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the threshold. Not just a seeking, it is also about having a large production so as to have something to enjoy being inside, to hide myself behind, to get lost in. A stacking and staggering that are constantly being built on and which are never finished—something I can work out from unspecifically, indefinitely. It is a constant interaction. Collection, dissolution, resolution, fluctuation. When I start on a painting I don't think it is the beginning, it is a continuation, and hence it is important to have previous works physically present. Like a hot potato that you have to throw on before you burn yourself.

Patently restless is how I am, somewhere in the middle, and yet together with my flow, my feed. We are a mutual lone ensemble like nomads' houses, hermits' gatherings—I, my flow, and objects create a context out of incompatibilities.

An even mass emerges. The amount is important. In Marxism they talk about quantitative changes reaching a critical limit, which leads to qualitative leaps; a simple example of these mechanisms is that water turns to ice at 0°C and to steam at 100°C. Across the threshold, with my growing collection of equals and études, gold can occasionally emerge. This involves both inner and outer refinement, transformation, distortion, and resembles the alchemic process. Intention—intuition—initiation.

I suffer from Quantitative kleptomania, Rhizomatic rheumatism, Panoramic paronomasia, and Fragmentary frenzy. But as with all chronic states you have to turn it to your own advantage. Incessantly affirming, observing, channelling, and compensating—filling in the spaces.

Flickers, fragments, collisions—the great visual feed brings me to a halt, painting makes me look. It has been a way of detaching myself from the idea and of being able to work open-endedly, without going in for too much reflection and evaluation during the working process. Painting is direct and a tool that makes it possible to create new knowledge without having to articulate hypotheses and facts in advance. The brush is an ancient tool and is as much an extension of myself as it is a relay baton. Its history is long and the burdens many.

>I stand in the middle of what has been
and what will be<

In front of my back, Here is there where there is here, Already as a child I was little. These are plays on words that also reflect the problematics of painting historically with respect to image, space, time, position, surface, body and its being. The titles act in contrast to paintings, making gaps and creating connections. Meanwhile, there is the empty surface, the playground, where I can create my own conditions. Systematically, from experience and endless entities, I can push on to new discoveries. Rebuild, build on, build out. Despite the fact that it is a continuation, painting is also a beginning from the beginning, creating something from nothing. Image meets body, both mentally and tangibly. In contrast, the material has its own origin. I take hold of it. I want its history to be seen—to remind us of what has been. Paint on a surface creates a context for it, a gap in time, a layer of bodiness. The past confounds and the future cries out. It is a desperate thing to be condemned to the here and now, since it can be an unreliable relay baton to really rely upon. Sometimes, I feel like I am a plastic surgeon operating on a corpse, but the painter and thinker Vincent Geyskens says that painting is a zombie, one of the undead; something unresolved, unfinished. That is a revitalising thought. For me, it is not about the frustrated, listless creations of the 1970s, but about the zombies of the 1990s running amok—restless and always on the way.

MARIE RAFFN

Dazzled in Nights with Snow

QWERTYUIOP
ASDFGHJKL
ZXCVBNM

Imagine that you are opening a Word document. You know that the document contains one page as a starting point. If we let our minds wander back fifty years, you'd probably have been sitting at a typewriter with a sheet of paper inserted in the carriage. But now you're sitting, of course, at a computer, where there is similarly given a grouping of letters—the one you see on the keyboard, the very one with which this text is built up. Combinations of letters form words that, when combined with one another, form sentences, which generate meaning, determined by the language's use. A to Z, Q to M. You proceed now to figure out how many sets of letter combinations, that which we call a keyboard, can be on a page in the Word document. You choose to move up into the "Tools" menu and to completely remove the margin, the white frame. For a moment, you let your eyes rest while you linger on the hard drive's humming, a peculiar sense of satisfaction. You stretch your fingers before you spring into action. A gymnast runs through countless stretches and rituals before taking a deep breath and gathering her concentration through gazing eyes in a prepared body. You type the twenty-six letters from Q to M, allocated on three lines, in standard font-size 12, that look exactly like the keys when you glance down. In order to indicate an entry of a new grouping, you insert a space. You count how many letter groupings, "keyboards," there can be on the page. It figures out to 152 groupings. Print.

You transfer the A4-size page with the 152 "keyboards" to a stack with 152 sheets of paper, which are then distributed 152 times in a room, the proportional relations of which correspond to the paper's dimensions. Before doing this, you have dipped every single piece of paper in water for the purpose of giving volume to the papers. You could continue the system into infinity, but

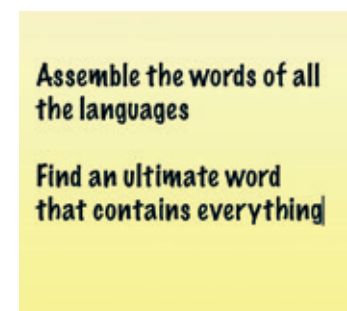
you stick with the thought: letters on papers, papers in rooms, rooms in buildings, buildings in cities, cities in countries, countries in continents, continents in worlds, worlds in universes, universes in ... universes in letters on papers.

Then you hang one of the papers up on the wall in your studio, with transparent tape, but on the back side, so that it cannot be seen. In addition, you fasten tape onto the very top of the paper's front side but you don't stick it on the wall. The paper holds the tape up, which hovers near the wall, and the writing bears the paper.

For the German artist Hanne Darboven, pencil and paper were the simplest means for putting down her ideas, ideas that were expressed through letters and numbers. But then it was neither literature nor mathematics but rather signs. Darboven made use of dates in order to render visible the flow of time and to confirm her own existence, day by day—almost like an obsession. She often crossed her words out:

Heute

"*Heute*" with a line running through it. What is the meaning of "today" crossed out? "The nature of ideas is immateriality," declares Darboven.¹



Language has its natural limitations, either because one cannot figure out the right word for the right occasion or because the words simply do not exist. As the linguistic philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein points out: "The limits of

Unfolded horizon

2014

Cotton canvas and acrylic paint
110 x 171,5 cm
Detail

—

6. Andrea Fraser, "Why Does Fred Sandback's Work Make Me Cry?," *Grey Room*, no. 22 (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2006), 38.

7. Barnett Newman, "Barnett Newman Interview," YouTube video, 4:08, posted by A Chromatic House, May 26, 2010, <http://youtu.be/N6sU6ft9Xjg>.

8. Robert Rosenblum, *Modern Painting and the Northern Romantic Tradition: Friedrich to Rothko* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1975), 10.



brought on by the precise perceptual focus his work requires. [...] I could talk about the 'disappointed eye' longing to see what is not there to be seen."⁶ Just as language has its natural limitations, so does the eye. Either physiologically or because the eye cannot perceive everything in the room at one and the same time. Or maybe because it doesn't even exist.

From my point of view, painting is something like a theatre stage. The curtain is drawn, red velvet seats are folded down, and there's a sense of suspense in the house. Most of the time, the curtain is down and signals that any kind of performance whatsoever can be presented. Are we still waiting for Godot?

I hang a roll of canvas up onto the wall with the paint. I'm trying to figure out how much canvas the paint can bear, but the ceiling is in the way. I'm doubting that a single strip of paint can hold the whole quantity. It works! The heavy painting legacy is being upheld. The large piece of canvas simultaneously becomes an object inasmuch as it is fastened to the wall. The length of the piece is defined on the basis of the height of the wall, but it is shifted downward a bit, so that it comes to rest on the floor. A waterfall makes a noise, especially during the moment that it is curbed by a surface. As a rule, it is bluish.

At the opening of the exhibition, there is somebody who, by accident (I presume), leaves a footprint on the corner of the piece that hangs down toward the floor. Quite possibly, it is because a speech is being given and it's completely packed inside the room. If the person had stepped in a little bit further, I doubt that the piece would still have been hanging. So close to being one of Eugène Delacroix's fallen warriors. Wounded but surviving.

In the course of the exhibition period, the canvas's vertical edges will come to be folded more and more in on themselves as a result of the space between the piece and the wall and the fastening at the top, but in a process that is so slow that the eye cannot follow along.

On another wall, the paint tube is run a single time along the roll's uppermost edge, for approximately ten metres. The canvas bears almost as much as its own paint, but only *almost*. The colour amasses the painting and holds it up; the painting keeps the life in the art during a period when anything can be art.

On his forty-third birthday, in 1948, Barnett Newman painted *Onement, I*, which was the beginning of a series of paintings of vertical bands and thin vertical lines that were later called "zips." He asserts that "the painter is a choreographer of space."⁷ A zipped-up zipper that is hiding something behind itself can be opened, like closed doors to unknown spaces. The repetition, every time we open and close a zipper, is a kind of retelling of the past. If a zipper can open to the past, can it also open to the future or to the non-visible?

WE ENTER -I I- WE EXIT

If you position yourself sufficiently close to the front of *Vir Heroicus Sublimis* (1950–51) by Newman, you get something of the same sublime feeling as you do from works from the romantic era. In contrast to many of Newman's paintings, works by the German romantic landscape painter Caspar David Friedrich are often small, but the compositions render them overwhelming. Generally, Friedrich's paintings are cropped in such a way that you get a sense that the void continues. Friedrich's *Der Mönch am Meer* (1808–10) has been described as one of his most abstract works. We are presented with a sublime winter landscape alongside the sea. The grandiosity is confirmed by a small figure, which is believed to be Friedrich himself, placed below the horizon line of the beach.⁸ The audience inside a theatre typically sees the performance with a certain distance, but the viewer standing in front of *Der Mönch am Meer* sees what the monk sees and becomes, in a certain way, the figure drawn up onto the stage. In Newman's *Vir Heroicus Sublimis*, this feeling comes to be even more pronounced because the vertical lines confirm our individual bodily verticality—the totality as well as the separateness—as we are observing it. The monk becomes the viewer and the audience becomes the actor: "Instead of

making *cathedrals* out of Christ, man, or 'life', we are making [them] out of ourselves, out of our own feelings."⁹

Lucio Fontana created a series of performative works from around 1958–68, which consist of canvas that has been sliced through, known as *Spatial Concept*, or the *Tagli* (slashes). Franz Erhard Walther offers an account of documenta II in 1959, where he first witnessed Newman's zips and thereafter saw Fontana's cuts at one and the same exhibition.¹⁰ While the one amasses and gathers, the other separates and dissociates. I separate, after which I collect.

Built from Bricks, Made from Clay

My ongoing novel, *The Invisible World*, is a solidly recast ruin built up from many different text fragments that have been assembled into book form. *The Invisible World* is the title from the cover of a used book found, without contents, on a "books for free" shelf in a library. This cover is the book's skeleton, which forms frames for the pages that are constructed from abandoned, ignored books without owners, without homes, found on the street or discarded at libraries. The vast majority of the books are so old that their pages could crumble at any time. *The Invisible World* writes itself, defined on the basis of the places where I happen to be. "The idea becomes the machine that makes the art"¹¹—that is, the fragment from the first book that passes along my way becomes pages one and two, the second book pages three and four, and so on and so forth, so that eventually a fragmented narrative is created. Torn down and built up again. The same accidental contingency is true of the Dadaists' "exquisite corpse," where several artists take turns writing about or drawing the next link, unaware of the previous contributor's efforts. The books I encounter remain lying where I found them, so that in the event they are subsequently gathered up, the reader will come to discover that they are missing a page. In this way, the authorship of every single book is secured, but *The Invisible World* is a work of fiction; and seen in this light, I become the author. Volume I was, paradoxically enough, designed in New York—a city that is anything but invisible. As a foreigner in a new city, this innocent little gesture can be likened, to some degree, to burying a hand inside

of neglected piles of pebbles and putting a single one into a pocket, only to add it, subsequently, to the series at home on the floor. Geography and culture determine the book's tempo by virtue of the fact that there are different traditions connected with throwing away books, depending on where you happen to be. The plot in Volume I eventually proved to be a journey through time from country to country, with decline as the recurring theme. Above and beyond being a re-narration of the past, it also writes, at the same time, my own story and will be in process for as long as I exist, unless I manage to reach such a high page number (as a result of filling out the last page in the found books) that it comes to an end. In order to bring Volume I to a close, I placed it under my surname in the fiction section of the library where the project started. It returned in all secrecy and almost invisible among thousands of other library books. I have made it as far as page 230 and am consequently in the middle of Volume II for the time being. *The Invisible World* is a commentary on the French poet Stéphane Mallarmé's ambitious project *Le Livre*, about one single book containing the sum of all books, the essence of all literature. A utopian dream about all existential relations between everything.

I imagine *La Peinture*, a painting containing the sum of all paintings, the essence of all art. The floor is covered with a brownish paper that protects the floor from unwanted paint blobs while I am working. The paper absorbs the paint into itself while the paint between the composite pieces is drying. As a result of an entire canvas roll's paintings, a picture is created on an underlay paper, of which I, of course, am not in control. The closest I have come, for the time being, to *La Peinture* is, then, the underlay—a painting containing fragments of all my paintings.

Moreover, *The Invisible World* has features in common with Auguste Rodin's assemblage technique,¹² by which he constructed his sculptures of detached body fragments instead of creating a harmonious classical figure in one single piece. *Meditation or The Inner Voice (A Muse)* from 1894 depicts a twisted and distorted naked female body, as Rodin has collected her from anatomically incorrect parts, borrowed from both genders. This reinforces the subjective aspect of the sculpture: her expression becomes an alternating

9. Barnett Newman, "The Sublime Is Now," in *Barnett Newman: Selected Writings and Interviews*, ed. John P. O'Neill (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 173.

10. Renate Wiehager, "Circa 1960: Abstraction, Concrete Art, and Minimalist Trends in Art, Academies and Galleries, and Interaction with the American Avant-garde. A Round Table Discussion with Hans Mayer and Franz Erhard Walther," in *Minimalism in Germany: The Sixties* (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2012), 90.

11. Sol LeWitt, "Paragraphs on Conceptual Art," in *Conceptual Art*, 12.

12. "Assemblage" stems from the French word "assembler" and signifies "to assemble, gather, or join together."

The Invisible World vol. 1
2013 –
On-going novel, printed
replica
22 x 28 cm
–

13. Anne-Birgitte Fonsmark, “Auguste Rodin,” in *Rodin* (Holbæk: Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, 1988), 9–34.

14. LeWitt, “Paragraphs,” 12.

15. Auguste Rodin, quoted in Fonsmark, “Auguste Rodin,” 28.

16. *Le Penseur* (*The Thinker*) is a sculpture from circa 1880, on display in the garden of the Musée Rodin in Paris.

voltage between vigour and powerlessness—the figure’s inner struggle. The ankle corresponds to pages twenty-one and twenty-two in *The Invisible World*, the arm to pages seventy-nine and eighty. Rodin also puts his sculptures together in certain constellations, where each sculpture becomes a fragment in the larger sculpture group.¹³

As I observe the sculpture *The Inner Voice*, I sense a dimension of time that is reminiscent of the book’s. I imagine a gliding movement that transpires over time by virtue of the fact that the composite fragments display different movements. *The Inner Voice* has not been carved completely free from the plinth: it is rather in the process of starting to emerge. *The Invisible World* is unfinished, in process and forever susceptible to change. Perfection is not an end in itself. Text on paper is like a sculpture on a plinth. The sculpture is a prerequisite for the plinth’s existence, and in this way, the sculpture bears the plinth. *The Inner Voice* is turned upside down, in the manner of a headstand. Sometimes, the thought can be more interesting than the execution: “In conceptual art the idea or concept is the most important aspect of the work.”¹⁴ The floors of the atelier are being weighed down, not so much by works but by ideas and thoughts. Impressive that it holds.

“Even *more beautiful* than a beautiful thing is the *ruin* of a beautiful thing,” Rodin once said.¹⁵ A ruin, a damaged work. Rodin has consciously constructed *The Inner Voice* as an amputated body that looks like a ruin, not a result of the ravages of time but of an aesthetic principle. The sculpture causes me to think of a picture of the Venus de’ Medici on one of the pages at the beginning of *The Invisible World*. Her body has been executed as one single piece, but she is now a fragment in my aggregate totality.



Marie Raffn / Bachelor of Fine Arts 3

Is a letter a fragment of a sentence, a thought, a fragment of a philosophy? Is an idea a fragment of an art practice and every day a fragment of a life? It happens that I am thinking in rooms without walls. Just like *Le Penseur*¹⁶ in the garden.

Seconds of letters, minutes of words, hours of sentences, days of chapters, months of books, years of volumes of books, decades of bookshelves, centuries of libraries.

I close the door behind me, feeling the fresh air on my neck, which gets me to thinking that I will never see my own neck, only yours. I decide to walk straight ahead, as far as I possibly can. On my path, I cross over innumerable lines, especially vertical ones. I brake because I hear the sound of waves against the sand and look down: wet water that fastens the grains of sand to a larger surface, separated from the dry sand that I am standing on. Before the water manages to dry, the grains are separated as a new wave washes up on shore; a repeating movement, back and forth, sighing like a sleeper whose breath comes and goes by itself, to the aroma of seaweed—the delight taken in the recognisability of this moment. Waves roar almost as impetuously as drops. I look up and remember having been told that there are more stars than grains of sand. Or was it the other way around? Looking straight ahead. Having difficulty distinguishing the sea from the sky, but the sea is slightly crumpled like a wrinkled piece of fabric. Unfolded. All I see is gathered by a line, a horizon that is hidden behind the mist’s thin layers. Barely visible.

DANIEL SEFERIAN SPIES

Of a Quantitative Matter; or, The Second Extinction of Unicorns

Truth is stranger than fiction, but it is because Fiction is obliged to stick to possibilities; Truth isn’t. — Mark Twain¹

Sometimes it seems just a few words served in the right sentence can quench one’s thirst for another meaning—at least so it was for me when I first stumbled upon this quote by Mark Twain. Claiming that *truth* is stranger than *fiction* is plenty appealing in itself, but what really filled my cup was the reason for this being that fiction is obliged to stick to possibilities. This proclamation, although perhaps not being of Twain’s intent, allows for the difference between truth and fiction to be not of a qualitative matter—as the defining of right or wrong, or real or fake, which seems to be a recent agreement—but of a quantitative matter, that is, the quantity of possibilities.

This not only supplies a refreshing answer that is uncommon, but arrives with a new set of questions to ponder upon. Firstly, if the difference between truth and fiction is of a quantitative matter, then in what manner do the possibilities of fiction then diminish in order for the truth to be established? Perhaps simply by stripping the possibilities down to that last possible one: *Et voila! La vérité*.

But while this deduction seems to be well functioning and legit on paper, as maybe in mathematical philosophy and the realm of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, it does seem to drop off certain conflicts if it is used as a valid method all the way towards the origin of this question.

*Eliminate all other factors, and the one which remains must be the truth.*²

Since given that truth is not the absence of fiction but rather the deduction of it, so it must be that there would be no truth without fiction. Hence, if we are to look at the origin of the ques-

tion, we are led back to the beginning of fiction, to the birth of imagination. In my practice as an artist that is often where I am drawn. This is not to say that my art comes together at the place where imagination is born, but that the whole search for the origin of fiction, and the questions this involves, repeatedly compose my greatest inspiration. *When* and *why* mankind’s ancestors were the first to deal with fictions will for this part be left to linger unanswered, but the question of *how* I will have to approach.

Apparently, fiction must have held some initial advantage for our ancestors, since nature has taught us well that nothing gets to stay for long in its kingdom unless it obliges to serve a purpose. As for truth, it is only safe to call it a consequence of this agreement, whether a pleasant one or not. But going back to our main question now—that is, how to go from fiction to truth—it is here that conflicts begin to drip. Since at that prehistoric time, probably before the philosophy of math and certainly before Sir Doyle, a single footprint would, even under a magnifying glass, contain more possibilities than Sherlock could ever dream of, or dare to admit.

*An object which speaks of the loss, of the destruction, of the disappearance of objects. It does not speak of itself. It speaks of others. Will it also include them?*³

It is fair to assume that those of our ancestors who should be the first to deal with fiction would do so primarily in relation to the hunt—that is, when perceiving and perhaps speaking of clues. In many ways this is very similar to our good detective, who is also all about the hunt and clues; but when it comes to be dealing with fiction, and so truth, there are in these cases diametrical differences.

1. Mark Twain, “Wagga-Wagga and the Tichborne Claimant,” in *Following the Equator* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1909), 137.

2. Arthur Conan Doyle, “The Science of Deduction,” in *The Sign of Four* (Kindle edition, 2012), 11.

3. J. Johns, quoted in Carlo Ginzburg, “Clues: Roots of an Evidential Paradigm,” in *Clues, Myths, and the Historical Method* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum, 1999), 78.