



Article

## Conjuring up the Jinni

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This article focuses on my ongoing work within a collaborative project based on the enigmatic literary fiction 'Tale of the Arabian Nights'. The book is a collection of tales from the Middle East dating back beyond the ninth century and profoundly influenced many writers such as Jorge Luis Borges and Italo Calvino.

This essay will not seek to explain my drawings directly. Still, it will provide a series of tales that requires the reader to formulate their conclusions on the drawing's relationship to the Arabian Nights. It is also intentionally incomplete; further tales will be added in the future in the form of embedded stories in much the same way the Arabian Nights uses this literary device. As this article is in a scientific publication, scientific notions of illusion, neurology, and imagination will appear as embedded tales but do not appear here yet but are alluded to in the stories.

Furthermore, the author's intention for this article is to enable the spawning of a thousand and one tales about the drawings. Therefore, it will not have a conclusive story at the end and will end abruptly with the new accounts awaiting conception and addition.

It is a live piece of work continuously growing to simulate the Arabian Nights as it evolved throughout the centuries through additions, alterations and subtractions. The translated text that influenced the drawings was undertaken by Husain Haddaway and published by Everyman Library (1992) which was based on a Fourteenth Century Syrian manuscript that was edited Muhsin Mahdi in 1984.

Like all good stories, this article will start with once upon a time.

Once upon a time, there was a tale:

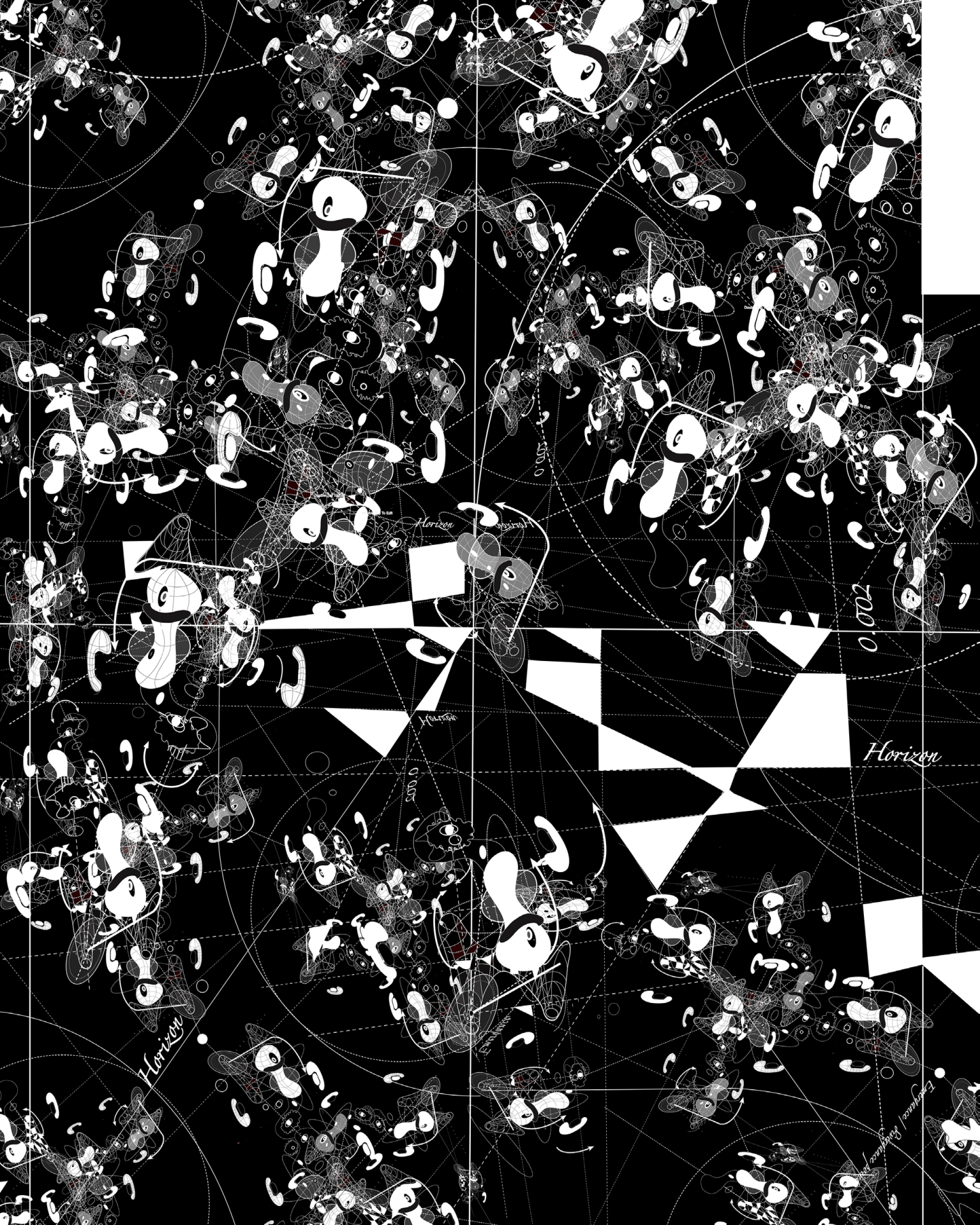
### **The Tale of The Tales of The Arabian Nights:**

The Arabian Nights is a fictional narrative that has evolved and morphed as it was projected from the depths of the past through the centuries and into the present day. Its genesis and evolution have been enigmatic.

Its origins are unknown -the oldest manuscripts have been found in Iran, Syria and Egypt; its original authors are also unknown; it has been translated from Arabic into many languages and travelled to many continents and back again. We must assume that some of the intended meaning may have been lost in translation, which has added to its mesmerising quality. Its deterritorialising and re-territorialising adventures have been accumulating influencing debris.

Some translators have even taken to virtuous editing to meet the moral sensibilities of a country and era in which the translation was completed. There is suspicion that some translators took the liberty and added their tales to the original. It has been exoticised and reinvented. It has been depicted in different media, from the textual to pictorial to film. It seems to be in a morphogenetic process that is also in an episode of wanting to metamorphose into something else but never does.

(next page) Rahesh R. Ram, Mirror Mirror, 2020



The structure of the book is both a tree structure and a rhizome. It has a framing structure from which tales branch off. These tales sometimes have within them, embedded tales, and within them, there are two or three other independent stories that are entirely new. The tales offer a multitude of portals into other fictions and even genres.

Most of these tales are complete, but some have no end and finish mid-story, leaving the reader dismayed. Other stories branch off into songs and poems to evoke emotive ideas but are tales and realms in themselves.

It uses the idea of repetition: sometimes characters and objects appear, and a disappear in tales and remerge in other narratives, and you wonder what they are doing there.

The drawings are not just a representation of a story but are another embedded tale within a tale. They are there to evoke something else within the story in the same way the Arabian Nights uses poems and songs to embellish the narrative.

The drawings are not only influenced by the narrative but also by the book's violated and mysterious evolution.

### **The Tale of the Appearing and Disappearing Author(s)**

The article focuses on the drawings that I drafted as part of an ongoing joint project with Sarah Allan that started in 2017.

I will not go into the collaborative project as there is no room in this essay to go into the intricacies and complexities of it. However, these drawings are my thoughts and ideas, and the hope is that they will merge with Allan's work in the future. Our hope is this will, in turn, entwine with other collaborators until the specific authorship of our collaborations is indecipherable. This working-together and separately is an artificial construct attempting to simulate the Arabian Nights evolution with its many unknown and known writers whose inputs are sometimes unspecified but whose insertions profoundly impacted the Arabian Night's enigmatic offering. The idea is that the work will live and breathe, pulsate and grow with the many authors' creative insertions; but, in the end, they will disappear into the thick smog of a multitude of authors that will eventually be inhaled into

a vanishing point leaving the work as an entity in a rhizomatic condition waiting for the next author to attach to its tentacular structure.

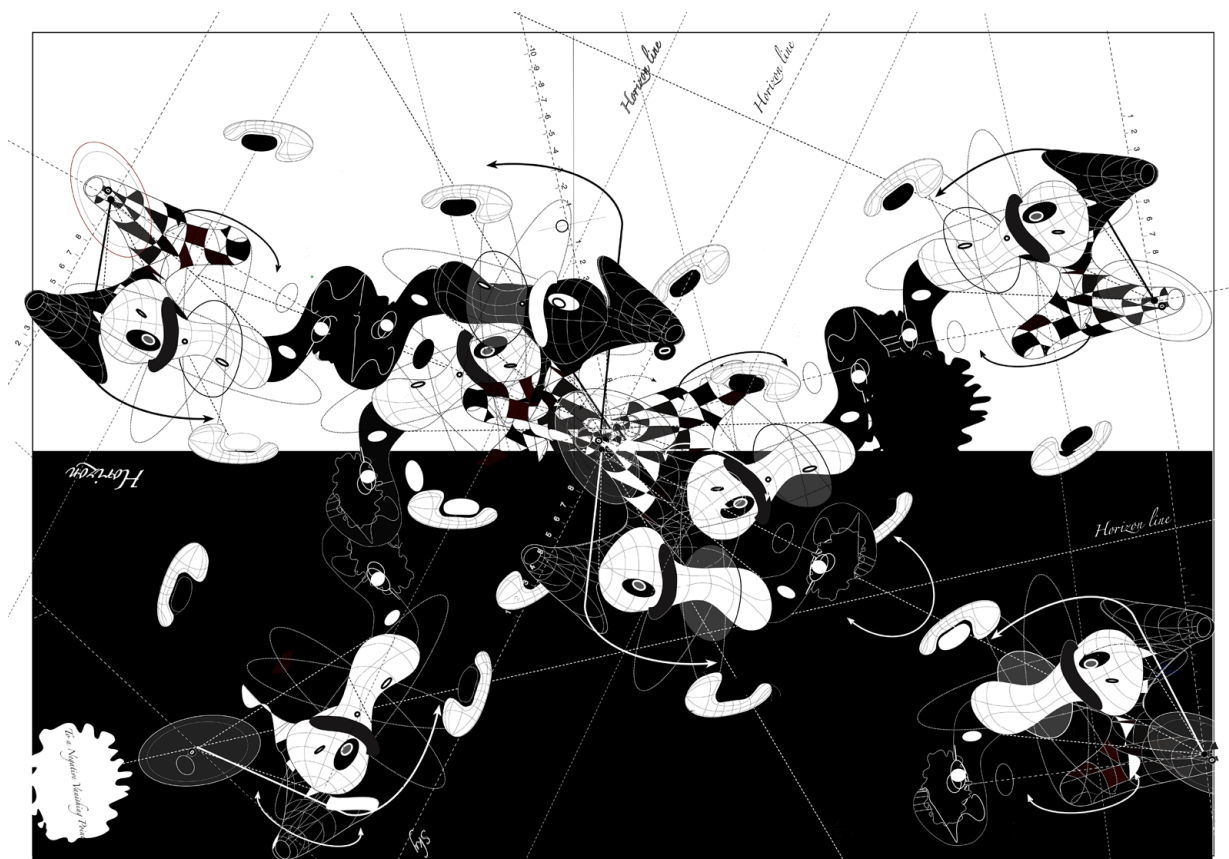
### **The Tale of the Conjurer**

This article retrospectively looks at my drawings as a way to reflect and articulate the process that I took to investigate the story and the relationship between the textual imaging, the mental image, and the drawn image and the spaces in which these images inhabit: in the written word, in the mind and of the drawing surface. The object of this exercise is to decipher my drawings. Intuition plays a large role in my work, and undertaking the drawing process is something akin to shamanistic practice where the conjuring up the image requires several catalytic entities to come together to enable evocations. I would suggest that this is analogous to a moment in 'The Tale of the Fisherman and the Jinn' in the Arabian Nights, where the Fisherman removes the Seal of Solomon on the Copper Jar, that he drags out from the sea with his fishing net; only to release the powerful, malevolent Jinn.

The drawings are of this moment of the arrival of the Jinn in the narrative, and the moment of the drawing is also the moment of the appearance of the Jinn. They are the same thing but different. The summoning of lines, dashes, arrows, text, planes, surfaces, splines are jostled into position to capture a dynamic moment; where the real and the unreal coexist for a fraction of a second on a 2d planes that enable a 3D perceptual inhabitation where the dismembered, molecularly dispersed spray of the Jinn converge from a multitude of different horizons and vanishing points to bring forth its elicitation.

### **The Tale of the Three Jinni and the Manifestation of a 1001 Jinni**

Three Jinni are evoked at the same place and time, but two may appear together at the same time and place but in different spaces, and the other appears somewhere else, but it is still of the same place and time. This kind of sorcery consistently happens throughout the book, but this time the Jenni appear outside it; in the mind and on a drawing surface.



Rahesh R. Ram, Jinn on the Horizon, 2020

All three Jinni that emerge are the same but different. In the tale inhabiting the book, the Jinni is generated through textual semiosis. The author brings forth his notions of the Jinni through the word. The book and the text become the copper jar in which the Jinn is trapped. However, Jinn in the textual format is not whole and inhabits the sentences in a destabilised state. We know that language is not specific enough to get the author's intention and vision over to the Reader to any degree of accuracy. Add to that, the Author's image of the Jinn may not be whole anyway. This unsettled nature is further compounded by the multitude of translations the Arabian Nights has gone through. The losses and gains that the process may have had will have accumulated onto its body.

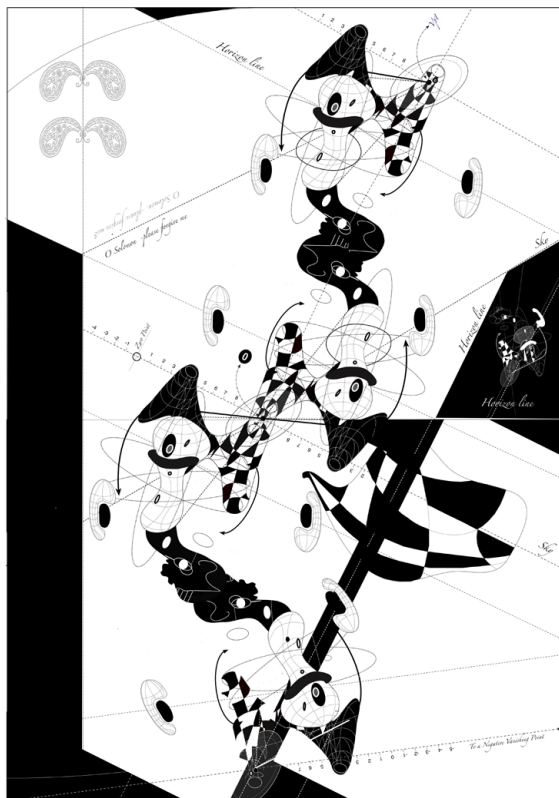
Between the Author's intension and its distance from the Reader; between the word and its meaning; and between non-specificity and accuracy; between the losses and gains in translation; there is a dream space waiting

for cognitive inhabitation by the Reader.

Through the textual portal, the reader will enter into the realm where the second Jinn will appear. Here the reader becomes a living breathing Copper Jar in which the Jinn inhabits needing to be released; the text is the Seal of Solomon and its meaning; the releasing agent.

The Reader, who was the copper jar metamorphoses into the Fisherman (the Observer), and the Jinn makes his second manifestation. The reading moment is when the reader and the author make a futile attempt to become conjoined beings before the enigmatic appearance.

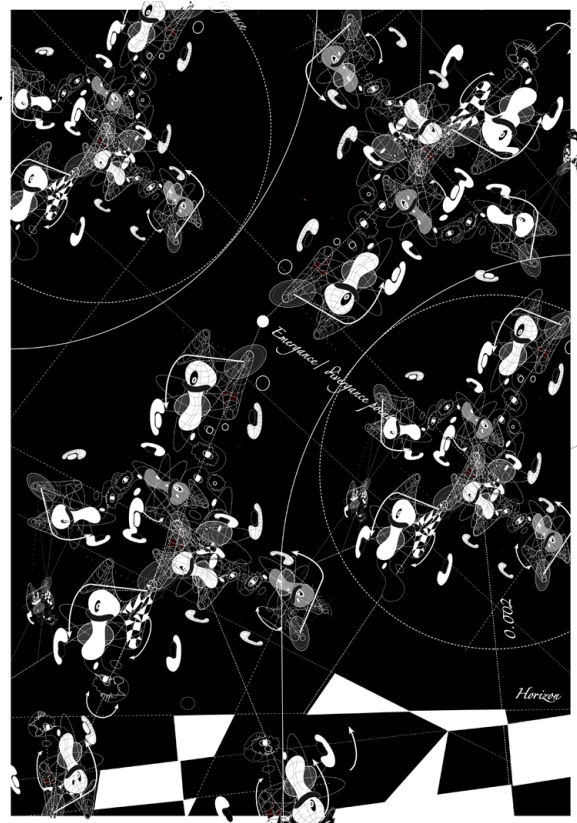
The space of the mind of the reader conjures up the Jinni triggered by the text. It is made up of the reader's past catalogue of ideas, notions and experiences and their ability to imagine. This Jinni here is also a fragmented and a dismembered entity that is lacking in detail. The Jinn that arrives is not only a phantom Jinn but is obscure.



Rahesh R. Ram, The arrival of the Jinn, 2019

The third Jinn arrives at the moment of removing the Seal of Solomon, and through the conduit of the body, the imagined Jinn is exorcised and purged to make the Jinn manifest in the real world. It is formed out of interpretations, intellectual reasoning, the imagination and intuition resulting in a representation and expression of its form. The media used provides another language for its presentation. This time, it is generated by a drawn semiosis.

Like the textual language, the drawn language has the same dream spaces between its lines, but this time there is an additional protagonist; the viewer. With the viewer, like the reader, being plural, the drawing has the ability to conjure up a thousand and one Jinni.



Rahesh R. Ram, Emergence Divergence Point, 2020

**The Tale of Copper Jar & the Possible Death of the Artist**

The Copper Jar is an ordinary yet mysterious object made more so by the Seal of Solomon. The Fisherman's curiosity finally enabled its opening, which in turn triggered a disturbance in reality, producing an unreal event. This unreal moment is unreal because it does not follow the laws of physics and does not relate to any human experience of the real world. However, this moment makes the Real-world strangely more vivid.

The Arabian Nights, the tales, the words are the Copper Jar. The incomplete nature of textual offering engages the imagination and images formulate in the reader's neocortex and thalamus. This structure is a real place. However, there is an unreal hybridised fragmented yet obscure form of the Fisherman, Arabia, the Copper Jar and Jinn conjured up to form one entity that inhabits that place.

The Reader, inhabiting a real space also inhabits unreal places simultaneously; the text provides the disturbance in reality and a portal from it. It enables time travel, occupying 9th century Arabia, and experience imaginary situations. If one definition of heterotopic spaces is that it has to be real; I would contest that these fictional spaces are as real as anything real especially with the brains ability to augment reality; the real is never real.

There is an intimate relationship formulated between the Reader and the text. The words penetrate the inner world of the reader, engendering cognitive experience and pleasure.

The Artists who offer a visual representation of this moment is attempting to kill this magic moment. Indeed, they should not be allowed to do so: and if they did, they should be offered the same gift as the Jinn offered the Fisherman .i.e. choose the manner of their death but die they must.

In his final summation, the Prosecutor states to the Judge and Jury: "The blood supply that offers textual semiosis its moment in the reader will be cut off by the introduction of visual representation. The artist must die!"

### **The Story of the Drawn Conjunction in a Thousand and One Tales**

#### ***The Story of Conjunction 1: The Story of Retrieval of the Black Box***

*The Fisherman threw out his net in search for the black box; he eventually found it. Through the rustling of the leaves on the trees, the wind begged caution.*

#### ***The Story of Conjunction 2: Black***

*Black absorbs light, and we are offered the view down the Jinn's throat that reveals the vast blackness of the universe. This blackness is associated with death and the underworld, mourning and witchcraft. It is dangerous.*

*Venta Black traps 99.965% of the colour spectrum like a jailer. The prison does not allow the perception of depth and texture. The black is*

*of infinite depth, but it is also the black that is between the stars and planets; it is the black of the endless universe. It also inhabits the spaces between the quarks that make neutrons and the protons of the atom.*

*It is both the unseen microscopic space and the vastness of the macroscopic universe appearing simultaneously. It is the place of vertigo and endlessness, and it is pregnant with the unknown. If you put your ears to infinite black, you can hear Malevich screaming, "can you hear me?".*

### **The Story of Conjunction 3: White**

*While black recedes and exceeds, the white makes its move.*

*White reflects light and like a ghostly body formed out of photons with a magnetic field and energy traces the lines, dots, dashes, and planes and rises through the atmosphere and enters the observer's inner receptors and possess them.*

*The viewer is triggered; a multitude of synapses fire with electrical energy and information becomes accumulated, allowing a phantom to appear in the blackness of the brain. The Jinni arrives as an apparition at one place at the same time from a multitude of angles. If one removes the light; the white dies, and so does the Jinni.*

### **The Story of Conjunction 4: The Ambiguous Dance of Lines, dots, dashes, rogue words and floating numbers.**

*Lines, dots, dashes, splines, planes, arrows are in the process of dynamic semiosis; struggling to form meaning. There are suggestions of forms, surfaces, folded planes that do not have gravity working on them, but these are only suggestions, and they are not real. The lines are continually alluding to the places beyond the page, but what is beyond the drawn surface's rectangle is anyone's guess. There are rogue words, floating numbers and symbols that seem to be associated with lines and dashes; a judge would say they are guilty by association, but the alibi has been*

that they just happened to be at the same place at the same time. The typography seems to have a meaning as much as the text, but the text does not have a sentence, and the suspicion is the lines have eradicated them to take their place. Why are numbers here anyway? They have no right to be here. This space is an unreal world.

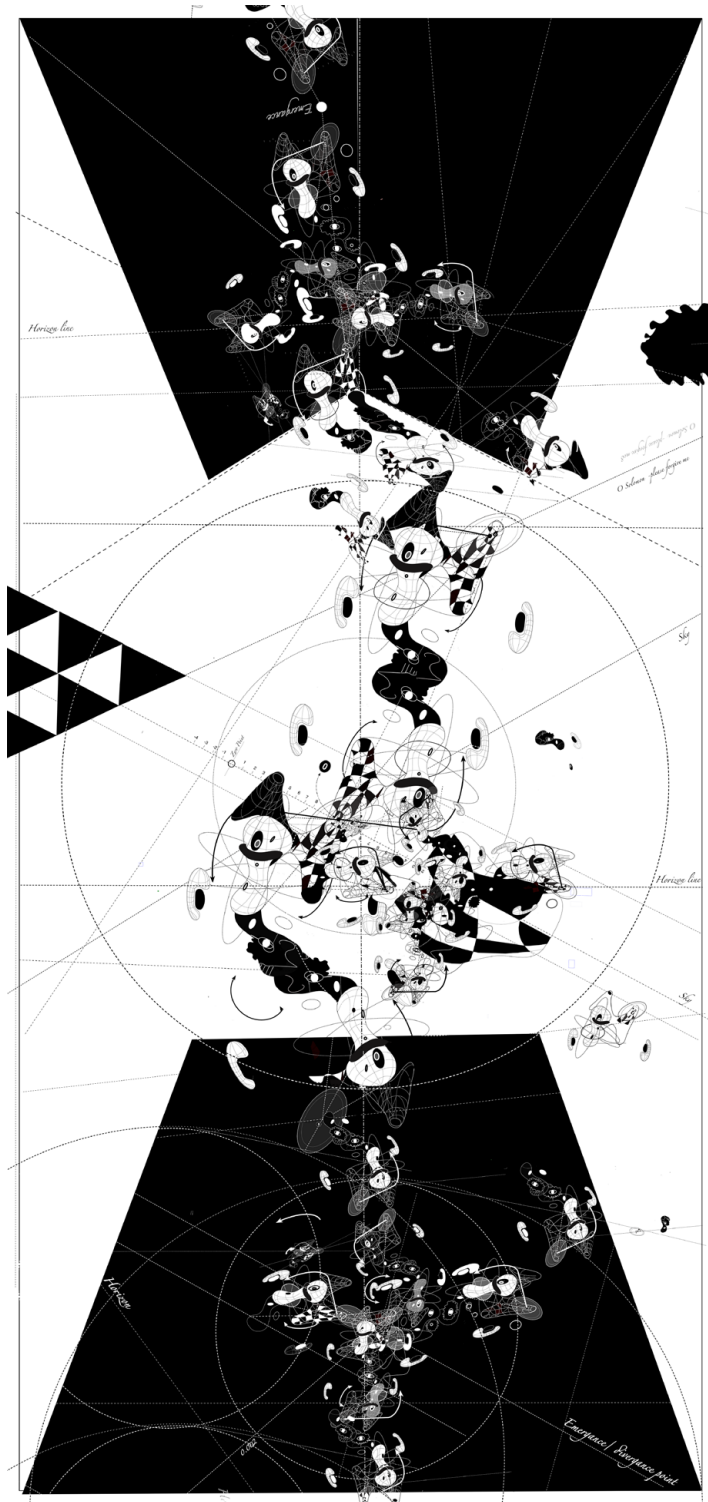
**The Story of Conjunction 5: The Tale of a Moment**

From the shores of the frame, we threw out the fishing net and captured a moment. Time, place and event stopped mid-flow and was not allowed to move. The drawn semiosis's momentum was halted and asked to hold its breath. The spectre Marcel Duchamp and Oskar Schlemmer appeared. From here, they seemed to be arguing. All I could hear was Duchamp while descending a staircase, shouting, "Schlemmer, what do you think you are doing?" and Schlemmer shouting back "What do YOU think you are doing?" They just kept calling out the same thing again and again.

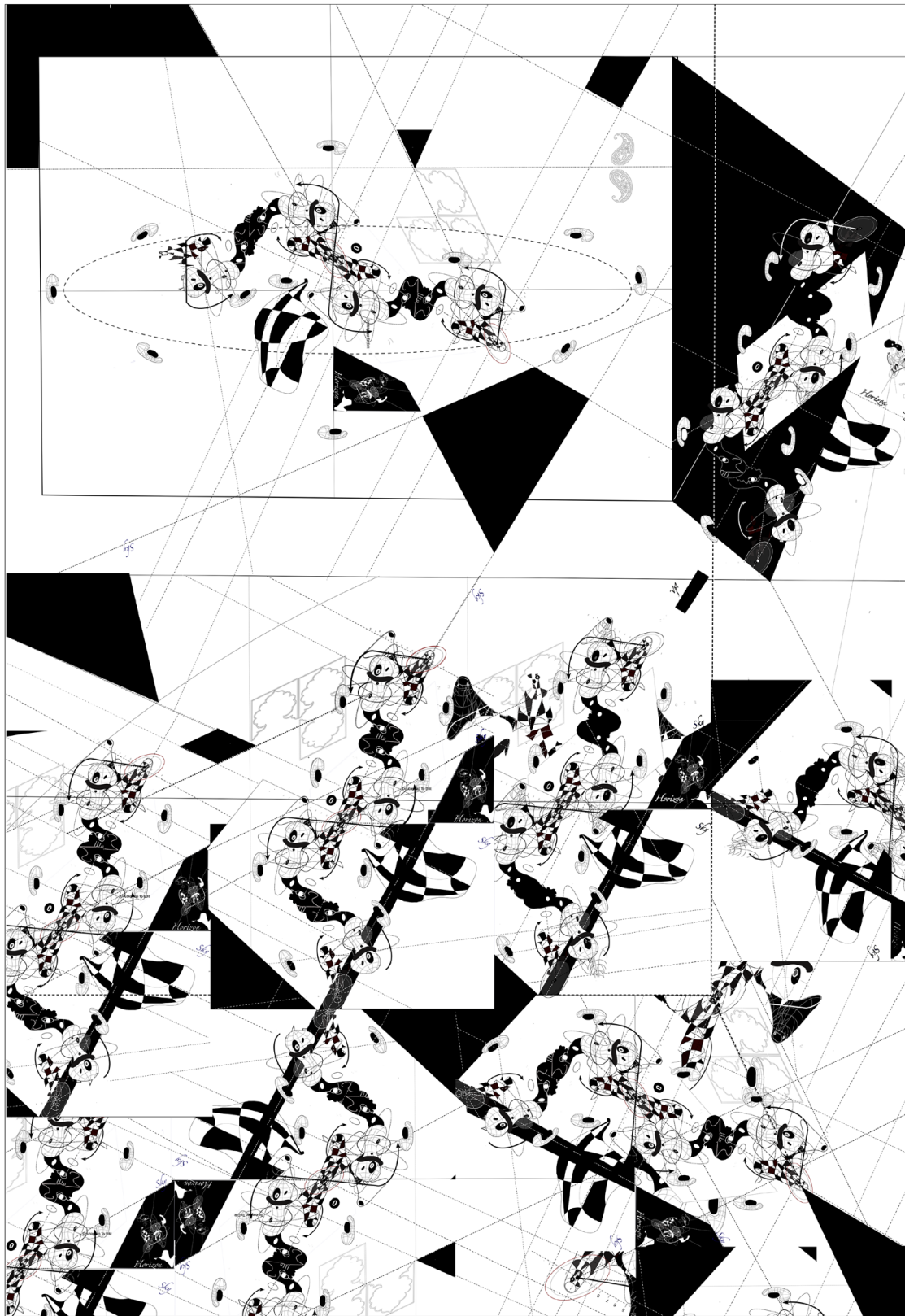
**The Story of Conjunction 6: The Tale of Many Horizons & Vanishing Points**

The drawing arrested the viewer. The horizon lines hold the vanishing point like a string holds a single pearl, but the pearl is a black hole. Did the lines converge to a point? Or was there a dynamic explosion from a single hole projecting its debris beyond the viewer? Was it convergence or divergence?

There is another horizon on the same plane, which also has a vanishing point; how can that be? Is there another viewer(s) looking from another place? How dare the other viewer be here on this plane. I am THE viewer. This occurrence should not be allowed. Another story is being told for another viewer or viewers; these are observers without bodies that can see the same space from multiple viewing points all at the same time. Then, who am I? I'm the viewer.

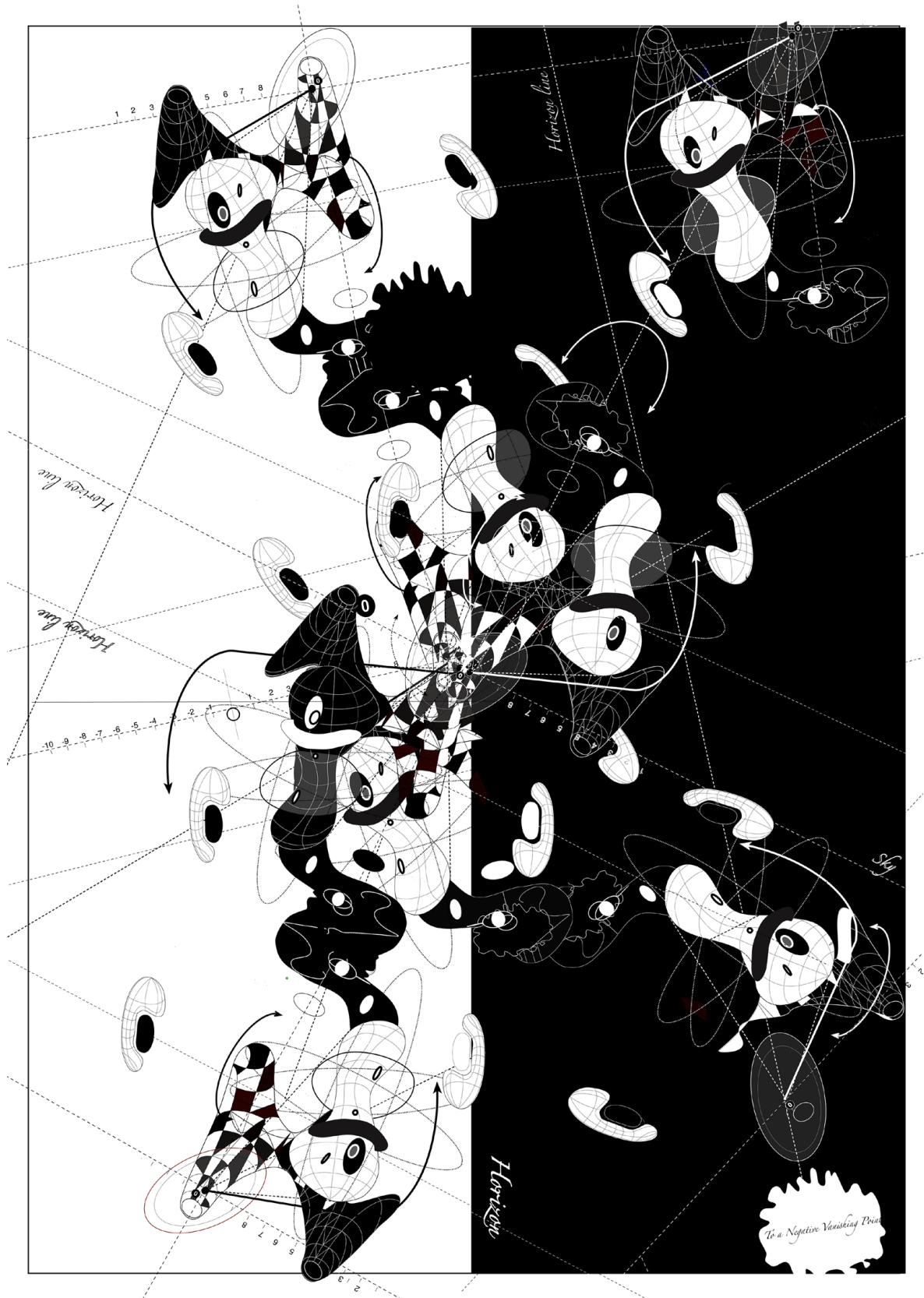


Rahesh R. Ram, Elevation, 2020  
 Next page: Rahesh R. Ram, Jinn in the Corner, 2020



Raresh R. Ram, Jinn in the Corner, 2020





Raresh R. Ram, Split Jinn, 2020

### **The Story of Conjuraton 7: A Tale of Escape**

*Lines, dashes, dots have offered themselves on a rectangular plane but are trapped within a frame. Border control is strict here. There is a suggestion that they can slip under the rim and project into unseen spaces; however, we know they are trapped, and any attempt to escape is futile. The only way is for another rectangle to straddle aside it and let the lines, dashes and dots join together at the borders – and let their spirit escape along those lines.*

*The rectangles planes may have to twist and turn to allow like-minded lines to join at the borders. However, rectangular planes will need to be tied together, dropped out of a window into the depths of infinite space for the lines to be truly free.*

### **The Story of Conjuraton 8: The Everchanging Drawing.**

*The pictorial plane is both Portrait and Landscape at the same time. However, the culmination of lines, dots, splines, and planes conspire together to create two different tales with different characters and events depending on the pictorial plane's orientation. The plane must be allowed to rotate 90 degrees continuously changing from one meaning to another, never allowing it to rest on its laurels.*

### **The Story of Conjuraton 9: The Tale of Repeating Oneself.**

*Is it a time frame taken every second or is it a 1001 Jinni, Fishermen, lines, planes, splines circles appearing and disappearing 1001 times?*

### **The Story of Conjuraton 10: The Tale of Materialisation**

*The Fisherman said to Jinn, "sometimes it's not good to say too much."*

*However...*

### **Reference:**

Huddawy.H. (1992). The Arabian Nights. Everyman Library with arrangement with W.W.Norton & Company.