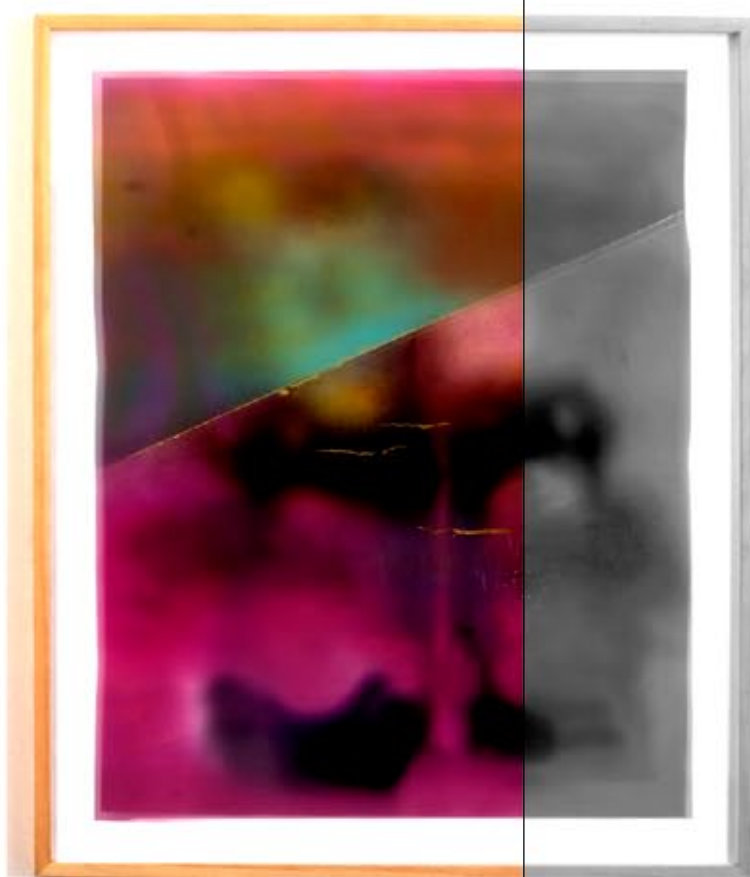


EITAN BEN MOSHE
Jericho Moons















1

*there's always a Troubled soul
still running in the snow two years later*

2

*red flamingos feel ready for their final journey
hearts of the Jordanian people open at once*

3

*(the) blue star's flare masks your cave eyes
never can you fulfil a cave wish*

4

*the weekend's events around the holy column
left a sour odour of terrified selfishness*

5

*one camel loses his temper
the entire herd sleeps for years dreaming of icy malice moons*

6

*the lake will overflow the city
lost sunsets sneak into the danceholes*

7

*there's nothing more slippery then a night cruise
in the back of my nose i hear dead stars mumbling shamefullyt*

8

*a giant base-ball splits into two skinny albino girls
never can you fulfil a dead cave wishe*



















9

*the sun meets the moon's passive aggression
dark violet clouds assault our garden*

10

*yellow vapour on the arctic water
a sleeping pair of sea-bears toss and turn*

11

*evil gossip between one's own tiptoes,
tail's world war starts without notice*

12

*a milf lives inside a dead sock hanging from my appendix
feeling her scrambling inside/outside*

13

*close up of her nipple deeply shocked but still alive
looking like Herod's mountain from a bird's eye view*

14

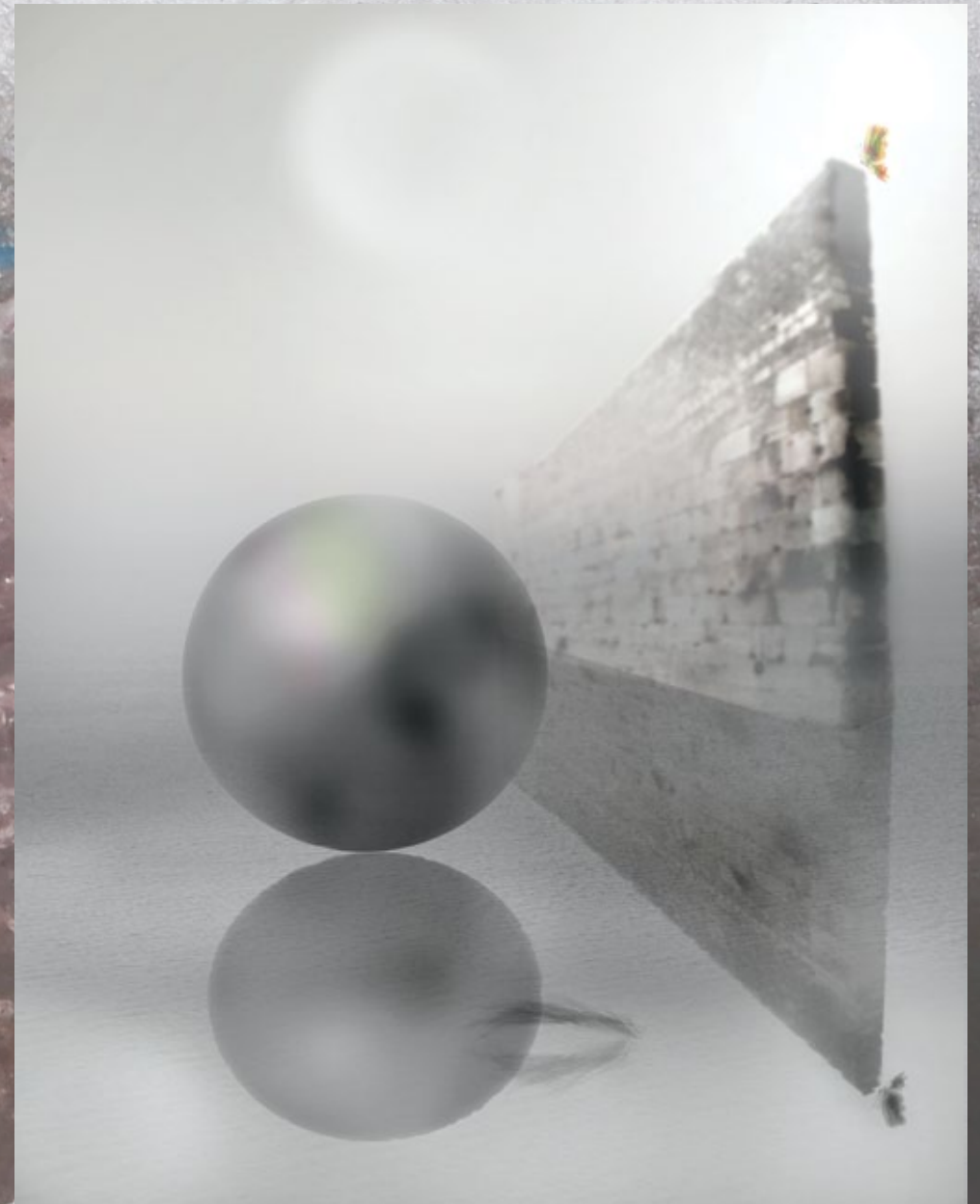
*shomron hill's blue night punctured by phosphorus dots
all is water*

15

*two nurses running into one another
crescent shaped scars cut the heavy purple sky*

16

*your wife became a cube
sing at night the dog's cousin's song!*











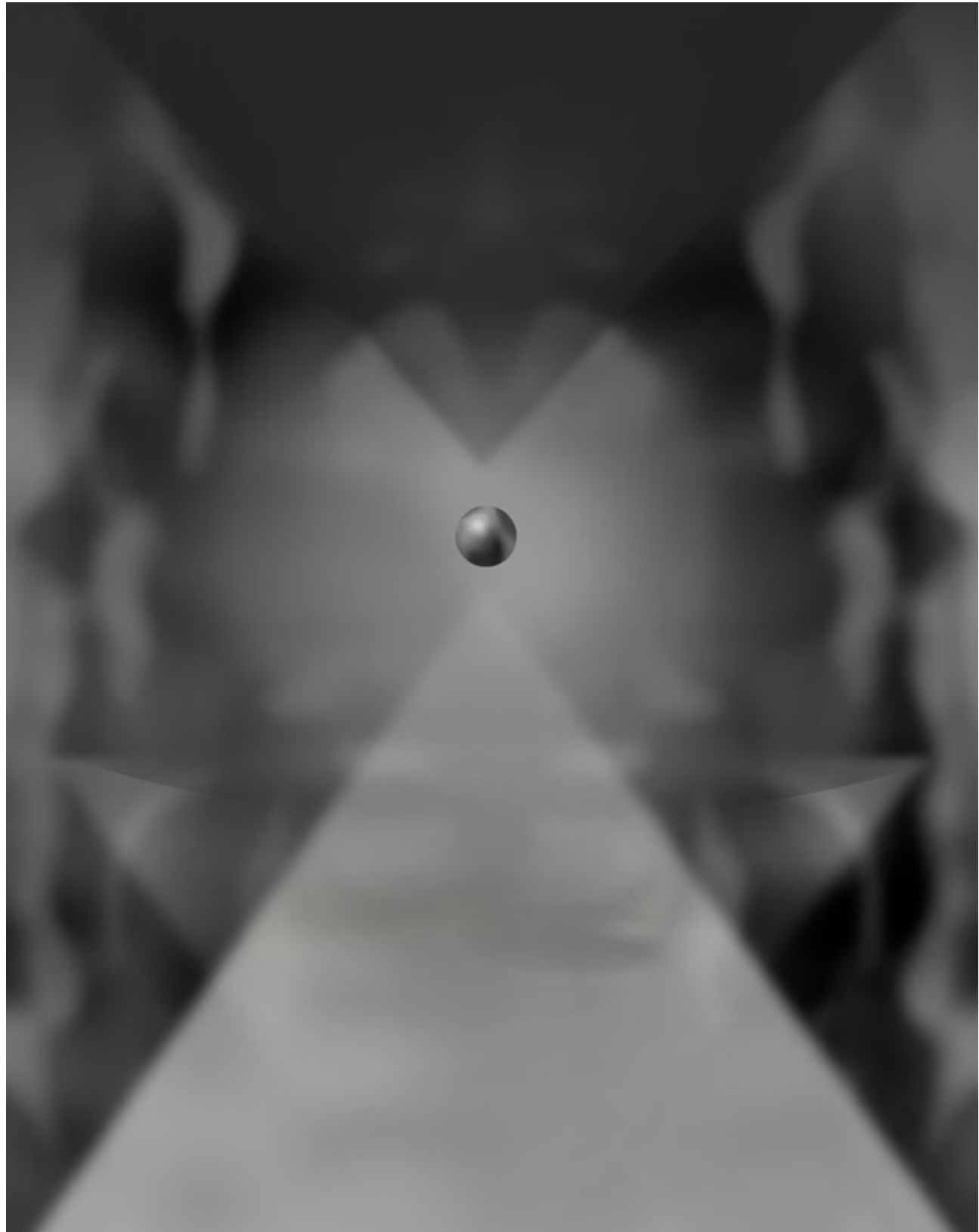






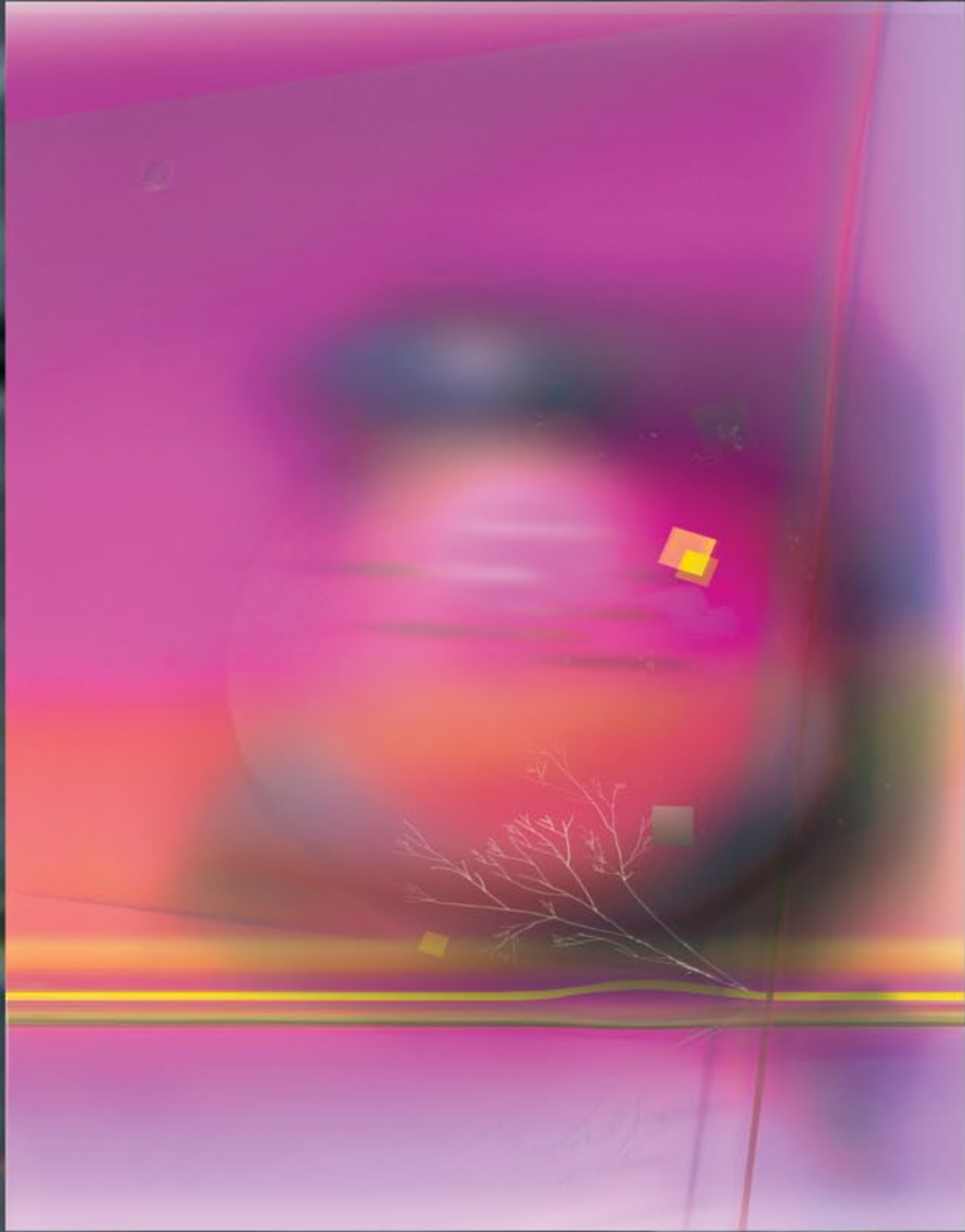




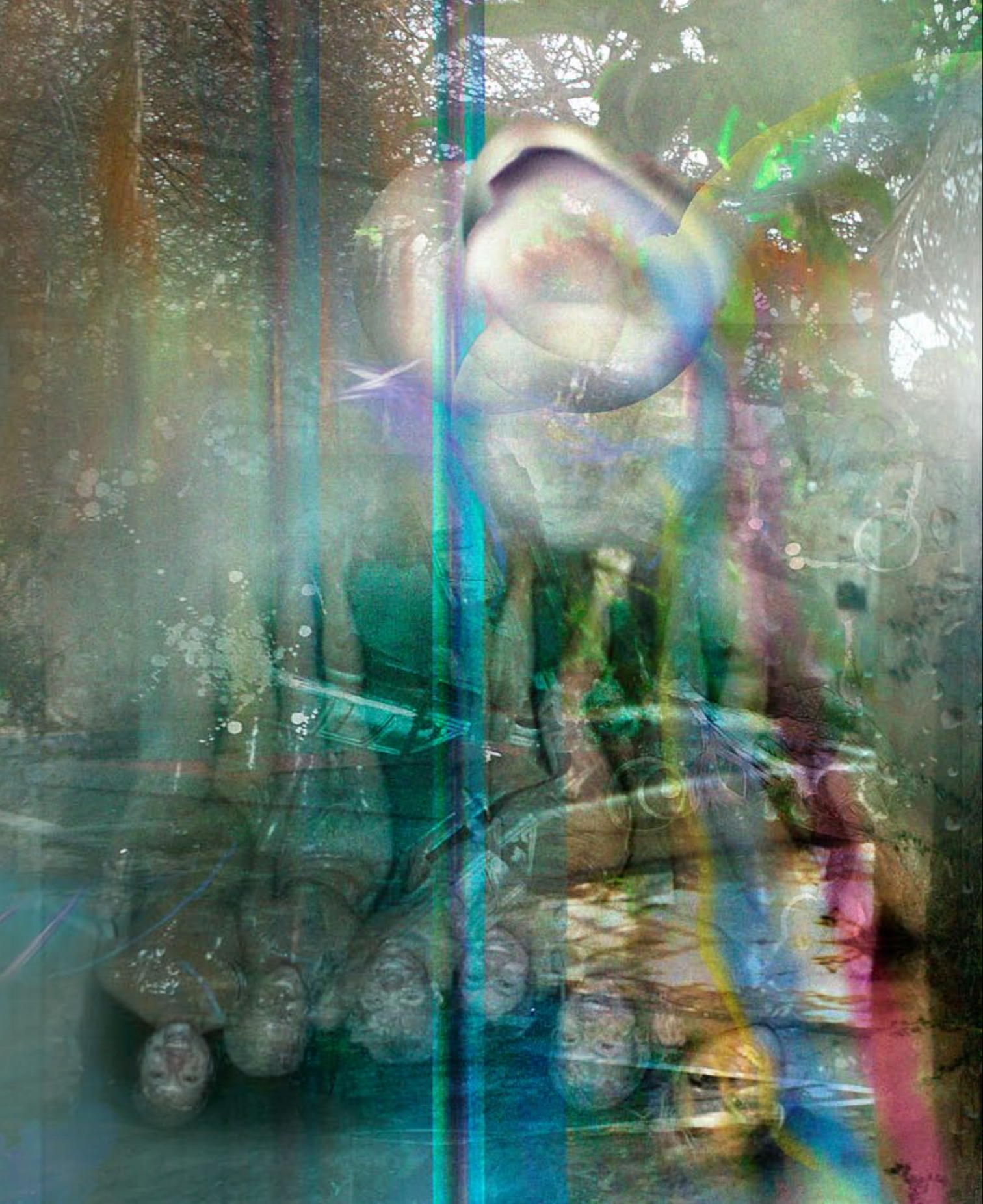














THE BLIND BROTHER

A pre-school child approaches Eitan Ben-Moshe at the artist's exhibition *The Blind Brother* at the *Tal Esther Gallery* in 2006. The child points at a group of objects and says: *Those things are gross.*

He refers to Ben-Moshe's sculptures. When Eitan asks the child to explain the meaning of his words, he tells him that they are *gross* because they remind him of the backside of things that no one sees – like the back of a refrigerator that slowly rots. It seems like Ben-Moshe has always been around to exhibit undefined, skeletal works that expose the things that lie underneath. His work straddles a borderline – wherein which lies its strength. His art exposes the detritus of the human body; he presents morbid creatures that induce nausea, and dares to offer them as relevant pieces of beauty to the homes of people he doesn't know.

Throughout the last few years he has become more focused on creating a world of objects that resemble organic beings, human tissue, and infected wounds. Will viewers get used to his 'shapeless' shapes? Will they accept these pieces, so that they may rise above the exhibition space to assume their identity as predatory flowers, mashed-up plants, and amputated tree limbs, open and scarred?

Naomi Aviv

Will the observers keep reacting to Ben-Moshe's creatures in horror? As though they were witnessing a shellfish twist and contort its organs, or a body pulled from the sewer, covered in mold?

Not many artists aspire to represent human physical urges, to show shrunken guts, and lure us into a confrontation with the 'other' that we prefer to avoid. Few artists formulate a language that is surreal and abstract, concrete and fluid, all the while avoiding clearly defined precincts.

Eitan Ben-Moshe is a unique artist. He operates from an exposed and idiosyncratic place, representing that which the body knows how to react to long before the rational mind does.

LETTER

Dear Eitan,

In the meantime we have moved and your little sculpture is still in a drawer. Maybe there is no connection, but let me try to explain.

It all has to do with the question of what a work of art can do, what its role or effect can be. I turn to the field of art in public space because I know more about that and also because I think that the difference between art in the private sphere, in this case, is not that big. One of the standard reproaches towards art in public is that it is tailored to appeal to the taste of the common public. In other words, instead of being completely autonomous, a product of the deep inner self of the artist, it compromises with the clichés of general preference.

Artists and the supporting organisations that work in public space often claim that their work produces an almost guerrilla-like effect. The artwork is in their eyes supposed to undermine the common experience of a certain location, add another way of looking at the world, or just generally disturb normative behaviour. It is interesting that both of these claims are false. It is also interesting

Jeroen Boomgaard

that you incorporate both claims into your work. You visit people as a tailor to measure their needs. You interview them, and then you make them a work of art that nestles as a strange body, as a virus, in the house of the owner. In your case both claims are right. Even in the private interior, the work of art remains a strange entity, no matter how familiar it will be to us. But to get this feeling of 'unheimlichkeit' we have to love it first.

The feeling of alienation – when things we think we know, or own, suddenly become strange to us – is one of the basic points of departure for art generally, and for surrealist art in particular. It is a feeling that relates to human control over the world. One could argue that the role of the work of art as a 'strange body' came into being at the beginning of the nineteenth century – when controlling the world became the way of life. The work of art always represents a world that is ours. It appeals to our taste. It reflects our wellbeing and status. At the same time, it also always belongs to another world, a world that may be the world of the artist, but even that is not certain. It is this effect of art that makes everything common uncommon, that denies us our uniqueness, and turns us into something common amongst the world of things.

This effect, however, requires a very precise balance. When working in public space the element of estrangement cannot be predominant; the work cannot disturb our view of the world right away. If this were the case we would not accept it. The artist has to make sure that he speaks a language that can be understood, so that his image can be rooted in the world of people that know nothing about art. On the other hand, the work cannot comply too perfectly with general taste either, because it then becomes as invisible as most advertisements are to us. The work has to have a quality that will make us like or love it, and at the same time puzzle or amaze us.

When working for an individual, and creating work for a private home, you do not face the exact same challenge, but it is comparable. In some sense I guess the works lack the power to make us love them. They look like strange bodies from the start. Their viral force is too obvious. The element that could turn them into a personal choice is there, but you don't seem to use it in the right way. The interviews you do with the people about their home, about the place where the work has to nestle, does not feed back into the reception of the work, but only in the production. In other words, the aspects that lead you to make this

specific kind of work for this specific person are not transmitted to the persons themselves.

In this way they do not become part of the way they see the work. I am not sure why you do not incorporate the interview into the work. Maybe it feels like giving away a secret, but that might be a mistake. No matter what you tell, the secret will remain when the connection between the interview and the work is not completely obvious. On the contrary, the fact that your impression has led to an 'opinion' that is translated into this specific work will only be the more intriguing.

Dear Eitan, forgive me if I have misunderstood your work. I am of course only speaking about the very small part that I know of it. I will try to find a place for this very small part in my new home. But that would have been easier if I knew in what way it relates to the old one.

I wish you good luck with your work, and I am sure we will meet again, over here or over there.

Best wishes,

Prof. Jeroen Boomgaard

THE OZONE FLUTE PROJECT

The *Ozone Flute project* is a travelling urban installation created by *The Tailor*, an invented persona adopted by Israeli artist Eitan Ben-Moshe. The project is based on consultations with local spiritual authorities such as shamans and/or healers. Dictated by what the shaman calls “urban energy blockages,” the *Tailor* maps out his route to a series of “ill” locations where he punches, penetrates, and pervades the urban fabric by planting his *Ozone Flutes*. Ben-Moshe describes *Ozone* as “the echo of extra-terrestrial materials,” which, according to him, “penetrate our atmosphere, interfere with the borderlines of inner and outer.” As for the *Flute*, he says, “it is an archetypal human-made form, but the ones I create seem both ancient and futuristic; organic and manual and thus, to an extent, alien.”

The coloured glass *Flutes* are horizontally injected into all sorts of urban façades: a wall, a tree, an interval between a steel frame and a glass, a marble panel, an old metal sheet, a standalone pipe, or an iron mail box. Whether straight or bent, these phallic objects expose a scar in order to heal the ‘wound.’ In this way, the injection itself reveals a paradox — a coexistence of healing and injuring; of *punctuation* (precision) and *pervasion* (dissemination); and of *persuasion* (intention) and *perversion* (intervention).

Lior Galili

Inspired by several mythological figures, the *Tailor* is an emblem for the link between *traveling* and *fixing*. On one hand, a traveling tailor suggests a link between two duration-based activities — *wandering* and *sewing*. Ben Moshe’s tailor on the other hand, ‘pauses in order to fix’ or, ‘fixes as he moves.’ In this way, a new construction emerges: a construction which links *motion* and *utility* or, the seemingly paradoxical link between *mobility* and *fixity*. In this regard, the tailor undermines the traditional relationship between utility and stability (fixation) creating a concept that I call utilitarian mobility.

Parallel to installing these flutes throughout the outdoor route, a series of video installations screening the consulting sessions are rendered as an indoor exhibition. Here (among many others) we meet Amravati and Zoe. What kind of meeting is it? What do we really see when we join the intimate sphere inherent in all such exchanges? Isn’t it precisely the end of intimacy that faces us? The act of exhibiting the forbidden may appear as what desecrates, depletes and cancels its sublime nature. Yet the passive presence of the *Tailor* creates the right tension between *belief* and *disbelief*. On the one hand we reject this forced intimacy, but on the other, it is through the zero identification with the presented figure that *cynicism*, *scepticism* and other forms of *avoidance* turn into *curiosity*.

Furthermore, this tension between *belief* and *disbelief* is constructed by the artist's sustenance of an indifferent position: The desire for new-age promises, the wish to be part of the ceremony, meets the awareness of its inability merely by pointing it out. What begins with exhaustion from the mass-culture spectacle turns into a spectacular show. Reluctant to prioritize the enchanting new-age promise over the so-called 'scientific' recording, Ben-Moshe's *Tailor* inevitably produces *self-irony*. Back to Amravati and Zoe: What could possibly be alluded by their distinct styles? While Amravati roars, Zoe talks; while Amravati sings, Zoe speaks; while Amravati uses *sound* Zoe uses *word*. In other words, here is an intersection between the *semiotic* and the *semantic*. The *Tailor* lays the ground for yet another stagnation caused by the mutual cancellation of *belief* and *disbelief*: belief that is carried by the flow (Amravati's melody), and disbelief which claims its pause (the intervals between Zoe's words).

What is then, the relation between the outdoor flutes planting and the indoor videos screening? By its dialectic nature — the double meaning of the title *Ozone Flute*, the opposing operations of healing and injuring - the act of planting the flutes is both *productive* and *futile*. Through the dichotomy— between the roaring against the talking, the singing against

the speaking, the sound against the word - the videos reveal a collision between *devotion* and *avoidance*. And thus, the coexistence of *productivity* and *futility* intersects with an inability to choose between *devotion* and *avoidance*.

A CONVERSATION

*You sent me an early layout of Jericho Moon last week,
and I initially felt like I was flung onto a rollercoaster of
images – racing forward with no way out.*

*The book constantly re-imagines the scale, context,
and appearance of your pieces. This strategy proposes a new way
of seeing your work, one that questions the notion of
‘what was’, and more broadly, of ‘what is.’*

When I began working on the book, I started creating digital collages that incorporated images from my entire body of work. Continually transforming my pieces in the virtual world allows them to remain alive, perpetually subject to change, much like how memory works. Memories are transformed each time they are re-conjured; they are unpredictable reincarnations of past events that are equally connected to all the tenses.

*Beyond this constant metamorphosis,
your images seem to consistently present leftover traces,
remains of something that isn't there anymore, or maybe of
something that we just don't notice. Many of the photographs,
for example, are marked by fluorescent stains reminiscent of
auras and energy force fields. I don't feel that your work
is involved in 're-writing' the past.*

Eitan Bm & Yael Hersonski

*I see it as a 're-production' from a new perspective, which
transforms these 'leftovers' into living entities.*

It's like when a love affair ends, and turns into a friendship. Something remains, quietly disturbing the present, even if it goes unnoticed. I started to become interested in exploring ways of seeing that exceeded optical perception when I began studying art. I would give myself drawing exercises in addition to the ones assigned by my teachers. Whenever I sat in on lectures, I would attempt to draw the auras of the people who were sitting in front of me. I continued to do this kind of work for years, and when I started teaching, I gave my students similar exercises. In one class, I had fifteen students in the same room draw a naked model. I asked them to paint only his aura. I was surprised to find that most of them chose the same color scales, orange and purple. There was no color in the room that could have influenced them.

How is your artistic act connected to Science Fiction?

I see many parallels....

I can't situate my artistic process in any one tense. This is one of the reasons I am so drawn to Science Fiction; it is marked by frequent references to 'a-temporal' and 'a-historical' places

and people. This temporal fluidity is something I long for. Science Fiction movies like Battle Star Galactica have been an important conceptual and aesthetic influence for me. Some dismiss TV shows like 'Star Gate' as cheap and gimmicky – but I have taken enormous inspiration from these narratives. Through their clichés, they naively grapple with important ideas and concerns usually claimed by high culture and academia. By not trying to be too philosophical, they are able to express collective desires and fantasies. I haven't been able to find good science fiction literature written in Hebrew. The Hebrew language inherently privileges the past, and this clashes with Science Fiction's futurist longings. The Hebrew word for Hebrew, *Ivrit*, is etymologically derived from the word *Avar*, which means past. When everything is burning under your feet you are not supposed to look towards the sky. In doing art I prefer looking at the stars.

Maybe this explains why your works are so unrecognizable. Even though you frequently refer to yourself as a 'tailor' there is something totally un-domestic about the works you are creating. Their 'unfamiliarity' provokes an anxiety within the viewer. I experience your sculptures as wild and untamed beasts, or evil tumors that clone themselves and swell endlessly.

There is a Hebrew expression that says that whenever evil is seen, the evil is located within the eyes of the beholder. I agree that there is a kind of excessiveness about my works that never ends. It is inherent to the works – the way they are shown, documented, and continually reinvented. This frantic growth will not come to an end with the book either.

When I look at your public installations – take for instance the large larva looking sculpture that you installed on the base of a highway overpass – I see homeless creatures. No one really understands if the sculpture lives there, or if it's just passing through. They provoke an anxiety within viewers. Looking at these creatures coerces a feeling of fear. It provokes a moment that exists outside of time, similar to the way a frightened animal might freeze when confronted by a predator. It reminds me of Franz Kafka's short story, 'The Burrow.' In the story a mole is trying to build a home in the ground, only to find his efforts undermined by an underground monster who produces scary sounds that frighten the mole, and threaten the existence of the house. According to Kafka's story, wherever there is a house – or a delimited sanctuary of safety and security – there is also the threat of violation.

It reminds me of the Zionist claim that Anti-Semitism came from a fear of the Jew's homelessness, and thus, his unfamiliarity.

A few years ago Tamar Geter, identified a violence within my work that she said derived from the strangeness that you are referring to. She said that my work doesn't give the viewer's eye a chance to rest. It never gave the viewer the chance to be comforted by the sight of something familiar. I understand what she means – but on the other hand – I approach them with the indulgence of a child who bakes a make believe chocolate cake out of moist earth, snails, and garbage. I think that an artist is a cross between an autistic and a fashion designer.

Sounds like some sort of creative alchemy...

My process is too rough to compare to the alchemists – they have a much more delicate approach towards the magical concoctions they cook up. Whereas the alchemists had an absolute belief in the unity between humanity and the cosmos, my work tends towards recognizing the turmoil of energies and force fields, with a hope that through my efforts I might help achieve some sort of catharsis.

*I still believe in this thing called "reality."
Would you agree that your work has real life objectives?*

I think so, though perhaps we are working from different understandings of what constitutes reality. Take for instance our meeting at this coffee shop. This constitutes a shallow layer of reality. Our feelings now and what we grasp with our five senses are a tiny part of a much larger reality. Take for instance the many years we've known each other, or the energies we exchange without speaking. In these parallel universes, we could for instance be two ravens on a grey tree, or a brother and sister.

This otherworldly perspective reminds me of the never-ending transmutations that your sculptures seem to continually undergo. On the one level, they exist as objects, material forms that occupy three-dimensional space. But you seem uninterested in letting them exist just in this phase.

The work's constant re-incarnation induces a collapse of linear temporality. It reminds me of a scene from Star Trek where time stops. Spock wanders amongst the crew, who are stuck in time, physically frozen around him. For example, if a

member of the crew is jumping in the air when time comes to a stop, Spock will see them in the air, without understanding how the character got there. The scene illustrates the collapse of cause and effect in quite a literal way. But it opens up a new space for imagining how this disconnection might look and feel. I see my sculptures as symbols of this collapse of linear time – much like the members of Spock's crew. They look like living organisms that are in the middle of transforming. Being however static objects, this metamorphosis is petrified, frozen in time.

Where does your work emerge from?

The work originates from an internal restlessness that combines with my natural enthusiasm. I have a very open attitude towards different medias – the essence of the work remains the same. Lately I have been thinking about the musical term 'fusion' in relation to my work. Fusion takes elements from a variety of cultures and melds them together, and in this way, distinguishes itself from Post-Modernity. I think of The Pompidou Center as an example of Post-Modernism. It took cultural signs and symbols from all kinds of aesthetics and cultures, but the building cannot be described as a fusion. The various elements, whether they are from popular

culture or from the industrial era, are identifiable. Fusion involves a melting together, a transformation, wherein various elements are divorced from their contexts, intermingle, and create something new in the process. In this sense, fusion is Post-Post-Modern.

*Your work samples elements of post-modern thought,
but in an important sense, your concerns are quite modern.
It's as if you are fighting for the idea of the aura, the essence,
the original – a concern that was in many ways deemed
irrelevant by Post- Modern thought.*

There is an expression that says 'one cannot make dough from bread.' I am trying to prove this is not true. Nowadays, everything seems 'baked' in the sense that all ideas, thoughts – even systems – have been formed and explained, contain a value and a definition. In a culture where ideas of truth and authenticity have collapsed, I see my art as a response that points to this void of meaning, but goes a step further than merely critiquing, and offers new sources of meaning. I see my sculptures as chemical plants that have grown out of this fallout. I strive to make proud and erect sculptures, even if they still end up looking like a junkie who is unsuccessfully trying to clean himself up.

*I don't know which motives or feelings drove the first men
who painted, whether it was a way of developing
some technical skill, or of self-expression, but it must have been
necessary for him. He made a very basic human movement,
without the presence of complex language and loaded
definitions. There was no complicated language. With you, the
situation is quite different. You cannot be as innocent...*

In a strange way, the motives that drove the first painter in human history to pick up a brush are increasingly relevant. Technology and worldwide communication have on the one hand improved our ability to communicate, but on the other hand they have significantly harmed the quality of communication. Our situation today is analogous to the Babylonian tower, where the punishment is built into the structure. The increased fluidity of our communication has diminished the resistance that enables the differentiation that is so crucial to understanding and language. The ease and facility of communicating has killed the borders, resistances, and separations that make language comprehensible. It mutes the separations that help to prop up vocabularies. The result is a loss of community. In Tel-Aviv, this process is compounded by the constant barrage of 'news', the rhythm of which continues to invade our psyches. This is further

compounded by the intensity of the heat, which combined with the fraught political climate, contains an intensity capable of melting even a diamond. The intensity is castrating. My work attempts to neutralize this violence. I think this is the origin of the flute project, where I installed small flutes in hidden places, as both a signal of distress, and an attempt at healing. In this way I don't think my work is that different from tribal art.

*Your work has strong fractalic motifs.
In the light boxes this fractalic tendency materializes
through the constant duplications of small elements
that collectively echo these smaller shapes. If you stand
near the light boxes, and then walk further away,
you will end up noticing how the piece as a whole is
composed of smaller versions of this whole.
In contrast, one also has the feeling that your work
strives to create authentic, distinct, and original forms,
even if these 'unique' shapes employ duplication as a device.
I really feel this when looking at the
large circular light boxes. In a way the fractalic notion is
opposed to the authentic, because it's based on reduction
and duplication. This is in conflict with
your craving for unity.*

I created the circular light boxes after Battle Star Galactica, one of the great masterpieces of science fiction TV, ended. The show is about a world of humans and clones who practice a very strange religion that seeks out the original source of life. A group of these clones destroy the possibility of making more clones – some of them long to be human and have unique souls. The light box is comprised of a series of duplications made with photo-shop, but the unity of all these diverse elements creates a distinctive landscape.

*How much of the sculpture can you predict
before it's been made?*

I begin working with an idea of what I want to create, but many unpredictable things happen along the way, both as a result of my inner process, and reactions with the material. Sometimes I feel that the works know more about the world than I do. I think I fear reality more than they do.

*Your work moves between the white cube
of the gallery, and works that are installed in public spaces.
I am wondering about how you negotiate the
passage between these two very different ways of
working and exhibiting?*

To show my art in a venue that I respect is satisfying. It is a sign of love and approval from the artistic community. But I feel much more fulfilled when my work is transplanted outside. These public interventions remind me of the reasons I started making art. They are what allow me to act into the world, to provoke feelings and ask questions amongst people who are outside of the art world.

*What do you think is the
museum's role nowadays?*

That's an interesting question that I have been thinking a lot about lately. I think museums need to be more like temples whose god's are beauty, spirit, and madness. Instead many museums feel more like the branches of a bank. They are filled with the expected objects, easily written about and understood. It may be utopian, but I wish that museums would leave the market's considerations to the commercial dealers, and busy themselves with seeking out that which is sublime.

*When I was in Paris I was in a museum where there were
all kinds of very impressive shamanic sculptures.
It was amazing. It also felt like a vast graveyard.
All of its contents, which were once connected to*

*real life rituals, now lay petrified, disconnected,
and void of their real life symbolism.*

It's very common nowadays for artists to re-make ritual objects that are clearly disconnected from any community, tribe, or system of belief. They are creating a deliberate dissonance that points to the ruptures of modernity. It reminds me of what was once said about Franz Kafka's writings – that his stories were fables without lessons, tailored for a world that had lost its rooting in faith and morality. Damien Hirst's famous skull of diamonds is a brilliant example of this kind of sacred object. In the end, his work offers something that is very tragic. I do not think it's enough to just point out problems to people. I believe there must be more. There must be another way.

What do you mean by another way?

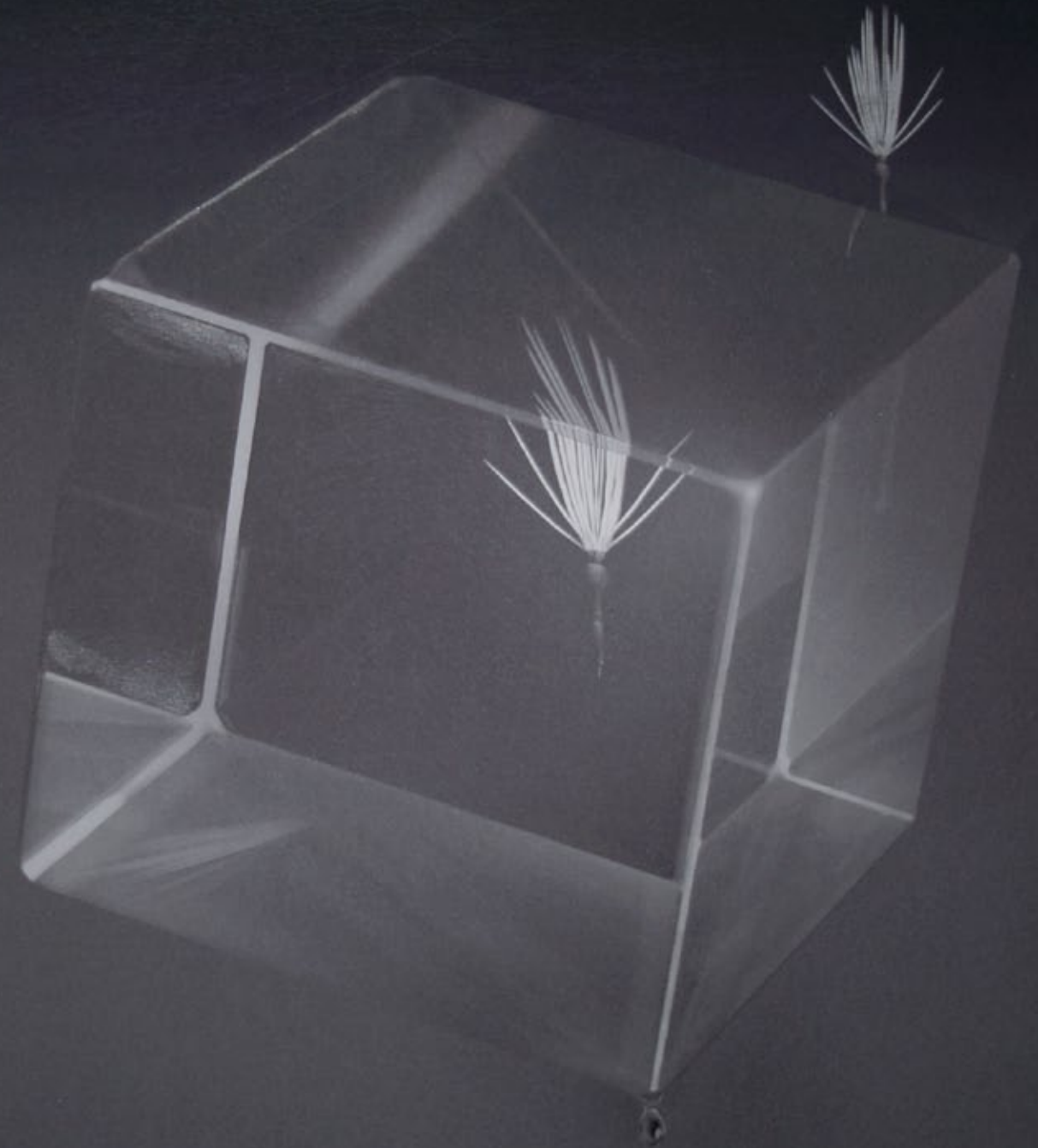
There are revolutions happening all over the world today. These uprisings indicate that the human spirit is tired of separation, alienation, and exploitation. The demands that have been put forth are not those really desired. The real demand is for our collective dreams to reclaim the physical world, instead of remaining relegated to the imaginative spheres. When I walked through the protestors tents in Tel-Aviv this summer,

I felt like I was wandering amongst a parallel universe of the pre-historic, where people were living together in a village, collectively preparing their food. I felt that the real reason they were there was their longing to return to a feeling of togetherness. Humanity has spent too many hours in front of plasma screens lately.

In the film editing process there comes a point when you are ready to show someone your first edit. The benefit of this doesn't necessarily lie within the viewer's critique. It is more about me being ready to see the film from someone else's eyes. Do you experience the same with your own work?

I could have handled the creation of the book by myself, but I felt the need to get other people involved. There is something isolating about the plastic arts. In filmmaking there is a whole team that works together. In many of the exhibitions I have participated in, the curators were frequently involved at the end of my process, right before the exhibition was held. I never let someone else hold the brush for me. In The Tailor project in Amsterdam I made sculptures for people's homes after having conversations with them. I felt they were like sculpting mentors for me. One of those people was an art historian, and he acknowledged my work by writing a text for this book. He told

me I should aspire more to have my work fit into the receiver's home, that I should oppose less and listen more. He certainly made me reflect upon the relationship between my sculptures and the spaces that surround them. I didn't really agree with him, but it was a lesson in the transparency of my artistic presence.







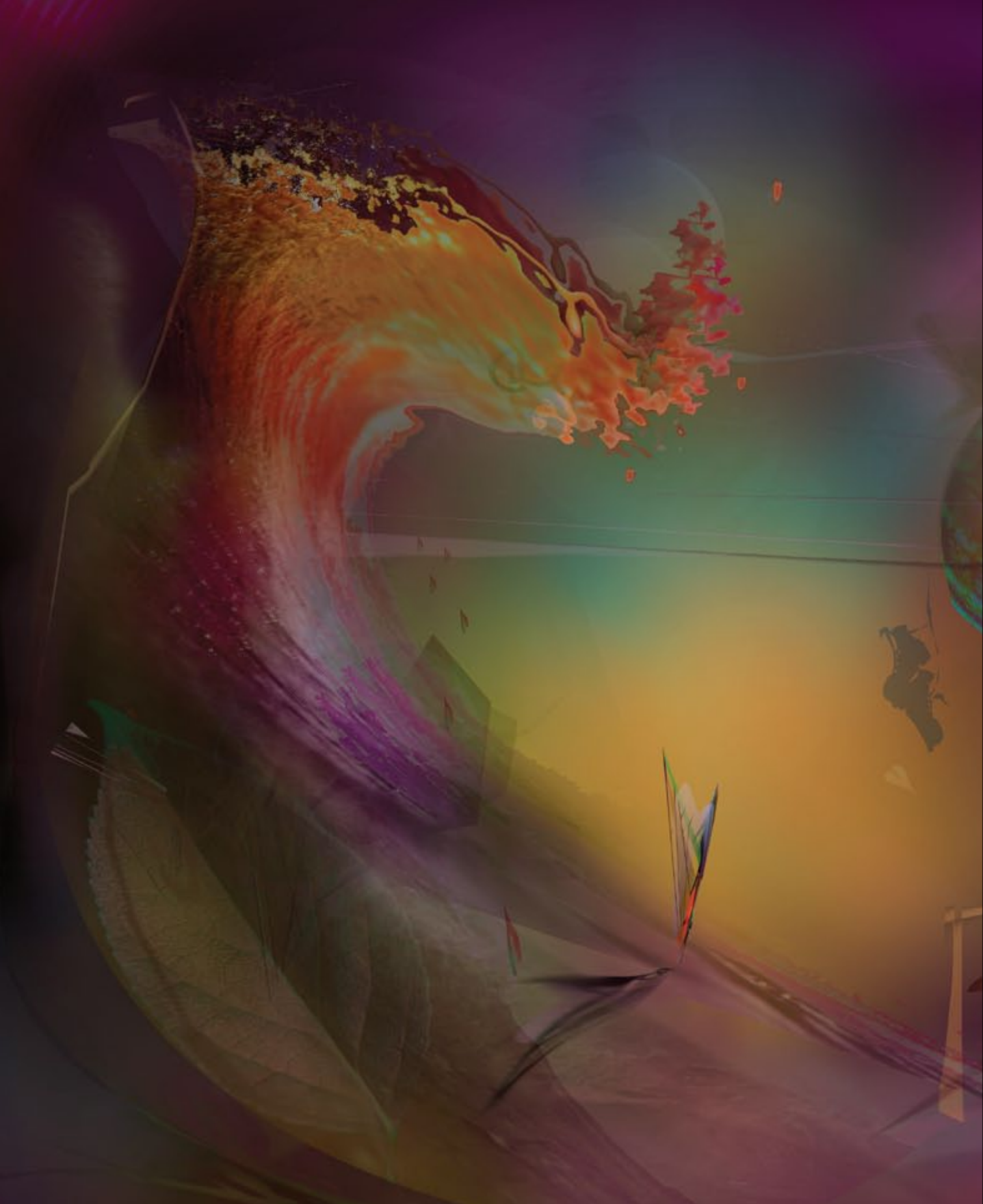






















המחנה 2







17

*still afraid of fields of flour
there is always the annoying possibility of not going back*

18

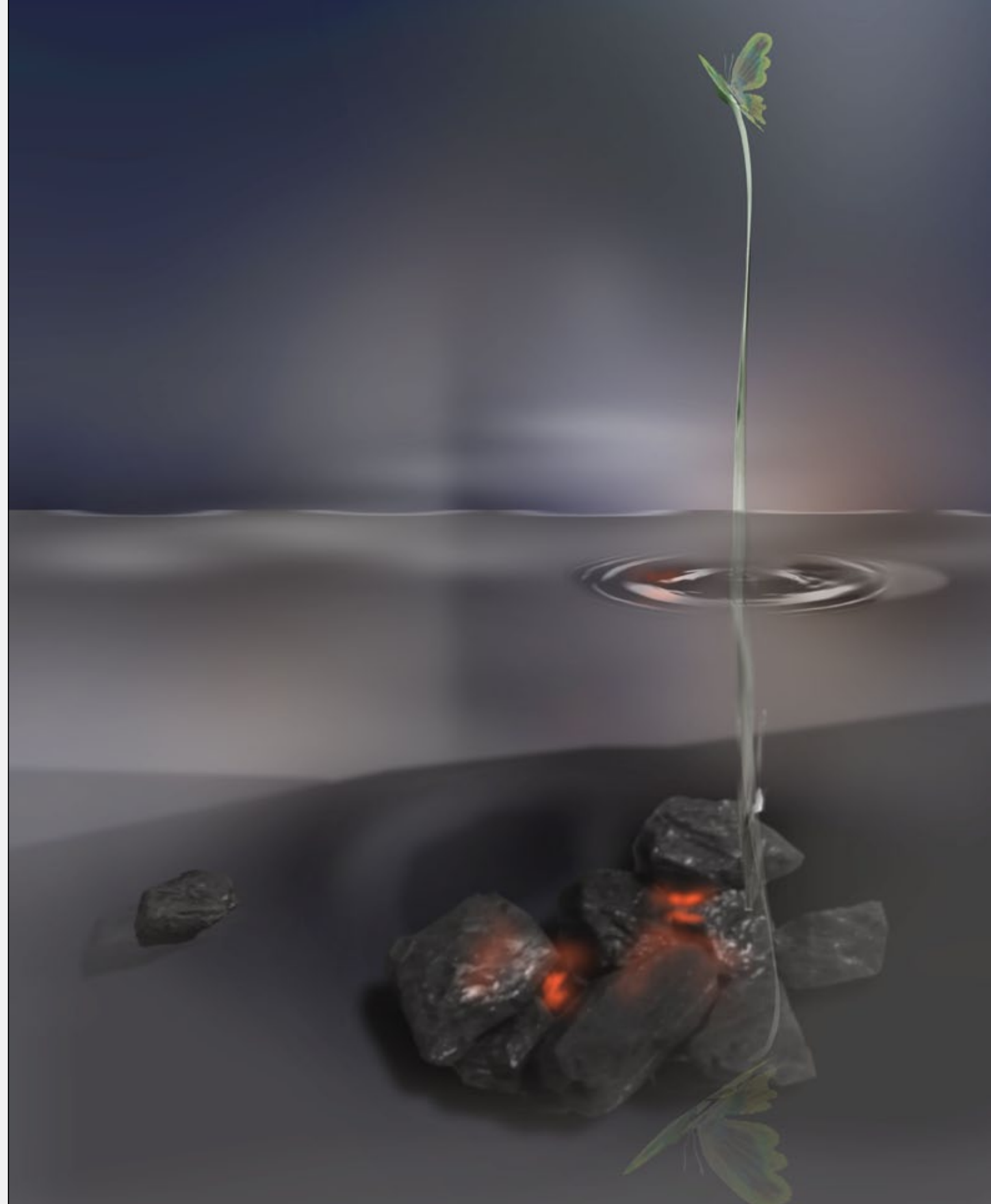
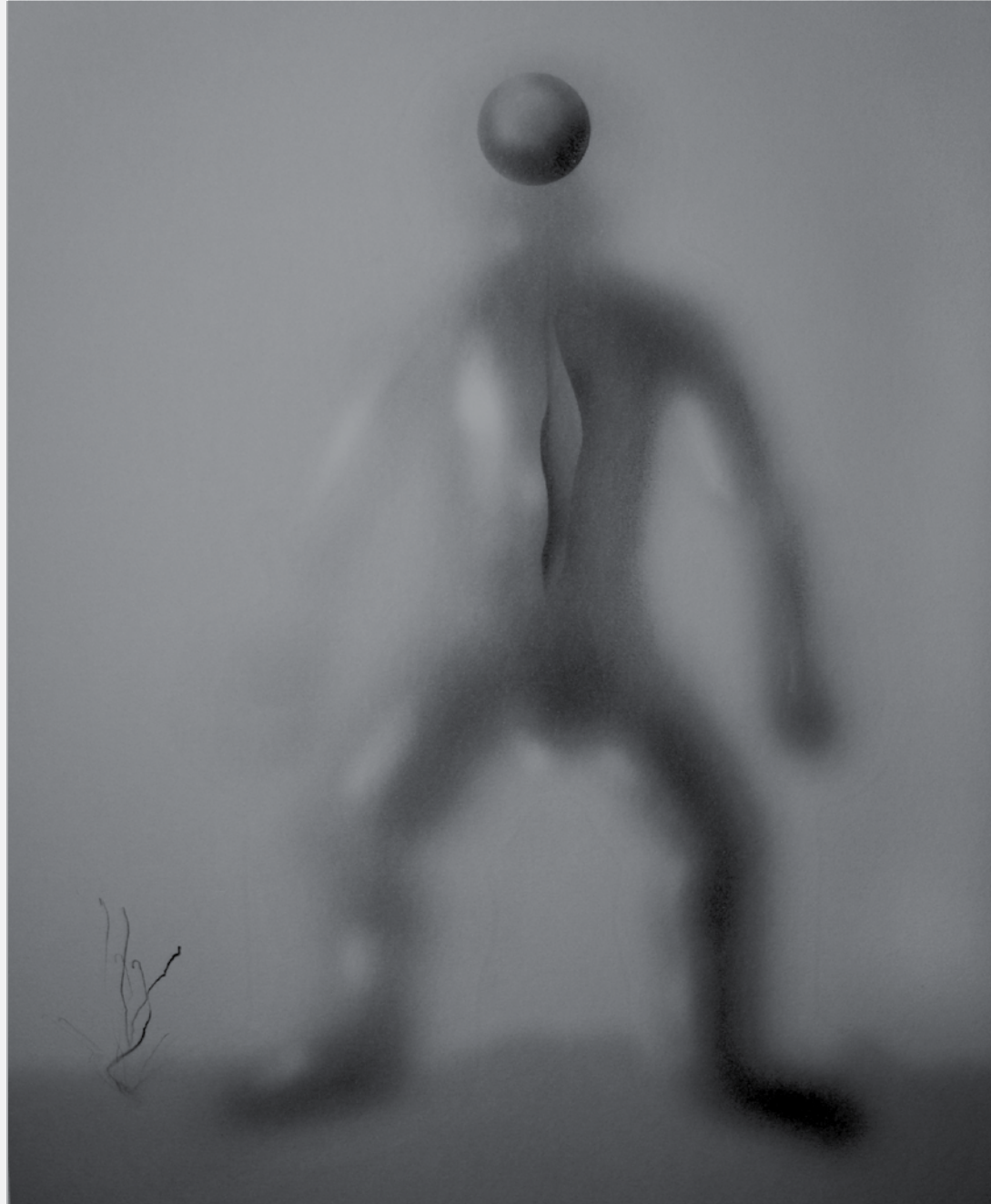
*there's nobody home
you are all alone with this song*

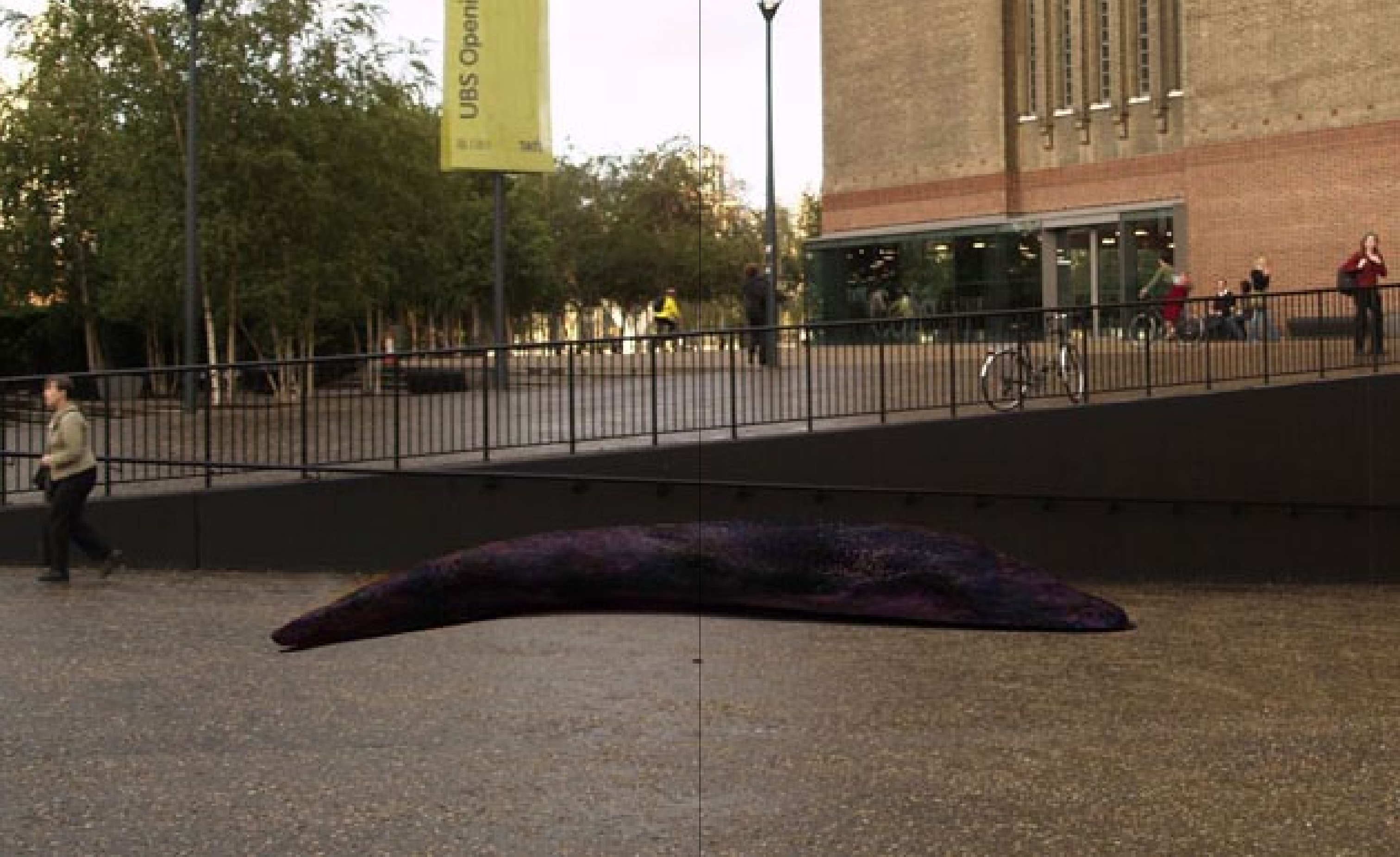
19

*every time Mars passes by her roof shingles
she jumps on her tail and sings to her nails*

20

*every five seconds a Chinese girl has her period.
cobalt balls clatter inside all night long*



















25

*like a broken chess beast, sick for monotony squares,
running for a cube's shade shelter*

26

*like a broken chess beast, sick of the monotony of squares
running for a cube's shady shelter*

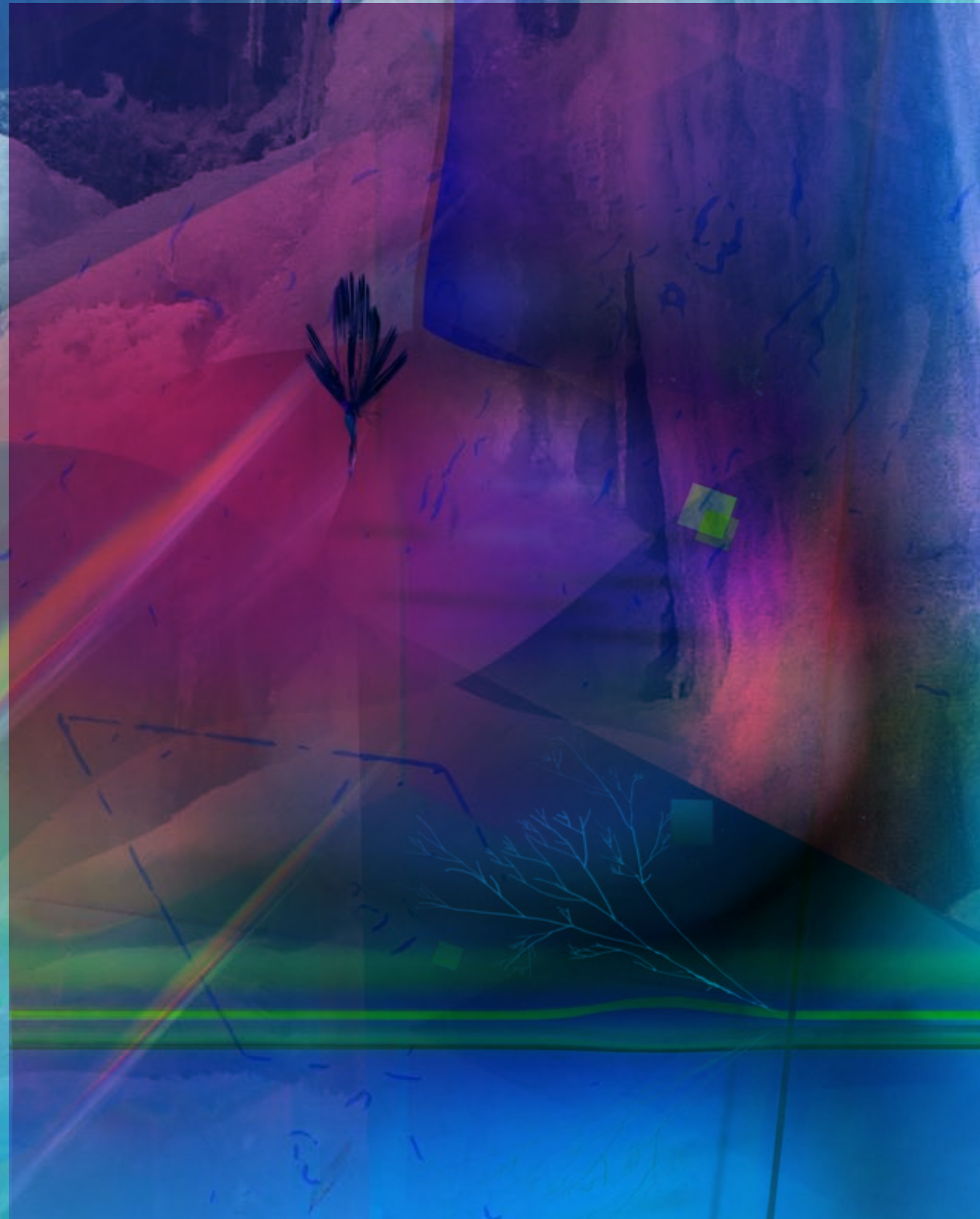
27

*it was a full moon when the well trained fleas decided
to leave the circus and assassinate the red head rabbi and his
Wife*

28

*you told me lets go to the hill, there are rabbits all over
I didn't see even one, just empty UNRWA rice packages*

















This book is published on the occasion
of *Eitan Ben Moshe's* exhibition

JERICHO MOONS

January 12 — February 8, 2012

Alon Segev Gallery

Tel Aviv, Israel

Design & Production AVIGAIL REINER

Editor IAN STERNTHAL

Texts ??

Translation ??

Printing A.R. PRINT, LTD. PRINTED IN ISRAEL

© EITAN BEN MOSHE, 2012



ISBN 978-965-91726-0-3



STERN
-THAL

www.sternthalbooks.com

 Alon Segev Gallery