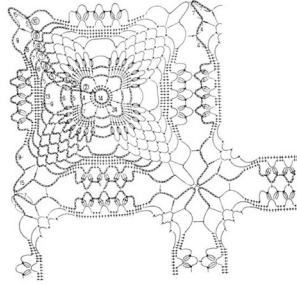


HOBGOBLIN'S PLEASURE



Parergon—Walking
as if it was an
ornament

Hermeneutics
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Ornamentation
and the Erotic:
the difficulty in
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Cyclical pain.
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**
Silent Mantras and
hectic Movements.
Delicate depression.
Post hope. How to
get out?
**

The possibility of
micro-resistance in
homo ornans

So please don't
cancel the future,
not yet

Parergon^{2(a)} —
Walking as if it was an ornament.

^a
A parergon comes against, beside, and in addition to the ergon, the work done [fait], the fact [le fait], the work, but it does not fall to one side, it touches and co-operates within the operation, from a certain outside. Neither simply outside nor simply inside. Like an accessory that one is obliged to welcome on the border, on board [au bord, a bord]. It is first of all the on (the) bo(a)rd(er) [Il est d'abord l'a-bord] (Derrida, Jacques. *The Truth in Painting*. The University of Chicago Press, Ltd., London, 1987)

I am wandering the winding streets of Warszawa. The air here always seems very dense or maybe it is just disturbed by the exhausted sighs of unfulfilled voids and neglect of untold stories, forever stuck in its fibers. My mind fixates on the crumbling architecture around me, a silent testament with its jagged cracks that echo my own internal lacks. Somehow, we are always in synch, feeding off each other's unease. Consciously unaware of time I am slowly walking towards the non-destination since again, I have promised myself I would finally develop a genuine affinity for this sweet connecting isolation, this rapid passage through varied ambiances¹ I am yet to explore. *Surely, it can't be that difficult*, I tell myself.

Walking provides a sense of comfort and unfolds a curious perspective on the interactions with one's surroundings and the passage of time, as it breaks them into small bits and pieces—manageable chunks.

It satisfies the desire for repetition, reiteration, recurrence, cure sustained by the physical act of walking itself. it offers the possibility of unexpected encounters — with desolate city ruins, beautifully exhibited bench made of rusty pipes by a local handyman, or mating pigeons almost glued to the old chewing gum lying beside their feet, on this post-party morning pavement. it allows for the merging of various times and places, previously separated, now finding a way to complement each other. It's palpable that if I am walking, I am more likely to take a detour to visit this flea market on the way to school. I am constrained and my sensuous percipience is easily activated this way.

Hey, easy! I remind myself repeatedly as I race through each passing moment, each passing block, every insular loop produced on the spot by my neurotic brain. I find myself hurrying for the unknown, wanting to finally get there, to conclude my long, devout trip. Please dedicate yourself to the roaming you are trying to tame — my conscience chides me as I struggle to arrive on time. I am uneasy and annoyed.

Why did I begin to walk more? Perhaps it was a form of identification with this mode of being that I yearned to associate myself with, becoming a sort of badaud^(b), a dreamy utopia. Feasible or not, the need to dissect this urge was strong enough for me to persist. Ultimately, I truly long to perceive myself as one who is patient and deliberate, taking enough time for the exploration of their interiority, aka leisure, instead of fully succumbing to the fast-paced urgency of neoliberalism. But walking had always been more of an obstacle, a subjugation for my legs, rather than an act of emancipation or resistance.

In my memory, I recall racing home from my primary school every day—which was only 700 meters from my house—to avoid the slowness and potential boredom. I'm easily bored or maybe I just bore myself. Anyway, this long-suppressed thought now resurfaced. It continues to haunt me. Running away from the very thing I need—unwinding.

Maybe the main incentive for the confrontation with walking was one of the books I started reading last summer—*Vagabondi Efficaci*. This beautiful cluster of words celebrated walking as a mode of being, a way of existing. I read somewhere in one of the essays that the premise of a fall, is the one that constitutes the action of walking. It is your body's effort not to fall, to discipline itself when the instant calls for it, taking into consideration all the remaining surrounding movements of the environment. It displays a continuum of interlinkages, feedforward and feedback, by which movements capture and convert each other to many ends, old, new, and innumerable.² How much attention. And still, this action tends to be conceived as so effortless and simple it almost becomes unnecessary, redundant.

^b
Flâneuse derives from the Old Norse Verb fl a-na which means to "to wander with no purpose"; The fl âneur must not be confused with the badaud; a nuance should be observed there The simple fl âneur is always in full possession of their individuality, whereas the individuality of the badaud disappears. It is absorbed by the outside world...which intoxicates them to the point where they forget themselves. (Fournel, Victor. *Ce qu'on voit dans les rues de Paris*. Forgotten Books, 2017 (originally published in 1867))

Hobgoblin's Pleasure is a text full of back and forth contradicting dwelling on possibility of engagement with *being* in a current climate. To make this quest tangible, i employ and build upon the ever-expanding definition of the ornament, not purely as a graphic gesture, but mostly as an expression — a tool for communication and fulfilment. Broadening ornament's definition creates a ground for me to reflect on its submergence in the current social condition, a matrix consisting of hopeless tears of lost futures and remainders of occult potential within us. It is a speculation where ornamentation can materialize as a tool for queering and micro resistance.

1 Debord, Guy. *Definitions*. Internationale Situationniste, vol. 1, 1958

2 Massumi, Brian, Candeloro, Constanza, editor. *Vagabondi efficaci*. Ness Books, 2019

My shoes are covered in mud; it is winter's peak, though the snow didn't come this year.
 Tall, bare trees had shed all their leaves on the ground.
 Kneading them, and through that becoming the protagonist of this venture
 is what I thought I was.
 You told me about the people hiding in the forest,
 They had to adapt to the space.
 Not kneading the leaves, not leaving any traces, becoming feral.
 My shoes are thought to be covered in mud, trying to commingle but somehow,
 I still stand out.

I'm leaving then.

Ornament as a normative, descriptive word, has its roots in the Latin *ornamentum*, meaning *equipment, tools, or embellishment*. Derived from the verb *ornare*, which meant to *adorn or embellish something*⁴. It has been a part of the English language since the 14th century, referring to the elements used for enhancement of the appearance of something as well as its apprehension—both aesthetical and symbolic. *There is an ontological, or rather teleological legitimacy for ornament, which by supplying a structural lack within the object, would become essential for restoring and achieving the unity of the existent. The need for ornament is thus sanctioned as fundamental since it corresponds to an intrinsic and not to a superficial requirement.*⁶

Structural lack of the human psyche finding completion only in the embrace of connection (with).

Walking disclosed to me as an abstract ornament, one I had sought to craft for months on end. (Sadly) it still doesn't feel truly genuine. But is it actually sad? Maybe it is just not mine... A simulacrum with a purpose of bringing questions. A pretext for me to dwell, to wander off a bit. So then I think: What is it that terrifies me about ornamenting my life? Who or what stands in my way? Reveal it to me, or I may be left to conjure my own delusional explanations.

The need for ornamentation, which I first experienced in purely visual categories of my graphic design practice, now appears as a symptom of a broader societal condition in which I find myself and discover anew. Grappling with nostalgia for the devout ornamentation of my precarious life — for *this glitter that makes things appear and become part of a unique assemblage, part of the presence*⁷. Ornament is a mediator in expression, a carrier of meaning, serving as a bridge between the abstract and the concrete, ethereal and the tangible, rendering ideas comprehensible or visceral to the observer. Now I can see and justify the need for myself to conflate these two realms—of visual arts and mode of existence in the world—to delve deeper into what has become a *syncretic inclusion*.⁸

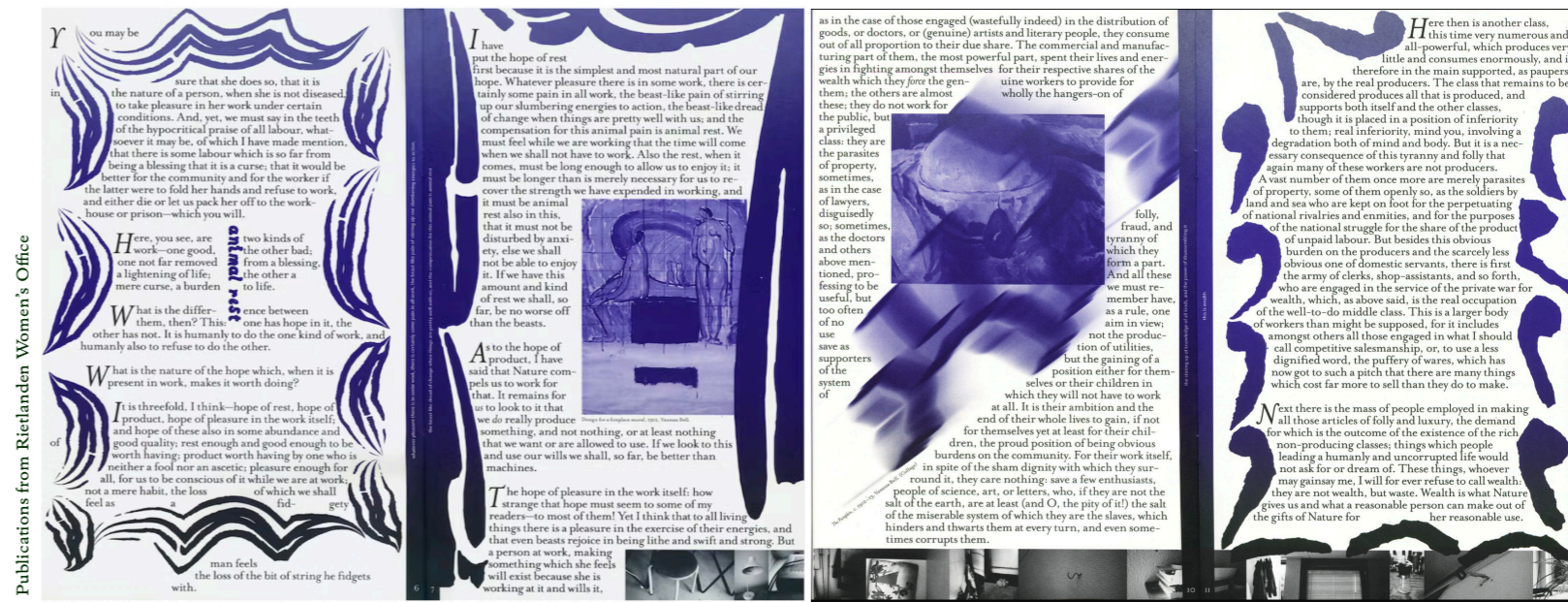
I'm already telling you: I can't truly comprehend the intricacy of an ornament in its entirety. It would be insincere of me to pretend otherwise. I'm trying to capture some of its scattered frag-

- 4 Online Etymology Dictionary, <https://www.etymonline.com/word/ornament>, 2019
- 5 concerned with the purpose, goal of something rather than the cause of its existence
- 6 Criticos, Mihaela. *The Ornamental Dimension: Contributions to a Theory of Ornament*. New Europe College Yearbook, 2004
- 7 Heidegger, Martin, Criticos, Mihaela. *The Ornamental Dimension: Contributions to a Theory of Ornament*. New Europe College Yearbook, 2004.
- 8 Ibid.

I'm in Amsterdam. It's March. The rain has finally ceased so I pressed on with my walk. Two hours in, the weight of unproductivity heavy on my mind, I found myself at a corner bookstore, seeking stimulation or, perhaps more accurately, a momentary reprieve from the feeling of laziness by engaging in a task cemented as productive. Immediate gratification, hm? That's when I came across a publication by the Rietlanden Women's Office called *MsHeresies 2—Useful Work versus Useless Toil*. It is an edited version of a lecture given by William Morris in 1884 on, among other things, the relationship between work conditions and ornamentation. Initially sceptical about them using a text from so long ago, I eventually realized its relevance. It aims to spark a discussion about what it means to ornament and why it is so difficult to do so in the current (political) climate. In the glossary at the end of the publication, I found a short excerpt from the text interwoven with comments from the designers. It explains ornamentation as *the non-rational part of life where being human or being (wo)manly as opposed to machinery, comes into practice. But "the ornamental part of modern life is already rotten to the core and must be utterly swept away before the new order of things is realized. [...] We must begin to build up the ornamental part of life—its pleasure, bodily and mental, scientific and artistic, social and individual."*³

I'm leaving.

3 Rietlanden Women's Office. *MsHeresies 2—Useful Work versus Useless Toil*. Rietlanden Women's Office, 2019



ments, and display them as traces mixed in a large, weighty bag that I shake with each step forward. One piece falls out, I retrieve it and place it back, but it inevitably lands somewhere else.

Hermeneutics of Ornament

There are so many various ways in which ornamentation ripens for its understanding and utilization, but it is the following interpretation that captivates me—with its timid, introspective words.

Where the ornament serves as a guide to this
super-
confused
and frenzied
world.

SYMBOLIC AIM

Firstly, as a sense-giving detail in symbolic scenography, *a material bearer of ritual, social or cultural signification*⁹. Its function—which amplifies the essence of an object—delves into the ineffable bond between the physical form and the metaphysical content. Throughout the ages, this symbolic or representative function can be seen in myriad places, from the funerary ideologies of ancient Neolithic communities^(c) to Soviet five-pointed Red Star. The act of sharing a common symbol or ritual, *giving and taking of meaning*¹⁰ whether it be something as small as assembling a window display for the gentle pleasure of your neighbours or getting matching tattoos with close friends, is a part of forming and sustaining societies.

ADJECTIVAL AIM

Ornament is also a type of adjective, and without any adjectives, nouns would not be able to have a distinct existence (regardless of this possibility in theory).¹¹ So

I am made of the smell of the passing farms on our way to the mountains,
I am made of roman snail's trails beaten after a drizzle,
I am made of a dandelion wreath braided by my mother as we sat in the grass behind our home,
the one-meter-deep hole in the muddy sand and the sand tossed aside during its excavation,
the smell of tomato soup blended with way too much yogurt,
CocoRosie's Werewolf,
an old roof waiting for the next storm to finally collapse,
a floor slick with sweat from countless hours of feet stepping and hitting and jumping and touching, caressing and falling, exertion and cry
a physical body prone to decay,
future nostalgias and
all the conversations I have had with you since we met. You have made me too and still molding.

*In this way, ornament is related to subject as individual nature to essence.*¹²

9 Criticos, Mihaela. *The Ornamental Dimension: Contributions to a Theory of Ornament*. New Europe College Yearbook, 2004.

10 Hall, Stuart. *The work of Representation*. London: Sage in association with the Open University, 1997

11 Coomaraswamy, Amanda, Criticos, Mihaela. *The Ornamental Dimension: Contributions to a Theory of Ornament*. New Europe College Yearbook, 2004.

12 Coomaraswamy, Amanda. *Figures of Speech Or Figures of Thought? The Traditional View of Art*. World Wisdom, 2007, (originally published in 1946)

^c
Indeed, all elements of
body adornment are
so important in Naga
society for displaying
personal and social
identities that they
are conceived as
part of the defini-
tion of being truly
human. Therefore,
they have to be
removed from the
body at death, since
they cannot follow
the corpse of the
wearer in the grave
(Micheli, Roberto.
*Personal Ornaments, Neo-
lithic Groups, and Social
Identities: Some Insights into
Northern Italy*. Documenta
Praehistorica 39, 2012 (227-
256))

The accidents of essence.

ORDERING AIM

But that's not all. Ornament's interiority also realizes an ordering purpose, one that structures the physical reality¹³. It brings organization and coherence to that which may otherwise be perceived by many as chaotic or even formless. *Decorum*, the fitting of form to content, the adherence to conventions and customs, and the appropriate relationship with the surrounding context, all with the aim of creating harmony and balance.

I was sitting with Zuzia in a cafe, talking. At one point Jerzy, my sister's bobo, started unrestrainedly eating the cake he had just beseeched me to buy for him. I had no revulsion at the way he was feeding himself, but surely my awareness of our surroundings heightened, and I became self-conscious, all too aware of our presence in this shared space. Zuzia noticed my discomfort. *I recall a class we took discussing the evolution of spitting etiquette*. She was quick to react, as she is always attentive. *Until the eighteenth century, spitting was not frowned upon, but as time progressed, the norms surrounding it changed. It's quite amusing, don't you think?*

Do not spit over or on the table. (English c.1463)

It is very ill-mannered to swallow what should be spat ... After spitting into your handkerchief, you should fold it once, without looking at it, and put it in your pocket. (La Salle, 1729)

It is unpardonably gross for children to spit in the faces of their playmates (la Salle, 1774)

It tells us so much about the psychological fluctuations that occurred in the psyches of European societies over time.

She continues reading.

*Spatting is at all times a disgusting habit. Besides being coarse and atrocious, it is very bad for the health. (English. 1859)*¹⁴

DECORATIVE AIM

All this is so often overshadowed by ornament's equation with the decorative. Through the adornment of a building's facade with intricate carvings, one can connect to the reality of the structure's materiality, as well as the cultural and historical significance it holds. If you are soaked with European culture, try looking upon the statues of St. Men at St. Peter's Basilica and not feel a sense of remorse, even as an atheist. The indication is so ingrained it becomes a visceral response.

Look!

Here, below the tiniest sculpture's feet, nestled near the edge of the facade, I can see the *ornamental slips*,¹⁵ details formed in the process of ornamentation that blur the distinction between the practical purpose of an object and its aesthetic form. These ornamental slips embrace elements that may be viewed as flaws, errors, or experiments—forever incomplete. A sudden muscle spasm at the conclusion of an inked curve results in a graphic tension of interrupted perfection, sparking a potential for suspended judgment. It makes space for replacement. With what exactly? With apprehension expanding into perception. With perception that points to and celebrates the unique or the one at odds with popular opinion.

13 Criticos, Mihaela. *The Ornamental Dimension: Contributions to a Theory of Ornament*. New Europe College Yearbook, 2004.

14 Davies, Norman. *Europe: A History*, Harper Perennial, 1998

15 Rietlanden Women's Office. *MsHeresies 2—Useful Work versus Useless Toil*. Rietlanden Women's Office, 2019





Ornamentation and the Erotic: the difficulty in reconciliation of Rational and Sensual

See the sky through your belongings
by making holes in them

i.e.: pants, jacket, shirt, stockings, etc.¹⁶

When beauty is found, it brings a sense of joy and completion, elevating our appreciation of it more. And in turn, when we are fulfilled, we become more attuned to the beauty that surrounds us. In this way, beauty and satisfaction are entwined, each strengthening the other in a positive feedback loop, each element reinforcing the other in an endless dance.

Sadly, there has been a big shrink, a decline in appreciation for beauty, which can be traced back to the new epistemology proposed by Descartes. He separated the indubitable mind from the dubitable body in a way not considered before him. Distancing himself from sensations, he made the world dead, litter. So, *Between me and the world, there is now a veil of ideas.*¹⁷ The veil that grew so vast that I no longer notice its presence. *Even* if I somehow still find, in a gleaming moments of recognition, the meaning in ornamenting this distant world, I am hindered by the long-standing tradition of *evangelizing for correct use of it*¹⁸, how and why and what it means.¹⁹

Let me elaborate on the cause of my *even*.

I can't know anything for sure, so I am just speaking nearby. I am speaking near Llewelyn Negrin, the author of *Ornament and the feminine*. Before modernism, there was no distinction between the *merely ornamental elements of an object and those of function*. Then, a clear cut happened, a division. The giant scissors in the faulty hands of Adolf Loos^(d) who wrote that the use of ornamentation indicated a lack of cultural development, reconceptualizing it as a *mere embellishment*, an accidental not an essential aspect. Ornamentation—primitive and wasteful—deserving symbolic criminalization. Modernist architecture^(e) and design^(f) became greatly influenced by these ideas, favouring a functional and minimalistic approach over ornamental elements if they could be separate. Loos believed that all art had its roots in the (wicked) erotic, some sort of Freudian sublimation—an expression of *wanting to rid oneself of natural excess*²⁰—within which exists a relationship between ornamentation and the feminine that deserves dismissal if not demonization, putting it in the suffocating box of irrational, sensual, superficial. *Man had progressed enough for ornament to no longer produce erotic sensations in him*²¹—he said.

It is noteworthy to mention Beatriz Colomina's text *Battle Lines*, in which she tells us a story of Le Corbusier employing the technique of mural-painting as a means of ornamenting and yet defacing the surface, specifically the house made by Eileen Gray. Through this act, he asserts his ownership of the space, marking it with a bold and destructive gesture.

Alice Twemlow mentions in her text *The decriminalization of Ornament that even today, despite its proliferation and the slow emergence of discourse surrounding it, the use of decoration is still regarded by mainstream graphic design as a taboo—a testimony, perhaps, to modernism's enduring hegemony.*

16 Ono, Yoko. *A painting to see the sky III*. Grapefruit, Wunternaum Press, 1964
17 Dr. V.A. Gijbers. *History of Modern Philosophy*, Universtiy of Leiden. 2020
18 Twemlow, Alice. *The decriminalization of ornament*. EyeMagazine. 2005
19 Jones, Owen. *The Grammar of Ornament*. London: Day & Son. 1856
20 Loos, Adolf. *Ornament and Crime*. Penguin Classics. 2019 (or.pub. 1913)
21 Ibid.



According to Negrin, by putting too much attention to just giving ornament a positive rather a negative value, most of the criticisms^(g) towards Loos neglected the prejudice which dismissed it at its core—the idea that ornamental is not a carrier of meaning. With that, the labels that were stuck to the ornament stayed in place—a perpetuated image of either or. Rational or Sensuous. The enchanting binaries.

Negrin considers ornament as a multidimensional phenomenon. In her encapsulation of ornament as a complex, nuanced mode of expression, she makes space for a valuation of its spiritual dimension—the one satisfying a decorative impulse intrinsic to humanity, bringing pleasure to the soul. She brings back the aspect of nonrational spirit that now, in its erotic dimension, has an agency to resist the attention economy²² by engaging in an alternative framework. Reclaiming the nonrational while at the same time pointing to its semiotic function can be a step towards its rehabilitation since above all, ornament hints, guides and exposes.

The fog of associations in my mind starts to slowly clear to make space for the realization of how my desire to dissect ornamentation is simply an extension of all that I had already learned from Audre Lorde. What is still lingering somewhere in my head is this overarching, warm feeling of becoming completely entranced by her words. *The erotic is not a question only of what we do; it is a question of how acutely and fully we can feel in the doing.* *When I speak of the erotic, then, I speak of it as an assertion of the life force of women; of that creative energy empowered, the knowledge and use of which we are now reclaiming in our language, our history, our dancing, our loving, our work, our lives.* Lorde, Audre. *The Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power*. In *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*, edited by Audre Lorde, 53-59. Crossing Press, 1984.

Once we know the extent to which we are capable of feeling that sense of satisfaction and completion, we can then observe which of our various life endeavours brings us closest to that fullness.^(h) I fear the word erotic. This expression that has been stripped away from me, from us, by those who wield power. A theft that led to neglect on my side, perhaps even a sense of disgust. Thank Goddess, Lorde uncovered some of this abuse, explaining that the erotic has often been misnamed by men and used against women. It has been made into the confused, the trivial, the psychotic, the plasticized sensation.²³ An idle gesture. Somehow, Lorde managed to reintroduce mere-introduce me to the ideology of the erotic: this time as a force for resistance against oppression and a catalyst for change, a wellspring of our utmost power. Refusing to use the word properly⁽ⁱ⁾, reconceptualizing it. *A queer vandalism.*^(j) *When we recover a potential from materials, when we refuse to use things properly, we are often understood not only as causing damage but as intending what we cause. Queer use could thus also be interpreted as vandalism: "the wilful destruction of the venerable and beautiful."* Sara Ahmed for *feminstkilljoys* blog

How long can we be at odds?
How much endurance and emotional energy can one possess?
I'm almost out of energy to keep persevering in this ornamental dwelling.
My soul is full, but my legs are getting tired. This is my small complaint.
Feminism as complaint, *complaint activism*.²⁴

How can we bear the present? asks Lisa Robertson in her book *Anemones—A Simone Weil Project, thinking near Weil herself*. At one point, she focuses on how reinhabiting the words that were misused or co-opted by the terrorizing powers can be an experience deeply valuable for resisting the flattening narratives. Simone Weil lived amid horror. In the 1940s she wrote: *The sole strength in the world is purity.* (Petrement, Simone Weil, p.16) Robertson chooses to give space for contemplation of Weil's usage of the term. Weil, herself was Jewish and antifascist, and her choice to give great importance and value in her writings to the term *purity* (a theft enacted by Nazi propaganda of the time) can seem misplaced or troubling. But Robertson convinces us that it is a difficult relationship that unfolds multitudes that we should aim at. It underlines the relationship to language as contextual, including the histories of abuse, and

heresy of resistance. It is a purity that is considered as opposition to force, purity is the opposite of force. *Here the word purity pertains not to an essence or a putative origin, nor a coalitional focus or exclusivity, but to a quality of social relationship—social mutual consent.* It is a heresy because not many will take the time to understand the purpose of this employment. But this approach faces us with something exciting for me. It stands in opposition to neglect or erasure, it claims the reality in its fullness, offering this linguistic reinhabitation as a difficult fight against singularity and binaries. *It opens our ways of coexisting, and so our mentalities, if not always to hope, at least to a discernment that evades the market-driven flattening and squandering and of our intellectual and spiritual beings. Such discernment must underpin any lovingly committed living in the world, where the world is the inconceivable, irritating, stimulating many-ness that will persist nonetheless to the end, whether personal or global.*

22 Odell, Jenny. *How to do nothing*. Brooklyn, NY, Melville House, 2019
23 Ibid.
24 Ahmed, Sara. *Complaint Activism*. *Feminstkilljoys*, 2021

Big words. Hope you know they are just in this moment. They feel right to me. Gadają do mnie. Sparked by all these talking heads²⁵.

Do all lovers feel like they are inventing something?²⁶
Héloïse asks Marianne between breaths.

I don't mind all these cheesy words with you
saying it's the best sex I've ever had,
you're the best kisser;
words can be ornamental too
seedlings, suddenly bursting forth from
the plant embryo
maybe it's not true, maybe you're not the best
kisser but I really don't care
Dlatego zasiej się we mnie,
zapuść swoje korzenie,
zakorzeń się jeszcze głębiej²⁷

25 Kieślowski, Krzysztof. *Gadające Głowy*. Warsaw Documentary Film Studio, 1980

26 Sciamma, Céline. *Portrait of a Lady on Fire*. 2019

27 Spalarnia, 2022. *Ziemia*. On USTA



The Intersection of Ornamentation and Labour: Navigating the Tensions of Privilege and Exploitation

The ornamental can only come about with enough rest, agency, and variation. However, it is not an outcome or product of these conditions' rather, it is something intrinsically intertwined therein. The ornamental reminds us that life is more whole than the divisions of leisure/work, useful/decoration, business/pleasure, or individual/communal.²⁸

We accommodate multitudes so don't tell me I'm one.

Still, (visual) ornamentation is tied to time, which makes it susceptible to criticism for its connections to privilege. Its consideration is necessary to incorporate the more all-embracing approach. We can't deny the long history of exploitation of workers in the production of ornamentation. The continued need to seek out slave-free goods is evidence that a significant number of products are still produced using exploitative labour practices.^(k)

Today, decorated objects, which, thanks to progress, have become separated from the realm of ornamentation, imply wasted labour^(l) and material.²⁹

This hazy sentence can serve as a small sand box in which to contemplate some of its particles.

Rendering ornamentation abundant aligns itself with the logic of late-stage capitalism, it becomes a *useless toil* in Morris' words. Right now, the thought of ornamentation to embellish one's life, or one's work can be seen as a subversive act—as it challenges the idea of such adornment being unnecessary—but also an act playing along the lines of privilege since it is mainly cogitable by the ones having enough time and rest, and resources.

We can see this tension in Pilvi Takala's intervention *The Trainee* from 2008 where, under the cover of a trainee in the marketing department of the Deloitte consulting firm, she spends her days at work engaging in 'non-doing'—sitting behind her empty office desk, just looking ahead or riding the elevator for the whole working day, doing "thought work". Resisting to adhere to socially accepted forms of inactivity, such as browsing through social media or texting, her non-doing in the workplace becomes a potential threat for her colleagues. What is she capable of? She becomes illegible and through that illegibility she disrupts the order. Her refusal not only poses a threat, but also comes across as a form of privilege that others begin to feel resentful of, a visible claim: I can afford doing nothing.

Pleasure resides and flourishes in the intellectual uncertainty and deferral, which can open the moral spectrum of our existence to forms of experience that can't be quantified by market censors.³⁰ However, when one is engaged in tedious labour, in unhealthy and alienating conditions, it becomes difficult to find resources to engage in reading critical theory or appreciating the beauty of a glimmering sunset as a form of moral exploration. Instead, let's numb ourselves. Welcome delicate depression.

^k Not mentioning a new facet of this problem that comes with a neoliberal metamorphosis of allo-exploitation into auto-exploitation further explored in the writings of Byung-Chul Han such as *Psychopolitics*

^l The increasing industrialization shed new light on (wasted) labour, where on the one hand, the body of the labourer is used up or wasted at accelerated rates to secure the most profit. On the other hand, the exigencies of capitalist profit-making may lead to this factor of production being excreted (as a form of waste) into unemployment or underemployment, creating surplus populations that are separated partially or fully from domains of capitalist exchange and social life (Yates, Michelle. *The Human-As-Waste. The Labor Theory of Value and Disposability in Contemporary Capitalism*. Radical Journal of Geography, 2011)

28 Rietlanden Women's Office. *MsHeresies 2—Useful Work versus Useless Toil*, Rietlanden Women's Office, 2019

29 Loos, Adolf. *Ornament and Crime*. Penguin Classics, 2019, (originally published in 1913)

30 Robertson, Lisa. *A Simone Weil project: Anemones.?*, 2021

Scary thoughts start to bubble up as I am writing these words. This subconscious urge to continually strive for greater heights separating oneself from others. Me vs. the Other. Forever. Endless quest for power and possession. Economic gain cloaked under the guise of rationality.

To take a step back, to slow down, to re-evaluate our priorities. This way, we could strive for progress that is conscious, drawing upon the concept of degrowth—this (un)common assertion that unyielding pursuit of economic growth in industrialized countries is detrimental to the creation of a more harmonious and ethical society.^(m)

Because if the current way in which we pursue progress is eternal, then are we not lost?

(Prze)myśli

^m
Degrowth directs itself at reaching a society that *enables global ecological justice, strengthens social justice and self-determination and strives for a good life for all under the conditions of this changed metabolism. It redesigns its institutions and infrastructure so that they are not dependent on growth and continuous expansion for their functioning.* Multiple viewpoints exist on reaching this state, with no one perspective dominating the discourse. It is a pluriverse, containing many possible futures. This is reflected in number of degrowth-oriented imaginaries including currents that are institution-focused, sufficiency-focused, communing-focused (alternative economy), feminist, and post-capitalist/critical of globalization.

(this fragment is based on Schmelzer, Matthias, Aaron Vansintjan, and Andrea Vetter. The Future is Degrowth, Verso Books, 2022)



Cyclical pain. Attempt at movement towards the past.

It's a movement towards the failures, the points of intensity, and of rationality, in order to access a "better life, not elsewhere, but in this world, and right away, because the values brought to life are the values of this world".³¹

It's clear for me now that I need to hear more from you. I need to hear with you, hear next to you. I'm done with hearing about you from the ones who should at once remain silent. Mothers, you were once medieval witches illuminating our journeys through the dark of the woods, performing the most laborious of works.

The scent of your blood permeates the air, a reminder of the violence inflicted upon you. What did they do to you? How were you hurt?

During the 16th and 17th centuries, a cultural shift occurred holding that women were inferior, lustful, emotional, and incapable of self-governance, and therefore must be controlled by men. That resulted in their marginalization in all aspects of social life. Among others, this was achieved through the demonization of birth control and non-procreative sexuality, as well as legal restrictions that deprived women of their independence in conducting business affairs.⁽ⁿ⁾

Sylvia Federici's probing into the connection between witch hunts and the rise of capitalism illuminates how these historical occurrences shaped our present societal landscape. The persecution of alleged witches served as a tool of social control wielded by the emergent capitalist class to subjugate and reap benefits from the lower classes, particularly women, who were singled out due to their significant contributions to labour reproduction and preservation of communal forms of land use, both of which were seen as threats to the emerging capitalist system. The witch hunts were also fueled by the fear of magic that was an obstacle to the rationalization of the work process, and a threat to the establishment of the principle of individual responsibility. Above all, magic seemed a form of refusal of work, of insubordination, and an instrument of grassroots resistance to power. Most target were mostly sorcerers, healers, performers of incantations and divinations.

The world had to be 'disenchanted' in order to be dominated³². And it was. The witch hunts destroyed a whole world of female practices, collective relations, and systems of knowledge that had been the foundation of women's power in pre-capitalist Europe, and the condition for their resistance in the struggle against feudalism.³³

While in the Middle Ages women had been able to use various forms of contraceptives, and had exercised an undisputed control over the birthing process, from now on their wombs became public territory, controlled by men and the state, and procreation was directly placed at the service of capitalist accumulation.^(o)

Reengaging with present being is reengaging with the being(s)' pain of the past.

ⁿ
Important factor in the devaluation of women's labour was the campaign that craft workers mounted, starting in the late 15th century, to exclude female workers from their workshops, presumably to protect themselves from the assault of the capitalist merchants who were employing women at cheaper rates. The craftsmen's efforts have left an abundant trail of evidence... the discrimination that women have suffered in the waged workforce has been directly rooted in their function as unpaid laborers in the home.

(Federici, Silvia. Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body and Primitive Accumulation. Autonomedia, 2004)

^o
Alongside these movements, new forms of surveillance were adopted in Europe to ensure that pregnant women did not terminate their pregnancies. Women were required to register every pregnancy and were sentenced to death if their infants died after a concealed delivery. Statutes were passed to surveil unwed mothers, and even unmarried pregnant women "became" illegal. A new medical practice prevailed that prioritized the life of the foetus over that of the mother which led to women being prosecuted in large numbers and later executed for infanticide. Midwives were marginalized, and male doctors came to be seen as the true "givers of life."

(Based on: Federici, Silvia. Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body and Primitive Accumulation. Autonomedia, 2004)

31 Robertson, Lisa. *A Simone Weil project: Anemones?*, 2021

32 Federici, Silvia. *Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body and Primitive Accumulation*. Autonomedia, 2004

33 Ibid.



@smalaskuggan

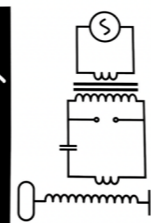
Poland's constitutional court banned abortions for seriously malformed fetuses in 2020, limiting it to cases where the pregnancy endangers the woman's life or results from a criminal act. In December 2021, a 37-year-old woman named Agnieszka was admitted to the Provincial Hospital in Częstochowa because of vomiting and abdominal pain. She was pregnant with twins, but unfortunately, doctors discovered that both fetuses were dead. Agnieszka carried the decomposing bodies inside her for another 9 days as doctors did not remove them, believing they were restricted by the regulations in force in Poland. Agnieszka's condition worsened and both fetuses were eventually removed by hand, but it was too late, and she passed away on January 23, 2022.



@zuzannabartoszek



KHAL SCOTT



@th3nc04h

Medieval gesture and why it matters

They relate to the beginnings They are in the middle and will appear at the end
 Not in the epicentre
 Centre is free
 They're not the most important

It is May, summer but somehow the heat doesn't seem to enter the guts. Sweaty, in motion—to get from one class to another—I walk through the building's corridors, oblivious to the materiality around me. I know it is quite inconsiderate of me since today marks four years of struggles encapsulated into one brief exhale—a graduation exhibition of art students. But I can't look, I am overstimulated, overwhelmed, I am no longer able to read more than 2 lines of text at once, and still, I don't even know what she wanted to tell me with those 2 lines. *Please let's just leave and get some food! Otherwise, I am going to faint*— I text Luna while walking towards the exit. She agrees but wants to see the sculpted shrine before leaving. I wonder if I've even seen the artwork myself.

In my dreamy mind, everything fused into a hazy mass of works. It utters into the space softly whispering: Middle Ages. I am experiencing a range of conflicting emotions in response to this recognition. There is a small glimmer of hope that is deeply felt, but also a sense of darkness and despair about the world's current paralysis. I am longing for the past and have a desire for reconciliation. There is also a sense of curiosity, silliness, and queerness. I am questioning myself. Are these seemingly medieval impulses I am experiencing just a figment of my imagination? Do they hold any real potential?

*Could we now be experiencing a revival of an era where illiteracy was the norm, where we read in images rather than abstract symbols (letters), right brain over left?*³⁴

34 Exhibition curated by Daniel van Straalen. *Medieval Minded*. 2019



@?



@visio



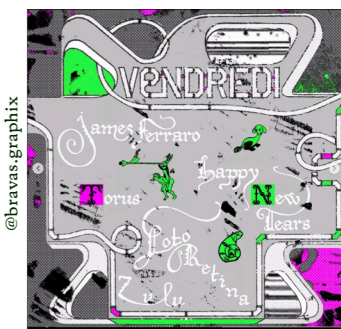
@janneschimmel



@jze.zima



@?



@bravas.graphix

Even though I feel ambivalent about these clear distinctions made in the Medieval Minded pamphlet, I find solace in the realization that I am not alone in this intuitive recognition. It prompts me to continue discovering.

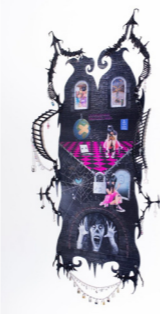
In *Dreaming of the Middle Ages*³⁵—a poetically named essay written by Umberto Eco—the writer discusses a renewed interest in medieval times observed by him already in the 1980s. Eco highlights ten ways^(P) that people have attempted to capture the spirit of the medieval era. But his critique is deeply rooted in the time of its expression and is in this way failing to encapsulate something that remained out of his reach—the spirit of the 21st century. The division he makes, therefore, feels too rigid in its structure, with a tendency to oversimplify and flatten the diverse and nuanced ways in which people have engaged with the past. *It is a shaggy medievalism, and the shaggier its heroes, the more profoundly ideological its superficial naïveté.*³⁶ As I read the text, it became evident that the various interpretations of the Middle Ages are inextricably intertwined and, like all things in life, are constantly evolving. Even if they do not necessarily hold constructive power in themselves, these visitations offer us a window into a haunting and complex history that unfolds in front of us. Unlocking rich and captivating past and by this unlocking rendering it meaningful. Our cravings, hopes, and disappointments.

Looking at The Middle Ages means looking at our infancy³⁷, Umberto Eco says. These words, having a hint of cynicism, set the tone that permeates the text throughout. And of course, it is difficult not to agree with him stating that we no longer want to be infants, at least to some extent. We yearn to mature, take on responsibilities, have control over our own lives, and attain independence in some form or another. Building his arguments on this comparison, he considers most of the contemporary allusions to the medieval period as unnecessary. Their validity is disregarded. By setting aside Eco's purism, we allow ourselves to notice a constructive angle in this text to

dissect the neo-medievalist³⁸ traces happening today. We should look at our infancy filled with care because examining it can not only help us to understand the lingering effects of past grievances on our adult selves but also allow us to rediscover and embrace the positive qualities that we may have lost as we rushed into adulthood. To remind ourselves how to be ludic.^(Q) This is one of the attempts of neomedieval art, to relearn, to reconcile.

Ursula LeGuin paints a similar story in a conversation she had with Jonathan White (*Talking on the Water: Conversations about Nature and Creativity*) In it, she said: *The daily routine of most adults is so heavy and artificial that we are closed off to much of the world. We have to do this in order to get our work done. I think one purpose of art is to get us out of those routines. When we hear music or poetry or stories, the world opens up again. We're drawn in — or out — and the windows of our perception are cleansed, as William Blake said. The same thing can happen when we're around young children or adults who have unlearned those habits of shutting the world out.*

^P Middle Ages as a pretext, as the site of an ironical revisitation, as a barbaric age, a land of elementary and outlaw feelings, of Romanticism, of the philosophia perennis or of neo-Thomism, of national identity, of decadentism, of philological reconstruction, of so-called Tradition, as an expectation of the Millennium



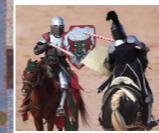
@lenakuzmich
ecolaubohrsac2021



Book of Kells, 9th century



Jousting reenactment



Jousting reenactment



Lombard, Glossa in epistolas Pauli, 1250-1300



Corpus Grammaticorum Latinorum, end of 8th century

** *Silent Mantras and hectic Movements.
Delicate depression. Past hope.
How to get out?*³⁹

The extreme machismo associated with medieval and fantasy visuals is subverted when filtered through a queer lens. "I love the exaggerated masculinity and the drama of medieval music and visuals. I am very bored by things that are not extreme in some capacity. I can't help it," Dorian Electra agrees. "I love traditional Christian religious and choral music and Gregorian monk chants. The same goes for religious aesthetics and symbols. There is great power in being able to reclaim something that has historically been used to oppress. Especially for queer people."⁴⁰

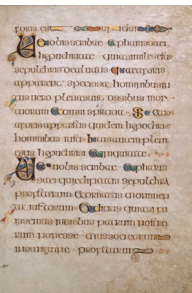
Hilf Dir Selbst!—God helps those who help themselves—serves as a title of a gothic-jungle album released in 2021 by a Berlin-based producer Christoph de Babalon. This motto, even though it is known to be one of the most prominent citations from the Bible, doesn't actually appear in the source. The rumour became indicative of Christian morality although it was birthed in another circumstance—conceived in ancient Greece. This transposition of meaning—a meaning traveling uncontrollably from one temporal context into another—feels familiar in our tendency to connect with the past. Incomprehensive. The past that never occurred but could have. The past that was reimagined, a distant void marking present ideologies and desires. I am listening to the lamentations expressed in the album, and it feels recognizable, this post-hope expression of stillness in excruciating affliction. My imagination, activated bit by bit by the sonic experience, carries me towards a different time-space and I land amid the Middle Ages. I find myself caught in the liminal space, unable to fully enter or leave, having one foot in-between the fall of the Western Roman Empire in the 5th century and the weight of the early modern period's witch-hunts bearing down on me, the other somewhere in the 21st century. This sensation becomes more vivid as I focus on the accompanying album cover and start carefully scanning it with my eyes. A collage made of tears and armour-clad by Nicola Tirabasso, alias visio. Different epochs conflating under the influence of raining castles melting into ornate dissolved rotunda-like font ornamenting this confusing image.



In this example I see the gesture, the usage of an epoch—the Medieval period—serving as an ornament, as an indication that we are led towards, that beckons us to feel moved, to find relation. Ornament here is thus an appreciation uttered both towards the past and the present simply and mostly through the act of paying attention and dedicating time. Here, medieval imagery—which to me in this context is not just a graphic depiction but rather a distant cousin of imagination, derived from Old French *imaginacion* meaning *concept, mental picture; hallucination*, and Latin *imaginationem* meaning *imagination, a fancy*⁴¹—is used to grasp at least a fragment of the present-day zeitgeist through image-creation.

In this album, describing itself as a delicate depression, the ornament guides us towards the future that will questionably bring anything new but repetitions of what has already happened, what has already been—both felt and expressed by our ancestors. Contemporary allure of the Medieval ages is

- 39 description of the album *Hilf Dir Selbst!* by Christoph de Babalon
- 40 Yalcinkaya, Günseli. *When Medieval Mysticism Conquers the Dance Floor*. RA Electronic Music Online, 2021, <https://ra.co/features/3921>
- 41 Online Etymology Dictionary, <https://www.etymonline.com/word/imagination>, 2017

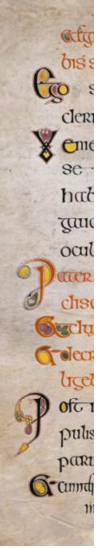


Book of Hours, 15th

Christoph de Babalon, — Hilf Dir Selbst!



@visio

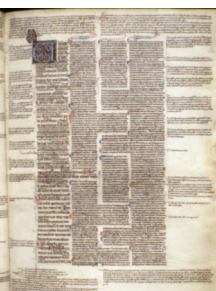
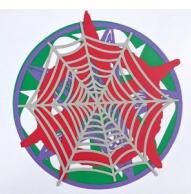


Corpus Grammaticorum Latinorum, end of 8th century



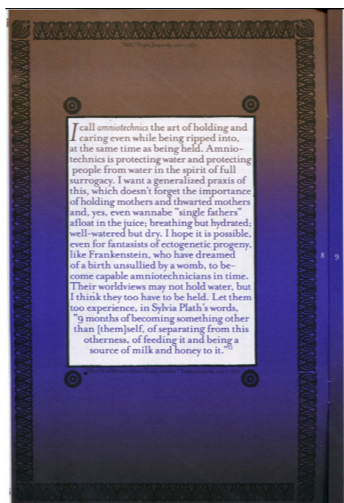
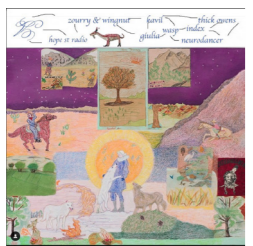
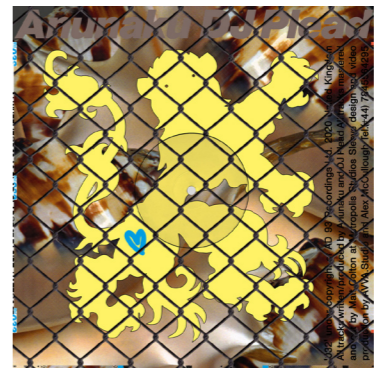
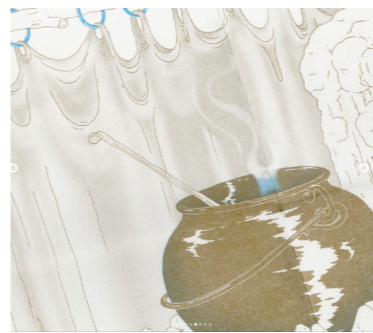
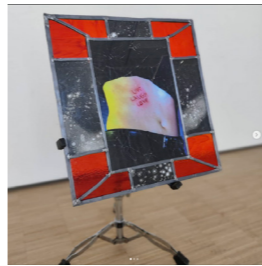
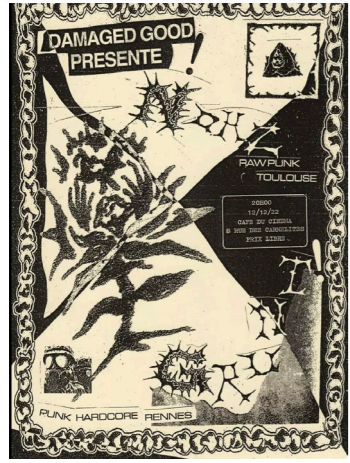
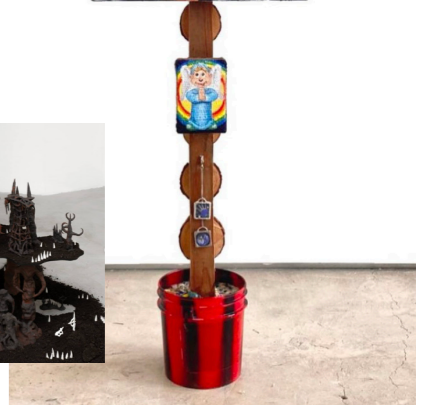
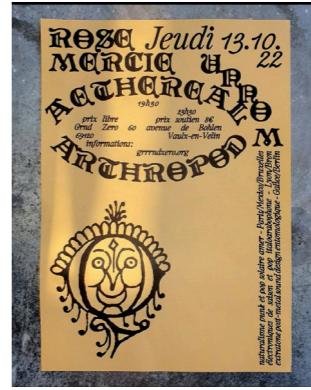
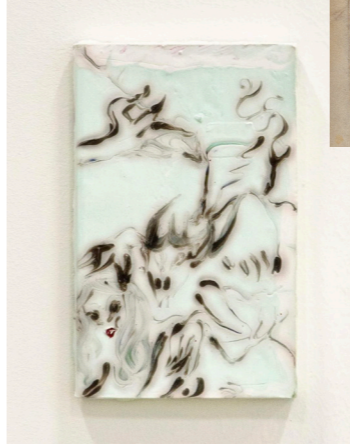
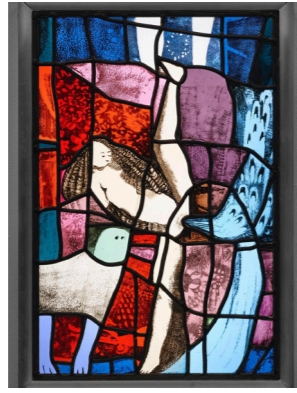
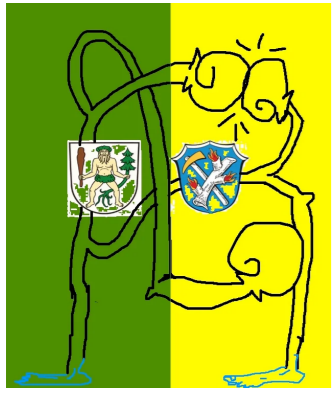
Painting from Hildegard von Bingen

@th3no4h



Commentary to the Bible, 1220-30

- 35 Eco, Umberto. *Dreaming of the Middle Ages. Travels Through Hyperreality*, 1987
- 36 Ibid.
- 37 Ibid.
- 38 various postmodern tropes directed towards the medieval past



I will one day caption all the images; for now please excuse me, but i don't have energy

fundamentally tied to the desire to re-enchant the world in reaction to the prevailing reality of scientific rationalism. From this perspective, the future appears as chimera, materializing itself as a constant self-actualization of the past in the interim with the present. And it is a gruesome picture.

*Consider TikTok microtrends like cottagecore, fairycore and goblin-core subcultures, all of which emerged over the pandemic and hint at a wider discontent towards the world at present.*⁴²

In the *Ghosts of My Life*, Mark Fisher gives us a tool that contributes to the better understanding of the current artistic climate by introducing the term hauntology, originally coined by Derrida. Hauntology is the specter of the past that keeps haunting us.⁴³ We relate to the past in our conceptualization of the present, and through this employment of the already existing narrative, it becomes strong again, vivid because we engage with it anew, creating new associations. Looking through Fisher's eyes, we would see here the dialogue between the Middle Ages and the contemporary art scene as disenchanting in essence, an excessive tolerance of the archaic which lost its clarity.⁴⁴ Haunted by the lost futures that never arrived, artists use the imagery associated with the pre-capitalistic world of the Middle Ages. But to Fisher, this future will never arrive because we are unable conceptualize anything new. Recycling old ideas that are ultimately consumed by capitalist realism is a frightening notion, but one that must be considered. Despite this disheartening reality, we must rise above it and make it insufficient for our pursuit of reengaging with being.

Nostalgia having purpose outside of itself. This aesthetics asks us: what is the present? Where is it? The sound and image answering with a helpless cry. The visio-created image conjures the widespread association of the Middle Ages with mystery, uncertainty, and terror—described by Umberto Eco as the barbaric age.⁴⁵ At first glance, the violence depicted in the artwork may go unnoticed due to its grotesque nature. However, once it is observed, it becomes impossible to unsee.

*However, a progressive view of human knowledge should also consider that the concept we have of the so-called dark ages is most likely not our own at all, but rather ideas imposed on us by a growing capitalist empire that needed to build a fervent belief in the dawn of a modern age and create a dark past from which we could emerge. To enter the state of mind of a distant epoch requires a great shift of belief systems.*⁴⁶

It is not just the historical facts themselves that are important in our engagement with reality, but rather how we interpret and navigate them, even when faced with contradictory or ambiguous information. This interplay of truths has the power to rethink this relationship. This interplay of truths has an unclear subversive potential. What may appear grotesque to me could have originally been intended with sincerity.

The designs of Nicola Tirabasso possess a powerful quality that derives from their ability to create an ambiguous and confusing atmosphere, resulting in a strong presence. This presence is achieved through the disruption of one's ego. We see it in how they employ medieval signs such as blackletters, ele-

42 Yalcinkaya, Günseli. *When Medieval Mysticism Conquers the Dance Floor*. RA Electronic Music Online, 2021, <https://ta.co/features/3921>

43 Fisher, Mark. *Ghosts of My Life: Writings on Depression, Hauntology and Lost Futures*. London: Zero Books, 2014

44 Fisher, Mark. *Mark Fisher: The Slow Cancellation of The Future*. Youtube, Uploaded by pmilat, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aCgkLICtSkQ>

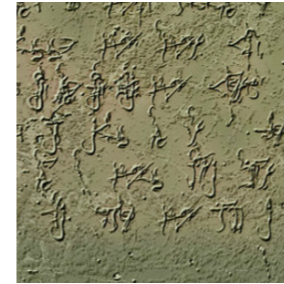
45 Eco, Umberto. *Dreaming of the Middle Ages. Travels Through Hyperreality*, 1987

46 Exhibition curated by Daniel van Straalen. *Medieval Minded*. 2019

ments of insular art, illuminated letters, and so on, but also in how they succeed in conveying an identifiable atmosphere after the primary, decipherable and clear signs are gone. The neo-medievalist gaze, to be convincing, must possess a profound understanding of the processes shaping the creation of different associations and abstractions. It results in us, the spectators, often finding ourselves assigning the word medieval to a work of art or object without the ability to discern the specific elements and pinpoint the signifiers that contribute to this choice of words.^(r)

The ornament can be equated with expression also because it acts as a particular type of sign, whose original content fades almost completely in the favour of the meaning it has to embody or to enhance in a particular context. Its content being reduced or inessential, the ornamental sign acts as pure expression, although its form cannot be devoid of its primal sense and is chosen precisely for its signifying potential

(Criticos, Mihaela. *The Ornamental Dimension: Contributions to a Theory of Ornament*. New Europe College Yearbook, 2004)



asemic writing from x, wheel by heith



Language of Bugs



x, wheel by heith next to Voynich Manuscript

One instance of this phenomenon can be found in the album X, wheel by Heith featuring image assembled by visio. It resembles a map or stela, adorned with asemic writing^(s) by Heith and Pietro Agostoni bringing the affect like that of an old manuscript. Some time ago I stumbled upon a 15th century work, the Voynich Manuscript—the purpose of which remains undecipherable. Some speculations regarding its content include a scientific diary, a forgery, a medicine book, astrological readings, or herbal remedies. Having a glimpse of mysterious spirituality that is not possible to grasp with words that are known to us—asemic writing eliminates meaning in that it does not convey a verbal message, but the evocation of writing is meaningful^(v) on another plane. It conveys something about the nature of writing that is generally obliterated by the verbal message. (...) This is a description of writing that locates its essence in the rhythms and gestural relations of marking. It is precisely this vision of writing that asemics wants to convey.⁴⁷

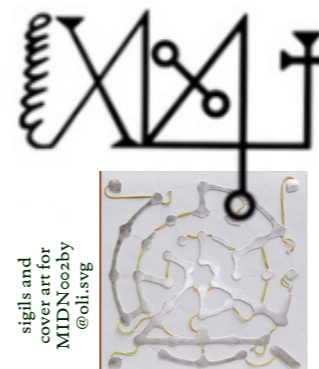
There is parallel sensation that I see expressed in both asemic writing and pre-capitalistic ornamentation of life (in forms of magick, feminine power, consideration of body and mind more united, investigating the world from within not from the outside) that makes this immediate association with Middle Ages possible. A mythical rather than historical embodiment. Asemic writing can be seen here as a contemporary attempt at reconciliation with some aspects of medieval epistemology, yet another transposition.

a shadow, impression, and abstraction of conventional writing (Jacobson, Michael, Schwenger, Peter. *Asemic: The Art of Writing*. 2019)

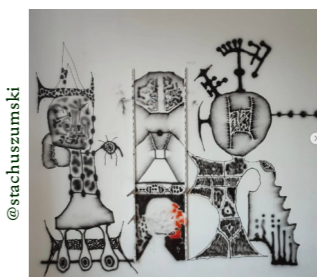
These shapes have been designed and crafted to be used as a computer font with the specific purpose of enabling the practice of data divination, meditation, and investigations of the unconscious. This is a tool for detaching our cognitive system from the relationship between language and object, and from the relationship that connects a sound to a specific meaning. A tool for detaching us from our anthropocentric vision of realities. It's also an attempt to sabotage our common language and—along with it—

I learned this technique while working in sound design — you can just like deep-fake words. You just take syllables and move them around and if you do it correctly, it sounds like that's how they were spoken. So between the chords and my voice being deep-faked constantly, there isn't actually literal meaning in the music. Especially in Chinese, which is a monosyllabic language. It's actually just gibberish. You cannot understand anything. With that, even when I play these songs out as gibberish, people still have visceral emotional reactions to it. That indicates to me that the music has effectively imprinted whatever moment of emotion I had when I made it.
(bod, Get lost in bod []'s sprawling Music for Self-Esteem, 2020, <https://www.thefader.com/2020/04/30/bod-nich-zhu-music-for-self-esteem-interview>)

47 Schwenger, Peter. *Asemic: The Art of Writing*. University of Minnesota Press, 2019



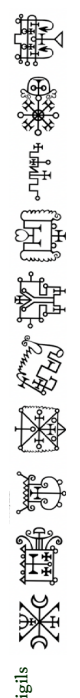
sigils and cover art for MIDNcozby @oli.svg



@stachusumski



drawn sound, Daphne Oram, 1950s





Doodle in the lower margin of a medieval page

The possibility of micro-resistance^u in homo ornans⁴⁸

Micro-resistance refers to subtle forms of resistance to authority or dominant systems, such as ignoring rules or norms, expressing dissent through tone or body language, and using irony, humour, or other forms of small subversion. While not as visible as more overt forms of resistance, it can still be effective in challenging oppressive systems.

Revaluation of medieval practices such as magical beliefs, belief in parapsychology, and biofeedback is considered by Silvia Federici as once perceived as a real threat to a society in which it had a disruptive role, killed the industries, was offering an alternative to feudal relations. In the world of mechanized body, these customs are gobbled by neoliberal forces that make space for these quirks because they no longer disrupt the regularity of social behaviour.⁴⁹ Sylvia Federici and Mark Fisher concur in their bleak view of our ability to effect change within neoliberalism.

I keep coming up against the same wall.
Affliction follows me, inextricable encounter sometimes muted
I crave more. More of this silence.

*To nurture and fulfill the complexity of an immanent ability, we sometimes need to withdraw from perceivable action and discourse. Such a protective withdrawal carries a hint of heresy with it.*⁵⁰

November 13
I stand easy and outside of this world. I needed a break. Ostensibly passive, just staring at it.

Suddenly, my body starts to gently tremble as I feel a growing presence inside me. My belly abruptly filling with an idyllic picture of a sentient⁵¹ encounter that starts to expand and expand and it fills me completely. In it, the body of one is the body of all. I am all of them (I don't know how many there are) and their material surfaces engulfed in each other, an erotic dynamic. At first, iffy, I don't recognize their human-like forms as they are intertwined without clear boundaries, so radiant from the blinding threads gracefully handled, extended from (what seems to be) one body to another. I can't see with my eyes but somehow manage to navigate all my movements with intention guided from within. The threads are very comfortable, different depending on connection, but equally tight; flexible, allowing for fluid movement without causing any discomfort. I feel so clearly that, now being a part of this mass of bodies, there is nothing more holy in the present than this encounter, there is nothing more than this encounter. Now, there is no space for other reality.

48 ornans meaning adorning, decorating, praising
49 Federici, Silvia. *Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body and Primitive Accumulation*. Autonomedia, 2004
50 Robertson, Lisa. *A Simone Weil project: Anemones.?*, 2021
51 forms that are able to perceive and feel

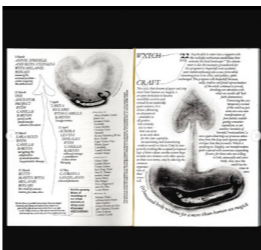
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Wxrch Crafr Cycle '21, KABK



Break does not mean negation, I didn't leave. I was just trying to refuse for a moment, being responsible to the present.^(v)

*To be alive: not just the carcass
But the spark.
That is crudely put but...
If we're not supposed to dance,
Why all this music?*⁵²

^v
(Standing apart) also means giving yourself the critical break that media cycles and narratives will not, allowing yourself to believe in another world while living in this one(...) To stand apart is to look at the world (now) from the point of view of the world as it could be (the future), with all of the hope and sorrowful contemplation that this entails.
(Odell, Jenny. *How to do nothing*. Brooklyn, NY, Melville House, 2019)

The objective is not to maintain consistency, but rather to embrace the inherent contradictions within us—a sort of Nietzschean *Amor Fati*⁵³, a serenity in accepting the present circumstances as necessary. The oppressive narratives of neoliberalism and dooming critiques can numb and paralyze us, leading to feelings of disappointment and resentment. However, by transcending these limiting beliefs, we can tap into a sense of fulfilment and connection with the world around us.

I'm sitting alone in my room watching this documentary with a silly, relatable title I'm not unhappy. The narrator talks about their friendships.

*With them, I'm in a bubble
Warm and cozy
like the backstage of the serious life we need to have on the side
the moment I catch my breath
I don't have any anxiety left
these moments make me forget the future
held by their strength, I step back
what matters is what we're living
everything seems far away
years passing by*⁵⁴

Seems like they figured it all out—somehow managed to transcend the neoliberal reality of all these concepts allowing us to bathe in the numbness of our condition.

Or...maybe they haven't?

The scene is followed by a crude conversation about the pointless reality of studying, elusive nature of self-discovery, and the ennui induced by the oppressive forces of the Global North.

52 Orr, Gregory. *To Be Alive*. From *Concerning the Book That Is the Body Of the Beloved*, Copper Canyon Press, 2005
53 Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Gay Science*, Courier Corporation, 2012, (originally published in 1882)
54 Decaster, Laïs. *I'm not unhappy*, Paris 8 Vincennes-Saint-Denis, 2018



@barbarvara

Yes, I am aware of the decline around me, but I still need to get by... I still want to be an agent in this fatalistic world, so I need to accept that this determinism imposed by capitalist devour belongs to the realm of thought and limits me. I can still revolt. The revolt is a necessary component of this dynamic. Seeing beauty as revolting.

To see things as beautiful is to make things beautiful, I guess?

But to fall in love with the world, we must be aesthetically alive to it.

^(w) Although this solution may seem straightforward and even trite, it is the most challenging to fully embrace and embody in our lives.

w

The insight of James Hillman, a student of Carl Jung aids me. A glimmer of hope. There is this one interview that I kept compulsively sending to my friends two years ago while struggling with mental exhaustion, reaching the limits of my sanity. In it, he identifies the root issue plaguing contemporary (so-called) Western societies as a chronic, numbing detachment from the world and its captivating beauty. *The "cosmos" which was the world for the universe, was at the same time signifying an adornment. The cosmos was an adornment.*

Hillman suggests that we can heal ourselves by reigniting our sense of aesthetics. If we approach the world with a sense of its beauty, we will want to preserve it, just as we would do with anything that captivates our hearts.

(Hillman, James. *James Hillman on Changing the Object of our Desire*. Youtube, Uploaded by TreeTV, 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rFaoXo6hLOU>)

So please don't cancel the future, not yet

*In her private journal of January 18, 1915, in the bleakest hours of the First World War, Virginia Woolf observed that 'the future is dark, which is the best thing the future can be, I think.' As Rebecca Solnit has written, 'It's an extraordinary declaration, asserting that the unknown need not be turned into the known through false divination, or the projection of grim political or ideological narratives; it's a celebration of darkness, willing—as that "I think" indicates—to be uncertain even about its own assertion.'*⁵⁵

Convoluting path of the simple engagement

I'm walking towards you
not aimless still scared but

I have changed a bit insofar everything changes with its small disturbance

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