

# Creation in Ashes

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## **Abstract**

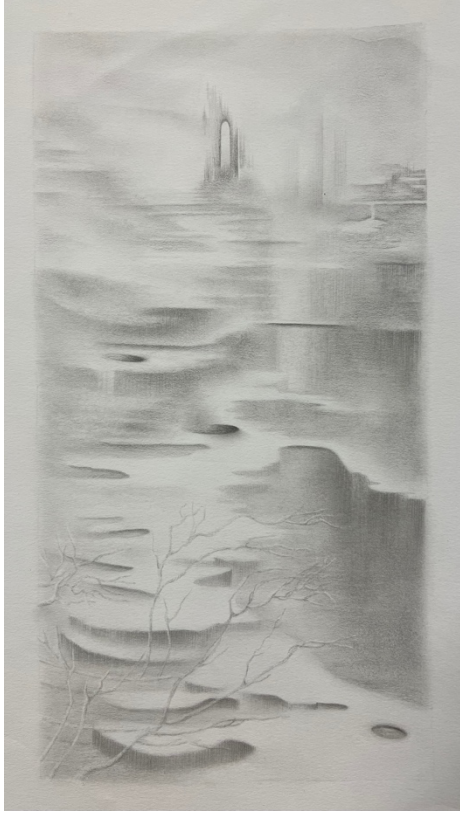
One of the crucial concerns in my artworks is how differences lie close to one another and constitute completeness. I have always had this question in my mind is it as simple as there is a thin line, border, between contradictions? If so, why does their non-existence challenge the other ones' existence? Where are the limits, differences, and even conflicts of both sides or in general between every contradictory concept or form or element, and who could recognize this Boundary? I am not looking for answers necessarily. I just want to pull images out of the words and concepts via media like painting, drawing, photography, sound, and video. To create a visual language and materialize an existential position between abstraction and figuration, dream, and reality. All my artworks reflect the concept of contradiction, appearing in different ways, not just in the concept but also in methods and media, used in projects, and finally in the way to present them. "Light and Darkness", "Imagination and Reality", " Dream, Memory, Reality", and "Creation in Ashes" to name but a few. In all these works, I research how can I use the spatial potentials and combine techniques to heighten the concepts of my works.

As an artist coming to Norway from Iran, I try to find common threads and weave relationships between western and eastern philosophies like mysticism and existentialism, extend the medium of painting into video, bridge reality, and the dream world, question the existing understanding of them not just on the conceptual level but also in methods.

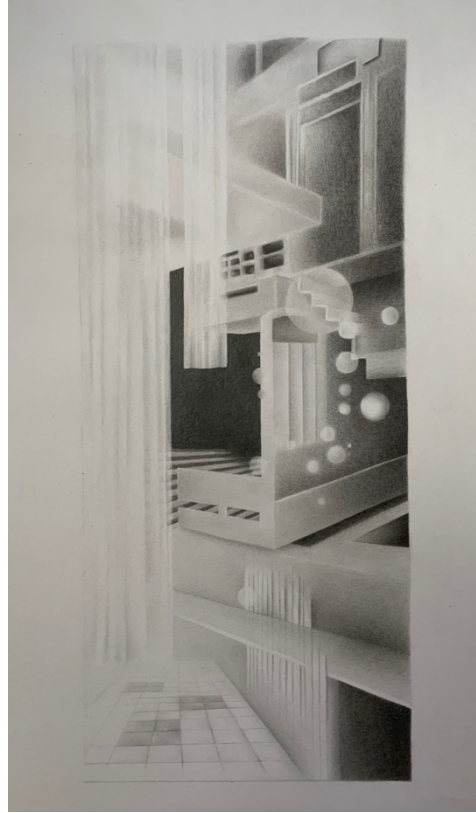
**Elements of artistic diagram:** Philosophy, existentialism, mysticism, psychology, dream, perception, memory, reality, drawing, video, sound, text, narrative, poetry, photographs, collages, figuration, abstraction.

## Chapter 1

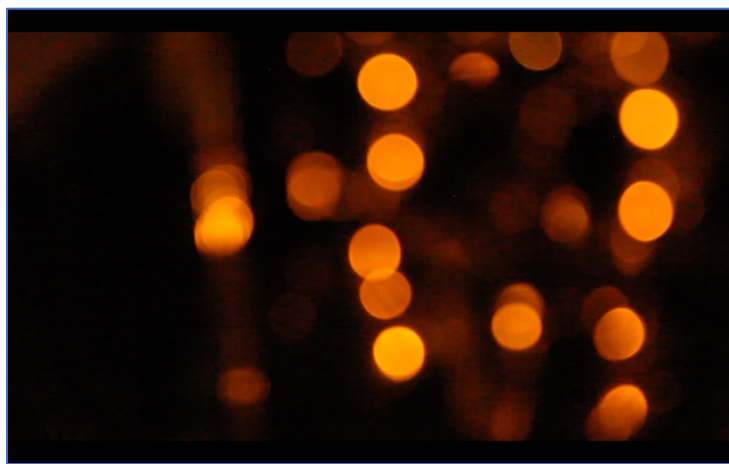
### **Dream, Memory, Reality**



*Melt into white*  
Pencil, 29x15 cm, 2020



*Floating at night*  
Pencil, 12.5 x 28 cm, 2021



*Dream, Memory, Reality*  
Video art, 2021, <https://vimeo.com/486591770>

*I'm awake, conscious, I know I am sleeping, I get up, I'm floating, in a dark house, drown in strange darkness, I roam, a transparent light, a black light, illuminates my path. As I go, a greenish but dim light clears this color. An indistinctive sound, fused with dim light, with me, with the house, talks to me. I have felt its shapeless presence from time to time. A suspended sound from the land of silence talks about blending two nights, with no days in the middle, and I am drowning in the beauty of the unbounded skies, lit by the stars and planets. Radiance of a rainbow in the unlimited depth of a night, which as I go, makes the atmosphere even more blurry. I reach the window to submerge myself even more. The window belongs to an unknown house, yet familiar. I perceive it, I know it, time and again, and I have woken up in sleep to and fallen asleep in awakening to explore it. My acquaintance with the house relates to this middle world. The world which once breaking alienated me with the house. The house is a labyrinth with wide doors and windows. Its identity is in ambiguity. It is infinite, voids every end, every limit. It escapes familiarity, tells a new story every time and creates a new meaning. Each visit is the first. I wander in it. I appreciate it. It's reflection in notes, in hovering whispers in the darkness, in discrete images, in familiar aliens, in peculiar feelings, in broken mirrors, spread in the outer world, stops me. I seek it in my memories. I get to a child, scarring of night, of the dark, sleepless. Glowing colorful lights shine through crystals and little mirrors catch her eyes. The temptation of them calls for her. She sees thousands of herself through the mirrors, through the glowing crystals. Now, she is infinite. They conflate into one. There is no crystal, no light, and no child. Just a child who understands the night.*

Dream and memory are the entrance to the mystical land of images, to secrets and myths. The ability to create, sometimes reflects the outer world and sometimes the outer world is the reflection. Painting and video give me the power to pull out these images that stand somewhere between real and not real. Like a mirror, like a crystal reflecting lights, breaking lights but at once opening new horizons. As we cannot put a boundary between a crystal and lights because the absence of one of them eliminate the new aspects and those aspects lose their meaning.

A veil of paradox has covered these two paintings and the video. They are creating images of the feelings which come from dreams, and they provide the presence of the images with a new way. They are a platform to merge these fragmentary images related to the past and the land of dreams. An exchange, a conversation between the outer world and the inner world. The combination of moments from the past and dreams with the mystical feelings evoked and experienced once again at the present. Which from this, the concept of time shatters. They become blurred, melt into elimination, therefore, some parts of them are smudgy. Whenever my paintings break the boundary of the paper, they come out as a video. Like time, like a path, it is full of beginnings and ends. It gets conceived a minute and die the next. Like bokeh lights, the instants are out of focus. This uncertainty between existence and nonexistence makes it subjectivity.

***Once upon a time, I dreamt I was a butterfly, fluttering hither and thither, to all intents and purposes a butterfly. I was conscious only of my happiness as a butterfly, unaware that I was myself. Soon I awaked, and there I was, veritably myself again. Now I do not know whether I was then a man dreaming I was a butterfly, or whether I am now a butterfly, dreaming I am a man.***

— *Zhungzi*

## Creation in Death



*Creation in death*  
*Ink and found tools, 30.5 x 23cm, 2021*



*Lost past*  
*Ink and found tools, 32.5 x 24 cm, 2021*

*Sleepless pace of advancing in science and technology made the impossible, possible. Limitations and restraints which were the root for many of humankind's beliefs were disappeared. God, whose place was high in the skies, lost his divine spirit and human came to substitute. The world became an object and he conquered it. He who claimed superiority and chained mother nature. Some religions come to grant this delusion and left everything to him. This place came with a price. It brought solitude to him and took the responsibility away. His position was out of reach, and he alienated the world. Such inaccessible that he alienated himself too and lost his selfhood. He became a God with no character. Superiority delusion led him to seek an identity that destroyed nature. A sole consumer who accepted whatever he pleased from and refused the responsibility. But someday he might level with the world, leave the God-like position, and become one with the world. Accept his limitations and deficiencies and recover the connection he had with his selfhood. Nature, settle itself in him and he acknowledges himself through the light of nature. Maybe then, these two can figure and disfigure in each other. They are limited. They are mortal. They become one then they vanish. Like time. Or even distance fades in a way that they die while they are being created and they create while they are dying. Their lack and mortality immortalize being. Existence and inexistence create new meanings, so this cycle lives for eternity.*

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## **Creation in Ashes**



*Creation in Ashes*  
Ink and found tools, 102 x 66 cm, 2022

*Your mind has become a machine that seems to be pre-programmed, capable of doing basic and simple tasks automatically. There is no thinking. Everything is on the surface, and nothing goes deep. Vulgarity and your mind are intertwined. Behind your calculations and daily routine, the meaning of it all is cloaked. Your world is devoid of secrets. Nothing is hidden from this God-like human. Your scientific vision makes everything possible and achievable. The domination of the intellectual side of your world has destroyed your individuality. You do not have self-confidence. You do not trust yourself. Everything that was said to be true, pleased you. Everything you were told that is wrong, you remarked it to be ugly.*

*But every now and then, as you distance yourself from the hustle and bustle of everyday life and become alone with yourself, a shadow quietly approaches you. You feel the weight of its gaze on you. You struggle not to see it but to no avail. This dark shadow gets closer to you every moment and immerses you in its own darkness. You surrender. You stare into its indifferent eyes. It is a familiar stranger inside you who has become segregated and alienated from you. Its cold presence plunges humans into a painful sorrow. This is the beginning of tragedy; Thinking.*

*The stranger, while refusing to tell you, wants you to remember. You feel a deep rift between yourself and what you have been reading all your life. Moments pass before your eyes. They are meaningless, alien, this is not what you want. The face of your world, that lovable old acquaintance, shatters. You do not recognize it; it is a stranger who cannot understand all of you. you cannot tell it about your feelings. Your language is too complex to understand. You find yourself in captivity. Captivity in which you are sentenced to liberty. Feelings of loneliness and homelessness permeate your whole being. You disintegrate. Shatter into thousands of pieces. You see thousands of ways in front of you. You ask the world; "which one should I choose"? The world looks at you indifferently. You repeat the question. You justify yourself by saying, "it might not have heard my voice"; "Maybe I did not ask correctly"; "Perhaps I should ask more clearly"; "Maybe I should say it louder". The world still looks indifferent in your eyes. This is the first indifferent look at the answer to your questions, which creates a new impasse every time, which suffocates the glimmer of your justifications. As if it wanted to say that no way is superior to another.*

*The frozen frosts of the eyes of the world gradually penetrate into you. Your heart is wounded. It makes you angry. It's not fair. This cold look is not the answer to your sincere questions. Your anger becomes your strength. You choose the path that you call rebellion. Maybe this can make the cold face of the world angry. you deny it, but behind this rebellion is a dialog with the world. You want to say, "I accept whatever the price is, just notice me." A power called reason accompanies you in this war. You look in the eyes of the world, pleased with your rebellion. That frozen look extinguishes the fire inside you. All your motives are reduced to ashes. Suddenly you see that the world does not care about you. While you took the world seriously.*

*It is not rational, nor stupid, cruel, kind, arrogant, or even forgiving. All these attributes are insignificant in the face of all its indifference. It's all about suffering; like yourself.*

*There is a power in this disregard that deprives you of courage. It is an absent authority that has overcome you. You do not know if it is an illusion or if it is real, but you read in his frozen eyes; humans are condemned from the beginning until eternity for all the sins they never committed.*

*Dizzying anxiety pervades your entire being. You are sentenced to a sin for which there is no crime. You are punished for something that is not your fault. Deep, thick darkness is everywhere. You see nothing. You are numb; you have no feelings, no desires, no questions. You have become a mirror that reflects the depth of this darkness. You neither add to it nor diminish it. You yourself are the darkness yet are apart from it. Your eyes gradually get used to the darkness. You are neither awake nor asleep. The basis of what you see is based on the logic of dreams. You see pieces of your being that slowly separate from you and become scattered in space. You see but do not feel. Those transparent pieces gradually become colored, conflate with dark light, each in one color. The heat of those colored pieces sparks in your heart. You feel your heartbeat. In balance with the fluid flow of refracted light scattered in space, you breathe.*

*In this dark rainbow, in the heart of that unbounded night, lie thousands of stories. The glow of one of those colorful refractions catches your gaze. you fade in its colorful light. As if it wants to say something. In the murmur of the light, you see an image. The image is vague, but it makes your heartbeat faster. A memory comes to life in you. You remember the glare of light on the surface of rebellious waves, the memory of dancing lights in intertwined branches. You feel the breeze blowing on your soul. Involuntarily, you start shaking your hands like dancing leaves. You see that shining piece near you. Every colorful glow says, "Summon me". you summon it, a shining piece melts into you. Its amorphous appearance is engraved on your heart.*

*You look at those colorful stars, drowning on the shore of that endless night. Each colored piece tells a story. You laugh with one, dance with another, sympathize with the other one, and shed tears with another one. Each in one color; each with an aroma. A commotion of sounds, notes, in the form of rain, belongs to the world of silence.*

*In the midst of them, a sound fading in space, made of black light, falls on you. Each sound breaks the previous sound. Every word is understood as it flows. The next word split the woven strands of the meaning of the previous word. It is as if the previous word is lost in the next word. Only one sentence from all of them is left in your mind. The depth of this infinite night is caused by the merging of two nights, which are not mediated by any day.*

*You hear a song. Unconsciously echo it. You sing it until your voice dominates. You become silent. There is no sound. You are the only one who sings. Sometimes, you do not know the stories you already knew, or this is the first time that you read them. You do not know whether you create, or they are narrated to you. Whatever it is, it is an intoxicating pleasure with dense sorrow in it.*

Mysticism is the cornerstone of my projects. Sometimes it is inclined toward philosophy and sometimes it takes a psychological approach. Metaphysics of Rumi and Hindu religion, existentialism, and two novels by Franz Kafka (The Metamorphosis and The Trial) are powerful sources of inspiration for me. There are more or less some connections and even similarities among them. While they have different approaches toward the absurdity of humanity, they all assent to the irrational universe, and individuals themselves are responsible to define meanings based on their choices and freedom. An approach both sides adopt in relation to this non-logical world is to go beyond the conceptual connection and communicate through emotions. Freedom and choice



give human beings the power to create, to express themselves, their feelings, their thoughts, the notion of the absurdity of human beings' condition, or the human existence abounding in contradictions through the aesthetic approach (novel, poem, drama...). Art, as an entrance to the mystical land of images, secrets, and myths, expands new horizons and activates engagement in the world. It alters the existential position of human beings and challenges the authority of reality. Below, you will find some notes indicating these relations which inspired me through the process:

*...This ontological aspect of existentialism ties it to aesthetic considerations. Existentialist thinkers believe that, under certain conditions, freedom grants the human being the capacity of revealing essential features of the world and of the beings in it. Since artistic practice is one of the prime examples of free human activity, it is therefore also one of the privileged modes of revealing what the world is about. However, since most of the existentialists followed Nietzsche in the conviction that "God is dead," art's power of revelation is to a large extent devoted to expressing the absurdity of the human condition. For the existentialists, the world is no longer hospitable to our human desire for meaning and order.*

*— [Existentialist Aesthetic, Jean-Philippe Deranty](#)*

*...If it were concerned only with lyrical fervors and ecstasies, there would no doubt be much that touches our own inner chords and stirs emotions in the soul that are too deep for words. But that is not all that we find in Rumi. He tells us that what he means by Love is indescribable and the attempt to define it is as baffling as to define life itself. Life as well as love, not in spite of, but on account of their immediacy cannot be defined. He tells us that it is not logic but music that is a partial medium of its expression, and love being paradoxical in its nature, music, that is its vehicle, becomes paradoxical too: "Poison and Antidote at the same time." "Our sweetest songs are those that tell us of saddest thoughts." Love is the greatest mystery of life and music is the garb in which it symbolizes itself in the phenomenal realm.*

*...Love is a principle of Unification and Assimilation. The force of attraction in every atom and one form of life losing itself in another form (Assimilation) and thereby resulting in Growth-all are manifestations of the form of Love.*

*...Rumi, in contrast with Plato, is an Irrationalist. In him the position between Reason and Love is reversed. He does not believe in the knowability of the ground of Being through Theoretical Reason. The categories of the Understanding or what he calls the Particular Reason are from their very nature incapable of grasping the ultimate Reality and on account of their discursive and dualistic nature cannot comprehend the Unitary Essence of Existence. Reason for him is a light and a guide but not a goal. As life in its essence is non-intellectual, so the Eternal Beauty that attracts the lover is not the beauty that is the "Effulgence of Truth." Rumi employs the*

*Platonic terminology for views that are poles apart from Plato. For Plato the word 'Ultrarational' would have been utter nonsense. When reason is identical with the ultimate reality, how can there be anything beyond it? That explains again why the Eros of Plato is theoretically intelligible and the Love of Rumi defies all description. The nature of God and the nature of the human soul are ultrarational; so, their deepest and ultimate relation must necessarily be so. It is a characteristic feature of Rumi's world of thought that his central conception is not Truth or Knowledge of God but Life. It is the organism and its function of Growth and Assimilation that presents to him a picture which explains life more than any system of intellectualistic metaphysics. Love is a paradox in the sense that in it by giving we take and by dying we live. This process of dying to live is represented by organic life. Inorganic matter becomes organic by dying to itself and living a higher life in the plant and so can the plant be exalted into still higher life by dying unto itself and living in the animal. The whole course of evolution is an illustration of the principle of dying to live.*

*— [Metaphysics of Rumi by Dr. Khalifa Abdull Hakim](#)*

*...Beginning to think is beginning to be undermined. Society has but little connection with such beginnings. The worm is in man's heart. That is where it must be sought. One must follow and understand this fatal game that leads from lucidity in the face of existence to flight from light.*

*...It is that divorce between the mind that desires and the world that disappoints, my nostalgia for unity, this fragmented universe and the contradiction that binds them together.*

*...That universal reason, practical or ethical, that determinism, those categories that explain everything are enough to make a decent man laugh. They have nothing to do with the mind. They negate its profound truth, which is to be enchained. In this unintelligible and limited universe, man's fate henceforth assumes its meaning. A horde of irrationals has sprung up and surrounds him until his ultimate end. In his recovered and now studied lucidity, the feeling of the absurd becomes clear and definite. I said that the world is absurd, but I was too hasty. This world in itself is not reasonable, that is all that can be said. But what is absurd is the confrontation of this irrational and the wild longing for clarity whose call echoes in the human heart. The absurd depends as much on man as on the world.*

*...The world itself, whose single meaning I do not understand, is but a vast irrational. If one could only say just once: "This is clear," all would be saved. But these men vie with one another in proclaiming that nothing is clear, all is chaos, that all man has is his lucidity and his definite knowledge of the walls surrounding him.*

*— [The Myth of Sisyphus and Other, Albert Camus](#)*

*...man is condemned to be free. Condemned, because he did not create himself, yet is nevertheless at liberty, and from the moment that he is thrown into this world he is responsible for everything he does.*

*— [Man is Condemned to Be Free \(from the lecture “Existentialism is a Humanism”\)](#), [Jean-Paul Sartre](#)*

*...Kafka’s characters are almost always trapped – in a cage, a court case, an insect’s body, a false identity – and they share a feeling that the walls are closing in, and that a door, once there, is disappearing into the distance. This existential claustrophobia, at once vague and intense, resonates today, particularly under lockdown.*

*...In Kafka’s dreamlike style of storytelling, wild and disturbing events are presented as completely normal, even inevitable; the world seems to conspire against you and run its natural course at the same time. The reader is left with “the dizzying simultaneity”, as the critic Erich Heller once put it, “of ‘Impossible!’ and ‘Of course’.”*

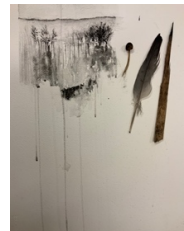
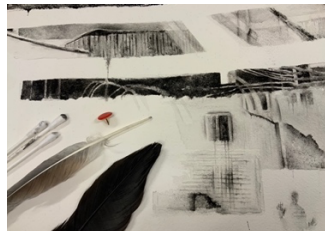
*...In this sense, our feeling of imprisonment is about much more than formal constraints on our freedom: it is about being in an alien world where, because the terms and conditions are both unclear and ever-changing, we are always liable to be doing something wrong. These two feelings – a claustrophobia that requires no cage and a guilt that requires no crime – are central to the psychology of the pandemic. They also form the foundation of Kafka’s life and work.*

*...In his diaries, letters and stories, Kafka’s underlying fear almost always takes this form: a dark, omnipotent authority that holds the victim hostage; that refuses to recognize the victim’s true self or individual worth; and that brazenly punishes, because existence alone is crime enough. This vision is fully realized in Kafka’s unfinished novel *The Trial*, published posthumously in 1925, in which a hapless bank clerk named Josef K wakes up to his own unexpected arrest. Since his crime is never specified, Josef K can’t prove his innocence. “You can’t defend yourself against this court,” he is told, “all you can do is confess.”*

*— [The new statesman](#), [Samuel Earle](#)*

## Chapter 2

### Methodology



The project named “Dream, Memory, Reality” includes two drawings and a video. They give me the power to pull out images that stand somewhere between real and not real. Like images through a mirror. They have been created during the first year of my MFA. For me, the video is a painting with mixture of sounds, colors, and time. “Dream, Memory, Reality “is the continuation of the video titled "Imagination of reality". This video had been created before I started studying Master of Fine Arts at Trondheim Academy of Art. That was the first time I was working with sounds and video, and I am eager to keep working with this media and tell stories through them.

The latter, degree project named "Creation in Ashes " is the continuation of my both previous projects. In this project, I am drawing with ink and a number of different objects which are more or less logical and non-logical tools for drawing that because of their destruction or transformation, my painting will be created. I find some of them – like feathers, stones, sticks, and so on – when I walk down the street. Some of them are considered as a waste and litter, like wires, threads, and pieces of paper or fabrics. What they all have in common is that they have no value and might not catch the eyes at first glance in everyday life. I call them "found tools". Some of these objects are fragile and might break, transform, or destroy during the process of drawing. This is where the wear and tear of these objects lead to creating these drawings (this indicates one dimension of the title through the process). This project is indeed a playful conversation between found tools and me, which goes on as drawings.

In this project the process is as important as the result. All drawings are being created by ink and Found tools. The process of drawing and the wear and tear effects on the objects will be photographed and recorded. In the end, the objects themselves, used in the drawings, even in transformed condition, will be shown alongside the drawings.

Like previous projects, here the role of images is considerable. For instance, in how they construct and deconstruct reality. Sometimes they act as a bridge, a connection between perception and reality. I merge fragmentary images from my photographs, paintings, and drawings, and create collages that are used as sketches for the drawings. They are double exposure works. One image is made from different places and lifetimes which is full of elements and structures that have signs and traces of the past, (sometimes lost past, when you cannot remember but you know there was something), dreams, and memories. Like ghosts that are confined inside them. these traces have power to collapse the march of time. like a state of suspension when dreams, memory, and reality conflate into one. In that sense, the drawings are self-reflection.

The treatments of unconventional tools are unpredictable. Through the process of drawing, they change my plan and my sketches and pose several challenges to me. Sometimes they support and even improve and develop the motifs and qualities, sometimes against them and even ruin them. every moment a new thing might happen that is beyond the expectation. It might be manageable

or not. Whenever they show opposite manner, I should change my way or create a new one. How can I pull out images of the unexpected motifs and lines they created?

Found tools characterize and materialize their presence and influence the drawings. In another word, they melt into the drawing and become a part of them. They convert to images and emerge themselves. In other word, their presence, their influence is preserved in the drawings.

This project includes three drawings that will be presented in a dark room as an installation. At first, viewers cannot see anything. As they move forward and come closer to drawings, the lights fade in via motion sensors and they can see the drawings, found tools, and some notes (Statements). This installation might include sound to heighten the dreamy aspect. When they move away from the drawings, the lights fade out and the room becomes dark. Depending on the potential of the room, it would be better if this process is repeated for each drawing separately. I am going to present this project and the previous one, "Dream, Memory, Reality", for the master exhibition. The previous project will be presented in a dark room as well. This project includes a video and two drawings. at the end of the video, the room becomes dark, and my voice will be heard as I read my statement. Gradually, some moving bokeh lights fade in and their motions are in sync with my voice.

## **Development in the Future**

Alongside the continuation of "Creation in Ashes" project, I want to extend my previous project, "Dream, Memory, Reality" by making two videos. Whenever my paintings break the boundary of the paper, they come out as a video and sound. They are a platform to create images of the feelings and they provide the presence of the images in a new way. Could be considered as an exchange, a conversation between reality and abstraction, reality and perception. For instance, in one of these videos, I am going to record a slow-motion video of snowfall. It seems that it could be just snow falling slowly and therefore real, however, then it could be an alternation of the time and space. This video will be mixed with sounds and effects. The next video is an experimental video. Raindrops and their effects on a number of different surfaces will be recorded and mixed with sounds and effects. Like time, like a path, they get conceived a minute and die the next. Like bokeh lights, used in previous video, raindrops, and snowfall, the instants are out of focus. The uncertainty between existence and nonexistence makes their subjectivity.

In general, through these projects, I want to explore the effectiveness of the various artistic media, including paintings, sound, and videos in relation to the unconscious. To merge and even expose the different elements and media to one another, even when I want to exhibit my artworks.

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