

Portfolio

Alessia Taló

May 2024

Bio

Alessia Taló (1999, IT) is a visual artist currently based in the Netherlands.

While her background lies in painting, her artistic practice now engages with multi-media explorations, with a keen focus on sound, DIY culture, textile practices, and installation art.

Artist Statement

My work is influenced by topics such as family and cultural heritage — their role in shaping one's identity — and feminist practices. I'm interested in how memories and emotions linked to these experiences can trigger the creative process and how they can resonate in embodied practices.

While my background lies in painting, I also experiment with different media including installation, video and performance. Nevertheless, I always carry a profound connection to the liquid state of painting, viewing it as a methodology for embracing fluidity, movement, and adaptation.

I am delving into sound, its influence on the body and its physical manifestation through vibrations. Through the use of DIY techniques, I attempt to create tools to practise empathy and care. I invite the audience to engage in an intimate experience with these materials, to touch, hold and feel.

What if we had danced?

(Graduation project in progress)

Mixed media installation

The work in progress is the topic of my thesis and my graduation project. It revolves around my experience of facing parental loss, and growing up in a family that faced episodes of depression and anxiety.

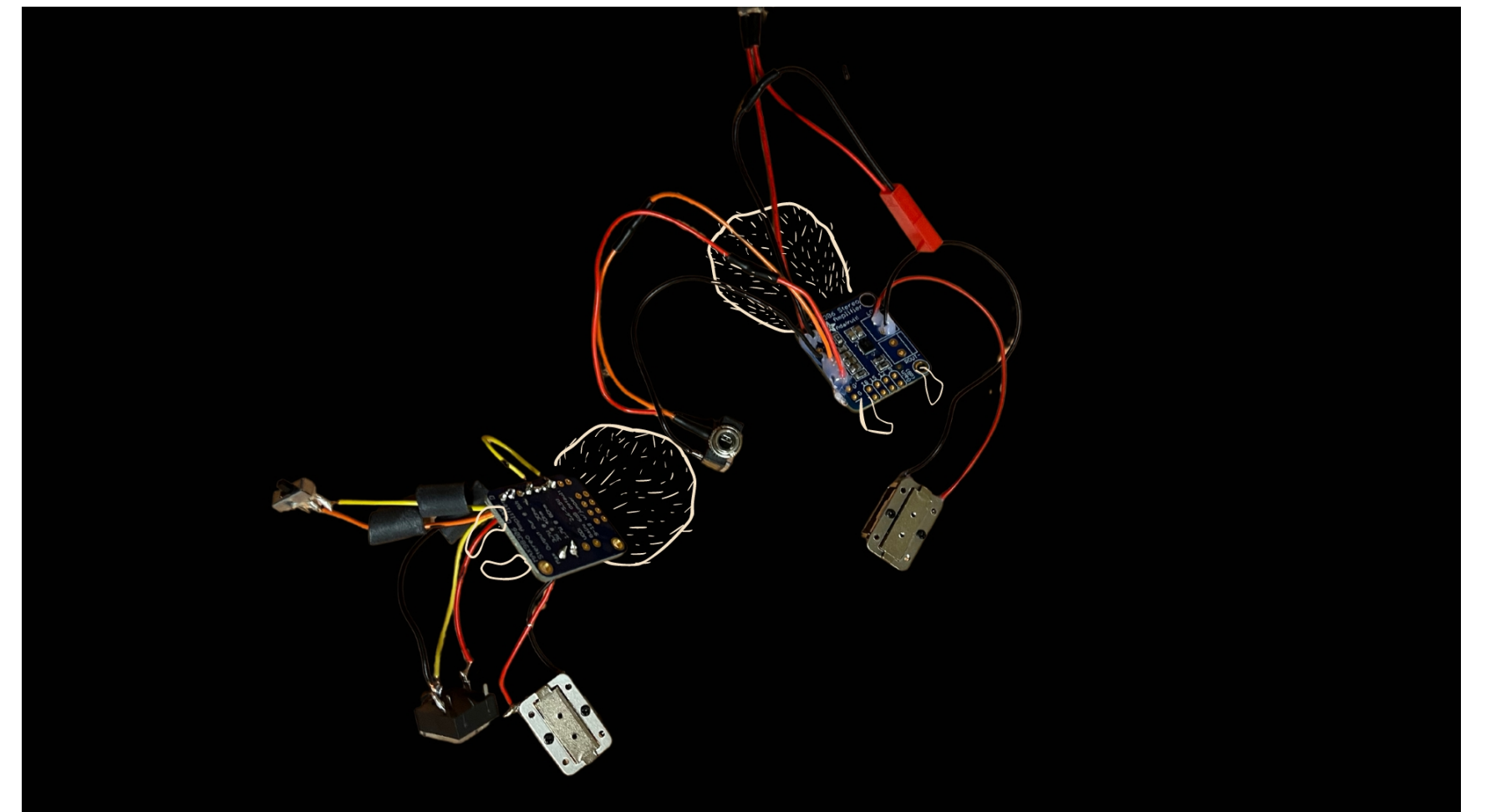
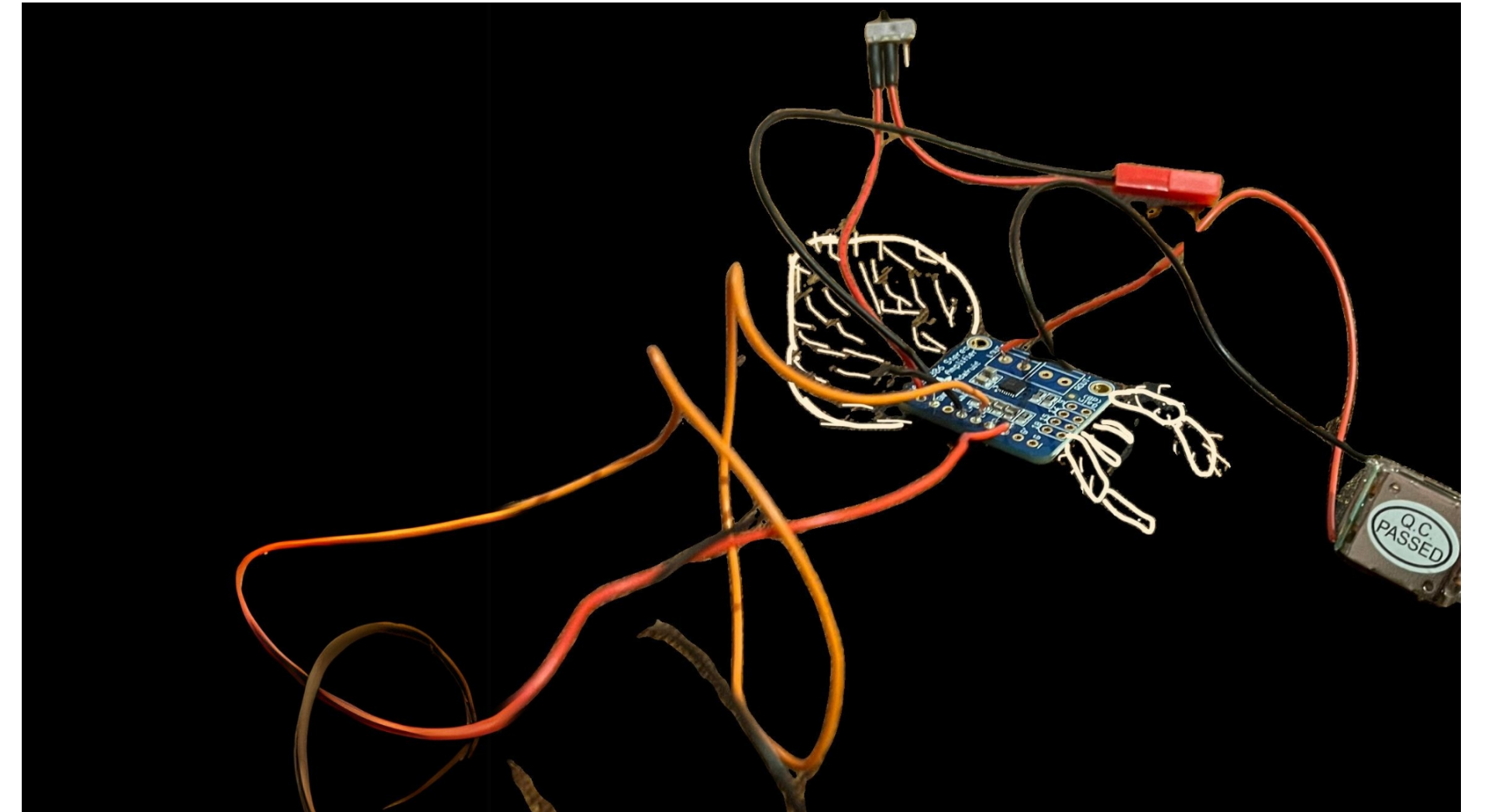
This experience is seen through the lens of tarantism, the Italian phenomenon widespread in Salento until the last century, the same area where my family is from. The ritual is no longer performed and my family moved anyway to the North for cultural and economic reasons. But I still wonder

What if we had danced?

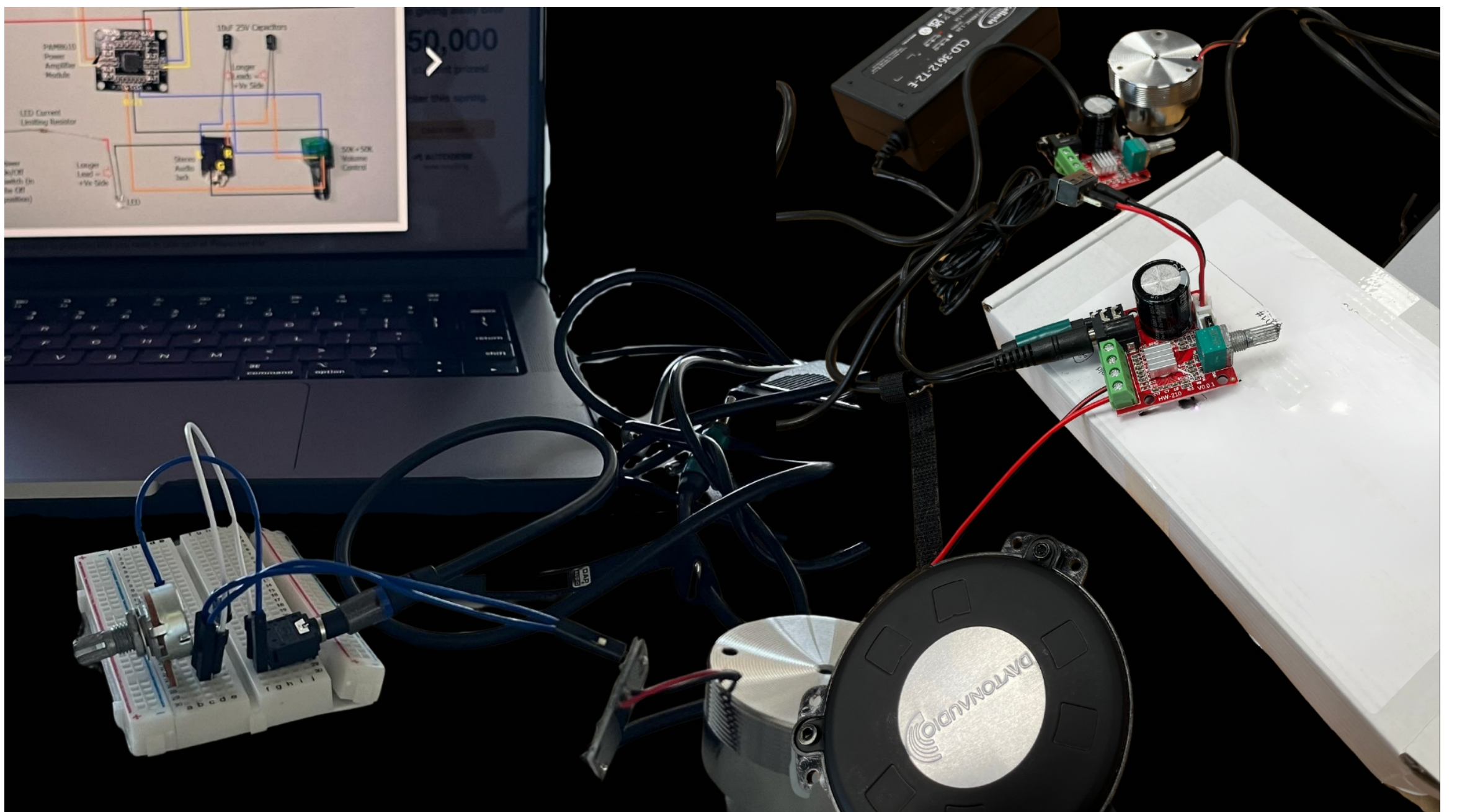
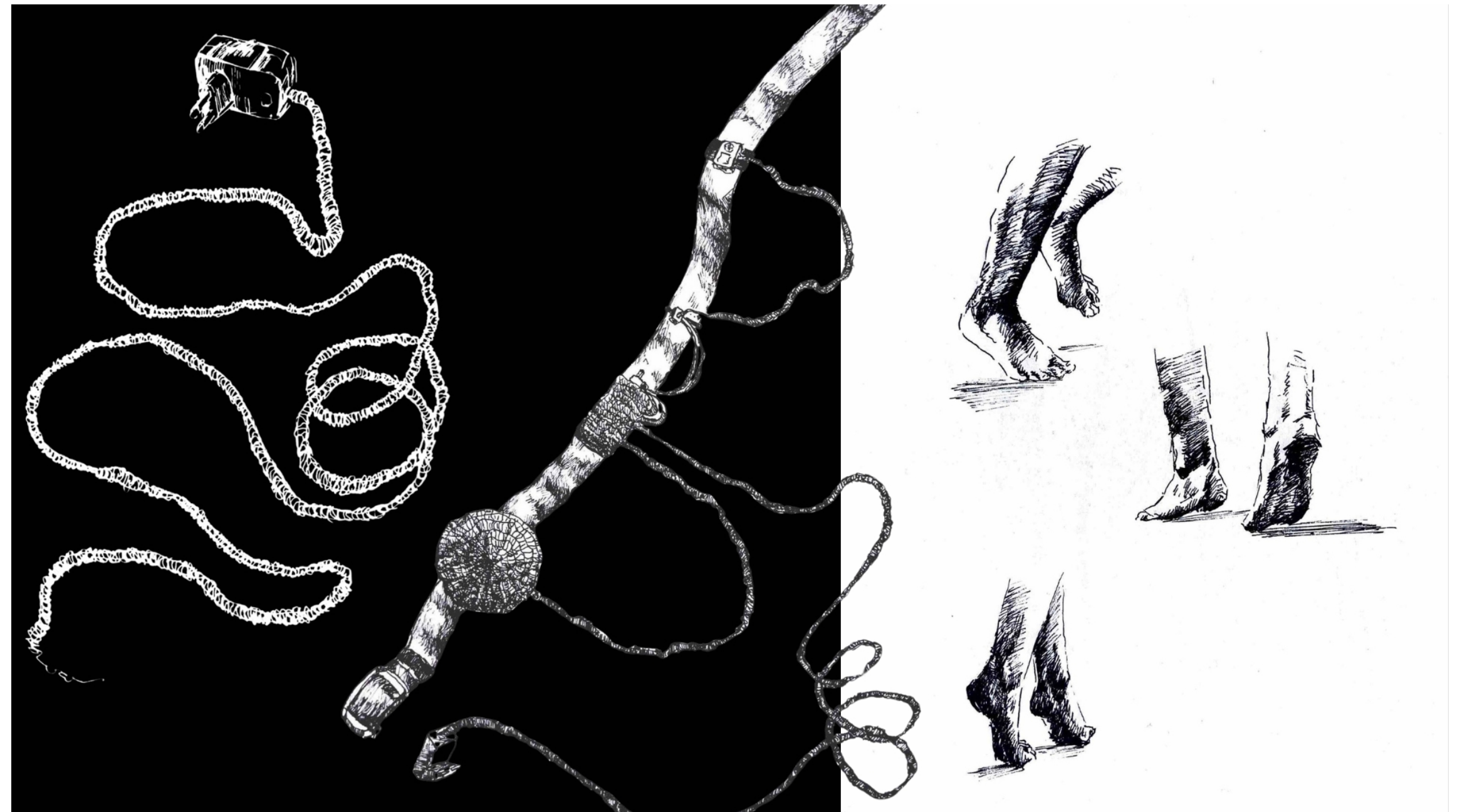
How would things be different?

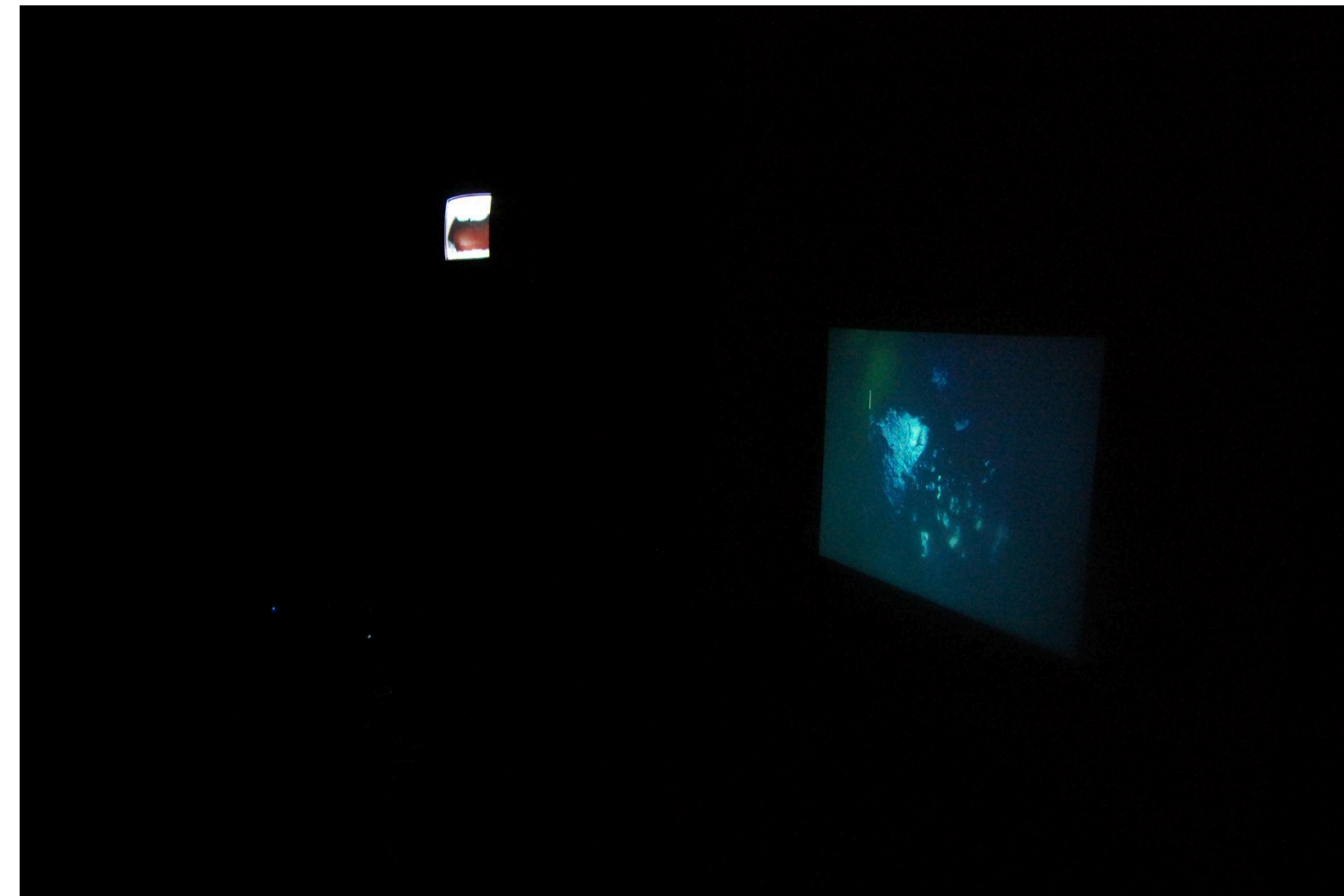
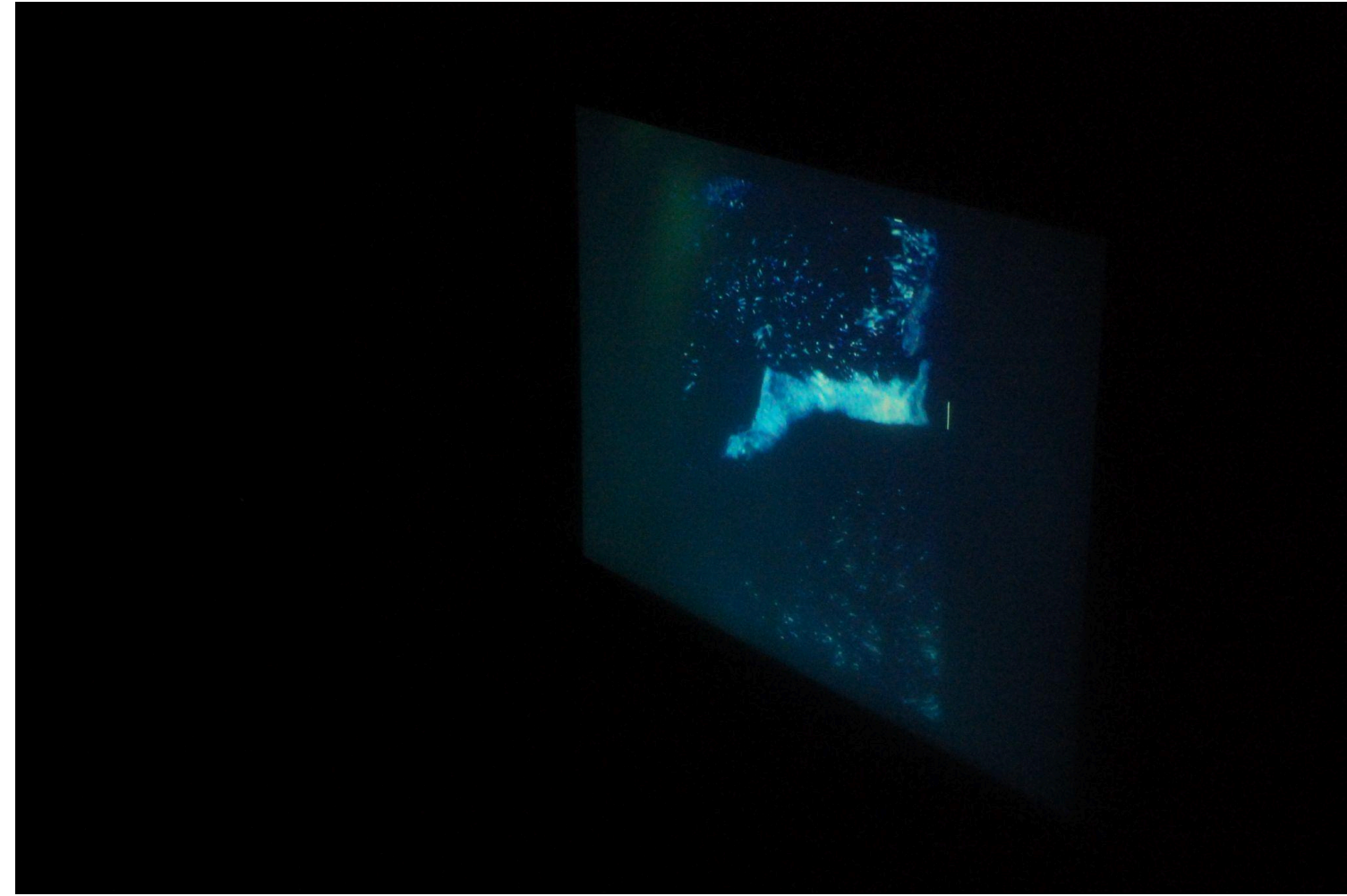
The project intertwines DIY practices, sound, vibration and embroidery, and intends to invite the visitor to reconsider the role of the spider within tarantism (as the one encouraging the healing process and not the one bringing the disease) and question the role of dance within the ritual and the consequences of not dancing. It reflects on my childhood experience and my feeling of helplessness within the caring process.

Sometimes it is just enough to listen to and stay with



Note: I have decided to present documentation of my process since the installation is not complete





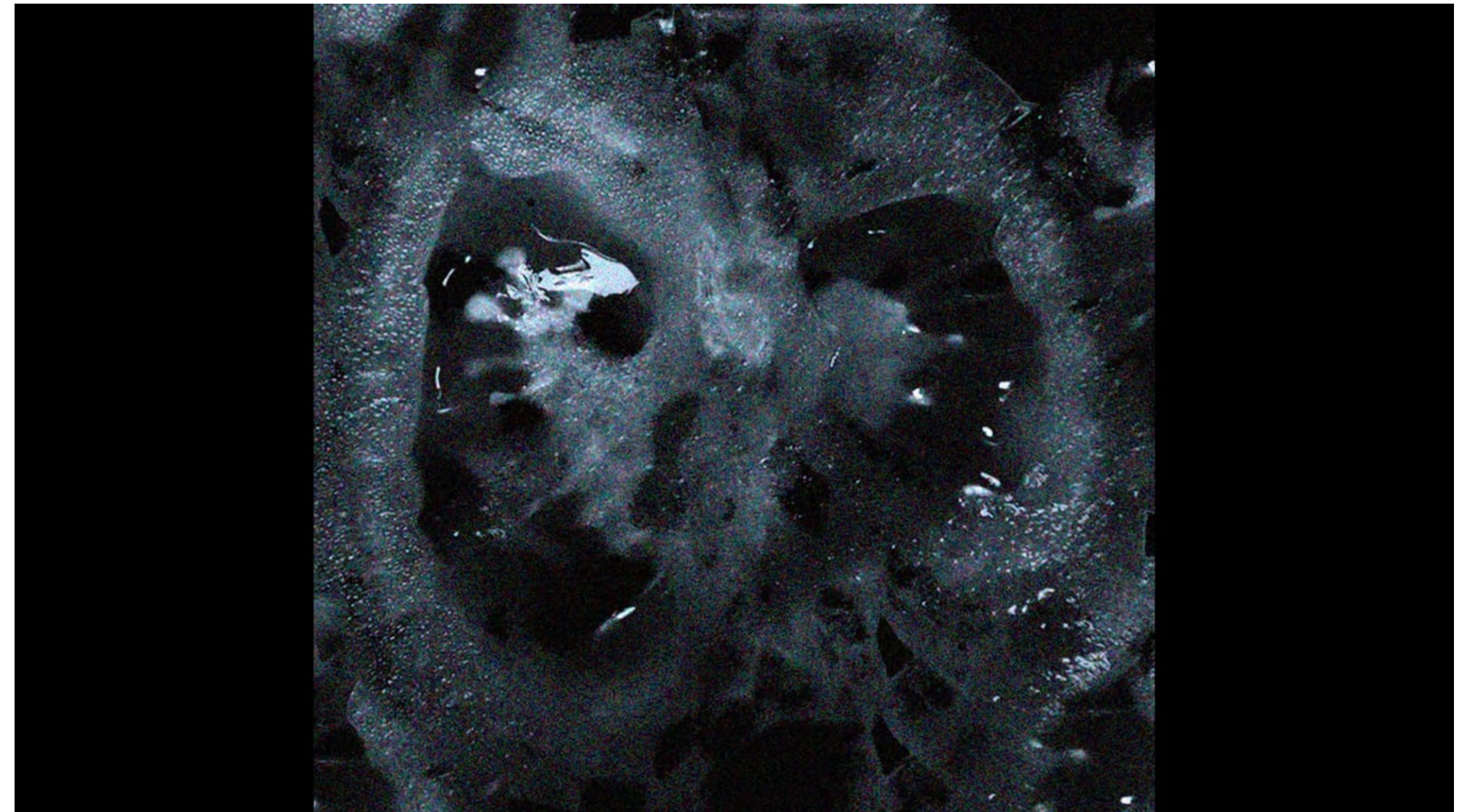
Dull ache (2022)

Video 1'29" played on a CRT TV, headphones, video projection 0'24", linseed oil on plexiglass

I asked myself how the (*my*) body reacts to discomfort. From my personal experience, I tend to somatize negative emotions, distress, and anxiety in my digestive system, leading to stomach ache, nausea, and diarrhea. To visualize this process, I created four ultrasounds by digitally processing pictures of the fruits and vegetables that I cut, cook, and consume daily, which provide me with nourishment.

In addition, I have a temporomandibular joint dysfunction that causes my jaw to pop. According to my doctor, this is due to teeth grinding during uneasy situations and tongue-sucking for pleasure. To illustrate the uncomfortable feeling inside my jaw, I recorded the sound of my jaw popping and my breath while normally opening my mouth, and edited the audio clips.

The display intends to depict the mechanism of projection involved in somatization and to provide a detached perspective from my personal and intimate experience. The purpose of this work is to visualize how discomfort can manifest in the (*my*) body.





Licking Lichens (2021)

Performance documentation

lichène: s. m. [dal lat. lichen -enis, gr. λειχήν -ῆνος, der. di λείχω «leccare, lambire»]

(tr.) **lichen:** noun [from lat. lichen -enis, gr. λειχήν -ῆνος, der. from λείχω «to lick, to lamb»]

I've found it hard to get to know you, Lichen.

It was hard to get to know you, I felt a sort of barrier keeping us apart.

Was it my fault? Was I creating misconceptions?

Eventually, I tried another way: I took the path of etymology. I've heard that the origin of the word that we use to describe you means "to lick" or "to lamb".

Do you like the name we gave you?

In the animal world, the act of *licking* has plenty of connotations. The tongue could be seen as a probe, filled with thousands of sensory cells, used to investigate and understand the surroundings. Licking wounds is seen as a (self-)soothing gesture, to remove debris, dirt or any kind of fragments and clean the injury. It could also be understood as a communication method, in order to make visible a state of anxiety, nervousness or distress, to comfort the other, to show love.

In the human sphere, specifically, licking is related to food intake, as a way to taste a new dish, a product or a flavour or to consume a specific food made especially for being licked (for example ice creams or lollipops). It can be related to the oral stage of infants, where the interaction and discovery of the world comes through their mouth. Another aspect to address is the sexual one: we lick to stimulate the partner, and we engage our tongues as an erotic tool to wander on each other's body and in oral sex.

For this project I decided to engage lichens sexually, exploring and experiencing their body with my tongue. Maybe the fact that it's hard for me to connect with lichens could make them intriguing to me, but, of course, also oral sex requires protection. For this purpose, I'm considering using a thin layer of bioplastic that I created in the lab with the Guar Gum powder, obtained from the guar beans, glycerine, an organic mixture, and water.

Lichen, is it okay for you if I touch you like that? Am I allowed to? It is a strange sensation for me.

Your surface is coarse, your texture triggers me.

Maybe, if you'll let me, I could use my saliva to enjoy you becoming colourful again, to please myself with your unfurling.

Lichens are a complex symbiotic merger, involving two or more partners. They could be seen as a non-individual multispecies community and exposing the possibility of transboundary between organisms. Lichens are described as poikilohydric, they can survive exceedingly low levels of water content, but in order to do so they have to turn photosynthetically inactive. Once rehydrated they bloom again. These organisms are also bio-indicator species, they can be sensitive to climate change and pollution, something that humankind seems to lack.

*If I just could get closer to you, you would be able to shape me
You could show me other possibilities of being.*



Documentation of the performance

Lavo le mie ferite (2021)

(I Wash My Wounds, 2021)
Video performance, 2'27"

Video: Matteo Toni



Here I wash photographic fragments of my residues, both pictorial and gestural.
The residues of my paintings, all the liquid colour in excess.
The residues left on my body, wounds and bruises.

My skin becomes a map of my emotional state.

Just a seeming cleaning action: colour dilutes and lumps settle in water

Participation in Chapter 4 of Tentativo di Dubbio (2022)

"Tentativo di Dubbio" is a visual and performative practice created in 2015 by the collective Didymos. The open-ended research examines the relationship between Western humans and their way of knowing, focusing on the concepts of subjectivity, individuality, interiority, and intentional relationship. The goal is to define creative practice as a technique for redemption from the crisis.



The residential research work is divided into the following phases:

- argumentative,
- poetic-intuitive,
- artisanal-analogical
- restorative aesthetics.

Please find the link to the website for a complete description of the work

[UNA PRATICA COLLETTIVA at Nelumbo, Bologna, Luglio 2022](#)



Marsyas (2021)

Tecnica mista (frammenti strappati da altri lavori e raccolti nella resina)

2 x 17 x17 cm

Marsyas collects the skins of my paintings.

It captures their fragility and my frustration felt during and after the pictorial moment: the moment of the action, gesture, and the next phase of conservation of the work.

It gathers memories of crucial moments, in which the difficulties of managing situations are exhibited, like self-harming gestures (tearing off the skin of the lips) and the phases of eating, digesting, and excreting food.

