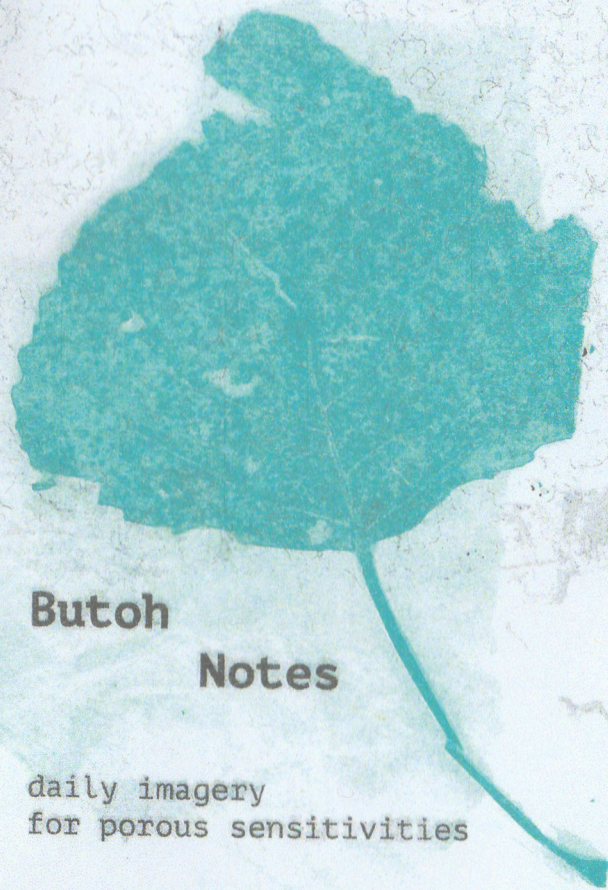


glassdoll



Butoh
Notes

daily imagery
for porous sensitivities

by Ulrike Scholtes

At the beginning of my research, I asked Butoh practitioners how they would describe Butoh. "Do you see that leaf there, lying on the ground? See how it is slowly disassembling? That's Butoh," was the answer of one practitioner (and I heard very similar answers since).

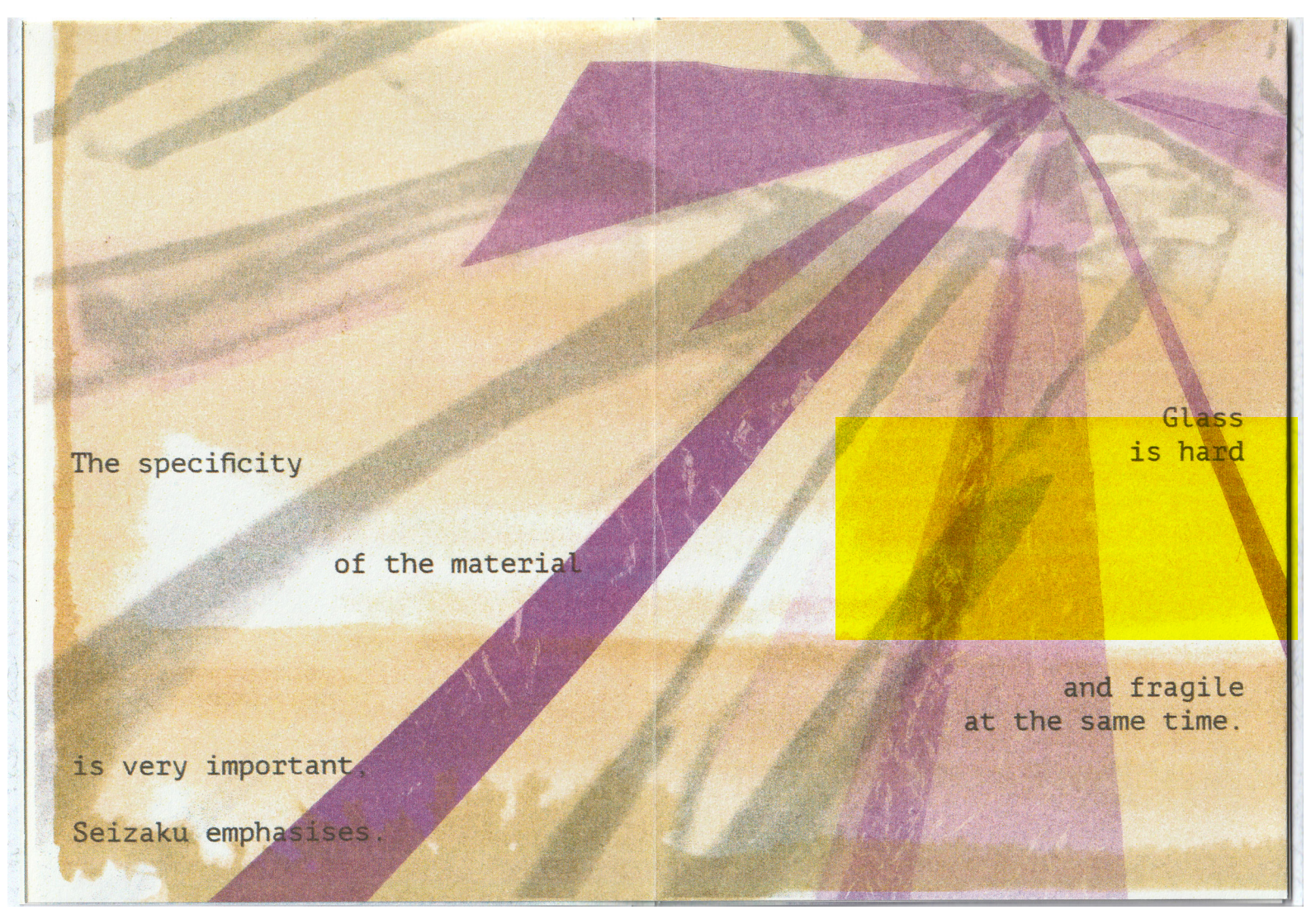
Butoh imagery facilitates slow transformations of the body, attuning to the surrounding conditions, and shifting body boundaries. The imaginations presented here are based on images used for Butoh dance and taught to me by different Butoh teachers. They can be used by anybody to foster porous sensitivities in daily life.

This series is part of a broader research project on porosity and leakiness. For more information see:
<https://www.ulrikescholtes.de/blob/leaky-bodies-archives/>



Seizaku-sensei

teaches us
how to be a
glass doll.

The background is an abstract composition of overlapping geometric shapes. A large, dark purple triangle points towards the top right corner. A bright yellow rectangle is positioned on the right side, partially overlapping the purple triangle. The rest of the background is a mix of light beige and muted greenish-yellow washes. The text is arranged in a fragmented, non-linear fashion across the image.

The specificity

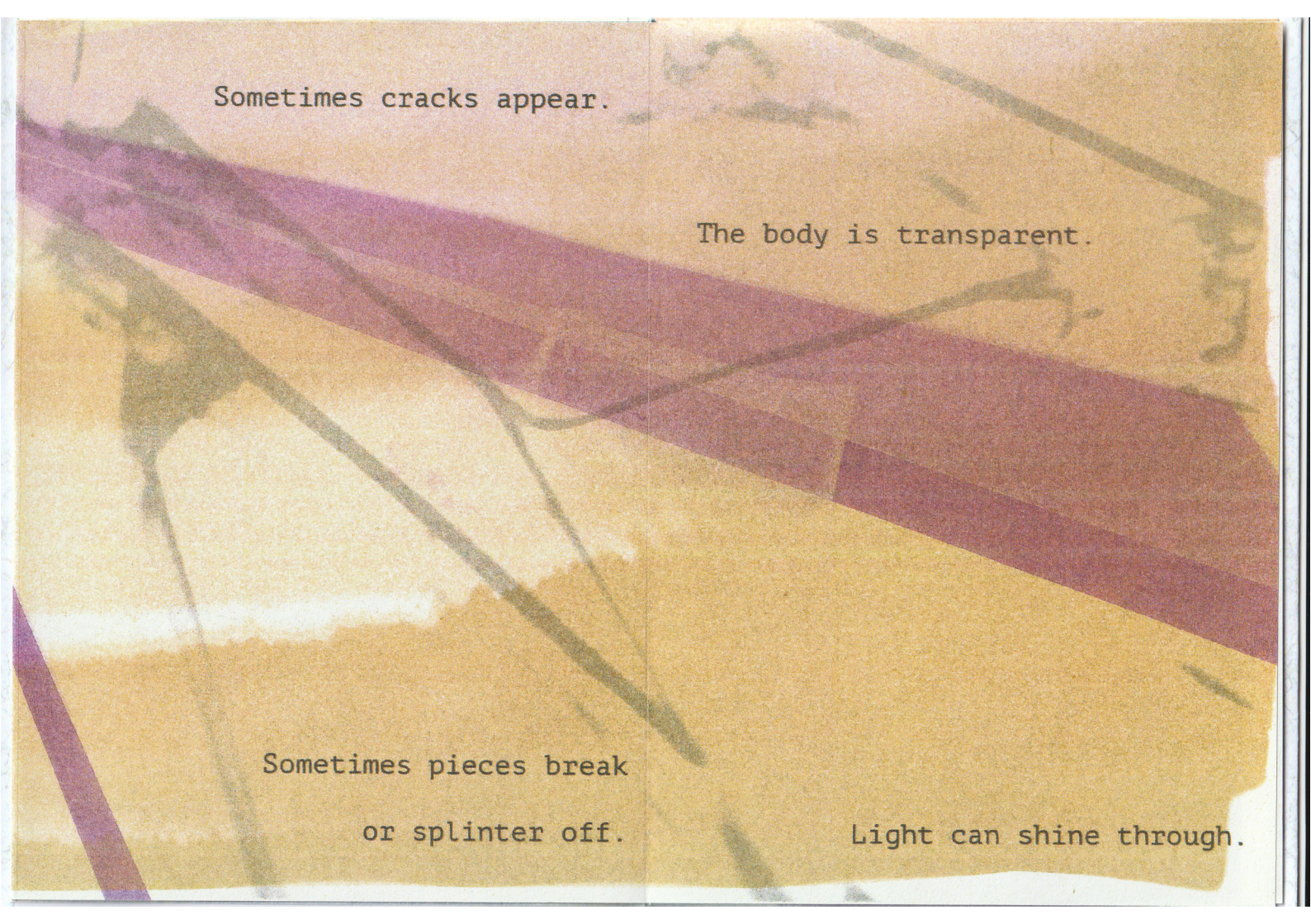
of the material

is very important,

Seizaku emphasises.

Glass
is hard

and fragile
at the same time.

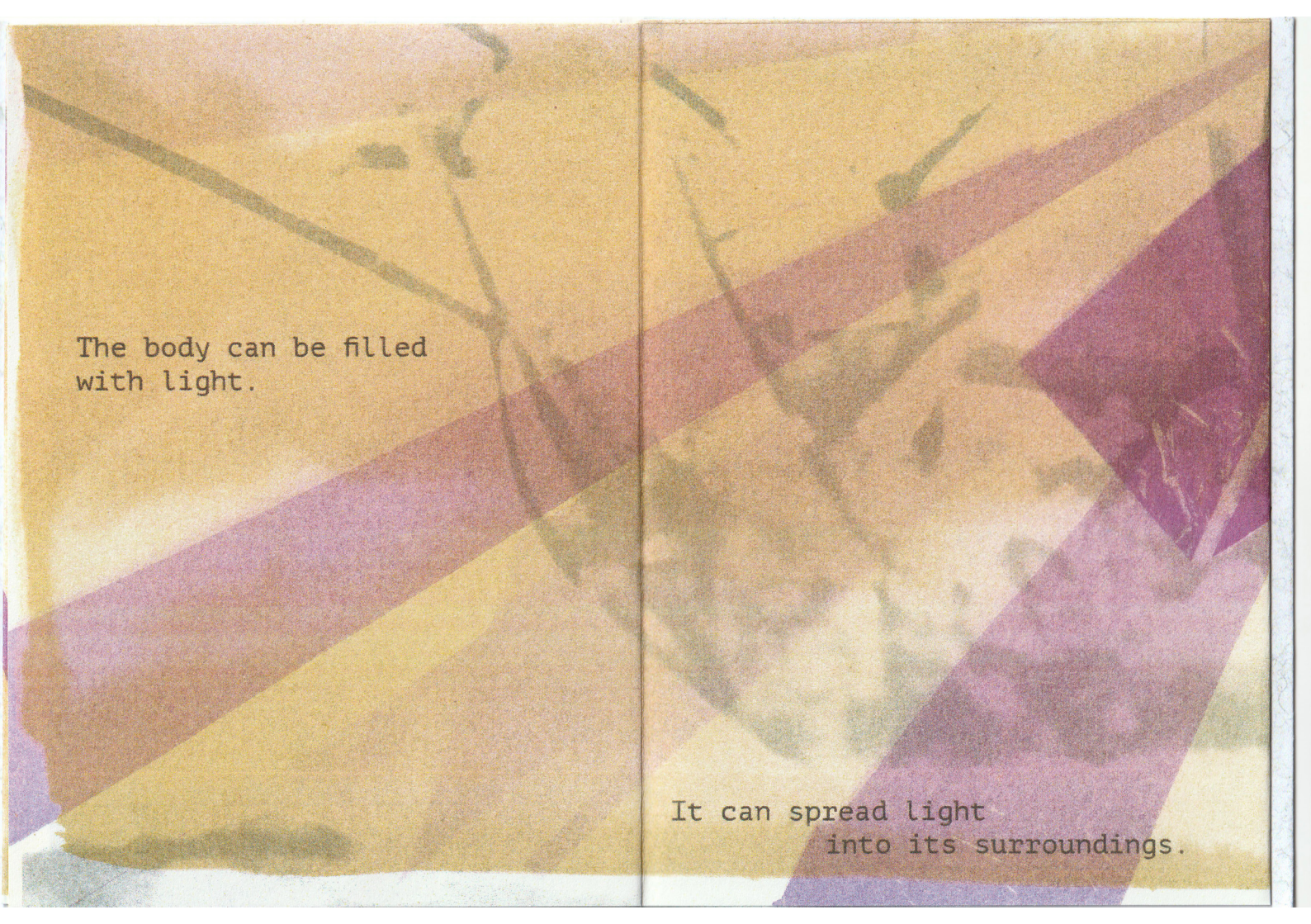
The background is an abstract composition of layered, textured paper. It features a palette of warm, earthy tones: various shades of beige, tan, and light brown, overlaid with broad, diagonal strokes of deep magenta and burgundy. The edges of the paper layers are irregular and torn, creating a sense of depth and movement. Faint, dark lines and smudges are visible across the surface, suggesting a process of layering and perhaps some light staining or wear over time.

Sometimes cracks appear.

The body is transparent.

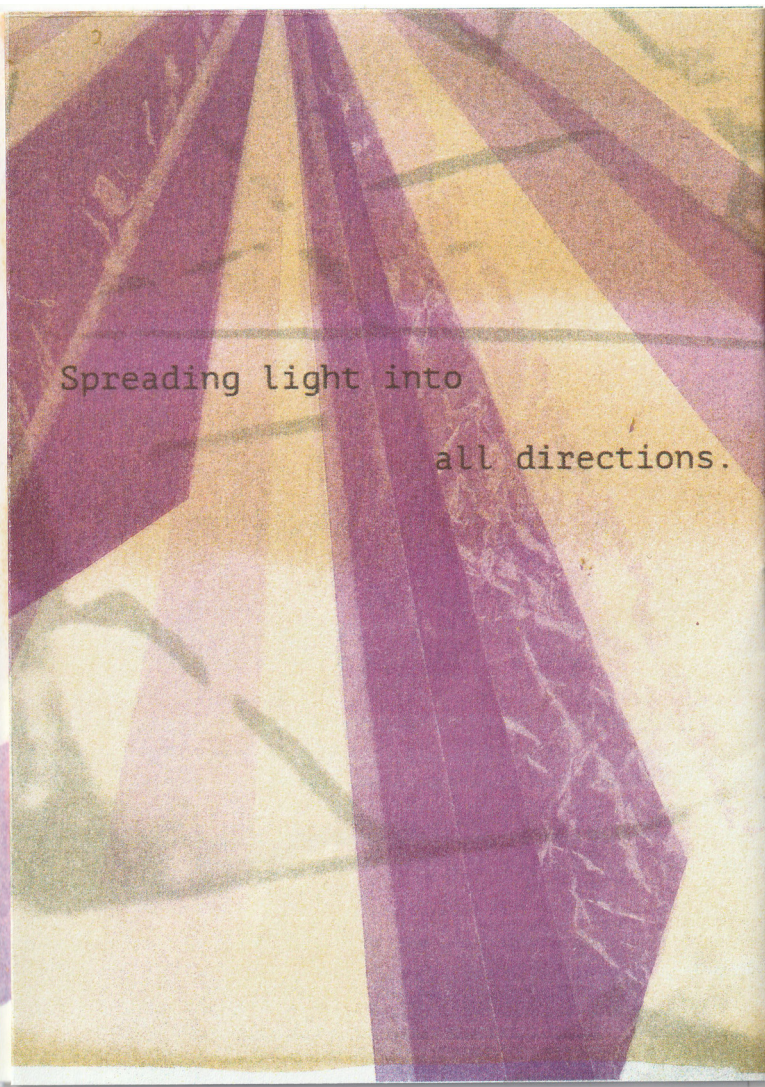
Sometimes pieces break
or splinter off.

Light can shine through.

The background is an abstract composition of warm, earthy tones. It features large, overlapping areas of yellow, orange, and light brown. A prominent diagonal band of reddish-pink or magenta runs from the lower left towards the upper right. In the bottom right corner, there are more complex, darker purple and magenta shapes that appear to be layered or folded. The overall texture is soft and painterly, with some darker, almost black, lines and shapes scattered throughout, suggesting a sense of depth and movement.

The body can be filled
with light.

It can spread light
into its surroundings.



Spreading light into
all directions.

The imaginations presented here are based on fieldnotes, made during my research on Butoh in Japan and Europe (between 2011 and 2018). For the series "daily imagery for porous sensitivities", I selected imaginations that enact bodies not as whole and closed, but as leaky, permeable and dissolving.

Porosity and leakiness are concepts and sensitivities I explore for my artistic practice - called BLOB - and for my work at research centre What Art Knows: porosity as a generous and caring artistic research attitude; leakiness as an embodied approach towards connectedness and attunement.

How can we radically let go of individuality? What if we don't have boundaries? What if we allow ourselves to be all over the place? How does a leaky body feel? Butoh offers bodily practices that allow to physically explore such questions.

In this series of zines, I work with Riso printing to explore how butoh imagery - which is usually mediated through a dancing body - can be mediated on paper. Riso enables working with transparencies, different materialities and the merging of colours. Through working with these prints, I broadened my repertoire of porous sensitivities and hope to transmit (some of) these to the reader.