

Hugging Atmospheres

A love story between the psyche and its surroundings

Graduation Research Paper

Ву

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Abstract

The main question around this research paper is how can we translate ambiances? This ungraspable 'something'? What is our relationship with the atmosphere of spaces that brings out our emotional state? Can we characterize atmospheres by simply giving them names? Giving them a place for their selves to develop.

I researched six certain atmospheres, Masculinity, Sound, Death, Warmth, Lust, and Serenity. They are the ones that I went through most recently before writing this research paper. I wanted them to all come together and hopefully come across an answer on how they might be useful in day-to-day life as an artist in creating art, but also in general, can we understand each other better while talking about them? They are unseen yet as important as our imagination.

Hoping for a translation of the ungraspable 'something'. Into moments of poetry and storytelling to get a grip on where they touch each other. Giving them a platform/to create a world where atmospheres/ambiances are more visible. To have conversations with them to create an understanding of what they mean. And how they would look like. Along the way I figured, one can not stand on one's self, they are all in need of the other. Which seems like a reflection of our reality.

Keywords: Ambiances - Atmospheres - Masculinity - Sound - Death - Warmth - Lust - Serenity

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Introduction

Dear reader,

I would like to start by taking you to a place where there is no such thing as absolute truth, a place where fiction becomes our armour. Reflecting on the words of Dona Haraway in A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the late twentieth century: "The boundary between science fiction and social reality is an optical illusion". In this research paper, I'm looking into what is mainly left unspoken but is mostly felt. As Pascal Mercier described in *The* Night Train To Lisbon: "We leave something of ourselves behind when we leave a place, we stay there, even though we go away. And there are things in us that we can find again only by going back there". This 'something' I would like to call Hugging Atmospheres. A movement / A moment of spheres touching each other and becoming one with their surrounding, but maybe also something to hold on to when we feel most alone. A subjective matter, but well-known in the arts. As the Cambridge dictionary describes the literature definition of atmosphere: "The character or mood of a place or situation". Leaving out the word: 'literature' in the Merriam-Webster dictionary the meaning becomes: "the whole mass of air surrounding the earth". A scientific definition that sounds like poetry to me. The main question wandering around this topic is how can we translate this ungraspable 'something'? Can we characterize atmospheres by simply giving them names? By giving them a place for their selves to develop. Maybe so that we understand them better, and therefore ourselves and each other. Imagine your living room changing from loving into persuasive, walls made out of red pillows are shape-shifting into iron arrows, the arrows are growing, touching, not stabbing the furniture. Allow me to take you with me traveling through:

Arena, atmosphere of Masculinity
Aria, atmosphere of Sound
Ara, atmosphere of Death
Aurora, atmosphere of Warmth
Basia, atmosphere of Lust
Carmen, atmosphere of Serenity

The ones where I lost some pieces of myself, the ones that will always have a piece of me.

Arena

Atmosphere of Masculinity

An arena full of loud men starts to whisper at the break of dawn. A vibration of tongues clicking singing sinful words. No one is allowed to leave the day. A lonely chill is entering the sandy floor. Frost on the feet of madness gives room for hands to touch the lungs to breathe. The men are formatting now, row after row until their movement stops, it becomes silent.

The round pillars are slowly waking up. They're turning and bending like legs crossing over themselves. The night must have been rough. The trees outside are laying leaves on their scratches, and the ceiling as the sky is spreading golden lines. Blinding the trapped men's eyes. Here is where she was born, Arena. The fences of both entrances are fading and it opens up her route. On heels made of pale limestone, she is walking carefully, passing the frozen bodies. Her curiosity starts to grow and after a while, she gently puts her hand above the eyes of the first man in the front row. He is blinking and slowly able to see, but she is nowhere to be found. He speaks quietly. "Are you there? I can feel you, but I can't feel myself". She takes a deep breath and he loses his static posture, for a second he is able to see the men surrounding him."Why are they all sleeping? Can you please show yourself"? He says. With his feet still stuck, his voice becomes louder: "show yourself"! She seems intrigued by the rough shapes of his gestures and she is trying to find her sound, but even in her thoughts, all sentences come off too strong. She lets go of the shadow covering his eyes and walks through the lines of other men. Her elegance is pervasive and she is determined to leave a mark. She passes the last man in the end row, a slight touch on his chest, as she laughs. "The day has almost come to an end", she whispers. The frost is melting while the sand is losing up. Eyes are slowly opening. She becomes one with the keystones that are holding her arch.² The pillars are turning to the other side. Some men fall as the others scream, but one is standing still. The gold fades and it makes room for the trees to bend over. The branches usurp the chaos. She breathes loudly, and the stones are quivering. It makes a tiny sandstorm.³ The men are leaning against each other, they don't seem to be fearful. Their screaming turns into laughter as they pick up the fallen men, but one is standing still. The sand is moving in his direction, but even the highest wave divides itself in front of him. She wonders where he went and if he will ever return. The others are clapping, louder..louder..louder..their voices are building up. Grunting in the air there are no words needed. The vibration is everywhere, it brings the sand to sleep. Together nothing is forbidden, so it seems. She can't help but wonder about the lost man, she leaves her stand and places herself in front of his empty body. She whispers. "Did I lose you, because I didn't tell you my name? I didn't want to frighten you". He looks peaceful, but without light, she can't reach him. Strange feelings are entering her body, she feels the need to find him, but she can't leave. "If there is a slight chance you are in there". I will make you a bed, I will give you some rest, I will stay beside you", she says. Without a response, she moves to one of the exits. She opens the gate that divides the oval sandy floor, from the over-capped hallway and walks into the darkness. Here she will make his cave. She gently asks the trees for some dry branches, she picks them one by one and lays them on the cold grey stones. The picking makes the gold enter the cave briefly and the little branches are spreading out light and heat. From the leaves, she makes his bed. She returns to his empty body and takes him into her arms, the pieces of dark fabric layering around him are dripping

¹Limestone - Material commonly used as a substitute for marble in Roman architecture

 $^{^{\}rm 2}$ Keystone - The central stone of an arch

³ "After all, what had we seen, but the hopeless struggle of men with the violence of nature". - Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe, Italian Journey, 1786-1788

cold drops of water. Carefully she drags him with her and lays him down in the red and green. She takes place next to him, her hands touching his wet clothing while pulling them off airily. "I hope you don't mind", she says. Her eyes fall on his naked chest where with big black letters it reads: SABULO.⁴ "Sabulo", she repeats. With her fingers lingering over the letters and her lips close to his ear she whispers: "My name is Arena".

⁴ Sabulo - the Latin word for sand

Aria

Atmosphere of Sound

She seems peaceful in the middle of the night. The air she breathes breaks into shattered pieces, as she walks on white sheets engraved in the soil where once some olive trees lived. Her feet are walking freely, without seeing any footprints on the ground, while her hands are touching every part of her scenery. Multiple strokes of dark green satin are draped around her shoulders they are putting weight on her body, integrating with her intuition while a thunderstorm speaks too loud. Without any effort, she remains in peace. As the lioness of God, she will never have a free day. While the route of the night is spreading out sheet by sheet, the waves are drifting, circulating between her lips, but without consent. She takes a turn as she makes her way into a tiny house where a daughter lays. A broken heart on a cold winter floor, her weeping gets louder the closer Aria goes. She is surrounded by grey bricks and an empty wooden table while standing in front of a fireplace. The daughter's eyes are closed and while the last bit of smoke is leaving her side, Aria takes off a satin stroke and starts to sing: "While you live, shine. Have no grief at all. Life only exists for a short while, and time demands its toll".5 Aria repeats it seven times on nine strings with her feet tapping the drums, the daughter seems to wander off, and the weeping stops. Aria now leaves, and the route is moving again sheet by sheet. The soil is growing into grass. The thunder left as she walks passed broken trees. Hundreds of ravens are slowly making their way into the fields. She walks right through them. In her loneliest pathways, she speaks with comfort. She hears a soft longing behind the ravens, and she follows it as the landscape is shape-shifting into stone, where water runs through their open veins, and the yearning gets louder. She now stands beside a circle of giant houses. It screams high powers. The bricks are white as her sleeves, but the windows and the front doors are nothing more than squared open shapes that show bits of life. She walks around the houses, trying to find the one with the longing deep inside. But every room is forced into laughter. By broken glasses, loud voices, ripping shirts, ripped meat, kisses, screams of wonder, and a young boy squeaking on the violin. She makes her entrance starting at the ground floor where she finds an old man with a lazy eye. He looks up from his reading and puffs heavily. He looks down again, and in a moment of despair, he rips out a few pages of his book. The candles on his desk are shaking from the vibrations of the walls around him. Suddenly a brief moment of guilt lingers around Aria. But the yearning is getting stronger and she can't stop her feet from walking to the inside garden of the ring. A rose garden imprisoned by the needs of others is what she sees. She looks around and in the middle of the flowers she notices a long pole made out of metal as high as the top floors of the giant houses, a wooden platform is floating above her. She hears a voice circulating down. It sounds like singing. Aria gently asks: "Is someone up there"? The singing stops immediately. "Don't be scared, I'm here because you asked me to", Aria says. And after a few seconds of hesitation, a pale face with two curious eyes and hair as dark as the night appears above her."I could hear you from miles away". Aria says. Very carefully the young boy makes with his tiny hands a gesture for Aria to come up. Her white sheets are forming into a spiral staircase. Slowly she walks above the red roses and a sense of serenity lights up the garden. Now she is visible. Inside every squared open space the movements stop and thousands of big eyes are lured outside, seeing Aria walk for the first time. She steps onto the platform where she finds the young boy sitting on a bed made out of steel surrounded by woolen blankets. "What is your name"? Aria asks. "my name is Altus", he says with a soft voice. "Altus, why did you call for me"? She asks. Altus takes a deep breath, "I mean, I don't want to bother you with my complaints or footsteps even, maybe only when you're loud enough,

⁵ Song of Seikilos

but from where I'm staying I doubt that that will ever happen. I needed to speak to you even though your speech makes me tired sometimes. I want to leave the bed that they made for me, but they trapped me here. They told me that I have a golden voice, but only under the blankets do I feel the need to sing". Altus says with a trembling voice. Aria takes off a satin stroke and wipes the tears from his cheeks. "Can't you see they're always watching"? He says. Aria looks around her and speaks: "Let me take you somewhere, where we can blend into the red curtains, where I will stand upon your stage, all you have to do is listen and fall out of this silver frame, and there we can only wonder about the other".

Ara

Atmosphere of Death

"What is this landscape? Where am I? It doesn't make sense, these salty shapes of human bodies are in red, black, orange, green, and with a funny blend of yellow. Is this where earthly gasses purr in comfort? Is that what makes the taste of salt? At the end of the mountains, I can feel all of you, it annoys me". Ara speaks out loud.6 She walks firmly with a slight arrogance over her. The ground is changing, but there is no one else around. This must be what loneliness looks like, she frowns. The heat is almost unbearable, but what does it mean to survive? She wonders. She stops in front of a fumarole and leans into the steam. Her curly brown hair is getting slick and fuzzy, and with her eyes closed she listens to the earth's language boiling underneath her. Slowly she steps out of the toxic gasses, she feels a fast punch against her shoulder, and in a quick moment, she loses her balance. "Who did that"?! She asks loudly. It stays quiet. "Who dares to intrude me in such a cowardly way"? She looks around her, but all she sees is the wide open ground of hardened magma. She steps back into the steam, but now with her eyes open. She waits a little while, but there is no one and nothing to be found. Ara decides to walk further. Breathing, awareness, circulation. Breathing, awareness, circulation. Am I losing it now? Where am I? She thinks. With her mouth wide open she tries to force a storm to come. Please cry for me, she looks up. "Celebrate this place on earth, will you"! She screams.7 "I will try and speak up under the wings of loss, I dare you to evoke me, to let me feel. Challenge me in the way you describe life, and I will try to let my altar die". She whispers. She falls on her knees and with her sharp and pointy red nails she scratches as fast as she can into the hardened ground."My being, Deep in thought, Deeper, Deeper, I need to feel the lava burn, making fossils on my fingertips. I need to remember all of you. Why are you all so important? I need you", she says out of breath. Her lines and her silhouette move slower. With her head down on her chest she looks at her hands, her aging has begun.

"I will try to move in a forgotten pace, maybe in the heartache of time, we will meet again. Jumping over high grass while the seasons change, I'll go back into the blankets in the warmth of your arms, looking up into watery eyes this time it wasn't me that cried". She speaks softly. And while the sun goes under, She sees a black sea of people stride in her direction. And slowly she falls into a deep sleep, down under a broken ground she dreams heavily. "I want to welcome you all"! Says a young man standing on a carousel.8 "Where there is no beginning nor an end, here is where she found redemption. Her life long she created her death to be an artwork. While only she can be reborn in its entirety. Therefore here life will always exist and art will never be forgotten.9 Let me tell you something", The young man jumps off the carousel and says: "One day I found her in all her glory, a young woman fast asleep, laying on the silent ground. In the middle of hot springs. I picked her up and carried her into the midst of a summer's morning, I put her down where red Lillies were leaning against her, She woke up and the sun shined bright into her dark brown eyes. Her naked skin glowed. I had never seen someone like her before. All I could do was hide behind high grass and watch her move. She stood up as if the breeze was holding something against her. But her strength was mesmerizing. It only took her a little while to catch me. She looked right at me and I could have sworn I could feel her heart beating the same as mine. She wouldn't speak, she just

⁶ Landscape colors in this one place on earth where no life can exist, Dallol Ethiopia

⁷ Ritual Dances Performed for Centuries throughout Africa to celebrate death and call for rain on earth

⁸ Kurt Godwin, Modern Alchemical Art

⁹ Elizabeth Lev, Bernini and the Art of Dying

laid next to me, until my movement stopped. And I never cried again". The young man jumps back on the carousel, takes a bow, and speaks: "Because of you I do exist. I am here with her, my Ara. And I would like to see you leave". Ara wakes up.

Aurora

Atmosphere of Warmth

"Your land is lingering between the heavens and earth, and you sleep even on the crusty roads. You move up and down flying seventy meters above the ground. ¹⁰Just to keep an eye on everyone even in their suffering. You walk along with the circles of an eagle preparing his attack, while the dirt is changing you make tiny tents and hold the hands of little beasts. You are spreading golden lines into the ceiling as the sky. With all your care you bend over branches for the heat to enter darkened caves. You sing out tiny bits of smoke when floors are getting cold. The waves of trembling tables can't put your candles out, in all the troubled thoughts you will hold me down. As far as you can go. You will brighten up a trapped voice while rose peddles are healing from a shortage of oxygen. You breathe the sun at night and lean into the fields of goddesses at dawn. Aurora, can I come into your arms warm as blankets"? A young man says. Aurora smiles and takes a sip of her tea. The floor underneath them is filled with woolen carpets and only a hard wooden table is standing between them. "We know each other for a while now, but I'm not sure if I can answer your words", Aurora says. The young man looks outside, the windows are steamed up from the heat in the living room. After a while, he gets out of his chair and walks to Aurora who is sitting on the woolen carpet. He puts his hand out and says: "I want to show you something". Aurora looks at him doubtfully but takes his hand. Together they walk outside into the garden. The young man turns around and looks at the house in front of him. "My cracking walls are the veins where pile beetles live, broken pieces of grey paint make room for other layers to breath, the sun shields I kept frozen I threw my curtains out, for the sharp-shaped open windows that are made for you to come in", He says. 11 Aurora looks at him, she sees a young man in need of youthfulness. "Even in my arms you will feel lost, we can't hide here", she says. The young man lets go of her hand and while the condensing on the windows is sliding down drip by drip he looks up and screams as loud as he can. They're turning around each other as a dance of hide and seek. "Let it all out", Aurora says. The young man falls to his knees. She walks up to him and reaches out her hand. "It's time for you to sleep", she says. She takes him inside again and pushes him onto the stairs in a room so soft but without a bed. The young man lies down on the ground in a fetal position. Aurora wraps her arms around him and whispers: "I will give you dreams to become curious for the next day, tonight I will take away your pain, but in the morning you need to rise without me". The young man falls asleep. Quietly Aurora leaves the room. She goes into the garden and walks upon the chestnut tree, where she makes a swing out of two ropes and an old tire. This will keep him company for a while, she thinks. Out in the distance, she hears voices screaming in her direction. "Dico...". The voices become louder and Aurora sees two dark shapes walking past the garden path. They're calling out his name, she thinks. At a fast pace, she walks torch the moving silhouettes. "Who are you"? Aurora asks. As they step out of the shadow she sees an old couple holding hands. The woman's eyes are red and watery, while the man looked up hopefully. "Dico, our boy, have you seen our boy"? The woman says. Aurora walks closer to them. She smiles peacefully and says: "Follow me". She leads them into the house and up to the bedroom. Dico is fast asleep. The old woman slowly falls next to him and puts her scarf over his body. The man sits down on the other side and moves his hands through Dico's hair. Aurora looks at them and silently leaves the room. She walks outside again where she climbs into the chestnut tree while the sun rises and fades into

¹⁰ The sound of northern lights

¹¹ The warm embrace of addiction

the dawn of day. Beams of soft light are entering the house. The old couple is holding their son in between their arms and while they look at each other, the broken windows recover.

Basia

Atmosphere of Lust

On an artificial Island made by the hands of greed is where she is left to stay, her movements are controlled in an isolated mind. 12 This evening she must be alone. She takes place on the rock above the sea and starts to wonder. "A foreign kiss, close to where my heart is left, I should have known boundaries. Walking past a midnight sky. My body is losing its way of steadiness. White light is aiming to pull me up right into the universe. I'm holding it against you. I'm climbing on you. Your shoulders are duplicating a thousand times. In infinite you's, my body retires. Sliding down is not an option. Should I take a leap"? She jumps into the ocean and lets go of her thoughts. Here she is unfindable. With all her strength she tries to swim deeper into the dark land of the unfamiliar. While echoes of voices are following her muscles, once they reach into her body she has no other choice than to drift above. "My lady of the night, according to some you are the only one who should be admired. You're the welcoming heat of a stranger in this lonesome landscape. Your line of diamonds gets me walking over the edge. You make me your shadow and I don't even mind. Where your golden walls are almost collapsing I seem to hold you. Basia, your arms feel like water without the fear of drowning. And the best part is that I'm not attached to you, I mean I know the sides of the road. I'm at ease with them". Basia looks down at him while having her hands in his hair. She slowly moves her legs away from where the old man is laying. She tries to go back to her Island, but the sharp sound of his voice is unstoppably annoying. She looks at him with devious eyes and says, "I appreciate your kind words, but unfortunately our time is up". She steps out of the bed and puts on a nightgown. The man stands up undressing her with his eyes from top to bottom while pulling his pants on. "If he keeps on continuing watching, my skin would fall from my bones", Basia thinks. "Again, it has been a pleasure to be with you, Basia", the man says with a slight arrogance and walks out of the tiny bedroom. The walls are starting to shiver pieces of red plaster are falling on the white carpet. Without any care for her belongings, she becomes one with the waves of destruction. A red sea is filling up the cracked walls until the ceiling pops. She floats outside into a sky of despair. "Is this what hell feels like"? She thinks. After a while, the red ocean finds its calmness and falls into still water. With her nightgown soaking wet she finds herself surrounded by bright natural light. She starts to laugh loudly. "Finally I feel the rocks underneath my feet", She thinks. She walks out of the water and sits next to a shrub with red berries and white flowers. A longing for smell makes the berries seem powerful "I remember now", she thinks. "The way you threw them in my hair, I can't thank you enough. Here I can remember the joy in us. Don't stop me now, in a wave of blaze I am meant to exist in all my loneliness, just so I can go back to us. Down in the sea, I will go. A long side of your cherry mind, I will blow on the blossom in every song that was made for them. And I will create my own". Here where there are no walls she is allowed to speak. "Even if I don't understand what love is, I will still go back to us", Basia says softly but firmly. She walks to the shore where a jetty lays. Her legs are feeling heavy while she takes her steps over the roughly cut wooden beams. She sees a small boat in the distance. "Did you leave your steady land"? She asks herself. The boat becomes bigger until she sees a man waving at her. He looks exhausted. He throws a big rope and says in a loud voice, "can you help me, please? I have been lost for days". Basia grabs the rope and ties it around her waist. The man climbs up onto the jetty. Even with his pale face, his charm is undeniable. He walks up to Basia and slowly takes the rope off her. "I would have never guessed that these cold waves would bring me to your beauty", he says with a crooked smile. Basia looks at him. His black hair is glowing from the

¹² Odaiba (お台場) Tokyo

salted Crystals. His brown eyes are changing from dark to bright. "Can't you speak"? He asks playfully, as he ties the rope onto one of the wooden beams. Basia laughs and says, "my words are not for free, for a man like yourself". "Then who am I"? He asks. "A foreigner, perhaps a pleasant intruder until our time is up". Basia says. The man puts himself closely in front of her and says, "can't you remember me"? The wooden jetty starts to shiver and the man grabs onto Basia, but the wooden beams are collapsing one by one. He falls into the heavy waves as Basia falls back into her room.

Carmen

Atmosphere of Serenity

Carmen wanders in a labyrinth of evergreen plants where pines shed the only shade and where the moss lawns are frozen.¹³ It's cold and the night almost ended. She looks upon the moon. Her posture feels tired, but she can't hide her kindness, carefully her feet are jumping in pillows of ice but without the sound of cracking waters. With leaves in her hair, she walks until the sun rises. In the morning she can appear in silence. She needs to leave the labyrinth of evergreen to fight the chaos in the brains of others. She feels however untroubled by the number of people cursing out her name. Outside the labyrinth, she meets the walls of big boxes and talks to the concrete to weaken their ability to last in greed. "Nature will come back to you", she slowly speaks. As if she puts a spell on the pavement, where heavy legs are walking faster than the speed of their minds, she stands still in the middle of the street, time is slowing down. Streams of salted water are falling on the ground. And still, she is loving every stone that crosses her skin. Tearful faces are looking in her direction. "There should never be a force more powerful than the ability to let go", She speaks softly. She turns around and while her long gray hair is moving in waves alongside her body she walks back into her labyrinth. She sits down in the middle of her center and looks at all the tiny stones around her. Carefully she staples them one by one until a tower of structures appears. A long gray, black, and white line is reaching for the clouds. She stands up and walks to the cords that are holding the trees to survive. She touches the tension and pulls them close to her chest. She breathes out while letting them go. She can hear the vibrations, while the trees are shaking peacefully. She walks to the outer circle of her center and slides with her feet in the cold not yet frozen dirt. She walks a few rounds and stops in front of the stone pile. She sits down again and closes her eyes. An old woman enters Carmen's labyrinth the sound of her footsteps slowly blends in with the sound of the evergreen plants. The closer she gets to the center the more they merge. She walks on uneven legs but with her head held high as if she knows the outcome of her journey. She sees Carmen. Carmen opens her eyes and sees the old woman standing in front of her. A small smile at each other says enough about the enjoyment of only their presence. The old woman takes her place underneath one of the pine trees. "It took me a while to get here, for a long time I could only hear the thunder, and I thought I lost you", the woman says. Carmen stands up and takes a few stones from her pile. She lays them next to her and says, "One can't exist without the other". The woman looks at her with her almost child-like big blue eves. A glance of balance is shown from her old skin to her playful hands taking the stones one by one while creating her tower. Carmen walks back to the middle of her center and sits down again. She closes her eyes. The moon is carefully showing while the sun is disappearing and in the twilight, a young child takes her steps into the labyrinth. Tiny fast steps are dripping inside the route of evergreen plants until the sound stops. Carmen feels intrigued by the silence and at a slow pace she walks up to the child. She goes left, right, right, left... and there she sees this little girl with her knees on the soft but frozen moss lawn building houses made of leaves and sticks and stones for the tiny creatures who were walking underneath her bare feet. Carmen just looks at her with a soft smile and goes back into her center once again.

¹³ Labyrinth of Chartres

Hugging Atmospheres

A scream for help is echoing between landscapes. It goes through heavy walls and reaches the highest mountains. Arena looks up as she stands over Sabulo's body. The over-capped hallway is losing its structure and falls into pieces next to them. Sabulo wakes up frightened. Arena looks at him and says loudly: "we need to leave". She pulls him up and while he stumbles over words Arena takes both of his hands and runs out of the broken blocks. In the distance, she sees a labyrinth of evergreens. Carmen is startled by loud footsteps and looks immediately at the old woman who seems to have fallen into a deep sleep. She stands up and runs to the child in the middle of the pathways. The child is crying and Carmen folds some branches around her. She walks further and sees Arena and Sabulo standing in a corner slightly out of breath. "Arena, what is going on"? Carmen says with a soft voice. "Carmen, is that you"? Carmen nods slowly as she waves for them to come closer. "I heard a loud scream while I was taking care of him my walls tumbled down, but I'm glad I found you", Arena says. Sabulo looks at Arena: "I remember you, I remember your voice", He says. Arena looks at him and smiles. The branches are opening up and a sharp light is shining on their faces. "Aurora"? Carmen asks. Aurora slides out of a pine tree and walks up to them with open arms. Greeting them with three kisses and says: "I think Aria is in need of our help, I passed her stage but it seems she is stuck in between the curtains". They all look at each other slightly worried and together they walk out of the labyrinth. Carmen closes her gates carefully and at a fast pace with Arena and Sabulo walking firmly at the front the landscape changes. Ara wakes up and finds herself in the middle of a stone desert. She looks at her hands and sees her skin glowing. The ground underneath her is shaking. "Not now", Ara thinks slightly irritated. And she falls at a fast speed down until she lands on top of a house next to a silent highway. She puffs and slides herself down to the ground. The windows look dark except for one where red light is reflecting on her cheeks. She knocks on the door. "Basia, are you in there"? Ara asks. Basia hears the knocking and walks to her window. She sees Ara standing outside and wipes the tears from her eyes while walking down the stairs. She opens the door. "I was expecting you", Basia says. Ara looks at her red eyes and feels uncomfortable. "I'm sorry Basia, I was asleep when my ground started shivering", Ara says. Basia takes a deep breath and says: "You are not the one to apologize, at least I could look at him for one last time", "Ara...Basia...". A loud voice fills up the porch. Ara turns around and sees Arena waving. "What do they want", Basia whispers. "Aria needs our help", Arena says. Aurora looks at Basia and sees her watery eyes without a word she hugs her As they walk along the silent highway, the sun appears in its brightest colors. They stop in front of the ring of giant houses the white bricks are shape-shifting into streams of water. They march underneath it until they see Aria standing on a stage filled with roses. Sabulo grabs Arena's hand and pinches it softly. And they all take place in the front row of red seats. Aria looks at them with a crooked smile and starts to sing: "While you live, shine. Have no grief at all. Life only exists for a short while, and time demands its toll".14 With her ankles chained she takes a bow. And starts again. Slowly they all walk up to her. Basia blindfolds Aria's eyes while Carmen lies her hands on her forehead, Arena jumps roughly on the chains while Ara holds onto the metal, and Aurora wraps her arms around Aria's waist. The metal breaks. They breathe. And Sabulo claps loudly.

¹⁴ Song of Seikilos

Questionnaire

Beautiful minds... A very special thank you to

Filipe Oliveira Sarah Burkhardt Jacqueline Petit Merijn Vonk Lotus Rooijakkers

Arena - Aria - Ara - Aurora - Basia - Carmen

Arena

I don't have a lot of positive associations with an atmosphere of masculinity. The word to me represents a lot of stupidity, rage and false reality. An environment designed to reach goals. Standards can be met or people themself become insufficient. The space needed to be human is taken in a masculine environment I feel. Maybe it can be positively interpreted as a driver, as an ambiance that drives to do, and because I believe stagnation to be decline to do is a positive.

Arena

I am sitting in a concert hall in the front row at a podium filled with 30 cellists vigorously moving their bows. The vibrations of the strings go through my body with an enormous force, so powerfull. I am one with them.

Arena

This atmosphere relates for me to expansion in space, but is also related to a sense of a false stability; a stability made up from generational trauma that have never been dissolved. It therefore feels often rigid, stable, and protective like a castle. At the same time it feels like

constructed from highly tensioned, heavy, polarized pieces that could fall apart any time. To me, this creates a sense of anxiety, of feeling that if one brick in the firm wall falls apart, or is touched in the wrong way, the whole heavy weight falls apart and can easily destroy its surroundings. I respond with a sense of caution, distance, discomfort. While I also feel attracted by the portrayed stability, being myself way more fluent and unstable, knowing it is not real, this creates a longing to investigate the firmness and start changing its form without that it has to fall down on me or others. This atmosphere, with its dominant presence as a firm and massive construction, comes with an inherent respect and sense of intimidation.

Arena

In an ambience of masculinity, you are driven by it. A room full of loud men influences one another to be louder. Inside that ambience, trying to not be loud seems disrespectful.

Arena

I really like the balance between femininity and masculinity. I personally find dealing with men very pleasant. I speak from experience because I deal with men a lot. I also like the superficiality, energy and fact- and fact-based conversations instead of the emotional conversations you can have more with women. When dealing with men, I oftentimes get irritated that conversations are very superficial. It is a dichotomy sometimes, and sometimes even makes the interaction impersonal. From my perspective, perhaps a man values being purely in each other's presence. Conversations and actions fall hugely into my interests and energy. Masculinity actually has nothing at all to do with whether you are a man, woman or something in between. Women too can act "masculine". Still, I often notice that, if we generalize to make things easier, men can focus more on one thing, like playing the piano, coding or doing odd jobs, then women can. Women have a very broad orientation and focus more on the whole of life with a thoughtful future. This is very important. This obviously comes from prehistoric times when men had one job, which was hunting, the woman's job included preparing the food, guarding the base and protecting the children. Respect the woman, give her a management position and the company will have considerably more oversight as where a man is in charge. I also think it has to do with the areas of expertise in which women and men are interested and that with male interests the focus is different from female interests.

The focus in men with achieving a particular goal seems timeless and specialized while at the same time the energy and effort put into it is time-consuming. In any case, ample time is taken to develop in masculinity as if there is never any hurry. Maybe they are less in a hurry because women lose fertility faster. Men are less in a hurry since you can still have children at 70.

Aria

For me the sound brings me to the beach sitting near the water with my eyes closed gently and my feet sunk in the warm sand, I am listening to the water, the coming and going of rolling waves, the birds in the sky, the stormy wind in my hair. Around my head. It has a rhythm, I feel a song

Aria

Sound is a very fluid and connected atmosphere, if not maybe the most connected of any atmosphere. It directly enters my soul, my body, connecting all together by its own force and rhythm. I enjoy letting myself flow to this type of atmosphere, I think it is one of the most important atmospheres to me. For me, there is no other atmosphere that brings things into connectedness and transcendence like that of sound.

Aria

Sound surrounds. It engulfs.

I imagine it rippling through space,
joyfully sloshing, splashing, and spattering.

Aria

Sound is everywhere. It is there in your surrounding and in your ears. It is a super fluid with no mass. You can't get rid of it. It is a dream and a nightmare.

Ara

The atmosphere of death is white to me. I know of two dead people, my grandmother and my mothers African father. Regardless of skin color both turned white when life left them. Death's ambiance is respectfully silent. It remembers silly moments to laugh away the heavy. There's also a lot of dark wooden furniture involved in this ambiance. And a church.

Ara

I find myself in a dream, dancing on a black and white checkered dance floor full off strangers, the four walls of the ballroom are filled with stairs that disappear through the ceiling. I do not want to reach them, I want to keep dancing forever and ever. An unknown handsome guy comes to dance with me and I ask him his name. He says: I am Ton Ami.

He tells me he is going to die. And that is why he is happy. I looked up at him and it was clear. We kept dancing for a while and then I woke up and realized that he said he was my friend. (Ton Ami means your friend in French). I know there will come a time when I will take the stairs. But I won't be alone! This dream is always with me...

Aria

I recently found that if I leave the music on while sleeping I wake up restless. Now, sound is not music nor the other way around. I am writing this is my almost silent room after turning off the music half an hour ago. I get distracted by sounds like typing this text. I do not get that much distracted from music. This is also a sound but more spread out over time. I once did a sound walk through the city center of The Hague. I was focussing on any sound I could hear and wrote it down. I noticed that every city has their own sound identity. If you put me blindfolded in an unfamiliar city, I might be able to recognize the city based on the sounds. For that, I would need some practice though. Sound does a lot to me, it reflects a certain atmosphere. It evokes danger, but can also be very soothing. What I find interesting is that sounds are quite universal. Many people hear the same sounds and can also convert this to the same thoughts such as a siren from a fire engine is danger or the sound of a cricket can mean discomfort.

Ara

This atmosphere feels painful, cold, but it also has a notion of release, explosion, renewal. It is an extreme, something that holds me in a tension that moves me throughout life, changing its shape from being scary to being necessary and releasing.

Ara

I always have been very scared of death and that is why I am NOT avoiding it at all but trying to recognize my fear of dying. Sometimes I close my eyes and then I push my eyeballs into my eye sockets. If I do this long enough, I enter a starry world and am closer to death to get used to it already. It doesn't hurt, it just becomes very visual and all sorts of images come up.

Ara

When I think of ambience of death I see the moment I'll actually die. That second before eternal sleep. That is the ambience of death to me.

Aurora

Warmth translates almost immediately in my brain to the concept of comfort. The warmth of a real hug. Safety also makes part of that comfort, but not always. Maybe this ambience can be, in a glimpse, created in an unsafe environment.

Aurora

I see myself with in my arms a little girl just born, so beautiful, oh yes I am in love. For 9 months she was always with me everywhere I went. I sang songs to her all the time and became so happy when I could feel movement, that felt so warm. And so many moments later in time, yes that can only be a mother thing for her daughter ... warmth!!!And still!!!

Aurora

One of the most beautiful atmospheres. Feeling and being warm feels like the essential atmosphere we strive towards, we are made from, but which too often disappears and gets lost. I see places that continually seek to actively recreate warmth, such as baths, saunas, events, but I find the most significant warmth amongst people and in the heart. It is an atmosphere that comes around you, that wraps you into a state of well-being and comfort, it is nurturing and does not demand anything from you. There is no fear and no reason to worry.

Aurora

The atmosphere of warmth ties together with love. It is protective from all that is the world, ranging from the weather to that job interview.

Aurora

For me, warmth is a place where people not only talk, but also listen. There is a difference between hearing and listening.

Basia

Principles Of Lust: Sadness / Find Love / Sadness. This song is about a monk who falls in love but cannot express his love because of his religion.

The presence of lust is beautiful. Lust is passion. It energizes and can also discourage you in life. It is ultimately about being able to control the feeling. You can have lust in many different aspects of life. It can be an urge to see someone, or an urge to consume substances. I have experienced many moments of lust. In my opinion, it is important to feel this regularly and it gives me energy to get things done in a day. This can be about a person or consuming a drink, a cigarette or a snickers.

The monk is sad since he cannot fulfill his feeling of lust because of certain personal norms and values in his life. Now he is suppressed. As a result, dreams are not fulfilled and people remain unhappy. Keep chasing your lust!

Basia

An atmosphere that puts one out of control and connects one with one's senses. It can do so in a warm way but also in aggressive ways, it can be carried by different energies, which are out of one's control. Therefore, it can be beautiful and very energetic but it can also be frightening and strange. It is a very physical and bodily atmosphere, which I rarely experience myself.

Basia

Lust and desire...we played the game of attraction and deterrence. It feels like I am in the garden of Eden. Kinda forbidden makes the desire stronger. I like to fantasize. I dressed up nicely. My lips are shiny red. My hair in curly strands. Maybe a bit horny. But today it doesn't matter. I am in an exuberant mood.

Gorgeous nature, the rising sun, colorful flowers and proud trees, fluttering butterflies and hungry hummingbirds in the middle of the huge red mountains. A bottle of champagne and salmon to eat later on the balcony. Everything is ready for a meeting, will he come? What a wonderful tension...

Basia

Lust to me comes closest to me being primarily a natural and carnal being. All others are more tempered with by my (cultural) surroundings I feel. Lust to of course, but the influence is less somehow. Lust is red, it is an absolute wanting that I would more precisely describe as a having to have. Like sound it engulfs, though sound engulfs and dissolves in the background, lust does not dissolve; it takes possession.

The possession taking is not one that I have often felt, but I know of its existence. Lust takes me to clumsy cute bedrooms with messy clothes on the floor.

Basia

Ambience of Lust is difficult to explain to me. First idea of lust, for me, is money. But after a second thought, can also mean something that you don't really require and/or something superfluous that you still possess. Makes me think if love is lust. I feel lust as a hyper-selfishness.

Carmen

An atmosphere of control and well-being, it is a balanced atmosphere that one can act within in the ways one desires, but with reflection and not out of any forces or despair. This atmosphere allows one to achieve and feel power whilst also not being in power over others-only over oneself. This allows to feel good about this particular kind of power, and it is something I long for but which feels to emerge only after stormy times.

Carmen

My thoughts go to the monastery, although of course it has turned out not to be as serene as it should be. But leave that there. The atmosphere of slowly walking men and women in long habits and robes, praying, silent just being. And that in a beautiful environment like living in the Middle Ages, like living hundreds of years ago. No Internet no telephone. Just the sound of the weather and of course the prayers and the Gregorian chants. And the old buildings with solid walls all turned inwards. I think we all need to experience this for a while.

Carmen

For me an ambience of serenity can be faked by the outside world, but it is only true once in one's mind. Being in a church can, in a glance, transport you to the idea of serenity, but not as long as you are prepared for it. Feeling accomplished is the pathway to creating an ambience of serenity.

Carmen

Serenity is not longing for what happens in the future. Live in the present because the future is out of your control. It gives a certain serenity to think about that. It is a rare experience when serenity comes over you and worries are for tomorrow. Serenity comes when you feel satisfied with what ever you do in life.

Carmen

Serenity entails a being okay with the world and my position in it. It is contemplative and in rest. It involves to some extent forests and lakes.

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