BRITISH COUNCIL

Curated by Jeremy Ip

Room Tour of a Sharing Castle

In a parallel time, a remote castle stands, a relic of an earlier age. Those who live there call it a shared refuge for artists, governed by no one but themselves.

One evening, Frankie and Krystine bump into Avery at a station where their lines cross. All three have lived in the castle for some time, yet a quiet respect for privacy has kept them from ever asking what brought the others there. Perhaps it is the slow journey home that lowers their guard, in that the conversation drifts from their artwork to what the castle means to each of them.

Avery loves the castle's labyrinth of hidden passages. He has carved its rooms into ten scenes, and deliberately concealed the way to his own bedroom. The maze seems to suggest that feeling must be allowed to settle, to be sifted, before it can truly be soothed and set in order. "Everything here is carefully staged. It's a vessel for myth," he says. "The right boundary is what lets me feel at ease." In every shadowed corner, he renders objects with painstaking care, laying his emotions down in the faintest light.

Krystine rummages through her bag as she listens. "I collect odds and ends, especially stationery and craft supplies. The dark pulls me away from the noise of everyday life and makes these little things glow." Her collages are a ritual of reclaiming childlike play. Memory is reshaped through shifting scenes, the imagined world of magic lives on, and amid the clutter she carves out a small private space of her own.

Frankie picks up the thread. "For me, this is where the game world begins." Working in 3D, he builds a virtual model of the castle, using the language of new media to give fantasy a tangible form and to slip free of reality's constraints.

By the time they finish, the train is gliding into its final stop. The night is so dense it seems it will never lift.

Built of plain brick and stone, the castle looms against the black sky, a silent, monolithic box. The gate stands open and unguarded, and a neat bouquet by the entrance lends the scene a quiet warmth.

In the hall, they find Tim, a long-time resident who says little, setting a vase on a table. He steps back, studies it, nudges it a little. Then he drags over a chair and adjusts its distance and angle again and again, absorbed in tuning the atmosphere between one object and the next.

The three say nothing, careful not to disturb him. They simply gaze at the objects in the half-light, their thoughts drifting freely. After a while, Tim takes the small dog at his side by the lead and slips away into the depths of the corridor.

The three exchange a glance, give a small nod as if on cue, and return to their own rooms.