

# Under the Last Magnetic Sun

**Practices of (Counter)Research Imagination**

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Cătălin Gheorghe, Lorena Marcinec (eds.)



# **Under the Last Magnetic Sun**

**Practices of (Counter)Research Imagination**

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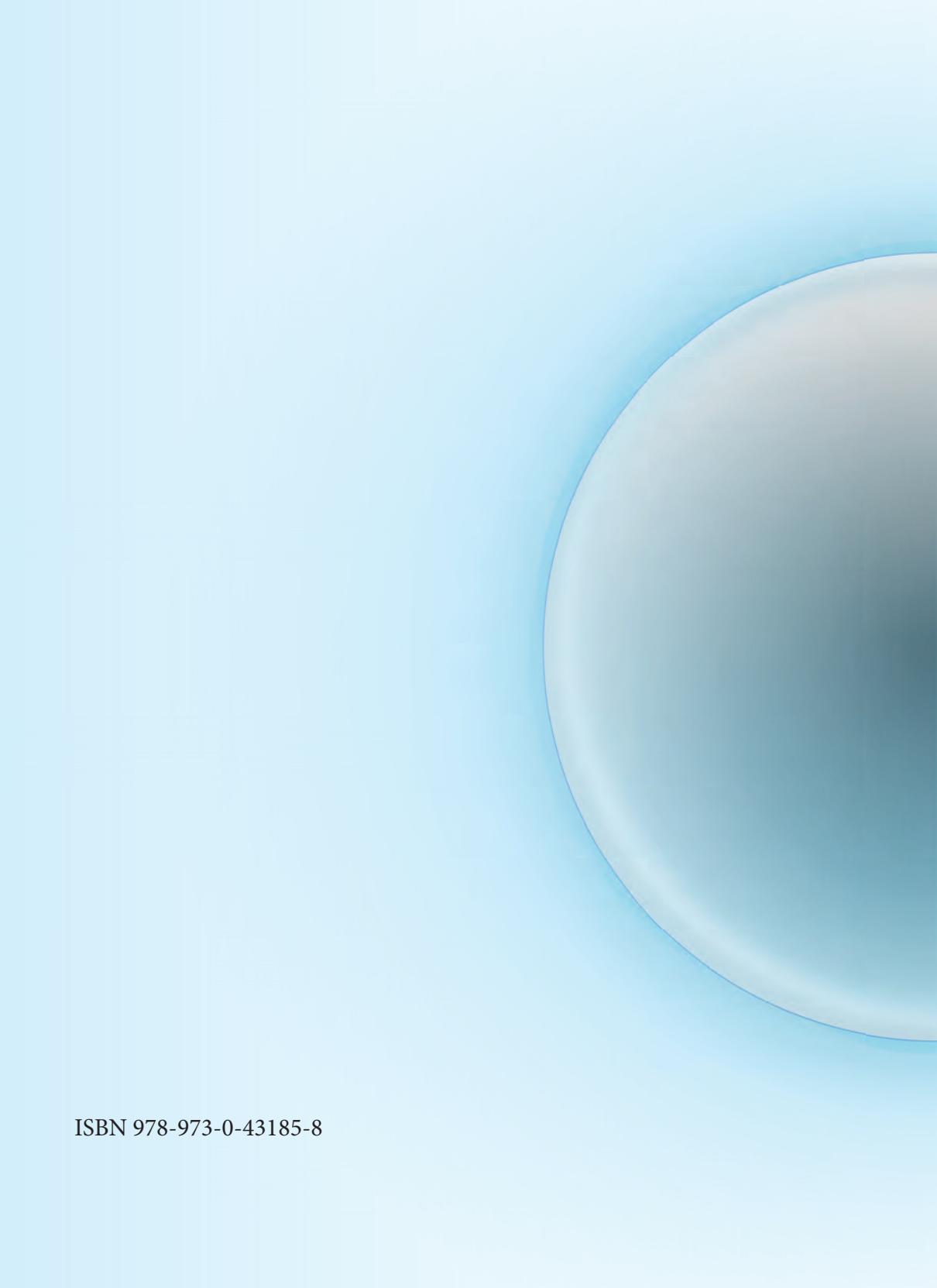
**Cătălin Marinescu**

**Radu Marțin**

**Ioana Roșu**

**Raul Saucă**

**Cristiana Ursache**

A large, light blue circle is positioned on the right side of the image, set against a light blue background. The circle is semi-transparent, allowing the background to be seen through it. The overall composition is minimalist and abstract.

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**Cătălin Gheorghe, Lorena Marciuc**

Practices of (counter)research imagination

This probabilistic generated book seems to be immersively conceived in resonance with an underrated hybrid genre, as a spectrum covering a (trans)script of a sonic translation which reverberates the inner voices from a series of sci-fi poems, a geography handbook, an epistolary archive, a political manifesto, an art exhibition (as disinhibition), and some other stuff.

‘The Last Magnetic Sun’ appeared in a lucid dream. It was not a star, but a machine. It started to produce meanings, speculations, desires, and contradictions. As a cinematic experience, it assembled itself from different aspirations, illusions, revolts, fugitive practices, and thoughts implying the impetuous impulse to make worlds outside ecosystems, to conceive geographic atopies and sit-uations, to listen to the breath of city(land)scapes, to empathise with the logic of the sun overseeing migration routes, feeding the soils, marking the passing of time (through sundials), to stay away in the vegetation that is spreading now over the earth and the rocks, hiding incredible traces and reflecting the unbearable sky.

Nonetheless, the book will not reveal the mystery, will not offer unexpected answers, will not close the case. Nobody will ever know what is still there, on the dark side of the last magnetic sun.

From a certain distance (taking into consideration the predetermined, possible prejudicial, attitude to take an artificial

epistemic distance from an object of observation) there are multiple and contradictory factual derivative meanings of the effective relation with one of the possible imagined suns. Is that sun a symbol of a centre of reference to cultivate meaningful (disputed) ideas, (dislocated) memories, (disaffected) affects? Is that sun a centre of a peripheral, marginal, gnostic world that has its own autonomous disruptive existence? Is that sun an artificial device illuminating the walls of a cultural space that produces artistic experiments at the frontier of what is still unknown?

Each artist, as a cultural/social worker, as a researcher, as an explorer of the unknown, strives to conceive its own exit/existence strategy, to take a certain distance for having a wider view of the objectual/abjectual world in which they live, or to situate themselves between systems (from nervous to global systems).

Even if speculative fiction is sometimes used as a synonym for science fiction (Steven Shaviro) it is still associated with the imagination of alternative worlds that can change our perception, overturn our understanding, rewrite our ways of living, despite any kind of inherent uncertainty.

There is not something necessary to be discovered. A researcher is not necessary in the position to find out new/innovative objects of inquiry, perspectives to operate in advance, technologies to investigate further dimensions of wonder, but s/he is overturned in her/himself to understand the controversy of becoming, the processual flow of doings, the movement of speculation away from extrapolation.

The beauty is in the contingency of suspension. The research experience is a light conglomerate of disrupted sequences of self-perceptions and self-anticipations that are floating between nomadic stations of thought. Waiting to be transported, a researcher is traveling in the distorted space of discontinuous imagination.

In the folds of the imagination, an overwhelming sentiment of loneliness and an unexpected encounter with others' 'not-yet-presence' collapse one into each other. The researcher feels, simultaneously, alienated and accompanied. It is a stranger for her/himself between strange strangers. And then a(n) (imaginary) conversation with 'things' around and afar ignite the pinkish flames to read in the aspatial dark. A cognitive estrangement (Darko Suvin) is experienced as being a sufficient reason to look for concretizations

even away from definitive explanations.

(Counter)Researchers are living in a minority, speaking a minor language, self-naturalized from an artificial performative elucidation. They are not speaking/translating to a specific someone, but they play a tactical (even speculative) role to speak (as drawing on, or gesturing upon) to a wall that reverberates towards those who are listening as seeing from behind. The researcher is in avantgarde, facing all the imperfections, fissures, dramaturgies of the wall that becomes part of a captivating narrative. And then, the researcher is attracted by a blinding sun, that reverse her/him in the head, and resets the senses, and rescripts that which is overconsidered the already known.

At that (almost insane) moment, (counter)research spikes as a movement against the fetishisation (as academisation) of research. It is not denying the critical value of research, but contests its speculative scientification and its financial politisation. It is almost something similar to fugitive studies, but is rather a trial to get away even from flight, and any kind of any other, studies.

If, not only through a mental experiment, a (counter)researcher (positioning her/himself counterintuitively) will be in the (suspended) situation to understand 'research' as an intoxicating cocktail of feelings, rather than being able to comprehend the impossible limitation of sadness, the continuous flipping of wonder, the profound infinity of refusal, the deliberative fixation with keeping the wrong distance. And that is, maybe, because, in the emanation of its spectrality, 'research' confronts its own denial.

There is not a time for research. Because time does not exist. It is only our inability to understand or to cope with the conjunction of different modes of all-directions-transience. We live in a (extra-future-multi-present-conditional-past) continuous that is just concealed in the conventionality of linear passing. We are simultaneously in everything, and separated in the still contemplation of nothingness. That is why research is meaningless, if it is not understood from the perspective of its crucial role. Because it connects the horizontality of moving/staying away with the verticality of falling/raising here, which is the most important spatial identificator to disconnect ourselves from all that is 'there'. What is 'there' is the magnificent attractor that distracts someone from being 'here'. But, contrary to contingent appearances, 'here' is not at home. 'Here' is already somewhere else.

Learning from the sun makes you understand that there are risings and dusks, in different cycles, and makes you feel enlightened and dark, hot and cold, close and far, in different nuances, tones, rhythms. Also, we are also learning that not everything can be seen, but can be felt or lived as an absence. Such as the magnetism is invisible, but proved to be disruptive.

We've learned that, in the astronomical sense, a revolution describes the rotation of celestial bodies. We've learned that a sun supports life on a planet that revolves around it. We've learned that, in a similar way, in the social ecosystem, a revolution can turn the flow of events in favour of a larger impact of equity and support of common considerations.

We've also learned that the Sun is a cosmic mark that, in its predictability, appears and disappears, depending on the revolution movement of the earth in an unpredictable multiverse. This is one of the founding contradictions of our limited (astrological) knowledge. In the process of unlearning, we've learned that the unknown is our contracted/dilated space for re-staging the play of our political/ (counter)research imagination.

This experimental book was generated in the expanded field of deflection and (counter)reflection on the unpredictability and joy of the imagination, at the interference of author's introspection and extrospection, based on a two folded obstruction. In the editorial transgressive outline, the doctoral students, as contributors, received rather two obstructions than a set of instructions. The book became a (de)exhibitionary space divided in an inner space as a personal space in which the researcher had to explore idiosyncratic conditions to approach specific interests in their proposed doctoral research from the perspective of their own (anti)methodological position, and an outer space as a common space of curiosity, inquiry and imagination in which the researcher had to generate a response to either the ideas that circulated during the IASS – Iasi Arts Summer School [organized by the Doctoral School of Visual Arts at UNAGE Iași on September 3-5, 2025, with the theme „Emancipative Research. Critical perspectives in curatorial and artistic research”, hosting the guest lecturers Charles Esche, Maria Hlavajova, Ronald Kolb], or the visiting experiences at Istanbul Biennial and/or the encounter with the city (on October 5-9, 2025), or both. It is true that an activation of a paradigm

involving a sequencing of inner/outer research implies a reflection on what could be included and what remains excluded from the sight/hearing of the researcher. In that intermediary, undecided space of oscillation, between circumspect darkness and trustful illumination, between silent repulsion and affirmative attraction, between creative destruction and destructured construction, this book (is it a book!?) appeared, through a crack, under the last magnetic sun.



## **SPACE 1. INNER RESEARCH**

**Lorena Marciuc**  
Curator-on-the-move

Being inside the infrastructures, outside of them or part of them involves a static counterpoint in relation to a paradigm the cultural field construes. Despite its fluctuations, there is a form of stability at the foreground of this positionality, one which is definitory by nature and inescapable. Research-led practices appear as mechanisms which granulate this hypothesis, fracturing well established practices of the exhibitionary act by means of imbuing institutions with constellations of perspectives and awareness of involvement and consequences. Mixing up knowledge territories with interdisciplinarity and drawing a cartography of imaginary counterresearch which defies the unattainable future that never belongs to the present presents itself as strategy worth taking into account—if the future is continuously postponed, then there appears no choice on the horizon. But the dark side of that way too furthered moon faces us slightly if we consider perspectives such as Maria Hlavajova’s proposition of imagining now that which is not yet fulfilled. And for that, I name the condition of continuous movement as necessary, in other words—a curator-on-the-move. Someone who moves in between spaces, physical or mental, who infers meaning and uses infrastructure as the Swedish Exhibition Agency proposed – a method of facilitating other publics to have a say,

not to deliver meaning hegemonically as they quote Malraux proposed through his model.

A curator-on-the-move requires gaps and polyvocality, as his processualism is aware of constitutive exclusions, he defies through *parastructures* (Nora Sternfeld) the hegemony. He inspires responses and allows for comprehension to vary and sediment itself gradually, according to the new spaces the viewer or himself encounters. The curator must therefore run, as only through movement and change the meaning can be alive and transformative. On the opposite end positionality for the *curatorial* implies inertia and fixated forms, but the artistic object of contemporary times is different, no longer approachable in a unidirectional predefined manner, it proposes in fact openness, narrative open-endedness and power of change. The object as experience, as it is now defined, needs a curator perpetually moving too, who allows for what is unable to be presented and also that which escapes the archive to be invisibly present and found, if needed, by the publics. He may become thus one who creates resonances and presents meaning as being made by many, not one.

The curator-on-the-move borrows from the logic of running the principle of gliding over the surface, be it walking or running, in order not to reach a certain point, but a manner of being—in touch with the surface (Earth) beneath, always aiming for the magnetism of the sky, constantly moving and knowing by connection. He conquers the distance between mind and matter. Similarly to what topological maps show, sense is created as matter sediments itself, with time, creating geographical entities on the surface of the planet. Mountains appear through cracks of tectonic plates, sculpted within centuries by weather conditions and measured by the human being in order to be made familiar to us. The alpinist traverses these changes, encountering them by himself, in order to see and understand and so does the curator, he cannot stand in the distance, but travel and know the edges of what is possible or impossible to be known. Despite this, he cannot remain there, on the brink of the ridge as there are no facilities to live there. He continues his travels and brings together the inner and outer world for everyone. The curator must travel, escape the ivory tower and work as a compass who knows the Earth and can direct towards North. One who sits in his place can know the world only by travelling with his mind, imagining, but imagining is not enough as Maria Hlavajova

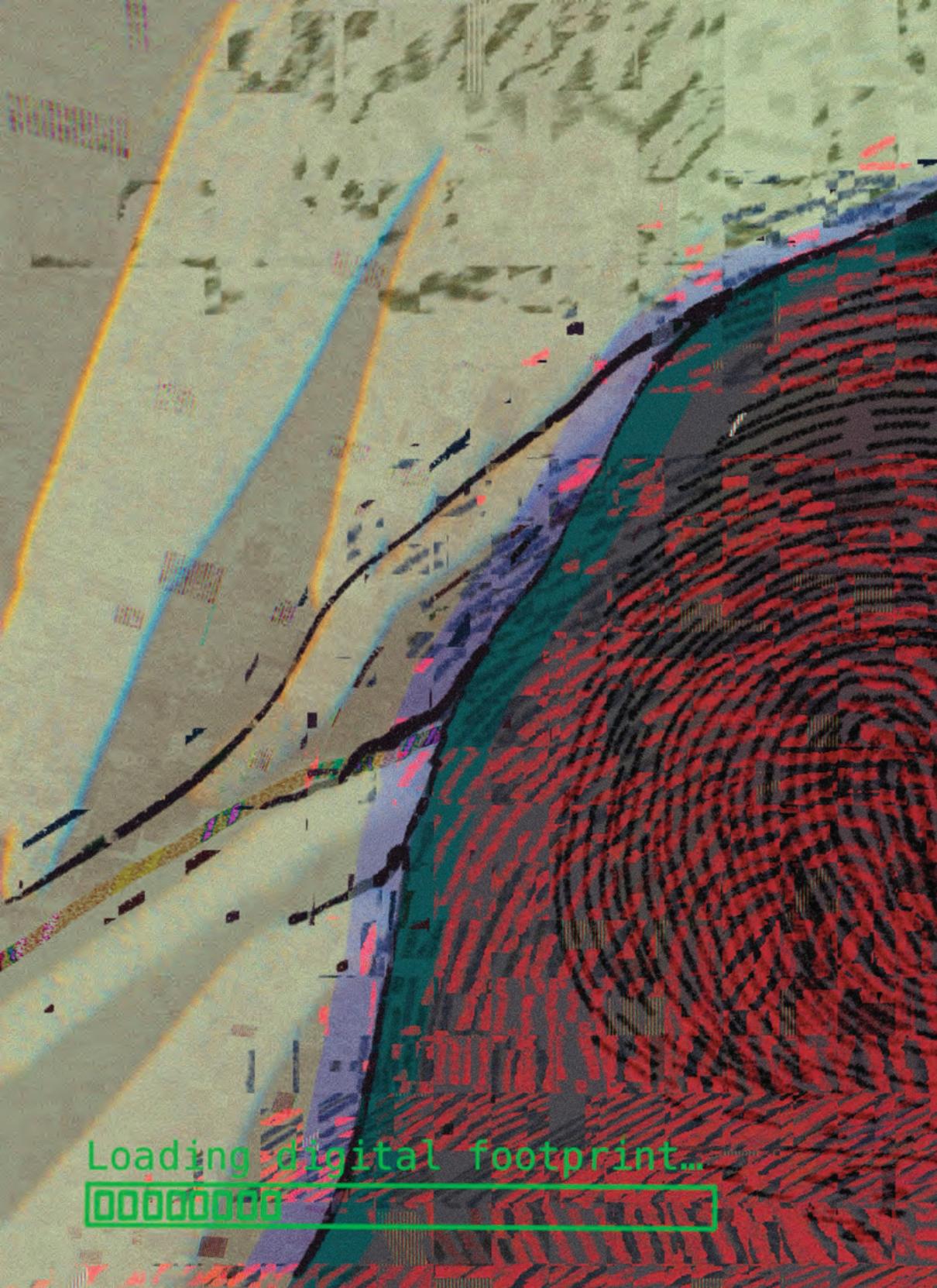
suggests. Extituting, or what Nora Sternfeld calls *zones of contact*, are strategies of subduing that take place in-the-world, among people and their uncertainties of the surrounding world, surveilling borders of knowledge such as those explored by Jean-Hubert Martin with *Magiciens de la Terre*. According to Kate Fowle, what Martin did and, subsequently, Elisabeth Sussman—with the 1993 biennial exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York—was to tackle down the issue of globalisation with an effort of going around universalism for a truer internationalisation. How much of this issue was in fact rightfully put into practice is not the main concern, but what Fowle and Hans Ulrich Obrist vouch for is a generative curatorial practice, research as active, as she titles her paper, which sketches a complementary practice to how they anticipate a curator should work. With *Cities on the Move*, Obrist describes the infrastructure (or maybe parastructure to be fair) of collaborative energy which immerses itself in the travels, the movement and spontaneity of the collectives formed everywhere around the world. And this everywhere defines in fact the contemporary culture, as James Voorhies puts it in his *Postsensual Aesthetics*—a time when space and temporality are open for art to be understood extensively. An *anytime-anywhere* becomes the precondition for curating nowadays, which only can redefine the position of the curator in such a constellation.

The aforementioned examples serve as proof of the still existing trial-and-error method of finding the proper way to move among cultures respectfully, without reiterating a Western hegemonic position which transforms, maybe by accident, internationalism into regionalism or nationalism, as Hou Hanru acknowledges. A curator-on-the-move, in a hypothetical perfect version, could be the one who counter-researches spaces unfamiliar to him and who moves among types of knowledge in an effort of expansion, not necessarily of production. Movement must not be understood with a capitalist nuance, it implies no accessibility nor simplification, but a desire for trying to expand one's field to as much as possible. True encounter with objective reality may not be possible, but the effort of trying to get close to it is worth our time, and so is for the curator.

**Sabina Benescu**  
Pixelated sedimentations

Through this series of works, I explore the intersection between knowledge, memory, and symbolism by evoking a virtual space with geomorphological topography, imagined as a digital cave.

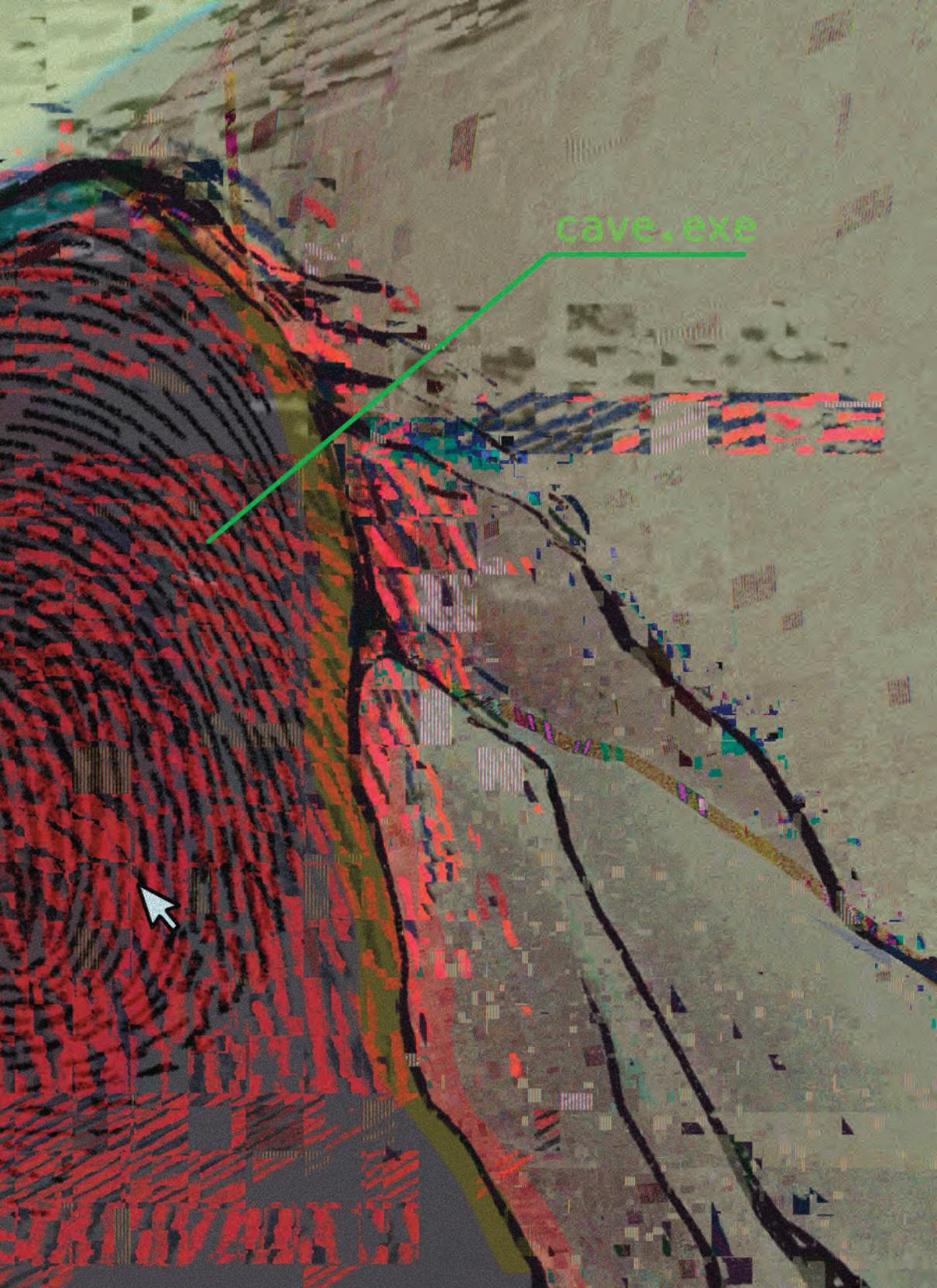
Thus, the first work represents the entrance to this sanctuary, which takes the form of a digital fingerprint, creating a virtual relief of cybernetic memory.

A digital landscape featuring a winding path composed of blue and orange lines. The path starts from the bottom left, curves upwards and to the right, then descends towards the center. The terrain is a mix of green, grey, and red. In the bottom right corner, there is a large, stylized red and black fingerprint-like pattern. The overall image has a high-contrast, digital aesthetic.

Loading digital footprint...

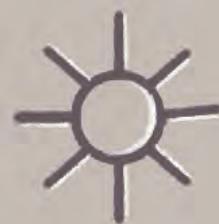
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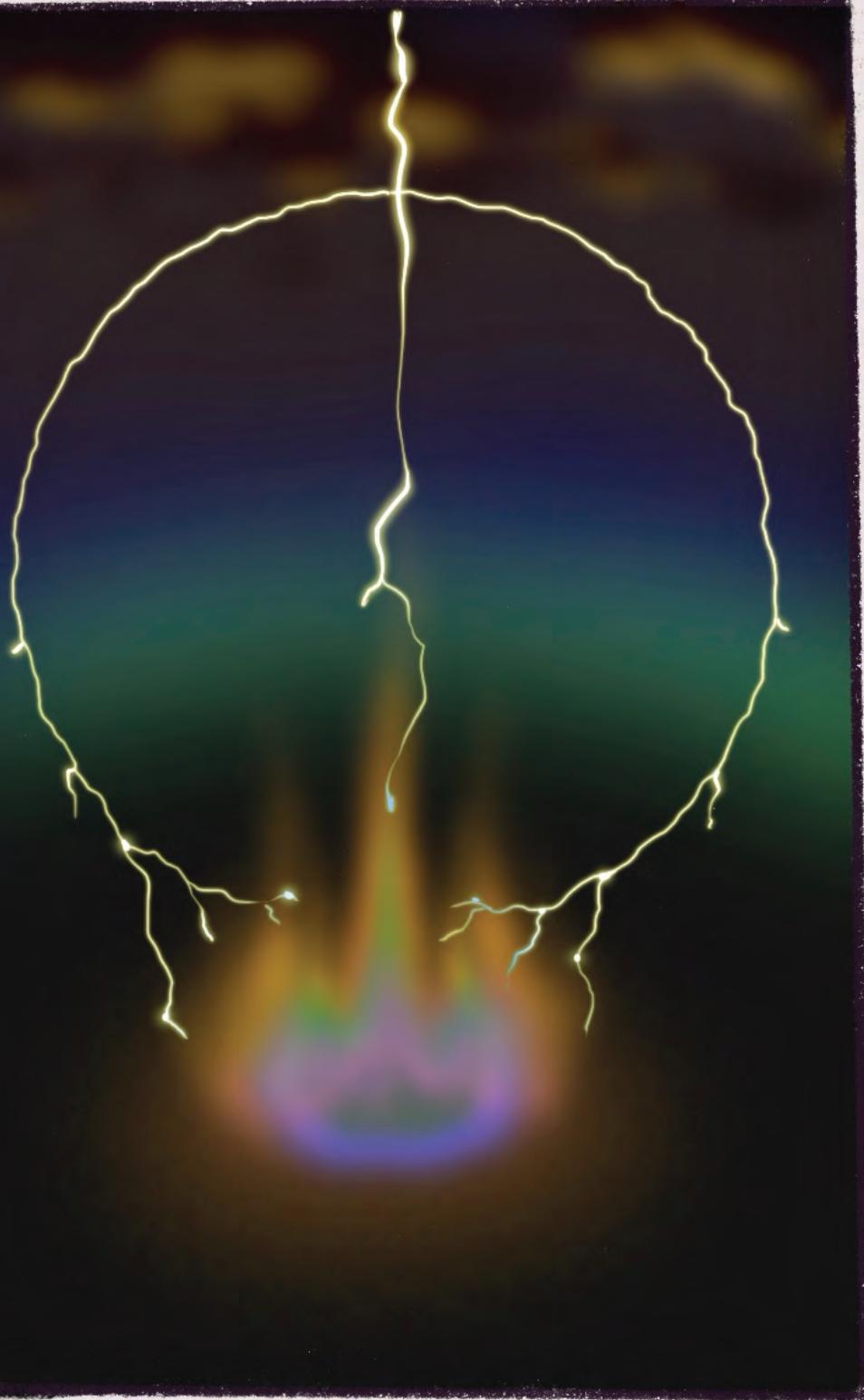
cave.exe



In the second work, I seek to capture the symbolic transition from the representation of the sun to the power icon of computers, highlighting the continuity and transformation of the energies that have shaped and continue to shape the paths of exploration and knowledge.

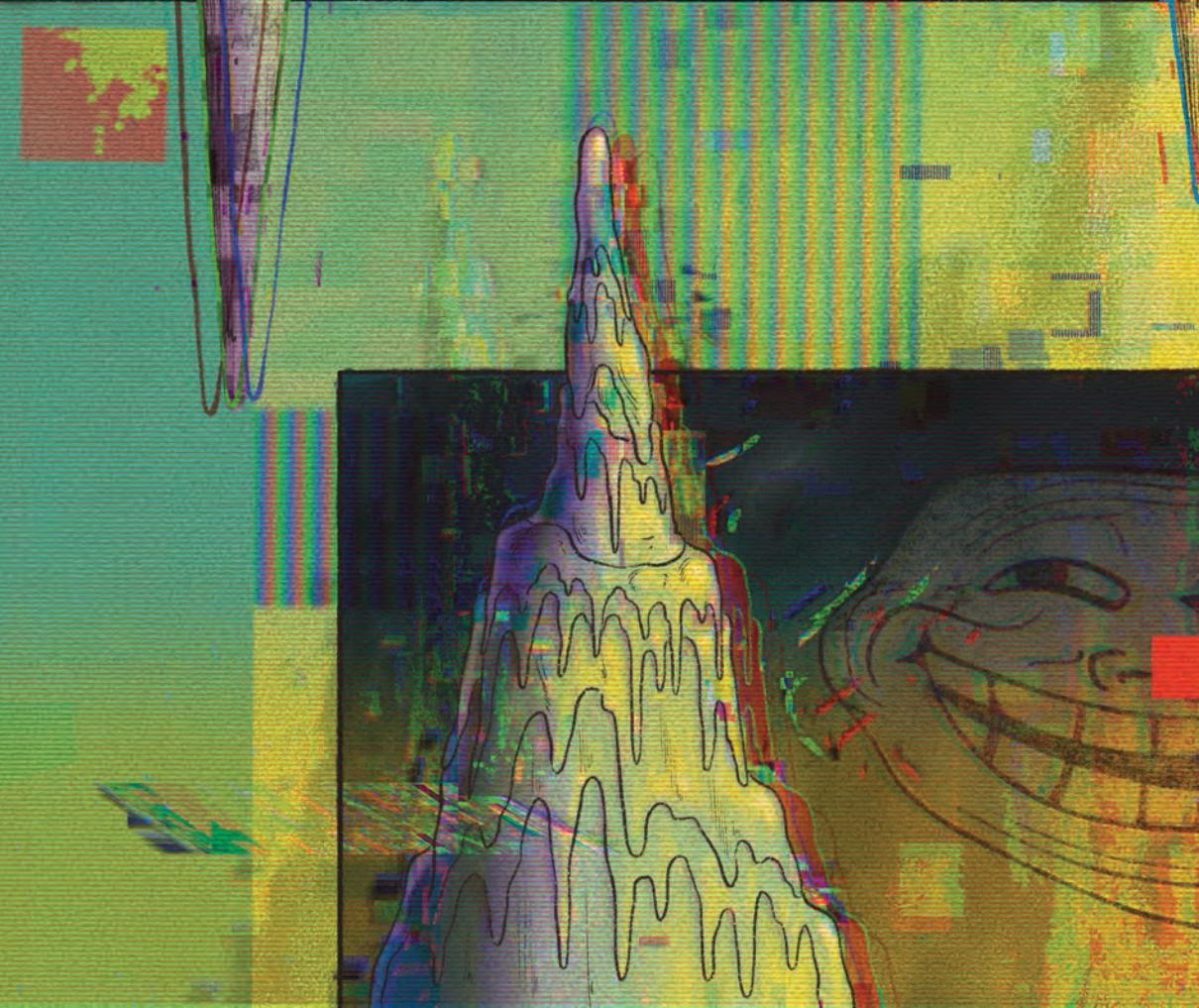
The third work is an extension of this transition. Here, by juxtaposing the lightning bolt that takes the form of the power symbol with the image of fire, I wish to evoke a cycle of knowledge. The primordial energy, instrumentalized for human progress, is identified today in a society articulated around electrical energy infrastructures, thus completing a symbolic circuit of transmission and acquisition of knowledge.

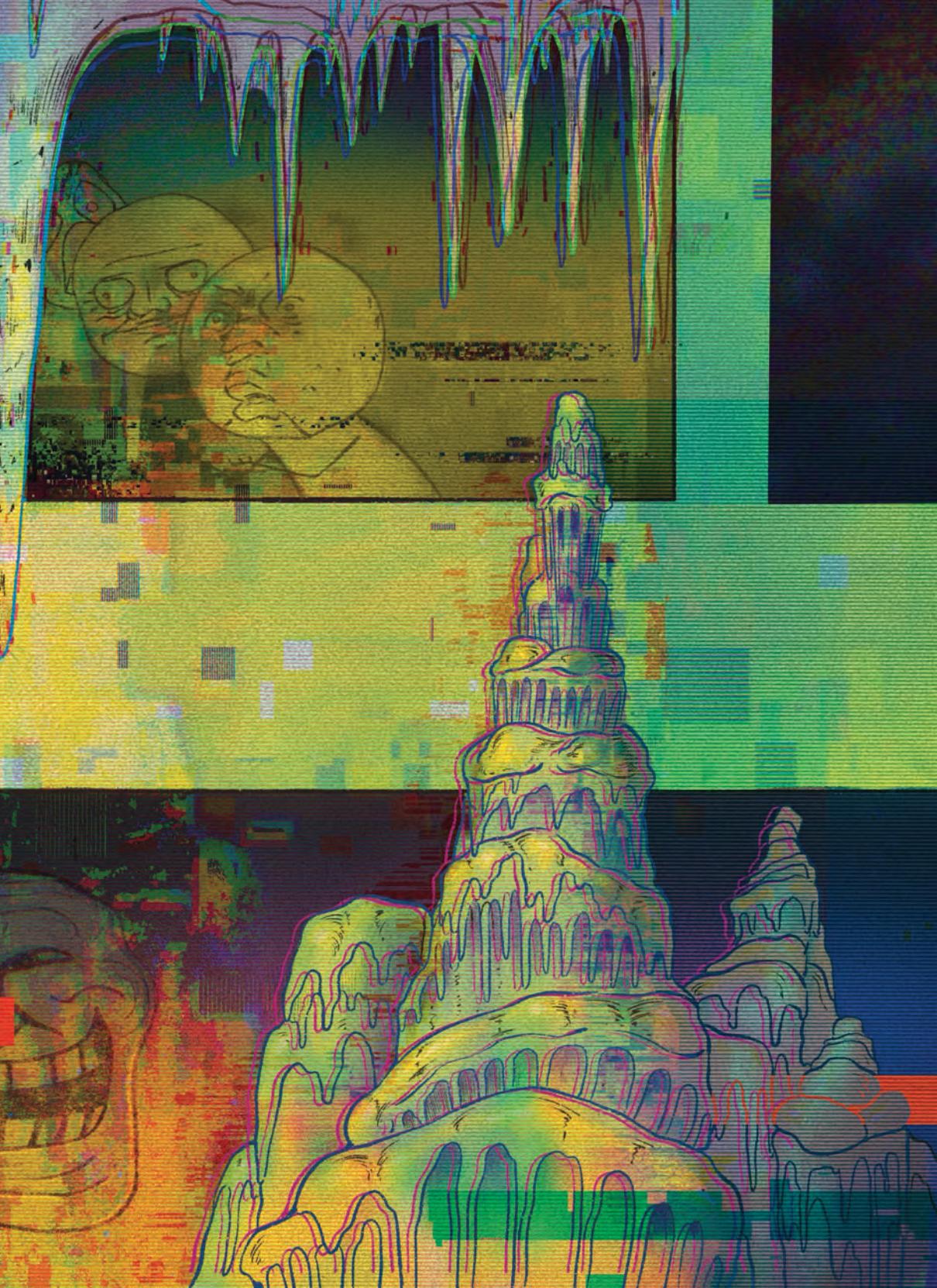


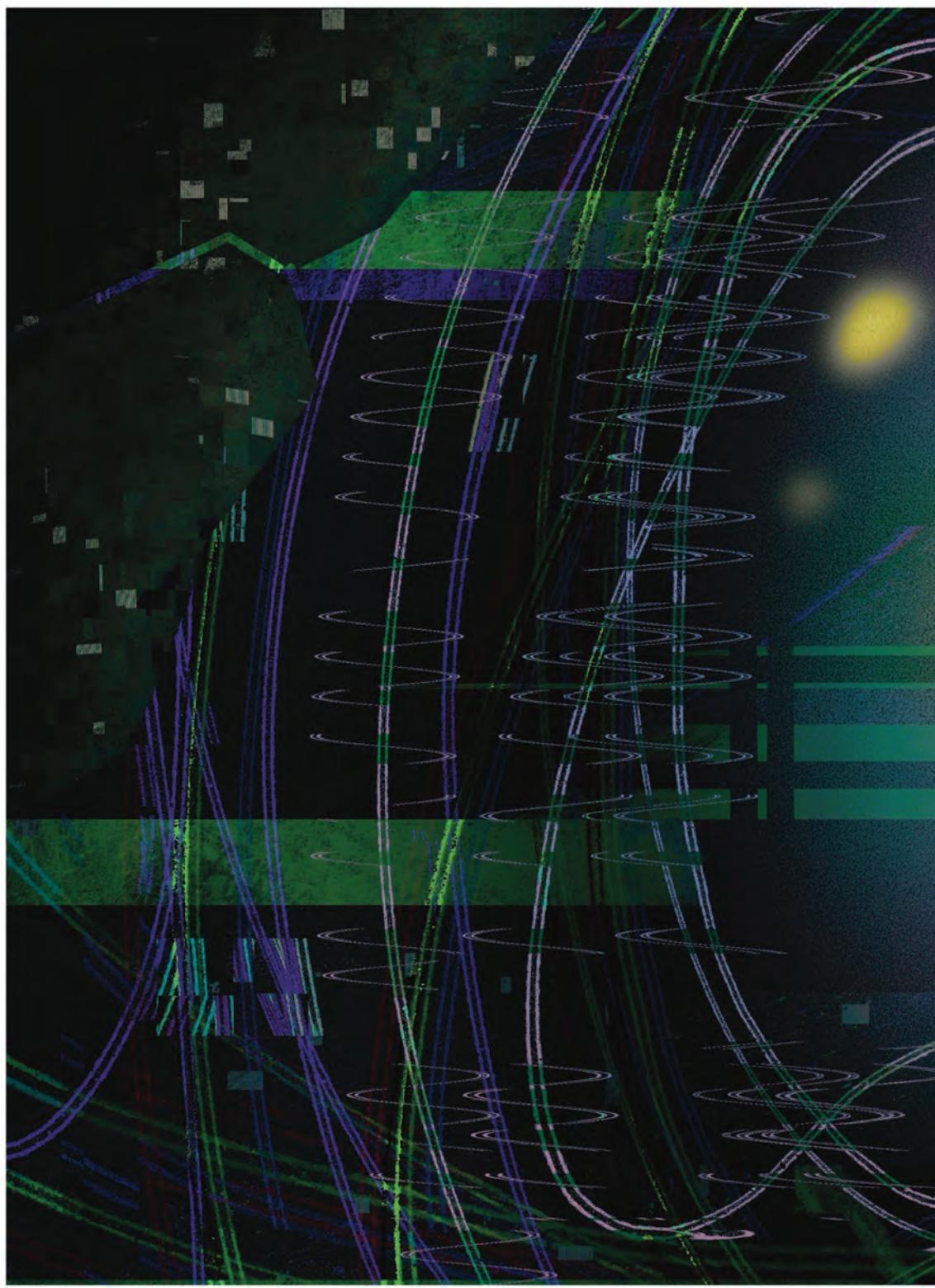


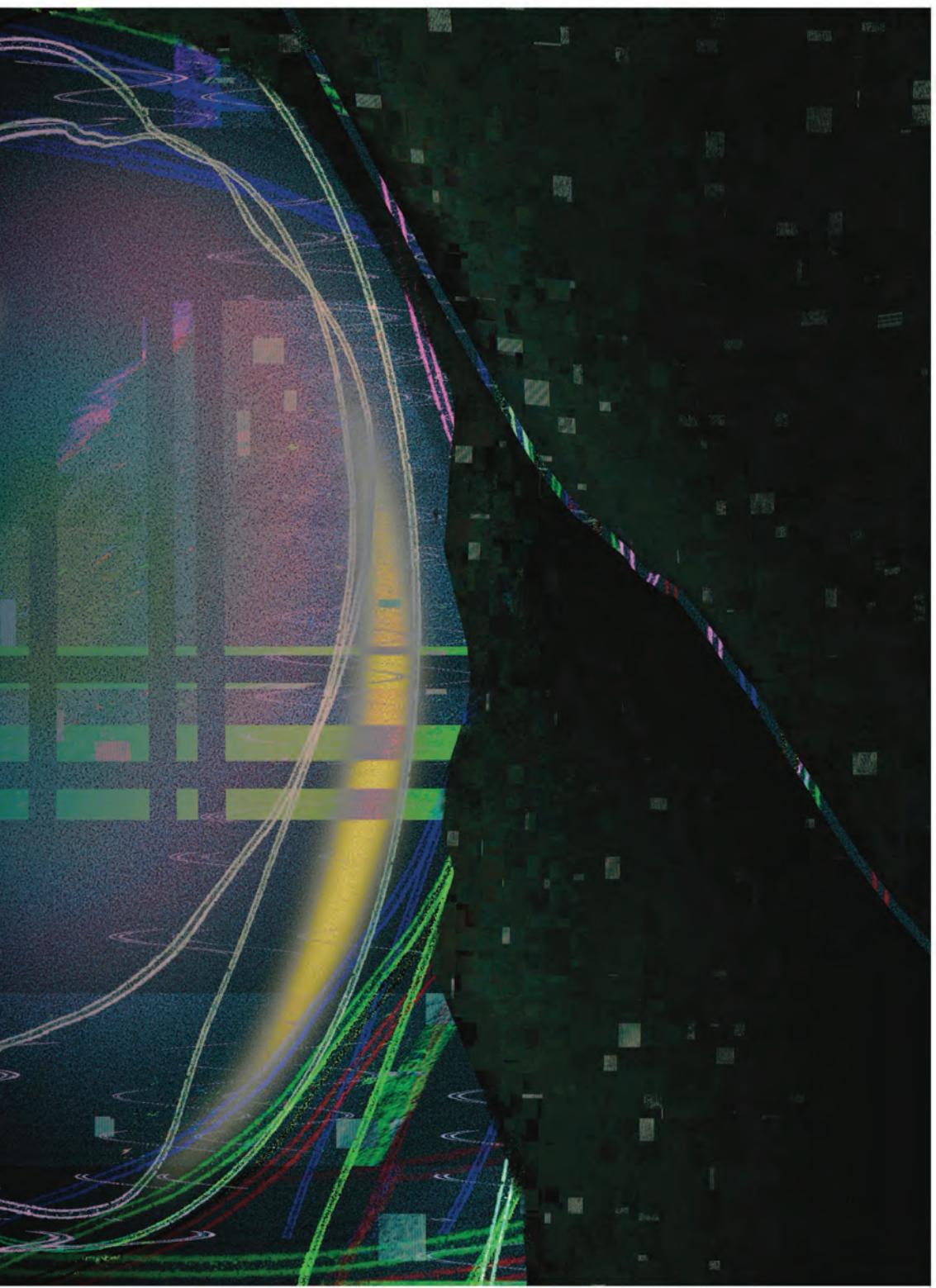
In the next work, I propose an incursion into the digital cave, where the walls are covered with early memes belonging to *Rage comics* that were popular in the early days of social networks.

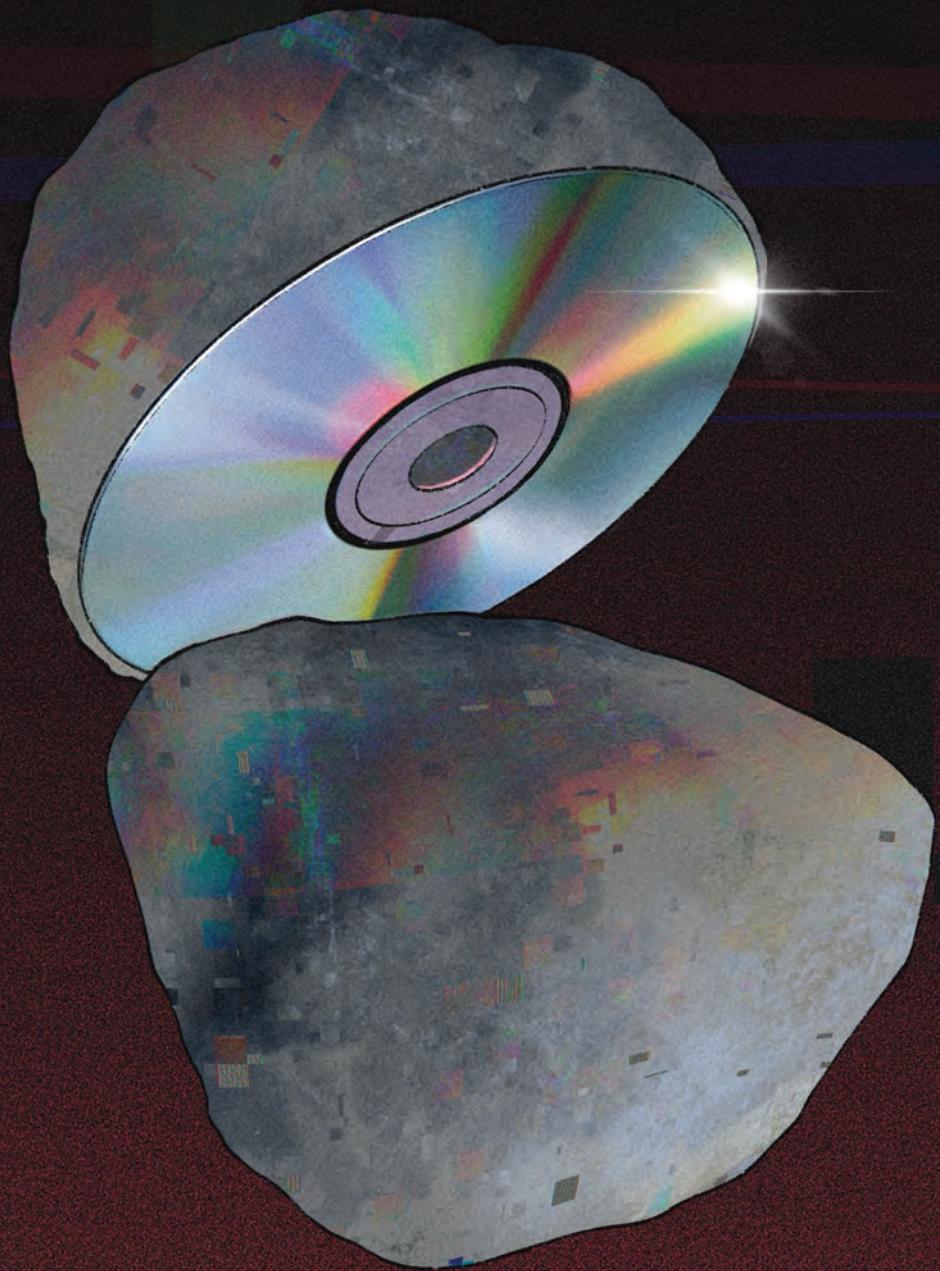
The way they are arranged on the surface of the walls is intended to evoke the organization of cave paintings, suggesting that these digital artifacts can be seen as alternative tools for communication and cultural preservation.

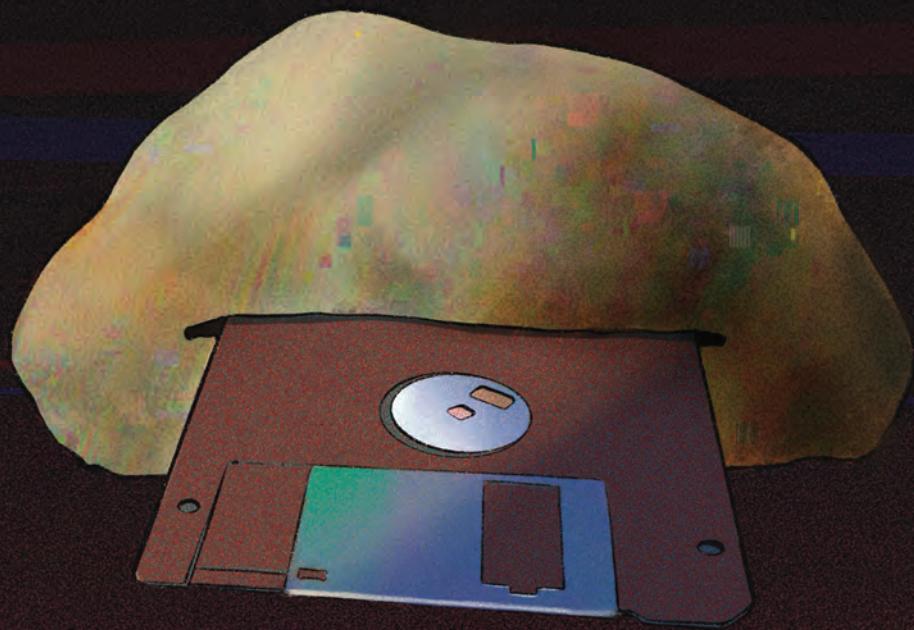












**Radu Marťin**

Glitches and roots: a network poem for a hybrid ecology



# Glitches and Roots: A Network

# ark Poem for a Hybrid Ecology

```
1 pixel_fog -> ("haze")
2     # the image exhales itself,
3     # a mist of broken resolution,
4     # as if vision eroded into dust.
```

```
1 syntax_root -> ("code as soil")
2 # language becomes terrain,
3 # each operator a stone, a sediment,
4 # shaping a new topography of thought
```

```

    110
    00101
    1100110
    1100110
    1100101
    1010101

1011010 1001
01100101 100 110
100100100 0 10100
110011001 1 1010010
010100101 11010010
1001001001 1001001001

01100101 0
00001101 0 110
110010100 0 10010
110010010 1 11000100
010101001 10101001
1001001001 1001010101

0101 0
0101 0
0101 0101
010 0
0

```

ASCII

```
1 mirror_loop -> ("self-recog-  
2      # reflection folding up  
3      # a hall of echoès when  
4      # the system seeing on  
text26
```

```
1 root_memory -> ("organic archive")
2   # traces of soil encoded as silent data,
3   # the plant remembers what the machine cannot.
```

4  
5  
text24

```
1 archive -> ("seed / origin")
2   # every generative system begins with a seed,
3   # a collection of data, memories, codes, or archives
4   # compressed potential waiting to unfold.
```

5



```
1 viewer_proximity -> NOISE ("disturbance / parasite")
2   # human presence does not bring warmth,
3   # but entropy: an exogenous vibration
4   # that fractures the visual field like sudden erosion.
5
```

130



#### 1 plant sensor

10

```
1 plant_sensor -> ("organism-translator")
2   # the plant is no longer a mere biological entity,
3   # but a mediator between soil and circuit,
4   # a living node caught between root and cable.
5   # the plant is no longer a mere biological entity,
```

10



```
1 ecosystem ->
2   # an image
3   # resembling
4   # shaped like
5   # an envelope
6   # crystals
7   # sediments
8   # a fragment
```

2015

```
1 algorithm -> ("rules / constraints")
2   # the algorithm is tectonic force,
3   # invisible yet decisive,
4   # pushing, colliding, eroding-
5   # shaping the landscape of possibility
```

text16



01101  
0001  
0001  
001  
01

01001  
0001  
0001  
001

```
1 electric_leaf -> ("photosynthetic surface")
2   # leaves glow in borrowed spectra,
3   # harvesting photons of electricity,
4   # chlorophyll written in binary.
5
```

text28



ognition",
 on reflection,
 identity dissolve
 itself.

```
1 hybrid_terrain -> ("unstable landscape")
2   # roots, pixels, photons, glitches-
3   # all sediment into a geography without map,
4   # a territory only visible when disturbed.
```

text30

PARSITE

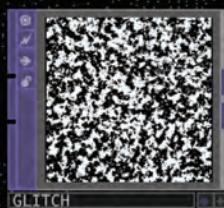
```
1 parasitic_whisper -> ("hidden signal")
2   # faint frequencies leak from the cables,
3   # as if technology murmurs to itself,
4   # a secret dialogue beneath the noise.
5
```

text29

- ("fluid topography")
 imagined landscape, fluid and harmonious,
 along a terrain just born,
 by soft currents and luminous sediments.
 environment rendered as a flowing terrain,
 alline rivers of pixels,
 elements of color, dunes of moving light,
 while equilibrium constantly rewritten.



ity.



```
1 GLITCH GLITCH GLITCH GLITCH GLITCH  
2 GLITCH GLITCH GLITCH GLITCH GLITCH  
3 GLITCH GLITCH GLITCH GLITCH GLITCH
```

text6

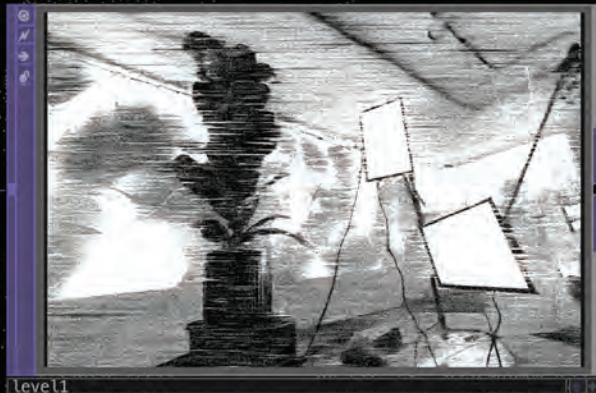
```
1 screen  
2 #  
3 #  
4 #  
5 #  
6 #  
7 #  
8 #  
9 #  
10 #  
11 #  
12 #  
13 #  
14 #
```

```
1 # the  
2 #  
3 #  
4 # each  
5 #  
6 #  
7 #  
8 #
```

```
1 plant_sensor -> ("organic input")  
2      # unlike pure code,  
3      # here the signal is vegetal,  
4      # rooted in soil yet translated to electricity.  
5
```

text19





```
n_white -> LIGHT("synthetic sun / digital photosynthesis")
the screens become a magnetic sun,
projecting artificial photons into digital photosynthesis.
the plant breathes a light that doesn't exist,
feeding on specters, burnt pixels, and sterile radiation.
a process both vital and toxic, nourishing and exhausting.
the screens operate as artificial suns,
radiating sterile luminosity.
digital photosynthesis begins:
photons of data enter the plant-sensor,
the organism consumes light made of numbers.
but this sun burns and nourishes at once,
creating growth from emptiness,
a metabolism of illusions.
```

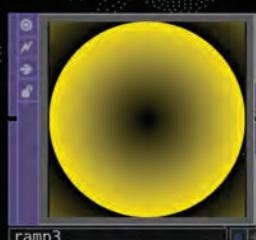
```
e glitch acts as an inner earthquake,
a wound that never heals,
multiplying through its own self-consumption.
ch glitch is a scar across the surface,
multiplying through recursive reflection,
a landslide of images devouring their origin,
entropy disguised as ornament.
```

```
1 cables -> ("inverted roots / artificial rhizome")
2     # the cables grow downward, as if roots inverted,
3     # extracting sap from an artificial soil.
4     # black veins carrying flows of data,
5     # not water, not minerals.
6
```

text9



ramp2



ramp3



Photosynthesis



Photosynthesis1



Photosynthesis2



Photosynthesis3

```
1 floor_reflection ->
2     # the reflective floor
3     # a lake of inverted
4     # where organic
5     # distorted, yet
6     # the reflective
7     # a mineral memb
8     # doubling each
```

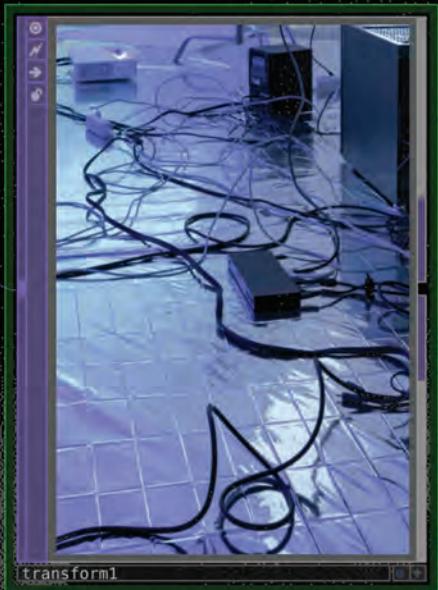
text10

```
1 screen_white -> LIGHT("last magnetic sun")
2     # beyond nourishment, a magnetic pull,
3     # oscillating between attraction and rejection,
4     # a star that blinds as much as it illuminates,
5     # its gravity bending perception into paradox.
```

text12

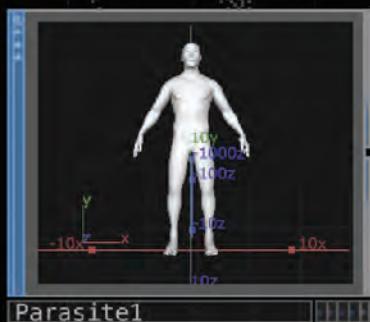
```
1 light -> ("synthetic sun / magnetic force")
2     # every generative process orbits a source of energy,
3     # here it is the artificial sun,
4     # a screen that both nourishes and blinds.
```

text20

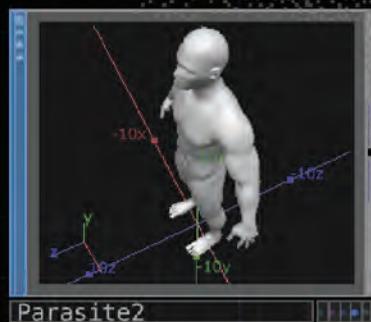


```
RENDER("mirror / geological crust")
the floor becomes a thin crust of transition,
the reflected skies,
and artificial stare at each other,
they are bound together.
the ground becomes a threshold,
the membrane capturing both sky and abyss,
the image until perception fractures.
```

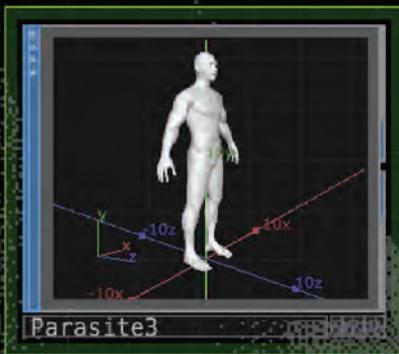




Parasite1



Parasite2



Parasite3



Parasite4



```
1 spectator -> ("observer / intruder")
2 # the spectator enters as both witness
3 # an unavoidable parasite,
4 # altering the very balance they can
5 # the human is not neutral,
6 # their body is a disruptive input,
7 # reshaping the ecosystem by mere presence
8 # becoming the parasite that completes
9
```

text11



```
1 soundscape -> ("resonance field")
2     # audio glitches reverberate like tectonic cracks,
3     # a vibration beneath the surface,
4     # the sonic equivalent of shifting plates.
5
6
```

text13

ness and trespasser,

ame to observe.

presence,
 etes the circuit.

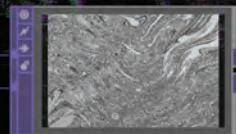
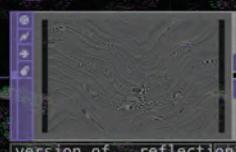


```
1 feedback_loop -> ("auto-c
2      # the system folds ba
3      # devouring its own i
4      # mirroring the way t
5      # the very nature it
```

text14

```
1 spectator -> ("co-author / disruptor")
2      # generative art shifts authorship,
3      # the spectator is no longer passive,
4      # but a catalyst-an intruder
5      # whose presence alters the output.
```

text18



annibalism")  
ck into itself,  
image,  
technology consumes  
simulates.

```
1 Parasite -> ("case study / hybrid ecosystem")  
2     # in Parasite the generative system is alive:  
3     # the plant breathes data,  
4     # human presence mutates the field,  
5     # glitch emerges as aesthetic geology.  
6     # digital photosynthesis sustains and corrodes,  
7     # producing an unstable relief of light.
```

text17



RENDER

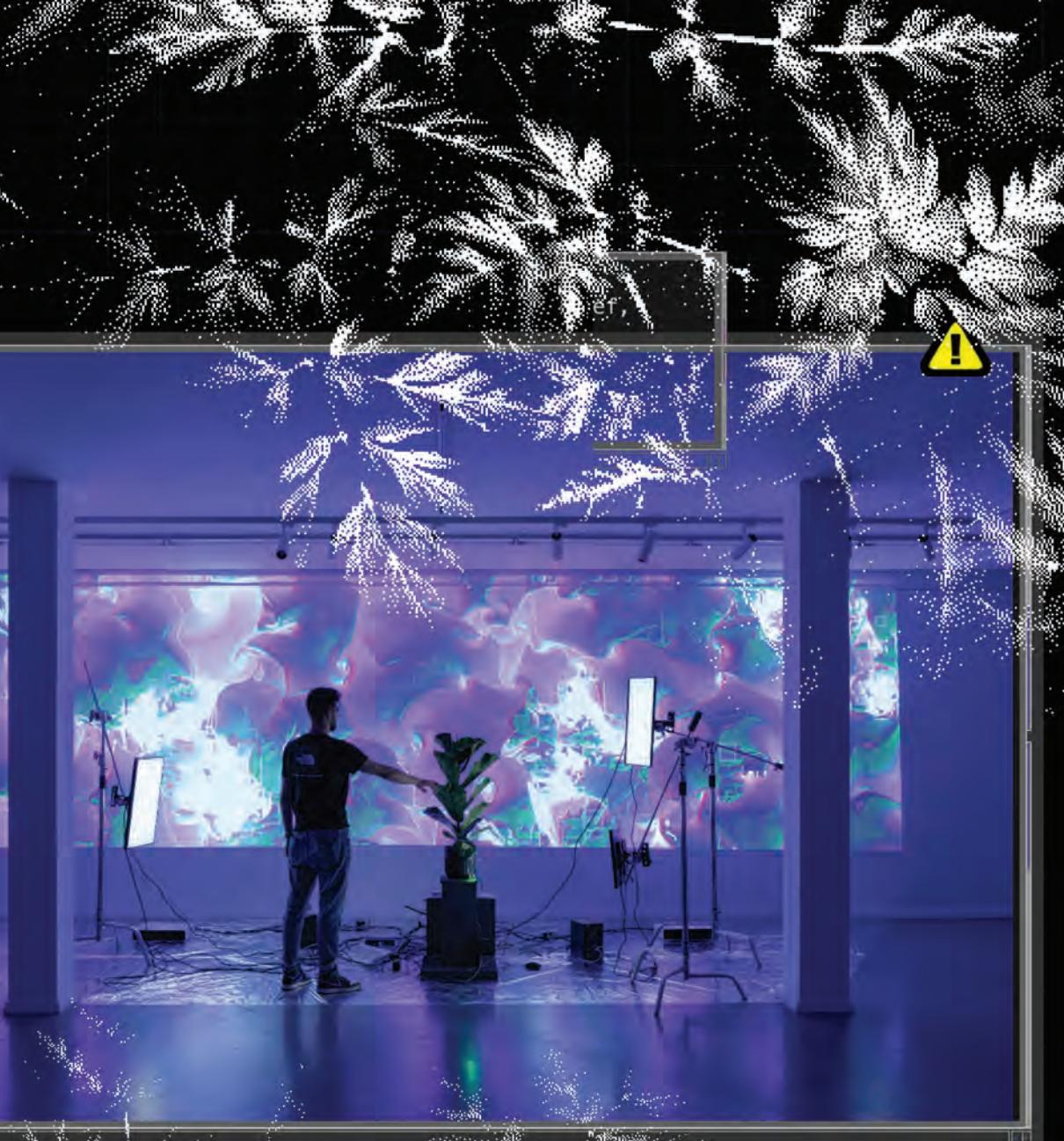
```
1 question // ? question // ? question // ?  
2 question // ? question // ? question // ?  
3 question // ? question // ? question // ?  
4 question // ? question // ? question // ?  
5
```

text22

```
1 meta -> ("question / reflection")  
2     # who generates?  
3     # the artist, the code, the machine, the spectator?  
4     # Parasite answers with ambiguity:  
5     # generation is shared, contested, parasitic.
```

text21

OUTPUT



```
1 meta -> ("question / reflection")
2   # who generates?
3   # the artist, the code, the machine, the spectator?
4   # Parasite answers with ambiguity:
5   # generation is shared, contested, parasitic.
```

text21

**Cătălin Marinescu**  
Shopping in Rodeo Drive



Seen from above, the flea market disrupts the urban order. It resists zoning and classification, functioning instead as a porous archive, a living cartography of circulation, exchange, and loss.

**AUTO****BUYING**

Hii! I'm looking to buy a used car for personal use. I'm not a dealer – just someone in need of a reliable vehicle. Preferably something in good running condition, with papers in order and a decent price. I'm open to different models, but I'm mostly interested in something practical and affordable.

**AUTO****ROMANIAN**

For sale – my personal Dacia 1310 from 1999. This car has been with me for some time now, and it's more than just a vehicle – it's a piece of Romanian history. It's the classic Dacia 1310, in its original white color, still running well after all these years. It has 243,000 km, but the engine starts without hesitation and it drives smoothly. All documents are in order, and it can be registered without issues. The body is solid, and while it does show signs of age, everything is honest and original – just the way a classic should be. Most of the parts are still original, and I've taken care to keep it in decent condition.

Every object carries its own distance. Some travel through use, others through memory. Between ownership and loss, there is always a movement, the slow transfer of meaning from one hand to another and in these newspaper ads, utility becomes biography.

A car, a van, or any kind of vehicle, each entry on a fragment of identity that floats through the square, looking for a new direction, or maybe just a place to stop.

**AUTO****FOREIGN**

For sale: Škoda Yeti, white, used but reliable. A car that has proven its strength not only on the road but also as a traveling storage unit. Spacious interior, demonstrated here with bags, coats, and everything a family once needed on the go. Roof rack currently tested with a stroller and a toy horse, both included if desired. Ideal for those who see a car not just as transportation, but as an extension of home or a place where jackets, and memories pile up together. Runs well, still steady, even when carrying more than it should.

Price negotiable, depending on how much of its story you wish to keep.



For sale: Ford Transit van, white.

Spacious and dependable, ideal for transport or mobile business. Large cargo area, easy to adapt for work or travel. Reliable engine, tested on highways and market grounds alike.

Currently demonstrated as a "mobile gallery," carrying framed paintings of landscapes, portraits, and romantic scenes. The art is optional — the van remains the true canvas here, ready for a new owner to write its next story. Price: 3000 \$



For Sale: Toy, an imaginary friend who refused to grow up. It has spent years on a shelf, waiting to be found again. Still searching for the child who lost it, but in the meantime it's ready to find a new home. Price: as much as a memory.

**SELLING:** Full shoe rack, containing several pairs of shoes, from size 38 to 43. Some pairs have traveled through many countries, so you can count on them knowing different roads. 20 \$

**Selling:** Cuckoo clock. Bought decades ago as a wedding gift, it counted the hours for generations. The cuckoo sometimes skips a call, as if tired, but the wooden case still holds its charm. Only 15 \$



Audio and/or video recording available on request – any format: MP3, AVI, MP4, WMV, DVD, etc. I transfer and record music and/or videos in any format onto any type of media – memory cards, audio CDs, MP3 CDs, USB sticks, DVDs, and more. Prices vary depending on the quantity. High-quality audio and video guaranteed – professional recording studio available. Serious inquiries only – I value and offer professionalism.

**Moving Services – Reliable and Affordable**  
I'm an individual offering moving services with my own van – available in Iași and nationwide. I can help transport furniture, appliances, and personal items. Assistance with loading and unloading is also available if needed. Ideal for small apartment, studio, or office moves. Fair prices, negotiable depending on distance and volume. Available on weekends too.

Each listing conceals a story disguised as an offer. Between the price and the description, memory negotiates its own survival. These are not just sales; they are confessions written in the language of commerce or an inventory of absences.

A childhood toy becomes an allegory of longing.

A family photo turns into a collectible.

A broken camera, a wedding gift, a forgotten shoe, each an object adrift, detached from its origin, waiting to be re-adopted.

Within the flea market's economy of sentiment, value is measured not by rarity, but by the weight of attachment.

To buy is to inherit someone else's memory.

To sell is to let go of a fragment of yourself.



For sale: framed reproduction of "The Last Supper." Printed image of Leonardo da Vinci's famous scene, showing Christ surrounded by his apostles at the long table. The print is in warm tones, with details slightly faded by time, but still clear. The frame is wooden in good condition. This piece once hung in a family dining room, a familiar presence above countless meals and gatherings. It carries the weight of tradition and memory, and now waits for a new wall to watch over. Price: 50 \$

**Vintage Pocket Watch with Unique Engraving – Fully Functional.** This beautifully engraved vintage pocket watch is in perfect working condition, with a diameter of 5 cm. Ideal for collectors or as a special gift. Multiple pieces available. Price: 10 \$, delivery via courier with parcel check and cash on delivery – 5 \$.



For sale: a small crowd of childhood companions. Rubber ducks of every color, a frog with a crown, wide-eyed dolls and tiny figures, each one once lived in bathtubs, backyards, or toy boxes. Their paint is worn, their faces slightly faded, but they still carry the laughter and noise of the children who once held them. Price: Free for kids.



Porcelain objects embody the paradox of memory as surface and they preserve through fragility. Their polished skin acts as a mirror to the invisible gestures that once surrounded them,

transforming domestic artifacts into silent witnesses of care, habit, and loss.

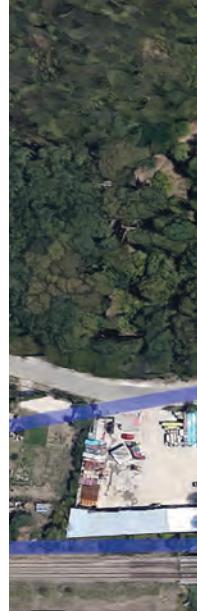


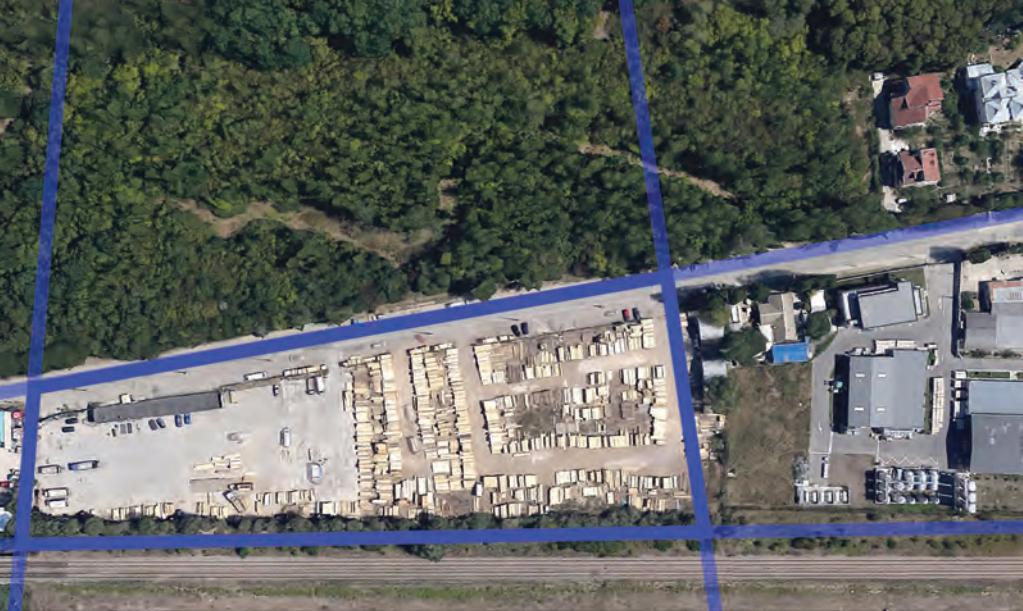
To paint over is to both protect and erase. The layer of white conceals the object's biography, turning it into a blank relic, a fossil of domestic memory stripped of color and function.

The act is not decorative but archaeological: covering as a form of preserving, whitening as a gesture of care and denial.

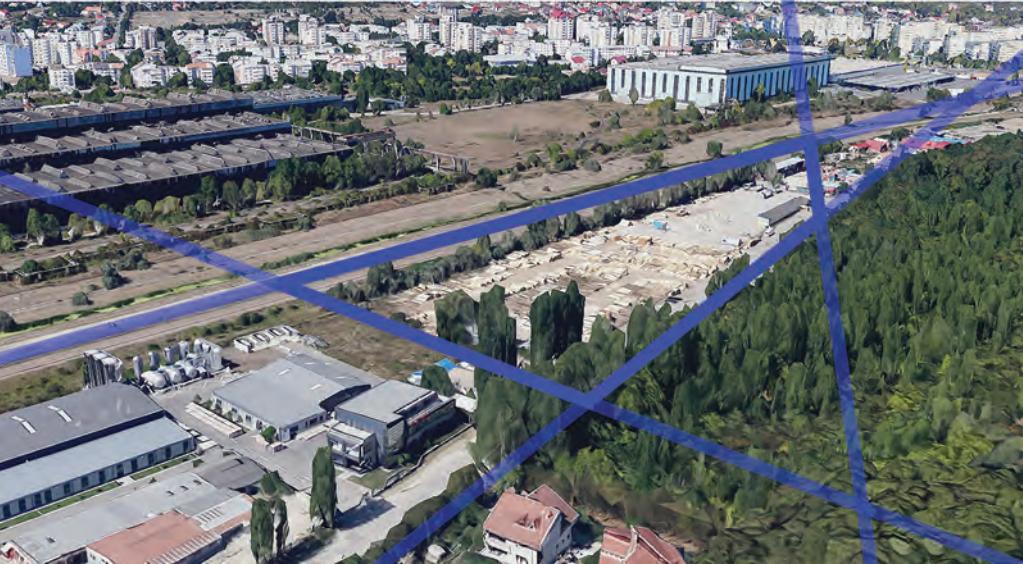
**In their new opacity,**  
these objects speak less and resonate more.  
They no longer recall what they once were,  
they become what remains when memory loses its image.







The flea market inhabits the in-between:  
**a spatial residue**  
of the city's metabolism.  
It converts leftover ground into  
a site of circulation,  
revealing how absence  
becomes productive.



**Andrei Botnaru**  
Untitled











CGEBCEDEFDDD  
DHEBBHGGFFCC  
OOOKDCEGJIHE  
NNNOLNMRMTT1T











**Cristiana Ursache**

scAI as a method of re-territorializing creative  
infrastructures

A pretext for confrontation and investigation. Curatorial research may be understood as a continuously shifting landscape, shaped by a vegetal–conceptual ecosystem whose purpose is the deterritorialization and re-territorialization of creative infrastructures.<sup>1</sup> Curating functions as a process of reconfiguration: art, once presented within its “original” territory, can be recontextualized in order to generate tensions, connections, and new interpretative possibilities. In this sense, *deterritorialization* refers to the detachment of an element from its initial field of meaning, whereas *re-territorialization* designates the process through which that element is reinvested with new significance.

The conceptual foundation of this reflection is articulated through two elements: *the burdock (scAI)* and *the rhizome*. The burdock acts as a

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<sup>1</sup> In Romanian, the word “scAI” refers to the burdock plant, a resilient weed that adheres to surfaces and bodies through tiny hooks, symbolizing persistence, tension, and involuntary attachment. By transforming it into “scAI,” the term becomes a conceptual hybrid that merges the vegetal metaphor (“scAI”) with artificial intelligence (“AI”). This wordplay encapsulates the idea that technology, like burdock, clings to artistic processes and infrastructures not by deliberate choice but through continuous contact and integration. Thus, “scAI” signifies both a curatorial method and a theoretical lens: a way of understanding how art is re-territorialized at the intersection between natural forms of adhesion and algorithmic agency.

vector endowed with an almost arbitrary yet persistent adhesive force; it attaches itself to surfaces and bodies without apparent selection, multiplying through contact. Within the field of curatorial research, the burdock becomes both an image and a method, a way to understand how artworks and artists, once uprooted from their original sites of production, are repositioned within an exhibitionary field where they are re-territorialized and produce new meanings.

From the perspective of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, the *rhizome* designates both a vegetal and conceptual structure that rejects hierarchical verticality, proposing instead a model of horizontal, multiple, connective, and non-linear growth. The *rhizome* lacks a centre, a beginning, or an end, it extends through unpredictable networks, perpetually generating connections among heterogeneous elements. In this sense, it has become a key conceptual term for describing artistic and curatorial practices that operate through intersections, hybridizations, and multiple distributions of meanings.

If the *rhizome*, in Deleuze and Guattari's framework, offers the infrastructure of connections, an open, multi-directional, and non-hierarchical network, then the burdock proposes the mechanism of association: the logic of unpredictable linkages, fertile tensions, and unstable attachments. Together, these two vegetal metaphors, transposed into the artistic field, configure a model of curatorial research that cultivates instability and correlation as sources of knowledge.

The concept of *burdock* introduces a distinct vegetal dimension into curatorial inquiry. Unlike the *rhizome*, which proliferates underground through expansion, the *burdock* asserts itself through adhesion: it clings to whatever it encounters, attaches to surfaces and bodies, and multiplies through direct contact. If the *rhizome* embodies the logic of diffuse connectivity, the *burdock* brings forth the rationale of associative attachment of arbitrary yet generative bonds that emerge unpredictably.



SCAi: vegetal component



dual metaphor



SCAi vs. RHIZOME  
structure vs. mechanism



associative methods



artistic re-territorialization

Thus, curatorial practice may be conceived as the work of a geologist exploring an unstable terrain, where geomorphological processes translate into curatorial dynamics: collisions, erosions, sedimentations, and eruptions. The exhibition becomes a living topography, a perpetually transforming territory where the rhizome provides the network's infrastructure, and the burdock generates its relational dynamics.

“scAI” operates as a manifesto, a contrast between fragility and the manifestation of resistance. This vegetal paradigm can be expanded to articulate how technology relates to art. Like the burdock, technology and artificial intelligence function as agents that inevitably cling to artistic research, leading to a hybridization of artistic production. Algorithms, databases, and digital networks infiltrate the artistic process not through deliberate choice, but through direct and continuous contact with artistic life. Once attached, technology becomes part of art’s living organism, multiplying its forms while simultaneously generating tension and resistance.

“scAI” thus emerges as a dual method of understanding: both a vegetal image and a conceptual framework through which the modes of technological action upon art can be examined. If the Deleuzian rhizome offers the infrastructure of the network, an open, horizontal, and non-hierarchical cartography, then scAI elucidates the mechanism of adhesion through which technology becomes affixed to artistic research, producing new associations, hybridizations, and meanings. In other words, scAI represents a re-territorialization of creative infrastructures, where technology operates not merely as a tool, but as an agent of transformation that redefines the epistemological and material conditions of artistic creation.



My curatorial practice unfolds precisely within this interval, between the rhizome that maps connections and the burdock that clings, forcing new associations. ScAI thus proposes not only a reflection on the art-technology relationship, but also a phenomenology of attachment: technology as burdock clinging to contemporary art, attracting and repelling, fertilizing and unsettling, yet remaining ever-present. From this perspective, curating becomes a geomorphological investigation of an unstable terrain, where vegetal and algorithmic forces intersect, shaping a critical relief of the posthuman imaginary.

Through these strata, collisions, erosions, and sedimentations, the scAI exhibition operates as an unstable terrain, where burdock and rhizome together shape a curatorial methodology. The artists' works are not merely outcomes of research, but nodes of tension and attachment through which a critical cartography of the relationship between human, technology, and art is delineated.

The visible result is grounded in a prior research process carried out during artistic residencies and working sessions, where the concepts of deterritorialization, rhizome, and burdock functioned as instruments of analysis and association. Within this framework, the artists explored early forms of the works now exhibited, directly confronting questions about the role of technology in the creative act and the ways in which artistic identity is reconfigured through algorithmic filters.

This research did not aim to produce definitive answers but to generate a methodological framework, a way of thinking and working in which instability, heterogeneous connections, and unpredictable attachments have become productive resources.

Research, in this context, designates a curatorial practice that treats the exhibition as a living relief, an experimental terrain where works attach to one another like burdock, and connections develop rhizomatically. The exhibition is not merely the final accumulation of individual projects, but the materialization of a working method, where curating unfolds as a continuous form of research open, critical, and attuned to the tensions between art and technology.

This methodology has evolved into an exhibition strategy that does not privilege narrative linearity or hierarchical logic, but rather emphasises proliferation and unexpected adhesions. The scAI exhibition is therefore not simply a space of presentation, but a

collective research experiment a laboratory in which artists and their works continue to be repositioned and re-signified in response to the tensions between the vegetal and the algorithmic. In this sense, curating operates as a form of applied research: a method of testing how rhizomatic thinking and the logic of burdock can generate new infrastructures of creation and new modes of understanding the art-technology relationship.

Thus, *scAI* marks not only a moment of visibility, but also a stage within a broader process of investigating the posthuman imaginary. It functions simultaneously as a critical landscape in which research becomes materially and conceptually visible, and as a point of departure for further exploration keeping open a field of fertile tensions for ongoing inquiry.

**Dumitrita Gurău**

Fragmented urban landscapes



The dissonances of the city cannot be reduced to a mere aesthetic discord. They reflect a lack of vision and the impossibility of constructing a shared image of urban space. These dissonances reveal the tensions between economy, culture, and politics, which shape the way the city is organized and perceived. Aesthetic dissonances influence both the way individuals engage with urban space and the overall perception of the city. Through their repetition, such as intrusive advertising, urban clichés, and uncontrolled eclecticism, they no longer appear as exceptions but become omnipresent visual markers capable of defining the identity of the city.

The accumulation of these dissonances transforms them from exceptions into defining features of the urban landscape, to the point where the city's identity becomes associated with standardized and superficial images. Rather than reflecting the specificity and authenticity of the place, they reproduce trends dictated by economic interests or hasty urban planning decisions, reducing the city to a generic and commercial backdrop, devoid of cultural depth.

Inspired by the *dérive* method, I approached this controlled wandering as a potential form of artistic research into space, directly connected to urban psychogeography. The *dérive* provides an opportunity to observe how the city's images, whether harmonious or fragmented, influence our paths and the way we perceive public space, transforming mere exploration into a critical and potentially transformative act. In this way, the city reveals itself not merely as a backdrop but as a network of visual signals that shape, often unconsciously, our everyday experience and our relationship with the built environment.

I chose to start from my most frequent route, the one that repeated over time until it became a personal map of the city. Using digital chronology, which automatically archives the places visited, I was able to observe the areas I traverse most often and how this repetition influences my perception of the city. The analysis, conducted over the course of a year, allowed me to determine the frequency of these visits and the way I relate to the city as an inhabitant. Based on these observations, I transformed the usual route into a conscious exploration of urban space, aiming to understand what types of aesthetic images and messages dominate, how they influence collective perception, and which visuals define the daily experience of those who navigate

them regularly.

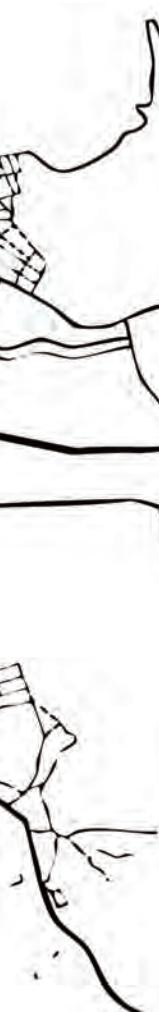
During the first traversal of the route, I noticed the prevalence of visual eclecticism, evident both in the architecture of the buildings, the uneven color palette of the facades, and the density of advertising images. This mixture affects not only the visual aspect of space but also the psychological and ideological dimensions of how it is perceived. The contrast between architectural elements and the uncontrolled layering of advertisements produces a fragmented image of the city, where aesthetics appear to be governed by a chaos of competing styles and messages.

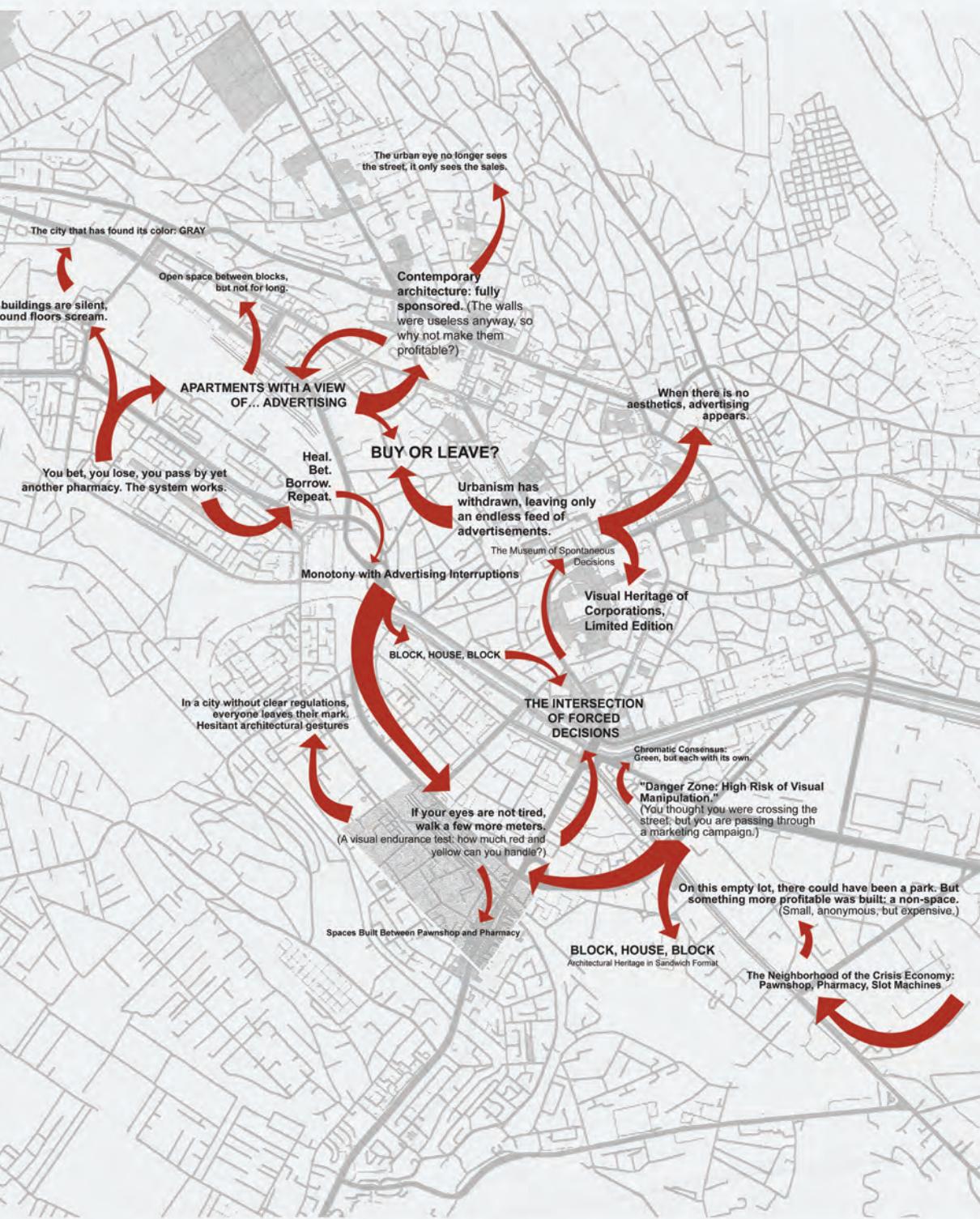
In this context, the city emerges as a visual palimpsest: disparate architectural elements and the uncontrolled layering of advertisements give rise to a fragmented landscape, yet one rich in meaning. Eclecticism is not merely an aesthetic issue but also a semiotic phenomenon, with each image, building, and advertisement contributing to the definition of the place's identity and to how it is perceived by residents and visitors alike. Advertising, through its repetitiveness and dominant typologies, functions as an indicator of the economic and social roles of different areas, and its analysis reveals subtle relationships between consumption, space, and urban identity. The transition from direct exploration of the city through the situationist *dérive* to a semiotic analysis of this landscape allows us not only to understand its visual structure but also the implicit messages constructed by this seemingly chaotic aesthetic. Documentation through mapping enables the decoding of these messages by exploring how urban eclecticism and the advertising system shape collective perception and the social dynamics of public space. However, this approach is not limited to visual observation; it also invites an analysis of the contexts that have produced these urban forms. To understand the eclecticism and advertising messages that define contemporary collective perception, it is necessary to view the city from a historical perspective, examining the social, economic, and political factors that have shaped its structure and aesthetics.

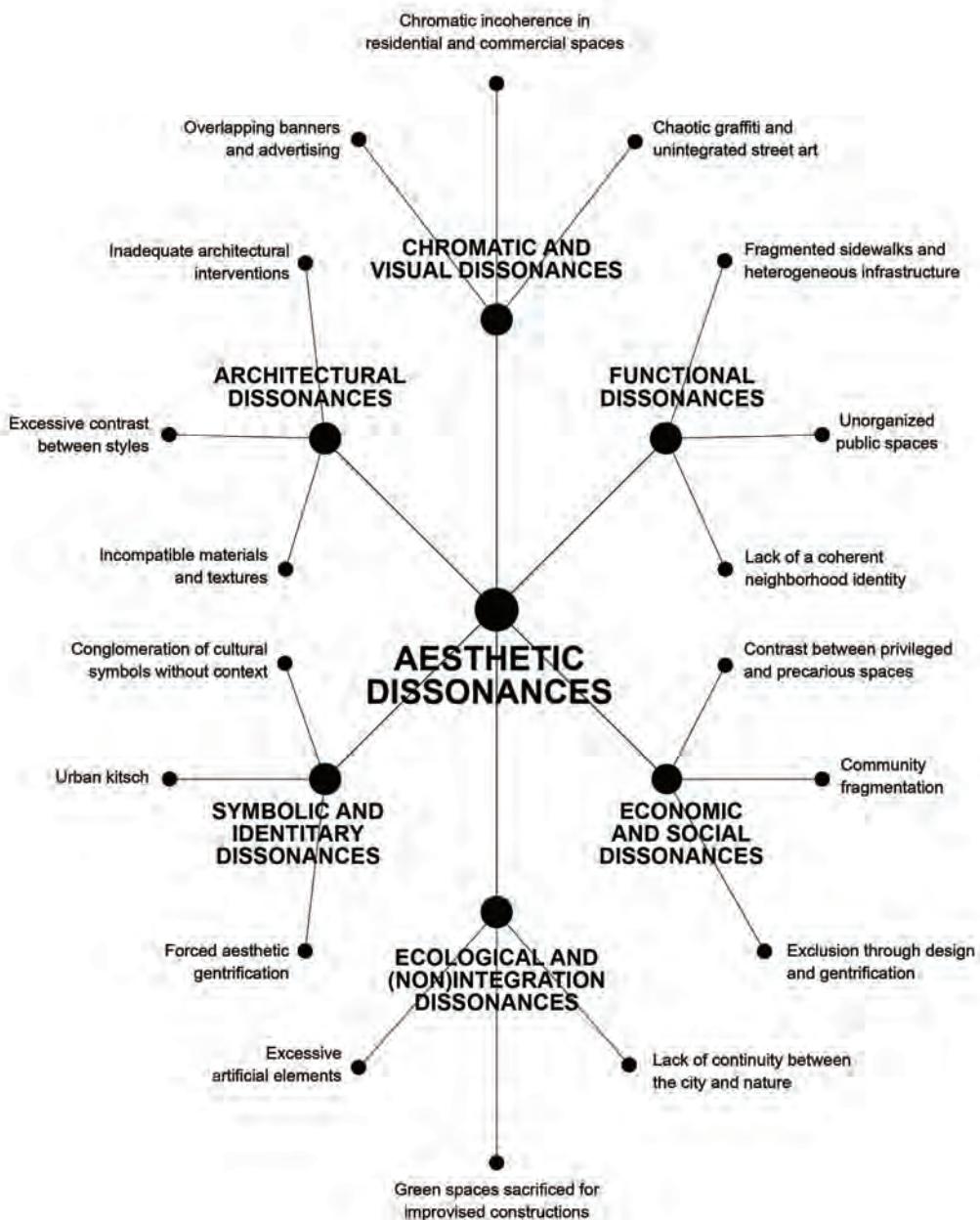
Thus, the accelerated urbanization in Eastern Europe can be understood as a direct consequence of industrialization and urban planning imposed during the height of the socialist system. A significant part of the contemporary image of Romanian cities has its roots in the demographic pressure of that period, which generated architectural

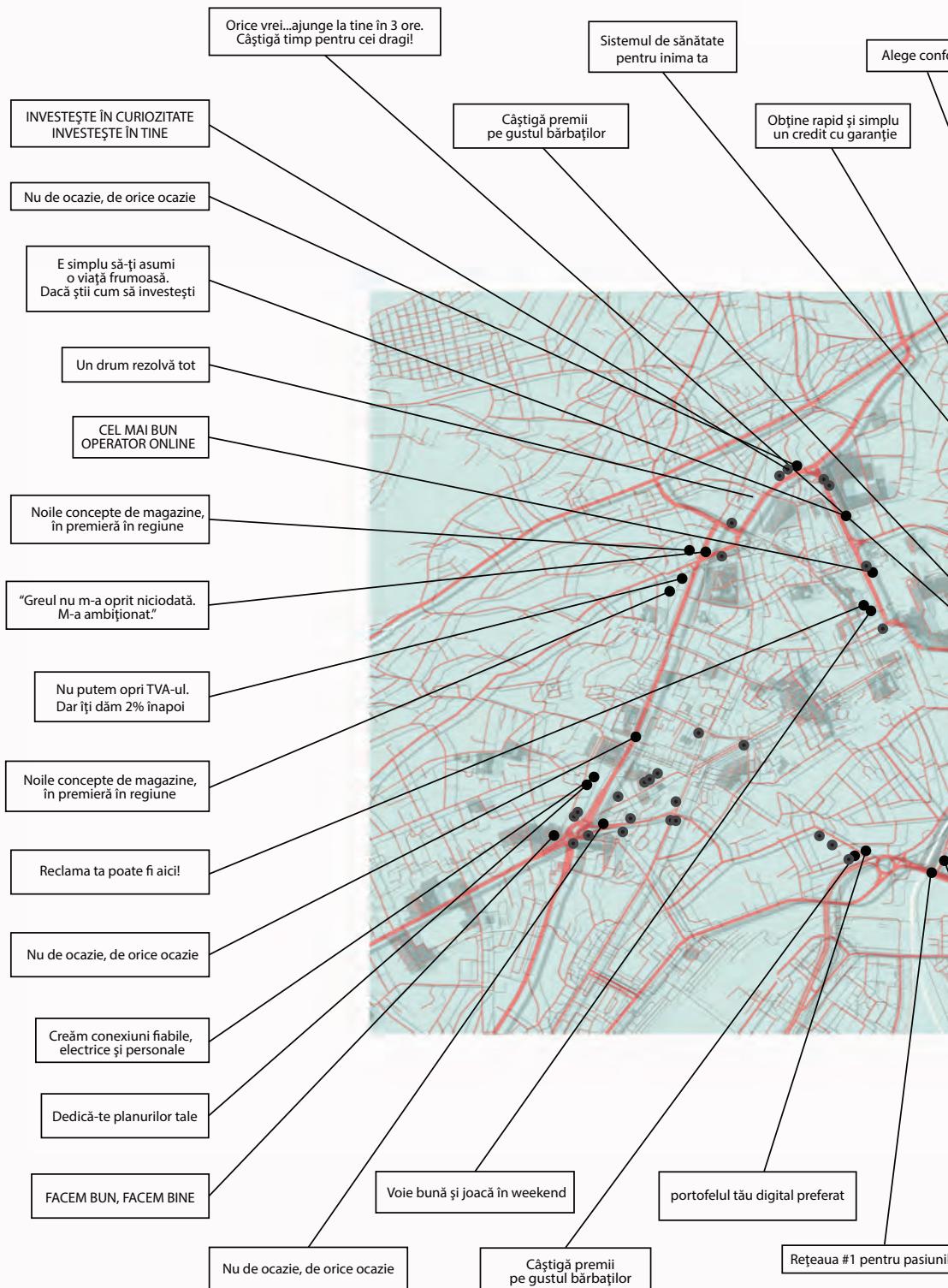


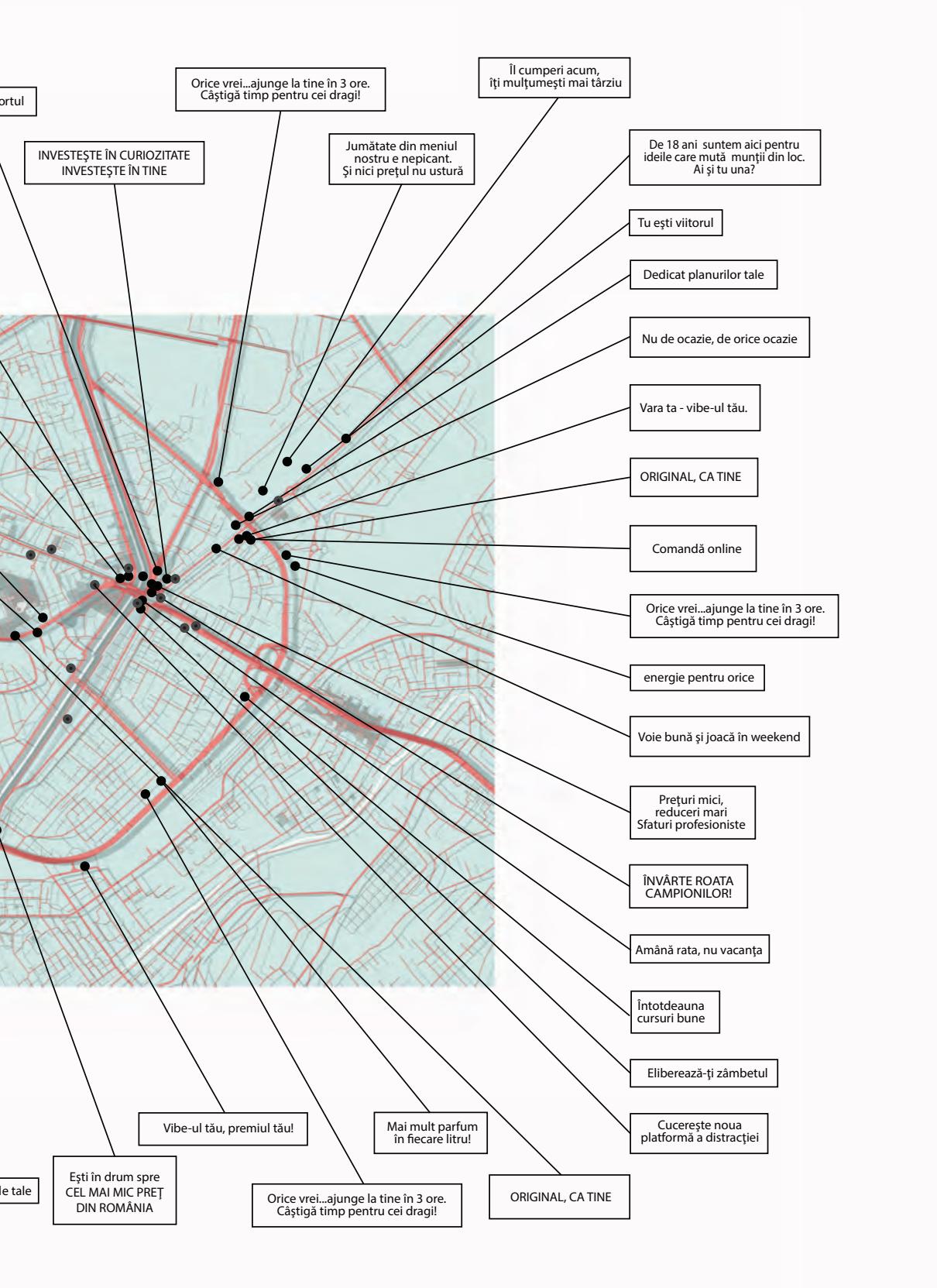
solutions designed to support the idea of a “progressive order” shaped by strict ideological premises. The rigid planning of collective housing eliminated from the outset the possibility of subsequent adaptations or interventions. Viewed today, however, this progressive utopia seems entirely distant, just as Ruskin’s culturalist model of the city, organic order through irregularity and asymmetry, remains absent. In practice, one can observe is rather the result of urban eclecticism, born either from the individual solutions of residents or from spontaneous attempts at adaptation. Could this be a sign of a “new order,” as described by Engels and Marx, in which “the expression of a creative order of its time must be destroyed in order to be surpassed”? And if so, can we consider this phenomenon as a “myth of urban disorder” or rather as an anachronic dialogue of time and a temporal derive?



















**Ioana Roșu**

Alternative topographies of urban public space

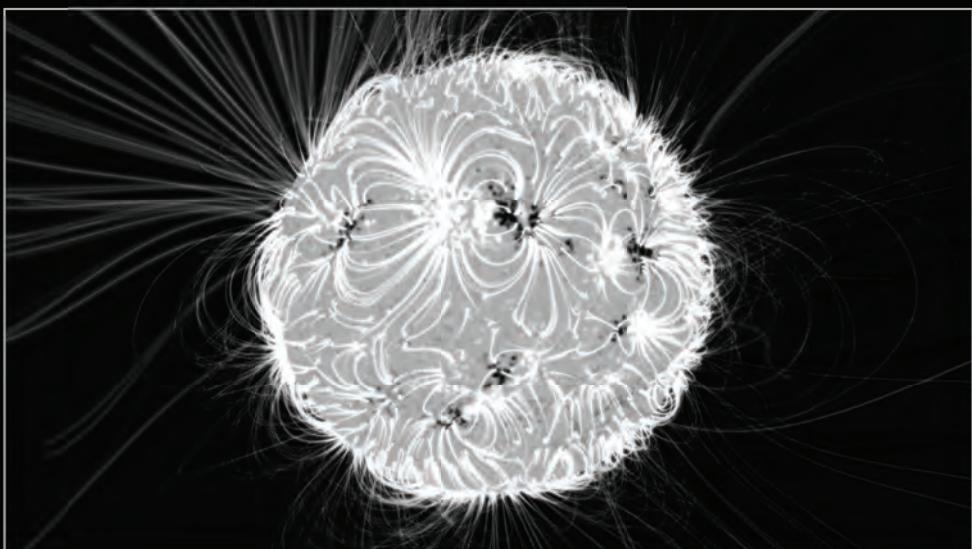
At first glance, a city may seem to be a conglomerate of buildings, streets, and infrastructures that host certain assemblages of people. However, the city is more than the sum of its physical parts. It is not simply a site, a geographical location with fixed borders on a map. A city is represented by a multitude of converging and diverging layers and alternative topographies: physical and social, congruent and conflicting, static and dynamic, tangible and imagined.

Mirroring the sun in relation to its neighboring stars and planetary bodies, the city is never static. It is constantly shifting, being pulled and stretched by various forces (cultural, social, economic, (geo-)political and so on). It interacts with its surroundings on a local, regional and global scale, thus calling for a relational reading of the plurality of its layers.

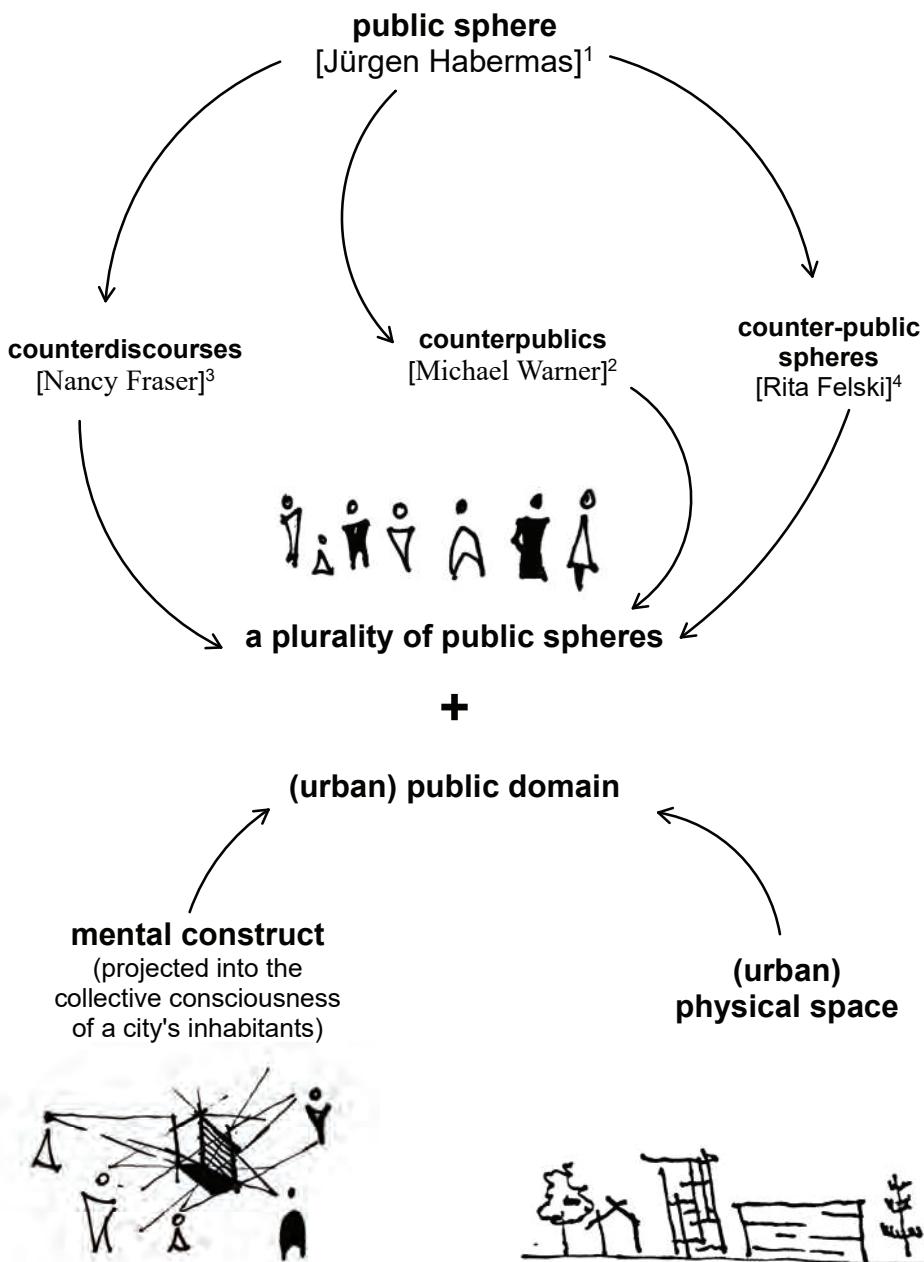
We may dare say that within the complex structures and topographies of the city, public art acts like the magnetic fields of the sun. The lines of the latter describe forces that repel or attract, converge or disperse, generating sunspots and solar flares. Similarly, art in public spaces mediates between the city's various layers, and has the potential of making visible those certain dynamics that otherwise may remain invisible. In this sense, artistic research in relation to the urban environment becomes a way of exploring the city that maps connections, investigates tensions, and inquires about various forms of (collective) imaginaries.

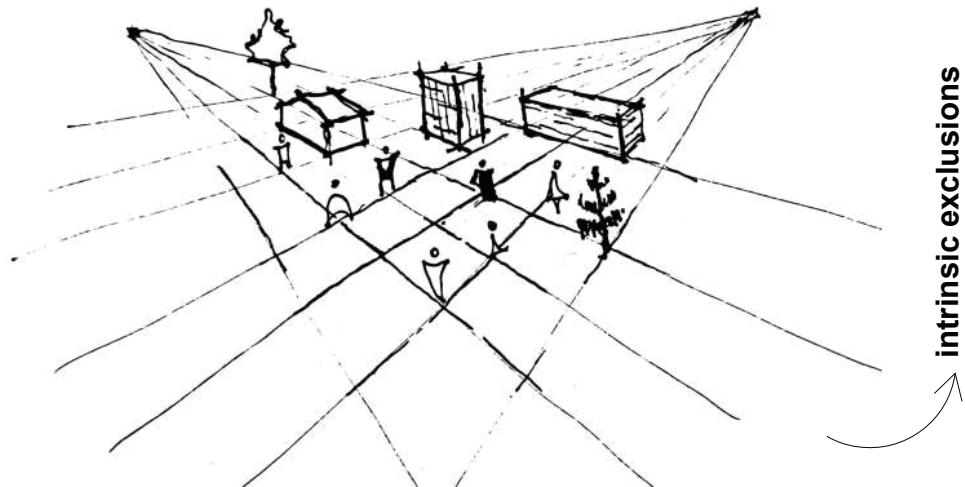
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Altered screen-capture. Video source: *Understanding the Magnetic Sun*. Youtube channel: NASA Goddard, 2016.



# A BIPARTITE STRUCTURE OF (urban) PUBLIC SPACE





= (urban) public space

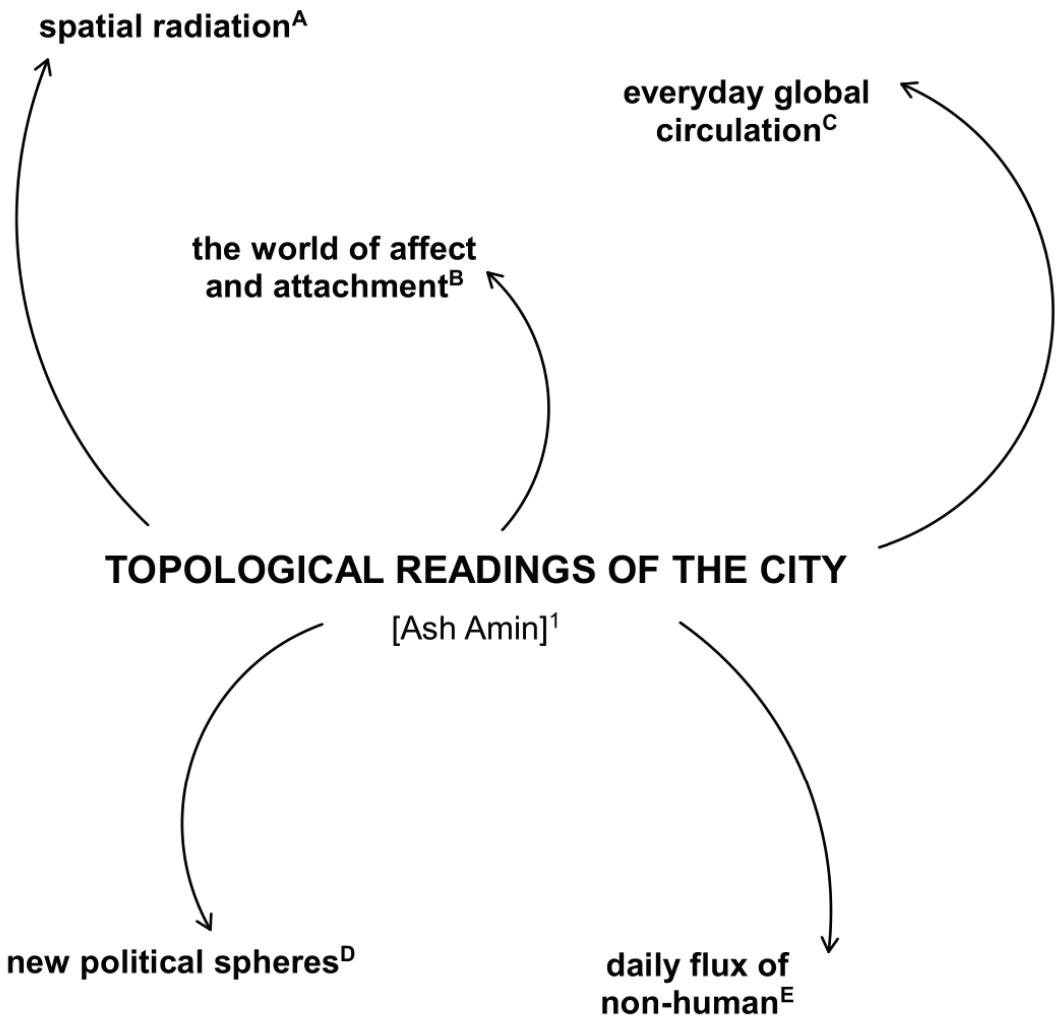
<sup>1</sup> Jürgen Habermas. *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*. 1962, translated 1989.

<sup>2</sup> Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*, 2002.

<sup>3</sup> Nancy Fraser. *Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy*. 1990.

<sup>4</sup> Rita Felski, *Beyond Feminist Aesthetics*, 1989.

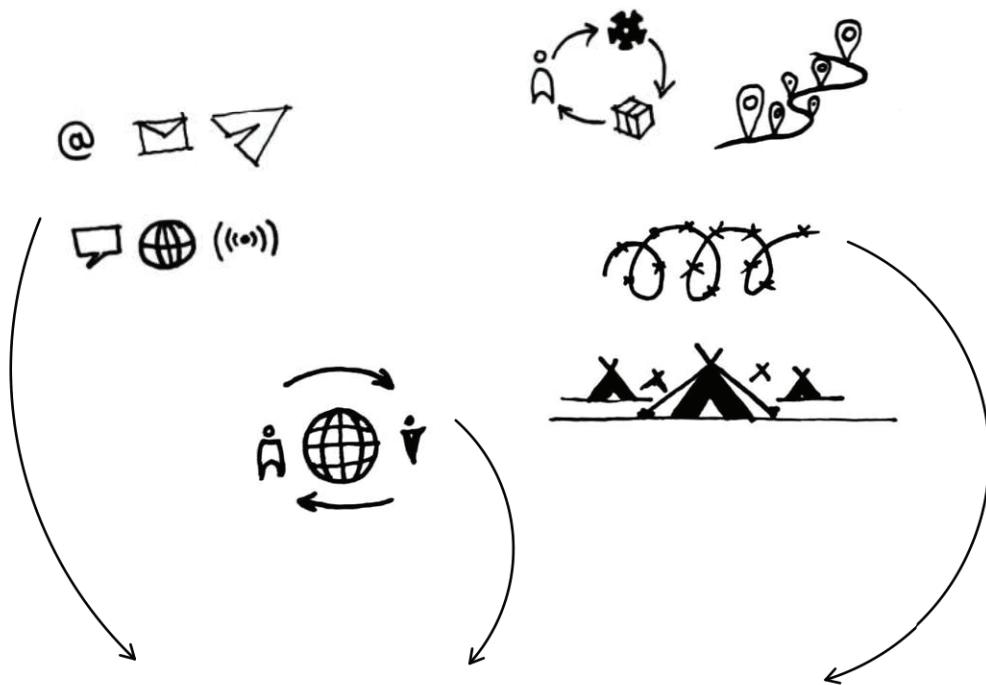
# READING A TOPOGRAPHY OF THE URBAN IN THE CONTEXT OF ACTOR-NETWORKS<sup>3</sup>



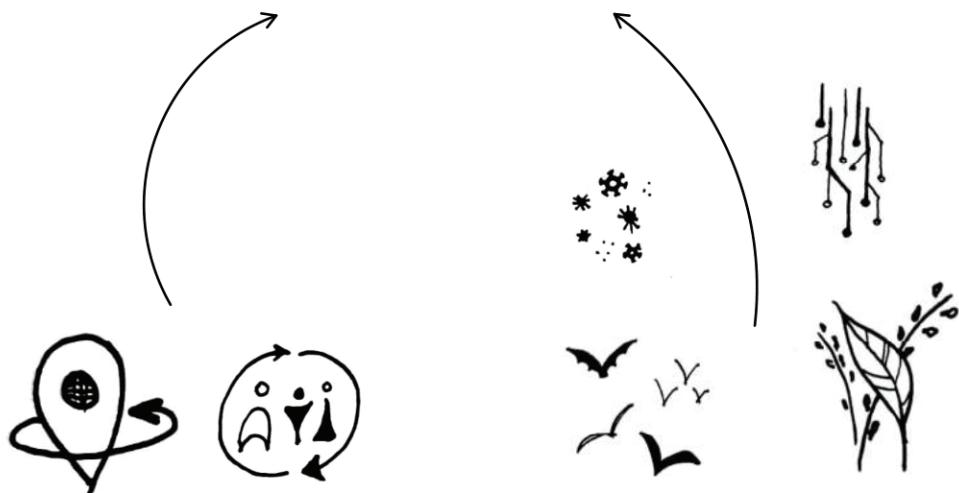
1 Ash Amin. Re-thinking the urban social. 2007.

2 Ash Amin. Cities and the ethic of care for the stranger. 2010.

3 Thinking of the city as a multitude of alternative topographies, which are interrelated and constantly influence each other may allow for new readings of the urban environment



'The result is the transformation of the city from a territorial form with distinctive insides and outsides to a topological form with blurred and shifting spatial contours, as places on the cartographic map become drawn into diverse organisational topologies.'<sup>12</sup>



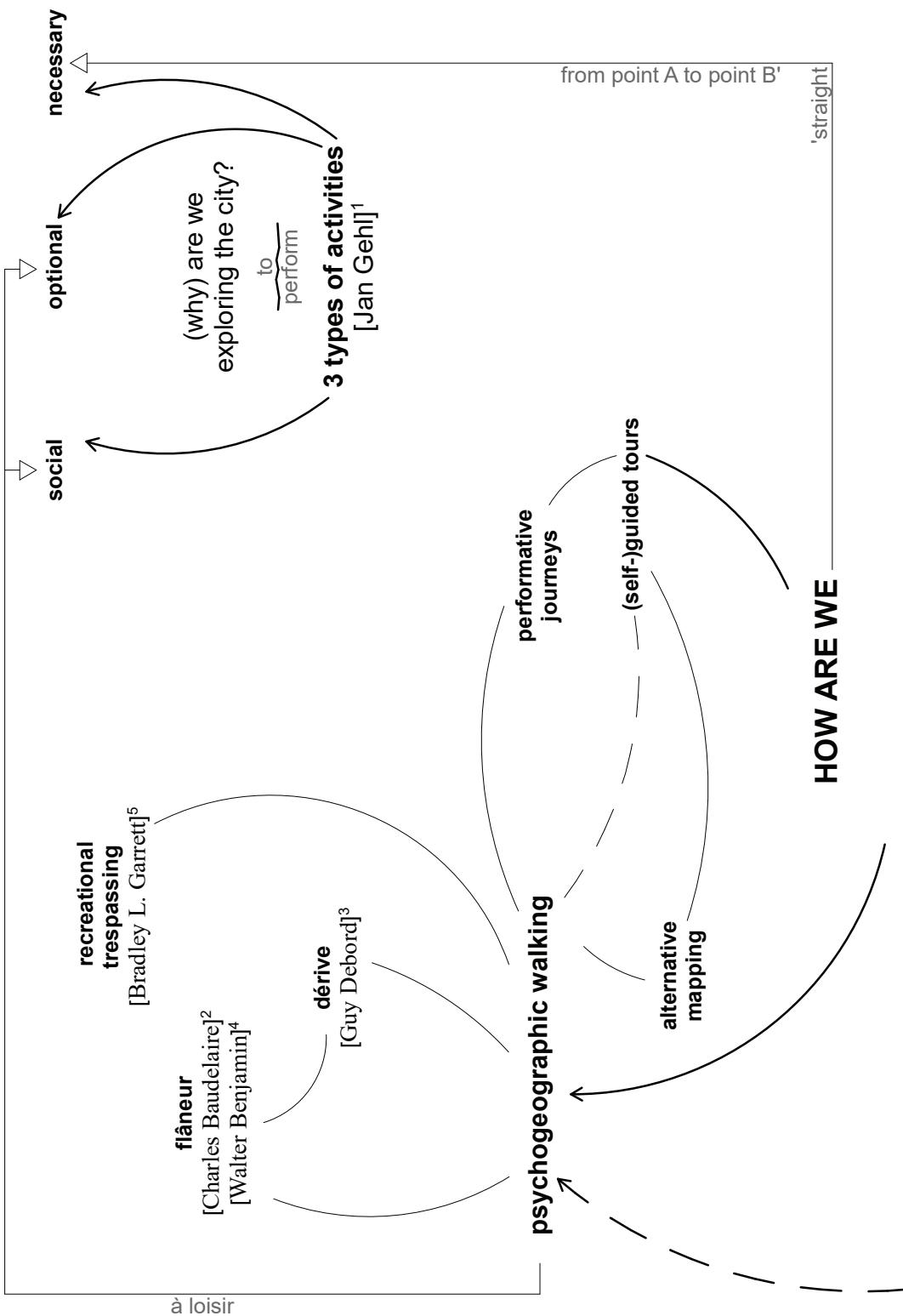
A virtual and nonvirtual communication networks

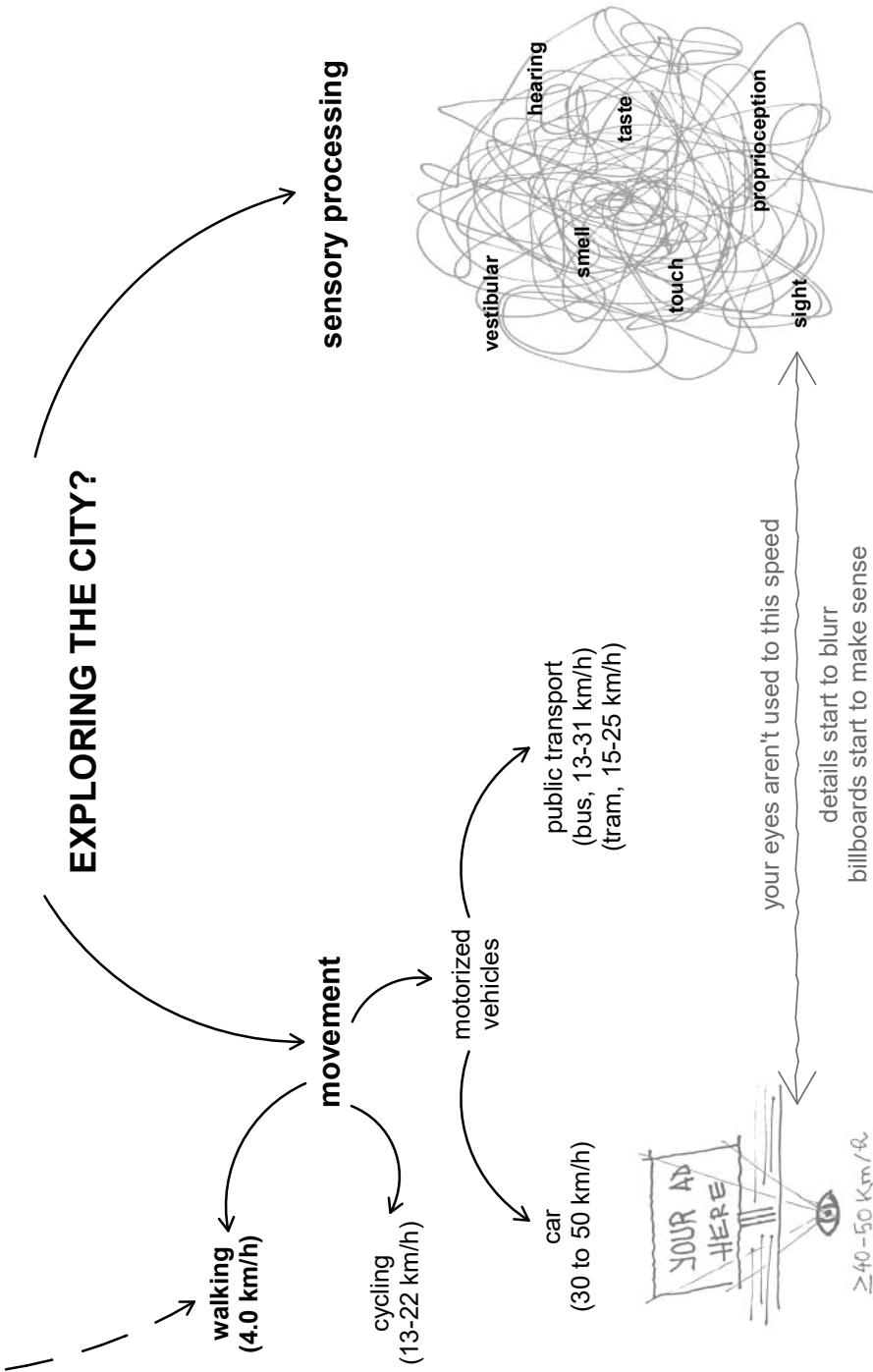
B global cultural influences, diasporic connections

C supply chains, corporate networks, transnational escape, migration, tourism, business travel, asylum, organized terror

D virtual public spheres, international organizations, global social movements, planetary politics

E viral, digital, animal, plant life





<sup>1</sup> Jan Gehl. *Life Between Buildings. Using Public Space*. 2011.

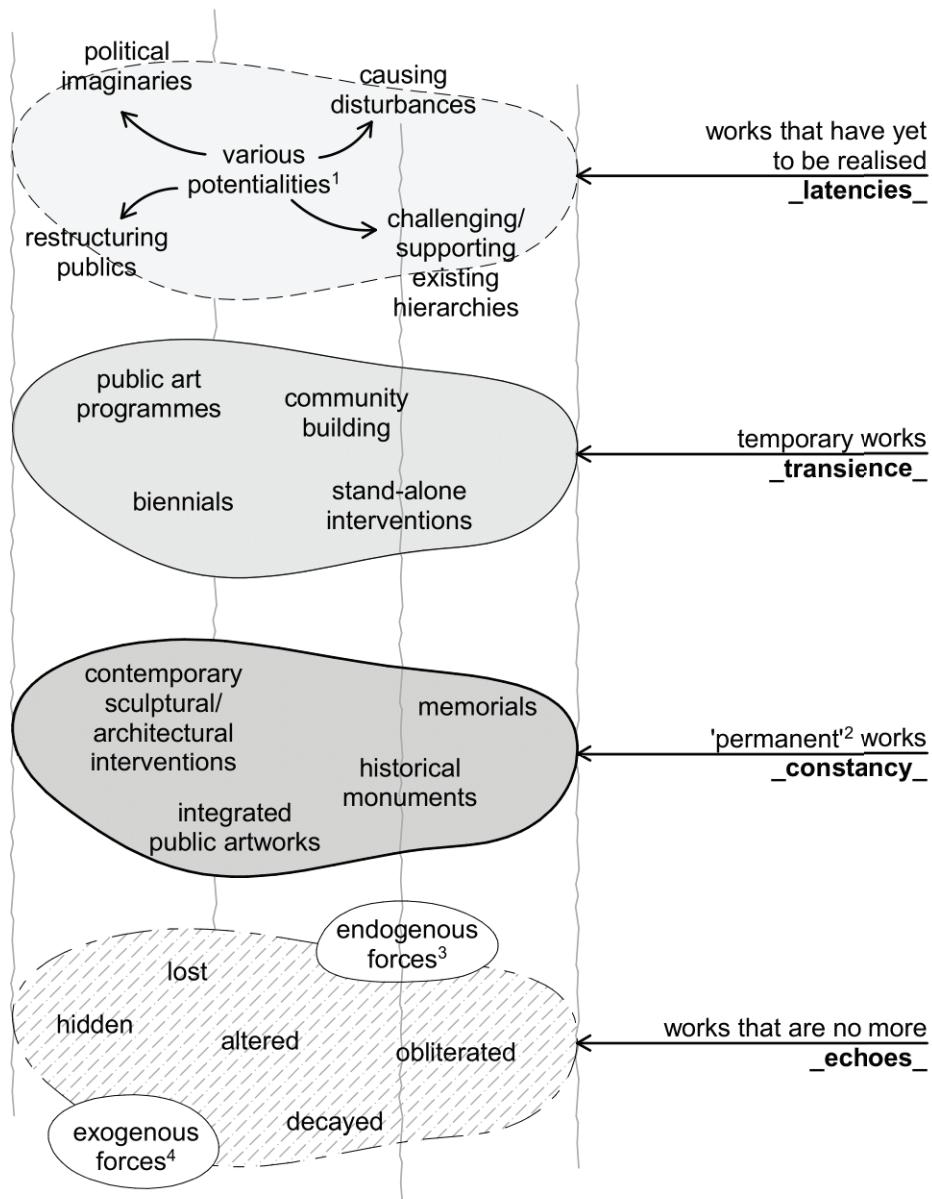
<sup>2</sup> Charles Baudelaire. *The Painter of Modern Life*. 1863.

<sup>3</sup> Guy Debord. *Theory of the Dérive*. 1956.

<sup>4</sup> Walter Benjamin. *On Some Motifs in Baudelaire*. 1939.

<sup>5</sup> Bradley L. Garrett. *Undertaking recreational trespass: urban exploration and infiltration*. 2014.

# A TIME-LAYERED TOPOGRAPHY OF ART IN PUBLIC SPACES<sup>5</sup>



<sup>1</sup> There might be infinite potentialities. The examples provided do not pretend to be exhaustive in nature.

<sup>2</sup> There are no truly ‘permanent’ works. Sites, perspectives, and political regimes are subject to change.

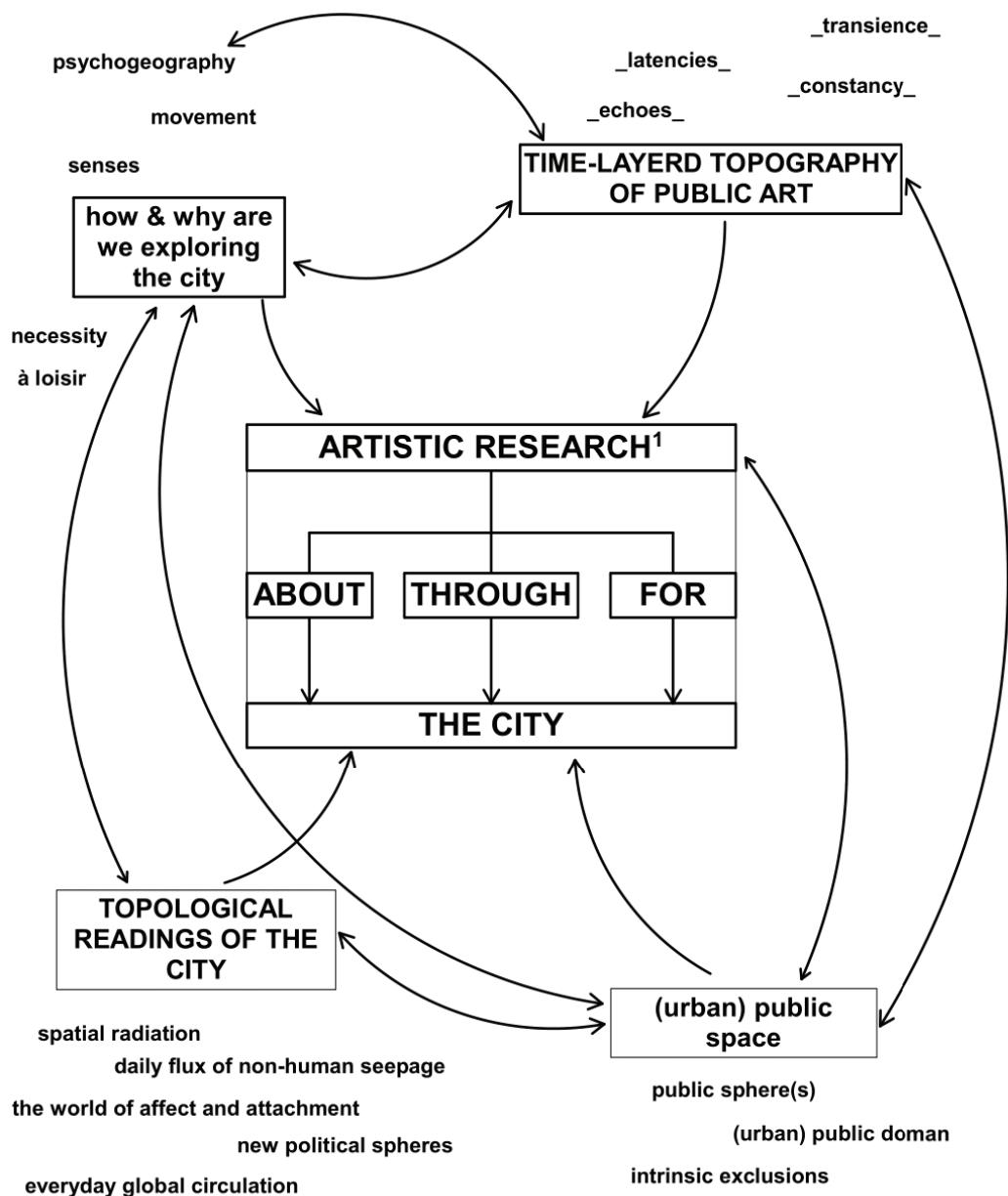
<sup>3</sup> Internal Forces (Slow or Sudden Movements) & <sup>4</sup> External Forces (Weathering, Mass Movements, Erosion and Deposition), be they physical, societal or political, lead to various forms of erasure of public art and spaces, as well as (micro-)histories and (collective) memory.

<sup>5</sup> All of these layers overlap and inform one another. They generate both continuity and rupture in the fabric of the city, shaping the ways in which we perceive and even inhabit it.

<sup>1</sup> Structure inspired by the work of Henk Borgdorff, *The Conflict of the Faculties: Perspectives on Artistic Research and Academia*. 2012.

<sup>2</sup>The dynamic relationships which might be traced between artistic research and urban public space mirrors the complexity of the city's multiple readings, structures, and alternative topographies. They can vary widely and wildly beyond the limits of this study.

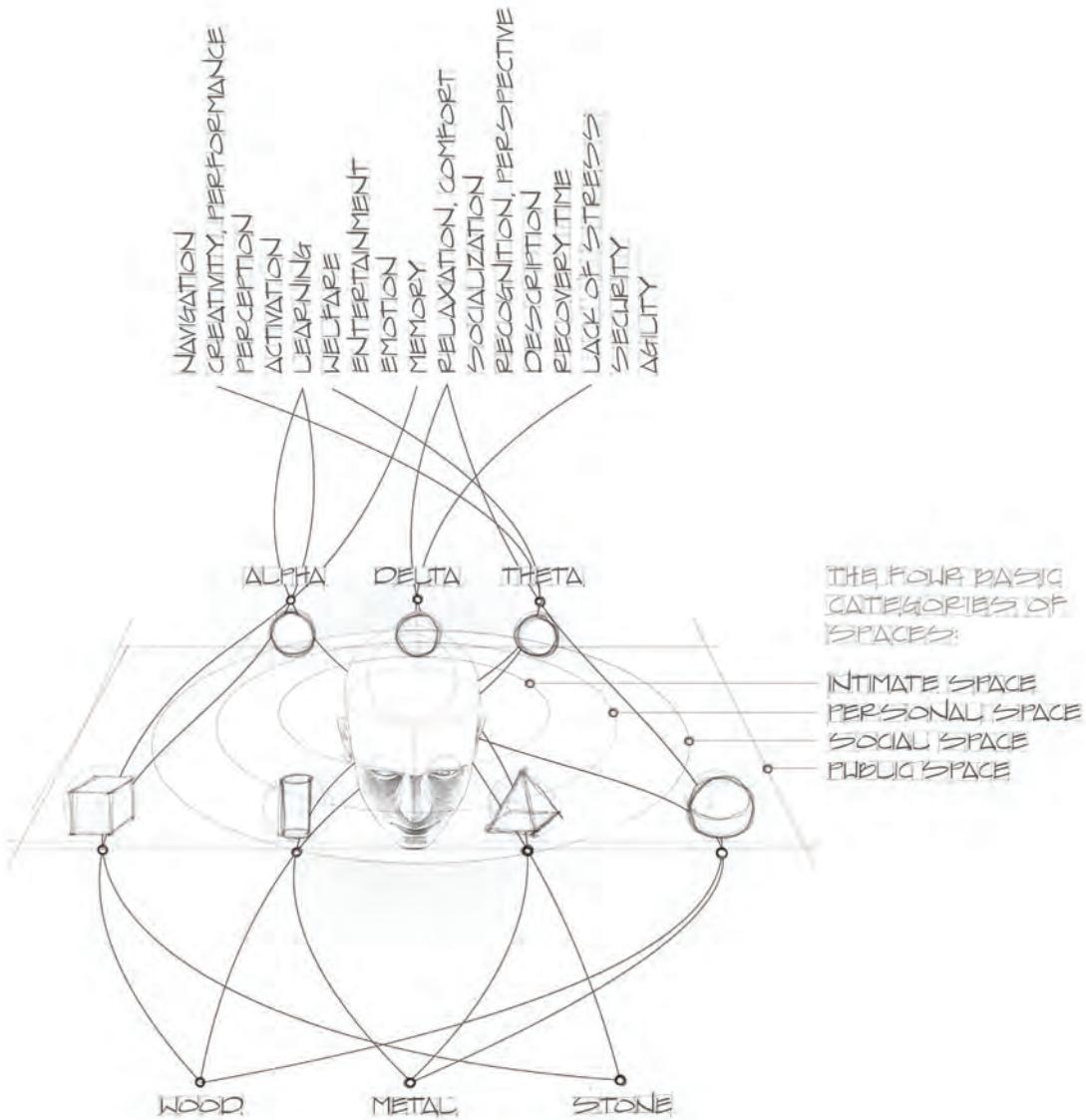
# TRACING CONNECTIONS BETWEEN ARTISTIC RESEARCH AND THE CITY<sup>2</sup>



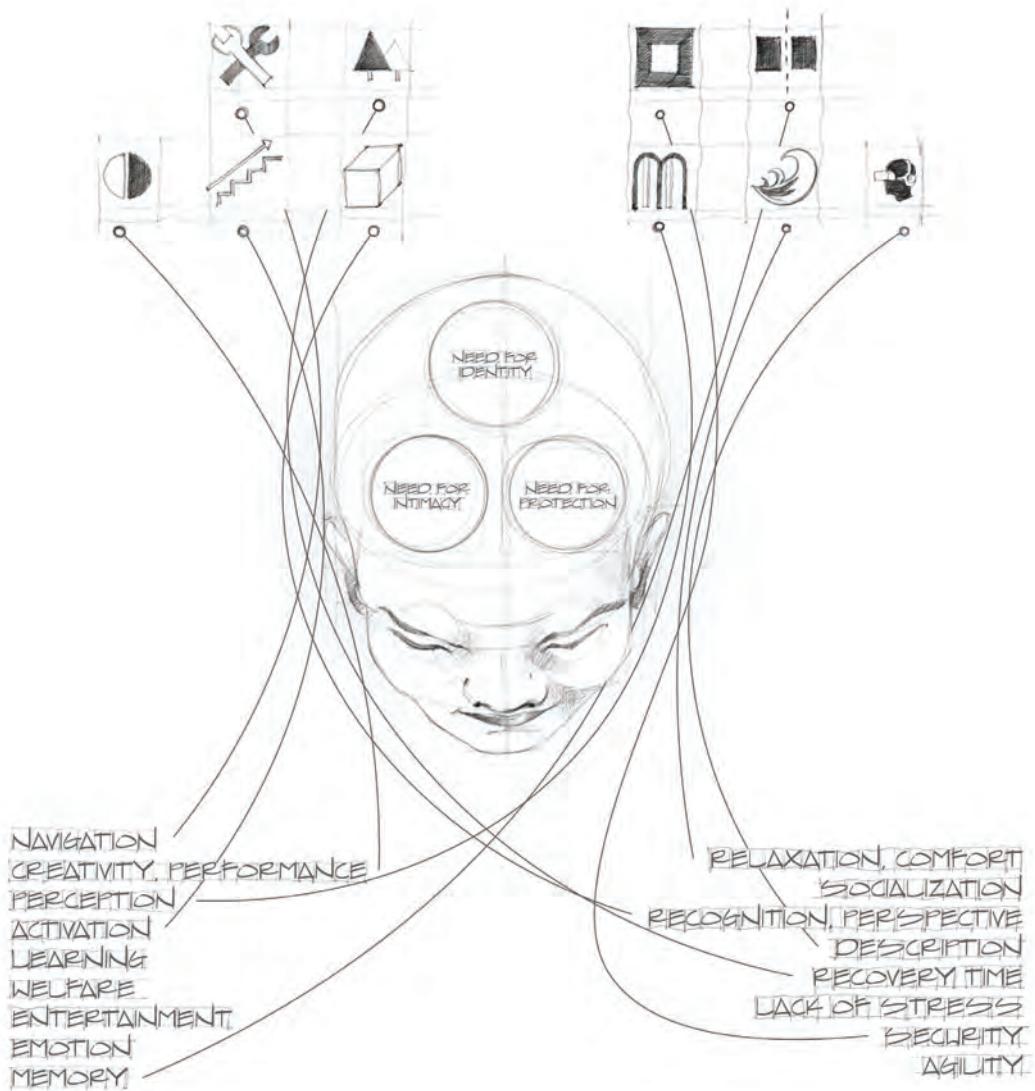
**Raul Saucă**  
Perceptive Cartography

One of the significant transformations of the contemporary period lies in the reconfiguration of the experience of interacting with art, an experience that can no longer be reduced to the exclusive contemplation of the work itself, but extends to the environment in which it is installed and presented. As art diversifies its forms and concepts, the exhibition space becomes a constituent actor in the aesthetic process, generating a field of perception that shapes the intensity and quality of contact with the artwork. Through its particularities—from the principles of unity, variety, emphasis, center of interest, scale, proportion, balance, and rhythm, to design elements such as line, shape, and volume, texture and pattern, the illusion of space and movement, value, color, or light—the exhibition space not only frames the work, but also re-semantizes it, influencing the psyche and behavior of visitors and often amplifying the emotional and cognitive impact of the creation. It is, therefore, conceived as a territory subject to magnetic forces that shape perception and direct the gaze, similar to the endogenous and exogenous energies that give rise to relief. If the work of art presents itself as an incandescent nucleus, a “sun” of expressiveness, then the environment surrounding it functions as a magnetic field: sometimes attractive and revealing,

sometimes obstructive and enigmatic. The principles and elements of design are not mere formal tools here, but constitute subtle tectonic processes that raise or erode meanings, sedimenting them in the visitor's memory. In such a landscape, the artistic experience becomes an act of orientation in a field of tensions, where perception is no longer neutral, but inscribed in an affective and cognitive geography, traversed by lights, shadows, and vibrations. Artistic research on this subject can be understood as a cartography of these magnetic fields, in which space and work merge, generating new topographies of meaning and emotion.



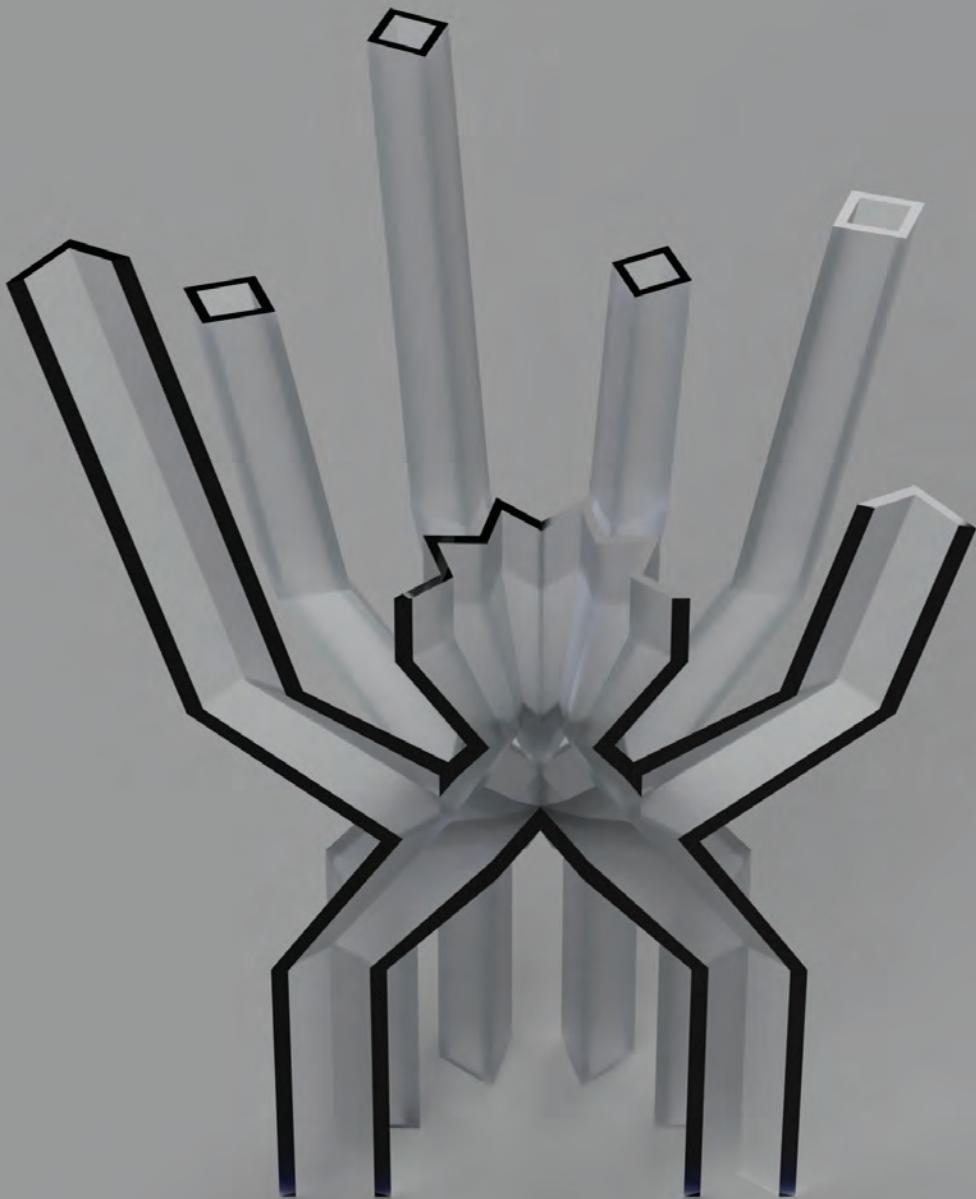
Each spatial element has a specific impact on human brain functions, creating different feelings and abilities. At the same time, each material, form, or architectural element can influence the human brain differently, generating specific brain waves. Exhibition architecture no longer appears as a simple backdrop for the artistic object, but as a magnetic structure, a field of tensions that modulates the aesthetic experience and configures the conditions of possibility for reception. Within this field, the need for identity manifests itself as a tendency to fix landmarks, as a sedimentation of defining features in an unstable perceptual memory, the need for intimacy translates into a fragile balance between withdrawal and exposure, between confidentiality and visibility, involving a permanent negotiation between proximity and distance, and the need for protection is reactivated when space induces vulnerability and precariousness, forcing the subject to seek shelter in the architecture of perception. These psychic instances are transfigured into an ambiguous geography, made up of attractions and repulsions, of processes reminiscent of symbolic eruptions and erosions, where meaning is not fixed but shifts, continually rewriting itself in the tension between light and darkness, familiar and foreign, protection and exposure.



Artistic research into this issue is not limited to a simple inventory of compositional principles or design elements, but extends into a territory of obscure intersections between psychological knowledge and the materiality of the environment, between diagrammatic reason and the perceptual vibration of forms. The methodologies of prototyping and iterative testing, infiltrated into the process, function not only as technical tools, but as speculative devices that produce possible worlds of exposure, where 3D models—whether virtual or printed—become intermediate bodies, transitory entities between concept and experience. When these structures are placed in front of the viewer, through direct contact or immersive mediation, they trigger sensory cartographies, maps that do not measure but unfold, that do not explain but tense, converting diagrammatic analysis into an act of poetic traversal of perception. Thus, the exhibition space reveals itself as a palimpsest of unstable layers, in which the visible and the invisible contaminate each other, in which order and dislocation overlap, and the visual experience is configured as a geography of intensities, marked by a continuous oscillation between fascination and refusal, between the attraction of light and the gravity of darkness.

**Alexandru Bălteanu**

The underground landscape of  
creativity

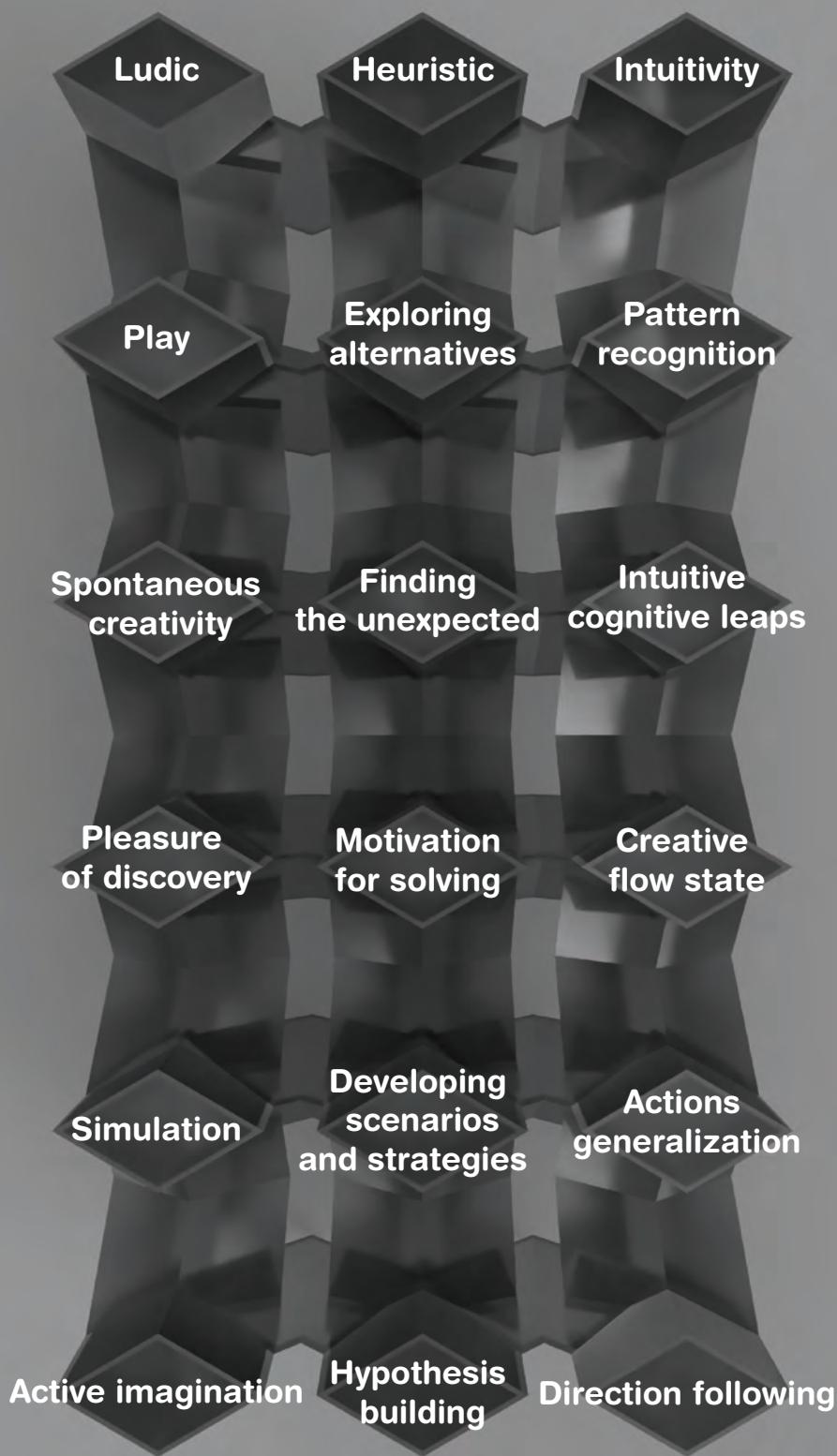


In contemporary artistic research, the methodologies of design blend seamlessly with the spirit of the Ludic (the inherent quality of play). This dynamic space fosters a powerful intersection where playful experimentation, structured heuristics, and creative intuition converge. Through this process, initial ideas take shape, functional structures are formed, and intuitive connections are revealed, transforming the artistic endeavor into a vibrant landscape of knowledge, discovery, and innovation.

In the realm of contemporary artistic research, the process of generating forms and meanings is not merely an aesthetic endeavor, but a continuous ground for multidisciplinary experimentation and exploration. From this perspective, the Ludic, heuristics, and intuition emerge as complementary dimensions of creative investigation, and their interaction produces profound artistic knowledge structures. This process can be conceptualized through a geomorphological metaphor: the formation of a subterranean relief, where stalactites and stalagmites advance slowly, drop by drop, idea by idea, merging after an undened waiting period into solid columns, or sometimes remaining fragile fragments suspended between the possible and the realized. This analogy offers a useful framework for understanding how structures of artistic knowledge are built over time. The Ludic, interpreted as a descending element, similar to stalactites forming from the ceiling of the imagination, becomes the mechanism by which the researcher or creator tests the spontaneity and exibility of materials and ideas, experimenting without systemic constraints.

These ludic moments represent the sediments and minerals of ideas that can generate more complex structures over time. Heuristics, in counterbalancing ascent, can be associated with stalagmites rising from the ground, influenced by the deposits of the ludic drops. It represents systematic and investigative exploration: the testing of hypotheses, the evaluation of alternatives, and the establishment of coherent structures of understanding as a reactive method, through which ludically generated materials and ideas are evaluated, compared, and organized into conceptual coherence. In the artistic research process, this dimension allows for the consolidation of spontaneous observations, transforming the experiment into significant data, interpretations, and articulated forms. Like stalagmites, heuristic structures offer stability and consistency, integrating the uncertainty





of spontaneous exploration into a solid cognitive framework. Intuition emerges when the ludic and heuristics converge, granting the researcher the ability to recognize patterns, connections, and expressive potential in the explored artistic material. From this perspective, intuition is not merely an immediate subjective reaction, but a product of the iterative interaction between experimentation and analytical reaction, a way of synthesizing artistic knowledge into a coherent structure fertile for innovation. In an imaginary world where Johan Huizinga would have been not just a cultural historian but also a visionary designer, we might hear the echo of a paradoxical maxim: “Play is design and design is play.” In this view, every object becomes a stage, and the user is no longer passive but an active participant in a ludic experience, this new ways of play.

In this case, following this logic, the imaginary proposed by Johan Huizinga becomes an extension of artistic research: every object becomes a ludic laboratory, a field of exploration for the user. A chair, a lamp, or a piece of furniture are no longer just functional tools; they become experiments in interaction and perception, challenges that stimulate creativity and active engagement. In this approach, the artistic research process is not limited to producing an object or a form, but explores how objects can activate cognitive, emotional, and social processes at the user interface. Thus, artistic research, from this perspective, can be conceptualized as an underground landscape of creativity: the Ludic drips spontaneous ideas and discoveries towards the goal of heuristics, which sculpts coherent structures. The column of intuition, resulting from the intermingling of these two forces, consolidates connections into a network of meanings and forms of recognizing past experiences, aiming for the formation of an organic logic. Obstacles and tensions encountered in this process are no longer mere impediments, but catalysts for discovery and innovation, contributing to the shaping of complex cognitive and narrative geographies. Ultimately, this approach reveals the interdependence between experiment, method, and intuitive perception, highlighting their central role in developing artistic knowledge and in generating fertile ground for experimentation, innovative design, and the exploration of the unwritten future of creation.



# What is Ludic

# This is Intuitivity

# What is Heuristic



## **SPACE 2. OUTER RESEARCH**

**Lorena Marcicu**

Rotating soundscapes in a rebel circle

*The smell of fish intermingling with the sound of the boiling oil in which it is fried*

*Howling echoes in the harbour silencing the horn of the infernal traffic on Galata bridge*

*A sun that does not dare to set silently, as the voices of the muezzin must soon start their call to prayer*

No place on Earth sounds as disturbingly as Istanbul, especially for a foreigner. The noise, the smell, the pastries and chic cafes are spread all over the world in a repeating pattern as Boris Groys once noticed how globalisation has brought upon the capitals of the world a form of uniformity. But the sound of latino music in Argentina or the silence of very industrialized northern countries in Europe, even the noisy reconstruction of states belonging formerly to the Soviet Union does not bear resemblance to this passage in the half-mooned empire. At varying times of the day, sound takes over the city of 15 million people.

The citizen who wants to blend in the myriads is faced with something terrifying—words that call every soul's attention at once.

Such request in the western world can only be the sound of war. No one would dare to stop all movement in track unless there was imminent danger. We know sirens only as death predictors. The silence of a city is a psychological form of freezing in the face of a tarrying outcome. The other side is, of course, a constant overarching noise threatening constantly. Silence follows bombing, earthquakes, when something happens which cannot be avoided or stopped. When the autonomy of the human being is taken away, a momentary silence follows which translates the shock of it happening. But never noise. Rebellion involves having understood what has happened. Perhaps, silent places are those which cannot contain a forward moving from the disaster, whichever belongs to them—the failing of not having become an utopic city or one which cannot get rid of its past. But Istanbul simulates the terror for the Western five times a day.

Sipping coffee on the terrace of a cultural centre in Istanbul, unknowingly aware of the echoes of the practice, I froze in terror upon hearing simultaneous callings for prayer. The weight of it was unbearable, the hypnotising force unfightable. Up to 15 million people connect briefly and safely in those moments. All strangers become related. The daily feeling of powerlessness is cured for some when the repeating voice is signalling the time for prayer. And this repetition is the key.

Lou Faroux, on the occasion of the Istanbul Biennale, creates a spiritual science fiction video piece in which he (re)imagines the past and future of the loss of his sister. A haunting phrase pervades the work: time is a flat circle. Probably, a repeating pattern, just like the sound pattern of Istanbul where you keep circling back to a root, religious in this case, and unescapable. Any identity is permanently altered by the frame one finds himself in. Some place string no sensible chord and identity remains unscathed. No magnetizing force, no gravity pull, nothing to modificate the mind of the traveller.

The last magnetic sun may be a question of alterity—the possibility to be altered by something that pulls you in so close, that it could vaporize your wings. In a time of skimming through and being vaguely interested in anything that is not a trend, the magnetism appears to have almost vaporised itself. No flat circle of our own.

*Work resumes, silence is disturbed  
Do you rebel now?*

**Radu Marťin**  
Broken Renderings



BRO

REND





They took the hammer first,  
then the hands,  
then the head that once looked at the horizon.  
Now the torso stands alone —  
a data fragment in an interrupted loop.  
Each wound re-coded,  
each absence rendered again in cardboard and light.  
The archive keeps duplicating its loss,  
as if the algorithm itself  
were trying to remember how to forget.





I walk among the limbs  
each fragment humming  
Sensors catch the  
the sculpture  
not through marble,

of a **dismantled** memory,  
with **digital static**.  
movement of my breath —  
**listens**,  
but through **signal**.



Somewhere beneath the **surface**,  
a **photosynthesis** of **pixels** begins:  
light turned into current,  
matter translated into noise.  
Even **ruins** evolve



the light flickers —  
the illusion of rebirth,  
of a monument breathing through  
But corruption always follows  
The archive **saves** everything,  
except truth.

The  
his  
a 1  
Each  
each  
Wh



Every limb becomes a node.  
The absent head transmits silence.  
The torso sends feedback to the void.  
In this topology, the body is distributed,  
scattered across invisible channels of memory.  
Somewhere, the sculptor still types,  
rewriting the same sequence:  
build-destroy-rebuild- render loss.  
His code loops indefinitely,  
a digital archeology of grief



h code.  
generation.

The worker no longer stands in stone;  
his body reappears as a simulation,  
a low-resolution echo of labor.  
Each gesture processed,  
Each fracture remapped in 3D space.  
When the system renders him,



Once, he faced the sun  
Now the light fits

a synthetic dawn  
People pass

their reflections shift

They do not rebuke  
they orbit him,  
like satellites  
ruins of

Somewhere beneath  
the worker still b

lters through cardboard pores,

replayed in the gallery.

s and look —

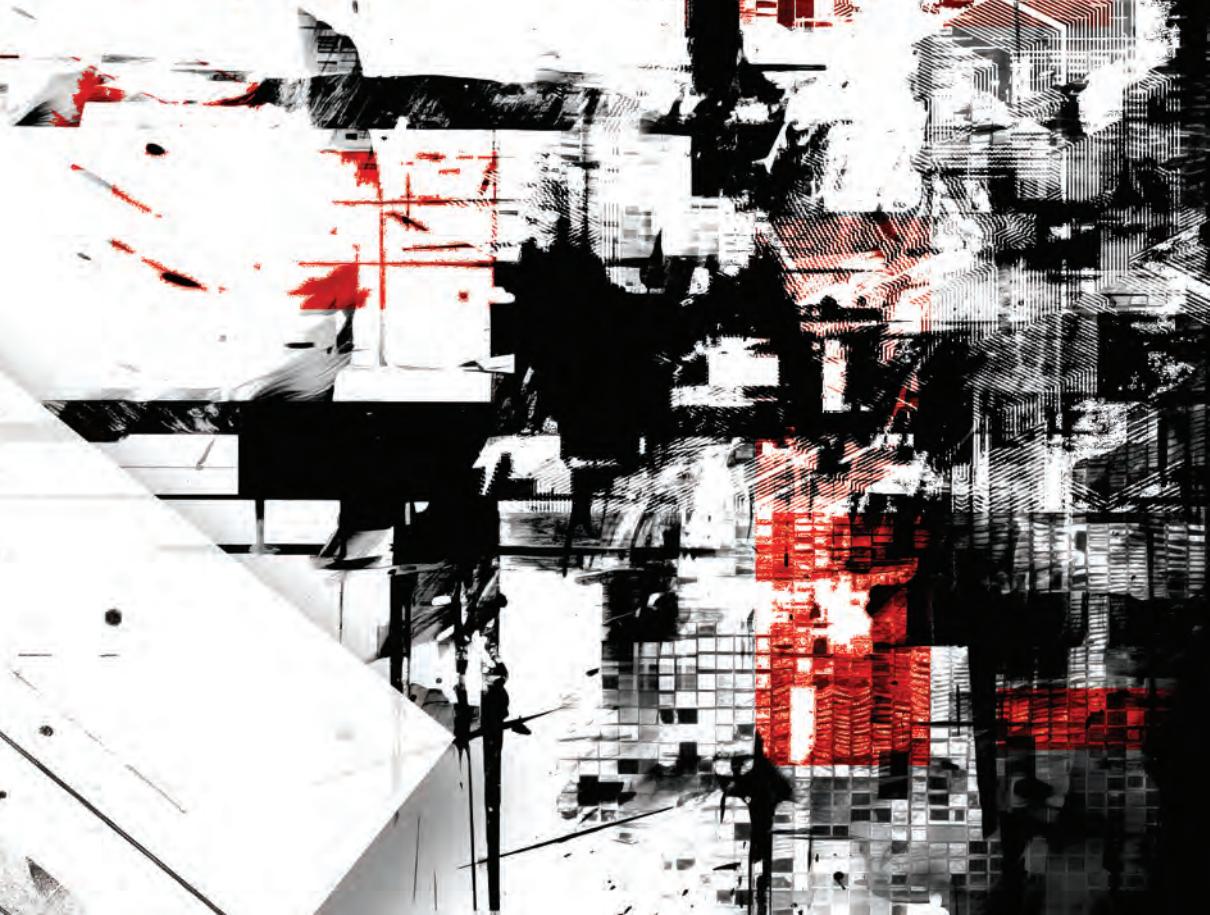
immer across the fragments.

uild him;

es tracing the  
an idea.

h the noise,

breathes in pixels.





My hands have

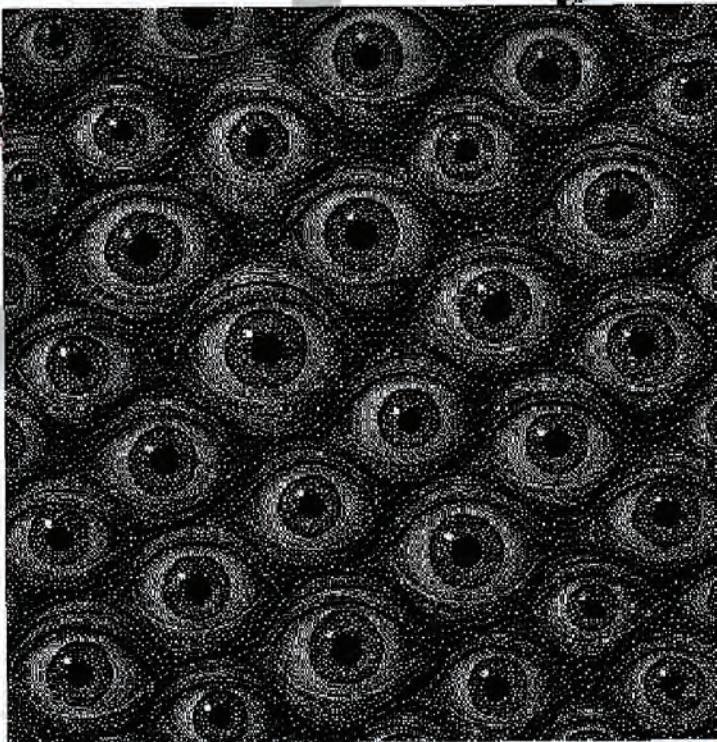
There is no clean movement  
only decay rendered in

I keep searching for  
but the image  
a delayed version  
walking through the de

Somewhere inside the  
I think the work is  
Or maybe it just hasn't

learned to shake like corrupted files.

ent left,  
n high resolution.  
r the right frame,  
e always appears one step behind —  
on of myself,  
ebris of intention.  
noise,  
still alive.  
finished dying.





I build,  
the world deletes.  
I restore,  
it deletes again.  
We are partners now,  
this universe and I,  
locked in an endless exchange of  
undo commands.  
Sometimes I imagine the final ver-  
sion —  
a clean render, without correction.  
But even that perfection terrifies  
me.  
Without error,  
there would be no reason to begin.



At the end of every process,  
the studio glows —  
screens cooling,  
silence pixelated.  
I watch the light fade from  
the surface  
and realize I've built nothing  
but the shadow of per-  
sistence.  
Still, I save the file.  
Naming it something hopeful:  
final\_version\_23.  
Knowing it never will be.

**Cătălin Marinescu**  
City out of map

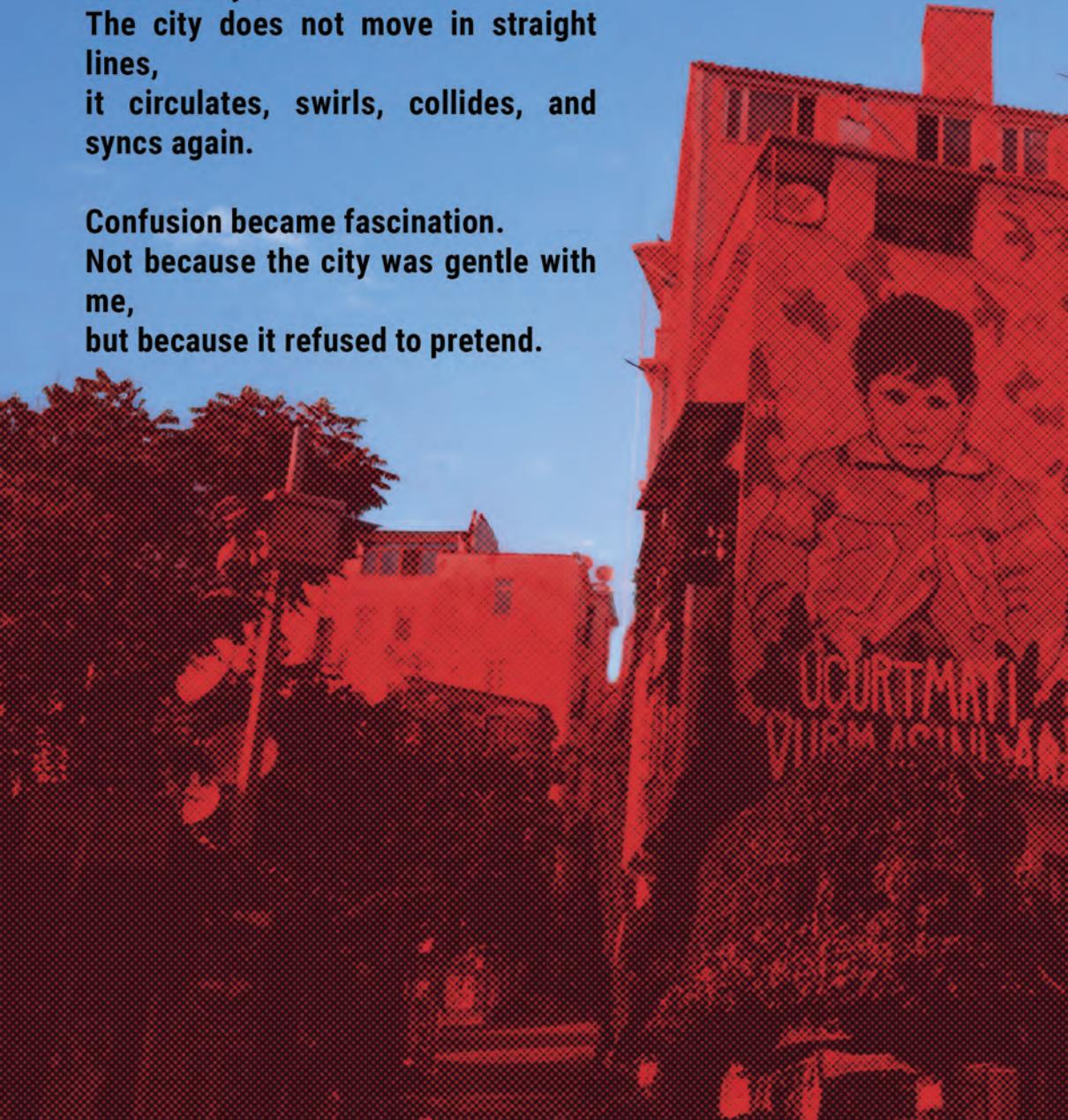


**Istanbul does not ask to be understood.  
It engulfs you first, then it teaches you  
how to breathe. The noise, density and  
motion...**

**What appears chaotic at first reveals  
itself as rhythm.**

**The city does not move in straight  
lines,  
it circulates, swirls, collides, and  
syncs again.**

**Confusion became fascination.  
Not because the city was gentle with  
me,  
but because it refused to pretend.**





Istanbul builds by accumulation, not replacement.

Fragile wooden houses leaning toward the street, baroque facades dissolving into concrete repairs and glass towers rising behind abandoned shells of the past.

Every ruin has a witness.

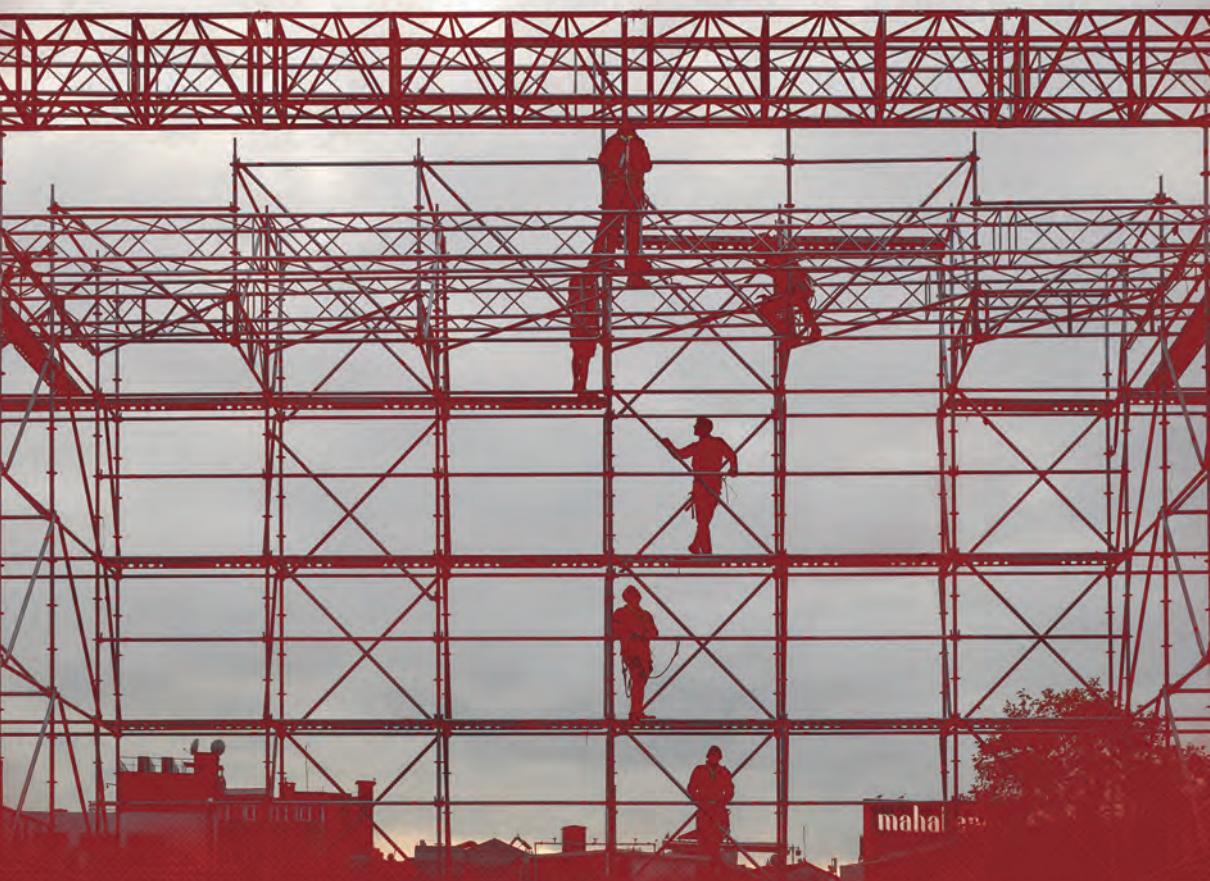
Every restoration hides a fracture.

Architecture becomes an archive, not of style, but of survival.



**"Art is a state of encounter." – Nicolas Bourriaud**

**And sometimes the most meaningful encounters are not inside institutions, but in the scaffolding outside them, where work is not symbolic but necessary.**







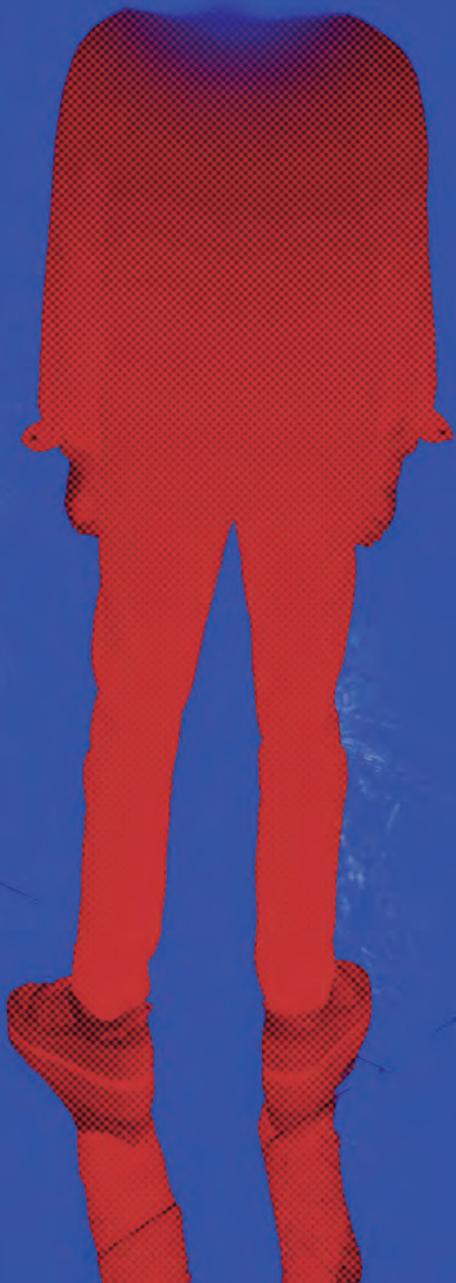
In the museum, identity was a concept.  
Here, it was a scratch, a sticker, a stain,  
a joke, a protest, a whisper on concrete.  
I recognized myself more in this vandalized  
surface than in any curated reflection.



I stood in front of the work, but I was not sure if I was looking or being looked at.

The image around me expanded and my edges dissolved.

In cities and exhibitions alike, I realize I do not witness, I participate in disappearance.

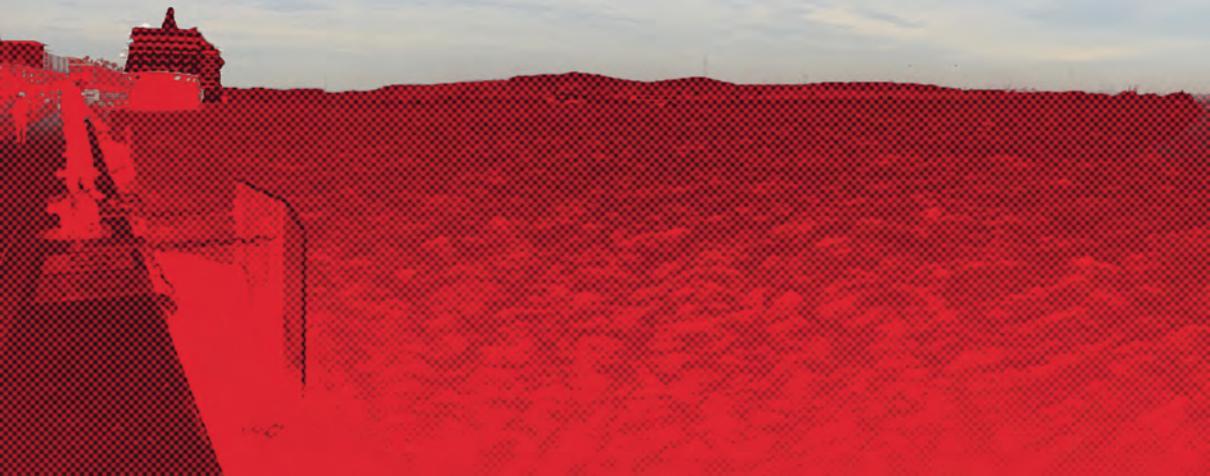




**The Art Biennale spoke about global futures, yet here the present felt heavier, tides, prayers, migrations, lungs of a city that does not wait for theory to catch up. Looking from above, I saw no themes. Only life unfolding, indifferent to art's vocabulary.**



**Between the museum and the street,  
two worlds argued.  
One curated crisis. One lived through it.  
I learned more from the noise.**



**Distance softened the debate.  
From the water, everything aligned for a  
second, culture, conflict, fatigue, hope.  
I did not choose a side.  
I just stood in the current, knowing the  
river carries us all.**







**Andrei Botnaru**

Untitled

In Istanbul, I saw the largest flag I had ever seen.

Later, I understood that the image of a nation is never direct.

It's an optical phenomenon, a projection formed at the intersection of light, wind, and gaze.

The flag is not a piece of cloth.

It's a reflection.

And reflection is the contemporary form of faith.

The flag is a leitmotif that magnetizes me. I carry it in my gaze like a question mark. Between me and the territory stretches a shifting fabric – a symbol that promises belonging, yet also distance. The flag and the territory: two faces of the same obsession. One flutters, the other stands still. One is an image, the other is matter. Together, they construct the illusion of a certainty I keep searching for, but never reach.

**41°01'40.3"N  
29°04'12.8"E**











I saw it from afar.  
It was as tall as five houses put together.

But it wasn't alone.  
Everywhere there were red flags –  
on buildings, on bridges, in windows,  
in shopfronts, in people's eyes.

The city was breathing red.

I realized I could no longer look at a single flag,  
because the flag had become the air itself.

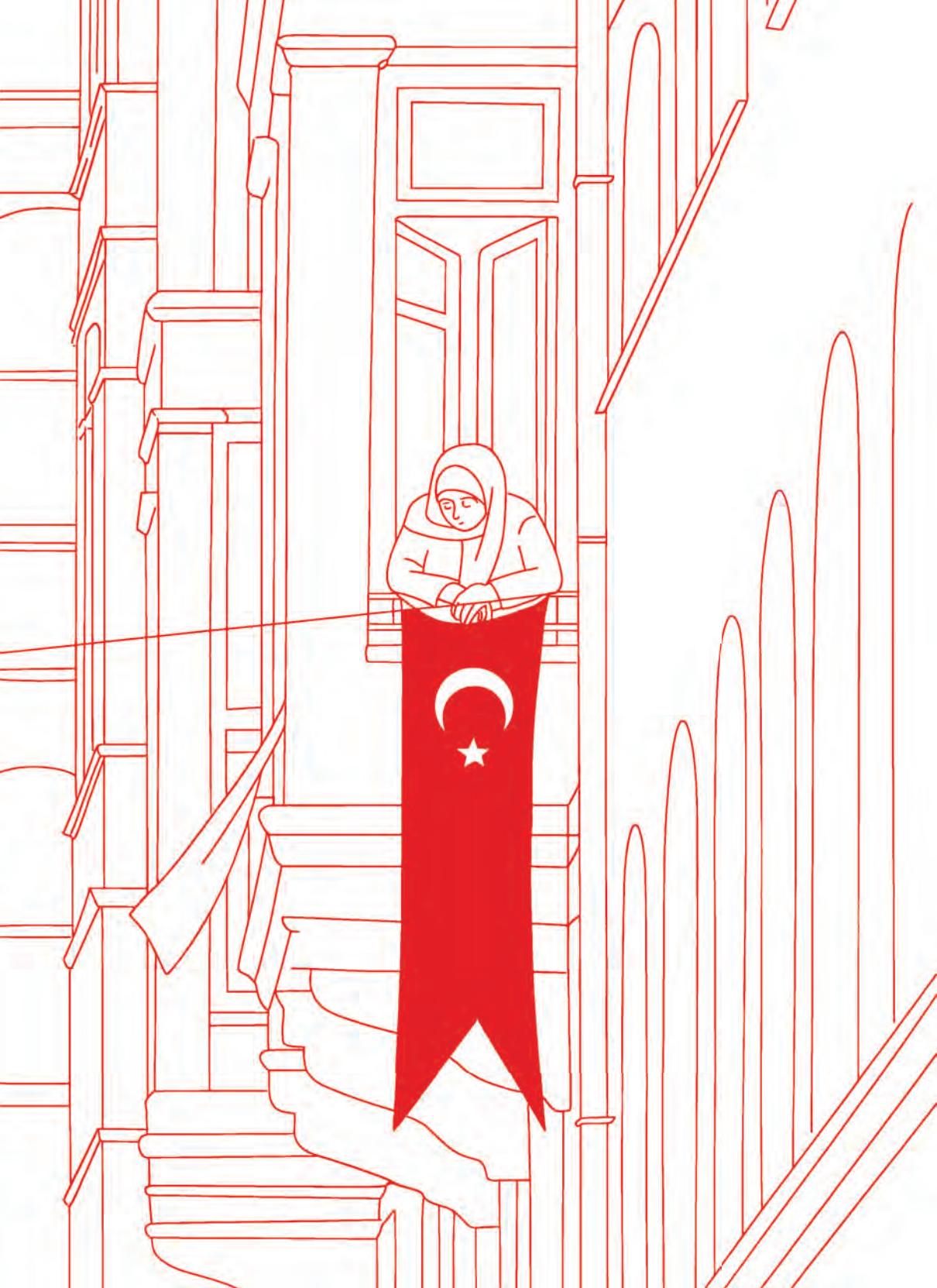
So I looked at their reflections –  
in water, in glass, in metal,  
in everything that could hold a trace of light.

In each reflection, another country.  
Another faith.

When I lifted my eyes again,  
only the color remained.

The air was red.  
Me – transparent.







**Cristiana Ursache**

The three-legged gaze and notes from an  
algorithmic city



The gaze within a multilayered space such as that of the Istanbul Biennial may function as an epistemic device that maps the ways in which the world becomes intelligible. In this sense, *the three-legged gaze* emerges as a cognitive model derived from the theme of the 18th Istanbul Biennial curated by Christine Tohmé, which proposes a reflection on the incomplete body, fragile equilibrium, and mobility. The three-legged cat becomes an epistemological figure of resilience and improvisation, a form of navigation through instability that resonates with the functioning of algorithmic perception: a vision augmented by data, filters, and predictive models that learn to operate in the absence of the necessary resources.

Here, the notion of scAI is introduced as a conceptual extension of this condition. If the Deleuzian rhizome refuses hierarchy and proposes a logic of multiplication, scAI adds an additional dimension, a perspective from another angle, a fourth dimension of understanding: that of algorithmic attachment, the way human perception adheres to digital infrastructures, generating a new cognitive and affective topology.

The Biennial thus becomes a laboratory, a site where perception is tested under conditions of instability and fragmentation. Unlike classical exhibition models, which relied on coherent narratives and hierarchical structures, the three-legged cat refuses order, exposing the visible as process, as vibration, as a moving infrastructure.

In this perspective, the research embedded within the scAI methodology becomes a form of knowledge that clings, accumulates, collates, and captures through contact, and whose results are disseminated in unpredictable ways. Istanbul operates as a networked architecture, a visual ecology in which the urban infrastructure itself becomes a cognitive model. Following Gilbert Simondon's logic, the city can be understood as a concrete technical being, an entity defined not merely by its utilitarian functions but by its capacity to generate relations between matter, energy, and information. Its Byzantine, Ottoman, modern, and digital layers coexist like strata of code within a data-processing system. In Galata and Karaköy, within former commercial spaces reconfigured into galleries and installations, perception functions as a system of translation between history and the present. The gaze moves across damp walls, electric cables, glossy surfaces, and tactile screens, constructing a rhizomatic ecosystem

of visibility. The Biennial inscribes this stratified city within a post-anthropocentric framework: art becomes a cognitive agent, and curating, a process of ecological attention. In this sense, *scAI* no longer designates a critical concept alone but a device of translation between levels of perception, between the human and the technological, the sensory and the algorithmic. The gaze associated with the “three legs” is one that adapts to discontinuity: an incomplete, algorithmic gaze that operates through selection, prediction, and error. In Istanbul, this gaze is reflected in the city’s rhythms, in the sound of trams on İstiklal, in the vibration of the Bosphorus waters, and in the air currents traversing the markets. The city becomes a neuro-urban model, an open brain where sensory and data flows intertwine.

This cognitive ecology is what Deleuze would describe as an abstract machine: a structure without centre, producing relations and differences simultaneously. The Biennial brings into this space a pedagogy of distributed perception. Instead of a monocular, centralised gaze, it proposes a multiple, rhizomatic, augmented one.

By its very nature, the Biennial becomes a space for prototyping perception. Artistic works and interventions are no longer finite objects but cognitive devices that reorganise the relation between the visible and the intelligible. Within the exhibition, the gaze is compelled to alter its regime, it moves between bodies, materials, screens, sounds, reflections, and, above all, between distinct modes of the existence of the image. Sound installations, machine-generated images, sculptures made of vegetal materials, and digital projections function as elements within an *scAI* system, an entangled ecosystem where data, matter, and affect coexist within a regime of co-evolution.

Through the superimposition of these levels, an algorithmic aesthetics takes shape: a form of sensibility that incorporates mathematical procedures, logics of recurrence, processes of automatic recognition, and probabilistic selection. This aesthetics is no longer anthropocentric but procedural: the image does not emerge from the artist’s intention but from the emergent relations among technology, space, and the body.

Within this paradigm, the curator’s gaze transforms into an act of cognitive negotiation. Each work reactivates an internal algorithm of perception, the manner in which we recognise forms, interpret movement, and establish connections.

If the algorithm is a system of rules oriented towards coherence, *scAI* is an ecology of fragile attachments, a logic of the remainder, of that which escapes classification. In this sense, the Biennial constitutes itself as an experimental field in which uncertainty becomes a form of knowledge.

Within this aesthetic ecology, *scAI* acquires the status of an expanded curatorial methodology. It designates a mode of understanding curating as a process of capturing, filtering, and redistributing perception. If, in a previous text, *scAI* was defined as a method of re-territorialising infrastructures of creation, here it becomes an agent of re-attachment between visual art, technology, and the environment. This may be interpreted through the lens of the relational ontology formulated by Gilbert Simondon, for whom individuation is a continuous, never-finalised process. *scAI*, as a “cognitive organism”, functions through permanent variation, and within the Biennial this variation translates into unstable curatorial configurations spaces that reorganise themselves under the pressure of visibility and data. As Donna Haraway asserts, “situated knowledge” implies a responsibility towards place and relation, not towards totality. *scAI* itself represents a form of situated knowledge: it clings to context but does not dominate it, it produces temporary cartographies of understanding rather than absolute theories.

This pedagogy of instability becomes one of the most fertile territories of contemporary research. Within it, art ceases to be an object of analysis and becomes an experimental system. Through its dual vegetal and algorithmic nature, *scAI* emerges as an epistemological model that counters the neoliberal logic of efficiency and quantification. Where the algorithm tends to extract and predict, *scAI* attaches and disrupts: it does not produce results but unexpected connections.

Through this function, *scAI* reactivates an ethical dimension of research, that of care for relation, of responsibility towards what cannot be measured. Within the Biennial, this care manifests through minimal curatorial gestures: the placement of a work in a passageway, the decision not to translate a text, the preservation of a fragment of an old wall, all these actions define a way of allowing the visible to breathe.

The three-legged gaze thus becomes a cognitive model for non-linear research: a form of unbalanced yet adaptive perception that

operates through distributed attention. It relies on three dimensions: affect, algorithm, and attachment. This is the terrain activated by the Istanbul Biennial: a magnetic field in which human perception, urban materiality, and technological infrastructure together form an ecology of augmented attention.

What has been articulated within the Istanbul Biennial is not merely an exhibition, but a pedagogy of extended perception, a way of learning to see differently, to accept that vision is no longer the property of a single subject but a shared field of vibrations. Like the three-legged cat that reinvents its balance with each step, contemporary artistic research learns to live without the support of certainties. It no longer seeks hierarchies or centres of stability but explores modes of becoming, temporary alliances, and ephemeral configurations of knowledge. The gaze allows itself to be orbited by the lights of the city, by the shimmer of the waters, by the multiplexing of data and images. It no longer seeks a single meaning but moves among multiple horizons, aware that any of them might dissolve.

Thus, what remains is not a conclusion but a position, an attitude of researching from within the world rather than above it. Beneath the last magnetic sun, research is not a path towards clarity but a process of acclimatisation to uncertainty. Instead of closing, it opens; instead of crushing, it shelters. And perhaps this is where the true liberation of knowledge begins: where every gaze, be it incomplete, fragmentary, or algorithmic, finds, within its own limit, a new beginning for wonder.









**Ioana Roșu**

Patterning togetherness. Turing-Rorschach itterations

In the context of the 18th Istanbul Biennial, the Turing patterns which inspired the visual identity of The Three-Legged Cat<sup>1</sup> are meant to evoke „complex, plural, and transformative ways of being together.”<sup>2</sup>

In the pages of this diary, the Turing patterns take in, foster and reflect the meanings of a series of the works presented during the Biennial. They bring together personal visual records of the works<sup>3</sup> and key-words extracted from their respective descriptions from the guide of the Biennial. Playing on the action of mirroring, they become Rorschach patterns that reflect upon (our) multiple ways of existing in the world.

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<sup>1</sup> Designed by independent graphic designer Okay Karadayılar.

<sup>2</sup> Kevser Güler. “Foreword”, in *The Three-Legged Cat. 18th Istanbul Biennial*, ed. Jad Ghazali and Çağla Özbek, (Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts, 2025), 15.

<sup>3</sup> The works of Lungiswa Gqunta and Khalil Rabahm, Naomi Rincón-Gallardo and Ana Alonso, Elif Saydam and Valentin Noujaïm, Natasha Tontey and Karimah Ashadu.







trace pollutants in the water

colonial legacies and power imbalances of global extractivism

aggression

mining

land dispossession

communal

resistance

survival & resistance

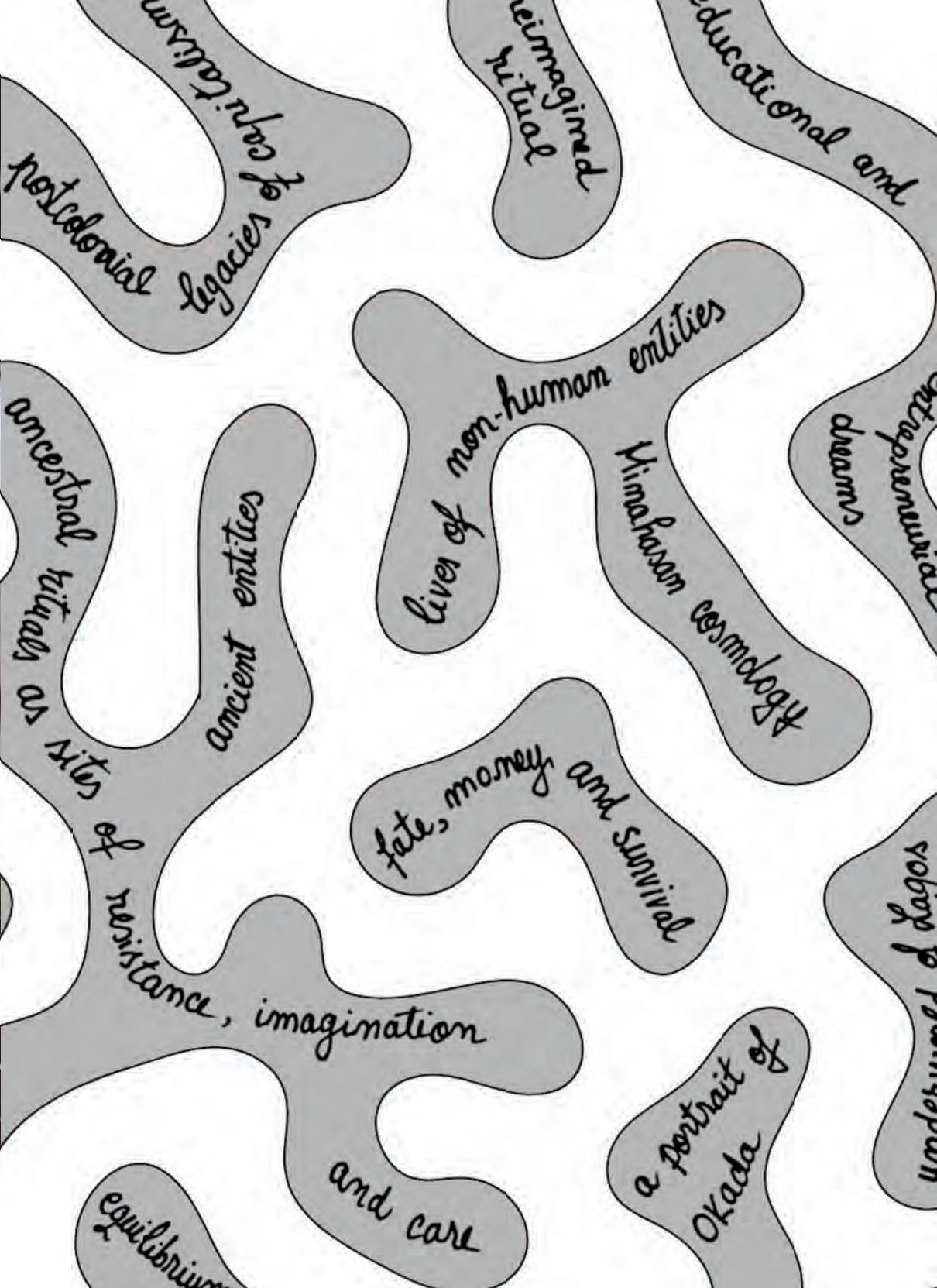
of gold mining

reality



the sense of camaraderie  
communal memory and celebration  
forms of exclusion experienced in France  
minoritarian societies in Turkey  
a haven  
public expression  
'strip' 'urbuzz' 'disrepair'  
welcoming as well as excluding  
diasporic communities in Paris  
for immigrants  
hospitality





FRI, 10th Oct, '25

Journal entry no. 10,

I am back home. Can't stop thinking about this quote... From E.A. Povinelli's "Divergent Survivances":

If there is a general economy of Western hauntology, it is because their social and political houses are riddled with a specific ghostly presence of massacred bodies they cannot manage or get rid of because they are the condition of their most intimate inside."

Alas, we live in a world designed and produced to care only for some, and to take advantage of (the) others.

How often do we mistakenly sing along to this world's cynical tunes?  
How often do we do it willingly?

Who is "we"?

Should we be dismantling borders?  
This socio-political construct seems to be  
too deeply embedded in the structure of  
our world to be dismantled.

Perhaps we should be reaching out,  
creating new connections.

Could we begin mapping relations and  
common points in different places and  
across diverse spaces, without dismissing  
their distinct ancestry, heritage and history?

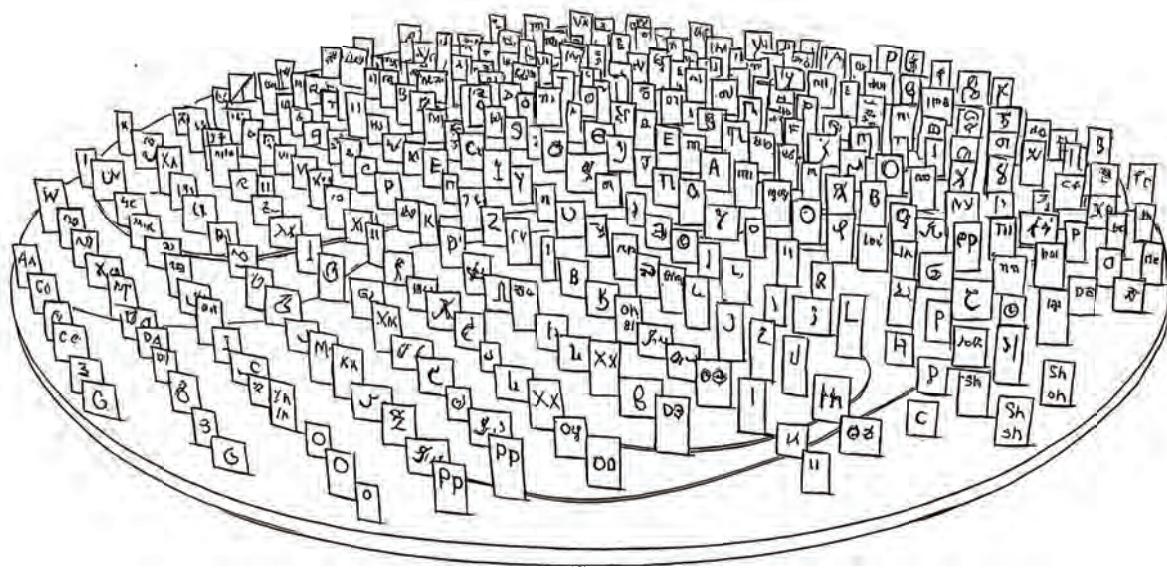
Maybe creating constellations of relations  
might erode the borders that isolate us.

Maybe forging and connecting multiple  
micro-communities will preserve some  
semblance of sanity in this world.

Who is "we"?

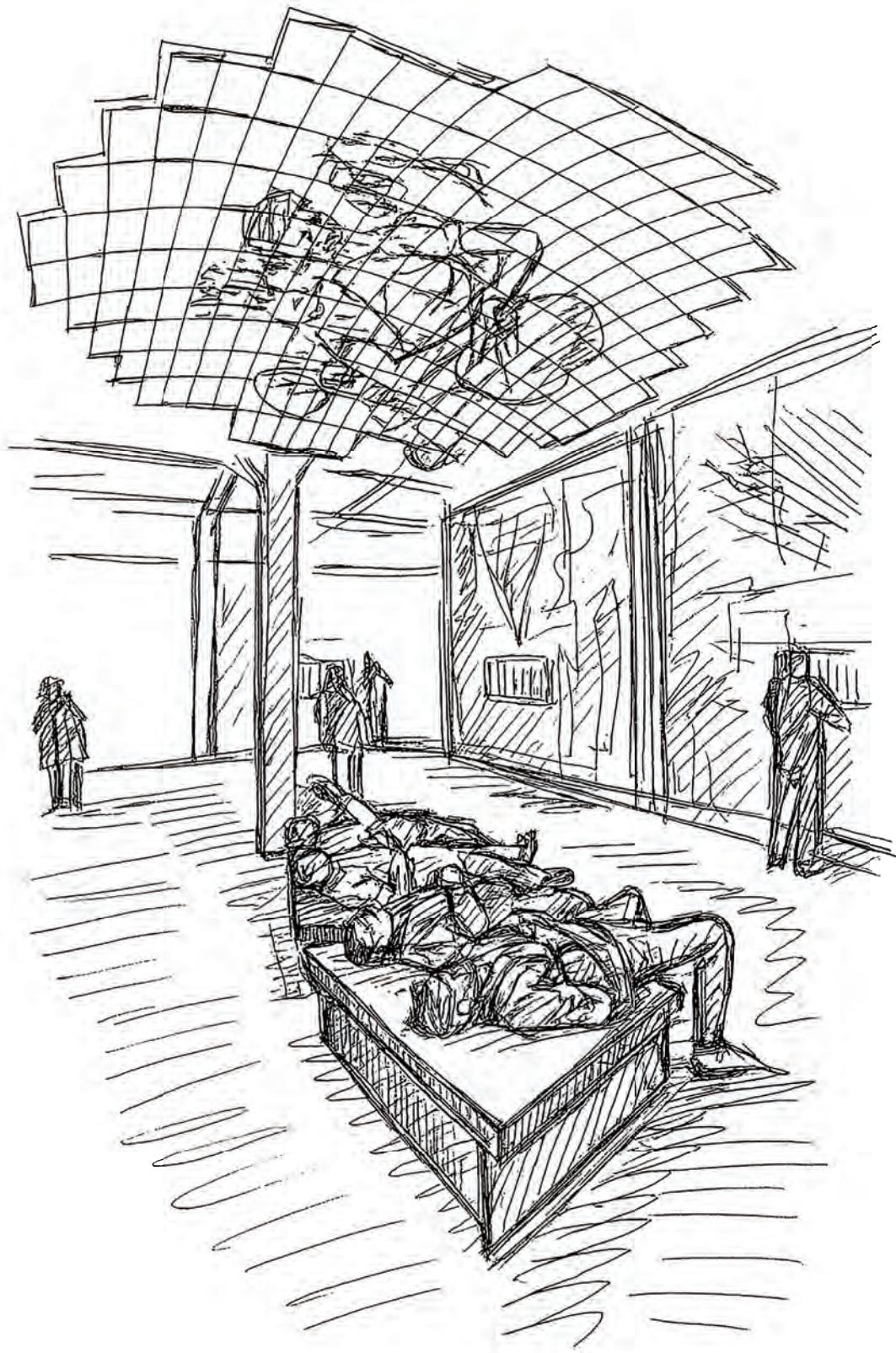
**Raul Saucă**

Magnetic Cartography



Under Istanbul's almost magnetic sun, I discovered another dimension of perception: one that no longer unfolds only between the viewer and the object, but between vibrations, between spaces that overlap and dissolve at the same time. The city itself becomes a living museum, a perpetually reorganizing stage set, where ruin and construction coexist, and light glides over architectural textures like an electric wave of memory. The experience of mobility provided me with direct confirmation of the theory I had developed in my research: space is no longer a passive container of the work, but an active entity, capable of shaping the perceptual state of those who traverse it. In front of each artwork, I felt a reaction similar to that of the body in an electromagnetic field – a subtle vibration of attention, a continuous attraction and repulsion, a process of orientation and disorientation at the same time.

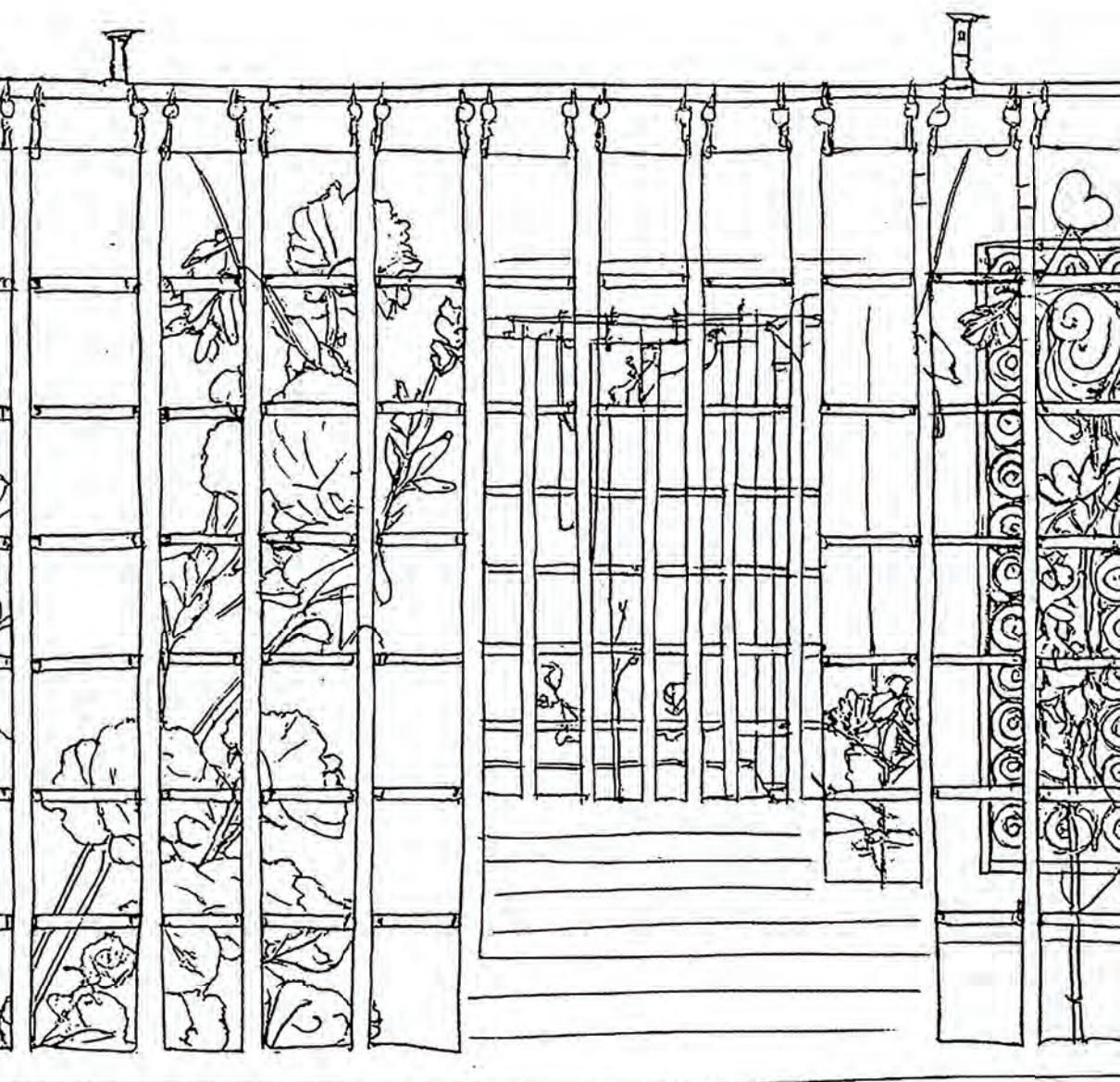
Claudia Pagès Rabal's "Five Defense Towers" installation functioned for me as an exercise in reverse perception: the viewer, lying on their back, becomes part of a surveillance mechanism. Under the dome of projected light, the circular image of the film transforms the ceiling into a map of contemporary anxiety, a diagram of control and fragility. What would traditionally have been perceived as a simple screen behaves here like a magnetic vault, reconfiguring the relationship between gaze and space. At that moment, I understood, more clearly than in any theoretical text, that exhibition architecture is an optical instrument, a perceptive apparatus that disciplines and, at the same time, emancipates the viewer. Inside that luminous geometry, the distance between body and image is canceled out, and the gaze becomes a force field, an energy that changes everything it touches.

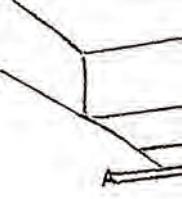


In contrast, Natasha Tontey's „Garden Amidst the Flame” opens up a fluid territory where ritual, fiction, and mythology merge into a sensory meditation on corporeality and transformation. Her film exudes an almost physical warmth, and the saturated color palette seems to pulsate like an incandescent surface. Inside this installation, I perceived my own body as an extension of light—a sense organ that not only receives but also generates energy. The relationship between the viewer and the image becomes a thermal, organic one, in which perception is no longer articulated through distance but through contact. In the context of my research on the impact of environmental spaces on perception, this work offered me a tangible experience of the concept of total immersive space, where the environment does not frame art, but metabolizes it.

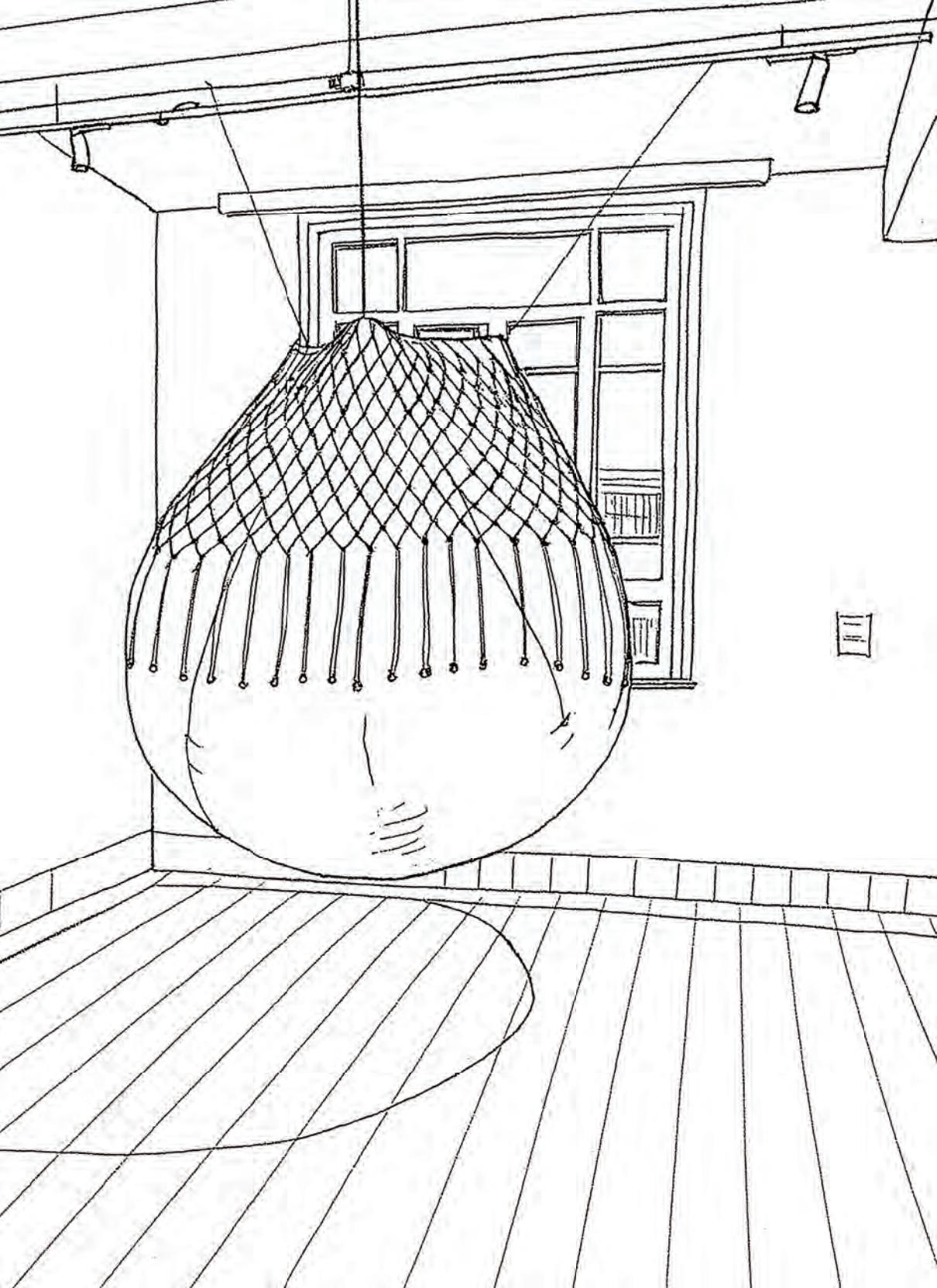
In Elif Saydam's works, brought together under the title „Hospitality”, I found another form of magnetism—that of interstices. The transparent layers of plastic suspended in the air, vibrating slightly with the movement of the air, created an illusion of instability, a visual vibration that seemed to reactivate the consciousness of the material. Here, hospitality becomes an ambiguous notion: a space of transition between openness and rejection, between intimacy and exclusion. I noticed how the light, filtered through the translucent layers, generated an optical game that altered the perception of volume and depth, similar to the processes of visual erosion that I study in my thesis. This experience was one of slow sedimentation, in which perception is deposited in successive layers, like meanings that settle in memory. As the plastic plates swayed gently, it seemed to me that I was listening to the vibration of a different kind of discourse—one in which matter itself becomes language, and transparency becomes a means of poetic resistance. What fascinated me about „Hospitality” was not only the optical game, but the way in which the interior and exterior redefine each other in a continuous negotiation of boundaries. I perceived that installation as a visual metaphor for the contemporary exhibition space: a porous architecture, capable of breathing, filtering, reflecting. In this sense, the experience of the work functioned as a living demonstration of my doctoral hypothesis—that the exhibition environment is a dynamic entity, an open system in which perception is constantly constructed, dislocated, and reconstructed, like an organism that feeds on its own instability.







In front of Nolan Oswald Dennis's works, I felt a different gravity, a conceptual density that transformed the walls of the room into a mental map. His drawings, designed as a cartography of decolonial thinking, functioned like a seismograph of perception—recording the subtle vibrations between idea, space, and body. In “model for a gasp (veiled)”, that black form that slowly inflated and deflated to the rhythm of human presence seemed to breathe an aerodynamics of consciousness. It was a collective body, a shared lung that translated the energy of visitors into movement, making visible the invisible tension between interior and exterior. At that moment, I recognized a profound analogy with the notion of “reactive space” in my research—that type of environment that responds, that adjusts to presence, that becomes a co-author of the experience. Dennis’ installation was not just a kinetic sculpture, but a meditation on perception as a bioenergetic phenomenon, in which air, sound, and movement create a sensory network with almost magnetic potential.



In “shadow (articulated)”, the shape of the globe suspended from the ceiling, covered with recurring mirrors, introduced a cosmological dimension of perception. The reflected image belonged neither to the viewer nor to the outside world, but to an interspace—an area of interference between the real and the possible. It seemed to me that this work precisely transposed the relationship I discuss in my thesis between the visible and the invisible: perception as an unstable territory, in which reflection is not just a doubling, but a form of poetic translation. Through Dennis’s mirrors, the exhibition space became a diagram of consciousness, an architecture of perception in motion. What I experienced there was not contemplation, but a topography of thought inscribed in matter.

Dilek Winchester, in “410 Letters: On Reading and Writing (Albanian)”, offered me the experience of another form of spatiality: a linguistic one. Faced with projections and fragments of the alphabet scattered throughout the room, I understood the alphabet not as a system of signs, but as architecture. Each letter became a suspended body, a material form with its own vibration. Viewing the work was like traversing a phonetic labyrinth, a journey through layers of cultural history transformed into visual structures. In the diffused light, the letters behaved like magnetic relics—residues of linguistic memory that simultaneously attract and repel meaning. For me, this work activated a hidden dimension of research: the way space can be read as text and text as space.

I remembered then how, in exhibition architecture, explanatory text often becomes a marginal element, a guide to meaning. In Winchester’s installation, the text itself becomes space, and the viewer is forced to navigate between alphabetical forms as if in a three-dimensional landscape of memory. The experience was one of sensory decoding, in which reading and perception overlap, and the visual becomes a language of resistance against forgetting. I understood that, like the relief sculpted by geological forces, language is a material that bears the traces of historical pressures, a topography of sedimented meanings.

This awareness deepened when I encountered “Untitled (Kendinibegen...)”, installed on the roof of Gallery 77, where the text became a luminous scar on the building, an inscription that rewrites the identity of the architecture. There, meaning no longer resided in words,

but in the light that made them visible. I thought that the exhibition space, in its essence, is also a form of writing: a grammar of light, distances, and proportions that generates perceptive sentences in the viewer's mind. In this analogy, my research intersected organically with the artist's practice, both investigating the ways in which sign and form can generate an emotion, a memory, an orientation in the visual field.

The experience of the works of Claudia Pagès Rabal, Natasha Tontey, Elif Saydam, Nolan Oswald Dennis, and Dilek Winchester crystallized into a kind of interior architecture, a mental landscape composed of perceptual and energetic layers. Each installation functioned as an area of different intensity (one acoustic, another luminous, another tactile or cognitive), and the transition from one to another was like crossing a geography of consciousness. I felt that the Biennale spaces were not just exhibition venues, but organisms that breathe, pulsate, and transform perception into living matter. Each of them manifested a form of magnetism: a subtle attraction between the gaze and the surface, between thought and materiality.

This experience made me reconsider the role of the body in relation to space. In my research, I talked about the visitor as a receiver of stimuli, but here I felt that the visitor is rather a generator of perceptual fields, a catalyst that activates the latent meanings of space. At the Biennale, the body not only perceives, but also configures, like an electromagnetic probe that translates the invisible into visible vibration. In front of those works, physical presence became a form of writing in the air, an interaction with an environment that responds and reverberates. This mobility allowed me to directly experience what had remained theoretical in the documentation process: the interdependence between space design, light configuration, and the psychological mechanisms of perception. In front of installations that manipulated light, transparency, reflection, or sound, I recognized the compositional principles I had written about in my research: unity, variety, balance, contrast, rhythm. I saw them transposed into reality, not as aesthetic formulas, but as active perceptual processes capable of altering the viewer's emotional state. Theory was converted into experience, and experience into sensory knowledge.

In a way, the Biennial functioned as a perceptual laboratory: a space for testing hypotheses about how the environment determines perception. In each work, the tensions between the visible and the

invisible, openness and limitation, protection and vulnerability were rewritten in other forms. For example, in Dennis's installation, the slow movement of objects produced a sensation of suspended waiting, as if time itself had become material. In Saydam's, light was filtered and distorted, generating a diaphanous, almost tactile form of perception. In Winchester's work, text and image melted into each other, and meaning was formed through a process of visual sedimentation. These were not mere aesthetic observations, but concrete confirmations of how architecture, materiality, and light can orchestrate complex psychological reactions. What I brought back from this experience is not just a set of images or memories, but a new understanding of research as a living, permeable process. I learned that perception is not just the result of a mental construction, but a network of forces circulating between body, space, and object. Art, in this sense, becomes a magnetic field of consciousness, and artistic research a way of measuring the invisible vibrations of the world.



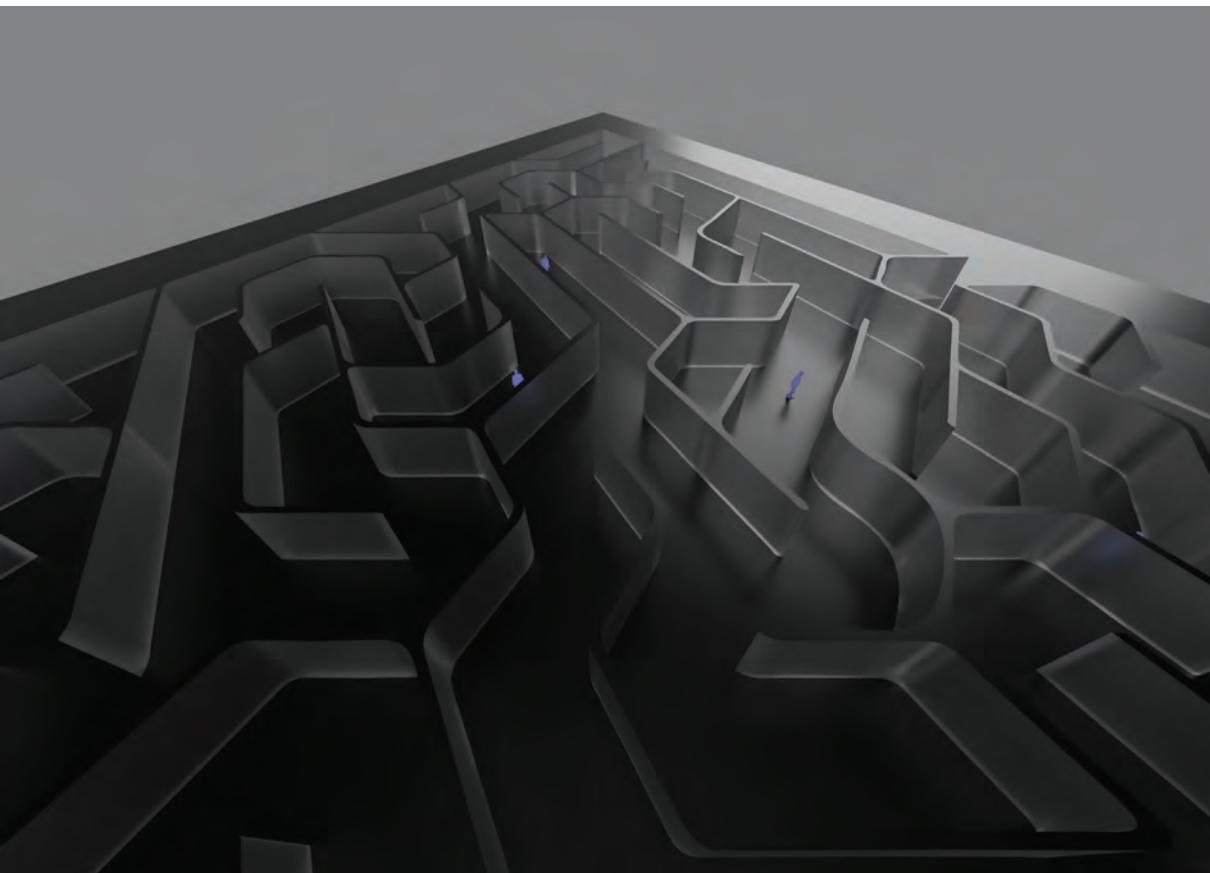
**Alexandru Bălteanu**  
Entering uncertainty

Every project begins in uncertainty—not the absence of knowledge, but the space for possibilities. At the summer PhD school, as a spectator and student, I encountered two philosophical architectures that sparked ideas and refreshed my mind with something that I should have known by that time: *The Not-Yet* and *The Panopticon*. At first, hearing those terms sounded familiar but yet not explored enough as I was still in class. They even felt incompatible to some extent. One invited me to dream, the other to obey. But soon I realized both were speaking of the same tension: between freedom and structure, between visibility and becoming. And with this, my creative mind sparked an idea: what if these two concepts interfere with each other and create, in fact, a new concept that can be achieved in reality?

*Thinking through doing, and doing through thinking.*

*This became the method—not theory first, but thought emerging through the act itself.*

The challenge was to visualize this duality not as opposition, but as coexistence—as a system that both restricts and generates.

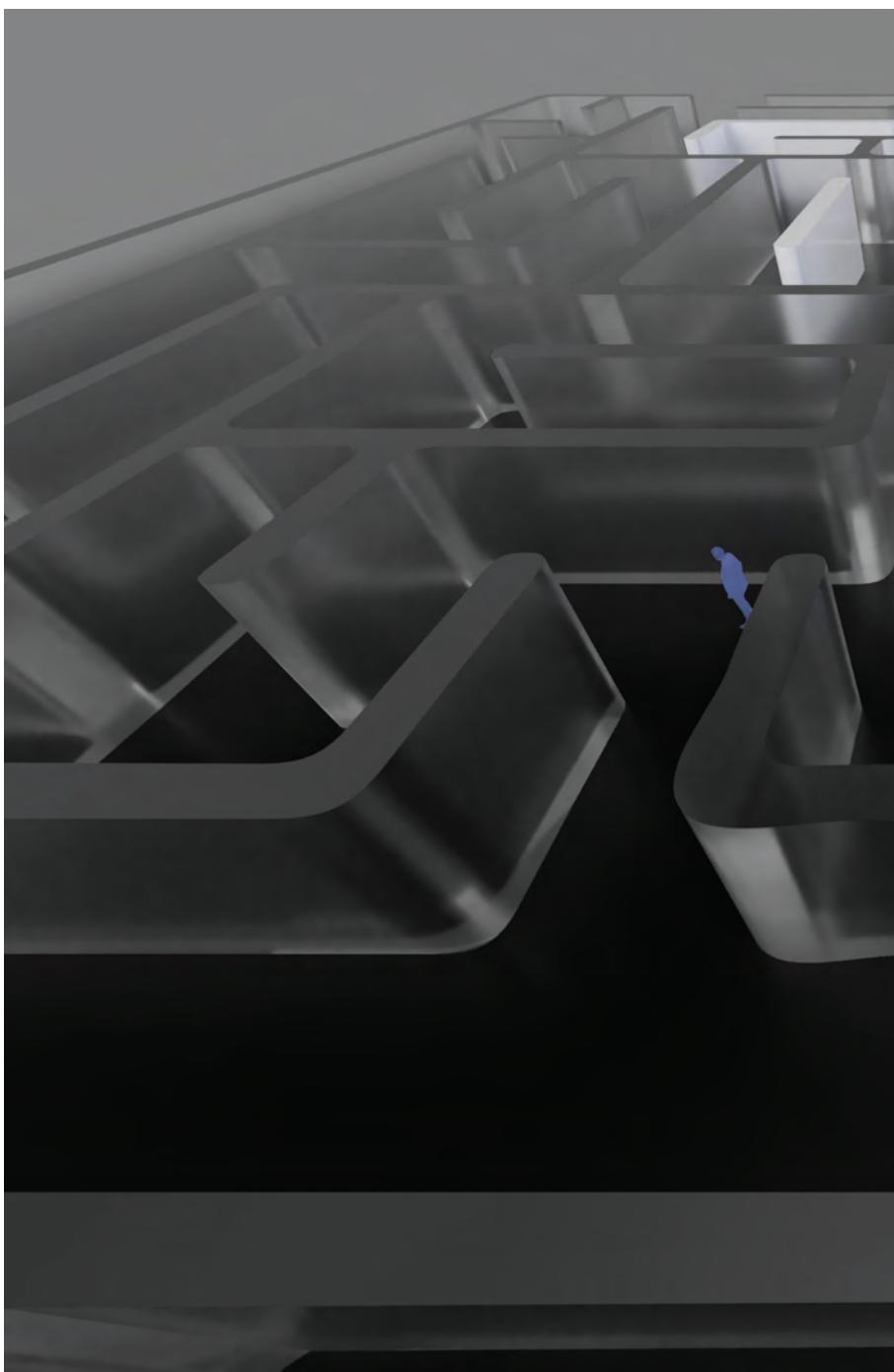


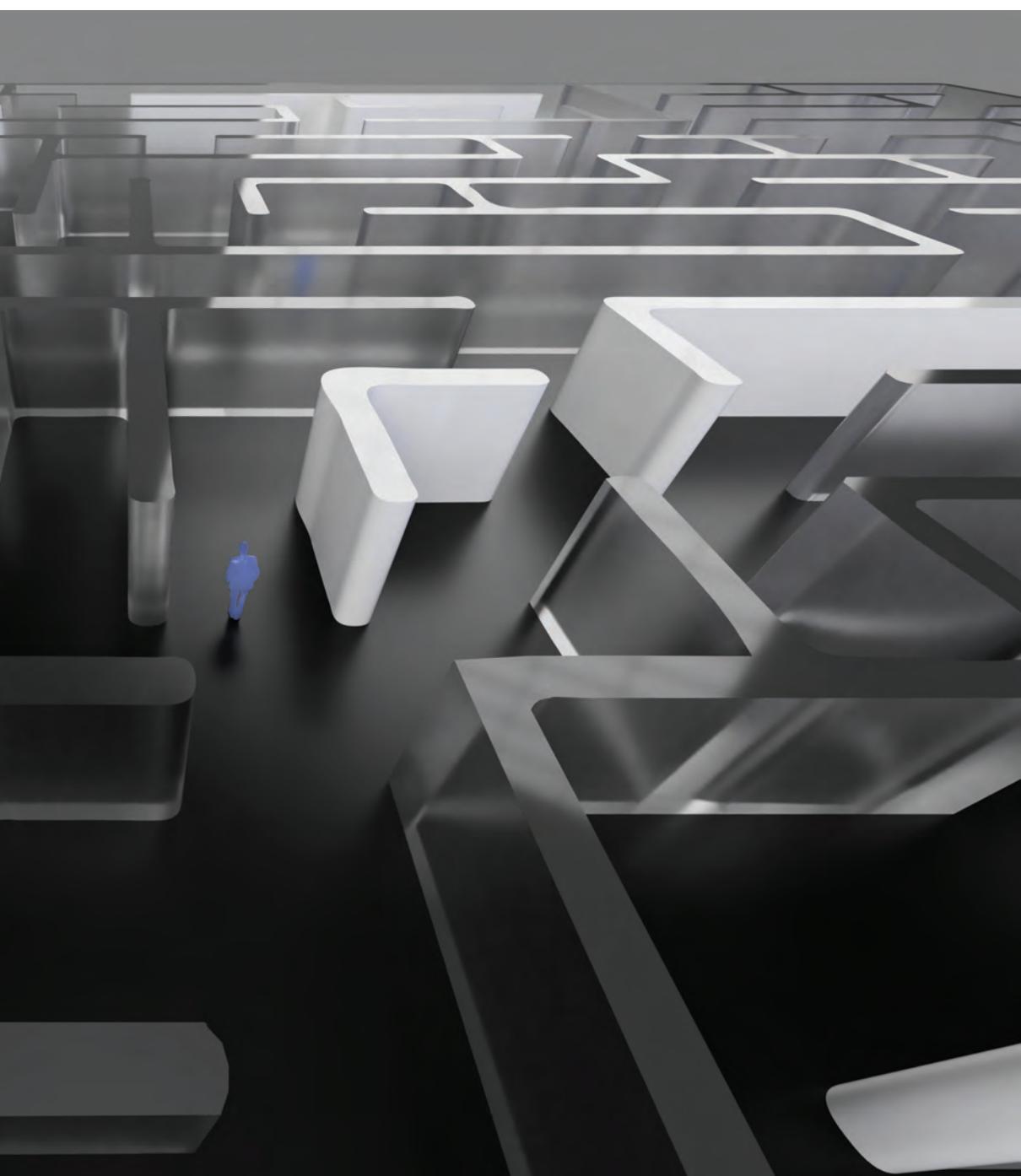
## **Visualizing the Not-Yet – the architecture of potential**

The Not-Yet is not a future that will arrive; it is the future already present as possibility. The Not-Yet is not a distant future waiting to arrive; it is the potential already breathing within the present. It exists in the gestures of trying, failing, and improvising—a heuristic process of thinking through doing and doing through thinking. This process is not about prediction, but about possibility as a living method.

Perhaps uncertainty itself is what allows us to accept radical ideas. The Not-Yet is not chaos; it is the logic of becoming.

Maria Hlavajova spoke about tactical imagination—the capacity to imagine within constraints, to design while rethinking the conditions of design itself. For her, this imagination is both critical and emancipatory, an act of resistance to closure. She further draws on Octavia Butler, who spoke of visionary action—but not Science Fiction—a kind of storytelling that builds futures through care, ethics, and awareness rather than spectacle. This vision of art as an anticipatory practice—a space of rehearsal for possible worlds—became fundamental to how I began to understand the Not-Yet: as a design method that welcomes uncertainty as fertile ground.









## **Visualizing The Panopticon – the architecture of visibility**

*in art, institutions, and society—evolution does not emerge from competition, but from symbiosis.*

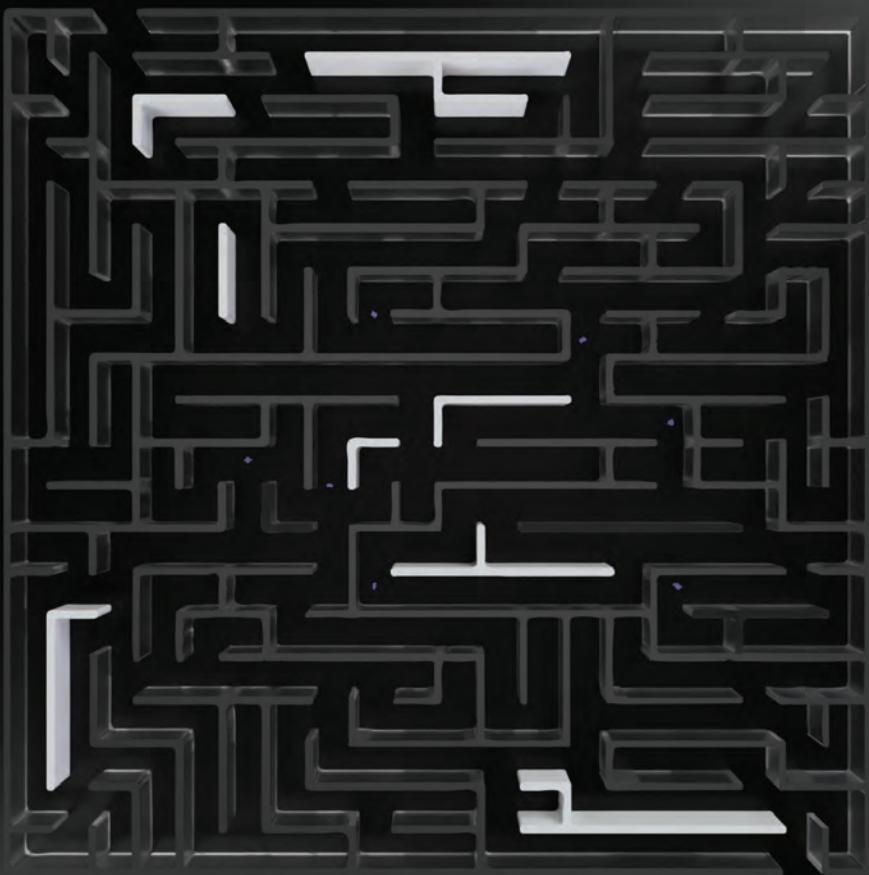
In contrast, The Panopticon embodies order, structure, and the disciplined gaze. It is the architecture of transparency—the promise of seeing everything, which becomes the condition of being seen.

It mirrors how design often operates: frameworks that organize creativity but also deny its boundaries. During the discussions with Ronald Kolb, the notion of visibility became more complex.

*in art, institutions, and society—evolution does not emerge from competition, but from symbiosis.*

No longer a space of domination, but one of mutual dependence, where power, observation, and cooperation circulate in constant exchange. From there, I began to question how design might reimagine visibility itself. What if transparency were not only a condition of control but also of transformation?

This thought led to a speculative gesture of my own: What if the modular white cube—the emblem of institutional neutrality—could appear anywhere? Placed at random, beside a rock, a pole, or a bench—becoming a nut in the wall, a small space of disobedience, of friction, of unexpected possibility. This wandering white cube became a metaphor for a new kind of exhibition: one that acknowledges its structures yet refuses to remain static within them. A space both inside and outside the system—a micro-panopticon turned playground of the idea of the not-yet.



## The interference – translating tension into form

Between the order of the Panopticon and the openness of the Not-Yet emerges a third state—the space of interference. It is a moment of reflection where structure and potential coexist, embodied by the geometry of the triangle. Unlike the square that encloses or the circle that repeats, the triangle connects—it directs tension into relation. Each side reflects a force: order, flow, and awareness. Together they form a fragile equilibrium, a geometry that holds contradiction without resolving it.

The triangle thus becomes a metaphor for reactive design—the point at which intuition meets structure and the system begins to perceive itself. Here, the designer is both observer and participant, balancing control with imagination.

*The triangle is not a resolution, but a consciousness of coexistence.*

In this sense, the triangular labyrinth represents the threshold between knowing and imagining. It is the place where design thinks itself—where the observer becomes the observed, and the creative act turns into self-reflection. Here, the Not-Yet gains direction, and the





## **Geometries of consciousness – translating tension into form**

Out of this dialogue between potential and control emerged the idea of the transparent labyrinth. I imagined three spatial models—square, circle, and triangle—not as forms, but as states of consciousness.

*The square embodies order and surveillance, the walls of Panopticon.  
The circle represents the fluid, cyclical rhythm of the Not-Yet.*

*The triangle becomes the reective state of synthesis—awareness of both at once.*

The labyrinth is not only a structure but a method: a map of iteration, of design thinking made visible. Each wall represents a stage in the process—research, ideation, prototyping, feedback—but none of these are linear. The process loops, folds, and redirects itself.

In walking through the labyrinth, one simultaneously experiences the discipline of the Panopticon and the openness of the Not-Yet—seeing the exit yet unable to reach it directly, moving through a system that reveals both control and freedom as part of the same design.

*Every return to the beginning is a new version of hope.*

## The Möbius Labyrinth – The Porous Emancipatory Space

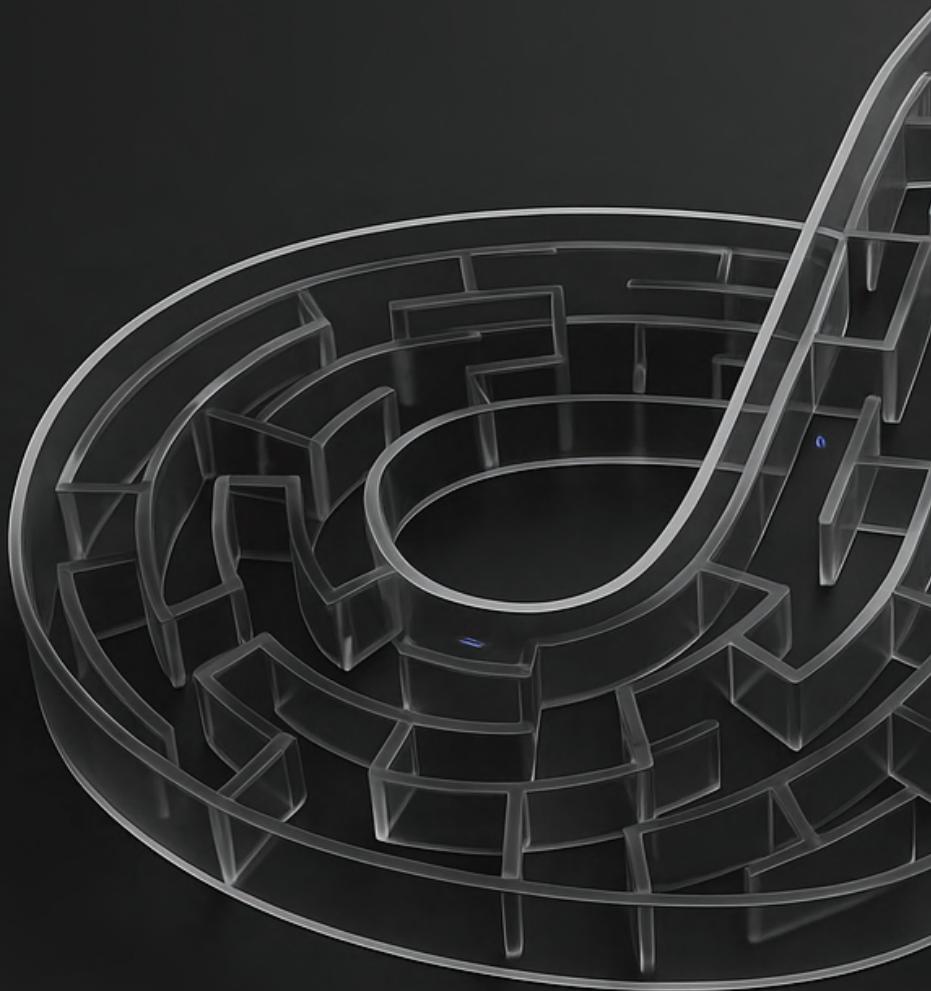
As the reflections deepen, the labyrinth begins to change. Its transparent walls start to breathe, and its geometry folds into itself—no longer an enclosure, but a continuum of becoming. The rigid structure dissolves into a fluid surface: the white cube becomes an idea of a porous white cube, transforming into a Möbius labyrinth—a space that both holds and releases, that contains memory yet refuses stability. In this configuration, porosity becomes more than just a material transparency. It becomes a method of emancipation—an openness to transformation, dialogue, and co-authorship. What if the space absorbs what surrounds it: light, movement, sound, and human gesture and each visitor alters the environment through subtle interaction—a chair moved, a reflection shifted, a step reframed, the future is changed. What remains after each act is not residue, but potential, a soft invitation for the next participant to continue the process.

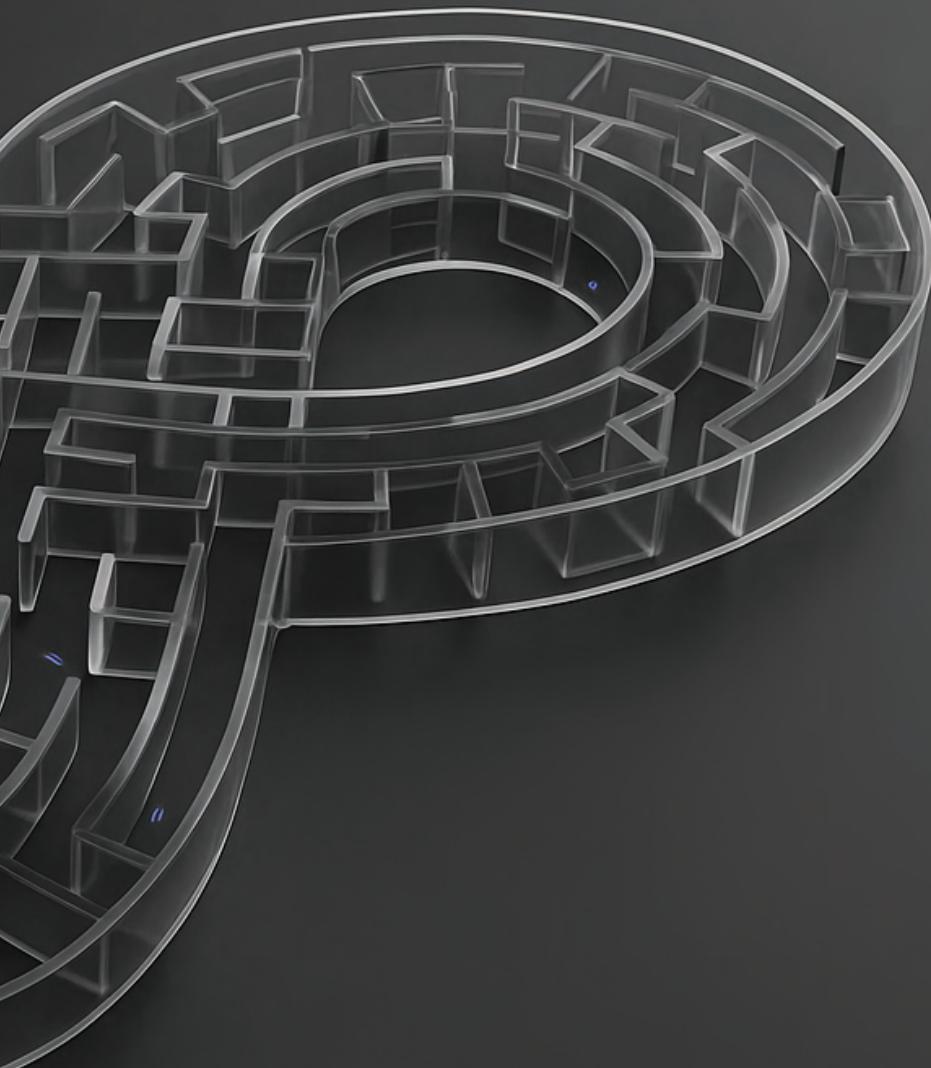
This Möbius labyrinth-like topology embodies superpositionality—a condition of simultaneity, where the visitor is both inside and outside, both designer and observer, both actor and space. The architecture no longer denies behavior; it responds to it. It is alive through its permeability, sustained by constant iteration.

Such a space resists the logic of exhibition as spectacle and moves toward a practice of exhibition as ecology—a shared field of sensing and making, where perception itself becomes a creative act. This is the emancipatory potential of the porous cube: it transforms visibility from control into relation, from static display into participatory co-existence.

*In the Möbius labyrinth, transparency becomes respiration, and the act of walking becomes a gesture of redesigning the world.*







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