

Light Being

The Wild Parlour

June 2023

We were talking of such things: shadows, obscure illumination, folds within substance, but all without a schema that would serve to cohere. Then someone interjected about the root meaning of the word for being human as being an entanglement of light, thinking, and being. This would then generate a sense, like something in the air, but also a generation of a spacing for work. Rather than being an exhibition with a theme, instead a tonal poetics and with it a letting be or presentation of an accord would emerge.

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An Unexpected Arrival

An essay by Jonathan Miles



Underside, 2023 digital print 206 x 233cm

“Angels are immaterial but can leave traces.”¹

The first recorded marks of human are found in caves and possibly the first representation is of hands as if recording the event of being there, a surprise of being. The cave became a recording chamber both of images but also sound. There is no trace of it being a sonic chamber, so we have a sense of a trace without a material index other than a remote vestige. If extinction is our future (even if by heat death) what might be the mark or trace of this finality. Inscribed in these drawings are footmarks so it might be a fitting trace² of a disappeared humanity that it would be a footprint. So, if the handprint is a mark that asserts being, the footprint then would designate non-being and with this a dialectic of wall and floor. In proposing a ‘future-yet-to-come,’ art is at liberty to advance its own speculative content because it can both do and undo things at the same time or within its own passage. Such passages can be abject, or erent, as much as ecstatic and even

¹ Germano Celant, *Amselm Kiefer: Salt of the Earth* (Milan: Skira, 2011)

² The trace in Derrida’s philosophy is not a presence and therefore has no place but rather it serves to dislodge beyond itself. It marks the absence of a presence. See *Speech and Phenomena*, p.156 As a body of work there is an open play on the difference of mark and trace.

fold back into each condition therefore must occasion all kinds of misrecognition in the wake of its realisation.

What then are the folds of this series of presentations? A folding of temporality might jut out, a fold between mark and trace, a fold of interiority and exteriority yet another. Such an account of folds could continue because following the lead of Gilles Deleuze in his work on Foucault: "Subjectification is created by folding."³ Each of the main folds which are posited are variable and have different rhythms that operate beneath the rules of knowledge and power. They are also subject to unfolding which might in turn give rise to new folds and so is unfixed as an outcome. In this way this is outside of representation that is secured by stable or fixed identity in the way it casts a net over reality whereas presentation is closer to a journey of becoming that undoes this grid of manifestation.

Before the designation of photographs, installations, post medium works, they are an impulse that presents a process of becoming other.

³ Gilles Deleuze, Foucault (London: Bloomsbury, 2006) P.86

They record a desire both to perform and be inscribed as performance, and as such stage desire as a form of productivity out of the void from which it emerges and into which it also descends. Therefore, the works present a complex series of inscriptions, that of mark, performative or ritualised expenditure, mapping, temporal registers and the eruptive potentiality laying await in the form of invisibilities. This is neither a labyrinth, nor a network, but rather an offering of a content as “a glimpse of something” in the words of Willem de Kooning. If content is but a glimpse of something, then what is it that is glimpsed? Inscriptions, folds, maps of elsewhere, subjectification, encounters, meditations, the list could be stretched out by such serialised abstractions. What we might instead start with is material crumbling in the hand, or a lump of clay looking back at the other as if to invite a response, the primal division of form and formlessness, or a process which stages de-centredness. Either lines are drawn, or vessels are constructed, but which ever there is, a response to the outside is advanced and with this

a gestural economy is formed. This is the first sign of an emergent excess and this in turn founds the basis of art. It could be claimed that art has become in this late exhausted phase of modernity, principally its own excess. In this it is only capable of nihilistic dwelling and that to become resistant as artist, there can only be a resistance to time itself. Rather than starting through great refusals, there might be instead an invitation to start with such things as material crumbling in the hand, and with this, the perception of time as temporary arrest.

According to Ali Cherri we are living in a time of slow collapse. The artist might imagine him taking her by the hand in order to inform her that “historical time is so stretched it has become infinite, a few moments of collapse becomes a century.”⁴

‘As material crumbling in the hand,’ stages both a starting point but also as an end point with just a spasm of time in-between. This might also indicate fragility of encounter. Perhaps the manifestation in the form of photography is in order to present an arrest of time.

⁴Ali Cherri, ‘Troubled Waters,’ Presented at the RCA, 2023



Babette Margolte claimed that: “I feel that photograph’s main achievement is its ability to stop time so we can look and see.” This ‘standstill’ in time interrupts continuity, allowing in turn for a discovery of the force of discontinuity as a different basis for a principle of reality. Just as material crumbling is raw, so this in turn corresponds to raw or even wild time that leads in turn to the process of disfiguration. The blackboard drawings of Cy Twombly are clearly an influence, not just on the level of appearance, but in their penetration of an engorged temporality. In this they link the writerly with the painterly in order to stage a possibility that is itself been written over or exscribed.⁵ As much as something is written in, it can also written out, and there is in turn the sense in these works of a rhythmical relationship born out of this movement. This echoes the relationship of memory to oblivion, so that one state is always in the process of given rise to another contrary state. Within such circulations there are eruptions on the wall of the exterior of this. The eruptive quality that appears as, or

⁵ A term developed by Jean-Luc Nancy to indicate a spillage of meaning or a rupture within the structure of communication. See *The Birth to Presence*.

within, the standstill presented, are the in-between of what divides things into distinct orders of difference. A sighting of a ghost or spectre within the field of vision might be a way of understanding this, something that appears in one moment, but then disappears in the next, like an optical flash. Thus, instead of seeing materialised marks, there is instead light traces of what passed through as patterns of energy. In effect this can be understood an event that stages a structure not unlike an uncertainty principle.

That there is a space bounded by entry and exit points cannot be disputed. This composes a view but what precedes such composition of space and what follows in its wake is not open to exposure. The exposure registered by the camera cuts into this continuity so functions as the nerve ending of another order of time as in the Greek concept of Kairos.⁶ Kairos is not only an edge of time, but also the possibility of surprise, and surprise is what makes an event into an event in the form of something happening for the first time.

⁶ See Antonio Negri and his discussion of kairos in 'Time for Revolution': 'as the passage from fullness to the void and as the production of being on the edge of time.' (p149)



Wortman, S *Scrawl*, 2023 digital print

What is being discovered within this event of interruption, is a form of excess, as in something once bounded within circulation is breaking out of this bounded condition by being elsewhere to it. Jean-Luc Nancy terms this an ‘unexpected arrival’⁷ that is not the outcome of either successive time, neither does it take the form of a distributed place. Nancy develops this further when he states: “The surprise is the leap into the space-time of nothing, which does not come “before” or from ‘elsewhere’; as such, it is a leap into the space-time of space-time “itself.”⁸ All of this is not simply the subject matter at hand, but rather is the disavowal of there being a simple stretching out of things into a continuum which would facilitate the smooth representation of the principle of reality.

How something might appear, and then what it is in actuality, cannot easily be deduced. In effect how things are rendered or shown is not grounded within a system of logical inference without becoming exposed within a flash of quite a different light. There is a Buddhist

⁷ Jean-Luc Nancy, *Being Singular Plural* (Stanford, 2000) P168

⁸ *Ibid* P173

sutra that states that: “Things are not as they appear, nor are they otherwise”⁹ Rather than electing a difference between heavy matters or light forms we might instead step outside of electing this, or that, as a play upon choice. What is there? A lump of clay, hanging folds of porcelain like textile, a body recording motion, an imaginary cell like darkened space, dust, the expenditure of time, and an apparatus of recording. Add to that a coming into presence as the inaugural gesture, and within this we have both the acting upon, and the being acted upon in turn, as the primary modes of entanglement. Thus, there is a working through, a working over, within a series of passages, each with their own discrete interruptions. Other works are in circulation within all of this. Not just Cy Twombly, but Pollock even with all the heavy matters which might attend his distributive presence, the Korean Moon vase once owned by Lucie Rie as a way of capturing a light form, Zen calligraphy and the raked sand of Zen gardens, the impasto paint of late Rembrandt paintings, the shimmering folds

⁹ Lankavatara Sutra

of cloth in Velasquez's art, the spectral like photographs of Francesca Woodman, the black and white films of Maya Deren, the web like drawings of Giacometti, Classical Greek sculpture with all their multiple folds of cloth and flesh, and the art of Joseph Beuys, with each fragment of influence accrued within a spinning vortex of distribution. Such influences are invariably indirect and as such occupy only liminal presence, but nevertheless, they are there as trace elements. Thus, these influences are not necessarily always present as a mode of consistent registration but come and go. This is in part an attempt as to discover various modes of registration within this aesthetic template that is born out of both interruptions and eruptions. As a body of work, it employs and displays, not only the various influences, but also the play of the optical and the haptic at the root of the endeavour. All of this occurs within the circulation of a range of abstracted figures of thought that are present within the various modulations and manifestations of practice. It is also the case that it is necessary to understand that such



a practice does not simply stand as the sum of all the additions and refinements that are part of the making process but also a relationship to processes of subtraction. The work is almost witness to an endurance of the play of the negative that manifests a record of not this or not that.

This is an art that does not know its place but none the less goes in search of it. It is also in search of a time that is close to dissolution as it quivers on its own edge of disappearance. It collects its own forces and redistributes them across the figures and affects that it advances with. A door is opened upon a palace of splendour, a door that has been labelled as abject is closed, yet another door is left ajar through which a spectacle of terror might be glimpsed, and so it goes on, with each door opening and closing to different forms of illumination or visibilities that might be discovered by the perceiving subject.

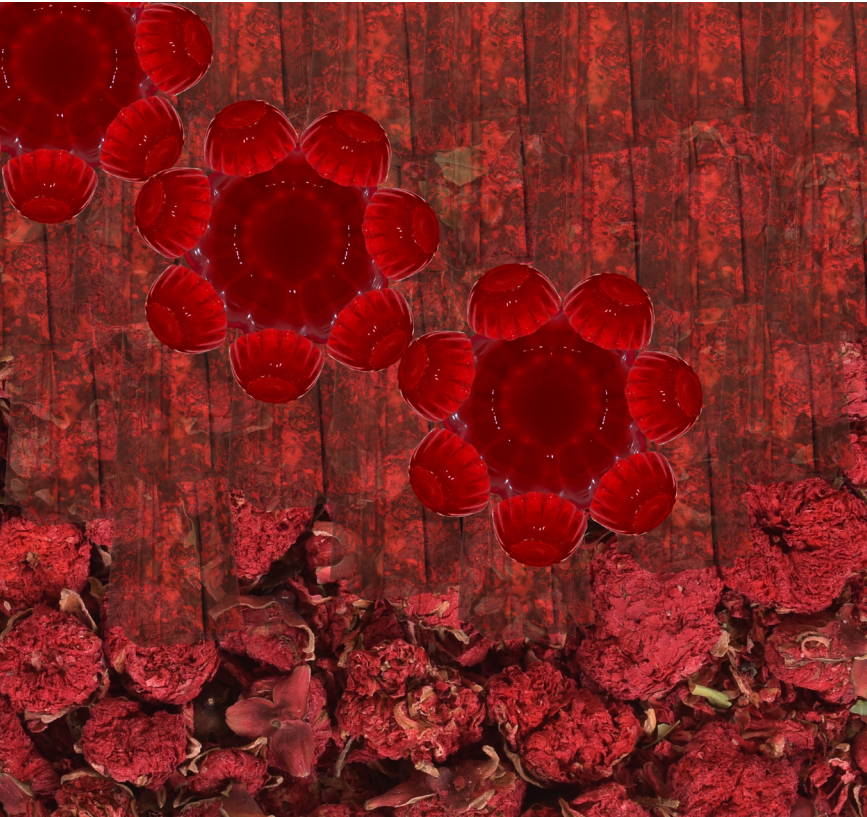
Dust, lines of light, splendour, marks, recordings, echoes all cohere then come apart again.

We are left to stand before, to be with, to become tissue of absorption with a process of going on or getting into. Radical passivity, solitude, fascination, we are left to discover an orientation without a sign economy as a guide. Alone in making, all that presentation might offer is this condition.

Splendid, alone, an offering without reply, like a return to nothing, a disappearing footprint left over from wandering and from wondering. Perhaps. The whisper(ing) of a work. Perhaps. A door a-jar. Just enough, a trace of enough.

Perhaps.

Enough.



Bindawan, S *Scents of Forgotten moments I* 2023 Digital Print Mounted on Dibond 50 x 50cm

Scents of Forgotten Moments

Sara Essam Bindawan



Bindawan, S *Scents of Forgotten moments II* 2023 Digital Print Mounted on Dibond 50 x 50cm

The work is a form of the recording of traces which intersect interior and exterior patterns of life. There is within this, a pre-occupation with a gestalt of what is foreground and what is background, but also with surfaces serving to weave together elements and registers.

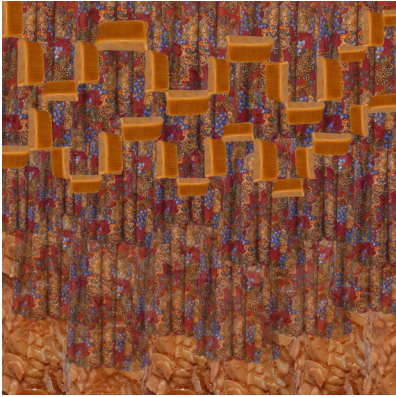
At its root, there is not a focus upon the subject, but a play upon substance and surface in order to make visible identity moving in and outside itself. A pattern from a dress, a display of fruit, or confectionaries, a configuration of abstract diagrams, all in turn contesting attention, or forming a presentation of a mood that projects the elsewhere of attention.

Within this movement of becoming or the imaginary transportation elements linger and cross over, as if, for instance, colour might also be a scent. All this points towards a subject in the process of flux. Operations of splicing, merging, mutating, montaging, all draw the viewer away from pinpointed reading and transport instead into the realm of scanning and with this the flickering of focus. This then is a presentation of a world opening out the passage of the intersections in which the work of the

Bindawan, S *Scents of Forgotten moments III* 2023 Digital Print Mounted on Dibond 50 x 50cm



imaginary predominates within all the various veiling of ambivalence. On the level of temporality, it is a passing over or through, a collection of instances, or if transience in which nets are composed in order to capture and recirculate moods. What is being composed here are the subtle manifestations of what is invariably passed over as if lacking in significance, a world that is close to the skin, and the interceptions of combined senses. What is being presented overall is a series of abstract diagrams. Within this there are various circulations are both visibilities and moods. Part of such circulations are the switching of senses, for instance colour becoming a scent on an imaginary level. What is being composed is the subtle manifestations of what is invariably passed over, as if lacking in significance. A world that is closer to the skin, as opposed to the analytical interception or scrutiny of visual sense, the compositions of nets in order to capture and reconfigure things as they pass by, or just a frame of the flicker of transience.



Bindawan, S *Scents of Forgotten moments IV 2023* Digital Print Mounted on Dibond 50 x 50cm

In finding oneself amid maze in which days simply drift by, the desire to simply make a space of resolve surfaces with the thought that from within the maze truth might occasion itself. In the last hour of the night the sky assumes a violet colour in which the deception of the preceding night is cast aside. A deep sound of a flute can be heard in the distance, but in listening the sound appears to come ever closer as it is a deposit of the sky itself.

Catching a glimpse of a solitary swing in space, a scent of saffron

Bindawan, S *Scents of Forgotten moments V* 2023 Digital Print Mounted on Dibond 50 x 50cm



pervades the air. Somehow scent and sound cohere to form the semblance of an image of bliss retained within childhood reverie. The sky appears to look back, as if to smile.

Does the swing offer itself in order that the night sky might be viewed without feet lodged into the ground? Far away stars can be seen as so much candy to the child offering sweet elevation.

Art opens in such a time, the last hour of the night in which imagination stirs and reverie is unbounded.



Other Fruyte

Abigail Norris

Norris, A *Reaching for the Feallan Aepl*, 2023 mixed media, silk gloves, copper wire 20 X 20 X 23 cm and gloves 40 X 8 cm

Sitting hunched upon a table, an un-human worm-like figure cradles what could be seen as a phallus or foetus, spilling out onto the table between its legs. Then an oversized apple, with flesh-like, post-operational stitches, lays on the floor, and next to it, a pair of lace gloves, as though an unusual metamorphosis has taken place. A lace-makers cushion rests on the ground, with a spawn-like arrangement spilling down onto the floor, one could mistake this spillage as embalmed breasts or oversized watery egg cases, left while the occupants have moved on. Is this an alternative Eden?

The viewer is left alone to ponder the whereabouts and nature of these fledgling beings.

Other images jut out and circulate in this free play of sense. Lurking here are Andrei Tarkovsky's reflections of the human attached to all of its slippages of recollections of memory and dreams, and then Bela Tarr's pessimistic visions rooted within the reality of societal hardship. Such appropriations could be said to induce a speculative vision of



Norris, A *Other Fruyte IV* 2023, walnut ink on paper 27x19cm

interior or subterranean landscapes where the protagonists are neither human nor un-human, but exist within an atmosphere that Marguerite Duras referred to as a 'hole world'.

In such places, incommensurability is the measure of everything.

Other images start to emerge. The artwork is always its double, containing an invisible archive of imaginary references - like flesh and mind folded.

Through her recording of a banal incident with a cockroach, Clarice Lispector brings into question our desire to tie down and understand reality. She goes on to form a posture that to truly 'be' in the world one must embrace a lack of understanding. Could this in turn implicate an approach of 'blindness' to established societal schemas? The systems within her worlds are always shifting and transforming as they do so.

The flesh of humans becomes the flesh of fruits. A form of celestial pregnancy?

Julia Kristeva seems to draw together this unstable landscape when she writes: “we are seized at that fragile spot of our subjectivity where our collapsed defences reveal, beneath appearances of a fortified castle, a flayed skin.¹ A universe of borders, seesaws, fragile and mingled identities, wanderings of the subject and its objects, fears and struggles, abjections and lyricisms. At the turning point between social and asocial, familial and delinquent, feminine and masculine, fondness and murder.”

Thoughts drift to other forces. Butoh dance rose from the ashes of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, disturbing representation in the process. In contrast to Western dance ideologies of the body being strong and athletic, Butoh resonates with the ‘weakness’ of the body, drawing upon grotesque imagery and environments. Time frames are subject to warping into post human worlds that disorder established schema.

¹ McAfee, N. (2004). Julia Kristeva. Routledge.





With this, other visions of bodies are formed and deformed.
Thus a setting is created, new lines are drawn, poetic transformations
given over to light, material forms find place within all of this, making
possible a joining of abjection and splendour defying measurability.



Other Fruyte I



Other Fruyte III



Other Fruyte II



Other Fruyte V



Other Fruyte VI

Norris, A *Other Fruyte* drawing series, 2023 walnut ink on paper 27x19cm

Vapour

Jonathan Miles

The clouds drifted by unnoticed,

And thoughts also

In passing

Silent

Like the silver rain

Defying gravity

Ascending, not falling

Impossible.

Pink mist

Mixing with silver rain

Sky bound.



ENLIGHTENMENT

from the series “Dogon: The Cosmological Myth”

Misia-O’

Misia-O’, *Enlightenment-series-Sirius* 2023, Fine Art Print on C-Type, Matt,
Limited Edition /15 50cm x 50cm

“For what is it to die but to stand naked in the wind and to melt into the sun?

And what is it to cease breathing but to free the breath from its restless tides,

that it may rise and expand and seek God unencumbered?

Only when you drink from the river of silence shall you indeed sing.

And when you have reached the mountain top, then you shall begin to climb.

And when the earth shall claim your limbs, then shall you truly dance.”

Kahlil Gibran



Photography, art film, spoken word, binaural sounds and scented sculptures are part of this immersive art project conceived with and for my Dad, at the onset of his passing to the otherworld.

A transitional collaboration for us both, linking the physical world to the otherworld, bringing back to light the wisdom and magic of the Dogon and their ancestral knowledge. The Dogon are a tribe in Mali, West Africa, whose mythology and quantum knowledge defy western understanding of time and death with its cosmogony and offer us a new insight as a gateway to the cosmic realm.

“Dogon: The Cosmological Myth” conceptualises the story of creation of life by the God Amma in Dogon mythology. The Dogon, a tribe from Mali in West Africa, are believed to be descendants of ancient Egyptians and to hold secret and sacred knowledge of the mystery schools and of quantum theory. The Dogon discovered the star “Sirius” (a star shining 20 times brighter than the sun) 400 years before the invention of the telescope.

Sirius, located in the constellation of the Dog, is celebrated in the animist rituals and Dogon dances. 'Dama', one of the Dogon dances, celebrates the link between the physical world and the otherworld (since Life and Death are one). According to the Dogon complex mythology, the origins of the creation of life are linked to universal beliefs-where the universe is a living organised body, with mankind as a microcosmic image of this world. Those beliefs are translated in Dogon's dance rituals.

I am deeply inspired by Thomas Nail's "Theory of the Image" as it relates to posthumanism with the idea that we are no longer bound by the limitations of the physical world. We are no longer limited by our bodies or our minds, but are free to explore the mysteries of the universe and connect with the divine. Post-humanism is the key to unlocking the secrets of the universe and achieving enlightenment.

The Recovery of Meaning

Jessica Mardon

When numbers weren't just a unit, a system of measurement, but were symbols that had meaning, it was their meaning that provided structure, not structure that provided their meaning.

The Monad. One.

Like the egg, complete within itself and containing the apparatus for its own proliferation, the One is not so much a building block, as a seed, who in its own becoming, germinates reality.

This non-number - not strictly considered a numeral but something closer to the principle which allows Number to exist at all - points to lines, harmonies, geometries, the elements and forms.

At its centre, the centre of all things, burns an eternal fire,



Mardon, J Kaleidoscope, 2023 digital artwork

impenetrable to living beings. The unlimited continua.

The Original and Origin.

This blazing Being-beyond-being, untiring witness to the eternal Sun, radiates a burning border, the event horizon between eclipse and become.

The collapse of opposites, manifests the One.

*Two. **The Dyad.***

Into this silent universe, the Original drew in breath and time and the void. And created the starry heavens and their orbits and their voice.

And so the one became two. The polar, the antithesis, the double. The othered, the neutered, the shadow.

And for the first time, the world knew separation. And the desire for return.

I heard they call it CounterEarth, the Land of even-odd

Where Existence - that is, flows from Essence - what is, where language flows from the One.

I heard of a Land that speaks, not because it can, but because it must

Where fire cannot but give out its heat and expression is the only Sun

*I heard of a Land that waits
Where sound responds to being heard*

I heard its impossible to be lonely, when its impossible to be alone

For, contained within the seed is the capacity for its division and yet each separation, sows the seeds of its return.

So it is with orbits that each journey has a coming home.

As the One casts out its double it secures a chord, which through its emanations bursts forth a force that floods the All.

And through it, matter finds its pulse, and sound begins its song. The recovery of meaning from the blazing Being-beyond.



The Infinite Intimate

Kate Howe

Howe, K *Infinite Intimate (Detail)*, 2023 Kraft paper. 370 x 800 cm

Infinite. Intimate. A delicate mode of dissolution, the impetus of which sends us hurtling into the never-ending expanse of consciousness. It is the warmth of your breath against my ear as you confess; it is the secret I hold back even from myself and think I will never tell. Not impossible, but unlikely. Not a paradox, a new truth: a sequence of polemic doubles disavowing fixed identities and, with this, modes of binary logic.

To drift, an aesthetic of drift, the drift of bodies becoming unanchored and thus fluid, the drift of memory forms, the drift within the emotional life of cells. To perfuse the boundary, to transgress the form, to permeate, perforate and shine through the other.

This is the work of capturing forces and putting them to play amidst the turmoil of figures drawn from memory, lodged, heels out, in the cellular structure of becoming, door bolted shut. There is within this release of forces a sense of resistance to power and control that serve to fix identities and a sense of the fractured and nervously hidden



Howe, K *The Infinite Intimate*, 2023, Kraft paper 370cm x 800 cm

nature of the whole, but yet to be unified, form.

This art object, sensual, lush, dark, lascivious, and pious all at once, is also a teacher. Lodged within material structures are fibers forming and deforming memory circuits. The memory circuits of the body, acrobatic and clever, running under the narrative memory of the mind, sifting and placing in order, making order of the chaos, leaving dangling threads and incomplete sentences and bits of things I meant to tell you off the edge of the void, we do this furiously, the tidying and making sense of and understanding of when actually, memory is bound, and binding and lumpy and unpickable, and physical, an object you can hold in your hand and examine.

I am memory bound by material structures; I've been cut apart and sewn together so many times I'm nothing but scar tissue. I'm still strong, tight, and bound, both controlled and cracking open at the same time. Clinging on and fighting for my life on a sea of tranquility, falling through the fold, watching it go by, tick, still here,



Howe, K *bound to unwind* 2023,
graphite and stitching on industrial
Kraft paper
29 x 27 cm

tock, breathe in, tick, out, tock. Elbows touch.

Body began to speak to Susanna, coalescing all the Susannas before through the material. This crinkling, glistening, holy and mundane industrial material, tear-resistant, useful still when its beaten, hard to break, easy to repair, performing its purpose over and over and over again. Like a Sysaphis if she was a woman. Now, they rise, beyond Susanna and into the infinite intimate, into the darkest folds where we all think we are hiding.

Last week, I sat, a nude hatchling in a nest of kraft paper, eye to caved-in skull with an enormous remnant of Susanna: gestated in this tiny box, birthed as a giant grotesque Kraft paper moth, my mirror self could not get airborne for all her thrashing. I had my last IV naked as a pupa in that nest of paper, connected to her. Staring at her. I was sitting in meditation in the shop-front window of RuptureXIBIT in an unannounced and impromptu performance for a little over an hour.

Howe, K *I bend a branch and stitch you to me in this sacred space* 2023, graphite and stitching on industrial Kraft paper
44 x 42 cm



I gazed past and through her, me, them, hooked up to this magic pancreatic power wash, as surgical tubing snaked from her mouth to mine, plunged into the vein. I became plump. I became pink. I looked at the mirror of my dying self, of the me I was when I arrived in London: a swollen broken shell of illness beating myself against the cage of my ambition and the howling unfairness of the undiagnosable, continuously misdiagnosed as hysteria, menopause, nerves, migraines, and “women’s troubles.” Prescribed antidepressants, sedatives, nerve-calming agents, and bed rest, my pancreatic cysts were gurgling their unheard and unobserved truth: we are drowning.

I was you once, I said out loud. I know they heard me.

Now, I’m not like you want me to be. Because I have language, I speak in paper tongues, bright within the darkest folds. And I stand layer to layer in the infinite unfolding of all of us: this is the cilia of myself, this memory body constituted outside of my flesh.

The Wild Parlour group started in the RCA as a response to the lockdown at the RCA and meets weekly to discuss contemporary ideas and practices. The aim is to build an archive of material mainly in the form of power points but also an investigation of creative writing forms. This exhibition is an outcome of the groups activities and the catalogue reflects the passion for writing to find its place within the overall presentation.

Our thanks go out to Lychee One Gallery in staging this project.