

Kim Wyon,  
Piazza delle Vigne  
Genoa, Italia

## SOULFUL SHADOWS

Vested with the monumental ethos of Yves Klein and Mark Rothko, Danish artist Michael Chang's monochromes offer a subtle treaty of lustrous hues calibrated by cool Nordic light.

"Shadows" are what the artist calls his monochromes, and rather than presenting a Platonic antidote to the sensual, emotional world, they engage it head-on. Cast in a vernacular of chlorophyllic greys and brittle, combusted browns they recall the stoic, achromatic grace of Vilhelm Hammershøi yet offer transcendental escape.

The transcendental realm on which Michael Chang's paintings open is less of a hallowed hinterland and more of a compelling, tactile presence. They offer no "zip" as with the vertical stripes in the monochromes of Barnett Newman - openings with which, in principle, to "undo" the mundane world like zipping open a tent and walking out into the Promised Land.

Michael Chang's paintings are true to the conceptuality of the monochrome. In fact, they are just that: monochrome surfaces where compositional alchemy is relegated to the edges of the painting, to the mercurial borderland between the saturated canvas and the white-space it inhabits.

Far from offering transitory moments of fly-by existence, Michael Chang's monolithic apparitions evoke the image of soulful steppingstones juxtaposed by an iridescent void. They are empowering and eye-opening yet are easily invested with our most burnished fears. They are our ghosts. They are sobering and even haunting. Michael Chang's monochromes are, in essence, ethereal amplifiers of our emotional chords, calling on reflection and introspection.



4 grades of reality

absence no. 1

michael chang (b. 1973, dk)

oil on canvas

93 x 110 cm.

2008





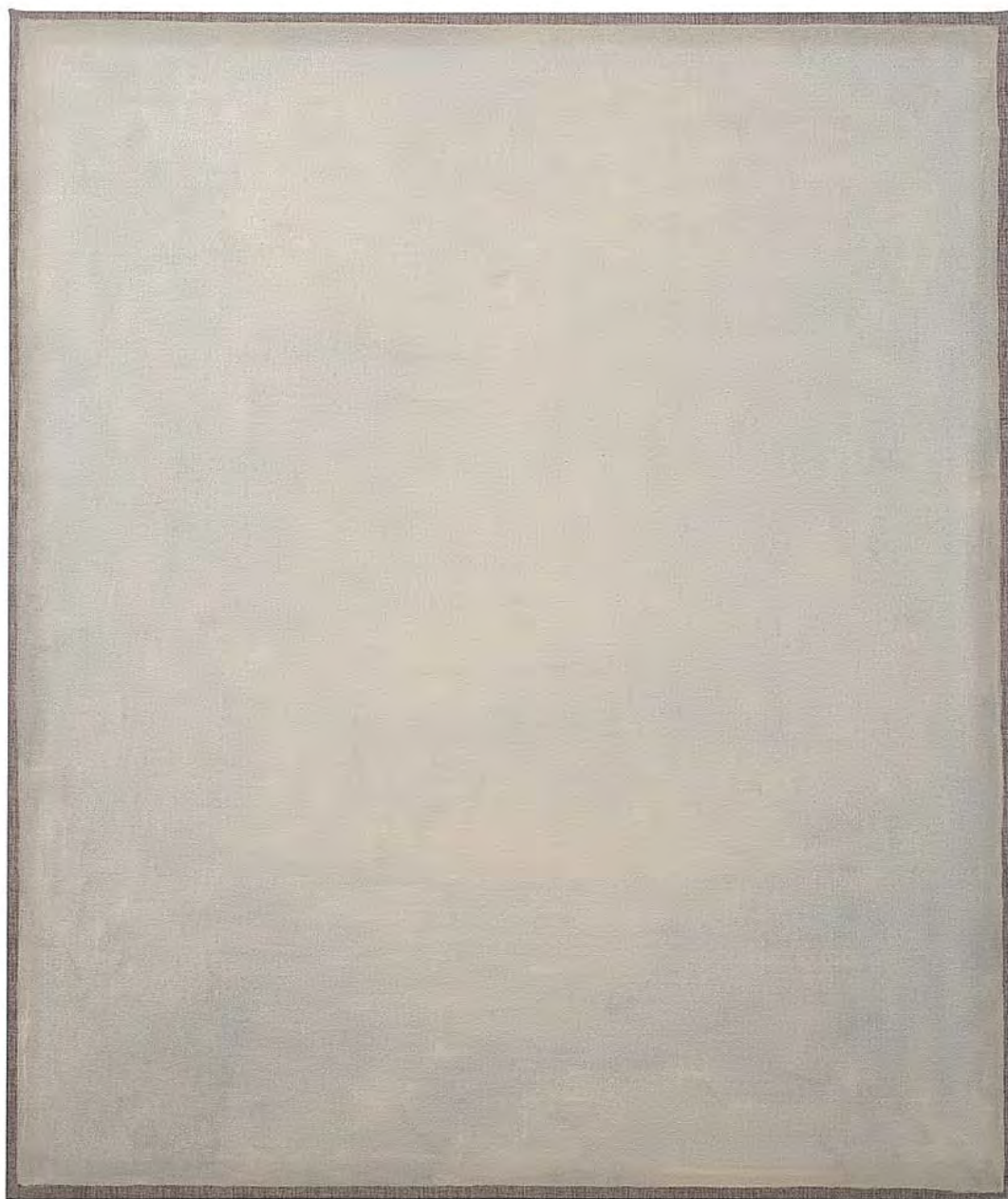
absence no. 2

michael chang

oil on canvas

93 x 110 cm.

2003

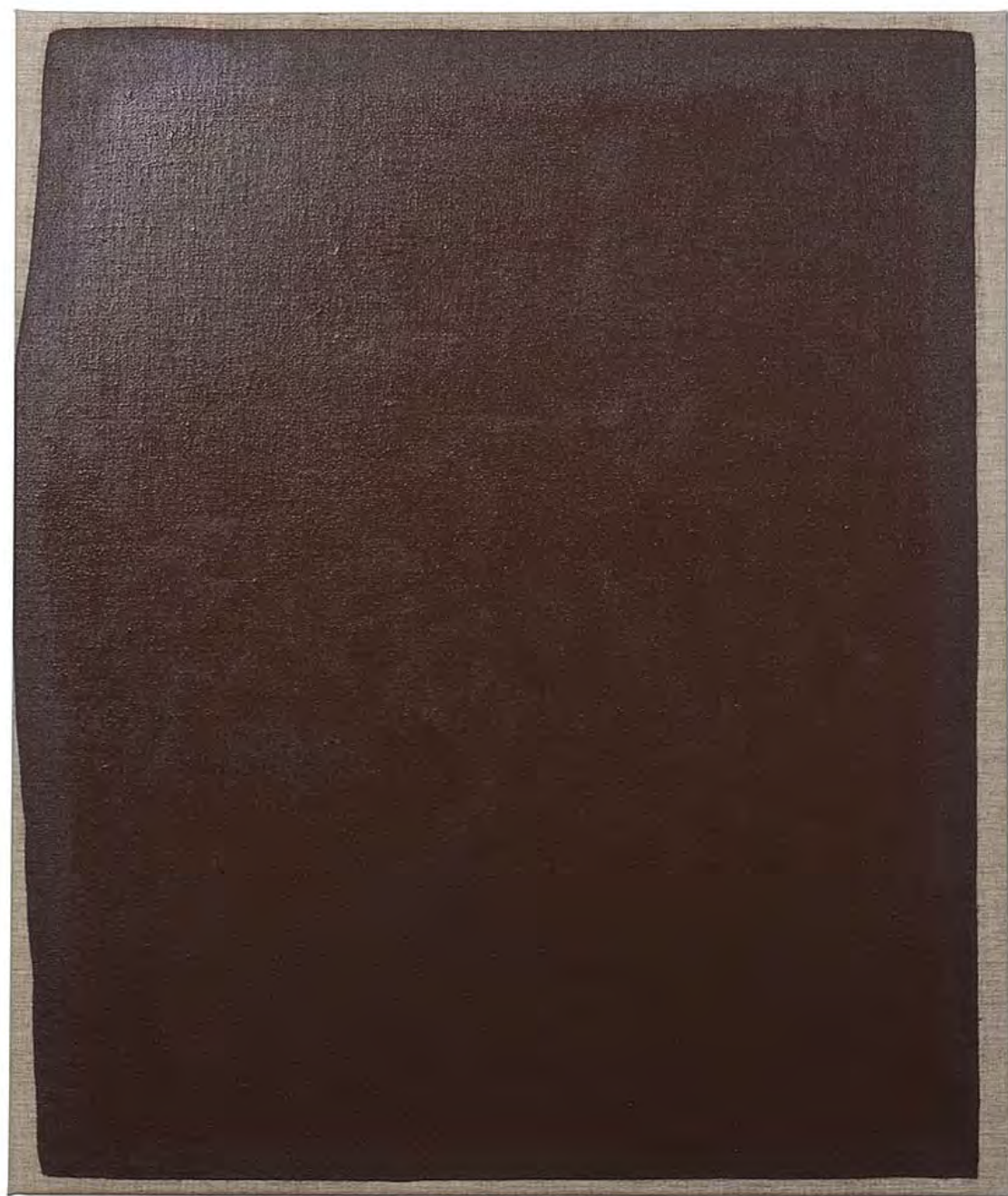


absence no. 3  
michael chang  
oil on canvas  
110 x 130 cm.  
2008



absence no 4  
michael chang  
oil on canvas  
79 x 93 cm.  
2008









# The Meditative State

An excerpt from the book  
”Meditation – en rejse tilbage til dig selv”  
(Meditation – A Journey Back to Yourself)  
in danish by Svend Trier

”THE OBJECT OF MEDITATION IS TO CALM THE SURFACE  
MIND AND BEGIN LIVING FROM WITHIN.” - SHRI AUROBINDO

Meditation can be understood in two ways: partially as a particular state of consciousness, and partially as different techniques, methods and tools which can assist the individual in opening herself to this particular state.

When we talk about meditation as a particular state of consciousness, we are talking about something that we all know and have experienced, or at least glimpsed. For example, when we are in nature and become overwhelmed by a beautiful sunset or a magnificent view. When we are captured by a wonderful work of art, or forget ourselves in music at a concert. Or when we are absorbed in conversation with another person and completely lose our usual sense of time, etc.

In moments like these, there is a certain alertness and attention, a feeling of intense nearness, and a sense that our usual worries and broodings have disappeared. We might experience a deep feeling of oneness with our surroundings, with nature, with the other person – and it is as if time were standing still. We feel at once closer to our own essence and, paradoxically, connected to something bigger than us, with life, with heaven, the whole – or however we choose to name it.

## TURN OFF THE MENTAL NOISE

Peak experiences, as the psychologist Abraham Maslow called them, have a deeply regenerating and renewing effect on us. They give us a new perspective on day-to-day challenges and on our existence as a whole, they give us new energy and inspiration and can sometimes help us rearrange our priorities and bring direction to our lives. But these are fleeting, temporary experiences, which may only leave a faint echo in the rest of our

lives. Soon, the experience will usually fade into the background or become overshadowed by busyness, different external factors, diversions or simply inner mental noise and mental activity.

The meditative state cannot be summoned by force of will, but certain conditions can be created under which there is greater probability for the state to occur on its own. And through regular practice of meditation, we can gradually reduce the inner ”mental noise”, which often monopolizes our attention on the surface of life and makes us turn off the deeper levels of consciousness.

The way that most people live nowadays does not leave much room for contemplation and self-reflection. There are always e-mails and text messages to be answered, information to process, different decisions that need to be made.

We need breaks and silent periods everyday to return to ourselves and re-establish contact with our own essence. Paradoxically, we need more time to experience timelessness in our everyday.

So turn off the computer, the television and mobile phone and give yourself time to dive deep into yourself, to come in contact with your own hidden resources. Set aside an hour every day where you can meditate and let your surface mind relax, and open your consciousness to deeper inspiration and creativity, which will bring renewal and joy into your everyday life.

If you give it a chance, it will have a surprisingly positive effect on different aspects of your life.

– Svend Trier, meditation instructor, lecturer and author of the books *’Vær dit eget lys’* (Be Your Own Light) and *’Meditation – en rejse tilbage til dig selv’*.

Michael Bastrup Chang

Michael Bastrup Chang

Michael Bastrup Chang

Michael Bastrup Chang





work notes 2008

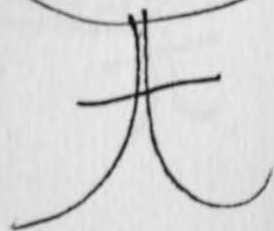
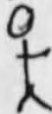


my head

how can I be  
good?

by seeking wisdom  
and implement it to my  
works of art.

by seeking truth and  
stuff that is relevant  
my own essence, cos  
I am a fragment of  
the whole.



THE DATES  
APRIL 2008





the whole

what benifit man is  
to reject ignorance and  
become one with the whole!  
(no idea how i am @ 2 o'clock)

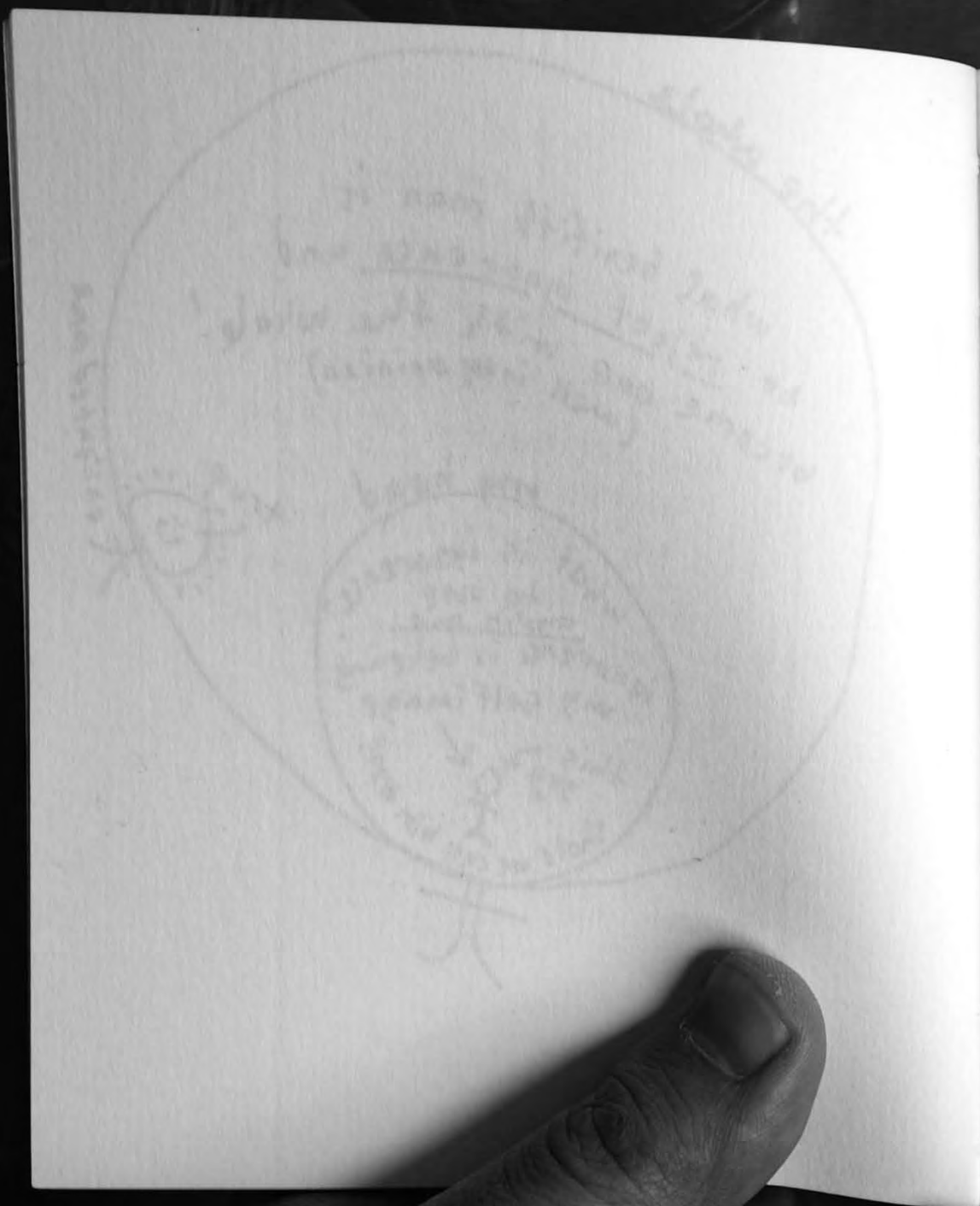
my head

what is ignorance?  
to me  
and in me  
ignorance is believing  
my self image

this guy  
↓  
Should we call him ego?



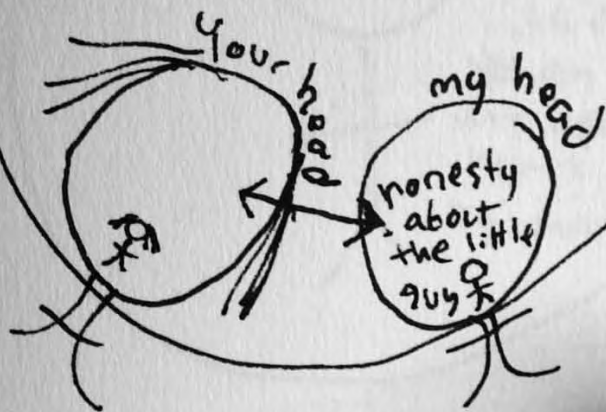
enlightened one

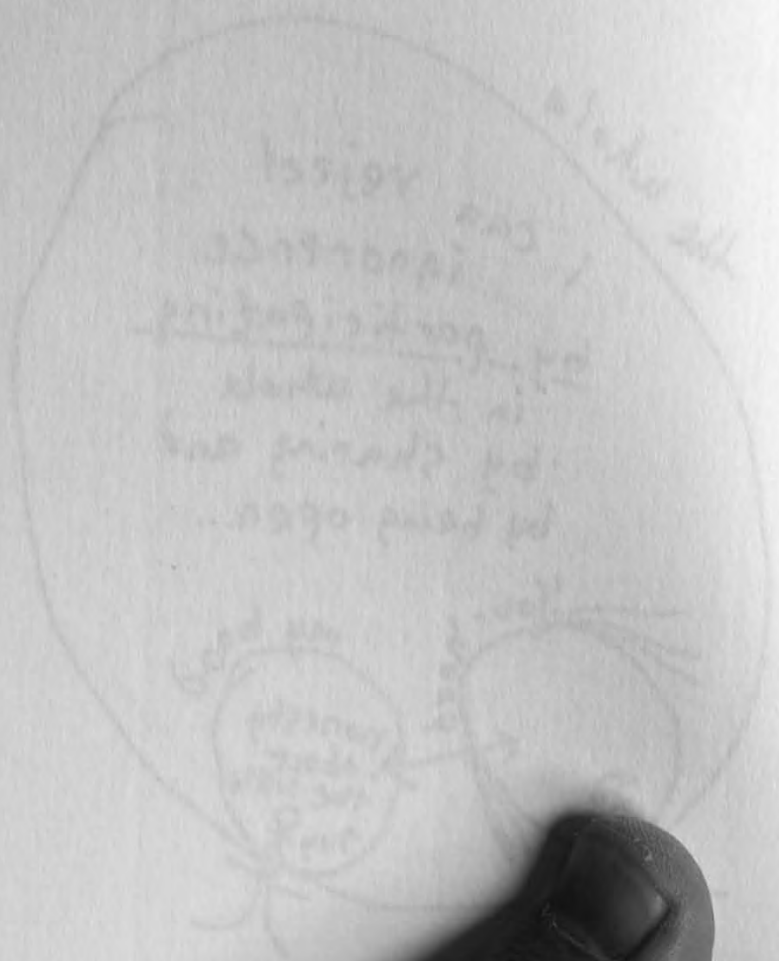


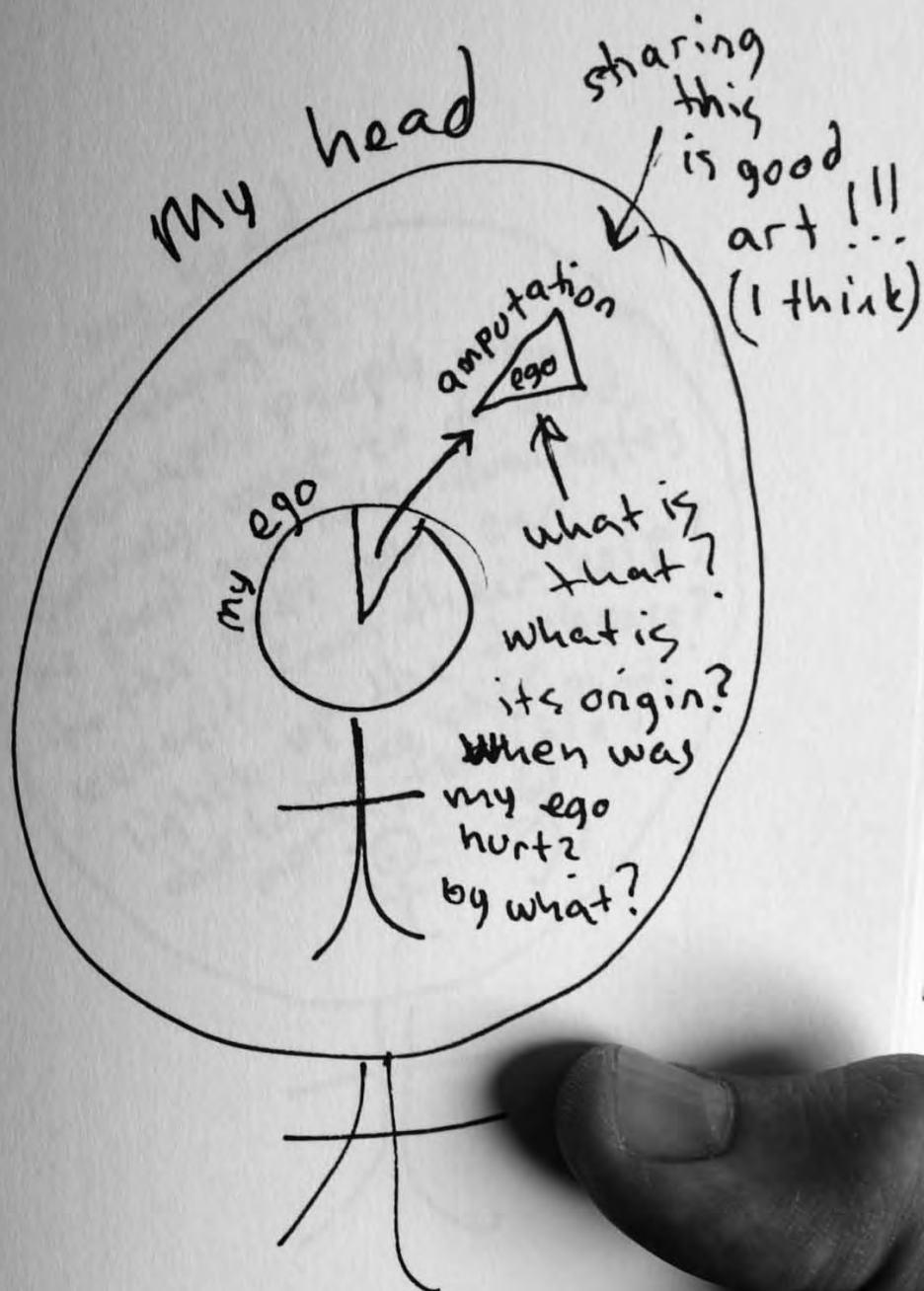


the whole

I can reject  
ignorance  
by participating  
in the whole  
- by sharing and  
by being open...











my head

a thought:  
perhaps, people who  
genuinely want to do good,  
be good and help. illuminates  
to the ones who can  
benefit from their help?  
lights up the darkness?  
able to make stiff minds  
more flexible?



THE DATE  
APRIL 200

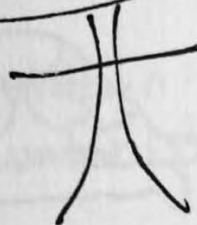
Handwritten text inside a circle, likely bleed-through from the reverse side of the page. The text is illegible due to fading and bleed-through.

my head

I can reject  
ignorance by:

concentration  
meditation  
contemplation

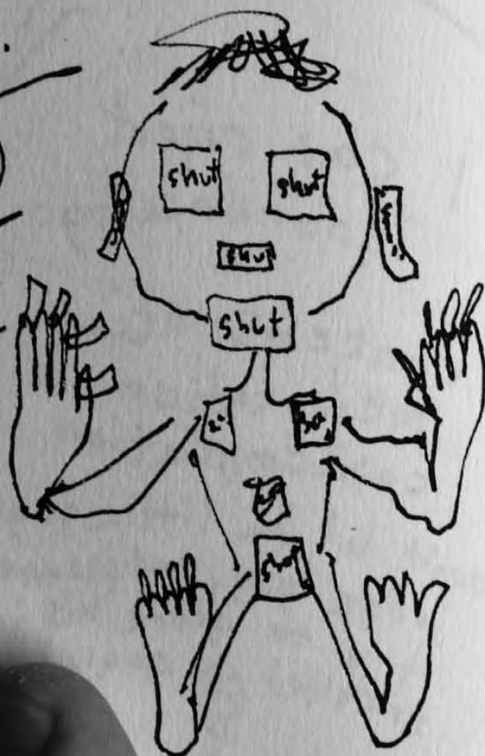
(don't let the little guy  
judge you, and please  
try to ignore his  
so called



things  
shut.

closed

introvert.

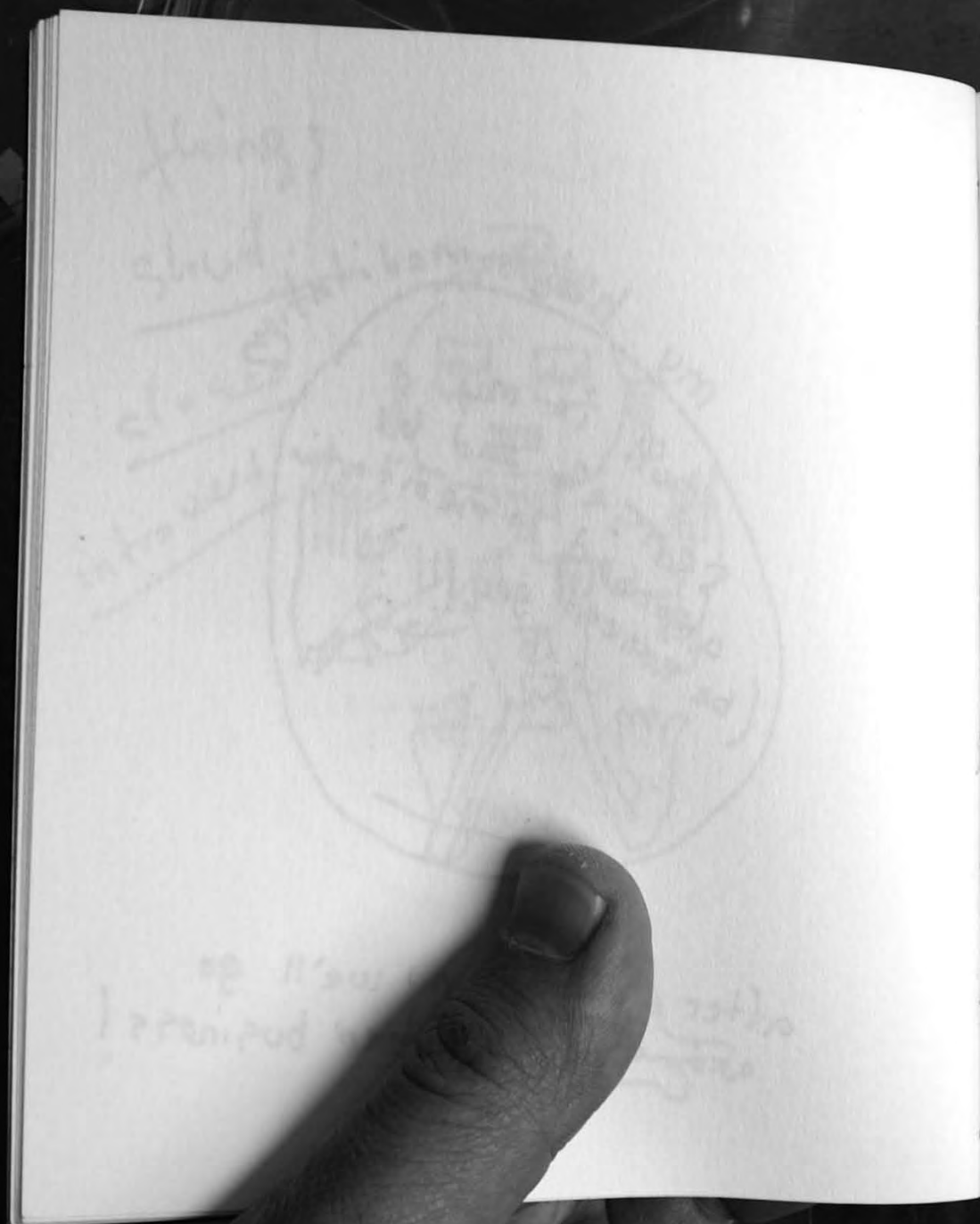


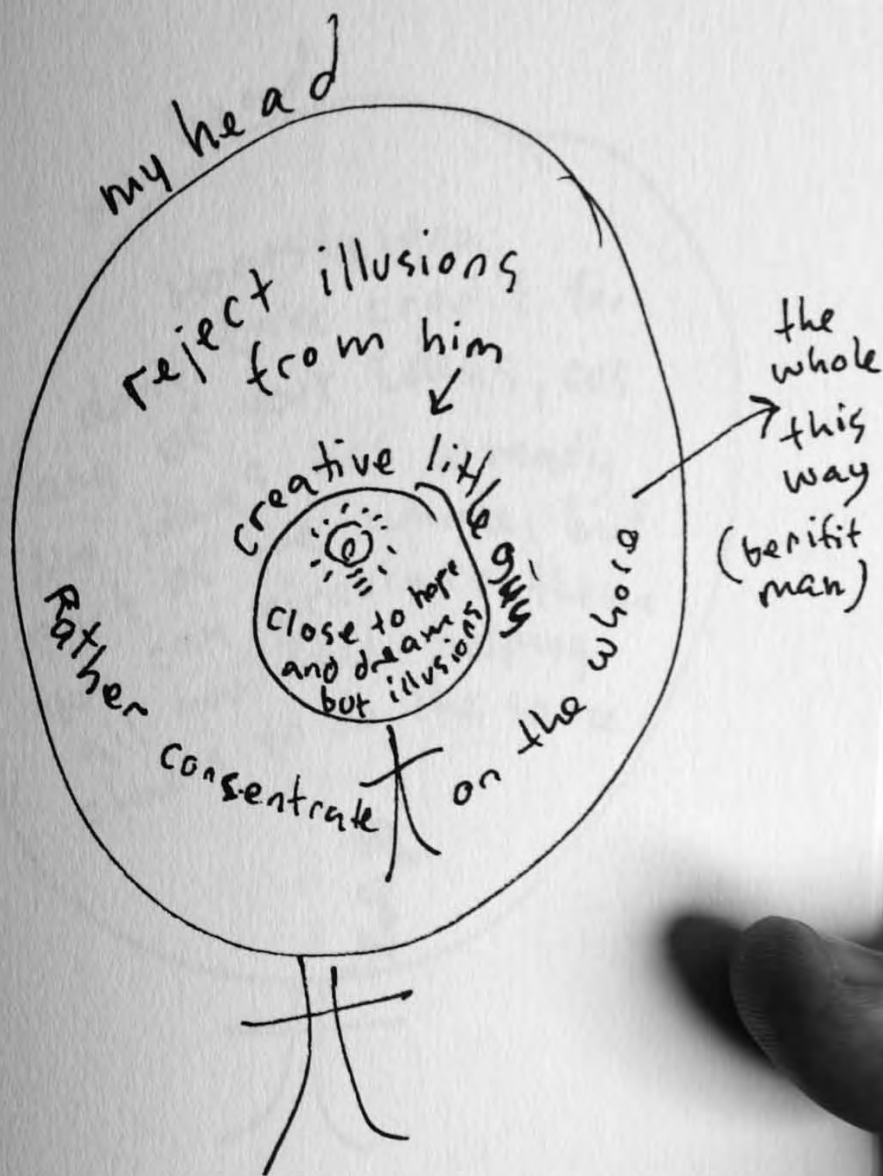




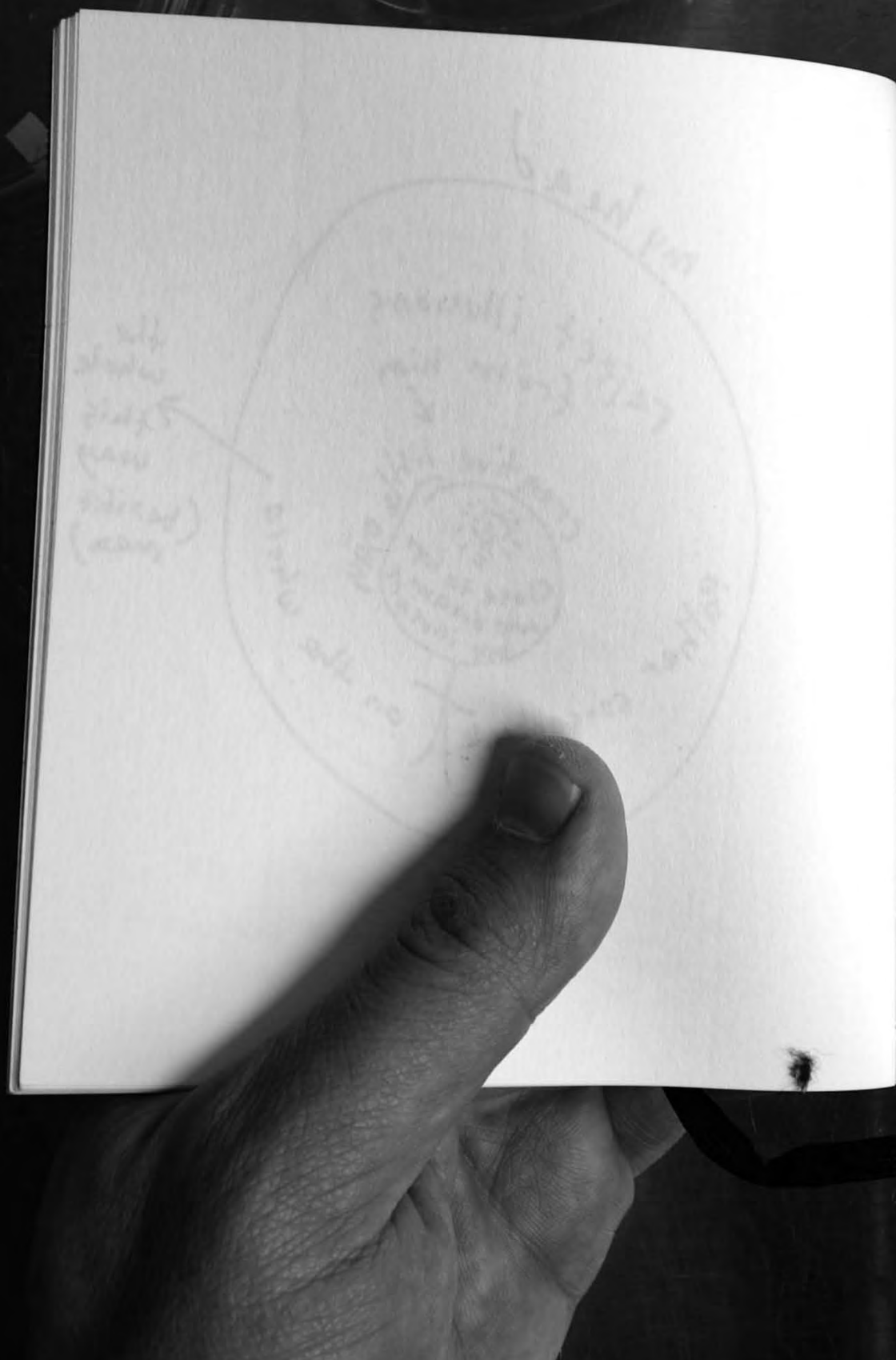
after meditation, we'll go  
and do unfinished business!

THE DATE  
APRIL 200





THE DATE  
APRIL 2008



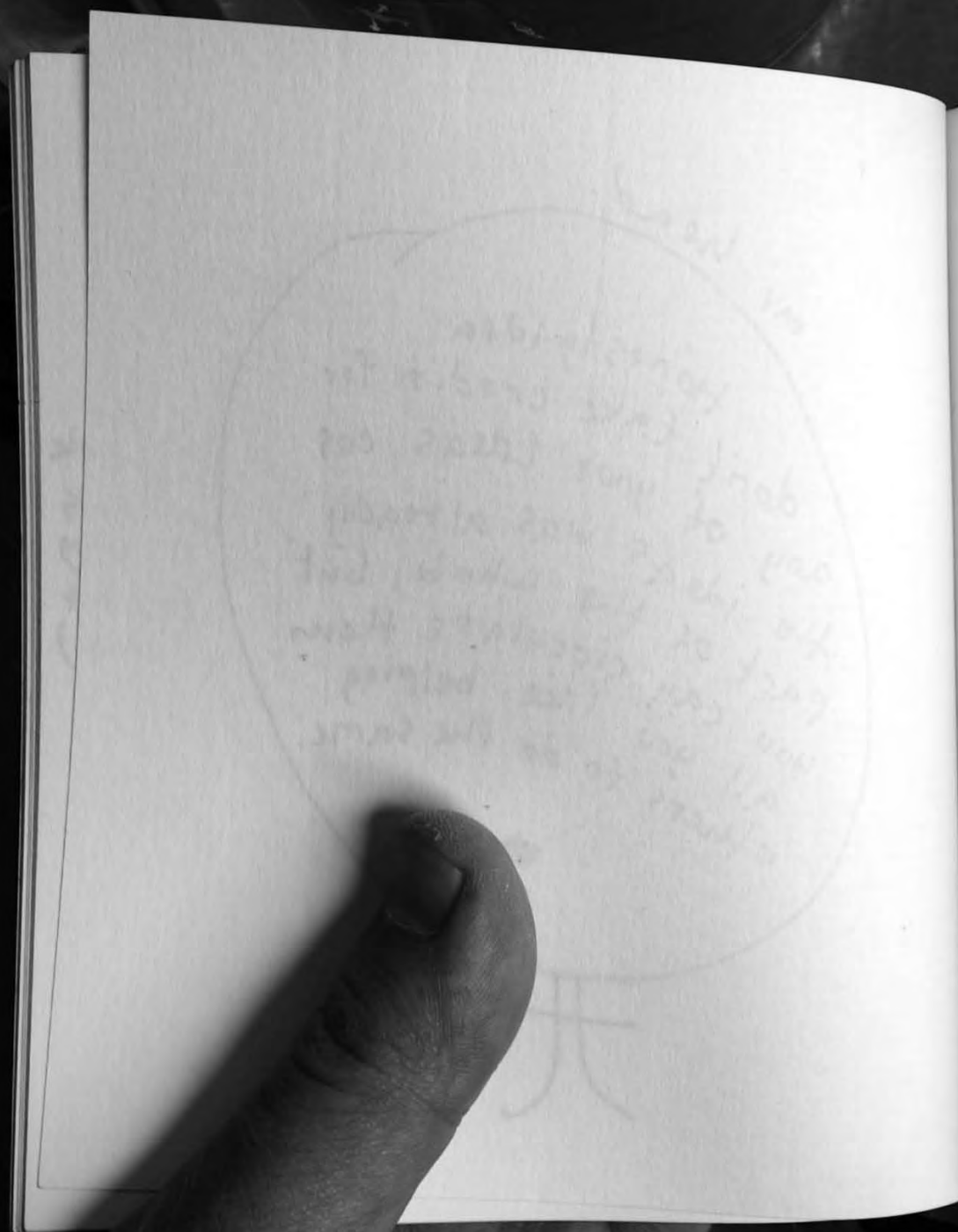


my head:

Honesty idea:  
don't take credit for  
any of your ideas, cos  
the idea was already  
part of the whole, but  
you can circulate them  
all you like. helping  
others to do the same.



THE DATE  
APRIL 2008



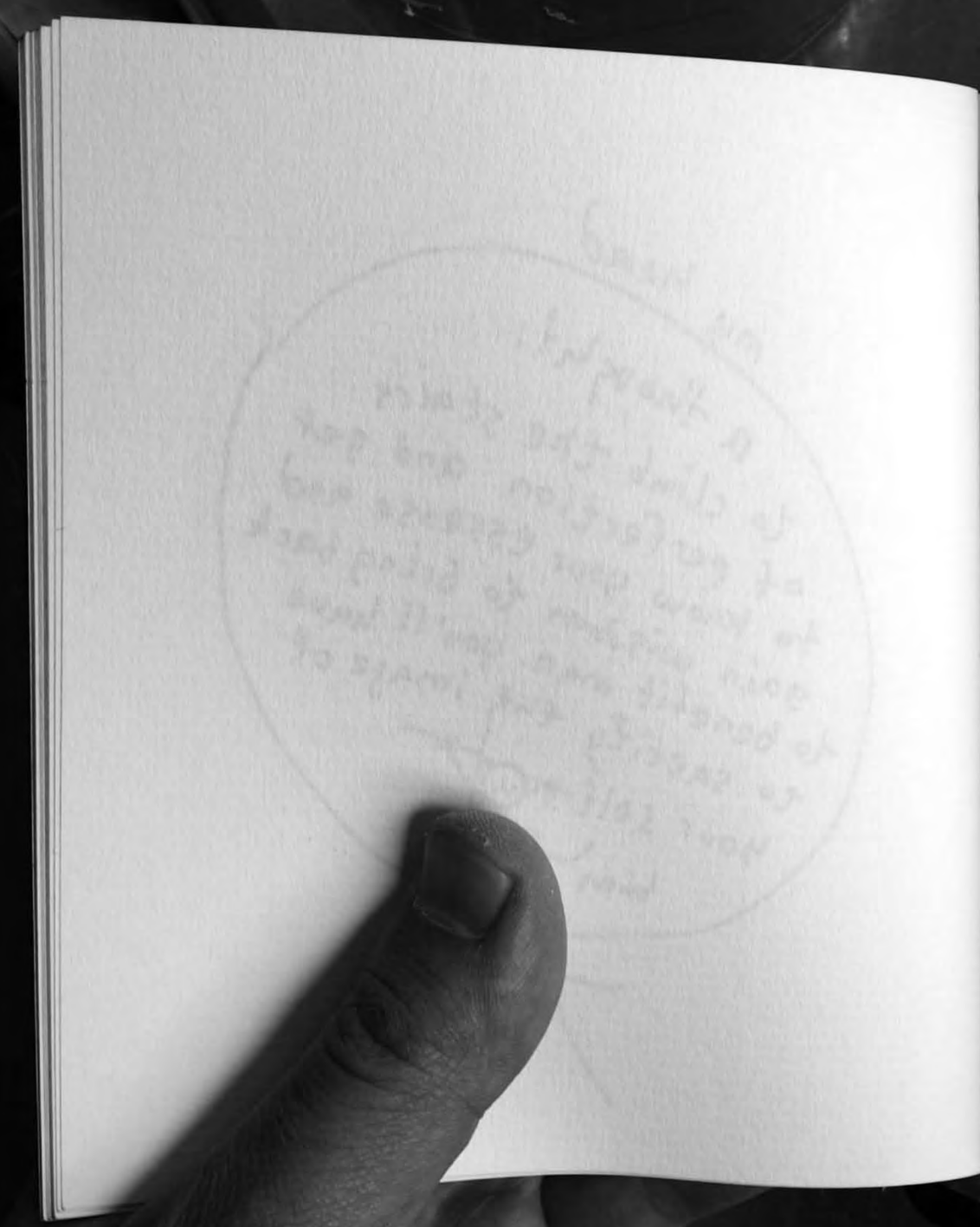
my head

a thought:

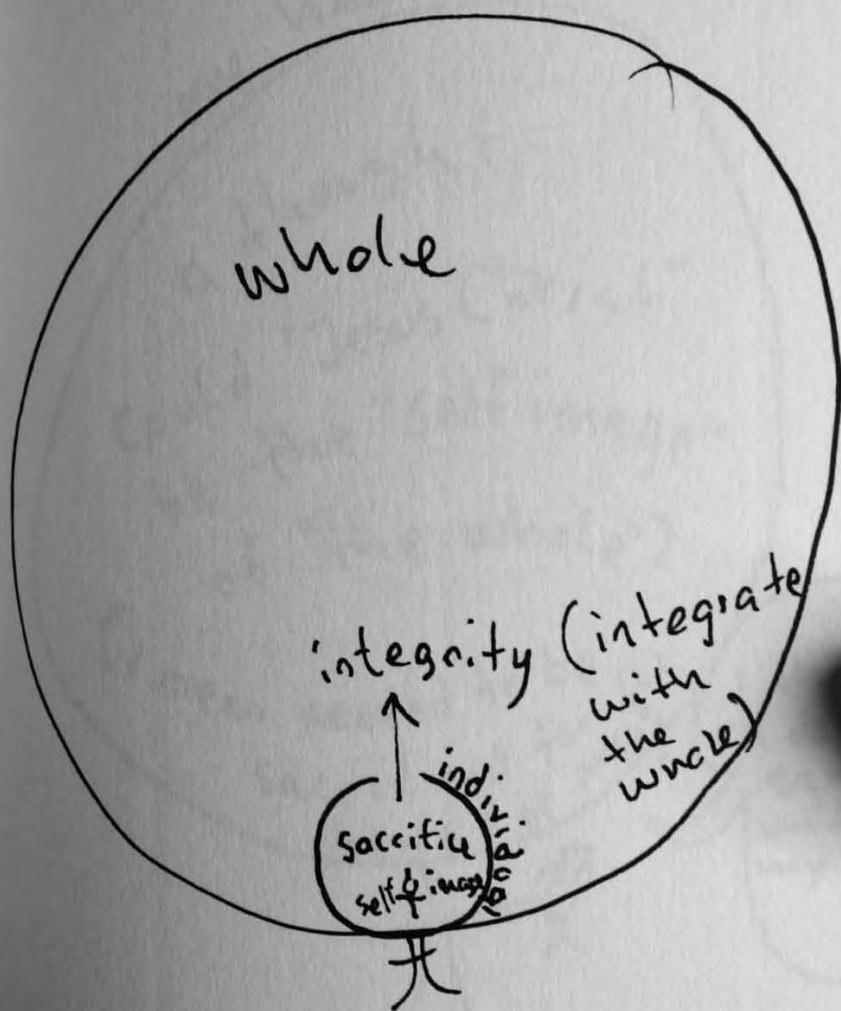
to climb the stairs  
of perfection and get  
to know your essence and  
gain wisdom to bring back  
to benefit man. you'll have  
to sacrifice the image of  
your self

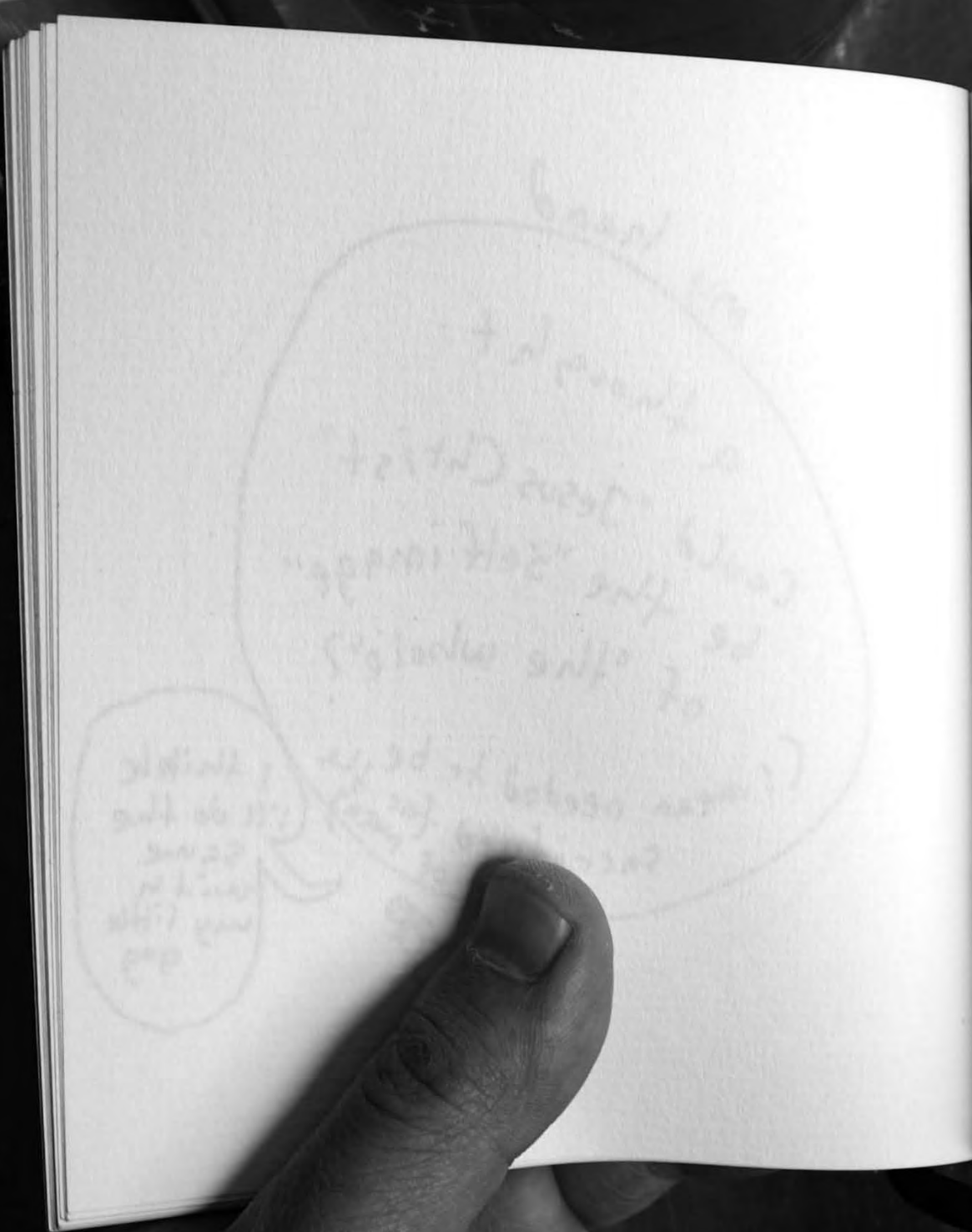
him





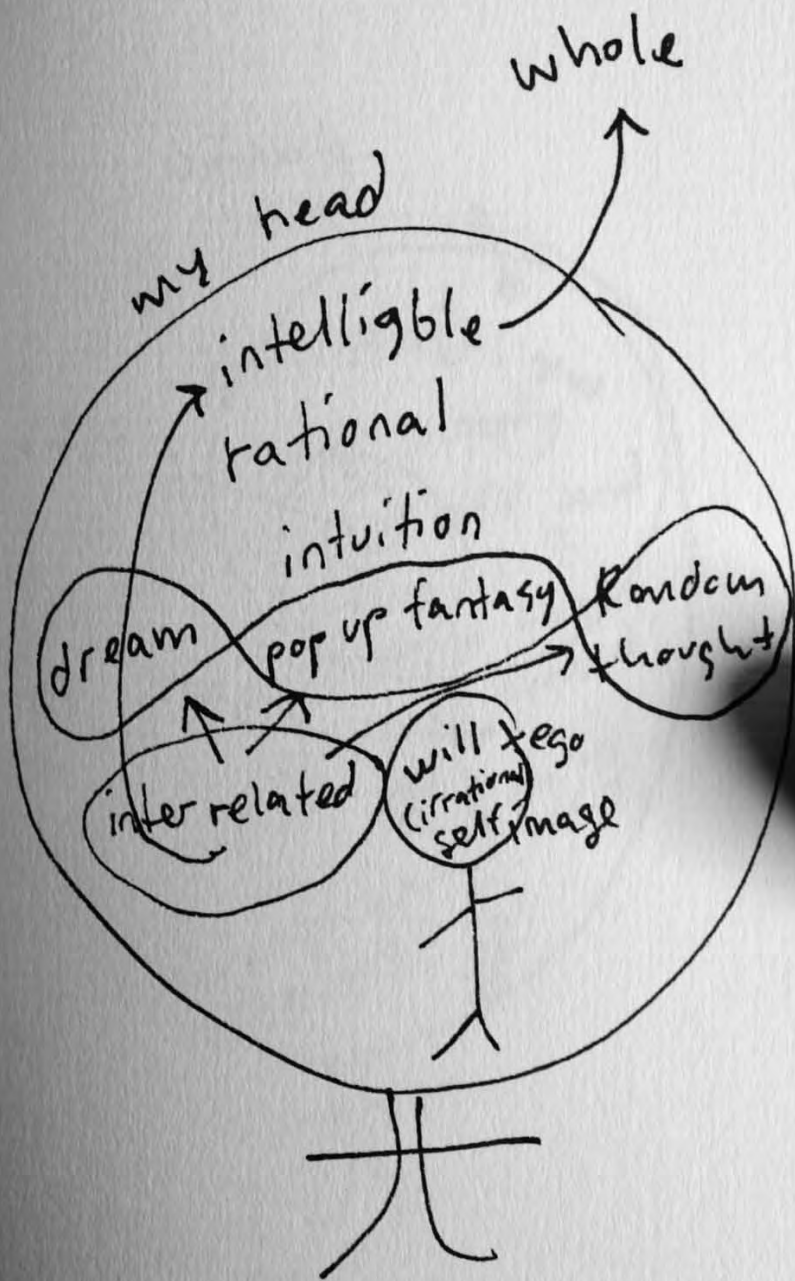


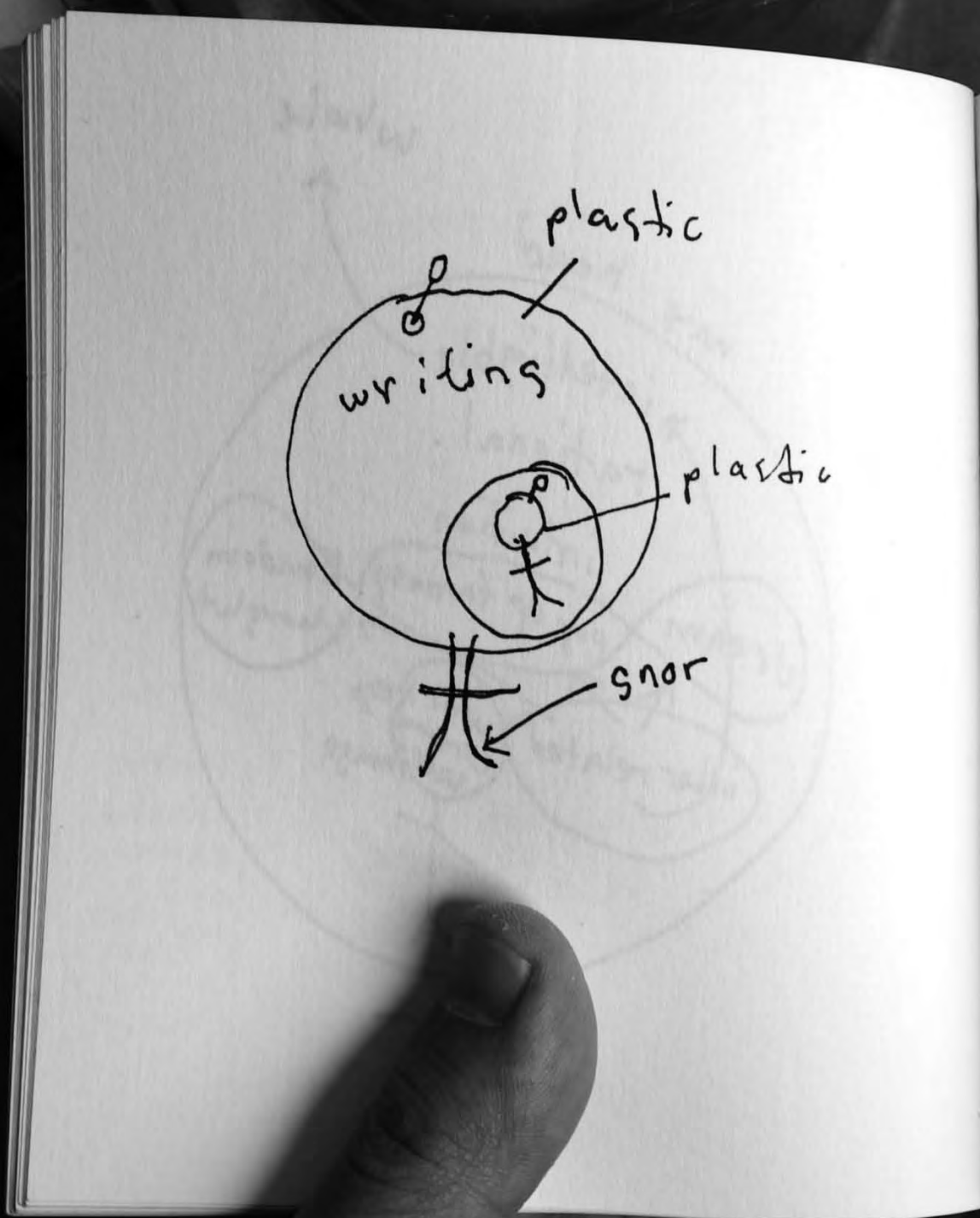




Handwritten text inside a small oval shape, likely a note or a separate item.

Handwritten text inside a large oval shape, likely a list or notes.



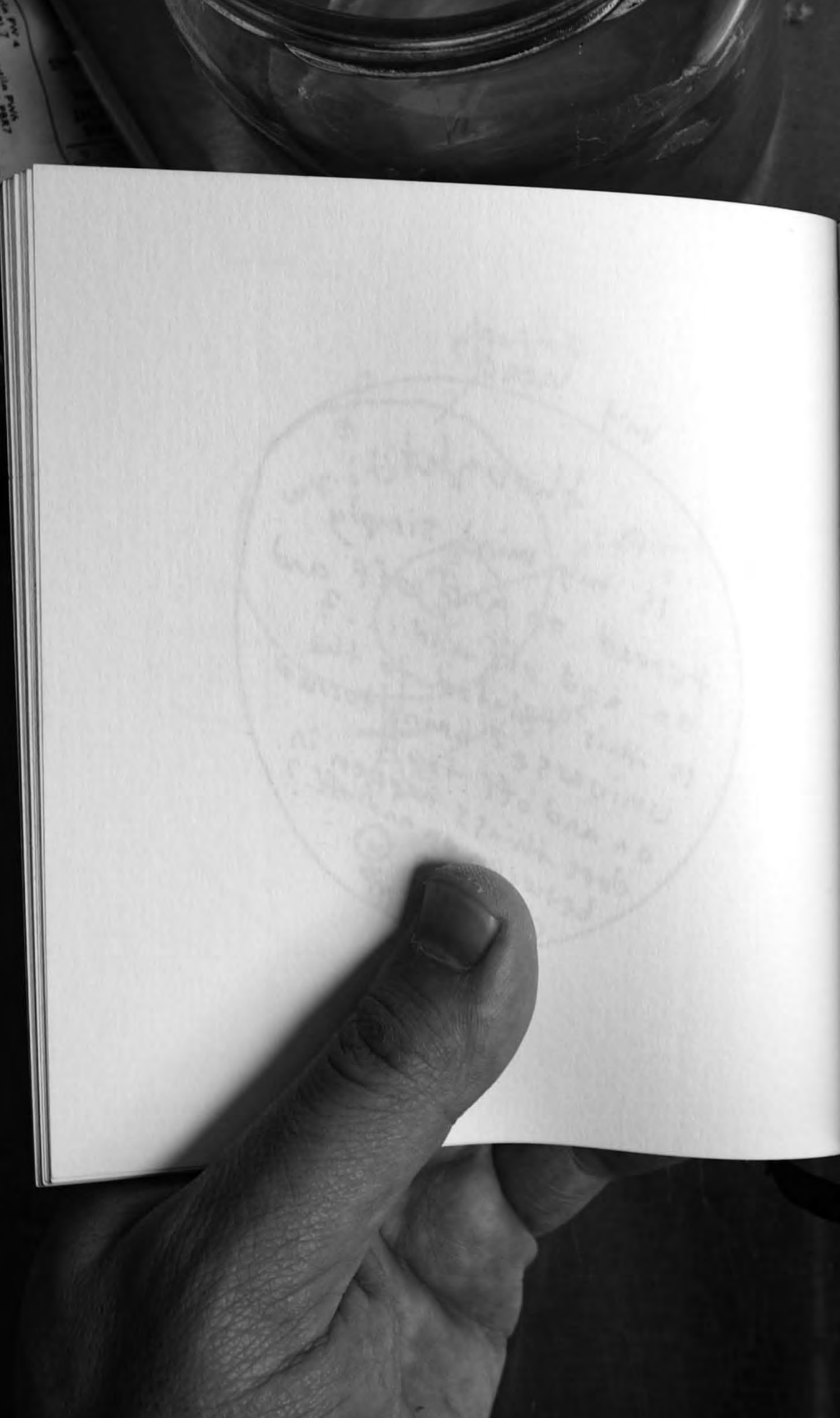




my head

a thought:  
is my mind simply  
turned on and off and  
on and off and ....?  
Is this related to the  
universe? being turned  
on and off too?  
does things happen in  
between on and off?  
changes?







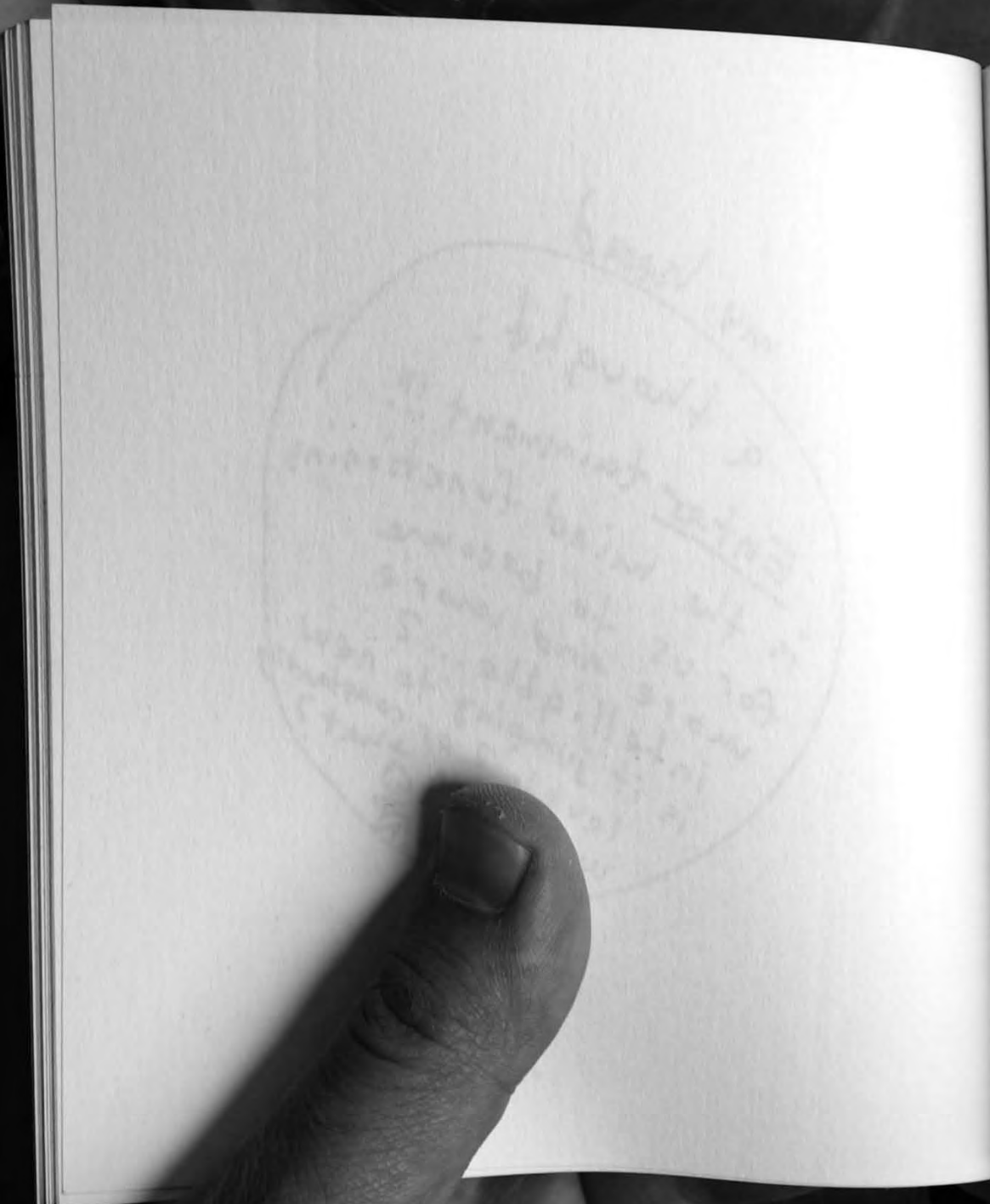
my head

a thought:

Enter tainment !!!

is the mind functioning  
for us to become  
more and more  
intelligible...?  
is it jumping to new  
levels? or constantly  
working on that?





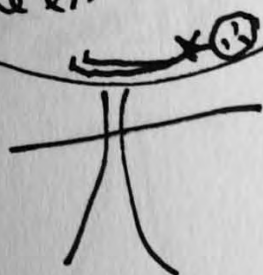
my head

an idea:

should

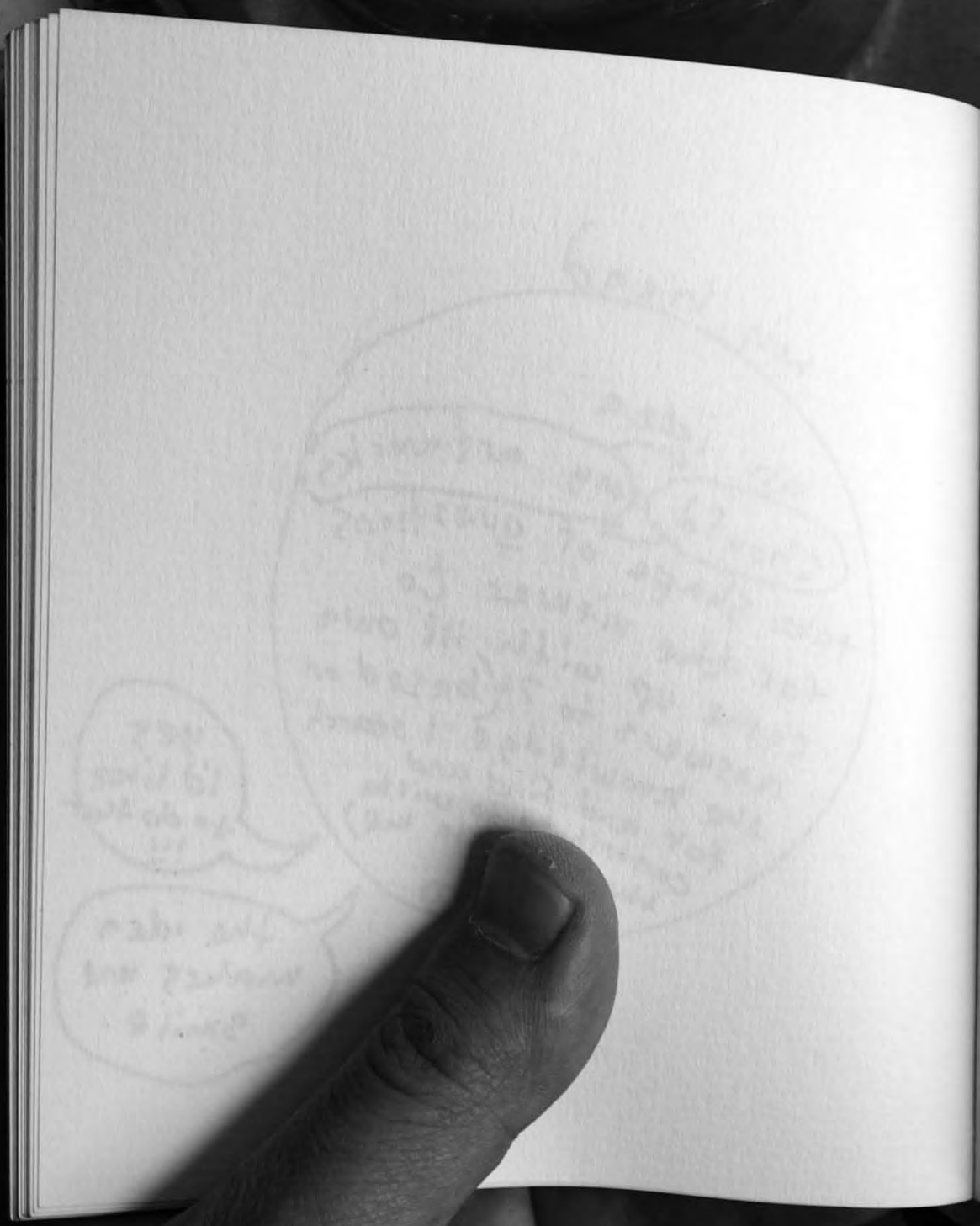
my artworks

take shape of questions  
for the viewer to  
come up with its own  
answers to ?! (based on  
the knowledge I search  
for and find and  
contribute to with  
the essence in me)



yes  
I'd like  
to do that  
!!!

the idea  
makes me  
smile





my head

ideas on my art:  
so my art should be  
suggestions and as an  
artist I should be open,  
curious, flexible, attentive,  
listening... my art should  
be asking questions  
or raise questions  
about the things  
that will benefit  
man!



So I'll  
study to  
become  
wiser  
and more  
able to  
benefit  
everyone  
!





my head

some thoughts  
on "sacrifice":

less coffee

2001: no telly = more time  
to get wisdom

2003: start yoga = flexibility  
Quit sugar physically and  
mentally

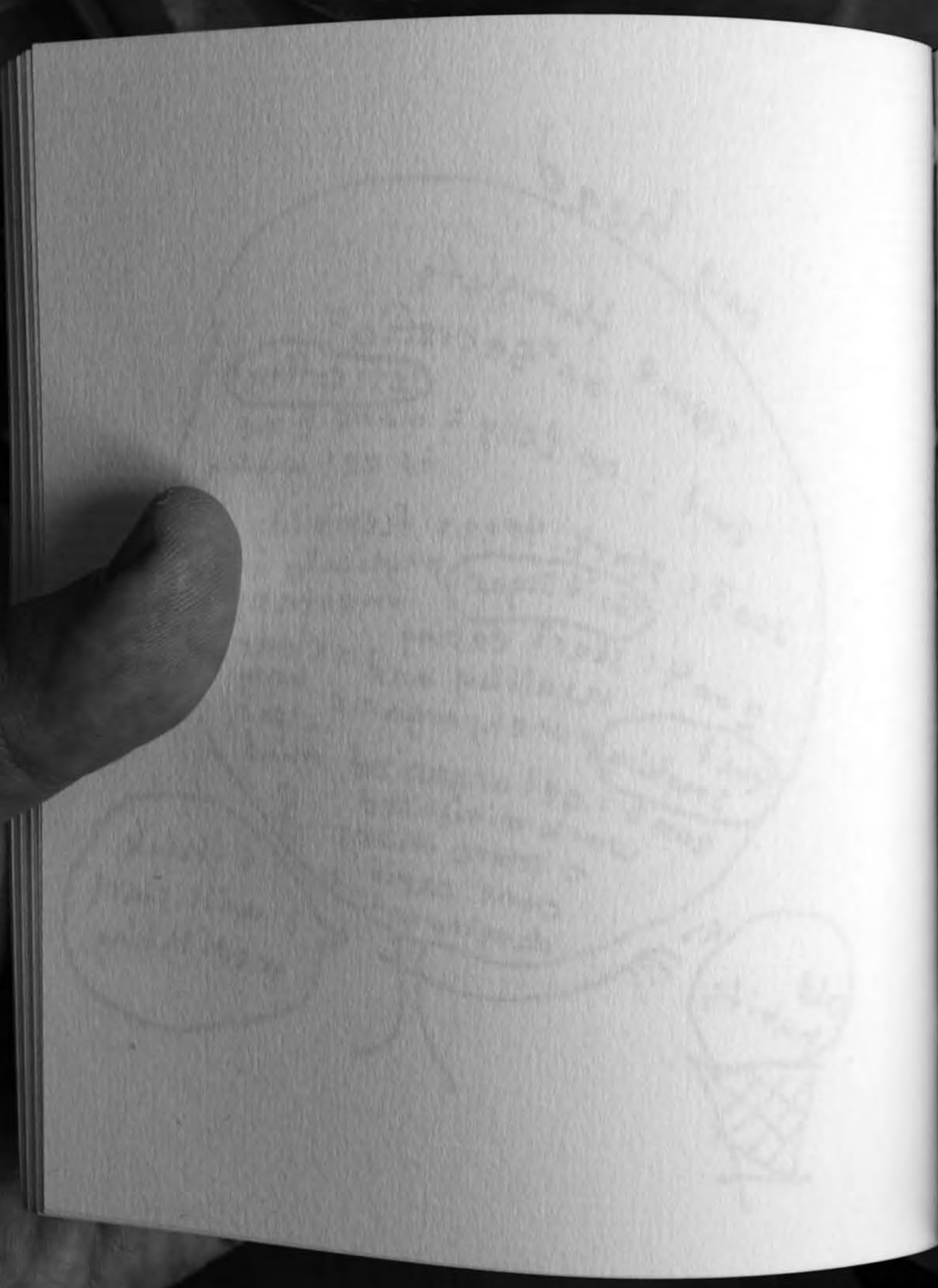
2004: start eating  
healthy and = clear  
body

Quit smoking purely organic clear  
mind

2006: get organized  
work disciplined  
= more things  
done rapid  
development

I think  
I will start  
meditating





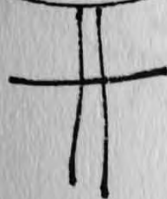
my head

thoughts on social skills:  
(virtues)

patience!

open!

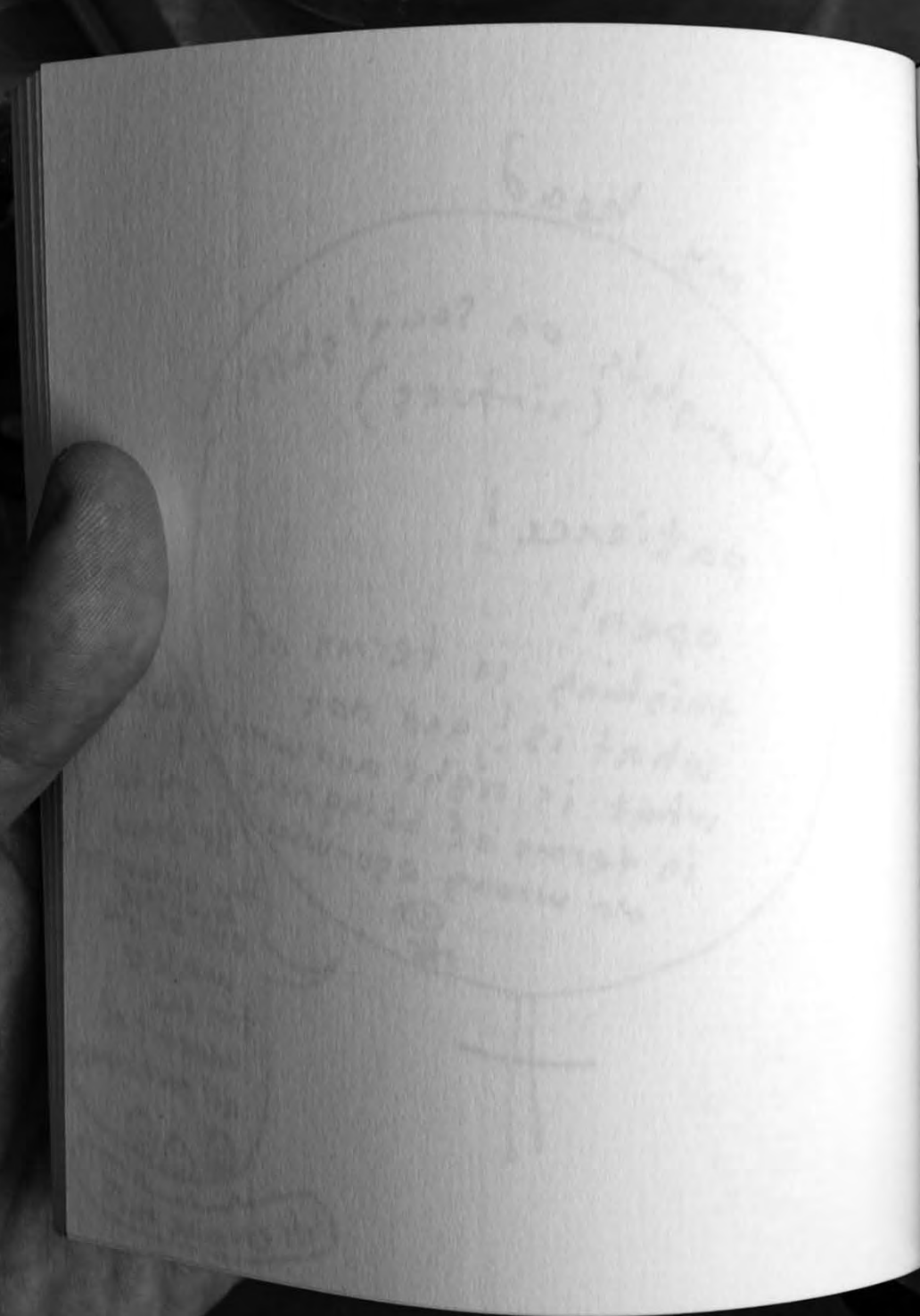
thinking in terms of  
what is! and not  
what is right and wrong  
in terms of being right  
or wrong ego-wise!



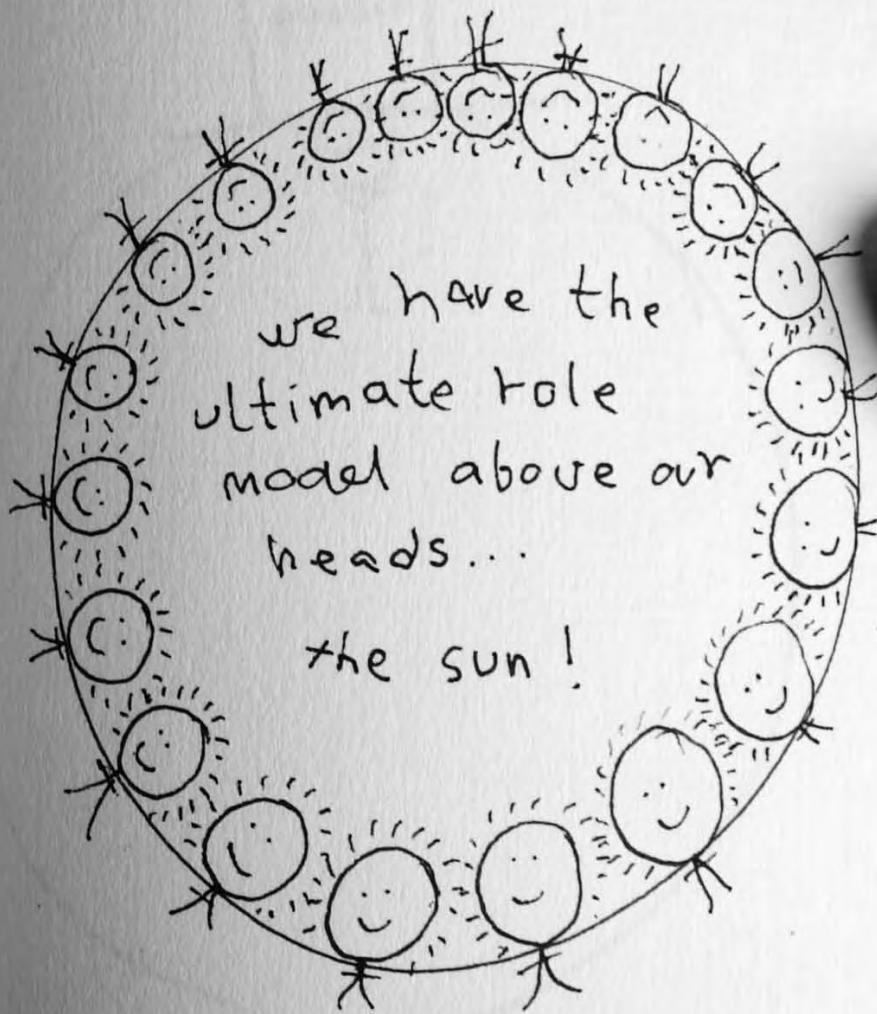
part  
I  
try to  
I'll draw  
the virtues or  
excellence  
out of the  
matter  
for the  
benefit of  
all participants



let's examine this

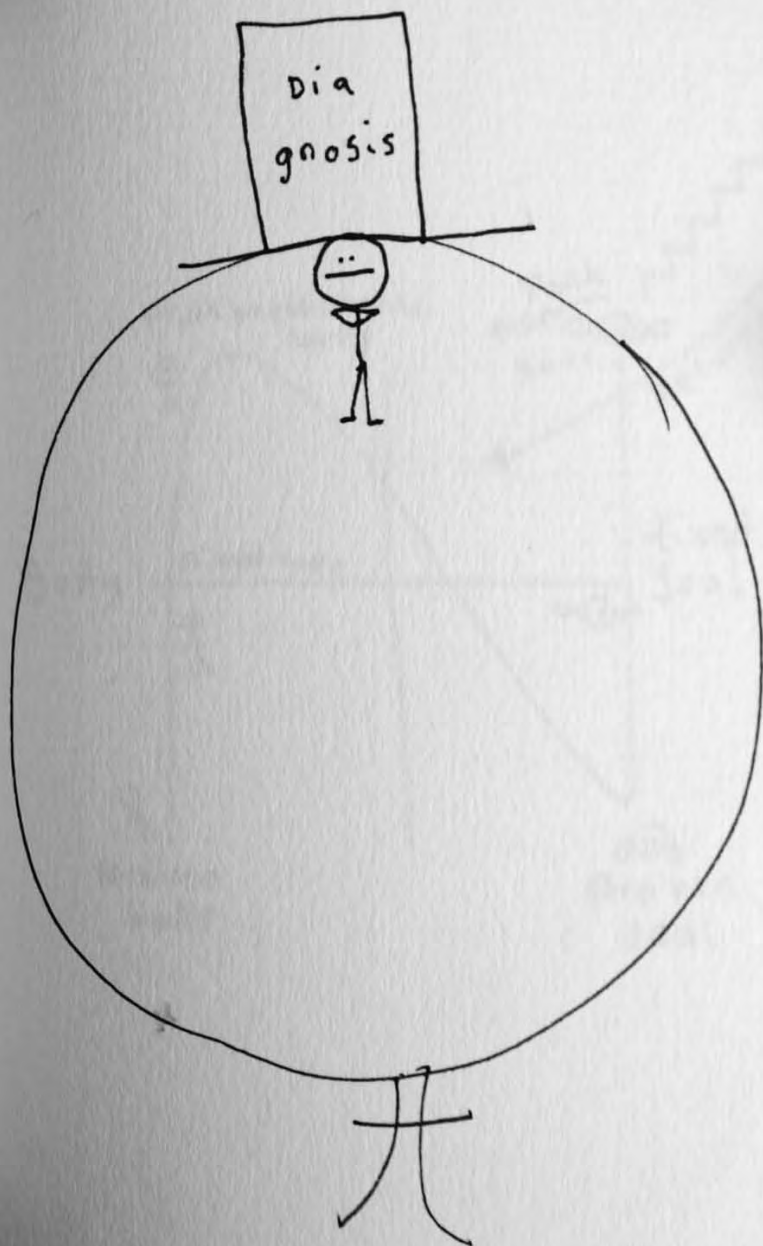




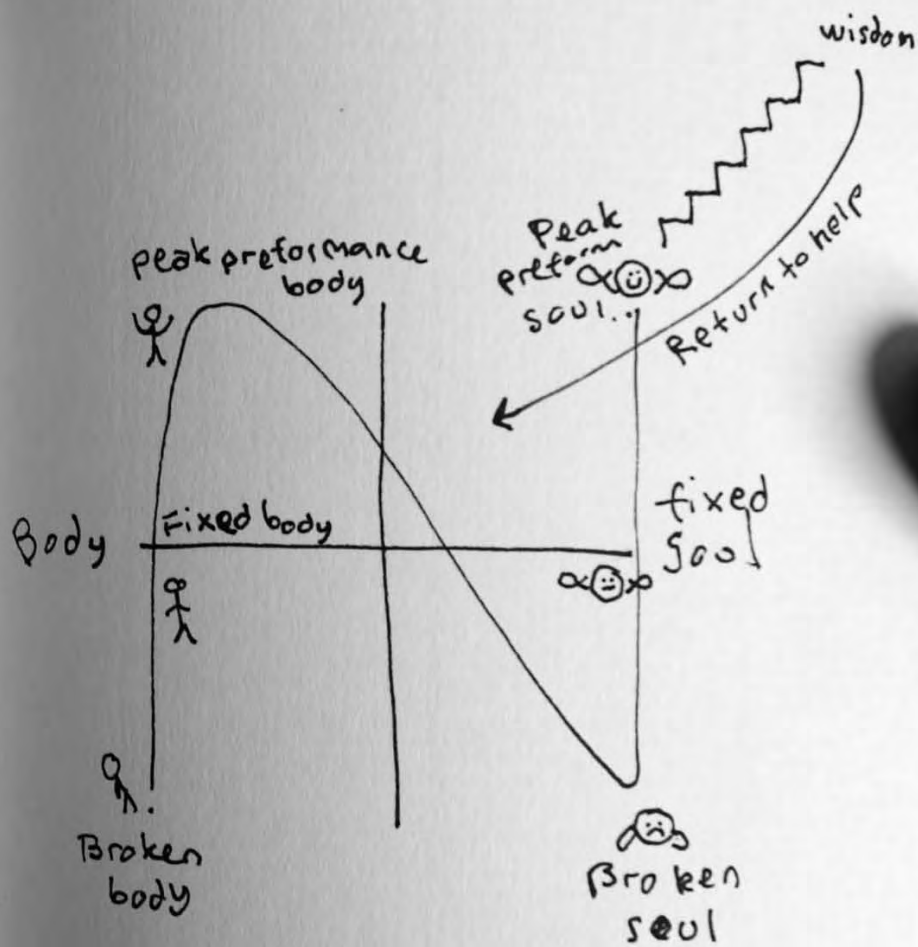




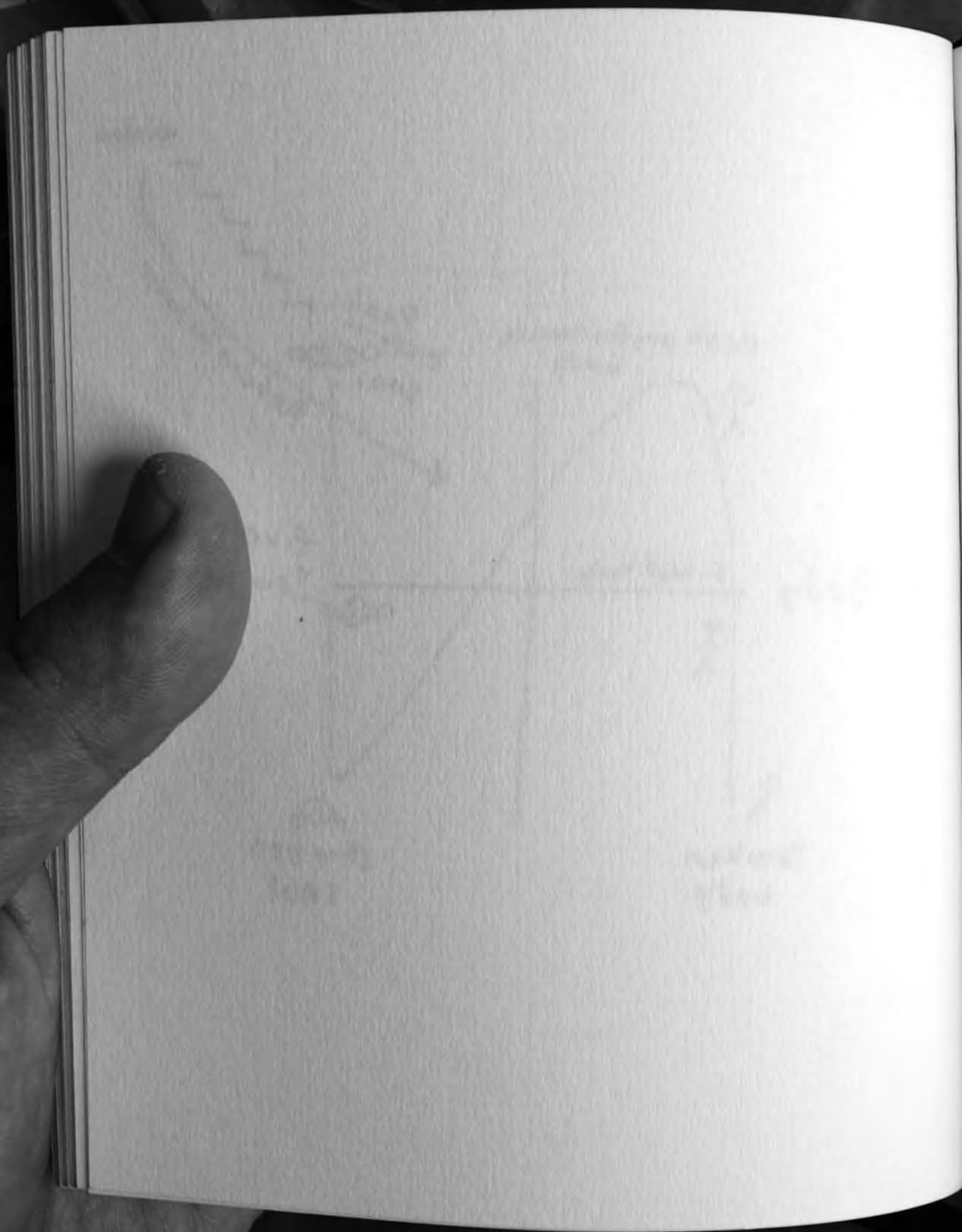






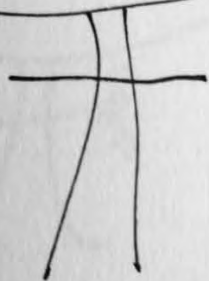








intet ansigt



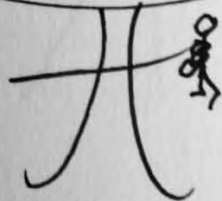


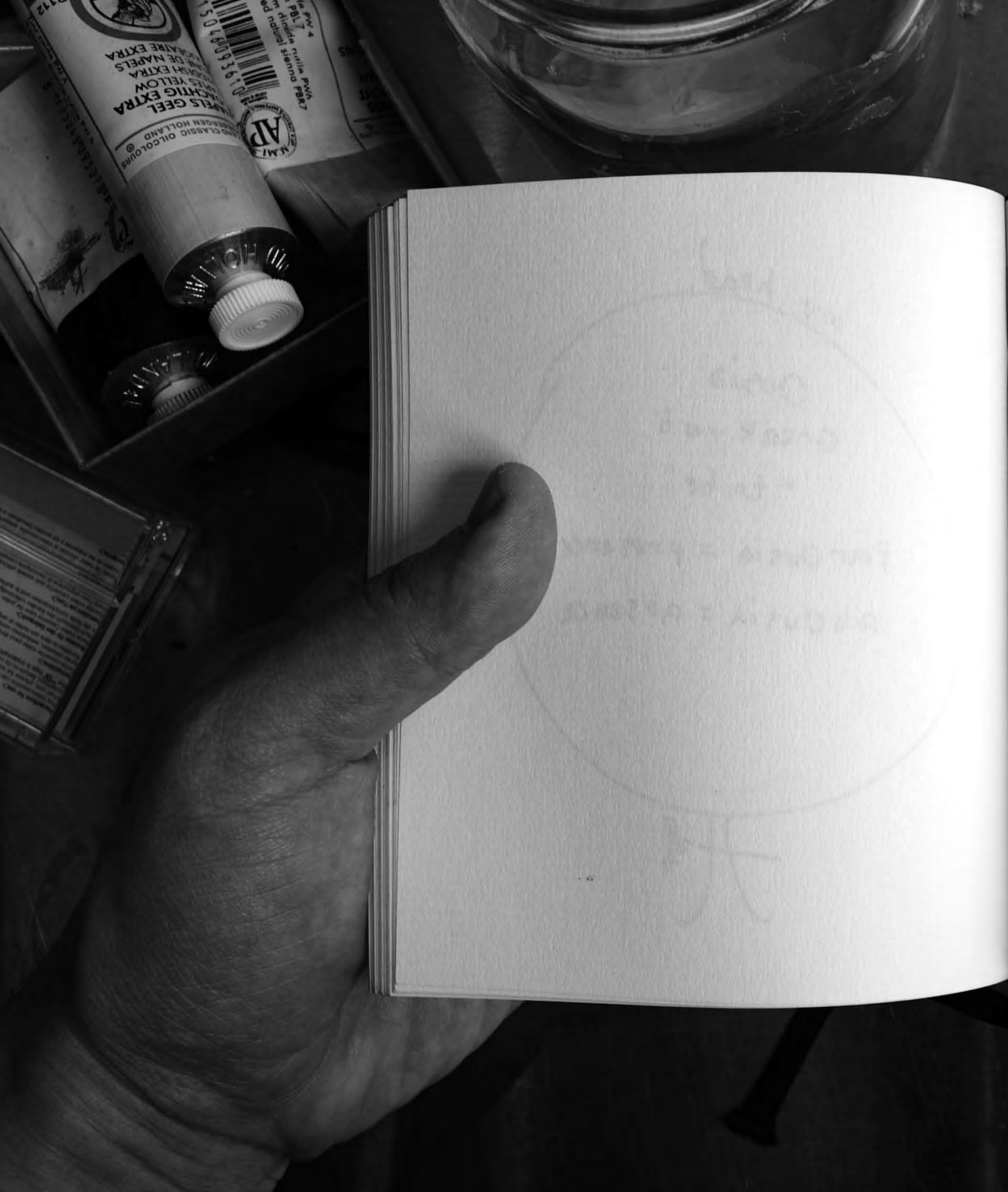
my head

Ousia  
Greek verb  
"to be"

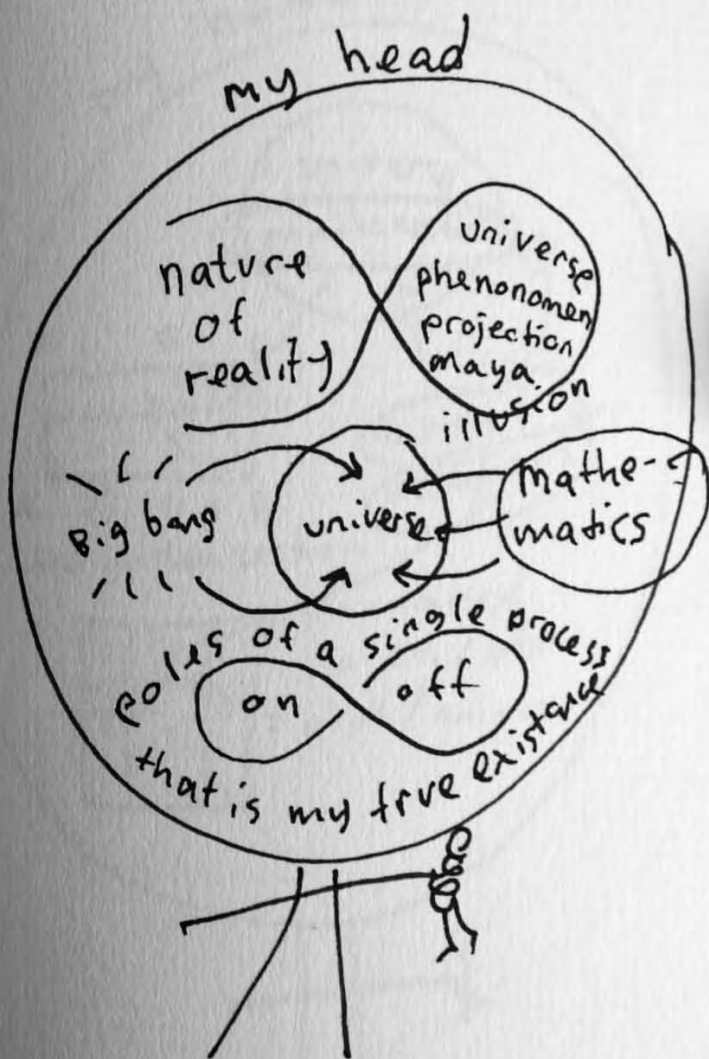
Parousia = presence

Absousia = absence

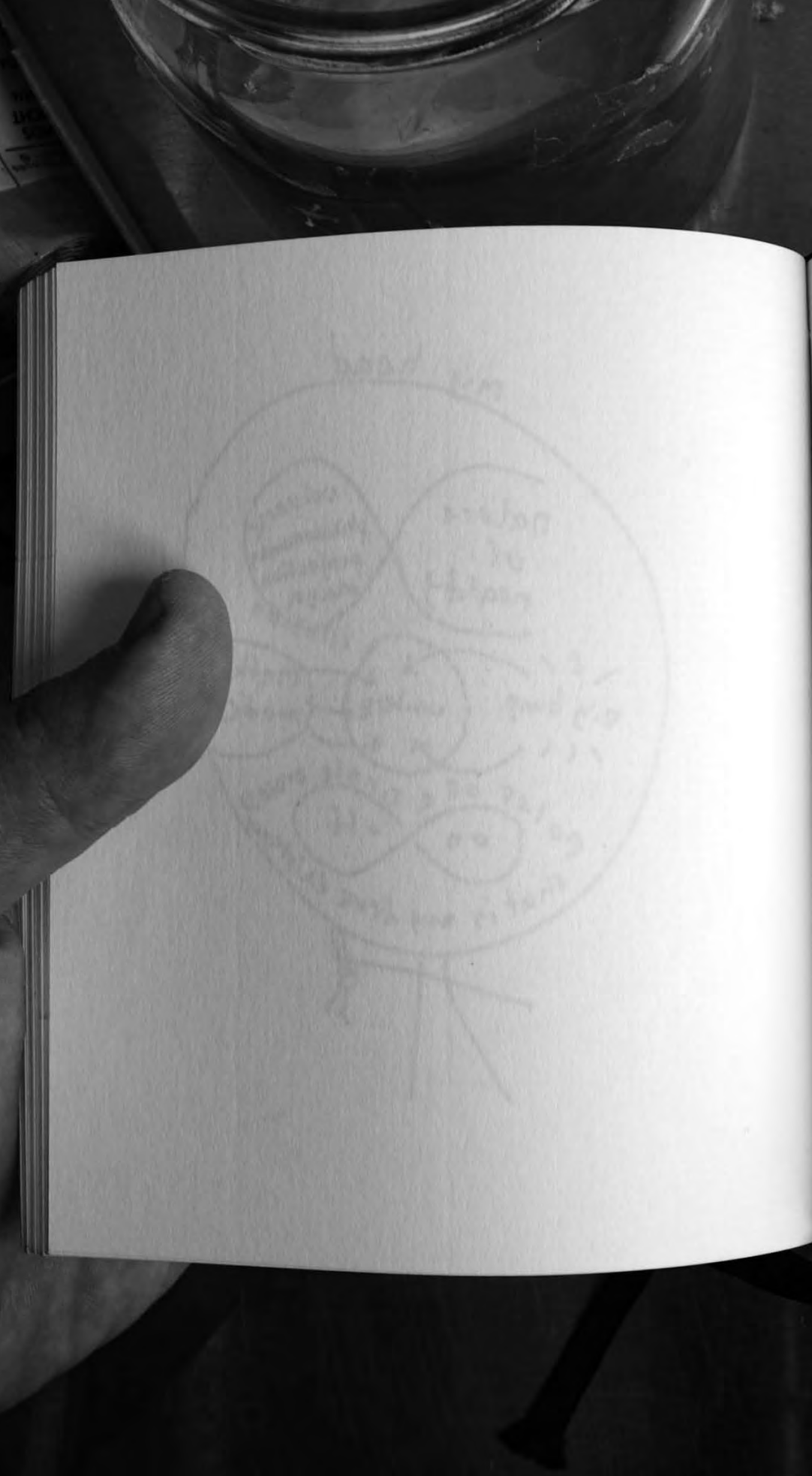




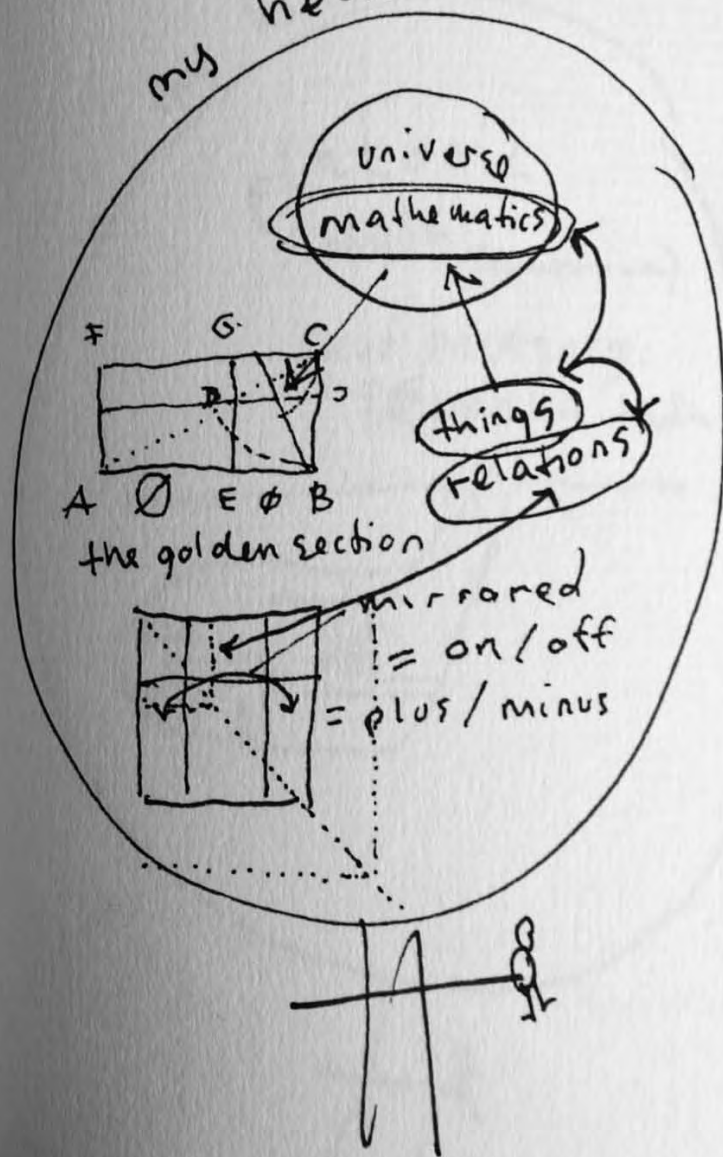


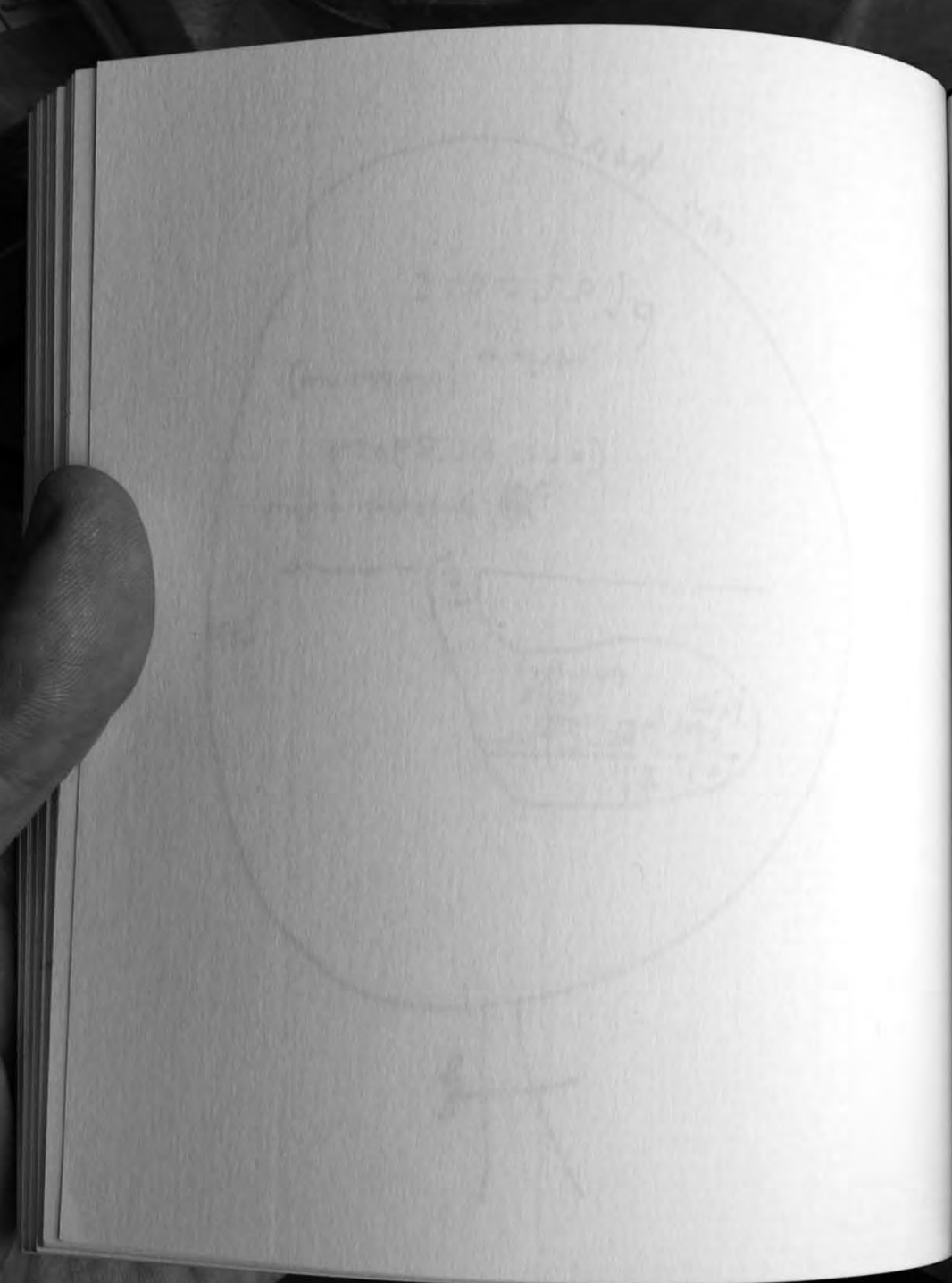






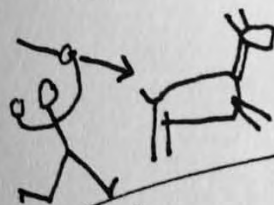
my head





my head

hmm...



Cave paintings

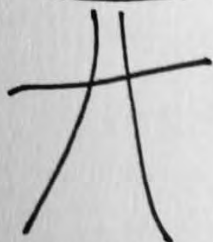


museum paintings

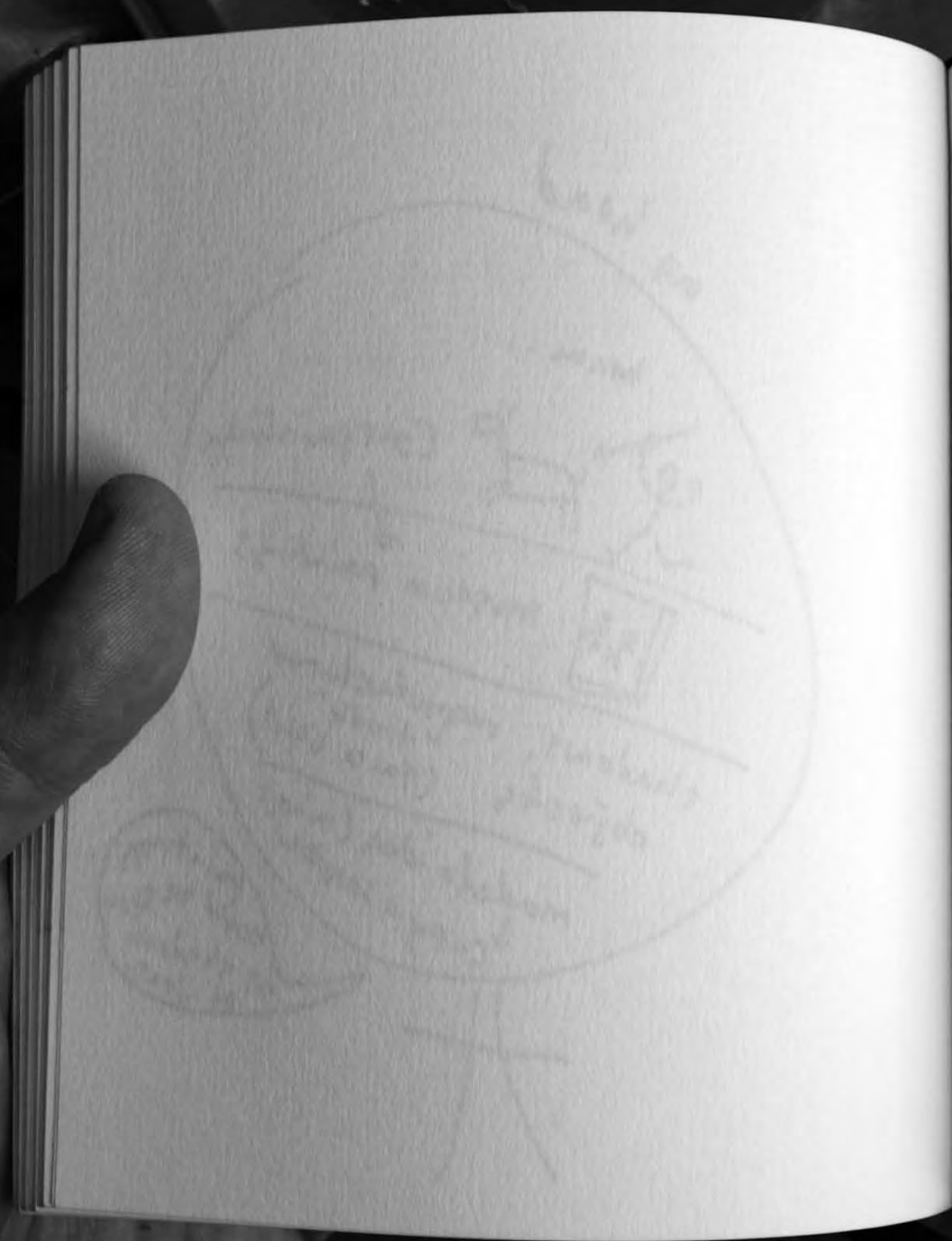
shadows, manufactured  
objects "truth"  
(false light)

model = idea (mind)  
↓  
copy = shadow

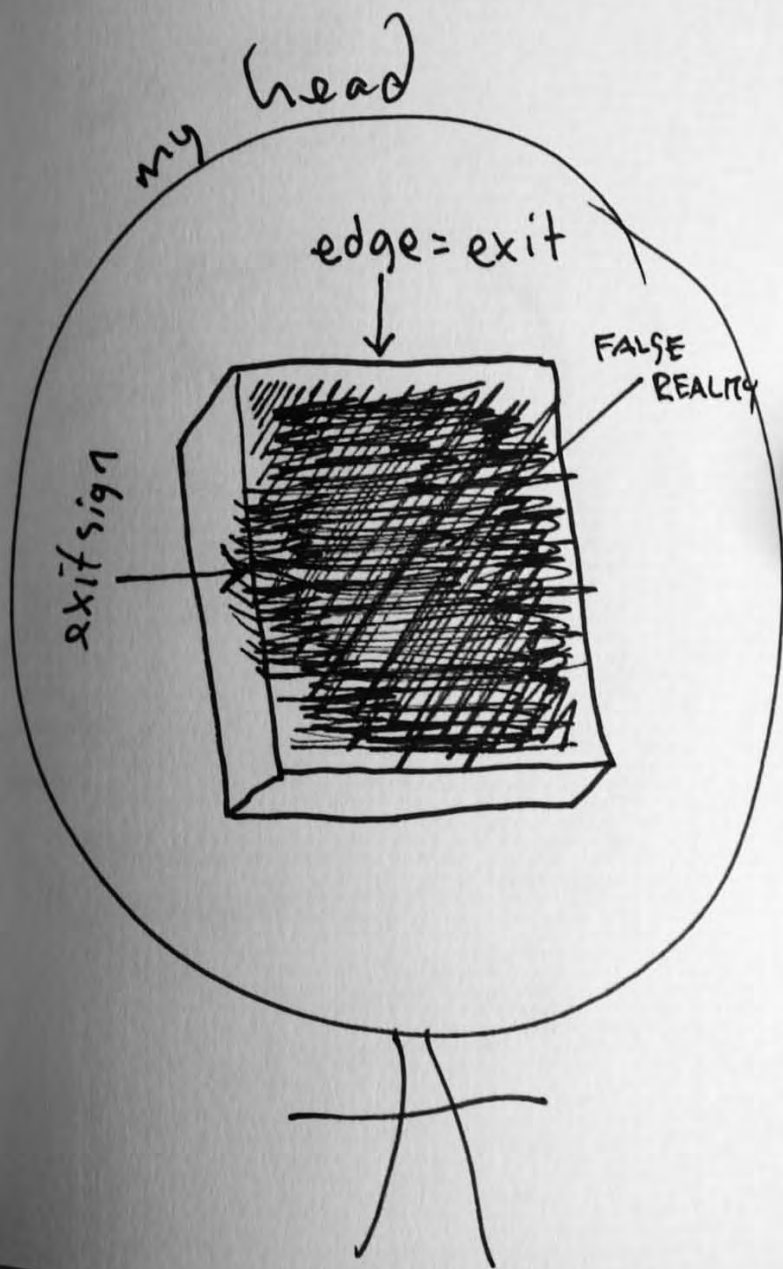
paintings  
could be seen  
as shadows  
of ideas.

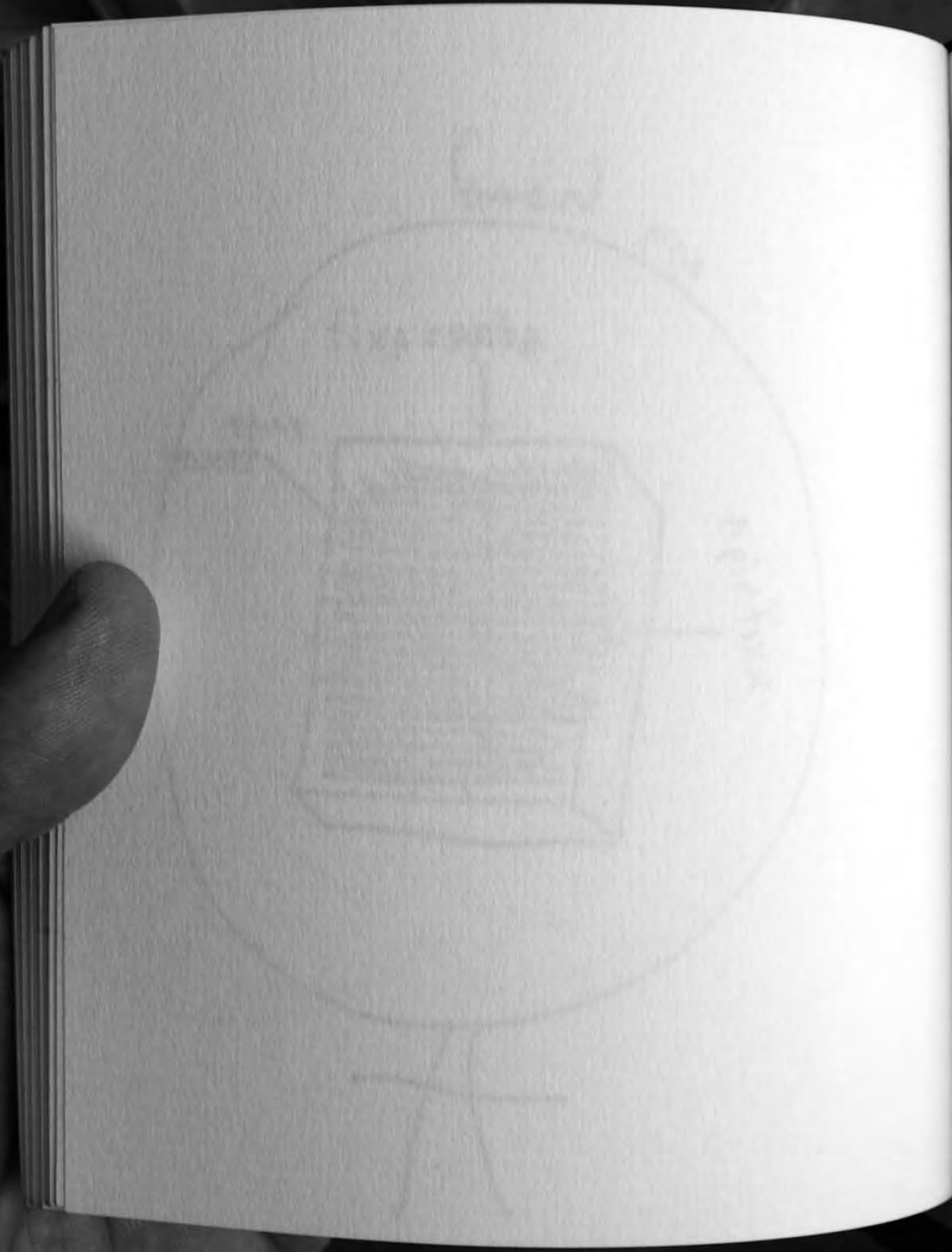




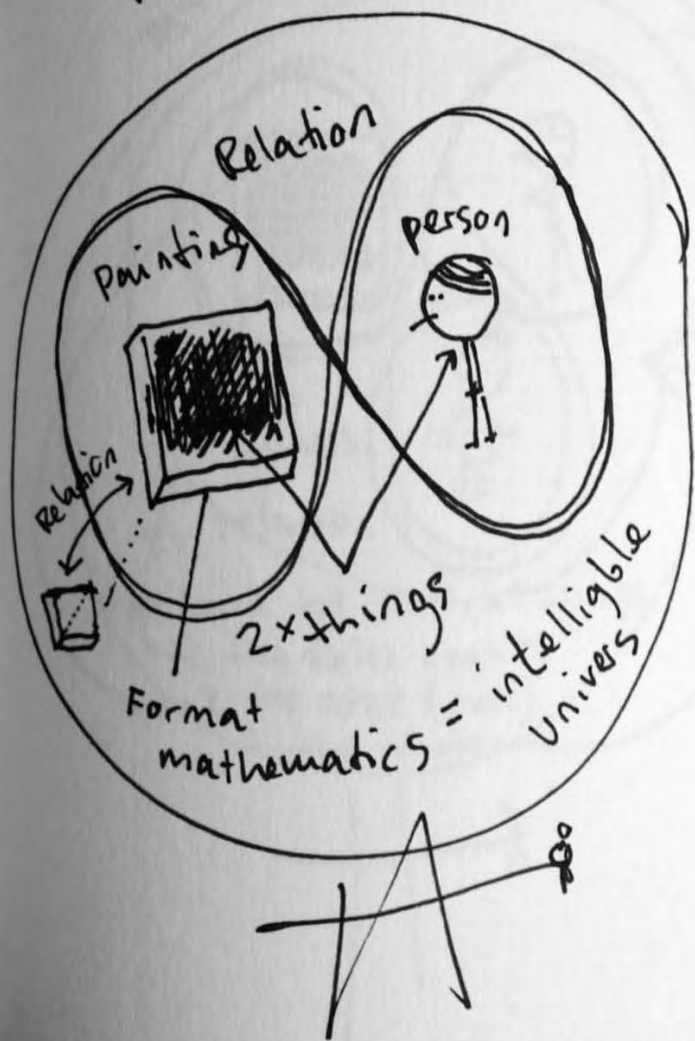


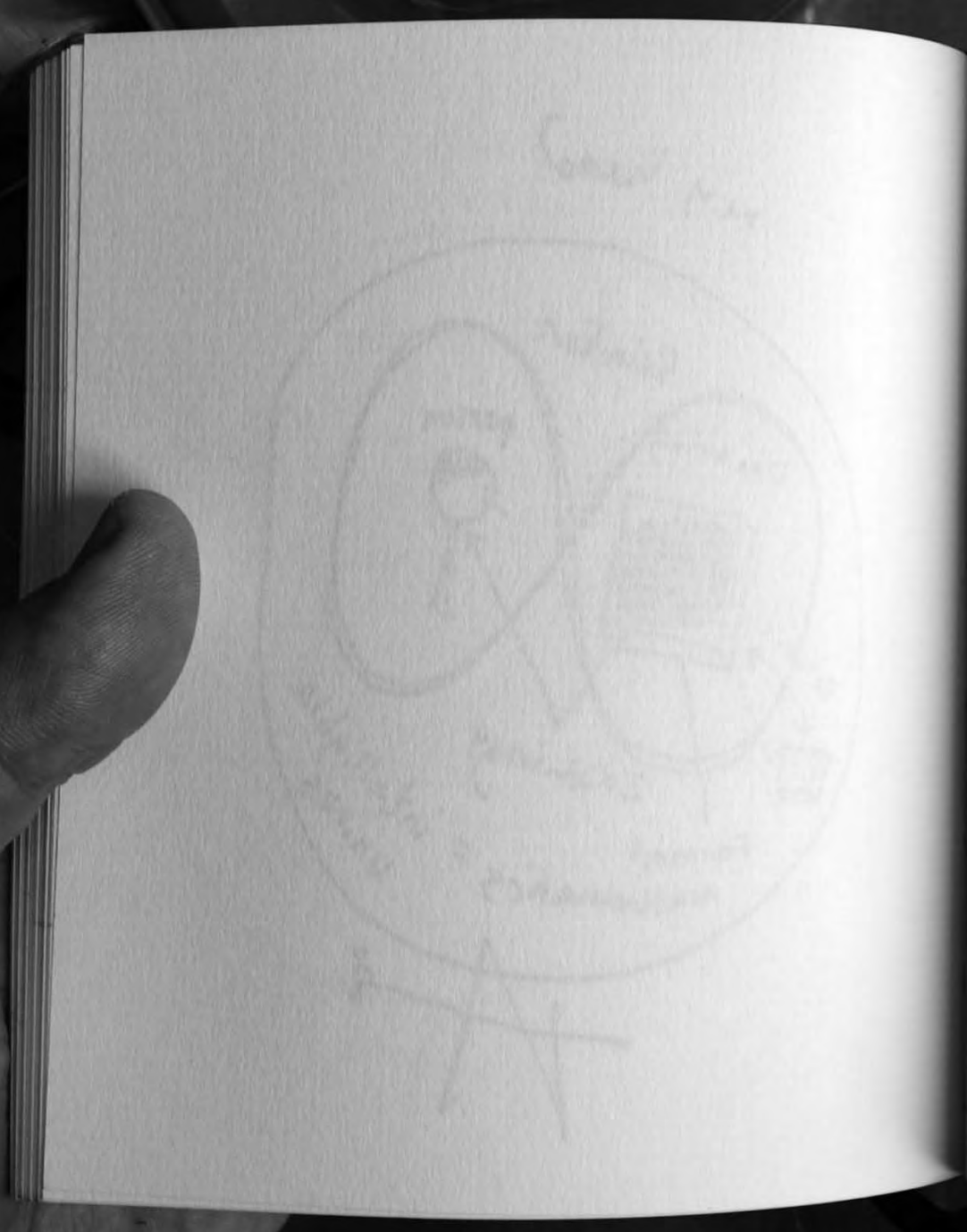






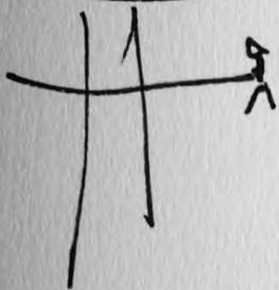
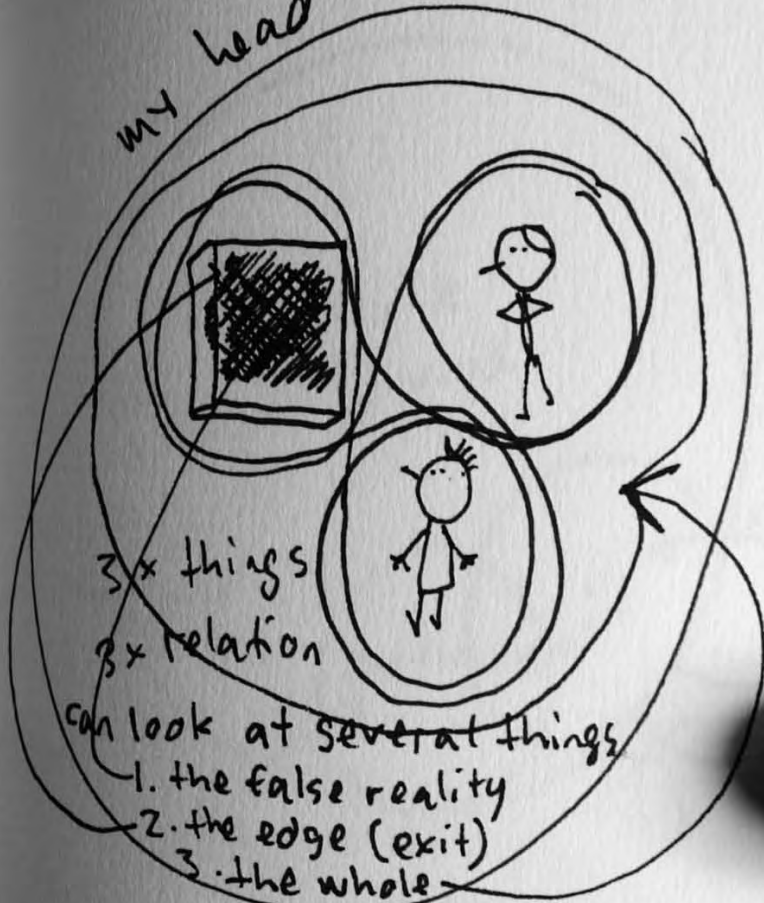
my head



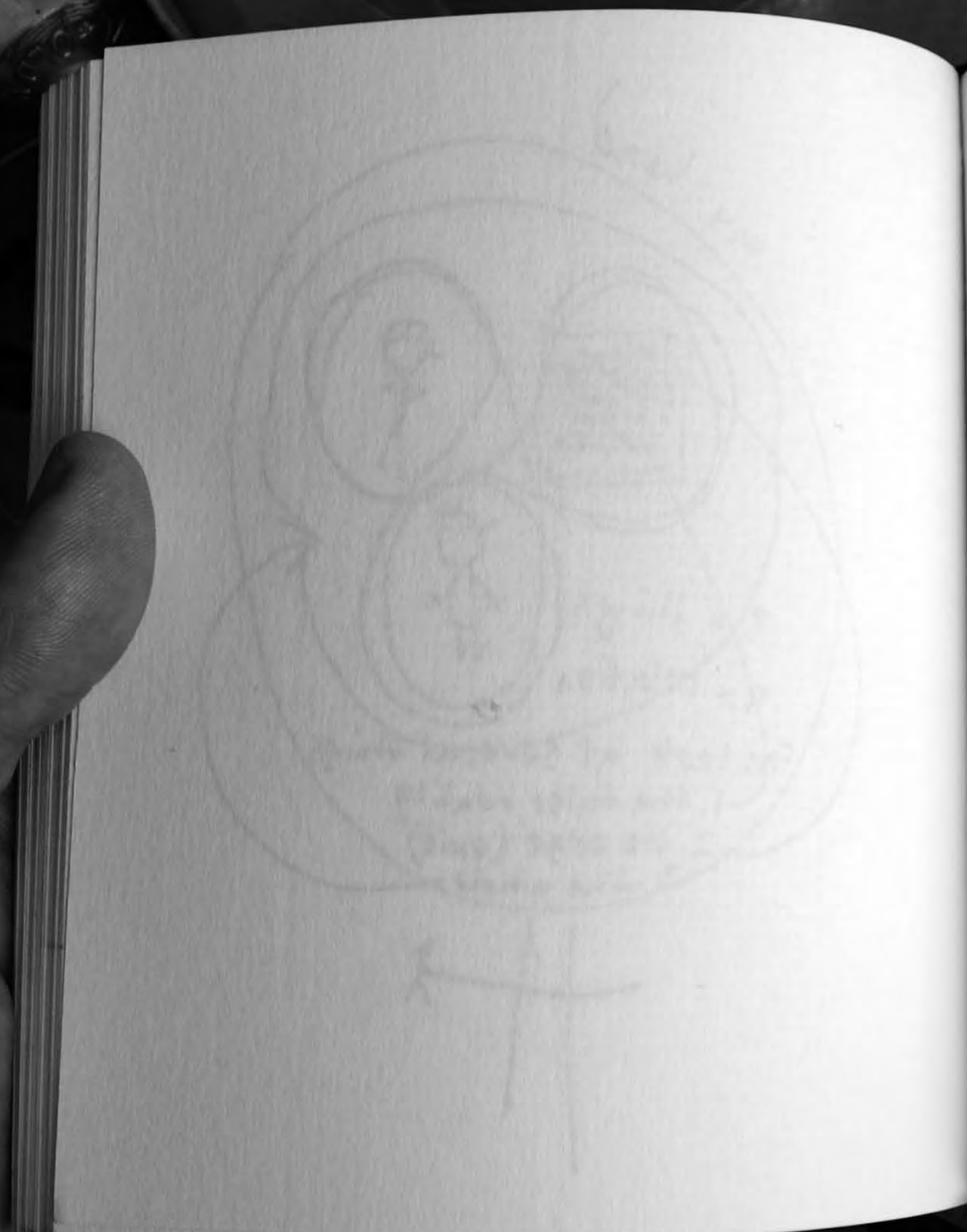


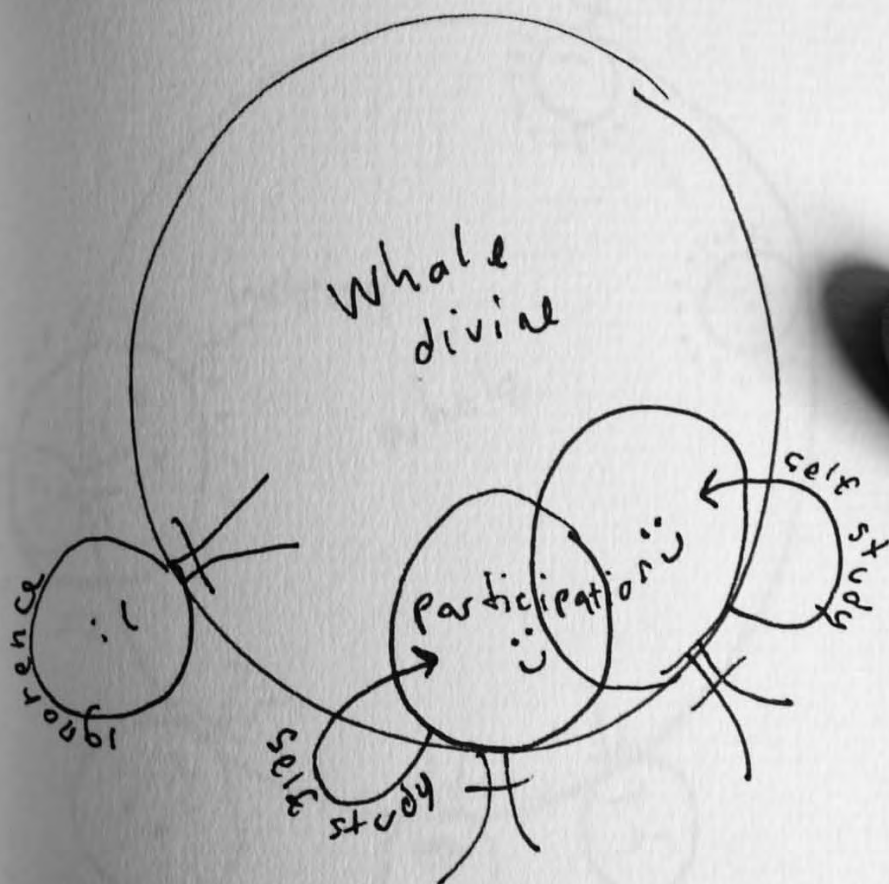


my head

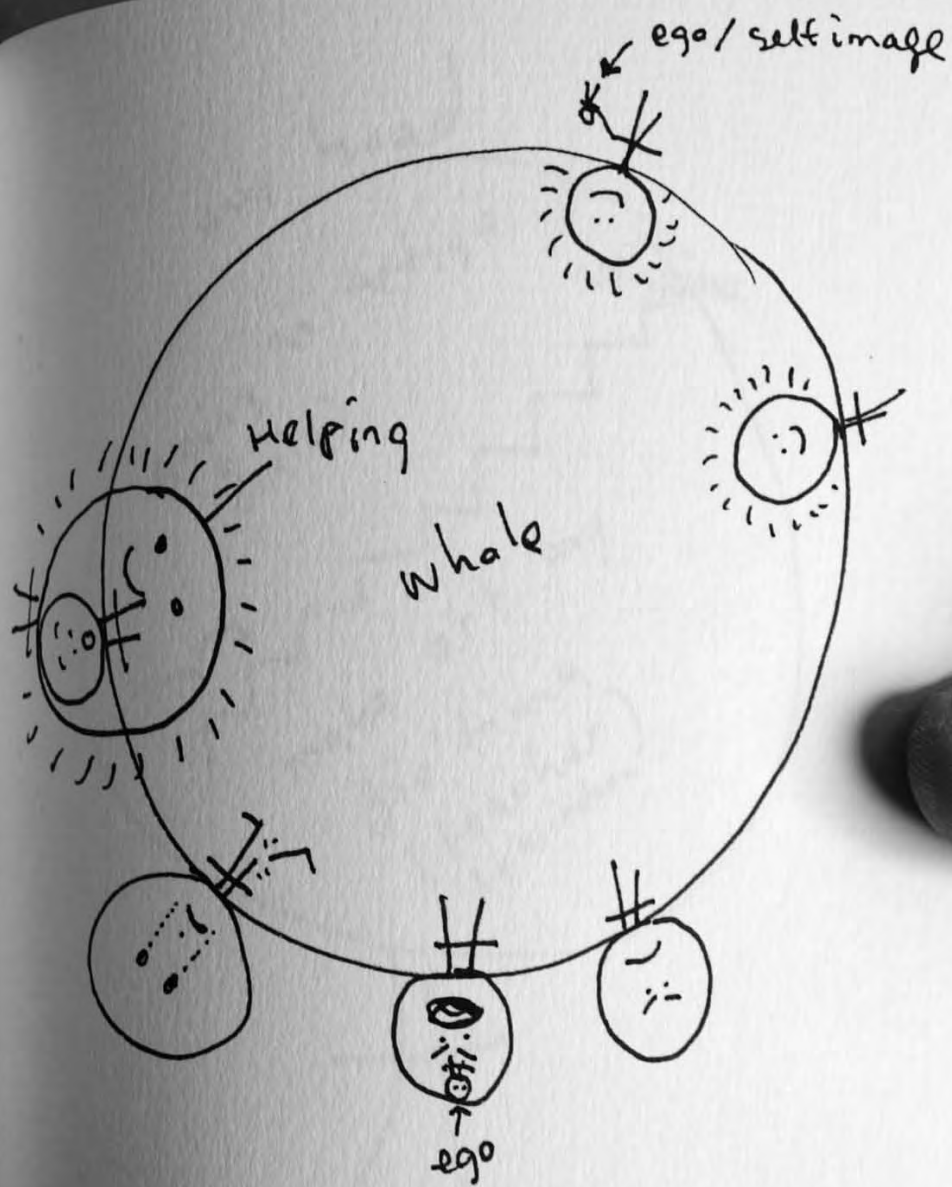




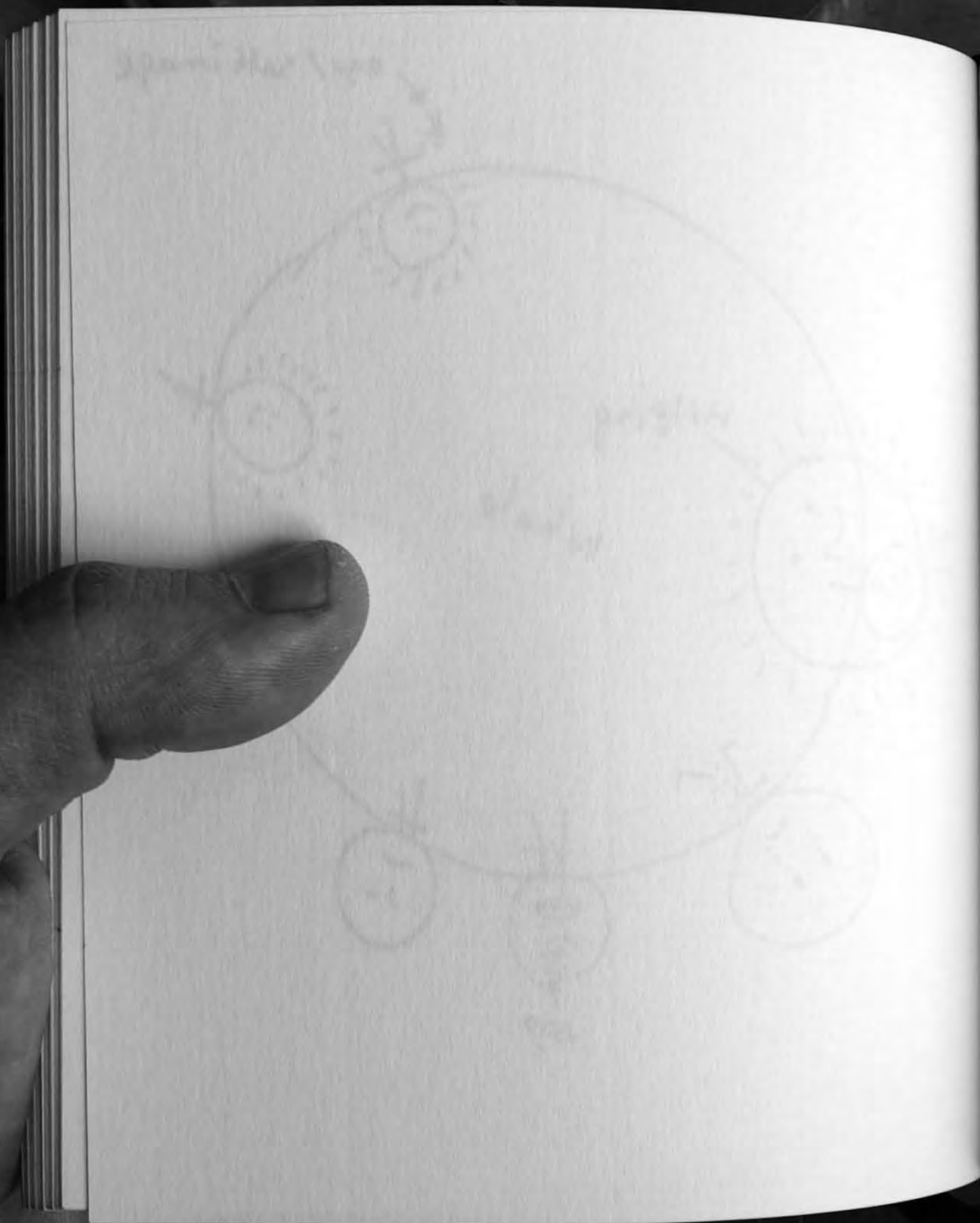












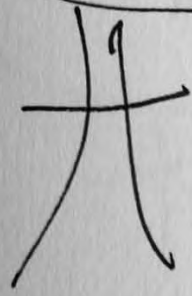


my head

being an artist  
(ousia)

Wisdom

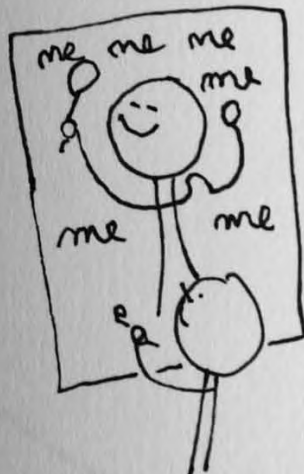
make art my  
dio'tima  
(teacher  
to wisdom)



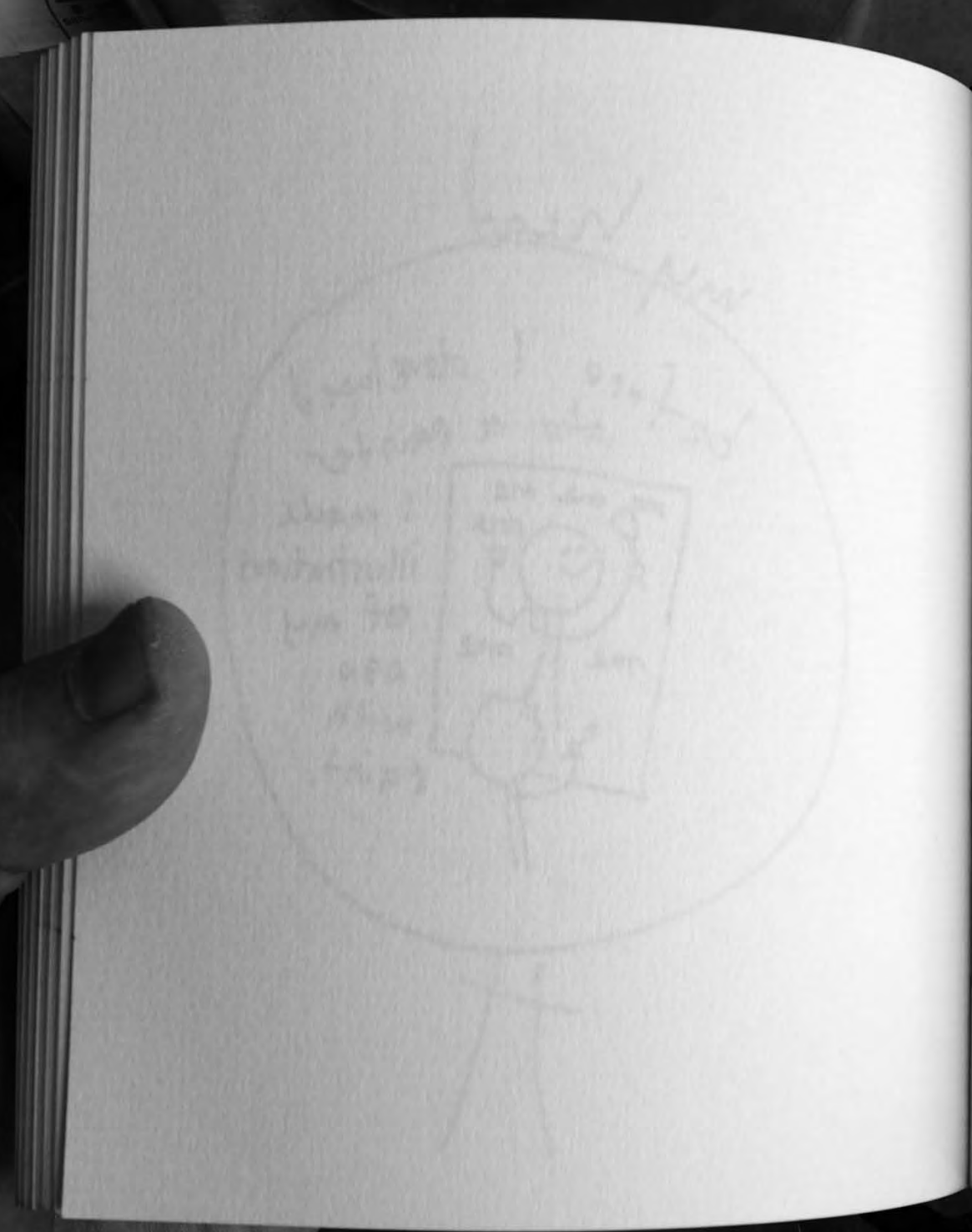


my head

before I developed  
into a painter

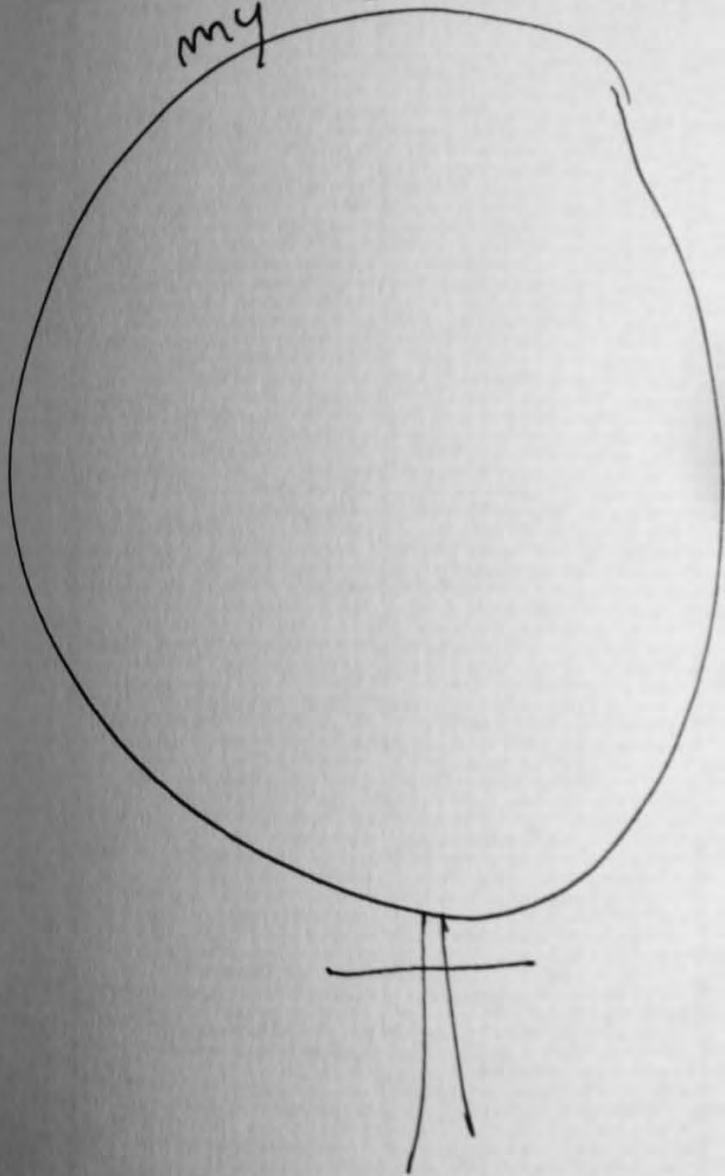


I made  
illustrations  
of my  
ego  
with  
paint.





my head





Absence  
skitse 1

every stroke's a  
person, like me,  
standing in line,  
caught in illusions  
of reality or  
-ies

And some  
of them  
make  
babies...



could  
every stroke  
on a painting  
represent a  
fragment/amputation  
of the whole?





could every  
"rub off" "energy application"  
represent a variation  
of the same?

the same drama  
or primary triad  
of being, power and  
mind?

I think  
it actually  
could!?



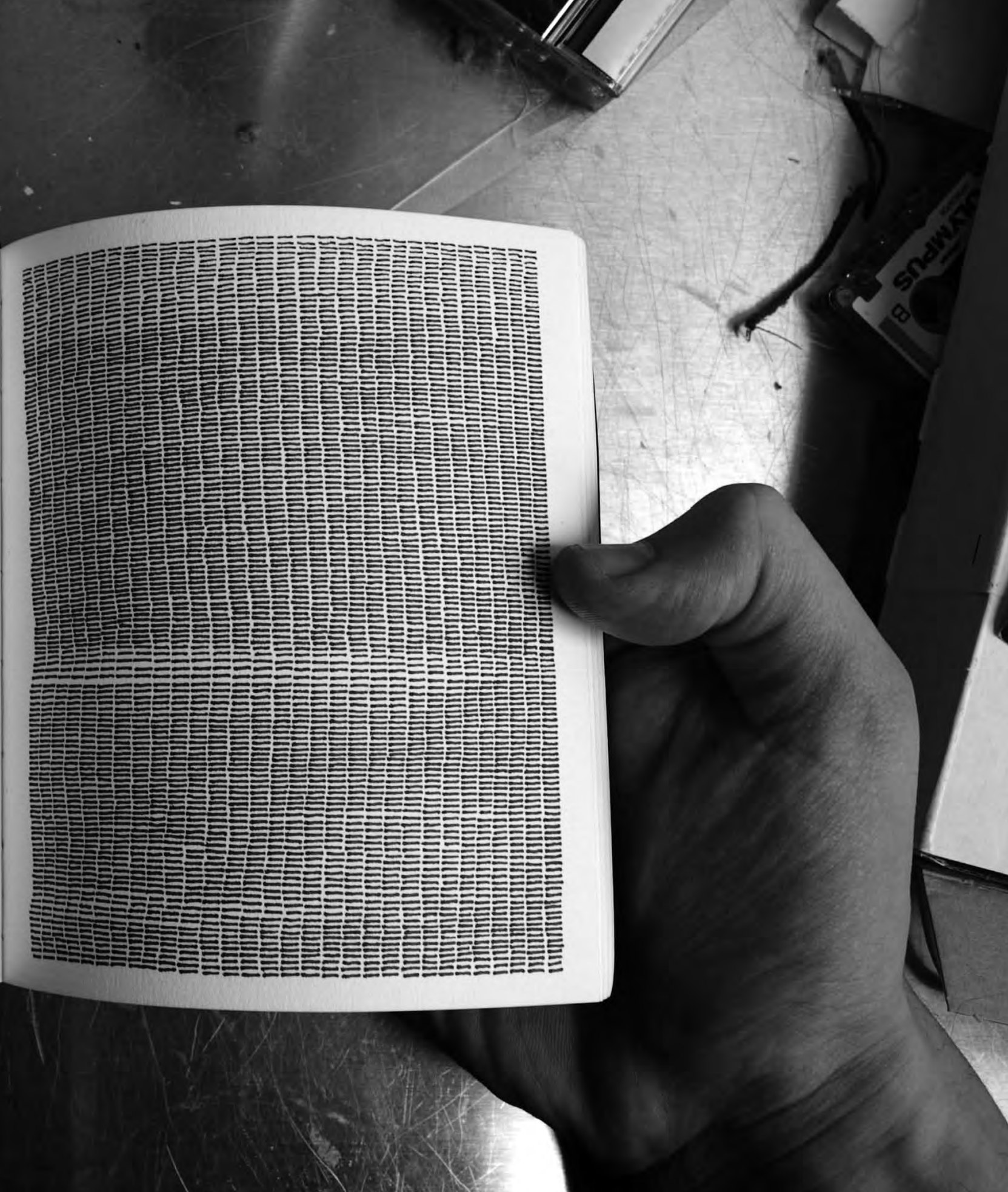


Kalasset  
Lamy Friday  
2009

"The big  
effect of  
small things"  
• the things and  
their relations

trying to  
show myself  
that I'm  
far from perfect  
teaching myself  
to ~~low~~ allow flaws  
the image  
of my  
imperfection  
meditation  
on patience

"The library"



## 4 Grades of Reality

The first time I read 'Soulful Shadows', the text Kim Wyon wrote about my paintings, I felt happy, because we had reached each other through art. It was a great experience. I respect Wyon, and when he makes a parallel to Vilhelm Hammershøi, I recognize the absence in Hammershøi's pictures in my monochromes.

The interior of the Copenhagen apartment where I've been living the past 5 years shares the same cracked white paneling with Hammershøi's paintings. Nordic light filtered through two thin panes, 10 centimeters away from each other in the framed windows. Maybe stillness resides in the interior of this sort of apartment, with its German wooden floor planks. Maybe the emptiness of these rooms resonates in those who need absolute silence to work.



'Heidi laying on the sofa in St. Kannikestræde', oil on canvas, 76 x 65 cm. 2006.

Calm surroundings stimulate my thoughts. My desire to create equilibrium contrasts sharply with my fascination with disorder and my love for chaos. Since I was 14 or 15 years old, I've been fascinated by withering flowers. I find them interesting when they are rotting and stinking. They are full of life. There is a useful dynamic in contrasts like chaos and order, balance and imbalance, life and death.

Similarly, I find the difference between young and old inspiring. This is life and death in the process. When I visited the Panum Institute in 2005 and 2006 to do drawings of the macroscopic divisions collection, I fell in love with the tranquility which surrounds dead flesh. The ultimate silence was stimulating for my concentration.

When I was younger, I found it amazing that a guy like Leonardo da Vinci could go out and get himself a cadaver to chart. Today, I can understand his fascination without a problem.

It seems that I share my interest in deterioration or metamorphosis with the Danish painter Per Kirkeby. Kirkeby has been an excellent artistic idol for me. When I was young, I didn't understand Kirkeby's art, or what he was trying to say. My reward for continuing to investigate this mystery snuck up on me, and at a certain point it overpowered me. It matured me so that today, I can stand and absorb his paintings, for example at Aros art museum, in Aarhus, Denmark. I like the idea that good art belongs in museums. It makes sense to me that paintings are muses and muses want to serve as many as possible. Really good art, of course, belongs in an atelier.

My atelier is what Kirkeby would call a firetrap. I am and will remain disorganized, and chaos lives and breathes in my atelier. My father does not share my interest in deterioration, and the last time he visited my atelier, he threw away a dying olive tree I had there. I missed out on the exciting final stage, and can only imagine the colors of the final stage or restart the experiment.



'Annemie and Birgitta in my atelier in Store Kannikestræde' oil on canvas, 130 x 110, 2007.

There are sides to my monochromes that only I know. I won't take the pleasure of immersion in the painting from my audience. Personally, I find the discovery of small things along the way wonderful.

When I was 16, I fell in love with a girl who was a few years older than me. I succeeded in buying her an ice cream. We sat on a park bench looking out over Skanderborg lake. She looked at me, curious, while we ate our ice cream, and I began to tell her about myself and my interests. When you're 16, it doesn't take much longer than an ice cream. When I had finished, and it was her turn to tell me about herself, she just said that she liked to discover small things along the way. She said that it was important not to tell everything about yourself all at once.

It was advice given lovingly, and it matured me, like instant coffee becomes instant coffee.



'Heidi, two months pregnant', oil on canvas, 110 x 130 cm. December 2007

When I say that my monochrome paintings are 'maturing', I mean that they are constructed in a way that makes them more than simple first impressions. Much more, even. Their structure is subtle, and it attracts, and in the end, maybe even makes you love it. The monochromes preserve honesty and sincerity. There is nothing cryptic or complicated in these paintings. Their depth is at once apparent and unspoken.

I spoke with Wyon about the mysterious quality of monochromes in a room, and what a monochrome surface does to its surroundings. It is precisely the unresearched potential of monochrome paintings that caught my interest. The monochrome is capable of more than a comma in art history books. I feel that there is at least enough substance for a chapter.

I sense instinctively that the limitations dictated by monochrome paintings will be central in my development as an artist. Monochrome painting has a system and a limitation which I find interesting. The system consists of two directions: inward followed by outward. On followed by off. Like a pair of lungs, inspiration followed by expiration.

Monochrome painting is like a breath. And I believe that that is what we feel when we are in a room with these monochromes. Like a tree breathing with someone who is standing before it.

A monochrome painting alters its character depending on the time of day when you look at it. Like a tree. At night, it is cold and naked, even deep, and frightening. It's impossible to tell what color it is, and it is as dark as a hole in a wall. The opening of a hole. A doorway. In the morning, it is playful and light. The colors present themselves slowly, like an opening mind. At midday the surface colors shimmer in the sunlight, and you can feel the life in it. When evening falls, it becomes a long shadow, stretching and yawning sleepily.



I was lucky enough to come home just as a triangle of light fell on the painting 'Absence no. 3'. The sun was descending behind a rooftop between the sun and the painting. Maybe it was the roof of the Royal Library. Naturally, I stood directly in front of the painting and observed the glowing triangle as it became smaller and smaller. The painting's colors were completely indefinable for awhile, even though I know it inside and out. When the triangle of light was no larger than a keyhole, there was a dark contour on the edge. The painting seemed to be on fire, like a match was being held up behind the canvas. Of course, the fire was in reverse, as the triangle was ever-shrinking. The process ended when the light transformed into two black contours, which then overlapped and disappeared slowly into the picture, as if it had been absorbed into its structure. It took about half an hour, and in that time, monochrome paintings stole my heart again.

I was talking to Heidi about the search for happiness. If we dig into the layers we lay on each other, we reach a point where there is a wish for happiness. The discussion progressed, and we talked about what is beyond happiness. I believe that it is silence, harmony and balance. Neither happiness nor unhappiness. Or more precisely, both at once. It's a state of grey, which is a mix of black and white. Many find black intolerably uncompromising. Too much yin. But then isn't there too much yang in the chasing of light? The blinding white. Doesn't it burn your eyes?

I love doorways. As a young boy I often sat in them. Neither in nor out – or else both.

When a painter thinks economically, it is not (necessarily) a question of currency, but of precise, careful and measured use of paint and brushstrokes. Just like it is usually the right combination of words that express the essence of a text, not the volume. This can be seen the paintings of the old masters, who strove to belie their subjects with natural vitality through form. You can see how good they became by how few strokes they needed. Economical use of brushstrokes. Economy of actions, based on knowledge and experience.

At a gallery in San Francisco in 2007, I saw a series of modern, figurative pictures, painted so fine that it was almost unfathomable that they had been executed by hand. The question I had to ask myself when confronted with these paintings was whether or not a skill can reach a point at which it becomes so perfect that it loses character.

There was something kitsch and unreal about the precision with which imprecision and actual strokes had been removed from these paintings. An interesting aspect of these nearly flawless illusions was that a sublime handwork can seem meaningless and even worthless. That was what I liked about them. They were like an incredibly well painted picture which had already failed before it had begun. In a way, they were inspiring, even if I wasn't quite sure if that had been the artist's intention.

An interesting thing to think about it is what the goal of the 'new masters' is. Is it still realistic reproduction? Is it enough to be good? Is the actual handwork the essence of a picture? Or is it irony? Can art be constructed in a way that benefits others' personal development? Is it the place of art to diagnose? Or can art help people to help themselves?

I had a discussion with my brother about the necessity not only to pose questions, but also to offer solutions. I understand his dissatisfaction. Our discussions often become abstract quickly. I agree with him in that answers are important. But the way I see it, one good question can be more relevant for more people than one good answer. It's difficult for me to see how my subjective answer can help many people besides me. Maybe my brother sees the world as more tolerant than I do. In an ideal world, within which differences are tolerated, a multitude of answers has greater meaning. Someday, all questions will become irrelevant. My monochromes may be seen as a temporary answer.



Photo, selfportrait with skull hat, 2007

At 34 years of age, I've reached a point in my life where I have chosen to open myself up to the world around me. I vaguely sense a defense mechanism in the form of cynicism. I'm convinced that that cynicism is born of a fear of opening myself. When reading my own thoughts on paper, I see questions like: why will people be interested in my thoughts? Am I certain that the things that I write haven't been thought a hundred times before, and better? What is the point of exhibiting oneself? Why expose oneself like that?

I believe that fear and courage are dualistic polarities. Therefore, it's natural that we feel fear when we take risks. I can feel that the courage to stand tall comes from the trust in one's surroundings. There is an element of abandonment when publishing a text like this one and debuting with 4 monochromes.

It can be terrifying to show yourself to others, to let yourself stand out, and to let your otherwise invisible thoughts become visible.

One source of courage may be the message one is bringing. It's not difficult to stand tall with a message about one collective spiritual essence. Ousia. The only answer that seems meaningful to me. Everything starts here.

Namasté  
Michael Chang

# Monochrome

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Monochrome comes from the two Greek words mono (μονο, meaning "only" or "alone"), and chroma (χρῶμα, meaning "color"). Monochromatic light is light of a single wavelength, or a narrow wavelength range. A monochromatic object or image is one whose range of colors consists of shades of a single color or hue; monochrome images in neutral colors are also known as grayscale or black-and-white.

– <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monochrome>  
April 2008

# Theory

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

In physics, the word is used more generally to refer to electromagnetic radiation of a single wavelength. In the physical sense, no real source of electromagnetic radiation is purely monochromatic, since that would require a wave of infinite duration as a consequence of the Fourier transform’s localization property (cf. spectral coherence). Even sources such as lasers have some narrow range of wavelengths (known as the spectral linewidth) within which they operate. In practice, filtered light, diffraction grating separated light and laser light are all routinely referred to as monochromatic. Often light sources can be compared and one be labeled as "more monochromatic" (in a similar usage as monodispersity). And a device which isolates light sources of a narrow bandwidth are called monochromators, even though the bandwidth is often explicitly specified, and thus a collection of wavelengths is understood.

– <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monochrome>  
April 2008

# Application

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

For an image, the term monochrome is usually taken to mean the same as black-and-white or, more likely, grayscale, but may also be used to refer to other combinations containing only two colors, such as green-and-white or green-and-black. It may also refer to sepia or cyanotype images.

In computing, monochrome has two meanings: it may mean having only one color which is either on or off, allowing shades of that color, although the latter is more correctly known as grayscale. A monochrome computer display is able to display only a single color, often green, amber, red or white, and often also shades of that color.

In film photography, monochrome is the use of black and white film. In digital photography, monochrome is the capture of only shades of black by the sensor. Originally, all photography was done in monochrome until the invention of color film plates in the early 20th century.

– <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monochrome>  
April 2008

# Monochromacy

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Monochromacy, also known as "total color blindness"[1], is the lack of ability to distinguish colors; caused by cone defect or absence.[2] Monochromacy occurs when two or all three of the cone pigments are missing and color and lightness vision is reduced to one dimension.[1] Organisms with monochromacy are called monochromats. Monochromats are truly color blind and can see only shades of black, gray and white. The perceptual effect of any arbitrarily chosen light from its visible spectrum can be matched by any pure spectral light. The normal explanation of monochromacy is that the organism's retina contains only a single kind of light receptor cell, or at least that only one kind is active at any particular level of illumination. In vertebrates, which typically have two kinds of receptors, called rods and cones, active at low and higher levels of illumination respectively, there are two main kinds of monochromacy: rod monochromacy is the condition of having only rods in the retina. A rod monochromat will be unable to see well in normal daylight levels of illumination. cone monochromacy is the condition of having both rods and cones, but only a single kind of cone. A cone monochromat can have good pattern vision at normal daylight levels, but will not be able to distinguish hues. (see below) In principle there could also be a second kind of cone monochromacy, in which the retina contains no rods, and only a single type of cone. Such an animal would be unable to see at all at lower levels of illumination, but it would have good pattern vision at normal daylight levels (though it would not be able to distinguish hues). In practice it is hard to produce an example of such a retina, at least as the normal condition for a species; there are animals (for example, many birds) with very cone-rich retinas, but they all tend to have multiple types of cones. Some individuals do possess diseases or injuries that lead to nyctalopia, or night blindness, where rod cells stop responding properly to light.

In cone monochromats, at low light intensities the rods and cones may be active simultaneously, allowing some degree of color discrimination. However it is unlikely that this will be functionally significant since the neural apparatus for hue discrimination would presumably not be present in an animal that was monochromatic most of the time. It used to be confidently claimed that most mammals other than humans and our fellow primates were monochromats. In the last half-century, however, evidence of at least dichromatic color vision in a number of mammalian orders has accumulated. Two of the orders of sea mammals, the pinnipeds (which includes the seal, sea lion, and walrus) and cetaceans (which includes dolphins and whales) clearly are cone monochromats, since the short-wavelength sensitive cone system is genetically disabled in these animals. The same is true of the owl monkeys, genus *Aotus*.

Both rod and cone monochromacy occur as very rare forms of color blindness in humans. Rod monochromacy, or maskun, is the more common of the two. The majority of people described as color blind, however, are either dichromats or anomalous trichromats. Monochromacy has been subdivided into typical (rod monochromacy) and atypical forms.[3][4] Clinically, some monochromats have normal visual acuity and others have poor visual acuity.[5]

CONE MONOCHROMACY

Cone monochromacy is a rare, total color blindness that is accompanied by relatively normal vision, electroretinogram, and electrooculogram.[2] There are three types named according to the single functioning cone class: Blue cone monochromacy, also known as S-cone monochromacy[1] Green cone monochromacy, also known as M-cone monochromacy[1] Red cone monochromacy, also known as L-cone monochromacy[1]

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<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monochromacy> April 2008

# Monochrome painting

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Monochrome painting is sometimes seen as meditative art. Throughout the 20th century and into the 21st century painters have created monochromatic painting. The exploration of one color, the examination of values changing across a surface, the expressivity of texture and nuance, expressing a wide variety of emotions, intentions and meanings. From geometric precision to expressionism, the monochrome has proved to be a durable idiom in Contemporary art.

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ORIGINS

A canvas is never empty. —Robert Rauschenberg, [1] A late 1990s article in Art in America asserts that “monochrome painting” began as a joke. The article states that it was merely a whimsical pastime of salon life in late 19th century France. A typical example, which may be familiar from popular puzzle books, might be a blank page or canvas bearing the title “A White Cow in a Snowstorm.” However, this kind of activity bears more similarity to 20th century Dada, or Neo-Dada, and particularly the works of the Fluxus group of the 1960s, than to 20th century monochrome painting since Malevich. The very broad range of possibility (or impossibility) in interpretation of the monochrome in painting is arguably why monochrome painting is so engaging to so many artists, critics, and writers. Although monochrome has never become dominant and few

artists have committed themselves exclusively to it, it has never gone away. It reappears as though a spectre haunting high modernism, or as a symbol of it, appearing during times of aesthetic and sociopolitical upheavals.

SUPREMATISM AND CONSTRUCTIVISM

Black Square, 1913, Oil on Canvas, State Russian Museum, St. Petersburg Monochrome painting as it is usually understood today began in Moscow, with Suprematist Composition: White on White [2] of 1918 by Suprematist artist Kazimir Malevich. This was a variation on or sequel to his 1913 work “Black Square on a White Field”, a very important work in its own right to 20th century geometric abstraction. In 1921, Constructivist artist Alexandr Rodchenko exhibited three paintings together, each a monochrome of one of the three primary colours. He intended this work to represent The Death of Painting.[3] While Rodchenko intended his monochrome to be a dismantling of the typical assumptions of painting, Malevich saw his work as a concentration on them, a kind of meditation on art’s essence (“pure feeling”). These two approaches articulated very early on in its history this kind of work’s almost paradoxical dynamic: that one can read a monochrome either as a flat surface (material entity or “painting as object”) which represents nothing but itself, and therefore representing an ending in the evolution of illusionism in painting (i.e. Rodchenko); or as a depiction of multidimensional (infinite) space, a fulfillment of illusionistic painting, representing a new evolution—a new beginning—in Western painting’s history (Malevich). Additionally, many have pointed out that it may be difficult to deduce the artist’s intentions from the painting itself, without referring to the artist’s comment. This very broad range of possibility (or impossibility) in interpretation of the monochrome is arguably why monochrome painting is so engaging to many artists, critics, and writers. Although monochrome has never...

# < Monochrome painting

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

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## ARTISTS

### NEW YORK

#### ABSTRACT EXPRESSIONISTS

Main article: Abstract Expressionism

Milton Resnick (January 7, 1917 Bratslav, Rodolia, Ukraine - March 12, 2004 New York, New York, USA) had a long career as an Abstract Expressionist painter. Initially, during the 1940s, he explored the then-current style of Action Painting. His later work, from the 1950s through the 1970s is often characterized as Abstract Impressionist - largely because he constructed his allover compositions with multiple, repetitive, and close-valued brushstrokes, in the manner of Claude Monet in the famous Waterlilies series. During the final two and a half decades of his painting career Resnick's paintings became monochromatic, albeit with thickly brushed and layered surfaces.

Ad Reinhardt (1913 Buffalo, New York, USA - 1967 New York, New York, USA) was an Abstract Expressionist artist notable for painting nearly “pure” monochromes over a considerable span of time (roughly from 1952 to his death in 1967), in red or blue, and lastly and most (in)famously, in black. Like the Johns works mentioned below, Reinhardt’s black paintings contained faint indications of geometrical shape, but the actual dilineations are not readily visible until the viewer spends time with the work. This tends to encourage a state of contemplative meditation in the viewer, and to create uncertainty about perception; in terms of Frank Stella’s famous quote, you may question whether ”what you see” is actually what you are seeing.

Richard Pousette-Dart - Although Pousette-Dart (1916 Saint-Paul, Minnesota, USA - 1992 Suffern, New York, USA) created several distinct series of paintings during his long career as an Abstract Expressionist painter, his monochromatic series called Presences spanning the late 1950s through the early 1990s, was among his most powerful.

### COLOR FIELD

Beginning in the 1950s and 1960s, several Abstract Expressionist / color field artists (notably: Barnett Newman, Mark Rothko, Robert Motherwell, Adolph Gottlieb, Theodoros Stamos, Ludwig Sander, Clyfford Still, Jules Olitski, and others) explored motifs that seemed to imply monochrome, employing broad, flat fields of colour in large scale pictures which proved highly influential to newer styles, such as Post-Painterly Abstraction, Lyrical Abstraction, and Minimalism.

### LYRICAL ABSTRACTION

Lyrical Abstractionist painters such as Ronald Davis, Larry Poons, Walter Darby Bannard, Dan Christensen, Larry Zox, Ronnie Landfield, Ralph Humphrey, David Budd, David R. Prentice, David Diao, David Novros, Jake Berthot, and others also explored and worked on series of shaped and rectangular canvases that approached the monochrome - with variations especially during the 1960s and 1970s.

### NEO-DADA

Main articles: Neo-Dada and Pop art

Robert Rauschenberg- In the early 1950s, Rauschenberg (b. 1925, Port Arthur, Texas, USA) became known for white, then black, and eventually red monochrome canvases. In the White Paintings (1951) series, Rauschenberg applied everyday house paint with paint rollers to achieve smooth ”blank” surfaces. White panels were exhibited alone or in modular groupings. The Black Paintings (1951–53) incorporated texture under the painted surface by way of collaged newspaper that sometimes indicates a grid-like structure. The Red Paintings (1953–54)

incorporate still more materials such as wood and fabric under the heavily worked painted surface, and seem to foreshadow Rauschenberg’s development of assemblage in his ”Combine Paintings” as well as his stated intention to act in ”the gap” between ”Art” and ”Life.” The white canvases became associated with the work 4’33” by the composer John Cage, which consisted of three movements of silence, and was inspired at least in part by Cage’s study of Zen Buddhism. In both works attention is drawn to elements of listening / viewing which lie outside the artist’s control: eg. the sounds of the concert environment, or the play of shadows and dust particles accumulating on the ’blank’ canvas surfaces (”landing strips” -- Cage).

In a related work, his Erased de Kooning Drawing of 1953, Rauschenberg erased a drawing by abstract expressionist artist Willem de Kooning. Perhaps surprisingly, De Kooning was sympathetic to Rauschenberg’s aims and implicitly endorsed this experiment by providing the younger artist with one of his own drawings which was very densely worked, taking 2 months and many erasers for Rauschenberg to (incompletely) erase.

Jasper Johns (b. 1930, Augusta, Georgia, USA) was a friend of Rauschenberg, and both were often categorized as Neo-Dadaist, pointing to their rejection of the Abstract Expressionist aesthetic which was dominant in the 1950s. Johns painted a number of works such as ”White Flag,” ”Green Target,” and ”Tango,” in which there is only a slight indication of an image, resembling the ”White Square on a White Field” of Malevich in technique.

These works often show more evidence of brushwork than is typically associated with monochrome painting. Many other works also approach monochrome, like the melancholic ”grey” works of the early ’60s, but with real objects (”assemblage”) or text added.

### MINIMALISTS

Main article: Minimalism

Ellsworth Kelly (b. 1923, Newburgh, New York, USA) spent a lot of time in both Paris and New York. He has made a number of monochrome paintings on shaped canvases and single color rectangular panels. His abstractions were “abstracted” from nature. His interest in nature extends so far that he has made a series of plant lithographs in an impressive and sincerely realistic style. Agnes Martin (1912, Macklin, Saskatchewan, Canada - 2004, Taos, New Mexico, USA) whose works of the 1950s and 1960s are serene meditations on “perfection,” and hence “beauty,” are typically white, off-white or pale grey canvases with faint evidence of pencil dragged in lines or grids across the painted surface.[4]

Robert Ryman (b. 1930, Nashville, Tennessee, USA) in works such as Ledger (1982) bring the word “constructed” to mind, with attention drawn to supports, framing, and the artist’s signature as important elements of works which are usually white, or off-white, and in square format. Abstract Expressionist brushwork is used as formal material in these minimalist constructions. Ryman exhibits a tour de force of variation on a deliberately limited theme.

Brice Marden (b. 1938, Bronxville, New York, USA) in his earliest mature works explored a reductive strategy which seemed similar to that of Jasper Johns’s and Ellsworth Kelly’s contemporaneous works, yet more formalist: paintings such as Return I consist of subtly grey fields painted in encaustic (wax-medium) with a narrow strip along the bottom of the canvas where Marden left bare evidence of process (i.e., drips and spatters of paint). During the late 1980s Brice Marden, who held a spiritual/emotional view of abstraction, began a more multi-colored and calligraphic form of abstract painting.



Frank Stella (b. 1936, Malden, Massachusetts, USA) echoed composer Igor Stravinsky's famous assertion that "music is powerless to express anything but itself" when he said "What you see is what you see," a remark he later qualified by saying his early paintings were influenced to a degree by the writing of Samuel Beckett (see above). In his work he was attempting to minimize any inference of "spiritual" or even "emotional" response on the part of the viewer, and this is perhaps most striking in his pinstripe Black Paintings (Marriage of Reason and Squalor - detail - 1959) beginning in the late '50s, where the pinstripes are articulated by unpainted canvas. Later, Stella abandoned not only monochrome, but also eventually geometric painting.

John McCracken (b. 1934, Berkeley, California, USA) is characteristically Minimalist in that his "objects" aren't adequately categorized as "painting" or "sculpture." Famous since 1965 for "slabs, columns, planks ... Neutral forms," his meticulously finished, polished monochrome objects are often simply leaned up against gallery walls, in what some critics describe as a casual "West Coast-lean." Although he draws from techniques characteristic of surfboard manufacture, his works are personally and meticulously handcrafted, unlike those of John M. Miller and other more recent artists, which are typically factory-made according to the artist's specifications.

Allan McCollum (b. 1944, Los Angeles, California, USA) determined in the mid-1970s that the social forces that give paintings meaning may be better understood if the "painting" itself could be reduced to a generic form -- a painting that could read as a "sign" for a painting," which could function of a "placeholder," or a kind of "prop." In the 1970s and early 80s he painted what he called Surrogate Paintings, and ultimately began casting them in plaster, frame and all. These hundreds of objects that looked like framed, matted, fields of painted blackness, worked as neutral, "generic signs" that might inspire the viewer to think

about the social expectations which construed the "idea" of a painting," more than the actual painting itself. By reducing paintings to mere signs of themselves, McCollum turned the gallery and the museum setting into a kind of theater, highlighting the drama of presenting, displaying, buying and selling, exchanging, photographing, assessing, criticising, choosing, and writing about the works; the object-paintings at the center of the action were purposely rendered moot, in order to turn one's attention to the supplementary devices and social practices that, in the end, bestow the value on the work. Paradoxically, as time went by, these neutral objects became valuable in themselves, as symbols of an anthropological way of looking at art.

Anne Truitt (1921-2004) was an American artist of the mid-20th century; she is associated with both minimalism and Color Field artists like Morris Louis and Kenneth Noland. Primarily thought of as a minimalist sculptor, and as a colorist who painted her sculpture, throughout her career Truitt produced several series of Monochromatic paintings.

She made what is considered her most important work in the early 1960s anticipating in many respects the work of minimalists like Donald Judd and Ellsworth Kelly. She was unlike the minimalists is some significant ways. She named, for instance, many of her works after places and events that were important to her - a practice suggesting a narrative beyond and yet somehow contained by the sculpture.

The sculpture that made her significant to the development of Minimalism were aggressively plain and painted structures, often large. The recessional platform under her sculpture raised them just enough off the ground that they appeared to float on a thin line of shadow. The boundary between sculpture and ground, between gravity and verticality, was made illusory. This formal ambivalence is mirrored by her insistence that color itself, contained a psychological vibration which when purified, as it is on a work of

art, isolates the event it refers to as a thing rather than a feeling. The event becomes a work of art, a visual sensation delivered by color.

#### EUROPE

Yves Klein - See also International Klein Blue[5]

Gerhard Richter (b. 1932, Dresden, Germany) is an artist who is probably best known for his technically stunning photo-realist paintings, which overshadow his abstract and monochrome works. Both his abstract and representational works seem to cover similar emotional terrain, a kind of ironic pessimism which made his work very fashionable in the late 1980s. His grey paintings, such as Untitled (Grey) 1968 are made by drawing "expressive" gestures in wet paint.

Olivier Mosset (b. 1944, Bern, Switzerland) also has spent considerable time in New York and Paris. In Paris in the '60s he was a member of the BMPT group, along with Daniel Buren, Michel Parmentier, and Niele Toroni. The group brought forth questions about the notions of authorship and originality, implying that they often did each others' works, and that the art object was more important than its authorship. Later, in New York in the late '70s, Mosset undertook a long series of monochrome paintings, during the heyday of Neo-expressionism. He became a founding member of the New York Radical Painting group, radical referring both to an implied radical social stance, as well as a returning to the radical "root" of painting. This re-assertion of social relevance for abstraction, and even the monochrome, hadn't been emphasized to such a degree since Malevich and Rodchenko. 1980s neo-geo artists such as Peter Halley who assert a socially relevant, critical role for geometric abstraction, cite Mosset as an influence. See: Untitled 1999

#### OTHERS

Sally Hazelet Drummond (b.1924, USA) exhibited her monochromatic

paintings during the late 1950s in New York City at the Tanager Gallery, one of the first Tenth Street cooperative galleries. As of 2007 she heroically and impressively continues to paint Monochromatic paintings (See: Presence of the Heart).

Alan Ebnother (b. Alameda, California, 1952, USA) is an American painter who explores the heritage of monochrome painting, confining himself to the single color green (See: December 26).

Florence Miller Pierce (b. 1918, Washington, D.C., USA) was a member of the TAOS Transcendental Painting Group in the 1930s, currently residing in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Her square monochromes, made with translucent resin poured onto mirrored plexiglass, seem to glow of their own accord.

Anne Low is a member of the New New Painters group who paints monochrome pictures. The New New Painters exploit the latent qualities of materials such as new acrylic gels in the much the same way that the Post-Painterly Abstractionists in previous years embraced the new acrylic paint of their time. Among the group's goals is to continue with and extend the now somewhat unfashionable tradition of modernism.



life sketches 2005/06  
panum institute, copenhagen, dk

twins



PRÆP. 1-36  
Uterus med gemelli.



PRÆP. 1-9

VENTRICULUS, (set forfra)  
fra nyfødt



PRÆP. 1-36



PRÆP. 1-12

Ren sin. et  
dext.,  
med  
foetal lapdeling.



PRÆP. 1-8

THORAXORGAN, fra  
Pulmo dext. et sin.  
impressiones costarum

details

foetus



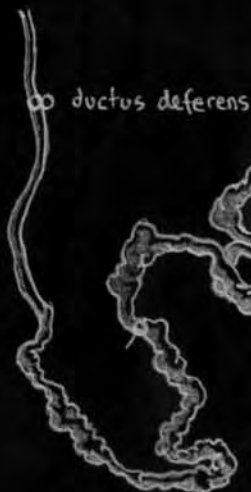
PRÆP. 1 - 34

Fœtus, fuldbærent med funiculus umbilicalis  
omkring collum.

o Septulum testis  
 ooo lamina visceralis tunicae vaginalis testis



o tunica albuginea  
 oo ductus epididymidis  
 mediastinum testis



oo ductus deferens



oviductus

o lobulus epididymidis

o ductus epididymidis

ooo parenchyma testis

PRÆP. 284  
 MONTRE 14  
 TESTIS ET EPIDIDYMIS



testis et epididymis

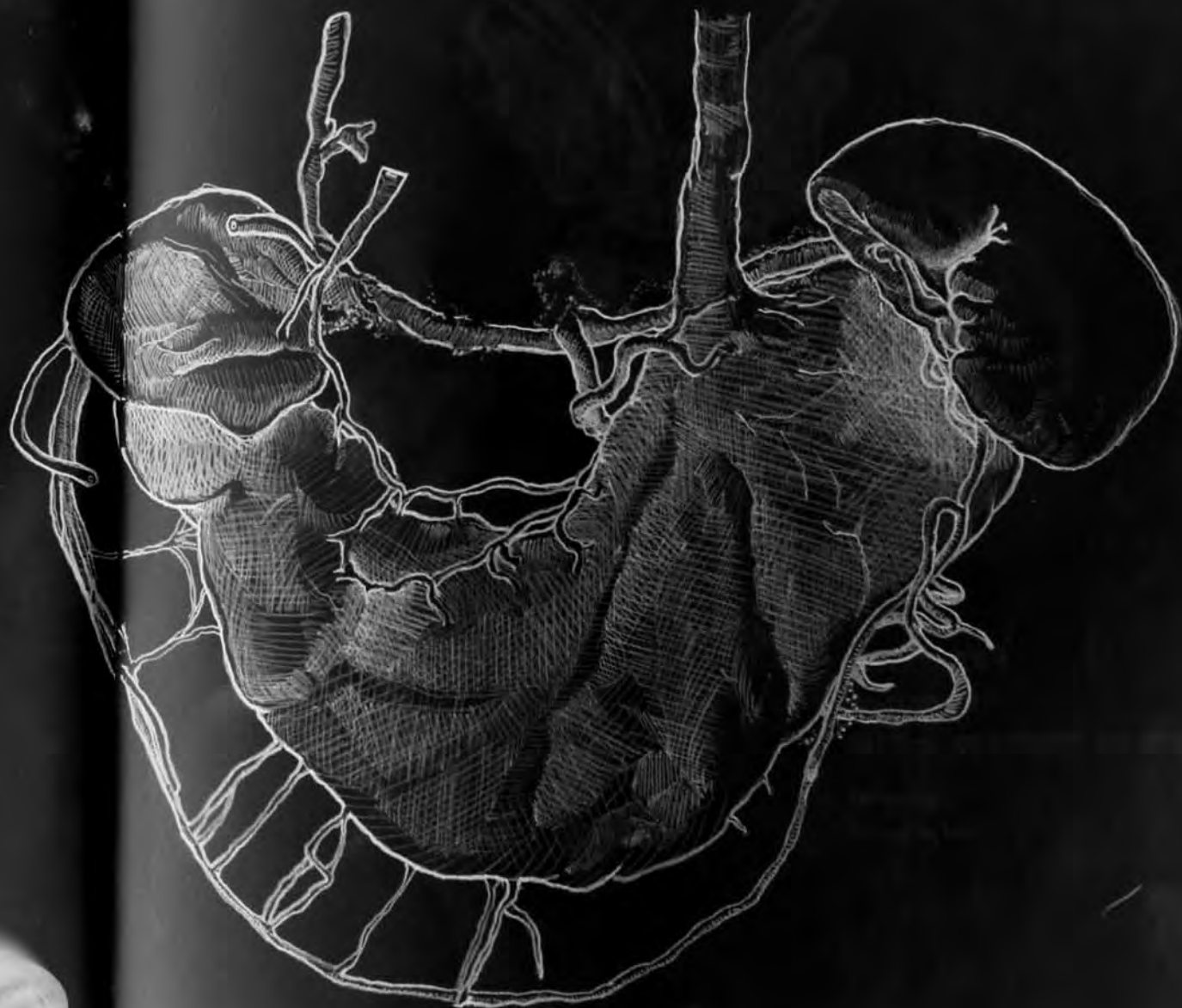
stomac

PRÆP. 333

MONTRE 11

VENTRICULUS ET LIEN

lyserødhvidlig  
rødtlysebrun  
hvidlig gulig





VESICULA SEMINALIS

PRÆP. 287

MONTRE 14

DUCTUS DEFERENS ET PROSTATA

redgrålig  
hvidgrålig brunt

prostata



heart

RRÆP. 158 MONT 9  
COR

Gul grø, hud grølig  
blåhvid



PRAP. NR 171  
MONTRE 12  
red AA. JEJUNALES ET  
blā VV. JEJUNALES



jejunales

spleen



PRÄP 265  
MONTPE 12  
MILT OG BIMILT  
rødkøllig grå



PR&P 261

WONTRE 12

RENES ET GLL.  
SUPRARENALES

glandes gra

(hyre)



kidney

rectum

PREP 237 MONT 10

RECTUM  
ET COLON  
SIGMOIDEUM

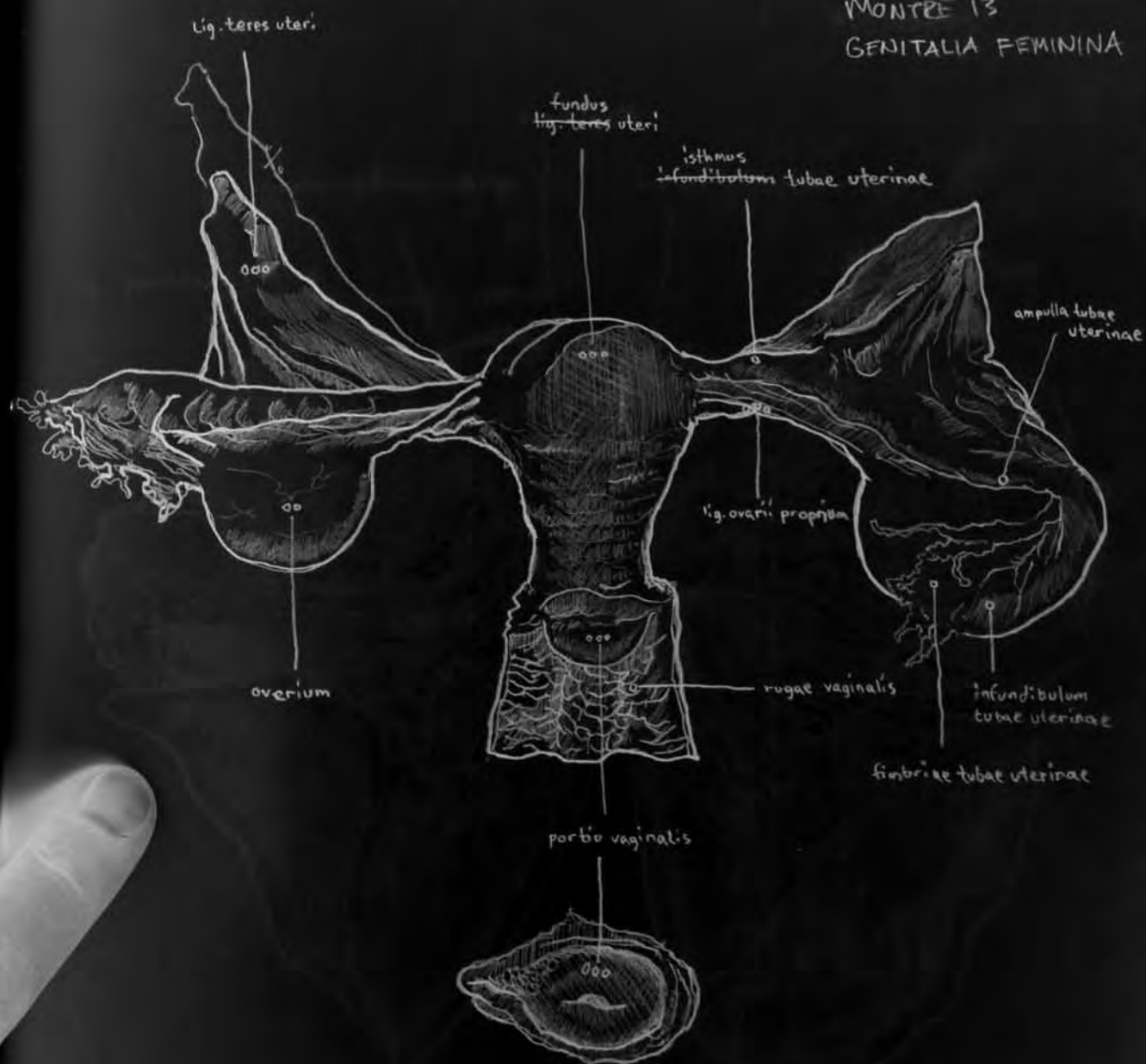




PRÆP NR. 266

MONTPE 13

GENITALIA FEMININA



genitalia feminina

intestine

PEEP 235  
MONT. 10  
INTESTINUM  
TÆNVE  
MESENTERIALE

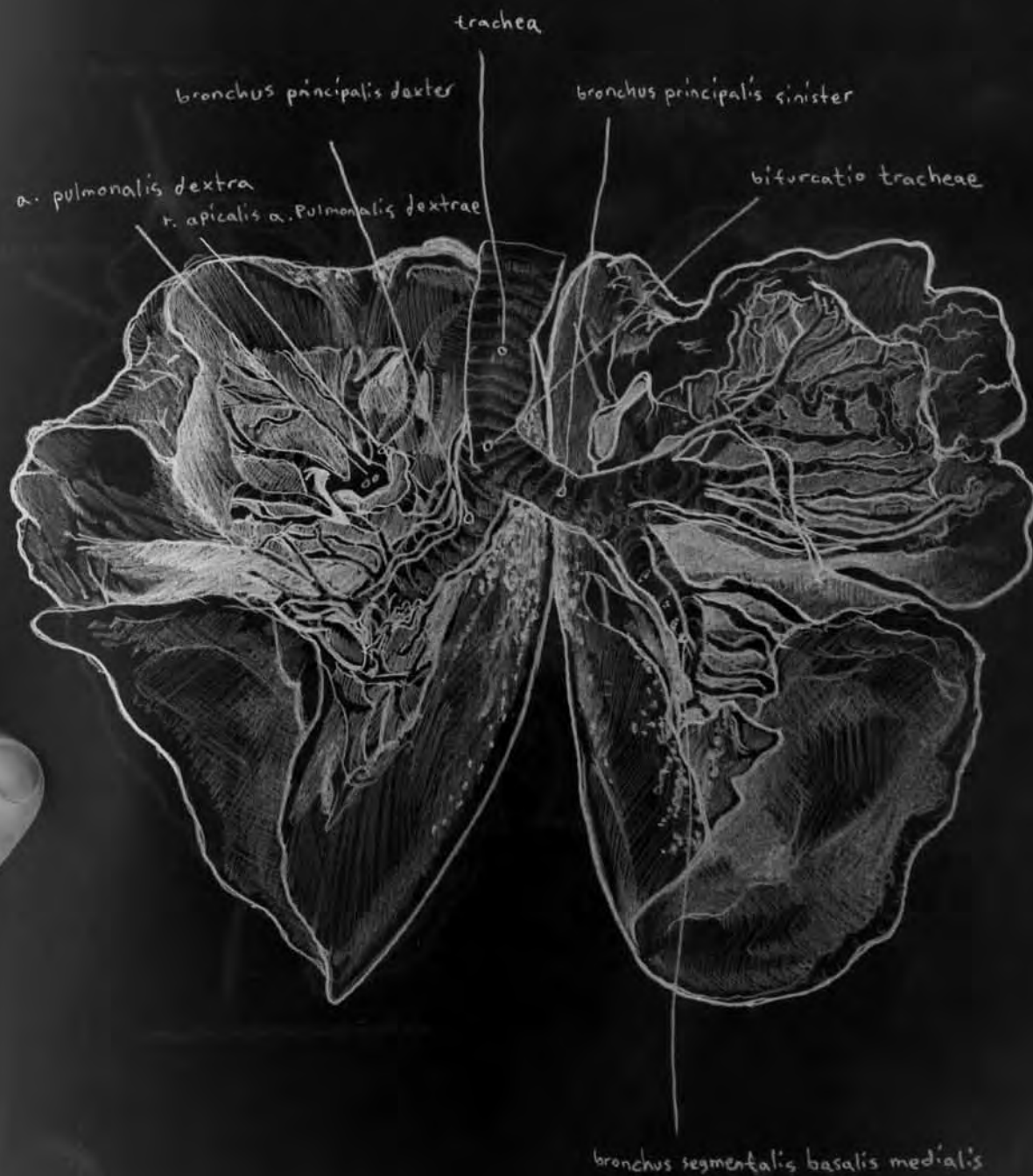
page og lig. x hvidgul og hvid

oo ileum terminale



o divesticulum meckeli

PREP NR 338  
MONTRE 9  
PULMONES





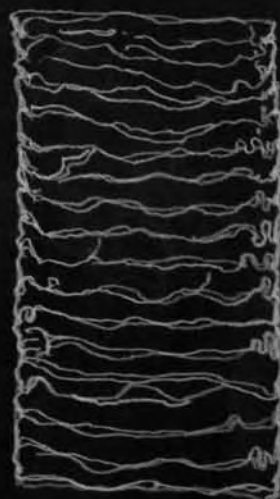
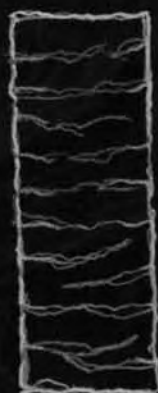
lungs

pancreas

PRÆP NR. 138  
MONTÉE 12  
DUODENUM ET PANCREAS



PRAP. NR. 236  
MONTRE 10  
INTESTINUM  
TENUE  
MESENTERIALE



intestine (sections)



cerebral hemisphere

PRÆP. NR. 79

MONTRE 2

### PROSENCEPHALON

- telencephalon
  - corona radiata
  - capsula interna
  - radiatio optica
- diencephalon
  - tractus opticus

### MESENCEPHALON

- p. anterior pedunculi cerebri
- lemniscus lateralis
- colliculus inferior
- brachium colliculi inferioris

### RHOMBENCEPHALON

- METENCEPHALON
  - pons
  - pedunculus cerebellaris medius
  - pedunculus cerebellaris superior
  - nucleus dentatus
- MYELENCEPHALON
  - oliva
  - pyramis

### NERVI CRANIALES

- n. opticus
- n. vestibulocochlearis



PREP. 282  
MONTRE &  
CAPUT



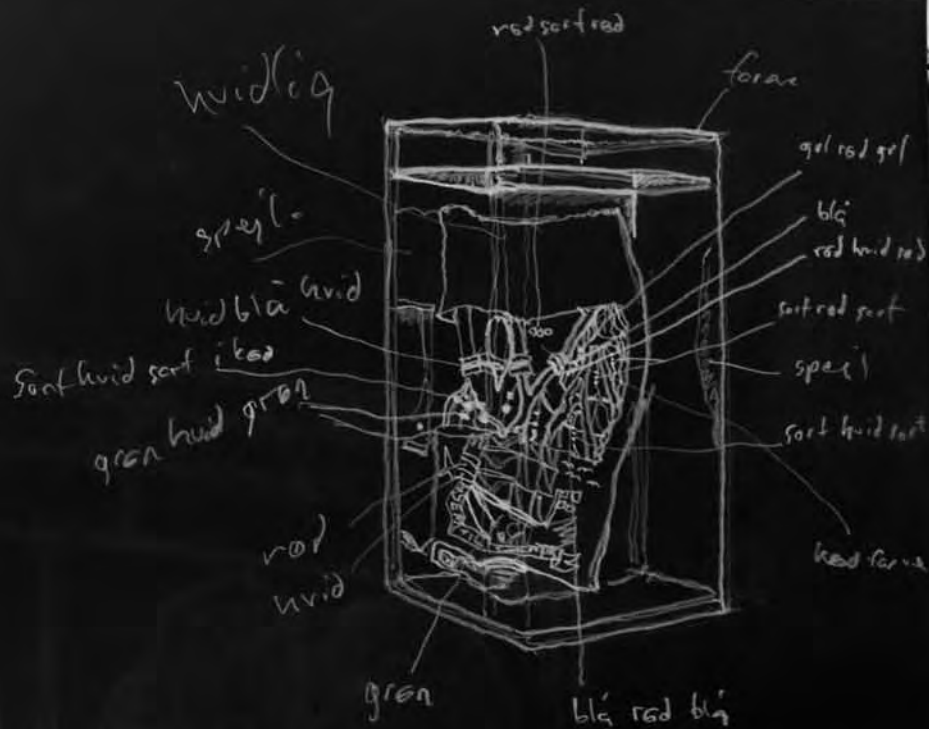
scull

the cerebellum

PREP. NR. 141  
MONTRE 2  
DETALJE







"Hjem til mor"

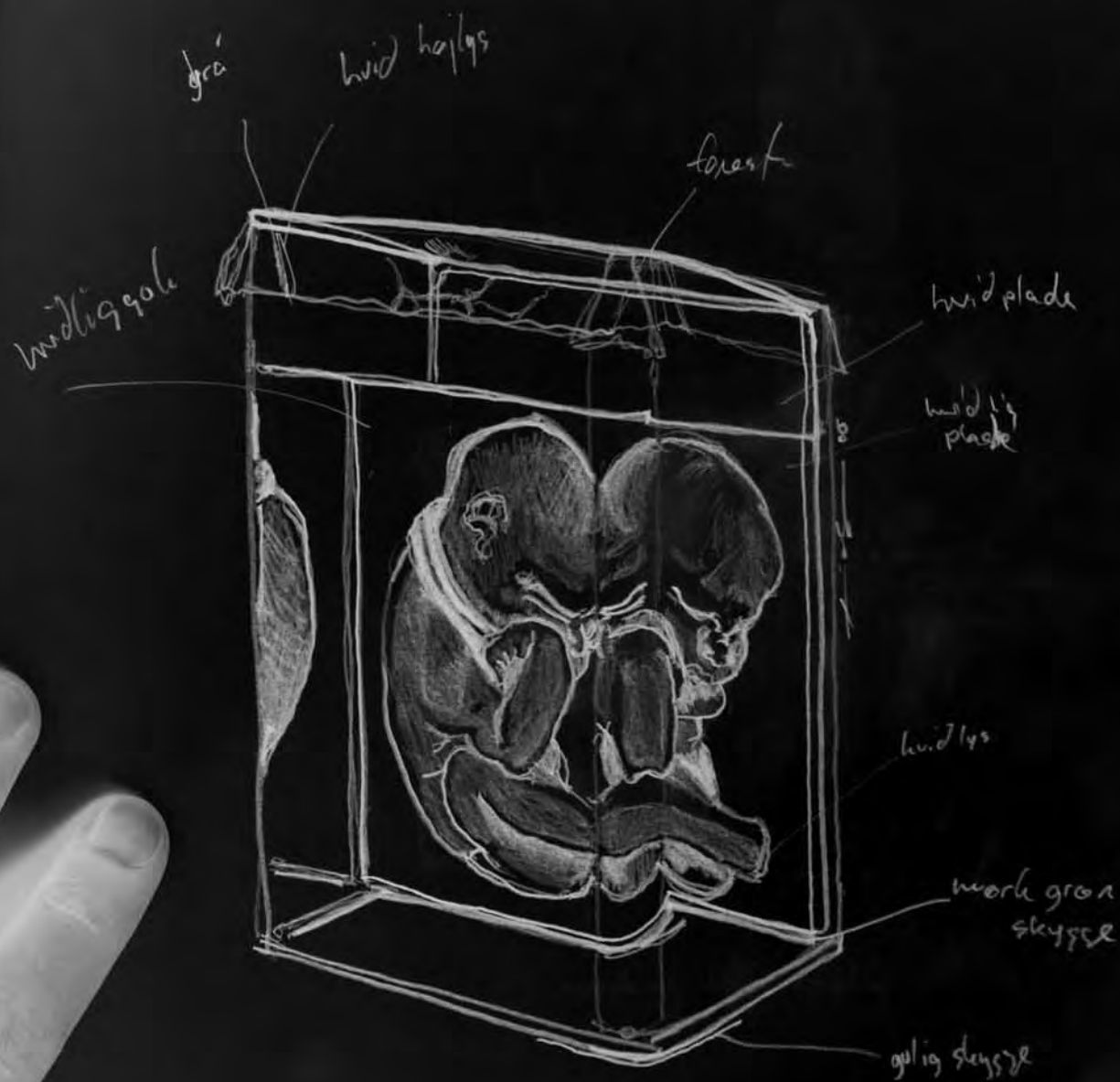
prep. 227

"FOSSA CUBITALIS"

montre 15

albow joint (with tattoo)

foetus



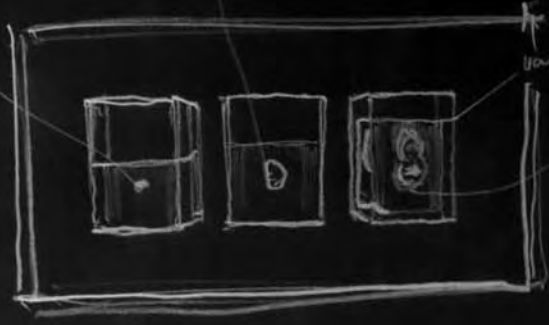


lys hvid  
grå mørk  
hvidgrønnet  
gult lys

hvid skibe

lys hvid  
gulig bund

mørk og kontrast



hvid skibe

embryo (3 stages)



section (with face)

studied  
Makroskopisch anatomi



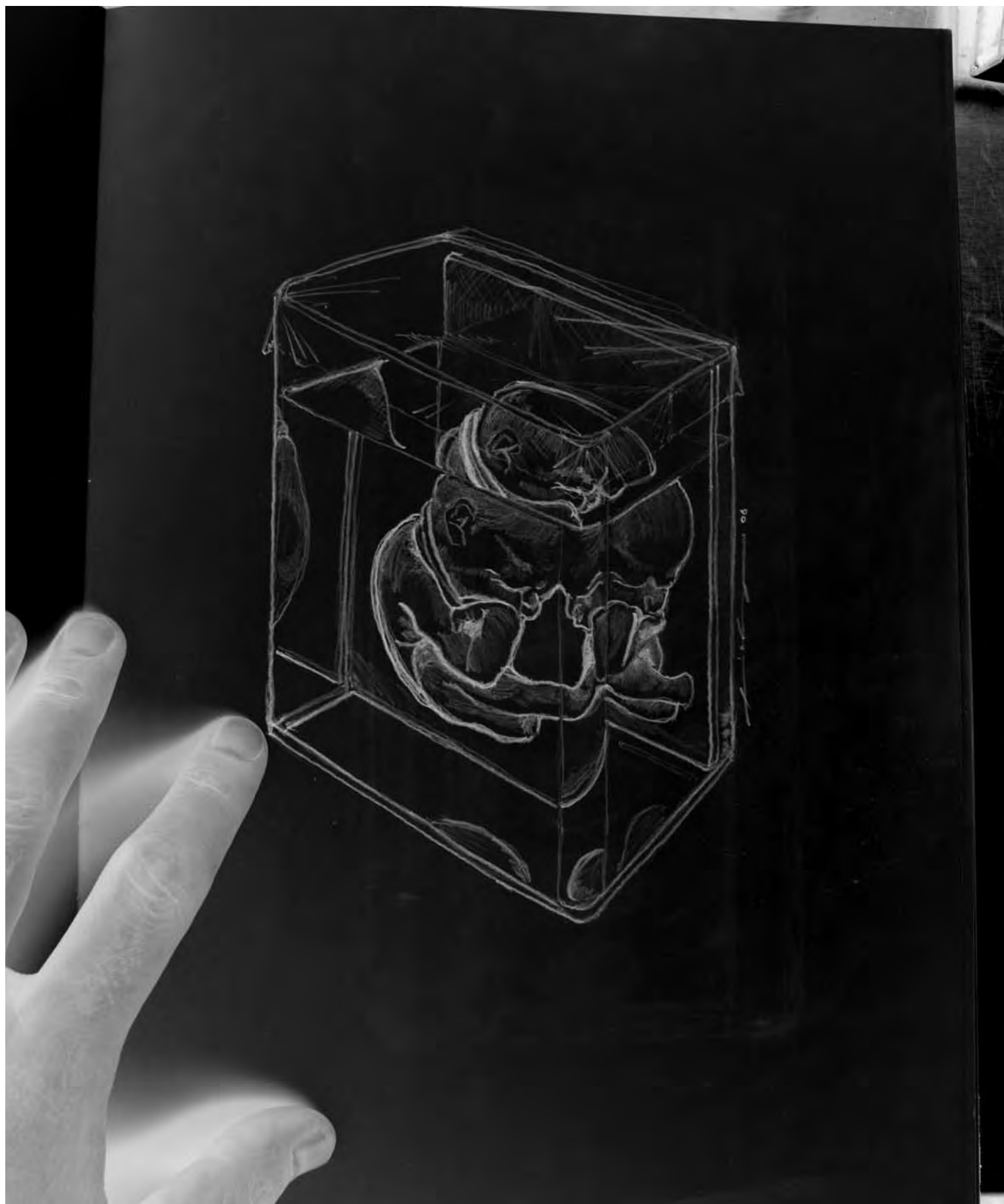
"Artist donated"

"the artist head on a plastic platter"



foetus

foetus



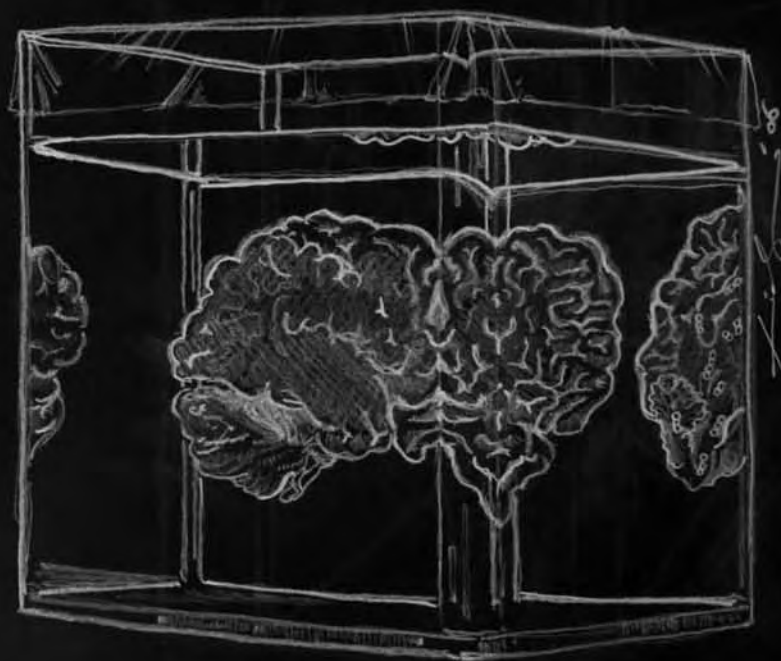




heart (6 stages)

lungs

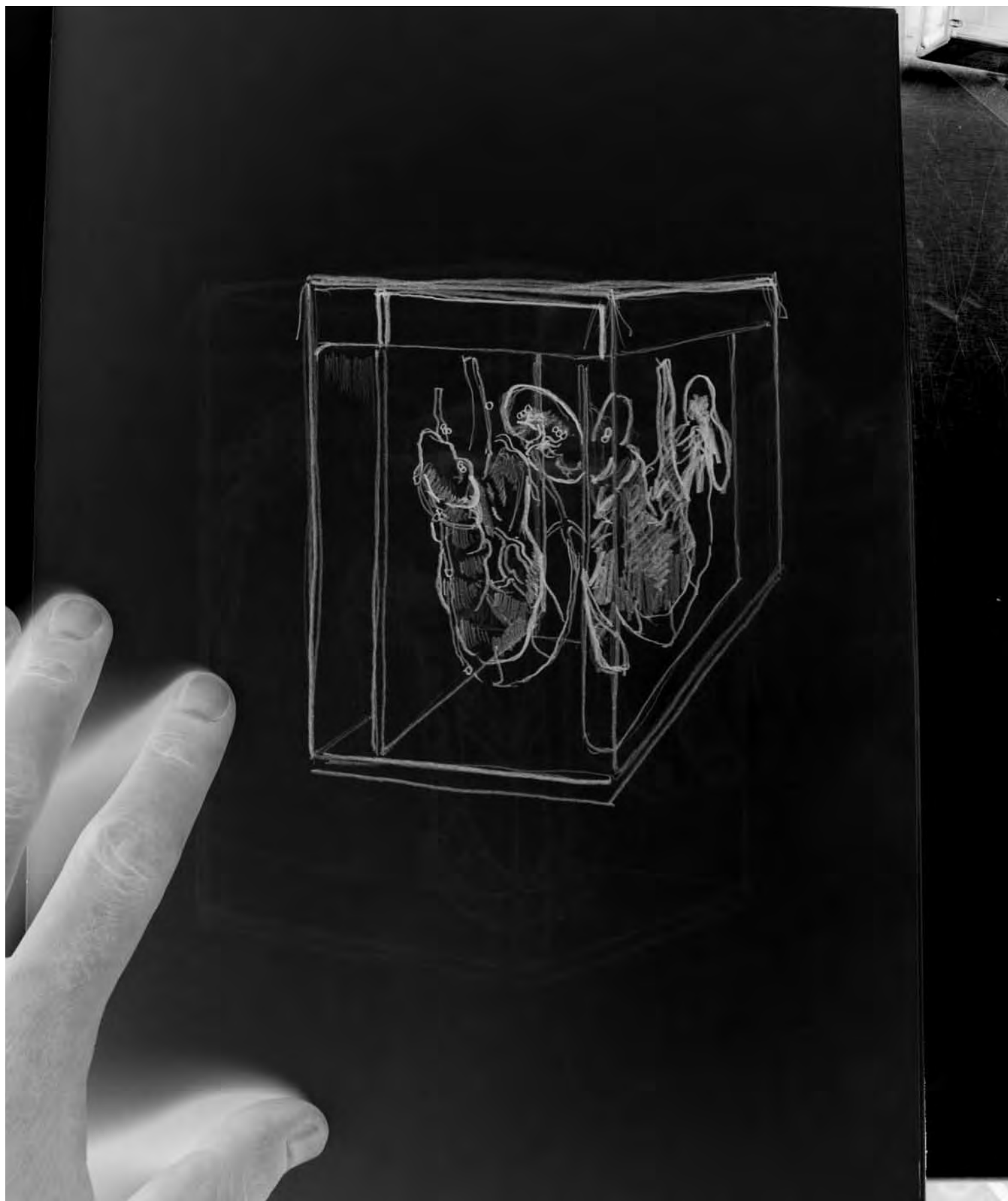




grey matter



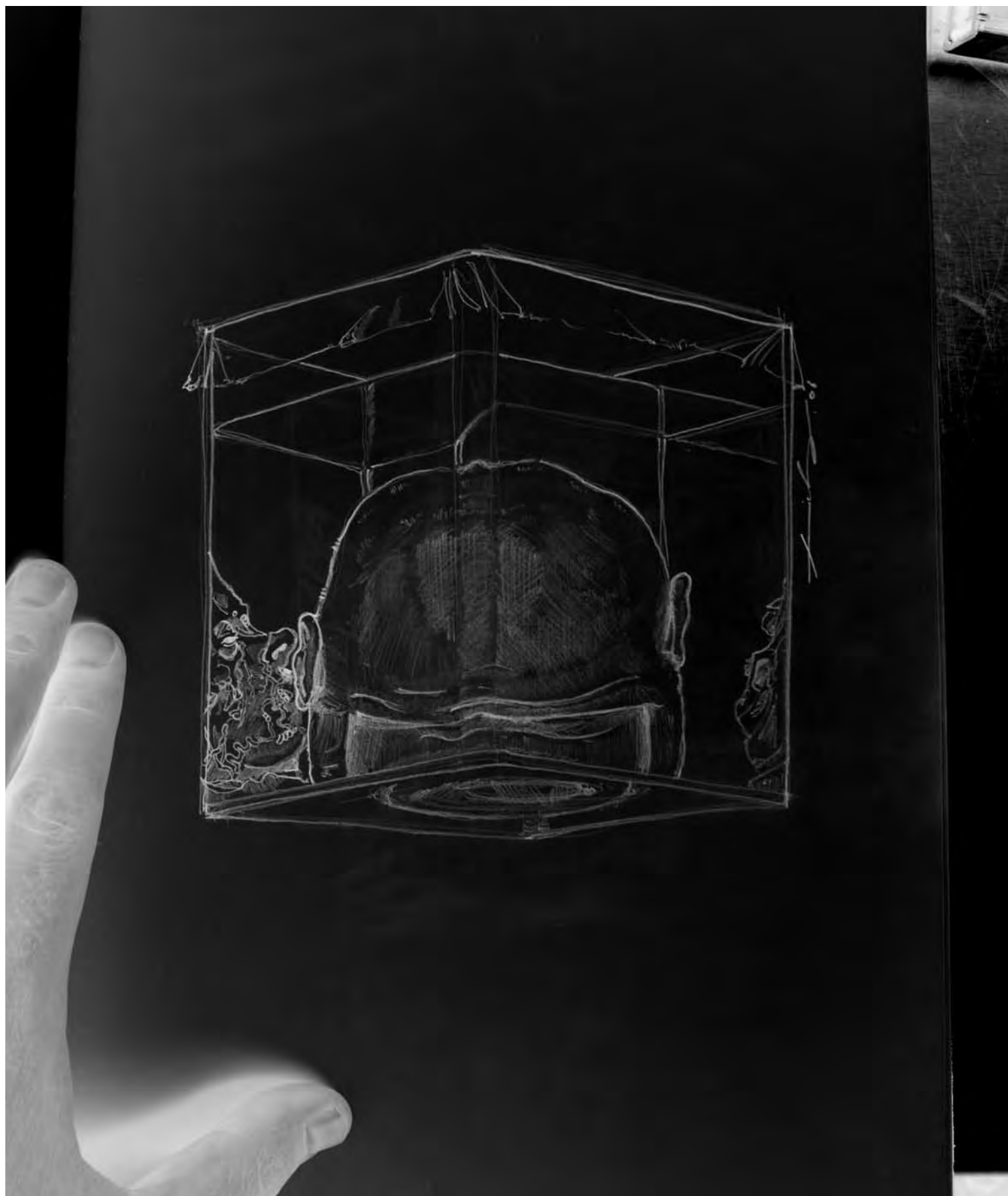
stomac





legs of a child (with feet)

head







cerebral hemisphere

hand (right)

gulig<sup>e</sup>

462

all nerve

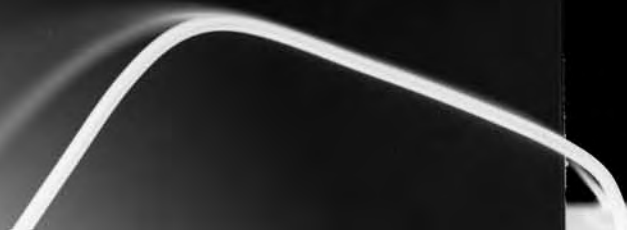
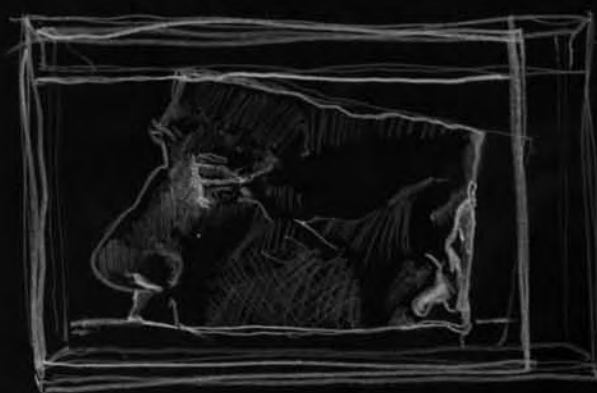
leafy red

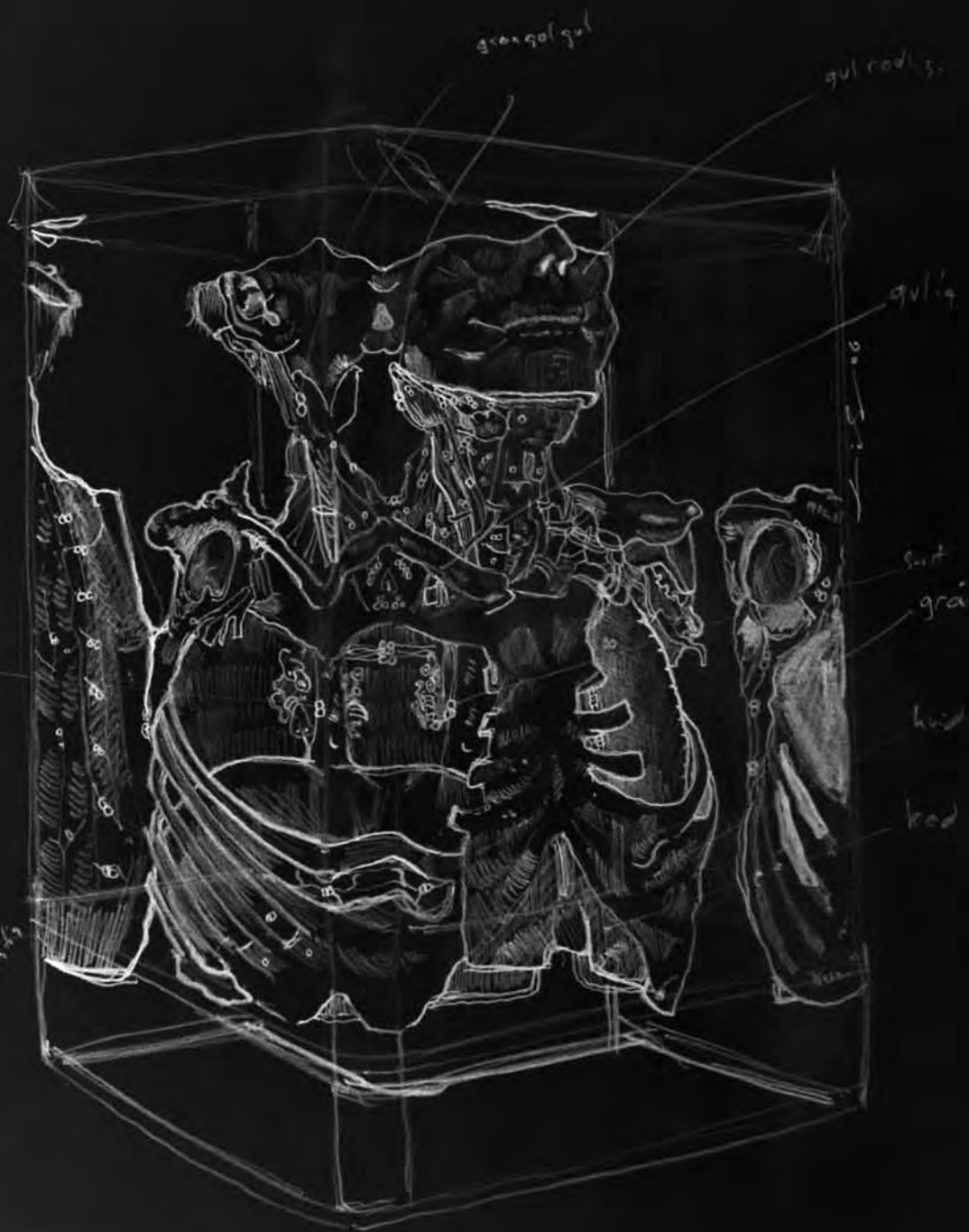


womb



section of a face





section

section



"Stump"











photo essay  
by heidi vejsnæs

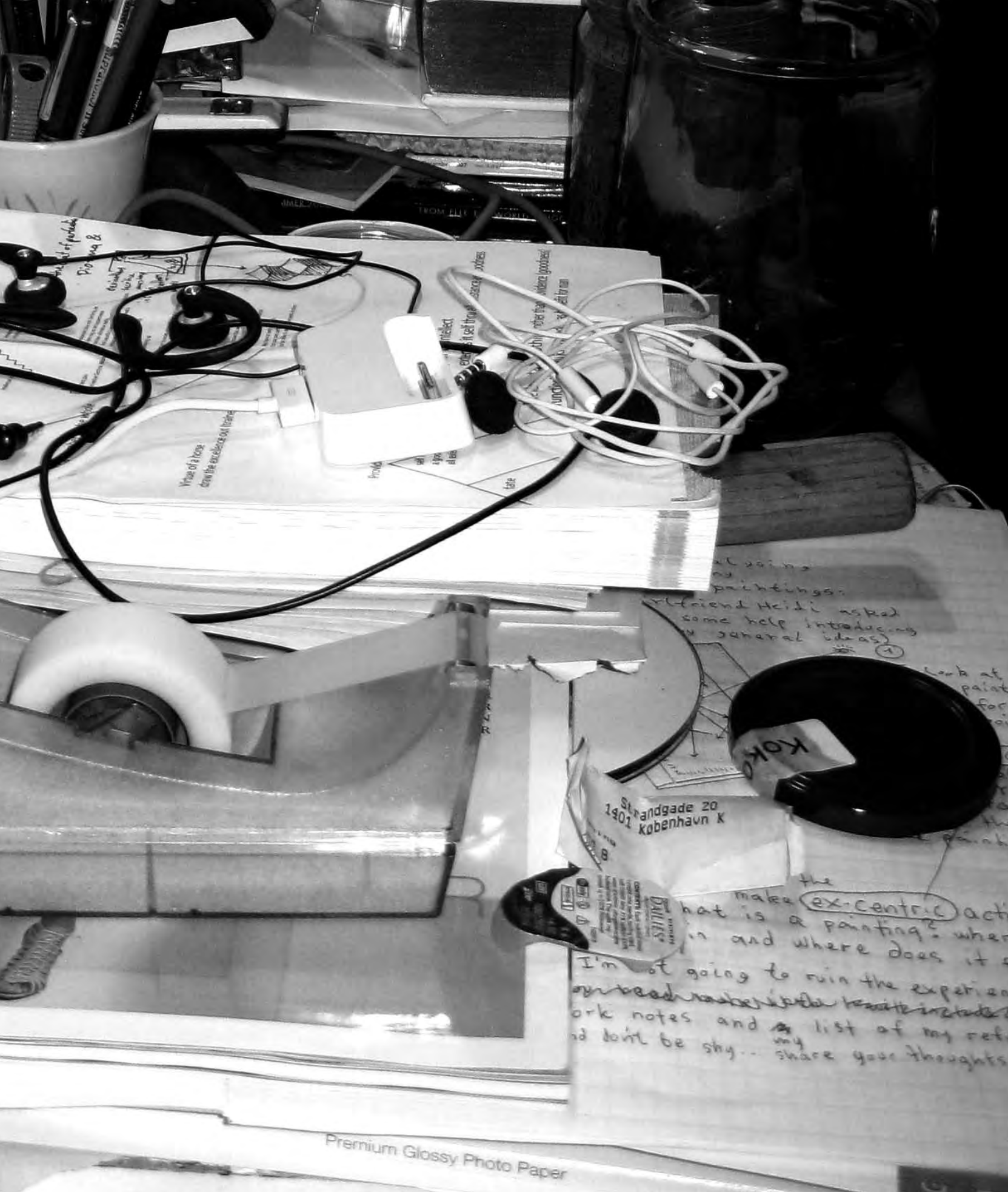




2008







...of ...  
...ing &

View of a ...  
... the ...

...ect  
... of ...  
... where ...

... paintings.  
... friend Heidi asked  
some help introducing  
in general ideas

Strandgade 20  
1401 København K

KOKO

... the  
... make ex-centric act  
... is a painting? where  
... and where does it  
...  
I'm not going to ruin the experience  
... your notes and a list of my references  
... and don't be shy... share your thoughts

Premium Glossy Photo Paper





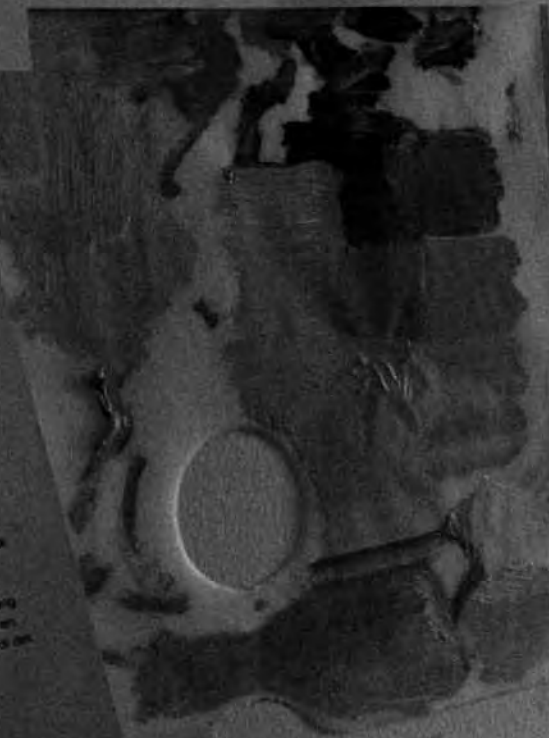








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*[Faint, illegible handwritten text on a piece of paper.]*









































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4 monochromes, notes, sketches and essays  
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michael b. chang (b. 1973, dk)  
danish painter, self-taught

debut exhibition opened on 1 may 2008  
featuring 4 monochrome paintings:  
absence no. 1, no. 2, no. 3, no. 4  
showing one day only

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