A Manual Anomaly

Anna Theunissen
Sandberg Fine Arts
2025-2026

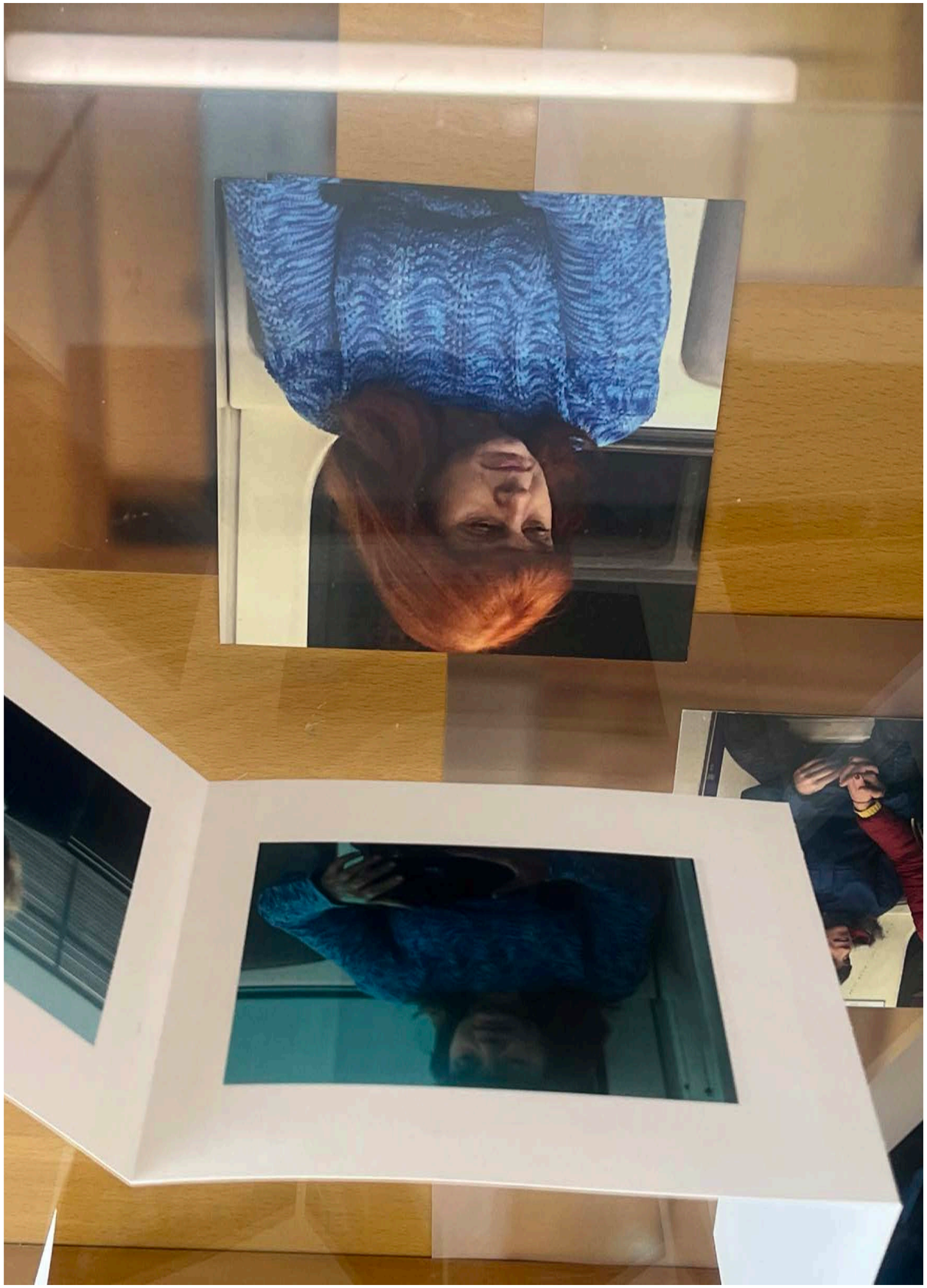
I'm twenty-two years old, and I decide to move to Bulgaria for work. Within a month I pack my things and leave.
The ease with which I move, arriving in a made-up bed, spread and ready to sleep in, while the company takes care of everything, turns me into the so-called expat.

At the age of twenty-two I'm earning more money than I know how to deal with. Smoothly creating a distance between me and the country that I'm living in.

The team I arrive in is a group of fifteen Dutch middle-aged men, and me. And together we form a little island of computers, with above us, the Dutch flag.
Around us are more groups of people on a computer islands, all with a flag hanging above them, corresponding with the language that is spoken underneath.

Together, on the fourteenth floor of a high-rise building just outside the city, we form the customer service of a telecom company.

I'm getting to know the team, I realise we're coming together because of our similar reasons to migrate. We connect in our fantasies of not knowing where to go or what we want at that point in our lives.

A lot of our fantasies aim high, and the longer we work at the call center, the bigger they seem to become. They are friendly narratives, carefully constructed. Sometimes spoken out loud, as if a dream is on the verge of coming true. But most of the time said with a mild concern, shared bending toward each other, as if it isn't allowed to leave the desk.
The stories that are told wait for some kind of creative outburst, or a courageous act coming from themselves or someone in their surroundings. They bring us and the place we're in closer together. And at the same time, completely reduce the need to engage with the actual place itself.

The growing imagination towards the place I was in made the aliantion the hardest to name.