

## Encountering Strangeness

In which way are encounters connected to the notion of strangeness? How “strange” can an encounter be?

Encounters are happening daily and in every second of your life. There is always something unexpectedly coming your way. Everything we cannot control is unexpected. The smell of cooked food from our neighbours, the subtle sound of our intestines digesting, a spontaneous visit from a friend. In our topic of “borders”, these encounters are very prominent. Overstepping a border leads to encountering a different culture (country borders), you suddenly being in a different space (doors as a border) or being too much in someone else’s space (personal borders/boundaries). Especially regarding the latter, it connects to the notion of strangeness, which Sara Ahmed presents in her book “Strange Encounters, Embodied Others in Post-Coloniality”. Sara Ahmed is focussing the view of simply someone that you do not recognise as a “stranger”, to some bodies already being “stranger” as they are socially recognised as such. Therefore a person can assign someone to be a stranger, just by the notion of them not belonging in a certain space from their point of view. They are being estranged without being included in the process of estrangement.

I wish every encounter would be free of fixed assumptions.

I wish every encounter would be blessed with an open heart.

With an open mind.

With pure intentions.

I wish for encounters to happen unexpectedly with an excitement for the intersection.

With an excitement for the unknown entanglement.

With other bodies. With other matters. With one another.

I wish every “stranger” would be free of the strange.

