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TIME HAS FALLEN ASLEEP IN THE AFTERNOON SUNSHINE

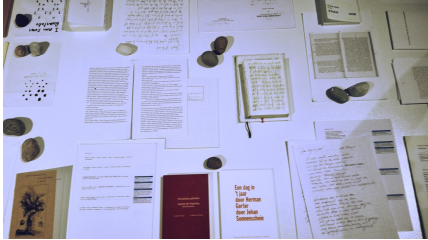
METTE EDVARDSEN

A handsome young book extends a hand to me, "I am *Against Forgetting*". His hair is black, silver seamed; his skin pale with a Williamite scrubbed-rust tinge; his eyes are well decorated with past joys; he was written by Hans Faverey, over two decades from 1968 and 1990. My book brings me to a quiet spot on the steps of Galerie Ravenstein, a few feet down from the mouth of the street and presents his contents. "Let's start," I decide, "with *Silk and Chains*", so he begins:

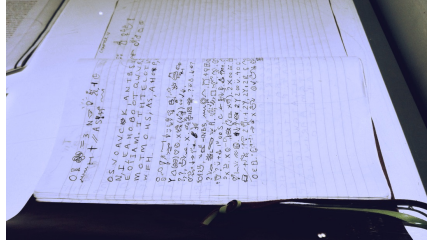
a_ball_is_at_rest____or_it_is_moving___in_
search_of_rest___the_mirror___filled_to_
the_brim_with_what_occurs____repeats_itself_
ex_improvise___semblance_and_essence_
regain_each_other's_balance____the_god_
that_I_name___and_do_not_name___seems_to_
yield___and_not_to_want_to_yield___the_
afternoon_prophesies_nothing_but_itself___
the_brass_box_in_the_window_sill___now_
holds_everything____but_nothing_most_of_
all____the_keyboard___however____ever_
more_fiercely_present____now_holds_a_more_
melodious_silence

On finishing, my book pauses, offering me the chance to continue to the next poem, or open up at a different chapter. My book's name is Bruno de Wachter, a poet in his own right, and he joined Edvardson's library having approached and congratulated her after another of her shows. Each of those taking part in *Time has fallen asleep in the afternoon sunshine* is asked to choose a book and memorise it in its entirety - a gesture inspired by Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*, a novel set in a hedonistic future where all books are banned, in which a group of dissidents rebel by committing whole works to memory.

The exhibition space in which the books are kept also features a bound library with four sections. There are books that investigate the nature of mind and memory, Proust, Borges, Calvino - works that play with the borders between book, reader and story. Then there are the physical copies of all the books that have been and are being memorised (this library continues to grow). Under glass cases are the notebooks which the living books have kept - notes on the process of memorisation, dense cubes of mnemonic glyphs, descriptions of the stories and even of the size and shape of the volumes. Finally, there is a table of volumes that the living books have produced. Having completed the process of memorisation, the books then write themselves again, reproducing a text form of the works they have stored up in their heads. Some are typed, some handwritten - my book wasn't sure about his punctuation and line breaks, so he used underscores to represent the length of his pauses between each word.



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Once I feel I've read enough of him, my book and I discuss the process of becoming a book (about which he has written at length [here \(http://www.ny-web.be/transitzone/match-accordance-orders-communicated-burning.html\)](http://www.ny-web.be/transitzone/match-accordance-orders-communicated-burning.html)). He tells me how the memorisation and repetition work like meditation to subjugate the ego, how Wachter becomes lost in Fevery, and I begin to understand what the exhibition part of the show had already hinted at - I am not experiencing the true heart of this work. I am smelling but not tasting the wine. The real heart is the process, the act of memorisation itself - the abandonment of the Googling mindset and the deep enrichment, through prolonged struggle, of the realm of the self.

Anthony (</critics.html>) for **DRAFF**

Time has fallen asleep in the afternoon sunshine by Mette Edvardsen runs at the Kunstenfestivaldesarts (<http://www.kfda.be/en>), Brussels until 27th May.

Headline image: Titan Bregentzer

Images /1, /2, /3: Anthony Colclough

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