



Gatekeeper
Julien Parant-Marquis
Afternoon Projects

Teaching a Turnkey to Tend

Somewhere on the cusp of Germany and Poland, in a small town called Angermünde, I walked up a staircase to a stone tower. Now I could tell you the clouds dipped so low to the ground, that up there felt like a beanstalk but it's not like I got all the way up there, really. The road to the tower wasn't paved, there weren't any signs either. Bales of hay to the right. And God knows what to my left. Same trees since the fall of 42, I imagine.

Here is to thinking every stone tower was once part of a fortress.

Angermünde had a lot of trust based systems: small cabins to pick up local honey or hand knit treats, with a till to leave your change. I do remember that on the door of the tower was some kind of note in German about the opening hours or keys, but I didn't think of inquiring further. No one was around. Besides, there probably wasn't much to it. Not like I could differentiate a fortress tower from the remains of a mill.

What's the saying: *The mind is its own place?*¹

In your mind's eye, I bet you can come up with quite the panopticon: half a dozen entrapments, binding enclosures where the sinuous tentacles of your visions, as unbelievable as they are, will not release you. *Can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven?*², or so it goes. Which makes YOU the turnkey to your tower.

You are guided from the key to the keyhole. You are invited to witness visions of the fortress, inside and out. You will meet the guardian, the captive alike. The path is traced out, if you choose to follow. The sinuous, plant-like, landscapes are offered to you like fantasies, fears, divinations even. You might feel as if you are staring into a microscope, eyeing your own cellular formations. Or peeping down a sewage tunnel where oil mixes with water in psychedelic tints of gold and purple.

I wish I had an unbelievable story of the Angermünde Fortress, where Eve once laid eyes on a snake, where battles were won and lost, where some damsel was captured and released by her one true love, or where a nun and a priest met in secrecy in the early 1300s before the little ice age. Or more realistically a refuge for members of the resistance during the occupation. But it's not like that, it never was. The damned tower isn't even worth mentioning. Even if somehow, I can take my mind there –vividly.

Its own place. They say some people's mind's eye goes blind, or never sees at all: Aphantasia. The inability to imagine or visually recall a memory or a place. Some people go their whole lives without ever knowing they are afflicted. To each their stone tower. Here is the thing about the turnkey, no matter what they keep – someone's gotta be their teacher.

Text by Marie Ségolène C Brault

¹ Milton, John. *Paradise Lost*, Book One, lines 254-263, Penguin Classics. 2003.

² *ibid*



Artist Bio

Julien Parant-Marquis is an artist based in Montreal (Tiohtià:ke) working predominantly in painting and drawing. He holds a Bachelor in Fine Arts (painting and drawing, 2021) from Concordia University. Parant-Marquis' practice also visits experimental photography and sculpture. He has exhibited work in Montreal, Vancouver, Los Angeles, Upstate New York and Mexico City.