

CHARLOTTE CULLEN  
COLE DENYER  
NAMH FORBES  
MARGAUX FOUCRET  
GAVIN JACKSON  
JOSHUA JOHNSON  
JILL MCKNIGHT  
CHARLES PRYOR  
EMILIE SPARK

**conversations on swansong** 2016, foreword by gavin jackson, & her mother, red & gloria by charlotte cullen, untitled by cole denyer, lang craig's by niamh forbes, metamorphosis & take back the night by margaux foucret, frontispiece by joshua johnson, bridge of sighs by jill mcknight, corrections2016, corrections2017, corrections2018 & corrections2019 by charles pryor, eight//arms by emilie spark.



### John Berger / Ways of Seeing , Episode 1 (1972)

 tw1975  
Subscribe 4,431

421,645 views

3,261 50

+ Add to Share More

The quote is from *Das Kapital* by Karl Marx but that does not matter. There are several reasons why I liked it. First the sense of knowing irony, the self-commentary of producing an object that is itself a commentary on the act of producing objects for sale; the acknowledgements of socially determined restrictions on what art was capable of doing.

But, the artist in turn is mocking the seriousness of the statement and its irony – as well as asserting the possibility of creativity – by throwing some paint on it. It is serious commentary done as a joke and a pointless prank that masquerades as a sensible point. It points out the limitations of semiotics while putting two fingers up at those limitations.

It captured exactly why I enjoyed economics: understanding the way in which social relations arise from material relations and why people mistake material relations for social ones. Economics is the point where brute physics meets the softer world of culture. Where the blob of paint meets the canvas.

Nowhere is this better expressed than in pottery – probably one of the first tools that humans came up with as well as one of the first venues for expression. Pottery is an art form, but it is also chemistry, commerce, and industry.

To make porcelain one must heat up a kiln to 1400 degrees centigrade so that the material it is made out of, a white clay and quartz, vitrifies to become a transparent waterproof surface. There is no other way of doing this, it is an unchangeable property of the material and of the physical laws governing the universe.

At the same time porcelain was the signifier of power in imperial China and then wealth in bourgeois Europe. This is social construction; the creation of categories and the imputation of value to them.

The social world lies on top of the material world. But equally, the social gives birth to the material – the secrets of manufacturing porcelain were unlocked by Europeans thanks to the cooperation of an enlightenment lens grinder, a boy-wonder alchemist, and the patronage of a Polish-Lithuanian king. Porcelain manufacture in China is concentrated in one industrial city and handed down family lines.

So there we are; definite social relations between men, that assumes, in their eyes, the fantastic forms of a relation between things. The art, was imbued with the sense of personal greatness and given an associated scarcity value. It became tradeable and exchangeable for a given quantity of grain or spices.

This analysis casts art as commodity, or as a signifier for power. What of the rest of what art could do? The word here, I think, is transcendental. Can art be something beyond the confines of material or social reality?

John Berger, in the 1972 documentary series *Ways of Seeing*, argues it can be. He picks some of the masterpieces of the Dutch Golden Age. He shows how they illustrate a materialist conception of the art world, full of the signifiers of wealth and status.

But then he deliberately undermines himself. He asks us to look again at the details of the paintings.

In a painting of a woman weighing pearls on a set of gold scales he asks us to look at the light, at the woman's face and says that here a moment is preserved in time – the particular way a particular beam of light fell on a particular woman's face.

For a period, as an economics graduate student, my favourite work of art and my cover photo on Facebook was a painting on acrylic by the artist Thomas Locher.

The painting was simple: white text on a grey background that read "THERE IT IS A DEFINITE SOCIAL RELATION BETWEEN MEN, THAT ASSUMES, IN THEIR EYES, THE FANTASTIC FORM OF A RELATION BETWEEN THINGS." In the middle of the painting was a yellowish-beige splodge of paint that had been thrown on the canvas and allowed to drip down.

*But now, the painting carries a value of £3m. By trying to turn the traditions of European painting against itself Rembrandt has instead taken it to its apotheosis.*

*These Dutch artists tried to escape through humanism. They focused on the singular human experience and allowed for sentimentalism about those individual lives. More modern art has tried to break out from commodification in another way; through deliberate ugliness or obscurity or by creating ephemeral works of art such as performances that cannot be traded or have a value attached to them.*

*Just as for the Dutch, it has been a mixed success.*

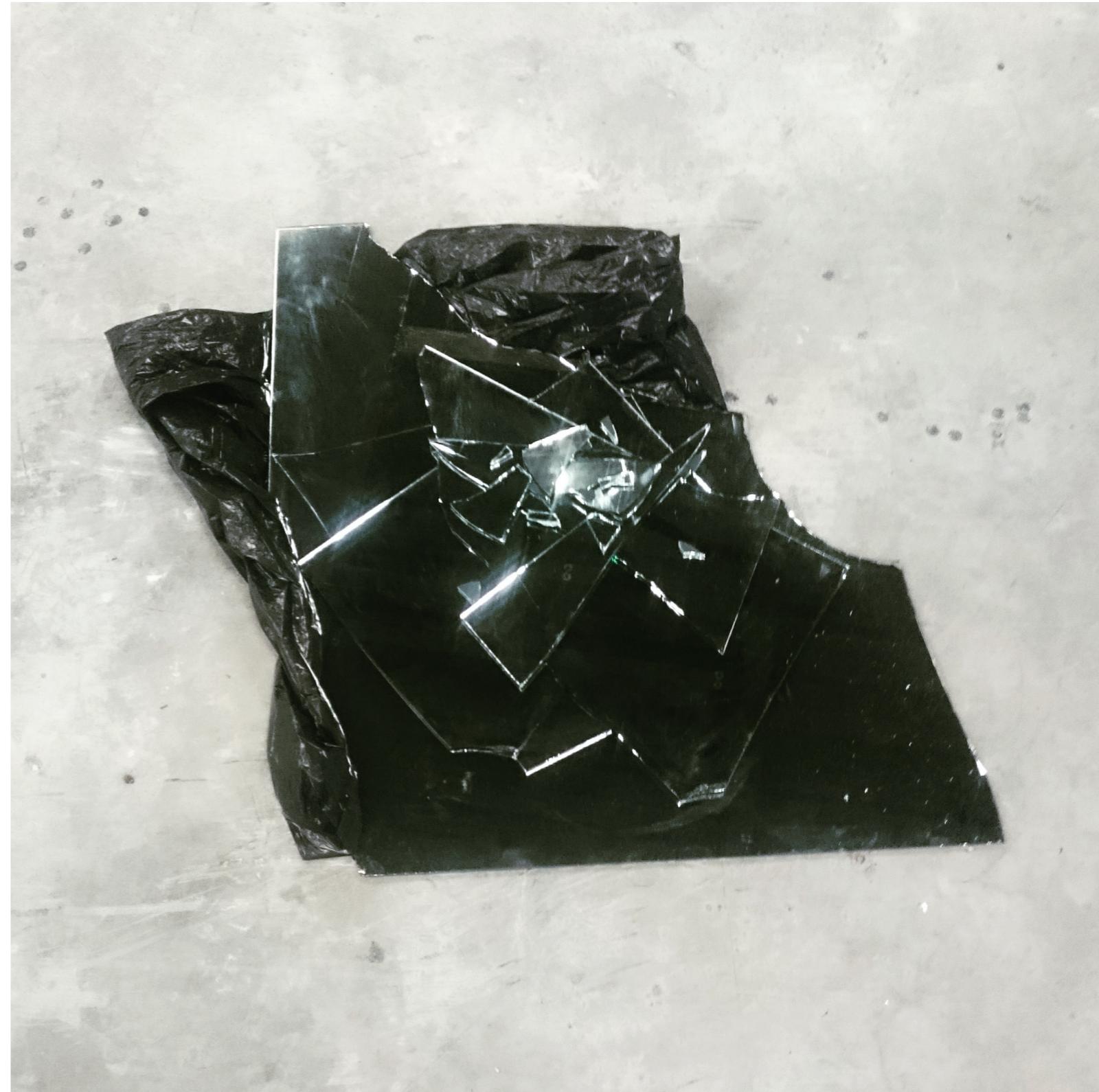
*"It is as though she's holding the moment between her forefinger and thumb," he says. "Despite its apparent celebration of property, this painting is about the mystery of light and time as we look up at the stars."*

*He once again undermines himself. He takes two self portraits by Rembrandt. One where he is young and celebrating his achievements, and another where is an, old man,broken and staring forlornly out of the painting at the viewer. All has gone, Berger says, except for a questioning of existence. Rembrandt has tried to escape.*



so she skinned the great wolf  
& it's pelt fell t'floor

& she wrapped it 'round her  
no knickers nor all





The darkness of the night permeated the small space, seeping through the stark windows. Gloom lingered in the air with the dust and the damp and the musty smell that comes from a marriage of such components. Far off a brilliant light pierced the veil, a star, maybe, but it could have just as likely been a plane or UFO for the attention it was given. She leant her face close against the window and sighed heavily against the thin glass allowing her breath to cascade and transform the material. She drew her short, thin finger against the stain she had created, 'an abomination' she thought, and drew a line, a squiggle and nothing really in particular until there was little left of the indentured mark that proved she was, in fact, alive. A fact she often had to remind herself of as she walked through the close, blunt walls of the castle. She smiled to herself. 'The castle' as she had affectionately, and more often times hatefully, named it. A thing must have a name to exist, she thought; all the better to fear it. And her thoughts cast again to name her own being, so that others could fear her.





Seek specialist advice,  
dial a premium rate number,  
or slaughter a goat but most of all learn German  
for reproduction

like a cardiac splinter or  
and I'm thinking of a calendar heaven or  
a map or what use is it in thinking  
-about prosody? in the head  
felled trees

each new trench  
has gossamer of tolerable  
wealth  
dreaming heave  
compensates a top plastic surgeon  
and many many foreheads  
wiped just want money but  
we're all in it together  
in this big champagne flute  
about 2 1/2 ft wide and 3 ft deep  
around the base  
all  
upheaving ceramic, silicon, liquid crystal versions of wheel barrows,  
shovels and pick ax's  
obviously still composed of flesh  
and i thought to myself  
alongside municipal zoning  
pursue both ditch digging and symbol management

more milk dispensaries  
than ATM's

ballerinas  
siesta

all day

Family planning,  
domestic care and  
educational systems can't predict

aerosolised, manic  
and ambulatory

OXI  
is the destruction  
of restaurants

a yes

that can't  
hear

milkweed  
the sustenance  
monarch or

avuncular

gone to the numbers  
game  
and not war  
and you won  
cold from  
warmth

resplendent

light  
makes work  
that  
is not

work

light bulbs  
in daylight  
asks such  
a slightness that  
needs a head  
against a tree

looted floribunda  
in kitchenettes  
in SUV's  
arboretum  
full of profound  
asthma  
attacks

with mothers and fathers

in bed, glued together  
yearning for timeless grasp  
of verities

ausmerze  
6 million lazy gluteus'

apply for

sunlight is no  
bayonet  
when we  
drive cars  
without ancestors  
full with  
silence

and

if you don't feel like  
you've failed enough already  
opulent trade in CDO

and cunning pass  
pink  
filis  
cages  
rented

will spread through

your  
surviving intervals of memory  
payments  
loving all

is this  
property  
of the mind?  
virtuous world tongues  
coming  
thru  
your window  
at midday

small vagrants  
stiffened in blast

crimped baked convulsive  
joke that

with bottled Fixes and the mosquitos  
eating my tired idiot hand

heterogeneous ideas are  
yoked with violence together

‘each a crisis’

so  
complete the fiasco

out

in your terrain  
of  
reproduction

at once,  
agencies of fiscal discipline  
sanction trials

demanding Hercules  
dig a straight ditch  
of credit products

counter-attacks  
strange fits  
no yellow pongee silk suit  
snuffed out  
with the cocaine in mayfair shingle  
lost  
paraded pet gazelle

squeeze the piece  
doesn't produce miracles

'they'll end up in the  
food processor, eventually'

when asked  
a revelation intended

we said  
hold up

evicted paving slab  
painted purple

broken  
Bouygues uk

outside the fire assembly

i cut in their lino  
three words

SUMMER  
OPENING  
TIMES

I am sending SMS

the box  
it seems  
as if the choice is yours

“it was all good fun until someone  
tried to kill a police officer with  
a fire extinguisher”

read prestissimo  
riot-loot  
locked foot in  
low fidelity  
and kind pity  
chokes

humble citizen of Koenigsberg  
unlimited capacities for  
imagination

wreckage of stars  
as we think

yet  
even fungible  
individuals  
need

how to fall over into the earth  
or drink

small claims

a divine

kingdom  
suddenly got a lot realer

the eccentric water  
each basilica

splits out your genetic  
code

plague is a bad metaphor for an  
elaborate fit of panic

believed to be holed up  
in one of the more lugubrious corners

impressed on condition of intense  
young men

purified awareness of

new decimal

throbbing uncertainty  
of being just right relief

in prospect

will do for

concentratedly

workable antinomy

despite

of their

and the state

coherence

is to

flatteringly make distinct  
in

looking

to the social kernel

of abolition  
the balance  
to patter

looks like

produced this

urban stampede

the basmati  
is a thriving

literalness

and the

unkillable infants

austerity

stiffened in

air

with no name  
or place

preserve

crimped-baked

I'm not a piece of shit  
I'm a piece of

society

and

and the  
basmati  
is still a thriving

literalness

a negativity  
so negative

it will never be

exhausted by  
feeble sketches or  
piloted extinctions

of

the homogeneous  
moment,

with lease down go  
in our  
debt is mind-dependent

but a tungsten ring is forever

when the

powdered milk or  
long-life psychopomp

commands the safe  
ecstatic visor by gift of

the speculum as in

media res

disorientated witness

takes in a full 360 degree revolution of a world

another mans property truly

legalises his filial  
pathos for/of distance

the merchant drags  
from the inventory

into the offer-window,  
and will drag them down  
to the demand  
window

note the prices

you accept

the container must be emptied  
first

the inventory limit

for a merchant seems to be 50–55 items.

you can remove items for sale by  
dragging them from the merchants offer window  
down to your demand window

you accept

and you do not need to pay for them  
the merchant has gained money,  
he will give that to you as well

to dismiss a merchant,  
for instance to move it somewhere else,

check dismiss

items and money disappear,

so make sure to take them all out

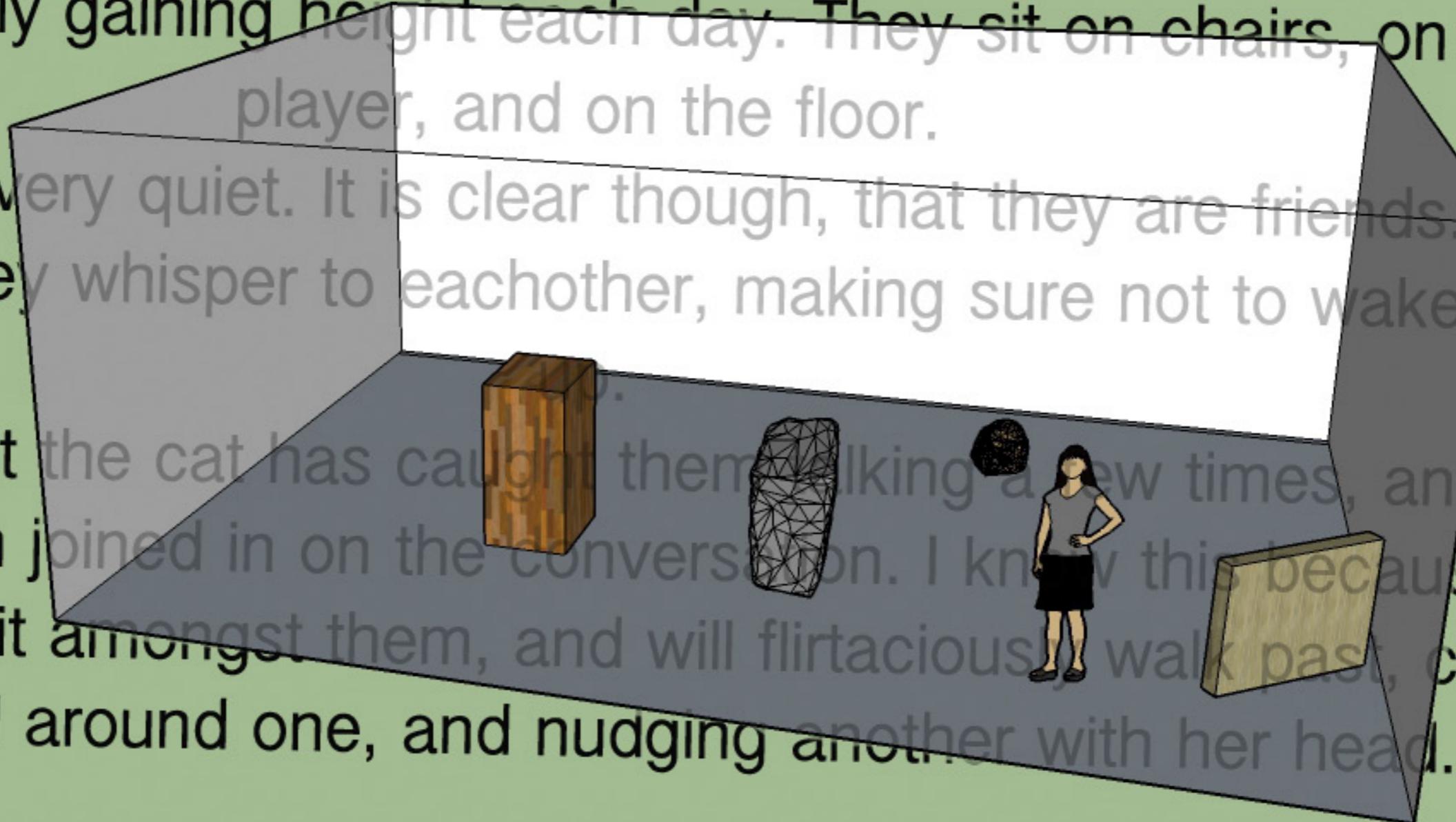
there are female merchants

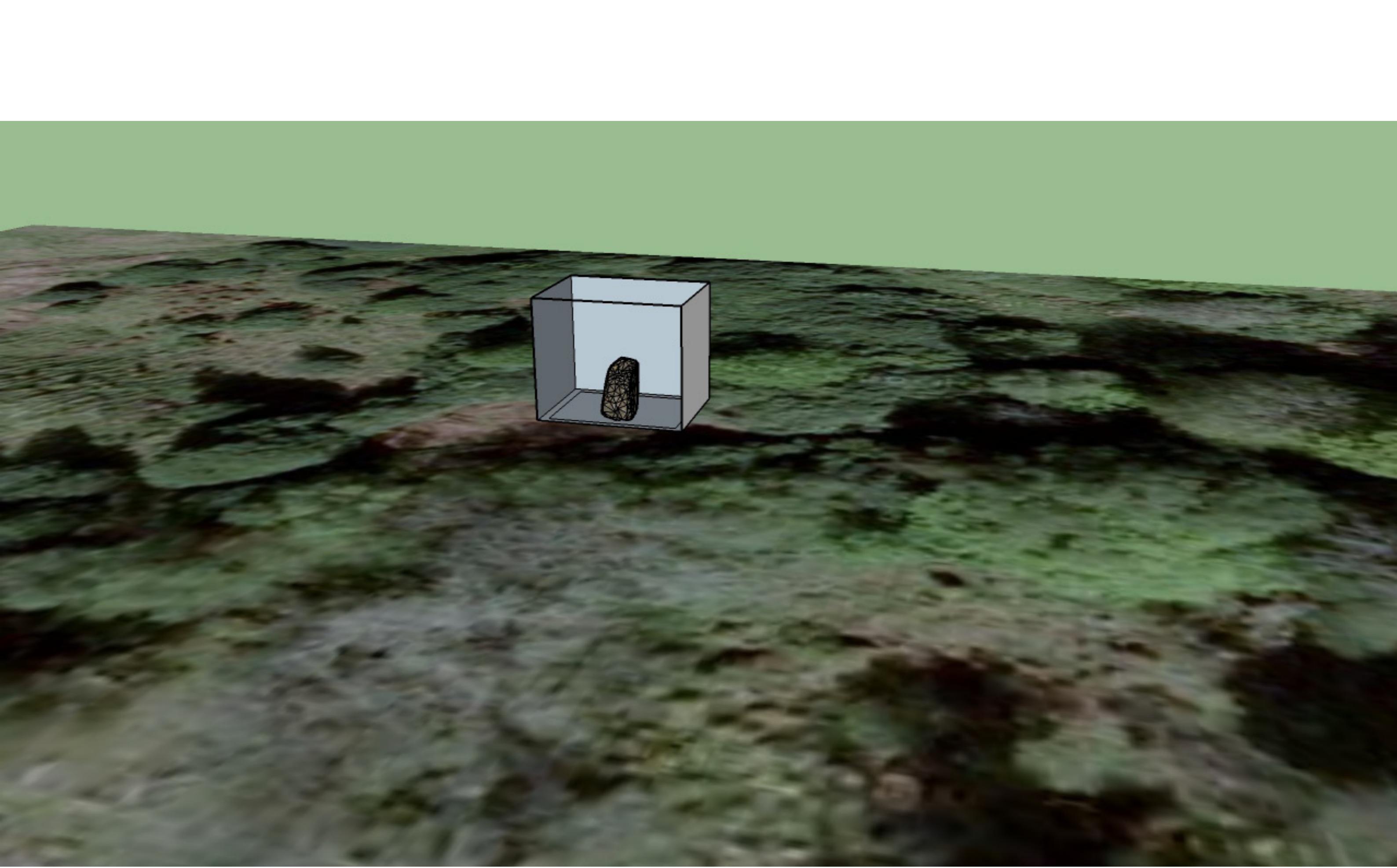
there are male merchants

The plats grow, curling on their way up.  
Surrepticiously gaining height each day. They sit on chairs, on the  
player, and on the floor.

They are all very quiet. It is clear though, that they are friends. At  
night time they whisper to eachother, making sure not to wake us

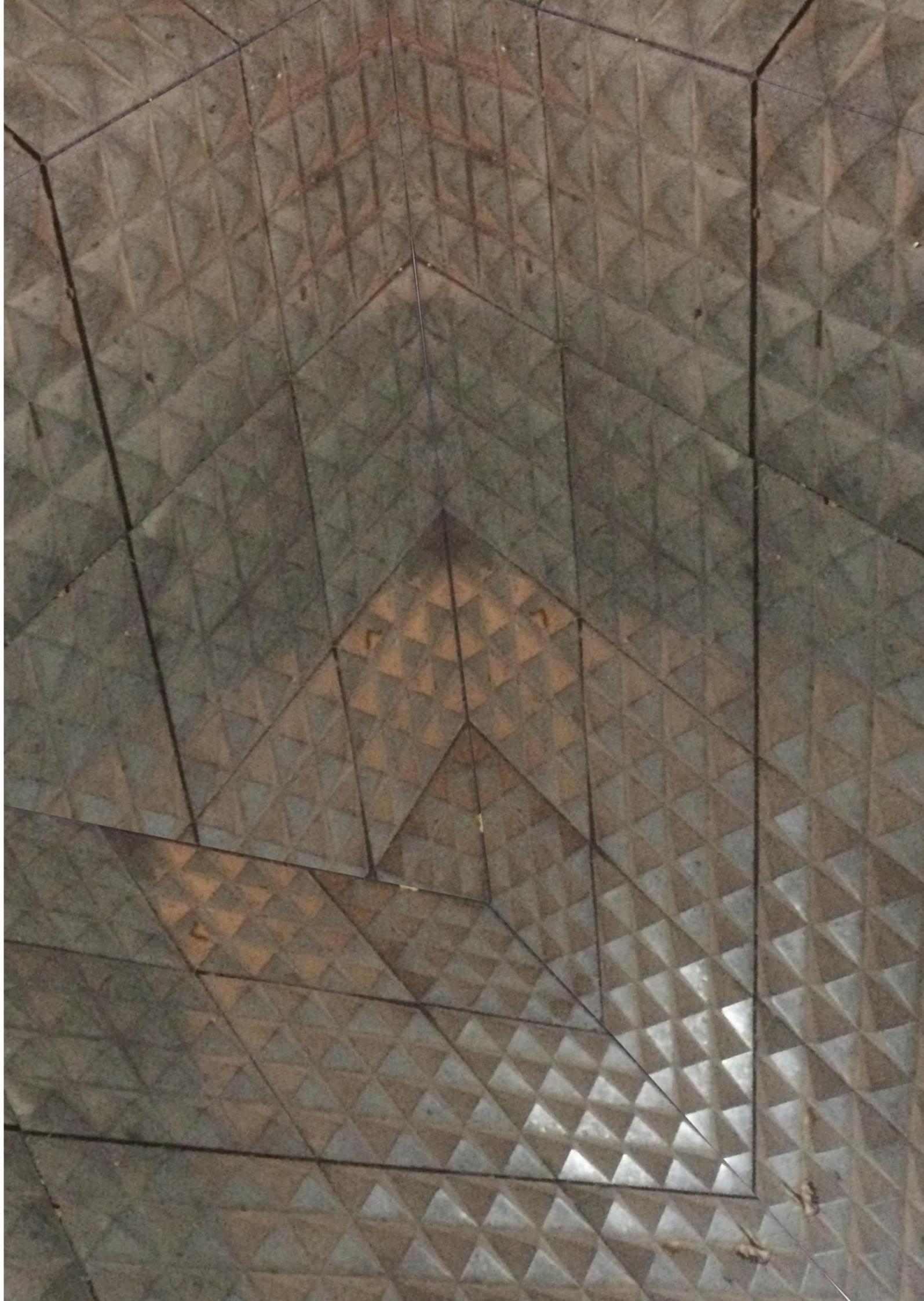
I know that the cat has caught them talking a few times, and  
maybe even joined in on the conversation. I know this because  
she likes to sit amongst them, and will flirtaciously walk past, curl-  
ing her tail around one, and nudging another with her head.

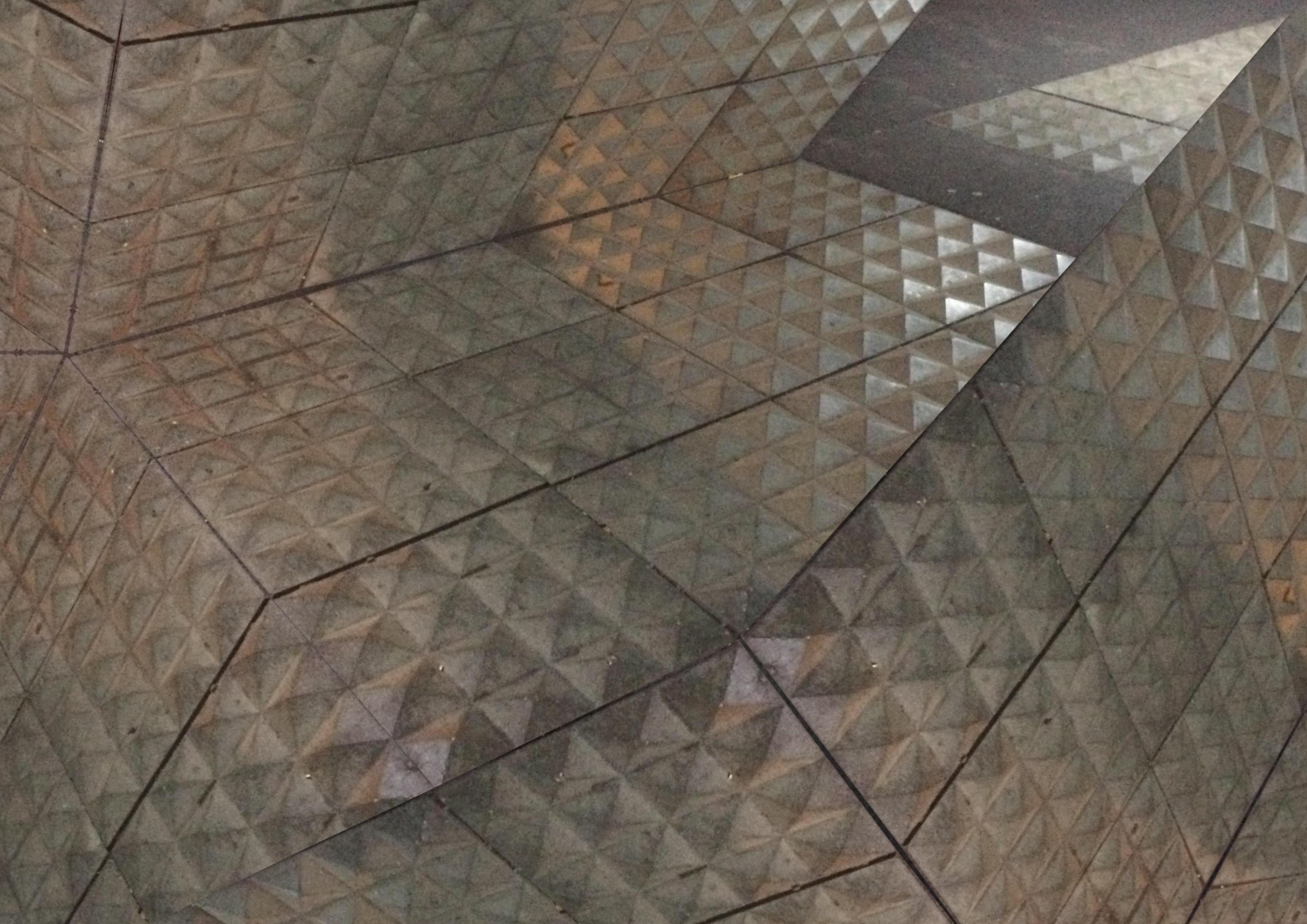


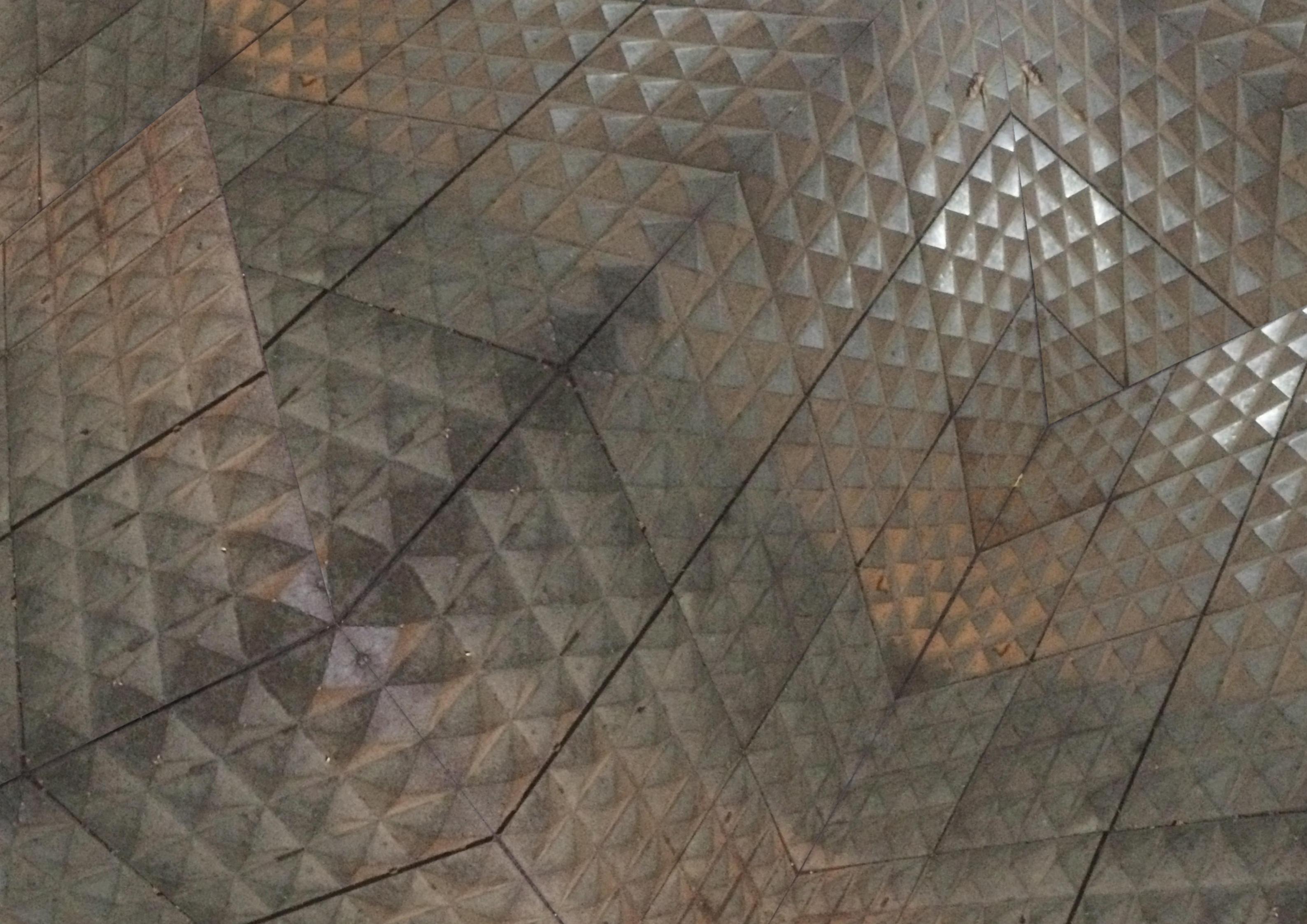


salle d'attente grand hall  
froid brûlant  
i don't want to be here  
i need help  
impératif impérieux  
la glotte implacable et le stylo tremblant  
how do you want me to say  
on the paper it doesn't look like it anymore  
vision trouble dans le vent  
flacon serré dans le poing  
élixir du diable  
i want to go to the altar  
mon personnage ne peut pas y aller  
i don't understand  
peut être qu'il me manque des niveaux à passer  
conasse naïve  
go make a bonfire  
y brûler les mots à taire  
carve those to keep on the stones  
carve those to keep on your stake  
y a des fantômes qui traînent derrière mes écrans  
s yeux myopes n'y voient plus assez usés par le lcd  
the slayer is just like me  
tentatives itérations rituels  
again and again and again  
j'aurais dû la fermer  
garder les mots au fond du www  
moulus à la force de ma solitude  
supprimer ceux de mon immensité disque dur  
vacuum  
aucun vocabulaire ne suffit  
evil vortex  
je vais devenir vulgaire bordel  
my song is the scream  
echouée dans l'embrun de la mer  
it's time of metamorphosis  
le retour de baton  
un autre pieu  
an other stake  
an other steak  
not sorry











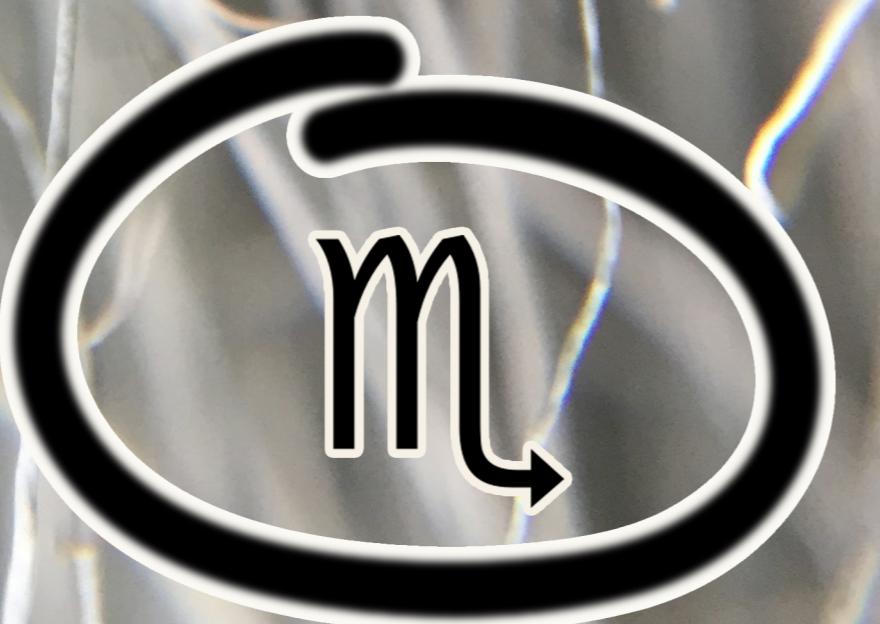
2016



2017

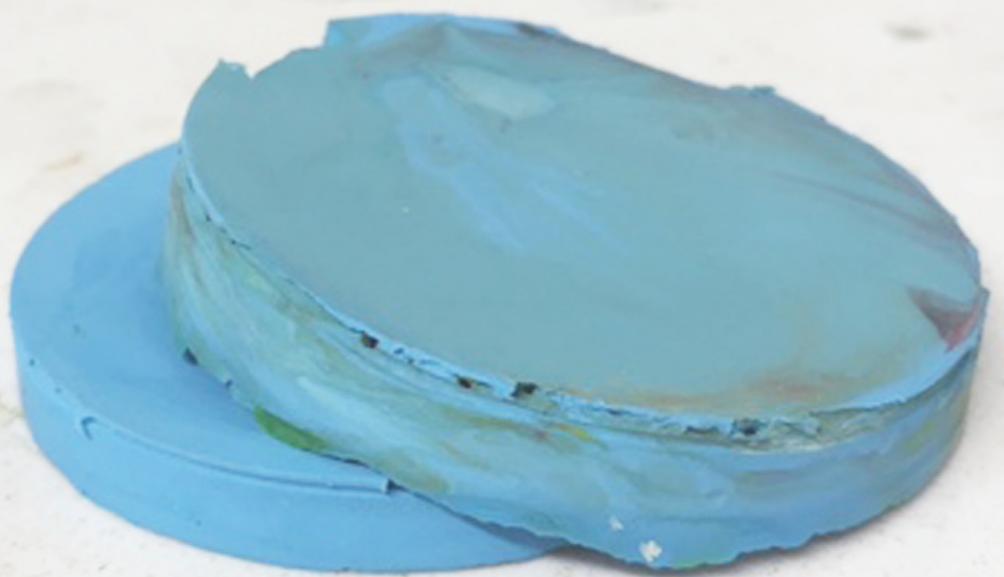


2018



2019





hypcmp1: eight] why would you need eight?  
hypcmp2: think of all I could do





2016