

# THE GROUND OF MEMORY

JIALIN SUN



'The "private theater" phenomenon involves persistent, systematic daydreaming, creating elaborate internal fantasies parallel to daily life. Patients outwardly perform routine tasks but internally remain immersed in detailed imaginary narratives, often fairy-tale-like, as emotional escape or stimulation. While initially adaptive, continued indulgence blurs the distinction between imagination and reality, potentially leading to dissociative episodes or "absences" common in hysteria.'

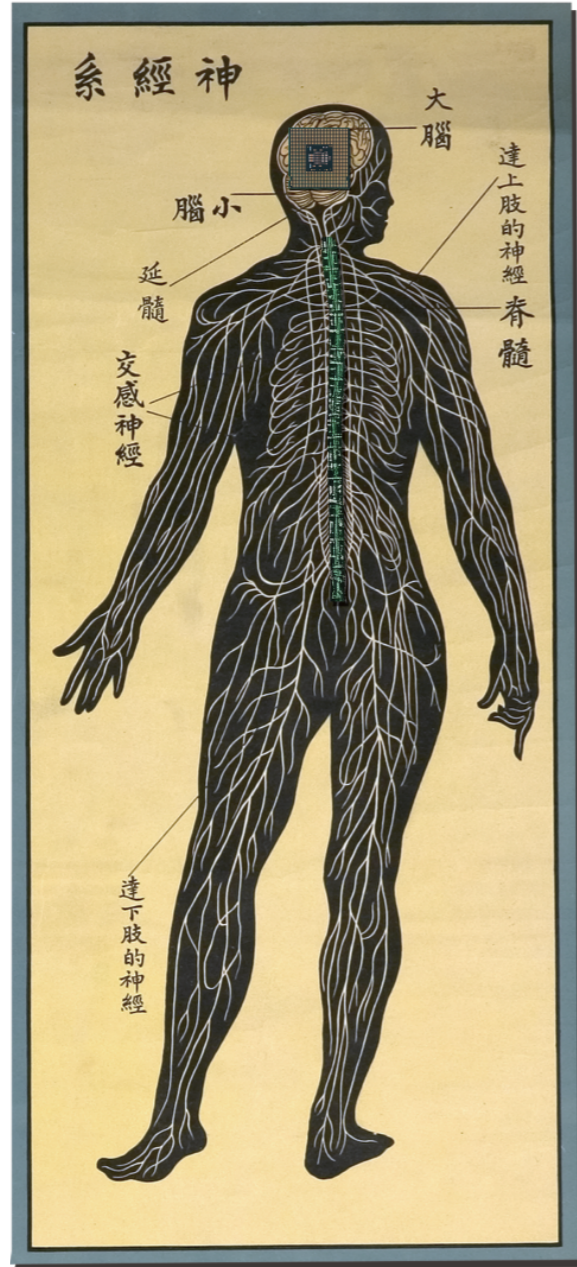
He would occasionally mutter to himself, sitting there repeating some unclear words: Wind, rain, sunshine... soil, food and hope....,perhaps only he knew what they meant.

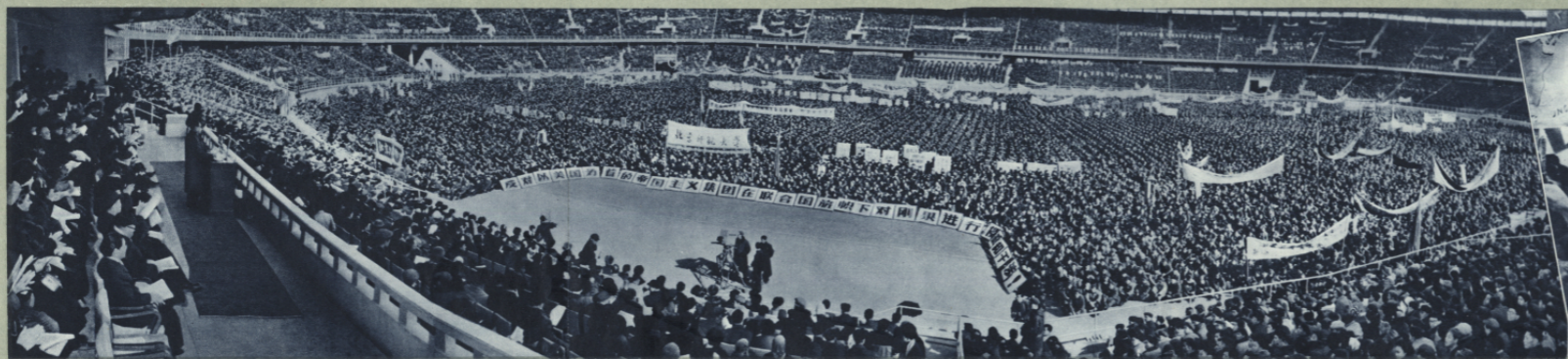
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In late February this year, large-scale mass rallies were held by the Chinese people in Peking, Shanghai, Tientsin, Canton, Wuhan, Shenyang, Sian, Chengtu, Urumchi, Hubehot, Lhasa and other cities to voice their strong protest against the towering crime committed by the U.S. and Belgian imperialists and their henchmen in murdering the Congolese Premier Lumumba, and to express their firm support for the just struggle of the Congolese people. Photo shows a 100,000-strong mass rally held by people of all circles of Peking at the Workers' Stadium on February 18. On the same day scores of similar meetings were held in various parts of the capital, with a total attendance of 400,000. Filled with anger, the participants in these rallies shook their fists shouting "New and old colonialists, get out of the Congo! Get out of Africa!" and other slogans.



Working people and youth of the Soviet Union voice their protest against the imperialist murder of Premier Lumumba.



Enraged by the brutal murder of Premier Lumumba by the imperialists and their agents, crowds of people demonstrate before the United Nations building in New York, holding placards with the slogan "Death to U.N."



The Mali people plunge themselves into the angry tide of protest against the assassination of Premier Lumumba by U.S. and Belgian imperialism.



Late Premier Lumumba, the Congolese national hero.

# NEW AND OLD COLONIALISTS, GET OUT OF ASIA, AFRICA AND LATIN AMERICA!



The just struggle of the Laotian people and youth for peace, neutrality, national unity and unification of their country is advancing from victory to new victory.



The people of Northern Rhodesia vehemently protest against British Secretary of State for the Colonies Macleod's conspiratorial trip to Central Africa.



The heroic Algerian National Liberation Army, which has persisted in armed struggle for over six years, has dealt heavy blows to the French colonialists.

This year April 24 — the Day Against Colonialism — falls at a time when the revolutionary storm against imperialism and for the achievement and defence of national independence has risen to new heights among the people and youth of Asia, Africa and Latin America, hastening the disintegration of the imperialist colonial system. The heroic people and youth of Laos are marching forward triumphantly in their just struggle against U.S. imperialist aggression and intervention, and for the realization of peace, neutrality, national unity and unification of their country. The dauntless people and youth of Algeria, upholding their unity and persisting in struggle, have administered one powerful rebuff after another to the French colonialists backed by U.S. imperialism. The broad mass revolutionary banner of the Havana Declaration, are engaged in a head-on struggle against U.S. imperialism, setting a glorious example for the peoples of all Latin America. The valiant people and youth of Cuba, holding high the banner of modern colonialism and the most vicious enemy of the world's peoples and youth, and it is absolutely impossible for the U.S. imperialists to "bestow" independence and freedom as a favour on the people.

But the imperialists will never quit the stage of history of their own accord. The U.S. imperialists, being both ferocious and cunning, have always resorted to the two tactics of armed suppression and political deception, alternating from one to the other, in a vain attempt to attain their criminal aim of dominating the world and strangling the national liberation movement. Many recent facts have proved that the Kennedy Government is further pushing ahead with its policies of aggression and war, intensifying its activities for arms expansion and war preparation and stepping up its efforts for reviving Japanese and West German militarism, while making a big fanfare about "peace", "aid to under-developed countries", organizing the so-called "youth peace corps", and so on and so forth. But the leopard can't change its spots. It has become increasingly clear to the people and youth of all countries that U.S. imperialism has been carrying out new colonialist expansion in the Congo under cover of the United Nations flag. The U.S. imperialists have all along been engaged in the plot of splitting the Congo, interfering in its internal affairs, fostering puppet regimes in that country, subverting the legal Congolese Government and suppressing the Congolese people's struggle. They have moreover committed the monstrous crime of directing the murder of the Congolese Premier Lumumba. Whether in Cuba or Laos, in Japan or Algeria, wherever there are the flames of anti-imperialist and patriotic struggle, there appear the hideous clutches of U.S. imperialism. U.S. imperialism is the bulwark of modern colonialism and the most vicious enemy of the world's peoples and youth, and it is absolutely impossible for the U.S. imperialists to "bestow" independence and freedom as a favour on the people.

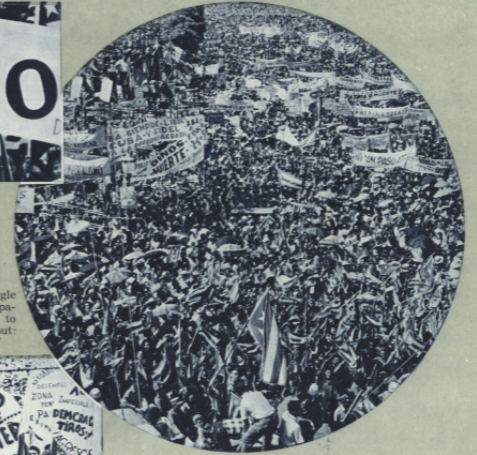
The youth of China, like their brothers in Asia, Africa and Latin America, suffered from imperialist oppression for a long time. Up to this day the U.S. imperialists are still occupying our sacred territory Taiwan and stepping up their machination to create the so-called "two Chinas." We share a common experience, we are faced with a common enemy and we are waging a common struggle. Together with their people the Chinese youth resolutely support the national liberation movement of the Asian, African and Latin American peoples. Today the forces of peace have surpassed the forces of war, the forces of progress have surpassed the forces of reaction and the forces of socialism have surpassed the forces of imperialism. We are convinced that in such an excellent international situation, the peoples and youth of Asia, Africa and Latin America will certainly strengthen their unity, enhance their vigilance, organize a broad united front against U.S.-led imperialism and its lackeys, and carry on a resolute struggle. With the support of the powerful socialist camp and with the sympathy and solidarity of all peace- and freedom-loving people throughout the world, final victory will certainly belong to the peoples and youth of the Asian, African and Latin American countries who are fighting for the achievement and defence of national independence and democracy. New and old colonialists, get out of Asia, Africa and Latin America! Down with imperialism! Long live world peace!



A big anti-U.S. demonstration held by the Bolivian people supporting the Cuban revolution and opposing U.S. aggression.



The Cuban people and youth, holding aloft the banner of the Havana Declaration and displaying the revolutionary spirit of daring to fight and win victories, have dealt the U.S. imperialist aggressors a knock-out blow. Their powerful slogans are: "Cuba yes, Yankies no!" and "Cuba will win!"



The struggle of the people in south Viet Nam against the fascist rule of the U.S.-Ngo Dinh Diem clique is spreading like a prairie fire through town and countryside.



Negro people of the Union of South Africa have risen bravely against the notorious colonialist policy of racial discrimination.



The Panamanian people's struggle against the U.S. imperialist occupation of the Canal Zone continues to mount. The demonstrators shout: "Down with U.S. imperialism!"



Kennedy's two tactics: "Olive branch" in one hand and arrow in the other. His one aim: Continuation of the policies of aggression and war.



Sowing the new crop.



"U.N. forces" in the Congo.













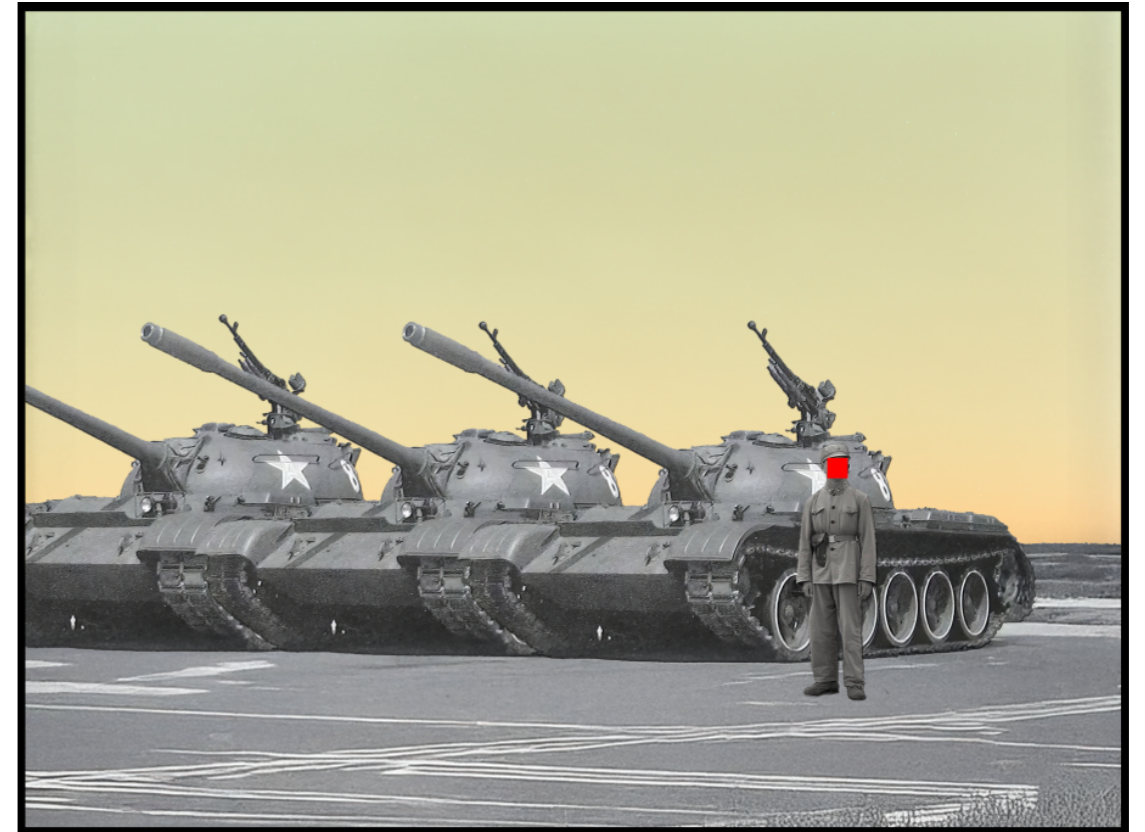


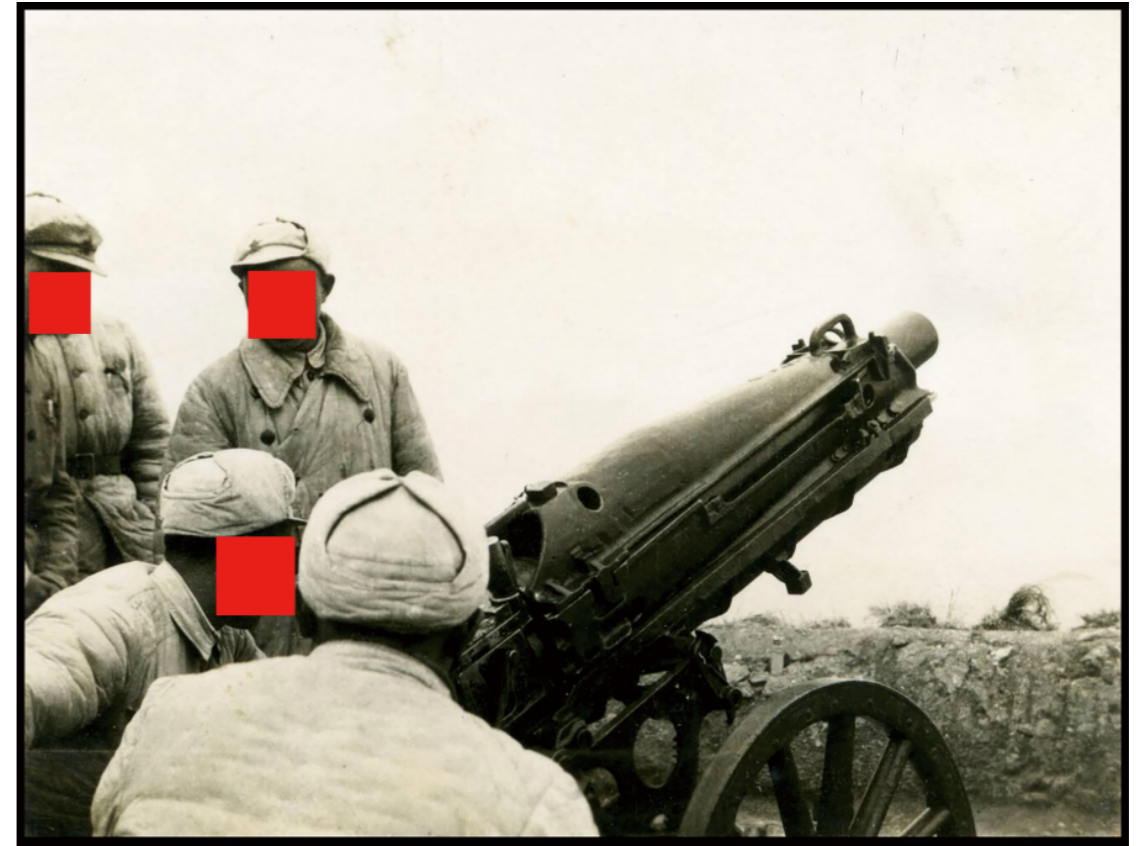
## CHAPTER TWO: Delirium

Lately, he had been speaking as though he were still there. He described a place I could not find on any map, a hillside filled with smoke and orders, where the trees fell in rows like men. He insisted it had happened, though no record exists. When I asked him who had sent him, he said only: "I followed the noise." It seemed to me then that he had mistaken history for a memory of his own.

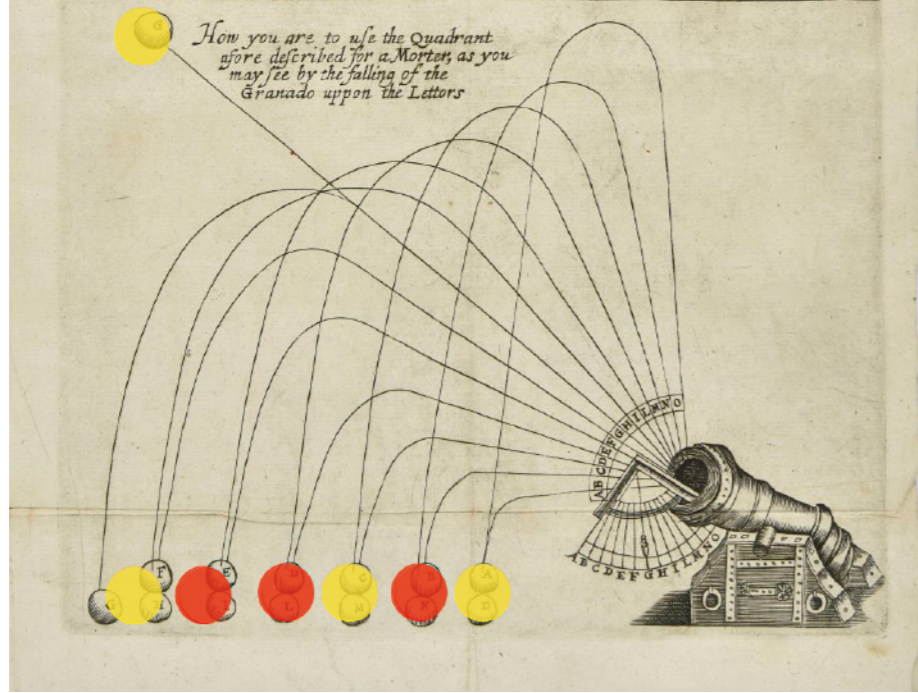
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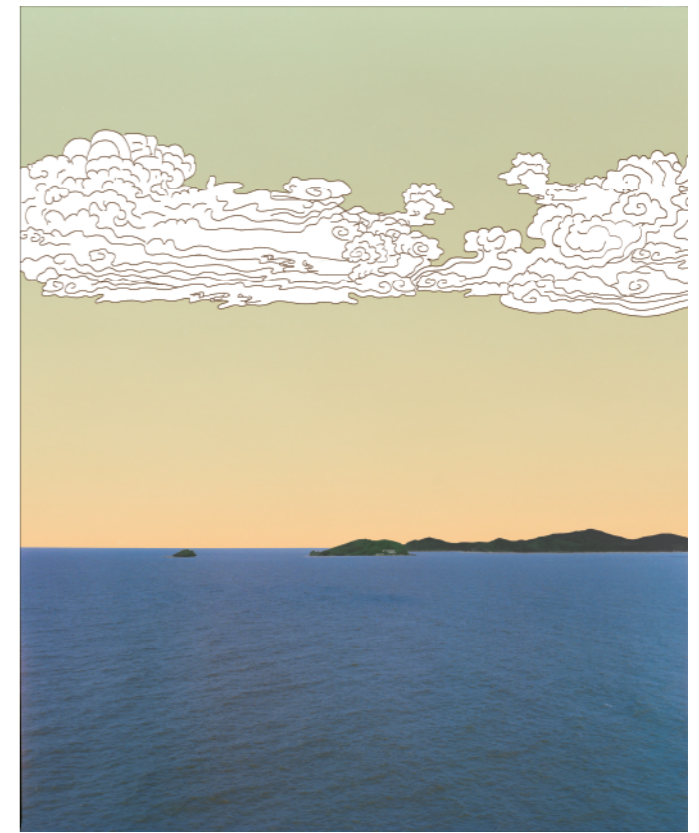
CHAPTER THREE: A BIRD SPEAKS  
IN DREAM

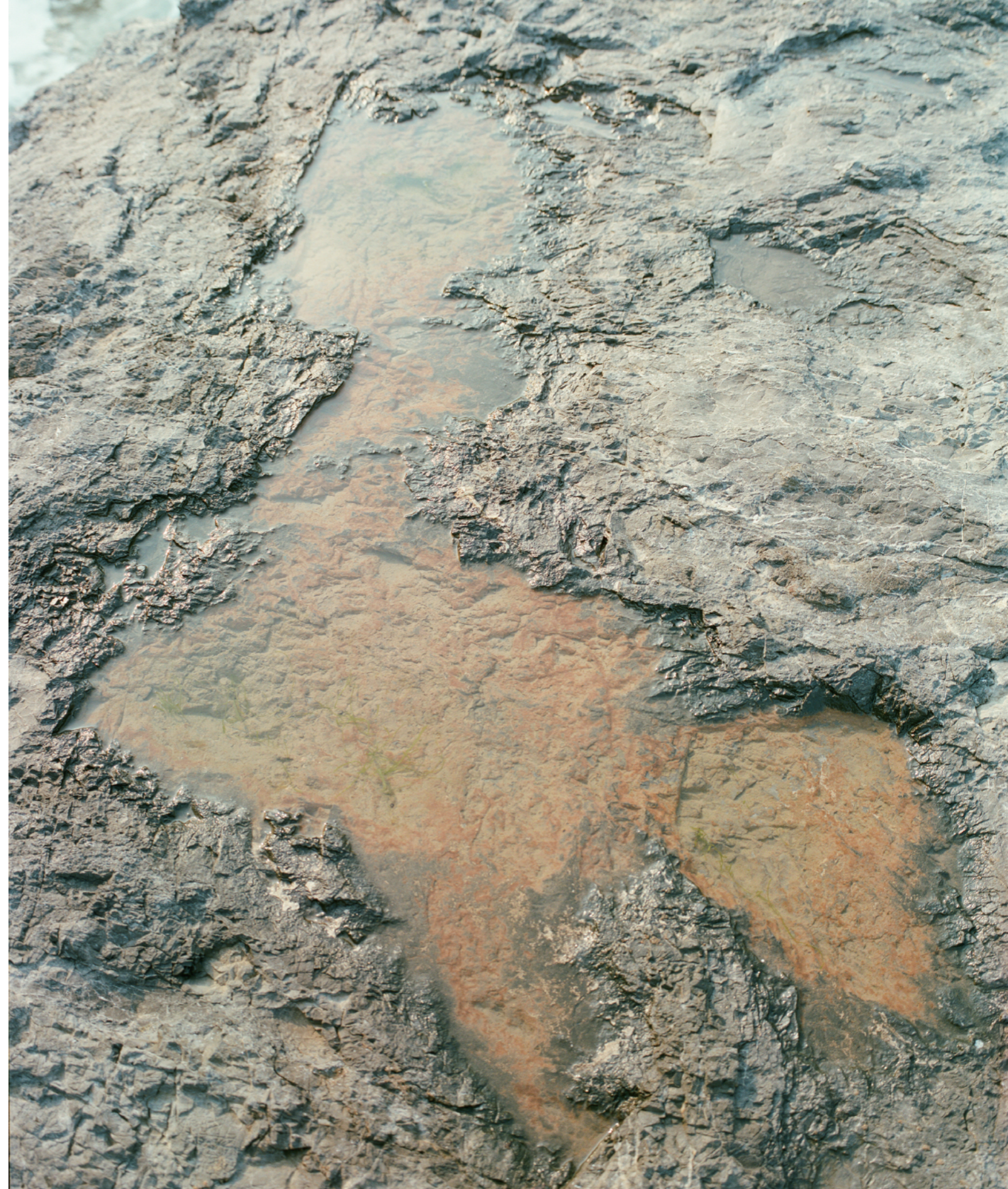


For some time afterwards, he had been looking for something. He said he had a rather long dream in which he had met a Crested Ibis during his travels, and after telling me this he asked me what it could be, as he had never heard the name before. I was able to tell him that the crested ibis was a very rare bird, which he could not have invented in his dream, as the name had long been familiar to me from books.

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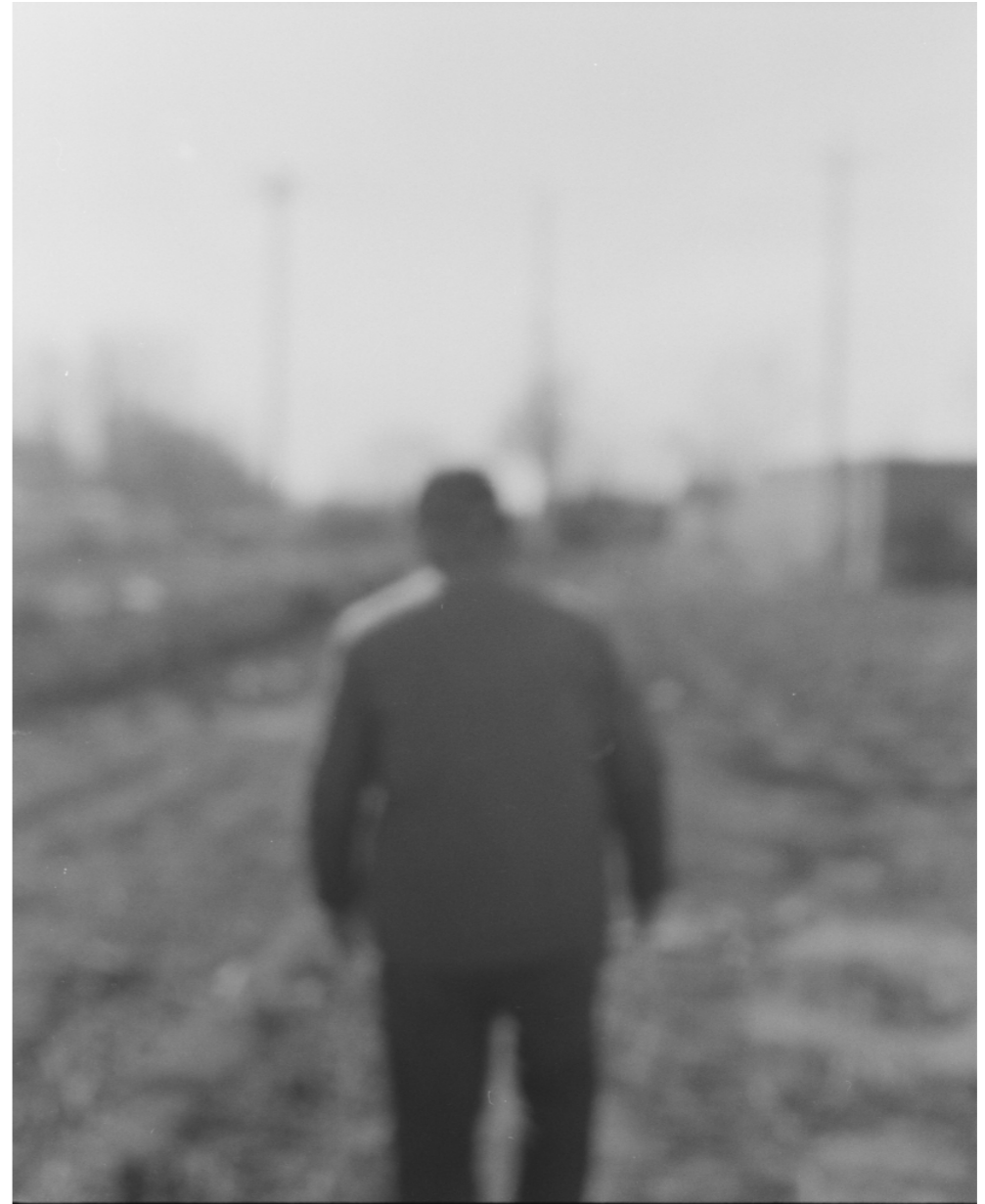




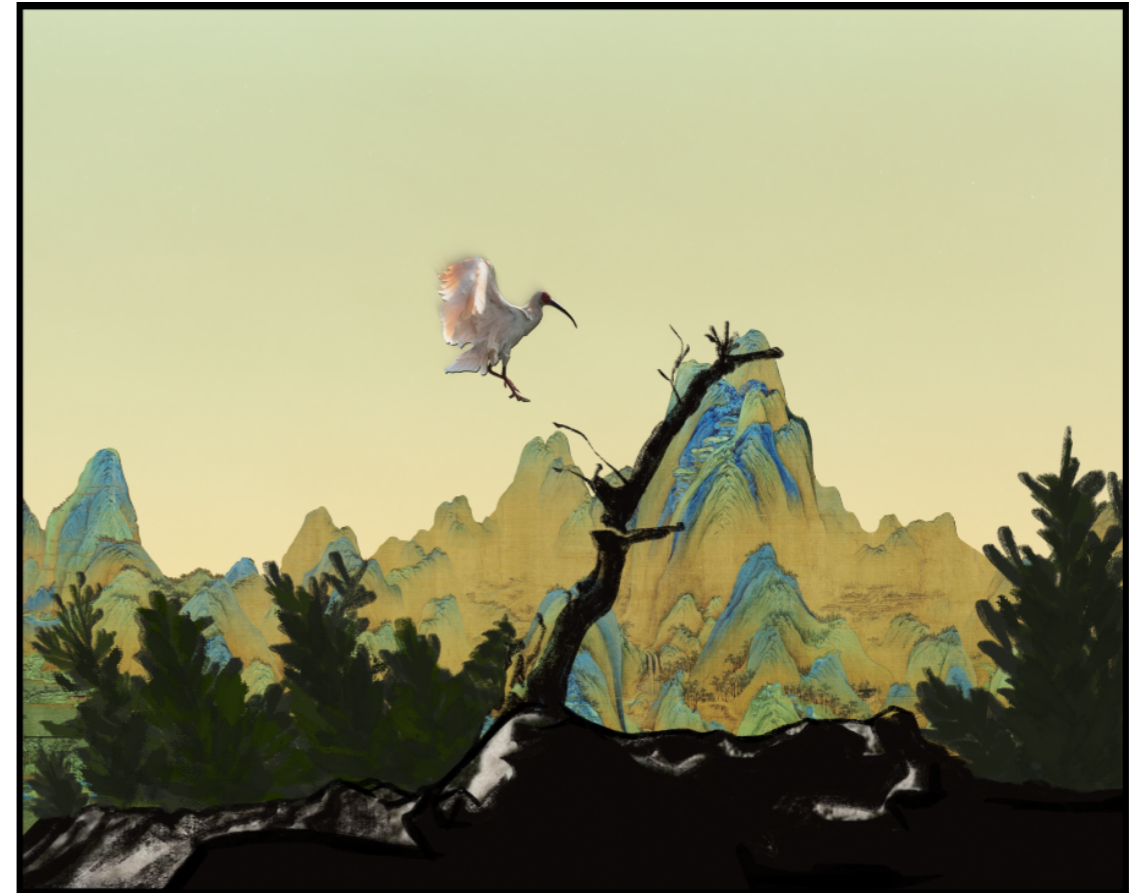














The inspiration for *The Ground of Memory* emerged from a profound personal fascination with the fragile and ephemeral nature of human memory, combined with the critical interrogation of how societies construct and preserve their collective histories.

In 1959, less than a year after the Great Leap Forward began, famine had already spread to my grandfather's hometown. He chose to go north and fled all the way to Heilongjiang, where he lived for 20 years until the gradual disintegration of the people's commune in 1982. In his description, he said: It was a vast area with few people, and there was a lot of food, so much that it was spread on the road to dry in the sun, without worrying about being robbed.....

I know very little about the stories that happened during this special historical period. My curiosity and exploration about them led to this project, for

no other reason than that I often think about, what do we inherit from the stories and experiences of our ancestors?

Photography, in this work, has functioned not simply as evidence, but as a provocation—both a symptom and an artefact. Sekula's insistence that photographs are “utterances” rather than mirrors reminds us that they speak within systems of power. Like Steichen's war reconnaissance images or Lange's *Migrant Mother*, they are filtered through ideological intent. My own photographs do not aim to correct history, but to make visible its opacity—to sit within the “hysterical symptom” of lost or discredited memory that Freud once read as a distorted form of truth. This is why I have often turned to the quiet or marginal—objects, gestures, ephemera—because within the unspoken, the unconscious makes itself known.

The notion of the "historical a priori," as Foucault

proposed, tells us that knowledge is always conditional, always shaped by the thresholds of its time. Archives are never neutral. The State, the institution, the family, and even the self, participate in choosing what to remember and what to let go. I have come to understand my work not as an attempt to assert authority over the archive, but to dwell inside its limitations. The gaps, the silences, the erasures—these are not absences to be filled, but spaces that demand different forms of listening.

This is a question of return, not origin—repetition without replication. The question is not how to access history once and for all, but how to remain ethically attuned to its fragility. The digital age tempts us with fantasies of infinite storage, yet as Derrida warned, the archive always harbours the impulse of destruction alongside preservation. What we remember may one day be unremembered—reformatted, redacted, or re-authored by forces

beyond our reach.

Still, I choose to create. Not in the hope of permanence, but in fidelity to the trace. Perhaps that is the most the archive can offer: not a monument, but a murmuring. A gesture that says: someone tried to remember. A photograph that says: this passed through me. And a book that whispers: here, for now, is the ground of memory.

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