

**water, air, stones and stains**  
**examining interpersonal aspects of bodily dwelling through drawing**

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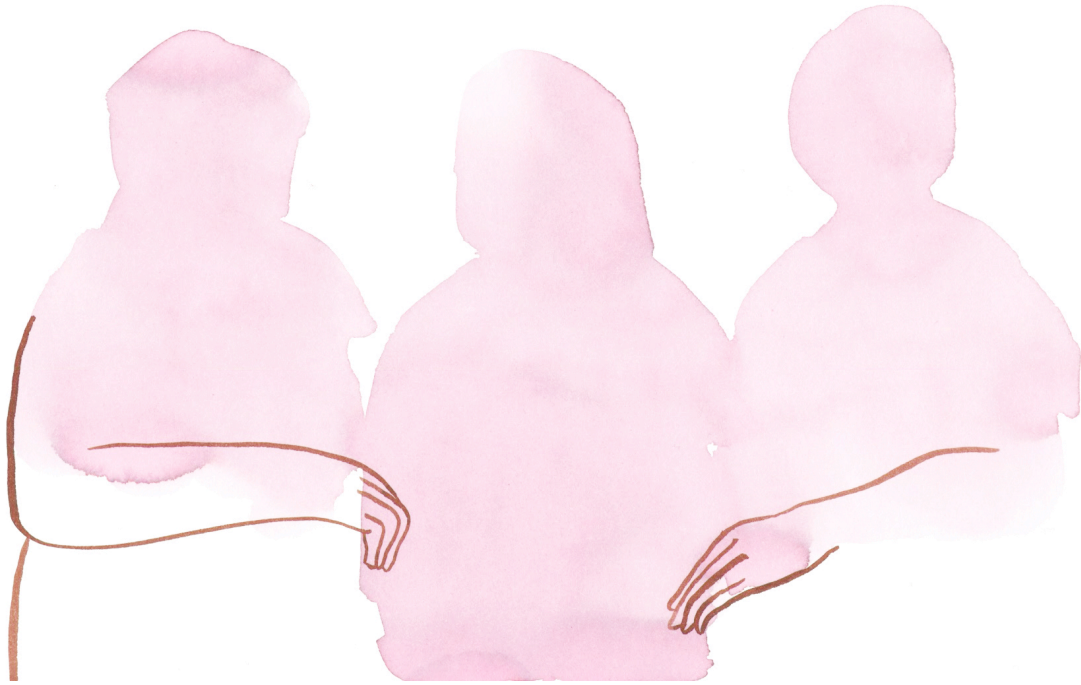
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## Abstract

How do we extend into our body and into the world? I draw to express, remember, discover, tell, record, understand, make marks, meditate, trace and draw out. Drawing is a way to articulate both dilemmas in relation to identity and bodily dwelling. I am focusing on an interdisciplinary practice of drawing, and queer and immigrant identity through the body. I will be considering, then, throughout this thesis support paper, bodily identity as primarily relational through various concepts, such as body knowledge, body and land, body and identity, bodies and borders and bodies as borders.



to my grandmother

Farkhondeh Rastegar Khojasteh

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The stage of Drawing: Gesture and act by Avis Newman

I understand drawing to evidence the materialization of an act of consciousness - where a gestural act embodies an act of thought - if consciousness is defined in the way Bion proposed: "the self is able to be conscious of itself in the sense of knowing itself from the experience of itself." (72)

in the inscriptive act of drawing there exists the shadow of our ambivalent relation to making marks, before the time when "image" and text are differentiated to go their separate ways." (73)  
"gestures as they are experienced when looking at drawing are actions that are registered and suspended in time." (76)

left foot take collage

"the gestural record on the page stages a moment of existence that is no other moment, it measures and binds and establishes parameters." it allows one to imaginatively rethink that moment of action even though it is past, and in that sense it marks its time." (78)

time

Avis Newman (Pg 78)  
"A drawing can have the quality of an act of reclamation - the reclamation of visual "thought" fleetingly perceived in the mind's eye. In the registration of actions, something can be seen, retrieved from the depths of the mind, brought into existence, and only just named. In that respect, drawing can be the most wretched of activities, often made from the material leftovers, the residues of those things that the mind has...."

... (78) previously abandoned. Torn pages or bits and pieces signify they existed only as reminders, without the dignity of a coherent intention. Such acts lay bare the many indecisions and marks worked over and over, which sometimes get no further: the abandoned efforts of gestures, we understand such scraps not as works but as evidence of the effort of the mind to externalize vague thoughts.

... And in that sense drawing is akin to an interior monologue emerging to the surface in our actions. (78)

(79) marks always retain their autonomy however densely worked, and invariably suggest a looseness or transparency, thus evoking a fractured space. Without the continuity and substance of a worked surface (as one would experience in painting) there is the impression of only a vestige of something. This seems to imply a paradox, which I am quite happy to do with: that the work is complete in its individual state of fragmentation.

... (79) to speak of communication: in this context it is therefore to address the procedure of drawing. I do think part of our experience of looking is in this regard unconscious recognition. To gesture, to touch and to make contact, is such a primary pleasure.

Primary pleasure

(8) Is drawing really this "in-between" space where everything happens at once, separating and binding, sensation and thought, response and control - into being each time over and over again.

space - in-between  
drawing as an "in-between"

(95) In drawing, I have suggested, the question of status of the trace is articulated through the relation of the trace to the mark. Is the mark also a trace? Is the trace that which with draws from the mark?

mark vs. trace relationship

(98) What are the implications of using blot as the basis for representation? The inkblot test developed in 1912 by the Swiss psychiatrist Hermann Rorschach uses the blot to invite projection on the part of the subject. We could reverse the direction of this rather grand approach so that the blot functions as a de-figuration rather than a sava for the figure." ...

- The stain -

(98) The "blot" then becomes something like a "stain"; marking the unfigurative origin of figuration. The French word for stain is "tache" and "tache aveugle" literally "blind stain", means the "blind spot" in the field of vision. The blind spot marks that point in the field of vision that we cannot see. "If we look at something near to impose a distance, and to objectify it, the blind spot would be the place, in the visible form which we cannot detach ourselves, and we cannot objectify. It marks our attachment or our adhesion to the world."

"The stain remains outside both the mind of the artist and the work produced."  
"In Cozzen's three terms - Stain, Psyche, and work - are collapsed into one. The blot forms a part of the real work and is never fully sublimated. And it is not only that into which the artist projects, but also, there from where he sees. This has something to do with the shift from using the stain to suggest details, devised & depicted in the picture to the use of the blot to evoke possibilities for pictorial composition as a whole." ...

(98) ... He is not simply looking at the blot in order to produce the work; he is inhabiting it. The unsublimatable residue of the blot that remains in the picture thus signifies the artist - and in general the subjects - irreducible adherence to the word. Alexander Cozzen's use of the blot as the basis for a work discussing question, the nature of the mark. "that the work of art is composed of a blot, that it is a composition of a blot, suggests an essential residue that cannot be ..."

... (98) raised up into intentionality."  
(100) At what point does a mark become substitutable by a concept, by a word, by an image, even by an accidental mark? Is there even a moment before substitution is possible, when the mark is unrepeatable, and if so, can we ever have access to it?"

(100) of all the acts, drawing has the potential to reduce to its smallest difference between meaning and non-meaning, between repeatability and singularity. If we suppose that the condition of the sign is substitutability, and that this requires absence (or non-being) a rupture has always already occurred between a world which has no signs, and a world of full being. This is what is meant by the idea, common to the structuralists, that language does not evolve, does not come into being gradually, in stages along a continuum from animal to human language, but -

(100) Drawing because of its status as becoming best becomes mark, mark becoming line, line becoming contour, contour becoming image, image becoming sign... the direction of this movement being always reversible) sense of "sense" to the other, yet it seems possible to observe a certain hold of the visible moment, or experience, of that flip-over from the pre-sign, differentiated, but not yet actually caught in the opposition, to signifier, image, and meaning. It happens in a blink when the eye is closed. ...



## Introduction

“Drawing is capable of addressing the experience of ourselves in action – and therefore as multiple beings.” (De Zegher 170)

My thesis project examines bodily dwelling through drawing. How can where we are, effect who we are, and how we are? How do we extend into our body and into the world? Drawing is a way to articulate both dilemmas in relation to identity and bodily dwelling. John Berger, describes drawing as “an autobiographical record of one’s discovery of an event – either seen, remembered or imagined” (Berger 1953). For me, I would add that I draw to express, remember, discover, tell, record, understand, make marks, meditate, trace and draw out.

I am focusing on an interdisciplinary practice of drawing, and queer and immigrant identity through the body, and exploring narratives inspecting what Sara Ahmed calls “Interpersonal aspects of bodily dwelling” (Ahmed 9) the ways in which bodies inhabit spaces, and inhabit themselves. This refers to a notion of identity as multi-faceted, rather than singular, fragmented rather than whole, and moving across both figurative and literal margins. I wish to express through my drawing-based artwork how one can feel in their own body in relation to the spaces which they occupy. I will be considering, then, throughout this thesis support paper, bodily identity as primarily relational through various concepts, such as body knowledge, body and land, body and identity, bodies and borders and bodies as borders. Bodies are oriented in response to what is around them, “bodies do not dwell in spaces that are exterior but rather are shaped by their dwellings and take shape by dwelling.” (Ahmed 9).

I am indebted to feminist writers, philosophers and thinkers such as Sara Ahmed, Dina Georgis, and bell hooks, who write about intersectionality of race, gender and sexuality. I look to female or marginalized artists who draw and engage in personal, cultural, poetical, and

political narratives, such as Annie Pootoogook, Nancy Spero, Marlene Dumas, Kara Walker, Ed Pien, and Kenojuak Ashevak, who have helped me understand freedom and transformation as a process. Writers such as Jean Luc Nancy, John Berger, Micheal Taussig, and Lynda Barry who have written extensively on drawing have also greatly helped me understand my own relationship to drawing as both medium and bodily act.

My Thesis exhibition, *water, air, stones and stains* consists of an immersive installation of hundreds of drawings. Viewers enter into a world of drawings, hanging on the wall as well as arranged on tables. These installations will contain non-linear and ambiguous narratives of fluidity, belonging and becoming; “speaking to the construction of a transnational queerness, which exceeds the boundaries of gender, sexuality, and place.” (Carte)

In the following chapters I discuss what happens when I draw as well as what might happen when we view drawings, mentally, physically and emotionally:

**Drawing as discovery – pleasure and desire in drawing**

**Gesture - drawing as performance, the act of drawing**

**Bodies and borders - identity, invisible time and space**

**Materiality - water, air, stones and stains**



Dina Georgis  
"The better story  
Queer affects from the  
Middle East."

"stories of belonging  
produce social identities  
to which we become  
emotionally attached  
because they fill the  
spaces of unanswerability.  
As someone like Zara,  
whose ancestral history is  
complicated by several sites  
of belonging, ambivalent  
ties, and traumatic history,  
how does she come to understand

herself might only occur  
from the achievements  
of her own insights and  
imagination. (xi)

"Diasporic identities are  
the work of creation  
from the vestiges of the  
Past."

"space of traumatic  
transgenerational  
unknowability" (xi)

... a story that is simulating  
biography and autobiography  
rather than story exists without  
the other

"stories of origins offer  
diasporic people consolation  
from the brutal realities  
of racial violence and  
diasporic violence. (X)

"How do we narrate our  
stories ethnically? (xi)

"The stories we tell about  
our selves, about others,  
about world events,  
about the past, about  
our political beliefs, about  
our identities are not just  
simply social and political  
constructions but elaborations  
of our psychic dramas." (xi)

"if our stories always  
implicate the other - because  
our humanity is made  
relationally - how do we  
narrate stories ethnically?" (x)

"the value of story making  
insights into collective  
histories and group identity.  
Stories give us access to  
the deep human qualities  
of new political histories  
but written from the  
existential effects of  
trauma, loss, difficulty  
and relationality." (11)  
"Stories I propose are  
emotional resources for  
political imagination and  
for political renewal"

... because they allow us to  
understand struggles that  
lead to devastating conflicts  
- such as what we are seeing  
in the Middle East - as human  
responses to histories of  
injury." (11)

"I propose story as a  
method for social inquiry." (11)

Stories allow us to  
navigate the past, seek  
and transmit knowledge,  
and imagine our future." (11)

"mourning is implicated  
in the racist-social processes  
that demand racialized  
subjects get over their  
pain and their wounded  
attachments by letting go  
of their racial identities.

In other words, racial  
mourning is understood  
as being equivalent to  
assimilation to white  
imperial culture. (3)

- Conversations about  
racial pain

racial mourning  
racial pain

"Mourning is not equivalent  
to forgetting the past but  
making a different relation  
to what is lost." (4) Shir

Judith Butler - "one mourns  
when one accepts that  
by the loss that one  
undergoes one will be  
changed, possibly forever."  
Perhaps mourning has to do  
with agreeing to undergo  
a transformation (perhaps  
one should say submitting to a  
transformation) the result of  
which one cannot know in  
advance" (4)

Transformation

"Trauma is most certainly  
a crisis of knowledge.  
Language fails. As such,  
the past is reconstructed  
between what we know and  
remember and what is  
defensively lost to memory." (10)

"Traumatic experience  
has a paradoxical relationship  
to narrative: it both  
resists and reveals  
lost memory." (10)

"In fiction history is granted  
the space to mourn." (10)

"In aesthetic accounts of  
history or collective narrative,  
the enigma of traumatic  
loss is more accessible  
because aesthetic representation  
captures, as Caruth puts it,  
the human voice that cries  
out from the wound." (12)

"to tell you a story about  
the past that is otherwise  
impossible to tell." (12)

"a search for the stories  
discarded in history,  
which is why we need to  
look in queer corners."

"group identities, (21)  
especially those that rise from  
traumatic histories, are  
invested in stories that  
resist queer affects and  
threaten the social bond." (28)

vulnerable to the conditions  
of new contexts, both at home  
and in the diaspora, identity  
and group co-hisiveness is  
often the strategy to deal  
with past colonial loss, and  
is also the logic of nationalist  
exclusion and violence ... (43)

"... of which we have  
witnessed many examples in  
our time." (43)

"to embody the truths  
of our traumas,  
they also cry them  
out." (47)

Subaltern woman (54)

"How might we hear her voice  
that is a victim or in  
opposition to victimization  
but through a voice that  
belongs to the obscured  
experience of her difficulty?"

"In other words I offer a  
model that recognizes and  
values the affective register  
in representation and reading  
representation." (51)

"Representation beyond its  
capacity to affirm ordering  
human agency and resistance.  
Instead I listen to the  
postcolonial people who  
negotiate dilemmas of  
Past and present colonial  
violence." (51)

(52)

"the fiction in the work of  
representation is an idea  
that has become well established  
in postcolonial and post modern  
theory, specifically in  
the capacity of cultural  
production to articulate  
how identities are historically  
located or made and remade  
in time and space."

"But the enthusiasm that  
surrounds representation's  
capacity to teach us about  
history and about our  
unstable and ambivalent  
relationship to domination  
often forecloses a psychoanalytic  
reading of speaking."

identity in time &  
space.

"the effects that  
injury has on subaltern  
subjectivity and how we  
represent subaltern history."

Suffering has not been (52)  
a very popular topic in  
postcolonial studies, nor, for  
that matter, in race studies  
in general." (54)

"But if the subaltern woman  
is a convenient object and  
designated fetishized other  
that provides consolation from  
psychic hunting for the  
European subject, how does she  
live with this violence? where  
does the subaltern woman  
project her unconscious conflicts?  
Does her unconscious also not  
cast a shadow? And does this shadow  
not erupt, dream, desire?"

(54)

Female agency  
"the Subaltern is excluded  
from cultural production and  
therefore has an "imagined  
community." For Spivak,  
the subaltern woman's voice  
cannot be heard because  
even though her conditions  
connect her to millions of  
people that constitute a  
class, her interests are not  
articulated collectively to  
produce a collective  
agency or "a feeling of  
community, national links,  
or a political organization."

(55) From this perspective, to  
locate a voice or give a  
ambiguity to make only  
speak to all that is left  
what would mean to give that  
cultural solidarity exists among  
randomly placed global  
people.

"If speaking is only  
possible in the  
context of a collective  
voice, then a voice that  
cannot be heard collectively  
is not a voice that  
can speak politically."

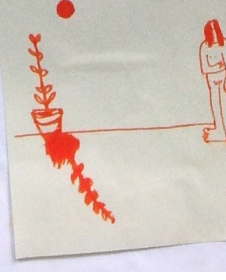
a voice  
a voice which  
cannot

(56) ~~unstable~~  
and pressing social ill must  
concern itself with how the  
past is enacted in the  
Present.

unable to speak  
- to be a victim of oppression  
or gender and to be tolerated  
by your community.

(59) touched by representation  
"It seems to me that the  
crisis - some really reproductive  
concerns the challenge of  
what it means to know and  
presence the past, as well as  
with attempting to answer the  
question  
"Why do we have knowledge  
difficult?"

"said differently, it is  
knowledge itself that is  
difficult: it is knowledge  
of colonialism, of slavery, of  
genocide that renders  
representation an unpredictable  
and interminable project." (59)



(61) "writing history or the  
representation of our own  
or the other's experience  
might be better viewed as  
a story that never ends  
understanding our relationship  
to the difficulties of representing  
otherwise, then representation  
as repetition is the process  
through which we are working  
through the past."

(62) "Also concerned with how  
post structuralist theory's privilege  
the unrepresentable qualities of  
trauma. We turn our attention  
to the everyday life of trauma  
and its affective production of  
culture."

"to do that requires  
that we view representation  
as a phenomenological effect  
of trauma which embodies  
affect and transgenerational  
excesses the injury of the  
loss. In transference, we  
can recognize the emotional  
affect of loss by regarding  
representation as the past's  
legacy on the present.  
Representation is the  
"deferred action" of loss.

The representation through  
a repetition with displacement  
communicates a complex  
system of unconscious  
conflicts, expectations, anxieties  
and defenses relating to the  
past that are brought to bear  
on new settings." (63)



## Artist Statement

Drawing is at the core of my art practice. In the past my approach to drawing has taken shape in bookworks, installations, animations and performances. My undergraduate thesis, as well as much of my previous artworks, explores belonging, and the idea of home as a place or location, and themes surrounding immigrant and queer identity. Although my work still concerns notions of identity and place, these concerns have shifted from the idea of a home as a physical place, to a non-location, and towards the idea of being in one's body as a home. My concerns with states of perpetual in-between-ness and dualities surrounding identity have shifted to fluidity. In other words while this project presents drawing as a *place*, and the body as *home* (both clearly terms of demarcation) it strives to show how they are embodied through a fluid process. For as in drawing, fluidity of material gives the appearance of something in-between a stable and mutable form. It is through our bodies that we extend into this world. One must extend into one's own body, in order to extend into the world, to feel at home in the world.

Coming into the MFA program at York University, I began to focus on using predominantly ink and brush, in order to work more intuitively, and create more open images where ambiguous associations could arrive. I felt strongly that my work and narrative associations needed to be drawn from an unknown place, from a void or emptiness. These drawings embrace void of culture, where ambiguous bodies in ambiguous spaces allow for forms and narratives to emerge from pools of water, stains or quick gestural marks. The immediacy of drawing allows one to be open to an external force, working in a flow with a focus on exhausting the possibilities of a single medium, subject and format.

I have worked as an Arts educator for many years, along side, and prior to my artistic practice. I have observed children draw, as well as drawn with children for many years. I have always been intrigued by how children effortlessly draw, draw to make marks, to

communicate and express themselves, and to urgently tell stories. This remarkable ability most possess in childhood, disappears for most people as they begin to read and write. Written language is given much more weight in our society, starting in schools, where drawing takes a backseat as a pastime activity. Like memories, ideas can come through as images before they come out in words. Drawing can be a form of thinking, communication, recording, documenting, and metaphor. I believe the immediacy of drawing allows us to communicate, express, connect, and form thoughts, just as language does, and beyond the boundaries of language. Language divides us, frames and defines us. Slavoj Zizek describes this as a 'wall of language', "which forever separates me from the abyss of another subject is simultaneously that which opens up and sustains this abyss – the very obstacle that separates me from the Beyond is what creates its mirage." (Zizek 73)

Drawings have existed on cave walls, existed through human history and across cultures; they are a "part of our humanness" (Kantrowich). I often play a variety of drawing games involving quick gestural lines or stains to encourage learners of all ages to draw. Asking them "What do you see in this quick gestural mark or stain?", focusing on drawing freely, and without fear, encouraging a freedom and a kind of play. I often incorporate these games in my own studio practice in order to shed inhibitions and keep drawing. I find the drawings by children essential to my own practice and methodology. While they might be learning in my classes, I'm doing a lot of unlearning, unlearning to draw, so that I can draw like them, bravely, boldly and urgently. I also observe the ways in which children approach drawing a body for example, many start to draw from a foot and not the head. I too now begin from the feet at times.

One can't help but notice a child-like quality in the drawings created by many artists who's extensive drawing practice I can identify with; Marlene Dumas, Louise Bourgeois, Ed Pien, Nancy Sparrow, and Amy Sillman. Although Dumas also approaches her practice in a



very intuitive manner, working loosely, pouring water and allowing for images to emerge, essentially her source is from popular culture, or media and drawn from her vast archive of images. She is also well known for her writing, along side her work, often through very long titles, poetry and prose. At times it is hard to discern which might have come first, the words or the image. Does the drawing call for writing, or the writing call for drawing? Titles can determine the way in which we look at an image, as a way to guide the viewer when the works are so open ended, carrying many levels of meaning and possible interpretations.

I am also very interested in the relationship between drawing and writing— they often freely intermingle in my sketchbooks, pushing and pulling one another, giving meanings, changing meanings, and offering other meanings and taking shape as titles for my work. As an artist and educator, I am also interested in Lynda Barry’s practice based research methods through a combination of self-reflective drawing and writings. “Writing and drawing by hand until we arrive at the unthinkable” (Barry 8), exploring drawing as a way to confront the unknown. I don’t possess a language, as my mother tongue is now foreign to me, drawing is like my first language, it is my speaking voice, a form of speech or song. “That’s the beautiful thing about drawing”, says British artist Tracy Emin, “it is intimate, like hand writing, and the dialogue, is between the paper and me. One day I could write a poem; the next I could draw the poem. If I were left alone on a desert Island I would still have the need to draw.” (Emin 2009).

To draw a parallel, between the work of contemporary artists and my own art practice, I look to artists who have had a dedicated drawing practice. These artists have created large bodies of work in drawing, and consider drawing to be an important aspect of their practice. These artists include Marlene Dumas, Nancy Spero, Amy Sillman, Louise Bourgeois, and Ed Pien. Beyond their drawing practices, they have created installations, sculptures and prints, which have specifically emerged from their drawing practices. Although using various

methodologies, and processes, there is a sense of otherness, immediacy and urgency in their drawings. These artists, although each engage in different methodologies, deal with the primacy of emotions. Their works are psychological, and sometimes grotesque. They are about fears, desires, the body, identity, anxieties and trauma. All of these artists have created a large amount of drawings through a continuous and consistent practice. Intuition, and openness to the medium itself plays a vital role in the drawing processes of these artists, while also translating personal ideas, desires and anxieties into universal ones. We are all asking the same big life questions and we are not afraid to make ugly drawings. We're not afraid of the grotesque—we want to confront it. We may even be on a quest to find the grotesque and face our fears. To draw is an existential act.

Drawings are often deeply personal reflections of our own life and anxieties. When monsters and daemons appear we ask why and we look further to deconstruct our own drawings, and our own being in the world. Ed Pien discusses his fascination with the monster or the grotesque as a way to think about and identify our relationship to “the other” or the other as “enemy” (Pien 2012). Responding to what is current, internally or externally, emotionally and psychologically these artists create frank and honest drawings.

Autobiographical and narrative-based interests, are two key features which thematically characterize my creative practice. Through intuitive drawing approaches, I make marks, and interact with the marks with intention, in search of narrative association, bringing together the cognitive, affective, and intuitive.

This method of working intuitively and with intention reverberates with the tensions of fragmented identities, and the mind and body. A focus on the medium of drawing and ink itself has greatly shifted my drawing practice. Operating between figuration and abstraction, I work quickly, in series, and in sequences rather than single pieces, often with minimal lines and open spaces, where the viewer can become more involved in the drawing by completing

forms and finding meanings. I work through a flow presenting nonlinear and open-ended narratives for the viewers to discover. These partial, open-ended images can be seen as fragments, which come together to form an open-ended whole through their installation. For it is with these relational fragments that I can best tell a fragmented story with open spaces—like a pause in music, or margins in comics, a space for the audience to fill, a space of ambiguity.

Drawing, for me, is a daily practice—a spiritual and a subversive act. Intuition and openness to the medium itself, accidents, surprises and discoveries in the studio play an essential role in my practice. Drawing involves our cognitive process of knowing, perception and memory, as well as our judgment and reasoning. It is both a conscious and subconscious activity. In the process of drawing, our mind, body and vision become very intimate (Berger 1953). Drawing becomes a place, an in-between place, we go to. In the following chapters, I will address my drawings and research through exploring the relationships, and associations of mind and body, body and identity, bodies and borders, bodies as borders, and bodies and land. Considering the body as the site of experience, starting point of our being in the world, and in relation to others and place.



**Zen Art**  
 For meditation  
 By Stewart White  
 and Chinyo Ibricos  
 Rutland Vermont  
 Tokyo Japan, 1973

"not only considered to be great works of art but also portraits of various faces of a man's soul" (11)  
 - to experience certain insights into human nature and the universe."  
 - "struggle to expansions of consciousness." (11)

(14)  
 a balance between floating, and alert awareness.  
 (14) what is Zen? - Tao  
 Chinese: Ch'an - Tao  
 Dhyana  
 Tao - harmonized with the non-self-assertive, noncraving acceptance of life.

Ch'an → from China (15)  
 was taken by monks to Japan! called it Zen not just a way of life, but also art! / orientation w/ creative work  
 "selfless respect for the nature of things - like wood, rocks, clay, moss, streams, pools - as beings, .."

(14-15)  
 .. equally with human beings, aspects of Buddha-nature, produced a great tradition characterized by distinguished works of art."  
 "this search for unselfconscious facility and creativity is still available.."

(15)  
 "Since Zen looks beyond the symbol to the thing, the sketches that most of us have constructed concerning color, sex and age, as well as the dynamism of ethnic-bound cultures, are seen to be man-made, not part of the nature of things."

Taoism + Buddhism = ZEN (15)  
 distinct schools of Zen way of life art, teaching, practice.  
 15 tenets representing aspects of this Zen orientation - essentially a practice, not a theory

Zen tenets / principles / beliefs (16)  
 1. the realities of life are most truly seen in everyday things and actions.  
 2. Everything exists according to its own nature. Our individual perceptions of worth, greatness, beauty, size, and value exist inside our heads, not inside ..

3. everything exists in relation to other things  
 the universe are not separate entities but are functioning whole.  
 5. man rises from nature and gets along most effectively by collaborating with nature, rather than trying to master it.  
 6. there is no ego in the sense of an endless center, in changing processes and in things that are temporary like body.

7. True insight does not issue from speculation or knowledge, from membership in a party, from doctrine or dogmas. It comes from the personal intuition of one's whole being, from one's own side.

8. In emptiness, forms are born when one becomes empty of the assumptions, inferences, and judgments he has acquired over the years, he becomes close to his original nature and is capable of achieving original ideas and reactions, freshly.

9. "Being a spectator while also participating spoils one's performance."  
 10. "Security and changelessness are fabricated by the ego dominated mind and do not exist in Nature. To accept insecurity and commit oneself to the unknown leads to a relaxing faith in the universe."

11. one can only live in the present moment.  
 12. living process and words about it are not the same and should not be treated as equal in worth.  
 13. when we perceive the incongruity between theories about life and what ..

"we feel intuitively to be true on the nonverbal, non-judging plane, there is nothing to do but laugh."  
 14. Zen art has this characteristic quality that it can fuse delight in a work of art, knowledge of life, and personal experience and intuitions into one creative event."

15. "Each of us develops into a unique individual who enters into unique transactions with the world as it exists for him."

a haiku gives you nothing but a picture a vignette of a tiny part of the panorama of life as he sees it.

zen trained people would say "emptiness is fullness and that emptiness is the womb of forms" (18)  
**emptiness**

"~~everything is nothing~~"  
 "everything has a cause, and the cause of anything, is everything."  
 "the salt of the sea, is in our blood, the calcium of the rocks is in our bones, the genes of ferns, mosses, generation of still-living progenitors are in our cells."

"the sun shines and we smile, the winds rage and we bend before them, the blossoms open and we rejoice. Earth is our long home."  
**earth is our home, our body is earth**

"As you sit here quietly, enjoy your real self. Forget your activist self. Such forgetting is not a denial of real self. there is no real self to deny - a self that persists always in one pattern, one mood, one degree.."

"... of intelligence, one sum of affection. The living you is always changing."

"Each moment you are responding differently, as your chemical combinations change and result in different reactions to changing external stimuli."  
 boundaries of one's being

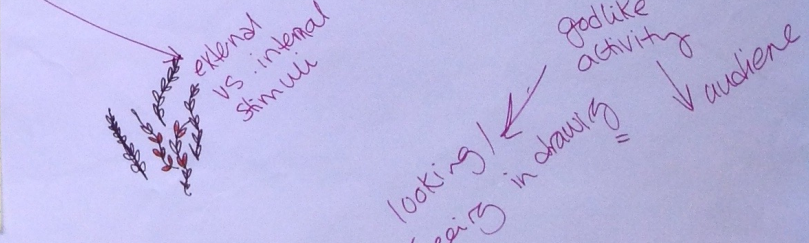
**water**  
 "the water flows - sometimes serenely in wide, quiet places, sometimes dashed through rapids and buffeted rocks, this free places the artist, enables the artist to feel the ocean, the sun, the vapor over the surface of the coast to fall as rain and snow, soaking the spaces which fill the river, which flows on, is the water really the river, or the pleasure on the environment, or the evaporation - precipitation cycle? none of them because all. It flows. We live."

"most of the picture consists of 'nothing' of space, emptiness, the void. A Zen picture invites you to a godlike activity, invites you to enter into a transaction with it by presenting you with something out of which to create forms. The artist gives you a clue of form, but like a good haiku writer he lets you surprise."

"your forms and significances out of your original nature."  
 "Emptiness, Silence, is not nothingness, but fullness. your fullness."

"the zen person, feeling himself to be part of nature, finds of life a rapture as a dance, a dance in which one moves joyfully and spontaneously. its value lies in the dancer's joy, not the creation of a particular .."

"... reaction in the spectators nor in the satisfaction gained from following slavishly a pattern someone has created before hand."



## **Drawing as Discovery – pleasure and desire in drawing**

“Drawing carries the gesture of desire. In taking shape, this desire reveals itself to be pleasure, not the pleasure of completion but the pleasure of tension.” (Nancy 26)

My work is created within a tension between control and letting go. I allow for outside forces such as stains or quick gestural marks and unintentional forms to guide my work, with a tension between intuition and intention. The lines, which I intentionally add to the stains (and or gestural marks), are interventions through which I discover and draw figures and narratives. Jean Luc Nancy, refers to the pleasure in drawing, as the pleasure which exists within the inconclusiveness of drawing, within a desire towards an impulse, and possibility (Nancy 38). My drawings are about a kind of withdrawing. The pleasure of gesture in drawing is a pleasure with a tension, tension of drawing out, not knowing; an inconclusive pleasure, towards an unknown end, or no end (Nancy 38). The pleasure is in becoming, and following the line.

My lines aren't sure of which way to go, or what to become. Drawing is a site of discovery, where I follow the line's inclination, it is desire, where forms unfold, and form themselves. What appears before me is like a hallucination, for it appears not from reality or my conscious imagination, but feels instead closer to dreams and a subconscious. I discover within these stains and forms, which have appeared before me something both strange and familiar—like the inkblot testing method popularly used by Psychologists. The personal associations, which I make with these fluid drawn shapes, allow for narratives to emerge in my imagination. This psychological space of drawing allows for difficult narratives to surface from within an ambiguous space. In this space, difficult narratives are constructed and confronted, from a place that is not from here. In ways similar to the state of a shaman in a trance, where one can confront the profound and indescribable, because often our deepest feelings don't rise to consciousness.

In *What Do Drawings Want*, by Micheal Taussig, the author engages with the writings of John Berger on drawing, and suggest the idea that pictures want something, that they are spirits, and asks what happens when we make pictures and look at the pictures we are making. He describes drawing as a three-way conversation between “the drawer, the thing drawn, and the hypothetical viewers” (Taussig 265). Taussig also refers to letters written between Berger and his son about drawing. One in particular where Berger asks his son Yves, “Where are we when we draw? That is, where are we spiritually?” to which his son Yves responds that he feels that the process of drawing is like an electric circuit, like “something passes from what he is looking at back to himself and from there back to the thing looked at” (Taussig 270). Berger then replies that drawings are more about becoming than being, emphasizing the importance of a drawn line, not only in what it records, but what it leads you to see (Taussig 270).

The pleasure of drawing is also in experiencing yourself as the other. “What satisfies is a thing (an object, a being), what gives pleasure is a relation. My pleasure relates me in myself to myself to a subject that “I” am not, which is prior to and beyond me, to my desire and my pulsion.” (Nancy 68-69). The pleasure is in the relation of the trace to the marks, and stains which are outside forces. The pleasure is in the drawing out, bringing out, and revealing. I am dealing with fragmentation of queer immigrant identity through drawing, where my desires are reflected where invisible stories are able to surface, and allow me to locate myself in the world on my own terms, and to exist. Drawing then is also a journey of discovery of my own voice, my own narrative and visibility, but also a place where others might see themselves.



Jon Bird Jo Ann Issak  
Sylvère Lotringer  
  
Nancy Spero

Nancy Spero  
ties her art to cultural  
history ~~text~~

stepping into myself... <sup>1/2</sup>  
(Post war figurative works)  
  
Spero's work (pg 44)  
Cedex Artland one-texture of  
women introduce major themes  
which continue throughout her  
practice

... (pg 44)  
: a semi-ritualization of the  
female body spanning a  
register from pain to pleasuring,  
mourning and loss and an  
uninhibited recognition of  
the capacity for joy.

pleasure and pain.  
women, pre history to p

(48)  
establishing a relationship  
between the viewer and the  
work  
"In her approach to the signifier  
and potential of the female  
body, Spero's lexicon and mytho-  
logical images of women  
represents an unmasking...

... of the (48)  
power of the slave type,  
a displacement of fixed  
categories value hierarchies  
in favour of an aesthetics  
of heterogeneity.

(48)  
the meanings reside in  
relationships  
(Artland writing)

I am no (god)des  
no myth  
I am real  
now kneal

phases of acute embodiment  
(sexual pleasure, masturbation,  
death...) of dominion  
of the body, evidence  
in contestable reality. Xs

expressive range of the  
gestural female body  
as metaphor for physical  
and psychic experience  
  
torture, maiming  
death, sexual  
pleasure... <sup>(5)</sup>

"the relation between  
suffering, social responsibility  
and regimes of power  
con-strating provides a political  
framework for the work,  
reflected and transformed in  
the redemptive possibilities  
of liberated female bodies

"the space of the paper  
over which her narratives  
unfold becomes protected  
space for the expression of  
the fears and desires prohibited  
by social convention: here  
truths can be stated."  
(56)

"... she contracts to the limits  
of the body in its most  
detailed and corporeal expression  
- the voice remains the sole  
extension of the self  
beyond the body, space  
contracts to the limits of  
the body, or the body's  
limits expand to fill the  
infinite space; ... (56)

(56)  
... time is the eternal  
present and the distance  
between interior and  
exterior dissolves."

(40)  
"Figure/ground relations are  
of fundamental importance in  
Spero's work. Space signifies.  
It has narrative and formal  
value, it is bounded and  
architectural."

... (60)  
often these spaces can best be  
described as 'liminal', spaces  
of ambiguity and ambivalence.  
liminal space falls between  
the social spheres of the  
public and private, the local  
and the global, economy and  
culture - ...

(60)  
formally, space becomes charged  
in the figure/ground and  
viewer/work relationships,  
either broken into the short  
repetitive or staccato-like  
phrases which serve to  
animate the gestulating  
bodies, or as ...

(60)  
... in anthropological terms  
the space for ritual and  
a rite of passage which depend  
upon the suspension of  
social codes and conventions  
for the exchange of meaning

(60)  
... long intervals which  
function mimetically as  
stillness or silence: a  
pause in the narrative.  
space is therefore, is both  
real and metaphorical."

(60)  
"imminence, in this sense, can  
be connected with the notion  
of 'carnavalesque', as another  
presence, encouraging the  
interruption or suspension  
of normative behavioural  
social patterns."

... (60)  
carnavalesque is essentially  
dialogical. 'composed of  
distances, relationships,  
analogies and non-  
exclusive oppositions"

... (60)  
emphasizing instead the  
fragmentation and interaction  
between subject and object.

"the experience was both  
spatial and durational, a  
relation of subject to  
object reflected in the  
internal relations and  
divisions."  
(63)

a space for new meanings  
to appear, enter the  
work.

(71)  
for Foucault spatial metaphors  
were best used to express the  
relations between power and  
knowledge: "Once knowledge  
can be analyzed in terms of  
regions, domains, implantation,  
displacement, transposition,  
one is able to capture the  
processes by which ...

(71)  
... knowledge functions as a  
form of power and disseminates  
the effects of power."

(73)  
The Key elements, the associations  
of femininity, sexuality and  
fluidity, a quest, a lost or  
wounded body and the impossible  
yearning for reunion, reach across  
the centuries and narrative  
traditions, describing a powerful  
form of psychic desire."

(76)  
... the thematic and rhythmic  
focus of the work as a whole:  
a narrative which plays with  
codes of gender, the 'erotic',  
and the performance of  
femininity as masquerade."

to draw like writing  
in the same way that  
Spero paints like writing.  
(80)  
(The language  
of the body)

## **Gesture - drawing as performance, the act of drawing**

A gesture not governed by causes, right at the body, “the body that gives itself over to a motion - to an emotion - that receives it, coming from beyond its functional corporeality.” (Nancy 39)

The pleasure of drawing occurs also right at the level of the body. Drawing is a verb, an action. Gestures are improvisational acts. Drawing involves my muscles, hands, arms and shoulders, they know where they are, how fast to move, how slow to drag the brush, where to apply pressure, where to drag it lightly and precisely when to lift off from the surface. How fast, slow, hard or soft a mark was made is exposed in a drawing. Berger writes about how drawings contain the experience of looking, and the way in which drawings encompass time:

A drawing of a tree shows, not a tree but a tree being-looked-at. Whereas the sight of a tree is registered almost instantaneously, the examination of the sight of a tree (a tree being-looked-at) not only takes minutes or hours instead of a fraction of a second, it also involves, derives from, and refers back to, much previous experience of looking. Within the instant of the sight of a tree is established a life-experience. This is how the act of drawing refuses the process of disappearances and proposes the simultaneity of a multitude of moments. (Berger 1985).

Drawing is a physical act that requires the alignment of our mind and body. While identity is troubled by fragmentation, there is an alignment of mind and body in the act of drawing. Drawing isn't only about looking and seeing, it is also about the touch, and to put the body at the center of knowing: to empty my mind, become one with my materials in a state of floating and alert awareness. I have come to learn that my approach to drawing and my materials, is in fact very much in line with ancient Chinese ink and brush practices and thinking, the freedom of gesture and openness. As well as the emptiness an open space, which is also orchestrated, choreographed, and formally organized along with the marks (Sillman). The brush leads, and my hand follows.

The corporeality in drawing “provides the image-maker bodily access to its being.” (Taussig 23). Drawing is movement, a dance in space and time. I feel *in* my body when



engaged with drawing. Drawing also becomes a place through which I am able to reach my past, be in the present, imagine a future, extend into my body, and therefore into the world. Drawing is like a dance grounded in our bodily interaction with the world, a dance through which we connect to the world and ourselves. Through drawing my body becomes present in a place outside of social and cultural conventions.

A companion to the Anthropology of the Body and embodiment edited by Frances E. Mascia-Lewis Wiley-Blackwell 2011 UK

(42) Affect "Intersections of racialization, affect, and the anthropology of the body" "ventures into a sphere (43) of racialized "public feelings" all suggestive of of embodied racialized affect emerging from the managing of...

43 "... Sentiments and emotions in the public sphere and how neoliberalism has dialectically sustained and being sustained on affective grounds."

(46) Autoethnography "Autoethnography is an embodied practice: it is ethnographic investigation that takes auto-reflective perceptions of the world as the starting point for generalization and theorizations about the cultural, the social and the political."

46 (check for error ref) "... emotionally, aesthetically, and intellectually (46), producing between an embodied experience of reading that often forges intimate (Sensual) contact between readers & text)

(46) ↓ "though foregrounding personal experience and story as meaning-making exercises, auto-ethnographers ask their readers to become co-participants [in their stories], engaging the storyline morally..."

(47) Carolyn Ellis Auto-ethnography "In anthropology in particular, auto-ethnography as a form of cultural inquiry + genre of representation - and embodied practice - is tied to a narrative of states"

(47) "For many anthropologists concern with the politics and poetics of writing culture" - whether feminist, post-colonial, post-structuralist, or LGBT - auto-ethnographic techniques were, and remain today, a tool of cultural criticism..."

(47) ↓ "... a means to respond both to how power operates within traditional fieldwork and realist forms of ethnographic representation through creating "the categories of native and narrative, subject and..."

(47) ↓ "... object, researcher and subject of study" and the personal and public."

(48) "embodied experience of gender, race, sexuality, identity, performance, a kinship and community - uses elements of both, but emphasizes the use of stories as empirical evidence, as ethnographic..."

(47) Bodies- "the prose 'cultural phenomenology' of embodiment denotes an attempt to gain purchase on the understanding of culture and self from the starting point of our bodies as being-in-the-world and requires recognition that our bodies are at once..."

(47) "... the watery of existence and the site of experience" "In effect, embodiment is our fundamental existential condition, our corporeality, our bodeliness in relation to the world and other people."

(48) environment / place, power relations. "we inhabit the world and the world inhabits us"

"aspects of the relation of our bodies to the world, specifically with respect to how they deal with the issue of agency" (138)

(137) body-world relations. "sexual differences, and a component of corporeality that establishes as it were the dimensions - lengths, breadth, and depth - of embodiment." (138)

(137) Merleau-Ponty: Body as Being-toward-the-world

(140) "the locus of agency in relation between our bodies and our world shifts" in the Bourdieu to the habitus, & the mode of agency becomes practice."

"phantom limb" & "being-towards-the-world" (141)

(154) "three-dimensional field includes a system of elementary structures of agency in the body-world relations, the fundamental axis of sexual difference between male & female relations..."

(149) "Partialization - how to Do Races with Bodies" it is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of the world that looks on in amused contempt & pity."

(149) "one ever feels this twoness - an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts; two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps from being torn asunder"

(W. E. B. Du Bois, The Souls of Black Folk (1903))

(141) "The signifier of my ethnicity isn't so much my body as it is my name"

(141) 421 "production of identity and otherness"

(431) "A century after their publication, W. E. B. Du Bois's illuminating observations (1897-1903) about 'double-consciousness', and the remains remarkable entry into the question of embodiment & racialization, revealing how social relations - in particular the..."

(431) "... way people look at, talk to, behave with, treat others - relations - in particular the way people look at, talk to, behave with, treat others - shape racial identities."

## **Bodies and borders - identity, invisible time and space**

“Home is not a fixed place but a constantly negotiated space between self and location”  
(Jamelie Hassan)

Each hand-drawn line is a unique mark corresponding to the hand and mind that made it, their environments and previous experiences. I have lived in two very different countries one in the East as a child, and one in the West as a youth and adult. I am Iranian Canadian, female and queer. I have identified in this body, as white, as brown, coloured, Iranian, Persian, and Middle Eastern. In this body, I have identified as bisexual, pansexual, lesbian, and queer. In this body I have also identified as monogamous and non-monogamous and polyamorous. In this body I have been discriminated against as a person of color, and passed as a white person. All of the above occurring in different, times, places and across borders. Through this body I extend into the world—there are borders against this body, and this body is sometimes a border itself. I am 35 years old and I am just starting to come into my own body, on my own terms.

I grew up in Iran until the age of 14. The 1980's in Iran were like the dark ages. It wasn't long after the revolution, and the government forces were extremely oppressive. In school we studied the Koran and religion, prayed and covered up. At home, I would watch Madonna on the screen, David Bowie, Prince, bootleg VHS tapes of foreign films, Disney movies and obsess over Michael Jackson. I was negotiating very different worlds: a whole other world different from my day-to-day life outside of our home, very much like the way my now queer life and familial life feel today. I am still coming home to this body. I grew up unaware of how my Persian-ness, my gender, and my sexuality is dismissed and or pushed upon me, and who has power over my identity, well into my adult life. I am being formed and self-forming much like drawing.

Until we immigrated to Canada, and I went to college, I denied all things Persian. I rejected, and suppressed all things “Persian” and felt ashamed of them. It took me a long time to embrace my cultural background and to understand its weight and complexities. I am still working on that. Our lives were full of paradoxes and dualities. This was a very complex world, which many in my generation navigated. When I looked at films and photographs from my parent’s generation, the past and present seemed impossible. They looked different, the opposite, and conflicting. Iran was a different country and Iranian nationality had a different meaning. My mother went to school in her youth in mini skirts and flirted with boys, my father played music in bands and performed, and a gay man hosted a TV show. In the same place, a few years later, music was banned and gay men were executed; I went to an all girl school, wore hijab, learned Arabic, read the Koran and prayed to God by force. The past was not accessible to me, and neither was my present. The sound of Azan from a local Mosque would occupy the air every morning and afternoon, and the sound of foreign music would occupy the inside of our atheist house. My identity was multinational even prior to my migration to Canada, or perhaps transnational, or not national at all, as nationalities/nations are not fixed.

I am fluid like stone, like mountains, like water, but held and contained by a river bed. Yet the river bed is also held and contained by the land, the wind and trees and so on. My identity is fluid and shaped by my experiences, which are not tied to a location, but my experiences and relations to others. Tanya Salesi describes what shapes our identities in three categories: our rituals, our relationships and our restrictions (Salesi). She describes that rituals are things like languages we speak, foods we eat, traditions and our home life, relationships are the day to day with those who shape our experiences, and restrictions like where you are able to live or travel to (Salesi). The way in which we inhabit our bodies, shifts and changes, and so does the way we inhabit space, depending on the “where” of our bodily dwelling. Sarah Ahmed suggests that orientation is about making the strange familiar through



the extension of bodies into space, when this extension fails, “they might feel out of place, where they have been given a place” (Ahmed 11). My body is raced, gendered and sexualized by how I extend into space, by how I take up space and direct my desires; it is the site of my experiences.

Through drawing I am also reflecting the foreignness, otherness, and estrangement of all the states of my living, I am re-examining my personal experiences through narratives centered on the intersections of my irreconcilable and fragmented identities, and dualities. I am not questioning how one locates home in a diaspora, but asking, rather, what if our body is our home, and that to extend into one’s own body, is to be at home? What happens when queer bodies move cross borders and margins? “In a way we learn what home means, or how we occupy space at home and as home, when we leave home.” (Ahmed 9). A realignment of politics, identity, and desire takes place, when queer bodies move between spaces, religions and cultures (Patton 3). Iranian female, queer identities face a gap and lack of research as well as literature or representation due to religious, cultural and political barriers against their bodies. I search for visibility through the narratives of other queer women of color, something anything close enough.

I have had conversations about my name with a countless numbers of Uber drivers in Toronto, and I have come to learn, that my name is common in many neighboring countries to Iran. The driver’s often read my name, prior to seeing me get into their car. “Naz! Where are you from?”, “What does your name mean?”, “Do you know what your name means?”, “What kind of name is that?”, often followed by “Oh, you don’t look Iranian”, “You don’t have an accent”, “Where you born here?”, “I was surprised to see you after I saw your name”. My extension into this world is also tied to my name, a name that categorizes my body, ties it to a nation, an ethnicity, and therefore power relations. These moments of disorientation and loosing one’s place are moments in which I come to understand my own being, through my

relation to others, through moments of identity crisis, a crisis of knowledge, tied to history, time and space. At times it feels as though I have no access to my own body, my own history, or knowledge of self. Drawing provides a kind of mental and physical liberation, a place of healing, and resistance, and knowledge of self.

Upon moving to Canada I began my teenage life in high school. High school is not kind. I began my journey of truly assimilating, forgetting my past, and making a different relationship to what was lost, as a defense mechanism. I began to wear an armor of black clothes to school, lots of heavy black makeup, and soon made scary looking goth friends who made me feel protected. I also began to skip school and act out. At age seventeen, to threaten my state of affairs and questionable behavior, my parents sent me to visit my uncle and his family for the summer. I crossed the US border to visit my uncle. I was traveling alone for the first time, and only seventeen. I was fingerprinted and posed for mug shots just like a criminal. While an entire bus of people sat and waited at the border for the one passenger, who was me, and held up because of the name on my Canadian passport, and because of my place of birth. This was only the first of many other non-pleasant border crossings. I remember gaining a particularly different understanding of my being that day.

My identity is oscillating between worlds; through drawing I find reconciliation between my worlds, a place where my body extends. As a grown adult queer, and Iranian woman, the boundaries of the closet from which I have stepped out, are different. My sexuality is in transition, and can't be named. Not only there is literally no Farsi word to translate it to; my queer identity does not translate into my Iranian identity, and family life. Who I am is negotiated based on who is at family dinner or which side of the border I am. Sometimes I am shoved back into the closet. Who I am is in negotiation, and my emotional experience of day-to-day is also tied to a different life, culture and place.

Sarah Ahmed writes about these moments of disorientation and reorientation and the intersection between queer and diaspora (Ahmed 177). Moments, which make one feel in the wrong body, disoriented and not at home. Reading Dina Georgis on “Queer Affects from the Middle East”, in the past year has given me great insight into my own being in the world, queer, and diasporic identity. Dina Goergis and Slavoj Zizek both use the example of Frankenstein to discuss the notion of “the other.” Dina Georgis suggests the predicament of many queers is much like Frankenstein’s monster, not belonging to the cultural/racial communities of their birth, not being reflected in the stories which “set the terms of belonging” and what this does to one’s desires (Georgis 133-4). Zizek, writes about the other as the enemy, as someone who’s story we have not heard (Zizek 49).

Although Marhjaneh Satrapi’s book *Perspolis* is many people’s only point of reference to my identity, work and life, it is not my story. It is a single story. My identity is forming itself within the boundaries of itself, contained within this body, as forms form them selves and are contained within the paper. I need to produce a narrative of my own, to tell my own story, a narrative not tied to a location, or fixed in time, portraying identity as both inevitable, transforming and contrived. I need to look beyond symbols, and cultural constructs, to avoid the narratives, symbols and elements, which are imposed on me, instead to give over to my body, to water, to my materials to the unknown.

Leaving home, has been tied to extreme feelings of grief and abandonment, and orienting myself as queer and coming home to my own body, has been tied to extreme feelings of shame, joy, love guilt and fear. My knowledge of self has been, and is attached to power. I do not have access to a present, or past where I am reflected. At age 35, for the first time, I heard this ionic Malcom X speech from 1962, in Los Angeles. It really spoke to me, as his questions felt valid for me to ask of myself, today. He asks “Who taught you to hate yourself from the top of your head to the soles of your feet? Who taught you to hate your own

kind? Who taught you to hate the race that you belong to so much so that you don't want to be around each other?" (Malcom X). Except unlike his audience, I had no answers to any of these questions. If a knowledge of self is what I need for salvation, where do I search?



writes to speak for herself (18)  
I write to participate in the world  
 - preference for the written word, not the spoken word  
 - reflecting on the complexity of the human condition and the often problematic inter-human communications.  
 - for the reading of her artworks the movement she chooses of her medium are as important as the subjects she chooses.  
 "Similarly in the writing she tells us the substance of language."  
 - "complexity of doubt and nuance."  
 "Demands upon an illusion of intimacy and suggestion of narrative, without returning the promise, because she is ambiguous as to come to terms with." (19)

"I write about art because I suppose a safe artist."  
"I write about modern work because I don't want to speak for myself."  
 "Even Duchamp mentioned that (2)  
 "I write about art because I want to do some work about the tone of most art writing." "I am not impressed by ART name disappointed, because I never wanted a art as the Big White Horse animal, or saw artists as larger than life."  
 (11)


EXPRESSIONISM -  
 its give up style because you've had out given #"  
 - art is not a mirror. Art is a translation of that which you don't know, but which you want to convince others or rather that which you know, but by which everyone can be seduced into believing that although it is bad it is good. It's good not to have what you desire most. (13)

- Reliability of Subjects  
 - being literal + illustrative (Sins)  
 -> us. music + fine literature are allowed  
 - "it's a great pity that it seems as if only 'media' artists have something meaningful to say about our cultural decline, or want to portray it. Generally speaking it's media-artists who still get all excited about nation's life, honest, or manipulations from the advertising world or other 'Power' structures." (42)

move for abstract expressionism  
 "second-order heavy burden of melancholy, Mordmann (and Marilyn Monroe), and in the knowledge that everything of value is invisible, and because of my love of Abstract expressionism and wanting that goes with it (particularly, there fore Clement Greenberg) I felt that a growing need to reevaluate the concept 'realism'." (43)

"my memory disfigures my feeling. My imagination disfigures my memory. My sources vary." (54)

"I like art that creates with the eternally unequal relation between its source of life and its artificial nature, art which dwells on corporality, while always acknowledging that it the final analysis, it remains unnatural." (51)  
 "why is there so little that moves you? Because we want to ignore evil and deny the body."

"when art is too well-orchestrated, when it knows only too well how to manipulate its public and knows exactly what the public wants, then inevitably emotion is absent because, in my opinion, art disturbs you. has something unpleasant about it, in some way bound up with a combination of hesitation, and something going wrong." (50)  



"I've never been interested in drawing in that respect - elate like children do." (42)  
 - Isolation  
 "as the isolation of a recognizable figure increases and the negative character decreases (contrary to what one might initially assume that this lack of illustrative information would bring about) the interpretative affects are altered. The times reflect the work, however do not eradicate the inherent ambiguity." (62)

Burge drive refers to by Dumas "The aim is too reveal" not to 'display' (61)  
 - "my paintings are not executions of one idea or emotion that goes from (a) intention to (b) artwork. (our notions of cause and effect are also in bad shape.) Drawings are closer and quicker in conveying immediate feelings. the more you move towards painting the darker the work becomes through which little Red Riding Hood goes and it's not only the wolf, but also the wicked witch and the seven dwarfs and Judas and Jesus and the virgin Mary that she has to face." (60)

compares painting to pop music, to soul music.  
 "the relationality + accessibility  
 - someone once compared her work to "cheerleaders" not as a compliment or really. It was a compliment." (69)

she seeks and enjoys "popular things/ images/culture  
 "Public images intermingled with private snapshots and statements by others." (70)  
 "usa & violence" (70)

"Post script  
 It has been said men make history, women autobiographies.  
 "No man are not all self portraits"  
 on being female (72)  
 + backgrounds

"Drawing are street wise" (73)  


Drawing is closer (75)  
 Drawing is closer to whispering into someone's ear, while painting is more like the ear itself. It contains all that has ever existed there. It listens more than it speaks. It throws speech into the dark. Thinking is not speechless. It overflows. It is a drunken mermaid's song."

"A painting is about the trace of the human touch. It is about the skin of a surface." (77)  
 (this)  
 Painting + white craft

Painting VS. Photography  
 - not from here. (86)  
 "Painted human figures remain always imagined beings, that have their own peculiar features and psychology. they are closer to the world of ghosts and angels, daydreams and nightmares than to real people in the streets. In a sense, they are always not from here, which does not mean that they don't play with our social fantasies and fears, and related preoccupations."

On Beauty (98)  
 (they say) Art no longer produces beauty. She produces meaning, but to sure, one cannot paint a picture, or make an image of a woman and not deal with the concept of beauty."

"the balance between control and letting go is very important. Deliberation needs arbitrariness. there is not a set message to decipher. there is ambiguity to come to terms with, an existential awareness that the interpretation of my work operates like a movie with an open ending." (107)  
 live in a state of tension  
 ↳ low artistic involvement

- open balance - tension  
 ↳ control vs. letting go

## **materiality – water, air, stones and stains**

“The salt of the sea is our blood; the calcium of the rocks is in our bones; the genes of ten thousand generations of stalwart progenitors is in our cells. The sun shines and we smile, the winds rage and we bend before them. The blossoms open and we rejoice. Earth is our long home.” (Holmes 37)

Nature accepts this body, while culture rejects it. While growing up in Iran, prior to grade one or my school life, my father worked as a biologist in the mountains and wilderness, researching plants in the woods. We lived near the Caspian Sea in northern Iran, where my mother’s family is from. We lived in a small community where everyone knew one another, we had fresh fish from the sea and, although I was very young, I roamed the streets, played with our neighbor’s hens, and spent my days outside playing with sticks and stones. The government forces, which controlled and pressured people, were not as intrusive here in a small town. Once we moved to the city of Tehran where I began school, I was confronted with my gender, and torn from nature and a sense of freedom. I was no longer allowed to play outside, or to be in my body on my own terms. We would often return to this town, on holidays and over the Summer to visit friends and spend vacations, I remember the time I spent there as a child, very fondly, a simple time, prior to realizing the complexities of being in this body. An early sense of my identity was developed here.

I collect things from nature. In my studio you will always find sticks and stones, they comfort me. They help me connect with and recognize what is here. This has remained for me a form of play from childhood, with a sense of wonder, adventure and discovery. A similar kind of pleasure is what attracts me to drawing. My materials are close to nature. As Marlene Dumas describes, “Painting is about the trace of a human touch. It is about the skin of a surface” (Dumas 77). I feel very close to my materials. They are essentially, stones, water, and air. I use ink, a lot of water and a paper made of stone. For me, these materials hold a

significance similar to that expressed by Mark Treib: materials, he writes, “maintain a physical link to the land. They behave materially like other natural elements as they share the same physical laws such as gravity, tension and resistance.” (Treib 69) The water moves, pools, and evaporates; the ink separates, and the colors change.

The paper, which I use, is an environmentally friendly paper made from stones called Terra skin paper. There are no water or trees involved in creating this paper. I use a lot of water and need air and time for the water to dry. I have always collected rocks, leaves, pinecones, tree bark, and seashells. I like to study trees and enjoy familiarizing myself with the natural habitat of places in which I live. Familiarizing myself with the trees of a region helps me feel at home, to belong and create a relationship with the land which helps me feel less foreign. These materials provide a grounding for me, a relationship to nature, in a void of cultural connections, operating across space and time. A tree can be the oldest specie one can encounter in a city. They are in fact physically linked to the land. As someone who is not native to this land, or a settler, but an immigrant, I think about my relationship to this land. While reading bell hooks on her experiences growing up, her relationship to nature and moving away from her childhood home in Kentucky, I relate to the connections which she makes between the natural world and human desire for freedom (hooks 8). I also understood this early in childhood, and make connections between geographical location and psychological states of being.

A good friend once told me something interesting about trees. They said that trees are connected underground, through a whole world of networks and connections through their roots underneath the forest bed. I lost a friend, last March in 2018. Levon Haftevan, he was an actor, a playwright, a director and the most generous human. His home was a home to many in Toronto and his door, open to all. This March I started a funding campaign to plant a tree in his Memory. He was a refugee most of his life, in Iran, in Russia, and finally for a long

while, in Canada. After many years he had finally received his permanent residency, which meant that he could travel and finally visit Iran after too many years. He was in Iran when he died, and was buried there. What happens when a tree stands alone? What if it has no roots and it dies? I couldn't help but think of him when thinking about roots, and trees. How he was never able to grow roots anywhere. It has been extremely healing to plant a tree in his memory. While growing up, in moments of grief and calamity, when most would grasp for a kind of faith or religion, I would find myself learning about ancient traditions of witchcraft and astrology. These are terrains where I look to the stars, the planets and the universe. I look to the cosmos, to the earth, to what I am made of, not what man has made. Looking for an alternative knowledge. In nature, my body that is not tied to race and identity has place of solace. "When we love the earth, we are able to love our selves more fully." (hooks 34).

I often approach my work with minimal materials, and limit my color pallet and tools. I am interested in using basic and lo tech materials which are accessible, portable, and tangible, closer to life and nature. Drawings are frail, easily torn, shared, transported, smudged, crumbled, stained or soaked (Hill 94). Drawing is an accessible medium; it is immediate, urgent, sequential and intimate. Here I will further discuss my relationship to my materials more specifically.

**Water** – We are made of water. Water is what separated and connects all that is on earth. We cannot survive without water. Water purifies. Water is healing. Water is ambiguous.

The water flows – sometimes serenely in wide quiet places, sometimes dashed through rapids, and buffeted on rocks. This flow pleases the artist, enriches the former, fills in ocean, rises as vapor, over the surface of the earth, to fall as rain and snow, feeding the springs which fill the river, which flows on. Is the water really the river, or the pleasure, or the enrichment, or the evaporation – perception cycle? None of these, because all. It flows. We live. (Holmes 58)

The fluidity of water is central to my work. This fluidity aids me in loosing control, in order to create a kind of tension, with my intention. We are like water, always moving and changing to



our environment. Water is ambiguous, two faced, two gendered (Dumas110). Like Marlene Dumas, water is a vehicle, and a forming elementary substance in my work (Cantz 110).

Water transforms as a result of external stimuli. We are water.

**Rocks and Stones** - Do I put rocks in my pocket because I need something to hold on to? Do stones hold knowledge? Do they transmit energy and heal us? Stones signify endurance and slowness, they last longer than human flesh, and decay slowly (Bennett 2011). I have always collected rocks, from places I have visited. They are always around, on my worktable, on my windowsill, used as paperweights, used as objects, which ground my work and me. Rocks are our lucky charms. Rocks are grounding, calming, they are solid, not liquid like water, but they also transform. I am especially interested in metamorphic rocks, which transform under extreme heat and pressure. One can see the trace of time, through the patterns created on these rocks. We are metamorphic rocks, shaped by the events of our life, decaying slowly in time. The stains, which I create in my work, reference these types of geological formations.

**Time** – I consider drawing to be a time-based medium (as discussed in Part 2). However, time in my work operates also as a pause. Once I pour the water on the surface to create pools of ink and water, because of the non-absorbent quality of the paper, this pool dries very slowly over time leaving lines and marks, indicating the process of time. The patterns created, look very much like geological rock formations, similar to those on metamorphic rocks. These layers of marks represent what my proceeds my body, the earth, the universe.

**Air** – I hold my breath when making a mark. For each mark I hold my breath, I hold the air inside me, upon releasing the line I release the air from my lungs. Air is also my collaborator as it dries the pools of ink water that I pour onto the paper. The dust in the air also settles into the water and often appears as little specs, as the paper and water sit out to dry for long periods of time.

**Stains** – Stains are material, the stains are an extension of the water, external stimuli to which I react and interact with. They are often the basis of the work, a kind of purposeful accident. The stain is an external force. They guide me into the abyss.

**Ink** – We have made ink and used it to draw since we drew in caves. The use of ink can be traced back for centuries, first as a decorator of objects and, evidence of civilizations, later as the transmitter of ideas. “Recipes, mathematical formulas, banking, poetry, music, diagrams, history, philosophy, and stories are inseparable from the history of ink” (Logan 23). Ink allows me to work loosely. The particular ink that I use is fountain pen ink, meant for writing. When used with water and diluted in time the colors separate. Operating as an additional external force.

**Brush** – “By itself the brush has proven to possess the most infectious, most responsive, personality, and the widest vocabulary, of any graphic instrument” (Hill 95). Replacing the brush with my other drawing tools has pushed my drawing style forward and helped me create more open and expressive images. Something about the brush just leads your hand. The brush leads and I follow. I particularly enjoy the way Chinese ink brushes can hold ink and water, and the variety of marks they make. The bamboo feels nice to hold, and when the water drips from the brush into the water, it makes a nice sound. I often will only use one or two brushes, until they are no longer usable.

I am using air, earth and the fluidity of water. Things that don't die, things that are always moving and transforming visibly and invisibly, closer to the body, to earth, to nature, dying, degrading but also being born, beginning, becoming and infinite. Once the pools of ink water or marks have dried, I return to these stains and continue to work, in response. Suggesting a looseness and transparency, against and in tension with what is already there; in a state of fragmentation, using the stain or blot as a “de-figuration” rather than a source for

the figure (Dumas 98). There is a kind of surrender to external as well as internal forces in this body of work.



**Violence**  
Slavoj Žižek  
"At the forefront of our minds, the obvious signals of violence are acts of crime and terror, civil unrest, international conflict. But we should learn to step back, disengage ourselves from the dominating lure of this directly visible 'subjective' violence, violence performed by a clearly identifiable agent." (1)

"we need to perceive the contours of the background which generates such outbursts, a step back enables us to identify a violence that sustains our very efforts to fight violence and to promote tolerance." (1)

"Subjective violence is just the most visible portion of a multitude that also includes two objective kinds of violence. First there is 'symbolic' violence imbedded in language and its forms, what the digger would call 'our house of being.' As we shall see later, this violence is not only at work in the obvious and extant, but also in the subtlest cases of incivility." (1)

"... and of relations of social domination reproduced in our mental speech forms. There is a more fundamental form of violence still that pertains to language as such, to its imposition of a certain universe of meaning. Second there is what I call 'systemic' violence, or the often catastrophic consequences of the smooth functioning of our economic & political systems." (2)

"the catch is that subjective and objective violence cannot be perceived from the same standpoint: subjective violence is experienced as such against the background of a non-violent zero level. It is seen as a perturbation of the 'normal', peaceful state of things. However, objective violence is precisely the violence inherent to this 'normal' state of things." (2)

"objective violence is invisible since it sustains the very zero-level standard against which we perceive something as subjectively violent. Systemic violence is thus something like the 'dark matter' of physics; the counter-part to an all-too-visible subjective violence." (2)

"Systemic violence" maybe invisible, but it has to be taken into account if one is to make sense of what otherwise seem to be "irrational" explosions of subjective violence." (2)

"when the media bombards us with those 'humanitarian crisis' which seem constantly to pop up all over the world, one should always bear in mind that a particular crisis only explodes into media visibility as the result of a complex struggle." (2)

**Impact in our Symbolic Space (3)**  
"Do we need further proof that the humanitarian sense of urgency is mediated, indeed overdetermined, by clear political considerations? and what are these considerations?" (3)

"Instead of confronting violence directly, the Tibet book casts six sideways glances. These are reasons for looking at the problem of violence away. My underlying premise is that there is something inherently mystifying in direct confrontation with it." (3-4)

"(4) the over powering horror of violent acts and sympathy with the victims inexorably function as a lure which prevents us from thinking. A dispassionate conceptual development of the typology of violence must by definition ignore its traumatic impact." (4)

**(factual) truth and truthfulness, is repeats of narratives of trauma. (4)**  
(the only appropriate approach to my subject thus seems to be one which permits variations on violence kept at a distance out of respect towards its victims (4)

"Adorno's famous saying it seems, needs correction: it is not poetry that is impossible after Auschwitz, but fame-verse. Realistic prose fails, where the poetic evocation of the unbearable atmosphere of a camp succeeds. That is to say when Adorno declares poetry impossible (or, rather, barbaric) after Auschwitz this impossibility is an enabling impossibility: poetry is always, by definition, 'about' something that cannot be addressed directly, only alluded to." (5)

"the key question, of course, is what kind of description is intended here? - not a realistic description of a situation, but what Wallace Stevens called 'description without place' which is what is proper to art." (5) "this is not a description which isolates its content in a historical space and time, but a description which creates, as the background of the phenomenon it describes, an resistant (virtual) space of its own. So that what appears is not an appearance sustained by the depth of reality behind it, but a decontextualized appearance, an appearance which truly connects with real being." (6)

"if there is a fundamental anti-theoretical edge to these urgent injunctions. There is no time to reflect: we have to act now through this false sense of urgency, the post-industrial nihilism in the secluded virtual world, not only do not deny or ignore the harsh reality acts in their area - they actually refer to it all the time." (7)  
"there are situations when the only truly 'practical' thing to do is to resist the temptation to engage immediately and to 'wait and see' by means of patient, critical analysis." (7)

"And this is what we should do today when we find ourselves bombarded with mediatized images of violence. We need to 'learn to learn' and learn what causes this violence. (8)  
- making art as a kind of working around to see a way of learning, not engaging immediately, but reflecting."

**the complex notion of (11) the three modes of violence: subjective, objective and symbolic. The lesson is thus that one should resist the fascination of subjective violence, of violence enacted by social agents, evil individuals, despised repressive apparatus, fanatical crowds. Subjective violence is just the most visible of the three. (11)**  
Barbar - who distinguishes two opposite but complementary modes of excessive violence: the 'ultra-objective' or systemic violence that is inherent in the social conditions of global capitalism, which involve the automatic creation of excluded and dispensable...

"individuals from the necessity to unempowered and the 'ultra-subjective' violence of newly emerging ethnic and/or religious, in short racist, fundamentalism." (14)  
"today's liberal tolerance towards others, the respect of openness and openness towards it is complicated by an obsessive fear of harassment. In short the Other is just fine, but only insofar as his presence is not intrusive insofar as this other is not really other. In a strict homology with the paradoxical structure of the..." (14)

"this presumed subject is thus not another human being with a rich inner life filled with personal stories which are self-narrated in order to acquire a meaningful experience of life. Since such a person cannot ultimately be an enemy, 'an enemy is someone whose story you have not heard.' (16)  
(use's Frankenstein as an example same as Dina Gorjiz)

"language itself, the very medium of non-violence, of mutual recognition, involves unconditional violence." (15)  
"so perhaps, the fact that reason and race have the same root in Latin (ratio) tells us something: language, in its primitive egotistic interest, is the first and greatest divider. It is because of language that we and our neighbours (can) 'live in different worlds' even when we live on the same street. What this means is that verbal violence is not a secondary distortion, but the ultimate result of every specifically human violence." (16)

"the 'wall of language' which forever separates me from the abyss of another subject is simultaneously that which opens up and sustains this abyss - the very obstacle that separates me from the beyond is what creates its image." (73)

This is the truth of globalization: the construction of new walls safeguarding prosperous Europe from immigrant flood. One is tempted to resist at least the old humanist opposition of relations between things, relations between persons, in the much celebrated free circulation opened up by global capitalism, it is 'things' which freely circulate, while the circulation of 'persons' is more and more controlled. We are not dealing now with 'globalization' as an unfinished project but with a true dialectic of globalization." (102)

102 ... "the segregation of the people is the reality of economic globalization. This new racism of the developed world is in a way much more brutal than previous ones: its implicit legitimization is neither naturalist (the 'natural' superiority of the developed west) nor any longer culturalist, but unabashed economic egotism, the fundamental divide in one between those included in the sphere of (relative) economic prosperity and those excluded from it." (102)

**the other**  
Does the Universe have a beginning in time, a limit in space, an initial cause, or is it infinite? The ordinary arises because it is possible to construct valid arguments for both sides of the question we can conclusively demonstrate that the universe is finite and that it is infinite. Kant argues that if this conflict of reason is not resolved, humanity will fall into a bleak nihilism." (105)

Bertolt Brecht's motto from his bourgeois opera: "what is the robbery of a bank compared to the founding of a bank? In other words, what is the robbery that violates the law compared to the robbery that takes place within the confines of the law?" (117)



## Portfolio of Studio Work

A lot of my creative process involves spending time in the studio, testing inks, papers, playing, making mistakes, repeating, redrawing, pouring water, making marks, making and making. Although my process is very immediate as I draw, there is also a pause, and a long process of waiting and observing external and internal forces. I search for meanings in the process and creation of the work, often after the work has been created. I work intuitively and in sessions. I often have 5-10 pieces of paper, which I work on at once, jumping from one to another. Each one exists in relation to the other. Each session is like a song. I can't stop drawing; it is a form of speech and my speaking voice. It is also an uncontrollable urge. Often if not in the studio, drawings appear on the edges of my notebooks or just about any surface, anywhere with whatever tool I can use, my fingers on a foggy window, a stick on sand, a pen in a notebook, a chalk on a board, or my feet in the snow.

The materials I use for this body of work in the studio consist of ink, water, and paper. I pour ink and water on the paper surface in quick gestures, creating pools of water. These pools of water dry slowly over time, revealing the separating of the ink colors, in layers of time, as stains on the paper. Therefore revealing itself as many. Using the stains, I rework the stains by intervening with quick gestural lines, which seek figures in the forms. At times the stains feel complete and I don't intervene with any other marks. The presented forms are enough, already figures. The action of pouring water is much like making quick gestural marks. Pouring water on the paper is a kind of mark making and drawing as well.

For this body of work, I have used only two types of ink. Sumi ink, which is a black traditional ink used in many East Asian cultures for calligraphy and traditional ink paintings, originating in ancient China. The second ink, which I have used most for this series is a brown

fountain pen ink. This brown ink, creates a pink and magical green which only appears when diluted in water and sitting on the surface of this particular paper for a long while (Fig.2). I often leave the studio and return once the pools have dried, and surprise as to how the water has moved, where it has moved, how the colors have separated and how the marks are created. I create the situation in which the work creates itself. It is a collaboration, and not something that I can claim as entirely mine. I often use small rocks which I keep in the studio, to prop up the edges of the paper, so that the pools of water does not become a stream pouring off the edge. In fig 1. you can see the lines and layers, which form as the pool of water dry slowly, over time. As well as the marks I have made, once the pool has dried.

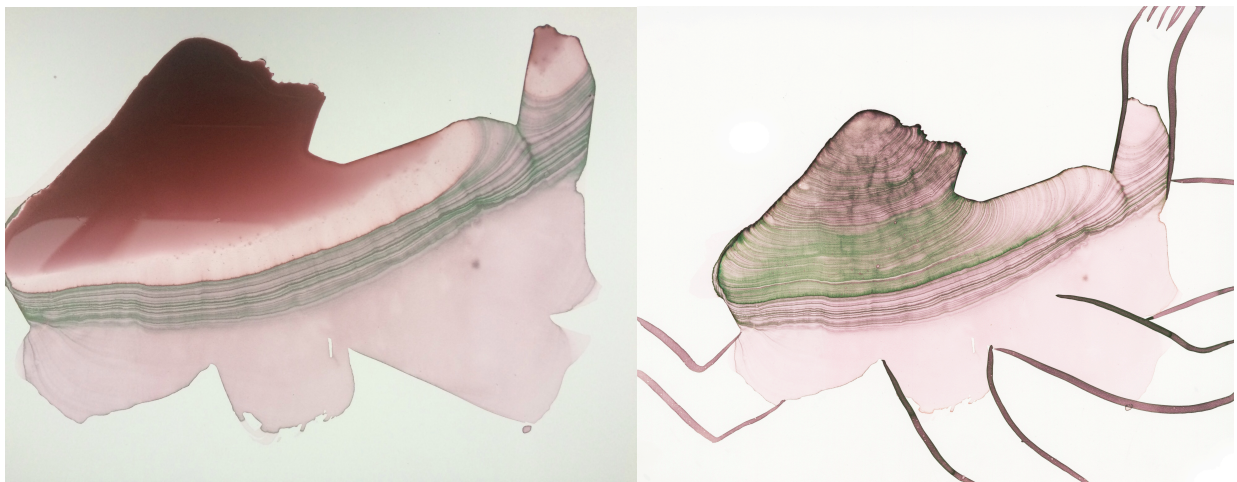


Fig 1. *In all directions all at once*. Ink on paper, 2019.

In (Fig 1) a hand appeared to me, after a free gestural mark was made. I quickly added the lines to suggest nails. Is it a paw? Is it a hand turning into a paw? Is it a claw? I don't know. It's ambiguous, and open to interpretation. But I question why it is that I would see this, and later try to analyze it in a notebook. The quick gestural marks or pouring of water allow for a kind of freedom. A freedom to create without inspiration, to start without an idea or preconceived notions, to always have something to work with, start from and seek. This way

of working allows for no excuses, no sitting around and waiting for inspiration. It is a journey, a discovery, a process, which is infinite. With almost no revisions, no additions, and often no intentions, I draw from the stains, which are infinite, and gestural marks which are infinite. No two are the same, but they are of the same. Some days I come to the studio and there are ideas, which I like to explore. Even then, I proceed without an end result in mind. I improvise and try not to stay too committed to an idea. Perhaps, similar to the way a song or piece of music is improvised.

On other days, I come into the studio, not humming any particular song. Most days are like this, I show up and I get to work. First I put out as much paper as possible, and then I begin to work. In (Fig. 3) you can see drawings, which were created in one session simultaneously. Most often not every single one works. I do have a pile of discards from each session. I consider this pile as part of the whole as well. I can often see clearly that the thoughts and events in my life happen to find their way into the work. These past two years have also been very eventful, outside of the studio for me in regards to my personal life. I can see a direct coloration between the images and my personal life, my readings and understanding of life in general. If my mind is preoccupied with something, it is almost as if I am seeking answers, solutions, or a rest through the work.

Much of my work is also contextualized through my reading and writing. I have always also had a vigorous note taking practice, while reading and researching or watching things. I like to organize my notes so that I can easily refer back to them. As if there is no other way to retain the information. I need to see it written on paper in my own writing. There is a kind of brain activity in writing and looking at my own writing, which makes the information more understandable and engrained in my mind. Drawings often find their way here too. I keep sketchbooks in which I do a combination of writing and drawing. They are a mixture of

personal narratives and anecdotes in writing, lists of things, plans, and small drawings. This is where I make connections between my studio practice, my readings, and everyday life, and history, where I name things out loud, to myself for the first time.

In the studio, often as the body of work grows, I arrange and rearrange them on the wall (Figure, 4,5,6). A big part of the work happens after all the drawing. When I sequence, put together, overlap, take out, arrange, install, and group the work. These are my final edits before the story is complete. The arrangement of the pieces on the studio wall has taken many shapes and forms over the past two years. First I began to arrange the work with a bit of distance from one another. Slowly I began to really understand them as a whole and in relation to one another.

In (Fig. 6) you can see than they begin to overlap. The drawings continue to perform, and perform differently, as the arrangement and installation changes. This becomes a kind of game, a form of play. To arrange, and, rearrange and sequence. Once they make their way out of the studio space, I like to arrange them differently each time, depending on where they are being displayed and what story I'd like to tell or conversation I'd like to hold in the space. They stay fluid and transforming. Sometimes I would choose only a few to sequence together. Often as the work is being made, I start to see themes, and images, which keep repeating and demand a narrative. Adding another layer of discovery as I group them together to uncover narratives, exactly where they come from is not clear to me. The abyss I would say.

Fig. 1 Drawing materials, studio shot, 2019.





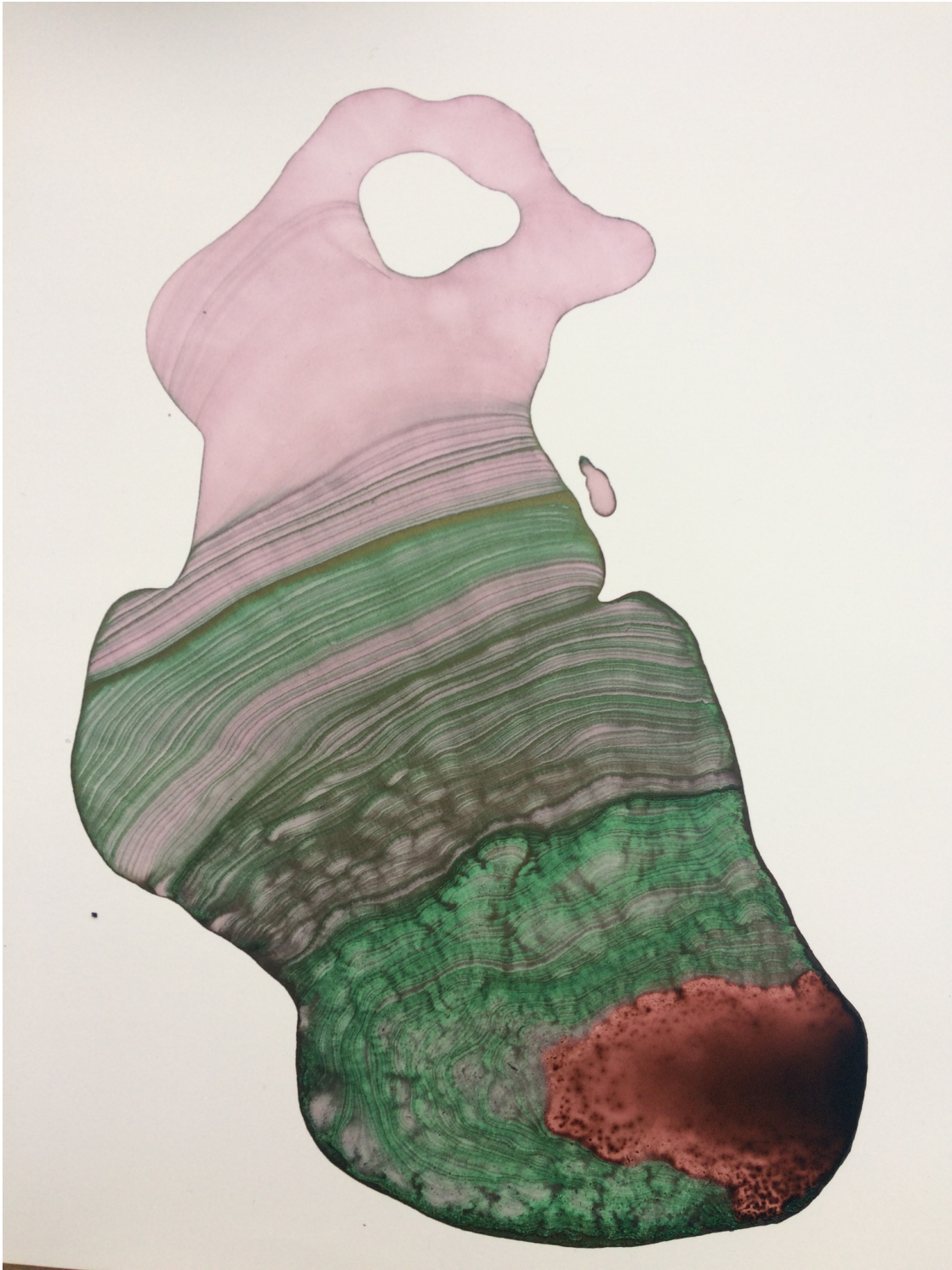


Fig. 3

Ink on paper, work in progress, 2018.



Fig. 4

Studio shot of work in progress, 2018.





Fig. 5

Studio shot of drawing installation, York University, 2017.





Fig. 6

Studio shot of work in progress, York University, 2018.



Fig. 7

Installation of in on paper drawings, studio, York University, 2019.





Fig. 8

unseen

unknown

medium: ink on paper

Date: 2019

Size: 8.5 x 11

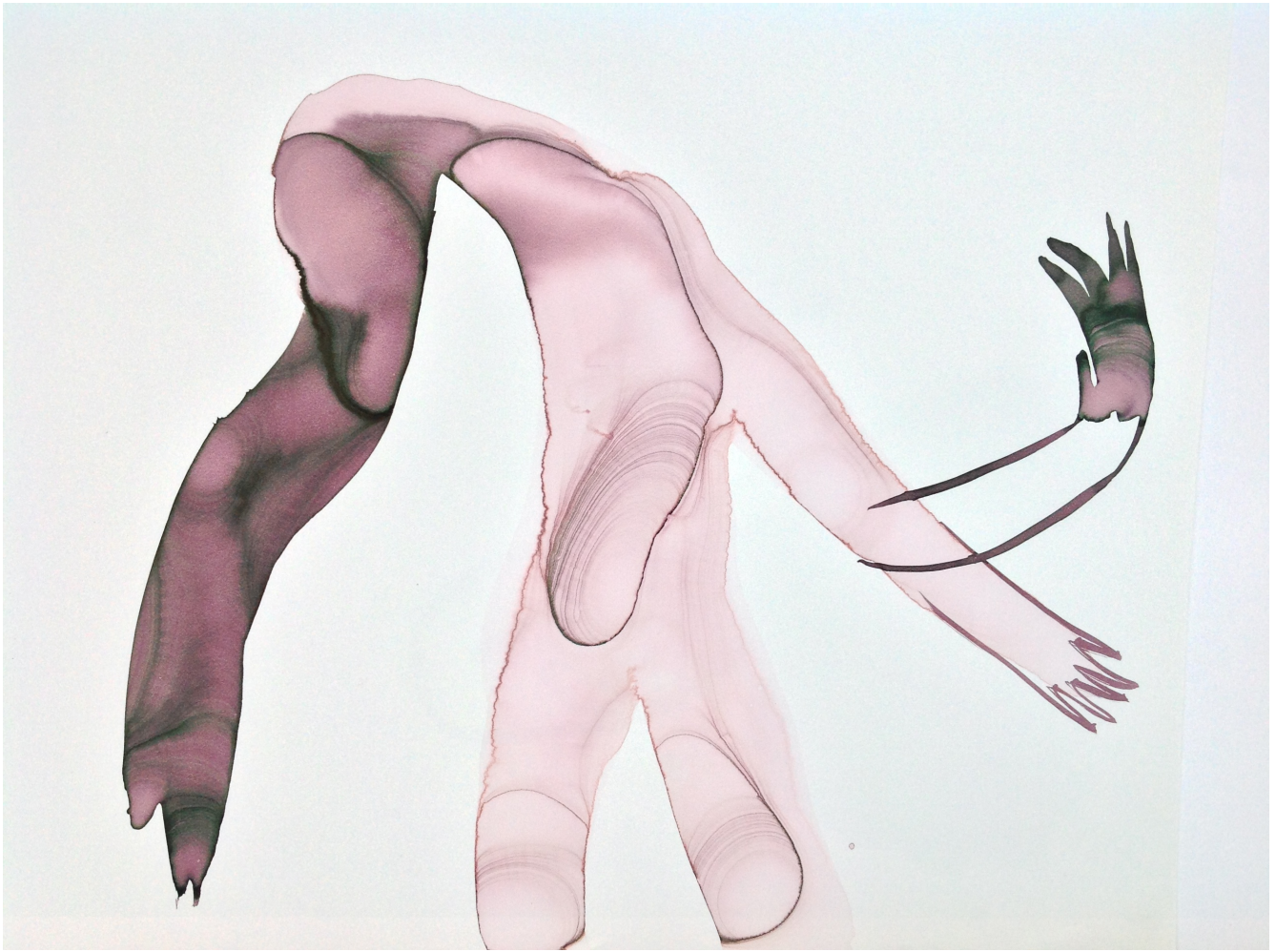


Fig. 9

what should we call you?

medium: ink on paper

Date: 2019

Size: 8.5 x 11"



she just never reached her toes

medium: ink on paper

Date: 2019

Size: 8.5 x 11"

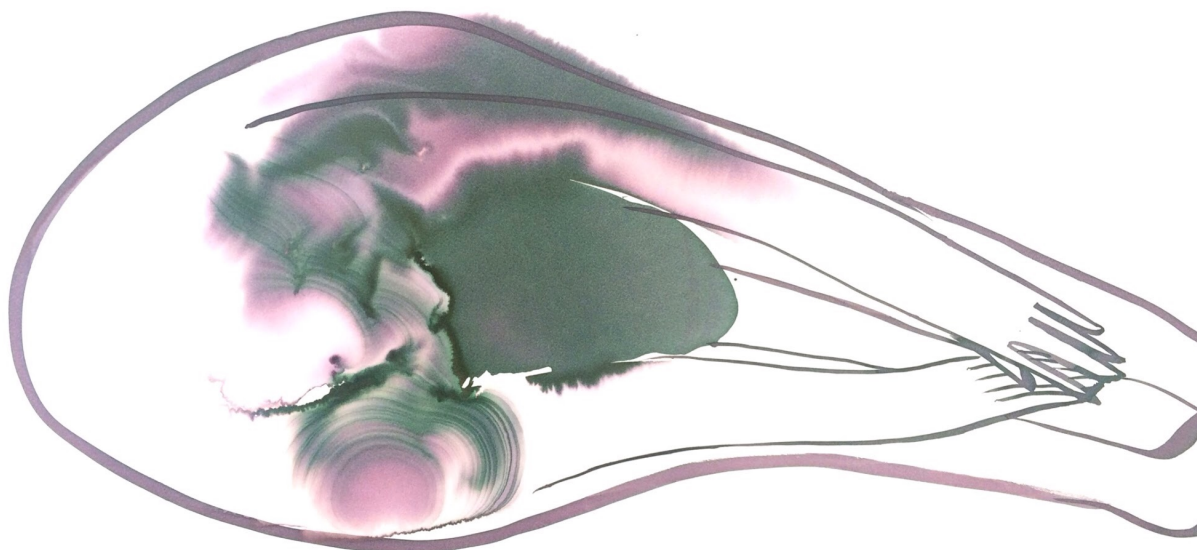


Fig. 10



Fig. 11

she came like the September breeze

left before the winter freeze

medium: ink on paper

Date: 2019

Size: 8.5 x 11"

Fig. 12



in my dreams

i'm swimming all the time

never flying

medium: ink on paper

Date: 2019

Size: 29 x 20"



Fig. 13

take my hand

take my land

medium: ink on paper

Date: 2018

Size: 8 x 5"





Fig. 14

here we are

medium: ink on paper

Date: 2019

Size: 8.5 x 11"



representation embodies the emotional residues of the Post even as it resists them. (26)

(93) the work of aesthetic production allows us to engage in ambivalence's affective reality such that it is something that reaches out and touches us beyond intellect, but paradoxically creates conditions for insight.

beyond intellect

(94) Insofar as these works do not provide the conditions to be touched by the terrorists and war things they radically love. They allow us to see how the work of recognizing ambivalence is the work of becoming integrated beyond a paradox-schizoid splitting of love and hate, of East and West, of masculine and feminine. beyond binaries

(95) Perspolis Sometimes reactionary and sometimes indifferent to politics Marji lives much of her childhood and adolescence indifferent to politics, Marji lives much of her childhood and adolescence with little control over her life, her body, her destiny, or her dreams. (96) this is a search for the emotional dimensions of how postcolonial people are constructing and living their lives. An emotional alliance into the struggles of postcolonial people might allow us to see Muslim bodies beyond the hegemonic discourse that produces Muslims and Arabes (and other racial bodies in general) ...

raced bodies, colonialism

(96) ... as either assimilated westerners (with white masks, as Amin would have it) or upholders of tradition, and, therefore potentially terrorists. "what we need now is a more nuanced reading of Postcolonial Subjectivity that addresses the injuries and vulnerabilities of postcolonial people, going beyond a group or nationalist logic." (97)

(97) Perspolis as such, is not a lesson in Postmodern identities. By inviting us to the emotional space of her own young life, Satrapi's graphic novel in spite us to think about postcolonial diasporic subjectivities and the histories from which they arise with an affective register. Perspolis is a historiography of intimacy because it takes inventory of adolescent struggle and conflict: violence, loss, hatred and pain. Her narrative arguably invite us to form a different relationship to global struggles and to become better...

Postcolonial traumas

(97) "readers of Postcolonial traumas and their shaping effects on culture and subjectivity. Interested more in chronicling suffering than creating prototypes of feminist freedom, Satrapi's graphic novel gives us insight into the affective realities and traumas that inhabit racial and diasporic subjectivities.

Profound rethinking of postcolonial subjectivity

(101) if we are still invested in resistance as an epistemology, it is because it is a psychic strategy we are unable to let go of. identities and political epistemologies that react to suffering defend us from injury and from our vulnerability to power. "one could read Marji through the narrative lens of resistance, but I think Satrapi's autobiography also leads itself to thinking about freedom and transformation as a process resistant to control. In Perspolis's war story does not conclude in victory but in the promise of freedom that is made from working through tragedy, tragedy and suffering. In Perspolis there seems to be one constant for Marji...

Moving through the disillusionment (105) with oneself and the world in which one lives.

(105) "what does it mean to exercise autonomy over one's life within a world that is not the social world in which I live, not the parents who raised me, or whom I became dependent, from whom I sought recognition, and with whom I became an 'it'? what does it mean to have and possess a self, even a gender, when as Butler suggests, 'selfhood is something that was 'done' to me? what is the relationship of that 'doing' to my desires, to who I have become, to how I see the world? and how can I feel confident about my future when so many of my decisions and choices have had unpredictable consequences?"

(105) ... "how do I leave my epistemological vertigo? Is mastery a complete fiction? If so what is freedom if sovereignty over my life is always compromised?" "how we stumble into our survival from the mess of childhood affects." -examining the limits of one's garden? -trajectories of political conflict and displacement (Surviving)

(100) realities of femininities can be lived in a gray zone, lived somewhere between east and west? these sexualities are in transition and thus resist easy naming. A failure of Post coloniality could be understood as the condition of having to negotiate worlds.

Sexual in transition between east and west

(131) indeed, this is true of any community (racial, ethnic, religious) because what I am calling queer affect underlies and threatens the symbolic world of all socialities. In Arab cultures this would mean that some sex social encounters are unmarked not so much because queer sexuality is the unspoken; it is social difference that has no language because...

not socially sanctioned

it is not socially sanctioned (131) Frankenstein - "the very group that scorned him shaped his social identity." "the predicaments of many queers are not unlike Frankenstein's monster. Anomalous in the cultural / racial communities into which they are born and with which they may have deep identification, their sexual communities are elsewhere." (133)

negotiating who you are in difficult terrains (134) "I invite us to think about how bodies become social masters - outcasts, terrorizing bodies in/with us inside and outside the community to which you belong - and how difficult it is to live in your desires (such as to think about them) when they are not reflected in the stories that rigidly set the terms of belonging.

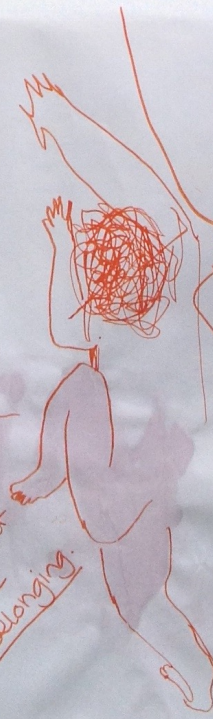
what is post colonial subjectivity?

freedom and transformation as a process with out an end!

gender/identity, as something that is "done to me."

what is the relationship of that doing to my desires? and to who I have become? and how I see the world.

Negotiating who you are in different terrains. when your desires are not reflected in the stories that rigidly set the terms of belonging.



When its difficult to live in your desires.

(100) "Insofar as something is given to us that we cannot experience, it is something like death or trauma, or a transport from one place to another, without our knowing how we got there." a place

## Summation

“I think the paper is an undifferentiated space in that references the primitive undifferentiated space of the infinite body that has to be claimed as the self.” (Nancy 237)

I would like to return to the notion of drawing as a place unique to our individual lived experiences—a place in between dimensions, the voice of our imagination and lived bodily experiences. In her lecture *Drawing in a Continuous Present*, Amy Sillman refers to drawing as a kind of transacting between the inside and outside “as you draw from the body towards the outside world” and drawing exists on the “border between inside and outside”, “drawing is truly a thing in between, a go between, a messenger between the drawer and the world”. Drawing is a place where we confront the unknown—an elsewhere that is not here, a place not reachable by reason, an in-between place, binding sensation and thought. It is the interrelationship between our mind, body, and place, a physical and metaphysical, conscious and unconscious, subjective and objective trace of our being in the world. This in between place is where I can locate myself, create narratives and draw from, a place from which I can speak. When I draw I define my own borders, which lines to follow, which lines to cross. To map a selfhood, to locate oneself within one’s own body and further within culture, one should be able to trace one’s history. Is it possible to discover my ancestry through my body, through drawing? I’m after the “corporeality” in drawing which Berger speaks of, where an image of something provides the image-maker bodily access to its belonging” (Taussig 23). The tension of allowing form to form itself, exceeds intentions, following the desire of a line, the pleasure of relation to its own appearance and disappearance, of becoming, transforming and moving. The line’s desire mobilizes my body. We claim space, through what we do with our bodies, and define ourselves through resisting and challenging narratives, through creating narratives to find new meanings, where others may find new meanings as well.



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## Documentation of Thesis Exhibition



Fig. 15. *water, air, stones and stains*, 2104 Dundas West, Toronto. April. 2019



Fig. 16. *water, air, stones and stains*, 2104 Dundas West, Toronto. April. 2019





Fig. 17. *water, air, stones and stains*, 2104 Dundas West, Toronto. April. 2019



Fig. 18. *water, air, stones and stains*, 2104 Dundas West, Toronto. April. 2019



Fig. 19. *water, air, stones and stains*, 2104 Dundas West, Toronto. April. 2019



Fig. 20. *water, air, stones and stains*, 2104 Dundas West, Toronto. April. 2019





Fig. 21. *water, air, stones and stains*, 2104 Dundas West, Toronto. April. 2019



Fig. 22. *water, air, stones and stains*, 2104 Dundas West, Toronto. April. 2019



Fig. 23. *water, air, stones and stains*, 2104 Dundas West, Toronto. April. 2019



Fig. 24. *water, air, stones and stains*, 2104 Dundas West, Toronto. April. 2019