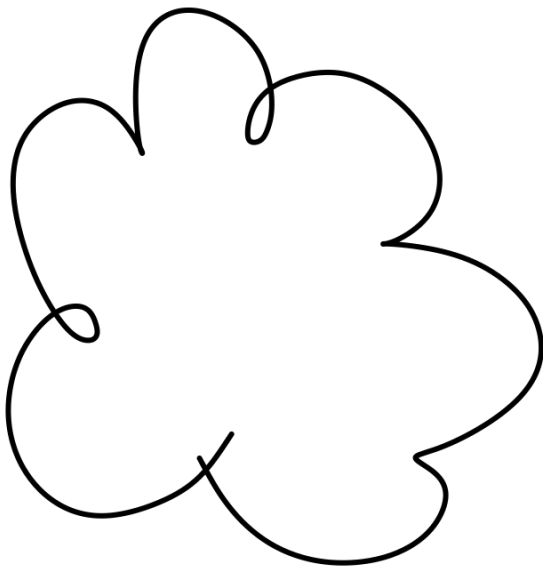




*A Sea of Things  
I'm Working  
Through*

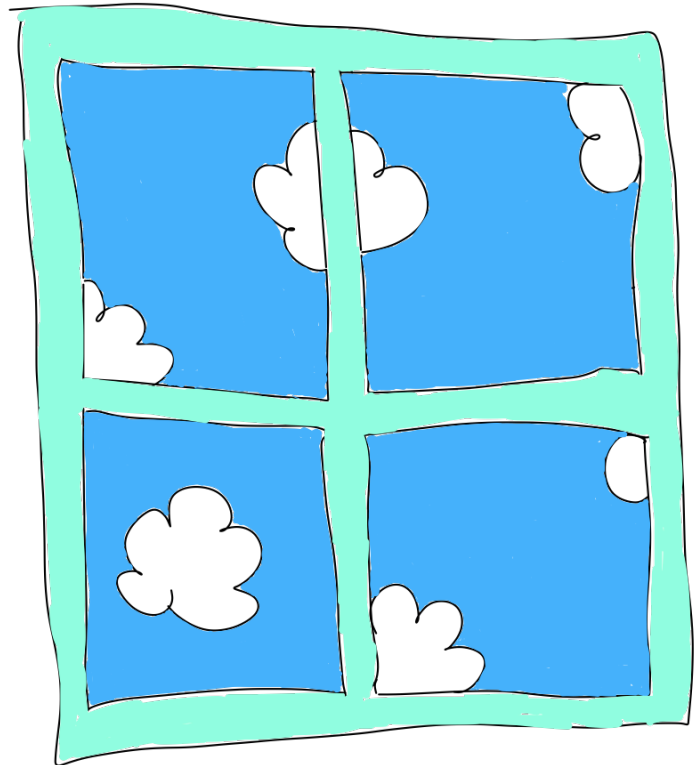


*I am thinking of this document as a kind of illustrated index of terms, concepts, and ideas that have persisted throughout my life, and more specifically, my studio practice. Language is slippery. I can not promise that I will be able to define anything definitely, but my hope is that something could be understood nonetheless.*

# ***The Absurd***

*The paradoxical situations found in life.*

*To understand  
my practice it  
would be  
important to  
attempt to  
define the  
absurd. The  
difficulty lies in  
the pursuit. To  
define the  
absurd meaning  
must first be  
understood as  
slippery,  
constantly in  
motion. |*



*Albert Camus, locates the problem of defining absurdity within the pursuit of a definition | “For a definition to be accurate it would have to be endless.” The answer is found in the question which brings our attention to the essential characteristic of the absurd. The Paradoxical. When ends and means negate one another revealing a secret third thing, the insatiable pursuit (which paradoxically tends to be the thing that curious minds strive for). For those like me, one disposes of the looking glass replacing it with this aperture of collapse.*

*While it can be profound to marvel at the mental architecture of times past, what of the present and times yet to come? Everything is suspect and I have no interest in the conservation of any singular ideology. The fetishization of a thing can lead to a particular kind of conservative activity that creates a considerable amount of distance between you and the subject; rendering it unknowable. Although it may be well intentioned I find this precious attitude to be a hindrance when it comes to the pursuit of knowledge. The immense amount of maintenance required to preserve an idea can be enough to cause you to forget why you cared about it in the first place. I find it more fascinating when they fall apart, because of what it may reveal. The collapse of the familiar can be petrifying, but through collapse, one is able to recognize the elements of construction. Ideology crumbles into a plethora of smaller ideas*

*that you can take or leave. I believe in building something that suits my needs. I am not allergic to the idea of labor and with a vacant lot anything is possible.*

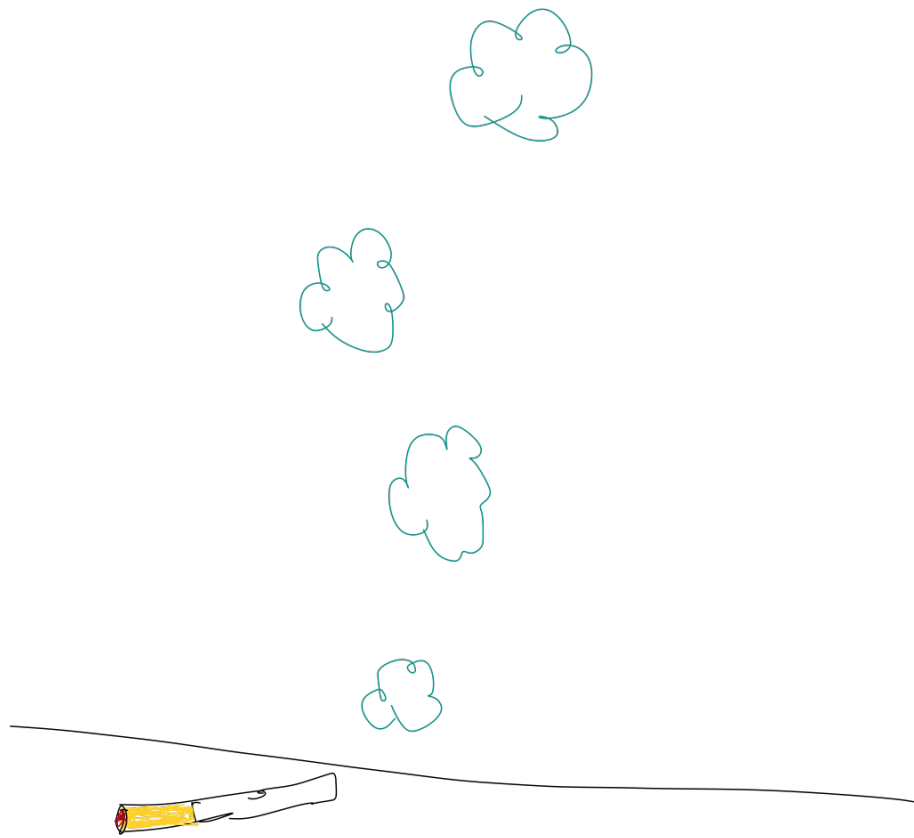
*I am always met with emptiness; It is the source of my creative acts. This should not be mistaken as a source of intense despair. Emptiness implies a particular kind of fullness. An empty vessel has the potential to determine its use value (meaning) along the way. Thoughts resemble the nature of clouds existing in a constant state of being written and unwritten, formed and unformed. They are celebrated for what can be seen in them, celebrated in their absence, celebrated for (their) being. How could one appreciate a clear sky without a cloudy day? The insatiable pursuit for meaning(s) will always persist, I believe it to be something that fundamentally connects us to one another. However, removing the need for an essential definition emphasizes the need for a present engagement with the world, paradoxically loading the brush that paints meaning(s) into the world.*

*I think of the mind as being analogous to a sourdough starter, a compost heap, and all things like it. An ecosystem in need of constant feeding and evacuation. I think of ideology as my grandmother thought of a cast iron skillet. Meant to nourish generations. Seasoned from lifetimes, without*

*dictating what's to be cooked in it, with simple rules for maintenance. When maintained properly a standard cast iron skillet could sustain lifetimes, as many as necessary until either humanity or the sun facilitates our inevitable end.*

*Any idea of utopia one could leave behind is irrelevant, dreadfully idealized, and requires many realities to be left in the margins. I celebrate my flickering humanity despite the certain and crushing fate*

*we know we are destined to face alone. I choose to love the insatiable pursuit. In this game called life no one makes it out alive, but there is a wealth of joy found in playing.*



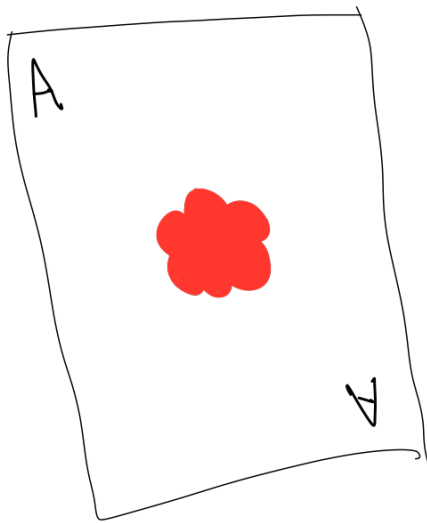
## **GAMES & PLAY**

*“a situation you find yourself in with a coded and/or conditioned set of rules of a shared vernacular (game) and the performativity that accompanies it (play).”*

*Play constitutes a majority of what I find myself to be doing; it informs the way I choose to participate and/or engage with the world. It is the essential element to all of my inquiries; Play is ultimately what maintains my interest in things. In play, possibilities reveal themselves. During play, the mind is constantly oscillating between receiving and responding, suspension and action. When a ball is thrown, one learns how to read and respond in order to position one's hand properly to catch a ball. In a game of cards, there is an osmosis of possibilities as new cards are revealed on the draw. In a game of pool, there are a number of makeable shots at any given time for experienced players; there may be shots on the table that a novice player doesn't even see. I am intending to emphasize that in play the mind is entangled with creativity. There is no guaranteed way to play that ensures you will “win” rather; it must be negotiated throughout the process of playing around the parameters and obstacles one is faced with. The Rules.*

*Games are a series of repetitions and alterations which depend upon a conceptual frame that guides the activity. Constraints are necessary because without a frame of reference the playing of games*

*would be misunderstood as either freedom or insanity. An agreed upon understanding of a game is what makes it legible and legibility is what makes games fun to watch and play. Without rules, play would be impossible to interpret as anything meaningful. Games would be impossible to learn because you would be unable to associate them with their context. Game's must be distinguished from life for them to function well; rules allow us to make judgements.*



*Though the value of a game is not found in victory or failure. Games have held their place in culture due to the fact that they can be played and enjoyed over and over again; which is why they are known as pastimes. The enjoyment of winning and the despair of failure is fleeting; What persists is the joy of playing. Games are logical in theory, intuitive in practice, and only temporarily satisfying. Each time*

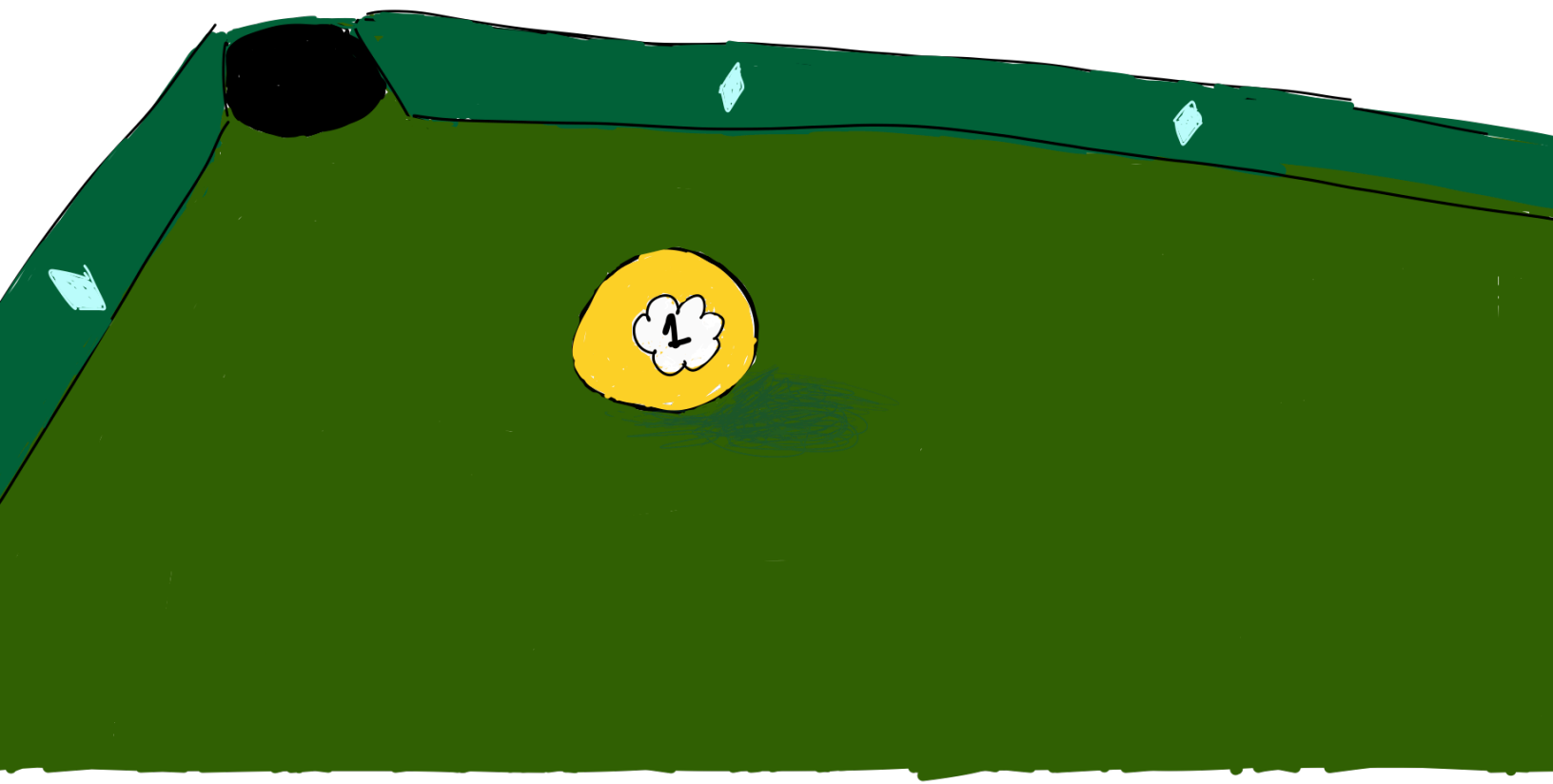


*a game is played, something tangible is learned, internalized and carried into the next game, the proverbial snake eats its tail. What happens when these ideas of play extend beyond the confines of their obvious context?*

*Ludwig Wittgenstein in his book *Philosophical Investigations* developed the concept of “Language Games” which considers the activity of language as a series of games. The context of said games forms the basis of how meaning functions in the world. When we think about games it is considerably difficult to attribute a definition that would succinctly define all games under one activity. This conceptual structure applies not only to the word “game” but all words within our language and in fact any attempt at a total definition fails. However, this does not mean that we cannot understand games or things within language. Since there is no such thing as a complete definition we must think more locally about the context and the ways in which it influences meaning. Truth and knowledge are not dependent on one another revealing that meaning is unstable and can shift considerably from situation to situation, from game to game.*

*Jean-François Lyotard later would radicalize this concept of language games and apply this frame of thinking to discourse. For Lyotard, discourse itself is a kind of game played within language. All with certain sets of “rules”; filled with their own nuance. For instance, take discourse (language game) of painting and the discourse of photography. They have always been in dialogue with one another responding to culture through very different means using very different strategies. In many ways photography and painting are irreconcilable. Any attempt to reconcile one discourse with the rules of the other proves to be frustrating and unproductive for everyone involved. Lyotard defines this kind of situation as a differend, when one discourse (language game) attempts to judge another discourse (language game) under the same set of “rules”. There is no master key. no such thing as a universal set of criteria, and any idea of a master narrative is misguided. For if there was a single set of criteria which we could use to judge everything in every circumstance there would be no question about what makes a judgment just. Lyotard finds his way out of this issue through Aristotle's concept of prudence (dispensing judgment without models.) Judgment without a prescribed criteria, it has to be invented on a case by case basis.*

*I'd like to take a moment and clarify that all of this is to say that games and play are not limited to the obvious. Game is merely the context of play and is not limited to a ballfield or a tabletop. I define Game as such: a situation you find yourself in with a coded and/or conditioned set of rules of a shared vernacular. Play would be the performativity that accompanies it (play).*



# Convention

*“a way in which something is usually done, especially within a particular area or activity.”*

*Conventions consist of the constellation of assumptions (inherited and learned) that fill in the gaps of our knowledge about things in the world and the ways we typically engage with said things.*

*If we for a moment think about tools. There is a wide range of tools all serving a particular function. If we were to zoom in and think about a hammer. There is the local knowledge that is discovered as an individual acquaints themselves with the physical object: how it feels in the hand, its weight, its material composition; any and all of the particularities that constitute the individual hammer. The object's facticity. There is the social knowledge of the tool that consists of everything we learn about it through observation: Watching a worker drive nails into wood, prying nails out, etc. The repeated exposure of these experiences combine to form a conventional understanding of the tool's function. However, there is also the unexpected knowledge of a tool : discovering a hammer was used violently as a murder weapon in the news, breaking ice dams that form in the winter, using the claw side of the hammer to dig a hole. Any and all of the unexpected, surprising and/or strange uses of a tool that deviate*

*or defy their pragmatic function; unconventional practices. Thus our understanding of a tool and all of its potential functions becomes entangled with our varied experiences with them; synthesizing into a complex well of knowledge that deploys itself depending on the context.*

*Convention is the product of an assumed set of criteria that is justified within a particular language game; what some problematically label as normal. Notions of progress and the hallucinated utopia they ascribed to collapse. We are left with futile pursuits of play caught in a culture of fragmentation and simultaneity with all of the beauty and horrors that accompany it. One must Imagine Sisyphus happy.*



## **PROPS**

*“ a thing used to fill a syntactic role without any specific meaning of its own”*

*Value is slippery, I find great difficulty when it comes to sussing out the perceptual shift from meaningless to meaningful, when nothing becomes something. I think of theater, of plays, and how props function within them. Props are things devoid of any specific meaning; they simply are. When a context is persuasive enough objects can be transmogrified from ordinary to significant. I find that this perceptual shift happens most frequently in theater, film, as well as the “fine” arts, and I am certain that this has to do with staging. The way something is presented greatly influences how it’s perceived. In a theater or a gallery belief is suspended, even if just for a moment, and everything presented in these contexts are suspect. I relish in these moments, this space where things are yet to receive a definition and rather are just happening. Curiosity is quelled by definition. Props fill the cavities of knowledge of language*

*.I have always admired the fluidity of language. When caught in the throes of language I find it easy to be swept away, however to be understood is no easy feat. Imagine an entire conversation without using the word IT. We depend on IT a great deal.....*

*To be continued.*