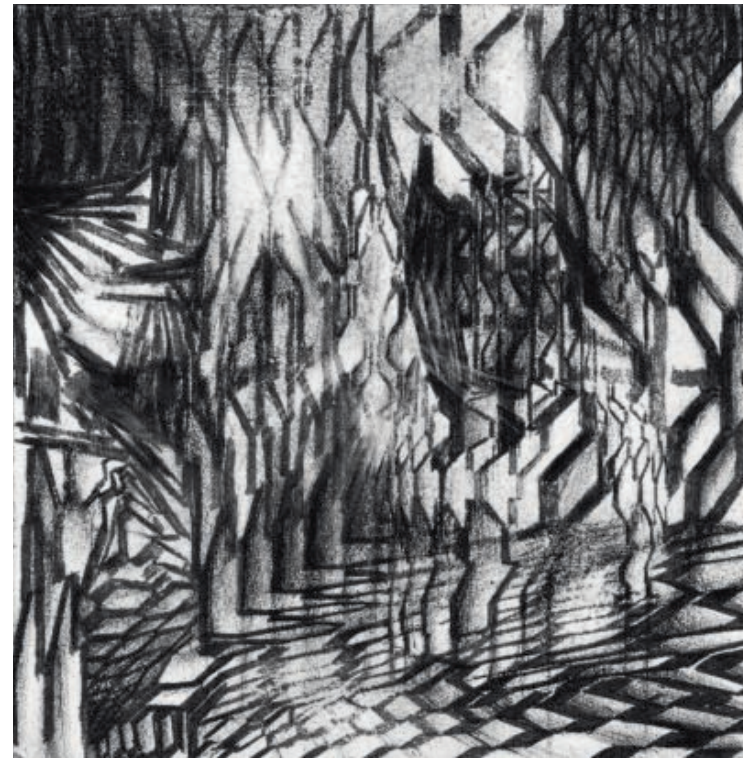


VIKTOR TIMOFEEV Working across a variety of media, Viktor Timofeev creates haunting landscapes suffused with existential dread. In *(AB/AB)/B* (2018) multitudes of small, featureless figures cling to a large industrial-looking structure. These figures appear doomed to carry out a Sisyphean task, climbing to the apex only to fall back down and start their ascent again. On closer inspection, the structure reveals itself to be another, larger version of the same figure. The head has been cut open, revealing a maze-like grid in place of a brain. Like many of Timofeev's works, *(AB/AB)/B* is made using coloured pencil, with a palette of greys, reds and blues. A blurring effect gives the impression the entire scene is spinning, enhancing the sense of peril and hopelessness. Some figures crawl through the pathways of the maze; others leap over the edge into the masses below. In his novel *Invisible Cities* (1972), Italo Calvino wrote that, 'Cities, like dreams, are made of desires and fears, even if the thread of their discourse is secret, their rules are absurd, their perspectives deceitful, and everything conceals something else.' A similar philosophy underpins Timofeev's drawings. His environments are filled with vague terrors, governed by unknown powers, rife with allegorical meanings that remain just beyond reach. *(AB/AB)/B* could be a depiction of the psychological turmoil of an individual or of an entire population toiling under totalitarian rule. Like waking from a distressing dream, the significance of which you are unable to fully place, the use of surreal imagery increases the mood of foreboding. In an interview with the publication *TZVETNIK*, Timofeev described his works as 'a patchwork of worlds: passing thoughts, fantasies, desires, what-ifs, curiosities, hallucinations, relations, urgencies'. While each of his drawings appears to portray a different scenario, they share certain factors in common. The most prominent of these is the grid, which forms a base layer in many of his compositions. No figures are present in the large wall drawing *Godflower X* (2019), made with hard pastel, but the ground is completely covered in a maze-like grid that stretches to the horizon line. It is not possible to ascertain how tall the walls of this architectural structure are, nor can you see what lies beneath. Out of the dark crevices, twisting forms rise like monstrous weeds towards a blank sky. Their stems and leaves do not look like those of plants, but a hybrid of mangled steel and human sinew. This is a place of death and danger, of which there is no end and from which there is no escape. Rosanna McLaughlin



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1. 12.17.2009 from 'Dailies (2009 x19)', 2019, ink and pencil on paper, 15 x 15 cm (5.9 x 5.9 in)
2. *Floating Ossuary*, 2019, ink and pencil on paper, 35 x 28 cm (13 ¾ x 11 in), from 'I had amnesia once or twice', Polansky Gallery, Brno, Czech Republic
3. *(AB/AB)/B*, 2018, coloured pencil on paper, 35 x 25 cm (13 ¾ x 9 ¾ in), from 'God Room', Alyssa Davis Gallery, New York
4. *AB + AB*, 2018, coloured pencil on paper, 35 x 25 cm (13 ¾ x 9 ¾ in), from 'Cosplay at the Family Dinner', The Sunroom, Richmond, Virginia



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