

WINTERSEMESTER 2025/26

SEMINAR

MASTER

EINFÜHRUNG UND ERSTE SITZUNG
17. OKTOBER 2025

11:00—17:00

24. OKTOBER
07. NOVEMBER
21. NOVEMBER
05. DEZEMBER

11:00—17:00

SEMINARRAUM
(L3|01 110)

OPPRESSED FANTASIES LIBERATORY CONSTRUCTIONS ANNA KOSTREVA

This block seminar will investigate architecture and artworks for their potentials to comment, critique and enact alternative worlds. To what extent can architecture support struggles for emancipation and human rights? We will discuss architects, writers, activists, and mythical characters such as Eileen Gray, Lebbeus Woods, Ursula K. Le Guin, Henri Lefebvre, Audre Lordé, Rosa Luxemburg, and Pandora. Students will participate in a collaborative world-building project that ties critical thinking and literary development into architectural drawings. The course is organised as a series of full day workshops, in which there will be time for collective study and production. These exercises, experiments and collective methods for textural and visual material will serve as tools for praxis that integrates theory and technical expertise in architecture.

Dieses Blockseminar untersucht Architektur und Kunstwerke im Hinblick auf ihr Potenzial, alternative Welten zu kommentieren, zu hinterfragen und erfahrbar zu machen. In welchem Maße kann Architektur emanzipatorische Prozesse und Menschenrechtsbewegungen unterstützen? Wir beschäftigen uns mit Architekt:innen, Autor:innen, Aktivist:innen und mythischen Figuren wie Eileen Gray, Lebbeus Woods, Ursula K. Le Guin, Henri Lefebvre, Audre Lorde, Rosa Luxemburg und Pandora. Die Teilnehmer:innen erarbeiten einem kollaborativen Worldbuilding-Projekt, in der kritisches Denken und literarische Entwicklung in architektonische Zeichnungen übersetzt werden. Das Seminar ist als Reihe ganztägiger Workshops organisiert, die Raum für gemeinsames Studium und gestalterische Produktion bieten. Die Übungen, Experimente und kollektiven Methoden zum Umgang mit textlichem und visuellem Material dienen als Werkzeuge für eine Praxis, die Theorie und architektonisch-technisches Wissen miteinander verknüpft.

Oppressed Fantasies Liberatory Constructions

Responses to *Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman*
by Sarah H. Bradford.
Collated for <https://womenwritingarchitecture.org>

These student projects respond to Harriet Tubman as a figure to inspire liberatory constructions. The starting point for their research was the 1869 book *Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman* by Sarah H. Bradford. The projects are from the Masters of Architecture Theory Seminar *Oppressed Fantasies, Liberatory Constructions* led by Anna Kostreva. It took place at TU-Darmstadt in the department of Architectural Theory and Science (Architekturtheorie und -wissenschaft / ATW) during the Winter Semester of 2025. The student projects are published as annotations to citations from the course collection on <https://womenwritingarchitecture.org>.

The seminar investigated architecture and artworks for their potentials to comment, critique and enact alternative worlds. To what extent can architecture support struggles for emancipation and human rights? We discussed architects, writers, activists, and mythical characters such as Eileen Gray, Lebbeus Woods, Phyllis Birkby, Ursula K. Le Guin, Henri Lefebvre, Audre Lorde, Rosa Luxemburg, and Pandora. Students participated in a collaborative world-building project that tied critical thinking and literary development into architectural drawings. The course was organised as a series of full day workshops, in which there was time for collective study and production. The exercises, experiments and collective methods for textural and visual material served as tools for a praxis that integrates theory and technical expertise in architecture.

The ones who saw

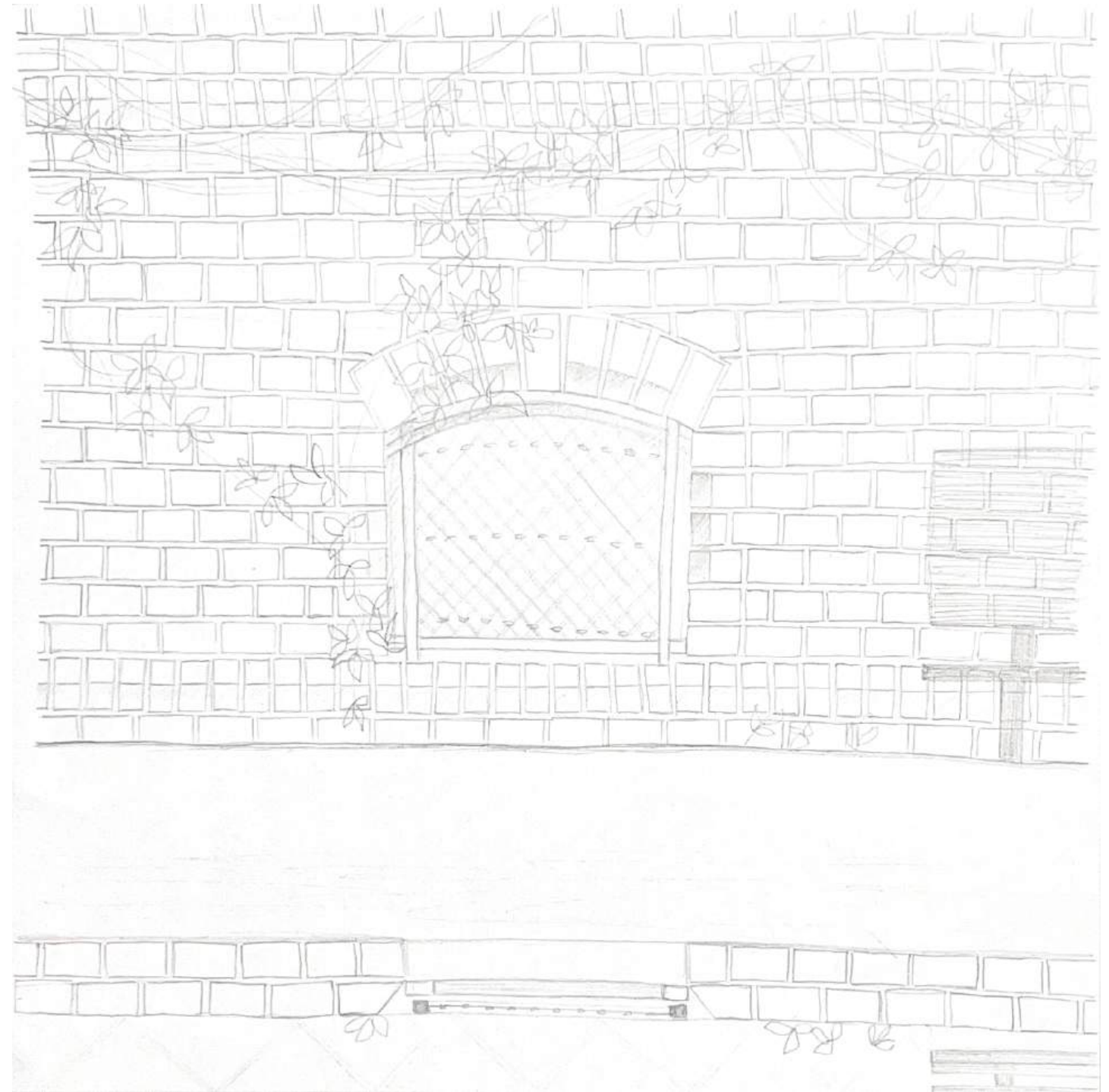
Beatriz Geovanini, Jessica Joia, Paulo França

There are so many ideas crossing my mind when I think about the stories of Harriet. The amount of confidence she had that everything would work out because she was being guided by her God, the fearlessness is very striking to me.

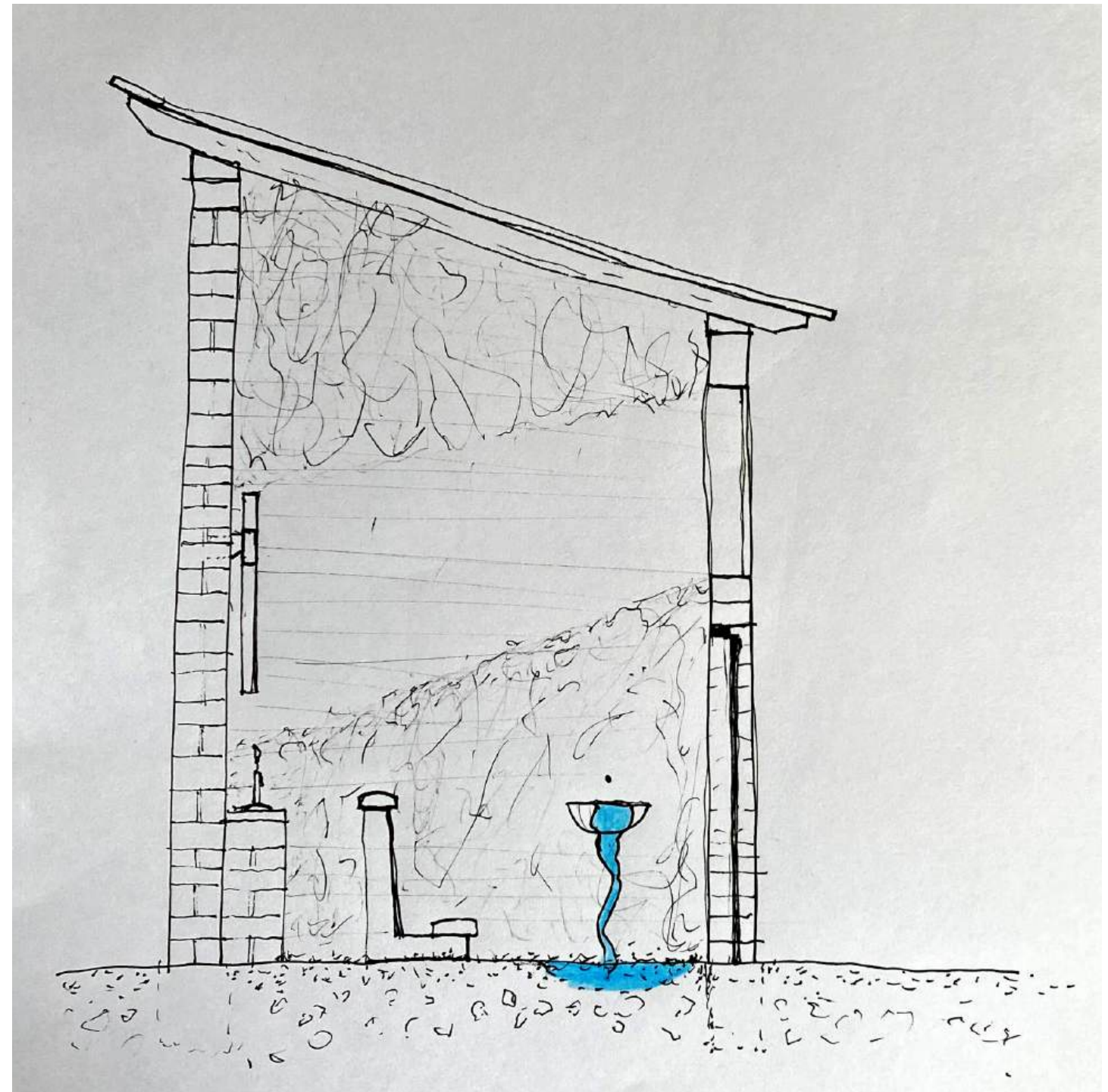
I would like to think more about her family. She ran away one night, was able to find her way to the North but when she got there she noticed that this place where she wanted to be was not her home. What did home mean to her? I believe it meant being somewhere where your loved ones are, not being alone. She decided to make a home in this new, strange place, and to realize that she had to bring her family there.

There is one story told in the book about Harriet that stayed in my mind. The time when she went back to help her brothers run away during Christmas time. Her mother could not know she was in town and what they were planning, otherwise she would not let them do it. I imagine the scene of the mother sitting at home, just waiting for her sons to come for Christmas, but no one came. She could have felt sad and lonely, or she could have felt fear that something might have happened to them. The anxiety, the uncertainty, the preoccupation. Waiting in the dark can be terrible.

Harriet and the brothers knew what they would cause their mother by not showing up, but the chance to run away was something so big it could not be wasted. Before going away they went to the mother's house and looked at her through a window for 15 minutes. I imagine their feeling in that moment. Sorrow for making her suffer; love and willingness to just go give her a hug, which could be the last one; fear of the journey that was coming ahead; trust in their sister and her capabilities to bring them safe to freedom. This moment of staring at your home and knowing you'll never be there again, of knowing you will leave people you love behind, of knowing that now you have to build a new home to keep going. In the end, it was worth facing all of that to go away from their horrible reality. Harriet was there to show them everything was possible if they trusted.



Effort is necessary to change things. If you know what is right, do right. Keeping yourself in comfort is a political choice where you disfavour yourself. What is missing for change? Why is it so difficult to change? The routine, the fatigue, the fear, the system. All these factors strengthen the constant seek for comfort. There is no time left for action, there is no time left to think. The inertia is almost certain. Moving it and breaking it requires an enormous effort exercise, even if the end result is better for you. Freedom has a cost and it's tiring, exhausting. "Leaving the island to see the island," arriving in a new one and noticing everyone is blind and inert. Fleeing and isolating, creating a new island may not be the solution. Refusing to participate and staying on the island may cause more impact. Why don't you see the island? Why don't you free yourself? Maybe you are overfilled with privilege, maybe you are blind, maybe you are oppressed, maybe inertia.



I pray that God keeps guiding me. Being in the right place on the right time is no coincidence. He knows and he brings me there.

I speak out, I convince others to have courage. I show myself no matter where. If I am there it is because I should be, it is because He guided me there. If an unknown needs help and their way crosses mine I will be there to help.

If God showed me the way to freedom, I shall show the way to others. If they want, they will trust and believe in me. My path is paved with intuition and leads to liberation.



Before going away they went to the mother's house and looked at her through a window for 15 minutes. I imagine their feeling in that moment.

This moment of starring at your home and knowing you'll never be there again, of knowing you will leave people you love behind, of knowing that now you have to build a new home to keep going.

Why don't you free yourself? Maybe you are overfilled with privilege, maybe you are blind, maybe you are oppressed, maybe inertia.

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The Way Out

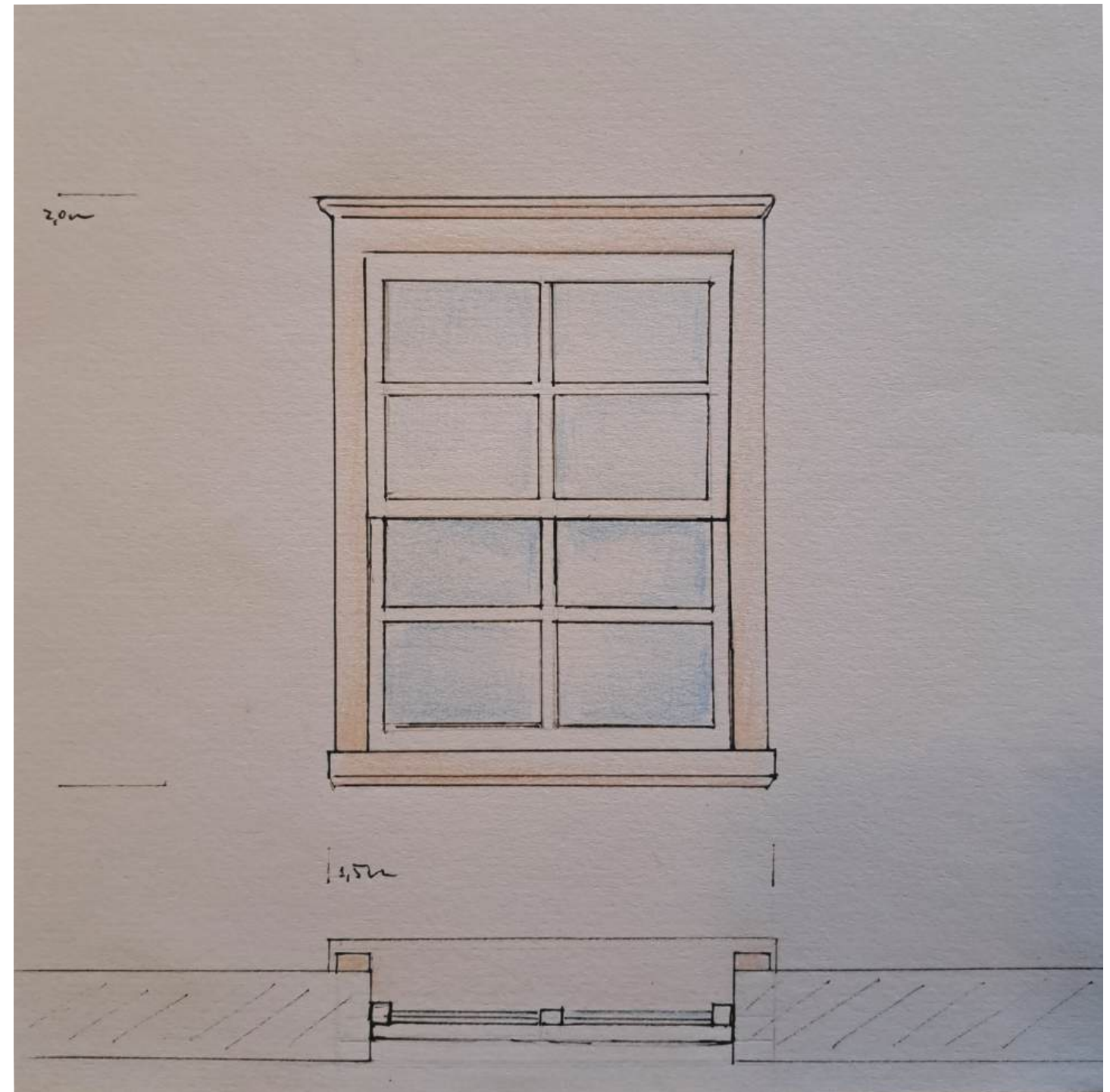
Jessica Joia

A FRAME FOR THE IMPOSSIBLE. IT HELD THE DARK WOODS
THAT COULD BECOME A REFUGE AND THE NORTH STAR THAT
COULD BECOME A GUIDE.

IT WAS A GLIMPSE OF HOPE, OFFERING A VISION OF A WORLD
BEYOND THE ONE THEY KNEW.

BUT FOR THOSE MOVING THROUGH THE NIGHT, THIS WAS NO
PASSIVE VIEWING PORTAL ONLY. IT BECAME AN ACTIVE
COMPONENT OF LIBERATION. A LANTERN'S FLAME, A CURTAIN
DRAWN, WERE ALL CODED SIGNALS.

SO, HARRIET UNDERSTOOD BOTH THE DREAM IT FRAMED AND
THE DANGER IT OFFERED. AND SHE WAS THE GUIDE WHO
MADE THE VIEW THROUGH THE WINDOW REAL.



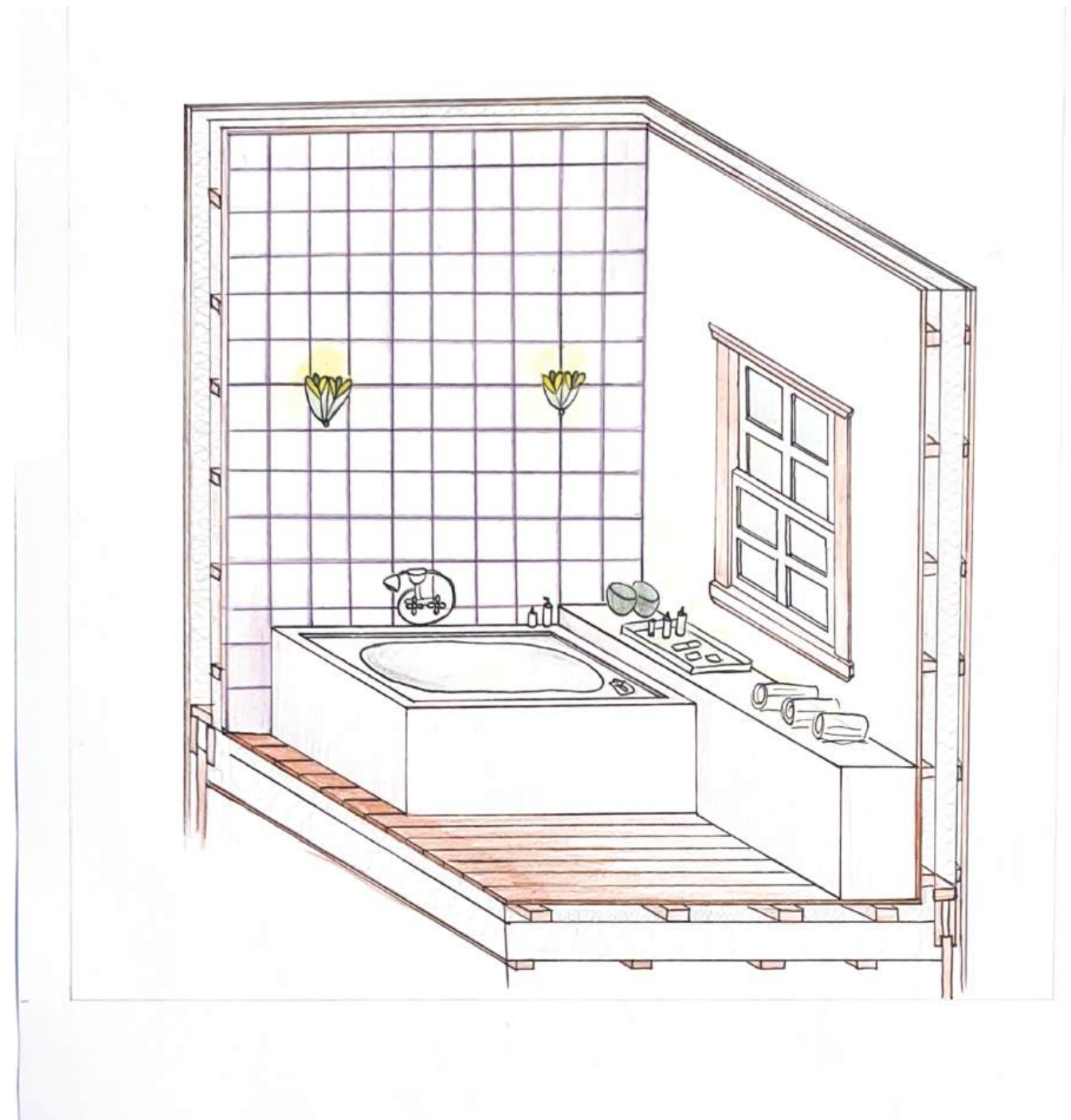
WHAT HAPPENS TO THOSE WHO REFUSE TO PARTICIPATE? OR TO THOSE WHO DECIDE TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT? WHAT HAPPENS TO THOSE WHO WALK (OR RUN) AWAY?

THOSE WHO WALK AWAY REMAIN WITH THE CONSCIENCE THAT SOMETHING IS WRONG, THAT EVERYONE SHOULD BE REFUSING, BUT SO MANY DON'T REALIZE. THEY KNOW THEY HAVE TO KEEP GOING BACK TO SAVE AS MANY AS CAN (AND WANT) TO BE SAVED.

THOSE WHO WALK AWAY REMAIN WITH AN UNSTOPPABLE HEAD THAT KEEPS TRYING TO FIND SOLUTIONS. IT IS TIRING. IT IS A CONSTANT ATTEMPT NOT TO LOSE DUE TO EXHAUSTION.

ONCE YOU ARE OUT, EVERYTHING ABOUT YOU BECOMES ABOUT BEING OUT AND LIBERATING OTHERS. THIS IS TIRING. MAYBE A WARM SHOWER HELPS. LET THE WARM WATER HUG YOU, LET IT HELP MAKE THE HARD THOUGHTS BECOME SOFTER AND CLEARER. LET US REST.

Text written by Beatriz Geovanini.



Drawing by Beatriz Geovanini.

FREEDOM IS NOT A SECRET. IT IS A STORY THAT MUST BE TOLD.

THEY WILL TELL YOU TO BE QUIET, TO HIDE YOUR TRUTH. DO NOT LISTEN.

THAT ROOM IS FOR THE BODY ALONE. THIS PLACE IS FOR US TOGETHER. THERE, YOU HIDE AND ARE SILENT. HERE, YOU WILL BE SEEN. YOU WILL SPEAK.

TELL ME THE NAME OF THE RIVER YOU CROSSED. TELL ME HOW THE COLD FELT ON YOUR SKIN. I NEED TO HEAR IT. THE OTHERS NEED TO HEAR IT.

GIVE YOUR STORY A VOICE.



PERSPECTIVE



SECTION

FLOOR PLAN

THEY SAY THERE ARE TWO WORLDS

THE FIRST IS A NARROW WORLD, BUILT FROM RULES THAT PRESS AGAINST THE SKIN
A WORLD WHERE CERTAIN BODIES ARE WATCHED MORE THAN OTHERS
HERE, THE AIR FEELS CLAIMED

AND THEN THERE IS THE OTHER WORLD
WIDE, UNBOUND
IT FEELS LIKE ANOTHER PLANET, IT IS FREE FROM THE SMALLNESS OF HATRED
A WORLD WHERE PEOPLE STAND IN LIGHT AND VOICES ARE NOT SWALLOWED

BETWEEN THESE TWO WORLDS RUNS A HIDDEN PASSAGE

IT STARTS IN DARKNESS
CARVED QUIETLY BELOW THE SURFACE OR UNDER THE NIGHT SKY?
HERE THE SKY IS NOT ABOVE BUT AROUND YOU
ROW OF FAINT WINDOWS AND OPEN DOORS,
OFFERING A BREAK
HOLDING FRAGMENTS OF A LONG JOURNEY
A PRIVATE CONSTELLATION OF GOOD SOULS GUIDING YOU FORWARD

THE WALK IS UNEASY
SHADOWS CALL YOU BACK, SOFT VOICES URGE YOU TO KEEP WALKING
WALLS SEEM TO MURMUR: DON'T LOOK BACK

THEN THE TUNNEL BRIGHTENS
THE AIR SHIFTS, THE SOUND SHIFTS, THE AIR WARMS

YOU ARE APPROACHING THE OTHER WORLD

HERE, THE PASSAGE RISES AND OPENS INTO A GATHERING PLACE

THOSE WHO CROSSED BEFORE YOU, LISTEN
REMEMBERING EVERY JOURNEY CARRIED OUT
WHAT ONCE TRAVELED IN DARKNESS NOW STANDS IN OPEN LIGHT

AND THE PASSAGE REMAINS BEHIND YOU

QUIET, WAITING
READY TO GUIDE THE NEXT TRAVELER BETWEEN THE WORLDS





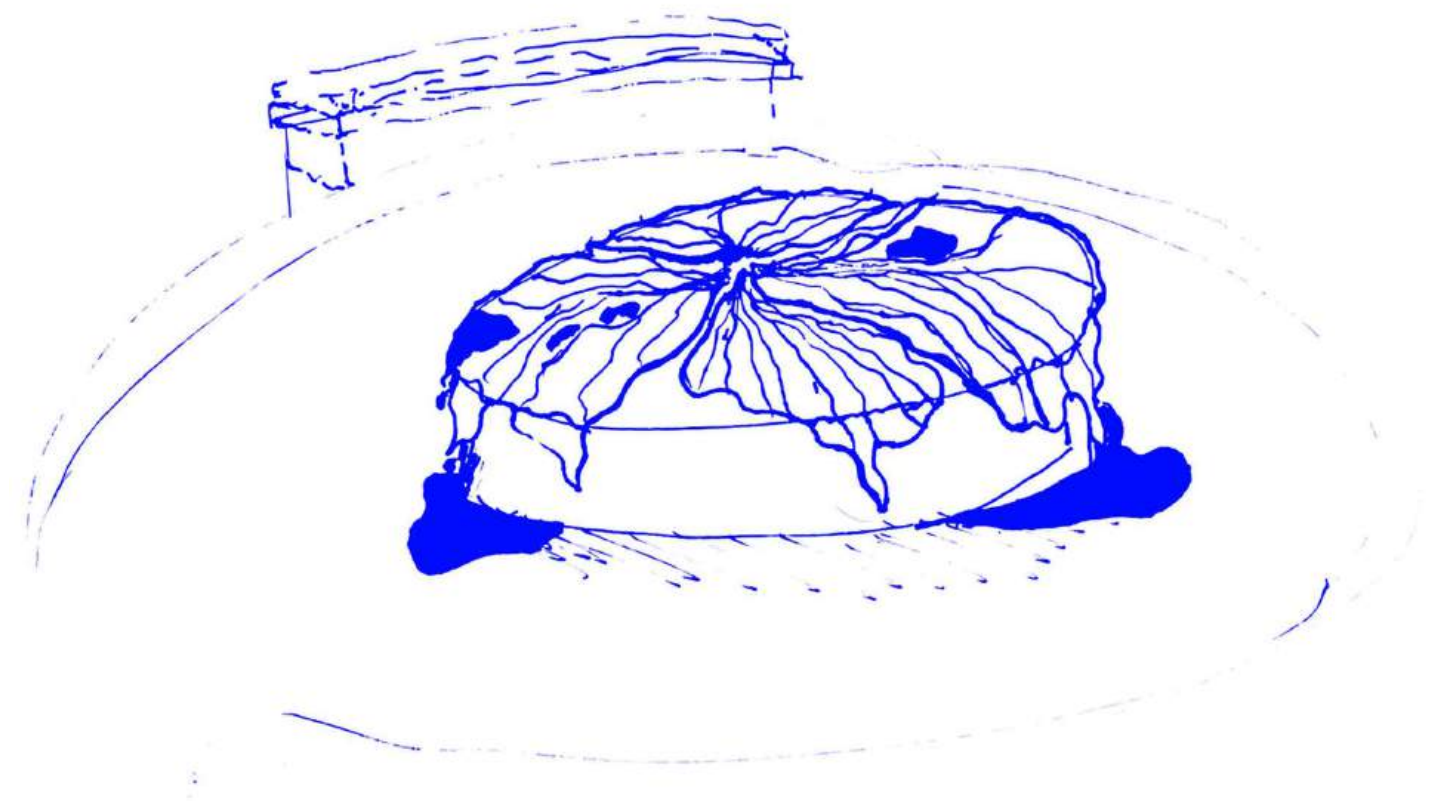
água

paulo franca

jessica joia

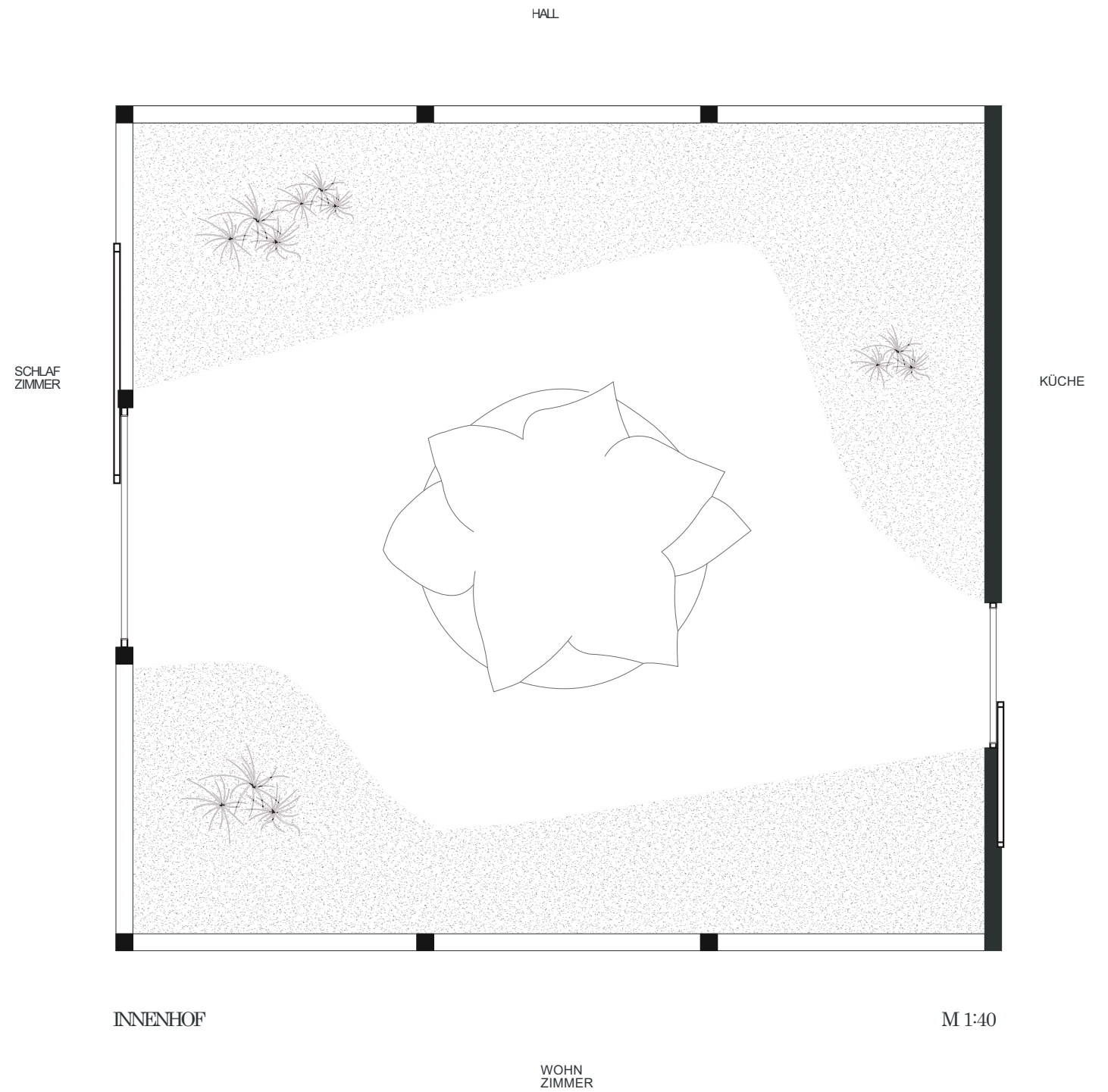
beatriz geovanini

SINTO MUITA DOR:EU OLHO
PARA A LINHA, EU OLHO
PARA DENTRO, EU OLHO
PARA CIMA, FECHO OS OLHOS
E ANDO PARA FRENTE
BUSCANDO O QUE DEIXEI
PARA TRÁS:SINTO MUITA DOR



I feel much pain: I look to the line, I look inside, I look up, close my eyes and walk forward, looking for what I've left behind: I feel much pain

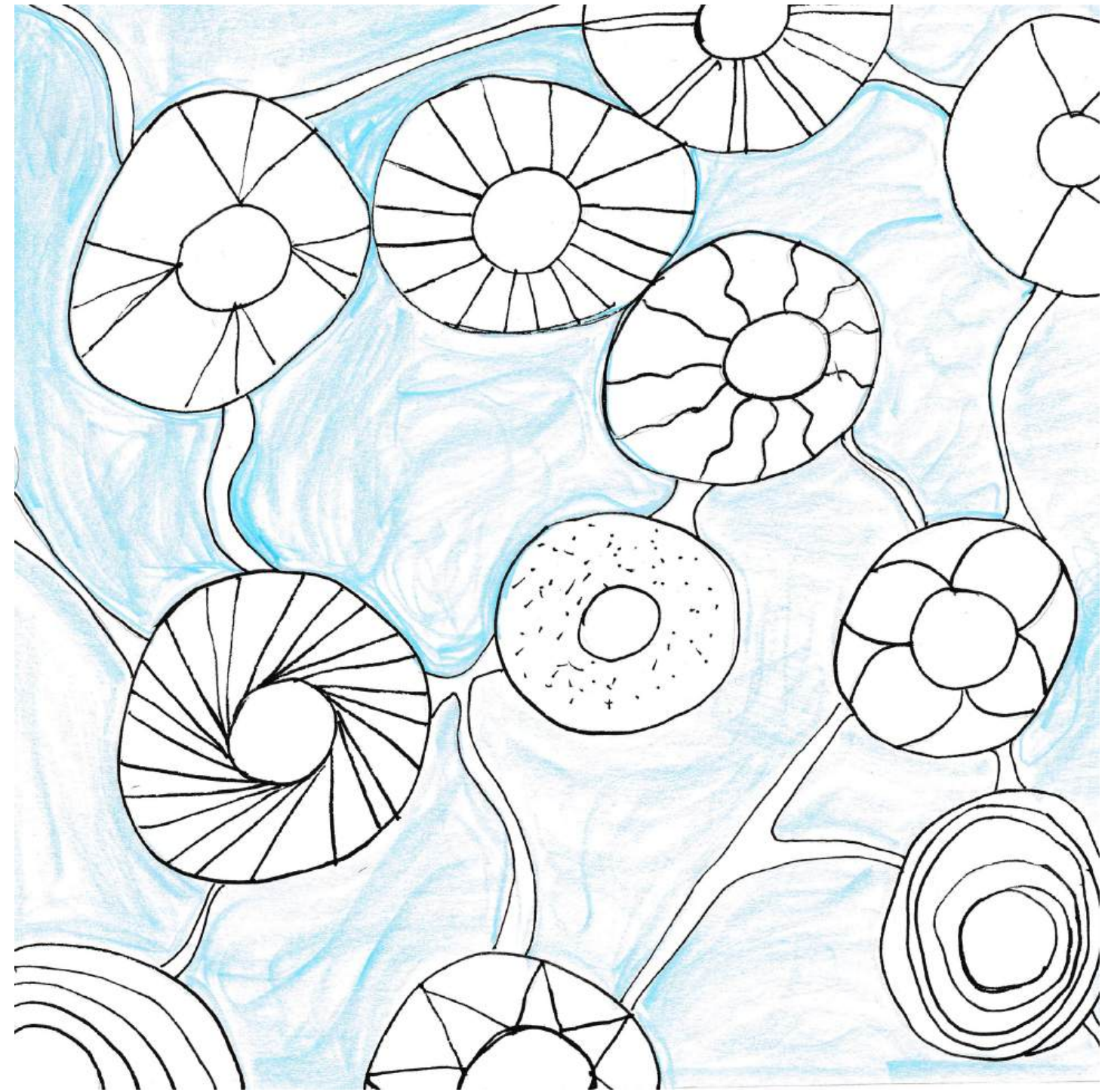
SHE WALKS THROUGH PAIN AND SHADOW
EYES CLOSED, HEART OPEN
EACH STEP FORWARD
A RETURN TO THOSE LEFT BEHIND
A LINE BECOMES A PATH,
PAIN BECOMES STRENGTH
EYES TO THE SKY, HEART IN THE PAST,
SHE CARRIES A THOUSAND SOULS
THROUGH HER WOUNDS, INTO LIGHT



I freed myself to free the others, to free my brothers. There is no comfort when seeking for freedom, but the Lord guides me, the Lord protects me. He gives me a hand, he shows me the light. Being alone in my freedom doesn't make me feel whole. Seeing my brothers suffering what I suffered doesn't bring me peace. So I prayed, and Lord showed the way to free my brothers. I crossed the line many times, I saw the holy water many times and brought many brothers to see the water. Lord made me river, Lord made me rain so I could free my brothers and sisters. I praise you Lord.



Unlearning what was taught to you as absolute truth is a revealing and liberating process. It's both tiring and gratifying. Each new discovery brings something to unlearn and relearn, and slowly you realize that nothing is unquestionable. To unlearn is to resist to learn differently and reach new conclusions. It's to understand that those who refuse to unlearn also don't want you to unlearn what they taught you. Unlearning means understanding that you cannot stay silent. Speak. Say what you think. Question things. Blind obedience only makes you part of the problem.



Ela desperta, desorientada, perdida. Sente o cheiro de barro e o calor de seu corpo, quase esfumaçando, como se houvesse acabado de sair do forno, acabado de ser feito. Ela sente muita dor, uma dor que não sabia se já havia sentido e não podia compreendê-la. Não podia compreender nenhum sentimento que pudesse existir naquele momento. O próprio significado da palavra sentimento era inexistente em seu vocabulário inexistente. Qualquer coisa que acontecesse em seu corpo em sua mente era para ela indescritível. Não entendendo o significado de suas seguintes ações, levantou e olhou para frente, parada inerte, por um tempo incalculável. E depois dessa inércia entrou em movimento e caminhou na exata direção para onde estavam alinhados os seus olhos. A linha do horizonte era seu limite e a cada passo via um novo passo depois da linha do horizonte.

Seguiu caminhando e em um momento qualquer de sua viagem, ainda sem nenhum significado aparente, sem qualquer motivo aparente, ela parou. Se encontrava em um círculo sem nenhum propósito aparente para existir, aparentemente sem nenhuma importância, como se toda sua existência bastasse por si só. No momento em que parou, sentiu algo em sua boca, uma aridez, um amargor. Que ainda não poderia definir em palavras. Ao centro do círculo viu algo que na sua caminhada ainda não havia visto. Algo volátil, sua materialidade se esparramava se esparramava. E preenchia qualquer espaço em que se pudesse acomodar. E assim, ainda sem compreensão de suas ações fez aquela matéria preencher as dobras e vincos de suas mãos e então, levando-o à boca a matéria preencheu todos os espaços secos de sua boca, aliviando seu amargor, entrando em seu corpo fervente e refriando-o, ajustando o que havia sido embaralhado e mostrando todo o significado de todas as coisas que havia visto em seu caminho. Os campos verdes, amarelos e vermelhos, o céu azul, todas as cores possíveis estavam aí, todos os cheiros, toda música, toda sensação, toda beleza.

Olhou para trás e percebeu que toda aquela beleza era uma memória do seu passado e viu o cinza, viu fumaça, viu tristeza e sentiu a opressão daquela massa cinza ainda indefinida que via próxima ao horizonte. Deu-se conta que aquele círculo guardava o seu passado e seja lá o que fosse, lhe entregou de volta a força e a capacidade de realmente entender o que estava acontecendo, de lembrar a essência das coisas, de ter controle sobre se mesma. Quis fazer dali sua casa, de qualquer maneira sabia que já pertencia àquele lugar. Se deu conta de que saiu dali o seu ponto de partida em direção ao círculo era aquela massa cinzenta. Percebeu que o seu passado havia sido apagado, assim como o passado de qualquer um que pudesse estar naquela massa cinzenta, que gerava confusão e ofuscava a realidade de quem estivesse próximo a ela.

Percebia que pelo círculo passavam vozes com o vento, suplicando, perdidas. Então, assim como chegou ao círculo, voltou caminhando para a massa cinza para libertar as vozes, mostrando o passado.

Chegando à massa cinzenta, via pessoas perambulando pelas ruas, muitas caladas, as via muito desorientadas, muitas a olhavam com estranheza. Ela perguntava, tentava se comunicar de alguma forma, mas as pessoas cabisbaixas não reagiam. Apenas algumas tinham repulsa e se afastavam abruptamente, não buscavam o diálogo. Ela se sentia impotente. Começou a gritar, chamar as pessoas, precisava fazer algo.

Apesar de todo o cansaço, apesar de toda dor, caminhou de volta ao círculo. Recolheu um pouco de terra e voltou, já com os pés ensopados de sangue para a cidade cinzenta. Espalhou o tanto que havia trazido, e assim como ela mesma retomou o controle de si ao chegar ao círculo, muitos tinham lapsos de reação e seguiam em direção à linha do horizonte, em direção ao círculo que resguardava a história. E lembrando de tudo, entendendo tudo, muitos foram e voltaram várias vezes. O círculo floresceu, se inundou, se reconstruiu.

She awakens, disoriented, lost. She feels the smell of clay and the heat of her own body, almost smoking, as if she had just come out of the oven, just been made. She feels great pain, a pain she did not know whether she had ever felt before, and she could not comprehend it. She could not comprehend any feeling that might exist in that moment. The very meaning of the word *feeling* was nonexistent in her nonexistent vocabulary. Anything that happened in her body or her mind was, to her, indescribable. Not understanding the meaning of her next actions, she stood up and looked ahead, motionless, for an incalculable time. And after that inertia she moved, walking in the exact direction her eyes were aligned with. The horizon line was her limit, and with every step she saw a new step beyond that horizon.

She kept walking, and at some moment of her journey, still without any apparent meaning, without any apparent reason, she stopped. She found herself in a circle with no apparent purpose to exist, seemingly without any importance, as if its entire existence were enough on its own. The moment she stopped, she felt something in her mouth, a dryness, a bitterness that she still could not define in words. At the center of the circle she saw something she had not yet seen in her walk. Something volatile, its materiality spreading and spreading. And it filled any space it could settle into. And thus, still without understanding her actions, she let that matter fill the folds and creases of her hands and then, bringing it to her mouth, the matter filled all the dry spaces in her mouth, easing its bitterness, entering her burning body and cooling it, setting right what had been scrambled, and revealing the meaning of all the things she had seen along her path. The green, yellow, and red fields, the blue sky, every possible color was there, all the scents, all the music, every sensation, every beauty.

She looked back and realized that all that beauty was a memory of her past, and she saw the gray, saw smoke, saw sadness, and felt the oppression of that still-undefined gray mass she saw near the horizon. She understood that that circle held her past and, whatever it was, it had given her back the strength and the ability to truly understand what was happening, to remember the essence of things, to have control over herself. She wanted to make that place her home; somehow she knew she already belonged there. She realized that from where she had departed toward the circle was that gray mass. She perceived that her past had been erased, just as the past of anyone who might be in that gray mass had been erased, which generated confusion and obscured the reality of those near it.

She perceived that voices passed through the circle with the wind, pleading, lost. And so, just as she had arrived at the circle, she walked back toward the gray mass to free the voices, to show them the past.

Upon arriving at the gray mass, she saw people wandering the streets, many silent, she saw them very aimless, many looking at her strangely. She asked questions, tried to communicate in some way, but the downcast people did not react. Only a few showed repulsion and moved abruptly away, avoiding dialogue. She felt powerless. She began to shout, to call the people; she needed to do something.

Despite all the fatigue, despite all the pain, she walked back to the circle. She gathered a bit of earth and returned, her feet already soaked in blood, to the gray city. She scattered what she had brought, and just as she herself had regained control upon reaching the circle, many had flashes of reaction and moved toward the horizon line, toward the circle that safeguarded history. And remembering everything, understanding everything, many went and came back many times. The circle blossomed, filled itself with water, rebuilt itself.