

Untold

Tales from the Street

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Studio Caruso FS 2020

For all the animals we've ever run over.



View onto a street of Zürich

Time simply flows by, nothing seems to drag you out of that constant and dull flow. Grey stream, gliding through everything, taking you everywhere, rare are the dots of green. You feel no need to stop, it is one endless frame. Disorder always catches your eyes, for the appearance of homogeneity is what we are used to, are made to like.

A street, no this can be called a space, a place. You cannot merely pass through, it requires your attention, your full presence. Green is not only a side character, it is a consistent other, so are animals, living side by side with humans – unseen and yet it strangely seems...natural? Normal. It is a free movement of all, or so it seems, the living fabric seems to have smudged away the marked thresholds, giving way to publicness. One has the feeling to be somewhere else entirely, displaced in a different place, in a different time.



THE FOX'S STRIDE

1



Street level and new function, View onto Nr. 24 / 26

Walking through this street feels different now. My paws can occasionally feel the soft earth. The burning desert of tar, a sense belonging to history. I can now drift through the street, feeling the bushes and high grass here and there brush my tale. Convenient they are, serving as hiding places. No one would suspect an animal crouching between flower beds and bushes, now to be found here and there within the street. They are but so inattentive those two-legged beings. Man is sitting on his balcony. He reads a newspaper, legs crossed.

I hear a clicking noise; a woman walking on the pavement. A baby is babbling with relishing rosy red cheeks. A bee is flying right before my eyes, sadly not in snapping reach. The high tree gives some cooling shade, and what do I see? Nice well-fed looking birds perched on its branches. An elderly woman is opening her window, watering her flowers. The water pours over, yet she continues to water, falling onto the crops laying on the pavement below – heads of salad floating. Of course, the collective must take care of the crops and share the harvest.

Speaking of which, there have been a lot of apples missing from the trees lately. I then found all of them later being nailed to a back wall, its sweet juice gliding down the plaster.



A ROOM WITH A VIEW

2

I live for. In fact, I cannot live without it. It always makes me wonder how these humans manage to stay inside all day, in the dark not catching one breath of fresh air, always enclosed within. They mostly are quite lethargic, so it is easy for me to squish past them without them noticing. Their feet smell and are quite dry somehow, and yet not as hairy as the rest of their body. Luckily, I have a room of my own. For one must make room for other living beings than humans. I always wondered why they need so much space if they either are in bed or out somewhere else.

Though most important is my disguised appearance, no human notices me on my sunbathing spot, always watching. Their attention is apparently not broad enough to notice the small things, or rather to call them acknowledgeable.



View into room on second floor of Nr. 23

They probably know that there is something around the corner, memorizing everything they do, the private being ultimately dissolved. But they do not seem to care, they think they have nothing to hide. The intimate has always something to reveal and I know oh so many hungry souls wanting to be fed by the gathered information.

Feeling the idyll, one has the need to take in every detail. Apparently, this happens on both sides. The otherwise all too common neutral gaze turns into an analysing one. This place's metamorphosis has changed interaction. It seems to be a habitat, satisfying the needs of its very different inhabitants, co-existing next to each other.



BOXED-UP

3

Outside, on the balcony that is what I call home. Swaying in the wind, leaves quivering, occasional drops of water that is my daily routine. Life happens around me, but I stand still, having nothing else to do but add some green colour to the seemingly bleak stream around. Birds, insects and even humans acknowledge my presence now and then. Occasionally, I have to endure the cutting knife coming for my branches or a storm threatening to throw me off the balcony. I look down onto the street and see all those happy beings gardening, talking, playing. But looking inside the room behind my balcony, I see my cousins savagely caged in by a glass box puncturing the whole building. Though one must offer room to flora, for the city must become greener, some plants don't experience rightful environment. They will never be able to feel the wind nor the direct sunlight. All this to please the eye, wipe away the bad conscience. Why has have to be us standing against a tide we did not even initiated? Are we a smaller loss, if we perish first?



Interior view in flat on second floor of Nr. 24

I hear my cousins calling out for me, their leaves pressed against the glass getting dirtier every day. Once a month, the gardener steps into the box, the Dark Day. After his doing, my cousins are much quieter, for they have been thinned out. Their leaves are said to be a miraculous cure for distressed humans.



A RAT'S NOSE IS EVERYWHERE

4

It is rough down there and one often has the wish to get out and seek the light. It would be comprehensible if the sunlit ground above really was as bright as the sun it is being illuminated by. It is a place where happiness disguises itself in objects humans collect, hoard, stack and then throw away again. A street where communication seems to be reduced to the mere prospect of working together or worse to show off with one's good behaviour. The street has always been a place where one could see the transparent glimmer of hierarchy shine through. Even for those covering their eyes to see it.



Street level and new function, View onto Nr. 23/25

Still, the common rooms and the street must promote a sense of co-ownership, collective work and dissolution of hierarchy. Even if now humans have to accept animals into their lives, I wonder if we are their equals yet? Two figures are sitting closely, disorder surrounding them. I stop to listen: “you need to make him do it, I do not care if that filth of a family will discover their son works for us. It needs to be done; the mayor has urged me. Use what ever necessary means, by the end of the month this house needs to be removed of every living thing.” barked one of them. Where does this need of overthrowing others come from, even within its own species? Is human’s highest value always one’s own wishes?

One always thinks of himself as one’s highest judge. Being pleased with yourself seems to be the ultimate satisfaction. But the other still has its opinion branded upon yourself. Hidden though he is, you still feel his judgement burning your neck. While walking in here one experiences intense traffic, but not in the sense a conventional street used to incorporate it. It is traffic not caused by cars, but by human exchange, insects flying from the high grass to fruit trees, animals silently scurrying around, not fully at display, but clearly present.



STICKY NEIGHBOURS

5

We never think simply for ourselves. We are a collective. Working individually, but side by side. Some are left behind. The survival of our hive is our priority, growing it constantly, expanding as much as we can. Those setting their individuality higher above that of the collective, never have a chance to stand against the wind of change. Of course, this applies to this one species that we share our habitat with. Strangely they let us be now, though they often are so keen on destroying habitat. Although destruction might not be what they seek this time, they interfere nonetheless, making sure everyone knows what's theirs. During the day, they hear loud music, echoing so deep that it makes the hive tremble. In the night, their sun, hanging in each of their rooms burns so bright, that one could think it was daytime. Inhabitants must organize and maintain common rooms, but how much of it actually is maintained remains questionable. We tried angrily to make ourselves heard, buzzing around their heads. But they are so simple minded, only hearing what they want to hear.



Ground level view from backyard into Nr. 25

We had to reach for more drastic measures. The smaller ones of our colony were sent out in the dead of night. Looking for the humans, whispering they enter their ears, telling them to stop those behaviours disturbing our lives. So, it goes, once a week this procedure has to be repeated, renewing the influence we now have on them, always in their head, producing the same warning sound over and over again.



WHAT IS MINE, IS YOURS

6

I have been given a living room; water was added, for one must offer only some room for Flora and Fauna. It has always been very clear which place I had been assigned to. Not water means human's zone. The room is quite nice, I can look out into other's living room, watching other animals or humans, while enjoying the coolness of the water. Seeing lizards scurrying past me, even crossing the boundary the human had laid out for me, I became jealous very quickly. Even though being big and having sharp teeth, I also wanted to see what lay beyond that door, always closed.



Interior view in flat on second floor of Nr. 23

As the days, weeks and months are passing by the hunger grew more and more, I desperately wanted what I was not granted. One afternoon, I took my chance and stepped out of the pool. Slowly taking in every detail in the rooms I stepped into, relishing the feeling of doing something I had never done: cross boundaries. The last room I noticed was by far the darkest and the dampest, I climbed into something slippery but hard. I discovered the knobs were to let in water, and not just water, warm water. As the hot liquid enclosed around my whole body, I saw light stream through the bathroom and distinguished my neighbour's shape. We locked both our gazes; fear written all over his face. For quite some time I did not leave this place for fear he would lock me up. I heard him grunt and muttering mean words every time he passed the bathroom, but never did he dare to enter again.

Even wandering through a street like this one, one still wonders what does happen behind the curtains. The façade disguises itself as a friendly, yet impassive face. Only revealing momentarily its insides when night comes and light streams through it. One often does not foresee the consequences of one's action, for if this would be a rule, mistakes would be inexistent.



THE BLACK MIST

7

Our nest is tucked in one of the corners of this room. We were croaking with happiness. We sometimes heard banging from the human living next to us, but never was it louder than our croaking. One night, our hatchlings were happily making noises in their sleep, the human made such a loud bang, it broke a hole into the wall separating our room from his. He shouted with such a fury to us it waked our hatchlings. They began to cry out of fear, we became so angry. Though every inhabitant must offer room for Flora and Fauna guaranteeing a new way of living together. It is the human trying to undermine his self-set principle, even though he still occupies most of the space. What is it he even needs rules for, if he cannot follow them?

We had only one solution left, attack the human. We aimed for the eyes of course, he tried to wear us off, but we are good at this. Unfortunately, we did not manage to reach his face, for it was covered with his arms, yet bruises from our beaks were still covering his body. The next day, when we came back from our hunt for food, the human had made several other holes and was throwing stuff into the room.



Interior view in flat on second floor of Nr. 26

It only meant one thing, he tried to take his king's seat back. He did not see us coming, for we came from behind. Since then he never complained about our croaking noises anymore. Here we are, always watching, always aware. Finally, peace had been restored for all.



ROOF SECRETS

8

Hearing a hissing sound, one could see the snake slowly gliding on the ground. The woman always shuddering, since her bedroom was just under to where the snake had nestled itself in the glasshouse. Of course, they had had no choice, never would they have accepted, knowing they had me, a dog as a companion. Co-habitation must be guaranteed at all times, yet it has been decided upon how this particular co-habitation has to look like. They never told anyone. They always had such good reputation in the neighbourhood, almost being the sample humans, having most graciously embraced the new way of living, without questioning. Following eagerly this new setting, for embracing is often easier than endlessly seeking for a better alternative.



View from greenhouse on rooftop of Nr. 24

So, they had to hide me on the roof. Suddenly, the hissing became soft but very persistent. The snake whispered in a low voice “What are you little creature doing here? No need to hide, no need to hide. I can smell your presence by your warm, young blood.”

There was a sudden outcry, the woman had discovered my missing paw. A few seconds later, distant croaks were to be heard and soon you could feel the flapping noises of the raven’s wings above your head. The whole armada rushed into their apartment; rules are to be ensured at all times. Some hours later one could observe the three humans painting, in red letters “I must never own an animal” over all of their walls, a thousand times. The distant red glim of the forced writing could be seen from several other spots, a warning banner to never cross the rules of the ravens.



GREEN SHIELD

9

The ravens were boasting of contentment of their now high acclaimed position, which they had acquired by their rule of terror.

You could see them happily perching one next to each other on the lamp cable. Us plants never had the desire to mingle so much in those affairs, we have less direct power over such creatures. All of them seem to think we have no power at all, for we are not able to move or rather able to attack. Still we see everything, and if we do not see it, we feel it through the air or through the ground. Silently growing in the brightness of the sun, in the shadow of all the minds which always keep to themselves, only regarding what is best for them. You see all those living creatures moving in the street, claiming a space they have stolen from us. We fully took advantage of the situation – inhabitants must offer room for vegetation, ensure its deployment.

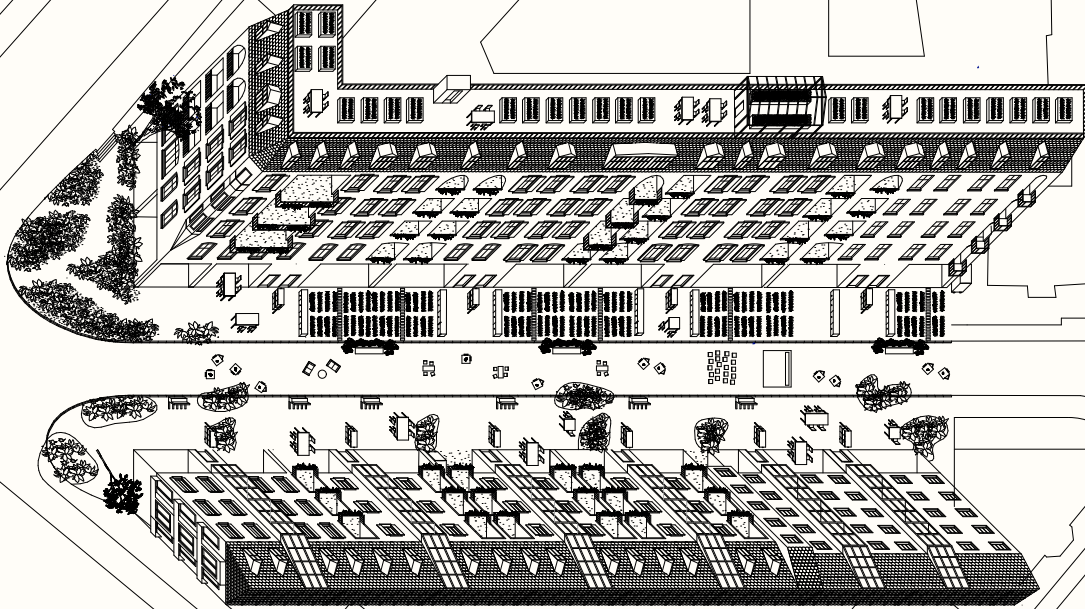
What used to be forest is now flat surface. I wonder how much they would like it if they would not be able to find home anymore, their way being blocked by some impenetrable material, sealing everything of. Funny how humans still wish for wildness, for more green space, when the only thing they manage, is to destroy it. They simply do not like it too close to their doorstep.



View from inside of staircase of Nr. 23

One steps out, back into the lifeless fabric. One is almost instantly washed over by loudness and a certain rush, after having left this seemingly perfect place. So much has been discovered, so much still remains uncertain. Nature is neither here nor there. Human constructs, avoiding a confrontation with others is only meant to collapse.

THE END





THE STREET AS A STAGE
Compilation of ground floors and second floors and their interiors

24

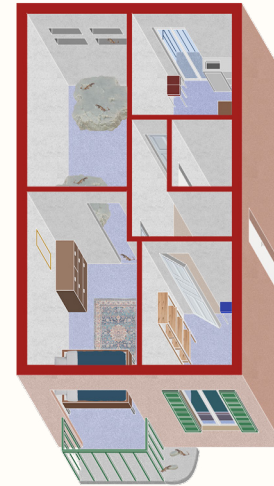
GROUND FLOOR



CHAPTER 1

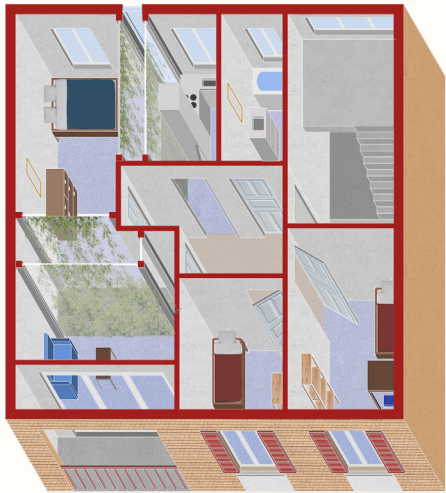
23

SECOND FLOOR



CHAPTER 2

24
SECOND FLOOR



CHAPTER 3

23
GROUND FLOOR



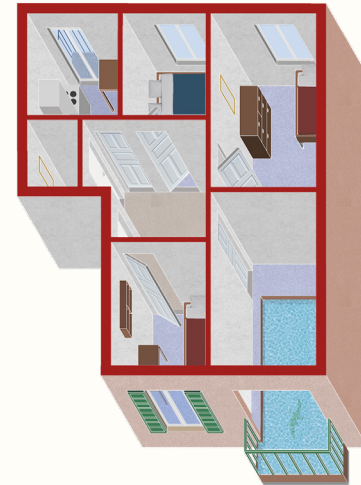
CHAPTER 4

25
GROUND FLOOR



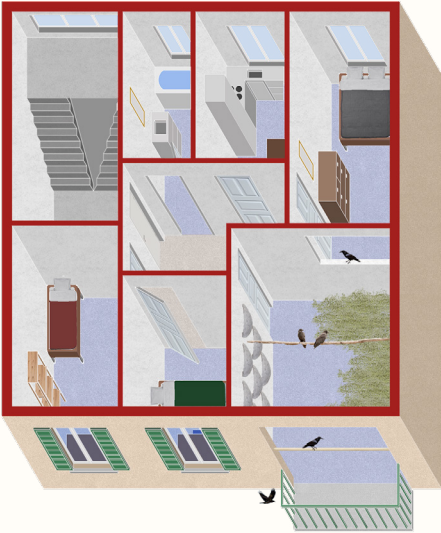
CHAPTER 5

23
SECOND FLOOR



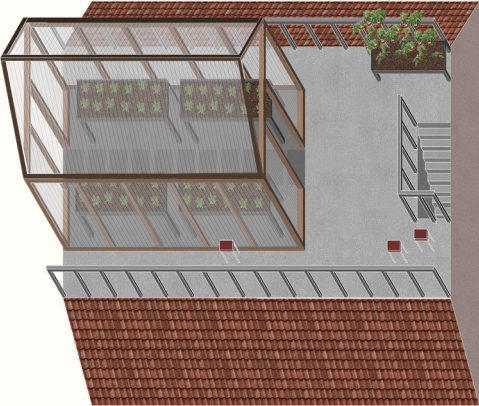
CHAPTER 6

26
SECOND FLOOR



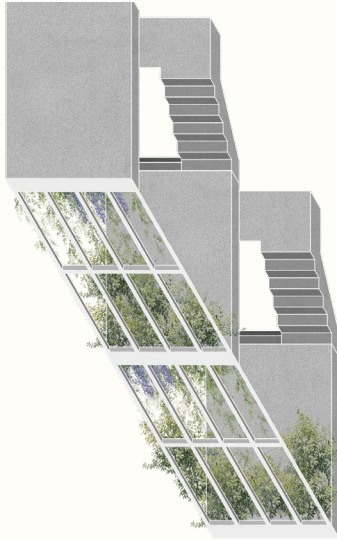
CHAPTER 7

24
ROOF



CHAPTER 8

23
STAIRCASE



CHAPTER 9

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