

# PROVENCE

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Letter from the Editor      Sunday, February 1, 2026

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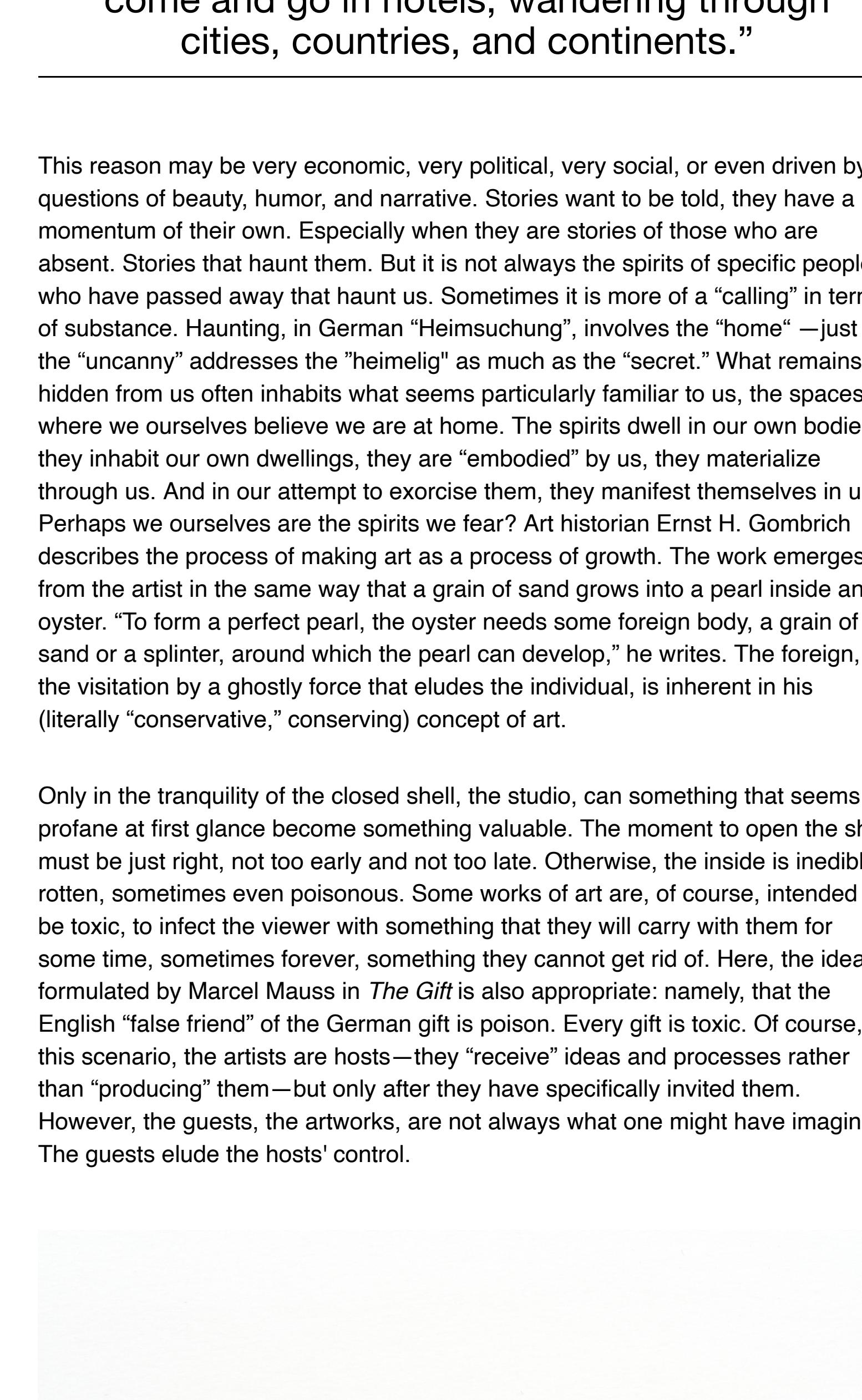
# Best, PROVENCE

*Home is where the heart is*  
– Mark Fisher

living, whom they secretly envy, and who then, as individuals, carry out their missions for them. Just as you come and go in hotels, wandering through cities, countries, of them are artists, you are coming for exhibitions and

is observed as something foreign. Few of the international travelers know much about the developments of the cities they're visiting over the last hundred years, or they view it as an anthropological or archaeological site. As well as ghost artists, too, sometimes feel as if they are fulfilling tasks that are not entirely in their hands. Tasks that have been communicated to them in one way or another by an immaterial entity. As if they were carrying out what they had been instructed to do —for one reason or another.

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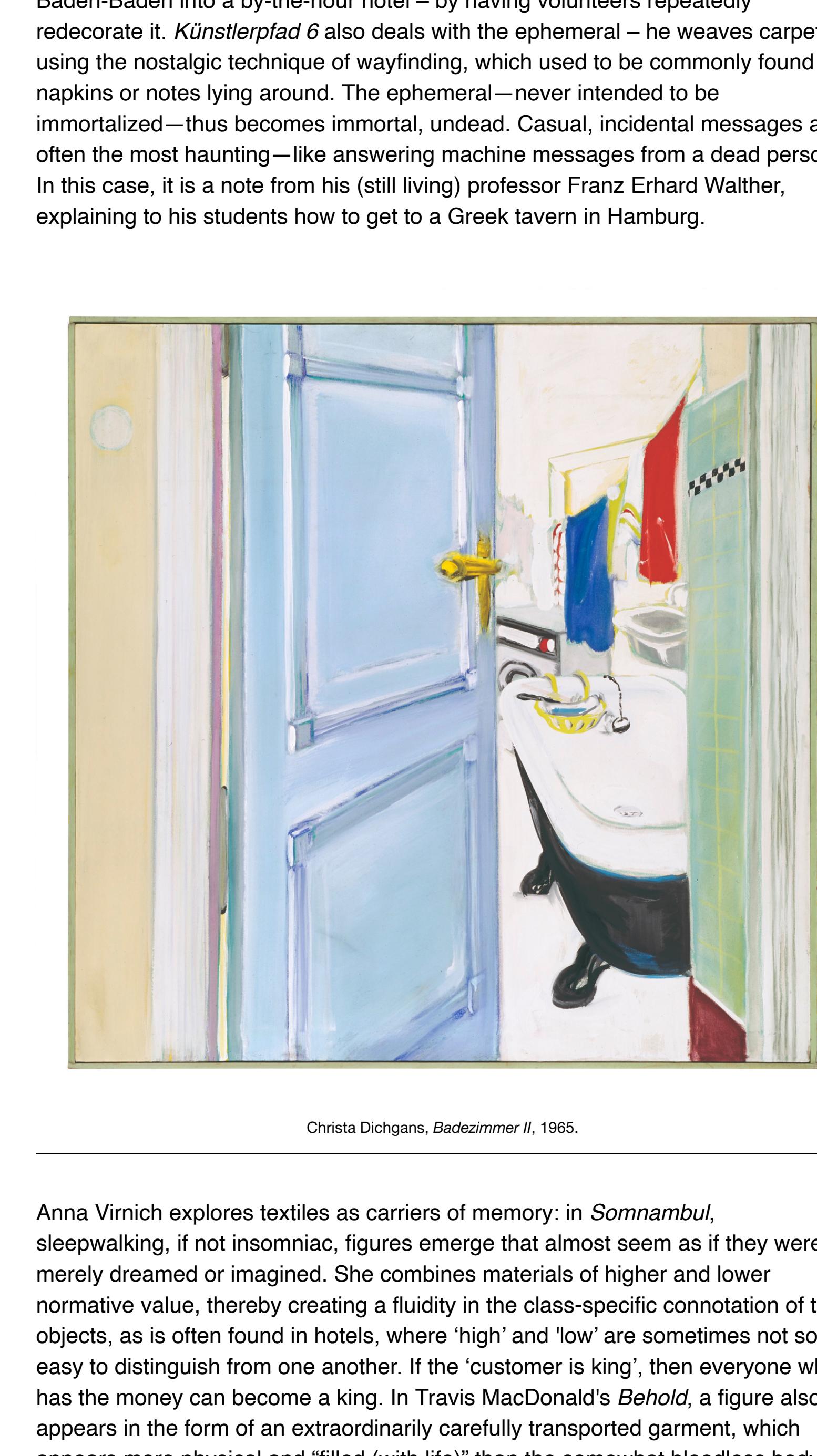
Angelika Loderer, *Peace*, 2024.

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In *Pension ABC*, CFA offers precisely these ghostly apparitions, these artistic apparitions, a “home” and does so in a literally semi-domestic context. The first floor of the Charlottenburg Wilhelminian style building with its star parquet floor is located directly above the gallery rooms and represents a place of classic upper-middle class bourgeoisie. What you only notice at second glance, however, is that there used to be bathrooms in several places. Traces of a time when the apartment, which was initially designed as a family home, was a guesthouse, a small hotel run by a private family, namely *Pension ABC*. The name was chosen for purely pragmatic reasons: ABC, written here in capital letters, naturally took first place in the telephone book, the Yellow Pages. The Yellow Pages (and the alphabetical hierarchy) are like the guesthouses in post-war West Berlin an only recently extinct, archaeological phenomenon of a past that is not so long ago – but nevertheless already nostalgic. Nowhere were there as many of these small hotels as in West Berlin before the fall of the Wall and there is a tragic reason for this. Of course, hardly anywhere else were there as many empty apartments as Berlin after the end of World War II. So the idea of hauntings is not far-fetched; Berlin's historic buildings have often witnessed the darkest episodes of 20th

mouth sticks its tongue out at you as a doorknob, as in *Operator (Mouth)*. A fragmented face stuck to the door looks like part of a death mask. An imp something that was once alive. Zuzanna Bartoszek's *Three Lights* shows from a window, specifically, the view from a train window. A fleeting, domed space. Perhaps the traveler will arrive at one of those guesthouses at the end of the journey. I am reminded of E.T.A. Hoffmann's *The Sandman*, in which the view from the window also creates confusion between a "real" person and a ghostly doll. How many ghosts dwell among us, materialized in figures, scarecrows, dolls, or objects that are heirlooms of the deceased—or even anonymous

A painting by Georges Rouault titled "La Crucifixion" (1930). The composition is divided into two horizontal bands. The upper band is dark, featuring a figure with a red, hooded head and a blue, shadowed face. The lower band is lighter, showing a figure with a red, hooded head and a yellow, shadowed face. To the right, a figure is shown from behind, wearing a red robe with a black cross. The background is dark with yellow and red highlights, and the overall style is expressive and somber.

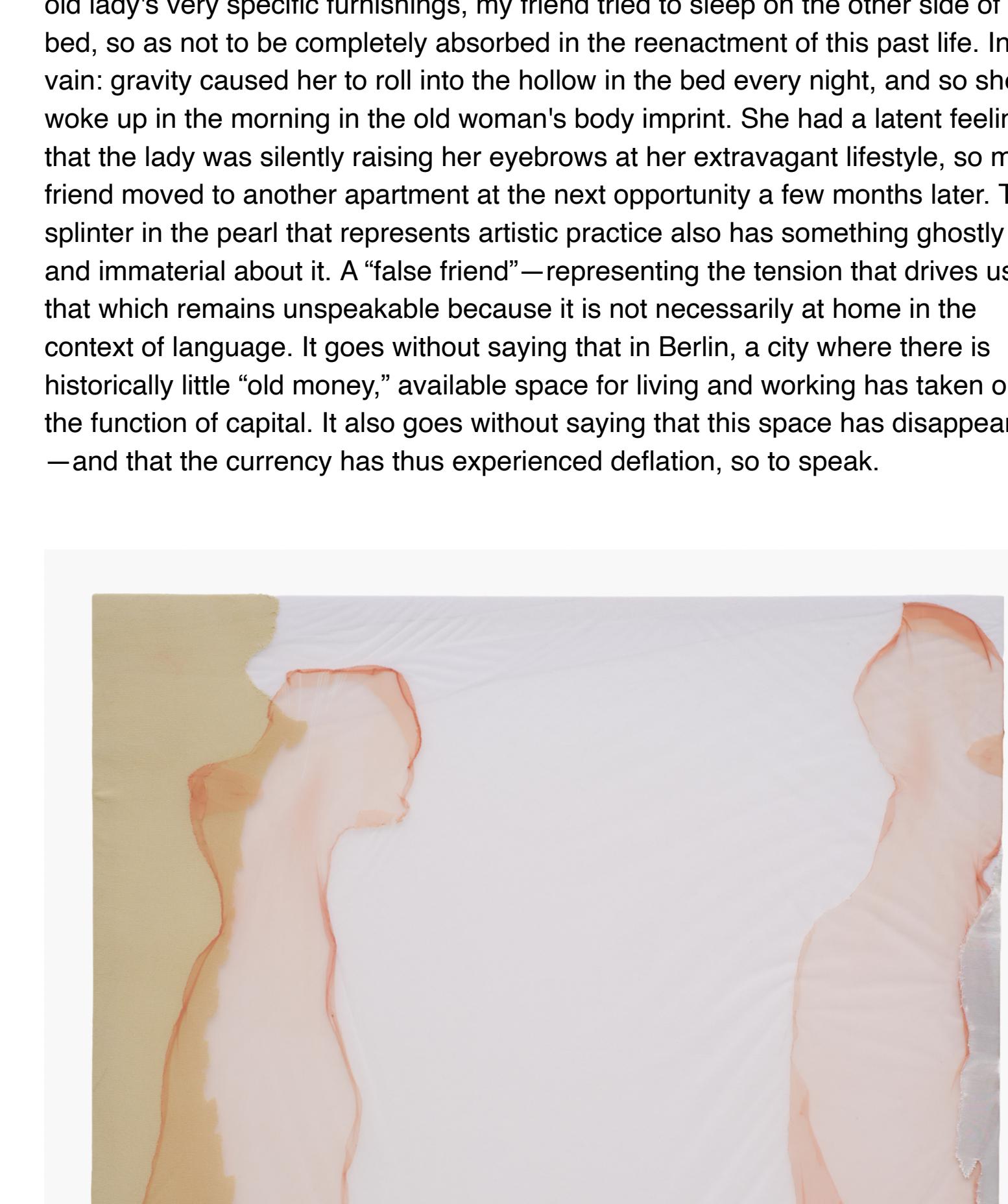


and filled (with life) than looking spirit, an every form of just about anyone's spirit in many forms at once.

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“If the ‘customer is king’, then everyone who has the money can become a king.”

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In *Pension ABC*, the space itself, and its traces on the parquet floor, plays the leading role; the apartment is the main character within the realm of the exhibition. The works, certainly more than „extras“ though, are arranged in a site specific manner in a context that could hardly be more particular, reminding us “what Berlin once was.” *Pension ABC* reminds us of this in a pleasantly local-patriotic manner, and in a way closes the circle by showing us that history is cyclical. It doesn't repeat itself, but it rhymes - as Mark Twain writes. Where there is “not much to be gained” for artists in this city, either commercially or institutionally, the underground develops. Passion and dedication become the (only) mission. Mutual support seems easier when there is not much to compete for. The history of the city is written in basements, studios, squatted spaces, and

for. The history of the city is written in basements, studios, squatted spaces, and above all in private and semi-private spaces that are suddenly shared. Communication about “where what” is happening tends to be oral, in the spirit of speakeasy culture. And, without wanting to fall back into the logic of the corporate world, the new currency in the scene is perhaps precisely this information—about “what is happening where with whom.” The precariousness is not romantic, but brutal. We are certainly not „sitting in the same boat“. But there is a certain “equality” in it, or at least a tenderness and enthusiasm. Because, as Diedrich Diederichsen recently described very accurately in his Artforum article *The War on Bohemia*, it has simply become damn hard for artists to live in this city, which

Diederichsen recently described very accurately in his *Artforum* article *The War on Bohemia*, it has simply become damn hard for artists to live in this city, which structurally attempts to eradicate bohemianism and its idea of freedom of expression through urban politics. And, simply put: It's become damn hard to pay for one's life, every day. So there's no need to be afraid of the ghosts of the past because they disappear just as quickly as they arrived. And in any case, you should be at least as afraid of the living creatures of the present. It's a comforting thought that new ghosts are also being created and that one day you yourself will become a hopefully "friendly ghost." A reliable, a steady ghost. (Because *ghost* people - lovers - , on the other hand, is OUT in 2026.) The more ghosts we have,