



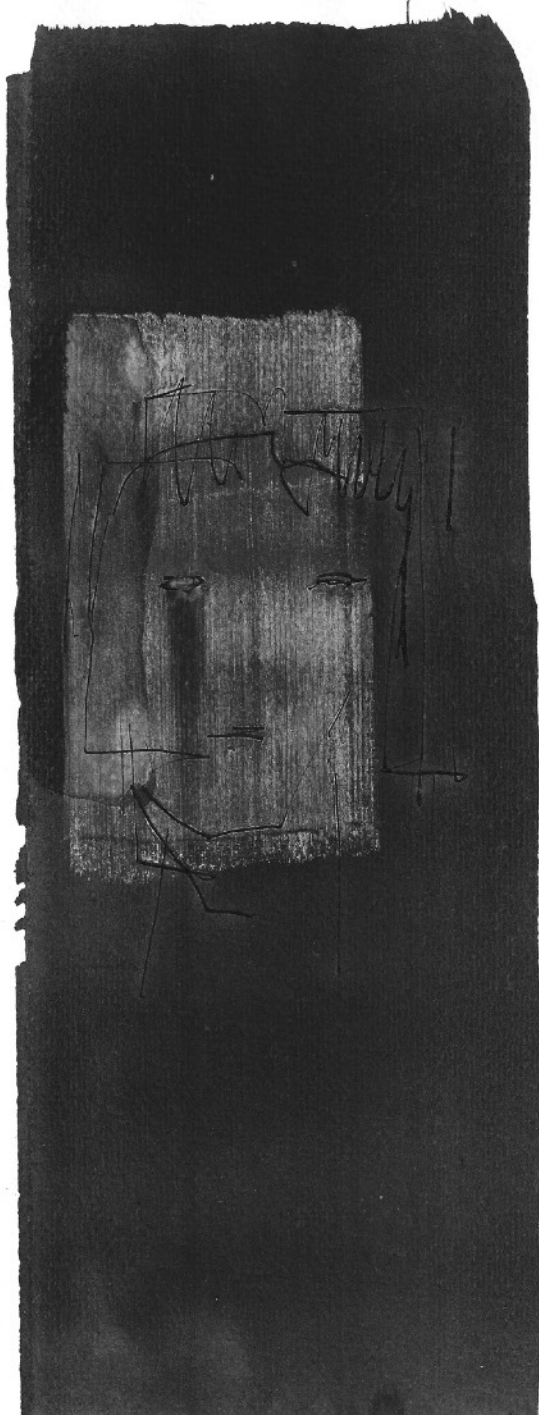
the tangibility paradox

art as power

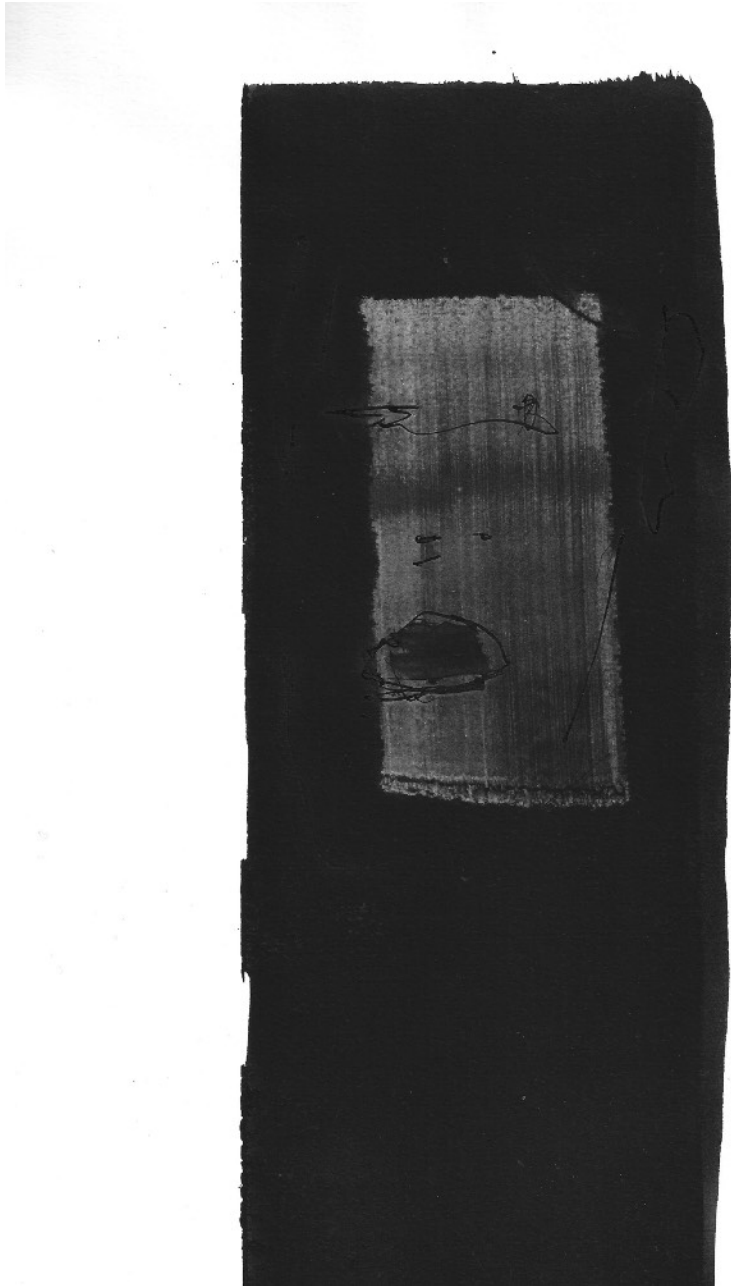
update

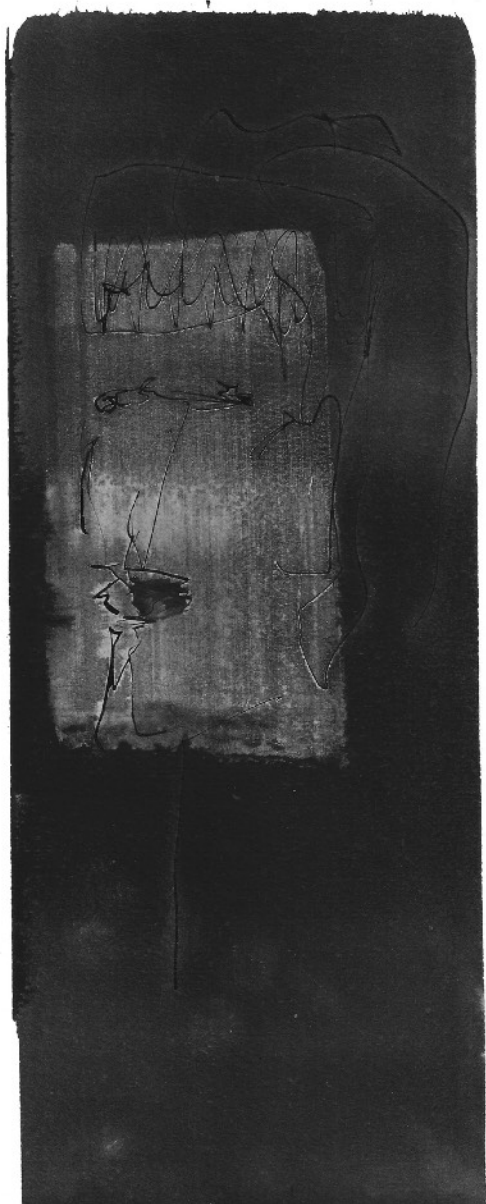
#14

please,
do not immediately ask what it means in practice





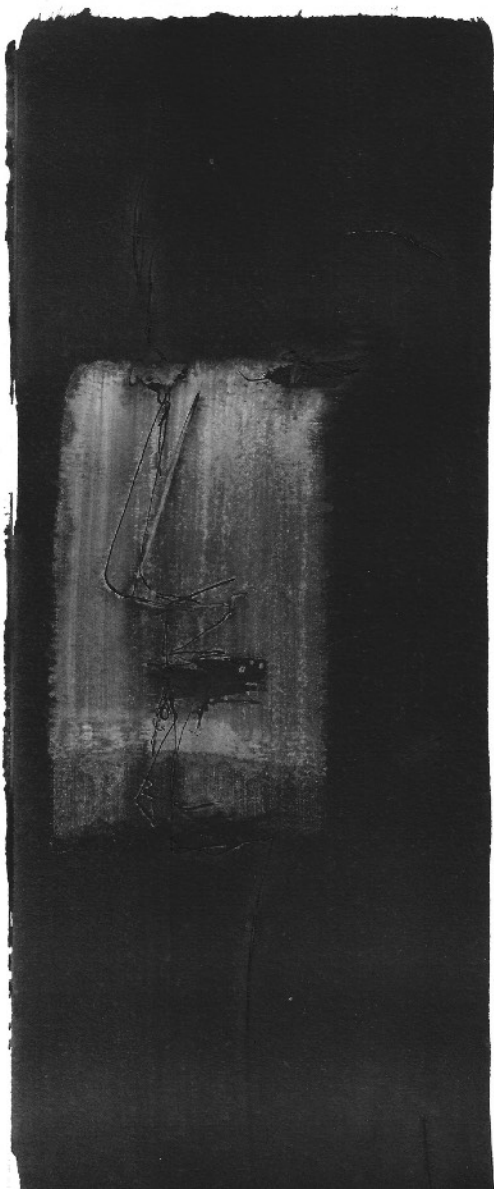


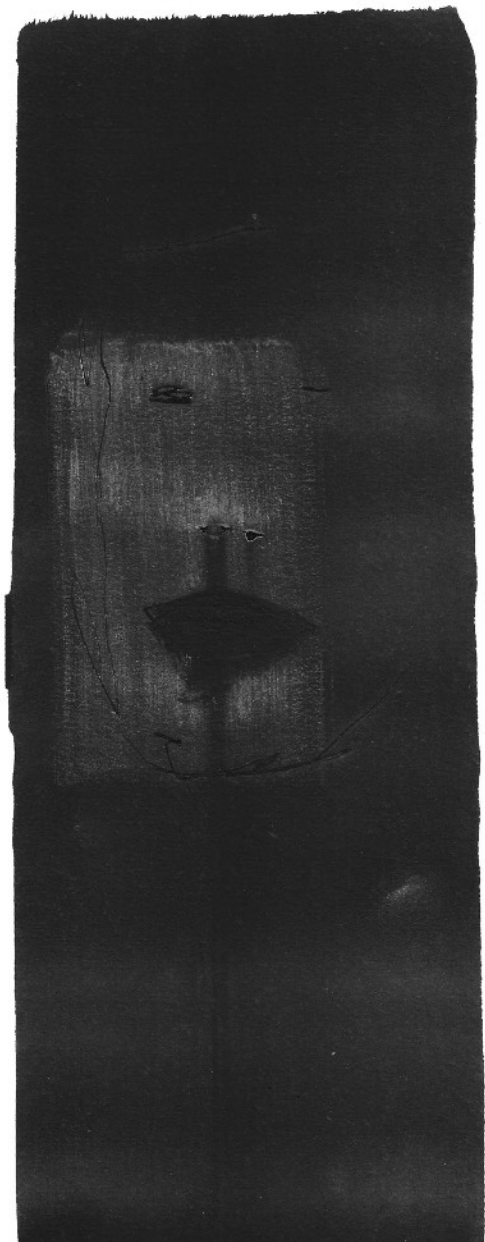


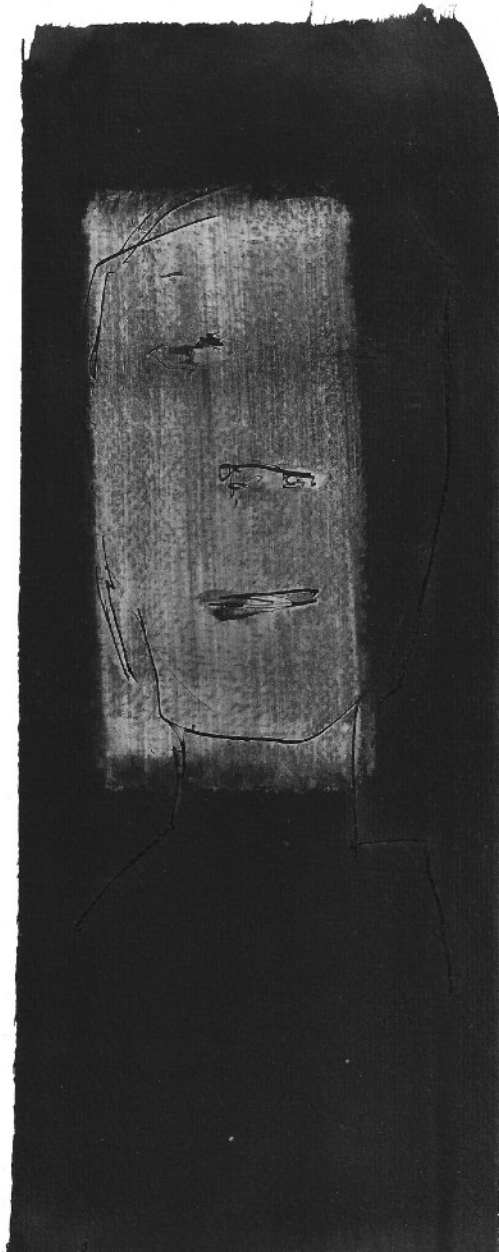
meaning veiled in the painted lines
of the concept

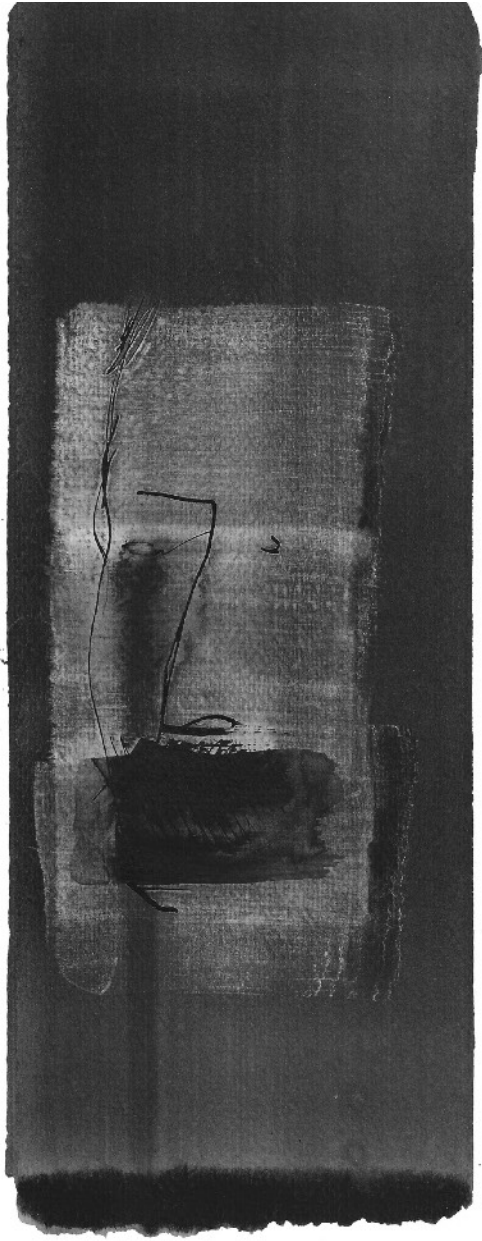
contours longed for
of the unexplainable dreams

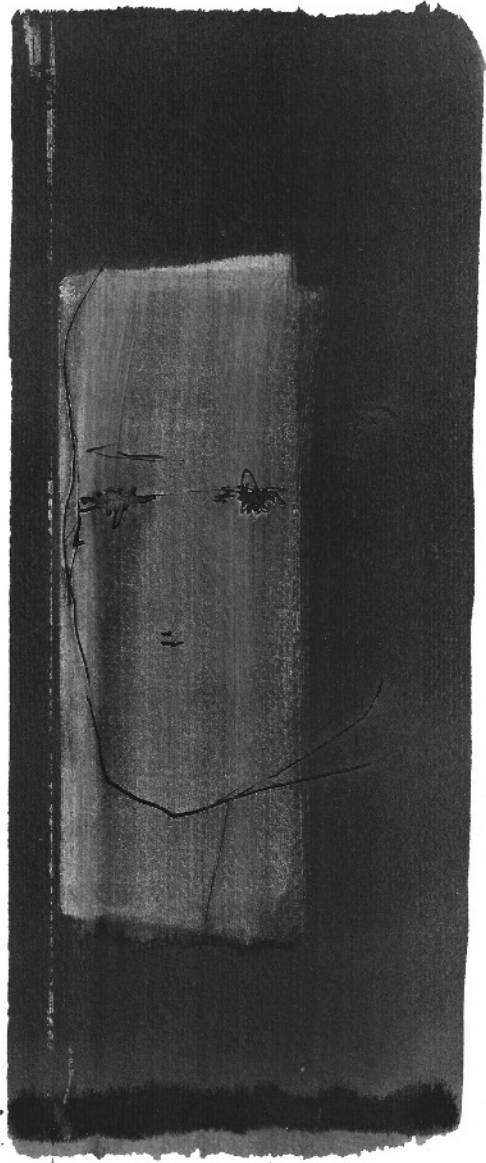
the image uncovered
evoking anxiety and determination











the tangibility paradox
the postscript

art as power

update

#14

There is a promise in the not immediately clear images and ideas. They evolve in one's mind and lay a foundation for aspirational and determined actions for unseen outcomes.

The management of organisations is full of urgency to act and to move ahead. It continuously focusses its people to make the wheels of the organisation turn, to make products, deliver services, develop new products, smooth supply chains, secure finance, hire talent, etc. The coordination and leadership is directed towards individual and collective decisions to act and realise tangible, measurable outcomes. That in itself can be extremely complicated and requires lots of coordination and the actions may stretch over years to attain the goals set out. But the tone of voice is 'yes we can talk about it, think about it but we have to know what we are going to do'.

This actionability attitude makes organisations realise many outcomes that have helped human kind to thrive (and sometimes to suffer badly too). And in the end we create and maintain these human artefacts called organisations to just do that: create output. So that orientation towards action is part of their raison d'être.

Yet the trouble with this engrained emphasis on doing is that it assumes that relationships between actions and results are straight forward and that the environment of operation is predictable and makeable. And that assumption is often proofed wrong. The reality organisations work in is complex, with strange connections and interdependencies which are as unexpected as unclear. Moreover the human nature is layered and motivation and logic of behaviour remain intriguing and surprising. Even with all the accumulated knowledge and wisdom, helped by vast amounts of data and artificial intelligence, we can not always see what is to be done next.

The question is whether this current focus on actionability and measurability in a complex world that faces devilish dilemmas and demands difficult trade-offs does not leave our organisations underperforming in terms of progress and humanity.

At the same time humans have a natural, not always appreciated ability to reflect, to ponder, to search, to conceptualise, to try to make sense of the world around them and look for answers that somehow resolve the anxiety for the unknown. We are able to postpone decisions and actions and allow space for doubt, take the time to develop alternatives and resolve disagreements.

One of the areas where this human ability to ponder is cherished is the arts, where it is a sine qua none for existence. While the arts and what is written about it is as diverse and colourful as the human nature itself, it exists just because of the reflection by the artist. Reflections on human nature, the world and what it implies result in an abundant variety of works. Every artwork is its own unique testimony of a particular reflection, whether it is a novel, a play, a dance, a piece of music, a photograph, an object, an installation or a painting.

The deep reflections which are seldom straightforward or simplistic and often interwoven with the personal biography, the identity and the ideas and beliefs of the artist, are materialised in a work of art. The abstract and the personal become tangible through the actions, the doing of the artist. There is something magical about it. Maybe the longevity of the value of artworks can be seen as the returns on the investments made in the artistic practices.

To satisfy that aforementioned longing for concreteness this may be a good moment to answer some questions about what this promise of reflection and the qualities of art mean in the ways of workings of an organisation.

Rites of introspection

A first implication in the daily management and decision making could be to take a kind of artistic mindset. Referring to memorable works of art you can adopt an attitude of not acting or judging instantaneously, but allow time for postponing responses. Establish a practice to force yourself and others to reflect on the own position vis-à-vis a larger and more profound picture before making determined moves. It strategically makes sense, too.

Icons of reflection and intention

An artwork is in its occurrence very tangible, while in its meaning it is often layered with interesting ways of communicating that to its audiences. This attribute can also be applied to the management of organisations in the manner how actions show care and dedication and in how the format and materialisation of the results demonstrate these specific reflections and intentions. An instilled culture of work can be built to secure the surpassing of one dimensional outcomes and the realisation of instilled meaning.

Art is the living proof of the tangibility paradox of concreteness and consciousness and carries an intrinsic power to shape organisations in their own ways suited for unknown futures.

illustrations:

p 1.
hein duijnstee
t'es ou?, 2021
(detail)

p 3,4,5,6,8,9,10,11,12
hein duijnstee
t'es où?
(2021)
ink on paper (30x21cm)

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