

A Text Network of Rooms

— on Artistic Freedom and Survival

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My final project of the semester is *A Drawing Network of Caves*, and this essay forms a text network of rooms in response. Caves are natural rooms; rooms are man-made caves.

Corridor of Translation

This is a corridor that seems to lead to others—but is sealed on all sides. It's straight, narrow, echoing. Every sentence feels like it could pierce its end and arrive at the door of another soul. But you soon realize: every inch of the floor is paved with a different language. Behind each door is a lonely room, surrounded by reefs, with turbulent winds and unpredictable waves.

Here, you practice empathy like learning a foreign language you will never master. You imagine someone on the other end, reading it, replying, approaching. But the corridor is too long, the signal too weak. Eventually, your message just circles on the floor, becoming a kind of ghostly soliloquy.

Some use language to build walls, sealing themselves in silent fortresses. Some use language to shed their skins, escaping the gravity of the self. Most, however, pace back and forth in this corridor, repeating their narratives with near-obsessive compulsion—yet never breaking free.

The exit of this corridor is an illusion—the idea that doors are interconnected, the assumption that understanding is possible. But empathy is a precise and ultimately futile project. It requires too many variables to align for even a brief spark to appear. Just like this very text—once translated, it already leads to a different place.

Prehistoric Cave

This is a forgotten corridor that leads to caves from before language had rules. No labels. No theories. You see images flicker on the walls—perhaps just textures—dancing in firelight,

echoing through stone. Here, art needs no grammar and no proof. It is a direct extension of the senses, a response to the primal pulses of life.

Images, gestures, sounds—before they were codified, they were free breaths, untamed air. You stand at the center of this corridor, feeling a primordial atmosphere flowing freely through time.

The Maze of Interpretation

Somewhere, a corridor leads into countless others. Together, they form a complex—this is the Maze of Interpretation. Every wall is pasted with “explanations.” You are taught how to walk, how to navigate, how to orient yourself. How to think—even how to feel.

Intuition is folded, sealed, annotated, then pinned like a specimen behind glass.

Here, art becomes ritualized behavior, a social gesture, an extension of language games. You can no longer judge a work purely by its emotional pull. You must decode its tags first: gender, identity, politics, trauma, colonialism, post-colonialism... Artworks are no longer experiences, but presentations of “issues.” Answers precede the questions, already printed.

You haven’t understood art more. You’ve only become more familiar with annotation.

Vanity Fair

This is a glittering ballroom.

Polished marble walls gleam like mirrors, endlessly wiped down.

Crystal chandeliers hang from the ceiling, competing for light.

In the center is an endless masquerade of extravagance.

People arrive dressed in splendor, their garments adorned with sponsor logos and curatorial keywords.

Some of the keywords are faded; some still glow.

Guests drift with wine glasses, whispering price comparisons, assessing each other's rarity and value.

Vanity and anxiety linger in the air like perfume—luxurious, yet suffocating.

A strong wind blows through the hall.

Streams of taste change with the tide.

Trends drift like perfume molecules—elusive, imitative.

A guest wears a new outfit and becomes a model for others within days.

A once-revered “cutting-edge” style is now quietly placed at the corner buffet, covered with a

silver lid as if it never appeared.

What was once called “avant-garde” is now mentioned only in drunken whispers, tinged with awkward hesitation.

The White Cube

The white cube is the center of the contemporary art world—blank, yet radiant with allure.

Its white walls flatten the world into planes. It is neutral, sterile, focused. It suspends and spotlights art. Here, works compete, confront, and vie for recognition and attention. But some choose to retreat quietly, remaining still.

Size remains a key factor in the game. Though standards are increasingly diverse, massive scale and labor-intensive execution still equate to importance and value. Diesel cranes lift paintings weighing tons—that is the cost of spiritual grandeur.

The Humble Atelier

This is a space barely qualifying as a “room.” Its walls are unfinished—wind slips between wooden boards. The ceiling hangs like fragmented memory, incomplete. The floor is a mix of gray paper scraps and dried pigment, crunching underfoot like a pencil scraping paper.

This is the studio of private thought—or the ruins of a soul. Cardboard scavenged from trash. Thin pigment. A brush worn down after fifteen years of use. Low resolution. A rescued printer. Near the back door are tools for archaeology: brushes, pickaxes, shovels.

No one visits here. No funding. No curating. No oversight.

This is a zone of autonomy, where technical mastery is not promised, nor is completion.

The lower the cost, the greater the freedom. Freedom hides in unfinished sketches, in the layered breath of reused sketch paper.

In the clutter, you can see the artist’s hand—hesitant, rushed, calm, redrawing. Every decision remains visible, preserved as part of the process.

On the table and walls are fragments, scribbled notes, and pictorial maps. One sheet draws an irregular structural map—perhaps the schematic of the very room network you’re in. A paper banner hangs from the beam: “Survivalism.”

Printmaking Workshop and the NFT Room

Here we see printmaking replicating itself—a logic of aesthetic equality radiates outward. It divides ownership, lowers prices, and reaches more hands. Each print is a shadow clone of the original image.

In resonance, the NFT room appears—a printmaking of the information age. They link together in blockchain chains. A different kind of hope. Though swaddled in noise and bubbles, NFTs are new creatures that do not rely on the white cube. They weave a new kind of Vanity Fair.

The rooms of digital technology—the screens and printers—keep churning inside, flipping between the real and the virtual.

The Archaeological Pit

After passing through countless rooms, displays, and devices, you arrive at a deep archaeological pit.

No exhibitions here—only remnants. No focus—only blurred clues. Scattered pigment recipes, hand-copied craft notes, broken frames, obsolete aesthetic terms—all lie silently in disarray.

They belonged to once-fiery eras, briefly embraced by some style, then buried and sealed by time.

You discover techniques no longer practiced. Color schemes that existed long before they were in vogue. Variants of ornament that quietly survive on handmade paper in a remote village.

This is the basement of cultural amnesia—the fossil layer of visual language. Countless documents layer and compress over time into millennial ore.

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