A large, stylized red handprint graphic is centered on a light pink background. The handprint is rendered in a simple, bold style with thick red outlines and a solid red fill. The fingers are spread out, and the palm is open. The text is overlaid on the center of the handprint.

Rai and
Nadia
talking
about
Constance



RAI Let's continue describing what we see in this card: pleasurable wind infuses the present like a soft cotton candy pinched with fingers. It alights stinging breeze, which goes along the cheeks. It's a unique texture that conquers, refines and broadens the senses, possibly a character in itself, possibly the grand Knight, multiplying or expanding himself – a very reassuring and tenacious person, as tenacious as light.

NADIA It is very much about how to let go and be guided by someone. The first thing that I feel by looking at Constance's world – one that can only be perceived from the outside. It cannot be as clear as it is in her mind. And this gap to me is very interesting. I like the space that it leaves for one's imagination. A tangible truth.

RAI What is tangible truth?

NADIA Something that you can see or feel or grasp, and that in this way, becomes visible to anyone. But at the same time, you cannot share or feel it. It's as tenacious as light.

RAI But when you say like ‘imaginary world of someone’ you almost say that it’s inaccessible to anyone else. But, for example, an artists like a chef in the kitchen can express that imagination in a sensible and shareable meal, no?

NADIA Then it’s tangible. It goes into your mouth and infuses your body, for example if it’s a bad food, and it’s difficult to digest, it leaves a trace in your body. I think what artists try to do is to give another kind of sensation and expand beyond what we all know. Constance expands our imagination into a different world, where there are no definite answers, but a sense of endless joy. That’s what I felt first when I looked at her drawings. I was like, ‘oh, she must have had fun making them’.

RAI Burping in that respect is also a very specific sensation. It’s not something that you can easily share with someone else, but it reflects the meaning of an abdominal muscle and reflux.

NADIA It’s painful and pleasurable.

RAI Right? Exactly.

NADIA And it requires some level of intimacy too.

RAI And it would be hard, hard to find a person who would be very good at talking about burping, let’s say like, who would really describe it like with lots of joy and eloquence.

NADIA Yes, it revolves around this idea of what we try to suppress. Burping is often associated with being inelegant. Anything that brings us back to our physical nature is, in a way. Maybe the purpose of artists is to reverse this logic and to say, we can burp and feel good in our own skin. Maybe that’s the ultimate elegance?

RAI In history, I think more things got suppressed rather than emancipated into something elegant. It’s not often that you would have someone at the dinner table burp and be proud of it. Right? The simplest example is smell – people eradicate certain smells. Like sweat.

NADIA I always had this sensation that it has to do not only with the acidity of the body, but also with what you eat. To me, it is the opposite of solipsism: we are part of something larger than us and what goes into our bodies also emanates from us.

RAI Yeah, that includes also less-apparent matter. I was reading some awesome research on the bacterial field in our digestive system. Apparently, in ancient times bodily waste would work like anti-depressants. Some people who were less happy could eat faeces of very happy people and they would become fused with that discharged happiness.

NADIA Whoa. Oh, man. But when was that? Do you remember?

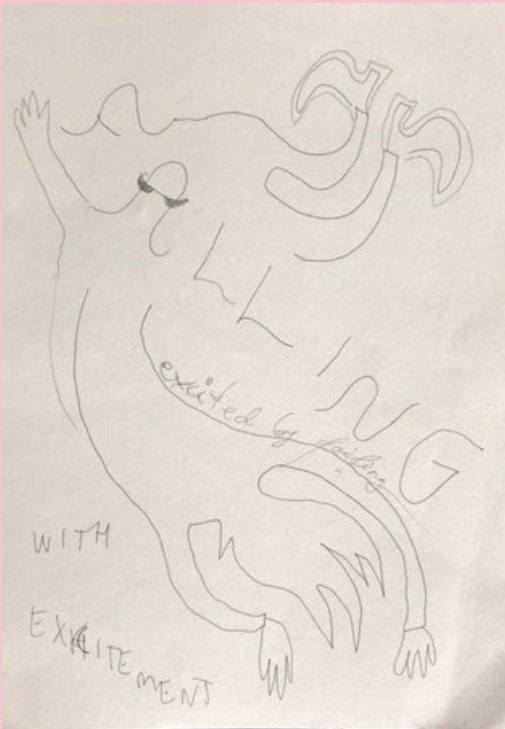
RAI I couldn’t say precisely, maybe thousands of years ago? Let’s go back to what is happening in front of us: so tenacious as light, along with the presence of a sudden, common desire to materialise feelings into a bubbling mass, slightly heavier than a foam that cannot be trans-

lated into words. Feelings are floating right above the ground like a cloud at the top of a mountain as if they were sky-diving close to the floor. Bodies willingly and excitedly grasp these differentiated experiences of time, speed and gravity. Love shows what time is. We spread our arms in slow motion to feel the weight of time on our muscles. When are we present? Is it like being in a future and also in a remote place of remembrance? Like inter-looping circuits between anticipating something and informing your present with it, and seeing how that anticipation shapes your feeling of the present. Anticipation and memory coexist.

NADIA It’s in a way when you let go, when you embrace this sense and with joy. Embracing everything that is surrounding you is another level of presence. I think when you let your mind wander there’s another level of presence. Rather than when you’re rushing to get your train or thinking about the future of your career, all those things can paralyse. The best way to be in the present is to let yourself go, and get anything you can get from it. It is really greedy in a way, but in the good sense, like being hungry for life.

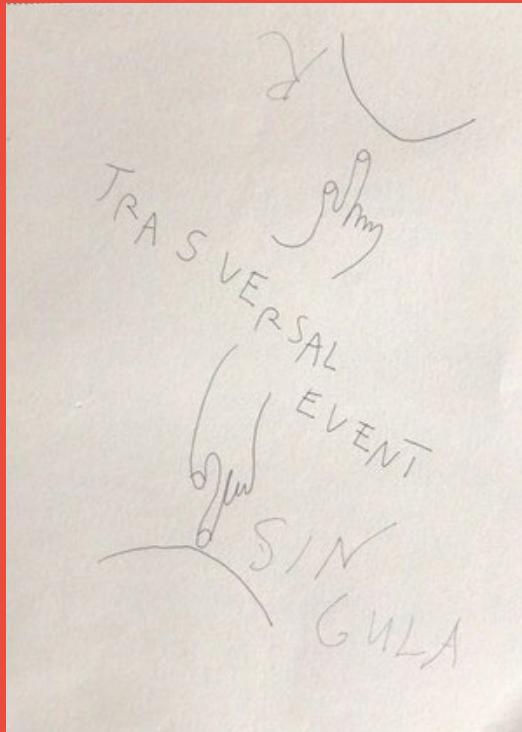


the detective
 doubting the
 criminals
 mind
 realises that
 it was not a
 mind of a
 criminal to
 act all



WITH
 EXCITEMENT

excited by failing



TRAVERSAL
 EVENT
 SINGULAR



DREAMS
 FRACTION

THEY GAVE ME DOPPLINGS OF OTHER PEOPLE

RAI There's also that saying, you know, 'do something like there is no tomorrow' – we say, oh back in the day people were partying as if there was no tomorrow. Maybe it corresponds to being free from thoughts that paralyse you. The future can be very paralysing indeed if you're scared of what will happen there.

NADIA Also, if you focus too much of your energy on one set of goals or even just one goal you can miss sight of all the other opportunities. So it's a matter of balance between focus to be able to achieve things and drift. In and out, in and out, letting things go through you.

RAI Yes. Not to hold to them too much. It's a matter of daily practice, trying not to hold to things.

NADIA And then comes curiosity. If I go back to Constances' drawings, there is this sense of curiosity, there is this spontaneity that you get out of them. Makes me think that she can surprise herself also. Deconstructing your self-beliefs about yourself, to me is the best way to open up to the world and all that it has to offer.

RAI What is that practice of deconstructing beliefs about yourself?

NADIA We are the person that we believe we are, the person that people think we are, and the person we really are. Trying to get closer to that person that we really are is the most surprising and exciting, to me. It's looking beyond your own judgments. If you don't apply them to yourself, then you can also get closer to others. It becomes very exciting because you get to see beyond what most of the people would see. And then you can create a deeper connection.

RAI I was reminding myself recently, how to not reduce the world, including friends, for example. How to not reduce my friends to something I already feel that I know about them, and who I think they are. Because reduction is also a form of domination.

NADIA I was talking to a friend who has four kids, two are twins and really young and two others are older. I watched them grow up from afar. One of them now has a blurred sense of his gender identity. It's



really beautiful to see how my friend embraced it. She has this funny saying: 'a kid is a package that you get and cannot return'. You have to accept that you cannot mould that person.

RAI Yeah. I didn't order that package. But I remember you telling me you had a very touching, emotional and physical experience with an artwork. Maybe now it's a good moment for you to talk about it?

NADIA I felt deeply connected to that artist in a way that I couldn't have imagined possible by *just* looking at art. Now I'm torn between the desire to get to know that person, and the desire to never wanting to get to know that person. It was so beautiful that anything that can happen now, will break the beauty of that moment. I want this experience to remain untouched.

RAI What was in that experience that made you so shaken and moved?

NADIA The sense of fragility of life.

RAI That's a feeling that my mother likes to remind me of, always.

NADIA And it's not that it was a sad exhibition. In western Europe, we are really confused. And this exhibition reminded me that it's not the case everywhere. I really felt the pain of generations. And also, how pain gives, at least in my vision, this artist a sense of purpose and a sense of humanity. He can touch everything with grace. The piece that brought me to tears was composed of three hanging white shirts, that belonged to him, his father and his grandfather. There is something before and there's something after. Everything was alive and could not be produced or duplicated. In that sense it comes very close to the real value of art.

RAI Irreducibility – again, we are talking about irreducibility. I also went through the consequences of submission on the last day of the exhibition by Constance. And there was that sort of like moment of controlled conflation of many different forces in one event, a messy multiplicity of happenings. At the same time multiplicity with a lot of grace and elegance woven through it. Because Constance

herself acted that way and people who came also generously embraced it and responded to this vitality.

NADIA I was thinking a lot recently about the distinction between life and survival. I thought maybe there is no distinction between the two.

RAI How so?

NADIA You can try to survive, but do you really survive if you don't live? Trying to live your life, isn't it the best way to survive? I am aware, of course, that this peculiar sense of resilience can be very difficult to grasp in some given situations; whether you were born into very difficult circumstances, or you go through a very difficult time in your life. But maybe, especially then, there is no distinction between keeping your head above the water and living your life. *To survive* is maybe to find this ability to nurture joy and pleasure in one's mind and also unity. It's a true revival, after all, this sense of vitality.

RAI I thought a couple of days ago what it would be to live a good life without it being a matter of achievement. To live a good life without having ever considered that you need to achieve something, or having specific qualities, either related to your status socially, competition, or your, let's say, consumptive power. How not to reduce, but even to abolish the sense of achievement from the notion of a good life. Would you agree that very often in an anonymous society a good life is a matter of achievement, for example when people say they are proud of their life and something they have achieved, either through their labour or smartness.

NADIA When I think about a good life it brings me to the idea of its conclusion, in a way. Like, when you get really old or when you know that your days are almost over. And, to me, the person who had 'a good life', that I know, is my grandfather.

Very recently my mum told me a beautiful story about him. He was a baker and had a bakery in the northeast of Algeria. He didn't have many adventures and never

travelled outside the country, not even to Algiers. The reason why he had a good life is that he always had this sense of inner purpose and of knowing who he was. He was 93 years old when he spent his first night ever at the hospital. My aunt and uncle who work there saw a lot of people queuing in front of his room, like, a lot. And they were wondering, who are they? When they asked these people they all said, 'we grew up with his bread'. He was just giving away the bread when people didn't have enough to eat. What I found fantastic about that story isn't only how generous he was, but also the fact that he didn't tell anyone about it. Not even his own children. It's insane when you think about how much sense of self and sense of own value he had and that he didn't need to show off anything. That's quite amazing. If you have a sense of your his own value like that, then I think you had a good life.

RAI That's a very beautiful story. Let's continue with what we see in this card by Constance. It's someone who is a bit like your grandfather, who was hiding. His tall silhouette hides and shadows blend in complex backgrounds. I'm wondering what clues could sweat out of these

worlds. His deeply set eyes glance all around musing that every inanimate object could share their stories aloud. High boot resurfaces tossed on the floor. One tie resurfaces and stands as the silent witness of the previous extravagant night. And it's an abundant exhibition. I like the notion of abundance here. Constance's cards are landing on the ground, shamelessly displaying dirty tricks, and fraudulent secrets. Such an excess of information for one's mind to process at once. Almost all of them got lost in the mix and overload. It is out of hand to untangle the complexity surrounding compromise and complicity. Any attempt is a very slow process, which has to be repeated from many different angles. The textures, colours and smells taste different each time. The detective walks out of the room with no clues, but somehow with more adequate questions. Maybe it's like us tonight. What if he isn't walking in the steps of one yet to be identified criminal? What if what he's after cannot bear a human face? He draws, maybe she draws by hand. Parallel vertical lines, traces of her clumsy and repetitive gestures in the manner of a bottle in the sea. She leaves her drawings behind hoping someone will follow her trail. Edgar Allan Poe possibly the next person entering the room.





NADIA Perhaps in her future Constance would have the habit to dream even more vividly. This ability to have, as we say in French, one foot in one place and the other foot in another. The sense of being in between at a place where both universes can exist and where she can reveal the existence of what is unseen to us.

NADIA And what is in her future is maybe helping others to broaden their senses, experience adventure and shameless pleasure. Stretching time, making it worthwhile.

RAI That's very nice. I like that kind of future.

RAI Having one foot in one place and the other somewhere else, kind of implies that we are bipedal beings, but what if we are more like centipedes? Maybe this is how I see Constance's future from that story that we read; it looks more like a centipedal future.

NADIA Maybe in her future she won't even just look just around, but it would also be up and down and everywhere else that we are not yet able to see yet. It's the sense of adventure, that I can see in her drawings. Totally the opposite of boredom. That's what I see in her future.

RAI Maybe her future gives a possibility of introducing a good life that is not a matter of achievement.

