

Contingency as a form, or do I have a film?

Ana Buljan

student # 0956246

T h e s i s .

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Adviser: Kate Briggs

Second Reader: Steve Rushton





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References

- *Everything is a mythical cosmic battle between faith and chance*
(Children of Men, 2006)

0. Introduction

Primarily, this is a story about a Journey and the transformations that occurred in my practice because of it.

By telling the story of the journey, instead of an argument, I'm offering a narrative and a sequence of insights into my own working methods and aesthetic positions. This writing project has been an opportunity to reflect on what these are, and how to affirm them in my own words and metaphors.

Etymologically speaking, the noun journey travelled from the Vulgar Latin's adjective *diurnus*, - meaning *of a day*, through the Old French(- *ournée*) into a Middle English meaning of a *defined course of travelling; one's path in life*.

In a similar way, I am reporting on my expedition to Central and South America. I am also writing about the two very opposed and extreme locations there, the jungle and the desert, and about my debut experience with working with the analogue film medium.

While filming my journey with a Bolex camera, I really was on a

defined course of travelling, but the path that I took was an unexpected and a transformative one.

The main theme of this story is set up by the undefined, the precarious, the unpredictable state of the material. The film that I was using was dead stock, untested, and at least a decade past its expiration date. The outcome was literally built on sand, and because of this, my project becomes a living object on its own, and our journey an experimental meditation on transition.

The journey slowly becomes, in material and in text. The text becomes a reflection of the journey, while the distinction between the journey and my practice slowly fades in their interconnectedness. Likewise, as the distinctions between my practice and my life still belong to a blend of very personal feelings and experiences, this story is shaped as a diary.

The text follows the project as a story, seemingly disconnected, yet structured in three main acts:

1. Preparation for the journey
2. The journey
3. The results of the journey

During the preparation, the journey partitions. Floating blocks of narrative do not go further into acts, but into structures that will be soon merging in and out, throughout the story, blending this journey into a superimposition of narratives.

One that emerged from the physical journey and the other one that is an abstract(ed) consequence of that journey.

One that represents the flux of the material, and the other that represents my own flux.

But also, one that belongs to the text and the other one that will be a part of the material, as a result of editing.

These two entities also form a mutual tension and share the jeopardy of the narrative, and because we both go under a transition, these type of questions arise:

*How does the physical journeying relate to my image-making?

*How does being in a transitive state relate to the qualities I seek in my moving images?

*Will I be able to keep my film alive, what will happen to the film?

*Will the film be stable enough to hold an image, and how will this impact my editing process?

*I don't yet know if I am making a film.

Through narrating this journey, I realize a space of analogy, where images come into being, and a space of alchemy, which is linked to the analogue processes I work with. The alchemical transformations I enact on the materials are analogous to my own lived processes of transformation, on a spiritual, intellectual, and physical level.

The material, the film, is in a constant state of flux, therefore its ontology goes beyond the medium itself. All of this also alters my states of perception, as the understanding now occurs through connections I discover organically, in my own flux, and in relation to psychology, ecology and the physical states of being.

Finally, another space that belongs to the transitive states is one of atemporality. While treating the narrative as a floating structure, all the elements exist in a synchronous relationship. Since everything becomes Time and Space, the narrative becomes a creation without a beginning or end ; a reflection (on) itself. (Deren, 1946, 6)

Apart from the story of the journey, the other mentioned incorporated narratives that come superimposed, or just act as a connective tissue in my structure are the following:

/a fictive conversation with Tacita Dean, whose works are a strong visual and thinking inspiration to me

//a collage of heroines and heroes of the particular form of film-making that influence my practice

//a diary of acquiring and caring for my materials

1. Reinventing your position

Reinventing your position changes your place, ergo, a dislocation easily follows as a consequence. My decision to change the location and the place of my practice thus began as a sequel to the sum of my thoughts. Thoughts on reevaluating my life. Repurposing it. Regurgitating it, if I may. The act of reevaluation was still far from a strategic plan of some sort.

It identified as an internal murmur. A sound that was always “there”, present but in the background of things, in a certain “here - there” space. It seemed to be growing with time, though, taking more and more space, sculpting the background into a shape of a volcano, until it presented itself as “here”.

The volcano brought me to Rotterdam. And I will start from here, in attempt to tell this story correctly. Believing that no story is an island, and that every story is a thread interweaved in affairs with others, it is difficult to resist the kinship and alliance of the following:

it matters what matters we use to think other matters with; it matters what stories we tell to tell other stories with; it matters what knots knot knots, what thoughts think thoughts, what descriptions describe descriptions; what ties tie ties.

It matters what stories make worlds, what worlds make stories.
(Haraway 2016, 12)

Being immature for my age, possibly a combination of the consequences of being raised in a post-war-society that robbed a decade off me, my hopes we set pretty high before coming to a Rotterdam start. I thought I finally had a chance to unlock and set free my suppressed cabinet of dreams here. Soon after the euphoria of a new beginning settled, I started feeling very blocked creatively.

Restlessness took over.

Staying anchored in a port city sounded like an oxymoron for someone raised on sailing boats, so I tried to change my setting again, and started applying to numerous residencies.

Anything and anywhere would have made my peripatetic nature happy, and to my big excitement the way opened itself to take me really far and out. I got accepted to two Artist in Residencies in very remote areas of the American continent.

The Artist-led residence La Wayaka Current accepted both my applications, first one for the Central American Jungle, and the other



for the Atacama Desert. Each program involved a three weeks stay with other international artists. There was no obligation to show work at the end of the program, but “studio visits” were available, as well as the end of the residency presentation. There will be a possibility of showing work informed by the residencies in a curated biennial exhibition in London.

Because I managed to get fully funded both by the Croatian Ministry of Culture and the CBK Rotterdam, the PZI also cleared my passage, when we all agreed I would come back with my graduate material.

Prior to leaving, I had to reflect on my urges, and question my work, all ahead of the task. An undertaking so uncommon (and difficult) to my flowing method.

This is what I wrote before leaving:

I would like to explore on the where(s) and why(s) and in what ways are we connected and disconnected to and from each other. Also, to analyze myself prior and during this expedition, to get into personal conflicts with my own unavoidable expectations, preconceptions and infantile romanticizing. To mix conclusions, draw them, end them or a just add a couple more to the place where ideas go to rest.

When a person changes her or his environment from a repetitive and almost automatic one to an unknown one, the brain gets a chance to process the inputs in a fresh way, to reset, and I see that event as a potential beginning point of a change of awareness. These changes are made of all sorts of banalities that strive to be more complex or elaborate with time, but are basically our general everyday gestures and procedures that have an option to be transported into a new form.

This is where generating new insights come from: from a consequence of making that move. Insight is a speculation that follows, a story, or only a beginning of it.

My plan is to briefly undo the trap that holds me under the layers of my contemporary living and to change the stale reference point that sometimes hazards on my conclusions.

What I mean is, I know that my whole creative body needs some moving to be expressive and healthy. To dance out from that subtle little invisible prison that creeps on you unintentionally with time that is stuck on repetitive. I want be in a place where all my layers have the freedom to undo themselves, to go wild and messy, in order to be redressed and worn again. Slightly tilted I hope. Spirituality can mean so many things, endlessly.

What knots knot knots? (echoes)

To open spaces.

To open my spaces.

2. What was the work missing?

Distance. My work needed to grow and expand. I had to step out in order to recognize it.

A step out into a change of scenery.

Paradoxically, as it is sometimes essential to come closer to a problem in order to avoid it, one might need a great distance in order to come closer to a resolution.

One thing I understand by now about my work, is that it gets very stale and uncomfortable when confined to a fixed place. Finding inner peace and crystal clear thoughts rarely seems to happen to me while I'm sitting down. Even now, as I'm writing this, I am riding, with my back towards my future, on a fast train to Berlin.

I am going where Tacita Dean lives.

What was my work missing? It was missing to be born out of a movement, to be born out of a chance following that movement.

Chance is a key part of my practice : it is important that I put myself and my work in circumstances where we are open to chance.

I needed a movement to get my chance. Likewise, I'm going to need stillness for another kind of process.

If Chance had a character maybe it would match the character of a Person it belongs to.

Or does a Chance really just fall, "apple - like", from a tree?

Maybe my Chance was also working quite hard to center itself, in order to be able to find stillness. Or is stillness simply a sign of a flat dead Chance?

My Chance seems to be very female.

Indeed, it seems that she is some sort of a motherly figure to a fleeting moment suspended in time.

Certainly, that makes me a fleeting moment suspended in time. And I like that.

3. What I packed for the Jungle and what I packed for the Desert

The Jungle is a place in Central America, protected by the indigenous peoples called Kuna, or Guna Indians.

The organizer told us to bring: backpack, head torch, insect repellent, itch relief cream, sunscreen 30+, travel towel, sunglasses, long sleeved loose clothing for protection from UV and mosquitos, quick drying materials for humidity, sandals and comfortable shoes for walking, medicine and toiletries, cash with low denominations, swimsuit, raincoat, water bottle, zip lock bags and dry sacks for all valuables including professional equipment, phones, camera, laptop, passport. Basic and non-valuable clothing, ear plugs for noise at night, and any professional art supplies or equipment we might need. Spanish travel dictionary, supplements and vitamins or extra food supplies, water shoes as well.

Backpack I had of course, head torch I had to get. Insect repellent, is what I learned the most about.

And I ended up having two bottles of the most potent repellent that is probably still a part of my hair. I'm sure it managed to get into my bones, break the code of my DNA and will easily continue to travel in my subconscious forever. Reincarnated, I will probably

come back as a repellent. Some people come back as flowers, but I will be back as 60 % *Deet*.

Apart from the bottles of the toxic deet, I got myself some less toxic bracelets, in a warm and calming shade of yellow that I ended up sharing with the village kids, but also tried to save some dogs with. Jungle stray dogs that have ticks as their third eyes, too evidently.

Ticks guide them into some kind of a mystical dance, a whirling dogish dance.

Because I speak dog language, I was expecting to learn more about this experience, but I guess these Panamese strays have their own ways of pronouncing words. I really didn't understand a single little thing.

Instead of sandals, I took my flip flops that broke just one week later. So I just went on barefoot, too afraid to open my dry sack zip lock bag that acted as a safe for my only sneakers I was trying to keep uncontaminated for the coming desert.

Jungle is just like being in a Turkish steam sauna, day and night. I was lucky because some people ended up with mushrooms growing at the soles of their feet.

Ear plugs, they told us.

Why do I need ear plugs in the middle of nowhere?

Because a small indigenous village, with no electricity, just fire, gasoline and sun panels, has a habit of blasting “music” with some serious sound systems. Thatched roofs and sound systems. Not just ordinary, cordless, pastel colored cute speakers, the ones everybody has by now.

Not the ones students cook by hips swiveling in their improvised kitchens with no ovens.

This indigenous tribe uses the hard core stuff.

They begin their Fridays by grilling the gas and roasting those speakers, completely muting the waves, managing to bang through my ear plugs some strange sounds of transmuted dance folk tunes deeply into the night.

The dictionary of the Spanish language that I bought, I never opened. It came back with me, having travelled mute to where they speak its language.

A traveler without a cause, now a second hand item. Nevertheless, my Spanish improved.

I left Panama without a Panama hat.

What one needs in a Desert but the Desert and its profound absence? A tube of itch relief cream.

One should never impose meanings to a Desert, somebody said there.

Desert is alive, and it took me to Mars, I understood later.

Ursula K Le Guin wrote a book of poetry dedicated to the Desert. In a poem titled “A Meditation in the Desert” , she imagines *a stone being full of slower, longer thoughts than mind can have*. (Le Guin, 2010)

4. My analogue dreams

Thinking about what equipment to take on my travels first existed as more than one messy thought. One of those thoughts that you are a little uncomfortable with, so you put them aside. But are constantly aware of, because in the end, they weigh as much as (or even more than) the equipment you don’t want to be thinking about.

It’s of those things that need to cook in your brains first for a while, until the time has come to make peace with the first idea you had anyways:

Take everything!

First take everything to the Jungle and then take everything to the Desert.



I have a Bolex. A 16mm camera borrowed from a DOP (Director of Photography) friend from Zagreb. This is around 4,99 kg. I have cca 700 meters of various film stock I managed to get from all around. This is around 10 kg.

All around these kilograms are my friends and mentors. They sent me a box of old stock 16mm film from Vienna. As I was unpacking the heavy box full of possibilities and even fuller uncertainties, I was also trying to guess, (and not only by smelling), by mindfully staring at it: where has all this stuff been sitting, before coming to me?

All of the films I received were out of factory production for many years already. Nobody, especially not the box (regardless of my stare) uttered the answer.

This, of course did not compromise one tiny bit - the grandeur of this donation. I was so very excited to have this treasure, and I had a week before the journey to test the material.

The lab in Amsterdam said *No*.
The stock was too old for them to test.

Analogue camera 1; a Contax G3 with 2 lenses, the first camera I bought with my own money, around 1kg.

Analogue camera 2.; a Contax RTS, I inherited from my father. I'm only taking this because it has a tele lens that is not mountable on the other one. Weight: 1,5 kg for sure.

My Fuji digital camera, that works as a backup, a parallel cloud device for all of this analogue treasures I'm counting on first. The weight - a feather, compared to all the rocks above.

A tripod (cca 4kg), lots of analogue 35mm films, and a lot of waterproofs sacks of all sizes.

I divided the daily 16mm film rolls I had into two piles, one for the jungle and the other one for the desert. The donated old stock outnumbered the healthy stock and I had to make a risky decision to assign healthy to one pile and the old stock to another pile. The coin flipped for the healthy stock to go to the jungle, old stock to the desert. Chance!

And we took off, my films and my analogue dreams.
When again will I have a possibility to try capturing the dash of the jungle humidity in marriage with the dry desert sand?

It's a type of romance I fall for straight away.
So incompatible, it works magically.
Plunging into the void.

5. Writing back to Tacita Dean

Even though I experienced very little of Tacita Dean's work, I consider her my very big inspiration and ally. Because her installations were mostly too far for me to reach, I started to read her. That way, I am experiencing her at hand's reach and at my own pace, non-linearly, at times opening her book randomly as an oracle.

In a way, our relationship is potentially a worshipping one, she is a figure I turn to when I feel misunderstood or lonely in my processes. It takes time to find the right words to express what you do and why, especially when you are catching clouds. And then you find a master in that. Maestra, I wanted to say.

In my trajectory here, she appears both as a guide, and a sign that keeps signaling to me - believe, carry on, proceed. Also, we share the loving fascination for the Sea.

from *ANTIGONE*

For years as an artist, I have allowed the making of my work to be open to interruption and redirection by chance, and what I describe as contingency: events occurring through practical necessity that become instructive or defining in retrospect. Working like this, just beneath my conscious level, requires an aspect of willful blindness. It is uncomfortable at best and terrifying at its worst

and necessitates a private belief system - faith that something will inevitably rise to the surface not unlike the unearthly subterranean vapours summoned to human intelligibility by the priestess Pythia, the Oracle at the Temple of Apollo at Delphi.

(Dean, 2018, 109.)

from *KODAK*

Tacita Dean:

I realise that I do not know what analogue means. I flounder about trying to find a definition.

Analogue, it seems, is a description - a description, in fact, of all things I hold dear. It is a word that means proportion and likeness, and is, according to one explanation, a representation of an object that resembles the original; not a transcription or a translation but an equivalent in a parallel form: continuously variable, measurable, and material.

Everything we can quantify physically is analogue: length, width, voltage and pressure. Telephones are analogue; the hands of watches that turn with the rotation of the earth are analogue; writing is analogue, drawing is analogue. Even crossing out is analogue.

Thinking too can become analogue when it is materialised into a concrete form; when it is transmuted into lines on paper or marks on a board. It is as if my frame of mind is analogue when I draw;

my unconscious reverie made manifest as an impression on a surface...

...(but for me)digital does not have the means to create poetry; it neither breathes nor wobbles but tidies up our society, correcting it and then leaves no trace.

I wonder if this is because it is not born of the physical world, but is impenetrable, and intangible. It is too far from drawing where photography and film have their roots: the imprint of light on emulsion, the alchemy of circumstance and chemistry, marks upon their support. (Dean 2018, 68.)

Me:

The 'alchemy of circumstance' the art of being alive. Not staying, being. The electrifying essence that is keeping us powered. Vibrant with particles, it holds many magical outcomes - oh, you never know. And the particles are blinking back at you from the screen.

When our energies collide we can flow in a river together.

Or, I can cry you one if I mess up the chemistries.

A film alchemist respects his material like a fellow being. A being called the emulsion spirit. You need to keep your films dry in humidity and cold enough in the heat. You need to think about when to turn the lights on otherwise it will react with complete darkness

in return.

Film contains a mystical charm. A delicate lady and a wise sage at the same time, the emulsion spirit is holding a secret. With every film there is a new koan, new fortune cookie that you, enchanted by its delicacy, are trying to unriddle. So if there is an equivalent in a parallel form, we call it a space, a volume that you just walk in, because the doors are open.

from *FLOH*

Tacita:

I do not want to give these images explanations: descriptions by the finder about how and where they were found, or guesses as to what stories they might or might not tell. I want them to keep silence of the flea market; the silence they had when I found them, the silence of the lost object.

(Dean 2018, 42.)

Me:

She is not talking about her own images here, but of the images she was collecting from various flea markets around the world in a period over six years. At one point she realized that, unintentionally, she started being a collector. And then she defined an interesting point - that there was nothing more worrying to a collector than

a prospect of a “closure”, of the realization of an end and a final version of the collection.

There is something very familiar I am relating to here. I think what tickles me here is the reluctance towards explaining the images she was collecting. I keep getting one instruction, when getting assessed by my tutors, how I need to “own” my work.

I do want to be in a relation with my images, but not to “own” them. Why not gently put aside these power terms of dominance and patriarchy, and move away from the outmoded ideas of what who and how the artist can be, and be more aware of the kinship and study of relations with relations, while accepting the risk of contingency. (Haraway, 2016, 12)

I really do have a problem owning my images, because these are merely images of images.

My thoughts then point to a fact that I actually collect my own images, myself. And being suspended in their relativity is what I find the most intriguing about them.

In the images I make, whether these are moving or still, what I want to own is this realization about them being free. I want to own their floating, their waiting to be consumed, used as a lucky charm or a sign. In silence.



from *A BAG OF AIR*

Clouds

Tacita:

I remember wanting to catch clouds. I imagined leaning out of an airplane window and scooping them into plastic bags and sealing them up to take home. I remember the disappointment of my first plane trip, and realising that what I believed to be possible was in fact impossible. I think of this desire as being medieval; it has something to do with the visible and the invisible; with presence and absence. Clouds always look so present, but grasp at one and you grasp at nothing. I wanted a proof of this presence, but what I didn't realise was that catching clouds was an act of faith.

(Dean 2018, 21.)

from *THE STRUCTURE OF ICE*

Tacita:

Atoms are in constant motion; they touch and turn and move by mutual collision and blows.

And as they move, they collide and become entangled in such way as to cling in close contact to one another.

And so it is with the hooked atom, it becomes involved with another

atom into whose shape

the hook fits.

And so too it is with the angular and sharp atom that is so formed as to produce a salty taste.

And those concave atoms that do join with those that are convex until they have all come together intertwining and clinging to each other, according to the congruity of their shape, size, position and arrangement.

And then they stay together to become compound bodies, until such time as some stronger necessity comes from the surrounding, and shakes and scatters them apart.

However, there is one atom that cannot be joined to another by hooking or collision or implication, and that is the spherical atom, of which the soul atom and the fire atom are composed.

The soul atom is scattered throughout the body and is mobile because of its shape. It joins with the fire atoms, which are also spherical, by the principle of like-to-like, by the use of mutual bond.

Each fire atom grips the soul atom firmly, but at arm's length because of the bond, and each soul atom attends both the fire atom to its left, and to its right, vibrating to and from as is its custom.

And so this compound of three atoms joins together with a compound of three more, and so on and so forth, until it will produce the primary material that is the secret food of life. With fire as its father and soul as its mother, it will retain the qualities of both parents, mediating between them and reconciling their strife by virtue of its composition.

(Dean 2018, 30.)

Me:

The Structure of Ice, according to Tacita is as hot as a Volcano. And behind every named object there are so many untamed connections that will remain unnamed. The connections are the hot wires of life, or a life parallel to life. And their compositions are endless in their uniqueness, in their pure energy and impermanence.

They might live forever, but when we finally realize them, comes a feeling of a tremendous gain and loss at the same time, similar to seeing a shooting star.

6. Nobody lost anything to the Sea

To reach the Jungle you need to take a small 9+1 person plane to a village in Panama.

The landing runway is the only paved road one jungle will offer, and the one that seems too short to handle as it finishes so abruptly in a massive rocky mountain, immense as a continent just risen from the sea.

Colombia is around the corner, and our village is around the other. It is accessible only by boat. It happens that the boat can't navigate into the village sometimes, because of the waves. Other times it can't depart from the village for the same reason.

We were lucky, both times, and nobody lost anything to the sea. As much as I like a sacrificial ritual, and in spite of the temptation, I did not take all my equipment to leave it to the Sea Gods and Goddesses. I met with Yemanja a couple of times before, but I doubt her kingdom stretches all this way. This equipment is a part of me.

Arriving to Panama loaded with 10 kg of heavy rolls of film was a little disturbing.

I was counting on the fact that these would survive the 3 weeks before going further south to the desert. So typical, you really understand the feeling of the jungle only when you land in one.

Only when you face it, you sense the 65 % percent of your water boiling steadily.

There are no 24/7 fridges around, due to the lack of electricity, which was rather alarming.

The village we were living in for 3 weeks was set on the coast, the ocean on one side, and the rest was jungle.

The villagers depended exclusively on those three points.

The jungle, the sea, and the boat as a connection to the rest of “civilization”.

Sometimes the Sea would turn around a boat, and all the food transported from the mainland would go to the mermaids.

Sometimes the villagers would have to track through the untamable jungle paths to reach the other food, and it would take around a day to achieve that.

The electricity was partly coming from the solar panels, a relatively new government installation, looking alien in its sustainability on the sun bleached thatched roofs of the indigenous huts.

The sun could not power a fridge, though. Only around two or maybe three houses in the village had a freezer for that matter. Powered by generators.

So, I had to make a deal with one of them, set up a price for 3 weeks of gasoline to run the generator that would freeze my films roles alive.

The deal was a fifty: fifty. They would only turn the generator on for a couple of hours daily, so the films were getting frosted and defrosted on a daily basis, which, at that point, I decided to file as part of the method. As an experimental visual surprise that fell on my head, from the Cocoa tree of Chances.

Meanwhile, fungus was growing on us overnight.

7. I had to turn to the landscape

I wanted to film and document the people in their daily life activities. The idea I had was not a fixed one, but I wanted to be in control of what open or free means. Does it mean getting out and about my sandy village, barefoot, losing my flipflops on my way, capturing what I heard calling me?

It turned out the villagers have had enough of Western people going open on them like that, making them feel as closed animals on display in a socio-anthropological experiment only one side seems to enjoy.

What happens in those circumstances is interesting. You are frustrated for having lost your quasi -plan, your habit, or the idea of a certain freedom and openness, but only then you realize that you are pushed to try out a completely new approach.



So, I had to turn to the landscape. Filming the landscape first started with the idea I was only filming a barely missed moment. Somebody was just here. Washing the clothes in the river; can you feel them in the shot? Is it possible to convey, or form a narrative, made out of seemingly invisible material? Is this the semiotics of non-intentional spaces? Jungle spirits moving the winds that are moving the leaves - and am I the only one able to see (read) them?

Does it matter if others are not able to?

Walking the beaches was unbearable. Of course I am addressing the climate change and the toxicity of our times. There was so much trash, the anguish of the sand screaming into itself was piercing. The beaches, endless.

The Earth felt so heavy, and the Sea so tired of carrying it back and forth.

Seeing the Sea as a Sisyphus, and not as a Poseidon, is unnerving beyond the absurd.(CAMUS, 1991)

And it seems again, in the way I gathered the material, I had to turn to the empty spaces. The ones that existed between the physical, human objects. And to imagine that in those spaces, I would find present a real ancestral presence. Or at least invent some spirit wisdom to raise the strength of dealing with tomorrows.

The softs sands of the jungle morphed into the dry sands of the deserts, the air lost the water and so did the soil. But the ancestral presence was felt even more here, no inventing needed. Maybe my sensors got enhanced by the aridity of the landscape, the desert winds definitely eradicate any sort of jungle brain fog. Maybe it was just the fact that the whole desert is in truth one massive graveyard whose spirits seem to mirror themselves so clearly above in stars, visible to the eye, during the night.

After you have exhausted what there is in business, politics, conviviality, love, and so on - have found that none of these finally satisfy, or permanently wear – what remains?

Nature remains; to bring out from their torpid recesses, the affinities of a man or woman with the open air, the trees, fields, the changes of seasons - the sun by day and the stars of heaven by night.(WHITMAN 1982, 780)

As a child I considered the natural world as part of my own world, these two worlds interacted and crisscrossed each other, the bond was flexible yet indestructible.

I was so privileged to be in such a close contacts with nature, summing directly and literally on the Sea surface, it shaped my life.

The way I learned measurement, was also a lecture from nature. The openness of the desert, the non-limitedness of it is so similar to

the forever of the Sea. The technique is simple, you just put a Man in the middle of the Sea as a starting point.

I miss the natural scale of things. But I know how to measure a spot to disappear in.

8. The insides of the woman

The dust is just a part of the air, you can see it beautifully in the ray of light.

(About the Woman and the Work.)

I don't think they can be separated easily, and that might be a problem for the Woman. The same woman that called herself a child of a Chance and liked it. There are moments when everything is aligned well, and when everything seems to be breathing homogeneously, when the child, the woman and the work inside the woman feel their space is good. The Woman then feels herself both the child and the mother, and basically doesn't care about what others think.

While some think that the Work should be separate from the insides of the Woman.

She is trying it now anyways, by separating herself to the third person singular.

Not only the woman can't seem to grasp the separation concept, she is not exactly sure why she should believe in having that stand towards her work.

The work that is a product of a personal experience, one of the many results of dealing with the World and herself.

If Claire Denis wasn't brought up in Africa, her film would not be *Chocolat* (Denis, 1988)

These relationships between you and many layers of you and everything you can be tend to be very private and intense.

She will not announce them before she enters them. It is a process. Because her work is attention.

She doesn't want to point to the details and call them relevant.

She wants to pay even more attention to these details and everything surrounding these details.

Attention to minuscule relationships around the details and their details.

Her attention is of a visual kind and it evolves around tuning with those layers of movement of the matter around these details.

Until she finds a door to become a part of that movement herself, where she becomes both the attention and the details, both the movement and the space.

Duration is diminishing in fractals, the goddess Kali de-storied the Time.

The relationships keep spiraling, small and large.

Time is very slow and yet very fast. Astrophysicists say it does not even really exist. (Denis, 2018)

She wants to enter the light reflection, to inhabit the reflected reflecting onwards, through and besides her.

Aspiring, as a matter of fact, to be a dust particle, aspiring to being overblown. Aspiring to being in a no way, in a no direction, in an air affair.

And the dust travelled on.

9. These active stillnesses

For me a stillness is what *subtle moment* might be for Roland.

..the Photograph represents that very subtle moment when, to tell the truth, I am neither subject nor object but a subject who feels he is becoming an object: I then experience a micro- version of death (of parenthesis) : I am truly becoming a specter. (Barthes, 1982)

A micro dose of a pain we compare ourselves to.

A micro dose of a truthful moment from a gaze our memory relates to.

A micro dose of any-micro-thing offering you a bridge to a parallel space that connects to yours. It is a gift, a consolation, a sign of you - you forgot you had inside.

It's a dance floor for your memory to enjoy. A jumpstart to present, or to a certain presence, connecting you to all of your layers and planes of existence.

It is a contact, or a lost contact, it is also the “communicated”, a reference to essence, or essence itself, or to its energy, or back to a subtle moment.

Stillness is a movement in spite of a “rupture” in a temporal continuum (Sontag, 1967).

Because the movement continues beyond the rupture.



The movement has an echo, and if it was a composition, I would play it with both hands on my piano.

There is no real rupture here unless we edit it, or unless it falls on our heads as a comet.

A Chance comet.

I also like to dedicate myself to the silences I find in these active stillnesses.

In their movements.

Because when you do a zoom in, these movements are nothing less than a simple passing of time.

Addressing time as a homage to time itself, to all that time I already let pass me by, without having the slightest power to notice all of its weight.

It has simply gone to the impossible.

To keep track of the all-time is dangerous, so you can improvise an intervention, a “rupture”, a catching, a collection of it.

You can set your position in a middle of a sandy beach close to the border of Panama and Colombia, just a little bit off center of an improvised football goal.

The one made out of wooden sticks that were imported floating,

carried by the Sea Gods, those manly ones that still care for sports.

When your position is set you fix camera on a tripod, and you roll your film.

Let those 2 minutes be themselves.

‘>

‘>

Witness that present pouring from *is* to *was*, as onto your film.

Transporting it into your future to let it pass by you again, a rendering or a passing by passed by again.

Scenes from your pasts are going to evoke a somebody’s present.

Everybody’s a contributor to the factory of travelling memories.

Unlocking what may seem at times to be nothing but nonsense, is possibly full of meaning.

Or just an irrational element of mine, his or her own existence spiraling in time.



10. An open form /a collage of heroines, heroes and allies and travel companions/

John Cage once said: *Art comes from a kind of experimental condition in which one experiments with living.* (O'Sullivan 2006, 168.)

In filmmaking, there are categories that embrace this theory. One of those that doesn't fit a fixed definition or genre is a film-poem.

Film-poems are considered *personal films* and are seen as autonomous, out of genres pieces. They are an *open, unpredictable experience*, Peterson said. (Peterson, 1994, 29)

The viewer's cycles of anticipation and satisfaction derive primarily from the film's intrinsic structure. (Peterson 1994, 31)

The ambition I have for my works is that they also be experienced as sensory experiences, open and free formed, as a film-poem is. I want to set the audience free to read a film in multiple ways, their own ways, without being captive of my ideas.

Possibly the first to describe himself a film poet was Dziga Vertov, a soviet film theorist, experimentalist, documentarist and contemporary speaking, an influencer.

I am a writer of the cinema. I am a film poet. But instead of writing on paper, I write on the film strip. (Vertov, 182)

Another writer of the cinema, more precisely, a *cinécriture*-ist, was Agnès Varda. She invented this term, played with it, and made out with all of the genres and categories, from the traditional fiction and non-fiction, to the unconventional use of poem and prose within both cinema and photography.

I don't want to show things, but give people the desire to see (Varda, 2019)

The most prominent name associated with the American Avant-garde, an artist immensely dedicated to the medium of experimenting with film is Stan Brakhage, known for his various (diaristic) film experiments born from his own visual aesthetics method, the *Untutored Eye*.

Imagine an eye unruled by man-made laws of perspective, an eye unprejudiced by compositional logic, an eye which does not respond to the name of everything but which must know each object encountered in life through an adventure of perception. How many colors are there in a field of grass to the crawling baby unaware of "Green"? How many rainbows can light create for the untutored eye? How aware of variations in heat waves can that eye be?

Imagine a world alive with incomprehensible objects and shimmering with an endless variety of movement and innumerable gradations of colour. Imagine a world before the “beginning” was the word.

(Brakhage, 1963)

Revered for his subjective filmmaking and a firm individual approach that he never seem to have compromised, because he basically invented his own rules.

Through rejection of the standard narrative, he focuses on the priority of the visual sense, first comes the filming and then the structure.

Romantically and spiritually, all of my companions share a thread that I hope to be able to convey through my work as well, that is a search for consciousness and empathy through filming the raw beauty of being.

Which reminds me of Jonas Mekas, a romantic hero of the visual film poem-making, and his work *As I Was Moving Ahead Occasionally I Saw Brief Glimpses of Beauty* (2000) A compilation of all of his home-made experimental films, a documentary of film poems, present moments, spliced accidentally, by chance.

He preferred calling himself a filmer, because to be a filmmaker

you have to have a purpose, an idea of what film you want to make ...*And I have no ideas and no purpose. I'm just filming. I never know what I'm going to film* (Mekas 2013, 15)

In an interview for the Village Voice, he explains his process:

It helped me to condense reality, and to put my feeling of the moment into what I was filming. I compare it with somebody who plays a musical instrument, like saxophone. Your feelings translate into your fingers and how you play it. The same with a movie and my Bolex. My temperament I put into it, guided by the many possibilities — to speed up, to overexpose, the single frame — all connected directly with my feelings. Same with a painter and brush — which way you move the brush, what you do, you do it all with no thinking. Because you cannot think, “Now I will go right, now left.” No, you have to have mastered your instrument well enough that you do it with no thinking. (Mekas 2017, Village Voice)

Chris Marker communicates his poetry via overwhelming visual and philosophical essays that come mostly in documentary formats. Marker poses so many questions while questioning questions, forcing us in a set of contractions with our own flexibilities of perception.

Memory, time, vision and movement make his films powerful aspirations that go far beyond the visual stimuli.





To Marker, you just have to surrender and let him take you on his Journey.

Because *Poetry is born of insecurity, and Madness protects, as fever does* (Marker, 1983).

Maya Derren chooses the ambiguity of anagram to underline the non-linear form with which reality is transported to her creative practices and filmmaking.

In an anagram all the elements exist in a simultaneous relationship. Consequently, within it, nothing is first and nothing is last; nothing is future and nothing is past; nothing is old and nothing is new...except, perhaps, the anagram itself. (Deren 1946, 6)

While naming my travelling companions, it is impossible to escape Luigi Ghirri, the Italian photographer with a specific practice in poetic stillness. In attempt to convey the essence of his work he is citing Giordano Bruno, the philosopher and friar: *To think is to speculate with images.*(Ghirri 2016, 23)

In his book of essays, *The Complete Essays 1973-1991*, he is putting forward an anthropomorphic idea of a photograph standing as an individual, that possesses its own autonomous history (i.e. thought) beyond any vision he, as a photographer might have. *When I take a photograph, I'm inevitably inside the narrative, an*

individual inside the story, which is a historicity I cannot refuse in the moment I experience it.(Ghirri, 2017, 42)

11. What is cooling in my fridge?

If I decide to keep calling my practice one that is based on intuition, that means that I have decided for myself also to be fluid and not restrained, not fixed to one type of material, camera, lens, medium.

Experimental filmmaking is a new area I'm exploring, and writing about it comes more from my romanticizing, less from my experience. However, what I have understood so far is that the moving images collected on film are so needy in their handling.

I left on my journey with hundreds of meters of untested film, to risk. Is ignorance a bliss?

Uncertainty does seem to be a part of my process. Now I understand that I wish to stay unsure of what I'm doing. It is a living part of my work that needs to stay an "amateur" in order to re-enact the innocence of a beginning. For me, *I don't know what I'm doing* is not an empty phrase, but as a starting point.

When I got back to Rotterdam, in late December 2018, my film roles went to Romania, to a professional film lab that did not mind

the state of the stock.

When I finally got my roles developed, it was the end of January. All the roles except three.

These three were sent back to me, as the lab didn't do the reversal developing process.

So this reversal film, the discontinued Ektachrome, kept waiting for me and for its light again.

I am truly enjoying having these three films still in the dark. Unknown.

A mystery is stiff in my freezer.

And as the time goes, my memory is getting vaguer and further away from what it held present in the southern hemisphere.

And then I realize that this is also a part of the editing process. Getting away from it in order to approach it. Sculpting it over and over again. Producing space, to place this mystery in.

The space I collected then, is about to refold into a physical one.

12. Editing

To see better, sometimes you need to be able to not see everything. To understand better what is happening within the frame, sometimes it's better not to see everything. Cinema is the realm of the fragment. Audio fragments, image fragments... We use fragments to tell stories.

(Martel, 2018)

I went to the lab the other day, it was time to defrost the film and move the image. It has been frozen for around three months now.

So I mixed the chemicals to develop my first 5 meters of mystery.

I never did this before so, precariously, I followed the steps.

In each of my three spools there is +- 30 meters of film. Altogether, I own around 90 meters of mystery.

It is rather hard to give it all up.

I might face a nothing, these films are very old.

I might face a nothing, this will be my first time developing reversal color film.

I might face a nothing, I gave one spool to a professional to develop, just for the balance.

And I don't want to lose the 't'.

So I am very concentrated, and do everything as instructed. I'm doing a 5 meter test first, for being cautious. In the end, if I lose it all, I will lose the 't'.

I go into the darkroom, with my film, a Lomo tank, a pair of scissors. I manage to thrust the film on the spiral wheel with no panic attack. I'm in the dark, I cut the 5 meters. Mix the chemicals, double checking every step I do.

The temperature of the chemicals is required to be 35.6-39.4 °C +/- 3/ .

We are both boiling, not to lose the 't'.

So I perform the bath, for 6 minutes, turn the knob of the wheel without stopping for the first minute, then every 15 seconds.

Then do the following baths with their own minutage.

When I'm just before the last step, I'm washing it. I can open the tank now, the water is running freshly warm, right from the tap into the middle of the spiral, to keep the wheel turning.

I pull it up a little bit by the knob, to see if there is any image on it at all.

The overall color of the film is one of a Dead Salmon**¹, according to the Farrow&Ball's color wheel.

¹ available at : <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2019/03/18/the-luxury-paint-company-creating-a-new-kind-of-decorating-anxiety...>

² word play: mystery/misery: losing a T would make the whole ordeal miserable

It is still a mystery, with a "t".*²

13. Conclusion : Do I have a Film?

In conclusion, what I have are fragments, that will eventually make my story complete.

I did come back with a lot of images on film, some pieces of it are very damaged but they still carry a story.

Chance, on the other hand, wanted that I used the more damaged stock in the desert, resulting in images that are very decomposed in the end, due to the failed state of the emulsion on film.

The look of the landscape so crispy perfect in reality is literally falling apart before our eyes.

(Falling just like sand.)

As my floating block of narrative travelled into its story, so will my film find its final destination, first, in its own superimpositions with my dreams.

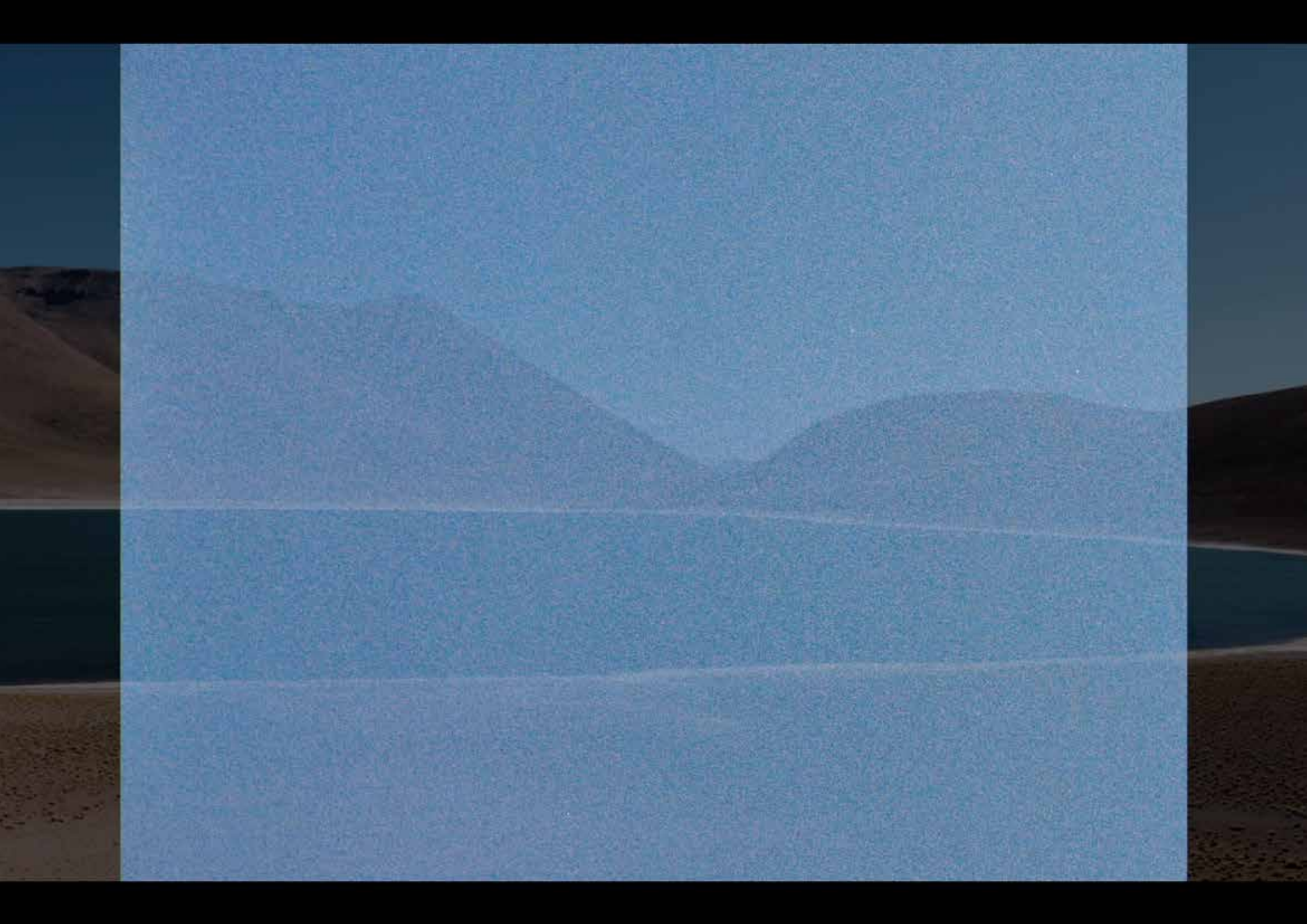
Art is the practice to discover one's own voice and to be able to speak honestly and truthfully. Truth is art fosters empathy and in

the world we are living in we need more empathy as well as art that communicates real truths.

I worked in the medium of film first because it was an escape, but then I discovered that it can be subversive. It is a language that can move beyond criticism and has the ability to mirror suffering fear and hope. Film creates another layer of identity that counters the other seemingly fixed narratives in our world.

(WEERASETHAKUL, 2019)





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