

Two  
Finger-Widths  
Unrest – An  
Archive-Lead  
Dialogue in Text  
and Drawing

DUA  
(PATRIZIA BACH AND REGINA DÜRIG)

In their interdisciplinary project *Zum Konvolut F119* (On bundle F119), from which *Two Finger-Widths Unrest* is an excerpt, DUA (Patrizia Bach and Regina Dürig) propose a dialogue between drawing and writing as a collaborative method to artistically explore archival material and challenge one-dimensional, majority-centered concepts of history. The material the dialogue is based on is taken from the TOMIKO Archive – an art project by Patrizia Bach in the form of a photographic archive. It consists exclusively of found family/amateur photographs, predominantly from the 20th century and mostly from the German region.  
Keywords: alternative history/s; constraints & collaboration; the archived everyday; drawing and writing

No seu projecto *interdisciplinar Zum Konvolut F119* (On bundle F119), do qual *Two Finger-Widths Unrest* é um excerto, DUA (Patrizia Bach e Regina Dürig) propõe um diálogo entre desenho e escrita como método colaborativo para explorar artisticamente material de arquivo e desafiar conceitos de história unidimensionais e centrados na maioria. O material em que se baseia o diálogo é retirado do Arquivo TOMIKO – um projecto artístico de Patrizia Bach sob a forma de um arquivo fotográfico. Consiste exclusivamente de fotografias de família realizadas por amadores, encontradas predominantemente no século XX e, na sua maioria, na Alemanha.  
Palavras-chave: história/s alternativa/s; limitações e colaboração; o quotidiano arquivado; desenho e escrita

## DUA

DUA are the Switzerland-based writer Regina Dürig and the Berlin-based artist Patrizia Bach. DUA's projects explore text and drawing in different constellations and constraints. DUA is a friendship and an ongoing artistic dialogue on paper: drawing on their respective practices, Patrizia Bach and Regina Dürig develop collaborative settings to unfold a gentle space of immediacy.

DUA é o nome do colectivo composto pela escritora suíça Regina Dürig e a artista berlinense Patrizia Bach. Os projetos de DUA exploram o texto e o desenho em diferentes constelações e restrições. DUA é uma relação de amizade e um diálogo artístico contínuo sobre papel. Tendo por base as suas respectivas práticas, Patrizia Bach e Regina Dürig desenvolvem configurações colaborativas para revelar um espaço suave de imediatismo.

There lies an almost-electric tingle of excitement in holding a photograph from unknown origin in your hands. You see a person, a place, you see a fine-grained absence. A life flits<sup>1</sup> by – its energy, the darkness, the contrasts. Who was this person? Why are they looking at you? What do you see? In *Two Finger-Widths Unrest*, which is an excerpt from the extensive drawing-and-text project *Zum Konvolut F119* (On bundle F119), we (Patrizia Bach and Regina Dürig) explore these questions and, maybe most importantly, the tingle.

#### THE ARCHIVE AS AN ART PROJECT

The dialogue in text and drawing *Zum Konvolut F119* is based on the TOMIKO Archive – an art project by Patrizia in the form of a photographic archive. It consists exclusively of found family/amateur photographs, predominantly from the 20th century and mostly from the German region. To date, the collection comprises over 500,000 photographs, which Patrizia is digitizing and indexing piece by piece.

Originally, Patrizia was guided in this project by a very emotional thought – that of saving history and entire phases of life which can be found so carelessly strewn on the ground at overcrowded flea markets. This is where the idea of the bundle comes from, there are no individual photographs in the TOMIKO Archive; the albums and stacks are kept in their entirety. Since 2018 Patrizia is mainly concerned with the (for now) last delivery added to the archive. For over ten years she worked together with a “secret supplier” who browsed house clearing auctions for photo collections. This collaboration ended in 2016 with the extensive contribution of around 6,000 photographs and 72 albums. Subsequently, Patrizia invited different artists to react to the photographs from the last delivery – one of the many works that resulted from this invitation<sup>2</sup>, is *Zum Konvolut F119*.

But why collect other peoples’ private pictures when they themselves (or their heirs) are ready to give or throw them away? For Patrizia, the photographs are evidence of what she sees as history that has not been handed down. Thus, the TOMIKO archive is an encyclopedia of neglected history: How can we preserve alternative history, and how is it to be confronted with the present? How can artistic practice give a voice to suppressed history? Can we find a moment of truth in photographs? What happens to these images in different constellations and environments?

Drawing from our respective practices, we invent constraints and collaborative settings for our work, unfurling a poetic space which encompasses fleetingness, porousness and silence. Bundle F119 contains 151 photographs to which we responded in a conversation of short prose and drawings: we both took a photograph from the bundle and reacted to it in five minutes – Patrizia with a drawing, Regina with a prose miniature written on typewriter. After a while, all the resulting texts and drawings were shuffled and exchanged. Then Regina wrote a text to each drawing and Patrizia made a drawing to each text, again in five minutes. With this method, every photograph is echoed in a fourfold reply: two direct reactions and two indirect ones. The work consists of 604 sheets, 302 drawings and texts.

The time limitation made us react spontaneously to the photographs from the archive, with no filter or prevalent agenda: What can we see and what are we reminded of? What can’t we spot? Where does our gaze turn first? After the five minutes have passed, texts and drawings look at us, and it is hard to say where they came from: a person notoriously asking for directions, men living in walls, a child made from glass. The thought process is brought to a virtual standstill by the time constraint. We are not eager to capture the most beautiful, the most interesting, the most touching aspect of the shot, but to lend our hands to the photograph, allowing it to use us to tell its story – almost automatically. While in a strict *écriture automatique* it is not necessarily desirable to be consistent, to create a coherent piece of writing, the five-minute constraint evokes certain structural elements of automatic writing: most notably the absence of self-censorship. There is so little time to react that is almost impossible to develop an intention, to follow an already-established aesthetic. The results are foreign and personal at the same time. In both the texts and the drawings, a kind of rawness remains, dissolving into splinters of poetry between past and present.

Constructing a *machine à raconter*, a storytelling machine, was one of the main tasks the French writers’ group Oulipo (ouvroir de la littérature potentielle – workshop for potential literature) has challenged itself with, in particular Georges Perec. For his novel *Life, a User’s Manual*<sup>3</sup>, he devised programmes – mathematical formulas and exhaustive lists with elements that had to appear in the respective chapters of the book<sup>4</sup>. In *Zum Konvolut F119* we use the photographs as programmes. As in Perec’s lists, they supply us with characters, a

<sup>1</sup> “The true picture of the past flits by. The past can be seized only as an image which flashes up at the instant when it can be recognized and is never seen again.” (Benjamin, W.: On the concept of history) Walter Benjamin’s writings (namely “The Arcades Project” and “On the Concept of History”) are the point of departure for several of Patrizia’s projects, for more information see: <https://patriziabach.de/Projekte/Walter-Benjamin-Passagen/>; <https://patriziabach.de/Projekte/on-the-concept-of-history-in-istanbul/>

<sup>2</sup> See [tomikoarchiv.de](http://tomikoarchiv.de) for other works and collaborations.

<sup>3</sup> Perec, G. (2009). *Life a user’s manual*. David R. Godine Publisher.

<sup>4</sup> See Perec, G. (1993). *Cahier des charges de La vie, mode d’emploi*. Zulma, p. 13.

specific epoch and place, style, clothing, animals, furniture etc.<sup>5</sup> Unlike Percec, we are not obliged to use all of these elements in our reactions. We allow our regard to be drawn to one element, and allow ourselves to be creative chroniclers, following intuition's immediateness. What we do is inscribe ourselves, our thoughts, bodies and experiences, we create a new layer of history and unfold it gently, carefully, to keep the other layers – already existing and future ones – alive.<sup>6</sup>

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#### THE DIALOGUE IS AN EXTENDED INVITATION

To state the obvious, we are two artists in this project, with two distinct disciplines as background. We react twice to each photograph. The twofoldedness is deeply embedded in the project, as it emphasizes our tentative poetics of the in-between. The dialogue unfolds between us, in between the audience and the drawings/texts. We strive to create a space of absolute openness, allowing the audience to add another layer – by making the original photographs available in a book in the exhibition space. As each drawing and text are referenced, they can be traced back to the original. Thus, our process becomes transparent, the archive material turns into a land-

scape in which the viewers can explore their own ways of seeing and reflecting on the photographs.

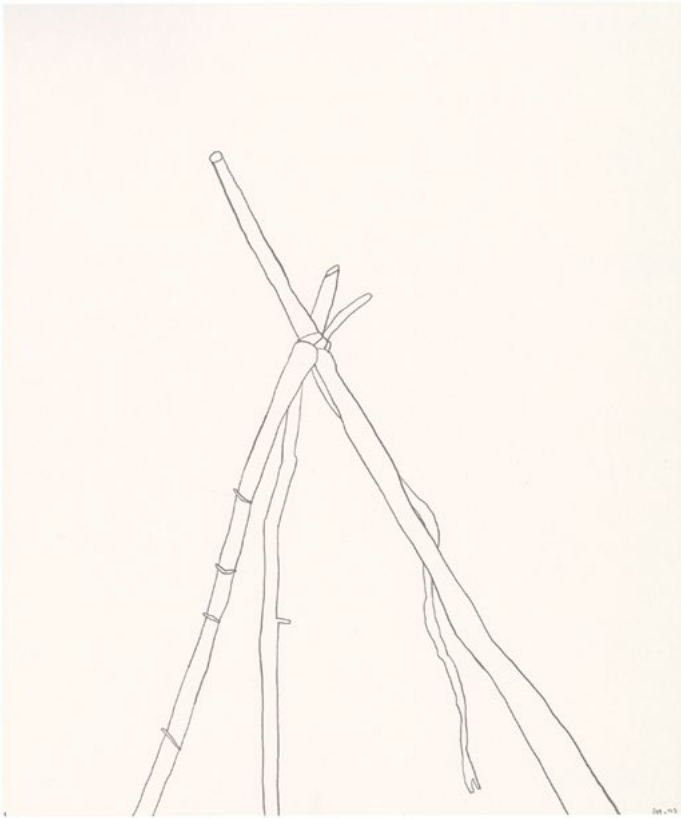
The project hasn't been shown in its entirety yet. For each exhibition<sup>7</sup> we choose a selection and develop a site-specific hang that allows the sets of four sheets to enter into a dialogue with each other and thus form new connections, contrasts, and references. The material speaks for itself, it creates its own movements and magic. This doubles the moment in the creation process when we put together the sets of four for the first time: a tingle, almost electric. We look at our gazes on paper and they look back, black on white. Sometimes the combination makes the individual drawings and texts stronger, sometimes they become flatter. For this publication we chose those sets of four that, for us, work particularly well. What we cannot replicate in print (due to the limited number of pieces that can be shown and the linear logic of the publication) is the feeling of being inside the work, letting the attention be drawn and creating new connections, an own way of moving through the archive. Our wish to put the work into a conversation with itself, the archive material, and the audience is best summarized with the notion of being *anarchivists*<sup>8</sup>: sensitive to the multiplicity of narratives, driven by intuition and affection.

<sup>5</sup> *ibidem*, p. 16.

<sup>6</sup> In this, Hélène Cixous' concept of *écriture féminine* is an important reference, as she places the tentativeness, the liveliness, the movement – rather than the accomplished, final – at the center of writing. *Écriture féminine* is for her “an inscribing of some sort; it will be [...] not as much a mastered writing, that is, a writing that is aware of writing and observes itself while writing, but an alive writing, ungraspable, in the realm of the subconscious, the phantasms.” (Cixous, H. (1980) *Weiblichkeit in der Schrift*. Merve, p. 23, my translation).

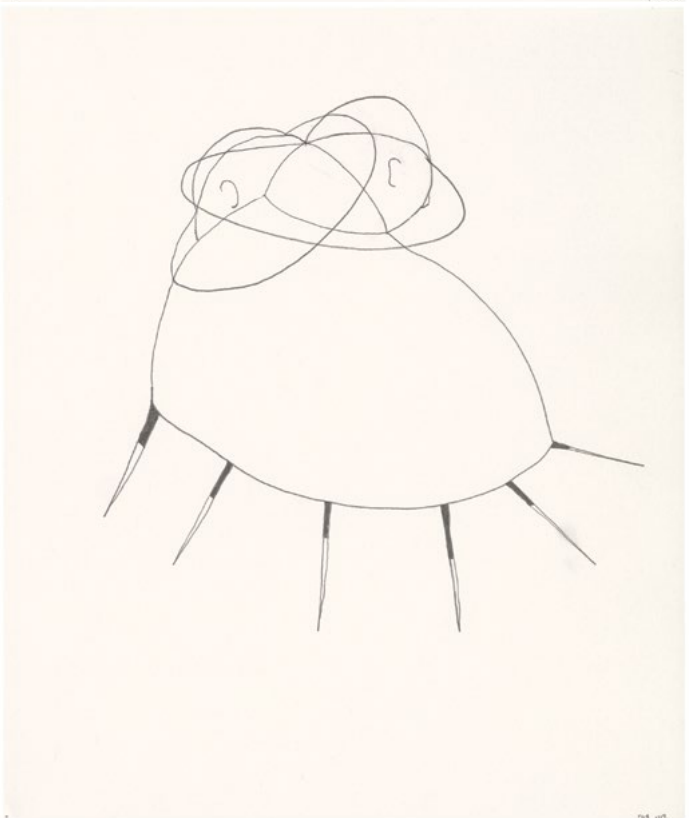
<sup>7</sup> Zum Konvolut F119 was so far shown in Pavillon am Milchhof, Berlin/Germany, 2022, Cantonale 2020, Kunsthau Langenthal/Switzerland, 2020/21 as well as in an Open Studio event at Künstlerhaus Mengerzeile, Berlin, 2020.

<sup>8</sup> “To me, anarchives are a complementary opposite and hence an effective alternative to archive. [...] Following a logic of plurality and wealth of variants, they are particularly suited to handle events and movements; that is, time-based sensations. Just as the anarchoeological sees itself first and foremost as an activity, anarchives are principally in an active mode. They do not, however, lay claim to leadership. Nor do they claim to truthfully know where things come from and where they may be headed to. The origin is and remains a trap. Anarchives do not follow any external purpose; they indulge in waste and offer presents. Basically, they are indebted to a single economy, that of friendship.” Zielinski, S., & Winthrop-Young, G. (2015). *AnArcheology for AnArchives: Why Do We Need – Especially for the Arts – A Complementary Concept to the Archive?* *Journal of Contemporary Archaeology*, p. 121.



Mitten auf der Kreuzung steht eine eilig aus Reisig zusammengebundenen Ueberheblichkeit ~~Klischee~~, es hätte beinahe Unfälle gegeben, aber niemand ~~man~~ hält an, steigt aus und brennt ~~es~~ <sup>sie</sup> nieder.

Es scheint naheliegend, dass viele Männer, die sich dem Glauben verschrieben haben, ~~man~~ ein Sehnen nach einem zweiten Körper verspüren, angemessen biegsam. Nur ~~man~~ sehnte sich danach, allein zu bleiben, aber als Cowboy, am Feuer, in der Prarie.

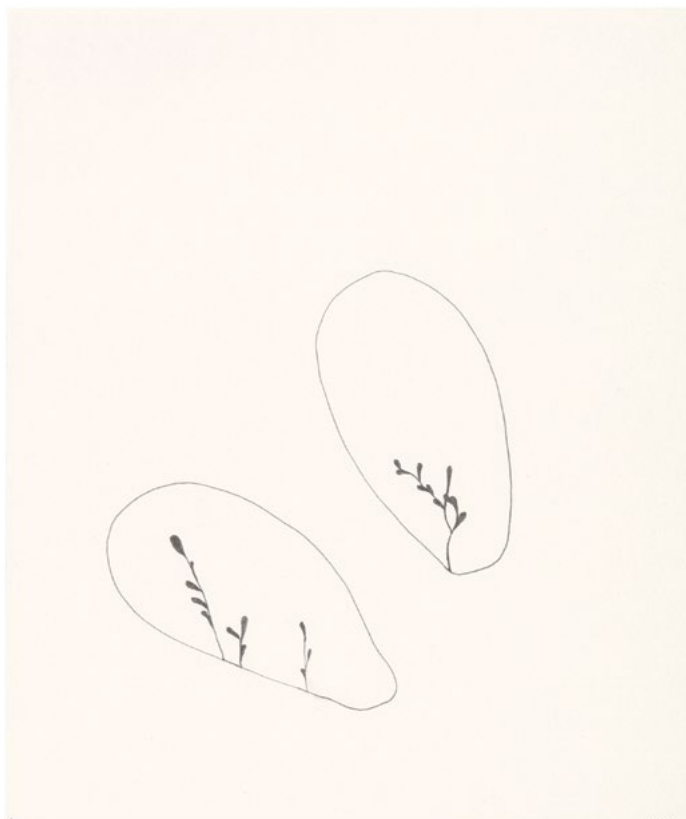


PSIAX

Fig. 1 F119\_143.

In the middle of the crossroads an arrogance is standing, hastily tied together from brushwood, there had almost been accidents, but no one stops, gets out and burns it down.

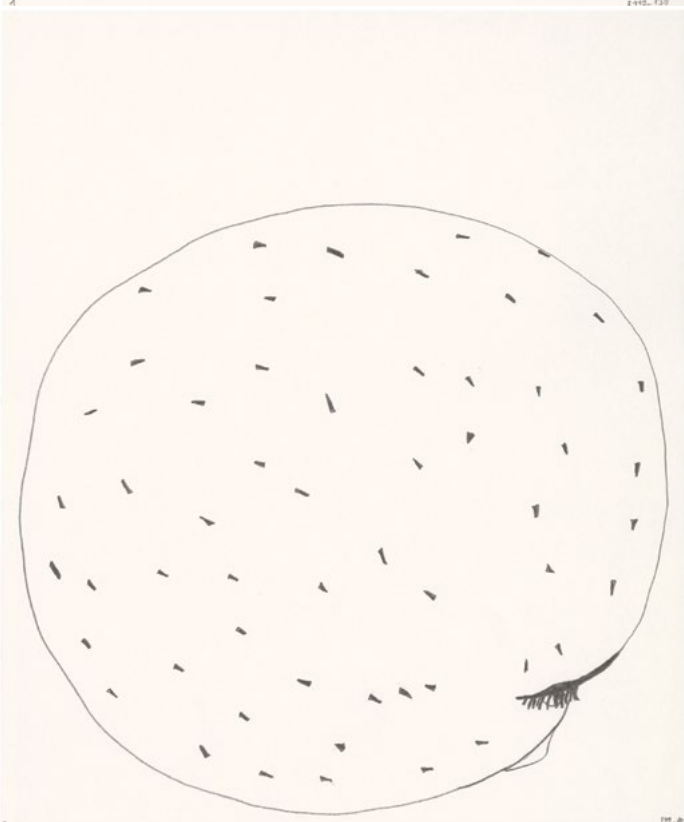
It seems obvious that many men devoted to faith feel a longing for a second body, appropriately pliable. Only one longed to remain alone, but as a cowboy, by the fire, on the prairie.



Handwarm geflückt:  
 Erbeeren, Erschöpfung,  
 Erinnerung



In den Pfützen der Empfindsamkeit  
~~hallt~~  
~~das Heranwachsen~~  
~~hautlos nach~~



PROJETO

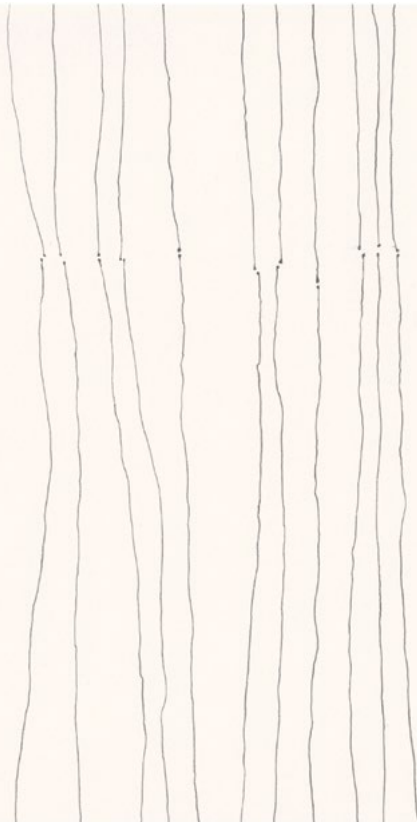
Fig. 2 F119 - 130.

Hand-picked warm:  
 strawberries, exhaustion,  
 memory.

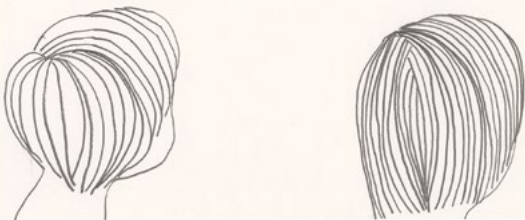
In the puddles of sensibility  
 growing up reverberates silently.

~~WaxkdxzxErd~~

Auf dem Heimweg vom Baden malten  
die Spitzen ihrer Zöpfe dunkle  
Länder auf ihren ~~blauen Rücken~~<sup>beblusten Rücken</sup>.  
Länder, die sie besuchen oder  
meiden würde? Länder, die zerfallen  
würden, bis sie alt genug wäre, einen  
Pass und eine ~~Zugkarte~~<sup>Zugfahrkarte</sup>  
und einen Kurzhaarschnitt zu haben?



Zusammen die Kommode vors Fenster  
schieben~~xxxx~~, von dort aus in die  
Nacht schauen und so wenig wie  
möglich blinzeln, um ja nichts zu  
verpassen: keine Bewegung, keine  
Verheissung, keine Angst.



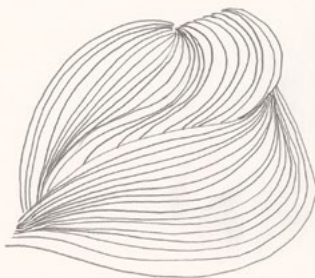
PSIAX

Fig. 3 F119\_126.

On the way home from taking a swim, the tips  
of her braids painted dark countries on her  
blouse back. Countries she would visit or  
avoid? Countries that were to collapse until  
she was old enough to have a passport and  
a train ticket and a short haircut?

Pushing the chest of drawers together in  
front of the window. From there, looking  
out into the night, blinking as little  
as possible so as not to miss anything:  
no movement, no promise, no fear.

Michi war oft damit beschäftigt,  
 Posen nachzuahmen, die er heimlich  
 im Fernsehen gesehen hatte. Leider  
 durften ~~die~~ seine Klassenkameraden,  
 wie er, nur Kindersendungen schauen ~~zu~~  
 und ~~sehen~~ <sup>würden</sup> seinen Effort frühestens  
 in zwei oder drei Jahren zu schätzen  
 wissen, wenn er schon lange von der  
 Schule geflogen sein und eine Ausbil-  
 dung zum Elektriker machen wird, weil  
 seine Eltern und Lehrer sich einig  
 darüber ~~sind~~ <sup>waren</sup>, dass ~~er~~ ihm für eine  
 höhere Schule sowohl Konzentration  
 als auch Durchhaltewillen fehlt.



ineinandergeschlungen  
 geschädigten  
~~die~~  
~~die~~

PROJETO

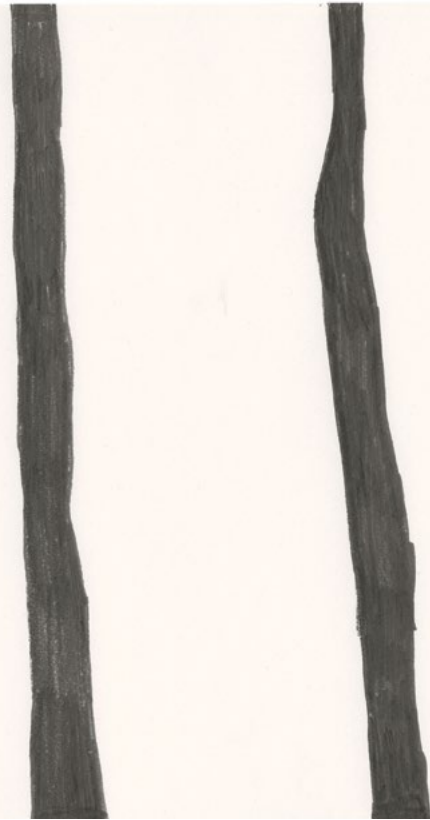
Fig. 4 F119\_124.

Michi was often busy imitating poses  
 he had secretly seen on TV. Unfortunately,  
 his classmates, like him, were only  
 allowed to watch children's shows and  
 would not be able to appreciate his  
 efforts until two or three years from now  
 at the earliest, when he will have long  
 since been expelled from school and will  
 be training to be an electrician, because  
 his parents and teachers agreed that  
 he lacked both concentration and stamina  
 for higher school.

Intertwined.



Eigentlich, sagte Erika, während sie ein bisschen Schorf von ihrem Unterschenkel pulte, hatte ich mir immer gewünscht, dass Menschen sich auch verpuppen. Und dann würden da überall ~~in~~ diese trockenbraunen Kinderhüllen kleben an der Unterseite des Bettes oder an der Tür. Aber ~~mal~~<sup>mal</sup> habe ich gelesen, sagte sie und aus der Haut trat ein Kugelchen Blut, dass ~~schwarz~~ Raupen sich in ihren Kokons zu kompletter Matsche auflösen, ~~die~~<sup>die</sup> sich dann ~~neu~~<sup>ganz</sup> neu zusammensetzen muss zum ~~Geist~~<sup>Körper</sup> eines Schmetterlings.



Die Gleichzeitigkeit steigt  
als träge Flut über die  
Ufer unserer Zeit

PSIAX

Fig. 5 F119\_118.

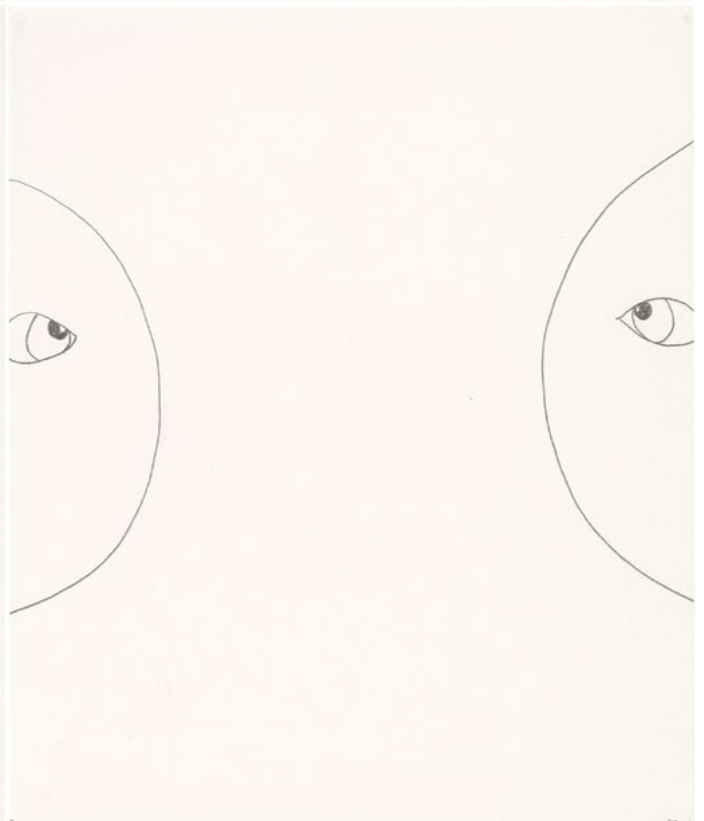
Erika said, while pulping a bit of scab from her shin, I had always wished that people would pupate. And then there would be these dry-brown infant shells stuck to the underside of the bed or the door. But the other day I read, she said, and a bead of blood escaped from the skin, that caterpillars dissolve in their cocoons into utter slush, which then has to reassemble itself all over again into the body of a butterfly.

Simultaneity rises as a sluggish tide over the shores of our time.



Das Berühren fremder Knie mit  
den eigenen Knien aufgrund räumlicher  
Gegebenheiten (i.d.R. U-Bahn, Gruppen-  
ausflug auf einem Motorboot, Taxi-  
Rückbank) löst in mir ein freudiges  
Unwohlsein aus, das schwer zu lokali-  
sieren ist: irgendwo zwis chen  
Zwerchfell und Rippenkästchen, würde  
ich sagen.

Die Schildkrötenfrau muss aus der  
Winterstarre erwacht sein, ~~xxxix~~  
~~xxxxxwxixxiexixxxxxxPanzerxdurch~~  
~~dieSäurexderxSiedlungxschiffx~~  
denn ~~ix~~ aller Kohl ist ange-  
fressen, genau wie der Salbei.  
Wir bendien sie nicht darum, den  
Panzer umherschleifen zu müssen,  
das Reiben zu ertragen auf Strassen-  
belag, das Knirschen auf Kies. Dennoch  
wäre es uns lieber, wenn sie sich  
niht durch die Gärten klauen  
würde, wenn sie Mehr Anstand zeigte  
und Menschlichkeit.



PROJETO

Fig. 6 F119\_116.

The turtle woman must have awakened from her winter torpor because all the cabbage has been eaten, as has the sage. We don't envy her having to drag the shell around, endure its friction on pavement, its grinding on gravel. Still, we'd rather she didn't steal her way through the gardens if she showed more decency and had a little more humanity.

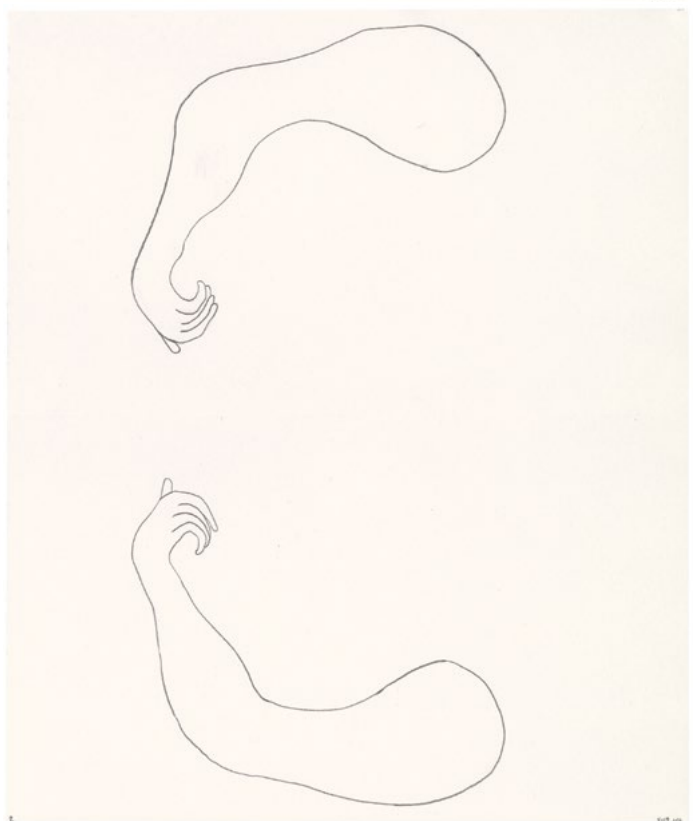
Touching other people's knees with one's own knees due to spatial circumstances (i. e. subway, group excursion with a motorboat, cab back seat) triggers a joyful discomfort in me that is difficult to localize: somewhere between the diaphragm and the rib cage, I would say.



Ich wünsche mir nichts, sagte sie,  
~~xxxxxx~~ obschon sie, wie alle,  
 W eine ganze Menge Wünsche hatte, der  
 dringendste davon war ~~xx~~, sich eine  
 Umarmung massschneidern zu lassen  
 aus englischer Wolle, gefüttert mit  
~~Seiden~~<sup>Seide</sup>, um das Hinein-  
 schlüpfen widerstandslos zu machen  
 und glatt.

~~xxxx~~ Carlotta, hast du Karneval  
 vergessen? Hat die Mama ~~wieder~~<sup>wieder</sup>  
 keine Zeit gehabt ~~keine Zeit~~<sup>keine Zeit</sup>  
~~keine Zeit~~, ein Kostüm zu nähen?  
 Ein Jammer, dass alle so bunt aus-  
 sehen, so maritim oder eingeboren,  
 nur du Carlotta, ~~ist~~<sup>bist</sup> langweilig und  
 grau.

Aber ich habe mich verkleidet.  
 Sehen Sie ~~xxxx~~<sup>guck</sup> ~~xxxx~~, Frau Kares,  
 ich bin Grundschullehrerin, genau  
 wie Sie.



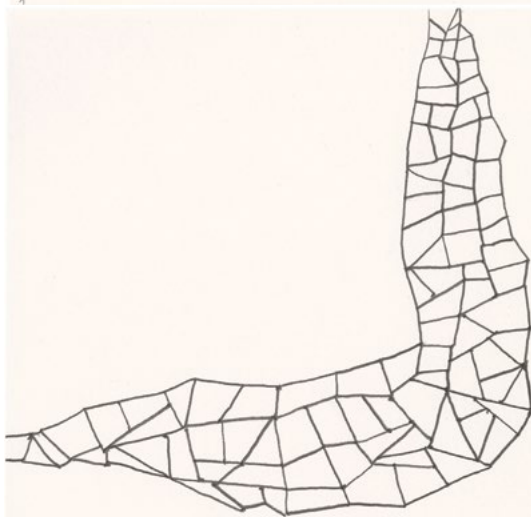
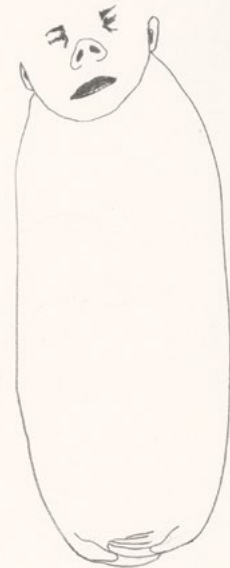
PSIAX

Fig. 7 F119\_114.

Carlotta, have you forgotten Carnival?  
 Did mom not have time to sew a costume  
 again? It's a shame that everyone looks  
 so colourful, so maritime or indigenous,  
 only you Carlotta, are boring and grey.  
 But I did dress up, Mrs Kares, I'm an  
 elementary school teacher, just like you.

I don't wish for anything, she said, although  
 she, like everyone, had a lot of wishes. The  
 most urgent of them was to have a hug tailored  
 from English wool, lined with silk, to make  
 slipping into it effortless and smooth.

Bis ins hohe Alter wartete Alexej  
auf die Frau, die ihn komplett  
ruinieren würde mit ihren Ansprüchen,  
ihrer Prunksucht, ihrem Neid. ~~Abxxx~~  
~~Alle Frauen, die xxxxxx angeht~~



Ich habe Theo einen ~~sehr~~ hässlichen  
Schal ~~g~~-strickt (weil ich nicht stricken  
kann, mir aber eine Art Weiblichkeit  
beweisen wollte), dass die eigentliche  
Geste der Liebe nicht die Stunden es  
kläglichen Handarbeitens sind, sondern  
die Tatsache, dass er ihn tatsächlich  
trägt.

PROJETO

Fig. 8 F119\_124.

Until late in life, Alexei waited for the woman who would completely ruin him with her demands, her ostentation, and her envy.

Fig. 9 Exhibition view,  
Kunsthau Langenthal,  
Switzerland.

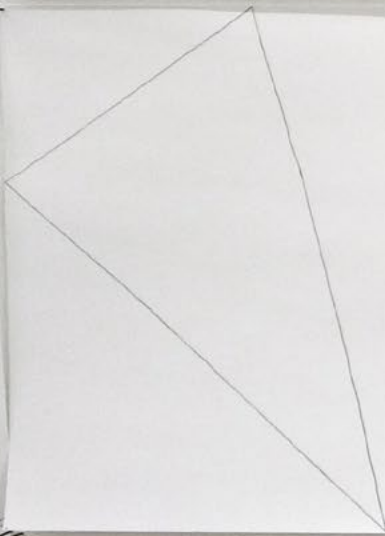
I made such an ugly scarf for Theo (because I don't know how to knit, but wanted to prove some kind of femininity to myself) that the real gesture of love is not the hours of miserable needlework, but the fact that he actually wears it.

Von Weiten sieht der Hörantenn aus  
Salkstein den Notz. zont aus Neuz-  
haltzozozur wirklich vom Verwecheln  
khallich, sofern was kein Einzel-  
mischer ist mit ~~Kwekwek~~ Augen  
aus Himmelstein.

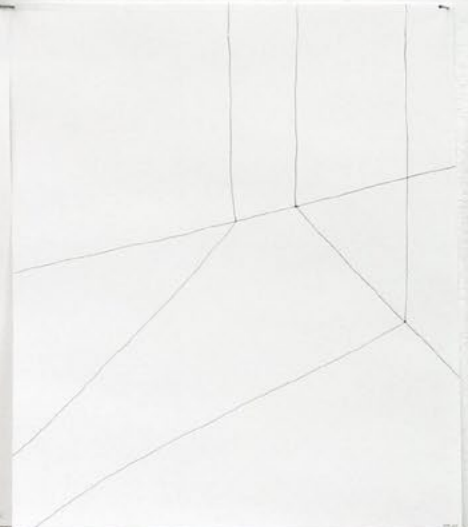
Es klingt, als ob der Wind mit  
Drosselbögen hantiert, findest du  
nicht?  
Klinget wie eine Palme.  
Du löst mit deinen Fotologien,  
wenigstens im Urlaub könntest du  
dich zuzunehmen.



Bei Fallwind konnte ~~etwas~~  
nichts anderes tun, als bei  
Halt heruntergelassenen Löden  
~~Ywekwekwek~~ reglos zu sein,  
d. unkonstant die Luftströme  
samtliche Gewissheiten bis  
zur Unkenntlichkeit durch-  
wunderbrochen.



Juraks Lieblingspiel war es,  
so zu tun, als sei er nicht dr.  
Er stand in einer Ecke des Raums,  
ganz unbeweglich und fahl.  
Am Anfang kam uns das unheimlich  
vor, aber mit der Zeit vergaßen  
wir ihn gänzlich.



es beruhigt sich, zu wissen,  
dass du beharrlich bist ~~etwas~~  
und Irrenden beabsichtigt



In sehr seltenen Fällen ist die  
Folgerichtigkeit derart überhöht,  
dass sie mit voller Absicht vergisst,  
wo oben und unten, hinten und vorn  
gewesen sein sollte.





Fig. 10 Selected photographs from bundle F119, TOMIKO Archive.