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VISUAL

LEGAL SIGHTSEEING

All those goings without you

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A summer of train tickets – Collage (2025)

> 'Legal sightseeing wonders about the public and visual life of international law, as well as about our own place within it as researchers, professionals, and members of "the public".'[1]

This collage was created from train tickets assembled one by one over the course of a summer. Through this artwork, I sought to visually represent the impact of practicing international law on our intimate lives and on those of our loved ones, as researchers and members of the academic community. Our engagement in an academic world that is precarious, fluctuating, and mobile compels us to move constantly – and, consequently, to be absent. To attend one conference or another, to accept one position or another, we weave invisible threads of absence between us,

[1]'Legal Sightseeing', available at www.cambridge.org/core/journals/leiden-journal-of-international-law/information/author-instructions/preparing-your-materials.

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made tangible through video calls, calendar planning 'to come back home', and date negotiations. Each train ticket in this piece was used *not* to reach the person I love – my home – but to fulfill the obligations of my academic position. That person, incidentally, was on another continent at the time, for the same reasons. With this work, I wanted to shed light on the practice of international law as inherently mobile, forcing us to adapt, to *create* – or accept – absence in order to *make* presence elsewhere.

The train, and transportation more broadly, becomes in itself a site of often prolific academic creation: conference slides refined in the hours before arrival, papers completed in airports, comments jotted hastily in a notebook to be later developed into a new project. The practice of international law also unfolds in these suspended, mobile moments – fluid and restless, just like the field itself. International law is created because we agree to move, to become flexible, even though this sometimes entails intimate separations. By using train tickets, I wanted to make visible this relationship between the researcher and their means of transportation – from one place to another—for research or dissemination purposes. Beyond illustrating the tacit 'absence for presence' trade-off that academic life entails, these tickets also carry another dimension: researchers collect them for reimbursement purposes, especially when attending conferences. Advancing such expenses is not always easy, and the wait for reimbursement often comes with a measure of anxiety, particularly within the current climate of academic precarity.

Through this piece, I wanted to make visible the way academic practice acts upon the researcher and those around them, using transportation as a tangible trace of that process, and of the hours spent 'within our separations', creating presence for the greater project of Academia while carrying within us an intimate absence.

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