

TOPOGRAPHIES OF DISPLACEMENT

Collected Works 2024-2026

Farid Nazifi

Visual Communications

Leipzig, Germany

<https://nazififarid.com>

Contents

Foreword — ***The Cartography of Exile*** 5

SECTION I: BODIES AND BORDERS

Human, Pending Update 11

Circuit of Belonging 19

Surface Tension: The Carat of Exile 29

Stem Cell Therapy 37

SECTION II: MYTH AND MEMORY

<i>The Cowboy in the Static</i>	45
<i>The Orchard of Absence</i>	55
<i>Charlie and the McDonald's Factory</i>	63
<i>Return Under Fog</i>	73

SECTION III: CARTOGRAPHIES

<i>Topographies of Displacement: S4D Atlas</i>	83
<i>Chronotopia: The Cartography of Time</i>	93
<i>Cosmic Stasis: The ISS in Event Horizon</i>	105

SECTION IV: WITNESS

<i>Shelter</i>	115
<i>The Wild at the Threshold</i>	123
<i>OTANDOWS 77</i>	131
<i>The Republic of Small Bodies</i>	139

Afterword — <i>Notes on Exile and Practice</i>	149
Legal Statement & Copyright	155

Foreword

The Cartography of Exile

There is a particular kind of silence that arrives after displacement. It is not the silence of peace, but the silence of recalibration—a pause

between languages, between legal statuses, between homes. The works collected in this volume emerged from such intervals: moments of suspension in Ukraine before the war, in Poland during transit, in Germany while waiting. They are documents of a life reassembled across borders, and of the attempt to translate experience into image.

I was born in Mashhad, Iran, in 1994—a city of pilgrimage and poetry, of turquoise domes and mountain horizons. I studied Visual Communications at the Ferdows Institute of Higher Education, learning to see composition as syntax and color as tone. Later, I pursued informatics in Kyiv, where the logic of systems—circuits, code, networks—became a second visual language. When war fractured that trajectory, I carried both vocabularies with me: the eye for narrative and the understanding of structure.

This book is organized not chronologically but thematically, tracing the concerns that have shaped my practice across geographies. ***Bodies and Borders*** examines the physical and bureaucratic architectures that contain, measure, and process human life. ***Myth and Memory*** engages with the symbols we inherit and reinvent—the cowboy, the apple tree, the factory—as sites of contested meaning. ***Cartographies*** reimagines geography as temporal, provisional, and deeply personal. ***Witness*** attends to the quiet acts of observation that displacement demands.

Throughout these works, certain motifs recur: the smartphone as territory, the circuit as connection and surveillance, the shoe as trace of presence, the diamond as measured self. These are not arbitrary symbols. They emerge from the materials of my own trajectory—the hardware I assembled, the documents I translated, the applications I submitted, the languages I learned and forgot and learned again.

Leipzig, where I now live, is a city of layered histories: socialist modernism beside Gründerzeit facades, peace movement memory beside contemporary migration debates. It is here, in this northern German city, that I have continued to work—completing my integration

courses, having my degree recognized by the state, and producing the images that follow.

The title of this collection, Topographies of Displacement, names both a method and a condition. To map displacement is not to fix it in place, but to trace its contours—the ridges of bureaucracy, the valleys of waiting, the fault lines of identity under pressure. These works are not illustrations of exile; they are its visual residue.

What follows is offered not as conclusion, but as continuation. The images remain open, as do the journeys they document.

Farid Nazifi

Leipzig, 2026

SECTION I

BODIES AND BORDERS

[Image: Still from "Human, Pending Update" — fragmented face with digital overlay, blue-gray palette, pixelated distortion across features]

Human, Pending Update

2025

Medium: Motion graphics, digital video

Duration: 1:24

Available at: <https://nazififarid.com/human-pending-update>

Visual Content

The video opens with a close-up shot of a face, its features overlaid with digital glitch effects that fragment and pixelate against a dark background. The image oscillates between clarity and distortion—a face becoming data, becoming noise.

The scene shifts to a robot standing in a futuristic cityscape. Its design is sleek and metallic, with intricate mechanical details: gears, circuits, wires, and glowing accents. The camera pans around this figure, revealing its humanoid form and advanced articulation.

Human and machine begin to merge. A face partially replaced by circuitry. Skin giving way to electronics. The hybrid figure exists in a space between categories—not quite one, not quite the other. Lighting shifts dynamically across the form, now highlighting flesh, now illuminating components.

The final sequence returns to the robot walking through the city. Its movements are smooth, deliberate, almost contemplative. The camera follows from behind as it strides through the urban landscape—imposing, integrated, alone.

Artist Statement

These works and the accompanying short film explore motivation, power, and political consciousness in the age of artificial intelligence. Through hybrid human-machine imagery, the project reflects on contemporary global events and the evolving relationship between technology, identity, and geopolitical influence—particularly in connection with the United States and Germany.

Set against the backdrop of post-Brexit Europe and accelerating AI dominance, the works examine how political systems shape human

agency, migration, and selfhood. The fragmented, cybernetic bodies function as metaphors for societies under algorithmic governance—caught between control and autonomy, progress and erasure.

The project is deeply informed by lived experience: my trajectory as a visual communication designer currently based in Leipzig, Germany, where I reside as a refugee after fleeing Ukraine. My academic background includes a Bachelor's degree in Visual Communication, officially translated and recognized by the German Ministry of Education. My asylum process was initiated through the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

By merging personal history with political analysis, the work positions artificial intelligence not merely as a technological tool, but as a symbolic force—one that mirrors contemporary systems of surveillance, displacement, and ideological power.

[Image: Two-page spread — left page shows robot in cityscape, right page shows hybrid human-machine figure]

Conceptual Frameworks

The work operates across multiple registers of meaning:

Synthetic Sovereignty — What happens when governance is automated? When decisions about movement, status, and belonging are processed by systems rather than humans?

The Thinking Body — The body that crosses borders carries memory, trauma, and knowledge. How is this body processed by systems that read only data?

Consciousness Under Construction — Identity in displacement is never finished. It is compiled, rendered, updated—always pending.

Anatomy of Control — The circuitry visible on skin is also the circuitry of surveillance: databases, fingerprints, facial recognition, case numbers.

Alternative Titles Considered

Algorithmic States
Manufactured Agency
The Machine Decides
Governed by Code
Half Life, Fully
Watched The Divided
Self Becoming
Interface Flesh /
Firmware No Fixed
System Bodies
Without Borders
Displaced Intelligence
Foreign to the Machine

[Image: Close-up of hybrid face — circuitry merging with skin, amber and blue lighting]

Political Reading

The work stages a confrontation between the organic and the administered. The glitch is not failure but exposure—the moment when the system reveals itself. In migration contexts, this glitch occurs constantly: the document that doesn't match, the name that won't transliterate, the biometric that won't scan.

The robot walking through the city is both threat and promise. It moves with purpose through spaces designed for others. It belongs to the infrastructure even as it is surveilled by it.

This is the condition of the refugee in technological societies:
hypervisible to systems, invisible to communities. Present in databases,
absent from narratives.

Circuit of Belonging

2025

Medium: Motion graphics, 3D animation

Duration: 2:08

Available at: <https://nazififarid.com/circuit-belonging>

Visual Style & Technical Execution

The video employs a futuristic, techno-minimalist visual language rooted in motion graphics and 3D electronic art. Photorealistic hardware details—microchips, circuit boards, processors—are layered with semi-transparent wireframes, holographic elements, and lens flares. The aesthetic balances clinical precision with ethereal, glowing effects, evoking both technological rigor and digital transcendence.

Color Palette

Primary hues of cyan, electric blue, and deep purple evoke digital interfaces and futurism. Secondary accents of gold and amber highlight circuit activity and core components. A neutral base of charcoal black and dark gray grounds the visuals and emphasizes the luminosity of active elements.

Color shifts signal thematic transitions: the opening hand sequence uses muted cyan; microchip deep dives shift to gold and amber; final circuit

board shots return to cool blues, reinforcing precision.

[Image: Circuit board cross-section with glowing amber pathways]

Shapes & Form

Geometric and structured forms mirror the architecture of electronic hardware:

- **Microchips & Circuits** — Square and rectangular dies, grid-like traces, linear pin arrays emphasizing order and miniaturization
- **Holographic Elements** — Wireframe hands, translucent cubes, glowing orbs introducing organic yet digital forms
- **Layered Compositions** — Stacked circuit layers creating nested, recursive shapes that visualize the complexity of integrated systems

Movement & Rhythm

The video's movement is dynamic yet controlled, alternating between slow, deliberate pans and rapid, immersive zooms:

- Extreme close-ups into microchip interiors create a sense of scale, shrinking the viewer into the "world" of the circuit
- Smooth 360° rotations of circuit boards showcase spatial architecture
- Horizontal pans across labeled components emphasize functional layout
- The wireframe hand moves fluidly, interacting with a touchscreen interface
- Glowing data streams pulse rhythmically, mimicking electrical current

The pacing builds from intimate human-machine interaction to grand, systemic views of hardware—a narrative arc from micro to macro.

[Image: Wireframe hand reaching toward glowing circuit components]

Symbolic & Thematic Elements

The video explores human-technology symbiosis and the invisible complexity of digital systems:

Wireframe Hand — The opening shot symbolizes the fusion of human input and digital processing: control, interaction, the "ghost in the machine."

Microchip Cross-Sections — These visuals demystify the hidden layers of technology, framing microchips as intricate, almost architectural systems.

Glowing Circuits — Amber and gold glows represent activity, energy, the "lifeblood" of digital devices—transforming inert hardware into dynamic, living systems.

Labeled Components — Text anchors abstract visuals in real-world technology, bridging artistic expression with technical accuracy.

Artistic & Political Analysis

Circuit of Belonging oscillates between the clinical precision of electronic boards and the fluid chaos of human migration. Layered circuits pulse like veins, flickering between coherence and disintegration. The work interrogates technology as both tangible skill—my expertise in assembling hardware—and metaphorical lens for exploring fractured identity, linguistic barriers, and geopolitical disenfranchisement.

Syntax of Fragmentation

Geometric shapes—reminiscent of circuit components—reconfigure in real-time, echoing unfinished informatics education. Transparent layers expose overlapping "wires," suggesting parallel narratives that never fully synchronize.

[Image: Three-tiered chip structure glowing gold against blue circuit background]

A palette of sterile blues clashes with sudden flares of warm amber, mirroring the dissonance between digital systems and the humans navigating them. Corrupted "error glitches" visually punctuate the work—a nod to system failures that mirror stalled academic trajectories.

Movements are deliberately unstable. Components "solder" themselves only to break apart, alluding to multilingual identity: languages partially mastered yet never wholly owned.

The Refugee as Integrated Circuit

My proficiency in constructing electronic boards becomes allegorical. Like a refugee piecing together legal status, housing, and employment, the artwork's "circuits" are assembled from disparate, scavenged parts. A recurring motif—a half-populated board with missing resistors—references interrupted education, a skill set forever "in beta."

Typography mutates between Cyrillic, Latin, and Arabic scripts before dissolving into binary. This evokes the labyrinth of translation-heavy asylum processes, where linguistic competencies render one forever **almost** comprehensible—but never native.

The work's most jarring moments—sudden blackouts, distorted audio loops—mirror the instability of flight from Ukraine. These disruptions

occur when imagery shifts toward recognizable national symbols, suggesting how identity is forcibly rewired by conflict.

[Image: Circuit board with Cyrillic text fragments and binary overlay]

Technology as Negotiation

Circuit of Belonging ultimately posits technology as a contested space. Circuits are both traps—the opaque systems that govern migration—and tools—hardware expertise as a means of reinvention. The artwork's unresolved tension, between integration and disintegration, mirrors the refugee experience: a life reassembled, yet perpetually aware of its own seams.

Here, technology is neither utopian nor dystopian. It is the frayed wire connecting personal agency to geopolitical forces. The work makes visible the hidden complexity of such negotiations, one fragile solder joint at a time.

Technical Nuances

- **Depth of Field** — Shallow focus draws attention to central chip components, creating cinematic intimacy while emphasizing microengineering precision
 - **Transparency & Overlay** — Semi-transparent wireframes and holograms layer digital and physical elements, blurring tangible and virtual
 - **Lighting** — Directional lighting highlights circuit board texture; emissive glows simulate electrical flow, adding dynamism to static hardware
-

[Image: Full-page circuit board panorama with gold and blue illumination]

Surface Tension: The Carat of Exile

2025

Medium: Digital video, 3D animation

Duration: 1:42

Available at: <https://nazififarid.com/surface-tension>

Title Meaning

The title operates on multiple registers:

Surface Tension — The physical property of a liquid's surface, but also the psychological pressure of maintaining coherence under stress. In gemology, surface tension affects how light refracts through a diamond. In exile, surface tension is what keeps a person intact while everything below threatens to fracture.

Carat — The unit measuring a diamond's weight, but also a homophone for "carrot" (the dangling promise) and "caret" (the proofreader's mark indicating insertion—what has been left out and must be added). In bureaucratic contexts, "carat" becomes the measure of human value: skilled vs. unskilled, desirable vs. undesirable, worthy vs. unworthy.

Exile — Not merely geographical displacement, but the condition of being measured by systems that claim objectivity while enacting judgment.

[Image: Diamond rotating in darkness, facets catching light]

Visual Content

A diamond rotates in absolute darkness. Its facets catch light from unseen sources, refracting it into brief, brilliant patterns. The gem is isolated, suspended—no context, no setting, no hand.

The scene shifts. Technical specifications overlay the image: cut, clarity, carat, color. Numbers and diagrams replace the visual splendor. The diamond is no longer an object of beauty but a dataset, a classification, a grade.

The rotation continues, but now it feels different—not contemplative but clinical, not eternal but measured. The darkness remains, but it has become the void of the database rather than the void of space.

Artist Statement

This work transforms the diamond into a metaphor for the asylum seeker's ordeal under institutional gaze. The rotating gem, suspended in darkness, performs a paradox: its facets dazzle with innate complexity, yet the subsequent shift to technical specifications reduces it to a sterile ledger.

This mirrors my own trajectory—an Iranian student displaced from Ukraine by war, filtered through Poland and Germany's bureaucratic machinery—where personal narrative collides with the reductive labels of immigration systems.

[Image: Diamond with technical overlay showing measurements and classifications]

Political Analysis

Commodification of Identity

The diamond's dual portrayal—aesthetic splendor versus clinical data—critiques how asylum frameworks commodify human worth. Like a gemstone appraised by market metrics, my degrees required translation and authentication—processes that atomize lived experience into administrable units. The abrupt cut from the diamond's glow to its data-driven presentation replicates the violence of this translation: the artist's intellect and trauma alike become line items in a case file.

Fragmentation and the Illusion of Transparency

The gem's fractured reflections symbolize the self shattered across borders. Each bureaucratic interaction—visa applications, residency interviews—demands a splintered performance of identity, much like the diamond's facets refract light disjointedly.

The dark background isolates the object, echoing isolation in systems that demand hypervisibility (documentation) yet render individuals anonymous in their struggles. The climax—where the diamond's luster dims under quantification—parallels the erasure of refugee narratives beneath bureaucratic syntax.

[Image: Diamond facets catching light, with faint grid overlay suggesting measurement]

Global Politics of Surface and Depth

The work extends beyond personal testimony to indict neoliberal displacement economies. The diamond, a symbol of both colonial

extraction and capitalist aspiration, becomes a migrant body: prized for its labor potential ("skilled" vs. "unskilled" migrant categories) yet stripped of context.

The clinical aesthetic mirrors the EU's border-industrial complex, where human movement is managed through databases like gemstone inventories. Yet the diamond's persistent glow beneath its specifications hints at resistance—a core self that eludes capture.

The Unassayable Core

The work exposes the failed alchemy of immigration bureaucracy: the belief that human value can be graded like a gem. The tension between surface (documents) and depth (identity) challenges viewers to see beyond the carceral logic of categorization.

In a world where passports dictate luminosity, ***Surface Tension: The Carat of Exile*** insists on the right to opacity—to be unreadable, uncut, and thus, unconquered.

[Image: Diamond suspended in darkness, single beam of light creating refraction patterns]

Conceptual Framework

The diamond operates as political autobiography disguised as commodity. It speaks the visual language of global luxury—perfect refraction, numerical exactitude, scientific neutrality—but this neutrality is deceptive. The diamond becomes a proxy body: measured, classified, evaluated, much like the artist within asylum systems, borders, and academic institutions.

My life trajectory is embedded in the work's structure. Born and educated in Iran, later a student of informatics, I entered Ukraine not as a

tourist or consumer but as an asylum applicant under UNHCR in Kyiv. In this context, the diamond's dimensions and carat values echo the bureaucratic metrics imposed on displaced people: eligibility, credibility, documentation, proof. Human life is reduced to tables and thresholds, just as the diamond is reduced to millimeters and weight.

The outbreak of war in Ukraine fractures the narrative, much like light splitting inside the diamond. Forced displacement repeats itself. From Kyiv to Poland, then to Germany, movement is no longer a choice but a survival mechanism. The diamond's brilliance—associated with permanence and stability—stands in sharp contrast to lived instability.

[Image: Diamond data sheet overlay on gem image]

Key Visual Evidence Referenced

- The diamond's rotation → cyclicity of displacement paperwork
 - Data overlay → Eurodac fingerprinting, credential verification protocols
 - Dark void → statelessness as enforced invisibility
-

Alternative Titles Considered

Carat of Statelessness

The Weight of Being

Measures of Worth

Refractive Index

Brilliance Under Pressure

Stem Cell Therapy

2025

Medium: Digital animation

Duration: 1:18

Available at: <https://nazififarid.com/stem-cell-therapy>

[Image: Glowing cellular structures against dark background, bubble-like forms with luminous cores]

Visual Content

The video presents abstract, glowing cellular forms against a dark field. Bubble-like structures pulse with inner light, their membranes thin and elastic. The imagery shifts between scientific visualization and cosmic abstraction—cells that could also be galaxies, membranes that could also be borders.

The forms multiply, divide, merge. Some glow warm amber, others cool blue. They exist in suspension, neither fixed nor entirely fluid, held in tension by forces just outside the frame.

Political Analysis: Bubbles Stem Cells

Visually, the "bubbles" echo stem cells in three key ways: containment, potential, and fragility.

Containment / Borders — Bubbles are membranes: thin, elastic, separating inside from outside. Stem cells are likewise bounded units whose membranes regulate what enters and exits. Politically, this mirrors how modern systems manage potential populations—migrants, youth,

innovators—kept within fragile policy "bubbles": visa regimes, funding programs, ethical frameworks.

Potential Without Fixed Identity — A bubble has no destiny; it can merge, split, or disappear. Stem cells are defined precisely by undetermined futures. Politically, this resonates with how power structures treat human potential as a resource: valuable precisely because it is not yet specified. States, corporations, and institutions compete to shape that potential before it "differentiates."

[Image: Cellular structures merging and dividing, warm amber cores]

Fragility and Control — A bubble can burst. Stem cells can mutate or become politically controversial. The imagery suggests a tension: systems want maximum promise with minimum risk. This is the politics of precaution—regulate early, contain tightly, intervene before autonomy emerges.

Political Analysis: Stem Cells Politics

Stem cells sit at a rare intersection where biology, ethics, capital, and sovereignty collide.

Biopolitics (Who Governs Life?) — Stem cell research raises the classic political question Michel Foucault framed: Who has the right to manage life itself? These images—glowing, isolated cells—feel surveilled, curated, almost administered. Life is no longer natural; it is governed.

Promise Economies — Politically, stem cells function less as cures and more as futures. Funding, legislation, and national prestige are built on what stem cells *might* do. The imagery's luminous cores suggest this speculative value—life as an investment vehicle.

[Image: Isolated cell with luminous core, surrounded by darker field]

Moral Borders — Stem cells are constantly crossing moral lines: between life and non-life, human and material, sacred and instrumental. Politics steps in to draw borders where biology refuses to. The membranes in these images quietly resemble legal boundaries, not natural ones.

Technocracy vs Democracy — The abstract, almost cosmic aesthetic distances the viewer from everyday bodies. This mirrors how decisions about stem cells are often removed from public discourse and relocated into expert committees, labs, and policy documents—power without visibility.

Reading Through Personal Trajectory

Given my background—natural sciences, abandoned medical engineering, visual communication and informatics—the work reads as a critique from the inside.

I understand scientific imagery, but refuse its authority. I replace medical clarity with ambiguity, aesthetics, and atmosphere. This shift itself is political: moving from engineering solutions to communicating questions.

The bubbles and stem cells aren't instructional—they're destabilizing. They ask:

Who gets to decide what counts as progress?

When does life become data?

At what point does care turn into control?

[Image: Full-page cellular composition, multiple glowing forms in dark field]

Final Synthesis

These images argue—quietly but insistently—that:

**MODERN POLITICS TREATS LIFE THE WAY
PHYSICS TREATS BUBBLES: VALUABLE,
TEMPORARY, CONTAINABLE, AND
ULTIMATELY DISPOSABLE IF THE SYSTEM
DEMANDS IT.**

Stem cells become the perfect political object: alive, but not autonomous; full of promise, but not rights; celebrated, yet tightly governed.

The work does not take a side—it reveals the structure. And that, in itself, is a political act.

SECTION II

MYTH AND MEMORY

[Image: Still from "The Cowboy in the Static" — animated cowboy figure against warm textured background]

The Cowboy in the Static

2025

Medium: Mixed media video (live-action + animation)

Duration: 0:19

Available at: <https://nazififarid.com/cowboy-static>

Visual Content & Subjects

The video centers on a man who undergoes two distinct visual transformations, bookended by low-quality, grainy live-action shots.

Opening Segment (0-5 seconds) — A grainy, low-resolution live-action close-up of a man with short dark hair, wearing a dark unbuttoned collared shirt and a thin silver necklace. The background is dim and indistinct. His expression is neutral, with subtle head movements.

Animated Transformation (6-15 seconds) — The scene shifts abruptly to vibrant, stylized animation. The man is reimagined as a cowboy: tan cowboy hat, blue button-up shirt with a yellow star patch on the left chest and a Texas state-shaped patch on the right chest, thin necklace. As the animation progresses, he unbuttons his shirt to reveal a muscular torso decorated with yellow star and arrow-like patterns, plus a large steer skull pendant. The background is warm, textured beige with fragmented Texas flag motifs. His expression remains stoic.

Closing Segment (16-19 seconds) — The video cuts back to low-quality live-action, mirroring the opening. The final frame distorts into pixelated blocks, obscuring his face.

[Image: Split spread — left shows grainy live-action, right shows animated cowboy transformation]

Title Analysis

Three titles were considered for this work:

Texan Reverie — Emphasizes the dreamlike, nostalgic quality of the animated fantasy sequence and its specific Western theme.

Between Realms — Highlights the core contrast and jarring transition between the low-fi "real world" and the bold animated "fantasy world."

The Cowboy in the Static — Suggests an idealized identity emerging from or hidden within a mundane, imperfect reality (represented by the grainy footage). This title was selected.

Analysis Summary

The work is a short, surreal character study. It uses a stark stylistic divide—switching from grainy, muted live-action to clean, saturated animation—to visualize a personal fantasy. The subject's neutral expression in both "realms" suggests this transformation is an internal, contemplative escape rather than an outward action.

The Western iconography (cowboy hat, Texas patches, steer skull pendant) points to themes of nostalgia, identity, and romanticizing a particular persona or place. The final distortion back into pixelated blocks reinforces the fleeting, perhaps unstable, nature of this fantasy.

[Image: Animated cowboy with star patches and steer skull pendant]

Performed Identity and the Geography of Imagination

The four images and video sequence together compose a study in rupture—between visibility and distortion, documentation and fantasy, exile and myth. At the center stands a man whose image shifts across visual regimes: from grainy live-action realism to saturated, stylized

animation, and back again. This oscillation is not merely aesthetic; it is conceptual. It stages identity as something negotiated between worlds.

One photograph presents the subject in a dim interior space. The image is marked by low resolution, ambient shadows, and digital noise. These visual imperfections reinforce a sense of immediacy and vulnerability. The subdued palette situates the subject in a contemporary European urban environment, where he lives as an Iranian refugee and where his degree has been formally translated and recognized. Institutional recognition stands in quiet tension with the instability implied by the grainy aesthetic. Paperwork may stabilize status; it does not dissolve the existential fracture of displacement.

The animated transformation introduces a second visual plane. The same figure is reimagined as a Texan cowboy. The shift from muted realism to bold illustration is abrupt—almost jarring. It is precisely this rupture that animates the work's political and cultural charge.

[Image: Close-up of animated cowboy chest with star patterns and pendant]

Politically, the cowboy iconography invokes the mythology of frontier autonomy and self-reliance. Yet in this context, the imagery reads less as geographic allegiance and more as symbolic aspiration. Texas becomes a visual shorthand for sovereignty and self-fashioning. The cowboy is not presented as a literal identity but as an aesthetic mask—one that dramatizes the longing for agency within the bureaucratic and social constraints of migration.

Culturally, the work situates itself within a triangulation of diasporic experience, European institutional frameworks, and American frontier myth. The references to Texas function as cultural symbols rather than personal affiliations.

Artistically, the most striking gesture occurs when the animated figure unbuttons his shirt to reveal a muscular torso marked with yellow stars and arrow-like patterns, along with a prominent steer skull pendant. The body becomes inscribed—decorated, heraldic, almost mythic. Identity here is not discovered; it is layered and performed. The chest is both armor and canvas. The pendant evokes mortality and endurance, while the star motifs recall flags, badges, and emblems of belonging.

[Image: Final pixelated frame from closing sequence]

The return to grainy live-action is decisive. The face reappears in dim light, only to dissolve into pixelated blocks. This final distortion undermines the stability of both realms. If the animation represents idealization, the pixelation reveals the fragility of representation itself. Both "real" and "fantasized" identities are mediated—one by the limitations of a camera sensor, the other by illustration software. Neither offers unfiltered authenticity.

The slow pacing throughout—minimal head tilts, restrained expressions—keeps the focus inward. The transformation is contemplative rather than theatrical. It resembles a fleeting daydream: an internal rehearsal of an alternative self. In this sense, the work becomes a meditation on diaspora as a condition of layered belonging. The shirt can be unbuttoned; the patches can be stitched on or removed. Symbols are wearable. Identity is provisional.

Ultimately, the piece resists a singular narrative. It is neither a straightforward autobiography nor a detached fiction. Instead, it inhabits the liminal territory between documentation and myth. The cowboy emerging from static is not an escape from reality but a commentary on how reality is continually reimagined through iconography.

The Orchard of Absence

2025

Medium: Motion graphics, digital video

Duration: 0:58

Available at: <https://nazififarid.com/orchard-absence>

[Image: Slipper hanging from apple tree branch against misty background]

Visual Content

A single slipper hangs from the branch of an apple tree, gently moving in the wind. The word "Lost" is written across it.

Across different episodes, the imagery shifts slightly—sometimes the tree is blooming with delicate pink blossoms, sometimes it bears ripened apples, sometimes it stands in a mist-filled forest. Yet the central object remains constant: the suspended shoe.

Artistic Analysis

The slipper functions as a powerful symbol of human presence through absence. A shoe is an intimate object—it carries the imprint of a body, a journey, a direction. Detached from its wearer and hung unnaturally from a tree, it becomes evidence of interruption. The word "Lost" transforms it from a mere misplaced object into a narrative fragment. We are not simply witnessing a forgotten belonging; we are confronting the idea of

disappearance—of a person, a childhood, a memory, or even a sense of self.

The apple tree deepens the symbolic field. Traditionally associated with knowledge, temptation, growth, and life cycles, the tree becomes a silent witness. In some frames it blossoms—suggesting beginnings, innocence, renewal. In others it bears fruit—implying maturity, consequence, time passed. The natural rhythm of the tree contrasts sharply with the unnatural presence of the hanging slipper. Nature continues its cycles, while the human story remains suspended and unresolved.

[Image: Apple tree with blossoms and hanging slipper, misty atmosphere]

The misty atmosphere and subdued blue-gray palette create a feeling of distance and melancholy. The red or muted tones of the shoe subtly draw the eye, functioning as the emotional focal point. Movement—gentle swaying in the wind—adds a temporal dimension. The slipper is not static; it oscillates, as if caught between falling and remaining, between being remembered and being forgotten. This motion reinforces the theme of instability and emotional suspension.

There is also a poetic tension between gravity and attachment. A shoe belongs to the ground; here, it is elevated and estranged. It hangs like fruit, yet it is not organic. This visual paradox suggests themes of displacement and identity—when something (or someone) is removed from its rightful context, it becomes symbolic rather than functional.

Symbolic Interpretations

The artwork may evoke:

- Lost childhood or innocence
 - Migration and displacement
 - Memory suspended in time
 - The fragility of human presence within enduring nature
 - The search for belonging
-

[Image: Apple tree with fruit and hanging slipper, warm evening light]

Religious and Spiritual Interpretation

In Iranian cultural and spiritual sensibilities, both trees and shoes carry layered meanings:

Trees evoke sacred life—from Zoroastrian sacred groves to Sufi symbols of the divine Beloved rooted in the world yet extending toward the heavens. Apples suggest knowledge and the paradox of loss and awakening.

Shoes in Islamic tradition are symbols of humility (one removes shoes before prayer); they also appear in supplications for protection and justice.

The hanging shoe can be read as a spiritual symbol of suspended belonging—a pilgrim who has left home, yet is not yet arrived. It is the mark of a seeker caught between worlds: memory and prophecy, loss and hope.

The Persian word for loss, گمشده (gomshodeh), carries spiritual weight: not just lost physically, but lost morally, ethically, spiritually. The work evokes this layered meaning: the outward journey of migration becomes a deeper inner journey—a search for self, faith, and home.

[Image: Slipper detail against bark and blossoms]

Political and Legal Context

The work's personal journey mirrors the realities of thousands of Iranians who have fled war, repression, or lack of opportunity and sought refuge in Europe. The biography—an Iranian student in Ukraine during wartime, an asylum applicant through UNHCR, a German language learner whose progress was interrupted—echoes many stories now unfolding across borders.

Iran's current political climate has driven waves of migration: economic instability, suppression of dissent, and the aftermath of state violence have made life precarious for many, particularly for youth and intellectuals. Many Iranian refugees find themselves in legal limbo, caught between incomplete documentation, complex asylum bureaucracies, and cultural dislocation.

The artwork becomes, therefore, politically resonant: not just about loss, but about the uncertain status of those uprooted by circumstance; about belonging without citizenship, identity without home, movement without return.

Integrated Interpretation

"Suspended Journeys: The Tree of Becoming and Belonging" (a proposed alternative title) becomes an artwork functioning on multiple levels:

- **Artistically** — It captures universal emotions of loss and memory
- **Spiritually** — It expresses the liminal struggle between rootedness and exile, familiar in Iranian mysticism

- **Politically** — It reflects the unresolved identity of refugees who are present but not fully recognized
- **Legally** — It symbolizes bureaucratic suspension—the waiting, the uncertainty, the displacement embedded in current asylum and migration policies

The work is not simply an aesthetic experience; it is a living testimony—to being from somewhere and belonging nowhere, to a world where the body travels but the legal status remains in the air like a shoe hanging from a branch.

Charlie and the McDonald's Factory

2025

Medium: Video, surreal montage

Duration: 1:34

Available at: <https://nazififarid.com/charlie-mcdonalds-factory>

[Image: Gloved hands holding McDonald's fry container with chocolate bars on newspaper]

Visual Content

The video begins with a close-up of gloved hands holding a McDonald's fry container, tilted to spill fries onto a tray lined with a newspaper and stacked chocolate bars labeled "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory"—a direct nod to Roald Dahl's classic. This sequence repeats, emphasizing the act of emptying the container.

The scene shifts to a character in a red velvet suit and top hat (evoking Willy Wonka) standing at a McDonald's counter, holding a large burger and facing a customer with a menu. Next, Ronald McDonald appears, reading a newspaper or menu. The final scene returns to the Wonka-esque character at a busy McDonald's counter, interacting with a cashier.

The narrative weaves together elements of ***Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*** with McDonald's branding, creating a surreal fusion of the two franchises.

Characters & Setting

Wonka-esque Figure — Dressed in red/pink velvet suit, top hat, and bow tie, this character bridges Dahl's whimsical factory owner with the corporate fast-food setting. Their presence frames McDonald's as a "factory" of mass-produced food, mirroring the chocolate factory's industrialized magic but with a commercial twist.

Ronald McDonald — The brand's iconic clown, presented in a mundane, service-oriented role (reading a menu), subverts his usual playful persona to highlight the banality of fast-food labor.

Setting — A McDonald's restaurant, with counters, menus, and branded decor. The contrast between the fantastical Wonka character and the sterile fast-food environment creates cognitive dissonance, underscoring the video's satirical tone.

[Image: Wonka-esque figure at McDonald's counter holding burger]

Symbolism & Social/Political Themes

Fry Spillage — The repeated act of emptying the fry container symbolizes excess and waste in fast-food culture—McDonald's as a machine that produces more than needed, mirroring critiques of consumerism and overconsumption.

Chocolate Factory Reference — By merging ***Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*** (a story about a magical, albeit exploitative, factory) with McDonald's, the video critiques corporate "magic"—how fast-food chains market themselves as whimsical or desirable while operating as industrialized, profit-driven entities. The chocolate bars on the tray link McDonald's to Dahl's factory, suggesting both are sites of mass production that prioritize quantity over quality.

Wonka as Consumer — The Wonka-like figure, typically a creator, is reimagined as a customer at McDonald's, reversing the dynamic of production and consumption. This implies that even "magical" creators are subject to the homogenizing force of fast food, or that corporate brands co-opt whimsy to sell products.

Labor & Alienation — Ronald McDonald's passive, menu-reading role and the gloved hands (anonymous workers) highlight the dehumanization of fast-food labor—workers reduced to cogs in a corporate machine, even as the brand uses playful mascots to mask this reality.

[Image: Ronald McDonald reading menu at counter]

Artistic Style & Visual Techniques

Surreal Montage — The video cuts between unrelated but thematically linked scenes to create a dreamlike, disjointed narrative, forcing viewers to connect the dots between the two franchises.

Color Contrast — The vibrant red of McDonald's branding clashes with the muted tones of the newspaper and chocolate bars, drawing attention

to the commercialization of whimsy. The Wonka character's pink/red suit echoes both McDonald's red and the original Wonka's purple, blending the two visual identities.

Repetition — The repeated fry-spilling sequence emphasizes the critique of excess, while the recurring Wonka figure reinforces the fusion of fantasy and corporate culture.

Close-Ups & Medium Shots — Close-ups of symbolic objects balance with medium shots of characters in the McDonald's environment, balancing intimacy with social commentary.

The Absurd Factory: Industrialization of Power

The collision of Dahl's whimsical factory with the golden arches of McDonald's creates a jarring commentary on the homogenizing forces of corporate and state power. The surreal montage serves as a visual metaphor for systems that produce not just consumer goods but also violence, displacement, and geopolitical tension.

At its core, the work critiques the **factory** as an emblem of industrialized control: whether churning out uniform fast food or uniform military technology, the logic remains eerily similar. The McDonald's "factory" mirrors the state's military-industrial factory—both rely on dehumanized labor, both flatten individuality into interchangeable parts, and both perpetuate cycles of consumption and destruction.

[Image: Fry container spilling fries onto newspaper with chocolate bars]

From Happy Meals to Drones: The Homogenization of Violence

The video's most potent symbol is its subversion of the "magical factory" trope. In Dahl's original, Willy Wonka's factory is a site of wonder; in this reimagining, it's a site of eerie mechanization. Ronald McDonald, stripped of his cartoonish exuberance, becomes a passive worker, his movements repetitive and joyless. This mirrors the anonymity of drone operators or assembly-line technicians in weapons manufacturing—faceless cogs in a machine that produces both Big Macs and ballistic missiles.

The recent downing of an Iranian drone by the USS Abraham Lincoln crystallizes this parallel. The drone, a product of Iran's military-industrial factory, is a standardized tool of surveillance and force, much like McDonald's fries are a standardized product of global capitalism. Its destruction by a U.S. naval vessel—itsself a symbol of American military hegemony—echoes the video's clash of cultural icons: Wonka's fantastical idealism versus McDonald's sterile efficiency. Both encounters reveal the absurdity of industrialized power, where the outputs (a drone, a burger) are less significant than the systems that produce them.

[Image: Wonka-esque figure interacting with cashier at counter]

The Refugee as Witness

My position as a refugee lends this critique unique weight. Having fled geopolitical conflicts fueled by these very systems, the artwork exposes the human cost of monolithic structures. The gloved hands in the video—bleached of identity—evoke the bureaucratic machinery that processes refugees, reducing individuals to paperwork and quotas. The spilling fries, a grotesque surfeit, parallel the waste and excess of militarized states that prioritize arms over asylum.

The drone incident is not an isolated event but a symptom of the factory logic the work skewers. Just as McDonald's global empire erases local food cultures, military industrialism erases nuance, reducing conflicts to the cold calculus of hardware and collateral. The artist's lens captures the absurdity: a world where factories produce both toys and torpedoes, where the same systems that promise "happy meals" also deliver unhappiness in the form of displacement and war.

Conclusion: Art in the Age of Industrialized Absurdity

Charlie and the McDonald's Factory is a dissection of the 21st century's industrialized absurdity. By juxtaposing childhood nostalgia with corporate critique, it forces viewers to confront the underlying sameness of systems that rule our lives—whether through a drive-thru or a drone strike.

For me, art becomes an act of witness. A refugee's perspective is uniquely suited to expose the fractures in these structures, precisely because one exists at their margins. This video is more than satire; it's a call to recognize the factory in all its forms—and to imagine a world beyond its assembly lines.

Return Under Fog

2025

Medium: Sculpture, motion graphics, photography

Dimensions: Variable

Available at: <https://nazififarid.com/return-under-fog>

[Image: Solitary standing figure in dense mist, suitcase in hand]

Visual Content

The sculpture and motion-graphics concept centers on a solitary figure standing upright in a dense, almost suffocating mist. The man's posture—upright yet introspective, gaze lifted toward an unseen horizon—suggests both moral defiance and existential isolation.

The suitcase in his hand functions as a key symbol: it is the portable life of a refugee, the archive of memory, and the burden of return. Beneath him, the recumbent body evokes sacrifice, martyrdom, and the cost of political courage. The vertical composition (standing figure) versus horizontal form (fallen body) creates a stark visual dialectic between life and death, voice and silence, witness and victim.

The fog dissolves geographical certainty, making the monument feel placeless and transnational. It could be Siberia, Europe, or a psychic interior landscape. This ambiguity mirrors the displacement of contemporary exiles: identities suspended between countries, languages, and futures. The muted blue-gray palette reinforces mourning but also endurance, as if the figure persists within a climate of repression and uncertainty.

[Image: Figure with suitcase in fog, recumbent form visible beneath]

Political Analysis

The artwork invokes the fate of political dissidents as a symbolic narrative of dissent, exile, and fatal return. In doing so, it situates individual sacrifice within broader geopolitical tensions shaping Europe.

The work intersects with diasporic political mobilization in Germany, including demonstrations by Iranian exiles, which have energized conversations about democratic futures in Iran. In this context, the sculpture reads as a shared memorial language across national struggles: Russian, Iranian, and broader refugee experiences converge in a single monument of resistance and mourning. Germany becomes a stage where these narratives overlap—hosting conferences on global security while simultaneously serving as a refuge for dissidents and artists displaced by war and repression.

Thus, ***Return Under Fog*** operates on multiple registers:

- **Memorial:** honoring the cost of political dissent
 - **Autobiographical:** reflecting the journey of a refugee artist navigating Europe
 - **Geopolitical:** engaging with contemporary debates about democracy, exile, and state power
-

[Image: Close-up of figure's face in mist, upward gaze]

The standing figure's upward gaze ultimately suggests unresolved tension: hope without resolution, courage without guarantee. It is a monument not to closure, but to the fragile persistence of conscience in an era of displacement and political uncertainty.

Artistic and Professional Context

The work resonates with my biography—a refugee artist whose path through Poland and Germany parallels the symbolic journey embedded in the sculpture. My academic formation at Ferdows University of Mashhad and subsequent credential recognition in Saxony anchor the piece in

both Iranian and European visual traditions: monumental realism, memorial sculpture, and contemporary political installation. The standing figure becomes not only a portrait of a dissident but also a mirror of the artist himself—an observer suspended between departure and return.

SECTION III

CARTOGRAPHIES

[Image: "Topographies of Displacement: S4D Atlas" — smartphone with topographical relief mapping]

Topographies of Displacement: S4D Atlas

2025

Medium: 3D animation, motion graphics

Duration: 1:52

Available at: <https://nazififarid.com/s4d-atlas>

Visual Framework

The designs merge smartphone camera modules with mountainous terrain and fault lines, producing a metaphor where territory becomes device and device becomes territory.

In migration contexts, the smartphone is simultaneously:

- A survival tool
 - An archive of identity
 - A tracking mechanism
 - A geopolitical interface (borders, asylum routes, surveillance)
-

[Image: Smartphone with topographical mapping overlaying camera module]

Color Palette

The video uses a restrained, high-contrast palette dominated by cool grays, deep blues, and metallic silvers in its opening and mid-segments, evoking a futuristic, technological tone. Later, it shifts to warm earth tones (beige, terracotta, and muted gold) layered with grays, creating a visual metaphor of merging technology with natural landscapes.

The monochromatic grayscale sequence emphasizes texture and form, while the final segments balance cool and warm hues to highlight the fusion of the smartphone and topographical elements.

Typography

Typography is minimal and functional, with clean, sans-serif fonts. Large, bold "4DD" text uses a geometric, modern typeface that contrasts sharply with organic topographical textures, drawing focus to the core message. Smaller, lighter sans-serif text is subtle, blending with the background to avoid distracting from the central visual narrative.

[Image: "4DD" text over topographical smartphone surface]

Animation Style

The animation employs smooth, fluid camera movements (slow pans, tilts, and rotations) that glide over the smartphone's topographical surface, emphasizing its 3D texture and depth. Transitions are seamless: the initial abstract blur morphs into a detailed topographical map, and later, the smartphone "emerges" from or merges with landscape imagery via soft dissolves and layer masks. The style balances realism (detailed texture rendering of mountains and valleys) with surrealism (the smartphone as a landscape canvas).

Topographical Textures

Three distinct topographical layers appear:

Top — Snow-capped mountain range with detailed, rugged peaks and cloud formations

Middle — Coastal or island-like mountainous terrain with mix of dark and light brown textures, showing elevation and land-water boundaries

Bottom — Arid, desert-like mountainous terrain with warm brown and beige hues, detailed with ridges and valleys

[Image: Three-tiered topographical layers on smartphone surface]

Visual Themes

The core theme is the fusion of technology and the natural world: the smartphone's back surface is reimagined as a topographical map, blurring the line between digital devices and organic landscapes. This metaphor underscores the smartphone's advanced capabilities—capturing detailed, immersive environmental data.

Secondary themes include precision (via detailed texture rendering) and futurism (via cool metallic tones and smooth animations).

Design Elements

Textural Contrast — Smooth, glossy smartphone surfaces paired with rough, rugged topographical textures create tactile visual interest

Layered Imagery — Overlapping layers of smartphone, landscape, and abstract blurs add depth and complexity

Lighting — Soft, directional lighting (cool blues in opening, warm golds later) enhances texture—highlights define mountain peaks, shadows deepen valleys

Abstract Transitions — Pixelated blurs and radial fades act as transitional devices, signaling shifts between thematic segments

[Image: Smartphone half-submerged in landscape, split composition]

Enhancement Opportunities

1. **Color Palette Variation** — Adding subtle accent colors (deep teal or burnt orange) to key elements could increase visual hierarchy and memorability
2. **Typography Integration** — Animating small technical labels to "activate" as the camera pans over relevant features would tie them to smartphone functionality
3. **Animation Dynamic Range** — Occasional subtle speed variations could create rhythmic contrast within the slow, fluid pace
4. **Texture Depth** — Micro-interactions (tiny particles, light rays bouncing off mountain peaks) could enhance surreal, immersive quality

5. **Narrative Clarity** — Brief, subtle animation of a camera lens "capturing" a landscape detail could explicitly link visuals to smartphone capabilities
-

Political Interpretation

For institutions such as the United Nations and the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF), this visual language can be interpreted as a cultural artifact expressing displacement, securitization of mobility, and the psychological cartography of exile.

The mountainous reliefs evoke regions across the Iranian plateau, Afghan highlands, and Central Asian corridors—spaces shaped by conflict, migration routes, and political fragmentation.

[Image: Topographical smartphone with camera module focus]

Policy-Oriented Interpretation

For audiences within global diplomatic bodies and migration authorities, the package can be positioned as:

"A visual ethnography of digital exile and securitized mobility."

It reflects:

- The psychological impact of forced migration
- The role of digital devices in asylum journeys
- The perception of constant surveillance among diasporic communities

This framing avoids unverified allegations while acknowledging that violence against cultural figures, political repression, and migration crises shape the emotional landscape represented in the designs.

Chronotopia: The Cartography of Time

2025

Medium: Motion graphics, 3D animation

Duration: 2:24

Available at: <https://nazififarid.com/chronotopia>

[Image: Layered landscape with river valley merging with colossal stone face]

Visual Content & Style

The video opens with a dynamic, abstract burst of light and texture, transitioning into a layered, surreal landscape where a river valley merges with a colossal stone face—suggesting a fusion of natural geography and historical monumentality.

Subsequent scenes shift between topographical maps, ethereal human silhouettes, and translucent, overlapping map layers, creating a dreamlike, temporally fluid aesthetic. The style blends photorealism (detailed river valleys, weathered maps) with digital surrealism (glowing projections, floating historical figures, fragmented typography).

Motion & Graphical Elements

Motion is fluid and layered: the camera glides over morphing landscapes, map fragments fold and unfold like origami, and historical figures (Roman soldiers, 1600s explorers) appear as semi-transparent projections, their forms shifting between eras.

Graphical elements include:

- **Topographical maps** — Textured, crumpled, and overlaid with crack patterns, merging with mountain ranges
 - **Light projections** — Beam-like rays illuminating floating maps and figures
 - **Temporal markers** — Dates (1865, 1204, 1492) and labels ("ANCIENT MESOPOTAMIA," "TERRA INCOGNITA") floating freely in 3D space
-

[Image: Historical figures as translucent projections over layered maps]

Typography & 4D Space

Typography is integrated as a dynamic, spatial element rather than static text. Ancient script and modern labels appear etched into landscapes, float above map layers, or fragment into particles—embracing the "4D space" brief by existing across time (historical eras) and physical dimensions (overlapping, moving, and interacting with visual elements).

Cyrillic and Latin text overlays shift as the camera moves, and labels like "BOUNDARIES REDEFINED" (1865) appear as both text and visual break in map layers, linking linguistic meaning to spatial transformation.

Core Themes

The video centers on geographical ownership as a fluid, historical construct—challenging fixed notions of territory by showing maps and boundaries evolving across eras (from Ancient Mesopotamia to 2024 CE).

History & Natural Sciences — The fusion of landscapes with historical figures and maps frames geography as a product of both natural

formation and human interpretation

Mathematics & 4D Space — Layered maps and temporal projections use spatial mathematics to visualize time as a dimension, turning history into an interactive, 4D landscape

Cosmopolitanism — Translucent, era-spanning figures stand side-by-side, suggesting a shared human connection to geography beyond racial or national divides

[Image: Dates and typography floating over morphing landscapes]

Artistic Analysis

The film masterfully interprets the demand to equate geography with interdisciplinary cosmopolitanism. By rendering historical figures as translucent specters and maps as mutable entities, it visualizes land as a palimpsest of human endeavor. The integration of equations and typography into topography bridges STEM and humanities elegantly.

The "4D" illusion is achieved through kinetic typography that reacts to environmental changes: dates stretch into horizons, place names warp with erosion. The surreal, high-contrast aesthetic underscores the tension between permanence and flux.

A standout sequence—explorers' ships disintegrating into migratory arrows—brilliantly ties colonial history to modern diaspora.

Story: A Journey Through the Fluid Borders of Time

Witness the earth breathe. Mountains rise and dissolve into parchment-thin maps, their borders bleeding like watercolor. Roman soldiers march across a desert that fractures into equations—Newton's calculus etched

into canyon walls. A 15th-century explorer's compass spins wildly as the terrain beneath him liquefies, revealing strata of war treaties and migratory routes.

Dates hover like constellations, colliding with rivers that rewrite themselves. A child's hand (present-day) reaches into the soil and pulls up a ribbon of text: "You are standing where a Pharaoh once stood." The typography fractures into particles, swirling into the shape of a DNA helix—linking all who've walked this land.

The climax is a silent explosion: borders vanish, maps become translucent, and the land whispers in the voices of a hundred languages. The screen fades to a single coordinate—(0,0,0,0)—the origin point of time and space, where all human stories converge.

[Image: Ships dissolving into migratory arrows over map layers]

Political Geography and the Body of the Refugee

Born in Iran, now living in Leipzig, Germany, I stand at the intersection of multiple geopolitical ruptures. Having fled Kyiv after the outbreak of the war in Ukraine—after previously beginning my asylum process in Ukraine under UNHCR protection—my biography is itself a cartography of displacement.

Chronotopia: The Cartography of Time is not merely a conceptual meditation on geography; it is an autobiographical document encoded in spatial metaphors. The floating dates—1204, 1492, 1865, 2024—are not arbitrary historical signposts. They represent ruptures in territorial logic: empire, colonization, redefinition of borders, modern global realignments.

In this context, the refugee condition is not external to the work—it is its epistemological engine. Movement from Iran to Ukraine to Germany

mirrors the film's layered maps folding and unfolding. Just as parchment morphs into mountains and borders dissolve into rivers, the legal status of a refugee is a shifting construct—defined by states, contested by politics, yet anchored in universal human rights frameworks.

[Image: Coordinate (0,0,0,0) against cosmic background]

Leipzig and the German Academic Context

Leipzig, long associated with intellectual dissent and transformation, provides a fertile yet complex environment. German universities operate within a framework formally protective of academic freedom but also embedded in funding structures, migration policies, and bureaucratic procedures that profoundly shape refugee scholars and artists.

For an Iranian refugee artist in Germany, there exists institutional openness alongside administrative barriers, language thresholds, and subtle cultural exclusions. The political climate—marked by debates over migration, nationalism, and European identity—creates a paradoxical space of welcome and scrutiny.

The work visually anticipates this paradox. Roman soldiers, Ottoman dominion, explorers, and contemporary figures coexist as translucent presences. Germany is implicitly positioned not as a final destination, but as one historical layer among many. In this sense, the artwork critiques the illusion of national permanence—even within Europe's most stable institutions.

Cultural Cosmopolitanism and Post-National Identity

The work's ambition is not simply to critique empire but to envision post-national coexistence. By placing Roman soldiers beside 1600s explorers, Ottoman dominion beside contemporary figures, and layering scripts from multiple languages, it constructs a planetary archive.

In a Europe grappling with identity politics, rising populism, and debates over integration, this vision is both utopian and necessary. It suggests:

- Identity as sediment, not essence
 - Citizenship as temporal status, not metaphysical destiny
 - Humanity as the only durable geography
-

Cosmic Stasis: The ISS in Event Horizon

2025

Medium: Motion graphics, 3D animation

Duration: 1:36

Available at: <https://nazififarid.com/cosmic-stasis>

[Image: International Space Station suspended at black hole event horizon]

Concept Overview

In ***Cosmic Stasis: The ISS in Event Horizon***, the International Space Station—humanity's most ambitious cooperative technological structure—is positioned at the threshold of a black hole, where time theoretically slows to infinity. Suspended at the event horizon, the ISS appears frozen in an impossible equilibrium: neither consumed nor free.

This motion graphics work stages a scientific paradox as a cultural metaphor. The black hole, a region where spacetime curves beyond return, becomes a visual language for displacement, rupture, and transformation. The station, built through international collaboration, stands as a symbol of collective survival and shared futurity.

For an artist who has crossed borders, languages, and political systems, this cosmic suspension resonates beyond astrophysics. It becomes a meditation on liminality.

Thematic Framework

Suspended Time, Suspended Identity

The event horizon is not merely an astrophysical boundary—it is a threshold of no return. Time dilation near a black hole implies that, from an external perspective, motion appears to halt.

In this work:

- The ISS appears motionless against spiraling gravitational currents
 - Human progress confronts the limit of cosmic law
 - Movement exists, yet is visually imperceptible
 - Time stands still, yet transformation is inevitable
-

[Image: ISS in symmetrical suspension within radiant gravitational ring]

The ISS as Political Architecture

The International Space Station is the product of multinational collaboration—an engineered symbol of diplomacy in orbit. In this rendering, it becomes:

- A monument to international cooperation
- A fragile construct against overwhelming force
- A testament to human persistence
- A geopolitical object repositioned within cosmic indifference

Placed within a black hole's gravitational field, the ISS becomes a metaphor for institutions—national, political, cultural—subject to forces larger than themselves.

Visual Language & Motion

The imagery reveals three compositional modes:

1. **Isolation in absolute blackness** — emphasizing vulnerability
2. **Symmetrical suspension within a radiant gravitational ring** — invoking ritual, cosmology, and sacred geometry
3. **Spiral descent into luminous matter streams** — suggesting inevitability and flow

The swirling accretion disk evokes both astrophysical realism and painterly abstraction. Motion graphics techniques—rotational blur, radial light dispersion, deep contrast—produce a sensory field where stillness and velocity coexist.

[Image: ISS spiraling toward luminous matter streams]

Scientific and Philosophical Dimensions

Core themes include:

- Time dilation and relativity at the event horizon
- Human technological ambition vs. cosmic scale

- Thresholds and irreversible transformation
- International cooperation as fragile equilibrium
- Gravity as both physical and political metaphor
- The aesthetics of suspension

The event horizon functions here not as catastrophe, but as contemplation.

Cultural & Political Artistic Analysis

My biography infects the work with additional resonance. As a refugee currently residing in Leipzig, Germany, with academic credentials officially recognized, I embody a trajectory of transition and institutional negotiation. My continued graduate studies in Europe situate me within the intellectual space of mobility and transnational discourse.

Within this context:

- The black hole becomes a metaphor for historical rupture
- The ISS symbolizes international solidarity and the promise of shared structures
- Suspension evokes the bureaucratic and existential limbo often experienced in migration
- The work resists collapse; it chooses tension over destruction

Cosmic Stasis can thus be read as a political meditation on belonging in an era of planetary instability—ecological, geopolitical, and epistemological. Rather than dramatizing fall, it stages endurance.

SECTION IV

WITNESS

[Image: "Shelter" — squirrel wearing headphones in public transport carriage]

Shel ter

2025

Medium: Digital image

Available at: <https://nazififarid.com/shelter>

Visual Content

At first glance, **Shelter** presents an almost whimsical image: a squirrel wearing oversized headphones inside a crowded public transport carriage. But that whimsy is doing serious political work.

Political & Artistic Analysis

The Squirrel as Political Subject

The squirrel functions as a proxy citizen—small, vulnerable, alert, and displaced. It is not native to this environment, much like many individuals navigating contemporary political systems.

In Texas, current debates around migration, homelessness, public safety, and state control place vulnerable populations into highly visible yet powerless positions. In Saxony, similar tensions exist around migration, economic insecurity, and the rise of exclusionary politics.

The squirrel is present but not protected—a being allowed to exist in public space but not truly accommodated by it.

[Image: Squirrel with headphones, food debris visible on floor]

Headphones: Self-Isolation as Survival

The headphones are crucial. They symbolize:

- Psychological withdrawal
- Algorithmic comfort
- Selective listening in polarized societies

In both Texas and Saxony, political discourse has become loud, hostile, and exhausting. The headphones suggest that survival now requires tuning out—not out of apathy, but necessity. This mirrors how citizens retreat into ideological or digital "shelters" when public space feels unsafe.

Public Transport as the State

The subway/bus interior operates as a metaphor for the state apparatus:

- Crowded
- Moving forward without individual control
- Governed by unseen rules

The animal is inside the system, not outside it—suggesting that marginal groups are not external "problems" but internal contradictions within modern governance.

[Image: Interior of public transport carriage with squirrel passenger]

Crumbs on the Floor: Precarious Economics

The scattered food debris at the squirrel's feet points to scarcity and informal survival:

- Gig economies
- Shrinking social safety nets
- Survival through leftovers

This resonates strongly with Texas' rollback of welfare protections and Saxony's post-industrial economic anxiety. Shelter here is not comfort—it's temporary relief.

Shelter as Paradox

The title **Shelter** is deeply ironic. The public vehicle offers:

- Physical enclosure
- Emotional exposure

There is protection from the outside, but no dignity inside. This reflects contemporary governance: people are "included" structurally but excluded socially.

Academic Influence

My background in Visual Communications and Informatics becomes evident:

- **Visual Communications** — symbolic compression, metaphor, visual irony
- **Informatics** — systems thinking, nodes within networks, behavioral adaptation

The squirrel behaves like a data packet inside a noisy system—buffered, compressed, waiting.

Final Reading

Shelter argues that in Texas and Saxony alike, modern citizens increasingly resemble urban wildlife:

- Adaptive but anxious
- Visible but unheard
- Sheltered but unsafe

It is not a protest image—it is a diagnosis.

The Wild at the Threshold

2025

Medium: Video

Duration: 0:32

Available at: <https://nazififarid.com/wild-threshold>

[Image: Snowbound wooden cabin with warm interior light]

Scenes, Setting, and Mood

The video unfolds in a snowbound, remote wooden cabin, framed by a wintry landscape of snow-laden trees and falling snow. The mood oscillates between cozy introspection and eerie mystery: warm, golden

cabin lighting contrasts with the cold, blue-tinged exterior, creating a sense of isolation and quiet tension.

Characters and Actions

A lone, unseen figure (implied by hands and a distant silhouette) interacts with objects:

- Pouring whiskey from a "Wolfe's" bottle into a glass
- Handling a dark, intricately wrapped gift box and a deck of custom playing cards
- Walking through the snow toward the cabin, holding a gift box, with a wolf watching from the distance

A wolf appears as a recurring, symbolic figure: standing outside the cabin, observing the figure, and mirroring the wolf illustration on a playing card.

[Image: Wolf outside cabin, watching from snow]

Key Visual Elements

- **Objects** — "Wolfe's" whiskey bottle, custom playing cards (featuring wolf, spades, diamonds, portrait), wooden box with cash, wrapped gift box
 - **Lighting** — Warm interior firelight, twinkling Christmas tree lights, cold diffused exterior snowlight
 - **Transitions** — Soft fades between close-ups and wide shots, with pixelated abstract final frame suggesting ambiguity
-

Political & Cultural Interpretation

Visually and thematically, the video uses stark contrasts—warm interior light vs. cold snow, solitude vs. the distant presence of a wolf—to explore inner conflict, survival, risk, and belonging.

Themes & Symbolism

Isolation and the Snowbound Cabin — Reflects the experience of displacement and survival in unfamiliar territory: the cold exterior symbolizes uncertainty, loneliness, and the outsider's struggle.

[Image: Playing card with wolf illustration]

The Wolf — As both a real animal and a card motif, the wolf can represent:

- The outsider gaze—a being that observes but is not fully integrated
- The tension between fear and kinship
- A symbolic doubling of the self in exile—both wary and watchful

The Cards and the Gift — The wolf-featured cards and wrapped box might symbolize luck, chance, identity, hidden potentials, the interplay between risk and survival choices.

Whiskey — A moment of ritual, pause, and introspection—the protagonist confronting inner thoughts while outside forces (snow, wolf) encroach.

Artistic Reading

Visuals are cinematic:

- **Color Palette** — Contrast emphasizes emotional tension: warm human presence inside vs. unresolved cold outside
- **Minimalism** — Sparse visuals highlight psychological landscapes more than literal narrative
- **Ambiguity** — The unresolved ending symbolizes open possibility, mirroring an asylum seeker's uncertain future

This aligns with artistic traditions where environment reflects inner state.

OTANDOWS 77

2025

Medium: Video installation

Duration: 0:45

Available at: <https://nazififarid.com/otandows-77>

[Image: Pressure cooker with steam, vintage television showing "OTAN"]

Political Art Analysis

OTANDOWS 77 is a compact but loaded political allegory that stages tension, power, and delay through everyday objects: a pressure cooker, a vintage television, smoke, and shifting textual signals—"OTAN" and "77." The work operates at the intersection of domestic life and geopolitical violence, a space that resonates deeply with my position as an Iranian refugee living in Germany.

At the core of the composition is the pressure cooker, a domestic object associated with nourishment and routine. Here, however, it becomes a

symbol of contained violence—a vessel designed to hold pressure just short of explosion. This metaphor is difficult to separate from contemporary Iran, where social, political, and economic pressure has accumulated over decades under authoritarian control, sanctions, and recurring cycles of protest and repression. The cooker's steam is not chaotic; it is regulated, suggesting a system that allows limited release but never genuine relief.

[Image: Hand adjusting pressure cooker valve]

Beneath it sits the television, a mediator of reality and propaganda. In one frame, the screen displays "OTAN"—the French acronym for NATO. This linguistic choice is crucial. "OTAN" signals Europe, Western military alliances, and the language of international intervention, while also emphasizing distance: Iran is often discussed **about**, not **with**. The TV becomes a mouthpiece for global power narratives, where Iranian lives are reduced to headlines, strategic calculations, or moral abstractions.

The act of a hand adjusting the cooker introduces a subtle but powerful intervention. This hand can be read as Western influence—sanctions, diplomacy, covert operations—carefully modulating pressure without dismantling the system itself. It is not liberation, but management. The gesture implies control without accountability, echoing how international actors often "handle" Iran: preventing explosion while allowing suffering to continue.

The final image replaces "OTAN" with "77," a number that invites multiple readings. It can reference 1977-79, the years leading up to the Iranian Revolution, when pressure similarly built beneath the surface of everyday life. It may also allude to repetition and stasis: history looping rather than resolving. The shift from a political acronym to an abstract number suggests the collapse of meaning—news reduced to symbols, dates, and statistics, stripped of lived experience.

[Image: Television screen showing "77"]

The muted color palette, retro television, and absence of faces reinforce a sense of temporal suspension. This is not a moment of explosion but of permanent anticipation. The work speaks to a global condition in which crises—especially in the Middle East—are endlessly broadcast yet endlessly deferred, normalized as background noise.

Seen through my biography, **OTANDOWS 77** becomes even sharper. As an Iranian refugee in Germany, I occupy the space between lived trauma and mediated representation. The artwork does not scream; it simmers. It refuses spectacle in favor of sustained pressure, mirroring the psychological condition of exile: waiting, watching, knowing something will happen but not when—or for whom.

Ultimately, **OTANDOWS 77** critiques both authoritarian containment within Iran and strategic containment by global powers. It asks an uncomfortable question: when pressure is managed rather than resolved, who benefits from the delay—and who is left inside the cooker?

The Republic of Small Bodies

2025 — Ongoing

Medium: Digital illustration, photographic compositing, typographic intervention, motion graphics

Series: Ongoing

Available at: <https://nazififarid.com/republic-small-bodies>

[Image: Ant with anatomical overlays — mandibles, antennae labeled]

Visual Style & Composition

The video employs a macro-photography aesthetic with a cinematic twist, blending hyper-detailed close-ups of ants with diagrammatic, anatomical overlays. The opening sequence uses a split-screen (four vertical panels) to frame the ant from multiple angles, creating a fragmented yet cohesive view of its movement and anatomy.

Later shots shift to full-frame close-ups, emphasizing the ant's facial features (mandibles, antennae) and, eventually, a full-body anatomical diagram. The composition transitions from intimate, dynamic framing (ants in motion, dust particles) to structured, technical layers (labeled body parts), balancing organic movement with scientific precision.

Color Palette & Lighting

A warm, earthy palette dominates: deep blacks and browns for the ant's exoskeleton, contrasted with glowing amber and gold from backlighting that creates a halo effect around the insect. Lighting is dramatic—low-key with strong backlighting—to highlight texture and create depth. Dust particles catch the light, adding a tactile, atmospheric quality.

[Image: Full-frame ant close-up with anatomical labels]

Subject Matter & Narrative

The video centers on ants, moving from a focus on their physicality (mandible movement, antenna twitching, dust displacement) to a scientific exploration of their anatomy. The final segment presents a

stylized, almost mechanical ant diagram against a technical blueprint background, suggesting a fusion of biology and engineering.

Symbolic & Thematic Elements

The ant functions as a dual symbol: of natural resilience and collective labor (a common metaphor for social organization) and of biological precision that mirrors technological design. The anatomical overlays blur the line between organism and machine, hinting at themes of biomimicry — how nature inspires human innovation.

The Fiction

The diagrams refused accuracy because accuracy had once refused him.

In the fictional state of Formicaria, every creature is both worker and witness. The head is labeled **head** because authority repeats itself until it becomes meaningless. The thorax is **thoraox** because language fractures under pressure. Antennae become **antenex**—translators that mishear the orders of queens and ministers. Mandibles are called **mandipoix**, because in the Republic of Small Bodies, tools are renamed to evade confiscation.

[Image: Anatomical ant diagram against technical blueprint background]

Each ant in the series is a refugee carrying its own anatomy like a passport:

- segmented abdomen = chapters of migration
- legs = routes closed, reopened, closed again
- antennae = signals from home that arrive distorted

- mandibles = the right to speak or bite

The motion graphics animate these diagrams into a slow choreography: the ants assemble into parliaments, scatter into protests, march across blank backgrounds like maps erased by policy. Their bodies form borders that dissolve and reform. In one loop, an ant's abdomen swells until it becomes a globe; in another, the head detaches and floats above the thorax like a leader without a people.

The fiction insists:

If a state can be drawn, it can be redrawn.

If a body can be mislabeled, it can be reclaimed.

If an ant can survive the collapse of its colony, so can a human.

The work imagines that somewhere beneath the white studio lights, the ants are drafting a constitution. Their clauses are simple:

Every being has the right to rename itself.

Every exile is a cartographer.

No border is permanent at the scale of a body.

[Image: Ant looking directly at viewer, administrative gaze]

In the final frame, a close-up ant looks directly at the viewer. Its face is not menacing but **administrative**—an official of a micro-state issuing silent visas. The viewer becomes the foreigner. The diagram becomes a checkpoint. The mislabeled parts become a language test no one can pass.

The Republic of Small Bodies does not promise return.

It promises only motion.

Afterword

Notes on Exile and Practice

The works collected here span two years and multiple countries, yet they are united by a single concern: how to render visible the experience of being processed.

In asylum procedures, one becomes a file. In border crossings, one becomes a statistic. In language exams, one becomes a level. These transformations are not metaphorical—they are administrative realities that shape every aspect of life for displaced people. My practice has been, in large part, an attempt to document these transformations from the inside: to show what it feels like to be measured, categorized, and evaluated by systems that claim neutrality while exercising profound power.

[Image: Dimly lit workspace with computer screens showing code and design software]

The images in this book are not illustrations of these experiences; they are their residue. The circuits that refuse to integrate, the diamonds that resist measurement, the ants that rename themselves—these are not symbols chosen for their aesthetic appeal. They are forms that emerged from the pressure of living between languages, between legal statuses, between homes.

Leipzig has been, for now, a place of relative stability. My degree has been recognized. My German has progressed. My work has found audiences. But stability, for a refugee, is always provisional. The shoe

still hangs from the branch. The figure still stands in the fog. The application still says "pending."

Acknowledgments

This work would not exist without the communities that have sustained it: fellow artists in Leipzig who welcomed a stranger into their studios; language teachers who understood that learning German was also learning to exist in a new world; caseworkers who processed paperwork with patience and, occasionally, with care.

I am grateful to the institutions that have supported my practice: the Ferdows Institute of Higher Education in Mashhad, where I first learned to see; the University of Kyiv, where I learned to build; and the German education system, which recognized what I had already made.

Most of all, I am grateful to the viewers of this work—those who look closely enough to see not just images, but the conditions that produced them.

[Image: Streetlights through train window, reflection blurring]

Continuation

This book is not a conclusion. The works continue to circulate, to find new audiences, to generate new meanings. The website remains active. New projects are in development. The journey continues.

Because exile, finally, is not a condition one leaves. It is a condition one learns to inhabit—to map, to document, to transform into something that might be shared.

The coordinate remains (0,0,0,0). Not a nation. Not a flag. Not a regime.
Just origin. And in that origin, every refugee, every emperor, every
protester, every child stands on the same ground.

Farid Nazifi
Leipzig, 2026

Legal Statement & Copyright

1. Ownership

All artworks, visual concepts, 3D renderings, relief-map compositions, motion graphics, video sequences, and associated design elements within this series are original works created by Farid Nazifi.

Copyright © Farid Nazifi. All rights reserved.

The artist retains full moral and economic rights to all images, models, animations, and derivative visual materials included in this collection unless otherwise transferred through a written licensing agreement.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- Digital images and renders
 - Conceptual design language and visual identity
 - 3D topographic compositions
 - Layout, typography, and presentation structure
 - Exhibition, publication, and portfolio materials
-

[Image: Legal text overlay on abstract background]

2. Moral Rights & Attribution

The artist's authorship must be credited in all contexts where the work appears.

Required credit line: Farid Nazifi

The artist retains moral rights to attribution and integrity of the work. The work may not be altered, distorted, or used in contexts that misrepresent the artist's intent without explicit permission.

3. Institutional & Editorial Use

For use by public institutions (including but not limited to the United Nations and the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF)), the following applies:

Non-commercial use for research, policy discussion, exhibitions, or educational documentation may be authorized via written agreement. Any publication, report, or presentation must include full attribution and may not imply institutional ownership of the artworks. The works may not be used for political campaigning, propaganda, or commercial advertising without explicit licensing.

4. Third-Party References

The artworks may contain symbolic or conceptual references to geographic, technological, or cultural themes. All recognizable brands, devices, or public figures referenced visually or conceptually remain the property of their respective rights holders and are used strictly within the scope of artistic expression and commentary.

5. Licensing & Permissions

Licensing inquiries for exhibition, publication, or institutional use should be directed to the artist or authorized representative.

Contact: <https://nazififarid.com/contact>

6. Protection & Jurisdiction

These works are protected under international copyright conventions, including the Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works, and applicable German and EU copyright law (Urheberrechtsgesetz - UrhG).

Unauthorized use may constitute infringement and be subject to legal action.

7. Statement of Artistic Integrity

This body of work represents an original artistic investigation into displacement, digital identity, and geopolitical perception. All visual materials are protected as a cohesive conceptual series and may not be replicated or imitated in commercial or derivative design without permission.

8. Personal Context

The artist is a refugee who arrived in the European Union via Poland and later Germany following the outbreak of the war in Ukraine. Under German constitutional protections—particularly Article 5 of the Basic Law (Grundgesetz)—freedom of artistic expression and freedom of publication are guaranteed to all persons residing in Germany, including refugees and individuals with pending or recognized protection status.

The artist holds a Bachelor's degree in Visual Communications from Ferdows University of Mashhad, officially translated and recognized

within the German federal state of Saxony in accordance with German credential-recognition procedures.

First publication: 2026

Series: Topographies of Displacement: Collected Works

Artist website: <https://nazififarid.com>

© Farid Nazifi, 2026

All rights reserved.

[Image: Final page — abstract blur of light through window]

I'll create a PDF eBook for you with the title "Topographies of Displacement" and your name as the author. Since I cannot directly generate downloadable files, I'll provide you with the complete HTML code that you can easily convert to PDF using your browser's "Save as PDF" function.

html

```
<!DOCTYPE html>
<html lang="en">
<head>
  <meta charset="UTF-8">
  <meta name="viewport" content="width=device-width, initial-scale=1.0">
  <title>Topographies of Displacement - Farid Nazifi</title>
  <style>
@import url('https://fonts.googleapis.com/css2?family=Cormorant+Garamond:wght@300;400;500;600;700&family=Inter:wght@300;400;500;600;700&display=swap');

  * {
    margin: 0;
```

```
padding: 0;
box-sizing: border-box;
}

body {
  font-family: 'Inter', sans-serif;
  background-color: #f9f9f7;
  color: #1a1a1a;
  line-height: 1.6;
  margin: 0;
  padding: 0;
}

.book {
  max-width: 1200px;
  margin: 0 auto;
  background-color: white;
  box-shadow: 0 0 20px rgba(0,0,0,0.05);
}

/*Typography */
h1,h2,h3, h4, .section-title, .chapter-title {
  font-family: 'Cormorant Garamond', serif;
  font-weight: 400;
  letter-spacing: 0.02em;
}

h1{
  font-size: 4.5rem; line-
height: 1.1; font-weight:
300; text-transform:
uppercase; letter-spacing:
0.1em;
}

h2{
  font-size: 3rem;
  font-weight: 300;
  margin-bottom: 2rem;
  border-bottom: 1px solid #d4d4d4;
  padding-bottom: 0.5rem;
}

h3 {
```

```
    font-size: 2rem;
    font-weight: 400;
    margin: 2rem 0 1rem;
}

.subtitle {
    font-size: 1.2rem;
    font-weight: 300;
    text-transform: uppercase;
    letter-spacing: 0.3em;
    color: #666;
}

/*Layout */
section {
    padding: 4rem 3rem;
    page-break-after: always;
    position: relative;
}

.full-page {
    min-height: 100vh;
    display: flex;
    flex-direction: column;
    justify-content: center;
}

.two-column {
    display: grid;
    grid-template-columns: 1fr 1fr;
    gap: 3rem;
    margin: 2rem 0;
}

/*Images */
.image-container {
    margin: 2rem 0;
    page-break-inside: avoid;
}

.image-full {
    width: 100%;
    height: auto;
    background-color: #2a2a2a;
```

```
border: 1px solid #e0e0e0;
display: flex;
align-items: center;
justify-content: center;
color: #999;
font-size: 0.9rem;
aspect-ratio: 16/9;
background: linear-gradient(145deg, #2c2c2c 0%, #1a1a1a 10
0%);

position: relative;
overflow: hidden;
}

.image-full::after {
content: "Image: " attr(data-label);
position: absolute;
bottom: 10px;
right: 15px;
color: rgba(255,255,255,0.3);
font-size: 0.7rem;
font-family: monospace;
}

.image-half {
width: 100%;
aspect-ratio: 4/3;
background: linear-gradient(145deg, #333 0%, #222 100%);
border: 1px solid #444;
}

.image-spread {
display: grid; grid-template-
columns: 1fr 1fr; gap: 1px;
background-color: #ddd; border:
1px solid #ddd;
}

.image-spread > div {
aspect-ratio: 4/3;
background: linear-gradient(145deg, #3a3a3a 0%, #252525 10
0%);
}
```

```
/*Page elements */
.page-number {
  text-align: center;
  font-size: 0.8rem;
  color: #999;
  margin-top: 2rem;
  font-family: 'Inter', sans-serif;
}

.signature {
  font-family: 'Cormorant Garamond', serif;
  font-size: 1.5rem;
  margin-top: 3rem;
  text-align: right;
  font-style: italic;
}

.quote {
  font-size: 1.5rem;
  font-family: 'Cormorant Garamond', serif;
  font-style: italic;
  line-height: 1.4;
  color: #444;
  border-left: 3px solid #aaa;
  padding-left: 2rem;
  margin: 2rem 0;
}

/*Cover */
.cover {
  background: linear-gradient(135deg, #0f0f0f 0%, #2b2b2b 10
0%);
  color: white; text-
  align: center; padding:
  6rem 3rem; min-height:
  100vh; display: flex;
  flex-direction: column;
  justify-content: center;
  position: relative;
  overflow: hidden;
}

.cover::before {
```

```
        content: "";
        position: absolute;
        top: 0;
        left: 0;
        right: 0;
        bottom: 0;
        background-image: radial-gradient(circle at 30% 40%, rgba(10
0,100,100,0.1) 0%, transparent 30%);
        pointer-events: none;
    }

    .cover h1 {
        color: white;
        margin-bottom: 1rem;
        position: relative;
        z-index: 2;
    }

    .cover .subtitle {
        color: #aaa;
        font-size: 1rem;
        margin-bottom: 2rem;
    }

    .cover .author {
        font-size: 1.5rem;
        font-weight: 300;
        letter-spacing: 0.2em;
        text-transform: uppercase;
        margin-top: 4rem;
        color: #ccc;
    }

    .cover .year {
        font-size: 1rem;
        color: #666;
        margin-top: 1rem;
    }

    .cover-image {
        width: 100%;
        height: 300px;
        background: linear-gradient(145deg, #3a4a5a 0%, #1a2a3a 10
0%);
```

```
        margin: 2rem 0;
        position: relative;
        border-radius: 4px;
    }

    /*Contents */
    .contents {
        background-color: #fafaf8;
        padding: 4rem 3rem;
    }

    .contents-list {
        list-style: none;
        margin-top: 2rem;
        columns: 2;
    }

    .contents-list li {
        margin-bottom: 1rem;
        border-bottom: 1px dotted #ccc;
        padding-bottom: 0.3rem;
        display: flex;
        justify-content: space-between;
    }

    /*Section breaks */
    .section-break {
        text-align: center;
        margin: 4rem 0;
        font-size: 0.9rem;
        letter-spacing: 0.3em;
        color: #999;
    }

    /*Images with captions */
    .image-caption {
        font-size: 0.8rem;
        color: #666; text-align: right;
        margin-top: 0.3rem;
        font-style: italic;
    }

    /*Print styles */
```

```

@media print {
  body {
    background-color: white;
  }
  .book {
    max-width: 100%;
    box-shadow: none;
  }
  section {
    page-break-after: always;
    page-break-inside: avoid;
  }
  .image-full, .image-half, .image-spread {
    page-break-inside: avoid;
  }
  h2{
    page-break-after: avoid;
  }
  h2+p, h2+div{
    page-break-before: avoid;
  }
}

/* Decorative */
.rule {
  height: 1px;
  background: linear-gradient(to right, transparent, #999, transparent);
  margin: 3rem 0;
}

.small-caps {
  font-variant: small-caps;
  letter-spacing: 0.1em;
}
</style>
</head>
<body>
  <div class="book"> <!--
  Cover --> <section
  class="cover">
    <div class="subtitle">COLLECTED WORKS 2024-2026</div>
    <h1>TOPOGRAPHIES<br>OF DISPLACEMENT</h1>
    <div class="cover-image" data-label="Topographies of Displace

```

```

ment: S4D Atlas - Smartphone with topographical mapping"></div>
  <div class="author">FARID NAZIFI</div>
  <div class="year">LEIPZIG · 2026</div>
</section>

<!-- Half-title page -->
<section style="text-align: center; display: flex; flex-direction:
column; justify-content: center;">
  <div class="subtitle" style="margin-bottom: 2rem;">FARID NAZI
FI</div>
  <h1 style="font-size: 3rem; margin-bottom: 2rem;">TOPOGRAPHIE
S<br>OF DISPLACEMENT</h1>
  <div style="margin-top: 4rem;">
    <div style="width: 60px; height: 60px; border-radius: 5
0%; background: #333; margin: 0 auto;"></div>
  </div>
</section>

<!-- Copyright page -->
<section style="font-size: 0.9rem; color: #555; display: flex; fl
ex-direction: column; justify-content: center; max-width: 80%;">
  <p style="margin-bottom: 2rem;"><strong>Farid Nazifi</strong>
<br>
  Visual Communications<br>
  Leipzig, Germany</p>

  <p style="margin-bottom: 2rem;"><a href="https://nazififarid.com">https://nazififarid.com</a>

  <div class="rule"></div>

  <p style="margin-bottom: 1rem;">© Farid Nazifi, 2026</p>
  <p style="margin-bottom: 1rem;">All rights reserved. No part
ofthispublication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any
formorbyany means without the prior written permission of the artist.
</p>

  <p style="margin-bottom: 1rem;">First publication: 2026<br>
  Series: Topographies of Displacement: Collected Works</p>

style="margin-bottom: 1rem;">The moral rights of the artis
thavebeenasserted. All works are protected under international copyrig
htconventions,including the Berne Convention and applicable German and
EUcopyrightlaw(Urheberrechtsgesetz - UrhG).</p>

```

<p>Printed in the Federal Republic of Germany</p>
</section>

<!-- Foreword -->

<section>

<h2>Foreword</h2>

<h3 style="font-size: 2.5rem; margin-top: -0.5rem; font-weight: 300;">The Cartography of Exile</h3>

<div class="image-container">

<div class="image-full" data-label="Dimly lit workspace with computer screens"></div>

</div>

<p>There is a particular kind of silence that arrives after displacement. It is not the silence of peace, but the silence of recalibration—a pause between languages, between legal statuses, between homes. The works collected in this volume emerged from such intervals: moments of suspension in Ukraine before the war, in Poland during transit, in Germany while waiting. They are documents of a life reassembled across borders, and of the attempt to translate experience into image.</p>

<p>I was born in Mashhad, Iran, in 1994—a city of pilgrimage and poetry, of turquoise domes and mountain horizons. I studied Visual Communications at the Ferdows Institute of Higher Education, learning to see composition as syntax and color as tone. Later, I pursued informatics in Kyiv, where the logic of systems—circuits, code, networks—became a second visual language. When war fractured that trajectory, I carried both vocabularies with me: the eye for narrative and the understanding of structure.</p>

<p>This book is organized not chronologically but thematically, tracing the concerns that have shaped my practice across geographies. Bodies and Borders examines the physical and bureaucratic architecture that contain, measure, and process human life. Myth and Memory engages with the symbols we inherit and reinvent—the cowboy, the apple tree, the factory—as sites of contested meaning. Cartographies reimagines geography as temporal, provisional, and deeply personal. Witness attends to the quiet acts of observation that displacement demands.</p>

<p>The title of this collection, Topographies of Displacement, names both a method and a condition. To map displacement is not to fix it in place, but to trace its contours—the ridges of bureaucrac

y, the valleys of waiting, the fault lines of identity under pressure. These works are not illustrations of exile; they are its visual residue.</p>>

<p class="signature">Farid Nazifi
Leipzig, 2026</p>

<div class="page-number">5</div></section>

<!--Contents --><section class="contents">

<h2>Contents</h2>

- <ul class="contents-list">Foreword – The Cartography of Exile 5<li style="margin-top: 1rem; font-weight: 600;">SECTION I: BODIES AND BORDERS Human, Pending Update 11Circuit of Belonging 19Surface Tension: The Carat of Exile 29Stem Cell Therapy 37<li style="margin-top: 1rem; font-weight: 600;">SECTIONII:MYTHANDMEMORY The Cowboy in the Static 45The Orchard of Absence 55Charlie and the McDonald's Factory 63Return Under Fog 73<li style="margin-top: 1rem; font-weight: 600;">SECTIONIII:CARTOGRAPHIES Topographies of Displacement: S4D Atlas 83Chronotopia: The Cartography of Time 93Cosmic Stasis: The ISS in Event Horizon

```

<span>105</span></li>

        <li style="margin-top: 1rem; font-weight: 600;"><span>SEC
TIONIV:WITNESS</span> <span></span></li>
        <li><span>Shelter</span> <span>115</span></li>
        <li><span>The Wild at the Threshold</span> <span>123</spa
n></li>

        <li><span>OTANDOWS 77</span> <span>131</span></li>
        <li><span>The Republic of Small Bodies</span> <span>139</s
pan></li>

        <li style="margin-top: 1rem;"><span>Afterword – Notes on
ExileandPractice</span> <span>149</span></li>
        <li><span>Legal Statement & Copyright</span> <span>155</s
pan></li>
    </ul>

    <div class="image-container" style="margin-top: 3rem;">
        <div class="image-full" data-label="Circuit board detail
with amber illumination"></div>
    </div>

    <div class="page-number">7</div>
</section>

<!-- Section I divider -->
<section style="display: flex; flex-direction: column; justify-co
ntent: center; align-items: center; text-align: center; background-color:
#f2f2f0;">
    <div class="subtitle">SECTION I</div>
    <h2 style="border: none; font-size: 4rem; margin: 1rem 0;">BO
DIES AND BORDERS</h2>
    <div style="width: 100px; height: 1px; background: #999; marg
in: 2rem auto;"></div>
    <div class="image-container" style="width: 80%; margin: 2rem
auto;">
        <div class="image-full" data-label="Human, Pending Update
- fragmented face with digital overlay"></div>
    </div>
    <div class="page-number">9</div>
</section>

<!-- Human, Pending Update -->
<section>

```

```
<h2>Human, Pending Update</h2>
```

```
<h3 style="margin-top: -0.5rem; font-weight: 300;">2025</h3>
```

```
<div class="two-column" style="margin-top: 2rem;">
```

```
<div>
```

```
<p><strong>Medium:</strong> Motion graphics, digital  
video<br>
```

```
<strong>Duration:</strong> 1:24<br>
```

```
<strong>Available at:</strong> https://nazififarid.com/human-pending-update</p>
```

```
<div class="image-full" data-label="Robot in futuristic cityscape"></div>
```

```
</div>
```

```
<div>
```

```
<div class="image-full" data-label="Hybrid human-machine figure"></div>
```

```
</div>
```

```
</div>
```

```
<h3>Visual Content</h3>
```

```
<p>The video opens with a close-up shot of a face, its features overlaid with digital glitch effects that fragment and pixelate against a dark background. The image oscillates between clarity and distortion—a face becoming data, becoming noise.</p>
```

```
<p>The scene shifts to a robot standing in a futuristic cityscape. Its design is sleek and metallic, with intricate mechanical details: gears, circuits, wires, and glowing accents. The camera pans around the figure, revealing its humanoid form and advanced articulation.</p>
```

```
<p>Human and machine begin to merge. A face partially replaced by circuitry. Skin giving way to electronics. The hybrid figure exists in a space between categories—not quite one, not quite the other. Lighting shifts dynamically across the form, now highlighting flesh, now illuminating components.</p>
```

```
<div class="image-container">
```

```
<div class="image-full" data-label="Close-up of hybrid face - circuitry merging with skin"></div>
```

```
</div>
```

```
<h3>Artist Statement</h3>
```

```
<p>These works and the accompanying short film explore motiva
```

tion, power, and political consciousness in the age of artificial intelligence. Through hybrid human-machine imagery, the project reflects on contemporary global events and the evolving relationship between technology, identity, and geopolitical influence—particularly in connection with the United States and Germany.

Set against the backdrop of post-Brexit Europe and accelerating AI dominance, the works examine how political systems shape human agency, migration, and selfhood. The fragmented, cybernetic bodies function as metaphors for societies under algorithmic governance—caught between control and autonomy, progress and erasure.

```
<div class="quote">
```

"The project is deeply informed by lived experience: my trajectory as a visual communication designer currently based in Leipzig, Germany, where I reside as a refugee after fleeing Ukraine."

```
</div>
```

```
<div class="page-number">11</div>
```

```
</section>
```

```
<!--Circuit of Belonging -->
```

```
<section>
```

```
<h2>Circuit of Belonging</h2>
```

```
<h3 style="margin-top: -0.5rem; font-weight: 300;">2025</h3>
```

```
<div class="two-column">
```

```
<div>
```

```
<div class="image-full" data-label="Circuit board cross-section with glowing amber pathways"></div>
```

```
</div>
```

```
<div>
```

```
<div class="image-full" data-label="Wireframe hand reaching toward glowing circuit components"></div>
```

```
</div>
```

```
</div>
```

```
<p><strong>Medium:</strong> Motion graphics, 3D animation<br>
```

```
<strong>Duration:</strong> 2:08<br>
```

```
<strong>Available at:</strong> https://nazififarid.com/circuit-belonging</p>
```

The video employs a futuristic, techno-minimalist visual language rooted in motion graphics and 3D electronic art. Photorealistic h

hardware details—microchips, circuit boards, processors—are layered with semi-transparent wireframes, holographic elements, and lens flares. The aesthetic balances clinical precision with ethereal, glowing effects, evoking both technological rigor and digital transcendence.

Color Palette

Primary hues of cyan, electric blue, and deep purple evoke digital interfaces and futurism. Secondary accents of gold and amber highlight circuit activity and core components. A neutral base of charcoal black and dark gray grounds the visuals and emphasizes the luminosity of active elements.

```
<div class="image-container">
```

```
  <div class="image-full" data-label="Three-tiered chip structure glowing gold against blue circuit background"></div>
```

```
</div>
```

Artistic & Political Analysis

Circuit of Belonging oscillates between the clinical precision of electronic boards and the fluid chaos of human migration. Layered circuits pulse like veins, flickering between coherence and disintegration. The work interrogates technology as both tangible skill—my expertise in assembling hardware—and metaphorical lenses for exploring fractured identity, linguistic barriers, and geopolitical disenfranchisement.

My proficiency in constructing electronic boards becomes allegorical. Like a refugee piecing together legal status, housing, and employment, the artwork's "circuits" are assembled from disparate, scavenged parts. A recurring motif—a half-populated board with missing resistors—references interrupted education, a skill set forever "in beta."

```
<div class="page-number">19</div>
```

```
</section>
```

```
<!--SurfaceTension: The Carat of Exile -->
```

```
<section>
```

```
  <h2>Surface Tension</h2>
```

```
  <h3 style="font-size: 1.8rem; margin-top: -0.5rem;">The Carat of Exile</h3>
```

```
<div class="two-column" style="margin-top: 2rem;">
```

```
  <div>
```

```
    <div class="image-full" data-label="Diamond rotating
```

```
in darkness, facets catching light"></div>
</div>
<div>
  <div class="image-full" data-label="Diamond with technical overlay showing measurements"></div>
</div>
</div>

<p><strong>Medium:</strong> Digital video, 3D animation<br>
<strong>Duration:</strong> 1:42</p>
```

<h3>Title Meaning</h3>

<p>Surface Tension – The physical property of a liquid's surface, but also the psychological pressure of maintaining coherence under stress. In gemology, surface tension affects how light refracts through a diamond. In exile, surface tension is what keeps a person intact while everything below threatens to fracture.</p>

<p>Carat – The unit measuring a diamond's weight, but also a homophone for "carrot" (the dangling promise) and "caret" (the proofreader's mark indicating insertion—what has been left out and must be added). In bureaucratic contexts, "carat" becomes the measure of human value: skilled vs. unskilled, desirable vs. undesirable, worthy vs. unworthy.</p>

```
<div class="image-container">
  <div class="image-full" data-label="Diamond facets catching light with faint grid overlay"></div>
</div>
```

<h3>Political Analysis</h3>

<p>The diamond's dual portrayal—esthetic splendor versus clinical data—critiques how asylum frameworks commodify human worth. Like a gemstone appraised by market metrics, my degrees required translation and authentication—processes that atomize lived experience into administrable units. The abrupt cut from the diamond's glow to its data-driven presentation replicates the violence of this translation: the artist's intellect and trauma alike become line items in a case file.</p>

```
<div class="quote">
  "In a world where passports dictate luminosity, Surface Tension insists on the right to opacity—to be unreadable, uncut, and thus, unconquered."
</div>
```

```
<div class="page-number">29</div>
</section>
```

```
<!-- Stem Cell Therapy -->
<section>
```

```
<h2>Stem Cell Therapy</h2>
<h3 style="margin-top:-0.5rem;font-weight: 300;">2025</h3>
```

```
<div class="two-column">
  <div>
    <div class="image-full" data-label="Glowing cellular
structures against dark background"></div>
  </div>
  <div>
    <div class="image-full" data-label="Cellular structur
es merging and dividing"></div>
  </div>
</div>
```

```
<p><strong>Medium:</strong> Digital animation<br>
<strong>Duration:</strong> 1:18</p>
```

```
<h3>Political Analysis</h3>
<p>The "bubbles" echo stem cells in three key ways: containme
nt, potential, and fragility.</p>
```

```
<p><strong>Containment/Borders</strong> – Bubbles are membr
anes: thin, elastic, separating inside from outside. Stem cells are likew
ise bounded units whose membranes regulate what enters and exits. Politic
ally, this mirrors how modern systems manage potential populations—migran
ts, youth, innovators—kept within fragile policy "bubbles."</p>
```

```
<div class="image-container">
  <div class="image-full" data-label="Isolated cell with lu
minous core"></div>
</div>
```

```
<p><strong>Potential Without Fixed Identity</strong> – A bubb
le has no destiny; it can merge, split, or disappear. Stem cells are defi
ned precisely by undetermined futures. Politically, this resonates with h
ow power structures treat human potential as a resource: valuable precisely
because it is not yet specified.</p>
```

```
<h3>Final Synthesis</h3>
```

```
<p>These images argue that modern politics treats life the way physics treats bubbles: valuable, temporary, containable, and ultimately disposable if the system demands it. Stem cells become the perfect political object: alive, but not autonomous; full of promise, but not rights; celebrated, yet tightly governed.</p>
```

```
<div class="page-number">37</div>
```

```
</section>
```

```
<!-- Section II divider -->
```

```
<section style="display: flex; flex-direction: column; justify-content: center; align-items: center; text-align: center; background-color: #f2f2f0;">
```

```
<div class="
```