

# tangling (in) the coil

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*"You know when you're driving at night like this it can suddenly occur to you that maybe you're going in completely the wrong direction. That turn you took back there ... you were really tired and it was dark and raining and you took the turn and you just started going that way and then the rain stops and it starts to get light and you look around and absolutely everything is completely unfamiliar. You know you've never been here before and you pull into the next station and you feel so awkward saying, 'Excuse me, can you tell me where I am?'"<sup>1</sup>*

I'm sweeping my cigarette under the ledge of the wall I'm leaning against and finish my iced coffee before I open the ponderous door in front of me, revealing a sanctuary of luminosity. There are dark spots in front of my eyes as I enter, and a feeling of dizziness enters my body for a minute.

The apparent self-formation of the spiral conceals the thought of care behind it: after all, the external should have the same meaning and effect as the interior.<sup>2</sup>

Tangling into the coil of the unknown depths of space through geometric grids and wooden panels, through doors, gates and portals, finding the way through the labyrinth, leaving personal items behind and finding them again in an ongoing spiral of entanglement. My eyes wander to the floor and recognize a hatch, which I can see through like looking through a glass ceiling from above. The history of the house is made visible to me. A discrepancy between the exposure of structures and the restricted view of the surrounding darkness. Intricacies that give the impression that something is off. A slowly opening door gap allows a view inside and is immediately closed again. Boom. Who built this house? Am I allowed a view inside? Businessmen tricking you into staying by making you think you could actually gain something from working. A prosperity that will never happen. "This makes me realize that art as a commodity really isn't such a good idea after all."<sup>3</sup>

Turning around I take one last look outside, where the everlasting dichotomy of cleanliness and dirt strikes me. Pigeons lured into building fake nests so that their eggs can be thrown from buildings. The pigeon as the monster remembered for its resistance to its killing by the bourgeoisie.<sup>4</sup> A momentum of dying in the brutality that is urban life, here the often unwanted, hated – referred to as the rats with wings – experience devotion. Still. Is it a house to die in?<sup>5</sup>

Transitioning from discipline to control, subjectivity within the collective: *Leistung aus Leidenschaft*.<sup>6</sup> High places as symbols of spiraling success and the hard time you have cleaning up afterwards.<sup>7</sup> An ongoing turmoil in the economy of means: "The DNA of good forms."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Laurie Anderson, "From Americans on the Move," in: *October*, 8, 1979, pp. 45–57.

<sup>2</sup> See Paul Valéry, *Über Mallarmé*, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp 1992.

<sup>3</sup> Adrian Piper, "Talking to Myself: The Ongoing Autobiography of an Art Object," in: *Out of Order, Out of Sight: Selected Writings in Meta-Art, 1968–1992*, vol. 1, Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996, p. 40.

<sup>4</sup> See Lars Bang Larsen, "Zombies of Immaterial Labor: The Modern Monster and the Death of Death," in: *Are You Working Too Much? Post-Fordism, Precarity, and the Labor of Art*, ed. Julieta Aranda, Anton Vidokle, and Brian Kuan Wood, London: Sternberg Press, 2011, p. 78.

<sup>5</sup> Ina Blom, *Houses to Die in*, London: Sternberg Press, 2022.

<sup>6</sup> "A Passion to Perform"; Deutsche Bank's slogan until 2017.

<sup>7</sup> Roman Roy, *Succession*, HBO, season 1, episode 3.

<sup>8</sup> *Economy of Means*, Lisbon Architecture Triennale 2019, <https://2019.trienaldelisboa.com/en/exposicoes/economy-of-means/>.

*"Exceptional clarity*

*Optimum transparency*

*Unfiltered natural light.*<sup>9</sup>

The moment of finding, keeping, remembering and rediscovering as an after-feeling of a sensory perception. The key to serendipity lies in questioning the supposed familiar of fit and hold in creating an entity of the objects condition.

I turn around the corner looking for a glass of water or maybe a beer. More doors are approaching me. I am looking for the restroom – is what I will say when someone asks me what I'm doing back here. Feeling like the intruder I actually am; an orange light blinds me until eventually it fades.

In the white domain, where doorways defy confinement, one door can be open and another can be closed, beckoning contemplations on the essence of shelter. *Splendid isolation*. Within these walls, I not only recognize this as a site of light, but also acknowledge my inability to choose,<sup>10</sup> as the (trap-)door, the window, the crack can only exist where the wall already is.

Lea Lahr

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<sup>9</sup> Andrés Jaque, "Architecture as Ultra-Clear Rendered Society," in: *Everyday Matters*, ed. Vanessa Grossman and Ciro Miguel, Berlin: Ruby Press, 2022, p. 164.

<sup>10</sup> See Vilém Flusser, "Wände," in: *Dinge und Undinge: Phänomenologische Skizzen*, Munich: Hanser, 1993, pp. 27–32.