

The DODO



OR IS IT
DODO(ORS)?

WHAT

DOORS

COULD

CHANGE

**EVERY
THING?**



The bee hovers at the threshold of a flower.
The mole burrows into soft soil to access
the deep underground. The writer lifts a
pen, opening a door that does not exist
until the first word dares it into being.

Every soul stands before thresholds both
seen and unseen. Some take the form of
brass or bone, others are woven together
by courage, imagination or yearning.

What if every door you come across hides a
secret path? Do you follow the rabbit as it
vanishes into the impossible?

Or do you remain where your shadow
lingers?

Each door opens forward, but it also closes
behind. The question is never whether
doors exist. It's about which ones we are
brave enough to open, and which we are
finally ready to leave behind.

What doors do you wish to open?

You only need to turn the handle.

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The lights flicker as the door slams shut behind you.
From a distance, something scratches softly against the walls.

- If you choose to search for another exit, *flip to page 04*
- If you call out into the darkness, *flip to page 10*
- If you walk towards the noise, *flip to page 16*
- If you don't know what to do, *turn to page 22*



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PEOPLE

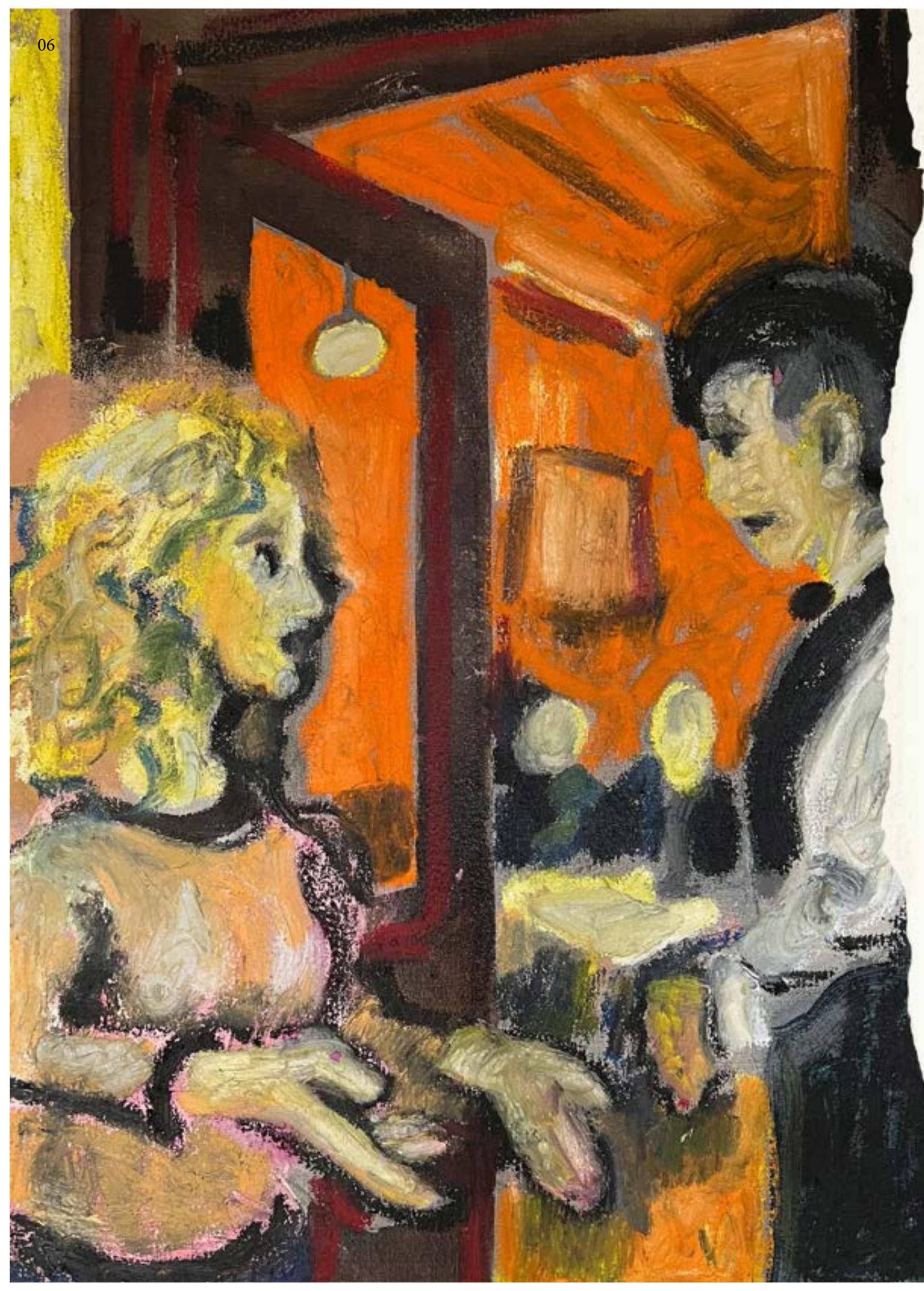




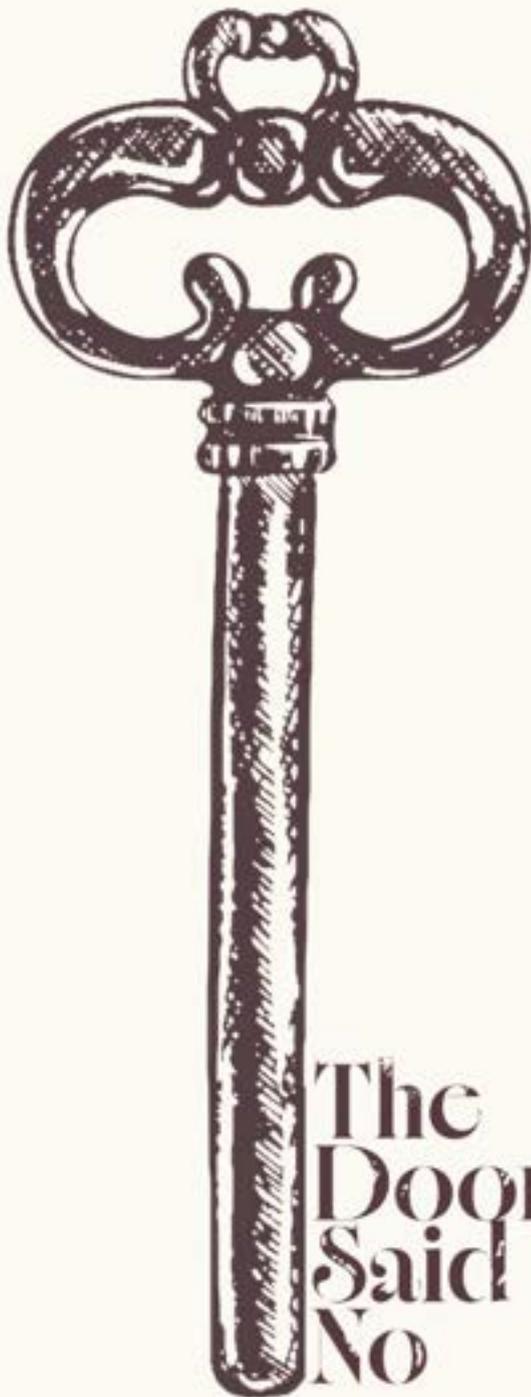
What if doors could
breathe, listen, and speak?
What if we crossed paths
with them everyday, missing the worlds
that they carry in their eyes?

Some people are open arches, letting
light and laughter in.
The exit is left wide open,
but they are waiting to see if you will stay.

Some people are locked doors,
carved by histories they don't spell out.
But if you learn the language of their
silences, they may open up.



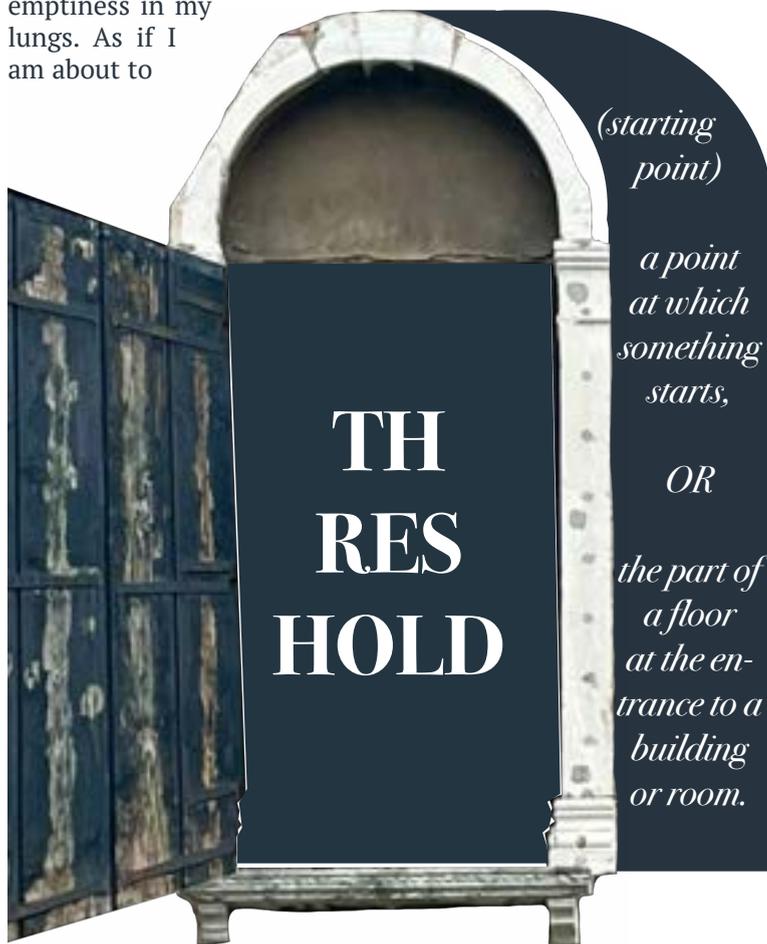
I went to the restaurant
to meet my friends
The doorman said no
but wanted to chat
It was hard for me to
comprehend
I went to the restaurant
to meet my friends
I mentioned John Cage
and the wait did end
I was admitted and with
them I sat
I went to the restaurant
to meet my friends
The doorman said no
but wanted to chat



The
Doorman
Said
No



To which I am standing by, or standing on (as they say), or trying to welcome its essence. Should I do it lying down, exposing my underbelly, showing it I don't pose a threat, or that I am, as it is, just another IT to be held, that is willing to be threshed around towards the movement it will thrust upon me? Certain places, such as a threshold, invite movement. It may seem as if they symbolize it, but actually, they summon it. Even if one is frozen on the threshold, it comes from the resistance to an invitation encompassed in or embedded in the space itself, no matter its materiality. Resistance can be a form of movement. On this verge, I am sustained between two worlds, with blissful emptiness in my lungs. As if I am about to



jump out of an airplane and all the air is waiting for me outside, and soon I will try to accommodate it in me, a small, perishable being, with only one hard-working person's lungs, laboring through stains of cigarette smoke, fire, public transportation; through other entities that are all cluttered particles within me, through which I insist on breathing. Only the finite amount of hair on my head, my arms, my upper lip will be flattened by

the Whoosh in a stormy current of wind that becomes sound and impact, filling my head with excitement and dread and I know, I am facing a certain death that this threshold is demanding of me. (this is how it feels sometimes to write in English) The future knows what may happen; maybe it allows several options, or just one, that is enabled in the first place, to be revealed as the outcome in the

aftermath. In hindsight, it always seems that I would end up at a certain place after crossing the mark point. Yet not to me, standing on the verge of. And this is why it is so hard for me to move, to make a choice. It is a great effort. Great as in wonderful and also as considerable. I have to be willing to let something die, yet as I do not know where I will end up, I am not sure exactly what will be lost. Which part of me will die when I cross? Maybe it will be a large piece of bark that takes up too much space but is no longer growing, an ornament that hints of past nature, an empty signified deprived of its original signifier, a souvenir sucking space and energy from new creations. Surely, it may be a good thing to leave it behind, release it, and let my memory decide the right place to store this footnote (in the abyss? Or maybe a recollection that will rise while I clear the dishes from a dinner table or at two am as I wake from a dream. Hey, remember me? I used to be a big part of your life, but now I'm only here to remind you of your growth. Look at you go. And I will say oh hi, funny to see you again. What made you drop by? But it will be gone, spiraling into its small existence, with only its trace carried through the pause in my body mid-motion, on my way to the sink, or a confused smile lingering as I'm called back to sleep. Wouldn't that be nice?) But what if it will be something that seems small but is vital? A ruby stone that is in my

core, and for some reason, by the calculations of the elusive future, it must be left up in the air as I am pulled to the new ground of an unknown world in which I am left to navigate without it. When something important that you deemed insignificant is lost, the vacancy is the first thing you notice. The cold flesh of a finger, indicating the absence of a ring, or a set of keys that do not burden a pocket anymore. Vacancy has an expansion in it. The spread of this antimatter takes up more space, revealing the true nature of what it was. The ruby didn't take up much space, but it was powerful and located perfectly in my innate order of things, reflecting light and holding color through darkness (what will I do without it how do I get it back what will I do without it how do I get it back) Yet one cannot stay forever on the threshold, because of the intrinsic movement within it, and because of the future, which is on the same current as living beings. We always move towards each other passively, never to really meet, but this motion inflicts both. I feel that

I would rather choose. The alternative is sustaining an illusion of a threshold, a self-conviction that we were able to hold on to the almost, to the not just yet, only for it to eventually dissolve. Then, a foreign world is revealed around us. One that we have already been inhabiting for a while, but we were blind creatures filtering our own reality, constructing a dream that a choice had not been made, and everything was frozen with us. (that is what I fear the most) To choose, I must accept that the only constant thing is change and movement. By now, I already know that I can continue without a bark and without a ruby, because it happened before. In the cycle of the inner nature, some things grow and some wither through different seasons. Even through pause, or resistance. Let it be me who jumps out of the airplane, who lands on my own two feet, let the impact keep my eyes wide open. Then I may wonder, what did I lose by coming here? How much room do I have now for something new? What can grow only in this soil?



*Photos by
Paola
Randazzo*

While exploring, you come across a room.
Just then, your phone buzzes. The message says:
Don't trust anyone in the room.
You find three strangers sitting in silence.



If you choose to talk to them, flip to **page 10**



If you join them in silence, flip to **page 16**



If you decide to ignore them, flip to **page 22**

time

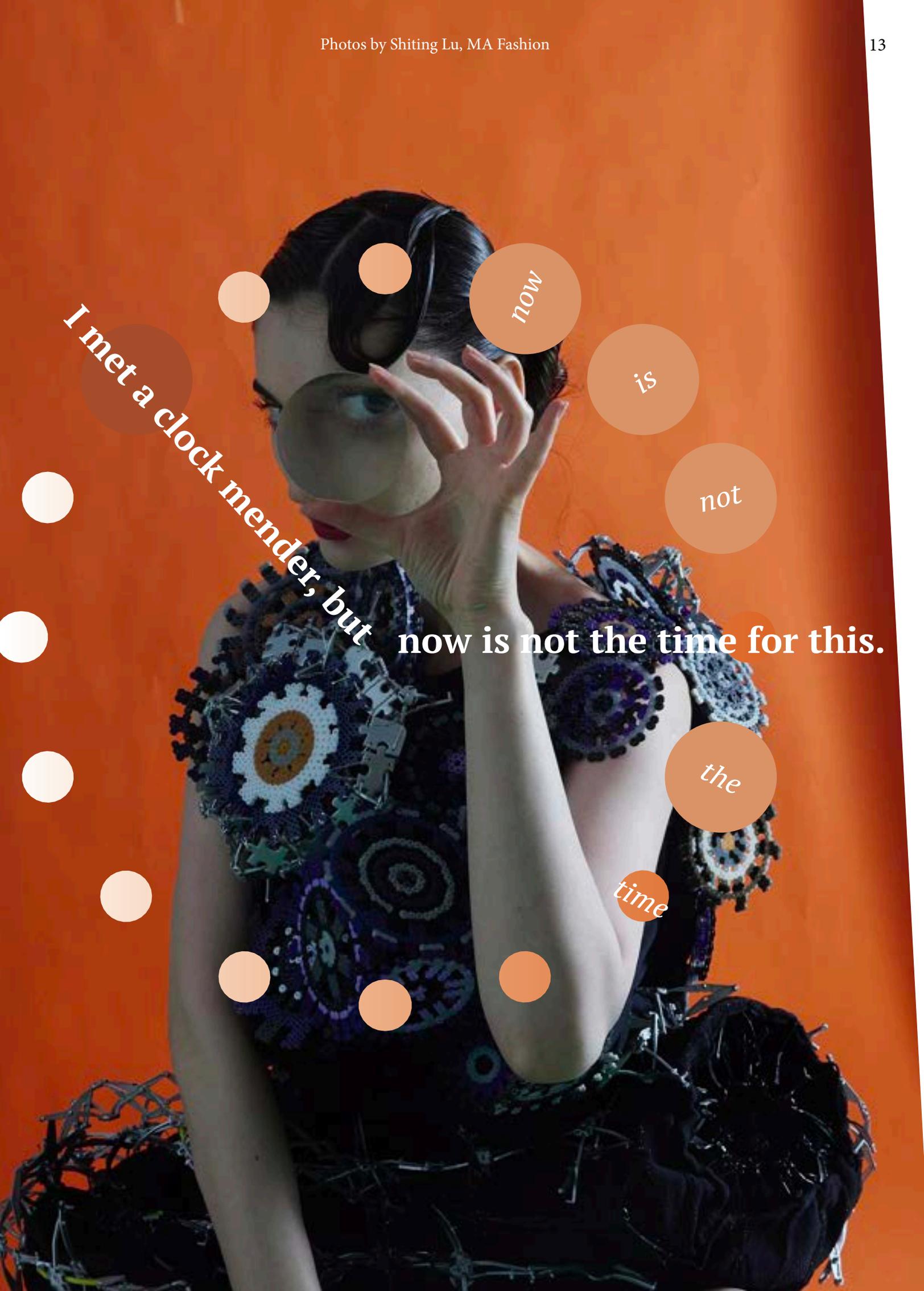


Time is full of doors you might
never touch.
They remain closed to give shape
to the path you chose.

Still, time keeps
opening new doors,
asking only that you notice the
hinge, feel the pause

And decide if you will
take the step forward.
If doors were shaped by time,
when do you decide to enter?

my
 beating heart
 with chewed up
 wires and melted batteries
 cast into the centre of a furred sentient rug
 of gloom and broken vows.
 my semi-translucent crowd manipulator
 who once riled up a stream of protesting blood cells
 compelled to only absorb this carpet's peculiar
 galaxies sculpted from loose hair, debris, and elastic.
 my half-dead blood pumper might
 soon mummify into a duplex for giant silk moths
 scarlet lily beetles with varnished vibrant shells taking flight,
 searching for musky crown imperials to cut.
 for the unfurl: an
 inconspicuous technician is needed!
 a technician
 is found — in reality, she found me; she did!
 as the stenographer of mine own existence,
 i first observed how her soft face glistened in
 sun; an awakening; spiritualising an act once
 perceived as trivial and frankly un-attaining.
 her eyes were jovian planets revolving around me; each eyelash:
 a piece of thread closing the space between us
 frozen; liquifies then coagulates. her voice: the milky lilac
 lotion used to re-moisten my dehydrated skin before the climb.
 she rocked a messy melismatic mullet with tapered
 ends that kissed her warm neck
 me, when i stammered in fear: pondering on
 what a raptured confession as such
 could bring forth.



I met a clock mender, but **now is not the time for this.**

now

is

not

the

time

SOLAR ANUS!

Pallavi Devkota | MFA Arts & Humanities

All that power
You accrued in your small pond
Big fish, bottleneck

The problem for me:
There is no escape route
Away from people like you
You think it is just a giant
mirror
The world, everyone, every-
thing!
You burn right through us all

Caught up in your fun house,
mirror quest
The crumbs
What little I had, was grateful
for
Became a painful burden to you
As you stared at your syco-
phantic
Circus mirrors

I saw you squirm at your own
reflection
that the department store glass
refused to bend to your will
Deform and accommodate
your endless vanity
Infuriated you
But reflected instead, the several
glasses
You had the night before
Casting angry glances at me,
you fled
A bit bloated, still red
Sympathetic

To find whoever might throw
back a view
That was good enough for you
Less humiliating, less human



You thought I was oblivious
 When I looked straight through
 you— You think you are better than
 the view behind you Which is, in
 fact much older, and better company
 It looks more alive too
 Thrown into relief
 By sheer comparison
 The first spring dew flavour
 Effervescent, eager
 Not set in its way

It is true that I flit around too much
 For you to get a good look at your-
 self
 Reflected in my eyes
 Which, they have said are like
 (Though I look away, try my best to
 be polite and hide it)

— Black mirrors!

You find me lowly, pitiful
 The way I dress, provincial
 You were born too high
 Belong in space

Your power trips are
 not compelling
 No vision, just orbital
 Cleaving onto the nearest
 heavy object

Like some zealot priest
 Of some suicide religion
 Hurling his congregation
 Lambs stuffed into a cannon
 Poison laced holy wine

But then, you tell me you are
 God!
 Oh yes, a sun god
 Helios!
 Temper tantrum, toddler
 A greedy two-year-old

You draw me close
 Just to blow me off course
 That negative image
 Retinal burn
 Acid etched
 I cast it back up into the sky

You purse your lips
 Pucker up
 Prolapsed
 The biggest star in the system
 Collapsed



You open your mouth to say something
 To your horror, you've lost your voice..
 You desperately search your backpack,
 looking for anything to communicate.



If you pick a flashlight,
 flip to **page 04**



If you pick a book, turn
 to **page 15**

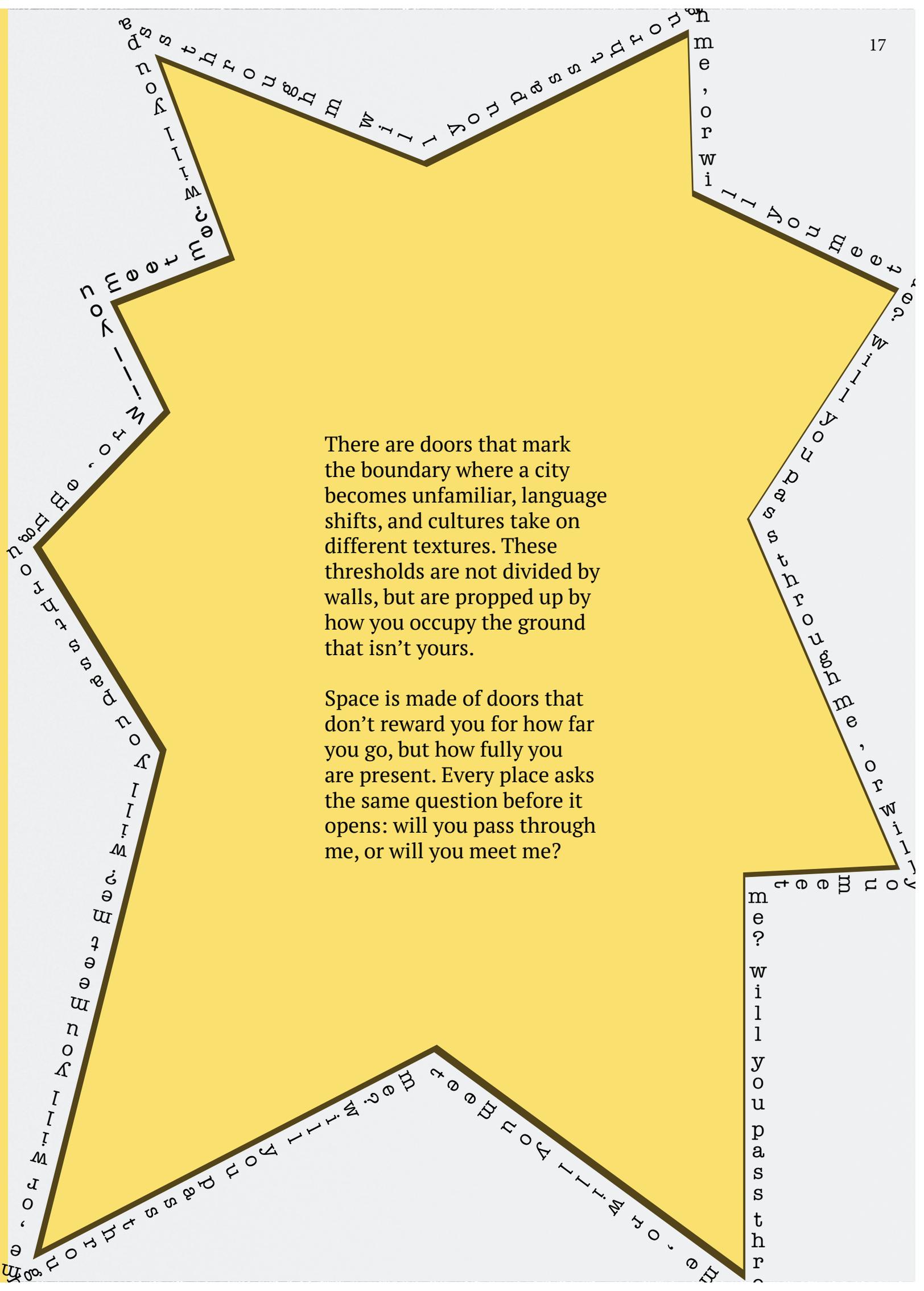


If you choose your
 watch, flip to **page 21**



n

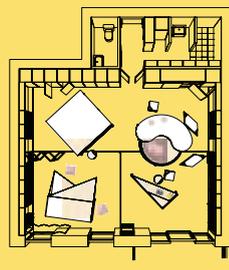
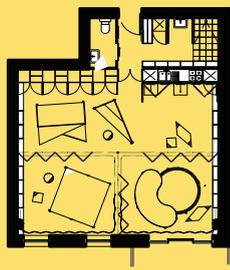
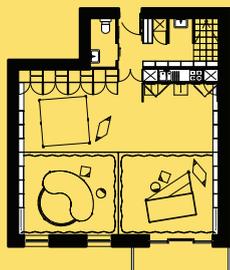
s
y



There are doors that mark the boundary where a city becomes unfamiliar, language shifts, and cultures take on different textures. These thresholds are not divided by walls, but are propped up by how you occupy the ground that isn't yours.

Space is made of doors that don't reward you for how far you go, but how fully you are present. Every place asks the same question before it opens: will you pass through me, or will you meet me?

Inhabiting the In-Between



Inhabiting the In Between explores the threshold as a flexible architectural device mediating transitions within overly standardised London apartments of minimum floor area. Informed by 1:1 experimentations, domestic activities are combined through furniture design to adapt to contemporary changing formats of co-living.



African Violets Up the Stairs

'The house we were born in is more than an embodiment of home, it is also an embodiment of dreams.'¹

Are we not born into the homes of our parents' memories? We come to live in those spaces we will never physically enter ourselves, accessing them through imagery conjured by and reactivated through storytelling. In solitude, we can begin to daydream within these imagined homes. One such home, a maisonette on Florence Road in Brighton, was set in a grand villa belonging to a couple who were customers of my grandparents. The house was broken up into several flats, and my family temporarily lived in parts of the top two floors, comprising two rooms (a bedroom and a dining room, with tiny built-in kitchen) on the lower floor, and a further bedroom with separate bathroom on the upper floor. This upper floor also included a large landing space, and an attic room with sloping ceilings that was used as a sitting room. My daydreaming happens in these two spaces. It begins by standing at the bottom of the stairs and peering up the bright, loosely geometric Axminster carpet my Grandpa installed. Behind me is a large window, an interface of 'anthro-cosmology'² between interior and exterior worlds, which bathes an impressive collection of African violets in sunlight.

The ever-blossoming, eternally deep purple of their petals and their starred yellow stamens, suggestive of the 'cosmicity'³ in this stairwell of oneirism.



During my family's time there, my Grandpa's green fingers reached for a garden. He had access to various plots in previous rented homes, but up in the heights of Florence Road there was no such space. So Nanny - my Grandmother - dreamed him up an indoor garden of colourful tropical species that thrived in their sunny window position; their velvety leaves pointing towards the green plushness of her newly made slipcovers on the sofas in the attic room. When Bachelard champions the potential of attics as spaces for reverie - where as adults we 'recall attic stairs from the bottom looking up'⁴- an outcome of such daydreaming must be considered a capacity for productive problem solving. In my own imaginings of this space, I perceive its potential for production, and where a distinct lack is met with a creative solution. The subtle orchestration my grandmother made through avid propagation of these African violets, offered a comforting remedy to an absence of outdoor space. It is with this act of reproduction we begin to see murmurings of cultural cross-pollination, where the plants themselves are native to Tanzania and Kenya, brought over to Europe as a result of colonisation. Diaspora of the natural world, these pots of Saintpaulia in my family's home could be easily transported, harbingers of the inevitable relocation to come.



In the context of the multicultural home, these cross-cultural signifiers (like the lamplight Bachelard describes as shining out from within the home) 'form earthly constellations'⁵, suggesting, themselves, a 'concentration of intimacy in the refuge'.⁶ It is with such signifiers that artist and curator, Michael McMillan creates a constellation of his 1970s front room at the Museum of the Home's Rooms Through Time exhibition.⁷ One such example being his inclusion of crochet items. Here McMillan explains how European missionaries introduced this craft to the Caribbean, and how it forms a distinct aspect of the semiotics of the Caribbean home in London. There are also the imprints of the secular talismanic onto Christian artefacts, where images of The Last Supper are ubiquitous and cross-stitch tapestries read 'God Bless This House'. McMillan suggests the prominence of such materials in the Caribbean front room as offering protection, speaking to what Bachelard describes as 'the house's powers of protection against the forces that besiege it'.^{8,9}

In the attic room that my grandmother curated at Florence Road, my mother remarks that her choices marked a departure from previous schemes and signalled a more experimental style.¹⁰ Nanny opted for a green and orange colour palette, making the curtains, slipcovers and other soft furnishings herself from opulent velvet. Looking at a photograph of the room, I see the electric fireplace as a focal point which can be read as an altar or shrine. The objects of most paramount importance are displayed here, making up a cross-cultural collection: a photograph of my parents on their wedding day, a French carriage clock inherited by my Grandpa, an Arabic coffee pot, even a brass statuette of a pharaoh, all surrounded by wallpaper of a figurative Indian design. I ask mum if this arrangement related to the cultural influence of my father's presence in the family, to which she argues it was more likely a sign of the times and its trends, the 1970s being another distinctive period when the West looked to the East for creative inspiration. I believe however, there must have been an impact more personally related to dad's assimilation into the household. For one thing, he began to contribute objects to the home himself. The Arabic coffee pot, for example, which he brought back from a trip home to Dubai as a gift. Anyone who has experienced Middle Eastern hospitality knows the significance of this emblem of welcome. The ritual dictates its spout won't cease being poured from until you leave a measure in the bottom of your cup to signal your satisfaction. For me the coffee pot on the mantelpiece is as significant as the inclusion of The Last Supper painting in McMillan's front room. Where its protective qualities highlight the remnant traces of ritual from its inhabitants' Caribbean heritage, so too does the coffee pot seem to act as a talisman for its cross-cultural family. It protects the space by celebrating the foreign and making my father feel the home is as much his as anyone else's. In the same way she offered my Grandpa a display of African violets, Nanny offered Dad a symbol of the comforts of his homeland in giving the pot pride of place in what had become a 'laboratory of identity'¹¹ for the whole family.

¹ Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, p. 15.

² John R. Stilgoe, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. by Maria Jolas (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994), foreword to the 1994 edition, vii-x.

³ Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, p. 25.

⁴ Stilgoe, *The Poetics of Space*, foreword.

⁵ Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, p. 35.

⁶ Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, p. 37.

⁷ *A Terraced House in 1978* Curated with Michael McMillan, Permanent from June 2021, Museum of the Home, London.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, p. 27.

¹⁰ Polly Hassan, interview, 15 January 2025

¹¹ Ben Highmore, "Teenage Wasteland: Bedrooms, Adventure Playgrounds, and Youth Atmospherics in and out of the Home"

**Just then, across the space, a screen bursts into colour.
A warning flashes: unknown life detected.**



If you choose to investigate, flip to **page 04**

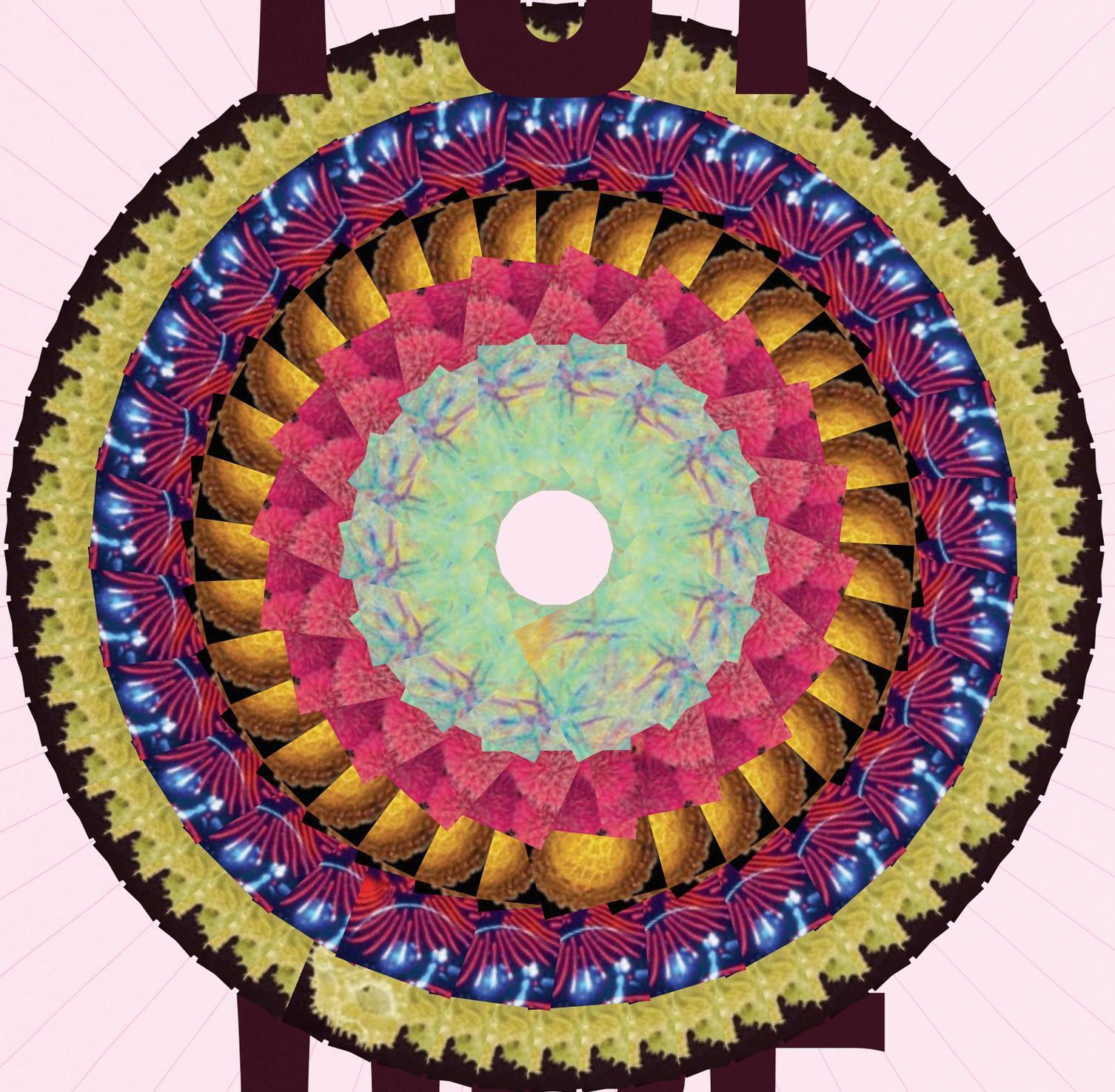


If you try speaking in alien language, turn to **page 10**



If you choose to escape, flip to **page 22**

FUT



URE

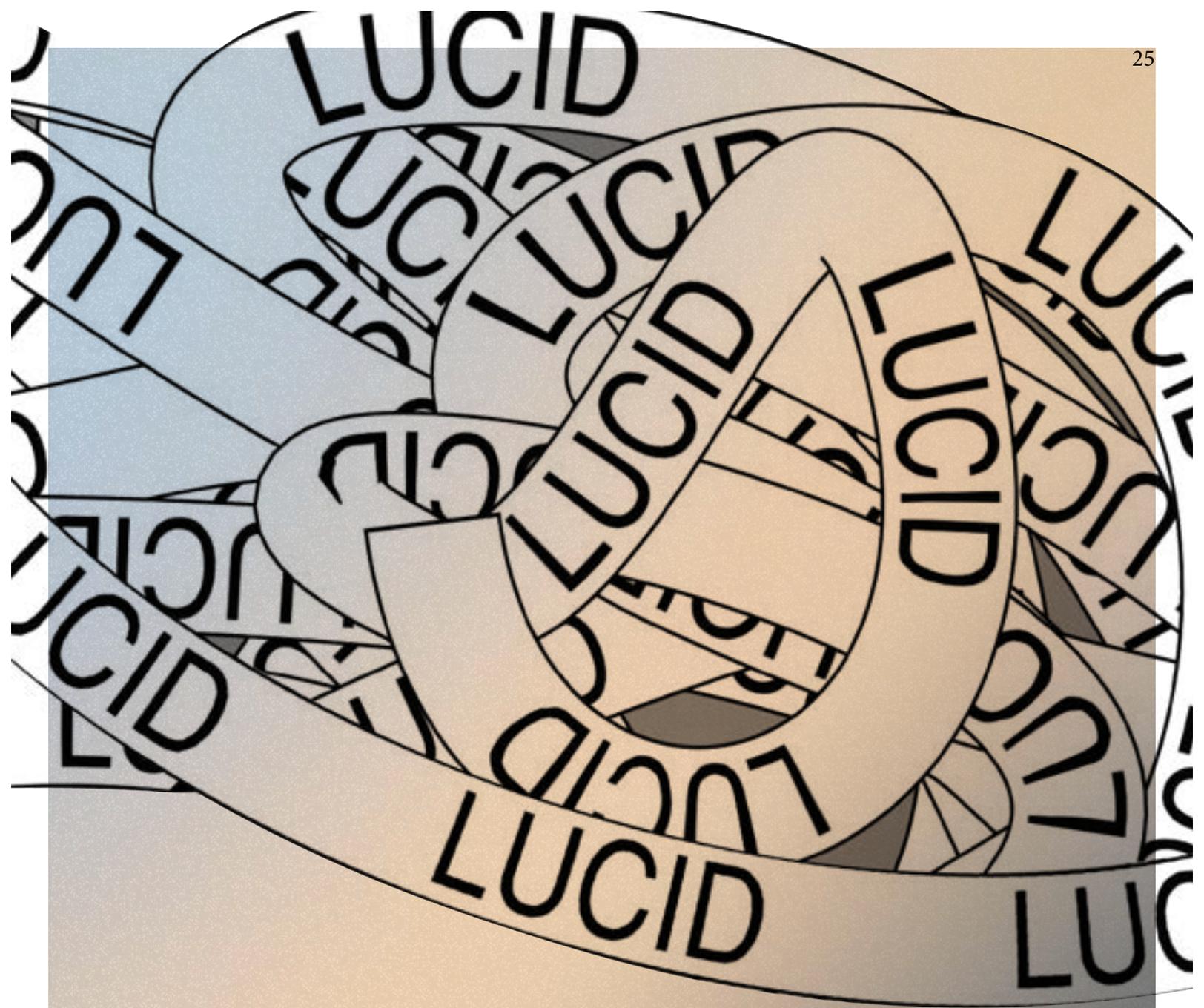


If there were doors to the future, every single day, you'd be crossing the thresholds between yesterday, today and tomorrow. And yet, the door to the future is always closed, patient and unoffended, waiting for curiosity to land its knock.

Veins of the Jungle



The veins resemble roots or jungle paths, transforming the body into a living landscape. This merging suggests an inner, utopian world beneath the surface and captures a moment just before crossing into another state.



LUCID

what if the planets
around us are versions of
us from the future

bare quantum warnings
of what awaits us if we
make the wrong choices

or what if they're just
the most transcendent
outcomes
with dimensions

we aren't equipped to
perceive, stumbling around
in
the dark while they laugh

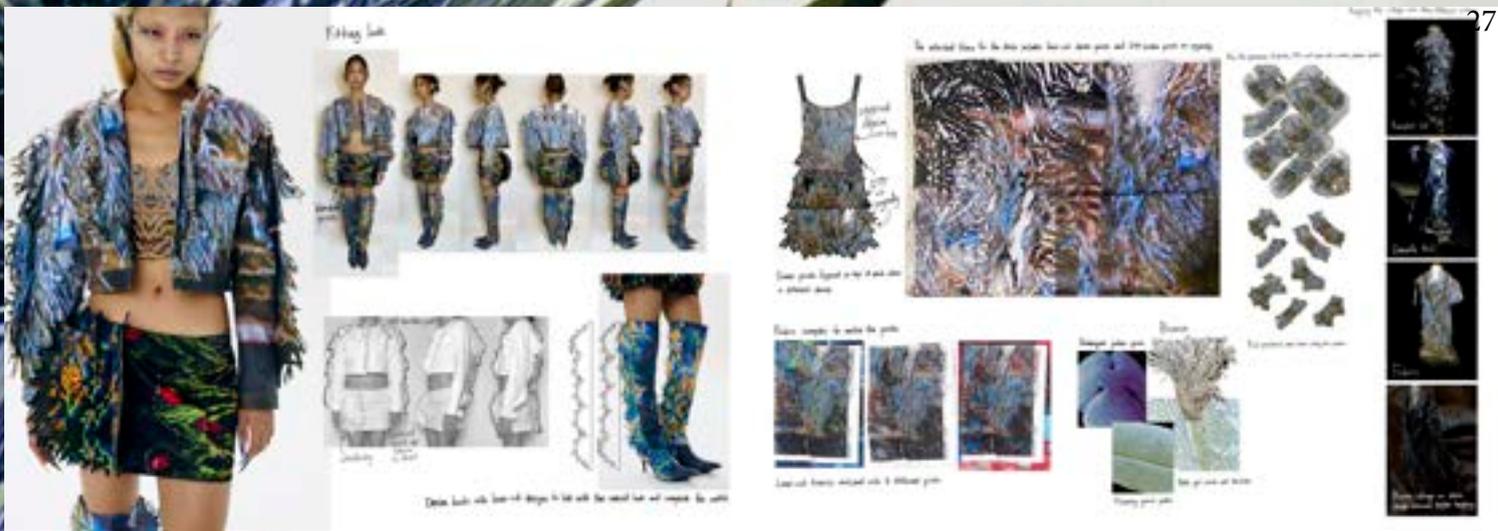
and shake their heads at
these beings who insist that
we're the only ones

PsyloScope

What if the door was already open—
and we simply never looked closely enough?

This work operates as a prologue to unseen worlds embedded in biology. Microscopic plant structures dissolve into psychedelic light, forming landscapes that feel alien yet familiar. These images suggest that reality is layered, and that entire universes may exist at scales we overlook. The door does not lead forward, but inward, toward perception, speculation, and the possibility that the cosmos itself is only a cell in something larger.





Something else catches your eye. You come across an old blueprint of where you're at. You're stuck in a labyrinth where there is seemingly no escape.



If you choose to go deeper,
flip to **page 04**



If you choose to chant
a spell, flip to **page 10**



If you choose to retrace your
steps, turn to **page 16**

SU EXHIBITIONS

Our term 2 exhibitions will be taking place in the Hockney Gallery across **February** and **March**. As always we have a range of amazing student work, and each group has worked exceptionally hard to put on such excellent work. Drop by and support!

9-13 February

Green into Blue,
Hockney Gallery.

2-6 March

**Inside a Home
Inside a Body,**
Hockney Gallery.

16-20 March

Apocalypse, and After,
Hockney Gallery.

SU EVENTS & COLLABS

12th February

Techs on Decks: Tender Business. Valentine's Vibes and Dancefloor Energy. 5-11pm, ArtBar. Our techs on decks are back for another night of funk. Bring your friends, lovers, flatmates, neighbours, anyone who fancies tearing up the dancefloor!

17th February

Pancake Day Pop-up: DesignBar, Battersea, from 12-2pm. The SU will be giving out free pancakes in the DesignBar with a range of toppings. Whilst supplies last!

19th February

Spring Festival: an evening of traditional workshops and stalls to celebrate the Lunar New Year! As well as £5 meals from the canteen and a special cocktail menu at the ArtBar to follow. 6-9pm, Courtyard Gallery and the ArtBar.

5th March

5pm onwards, **Iftar celebration** in the canteen, in collaboration with the College and the Muslim Creative Society. Join us to celebrate together during Ramadan, whether you are breaking fast yourself, or supporting your peers and learning more about Islam. Food will be available.

20-21st March

RCASU Annual Spring Fete is returning for another year. Come down and do some shopping. All stalls are RCA students, staff or alumni who will be selling bespoke, handmade items. Hangar Gallery, 12-7pm each day. Bring your friends and neighbours!

25th March

Join us for a belated Eid celebration in the DesignBar. Snacks available, as well as crafting and Henna!

The time to nominate yourself to run in the Sabbatical Officer elections is almost upon us! Our current Sabbs, **Leona** and **Sachita**, were elected during their year of study (2024/25) and are working in the SU for a year. A Sabbatical Officer is a paid position, working 4 days a week to improve the student experience and implement positive change. Keep an eye out on the SU instagram and around campus for more information, and start thinking about it!

SU ELECTIONS