

**COMMON**

**DIARY**

**OF**

**THESE**

**TIMES**

a documentation of life during covid-19 quarantine  
contributions by international exchange students of the  
academy of fine arts vienna  
summer semester 2020



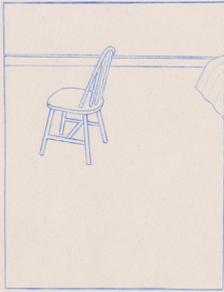
WHEN THERE'S  
SO LITTLE TO DO

---

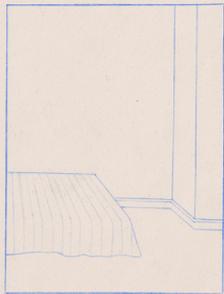
YOU DO IT  
SO INTENTLY



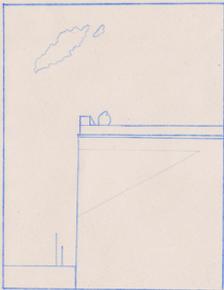
Artisan Nap  
Pauls Rietums  
Exchange student from Latvia  
at the Department of Architecture



MY DAD TOLD ME  
ABOUT THE SEASIDE TODAY



THE SKY IS SO CALM NOW,  
STRANGELY NAIVE AND ROMANTIC



WITHOUT THE PLANE SPEAKS,  
IT LOOKS LIKE A FLEMISH PAINTING



THAT'S PRETTY COOL.

Flemish painting  
Pauls Rietums  
Exchange student from Latvia  
at the Department of Architecture

## Dead Bee

It was the end of April when the tired sun finally collapsed at the end of the horizon. The man standing at the balcony checked his watch. The sun set a couple of minutes later than yesterday. It meant the universe was still obligated to observe at least some basic laws of physics. He lit his cigarette. Behind the wall of his small room a little girl started singing in some foreign language. Just like the sunset it was a daily occurrence. Nevertheless it was an annoying one to the man. After spending another week in his apartment his head was aching badly. Even the tiniest noise made him want to scream. On the other hand he felt relieved every time the voice started singing. It meant the girl has strong lungs which is a good thing. Also it meant he is not that alone. But the day will surely come when the voice of the little girl will be heard no more. It's just the nature of circumstances everybody found themselves in. He started thinking about his family. Whether or not they are okay. He could call them. Apologize to them. They would surely be quick to forgive him, given the circumstances everybody found themselves in. A lone ambulance quickly sped by his building in complete silence. There were no cars, no people to warn using the siren. Suddenly he felt the longing growing inside. He missed his hometown. It had lots of uncontrolled vegetation. This time of the year there are blooming trees everywhere you look.. He didn't know what the trees were called but he could always recognize them by the smell of their flowers. It was the same scent a small tree growing by his balcony was giving off. He could touch it with his hand if he wanted to but he knew better. He lit another cigarette. He'd rather not inhale the toxic smell the tree was giving off. He tried to cover it up with smoking but to no avail. The sweet scent of decomposition was too much. It was everywhere. On his balcony, in his small room. It was present even in the kitchen where he would prepare the

same exact dish over and over again. The scent was stronger than the smell of canned tomatoes or freshly boiled pasta. It was even stronger than the scent of the eggs that went bad a couple of weeks prior. They were put into the pile of garbage he couldn't throw away because of the circumstances everybody found themselves in. It helped when the cleaning lady used to show up once a week to clean the apartment. The smell would go away then for a precious couple of hours but it always came back eventually. She's probably gone now. The scent was everywhere. It subdued every other scent. The bedding no more smelt like washing powder and his clothes no more gave off the smell of old sweat. The smell of freshly baked bread from the nearby bakery has been gone for a long time. Only the cigarettes still smelt the same.

The tree blossomed some time ago. At the time of his arrival to this foreign country, just after he had abandoned his home and just before the circumstances everybody found themselves in, the tree was only a couple of black branches. It looked like it was dying. But after a couple of weeks it started growing little leaves. The first day there were only three of them. The day after no more than ten. At the end of the week there were so many of them he couldn't count them. On the next day the tree started blossoming. He saw bees approaching the sweet flowers and falling to the ground the moment they touched them. The part of pavement beneath the tree was littered with dead bees and cigarette butts he would throw away absentmindedly from the balcony.

It was finally night. The sweet scent became much stronger and there was only one cigarette left apart from the one he was smoking right now. The phone vibrated in the dark room behind him. He ignored it. The times when he would care for daily death rates were long gone. The numbers, even the small ones would incite a perverse

curiosity but now he couldn't probably care less, although the deaths now were counted in millions. The strange thing is he would be much more concerned with the situation in his home country than the one he was currently stuck in. It made him feel immense satisfaction that his home country was falling under the burden of the circumstances everybody found themselves in. The more victims there were the more happy he felt. It made him feel that the decision to abandon them all was indeed a right one. Despite all of that he couldn't resist thinking about her. Wondering about her whereabouts. Recalling their last evening they had spent together just before he left the country. It was night and they were walking among the blossoming trees. They smelt exactly like the one by his balcony. There was nobody there on the street, just like here. They talked about the future. He shared with her how much he hates this country and how elated he will be entering the tomorrow's plane which will take him far away from here. She would listen to him carefully and calmly. It made him frustrated. He wanted so badly for her to try to stop him, to say to him „don't go“. But she would not say a word. She was just looking straight into his eyes with overwhelming love when he called her names, furious beyond measure. She agreed to each and every argument he would throw at her. He prepared them with much care just in case she would try to argue against it. But she wouldn't. She didn't say a word. He stopped. There was nothing he could say. Everything he wanted to tell her was prepared as a counterargument. But she didn't say a word. The man entered his room. He decided to call her but there was no answer which was not that uncommon given the circumstances everybody found themselves in. He tried two times more. There was no answer. He turned the phone off just in case she would try to call back and returned to the balcony. He looked at the small tree. He knew that all of

this is just like a bus stop on his journey. He didn't plan to stay here for long. The distance between him and them which he worked so hard for was shrinking second by second. He could almost feel their breath on his back. He waited impatiently for the world to start spinning again. He couldn't wait much longer. He must get moving. Fast. Because if not, then what's the point of all of this? He put out his last cigarette. The sweet scent immediately overwhelmed him with the doubled strength. It forced him out to his small room. He decided to give it one more try. Dead silence. „Maybe she's dead?“, he thought hopefully. „Maybe all of them are dead?“. His heart started racing. The amount of possibilities it would open up for him! He calmed down. It's better he would not indulge in such fantasies. He can't let his guard down. What if that's what they want him to think? He went to bed. His breath became much calmer. He couldn't help dreaming. He inhaled deeply the sweet scent of decomposition the tree by his balcony gave off. He fell asleep softly like a dead bee falling to the ground.



Anna Piccolo  
Exchange student from Italy  
at the Department of Restauration



## This all feels like a dream

An exciting one that started so real,  
and ended up entirely unreal.

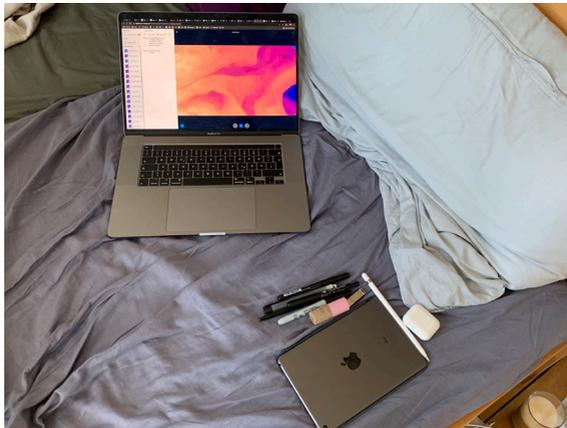
I missed up to get to know you all,  
therefore the time I got was too small.

That's why I wish to come back soon,  
to spend some time in your commune.

Due to this confusing time right now,  
everybody learned to say wow!

I wonder about the world and myself,  
and wish you all do enjoy this yourself.

Let's see what these time will bring,  
until then lets' dance and sing.



Workspace  
Felix Kofler  
Exchange student at Bauhaus University  
Department of Architecture







Karina Putra  
Exchange student from Latvia  
at the Department of Fine Arts

## Ken o lo?

What is right, what is wrong,  
is there any right or wrong,  
how can I make a decision,  
where do I belong,  
where do I want to be,  
how long will it last,  
how will it develop,  
do I want to go back,  
do I want to stay, I stay!

You should go stay with your family,  
don't you want to go back,  
if you prefer to go we understand,  
you are already part of the family,  
nobody can tell you what is right or what is  
wrong,  
there is no right, there is no wrong,  
good that you stay!

Should I go or should I stay,  
I don't want to go,  
I won't go,  
I want to stay,  
I'm moving,  
I'm here, more and more leaving.

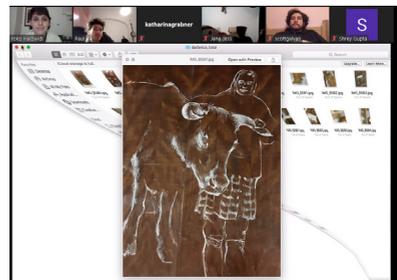
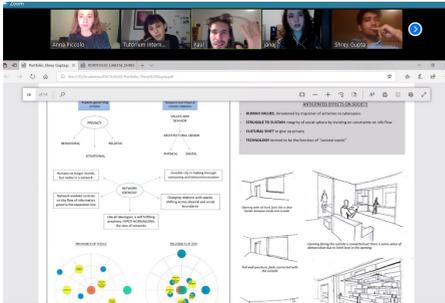
Should I go,  
I don't want to go,  
it seems better to go,  
for me its better,  
you don't have to go, www  
you can go,  
you may go,  
your family will be happy,  
what do you want,  
you have to decide,  
I cannot make the decision for you,  
what do you feel,  
I want to stay,  
I don't want to go,  
she goes.

I am home already.  
I stay!

Ken

A continuous thought, a question of leaving or  
staying. Even once you have found the answer  
for yourself, there has always been someone  
dealing with this not at all simple question.

Should we go or should we stay?  
Ken o lo?



International quarantine zoom hangouts  
Screenshots by Anna Piccolo, Katharina Grabner  
and Yoko Halbwidl

## **We want to thank all contributors**

**Pauls Rietums**, Incoming student from The Glasgow School of Art, United Kingdom, Architecture

**Konstanty Stanczyk**, Incoming student from Academy of Fine Arts, Katowice, Poland, Fine Arts

**Anna Piccolo**, Incoming Trainee from Università Ca' Foscari di Venezia, Italy

**Rebecca Hayek**, Academy's Outgoing student at HKU University of the Arts Utrecht, the Netherlands, Education in the Arts

**Felix Kofler**, Academy's Outgoing student at Bauhaus-University Weimar, Germany, Architecture

**Karina Putra**, Incoming student from Art Academy of Latvia, Riga, Latvia, Fine Arts

**Marcella Brunner**, Academy's Outgoing student at Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, Jerusalem, Israel, Architecture (in alphabetical order)

## **An initiative of the International Office at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna**

**Editorial Team:** Gabriele Reinharter-Schrammel, Stephanie Baumgarten, Eva Bruchmann, International Office, Academy of Fine Arts Vienna

**Idea & Concept:** Katharina Grabner, Yoko Halbwidl

**Layout:** Yoko Halbwidl

**Proofreading:** Katharina Grabner

Vienna, Spring 2020

