THE LINES OF TEXT & DRAWING
THAT ORIGINATED:

LINES OF THOUGHT
BY BEATRIZ COSTA

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THE LINES OF TEXT & DRAWING
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BETWEEN THINKING AND DOING THERE IS OFTEN...

DOUBTING SOMETIMES JUST FOR A BIT SOMETIMES

LONGER I TRY TO IGNORE IT BUT DOUBT IS STILL THERE

OR WORSE I REALISE I AM THE ONE WHO'S STILL THERE...
A BRIEF FEMINIST THOUGHT

MY FIRST YEAR WAS PRETTY MUCH... SHIT.


SOME GOOD STORIES DO COME FROM TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCES AND SOME ARTISTS ACTUALLY CAN LET GO OF TRAUMA THROUGH THEIR WORK. BUT MANY OTHERS DON'T, MANY OTHERS CAN'T. AND WHY WOULD WE THINK WE HAVE TO? FOR MANY MONTHS, I TRIED TO DRAW AND RETELL STORIES THAT EMOTIONALLY HURT ME, MADE ME AVOID AND HATE MY OWN PRACTICE, MADE ME CRY DURING PRESENTATIONS... BUT STILL, I CONTINUOUSLY TRIED TO GATHER THE REASONS WHY I SHOULD DO IT.

I WAS GOING TO THERAPY DURING THOSE CONFLICTING MONTHS BUT ONLY DURING THE SUMMER, DREADING TO GO BACK TO KONSTFACK, I DECIDED TO QUIT MY NEGATIVE THOUGHTS AND TO PURSUE THE "SELFISH" AND "USELESS" JOY I KNEW I FELT WHEN DRAWING, READING COMICS AND TALKING ABOUT IT. DURING MY FIRST YEAR I ALSO READ "THE ARTISTS' WAY" BY JULIA CAMERON, WHICH I STRONGLY RECOMMEND TO ANY CREATIONALLY-BLOCKED PERSON. I MUST ALSO ACKNOWLEDGE MY TEACHERS AND CLASSMATES WHO ALWAYS LISTENED TO MY CRYING SESSIONS, ALWAYS CARED AND ALWAYS EMPowered ME WITH MY OWN DECISION—TO DO OR NOT TO DO THAT PROJECT?—WHICH IN THE END WOULD ALWAYS BE MINE TO MAKE. THERE'S NO CLEAR COMBINATION OF FACTORS THAT LED ME TO CREATE THE PROJECT I DID IN THE END, BUT I RECOGNIZE AND TREASURE THE SELF-GROWTH I HAD DURING MY STUDIES AT KONSTFACK.

I SEE THIS AS A FEMINIST ACT (SPECIALY COMING FROM A CATHOLIC BACKGROUND) FOR, FOR ONCE, NOT TAKING THE RESPONSIBILITY OF FIXING, CARING AND REPAIRING, FOR NOT TAKING SUFFERING AS BRAVERY AND FOR STOP THINKING ABOUT WHAT OTHERS EXPECT FROM ME (SPECIALY AS A WOMAN). FOR ONCE, TO TAKE MY OWN PLEASURE, CURIOSITY AND KNOWLEDGE AS A START. AND I'M STATING THIS IN HOPE THAT IT ACTS AS A SIGN FOR OTHER GIRLS, WOMEN AND PEOPLE OF MARGINALIZED GENRES TO EMBRACE THEIR OWN JOY AS A START AS WELL — PLEASE TAKE IT.
INTRODUCTION

“LINES OF THOUGHT—DRAWING SEEING TALKING FEELING” is a ~120 pages visual essay on drawing and visual literacy. This is the main project I worked on during the last year of the Masters in Visual Communication.

ACCOMPANYING THIS BOOK THERE ARE 2 OTHER SMALLER PUBLICATIONS: "DOG HORSE APPLE BANANA", THE EXPANSION TO A BIGGER FORMAT OF THE PREFACE (SPREAD SHORT COMIC) I CREATED FOR "LINES OF THOUGHT"; AND "ABOUT THE WORD «READING»" (AN 8-PAGE ZINE) THAT WAS CREATED TO EXPLAIN THE VISUAL TERM "READING" USED THROUGHOUT THE MAIN BOOK.
As of now, only a small edition of 10 copies of “Lines of Thought” has been printed since the work is not yet finished. The book now has 2 chapters (“Drawing” and “Image Reading”) but it’s my desire to continue working on the third chapter I envisioned (“Image Reasoning”) and contact editors with the aim of publishing it.
At the start of my project, I had a term I thought would be the one to follow and dive deep into in research — that term was “Visual Metaphor”. At the time, I thought of “visual metaphors” as magical moments of intelligent visual communication, meaning-making images with which words couldn’t compete, both in beauty and function. More specifically, I was looking for these kinds of “visual metaphors” inside comics. I had found great examples I loved, so I wanted to look for more, elaborate on them, try to define and give focus to these poetic and rhetoric moments of illustration.

As you now know, this was not the end result of my project.
I'm mostly interested in visual metaphors or non-representational visual narrative methods. Something about not being literal with images, and words + images together.

I call it magic because I don't know many words to properly explain it yet.

And it seems that most image-wizard-masters don't know either...

Visual Metaphor


* Spotting visual metaphors: How are they? Describe what they look like.

* Different types - which? How to categorize them?

* How do they work? How do we read them? What happens to readers?

* How to create them? Why and when?

* What parts constitute them to image work by themselves? Does language help/complicate?

* When & where & who wants to/can read them? Create them?

Focus on one subject to narrow this research

It's still hard for me to tell you exactly what I want to find...

But I hope that by the end of my research, I do have more words to talk about images.
To be fair to my past self, those words felt scarce from the beginning. In conversations with family members as well as with fellow creators or anyone else really, I had to over-explain myself about what I meant with “visual metaphor” and I always wanted to extend beyond that anyways. I knew there were other ways in which comics made me gasp, I just didn’t have the words for them… yet. I thought of my research as a parallel to finding “figures of speech” but in comics and illustration.

Even back then, this seemed too big of a task to handle. There had to be a way to frame it but also to keep the practice-based research going. I decided I would try to focus on bodies—looking for visual metaphors with drawings of human figures—since that was what I most liked to draw.

I actually never got to the point of trying to create those “visual metaphors” (or did I? who knows what that is anyway.) The other methods that got me farther away but also further into what I really was looking for were: to read a few papers I found about those precise words (“visual metaphor”) and to ask other creators and comic readers for examples of what they thought could be “visual metaphors” of bodies in comics.
How visual metaphors of the human body help us understand/relate to lived human experience?

Readers? Humans?

Categorize visual metaphors.

Find language to describe processes of reading & creating images.

Mixing real personal stories with fiction...

Maybe... Body as metaphor

I love to draw bodies - People's bodies - specially hands & feet. When I say "body", I think more of torso, limbs & head. I don't think so much about face, hands, feet, sex organ, butt, back... I think about poses, I think about action, appearance, movement. Is this what I want to dwell on? I'm not even sure about the body itself. But I guess it's a better shot than any other...

For what's inside...?
At the very beginning of the year I casually went to the library and, in the middle of many books, I picked up “Making Comics” by Lynda Barry. I thought that a book like this would help me keep the practice-based research on-going, not falling into the rabbit holes of traditional academic research, forgetting how to draw meanwhile. The book consists of several short exercises that encourage the readers/students to draw for fun and easily create short visual narratives. Little did I know how the book, specially the very first exercise, would be so crucial for my project.
...I'd like you to choose a name for yourself, based on a character you're fond of. You'll go by this name for the entire semester(...) On the day I'm writing this, I'm Professor Hotdog. Although I don't skateboard, Prof Hotdog sure does. It's good to have someone to turn into when class begins. A different you becomes present...

—MAking Comics (2019), Lynda Barry—

It was thanks to Lynda Barry that I created the Comics Astronomer; that I am the Comics Astronomer. I lived through her, allowing myself to be a researcher — a comics researcher; an illustration researcher; a drawing-philosopher. With this playful and even basic exercise, I got to experience one of the core powers of illustration: to allow other views of the world. Creating this character gave me a new view of myself and of my own thoughts. They got alive, independent from my ego, more possible, more real. With and through this character, I allowed myself to express, but mostly, to believe my own experience and my own practice.
I didn't do this consciously at first, but got to understand and made use of it mid-way through the process. Journaling and drawing her on the page helped me sort (bad) thoughts, refocus my practice, make fun of myself. She was more irreverent than I would allow myself to be; she was critical of my inner critic. She was playing and I was too.
She let me be a nerd and indulge in my love for drawing, both in a conceptual and practical way: having a character I knew by heart gave me a jump start to draw and think on the surface, getting out of my head, making me comfortable, not second guessing each line. That also helped to deal with harder drawings later when coming up with the comic: warming up from the comfort zone of drawing her figure, to then expand to imagine and draw whole scenes, backgrounds and objects (which I don’t like so much).
RESEARCHING THE WRONG CORNERS — WHAT ABOUT ILLUSTRATION?

As any common researcher would, I started by reading some papers I found when researching the data bases, especially the book "Visual Metaphor — Structure and Process". At first I was excited to even find people who had researched the same term I was trying to explain to my colleagues and teachers, but my initial excitement faded when I understood that my ideal findings did not match the results I was getting.

Firstly, the Visual Metaphors referred to in the book and website were mostly photographic collages from commercials (so, not drawn images) and political cartoons (so, with such specific context that had to be over-explained). Secondly, even when I found a few papers that analyzed "Visual Metaphors" in comics, they focused on the concept (and not on the form) and mostly completely ignored the text and context (isolating images from words and/or ignoring the surrounding knowledge necessary for the reader to understand the metaphor). Thirdly and most evidently, I was getting farther from the illustration practice, and into the realms of neuroscience and linguistics.

Some of my readings:

VISMET WEBSITE: [HTTP://WWW.VISMET.ORG/VISMET/DISPLAY.PHP](HTTP://WWW.VISMET.ORG/VISMET/DISPLAY.PHP)


Another thought: Although many examples showcase text next to the image in the book (and said text is in fact important to understand the metaphor on the meaning implied by the picture), the writer seems to only analyse the imagistic side of the image. It doesn't mention the text involvement at all—In some cases where the language is foreign is actually difficult to understand the image (and disappointing). So, I would say that language in relation to the images is also an important element/area to consider! In my project!

It's already 11 am now, I have to work...
These were things I probably couldn't have explained as well then as I am trying to do now, but felt off at that point. Still, I would perhaps have tried to follow that path (of reading and trying to find better papers) if Sara Teleman hadn't encouraged me to research my own practice.

While getting to these dead ends, my other approach was to ask other people (friends, followers, colleagues, teachers) for examples in comics they thought could be "visual metaphors" of bodies.

In some cases, I saw the metaphor in the whole narrative, not so much in the visual; in other cases it was so clear how the image was representing something else that it didn't seem like a metaphor at all... Many were exactly what I was looking for but in such different ways that I couldn't pinpoint one singular feature that clearly showed "this is a visual metaphor"—were they just "great comics"? In a conversation with Emma Rendel while trying to explain to her what I meant when looking for "visual metaphor" (or visual "figures of speech") I was already denying it, looking for all the ways I loved comics, to which she asked "isn't that just... illustration?"—but it was not at that point that I realized it.
"Portrait of a Drunk" — Jérôme Mulot, Olivier Schrauwen, Florent Ruppert (Sara showed me)

"Heat" — Jean Wei (read by myself but someone else also recommended it)

"Big Kids" — Michael DeForge (Joana Mosi recommended and I’ve read it)
TRYING TO FORMULATE MY RESEARCH IS PART OF MY RESEARCH

The sequence of events through which I navigated my project is blurry from the beginning, but one recurring sentence that helped my anxious (sometimes hopeless) state of mind was one of Sara’s saying:

"Trying to formulate your research is also part of your research."

NOW, I’M GOING TO WRITE MY NOTES FROM THE CONVERSATION WITH SARA AS A POEM:

Try to describe
The image creation experience.
The hand, the craft.
Searching for a line
A quest
For the "perfectly drawn line"
Less good ideas. Failing.
The result is something in-between
Dissiminate it.
A journey towards
Discovery.
ANOTHER ONE (IF NOT EXACTLY LIKE THIS) HOW I REMEMBER IT:

"YOU'RE NOT A JOURNALIST OR A SCIENTIST. YOU DON'T HAVE TO FIND THE ANSWERS. AS AN ARTIST, POSING THE RIGHT QUESTION(S) IS ALREADY HARD WORK."

Accompanying these, were all the times my external tutor (Dan Berry) asked me about my question. What is my question? What are my questions?
At the end, I think the best way I can pose my thesis is the short comic (then turned into book) "Dog Horse Apple Banana":

What if we can read images?

And be conscious of the (plural, multiple, ever-changing...) ways they make us understand?

I must admit that I made this comic in a strike of genius or divine inspiration, but I had thoughts cooking for a while and also asked for feedback to make sure it worked after the spark was already gone.

Every line of text and drawing was carefully thought and done to be presented as it is. The present tense of "can" for example, is an expression of my clear conviction that we really are able to do it (image read) as in it being a human ability. Not just a skill of some people, but rather a capability all can learn and develop. "We" and "our life" invite the readers to think of themselves as part of this collective humanity. The choice of presenting a children's book to address our cognitive learning was an idea that has been in my sketchbooks since the first year and, frankly, I don't have many more words to explain it — it conveys what I want you to read.
There’s a time in our life when images help us set up meaning and learn concepts. Not just images, but everything we see.

A process we’ve gone through so early in our existence, we most certainly don’t remember.

But since then we’ve kept doing it, socially, most of times, unconsciously.

But also very consciously sometimes.

And, do we ever stop?
The comic was done on two occasions: the first spread first, the second later. The first had such good reception that it shortly felt basic. Not in a diminishing way for the readers but something was missing from my investigative practice. At a feedback session where I showed that first page and other little comics that were later used in the book I could see that everyone knew what I meant with “what images represent” (concept) but not everyone understood what I meant with “how images represent” — although Hanna Stenman pointed out her interest in that sentence and that I should keep it. I then came back to the “dog horse apple banana” format to address the form of images. I used silhouettes, blind-drawing, my left hand and an attempt at abstraction to show what I meant, but probably invoking more than that — which was also the point.

Your readers are more clever than you think ♡
You’ll find a fine balance between images and words — between abstraction & accessibility

— Words by Aziza Al Tabbara
AND, WHAT IF THERE'S MORE TO SEE?

NOT JUST WHAT IMAGES REPRESENT, BUT ALSO HOW THEY REPRESENT.

WHAT IF WE CAN READ THEIR LINES, SHAPES, MATERIALITY... NOT JUST IN-BETWEEN THEM?

WHAT IF WE CAN TRACE BACK THEIR CREATION

AND BE CONSCIOUS OF THE WAYS THEY MAKE US UNDERSTAND.
EMBRACING ARTISTIC RESEARCH
— THE BREAKING POINT

Because my starting point was “visual metaphors” but also because I was trying to analyze something inside comics, for a long time I struggled between images and words. It’s even hard to describe my thinking process from back then, but thankfully my diary entries don’t hide it.
The fear and despair came mainly from thinking: I was trying something impossible, something wrong, something stupid, which made me feel lonely in the quest, alone with my mere curiosity.
BUT IT HELPED TO STOP THINKING AND GIVE SPACE TO THE DOING. KEEPING ON DOING (DRAWING AND MAKING COMICS) WAS WHAT LED ME TO BETTER REASONING.
So, I was starting this research by looking for:

**visual metaphors**

"Visual metaphor" was never my preferred term. It was just the least worst way I knew how to describe what I was looking for.

But it quickly led me far from where I wanted to be.
So I tried to describe it in another way:

Non-literal visual rhetoric devices

If I was trying, to define visual metaphor with the word "nonliteral" I thought I should investigate what could be... the opposite

Is this nonsense?
I searched for the meaning of "literal".

**Literal** *(adjective)*

1. Taking **words in their usual or most basic sense without metaphor or exaggeration**.
2. (of translation) **Representing the exact words of the original text**.

*Trigger*

Are there enough signs I'm in the wrong place...?

Quick Google search - Definition from Oxford Languages

I searched antonyms of "literal"

1. **Loose Liberal Vague**
2. **Whimsical**

I searched antonyms of "literally"

1. Doubtfully
2. **Figuratively**
3. **Loosely**

Something shines, and I think I should keep it.

But I understand I'm running after my own synapses.
IN A WAY, IT MADE SENSE
AND I THOUGHT I WAS CLOSER TO
"THAT THING IN COMICS."

IN ANOTHER WAY, IT FELT LIKE I WAS DOUBLESPEAKING MYSELF INTO A PARADOXICAL BLACK-HOLE OF UNGUINIastics.

IT KINDA GIVES ME THE CREEPS NOW.

THINKING I COULD BE TRAPPED IN A LIMBO.
I can’t do this.

Who is seeing them, and also in
when/where they are, their context

UGH

We’re so bound to words, I can’t even express myself!

UGH

I’m struggling in the middle
of images and words,
when I should actually be
thriving with both.
I CAN'T BE STUCK,

IN MY OWN ELEMENT.

SOME TIME

AS PASSED

2 Nov. 2021

Today is Tuesday. (sigh).

I had my feedback session last Thursday and it went pretty nicely. I feel that I'm stepping on something big. I'm discovering how to show & tell about this big thing — it's all in my head, but maybe in other people's heads as well. It's good to know we're in sync. It's good to know that I'm not crazy, that my weirdness helps me, them, us get somewhere closer. Our braincells mingling.
EMBRACING ARTISTIC RESEARCH
— WORD AND IMAGE CONUNDRUM

Looking back, it seems I was always doing some kind of artistic research even if it was “just” sketching in my diary, but it was harder at that time to see it or name it as such. I think this is because I was used to writing (journaling) and still consider it a text; but if I drew a “bad” drawing, I wouldn’t consider it art or illustration. Another unhelpful way of thinking of text and image is expecting them to communicate at the same level, with the same extent, for the same purposes — for instance, considering a full page of text more and/or more important than one page of drawings (or even thinking it should be full). I see this as a common struggle, many people might think like this, and despite me deciding to create a book that explores those same issues, I was fighting them myself. Through KonstaFck, I got better at recognizing this struggle and I got to write and draw with the same commitment and importance, even though for different reasons — I now mostly use words to talk about drawings and drawings when words aren’t enough.
EMBRACING ARTISTIC RESEARCH
— LEARNING BY DOING

ARTISTIC RESEARCH, OR LEARNING BY DOING, ALSO CAME IN THE VERY FIRST TIME I DECIDED TO TRY TO INK MY COMIC. ACTUALLY, IT STARTED WITH THE FIRST TRY OF LAYOUTING, CHOOSING DIMENSIONS, SKETCHING — MAKING DECISIONS FOR HOW TO START CREATING AND FINDING METHODS OF WORKING. BUT WITH INKING, THAT WAS WHERE I LEARNED THE MOST.

I DON’T THINK I HAVE A DEFINITIVE STYLE (DOES ANYONE?) ESPECIALLY WHEN IT COMES TO MATERIALITY, BUT MY CHOICES HAD BEEN MOSTLY TIED WITH EFFICIENCY — I’D ILLUSTRATE IN WAYS I THOUGHT TO BE QUICKER (JUST GRAPHITE LINES OR STRAIGHT UP DIGITAL). QUICKER THAN WHAT? I DON’T REALLY KNOW. I NEVER REALLY TRIED TO TIME MYSELF AND NOW I DON’T EVEN THINK IT CAN BE SO MEASURABLE… DIFFERENT MATERIALS ACHIEVE DIFFERENT RESULTS (QUALITATIVE DIFFERENCE THAT MIGHT NEVER BE QUANTIFIABLE) AND ALSO THE RHYTHM ONE GETS TO ACHIEVE THE WORKFLOW OF THEIR OWN METHODS CHANGES WITH MANY VARIABLES (WORK CONDITIONS, STRESS LEVLES, HEALTH…) BUT ALSO IMPROVES WITH THE MORE DEDICATION ONE PUTS INTO THOSE SAME METHODS.

SO, TRYING TRADITIONAL INKING WAS A RATHER SPONTANEOUS DECISION, BUT THE DECISION TO STAY WITH IT WAS A CRESCENDO. I FELL IN LOVE WITH THE SOFTNESS AND BOLDNESS OF THE LINES I COULD CREATE, THE VARIATION IN THICKNESS AND SOME UNCONTROLLED TEXTURE THE LINES WOULD INVARINGLY GET IN THE (PIECE OF) DRAWING. AND I ALSO OBSERVED MY OWN (ACTION OF) DRAWING, WHICH MADE ME FEEL AWARE OF MY SELF, BODY AND MIND, MUCH MORE THAN DIGITAL METHODS. I TRULY ENJOY THE PROCESS OF INKING.
(Explaining my process a bit better: before inking I make a sketch in pencil on a sheet; then, with the use of a light table, I trace over the pencil lines with Indian ink and brush onto another sheet, watercolor paper this time. I also do some final edits on Photoshop at the end, adjusting black and white levels, cleaning areas, retracing parts if needed).
EMBRACING ARTISTIC RESEARCH — TALKING (TO MYSELF) THROUGH COMICS

MAKING COMICS AROUND MY WORKING PROCESS HAS ALWAYS COME NATURAL SINCE MY STORYTELLING IS MOSTLY NON-FICTIONAL AND AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL. HOWEVER, A LARGE PART OF THE WORK-IN-PROGRESS OF COMING UP WITH THIS BOOK WAS VERY INTANGIBLE: MOST OF IT WAS JUST ME THINKING. THOUGHTS ABOUT WHAT I SAW, WHAT I DID, HOW I DID IT, WHY I DID IT AND ABOUT THE CONVERSATIONS I HAD WITH OTHER COMIC ARTISTS — BUT MOSTLY SELF-INITIATED, PHILOSOPHICAL AND METAPHYSICAL THOUGHTS AROUND DRAWING AND COMICS. SO, FOR THIS PROJECT, THAT PROCESS OF RECORDING MY WORKING METHODS THROUGH COMICS CAME IN A DIFFERENT SHAPE: I HAD CREATED THIS CHARACTER WHO I COULD SPEAK TO AND (MOSTLY) WHO COULD SPEAK FOR ME.
WHAT DO YOU LOVE ABOUT COMICS?

THAT'S SUCH A BIG QUESTION...

OKAY, LET'S SEE...

WHY DON'T YOU SHOW HOW YOU... CHOOSE A COMIC BOOK TO READ?

THE FIRST IMPRESSION OF A COMIC BOOK IS ITS COVER (SOMETIMES ITS SPINE)

OKAY, I CAN DO THAT. LET'S GO TO SEQUETEKEK

BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY, IT IS GOOD TO HAVE A PEAK AT THE INTERIOR PAGES.

FIRST INDICATOR THAT IT CAN BE A GREAT COMIC BOOK:

I DON'T GET DISAPPOINTED WHEN I FIRST LOOK AT THE INTERIOR PAGES.

THE COVER DOESN'T EVER SELL THE STORY
These Socratic conversations (as Aziza Ahmad described in my examination) were definitely more useful when materialized on the pages of my notebook than forgotten by my faulty memory (which also happened throughout the masters and I’d say it’s one main reason why I create in this manner). Moreover, they could then be presented to other people, without me having to formulate it again and again, and even with the possibility of hiding my identity behind this naive/deep drawn researcher (whom I actually dreamed of becoming).

Choosing to show these brain-dump diary comics and texts to others (teachers and colleagues, through emails and group tutorials) was simultaneously kind of embarrassing and very rewarding: I was straight up showing my opinions, my likings and (without noticing at first) my most raw and true taste in the writing style itself. And, on the bright side, it was somehow leading me somewhere. I can now acknowledge this “vulnerable publishing” and its feedback as the discovery and embracing of my author’s voice.

**why do I love drawings**

I don’t love all the drawings, I must be upfront about this. Drawing is a noun, drawing is a verb. Drawing is the essence, nonetheless. Drawings can be instant, they can vanish, they can be saved, they are calligraphy of the body/of the mind/from the body/from the mind. Drawings are lines that register our experience, our mood, our feeling. And as I was saying, drawing is so vulnerable. Drawing is so beautiful. Drawing is failing in every trial, in the best way. What is a good drawing? A perfect drawing? A true drawing? what is the best way of drawing? who draws, what draws, how draws, where draws, when, for how long?

**I love these drawings, I actually want to do this.**

They hold me and say “look”. They let me enter another world. They make me believe in something else, in something beyond, somewhere I wouldn’t know otherwise. Somewhere that came from someone else’s mind. When someone draws, they are showing their way of seeing and thinking and showing and telling, all at once.

drawing is so vulnerable.
drawing is so beautiful.
drawing is failing in every trial, in the best way.
A true drawing? what is the best way of drawing?
why do I love drawings
I don't love all the drawings, I must be upfront about this. I love to appreciate drawings. Like someone who loves cinema, usually doesn't love all the movies. They love to appreciate the cinema Art, and then they can also appreciate more the narrative part, the acting, the special effects and figurines… There are so many parts that make up the whole of a movie. And a similar thing happens in comics. I can't say one part is more relevant than the other but the part I get more excited about is actually the drawings. The illustration part of comics. I struggle to call it illustration because … the sequential aspect of it is also what makes it so good.

why?
well, I'm trying to get there, keep listening.
I love how these drawings, I actually want to call them drawings. I love the word drawing. Drawing is a noun, drawing is a verb. Drawing is a finished expression, but it's also an action, the expressing of a thought on a surface. There are so many kinds of drawings. drawing is not pretentious. Drawing is the essence, nonetheless. Drawings can be spontaneous, or thoughtful. Drawings can be instant, they can vanish, they can be saved, they are calligraphy of the body/of the mind/from the body/from the mind. Drawings are lines that register our experience, our mood, our feeling, our vision. things words can only translate.

and as I was saying,
I love how these drawings can also transport me. They hold me and say "look". They let me enter another world. They make me believe in something else, in something beyond, somewhere I wouldn't know otherwise. Somewhere that came from someone else's mind. When someone draws, they are showing their position in the world, they're carrying their way of seeing and thinking and showing and telling, all at once. drawing is so vulnerable. drawing is so beautiful. drawing is failing in every trial, in the best way.

What is a good drawing? A perfect drawing? A true drawing? what is the best way of drawing? who draws, what draws, how draws, where draws, when, for how long?
TACIT KNOWLEDGE:  
THE COLLECTIVE/INDIVIDUAL PRACTICE

AT THE DECEMBER PRESENTATION I SAID:

"I'M FINALLY GETTING TO A POINT WHERE  
I UNDERSTAND MY PROCESS AS THIS WELL-OILED  
MACHINE THAT CAN'T STOP AT EITHER PART OF  
ITS MOTION. I THINK, WHILE DOING, AND DO, WHILE  
THINKING. THEN I SHOW WHILE TALKING AND MAKE  
PEOPLE THINK AND TALK ABOUT WHAT THEY THINK.  
AND WE'RE BOTH LISTENING AND TALKING — AND  
THINKING! THEN I THINK AND DO AGAIN, AND THE  
CYCLE MUSTN'T STOP. AND THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT  
BECAUSE... I REALLY CAN'T DO THE THINKING ALONE."

*

"I'M SEARCHING FOR A COLLECTIVE VIEW ON  
ILLUSTRATION, SO FOR ME IT'S ONLY POSSIBLE TO  
THINK ABOUT IT COLLECTIVELY. AND IT IS THANKS  
TO TEACHERS, TUTORS, COLLEAGUES, ILLUSTRATOR AND  
COMICS FRIENDS, AUTHORS AND PRACTITIONERS THAT  
I CAN GET TO SO MANY OF THE THOUGHTS I HAD.  
IN A WAY, MY DRAWINGS CAME FROM  
OTHER PEOPLE'S MINDS TOO."
There were a few instances throughout the year, even if not clearly directly related to my project, that made me feel like I was doing research on the way. Moments when I found myself listening to someone describe their illustration practice and I joined trying to explain mine in return. Although I'll enumerate what can seem quite many, I think I have them engraved in my memory for their scarcity and my admiration for their rare different formats. One must definitely be looking to effectively find them.

(I even treasure the memory of a conversation I initiated at lunch time between colleagues when we commented how one easily edits a digital collage with different photos, but it was strange to try to merge different drawing styles into one.)

The most recognizable moments I could take part in were:

☆ The Contemporary Nordic Comics Research Conference
☆ The Research talks ‘Behind The Scenes’ (specially the talk with Mireille Fauchon and Rachel Gannon, authors of Illustration Research Methods)
☆ Cecilia Flumé’s 25% PhD presentation
☆ Research Week (I attended the node "(Craft) The Meaning in The Making.")
Each of these instances were richer than what I could describe here. I reference them not to cite anyone in particular, but to emphasize the collective knowledge I could gather from all. Here are some of my takeaways, not particular to any of the events:

* There's not (yet) enough illustration research
* Because of that, we still struggle to put words together to describe our practices
* Which feels sometimes contradicting, unnecessary, diminishing of the (art) form, or too intellectual
* And therefore practitioners refrain from trying it at all
* This prevents illustration from emerging as a field of its own, kept subdued to other already established fields, taken as a smaller skill or a set of borrowed skills, letting its authority shift from outside in.
* For example: comics being analyzed more from linguists than from drawers; for example: more designers claiming to also do illustration than illustrators claiming the opposite; for example: expecting illustration to accompany text, otherwise calling it painting; for example: using words to describe the practice that seem to deviate to other fields, instead of unite it ("line art", "character design" etc)
Nevertheless, many practitioners have similar questions, the same unanswered dilemmas, related underexplored ideas interesting and challenging ones, but usually falling short — I would say — for not having the vocabulary to sustain them, the prepared audience to elaborate on them, the platforms to uphold them.

However, my growing intention is to contradict, build onto this.

I see this problem in illustration specially through the lens of drawing and I embrace the task to make explicit (verbalize, communicate, democratize) its tacit knowledge.

For the more rudimental words we might come up with, those are the ones to use.
IN MY MIXED UP DREAM, YLVA LINDBERG (A COMICS RESEARCHER I HEARD AT THE COMICS CONFERENCE) ASKED ME: "SO, DO YOU KNOW ALREADY WHY WE SHOULDN'T SAY «READ» COMICS?"

I HAVE A MISSION, I CAN'T FAIL.
SETBACKS — FAILED EXPERIENCE

Overall, all the setbacks (disbeliefs, confusions, dead-ends and failed experiences) really pushed my research forward: out of comfort zones, aside from danger, away from desires, closer to my dreams — I remember and treasure them all.

For example, one experiment I tried in a workshop format: a collective and experimental reading of the picture book "Why Art" by Eleanor Davis (a book I found the previous year and had stuck in my heart). I love the overall premise of the story and the way it makes me think so deeply about art and life through a visual narrative. At that point I was curious about the relationship between words and images and found this a rather particular book.

My idea for the workshop was:

1. Gathering several people who hadn’t read the book.
2. I’d start reading aloud and showing the pages to everyone.
3. In the middle of the book, the group would split: one would only read text while the others would only read the images.
4. (I had previously edited images of every spread until the end of the story.)
5. After the readings, each group would write their thoughts on the experience — did they understand the story? Did they miss anything?...
6. Before everyone shared their ideas, we came back altogether and I read the full end of the story, words and images.
The results were very dubious: the group I had gathered was small (4 or 5 people) and generally got confused, the sample to be read was too long, the time of the day was not ideal. I re-evaluated my intention with the exercise and, with some frustration, understood that I was more interested in what happened by only reading the pictures. Was I still researching comics? It was not easy to admit this “failure” but undoubtedly it pushed me forward.
Another dead end was one reference my tutor Dan Berry gave me: if I liked and was doing something similar to Scott McCloud, I might like to explore the research work of Neil Cohn (a nerdier and more academic dive into comics).

The extensiveness of Neil Cohn’s work (including several books, but also plenty of free resources in his Visual Language Lab) is truly impressive and pulled me in for some time. Through his website I was also getting to other academics in comics seminars available on YouTube. However, while viewing these lectures I felt curious but mostly… alienated: these comics enthusiasts were analyzing drawing and the visual language of comics, yes, but through the lenses of cognitive science, linguistics, philosophy… using language and methods that would never serve my research or my field — illustration.

I do believe in the overlap of knowledge in-between fields but it seems enough (for now) to borrow terms and processes from neighboring subjects such as graphic design and painting. Listening to a phenomenology philosopher dissect and rename the views of a cube in the 3D space with weird names and numbered cells, clicked with my 10th grade geometry classes and made me think — I know this, only in other ways, that frankly seem more practical.
Sara enabled my thoughts and feelings to emerge fully after tutorials where I'd tell her my findings — and I then refrained from such foreign practices. She recommended to me a Swedish illustrator’s book about drawing ("När man ritar hästar" by Claes Jurander) which was much more up my alley. Even with the weirdest Google translation through my phone’s camera I could relate more to his words about his practice and I felt empowered to pursue my own.
SETBACKS — MISCOMMUNICATIONS

Not every sharing of my curiosity was easily taken. I remember instances of argument with colleagues or teachers that might not have understood the lack of vocabulary in the field as I felt or didn’t see the purpose of my pursuit. And I must admit: the fault of a poor communication comes from both sides; paradoxically, I couldn’t yet explain well how and why I felt the necessity for a more stable communication within Visual Communication.

The takeaways I now list (mostly to myself):

✶ Avoid comparisons between fields, especially quantitative comparisons (in this case, what images or words can or cannot do comparatively);
✶ Try not to sound as a misunderstood victim of the lack of interest and attention of society — in the end, the highest interest of developing one’s field comes from within;
✶ Fuel on the misunderstanding or disinterest of others to find the core of your passion — a lot of introspection will be needed;
✶ Even the most like-minded people will have challenging feedback to offer, and that’s great — listen carefully to those;
✶ Embrace emotion to reach reason — follow curiosity, feel excited to discover;
✶ Embrace the basic to achieve the complex — this is my personal philosophical method, feel free to try it;
✶ Embrace fun to get to serious professional your best work — at least this time, I think it really worked.

This is me today.
I'm wearing a skirt for a change.
This notebook is ending and I want to "leave" in a positive tone.
I think I've found my reasoning for doing this project.
I mean, not my reason.
My reason is - I love drawing
and I love comics. It's the reason I give people that was missing. And I think that
now, I have it.
I'm making something
that enables visual literacy.
Visual literacy is of course a gigantic field, but,
I'm doing it by drawing, thinking and communicating
about drawing & allowing people to draw and to commu-
cicate about drawing. Why? Well, have you ever
questioned why you have ever learned how to read?
And write...? I feel there is this huge lack in
communication between professionals and other
people, between everyone who doesn't draw or create
and even between practitioners themselves,
practitioners can, if an effort is made, come up with
their own, long, lost ways of talking about each other
works, but usually the drawing, the style of the lines,
is described by what it evokes, what it represents,
what it makes the viewer feel. So, in a subjective
way, it seems we can't actually point at what
we're seeing, beholding, observing.

It feels abstract because we can't
name it yet... but it's actually tangible,
material (it exists - the drawing itself).

So, this book is for... anyone who wants to become more
visual literate, which I think is important.
empowering.

Notice on perceive (something) and
register it as being significant.
SETBACKS — KILLING MY DARLINGS

MAYBE THE HARDEST SETBACKS WERE THE DECISIONS TO REMOVE (POSTPONE) PARTS OF THE BOOK.

THE THIRD CHAPTER WAS A STUBBORN WISH THAT I KNEW WOULD HAVE TO DROP OUT AT SOME POINT OR ANOTHER — IT WOULD HAVE BEEN PHYSICALLY IMPOSSIBLE TO HAVE IT DONE (MINIMALLY DONE, WHATEVER FORM THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN) FOR THE EXAMINATION BUT I STILL WORKED ON IT LONGER THAN I SHOULD HAVE ALLOWED MYSELF TO. IT IS OF COURSE WELL SAVED IN MY MATERIAL, DIGITAL AND EMOTIONAL FOLDERS, TO BE CONTINUED ASAP.
Another more or less abandoned idea, that actually got to layout sketching and inking phases (although not at all in good forms of either) was a promising academic material: a graph in which I (try to) explain my own process of image reading, which I was calling “the spectrum of representation”. In one of the last feedback sessions I presented it, within a reading of the second chapter: it triggered more controversy (confusion but also curiosity?) than I was expecting. It wasn’t yet refined to be able to stand alone without me trying to explain it (and even with my efforts…) I want to believe it is good food for thought, but must be digestible. I’ll save it for later and cook it for longer.
There are no clear lines dividing this spectrum, so they must be erased. Think of it as an infinite plane with 8 directions, rather than a group of measuring scales.
The latest giving up moment was a very detailed spread I procrastinated and postponed to the very last week of inking, when I realized I wouldn’t have time to either do it or to sleep. The said spread was also a fond idea of mine — a well known illustration reference that would clearly illustrate the act of image reading: Where’s Wally? — at the fairground. I would trace over the iconic illustration of Martin Handford as a reference to these books in general. I was proud of choosing this reference but I dreaded drawing it from the start. It was indeed a lot of work.
4. Usually there's a quick and broad first impression—given by its form.

2. As soon as you recognize a shape, you infer meaning—from its content. You probably can describe it.

3. If you don't get back to looking at its form, you might take its influence for granted—but it is its form that sets a mood for the way you think of its content.

4. And then it's a matter of time: even with the most simple images, to look for them, to analyze, scan them. Maybe you get to see details you didn't before. You notice how they were done and maybe even understand or question yourself why.

5. Each person carries their own experience to their reading experience. You interpret what you see in an image with all the knowledge you have to address it—you quickly gather associations and contrasts from your culture, from your time, from your region, from your body, from your social and human interactions, from your knowledge of how things work in your world... from your experience with other images as well.

6. And lastly, or even previous to it all, the external context of the image gives you signals on how to look at it. These images are inside a comic book, so you read them sequentially, but also having in mind where you found this book, why you opened this page, what will happen after you close it...
TANGIBLE PROCESS - BOOK

CREATING A BOOK THAT TURNED INTO THREE. HERE'S A DESCRIPTION OF HOW IT (MORE OR LESS) HAPPENED:

★ I HAD MANY THOUGHTS OF WHAT I WANTED TO WRITE — WHICH I HAVE BEEN NOTING IN MY SKETCHBOOKS WITH MORE OR LESS WORDS AND SKETCHES;
★ I ALREADY HAD A SHORT COMIC I MADE AS AN INTRODUCTION;
★ I ALSO HAD AN IDEA OF THE 3 CHAPTERS I WOULD HAVE.
★ AT SOME POINT I TRIED TO SUMMARIZE MY NOTES IN POST-ITS;
★ I TRIED TO SORT THEM INTO CHAPTERS;
★ I CAME UP WITH SOME MORE ON THE WAY;
★ SOME IDEAS WERE WORDS, SOME IDEAS WERE IMAGES, SOME WERE REFERENCES I STILL DIDN'T KNOW HOW TO REPRESENT.
★ IT TOOK A WHILE TO UNDERSTAND THE ORDER OF EVERYTHING;
★ I KEPT SHUFFLING BACK AND FORTH.
★ AT SOME POINT I STARTED WRITING;
★ I WROTE A LOT, TRIED NOT TO GET STUCK IN EDITING; (MANY TIMES I WISHED I COULD JUST DUMP MY BRAIN TO SEE EVERYTHING CLEARER) (BUT I GUESS THIS IS THE PROCESS TO DO IT)
★ I WROTE EVERYTHING FOR A CHAPTER, THEN I TRIED TO HAVE IDEAS FOR WHAT AND HOW TO ILLUSTRATE;
★ MEANWHILE I ASKED PEOPLE TO REVIEW MY WRITTEN IDEAS;
★ SOME PEOPLE WISHED I HAD DRAWINGS ALREADY;
★ SO I TRIED TO DO THUMBNAILS FOR THE THOSE IDEAS.
why do I want to go on this self-discovery?

well, I don’t know!? I don’t even know it for myself x]
I wrote everything for another chapter and tried to have ideas for illustrations;
These two actions started to happen more simultaneously.

I started working on my handwriting font.

I started putting the book together (InDesign).

I got some feedback here and there: from my ideas, from the writing, from the thumbnails;
I sat with it, I agreed with some, disagreed with some;
I took decisions on it — edit the text, rethink the idea, change the thumbnails.

I had to come up with a title — Fred helped.

I started doing the layout sketches.

I started writing everything for the third chapter — and mostly did;
I panicked a bit about the time.

I had to rework the font.
I tried to do thumbnails for the third chapter;
I didn't have time to make it work, so I gave up (postponed it).
Sara gave me the idea to adapt the dog horse apple banana into a separate book — I accepted that idea.
I tried to work more on parts I was more doubtful about;
I asked for more feedback on those.
14.04.2022

TO-DO
- Font
- Draw alternatives
- Font scan sheets
- Font edit sheets
- Upload + edit font
- Ink Chapter 1
- Ink Chapter 2
- Re-think Chapter 3
- Edit Chapter 1
- Edit Chapter 2
- Edit Chapter 2 - after word
- Write intro
- Explain "reading"
- Create outro
- Draw cover
- Draw / create patterns for inside cover
- Gather / edit bits
- Draw cover "dog banana"
- Look for print on demand for "dog banana"

EXTRAS
- wallpaper - edit & send
- Send signature
- Add signature

I'm getting back tomorrow, hopefully in a better headspace.

Note to self: work on calligraphic font

Choose a good thick pen
Good
Try Try Try Try A R R R Y Y Y
C C C C C C C C C C S S S S S S S S S S
0 0 0 0 0 0 CHOOSE S S E S S E S

Priorities
1. Font
2. Cover "dog banana" (04/04)
3. Explain "reading" (03/04)
4. Write intro
5. Re-think Chapter 3 (after word)
6. Edit Chapter 3
7. Write outro
8. Adjust dog - banana
9. Draw cover
10. Draw pattern inside cover
11. Gather / edit bits
12. Send banana - dog to print (04/04)
13. Drop打断 BEFORE (04/04)
14. Ink Chapter 1
15. Ink Chapter 2
16. Edit Chapter 2
I had to rework the font again.

I had to tie up the end of the introduction — text and images.

Sara told me I should have a part explaining the word "read".

I decide to make another book (zine).

I had to produce quicker — sketch and ink pages;

I gave up on the third chapter (postponed it);

I had to come up with a concluding afterthought.

I had to come up with a cover — got two ideas;

I had feedback on that and, weirdly, the best was to mash the two ideas.

Quickly I sent a digital version to my opponent;

I had to send the book to test print;

I had to correct stuff, add balloons

I sent the final book to print (I still got errors in the final printed version.)
Como é que eu rendo mais?
Quero desexistir.
Só um bocado.

Still To Do

Lines of Thought
Drawing, Seeing, Talking, Feeling

LINES OF THOUGHT
LINES OF THOUGHT
LINES OF THOUGHT
TANGIBLE PROCESS - EXHIBITION

FOR THE BUILDING WEEK I DEDICATED MYSELF TO DOCUMENT A DIARY AT THE END OF EACH DAY, SO THAT IS THE MOST ACCURATE DESCRIPTION I CAN OFFER:

Konstfack exhibition diaries
::: 16/06 - Building day 01 :::
Fred went home at 4am
Meeting with M1 to pair with buddies and make a schedule of building priorities.
I leave to Ropsten to look for chairs. Skipped the general Security meeting (hope it doesn’t come to show).
Getting to Ropsten, I see a woman leaving the store with a great black chair. No other good chairs inside.
Pits stop at another Myrorna in the center - no chairs - I buy a new outfit.
Stop at Liljeholmen, 3rd store - 4 black chairs, jackpot. I don’t carry them yet. Instead, I buy another outfit ☝️.
Run back to meet a girl who’d sell me her used black carpet - will return the 800 kr vynil I ordered
Eat an eggmacka.

Go back to Liljeholmen with my buddy to pick up the chairs ☝️ done
Go to Midsommarkransen to get the sample of my book. I sit outside for a moment by myself, reading in the sun. I almost cry.
Get back to Konstfack just before the time of the ticket runs out. In 8 trips, I spend 3 tickets 🏝️
Edit edit edit. Eat half a pie with Fred. Back to edit and send to print.
Organizing Book Hive stuff, discussions with Emil, Laslo, Fred and Anne about the paper and printing choices. We spend more time deciding then designing - or is it the same?

 Decide to go get dinner and eat at school. Slice of microwave pizza and pineapple.
The kitchen is gross and messy. I spend two hours alone cleaning and tidying while I chew my dinner.
Meet Fred and Anne in the printing room around 23:00 - think I will stay half an hour, two hours max
Draw stars on my cape while they print.
I try on my new outfits to show them. We also dance.
1:54 Anne and I leave Konstfack
Fred might leave at 4am again

Konstfack exhibition diaries
::: 17/05 - Building day 02 :::
Fred did go home at 4am again.
I come to school to a hectic morning.
3 of my chairs are missing. People are using them as normal chairs. My buddy (Alva) offers to look for them. They’re found 🙄.
Allover the place Book Hive meeting in the sofas.
We try to decide priorities. M1 buddies are the ones advancing with decisions 🙄.
11:00 Book Hive meets CuratorLab. We (try to) decide the structure to hang books. They don’t love the suggestion. They suggest we ask a technician for material leftovers from school.
They set us a curtain at least.
Curator asks me to change places with Jetty. It’s totally fine for me and a great relief for everyone else, apparently.
Eat microwave french pie while paint a sample of chipboard with chalkboard paint. I like it ✅.
Take the rest of lunch “break” to vacuum the carpet. I finally slow down.
I decide to have chipboard on the wall.
Can’t drill directly. New space requires an offset wall on top of the wall.

Alva and I go to the wood workshop and cut beams and boards to our needs (3x2.5m wall).
Bring them to the exhibition space.
Finally speak to the technician, we can get metal structures for the Book Hive 🦅.
Talk to building assistant. Our needs change (4x2.5m wall). We get and cut more supplies.
We paint 2 beams. Wait to dry.
I suggest fika. Alva suggests working on the chairs. She’s right.
I sand, she paints.
2 chairs later, we need energy. Alva gets us food.
Eat bagel and ommph! She eats aggmaca.
2 more chairs, we’re done for the day.
Break in the sun with Anne and her buddy (Iris).
Break in the sun with Fred.
Last visit to my exhibition space. I paint a tall covered window in white. Use ladder with Rana’s help. None of us went to the security meeting.
Pick up ingredients from home to make dinner at school. Anne, Fred, Rana and I eat salad and drink gin & tonic.
Everyone leaves by 22:30.
Actually Lars leaves just before me.
00:25 I leave Konstfack
00:30 I get home
Konstfack exhibition diaries

::18/05 - Building day 03 ::
10:00 Come to school
Start building the wall with tips from Klara, Majia and Ludl.
Alva drills and screws the wood, the wall.
I hold wood pieces together and the ladder.
It takes the whole morning.
Meet Sara in our studio before lunch. She’s seeing my book. Black covers seems to be a trend among the graduating illustrators. We’re both happy :)
Decide to have a proper lunch at the cafetaria.
Surprisingly, it’s NOT curry today. Disappointed, we take the pasta salad.
Eat with MiFs in the sun 🌺
Get back and drill the wall on the wall. The last piece of chipboard it’s 2 cm too long. Alva convinces me to go cut it (I’m a lazy constructor).
We do it. Not perfect but better.
I cover uneven holes on the wall. Alva double paints chairs.
17:00 Goodbye meeting with tutor while Alva starts painting the wall.
18:00 Call with illustration client. Suddenly I turn into an agent calling other illustrators for this gig and negotiating a fair payment. I’m starting a union.
Go to Liljeholmen to buy more chalkboard paint for tomorrow.
Bring food from home. Cook dinner at school again. No gin & tonic this time.
Stay late just because... I don’t wanna be alone.
00:00 Break with Anne outside. We swish some stranger for clothes they left at the school front.
3rd new outfit this week.
00:30 I get home
Konstfack exhibition diaries

::19/06 - Building day 04 ::
Anne leaves at 3:00. Fred leaves at 4:00, again.
9:45 I come to school.
I am bit all over the place. Drink tea, change to
working clothes, start the day.
Alva continues to paint the wall. Double coat of
black wall paint and double coat of blackboard
paint.
I get Ludi from Klara. We build the he Book Hive
counter on the book shop. Nail gun, glue, hammer.
Messy "learn by doing" process. It works.
Lunch break in the sun.
I manage to talk to Patrick. We don't need his help,
he tells me how to to lower the metal structures in
Havet (I get to know Konstfack's secrets just
before I leave).
14:00 we finish the counter
14:30 Emil calls Book Hive meeting. Jaap and him
put up the curtain. Fred can't help yet. Anne has a
mental breakdown. Laslo comes and goes? I give
ideas for the metal hanging structure and ask the
boys to try on the ropes. I pass on the secret of
the vertical structure and get back to my space.
Alva and I clean the floor. She assembles my very
heavy table and with 2 more people we put it in
place. I tape the carpet to the floor, she paints
cracks on the table. We decide to draw a rectangle
free-hand with chalk around the chalkboard paint.
It turns out nice :)
The Book Hive comes together. We ordered way
too much rope.
Break outside. Day is almost over. Some decisions
and actions are still to be done in my space.
Fred runs out of purple, she panics a bit. The store
opens again at Sh in the morning.
Laslo has the idea of doing a lottery at the Book
Hive opening. We'll do it.
We get hungry. Aziza is joining for dinner.
Fred and I buy pizzas and Rana shares middle
Eastern food with us 😋
Sewing club after dinner. Aziza hems a dress while
we paint furniture for the exhibition. Anne comes
back, better after 2 naps 🚀. We listen to 2000's
hits.
23:00 Aziza leaves.
We end the night inside our studio. Anne fixes her
table, I sew my cape. Fred reads all the emails we
got out loud so that we don’t have to.
00:15 we leave Konstfack.
Rana (and Zyian, Klara and Stef? and Jetty?) still
stayed.
Konstfack exhibition diaries

::: 20/05 - Building day 05 :::

I think I can have a chill morning, I was mistaken. 11:00 I leave the house. Get a text from Siri saying that Sara is waiting for me.

11:06 Get to school. Anne and Fred with put up their paste ups with Sticky Pete. Fred woke up at 7:00 to buy purple and paint the wall. Sara introduces my opponent. He is there to get my book. I don’t have my books yet. I give him the test book with annotations and the small book. There’s a small zine missing. I try to print new ones, they get printed wrong - I freak out. Fred gives me the one I gave her in a feedback session and I give it to him. Uff.

There’s stress in the air. The press is at Konstfack until 12:00.

Rana calls. She’s so stressed, sad and frustrated (she left school at 6:00). I try to comfort her but I also feel for her. Have a good (but quick) lunch with a friend. Can’t chill much.

13:30 Book Hive meeting turns into putting vinyl on the counter and briefly deciding how to do the opening. Curators insist that I could do a reading. I’m mostly worried that I don’t have my books. Anne is feeling a bit sick. It’s probably just exhaustion.

Email the printers. They have the book ready. Take the metro and bring my babies.

Anne leaves to rest. We’ll probably meet at C-print launch later. Aziza will also come.

I think I’ll be done soon. I just have some things to print and draw on the wall.

17:30 I call Rana to check on her. Didn’t sleep much but she’s calmer and she’s coming.

I write the description of my project on the black wall, first with graphite, then with white posca. I draw the comics astronomer in my size with chalk.

I realize I can’t erase the graphite. With Jetty’s advice, I paint black over the whole text. The drawing is okay. Will re-write it tomorrow morning.

Aziza calls and we realize we’ll never make it to C-print on time. Anne also doesn’t go.

Once again, I vacuum the carpet. Get hungry and eat pizza leftovers with Fred and Simon (they eat sushi). I think of going home soon.

Aziza comes and sits with us. She brings good news! We’re so happy but we decide to celebrate tomorrow with Anne and Rana.

I decide to stay and finish my costume for tomorrow. Aziza joins sewing club: she knits and finishes drawing stars on my cape while I sew on the machine. It feels good to hang out 😊

Rana leaves around 23:30

01:30 Aziza and I leave. Fred stays. (I think she’s the last...?)
RECEPTION — EXHIBITION & EXAMINATION

At the Spring Exhibition, I could see that my exhibition space was very popular and well visited. As Johanna said, it fulfilled an important space of interactivity with the Art space, freedom (specially for kids) and rest. I enjoyed seeing my intention of a spontaneous collective drawing club come to life every day at that table and black board; however, an exhibition is hardly ever an appropriate space for an intimate reading. The performance of displaying my books in such an extravagant environment, elevated even more with my own cosplaying of the Comics Astronomer, led me into a weird dissociation from my work that only weeks later I got to reassess and process. Either way, I got many appreciative comments from acquaintances and strangers, and even classmates and teachers who got surprised with such a large volume of production.

At my examination, although I’d like to have gotten into a deeper discussion about the ideas I presented in the books, I got very cheerful comments and amazing questions from the audience. I got the opportunity to reveal parts of the process of making it:

- Choosing black & white to emphasize lines;
- Struggling to understand my main interest was “drawing” itself;
- Thoughts about its audience (older than 10 - 12 y.o., but definitely people who are interested/curious about drawing, starting with myself — as Aziza pointed out);
- A failed trial to explain my love for lines, because I’m still not finished with the project;
- My intention of adding a 3rd chapter about vocabulary and communication;
- The possibility to use this book in teaching and drawing clubs.

The conversation ended with Johanna commenting that the book would travel and be the school itself, since I had done a good job with clear and accessible communication.

An end suggestion from my opponent (Jens Andersson) was to direct it to international publishers and consider following studies into a PhD — both of which I will gladly try.
LIVE DRAWING AT THE EXAMINATION BY STEF GAINES! ♥
A FINAL (UTOPIAN) THOUGHT

I'D LIKE TO CONCLUDE THIS DROP BY POINTING OUT HOW MY LIFE AND WORK BOTH BENEFIT WHEN I LEAST TRY TO (FORCEFULLY) SEPARATE THEM. WELL, WHEN MY LIFE AND WORK BOTH FEEL WELL IN RELATION TO EACH OTHER.

SOME OF MY WORDS FROM THE "AFTER-THOUGHT" CHAPTER OF "LINES OF THOUGHT":

"THE WORK OF THE BOOK I INTENDED TO PRESENT IS NOT FINISHED. WITHIN THE TIME CONSTRAINTS OF A MA PROGRAM, I HAD TO CUT BACK AND RUSH A LOT OF WORDS AND DRAWINGS, WHICH BRINGS ME SOME SORROW SINCE IT WOULD (AND HOPEFULLY WILL) BE A LABOR OF LOVE."

(...) 

"I BELIEVE THAT MORE THAN THOSE INSIDE THE "ARTISTIC" CIRCLES COULD (AND SHOULD) BE KNOWLEDGEABLE AND LITERATE IN IMAGE MAKING, SEEING AND REASONING. AND I WISH THERE WERE MORE CONVERSATIONS ABOUT SUCH A PERSONAL, HUMAN EXPERIENCE. (...) MAYBE BECAUSE THIS EXPERIENCE IS SO TIED TO AESTHETICS, IT IS HARD TO PUT OUR FEELINGS ASIDE...

BUT I WOULDN'T WANT IT IN ANY OTHER WAY.

BEING AN ILLUSTRATOR, I KNOW MY PARTICULAR BIAS IN WANTING ALL OF THIS TO HAPPEN. AM I DOING THIS BOOK FOR MYSELF OR FOR OTHERS? FOR THE ONES WHO NEED IT OR FOR THE ONES WHO WANT IT? IS A WISH FOR BETTER COMMUNICATION EVER ALTRUISTIC? WOULD I EVER EVEN THINK OF MAKING THIS BOOK IF MY LIFE DIDN'T DEPEND ON IT?"

AND AS MOA WROTE TO ME IN ONE OF OUR LAST EMAILS,

"THE WORLD (...) IS ALWAYS GOING TO EXPECT YOU TO RATIONALIZE THAT ["YOU LOVE WHAT YOU LOVE"] IN VARIOUS WAYS, AND WE TRY TO, DON'T WE?

AND, SOME OF US, LIKE YOU, CAN ALSO CARRY IT WITH GRACE AND INSIGHTFULNESS."
After this long description and reflection on my process and in a trial of rationalizing (or just acknowledging the good, the stressful, the friendly, the lonely, the fulfilling, the tiring, the educational, the doubtful, the empowering, the challenging...) the beautiful times at Konstfack:

*chaotic vibes*

Feel like I am having a love/hate relationship with my MA project

 несколь又要收 attention so bad 😞ользователь


THIS FEELS JUST LIKE WHAT I WOULD LIKE TO KEEP DOING 💘