

**B-SIDE**

Jhonathan Parra

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## **Abstract**

This thesis explores the relationship between existential philosophy, diasporic identity, and artistic practice through the project B-SIDE. Drawing from my experience of growing up in Bogotá, Colombia, and later immigrating to Canada, it reflects on how survival, labor, and social expectations can lead to a mechanical way of living. Through the philosophies of Albert Camus, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Arthur Schopenhauer, the research examines how routine, repetition, and the search for meaning shape identity and perception.

B-SIDE is a practice-based project developed through repetitive collage processes using black paper fragments assembled into circular forms. These forms act as metaphorical “rocks,” referencing the figure of Sisyphus and the continuous effort to create meaning within an indifferent world. The process revealed that artistic labor does not escape repetition. It becomes another form of endurance.

This thesis argues that meaning is not given. It is constructed through choice, awareness, and action. Art becomes both burden and freedom. Repetition, when consciously chosen, shifts from mechanical habit to a site of reflection and agency.

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## Introduction

The first part of my journey began in Bogotá, Colombia, a place where beautiful landscapes coexist with profound social struggles. Growing up in this environment shaped the foundations of my understanding of survival. Saturated by the persistent scourge of violence and a chronic lack of opportunities, I had little time or space to reflect on the direction my life was meant to take. Instead, I was propelled into what Camus would describe as a mechanical mode of living<sup>1</sup>, pursuing the goals I had been taught to follow without question: find a job, make money, spend it, and repeat.



Fig 1. Quyca, This is not Columbus land, Installation video, 2024.

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<sup>1</sup> Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus*, trans. Justin O'Brien (London: Penguin Books, 2013), 11

I do not claim that everything changed the moment I arrived in Canada; transformation is never that immediate. However, living in diaspora opened a space for broader learning. When I began studying art at OCAD University, I gained both the time and the intellectual tools to think critically about the structures that shape us as individuals and as members of society. Naturally, this process led me to question my own identity: Who am I? Where do I come from? In 2024, I developed a body of work and research that allowed me to confront these questions and search for a clearer understanding of myself. This project, titled *Quyca* (see Figure 1), is a video installation in which I examine the origins of Colombian identity and how these historical and cultural formations continue to shape contemporary society.

History became my first point of entry, an initial attempt to decipher the stories of the land and people I come from. Yet as I immersed myself in historical narratives, new questions emerged: Why do I care so deeply about this? Why does this history matter to me? Is the history of that land truly my own, or am I constructing a new one? Do I even relate to the history of my so-called ancestors? Through confronting these questions, I realized that if I wished to care about my own history and “my people,” I first needed to understand my own sense of self. Calling Colombians “my people” implies a sense of belonging and care that I cannot claim authentically, not until I define my own purpose and meaning. I learned that identity is not solely determined by inherited history but also by the choices, actions, and responsibilities one assumes in life.

This is not to dismiss the power of history. It undeniably shapes cultures, traditions, and collective behaviours. Yet I also believe that our attachment to history is strongly influenced by the education we receive and the ideological frameworks in which we are

raised. Access to wider sources of knowledge shifts the focus from judging one's own culture to examining human behaviour more broadly, behaviour often shaped within ethnocentric social bubbles constructed by previous generations. Education becomes the bridge through which we encounter other cultures, revealing that many share the same fundamental pursuit: the search for purpose. Once we discover who we are, what we want, and the weight of responsibility that comes with freedom, we can consciously choose what we wish to become.

During my eight years in Canada, I have experienced solitude and the challenges of navigating life independently, finding a job, earning money, surviving, and repeating the cycle. Yet this time I also became aware of my own behavioural patterns. I realized these patterns were less the result of my Colombian background and more symptoms of a systematic pursuit of success: the job, the house, the car, and the endless list of external goals. This realization forced me to confront a difficult question: Is this truly all I want from life?

This question opened the path to existentialism. Through it, I found alternative ways of seeing and understanding my life, as well as the purpose I had been searching for. My project, B-side, emerged from this philosophical inquiry. It is rooted in the reflection on mechanical life articulated by Albert Camus in *The Myth of Sisyphus*. We all carry a metaphorical rock up the hill, over and over, without fully understanding why. I am no exception. The burdens we carry, career aspirations, financial expectations, material goals, mirror Sisyphus's perpetual labor, repeated without conscious meaning.

With B-side, I sought to test whether art could offer liberation from this mechanical cycle. I began the project through collage, assembling small pieces of black paper without a predetermined outcome. The intention was simple: create a process based activity that offered joy and freedom rather than expectation and obligation. At first, the process was exhilarating. During the first week, I collected enough paper for the first circle, cutting and gluing with genuine enthusiasm. The second week required more paper; I cut and glued again. By the third week, I found myself repeating the same task, collecting, cutting, gluing once more.

Gradually, what began as a liberating artistic act transformed into another routine. The process became a burden, another rock to push up the hill. Each of the six circles I created became a repetition of the same mechanical rhythm I had tried to escape. I attempted to prove that art does not fall into the mechanical wheel of life: however, I found myself inhabiting the very condition I sought to critique. In the repetition of my own artistic process, I became Sisyphus.

Trapped again in this maze, I remember a quote from Albert Camus: “One must imagine Sisyphus happy.”<sup>2</sup> Camus does not claim that Sisyphus is genuinely happy; rather, he invites us to imagine him that way in order to find meaning within an absurd existence. Sisyphus, eternally pushing a boulder up the mountain only for it to roll down again, becomes a metaphor for the human condition. His “happiness” is not found in the outcome but in his conscious defiance and acceptance of his fate. In this acceptance, his punishment becomes a quiet revolt against the gods. In this spirit and unlike Sisyphus, I choose the rock I want to carry. That rock is the message of my work.

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<sup>2</sup> Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus*, trans. Justin O’Brien (London: Penguin Books, 2013), 119.

## Literature Review

As I mentioned before, existentialism has shaped the way I see the world and how I act upon it. In this section I discuss the philosophical works of Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus*, the mechanical way of life, Schopenhauer's Will approach, and Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*. I don't intent to fully dive into the theories discuss by theses philosophers but to take from them what triggered the awakening shaped my life and work as an artist.

### Being and Nothingness

In *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre describes mechanical life as Bad Faith<sup>3</sup>. An example he provides is the waiter acting as if his identity were completely defined by that role. *"His movement is... a little too precise, a little too rapid... He comes toward the customers with a step a little too eager... trying to imitate... the stiffness of some kind of automaton"* For Sartre, a mechanical life happens when a person acts as if they were a fixed object, like a machine or a role, instead of recognizing their freedom<sup>4</sup>. In Sartre's philosophy, this illustrates how people sometimes hide from their freedom by identifying completely with a social role or routine. So the danger of a mechanical life is that it reduces a free human being to a thing, ignoring the fact that we are constantly creating ourselves through our choices.

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<sup>3</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, trans. Hazel E. Barnes (New York: Washington Square Press, 1992), 59–60.

<sup>4</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre describes the waiter as performing his role with exaggerated precision, "trying to imitate... the stiffness of some kind of automaton," suggesting that such behaviour reflects what he calls bad faith—a denial of one's freedom by acting as if one were a fixed object rather than a conscious, free being (*Being and Nothingness*, trans. Hazel E. Barnes).

## **The World as Will and Representation.**

In the work of Arthur Schopenhauer, the term Will describes the mechanical way of life as life as an endless and unsatisfying cycle. Schopenhauer's quote, "*Life swings like a pendulum backward and forward between pain and boredom.*"<sup>5</sup> It refers to Pain comes from wanting what we do not have and Boredom comes after we get what we wanted. So life becomes a repetitive cycle without lasting fulfillment. Here Schopenhauer also suggests that human activity is driven by lack, meaning we are always trying to fill some gap, which keeps us constantly moving without reaching permanent satisfaction.

According to Arthur Schopenhauer, the Will is the fundamental reality underlying the world: a blind, irrational, and unconscious force that drives all living beings and natural processes toward endless striving and desire, a metaphysical force. This concept is different from willpower, which in everyday language refers to a person's conscious ability to control actions or resist impulses. It also differs from the religious idea of divine will, which usually implies a purposeful intention or plan directed by God. For Schopenhauer, the Will is neither rational, moral, nor purposeful; rather, it is an impersonal force that perpetually compels life to strive and persist, trapping it in an endless cycle of desire, struggle, and fleeting satisfaction<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, trans. E. F. J. Payne (New York: Dover Publications, 1969), 312.

<sup>6</sup> Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*. Translated by E. F. J. Payne, Dover Publications, 1969, pp. 164–68.

## The Myth of Sisyphus

Albert Camus work *The Myth of Sisyphus*, dives into Life's Absurdity: Camus argues that humans naturally seek meaning, purpose, and order, but the universe is indifferent<sup>7</sup>. This clash between our desire for significance and the world's silence produces the Absurd. The "*mechanical way of life*" can be seen as a symptom of this: people go through routines, jobs, and social expectations without questioning the meaning, trying to impose artificial order on an inherently meaningless world.

Camus writes that "*most men, if they look at their lives closely, are asleep. They live in a world of routine and habit, avoiding the confrontation with the absurd*" (Camus, 12,13, 53). In this statement, Camus is not referring to literal sleep, but to a condition of unreflective living. Most people move through life automatically, guided by social norms, work, and daily obligations rather than conscious awareness. This "sleep" becomes a metaphor for a mechanical way of life, in which individuals repeat actions without questioning their purpose or meaning.

However, Camus does not present this condition as a final or hopeless state. Rather than advocating despair, he suggests that recognizing the absurd, the tension between our search for meaning and a world that offers none creates the possibility for a different way of living. Awareness becomes a turning point. Once individuals confront the absurd, they are no longer bound to mechanical existence; instead, they can choose to live consciously.

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<sup>7</sup> Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus*, trans. Justin O'Brien (Penguin, 2013), 27.

In this sense, Camus introduces the idea of rebellion not as resistance against the world, but as a commitment to living fully despite its lack of inherent meaning. He contrasts the passive, habitual life with one of awareness, freedom, and self-created values. This is embodied in the figure of Sisyphus, who, despite knowing his labor is endless and without ultimate purpose, embraces his condition and finds meaning in the act itself. Through this, Camus suggests that purpose is not discovered but constructed, and that fulfillment emerges from the conscious engagement with life rather than from escaping its absurdity.

## Theoretical Framework

My life has been wrapped by the constant pursuit of meaning. Why do I do what I do? Does where I come from determine my purpose? How can I find purpose in a world where answers seem nonexistent? Should I shut off this existential anguish and simply adapt to what the world around me provides? Should I give in or continue with this new, painful awakening? These questions do not arrive gently; they impose themselves, interrupting the flow of routine, much like what Camus describes when *“the ‘why’ arises and everything begins in that weariness tinged with amazement”*.<sup>8</sup> I will try to break this down through the lens of my life before and after moving to Canada.

As I mentioned before, living in an environment where survival was a priority where work, anything that provides the basics of life, food and a roof reduces your existence to mere functionality. It leaves no space to reflect, to question, or to be critical about the meaning of life. That kind of inquiry becomes a luxury, reserved for a few privileged souls, or what Camus called a form of intellectual distance the gap between theorizing about existence and enduring its consequences.<sup>9</sup> In such conditions, the absurd is not confronted philosophically; it is lived unconsciously, buried beneath necessity. The urgency of survival silences the question before it can fully emerge.

Before moving to Canada, my world revolved around goals that only fit the status quo. Whatever society offered, I wanted a piece of it. And it all boiled down to money, acquisition, consumption, and satisfying desires, packaged as dreams, false promises

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<sup>8</sup> Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus*, trans. Justin O'Brien (London: Penguin Books, 2013), 12.

<sup>9</sup> Camus, Albert. *The Rebel: An Essay on Man in Revolt*. Translated by Anthony Bower. New York: Vintage International, 1991.

of purpose sold by a culture of consumerism. In retrospect, this resembles what Camus identifies as a form of evasion: a life absorbed in repetition and distraction, where one does not confront the absurd but instead “continues to make gestures dictated by habit” (Camus, 18). The system offers continuity, but not meaning.

For nearly eighteen years, from when I was fifteen until my early thirties, I lived in a bubble constructed from my limited experiences, the people I met, and the knowledge I acquired which, in truth, was not much. I was blindfolded, not by choice but by the environment surrounding me. Yet that version of myself was determined to achieve the goals I could afford. Lack of education and guidance thrust me into the world without tools, armed only with self-awareness, logic, and instinct. My existence became dictated by the repetition of a mechanical life: wake up, steel yourself (you need this job, you need this opportunity to survive), go to work, do your best within the environment, follow orders, complete your tasks without questioning, return home on the same bus filled with drained, tired souls, rest, and dream. Then repeat the next day.

Over time, I realized this pattern repeated itself in every job, every activity, every thought I had. It was only later that I began to sense the weight of Sartre’s words: existence precedes essence.<sup>10</sup> My existence, long dictated by circumstance, routine, and societal expectation, came before any notion of who I might truly be. The life I had been living, mechanical and unexamined did not define my essence; it simply existed. Understanding this helped me see that purpose is not given, nor inherited it is created through the conscious choices I make, the reflections I dare to have, and the courage to

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<sup>10</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, *Existentialism Is a Humanism*, trans. Carol Macomber (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 20.

confront the absurdity of life itself. Yet this realization does not resolve the tension; rather, it intensifies it. If existence precedes essence, then I am condemned to choose, to define, to act without guarantees. In Camus' terms, this is where freedom begins, not as comfort, but as burden.

Coming to Canada was something I was not expecting; it came from the same absurdity of life I still cannot understand. Once I moved here, I thought of continuing the lifestyle I had in Colombia, with the small difference that now the currency would be in Canadian dollars. I believed I could afford a better life for my mom and myself, and I would continue working without questioning my existence because there is no time, neither here nor in Colombia. You have to produce to be part of society. At that point, I had no philosophical guidance or sources that could offer alternatives, so I simply followed the routine. In a way, I was still resisting the absurd, not by denying it, but by postponing it.

Then, I had the chance to study art. For the first time, I asked myself, "What do I really want to do?" Until then, my choices had always been about survival, about earning money, never about desire or meaning. It was the first time existential questions touched me personally. I had always reflected on my life, but I kept those reflections locked away, afraid of the doubts they raised, doubts that demanded decisions I felt I could not afford. To question meaning is to risk destabilizing everything that sustains you.

After working as a cleaner and pizza maker, I finally confronted the idea of pursuing art, something that had always lingered in the back of my mind. Ten years as a

graphic designer had taught me that I could make a living, but the work drained me, leaving little room for creativity and, at times, raising ethical conflicts. I wanted something aligned with design but open enough to allow me to create freely. Illustration became my choice. Yet even as the spark of awakening flickered, I was terrified: art was uncertain, unfamiliar, and risky. The mechanical certainty of past jobs felt like a cage I had only just escaped.

During this time, I encountered Schopenhauer's words: "Man can do what he wills but he cannot will what he wills" (Schopenhauer, 89). These words struck me with surprising clarity. I realized that for years I had been caught in a current I did not choose, compelled by forces larger than conscious desire, the compulsion of the Will. My routines, my mechanical work, my avoidance of deeper questions were not accidents; they were expressions of a Will beyond my control, pushing me to act, to survive, to repeat. This insight resonates with Camus' notion that the absurd is born from the confrontation between human longing and the world's silence (Camus, 29). I was longing for meaning, for direction but the structures around me offered only repetition.

This insight also echoed Camus' concept of the mechanical way of life, in which people live absorbed by habit, avoiding confrontation with the absurd<sup>11</sup>. I had been living like that for years sleepwalking through life, repeating the motions, and ignoring the questions that gnawed at me from within. Yet once the question emerges, it cannot be undone. "*Beginning to think is beginning to be undermined*" (Camus, 12,13). Thought

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<sup>11</sup> Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus*, trans. Justin O'Brien (London: Penguin Books, 2013), 12–13.

destabilizes the comfort of routine, opening a space where neither certainty nor ignorance can fully exist.

Moving to a new country also brought another layer of reflection. Learning a new language, readjusting my mindset, and adapting to a new culture forced me to ask what home really means, and to examine where and who I come from. These are questions carried throughout life in diaspora you either embrace them or keep questioning. I chose the latter: questioning my background, my heritage, my culture, and my traditions. I am still trying to define my identity, still searching for a sense of belonging that feels authentic. In this sense, identity itself becomes part of the absurd condition: something sought but never fully resolved.

Back to the hunger for knowledge. During the pandemic, I had time to read, and I came across *The Myth of Sisyphus*, where a passage immediately resonated with me: “It happens that the stage sets collapse...” (Camus, 12). The image is familiar, the repetition, the rhythm, the unnoticed passage of time until suddenly it is not. The collapse is not external but internal; it is a shift in perception. The routine remains, but its meaning dissolves.

The question that followed was clear: how can one escape routine and find freedom without committing a philosophical suicide? Many try to resolve the absurd by leaping into religious or metaphysical beliefs that promise ultimate meaning, believing in God, an afterlife, or a cosmic plan. According to Camus, this is a form of “suicide,” abandoning an honest confrontation with reality and replacing the absurd with

comforting illusions<sup>12</sup>. Instead, he advocates living with the absurd: acknowledging that life has no inherent meaning, yet embracing freedom, experience, and personal rebellion. “*The struggle itself toward the heights is enough to fill a man’s heart*” (Camus, 119). The emphasis shifts from outcome to process, from resolution to persistence.

I spent the next five years hungry for knowledge, learning, experimenting, and discovering new ways to create and think. I rebuilt my perspective on life, confronting the mechanical compulsion of the Will, the absurd, and the lingering questions of identity. I found a place where others had asked the same questions not to provide answers, but to deepen the inquiry itself, inviting me into a space of reflection, rebellion, and freedom. Freedom, in this context, does not mean escape from the absurd, but the capacity to live within it consciously to act without illusion, to create without guarantees.

And in that, I discovered a fragile but exhilarating sense of autonomy: the freedom to face the absurd, to acknowledge the Will, and to pursue a life that is mine, even in its uncertainty. A freedom that does not resolve the tension between meaning and meaninglessness, but inhabits it.

Again, the question arises: Why? Why is bringing this part of my life into my art so important? Who cares about the struggles or reflections of an ordinary person? Is this not just another way of falling into the mechanical patterns of life or confronting the absurd? During the process of putting the pieces together, I wanted to test whether the act of making art could break free from routine, patterns, and the tediousness of living in a system designed to produce without thinking. It was an experiment, a confrontation

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<sup>12</sup> Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus*, trans. Justin O’Brien (London: Penguin Books, 2013), 44–49.

with the same questions that had long haunted me: Can creation be a rebellion? Can it be a way to live consciously, even amidst compulsion and absurdity?

For that, I started this project called B-SIDE, a quest to find meaning not in answers, but in the process itself. It became a way to investigate, to reflect, and to channel the questions that had carried me across continents, through jobs, routines, and periods of awakening. Through B-SIDE, I sought to explore whether the act of making, reflecting, and experimenting could itself be a form of freedom a rebellion against the mechanical and a sustained confrontation with the absurd. Not as a resolution, but as a continuous act, echoing the figure of Sisyphus, who, aware of his condition, continues to push the rock, not in hope of transcendence, but in defiance, in awareness, and perhaps in that tension, something resembling meaning.

## Methodology

For me, materializing philosophical subjects in art requires grounding them in conceptualism and abstraction. One of my primary references is Marcel Duchamp. His approach to art, which prioritizes the idea over the purely visual or material qualities of the object, has strongly influenced the way I conceptualize my work. Duchamp states that “the idea becomes a machine that makes the art” (Duchamp, 1957), emphasizing that the conceptual framework of a work can hold greater significance than the object itself. In this sense, I argue that the idea behind a work of art takes precedence because, without it, the object remains ordinary, lifeless, and devoid of meaning.

Within this framework, the artist transcends the purely material act of making. When an image or object merely mimics what we conventionally perceive as reality, it does not necessarily communicate the artist’s perspective. Representation alone risks remaining descriptive rather than interpretative. However, when the artist first conceptualizes an idea and then develops it through processes of construction and reconstruction, the object transforms into a vehicle for thought. Through this process, the work ultimately reflects the artist’s unique voice and interpretation of their surroundings.

My work takes shape through thought, and the transformation that occurs during the making process often diverges from the original conception. Rather than copying what I see or initially imagine, I allow the work to evolve as I construct it. Portraying philosophical themes presents a particular challenge because these themes are intangible. Attempting to represent them pushes the boundaries of both symbolism and

figurative representation. By using elements that can transform into representations of immaterial thought, I open a broad field of creative possibilities and allow the literal world to become metaphorical.

For this project, I adopted collage as my primary method. This technique involves both deconstruction and reconstruction: I cut images and fragments from books and magazines and reassemble them into new visual structures. Through this process, I discovered that the repetitive acts of cutting and assembling could function as a metaphorical reflection of the myth of Sisyphus described by Albert Camus. In Camus' interpretation, Sisyphus must endlessly push a rock uphill, only for it to roll back down again. This image became a conceptual framework for the development of my work B-SIDE. As Camus writes, "The struggle itself toward the heights is enough to fill a man's heart. One must imagine Sisyphus happy" (Camus, 1955).



Fig 2. B-SIDE, 2026.

Based on this idea, I set the goal of producing six and a half circular forms from fragments of black paper (fig. 2). These forms represent Sisyphus' rock, my rock, the rock I chose to carry uphill. In Camus' metaphor, this endless act reflects the structure of human life: we constantly pursue goals, push the rock upward, watch it fall, and begin again. This cycle can become a form of punishment when external forces dictate the goals we pursue. However, Camus' assertion that "one must imagine Sisyphus happy" led me to question whether meaning changes when one freely chooses the rock. In that case, punishment may transform into purpose and freedom.

The amount of pieces required for each form was determined by the fragments I collected from books and magazines. Consequently, the timing for every piece varied according to my recollection and the mental and emotional state I experienced during construction. At the beginning, excitement allowed me to build the first piece in two weeks. Extended hours of assembling cuts fuelled the motivation to create something new. The first piece used a total of 423 cuts of paper. The second, with 390 cuts, and the third, with 364, followed a similar pace, though repetition and routine increasingly guided the process.

By the fourth piece, life's mechanical rhythm pressed heavily on me. I experienced an illness that slowed my progress, and the accompanying depression complicated the process further. Completing the fourth piece took three months and 591 cuts, which were smaller than those in the previous works. Without noticing, the tediousness imposed the weight of existential thought, making each cut an exercise in endurance.

After four months of recovery and ongoing depression, I resumed work on the remaining pieces. The fifth and sixth forms reflected my fatigue and the temptation to give in. Yet I continued. Perhaps shaped by my life story, I became functional: no matter what I endured, I had to complete the task. Like Sisyphus, there was no option but to carry the rock uphill. The final two pieces became the last exertion of this continuous, deliberate effort.

I also deliberately used irregular shapes to disrupt the pattern within the act of making. I wanted the cuts to appear torn or randomly extracted from books and magazines, then assembled in a seemingly arbitrary manner until the circular form emerged. In this way, I introduced unpredictability into a process otherwise defined by repetition.

The choice to use black paper fragments conveys two symbolic dimensions. First, the monochromatic quality reflects the act of focusing on a single thought, idea, or goal. Second, black represents the void, the abyss that often accompanies the search for meaning or the confrontation with its absence. In this sense, the work reflects the experience of pursuing goals without fully perceiving their outcome, similar to moving forward in darkness while carrying the rock.

I determined the size of the works according to the available exhibition space. This practical constraint also became part of the conceptual framework. Conditions of limitation or possibility directly shape artistic decisions: a larger space enables larger work, while restricted conditions demand adaptation. Repetition and routine informed the spiral-like expansion of the forms, suggesting the continuous enlargement of the

void, an image that reinforces the experience of progressing while moving through darkness.

The methodology of this project consists of sustained, repetitive studio practice over an extended period. I followed a structured routine: I woke up, searched for materials, and worked between six and eight hours a day, five days a week, cutting and assembling paper fragments. I maintained this pattern for approximately six months. At first glance, this process resembles mechanical labor, which I intentionally sought to examine. However, I identified a critical distinction. Although the actions remained repetitive, I chose to carry this “rock.” The activity was not imposed by survival or external coercion, which allowed me to experience a sense of freedom within repetition. Additionally, I imposed formal constraints by maintaining consistent shapes across the six and a half pieces and by applying black to only one side. These decisions structured the process deliberately.

At the same time, the mental and emotional dimensions of the work evolved continuously. While the physical actions remained constant, my thoughts shifted in response to changing life circumstances. Each fragment of paper thus condensed a moment of reflection. The final works function not only as visual compositions but also as accumulations of time, thought, and lived experience.

From a research perspective, this process operates as a form of practice-based inquiry, in which the act of making generates knowledge. The repetitive methodology allowed me to test the relationship between routine, freedom, and meaning within creative labor. By consciously reproducing a pattern that resembles mechanical work,

while maintaining control over conceptual and formal decisions, I examine the tension between imposed routine and chosen action. The resulting artworks function not only as aesthetic objects but also as material evidence of a philosophical investigation. Through sustained making, the project explores whether repetition can shift from a symbol of mechanical existence into a site of reflection, agency, and meaning.

## Conclusion

I do not offer a final conclusion; rather, I reflect on what I learned during the process of making B-SIDE. Everything I have done, said, and considered reflects my current experience. The ideas I have developed, right or wrong, may evolve over time. I am not the same person I was twenty years ago, nor ten years ago, and even at the beginning of this process, I was different. Perhaps I will not be the same when I finish this document.

By situating my past within a framework informed by Absurd philosophy, I realized that we choose what to believe in, and once we define it, we adjust to it. I chose to believe in art as a rock I carry up the hill, regardless of how many times it rolls back down. In this sense, I am Sisyphus. B-SIDE became both the rock and the act of carrying it, a tangible manifestation of this philosophical engagement.

Art-making, compared to other forms of work, offers a unique freedom: I decide the subject, the method, the timeframe, and whether to share the work at all. These choices define my engagement and my practice. This freedom is central to the process of B-SIDE, allowing me to explore themes of persistence, meaning, and personal agency.

I began examining which elements of Sisyphus's environment are mutable: the background, the mountain, and the rock itself. The myth often depicts the background as dark, harsh, and punitive, a metaphor for the world we inherit. Yet the rock, as a metaphor for meaning, is not predetermined; we create it ourselves. If the rock

represents purpose, then why not carry it freely rather than abandon it? Do we even want a life without rocks to carry?

The background or what I call the system represents conditions beyond my control. Humanity shaped it through accumulated knowledge and experience, and I cannot change it. To attempt otherwise would be pretentious. As Camus describes, this is the absurd. My task is not to transform the system but to find purpose within it. This realization is simultaneously sobering and liberating: though constrained, the system offers countless opportunities to discover meaning, often hidden by the bubbles we create around ourselves. I may never find a definitive answer, but I can adapt.

The mountain, the ladder, and the path provide freedom: I choose how to move within the system. I chose to study art, to write this paper, and to walk this path. These choices, though limited, represent genuine freedom. The journey itself like the repetitive act of carrying the rock becomes an exercise in agency and reflection.

Finally, the rock, the subject, the creation of art is both my burden and my purpose. Art is not merely a product or an end; it is a realm of existence that few willingly inhabit. I cannot rigidly define what art is; I perceive it subjectively. The rock I carry exists in this realm and allows me to think critically, create, and convey meaning. Its weight is immense, but I chose it. It was not imposed. B-SIDE embodies this choice: the work itself is inseparable from the act of engaging with it, the labor of creation inseparable from the search for meaning.

In reflecting on B-SIDE, I understand that the artistic process is simultaneously an exploration of freedom and a confrontation with the absurd. Just as Sisyphus finds

purpose in the act of carrying the rock, I find purpose in the deliberate, persistent engagement with my art. By embracing this tension between constraint and choice, burden and freedom I recognize that meaning emerges not from the world itself but from the commitment to live fully within it.

Moreover, life is meant to be repeated, but each repetition carries the potential for change. Each day, each piece of work, each act of creation is different even if from the outside it appears the same. The repetition is not uniform; it evolves subtly with intention, context, and perspective. This understanding reinforces the freedom inherent in carrying the rock: even in the monotony of repetition, we shape the experience, transform the burden, and find new meaning in the cycle.

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