

THE LAWN

by Monilola Olayemi Ilupeju

Intuition has made a shelter in us. It told us the key hides under the checkered doormat. We look for it and come up empty-handed. Through the window with a brick will have to do. The shards of glass glitter in the air, get into our eyes, but we cannot look away.

It swims in us with the same stroke of a fetus in the womb. Or maybe it is the placenta: indispensable for a period of time, then disintegrating bit by bit until it falls out entirely, then grinded down into a pulver and sprinkled into green smoothies for stronger nails. With all senses blunted, we shuffle about, frantically searching for this crumb trail. We find it, finally. We follow it. It brings us to the front yard of our home. The lawn is overgrown, with weeds and wild flowers intertwining to become one. Did we lose it here?

Intuition is a god-given right, as real as death and taxes; passed down through the cracked palms of our ancestors, generation after generation, heaving, though the soft flutter of a pulse can still be found. Its faculty exists in stillness as much as in cacophony; in the individual as much as in the collective, don't let anyone tell you otherwise. Untethered, sublime, absolute—isn't that what she called us? Why didn't we believe her?

It has just come to our attention that the compass malfunctioned 20 miles earlier and we may be at the wrong house, but for whatever reason we cannot find the will to turn around; the muscles in our neck have calcified, the veins too. Something is pulling us and a previously dormant heirloom vibrates under the surface, waiting for our frozen fingers to cut through the soil and excavate it, save it from eternal damnation, from ourselves. A vapor is seeping out of the ground and we cannot find the source, nor can we identify its contents. A file, a folder, the entire hard drive has corrupted: a menacing, pixelated upside-down smiley face sits on the screen, sneering at us, and we wonder what comes after corruption.

The unfortunate truth of the matter is that the things most detrimental to our spiritual and emotional growth often feel the most comfortable, most true. How then are we supposed to know what intuitive calls to answer, and which ones to silence? How then are we to decipher whether the things we look at exist in front of our eyelids or behind them?

We snap out of it and again find ourselves in the front yard. Rusty landmines are littered across the lawn in the formation of an endless spiral. We attempt to follow it, but as we go deeper and deeper into its nucleus, we are shaking and filled with terror, for we sense our bodies are transforming into something that can no longer be recognised. We stop in our tracks and eventually turn around, can again locate the fissures between our borders.

Upon closer inspection, we discover the landmines are engraved with different labels, with the names of perpetrators and systems of control, dates, states of emotion like misrecognition, envy, and neglect, physical symptoms like hot cheeks, bruises, orgasms, the bed that became an ocean—the list goes on and it is not a pretty one. The words dig into the surface of the metal like a fist that won't let go, the words become the metal itself. It isn't until we exit the lawn that we wonder what these landmines are trying to prevent us from discovering or what would be forever changed once we did.

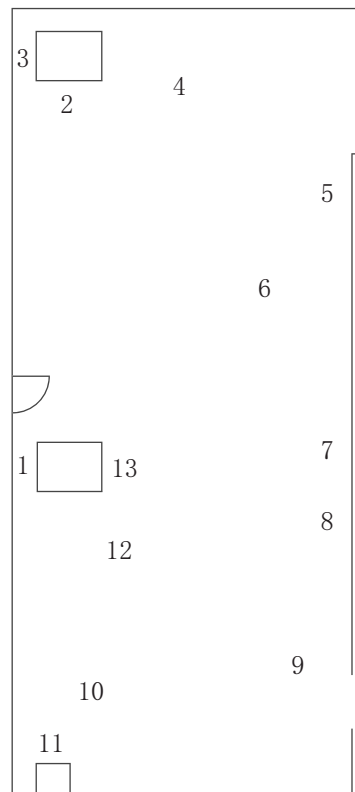
Bleeding, battered, delirious, we are coughed out of the mouth of the lawn. With eyes that have touched the sun, finally floating above the layer of fog, we see the fruitlessness of our journey and are saved. The landmines were all duds, though the ghosts of the words inscribed on their skin were not. But it's much too late for that now.

We stop walking and take off our boots. Our feet are covered in oozing blisters that we kiss and cleanse with our tears. We stare at each other and then straight ahead, and my god it's here, we are buzzing, everything is buzzing. Our crying becomes hysterical, joyful, enough to fill a thousand goblets. Free from searching for something never lost or to be found. A state of constant dissolution, where the edges of one seem to rapidly dissolve into that of another, that's what we are, what this is! Transmuting, fusing, eternally ambivalent. Not meant to be consumed with a smile on your face, but you'll be all the better for it, I promise. I promise it will be okay, even without the compass, without the map, without the key and without the eye. You aren't going anywhere you haven't already been.

Your horizon has limits even holes

Michaela Meise & Markues

- 1) Markues
'We walk the same line'
2015, watercolor on paper
- 2) Michaela Meise
'Portrait of Luce Irigaray'
2014, glazed ceramic and ink
- 3) Markues
'My shop is the face I front'
2018, watercolor on paper
- 4) Michaela Meise
'Trans Column 1 (rust and rose)'
2009, wood, gouache and oil
- 5) Markues
'Strong enough'
2017, watercolor on paper
- 6) Michaela Meise
'Trans Column 7 (pink and brown)'
2009, wood, gouache and oil
- 7) Markues
'Your horizon has limits even holes'
2019, watercolor on paper
- 8) Markues
'Über sich selbst hinaus'
2015, watercolor on paper
- 9) Michaela Meise
'Trans Column 4 (copper)'
2009, wood, gouache and oil
- 10) Michaela Meise
'Trans Column 3 (black)'
2009, wood, gouache and oil
- 11) Markues
'Don' t get mad get everything'
2018, watercolor on paper
- 12) Michaela Meise
'Trans Column 8 (beige and blue)'
2009, wood, gouache and oil
- 13) Markues
'The past will catch you up if you run faster'
2015, watercolor on paper



Your Horizon Has Limit Even Holes

A layer of fog occasionally spreads over the floor of the exhibition space at Scherben. It floats gently through the rods of Michaela Meises *Trans Columns*, rises slowly into the heights of the room, and interposes a soft blur before the watercolors in Markues' s series *For the Men & the Others*. An atmosphere somewhere between fantasy film, night club, and calculated effect results, which unites the works while also making the distance between them and the viewer tangible. A similar ambiguity characterizes the *Trans Columns* themselves. Developed in 2009 in the aftermath of the global financial crisis, the sculptures transform the column, typically a symbol of stability in patriarchal society, into something mobile. Without a roof to support, they become permeable.

In their attempts to undermine the certainty and stability of meaning in patriarchal society in favor of the fluid and mercurial, both Markues and Michaela Meise have looked to the writing of feminist psychoanalyst and philosopher Luce Irigaray. The title of the exhibition, as well as one of Markues' s watercolors, *Your horizon has limits even holes*, is a quotation from Irigaray' s work. Through her attention to bodily experience and engendered perception, she acknowledges the particularity of each individual without forgetting our shared connections.

Irigaray' s approach to language is mirrored in Markues' s watercolor series *For the Men & the Others*, in production since 2014. In each watercolor, the text is usually a quotation whose liquid script cannot be spoken, but is nevertheless open to examination. Painted in a gestural but antisubjective and deskilled fashion, the watercolors challenge the construction of subjectivity through both form and content. Because language comes from the other, it is not the subject who speaks; the subject is spoken. Alongside Markues' s watercolors hangs a ceramic relief portrait of Luce Irigaray made by Michaela Meise. It depicts the philosopher reading a book - as she did while modeling for the portrait.

On the 21st of November, there will be several readings in the exhibition space. During the readings, three sculptures by Michaela Meise will be installed for use as seating: *Cheshire Cat* and two *Cheshire Kittens* (all 2013). The exhibition is also accompanied by a commissioned text by Monilola Olayemi Ilupeju titled "*THE LAWN*", a poetic collage rethinking the concept of intuition.