



**“The Ladder”** A long term collaboration, **Ahmad Mallah and Rebecca Lillich/Krüger**  
Credits of the images and videos for this project to: **Jesse Immanuel Bom**  
Captured during our invited residency at **Art House Holland, July 2023 Leiderdorp NL**

The Ladder is a series of performative exercises in trust presented through various mediums; focusing on the active engagement building trust entails, the work presents our performative practices alongside material manifestations.

The Ladder is a singular open symbol that’s structure offers a basis for investigating situations of safety, connection and the process of trust.

Our trust, our work, our art is this dialogue, a never ending conversation. This is an ongoing series of happenings based on the symbol of the ladder.



## First part- writing:

- **Rebecca:**

The Ladder is a singular open symbol that's structure offers a basis for investigating or experiencing situations of safety, connection and the process of trust.

Like a bridge, a ladder invites a crossing, a reach across to another (the other) side– but unlike a bridge, a ladder requires a more active physical engagement, more risk, more effort, more trust.

- Hold this for me– don't let me fall–
- Where are we climbing to? The geometric planes of the vertical and horizontal seem to have solid beginnings, but the final destination is a determined choice of agency. Climb the ladder for me– don't worry where it goes.

This is an interrogation of the trust it takes to reach the other side– an aesthetic reflection on the beautiful and complicated dance of trust needed in meeting another. Safety is not a singular place or moment, a landing pad where all is certain–

Safety is a conversation where I pull you closer with every answer.

- **Ahmad:**

The Ladder is an instrument, and we are the players.  
The Ladder showed us the possibility of trustful communication.

With all our senses we play on this instrument as the wind blows on our naked bodies

- I will hold it for you, you will never fall
- You are safe.

- Take me with you, I trust you

The Ladder is strong enough to hold us and so we are.  
We move in harmony like the sounds of an ancient instrument.

Safety is required to build trust; communication is needed just like a ladder.  
It's a work in progress.



## Second part- writing:

- **Ahmad:**

We carry our insecurities and doubts from past experiences-  
It gets heavier as we climb up the ladder-  
Sometimes it's hard to trust the process-

There should always be space to communicate our fears-

I fear falling off the ladder and not finding you around when I slip-  
I fear and I fear-  
I fear so much and I want to feel safe-

These voices in my head won't stop me from falling in love with you-  
These voices are so loud today-  
But, I won't let them tear us apart-

My love to you is sacred,  
My love to you is stronger than the demons in my head.

- **Rebecca:**

I was never afraid of heights until I fell in love.

But sometimes my worries are so loud I can hear how you speak about me to the next person sharing your bed; and I think how beautiful it is to have such a powerful imagination and how sad that this is what I use it for- a bad practice of technology, to reaffirm doubts, again and again- some self-satisfactory self-harm, what I know, to defend, defend, defend. I am so afraid but I am so in love with you.



### Third part- writing:

Rebecca: I'm sorry.

Ahmad: I'm sorry too.

Ahmad: I take responsibility of my words.

Rebecca: I take responsibility of my words too.

Rebecca: I never want to hurt you.

Ahmad: I never want to hurt you too.

Ahmad: I want this magic between us to grow.

Rebecca: I want this magic between us to grow too.

Rebecca: I love us.

Ahmad: I love us too.

Ahmad: I'm so scared.

Rebecca: I'm so scared too.

Rebecca: I'm afraid of getting hurt and losing you.

Ahmad: I'm afraid of getting hurt and losing you too.

Ahmad: It's my nightmare to hurt you.

Rebecca: It's my nightmare to hurt you too.

Rebecca: I dream about you all the time.

Ahmad: I dream about you all the time too.

Ahmad: Thank you.

Rebecca: Thank you.

Rebecca: I miss you.

Ahmad: I miss you too.

Ahmad: I love you.

Rebecca: I love you too.





#### **Fourth part- writing:**

- **Ahmad:**

Let's move on

You look so beautiful with the sunlight on your soft skin

Do you want to go right or left?

You can decide, I trust your decisions.

I know we could fall again into the same cycle of pain, but we have to be strong and build our ladder again and again

Repeat this mantra after me:

I love you

I trust you

I feel safe with you

- **Rebecca:**

I realize now that the safety comes not from stability, from stillness and absence of doubt, but it comes from the rhythm and flow of the catch. I feel myself fall, I feel you catch. Again and again, the motion of the ladder in the air, the moment before gravity, the second-like blink of free fall- and then I feel you on the other side of the ladder, pushing back, holding. Like the cycle of breath the rhythm of trust is of falling and catching, inhaling and exhaling.



**First Public presentation: 1-4 Feb 2024**  
**Prospects- Mondriaan Fonds. Art Rotterdam NL**  
**video installation on two screens and 3 performances during the art fair**



**First Public presentation: 1-4 Feb 2024  
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'The Ladder' Performance, duration 10 minutes**



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