

The Footprints of Curiosity's Demise

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This is the path, or rather, the different paths I took to reach where I wanted to be. The decisions I made in the various phases I encountered, stepping off the path and improvising to discover something new and interesting, then getting back on track to ensure I'm heading in the right direction. A highly varied route filled with discoveries spurred by curiosity rather than challenge.

Chapter 1

I come from a town in the Sierra de Madrid. It's not a high mountain town, but the garden of my house has always been countryside, and I've had the opportunity to go out and discover plants, animals, insects, or climb the highest rock to see my house from above. Whenever there was a problem, I was bored, or simply for leisure, I would go to the countryside. A few years ago, my family bought a country house in Asturias, in the north of Spain, located in a village surrounded by mountains, rivers and coast. Here, I have been able to discover new routes and landscapes very different from the village where I live in Madrid. It's a much more wild and steep mountain.



Fig.1. Photograph made by me, Torrelodones, Madrid, 2023

Because my town is located only twenty minutes by car from the city, people who live and work there prefer to have the possibility of living here, as it takes the same time to get to work by car as it does by taking the subway. Pursuing the desire to be at peace and surrounded by nature, not hearing the noises of urban territory, cars, ambulances, endless constructions... It's quite interesting to know that this migration from the city to the village is what is causing the destruction of the mountains in the villages surrounding the city so that everyone can fit and achieve that idolized peace. My town is becoming more and more like a small city, open areas becoming scarcer, and it is increasingly filled with garbage.

Destruction through construction. This concept makes me think that this is how humans operate. More comfort equals less planet. This can relate to Richard Long's work, "A Line Made by Walking." He walked over a grass field going back and forth along the same line until this line became a reality

because the grass and plants were increasingly flattened. It seems to me like a good representation of how we function, the deterioration made by routine, and the comfort of knowing where we come from and where we are going. Why change that? If it's safe and the result is always going to be similar, perhaps deviating can be disappointing. I think it's something that conditions us as human beings and something that mentally wears us down and also wears down the land we live on. In my opinion, Richard Long achieves something with this work—he builds through destruction, turning a path into a statement of deterioration.



A LINE MADE BY WALKING

ENGLAND 1967

Fig.2. Richard Long, *A line made by walking*, England, 1967

This artist seems particularly interested in how people alter the landscape, especially in unnatural, rectilinear, and even circular forms. By slightly affecting the earth, individuals create monumental, futuristic works that blend with the landscape. For instance, “Brushed Path a Line in Nepal” consists of a photograph of the path during a 21-day journey in Nepal. It is inspiring that a path you casually follow, seemingly insignificant, reveals its importance as it unfolds, guiding you for many days. The trail becomes a mark created thanks to previous routes, perhaps evolving from initial failures to the perfection of a precise path that now serves as a clear guide, keeping you on track.



Fig.3. Richard Long, *Brushed Path a Line in Nepal*, Nepal, 1983

Beneath the visible writing of small roads,
gravelled roads, farm tracks, often with a comb
of grass in the middle between deep wheel ruts,
hidden beneath clear-felling's tangle of brushwood,
still legible in the dried-up moss,
there is another script: the old paths.
They go from lake to lake, from valley
to valley. At times they deepen,
become quite distinct, and large bridges
of medieval stone carry them over black streams
at times they are dissipated over bare flat rocks,
one easily loses them in marshy ground, so
imperceptible that at one moment they are there,
the next not. There is a continuation,
there is always a continuation, as long as
one looks for it, these paths are persistent,
they know what they want and with their knowledge
they combine considerable cunning.
You walk eastwards, the compass persistently shows east,
the path faithfully follows the compass, like a straight line,
everything is in order, then the path swings northwards.
In the north lies nothing. What does the path want now?
Soon you come to a huge bog, and the path knew that.
It leads us around, with the reassurance of one
who has been this way before. It knows where the bog lies,
it knows where the rockface gets far too steep, it knows
what happens when it goes north instead of south
of the lake. It has done all of this
so many times previously. That is the whole point
of being a path. That it has been done
before. Who made the path? Charcoal burners, fishermen,
women with skinny arms collecting firewood?
Outlaws, timid and grey as the moss,
still in their dream with the fratricide blood
on their hands. Autumnal hunters in the wake
of trusty foxhounds with their frost-clear bark?
All and none of them. We make it together,
you too make it on a windy day when
it is early or late on the earth:
We write the paths, and the paths remain,
and the paths are wiser than we are,
and know all we wanted to know.

This poem "Ballad on the paths in Västmanland" by Lars Gustafsson speaks of paths and their wisdom, created by all of us as we strive to forge the most direct and less perilous route to our destination. A path always knows what lies ahead, a path is an artwork made by the process of people.

"I am an artist who makes walks. A walk defines the form of the land in space and time beyond the scale of sculpture or the fixed image. Some of my walks are formal (straight, circular, rhythmic) almost ritualized. I have climbed around mountains instead of to the top; I have made walks about slowness, walks about stones and water. I have made walks within a place as opposed to a linear

journey; walking without traveling,”¹ says Richard Long. Perhaps art is the process of reaching something, the experience of what you are doing, and what you present to the public is the result of this.

What work exists without a process, or rather, what work exists without context? For example, I often draw without thinking, not giving much importance to the drawing but paying more attention to the form I am creating, to the line that sometimes satisfies the desire for it to be more organic in some parts, perhaps straighter in others. Depending on the technique, some make me apply them in one way or another, depending on how they visually satisfy the drawing. But I don't do any prior research on what I want to do or try to give the drawing a narrative. I believe that the process of this type of drawing is the context in which I find myself. What attracts me at this moment, how I feel, what I feel like doing, what I don't feel like doing, what kind of music I'm listening to, the weather, where I am... Perhaps all of this is the construction abstracted into a simple drawing.

Nature is where we all come from, and it is the great source of creativity. The process of creation, plants, animals, landscapes, light, rocks, moss, wind... and many more things that make the terrain infinitely varied. The organic way this world creates is similar to what our minds need to create. Thanks to being born and raised in the mountains, I have gained skills, felt comfortable in hostile places (or at least not felt uncomfortable), and produce an amplification of the senses when I am in such environments. This has been my introduction to art and my main influence when it comes to creating. Experimenting is what makes things come out unexpectedly, sometimes interesting and sometimes not, but always unexpected and unique. Knowing what to use, or rather, what works, I think is a more human aspect—the psychology of what an image conveys. This is where the artist's magic lies, knowing how to compose the spell to communicate what you want to convey.

Roman Signer, a Swiss sculptor, develops his practice, or rather, his practice is born from a mountain river, which he defines as his playground, as it was like the garden of his house. There,

¹ Richard Long (1980), five, six, pick up sticks, seven, eight, lay them straight, London: Anthony D'Offay Gallery



Fig.4. Photograph by me, Amsterdam, 2023

he could observe all the changes that the river manifested. This caused the artist to be loaded with ideas that he would later develop when he met with his friends, such as building a dam, a jump into the water, homemade fishing systems... Different ways of mastering the river and nature to have fun, which I think is a way to develop a logic of how nature works and how to handle it to create something of one's own. It's something that makes me feel connected, as with my friends and family, we have always experimented with ways to build cabins, cross rivers, climb trees and rocks using our heads and what the countryside provided us.

In Signer's sculptural work, we can observe that the use and control of natural forces are what activate his sculptures. For example, in the sand cube tower, the bottom cube has a hole that, when unplugged, allows the sand to flow out, eventually causing the tower of cubes to collapse to the ground. In this case, gravity takes center stage in shaping the sculpture. However, he also has a piece where he creates a small wooden cabin with a chair in the middle. Signer sits in the chair wearing protective gear, and in front of him is a paint can rigged with an explosive. When it detonates, the paint splatters across the walls, but on the wall behind Signer the paint forms his silhouette. It's akin to a photograph, as if the paint were photons of light and his body acts as a barrier, revealing his silhouette by preventing the paint from passing through. "I'm not happy unless an elemental force is part of the work,"² says Signer. The contrast he achieves through the control of elements blended with the human character and their objects is what, in my opinion, defines his work. It creates satisfaction and entertainment.



Fig.5. Roman Signer, *Kabine*, Venice, 1999

Boredom is also one of the great sources of creativity. Perhaps being in the mountains and being bored are the perfect companions for creating art, as boredom builds a tension that generates restlessness, and in the mind of a creative person, this can create worlds of fantasy and a universe of ideas to explore. The mountains provide a vast collection of materials and inspiration. On the other hand, boredom is often caused by monotony. Being in nature often brings solitude and a distancing from social life, as in this world, the city offers opportunities to achieve economic stability and fulfill dreams that might never be realized if one lives in the countryside. In previous generations, those born in small towns would stay there. There was neither time nor money to explore the world as we can now. Working the land requires a lot of effort and dedication, and although we, who are saturated with city life, idolize that lifestyle, I don't think we would easily adapt to that rhythm and monotony.

² Artist Roman Signer: It's Not Forbidden to Laugh, Louisiana Channel, 2023, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PKugd04zhHA&t=1077s>

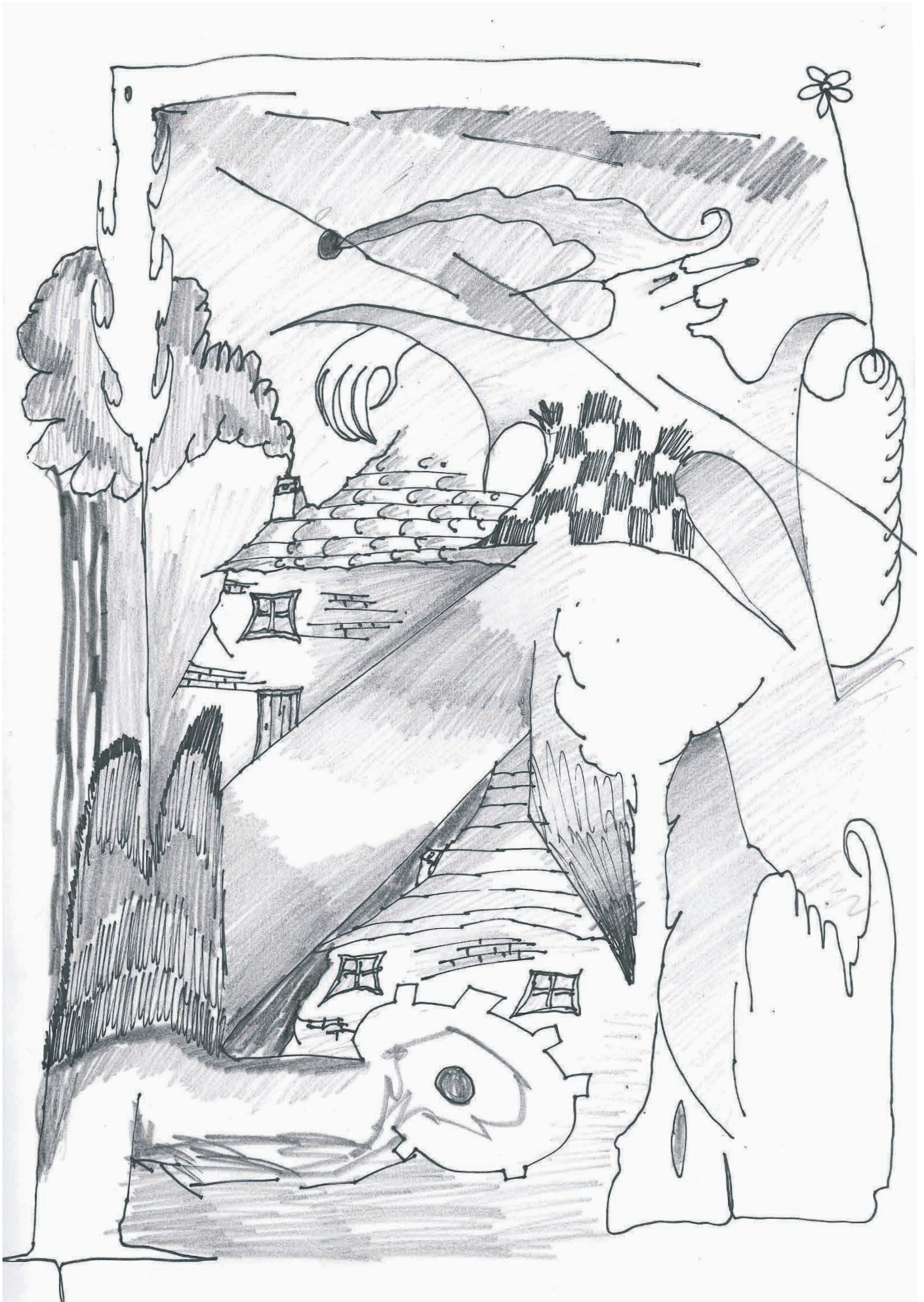


Fig.6. Drawing by me, *Based on 1st Chapter*, marker and graphite on paper, 2023

Quick, quick, let's get to it. Look at that beautiful flower; I wish to have them all, every species and every color. Nature is a wonder. It smells of firewood, and from down here, I can see a mist that limits my vision. It's a dark atmosphere, but with a sense of discovery and greatness. I wish to climb up to see the sea of smoke, and above it, the sun will shine brightly and joyfully.

Although it's quite comfortable inside with the fireplace, where you can cook delicious things and have a hot broth or drink to warm the body. I'm glad to be here; any scene is a good scene. Everyone builds their day differently, and when you start observing, the contrast each family in the village offers is very interesting. But seeing everything unfold in the same place makes it feel like everything makes sense and has a canonical composition.

Chapter 2

Whenever you take the car or set out on a path to begin an ascent, there's this unique feeling of both respect and intrigue as you look up from below at where you need to climb. Now, living in the Netherlands, a country with an average elevation of 30 meters above sea level, returning to a mountainous environment makes that sensation even more profound. After several months without encountering any terrain elevation surpassing the height of buildings, seeing sharp-edged stone monsters on the horizon, having to lean towards the car windshield just to catch a glimpse of the mountain peak, or simply having the chance to climb a rock in ten minutes to look down at the village – these are all unique sensations.

When you walk uphill on a mountain, due to the incline and the unevenness of the path, you often find yourself looking down for long stretches. When you finally lift your head and see the expansive landscape, it creates an incredible visual effect, as if you're zooming infinitely with a video camera. However, it always remains the same.

There are numerous challenges when you're reaching the most dangerous part of the mountain; you need an incredible level of improvisation because conditions are never the same, and the terrain can vary due to climate changes.

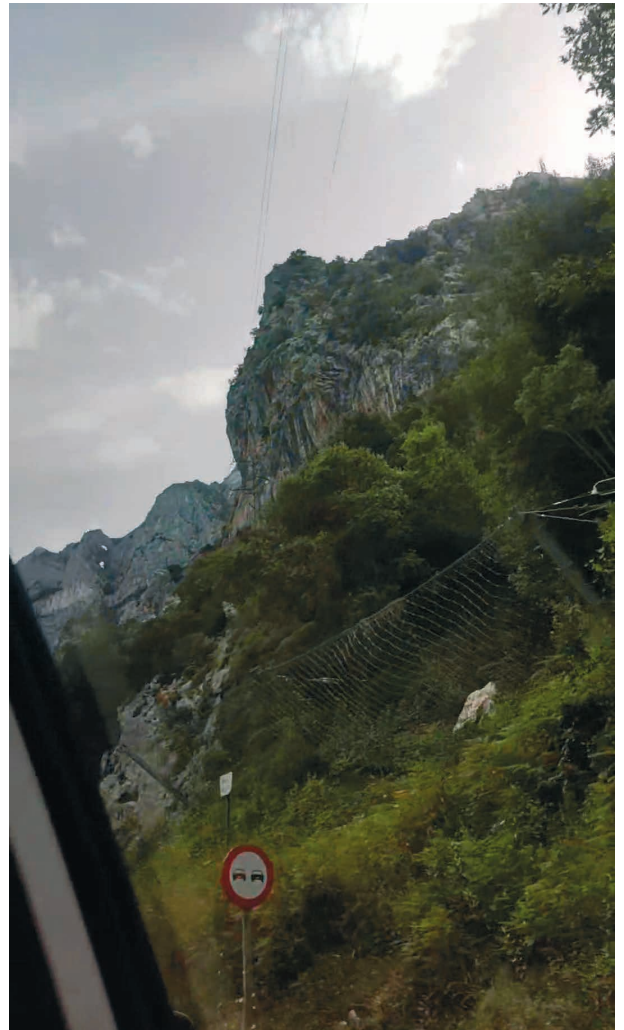


Fig.7. Photograph by me, Picos de Europa, 2023



Fig.8. Photograph by me, Sierra de Madrid, 2023

Recently, I watched a documentary called “The Alpinist,” featuring climber Marc-André Leclerc, a young man climbing the most crazy mountains through free solo climbing—without safety ropes. Any mistake meant death. He does this in a non-competitive way because that’s his life, what makes him feel alive and connected to nature and to himself. In fact, nobody knew him, yet he was already surpassing records that others achieved with ropes. For the documentary team, it was a challenging task, keeping up with him and recording his ascents was difficult because he wanted to experience it alone, him against the mountain. I understand it must be an incomparable sensation, feeling that you’ve achieved perfection, that every step you’ve taken has been an event, and mentally conquering a challenge with pure concentration without succumbing to fear, doubt, or any mental pitfalls that the brain can throw at you at any moment. “The art of surviving in the most extreme situations,”³ says Reinhold Messner, an Italian climber who became the first person in the world to climb all 14 peaks over 8000 meters without supplemental oxygen.

My relationship with the mountains may not be related to this type of climbing, although I find it important to mention and something I admire. While many may think it’s crazy and that these people don’t care about their loved ones, I believe it’s something done because life has given you the opportunity to feel so strong and possess such powerful mental control. Unfortunately, some people turn mountain experiences into a competition, where quantity matters more than the quality of the experience.

3 Peter Mortimer, Nick Rosen, *The Alpinist*, (USA, Red Bull Media House, Sender Films, 2021)



Fig.9. Screenshot of *The Alpinist*, by Peter Mortimer, Nick Rosen, 2021

“To pit oneself against the mountain is necessary for every climber: to pit oneself against other players and make a race of it is to reduce to the level of a game what is essentially an experience.”⁴ This quote from Nan Shepherd’s book “A Living Mountain” prompts me to reflect on Richard Serra’s work, “The Matter of Time.” This installation comprises massive sheets of rusted metal that create imposing and labyrinthine corridors within the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao. The artwork is described as subjecting oneself to the silent yet muscular cliffs of raw metal⁵, as if constrained by geological limitations that restrict movement. This can be associated with seeking a summit when surrounded by enormous rocks that obscure the path, forcing improvisation to reach the top. The heightened attention and anxiety of not knowing the way out become part of the experience. But why

4 Nan Shepherd, *A Living Mountain* (India: Fourth Estate, 12 May 2022).

5 Julian Bell, ‘Contemporary Art and the Sublime’, in Nigel Llewellyn and Christine Riding (eds.), *The Art of the Sublime*, Tate Research Publication, January 2013, <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/research-publications/the-sublime/julian-bell-contemporary-art-and-the-sublime-r1108499>, accessed 19 December 2023.



Fig.10. Richard Serra, *The Matter of Time*, 2005

create art that evokes such feelings in the audience? Why impose such aggression when someone seeking such sensations can experience them in nature? Perhaps the magnitude of the experience is what makes it valuable, emphasizing the transformation of an experience into a game. Maybe art is like mountaineering—some do it for competition, while others do it to extract value from the experience and sensations.

In contrast, ‘The Marsh Ruins’ by Beverly Buchanan is a work situated in the Marshes of Glynn on the southeastern coast of Georgia. It consists of three large and sturdy mounds made of concrete and shell-studded aggregate that, thanks to nature, change appearance due to water erosion and

the heat of the sun. Destruction/construction. The work is partly a tribute to Igbo Landing ⁶, a crucial story of the quest for freedom by black people that unfolded on the other end of these swamps. It is hidden among the plants of this place, without any signage, making it so that those who manage to see it do so randomly or someone exploring the terrain and having the curiosity to see what those mounds are has stumbled upon them. Thus, providing access to the work for people who have ventured off the beaten path to discover something beyond what they expect to see in those recommended marshes. Beverly Buchanan's art is primarily characterized by creating sculptures, photography, and paintings that depict or rather denounce the lives of slaves and poverty. Because of this, she placed her works in locations where terrible events occurred, aiming to manifest what happened and prevent it from fading into oblivion. The most powerful and interesting aspect of her work is that it was composed of a childish style and color, conveying a message of freedom and affection that the privileged classes could not deal with. The way she used her art as a form of expression and freedom with such subtlety and determination, considering the places where such terrible events occurred, makes me think that what she felt was something so pure that it did not need to be exposed to people, but rather, people should expose themselves to her work. 'It is, of course, merely stupid to suppose that the record breakers do not love hills. Those who do not love them don't go up, and those who do can never have enough of it. It is an appetite that grows in feeding. Like drink and passion, it intensifies life to the point of glory.'⁷ Freedom and feeling powerful

6 Igbo Landing (also called Ibo Landing, Ebo Landing, or Ebos Landing) is a historic site at Dunbar Creek on St. Simons Island, Glynn County, Georgia. It was the setting of a mass suicide in 1803 by captive Igbo people who had taken control of their slave ship and refused to submit to slavery in the United States. The event's moral value as a story of resistance towards slavery has symbolic importance in African American folklore as the flying Africans legend, and in literary history.

7 Nan Shepherd, *A Living Mountain* (India: Fourth Estate, 12 May 2022).



Fig.11. Beverly Buchanan, *The Marsh Ruins*, Georgia, 1981

are addictive, which is why the risk in extreme sports is always greater. When you achieve a goal, it's the end, and you need an even more challenging one to satisfy yourself. It's interesting how Nan Shepherd relates this vicious circle to nightlife, as drugs and alcohol provide mental states similar to adrenaline, euphoria, release, and freedom. This even becomes a need to escape problems and the feeling of being alienated due to how the system makes us function.

An ascent to the top of a mountain is always a process, a process that can be associated with many things in life. Whenever we want something, to achieve it, we need to go through the journey to reach that goal. I associate this with the creative process of a design, painting a picture, or cooking. This is where I find myself on a path of discoveries, decisions, getting lost and having to find the way back, getting tired and having to take breaks, taking paths that lead to dead ends to discover something new. All of this is very similar to when I walk in the mountains; it's never just about reaching the summit; on the way, you come across small treasures that make the journey different from the thousands of people who have passed through before. In the end, the detours you take by instinct and curiosity are what differentiate you from the rest and make your results unique.

Many times, we also find ourselves in situations where we can find shortcuts to skip parts that are not interesting to us. Although it may be risky at times, you can achieve quite a bit of success, even to the point where people can't resist copying you. This can lead to a 'desire path,' an visually incredible phenomenon that also satisfies functionality. It makes me think of parks where they've constructed a cement path that makes you take a terrible detour around the park when all you want to do is cross it to get home or buy bread. Inevitably, desire paths are created; some have become so significant that they have ended up making them permanent with cement due to their popularity. In the mountains, this is also something very common; sometimes, your physical fitness allows you to go straight up without having to follow the wide curves that everyone uses to climb. This can lead to new ways, routes, to climb, descend, or discover a new destination.



Fig.12. Desire path, from "What desire paths can tell us about how to design safer, better public spaces".



Fig.13. Drawing by me, marker, *Based on Chapter 2*, pastel and graphite on paper, 2023.

The sandpaper paths lead upwards, and I have to follow them even if they scrape and make my hands feel weak. There's no turning back; I have to figure out where this web of paths ends. Choosing which ones is the question—some seem easier but more boring, maybe that's the way to find something interesting, or should I take a more challenging one, so I might reach the heart of this maze sooner. Each path shows completely different sensations. One consists of strong wind and a moderate incline, but the air carries a blend of flower scents that provide a comforting feeling. However, there's another path that is very risky, with a steep elevation, but at the end of it, it shows a color that draws me in, it's hard not to want to select that one. I will try to vary and discover by choosing different paths and not always following the same one, so I'll get the most out of this experience.

Chapter 3

After an adventure filled with discoveries, challenges, and varied sensations, we reach the summit. The result of all the effort is incomparable. That feeling of reaching the top and having that panoramic view that borders on the surreal is indescribable. It's a sense of fulfillment and being in a dream. A sea of giant rocks now lies below you. The satisfaction of achieving what you set out to do and seeing that the result is much greater than expected. How different the world looks from up here – the tiny villages, the smoke from chimneys turning into clouds, clouds like sheets covering the surface of some mountains. Now all that's left is to enjoy the wide variety of visuals that being at this point offers you.



Fig.14. John Martin, *The Plains of Heaven*, 1851–3, Tate T01928

Werner Herzog is a great enthusiast of people who have a passion for something that involves a high level of risk. His work is enriched by several documentaries showcasing the lives and challenges of individuals passionate about different high-intensity sensations offered by nature. A great example of the sublime can be found in the documentary "The Fire Within," which features the video archive of the volcanologist couple, Katia and Maurice Krafft, who died in a volcano eruption in Japan. The documentary captures surreal images of the world in eruption, making the world seem almost fictional. Herzog mentions that the documentary is not about their lives as if it were a biography but to appreciate and enjoy the extensive collection of images recorded by these volcanologists. Watching it creates a sense of envy at what this couple saw and researched during their years of life, explaining why they were willing to give their lives for it. It's like witnessing hell ascending to the surface and the destruction caused by its terrible force – rivers of fire, clouds of deadly gasses, and darkness turning a sunny day into a dusty night. The expressive interior of the earth, forced to find its way out and create new landscapes on the surface. In the end, the earth and its surface are conditioned by what is inside and the superficial movement created by the different tectonic plates that form the Earth's surface, like a constantly tensioning and distending puzzle. When they separate, they cause fluids to erupt at tremendous temperatures, and as they cool, they create rocks, building islands and new stretches of solid surface. On the other hand, when they collide, the

earth feels compelled to rise and break, creating mountains. The world is in a continuous process of destruction and construction, similar to the process of ascending a peak or a life of creative projects.

It's interesting how Herzog feels the need to clearly reflect this aspect of people in hostile places, without creating this image of a cold perfection of someone achieving impossible things as if they were a feelingless machine. Perhaps what drives these people to set such challenges is what they have experienced and how they feel, and their survival technique is successful thanks to their personal instinct. For example, in the documentary "The Dark Glow Of The Mountains," Herzog shows an expedition by Reinhold Messner (mentioned in the previous chapter) and Hans Kammerlander, whose plan is to ascend two peaks in the Himalayas at once. Without oxygen and without sherpas. But the documentary not only shows the route, the difficulty, and the success but also delves into



Fig.15. Screenshot of *The Fire Within* by Werner Herzog, 2022



Fig.16. Screenshot of *The Fire Within* by Werner Herzog, 2022

Messner's personality and his past. Messner lost his brother in an expedition in the same place, and Herzog asks him about it and what he feels, making Messner open up and bring to light his intense emotions about that tragedy, which might be the driving force that makes him unafraid of death. He says, 'either my life or the world stops. Presumably, it will be that as my life ends, so will the world.' It's a phrase that romanticizes death, softening it to the level of something beautiful, like the end of an adventure book.

In the documentary "The Great Ecstasy of Woodcarver Steiner," Herzog also shows the life of Walter Steiner from a very personal perspective, practically narrating how he feels and what he thinks about the moments he experienced during his life as a ski jumping long-distance athlete at that time and his occupation as a carpenter. "When you start with the flying part, you feel the tautness in your head, maybe I can even shut my mouth because I feel it's superfluous, just a krumping up, then it's all easy, that's when you become aware of what is going on. That's what is great about skyflying,"⁸Steiner describes. He describes it as something unique, perhaps sublime, and what fascinates me the most about the documentary is the contrast between the images of the skiers flying in slow motion and when they touch the ground, ending up smashing against the ground somersaulting. Of course, in those days, the skis were not as perfected as they are now; for example, Steiner carved his own skis, which made landing well very challenging, so when they do land, it's in a ridiculous and amusing manner. It's very interesting how the glorious is hand in hand with the ridiculous or how the glorious, if something goes wrong, becomes something funny and comical. An example could be skateboarding – when you land a trick perfectly, it looks visually incredible, but if you bail (fall off the skateboard) in a way that involves a guaranteed crash, it turns the trick into a comedic scene. This concept can also be related to feeling superior and how ridiculous it is. For example, if you are a millionaire and have the possibility to buy everything – land, businesses, have it all. In the end, it's not important how much you have or how you feel about having all that you have, but whether you are happy, have experiences that passionate (or impassion) you, fill yourself with what interests and intrigues you. In my opinion, having everything and feeling nothing for all that you have reduces it to having nothing. But the feeling of superiority is addictive; perhaps that's why ascending to a peak and feeling above everything is such an incredible sensation.

8 Werner Herzog, *The Great Ecstasy of Woodcarver Steiner*, (West Germany: Werner Herzog Filmproduktion Süddeutscher Rundfunk (SDR), 1974).

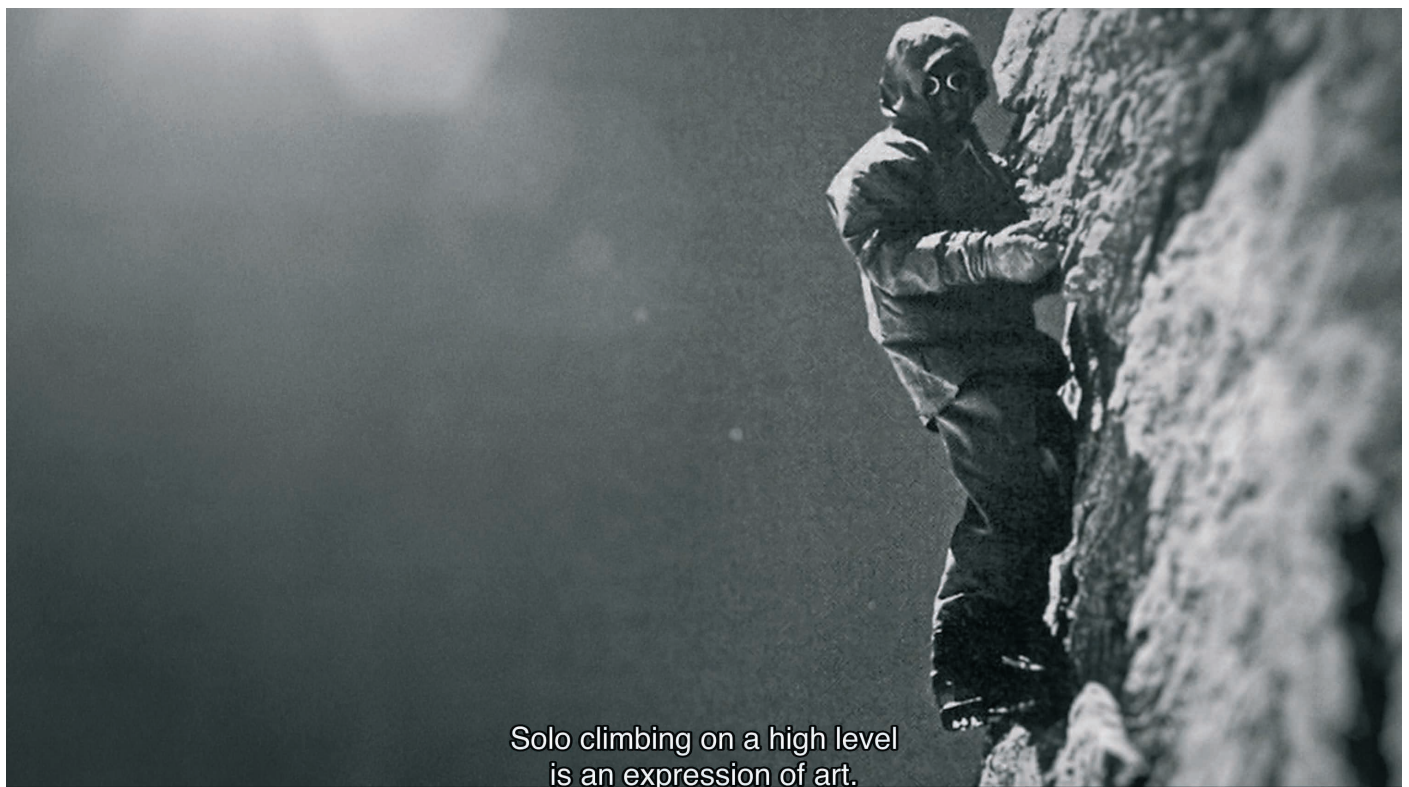


Fig.17. Screenshot of *The Alpinist*, by Peter Mortimer, Nick Rosen, 2021



Fig.18. Screenshot of *The Great Ecstasy of Woodcarver Steiner* by Werner Herzog, 1974

“The tyranny of the photographic lens, cursed by the promise of its indexical relation to reality, has given way to hyperreal representations—not of space as it is but of space as we can make it—for better or worse. There is no need for expensive renderings; a simple green screen collage yields impossible cubist perspectives and implausible concatenations of times and spaces alike.”⁹ Extract from “In Free Fall: A Thought Experiment on Vertical Perspective” written by Hito Steyerl. What I want to highlight is that with the camera, you can defy reality, which can also be achieved with painting. For example, the painting “Wanderer Above Sea Fog” by Caspar David Friedrich shows a great sense of superiority and power of the person who stars in the work due to the shot angle Friedrich chooses to recreate. It gives a feeling that the protagonist is the king of the land and that everything is at his disposal. When, perhaps, in reality, he would only be a small and fragile human with a cane surrounded by the immensity of nature. The psychology of camera shots is of great importance in cinema; the camera’s position has the power to intensify and diminish both the characters’ personality and the landscape. This is also related to the concept of the grandiose against the ridiculous and how something so simply can change from one to the other.

9 Hito Steyerl, “In Free Fall: A Thought Experiment on Vertical Perspective” (Issue #24, April 2011), <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/24/67860/in-free-fall-a-thought-experiment-on-vertical-perspective/>



Fig.19. Caspar David Friedrich, *Wanderer Above Sea Fog*, 1818

At the end, reaching the summit may not be the most important thing; rather, it is a panoramic reward that, after a lengthy process filled with challenges and discoveries, makes you feel fulfilled. A sense of completion, therefore, signifies the end of that particular journey, marking the beginning of the quest for a new one. A different one, perhaps, knowing that while you have physically and mentally achieved this without much hardship, the next one might be more challenging. The reward may be the same, but is it truly a prize without a great journey filled with experiences to attain it? In the end, you forge the reward yourself in the process. Yet, when you attain the prize, you can only enjoy it for a moment, and like everything else, it comes to an end.



Fig.20. Drawing by me, *Based on Chapter 3*, marker, pastels and graphite on paper, 2023

I've been staring at the ground for hours, completely focused. The truth is, I just wanted to reach the top, so I didn't pay much attention to the ascent, nor did I bother to see what surrounded me, letting curiosity guide me. But now, as I take the final step, what I see is unreal—a sea of textures and monsters that, from up here, seem to be at my disposal. A wide range of colors that change due to distance, different air densities, and clouds. The mountain range looks like a saw, with aggressively sharp rocks, and if I could assign them a color, it would be red. A surreal panorama that delights my eyes—it's as if someone has implanted an image in my brain, and what I see isn't real, too wild to be true.

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