

FORCED SHELTER

jerome strebel
METEORA S07

**a home
a house
a shelter**

meteora season seven

Miro Roman
Jorge Orozco
Adil Bokhari

chair of digital architectonics
by Ludger Hovestadt

ETH ZURICH
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Forced Shelter: (un)expectedly familiar

Bill Murray's latest play feasts on melancholy nostalgia for a world gone by — and seems to be a manifesto on how to stay in power



Let's avoid dramatics, although it was the purpose of tonight's *comedy*.
[1] What is likely is that it's half serious — a real idea exaggerated for comic effect, perhaps to parody other plays in that tradition. [2]

But his world is not much of a fantasy one. [3]

The whole century is looking for the same road: the distinction between good and evil, falsehood and truth, power and misery, never poses a very difficult problem you could even say that it is a distinction that we make almost naturally. All our hatreds lead us to it, all our violence impels us towards what is supposed to be a rational, or sacred division. But the path from one of these positions to the other, the continuum that links them, or the gulf that separates them, poses a much more formidable question for which neither our culture nor our resentments prepare us. The whole century is seeking the path of variation. [4]

We have yet to learn it, painfully, about conflicts, injustice, and misery.
[5] However, in order for this play to be appealing it also had to be relatable, which is to say that what people liked in theater was its being "appropriable." [6]

The play circulates around a mysterious magus on a quest for revenge, after he got exiled from his hometown. The source of his magic are his books; the words giving him the knowledge that the others are deprived of by him.

The true alchemists do not change lead into gold; they change the world into words. [7]

All other characters are at his mercy and negotiate their way through the piece. In his account, the connection and dependence between collective and individual identities become salient. [8]

I have to admit I am a huge fan of his other work and been so for many years, so I might deliver a slightly biased impression of what happened. The play is like a greatest hits album, with many of his favourite themes: loneliness, *revenge*, family, *death and magic*. [9] Every intricate tableau and winking nod to his influences feels like a nudge to the audience, an invitation to be in on the joke. This was perhaps because even though the author was able to read and write and was familiar with the style of *comedic cinema*, he had hardly any literary education, and absolutely no experience of the theater. [1]

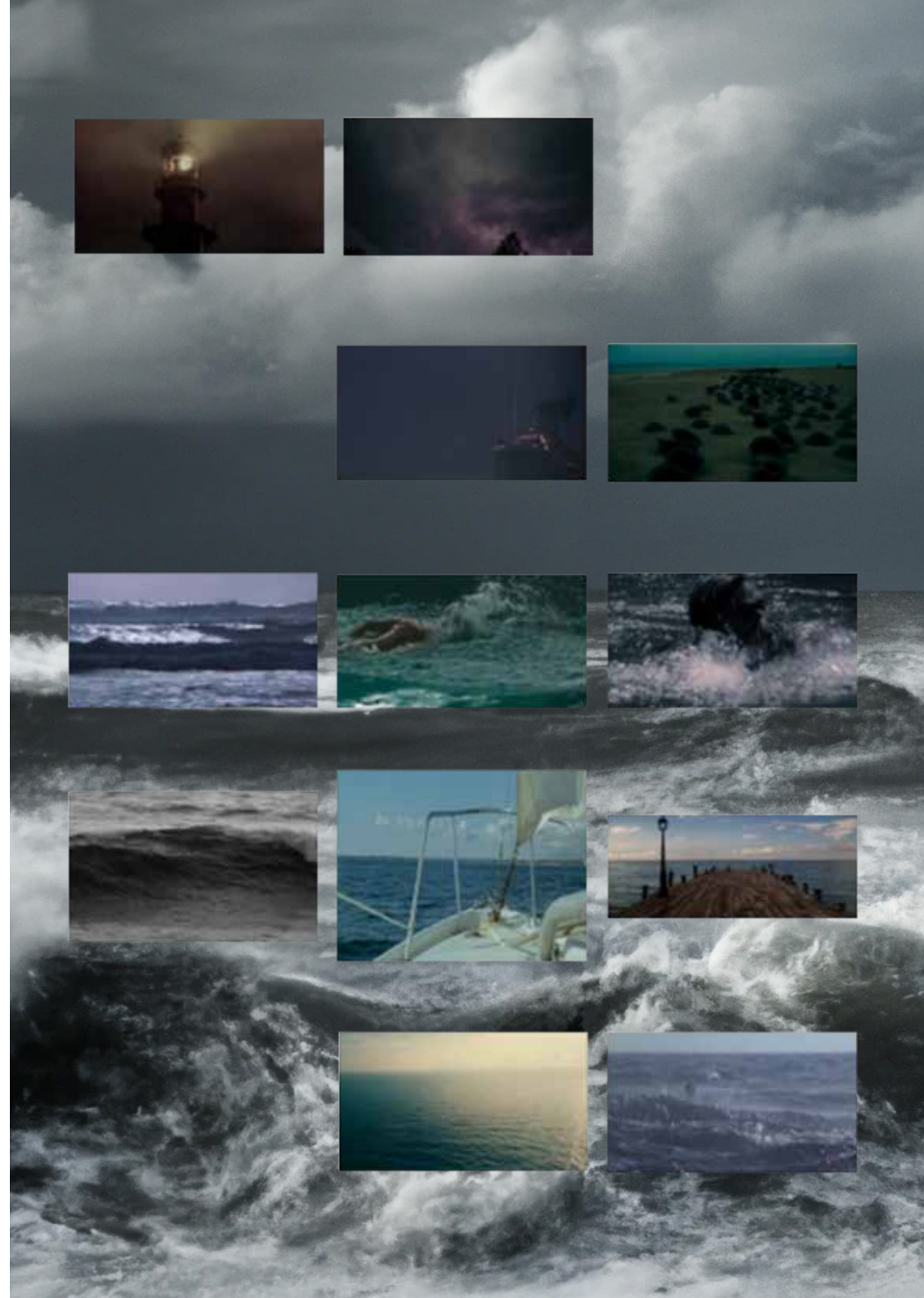
Yet I felt like I was being distracted from something while watching the play, my attention turned away from the bigger tragedy — *the continuing division of society* — that's hiding underneath.

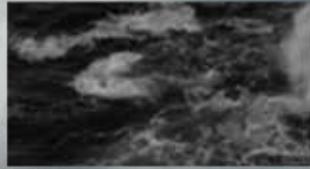




I

A PUBLIC PRIVATE PLAZA





After a sultry day, a huge slate coloured storm, fanned by the south wind, had curtained the sky. The wind flailed the trees wildly, and I was filled with the fear [...] that we would be surprised in the open waters by the elemental water. We ran a kind of race against the approaching storm. [11]

The “rational” is a tiny island of reality, a rare summit, exceptional, as miraculous as the complex system that produces it, by a slow conquest of the surf’s randomness along the coast. [12]

Located in the Bosphorus it is just large enough to host the tower, a private beach and a small plaza lying in front of it.

Spatially isolated – visually connected. It embodies the tensions that happened within.

The house has a life of it’s own. Even once the inhabitants are long gone their plot, their stories, their memories, fill this, then empty shell. A sort of shell in which everything else is, or is not. [13]

From the boat we reach the actual ornamental courtyard by a vaulted short stone dock, three steps, and a terrace projects from it. [11] The bridge is simply placed on the field of the building, in such away that the connection – but also the separation – between *the city and the tower* can be made easily. [14] [...]

This place still figures among the interior arrangements of representations. And there is no doubt that there exists, corresponding to this ambiguous epistemological configuration, a philosophic duality which indicates its imminent dissolution. [15]

No solitary cell in this cold home [...], nothing but disordered chaos behind the perfect cube faces. Does a word exist like sea, earth, water, or air to say this unitary and mixed element that quickly becomes an ossuary? [16]



II
HALL OF ORDER



On arrival a spectacular welcome is given to all. [14]

The triple height space is suspended with fluted columns that are almost purple. A non structural frame of red marble appears to hold it all together, leading to a *brightly illuminated ceiling mimicking the natural sky*, though it all feels impervious to natural light or fresh air. [17]

A perfectly well kept explosion of colours is the proud result of an obsessive quest to create an entrance hall, worthy to impress any guest. Diverse types of flowers are arranged to create the ideal spectrum of colours. Their vivid heads are staring into the space. Unable to talk with a voice, they're forced into a passive role of observing.

Easily overlooked [18], almost hidden in the corner between the columns of the entrance hall [19] a small patch of flowers are curious to discover what lays beyond this artificial enclosure.

Growing towards the real light that shines so much brighter than its simulacrum, which they have known all their life.

They stare at their printed counterparts, peer into the distance at this lively city and suddenly realise that there is more to their existence.

Driven by this new realisation some grow extra tall to collect more information about their situation and poke their head through a cutout in the ceiling.



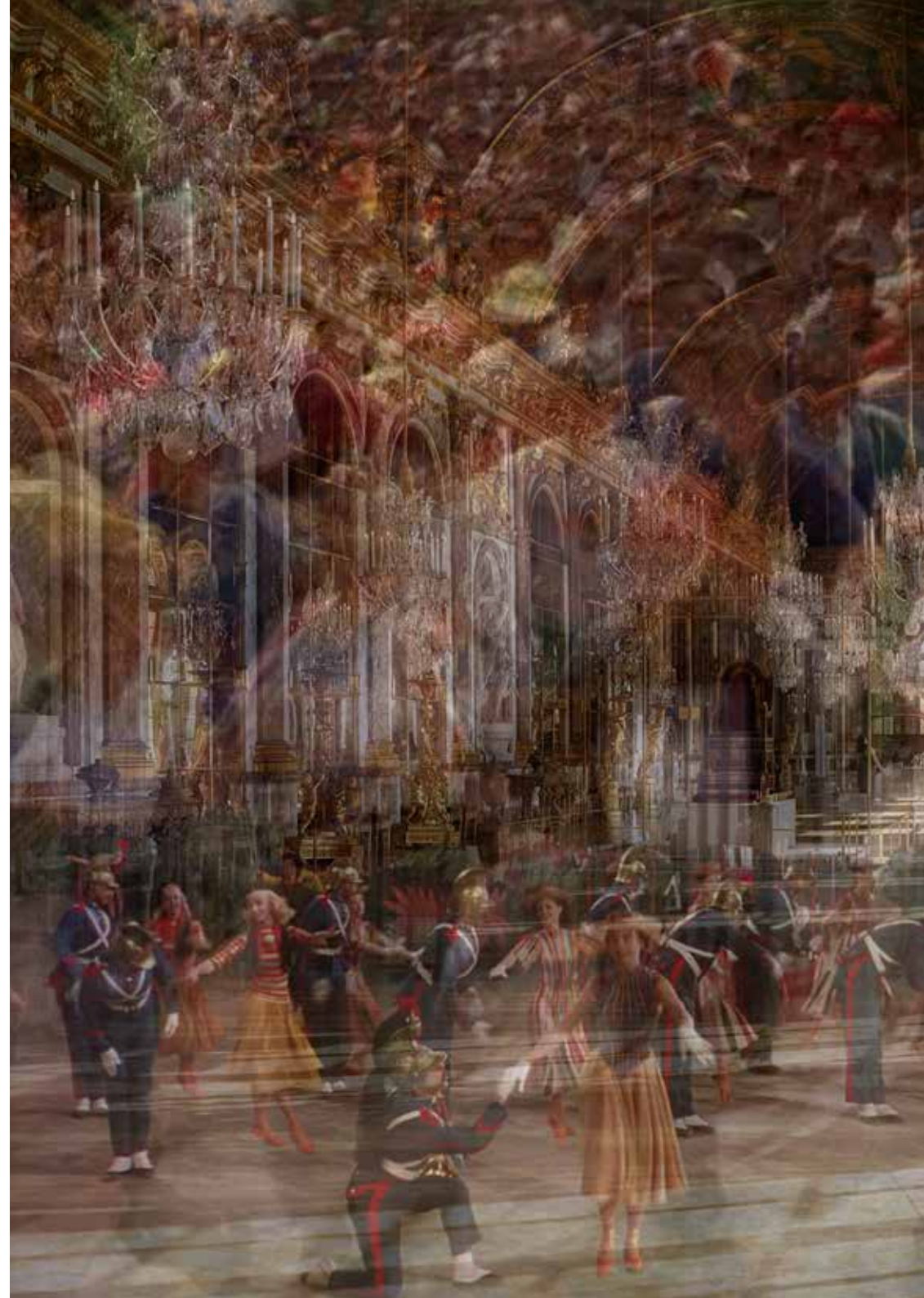




ELECTRIC TOUCH

III

HALL OF DIVINE DISTRACTIONS



The ever running water of the faucet attracts not only curious garden plants. It offers every guest a welcoming refreshment.

This unheated space thrives off the heat of discussions and conversations people are having. Without the right proportion of heat, the body will lack vitality, will not be well set up, and will not properly digest strong food. [20] People in conflict should be made to eat together: the common absorption would make the eruption of duels even stronger. [21]

During party time, there are moments when guests are found dancing with *l'homme qui marche* and have a drink with *Salvator Mundi*, using the breeze of the evening and the playfulness of a room that invites participation. [22] Look at the art pieces! None of them ask: who is seeking truth? [23]

In the end the wine gives each of them a face. Along the length of the table, stretching into the distance, the masks are moving, drinking, evanescent. Faces without necks, heads without pectoral girdles, napkins floating in front of vacant chests. [4]

A sudden, massive drop in temperature means that [24] *the feast has ended and life returns to normality.*

Observe who is contented or not contented with silence and obscurity, who benefits from both behaviours.

Communication increases with power and power with messages, sometimes, noise, often, but above all interceptions. All communication gives publicity to the person broadcasting it. [25] *Words pour out and never stop coming. A continuous flow of never-ending stories and shared knowledge.* So, in a manner of speaking, it creates the world. [26]





TALKING GLASS



IV

A CHERISHED NOOK



Here, the art of architecture is found in the treasured old, not the fashionable new. [27] *Whenever Caliban has time off, he escapes into his forest. Here he feels protected.*

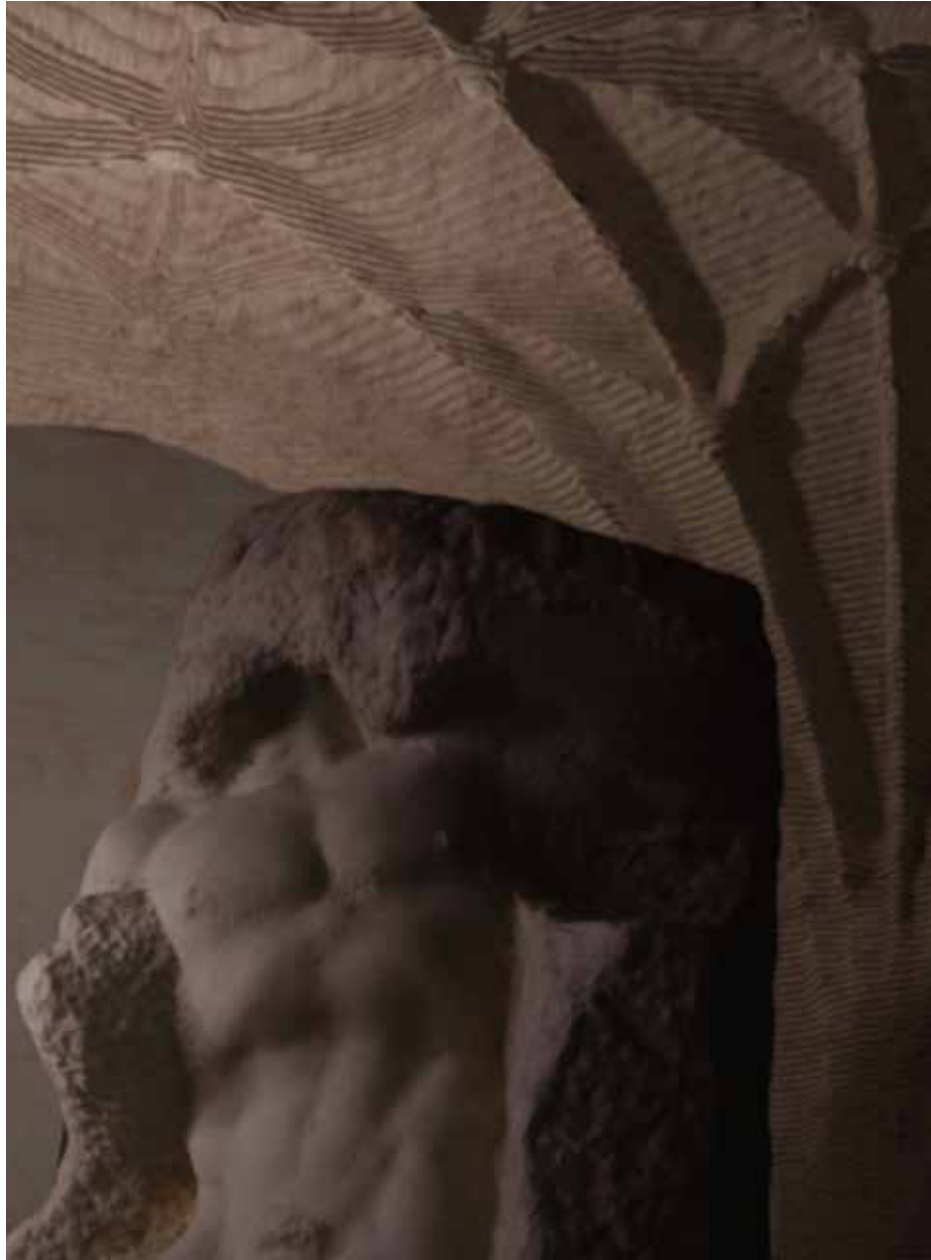
Protected from the environment, he lives in silence. [28]

He holds the roots next to his seat, finding comfort in their stability. Sometimes faces appear on the wall, with their holes; sometimes they appear in the hole, with their linearised, rolled up wall. [26]

“Be not afeard; the isle is full of noises,
Sounds and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not.
Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments
Will hum about mine ears, and sometime voices
That, if I then had waked after long sleep,
Will make me sleep again: and then, in dreaming,
The clouds methought would open and show riches
Ready to drop upon me that, when I waked,
I cried to dream again.” [29]

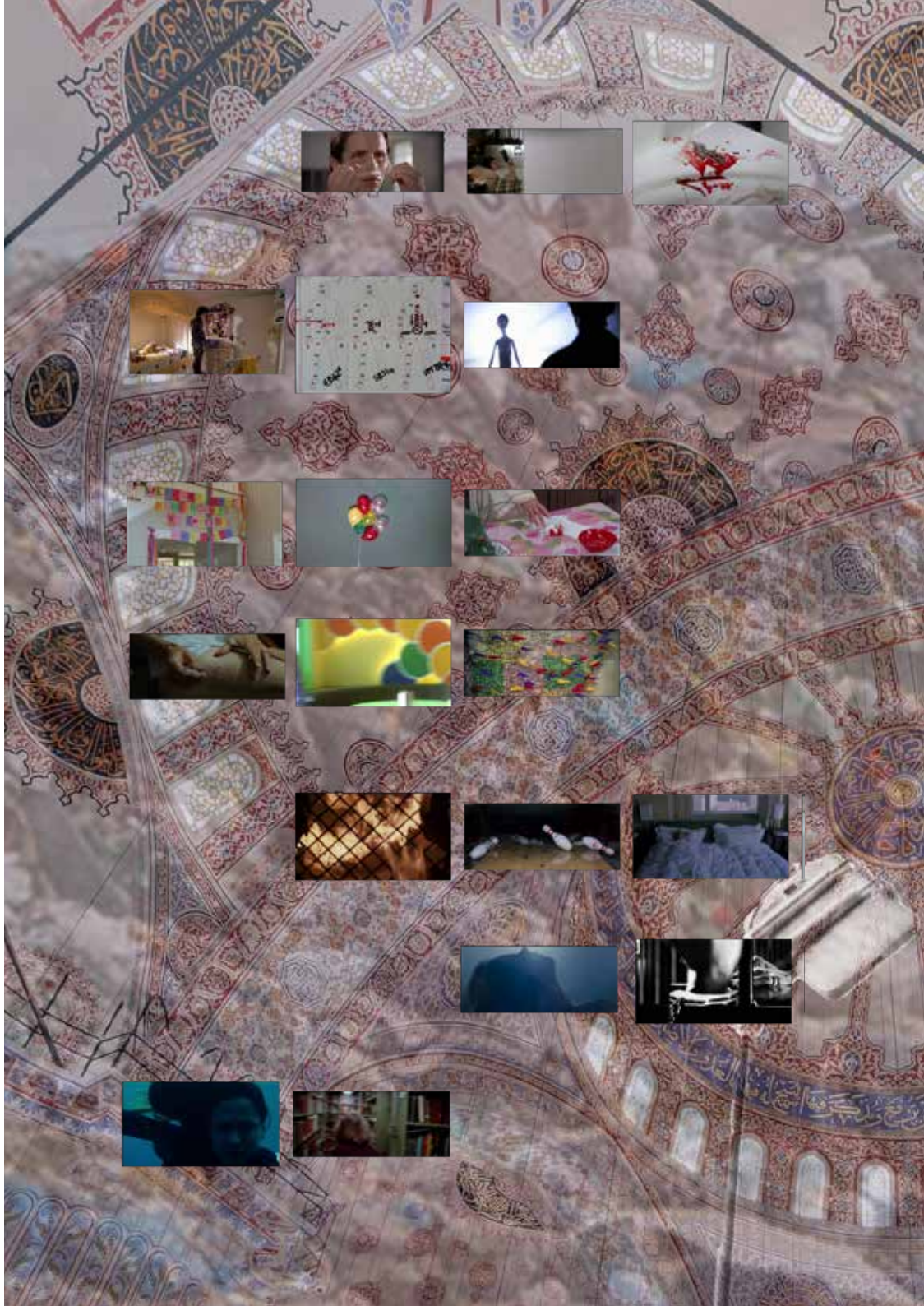






DISGRACED CAGE

V
SUBJUGATED
SELF-DISCOVERY





Belonging to the lower part of the perfect circle is the loggia, with its transparency and porosity, its tendency towards the well lit and airy. [30]

The combination of marble, tiles, mirrors, and light (both artificial and natural) provides the phantasmagoric setting for displays of purity that powerfully evokes people's desires. [31]

Miranda looks towards the city. She sees waves of buildings, a plethora amount of lives. She senses the intimacies of their souls. She would thus travel far without ever leaving home. [32]

The difference by which Venus's motion exceeded the Sun's motion was exactly this. [33]

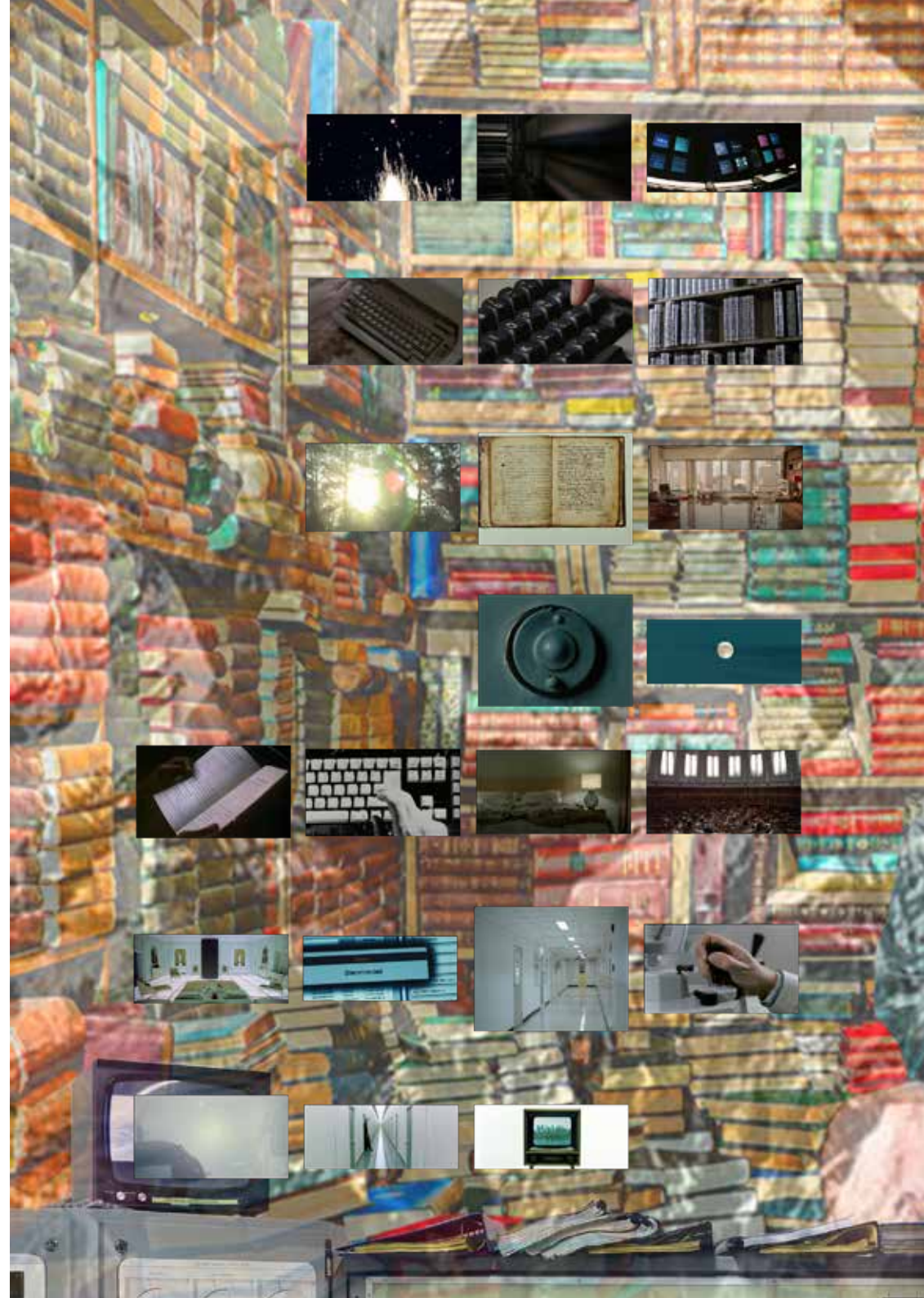
Behind the child, the wall; behind the father, the mountain: each of them perceives, twice, something stable. In front of them, the little torn clothes or the denuded facade; each of them perceives, twice, something moving. [34]





MESMERISED POKER

VI
ENIGMATIC LIBRARY





The ceiling is a sea of gold. The mosaic work, covering forty thousand square feet, is a skin of iridescence thrown across the walls and arches. Divine light was more significant than natural light. [35] For himself, he is at home. [36]

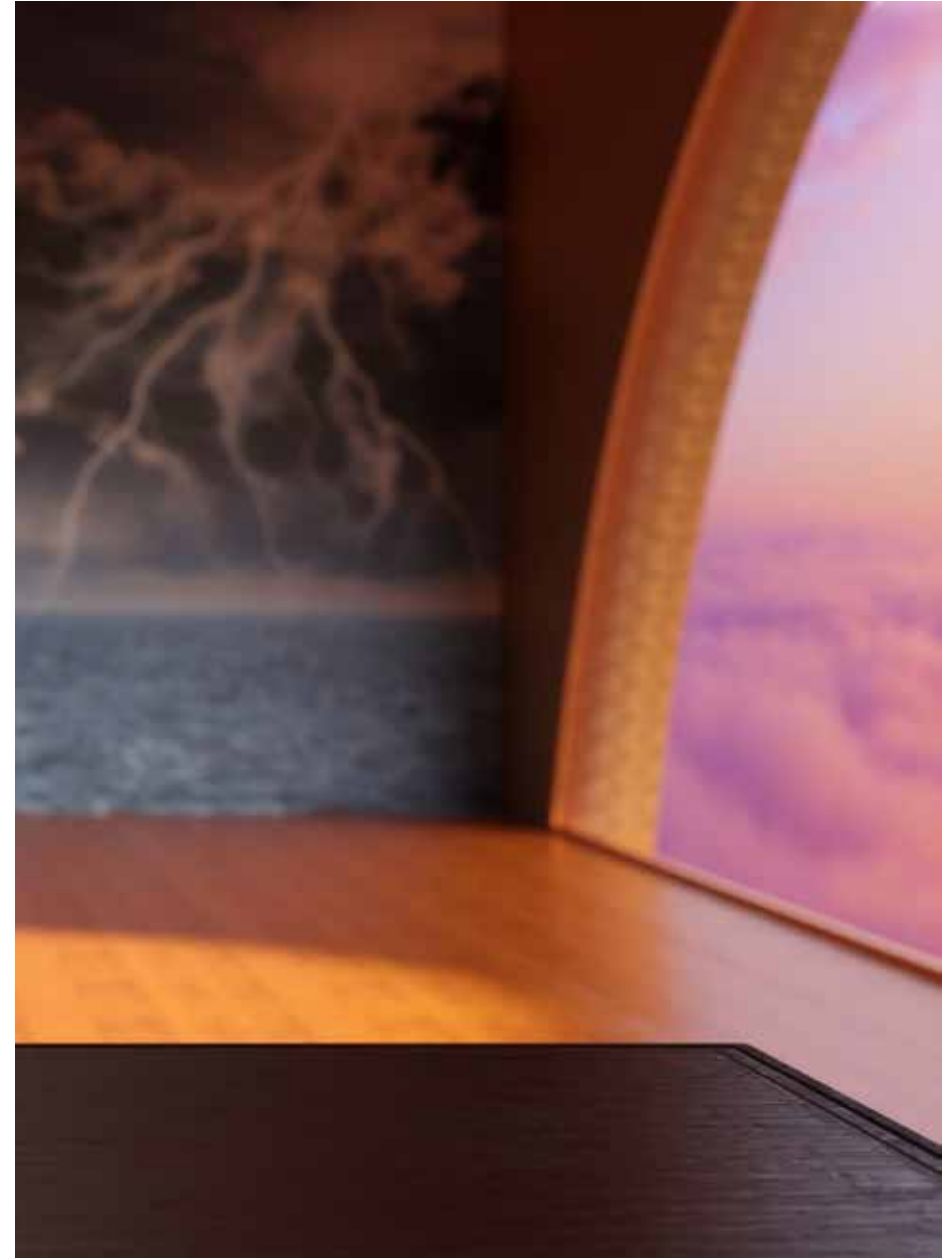
The window offers him the unidirectional and unobstructed view towards the ocean. It puts him at a distance. It transforms the bewitching world by which one was “possessed” into a text that lies before one’s eyes. It allows one to read it, looking down like a god.

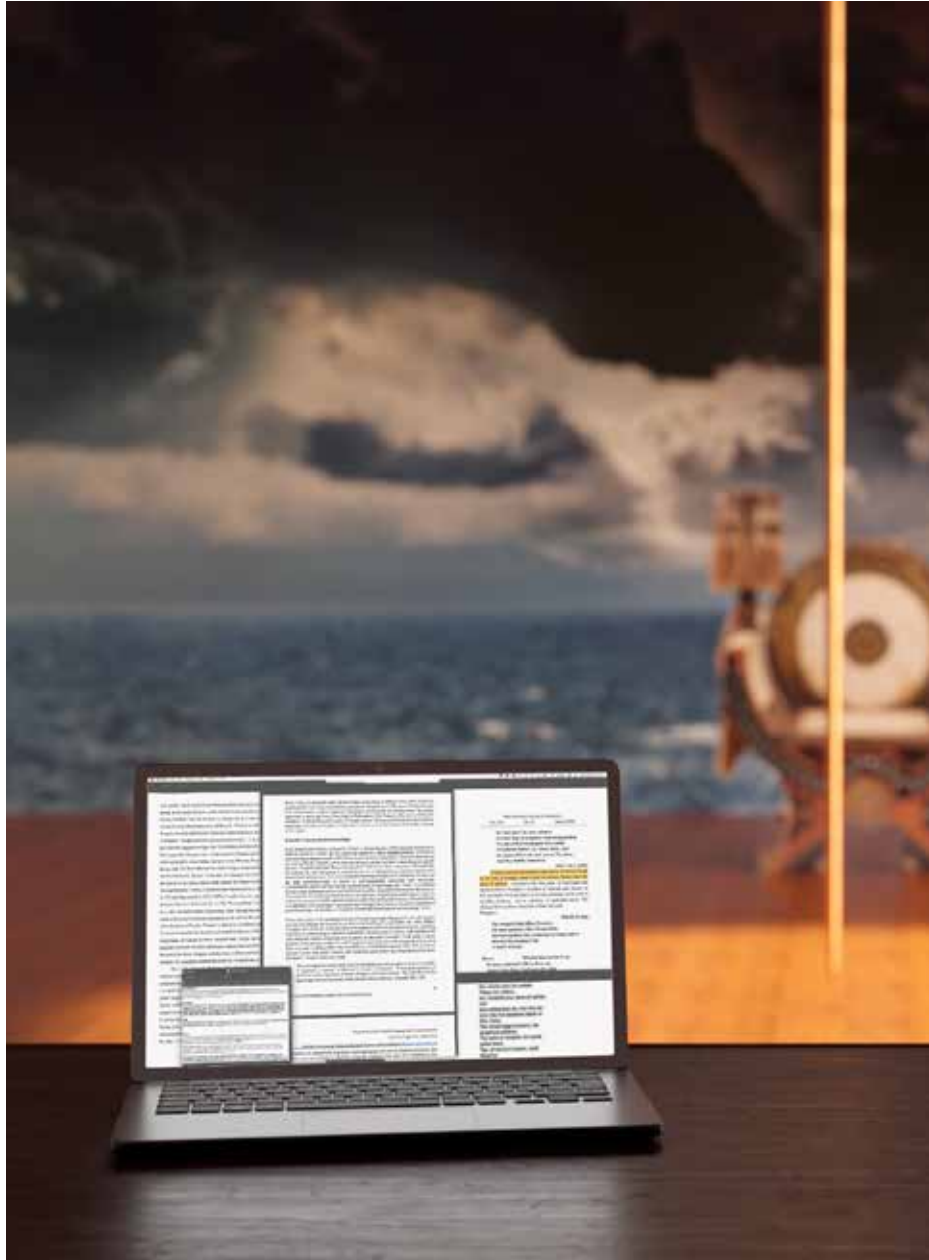
The exaltation of a scopic and gnostic drive: the fiction of knowledge is related to this lust to be a viewpoint and nothing more. Must one finally fall back into the dark space where crowds move back and forth, crowds that, though visible from on high, are themselves unable to see down below? [19]

He has read all the books, looked at all the images and through that he has learnt to puzzle together what is right and wrong. „Me, poor man, my library. Was dukedom large enough.“[29]

But the desire for revenge is a desire for something good: since revenge belongs to justice. [37]

To be sure, knowledge always makes comparisons to a model, in this case a sublime and absolute one, but more important, knowledge, dynamic and all consuming, which runs from the rearing of the human child to the glory or misery of the elder, only begins and develops because it is driven by the inextinguishable fires of imitation. [38]

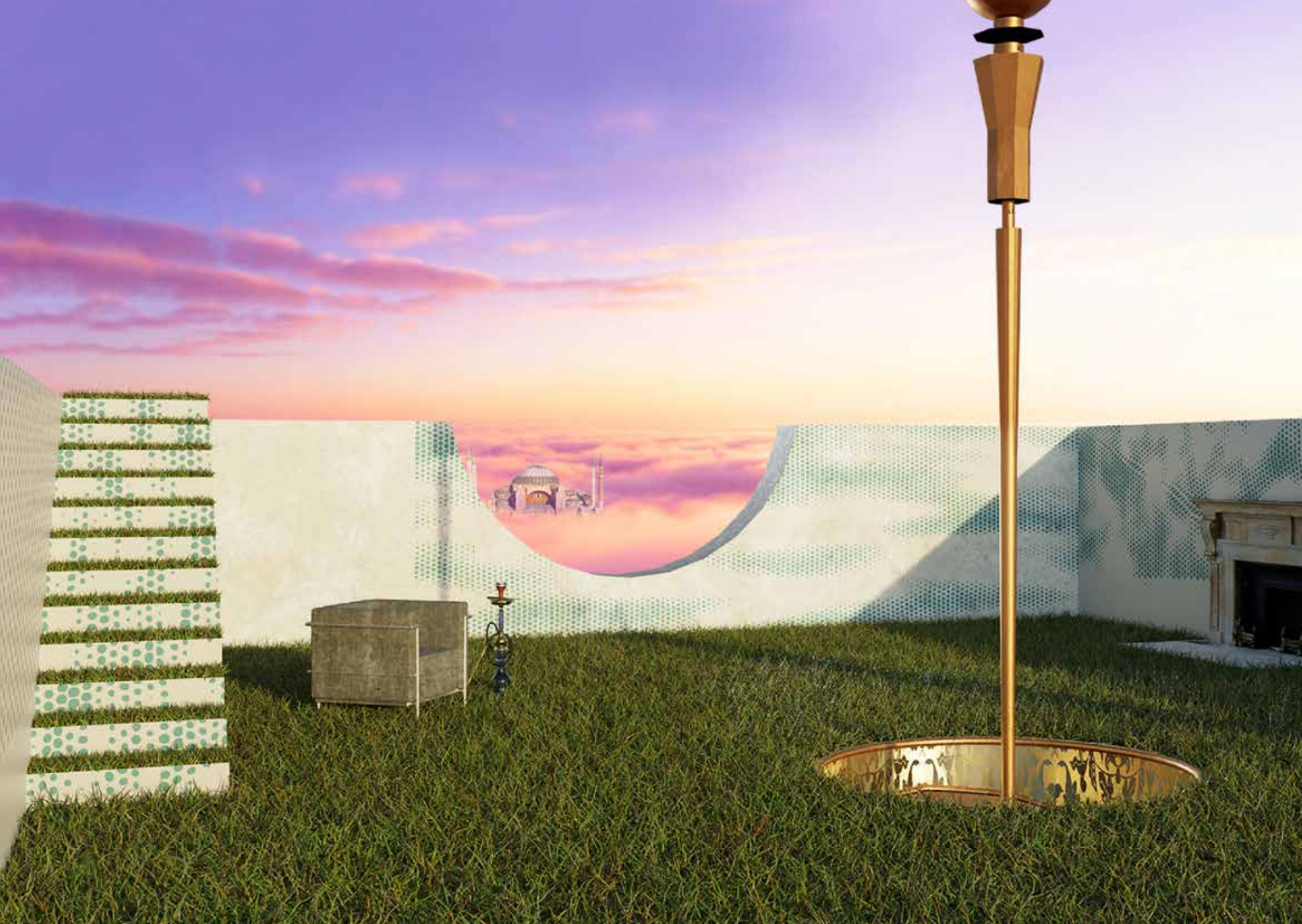




DIVINATION OF THOUGHT

VII ELUSIVE CROW'S NEST





The thick summer sky flared to the east with the lights of Istanbul, and on this high roof one had a sense of separation from the rest of the world one usually doesn't achieve in Nature at a level lower than five thousand feet. [19] This outdoor living-room, is the ideal space for a spirit like Ariel.

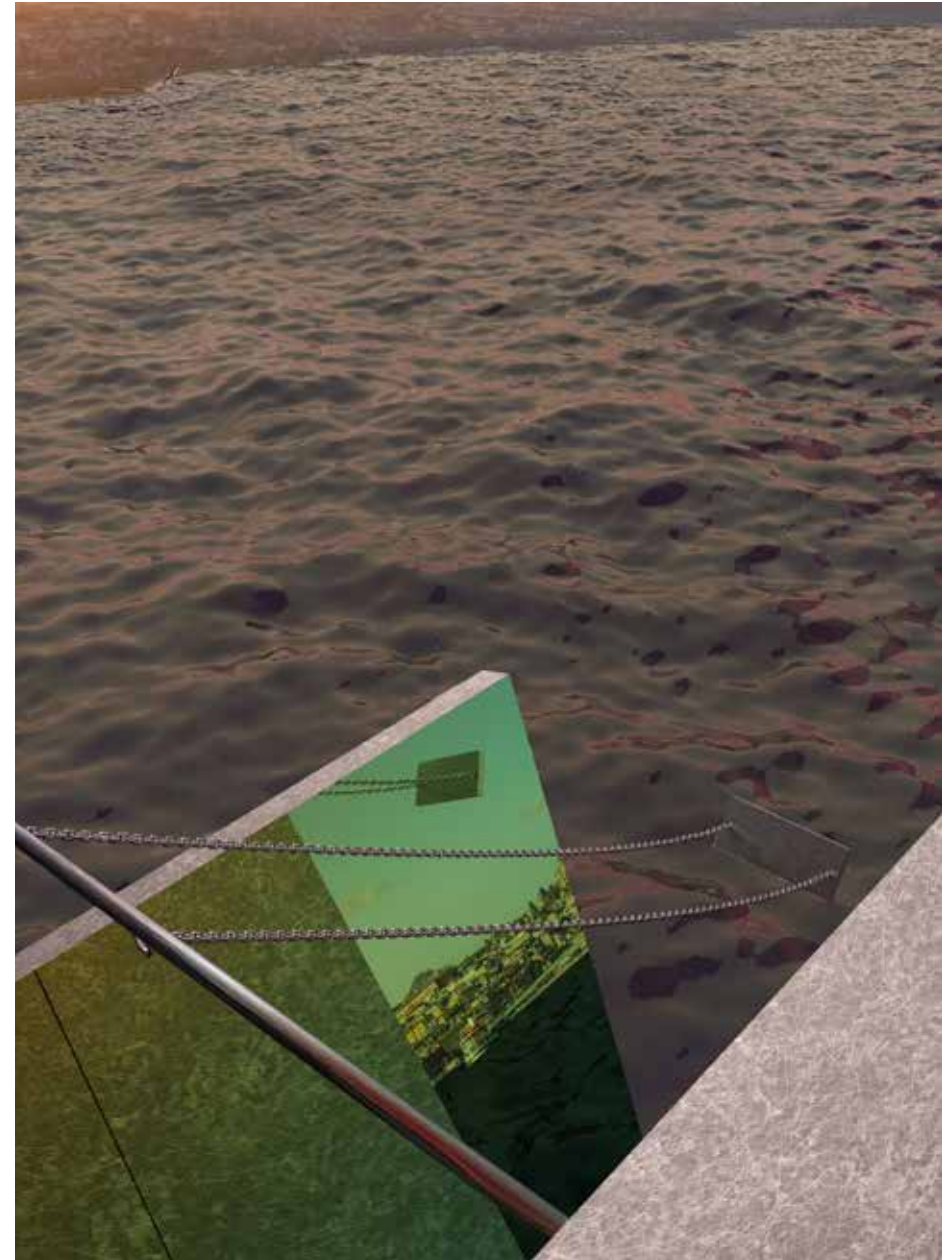
Although this rural fragment was largely isolated from the city, the top of the Hagia Sophia remained visible over the edge of the wall, serving as an insistent reminder of the urban density outside. [39]

On top of the tower he can freely look in all directions, be connected with the elements. Without any membrane separating Ariel with the city he hears all the noises this city produces. He listens to the conversations, chatter and fights people have. He takes the step up to the edge and walks along it. He can see in every direction. He breathes the fresh air.

He takes off his slippers and jumps off the edge. He swirls through the air and then miraculously catches the bar, drops down and starts swinging.

As with the natural case of climate, there is a human system of language that produces locally the mosaic diversity of languages. Proof again that the Universal doesn't necessarily result in uniformity; only stupid force does this. The cousins who remained in Africa and the brothers who left it thus produced a vast and multiply coloured spectrum of cultures; from almost infinitely close DNA, phenotypes are produced in which beauty explodes and scatters; agriculture and livestock farming, universals, produce rural ways differentiated according to the climate and the species. If globalisation is opposed to differences, the Universal on the contrary encourages them. [34]

To free ourselves forever from the illusions of truth there is only one requirement, which happens to be the very one that modern men refuse to meet: we must acknowledge mankind's thorough dependence on communication. [40]





HARMLESS SHOT

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