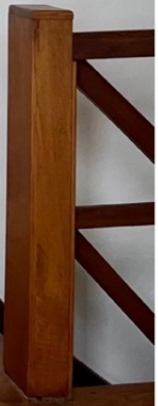




Function | Relation



Komm rHein



Roya is her name

that signifies "dream" in Farsi. Her pronoun is "او", pronounced "oo". In Farsi, there is no gender distinction, and "او" is used to refer to everyone. Her Iranian ID number is 22. She is from Zirab, a small town located in north Iran. The name "Zirab" is derived from "Zir," meaning "under," and "ab," signifying "water" in Farsi, making it "underwater."

Mathematics attracted her interest, and she considered studying pure Mathematics at university. However, despite her parents' vision of engineering as a more suitable path for her, she ventured into the field of commercial management with her best friend. They studied it for just two semesters to gain independence and distance themselves from the small city they originated from. Eventually she turned to art and photography.

Roya is the river and the valley

that crosses the Italian French border, where she, Roya confronted people crossing the border or facing forced return to Italy. During her stays in Ventimiglia, the city on the Italian French border in Italy, she always carried her camera with her, but she hesitated to take pictures of the situation unfolding there. The presence of the camera seemed to create a barrier between her and the individuals on the move, and she struggled with the idea of holding a position of authority as the one behind the camera.

Navigating the intersection of art and activism and contemplating the role of art's function in such contexts, proved to be a challenging endeavor for her. She was concerned with the question of how to engage with her surroundings without imposing the role of an observer with authority. During her last visit to Ventimiglia in March 2023, two days before leaving, she spontaneously documented a river with her smartphone as it flows into the sea. This spot is where

both locals and people on the move gather and find respite by the sea. (Photo on back cover)

This convergence, the meeting point of people on the move and locals, the river, and the sea, was inspiring for her. It evoked a sense of resistance—the river resisting the sea's intrusion and the other way around. It served as a reminder that this arrival point on the mainland becomes a destination once again. As people on the move continue their journey, they will confront numerous natural and manmade borders along the way like this river.

Days later, she discovered that the name of the river is Roya. She first heard about Roya from her friends when she arrived in Ventimiglia years ago. They took her to Roya River in France at that time. Initially, she had the impression that Roya could only be in France, so it was confusing when people mentioned Roya in Italy. However, she later found that the Roya originates in the mountains of France, crosses the political border into Italy, and flows into the sea.

This convergence again, the meeting point of Roya and Roya fascinated her as she was dealing with border, identity, and dualities. She didn't want to be "Roya" behind the camera; instead, "Roya" came in front of the camera. She embraced the unexpected occurrences, allowing them to shape the narrative.

The Roya River and Valley, while crossing the political border, also pose a formidable challenge and serve as a natural boundary for people on the move attempting to pass through. She was tracing the river's journey in two countries on Google Maps and filming the screen. The river's journey reminded her of the people who are pushed back to Italy, only to be caught in a never-ending cycle of returning to the sea from France and starting the journey anew.



13:43 ↶



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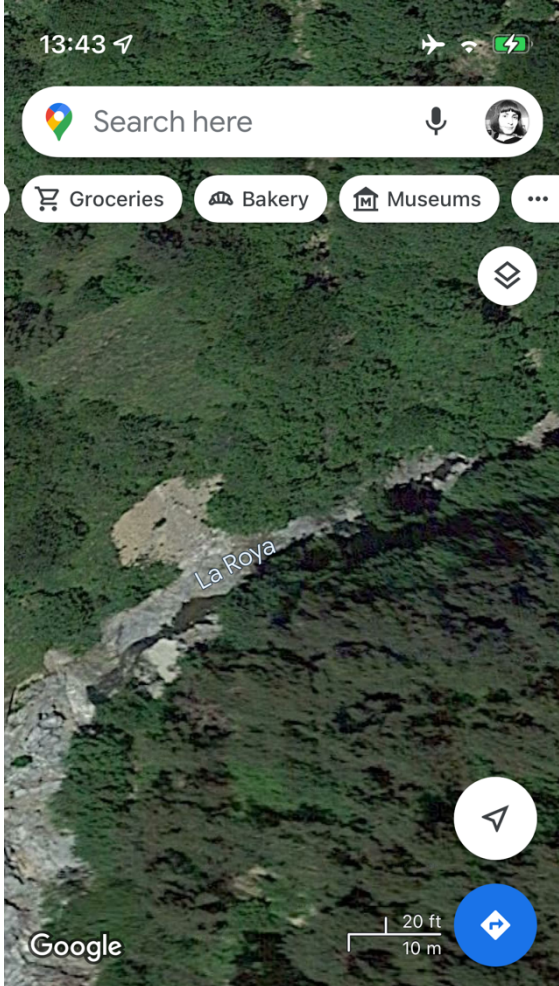


La Roya



Google

20 ft
10 m



13:56 ↗



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Home



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FRANCE

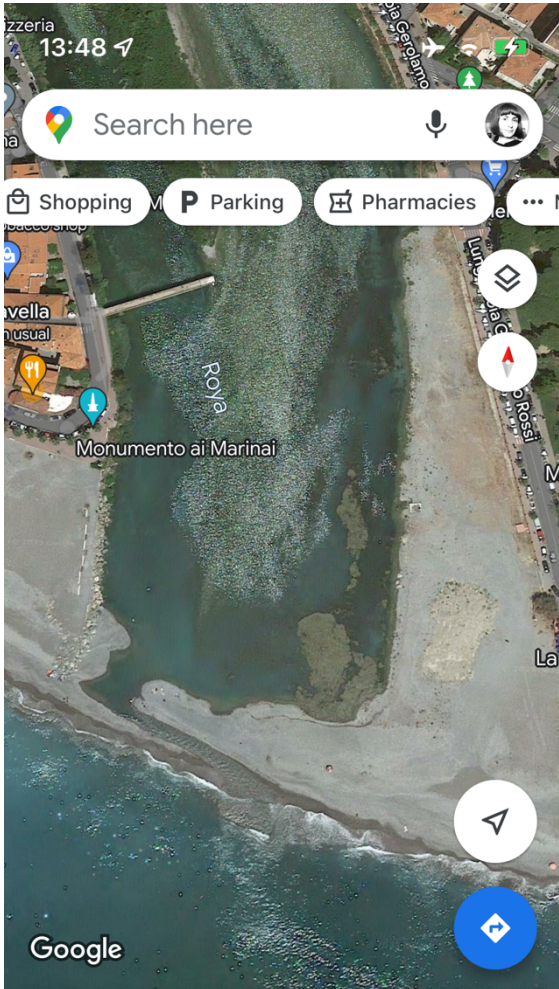
ITALIA

Roya

E74

Google





Roya is residing on the Rhein River temporary

From her room, she has a view of the middle of the Middle Bridge in Basel, the location where the women* who were once accused of being witches were thrown into the Rhein River and drowned. At the same time, she followed the news about the executions and violence in Iran and the fate of people drowning in the sea in search of refuge. Yet she is not a capable swimmer and has never swum in natural waters. So, she confronts her relationship with water and the fear that comes with it.

She was envisioning a swim from the middle of the bridge to her room, her safe space. However, her friends in Basel considered this idea impossible. To ease the overwhelming thoughts about whether it was possible for her or anyone, she constructed a triangle in her mind. In this mental triangle, she uses the Pythagorean theorem and denote the sides as follows:

Side "c" represents the distance from the middle of Middle Bridge to her room.

Side "a" represents the distance from the middle of Middle Bridge to the mainland.

Side "b" represents the distance between her room and the point on the mainland.

$$a^2 + b^2 = c^2$$

The Pythagorean theorem has been a valuable tool from ancient times, especially when direct measurements of distances, particularly across obstacles like rivers and mountains, were difficult or even impossible.



Catch 22

She was dealing with the number "22" as an ID, exploring the concept of identity on one hand, and on the other hand, she was dealing with the complexities of borders and their cyclic logic. In the meantime, she became acquainted with the story of the book Catch 22, as she was exchanging with her mathematics teacher about witches Hunting logic.

Catch-22 logic

A man* who refuses to go to war is considered sane, but the moment he expresses his unwillingness to risk his life in combat, he becomes classified as insane, and therefore, he must go to war.

Witch Hunting Logic

A woman* who drowned in the Rhine River is considered innocent, but the woman* who survived is labeled as a witch, and therefore, she must die.

It was believed that the sacred waters would reject a true witch and spare her life. However, if the woman managed to survive the drowning attempt, she would be deemed guilty of practicing witchcraft, and she would face a different form of execution, often being burned at the stake, or subjected to other cruel punishments.

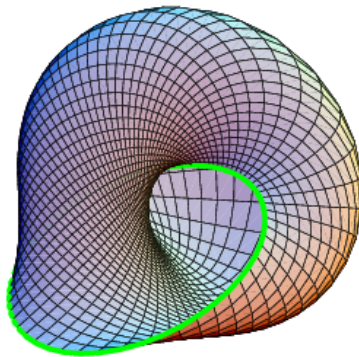
Game

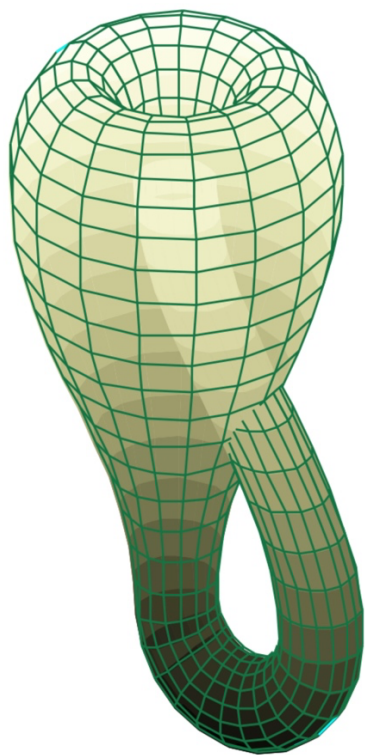
In Ventimiglia, she met a person who had injured his feet while attempting to cross the border in a truck, leaping out to evade the police. He called this type of border crossing a "game" and mentioned that he gamed more than 10 times.

Years later in Berlin Marzahn, an Afghan woman recounted that during their journey, a smuggler had suggested that using the phrase "we will game" was safer than saying "we are looking for a smuggler."

Game logic

or crossing border feels to me like walking on a Möbius strip for some, and like navigating a Klein bottle for others. The Möbius strip is a twisted surface with only one side and one edge. It's created by taking a strip of material, giving it a half twist, and then joining its ends. This results in a continuous loop that appears to have no distinct front or back. The Klein bottle is a non-orientable surface in three-dimensional space. It's a conceptual shape with no clear distinction between inside and outside. It's often depicted as a surface that intersects itself, challenging traditional notions of geometry. Informally, a Klein bottle is a one-sided surface where, if you were to travel along it, you could return to your starting point while experiencing an inversion in orientation.





Nightmare

We were in the middle of the ocean, my brother, my youngest, tallest, friendliest uncle, and I. I can't recall if we were swimming or floating on a wooden plank. A whale was following us. My uncle, a figure of great power to me, advised us to change our direction abruptly to confuse the whale. We did this several times, gaining moments to escape. My uncle noticed a ship and, using his massive hands, he lifted us onto the ship. We survived. My mom was there in the ship and my cousin was assisting her with tasks. It became apparent that my mom had undergone a breast surgery. Her breasts were no longer there. The sounds on her body were distressingly brutal. The intensity of it all jolted me awake. Overwhelmed with emotions, I confronted my mom through tears, asking her why she hadn't told me.

Upon waking up, I reached for my phone and noticed a voice message. It turned out to be from a friend in Basel, who was explaining her sudden journey to the India due to her mother's breast surgery. Her mom had been admitted to the hospital. She asked me to check the email she had sent the previous week. When I opened the email, I was greeted by photos of the sea and various clothes in it. They were meant for the "in flow" exhibition, which was scheduled to take place in Basel.

The whale in Brandenburg

is just as dangerous as the lion in Berlin; both occurrences took place during the summer of 2023.

Over the weekend, we were with many friends in Brandenburg, specifically in Solihof, near the border with Poland. I shared my nightmare about the ocean and whales with one of my friends; there were just two of us. Later in the afternoon, the two of us decided to go to the lake for a swim. Before we left the house, one of our friends

warned us to be careful, joking that a whale might eat us. We two exchanged glances and laughed it off.

Initially, we were thinking of going to a lake on our own. However, we ended up deciding to join our friends at a different lake, as we didn't feel safe being alone in that area. Upon arriving at the lake one of our friends who hadn't heard about nightmare and the earlier whale joke called out to us, encouraging us to join them in the water. He reassured us that there were no whales around to eat us and that it was safe. We exchanged glances once more and burst into laughter again.

I was contemplating and discussing with a friend whether Brandenburg or Poland is safer. He chuckled and responded, "I think Brandenburg." I felt a bit disappointed, as I had been considering staying in Poland due to its cheaper costs compared to Germany.

Belly of the whale

was a site-specific project by a friend who lives on the waterfront of the Bosphorus in Istanbul ...

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