a. SQUIRE

Sophio Medoidze
Details
Did
Disappear
21 November 2026–9 January 2027
Opening: Friday 20th November, 6–8 pm

THE OFFICE

"The word, gentlemen, is a public concern of the first importance."
Hugo Ball, Dada Manifesto.

It started one day in November in n district of n city, an ordinary day in every respect that is it was cold, damp and grey, when I was summoned to the n branch of the OFFICE that was dealing exclusively with my kind of people, i.e. country-less people, not in possession of the precious bundle of paper commonly known as the PASSPORT. And there I was, sitting in an overheated waiting room with pink walls carefully decorated with overexposed photographs of Somalis and Samaritans, printed out on thin office paper.

The first thing that strikes you in such a place is the sound. The usual office repertoire of doors opened and closed in prolonged movements, traffic noises from outside and the rhythmic ticking of an oversized clock were diversified by random cries of babies in pushchairs, followed by hurried comments from their seemingly annoyed mothers.

But most remarkable of all was the subdued voice of men, speaking in many languages and many more dialects, that was in the process of becoming a single unified utterance, as if they all spoke with the same mouth. These men—sometimes exchanging brief comments, sometimes pouring out in long monologues—left the long-faced receptionist perfectly indifferent, who, for over an hour now, had been engaged in a seemingly important conversation on her phone. She could not spare her time for things as trivial as the men's comments,—besides, they spoke in a language she couldn't understand which only confirmed her intention to remain uninterested. And who would blame her?

The OFFICE was divided in three unequal sections: the waiting area, the interview rooms and the 'HEAD' on the first floor, which was accessed through automated metal doors and guarded by a weary looking security man (in case something went wrong with the automata). It was, in so many ways like any other OFFICE in the district n, with maybe one peculiar difference: the sheer amount of glass. Not only the outer wall leading onto a busy street, but also the large construction to the left of the waiting area—something like a counter with three narrow openings, large enough for sliding the papers in and collecting Tesco vouchers (as was the custom in those days), was made exclusively out of translucent glass. It was here that the attention of the waiting mass was directed, who, given that the counter sat on a raised parapet and the waitees were seated as a rule, were undoubtedly getting neck cramps due to the prolonged intervals of waiting in an awkward position, with their necks outstretched. The other side of the glass counter was illuminated by the long ceiling lamps in six perfect parallels, and it was ablaze with artificial light, or so it seemed from this side of the counter where it was somewhat dark.

The weather was not helping either. It was a sunless day nearing its end.