

EXTRACT: BEATRIZ OLABARRIETA

She said that at a certain point she raised her hand to indicate she was there and that perhaps she wanted to say something. They looked at her, only vaguely surprised. It was a long room, a long, long way down towards the other end. Gravity seemed to work in a mysterious way; the same way, she said, as when one stares for long enough at the stars in a night sky, the up, the endless, vaulted, eternal up, can suddenly and inexplicably feel like an equally endless, chasmic and eternal down. She imagined things falling past her, moving slowly but at a greater trajectory than hers and she had closed her eyes to concentrate on this as it intrigued her. She was unsure if she had closed her eyes for a moment or a few minutes. The room was full of people and she walked towards them. She said they were talking about an object at the centre of a plexiglass table. She said that she had said nothing in the end, that talking was too difficult. Moving through the crowd, she made her way to the table and saw that the object at its centre was a large book. She watched closely as an old woman slowly turned each of the pages. It appeared to be a book of art deco design, not overly ornate but well made, the pages were framed with embossed lines, white, then off white, then a very light grey.

Were there images? Text?

She said she looked over a man's shoulder and saw the image of what looked like an elderly woman, dressed in a sort of kimono, in the grip of a large python. But what made it even more unusual was the strange quality of the light in the photograph, which was orange and hazy, a nostalgic, light afternoon light, oddly intimate, given the subject, or apparent subject as she could not completely make out but it was odd that the whole thing looked very pretty, as though it had been shot, not taken.