A THOU-SAND TINY LITTLE LOOPS

ZOFIA SKOROSZEWSKA

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"UPON IT FLOATED
 SWANS LIKE BOATS
 AND BOATS LIKE
 SWANS,
 BOTH LOST IN THE
 NOTHINGNESS
 OF THE
 HEARTLESS BEAUTY."

F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

TENDER IS THE NIGHT

SURFACE EULOGY

A teenage dreamer; a philosopher, gum chewing, eye-rolling individual, living inside the quixotic in-between world of her mind. Is it the reason she looks so awkward on pictures? Hyper-aware of her body, trapped in its borders, hating, resisting, boiling from within. No urge to contribute much, is it? Composing from her own, not ripe yet, mind, piling up material with no empty spaces, no pauses - just noise. A fairy-tale princess version of fabricating meaning. An adolescent volcano, awaiting permission (but the permission is not to be waited for!) to erupt and solidify from plastic to marbled, one mass piling up, and forming a style, a sentence, a dress, a house, an overview. Her mouth full of juvenile utterances, hastily made statements. A fast-forward becoming, composed from green, unripe styles, lacking any coherence or cohesion, folding inwards. Double sided groundlessness, made of notions that cease to be defined as they change, shift into other notions before they are established.

A thought of my teenagehood proves to be ghastly. The more I bring myself into reminiscing about that part of my life, the more I realise that such a rapid process of confusion, bombing of surfaces, condensation of ever-shifting ideas is what I am trying to grasp in this essay. There is no logic to teenage dreams and drama, it's all eggshells, suspended over an abyss.

As I sit and browse, in its most demonic sense, proving to be even more useless and guilty of my own repetitious sorrows, I realise - I am *it*[1]. I am as ultra-subjective and sorry. I don't contribute, I don't discover. I drink the water from the bath I'm soaking in. This text, a collection of written, layed out thoughts is composed of my frustrations and anti-discoveries. There isn't a particular order to reading it; it is to be seen as an accumulation of observations and theories, interlinked on different levels; by the similarities of structures of material things and phenomena, as well as the feelings they bring out to play.

[1] 'It' here stands for the essence of this text, its meaning

1 VELVETY, IDLE

Could the surrounding of one with omnipresent technology have a similar meaning to those, who in the 15th century draped themselves with meters of velvet, until they could no longer move nor do any manual labour? Is it a way of transitioning into, what Villém Flusser once described as the *Telematic society*[2], a culture in which people no longer work, but focus on leisure, the idleness of being immersed in screen haptics? Even if so, forgetting the apocalyptic reverberation of cybernetics, I'd like to analyze how my current ideas about *digital imagination*[3] influence my artistic process. I nearly don't feel a need to produce works, endlessly analyzing my possibilities, absorbing images and (re) considering my options. The lobby of a shopping mall filled with spectacles of instant purchases and swiftly passing trends holds me prisoner. The roll of the cultural fold seems to be all too rusty to catch up. Just as the teenage becoming, hardly anything has the privilege of time to set, to ripe and leave a mark. Aesthetic sustainability, recycling images, on the other hand, poses a question about whether this fast-forward consumption and production of surfaces should be regulated by any means. Probably not (as we are all, in the end entitled to the right of

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2 Flusser, Vilém. *Into the universe of technical images*. University of Minnesota Press, 2011. Flusser introduces a notion of *Telematic society* as a positive, utopian vision on the future (today's present) of cybernetics in society.

3 Imagination as a process commencing purely in one's mind, capable of anything, for me, has been largely influenced by today's technologies and the advancement in visualisation they offer as a stream of images, surfaces, and in the flattening of informative layers

adapting any form of individual expression, however generic and unoriginal these surfaces are made to be). I don't believe it's my role to present any ethical solutions. Nevertheless, positioning myself so passively seems to be all too easy. However opinionated, as an artist I feel the need or even pressure to see everything as positively productive. In this emptiness, in the groundlessness of today's imagery(and not only imagery), that has taken over nearly all aspects of my life, I see the possibility to expand, stretch, or even transform definitions of thinking about surfaces and what endorses the ways they function in our lives. Why do I set myself such a goal, I can't fully realize at this stage. This essay is an attempt to lay out all the entangled strings of thoughts. However naive and possibly all too insignificant (in the ocean of similar digital-related reflections), it can be read as a system, a technique of reviewing my own perceptions and needs. Writing has somehow had a prominent position in my practice, yet 'producing' this text has proven to be a challenge in the linear expression of superficial, surface-born ideas.

2 AM I DREAMING OF SMOOTHNESS?

The soul, or more empirically, the core, derives from relations. Nothing, in the end is a single point. One pixel comes from several coloured lights (RGB: red, green, blue), composing something we consider a base for constructing a digital image. Nevertheless, thinking through textile structures, or any structures at all has taught me that meaning doesn't emerge magically from a single atom, an image, one statement. It relies on a net, a moving mechanism. *An apparatus*; a system of forces constantly in charge of the pushing and pulling of influences, creating and absorbing illusions to swallow and to feed. Its meaning is fabricated; woven from an infrastructure of threads, the twining of ideas that relate and respond to each other continuously. Understanding this, not only reading about it and softly sketching a map from a written text is perhaps possible when looking at velvet fabric and its structure, which is what I will attempt to talk about later on.

Apparatuses have come to bear rather negative connotations (at least for my wannabe punk reasoning), proving to be composed of power structures such as institutions, architecture, sets of rules, credits cards and so on. They organize a grid that renders the playground we call existence. One who stumbles upon bits of theory and philosophy in between the walls of an art institution sooner or later will be juxtaposed to such a definition.

My recognition of The Apparatus[4] for the purpose of this text strikes me as a matter of terminological questioning, an area I tend to refrain from, as this essay itself will attempt to puncture the skins of definitions, rendering them more porous and pliant. Such an apologetic meta-talk often proves to be counterproductive, yet I cannot go against the grain of my own thinking. Studying structures has infused me with an everlasting need to deconstruct and analyze, deconstruct and analyze, deconstruct and analyze. An awfully dull, scientific way to go, it seems. Peeling off one layer after another, just to find myself with nothing but a few lines, grains or fibers. An obsessive search for the fundament, hopeless faith in logic of structures. I need an anchor to make sense of it and avoid a senseless monologue. Could the comparing and bringing together of concepts, or even techniques we use to construct something meaningful and translating into one another be just as much as an act of producing?

Having said that, I wish to introduce a philosophical concept of the Apparatus, as well as, later on; *The Smooth and Striated space,* notions that have come to lay out a foundation for this shilly-shally between structure thinking, material fascinations and my own practice.

4 Agamben, Giorgio, and David Kishik. What is an apparatus? and other essays. Stanford University Press, 2009.

3   **PIVOTING**

imposed by an external power
a set of strategies of the relations
of forces supporting, and supported
a heterogenous set that includes as installed between
by, certain types of knowledge
anything, linguistic and nonlinguistic, option and is
under the same heading, discourse, a power relation that is
institutions, buildings, laws, police,
measures, philosophical propositions, and is
always located in a power relation
established between
It appears at the intersection these elements
and so on.
power relations and relations of
knowledge [i]

Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari distinguish two kind of spaces that are at play, constantly mixing and becoming one another: smooth and striated spaces. Their nature is intrinsically different, yet they cannot exist without each other. The smooth is a space of intensities and events, of becoming; it does not follow any points, it's immeasurable, and grows in any direction it pleases, just like felt, sea or a desert. Its haptic nature finds reflection in imagination, constructed from perceptions of symptoms and feelings, rather than measurable properties.[5]

Striated space stands for the opposite. It organises itself according to many points, coordinates. Where the smooths is compared to a *war machine*, the striation is taking place in a *state apparatus*. Optical in nature, measured from one point to another, it provides us with a structure, full of built-in presets and in simple terms can be said to stand for woven fabric, written text, maps, and following that, an interface of a 3D software (or, in fact, any other software). Such a cyber-striation proves to be a bit more tricky to comprehend, due to its misleading visuals. A digitalised object is nothing other than a set of points called vertices, positioned in an Euclidean space. A satisfying clip of an endless disarray of fluffy little objects rubbing one another is the outcome of cold precision

[5] Deleuze, Gilles, and Guattari Félix. A thousand plateaus: capitalism and schizophrenia. Bloomsbury, 2015 p. 552-555

rather than free-hand playfulness. It requires a *skill* - knowledge of the software, and of workings of its adjustable settings, buttons, filters and so on. An advanced *3D craftsman* is perhaps even capable of finessing his work within the algorithms that result in a mathematical representation of a desired work. Modeling within such software is often described as sculpting, nevertheless it is a rather precise collection of [6]data that assembles an array of points in 3D space, connected by various geometric entities such as lines, polygons, and curved surfaces[7].

Felt and woven fabric are directly juxtaposed by Deleuze and Guattari, as they belong in the realm of textile. The structure of fabric, or the elementary lack of it is what in the first place compelled me to investigate fields of force, an idea which is strongly present in the construction of most of textiles.

'Fabric, in its simples form, is composed of two parallel elements: the vertical and the horizontal - the two intertwine, intersect perpendicularly. Each of these elements has a different function; one is fixed, and the other one mobile, passing above and beneath the fixed.'[8]

[6] Reed, Carl, and Tamrat Belayneh. "OGC Indexed 3d Scene Layer (I3S) and Scene Layer Package Format Specification." OGC 17-014r5: i3s, Open Geospatial Consortium, 24 Feb. 2017, docs.opengeospatial.org/cs/17-014r5/17-014r5.html.

[7] Deleuze, Gilles, and Guattari Félix. A thousand plateaus: capitalism and schizophrenia. Bloomsbury, 2015. p.552

Felt (and what an *idealist* would dare to name, its anti-structure) is created by random entanglement of fibers which can be caused by rolling, beating and massaging. The microscales of every fibre get hooked onto each other, creating a supple fabric. Felt has no direction; it grows from the centre, and it can be manipulated, sculpted like clay.A woven structure can be an illustration of the workings of the striated space, a space curated by apparatuses, or being the apparatus itself. Woven fabric can be infinite in length, but not in width; whereas felt stands for free, unrestricted expansion.

And finally - velvet. Appearing smooth, it conceals a striation underneath. Even more complex and restricted, as it is constrained by the use of resources and it requires a skilled weaver. Another inverse characteristic of felt and velvet is their resonance in society, which has a deciding role on their perception and meaning. Felt, the fabric of Nomads and velvet, the favourite of Monarchs. What these two have in common is their smooth surface, yet this surface is derived from a completely antagonistic source. The anti-structure, or the idea of it - is the opposite of the space ruled by the apparatus. A (utopian) smooth universe, uncontrolled by coordinates, it organizes itself in a way that evades logic reasoning.

(whispering: just like teenagehood)

4 DELUXE SOFAS

'm not entirely certain if I ever have had the pleasure of touching the real deal, Italian velvet. Stroking, rubbing my palms and grabbing bits of the solid fabric of designer's velvet sofas in the lobbies of expensive waiting rooms or wealthy friends' houses was the beginning of my fascination. I was lured. Hooked by the lifestyle and the looks that could embody the contemporary version of Scott Fitzgerarld's stories, set in between the pages of online catalogues and online shops like Barneys.com, Net-A-Porter.com or Bolia.com. Strangely enough, there was no desire to own. What is even more bizarre, I lost interest in touching the items I looked at. Looking satisfied me. I became consumed with the construct of the world offering velvet bags and velvet sofas and velvet items of no distinct function. Deep, dark blue backgrounds, metallic letters of sophisticated type, slideshows and animations, 360 degree viewports. Ambient, minimal, semi-slow techno music. I was sold. A textile student, lost in the haptic creation of marketing brains.

Velvet fabric represents the ideal situation (for those in favour of apparatuses). Its smooth surface (not space!) intrigues many and evokes connotations of luxury, wealth and a little bit of mystery. Velvet; the antagonist of felt (of the Deleuzian smooth), embodies complexity of a striated space, underlying a smooth, lustrous surface. It does so much greater than any other fabric, coming close to portraying a satisfying feeling we get when we look at an

elaborate, smooth 3D image. Both velvet and computer generated graphics have an odd power of evoking a sensation of desire and satisfaction when looking at them.

Technology certainly had an impact on the the way I think and project my thoughts onto vague, non-linear entities that are neither in the physical, neither in the cyber world. The word cyber nearly seems silly these days, writing it down makes me giggle a little at my own outdatedness. The shift from linear to image thinking that Flusser suggests, has influenced the way I grasp surfaces and their structure.[9] What he once defined as *technical images* made headway to the lustrous, omnipresent digital surfaces and their repercussion in today's society.

'Technical images arise in an attempt to consolidate particles around us and in our consciousness on surfaces to block up the intervals between them in attempt to make elements such as photons or electrons, on one hand, and bits of information, on the other hand, into images. This can be achieved neither with hands nor with eyes nor with fingers, for these elements are neither graspable, nor they are visible. For this reason, apparatuses must be developed that grasp the ungraspable, visualize the invisible, be fitted with the keys so that we may manipulate them.'[10]
It's not an easy task to explain and comprehend

[8] Flusser, Vilém. Line and Surface . University of Minnesota Press, 2002

[9] Flusser, Vilém. Into the universe of technical images. University of Minnesota Press, 2011. p. 16

how these images are *envisioned*. The act of envisioning something calls for an imagination that foresees a variety of possibilities. Again, if we were positioned within a Deleuzian smooth universe, these possibilities would be anything. In general, that's what imagination is. Yet the main difference here is that such images are created not by human imagination but by apparatuses. They arise from a very special level of consciousness; born from manipulation within possibilities, that in fact - have borders. Thus their ends and beginnings are so far apart, one cannot uncover their location.

Flusser argues that images no longer visualize text (have they ever?) even though they emerge from codes and are built with linear scripts. They are *conceived* in a different way, through a stream of surfaces, coming closer to a prehistoric conception of myths and symbols. It appears as written lines, even though omnipresent, lessen and lessen in their value. It's the top coat that matters, however superficial that sounds. My most approximate surrounding reflects aesthetics that are dictated by all those surfaces (of technical images), where texture and touch belong to the realm of screen hapticness rather than factuality.

If one would assume that composing meaning takes place on a line drawn as a circle, perhaps

now would be the time we are about to complete it. Not at all.If anything, we were drawing a circle with our left hand (assuming we are right handed), and suddenly, as we moved towards closing it, it spirals outwards, in an unpredicted manner.

Meaning, way back in time, was a purely mystical experience, a meditation led by a canon of symbols. A lost language of strict codes, without space for interpretation, just like cave paintings or symbolism appearing on carpets. These surfaces; impossible to read for anyone not contemporary to them, seemed to be truly epistemic. Then, text appeared, interpretation was born and subjectivity bloomed, making a way for criticality (hence there is no coming back to the mystical experience). But what I believe I'm experiencing now is mysticism, or a meditation of meaning that is so loaded it has become ultra-subjective, and has lost all meaning it has accumulated; it flattens out and is no longer distinguishable. Just like a Photoshop image, once exported (as a .jpg for example) from semi-transluscent, layered with information - once merged, it becomes a sleezy, solid shiny mask. Such precariousness of what stands behind the surface triggers more and more questions. How deep to dig? In the smooth and the superficial, the workings behind images, software; are just as elusive as a velvet fabric, withholding a process that doesn't necessarily matter as much as the construction of a table, a painting or a shoe.

5 THE OLD HORIZON

Do I need to acknowledge the socio-political background of a given technique in order to be able to translate it, use it or give it meaning? If so, to what extent? As an artist, even a conceptual artist; I never look as far as a scientist nor as much as a material nerd or a crafty person. I once tried to make velvet - or at least to get to know the system of making velvet. No, I didn't go to Italy. I set up a computer loom that helped me to follow a rather complicated pattern and actively observed with my hands how things go. The velvet I made looked nothing like the lustrous, heavy, dignified fabric. It rather resembled a dense, luxurious towel. I never set myself the goal of working on the level of specialised Italian weavers. Yet my velvet towel carried all the system of labour and extensive use of yarn (in this case), gleaming, if you looked close enough. Sometimes using a system is not the way to go. I wouldn't cast my beliefs in anything. They flow. I use a system, a method and the next day I just go for the pretty things.

However, from time to time I find myself at the point where I begin to question the fluidity of my process. When is something justifiably the next step, if I agree that the linear process no longer matters? Following certain materials, examining structures, namely a weave, or more elaborately, velvet, or diving into a mode of feelings, circumstances and illusion the material

creates with its being-in-the-world; these are all fairly predictable paths one might follow. But, perhaps (a timid thought), the creative process can also be reversed and it wouldn't matter. A daunting vision of never-ripening work frightens me, even though it is, in the end, what I desire.

To what extent, to what depth do I follow the information I gather and subsequently scatter again like crumbs, forming into something in the shape of a path? This makes me think of a route from the metro to my cousin's house. In order to get to my destination, I need to pass through a living area in Amsterdam Zuid-Oost. Surrounded by large blocks of flats, the surface presents itself as a mix of pavements and lawns. Green patches of grass amidst grey concrete pavements; they aim to designate which area is meant for walking, and which is not. And there are paths - impressive beings, consisting of mud and shoe traces, made in between the pavements and lawns. These trodden ways are beautiful examples of resistance to blindly following the imposed information in the physical world. How does this relate to the digital world? A universe composed purely of pavements, carpets arrayed with ones and zeros that can nearly effortlessly be manipulated into resembling seas and pristine fields of wild weeds.

From time to time, I catch myself fearing that everything I resist, I resist within a frame. The sea of possibilities has become more vast than all the oceans. It's easy to forget that some things are impossible in the days when I can generate anything I can dream of, and I dream within my own horizon. Is the loss of individual expression at stake, if we are destined to create, and exist within built-in presets?

6 VELVET THINKING

Velvet fabric had already reached the rank of monarch among textiles during the Renaissance, in 15th century Italy. This voluminous, soft fabric was a testimony to the attitudes and desires of the time. No other material could compare to the remarkable array of aesthetics and privileges offered by velvet. Wearing it at that time signified being aware of living in a new era. The 15th century, especially in Italy, witnessed an transition, in which power no longer meant birth and descent, but rather, and above all - money and wealth. The lustrous weave was spectator and participant in a shift of power structures, a shift which had a significant role in the formation of today's society. In comparison to lightweight, diaphanous silks it appeared as a heavy-weight, substantial fabric. One wearing it appeared to be transfigured and redesigned. It not only indicated wealth, but also generated wealth and power for those who knew the secrets of its manufacture. At that time, the velvet industry in Italy caused an economic shift so vast that banks had to be created just to hold the velvet-earned money. Even though it became relatively more attainable over the course of the 15th century, it came to acquire a range of features that sustained its price and value, in a vain effort to establish it as an exclusive, elite product. The urge to exhibit one's prosperity compelled the wealthy and powerful, and all those who wished to imitate their clothing and customs,

not only to frantically competitive purchasing of the increasingly expensive fabric, but also to a pretentious and improper use of it. From the simple display of one's means, a true parade of capital took place; something that we can easily experience in our contemporary times. Quite like social media accounts of the alleged 1% that holds 99% of the capital of the world, the 15th century velvet enthusiasts openly engaged in lavish and outrageous wastage of materials, by wishing for outgrown outfits constructed from vast amounts of material, unnecessary additions, mutilations and linings more valuable than the garment itself.

'As the wardrobes of men and women grew, the outfits increasingly featured forms that hindered movement, accentuating all those features that had nothing to do with the manual labour, such as the excessive lengths and volumes of gowns and exaggeratedly long and ample sleeves. Reckless spending on one's wardrobe was defined as a crime by sumptuary laws, and was indicated as the cause of ruin of families and nations. The display of wealth through the luxury of one's clothes was then trans- formed from a private sin, to a public duty with political goals.'[11]

At this point it might as well be a good idea to mention that the 15th century is, in terms of historical changes, seen as a bridge from Late

[10] Marinis, Fabrizio De, and Aurora Fiorentini Capitani. Velvet: history, techniques, fashions. Idea Books, 1994. p.42

Middle Ages to the Renaissance. It marks the beginning of an era of discoveries that introduced innovations such as the printing press and maps. An age of discovery that commenced the striation of the sea. All of that had an impact on the growing linearity of our civilisation in the subsequent centuries. Velvet has managed to sustain its position as a luxurious fabric for those who bear power, even though its popularity was subject to fluctuations throughout the centuries, and its production has been expanded and moved to other places.

Today, velvet, available in a range stretching from flocked iPhone covers to sofas worth a few years' worth of my tuition fees, functions as a model, an agency, not only through its socio-political significance, but also within the workings of its structure. In order to clarify that; I wish to explain how velvet is constructed and use its structure as a vehicle, a metaphor perhaps, to show why it portrays an ideal situation in the light of the latest technologies that shape the way I think, experience, create.

7 FOLLOWING FIELDS OF FORCE

Making is often considered as giving form to material, to matter; like building a house from bricks(cutting bricks to the right measurements and binding them with cement in a sequence that ensures the durability of the walls). This kind of model of creating is called *hylomorphic*[12], and in short, it entails the imposition of form upon the material world. Aristotle introduces the hylomorphic model in an attempt to grasp the general analysis of concept of transformation. Neither form nor matter stays in the physical realm; it can indicate states, emotions, experiences.

Working with textiles introduces a reverse model, one that teaches to follow currents, structures, fields of force that exist in the world of matter.[13] Something one might call a humbling experience of craft; that for me presents itself as an abstract venture, due to working with a simplification of just lines and points, the sheer potency of verticals and horizontals and spaces in-between.

Weaving is especially handy as an example, as it demands that the maker to abide by the warp (the vertical foundation of every fabric - an apparatus, one might say).

[11] The Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica. "Hylomorphism." Encyclopædia Britannica, Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., 15 Mar. 2016, www.britannica.com/topic/hylomorphism. Hylomorphism, (from Greek hylē, "matter"; morphē, "form"), in philosophy, metaphysical view according to which every natural body consists of two intrinsic principles, one potential, namely, primary matter, and one actual, namely, substantial form.

[12] Ingold, Tim. Being alive: essays on movement, knowledge and description. Routledge, 2011. p.92

Such a rigorous structure, once tamed and approached with friendly determination, unravels a universe of possibilities enclosed in it. A weaver follows hers or his own pathway, indicated by the warp, as they gradually construct a piece of fabric by horizontally inserting a weft in between the warp. Warp and weft are sources for a number of metaphors (for instance where warp is considered as given in life, and weft what we make of it), that in the end are to be read as the space of possibility we have within a given structure.

That's where I feel obliged to leave plain weaving and move towards what I want to use as my model, an ideal situation (for some- for who exactly?) of the making and the workings of imagination - velvet.
Technically, velvet is just a piece of woven fabric. It requires great amounts of yarn and a complicated technique in order to end up as an earlier mentioned sofa or an iPhone cover. But none of this matters now - later, it might. What is so special about velvet, in the end, is that is has a double warp that is much more loose. That doesn't sound exciting at all for those who aren't into textile structures, but this second warp, the loose warp, is what forms the smooth, lustrous surface that is guilty of carrying all the meaning of luxury, wealth and power. Thousands of tiny little loops are formed, as the velvet maker pushes the weft into wrinkling, condensing and

folding the warp that emerges from the foundation. A surface is created, the smooth facet of illusion, hiding an intricate mechanism within. If weaving was to be compared to something in the digital world (as it often is, since the binary code is based on a plain weave), I'd say velvet is a sleek 3d render.

> ### *What do the thousand tiny little loops do?*
>
> *The thousand tiny little loops are cut.*
> *The thousand tiny little loops become*
> *a thousand of tiny little hair.*
> *The thousand tiny little hair absorb.*
> *The thousand tiny little hair creates*
> *the illusion of a solid, smooth surface.*

Does the double warp entail another dimension? A realm conceived from one's own projections, where we are allowed to have and dream onto a surface so lustrous, like a mirror? It invites us to make it our own; once stroking a velvet sofa or browsing agreeable images, we enter a space that somehow compels us to yearn, to become, to absorb and to reflect. The double warp enables the remarkable talent of velvet to display, transmit and apply layers of longing, desire and doubt through a surface.

8 A WAY TO NAIL THE CORPORATE CULTURE TO ATTRACT AND RETAIN MILLENIALS

All I seem to be interested in and talk about are possibilities, continuously proliferating within a fixed frame -but what about my own competences? As Villém Flusser explains, *competences* belong to mathematical language as what they are, in fact, is just the sum of all possible combinations (computations) of elements according to rules.[14] Flusser gives an example of an English speaker, whose competence is the sum of all possible combinations of English words in his vocabulary that follow the rules of language, increasing whenever he learns new words or rules. Competence in today's world is actually what seems to be defining us, whether it's a product we want to buy or a material that has its own physical restrictions. However, when it comes to creativity, imagination or perception, the notion of competence has no borders and should be regarded more poetically.

It isn't an easy task to speak of competences within the realm of my own creativity. Submerged in a pool of possibilities offered by different media, tutorials, programs and their built-in presets, the definition of competence starts being irrelevant. Looking at results, we would all be insanely competent; it's intention that matters. A material with a given form, let's say a pair of velvet slippers with a fur lining and a small embroidery on the front, is so much more than a sum of competences; they are a portal to a life designated by leisure, not function.

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[13] Flusser, Vilém. Into the universe of technical images. University of Minnesota Press, 2011.p.112

9 ON A RAFT IN A SWIMMING POOL

Immersed in all of today's technology and daydreaming of splendor that was once attached to fabric I'm obsessing over - I'm drifting. It isn't necessarily a bad thing; drifting, or the French term *dérive*, that laid the foundations for the Situationist movement back in the days. An utopian belief of Situationists, even though nowadays appearing as something utterly naive, always keeps flickering in the back of my head in its own romantic manner. They wished to test the boundaries of the apparatuses, fiddle around with structures.

Has the notion of dérive migrated from the cityscape to the non-space of webshops?

'The Situationists devoted themselves to dérives: to drifting through the city for days, weeks, even months at a time, look- ing for what they called the city's psychogeography. They meant to find signs of what lettrist Ivan Chtcheglov called "forgotten desires"—images of play, eccentricity, secret rebellion, creativity, and negation. That led them into the Paris catacombs, where they sometimes spent the night. They looked for images of refusal, or for images society had itself refused, hidden, suppressed, or "recuperated"—images of refusal, nihilism, or freedom that society had taken back into itself, coopted or rehabilitated, isolated or discredited. Rooted in similar but in- tellectually (and physically) far more limited surrealist expeditions of the 1920s, the dérives were a search, Guy Debord would write many years later, for the

"supersession of art." They were an attempt to fashion a new version of daily life—a new version of how people organized their wishes, pains, fears, hopes, ambitions, limits, social relationships, and identities, a process that ordinarily took place without consciousness.'[15]

What would dérive through my digitalised landscape bring me?

Glimpses bouncing back from surfaces take me further, and further, with the currents and winds of sponsored content, suggested items. Who am I fooling? I feel used, without control. Overused and generic, yet ultra-subjective. Having given it some more thought I realize that comparing my browsing routine to a dérive encloses it within an anachronism; it is a term belonging to a certain group of people, during a certain period of time, relying on the intentional act of moving forward. I move up and down, in and out. The situation dissolves in the screen. It feels as if time and action have frozen, entrapping a city, a structure, under a thick layer of slippery ice. I skate upon it, my thoughts and views glide on the ice as I complete pirouette after a pirouette.

Alongside the joyful journey that flows with my thoughts as I type them for this artsy essay, a rather darker impression arises. Drifting, playing,

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[14] McDonough, Tom. Guy Debord and the Situationist international: texts and documents. MIT, 2004. p.4

immersing myself in reality in which I don't regard things by their utilitarian values and even disobey my own game. As I scroll through my sources, the first sentence of the Situationist Manifesto screams:

'The existing frameworks cannot subdue the new human force that is increasing day by day alongside the irresistible development of technology and the dissatisfaction of its possible uses in our sensless social life.'[16]

The spectacle of Situationist reasoning has infiltrated not only inter-human relations but affected the imaginative forces of individuals like you and me. Its ideas, repeatedly analyzed and reinterpreted, have grinded into tiny dust and grown into the tissue of today's makers and perceivers/receivers. It no longer carries the echo of condemnation over representation. The process of being exposed to images, digital surfaces, was said to mediate human relations; but now, due to their omnipresence, they have been absorbed all the way to the core of humanness.[17]

The other day, a fast-paced work of mine, an installation of velvety (flocked) black stones and yellow slime on an uneven pink, cushion-like surface triggered a comment:

'Wow, it looks just like a weird computer graphic'

[15] "Text archives > situationist international texts >." Situationist International Online, www.cddc.vt.edu/sionline/si/manifesto.html.

[16] Humanness here entails the capacity of personal perception, imagination, moral decisions and self-consciousness.

Was it my intention, even though I created something so tactile, like small, black, hairy stones to transport it to the realm of the screen? As I said already, it was a work created within minutes, utterly intuitively. My instincts led me straight into creating a setting of a digital display, with the ease of pressing a few buttons and adjusting other settings. An act of covering raw material with a layer of flocking fibers made it impossible to trace the origin of the stones. This smooth, ambiguous surface transformed their meaning in a flattening manner. A pitch black, light-absorbing stone became a reflection rather, than a being itself.

10 A PSYCHOTIC ROBIN HOOD

The screen goes black, revealing my tired reflection on its lifeless surface. I don't look too well. I've been through a mild cold, and my left eye is recovering from a bacterial infection. The past days have been marked by persistent annoyance at various, disgusting liquids coming from my throat, nose and eyes. The state of my skin is far from agreeable. There are four in-flamed, red pimples just on my right cheek. The area around my nostrils is red, irritated,ugly. I feel as far from velvet sleekness I can possibly be. I pity my fleshy realness. A body, a visceral frame, functioning within its own possibilities. All too primal, revolting and sore, it could be overlooked; if not for the saliva, sebum, semen, blood and feces constantly reminding us of the poor corporeal. I tend to ignore my need to urinate, which leads up to a dramatic moment, when my bladder is the one that decides my next step, motivating my legs to run towards the closest loo. If I don't make it - I will pee my pants. A fearful thought of a wet stain on my jeans, making its shade uneven, with a tint of yellow, it appears as an experience too direct, too shameful, all too real.

Straining one's body and soul over a raging chase between competences and achievements; still presenting it as flawless appears to repre-sent the velvet bubble of today. A shiny icing, a lustrous layer, an opaque surface of leisure.

As I sit and browse, in its most demonic sense; I take screenshots; I harvest the fruit of the labour of graphic designers, programmers, 3D artists and whoever else. Despite that, I feel like I'm the one ripping off velvet merchants, those responsible for generating the awe of smoothness, nobility and desire that pulls everyone else towards it. It's so glossy and flat, it loses everything that stands behind it. Only the top coat matters - that's what I keep murmuring repeatedly in order to justify such blatant appropriation of aesthetics, influences, and representations of products itself. Mischievous looting of these surfaces of yearning, I feel like Robin Hood, stealing from the privileged ones under the pretext of *some higher cause*. The more I continue my (intentionally) meaningless journey through websites, catalogues, lookbooks and social media accounts, I wonder; has texture and touch entered the state of redundancy? An astonishing similarity of aesthetics and the overwhelming amount of visual material presents itself to me as a pile of scraps of colorful foam on a dirty pavement, belonging to no one, created by no one. I wish to use this generic, poor material of our humdrum wandering through the cyber world. Doomed to create within the presets of software, I reconcile with the surface. A voyage on the edge of dismantling the authorship, disregarding originality, leading towards the mundane unknown. Am I immoral, conformist, lame? I try

and try and cannot decide - defining one's stand as an act of courage pisses me off. Ripped apart by romantic bullets, blown up by dreamed-up bombs, I continuously switch from the victim mode to the aggressor. I don't feel that I need to take any position; my role is to question, to balance ideas and contradicting statements. This essay, a result of a few years of interest, even obsession with textile structures and structure thinking allows me to see the world (especially the digital world) through the lens of theories based on lines and points that result in forming layers and standpoints of much more elaborated notions. My past three years have been orbiting around finding a method of analysis; a half blind crawl towards my own artistic system. After a long peek into velvet fabric, textile structures, 3D software and the striation of the digital world that resulted in this text, I feel ready to move on, like a furry, sticky ball of burdock, eager to get stuck on a coat of something else.

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