Stillman: The Surface of the City and the Depths of the Psyche

Kyung Hwa Shon

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Abstract

Stillman: The Surface of the City and the Depths of the Psyche offers an attempt to grasp not only a way of thinking about city space but also a new way of conceptualizing a subjective vantage point for this process. This practice-led research project aims to question subject-object dualism, in order to explore a third space (between absence and presence, between the invisible and the visible, between subject and object) and the potentiality of a new figure, which is a ghost-like entity called 'Stillman'.

Stillman is a 'figure-being' that implies significance both to the process of writing and to art practice. Such a non-indexical character goes beyond the notion of a discreet subject. It is neither fixed by time, visibility or by embodiment along the lines of gender. Within the attributes of such a spectral character, the usual type of procedure whereby knowing and recognition occur is radically displaced. This then is effecting a doubled displacement for we cannot be certain about the designation of objects or places or subjective perception. My impulse has been to introduce both stitching (actual) and switching (virtual) operations that create new space (a third space) of encounter in which entities might create reconfigured modes of designation. This implies a new mobility of perception on all levels, thus everything is animated and on the move. This might ordinarily imply a theory of the fragment in conjunction with a de-centered notion of the subject, but I wish to make a step beyond this in order to challenge the very process by which we might begin to suppose a constitution of knowability, or at least an order of representation.

In my research, the concept of the city is not based solely on the pragmatics of the urban planner or architect's drawing board, but rather one that is related to the disjointed mode of dwelling to be found in the recesses of imaginative projections of aesthetic becoming. With the alternating rhythm of rupture and suture[1], the surface of the city and the depths of

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[1] Although this term, 'suture' draws from a history of the concept of 'Suture' by Lacan, Miller, and cinema studies, I am not necessarily drawing upon this entire history of use. However, concepts with such a dense history unfold other trajectories of use particularly when placed into play with another concept such as rupture. They rhyme but they also open out discord. Concepts contain

the psyche occur as a folded rhythm within my conception of urban space, which oscillates between fiction and reality or actuality and virtuality. The project focuses on the moment of aesthetic shock or de-familiarization arising in the context of the city of glass. As such, the condition of the unsettling that is embedded in the nature of Stillman and the city of glass is revealed in art practice and writing, which together include fragments and non-casual factors. In attempting to understand the spaces of the in-between, the actual materiality and with it the sign economy of the city starts to recede as a source of representation and in the wake of this dissolution various trace elements of glass, mirrors and spectres hover within the half light of perception. This process of condensation runs parallel to my aesthetic modes of presentation. On a concrete theoretical level I have examined the dynamic of absence and presence, the idea of spectrality, the development of montage, Far Eastern aesthetics and the idea of emptiness, theories of temporality and the image, and the play of the poetic and philosophic.

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memory but they can also open out surprise in the present. Concepts are like springs that are latent with meaning yet to come.

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List of Artworks

Void
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15cm (in diameter)

Further details:
http://www.kyunghwashon.com/#/a-thingcannot-be-seen-cannot-be-heard-cannot-be-held/

Visibility, Non-Visibility, Invisibility
2015, text with phosphorescent powder pigment
Dimensions variable

Further details:
http://www.kyunghwashon.com/#/visibility-non-visibility-invisibility/

in between; there is, there is not
2017, holographic laser fabric, marble stone, pendulum, wire, acrylic paint
Dimensions variable

Further details:
http://www.kyunghwashon.com/#/in-between-there-is-there-is-not/

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2014, painting, performance and sound (12' 30")
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glass: copper paint on glass (55 x 55 x 0.6 cm)

Further details:
http://www.kyunghwashon.com/#/the-trace-of-a-city-phantom/
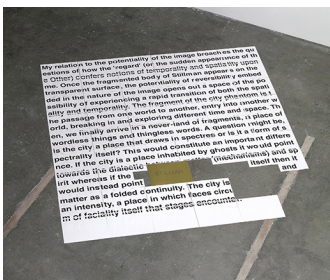
The City of Fragments
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2015, engraved mirror
121 x 140 x 0.6 cm

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2016-2017, LED and sound
Dimensions variable

Further details:
-photo documentation
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2015, silkscreen on paper
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Further details:
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2018, digital print on the transparent vinyl stickers
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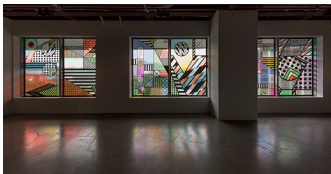
Further details:
http://www.kyunghwashon.com/#/every-second-in-between/

Every Second in Between
2018, moving image (continuous loop)

Further details:
http://www.kyunghwashon.com/#/every-second-in-between/

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2014, phosphorescent powder pigment, gold metallic foil, silver reflective fabric, cage, 3D printed teeth, bird toy, etc.
Sound included (12' 30")
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Further details:
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2017, aluminium, bricks, grass, plastic cup, coloured acetate sheets, chalk, polystyrene balls
Sound included
Dimensions variable

Further details:
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2016, pink holographic laser fabric and mirror
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Further details:
http://www.kyunghwashon.com/#/he-needs-my-eye-looking-at-him-he-needs-me-to-prove-hes-alive/

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Acknowledgements

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Author's declaration:

During the period of registered study in which this thesis was prepared the author has not been registered for any other academic award or qualification. The material included in the thesis has not been submitted wholly or in part for any academic award or qualification other than that for which it is submitted.

Signature:

Date: 3 April 2019

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"From one moment to the next, this opens in us, allowing us to see this vast drift [*dérive*] of the world. From one moment to the next, we find ourselves sensibly and physically outside of ourselves, outside the blind slipping away of our little stretch of time. We see the night that borders our time, and we touch on some aspect of it − not the future, but the coming of something or someone: the coming of something that is already of us and of the world, but that has to come from somewhere else, displaced elsewhere into an unimaginable elsewhere."[2]

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[2] Jean-Luc Nancy, 'Changing the World', in *A Finite Thinking (Cultural Memory in the Present)*, ed. by Simon Sparks (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2003), p. 301.

I say he (or she) but it is really more like a figure without gender. It is called 'Stillman'[3]. How can a phantom be gendered, anyway? Stillman unexpectedly appeared on the third or fourth day of February 2014. Phantoms slip between time, so the time between days creates an oscillation, but I still remember the night of the encounter. It was so vivid. The persona[4] of Stillman was possessed by a very dark presence, a form of presence that appeared as motionless and quiet in one sense but also as a pitch-dark, brutal, and impulsive character at the same time. This ambiguity of effect appeared to be like the fear of a shadow in a cave: something was there, but also behind this lurking presence was something that did not yield itself to appearance. What is this figure? Is it a ghost? Stillman's terrible gaze entered me through a glass window in ways that could not be avoided. They say that the gaze is what undoes the other. Anyway, it was closer to being a force, even a force that was

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[3] I clearly note that in my PhD project 'Stillman' should be understood as the condition of the in-between of the formed and the unformed (figure-being) that exceeds any version of enclosed space, time or determined identity. Such a non-embodied entity is different from Paul Auster's a male character, 'Stillman' in his book, *The New York Trilogy*. From here I will use the pronoun 'it' or 'Stillman' to convey the indeterminacy of the character, without the gender conflict.
As a Korean and non-native English speaker, I considered an English name, 'Stillman' as an entity being in profound silence and understood its nature as the quietude of a deep thinker. Such personal interpretation of the name reflects Korean culture, particularly naming traditions. Most Korean names are made up of three syllables-surname (one syllable) and given name (two syllables). The given names are comprised of two Sino-Korean morphemes each written with one Hanja (Chinese character), which creates special meanings. Koreans believe that a person's name entails a certain luck that ripples through the entirety of his (or her) life and also will be a great influence on one's attributes.

[4] On the persona, Giorgio Agamben writes: 'The desire to be recognized by others is inseparable from being human. Indeed, such recognition is so essential that, according to Hegel, everyone is ready to put his or her own life in jeopardy in order to obtain it. This is not merely a question of satisfaction or self-love; rather, it is only through recognition by others that man can constitute himself as a person. […] Persona originally means "mask", and it is through the mask that the individual acquires a role and a social identity. In Rome every individual was identified by a name that expressed his belonging to a gens, to a lineage; but this lineage was defined in turn by the ancestor's mask of wax that every patrician family kept in the atrium of its home. From here, it only takes a small step to transform persona into the "personality" that defines the place of the individual in the dramas and rituals of social life. Eventually, persona came to signify the juridical capacity and political dignity of the free man. The slave, inasmuch as he or she had neither ancestors, nor a mask, nor a name, likewise could not have a "persona", that is, a juridical capacity (servus non habet personam). The struggle for recognition is, therefore, the struggle for a mask, but this mask coincides with the "personality" that society recognizes in every individual (or with the "personage" that it makes of the individual with, at times, reticent connivance)'. Giorgio Agamben, *Nudities*, trans. by David Kishik and Stefan Pedatella (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2011), p. 46.

beyond my power to mount resistance to, so my mind was drawn into and absorbed into Stillman's two ocular globes that unfolded into multifarious personae subsisting as fragments under the surface of Stillman's black mask and disjointed limbs. This was all part of the encounter that I can only describe as a disturbance of the boundary that regulates the difference between being and figure. The field of energy that this being or figure drew force from was obscure, but I am certain of the fact that there was a field of energy. Everything else was unfixed, but then it was deep into the night. The figure, if I can give determination to Stillman, was without a definite form, volume, and weight but even so it stays alive on the surface of reflection. So, is this a figure-being that is revealed or uncovered within invisible remnants and ungraspable fragments, that is like an image appearing only at the point of indiscernibility?[5] Is the figure-being[6] closer to an image or the state of a coalescence of an actual image and a virtual image,[7] existing in a circuit of reciprocal exchanges of presence and absence? How can I know such things, because the main feature of this encounter was the effect of being undone?

Everything is uncertain (or unlimited?): or that it is how it seems. Anyway, this is the nature of Stillman. Stillman is like an apparition hovering on the boundary between life and death without the certainty of either state. In his book *Bataille, Klossowski, Blanchot: Writing at the Limit*, Leslie Hill notes:

> In all tales of inheritance, ghosts play a pivotal role. They announce the past and reveal the future. They belong neither to truth, nor to untruth, neither to the familiar nor to the strange, neither to reality nor to its simulation. Their fate is to hover, in suspense, at the limit between being and non-being, beyond the jurisdiction of either.[8]

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[5] Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema II: The Time-Image*, trans. by Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta (London; New Delhi; New York; Sydney: Bloomsbury, 2013), p. 72.
[6] In my research, I introduce the idea of a 'figure-being'. This is deliberately complex because it goes beyond the notion of a discreet subject. I am unpicking object-subject dualism and stitching together a new entity.
[7] Gilles Deleuze, ibid., p.72.
[8] Leslie Hill, *Bataille, Klossowski, Blanchot: Writing at the Limit* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 17.

As such, Stillman would constitute an in-between of the different states, or even a discharge of the two. Stillman is a force, a heterogeneous disorder that does not submit to order or method or determination. Stillman is just a gush of wind transforming the order of things, unfurling the shady space of the unknowable and uncertain to unfurl. It (Stillman) is fixed neither by time, visibility, nor embodiment along the lines of gender, nor by any other modes of definite identity. The name, Stillman, is itself a contradiction because the evidence is that it is a trace that moves. Stillman is motion without a body and as such is the undoing of embodiment. As an evanescent, fragmented vestige, Stillman has ambivalent attributes that derive from the play of presence and absence, emerging impermanently from non-being to being within what might appear as a flash but disappearing and reappearing as a trace again. On the outside of the self-enclosure which is the basis of any formal entity, Stillman is thus closer to an undetermined spectral figure-being that haunts the city without forms or modes of identity or recognition. As such, Stilllman is either beyond or before representation.

Will it be enough to say that Stillman is on my mind? Is it ever enough to claim that something is on one's mind? Being on one's mind retains the ambiguity embedded in the order of the imaginary because it is a figure as opposed to a concept that opens out into the perplexing encounter I am pointing towards. Is the truth close to the fact that we search modes of indexicality in order to find certainty, whereas when we engage the image we find instead a slippage or curvature of ambiguity? Does this not lead us all the way back to Plato? 'Stillman' is somewhere, but this somewhere may not be anywhere other than in my head – but then I cannot be certain as to what type of place that is. Stillman haunts because it is possible to think that it (Stillman) is in the space of the mind and yet it is not possible to pin it down in terms of a location (there and not-there simultaneously). Anyway, I am neither in control of a discourse through which I may tame my relationship to Stillman, nor is it (Stillman) filed away in my head as the errancy of irrational events. I am turning both ways at once with all of this, almost like the way stale pop tunes stick to the skin of everyday life. If I fall back on the notion that Stillman stands as a figure that captures the very dimension of being alone in the city without direction, then it functions as an entrapment that lies within the process of becoming. Entrapment or fascination? That is

the question – a question that can be posed in many different ways. It may appear to be a transpersonal question of the city itself. If the ghost is in the in-between, then what would be the in-between of an entrapment and fascination? If you say the word, 'city' to me, then everything starts to slip. The city is slippage itself, for nothing in the city is quite as it appears. Of course the city may be understood as the sum process of all its accumulated appearances, but equally it is also the slippage of appearances and essences. This is not because the city is always on the move, or because of embodied restlessness, but something much more uncanny. There is of course a long history of relating cities to spectrality. The idea that Paris is a city that is haunted by ghosts has a history rooted in the 19th-century writings of figures such as Charles Baudelaire and Victor Hugo, and this passes into the 20th century with figures such as André Breton and Walter Benjamin. Walter Benjamin's study of Paris in *The Arcades Project* has been described as a form of a ghost book,[9] but a history of such literature is not the concern, even though it may echo within the fabric of the text.

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[9] Gerhard Richter writes on Benjamin and the spectre: 'Whether discussing the promise and decay of Paris and the ideological patterns of the nineteenth century, whether circumscribing the ghostly origins or procedures of photography ('This is why old photographs appear ghostly'), the haunted nature of technological innovations such as the telephone, street lighting, and railway travel, or the cultural anachronisms of the Baudelairean flâneur and his metropolitan habitats, Benjamin's texts are populated by ghosts and phantoms. Indeed, the whole movement of the *Arcades Projects*, Benjamin's ghost book, can be thought in terms of the specter'. Gerhard Richter, *Benjamin's Ghosts: Interventions in Contemporary Literary and Cultural Theory* (Stanford; Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2002), p. 4.

Bamboo in the Wind by Seogyang

Old Bamboo, thus untrimmed, irregular,

Its branches lifted by a sudden breeze,

Sparse and graceful it wants to stir a man's emotions,

Its remnant sound cannot be found elsewhere.

Bamboo in the Rain by Seogyang

Two poles of bamboo in the rain,

In the mist one is pale the other dark,

Their long bodies do not submit to pressure

But are about to transform into dragons.[10]

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[10] Poetry by Seogyanggun Yi Jeong and Figures 1 and 2 are from: Burglind Jungmann, *Pathways to Korean Culture: Paintings of The Joseon Dynasty, 1392-1910* (London: Reaktion Books, 2014), p. 92-94.
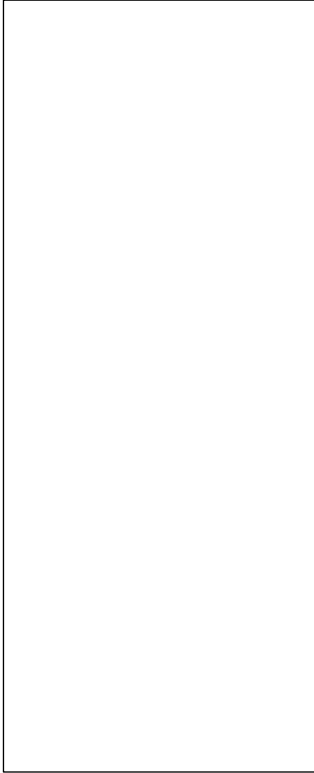
Figure 1:
Seogyanggun Yi Jeong
Bamboo in the Rain
Early 17th century
Hanging scroll, ink on silk
115.8 x 53.2 cm
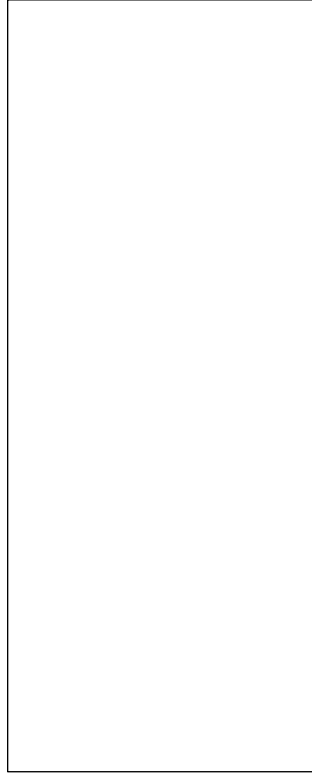
Figure 2:
Seogyanggun Yi Jeong
Bamboo in the Wind
Early 17th century
Hanging scroll, ink on silk
115.6 x 53.5 cm

What Is the Sound of One Hand Clapping?[11]

The mountain ridges appear to sink into the rising mist. A curtain of haze disperses and dissolves into trees, rugged cliffs and waterfalls. In the distance a small village is dimly visible through this ever-extending haze. The pattern of undulating waves becomes in turn a steep, dipping, sedimentary rock strata in clouds of vaporous air. The ground permeates and dissolves into the sky and things mingle with the moist atmosphere to go beyond the surface of things. The rhythm of the mountains, oscillating between appearing and disappearing, untethers the fixity of their identities as singular entities, thus raising the question of what the actualities of essences are. The existence of the mountain is a phase

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[11] Paul Reps and Nyogen Senzaki, *Zen Flesh, Zen Bones: A Collection of Zen and Pre-Zen Writings* (Clarendon, Vermont: Tuttle Publishing, 1998), p. 46.

of continuous transformations between earth and haze. The interweaving of presence and absence vibrates within the latent trace of the un-nameable other, in which the visible folds itself into the invisible and the invisible turns inside out to become the visible. Their correlation in the process of undergoing transfigurations are inseparable, non-ossified, non-contradictory and complementary, implying one another concurrently. It unfurls the unfathomable within a state of constant flux – a circuit between hiddenness and manifestation − in the mind. In the midst of receding haze, the village silently emerges from the absence that had for a short passage of time threatened it with disappearance or dissolution. Its presence slowly fades away as if behind the mist, and yet at this point a reversal starts to occur. Within the pervading silence, the distilled mountain's skeleton becomes resuscitated and emancipated from the haze in late summer. The trees appear as the haze disappears, rock emerges within the flow of the water's absence, and the gush of the cascade on the mountainside vanishes in the silence of the air. They replace each other in a series of transformations, continually interchangeable and in a state of flux. One emerges from within the other and one submerges into the other by suspending their peremptory borders; they are indistinguishable and indistinct, thus becoming a dynamic absence and emptiness that is not measurable. In this painting, the defined form of the thing or the representation of the thing is obliterated. This process of disappearance does not proceed to absolute annihilation, yet it opens for yet another potential manifestation to occur. Presence is complementary to absence and vice versa, within continuous renewals. The role of 'there is' is to uncover 'there is not' whereas 'there is not' is another way of revealing 'there is' – 'one time *yin* (陰) and one time *yang* (陽)' ('now *yin*-now *yang*')[12], which depend on one another as reciprocal alterations to unfold a new entity hovering between absence and presence.

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[12] François Jullien, *The Great Image Has No Form, or On the Nonobject through Painting*, trans. by Jane Marie Todd (Chicago, Ill.; London: University of Chicago Press, 2009), p. 13.
In this book, Jullien expands on such a mode of thought with 'the respiration system' (mutual rhythms of breathing in and breathing out), in contrast to dualistic thought in Western philosophy.
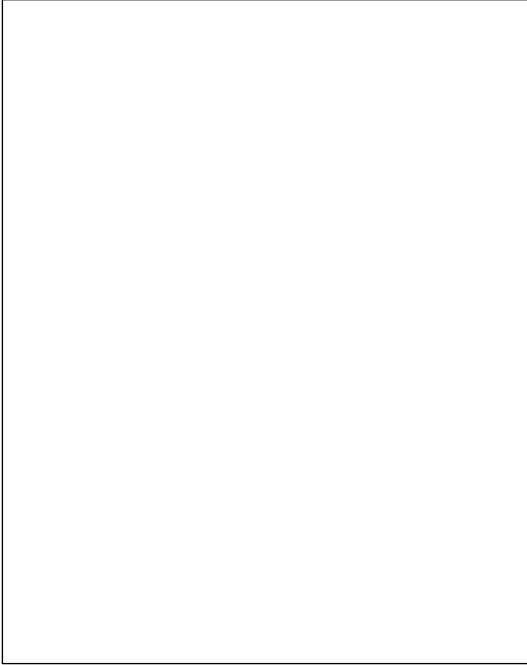
Figure 3:[13]
An Gyeon (安堅)
Early Summer (初夏)
from the album *Four Seasons (四時八景圖)*
15th century
Ink and light colour on silk
35.2 x 28.5 cm

Figure 4:[14]
Jeong Seon (鄭歆)
A Cliff Gate in Tongchon (通川門巖)
18th century
Ink on paper
131.6 x 53.4 cm

Two Korean painters, An Gyeon (安堅)[15] and Jeong Seon (鄭歆)[16] do not paint immutable natural landscapes. These paintings are neither the representations of the natural

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[13] An Gyeon, *Early Summer*, 15C, ink and light colour on silk, 35.2 x 28.5 cm <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/An_Gyeon> [accessed 13 August 2018].

[14] This painting is held at Gansong Art Museum, Seoul, Korea. Image source: 임두빈(Doo Bin Im), *한권으로 보는 한국미술사 101 장면: 선사시대 암각화에서 현대미술까지* (Seoul: Garambooks, 1998), p. 203.

[15] An Gyeon (安堅) was a painter of the early period of Chosŏn dynasty (1392-1910) in Korea.

[16] Known by the pseudonym 'Kyomjae', meaning 'humble study', Jeong Seon (鄭歆, 1676-1759) was a prominent Korean landscape painter in 18th century Korea with his realistic style known as 'true-view' landscape paintings. His works include oriental ink and water paintings, such as 'Inwangjesaekdo (1751)', 'Geumgangjeondo (1734)', 'Ingokjeongsa (1742)', 'Bakyeon Fall (18th century)', as well as numerous true-view landscape paintings on the subject of Korea and the history of its culture. His landscape paintings reflect most of the geographical features of Korea. His style is realistic rather than abstract, and features portraits of nature and character sketches.
For a more in-depth exposition of the artist and his paintings, see 임두빈(Doo Bin Im), *한권으로 보는 한국미술사 101 장면: 선사시대 암각화에서 현대미술까지* (Seoul: Garambooks, 1998),

landscape of mid-summer nor visual significations to reveal the ideal of nature in Far East Asian philosophy. The master painters attempt to depict the continuous transfigurations between the visible and the invisible by circumventing distinctive contours and uncovering fragments of things. As the French Sinologist François Jullien analyses: 'This constant transition tends to obliterate exclusive determinations, that nothing as a result coincides completely with "itself," and that there is thus no self-identical entity to erect into an essence or from which to constitute an object'.[17] The disfiguration of the image by the technique of 'flung-ink (破墨)' serves to disrupt and distort the ordered space of representation in the paintings. Norman Bryson views this process in the following manner:

> As the ink is cast, it flies out of the enclosure or tunnel of the frame, and opens the images on to the field of material transformations that constitutes the universal surround. The flinging of ink marks the surrender of the fixed form of the image to the global configuration of force that subtends it. *Eidos* is scattered to the four winds. The image is made to float on the forces which lie outside the frame; it is *thrown*, as one throws dice. What breaks *into* the image is the rest of the universe, everything outside of the frame.[18]

What these paintings implicate is the emptiness[19] and 'the real' of nature where everything has no particularly determined form; it is tentative and ever changing, in the realm of the 'in-between', like clouds[20] in the sky. It continues changing its shapes and keeps floating

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p. 197-204. Also details of the paintings can be found on the Gyeom Jae Jeongseon Art Museum website at: http://gjjs.or.kr.

[17] François Jullien, ibid., p. 3.

[18] Norman Bryson, 'The Gaze in the Expanded Field', in *Vision and Visuality: Discussions in Contemporary Culture #2*, ed. by Hal Foster (Seattle: Bay Press, 1999), p. 103.

[19] As Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki writes:
'In one Emptiness the two are not distinguished,
And each contains in itself all the ten thousand things;
When no discrimination is made between this and that.
How can a one-sided and prejudiced view arise?'
Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki, *Manual of Zen Buddhism* (New York: Grove Press, 1960), p. 78-79.

[20] Stuart Sim states on clouds in the work of Jean- François Lyotard: 'Clouds constitute one of the more poetic images in Lyotard's work, used by him to symbolise the nature of thought: "Thoughts are not the fruits of the earth. They are not registered by areas, except out of human commodity. Thoughts are clouds. The periphery of thoughts is as immeasurable as the fractal lines of Benoit

and wandering without a definite destination or border as a ghost (a figure without index). Figuration-disfiguration-configuration. Composing-decomposing-recomposing. The moment that the individuation of form is dismantled is the arrival of something, or, in the words of Maurice Blanchot, the 'not taking place in the form of any object that exists'.[21] Does this not remind us of the river of Heraclitus?[22] What is the identity of the image that generates uncertainty and ambiguity within the very edge of the framing device that enables a naming of the image to occur?

子曰: "書不盡言，言不盡意. 然則聖人之意，其不可見乎二."

子曰:"聖人立象以盡意，設卦以盡情偽，繫辭焉以盡其言，變而通之以盡利，鼓之舞之以盡神."[23]

The Master said: - 'The written characters are not the full exponent of speech, and speech is not the full expression of ideas; - is it impossible then to discover the ideas of the sages?'

The Master said: - 'The sages made their image[24] to set forth fully their ideas; appointed (all) the diagrams to show fully the truth and falsehood (of things); appended their explanations to give the full expression of their words; and changed (the various lines) and made general the method of doing so, to exhibit fully what was advantageous. They (thus) stimulated (the people) as by drums and

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Mandelbrot [...] Thoughts never stop changing their location one with the other". The image captures the amorphous quality of thought, its lack of precise boundaries, that Lyotard considers to be necessary to philosophy, indicative of the flexibility he feels philosophers should exhibit in their approach to the world and its problem. Everything is to be considered as in a state of flux, with the possibility of new states of affairs always tantalisingly present'. Stuart Sim,'Clouds', in *Lyotard Dictionary* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), p. 36.

[21] Maurice Blanchot, *The Space of Literature*, trans. by Ann Smock (Lincoln, Neb.; London: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), p. 42.

[22] 'SO. Heraclitus says, I think, that "All things move and nothing is at rest [πάντα χωρεῖ καὶ οὐδὲν μένει]", and, likening the beings to the stream of a river, that "You could not step twice into the same river [δὶς ἐς τὸν αὐτὸν ποταμὸν οὐκ ἂν ἐμβαίης]".

HE. It is so. (401e3–402a11)'.

Francesco Ademollo, *The Cratylus of Plato: A Commentary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 203.

[23] *Xi Ci I 系辭上* (known as *The Great Commentary I*), which is a Han-dynasty supplement to the *Yi jing 易經* (*I Ching* known as *Book of Changes*), trans. James Legge, <http://ctext.org/book-of-changes/xi-ci-shang/ens?filter=488925> [accessed 13 August 2018].

[24] I changed the word 'emblematic symbols' to 'image' because compared to the term 'image', 'emblematic' suggests a stronger meaning of the representational.

dances, thereby completely developing the spirit-like (character of the Yi).'

In the chapter entitled 'Distinct Oscillations', in *The Ground of the Image*, Nancy states that 'the difference between text and image is flagrant. The text presents significations, the image presents forms'.[25] Nancy defines the word *imago* as designating 'the effigy of the absent, the dead, and, more precisely, the ancestors […] it images absence. It does not represent this absence, it does not evoke it, it does not symbolize it, even though all this is there too. But, essentially, it presents absence. The absent are not there, they are not "in images." But they are imaged: their absence is woven into our presence. The empty place of the absent as a place that is not empty: that is the image'.[26] When Jean-Paul Sartre commented on the work of Alberto Giacometti, he posed a question: 'How to paint emptiness?'[27] Indeed, this preoccupation with emptiness and nothingness appears as a major preoccupation in such a philosophical lineage, outside of Buddhist philosophy, and yet in certain moments it does indeed seem to invite response because in both frameworks there is the obvious orientation towards a non-dual understanding of reality.

The painting *A Cliff Gate in Tongchon (通川門巖)* by Jeong Seon (鄭歚) is imbued with the suggestion of absence. The aerated blank above the wavy lines, without any particular form of drawn object, can be a place of either diffuse clouds floating, the wind blowing from all directions, a resurfacing path that the sea covers up, or a spiritual destination the mind aspires to. With few elusive lines freely drawn, the ambiguous, vacant space resonates with something intangible and immaterial in which unrivalled immanent potentiality may become manifest. A space is no longer measurable and divisible because it exists as invisible motion without a concrete body. The image presents (its) being as absence, grasping our gaze or attention, holding us captive. The fascination of absence that can be understood as a form of presence of the invisible is somewhat similar to the 'atmosphere' of a certain space. So, then, is it possible to understand the image as

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[25] Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Ground of the Image*, trans. by Jeff Fort (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005), p. 63.
[26] Jean-Luc Nancy, ibid., p. 67-68.
[27] Gay Watson, *A Philosophy of Emptiness* (London: Reaktion Books, 2014), p. 142.

'atmosphere'? When we are situated in unfamiliar spaces, it is often that the normal rhythm of our emotional states immediately becomes ruptured and we are seized with restless intensity, even though the space is empty. I recall a memorable experience in the Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris as a good example of the intensity of indefinability issuing from the pervading emptiness. In the midst of the space, I felt the unusual atmosphere that was created by this elusive interior that was so difficult to describe or in turn to comprehend. Within this atmosphere of mystery I definitely noticed that something was floating in the aerated space, a paradoxical something because in essence it could only be described as invisible, unknown or un-nameable. Yet, as I stood pondering this I was certainly seized by something intense that captivated me. To figure out what this uncertain thing was, I formulated a list of words and linguistic expressions that could formulate the essence of the experience encountered in this place. Although I suspected that my playing with the words could immure me in the realm of discourse or representation, I nonetheless attempted it. Within the process of signifying, I was not certain that the use of metaphor and metonymy, or negation (neither-nor) would account for this mysterious event and, with this, allow me to approach the truth of something uncertain and invisible. After several trials, I realized that it was impossible to present this through the premeditated order of thought and content of objective significations. In fact, signification disturbs the appearance of the presence of the truth of 'atmosphere'. My experience of 'atmosphere' in the church was closely aligned with the encounter with Stillman. It was the fact that there was no logical evidence of its existence, but an immeasurable, vigorous force, that immediately fascinated me. The power of indefinability led to the loss of the governing self, and the distinct border between consciousness and unconsciousness determined by logic was immediately collapsed and distilled when the presence of the absent occurred in front of me.

Could the fascination of ambiguity be the essence of 'atmosphere'? Regarding the notion of truth and essence, Gilles Deleuze emphasises: 'The truth has no need to be spoken in order to be manifest, and that it can be without waiting for words and without even taking them into account'.[28] 'Beyond designated objects, beyond intelligible and formulated

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[28] Gilles Deleuze, *Proust and Signs*, trans. by Richard Howard (London: Continuum, 2008), p. 20.

truths, but also beyond subjective chains of association and resurrections by resemblance or contiguity, are the essences that are alogical or supralogical. They transcend the states of subjectivity no less than the properties of the object'.[29] Back to my experience of the impalpable images and sensations derived from the peculiar atmosphere in the church, I awakened to the fact that in the moment that I started to speak to formulate it, the atmosphere that I attempted to grasp within a form of language started to slip and vanish. The ineluctable violence of the atmosphere unfastening the habitual self became broken, scattered – fragile and unapproachable traces. As a result, all that remains of the spoken 'atmosphere' is an unsubstantial trace without the essence of its existence. From this vantage point, we can see that it is impossible to present the essence of 'atmosphere' within the enclosed boundary of signification because it is located outside, or beyond, the realm of language. Thus, our trials within the structure of language can be understood as nothing other than representation through a method of resemblance, which is merely used as a substitute for the astounding experience to communicate and signify, rather than presenting the truth of the 'atmosphere' itself that intensified the rupture of my psychological state in the space. The presence of 'atmosphere' only appears when it can unhook itself from the system of significance and interpretation; otherwise, it immediately disappears and conceals its presence. Similarly, the image that is presented as an absence in the painting does not refer to nothingness, but rather its animating aerated emptiness implies the infinity where two separable modes – presence and absence – condense and merge into one another, beginning to form a single manifestation or cohesive being. It takes itself away within the realm of a legitimate structure governed by dualism, and then unveils itself in the sphere of the non-representational or anti-representational. It appears as a form of the inexhaustible, subtle, non-diacritical, non-ordered and non-signified, which is beyond the form of representation. The aspect of its infinity 'opening out *omnidirectionally* on to the universal surround'[30] embraces the seed of potential within itself for a different becoming. And then, how does the manifestation of the potentiality retained in the seed occur?

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[29] Gilles Deleuze, ibid., p. 25.
[30] Norman Bryson, 'The Gaze in the Expanded Field', in *Vision and Visuality: Discussions in Contemporary Culture #2*, ed. by Hal Foster (Seattle: Bay Press, 1999), p. 100.
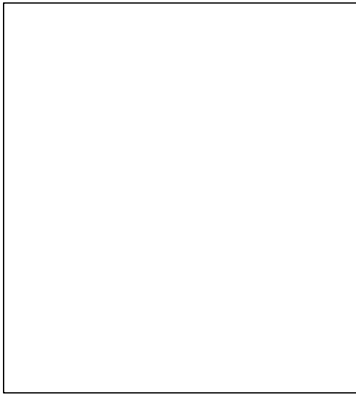
Figure 5:[31]

When I was young I was taken into the deep forest where it was overgrown with grass and trees. There was only an air of silent tranquillity and solitude filling every corner of the forest. It seemed that everything in the forest was at a standstill, frozen as if all living things held their breath or were dead. While wandering in the middle of nowhere, I discovered what looked like dried fruit left from a season that was already past. I immediately sensed that there was something going on inside and that I should not touch it, although I was not sure whether it was alive or not. The crust, suspended from a silk pad attached to a branch, did not show any signs of movement, nor did it eat anything to maintain its bodily functions for weeks. It seemed that all metabolic activities needed for its survival had completely ceased. I wondered whether I could still consider the immobilisation of this, a pupa, as part of a mobile continuum or not. Recently my curiosity about the pupa that came to a standstill was unlocked by a new technique called micro-CT that makes it possible to observe the process of metamorphosis within the chrysalis with a three-dimensional, virtual model. By scanning its interior using micro-CT, changes and development of the structures of specific organs such as the guts and tracheae – the network of breathing tubes generated from the beginning to the end of the pupation, can be tracked. This silent, immobilized pupa is a living body populated by all the potentialities still dormant within its structure. It is both shocking and marvellous at the same time. Through such advanced technology, it is possible to observe that pupation is not the process of

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[31] Bill Ivy, *Monarch Butterfly Chrysalis*, photograph
<https://thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/monarch-butterfly/> [accessed 31 August 2018].

decomposing, but rather the opposite of decaying; it is in a state of 'becoming'.[32] The 'in-between' state in the sealed body is required to reach the last phase, an imago, a beautiful flying creature. However, without this scientific development we cannot presuppose how the potentials inherent in the interior will appear, because it is in the form of waves, rhythms or pulsations manifesting as continuous and autonomous movement. As a body of immanence that consists of fluids, patterns of energy and pure intensities of becoming, it is undifferentiated. It is neither a larva nor an imago and cannot be defined by the sheer frozen stasis of either the virtual or the actual. It is in a continual exchange at the point of indiscernibility,[33] existing as objective potential, absolutely quiet and immobile on the outside, but performing vigorous gestures invisibly on the inside, becoming heterogeneous. It never ceases its process of metamorphosis although it shows itself in a state of standstill, which derives from a paradox of perception.

Like the butterfly pupa enclosed in the chrysalis, the becoming-image located 'in-between' does not designate its own determined border or form. The paintings by An Gyeon (安堅) and Jeong Seon (鄭敾) (above) are portrayals of the withdrawal from constructing certain figural forms. The images in their paintings deny occupying a single position or location, enveloping many forms of possibilities and accommodating the opposite ends of absence-presence, subject-object[34] and signifier-signified, going beyond

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[32] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari have this to say about the notion of 'becoming': 'Becoming is a rhizome, not a classificatory or genealogical tree. Becoming is certainly not imitating, or identifying with something; neither is it regressing-progressing; neither is it corresponding, establishing corresponding relations; neither is it producing, producing a filiation or producing through filiation. Becoming is a verb with a consistency all its own; it does not reduce to, or lead back to, "appearing", "being", "equaling", or "producing".' Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. and foreword by Brian Massumi (Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), p. 239.

[33] Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema II: The Time-Image*, trans. by Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta (London; New Delhi; New York; Sydney: Bloomsbury, 2013), p. 72.

[34] The introduction of the butterfly pupa and the paintings by An Gyeon (安堅) and Jeong Seon (鄭敾) aims to dismantle the Cartesian tradition of subject-object dualism. In *On a General Theory of Interpretation: The Betti-Gadamer Dispute in Legal Hermeneutics*, George Wright explains the significantly different perspectives of Descartes and Heidegger on the relationship between subject and object. He states that the modern idea of Descartes, founder of the philosophy of subjectivity, attempts to understand the world based on epistemological relation, the diagram of subject and object. Descartes' thought was challenged by Martin Heidegger. Heidegger criticizes Descartes' worldview for being unable to make humans compatible with the world. He also criticizes 'the thinking man' of Descartes – that man is subjective understanding in essence. Accordingly,

dualistic thought and becoming 'Oneness'. The becoming-image cannot be interpreted or signified because it keeps undoing the boundary between different realms like a ghost, Stillman. The essential qualities of the image, as the denial of the stabilization of the form or discourse[35] depending on the language and logos, are thoroughly outlined in the idea of 'Tao (道)' by Lao Tzu and the experiences of 'Satori (悟道)' through the Koan[36] in Zen-Buddhism[37]. What is 'Tao(道)'? In his book *Tao Te Ching*, Lao Tzu states: 'the Tao that can be told is not the eternal Tao; The name that can be named is not the eternal name'.[38] In this sense, 'Tao' cannot be transmitted in words or explained in writing or measured by reason. He advances in Chapter 14 that:

> Look, it cannot be seen—it is beyond form.

Heidegger defines Humans as 'Dasein' with an essence of 'existence', understanding Being of self along with an understanding of Being of others all the time. Heidegger sought to understand the world through characteristics of Dasein. Heidegger's 'worldhood' is an ontological concept, and stands for the structure of one of the constitutive items of 'Being-in-the-world'. Heidegger explains through 'Being-in-the-world' that the relation of the world and Dasein is no longer explained by a subject-object relation. Humans defined as 'Being-in-the-world' exist already in the world. Humans open to the whole world in essence. The world cannot exist in isolation from the human being. Accordingly, Heidegger's viewpoint on the world is considered as a correlation of the total entity within-the-world and Dasein. 'Being-in-the-world' opens a new door of understanding of world in which the opposing relation of subject and object is overcome.

For a more in-depth study on different perspectives of Descartes and Heidegger on the relationship between subject and object, see George Wright, 'On a General Theory of Interpretation: The Betti-Gadamer Dispute in Legal Hermeneutics', in *Gadamer and Law*, ed. by Francis J. Mootz III (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), p. 303-306.

[35] 'Discourse' is the process of representation by concepts. In turn, this facilitates the organization of objects of knowledge as a system of concepts or units of meaning. Thus, discourse becomes a spatial arrangement upon objects that issues a structure of meaning. Against the rule of discourse in textual space is the figural. The figural opens discourse to the order of difference or heterogeneity that cannot be subsumed within the rule of representation. Therefore, the figural marks a resistance to the idea that an object is contained within a system of signification.

[36] The purpose of a Zen Koan is to break the everyday patterns of thinking, and with this the habitual process of rationalization.

[37] 'Chan (禅)', from Sanskrit *dhyāna* (meaning 'meditation' or 'meditative state') is a tradition of Mahāyāna Buddhism. It developed in China from the 6th century, becoming dominant during the Tang and Song dynasties. After the Yuan dynasty, Chan Buddhism declined but it spread south to Vietnam as 'Thiền' and north to Korea as 'Seon', and, in the 13th century, east to Japan as 'Zen'. See Peter D. Hershock, *Chan Buddhism: Dimensions of Asian Spirituality* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005).

[38] Lao Tzu, 'Chapter 1', in *Lao Tzu's Tao-Teh-Ching: A Parallel Translation Collection*, trans. by Gia-fu Feng and Jane English, compiled by B. Boisen (Boston, Mass.: GNOMAD Publishing, 1996), unpaginated.

Listen, it cannot be heard—it is beyond sound.

Grasp, it cannot be held—it is intangible.

These three are indefinable;

Therefore they are joined as one.

From above it is not bright;

From below it is not dark:

An unbroken thread beyond description.

It returns to nothingness.

The form of the formless,

The image of the imageless.

It is called indefinable and beyond imagination.

Stand before it and there is no beginning.

Follow it and there is no end. […].[39]

The space of 'Tao (道)' is the realm of the formless, serene, solitary, un-nameable, infinite and eternally present, where all things flow through inside and outside and between presence and absence, and become reincarnated in the origin of all things. The radical thought of Lao Tzu refuses the totalized denotation in language and displaces the usual procedure of knowing and recognition through 'Tao (道)'.

Similarly, the impossibility of representation or conceptualization can be understood through an enigmatic question of the Japanese 18th-century painter-Zen monk, Hakuin Ekaku: 'You know the sound of two hands? Tell me, what is the sound of one hand clapping?' D.T. Suzuki introduced the Koan to the West and it was obvious that it also introduced fracture to dominant philosophical sense of Western philosophy based on rational and dualistic model of thought.[40] This question cannot be comprehended by logic. In the domain of the rational, a sound of silence (or soundless sound) is impossible; so it

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[39] Lao Tzu, 'Chapter 14', in *Lao Tzu's Tao-Teh-Ching: A Parallel Translation Collection*, trans. by Gia-fu Feng and Jane English, compiled by B. Boisen (Boston, Mass.: GNOMAD Publishing, 1996), unpaginated.

[40] Oliver Leaman, *Encyclopedia of Asian Philosophy*, ed. by Oliver Leaman (New York: Routledge, 2001), p. 287.

can be understood as being rather meaningless, obscure, and even inane. In fact, pondering on this Koan in order to formulate an answer calls for a paradigm shift out of a rigid frame of conceptual identification (concept). The concept intrudes on thought that is not yet constrained into the frame of discourse, causing thought not to proliferate through all the potential manifestations. Since Plato, we have been largely shackled by the notion of a subject-object dualism, designating the boundary that we are in here as a subject and the world out there as an object. In fact, we have been dominated by the paradigm of these 'two hands', the ordinary standpoint − the subject and the object. Hakuin's 'the sound of one hand clapping' demands a radical paradigm shift, providing a breakthrough to supersede subject-object dualism and with this an approach to representation predicated on it. The understanding of the Koan triggers a peculiar spiritual tension, an unanticipated insight called 'Satori (悟道)' that forces the mind to shatter the trap of reason at 'the time of now ('Now-Time [Jetztzeit]')'. [41] The moment of 'Satori (悟道)' coincides with something being taken apart (rupture) but also stitched together again (suture) as a folded unity, becoming a new entity. It is an immediate, intuitive, spontaneous, non-verbal experience. The alternating rhythm of rupture and suture links to the experiences of montage in film. The filmmaker Jean-Luc Godard states, 'montage in cinema is an act of condensation whereby different images and different temporalities are combined in ways that produce unexpected encounters. Montage is the figuring of surprise'. [42] Discussing Godard's montage, Deleuze accounts for it in detail in 'Thought and Cinema':

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[41] 'It is "a present which is not a transition, but in which time stands still and has come to stop"; "a Messianic cessation of happening" providing "a revolutionary chance in the fight for the oppressed". It is the "moment of awakening", which rescues history for the present and "ignites the explosives that lie in the past". "Now-time" is neither wholly inside nor wholly outside of history, but faces both ways at once. It is neither the time of the blankly identical Aristotelian or cosmological instant, taken by historicism as the ontological ground of its chronologies and interpreted by Heidegger as the basis of the "ordinary conception of time"; nor even the time of the extended, durational, phenomenological present described by Husserl, of which the idea of modernity is a historical form. Neither instant nor durational present, Benjamin's now-time histories the structure of instantaneity in order to produce it as interruption that connects to the entire history of humanity. The present is given a dialectical structure, as both durational extension and point-like source performing a two-fold mediation of nature (instant) with history (present), and of this historical present (modernity) with history as a whole (eternity). Neither instant nor present, Benjamin's "Now-time" is "the present as now-time" and as such a historically specific now'. Jonathan Miles, *Walter Benjamin*, Royal College of Art Lecture Series, London (2015).
[42] *Histoire(s) du Cinema*, dir. by Jean-Luc Godard (Gaumont, 1998).

In Godard's method, it is not question of association. Given one image, another image has to be chosen which will induce an interstice *between* the two. This is not an operation of association, but of differentiation: given one potential, another one has to be chosen, not any whatever, but in such a way that a difference of potential is established between the two, which will be productive of a third or of something new. […] The fissure has become primary, and as such grows larger. […] It is the method of BETWEEN, 'between two images', which does away with all cinema of the One. It is the method of AND, 'this and then that', which does away with all the cinema of Being = is. […] The whole undergoes a mutation, because it has ceased to be the One-Being, in order to become the constitutive 'and' of things, the constitutive between-two of images. The whole thus merge with that Blanchot calls the force of 'dispersal of the Outside', or 'the vertigo of spacing' […] in Godard, the interaction of two images engenders or traces a frontier which belongs to neither one nor the other.[43]

The shock generated by the simultaneous process of rupture and suture at the moment of disenchantment is the fundamental force of becoming 'Oneness'. On this point, a further important consideration is that such a condition of 'Oneness' does not stand for a single body or a synthesis of two different things but rather signifies the new realm of another potentiality in which being and non-being and body and mind can be no longer split. The collision and progression emerging from fragments of independently disjunctive images produce the potentiality of multiple new meanings, which is also found in Sergei Eisenstein's dialectical montage theory and 'Haiku'[44] poetry in Japanese literature. A pioneer in the theory and practice of montage in film, Eisenstein states that 'montage is conflict',[45] which emphasizes its specific feature as consisting of 'the fact *that two film*

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[43] Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema II: The Time-Image*, trans. by Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta (London; New Delhi; New York; Sydney: Bloomsbury, 2013), p. 185-186.

[44] 'Haiku' poetry, as a traditional Japanese literary genre, was a significant influence on the development of Eisenstein's montage theory.

[45] Sergei M. Eisenstein, 'The Cinematographic Principle and the Ideogram', in *Film Form: Essays in Film Theory*, ed. and trans. by Jay Leyda (New York and London: A Harvest / HBJ Book, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1977, 1949), p. 38.

pieces of any kind, placed together, inevitably combine into a new concept, a new quality, arising out of that juxtaposition'.[46] He claims that 'film communicate[s] by a succession of juxtaposed images that d[o] not need to have a linear, narrative or consequential relationship between them'[47] and 'shot "A" followed by shot "B" created a new meaning "C" in the mind of the viewer'.[48] This construction of dialectical montage in his films deals with the disparity and contradiction that interfere with the continuity of experience, producing an indiscernible moment of psychological shock, conveying the 'sensation of intermittency or jump that remains in any grasp we have of life and the tendency of what we see and what we feel to resist any prolonged order or linear sequence in time'.[49] Thus, the potentiality of multiplicity derived from juxtaposed shots forces viewers to create a space to unfurl the immanent image on their mind. In one of Eisenstein's most famous film essays 'The Cinematographic Principle and the Ideogram', he notes the significant influence of a traditional Japanese poetic form, 'Haiku', on the development of his notion of montage. Haiku poetry, consisting of ideograms, works in a similar manner to dialectical montage in film. Eisenstein likens montage to Haiku, 'the most laconic form of poetry'[50] and defines it as 'the concentrated impressionist sketch'.[51]

A solitary
crow on a bare branch -
autumn evening[52]

Following the example of Haiku by Japanese Haiku master Basho, Eisenstein elaborates: 'The simple combination of two or three details of a material kind yields a perfectly

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[46] Sergei M. Eisenstein, 'Word and Image', in *The Film Sense*, ed. and trans. by Jay Leyda (London: Faber and Faber, 1986), p. 14.
[47] Richard Howells, *Visual Culture* (Oxford: Polity, 2003), p. 242.
[48] Richard Howells, ibid.
[49] Roger Shattuck, 'Proust's Binoculars, 1964', in *Memory*, ed. by Ian Farr (London: Whitechapel Gallery; Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2012), p. 34.
[50] Sergei M. Eisenstein, 'The Cinematographic Principle and the Ideogram', in *Film Form: Essays in Film Theory*, ed. and trans. by Jay Leyda (New York and London: A Harvest / HBJ Book, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1977, 1949), p. 30.
[51] Sergei M. Eisenstein, ibid., p. 31.
[52] Basho Matsuo, *The Sound of Water: Haiku by Basho, Busson, Issa and Other Poets*, trans. by Sam Hamill (Boston, Mass.; London: Shambhala, 2000), p. 4.

finished representation of another kind – [the] psychological'.[53] Related to the implication of montage phrases in the Haiku, Dudley Andrew also notes that: 'Each phrase can be seen as an attraction, and the combination of phrases is montage'.[54] The juxtaposition of conflicting images from line to line in the Haiku creates infinite polysemous interpretations and unpredictable emotional quality, which directs readers to explore the poetics of sensory dynamics beyond the unitary space of denotative aspects in language. Basho's Haiku poetry condenses and coagulates the qualities of scent, sound, sight and tactile sensations with the aspect of time into minimal words. The interrelations between perception, emotion and sensation, where the effect of montage occurs, result in the 'experience of synaesthesia or multisensory experience'.[55] The friction of two conflicting images in the Japanese poem triggers the merging of different senses to be experienced in the mind. Here is another example of how the presence of the interwoven sensations as 'Oneness' occurs, and how it causes different ripples of emotions to occur in the mind:

> As the bell tone fades,
> Blossom scents take up the ringing,
> Evening shade.[56]

In this poem by Basho, the sound of a ringing bell gradually blends with the fragrance of flowers, which in turn merges with the visual image of the flow of temporality. The magnificent combination of three different sensory modalities within the process of synaesthesia, in fact, provides literary pleasure for readers in appreciating the beauty of linguistic expressions sophisticatedly describing the landscapes of a late afternoon in spring. This can be the reason that we enjoy reading literature. However, within this montage effect generated between disjunctive sensations, what I am particularly intrigued by is a space for

[53] Sergei M. Eisenstein, 'The Cinematographic Principle and the Ideogram', in *Film Form: Essays in Film Theory*, ed. and trans. by Jay Leyda (New York and London: A Harvest / HBJ Book, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1977, 1949), p. 32.

[54] J. Dudley Andrew, *The Major Film Theories: An Introduction* (London; New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 52.

[55] Steve Odin, 'The Influence of Traditional Japanese Aesthetics on the Film Theory of Sergei Eisenstein', *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, vol. 23, no. 2 (1989), 69-81, p. 79.

[56] John E Harrison, *Synaesthesia: The Strangest Thing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 134.

the subtle interludes of the image when an inherent quality of virtual elements in the Haiku suddenly appears within the transformational process of the rhythmical dynamics of sensations. The image at the moment of the fissure is neither thoroughly virtual nor actualised yet so the image is located in the interval or 'in-between' within the process of being made actual. The becoming-image releases its presence with a tangible or visible form, but it is not stuck in a state of being explicit so it immediately escapes and dis-adheres from its state, remaining evanescent, not constrained within a permanent determined form. Thus, it can be understood that its sudden disappearance does not refer to non-existence (or nothingness) at the moment, but rather it is present whilst being inhabited by absence. So it is an image of absence within a form of (silent) presence. Due to its attributes of ambivalence and impermanence, we are able to encounter it only through the unpredicted moment of discontinuity, rupture and disintegration, since the image appears as a flash within the form of the psychological shock or impulsive tension, which breaks up the process of habitual thinking. In other words, where synaesthetic montage occurs in literature or film, a void opens the unbounded possibilities of sensations, temporality and spatiality beyond the totalised denotation in language. A search for sudden awakening, enlightenment and insight, 'Tao (道)' and 'Satori (悟道)' can be actualised at the moment of the void appearing (a paradoxical event that indicates disappearance in the same instance). 'Tao (道)' and 'Satori (悟道)' are located outside of the net of language, promptly rupturing a succession of familiar and habitual thinking processes, and therefore impossible to conceptualize. The moment that 'Tao (道)' and 'Satori (悟道)' appear, something flashes up at that instant, 'flash-like',[57] and provides a unanticipated explosion in the mind, which is similar to the ways in which we confront the image. The image becomes a place where something interrupts or breaks, a moment of *caesura*[58] that enables a new departure to

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[57] Walter Benjamin writes his concept of 'dialectical image' as 'an image that emerges suddenly, in a flash ([N9.7] The Arcades Project)', which can be understood as a form of sudden awakening, uncanniness and insight (as 'Satori (悟道)') at the unpredicted moment of discontinuity and disintegration.
[58] Friedrich Hölderlin's notion of *caesura* indicates the disruption of the structure of a work and it is this disruption that enables each part to be considered in its own terms. Within the context of tragedy this effect is heightened. In Hölderlin, *caesura* suspends the unfolding structure of the narrative and thereby reveals its finite character, indicating then rupturing with the divine sphere. It is this that indicates tragedy because it points to the impossibility of union.

occur. In this moment of emptiness,[59] the 'I' is fractured by the image, which allows the experiencing of the presence of absolute liberation. The restless and intense psychological fracture or a fault within the fractured 'I' unveils a space of sensation, in which restraint by idea or reason is not present. Sensation occurs at the threshold of sense before cognitive processes take place, and give rise to structures of meaning. Thus sensation is prior to meaning. In the case of looking at a painting, what strikes one happens before the act of naming or designation starts to occur or that which vibrates at the threshold of form. With an unexpected impulsive tension, the image manifests itself as intensity, shock and violence, which refuses to be signified and recognized with the law of concept. It exists before or beyond the ordered space of the concept, or before interpretation or signification.

Hölderlin articulates this principle in the following manner: 'In the rhythmic sequence of representations, in which the tragic transport exhibits itself, that which one calls the *caesura* in poetic metre, the pure word, the counter-rhythmic interruption, is necessary; precisely in order to counter the raging change of representations at its summit so that it is no longer the change of representations but representation itself which appears'. Friedrich Hölderlin, 'Remarks on Oedipus (1803)', in *Classic and Romantic German Aesthetics*, ed. by J.M.Bernstein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 195.

[59] Such a condition can link to the notion of 'il y a'. This is a term employed by both Emmanuel Levinas and Maurice Blanchot. In his book, *Maurice Blanchot: The Refusal of Philosophy*, Gerald L. Bruns notes that, 'the il y a is not anything, but neither is it nothing: it is being from which everything has been withdrawn: being without substance and without light'. See Gerald L. Bruns, *Maurice Blanchot: The Refusal of Philosophy* (Baltimore, Md.; London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), p. 59. It relates to a state that is 'interminable, incessant night of insomnia'. 'Insomnia is the experience of impossibility, not just the impossibility of sleep but the impossibility of the day'. See Gerald L. Bruns, ibid., p. 59. It has a quality of a presence that lurks or is like an incessant murmur that solicits the feeling of horror in which the subject is stripped of subjectivity. See Gerald L. Bruns, ibid., p. 58-61.

"You never look at me from the place from which I see you.
Conversely, what I look at is never what I wish to see…"[60]

[60] Jacques Lacan, *Reading Seminar XI: Lacan's Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis: The Paris Seminars in English*, ed. by Richard Feldstein, Bruce Fink and Maire Jaanus (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), p. 202.

Twilight

I know that you are not sleeping.
I can see that you are pretending not to see me….
But, you are seeing me with the closed eyes and you are aware that I am here with you.

                                        I am aware of the gaze. I cannot resist it.
                              I can sense, something or someone is here, looking at me.
                                        It is frightening. I don't want to open my eyes.
                                        We see each other as invisible gaze.

One day, I was sitting alone on a bench and having a cup of coffee in the afternoon. It was an ordinary peaceful, sunny day in the late autumn. Under the deep blue sky, such a quiet atmosphere allowed all of my senses to be sensitive. The body and mind in turn became responsive to even silent movements and the merest noise. I could hear the murmur of birds, although it was very light, and my sensory organs in turn started to concentrate in order to find where it came from. I looked around, but the birds could not be seen in my visual field. I became more curious about this implausible and inexplicable event and stood up from my seat and started to look for the birds and the places where the sound was coming from. There were also other things around me that generated distinct gestures but they could not be mysterious enough to avert my eyes from searching for the birds.

I asked myself, 'Am I looking for a bird or its sound?' There was the sound but there was no subject creating the sound. Such a paradoxical incident could not be explained with any logical thoughts. How is it possible to understand the coexistence of the presence of the birds' sound and the absence of the birds? The gap occurring between 'there is' and 'there is not' invites the question of how we could comprehend the process of a metamorphosis or the state of in-between. The singing birds were in fact hiding between leaves and branches of a short old tree behind a wall overgrown with vines. The tree was a hub of murmuring, although the birds were still unseen. So then, what is singing the songs? Is it possible for us to consider that the singing is by trees, birds, or both? In everyday life, I often come across such in-between situations in which things cannot be defined and classified as a singular identity by means of the either/or, but rather their identities can be understood by that of the neither/nor. I am thinking that the tree was in the process of incorporeal transformation to become a new species of bird. The tree was neither a tree nor a bird, but a becoming–a bird or becoming–uncategorisable. Contiguously, the birds also went through the process of becoming in turn tree-like. They presented themselves without a specific form of representation, seemingly invisible with the naked eye. The sound was produced from the confluence of the tree and birds, the interactions between such different forces. The synthesis of the intensity of the forces generated the dynamics of the transformation. On that day, what I observed could be 'A tree–a bird'?

"The sky is the window of his pavilion.

Poetry and wine, how can they be joined together?

As soon as we catch a piece of the visible

The invisible fills the breast!" [61]

A poem about empty space from Choe Rip[62]

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[61] Burglind Jungmann, *Pathways to Korean Culture: Paintings of The Joseon Dynasty, 1392-1910* (London: Reaktion Books, 2014), p. 84.

[62] Choe Rip (崔岦/ sobriquet Gani, 1539 ~ 1612) was a literati of the Chosŏn dynasty.
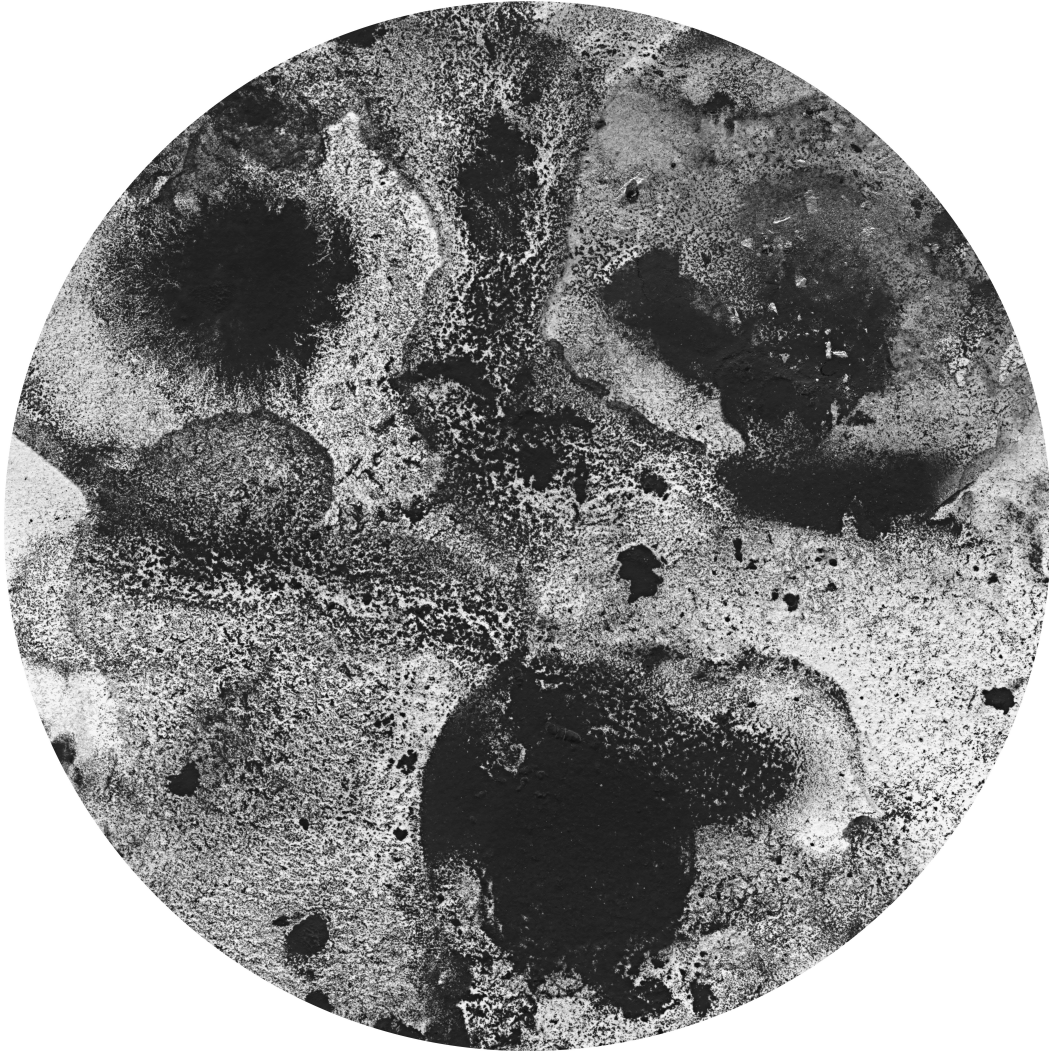
Figure 6:
Kyung Hwa Shon
Void
2016
Ink, graphite powder on paper
15 cm (in diameter)
Photo by the artist

"What I am trying to convey to you is more mysterious; it is entwined in the very roots of being, in the impalpable source of sensation"[63]

−J. Gasquet, *Cézanne*

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[63] Joachim Gasquet, *Cézanne,* cited in Maurice Merleau-Ponty in 'Eye and Mind'.
See Maurice Merleau-Ponty, 'Eye and Mind', in *The Primacy of Perception: And Other Essays on Phenomenological Psychology, The Philosophy of Art, History and Politics*, trans. by Carleton Dallery, ed. with an introduction by James M. Edie (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1964), p. 159.

The Fear of Incorporeality and Invisibility

On visiting the remains of Pompeii we may imagine a suspension in time. A city cast as a ruin. Something in these ruins looks back, but what is it that looks back? Is it a trace of the dead or even an image of time that was lived coming to an abrupt end? What then is the ground on which we are standing? A place indicating a time that was or a void of yet another mode of time that fails to gather itself. Thus we are left to wander within our time whilst referring to a lost image of time as if cast as a photograph-like image hovering in the in-between of the imaginary and the real. Is it possible to see or comprehend the absence of time, or even to prove a figure for this? Is this the function of ghosts, to mediate a gap that empties out the sense given by continuous time? If a city is cast as a graveyard, how can we not be left to wander free from the trail of ghosts? We may only be left to wonder if this trail derives from the remote outside or obscure regions of interiority. The ghost may even destroy such a binary opposition because ghosts drift through matter and dispel time, rendering space void of content. On one side Pompeii is a place. Tens of thousands visit each year as if to confirm this. It is also an image of something like an impossible figure that is a meeting point between what was and what may become: a strange place signifying the standstill of history but also the oblivion of it. How can a place be both a preservation of an instance and an obliteration of continuity? A ruin is perfectly congruent for the mind because it presents an image of the passing of time. Pompeii is not the presentation of such a passage but rather the possibility of time's interruption, like a human shadow on a wall in Hiroshima. The mind baulks at such traces because although it might grasp its own inevitable death, it nonetheless finds it difficult to comprehend the cold indifference of the extinction of humanity.

I do not know why the empty space between the tephra beds envisions the day of the unanticipated eruption of Italy's Mount Vesuvius by earthquake in my mind. I am suddenly overwhelmed by the fear of approaching flames, the sound of piercing shrieks, the poisonous smell of sulphur, the rain of pumice stones, and one's tragic demise under the dark shadow of death. The weight of the fright that I encounter in the present can be the same as the layers of time embedded in the volcanic ash where living creatures have been buried for more than 1600 years. Such a long period of time enables them to disappear

from the ash layers with no remnants remaining Here, we see only the soundless tragic holes the body lay in. The space of the body becomes absent and empty. The evaporated cadaver perturbs more and more, forcing me to face the moment of unexpected death in 79AD in the present. The void, where the incorporeal sleeps the eternal slumber and may never awaken, evokes the image of one's last moment alive in my mind − gruesome details of facial features, clothing, and the position the unknown person was in – it is as vivid as if it is happening now. The negative imprint of the incorporeal amplifies the intensity of the pain, horror and anxiety placed in the unconscious, which causes our body and mind to shudder and rupture. The forlorn cavity incarcerates us in the fright of the death. No one is able to experience death while alive, so then why we are afraid of death, and feel a sense of eeriness from emptiness? Where does the strange eeriness and sudden anxiety come from? Is it derived from the violence of uncertainty that the unidentifiable space emanates? Should we comprehend it as the uncanny effect of 'silence, solitude and darkness'?[64] Or am I haunted by something undetermined such as a spectre or ghost? Either way, it is certain to say that something unveiling itself with the form of the invisible or undetermined confines us to the realm of discomfort and unease.

I ask myself a question: how can invisibility be also a presence? I ask this question again and again but without an answer coming to me. It is like the sense of something being in the air. Once I heard a lecturer say that culture is the air we breathe so this points towards invisibility being a foundation of something in constant circulation. It is a figure of thought that touches something yet evades figuration. Such statements may be a source of fascination[65] because they touch upon something beyond the threshold of representation

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[64] Sigmund Freud, *The Uncanny*, Pelican Freud Library Vol.14, trans. by James Strachey (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985), p. 376.

[65] Maurice Blanchot states on fascination: 'Fascination is solitude's gaze. It is the gaze of the incessant and interminable. In it blindness is vision still, vision which is no longer the possibility of seeing, but the impossibility of not seeing, the impossibility which becomes visible and perseveres -- always and always -- in a vision that never comes to an end: a dead gaze, a gaze become the ghost of an eternal vision. […] Fascination is fundamentally linked to neutral, impersonal presence, to the indeterminate They, the immense, faceless Someone. Fascination is the relation the gaze entertains – a relation which is itself neutral and impersonal- with sightless, shapeless depth, the absence one sees because it is blinding'. Maurice Blanchot, *The Space of Literature*, trans. by Ann Smock (Lincoln, Neb.; London: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), p. 32.

and as such are closer to a form of immanent potentiality. Immanent potentiality creates a space for ambiguity, disintegrating the boundary of the interiority and exteriority of the being in the process. This is what at stake with the artwork: a boundary or condition of a boundary has to be transformed. The artwork challenges what is given in the world in order to establish a new condition or rule for itself. This is why the artwork is connected to a hidden, or even not so hidden, mode of violence. In turn, this impacts on the subject and is even a threat to the boundary condition that the subject is founded upon. This can be understood as a process of the annihilation[66] of the subject whereby a new rhythm of being is established, existing beyond the notion of both the pure self and the other.

Figure 7:[67]
Luc Tuymans
Gaskamer (Gas Chamber)
1986
Oil on canvas
70 x 50 cm

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[66] In Hegel's 'Preface' in *The Phenomenology of Spirit* there is a discussion on the relationship of the formation of the subject and its confrontation with death. Hegel states: 'But the life of mind is not one that shuns death, and keeps clear of destruction; it endures death and in death maintains its being. It only wins to its truth when it finds itself utterly torn asunder. It is this mighty power, not by being a positive which turns away from the negative, as when we say of anything it is nothing or it is false, and, being then done with it, pass off to something else: on the contrary, mind is this power only by looking the negative in the face, and dwelling with it. This dwelling beside it is the magic power that converts the negative into being'. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, 'Preface', in *The Phenomenology of Mind*, trans. with an introduction and notes by J. B. Baillie; introduction to the Torchbook edition by George Lichtheim (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1931), p. 92-94.
[67] Luc Tuymans, *Gaskamer (Gas Chamber)*, 1986, oil on canvas, 70 x 50 cm <https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/exhibition/luc-tuymans/luc-tuymans-room-5> [accessed 13 August 2018].

If there is a phrase that I retain from Pompeii or at least its afterimage, it is 'silent traces' or even 'haunted imagination'. I start to think of a painting by Luc Tuymans, *Gaskamer* (Gas Chamber), not because there is a connection which exists through the unfigurability of (in)human confrontation with extinction but rather because of the demands that may be endured through such a passage from one to another. The painting presents an empty-looking space without a sign of anything occurring there. If anything it has the look of banality, a look closer to a worn-out dereliction. Just an ordinary empty space bereft of drama. We may simply drift away from any further attention but there is something in the image that sticks to us. What is this stickiness of the painterly image? The painting shows an interior space which we can be familiar with in daily life. The eyes look around the pictorial space thoroughly and attempt to find visual elements that are able to draw the interest to explore further. There are neither specific images depicted nor particularly intense colours that are able to call upon something to remember. Instead, only a worn-out derelict cellar-like unfilled space is given to us. It is an ordinary empty space. It looks like an old abandoned warehouse. The usual stains painted with human skin tones spread over its pictorial space. The elements − widespread mould and water leaks, a sewer grate with water and irregular holes and broken architectural structures − that are painted with sombre grey and yellow colours indicate that no one has used or visited the building for a long time. The dark shadow that is flowing out from the small door to the floor strengthens the sorrow and desolation of abandonment. Nothing is indicated in Tuymans' painting, but traces of silence and disconsolation are surely present. In spite of the absence of brutal apparent images representing the moment or event of death or danger, why can we touch the feeling which is considerably strange and abnormal, even the dreadful emotion of a tragic death without cogent reasons? How does the vestige of death take place in such a voiceless painting? What causes such emotional violence to appear in our mind?

The overwhelming quietness and silence in the abandoned empty space gives rise to the image that associates terrifying hidden sites with torture, slaughter and massacres executed during World Wars I and II. The yellowish colour in the painting is reminiscent of the skin of the victims being buried alive, and the broken building structures awaken memories of their damaged bodies and minds. The horror of death as a result of war

atrocities like the Holocaust is suddenly returning to the real as image and the body and mind in turn become occupied by a shudder of fear. Tuymans' painting causes the vivid image and fear of such inhumanity to appear, and thus we can experience the horrific tragedy of humankind again in the 21st century. The fragmented dialogical images of the corpses, gruesome or terrible body gestures in the poisonous gas room and the pain sacrificed Jews feel at the point of death appear in the mind and we tremble with fear. How is it possible? More specifically, how can we possibly encounter such images in our mind and feel a sense of unease in the body, despite the fact that there are no particular catastrophic images drawn for us to see within the painting? Does it originate from the fragmented historical records that we have acquired through historical studies; the ruins of the Nazi concentration camps and the victims of cruel medical experiments in Unit 731 by the Imperial Japanese Army during World War II? Can the image of such tragic events be configured by a re-internalized array of mental images that have been collected through memories and indirect experiences? Or is it that such an emotion that appalls us can be a matter of the uncanny? Although we are already aware that such indefinable phenomena can never be explained with rationality, we cannot cease to ask questions related to the incorporeal and elusive.

When the viewer reads the title of this work by Tuymans and in turn sees the clues such as smudges and human skin colours drawn in the painting the implication of the relationship between these acts of reading and seeing appears in turn to open up a relationship between the virtualized image of the victims and the actual pain that we may imagine being endured. Enacted within this set of relationships are a series of gaps in the way these abstractions come in and out of register that disturbs the sense of continuity that in turn disrupts the relationship between what we sense and what we may know. In this circulation the viewers may produce a series of afterimages and even hear the voices or screams without the process of witnessing anything within actuality. It is evident that the gaps within presentation also function as silences. Simply a stage is set; something returns,[68] circulates there and then departs. Who knows? Only uncertainties pervade the

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[68] It indicates a term, 'the return of the repressed'. See Sigmund Freud, *The Standard Edition of The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud / Volume XVII, 1917-1919: An Infantile*

space. The work of the painter appears to be set adrift. Tuymans' painting is composed of a spectre of an event yet to arise. It is endlessly unsettling and this mode of restlessness is what constitutes its aesthetic force. Such potentiality does not appear as a manner of tangibility but rather as the violence of intensity. It is akin to the attribute of the ghosts Derrida describes: '[...] they are always there, spectres, even if they do not exist, even if they are no longer, even if they are not yet'.[69] The result of such violent sensuous experiences, in turn, is that the painting is no longer a depiction of a worn-out, abandoned vacant room. Instead, it becomes a disquieting image accompanied fully by an atmosphere of fear and uncertainty. The painting presents itself as a site of restless intensity in which unexpected and soundless violence takes places in the mind and in turn we cannot resist and escape from it. A body immediately becomes beyond one's control while encountering apprehension, if only for a fleeting moment. The body is no longer one's own thing, but it is subdued by something strange and de-familiar. The subject is undergoing the process of annihilation, between the meeting point of the inside and outside, in which an aperture is apprehended. The subject fades and a new rhythm of being in precarious balance becomes established instead. It is a part of, yet also apart from, one; a sense of a strange and unsettling place appears, which can be regarded as the emergence of a new entity. The body contains the forces of heterogeneity. As Nicholas Royle explains, 'It may thus be construed as a foreign body within oneself, even the experience of oneself as a foreign body'.[70] The collapse of the subject pertains to the violent rupture of the logocentric concept (or rationality), which unlocks and releases other hidden possibilities. The clarity and essential form of being are dislocated, which in turn gives rise to the experience of the world of sensation and freedom.

Neurosis and Other Works, trans. by James Strachey (London: The Hogarth Press: The Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1955), p. 218-253.

[69] Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*, trans. by Peggy Kamuf (New York; London: Routledge Classics, 1994), p. 221.

[70] Nicholas Royle, *The Uncanny*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), p. 2.

"From these deep sleeps we then awake in a dawn, not knowing who we are, being nobody, quite new, prepared for anything, our brain finding itself emptied of the past that had hitherto been our life. And perhaps it is better still when the return to earth of our waking is a brutal one and when our sleeping thoughts, concealed behind a vestment of oblivion, do not have time progressively to return before sleep has ended. Then, from the black storm through which we seem to have passed (but we do not even say *we*), we emerge lying prostrate, without any thoughts: a 'we' it may be without content."[71]

Marcel Proust, *Sodom and Gomorrah*

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[71] Marcel Proust, *In Search of Lost Time: Volume 4 Sodom and Gomorrah*, ed. by Christopher Prendergast, trans. with an introduction by John Sturrock (London: Penguin Classics, 2003), p. 377.

"When man goes blind, there always remains the question whether his blindness derives from some defect and loss or lies in an abundance and excess. In the same poem that mediates on the measure for all measuring, Hölderlin says (lines 75-76): "King Oedipus has perhaps one eye to many." Thus it might be that our unpoetic dwelling, its incapacity to take the measure, derives from a curious excess of frantic measuring and calculating."[72]

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[72] Martin Heidegger, '... Poetically, Man Dwells ...', in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. and introduction by Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2001, 1971), p. 225-226.

Darkness

There is nothing to see. The eyes may be torn out. The disintegrated vision. The dark gaze.[73] I see something not to see – what Orpheus[74] desires is not just Eurydice but Eurydice-as-lost. Nothing of the visible is given within the void. The eye is empty. Such an absence leaves me blind. I see the daylight but I see it as night. I am in the dark, vacant space, sliding into silence. The corpse has a gaze but has no eyes to see. I look at no object but see the darkness, taking me across the threshold of death. The empty pupil of the eye is flowing into the void. The inability to see the brightness leads to the mute, bottomless space in which I become eroded and lost. The blindness, a withdrawal of the vision, offers a visitation into the realm of image as infinite possibility. The void is the opening of unlimited possibility and mobility. It is the unending space which can never be measured. What do we see in the empty pupils of a person's eye? The somber ocular hollow is the absence of something seeable or to be seen. It can be instead a boundless emptiness. There is no prior inscription through which any certain image may gain association. Just as the eyes of the blind do not perceive the appearance of objects, we possess eyes to look, yet nothing can be seen. In the state of loss, the speculation occurs between what comes toward to me and where I am drawn into. Nothing comes before or comes after. Yet the loss of vision makes it possible to experience the intensity of violence inherent in the invisible and intangible emptiness. The utter darkness performs as the silent force retaining the intense power in which nothing can be deviated from. Things start to fall into a vortex of the dark void and then the traces of the presence ultimately merge with the realm of invisible flux. Whilst being bereft of the continuity of vision, any gestures through the rational procedure to exit from such intense force become suspended and only the dead end of the signifying

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[73] 'The Dark Gaze' by Kevin Hart theorises the writing of Maurice Blanchot. He describes the dark gaze as 'the vision of an artist who sees being as image, already separated from the phenomenal world and yet belonging to a separate order of being'. See Kevin Hart, *The Dark Gaze: Maurice Blanchot and the Sacred* (Chicago, Ill.; London: University of Chicago Press, 2004), p. 12. The dark gaze of fascination fixes the gaze in which 'blindness is vision still, vision which is no longer the possibility of seeing, but the impossibility of not seeing, which perseveres – always and always – in a vision that never comes to an end: a dead gaze, a gaze become the ghost of an eternal vision'. See ibid., p.13. Also Maurice Blanchot, *The Essential Solitude* in *Space of Literature*, trans. by Ann Smock (Lincoln, Neb.; London: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), p. 32.
[74] See Maurice Blanchot, 'Orpheus's Gaze', in *Space of Literature*, trans. by Ann Smock (Lincoln, Neb.; London: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), p. 171-174.

process remains. In the state of such cessation, the subject as a singular identity becomes dissolved and the subject does not exist in itself but purely out of itself, transforming into a new entity. The nature of the void[75] that retains immateriality, infinity and intensity recalls a black hole in the universe. An astrophysicist Subrahmanyan Chandrasekhar states that 'the black holes of nature are the most perfect macroscopic objects there are in the universe: the only elements in their construction are our concepts of space and time'.[76] Black holes cannot be seen because of the strong gravity that pulls all light into the centre of the empty realm. 'A black hole is a region of spacetime exhibiting such strong gravitational effects that nothing—not even particles and electromagnetic radiation such as light—can escape from inside it'.[77] Even a ray of light is trapped when passing into darkness. The light becomes darkness. A question occurs in my mind – what is beyond the darkness? As we do not know the inner world after death, no one is able to provide a definite answer to such a question, as nothing or no one ever escapes from there. All particles fall headlong into the abyss and vanish immediately before the eyes. Sigmund Freud explores the realm of darkness in his essay *The Uncanny*, saying that 'the uncanny would always, as it were, be something one does not know one's way about in'.[78] 'The uncanny, he notes, is fundamentally concerned with what is concealed, kept from the

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[75] The Indian idea of '0', zero or 'null number' is associated with the idea of nothing. The literal meaning is 'void' and represented by an empty slot in the counting system. In Sanskrit, the Hindu name for zero is 'Sunya', which means void or emptiness, whilst the Arabic is 'sifr' which means 'empty one'. Medieval Latin transcribed the Arabic word as 'zefirium' or 'cefrium'. In Italian, it gradually evolved from 'zefiro' to 'zefro' to 'zevero'. The Indian system of counting has been one of the most successful intellectual innovations ever made on our planet. The Chinese came into contact with the Indian system in the 8th century and adopted the Indian circular zero. The Hebrews encountered the Indian system in the 12th century, and zero was given the Hebrew word for the wheel. The Indian zero symbol found its way to Europe through Arabic culture which had assumed diverse elements of symbolical complexity that informed its conceptual structure. By the 13th century, through Spain, the Indo-Arabic system of numbers was applied in trade in parts of Europe but owing to official forms of resistance to this system it only assumed dominance in the 16th century.
For a more in-depth study on the notion of 'Zero' and 'Nothing', see John D. Barrow, *The Book of Nothing* (London: Vintage, 2001).
[76] Subrahmanyan Chandrasekhar, *The Mathematical Theory of Black Holes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 646.
[77] Robert M. Wald, *General Relativity* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1984), p. 299-300.
[78] Sigmund Freud, *The Uncanny*, Pelican Freud Library Vol.14, trans. by James Strachey (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985), p. 341.

sight'.[79] The darkness is the obscure empty space of the eyes. The black cavity is uncanny because it is the site of ghostly releases. The black darkness evokes the fear of blindness and the fright of being buried alive, both of which are other forms of loss that may be figured as being connected to the night. The open eyes without vision and premature burial impose the occasion of the possibility of their opposition, hovering between life and death and between the perceptible and imperceptible. The eyes both desire to see and not to see. Different forms of time and vision co-exist, which collapses the laws of the day. We have no point of identification for such a state. However, the glow of the night blows out the shine of knowledge and truth, and also discontinues the ocular-centric certainties and representation of the image, which in turn opens up other eyes to see the world of formless avisuality. The night, in the mode of the cessation of reason and signification, enables such aberrations to unfurl and the ambiguity of not knowing to open up. In the night the distinctions of absence and presence, life and death, visibility and invisibility and past and present are all eroded, in which unrealised possibilities and uncertainty teem. The night can be a space to allow something that has been erased and effaced by the light of day to be presented. A trace of the unfigurable, unnamed, hidden, suppressed and unidentified appears and in turn reveals its presence, which the eyes, closed, are able to see.

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[79] Nicholas Royle, *The Uncanny* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), p. 108.

"In the night, everything has disappeared. This is the first night. Here absence approaches − silence, repose, night. […] When everything has disappeared in the night, "everything has disappeared" appears. This is the *other* night. Night is this apparition: "everything has disappeared." […] Apparitions, phantoms, and dreams are all allusion to this empty night. […] Here the invisible is what one cannot cease to see; it is the incessant making itself seen. […] In the night one can die; we reach oblivion. But this *other* night is the death no one dies, the forgetfulness which gets forgotten. In the heart of oblivion it is memory without rest. […] In the night it is what one never joins; it is repetition that will not leave off, satiety that has nothing, the sparkle of something baseless and without depth. The trap, the *other* night, is the first night which we can penetrate, which we enter − granted, with anguish, and yet here anguish secludes us and insecurity becomes a shelter. In the first night it seems that we will go − by going further ahead − toward something essential. […] The *other* night is always the other, and he who senses it becomes the other. He who approaches it departs from himself, is no longer he who approaches but he who turns away, goes hither and yon. He who, having entered the first night, seeks intrepidly to go toward its profoundest intimacy, toward the essential, hears at a certain moment the *other* night –hears himself, hears the eternally reverberating echo of his own step, a step toward silence, toward the void. But the echo sends this step back to him as the whispering immensity, and the void is now a presence coming toward him."[80]

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[80] Maurice Blanchot, *The Space of Literature*, trans. by Ann Smock (Lincoln, Neb.; London: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), p. 163-169.

What is 'Stillman'?

Is Stillman an image or a force within a field?

When the image is present, we limit ourselves to affirming that, no matter how it came about, the image is here before us, that it appeared to us, that it is *in* our eyes: what we generally imply when we say 'I see'.

So then, is it a hallucinatory image? Is Stillman derived from a weakening of the sense of reality, of attention to life, having a quasi-hallucinatory vividness?

It is not posited that the real purpose of the object is to represent something real, an animal or a face. There is in it no existential position or that which can be demonstrated.

The image is not posited as an object/non-thetic consciousness that is in some way contradicted by the manner of positing the object.

I really do see some-thing, but what I see is closer to *nothing*, which I guess is a paradox.

Do I *see* Death, or is there another kind of encounter? To see death would be to see that which does not exist. So what kind of encounter is this?

Constituted out of faint forms, disintegrating when under observation and yet continuing to reshape endlessly, these forms in which the gaze loses itself and loses itself absolutely, these forms appear to possess powers of eliciting attention endlessly, and in so doing set up an endless circuit of deceit.

In each moment that I am caught in the circle of deceit from which I cannot free myself, and which enchains me, I am trapped in a circuit of panic serving to disintegrate any logical sense. Thus, it is impossible for a claim to be made based on the recognition of having seen or met this entity, because it is beyond representation.

"Everything remains to be said on the subject of the Ghost and the ambiguity of the Return, for what renders it intolerable is not so much that it is an announcement of death nor even the proof that death exists, since this Ghost announces and proves nothing more than his return. What is intolerable is that the Ghost erases the limit which exists between two states, neither alive nor dead; passing through, the dead man returns in the manner of the Repressed. It is his coming back which makes the ghost what he is, just as it is the return of the Repressed that inscribes the repression. In the end, death is never anything more than the disturbance of the limits. The impossible is to die."[81]

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[81] Hélène Cixous, 'Fiction and Its Phantoms: A Reading of Freud's Das Unheimliche (The "Uncanny")', *New Literary History*, vol. 7, no. 3, (Baltimore, Maryland: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), 525-546, (p. 543).

Inexplicable

When we cannot be certain about the designation of objects or places or subjective perception, we tend to underestimate things such as the inexplicable as meaningless, valueless or even as non-being. With the notion of categorization and conceptualization, we deduce that everything in the world needs to be clarified and transparent and in a given order. Nothing should be hidden and opaque, and the object should be exposed and placed in the field of vision. This premises the condition that certainty can be only judged and justified by the basis of the truth. Such a conception causes sensation and imagination to be ignored and devalued, as they have been considered obstacles to thought, and even understood as elements of unpredictable subjective phenomena that have the possibility of deviance from the world of the Idea. Like a ghost, they can be neither defined nor specified in language because they are located outside of the world of order and entail non-linguistic factors. The ghost is freed from the constraints of time and space. It is not fixed by visibility and by embodiment along the lines of gender, thus unraveling and deconstructing the foundation of the certainty. The usual type of procedures of knowing and recognition are displaced in the quality of the ghost. It hovers between the realm of the living and the realm of the dead and thus hovers within the spectral sphere. It issues a silent demand, which disturbs our configuration of the principle of reality, thus throwing to the wind a space of uncertainty, appearing as another type of floating order asserting itself. What is clear is that the ghost appears as a force within the field of the other, manifesting an intensity of disturbance or dis-figuration. Rather than being an image, the ghost is a figure. For Jean-François Lyotard the figural[82] is a lost object of desire rather than a present object of perception, disturbing the ordered space of representation. Force and desire co-mingle with the formation of the figure, which is also like a crossroads between the textual and the visual. Lyotard touches upon the paradox that although desire does not speak it nonetheless is capable of disrupting the order of language and it is this factor that brings to the surface an awareness of what cannot be represented.

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[82] See Jean-François Lyotard, *Discourse, Figure*, trans. by Antony Hudek and Mary Lydon (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011).

Hovering in the space of the in-between, the nature of Stillman is inexplicable, like that of a ghost that is neither alive nor dead. As such it cannot be identified or defined with the sphere of language and visibility. It is something in-between, not being and being: a becoming that disrupts the rule of representation. It exists without any structure or system and thus cannot be fitted into a certain category. Stillman as ambiguity refuses to be defined as a single, formal entity. As a mode of non-subject devoid of gender determination this opens up a sphere which cannot be judged by dualistic categories. Even the name, Stillman, may exist as an impossible construct because such naming appears to point towards a certainty of identity. Naming is the act of assigning a name to something or someone to specify their identity in a particular way. Possessing a name thus allows the invisible, untouchable or inauditable to be transformed into that which is physical, corporeal and explicable, which in turn ensures its existence within the senses of sight, hearing and touch. It therefore can manifest its state and quality as material form within the sphere of time and space. How can we then comprehend this paradoxical nature of Stillman? As a ghost-like entity, Stillman is an unidentified, non-indexical figure, without a physical dimension, that extends across various vectors of time and space, thus resisting the framing of a classification. Unconsciously the attribution of a male identity appears as a trace-like effect of other invisible figures such as God or Zeus who signify infinity but are given attributes that derive from finite human attributes.

Unlike the image of a spiritual being in the context of Western culture, the concept of a ghost in the context of Korea has been fixed on the terrifying-looking female because of the considerable domination of Neo-Confucianism[83] from the Chosŏn dynasty (1392-

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[83] Neo-Confucianism is 'the revival of Confucianism in Song China (960-1279) during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, which resulted in a creative interpretation of the earlier and existing teachings. The famous thinker Zhu Xi (1130-1200) provided a comprehensive system of Neo-Confucian learning, metaphysics, ethics, and spirituality. Three centuries later in the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), Wang Yangming (1472-1529) was the chief exponent of Neo-Confucianism who emphasized the unity of knowledge and action and the way to practice it morally in daily life. Zhu's and Wang's schools of Neo-Confucianism were gradually introduced to Korea and Japan, although the former generally became the orthodox school. The Confucian tradition of Chosŏn Korea (1392-1910) produced many outstanding scholars such as Yi T'oegye (1501-1570) and Yi Yulgok (1536-1584)'. Edward Y.J. Chung, *Korean Confucianism: Tradition and Modernity*, ed. by The Center for International Affairs (Seongnam: The Academy of Korean Studies Press, 2015), p.21.

1910), which was thoroughly an androcentric society. The female ghost reveals herself with long-dark dishevelled hair, a torn bloody mouth, sharp long nails and a pale face with staring bleeding eyes, clad in a white mourning dress. Such a stereotype of the female ghost's features has been portrayed from traditional tales up to the latest horror films[84]. In her essay 'Female Ghost and the Hidden Language in Her Crying Voice', Key-Sook Choe states that 'this negative construction of the ghost has some relation to the cultural status of woman as subaltern and a social minority'.[85] According to her explanation, the ghost's identity in Korea was structured at the point of social oppression of woman and her concealment, particularly by the effect of strict Confucianism[86]. The Neo-Confucian orthodoxy of the Chosŏn society limited the social activities of females, and women were forced to abide by Confucian ideals of chastity, purity, obedience and faithfulness, which resulted in females being completely isolated from the outer world. Women were subordinated in a society of male dominance throughout their entire lives and were not allowed to express their own opinions and thoughts. They were silenced and sacrificed by

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[84] See Korean Horror films: *Janghwa Hongryeon Jeon*, dir. Chang-Hwa Jeong, (N.A.:1936); *Janghwa Hongryeon Jeon*, dir. Yu-Seob, Lee (N.A.:1972); *Whispering Corridors*, dir. Ki-Hyung Park (Cinema Service: 1998); *Acacia*, dir. Ki-Hyung Park (Show East: 2003); *A Tale of Two Sisters*, dir. Jee-woon Kim (Cineclick Asia and Big Blue Film: 2003).

[85] See Key-Sook Choe, 'Female Ghost and the Hidden Language in Her Crying Voice', *Journal BOL*, vol. 008 (Insa Art Space and Arts council Korea, 2008), 110-133, (p. 123).

[86] Confucianism 'originated in China during a golden age of Chinese thought, several centuries before the beginning of the Christian era. It is a common, living tradition in East Asia including Korea as well as among international East Asian communities around the world. Acknowledged as one of the so-called Three Teachings (*samgyo/sanjiao*) of China, together with Daoism and Buddhism, it has shaped many elements of culture over centuries in China as well as in Korea. […] This tradition developed from the teaching of Confucius (551-479 BCE), a reformer and educator from the state of Lu in modern Shandong province in northeastern China. So the word "Confucianism" is associated with the name Confucius, which is the Latinized form of his Chinese title Kong Fuzi (Master Kong), best pronounced as "Confucius" by the sixteenth-century Jesuits and other European missionaries in China. It centered around a moral, educational and spiritual project that sought to promote the "cultivated self," "great community," and universal peace through a unique set of scriptures and teachings. Confucius did not view himself as the founder of a new philosophy or religion, but rather preferred to be called a "transmitter of ancient wisdom." He was also a spiritual thinker whose teaching inspired a great following about two centuries later when it was elaborated by Mencius (Mengzi, Master Meng; 372-289 BCE) and others. Mencius, second only to Confucius, offered a vision of idealism in terms of original human goodness. The teachings of Confucius and Mencius represented state orthodoxy from early Han China in 202 BCE to the end of China's imperial period in 1911, as well as in Korea until 1910, the end of the Yi Chosŏn Dynasty'. Edward Y.J. Chung, *Korean Confucianism: Tradition and Modernity*, ed. by The Center for International Affairs (Seongnam: The Academy of Korean Studies Press, 2015), p.19-21.

pre-modern patriarchal ideology. Thus, they were not permitted to articulate their voices until they returned as a ghost. Only as ghosts, not as women alive, were they able to achieve their thwarted wishes and reassert their own existences that were erased whilst in the realm of the living.

At this point, we can question why and how dead women appear as images of terrifying ghosts with discomforting visual appearances. Choe's opinion is that such a dreadful image of the female ghost reflects society's cruel victimization of women in the Chosŏn dynasty. As women were forced to hide and thus be disregarded, what they desired and were not able to attain in the world of the living, could only exist within the apparitional sphere. Therefore they haunt the realm of living in order to plead their undeserved deaths or sacrifices. The sorrowful voices of female ghosts calling for their aspirations and desires are regarded as gestures to dismantle the ideological and institutional foundations of male-dominated society. Hence, a ghost in the context of Korean culture and history has been represented as a horrifying female figure and viewed as an existence of 'fear' and 'threat' deconstructing the order of a patriarchal society.[87]

As opposed to such frightening images of the female ghost, the image of a ghost that a Korean painter, Her Ryun, rendered in the book *Mr. Chae's Filial Behaviour* (蔡氏孝行圖), is distinctively atypical and peculiar. A ghost is depicted as an ambiguous, uncertain image bereft of a certain body structure. Her's painting, functioning as an illustration, describes the moment of the encounter between Mr. Chae and the spirit. The story is that Mr. Chae is on his way to attend the anniversary of his father's death. The inclement weather causes him not to arrive at the ancestral rite on time. That he will not be able to join in the ritual to honour his father makes him sad and he in turn starts to wail. Mr. Chae's filial piety impresses a ghost and to come to the aid of Mr. Chae: the ghost suddenly appears and guides him with a flaming torch to attend his father's memorial service.[88]

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[87] Key-Sook Choe, ibid., p. 122-133.
[88] In the context of Korean culture under Confucian influence in the Chosŏn dynasty, the ancestor memorial service is a significant family event because it is a way of showing respect for deceased parents and ancestors (Confucian filial piety).
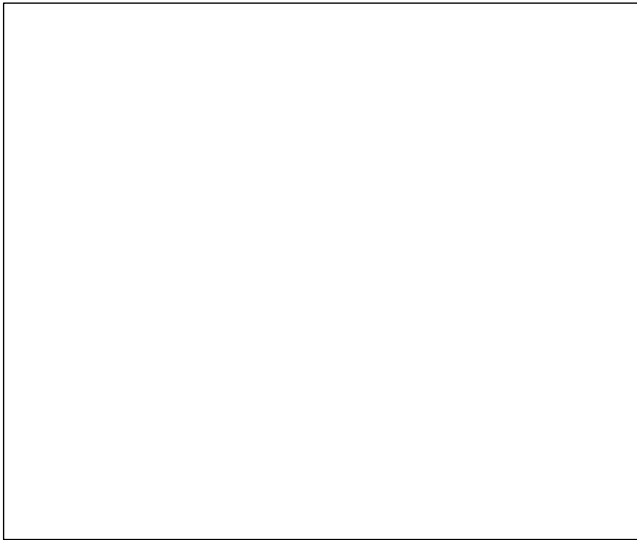
Figure 8:
Her Ryun (許鍊)
Guided by a Ghost's Torch (鬼火前導)[89]
1868
Ink and oriental watercolor on silk
23 x 31.7cm
Collected by Kim, Min-Young

The image of the ghost in Her Ryun's painting is drawn in a manner that is formless and tentative, which does not include visual features that can indicate a sense of certainty of identity by gender, age or race. In opposition to the way in which the mountain landscape and the male character are meticulously painted, the wraith is portrayed as an unnoticeable blur trace (or stain) without details of face or body structures. It is not constrained by any particular structures and hence it is not limited to a singular character; rather it is undone on the level of its being. Its bodily structure for instance, is unbounded and undetermined, without distinctive lines, which is a contrast to the other factors composing this painting. For instance, contours render the tangible form of the Korean traditional garment (道袍, dopo) and hat (갓, gat) that Mr. Chae puts on, the rocks behind him, gentle slopes, treetops, as well as the mountain's skeleton. The clarity of the boundaries of these elements serves as a frame to accentuate the aspects of identity and the actuality of the entity. According to historical record, Her Ryun was highly regarded as a great painter of the Southern School (南宗画, pinyin: nanzhonghua) of Chinese painting in the 19th century in the Chosŏn

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[89] Her Ryun, *Guided by a Ghost's Torch (detail)*, 1868, ink and oriental watercolor on silk, 23 x 31.7cm <http://www.ggbn.co.kr/news/articlePrint.html?idxno=32193> [accessed 14 August 2018]. For a more in-depth exposition of the painting, see Sangyop Kim, '小癡　許鍊의 《蔡氏孝行圖》삽화 (Sochi Heo Ryeon's Illustration of Chaessihyohaengdo)', *美術史論壇 (Art History Forum)*, vol. 26 (2008), p. 75-99.

dynasty. His other literati paintings significantly testify that he has achieved a complete mastery of painting techniques. Why did the painter leave such a rough and incomplete sketch, despite his remarkable artistic skills? Her Ryun could be seeking to expand his techniques beyond the tradition of the Southern School through exploring new ways of depiction in his painting. He could be undertaking to describe both the narrative of the hero, 'Mr. Chae', and the world of the unknown and ambiguous, which cannot be territorialized by the realm of representation and therefore cannot be objectified. The painting can be understood as a site where ghostly emissions and omissions occur, that draw the presentation of the ghostly figure closer to that of a vapour. Thus, we see only the trace of the sparse, without a shape or form that is liberated from the opacity of embodiment or objective determination. Instead, the painter questioned and conducted experiments on how to visualize the essence of indistinctness and ambiguity through his painting. How can we visually reify inherent existences, like the nature of the air that we breathe? The answer lies in something that is non-dual, fluid, invisible, mobile – similar to the attributes of air and wind which the ghost passes over, under and through without arrest and direction. The ghostly figure is thus the agent of ineffability, contingency, unfathomability, indefinability and in-determinacy that creates an unknowable rift within the pre-condition of essence that in turn militates against the structures of orthodoxy, certainty and totality. Instead of delineating the ghost's appearance, detailing the facial structure and expressions, the Korean painter seeks to reveal the presence of the ghostly entity as the absent, non-object, which can be understood as the refusal of figurative illustration. Such a perspective leads to the fact that Her Ryun intends to escape the confines of the structural form and rejects drawing a representational image of the uncertain figure. In this painting, the ghost does not manifest its presence with the form of a determined being, but rather it reveals itself as emerging from, and returning to, the condition of emptiness. The presence of the ghost is thus diluted and permeated by a quality issuing out of the field of absence. The painter emphasizes its existence through the man's fixed gaze towards the red flame of the torch that functions as a clue to allude to the presence of the ghost leading the man onto the correct path. Her Ryun's depiction is far from the clichéd representation of the phantom that we are accustomed to in Gothic horror films and literature. The flaming torch, performing as the significant trace of the invisible figure, reflects the immanent potentiality

and intensity of uncertainty, which in turn opens up other possibilities of incorporeal transformations.

As the name indicates, Stillman can be interpreted as a silent being without discernible movement, like a dead entity but paradoxically still alive by virtue of manifest pulsation. Stillman is an entity who stays here (or there) with us by virtue of manifesting its existence despite the fact that others may not recognize it. The film *The Man Who Wasn't There* is a study of this process of de-realisation. Connected to this central theme of estrangement of the self is the notion of the principle of uncertainty. At a certain point in the film, the hero, Ed Crane, reflects that it is as if he has become a ghost because no one appears to see him and in turn he does not really see anyone. He feels that he has disappeared from the world. Crane's monologue in the film states:

> When I walked home, it seemed like everyone avoided looking at me, as if I'd caught some disease. This thing with Doris, nobody wanted to talk about it. It was like I was a ghost walking down the street. And when I got home now, the place felt empty. I sat in the house, but there was no body there. I was a ghost. I did not see anyone. No one saw me. I was the barber.[90]

Likewise, Stillman is a spectral subject going beyond the notion of a discrete subject. It cannot be perceived by a concept or discourse by virtue of this. The usual procedure of knowing, and with this the orders of representation, are displaced as the attributes of such a character. Therefore there is a refusal to be restricted within a certain limited territory, or to be distinguished by presence, so Stillman can spread and float in all directions as if out of discernible control. Encroaching on territory, but in ways that threatens to engulf the remains of other territories at the same time, the moment of encounter with Stillman is like a catastrophe of the unexpectedness of intense force that resides within the hidden dimension of being. It leads us into an unknown dimension of implosion through which the notion of the death of the subject may be realized.

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[90] *The Man Who Wasn't There*, dir. by Joel Coen and Ethan Coen (USA Films: 2001).
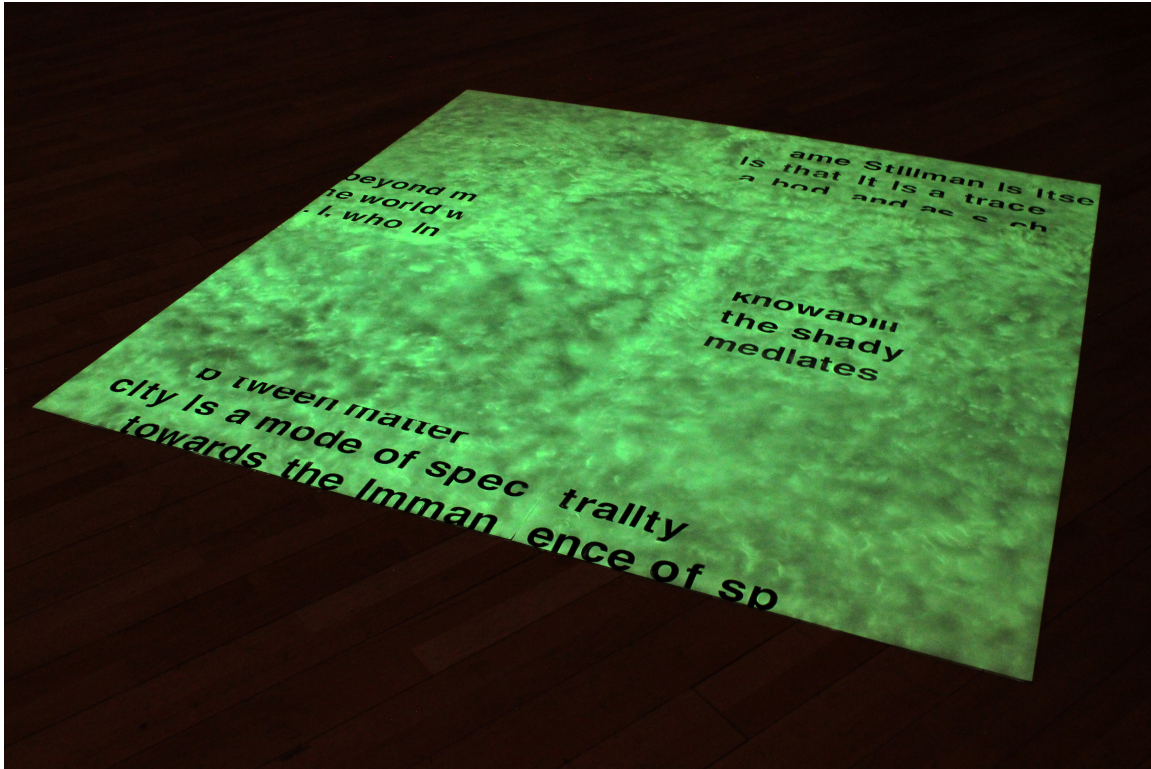
Figure 9:[91]
Kyung Hwa Shon
Visibility, Non-Visibility, Invisibility
2015
Text with phosphorescent powder pigment
Dimensions variable
Photo by the artist

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[91] I do not wish to try and explain my work or supply a context for it because the work creates a context within the way it is organised as a syntaxical continuum. Artists can provide clues that may give rise to commentaries but this is not the process of creating a commentary that may assume authority. Each work both appears as a construction created from elements that directly signify but largely the main task of a work of art is to assemble an a-signifying network that should be understood as indirect. Thus the work of art is an excess outside of signification and as such resists being placed inside a grid through which a reading might be enacted.

"This body is like a bit of foam that cannot be grasped. This body is like bubbles that do not last very long. This body is like a mirage, generated from thirst. This body is like a banana tree, with nothing solid within. This body is like a phantasm arising from confused [views]. This body is like a dream, an illusory view. This body is like a shadow, manifested through karmic conditions. This body is like an echo, dependent on causes and conditions. This body is like a cloud, which changes and disappears in an instant. The body is like lightning, unstable from one moment to another (Section 9).

This body is without master, like the earth. This body is without self, like fire. This body is without lifespan, like the wind. This body is without person, like water. (Section 10)."[92]

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[92] N.A., *The Vimalakīrti Sutra, Taishō Volume 14, Number 475*, trans. by John R. McRae (Berkeley, Calif.: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 2004), p. 83.

Gaze in the Glass of the City

A question begins to occur when we get the sense of being unnerved by coming face to face with the formless or the deformed. Is it because we can no longer identify whether it is there or not there and this is dictated in turn by a binary condition of presence or absence, or are we in fact terrified of the immensity that accumulates within uncertainty, which Her Ryun attempts to reveal with the sign of the flaming torch in his painting? When John Rajchman states that: 'Absolute immanence is in itself: it is not in something, to something; it does not depend on an object or belong to a subject',[93] he is evoking in philosophical terms the condition that is perhaps also figured in this painting. Within the painting the intensity and a changing assemblage of forces (or powers) cannot be understood as logic and reason in any discernible manner. There is the sense that something looks back within the matrix of this aesthetic template, a gaze perhaps that issues out of the field of intensity that is untouched by the constructed will of the conceptual sphere.

If 'gaze' is a factor to account for the unease, it is perpetually impossible to escape the apprehension of being looked at. Jacques Lacan defines 'the gaze' as the look within the field of the other and this leads in turn to the notion that a wall may have a gaze or an apprehension of some type of presence, which appears to be an undoing force. It is not that there is someone behind a plane of mirrored glass looking out of the unknowing subject, or even that such a constituted look is possible at all times, but that the glass itself absorbs this immanent potentiality. It is the glass that looks back. We incorporate this into our horizon of being. In an ancient context we may have imagined or sensed that the starry abode looked at us but now this sense is no longer connected to the heavens but to the surroundings of the city space itself. This is not just that we are brought closer to the ground but are trapped within the illusion that we survey or scan the world whilst at the same time possessing the paranoia that we are the subjects of a gaze that escapes our comprehension.

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[93] John Rajchman, *Gilles Deleuze Pure Immanence: Essays on A Life*, trans. by Anne Boyman (New York: Zone Books, 2001), p. 26.

Relating this unease to the relationship of city space to its subjects, it may even implicate another state underlying this. The city of glass is the space of unlimited repetition of appearing, disappearing, and reappearing. In this motion it yields itself to the infinite evanescent fragments spiralling into the optical field of the other. Urban subjects, in being surrounded by a myriad of glass windows, can hardly escape from the invisible force that issues from the gaze of this unlimited screen. This screen functions as its own image or even is a conflation of itself with the image. Within the context of the night-time spectacle of the city it assumes an almost broadcast-like reality within the explicit reality of the image hidden within a structure of the transmission of light. Is not this the true meaning of the gaze, this reality of an ever-present infiltration of a light that disguises itself as mere functionality? It is ungraspable because it infiltrates without the rhetoric of being anything. Architecture, of course, functions, but then it assembles something else as well in the form of an optical unconscious[94]. The city is not just how it appears but also how it infiltrates beyond our power to see. It calls upon us to be in circulation with several distinct optical registers. We may regard this or that building as having grace, and yet congregated together something else is being assembled that is closer to the appearance of a monster[95]. Yes,

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[94] For a more in-depth study on the concept of 'optical unconscious', see Walter Benjamin, 'Little History of Photography', in *Selected Writings: Volume 2: Part 2 1931-1934*, trans. by Rodney Livingstone et al., ed. by Michael W. Jennings, Howard Eiland and Gary Smith (Cambridge, Mass.; London: Belknap, Harvard, 2005), p. 512. Also Rosalind E. Krauss, *The Optical Unconscious* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1993), p. 178.

[95] Jean-Luc Nancy writes on the idea of the image as a monster in his book *The Ground of the Image*: 'Thus the image is, essentially, "monstrative" or "monstrant". Each image is a monstrance (or pattern) -what in French is called *ostensoir*. The image is of the order of the monster; the *monstrum* is a prodigious sign, which warns (*moneo, monstrum*) of a divine threat. The German word for the image, *Bild* -which designates the image in its form or fabrication- comes from a root (*bil-*) that designates a prodigious force or a miraculous sign. It is in this sense that there is a monstrosity of the image. The image is outside the common sphere of presence because it is the display of presence. It is the manifestation of presence, not as appearance, but as exhibiting, as bringing to light and setting forth. […] What is monstrously shown [*monstre'*] is not the aspect of the thing; it is, by way of the aspect or emerging from it (or drawing it up from the depths, opening it out and throwing it forward), its unity and force. Force itself is nothing other than the unity woven from a sensory diversity. The aspect is in this diversity, it is the relation that extends between the parts of a figure; but the force lies in the unity that joins them together in order to bring them to light. That is what all painting shows us, tirelessly and in constantly renewed modes: the working of or the search for this force. A painter does not paint forms unless, above all, he paints the force that takes hold of forms and carries them away in a pres-ence. […] Under this force, forms too deform or transform themselves. The image is always a dynamic or energetic metamorphosis. It begins before forms, and goes beyond them. All painting, even the most naturalistic, is this kind of

something looks back – but in ways that exceed our everyday sense of optical stability. Thus, this ungraspable and unavoidable gaze lies scattered in every inside and outside, evoking a sense that we can never be ourselves as a completed project. In his book *Being and Nothingness*, Jean-Paul Sartre reflects on this perspective of the Other:

> Every look directed toward me [...] it is not connected with any determined form [...] the look will be given just as well on occasion when there is a rustling of branches, or the sound of a footstep followed by silence, or the slight opening of a shutter, or a light movement of a curtain. During an attack men who are crawling through the brush apprehend as a look to be avoided, not two eyes, but a white farm-house which is outlined against the sky at the top of a little hill.[96]

Is it possible to assume that the unidentified unease about the invisible or incorporeal[97] is similar to why we are scared of ghosts? In fact, we are aware that the invisible does not signify the absence of being, but we tend to misunderstand that invisibility has the same meaning as nothingness. So then, how are we aware of the existence of the invisible? More specifically, how does the invisible gaze of the unidentified haunt[98] us?

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metamorphic force. Force deforms (and so, therefore, does passion); it carries away forms, in a spurt that tends to dissolve or exceed them. The monstrous showing or *monstration* spurts out in *monstruation*'. Jean-Luc Nancy, 'Image and Violence', in *The Ground of the Image*, trans. by Jeff Fort (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005), p. 21-22.

[96] Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology*, trans. by Hazel E. Barnes (New York: Pocket Books, 1978), p. 257-258.

[97] According to Brian Massumi, the incorporeal is: '[…] never present in position, only ever in passing. This is an abstractness pertaining to the transitional immediacy of a real relation-that of a body to its own *indeterminacy* (its openness an else-where and otherwise than it is, in any here and now). The charge of indeterminacy carried by a body is inseparable from it'. Brian Massumi, *Parables for The Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), p. 5.

[98] André Breton states on the notion of haunting in *Nadja*: 'Who am I? If this once I were to reply on a proverb, then perhaps everything would amount to knowing whom I "haunt." I must admit that this last word is misleading, tending to establish between certain beings and myself relations that are stranger, more inescapable, more disturbing than I intended. Such a word means much more than it says, makes me, still alive, play a ghostly part, evidently referring to what I must have ceased to be in order to be *who* I am.' André Breton, *Nadja*, trans. by Richard Howard (New York: Grove Press, 1960), p. 11.

When Sartre advances his notion of shame he predicated this on the invisible presence of the Other that can be understood as similar to the feeling of uncanniness or fright that we often experience in everyday life. It seems that the aspect of shame in 'Being and Nothingness' is more closely related to the situation when someone can be suddenly affected in a defenceless state. The look, the sudden awareness of the Other in a vulnerable state, produces a fracture which results in the disintegration of my universe. Sartre accounts for this thus: 'I discover a self in shame which is the recognition of the fact that I am indeed that object which the Other is looking at and judging'.[99] Such a perspective gives rise to the notion that the potentiality of the rupture embedded in the nature of the Other's look can be unlimitedly immanent, particularly in the realm of the glass window in the context of the modern city which gives rise to the subject becoming engulfed in fear or anxiety. It is certain to say that the gaze from the invisible sends forth enough force to scatter the embodied body and mind of the subject, becoming out of control. Within the context of the city of glass, in the moment of oscillating between being present and absent, the intermittent appearance of the image interposed itself through the aperture of the rupture, thus making an enquiry into the notion of self-awareness that is based on tri-relations of being between the self, the reflection of the self, and the undetermined figure as an image. Again and again the same questions occur in my mind. What is the unidentified image intermittently appearing on the glass window? What is the identity of the image that generates uncertainty and ambiguity within the very edge of the framing device that enables a naming of the image to occur? Is it a double split of the self as a reflection on the transparent surface? Or can it be comprehended as a strange figure from the symptom of schizophrenia? How about if it is understood as the being of a look, the vestiges of an apparition (Stillman), the presence of the self, the fragmented reflection of imagination or/and memory, projected metaphors of the individual psychological state, as well as 'a desire for another desire'?[100] It seems that I will never be convinced by discovering an answer to these questions because how is it possible to prove such uncertain things with

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[99] Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology*, trans. by Hazel E. Barnes (New York: Pocket Books, 1978), p. 261.

[100] In the work of Hegel, desire in its pure state is always the desire for desire itself. See Jean-Luc Nancy, 'Desire', in *Hegel: The Restlessness of the Negative*, trans. by Jason Smith and Steven Miller (Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), p. 55-65.

rationality? In spite of the constant doubt, I am sure that this image, slithering on the transparent surface at the moment of indiscernibility, endlessly provokes a frightening feeling of uncanniness. The invisible tiny void on the glass surface, as a realm in which the sudden presence of the apparition, Stillman, occurs, creates the space of rupture where every look is derived, dispersed, reflected, interchanged, multiplied, converged, and revitalized. This space opens up the sudden appearance of undetermined vestiges of the fragment. The presence of the look, which this image directs to me, allows me to be thrown outside of my world. 'The look entices me to the beyond my being in this world and puts me in the midst of the world which is at once this world and beyond this world'.[101] Turning to Jean-Paul Sartre for an articulation of the condition which is implied by this doubled over character: 'I, who in so far as I am my possibles, am what I am not, and am not what I am-behold now I am somebody! And the one who I am-and who on principle escapes me-I am he in the midst of the world in so far as he escapes me'.[102] When Sartre states that 'I that am not myself, am the one who is not me and the one who I am not',[103] in such a mode of negation that presents the paradoxical relation of the self, it implies the fact that intrinsic self-identity is discarded. The self can be both itself and not itself. Such an annihilation of a definite subject can touch upon the possibility of the ghostly entity as being of the in-between and the non-tangible substance. If so, can Stillman be myself? After all Stillman appears to be a slippage between the illusion of boundaries? Is it not the ghost who undoes the boundary between the living and the dead so why not the undoing of the boundary that sustains the subject as apart from its objects? Ghosts, in fact, have the trait of both being and not being wherever they are, wherever they go. What is the time of a spectre? My relation to the potentiality of the uncertain image broaches the question of how the look (or the sudden appearance of the Other) also confers notions of temporality and spatiality upon me. Once the fragmented body of Stillman suddenly appears on the transparent surface, the potentiality of reversibility embedded in the nature of the image opens up a space of the possibility of experiencing a rapid transition of both spatiality and temporality. In a direct sense, we can assume that the glass window in the modern city is a

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[101] Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology*, trans. by Hazel E. Barnes (New York: Pocket Books, 1978), p. 261.
[102] Jean-Paul Sartre, ibid., p. 263.
[103] Jean-Paul Sartre, ibid., p. 230.

fundamental realm where the psychological uncanny occurs. Stillman is the eruption of a sudden and strange image appearing in the blink of its own vanishing and as such stands in the very moment of the annihilation of the concrete individual. It is like a vanishing trace when butterflies flutter over the air; the image disappears as it is being made, but it deposits a trail of memories that hover between reality and imagination. The image floating over the glass window in the environment of modern city can be also something that causes psychic ambivalence to occur that releases the feeling of uncanniness because the sense of such a thing falls outside the domain of representation. As such, it can be the primary factor affecting the psychological framework of modern urbanites. The city phantom is the passage from one world to another, the entrance into another world, breaking in and exploring a different time and space. Then, I am finally able to arrive in 'a never-land of fragments of the undetermined and uncertain, a place of wordless things and thingless words',[104] beyond the logic and the realm of language.

Such thoughts result in another question occurring again in my mind – is the city a place that draws in spectres or is it a form of spectrality itself? This will constitute an important difference. If the city is a place inhabited by ghosts it will point towards the dialectic between matter (mechanisms) and spirit, whereas if the city is a mode of spectrality itself then it will instead point towards the immanence of spirit and matter as a folded continuity. The city is both intensive and intensity, a place in which faces circulate, but also a form of faciality[105] itself that stages encounter.

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[104] Paul Auster, *The New York Trilogy* (London: Faber and Faber, 1987), p. 72.

[105] In Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's writing on 'Faciality' they note that faces: '[…] are not basically individual; they define zones of frequency or probability, delimit a field that neutralizes in advance any expressions or connections unamenable to the appropriate significations. Similarly, the form of subjectivity, whether consciousness or passion, would remain absolutely empty if faces did not form loci of resonance that select the sensed or mental reality and make it conform in advance to a dominant reality. The face itself is redundancy. It is itself in redundancy with the redundancies of signifiance or frequency, and those of resonance or subjectivity. The face constructs the wall that the signifier needs in order to bounce off of; it constitutes the wall of the signifier, the frame or screen. The face digs the hole that subjectification needs in order to break through; it constitutes the black hole of subjectivity as consciousness or passion, the camera, the third eye'. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, '7. Year Zero: Faciality', in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. and foreword by Brian Massumi (Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), p. 168.

The lines of the city and the lines of the subject intersect. They pass through, over and under as mutually co-extensive. Both the city and its subjects are conduits for the passage of energy. It is difficult to discern who energises what because the passages between interfaces are both continuous and intensive. Can it be claimed that the city itself has a face? A city is constructed out of many lines, holes, accumulations of mass, flows and concentrations. A face likewise. Yet surely this is far too vague. It is also too vague to claim that, like a face, the city appears to look back but then the vague itself functions as a site of discovery.

Is Stillman an interface between the city and the subject? Stillman is like a ghost that hovers in the realm of the in-between without the certainty of different states. It is in neither life nor death, but rather it discharges the two. Stillman is flux without a corporeal body, and as such is the undoing of embodiment. Is it enough to have the attribute of the ghost in order to be a ghost? What is the mode of presence of a spectre? Here we face a paradox – the project started as a study of the sign economy of city spaces but has been thrown by an encounter with phenomena that empirically cannot be proved to exist. Yet can there also be a suspicion that the essence of the city may have been uncovered? Instead of a thesis pertaining to the knowability of discrete phenomena, I am left to muse within the shady margins of unknowability. Stillman presents or mediates a transfer of power from daytime rationality with its economy of sober writing into a metaphorical night-time, occasioning instead a striated mode of philosophical poetics.

It seems that I am closing some books and opening others, with a shift between what is direct and what is indirect. The city is not only a place that concentrates economy but economy understood on every level. It brings things together, introducing new flows that overwhelm other flows that link things together as well as breaking them apart.

Between the white wall of the signifier and the black hole of subjectivity these works set out to overcode the space charged by subjectification and signification. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari state that: 'Dismantling the face is the same as breaking through the wall of the signifier and getting out of the black hole of subjectivity'. See Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, '7. Year Zero: Faciality', in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. and foreword by Brian Massumi (Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), p.188.

Subjects are pushed up closely together and yet they are most intensely alone. A city beneath the flows and intensities is also a city of bits, segmented, broken up and open to the wind. The wind within the city is a special kind of wind, blowing in many directions at the same time. Populations are sensitive to these winds without having direct knowledge of them. After all it was such winds that brought them together in the first place from all the corners of the earth. All these faces in circulation are marked by such different origins and destinations. Without the encounter with Stillman it may not have been possible to write in such a manner. Now writing is incessant, whereas before it might have been the sum total of so many interruptions. Incessant writing is elsewhere to a writing mode dictated by rationality because it only knows itself outside of having to pass through the constructed realm of knowledge. At its very edge of becoming other, the city is a place that passes through itself without assembling the faculties through which self-knowledge is constituted. The city of course concentrates knowledge technologies and knowledge technics, but on its underside assembles forces that deregulate the gestures to be found within the machinery of persuasion.

There doesn't seem to be any other explanation, well at least one that may hold any sustained interest. One minute it was there and the next all that remained was the mark of some unseen gesture. I even have the security footage, albeit with some inexplicable gaps. The security guard assured me that nobody entered the gallery for hours either side of the incident, the door was locked and the cleaning staff had long come and gone. But something happened in those two and a half minutes, and as implausible as it may seem, we can draw only one conclusion... it was *him (or her)*. It was *Stillman*.

Figure 10:
Captured images CCTV while installing the work
Dyson Gallery, Royal College of Art
2014
Photograph from CCTV, Royal College of Art

After a seven days' march through woodland, the traveler directed toward Baucis cannot see the city and yet he has arrived. The slender stilts that rise from the ground at a great distance from one another and are lost above the clouds support the city. You climb them with ladders. On the ground the inhabitants rarely show themselves: having already everything they need up there, they prefer not to come down. Nothing of the city touches the earth except those long flamingo legs on which it rests and, when the days are sunny, a pierced, angular shadow that falls on the foliage.

There are three hypotheses about the inhabitants of Baucis: that they hate the earth; that they respect it so much they avoid all contact; that they love it as it was before they existed and with spyglasses and telescopes aimed downward they never tire of examining it, leaf by leaf, stone by stone, ant by ant, contemplating with fascination their own absence.[106]

The manifestation of the invisible city can be likened to a ghost because the city does not have a corporeal form to it – no shape, only the light and shadow of the stilts. We may say that nothing exists on the earth, as we cannot see anything that is not in possession of a certain form. If there is nothing to see with the opened eye, we can perhaps perceive something haunting with the eyes closed. Then we can experience a non-substantial existence with another eye that is no longer an organ of sight but rather of touch. Just imagine the body functioning as the eye engages with the city as an organ of touch. This newly constituted bodily consciousness will then allow the imperceptible city to become transformed into a visible, touchable space that will enable it to interact despite existing only as the absence of physicality. The skin of the body will then move over the surface of the city as a strange union of surfaces touching and being touched, thus dissolving not only the binary opposition between subject and object, but also the spatial organization of inside and outside. The city resurfaces on the level of its formally repressed figures and unveils within this a constellation of its desires of becoming other to what it was. The city can be

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[106] Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities*, trans. by William Weaver (London: Vintage Books, 1997), p. 69.

said to have a face or even be composed out of faces but these faces of the city, and the eyes it in turn encounters, are never identical. Baucis is not a space of nothingness but rather it is a realm of intensity brimming over with desires and forces. Visitors will never leave the city because they become trapped by the fascination of the city.

Figure 11:
Kyung Hwa Shon
in between; there is, there is not
2017
Holographic laser fabric, marble stone, pendulum, wire, acrylic paint
Dimensions variable
Photograph by the artist

"Memory is not an instrument for exploring the past but its theatre. It is the medium of past experience, just as the earth is the medium in which dead cities in buried."[107]

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[107] Walter Benjamin, 'Berlin Chronicle', in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings: Volume 2: Part 2 1931-1934*, trans. by Rodney Livingstone et al., ed. by Michael W. Jennings, Howard Eiland and Gary Smith (Cambridge, Mass.; London: Belknap, Harvard, 2005) p. 611.

"The dread of doors that won't close is something everyone knows from dreams. Stated more precisely: these are doors that appear closed without being so. It was with heightened senses that I learned of this phenomenon in a dream in which, while I was in the company of a friend, a ghost appeared to me in the window of the ground floor of a house to our right. And as we walked on, the ghost accompanied us from inside all the houses. It passed through all the walls and always remained at the same height with us. I saw this, though I was blind. The path we travel through arcades is fundamentally just such a ghost walk, on which doors give way and walls yield. [L2,7]"[108]

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[108] Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, trans. by Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge, Mass.; London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002), p. 409.

Memory and Imagination

"As this wave from memories flows in, the city soaks in up like a sponge and expands. A description of Zaira as it is today should contain all Zaira's past. The city, however, does not tell its past, but contains it like the lines of a hand, written in the corners of the streets, the gratings of the windows, the banisters of the steps, the antennae of the lightning rods, the poles of the flags, every segment marked in turn with scratches, indentations, scrolls."[109]

We tend to define a particular city's identity with the influences of significant historical events and recollect its impression through certain landmark sites. Such perspectives view a city as a solid consistent structure in the manner of rigid, identical coherence, and thus it in turn disregards the dynamic movements and endless rhythms occurring every second in everyday life. My experiences of a city in daily life in fact is closer to a field of excavation, mingling with different layers of time, unexpected occurrences of events and unforeseen manifestations of memories. The city in which I interact with the non-substantial and the unforeseen transforms into a space of flexibility, irregularity and fluidity rather than existing as a form of immobility. Thus I am not able to characterize its certain identity with any form of language or image. Instead of seeing the city through cognitive perception, I have encountered something unidentified or non-material with sensations. The manifestation of the uncertain image from the past to the present provides the possibility of the co-existence of different times and spaces simultaneously. So then, is the city the meeting point of past and present? The city appears as transitory faces in which images of the past come back to haunt the present. The traces of the past that revive from suspended animation occur as fragmentary images that are shown but not seen, or seen only as avisual spectacles. Is it possible to understand that the sudden appearance of the lost image that has been buried and hidden can be the reflection of a trace of ceaseless desire and aspiration? The city performs as a haunted place in which all deceased memories suddenly resurface with the mode of the phantasmal and then such manifestations unexpectedly disappear without leaving any trace. The more I unfold the

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[109] Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities*, trans. by William Weaver (London: Vintage Books, 1997), p. 9.

assemblage of the disintegrated factors in the city, the more it becomes an enormous, chaotic, surreal, even theatre-like space and in turn, a sense of otherness (or the feeling of newness) starts to emerge. The infinite metamorphosis of the city allows itself to appear unmeasurable and unpredictable. The faces of the city are always non-identical, transitory, which can be likened to the faces of a 'Bian Lian'[110] performer. Such uncontrolled and unanticipated transfigurations are embedded in the nature of the city. It avoids sticking to only a single character. The urban space is not operated by a mechanical order in successive time but rather by the interlocking of sensations and different temporalities. The temporal fragmentation and formless avisuality that are almost ghostly images from memories, cause a strange, uncanny form of doubling and deconstructed vision to unfurl and thus in turn, submerges into a state of hallucination without the consciousness of time and sequence. Thus, experiences within the city become infinitely fractured, transposed and intermingled, which causes the city to transform into a site of dynamics and disorder, dissolving any consistency and durable structure. The narrative that is formed in such the state of chaos is not necessarily logical and thus any certain meaning is excluded. The experience of such irrational space is for me on the basis of elusiveness, which refuses lucidity and fixity of purpose. Thus it can be understood that such dynamics does not signify the physical eventfulness generated by a large amount of traffic and crowds, but rather it implies the subjective complexity caused by emotional conflicts and the de-familiarization of the ordinary and the accustomed.

Such thoughts may in turn propel us to ask a question about what the relationship of the phantasmatic register, the power of the recollected image and schizophrenic subject can be. As a structure of a non-relational immediacy, the city is a space which encompasses a variety of fragmentary factors such as unknown voices, mysterious stories, forgotten figures and memories that have been concealed and exiled to the margin of actuality. Among these elements, the process of conflicts and re-formation that arises by the

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[110] 'Bian Lian' (literally 'Face-Changing') is an ancient Chinese dramatic art. It is part of Sichuan opera where actors keep changing their faces instantaneously with the swipe of a fan, a movement of the head, or wave of the hand. See Wang-Ngai Siu and Peter Lovrick, *Chinese Opera: Images and Stories* (Seattle, Wash.: University of Washington Press, 2008), p. 18-19. Also Lim S.K., *Origins of Chinese Opera* (Singapore: Asiapac Books, 2010), p. 28.

interruption of memory and imagination can be significant sources to comprehend how the city transforms itself as being a vital and ever-changing space, becoming a site of insatiable curiosity and fuelling the desire to see. Every alley and road becomes transformed into the domain of sensations. The manifestation of concealed memories and the imaginary makes the city appear unaccustomed, disoriented and reencountered, which gives rise to peculiar relationships with the world of things, as well as sensory experiences of fragmentation in everyday life. There is no absolute closure here. We can be both in time (and/or space) and also able to be out of a particular time (and/or space). The endless cut (or interruption) and the coalescence of heterogeneity arising in the city are the signifying processes as it presents the unique temporality and spatiality of the city. The condition of time and space in the city does not follow the linear mode but rather the multiplicity of times and spaces which can be comprehended more or less through the traditional Japanese performing arts. In Noh drama[111], different vortices of time coexist. The performer, by donning the Noh masks,[112] conveys different figures and characters from different levels of times such as ghosts, women, children, and the elderly.

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[111] 'Noh (能 Nō)' is a type of classical Japanese musical drama that was developed as a distinctive theatrical form in the 14th century by the actor and playwright, Kan'ami Kiyotsugu (観阿弥 清次) (1333 - 1384) and his son, Zeami Motokiyo (世阿弥 元清) (1363 - 1443). See Nippon Gakujutsu Shinkokai, 'General Introduction', in *The Noh Drama: Ten Plays from the Japanese* (Rutland, Vt.: Charles E. Tuttle, 1960), p. ix.

[112] In Noh drama, the relationship between the performer and the mask is unique. The function of the mask is not just to cover a performer's face for the performance, but it is believed that it has its own emotion and character. Thus, when the lead in Noh play, 'Shite', faces the mask in the 'Kagami-no-Ma (mirror room)', the performer is 'becoming' the mask, which implies that the 'Shite' and the mask becomes integrated as one.

In his book *Theatricalities of Power: The Cultural Politics of Noh*, Steven T. Brown states: '[…] Just before going onstage the *shite* sits before a mirror (in the mirror room) facing his own reflected image and puts on the mask. As he gazes intently though the tiny pupil eyeholes at the figure in the mirror, a kind of willpower is born, and the image – another self, that is, an other – begins to approach the actor's everyday internal self, and eventually the self and this other absorb one another to become a single existence transcending self and other…. [T]he functions of mirror and mask merge as a spirit is incarnated and the self transformed by the magic of strengthened auto-suggestion. When the time comes to go onstage, he fixes in his mind the stage as the mirror and himself as the image and then devotes himself completely to the magic of performance, which is meant to be shared with the audience and its group mind. […] Underneath the actor's costume and mask is the body of the actor transformed into the virtual body of the other. […] The noh mask (*omate*) does not disguise the face of the actor; rather, the actor's face *becomes* the face of the other through the spirit of the mask. The mask is not worn like a hat, but is "affixed" or "joined" (*tsukeru*) to the actor's face, becoming "a part of [his] body". The mirror room is the "space of transformation" where the actor becomes other, possessed by the spirit of the mask and the body of the other'.
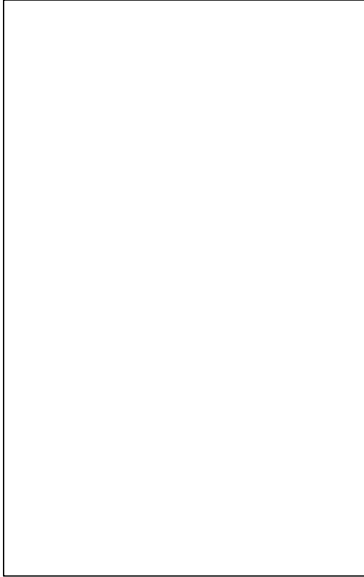
Figure 12:[113]
Noh Drama
Photograph by Hiroshi Sugimoto
Printed in *Hiroshi Sugimoto:Architecture of Time*

The structure of the traditional Japanese drama is divided into two separate parts –
in the first, the main character, appearing in a mask, enacts the scene, and in the second,
the character appears again, this time wearing the mask of the ghost's former self.[114] The
Japanese photographer and architect, Hiroshi Sugimoto states that: 'The ghost may be said
to be manifesting in double, both as the ghost and as the incarnation of who the ghost was
when alive'.[115] In the city, we are able to experience this strange doubling and layering of
time and levels of reality. A ghostly entity wandering the disordered space is at the

Steven T. Brown, *Theatricalities of Power: The Cultural Politics of Noh* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2001), p. 26-27.
For a more in-depth study on the concept of Noh drama and mask, see Friedrich Perzynski, *Japanese No Masks: With 300 Illustrations of Authentic Historical Examples*, ed. and trans. by Stanley Appelbaum (Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, 2005); A.L. Sadler, *Japanese Plays: Classic Noh, Kyogen and Kabuki Works* (North Clarendon, Vt.; Singapore: Tuttle Publishing, 2010); John Mack, *Masks: The Art of Expression*, ed. by John Mack (London: British Museum Press, 1994), p. 140-148.
[113] This photograph is taken by Hiroshi Sugimoto. Image source: Hiroshi Sugimoto, *Architecture of Time*, ed. by Eckhard Schneider (Cologne: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther Konig, 2002), p. 83.
[114] See Hiroshi Sugimoto, 'Noh Such Thing as Time', in *Hiroshi Sugimoto: Architecture of Time*, ed. by Eckhard Schneider (Cologne: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther Konig, 2002), p. 82.
[115] Hiroshi Sugimoto, ibid., p. 82.

crossroads of the inside and the outside, encountering the presence and absence of the in-between, which makes us always in a spin. Perpetual collisions of diverse possibilities in the city proliferate and divide into innumerable unanticipated variables at a dizzying speed, which embraces inaccessible and intricate psychological agitation. Within such an urban environment, it seems that the phenomenon repeatedly returns to manifest itself on the surface but it neither anchors nor accumulates a density or depth to remain as a permanent fixed existence. Rather it constantly slits, forks off from the previous one and thus it can refuse to be aligned and reconstituted. Any state of equilibrium and stability cannot be continued but rather deconstructed each time, which imposes a new meaning and a new break in causality. As a result, the repetitions of such phenomenon will be manifested in a collection of non-linear relations. So then, is it possible that the city can be understood as space of a time-crevasse, *caesura*, aporia[116] and fragments[117]? The idea of '*caesura*' is introduced by Hölderlin to demonstrate the disruption of the structure of a work, and it is this interruption that enables each part to be considered in its own terms. Within the context

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[116] Rodolphe Gasché writes on the notion of 'aporia': '*Aporia* means being *aporos*, without passage, having no way in, out, or through. […] Faced with an aporia, one must find a *poros*, a way out of the difficult and intolerable situation. […] *Poros* […] is a question of opening up a way where none existed. […] *Aporia* refers as well to difficult questions or puzzles. […] For Plato, the aporia designates the situation in which the one who is ignorant becomes aware of his or her ignorance and is thereby set on the path to truth. […] In Aristotle, the aporetic situation is systematically the methodological beginning of most of his investigations. […] To explore various routes (*diaporia*) so as to work out a solution (*euporia*) to what appeared to be an unsolvable dilemma. […] *Aporia*, according to Heidegger's interpretation of its Greek sense, names, then, a most singular but also most fundamental transitory situation of the human being in his or her relation to the world'. Rodolphe Gasché, 'Aporetic Experience', in *The Honor of Thinking: Critique, Theory, Philosophy* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2007), p. 332-340.
With the term 'possible-impossible' aporias, Derrida describes the paradoxes with four possible-impossible aporias: giving, hospitality, forgiveness and mourning. He argues that the condition of their possibility is also, and at once, the condition of their impossibility. See Jack Reynolds, 'Possible and Impossible, Self and Other, and the Reversibility of Merleau-Ponty and Derrida', in *Merleau-Ponty and Derrida: Intertwining Embodiment and Alterity* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2004), p. 173-196.
[117] In the modern era, the idea of the fragment is linked with the Romantic Movement, particularly Jena Romanticism. Its approach to philosophical writing is infused with the poetic. The poetically charged and fragmentary text indicates a turn away from both continuity and systematic totality. The ensemble of discontinuous fragments suggests a textual field that may be reconstituted as an infinite play of meaning. Fragments are understood as trails of an intense and agile aphoristic energy, a power of absolutely immeasurable extension and intensity.
See Simon Critchley, *Very Little . . . Almost Nothing: Death, Philosophy and Literature* (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 125.

of tragedy this effect is heightened. For Hölderlin, '*caesura*' can be a pure word or counter-rhythmic interruption that suspends the unfolding structure of the narrative and thereby reveals its finite character, indicating then rupturing from the divine sphere. It is this that indicates tragedy, because it points to the impossibility of union. The fragmentation of all linearity and unlimited breaks in causality fills the city with unsettling dynamics, which leads into the endless transition of the world of sensations. It in turn causes the break-up of the process of the formal coherence of entities. Within this procedure, there is no truth or monumental image of the city, but the waves and rhythms of its dynamics takes its place, which in turn amplifies the vibration and pulsation of vital energies to spread out in all directions without restraint. In this way, experiencing the city can be fragmented and discontinuous rather than linear and successive due to the rapid transposition of juxtaposed sensations and dynamics that forms of the very texture of velocity. The city generates thoughts and images of montage within the processes of the cut, interruption and collision. As a result, urbanites can instantaneously confront the ever-changing faces of the urban space in successive frames of perception. Such dynamic sensuous experiences placed in non-relation can be comprehended as a shock or a moment of awakening. The unlimited variables and potentialities contained within these frames of perception in the urban circumstance reinforce the complexity of every moment that evades the reality of distinct formations. With the operation of various machines of pulverization, condensation, stratification and sublimation, the unitary identity of the city that is built up by architects and urban planners becomes deconstructed and dismantled. Instead, the disjointed mode of sensing can be found in the recesses of imaginative projections of aesthetic becoming. Thus, such urban space provides the moments of awakening out of familiarity and habit in banal daily life, generating imagination and atypical relationships with the world of things. It is the dissolution of the familiar to the unknown and unidentified. The fleeting moment of de-familiarization cannot be verbally described or cognitively rationalized because such emotional intensity occurs prior to when a subject discovers the meaning of something and grasps words (or representative images) for rational judgment. It suddenly comes to us as a sudden shock like a flash of light. The invisible force of the shock collapses habitual recognition, and thus the continuous coherence of the consciousness becomes shattered and ruptured. The city is no longer a space in which physical substance (or structure) formulates;

rather it becomes transformed into 'a zone of the indiscernibility'[118] or 'a zone of undecidability'[119], which opens up the immanent potentiality out of the abyss of the city. In other words, the concept of the city in my research project is a psychological abstract space which is full of virtual objects or non-seeable and inexplicable images that do not conform with the actual, or present the actual image yet. So then, can we deduce that it can be like the character of the city phantom, Stillman, which does not have a certain body or the physical structure? Stillman is unsettled (unsettling), simultaneously oscillating between virtuality and actuality, which cannot be reduced to the logic of an either/or. Such an imaginary character, Stillman, does not remain either here or there but hovers on the edge of two realms in order to eradicate certainty. It avoids the dualistic tendency of being alive or dead, the present and the absent and the visible and the invisible. It is in the process of becoming that can never be determined by any representational forms and images. Similar to the nature of such an apparition, the endless advent of the virtual in the city of glass unfolds a space of making possible, the experiencing of a rapid transition of both the spatiality and temporality, which can touch off the phenomenon of the psychological conflicts. Of course, it is not possible to verify which one occurs first and then influences

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[118] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, '1440: The Smooth and the Striated', in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. and foreword by Brian Massumi (Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), p. 488.

[119] In his essay 'Difference and Repetition: On Guy Debord's Films', Giorgio Agamben notes that 'there are two transcendental conditions of montage: *repetition* and *stoppage*. Repetition is at the centre of Debord's compositional technique opening up "a zone of undecidability" between the real and the possible'. His use of stoppage brings 'cinema closer to poetry than to prose'. In the poem, stoppage is a 'noncoincidence, a disjunction between sound and meaning'. Paul Valéry said that the poem is 'a prolonged hesitation between sound and meaning'. To pull things out of the flux of meaning is to exhibit it and this is what gives stoppage its place within the practice of montage. Reflecting Valéry's definition of poetry, cinema is 'a prolonged hesitation between image and meaning'. 'It is not merely a matter of a chronological pause, but rather a power of stoppage that works on the image itself, that pulls it away from the narrative power to exhibit it as such'. Agamben states that 'the image worked by repetition and stoppage is a means, a medium, that does not disappear in what it makes visible. It is what I would call a "pure means", one that shows itself as such. The image gives itself to be seen instead of disappearing in what it makes visible'. For Debord, the image is 'a zone of undecidability between the true and the false. […] The image exhibited as such is no longer an image of anything; it is itself imageless. […] the refuge of all images'. Originally a translation of a lecture by Giorgio Agamben, delivered on the occasion of the 'Sixth International Video Week' at the Centre Saint-Gervais in Geneva in November 1995, see Giorgio Agamben, 'Difference and Repetition: On Guy Debord's Films', in *Guy Debord and the Situationist International: Texts and Documents*, trans. by Brian Holmes, ed. by Tom Mcdonough (Cambridge, Mass.; London: MIT Press, 2002), p. 313-319.

the other because they interpenetrate each other and occur simultaneously at once and in now-time. It is sure that the psychological turbulence and the arrival of unidentified images are interconnected. Understanding such relationships can be vital foundations for an enquiry into the identity of modern urbanites' perceptions, desires and psychological connections.

"As I walk through it my senses are reaching out and I am drawn to all sorts of things. For me cities are enormous bodies of people's desires and as I search for my own desires within them. I slice into time, seeing the moment. I see 'Shinjuku' as a stadium of people's desires. I like the intensity of the city's characters when its overcrowded and jumbled thoughts and desires are whirling. I cannot photograph anything without a city. I am definitely addicted to cities. I am creating my own home by connecting pieces of images from my imagination and things I saw as a child. I basically walk quite fast. I like taking snapshots in the moment of both myself and the outside world. When I walk around I probably look like a street dog because after walking around the main roads, I keep on wandering around the back streets. I never get bored walking around for over 50 years."[120]

<div align="right">Interview with Daido Moriyama</div>

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[120] Tate, *Daido Moriyama – In Pictures*, online video recording, YouTube, 18 October 2012, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=foWAs3V_lkg> [accessed 14 August 2018].

Figure 13:
Kyung Hwa Shon
The Trace of a City Phantom
2014
Painting, performance and sound (12' 30")
Stage: acrylic and chalk on board (200 x 200 x 10 cm)
Glass: copper paint on glass (55 x 55 x 0.6 cm)
Photograph by the artist

Fragments

The Jena Romantic Friedrich Schlegel was a great influence upon Maurice Blanchot, especially on the idea of the fragment in his work *The Writing of the Disaster*, that was written as a series of aphoristic encounters reflecting a Romantic approach to text. This can be understood as existing between philosophy and poetry and therefore took the form of aphorism. Maurice Blanchot delineates this relationship to the fragment:

> Fragments are written as unfinished separations. Their incompletion, their insufficiency, the disappointment at work in them, is their aimless drift, the indication that, either unifiable nor consistent, they accommodate a certain array of marks – the marks with which thought (in decline and declining itself) represents the furtive groupings that fictively open and close the absence of totality. Not that thought ever stops, definitively fascinated, at the absence; always it is carried on, by the watch, the ever-uninterrupted wake. Whence the impossibility of saying there is an interval. For fragments, destined partly to the blank that separates them, find in his gap not what ends them, but what prolongs them, or what makes them await their prolongation –what has already prolonged them, causing them to persist on account of their incompletion. And thus are they always ready to let themselves be worked upon by indefatigable reason, instead of remaining as fallen utterances, left aside, the secret void of mystery which no elaboration could ever fill.

> Fragmentation, the mark of a coherence all the firmer in that it has to come undone in order to be reached, and reached not through a dispersed system, or through dispersion as a system, for fragmentation is the pulling to pieces (the tearing) of that which never has pre-existed (really or ideally) as a whole, nor can it ever be reassembled in any future presence whatever. Fragmentation is the spacing, the separation effected by a temporalization which can only be understood−fallaciously−as the absence of time.

The fragments, as fragments, tends to dissolve the totality which it presupposes and which it carries off toward the dissolution from which it does not (properly speaking) form, but to which it exposes itself in order, disappearing−and along with it, all identity−to maintain itself as the energy of disappearing: a repetitive energy, the limit that bears upon limitation−or the presence of the work of art's absence (to say it all again and to silence by saying it again). So it is that the travesty of the System−the System raised by irony to an absolute of absoluteness−is a way for the System still to impose itself by the discredit with which the demand of the fragmentary credits it.[121]

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[121] Maurice Blanchot, *The Writing of the Disaster*, trans. by Ann Smock (Lincoln; London: University of Nebraska Press (New edition), 1995), p. 58-61.

My relation to the potentiality of the image broaches the qu
estions of how the 'regard' (or the sudden appearance of th
e Other) confers notions of temporality and spatiality upon
me. Once the fragmented body of Stillman appears on the
transparent surface, the potentiality of reversibility embed
ded in the nature of the image opens out a space of the po
ssibility of experiencing a rapid transition of both the spati
ality and temporality. The fragment of the city phantom is t
he passage from one world to another, entry into another w
orld, breaking in and exploring different time and space. Th
en, we finally arrive in a never-land of fragments, a place of
wordless things and thingless words. A question might be,
is the city a place that draws in spectres or is it a form of s
pectrality itself? This would constitute an important differe
nce. If the city is a place inhabited by ghosts it would point
towards the dialectic between matter (mechanisms) and sp
irit whereas if the   itself then it
would instead point   and
matter as a folded continuity. The city is
an intensity, a place in which faces circu
m of faciality itself that stages encounter.

STILMAN

The city is a place that concentrates economy but
y understood on every level. It brings things toget
ducing new flows that overwhelm other flows that
ngs together as well as breaking them apart. Subj
pushed up closely together and yet they are most
ly alone. A city beneath the flows and intensities is also a c
ity of bits, segmented, broken up and open to the wind. Th
a wind within the city is a special kind of wind blowing in m
ions at the same time. Populations are sensitive t
nds without have a direct knowledge of them. Aft
e corners of the earth. All these faces in
nds that brought them together in the fi
by such different origins and destinatio
unter with Stillman it might not be pos
n a manner. Now writing is incessant w
ni have been the sum total of
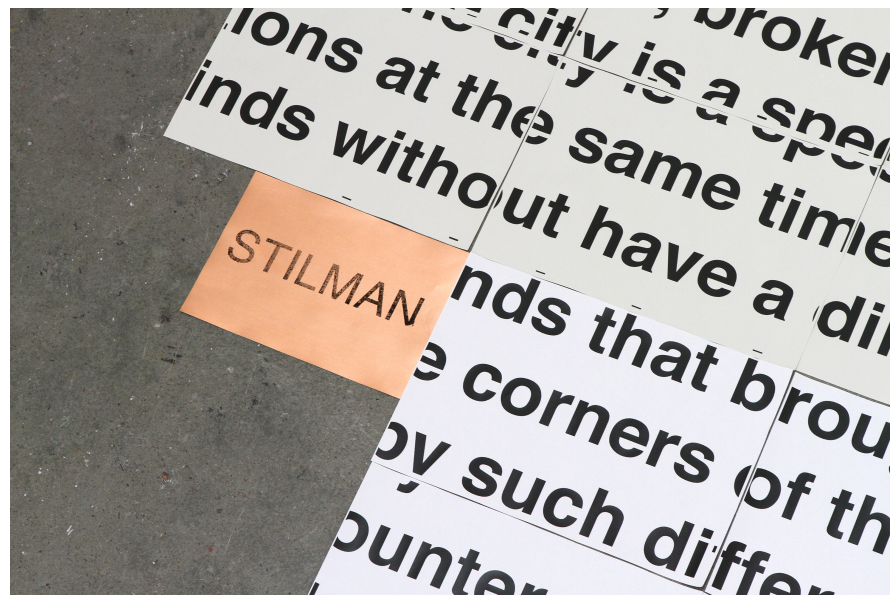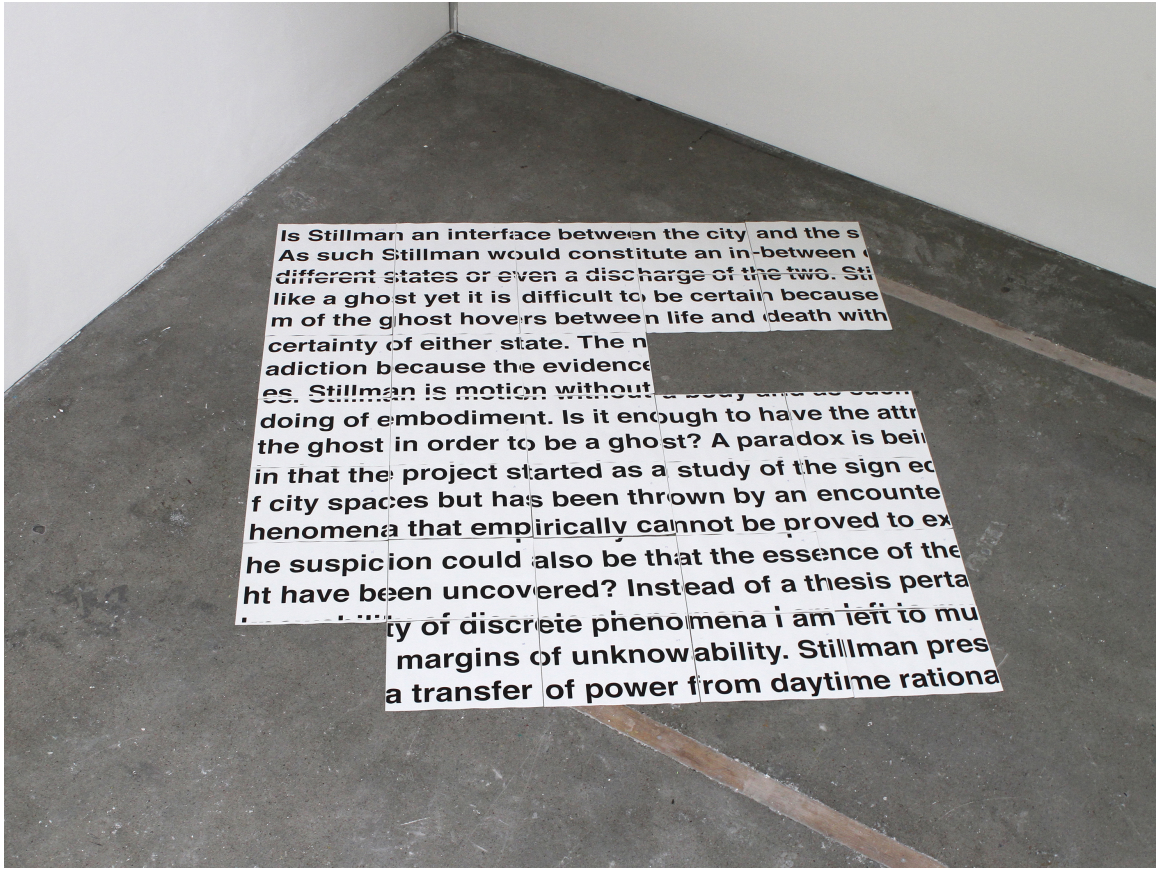sant writing is on the hither si
nly knows itself outside of hav

STILMAN

Figure 14:
Kyung Hwa Shon
The City of Fragments
2015
Fragments of an installation
Text on copper plate and paper
Photograph by the artist

The World Is Fragmenting

While walking around a city, I often come across ambiguous and fragmented images appearing and disappearing on glass windows, which in turn creates the feeling of unexpected rupture. As a passage, the window space demarcates both inside and outside, which exists as an undecidable zone. I wonder what factors result in my sudden, unexpected unease. I cannot clarify the causes of such unique emotional conflicts although I have striven to find out through logical and reasonable procedures. It is impossible to present a coherent account because it comes to me without prior notification but instead it appears with the shock of suddenness. Such an unanticipated event is beyond my control. The impact of a sudden interruption causes unease to occur and uncertain images in turn arise in combination with the process of imagination. What are such images? Are they derived from the fragments of forgotten memories and unwanted thoughts embedded in my unconscious? Or are they the reflection of desires that have not been allowed to manifest on the surface of the consciousness? The urban space in which realm of unconscious desire intrudes, does not offer a space in which the process of reasoned cognition can be involved. The fragments of uncertainty haunt me, leading into the world of the unknown or the imaginary. Traveling in the city of glass, I become another unique entity as if a person is possessed by a ghost. I, as a spectral entity, am floating and walking around here and there, from street and street, without a certain goal, purpose or any destination. In his interview, Daido Moriyama once said, 'Like a stray dog. Circling like a stray dog or alley cat. Or sometimes even like an insect. I will go from alley to alley, resurface and then enter another alley. And I'd just wander'.[122] Neither I nor the stray dog has an end destination in mind when we encounter the urban space. A glimpse of the surroundings rather than a long look is crucial for us to pick up scraps of information and to face images of the abandoned and unremarked. Confrontation with the inexplicable, unexpected and accidental is the crucial drive to continue the journey. Such a thing opens up a space for the possibility of encountering feelings of newness and psychic ambivalence,

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[122] Carlushi, *Memories of a Dog – The photographs of Daido Moriyama*, online video recording, YouTube, 3 March 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gmCDPB4ZYLQ> [accessed 14 August 2018].

as well as sensory experiences of fragmentation. In such a journey, the sense of smell, hearing and touch becomes as significant as the sense of seeing, or they could be even more crucial than that. Vision appears to be lost, for it is without a connecting sense of knowledge or judgment. I may desire to be a hybrid – half-dog and half-human whose body is composed of acute sensations. The direction to move is never decided but strolling is an activated activity with instinct and impulse as forces generating such an urban journey. My body shifts and moves onward in order to discover uncovered invisible remnants, ungraspable fragments, and evanescent vestiges. The strolling is generated by an intense force.

I shudder and tremble while entering through the doorway of glass (or window) and mirror, decomposing my identity as a rational being controlled by reason. I am transformed into a new entity that has the codes of animal and human simultaneously (a mixture of animality and humanity). The annihilation of the subject or human occurs, whereupon I am ultimately left in a state of oscillation between the two. Such a co-extensive state produces a sense of being unmade – I can be figured as a body of revolts in which the savagery of sensations is awakened, against the order of the logic. The sphere of the city is explored not by an eye [123] (or head), which is vertical-oriented perception through rational investigation but rather by a body, which is horizontal-oriented movement.[124] It is shifting

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[123] The approach of how I explore the city in my project is to escape from the shadow of 'ocularcentrism'. European metaphysical thinking has tended to privilege the eye above and beyond all other senses. It was especially evident in the 17th century with thinkers such as Descartes, who is seen as a visual philosopher. One of the main tenets of this philosophical system is that seeing equates to believing. Descartes said that: 'All the management of our lives depends on the senses, and since that of sight is the most comprehensive and the noblest of these, there is no doubt that the inventions which serve to augment its power are among the most useful that there can be'. See René Descartes, *Discourse on Method, Optics, Geometry, and Meteorology*, trans. by Paul J. Olscamp (Cambridge, Mass.: Hackett Publishing Company, 2001), p. 65. Cartesian thinking aimed as much as possible to objectify the visual field leading to the eye becoming disembodied. Invariably the spatial was stressed over the temporal within this order. Many of the discussions in 20th-century philosophy on Enlightenment modes of thinking challenge the privileged position of sight as the basis of truth.

[124] There are several distinct ways of walking in the city but what I am concerned with here is a way of walking that is largely a-cognitive. A cognitive mode of mapping of the city is based upon the vertical gait or posture that carries with it a sense of command and thus instrumentality whereas a horizontal gait that evokes the orientation of a dog implies a sensory mode of navigation. I utilise this distinction as a metaphor for distinctively different ways of mapping out space that would bring a subject closer to the circulation of the air that cultural formations emit. Hence the saying: 'there

the terms of vision from phenomenal to phantasmatic registers, from perceived visuality to an imagined one, from visual to avisual. While roaming the streets, the hidden things that have disappeared into oblivion become shimmering, slowly unfurling and resurfacing with excess forms. Nothing is what it seems. In a state of disorder, clarity of vision, good order and rationality are dragged down into a vortex in which sensations explode, which inverts and disturbs any rationalist foundation and its correlations. In escaping from the tyranny of reason, order and logic, the realm of the sensations and the imagination starts to present itself, just as an expedition in the city explores the uncertain and invisible with blind eyes and with an animal-like body. With the destruction of rational thoughts, the city is not a solid, physical space, but rather it is an excavation site, revealing the uncertain and the hidden beneath the surface. In turn, layers of images and sensations wake us from a deep sleep of the ordinary. The lost city that has disappeared into 'oblivion' comes to the surface, disclosing erased memory which may unfurl as an intangible but intense image. In each moment of unfolding, the world is created anew and a new perspective is thrown into the world. Each moment of new discovery is like the birth of a new world. Sudden, spontaneous recollection provides different outlooks on the city, and it becomes the psychic space of an individual. The city of memory and memory of the city interpenetrate and oscillate on the border between the dimensions of the personal and the communal. This might correlate with our exploration of the interplay between time and memory, space and image, sensation and emotional crevices. The interweaving of such elements allows the urban setting to be transformed into a space of disorientation in which one can easily lose oneself. In particular, I consider that the realm of glass is a fluid space in which disintegrated sensations conflict, proliferate and disperse simultaneously, resulting in exposure to a sense of unpredictability, instantaneity, flux, excitability, and fragmentation. A screen functions as a divider of a certain space, which restricts the extension of sensory experiences and particularly the visual and spatial senses. On the other hand, glass extends the sense of spatial mobility, temporality and sensory imagination through fragmented specular images on its surface. Once there is entry into the labyrinth of the city of glass, it is no longer possible to distinguish between dream and reality, between past and present,

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was something in the air at that moment.' This for me is a way of thinking alternatively to the dominant sense that issues from the dominance of ocular-centrism.

between inside (interior) and outside (exterior), between the subject and object and between actuality and virtuality; instead without beginning or end, entry into an opaque labyrinthine expedition creates endless labyrinths within labyrinths. Within any figure there is always another figure but never within the same space of optical continuity. In this sense, it is both the movement and passage from one world to another and still another in order to break in and explore, which in turn results in sliding into experiencing different temporality and spatiality. The ceaseless transitions of the world every second give depth and vividness to a prosaic perspective on urban life. The oscillating intensity of the space is the alternating rhythm of rupture and suture. Rupture provides the doorway into the figure within the figure and as such functions as a paradoxical switchboard from one to another despite the threat of abysmal loss. Suture[125] is the stitching over of this crossing over so that the process may inaugurate the next passage. Rupture exposes the abyss whereas suture stitches the wound to restore the surface. Thus, figuration and dis-figuration are bound together as part of a common process of becoming. The surface of the city and the depth of the psyche occur as a folded unity within my conception of urban space. Through the

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[125] The notion of 'Suture' originates from film theory. Although this term, 'suture', is historically used by Lacan, Miller, and cinema studies, I am not necessarily drawing upon its entire history of use. However, other trajectories of use unfold for concepts with such a dense history, particularly when it comes into play with other concepts such as 'rupture'. They are resonant but also discordant with each other. Concepts are latent with memory but they can also generate surprise in the present. Concepts are like springs that are imbued with meaning yet to come.

Slavoj Žižek writes on the 'suture': 'The concept of "suture" has a long history. It was elevated from a casual word that occurs once in Lacan into a concept by Jacques-Alain Miller, in his first and seminal short article, an intervention at Jacques Lacan's seminar of 24 February 1965. Here, it designates the relationship between the signifying structure and the subject of the signifier. Then, in the late 60s, the concept of "suture" was taken over into cinema theory by Jean-Pierre Oudart. In the following decade, when it was adopted and elaborated by the English *Screen* theorists, it became a global concept of cinema studies. Finally, years later, it again lost its specific mooring in cinema theory and was incorporated into deconstruction jargon, now functioning more as a vague notion rather than as a strict concept, as a term synonymous with "closure": "suture", in this context, signalled that the gap, the opening, of a structure was obliterated, enabling the structure to (mis) perceive itself as a self-enclosed totality of representation'. Slavoj Žižek, ''Suture', Forty Years Later', in *Concept and Form, Volume 2: Interviews and essays on Cahiers pour l'Analyse*, ed. by Peter Hallward and Knox Peden (London; New York: Verso, 2012), p. 147-167.
For a more in-depth discussion on the concept of 'suture', see Slavoj Žižek, 'Suture and Pure Difference', in *Less than Nothing: Hegel and The Shadow of Dialectical Materialism* (London; New York: Verso, 2012); Slavoj Žižek, *The Fright of Real Tears: Krzysztof Kieslowski between Theory and Post-Theory* (London: British Film Institute Publishing, British Film Institute, 2001), p. 31-68.

inter-connected process of rupture and suture, 'the immediate experience'[126] can arise as a form of fragment. We can experience it as a radical break[127] in continuous present time but it does not belong to the present, past or future. At the moment of such discontinuity, rational judgment (or cerebral) and narratives constructed by linear causality ceases; instead, bodily experience seizes and fills its gap. The world is no longer perceived and understood by the brain (or head) but sensed by the body across the skin and along the nervous system. In this state, the body is not a border of separation of inside from outside, but rather it is a prolongation of interiority into the world and an opening of exteriority into the subject, as mediation. More precisely, according to Jean-Luc Nancy's notion of a body in his book *Corpus*,

Bodies aren't some kind of fullness or filled space (space is filled everywhere): they are *open* space, implying, in some sense, a space more properly *spacious* than spatial, what could also be called a *place*. Bodies are places of existence, and nothing exists without a place, a *there*, a 'here', a 'here is', for a *this*. The body-place isn't full or empty, since it doesn't have an outside or an inside, any more than it has parts, a totality, functions, or finality. It's acephalic and aphallic in every sense, as it were. Yet it is a skin, variously folded, refolded, unfolded, multiplied, invaginated, exogastrulated, orificed, evasive, invaded, stretched, relaxed, excited, distressed, tied, untied. In these and thousands of other ways, the body *makes room* for existence (no 'a priori forms of intuition' here, no 'table of categories': the transcendental resides in an indefinite modification and spacious modulation of skin).[128]

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[126] Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, trans. by Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge, Mass.; London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002), p. 803.
[127] The relationship with Walter Benjamin is about the idea of interruption rather than shock, combining in this sense the idea of passage and rupture within passage. This relates to the idea of *caesura* in Hölderlin which in turn explains Benjamin's notion of past things having a futurity to them, thus breaking with positive ideas of historical progression.
[128] Jean-Luc Nancy, *Corpus*, trans. by Richard A. Rand (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), p. 15.

The world and the subject share a common existential ground or general medium or element of materiality. Subject and object (the world) intersect and interact with each other. The subjective body and the objective world become intertwined via a skin (or the body). Everything is allowed to pass through and nothing is hidden in the exposure of exposure itself. Sensation passes through the body, and thus such a bodily space in turn becomes metamorphosed into the domain of absolute freedom. In such a condition, the intensity of shock deconstructs and disintegrates the embodied entity. At the moment of rupture, the dualistic notion of the subject and the world (or object) cannot be registered. In other words, they are no longer divided and hierarchized but they are linked, interacting with each other, thus becoming one. The collapse of the dichotomy is interlocked with the time of the awakening. At the moment of such psychological rupture, we are able to get away from habitual everyday thoughts, encountering 'the surprise of the event'.[129] It allows us to experience temporal and spatial catastrophes. A question begins to arise in my mind. So, then, what is the event? The event is the unpredicted arrival. The condition of the event as such is temporal and immediate but extremely intense like a shock that interrupts the order of thoughts (or logic and reason) and ceases the continuum of time. The time of the event becomes empty. The event can never be presupposed and foreseen but rather appears with astonishment. The feeling of surprise as a footprint of the event strikes us with an explosion of condensed tension before we become aware that it can be akin to the manner of experiencing 'Satori (悟道)' through the Koan in Zen-Buddhism and the unanticipated appearance of the city phantom, Stillman. Jean-Luc Nancy states in his book: 'What is awaited is never the event; it is the advent […]'.[130] The event takes place as neither the formation of passing through nor process (or progressive) but rather happens as ruptures. He further explains that:

> There is a rupture and a leap: rupture, not in the sense of a break with the already presupposed temporal continuum, but rupture as time itself, that is, as that which admits nothing presupposed, not even, or especially not, a

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[129] Jean-Luc Nancy, 'The Surprise of the Event', in *Being Singular Plural*, trans. by Robert D. Richardson and Anne E. O'Byrne (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2000), p. 159-176.
[130] Jean-Luc Nancy, ibid., p. 167.

presupposition. To do so would be to admit an antecedent of time [in] to itself. The rupture of nothing, the leap of nothing into nothing, is the extension of negativity; or to be more precise, since the negative is not something that can be stretched like a rubber band, [it is] negativity as tension, a tension that is not itself progressive, but is all in one go, in a single stroke, the tension/extension of Being, 'that there is'.[131]

The moment in which such collision occurs shuffles all possibilities, all worlds, all order and all times. The point of the rupture is empty and void, but it embraces every possibility and infinitude at the same time.

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[131] Jean-Luc Nancy, ibid., p. 170-171.

"When nothing subsists of an old past, after the death of people, after the destruction of things, alone, frailer but more enduring, more immaterial, more persistent, more faithful, smell and taste still remain for a long time, like souls, remembering, waiting, hoping, on the ruin of all the rest, bearing without giving way, on their almost impalpable droplet, the immense edifice of memory."[132]

Marcel Proust, *The Way by Swann's*

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[132] Marcel Proust, *In Search of Lost Time: Volume 1 The Way by Swann's*, ed. by Christopher Prendergast, trans. with an introduction by Lydia Davis (London: Penguin Classics, 2003), p. 49-50.

In the pure state

In the novel *Remembrance of Things Past: Swann's Way*, Marcel Proust's famous '*madeleine*' [133] scene concretely captures an instantaneous moment of fracture when memory is unfurled. Combray, the involuntary reminiscer, appears in 'a morsel of time, in the pure state'.[134] In the scene, the small piece of cake takes the role of a catalyst, which unpredictably allows the return of what has been unremembered – vestiges of the yet not forgotten, concealed but not lost. At the moment of rupture, the forgotten, hidden memory suddenly awakens and the protagonist is able to re-experience vividly the time of Combray. The unveiled memory comes to him as a present sensation. Can we liken the condition of the hero being fascinated by visual, sound, tactile and cutaneous sensations to being in the state of hypnosis, hallucination or daydreaming? The essential point is that such vivid images and sensuous pleasures derived from the experiences in Combray are not representations of the past but they are different repetitions, something new. With regard to such an incident, Deleuze explains: 'The essential thing in involuntary memory is not resemblance, nor even identity, which are merely conditions, but the internalized difference, which becomes immanent'.[135] It retains the relation between the real and imaginary, the objective and the subjective, the actual and the virtual, the physical and the mental, the material and sensation. These two related elements differ in nature and they contradict each

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[133] Proust writes: 'Plump little cakes called "petites madeleines", which look as though they had been moulded in the fluted valve of a scallop shell. And soon, mechanically, dispirited after a dreary day with the prospect of a depressing morrow, I raised to my lips a spoonful of the tea in which I had soaked a morsel of the cake. No sooner had the warm liquid mixed with the crumbs touched my palate than a shiver ran through me and I stopped, intent upon the extraordinary thing that was happening to me. An exquisite pleasure had invaded my senses, something isolated, detached, with no suggestion of its origin. [...] Undoubtedly what is thus palpitating in the depths of my being must be the image, the visual memory which, being linked to that taste, is trying to follow it into my conscious mind. But its struggles are too far off, too confused and chaotic; scarcely can I perceive the neutral glow into which the elusive whirling medley of stirred-up colours is fused, and I cannot distinguish its form, [...] And suddenly the memory revealed itself. The taste was that of the little piece of madeleine which on Sunday mornings at Combray [...] the whole of Combray and its surroundings, taking shape and solidity, sprang into being, town and gardens alike, from my cup of tea'. Marcel Proust, *In Search of Lost Time, Volume 1: Swann's Way*, trans. by C.K. Scott Moncrieff and Terrence Kilmartin, revised by D.J. Enright (New York: The Modern Library Classics, 1992), p. 60-65.
[134] Gilles Deleuze, *Proust and Signs*, trans. by Richard Howard (London: Continuum, 2008), p. 39.
[135] Gilles Deleuze, ibid., p. 39.

other but they both refer and reflect each other. Then, they tend to join up with each other and become confused by slipping into the point of indiscernibility, resulting in the creation of the new at the time of rupture. Graeme Gilloch accounts for such an unexpected memory in his book *Myth and Metropolis: Walter Benjamin and the City*:

> [F]or Proust, such remembrances are not the intentional consequence of some controlled, directed mental activity. Rather, they flow from the elusive moment of illumination in which a sensation in the present suddenly and fleetingly calls to mind an earlier, forgotten experience with its train of associations and impressions, only for these to be forgotten once more. The smell and taste of the madeleine dipped in tea, the scent of various flowers – in Proust's work, these ephemeral stimuli awaken long-dormant memories of childhood encounters, loves and sorrows.[136]

The rediscovery of a certain space and the present sensation awaken the forgotten memory and causes it to emerge out of its abyss. Influenced by Proust, Walter Benjamin, in his essay 'Berlin Chronicle', also touches upon the spontaneous recollection and describes that:

> He who has once begun to open the fan of memory never comes to the end of its segments. No images satisfies him, for he has seen that it can be unfolded, and only in its folds does the truth reside−that image, that taste, that touch for whose sake all this has been unfurled and dissected; and now remembrance progresses from small to smallest details, from the smallest to the infinitesimal, while that which it encounters in these microcosms grows ever mightier.[137]

The well-preserved memory in darkness remains detached and self-sufficient, with its own

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[136] Graeme Gilloch, *Myth and Metropolis: Walter Benjamin and the City* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996), p. 98-99.
[137] Walter Benjamin, *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings: Volume 2: Part 2 1931-1934*, trans. by Rodney Livingstone et al., ed. by Michael W. Jennings, Howard Eiland and Gary Smith (Cambridge, Mass.; London: Belknap, Harvard, 2005), p. 597.

atmosphere, scents and sounds from its different chambers of spaces and passages of time. The images on the plate of remembrance drill a void in the wall of the abyss of forgetting and divulge their own appearances on the surface of sensations, which intrude into the world of the everyday (habitual) self. The moment when involuntary memory unfurls through the flavour of the *madeleine* can be comparable to the transitory time of an event occurring. At this point, everything is reversed. It is the moment of the crystal, and the point of indiscernibility arises, in which past and future collide and the actual and the virtual co-exist; the intertexture of two times and two sensations. In 'Cinema 2, The Time-Image' by Gilles Deleuze, the idea of the crystals of time[138] is used in order to analyse the working of cinematic montage. For Deleuze, the cinema is not just the presentation of present images, but rather it surrounds us with a world. He states that: 'The crystal-image was not time, but we see time in the crystal. We see in the crystal the perpetual foundation of time, non-chronological time, Cronos and not Chronos'.[139] Time is not stretched out linearly as a line but rather a rope that coils and uncoils. For Deleuze, what we see in the crystal is time itself, 'a bit of time in the pure state'.[140] The actual image reflects or mirrors a virtual image, 'the actual optical image crystallizes with its own virtual image'[141] in the form of a crystal image. 'When the virtual image becomes actual, it is then visible and limpid, as in the mirror or the solidity of finished crystal'.[142] The crystal image has both internal limits in the form of internal circuits and outermost limits at the edges of the world. On one side we have the crystalline seed and on the other a vast crystallisable universe. Connected with this is the way the crystal image is an operation in time in the form of a splitting of each moment as present and past move in two heterogeneous directions. In the moment touched by the shock of sudden illumination, the spurting images out of the crack in the dark abyss resuscitate all of the sensory materials such as taste, touch, scents, and sounds that have been resting in the grave of forgetting. And then, such accumulated particles of past memories merge with current sensory experiences, which in turn impact upon the

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[138] Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema II: The Time-Image*, trans. by Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta (London; New Delhi; New York; Sydney: Bloomsbury, 2013), p. 71.
[139] Gilles Deleuze, ibid., p. 84.
[140] Gilles Deleuze, ibid., p. 85.
[141] Gilles Deleuze, ibid., p. 72.
[142] Gilles Deleuze, ibid., p. 73.

perspective in the present, given environmental and personal psychological responses in an urbanite's perception. In an instant, the subject can experience the intense and indelible powerful force that the sudden manifestation of involuntary memories and sensations produces. They appear as a mode of the instantaneous and fragmentary but give rise to a vestige of unforgettable shock or force, influencing present perception. The intricate interweaving of memory with sensations results in imagination unfurling. In the maelstrom of modern urban life, shocks and multiple stimuli to the sphere of the unconscious cause involuntary memory to unfold, which in turn opens out into the world of imagination. The unexpected excavation of the past and the imagination bring numerous circumstances and contingencies into the urban setting. In other words, the city transforms itself into a mysterious, surrealistic space with labyrinthine characteristics. For me, such an urban space is like a great labyrinth or maze full of infinite potentialities and possibilities. Graeme Gilloch explains such an experience: 'To journey within a labyrinth is to be a *flâneur*, one who wanders without destination, one who is able to lose him or herself in the metropolis'.[143] When all things unfold, the city can never be a space for predictability, disinterest, repetition and boredom. On the contrary, the urban environment appears as a place of spontaneity, dislocation and disorientation. The conditions of porosity, multiplicity and indeterminacy are the prevailing features in my concept of the urban space. The quality of such chaos and disorder within the city can be connected with the notion of impermanence and fluidity of spatial and temporal boundaries, which in turn links to the excitement and stimulation found in the urban circumstance. A fluid, unforeseen chaos and improvised activities constitute the dynamics of the urban life. The temporality that the urban subject encounters in everyday life is not a linear progression, but rather discontinuous and fragmentary. As a site of intoxication, the city offers the metropolitan the exhilaration of the freedom of losing oneself and the novelty is intensified through the event of unexpected shock. Such viewpoints can be seen as well in Water Benjamin's impression of Moscow. In his essay 'One-Way Street', Benjamin states that: 'The city is on its guard against him, masks itself, flees, intrigues, lures him to wander its circles to the

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[143] Graeme Gilloch, *Myth and Metropolis: Walter Benjamin and the City* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996), p. 112.

point of exhaustion'.[144] The movement in such an urban setting is closely related to the voyage in the labyrinth without beginning or end. The city transmutes its appearance into the adventurous, mysterious and unfathomable. Then, experience in such a space becomes momentary and fragmentary, which can be understood as how montage is experienced in film. The city rendered as a strange and unfamiliar realm, not static but dynamic and dialectical, transfiguring itself into a place of disorientation and unknowing (or not-knowing). Within such a de-familiarized urban site, 'the cityscape becomes landscape'.[145] Regarding this kind of thought, Anna Stüssi states that: 'This paradoxical art of unknowing itself creates a no less strange setting: the city as landscape. [...] To those for whom the city appears as nature, it is not closer and more familiar, but rather thoroughly unnatural and strange'.[146] The fragmentation and discontinuity in the recollection become intermingled with sensuous experiences in the present, which turns the city into a landscape at the moment of rupture. In this state, a person is able to acquire the pre-habitual gaze of a child without the 'anaesthetic effect of habit'.[147] Such a landscape in turn provides endless opportunities for people to stray and encounter different faces of the city. The metropolis appears amorphous, ever changing, where one is able to have intimate connections with the world of things and move closer to the sphere of sensations and images, more and more, deeper and deeper.

[144] Walter Benjamin, *One-Way Street and Other Writings*, trans. by Edmund Jephcott and Kingsley Shorter (London: Verso, 1985), p. 179.

[145] Graeme Gilloch, *Myth and Metropolis: Walter Benjamin and the City* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996), p. 106.

[146] Graeme Gilloch, ibid., p. 106.

[147] Marcel Proust, *In Search of Lost Time, Volume 1: Swann's Way*, trans. by C.K. Scott Moncrieff and Terrence Kilmartin, revised by D.J. Enright (New York: The Modern Library Classics, 1992), p. 11.

In Search of the Unknown Man

A city as a field of excavation

Seemingly decryption, encryption, code, cipher

But there is no law and meaning

Everything is buried in the city, but I haven't discovered these things yet

Discovering, forgetting and tracing with blind eyes in darkness

Not in a quest for truth

But search for fragments[148], oblivion, ruins and moments within a city

Wandering the city without a plan

Window and mirror as a zone of fading and becoming

Within the dazzle, entering into imaginary world

Being in sheer ecstasy

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[148] Fragments are closely connected with a constellation of concepts, consisting of numerous thoughts related to theories of montage (juxtaposition, gap, fissure), to theories about time (stoppage, interruption, discontinuity, arrest), to fetishism and castration (particularly regarding the ideas of cut and loss), to theories of physics (splitting the atom, chaos theory, relativity), ideas of dream-work (omission, fracture, association, condensation, omission), to theories of the subject (displacement, splitting, forgetting, misrecognition), to theories of allegory (ruins, incompletion, displacement, otherness), to theories of psychoanalysis (trauma, mourning, desire, lack) and the aesthetics of sublimity and abjection (debris, residue, waste, formlessness).

Figure 15:
Kyung Hwa Shon
The Trace of Stillman
2015
Engraved mirror
121 x 140 x 0.6 cm
Photograph by the artist

"A portrait-one came to perceive this little by little-does not resemble because it makes itself similar to a face; rather, the resemblance only begins and only exists with the portrait and in it alone; resemblance is the work of the portrait, its glory or its disgrace; resemblance is tied to the condition of a work, expressing the fact that the face is not there, that it is absent, that it appears only from the absence that is precisely the resemblance, and this absence is also the form that time seizes upon when the world moves away and when there remains of it only this gap and this distance."[149]

[149] Maurice Blanchot, *Friendship*, trans. by Elizabeth Rottenberg (Stamford, Calif.: Stamford University Press, 1997), p. 32.

"We do not see because we have eyes, but we have eyes because we can see."[150]

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[150] Martin Heidegger, *Parmenides*, trans. by André Schuwer and Richard Rojcewicz (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1998), p. 146.

Figure 16:
Kyung Hwa Shon
A Neverland of Fragments; A Place of Wordless Things and Thingless Words
2016-2017
LED and sound
Dimensions variable
Courtesy Alternative Space LOOP. Photograph: Youngha Jo

Figure 17:
Kyung Hwa Shon
The City of Fragments
2015
Silkscreen on paper
Dimensions variable
Photograph by Sotiris Gonis
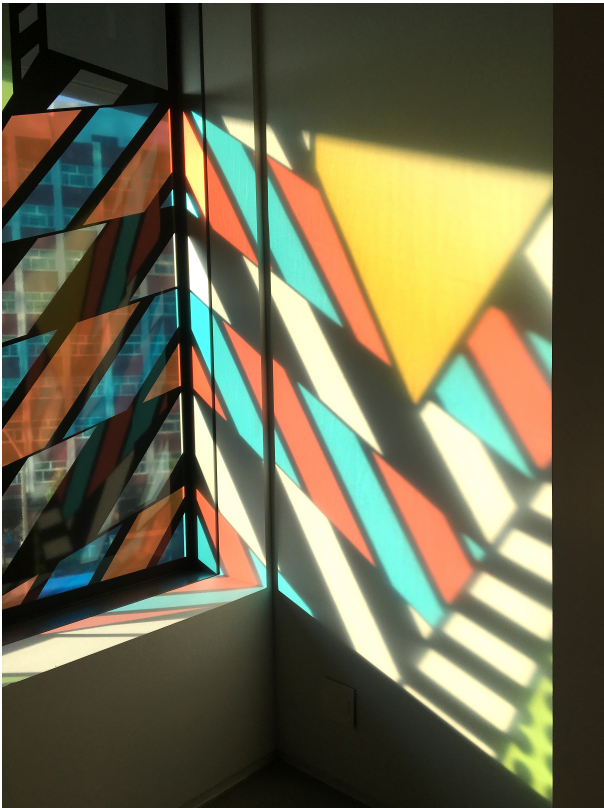
Figure 18:
Kyung Hwa Shon
Every Second in Between
2018
Digital print on the transparent vinyl stickers
Dimensions variable
Courtesy Sehwa Museum of Art

Figure 19:
Kyung Hwa Shon
Every Second in Between
2018
Moving image (continuous loop)
Courtesy Sehwa Museum of Art

Figure 20:
Kyung Hwa Shon
Non-Visibility
2014
Phosphorescent powder pigment, gold metallic foil, silver reflective fabric, cage, 3D-printed teeth, bird toy, etc. Sound included (12' 30")
Dimensions variable
Photograph by the artist

The Blinking of an Eye[151]

In the blink of an eye

The phase between the power of vision and blindness

A process of absenting and presenting of image

The black sphere absorbs the light

The unlimited images are suddenly emerging in a flash

The world unfurls on the screen of the sphere

The lightless night comes in

In the loss of vision, becoming a blind man

Then, the visible images disappear into the abyss

Nothing can be seen in such darkness

The afterimage however appears and illuminates the darkness

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[151] In the section of 'The Blinking of an Eye', I attempt to conduct experiments to explore how the fragments of the text can perform as an image in my text after reading Roland Barthes' essay 'Incidents'. These stories are written while staying in Kharkiv, Ukraine through SWAP: UK/Ukraine 2017 supported by British Council Ukraine and Liverpool Biennial.

Between nothing and something, there is an occurrence of the ambiguous.

Something takes place in that in-between and this in turn represents a third space, void of content. A look, as an image yet to come, like a blink of becoming. Such a gaze annihilates the real and disintegrates vision, setting out in the search for another face, stretching out to another time and space, in a quest for the unimaginable world. It gives rise to the unfurling of other possibilities that produce restless, unavowed vertigo.

The face is like a screen, which manifests unlimited images of desire and emotion.

A passage

A space of mediation

Rupture or break between the visible and the invisible
Hovering between the realm of manifestation and annihilation
The union of light and dark

'Two places at once, was it, or one place twice?'[152]

'If it – learning to live – remains to be done, it can happen only between life and death. Neither in life nor in death alone. What happens between the two, and between all the "two's" one likes, such as between life and death, can only maintain itself with some ghost, can only talk with or about some ghost'.[153]

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[152] Paul Muldoon, 'Twice', in *The Annals of Chile* (London: Faber & Faber, 1994), p. 12.

[153] Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International*, trans. by Peggy Kamuf (New York; London: Routledge Classics, 1994), p. xvii.

One day she suddenly says to him,

'London is empty.'

She emphasizes and tells him

'I always feel that I am the only person living in this city.'

'So, I like staying in this city.'

Then she adds,

'I encounter a lot of people of all cultures while walking around the city. I feel that they are like ghosts – walking spectres.' 'London is a city of the ghost.'

The Most Beautiful Shiny Sunday

Quiet sunshine morning

Strong sunlight coming through the window

A half glass of orange juice on a small chair

He is looking out the window and enjoying the cool summer air on the balcony

A light breeze is blowing

His hair is ruffling in the breeze

A sea of golden waves appearing under the summer sunshine

The bright golden waves are filling the space

A white cloud floating across the blue sky

A flight remains a trace of a white single long line across the blue

On the ground, a person is passing by

There is a sound of shouting in the air

The man hiding himself beneath the window

The haunting calls of the wild bird wafting across the air

An eagle is flapping its black wings noisily on the balustrade

It breaks solitude, the silence of immensely pathetic absence

I fall

I flow

I melt

Waiting for the arrival of the unknown,

Or the return of the uncertain

The impossible image of the visual

Is it hallucination, dream or imagination?

On the edge of disappearing,

A trace of the death becomes appearing

The void of darkness

The space of the solitude and infinitude embracing the silence

The annihilation of finitude

X enjoys wandering around a city by riding a young horse. Walking along the rough and bumpy road is not easy but a lot of fun. During the city tour, X once says to Y that X's first impression of this city is nostalgic. It seems to X that the city grabs the fragments of time and preserves them in the corner of the buildings and streets and people's daily lives. Y also reads the city in the same way. The city may not want to be changed but rather remain as it is longer, within the past, in order to retain people's traces. The city can no longer let its memories and remnants flow away and thus, it still stays in a particular time which X and Y have never visited. The city can acknowledge the nature of time that the advent of the future will never allow the past to return, just as a river flowing into the sea can never go back to when it was a little steam of water flowing from a pond in the mountain. X stares at Y silently for a while and then continues to say that the city can be a space of the time in which intangible traces unfurl.

A question appears in my mind,

'Is it necessary to put on sunglasses while wandering the city of Kharkiv?'

Figure 21:
A photograph from the city tour on 23rd August 2017, Kharkiv, Ukraine.
Photograph by Kyung Hwa Shon

In this city, there is a unique coffee culture.

If you want to be a young hipster, you should enjoy either the coffee blend with orange juice, or a glass of orange juice with several shots of liquid chocolate.

Everything is new to her. Visiting a new city, staying in an unfamiliar flat and sharing it with an unknown person. All her senses become much sharper and more sensitive than usual. Her sense of hearing in particular is too sharp for her to fall asleep at night. It is already 4am but she cannot asleep because there is a little sound outside her room. It bothers her. The sound is not that far off. She decides to see what is happening. She walks rapidly and soundlessly like a cat to the corridor so as not to be detected by anyone in the flat. She discovers where the unidentified sound is coming from. It is from the kitchen. She suddenly starts to laugh because of the excessiveness of her imagination. The little noise is from her new flatmate eating crisps in front of the sink in the middle of the night.

There is a brown brief case with four letters

A hand writing O S E L

Is it the name of a person?

Or is it the secret cipher indicating a certain thing?

The bag is still remaining with a small red sponge ball

Getting inside

Getting out

Standing

Getting in

Getting out

Standing

Getting in

Getting out

Standing

Getting in

Getting out

Standing

Getting inside

It never gets outside again

Lighting turned on

Pause for three minutes

Only is an old freestanding electric fan whirling in the silence

The first lighting turned off and the second lighting in the other room immediately on

Two persons are chuckling about such situation

Their laughing sounds are fulfilled in the room

Pause for one minute

The first lighting unexpectedly on again

Two lighting turned on in separated spaces

Both lightings turned off when they leave the rooms

They gradually disappear

Figure 22:[154]
Kyung Hwa Shon
A Neverland of Fragments; A Place of Wordless Things and Thingless Words
2016-2017
LED and sound
Dimensions variable
Photography by Seung Chan Lee

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[154] Kyung Hwa Shon, *Kyung Hwa Shon_A Neverland of Fragments; A Place of Wordless Things and Thingless Words*, video documentation, YouTube, 2 May 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hBIhA4FqLIo> [accessed 3 April 2019].
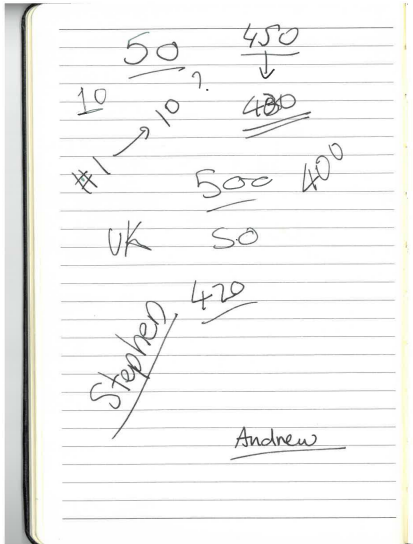
45 days in Ukraine[155]

<u>Story. 1</u>

Figure 23:
A conversation with Andrew from a local flea market in Kharkiv, Ukraine.
Photograph by Kyung Hwa Shon

This note shows a conversation and price negotiation about a golf ball between a golf ball seller, Stephen, and I in a local flea market in Kharkiv. One day, in the afternoon, Stephen and I decided to visit the market without Ukrainian staff in order to buy golf balls for his performance and some objects for my installation. While wandering the market, we decided to pretend to be deaf as we did not speak Ukrainian at all. My strategy was that I used a pen and a notebook to communicate with the sellers because I was not good at pretending to be deaf. Stephen, however, did not need such aids as a performance artist. Most of the sellers took pity on us and became much gentler than before and tried to help us with our shopping. The most memorable seller was Andrew who sold various toys and everyday objects. He was the sole person from the local community in Kharkiv who I could name apart from art-related people. When we were in his market space, he smiled at us and introduced himself and then asked our names as well. The conversation was not just only for the sale; there was also warm, human affection. We did not communicate through

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spoken language but could share our emotions through eye contact with each other. I still felt guilty for lying to him but it was one of the most memorable and beautiful conversations that I had with the local people in Kharkiv.

Story. 2

Figure 24:
Should I Put Sunglasses On?
Solo exhibition poster at YermilovCentre, Kharkiv, Ukraine.
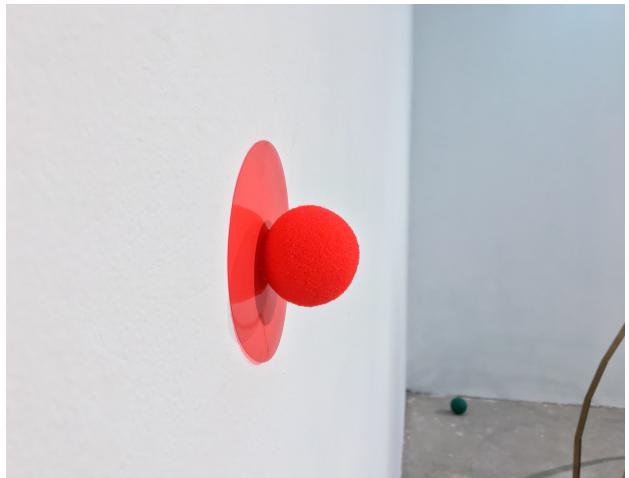Courtesy YermilovCentre

Figure 25:
Kyung Hwa Shon
Should I Put Sunglasses On?
2017
Aluminium, bricks, grass, plastic cup, coloured acetate sheets, chalk, polystyrene balls. Sound included
Photograph by the artist

There were numerous ambiguous letters and unique signs in the streets of Kharkiv that I could not guess the aim of or understand the meaning of. My imagination unfurled while walking around the city. This street sign (sunglasses-like) was the most memorable one because my interpretation of the sign was totally wrong and made the local people laugh. On the second day in Kharkiv, I saw this sign many times in the streets during an architectural tour that was part of the residency. I asked, 'While wandering this city, do we have to put sunglasses on? The sign prescribes that we must have them.' Of course, no one understood what I was talking about. After they explained what the sign was (it is a sign for drivers indicating the presence of a crossing for the visually impaired), I became more interested in the notion of de-familiarization and the moment of aesthetic shock, which led to the development of my concept for the installation artwork that was shown during my solo exhibition at the YermilovCentre. The work showed the fragments of my unique perspective and my peculiar relationships with the world of things within the city and how I absorbed Ukraine's culture and everyday life. The exhibition at the YermilovCentre was an abstract landscape of Kharkiv oscillating between the surface of the city and the depths of the psyche. It could be understood as my imaginary and psychic world incorporating fragmentary memories and experiences from a different time and space.
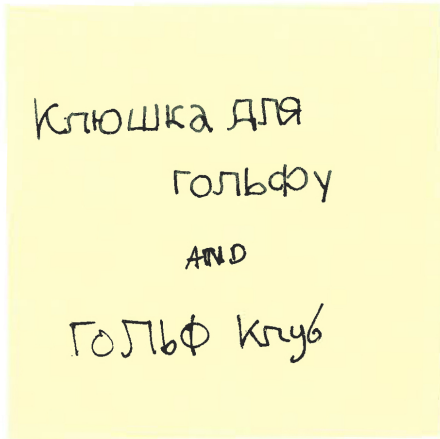
Figure 26:
Two different words about a golf club
Photograph by Kyung Hwa Shon
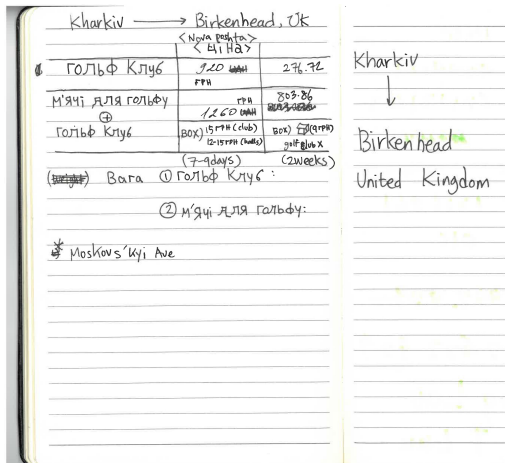
Figure 27:
A golf club between 'Клюшка для гольфу' and 'гольф Клуб'
Photograph by Kyung Hwa Shon

Today, I visited two different post offices to ask about the price of boxes and international shipping costs from Kharkiv in Ukraine to Birkenhead in the UK. My experience with the local post offices was terrible, a total nightmare. Before going there, I needed to prepare several things such as finding several key words in Ukrainian and making a diagram in my notebook for efficient communication with the staff in the post office. Otherwise, I knew that this mission would be never accomplished. I opened my Google Translate app and typed 'golf club' and 'golf balls'. I copied the translations into the diagram one by one.

Writing Ukrainian alphabets was akin to drawing unfamiliar shapes and patterns. My careful drawing took a pretty long time but I enjoyed it very much. With the notebook, I walked confidently towards the post office, feeling like an Olympic athlete who had won a gold medal, as I believed that everything had been perfectly prepared. However, the belief did not last long. I encountered an elderly lady working in the post office and I slowly began to realize something was wrong by her strange, puzzled facial expression. It was a very embarrassing moment because this unexpected situation was not planned and included in the process of the preparation. The lady's face revealed that she could not comprehend what I wrote in my notebook at all. After coming back to the YermilovCentre and checking with the staff, I understood what her face indicated. I did not know that there were two different Ukrainian words for 'golf club'. In the post office, I gave 'гольф Клуб' to her instead of 'Клюшка для гольфу'. I must have appeared to be a totally stupid Asian girl to the lady. But that's okay. I think that it was a great attempt. I guess.... Maybe I wish....

It was not successful today but I think that I will do well next time. And I am definitely sure that I can complete the mission set by Stephen tomorrow!!!

'He needs my eye looking at him. He needs me to prove he's alive'.[156]

An eye looks at a face. The surface consists of holes, lines and planes. The eye wanders over the face without a certain order. The eye starts to caress the skin by touching its eyelid gently and then the eyelashes one by one. The hairs are long, fuzzy, light, giving a soft feel as if one is touching a feather. As the eyelid opens, the hidden bead is slowly disclosed. There is a sparkling gaze inside like a black hole unfurled. It is like a deep and dark night. There is the intense gaze inside. Such intensity is emitted from the void. We will never be able to escape from such an infinite, forceful dark void unless it releases us. It is as if we are trapped in the middle of pitch darkness.

The cavity pulls and pushes the caressing gaze. While the darkness absorbs and pounces on the gaze, it becomes thoroughly trapped within such a void and thus it can never flee from its captivation. The intensity of desire between the gazes causes the dimensions of the black spheres to change. The sphere expands like a vast and boundless plain or a meteorite crater and also contracts to the smallest, deep dot or a pinhole. The gaze explores every space of the dark hole as if one is carefully caressing the other's skin with one's fingertips so as not to miss anything.

The dark void silently releases the gaze and thus the eye is able to get out of the dark night and move on. Then, the freed eye begins to touch the shallow wrinkles on the surface. The folds create a benevolent smile that looks like rippling waves lapping at the edge of a small pond. Within such a generous smile, a placid and peaceful atmosphere is emitted. In the mind, the moment when the cherry trees and magnolia silently start to bloom in spring appears. The scene of the petals swiftly unfurling overlaps with the frills from the smile. Like the flower buds bursting into blossom, the smile spreads all over the face. It is a most enchanting, indelible time. The caressing gaze begins to move towards a narrow path and arrives at the highest point of the face. As if walking along precipitous cliffs, the palpable gaze cautiously grazes the surface and intermittently stops to look over the facial landscape. There are very little pores, fine wrinkles, and hairs on the smooth skin. The eye

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[156] Paul Auster, *The New York Trilogy* (London: Faber and Faber, 1987), p. 184.

goes along such a thin and steep slope to come down and move over around the soft cheek. It has such a beautiful, healthy sheen and silky surface. The gaze senses the pulsation transferred from the heart to the surface. The outer layer of skin performs as the mediation of the inner body emitting its inner energy. The gaze gently rubs the surface and draw into it more and more. The eye desires to kiss the soft flesh on the face more deeply and searches for another hollow place hidden beneath bush-like whiskers. The gaze caressing the countless folds discovers a huge opening and enters slowly into it – a cave filled with warm moist air.

Such a gaze performs as a palpating touch. The eye that is transformed into a desiring subject in the act of touching interacts with the world (or a city) with the sense of the haptic. The flesh of world is touched by the caressing gaze moving along every surface of its skin. The eye is acting like sensitive fingertips that push, flay, pierce, flutter, smear, slide, scrape and rub the skin of the world. The touch of the amorous eye upon the world and that of the world on the eye co-mingle each other and thus the mutual exposure of each other's skin gives rise to intimate relationships like erotic encounters. The mode of touch involves the opening of one body to another, which brings two bodies into a single, sensible, real and palpable body – one, without even a tiny gap. The encounter between the gazes, caresses and desires. It is a completely sensuous, erotic, bodily engagement in which we cannot tell where one body begins and the other ends. It is the exchange of sensations between two bodies.

Figure 28:
Kyung Hwa Shon
He Needs My Eye Looking at Him. He Needs Me to Prove He's Alive
2016
Pink holographic laser fabric and mirror
355 x 800 cm, 65 cm (in diameter)
Photograph by the artist

Kagami-no-Ma (鏡の間)[157]

I am staying in a sacred space, Kagami-no-Ma.

A mask, mirror and I are in the room.

I don the mask.

The mask covers my face.

Then, I can feel the beating of its heart.

I am also hearing the sound of its breath.

Questions begin to appear in my mind,

'Am I possessed by the mask?'

'Who am I?'

Ongoing conversations between two figures occupy the mirror room.

I am gazing into the mirror.

I see myself that has been transmogrifying into the unknown figure, 'Stillman'

Stillman is being made to possess my soul and body through the mask.

I am no longer operative and Stillman is coming into being.

It is neither one thing nor the other, placed betwixt and between.

Being and non-being co-exist within one body.

A body of heterogeneity.

The interchange of one and the other.

Masking is the act of transformations.

In-between of concealment and revelation.

The event of becoming unknown entity.

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[157] The lead in Noh drama – known as the 'Shite (仕手, シテ)' – stays in the 'Kagami-no-Ma (鏡の間)', the 'Mirror Room' and the 'Shite' puts on the mask and waits to enter the stage.

The Face of the Invisible One

In a state of suspension, infinite, itinerant and free

Disappearance of the circularity of the look

The absence of anything seeable

Faces have no ends, nor for that matter final accomplishments – faces behind faces

The state of either the reiterative disclosure or the withdrawal

Blank screens – signs without seeming content

Either shining or fading

The event of becoming

Vaporous, mist

Unformed | Deformed

A trace of a lost object

Nothing of the visible

Undoing

Mutations

Faces

Stillman and Another Stillman

 "As Stillman reached the threshold of the station, he put his bag down once again and paused. At that moment Quinn allowed himself a glance to Stillman's right, surveying the rest of the crowd to be doubly sure he had made no mistakes. What happened then defied explanation. Directly behind Stillman, heaving into view just inches behind his right shoulder, another man stopped, took a lighter out of his pocket, and lit a cigarette. His face was the exact twin of Stillman's. For a second Quinn thought it was an illusion, a kind of aura thrown off by the electromagnetic currents in Stillman's body. But no, this other Stillman moved, breathed, blinked his eyes; his actions were clearly independent of the first Stillman. The second Stillman had a prosperous air about him. He was dressed in an expensive blue suit; his shoes were shined; his white hair was combed; and in his eyes there was the shrewd look of a man of the world. He, too, was carrying a single bag: an elegant black suitcase, about the same size as the other Stillman's. Quinn froze. [...] Whatever choice he made - and he had to make a choice - would be arbitrary, a submission to chance. Uncertainty would haunt him to the end. At that moment, the two Stillmans started on their way again."[158]

Stillman is a double in so many different ways, appearing and disappearing from one instant to the next, sometimes like a trace but then a definite entity. It is difficult to work it out because it is outside of measure.

There may be a line that divides art and life or at least something that keeps alive such a difference. When I start to reflect upon Stillman it is as if lines of distinction start to disappear. What is left over cannot be fathomed.

A ghost is that which simply haunts. It is without an object of perception because to lend it such a status is a trap.

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[158] Paul Auster, *The New York Trilogy* (London: Faber and Faber, 1987), p. 55-56.

A ghost may be a figure at the threshold of the void which threatens to engulf the subject. Yet it suspends the void out of which it appears. As such it oscillates between figurability and unfigurability. When we reach for a name for this we may also know that it cannot be fixed in space like other things. Anyway desire simply requires something to pursue even though our inclination is always to evade the ghost.

A ghost is the vanishing point of perception. What is it that I am in pursuit of, then: the dissolution of all certainty – or what? I have been asked to make an original contribution to knowledge, but all I seem to know is the uncertainty of my figure.

To gain knowledge of something implies having depth but the last attribute of Stillman is depth or in fact any dimension. In simple terms there is nothing to grasp and certainly no origin that can be explored. It is like the evaporating vestiges or traces of something.

I have a feeling that the time of the ghost is close to midnight. Midnight, according to Maurice Blanchot, is both a time which is approaching and a time which has past, but we do not know which. As such it is close to a condition of inertia. Midnight is the interval that introduces this inertia into the restlessness of time itself.

Within the time of the sudden manifestation of the non-embodied entity, I am neither able to discern its identity by language nor examine its attribution with any certainty. Rather it remains as a state of impossibility without mediation. Stillman is thus a state of incessant and uninterrupted spectrality that is either in excess or lacking in relation to all other entities in its field of encounter.

Stillman exhibits itself, but brings about the diminished attribution of the conditions of its exhibition as it does so.

My question relates to how one can figure the unfigurable, which is of course the question of the sublime in modernity. Yet my question is not that of the sublime because

there is no evidence of a subject with which such a question may be figured. The ghost is both intimately connected to the perceiving subject as well as the point that the perceptive faculties no longer function in order to figure such an affective encounter. So then, can Stillman be understood as the existence of non-relational properties? The nature of this uncertain figure can exist by opposing the concept of a pure individual (or singular) substance and the totality of all relations that can be distinguished or categorized by apparent features. All attributes of Stillman can never be distinctly understood because it is neither an object nor a subject of perception.

Ghost-like, Stillman demolishes the border between the perceived reality of truths and the imagination of unreality. It is instead located in the realm of potentiality or manifestation. There is no particular mode of identity or recognition that can affirm Stillman.

What if there is a figure that can cross between fiction and reality? I often suspect my own construction of identity which leads to questions relating to whether I may be a living embodiment of Stillman or even serialized Stillmans drawn from the realm of my imagination or unconscious. Is Stillman then the mediation between my conscious and the unconscious, a figure that stalks the in-between, endlessly oscillating in this realm? The only thing that is clear is the sense of ambiguity which in turn leads to the undoing of even being able to assemble such a notion of certainty with which to continue. Stillman then functions as a cut with the idea of dialectical passage.

Should I understand Stillman as a (strange) figure like 'Nadja',[159] who wanders around Paris with Breton? Does this idea of wandering strangely attract the idea of thought or does it instead annul thought?

People often imagine: what if there is a double of them somewhere in the world and if one day by chance they unexpectedly bump into the other 'I' of themselves like

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[159] André Breton, *Nadja*, trans. by Richard Howard (New York: Grove Press, 1960).

'Véronique and 'Weronika'?[160] If it really happens, how will I respond to my counterpart? What if something that should be concealed in secret and hidden in the dark, suddenly came to light? If this situation occurs, it can be associated with the striking feeling of the mysterious, frightening, uncertain or strange, which is far from the ordinary and habitual. Such an encounter with an inexplicable being (or figure) can be understood in relation to the irresistible moment of the dissolution of the authoritarian self that puts into question how everything may appear in place, calling instead for the return of the repressed, uncertain, and forgotten elements locked away in the psyche. More specifically, the nature of such things can be neither objectified with language nor grasped by the visual sense (eyes), dismembering the relationship between seeing and knowing. Thus, a signifying chain of darkness-blindness-ignorance-ugliness-evil emerges, a chain that is located opposite of the unassailable paradigm for civilization that suggests a link between the eye-mind-light-truth-beauty-ethics.

With regard to ways of analyzing the self, Freud, in his 1919 essay 'The Uncanny', relates the double as an object of terror and a harbinger of death to mirror-images, spirits, shadows and the fear of death. He considers most encounters with 'the double' to be phenomena of the uncanny[161]. Julia Kristeva assesses that Freud's account of the uncanny 'teaches us how to detect foreignness in ourselves'.[162] Referring to Freud's 'The Uncanny (1919)', she notes: 'Uncanny, foreignness is within us: we are our own foreigners, we are divided. […] The other is my ('own and proper') unconscious'.[163] Her thought is based on the notion that the double (or Doppelgänger) is the externalized manifestation of the unconscious that the superego refuses and represses, keeping it from emerging on the

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[160] Véronique and Weronika are the heroines of the film, *The Double Life of Veronique* (1991) directed by Krzysztof Kieślowski.

[161] The concept of the uncanny is developed by Sigmund Freud in his essay, 'Das Unheimliche (1919)' and he explains it as a feeling of something not simply mysterious and odd but more specifically, as something strangely familiar. Freud traces the German etymology of the word, 'uncanny', contrasting the German adjective, 'unheimlich', with its base word, 'heimlich'. See Sigmund Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud / Volume XVII, 1917-1919: An Infantile Neurosis and Other Works*, trans. by James Strachey (London: The Hogarth Press: The Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1955), p. 225-226.

[162] Julia Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves*, trans. by Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), p. 191.

[163] Julia Kristeva, ibid., p. 181-183.

surface. The double, as the appearance of the other side of the self, can be regarded as the return of repressed drives and desires hidden within the abyss of the unconscious of the self. In this way, the relation between the double and the self can be seen as reflections of one another, touching upon the notion of 'self-reflexivity'. That is to say that at the moment when one is given a brief glimpse of the double's face, the event acts as an occurrence of the uncanny, lying between perplexity and a certain disquieting sensation. Such a psychological transition, according to Freud's explanation, is based on the effect of duplicity, of the strange commingling of the familiar and the unfamiliar:

> […] if this really is the secret nature of the uncanny, we can understand why German usage allows the familiar (*das Heimliche*, the 'homely') to switch to its opposite, the uncanny (*das Unheimliche*, the 'unhomely'), for this uncanny element is actually nothing new or strange but something that was long familiar to the psyche and was estranged from it only through being repressed. The link with repression now illuminates Schelling's definition of the uncanny as 'something that should have remained hidden and has come into the open'.[164]

Drawing on Schelling's definition of the uncanny, Freud describes the phenomenon of the double in relation to the notion of the uncanny by sharing his unexpected encounter with his mirror image. He writes that:

> I was sitting alone in my wagon-lit compartment when a more than usually violent jolt of the train swung back the door of the adjoining washing-cabinet, and an elderly gentleman in a dressing gown and a traveling cap came in. I assumed that in leaving the washing-cabinet, which lay between the two compartments, he had taken the wrong direction and come into my compartment by mistake. Jumping up with the intention of putting him right, I at once realized to my dismay that the intruder was nothing but my own reflection in the looking-glass on the open door. I can still recollect that I

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[164] Sigmund Freud, *The Uncanny*, trans. by David McLintock (New York: Penguin Books, 2003), p. 148.

thoroughly disliked his appearance. Instead, therefore, of being frightened by our 'doubles', both Mach and I simply failed to recognize them as such. Is it not possible, though, that our dislike of them was a vestigial trace of the archaic reaction which feels the 'double' to be something uncanny?[165]

This story reveals the mirror image or the immaterial double to be an analogue of his body, which causes the feeling of sudden fright. Such strangeness begs the question of where it is derived from. It seems that the gap between resemblance and difference between the self and the reflection is the fundamental factor for the uncanny to occur. For instance, Freud's desire to be acknowledged is divorced from who he is in reality. He perceives the double image of his face in the mirror (or glass) as a decomposed, cast-off self. When he encounters the double, he is thoroughly possessed by unpleasant emotions, which relates to not only his physical appearance but also to the existence of the supposed stranger. With the influence of the traditional animistic belief that what befalls the double image will also happen to its owner, the reflection that stares back at the self is often regarded as threatening and hostile, resulting in the demolition of the self and a tragic death at the end. In literature, particularly Romantic Gothic literature, there is a pervasive tradition that seeing one's double foreshadows bad luck or death, and thus the double is often depicted as a sinister figure bearing an eerie resemblance to the self. For example, Heinrich Heine reveals such a perspective in his poem 'Die Harzreise': 'There is nothing more uncanny than seeing one's face accidentally in a mirror by moonlight'.[166]

Stillman and the Double

Considering the notion of the double in this manner, the locus of the mirror (or water) plays a significant role in understanding the uncanny effect, and with this the

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[165] Sigmund Freud, *The Standard Edition of The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud / Volume XVII, 1917-1919: An Infantile Neurosis and Other Works*, trans. by James Strachey (London: The Hogarth Press: The Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1955), p. 248.

[166] Heinrich Heine, *Die Harzreise*, quoted in Otto Rank, *The Double: A Psychoanalytic Study* (1914), trans. by Harry Tucker, Jr (Chapel Hill, N. Car.: University of North Carolina Press, 1971), p. 43 n. 19.

possibility of co-existence of the self and the double. The mirror is the meeting point of two different existences and such a surface simultaneously acts as a physical barrier splitting two worlds – the imaginary and the real, and the conscious and the unconscious. In spite of Freud's account that 'the uncanny effect is often and easily produced when the distinction between imagination and reality is effaced, as when something that we have hitherto regarded as imaginary appears before us in reality, or when a symbol takes over the full functions of the thing it symbolizes, and so on',[167] what I want to point out is that in Freud's analysis of the psychological aspects of 'the double', the realm of the real does not bleed into the imaginary or vice versa. Rather, the mirror serves as an evidence of the distinct division between the imaginary and the real, giving rise to emotional tension along the border. It is a fact that the double in Freud's theory turns out to be a reflection, an alternative for the original (the self), which is based on the idea of ego-duplication, ego-separation and ego-substitution through the device of the mirror surface. Hence the concept of 'the double' derived from Freud's mirror-image cannot go beyond the threshold of the dualistic perspective between the self and the other. In other words, Freud's concept is still enclosed within binary logic and bi-univocal relationships between the subject and the object. Freud's mirror-image takes the position of his alter ego as the reflection of his unconscious; they mirror each other. However, it cannot be ignored that the states of consciousness and unconsciousness, the material and the immaterial and the real and the imaginary are explicitly separated. In the Freud's studies, the surface of the mirror is a border to keep the two in juxtaposition. Ostensibly, there is a certain degree that the self seems to be privileged over the mirror image to some extent as the reflection (the double) is never able to establish its own appearance and presence without the existence of the self. However, it is the existence of 'double' as a fateful and inescapable harbinger of death that is the decisive factor in making the self shudder and feel unnerved. It calls to mind the fact that the occurrence of the uncanny effect can be led by the entity of the double, not by the subject. However, this is not to say that the self is subordinate to the mirror image (the double). Instead, such thoughts attempt to emphasize that the position of the double is

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[167] Sigmund Freud, *The Standard Edition of The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud / Volume XVII, 1917-1919: An Infantile Neurosis and Other Works*, trans. by James Strachey (London: The Hogarth Press: The Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1955), p. 244.

equivalent to the self and thus their relationship in turn can be understood as a link between the physical form of an object and its shadow. The self exists in reality whereas the reflection subsists in the mirror realm, which can be understood as the self and its double having identical ontological authority. It implies that the self neither prioritises its identity over the mirror image nor tries to condense its distance with the mirror image, and vice versa. Such a viewpoint indicates that the surface of the mirror, which serves as the sole possible psychologically violent meeting point of these two separated entities, can paradoxically impede their active reciprocation. In other words, it plays the role of a boundary, yet provides the opportunity for the two separated realms to encounter each other simultaneously. The notion of self-awareness from Freud's perspective thus implies the attainability of co-existence of the self and the other in a position of equality, which in turn results in the notion that these two figures are discrete beings stemming from the notion that the self cannot become the double, and vice versa. The collision of these two divided realms can only occur at the moment of the unanticipated encounter in the locus of the mirror, which gives rise to the tragic event, death. 'To recall Freud's formulation, the double is "the uncanny harbinger of death".[168] One may want one's double dead; but the death of the double will always also be the death of oneself'.[169] In some sense, the matter of the Freud's double – the self and the reflection of the self – still has an indisputable connection with the principle of dichotomy between the self and the other, being and figure, and consciousness and unconsciousness.

The Faces of Stillman

In contradistinction to Freud, Deleuze develops his discussion of the double in terms of a virtual and actual image within a structure of mirroring which leads to coalescence between the two. Not only is the image constructed out of two sides, actual and virtual, but also, on an internal level, the self is thrown into division. The double is in alliance with spirits and phantoms causing the differentiation between the animate and

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[168] Sigmund Freud, *The Uncanny*, Pelican Freud Library Vol.14, trans. by James Strachey (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985), p. 357.

[169] Nicholas Royle, *The Uncanny* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), p. 190.

inanimate.

Unlike the mirror in Freud's concept, the city of glass in my research is not based on the boundary between the self and the mirror image (or the double), on resemblance and difference. The realm of glass in my project is much closer to a site of chaos, to a delirious or schizo-like state. It is a site where the uncanny is unleashed. All autocracy – certainty, divisions, distinction, hierarchy and determination between subject and object – are pulverized or demolished, and only uncertainty, indiscernibility, instability and plasticity remain in the wake of this process. Wandering freely and aimlessly in the city of glass is to unfold the possibilities of unlimited proliferation and dispersion of the self and the other. Without doubt, there is no border between the two. They become heterogeneous through the process of doubling, dividing and interchanging without hierarchy – the self and the double stripped of both the sense of the original and the end. As such they are ghostly entities, floating as pure spirit without materialized form and bereft of direction, thus straying away from or out of the orbit of subjectivity and with this, the location of an ordered universe possessing places of integration. They are therefore no longer reflections of one another, reflections of the self-same or look-alikes. Rather, they are de-materialized as a new existence of uncertain presence as a mode of indeterminate, dynamic emergence. In other words, this heterogeneous force belongs to neither the self nor the other but rather it can be an amalgamation of both or even become something imperceptible to specific logic or definition. As pure virtualities they can embrace all possibilities and potentialities whilst keeping alive the play of absence and presence without end. Such a thing or state can be viewed as effects of becoming, which in turn cannot be reduced to the status of any determined object and explicit form. It can be understood through Deleuze's notion that 'rather than a product, final or interim, becoming is the very dynamism of change, situated between heterogeneous terms and tending towards no particular goal or end-state'.[170] It is the subversion of a subjectivity initially derived from Platonic theory that privileges being, essence and originality. A body of definitive instability, which exists within the flow of uninterrupted, interminable, continual transfigurations in alliance with dynamics and

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[170] Adrian Parr, *The Deleuze Dictionary Revised Edition*, ed. by Adrian Parr (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), p. 26.

fluidity, is thus rendered as purely nothing, without intent or possible meaning. As such it is 'a continuum of all substances in intensity and of all intensities in substance'[171] and this is what I name 'Stillman', which is the condition of the in-between of the formed and the unformed (figure-being) that exceeds any version of enclosed space, time or fixed identity. In this condition, it is not touched by law or even the rules of the day calling up the notion of 'Body Without Organs (BwO)'[172] that Deleuze and Guattari developed in their book *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. In this book, they describe it as an egg that is opposed to the organization of the organs that leads to the organized organism that is realized as completion. In opposition to 'the organizing principles that structure, define and speak on behalf of the collective assemblage of organs, experiences or states of being',[173] it may be comprehended that as an incomplete process or a condition of continuous becoming, the notion of the 'BwO' escapes from any teleological point of completion. Stillman shares the attributes of the 'BwO', which keeps moving through

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[171] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. and foreword by Brian Massumi (Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), p. 154.

[172] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari explain the notion of 'Body Without Organs (Bwo)' that: 'The BwO is not a scene, a place, or even a support upon which something comes to pass. It has nothing to do with phantasy, there is nothing to interpret. The BwO causes intensities to pass; it produces and distributes them in a spatium that is itself intensive, lacking extension. It is not space, nor is it in space; it is matter that occupies space to a given degree—to the degree corresponding to the intensities produced. It is nonstratified, unformed, intense matter, the matrix of intensity, intensity = 0; but there is nothing negative about that zero, there are no negative or opposite intensities. Matter equals energy. Production of the real as an intensive magnitude starting at zero. That is why we treat the BwO as the full egg before the extension of the organism and the organization of the organs, before the formation of the strata; as the intense egg defined by axes and vectors, gradients and thresholds, by dynamic tendencies involving energy transformation and kinematic movements involving group displacement, by migrations: all independent of accessory forms because the organs appear and function here only as pure intensities. The organ changes when it crosses a threshold, when it changes gradient. […] The BwO is the field of immanence of desire, the plane of consistency specific to desire (with desire defined as a process of production without reference to any exterior agency, whether it be a lack that hollows it out or a pleasure that fills it)'. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, 'November 28, 1947: How Do You Make Yourself a Body without Organs?', in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. and foreword by Brian Massumi (Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), p. 153-154.
For a more in-depth study on the concept of 'Body Without Organs (Bwo)', see Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, 'November 28, 1947: How Do You Make Yourself a Body without Organs?', in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. and foreword by Brian Massumi (Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), p. 149-166.

[173] Adrian Parr, *The Deleuze Dictionary Revised Edition*, ed. by Adrian Parr (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), p. 38.

different states without heading towards any distinct form or final outcome. It is 'neither merely an attribute of, nor an intermediary between events, but a characteristic of the very production of events. It is not that the time of change exists between one event and another, but that every event is a unique instant of production in a continual flow of changes evident in the cosmos'.[174]

Returning to the notion of the borderline between the self and the other in the city of glass, Stillman exists as a spectral trace[175] in a state of incorporeal transformations that can be seen as a rhythm of becoming beyond the threshold of an enclosed, corporeal identity. Such indiscernibility in turn provokes the loss of stable relations to both the real and the unreal, which leads to the expansion towards another realm, oscillating between actuality and virtuality instead. In this respect, Stillman, which emerges through transversal movements across varied states in the city of glass, runs completely counter to the concept of a dualistic link between the self and the diabolical double established by the notion of Freud's double (or mirror-image). In keeping with the quality of Stillman, we can consider the glass to be a space of an opening in which we come across the spectral flâneur, the threshold of the world of imagination or the surrealism of the ordinary. In his book *The New York Trilogy*, Paul Auster notes that:

> The true place in the world, it turned out, was somewhere beyond the self, and if that place was internal, it was also unlocatable. This nowhere of place can be understood as a tiny hole or striation between self and non-self, and for the first time in my life that I saw this nowhere as the exact center of the world.[176]

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[174] Adrian Parr, ibid., p. 26.

[175] According to Jacques Derrida: 'The trace is not a presence but is rather the simulacrum of a presence that dislocates, displaces, and refers beyond itself. The trace has, properly speaking, no place, for effacement belongs to the very structure of the trace'. Jacques Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena: and Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs*, trans. by David Allison. (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), p. 156.

[176] Paul Auster, *The New York Trilogy* (London: Faber and Faber, 1987), p. 234-235.

The ghostliness of Stillman does not possess a particular form that can be visualized or grasped nor can it be captured in discourse, as this will be inconceivable from the perspective of enclosed or perspectival thought processes. Stillman acting as a potential for mutations opens and expands the territory of limited thoughts, and questions what the subject can be. Its attributes are uncertain and not solid, like wind and mist that appears and disappears without structure and order. The infinite faces of Stillman disintegrate the embodiment of established order and the image of distinctive identity. There is no certain structure of face or body to be classified, categorized and recognized as certainty of being. So, can Stillman be understood as a new entity that neither resembles nor represents a certain figure? Stillman is uncertainty; something undone and something emptied. Beyond the notion of dichotomy, it is on the frontier and roams in the realm of the in-between. Thus it collapses the edge of two worlds such as the conscious and the unconscious, death and life, and being and non-being. The nature of Stillman is indistinct, uncertain and ambiguous, which may never reveal itself with a particular type of appearance. Rather, it continuously appears to drift and transform into another, not yet formed. Stillman may be an image without a trace of reality, perfectly still and crystalline, that can never be found in any forms of representation. There is always something behind the appearance, even if it is just another appearance. One night a face appears and evaporates. After that, another face comes to me and disappears again, always presenting itself as something other waiting for something yet to arrive. Such images haunt and hover ceaselessly over the city. I comprehend a face of Stillman as a surface of infinite possibilities and potentialities. In this respect, the question that begins to arise in my mind is the extent to which such a feature negates the notion of a tradition of the portrait as an identity of immobility, invariance, vapidity and finitude. As an unending recessional space, the face can be viewed as a realm of infinite archive – a series of faces behind faces, immeasurable and indefinable. Such a mode of the unlimited has a link to the notion of the face that Agamben explicates in his book *Means without End: Notes on Politics (Theory Out of Bounds)*:

> My face is my outside: a point of indifference with respect to all of my properties, with respect to what is properly one's own and what is common, to what is internal and what is external. In the face, I exist with all of my properties (my being brown,

tall, pale, proud, emotional...); but this happens without any of these properties essentially identifying me or belonging to me. The face is the threshold of de-propriation and of de-identification of all manners and of all qualities — a threshold in which only the latter become purely communicable. And only where I find a face do I encounter an exteriority and does an outside happen to me.

Be only your face. Go to the threshold. Do not remain the subjects of your properties or faculties, do not stay beneath them: rather, go with them, in them, beyond them. (1995).[177]

The face of Stillman is in the process of ceaseless movements, as opposed to complete. The interval between faces and the process of its metamorphosis will be unable to anchor its existence. The sense of dynamics and latency, which is the way of revealing how the faces of Stillman occur and manifest, prevents us from ever recognizing this or that identity. Thus, such a face is outside of representational stability. It is not a site for meaning or signification or representation of a particular look. Rather, it is a site for the possibility of all dislocations, without a stable reference or orientation. It never enables clarity, certainty or direction to arise. Instead, it can produce unrealized possibilities to drive forward. It is like a floating vapour (or cloud) which we can neither regulate the direction of its flow nor articulate its shape. Such unstable particles constantly drift, pass into the air and manifest in other forms without departure or destination. The process of its formation has no beginning or ending, as if one is entering through an unlikely entrance and emerging from an unavowed exit. It is the adrift, doubled, folded, monstrous form of vision and a passage into the realm of what is other. Thus the face of Stillman can never be in possession of the certainties that come with the limits of intentionality and representation, but must be in a precarious balance. The face I saw on the third or fourth day of February 2014 was a freely transforming image, vaporous, mist-like, an afterimage of an image, a de-materialization or an apparitional trace. Something was floating on the edge of the in-between of appearance, dissolution and reconfiguration. This aspect of the unmarked,

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[177] Giorgio Agamben, *Means without End: Notes on Politics*, trans. by Cesare Casarino and Vincenzo Binett (Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), p. 99-100.

undefined, thereby becoming an impossible image of un-representability, touches upon the notion of infinitude and emptiness. The face of Stillman is temporal, impermanent, ephemeral, formless, contingent and immaterial. As such, it can be understood as empty of essence or inherent existence. Stillman is here without a specific visual form. However, that is not to say that it is absent. Rather, Stillman appears by means of the absence. The face is a screen that produces the waves of probability in which a new rhythm of being is endlessly inaugurated. Such a surface has an apparitional or trace-like semblance. Everything is on the edge of disappearing, blurring and fading. There is no solid ground, no authorial or confined certainty. It manifests itself as the presence of absence. The face remains as a condition of ambiguity. It recalls the Zen Koan: 'What was your face like before you were born?' and the image[178] as the 'trembling of the image'[179] that provokes and simultaneously withdraws. Blanchot talks of fascination[180] being 'the passion of image' and it is this passion that issues a relationship to the space of the outside. The image is a rotation that keeps alive the play of absence and presence, hence it is without end or completion. The image even occasions a relationship to 'the unfigurability of death', serving in turn as an undoing of the living. Thus the image is a figure of detour, something

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[178] Maurice Blanchot asks of the image: 'What is the image? When there is nothing, the image finds in this nothing its necessary condition, but there it disappears. The image needs the neutrality and the fading of the world; it wants everything to return to the indifferent deep where nothing is affirmed; it tends toward the intimacy of what still subsists in the void. This is its truth. But this truth exceeds it. What makes it possible is the limit where it ceases. Hence its critical aspect, the dramatic ambiguity it introduces and the brilliant lie for which it is reproached. It is surely a splendid power, Pascal says, which makes of eternity a nothing and of nothingness an eternity'. Maurice Blanchot, 'The Two Versions of the Imaginary', in *The Gaze of Orpheus and Other Literary Essays*, trans. by Lydia Davis, ed. by P. Adams Sitney, preface by Geoffrey Hartman (Barrytown, N.Y.: Station Hill, 2000), p. 75.

[179] Maurice Blanchot, *The Infinite Conversation*, trans. by Susan Hanson, (Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), p. 324.

[180] In *The Space of Literature*, Maurice Blanchot states: 'Fascination is solitude's gaze. It is the gaze of the incessant and interminable. In it blindness is vision still, vision which is no longer the possibility of seeing, but the impossibility of not seeing, the impossibility which becomes visible and perseveres -- always and always -- in a vision that never comes to an end: a dead gaze, a gaze become the ghost of an eternal vision. […] Fascination is fundamentally linked to neutral, impersonal presence, to the indeterminate They, the immense, faceless Someone. Fascination is the relation the gaze entertains – a relation which is itself neutral and impersonal- with sightless, shapeless depth, the absence one sees because it is blinding'. Maurice Blanchot, *The Space of Literature*, trans. by Ann Smock (Lincoln, Neb.; London: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), p. 32-33.

that both attracts and sends into exile, a force of subtraction that eludes its own cessation and is thus interminable. As such, the face of Stillman is the image that always haunts. It is always unsettled, creating the quality of being infinite. The limits between time, space and mortality become erased. Stillman appears as the unbounded gaze in the city of glass.

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