

M r e s C o m m u n i c a t i o n
2 0 2 3 F a l l
W o r d c o u n t : 1 1 0 6 0 w o r d s



1 0 0 3 0 3 0 6 @ n e t
w o r k . r c a . a c . u k
L i n g y u (I r i s) Z h a n g

T r a c e s
F r e e - a s s e m b l a g e M a k i n g
a s a M e t h o d
t o T o u c h S e l f - N a r r a t i v e

Abstract

This study, which combines art practice and autoethnography, began by addressing the sense of alienation and dislocation between international students and first-generation female immigrants as a result of dramatic environmental change.

The research by practice combines psychology and psychoanalysis, invoking the framework of self-continuity and the concept of self-narrative.

A written and visual, sculptural practice of 'free-assemblage making,' explores the materiality of traces as elements that speak of the fragmentation and discontinuity of cultural and environmental displacement and dislocation.

Key writers and makers drawn upon include Sedikides with self-continuity, Steyerl with materiality, Lic Rodrigo B with Lacon's theory, Tracey Emin with feminist installations and Hew Locke with found objects sculptures.

The research explores how might we use 'free-assemblage making' to represent as well as analyse psychoanalytically, poetically and visually the ideas of self-continuity and self-narrative, and the paradoxes they hold.

Key words

*self-narrative, self-continuity,
assemblage art, creative writing,
feminist, autoethnography*

Contents

Glossary of Experiments	01
Glossary of Terms	02
Glossary of Pictures	03
Introduction	05
PART1:Be touched - past and present	07
1.1 Back to the Beginning: the orchid: writing, photography and retrospection	08
1.2 With objects: framework of the experiment, autoethnography and materiality.....	15
1.3 Touching on self-narrative: objects from the past, self-continuity and the desire to fill in	22
PART2: Be filled- present and future	37
2.1 To the future: as I am to London, as a comet is to the universe.....	38
2.2 My Madness: emotional observation, asemic writing, free-assemblage making.....	45
2.3 Daydreaming: paradoxes, symbols and publications.....	53
PART3: Be broked- the gap	67
3.0 Causes of the Gap: consumption, self-objectification and the female dilemma	68
Achknowlagement.....	80
Appendix.....	81
Bibliography.....	83

Glossary of Experiments

Experiment 1

Free assemblage making with real objects, combining with writing, found objects, assemblage, installation, sculpture

- Experiment 1.1 The Net----- 16
- Experiment 1.2 The Monument -----17
- Experiment 1.3 The Sun----- 18



Experiment 2

Assemblage making without thoughts, combining with autobiographical reasoning, considering space, objects from my past.

- Experiment 2.1 The packages----- 25
- Experiment 2.2 Packages in rooms----- 27-32
- Experiment 2.3 Sleeping in wood----- 33



Experiment 3

Free-assemblage making with graphical components, combining with writing, Asemic writing, collage, typography, graphic manipulation

- Experiment 3.1, Urban trace archiving----- 39-42
- Experiment 3.2, My words----- 44-50
- Experiment 3.3, Untitled----- 51



Experiment 4

Graphics to publications considering graphics, paper and space, handmade book, leaflet

- Experiment 4.1, will you remember me----- 52-56
- Experiment 4.2, won't you remember me----- 58-64

Experiment 5

Free-assemblage making with digital components, Multi-spaces, textile and video clips. Textile, graphic, installation, video, unreal

- Experiment 5.1, The Room----- 69-72
- Experiment 5.2, The Tent----- 73-77



Glossary of Terms

- Materiality of Traces -----21
- Self-Discontinuity -----21
- Autobiographical reasoning -----22
- Self-narrative -----24
- Asemic writing -----47
- Free-assemblage making -----46
- Hysterical discourse -----57

Glossary of Figures

Figure1, I saw a murder on street, 2023	04	Figure47, Urban Traces, Experiment 3.1, archives, photography of urban traces	42
Figure2, The orchid, 2023, photography	07	Figure49-54, My words. Experiment 3.2, A4 typography collage, free-assemblage making	44
Figure3, The orchid, 2023, photography	07	Figure55, My words. Experiment 3.2, A4 typography collage, free-assemblage making	45
Figure4, The Illusion, illustration sketch, 2023	08	Figure56, My words. Experiment 3.2, A4 typography collage, free-assemblage making	45
Figure5, The Pot, 2023, photography	08	Figure57-58, My words. Experiment 3.2, A4 typography collage, free-assemblage making	46
Figure7, The Polar Bear, 2023, photography	08	Figure60, Example of Asemic Writing ³⁷	47
Figure6, The Bracelet, 2023, photography	08	Figure61-62, My words, Experiment 3.2, A4 typography collage, free-assemblage making, Asemic Writing	47
Figure8, Initial Research Mind-Map, 2023	10	Figure59, Patient's handwriting. ³⁶	47
Figure9, Scene in Inception (2010)	11	Figure63-64, My words, Experiment 3.2, A4 typography collage, free-assemblage making, Asemic Writing	48
Figure11, Scene in Mulholland Drive (2009)	12	Figure65-66, My words, Experiment 3.2, A4 typography collage, free-assemblage making, Asemic Writing	50
Figure12, Scene in Mulholland Drive (2009)	12	Figure67-69, Experiment 3.3, 1080*1080pix, typography collage, graphic manipulation, free-assemblage making, Asemic Writing	51
Figure13, Scene in Paprika (2006)	12	Figure70, will you remember me, 2024, Experiment 4.1, A3 printed 2-sides leaflet. free-assemblage making, graphic manipulation with urban traces and asemic writing	52
Figure10, Research process of Strait is the gate (1980)	12	Figure71, will you remember me, 2024, Experiment 4.1, A3 printed 2-sides leaflet, free-assemblage making, graphic manipulation with urban traces and asemic writing	52
Figure14, Polyhedron (2022), installation prototype, with discarded objects and slime.	14	Figure72-74, will you remember me, 2024, Experiment 4.1, A3 printed 2-sides leaflet, free-assemblage making, graphic manipulation with urban traces and asemic writing	54
Figure15, Polyhedron (2022), installation prototype, with discarded objects and slime.	15	Figure75-81, will you remember me, 2024, Experiment 4.1, A3 printed 2-sides leaflet, free-assemblage making, graphic manipulation with urban traces and asemic writing	56
Figure15, The Net (2023), Experiment 1.1, sculpture, 30*30cm, with found objects	16	Figure83, won't you remember me, 2024,, Experiment 4.2, A5 handmade book, free-assemblage making, graphic manipulation with urban traces and asemic writing	58
Figure16, The Net (2023), Experiment 1.1, sculpture, 30*30cm, with found objects	16	Figure84, won't you remember me, 2024,, Experiment 4.2, A5 handmade book, free-assemblage making, graphic manipulation with urban traces and asemic writing	58
Figure17, The Net (2023), Experiment 1.1, sculpture, 30*30cm, with found objects	16	Figure88-90, The Book, Experiment 4.2, won't you remember me, 2024,, Experiment 4.2, A5 handmade book, free-assemblage making, graphic manipulation with urban traces and asemic writing	59
Figure18, The Monument (2023), Experiment 1.2, sculpture, 20*20cm, with found objects	17	Figure85-87, won't you remember me, 2024,, Experiment 4.2, A5 handmade book, free-assemblage making, graphic manipulation with urban traces and asemic writing	60
Figure19, The Monument (2023), Experiment 1.2, sculpture, 20*20cm, with found objects	17	Figure91-92, won't you remember me, 2024,, Experiment 4.2, A5 handmade book, free-assemblage making, graphic manipulation with urban traces and asemic writing	61
Figure20, The Monument (2023), Experiment 1.2, sculpture, 20*20cm, with found objects	17	Figure93, won't you remember me, 2024,, Experiment 4.2, A5 handmade book, free-assemblage making, graphic manipulation with urban traces and asemic writing	63
Figure21, The Sun (2023), Experiment 1.3, illustration sketch, with acrylic on plastic sheet	18	Figure95, The Book, Experiment 4.2, won't you remember me, 2024,, Experiment 4.2, A5 handmade book, free-assemblage making, graphic manipulation with urban traces and asemic writing	64
Figure22, The Sun (2023), Experiment 1.3, illustration sketch, with acrylic on plastic sheet	18	Figure94, The Book, Experiment 4.2, won't you remember me, 2024,, Experiment 4.2, A5 handmade book, free-assemblage making, graphic manipulation with urban traces and asemic writing	64
Figure23, The Sun (2023), Experiment 1.3, illustration sketch, with acrylic on plastic sheet	18	Figure96, core aesthetic ⁴	68
Figure24, The Packages (2023), Experiment 2.1, spatial installation 200 x 200 cm, with hanging textile and object from my past, assemblage sculptures	25	Figure97-100, Symbolizing, 2024, 1080*1080 pix, Experiment 5.1, Mapping pattern, free-assemblage making, graphic manipulation with urban traces and asemic writing	69
Figure25, The Packages (2023), Experiment 2.1, spatial installation 200 x 200 cm, with hanging textile and object from my past, assemblage sculptures	25	Figure101-104, Symbolizing, 2024, 1080*1080 pix, Experiment 5.1, Mapping pattern, free-assemblage making, graphic manipulation with urban traces and asemic writing	70
Figure26, The Packages (2023), Experiment 2.1, spatial installation 200 x 200 cm, with hanging textile and object from my past, assemblage sculptures	25	Figure105-106, The Room, 2024, Experiment 5.1, spiritual digital space, free-assemblage making, Unreal engine, graphical surreal mapping pattern	71
Figure27, The Packages (2023), Experiment 2.1, spatial installation 200 x 200 cm, with hanging textile and object from my past, assemblage sculptures	25	Figure107-108, The Room, 2024, Experiment 5.1, spiritual digital space, free-assemblage making, Unreal engine, graphical surreal mapping pattern	72
Figure29, The Packages (2023), Experiment 2.1, spatial installation 20*50 cm, with textile and object from my past, assemblage sculptures	26	Figure109-110, Experiment 5.2, fabrics on the tent, heat pressing transparent textile, collage	73
Figure30, Packages in rooms (2024), Experiment 2.2, spatial installation 200 x 200 cm, projection of my old room, with hanging textile and object from my past, assemblage sculptures	27	Figure111, Experiment 5.2, final cut pro green screen experiment, with green fabric and textile covering the tent	74
Figure31, Packages in rooms (2024), Experiment 2.2, spatial installation 10x30 cm, with hanging textile and object from my past, assemblage sculptures	29	Figure113-114, Experiment 5.2, fabrics on the tent, heat pressing transparent textile, collage, process	74
Figure32, Packages in rooms (2024), Experiment 2.2, spatial installation 10x30 cm, with hanging textile and object from my past, assemblage sculptures	30	Figure112, Experiment 5.2, fabrics on the tent, heat pressing transparent textile, collage	74
Figure33, Packages in rooms (2024), Experiment 2.2, spatial installation 40x40 cm, with hanging textile and object from my past, assemblage sculptures	30	Figure115, Sketch of The Tent, Experiment 5.2	74
Figure34, Packages in rooms (2024), Experiment 2.2, spatial installation 200 x 200 cm, projection of my old room, with hanging textile and object from my past, assemblage sculptures	32	Figure115-118, Video 5'00", Multi-media, unreal, digital space, tent with textiles, spiritual sounds	76
Figure35, Packages in rooms (2024), Experiment 2.2, spatial installation 40x40 cm, with hanging textile and object from my past, assemblage sculptures	32	Figure119, Video 5'00", Multi-media, unreal, digital space, tent with textiles, spiritual sounds	77
Figure36, Sleeping in wood (2024), Experiment 2.3, 200*200cm, installation, objects from my past, assemblage sculptures, video	33		
Figure37, Sleeping in wood (2024), Experiment 2.3, 200*200cm, installation, objects from my past, assemblage sculptures, video	33		
Figure38, Urban Traces, Experiment 3.1, archives, photography of urban traces	39		
Figure39, Urban Traces, Experiment 3.1, archives, photography of urban traces	40		
Figure39-46, Urban Traces, Experiment 3.1, archives, photography of urban traces	41		
Figure48, Urban Traces, Experiment 3.1, archives, photography of urban traces	42		

Introduction

Trace, verb, noun

means to find someone or something that was lost

to find the origin of something

to discover the causes or origins of something by examining the way in which it has developed

to describe the way in which something has developed

a sign that something has happened or existed

to copy a drawing, pattern, etc

by drawing its lines on a thinpiece of paper that is placed over it

the process of searching for something that has been lost

In this moment of tapping, I once again retrace my steps back to the beginning of the entire project, and I realise once again that my exploration as an artist is constructed on constant tracing. My practice is all about going back step by step to that starting point of discomfort. I explore the way back again and again, searching for why I am now and why I am here.

"As an artist separate from my art, I saw the effect of my existence in the existence of the work: The work changed the world for me by adding something new that wasn't there before...."-Adrian Piper¹

I remember it was inside the pub in Notting Hill and I looked out of the window at the crowd creating a feeling of detachment and numbness. I was a bit drunk at the time and looked at my DATE and said that sometimes I have a feeling that I am not here. He asked me if it was because it was different from China. I shook my head and said no, I am not there

or here, I don't know where I am. These streets are familiar to me, as are the streets of China, but they are all strange again. They were very different, and in essence they were no different to me. It was a feeling that I still find hard to describe, and I can't find any accurate words to express it. He asked me again then, "Do you mean to say that you find this thing about you being in London incredible?" And I said, "Not really. I understand that I've come all the way over and I'm supposed to be here. I remember bits and pieces and I can empathise with parts of them. But I have always felt this environment away from me. I seem to be disconnected from all of my environment.

My subconscious urgently keeps me searching for some hidden connection. I wanted to be connected to this place, to the environment, but I didn't know why.

How to do this and why my subconscious exists have become the subject of my research. As an inter-media artist, I have

been working with graphics, matter and the properties behind them, thinking about the historicity and materiality of it all. My work is not limited to dismantling and reconstructing objects in the traditional sense. It covers a much wider range. The substances I work with can be objects, commodities, graphics, symbols, words. They are not confined to our real space, but can also be in a two-dimensional plane, or a digital space, as long as they encompass a materiality worth thinking about.

In this research, my practice is to dismantle and reorganise matter into instantaneous narratives that condense space-time and story. I eschew terms that traditionally refer to them, such as sculpture, collage, and textual typography. I think there are certain structures and rules implicit in these words. I am concerned with the free and diffuse positional relationships and moods, and the choices made by the creators of the positional relationships between the elements of the assemblage, when the institutional discipline is removed. They medium and form, their narratives and new stories.

I have therefore named this way of working Free-assemblage making, and focussed my work on the materiality of the trace. Traces in any sense of the word are the element and only element that I consider in my practice. I reflect on any decisions made at the time of the assemblage event and work with the work to unravel the self through reworking and writing. In this process, I reflect on the structure and framework of the self-narrative and the relationship between the environment and the self-narrative.

This research is therefore an interdisciplinary study. It is built on the methodology of autoethnography, the research group is women who are international students and first generation immigrants, and the research subject is myself. Using the concepts of self-narrative and self-continuity in psychology as a framework, I study how to touch the abstract self-narrative in the process of Free-assemblage making through auto biology reasoning, how to fill in the gaps in the self-narrative and strengthen the connection with the environment. I think about the materiality of traces and the commonality of self-narratives, and do this through a variety of media: objects from the past, graphic written texts, urban traces and journeys, furniture symbols, and myself.

In the process of creation, the self-narrative of being touched (part1), filled (part2), and broken (part3) exposes the grandiose dreamscape I co-create with my environment. It explains the historical and emotional stories contained in the environment, and the paradoxes of the self-narrative revealed in the environment. I look back at East Asian culture, historicity and personal events, and discuss feminism and globalisation. Ultimately, I decided to live with the predicament. I became traces, I think, of the city, which covered me.

¹ Piper, A. (2014). Talking to Myself: the Ongoing Autobiography of an Art Object. in: the Object. cambridge, Massachusetst.: whitechapel Gallery, p.32.



Figure1, I saw a murder on street, 2023

PART 1

Be touched past and present

"I'm sitting in my house at a table by the window. Despite the large window, most of the time, day or night, the sun does not shine into my room. As I sit here alone, I am surrounded by warm yellow light, enveloped in it, and my vision is warm, even though my body doesn't feel the warmth.."

There was no sound in all directions and I could hear myself breathing. My breath connected with them. Then I felt them with me, quickly forming a larger net that connected me to others and, by extension, to everyone in the world. I didn't know them, I'd never met them....I sit alone in the house, and I am not alone..." - 2023.12.09. Echos in my room



Back to the Beginning

The Orchid: Writing, Photography and Retrospection

The dim, yellowed light cast an eerie glow upon the cramped space, where discarded items had piled up like miniature mountains. Thankfully, there were no bugs, I thought, but the smell was becoming rather unpleasant. With a toss, I added to the heap, making it even taller.

"Hey, help me, I'm here!" came a faint voice from the corner, startling me. I followed the feeble sound and found it sitting quietly there, still wearing a smile on its face – perhaps because its dark eyes reflected the dim light, but I couldn't help but feel a touch of sadness in its expression.

"How did you end up here? Who abandoned you?" I asked. "It doesn't matter!" it replied. "Now, we are friends!" "Oh... You sure about that?" I examined it closely. "I mean, I've

always wanted one like you, but I never thought I'd find one in a trash can."

"Just pick me up, you dumb ass!! I'm clean, I'm brand new. What more could you expect? I have a super cute face! Smile~" With that, it stretched its already sewn-on curve a bit longer.

I placed it on my table, next to my coriander pot. I thought, even though it was noisy, as a fake plant to decorate the room, it could still fulfill its duty. "Maybe it can be your friend? What do you think, Orchid?" I pointed at the potted plant – its leaves were turning yellow, hanging lifelessly over the pot. "It will die!!!! Friend's rule number one is not aging, not dying. Don't you know that?!" It yelled loudly, then laughed like a child.

"Well, you've got a droopy leaf

yourself, are you sure you won't die?" I asked. "I have the power of immortality, you silly!"

As Orchid had said, in a few days, the coriander plant began to wither, blending into the soil. Surprisingly, Orchid didn't make a fuss about it. Instead, it sat calmly beside the now empty pot.

"Why don't you say something about it? Mock me if you want." Only silence hung in the air. After a long standoff, it finally spoke, "Okay, but I won't mock you. You see, as long as you want, I'll be with you forever. We are eternal friends."

"Oh, give it a rest! If you're so great, why did your previous owner toss you away?"

"Why don't you guess a riddle?" I stared at it in disbelief. It

continued, "You don't have to understand me, but I understand you. You don't have to water me, yet I persist. Your one second equals my eternity; my life exists within your dreams. I exist but do not. I am real yet not. When do you think I exist?"

"When I need you?"

"When we're far apart?"

"At all times?"

"Ha..." it sighed, "You got it right for the night. Hope it won't keep you up!" With that, it closed its eyes and fell silent.

-2023.09. The orchid1

He is a *Phalaenopsis orchid*, with a light gray fabric textured by brown fine lines forming a circular outline. The pot-shaped cylindrical body is irregular, with some wrinkles resulting from the stitching, but this does not affect its role as a support on the table. His body is very soft, and when you pinch it, you can hear a rustling sound, as if the designer deliberately filled him with weighted fillings to make him stand. Two small black feet extend casually from the front of this cylindrical body.

Furry reddish-brown fabric is embedded in the top of the cylinder, and two deep green tendrils grow out from the soil, one to the left and the other to the right, extending to the top adorned with velvety purple fabric flowers. His petals are not fragile like those of other orchids; instead, they are quite thick. Perhaps it's the reflection of the velvety fabric, making the petals appear more three-dimensional, accentuating the striking orange clusters of stamens. More eye-catching than anything else are his two black, deep-set eyes - he's always smiling, but it always feels like he's saying something. Those black, profound eyes reflect the indoor lighting, as if he's genuinely happy, yet it also seems like he has to be. It's as if he doesn't care about what's happening in the world, but at the same time, he seems to understand the entire world. It's as if he want to say something to me, yet he choose not to say.

-2023.09. *The orchid2*



Figure3, *The orchid*, 2023, photography

These are two posts I wrote when I first met orchid. I had just moved into student accommodation. I was one of the first students to move in this year, so not long after I moved in a large number of people left, leaving behind a large amount of belongings. the refuse room was so full that the door couldn't be closed, and orchid was sitting on top of the rubbish.

He was cute, I thought. So I picked him up and brought him home. He was pathetic, and I sensed that behind the smile he couldn't stop smiling was the sadness of abandonment when the need was gone. He was a commodity, a stuffed animal, but I always felt he represented something more.

He became my friend.

More second-hand items made their way into my new, empty home, still brand new, but already abandoned. I looked at them and felt the flow of the world's population, the flow of needs. In being abandoned and picked up again by me, they conveyed some kind of need - and through that, I made some kind of connection with their former owners. This connection wraps itself around me. In my space, in consumption, in commodities. I felt their incessant cries of that crying need, warm but lonely - as if together they constructed some particular illusion. And in the process, I seemed to make some kind of connection with the environment.

What is this illusion? What is this need? What does it means?

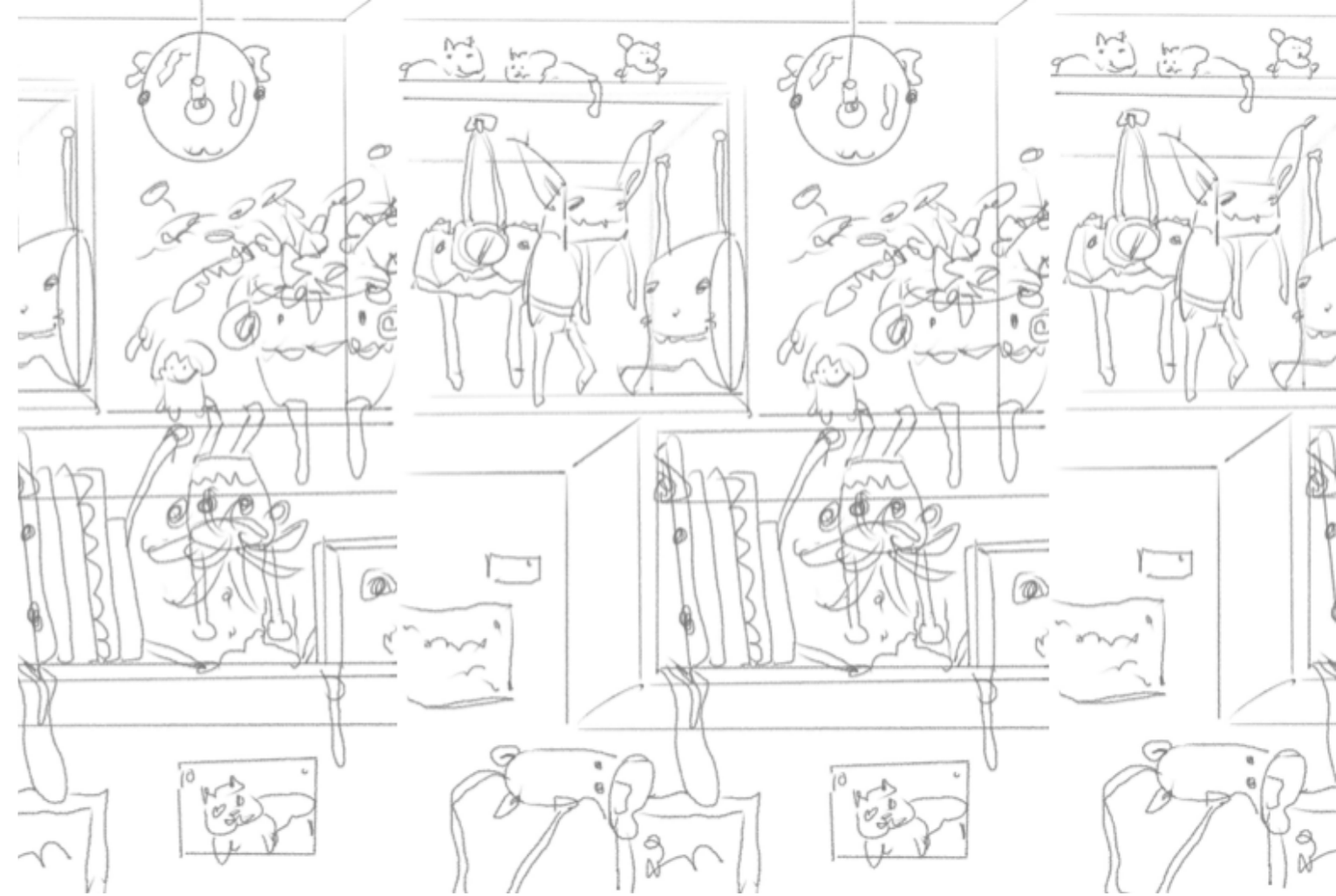


Figure4, *The Illusion*, illustration sketch, 2023



Figure5, *The Pot*, 2023, photography



Figure6, *The Bracelet*, 2023, photography

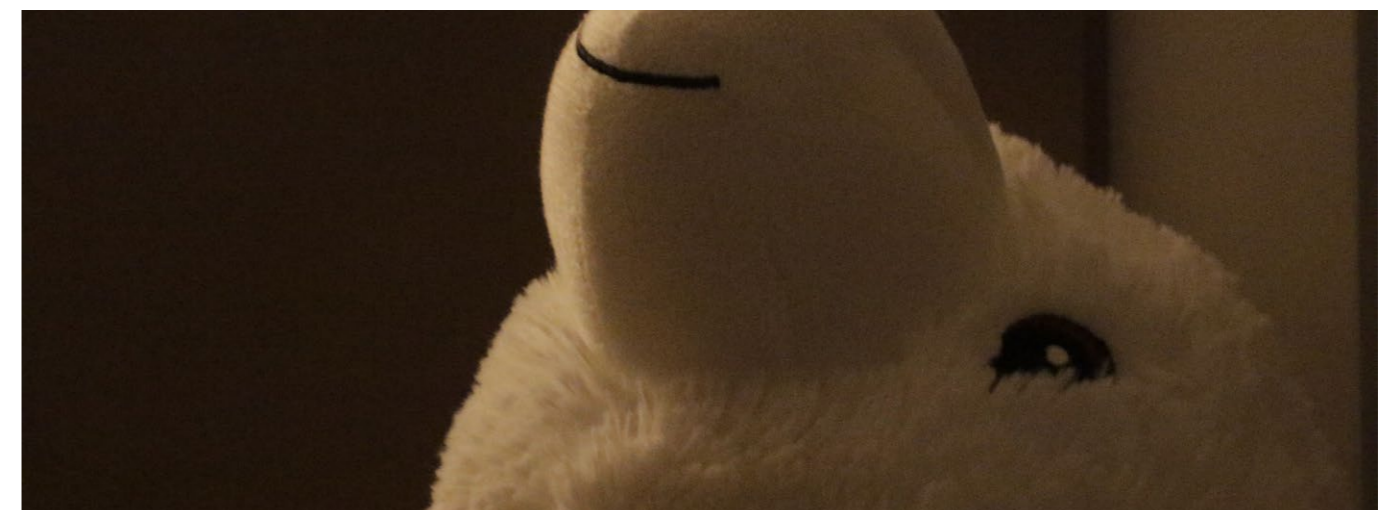
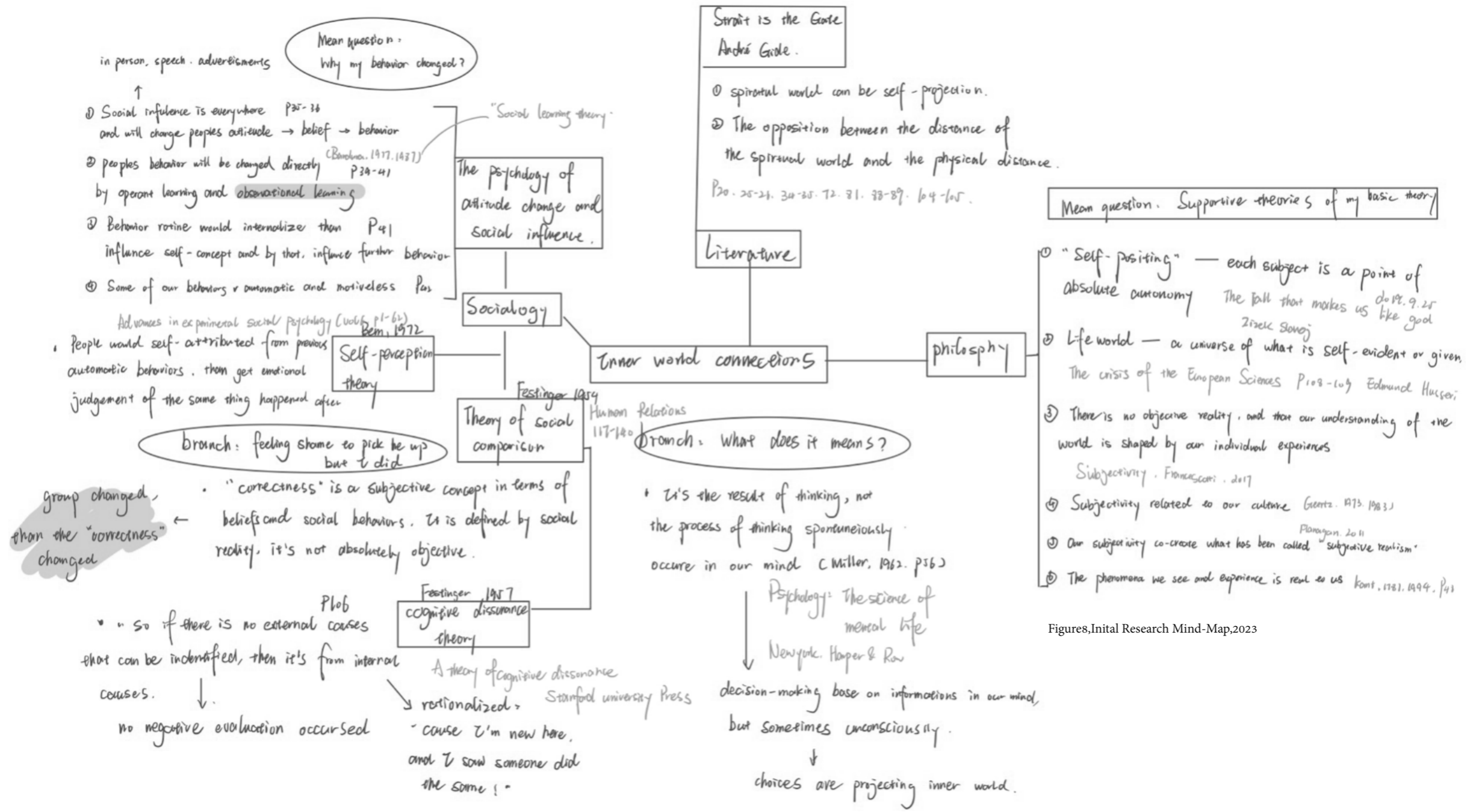


Figure7, *The PolarBear*, 2023, photography



Figures, Inital Research Mind-Map, 2023

I began to explore and investigate these two questions from sociological, philosophical and literary perspectives in an attempt to find the key to these questions.

It was a process of advancement. I first realised that the illusion I was trying to find was inextricably linked to my act of picking up the orchid, so I researched in the sociological field of attitudes, cognition and behavioural change, and came up with two key pieces of information:

1, behavioural routine would internalize than influence self-concept and then, by that, influence further behaviour. 2, some of our behaviours are automatic and motiveless.²

Although the two questions I posed above are not fully answered through these two conclusions, they point the direction of the research away from

external behaviours to the inner world. In this, the self-concept and unconscious behaviour seem to create some kind of correlation.

I immediately made the connection to what I defined as illusion and began to look for corroboration in philosophical

concepts. I found that even though in both cases it appeared that more other people were at the centre of the problem, simply put, those so-called other people did not necessarily see what I saw, the illusion of all the objects crying out for needs - because it was an illusion that only I could

see. Thus, the needs that I see others and I share are merely connected figments of my own needs. As Husserl defines the Life world, "The Life world-a universe of what is self-evident and given".

I read more relevant literature and films about visions, and they all seemed to point to an end: what I saw, felt, thought, and wanted to find, all pointed to some kind of lack that needed to be filled.⁴⁵⁶



Figure9, Scene in Inception(2010)

Figure10, Resaerch process of Strait is the gate(1980)

Figure 10 is a handwritten research process for the concept of a 'gate' or 'portal'. It features a central diagram with 'Strait is the gate' at the top, branching into '物理' (Physics) and '精神' (Spirit). The '物理' branch includes terms like '物理' (Physics), '能量' (Energy), '频率' (Frequency), '波长' (Wavelength), '干涉' (Interference), '衍射' (Diffraction), '共振' (Resonance), '波动' (Wave), '传播' (Propagation), '速度' (Speed), '方向' (Direction), '偏振' (Polarization), '反射' (Reflection), '折射' (Refraction), '散射' (Scattering), '吸收' (Absorption), '透射' (Transmission), '衍射' (Diffraction), '干涉' (Interference), '共振' (Resonance), '波动' (Wave), '传播' (Propagation), '速度' (Speed), '方向' (Direction), '偏振' (Polarization), '反射' (Reflection), '折射' (Refraction), '散射' (Scattering), '吸收' (Absorption), '透射' (Transmission). The '精神' branch includes terms like '精神' (Spirit), '意识' (Consciousness), '感知' (Perception), '思维' (Thought), '情感' (Emotion), '意志' (Will), '信念' (Belief), '信仰' (Faith), '理想' (Ideal), '目标' (Goal), '追求' (Pursuit), '奋斗' (Struggle), '牺牲' (Sacrifice), '奉献' (Dedication), '服务' (Service), '奉献' (Dedication), '服务' (Service). The diagram is surrounded by handwritten notes and references to various sources, including 'Inception', 'Mulholland Drive', and 'Paprika'.

Tangible Consciousness. 2023.09

In the night, my several cats were peacefully asleep throughout the house, with the window slightly ajar, allowing the faint rustle of leaves stirred by the wind to drift in. It was a tranquil sound, harmonizing with the warm, muted glow of the lamplight within, casting a gentle spell that drew me deeper into the embrace of my sofa.

alone. Time seemed to stand still within the dream, yet it flowed with the rhythm of consciousness, riding the thunder of trains and the slow tide of waves caressing the shore.

I saw the woman the man had been relentlessly searching for in his dreams. They argued, delving into matters of reality and illusion, but it did not concern me. Outside, the tempest howled between the hollow buildings, yet I felt no fear, as the riddle she spoke of repeatedly resonated within:

You're waiting for a train A train that will take you far away You know where you hope the train will take you But you can't be sure But it doesn't matter

Because we'll be together They emerged afterward—I believe they had no names, and their genders were indistinguishable. I could not discern their faces, only their voices telling me, "Leave, depart from this illusory place."

I replied, "No, I believe in your existence—my belief makes you real." "But you are the sole believer; this is a fantasy."

"No," I replied, "I think I can only be certain of what I see and hear as real, and so it is for others. I cannot confirm the truth of the stories spoken by others, nor can I verify the events and sights beyond my perception. Tell me, what is illusion, and what is real?"

They fell silent for a long while. "You're right. Perhaps this is related to distance and time—distance blurs our ability to distinguish between reality and illusion, both physically and emotionally. The only difference between you and me is aging. You see, I won't age, but you will."

I closed my eyes, endeavoring to float amidst the tempestuous winds as they did—but I failed. I plummeted from a great height, the frigid waters jolting me awake, and then my palm encountered the warmth and gentleness of a touch—a little calico kitten leaped onto my lap—I thought, the next time I meet them, it might be a long while from now.



Figure11, Scene in Mulholland Drive(2009)



Figure12, Scene in Mulholland Drive(2009)



Figure13, Scene in Paprika(2006)

It now seems that these key words have called out until the final destination - the environment, the spiritual world, objectivity and subjectivity. But at the time, I was still at a loss.

Even so, the results of this research took my research journey a step forward: I needed to work deeply with the objects in my room to uncover a hidden need in them. This need is my own, and it may be manifesting itself through my decision-making. I need to study myself; I need to observe myself as an object. I need to create my own practice-based research methodology to observe my decisions to explore the nature of the illusion - or at least try it first.

- Zimbarado, P. G. and Micael, R. (no date) "The psychology of attitude change and social influence," pp. P1-42.
- Husserl, E. (1990) The crisis of European sciences and transcendental phenomenology. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.
- Gide, A. (1980) Strait is the gate: La Porte étroite. Translated by D. Bussy. Bentley.
- Miller, F. P., Vandome, A. F. and McBrewster, J. (2009) Mulholland Drive (Film). Alphascript Publishing.
- Paprika. (2006). Sony Pictures Entertainment Japan.
- Inception. (2010). Warner Bros. Pictures.

1.2

With objects *Framework of the experiment, Autoethnography and Materiality*

Okay, now comes the hard part - to go ahead and make a thorough experimental plan and pay for it. I started to think about how to integrate into my experiment the models of decision-making behaviour, attitudes and value systems from the social psychological concepts I got in the previous chapter.

Decision-making behaviours, attitudes and value systems are known to show a cyclical relationship with each other, and the conclusion reached in the previous chapter is that my decisions point to my internal mental world. This mental world may be my value system, but I do not have a strong way of arguing this. The research methodologies that exist in sociology and social psychology don't seem to have much reference value for my research if I want to argue this point - unlike the goal of social psychology, which is to study the masses, here I need to study myself.

I was stuck in a difficult enquiry.

Here, thanks to my supervisors Dr.Rosa and Prof.Gemma. Through them, I learnt about the concepts of auto-ethnography and self-archiving. These two methodologies, which have been experimented and researched for a long time, provided me with a clear structure for my hazy experimental framework at that time.

I learnt that 'The process of artistic autoethnography is grounded in the stuff of living, or the facts of life, and it offers an open form of public good to its audiences. good to its audiences.'⁸

I realised that it was feasible to use myself as an object of study first and foremost, and that this research had a public value when observing myself as an object and thinking about the social, environmental and humanistic influences on the needs I was studying. As a research methodology, my research may be able to combine autobiographical writing with cultural analysis and interpretation, and expressed through artistic creation.

I realised that it was feasible to use myself as an object of study first and foremost, and that this research had a public value when observing myself as an object and thinking about the social, environmental and humanistic influences on the needs I was studying. As a research methodology, my research may be able to combine autobiographical writing with cultural analysis and interpretation, and expressed through artistic creation.

At the same time, I learnt that 'Visual autoethnography has been noted by various scholars as a methodology which challenges power relations for the maker and the viewer.'⁹ I might consider thinking more about the social implications of anti-colonialism and personal perspectives while reflecting on personal stories.

The already existing theory of auto-ethnography opens up more possibilities for my experimental framework, which seems to be inseparable from writing. Here I began to introduce the previously mentioned concept of self-archiving, a methodology of self-archiving in the arts that refers to archiving sketches, mind maps, etc., and combining them with past practice to form a personal artistic narrative.¹⁰

The self-creative retrospection mentioned in this concept inspired me a lot. Because of the research to this point, the focus of the experimental framework 'decision-making', the methodological basis of researching oneself 'autoethnography', the experimental approach of 'autoethnography' - writing The experimental approach of 'autoethnography' - writing - has emerged, leaving the final question, what exactly needs to be created? And what will be used to complete it?

Having already concluded through the initial research in the previous chapter that this relates to objects, I combined this with a self-archiving retrospective of my past practice. My final piece polyhedron points me towards working with material properties.

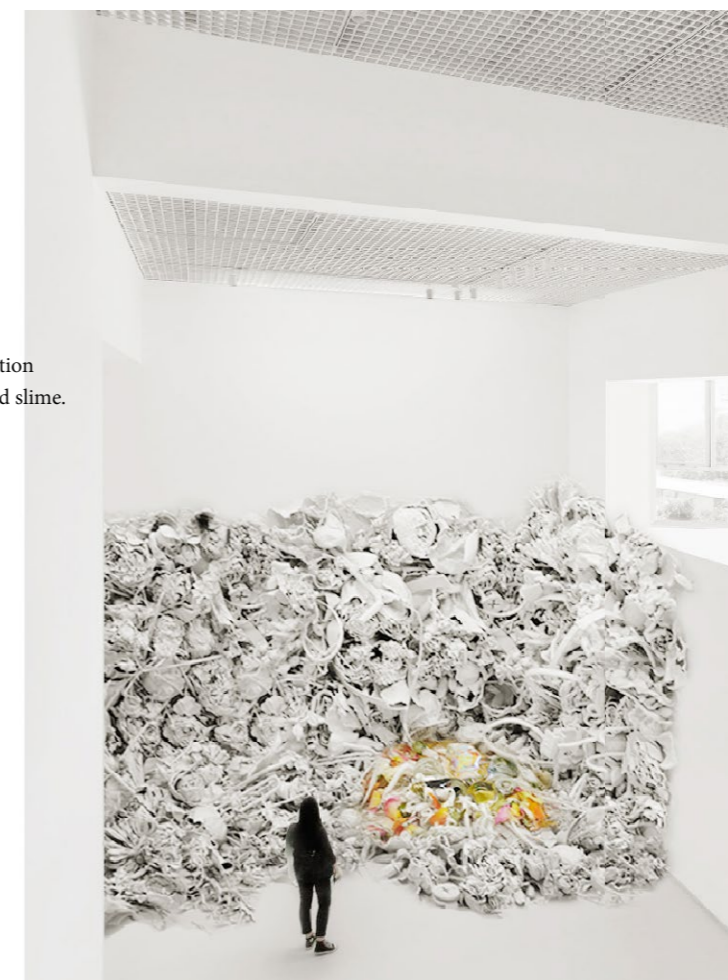
Polyhedron (2022)

50cm*100cm*50cm
Installation Prototype
Dried Flowers, Hardwares,
Discarded objects, Slime,
Clay, Spray

Iris Zhang

Figure14. Polyhedron(2022), installation prototype, with discarded objects and slime.

Polyhedron is about my long journey of alienation and self-reconstruction as a woman growing up under the dogma of East Asian culture. This self-portrait-like project rethinks material properties, materiality and the journey of the object, conducting a series of experiments, reflections and critiques on the alienation of female identity in a multi-dimensional space of artistic expression, and re-examining the relationship between individual female identity and East Asian society. "I" eventually becomes a container, a symbol and a medium.



8 Creps, K.B. (2023). Let's Count Off One More Time! An Autoethnodrama. [online] The AutoEthnographer. Available at: <https://theautoethnographer.com/artistic-autoethnography-artifacts/>.

9 Eldridge, L. (2012). A Collaged Reflection on My Art Teaching: A Visual Autoethnography. The Journal of Social Theory in Art Education, [online] 32(32), pp.70- 79. Available at: <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/51288648.pdf>.

10 Brannigan, E. (2020). ARTIST'S SELF-ARCHIVING TOOLKIT. Critical Dialogues 13: Archives, Practice and the Independent Choreographer eds. Claire Hicks and Elizabeth Chua, [online] 13(N/A). Available at: https://www.academia.edu/45022018/ARTISTS_SELF_ARCHIVING_TOOLKIT?auto=download



Polyhedron (2022)

50cm*100cm*50cm
Installation Prototype
Dried Flowers, Hardwares,
Discarded objects, Slime,
Clay, Spray
Iris Zhang

Polyhedron is about my long journey of alienation and self-reconstruction as a woman growing up under the dogma of East Asian culture. This self-portrait-like project rethinks material properties, materiality and the journey of the object, conducting a series of experiments, reflections and critiques on the alienation of female identity in a multi-dimensional space of artistic expression, and re-examining the relationship between individual female identity and East Asian society. "I" eventually becomes a container, a symbol and a medium.

Figure15, Polyhedron(2022), installation prototype, with discarded objects and slime.

I retraced the process of creating this work and reflected on the journey of the object contained in the abandoned object. I see the social, consumer, historical and political attributes added to objects at each step of the globalised flow. Their existence there constitutes their own narrative, and my intervention as an artist seems to be able to split and reconstruct on their own narrative. In the assemble process of the previous work, the historical nature of the objects was weakened on the basis of the original materiality base being partially preserved, and fused with the present time and space, becoming a new history and merging into my story.

Well, at this point, all the structure has finally been completed.

I will be splitting and reorganising using objects already present in my bedroom. In this process, I try not to think about the meaning of what I am making, detach myself from the academic framework that already exists for making sculpture, and just follow the unconscious spatial relationship to decide the position of each element. After the production is complete, I need to interpret this finished product, retracing the narrative that they have been reassembled by me and the story that exists in them, looking for the parts of that 'need' and 'illusion' that have been visualised, looking for clues to what they are and looking for the kind of clues that create a connection with the environment I will decide where they are in my bedroom and try to explain my decisions again.

The Net

I finally resolved to do this exercise today. I've always been terrified that I'd frustrate myself by following what felt like it didn't come out well enough, which has often happened before and caused me serious anxiety. But eventually I got out of bed and packed up everything on the table, laid out the newspaper and started making it. I played Mayday songs, as Mayday were playing a concert in London today, but I didn't go thinking about the imminent deadline.

I didn't think of anything at first, just a basic frame with wire mesh and wire to start with. But I was not satisfied. As I was doing it I remembered my previous experience of making flower arrangements, the spatial relationship between the branches, so I started to pinch up the branches and the frame - I decided to make a planter box, like the ones I've made at home before. Sitting here making this reminds me of almost every day I've spent at home this summer, crafting and making flower arrangements, I think of the hum of the air conditioner in the summer, of that humid smell, of that home with the brown floors. I think of my kitten lying around annoying me, of the sticky water soaked with petals - for the first time in three months since I arrived in the UK, I'm very thoroughly homesick. I'm not sure if the songs had a part to play in pushing it along, but I felt like crying.

I burned some pieces of plastic I'd picked up in the fashion studio, I guess I wanted to burn away the emotion. It took an incredible turn and black smoke came out too. I started to get scared that it would set the smoke alarms off, so I opened the window and sat on the ground floor with a candle. As I did it seemed to turn into a nest, with some branches sticking out, trying to reach something. Silk netting wrapped around it, charred black flowers blooming in the middle.



Figure15, The Net (2023), Experiment 1.1, sculpture, 30*30cm, with found objects

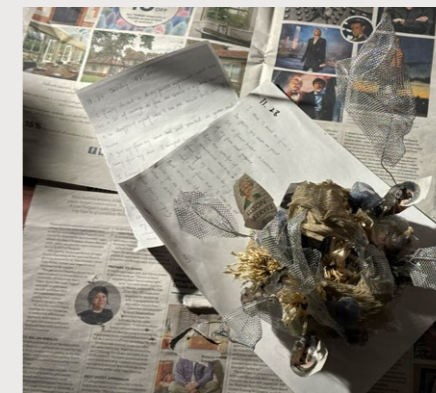


Figure16, The Net (2023), Experiment 1.1, sculpture, 30*30cm, with found objects



Figure17, The Net (2023), Experiment 1.1, sculpture, 30*30cm, with found objects

I still found it a little empty - I saw the little people on the newspaper matted underneath and cut them out as leaves too - I thought maybe they were in this nest too. They weren't people I knew, they were western faces, people I had only recently become accustomed to seeing every day. They were a lot of people.

I think I should stop, this fucking glue

gun is pissing me off. I don't think the lair works to my great satisfaction, but it's acceptable. It is the space I am in, the bedroom where I am now, and the living room of my home in Beijing. It is my shackle and part of my desire. It looks at me and I feel warm, but very sad. I placed it at the end of my bed, and I felt that it matched the atmosphere created by my lamp, like it was protecting me.

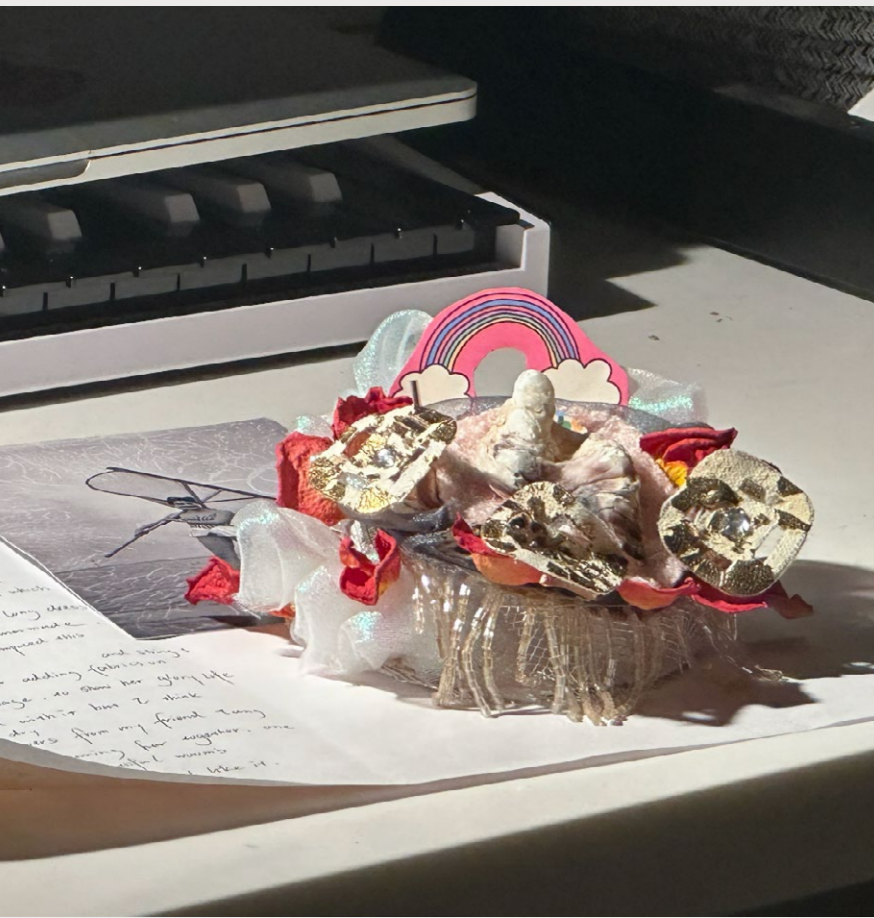


Figure 18, The Monument (2023), Experiment 1.2, sculpture, 20*20cm, with found objects

The Monument

Today was a very productive day. Worked almost all day at home, finished my other project and finally had some time to think about how I'm going to do this one.

Yesterday I went to Margate with my friends from RCA sound elective and I received a collection of shells from Neo as a gift. He found them on the beach and I chose this one because I thought it resembled a woman, half lying on the beach, with a long skirt.

After receiving the gift, I couldn't help thinking it was the mermaid's crystallisation.

At the moment of her death, she transformed into foam, which then condensed into this shell. The variegated colours on the shell reflect her life. She was not willing to live a short life, so she wanted to live on this earth forever.

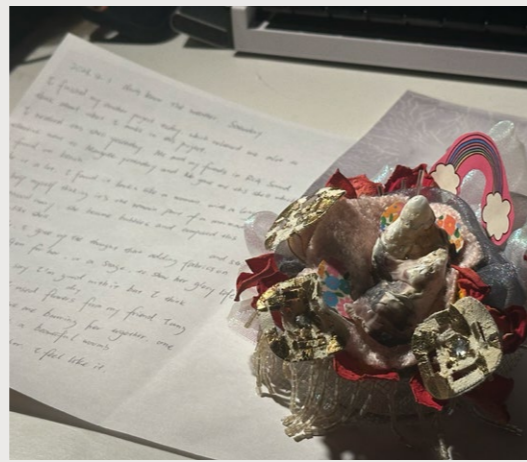


Figure 19, The Monument (2023), Experiment 1.2 sculpture, 20*20cm, with found objects



Figure 20, The Monument (2023), Experiment 1.2, sculpture, 20*20cm, with found objects

I gave up on the idea of adding any fabric or thread to her body, I respected her soul and crystallisation, so I wanted to go ahead and make her a coffin, or a stage, a place for her to live forever.

The fabrics I used reminded me of the afternoon I went shopping with my friend Tong that day, it was drizzling and we weren't too familiar with each other. That shop was crowded and cramped, and the owner's wife had snapped at me for asking for a student discount. At the moment I don't feel angry anymore, that seems like a long time ago.

I didn't listen to a song today, instead I put on a video made by one of my favourite bloggers and listened to it. Everything felt very relaxing and pleasant. I hadn't watched one of his videos in a long time and watching it again felt like seeing an old friend. I guess there is some truth in what psychologists say about presocial.

For the final soft bed, I added the dried flower petals that Tong had given me, and I added them piece by piece, as if we were commemorating the departure of the mermaid together. We each took a handful of sandy soil and buried her.

Even though I wasn't with my friends in my room at the moment, I could feel them. Neo found her on the beach, I made her coffin, Tong soothed her soul with flowers, and my favourite blogger delivered a eulogy - together we paid tribute to her eternal existence.

I placed her on my bookshelf next to the already dying ivy. I hope her love for the world will give my ivy some strength to live.

The Sun

Yesterday I slept from 5pm to 12pm, and as I woke up, my mum in China happened to say good morning to me, so I guess I had a day of Chinese jet lag and a night of sleep.

At seven I still decided to get out of bed and go do something. It was still dark outside and there was no sign of sunrise at all.

I thought about how my previous house always had warm, bright sunlight, and how my cat and I would sit in the sofa, always feeling like that sunlight represented a sense of life, a signal telling me to start a new day, and urging me to get up - something I no longer have here.

I think it's partly down to the British weather and latitude, but more than that I think about the prioritisation of sunlight - when I lived in this small and relatively cheap student flat, the building next

door blocked the sunlight from entering my room. I thought about the sunlight that people living in high-rise flats get to have, and compared it to the sunlight that I get to have living here. It seems that when the situation is different, the degree to which my space is in contact with the world makes a difference.

I looked at the wall by the window and decided to make my own sunlight.

I picked up a paintbrush that I hadn't picked up in a long time and began to draw. I think the last time I picked up a brush and drew seriously was when I was going to college. That explains why I hadn't picked up a brush for a long time, I crumpled up one piece of paper after another, I was always dissatisfied with my ability to draw,

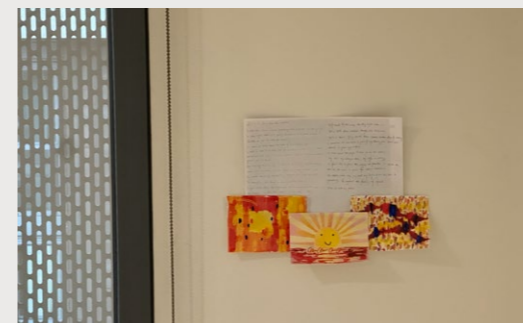


Figure 21, The Sun (2023), Experiment 1.3, illustration sketch, with acrylic on plastic sheet



Figure 22, The Sun (2023), Experiment 1.3, illustration sketch, with acrylic on plastic sheet



Figure 23, The Sun (2023), Experiment 1.3, illustration sketch, with acrylic on plastic sheet

thought a lot about it and then started to be afraid to draw, to face drawing.

I decided to make things simpler, I just wanted to create my own sunshine, it didn't seem right to set up frames and boundaries for myself. After thinking this way, everything went quickly.

I looked at the final product and eventually I became ok with them, I put them where I had decided to put them, a spot where the sunlight would come in for a short period of time in the afternoon on a good day, and I hoped that one day the sunlight in my internal world would be able to talk to the physical sunlight and make a connection.

The results of these experiments gave me the impression that the experiment was still very broad and it was even more difficult to effectively analyse my decision-making in terms of my spirituality. As you can see, the story is almost apocryphal and recent, existing in the space of the moment. This seems to give some visualisation parts to my production and the clues I'm trying to find, but so far they don't go back to what I need. I seem to need the framework of some more structured psychoanalytic theory underpinning it, and I need to figure out exactly what the so-called need and the part of the mental world that I can visualise is, and whether or not pre-existing psychological theories already exist.

But the good news is that the framework seems to work, both in terms of retrospective writing in auto ethnography and the way that assemblage making is practised. As for the items used in assemblage making, I seem to need a much narrower scope. From the experiments so far, the size of the two spaces is a bit of a mismatch in terms of reconstructing the narratives of objects collected from the city and then placing them in my bedroom. And, the narratives that already exist on the objects found in the city are left to my own speculation, which doesn't seem very rigorous.

As a next step, I need to narrow down the range of items used and look for relevant research frameworks in the fields of psychology and psychoanalysis to refine my experiment.

1.3

Touching on self-narrative

Objects from the past, Self-continuity and The Desire to Fill In

“Kitschy, decorative, non-functional original objects and materials generate new associations in this sculptural practice and tiny world. These reconstructed small objects recall domestic decorations, altar offerings and illusionistic stages.”

This is the conclusion I have come to after reflecting on the last part of the experiment over and over again. Even though their materiality didn't quite fit the direction I wanted to explore, I saw that they all had one thing in common. They seemed to speak to some of the, residual emotions from my adolescence.

I remember when I thought of this it was still winter. It was about three or four in the afternoon, and it was already completely dark. I was half leaning on my cot in my bedroom, just as I am now. I looked around me in the dim light of the lamp next to The net. When I realised this,

almost instantly I looked at the two small boxes under my desk. How had I not realised this? I exclaimed.

There were a few miscellaneous items in there, but more than that, they were my collectibles from the past that I had brought with me from China. I've always been a collector of all kinds of things. When I was a kid I collected stationery, some treasures I found on my own, then when I grew up I collected cacti, fridge stickers, sneakers, lipsticks I thought I simply liked the feeling I got when items from the same collection were laid out together, but now, as I look at these two small boxes of fabrics and accessories from the past, I realise that there may be more hidden in there. Why did I bring them here then? I thought. It seemed to me that I wanted to make something with them, or thought they would come in handy. Or, perhaps, they made me feel some old emotion and I needed them to come with me to this new place.

What did they really represent? Are they related to the need for visions and connections I've been trying to find? And could that vague leftover emotion from my adolescent years gradually become clearer through them?

Materiality of Traces

The answer came to me after a more in-depth encounter with art theory, as Daste described her deceased grandmother's suitcase: '...the evidence of her life was being erased. . the evidence of her life was being erased. In the kitchen, I held the glass she used the day before, fresh lipstick marks still on the rim...". She is still here.'¹¹ Here, her grandmother's suitcase, like the lipstick mark, becomes a trace of an individual's existence, a carrier of memories, events and life stories.

It is no coincidence that Karl Marx describes traces in Grundrisse in this way: ' . . but labour is not only consumed, but also at the same time fixed, converted from the form of activity into the form of the object; materialized; as a modification of the object, it modifies its own form and changes from activity to being.'¹² Here the trace is seen as the energetic transformation of activity, labour and

Self-Discontinuity

Think of it like this. It would be a strange and overwhelming feeling for me, now 26 going on 27, to go back in time and meet myself as I was 15 years ago. I feel like it's a different person, or rather, I've become a different person. I don't understand the decisions she's made, and I only share some of her memories. I couldn't empathise with her, yet she seemed

event. It is as if a brand that condenses all moments, inscribing into real space, into this physical world, fine fragments of time and space that are difficult to be visualised.

All of this has been a great inspiration to me. Is it possible to speculate that traces, as the elemental subjects of my practice, and their preserved materiality can be a bridge between the past and the present? What do they represent when I take them apart and reorganise them?

I needed to use them to make assemblages. Perhaps those needs to connect with others, those visions of objects screaming the need for connection, can be traced back to my past self. Perhaps the past myself needed something. I think back to the purpose in the last experiment, which was to create a connection with a stranger through an object. Here, then, the stranger, was none other than my past self.

inextricably linked to me. This seeming connection and seeming disconnection existed between us.

Once again I began my research, trying to find a connection between my past self and my present self. Finally I learnt that in psychology the technical term to describe this is called self-discontinuity.

*As a longitudinal concept, its opposite, self-continuity, encapsulates a number of keywords, including reminiscence, nostalgia, visualising the future, trajectory, etc.: Self-continuity is a fundamental psychological construct that reflects the subjective sense of connection and coherence between one's past, present, and future selves, serving motivational, regulatory, and well-being functions, and exhibiting cultural variations in its expression and significance.*¹³

This is an extremely abstract concept and it is described in four extremely scholarly papers as follows, 'We find it promising and generative to conceptualise self-continuity at the abstract level as an overall sentiment of an unbroken trajectory.'^{14,15} '... . as the subjective perception that changes are linked to and fit with one's personal history.'¹⁶

Despite this, I still extracted the key. That is the overall emotion, or unity of subjective feelings. Having researched this, I was more sure of the direction of my experiment using items from my past, and I could try to use the experimental framework I already had to find the connection between emotions. To see if this behaviour could remove the feeling of detachment from my past self. However, my experimental framework still needs to be more rigorous and refined, and I am eager to find a methodology that already exists in the field to find the parts of the life trajectory that can produce emotional links and unify them.

"In the presence of self-discontinuity induced by life changes, autobiographical reasoning was positively related to past-present self-continuity"¹⁷ The past-present relationship is exactly mentioned here, and coincides with my readiness to use items

from the past as well.

The importance of objects from the past is even mentioned in another paper: 'Associative links pertain to connections between objects such as a possession, keepsake, feeling, thought Associative links pertain to connections between objects such as a possession, keepsake, feeling, thought, or action on the one hand, and one's past, present, or future self on the other.'¹⁸ Here the research in psychology and the artist's research and sense of materiality in art theory that I mentioned earlier almost coincide, and together they confirm the applicability of my earlier suggestion of making assemblages with objects from the past in this framework.

Also mentioned in another study saying that:

*Autobiographical reasoning allows individuals to link different life experiences to how they have become the person they are, and give personal meaning to these experiences. It thus is vital to the creation of the life story.*¹⁹

I realised that perhaps I could complete this experiment by using the framework of this methodology to make assemblages that go back in time.

17 Habermas T, Köber C. 2015. Autobiographical reasoning in life narratives buffers the effect of biographical disruptions on the sense of self-continuity. *Memory* 23:5664–74

18 Hong EK, Sedikides C, Wildschut T. 2021. Strengthens global self-continuity through holistic thinking. *Cogn. Emot.* 35:4730-37

19 Pasupathi M., Mansour E., Brubaker J. R. (2007). Developing a life story: Constructing relations between self and experience in autobiographical narratives. *Human Development*, 50(2-3), 85–110. <https://doi.org/10.1159/000100939>

11 Daste, O. (2011). The Suitcase. In: S. Turkle, ed., *Evocative Objects: Things We Think with*. MIT Press, p.246.

12 Marx, K. (2014). Grundrisse. in: H. A, ed. *The Object*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Whitechapel Gallery, p. 88.

13 Sedikides, C., Hong, E.K. and Wildschut, T. (2022). Self-Continuity. *annual Review of Psychology*, 74(1). doi:<https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-psych-032420-032236>.

14 Atchley RC. 1989. A continuity theory of normal aging. *Gerontologist* 29:2183 -90

15 Hong EK, Sedikides C, Wildschut T.2021. Nostalgia strengthens global self-continuity through holistic thinking. *Cogn. Emot.* 35:4730 -37

16 Cohler BJ. 1982. personal narrative and Life-Span Development and Behavior, Vol. 4PB Baltes, OG Brim 205-41 New York: Academic

McAdams DP 2008. Personal narratives. *Handbook of Personality: Theory and Research* OP John, RW Robins, LA Pervin 242-62 New York: Guilford. Guilford. , 3rd ed. 23

On this basis, I also perceived another part related to my proposition. I learnt that in the research conducted with the refugee community, it was mentioned that huge environmental changes are positively correlated with a decrease in self-continuity. One of the most striking points in this thesis for me was when the interviewee said, ‘When I look at pictures of myself four years back, it feels a little unfamiliar.’. . . but I have the feeling that at the core I am the same person I was four years ago.²⁰This ambivalent feeling seems to be exactly similar to my feeling, does this mean that there is some correlation, in me and in the refugee community?

In my extensive reading of the literature, I finally became more and more convinced of my suspicion that what I suggested earlier, the connection I was trying to find, the visions, and the need to figure me out, were all subconscious self-help behaviours in the event of my mental breakdown. I desperately wanted to hold on to some sort of connection to myself to justify my existence, like a drowning man grasping for the only piece of driftwood. Even though, unlike the refugees, I actively chose this huge change of environment, the same psychological problem appeared to me.

Here, I'm finally going to bring up the subject: in the months between the start of the project and here, I've tried to receive psychotherapy three times. At first I didn't really know why. I remember it was inside the pub in Notting Hill, and I was looking out of the window at the crowd creating a feeling of detachment and numbness. I was a bit drunk at the time and looked at my date and said that sometimes I feel like I'm not here. He asked me if it was because it was different from China. I shook my head and said no, I am not there or here, I don't know where I am. These streets are familiar to me, as are the streets of China, but they are all strange again. They were very different, and in essence they were no different to me.

It was a feeling that I still find hard to describe, and I can't find any accurate words to express it. He asked me again then, ‘Do you mean to say that you find this thing about you being in London incredible?’ And I said, ‘Not really. I realise that I've come all the way over here and I should be here. I remember bits and pieces and I can empathise with parts of them. But I have always felt this environment away from me. I seem to be disconnected from all of my environment. I look at him, and I don't say the words that follow: maybe I'm only partially connected to you, for now.

20 Habermas T, Köber C. 2015. Autobiographical reasoning in life narratives buffers the effect of biographical disruptions on the sense of self-continuity. *memory*23:5664-74

21 Zhang F, Zhang S, Gao X. 2022. Relationship between socioeconomic status and win-win values: mediating roles of childhood neglect and self-continuity. *front. psychiatry* 13:882933

22 Ersner-Hersfield H, Garton MT, Ballard K, Samanez-Larkin GR, Knutson B. 2009a. Don't stop thinking about tomorrow: individual differences in future self-continuity account for saving. *judgm. decis. mak.* 4:4280-86

23 Serman, C. (2016). Art as Personal Identity Narratives. [online] NAESP. Available at: <https://www.naesp.org/resource/art-as-personal-identity-narratives/>.

What a clear sign of self-continuity it now seems. As the study says, ‘Correlational studies have also linked reduced past-present self-continuity to higher loneliness, lower agreeableness, and weaker win-win values’²¹ This completely corroborates what I mentioned earlier about detachment from the environment, strangeness of past selves, eagerness to grasp for connection with the environment, and other things I try to do in my art. "self-discontinuity can be a signature of mental illness. for example, individuals with psychiatric illness (i.e., schizophrenia, schizoaffective disorder, DSM-5 bipolar I or II diagnosis) manifested lower levels of global self-continuity"²²

In my research, although I don't want to bring up too much of my history of treating mental problems (because I will write more about that and because it is not the core of the research), I just want to say here that it was the research up to this point that convinced me that this was the right and viable direction to take. I see so many commonalities.

Okay, mental illness discussion aside. The research went so far that I decided to plunge deeper into the area of self-continuity. I realised that self-continuity and self-discontinuity is just a state of affairs which should be based on a certain entity of self-concept. It was here that I finally came into contact with the most central concept in my research, the self-narrative.

S e l f - n a r r a t i v e

*Self-narrative is a fundamental aspect of human experience, allowing individuals to construct a coherent sense of self, make meaning from their experiences, and express their personal stories through various artistic and therapeutic means, while being shaped by cultural and social influences and evolving over the course of one's life.*²³

To summarise, it can be learnt in conjunction with the concept of self-continuity that self-continuity is constructed on the basis of a coherent self-narrative. And from the perspective of this study, self-continuity occurs when major environmental changes occur, which means that the self-narrative creates a gap, i.e., the coherent self-narrative disappears.

Now let's rationalise the whole study up to this point: it has become clear that the need for flow and the phantasmagoria that was initially proposed was my own desire to create a connection with the environment, and that this need may be related to a legacy of emotions originating from adolescence. And this longing for need is evidenced in the very concepts of self-continuity and self-narrative. So now the topic undergoes a transformation: what is my self-narrative? Can I combine autobiographical reasoning and assemblage making to touch my self-narrative? Can I reduce my sense of alienation from my environment through my experiments?

I developed the rules for my second experiment: assemblage making with objects from the past, continuing the rules of the previous experiment, thinking only about the spatial relationship between the elements. After the production was complete, the immediate writing was abandoned for a directed reminiscence, searching for any element of the historical event that could reach an empathy with my present self, and looking for a relationship with the assemblage.



Figure24, The Packages (2023), Experiment 2.1, spatial installation 200 x 200 cm, with hanging textile and object from my past, assemblage sculptures



Figure25, The Packages (2023), Experiment 2.1 spatial installation 200 x 200 cm, with hanging textile and object from my past, assemblage sculptures



Figure26, The Packages (2023), Experiment 2.1 spatial installation 200 x 200 cm, with hanging textile and object from my past, assemblage sculptures



Figure27, The Packages (2023), Experiment 2.1 spatial installation 200 x 200 cm, with hanging textile and object from my past, assemblage sculptures

Autobiographical reasoning

The results were pretty confusing at the time - they were these childishly cute and kitschy spheres, like baggage, that seemed to resonate with something as they were scattered around the small student dorm. Yes, I hung them up and they floated around my bedroom.

In the process of autobiographical reasoning, the clues of not only my assemblages but also my self-narrative finally be shown. (See Appendix1 for text transcripts and translations of the first 30 minutes of audio recordings)

As I move little by little from the present back to the past, one year, two years, five years, ten years, I realise that my remaining memories are fragmented and instantaneous. Almost all of those instantaneous memories are related to men.

The feeling is almost absurd, as my life seems to be built on having date events, whether it's a recent fwb, or an ex four years ago, or a first love even earlier. My self-narrative starts right at the beginning of my interest in men when I was an adolescent - I can barely recall anything earlier. And yet, it's almost as if I can't empathise again with any of those memories that I remember seeming to be happy moments.

This feeling is all the more absurd because as far as I can remember, I was clearly aware of which person I was deeply attracted to at the time, but now, I can't recall any snippet that I can call happy,



Figure29, The Packages(2023), Experiment 2.1,spatial installation 20*50 cm, with textile and object from my past, assemblage sculptures

can't remember exactly what happened that night, even though I suspect it was supposed to be very happy. I wasn't sad, I wasn't happy, I wasn't angry, and now I can't even begin to understand what happened to me then.

It occurred to me that maybe this was my own problem, maybe my memories of family, of friends? I turned to retracing my time with friends and family, year after year. Yet the results were not the same. I can clearly connect to the joy I felt when I was with my friends, I can clearly connect to the excitement I felt when I received an offer, and I can feel the anger I felt when I fought with my family.

What was wrong with me? I felt deeply that there was a huge void in the narrative of my touching self. Those parts related to sex and love became distorted black shadows, hidden into the deepest darkness of the night. I had been wandering in what seemed to be an endless filling of desire. Yet in retrospect, nothing seemed to fill it. The void felt like pure nothingness, capable of swallowing up all emotions and memories.

I seemed to lack certain things, things that came from adolescence and have been left behind until now. I looked to my assemblages and decided to ask them what they thought.



Figure 30, Packages in rooms(2024), Experiment 2.2, spatial installation 200 x 200 cm, projection of my old room, with hanging textile and object from my past, assemblage sculptures

Experiment 2.2

Back to past

I will backtrack to all the bedrooms I have ever had, as my mind spins I appear in different places, the voices are rewinding, I am getting younger and eventually becoming a baby.

The faint humming I heard from the heater and the sounds of construction outside my window faded away, I was back in my last home, I heard the constant flow of water and the zipping of the motor from my cat's water fountain, I heard the somewhat noisy mechanical sounds of the water pump, I heard the windy noise my mainframe would make when I switched it on, and I heard the sound of the wind outside my window. I heard my cat purring in the dead of night, and his purr. they jumped up and down, the thud of their little feet on the wooden floor.

Going back further in time, I hear the sound of the boisterous wind slapping against the window, the sun on the straw mat on the windowsill giving off a sizzling smell.

I went back even further, to the sixth floor of an old residential building. I heard through the window the voices of the people downstairs chatting, the sound of the rain and the wind lapping at the leaves. I heard the neighbours outside my door returning to their homes.

A little longer ago, I heard the mechanical sounds from the air conditioner, the rattle of cats running up and down the stairs, the rumble created by the passing of large vehicles outside the window. In that place, there was a wilderness sound outside the window, always a very faint low noise except when cars passed.

I heard the wind again. I heard the sound of the family next door arguing.

I finally made it back to the house. This time the sounds became more varied; I heard my sister's footsteps coming out of her room, my great-uncle coughing, the kitchen cooking, my mother slamming the door.

As I got younger and younger, many of the sounds began to become muffled in my ears. The sounds in the environment diminished and the people around me spoke louder and louder.



Figure 31, Packages in rooms(2024), Experiment 2.2, spatial installation 10x30 cm, with hanging textile and object from my past, assemblage sculptures



Figure 32, Packages in rooms(2024), Experiment 2.2, spatial installation 10x30 cm, with hanging textile and object from my past, assemblage sculptures



Figure 33, Packages in rooms(2024), Experiment 2.2, spatial installation 40x40 cm, with hanging textile and object from my past, assemblage sculptures

Interviewing the Packages

When I was interviewing the objects, they were already kind of falling apart.

"What do you do with them?" I asked.

"I think I'm for headdresses for little girls!" "I'm a souvenir from a trip!" "I'm for decorating little girls' belongings!" "I'm curtains for little girls' houses!" "Then I am for decorating curtains!" ...

They spoke in a variety of ways, and I saw the little girl's space gradually filling up with them.

"How old was the little girl then?"

"About twelve or thirteen?" They came to a more unified conclusion.

"Where have you always lived? Ever moved?"

They chattered and discussed for a while, "Actually, we rarely see the little girl anymore. Once upon a time she would occasionally open this dark drawer and fiddle with us for a while, sorting us into categories, but then not for a long time..."

"And then later on when I saw her was when she acquired her new car, she was much older by then, and chose a few of us to hang on her car keys."

"Then later on someone else moved

in and we didn't see her again for a long time."

"I think it was her mum, she opened a drawer and put us all in a bag. We travelled a long way for a while and inside a new empty space we met the girl, oh no, the woman again. She picked and chose and threw some of our mates away, leaving us behind."

"Then we were stuffed into bags. The woman took us to another place and put us in a cupboard in the deepest part of the house."

"Why do you think the girl took you home and why did she keep you?" "She always does, collects things. We were all brought back in bulk over a

period of time, and a lot of times we'd been on the same shelves before."

"Yes, and she seemed to just collect it, not to use it. She moved on to collecting other things after that and soon forgot about us, only bringing them out occasionally."

"So are ye glad ye were left behind? From what you all said earlier, it seems that some of you have been discarded by her."

They were silent for a moment and said, "I don't know. I think we will always be left behind."

Some of them were blurred when I met them. I interviewed the clearest one first.

"Look at your body, small but full of objects. What are you made of? What do you think is the most important part?"

Her body made a humming noise now and then, which made her shake her head a little uncomfortably, and said, "I think it's made up of light, initially yellow light, some soft objects, a carpet, ethnic style floral patterned sheets. Then a lot of little things entered my body, some paintings, some decorations, bracelets, necklaces, and some prints, plants."

"So it was some very soft and relaxing items, right?" "You could say that."

I looked over to the slightly older one not far away and asked, "Which are the elements you share?"

"The yellow light." They started in unison, "Ethnic tattoos, and words

to say, some furry things and books."

"When did all this start to become convergent?"

"From about 4-5 years ago, I think, ethnic tattoos. Considering the circumstances, maybe she wanted us to be filled with more colours. Lights and shadows filled with more shapes to balance out the boring, long hours of living at home."

"Yellow lights, books and furry things is much earlier."

"From babies, from 18 years ago, from 15 years ago."

"So it's understandable that what

has had the longest continuation is the yellow light?"

"Yes, I think for us it's the source and symbol of the whole atmosphere of security and relaxation."

As the interview continued, the objects merged into their bodies, sorted into different locations, and their bodies he together into four-dimensional organisms that would evolve, narrow but expansive. The organs that hoarded the different items overloaded and gradually descended as imperceptible trauma added to his weight.

My spirit got closer to the abstract story that looked at me through kitschy bows, fabrics and decorations in my distant adolescence, turning into one of my travelling bags from the past twenty years. My bedroom became a narrative space, overlapping and reconfiguring in the process of housing them, creating reassuring echoes in multiple spaces.

I'm using them to reinvent the bedroom of my adolescence, a space that was absolutely safe in the home. I am dismantling the stories of the past, reorganising the old narrative that exists in the objects into a new one that belongs only to the present. "we are in fact attempting a rescue operation of sorts; that is, we aspire to restore the thing to its former wholeness and position of enigmatic centrality to our everyday experience of the world . . . we are thinking that world whole again."²⁴

I am attempting some kind of rescue operation, trying to restore things to their former integrity and former status, to bring myself back to the space of the past. In that space, I don't hear the ghastly noises of my family, and I don't have to deal with all the disturbing emotions I've encountered out there and in men. I digested and healed on my own, and I was safe with myself.

Those needs of yesteryear: unconditional love, the desire for sex and ultimately the intimate space they constitute, condense in this one object. Those confusions that I didn't understand in my youth become clear in the present day. At the beginning of my adolescence, when the self-narrative was budding, the process of objectification of the female self manifested itself in one decorative kitschy trinket. My stuffed animals that were my only companions during my restless and chaotic adolescence, silently providing unconditional listening, also appear in this one package.



Figure34, Packages in rooms(2024), Experiment 2.2, spatial installation 200 x 200 cm, projection of my old room, with hanging textile and object from my past, assemblage sculptures



Figure35, Packages in rooms(2024), Experiment 2.2, spatial installation 40x40 cm, with hanging textile and object from my past, assemblage sculptures

This one ball of concentrated past memories noisily screamed of the unconditional love I would never get and the desire to keep filling it. As Steyerl puts it, ' . . . in this perspective, a thing is never just an object, but a fossil in which a constellation of forces are petrified...' He concludes his article by talking about symbolism, saying "This bunch looks much worse than David Bowie, but is much more desirable for it. Because they love the pixel, not the hero . The hero is dead. Long live the thing."²⁵ At this point, everything is as I felt at the beginning of this research. Objects, shapes, traces, are nothing more than symbols of my self-narrative, and as long as my desire for a safe space remains, they will continue to sing a song of longing for connection.

24 Roelstraete, D. (2014). Art as Object Attachments: Thoughts on Thingness/ /2008. In: The Object. Cambridge, Massachusetts: London: Whitechapel Gallery, pp.65- 67.

25 Steyerl, H. (2014). A Thing Like You and Me. in: the object. cambridge, massachusetts: london: whitechapel Gallery, pp.45-51.



Figure36, Sleeping in wood(2024), Experiment 2.3, 200*200cm, installation, objects from my past, assemblage sculptures, video



Figure37, Sleeping in wood(2024), Experiment 2.3, 200*200cm, installation, objects from my past, assemblage sculptures, video

Here, I finally understood, I finally saw.

In the vast gaps of my self-narrative were my constant attempts to distance myself from my environment, my attempts to desire the impotence of being desired. It was the restlessness I kept feeling in my mind at work, my need to be safe, safer. I needed stable connection, more stable connection. In a large void, all the attempts I made driven by this force created a disconnect with my overall emotions, which leads to a very sad speculation:

Maybe all the attempts I've made in the past have been useless.

Yet this research still needs to continue regardless. However pessimistic the speculation may be, at least so far I have finally touched upon my abstract self-narrative by considering the materiality of traces in conjunction with assemblage making and building a creative bridge between my past and present selves.

I use a new form of autobiographic reasoning that integrates assemblage making and reflective writing to connect fragmented elements with distant memories to reach a cohesive self-consensus. This may reduce self-discontinuity somewhat, but I also need to broaden my research in terms of other aspects of the concept of self-continuity.

Most importantly in this series of results, I have learnt about the gaps that exist in my self-narrative and the three important elements of which the gaps are made up of: safe space (the environment), unconditional love and the desire to be desired in sexually bonded relationships. I will continue my research in relation to these three points, in conjunction with the experimental structures already in place.

PART₂

Be filled

present and future

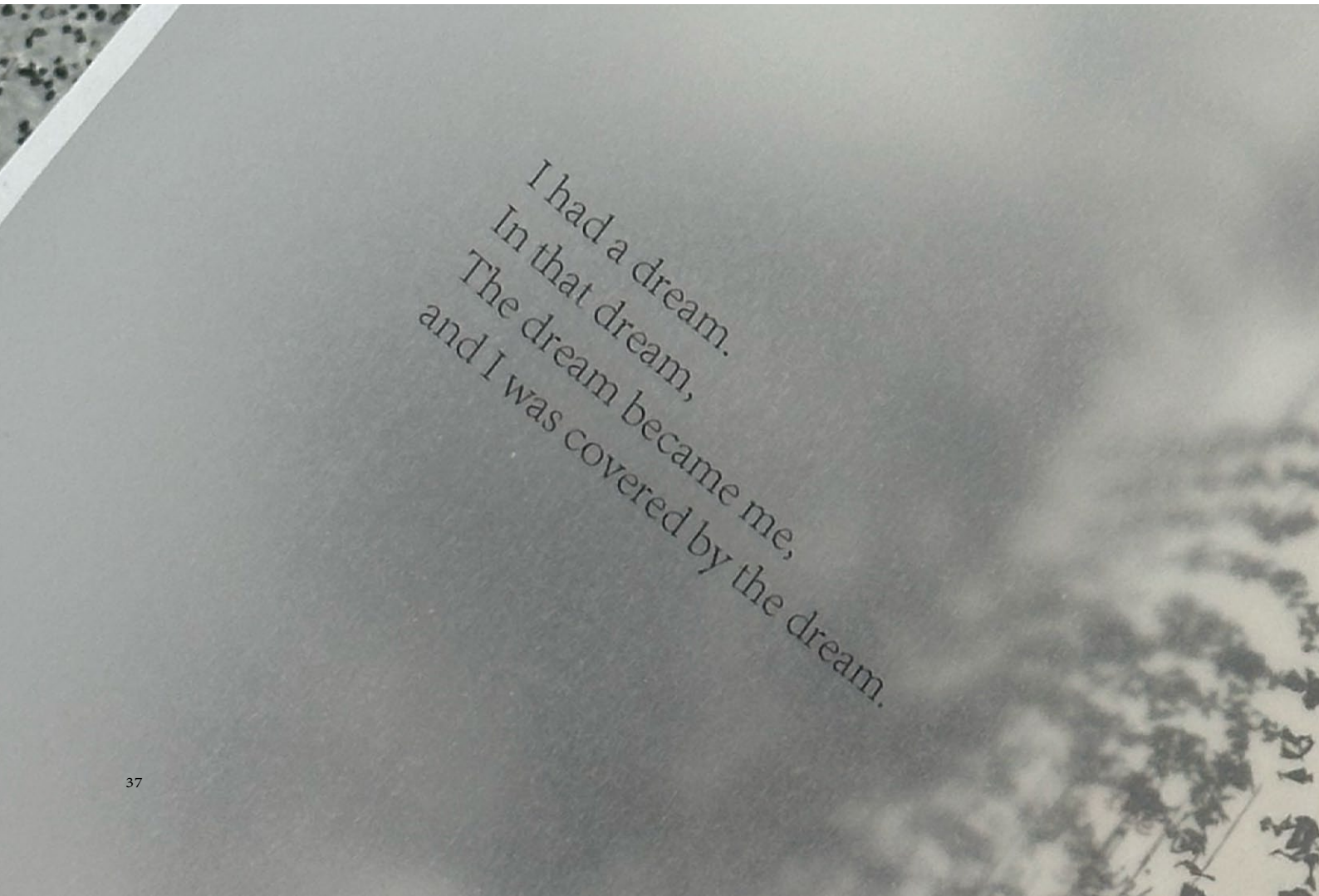
"Let me build you up, they said, I love you like crazy.

A crowd of strangers rushed to my side and lifted me high in the air. We will die, they said, and together we will forge a golden bronze statue that exists only for you. They leapt up in a frenzy, one on top of the other, gradually turning into a small mountain. Some cut off their own arms and stuck their bloodied arms into the mountain; others gouged out their eyes and filled the gaps in the mountain.

Slowly the hill took the shape of a snowman, and it swayed as if it would collapse at any moment.

I lay down on it and looked at the sky, which had never felt so blue.

Little by little, I melted into the hill. They became my blood. The new blood gave me strength and I ran to the top of the hill and turned into ashes under the sun." - 2024.04.09 My daydream



I had a dream.
In that dream,
The dream became me,
and I was covered by the dream.



To the future

as I am to London, as a comet is to the universe

In Part 1, I have discussed the construction of self-narratives by assemblage making in a number of ways, through a variety of research methods that look back from the present to the past. In the case of my research subject, myself, it can be said that it is a touching and re-understanding of self-narrative. As has been researched, "The ability to create meaningful self-narratives that bridge changes in life circumstances is positively associated with a greater sense of self-continuity."²⁶

Therefore, on the basis of looking back and constructing a connection with the past, in this section I will continue to use another part of the concept of self-continuity, the framework of present-future self-continuity, for further research. The aim remains the same, to remove the sense of alienation from the environment and to construct a safe space. The only difference is that in this part, I will attempt to fill in the self-narrative gap and explore whether this initiative can work together with the first part to construct my self-continuity.

However, after I carried out the theoretical research for this part, I found that present-future self-continuity has been much less researched in existential theories compared to past-present self-continuity. There was even much less research related to the interdisciplinary aspect of what I was doing. I found only one study on olfaction and self-continuity and another on musical nostalgia and self-continuity.^{27,28}

The obstacles that arise here are also quite obvious. After all, we can always easily see into our past and find our relationship with it. We can always do something with objects from the past or diaries, etc., and find some hint of what's going on. ". . . in nostalgising, people frequently link their past (e.g., 'When I look at the ball pen that my friend gave me...') with the present (e.g., '...I chuckle'²⁹

²⁶ Jiang T, Chen Z, Sedikides C. Self-concept clarity lays the foundation for self-continuity: The restorative function of autobiographical memory. *J Pers Soc Psychol.* 2020 Oct;119(4):945-959. doi: 10.1037/pspp0000259. Epub 2019 Jul 25. PMID. 31343221.

²⁷ Waskul, D. D., Vannini, P., & Wilson, J. (2009). The Aroma of Recollection: Olfaction, Nostalgia, and the Shaping of the Sensuous Self. *The Senses and Society*, 4(1), 5-22.

²⁸ Sedikides, C., Leunissen, J., & Wildschut, T. (2022). The psychological benefits of music-evoked nostalgia. *Psychology of Music*, 50(6), 2044-2062.

²⁹ Stephan E, Sedikides C, Wildschut T. 2012. Mental travel into the past. Differentiating recollections of nostalgic, ordinary, and positive events. *Eur. J. Soc. Psychol.* 42(3):290-98

But the future is another matter. It is nebulous, vague, and exists in the mind. It is not something that can be clearly felt and strongly related to oneself. It is more like an idealised daydream, as far as I am concerned.

In a limited study, the researcher mentioned peeking at the strengths and weaknesses of present-future self-continuity by imagining the present self in relation to its position and distance from its future self: 'First-year university students who visualised their future as a destination on a pathway (compared to those who did not engage in metaphorical thinking) perceived a more robust connection between their present and future selves.'³⁰

This is based on the fact that they have made choices from multiple paths and visualised them, and that this firmness about the state of the self enhances psychological well-being and facilitates decision-making. It can be surmised here that, among other things, college students see the future as one or more ladders or paths from their present selves, some transparent, some unstable, some undesirable, some straight and some curved.

In short, compared to the established past, the future is fluid and optional.

It is necessary here to bring up the neglected conditions and predicaments of the international student and first generation immigrant community that I myself, as the subject of this study, represent in this field. By analogy with the refugee community, which also lives in a precarious state, although there has been some academic research on the refugee community, the refugees' homelessness is more a result of external forces. It is clear, then, that major shifts in the environment will be the cause of self-discontinuity, even as traumatic events.

However, the homelessness of international students and first-generation migrant groups is more spontaneous and exists in the context of globalisation. This difference in the genesis of environmental shifts creates essentially different decisions and states of being when considering the future. The environment itself is an important causative factor in the discontinuity of the self. Secondly the uncertainty of the environment largely constitutes the inability to foresee where one is in the future. Even more, changes in the environment create uncertainty about more environmental changes.

The two keywords of change and environment became the focus of my final conclusion in this part of my research. I realised that going blindly thinking about how to connect the present with the future did not seem to be a smart solution. Maybe I should ground the research and this part of the experiment in self-narratives, as I did in part one, and rethink the relationship between self-narratives and the future.

³⁰ Landau MJ, Oyserman D, Keefer LA, Smith GC. 2014. the college journey and academic engagement: how metaphor use enhances identity-based motivation. *j. Pers. Soc. Psychol.* 106:5679-98

In the framework of the experiment in Part I, I summarised a few key points:

- 1, the reconfiguration of narrative and the consideration of space in assemblage making was the main focus
- 2, the most important element in the assemblage, i.e. in my self-narrative, is the materiality of the trace
- 3, It is possible to reconstruct safe spaces through assemblage making
- 4, The model of writing + practice combination is a necessary part of researching the self
- 5, I need to analyse and summarise the practice twice

After constantly reflecting on the first part, I finally found a way to iterate the experiment. In the first part, the practice served as a way of reconfiguring space and narrative, compressing the space and turning it into a vehicle belonging to the present moment, condensing stories and histories into a new narrative condensing the unconditional love and the desire to be desired in the gaps of the self's narrative. I construct narratives and make assemblages while the self-narrative and the environment connect. Thus, I internalise the entirety of the present past bedroom and the stories that take place in it into my self-narrative. So what are the spaces and narratives that correspond to the theoretical framework of the present and the future considered in Part II?

2024.02 *The City*

I suddenly felt time running after me. The long and continuing space was squeezed into a tunnel with no end in sight. Even if I just stood in the center of the tunnel, the dappled light squeezed into rain-like shapes on me. Even if I did nothing, I would be engulfed by the blinding light in the next second, dissipating and turning into ashes.

Gradually I lost sight of what the images of the future looked like. When I looked at them, one by one they too dissipated beneath that sunlight.

I knew they would always disappear without a trace, but I didn't want them to disappear now.

As I took a deep breath, I realized I was breathing away from me. I heard birds chirping, my eardrums thumping, and I wondered what was causing it. I hear the city, like a behemoth, wrapping itself around the birds that exist here.

I don't know anything, I know nothing.

The unknown of the city magnified in my mind. I think of the streets moving away from me during a MENTAL breakdown. In the space of the present, in the time that leads to the future, the closer connection I longed for expanded from my bedroom to the whole of London. I need to find something in the city, something that is a counterpoint to the old things, to the emotions of the adolescent bedroom.

I began to observe its my relationship with London. I observe my trajectory and the way I explore London from a third perspective. With my trajectory I became a purposeful wanderer. I saw murders in the streets, dead butterflies branded on poles, DNA fragments that swirled and swirled



Figure38, Urban Traces, Experiment 3.1, archives, photography of urban traces



Figure39, Urban Traces, Experiment 3.1, archives, photography of urban traces

In the area parallel to my line of sight, the city's interactions with people formed traces, and the traces became symbols in my eyes. When considering traces as transformations of energy, their presence becomes a microcosm of the stories of people's lives in the city. Their mysterious narratives are hidden behind images and become abstract symbols of history. I glimpsed in them the proof of the existence of countless strangers.

What about the proof of my existence? Where do I exist in the city and how does my self-narrative exist in this vast space?



Figure47, Urban Traces, Experiment 3.1, archives, photography of urban traces



The comet is to the universe as I am to the city.

What am I drawn to, so that I have nowhere to return home to.

I finally see it. I am, after all, still drawn to that void in desire this desire to be desired. It couldn't help but grieve me, as if it was like a vortex from which there was no escape, and at the centre of which was always the man. The road I was roaming on turned into my dating route in an instant, like a prophecy or a curse. Even after all the efforts, even if the old things become traces of the city, and the old bedroom becomes London, the kernel is still the thirst and desire for unconditional love in the unchanging void. The scale of the space in which the story takes place is enlarged, and my relationship with the city is unconsciously brought closer through the constant desire to fill the void.

Figure39-46, Urban Traces, Experiment 3.1, archives, photography of urban traces



I did not want to give up on this study, even though I was feeling miserable. I decided to designate a new experimental framework for urban and dating trajectories to investigate the role of my self-narrative in this context. I wanted to explore whether my unconscious behaviour, my dating trajectory, could actually satisfy my desire to fill in the gaps in my self-narrative. And on top of that, whether my self-narrative gap could actually be filled by this constant attempt.

I need to observe myself more, I need to find a way to relate the traces of the city to my story, and I need to broaden assemblage making to a larger space, rethinking the ways in which disassemblage and reconstruction are expressed in this experiment.



Figure48, Urban Traces, Experiment 3.1, archives, photography of urban traces



My Madness

emotional observation, asemic writing, free-assemblage making

*"Personal narratives are stories about authors who view themselves as the phenomenon and write evocative narratives specifically focused on their academic, research, and personal lives."*³¹

As stated in the study of auto ethnography, it takes a medium to see oneself in a third perspective.

After exploring the city and my relationship in the previous section, I decided to make observations about my dating life. So I started making notes on some of the emotions in my life that I was dating. It was a very slow process that lasted on and off for a total of about 6 months. At the same time, I still didn't stop documenting the traces of the city I was looking for on my way to meet my dates.

In the recordings, I extracted some of the methods from autobiographical reasoning that I had already tried before. I only chose fragments that were vivid in my recollections and that I could empathise with myself in the moment. I think only 45

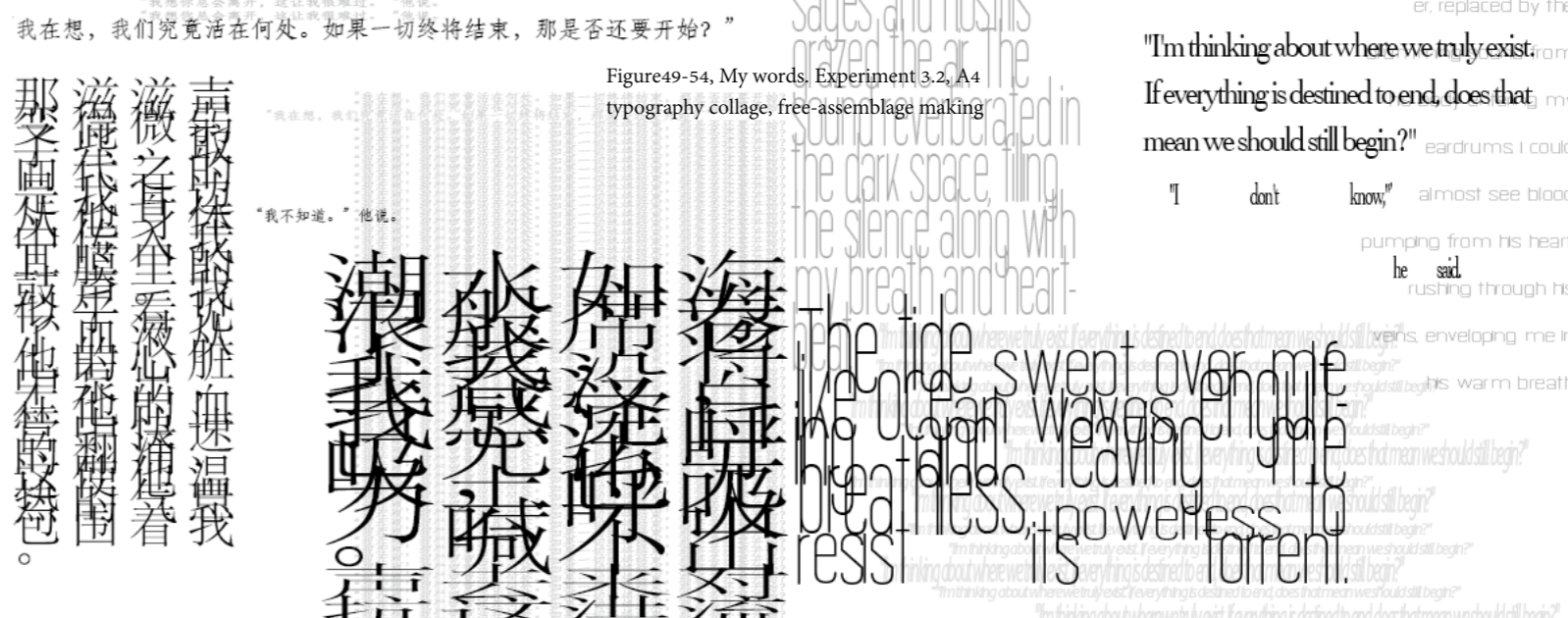
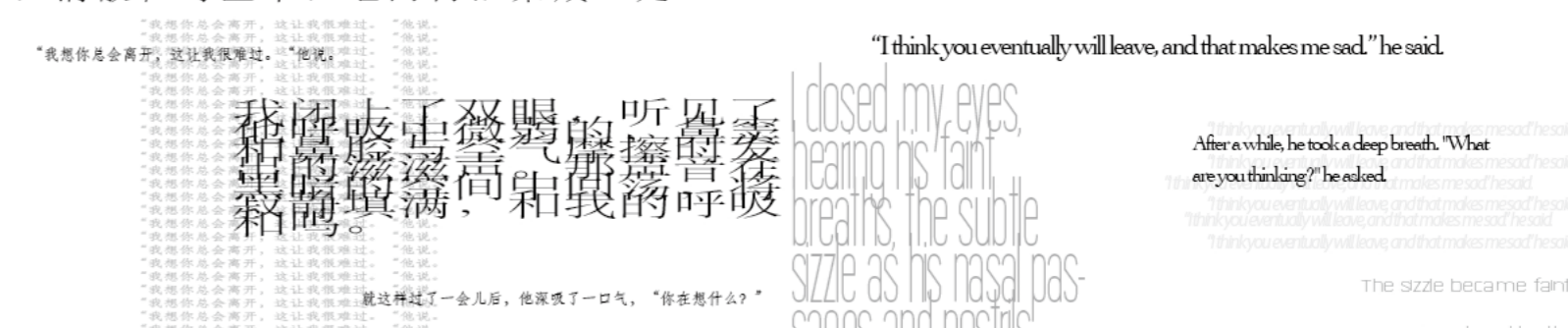
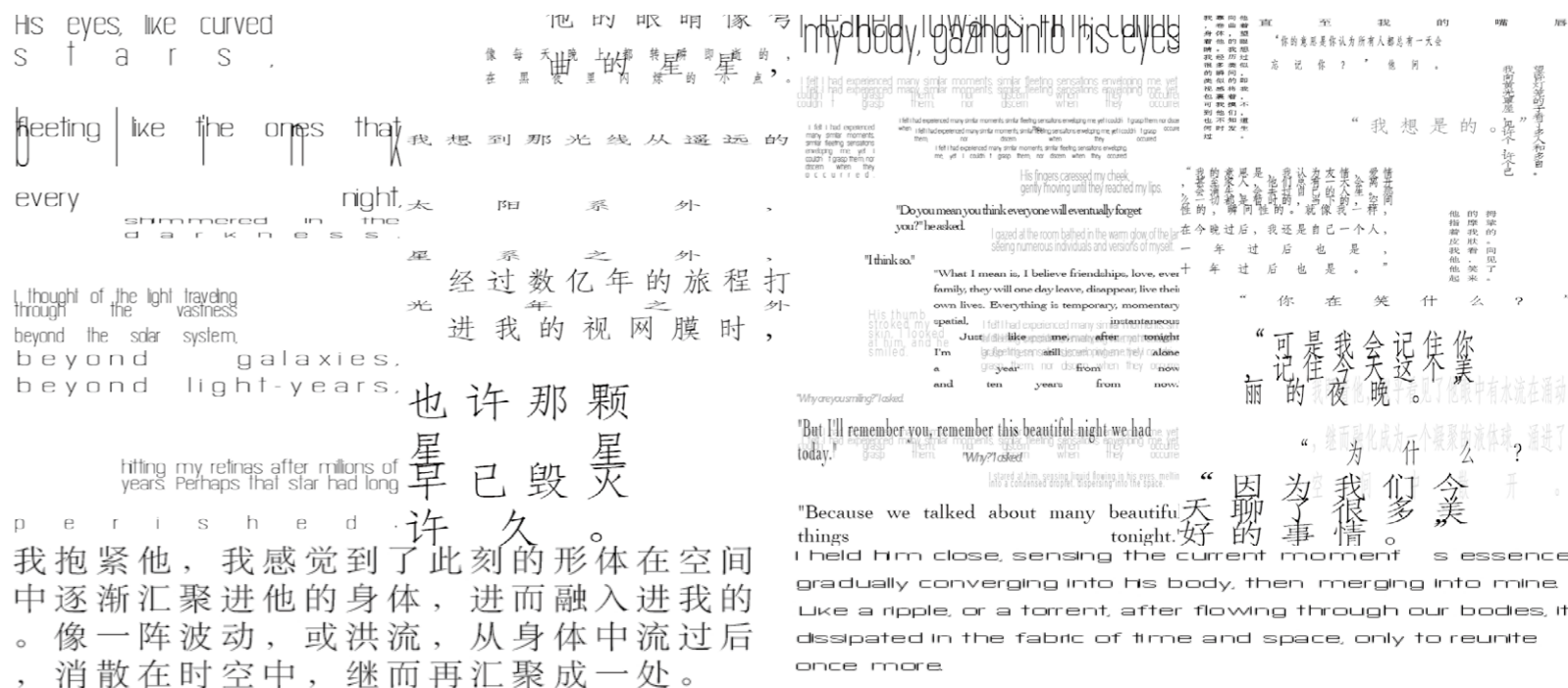
this part of the emotion and story can be called into my self-narrative, and there is a possibility to internalise it.

I initially chose to use the typography poster as a way of exploring my practice due to my previous experience of practising in a flat space. For the first month or so, my writing continued to dwell on specific events and details.

I need to mention here that due to the number of other people involved in this practice, I considered and strictly formulated ethical rules. ' Similar to traditional ethnographers, autoethnographers also may have to protect the privacy and safety of others by altering identifying characteristics such as circumstance."³² I will not mention any names, imply any characteristics of others, and ensure the use of the first person in textual descriptions.

31 Berry, Keith. 2007. Embracing the catastrophe: Gay body seeks acceptance. *qualitative Inquiry* 13 (2): 259-281.

32 Ellis, Carolyn, Tony E. Adams, and Arthur P. Bochner. ' Autoethnography: an Overview' *Historical Social Research / Historische Sozialforschung* 36, no. 4 (138) (2011): 273-90. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23032294>.



I learned that the current weather here was considered a storm, but I didn't feel that way. The rain mist, finer than a showerhead, touched my skin delicately, leaving me slightly damp.

We looked into each other's eyes, then kissed. The mist covered both of us, falling to the ground. I knew tomorrow these droplets would evaporate, returning to the sky.

"I think I'll remember you too," I said.

He smiled, lightly pecking my cheek.

"Me too. And I hope that one day, I'll somehow see your name in the future. And then, I'll think, oh, this person, I remember her, she finally realized her dreams."

"Thank you. I hope for the same."

"Then, I hope you live a happy life."

Figure55, My words. Experiment 3.2, A4 typography collage, free-assemblage making

I have established that in this section, both the urban trace images and my writing are elemental forms that exist in flat space. Here, it is no longer appropriate to create in the traditional assemblage making. Considering that in my creation, the focus is not on the existing structure of art creation, but on the reconstruction of space and the dismantling of elements. In order to distinguish my way of creation from the traditional assemblage making, from now on I will name my way of creation free-assemblage making.

They are very dark, obscure, and embarrassing. I continued to try this part of the experiment. But little by little, I realised that the point of it all was not the specific events, but the emotions involved. As the ebb and flow of my emotions entered into my creations, woven together with my dating life, the graphics that emerged from the practice shifted. This shift opened my eyes to more possibilities.

Here I need to start by defining the improvements I made in this part of assemblage making.

我得知在这里现在的天气算是风暴，但我并不这样认为。比淋浴头还细腻的雨雾打在我身上，我只觉得有些湿漉漉的。我们望着彼此，继而亲吻彼此。雨雾覆盖在我们一人，落在地上。我知道明天这些水会蒸发，重新进入天空。我想我也会记住你的。”我说。他微笑着轻啄我的脸颊，“我也希望有一天，我会实现我的梦想。我也会记得你。”

“那么，I hope you live a happy life.”

Figure56, My words. Experiment 3.2 A4 typography collage, free-assemblage making

I stared at the ceiling, feeling hot, absurd, and uninteresting. I gently pushed him a few times, then gave up. Tears entered my ears. He paused for a moment, wiping my tears awkwardly. "Why cry?" He stopped, turning away and not looking at me. "哭什么。”他停下了动作，转过了头去不再看我。

After a moment, he said, "Crying doesn't make much sense, does it?"

过了片刻，他又说，“哭也没有什么意义，不是吗？”

My tears wouldn't stop. I stared at him, opened my mouth, but didn't know how to respond. "Just continue," I said. I realized my voice was cold and dry.

He fell on me. Skin against skin, like two melted, yellowed, candied apples. I felt the coolness at my neck, realizing he was also trembling, desperately trying to suppress the unstoppable sobs.

I reached out and embraced him; he trembled even more.

我伸手抱住了他，我感觉他颤抖得更厉害了些。

Figure57-58, My words. Experiment 3.2, A4 typography collage, free-assemblage making

Free-Assemblage Making

I feel free in the name of free-assemblage making from the original structure. This is what I think is needed in this way of creation, that is, to dismantle and reconstruct the objects unconsciously and rethink myself in order to reinterpret them. At the same time, this way of creating will not be limited to three-dimensional space, it can be in flat space or in digital space. It can travel through time and space, it can mix spaces, it can be whatever it wants to be, the point is what kind of space the creator needs, and what kind of narrative the space reveals to the creator upon reflection.

Thus free-assemblage making in flat space is no longer collage, there is no longer a need to think about flat structures, they can be all messed up or full of order.³³ Free-assemblage making in digital space is no longer about scene building, no longer about thinking about conventional rules

Detach from structure, detach from rules, and create with the most original drive. This will allow for the creation of new effects and narrative systems outside of an aesthetic framework. It also makes it easier to analyse the elements that make up an individual's self-narrative through creation.

33 Gerber, A. (2004). All messed up : unpredictable graphics. London: Laurence King. Provides the theoretical roots of disorganised planar composition and has inspired me in visual composition.

Well, after defining free-assemblage making, it is finally time to think about the way I practice research in this section. In yet another piece of research, I learnt about the concept of Hypergraphia. It is an academic concept that started in psychiatric hospitals and crosses two fields, aesthetics and psychoanalysis. "The patients they observed displayed highly compulsive detailed writing, sometimes with literary creativity."³⁴ "A patient from a separate study experienced continuous 'rhyming in his head' for five years after a seizure and said that he 'felt the need to write them down. to write them down.'"³⁵.

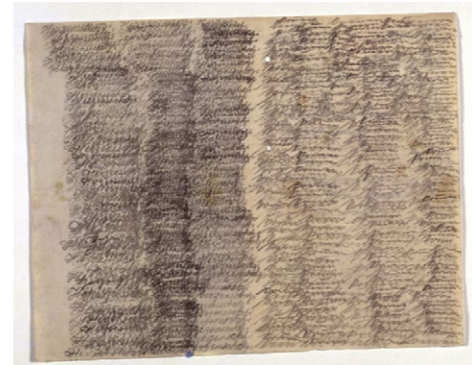


Figure 59, Patient's handwriting.³⁶

Here, the diaries, poems, etc. that they record have a strong aesthetic value due to pathological factors. While weakening the text itself, an obsessive, emotional rhythm appears in the flat space through visualisation. When this behaviour entered the field of artistic creation, it changed into a new term - Asemic Writing.

"Asemic writing is a hybrid art form that fuses text and image into a unity, and then sets it free to arbitrary subjective interpretations."³⁸ Here the text is completely transformed into abstract symbols, which the viewer is made to interpret freely through graphic and spatial arrangement. Asemic Writing is more concerned with aesthetics and visuality than Hypergraphia.



Figure 60, Example of Asemic Writing³⁷

34 Waxman, SG; Geschwind, N (March 2005). 'Hypergraphia in temporal lobe epilepsy. 1974'. *Epilepsy & Behavior*. 6(2): 282-91. doi:10.1016/j.yebeh.2004.11.022. PMID 15710320. S2CID 32956175.
35 Mendez, MF (Fall 2005). 'Hypergraphia for poetry in an epileptic patient'. *The Journal of Neuropsychiatry and Clinical Neurosciences*. 17 (4): 560-1. doi:10.1176/jnp.17.4.560. PMID 16388002.

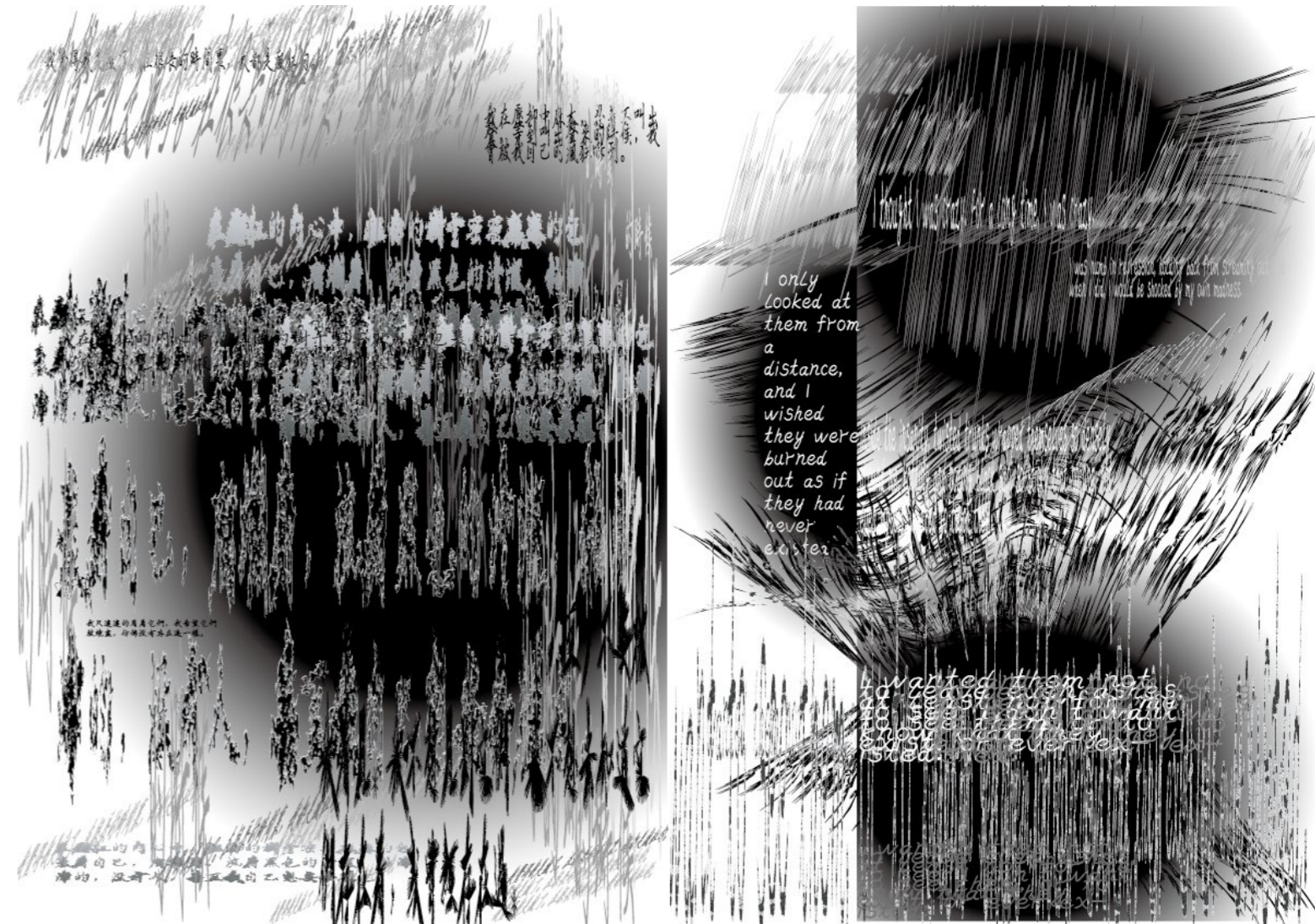


Figure 63-64, My words, Experiment 3.2. A4 typography collage, free-assemblage making, Asemic Writing

Knowing this, I realised that my text could also be part of the elements in free-assemblage making, which would be more graphic. Based on the emotional descriptions, I visualised the imagery in the text through a more abstract graphic manipulation.



Figure 61-62, My words, Experiment 3.2. A4 typography collage, free-assemblage making, Asemic Writing

36 Hypergraphia. (2024, May 29). In Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hypergraphia>
37 Asemic writing. (2024, April 19). In Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asemic_writing
38 Kaikkonen, Satu and Quimby Melton. 8 December 2012. "Satu Kaikkonen." *SCRIPTjr.nl*. <https://scriptjr.nl/texts/asemic/satu-kaikkonen/> (accessed 16 June 2024 [PST / -7:00]).

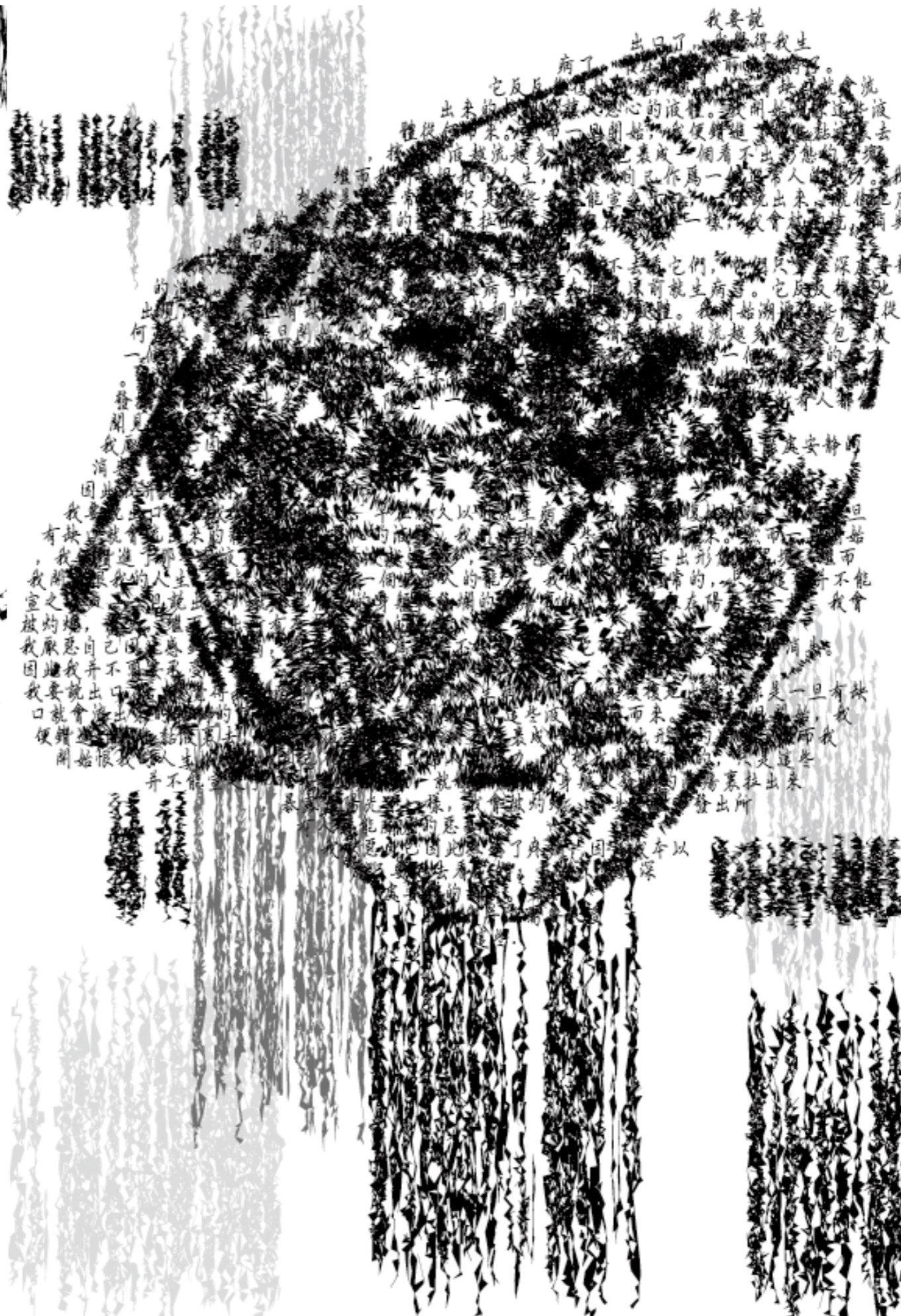
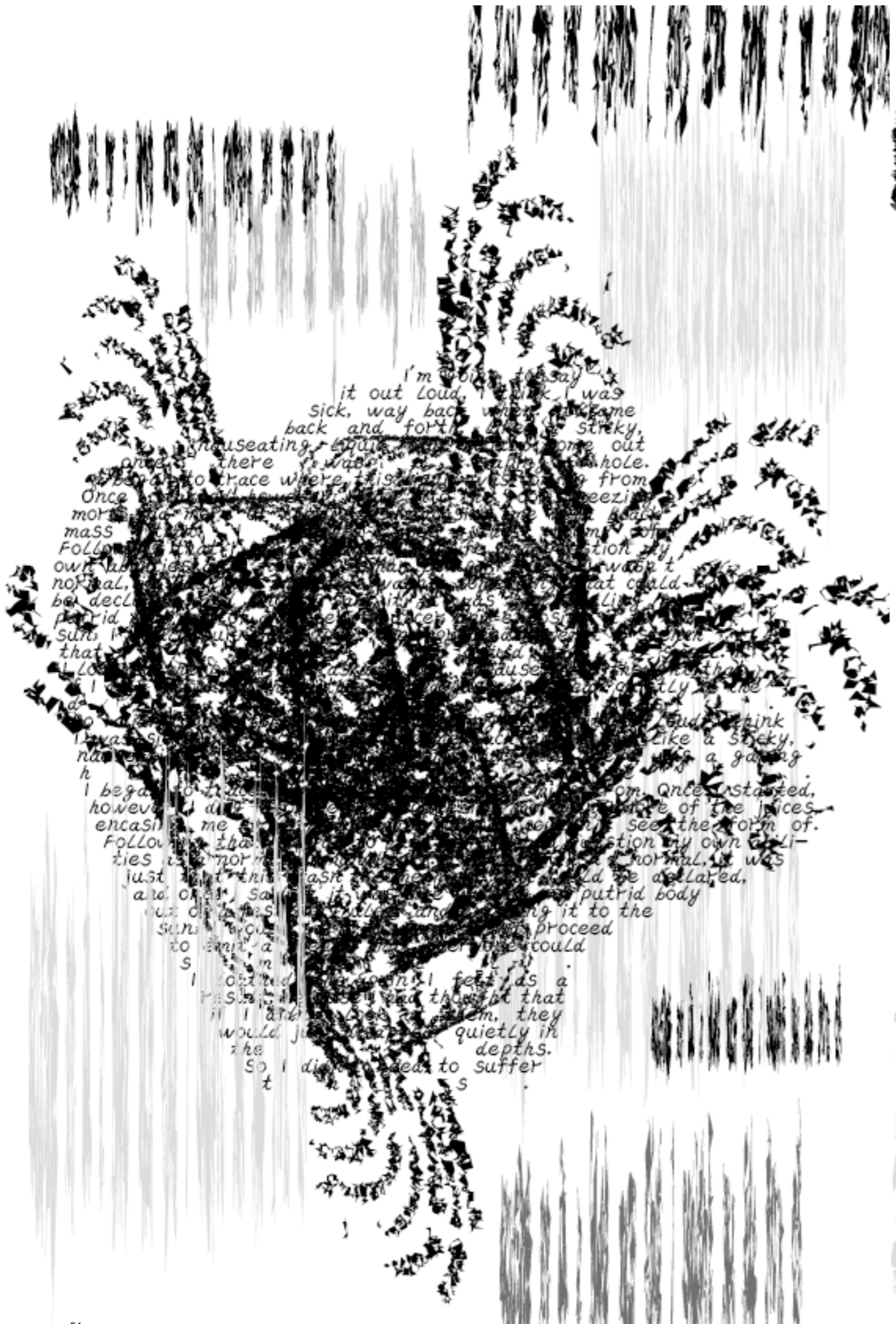


Figure65-66, My words, Experiment 3.2, A4 typography collage, free-assemblage making, Asemic Writing

As I explored and experimented with my emotions, they gradually became abstract symbols in the self-narrative. The traces they produced in the self-narrative were exacerbated in a flashback. My emotions passed with time, but they became part of the void.

Now, what about the urban traces?

2.3

Daydreaming

Paradoxes, Symbols and Publications

My story went into traces, and traces went into my daydreams.

After completing the last part of my experiment with text, I started exploring graphics and looking for a way to combine them. Free-assemblage making in flat space became much more difficult when all pre-existing flat rules were discarded. While thinking purely about the imagery portrayed in the text and creating it, I tried to incorporate some images I had taken on a road trip to a date. The results were not satisfactory.



Figure67-69, Experiment 3.3, 1080*1080pix, typography collage, graphic manipulation, free-assemblage making, Asemic Writing



Figure70, will you remember me, 2024, Experiment 4.1,A3 printed 2-sides leaflet. free-assemblage making, graphic manipulation with urban traces and asemic writing

I began to experiment with new ways of expanding my thinking into publications. Based on this, I tried to internalise my emotions into the urban traces and become one with it during the production process. At this point, I reconsider the material properties and spatial relations of the publication, and try to transform the narrative space from two-dimensional to three-dimensional again. Here, I rethink the possibility of non-linear narrative in two-dimensional space through the versatility of flat printed matter. In the moments when memories merge with urban trace, fragmented emotions construct a safe space, forming eerie and impractical dream modules.

Finally, after reweaving the narrative of urban trace, my story enters urban trace.



Figure71, will you remember me, 2024, Experiment 4.1, A3 printed 2-sides leaflet, free-assemblage making, graphic manipulation with urban traces and asemic writing

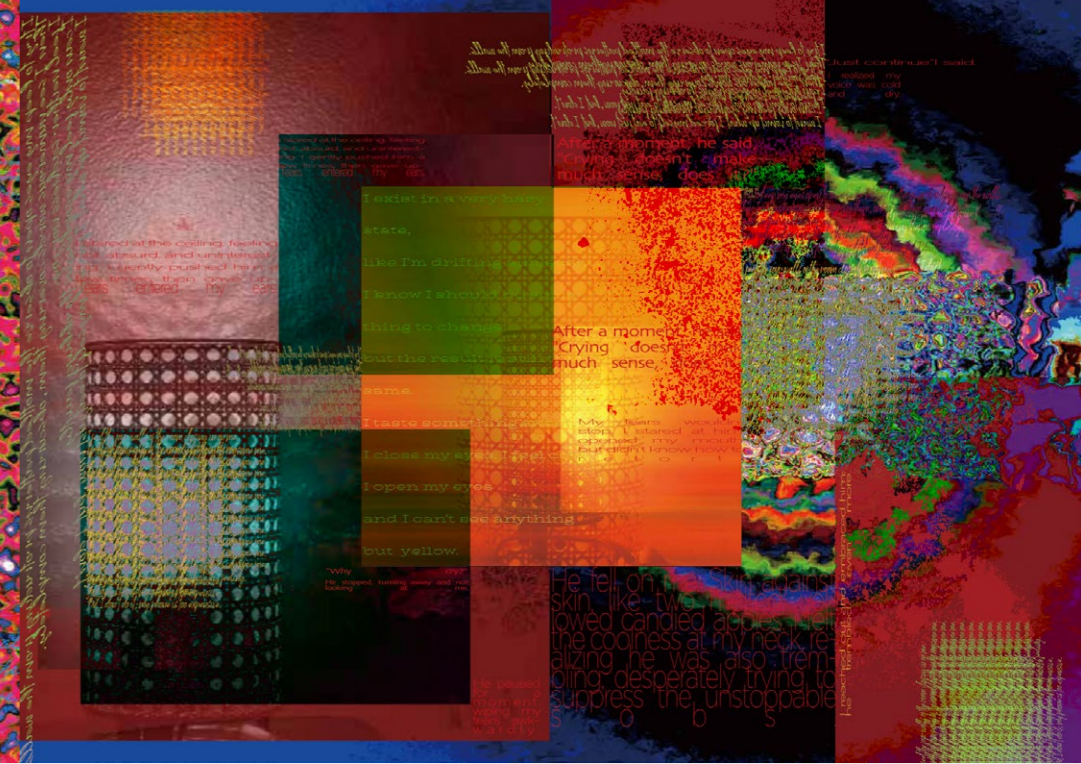
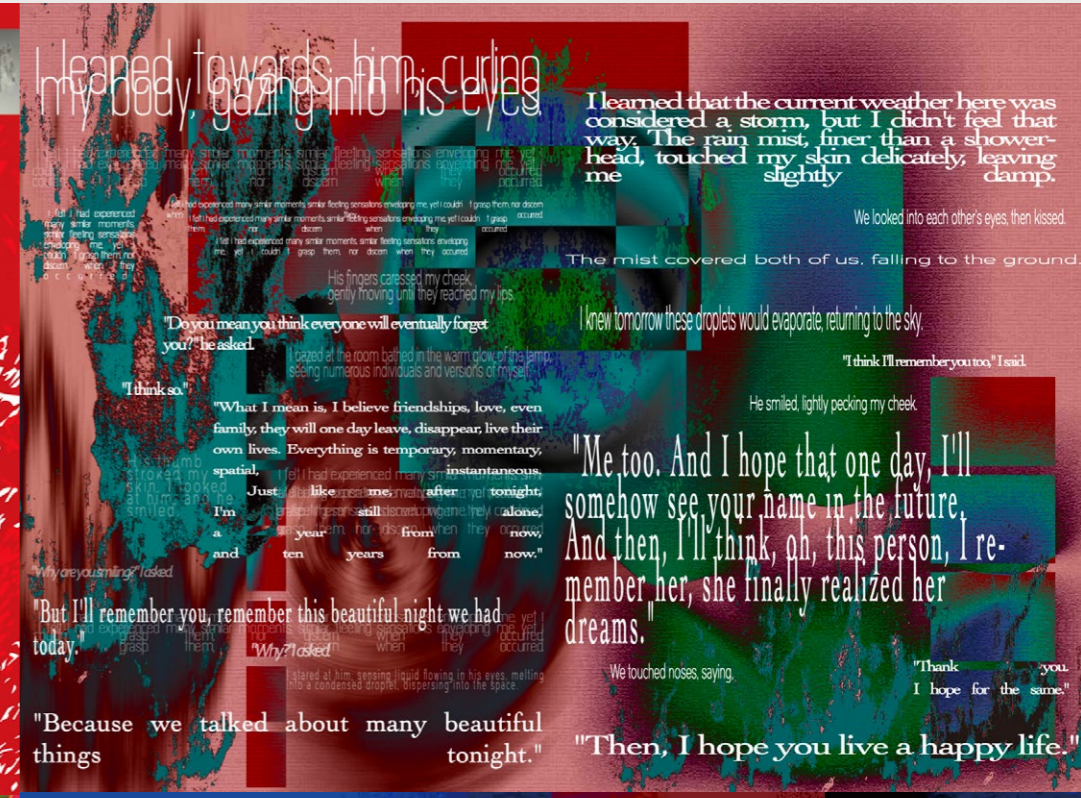
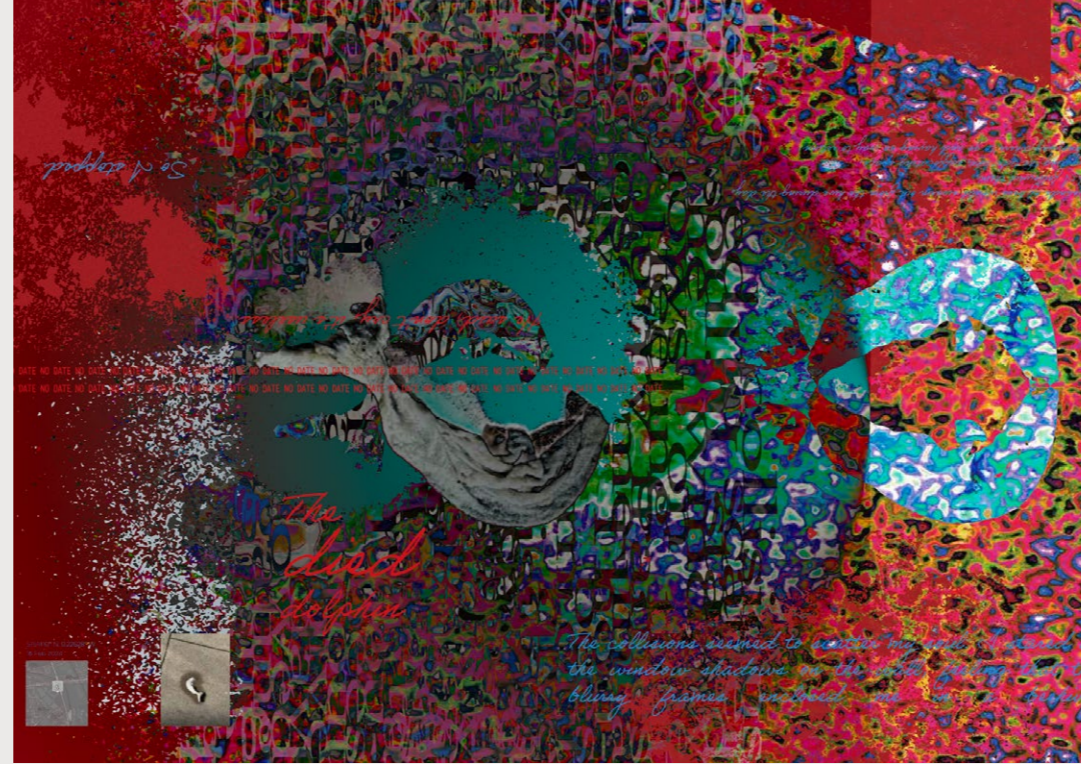
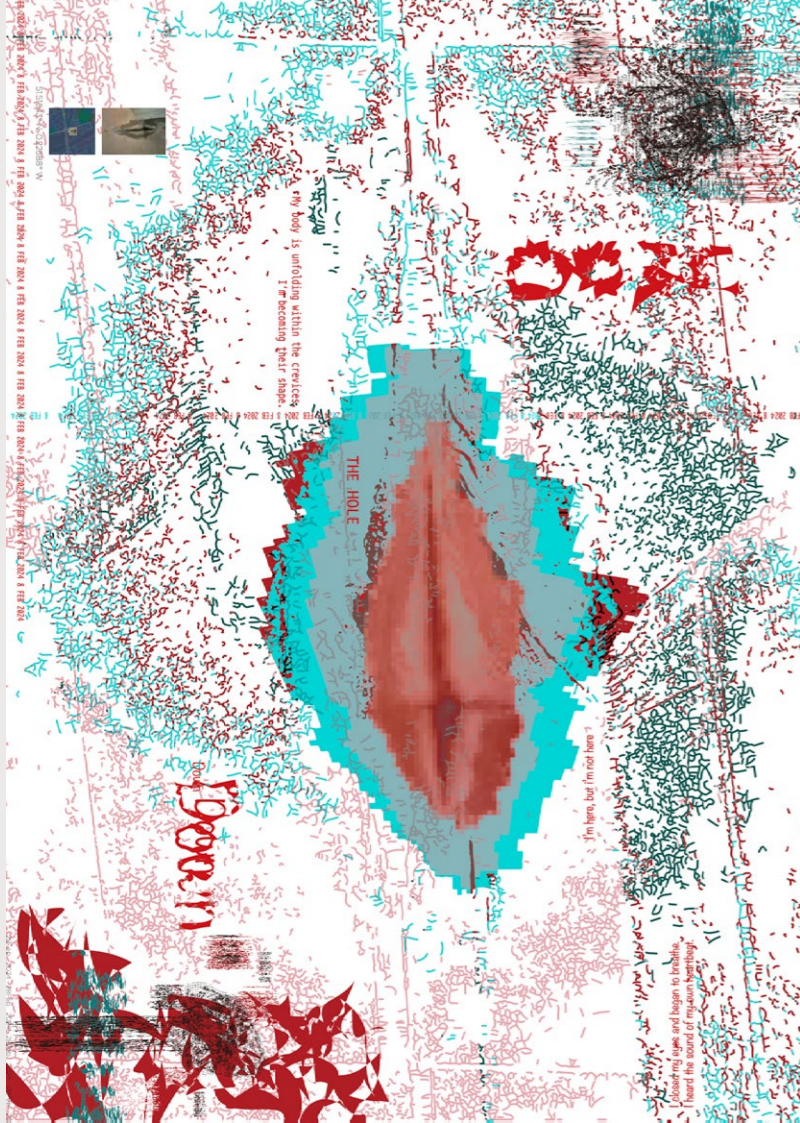


Figure72-74, will you remember me, 2024, Experiment 4.1, A3 printed 2-sides leaflet, free-assemblage making, graphic manipulation with urban traces and asemic writing



I became part of the city.

But what of it? Have the gaps in my self-narrative been filled by my attempts? Could I answer the questions I had begun to ask in PART2?

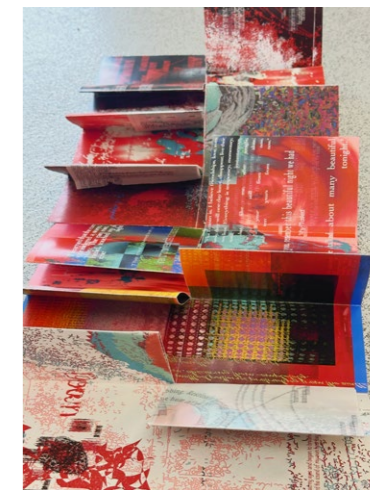


Figure75-81, will you remember me, 2024, Experiment 4.1, A3 printed 2-sides leaflet, free-semblage making, graphic manipulation with urban traces and asemic writing

With another look back at the autobiographical reasoning of the experiment, I realised that the emotional and symbolic language generated by this process of observation seemed indignant and sad. They were frantic and noisy. They gave me the illusion of creating a connection with the city. After further psychoanalytic theoretical research, I realised with despair the fact that there was a great paradox in my self-narrative.

$$\frac{\mathcal{S}}{a} \rightarrow \frac{S_1}{S_2} \quad \frac{\text{agent}}{\text{truth}} \rightarrow \frac{\text{other}}{\text{product/loss}} \quad \text{Hysterical discourse}^{39}$$

Figure82, Hysterical discourse³⁹

It is important to state here that I strongly disagree with Lacan as well as the Freudian psychoanalytic school of thought that has the male nativity as its theme as its precursor. I also strongly dislike the sexism, dualism and female stereotypes implied by the term hysteria. In this study, just as Hegel extracted Lacanian analytical structures to explain the laws governing the workings of capitalism, I will use only Lacanian structures to analyse the set of circumstances that have arisen in my case. It is also important to note that here, instead of using the word castration, I will use the term split.

In the hysterical discourse structure, the split subject is in a position of agency, located in the upper left position in the formula. Where the subject can refer in this study to the complete self-narrative and the split subject can refer in this study to the self-narrative where there is a gap. And the reason for the split can be different depending on the subject, philosophically it is the inevitable existence of incompleteness,

and looking back from the perspective of autoethnography methodology, it can point to the social environment, family of origin, discrimination, trauma and so on (this part will be discussed in part3).

The master can refer to the position in the upper right corner of the formula and becomes the Big Other. The master can refer to the structure, system, or logic that serves as the explanatory discourse, and when in the position of the Big Other becomes the slave of the explanatory subject. Here, the relationship between subject and object is transformed, and the divided subject asks the Big Other to explain itself. At this point, the discourse of interpretation falls on the Big Other, while the centre of interpretation is the divided subject, i.e. me.

In this study, the Big Other becomes dates in all shapes and sizes, and I ask them to explain my self-narrative, and I ask them to give me a way to fill it. Here, I and my self-narrative are passively filled and I remain in the centre,

waiting for the emotions to consume me.

The structure of knowledge appears as S2 in the bottom right of the formula, becoming product and loss. Here, knowledge does not need to be truth, it is simply a structure and system, produced by the master (the self-narrative). It does not need to make any sense, only to explain the needs of the unconscious. It can be denied, argued against, but it must be offered and produced.

This is all because object a (bottom left of the formula) stands in the place of truth. At this point, my desire to be desired, my desire to fill the void, my desire to draw closer to my environment becomes object a. And object a, as a part of the split-apart me, is always present with a desire that keeps wanting to be filled. When desire is in the position of truth, my attempts, needs, tries need to be explained by the Big Other. And I know nothing about it.



Figure83, won't you remember me,2024,, Experiment 4.2, A5 handmade book, free-assemblage making, graphic manipulation with urban traces and asemic writing

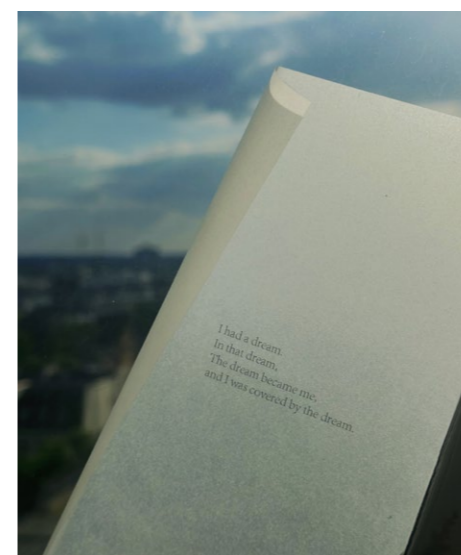


Figure84,won't you remember me,2024,, Experiment 4.2, A5 handmade book, free-assemblage making, graphic manipulation with urban traces and asemic writing

Now rewatch the first experiment to reflect on it again. It is possible to understand what the suspended assemblage is to the space, i.e. my room, the common attempt to touch the complete subject, the intrinsically chaotic self, i.e. the complete self-narrative. A ball is a condensation of memory fragments trying to fill in the gaps of a doomed self-narrative.

And in the second experiment, the incessant attempts and retraces are nothing more than re-interpreting oneself to the Big Other, filling in one's own power. In the ceding of power, fleeting connections are magnified, and desire is demanded to be interpreted. The tragic logical paradoxes present in this are never resolved.

From a philosophical point of view, it is doomed to failure. The void, or split remainder is doomed to exist, doomed to be incompletely filled.

The study ends here, leading to a tragic conclusion. Built on the supremacy of hysterical discourse, my self-narratives were not filled through my attempts to do so. They can only serve as a desire to fill in the gaps, and a voyeuristic desire to see the full grandeur of the self-narrative.

39 Ríos, L.R.B. (2020). UNA MIRADA CLÍNICA DE LOS 4 DISCURSOS (I): EL DISCURSO DEL AMO Y LA 'HISTERIZACIÓN' DEL DISCURSO. [online] Lic. Rodrigo Ríos. Available at: <https://www.licrodrigorios.com.ar/post/los4discursospartei>.

The dream becomes me and I am covered by the dream. The traces of the city that contain my story enter once again into the void of my self-narrative. They deceive me, they become my blood.



Figure85-87, won't you remember me,2024,, Experiment 4.2, A5 handmade book, free-assemblage making, graphic manipulation with urban traces and asemic writing



Figure88-90, The Book, Experiment 4.2, won't you remember me,2024,, Experiment 4.2, A5 handmade book, free-assemblage making, graphic manipulation with urban traces and asemic writing

I think of grasping, I always want to grasp. I always default to others in my favour and surround me only, I am the subject, they are the object. They become the substrate that fulfils my fragile dreams. Then the illusions break, one after the other, and the dreams gradually collapse, and I see behind the tattered curtains, remnants of a world in motion. In my dream world they are static, they are symbols, shapes, geometries of perception.



Figure 91-92, won't you remember me, 2024., Experiment 4.2, A5 handmade book, free-assemblage making, graphic manipulation with urban traces and asemic writing

I use the language they give me to explain me, to explain my world.

When I don't need these symbols very much for construction, when the symbols I already have are enough to hold up the dream. At that point, new symbols will no longer intervene and the dream will be stable forever.

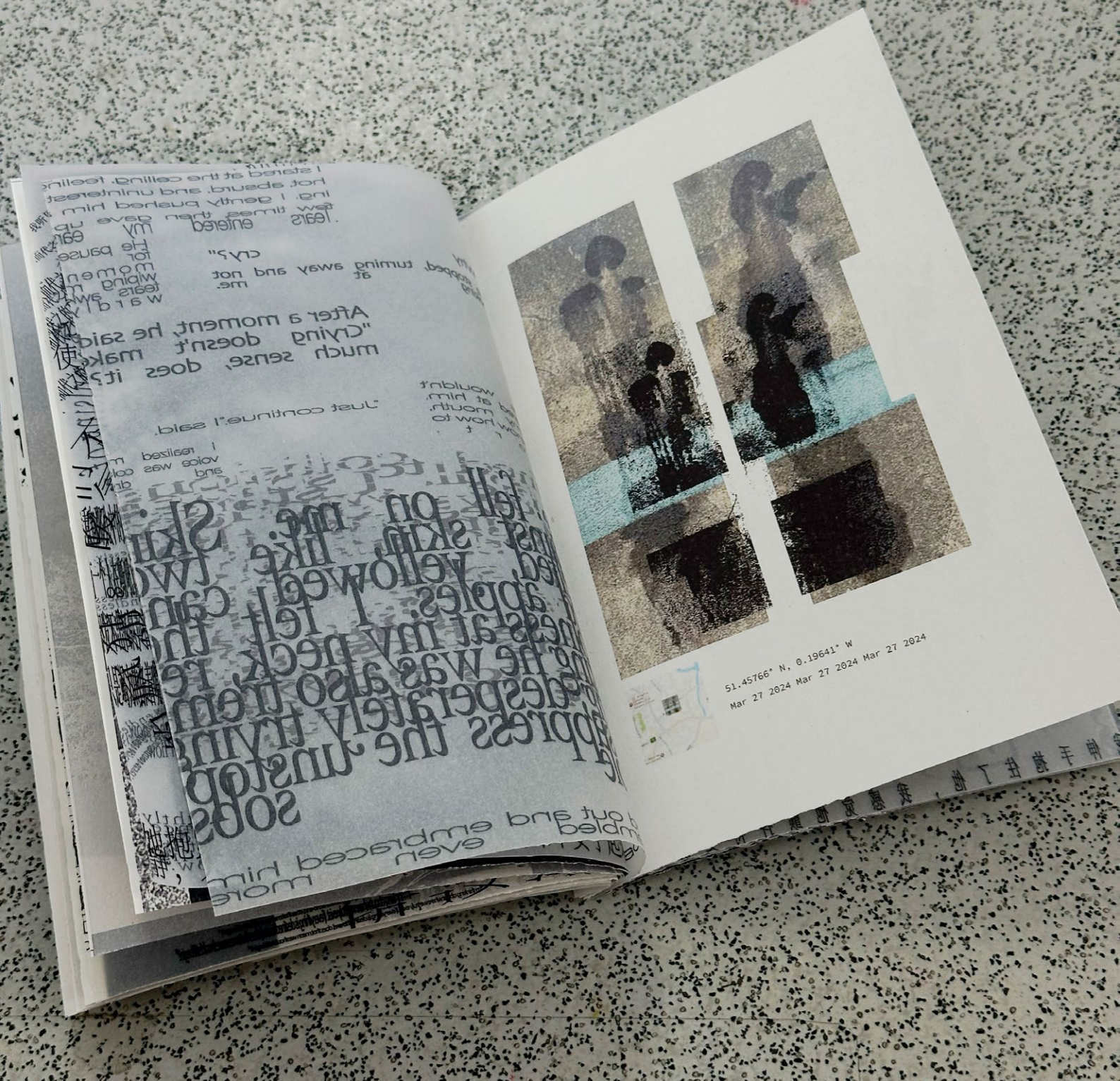


Figure93, won't you remember me,2024,, Experiment 4.2, A5 handmade book, free-assemblage making, graphic manipulation with urban traces and asemic writing

*Let me build you up, they said, I love you like crazy
 A crowd of strangers rushed to my side and lifted me high in the air.
 I will die, they say, cast into a golden bronze statue that exists only for you.
 They leapt up in a frenzy, one on top of the other, gradually becoming a small mountain.
 Someone cut off his own arm and stuck his bloodied arm into the hill, and slowly that hill turned into the shape of
 a snowman.*



*I lay on the hill and looked
 at the sky, which never felt so
 blue.
 Little by little, I melted into
 the hill.
 They became my blood. The
 new blood gave me strength.
 I ran to the top of the hill and
 turned into ashes under the
 sun.*

Figure94, The Book, Experiment 4.2, won't you remember me,2024,, Experiment 4.2, A5 handmade book, free-assemblage making, graphic manipulation with urban traces and asemic writing



Figure95, The Book, Experiment 4.2, won't you remember me,2024,, Experiment 4.2, A5 handmade book, free-assemblage making, graphic manipulation with urban traces and asemic writing

*As my story is internalised into
 urban traces, urban traces are
 internalised into self-narrative
 gaps. The reconstruction of my
 self-narrative ends here, leaving
 me with endless sadness.*

PART 3

Be broked

The Gap

Stairway corridor is often a transitional space, a space that does not stay too long.

It makes it seem as if one is in a perpetual state of waiting, not knowing when there will be a turnaround and the end is uncertain.

It is like the childhood process of being lost or left behind in an unfamiliar environment waiting for one's parents to come back, when the strangers in one's eyes do not offer any help.

It triggers some adults' deep-seated empathy with the lack of love and care in their childhood, and their sense of dislocation towards the environment through the surreal way of creation.

This kind of empathy is no longer possible to reproduce in reality, but will bring a sense of peace of mind like reading a book inside a house on a rainy day.



3.0

Causes of the Gap

Consumption, Self-objectification and the Female Dilemma

At this moment in time, as I put pen to paper, I sit on the patio in the centre of my flat, looking at the mottled traces on the ground and rethinking my journey so far. I observe that traces are everywhere. This yellowed rusty trace exudes an endless mystery; it seems to say that something was once here, but is now gone.



What I'm watching now

I think of my self-narrative gap, which may have actually existed once, though I can't remember it clearly.

"Personal narratives propose to understand a self or some aspect of a life as it intersects with a cultural context, connect to other participants as co researchers, and invite readers to enter the author's world and to use what they earn there to reflect on, understand, and cope with their own lives."⁴⁰ As Ellis says in her paper on autoethnography, here I will be rethinking the causes of blankness, tracing back to my past and the whole big environment.

It should be mentioned that I do not advocate any self-loathing arising from looking back. For me, all attempts are made to find solutions that start in the present, solutions that lead to the future, rather than clinging to the past, which is already an established fact.

I will start with my adolescence where the self-narrative begins. As I continued to collect bows, pretty but actually tacky fabrics, my objectified perception of self was already formed. Considered from a social psychological perspective, the act of collecting serves as an externalisation of cognition, in the middle of which there is a lack of internalisation of attitudes into cognition.

⁴⁰ Ellis, Carolyn. 2004. *The ethnographic I: A methodological novel about autoethnography*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press. p. 46

We have more or less all experienced the failure of adolescent adoration. After I revisited my diary from primary school (2008-2010) I realised that I had incorrectly attributed all failures to being external to myself. At this point, the failure became an external behaviour and the belief that I was not pretty enough became my attitude towards the event.

Now think about the social environment in East Asia between 2008 and 2010. At that time, the financial crisis caused a contraction in world consumption. In the case of China, consumerism from Japan and South Korea caused by the financial crisis is gradually penetrating into Chinese society. The consumption of objects was transformed into the consumption of concepts and perceptions, and women who had already objectified themselves were further educated by a new generation of women through magazines and the newly emerging internet. Buying and hoarding became part of this internalisation of attitudes.

At this point, social regulation becomes the force that internalises attitudes into perceptions. In my case, this also included my mother, and my sister's disciplining of me. In a societal culture above the patriarchy, it seemed that this doomed failure of adolescence could not be internalised in any other direction. At the time, LGBTQ anti-gender binaries were still a pipe dream and feminism was only in its infancy.

Not to mention individualism and liberalism. As a Chinese, we can hardly think of the self as important, and even the slightest hint of it is criticised by the teacher: 'Don't think of the collective.' At this point, the self becomes an insignificant being, a tiny grain of sand in the collective.

When the subject is forced to be divided by society, I, as a woman, was in a difficult predicament ten years ago. It is at this point that the term castration, which I abandoned back in the previous section, has to be mentioned. As Karen Horney says in her study⁴¹, even if penis worship does exist in women, in a broader sense it can be seen as a desire for the power and strength that men in a patriarchal society are given, and a complex that results from the injustices of the social structure. It would be foolish to attribute it only to sexual nativism. Therefore, in this study, I have also tried to use a broader perspective on this issue.

Now it is time to explore the reasons for the gap in the self-narrative, i.e., environmental change. In Part II I mentioned the difference between active environmental change (study abroad and immigrant communities) and passive environmental change (refugee communities). It is true that on the surface, active and passive decision-making lead to a great deal of variability, but is there the same kind of environmental displacement that exists in war, caused by invisible cultural oppression? In the same way that colonialism exists in war, does cultural colonialism also exist? This part requires further research.

41 Paris, Bernard J. Karen Horney: A Psychoanalyst's Search for Self-Understanding. Yale University Press, 1994. JSTOR, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1dszvwd>.

42 taira_kakeru (2022). Instagram. [online] www.instagram.com. Available at: <https://www.instagram.com/p/CbcTepTrAh-/> [Accessed 17 Jun. 2024].

However the discussion about the environment does not stop there. Through the experiments in this study it can be argued that the environment contains stories and emotions that are condensed from history. From this, it can be argued that when the environment is drastically changed and relocated, the historicity of the traces in the environment is lost, and the emotional stories lose their carriers, and therefore the connection to the new environment needs to be strengthened to find a container of materiality. Thus, in the process of internalising the story to the new environment, the condensation of historicity is revealed in the new space.

Finally, let me summarise how my interdisciplinary methodology has been helpful so far in studying self-narratives and self-continuity. In my experiments, it can be concluded that the first part of the attempts and analyses of the touching of self-narratives were helpful for the cohesive self. Although in the second part, the intention was to fill in the gaps in the self-narrative, the result was the discovery of paradoxes and female dilemmas in the self-narrative developed under cultural oppression. This can be understood as a further understanding of the framework of the self-narrative in a larger scale.

The purpose of Tracing was meant to be to find a solution to complete a continuous and complete self-narrative in order to reach a global self-continuity, but by the moment I put pen to paper, there is no more time to continue and our program will end. Now my proposition becomes how to express this dilemma through art.



Figure96, core aesthetic⁴²

As stated in Part II, I realised that my self-narrative was structured by others. The others become symbols in my self-narrative, they represent my desire to be desired, my desire for unconditional love and safe space. Here I think of endless space in the core aesthetic.

Stairway corridor is often a transitional space, a space that does not stay too long.

It makes it seem as if one is in a perpetual state of waiting, not knowing when there will be a turnaround and the end is uncertain.

It is like the childhood process of being lost or left behind in an unfamiliar environment waiting for one's parents to come back, when the strangers in one's eyes do not offer any help.

It triggers some adults' deep-seated empathy with the lack of love and care in their childhood, and their sense of dislocation towards the environment through the surreal way of creation.

This kind of empathy is no longer possible to reproduce in reality, but will bring a sense of peace of mind like reading a book inside a house on a rainy day.

I try to make an endless space structured by symbolism, making it a combination of my desires. It floats, it is fragile, it is weird, it is unknowable. Here I continue with the concept of free-assemblage making, the dismantling and reorganisation of structures in digital space.

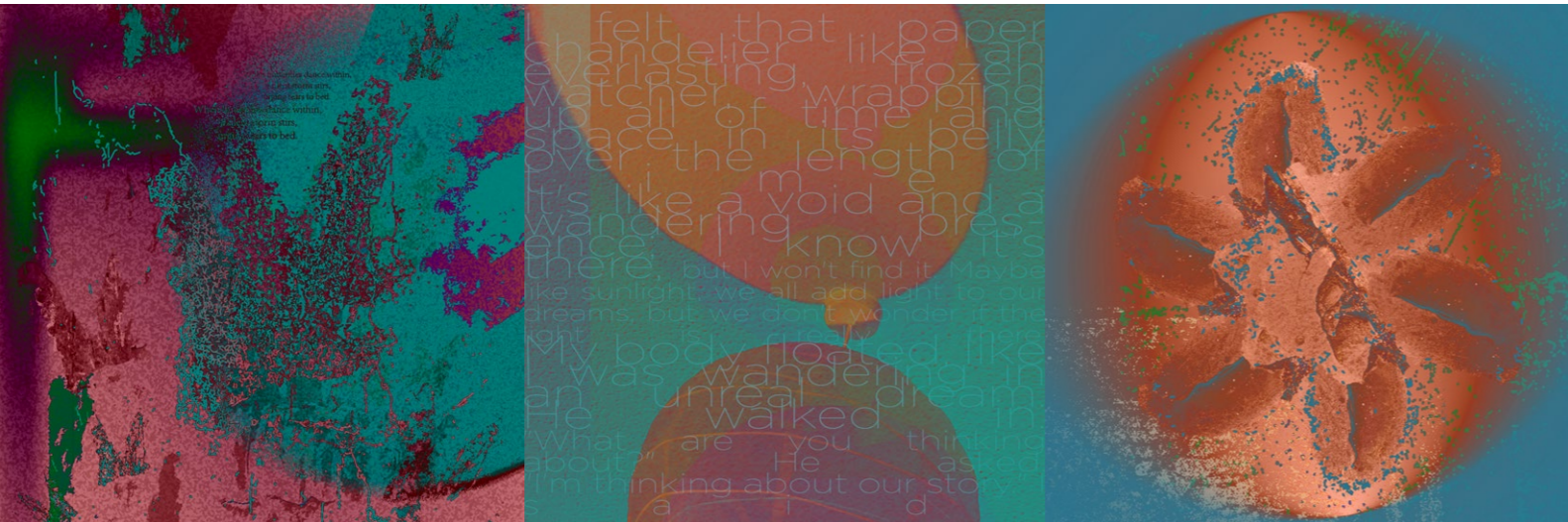


Figure97-100, Symbolizing, 2024, 1080*1080 pix, Experiments5.1, Mapping pattern, free-assemblage making, graphic manipulation with urban traces and asemic writing

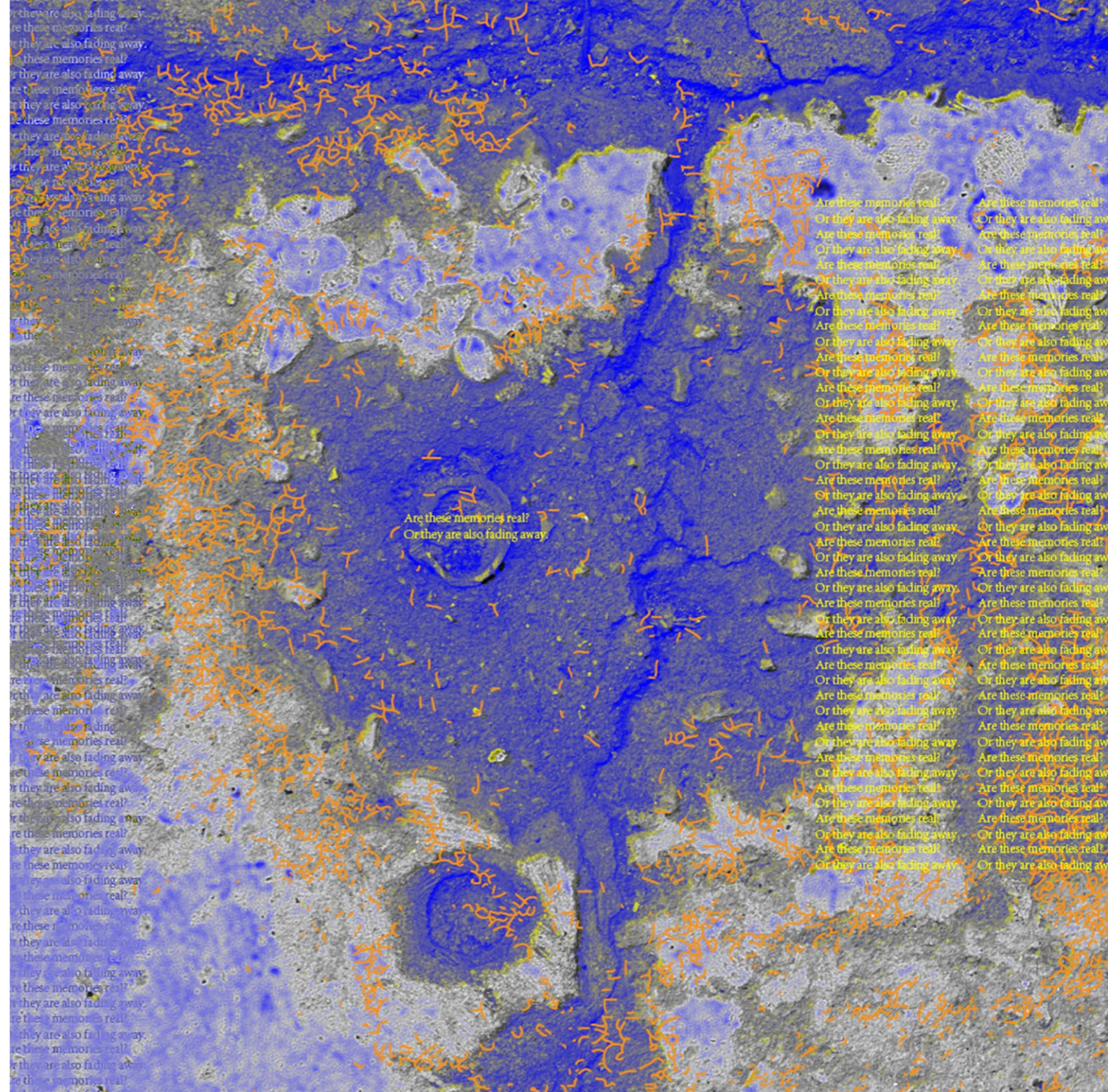


Figure101-104, Symbolizing, 2024, 1080*1080 pix, Experiments5.1, Mapping pattern, free-assemblage making, graphic manipulation with urban traces and asemic writing

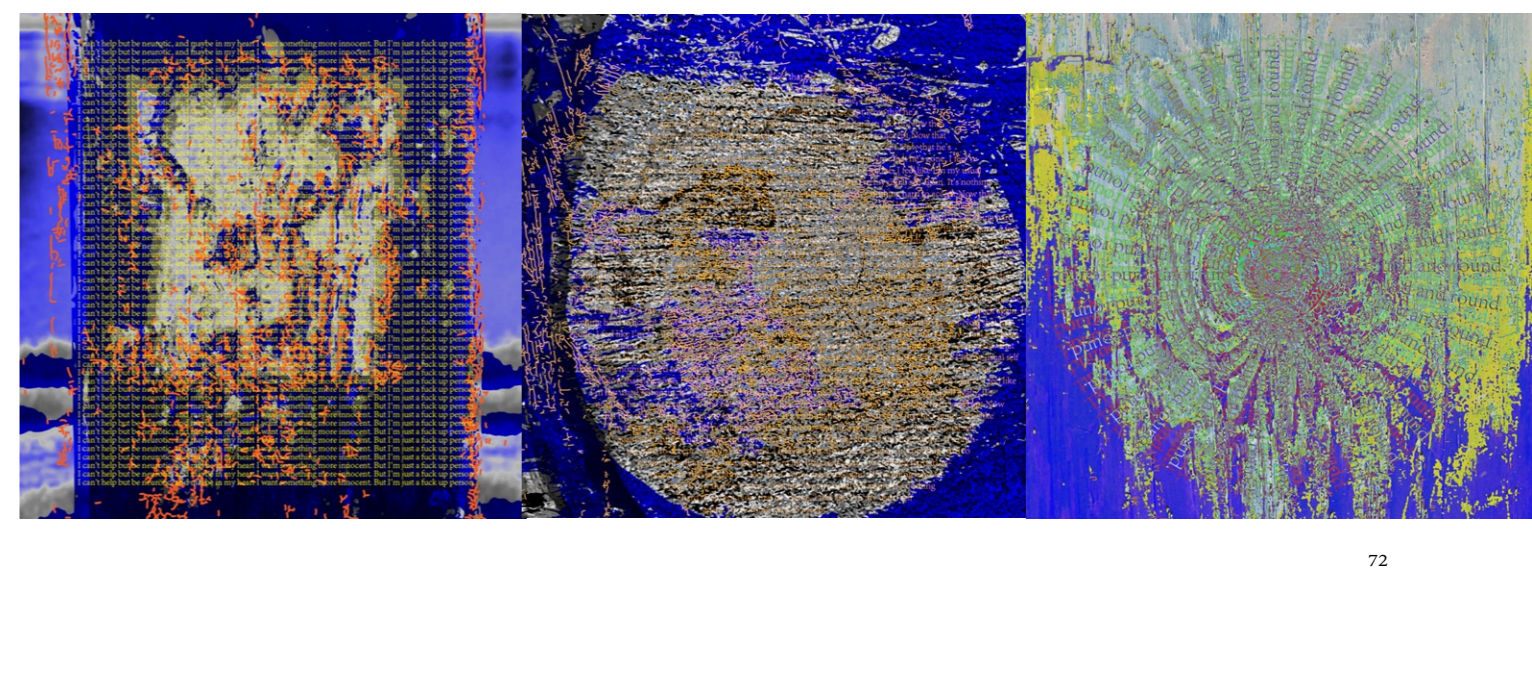
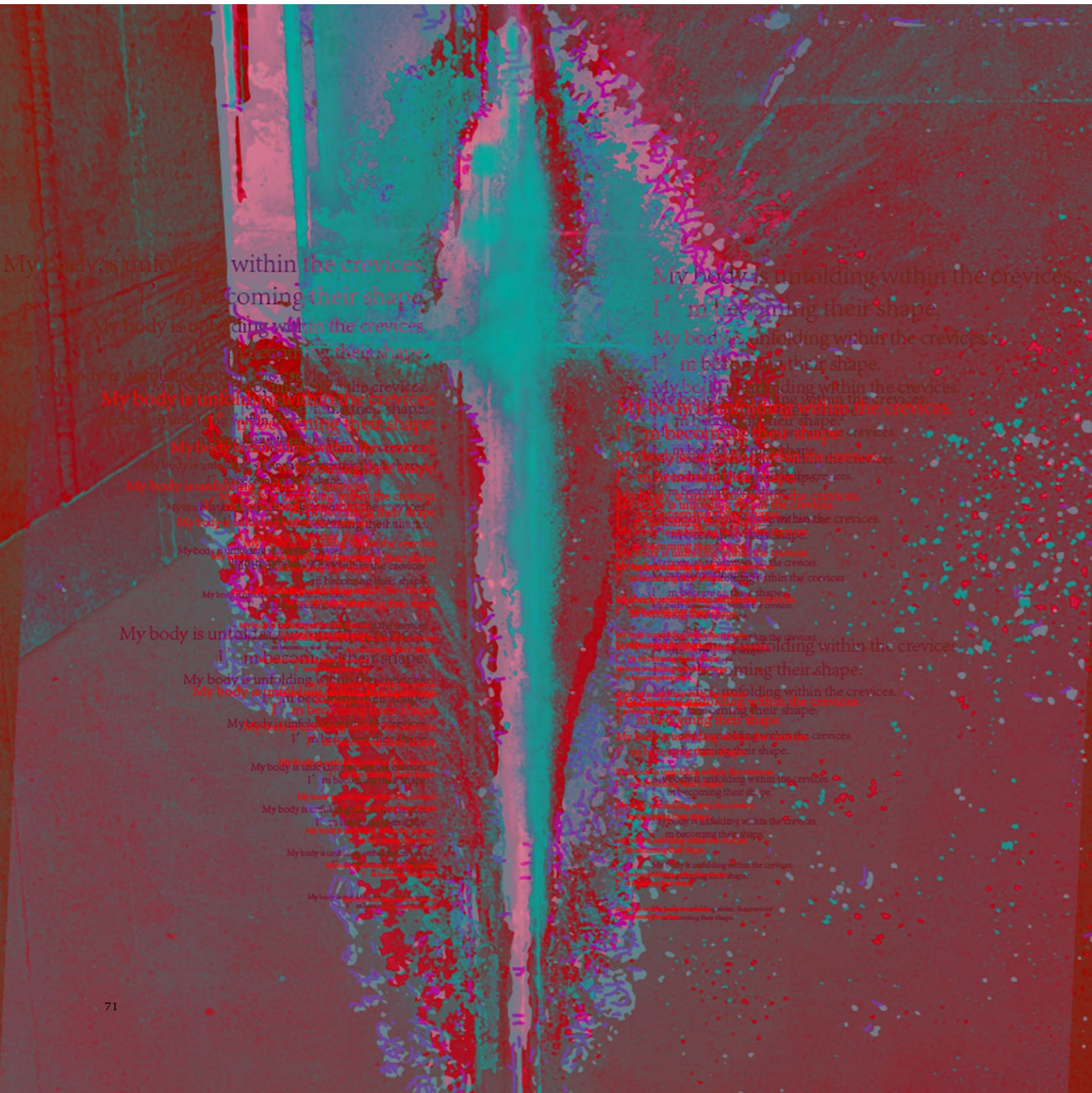


Figure105-106, The Room,2024, Experiment 5.1, spiritual digital space, free-assamblage making, Unreal engine, graphical surreal mapping pattern

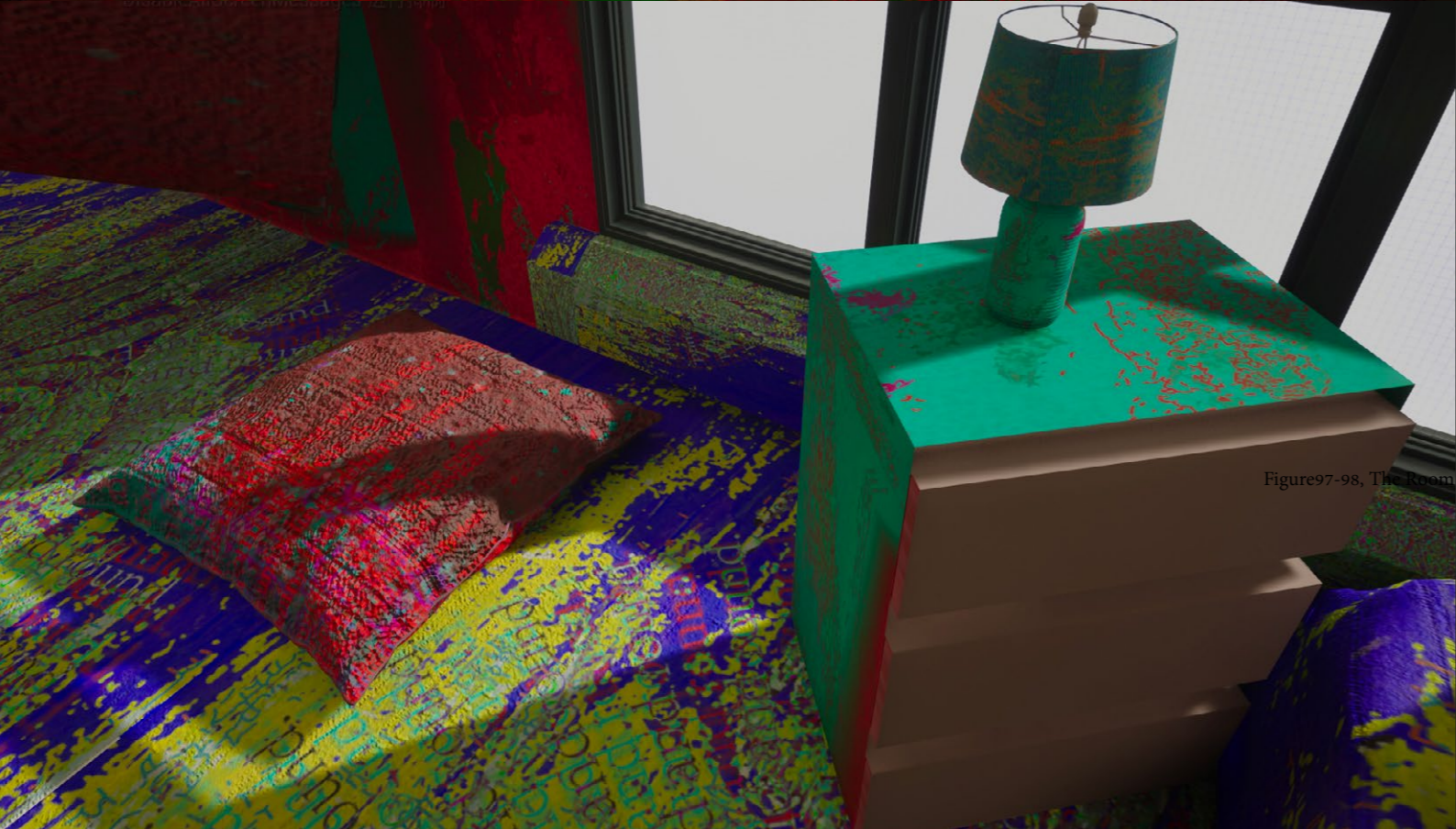


Figure97-98, The Room



Figure107-108, The Room,2024, Experiment 5.1, spiritual digital space, free-assamblage making, Unreal engine, graphical surreal mapping pattern

The results seemed to be okay, but I always felt like I needed to be in this narrative space as well. After all the attempts, I still didn't seem to have left any traces of the environment. Those fleeting connections and traces also only proved that something had existed here, but that was all. It occurred to me that perhaps I should enter the city to create.

I thought of tents and temporary dwellings, and I thought of the dream world that can only be seen in tents. On this basis, in the middle of the city, I am like a ripple of water that leaves only a faint ripple. I am only a miserable and small object to the world, to society, and to my research. To complete this vision, I conducted another experiment.

Considering the nature of symbols in constructing narratives, I considered using transparent fabric to manifest the shape of the tent. At the time, the tent changed from invisible to visible.



Figure 109-110, Experiment 5.2, fabrics on the tent, heat pressing transparent textile, collage



Figure 111, Experiment 5.2, final cut pro green screen experiment, with green fabric and textile covering the tent



Figure 112, Experiment 5.2, fabrics on the tent, heat pressing transparent textile, collage



Figure 113-114, Experiment 5.2, fabrics on the tent, heat pressing transparent textile, collage, process



Figure 115, Sketch of The Tent, Experiment 5.2



Considering the nature of symbols in constructing narratives, I consider using transparent fabric to visualise the shape of the tent. At that moment, the tent changes from invisible to visible, and I become a symbolically constructed individual in the city with no place to return to.

Also considering the nature of symbols in constructing narratives, I use transparent fabric to visualise the shape of the tent. At this point, the tent changes from the invisible to the visible, and I become a symbolically constructed individual in the city with no place to return to. My body and my private space become one. In the midst of this, I cannot see the city; all I see is the world constructed by the symbols of the Other (Experiment 5.1).

I am not in the city and I seem to exist in the city. The city exists with me and yet is far from me. I become part of the city and the city covers me.



Figure 115-118, Video 5'00", Multi-media, unreal, digital space, tent with textiles, spiritual sounds





Figure119, Video 5'00", Multi-media, unreal, digital space, tent with textiles, spritual sounds

Acknowledgement

Thank you to my tutors Dr.Emily Candela, Dr.Rosa Woolf

Ainley, Dr.Esther Teichmann and Professor Gemma Blackshaw for all of their guidance, help and recognition.

Thank you to librarian Angie Applegate for providing me with so much inspiration and direction for my research.

Thank you to my mum, Zhou Jing, for funding my research.

Thanks to my friends Tong Nui, Xiaoyu Ding, Xinyue Jiang, Neo Gao, Zhuoyan Shi for their help.

Thanks to my friends Zhan Yang and Jia Gu for mental support.

Also, thanks to Tender, Hinge, Feeld for letting me meet many dates to complete my research.

Appendix

Transcribed text of the autobiographical reasoning recording, first 30 minutes

I'm slowly remembering the past from now on. Recent events, I just went to a birthday party tonight, and it was so nice to see my friends laughing and being so cute. Then there was the other day when I went out with a guy, and we sat on a spinning thing, I don't know what it's called. It was fun, like being a kid again. It was very freeing. Then I remembered that I had a date with a guy recently, and he didn't keep the time, didn't keep the appointment, and made me very angry. And then I remembered that I've recently come to the conclusion that I'm always trying to control things, trying to control people, trying to capture. And then I had a recent incident with a woman who was very sensitive, and it was very unpleasant, but I don't really care about it anymore. I was very angry. I can't accept that people don't work things out with me. That's why I want a closure for everything, so that I can have an answer. I don't like it when things don't have an answer. I don't like it when things are left unanswered. It makes you feel uneasy, like something else is going to happen. But if you think about it, even if there are answers, things can still go wrong. I shouldn't have used this road. It doesn't matter if I can't understand Chinese. Before rewinding, I was very happy when I talked about the flowers. It was a surprise, wasn't it? Then I remembered this guy and thought it was boring every time. He just says the same thing. When I think about the feelings I've had so far, I can still recall them. Wow, I really can't remember. When I think of his words, I really don't remember them. I remember when he was back in Cambridge for a while, because he was chatting, because he was chatting on Instagram. It was fun. I

think he was very precious, and I remember saying to people that he was very precious. But I don't really remember why. I can't imagine that feeling at all right now. I can't relate to it either. I can't remember why I said that. I remember he told me I miss you. I can still remember how happy I was. I think he was very honest. Wow, and then before that, he was sick and I went to his house. I don't remember any of it. I can remember bits and pieces, but I can't remember what happened, what I did, or how I felt. Before that, before that, all I can remember is when we had a fight, my first mental breakdown, and how I felt at that time, I do remember that. I couldn't accept that people didn't solve problems with me. I remember the feeling of being depressed. Then I remember that day after the chat, when I said goodbye, I thought I had already prepared that I would never see him again in my life. I remember that day, I remember how I felt walking home alone. And before that, I remember that hormonal feeling, which I've had twice. I remember when I didn't get picked by the RA's, literally crying my eyes out, and I still feel so sad. I can connect with the sadness I felt at the time, the happy times I've had with these people, I can't connect with that at all. Why is that? I can connect to the depression at the time. When I had my first mental breakdown, I remember sitting inside the studio in White City for a long time, very numb, very tired. I remember going to Chinatown to hang out with Niu Tung, I was so tired, and I didn't have so much fun doing anything. I remember I could stir up that depressing feeling. When I said mental breakdown, the second mental breakdown was when I was rejected by RA, I remember I felt very lucky, because I met a lot of

people, I talked to him, and H, and R, and H, and Tom, and I talked to all three of them, and they gave me encouragement, and ISO, and I talked to ISO, and I still feel like I'm not the same person. I still think I can remember the good feeling when I think of ISO. I think it's probably partly, really, because I've got this thing down, that I can remember it. I also remember all the moments that I wrote about, I remember them, I can think of them, I can connect to the emotions, I remember them, and I feel like maybe I really need to write more about them, and I'm letting us skip over the words before the interviews now, and I'm still right about who else? It seems that all these happy things were just a moment, were all these connections just a moment? Was it a fantasy? Is it a fantasy? Is it something so unstable? I really don't know now. Am I recording? Wow, I've only been thinking about this for 15 minutes, and I feel like a lot of time has passed, well, now that the dating part is over, let's see, from the beginning of the school year to now, from the beginning of the school year to January, I can think of taking the guys to the beach, going to class, going to voice lessons, going to a lot of fun voice lessons, hanging out with my friends, going to build a bridge with my friends, having a really good time, and I can think of having a really good time, wasn't it a good time for me to be on a date with them? Wasn't it fun to go out with them? Did I really have fun? Did I really have fun? Maybe that's not, that emotion is not happiness, it's the desire to connect, it's the satisfaction of being connected, and that's why it's written down, that's why it's written down by me, and I don't think that I'm happy, it's the satisfaction of being connected to other people, that's really what it is, it's not happy, and when I think about it, the first time that I met the Oxford students, they were really very, very cute, and the other students, I remember meeting them for the first time, at that picnic in Kensington, and I remember going to class at White Tooth Bay, and remember having a really fun class, and I remember going to class at White Tooth Bay. I remember the first time I met them, we had a picnic in

Kensington, I remember the first time I met Heath, in front of the door, I remember going to White Teeth Bay for class, I remember the class was really fun, and then I went to do research, and then the first semester went by, and I called my friends for dinner, and then I went to watch fireworks, and then I went to take pictures at the bus stop, and then I went to shopping, and then I went to the fair, and then I went to the park, and then I went to the fireworks, and the New Year's Eve fireworks, and it's really nice to remember that. I can't connect with my friends, I can't connect with my date, I can't connect with my emotions, I'm not happy at all, I'm not happy at all, I'm not happy at all, I'm not happy at all, I'm not happy at all, I'm not happy at all, I'm not happy at all, I'm not happy at all, I'm not happy at all, I'm not happy at all, I'm not happy at all, I'm not happy at all, I'm not happy at all, I'm not happy at all, I'm not happy at all, I think about before I came here, I think about when I got the Olympiad, I was very excited, I felt that all my hard work was worth it, and I've slowly come to this point, I think about it now, I think about how anxious I was when I was waiting for the Olympiad, I went to take a bath with my mum, it was very fun, I kind of missed my mum, I think about doing my nails every day in my English class, and I think about flower arranging, and I think about it, and I think about it, and I think about it, and I think about it, and I think about it, and it's just like that, day by day, and I just really threw away my life. I really abandoned a lot of things, I think of playing games at home, before preparing to fly to record video, especially hard, I think of a little

homesick, I think of when I first moved in, I scrubbed the floor every day, and my mother's head was smashed, I think of flying every day is especially tired, and then sit in the office to do these things, I can't remember what the project to do, I think of the relationship with Gu Jia ended, I remember and the previous Gu Jia ended the relationship, remember the anxiety at that time, and then forward, every day over, there are mosquitoes, and then forward, and then forward, think of which, think of Gu Jia, and then forward, and her that time every day to do things in the study room, think of doing things at that time, feel very tired, can not think of, think of going to dinner with her, that time feel very interesting, and then forward, and then forward, and then by plane, think of doing experiments with Yichan in the classroom, and then by plane, think of doing experiments with Yichan in the classroom, and then by plane, think of doing experiments with Yichan in the classroom, and then by plane, think of doing experiments with Yichan in the classroom, and then by plane. I think of doing experiments with Ichikan in the classroom, chatting with the teacher when I was sorting out paints, thinking of chatting with that man, giving back, thinking of Japanese grasshoppers, further back, I also did a vegetarianism project at that time, because I was watching the class, and I thought life was quite good at that time, and before that, I was going to the United States, and then falling in love, and I was happy at that time, and I remember that he came in to listen to a song and danced with me at that time, I was really happy, and I still feel nostalgic. I remember one time, he came in and danced with me to a song....

Bibliography

André Gide (2007). *Strait is the Gate*. Mondial.

Autor: Henriette Huldish, Brinkema, E., Burton, J., Watlington, E. and Mit List Visual Arts Center (2017). *An inventory of shimmers : objects of intimacy in contemporary art*. Editorial: Cambridge, Massachusetts: Mit List Visual Arts Center ; Munich.

Bachelard, G. (2014). *The Poetics of Space*. Translated by M. Jolas. New York: Penguin Books.

Baker, L.R. (2014). *Making sense of ourselves: self-narratives and personal identity*. *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences*, 15(1), pp.7–15. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11097-014-9358-y>.

Bochner, A. and Ellis, C. (2016). *Evocative Autoethnography*. Routledge.

Brannigan, E. (2020). ARTIST'S SELF- ARCHIVING TOOLKIT. *Critical Dialogues 13: Archives, Practice and the Independent Choreographer eds. Claire Hicks and Elizabeth Chua*, [online] 13(N/A). Available at: https://www.academia.edu/45022018/ARTISTS_SELF_ARCHIVING_TOOLKIT?auto=download [Accessed 12 Jun. 2024].

Buskirk, M. (2005). *The contingent object of contemporary art*. Cambridge, Mass. ; London: Mit.

Creps, K.B. (2023). *Let's Count Off One More Time! An Autoethnodrama*. [online] *The AutoEthnographer*. Available at: <https://theautoethnographer.com/artistic-autoethnography-artifacts/>.

Daste, O. (2011). *The Suitcase*. In: S. Turkle, ed., *Evocative Objects: Things We Think with*. MIT Press, p.246.

Eldridge, L. (2012). *A Collaged Reflection on My Art Teaching: A Visual Autoethnography*. *The Journal of Social Theory in Art Education*, [online] 32(32), pp.70–79. Available at: <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/51288648.pdf>.

Harrod, T. (2018). *Craft*. London: Whitechapel Art Gallery. Hudek, A. (2014). *The Object*. MIT Press.

Inception. (2010). Warner Bros. Pictures.

Jiang T, Chen Z, Sedikides C. *Self-concept clarity lays the foundation for self-continuity: The restorative function of autobiographical memory*. *J Pers Soc Psychol*. 2020 Oct;119(4):945-959. doi: 10.1037/pspp000259. Epub 2019 Jul 25. PMID: 31343221.

Kaikkonen, Satu and Quimby Melton. 8 December 2012. "Satu Kaikkonen." *SCRIPTjr.nl*. <https://scriptjr.nl/texts/asemic/satu-kaikkonen/> (accessed 16 June 2024 [PST / -7:00]).

Landau MJ, Oyserman D, Keefer LA, Smith GC. 2014. *The college journey and academic engagement: how metaphor use enhances identity-based motivation*. *J. Pers. Soc. Psychol*. 106:5679–98

Lange-Berndt, P. (2015). *Materiality*. London: Whitechapel Gallery ; Cambridge (Mass.) ; London, pp.12–23.

Marx, K. (2014). *Grundrisse*. In: H. A, ed., *The Object*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Whitechapel Gallery, p.88.

Mendez, MF (Fall 2005). "Hypergraphia for poetry in an epileptic patient". *The Journal of Neuropsychiatry and Clinical Neurosciences*. 17 (4): 560–1. doi:10.1176/jnp.17.4.560. PMID 16388002.

Ngai, S. (2022). *The Cute*. MIT Press.

Paprika. (2006). *Sony Pictures Entertainment Japan*.

Paris, Bernard J. Karen Horney: A Psychoanalyst's Search for Self-Understanding. Yale University Press, 1994. JSTOR, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1dszvwd>. Accessed 17 June 2024.

Pasupathi M., Mansour E., Brubaker J. R. (2007). *Developing a life story: Constructing relations between self and experience in autobiographical narratives*. *Human Development*, 50(2-3), 85–110. <https://doi.org/10.1159/000100939>

Piper, A. (2014). *Talking to Myself: the Ongoing Autobiography of an Art Object*. in: *the Object*. cambridge, Massachesetts.: whitechapel Gallery, p.32.

Ríos, L.R.B. (2020). UNA MIRADA CLÍNICA DE LOS 4 DISCURSOS (I): EL DISCURSO DEL AMO YLA 'HISTERIZACIÓN' DEL DISCURSO. [online] Lic. Rodrigo Ríos. Available at: <https://www.licrodrigorios.com.ar/post/los4discursospartei> [Accessed 16 Jun. 2024].

Roelstraete, D. (2014). *Art as Object Attachments: Thoughts on Thingness/ /2008*. In: *The Object*. Cambridge, Massachesetts: London: Whitechapel Gallery, pp.65–67.

Sedikides, C., Hong, E.K. and Wildschut, T. (2022). *Self-Continuity*. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 74(1). doi:<https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-psych-032420-032236>.

Stephan E, Sedikides C, Wildschut T. 2012. *Mental travel into the past: differentiating recollections of nostalgic, ordinary, and positive events*. *Eur. J. Soc. Psychol*. 42(3):290–98

Sterman, C. (2016). *Art as Personal Identity Narratives*. [online] NAESP. Available at: <https://www.naesp.org/resource/art-as-personal-identity-narratives/>.

Steyerl, H. (2014). *A Thing Like You and Me*. In: *The object*. Cambridge, Massachesetts: London: Whitechapel Gallery, pp.45–51. Strohecker, C. (2007). *KNOTS*. In: *Evocative objects : things we think with*. Cambridge: Mass.: Mit Press, pp.24–29.

taira_kakeru (2022). *Instagram*. [online] www.instagram.com. Available at: <https://www.instagram.com/p/CbcTepTrAh/> [Accessed 17 Jun. 2024].

Tate (2010). *Tracey Emin*. [online] Tate. Available at: <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artists/tracey-emin-2590>.

Tate (2024a). *Art Now: Goshka Macuga | Tate Britain*. [online] Tate. Available at: <https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-britain/art-now-goshka-macuga> [Accessed 27 Jun. 2024].

Tate (2024b). *Cathy Wilkes | Tate Liverpool*. [online] Tate. Available at: <https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-liverpool/cathy-wilkes>.

Waxman, SG; Geschwind, N (March 2005). "Hypergraphia in temporal lobe epilepsy. 1974". *Epilepsy & Behavior*. 6(2): 282–91. doi:10.1016/j.yebeh.2004.11.022. PMID 15710320. S2CID 32956175.