



Evoking the Haptic City in the Age of Confinement:
A film animation project in Lisbon

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IdeasBe seminar

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Alvalade : an ordinary neighbourhood

“ALVALADE ENCOUNTERS”

Building a method for exploring the city through a hybridity of media, including handmade techniques. Studying architecture in motion, in time, its people – putting my thoughts in motion with sketches, feelings, reactions! Representing ATMOSPHERE

Not using handmade animation as end-goal but as the fittest medium for intimacy, familiarity, recognizability, process

Familiarity (Paul Wells), Recognizability (Elen Rocha), Process (Marina Estela Graca)

and, naturally, non-visual techniques that reveal the haptic (Laura Marks)

Alvalade : a Lisbon neighbourhood

So what is the atmosphere I am creating?

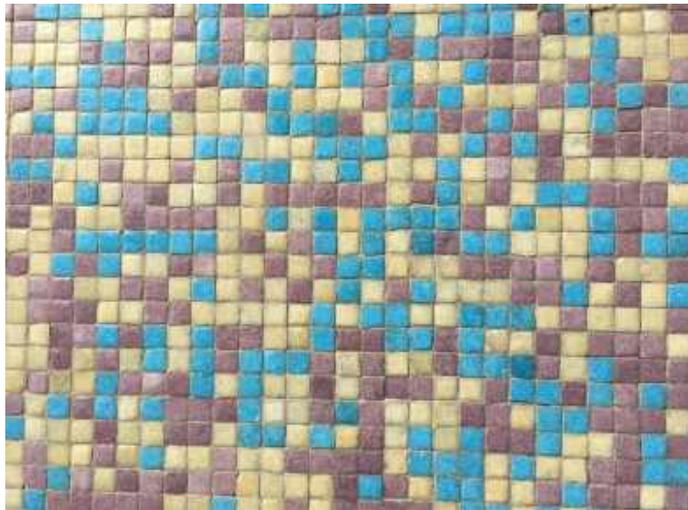
Or will it be pivoting around a story?

The HOW the neighbourhood was

- Conceived
- Made/Constructed
- Populated/Lived
- What it represents in the public imaginary
- Evolution /Decay



Alvalade





Realities of Confinement

Buildings represent longing of people.
Contrast between buildings, now left alone
to speak about the human corporeality
and voices of people that try to reach out, connect.
Materiality expresses the human condition.
Different buildings have different voices.
Streets: imaginary encounters in places now empty.
Empty street – voice of people doing what they would on that street.
View of facades while listening to what people are doing and staying inside
(contemplating, arguing, playing video games).

Encounters that WERE to happen: embraces, exchanges,
disputes, and ‘randomness’ that never took place.
Empty spaces echo these longings.
Buildings are what is left of our crazy world.
Those with traces have more to say.
Their architecture can allow them for
(balcony, dialogues, singing) becoming embraces.

It was nice seeing you

This is for you to smile

It is nice the moon tonight

*We can be passionate about things
we thought never existed*

How was your day?

I am in quarantena

I am back

I am leaving

We should meet before the moon gets too small ☺

I don't feel good today ☹

I really enjoyed our conversation

Realities of Confinement

*We were all forced to go digital
We were all forced to go virtual
To disappear
To go to our countries
To go to our houses and stay there*

*It was good for nature
For the rest of the species that is
It was good for the air and water
Our sick hands got out of the way
Along with it, our infectious love;
The egotistical urge to look into each other's eyes making plans for the future
Our own fantasies about which no one else cared*

*We were forced to go virtual
And banish ourselves
This was our punishment
We were all forced to go virtual
And pretend we like it
Pretend it is real*

*Pretend it was the same or even better than the real
We made fake smiles to one another
And shared likes and hearts online; pretending
We piled up a vast amount of bs to back it up
We had back-up, you see
We had to go inside and think what these hands were made for
And we washed them over and over again.*

Notes of Confinement

2 April 2020

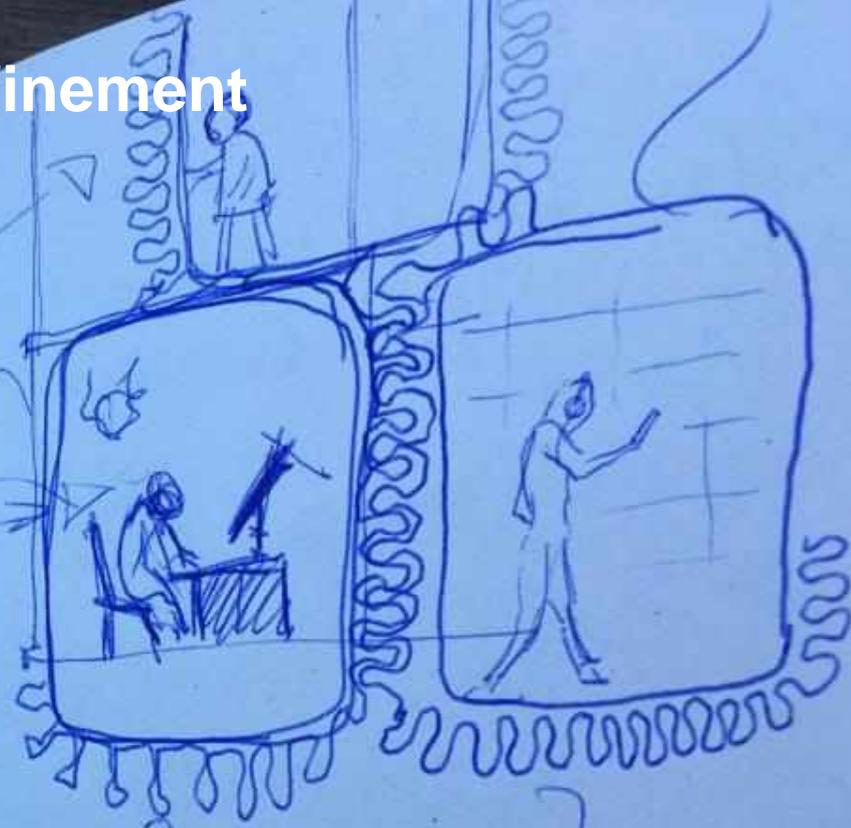
What is all this? What does it tell us about the senses? How have the senses being vilified, ostracized?

All movement is, I suppose.

So the city, from animated, becomes inanimate. Still. So if animation is to grasp it now, it would be about the minute movements of people and those of animals and plants. And of course the movements that would have been.

10 April

So, social distancing -- using technology to meet. Is this a crucial push toward disembodiment?



Busy
horses
of
machines
cars
airplanes

architect
des
of "call

Silence
human voices --

Notes of Confinement

10 April 2020

***When nothing moves
But only thoughts
A traffic of love
That runs in circles
And scrapes the skies
Heavy marks on the heart
With no place to go
No air to breathe
No touch to heal
No ocean to swim away
All the wrong people
We are all the wrong people for each other
And we cannot stand seeing it now***

14 April 2020

The idea of Atmosphere. Layers, Depth, Thickness.

What do they represent?

Depth of human relationships?

21 April 2020

Maybe the phenomenon is not the empty space but the blankness of humans in that space.

What is eerie is the awkwardness of humans who cannot be humans.

People trying to approach surfaces, cannot touch.

An archaeology of touches!

A world that was.

Architecture that was meant to be touched.



Notes of Confinement

12 May 2020

The breath

We are kept from breathing

Our touch is our breath

We breathe through the skin

Buildings breathe through their pores and openings

We see the sun, the master breather

We breathe when we see handwork and touch it with our eyes

Our eyes breathe only

when they know that we can touch

Only when they see that which is touched

Only when they know they belong to the body

A body that moves freely

That sweats, that falls, that hugs, that loses control,

That speaks to other bodies

The city is precisely this

Porous, mobile, messy, and improvised

The city is the pretext of order

in order to be human,

anonymous and hence civilized,

rational and thus safe,

in order for all the daily accidents to happen

Where can she be now?

Lost in the crowds alone in a room

My own imagination

That was beautiful

*Dressed with the most exquisite of flowers
which I grew in my garden*

*Silenced and drained from all juices
on a deserted island*

Unwilling and virtual

Away from the square

The piazza where it came to life

More Notes

23 June 2020

With more mediation, more blockage of physical interactions amongst humans, comes, naturally, an intensified desire to counter it. This is exemplified by the standardization of the use of the mask at the moment. Where people are desperately trying to **compensate** for the “blockage” of their lower face expressions by emphasizing their upper face expressions, eyes, eyebrows, etc. It means that **each advent of technology that would force us to abandon our physical expressions, will be countered with some sort of physicality**. As water does when blocked. It will find a way!

24 June 2020

The empty city is no longer empty. But it is strange. People are out but how will we discover each other? This is why confinement is symbolic or maybe a physical manifestation of our existing psychological state.

WHAT ARE THE ISSUES APPRECIATED?

Expressing the materiality and hapticity of the city. If expressing is not what film is about, then it may be about creating sensations on what is human and what is not. What is real.

New Sources

- Castello-Branco, Patricia (2010). Pure Sensations? From Abstract Film to Digital Images. *Animation: An Interdisciplinary Journal*. 5 (1).

About Oskar Fischinger's films: *...this idea of 'pure sensations' was perceptive and physical, and not representative, or emotional.*

In (Len) Lye's works, the awareness of the materiality of the film as a physical entity was accompanied by acknowledgement of the physicality of the act of perception and of the film's reception.

- Knowles, Kim (2016). Slow, Methodical, and Mulled Over: Analog Film Practice in the Age of the Digital. *Cinema Journal*. 55.

Tacita Dean: *The "burdensome physicality" of analog technology counters the "body-less, human-less world" proposed by digital.*

Babette Magnolte: *Film has a pulse. It measures time both physically and temporally.*

Bradley Eros: *The digital is perhaps closer to synaptic brain processes, and the speed of thought...but more distant than the body that suffers.*

- Wells, Paul (2015). The Animation Manifesto or, What's Animation Ever Done for Us?. *Metro Magazine*. 188.

Animation can literally be the 'concrete process of manufacturing records of psychological memory' and the animator, the mediator of a radical language that can service both images of perception and reception simultaneously. The external world can be rendered literally, metaphorically, and symbolically – but, in animation, all representation is essentially abstract, filtered through the self-reflexive faculties of the animator's empathy.(p.100)

More Notes

1st part

The depiction of the **city as is** but through the lens of my materials and technique. Materiality, atmosphere, what objects will I use, paper? photos?

2nd part

The depiction of **confinement** – has to do with our inhabiting of the screen and our ongoing virtualization – non-space – non-material

3rd part

The depiction of **what may be** is a recognition of what is there in new lenses...that only handmade animation can express. So the new lenses are important experimentations (!)of material and their various subversions that reinvent our relationship, appreciation to/of our built environment.

If image is supposed to fill the senses, then why is sound important?

Synaesthesia?

Could reality be heard more in non-visual moments of darkness – slowness?

A Lefebvrian triptych

Materiality – human presence – human participation – democracy

PERÇU => Initial scenes, those of routine, those of the speechless crowds that “go through the motions” and perceive with their senses the city as mere accommodation, a tool.

CONÇU => When confined/enclosed, the city is but a concept. All that which the authorities tried to impose with their designs, are now achieved in virtuality. The triumph of the top-down is virtuality.

People believe they organize themselves, communicate, change the world, but do nothing, really.

Society was already being dismantled. Now, it is physically dismantled. Banished from the public space – physical space and dehumanized. Dehumanization is an important step toward death, physical, mental, societal.

VECU => When people reclaim space after having (re)imagined it in confinement. After having desired and appreciated it, after loving their own coexistence and all those relationships, human, environmental, urban, animal, that make life meaningful.

Animation Project Storyline

Technique in mind: paper silhouettes on light table

Intro:

A circular mosaic motif turned into a busy roundabout with cars.



Animation Project Storyline.

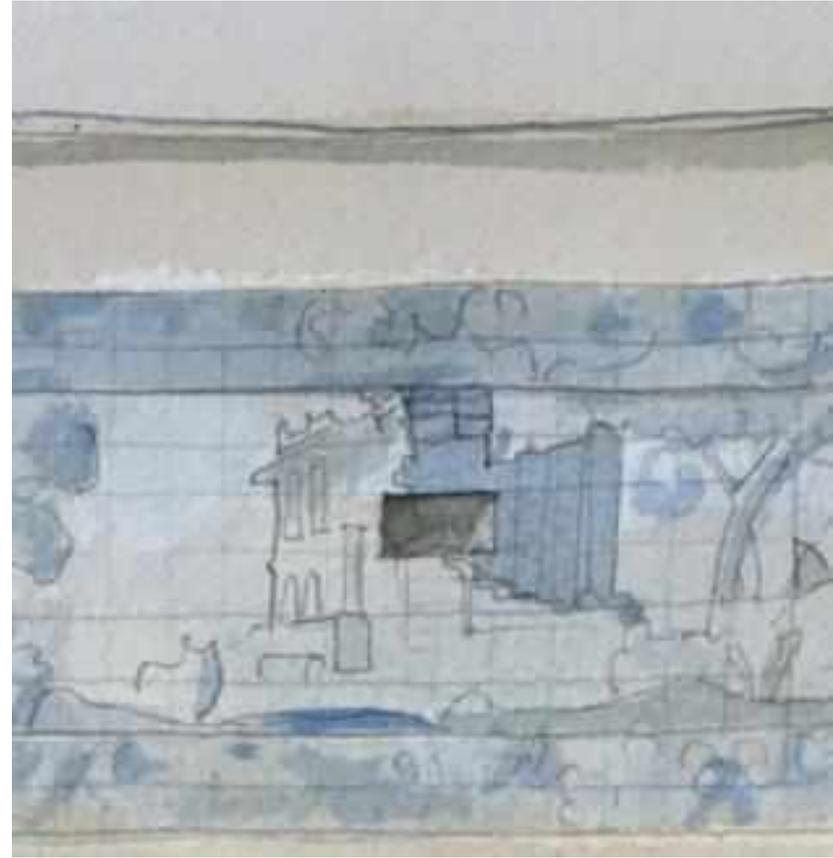


Animation Project Storyline.

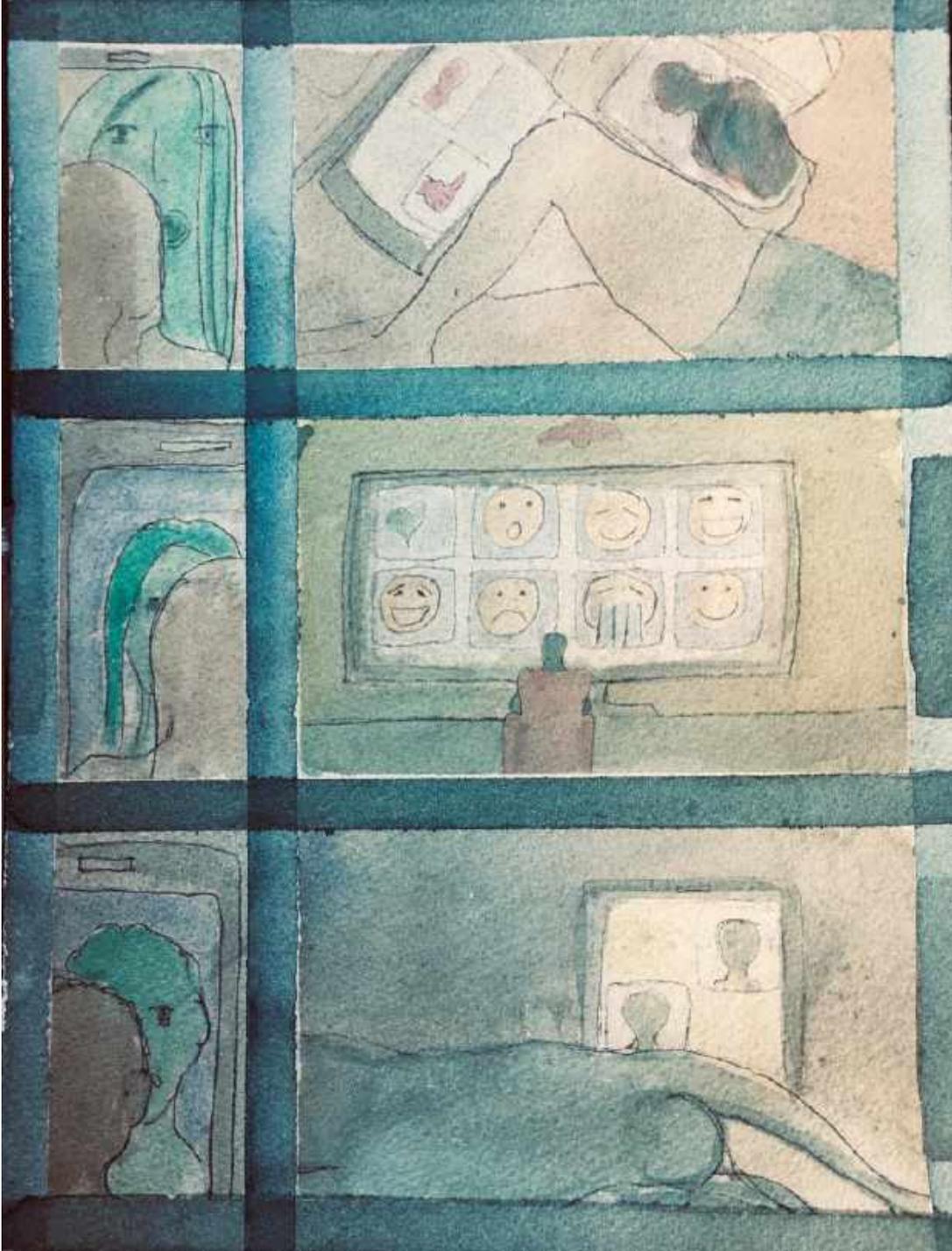


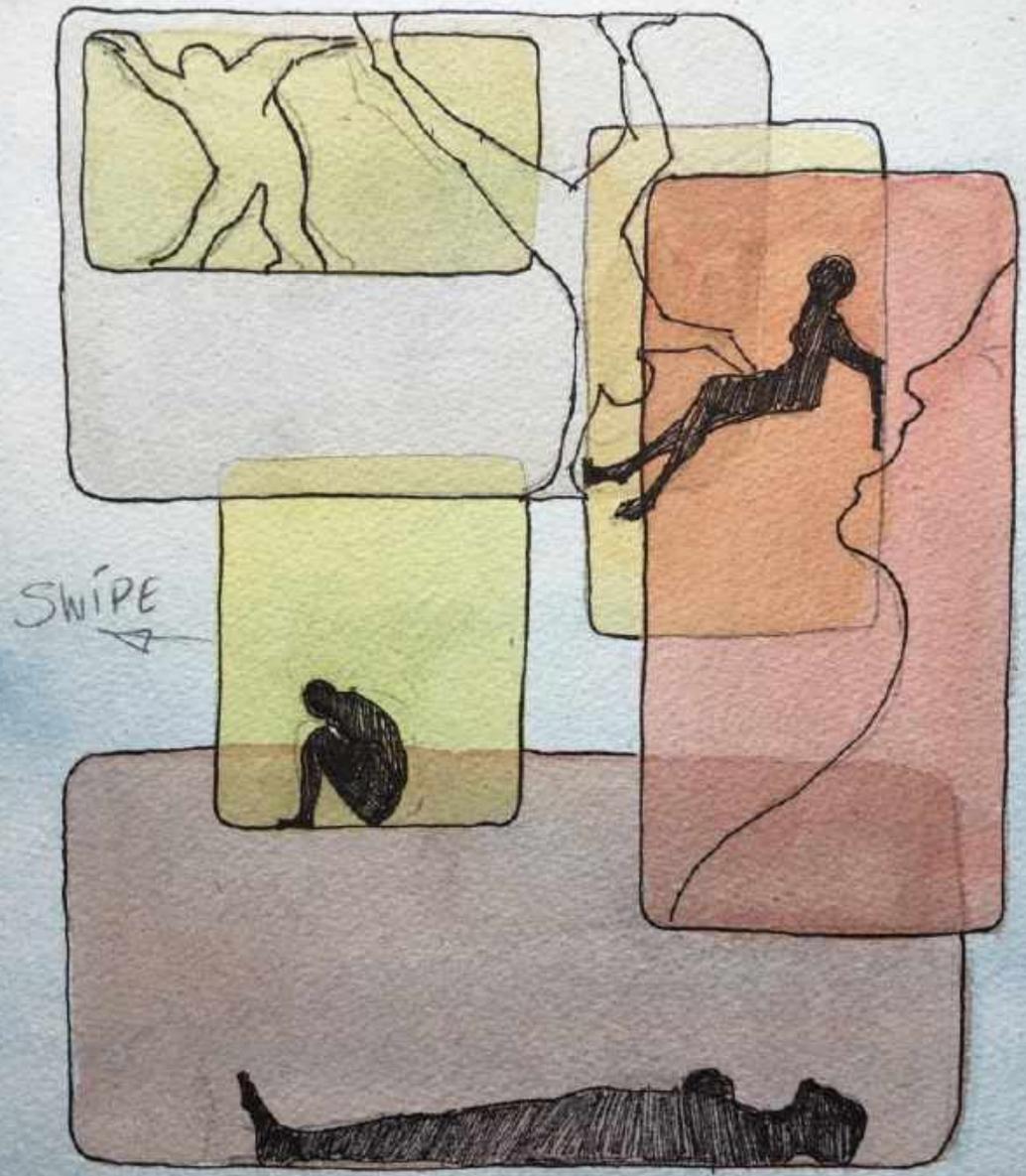


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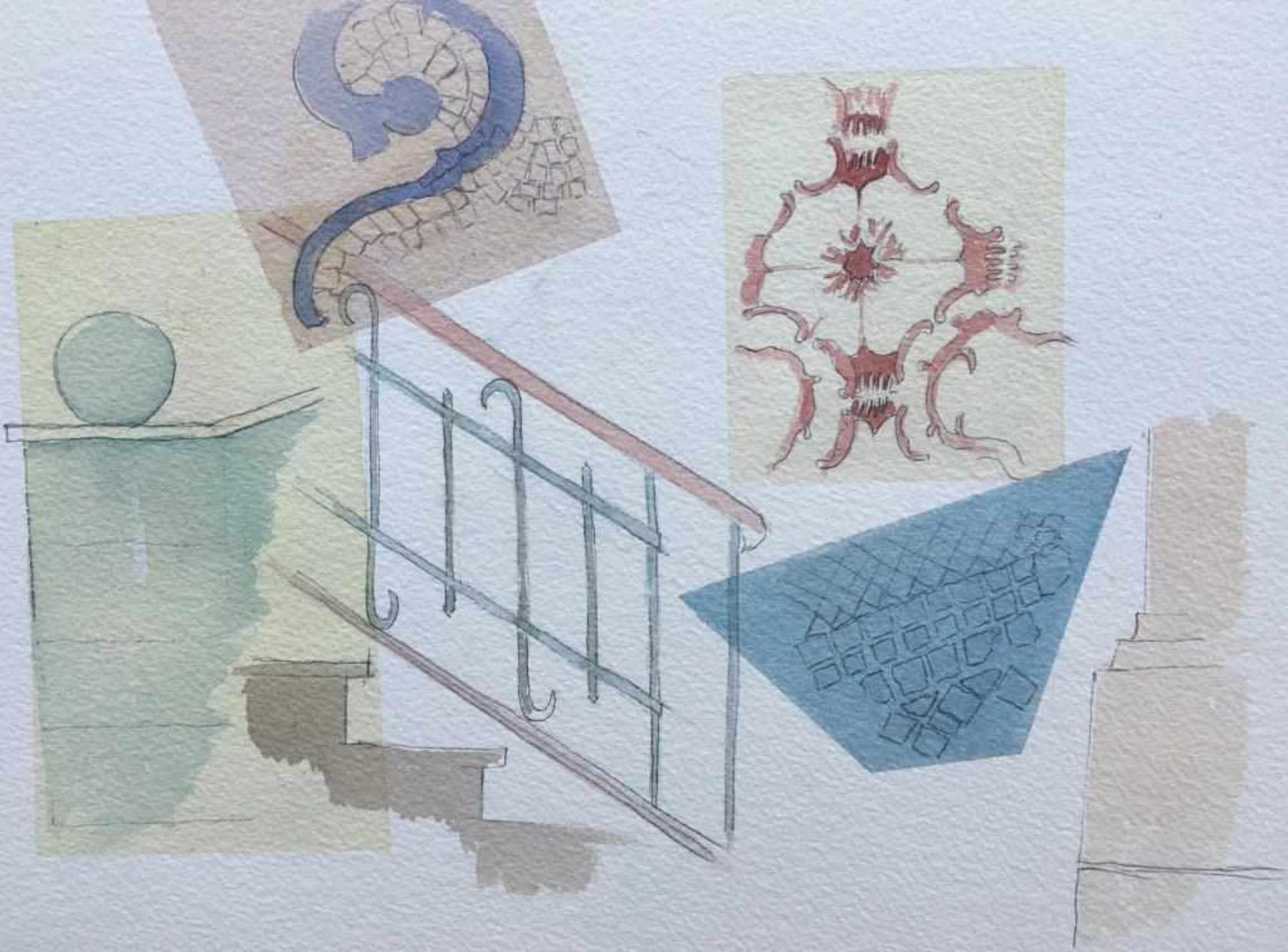


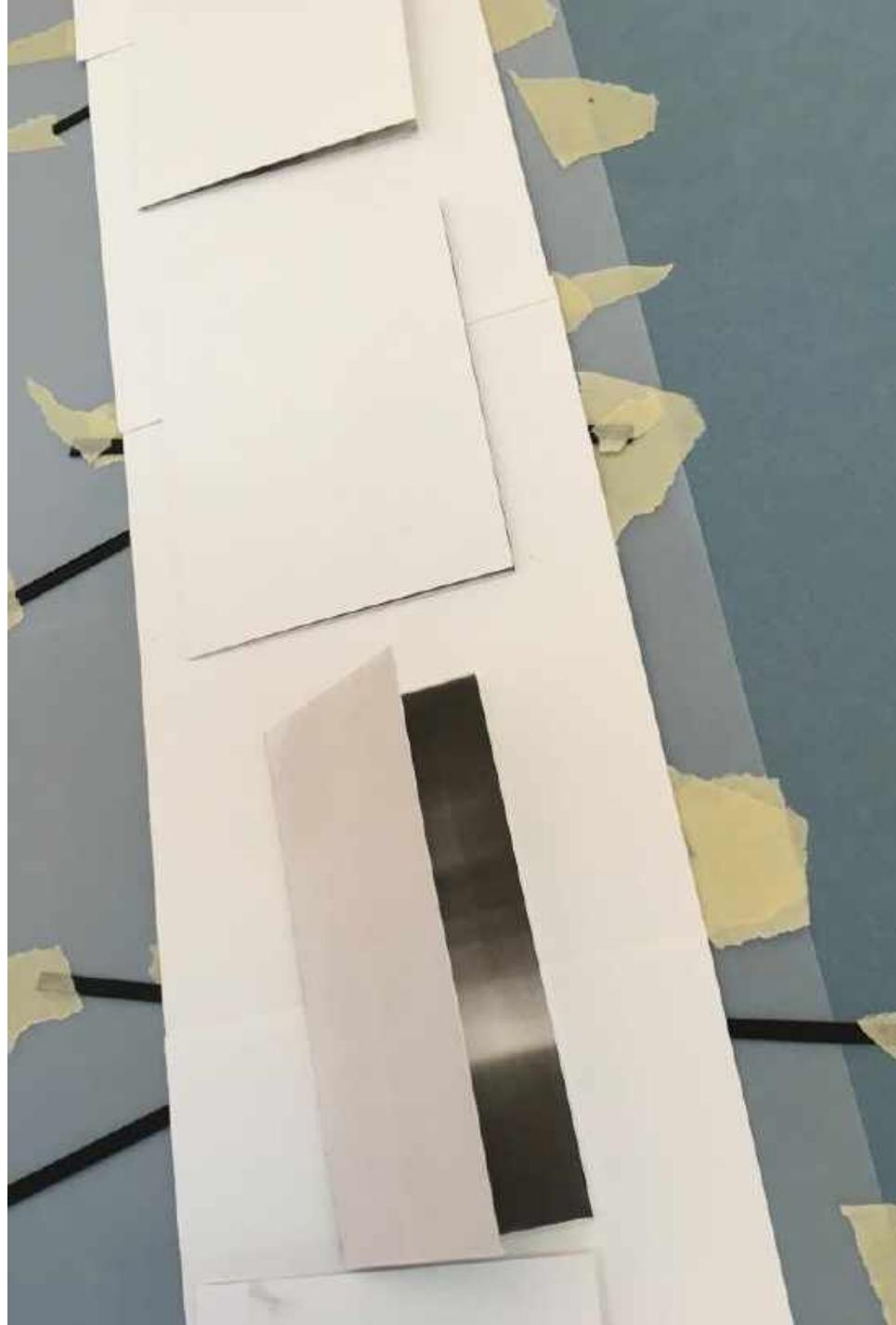






SWIPE
↘





More Notes

28 May

What makes the space of the vecu?

- The Dance/χορός/χώρος
- To see and to be seen within" frames of vision" (picturesque)
- To work, build, help, care
- To live in dwellings that express ourselves and our desires – platforms of expression
- To breathe the atmosphere of the city
- To cultivate gardens
- To educate each other
- And of course, to celebrate

29 May

Exploring REAL CITY LOCATIONS

Extracting their ESSENCE

Effectively, creating a personal interpretation

The PLACES are positioned in HISTORY and are also part of a STORY

The places speak about the PEOPLE. The relationships with them.

4 June 2020

How to reclaim the city? What is the city for?
The city is the Temple of physical coexistence.

There is no reason to have cities if we are to live in isolation. Our physical encounters, our humanity are all we have that is real.

Real = meaningful – multilayered meanings
(body language) = Senses

These multilayered aspects should be featured in my final scenes because they speak of the full and true **humanity of the city**.

Research Concerns

- What is a city?
- What does it serve today (as a physical entity)?
- How do we express it? (or make it felt?)
- How does the haptic of the moving image say something about it?