BABELS TORN
THE TOWER OF BABEL

The American author Paul Auster has written a novel called “City of Glass”. It is a story about a professor who is put in jail after having locked up his child in a dark room for many years in the hope that the child would learn to speak the language of God. The story takes place in Manhattan.

When the professor is released from prison, his former wife hires a private detective to prevent the professor from getting near the child again. The detective spends days shadowing the professor on his daily walks, until one day the detective realizes that the routes the professor is taking in the Manhattan street grid make up shapes that closely resemble letters in the alphabet.

Realizing this, it becomes clear to the detective that the professor is in the process of writing words with his feet, and that those words are: “THE TOWER OF BABEL”.

If you mark out 76 specific intersections in the street grid between 14th street and Central Park on a map of Manhattan, and then connect these intersections with straight lines, you will see the following capital letters appear: “THE TOWER OF BABEL”.

During a four-year period, Simon Hogsberg spent 46 days in 46 of these 76 intersections on Manhattan – photographing motifs relating to the biblical myth of Babel. He managed to write the words “THE TOWER” before concluding that just like the real tower, his project would never be completed. The images on the next pages are part of his Tower of Babel project.