

An Essay on the What and the Why

Reflections on Time, Possibility, the Magic of Imagination, the Idea, and the Nature of Leaping (in Creative Work)



Every so often, looking back at one or another of my works, I find myself asking: “What exactly are you doing — and why?” Thematically, the works are often miles apart, even when several of them come into being on the same day. It has probably become clear by now that I am a committed adherent of Sartre’s philosophy, and it is against that backdrop — and in the context of the essay “The Sartrean in the Works

and Texts of Arslohgo” — that I am trying to put some answers to my self-directed question down on a virtual page.

Time and Possibility

The answer to the second part of the question — the “why” — seems almost too simple: “because I can.” That answer might come across as provocative, defensive, defiant, arrogant — none of those apply. It would also be contradictory, given that I am trying to answer a question I’m asking of myself. What it actually points to is something factual: the recognition and acknowledgment of possibility — and with that come time and a transformed sense of self.

For a long time, I was not truly aware of my own foundational design. Career choices, relationships, and attitudes lived me — and in retrospect, genuinely so. It was time that left me no time to seriously engage with myself, with the past, and above all with the future. I think I can say that I lived for the moment, and thus in the in-between — or, as Sartre puts it, in the fleeting nothingness, in a period when I could no longer find time for anything artistic.

What it took was a rupture — Day X: C.’s death after a long and serious illness, and the grief that followed. At first it knocked me flat: a long stretch with my head buried in a shared past, an endless circling like a Möbius strip. To escape that loop, I turned back to making art — not in the form I had set aside a quarter century earlier, but newly, in the field of digital art. And gradually, the future came into view again, because distance set in, because I could tell myself that I am what I have been, yet the past does not define me.

The individual experience of time — set apart from Sartre’s concept of the ecstases — plays a significant role here. Which brings me back to the answer I gave at the outset: “because it is possible.”

After Day X — two years after an early retirement prompted by C.’s illness — time was suddenly just there, and at first I had no idea what to do with it or with myself, except to sit with the situation and think. With the growing awareness of being alone, of the responsibility that now fell primarily on my own life, with the end of professional obligations and the routines and constraints that came with them, and with the knowledge of financial security and independence, every path became thinkable. It was the situation that made possible the decision for a new self-conception, for the artistic.

“Possibility,” then, is a condition of self-conception. The artistic was always a possibility — structurally open, because consciousness is never fully determined. Moreover, possibility always arises within a project; it is perspectival and practical. Artdig WorX was conceived as a project from the start; the possible — digital art — is my possibility. The imaginary is the space of possibility: what is given is posited as not fixed, something absent, something other, is set against it. This structure is expressed through the guiding principle “Arslohgo visualizes language or verbalizes images,” whereby a double possibility opens up in the works: the image points to something that cannot be seen (language, concept, sound); language points to something that cannot be spoken (image, mood). Still other works rest on a particular structure of possibility: the gaze as the holding-open of possibility. The gaze need not be realized in order to take effect. The mere possibility alone can be enough to alter consciousness.

On the Magic of Imagination

While the ordinary world can be understood as instrumental — every action moving through means, causal chains, resistance — the world of imagination is magical: the object “obeys” consciousness without resistance, without mediation, without causality. If I imagine that someone is smiling, they smile. The object exists only insofar as I imagine it, and it has precisely the properties I assign to it. This magic forms the actual organizational structure of the Artdig WorX project. Here again I would point to the guiding principle “Arslohgo visualizes language or verbalizes images” as the formula for the magical structure of imagination.

In the instrumental, causal world, language and image are separate media: one unfolds through time and sequence, the other exists in space and simultaneity. There is no causal connection between them. That gap is bridged by the image immediately calling forth language and language immediately conjuring the image — without explanation, without mediation, without a causal intermediate step. The viewer’s consciousness does not follow this movement through logical deduction; it leaps, because it has to.

The decision to work exclusively in digital forms — without a physical support, without oil, without canvas — is my way of realizing the magical. The digital comes closest to the structure as a medium: it exists only as appearance, only as it passes through a perceiving consciousness — or, as Sartre might put it, only as organized

nothingness. Art, here, is the place where consciousness leaves the causal world in order to transform it from within.

The Idea

When people ask me “How did you arrive at this image?” I often answer, “An idea came to me and I followed it.” I have to admit: that’s not really the right answer. What I should probably be talking about is an impulse or a prompt, something I pursue.

At the core of my understanding lies Sartre’s philosophy of art: the work of art is not the embodiment of an idea. It is not the illustration of a concept thought out in advance. I do not first think an idea and then translate it into some kind of material form. It is rather the act itself — the use of digital tools, the eye searching for a composition — that produces a meaning which, in retrospect, looks like an idea. The idea follows the doing. What we call an “idea” is always already an afterimage of the act of consciousness: constructed, momentary, fleeting, situated.

Leaping (in Creative Work)

The range of subjects should not obscure a deep methodological constancy. Running through all the works is the same approach: the linguistic infiltration of a concept, the inscription of an additional layer of meaning into a word, or the short circuit between incompatible cultural fields. The subjects leap — the linguistic-conceptual operation behind them is constant. The leaping is surface; the method is deep structure.

Chance encounters form the trigger for a work: a glance out the kitchen window, a random reach into the bookshelf, a computer’s BIOS update, spontaneous impulses. The situation provides the prompt; freedom lies in the transformation — a genuinely Sartrean principle. This openness to the accidental is an attitude of availability: consciousness remains open to the world. It is not working through a program, and this produces structurally heterogeneous, thematically wide-ranging work.

What looks like leaping turns out, on closer inspection, to be a continuous movement of consciousness — one that draws no straight line, but remembers itself.

Arslohgo April 2026