

Inspiration Kafka

Ethiopian Perspectives

FRANZ KAFKA

1883 - 1924



2024

Kafka Year 2024

Inspiration Kafka: Ethiopian Perspectives

A project by the Goethe-Institut Äthiopien and the embassies of Austria, the Czech Republic and Switzerland in Ethiopia

Addis Abeba, 2024

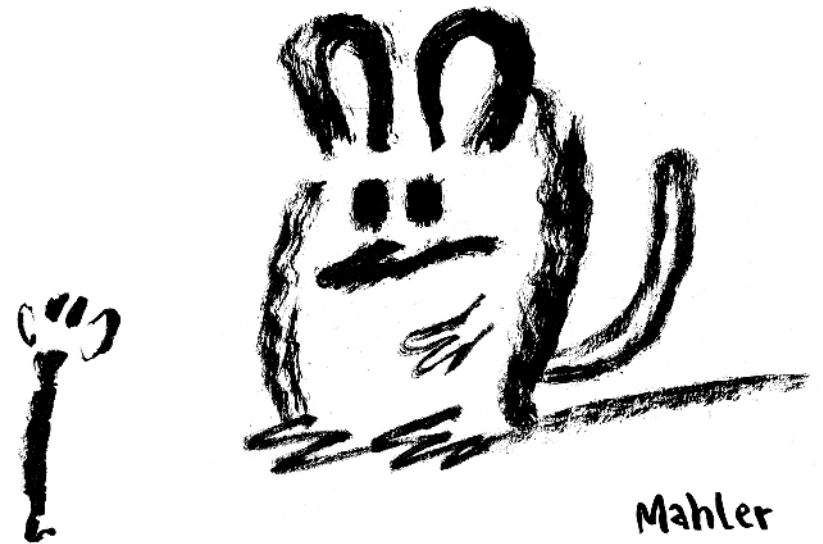
Artists:

Kaleab Alemayehu, Michael Asrat, Henok Begashaw, Mebiruk Demissew, Dawit Desalegn, Tihut Girma, Kalab Mehretu, Naol Mengistu, Yeabsira Temesgen, Biruk Tesfaye

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For the complete versions of the short stories, see:

FRANZ KAFKA ፍራንዝ ካፍካ, *Ausgewählte Kurzprosa የተመረጠ አጭብርባዎች*, published by Goethe-Institut Äthiopien in 2024, Addis Abeba. ISBN 978-99990-51-99-6.

Foreword

A word from the partners

Franz Kafka passed away on the 3rd of June 1924 in relative obscurity, leaving a legacy of a clerk that worked in a mundane office. Yet his insights and unique narrative style have immortalized him as a literary genius, revered globally, decades after his passing. His ability to capture the absurdities of life continues to resonate, bridging the gap between his time and ours.

Today, Kafka's works remain relevant, offering a mirror to our anxieties, alienation, and the complexities of modern existence. In an age marked by uncertainty, his themes of existential dread and bureaucratic absurdity challenge us to confront our realities with a critical eye.

In Ethiopia, as part of the programme Kafka Year 2024, the Goethe-Institut and the embassies of Austria, the Czech Republic and Switzerland organised lectures, book launches, exhibitions and workshops throughout 2024.

A key activity were the workshops on illustrations and comics by Nicolas Mahler from April till May 2024 delivered in hybrid format in Addis Abeba and developed to encourage a new generation of artists to explore Kafka's intricate worlds. This initiative not only honours his artistic contributions, but also connects diverse cultures through art.

The fruits of this workshop are encapsulated in this publication, a vibrant collection of illustrations and comics inspired by Kafka's stories. Each piece reflects the participants' interpretations, breathing new life into his timeless narratives.

For the young artists involved, this publication is a significant milestone. It represents their voices, creativity, and dedication to transforming Kafka's complex themes into visual form. May it inspire further exploration and dialogue, echoing Kafka's enduring influence across generations.

Simone Knapp

Miroslav Kosek

Tamara Mona

Angelika Eder

Drawing Kafka

From Nicolas Mahler

Even 100 years after his death, Franz Kafka's works continue to inspire artists across the world. Kafka's fantasy was the source of inspiration for numerous movies, plays, paintings, drawings, installations, and, last but not least, comics. Almost all of Kafka's novel fragments and many of his stories have been realised as comics. Why does Kafka speak to so many sequential artists? It is probably because Kafka's often dreamlike works can be interpreted in various ways - thus, in some way, any realisation as a comic is correct in its own way.

About Nicolas Mahler

Nicolas Mahler, born in 1969, lives and works as a comic artist and illustrator in Vienna. His comics and cartoons have been published by leading German-language newspapers and magazines such as Die Zeit, NZZ am Sonntag and Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung.

The works in this book come from a joint workshop. It was a pleasure to see the participants' creativity flourish. The interpretation and realisation of Kafka's texts changed slightly on each day of the workshop. After the end of the workshop, each artist put their individual finishing touches on their own contribution - this was worth all the effort.

He has received numerous awards for his extensive work, including the Max-und-Moritz-Preis for the best German-language comic artist in 2010, the Preis der Literaturhäuser in 2015 and the Sondermann-Preis in 2019.



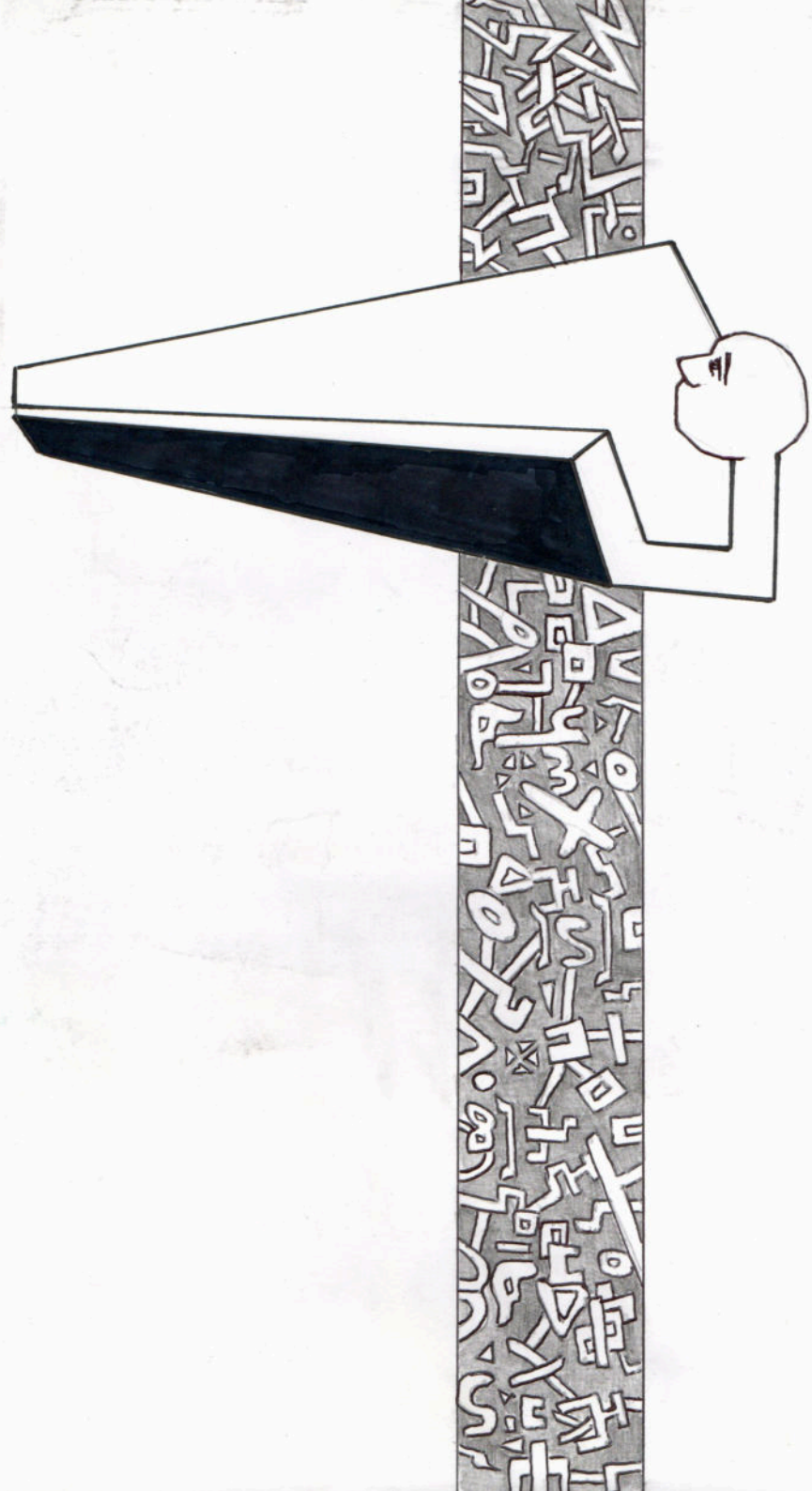
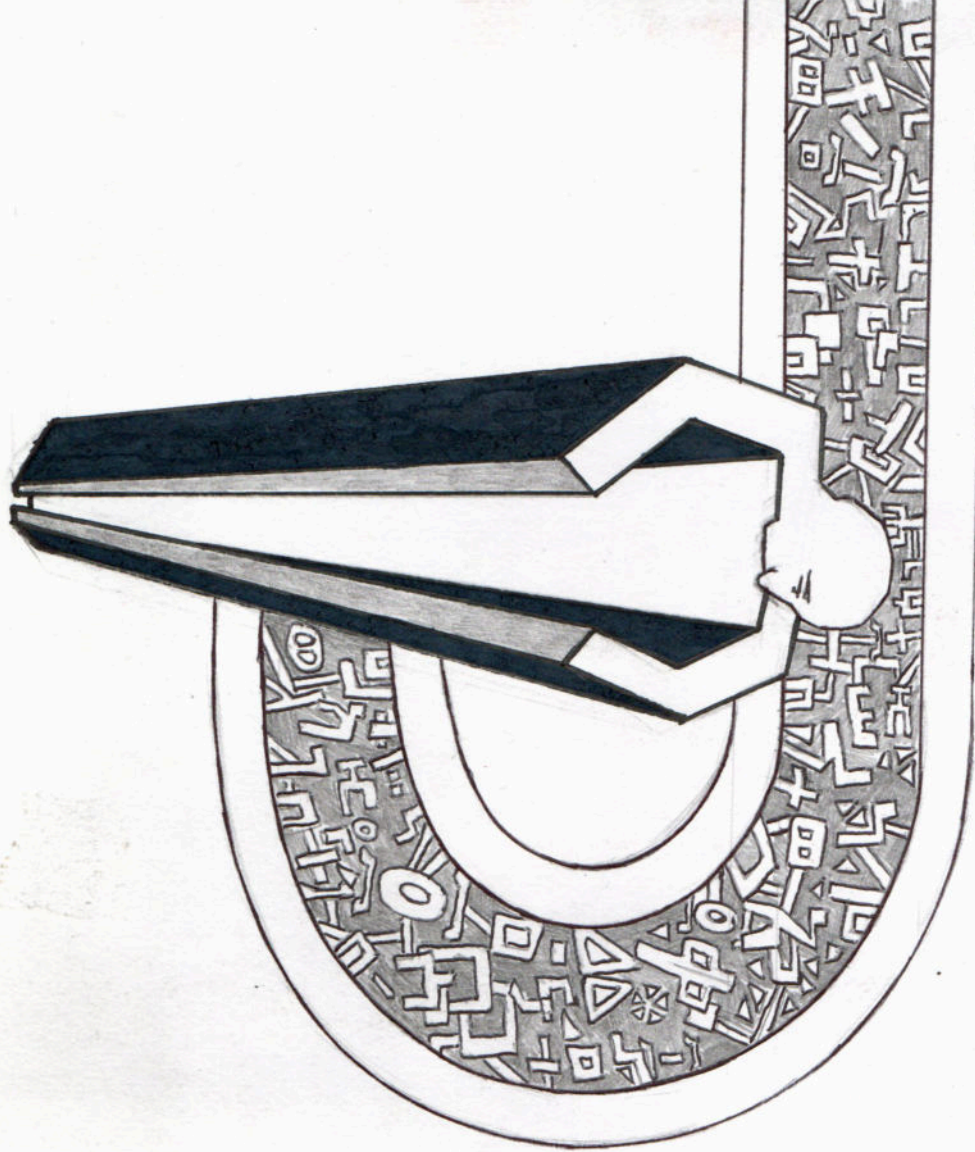
HENOK BEGASHAW

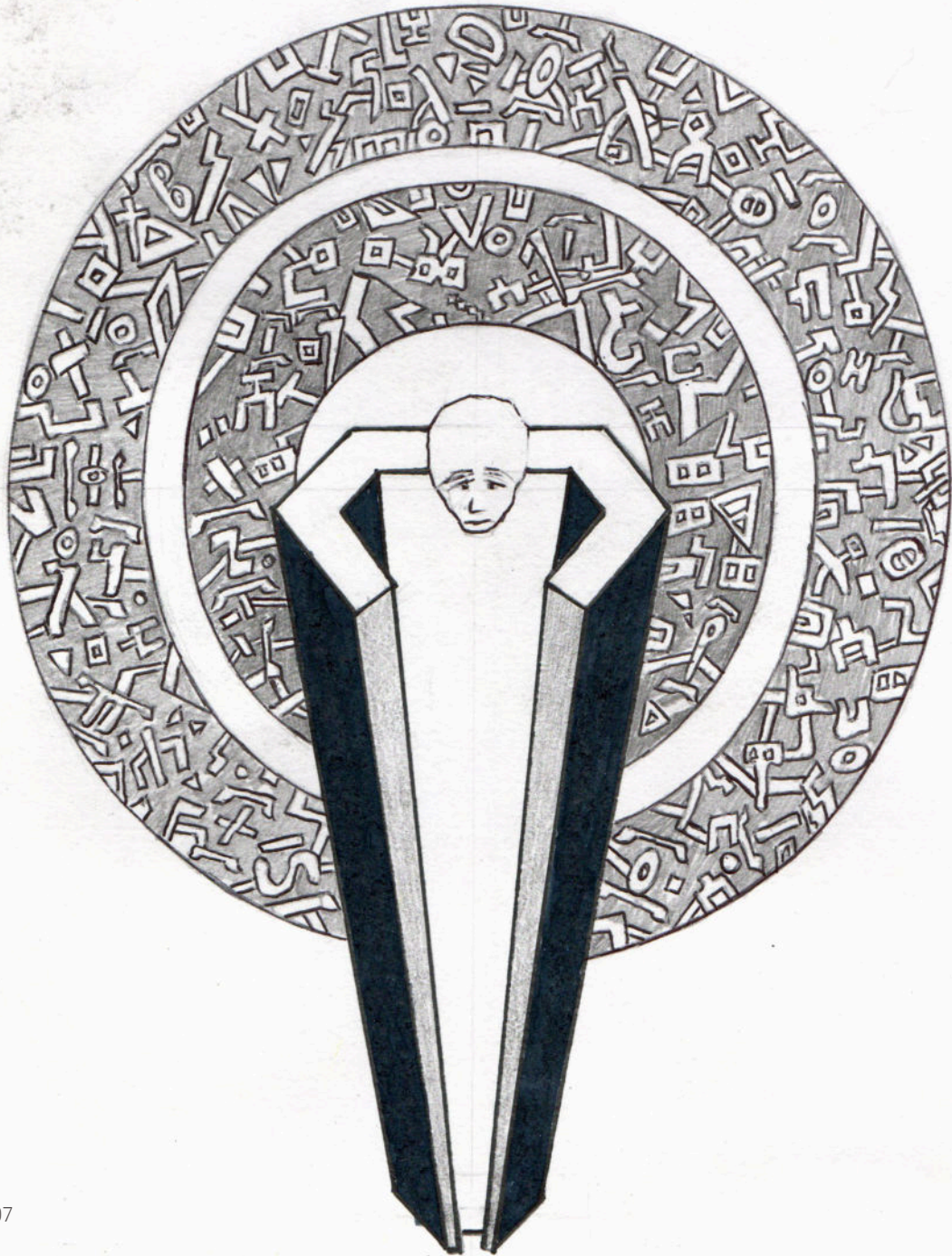
Henok Begashaw is an artist renowned for his introspective approach to painting. His work invites viewers to critically challenge stereotypes and to examine how societal factors—such as culture, gender, and ethnicity—influence the formation of identity. His paintings have been showcased in various exhibitions, including notable venues like the Hilton Hotel (Big Art Sale), Century Mall (All Art Addis), and Hager Fikir Theatre. From 2022 to 2024, he studied in the department of fine arts in Entoto Polytechnic College, where he honed his craft and earned several awards for his studies.

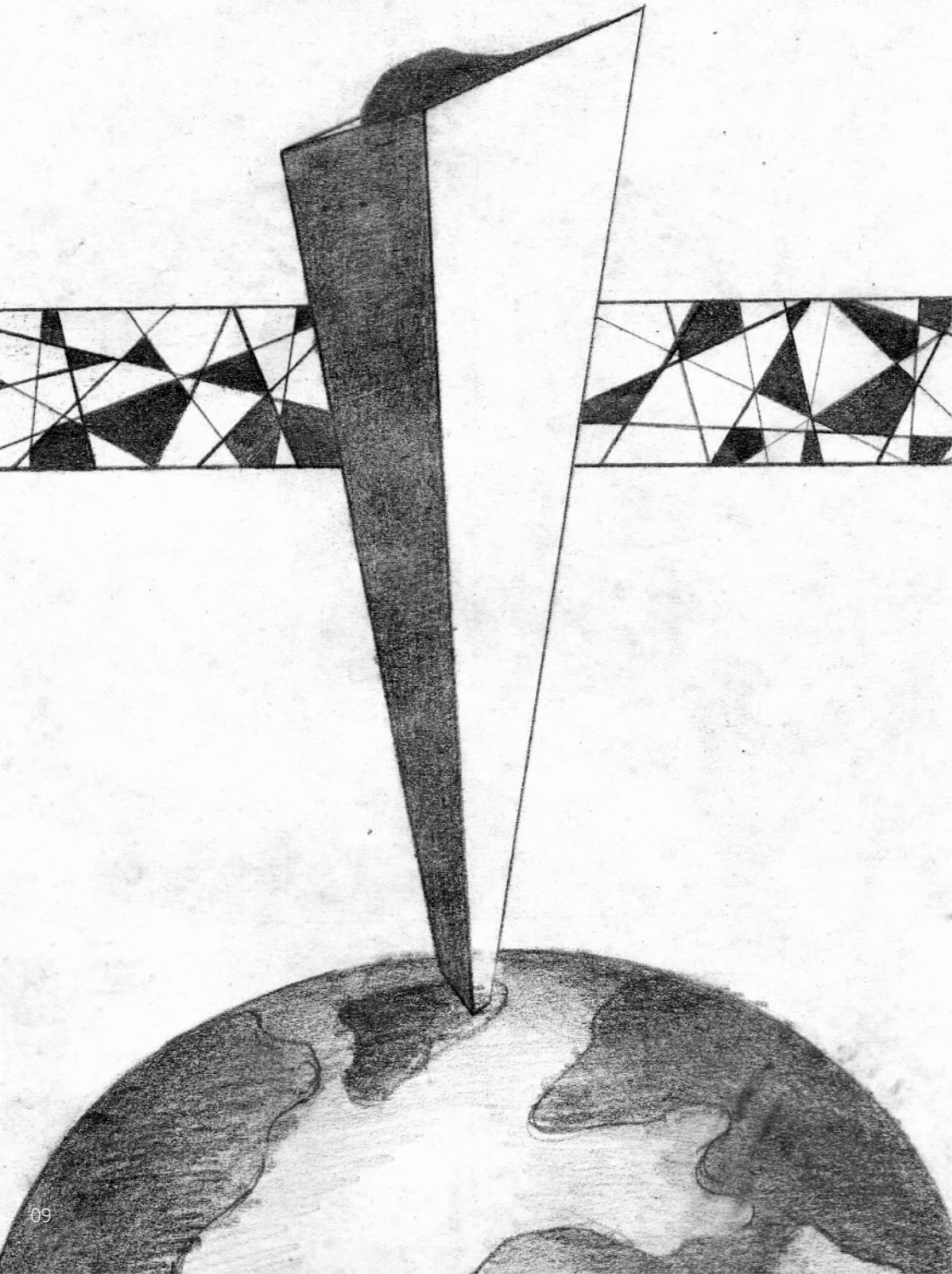
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Der Aufbruch









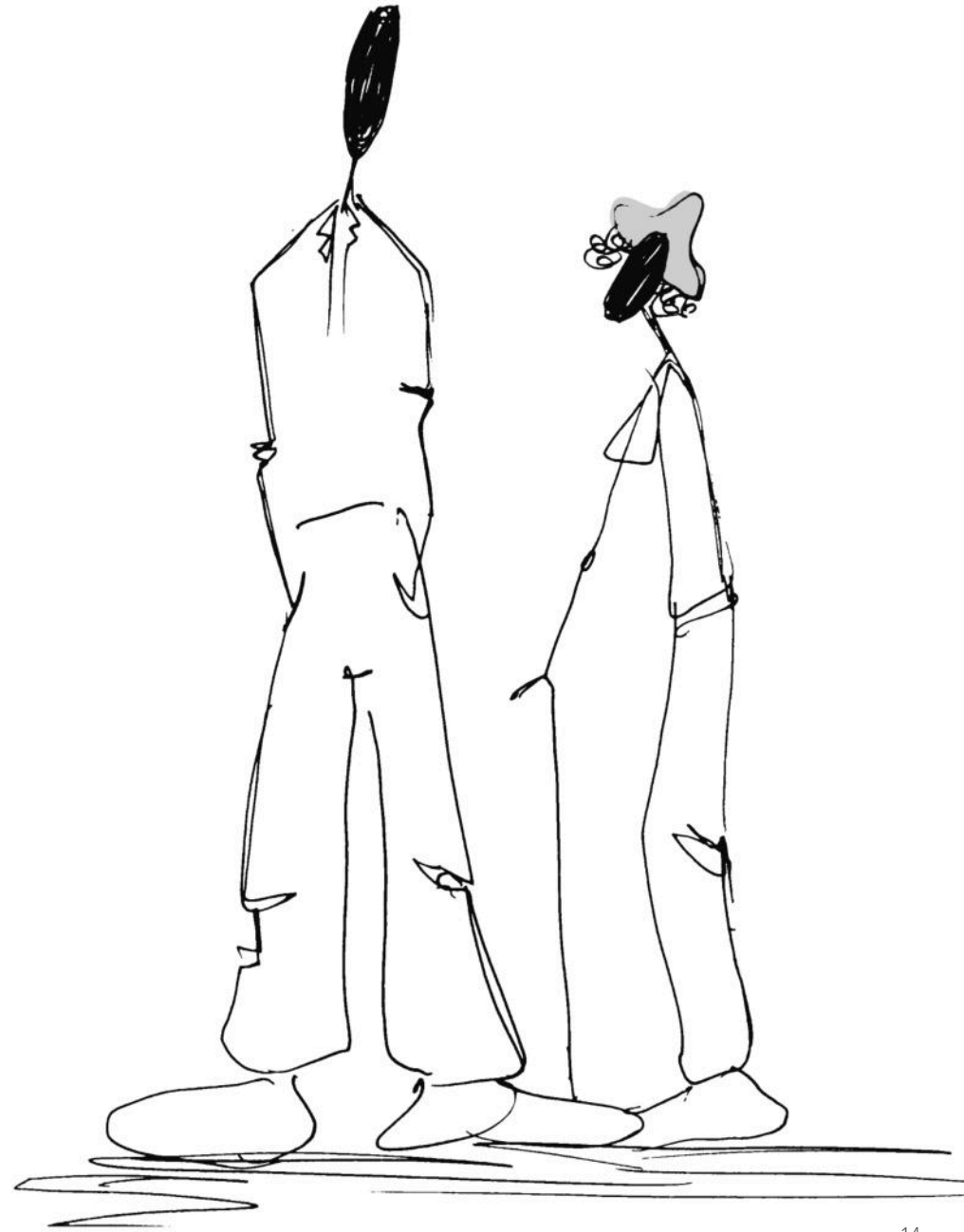
YEABSIRA TEMESGEN

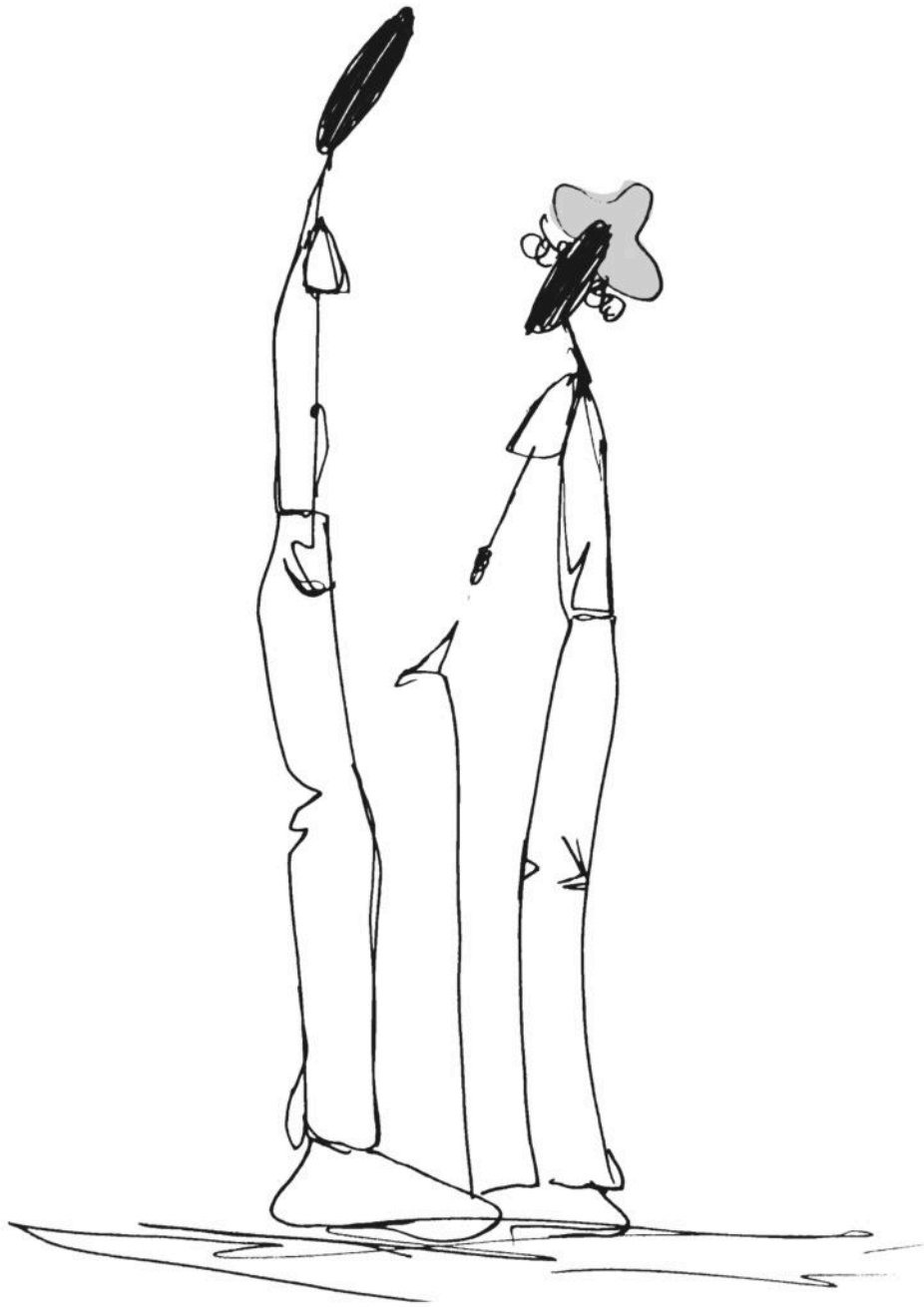
Yeabsira Temesgen is a student of fine arts at Entoto Polytechnic College, set to graduate in 2024. Specializing in sculpture and painting, she is currently preparing for her debut exhibitions, showcasing her artistic exploration in both mediums. This publication marks the first time her artwork has been presented in print and digital publication formats.

✉ ytemesgen23@gmail.com

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Das nächste Dorf







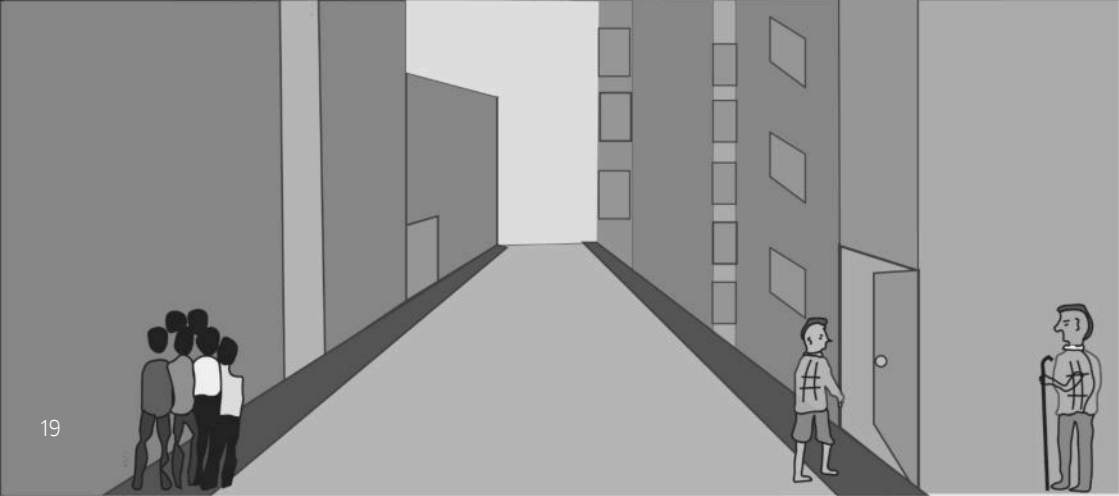
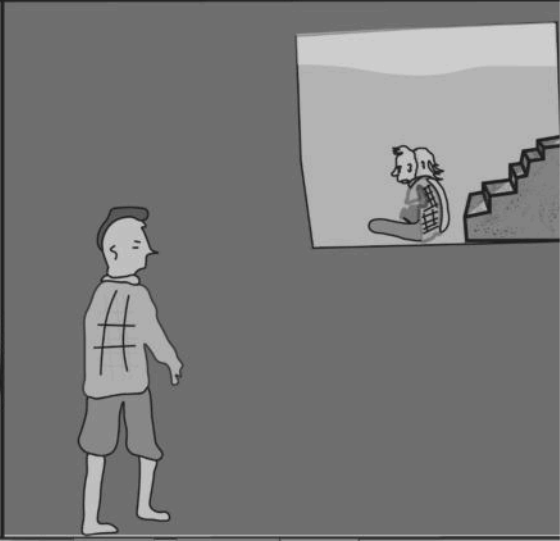
NAOL MENGISTU

Naol Mengistu is an artist who is currently studying painting and sculpture at Entoto Polytechnic College. His artistic style reflects a harmonious blend of traditional and modern elements, emphasizing the significance of cultural heritage in today's art scene. Focusing primarily on social issues, Naol addresses themes of inequality, identity, and community challenges in his work. Through his art, he aims to raise awareness, spark dialogue, and inspire change, encouraging audiences to reflect on their roles in society.

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Das Unglück des Junggesellen





KALEAB ALEMAYEHU

Kaleab Alemayehu is a multivisual artist whose work explores the intersections of traditional and contemporary art forms, with a particular focus on street art and graffiti. Constantly experimenting with new techniques and styles, he seeks to push boundaries and offer fresh perspectives on the world by creating pieces that resonate with the human spirit. Born in 1998 in Hawassa, Ethiopia, Kaleab's creative vision is deeply rooted in the natural beauty of his homeland. His artistic journey began at the Arts for Youth Center (AYC) in 2010, where he delved into various art forms, including sculpture, mural art, and mixed media. He later honed his skills at the Alle School of Fine Art and Design in Addis Abeba, where he earned his Bachelor's degree in Painting, further shaping his innovative approach to art. Through various group exhibitions and his solo shows titled "INSTINCT" and "Intuition," Kaleab's works have reached a wide audience, allowing him to share his artistic vision.

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📷 [Kaleab_alemayehu_mekuria](#)

Der Geier









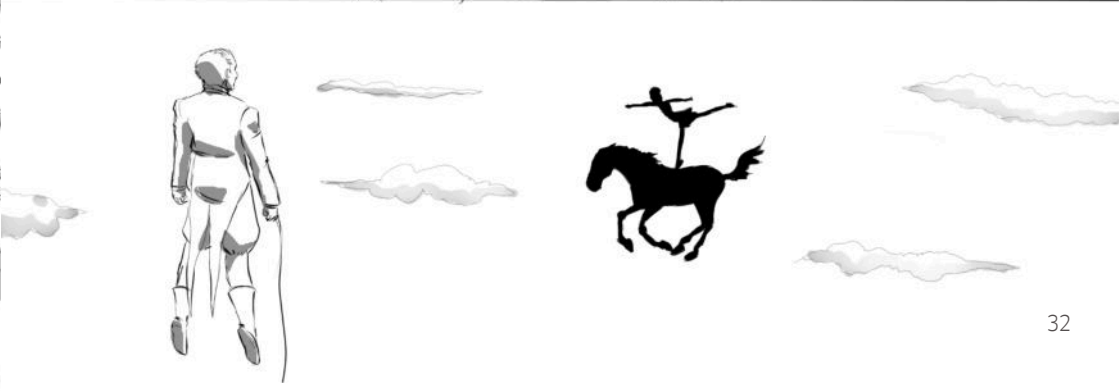
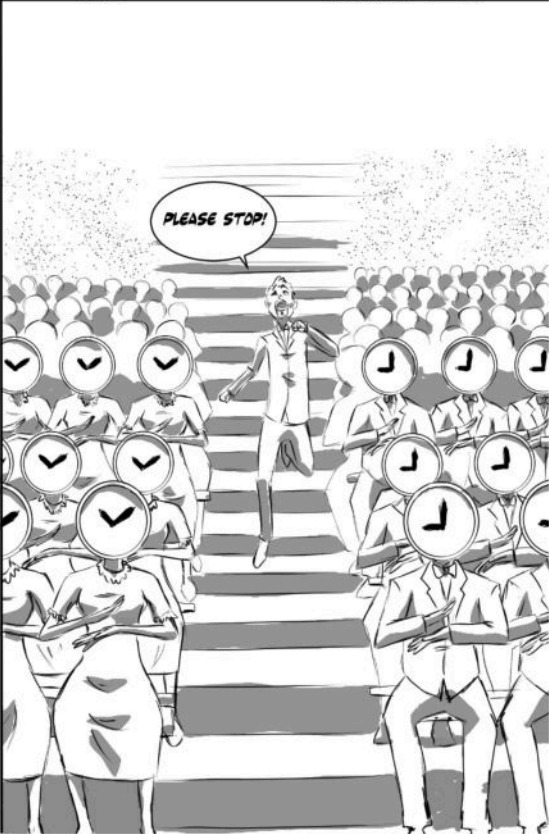
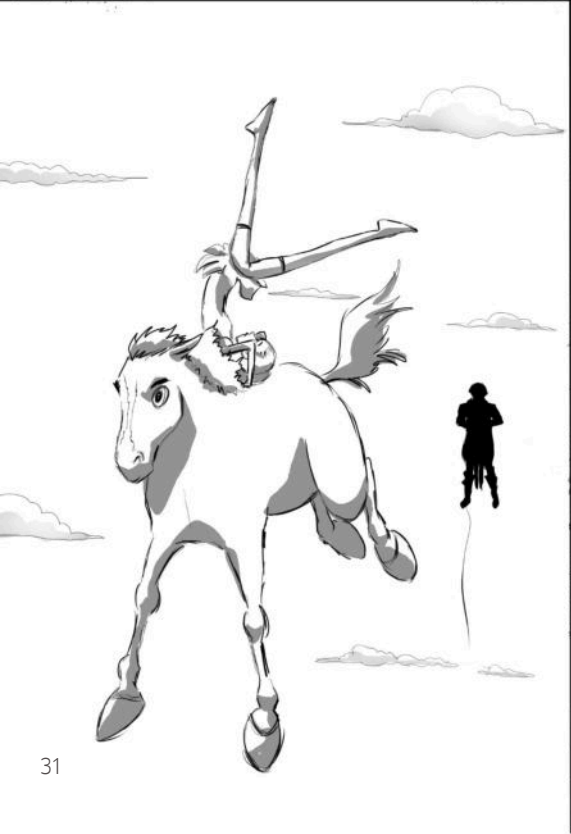
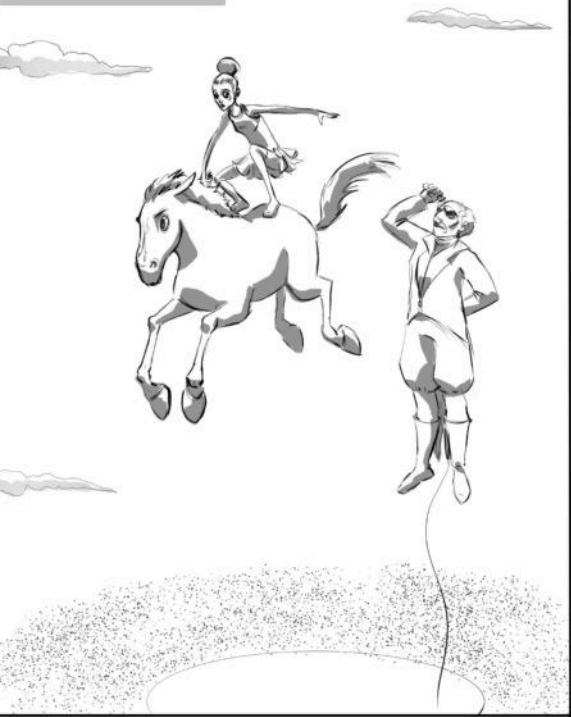
MICHAEL ASRAT

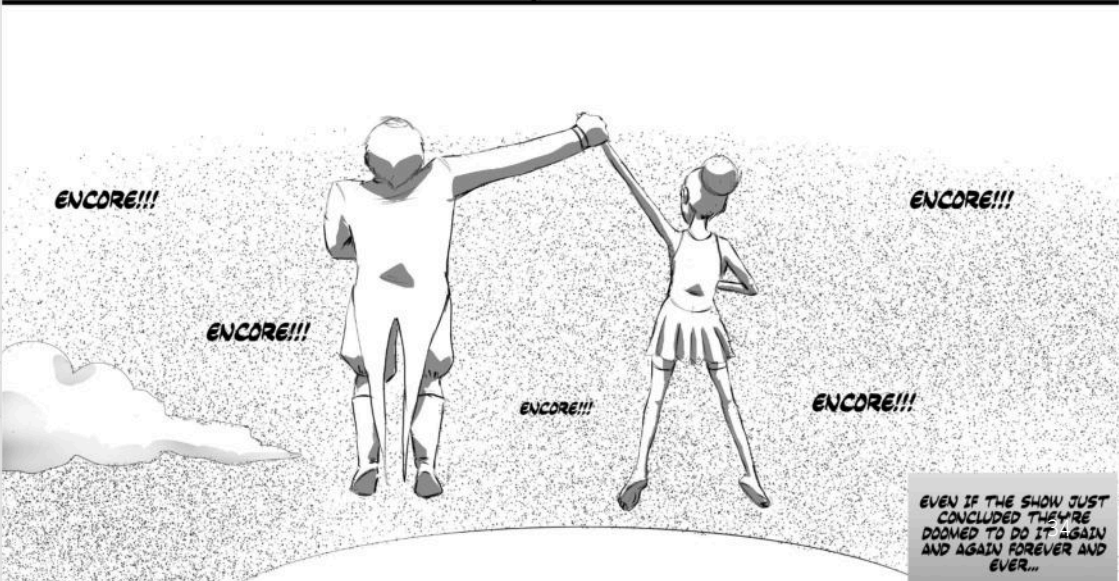
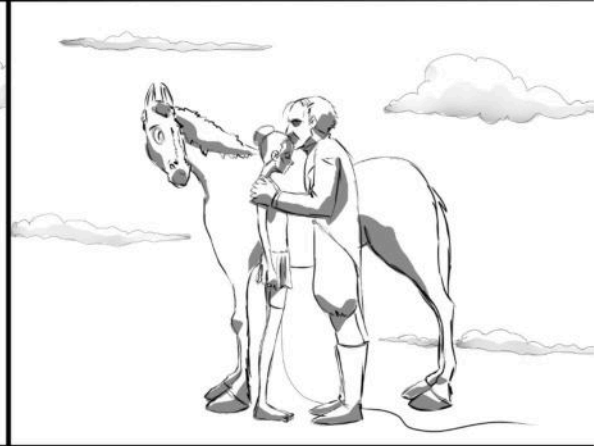
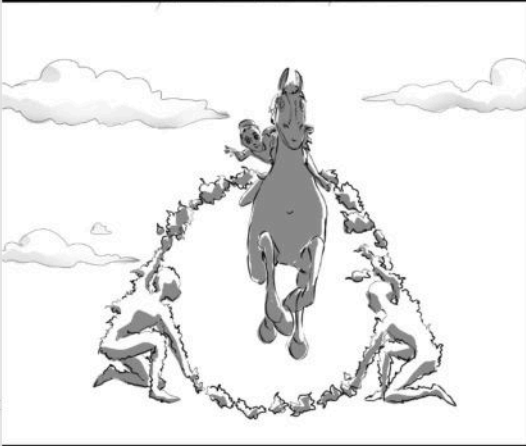
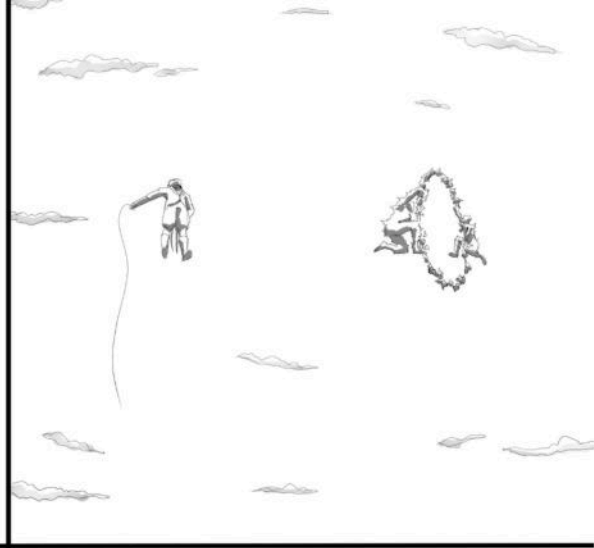
Michael Asrat is a cartoonist, illustrator, and comic book artist. While pursuing a bachelor's degree in marketing, Michael established himself in the art sector, showcasing his work in a 2018 all-watercolor exhibition and publishing two children's storybooks, *Guracha* and *Yanet*, along with various comics. Alongside his pursuits within the visual arts sector, Michael is involved in the musical scene, serving as the musical director at Behager Lij. Notably, he has composed scores for two initiatives with Etan Comics and created the soundtrack for the award-winning short film *Zarem Arbegna*.

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📷 [abby.comics](https://www.instagram.com/abby.comics)

Auf der Galerie





EVEN IF THE SHOW JUST CONCLUDED THEY'RE DOOMED TO DO IT AGAIN AND AGAIN FOREVER AND EVER...



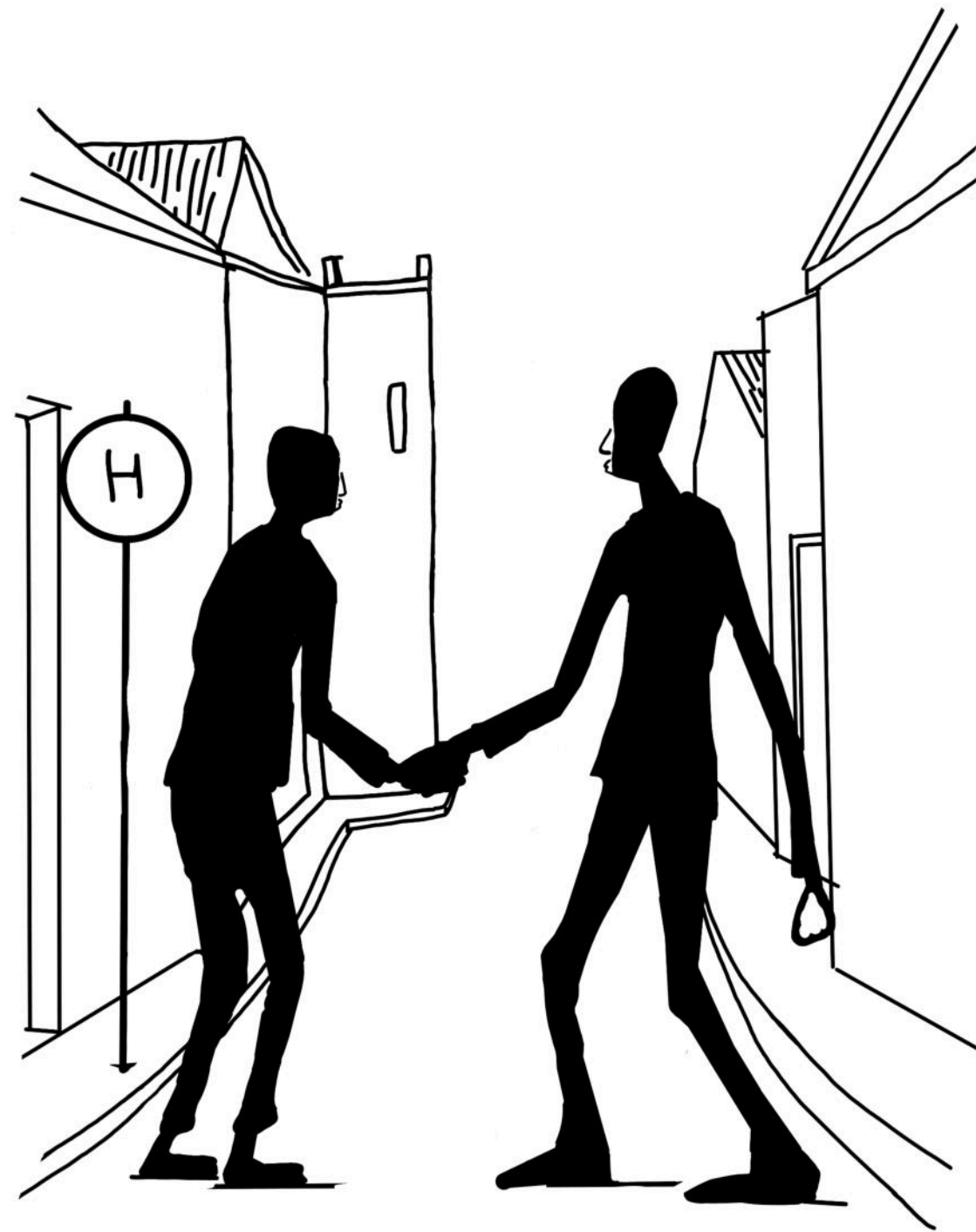
DAWIT DESALEGN

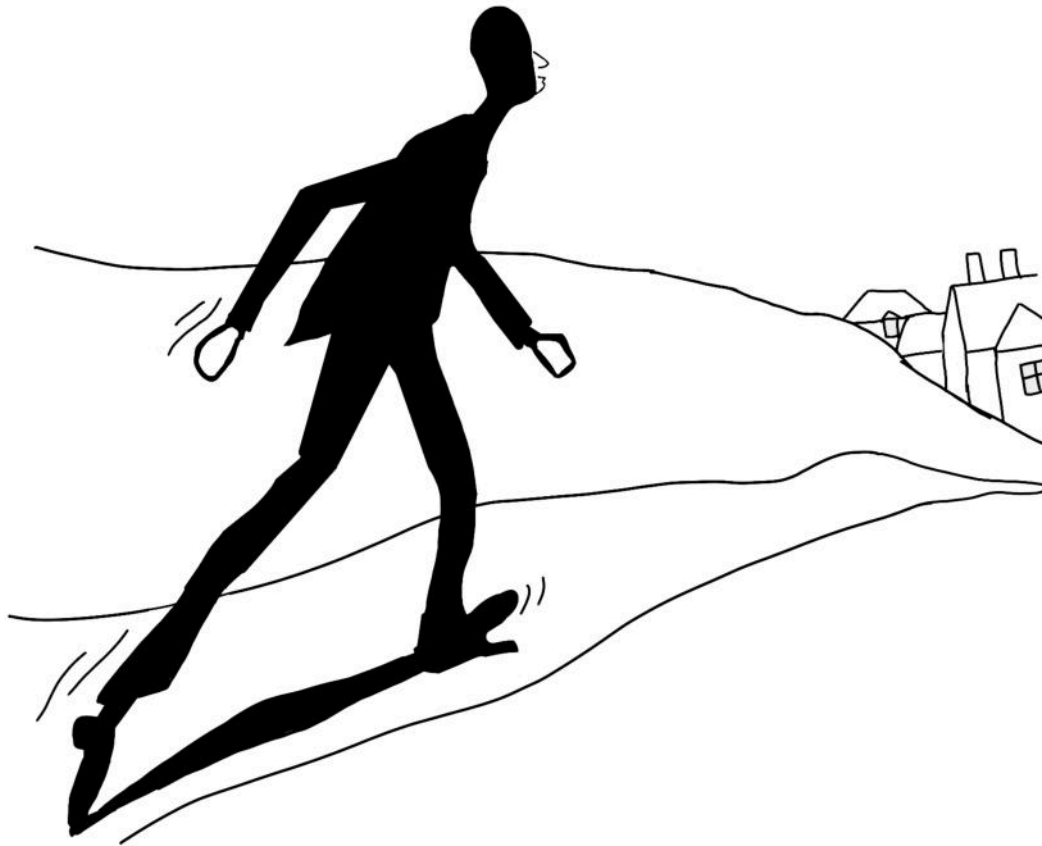
Dawit Desalegn is an artist based in Addis Abeba, whose work reflects his diverse educational background across multiple disciplines. He studied arts and sculpture at the department of fine arts in Entoto Polytechnic College before studying construction technology and management at Addis Abeba University. Currently, Dawit is focusing on sculpture, while also creating paintings and other visual artworks. He has exhibited his art in prominent venues, including group shows at the Hilton Hotel and Hager Fikir Theater, as well as live art presentations at the German Embassy.

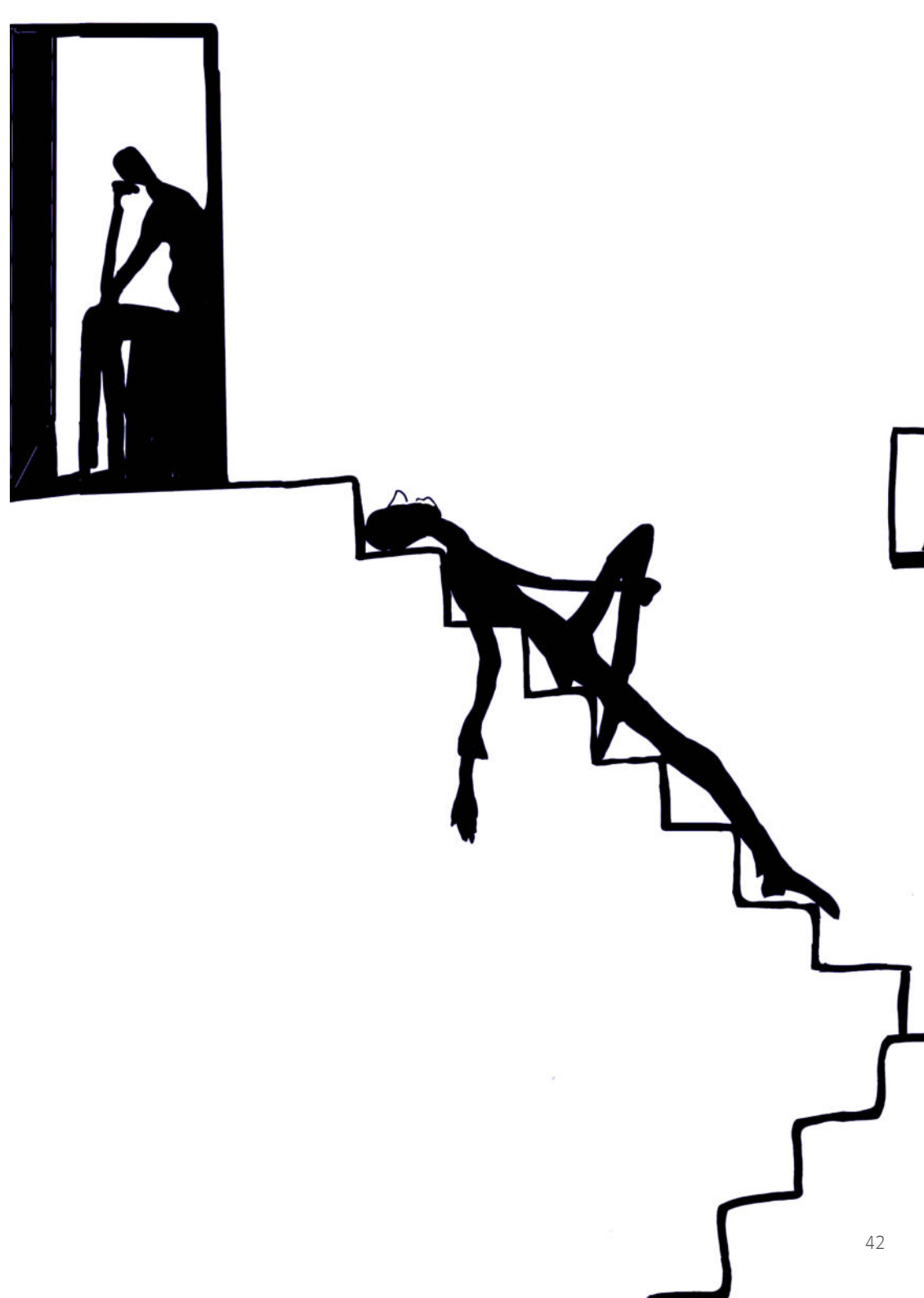
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Eine alltägliche Verwirrung











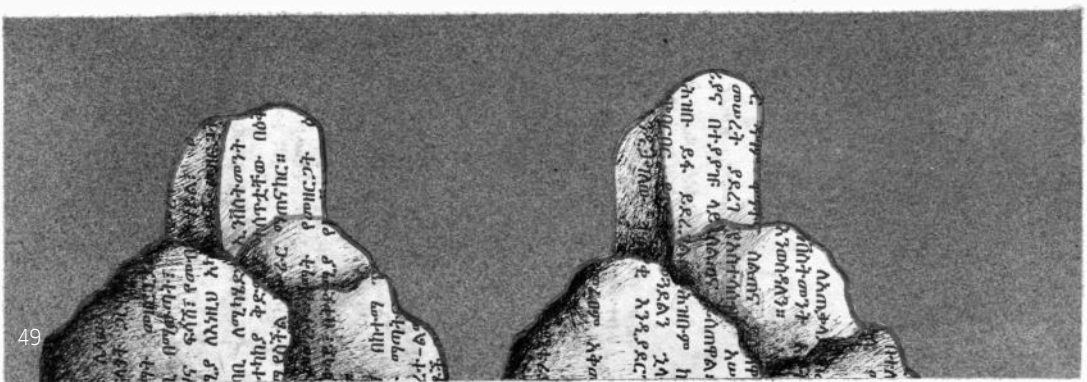
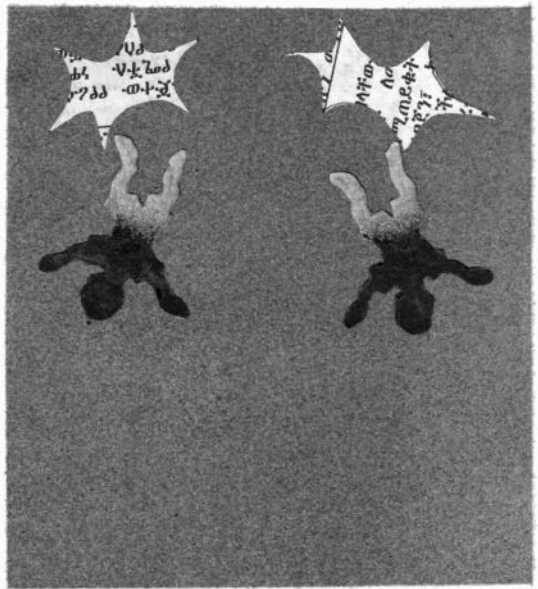
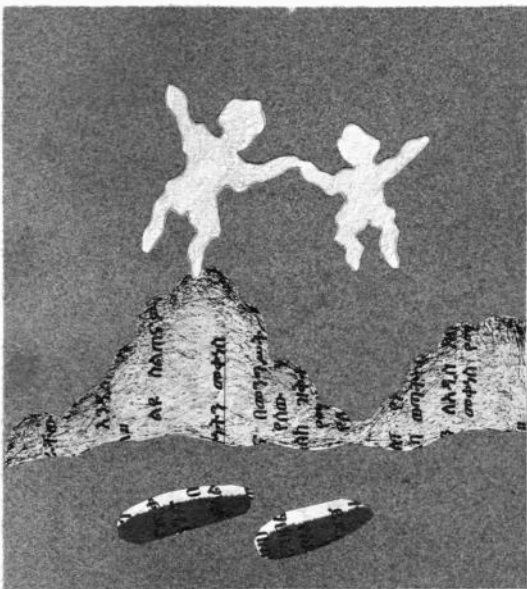
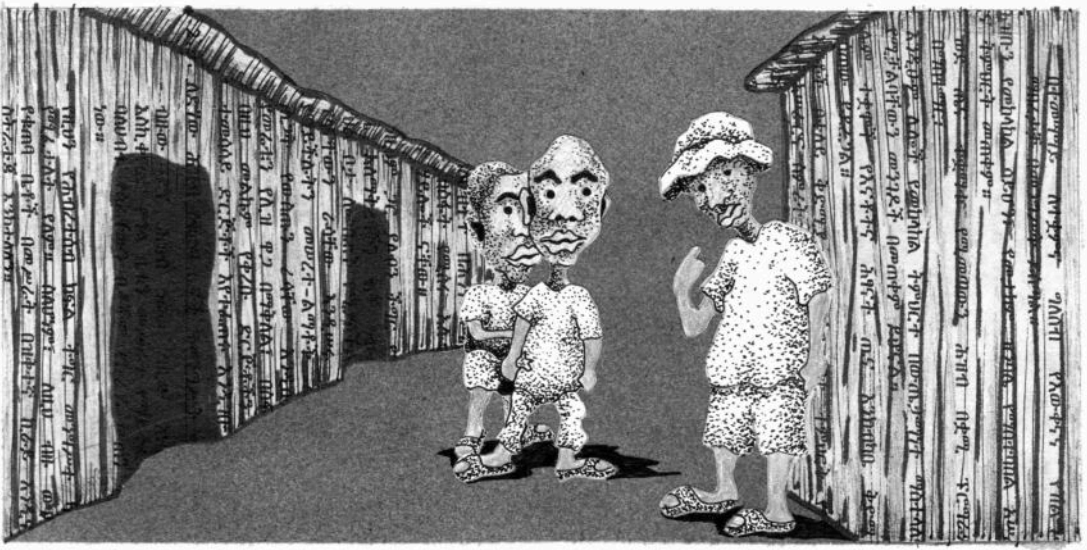
BIRUK TESFAYE

Biruk Tesfaye is a visual artist known for his experiments with various materials, such as wood and paper, to express his ideas with a focus on Ethiopian and African traditional designs and symbols. His artistic journey began at Abyssinia Fine Arts College, where he honed his skills in drawing, watercolor, and painting. He then advanced his studies at Entoto Polytechnic College, delving into painting, sculpture, and graphic art, ultimately specializing in woodcut printmaking. In addition to his formal education, Biruk has pursued short courses in architecture, further enriching his creative perspective. His work has been featured in group exhibitions at Hager Fiker Theater and Abyssinia Fine Arts College.

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📷 [brook.t_1234](https://www.instagram.com/brook.t_1234)

Eine Gemeinschaft von Schurken





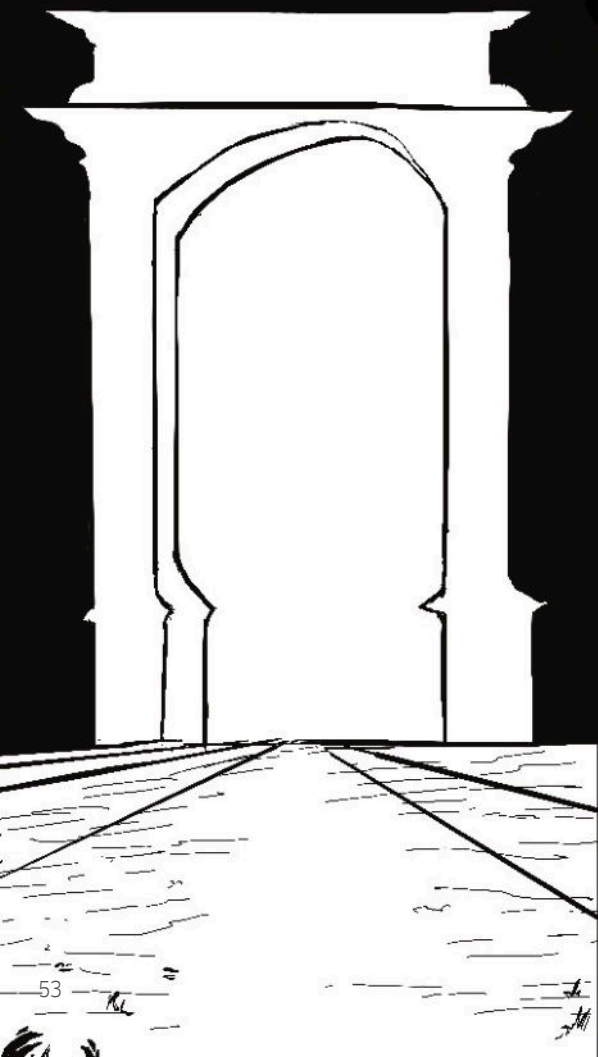
MEBIRUK DEMISSEW

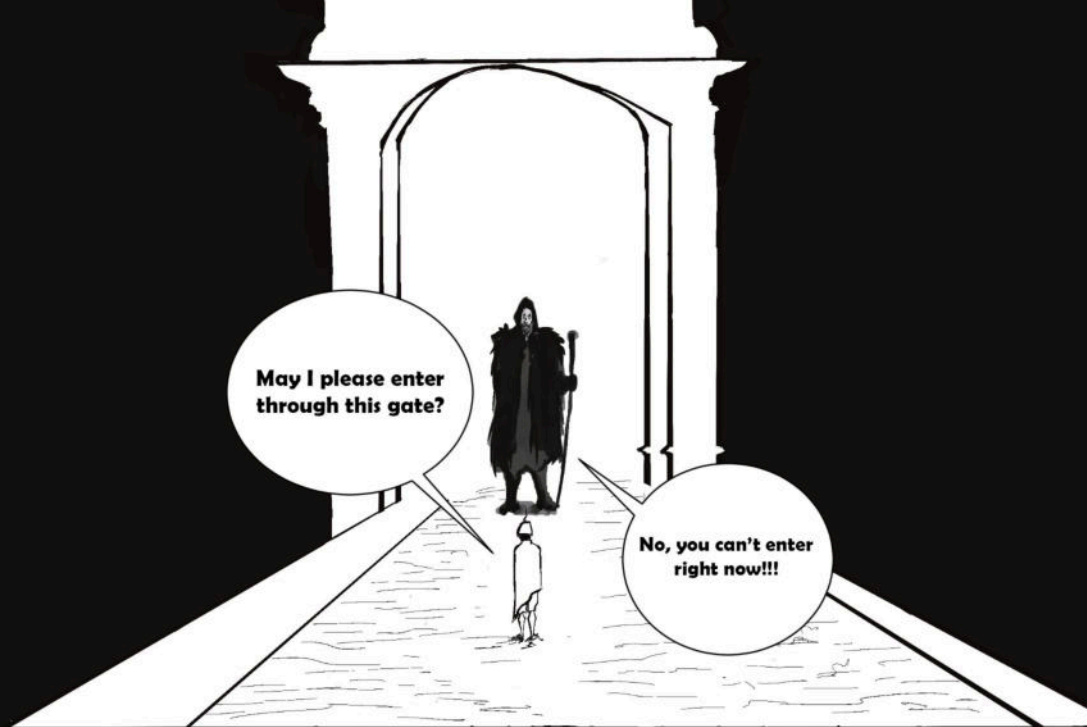
Mebiruk Demissew is a visual artist who graduates from Entoto Polytechnic College in 2024, specializing in painting. His artwork explores themes such as identity and culture through landscape, cityscape, and other paintings that reflect lifestyles and cultures within urban environments. Utilizing pencils and watercolor, Mebiruk uses vivid colors to enhance the expressive range of his pieces. Currently focused on personal projects, Mebiruk is eager for future opportunities to collaborate and exhibit his work.

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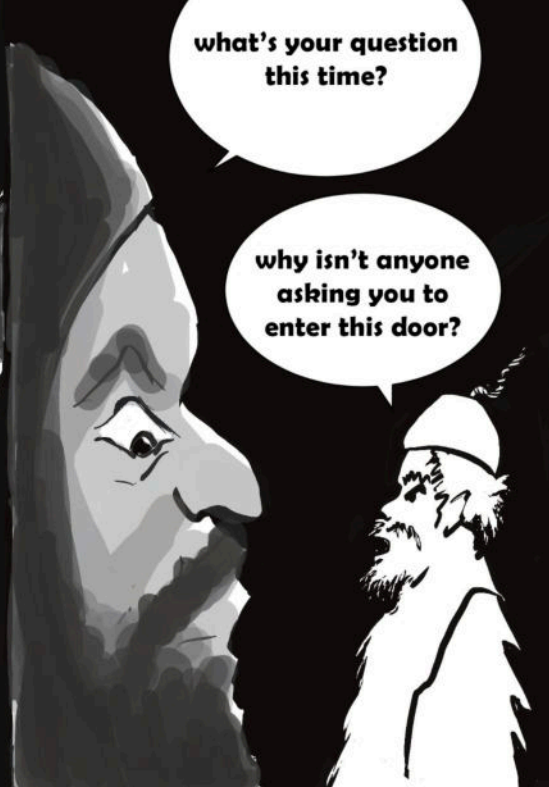
Vor dem Gesetz





May I please enter through this gate?

No, you can't enter right now!!!



what's your question this time?

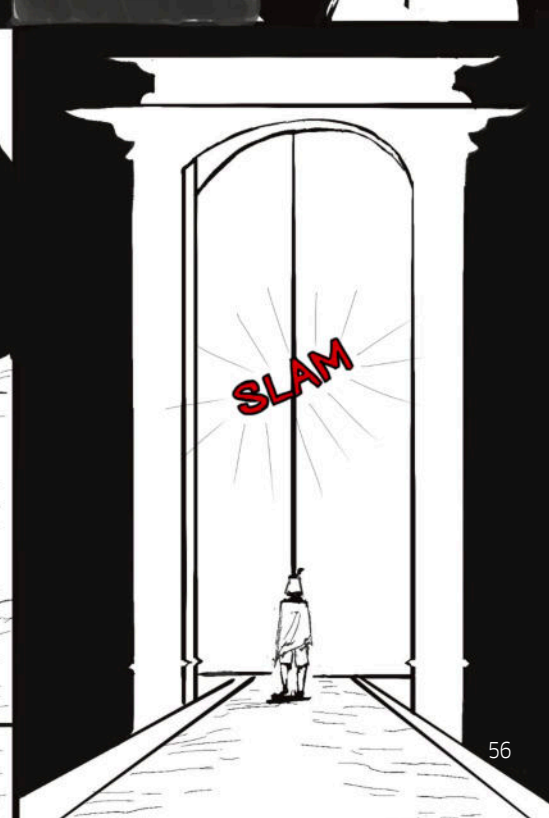
why isn't anyone asking you to enter this door?

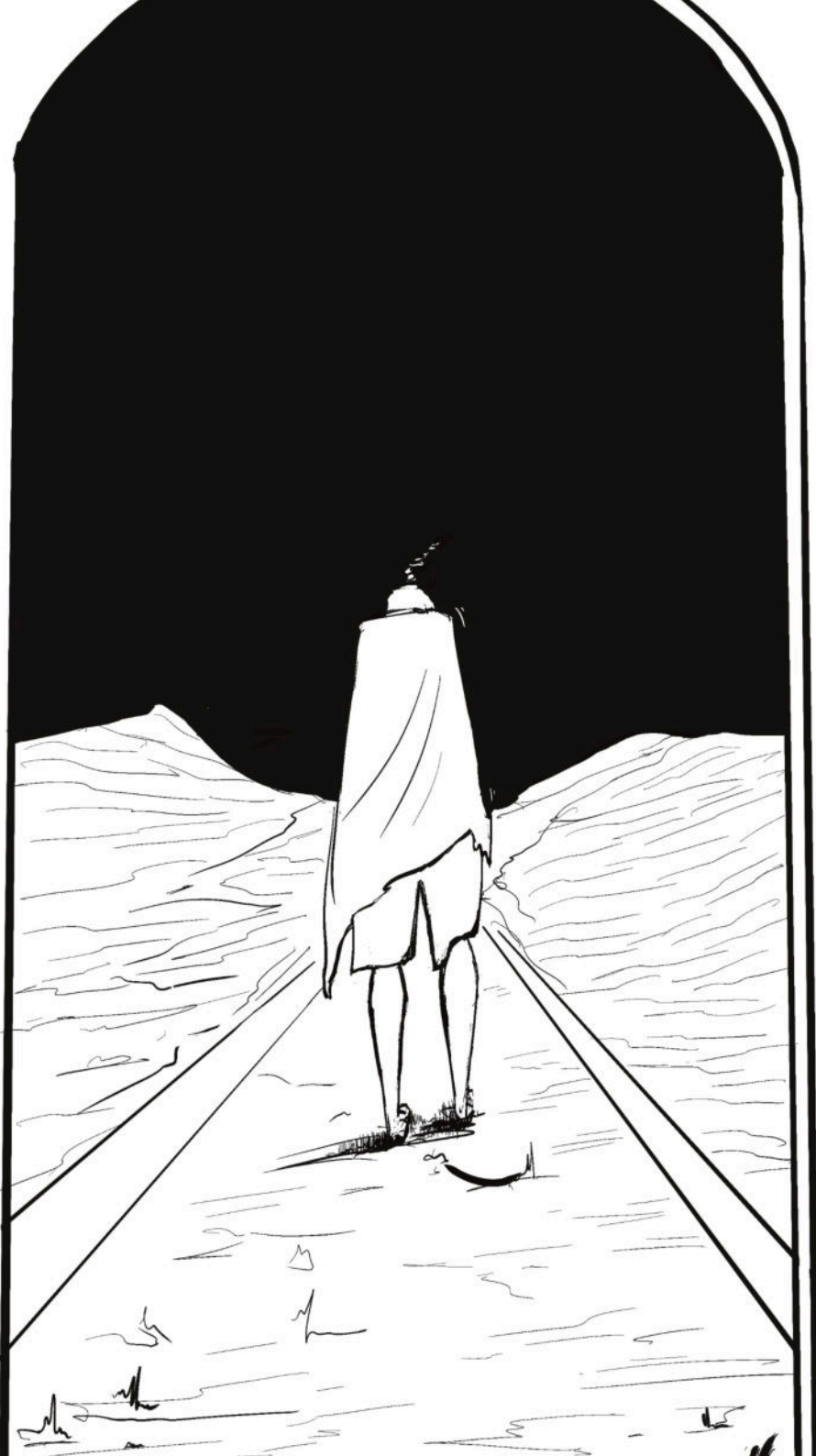


I am begging you.



only you were allowed through this gate, and now i'm closing it!







KALEAB MIHRETU

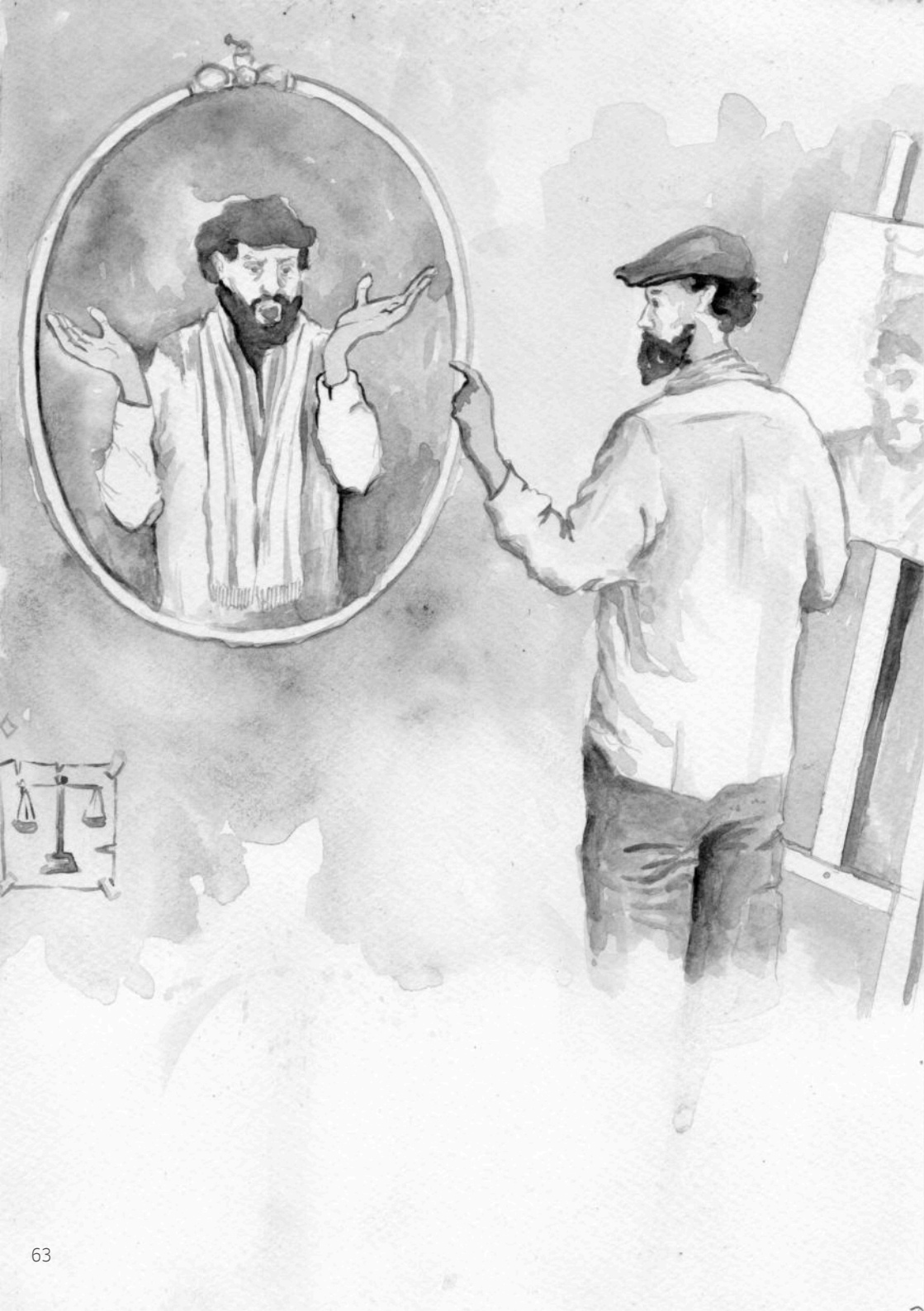
Kaleab Mihretu is a studio artist based in Addis Abeba, Ethiopia. His body of work encompasses oil and acrylic paintings, watercolors, sculptures, woodcuts, and craft designs, alongside multimedia experiments involving photography and video art. Kaleab's art explores themes of identity and the intricacy found between individuals and their environments, addressing pressing social and political issues such as war, urbanization, and self-destruction. Recognized with various awards, he has exhibited at venues like the Fendika Cultural Center in 2023. Kaleab holds a bachelor's degree in painting from Addis Abeba University (2022) and a diploma in fine art from Entoto Polytechnic College (2017).

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📷 [KaleabMihretu](#)

Von den Gleichnissen









TIHUT GIRMA

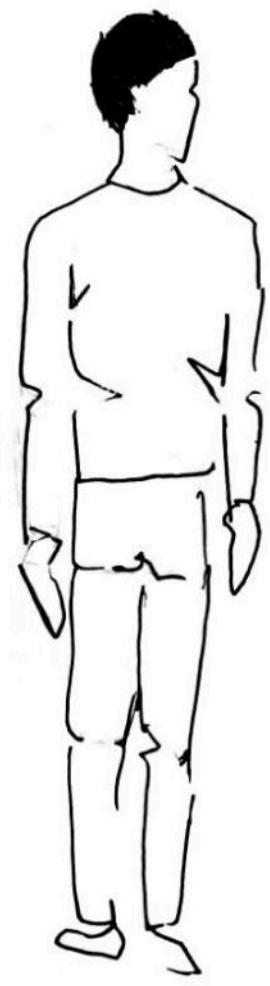
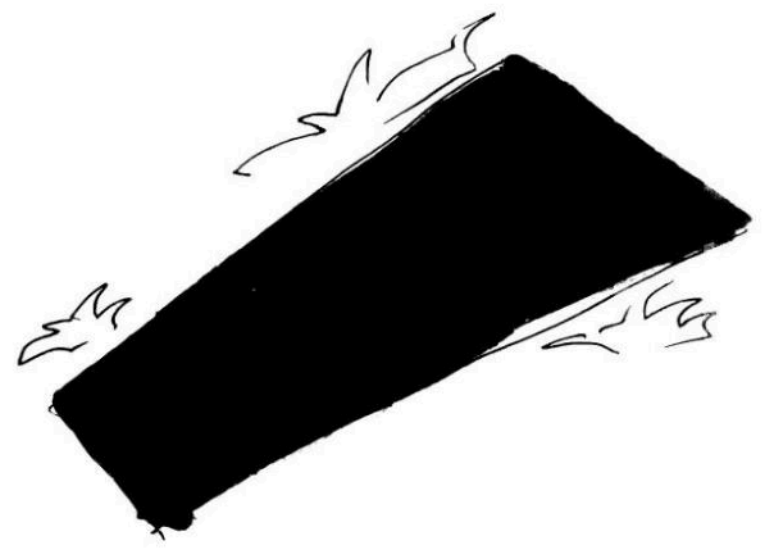
Tihut Girma pursued her passion for art at Entoto Polytechnic College, focusing on contemporary dance, sculpture, and music. Her artistic inspiration draws from human portraits that convey deep emotions and cultural identity through clothing and skin color. While her studies included graphic design and painting, sculpting remains her specialty. She has contributed to government projects, such as the Addis Ababa Corridor initiative, where she created paintings, sculptures, and aquariums. Her efforts have been recognized with several awards and certificates, reflecting her commitment to using art for community engagement and expression.

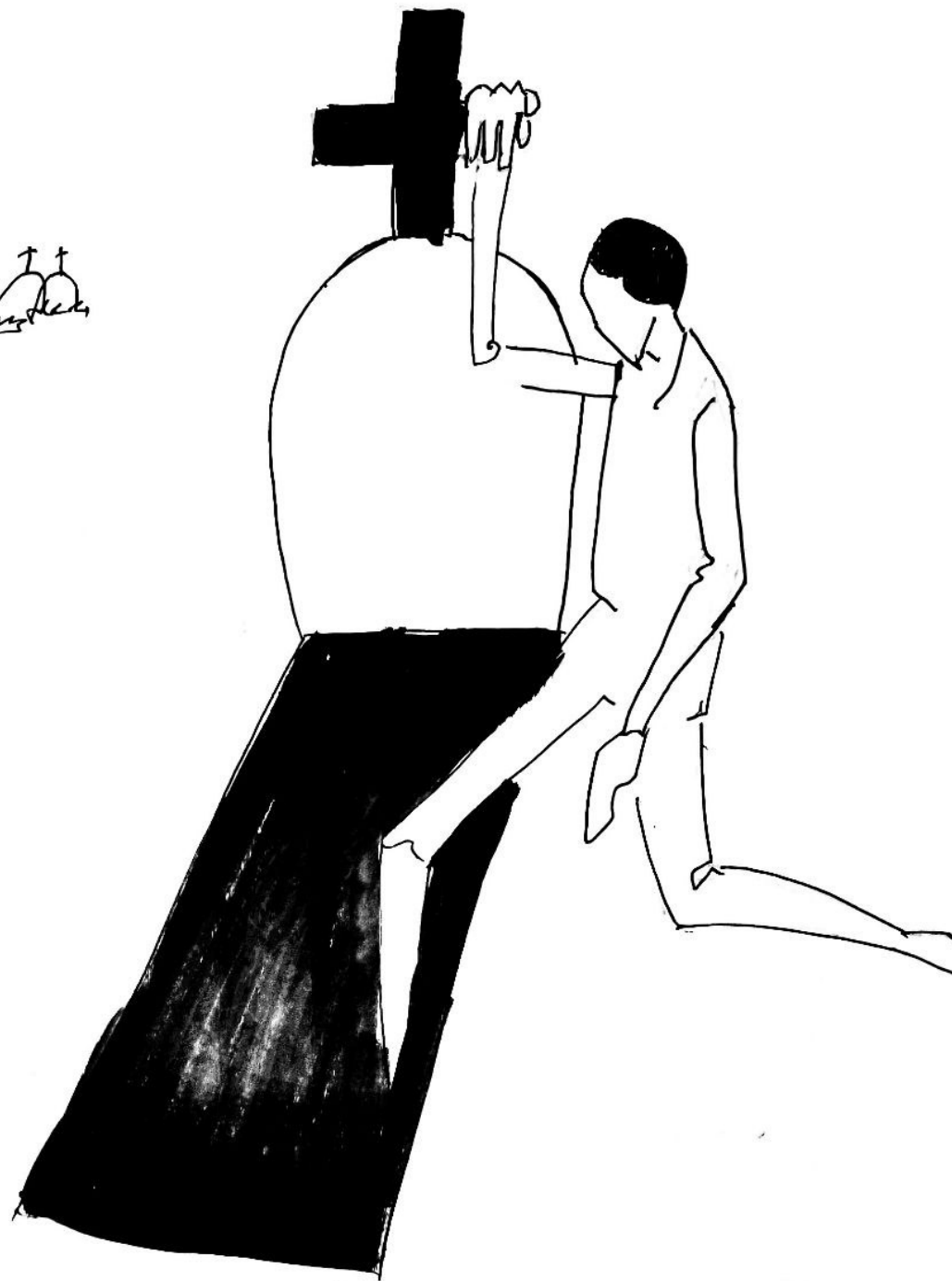
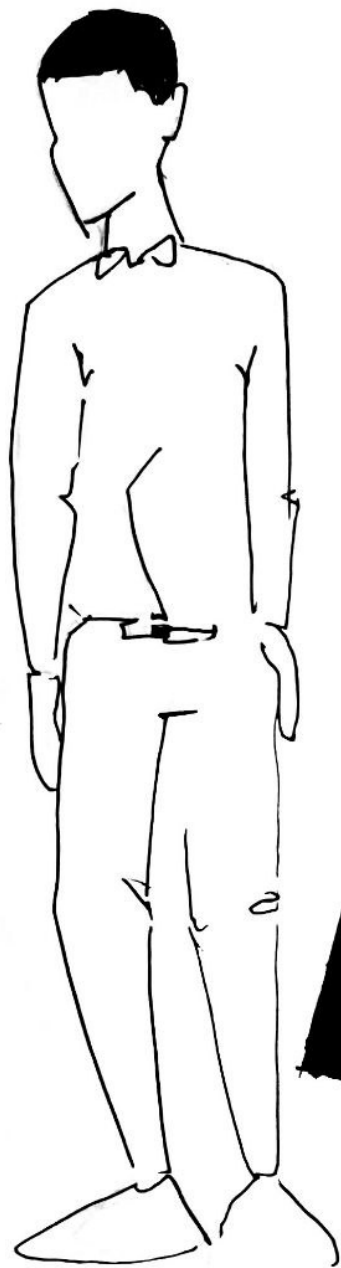
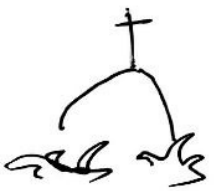
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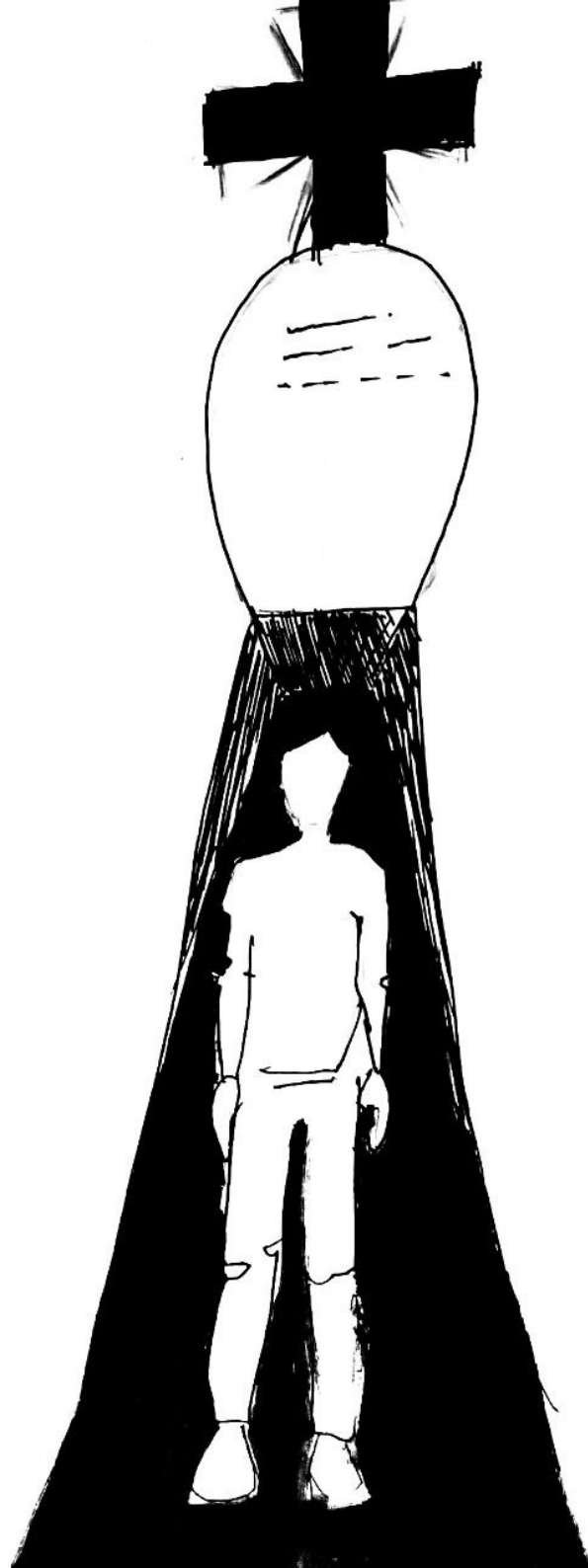
📷 [tihut823](#)

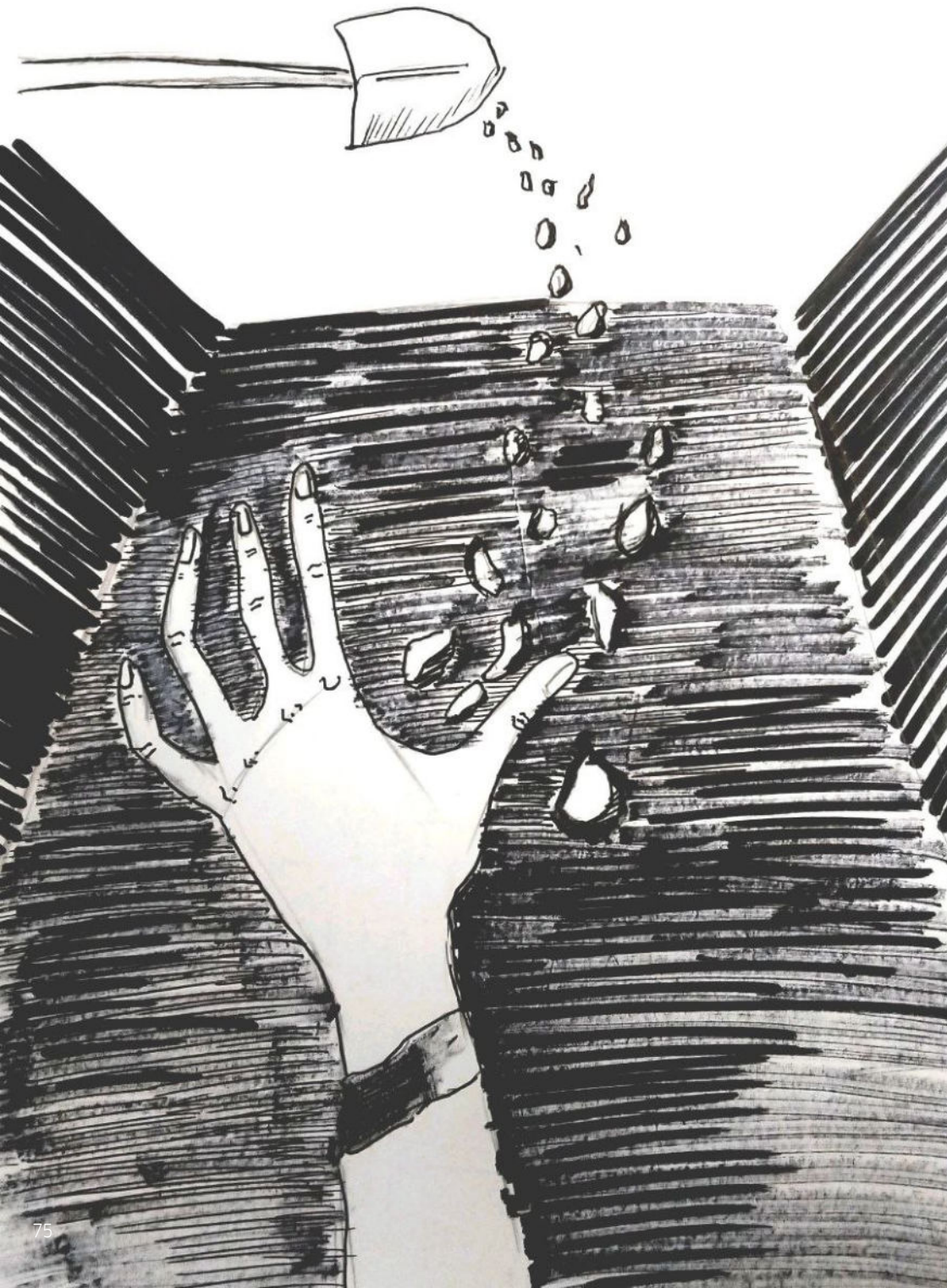
Ein Traum

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Our experience

A word from the participants

We found Kafka's stories to be different, sophisticated, and challenging in a good way. The workshop pushed us out of our comfort zones and made us interpret and come up with different ways to illustrate Kafka's stories in our own style. Working with Mr. Mahler was one of the highlights of the workshop. His feedback and advice were invaluable, and we are honored to be guided by a true artist of his caliber. We would also like to thank the Goethe-Institut for hosting the workshop and choosing us to participate in it.

Sincerely,
The Artists

 Austrian
Embassy
Addis Ababa

 Embassy of the Czech Republic
in Addis Ababa


Switzerland.

 GOETHE
INSTITUT