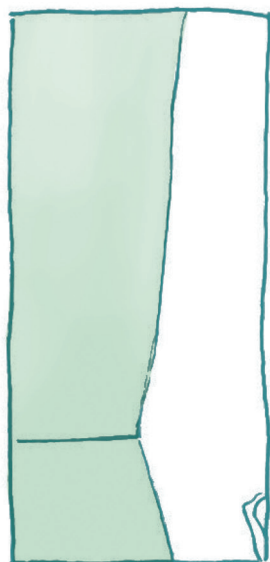
The strike of survival, the strike of need, because in killing it found the means for living. As when a human hopes their heart won't surrender to stillness after saying goodnight. A stillness that could bury all their longings, closing the doors to a world they once wished to explode, annihilating both distance and differences.

Bad vision versus sharp eyes, slenderness versus bulkiness, the wild wish of freedom versus the confinement of a room, the staged bravery versus the courage of intimate living, the difficulty of reading versus the commitment of focus, the life learned through fiction versus the power of experience, the number of fingers one could really put up their ass versus their inability for self-pleasuring. The insistence of memory to colour novelty versus self-repetition.

Because for M killing one frog was never enough. Seeing the stillness of death was neither revealing nor enlightening but only violently addictive.







...AND THERE HE WAS, UNABLE TO MOVE...
SMASHED BY THE WEIGHT OF EXISTENCE.



Suddenly, painting had become a way for him to make sense. He always knew that if one day he were ever to start painting, he would only be interested in figurative paintings in extremely large formats.

“You know, Jasmine, painting is a matter of position. In order to paint, you have to observe and change the scale of your observation. And in order to change scale, you have to dance all around the painting. The bigger the painting, the more interesting the dance.”

He was thinking those exact words while looking at a picture of himself on his phone. He often formulated such clever answers in his mind for Jasmine, the imaginary PhD candidate who would one day spend five or more years of her life trying to unravel the “*enigmatic, yet unsettlingly familiar nature*” of his paintings (words also taken from the successful thesis Jasmine would write).

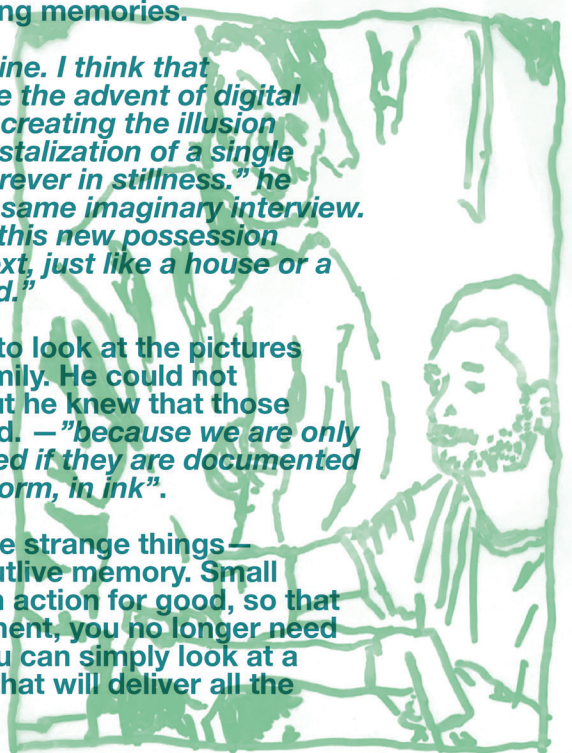
It is true that what most interested him most about the act of painting was not really the result - although his savvy use of a projector had brought him quite close to the visual reality of the photograph, he had enlarged on canvas - but the act itself. What fascinated him was the fact that the image was merely the leftover trace of a physical engagement—his whole body involved with the material, climbing up and down the ladder, moving close and far from the surface. A play that required his eyes to see, his arms to stretch, his fingers to guide the brushes, his legs to climb, his brain to translate what he saw in the photograph onto the support on which he was painting. A sort of meditative yoga that helped him to make sense of his history—and of History.

And there he was. He, who had never painted before in his life, there he was on his phone's screen, standing next to the portrait of a giant of at least two and a half meters tall. To his right, a young woman was dancing in the middle of the street. She is painted in a monochromatic shade of green, grotesquely enlarged - bigger than life. Looking at the image of himself, his tiny figure standing next to the giant woman blossoming in her twenties, he thought about the modern obsession with taking photos and catching memories.

"That's a good question Jasmine. I think that photography, especially before the advent of digital cameras, was another way of creating the illusion of possession through the crystalization of a single moment caught for the eye forever in stillness." he replied to Jasmine during the same imaginary interview. "In this way, you can pass on this new possession from one generation to the next, just like a house or a genetic disease can be passed."

He always found it unsettling to look at the pictures from his childhood and his family. He could not remember those moments, but he knew that those moments had surely happened. —*"because we are only sure that things have happened if they are documented or kept captive - captured in form, in ink"*.

Photographs, he thought, were strange things—extensions of time that can outlive memory. Small objects capable of freezing an action for good, so that when recalling a specific moment, you no longer need your biochemical memory. You can simply look at a rectangle of plastified paper, that will deliver all the



details you would surely forget, serving as a proof of a happening, taken more seriously and consistently than anything that can be simply said. Even when we know that images can be fabricated, we still trust them more than a told story.

He remembered opening the box only a few months earlier and carefully sifting through the photographs, scattered inside without any order or category. He had always considered himself slightly obsessive-compulsive, with a mania for taxonomy and cataloging. Perhaps that was why he had first developed a passion for Art History and became the Art History professor he is today. Back in high school, he loved painters' monographs, fascinated by the imagination of plenty of scholars spending decades trying to catalogue and divide in periods, techniques, and themes the body of work of a single artist.

So, when he found himself in front of that box of photographs—just thrown together like colored pieces of paper—his first instinct was to take them out and start piling them up and sorting them by paper size. But after stacking two or three photos together, his attention was caught by one specific image.

He picked it up and stared at the face of a young woman. Her mouth was open in a grimace of happiness—as if caught mid-laughter, or mid-sentence, or perhaps she was just singing. Or maybe she was objecting to the strong flash that had just blinded her. In any case, she seemed happy; the corners of her lips lifted skyward. She was wearing high-waisted, light-blue jeans, with a simple pink T-shirt tucked in, creating a myriad of wrinkles, that through the flash, became a miniature landscape of gorges and mountains lit by a scorching midday sun. Her right arm hung beside her leg, while her left arm was raised in a strange gesture. "What was she doing?" asked Jasmine, looking at the painting. *"Was she raising her arm to protest against being photographed? Or was she dancing?"*

What fascinated him the most was her position. She occupied the right side of the image, on a diagonal that made her appear light and sinuous. Her posture was unstable; the point where her weight landed—her right foot—disappeared beyond the edge of the frame. He loved the way the photo was cropped. Despite his OCD, he had always loved mistakes.

And then there was the darkness. She was completely wrapped in it. A night that through the translation of the photograph into a painting, had become a thick, dark-green night. Yet she had clearly been in the street; in the background, through the shadows, he could make out the silhouettes of some buildings and the tarmac. The more he looked at the painting, the enormous green woman mid-laugh, mid-protest, mid-dance, the more he realized that something had shifted. The photograph, once a simple document, had transformed. Through the act of painting, it had gained not only scale but weight — emotional, physical, historical. It was no longer just a record belonging to his family; it had become a relic. A fiction born of truth, or truth reborn as fiction. *“Painting,”* he murmured once again to Jasmine, *“is a form of autofiction. Because fantasy remembers what facts cannot.”*

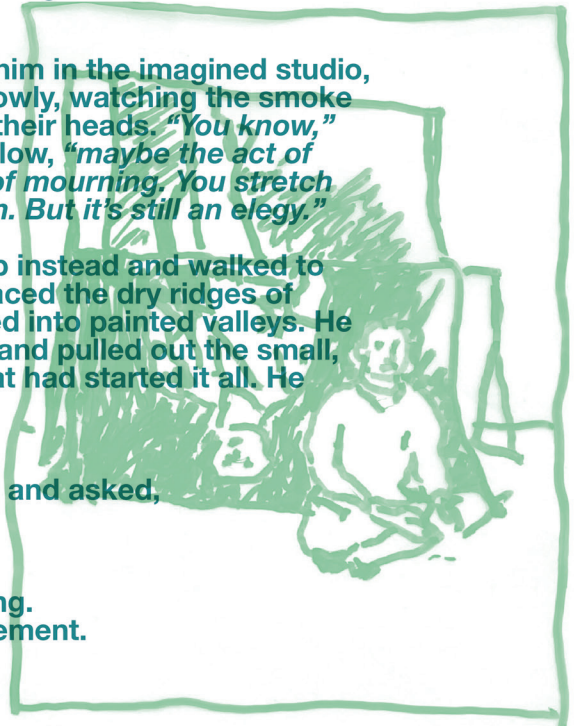
The original photograph was now locked inside the image on canvas, changed, yet untraceable. Especially now, that he couldn’t find the negative. He had searched for it, halfheartedly, as if hoping not to succeed. Its absence made the painting feel final. There would be no reprints, no restorations, no way back. What remained was singular. Original. Even if it had started as a copy.

Jasmine, sitting across from him in the imagined studio, lit a cigarette. She exhaled slowly, watching the smoke curl like brushstrokes above their heads. *“You know,”* she said, her voice unusually low, *“maybe the act of painting is just another kind of mourning. You stretch memory until it becomes form. But it’s still an elegy.”*

He didn’t answer. He stood up instead and walked to the painting. His fingertips traced the dry ridges of acrylic where her shirt creased into painted valleys. He reached into his shirt pocket and pulled out the small, worn photograph, the one that had started it all. He handed it to Jasmine.

He looked at it, smiled faintly, and asked, *“What if we burn it?”*

She hesitated — but not for long. She nodded her head in agreement.

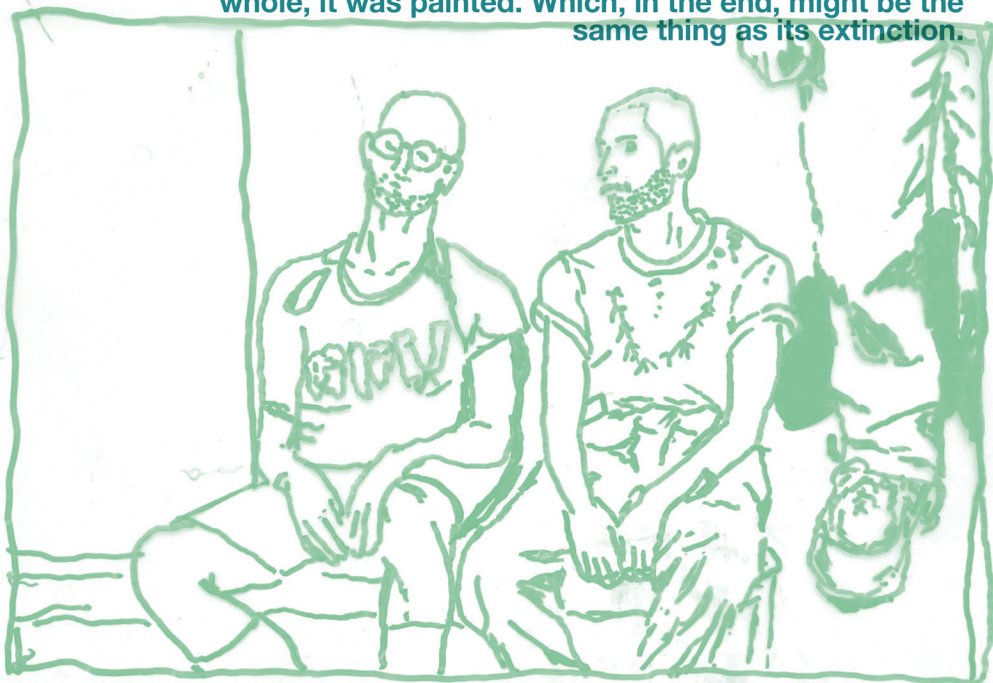


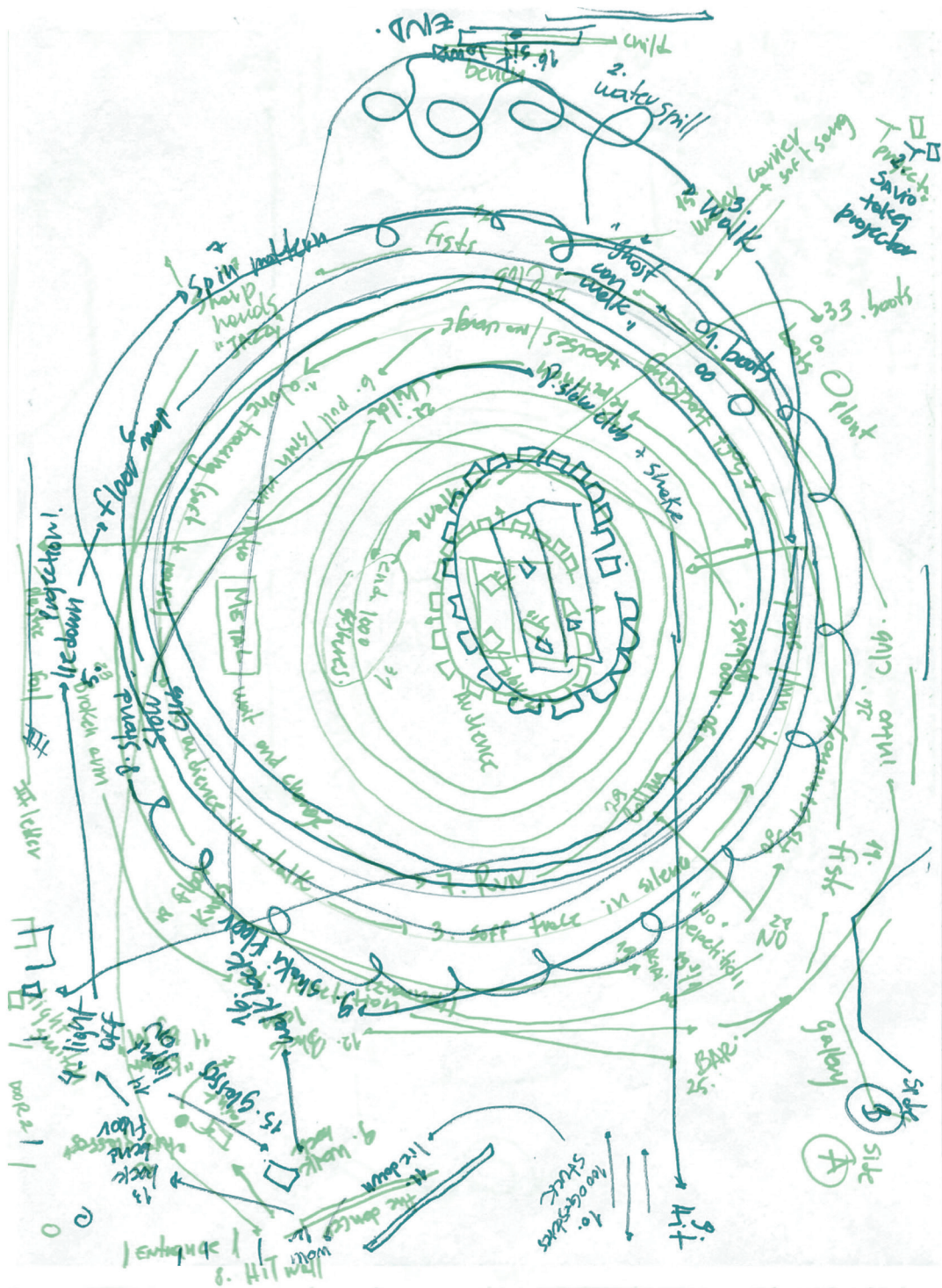
"Not as a gesture of loss, but of release. Not because the image would be gone, but because it had become something else. The photograph had done its job" she would later write in her monograph, "it had been transfigured into another color, into larger gestures and into a greater scale. It had entered time differently now, not as evidence, not as an accidental snapshot of a dancer, but monstrously as memory itself, phantasmagoric and distorted as any interpretation of the past - or the future."

Jasmine handed him the lighter.

They watched together as the paper curled in on itself, until the night it depicted grew even darker. The smoke rose and vanished, leaving behind just the ashes of the photograph as a memory of its fire.

The image was not erased. Partially missing, partially whole, it was painted. Which, in the end, might be the same thing as its extinction.





REHEARSAL SERIES

On a quest to be less self-referential and more aware of the unavoidable process of fictionalising reality—through hopes, fears, projections, and expectations—we initiate a process of auto-fictional co-writing as a radical form of honesty and a mindfulness practice. In this process, a series of stories emerge, forming a cosmogony that we have been exploring through a variety of artistic mediums, creating a body of work that challenges the linearity and taxonomy of time and media. Through our hybrid methodology—including auto-fiction, vinyl narrative pieces, scripts, and visual traces—we speculate a form of access that does not depend on the supremacy of the visual, but rather invites multiplicity, fragmentation, and sensory heterogeneity. The artwork exists across formats: it can be read, heard, seen, and felt, but never entirely apprehended through any singular modality. This refusal of completeness mirrors the experience of loss itself, where meaning becomes distributed across affect, memory, and fantasy. In this way, the single evening performance is only a middle point of a living project in which the work opens a dialogue with audiences and allows the research to outlive the often short-lived nature of

production-based contexts. To make it more tactile and to physicalise auto-fictional landscapes, we also entered a process of creating—or looking for—evidence from the stories' contexts, surroundings, and characters. In this framework, dance becomes part of the emotional landscape, finding its voice through a series of details observable in the audience's setup, in a narrator pressed into a vinyl, in the visual and graphic elements of the space, in cinematic gestures, in a forged atelier, in fragments of a living room, in memories of a particular area and its vegetation, and in old photographs that could belong to anyone's family—evoking a common language shaped by loss as a formative human experience. This effort to multiply the voice of the artistic research makes it more clear that art is not made in isolation. It is shaped by cooperation, whether as reflection or reaction to socio-cultural and local environments, or by its diffusion into various expertises and aesthetic sensibilities in its coming to being. Cooperation emerges in writing, collecting fragments, narrations, sound-building, conceptualising space, and treating it as an instalative dance exhibit, ...—in creating a hyper-object dependent on multiple people and their perception.

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