

Public Programs

CITYDANCE

Organized by Kadist Art Foundation
Saturday, September 28, 7:30 p.m.
You will be informed of the starting location when you
RSVP at wattis@cca.edu.

Citydance is an evening of outdoor screenings of nine different video artworks on public buildings in San Francisco. These interventions in public space all involve projecting the image of one city onto another. The program aims to instigate an awareness of other cities in the world and of how social and political movements, as well as the actions of individuals, shape the urban imaginary.

It is inspired by Anna Halprin’s 1977 daylong performance of the same title, which likewise turned the city of San Francisco into a stage, making a total of nine stops from Twin Peaks to the Embarcadero. It involved a combination of scored activities and a spontaneous walking parade. In the book *Experience as Dance*, Halprin is quoted as having said, “We experience ourselves as dancers through awareness of our movements, and our city through our awareness of our movements within it.”

As in the original *Citydance*, a poet will read at each stop on the tour, connecting the overall experience.

CITYDETOURS

These three guided afternoon excursions are led by collaborative groups of artists, writers, curators, and historians. While the exhibition invites the exterior experience of the urban into the gallery, these programs extend the exhibition out into the city. Each excursion will traverse the streets and alleys of San Francisco, performing alternate routes and discussing forces of the urban domain that are hidden in plain sight.

Citytours begin at the Wattis Institute (360 Kansas Street, between 16th and 17th Streets). RSVP required. Please email wattis@cca.edu to RSVP (the exact time of departure will be disseminated closer to the date of the tour) or if you have questions.

CITYDETOUR WITH GRUPA O.K.

Saturday, October 26
grupa o.k. is the collaborative endeavor of Julian Myers Szupinska and Joanna Szupinska Myers. The name is a mischievous borrowing from grupa a.r. (artyści rewolucyjni), the Polish avant-garde group founded in 1929 by Władysław Strzemiński, Katarzyna Kobro, and Henryk Stażewski.

CITYDETOUR WITH BRIAN KARL AND CHRISTIAN NAGLER

Saturday, November 9
Brian Karl conducted his doctoral research in Morocco, Spain, and the United States, and has taught widely in cultural anthropology, music, and art while also producing a series of independently produced experimental video documentaries. His latest project, *Markers of Death*, is supported by SALT Research in Istanbul. Christian Nagler is an artist, writer, and translator. He has performed with Anna Halprin, Isak Immanuel, and Open Experiments Ensemble. His novel *The Capitalist* is forthcoming in 2014. His recent writings can be found in the journal *Filip*, the SFMOMA exhibition catalogue *Six Lines of Flight, Somatic Engagement* (Chain Links Books), *Encyclopedia*, *Tarpaulin Sky*, and *Aufgabe*.

CITYDETOUR WITH WILL BROWN

Saturday, December 7
Will Brown is a collaborative project by Lindsey White, Jordan Stein, and David Kasprzak based in a storefront space in San Francisco’s Mission District. Its main objective is to manipulate the structures of exhibition making as a critical practice.

SMALL TALKS

Small Talks offer a unique opportunity to hear artists and scholars respond to current exhibitions at the Wattis in an intimate setting. Check wattis.org for an upcoming schedule of speakers. Small Talks are free and open to the public.

For complete details on all programs and events, please visit wattis.org.

Sign up at cca.edu/subscribe to get info on Wattis events and more, delivered by email.

City of Disappearances is an experimental curatorial collaboration, presenting works drawn from the collections of Kadist Art Foundation and the Zabłudowicz Collection. Both organizations are uniquely aware of the similarities and differences between urban centers because both have multiple locations: Kadist in Paris and San Francisco, and Zabłudowicz in London, New York, and Sarvisalo, Finland. Both collections focus primarily on contemporary art; the nine featured artists in this show are from Latin America, Europe, and the United States.

This exhibition exchange was initiated by Jens Hoffmann during his tenure as director of the CCA Wattis Institute and advisor to Kadist Art Foundation. It is the first in a series of exchanges between Kadist and local and international partner institutions. The next will occur in 2014 with the Times Museum in Guangzhou, China.

ABOUT KADIST ART FOUNDATION

The Kadist Art Foundation encourages the contribution of the arts to society, conducting programs primarily with artists represented in its collection to promote their role as cultural agents. Kadist’s programs develop collaborations between its local contexts (Paris, San Francisco), artists, curators, and art institutions worldwide. Read more at kadist.org.

ABOUT THE ZABLUDOWICZ COLLECTION

The Zabłudowicz Collection is dedicated to bringing emerging art to new audiences and actively supporting arts organizations and artists. It was founded in 1994, and it contains more than 2,000 works by more than 500 artists, spanning 40 years of art production. Its programs take place in a former Methodist Chapel in north London as well as permanent venues in the United States and Finland. Read more at zabludowiczcollection.com.

City of Disappearances
September 10–December 14, 2013
Curated by Joseph del Pesco of the Kadist Art Foundation and Elizabeth Neilson of the Zabłudowicz Collection

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Liz Glass and Micki Meng

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Many thanks to Jens Hoffmann, Kadist advisor and former director of the CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, for introducing the curators and initiating the exchange. Special thanks to Anthony Huberman, Wattis director; Micki Meng, assistant director; Justin Limoges, Wattis chief preparator; Elizabeth Glass, assistant curator; Rita Souther, program coordinator; Lindsey Westbrook, CCA managing editor; and Jon Sueda, Wattis design director, for their dedication and generosity in helping to organize the exhibition.

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SEPTEMBER 10–DECEMBER 14, 2013

CITY OF
DIS
APPEAR
ANCES

MICHEL AUDER, MARTIN BOYCE, SLATER BRADLEY,
PHILIP-LORCA DICORCIA, JOHN MENICK, ENRIQUE METINIDES,
YELENA POPOVA, AMIE SIEGEL, KELLEY WALKER

COLLECTING THE URBAN UNCONSCIOUS

“Unhesitating marks on paper, found in later times, will be a passport to the City of Disappearances.”

— Iain Sinclair, from the book *London: City of Disappearances*

In a city with a largely transient population, such as San Francisco, it’s uncommon to meet someone who has lived here since birth. This place is populated by people just passing through, high-tech commuters, and more dogs than children. The percentage of homeowners is well below the national average. It is unstable and elusive, subject to physical as well as ideological shifts and disappearances—whether sudden and violent, like an earthquake, or gradual, like the fading of the memory of someone who lived here for a while, then moved on.

The urban critic and journalist Jane Jacobs once said that cities are, by definition, full of strangers. They are places where some people enjoy being anonymous together, and others live in the shadows of isolation and absence. The urban sociologist Louis Wirth argued that “cities are the consumers rather than producers of men.” Through this lens, the alleys and avenues viewed from the tallest buildings of a city become digestive tracts. The Bay Area author Rebecca Solnit writes in *Infinite City* (2010), her San Francisco book of maps, that there are as many maps of San Francisco as there are inhabitants thereof: “No two people live in the same city.” She adds that the longer one lives in a city, the more his or her map “no longer matches the actual terrain.”

Each inhabitant may indeed carry a personal map of his or her metropolis, but the physical and social experience of “the city” is a universal language—a language of skyscrapers, traffic, human density, technology, affluence, poverty, and violence. Since 2007, the majority of the world’s population has been urban, making questions of “the city” particularly urgent. Whether we extol or condemn features of a certain city, there is no disputing that urban denizens play an increasingly critical role in setting the priorities of global culture.

— JOSEPH DEL PESCO

In Italo Calvino’s 1972 book *Invisible Cities*, Marco Polo says to Kublai Khan, “Traveling, you realize differences are lost: Each city takes to resembling all cities, places exchange their form, order, distances.” *Invisible Cities* describes many fictional domains, all of them metaphors for Calvino’s own beloved Venice. *City of Disappearances* dramatizes the mutual resemblance of the world’s great cities by borrowing the title of Iain Sinclair’s psycho-geographic “anthology of absence,” *London: City of Disappearances* (2006), a book he says is written “by and about” London. The exhibition imagines a transposition and exchange of the living imaginary of London conjured in Sinclair’s book with the fictions and myths of San Francisco.

This conceptual and metaphorical exchange will be followed by a real one, when the exhibition travels to London in 2014. There it will be renamed *Infinite City* after Rebecca Solnit’s almanac of San Francisco. The curators recognize these two authors as eloquently defiant—speaking truth to power. They have in common sympathies for spatial politics and interests in the vicissitudes of the urban landscape.

There are many “cities of shadows” (to borrow Sinclair’s term) that appear in the exhibition, recognizable as corporeal vanishings, filmic echoes from the past dissolving in the present, and contaminated memories. The photographs, videos, paintings, and sculptures evoke the personal experience of the individual in the city, cinematic fictions of the city as idea, and aesthetic distillations of the glow and texture of the urban. Whether we choose to view cities as formed by their inhabitants or the inhabitants as formed by the cities in which they live, the city remains a primary dilemma—a tension that informs all of the work on view.



— Enrique Metinides, *Mexico City, 1971*, courtesy the artist and the Zabudowicz Collection —

Artists in the Exhibition

MICHEL AUDER

Michel Auder views his video camera as an appendage more than a tool; it is an integral part of his identity. For decades he has used it to record daily life on thousands of hours of videotape, editing bits and pieces from this massive catalogue into individual works. *The Town* (1999) portrays the city of New York via monolithic columns of glass and steel that break apart expanses of sky; rooftop water towers are silhouetted against a hazy blank field. The horizon lines that usually orient a landscape are distant or altogether absent. Unmoored from our usual ways of understanding composition and gravity, our gaze skews skyward, following planes and helicopters that fly silently, steadily, between buildings. Some move diagonally up into the stratosphere and out of the frame, while others travel laterally across our field of vision as the camera appears to chase after them. Encircling the city, they seem to draw perimeters around the limits of our experience. The last shots of the film reverse the point of view. Taking to the air, the camera looks down, scanning across the skyline to offer a glimpse of the city’s totality.

MARTIN BOYCE

Martin Boyce’s suspicions regarding Modernism are reflected in his grim and isolated portrayals of the urban environment. Referencing the failures of an ideological age defined by “form follows function,” his exploration of the psychological and physical landscape often takes on a confused or dystopic construction, capturing anxieties related to overproduction and elitism through juxtapositions of high- and low-culture design elements. The installation in this exhibition combines related works from the Kadist and Zabudowicz collections. Together they tell the story of a cold, lifeless city, devoid of nature and human subjectivity. Objects become narrators in a humanized landscape of art. Formerly practical and familiar devices are now deprived of functionality, illuminated in artificial light cast by trees made of fluorescent tubes. There is no place for an inactive bystander; we find ourselves unable to rest on a bench with no seat, alongside a waste bin tilted askew. An estranged telephone booth is deprived its sole reason for existence—a connection to another human voice. A space once familiar—a civic gathering place for healthful activity—has become a representation of a new municipal language of tasks, order, and emptiness. It is a warning of a future world that offers no place for reflection, and no memories to reflect upon.

SLATER BRADLEY

Slater Bradley creates intimate portraits through drawing, painting, film, and video. The video *Female Gargoyle* (2000) is a simultaneously public and private display of vulnerability that appeals to visual and spatial modes of recognition, the modern city, and an emotional understanding of the human condition. Perched alone on top of a building, one leg dangling over the ledge, a female figure is overcome, we imagine, by the consequences of choices she’s made. She embodies the archetype of the wild heroine, a child born of urban nightlife, etched with tattoos. Given her pose and gestures of anguish, we suspect that she is contemplating a fatal descent. Her deliberation is recorded from afar by an amateur videographer. The device cannot possibly understand her private story of tragedy, and this somehow both dulls and magnifies the intensity of her experience. As a symbolic mirroring of a stone gargoyle, that observant urban creature, she sits forever suspended in time, plagued by indecision and grief.

PHILIP-LORCA DICORCIA

Philip-Lorca diCorcia falsifies the human experience—or, rather, seems to claim that there is no truth in reality to begin with. Instead of photographing his subjects in candid situations, he stages them in a manner that mimics the behavior of real subjects, implying a truth that does not exist except within the captured image. His lens creates a self-contained world with the potency of myth—an interpretation of the ultimate solitude of the contemporary individual. New York City (1984) shows a man who has literally fallen victim to a New York street. Life is humbling on these uneven concrete paths, as he must now question the reliability of solid surfaces underfoot. This momentary narrative suggests broader questions about everyday existence: the danger of making assumptions, the confusion created by the subjectivity of memory, and confrontations with the unexpected.

JOHN MENICK

The unnamed protagonist in John Menick’s video *The Secret Life of Things* (2006) describes himself as a “professional spectator.” The subject of his fascination is a recurring cinematic trope—namely, a city that has been emptied of human life except for one solitary survivor. It is indeed a common dream: You wake to find that the world is not as it was when you went to sleep. In some of the spectator’s narratives, the anonymous city has become a

ghost town overnight. In others, some stroke of magic has frozen an animate urban world in a single instant, transforming urban movement into history. The delusion is ultimately a narcissist’s dream—that one has become the last player in life’s great play. We, as watchers, are compelled to share these demented fantasies of people as statues, everyday objects as artifacts, the once-utopian city as a mausoleum, its silent concrete a prison.

ENRIQUE METINIDES

The photographs of Enrique Metinides are confrontational—indeed, sometimes very hard to look at. Shot over the course of the 50 years that Metinides worked as a crime photographer for the daily Mexico City newspaper *La Prensa*, most of them depict grisly events: death, accidents, earthquakes, fires.



— Enrique Metinides, *Mexico City, 1971*, courtesy the artist and the Zabudowicz Collection —

These scenes of gore and disaster, many of which have subsequently taken on iconic status in the history of photography, contain an uncanny cinematic quality. They are documentary, yet perfectly composed and viscerally concise, often with overtones of surrealism or hyperrealism. They are disturbing, yet they also convey an intense intimacy. From the crowds of wide-eyed spectators who populate the frame to the unrelenting gaze of his own camera lens, Metinides captures the temporary, forced, and at times almost claustrophobic proximity of urban life. Presumably strangers to one another, the subjects of his photographs are actually sharing the most visceral experiences of life.

YELENA POPOVA

Humans tend to personify the inanimate—to understand objects and places by likening them to ourselves. Cities are often described as if they were characters in a book. They are called “cold” because of their concrete, “unfeeling” because of their enormity. In her video *Unnamed* (2011), Yelena Popova introduces two sympathetic city-characters: one, the artist’s Russian hometown, and the other an Estonian city on the Baltic Sea. Both were secretly established during the Soviet era as bases for the manufacturing of plutonium and uranium. In the video, these small cities and their inhabitants are cast as victims of the Soviet nuclear program. Unknown to history and not even named at first by the government, they and their residents seem like family members unrecognized by an amnesiac society. By revisiting them, Popova exposes glimpses of their Soviet pasts while interrogating the hidden-ness and in-

visibility that she and others who lived in these forsaken landscapes has inherited.

AMIE SIEGEL

The city of Berlin holds within it many pasts. In the 20th century alone, it has experienced five separate eras of power, and physical manifestations of each regime are still visible in the multilayered architectural experience of the city. Centuries-old buildings stand next to Weimar- and Nazi-era constructions, while the East and West sides of the city tell different stories about war, destruction, reconstruction, and unification. In the two-channel video installation *Berlin Remake* (2005), Amie Siegel pairs segments of found cinematic footage, all shot in Berlin, with contemporary restagings of those moments. A subway station, a city plaza, an unremarkable street, and an apartment building are among the locations she revisits.



— Enrique Metinides, *Mexico City, 1971*, courtesy the artist and the Zabudowicz Collection —

Physical space and abstracted characters appear as echoes through time, while the city itself shifts and morphs across decades. Upsetting the customary narrative logic of progress and teleological, linear history, Siegel reveals the complexity of change and order through the ghostly manifestations of the past in the present.

KELLEY WALKER

In *Untitled* (2009), a work from Kelley Walker’s brick painting series, the artist becomes a virtual bricklayer by individually scanning bricks and cinderblocks to re-create the brick-and-mortar landscape of a city. The “mortar” in this work is made up of pages from the men’s lifestyle magazine *Hercules*. Given that the work is intended for display in an art gallery, it becomes a kind of reexamination of the urban backdrop in an isolated, foreign environment—a piece of the outdoors brought indoors for closer inspection. Also ubiquitous in the cacophonous milieu of the city—on billboards, taxicabs, and magazines—are potent commercial advertising images. In the act of extracting such imagery from an aesthetically seductive publication devoted to shaping personal identity, Walker insists on its cultural contingency. In reclassifying the language of propaganda, he highlights the sociopolitical issues underlying consumerism, which are shaped not only by the conditions in which the message and imagery are presented, but also by how they are manipulated. The symbolic gesture of the brick wall suggests something coming to a halt—perhaps all the attention we pay to the consumption of goods.

Works in the Exhibition

MICHEL AUDER

The Town, 1999
Video, color, sound, 5:10 min.
Kadist Art Foundation Collection

MARTIN BOYCE

Telephone Booth Conversations (1), 2006
Powder-coated aluminum, steel, acrylic paint, spray paint, and electric light components

Untitled, 2010

Powder-coated steel, fluorescent lights, and chain

Our Love Is Like the Flowers, the Rain, the Sea, and the Hours, 2002
Trees, bin, steel, wood, and fluorescent tubes

Dimensions variable
Kadist Art Foundation and Zabudowicz Collections

SLATER BRADLEY

Female Gargoyle, 2000
Video projection, color, silent, 9:42 min.
Zabudowicz Collection

PHILIP-LORCA DICORCIA

New York City, 1984
Impression on paper
15 ¾ x 19 ¾ in.
Kadist Art Foundation Collection

JOHN MENICK

The Secret Life of Things, 2006
Video, color, sound, 6 min.
Kadist Art Foundation Collection

ENRIQUE METINIDES

Photographs for La Prensa, 1949–95, printed in 2003
32 chromogenic and gelatin silver prints
Each 30 ¾ x 24 ¾ x 1 ½ in.
Zabudowicz Collection

YELENA POPOVA

Unnamed, 2011
Video, color, sound, 17 min.
Zabudowicz Collection

AMIE SIEGEL

Berlin Remake, 2005
Two-channel video installation, color, sound, 14 min.
Kadist Art Foundation Collection

KELLEY WALKER

Untitled, 2009
Silkscreen and acrylic on canvas
106 x 144 in.
Zabudowicz Collection

Enrique Metinides Photographs

(left to right, top to bottom)

Row 1

Mexico City, 1953
A truck crashes into the house of the Rivero Delgado family.

Morelos State, 1967

The drowned body of a man who has been reported missing for several days is found by the Red Cross in the lake of Tequezquilingo.

Mexico City, 1986
No information on record.

Mexico State, 1972
Bus crash.

Mexico City, 1993

Red Cross worker Manuel Hernandez Martinez prevents Guadalupe N Guzman leaping from the 27th floor of the Torre Latinoamericana.

Mexico City, 1962

A fire caused by 10,000 liters of butane gas engulfed an area of Tacubaya. The driver of the truck transporting the gas had decided to make a quick stop in his home neighborhood before driving on to Guerrero. He miscalculated a turn and hit a wall, creating a huge gas leak.

[Location and date unknown]
A 19-year-old boy lies unconscious on his father’s grave, after taking an overdose of barbiturates. His suicide note is pinned under a stone beside him.

Mexico City, 1960s

A crowd gathers around a crashed car and attempts to rescue the family trapped inside.

Row 2

Mexico State, 1964
Azcapotzalco refinery, Mexico

Toluca, Mexico, 1971

Jesus Bazaldúa Barber, a telecommunications engineer, is fatally electrocuted by more than 60,000 volts while installing a new phone line.

Mexico-Puebla Highway, 1966
Accident rescue off the Mexico-Puebla Highway.

Mexico City, 1971

“I wanted to know what death was like,” said 45-year-old Antonio N., after two rescue workers persuaded him not to jump from the top of the Tereo Stadium, 40 meters above ground.

Mexico City, 1958

After being stood up at the altar, a bride returns to the church in the Condesa neighborhood and shoots herself in the head.

Mexico City, 1971

“I wanted to know what death was like,” said 45-year-old Antonio N., after two rescue workers persuaded him not to jump from the top of the Tereo Stadium, 40 meters above ground.

Mexico City, 1970

An injured woman is rescued from a bus crash by a volunteer.

Lake Xochimilco, Mexico City, 1960
No information on record.

Row 3

Mexico City, 1955
Bus crashes into a tram.

Mexico City, 1985

The Regis Hotel, downtown Mexico City, after the massive earthquake on September 19.

Mexico City, 1971
“I wanted to know what death was like,” said 45-year-old Antonio N., after two rescue workers persuaded him not to jump from the top of the Tereo Stadium, 40 meters above ground.

Mexico City, 1995

A woman grieves over her dead boyfriend, stabbed in Chapultepec Park while resisting robbers.

Mexico City, 1971

“I wanted to know what death was like,” said 45-year-old Antonio N., after two rescue workers persuaded him not to jump from the top of the Tereo Stadium, 40 meters above ground.

Mexico City, 1971

Suicide, Torre Latinoamericana.

Mexico City, 1979

Adela Lagarreta Rivas is struck by a white Datsun on Avenida Chapultepec.

Mexico City, 1972

No information on record.

Row 4

Mexico City, 1966

A poor woman is forced to leave the morgue to beg for money in order to buy a coffin for her two-year-old daughter, whose autopsy has been performed two hours previously.

Mexico City, 1974

Three young Americans crash their convertible into a fountain on Reforma Avenue. Fortunately they suffer only minor injuries but later they accuse police of having stolen their gold watches and jewelry. Metinides’s photographs, sent to the attorney general, proved their accusation was false.

Querétaro Highway, 1967

Red Cross workers rescue the victim of a car accident on the Querétaro Highway.

Mexico City, 1958

A house belonging to a wealthy family in the Lomas de Chapultepec area catches fire. Passers-by help save their furniture.

Mexico City, 1958

A high-voltage cable snaps loose and hits a man walking along Tacuba Street. Despite being badly shocked, he survived.

Mexico City, 1973

Freeway accident.

Atizapán, Mexico State, 1965
A private plane lands on the roof of a house.

Mexico City, 1976

“After a murder was committed, I asked an officer at the General Attorney’s office to show me the bullet. I used to photograph the victim’s clothes and belongings, as well as the assassin’s weapons. Sometimes these images were published in the newspapers, so relatives could identify the deceased.”

A TRANSCRIPTION OF AMIE SIEGEL’S BERLIN REMAKE

[On poster] We will never surrender!

[Excerpted from the April 27, 1945, Wehrmachtbericht, or “Armed Forces Report,” a daily radio broadcast published during World War II by the High Command of Nazi Germany’s Armed Forces]:

The Armed Forces High Command announces: The focus of the campaign yesterday remained in Bremen.

By means of difficult street fighting in which they sustained heavy losses, the English were able to extend their invasion into the metropolitan area.

In the area of Fürstenwalde our unified forces surged in assault westward against the deep flanks of the Bolsheviks operating south of Berlin.

The Baruth-Zossen route was taken.

In the west, our spirited young offensive divisions reached the area around Beelitz and are engaged in heavy fighting with the Soviets in the forests there.

In the areas of Stettin and Prenzlau the Soviets stand to gain further ground.

The Battle in Berlin: Also yesterday, at the heart of the conflict is the battle for Berlin.

Shoulder to shoulder with all men able to bear arms, our troops led a heroic fight against the massive Bolshevik onslaught.

The heaviest fighting blazes in the areas of Tiergarten, Alt-Moabit.

You have been listening to the report of the Armed Forces High Command.

Do you know your way around here?

Yeah.

Where’s there a bakery?

There.

Where there?

Yeah, the second corner on the left.

A butcher?

Across from the bakery.

And a florist?

Don’t have one here.

Don’t like to talk much, huh?

Nah.

Do you at least like to eat candy?

Nah.

Good for you I don’t have any.

Crazy this square. Somehow classic.

Classic, you say!

I don’t know. Doesn’t do much for me.

I met one (a girl) here once, in the rain. She was walking barefoot, high heels in hand, in full daylight, across the square here.

Really a fabulous woman.

I came up to her, completely drenched, nobody else around.

And I said, “Hello, pretty woman.” And then she turned around and also said hello.

I looked around again one more time, wide grin on my face, and she did the same.

And that was all?

Yeah, and?

Now listen, you didn’t see her in the park at all.

It doesn’t even matter.

Wait a minute, do you know the one about the zebra? Where the bull comes up to the zebra and says, man take off those lame pajamas!

Come on, I’d way rather something straight like that.

You with your stories.

Someday the time will come...

Although for a while I couldn’t believe in this...

When I’ll be able to turn to a person and say, “I love you.”

This person will be you.

I swear it to you.

Stop talking, Hans.

I will wait.

English translation by Christina Linden