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Chris Ro

Thieves Like Us

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우리같은 도둑

크리스 로

Vol. 1

Contents

p	6 - 9
p	11 - 15
p	17 - 29
p	30 - 39
p	40 - 47
p	48 - 49
p	50 - 53
p	54 - 57
p	58 - 63
p	64 - 67
p	68 - 75

Vol. 2

Works

p	76 - 157
p	158 - 159

Lowercase-c, a Thief Like Us, Jiyon Kim
Process Diagram
Thieves Like Us – Documents
A Woman, Her Mother, Her Boyfriend, His Father and Her Nose – The Recipe Thief
An Older Gentleman and His Slightly Younger Friends – The Loneliness Thief
Two Men, Their Religion, Their Music – The Christian Thieves
A Woman, Her Addiction and Many Monks – The Virginity Thief
A Man, His Truck, His Fruit and His Thoughts – The Tree Thief
The Civil Servant And His Only Sin – The Cat Thief
A Maintenance Man and His Two Jobs – The Double Income Thief
Exhibition Archiving

Works 1 - 32

우리같은 도둑 c, 김지연
작업과정
우리와 같은 도둑 – 문서
한 여자, 그녀의 어머니, 그녀의 남자친구, 그의 아버지와 그녀의 코 – 레시피 도둑
나이 많은 신사와 약간 어린 친구들 – 외로움 도둑
두 남자, 그들의 종교, 그들의 음악 – 크리스찬 도둑들
한 여자, 그녀의 중독과 많은 수도사들 – 처녀 도둑
남자, 그의 트럭, 그의 과일과 그의 생각 – 나무 도둑
공무원과 그의 유일한 죄 – 고양이 도둑
정비공과 그의 두 가지 직업 – 이중 소득 도둑
전시기록

Vol. 1

Contents
Preface
Documents
Exhibition Archivings

0. 소문자 c는 “하늘 아래 새로울 것이 없다”는 문장을 안다. 다윗의 아들 솔로몬 왕이 말년에 쓴 것으로 알려져 있는 <전도서>의 “전도자가 이르되 헛되고 헛되며 헛되고 헛되니 모든 것이 헛되도다. 해 아래에서 수고하는 모든 수고가 사람에게 무엇이 유익한가. 한 세대는 가고 한 세대는 오되 땅은 영원히 있도다. 해는 뜨고 해는 지되 그 뒀던 곳으로 빨리 돌아가고. 이미 있던 것이 후에 다시 있겠고 이미 한 일을 후에 다시 할지라. 해 아래에는 새 것이 없나니. 무엇을 가리켜 이르기를 보라 이것이 새 것이라 할 것이 있으랴. 우리가 있기 오래 전 세대들에게도 이미 있었느니라. 이전 세대들이 기억됨이 없으니 장래 세대도 그 후 세대들과 함께 기억됨이 없으리라.”(전도서 1: 2-5,9-11 개역개정)에 등장하는 이 문장은 전도서에서 언급된 맥락을 휘저으며 이곳 저곳에 소환된다. 전에 없던 새로움을 요청받곤 하는 창작자들에게는 위로와 좌절을 동시에 안겨주는 문장이 되기도 한다.

사람들이 흔히 인용하는“모방(mimesis)은 창조의 어머니”는 새로움의 출처와 새로움을 향한 방법론으로 언급된다. 아리스토텔레스의 시학에서 비롯된 이 표현은 예술 창작의 원리로 ‘모방’을 말하는 저자의 권위에 기대 창작의 과정과 결과에서 발생하는 ‘모방’을 합리화하는 용도로 호출된다. 1899년, 발명될 수 있는 것은 모두 발명되었다며 미국의 윌리엄 맥킨리 대통령에게 특허청 패지를 건의한 뒤 사임했다고 알려졌던 찰스 F. 듀얼의 말은, 더 이상 새로운 것 없는 세상에서 새로운 무엇을 발명하는 일의 지난함을 옹호하는 문장으로 인용되어 왔다.

그로부터 100년이 지난 후 찰스 F. 듀얼은 이런 말을 한 적이 없다는 사실이 밝혀졌지만 문장의 선정성 탓에, 사람들은 사실 여부를 외면한 채 인용하고 싶은 욕망을 다스리지 못한다. ‘모방’을 해석하고 의미를 발견하고 명분을 부여하는 시간을 거친 끝에, 인간의 성장 과정을 지배하는 모방 본능은 절차를 학습하고, 경험을 축적하여 혁신을 꿈꾸는 인류가 문명을 꾸릴 수 있는 동력으로 여겨지며 인류 생존과 번영의 전제조건으로서의 위상을 획득했다.

1. 사유재산 개념이 등장한 이래 나의 것과 너의 것 사이 경계는 선명해졌다지만, 존재 자체가 온갖 연결망의 한 가운데 있을 수밖에 없는 인간에게, 내 것 네 것이 어디 있단 말인가. 법이 가능하는 소유는 허점 투성이고, 틈 사이로 흘러내릴 여지는 풍부하다. 그럼에도 불구하고 공동체 안에서 생존하는 이들은 서로의 생존을 배려하는 선에서, 억울함과 분노를 폭발시키지 않을 수 있는 선에서 유연하게 약속을 타고 넘는다. c는 합법과 불법의 영역이 포착하지 못하는 세계로 눈길을 두리번거려 보았다. 의심없이 받아들이기에는 질문을 멈출 수 없는 소유에 대한 자의적 해석이 통용되는 상황들을 살피던 그는, 예술가로 활동하는 자신의 창작 과정과 결과에서 ‘모방’을 넘어서는 ‘훔치기’가 핵심 기술이었음을 발견하고 말했다. 그렇다면 이제, 그는 무엇을 어떤 식으로 절묘하게 훔쳤는가. c는 누구나 알아차릴 수는 없더라도, 집중의 시간을 조금이라도 할애하는 누군가는 알 수 있을 정도로 그가 훔쳐온 역사와 그 기술을 은밀하게 고백해보려 한다. 이미지의 언어는 실상, 제법 솔직하게 그의 모든 것을 드러내지만, 해독의 과정이 필요하다. 그러니까, 그의 비기를 훔치고자 하는 이들이 이곳에 발을 들이고자 한다면, 나의 시간과 정성을 c에게 내어줄 각오를 하라고 조언하고 싶다.

2. “균형을 맞추는 것은 생명체의 본능. 균형을 깨는 것은 더 나은 생명활동을 위한 일시적 반항.” 이 문구를 적은 뒤 시간이 흘러버렸다. 이 문구가 글쓰는 이로부터 나왔는지, 누군가의 글을 옮겨 적어둔 것인지, 작가의 말을 옮겨 적어둔 것인지, 무책임하게도, 편리하게도 잊었다. 글쓴이가 c의 그림과 애니메이션을 들여다보며 떠올리지 않았을까 믿기로 한다. 이 불안한 믿음이 내 안의 도둑을 인정하는 행위인지 부정하는 태도인지는 의문이다. c의 도상은 화면 위에 멈춰 있지만 움직임이 잠재되어 있다. ‘원’이라고 부르기에는 비정형적이고 ‘사각형’이라고 칭하기에는 모서리가 부드러운 덩어리들이 자극하는 ‘움직임’은, 그것이 마치 본능인 양 화면 위에서 균형을 좇고 균형을 깨면서 리듬을 만든다. c의 작업이 보는 자의 시선을 오래 붙잡는 이유는 그 지점에 있을 것만 같다. 움직임이 요청하기 마련인 ‘시간’이 그의 평면에 갇혀 있다. 그렇게 보면 c의 애니메이션은 꽤 친절한 시도다. 보는자의 길잡이가 되어 평면이 가두어 둔 시간을 풀어놓는다. 덩어리의 율동감에 취해 나의 시간을 도둑맞지만, 덕분에 다른 즐거움을 만날 수 있으니까 억울하지는 않다. c의 도상이 삼차원 입체로 구현된다면 그것은 물을 가득 채운 풍선이 아닐까. 정형화되지 못하는 끝없는 변주가 새로움을 자극한다. 구현되는 움직임 밖의 움직임으로, 윤곽선이 가둔 세계 밖으로 보는자를 이끈다. 그의 그림에 사로잡혀 있다 보니, ‘물리계가 일을 얼마나 많이 할 수 있는지를 정량적으로 나타낸 것’을 말한다는 에너지를 도상으로 그린다면 c의 그림과 비슷하지 않을까 하는 데 상념이 미친다. 그렇다면 c의 도상은 일하는 중이다. 훔치기 기술이 내재된 c의 작업 과정을 일일이 기술하는 친절함을 제공하지는 않겠다. 그것은 은밀하게 내버려두었을 때 다른 상상과 해석의 여지를 만들어내면서 호기심을 일하게 만드니까. 모름지기 ‘훔치기 기술’은 비기로 은폐될 때 더 강력한 힘을 갖는다. 드러난 이미지와 텍스트를 통해 추측하는 것으로 충분하다고 말하자. 그러니까, 다시 한번 강조하자면, 보는자는 감상을 위한 시간을 투여해야 한다.

3. ‘훔치기’에 대한 c의 관심은 직관의 결과에 가깝다. 그것은 작업의 결과 뿐 아니라 과정이 빛지고 있는 세상을 향해 활짝 열린 도둑이 능히 가질 법한 관심이며, 솔직하게 창작자로서의 자신을 돌아보고자 하는 c의 순정이 깃든 호기심이다. 직설적이지 않을 뿐, 세상을 향한 재현적 요소가 다분한 그의 도상을 이해하는 배경이 될 수도 있을 c의 단편소설들은 세상 곳곳을 살아가는 인간 군상의 ‘훔치기’ 행위와 그에 깃든 마음을 살핀다. ‘합법’이라고도 ‘불법’이라고도 단정짓기 곤란하지만, 훔치지 않았다고 말하기도 애매한 이야기를 담은 에피소드가 꼬리에 꼬리를 문다. 그가 다루고 있는 에피소드의 내용은 보는자의 즐거움을 배려해 언급하지 않기로 한다. 우리 주변에는 그가 평생에 걸쳐 기술해도 모자라지 않을 만큼 많은 풍부한 ‘훔치기’의 사례가 있다. 그가 밝은 눈으로 관찰한 주인공들의 훔치기 기술이 유쾌한 문체에 붙잡혀 형태를 갖춘다. 텍스트를 읽어내려가는 동안, 보는자는 틀림없이 내 안의 도둑을 마주칠 것이다. 그러나 일종의 ‘진실’과 만나는 시간을 두려워할 필요는 없다. 그렇다고 다들 세상에 빛진 자로서 그렇게 살고 있음을 확인하며 스스로를 위로할 일도 아니다.

4. 이제 책장을 넘기며 우리같은 도둑의 비기를 엿볼 때가 왔다.

0. Lowercase-c knows the sentence, There's nothing new under the sun, originally penned by King Solomon, the son of David, in his later years: “Meaningless! Meaningless!” says the Teacher. “Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless.” What do people gain from all their labors at which they toil under the sun? Generations come and generations go, but the earth remains forever. 5The sun rises and the sun sets, and hurries back to where it rises. What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun. Is there anything of which one can say, “Look! This is something new”? It was here already, long ago; it was here before our time. No one remembers the former generations, and even those yet to come will not be remembered by those who follow them. *Ecclesiastes 1: 2-5, 9-11 (NIV)*. From the Book of Ecclesiastes, this saying is often casually thrown around out of its original context. For creators who are asked to bring something new into existence, this statement is the source of simultaneous encouragement and frustration.

The commonly quoted phrase, *Imitation is the mother of creation*, is often cited in discussions about the source and methodology of newness. This expression — now a principle of artistic creation originally from Aristotle's *Poetics*— is called forth as justification for the imitation that results from both the process and product of creative activity. Stating that everything that can be invented has been invented, Charles H. Duell resigned from the US Patent Office in 1899 after proposing that President William McKinley shut it down, and his statement has been cited ever since as one that expresses the extreme difficulty of trying to make something new in a world that has seen it all.

A century later, it's been confirmed that Duell never in fact stated these words — but due to its sensational qualities, people continue to ignore the veracity of the quote and fail to control their desires to cite it. Following a long period of interpreting, discovering the meaning of, and justifying the notion of *mimesis*, this instinct to mimic — which governs human development — is considered the impetus behind the human ability to build civilizations through learning, accumulation of experience, and innovation. This instinct has taken its place as a prerequisite for the survival and prosperity of humankind.

1. They say the boundary between what is mine and yours has become clearer since the advent of the concept of private property, but what does “mine” and “yours” really mean to a human being whose existence itself is destined to be at the center of a complex, interconnected web? Possession, as defined by law, is full of flaws; there is plenty of room in those cracks to slip through. Nevertheless, those who survive within the community gracefully negotiate the social contract, respecting each other's survival and avoiding the pitfalls of injustice and anger.

Lowercase-c peered into the world beyond the realm of legality (and illegality), taking in the view. Always looking out for situations where the notion of possession was arbitrary and up for negotiation, he came to discover that *theft*, beyond mere *imitation*, was the main technique in his creative practice as an artist. Now then, what did he exquisitely steal, and how?

Lowercase-c attempts to secretly confess his technique and history of thievery in such a way that anyone who puts forth a little bit of effort will understand. In reality, the language of images requires a process of decoding, despite the fact that it openly reveals everything there is to know. So, if anyone out there is scheming to steal his technique — his secret weapon — I advise you be prepared to offer up your time and bring a sincere heart.

2. *The act of balancing is a living organism's instinct. Breaking the balance is a fleeting rebellion for a better life.* Some time passed after these words were written. Some time passed after I wrote these words down. Whether they were originally from a writer, quoted from an artist's interview, or taken from some other source; irresponsibly and conveniently, I have since forgotten. I decide to believe that I came up with these words on my own while looking at Lowercase-c's drawing and animation, and wonder whether this questionable belief is an act of acknowledging or denying the thief within myself.

Lowercase-c's visual form is frozen on screen; the sense of movement still present, just dormant. *Movement*, stimulated by masses and lumps too atypical in form to be called “circle” and too rounded in the corners to be labeled “rectangle,” rhythmically chase and shatter balance on screen, as if by instinct. This might be where one finds the explanation for why Lowercase-c's work holds the viewer's gaze for so long. *Time*, bound to be brought up in any discussion about movement, is trapped under the surface. In some ways, Lowercase-c's animation can be considered a rather gracious and kind gesture. Becoming a guide for the viewer, it frees time from the constraints of the flat surface that it was trapped under. Drunk on the choreography of the lumpy masses, I get my time stolen. There's no regret, however, as I receive other pleasures in return.

If Lowercase-c's visual form was materialized in three dimensions, it would probably resemble a water-filled balloon. Endless transformation void of any semblance of standardization evokes the emergence of something new. As the movement outside of the materialized movement on screen, the viewer is led beyond of the world trapped within the contours. Captivated by his drawing, I'm struck by the thought that a visual representation of the energy required to state, *A quantitative representation of the inner workings of the physical world*, might look a lot like this image by Lowercase-c. That would mean that Lowercase-c's image is currently at work.

I won't extend the kindness of going into every detail about Lowercase-c's work process and its innately thieving ways. That's because when left to remain enigmatic, his process stokes one's curiosity, provoking the imagination and making room for interpretation. The *theft technique* yields a greater impact when kept concealed, like a secret weapon. Let's just say that getting an approximation of the work based on the visible image and text is sufficient. To reiterate the point, appreciation of his work requires an investment of time on the part of the viewer.

3. Lowercase-c's interest in stealing or theft is, in a sense, the result of intuition and not just the product of his process. It's the kind of attention that a thief who is completely open towards the world to which he is indebted would exhibit — an honest maker's self-reflective and pure curiosity. Indirect in their approach, Lowercase-c's short stories, which serve as a context for understanding his imagery of reproducible elements found in the world, examine the act of theft and the heart behind it as found among the vast human population. Each difficult to label as either “legal” or “illegal,” there is story after story of episodes where one can't fully ignore the act of theft contained within. For the viewer's pleasure, I won't go into the actual content of the stories here.

In our midst, there are enough instances of this sort of *theft* for Lowercase-c to tell stories for the rest of his life. The protagonists' techniques of thievery, observed through his incisive vision, are given form as they're captured and translated into pleasant prose. The viewer will undoubtedly come face to face with his or her own thief within in the process of reading, but that doesn't mean that one should fear this confrontation with the *truth*. It also doesn't mean we ought to comfort or excuse ourselves on the basis that we are all complicit in one way or another.

4. The time has come for us to turn the pages and get a glimpse of the tricks of the trade used by thieves like us.

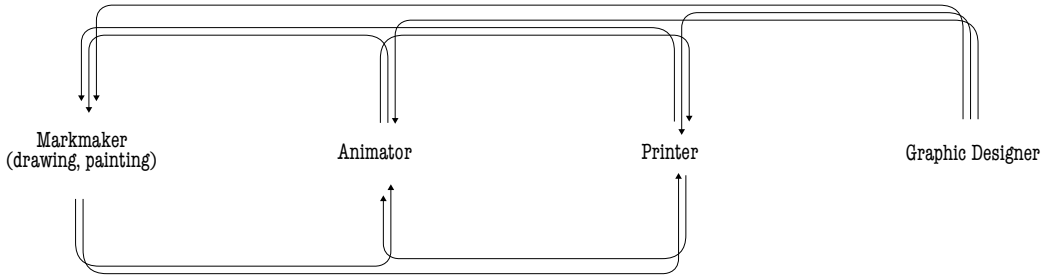
p 10

p 11

Process Diagram

마크메이커는 애니메이터에게서 훔치고, 마크메이커는 프린터에게서 훔칩니다.
애니메이터는 마크메이커에게서 훔치고, 애니메이터는 프린터에게서 훔칩니다.
프린터는 애니메이터에게서 훔치고, 프린터는 마크메이커에게서 훔칩니다.
그래픽 디자이너는 모든 것에서 훔쳐 옵니다.

The markmaker takes from the animator. The markmaker takes from the printer.
The animator takes from the markmaker. The animator takes from the printer.
The printer takes from the animator. The printer takes from the markmaker.
The graphic designer takes from them all.



A.

These are the originals. Created in 2019. Originally started as markmaking, then moved to sequence and then later to print and eventually animation.

It is a process of iteration. One thing leading to the next.

여기 원본이 있습니다. 2019년에 만들어졌습니다. 처음에는 마크메이킹으로 시작해 시퀀스를 거쳐 인쇄되고 움직임으로 전환됩니다. 하나가 다음으로 이어지는 반복의 과정입니다.

B.

These are iterations. Attempting to capture some of the aura or atmosphere of the original. These too began with mark making, digitally and then went to print and then went to animation.

이것은 반복입니다. 원본의 아우라와 분위기를 쫓는 시도입니다.

이 반복 역시 마크메이킹으로 시작해 디지털화 되고 인쇄와 움직임으로 나아갑니다.

C.

These next iterations specifically focused on animation methods alone and then some analog methods of markmaking as well.

다음 반복은 특별히 움직임의 방식과 마크메이킹의 아날로그적 방식에 집중합니다.

D.

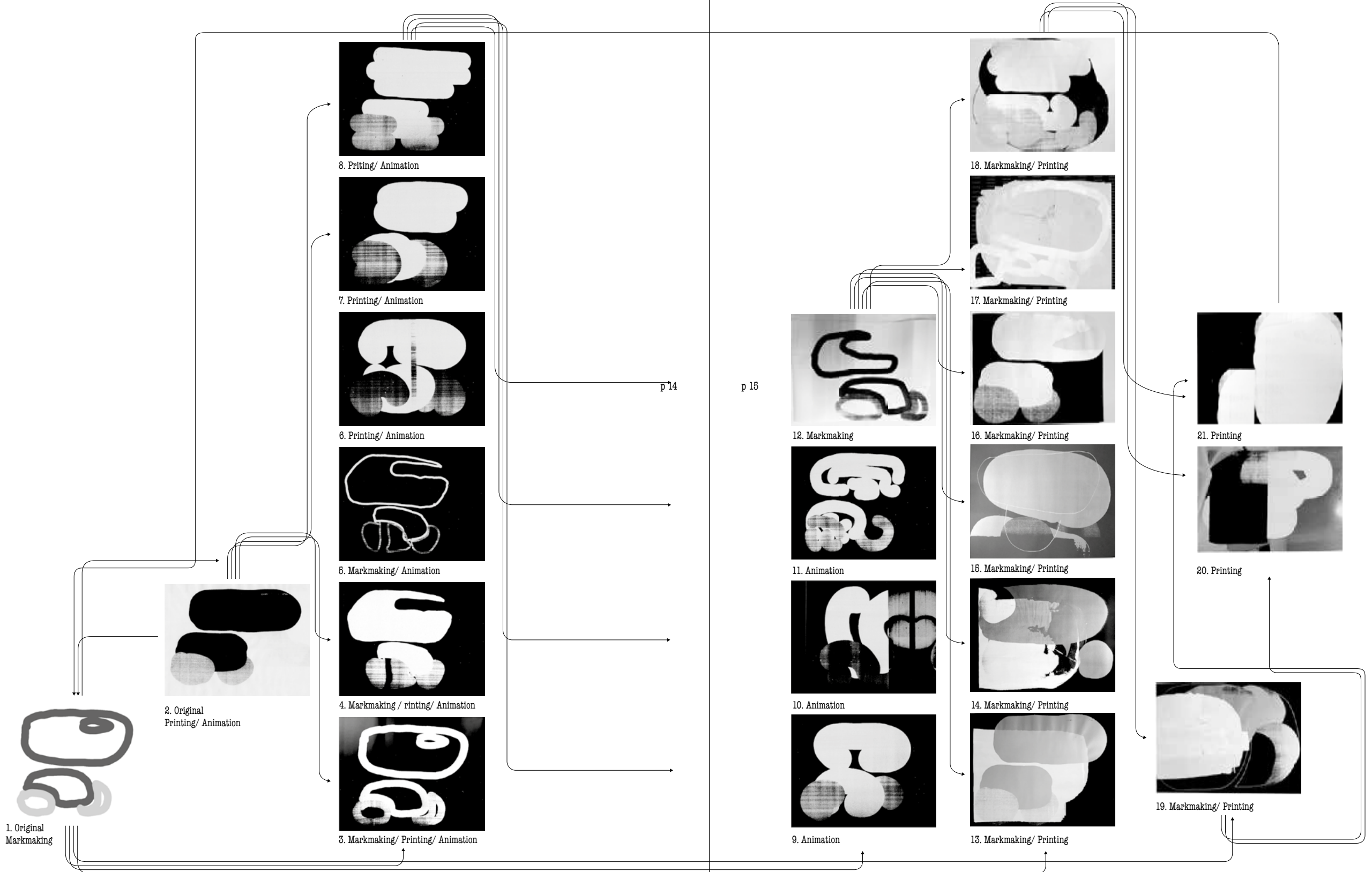
These iterations are a combination of everything. Printing and mark-making together.

이 반복은 모든 것을 종합합니다. 인쇄와 마크메이킹을 섞습니다.

E.

These iterations are a transition from printing, markmaking to pure printing alone. The printing process also leads to iterations and explorations on a variety of surfaces and platforms.

마지막 반복은 인쇄로부의 전환입니다. 마크메이킹이 순수하게 인쇄됩니다. 인쇄 과정 또한 다양한 표면과 플랫폼에서의 탐구와 반복으로 이어집니다.



She was raised, born, in Jeollado province. A region well known for its rich history, conflicts, culture and culinary prowess. Born in the city of Gwangju, she lived for that matter, a very normal, regular, everyday life. With very normal days becoming even more normal under very normal conditions. But in other ways, perhaps beyond the surface and the everyday, she was not so normal. Since youth, she had been earmarked, bookmarked, reared for success. Making it to a university in Seoul would be considered truly 'making it' from anybody from this region. Admissions to any schools in Seoul was considered a mighty hurdle. Admissions by the rare, gifted and hard working. Especially from this province and just anywhere outside of Seoul for that matter. This was always the goal. To make it to the big city. But somehow, she seemed to have been designated or perhaps destined for even greater things. She was one of those extremely rare cases where, teachers, family, peers, advisers all thought making it to a school in Seoul would be a mighty feat. To the big city. They all thought she could go for the gold. Make it to National University(SNU). The 'one' as they sometimes say. Seoul gateway to bigger and better things in life. The dream. This was the acceptable future for her.

She had been told from youth that if she did all the right things and managed all conditions correctly, she could definitely go to SNU. Multi-talented, sharp, she displayed every possible indication of somebody who could make it. And so this was her life. Her normal. Memorize, absorb, learn, absorb, learn, prepare, prepare, prepare, that lots of knowledge. Knowing that she may be 'the one'. To be filled with her family, neighborhood, teachers, friends all had their hopes in her. Knowing they thought she was 'the one'. Knowing this, she always felt that extra incentive to constantly push the pedal. Accelerate the engine. Until the car shakes. Everyday, all the time. Non. Stop. And the car, as engineered to do, kept going. This is the education machine that is Korea. Push the pedal regardless if the engine can take it or not. A true grind. A true battle. A true machine. In every possible way. But everybody goes through it. And she was doing so with aplomb. She was had no problems with the machine. She was often, extremely, particularly receptive to this machine. With a talent for information

Thieves Like Us

—

Documents

A Woman,
Her Mother,
Her Boyfriend,
His Father
and Her Nose

—

A Recipe Thief

2021

06

24

...who were devout Christians. Serious content may not be appropriate or in line with their beliefs. Typical. They told me one time they had been robbed. Their place broken into. They told me the thieves had not taken much things. Them, being Walmart friendly, well, there were not many things to take obviously. But these thieves, well, there were not many things to take obviously. portable CD player. A guitar. A distortion pedal. Things of this nature. They had also ransacked the CD rack. This is the 1990s. CDs were missing. Assets. Precious gems. More than thirty percent of their subject of interest. While going through the CDs, it became apparent that these thieves had taken the best of the best. Excellent music choice. Excellent music selection, these thieves.

This in itself was nothing outside of the ordinary. In a hurry, many thieves can make outstanding decisions. Many thieves can assess any given value in mere seconds. The irony here was that, as stout Christians, these fellows had in all of their purchases, limited themselves to strictly a selection of CCM(Contemporary Christian Music). Nothing else. But here, if one were to select the best of their best of Christian music, what could that possibly mean? As these thieves, Christian thieves?

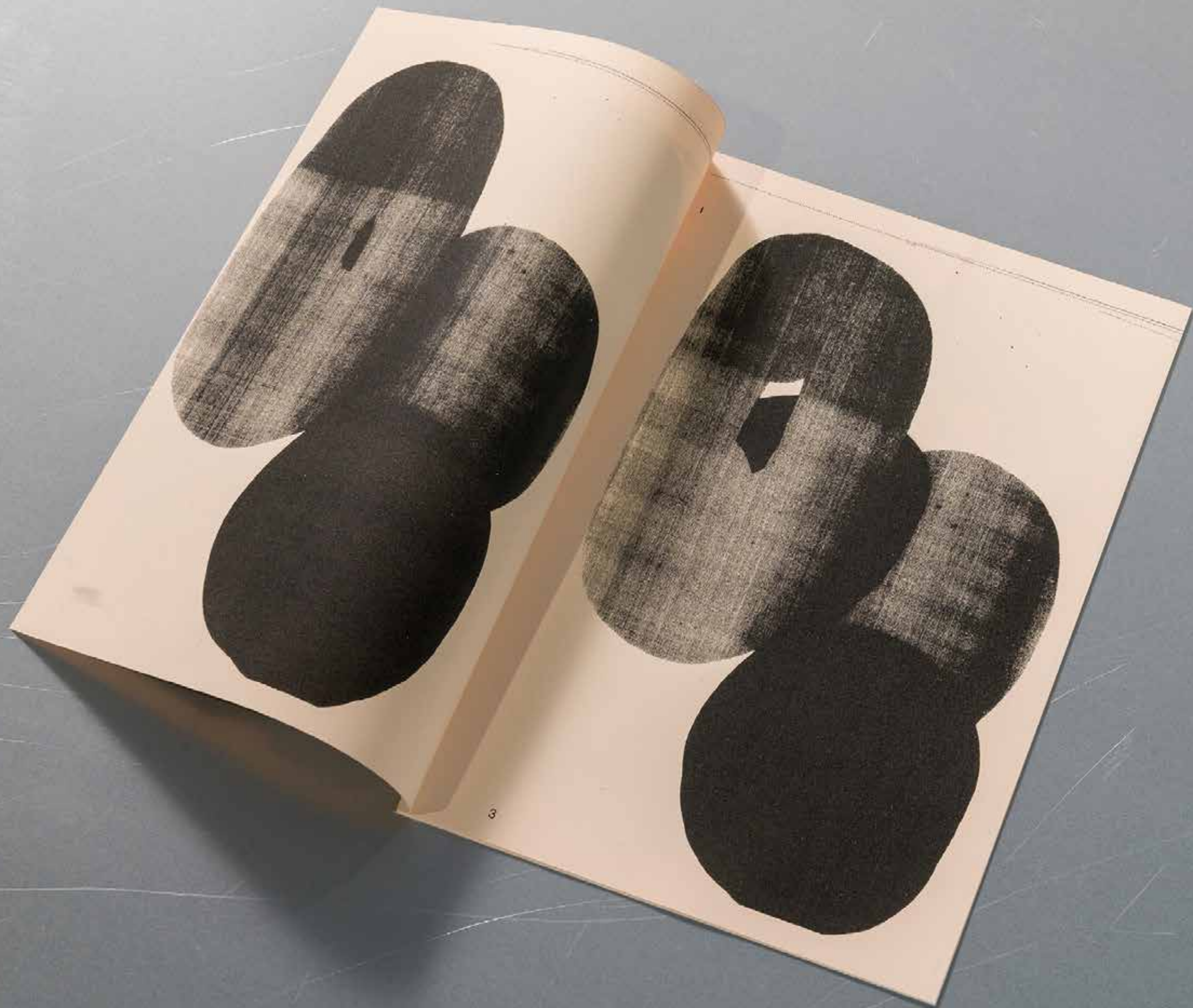
Thieves Like Us
— Documents

Two Men,
Their Religion,
Their Music

2021
08
12

The
Christian
Thieves

1



... is typically known as or called a 'soo-wee ajushi,' a position perhaps has an indefinite translation or description in English. In the dictionary, officially it is presented as 'security guard', 'janitor' or 'caretaker.' From what I can see, it is truly a combination of them all. Perhaps even 'maintenance man' might be an accurate definition. More often than not, many of them are tied or connected to a particular building, institution or space. It is their job to care for this building and all of the things that happen with, around, through and by this building. Together, perhaps akin to a clownfish and a sea anemone, two distinctly different organisms, with different purposes, that somehow reside together in perfect harmony.

But this position, at best, is not a taxing position. When you pass these gentlemen on the way in and out of any of these buildings, you can see they are often battling nature. Fighting sleep. Fighting time. Or the passage of time. They need each other. They need a particular any sense. Some days they must receive packages. Some days they must monitor parking nature. It is both an easy and difficult job if that makes around the building. Slight accidents. Deliveries. Some days they For many there are sleep quarters tucked inside of their offices and also required to remain on duty during odd hours. A symbiotic relationship. But what perks may come with the building. Not many. But perhaps, well, lots of doing nothing. Lots of time. Lots of monitoring security monitors with at the most, air passing by being recorded on them. In a place as safe as South Korea, well, again, not the most demanding job by any means. There is no kind of job? Typical much stress. There is no active

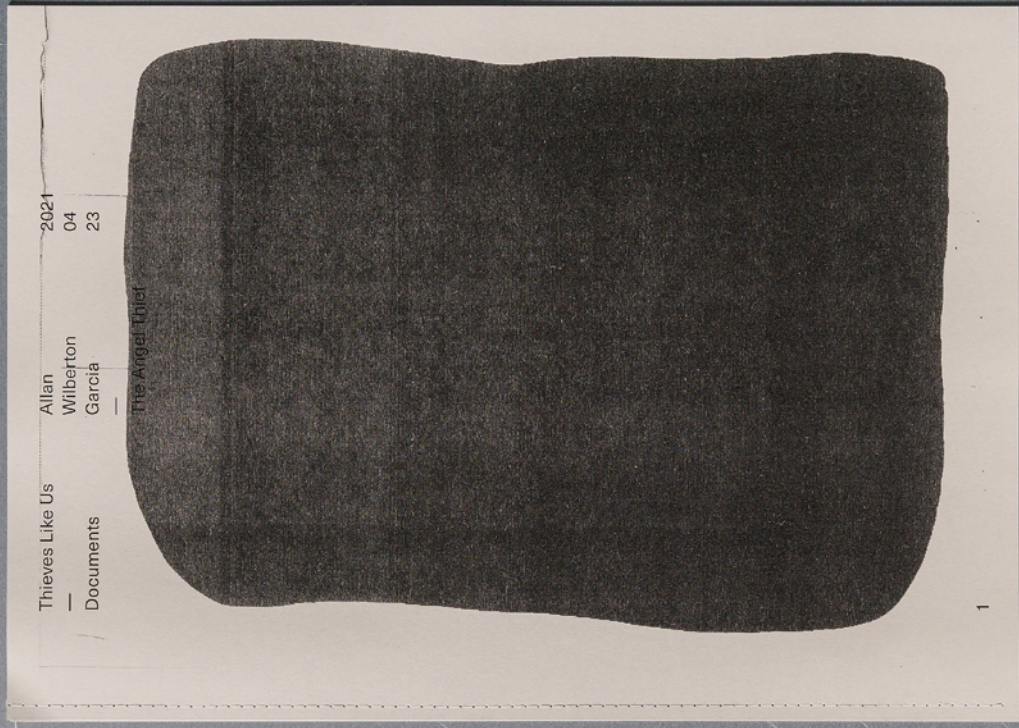
How does one find this kind of job? Typical much stress. There is no active

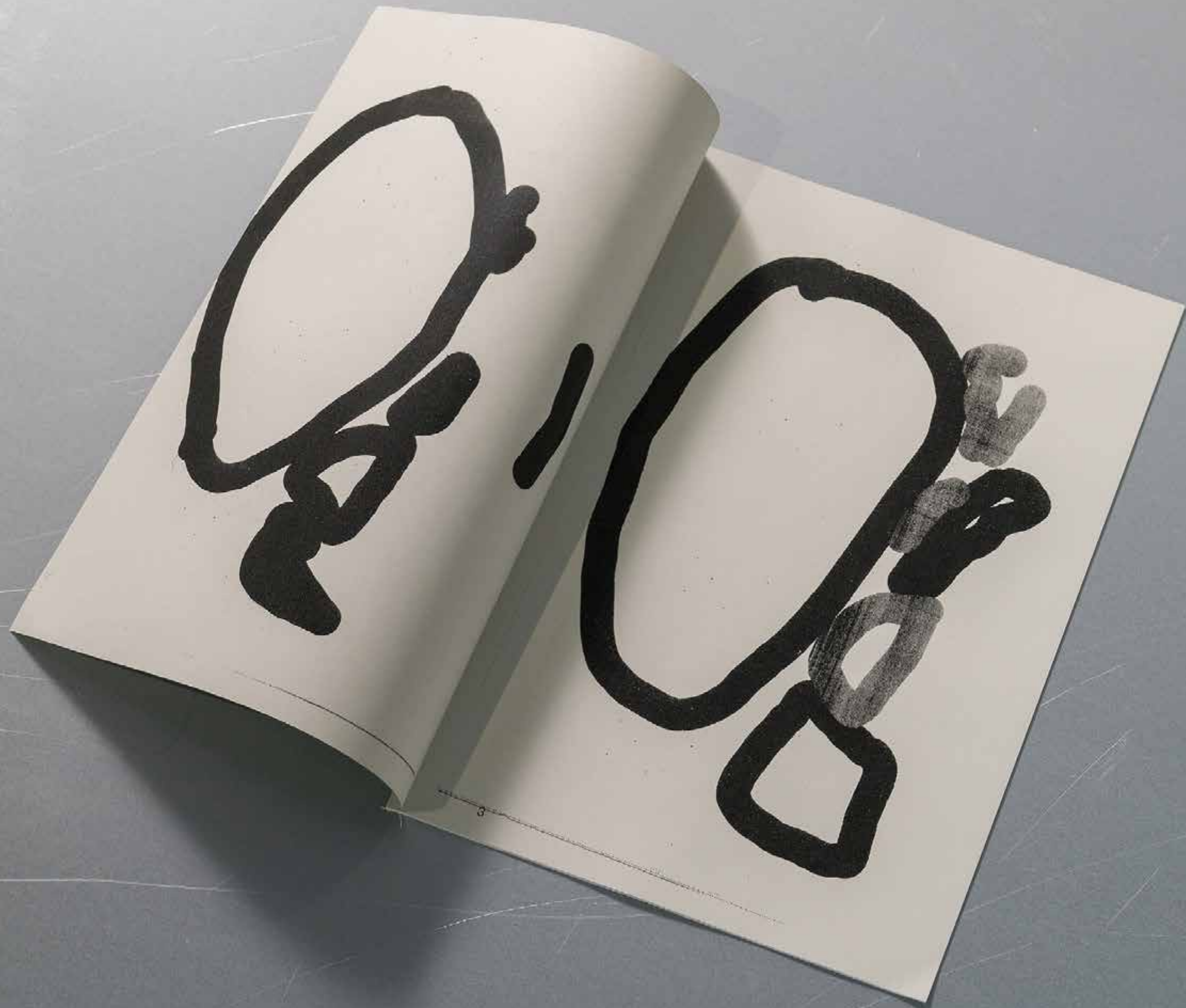
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She was raised in Jeollado province, a region well known for its rich history, conflicts, culture, and culinary prowess. Born in the city of Gwangju, she lived a very mundane, regular, everyday life. With very normal days becoming even more normal under very normal conditions. But in other ways—perhaps beyond the surface and the everyday—she was not so normal. Since her youth, she had been earmarked, bookmarked, and rather holistically reared for success. Being accepted into a university in Seoul would be considered truly “making it” by anyone from this region. Admissions to any schools in Seoul were considered a mighty hurdle cleared by the rare, the gifted, and the hard working—from folk of this province or just anywhere outside of Seoul for that matter. This was always the goal: to make it to the big city. But somehow, she seemed to have been designated or perhaps destined for even greater things. She was one of those extremely rare cases where teachers, family, peers, and advisors all thought making it to a school in Seoul would be falling short of what might be. They all thought she could go for the gold. Make it to the big one. She could be “the one” as they sometimes say. An individual who might attend Seoul National University (SNU), the esteemed and elite institution. The gateway to bigger and better things in life. The dream. This was the only acceptable future for her.

She had been told from her youth that if she did all the right things and maneuvered past all of the obstacles correctly, she could definitely go to SNU. Multi-talented and sharp, she displayed every possible indication of somebody who could make it. And so this became her life. Her normal. Her everyday. Absorb, learn, absorb, learn, prepare, prepare, memorize, absorb, learn. She was a sponge. A blank hard drive to be filled with. Knowing that she might be “the one”. Knowing

that her family, neighborhood, teachers, and friends all had their hopes in her. Knowing they thought she was ‘the one.’ Knowing this, she always felt that extra incentive to constantly push the pedal. Accelerate the engine. Until the car shakes. Everyday. All the time. Non. Stop. And the car, as engineered to do, kept going. This is the education machine that is Korea. Push the pedal regardless if the engine can take it or not. A true grind. A true battle. A true machine, in every possible way. But everybody goes through it. And she did so with aplomb. She had no problems with the machine. She was often particularly receptive to this machine. With a talent for information absorption, it never phased her. She enjoyed it. Knowledge was a wonder. A small glimmer of hope, on otherwise very normal days. Knowledge always brought something new. Knowledge brought joy. Brought experiences. Brought imagination. Perhaps dreams. She embraced this idea that she may be “the one” and that her knowledge absorption was getting her one, two, three steps closer to that place. Study does not equal work. For her, study equaled joy.

Her mother was also somehow a crucial component to this machine. She herself was an educator. A high school teacher teaching the equivalent of the American concept of “home economics”, or the ways of the house. In her courses, sewing, gardening, home management, textiles, nutrition comprised any of the topics on any given day. Preparing those who were willing—to survive—the wars fought in every household. Always prepared. But for this mother, there was one topic that was always of particular interest to her: cooking. She had always proclaimed herself to be an average cook. Not the best. But even her average was a level to strive for. When cooking, some describe a certain lever for aptitude and decision making. It is the bone in the spinal

area that tells you when to add more salt or when to diffuse the salt with other salt-diffusing mechanisms. It is the bone in the spine that tells you what those salt-diffusing mechanisms might be. More water, more vegetables, more rice. Whatever this bone is, wherever this bone may be, she had it. She knew it. And although she thought herself an average cook, it did not take away the joy in this game. The joy in the challenge. The joy in using these senses from the guts. Joy in accessing these neurons from the spine.

Some may call this a sixth, or seventh sense. Listening to this bone in the spine. Just the ability to know when. And more importantly how. It was a lever to make decisions and also to be creative when needed. Bone in the spine. Such a description could work because it is definitely something you feel—not something that can be explained or articulated through any logical means. And this, in cooking terms, is worth a billion dollars. Maybe more. Because you are just born with this. It cannot be taught. It is with you when you are in the womb. It is with you when you leave the womb. And she, the mother, had this, and concurrently, she, the daughter, had this as well. One billion dollars.

And so she grew up in this household. Her mother, as a teacher of ‘home economics’ would bring her lessons home. To practice them. To get them better. To get rid of all mistakes before the official show was to go on. To get better at teaching in a way.

Almost as a daily ritual. she began, what could best be described as pop quizzes on the cooking process. Pop quizzes she would suddenly throw upon her daughter. The sponge. Who was more often than not, ready. These pop quizzes always centered on the cooking pro-

cess. Sometimes, she would ask her daughter to smell the fragrance of something cooking. And purely based on this fragrance, she was quizzed on what materials had gone into this particular dish. And one by one, the daughter would name them. Accurately. Or as close to accurate as one can get. On other days, it was not just the fragrance, sometimes the mother would be cooking something and provide just a small spoon serving with the same question, “what goes in this dish?” “What ingredients are in this dish?” And again, after developing a certain sense for this, the daughter too began to correctly answer these questions and more than accurately describe the list of ingredients that went into each dish. With more training, more repetition, the daughter continued to develop. To evolve. And get better. Sometimes magic is not as magical as magic might seem. You just do something a trillion times and you too can make magic.

The method of repetition meets education has deep roots in Asia. It is a core part of the education process. And sometimes even serves as the education content itself. Rinse and repeat. Learn while doing. Learn while doing, again and again. Again. And again. And similar to any “master” and “apprentice” story, here the daughter, through continuous repetition was gaining a certain kind of mastery. A mastery just by trial, error, and later success. And in hindsight, a level of mastery truly difficult to achieve, for the number of households that conducted such education methods was probably few and far between. She was learning by doing and learning by doing in huge quantities. But she also had a particularly unusual teacher who equally enjoyed these daily pop quizzes. It was a never-ending game. And a game she embraced. Purely again for the accumulation of knowledge. Knowledge. Equals. Joy.

Perhaps it was in the mother’s interest to raise a young woman to succeed in the world. It was in the interest of the mother to raise excellence. And if not through academics, the one subject matter that this mother knew well, was the education of a cook. How to teach cooking and the essence of cooking. And so from age four to young adulthood, this mother/daughter, master/apprentice relationship had produced a human being of outstanding ability. Perhaps outstanding does not do this mastery justice. The daughter had become truly exceptional. World class. Space class.

Not only could she name every possible ingredient, spice, and flavor ratio within any given dish, she could often do it based on smell alone. For every part of a dish intended for your stomach it is assumed that your tongue might be the indicator or maker or breaker of success, yet there is something equally important and required from your nose. The nasal cavity sits right above your throat. The olfactory system has millions and millions of receptors that can archive and access thousands upon thousands of different smells. These senses are not first thought of when thinking of the cooking process. But this nasopharynx which connects nose to mouth is perhaps more important than one can imagine. And from an extremely early age, the daughter was developing this like a knight.

She could smell anything and she knew its roots. Its composition. Its physical composition. And the process by which it was constructed. She could walk into a kitchen and know what magic was being constructed there. Without looking at a single thing. Truly, a talent only time can create. And truly a talent that only time can solve. It was excellent. It was amazing. Her mother knew this. And she kind of knew it might be something

special. But what does one do when one has “X-Men” type ability? Does one shout it to the world? Or does one keep it and expose it just when that bus full of children is about to crash into an intersection? Or when a building is on fire and even the police force knows not what to do?

And so this prodigious talent was left. In silence. With nobody to know. But themselves. Both mother and daughter. They both knew it was something kind of special. But for someone preparing for college. Somebody in the dragon’s den of a Korean high school amidst admissions bedlam and cram-mania. Somebody without an inch of time or place. This ability was just a plus. An addition. Not a part of the ultimate goal. Not a part of the big picture in making it to The Big One.

And just like that, she was off and to the races. She was now in Seoul. She lived by herself. And she was very much just a normal student, living a normal student life and just trying to get by. She lived in a studio unit. Just enough space to study. Just enough space to do a tad bit of cooking. And just enough space to sleep. Not much more.

The normal college experience is filled with trial and error. Especially for those who have been living at home for their entire lives and are suddenly thrust into a space where eating out wreaks small havoc on one’s youth, but also extremely unaffordable as well. Time to buy ingredients. Time to cook. At home. But also, time to make lots of mistakes as would any first time cook. She however and as we know now, was quite different. Cooking was not the issue here. Or an inability to cook was not the issue. Trial and error were words to her. She had already been there. Done that.

For her, her meals, her daily meals, became small gifts to herself. She would prepare them in earnest. And she would continue to play the game. At any and all opportunities. But now without her mother there to initiate the quiz, she would have to initiate it on her own. She would go to restaurants, friend's places. Eat, smell and experience what was prepared there and then begin an inner dialogue with herself. "Okay, this is what goes in this. Pretty easy. And then, this is how they prepared this. Okay, pretty easy too. And then, to top it off, this is finished with this, pretty easy again." And to finalize these miniature challenges, she would go home and begin to mimic these processes. Mimic the steps she had vocalized in her head. And prepare these small gifts for herself. These gifts would sometimes be the small joys of her day. The small joys of her week. There was no limit to these challenges. This was the 1990s. This was Seoul. This was the time of expansion of the palette. Food was beginning to take shape in all forms, all colors, all formats. From all countries. Even local cuisine was continuing its evolution. Food from the West was becoming part of the daily conversation. Food from the South was slowly beginning to become part of life. And so she began to expand her sphere of expertise. Her sphere of influence and sphere of influenced. Noodle-based recipes from Europe. Noodle-based recipes from Southeast Asia. It started to matter very little where anything came from. As long as she could smell, take one long smell and capture some of the textures and the details. She was able to capture the elusive. In an instant.

As is typical with any college experience, she began to date. And one person became a consistent date. And this turned into a relationship. It was as all relationships start, a common course together and a group assignment had brought these two together. And initially

not even the thought of anything romantic had crossed either of their minds. But as these types of relationships go, things just happen. This is life. This is how the unexpected becomes life.

So they began dating and it was as wonderful as any college relationship could be. Study. School. Meet. Date. And as with any relationship typical to college, they would visit each other at their respective simple homes and prepare small meals for each other. Gifts, as mentioned earlier. But it became apparent very early on that this was a lopsided arrangement in terms of gifts. The young man, still adjusting to life on his own, had begun to learn of a wonderful machine called the microwave oven. How many minutes to set things at. How many seconds to set things. What kind of plastic does not melt? The beautiful sparks of electricity when tin foil meets said machine. The smell of burnt plastic when the minutes-and-seconds thing doesn't quite work out.

But her gifts. Her gifts were something else. Even when she visited his place and with the most basic of cooking utensils or setups, she was able to make magic. Absolute magic. And he had never tasted such things. Never seen such things. Everyday was just magic. And sometimes, these "X-Men" abilities continued to be noticed at large by this young man in all aspects of life. The nose. That super-nose. That super-smell ability. Truly X-Men. The normal greeting between each other often consisted of a hug, perhaps a peck on the cheek. But these seconds, in these mere seconds, these fleeting moments, she would know everything. She would be able to explicitly state what he had eaten that day for lunch or for dinner.

"Vietnamese noodles?"

"Yes, how the...?"

p 54

"Tramisu?"

"Yes, but how did you...?"

"*Kong bjj* stew (a tofu/bean based dish with almost no detectable fragrance)?"

"Yes", again...."

And this was her magic. And this was their life. And this was his magic to experience everyday.

Like her, he had a somewhat remarkable past. Not equally remarkable. But he too, had something that might separate him from the rest. Separate him from the normal everyday college student. It was not an "X-Men"-like superpower or ability. And it was something he could never actually share with her. Perhaps never. Perhaps much later in their relationship. Depending on how much trust could be cemented. Simply put, he came from money. Not exactly "*chaebol*" (Korean mega-conglomerate corporate) money. But it was serious money. "Mad" money as they say. But he could never openly share this. Never share even a hint of his background. To her, he was about as normal as one could get. Humble studio apartment. Humble clothes. Humble dining habits. But "mad" money, as they say, has roots. Every beyond-wealthy person has a story. And to get to that story. To get to that place, to get to that "mad" money, is not the journey of the common man. It is a path of domination, ethical dilemmas, use, abuse, manipulation, tactical strategy, and anything in between that can secure that extra dollar. There is an expression, "an honest dollar earned" that may exist in some realities to a certain extent. But in the world of "mad" money, the honest dollar is purely only a concept. There is no such thing as "a truly honest" dollar.

"Mad" money can be accumulated in a lifetime. But not an easy task. It often has deeper roots. Generations. Generations of doing "mad" things in order to become "mad" money. And in this long line, this generational story of money, his father thought himself to be the last generation living in a mad world. His one earnest hope was for his son to be the first generation to truly live the "honest dollar" life. He thought his son could grow up and just "not know" about their past. Not know about how they got to where they were. And not know how "mad" their money really was.

His father, and his father before that and his father before that were all what can best be described as "jopok" or Korean mafia. With a historically simple 'business' model, the previous generations lived and survived from what could best be described as a kind of 'collection service' model, enforcing debts, payments, repayments and other transactions to be completed. A pretty staid and stable model that often interacts with both the underworld and the overworld. It was a steady business that was profitable. Consistent. Steady. A means to survive and a means to provide for the next generation.

But it could best be described in all actuality as a business sitting on the periphery of a legitimate business. As with any kind of collections or debt-based industry, they would deal with a fair share of riffraff. From all walks of life. And this was the norm. This was how it had always been, as far back as their business went. But his father, in an effort to try to diverge from this history, wanted something else. Something that dealt less with riffraff. Perhaps something that no longer needed to exist behind closed doors. Something with less secrets. A business model that his son, perhaps, could be proud of. A business model his son, perhaps,

could tell people of. To this day, their surface-level business—their pen name so to say—was that they worked in 'consulting.' A very nice term to describe a little bit of everything and in this instance, not too far from the truth. They were consultants. But consultants that sometimes did the necessary or even the unnecessary to get things done.

It was not entirely a vicious cycle, or the vicious cycle one might expect in a situation like this. It could be stopped, it could have easily been walked away from. Yet, it was so steady. It was so straightforward. And it was so consistent, it was hard to walk away. Sometimes, those kinds of jobs get you. Jobs that are hard to leave for all the reasons that just make sense. And yet his father had this desire. He wanted his son to live as normal a life as possible. So he began exploring even more peripheral industries that might be exit material. A means to transition out. Smoothly.

In recent years, his father began to work with those in the hospitality industry, with a particularly larger percentage of those in and around the concept of "dining". The restaurant industry itself was a hodgepodge of all sorts of people—from those who received expensive educations from exclusive international institutions to those who failed at everything else they tried and found solace in a meritocracy that only evaluated you on how good you fried your chicken. There were all kinds of people with all kinds of complications that his father proceeded to solve for them. These were one of many kinds of clients. But a particular clientele he had become more interested in as time went on.

And this, his father thought, might be the key. Only an industry like the hospitality industry might welcome a

semi-gangster family like his and not think much of it. Only this kind of industry might allow his son to suddenly become legitimate. To "go clean", or "go regular", as they say. So, for years he had been researching this industry. Meeting people. Lots of friends of friends. Lots of friends of friends of friends. There were—and remain—small ways to make a penny. And he was slowly uncovering each of them, one by one. Some clean, some legit, some just as illegitimate as his past life.

He, the son, knew that his father was doing work in many different industries. Some perhaps illegitimate. But he also knew that his father was—and always had been—making some legitimate money as well. But as a college student, the details were often sparse. The amounts, the depths to which their business ran, was never quite clear. But he knew somehow that it was on the periphery of what a legitimate business practice might be in real life. It was foggy.

But he knew that money was not a pressing concern on a daily basis for them. And he knew that his father always meant well. Always.

He thought it a good time to introduce the magician to his father. They had been dating for almost two years. And his father had said—perhaps out of curiosity, or perhaps out of custom—to bring her over for dinner. Sometimes Korean households say this merely as a gesture and sometimes the meaning and intent behind such invitations is questionable. But here, it seemed legitimate and the father was genuinely a bit intrigued. For he had mentioned the magic a few times.

"Dad, I've met this girl and well, things are going good. But, did I tell you before, she has this uncanny ability to cook?"

p 55

His father had mentioned several new clients/pursuits within the dining/hospitality arena in passing, so it was sometimes a simple point of a conversation. A woman, whom his son was romantically involved with was, on occasion, making magical things in the kitchen.

It was to be a casual meeting—nothing too far out of the norm. There was a restaurant in their neighborhood, Yeonhuidong, in the northwest of Seoul called Subin.

Known as a “hanjeongsik” restaurant, a type of dining establishment that involves a wide variety of dishes, including both side dishes and main dishes. This particular restaurant was extremely popular because of the pure number of dishes. Lots. Just lots. And this space, in particular, was a favorite spot for older folks. An age which loves variety and quantity. But it also is a rather pleasant place to have a dinner that kind of makes everyone involved happy. Yes, one of those places. And it got off to a pretty pleasant start. Not particularly nervous, the son was quite happy to introduce her to his father. Perhaps both young, perhaps a bit naive. The meeting this day never formed the kind of levels of tension that take place at one of those meetings that take place prior to marriage conversations. This was a lovely woman who he was dating. And so from the get-go, all was relaxed, all was pleasant. Small talk is something Koreans are quite proficient at. Weather. The outside temperature. Undergraduate majors. Siblings. Age. Lots of things to generally assess one other and break the ice.

The conversation would at one point or another lead to the magic. He had been talking about her cooking and her nose for quite some time and just out of curiosity, and also, perhaps the fact he knew very little else about her, this subject came up rather early in the conversation.

of sorts. A place where cooking tests go on before they go to restaurant-level. Although these types of things probably do exist in all sorts of fashion and manners, this particular one was a bit more on the lo-fi side. Or actually, very lo-fi. The villa contained a strange collection of characters—all good cooks, of all ages, from all over Seoul. And here, in this slightly ramshackle villa, their one job was to create recipes, or more so, to match existing recipes. They made things, tested them, tasted each other’s tests, made more tests, and tested yet again. Then there was an older woman who would come by once a day and kind of test the best of the best.

When she first went in, very little explanation went into this job. At all. The existing team there had no idea what to do with her and she herself had no idea what she should be doing. She was a unique case. Which happens sometimes. Random people might show up and become part of the process. So it began, as all “arbeit” do, with menial tasks. Lots of cutting. Prepping food. Laborious, but easy stuff. And she was good. Fast, efficient and the food always passed the aesthetic test. And so this went on for a few weeks. And she did not question anything. She could definitely feel that perhaps this was something on the shady end of things. Something fishy. Something smelling of suspicious activities. But nothing of alarm. And everyone there were—by all palpable factors—good people who were passionate about cooking and with a very clear goal in mind: to match food. And when food was well-matched, there was great joy, elation, and celebration. High-fives all around.

And everyday this was the way it went. All different kinds of dishes came in and the challenge was how to replicate them. How to complement the dishes. Or better yet, how to one-up these particular dishes. To make

“I have heard more than a few times that you are quite gifted with a strong culinary sense?”
“Yes, I do enjoy cooking quite a bit.”
“My son says, you have some kind of ‘X-Men’ type abilities? Like, you can pick up things with your nose and translate that to cooking and stuff?”
“Hehheh, yes, well, sometimes I do that too. But nothing special, just for fun I would say...”

Subin, the restaurant, is known for their tremendous amounts of *bahnchhan* (small side dishes on small plates that typically accompany one main course at a Korean table). Whether it was fate or destiny, this proved to be kind of a perfect grounds for continuing a lively culinary discussion. And whether it was fate or destiny, this also proved to be the perfect place for an impromptu quiz of sorts. As dishes kept rolling out, he began to ask her, what types of ingredients went into a certain dish. And one by one, she aceed all of them. To a microscopic detail. Spices, oils, percentages, ingredient/sauce ratios... you name it, she named it. And the conversation began to get livelier the more he inquired. He started to ask about preparation methods next and how would one get this kind of impact, or this kind of flavor. And again, you name it, she named it. With machine-like precision, she explained how to get what with what. And as with these types of conversations, the wheels in the head start to turn. Or you can hear them turning. The wheels of the brain begin to chug forward. And everyone can hear this engine.

He was captivated. Enamored. Not out of any particular love for his son, or for his new found love interest at that. It was something else. Something that speaks to the innermost parts of the psyche and soul. Dollar signs. His pupils began to morph into vertically-slashed

letter “S”s. This was it. He was witnessing it. He was seeing—live and direct—the path. In this short span of dinner and casual conversation, he saw his escape. He saw the Raquel Welch poster from Shawshank Redemption. A way out. A way to go legit. A way to join society. But in a way that nobody could ever know. Or grasp. It was her.

In Korea there is this concept of “arbeit” or as they say with a Korean intonation, “ahlbah”, which is basically an adoption of the German word for “work, working, or employment”. In Korea, it kind of means the same. But perhaps less so much ‘work’ work. More like side jobs. A means of working on the side, doing slightly menial things for around minimum wage, give or take. And it is an extremely common thing to propose doing some “arbeit” to young college students as all college kids need some side money. And that was how it started. “Arbeit”. He had asked if she would be interested in doing some “arbeit” at a small restaurant that he was connected to. She agreed, thinking it might be fun to finally utilize this ability she had been developing—ninja-like—for years but never had an outlet to externalize. The details of this job were sparse at best. When she showed up for the first day, she was kind of shocked to see that the restaurant was not exactly a restaurant. There were no tables, no chairs. No customers at that. The first day of work was in the kitchen of an old “villa”—a small type of residential unit in Korea. Nothing fancy. Nothing new. There were older women here in the kitchen and the only thing she could truly discern was that they were cooking up a storm.

What was this place? In a ‘villa’ at that? She had eventually put two and two together and it became apparent that this was a kind of research laboratory

part of a ‘team’, opportunities sometimes arise in all sorts of manners. Especially when a team of people is trying to solve puzzles. She eventually became part of the brainstorming faction. Guessing how things were done. While cutting and prepping, sometimes they would have her taste a spoon and ask what she thought went in there. And one by one, she would give infinitely detailed responses to their surprise. To their absolute delight. These abilities of hers—dormant like dinosaur bones. No, not dormant. Unused. Unused like the newly formed wings of a now cocoon free... No. Not even that. These super-abilities of hers, not properly given their stage, were slowly given small gigs every night. Standup night. Five minutes. She would come on the stage and destroy for five minutes at a time. To their delight.

These gifts of hers began to garner more attention. Her responsibilities began to evolve. Began to expand. She went from prep work, to brainstorming, to theory, to practical application and execution. And even with “X-Men” abilities, these challenges were not a walk in the park. They were challenges. But she ate them up. Ate them all up. This team... These cooks were no slouches. These cooks were extremely good at what they were doing. What she had in regard to natural ability could not be matched by something only ages of experience could teach. Wisdom and experience. And these experiences—this collective wisdom—was all new to her. Tacit knowledge. What she had: intuition and ninja-like training; was entirely missing the years of tacit experience they had. So it was a time of great learning. Learning while also making money. Two good things she could not argue with. It was good.

As with all “chosen ones”, she began to get ‘it.’ She began to figure things out. Theory began to link with

her hands. The knowledge began to melt with her gut instincts. And the evolution began. A mutation. Where human moves beyond human. These abilities started to fuse and take hold. She, and to lazily reference a certain piece of pop culture history, like Neo, was slowly becoming “The One”. Whether she knew it or not.

The father would come in and check on the lab occasionally. It was never clear what his role was but he seemed to be passionate about what was happening here. Not readily involved. Not part of the day-to-day. He would openly and often ask how she was doing. But, strangely, she would never see her boyfriend here. Although they discussed what she was doing there, he never came. Never visited. And when asked about it, he would always say the most vague things. Things that always seemed to be shifting the conversation to the next subject. Always giving her the feeling that perhaps this was a sensitive subject. Perhaps an issue she should not push or pursue. And it furthered the feeling that perhaps—despite her happiness—all may not be what it seems. It was as if the lab was something he should not be a part of, or perhaps he should not know of. But why would that be?

As her senses, her ability, and her thinking were all fusing, she somehow did become “The One”. She slowly became the go-to in this place. A force. *The* force. Even the eldest cook would always double-check with her. Purely because she was always right. Always. In baseball, a .333 batting percentage is considered excellent. One third of the time if you get a hit that is considered successful. But here, in this laboratory, she was hitting an incomprehensible .990. A spirit walking amongst mere mortals. Extreme, uncanny, ineffable accuracy.

See no evil. Hear no evil.

And as time went on, things just continued to grow. To unfathomable levels. In ways, probably unimaginable to anybody. To, you, myself, or to her. Growth. Jack and the Beanstalk-type growth. Growth now meant business trips. First, Economy Class. Then Business Class. And now, First Class. Men in sunglasses picked her up from airports. With signs holding her name. Just like the movies. She was escorted to some of the finest dining institutions around the world. She stayed at some of the finest hotels in the world.

And all the while, she would go and just do what she did best. Eat amazing things. Smell amazing things. Experience amazing things. Process these things. Think about these things. And then, letting her instincts, her intuition, and her mind do what they did best. Putting these pieces together in her head. Like puzzles. One challenging puzzle after another. Storing this data in her head, she would then fly back to her palace in Hannamdong and begin to take apart these amazing things she saw, experienced and tasted. And make them again. And again. And pass this on down the line. To whatever it was that came next.

As with many things in life, the longer you are at a place, the more things you shouldn't see, you end up seeing. And all the while, her palace in Hannamdong was almost like a small incubator unit. A hatching grounds for tests and explorations. But it seemed to not just be an incubator. It was also a way to shield her from the truth. Shield her from what she was doing. And it did just that. But her abilities, her ‘almost super human-ness’, soon began to keep her from being hidden. Everybody wanted to meet her. Everybody wanted to

And her legend began to grow. He—the father—would begin to visit in more frequency and sometimes bring others as well. Older gentlemen who were very kind to her and inquisitive. And they would all come and do a quick test. It seemed just for entertainment. Just to see if this was the real deal. Ask her what would make a particular dish taste better and as she rattled off a million responses, you could see it in their faces. They were not listening to the answer but more so, just revealing in the fact that such a spirit could exist. That such talent could exist. That such a fancy, soul-searching answer could exist.

She was “The One”. The one component that could take a marginal operation to world-class levels.

The dishes that she started with were all local dishes—mostly of Korean origin, traditional food or even slightly contemporary twists were almost all they were doing. But with her the challenges began to become more diverse, more international, more expansive. European dishes. Southern American dishes. Southeast Asian dishes. They started to come in from everywhere. And she was able to match them, all the time. Every time. It was uncanny.

And things kept changing. They moved from the humble villa to a beautiful all-concrete building in Hannamdong. The kind you know they hired an architect to design. Because it looked like nothing else. Anywhere. And the kitchen. (Jeez.) The kitchen became one of those super-kitchens you sometimes see on television. Big tables. Big fans. Big everything. And it was a dream. They brought in staff to keep this machine going. And all she had to do was what she was doing. And people would support her.

The money was good. Very good. What went from minimum wage was now stratospheric-feeling. A monthly stipend that pretty much no college kid in Korea had ever seen. Uncanny. “Mad” money. For her, no degree. Not even a graduate of school. This was something else. What could she complain about? She was treated like royalty. She was given everything she ever needed and was never asked for a thing. Other than to do what she did best.

And life was good. Very good.

But some days, sitting at the back of her mind was always the slight thought that this could not be real. This could not last. This was not ‘real life’ as people knew it. Was it her ability? Was she the ninja that her mother had raised? All of this could contribute to a comfortable living, for sure. But she was always wondering? Was this operation on the periphery of what a normal business what she should be doing? How could such money be coming in? And so *fast*?

Although everything was fancy now—there was no beginning and end. There was always just a ‘middle’. She never saw what happened to these dishes. Or these recipes. She never knew where these existing dishes came from. But if one thought about it even for just a little bit, one could guess quite easily what this process might be.

These dishes were going off and becoming bigger and better things to people who mattered. And so perhaps that was it. There was no need to really see the end. Or the end of this process. This process was bringing in money and making people happy. And she herself was happy as well.

And life was good.
For these people.
For herself.
For her colleagues.
For her.
Very good.

But there were some days.
Some days.
Days where she could not help but think.
That perhaps, for better or worse, somehow, it might have been her that had created all of this.
Or, somehow, it might have something to do with her.
Could she have been a part of this?
Could this be her?

She would often question things.
Question this whole situation.
So many questions.

But then again.
Life was good.
And she was fine with this.

experience greatness. To see the greatness. Because how often do you see greatness in our lifetimes?

And so she began to eventually meet all kinds of high-er-ups. CEOs from this company or that company. Vice Presidents from this place or this place. All within this network on the periphery of this business. She could tell they were affluent. But not in the way one might think. Not corporate money. But another kind of money. She could tell, at their core they were normal people. But in this lifetime, they had suddenly come into wealth. “Nouveau riche,” as the expression goes. Suddenly part of the elite. Suddenly part of a new notch of society. Suddenly there. And she knew this. She could feel it in their appearance. Their mannerisms. The subtle things you can pick up that go beyond language. Rich. Suddenly. Within this generation.

And she would always meet them. These newly-rich. She would meet them in more quantity. More frequency as her success continued. She would meet them. Hear their questions. Entertain their questions and see their response. She could feel their joy. They knew who she was. They also knew she was of the same background: a person just like them. A person once poor. And now, a person of *something*. A person *with* something. But they were fine with this. They knew what gifts she brought. They knew her gift. And she was fine with this as well. She was fine with this life. She was fine with this fairy tale. She lived a life, unlike any human being she could think of. She was—for once in her life—a princess. And she was with people who cared for her in every way. Every possible way, as a princess should be cared for.



Wisdom comes with age. Fact.
Time seems to heal all wounds. Fact.
Time seems to cure all pains. Fact.
Time does many things and the sad thing is, one cannot turn back time. It just keeps going in one direction. And one has only to keep pace. Or not.

He was at the ambiguous age of around fifty. No longer right in the middle. Somewhere, a little above and beyond. Not young, for sure. But definitely not old. Or old enough to be considered old. Married. But no children. Whether by choice, or by timing, the opportunity had missed them somehow. No children, but they were, for the most part, a happily married, somewhat responsibility free couple who spent time enjoying the things they did enjoy. Crafts, hobbies, small projects that kept them going. Not necessarily a part of the rat race, but perhaps participants of a mouse race? Enough money to survive. And enough schedule capacity to find those things that occupy the time. And continuing to seek those things that could pleasantly fill the days and this precious time outside of work.

He had a fairly steady job. Actually, extremely steady. One of those jobs where he could not be fired unless he did something drastic. Something dramatic. He had only to clock in. Say the right things. Go through the motions. Everyday. Do these specified tasks, carefully, correctly and all would be good in his world. A good salary. Not outstanding. But definitely not at the bottom end of the scale. Just enough to supply them with the things to live and live comfortably. Not having children too, only added to the impact or scale of the things they could do with such a salary. It was definitely more than enough to live.

But with age comes wisdom. Age sometimes brings new thoughts. Or perhaps old thoughts. One or the other,

Over and over. Second thoughts trying really hard to be number one. And succeeding.

Children? No children? As age enlarged his sight radius, he began to see things that were foggy before. No children? He began to see those who had similarly decided not to have children in more full focus. And he began to see that without children, who was really there to care for you into old age? Who will be there to make the final decisions that lead you into the grave and hopefully, wherever it might be next that you would go? Not that all children actually do such things. But when there are no children, such options do not exist.

For him, there was nobody really. Just him and his wife. And this was it. And in all honesty, this was fine for him. This was fine years ago. And it surely is fine now. But, he could not help but wonder. Was this the right choice? Second thought continues to overtake second thought into the first thought slot. Congratulations, second thought.

What nonsense was this? Does that mean that the pure goal of having children would be to create somebody who would care for you in your late age? Nonsense. Absolute nonsense. Or was it? Was this the case for many parents? Was this an unspoken desire amongst those who did have children? He would never know. One of the things that stopped him years ago was similar thinking. Some parents had this desire to raise children in a kind of strange, vain manner in that they wanted to raise better versions of themselves. Or see themselves in somebody else. Or something along those lines. And he had no desire to do that. What would that mean to raise somebody in this world? To see yourself again? Genetically? Or to see something similar to yourself come into this world? It did not make sense to him.

thoughts come and there is no way to stop them. They just come and one has to be ready for when they hit you. Because they sometimes do hit you. Their decision to not have children was a serious one. For the most part it was him. He had seen, over the years, a kind of vicious cycle. And he knew he did not want to continue this vicious cycle. He himself knew acutely that he for sure would be a terrible father. A selfish man. With only his basic interests at the front and center. For all his efforts and love and care for his wife, he could sometimes still mess this up. And he who has trouble maintaining stability with such a loving wife, well, how could such a person raise another human being? Let alone two? Three? How could such a man be the home, the foundation, the rock for a group of human beings? He knew he would fail. And he knew he was not alone. The vicious cycle had to stop. And he was going to stop it.

He had seen this time and time again. His father, politely put, was there but not there. There in body. But not there in spirit. Not there in mind. Could he remember a single, memorable conversation with his father? It was tough to. Extremely challenging to even recall a conversation extending past the ten minute mark with his father. There were moments. Terse moments when fragments, small bits of information were exchanged. Fragments of talk that went back and forth. But was this a conversation? Was this a meaningful conversation? Was there meaning to this interaction? Very hard to say.

And this was not just him. Again, he was not alone.

He had seen this time and time again. His friends often discussed their home/family lives. And how they all knew, that deep down inside, their children greatly disliked them. And how they would come home, as outcasts, within their

own homes. He had heard this story a million times. It just seemed normal. He heard this when his wife would sometimes discuss her relationship with her parents. It was rough. The years of criticism. The years of one-directional communication. The constant heaviness of their expectations. Their requirements for your future. Even his father's father, as he could remember, was similarly a man who was there but not really there at the same time. There was a lack of communication and these all create a relationship that could be tertiary at best. One level removed from an active, moving relationship with real, palpable back and forth. Exchange. No. No exchange.

And so why continue this vicious cycle? At what point would it need to continue. He knew he would continue it if he followed suit. He had little confidence in many things in life. Little confidence in his work. Little confidence in any of his abilities. Little confidence as a human being. Or in his ability to be even mildly successful at anything in particular. But he was extremely sure about one thing. He was extremely confident about one thing. And that was the fact that he would be a poor father. It was almost as if written in stone. A sure shot. A given. And he knew it. He was the kind of man that sometimes people think should not have kids. Again. He knew it.

But now, at this ambiguous age, the second thought had changed position and become first thought. Now at this age, where childrearing no longer was a possibility, he began to wonder. Was such confidence in poor fatherhood, and a desire to end the 'vicious cycle,' the wisest thing in the end? For sure it was. It had to be. Logically. It all still makes sense. And, had he had the ability to play back time. To make that decision again, he would most surely do it again. For sure. But now, with age, with older age, these second thoughts. They come now like ants. Lots of them.

to care for their own parents. It was a vicious cycle. His father, in his old age and despite being a tall, proud and beaming figure of the family, was now an infant. A giant baby. To be cared for. To be carried. To be fed and to be looked after from morning until night. What is this? What meaning does this carry? Was this the cycle of life?

He vowed he would not do this. He would not be such a burden to anybody. He had often secretly hoped of perhaps just dying in his sleep. Or something very sudden. Not along the lines of suicide or anything like that. But a swift death would be best, he thought. This was a very common wish and one he knew many of his peers shared. A quick end to a long life.

At this ambiguous age these thoughts, second thoughts, keep coming like ants. Swift death aside, what would those older years be like for him? The time, the large amounts of time on one's hands. What would you do with all that time? What could anyone do with all that time? Or worse yet, all that time but now alone? No children. Nobody to talk to. Nobody to care for him? Not having anybody to share this time with or to extend to another generation? These kinds of things had begun to sink into him. Sink into his thoughts, into his plans, into his morning routine. Made him think. Made him wonder. For sure.

Alone. Aloneness. Obviously, his wife would be with him. Or would she? This was a real fear as well. Would she be there? What if one of them happened to go earlier than the other? What if? This was petrifying. This was fear in a pure form. This was true aloneness. Years back such a thought had never occurred to him. Perhaps this was just being stupid. Poor in thinking. Young. Poor in foresight. Poor in every aspect. Again, wisdom comes with age. Or so they say.

His father-in-law would call several times a week. No calls lasting longer than seven seconds max. So it was never cumbersome. But it was frequent. And perhaps it was just to hear a voice. His father-in-law just wanted to hear the voice of somebody. Somebody who was connected. Someone who was family. Perhaps it was, again, aloneness. He would call. And convey a wide variety of thoughts in those seven seconds. There was something about the amount one can convey in seven seconds. In those seven seconds, he would repeat things. And in repetition, it went deeper. His daily trips, the food he ate, things he saw, things he thought. The spectrum was as wide as it was deep. But one recurring theme began to take form in recent years. His father-in-law often commented that his friends were all dying. Passing away, one by one. And he was now very much alone. Aloneness.

So, second thoughts had become first thoughts. And these thoughts, they would tell him everyday, ask him everyday, are you prepared for this time? Aloneness? Are you ready for this? Large batches of silence. A phone that does not ring. A phone with no numbers to call. Aloneness.

As happens sometimes with ambiguous ages, a change is necessary in order to stir things up. To shake things up. They would often take walks. It was their thing. Neighborhood walks. Nature walks. A way to exercise briefly, see the world, get out of the house, get some fresh air. It was their thing and it was something they did love. But something had changed in recent times. These walks began to take on new dimensions. They began to explore new neighborhoods. They began to explore new restaurants. And for whatever reason, began to play where younger folk play. With time, neighborhoods become set in their occupants. Certain neighborhoods become youthful neighborhoods. Certain neighborhoods become domains of the old. Much

like North American caribou, watering grounds move as they move. Certain generations mix with certain generations. But certain generations stay within certain bounds or with themselves.

And in these recent walks, they began to cross the divide. They began to go to areas where younger folks play. What reasons could exist for this? Some may assume, it was just to feel young again. And perhaps there was some truth to this. But in general, it seemed to be a very natural extension of the walks. Something that did not feel abrupt. Or out of the norm. Whatever it was, it just happened.

As with any walk, or series of walks, repetition leads to experiences. Repetition always leads to things. When one sees something over and over again, something always happens. And here, during these walks, they began to frequent places. Become repeat customers. In their past walks, this would happen on occasion, but it was never a permanent thing. Korea is a place of great change. Rarely do you have a bar/pub/cafe that sits in one location for more than seven years. Very rare. Change is always in the air. But for the first time, they deliberately, and again, somewhat going with the flow, decided to return to certain spots on their walks. Perhaps it was to switch things up. Perhaps it was an effort to see beyond what the neighborhood might be on a surface level. Whatever it was, they began to be regulars. Begin to know, begin to know the staff, begin to know the owner, etc. Again, nothing unusual, but not exactly a common thing in Korea. Especially for folks of this age.

There was one particular restaurant that felt just right. Whether it was the decor, the food or just that feeling that comes with atmosphere, one may never know. It just felt right and they began to frequent it. As with watering holes and stomping grounds, the more you visit, the more you

stop by, again, the repetition leads to experiences. The owner was a younger woman, who, memorizing all patrons, enjoyed the frequency of their visits. Perhaps she had merely financially oriented intentions at first—as with all establishment owners—but at the end of the day, birds of a feather flock together, as they say. And as owner of this place, the decor, atmosphere, menu and everything they loved, was an extension of her. So it all made sense. The repeated visits, that is.

It could probably best be described as a somewhat “hipster” type of restaurant, meaning, very ‘cool’, perhaps surface-level cool, or trying-to-be-very cool in every possible way. Under normal circumstances, this would be a great turn-off for him and his wife. They preferred things that were not dependent on trends. Not dependent on things of the moment. But again, this place felt different. It felt as if the establishment was trying too hard, yes. But the food, the decor, the ambiance, all of this was really nicely done. Period. The ‘kids’, and yes, you could call them “kids”, that hung out there were wearing clothes they themselves would not wear next year. This was how hipster culture works. And they were ready for this. This was being hip. And this restaurant, in the same way, felt like a similar kind of non-classic-ness. A culture of now. He could honestly not say or be certain if this restaurant would be here the following year. In this place. With this atmosphere. With this menu. Nothing was certain. But this was fine for him. This was fine for her. This was fine for them.

After many visits, they began to notice patterns. Not only the owner, but they would begin to see others. Other regulars. Now with multiple visits under their belts, they had become regulars too. Greetings upon arrival. No need to look at the menu. Ordering from memory. Owner taking orders from memory. Or better yet, owner just confirming

said orders with a smile or a slight nod. Just enough to get the communication across. And this again was nice. And what happens when such regularity occurs? When patterns repeat like this? This is how networks become networks. Circles become circles. Friends become friends. It often takes the third meeting up to the fifth meeting to see where and how one connects. Probably something akin to dogs smelling each other in strange locations, these meetings began to happen in such frequency that strangers could now be considered friends. A community of sorts? A society? Not explicitly, but somewhere in-between for sure.

And this group was most definitely younger. A lot younger. Extraordinarily younger? Not that much. But definitely, somewhere in the range of a ten-to-fifteen year age gap. Would that technically be a generation? Not quite. But sometimes it felt like it. Differences existed for sure. They were palpable. But not overtly. Not enough to overwhelm. Just enough to overcome.

But this new generation. Something was different about this new generation that threw a wrench into this such thinking. This new generation, and in particular, this new generation of ‘hip’, was extremely 90s-friendly. Was it the 90s themselves? From pop culture academics to pop culture icons from the 90s, there was a common thought that perhaps the 90s were a kind of Golden Age. A heyday. Halcyon days. Some zenith of culture. One pop cultural icon had laid blame on the year 2004 and the advent of the smartphone and the proliferation of the Internet and internet culture. This new generation was incapable of creating pop culture. Or perhaps this new generation was able to satisfy themselves only with the accessibility of all historical cultures on their phones and therefore created a situation where no new culture was needed? This genera-

tion of hipsters was re-creating the 90s. From their musical tastes to their clothes to their interests in pop culture. The 90s were in bloom. And ironically, this might have been some kind of connective tissue. A link that was able to bridge this older couple taking walks with the young regulars of a small restaurant in a young neighborhood of Seoul. Some felt comfortable with 90s culture as referent while the others were 90s culture through experience. From fine art, to music to pop culture references. There were so many connections. Radiohead sounded good then. It still sounds good now. Thom and Jonny were some kind of connective material. Like silicon for tiles, they were the bond that could bond.

And so the relationship with this place, with these regulars began to grow. Began to get deeper and more connective in ways that would have been unpredictable. And this was good. It was perhaps better this way actually. But there were always moments, when it truthfully did not feel exactly right. The age gap was sometimes extreme. And even these kids often admitted that they had never hung with folks their age. But they ultimately did not mind. He ultimately did not mind. She did not mind. As a couple they enjoyed it. Not because it made them feel younger or anything like that. But because it was not forced. Or at least that is what he thought. It felt genuine. And they loved it. He loved it. He had, in a roundabout way, found friends. And nothing felt not right about it.

But some days, the logical side began to creep in. Sending more second thoughts and adding to the haze. As it always does. But he would sometimes sit at this restaurant, a few beers too many in, in those moments when to speak would not be the right thing. Instead, a nice time to look around the room. And observe. And think. Observe and think. And his mind would wander. Sometimes he would think im-

ensely happy thoughts. And be thankful. But other days, he would sometimes wonder, what on earth was he doing in such a place. How could he, this old man, be here, a generation removed, and be part of this place? Sometimes the thoughts would go darker. Was he one of those old guys, trying to be cool? Mid-life crisis? Frank the Tank from Old Skool? Trying to relive his youth? Or trying to be youthful by spending time with youth? Was he some kind of vampire? Absorbing youth? No, definitely not, he thought. But very fairly, anyone might think that. They were definitely the oldest folks in this room. By far. His grey hair would present red flags in many other contexts. But they were beyond that now. They had truly just become friends. But he would often think such things. What was he doing here with this group of younger folk? Younger folk who, by and with, any normal circumstances, would not wish to spend any time with him outside of such contexts?

Two years into this new found group, the restaurant was still around. But as with time, it had become less hipster-ish. Just a regular restaurant. But from day one, a restaurant with a good sense for everything. The food was still just right. The atmosphere, still, was just right. It was hip but now, slightly older hip. He would sometimes even wonder, was this partly their influence? Is this what happens when two old cats hang out in an alley? It becomes like this? It becomes home? He sometimes couldn't help but think this because the restaurant just felt more right as time went on and with every visit. They were happy here.

The relationships had grown too. At first the odd couple. Saying jokes to silence. Generational jokes. Pop culture jokes. Things that at first made little sense to a generation that had no experiences with such content and such context. But eventually, a sense of what jokes to say, and

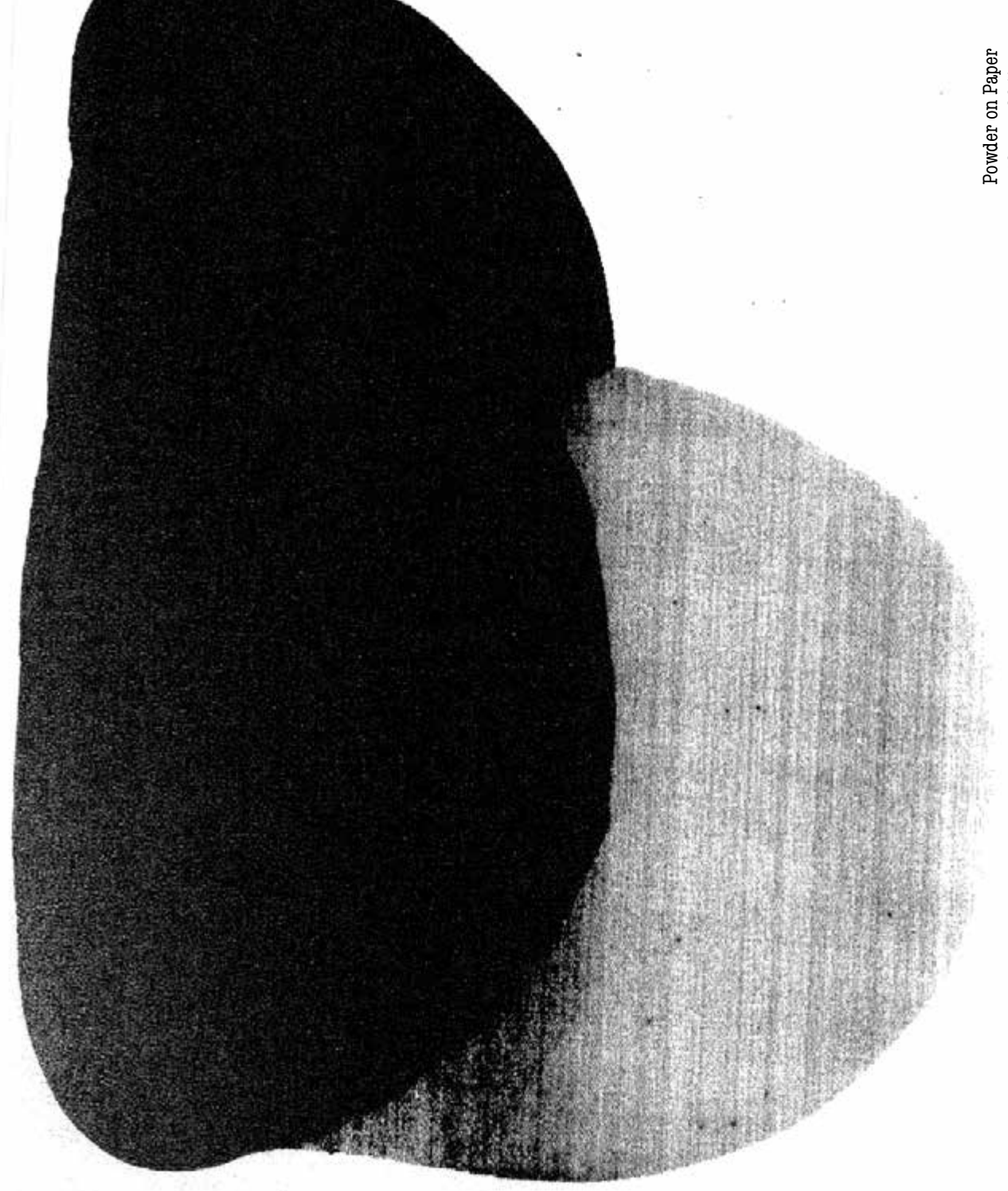
what might connect instead of disconnecting conversations began to become the norm. They had found their peace. Their place. Their peas. Somehow, whatever it was, it was working. He would often think about the strangeness of this and again, attribute it to some kind of sense? Or taste? What would be the right word for this? Somehow, things felt right, because there was nothing that went against the grain here. They had, in some ways, all grown together like dandelions. Whether it be a small crack in the concrete, or a pile of dirt in a discarded plastic container, they grew together. And it all felt right.

But there were always slight moments when he would still wonder. What was he doing here? They were 'the older friends' for sure. Sometimes looked to for advice. Sometimes looked to for their take on things. Sometimes just asked for advice from the perspective of somebody who had experience. Experiences with this, experiences with that. And that was a very common thing. But all in all, there were no problems here. And they were happy to be of help or offer advice in any of these situations. There were the other random moments too when it just was quite transparent that they were the older couple. And they did not fit into all situations or circumstances. They were definitely the odd ones out in many situations. But he knew this. He knew the reasons for this. He would often ask himself, would he spend time with somebody fifteen years older? The answer was often an affirmative "no". And so he again, was just thankful to be in such company on any given night, on any given week of any given month.

His father-in-law would still call. And the conversations sometimes were getting shorter than the normal seven seconds. Somedays, he would now call and just say, "It is so nice to just hear your voice, sometimes, call me when you can, it is again, so nice to hear your voice."

Years later those second thoughts spoke once again. And instead of creating the haze that they normally do, they created a moment of clarity. He had realized, many years after the fact, he had done something none of his friends had done. He had broken a generation divide. He had crossed the line from one generation to another. They were part of a community now. But part of a community a generation removed. A younger generation, but no less a member than anybody else. They were an integral part of a community and they had broken a divide rarely broken before. And in doing so, years later he realized, he had in some strange way stolen his aloneness. He would die. It was coming. And it was closer than before. He would die for certain. But he would not die alone. He now could realize, and with great clarity, that day, whenever it may be, might be a day where he was surrounded. Surrounded by a group of friends who only had one thought. And that was to wish him well on his way. He might now leave this earth with people around him. Something his father had not done, nor his father's father before that. He had perhaps quite unintentionally stopped one of many vicious cycles in his life. It was comforting. It was peaceful. To know that this group of friends was still very much alive. All of them. And every one of them. And now, on that day, all of them, each came to say goodbye. And all he thought again:

"It was so nice to just hear your voice."



Two Men, Their Religion, Their Music
— The Christian Thief

Powder on Paper
42cm x 29.7cm

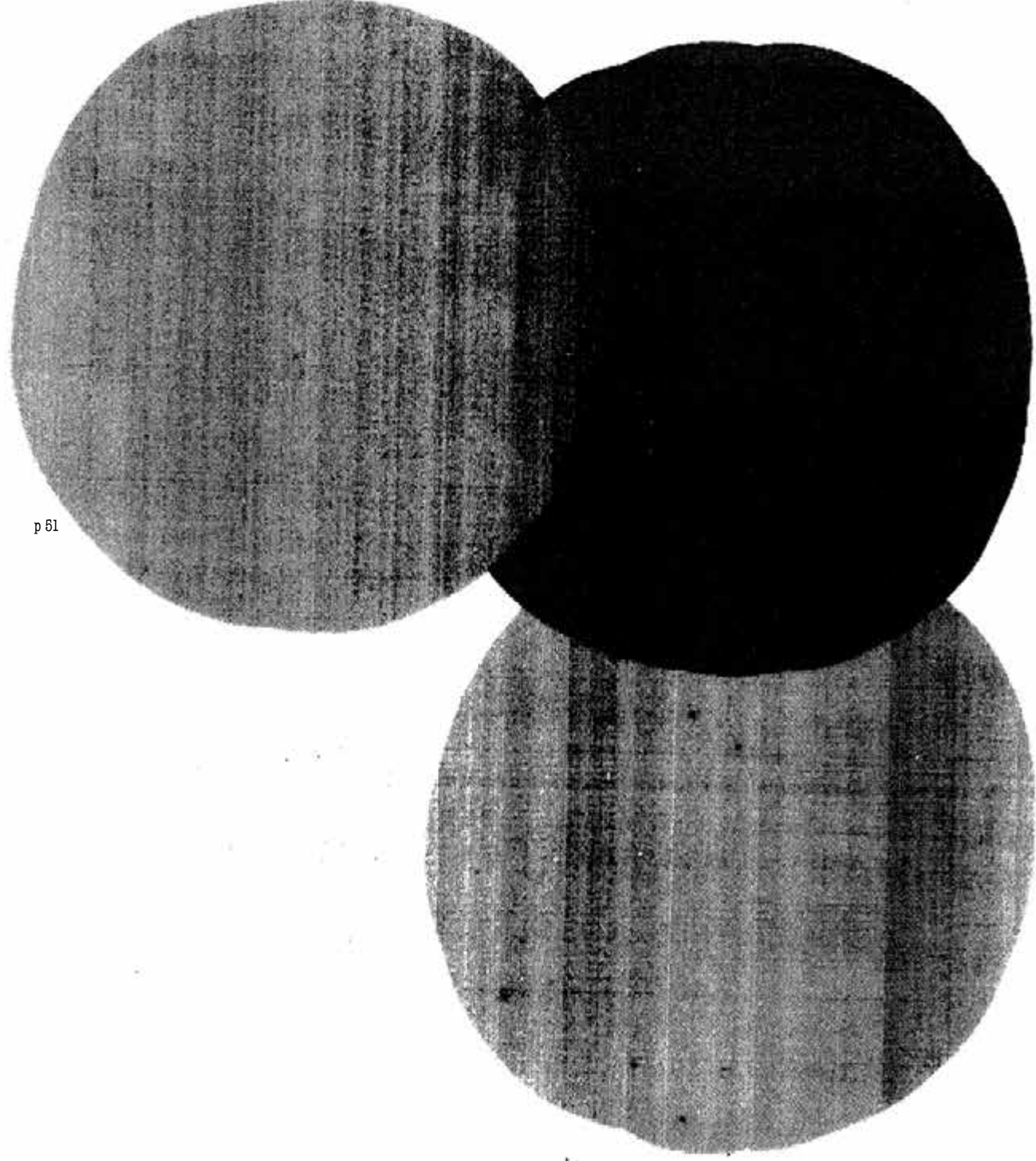
p 49

I once knew some fellows who were devout Christians. Serious “church guys”. They only listened to music for, with, and about God. They were against what was dubbed “secular” music at this time. For many reasons, I suppose. Perhaps they were worried it might sway them. Or the lyrical content may not be appropriate or in line with their beliefs. It was typical. They were roommates. Not the nicest of places. Young and not far removed from their undergraduate degrees. They didn’t have much stuff, and even more so, what they had was not really nice stuff at all. They lived in a somewhat dingy apartment with the best that Ikea, Target and Walmart could provide in terms of furnishings, objects, and products.

They told me one time they had been robbed. Their place had been broken into. They told me the thieves had not taken many things. Being Walmart-friendly, well... there were not many things to take. But these thieves, they had taken the best of what these fellows had. A portable CD player. A guitar. A distortion pedal. Things of this nature.

They had also ransacked the CD rack. This was the 1990s. CDs were valuable. Tangible assets. Akin to precious gems. More than thirty percent of their CDs were missing. Perhaps more. And as the assessment of what was missing and what was still around went further, the CDs became a subject of interest. While going through the CDs, it became apparent that these thieves had taken the best of the best. Excellent music choices. Excellent music selection, these thieves.

This in itself was nothing outside of the ordinary. In a hurry, many thieves can make outstanding decisions. Many thieves can assess any given value in mere seconds. The irony here was that, as stout Christians, these fellows had limited themselves in all of their musical purchases to a strict selection of CCM (Contemporary Christian Music). Nothing else. But then, if one were to select the best of the best of Christian music? And if one were to steal the best of the best in Christian music, what could that possibly mean? Would that then make these thieves Christian thieves?



I had heard about temple thieves on rare occasions and mostly from a friend of a friend who was into these types of things. Some of his stories were quite unbelievable, and for the most part, we took them as such: unbelievable. But this particular story somehow had some teeth and has stayed with me to this very day. This friend of a friend, he was definitely a one-in-a-thousand type of person. But you could not tell that at first glance. He looked as normal as normal could possibly look. But when he talked is when the magic happened. For he had some rather outlandish and outstanding stories. Again, stories you sometimes could not really believe. Stories you would always remember.

How did he accumulate such stories? He was one of the original ‘solo drinkers,’ or those that enjoy ‘hon sool’ (hon is short for honja, alone, and sool is alcohol in Korean). He was original because he was living this way before the term became a kind of everyday cultural concept in Korea. He would bar-hop, he would drink, he would drink alone, and he would drink a lot. On any given night. And alcohol can open many doors, can solve many mysteries, and can create many magic moments if you let it. On these nights out, which happened around four times a week, he would meet all slices of society. And he told us about one woman who he could not forget.

She worked at what could be best described as a hostess bar. But it was not the kind of bar and the hostess type of imagery that is typically displayed on film or through word-of-mouth. It was just a bar where lonely fellows would come and have a drink and be slightly cared for, talked with, thought of. Nothing fishy or out of the ordinary here. Just lonely men who spend some money on alcohol and conversation. Her name was Yoomee. Huh

Yoomee. And she worked here. This was arbeits. Or “ahlbah” as they say. A part-time job with relatively easy to keep hours. She did this job not for the prestige, not for the joy, but just to add a little to the bank account every month.

As is the case with many of these institutions, she was, as the expression goes, not hard on the eyes. She was, in fact, extremely attractive. She knew it. Everybody in the bar knew it. It was fact. And he would go to meet her on occasion, on his random nights out. But not necessarily because of her beauty. Or her beauty alone. For in addition to her beauty, she also had outrageous stories herself. She was that rare breed of personality and appearance. Truly rare. A gift to be with and a gift to talk with. And this kept him coming. For their conversations truly spanned the spectrum. Truly spanned the spectra. And he ate it up. Because they were that good.

She confessed to him one time that she had a kind of addiction that puzzled her but that she could not let go. She knew she was attractive. She had been told so since she could remember. But she would often wonder if there was nothing more. If this attractiveness had its limits or if these limits could also be pushed. She told him that one time, she had traveled to a temple in the South, near a city called Kangjin. And here she did a temple stay to recharge and refresh. Something quite normal. Quite normal for her and her family. Her parents, Buddhists, would take her to temples all across Korea, for similar reasons. To rest, meditate, eat clean temple food, and rejuvenate. But here, at this temple in Kangjin, she came to a kind of epiphany. She realized here, at this temple, that this temple, along with other temples she had frequented, well, this might be the only place or the only kind of place where her attractiveness

meant nothing. In her normal daily routine she could always feel the eyes of men. Whether they said anything or not, these eyes were working extremely hard when they met her. And she could feel this hard work. She could hear these eyes, hard at work. What they were doing, what kind of work they were doing, well, it could be left for the imagination. But it was also pretty obvious. These were men. And she knew her attractiveness had much to do with this. But here, at this temple, it became obvious that the eyes of the men here were not at work. These monks, if not avoiding eye contact entirely, well, their eyes said very little. She could feel nothing. And this began to unsettle her. Like tiny drops of water, falling on her forehead. Repetitively. Over time. It began to slowly get to her.

She would return to this temple a month later. But this time around, she had ulterior motives. Other intentions in this visit. Yoomee returned this time, not for recharging, but this time perhaps, purely for refreshment. She came with the goal of breaking these eyes. She came with the intention of seeing if these temple eyes could work. She wanted to see if these men could feel. If they could feel something. She wanted to feel something from these eyes. So she returned with all of the tools, tactics and ability her attractiveness could achieve. Using all of the training she had received at her job at the bar. Her mannerisms, her attire, her method of talking were all on full-throttle. She was used to talking to men and making them feel something. She was used to doing this very well. And always in return, she would feel something from these men. Desire. Loneliness. Admiration. She could always feel their hearts flutter. And today, she was determined to feel something here at this temple. She was determined to feel something in their eyes.

Similar to the process of fishing, and trying a new kind of lure for the first time, it took a moment. She had cast her lure. The line was in the water. And she would now just watch and wait. Fishing was like that. A waiting game. Waiting for something to happen. The water was still. Time had passed. But as with fishing, after a certain point in time, the fish might come. And here, at this temple, after a bit of silence. After a little time. It happened. She felt something.

One monk. His eyes had betrayed him. He had to look. And she caught it. It was a microsecond. Literally a fraction of a second. But she caught it. She caught the glimpse. After all this man was trained for, all he had worked for, all he had dedicated his life for, in that nanosecond, she saw a small flame in his eyes. A flame where there was none before. Small, like an ember or the beginning flame of a candle. But she knew it was her. She knew it was her. She knew where this flame came from. In that microsecond, the eyes expressed need.

Like all addictions. Like all games. One cannot stop. One has to go further. One has to see what comes next. So she began to fan the flame. She wanted to see if there was more. She wanted to see if this small flame from a candle could grow bigger.

And it could. It did. It would slowly grow. Those microseconds eventually became a second. Those seconds came in more frequency. He would try to sneak them in. Sneak in these looks. But she knew. She would catch them. She was good. Yoomee had been communicating for years without words, so she knew. She could feel it. This look. That look. Those looks. They became more frequent. Less discrete. He would sometimes even occa-

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But she couldn't stop there. She had knocked on the front door and heard somebody behind the door. Breathing. Contemplating opening the door. But not opening it. Not just yet. She knew there was something there. There was somebody there. And she had to keep going. Could he open that door? Would he? Even the thought of this kept her going. She knew where this might lead.

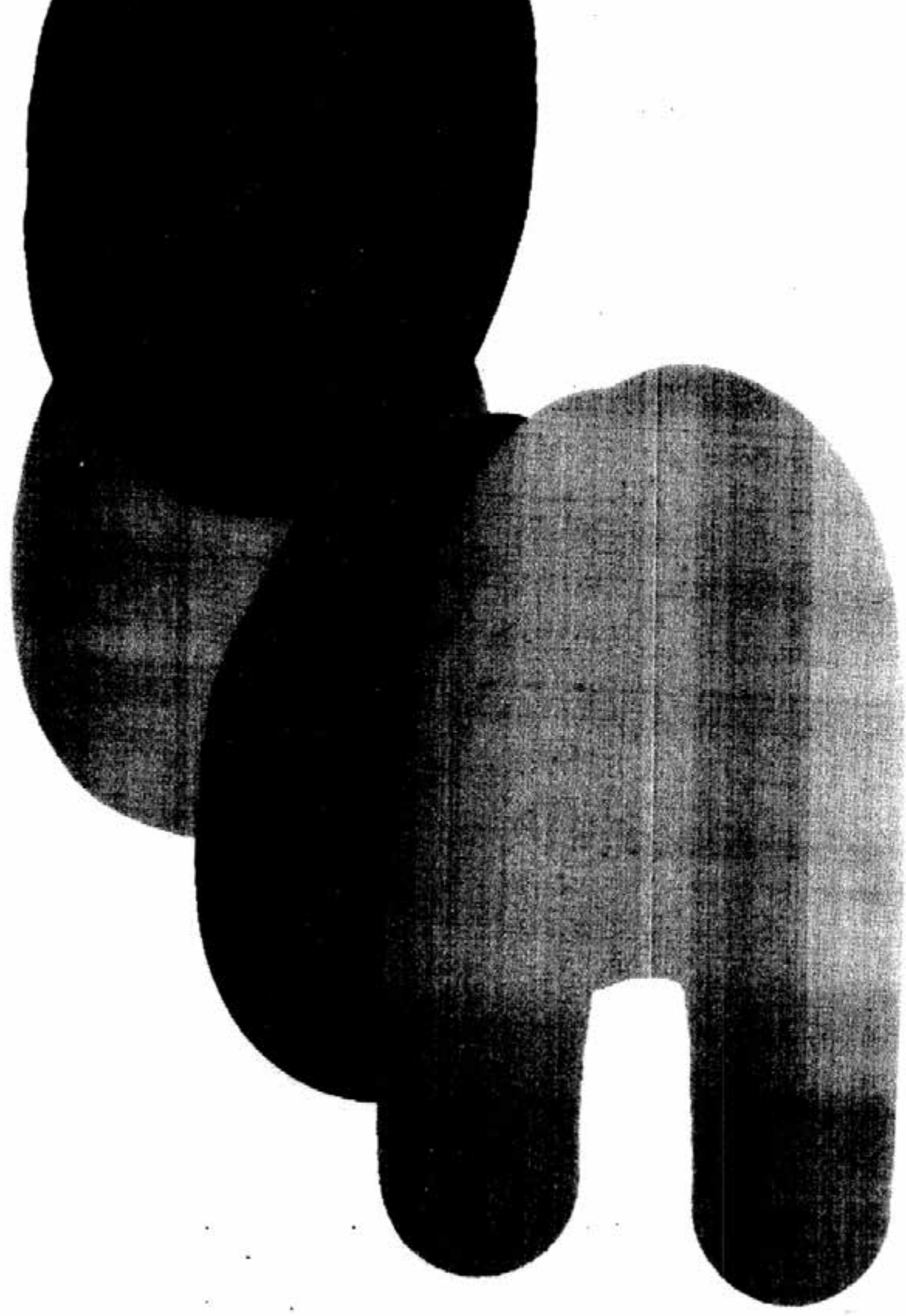
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She confessed that this was just the start of her addiction. Every couple of weeks, she would take a few days off. She would travel to a new temple. But now these trips had new purpose. She was hunting. Yoomee was looking at each temple for the most challenging of challenges. She went and looked into every eye. She was

looking for the eyes of those who could not be broken. And when she found those eyes, she knew what to do. She knew what she wanted to do. She knew wanted to feel that feeling. Again, and again.

Similar to a fighter pilot who crosses out their victims with chalk on their plane or a vampire who roams the streets at night, seeking a drink to replenish their life, she went on. And on. And on. It was both a game but it was life. And she confessed that she was actually now at monk number nineteen. Eighteen times before this, she had gone and broken someone. Eighteen times before, she had gone to look for those eyes, found them, and strategically went about breaking them. And now, at nineteen, she also confessed it was not enough. This had now become a numbers game. As game hunters do in the latter stages of their life, it is no longer a novelty. It is the collection. It is the sheer number. How many she could amass. How many she could take. And as she told this story, she had not yet even finished nineteen but already knew she was thinking of twenty.

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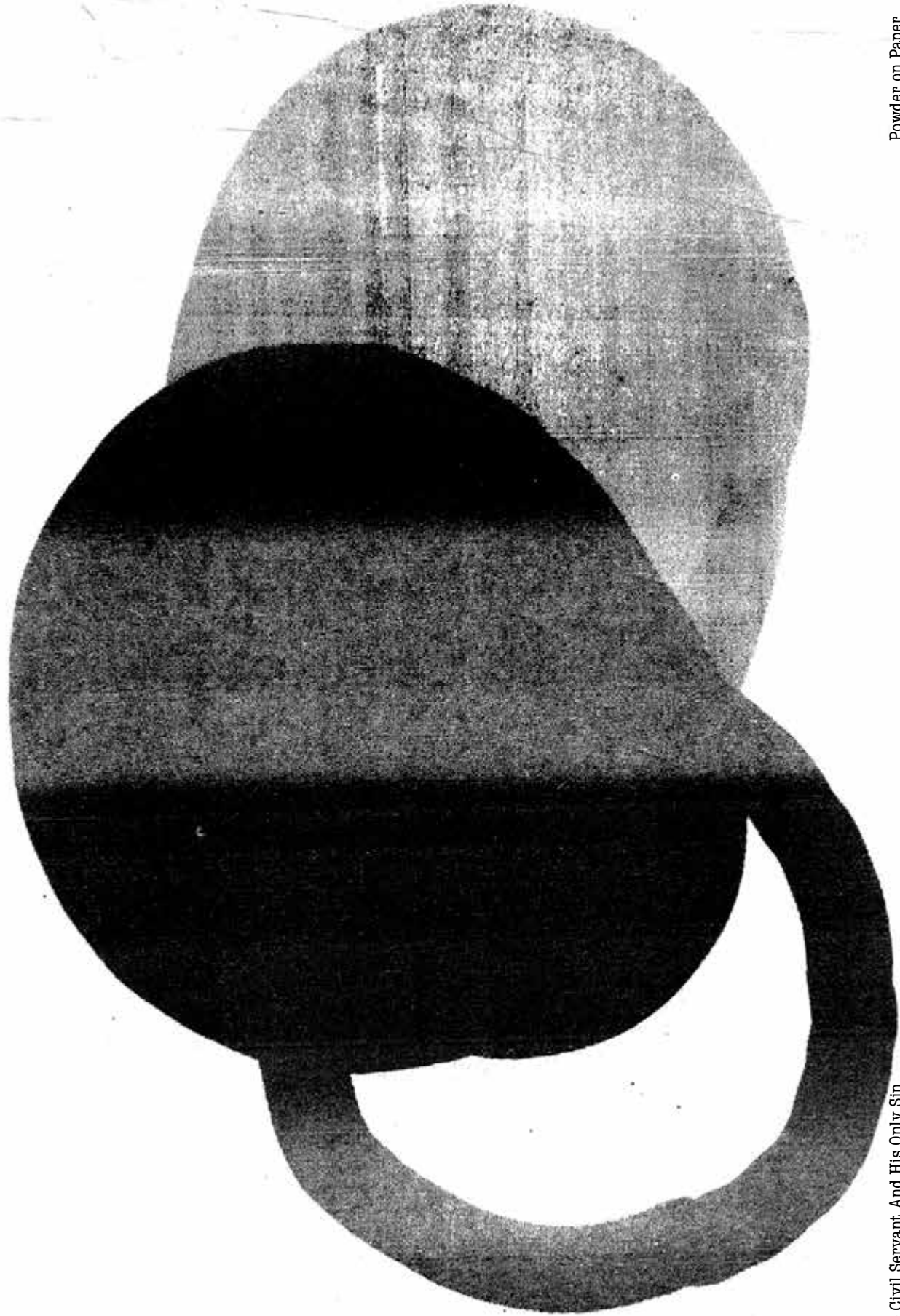
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The Civil Servant And His Only Sin
– The Cat Thief

Powder on Paper
42cm x 29.7cm

Definitely.

Definitely a regular guy, by all definitions. As regular as you can get. He was a civil servant. Joonhyub Ma worked for the local district office. A job that he definitely had no passion for, but a job that was extremely stable. A job with little stress. Consistent hours. Consistent vacations. Decent salary. No assholes. Well, not the kind that used to make him miserable. He could technically not get fired unless he did something awful. It was one of those kinds of jobs. He was one of those kinds of guys. He was.

He lived in a standard villa, which would be or could be considered a type of standard or sometimes, standard and housing here in Seoul. As typical as one can get. Sometimes three-to-five stories in height with anywhere from five-to-twelve units. Similar to what Americans call an “apartment”, these types of residences are everywhere and as common to the urban fabric of Seoul as pavement and streetlights. As normal as it can get.

And he comes home to this normalness. Everyday. Like clockwork. For having a job with very little stimulation, it was definitely part of the ritual to look at the clock consistently starting at around 5:15 pm. The countdown to 6:00 was something he wished he would not do but did with the utmost regularity. “Don’t look at the clock man, it didn’t move that much. But I just have to check. Real quick.. One quick peek... make sure my computer is working properly, right?... 5:35.. Just a little more... Time was the killer in this job. It was the one constant that controlled him. It was the asshole boss he didn’t have in real life. He had to wait for time. Always. And this daily cycle had elevated the value of 6:00 to spiritual levels. A holy place. A sacred place. The time

of day he knew, in this non-stimulating environment, which would raise his endorphins. Time to go home.

As regular as you could get. As clockwork as time can make. This was his everyday. Every. Day.

Coming home. A trip he had made thousands of times. The same flight of stairs. The same password to open the front door. The same number combination push-button password to open the door to his unit. No keys. All the same. Thousands of times. All the same. Again and again. Again. And again. His unit in this villa was a sanctuary. And this moment, in its simplicity, was part of those 6pm endorphins. A daily ritual of happiness. Escape. Escaping time. Escaping that place that provided both his livelihood and his normalcy.

As regular as you could get. As mundane as you could get. He made this journey so many times. It was a rock. It was a mountain. It was his sun. His clouds. His moon.

As regular as you could get. Machine-like.

He had created a machine of stability. One that provided both peace and sometimes, small moments of misery nonetheless. But the stability to him was priceless. The machine-like nature of his days was priceless. Chaos, change, the possibility of his employment terminating scared him. They would scare anybody. But for him, regularity was holy.

But sometimes, change happens. Whether you desire it, will it, request it, or not. This is the nature of order. And change happens to regular guys like this. To people who have—consciously or subconsciously—created systems in their lives. As with all routines, constructs, and

structures, there comes a day, a moment, or an action that creates a lull. A pause. A situation where the cycle stops.

Today came that lull. A glitch. Something that throws off the machine. Ever so slightly.

Today was regular, but it was different.

Different from a thousand days before and probably a thousand days after, upon entry to his home, punching the same numbers, entering the same codes and unlocking the same doors, today he was greeted by a sound. A very particular sound and it was not necessarily a sound that he was unused to. It was the location of the sound that was different. It was the proximity of the sound that was different.

The sound itself was one that he, and for that matter, all human beings were all too familiar with. But again, it was the location that threw him off. It was a sound typically found outside of the building. Outside of his home. Never inside.

“Me.”

“Ow.”

Cats, particularly stray cats, are an everyday story in this neighborhood. Actually, in all neighborhoods in Seoul, and throughout the whole of South Korea for that matter. Almost daily, one will see scurrying cats running under cars, diving under walls, and slipping into cracks. Feral cats live a tough life here, but probably not as tough as one might think. For every billion wandering cats here, there are an equally large amount of ‘cat moms’ here who do all the good things in the world for these feral cats. Fresh water. Fresh food...

ell... kind of fresh dry food. However it has happened, it has happened that these cats born in between buildings have become something akin to the pigeons one finds in New York. Animals who have simply become part of our existence. A part of our lives.

As is so, the sounds of cats are also everyday sounds. Or have become everyday sounds. It is an entirely frequent occurrence to hear cats looking for lovers. Or perhaps looking to be loved. Sometimes fighting. Sometimes in pain. Sometimes expressing joy? Is it joy? It sounds like joy. Seasonal. Quarterly. Monthly. Sometimes. Sometimes.

And today, Joonhyub was saluted, greeted, and seemingly shaking hands with this category of sound. The sound of a cat. “Me.” “Ow.” “Meow.” It was a sound he had heard, just like the dalliness in his life, a thousand times. Thousands of times. Thousands upon thousands of times. But today again, the curveball was proximity. He could feel this sound. It was so close. Like humid air, it was so close he could feel it on his skin. Hitting him like air hitting his face. It was so close. So close.

Today, his machine-like day had a hiccup. Something slightly tapped the machine that was his life and it jumped. A tad. This something that tapped the machine was a cat.

This regular guy saw a cat.

It was definitely a kitten. Or was it? Or would you say, micro-cat? Mini-cat? As someone who, himself, raises cats he was keenly aware that this cat must be a month-or-so old. Maybe a tad more just by looking at the size. But definitely, a little cat. His building of residence was

like most standard villas, four stories with six units within. Almost all villas in Korea have one entrance and one central stairwell that connects all the units. And this guy, who had traveled this stairwell to his second floor unit thousands and thousands of times, today, saw, lets just say, a micro-cat. A very small cat.

This micro-cat was wandering the staircase. Wandering? Perhaps not the right word. As the stairs were quite large for said micro-cat, the wandering seemed singly directional. This micro-cat could actually go nowhere but down. Slowly. One by one. So wandering could be the right word, but this cat was definitely not in and of its place. Nor in and of this stairwell, which normally exists as a transitional space. A space where nothing and noone lingers for more than 25 seconds at a time. But here this cat was, spending more time here, one stair-by-one stair, than anybody or anything had in the entire existence of this residence.

This regular guy saw a cat.

Not found. Not lost. But there, here and definitely not in its proper place. Not of this place. And this cat, upon closer examination, was shivering. Shaking? Shivering, most likely. As one with fairly extensive knowledge of all things cats, immediately, this guy did what he always does. What he was trained to do. What he was told to do when meeting new and unfamiliar animals. Stick out two fingers. Let the cat smell you. Let the cat get to know you. Don't just go for the gold. Many non-cat people do just that. They go for the gold. Reach out for the high-five. And are more often than not denied with this approach. The first thing is not to try to touch the cat. Let the cat get used to this guy. Understand this guy. Let the cat know this guy might be safe. Might be

non-threatening. So he stuck out his hand. Contact. Another thing he had learned in years of raising cats was height. The lower you are, the closer to the ground you are, the more comfortable cats can sometimes get. So, this regular guy got low. Sitting on the ground, cross legged, meditation-esque, and in the “we come in peace” gesture extending his hand again.

Contact.

The cat, perhaps in its youth, begins an immediate indication of trust. I mention youth because, similar to human beings, the young are not yet weary nor suspicious. Naivete? Simple-minded? No battle scars yet. No wounds. Not enough trauma to create the data that humans are no good. Not enough data to say, this protruding hand is no good. Or means harm. None of that. This cat sees the hand and immediately begins what may best be described as “the head bury”. The head bury is the golden sign. It is an action where cats kind of bury or burrow their head into you. Perhaps out of an itchiness on their head. And the inability to scratch said itches. Or perhaps it is to pass on their scent. Or rub their scent on you. Whatever it may be, it is a truly positive sign. And that basically means, in its youth, in its lack of all suspicions, somehow you have passed the first round of reviews. You are okay with this cat.

Sign two.

After the head bury, the cat begins to do what may best be described as “the spelunker”. Or “spelunking”. Climbing. Climbing up and onto the vast valley of the man's meditation-esque crossed-legs structure. The cat sits. The cat rests. The cat enjoys. The cat has found a place

deemed acceptable for resting. Similar to a hammock or sofa, the human structure can sometimes provide an appealing place of rest. But this guy knows as well how irregular this is, especially for cats. Almost 70% of the time, cats prefer a space just far enough from humans so that they can be friendly but not that friendly.

Human contact is sometimes okay, but for the most part not. Just close enough to be in eye contact. But that's it. The line is drawn. There is no more encroaching of this distance. You stay there. I stay here. We are good. Period.

But here, this cat had come and claimed territory. And not only claimed territory, but had created a form of residence. A bed/sofa/chair for rest. But again, was it youth? The trust of youth? Or was this one of those rare cats—the “dog cats”, as people in Korea call them. Cats that are more like dogs. Cats that are extremely friendly. And expressive. At this point, this regular guy cannot be so sure. But sign two, is a rare and precious sign and signifying that perhaps, this cat might not be so normal. In a good way.

Sign three.

If there is perhaps a final sign of “everything is okay”-ness, this is it. A sign of hope. Of all the good that can be in this world. Perhaps it would be that entirely unique method of communication that cats utilize towards human beings. As subtle, discrete, and unobtrusive as it may be, there is nothing quite like the purring of a cat. Although it has been said they do purr amongst themselves, strangely, it always feels as if the purrs are directed directly towards human beings. A gift. A flower. A special way to express happiness in an absolutely pure form. And today, this cat began to purr. And as the

idiom goes, it was the nail in the coffin.

Such is the power of joy. This thing. The cat purr. It can even break the hardest of men. The manliest of men. It can break a man down to his roots. It can put one's essence in question. Questions of humanity. Questions of everything. Even the toughest of tough guys cannot resist, ignore, or deny the purr of a cat. It is that powerful. What ancient magic is this sound that they send? And why or how do we know that it indicates happiness? The truth is that we do not know. We will never know for sure. For there is no logical explanation here. But one can definitely feel it. It really is. It must be happiness. It has to be happiness. Happiness encapsulated in an action so simple. A happiness that can be felt. And as this cat sits in the meditation-esque legs of this regular guy, this subtle action of purring begins to send small tremors across this landscape. Small tectonic shifts that this regular guy can feel. And it breaks him. Breaks him down. As it always does. Always.

A rush of thoughts to the head.

Who is this cat? Where is this cat from? Thought number one: ust be a street cat. No other explanation. But how in the world did it get in here? The front door remains open only for a few seconds at a time. And, as a knower of cats, this regular guy understands that most cats are not of the type to bolt for an open door. An open door, most likely, must be examined, understood, poked at, and prodded at in order for trust to develop. Then, just then, might athe cat enter a space. Enter the unfamiliar.

Can't be. Couldn't be.

Just can't be a street cat. A feral cat. Too clean. Far too clean. The cat itself is extremely clean. Most street cats, even the kittens, always look a bit shabby. A bit scrappy. A bit unkempt. Rough. Rough-around-the-edges. And more often than not, more than rough-around-the-edges.

Another reason this cat could not be feral was this immediate trust. Trust is also not the behavior of a street cat. Out of one hundred street cats, you may get one... just one who is approachable. One who might have had contact with a human at a very early age. These one-out-of-a-hundred are not scared and may come close. And even more rarely, may be able to be touched, petted, etc. But, this is extremely rare.

Afterward, a rush of thoughts to the head.

Enter. Panic.

Panic is perhaps not the right word. But in situations like this, there is a phone number that this regular guy dials. Not the police. Not the fire department. He, just like a million husbands before him, calls the wife. The one person that could make sense of all of this. The wise, always-wise, life partner. And as the cat sits meditation-esque on the regular guy's meditation-esque legs. The purrs. The stillness. This regular guy does what now has become basic intuition in human beings. Pull out the smartphone. Clicks camera. Records. Records film. Then send to wife so wife can make sense of this situation. And help him. Dear lord.

Message sent to wife. No text explanation. Just video. Just spur of the moment. Intuition.

Wife receives text and immediately writes back, something along the lines of “what”? Or perhaps “how”? Or perhaps a combination of those two words. Now kicks in, the second intuition.

Now. Call. Phone call. Needs to hear voice. Needs reassurance. Needs wisdom. Needs answers. Now in need of some voice of reason. The wife, always the wiser and almost-always-right-on-the-first pass, thinks the cat is not an outside cat. But an inside cat. An inside job. Something smells of neighbors. Something smells of other units. Something smells of home here. She tells him, check the other units because all signs are pointing towards an existing owner in the vicinity.

Regular guy sets cat down and bounds up the stairs. To see if said hunch is not hunch but correct. One flight up. All looks same. Two flights up. Here. Here lies the answer.

Here is where the true conflict begins. The door is open. Third floor unit. Completely open. For what reason? We do not know. And now, all things connect. Wandering cat is not wandering. Wandering cat is not lost. Wandering cat has walked out. A neighborhood stroll. But not in the neighborhood. A stroll in the building. This cat is not homeless. Everything makes sense now. Problem solved.

Or solved?

This regular guy saw a cat.

And now, as they sometimes say, the devil begins to whisper. Whisper in the left ear. Whisper certain thoughts that should not be thought from the start.

reassuringly might reply that, no, no, their cat had been gone for quite some time.

And the whispers kept coming. Such a conversation would not be so bad would it? These children would soon forget about the cat. And after time, these thoughts, these conversations, would all disappear. As time can sometimes do. As life sometimes does. Life continues on and as they say, out of sight, out of mind.

And so these whispers. These evil thoughts almost felt reassuring. This family would move on. They would forget about the cat. They would continue. And nobody would know otherwise. And what creates such evil? Where could such desire emanate from? The thought of “I love you man”, could it be so bad? It in itself is pure. A pure expression of emotion. Should he feel guilty for thinking such thoughts?

And as this cat continued to purr and sit in the meditation-esque lap, he continued to flash forward a million different scenarios in his head. All calculating a million different ways he could bring this cat home. And that his mind actually does this shocks him. It is shocking. For in every scenario, there is one incarnation of evil. In one form or another. There is the family that would miss this cat. There is the cat, who would know no better. But there is the chance, this cat would know this. Would know the truth. There could be a lifetime of guilt. There is the knowledge of comprehension. Knowing that this cat had become family. But not through the proper means. Through theft. Becoming family through theft. Family. Through theft. Raising a cat. Loving this cat. But knowing deep down. Knowing everyday. Knowing very clearly, that this cat had become family inappropriately.

This regular guy, in all his regularness, has lived by all standards a relatively evil-free life. Try to be good. Try to do the right thing. Try to do unto others, as they would do unto you. The upstanding life. Et cetera.

But here, and in one of those rare instances for this regular guy, irregular thoughts begin to creep in. Thoughts that for a majority of the year, for the majority of his life, have ceased to gain footing in the inner workings of this regular guy’s mind. Borderline thoughts.

How could you think such things?

This regular guy, to his own disbelief, began to think that if he took this cat home, nobody would know. Nobody would ever be the wiser. Who would know? How would anybody know?

No cameras in the corridor. No traces that could link back to him. The door was open. Cat got away. Perhaps later, an A4 flyer posted around the building. Perhaps around the neighborhood. Perhaps a knock on the door to see if said cat had been recently seen? Perhaps a call? A text message? But that would be it. And, the odds of anybody knowing this cat had a new home would be few and far between. Probably zero. Zero.

And it was such borderline thoughts that created a strange impulse. An impulse he had not felt in a long time. Now, as a forty-something-year-old man, he felt that strange desire to steal. It was a feeling he had not had for years. For decades. He was a grown man. Steady job. Steady place to live. Nothing more was needed in this life. But today, the bridge was broken. A regular guy. A grown man. And for the first time in probably three decades, the thought of theft had entered his

mind. Gracefully, silently, but surely. It was there. Dormant thoughts of theft? What magic could resurrect such thoughts?

This regular guy saw a cat.

And in this brief chance meeting, he was broken. Sometimes, something absolutely spectral exists about small cats or kittens. Any kittens. Anywhere in the world. These small cats can have the same effect on anyone. Anywhere. They can melt you. They can melt the hardest of souls. They can take the most hardened, calloused individual. And break them. Is it their reduced size or scale? Is it the underdeveloped manner of walking, moving?

There is an expression in English, “I love you, man”. It is kind of a brotherly term of affection, particularly used by adult men in a manner that is intended to be purely platonic. A way to express affection for men who do not sexually and romantically love other men. And for whatever reason, as this regular guy sat there with the cat in lap, he looks at said cat and thinks, “I love you man”. Although the cat is not a man. And although there is no need for such means of expression. He does simply feel this. “I love you man.” He felt it. He melted.

His head flash-forwarded five, then ten, then fifteen years. He started to imagine conversations from the household that would be losing the cat. The children in the house would be wondering where their cat had gone. And perhaps, as kidnapped cat makes sounds, perhaps the children might say, “Mother, did you hear that? We could have sworn we heard our cat?” And the mother

Family.

Through theft.

Temptations. The simple emotions. The simple experiences. The simple communications, the simple language that could break a man. Break a man who had not thought of theft in over thirty years.

Temptation.

This regular guy saw a cat.

He was what is typically known as or called a "soo-wee ajushi", a position that perhaps has an indefinite translation or description in English. In the dictionary, officially it is presented as "security guard", "janitor" or "caretaker". From what I can see, it is actually a combination of them all. Perhaps "maintenance man" might be an accurate definition. Regardless of the terminology, these types of people are all over Korea. More often than not, many of them are tied or connected to a particular building, institution or space. It is their job to care for this building and all of the things that happen with, around, through, and near this building. Together, perhaps akin to a clownfish and a sea anemone, two distinctly different organisms, with different purposes, somehow reside together in perfect harmony. They need each other.

But this position, at best, is not a taxing position. When you pass these gentlemen on the way in and out of any of these buildings, you can see they are often battling nature. Fighting sleep. Fighting time. Or the passage of time. It is both an easy and difficult job if that makes any sense. Some days they must receive packages. Some days they must monitor parking situations. Handle deliveries. Some days, odds and ends around the building. Slight accidents. Loaning out equipment. Very random things. But, never, almost never, ever a full day of work.

They are often required to remain on duty during odd hours. For many there are sleep quarters tucked inside of their offices, and they are required to sleep on-site due to potential twenty four-hour maintenance or on-call responsibilities. So, they sometimes are truly 'one' with the building. A symbiotic relationship. But what perks may come with such a job? Not many. But perhaps, well... lots of doing nothing. Lots of time.

Lots of monitoring security monitors with at the most, air passing by being recorded on them. In a place as safe as South Korea, this is not the most demanding job by any means.

How does one find this kind of job? Typically, or more often than not, this kind of work just kind of falls into your lap. Or comes by word-of-mouth. There is no active recruitment here. No job postings. A recommendation of a recommendation can slot you in. With that, comes not the greatest salary. But a salary nonetheless. And again, about as much stress as a bowl of ice.

Some folks fall into these jobs later in life. It is rare, but not unusual for young folks to find themselves here as well. For many, and for whatever reason, their previous occupation did not work out. And they just ended up here. A kind of later-in-life job to bring in some income where there was none before.

Jangok Soo Kyung was his name. A very uncommon name originating from Japan, he had never met anybody with his surname in his life. Despite his unusual name, he was about as normal as one might find on any given day in Seoul. He was a 'graphics' guy. In his previous job, he worked at a 'graphics' shop in Euljiro (an industrial area of Seoul), producing flyers, flimsy business cards and fabric banners for sales and events for the most part. He could be considered a "graphic designer" in a very practical use of the term. He was educated via the unofficial apprenticeship system found in Euljiro. A friend of a friend recommended him. He came to this job, knew nothing of the trade, and was trained on the job. Mostly using illegally downloaded versions of Adobe products with lots of illegally downloaded fonts, the apprenticeship system here is extremely functional.

Learn how to get it done, enough to get it done, then get it done. Most of the designers in this industry only use Adobe Illustrator. No such thing as InDesign or Quark here. No need for fine typography. Just enough to get it done.

He knew nothing when he came. But he eventually learned that Adobe Illustrator can do many great things. From moving things around to eventually figuring out how to output files, and then learning how to print things. Sooner than later, he knew enough to do 'design'. Enough to create some real beauties. Flyers for local Chinese restaurants. Menus for delivery that had magnets stuck on the back so they could be placed on refrigerators. The use of lots of big, terribly designed, free fonts from websites with thousands of free fonts. Unnecessarily bright colors. Copyrighted images which they had not received permission to use, courtesy of the internet. And because they were from the Internet, these images were low resolution and were pixelated when printed. Yes, some real beauties were coming out of this shop. But he knew no better. This was work. This was *design* to him. This was food on the table.

But anybody who knows design, knows that it's not for the old. It is a young person's game. And one day, as can happen, along comes another young fellow. Just like he did, ten years before, who knew nothing, was a recommendation from a friend of a friend, who similarly went through the rough-and-tumble apprenticeship, trial by fire. And as young people do, he picked all these things up extremely fast. So fast, so competent, and aesthetically was able to accomplish things better than his precursor. What do these three things mean? When shit hits the fan, when work is no longer abundant, somebody has to go, and that somebody is the one

who no longer works as quickly and efficiently as another. No longer competent. And no longer makes things aesthetically pleasing. He was out of a job.

And he remained out of a job for quite some time. Almost a year exactly. This year was the first time ever he could feel the weight of stress. No income. Living off of the small amount of money he had put aside. Lost hair. Gained some weight. Not a good year. But as had always been the case for him, somehow, through yet another recommendation, he kind of fell into another job. One day, the phone rang and he had found his next job.

He would be now, a building maintenance man. A friend of a friend had recommended him. This building was an older villa in the north of Seoul. The owner of the building was one of those old school types who believed those who he said he could believe. So no resume. No application. One day after meeting the owner, he had a new job.

It took some time to get used to. This new job. The commute, quite far up north. The new neighborhood. The lack of dining options in this residential part of the city. The work space itself was extremely small. Claustrophobic. Almost suffocating. The residents of the building were for the most part nice, but there were, as with most anywhere in the world, assholes. These assholes, as assholes sometimes do, spoke down to him, just because they could. Obviously a new kind of shitty feeling. The night shifts were also painful. A place to sleep next to his office for sure, but not ideal sleeping conditions. Not a mattress, but a sheet of polyurethane flooring over some wood. Just enough to sleep, but not comfortably.

inadvertently figured out, yet another way to kill time. But this time, he also flipped a few coins. Made some side cash. And now, the wheels of his 57 year old brain were in full motion. He got it.

So this restaurant owner, with low standards and a low budget, was pleased with the results. And pleased to be reconnected, said he needed some other things updated too. New business card. A couple promotional flyers. And a banner in the front door to advertise that they would be open during the holiday season. One, two, three: he did it all. His aesthetics: suspect, his font choices: equally suspect. But this client... well, he didn't care. He could not tell it looked amateurish. It was clear. People could read it. That was enough. He was happy. He was happy enough that he also recommended his cousin, another restaurant owner, who also needed an entire new graphic setup for his new restaurant as well.

One by one, these kinds of calls slowly increased. Slowly continued to come in. He was happy. Time was being killed. And now he had more money coming in. But ever so occasionally, Father Guilt would sometimes call him. Talk to him. Was this right? He was doing the operating system window-minimize several times a day. But it was cleanly done. Discreetly done. Nobody knew any better. Nobody knew what he was doing. But in a job like this, actually, nobody cared. Would they? But he did know what he was doing. He knew. He knew he was a double-salary man. He knew he was getting paid one salary, while doing work that earned another. All at the same time. He was a two-timer. He was meeting Sally while also meeting Jane. He knew it was not kosher. But again, nobody knew. Nobody would ever know. So he just kept minimizing the window. He was 57 years old. He was still designing. At a design office where he

Despite all of these things, this job was pretty as they say, "cush". He had time. Lots of time. Lots and lots of time. There would be days, where he would wonder, what he should be doing. There would be days where he would feel a tinge of guilt. Guilt for getting paid for this kind of job. For there would be days, hours at a time, where he truly would do nothing. Accept and sign for a package here and there. Receive a call about a parking spot mixup. That was it. Then silence. So it was a struggle. Sometimes, this was the hardest part of the job. Doing nothing.

One day, it occurred to him that if he was doing some things on the computer, he might be able to pass the time and it might appear as if he was working on something. At first he began to play the pre-installed Microsoft card game solitaire. This was good. Eating up a good several hours at a time. Mind-numbing? Yes. Exhilarating? No. But better than doing the nothingness that was so difficult to do. Better than staring out the window and hoping a bird might fly by. He had mastered the art of operating system window minimization. When somebody, if ever, would walk by, a simple click. Shrink. And nobody would know the better. Or he sometimes did the window switcheroo. Click on the window behind. Click on the window fullscreen button. In two clicks, two microseconds, nobody would ever know. He had mastered this.

And this went on for a few months. He eventually called his computer savvy friend to get him something besides solitaire. He could not take it anymore. And he received a USB stick with some illegal cracked games. Installed them. Not great games again. But the time started to fly. No more excruciatingly long days. No more staring at the sun.

One day, out of the blue, a former client who he had done some design for at the graphics shop rang him. Not knowing he no longer worked there, he had called requesting some design. Some updates to their menu. Some updates in price and perhaps a new look to catch up with the times. When this person called, his first gut reaction was to immediately tell this client that he no longer was at that graphics company and that he no longer was doing that kind of work. But a lot of thought can happen in a few microseconds. A lot of thinking can take place in this short amount of time. And he caught himself in those microseconds. Before admitting he was at a new job, he suddenly did the mid-sentence U-turn. One of those, "ummmm, actually...well, yes, yes, I can do that, 'we' can do that, sure, we'll get that to you right away...." For he realized, he was sitting at a machine that could probably do what he needed to do. And with all his old contacts, he could probably get this sorted. He could most definitely do what was necessary to get the job done. He could do it.

He immediately called a buddy who happened to have a CD with all of the illegal software. Check. He then called another buddy who happened to have all of the illegal fonts that he had been using before. Check. He then called a buddy who was now working at another print shop to see if he could print with them. The answer, yes. Check. Within a day, he was up and running. The solitaire Windows machine, old, yes, but functional, yes. Adding a copy of Adobe illustrator, adding a few fonts, he was actually pretty good to go. And like that, he finished said design request. Sent it out. Had it printed. Bank transfer. Done. And during this time, during the daytime, he minimized his operating system windows only twice. Twice during those two days. And nobody had known otherwise. What had just happened? He had

paid no rent. A design office that paid him. To be there. Paid him to look at the air. Just minimize that window. Minimize it one more time.





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Vol. 2

Works

1. Norma Joh
Acrylic, Oil on Paper
108 x 77.7 cm, 2021.

“My upbringing is distinctly Americana.
But my roots have always told me otherwise.
And therein, lies the conflict. I know only where
I am. Not where I have been.”
“나의 성장은 분명히 미국적이었습니다. 하지만 나의
뿌리는 항상 나에게 다르게 말해왔습니다. 그리고 그
안엔 갈등이 있습니다. 나는 오직 내가 어디있는지만
압니다. 내가 어디에 있었는지가 아니라.”

2. Documents
Powder on Paper
42cm x 29.7cm, 2012-2021.

2-1. A Woman, Her Mother, Her Boyfriend,
His Father and Her Nose – The Recipe Thief
2-2. An Older Gentleman and His Slightly
Younger Friends – The Loneliness Thief
2-3. Won Jinsang – The Tree Thief
2-4. Penelope Richardson – The Hope Thief
2-5. Two Men, Their Religion, Their Music
– The Christian Thieves
2-6. A Woman, Her Addiction and Many Monks
–The Virginity Thief
2-7. A Man, His Truck, His Fruit and His
Thoughts – The Tree Thief
2-8. The Civil Servant And His Only Sin
– The Cat Thief
2-9. A Maintenance Man and His Two Jobs
–The Double Income Thief
2-10. Allan Wilberton Garcia – The Angel Thief
2-11. Gail Hillian Gustafson – The Stomach Thief

2-1. 한 여자, 그녀의 어머니, 그녀의 남자친구,
그의 아버지와 그녀의 코 – 레시피 도둑
2-2. 나이 많은 신사와 약간 어린 친구들 – 외로움 도둑
2-3. 원진상 – 나무 도둑
2-4. 페넬로페 리처드슨 – 희망 도둑
2-5. 두 남자, 그들의 종교, 그들의 음악
– 크리스찬 도둑들
2-6. 한 여자, 그녀의 중독과 많은 수도사들 – 처녀 도둑
2-7. 남자, 그의 트럭, 그의 과일과 그의 생각 – 나무 도둑
2-8. 공무원과 그의 유일한 죄 – 고양이 도둑
2-9. 정비공과 그의 두 가지 직업 – 이중 소득 도둑
2-10. 엘런 윌버튼 가르시아 – 천사 도둑
2-11. 게일 힐리언 구스타프슨 – 위장 도둑

3. Erich Steinkopf
Acrylic, Oil on Paper
109.1 x 78.8 cm, 2021.

“Whatever it is that gets us to wake in the
morning, must be the same thing that gets us
to sleep at night. Whatever it is, I wish for it
to stop. For I have no desire to wake anymore,
nor any more desire to sleep. I just want
an alternative.”
“우리를 아침에 일어나게 하는 것은 그게 무엇이든 우리
를 밤에 잠들게 하는 것과 같습니다. 그게 무엇이든 나는
그만두고 싶어요. 나는 더 이상 일어나고 싶지도 잠들고
싶지도 않습니다. 다른 대안이 필요해요.”

4. Jerrie Entson
Acrylic on Acrylic
115 x 80 cm, 2021.

“I know that honesty has been my ally, my
sword. It has gotten me to where I am and
I swear by it. But it is also the reason, I do
the slightly dishonest things that I do. For if
I was honest all the time, that would be being
dishonest too.”
“정직함이 나의 동맹이자 검입니다. 정직함이 내가 있는
곳으로 이끌었다고 나는 맹세할 수 있습니다. 하지만
그것은 내가 약간의 부정직한 일을 하는 이유이기도
합니다. 내가 만약 언제나 정직했다면, 그것이 바로
부정직이 될 겁니다.”

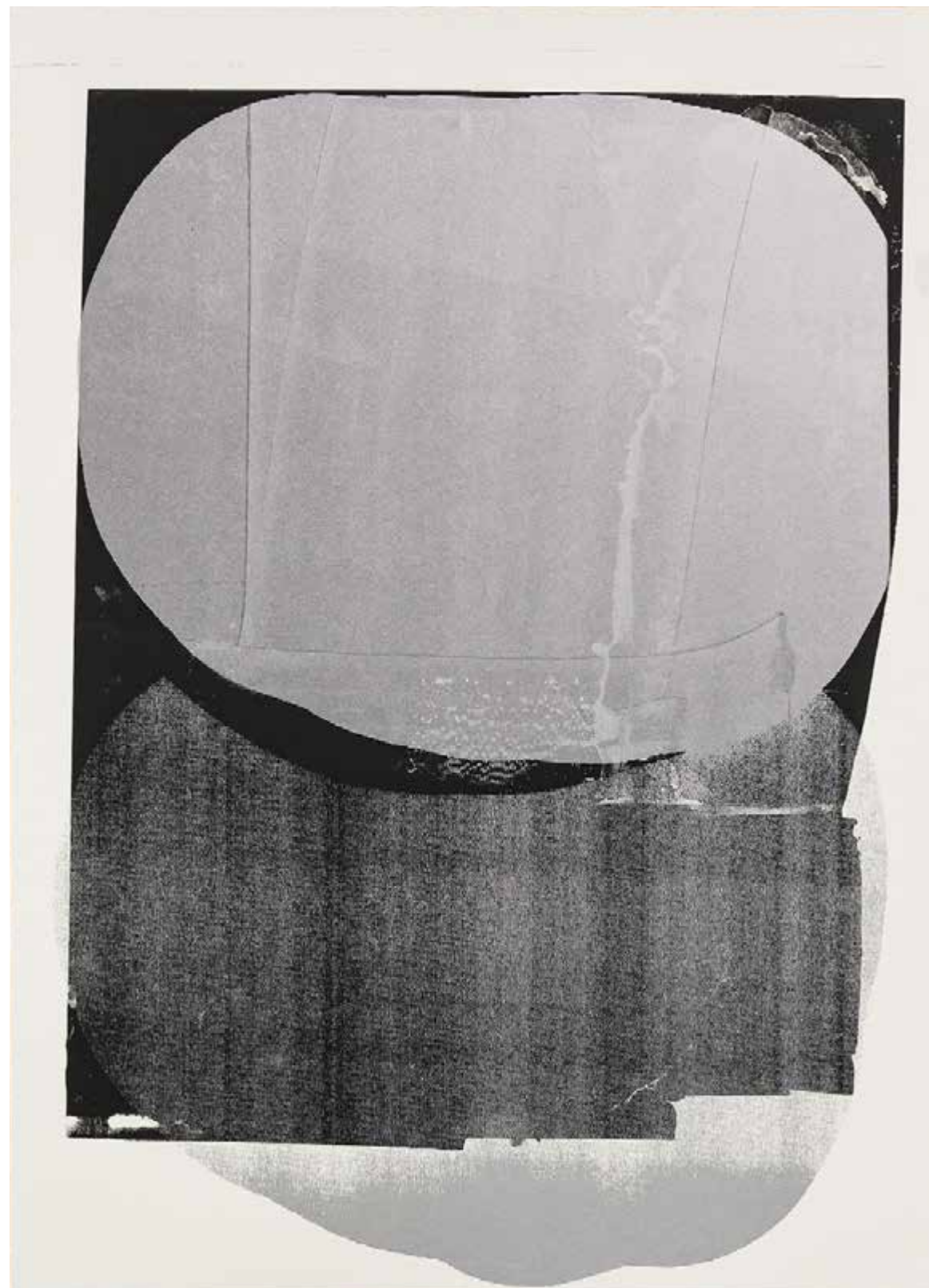
5. Constance Nahm
Acrylic, Oil on Paper
108 x 77.7 cm, 2021.

“I often wonder why I am in the position I am
now and I wonder this for altogether five to
seven seconds max. The reason I wonder this
for such a short amount of time is because
I know this. I know this very well and
somehow, I have just forgotten why I do what
I do and why I have done what I have done.”
“나는 종종 내가 지금 여기서 뭘하는지 궁금한데,
그 고민은 5초 내지 7초에 지나지 않습니다. 이렇게
짧은 시간동안 고민하는 이유는 나는 너무 잘 알고있기
때문입니다. 나는 내가 무엇을 왜 하는지, 어떻게 하고
있는지 잊을 정도로 잘 알고있습니다.”

6.	Joonhyub Ma Acrylic, Oil on Paper 108 x 77.7 cm, 2021.	11.	Thick as Thieves Single-Channel Video 4m 12s, 2021.	16.	Gaif Gershwin Acrylic on Polycarbonate 115 x 80 cm, 2021.	20.	Aggie Bernson Acrylic, Oil, Graphite on Paper 108 x 77.7 cm, 2021.	25.	Abe Ra Acrylic, Oil, Graphite on Paper 108 x 77.7 cm, 2021.	29.	Thieves Like Us Single-Channel Video 3m 41s, 2021.
“I have yet to do a ‘wrong’ thing in my life. I know this. My family knows this. My colleagues know this. But if everybody knows this, they might understand.” “나는 아직 인생에서 ‘잘못된’ 일을 한 적이 없습니다. 나도 이걸 알고, 내 가족들도 알고, 내 동료들도 이걸 압니다. 하지만 모두가 이걸 알고 있다면, 그들은 이해할 것입니다.”						“For every penny. For every dollar. I have saved, and saved. Only to realize that saving is not enough. I could save my whole life time and it would sill not be enough. I needed something more. I needed something less stable. Something with greater ROI. I just needed it.” “한 푼 한 푼 모으고 모았습니다. 아무리 모아도 충분하지 않다는 걸 알았습니다. 내 인생 전부를 모아도 충분하지 않았죠. 나는 더 많은 게 필요했어요. 덜 안정적인 것이 필요했죠. 뛰어난 가성비, 내게 필요한 건 바로 이거예요.”					
7.	Agatha Dawson, Allison Dawson, Addison Dawson Acrylic on Paper 109.1 x 236.4 cm, 2021.	12.	Isadora Winthrop Acrylic, Oil on Paper 108 x 77.7 cm, 2021.	17.	Edmond Fields Acrylic, Oil on Paper 109.1 x 78.8 cm, 2021.	21.	Huh Yoomee Acrylic, Oil, Graphite on Paper 940 x 640 cm, 2021.	26.	Lake Wainntaisoor Acrylic, Oil on Paper 108 x 77.7 cm, 2021.	30.	Fannie Kingston Acrylic on Acrylic 115 x 80 cm, 2021.
“There is no changing now. It has been five minutes. No more. If, and when. Not where.” “이제 바뀔 건 없습니다. 5분 지났습니다. 이제 그만. 만약에, 그리고 언제. 어디가 아니고요.”						“I have come to realize that all good things have become what they are because of the efforts we put into such good things. But I have also come to realize that shortcuts do not get enough credit for how good they are. You save time, you save energy and you finish. There is nothing negative in that.” “좋은 일을 위해 노력하면 좋은 일이 일어난다는 것을 깨달았습니다. 하지만 지름길이 얼마나 좋은지는 잘 모르겠어요. 시간을 절약하면 에너지를 줄이고 끝낼 수 있어요. 여기엔 부정적인 게 없습니다.”					
8.	Penny Wickers Acrylic, Oil on Paper 109.1 x 78.8 cm, 2021.	13.	Edison Ryu Acrylic, Oil on Paper 108 x 77.7 cm, 2021.	18.	Terrence Fulton Acrylic on Paper 110 x 400 cm, 2021.	22.	Benjamin Muenster Acrylic, Oil on Paper 109.1 x 78.8 cm, 2021.	27.	Hanson Whittaker Acrylic, Oil on Paper 108 x 77.7 cm, 2021.	31.	Watson Greyson Acrylic, Oil on Paper 108 x 77.7 cm, 2021.
“What goes up, must come down. Right? But not all the time. I have gone up with no intention to go down.” “올라가면 반드시 내려옵니다. 맞죠? 하지만 매번 그러는 건 아니예요. 나는 내려갈 생각 없이 올라왔어요.”						“I know there exists before me, the efforts of generations to seek both peace and redemption. I know these efforts are tremendous. But it is this tremendous effort, this time that also thrills me. I seek my own peace. I seek not redemption, but something as close to redemption as can be.” “우리 세대 이전에 평화와 구원을 추구했던 세대들의 노력이 있었다는 걸 압니다. 나는 이 노력이 대단하다는 걸 압니다. 하지만 지금 시대엔, 이런 대단한 노력들이 나를 긴장하게 합니다. 나는 나 자신의 평화를 추구합니다. 나는 구원이 아니라 구원에 가까운 것을 추구합니다.”					
9.	Jangok Soo Kyung Acrylic, Oil, Graphite on Paper 100 x 70 cm, 2021.	14.	Matthias Ko Acrylic, Oil on Paper 100 x 70 cm, 2021.	19.	Wilma Ransselar Acrylic, Oil, Graphite on Paper 108 x 77.7 cm, 2021.	23.	There is Honor Among Thieves Single-Channel Video 2m 39s, 2021.	28.	Wendy Zorn Acrylic, Oil on Paper 109.1 x 78.8 cm, 2021.	32.	The Rosses Powder on Paper 42cm x 594cm, 2021.
“The day lies before me. As it always does. But I cannot take it anymore. For it is just overwhelming. Time. For me the night could not come any sooner. But it does not. It waits, just as I do. I cannot bear it anymore.” “늘 그랬듯듯이, 시간은 내 앞에 놓여있습니다. 하지만 나는 더이상 참을 수 없습니다. 그것은 단지 압도적이기 때문입니다. 시간. 나에게 밤이 더 빨리 올 수는 없습니다. 그럴 수 없지만, 나처럼 그것은 기다립니다. 나는 더 이상 참을 수 없습니다.”						“For everything I have attempted to do with what I have perceived to be ‘life’ I have noted that my success rate sits squarely at 3%. For those who are limited in math, this means I have failed at nearly 97% of all my endeavors.” “내가 ‘인생’이라고 인식하며 시도한 모든 것에 대해 내 성공률은 정확히 3%입니다. 수학에 능하지 않은 사람들에게 이것은 내 모든 노력의 97%가 실패했음을 의미합니다.”					
10.	Yoonshik Goe Acrylic on Polycarbonate 115 x 80 cm, 2021.	15.	Agatha Fendricks Acrylic, Oil on Paper 108 x 77.7 cm, 2021.	p 80							
“The comments kill me. I know I should not read them, but I have to know. I have to know what people are saying. What people are thinking. Even if it comes on this soulless platform we call digital. Where nobody knows your name and therefore the most terrible things in the world can be uttered. They kill me. They do. But I need to know.” “댓글 때문에 죽겠어요. 읽지 말아야 한다는 걸 알지만, 나는 알아야겠어요. 사람들이 무슨 말을 하는지 알아야만 해요. 사람들은 나를 죽입니다. 사람들이 그래요. 하지만 나는 알아야 합니다.”						p 81					
“I have done little in this life to make for lasting memories. I have focused on salary. Comfort. All the things that you do not remember. And therefore, I do what I do. For I can remember each one. In detail. I am making up for lost time.” “나는 평생 기억에 남을 만한 일을 거의 하지 않았습니 다. 나는 오직 월급과 안정에만 집중했습니다. 당신은 거의 기억 못하겠죠. 그래서 나는 내가 하는 걸 합니다. 하나 하나 세세하게 기억할 수 있도록 잃어버린 시간을 만회하고 있습니다.”						“When I think of the future, it is not this optimistic vision that I would say, 80% of the population seems to enjoy. I know the future is a bad place. It is getting worse now. It has been getting worse. So I have no optimism for this place. I have fastened my seatbelt. I am prepared. It is not good, this future.” “미래에 대해 생각할 때, 80%의 사람들이 즐기는 것 처럼 보이는 건 낙관적인 비전이 아닙니다. 나는 미래가 암울한 장소라는 걸 압니다. 점점 더 나빠질 것입니다. 점점 더 나빠지고 있습니다. 그래서 나는 이곳이 낙관적 이지 않습니다. 나는 벨트를 꼭 맸습니다. 나는 준비되었어요. 미래는 좋지 않습니다.”					
“My father was famous. Not like, celebrity famous. But pretty famous. So I saw behind the curtain. Saw the Wizard of Oz and I chose another life. One far from such mechanics. And so far, I know I have chosen correctly.” “우리 아버지는 유명했어요. 유명 연예인은 아니었지만 꽤 유명했어요. 그래서 오즈의 마법사 커튼 뒤의 기계들을 보고 다른 삶을 선택했어요. 지금까지 나는 내가 옳은 선택을 했다는 걸 알아요.”						“Generational thieves. It is not something we readily admit or engage with. But it is also something we do not shy from.” “도둑 세대. 우리가 쉽게 인정하거나 관여하는 건 아니지만, 우리가 수치스러워할 것도 아닙니다.”					

p 82

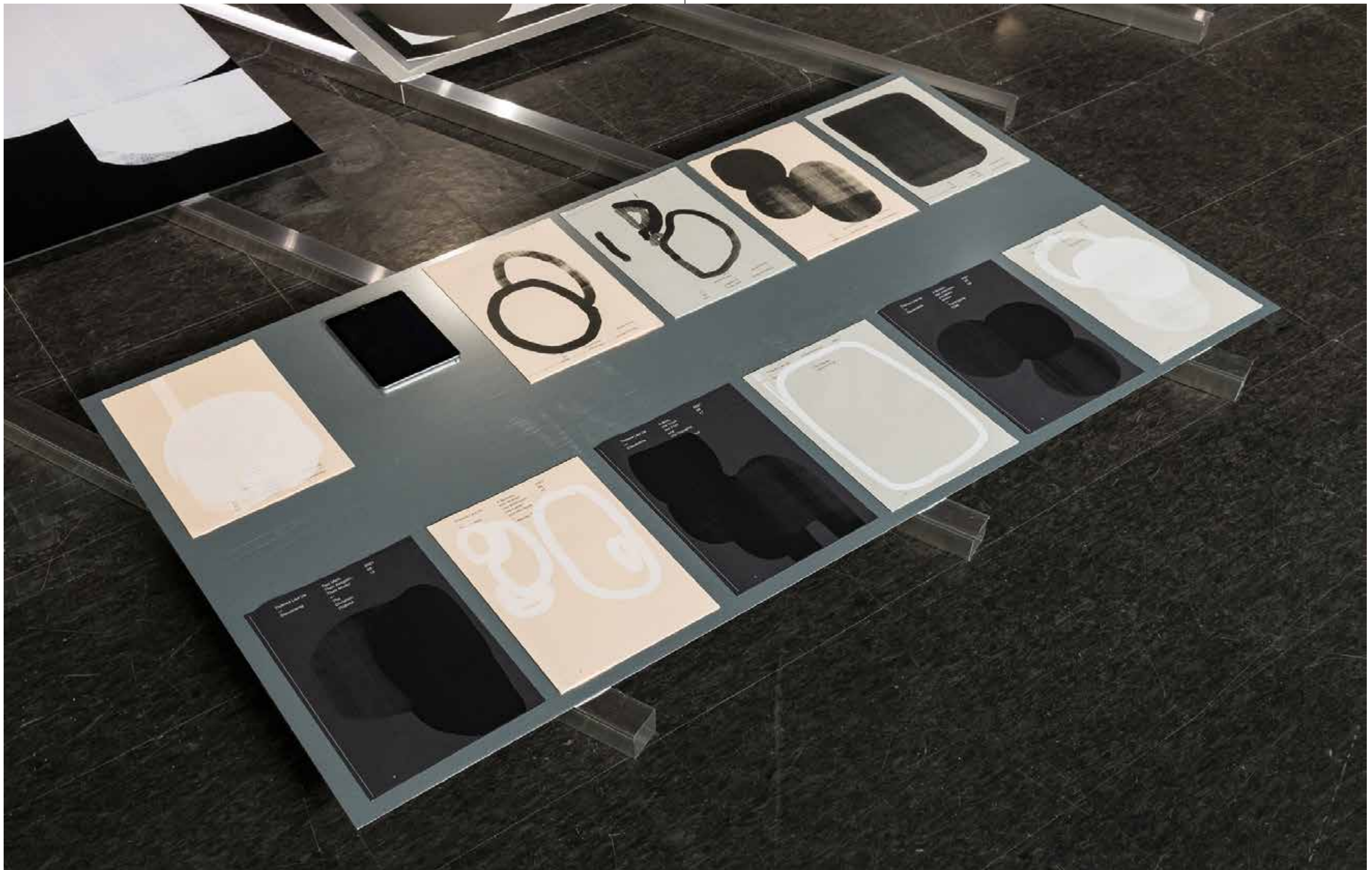
p 83



1. *Norma Joh*, Acrylic, Oil on Paper, 108 x 77.7 cm

1.
“My upbringing is distinctly Americana. But my roots have always told me otherwise. And therein, lies the conflict. I know only where I am. Not where I have been.”

1.
“나의 성장은 분명히 미국적이었습니다. 하지만 나의 뿌리는 항상 나에게 다르게 말해왔습니다. 그리고 그 안엔 갈등이 있습니다. 나는 오직 내가 어디있는지만 압니다. 내가 어디에 있었는지가 아니라.”



2. Documents, Powder on Paper, 42cm x 29.7cm

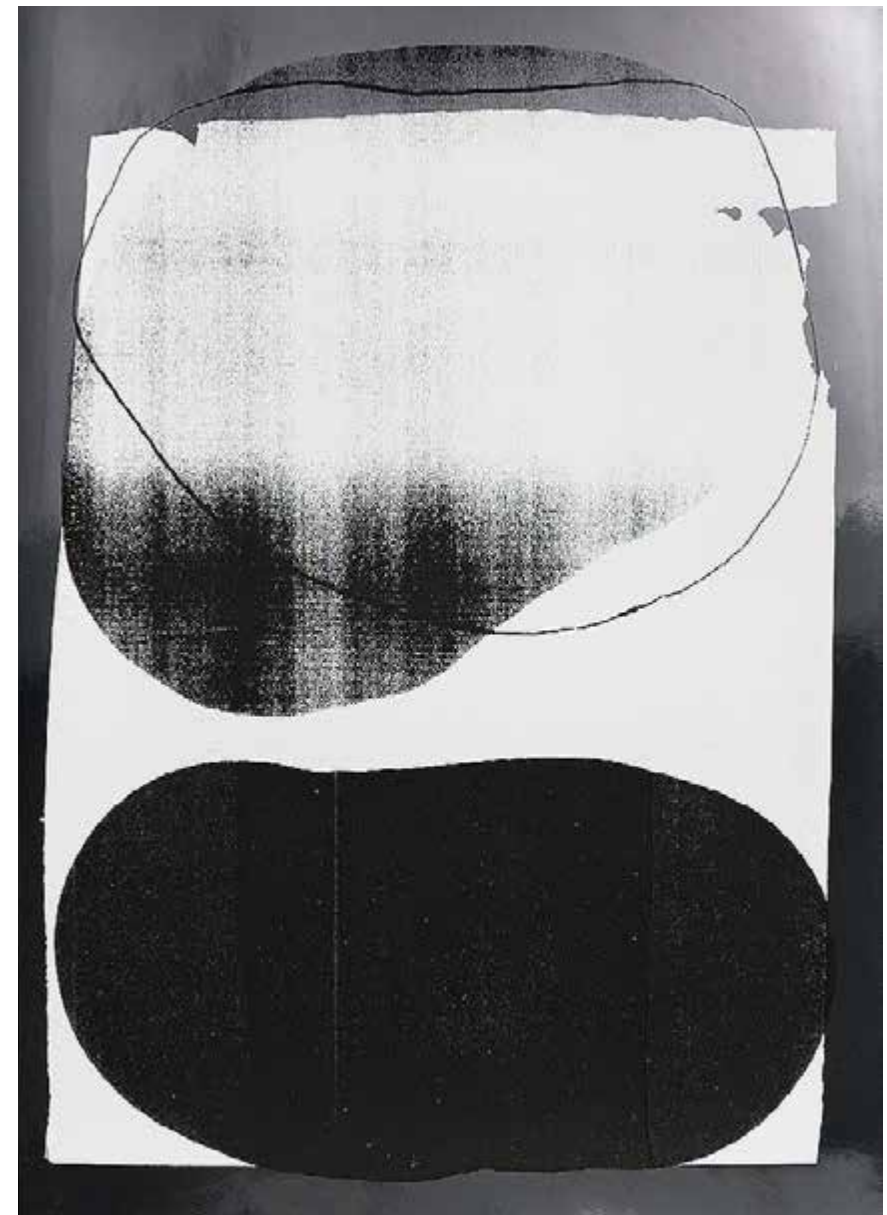
2.
- 2-1. A Woman, Her Mother, Her Boyfriend, His Father and Her Nose – The Recipe Thief
- 2-2. An Older Gentleman and His Slightly Younger Friends – The Loneliness Thief
- 2-3. Won Jinsang – The Tree Thief
- 2-4. Penelope Richardson – The Hope Thief
- 2-5. Two Men, Their Religion, Their Music – The Christian Thieves
- 2-6. A Woman, Her Addiction and Many Monks – The Virginity Thief
- 2-7. A Man, His Truck, His Fruit and His Thoughts – The Tree Thief
- 2-8. The Civil Servant And His Only Sin – The Cat Thief
- 2-9. A Maintenance Man and His Two Jobs – The Double Income Thief
- 2-10. Allan Wilberton Garcia – The Angel Thief
- 2-11. Gail Hillian Gustafson – The Stomach Thief

- 2-1. 한 여자, 그녀의 어머니, 그녀의 남자친구, 그의 아버지와 그녀의 코 – 레시피 도둑
- 2-2. 나이 많은 신사와 약간 어린 친구들 – 외로움 도둑
- 2-3. 원진상 – 나무 도둑
- 2-4. 페넬로페 리처드슨 – 희망 도둑
- 2-5. 두 남자, 그들의 종교, 그들의 음악 – 크리스찬 도둑들
- 2-6. 한 여자, 그녀의 중독과 많은 수도사들 – 처녀 도둑
- 2-7. 남자, 그의 트럭, 그의 과일과 그의 생각 – 나무 도둑
- 2-8. 공무원과 그의 유일한 죄 – 고양이 도둑
- 2-9. 정비공과 그의 두 가지 직업 – 이중 소득 도둑
- 2-10. 앨런 윌버튼 가르시아 – 천사 도둑
- 2-11. 게일 힐리언 구스타프슨 – 위장 도둑



p 90

3. *Erich Steinkopf*, Acrylic, Oil on Paper, 109.1 x 78.8 cm, 2021.



p 91

4. *Jerrie Entson*, Acrylic on Acrylic, 115 x 80 cm, 2021.

3.

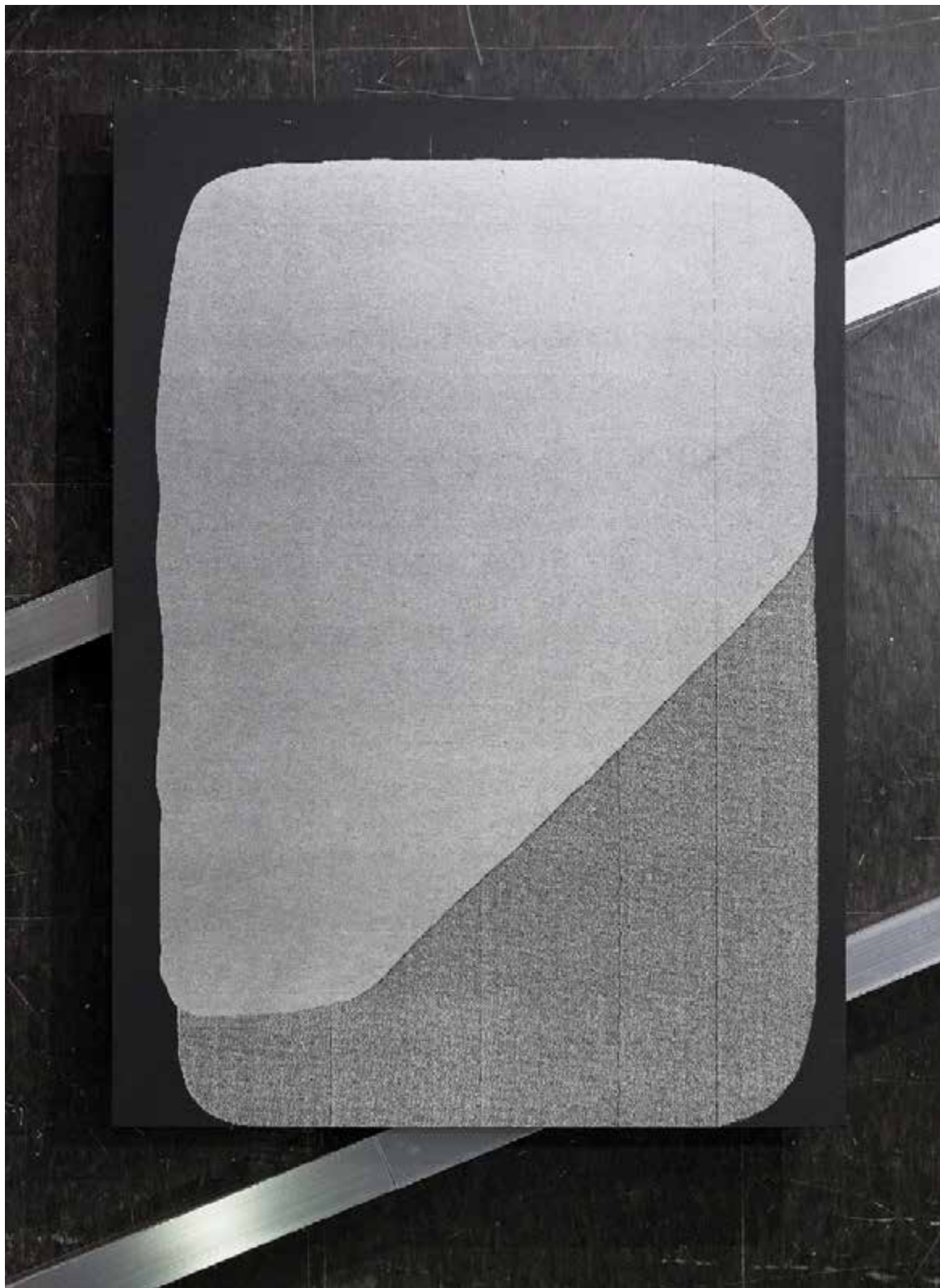
“Whatever it is that gets us to wake in the morning, must be the same thing that gets us to sleep at night.
Whatever it is, I wish for it to stop. For I have no desire to wake anymore, nor any more desire to sleep. I just want an alternative.”
“우리를 아침에 일어나게 하는 것은 그게 무엇이든 우리를 밤에 잠들게 하는 것과 같습니다. 그게 무엇이든 나는
그만두고 싶어요. 나는 더 이상 일어나고 싶지도 잠들고 싶지도 않습니다. 다른 대안이 필요해요.”

p 92

4.

“I know that honesty has been my ally, my sword. It has gotten me to where I am and I swear by it. But it is also the reason,
I do the slightly dishonest things that I do. For if I was honest all the time, that would be being dishonest too.”
“정직함이 나의 동맹이자 검입니다. 정직함이 내가 있는 곳으로 이끌었다고 나는 맹세할 수 있습니다. 하지만 그것은 내가 약간의 부정직한 일을 하는 이유이기도 합니다.
내가 만약 언제나 정직했다면, 그것이 바로 부정직이 될 겁니다.”

p 93



p 94

5. *Constance Nahm*, Acrylic, Oil on Paper, 108 x 77.7 cm, 2021.

p 96



6. *Joonhyub Ma*, Acrylic, Oil on Paper, 108 x 77.7 cm, 2021.

5.

"I often wonder why I am in the position I am now and I wonder this for altogether five to seven seconds max.

The reason I wonder this for such a short amount of time is because I know this. I know this very well and somehow,

I have just forgotten why I do what I do and why I have done what I have done."

"나는 종종 내가 지금 여기서 뭐하는지 궁금한데, 그 고민은 5초 내지 7초에 지나지 않습니다.

이렇게 짧은 시간동안 고민하는 이유는 나는 너무 잘 알고있기 때문입니다. 나는 내가 무엇을 왜 하는지, 어떻게 하고 있는지 잊을 정도로 잘 알고있습니다."

p 96

6

"I have yet to do a 'wrong' thing in my life.

I know this. My family knows this. My colleagues know this. But if everybody knows this, they might understand."

"나는 아직 인생에서 '잘못된' 일을 한 적이 없습니다. 나도 이걸 알고, 내 가족들도 알고, 내 동료들도 이걸 압니다.

하지만 모두가 이걸 알고 있다면, 그들은 이해할 것입니다."

p 97

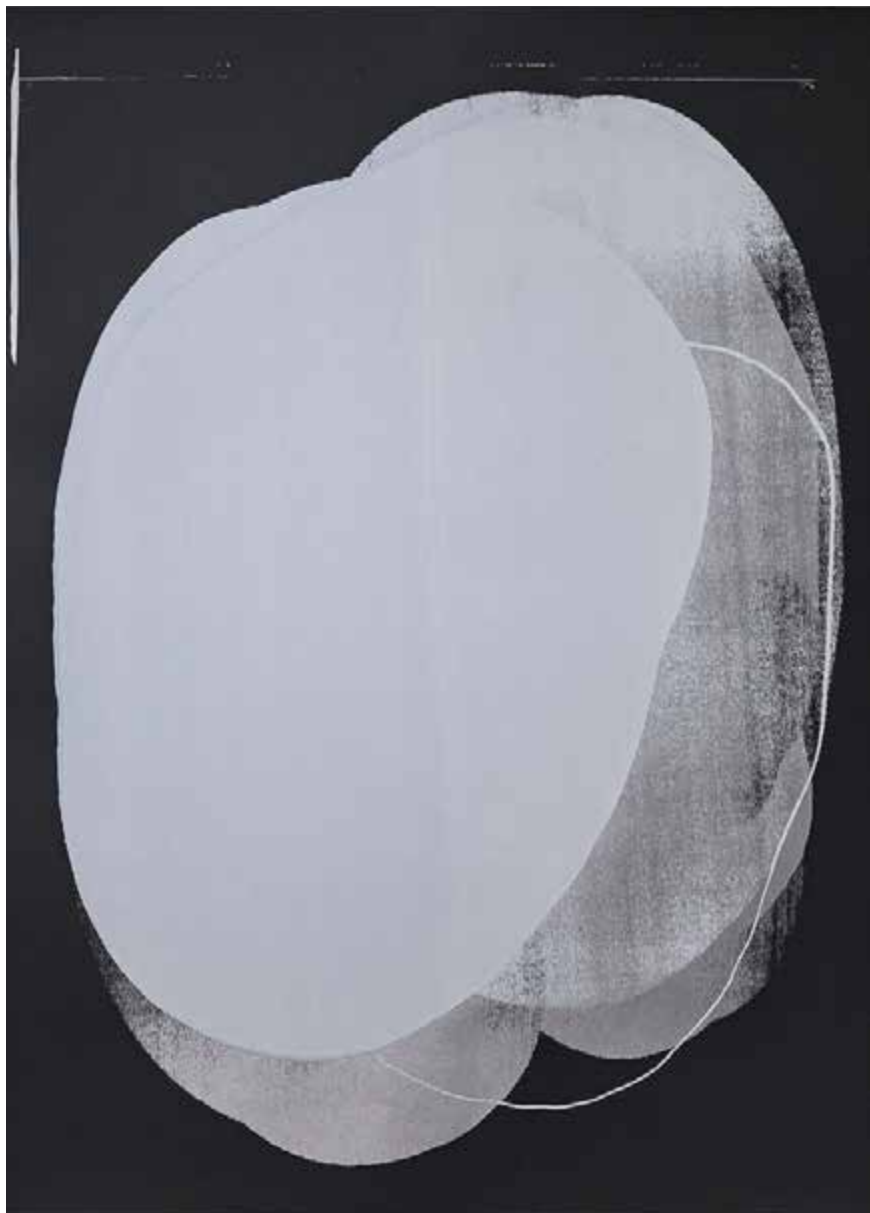


7.
“There is no changing now. It has been five minutes. No more. If, and when. Not where.”

p 100

p 101

7.
“이제 바뀔 건 없습니다. 5분 지났습니다. 이제 그만. 만약에, 그리고 언제. 어디가 아니지요.”



8. *Penny Wickers*, Acrylic, Oil on Paper, 109.1 x 78.8 cm, 2021.

p 102

p 103



9. *Jangok Soo Kyung*, Acrylic, Oil, Graphite on Paper, 100 x 70 cm, 2021.

8.

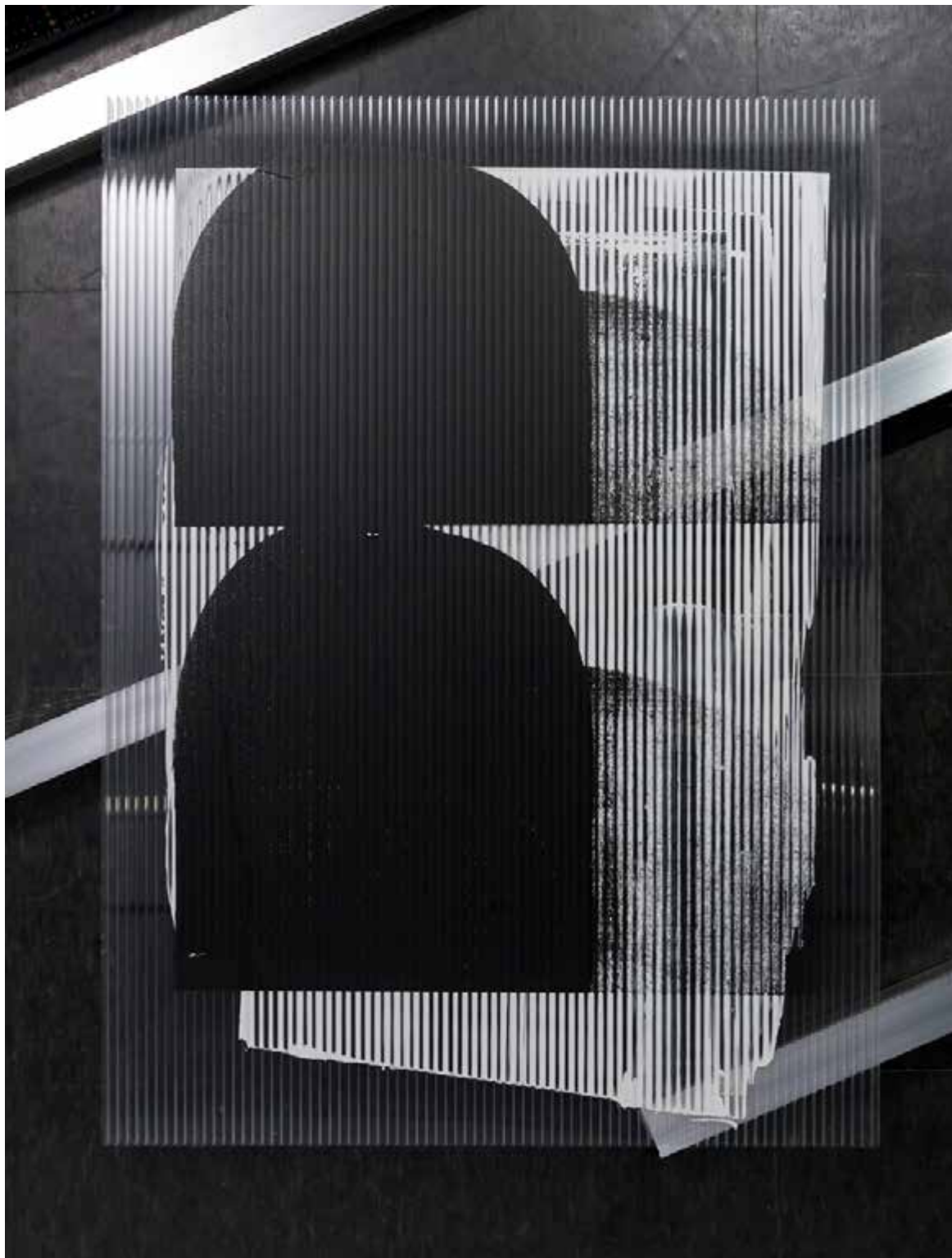
“What goes up, must come down. Right? But not all the time. I have gone up with no intention to go down.”
“올라가면 반드시 내려옵니다. 맞죠? 하지만 매번 그러는 건 아니에요. 나는 내려갈 생각 없이 올라왔어요.”

p 104

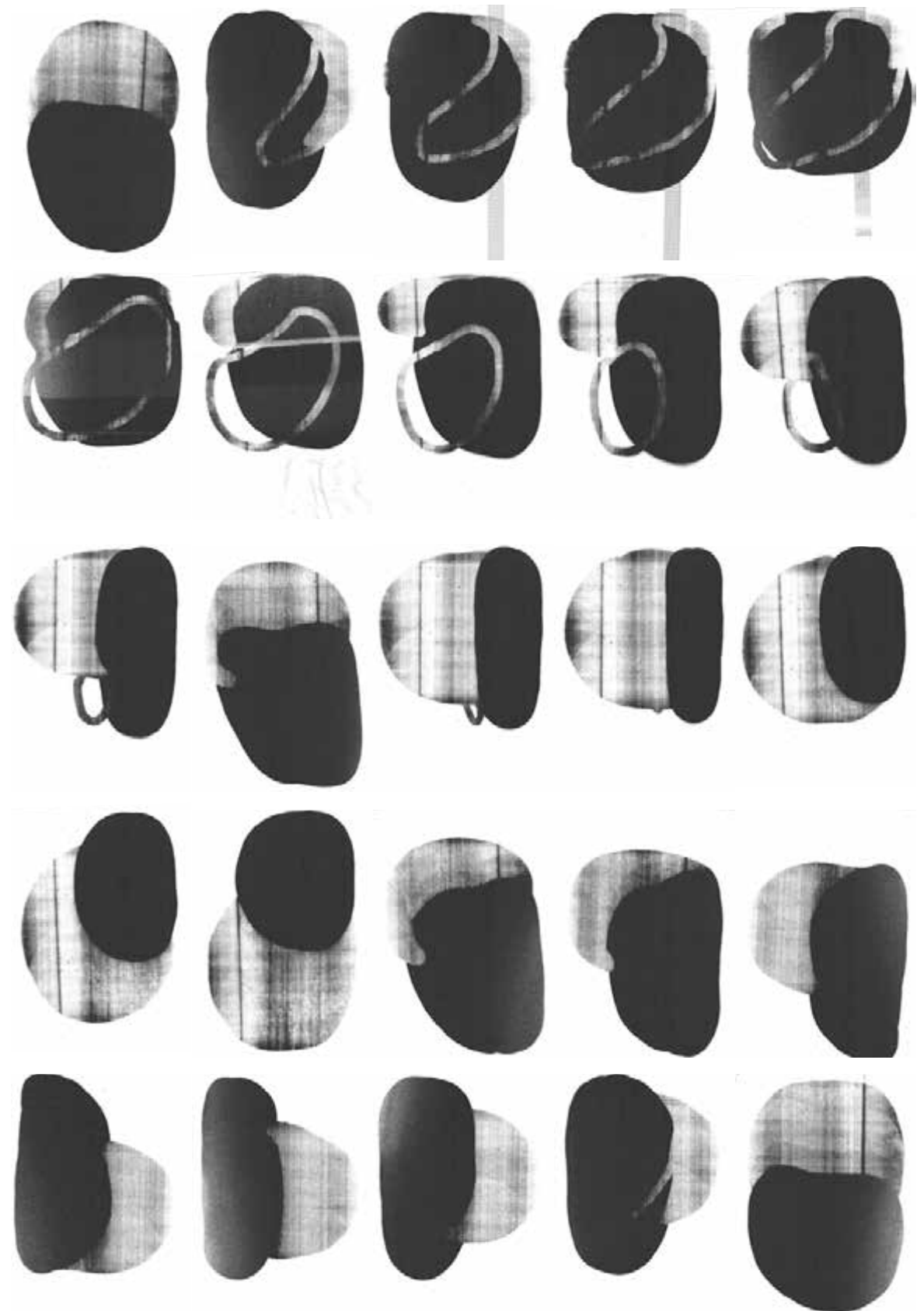
9.

“The day lies before me. As it always does. But I cannot take it anymore. For it is just overwhelming. Time.
For me the night could not come any sooner. But it does not. It waits, just as I do. I cannot bear it anymore.”
“늘 그랬듯이, 시간은 내 앞에 놓여있습니다. 하지만 나는 더이상 참을 수 없습니다. 그것은 단지 압도적이기 때문입니다. 시간. 나에게 밤이 더 빨리 올 수는 없습니다.
그럴 수 없지만, 나처럼 그것은 기다립니다. 나는 더 이상 참을 수 없습니다.”

p 105



p 106



p 107

10.
“The comments kill me. I know I should not read them, but I have to know. I have to know what people are saying.
What people are thinking. Even if it comes on this soulless platform we call digital.
Where nobody knows your name and therefore the most terrible things in the world can be uttered.
They kill me. They do. But I need to know.”
“댓글 때문에 죽겠어요. 읽지 말아야 한다는 걸 알지만, 나는 알아야겠어요. 사람들이 무슨 말을 하는지 알아야만 해요.
사람들은 나를 죽입니다. 사람들이 그래요. 하지만 나는 알아야 합니다.”



p 110



p 111

12.

“Quiet now. I think more than anything, it is the silence that I can only bear for so long.

White noise, background sounds, something to fill this void. Fill this empty space. I need this space filled because I cannot be alone. I cannot be with this silence.”

“이제 조용합니다. 내가 오랫동안 참을 수 있는 건 그 무엇보다 고요함이라고 생각합니다. 백색 소음, 배경 소리, 이 공백을 채우는 어떤 것.

이 빈 공간을 채우는 것. 나는 혼자있을 수 없기 때문에 가득 찬 공간이 필요합니다. 나는 이 고요함과 있을 수 없습니다.”

p 112

13.

“To know the motivations for what I do would be to know some of the deeper parts of both my psyche and soul. And I myself, do not know these as well.

So I wonder why you would want to know such things when I myself, have yet to uncover such things. You ask questions as if such answers exist.”

“내가 하는 일의 동기를 아는 것은 나의 정신과 영혼의 깊은 부분을 아는 것입니다.

나는 이것들을 잘 모릅니다. 그래서 나는 당신이 왜 나도 아직 모르는 것들을 알고 싶어 하는지 궁금합니다. 당신은 마치 그런 대답이 존재하는 것처럼 질문합니다.”

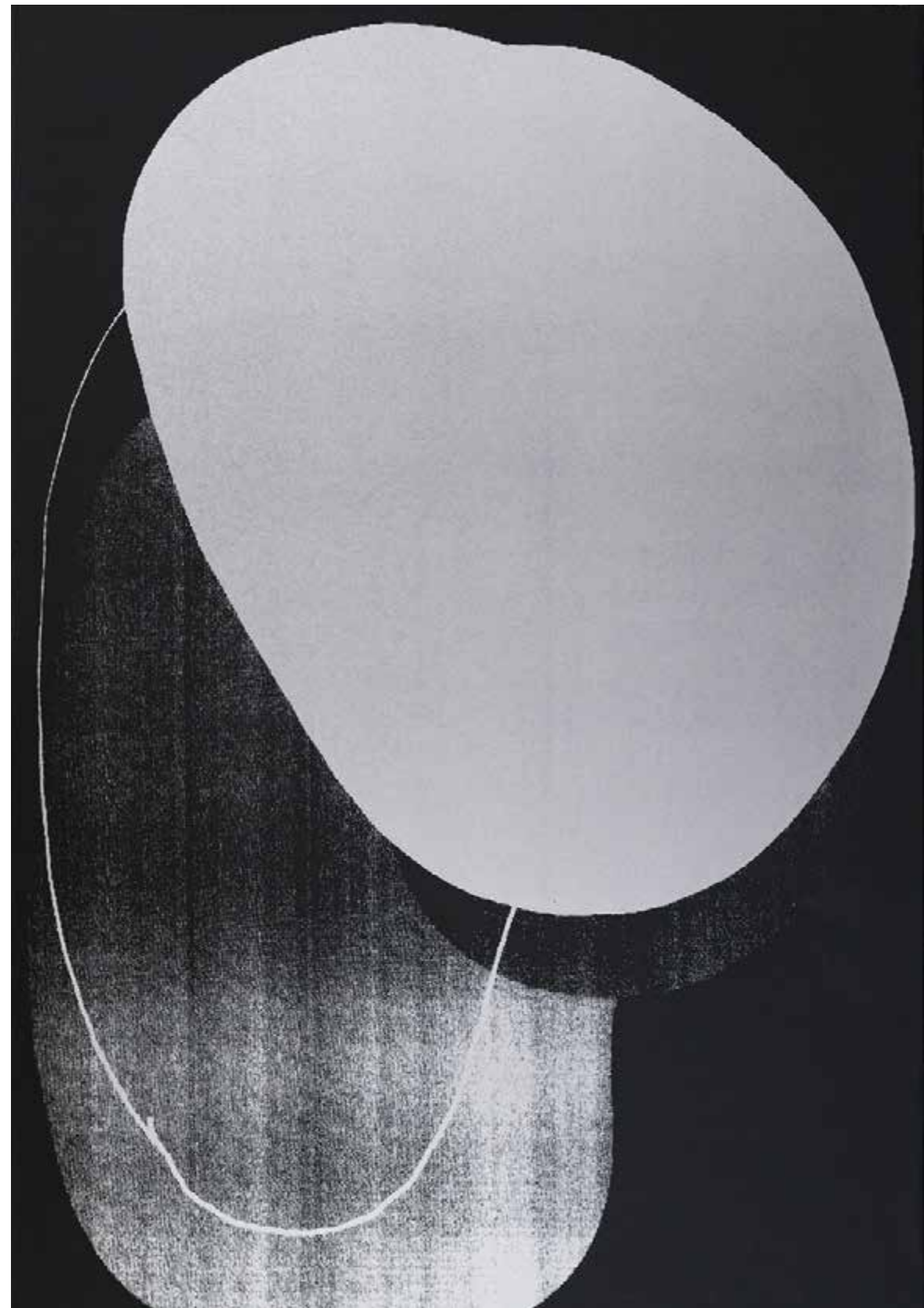
p 113



14. *Matthias Ko*, Acrylic, Oil on Paper, 100 x 70 cm, 2021.

p 114

p 115



15. *Agatha Fendricks*, Acrylic, Oil on Paper, 108 x 77.7 cm, 2021.

14.

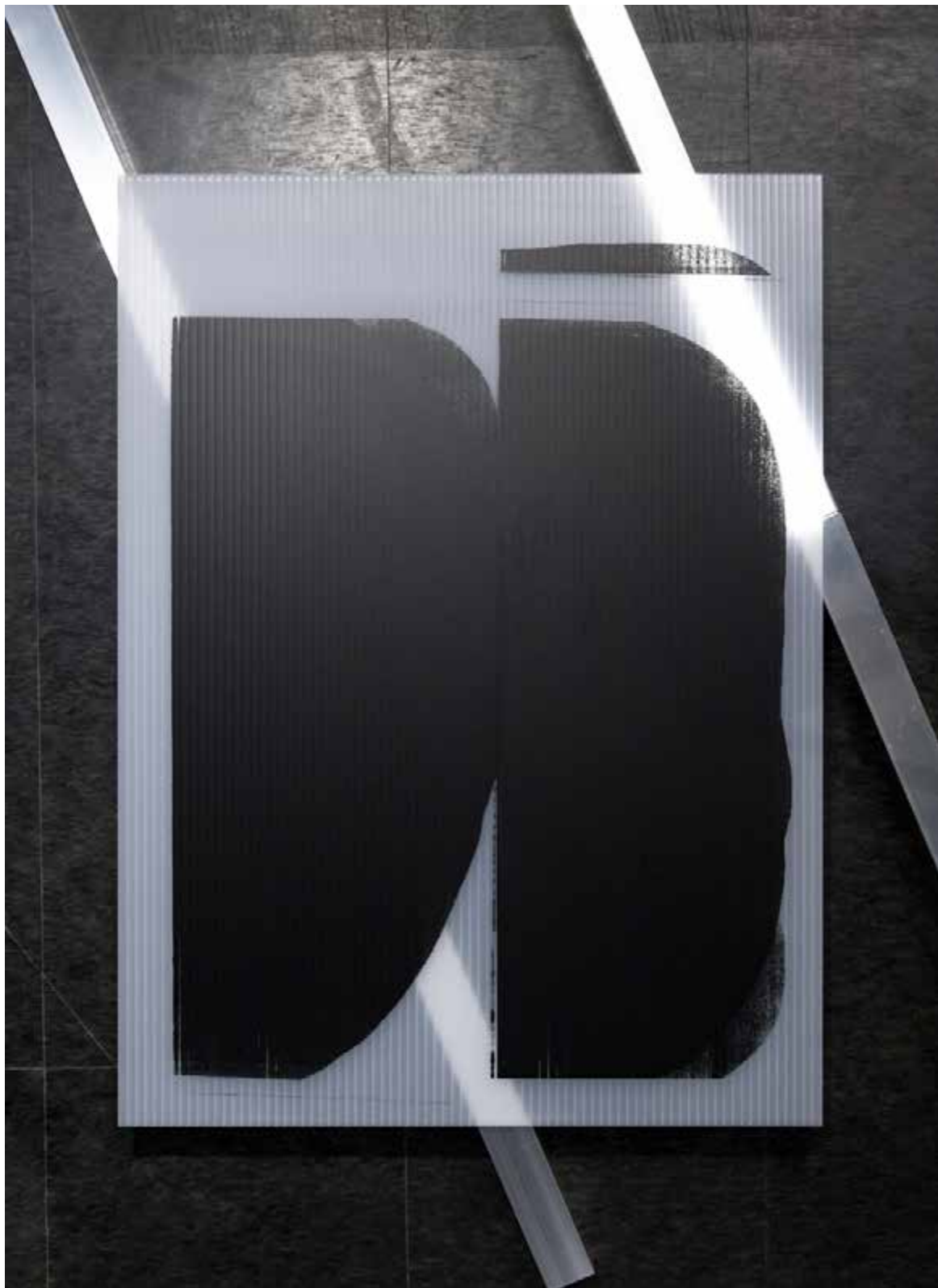
“I am an Ivy League product. I say product because I really feel that is what I am at the end of the day. Something kind of manufactured. Whether by the institutions or the standards. I am completely manufactured in almost every aspect. And I am okay with this.”
“나는 아이비리그의 산물입니다. 내가 산물이라고 한 이유는 하루의 끝에 내가 무엇인지 느끼기 때문입니다. 일종의 제품입니다. 제도이든 표준이든 나의 모든 면은 완전히 제조되었습니다. 그리고 나는 상관 안 합니다.”

p 116

15.

“I have come from far less than this. And to know that intrigues me. Keeps me going.”
“나는 지금보다 부족하게 자랐어요. 그건 내 호기심을 자극하고 나를 계속 가게 했어요.”

p 117



p 118

16. *Gaif Gershwin*, Acrylic on Polycarbonate, 115 x 80 cm, 2021.

p 119



17. *Edmond Fields*, Acrylic, Oil on Paper, 109.1 x 78.8 cm, 2021.

16.
“For every penny. For every dollar. I have saved, and saved. Only to realize that saving is not enough. I could save my whole life time and it would sill not be enough.
I needed something more. I needed something less stable. Something with greater ROI. I just needed it.”
“한 푼 한 푼 모으고 모았습니다. 아무리 모아도 충분하지 않다는 걸 알았습니다. 내 인생 전부를 모아도 충분하지 않았죠. 나는 더 많은 게 필요했어요.
덜 안정적인 것이 필요했죠. 뛰어난 가성비, 내게 필요한 건 바로 이거예요.”

17.
“I have come to realize that all good things have become what they are because of the efforts we put into such good things.
But I have also come to realize that shortcuts do not get enough credit for how good they are. You save time,
you save energy and you finish. There is nothing negative in that.”
“좋은 일을 위해 노력하면 좋은 일이 일어난다는 것을 깨달았습니다. 하지만 지름길이 얼마나 좋은지는 잘 모르겠어요.
시간을 절약하면 에너지를 줄이고 끝낼 수 있어요. 여기엔 부정적인 게 없습니다.”



18. *Terrence Fulton*, Acrylic on Paper, 110 x 400 cm, 2021.

“For everything I have attempted to do with what I have perceived to be ‘life’ I have noted that my success rate sits squarely at 3%.
For those who are limited in math, this means I have failed at nearly 97% of all my endeavors.”

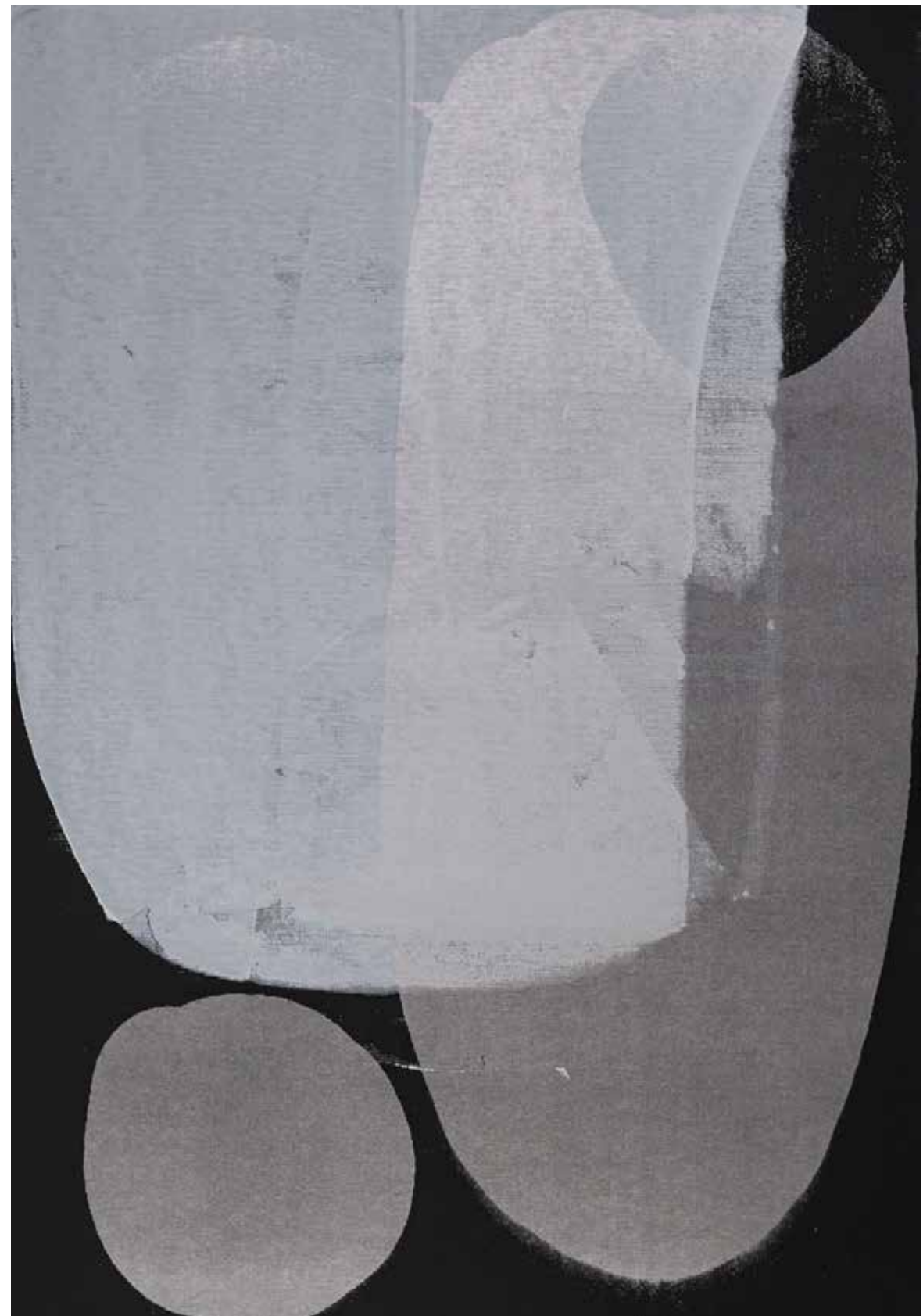
“내가 ‘인생’이라고 인식하며 시도한 모든 것에 대해 내 성공률은 정확히 3%입니다. 수학에 능하지 않은 사람들에게 이것은 내 모든 노력의 97%가 실패했음을 의미합니다.”



19. *Wilma Ransselaar*, Acrylic, Oil, Graphite on Paper, 108 x 77.7 cm, 2021.

p 126

p 127



20. *Aggie Bernson*, Acrylic, Oil, Graphite on Paper, 108 x 77.7 cm, 2021.

19.

“Where there is a will, there is a way. And for the most part, I know that I know far less than most. But, I know, there is a way.”
“뜻이 있는 곳에 길이 있습니다. 그리고 대부분의 경우, 나는 내가 대부분의 사람들보다 훨씬 덜 알고 있다는 것을 압니다. 하지만 길이 있다는 걸, 나는 압니다.”

p 128

20.

“I have done little in this life to make for lasting memories. I have focused on salary. Comfort. All the things that you do not remember.
And therefore, I do what I do. For I can remember each one. In detail. I am making up for lost time.”
“나는 평생 기억에 남을 만한 일을 거의 하지 않았습니다. 나는 오직 월급과 안정에만 집중했습니다. 당신은 거의 기억 못하겠죠.
그래서 나는 내가 하는 걸 합니다. 하나 하나 세세하게 기억할 수 있도록 잃어버린 시간을 만회하고 있습니다.”

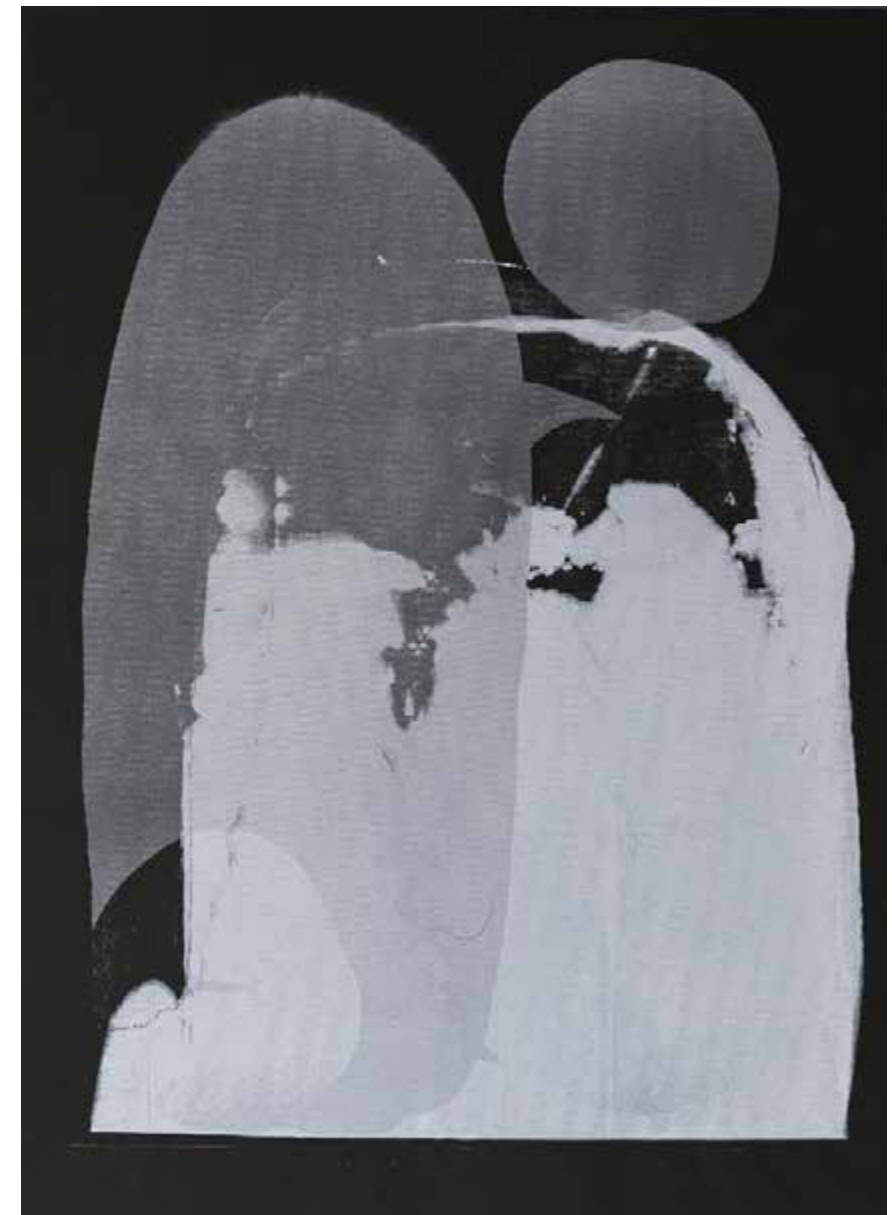
p 129



21. *Huh Yoomee*, Acrylic, Oil, Graphite on Paper, 940 x 640 cm, 2021.

p 130

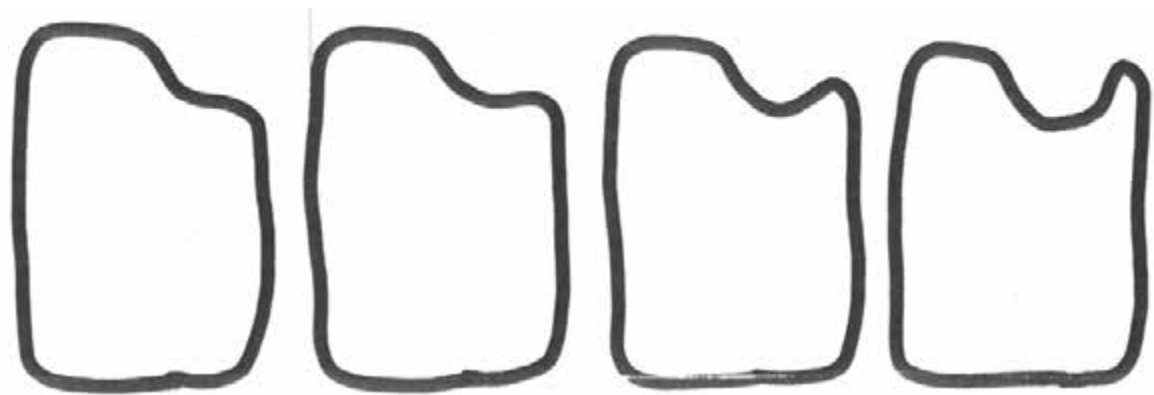
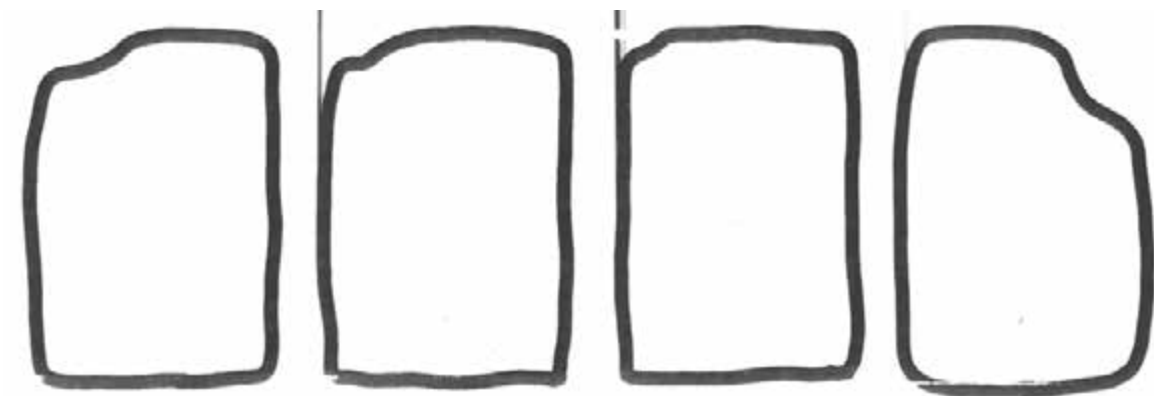
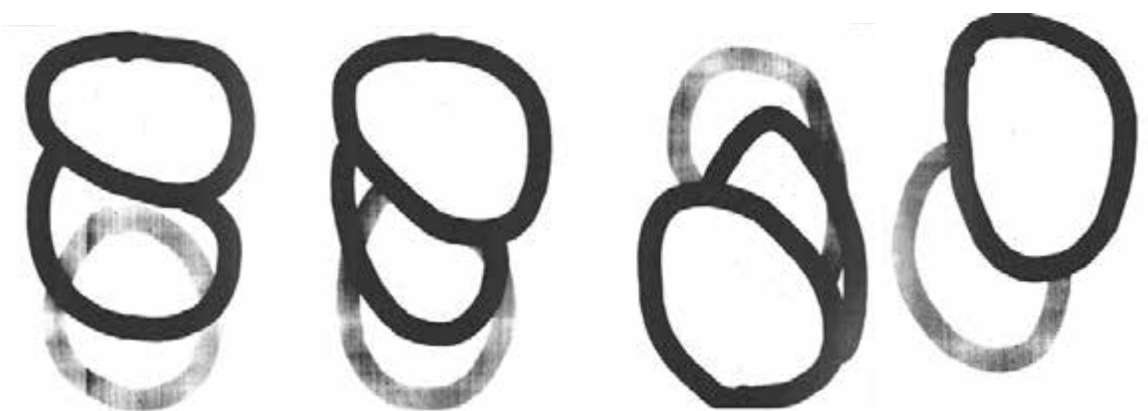
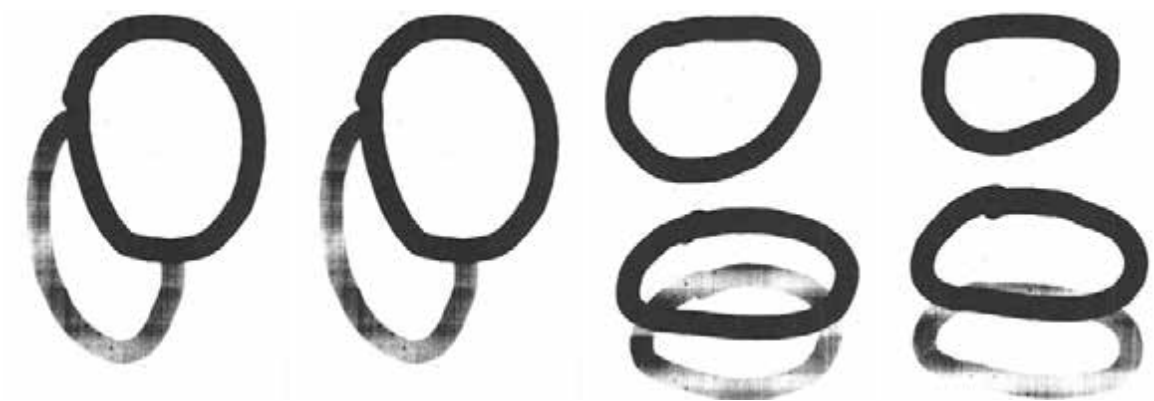
p 131



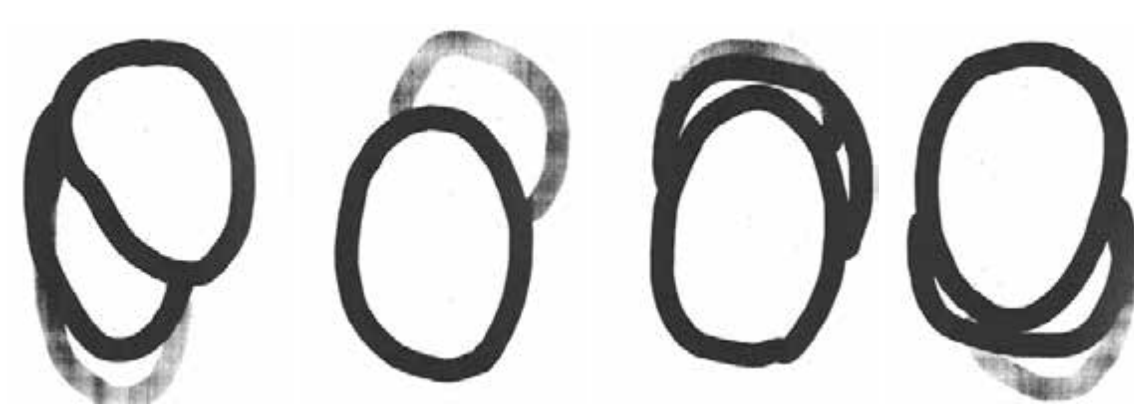
22. *Benjamin Muenster*, Acrylic, Oil on Paper, 109.1 x 78.8 cm, 2021.

"I know there exists before me, the efforts of generations to seek both peace and redemption. I know these efforts are tremendous. But it is this tremendous effort, this time that also thrills me. I seek my own peace. I seek not redemption, but something as close to redemption as can be."
"우리 세대 이전에 평화와 구원을 추구했던 세대들의 노력이 있었다는 걸 압니다. 나는 이 노력이 대단하다는 걸 압니다. 하지만 지금 시대엔, 이런 대단한 노력들이 나를 긴장하게 합니다. 나는 나 자신의 평화를 추구합니다. 나는 구원이 아니라 구원에 가까운 것을 추구합니다."

"There are no motivations for what I do. Survival is not even a sufficient word for what I am doing. I am living. Pure and simple. Living."
"내가 하는 일에 동기는 없습니다. 생존이라는 말이 내가 하는 일을 충분히 설명해 주지도 못합니다. 나는 살아있습니다. 순수하고 단순하게 살아있습니다."



p 134



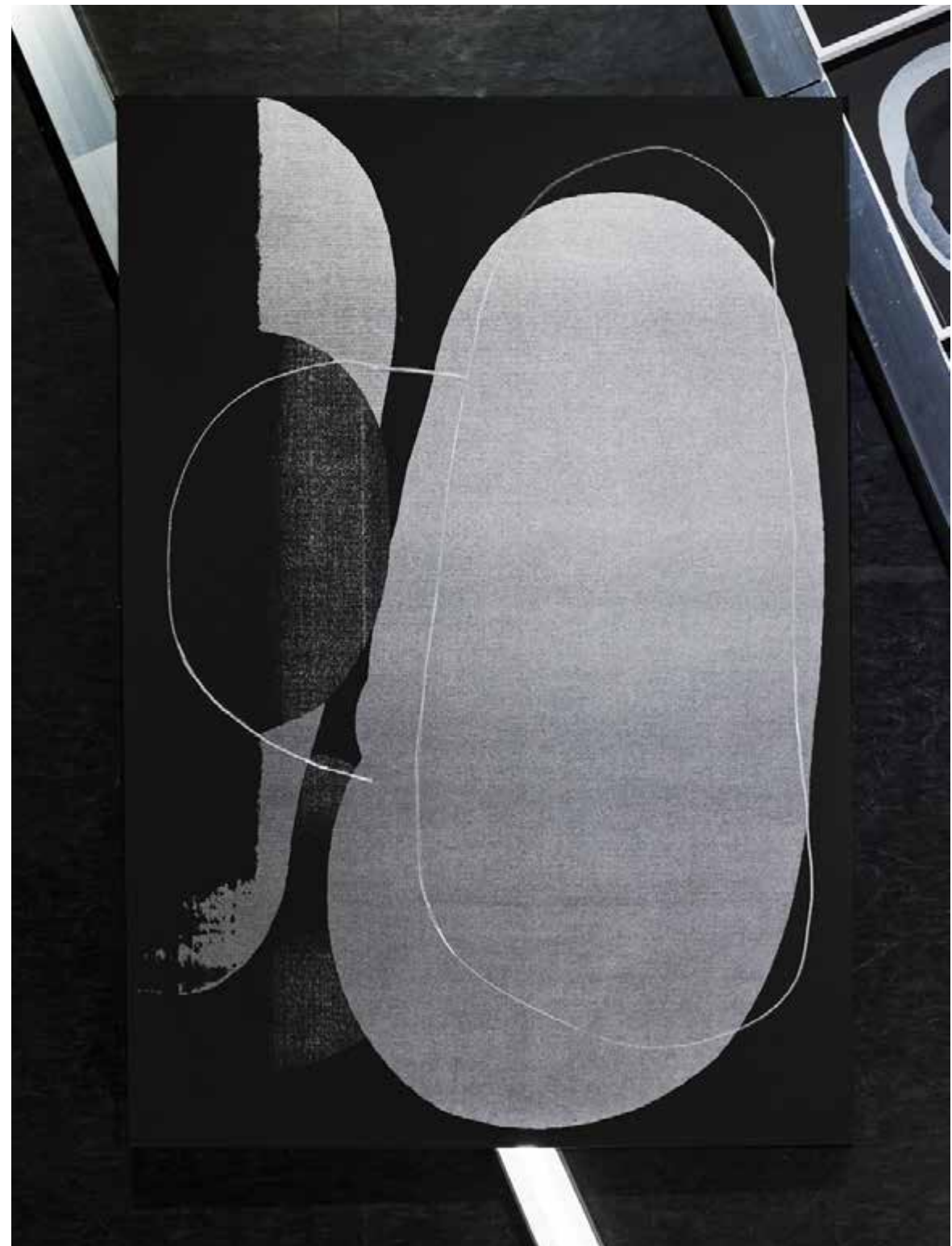
p 135



24. *Celia Winterhouse*, Acrylic, Oil, Graphite on Paper, 108 x 77.7 cm, 2021.

p 136

p 137



25. *Abe Ra*, Acrylic, Oil, Graphite on Paper, 108 x 77.7 cm, 2021.

24.
“I’ve heard of things to be learned and things to be gained. But what I have not yet heard of are things that have been done.”
“배워야 할 것들과 얻어야 할 것들에 대해 들어왔습니다. 하지만 해온 일들에 대해선 아직 듣지 못했습니다.”

p 138

25.
“Issues with height. Appearance. All of these things have been considerations of mine since I can remember. But in recent times I have come to accept all that is who I am now. And it is not necessarily peace or peace of mind. More so, it is an understanding that, such things have mostly been in my head.”
“키나 외모 같은 것들은 내가 기억을 한 이래로 나에게 항상 중요한 문제였습니다. 하지만 최근엔 지금 나의 모든 걸 받아들였습니다. 이게 평화나 마음의 평화가 필요한 건 아니었어요. 그보단 내 머릿속에 있었던 것들을 이해하는 것입니다.”

p 139



26.
“Most of the time, it is the ceiling, this glass or bamboo ceiling as they call it that gets to me.
I’d like to think that one day, such thinking may not exist. But I know, not in my lifetime.”

p 142

p 143

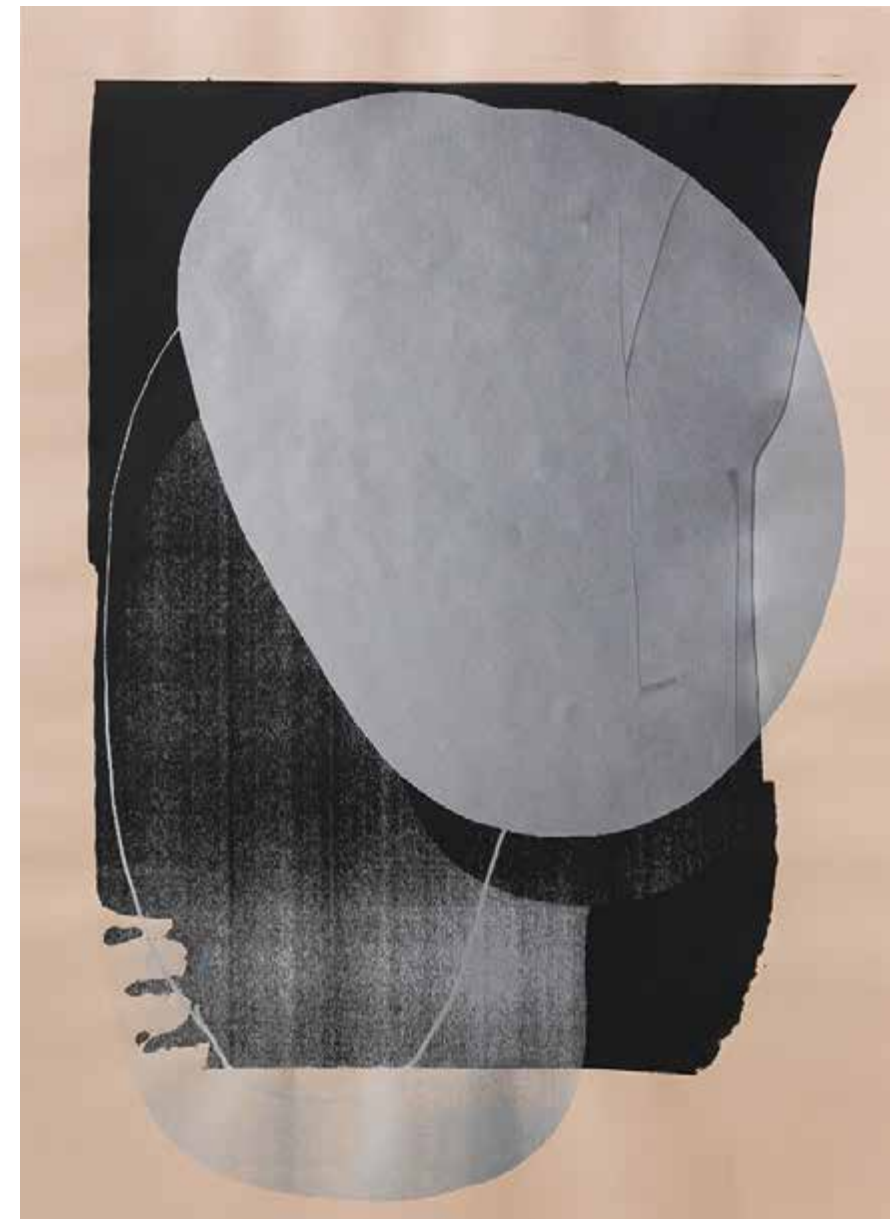
26.
“소위 유리 천정이나 대나무 천정이라고 불리는 천정이 내게도 있습니다.
언젠가는 이런 것도 없어질 거라고 생각하지만 제 살아생전은 아닐 거예요.”



27. *Hanson Whittaker*, Acrylic, Oil on Paper, 108 x 77.7 cm, 2021.

p 144

p 145



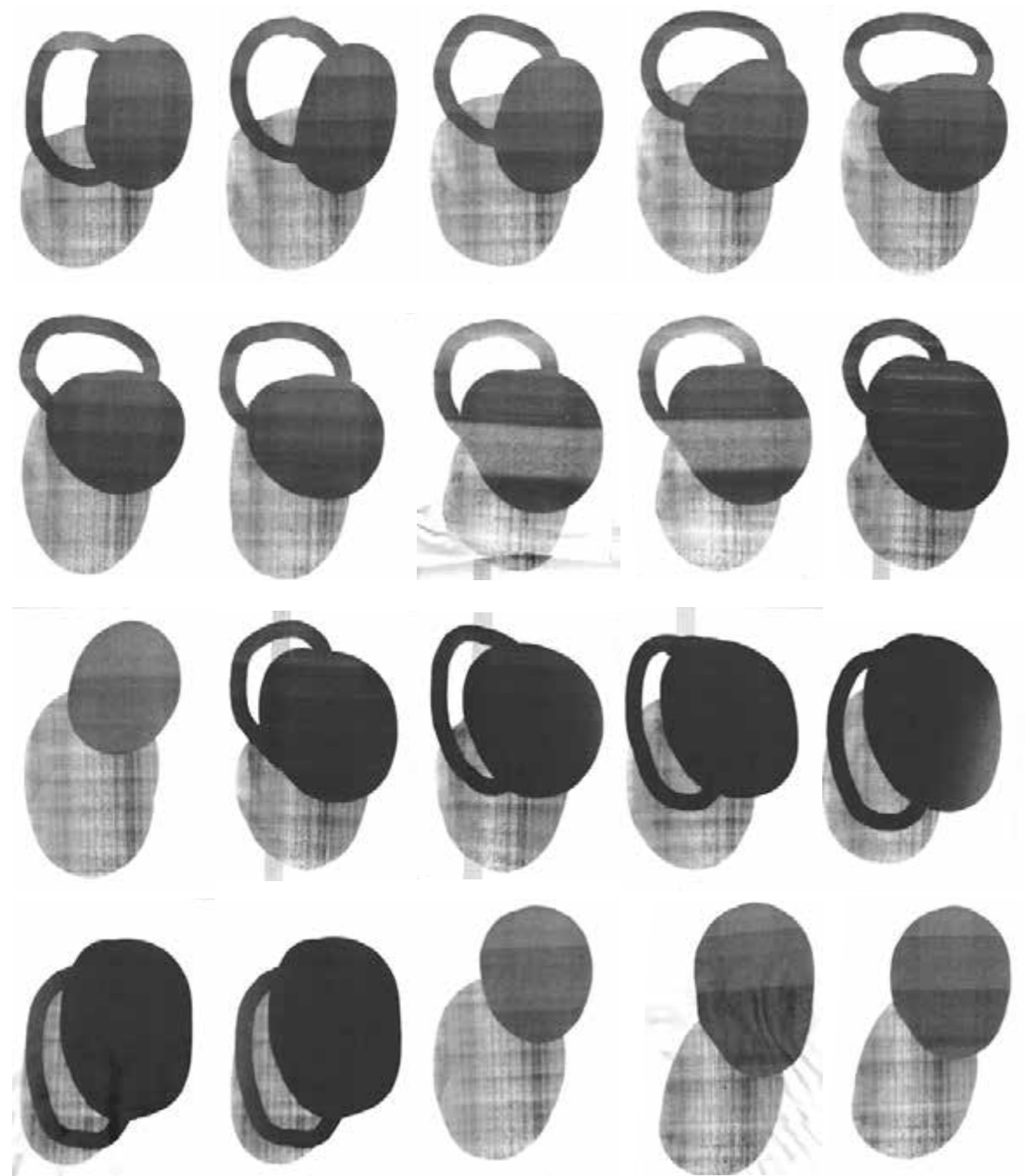
28. *Wendy Zorn*, Acrylic, Oil on Paper, 109.1 x 78.8 cm, 2021.

“When I think of the future, it is not this optimistic vision that I would say, 80% of the population seems to enjoy. I know the future is a bad place. It is getting worse now. It has been getting worse. So I have no optimism for this place. I have fastened my seatbelt. I am prepared. It is not good, this future.”
“미래에 대해 생각할 때, 80%의 사람들이 즐기는 것처럼 보이는 건 낙관적인 비전이 아닙니다. 나는 미래가 암울한 장소라는 걸 압니다. 점점 더 나빠질 것입니다. 점점 더 나빠지고 있습니다. 그래서 나는 이곳이 낙관적이지 않습니다. 나는 벨트를 꼭맷습니다. 나는 준비되었어요. 미래는 좋지 않습니다.”

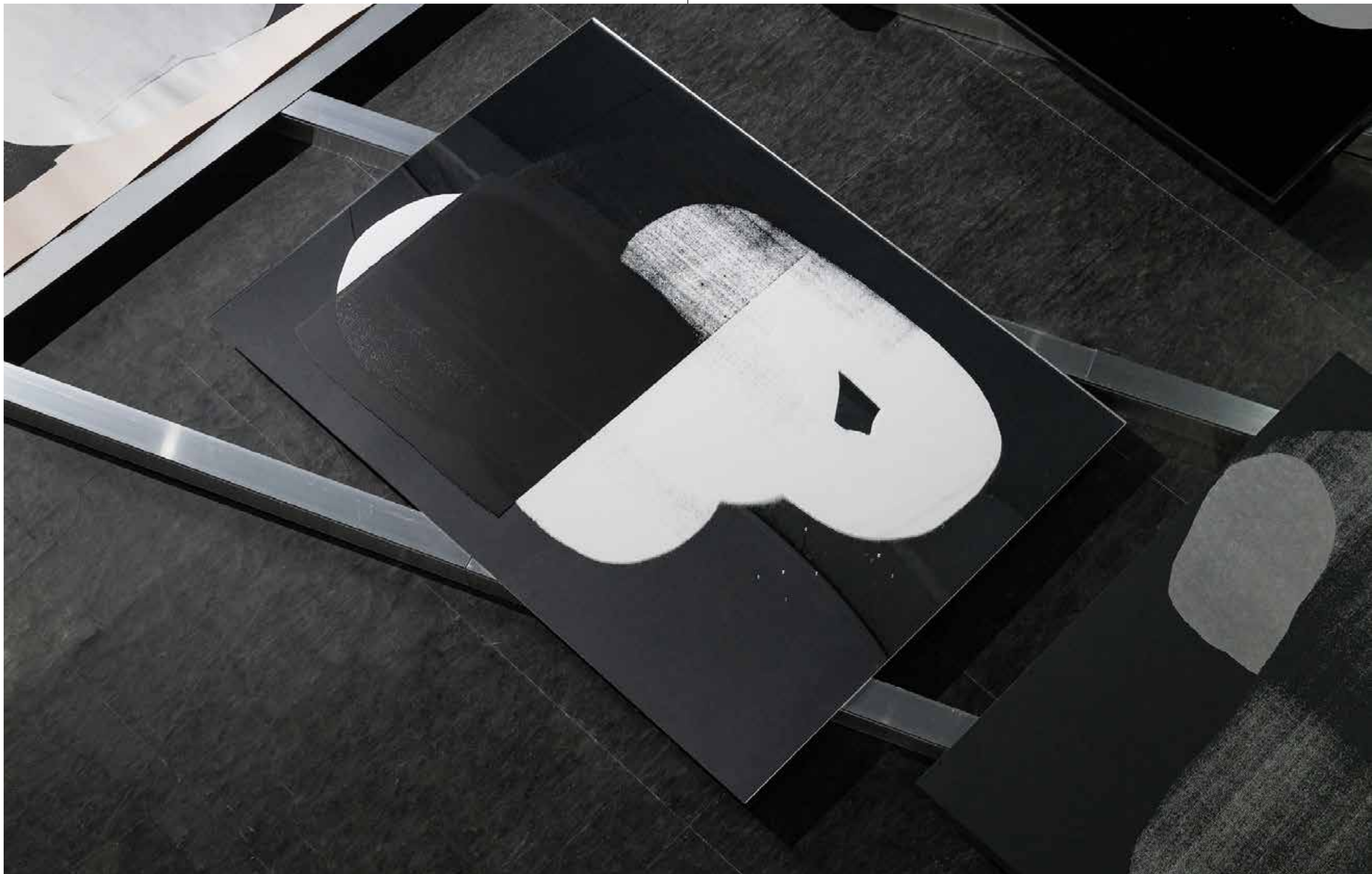
“My father was famous. Not like, celebrity famous. But pretty famous. So I saw behind the curtain. Saw the Wizard of Oz and I chose another life. One far from such mechanics. And so far, I know I have chosen correctly.”
“우리 아버지는 유명했어요. 유명 연예인은 아니었지만 꽤 유명했어요. 그래서 오즈의 마법사 커튼 뒤의 기계들을 보고 다른 삶을 선택했어요. 지금까지 나는 내가 옳은 선택을 했다는 걸 알아요.”



p 148



p 149



30.

“For all of my admirers. Past and way past. I do think about you. I do remember you. And I, despite my happiness, always think what if.
For that is the type of person I am. I can't help it. I might be the first person to need a time machine. Like, actually need one.”

p 152

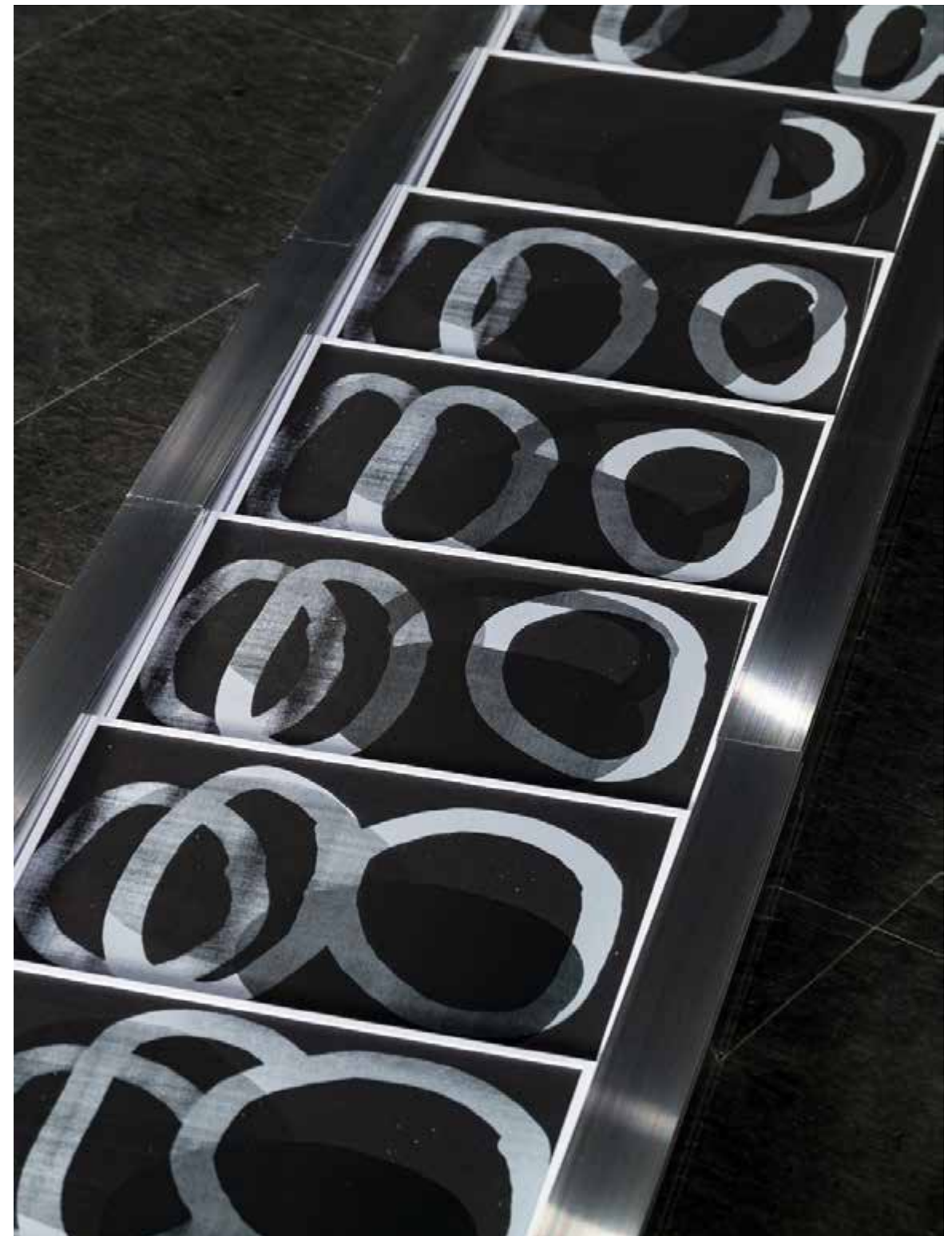
30.

“오래전 아주 오래전 나를 사랑하는 사람들이여. 나는 당신에 대해 생각합니다. 당신을 기억합니다. 그리고 나는 나의 행복에도 불구하고 항상 만약을 생각합니다.
내가 그런 사람이라 어쩔 수 없습니다. 나는 타임머신이 필요한 사람일지 모릅니다. 사실 필요합니다.”

p 153



p 154



p 155

31.
“I’ve thought less and less throughout the years. And now, I think of nothing.”
“몇 년 동안 더 적게 더 적게 생각했습니다. 그리고 지금, 아무것도 생각하지 않습니다.”

p 156

p 157

32.
“Generational thieves. It is not something we readily admit or engage with. But it is also something we do not shy from.”
“도둑 세대. 우리가 쉽게 인정하거나 관여하는 건 아니지만, 우리가 수치스러워할 것도 아닙니다.”

전시	Exhibition	도록	Publication
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