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# BA (Hons) Communication Design

Application Guidelines for 2024 Entry

# Application guide

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This guide takes you through the application process and what to include in your application to BA (Hons) Communication Design.

## Contents

- ✳ [Application timeline and deadlines](#) page 3-4
- ✳ [What is a digital portfolio?](#) page 5-6
- ✳ [How we assess your application & our criteria](#) page 7-13
- ✳ [Interview advice guide page](#) 14
- ✳ [Starting your degree in 1st, 2nd or 3rd year](#) page 15
- ✳ [Application support](#) page 16
- ✳ [Portfolio examples from recent applicants](#) page 17

# Application timeline

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Your application to study for an undergraduate degree at the GSA is in two parts:

- ✳ UCAS application form
- ✳ Digital portfolio (15 slides as JPEGS or a PDF) & portfolio statement (500 words)

When GSA receives your completed application form from UCAS, we will email you with an acknowledgement of your application and direct you to upload your portfolio to the [GSA Upload Site](#). You can do so as soon as you receive your acknowledgement email. But no later than the deadline in the email you receive.

# Application timeline

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Here are the deadlines and key dates for your application:

<b>UCAS application deadline</b> <b>Wednesday 31 January 2024</b>	Apply via UCAS as at <a href="https://www.ucas.com/">https://www.ucas.com/</a>
<b>GSA portfolio deadline</b> <b>Wednesday 7 February 2024</b>	You will receive instructions on how to upload your portfolio after you submit your UCAS application.
<b>Interviews</b> <b>Between early February to mid April 2024</b>	GSA staff assess your application. If you are shortlisted, you will be invited to interview. All interviews will be by Zoom.
<b>Final decisions</b> <b>Saturday 18 May 2023</b>	The outcome of your application will be communicated through UCAS.

# What is a digital portfolio?

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A digital portfolio is a selection of images of work you have made, laid out clearly. It demonstrates your skills, ideas, interests and suitability for the programme you are applying to. The Portfolio must include 15 slides either as individual JPEGs or a PDF.

We have made some resources to help you do this and how to organise the images of your work.

 [Application support guides](#)

# What is a portfolio statement?

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The Portfolio Statement is an opportunity for you to write more specifically about why you are suited to studying this particular course. You can also tell us more about the work in your digital portfolio.

It is a maximum of **500 words** long and is uploaded along with your Digital Portfolio to the GSA Upload Site.

Have a look at our guide [Writing your digital portfolio statement](#).

# How we assess your application

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Admissions staff assess your UCAS Application Form, Digital Portfolio, and Portfolio Statement together.

Your application will be numerically scored against specific assessment criteria (see [next page](#)) set by the programme you are applying to.

The scoring is between 1-7 (7 being 'excellent evidence of' and 1 being 'unsatisfactory evidence of'). Applications may be unsuccessful at this stage with the result processed via UCAS or you may be invited to attend an interview by email.

# Our criteria

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It is important to know what this assessment criteria is. You should try to respond to this criteria when creating your digital portfolio, writing your personal statement, and preparing for interview.

It's also really important all applicants understand, it's not about who has access to the best art and design materials; it's about doing your best with what you have access to.

A detailed explanation of our criteria is in the [next page](#). Examples of portfolios can be found at the end of this guide.



## Stage 1 Criteria – Application and Portfolio

### **1. Ability to apply practical skills**

We want to see your practical skills and how you explore and use different media and materials. You can demonstrate this in various ways in your portfolio, including drawing, painting, model making, photography, computer-aided drawing and creative coding.

You could group several images on a slide; this could be by photographing several pieces of work together or by photographing or scanning several pieces individually and using Photoshop, Canva or PowerPoint to combine them into one slide.

### **2. Ability to show the development of your work and ideas**

We are interested in the ideas behind your work and how your work develops from the initial starting point to a finished piece of work. We would like to see your exploration and experimentation with different materials and media in your portfolio. This can be evidenced by images or photographs of sketchbook pages, notebooks, worksheets, development sheets and finished pieces.

Your digital portfolio should focus on your own work. Try to avoid using other people's work (for example, printouts, photocopies from books), unless these examples are relevant to the content. If including work by other people, you should cite their names.

**Stage 1 Criteria – Application and Portfolio**

**3. Ability to reflect on the work in your portfolio**

Use your portfolio statement to tell us about the work in your portfolio. We want to know what inspired you, how your ideas developed and the elements you consider to be the most successful or interesting.

**4. Ability to demonstrate an interest in the subject area**

We want to know why you want to apply to the programme. What do you find exciting about the subject area?

## Stage 2 Criteria – Interview

### **1. Ability to apply practical skills**

Practical skills are important for creative subjects. We will use the Stage 1 evaluation for this as part of the Stage 2 assessment.

### **2. Ability to discuss your ideas and development of your work**

We want to find out more about the ideas and development of the work in your portfolio. We are interested to know about initial inspiration and starting points, how your ideas evolved and how you explored and developed your work.

## Stage 2 Criteria – Interview

### **3. Ability to reflect on your work; challenges, successes and potential**

At interview, we will discuss the journey of your work. What did you learn and what areas did you find to be the most successful or challenging and what you might do next? For work-in-progress you could describe what you hope to achieve, what sources you will be looking at, and how you hope to explore these.

### **4. Ability to demonstrate your interest and knowledge of the subject area**

We want you to demonstrate your interest and knowledge in your chosen subject area, who or what inspires and motivates you, your personal and individual interests. This might include artists, designers, architects, mentors, exhibitions, online events, documentaries, books, journals, archives, podcasts etc.

Stage 2 Criteria – Interview

**5. Ability to demonstrate an understanding of the programme applied for at the Glasgow School of Art**

You should demonstrate that you have researched your chosen programme and be able to discuss why you have chosen to apply to this programme and communicate why you consider the programme is the appropriate one for you and why at the Glasgow School of Art.

# Interview advice guide

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If shortlisted, you will receive an email inviting you to attend an interview. Interviews are on zoom. They last 20 minutes and usually with 2 members of our teaching staff.

Our [Interview advice guide](#) gives you great advice for preparing for an interview.

Our staff will numerically score your interview using our assessment criteria ([see pages 11-13](#)). The outcome of your interview will be communicated to you via UCAS.

# Starting in 1st, 2nd or 3rd year?

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Our Undergraduate Honours Degrees at the Glasgow School of Art include four years of study.

Most applicants apply to start in Year 1. However, you can apply for 'Direct Entry' to 2nd or 3rd year. The year you apply to depends on what qualifications you already have or what you're currently studying.

You must be able to satisfy us that you have undertaken a period of study equivalent to the first, or first and second year, of the degree programme. This may include an art foundation, HNC or HND qualification.

For more information, see the [How To Apply](#) page on our website.

# Application support

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Remember if you're in education currently, speak to your teachers or lecturers for support with your application. For queries about the application process and our application site, contact [registry@gsa.ac.uk](mailto:registry@gsa.ac.uk)

We've also made these guides to support you in making your application:

- ✳ [Application support guides](#)
- ✳ [Widening Participation at GSA](#)
- ✳ [Open Days](#)

For queries about the application process and our application site, contact [registry@gsa.ac.uk](mailto:registry@gsa.ac.uk)



# Portfolio examples

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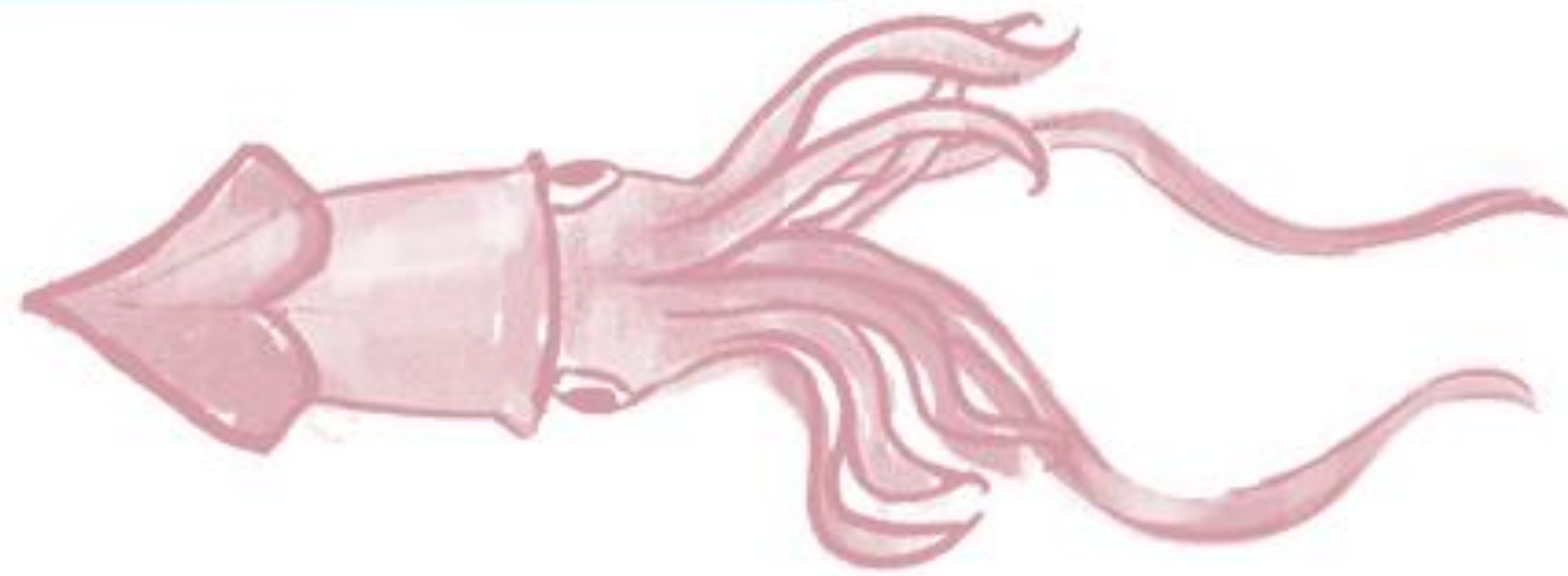
The following pages are example portfolios by our current students, taken from their application to study at GSA.

Don't use these as examples to follow in terms of style. But look at how they've presented their work and process.

# Saoirse Cox

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Year 1 Communication Design

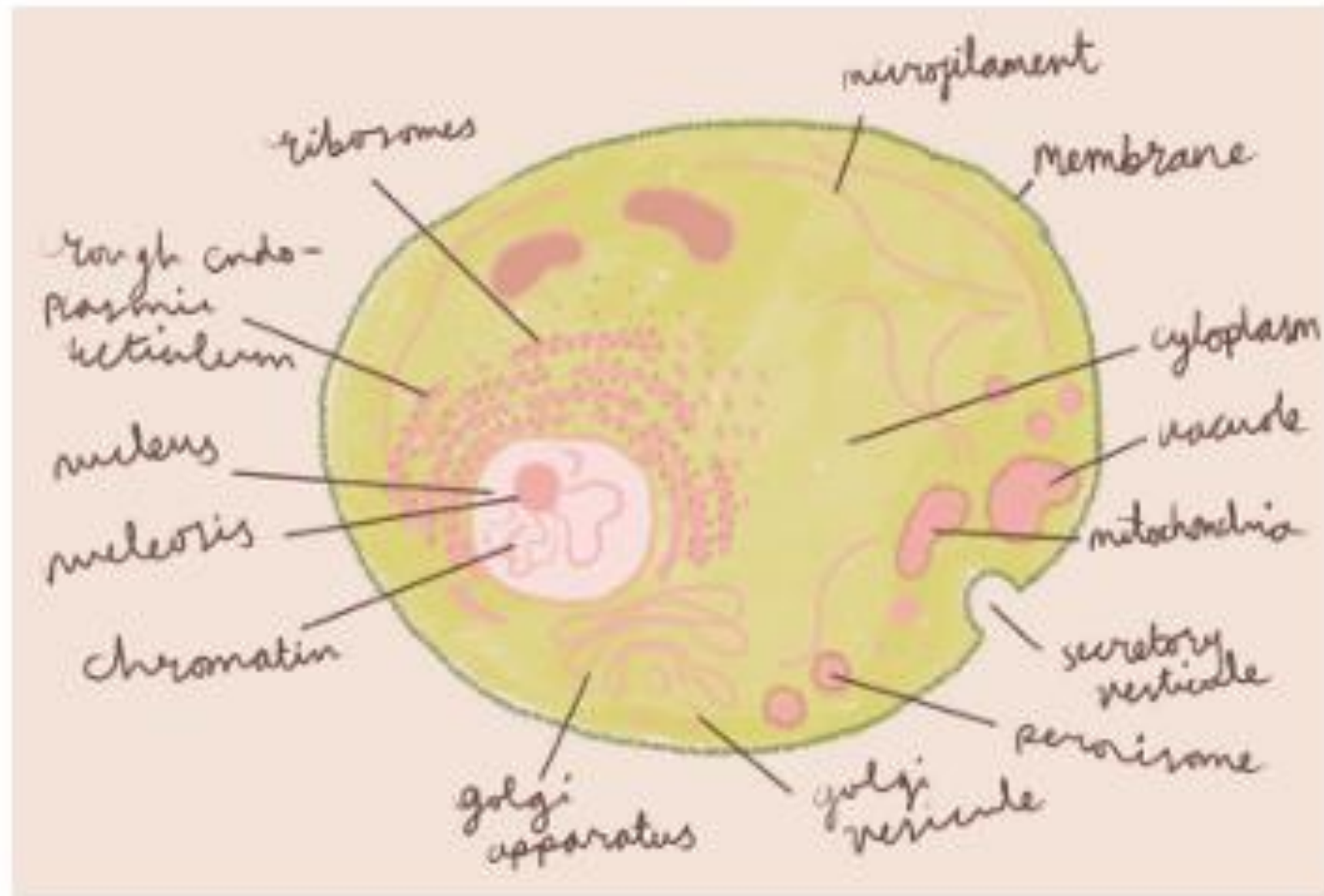




Margaret Gatty seaweed illustration









stained glass at  
Red House, Bexleyheath

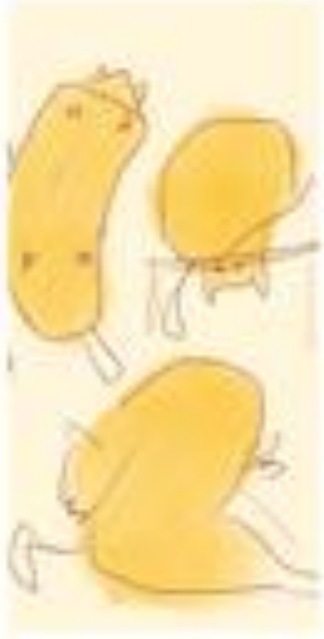


William Morris tile on display at  
William Morris Gallery,  
Walthamstow



Plan for embroidery

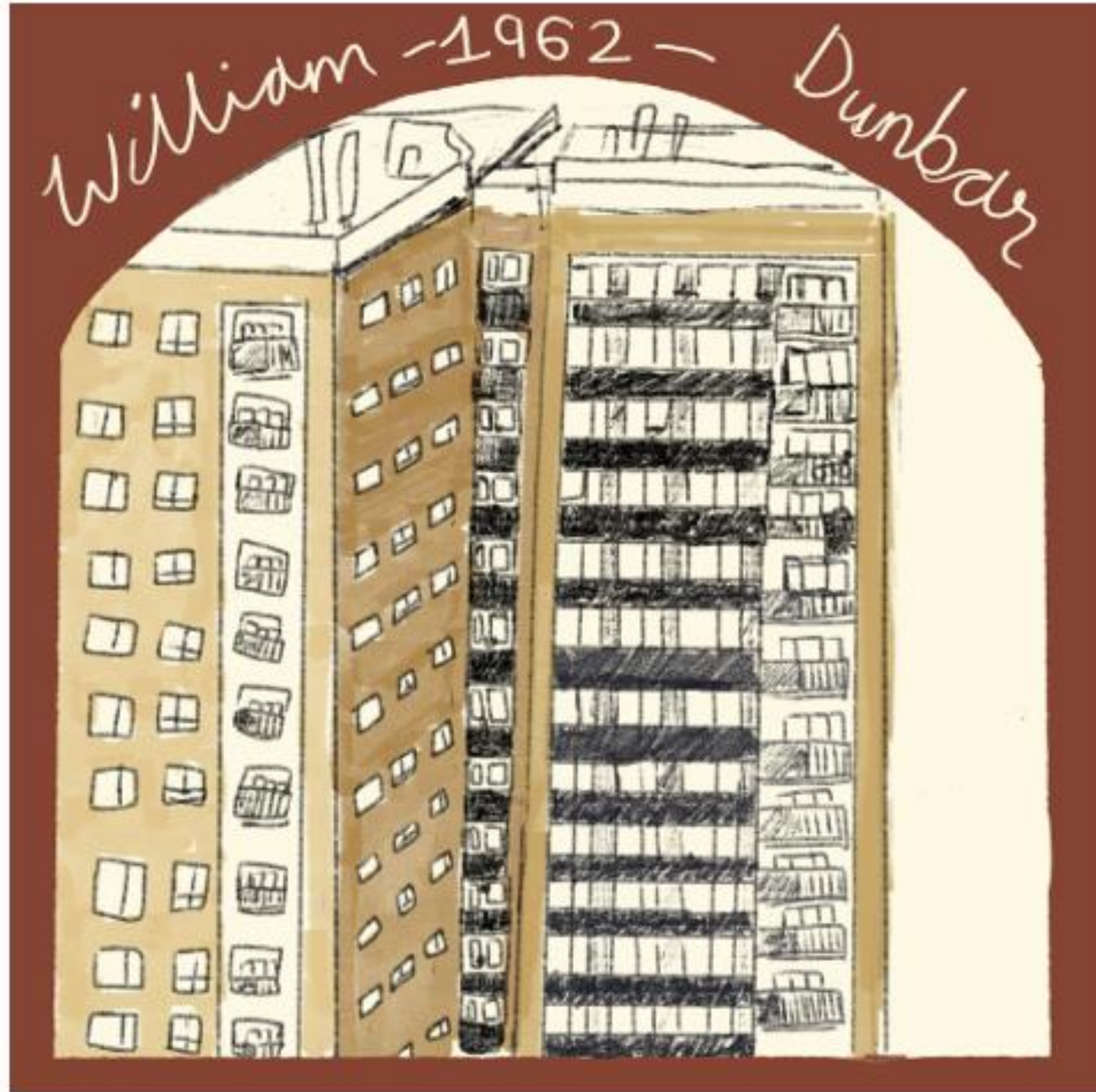




Bedspread embroidered by  
May Morris







Designs for wallpaper for doll's house





This illustration includes text from *Living Rooms*, Sam Johnson-Schlee (Peninsula Press, 2022).

"By looking closely at the places where we live we can wake up to the dream we don't always know we are sleeping through. If we read the clues of the domestic interior, I think we might find a glimpse of another world: one beyond the alienation of life under capitalism" (p.21)

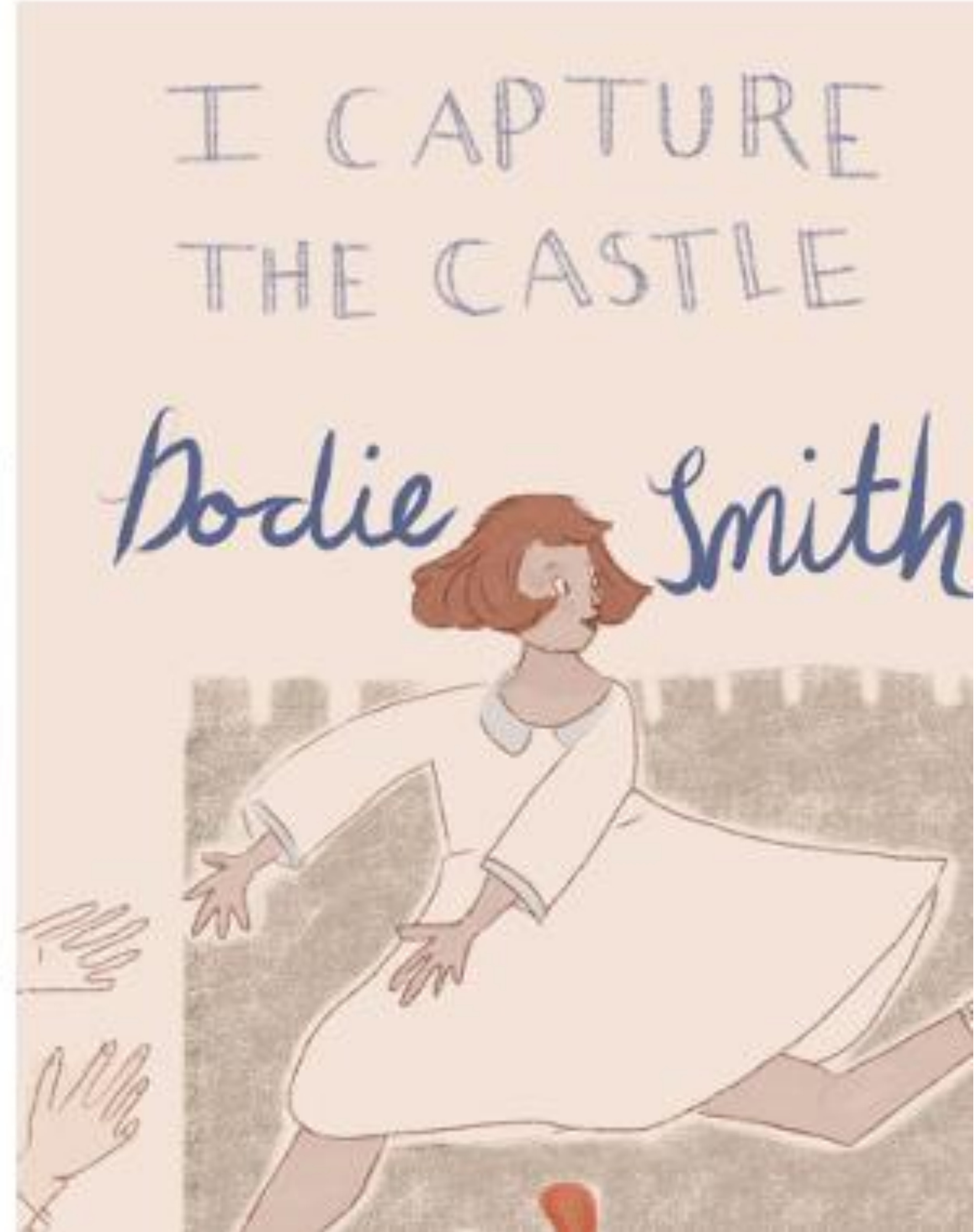


Doll's house on display at Horniman Museum





Cover design for  
*I Capture the Castle*  
by Dodie Smith





Photocollage to use as reference



Above: Photos taken at Western Cemetery, Dundee

Right: Dance of Death oil painting, on display at the Wellcome Collection







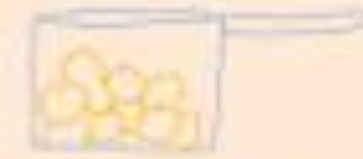
## Clementine Cake

### Ingredients

- Approx. 27kg clementines
- 6 large eggs
- 225g sugar
- 250g ground almonds
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp cinnamon (optional)
- 10 tsp ground cloves (optional)

1

Give your clementines a rinse, then place them, whole, in a large sievepan. Cover with water, and bring to the boil. Simmer for two hours, or until very soft. Alternatively, microwave them covered in water in a bowl for 3 minute batches until very soft (although this won't make your home smell quite so lovely).



2

Drain clementines well, discard the cooking water, and allow to cool. Cut open and remove all pulp. If you have a food processor, you can now use that to process the clementines - skin, pits, flesh and all. Otherwise, use a sharp knife to chop them finely.



3

Preheat your oven to gas mark 180°C/350°F. Rub the tin with parchment paper (a 20cm x 8 inch cake tin is preferably springform).



4

Mix all other ingredients. You can do this either by hand, beating the eggs first, then adding the sugar, spices (if using), almonds, baking powder, and finally stirring in the clementines. Or you can add all the other ingredients to join the clementines in the food processor and use that to mix everything together.



5

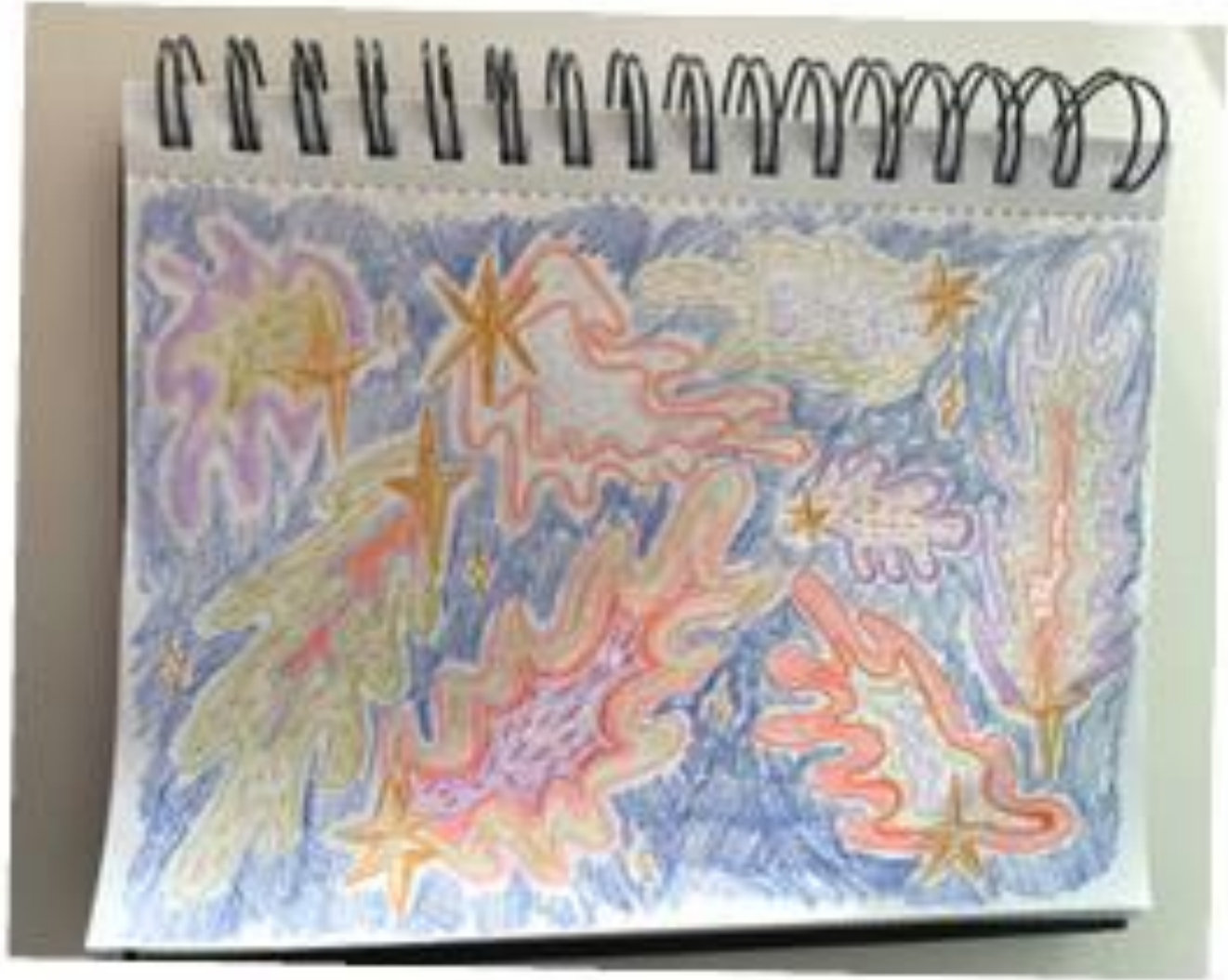
Pour batter into the cake tin and bake for an hour or until a skewer inserted into the middle comes out clean. Check halfway through and cover with foil or parchment paper if it looks like it's browning too quickly and might burn.



1 hour

Allow to cool in the tin, then remove and eat. This cake keeps (and travels) very well in a tin. It looks lovely dusted with icing sugar, but do this right before serving so it will melt away fine.







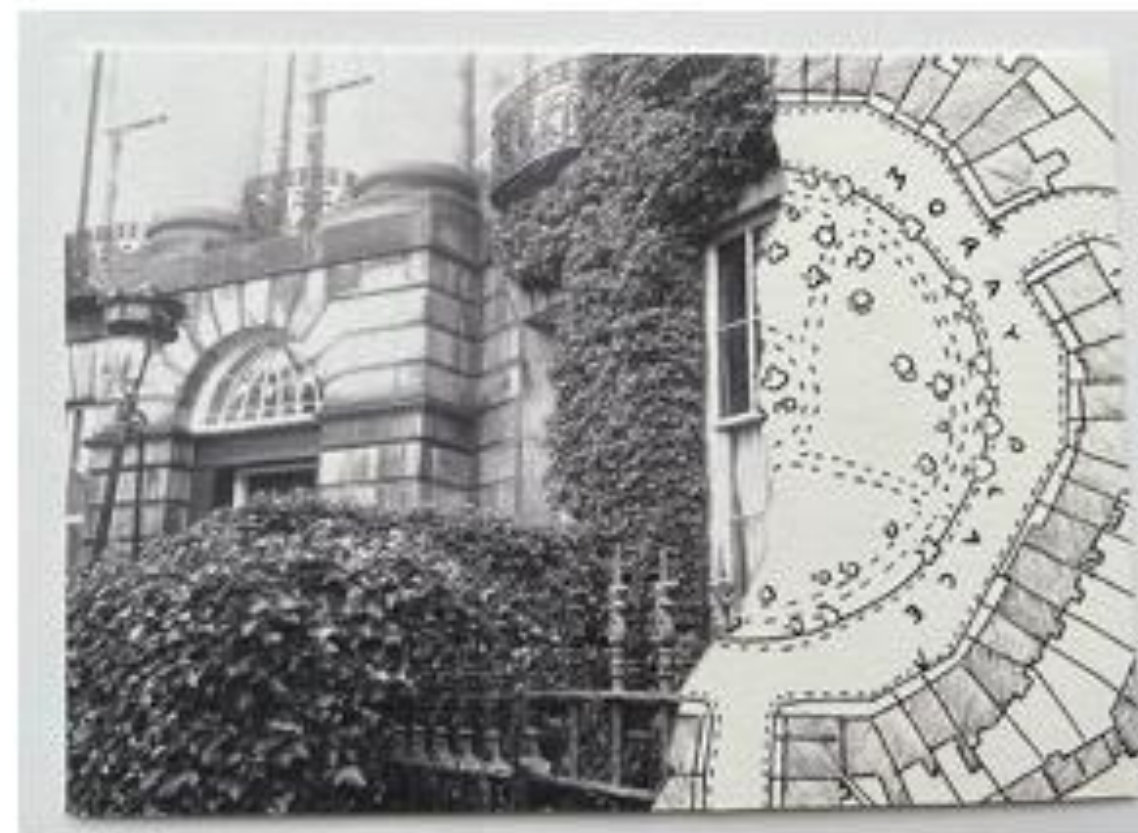
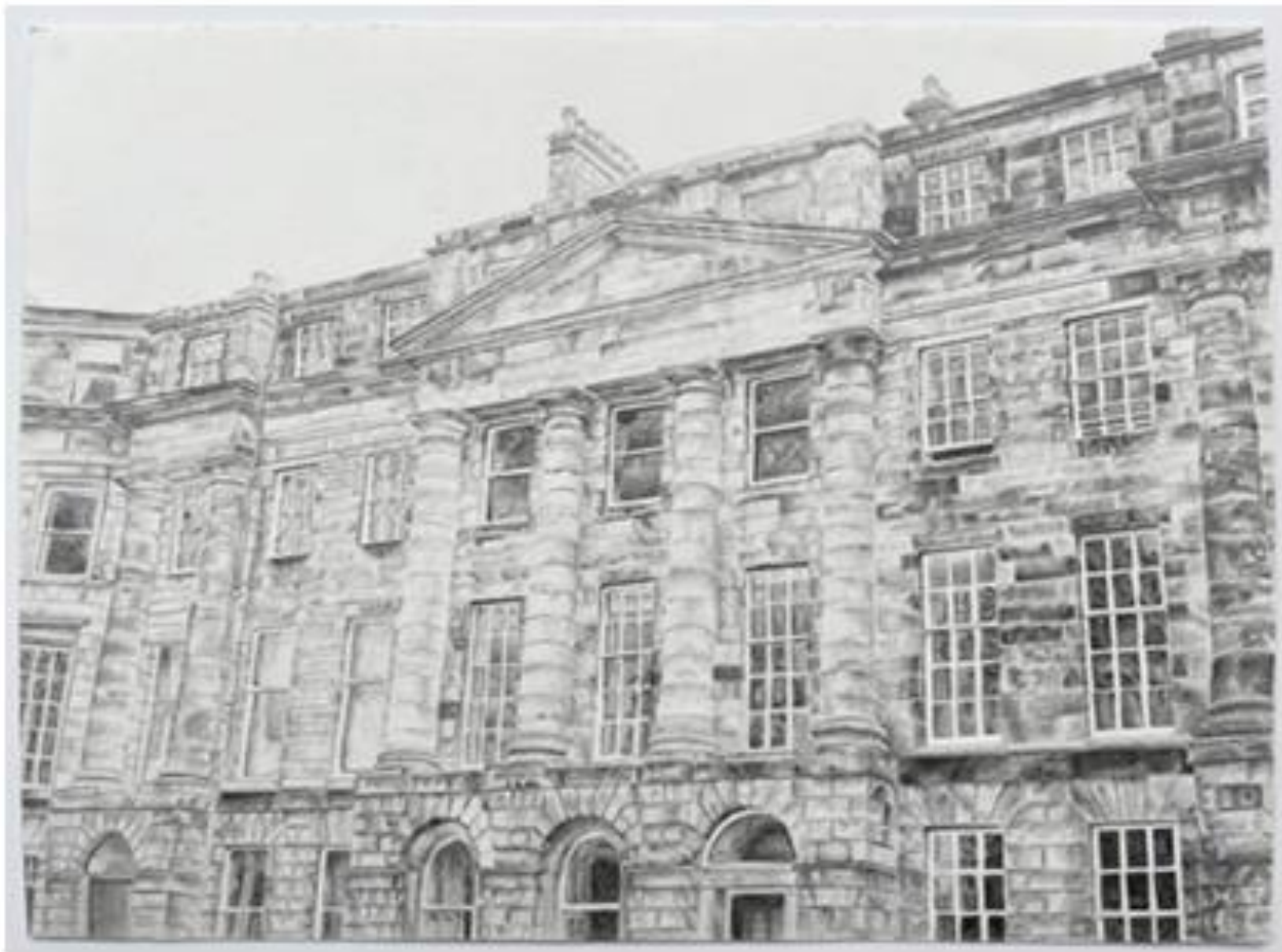


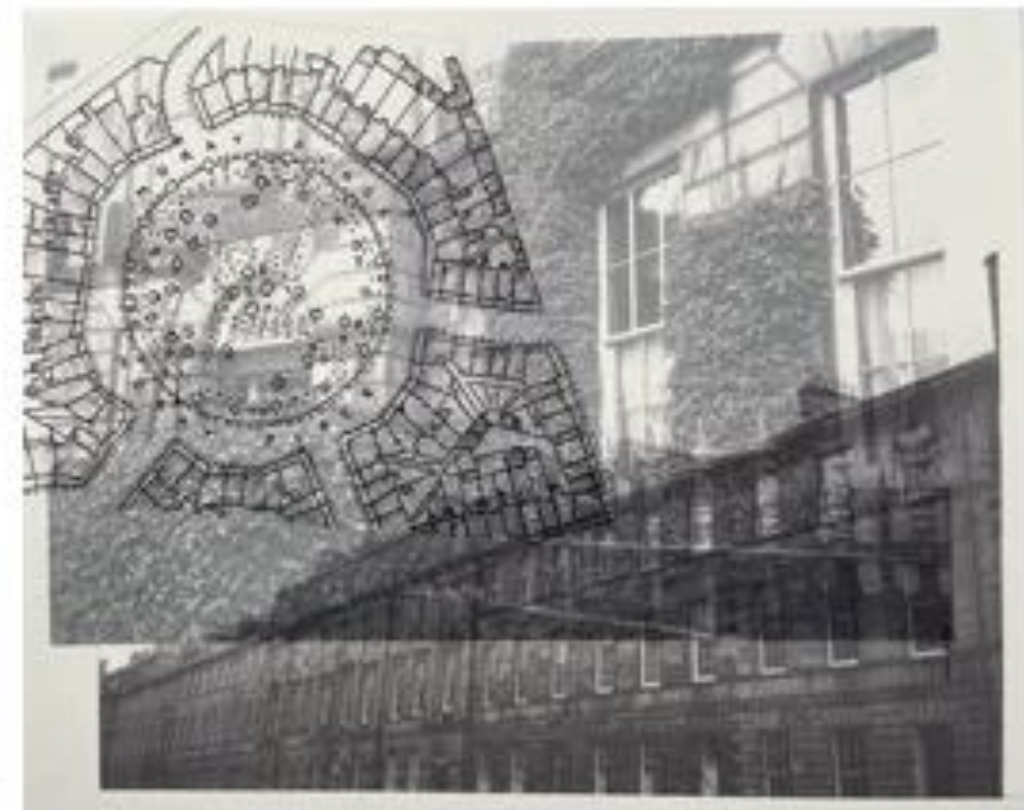
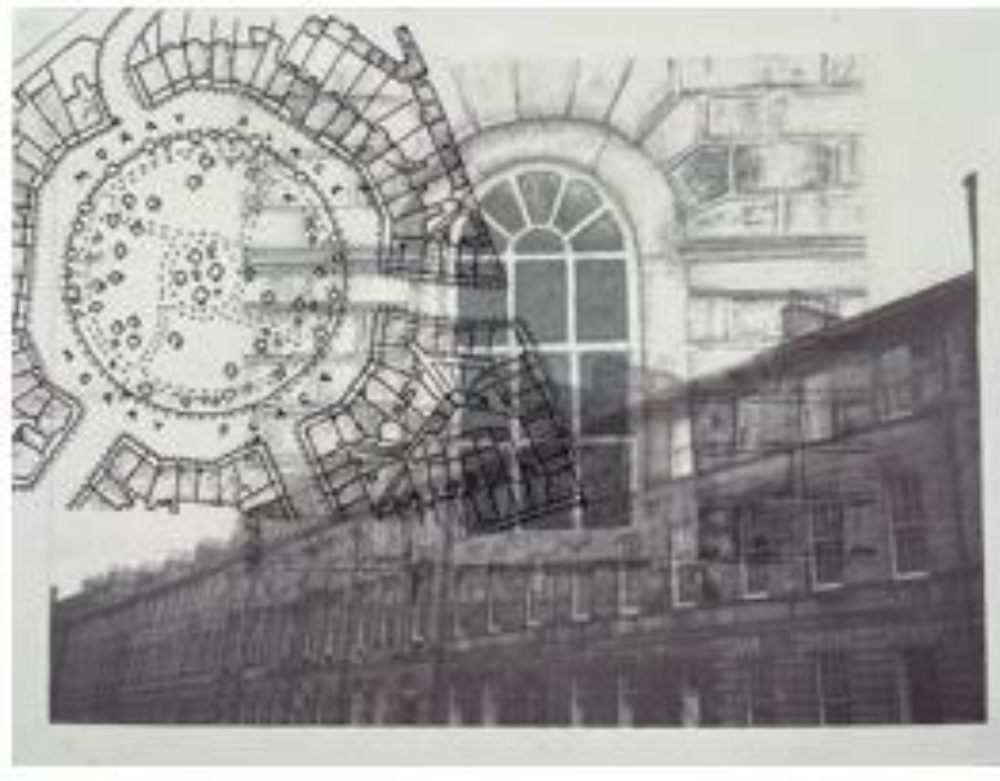
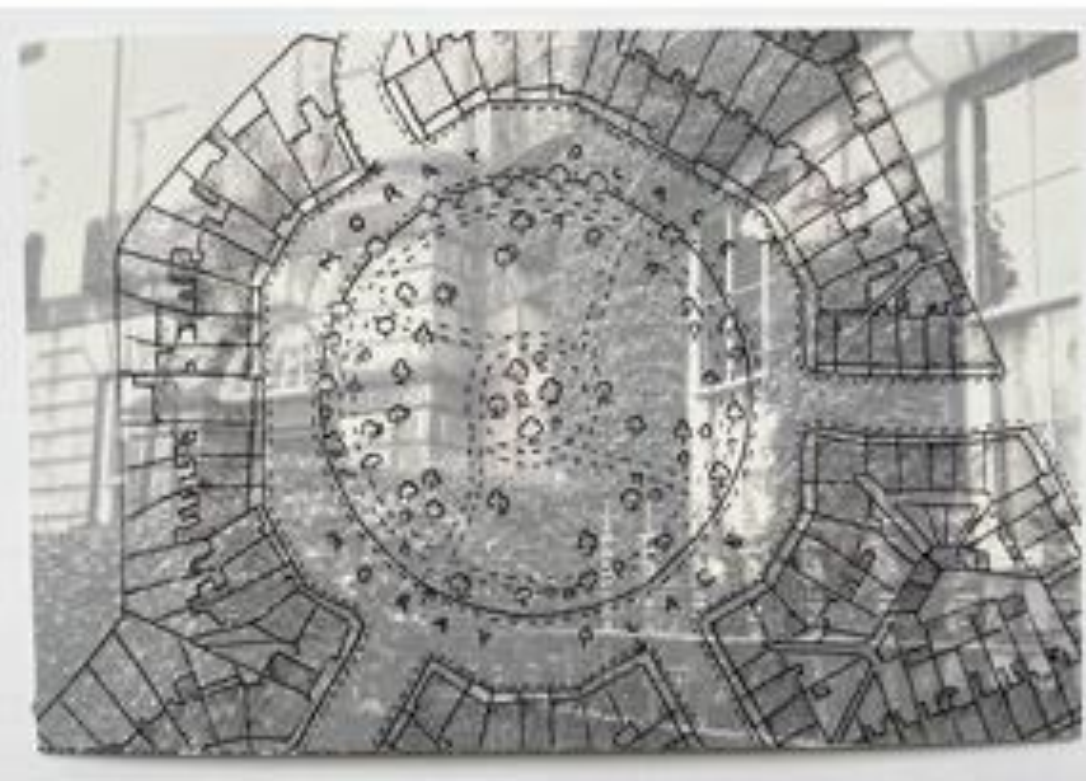
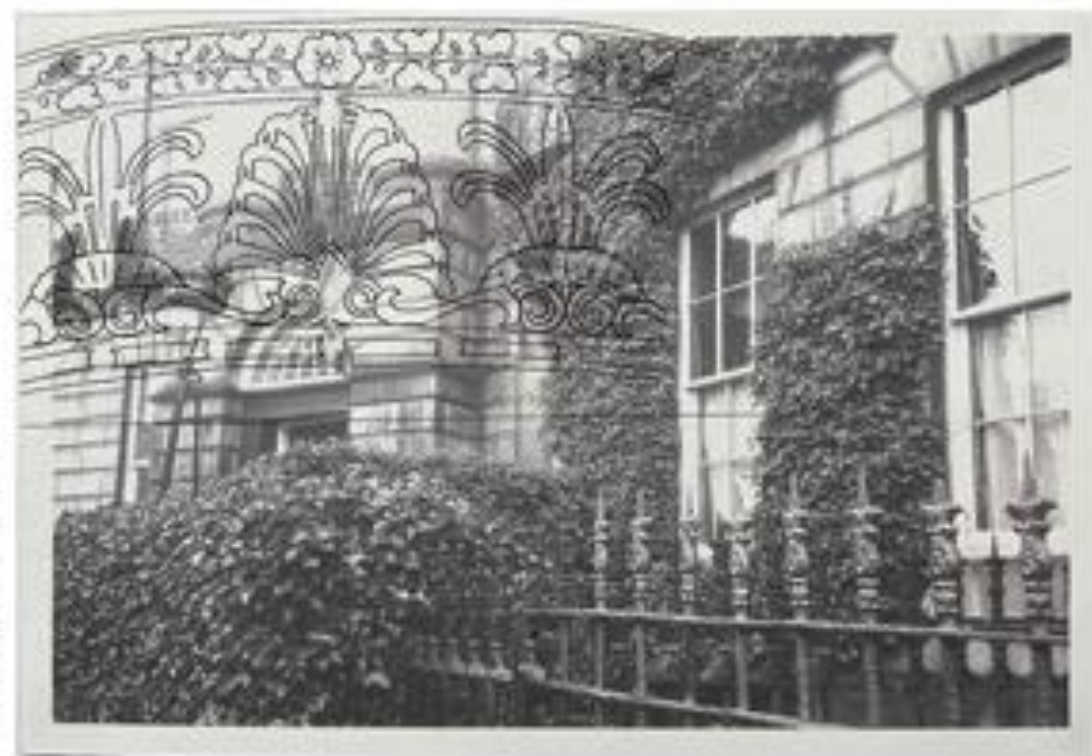
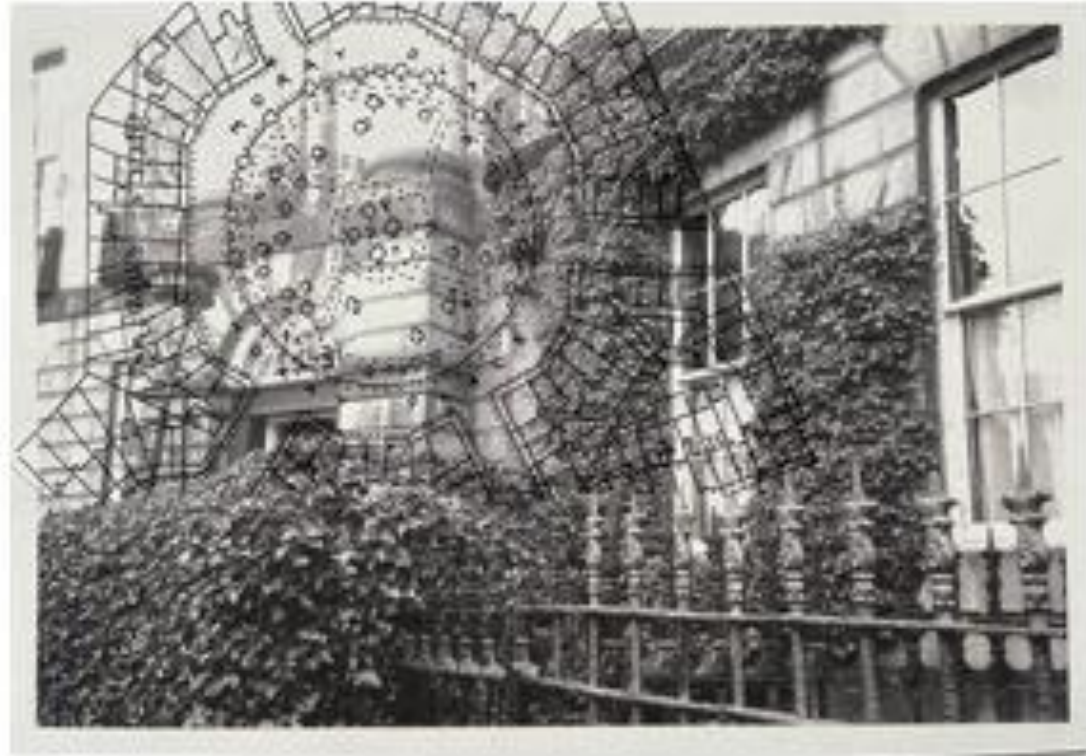
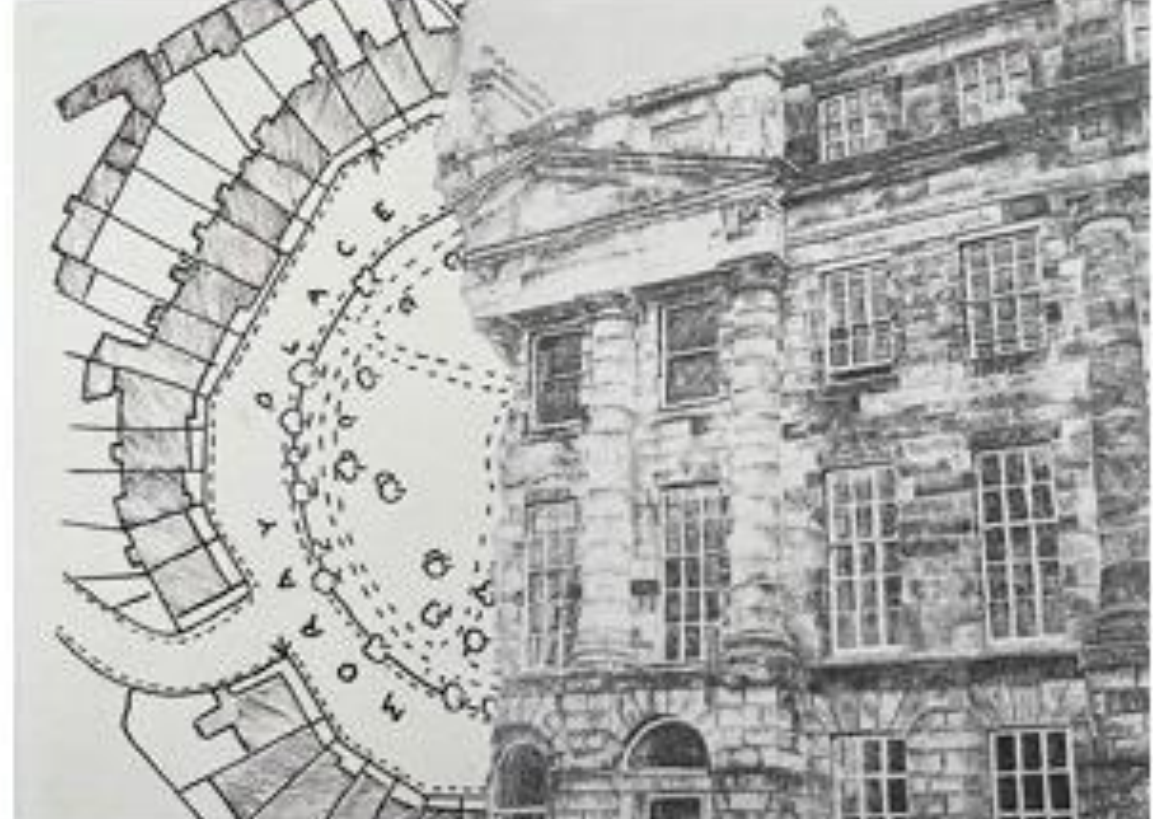
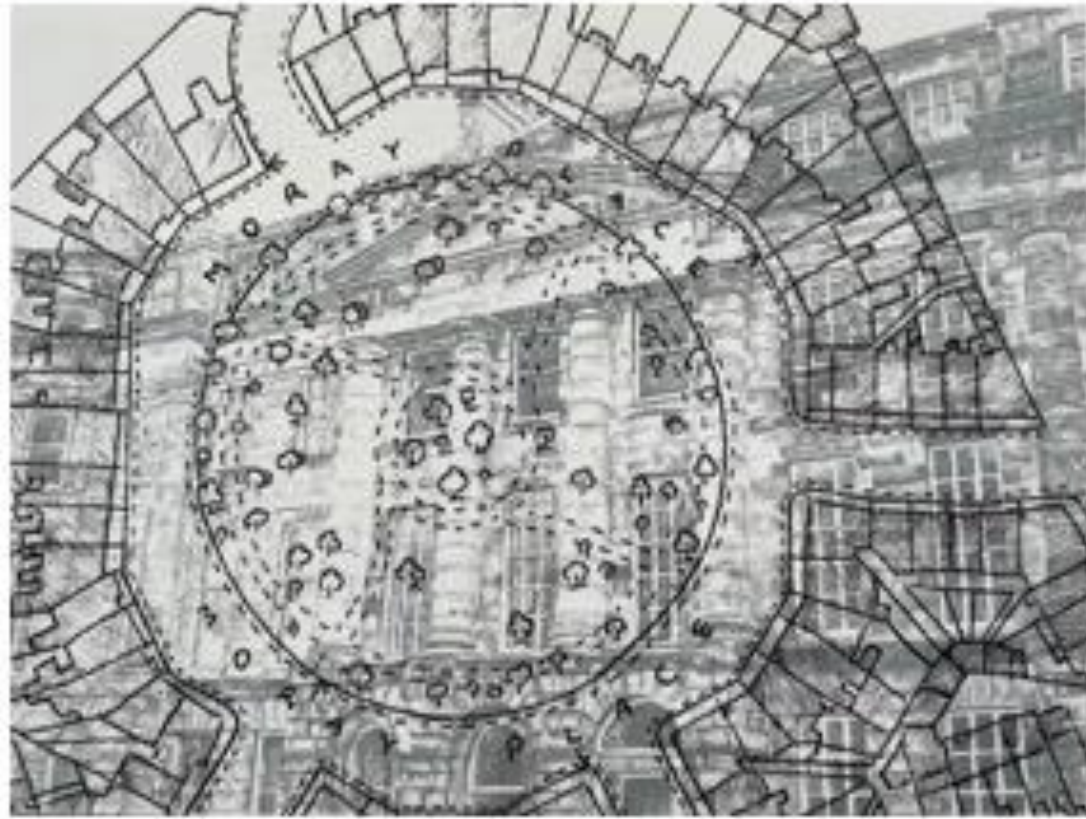


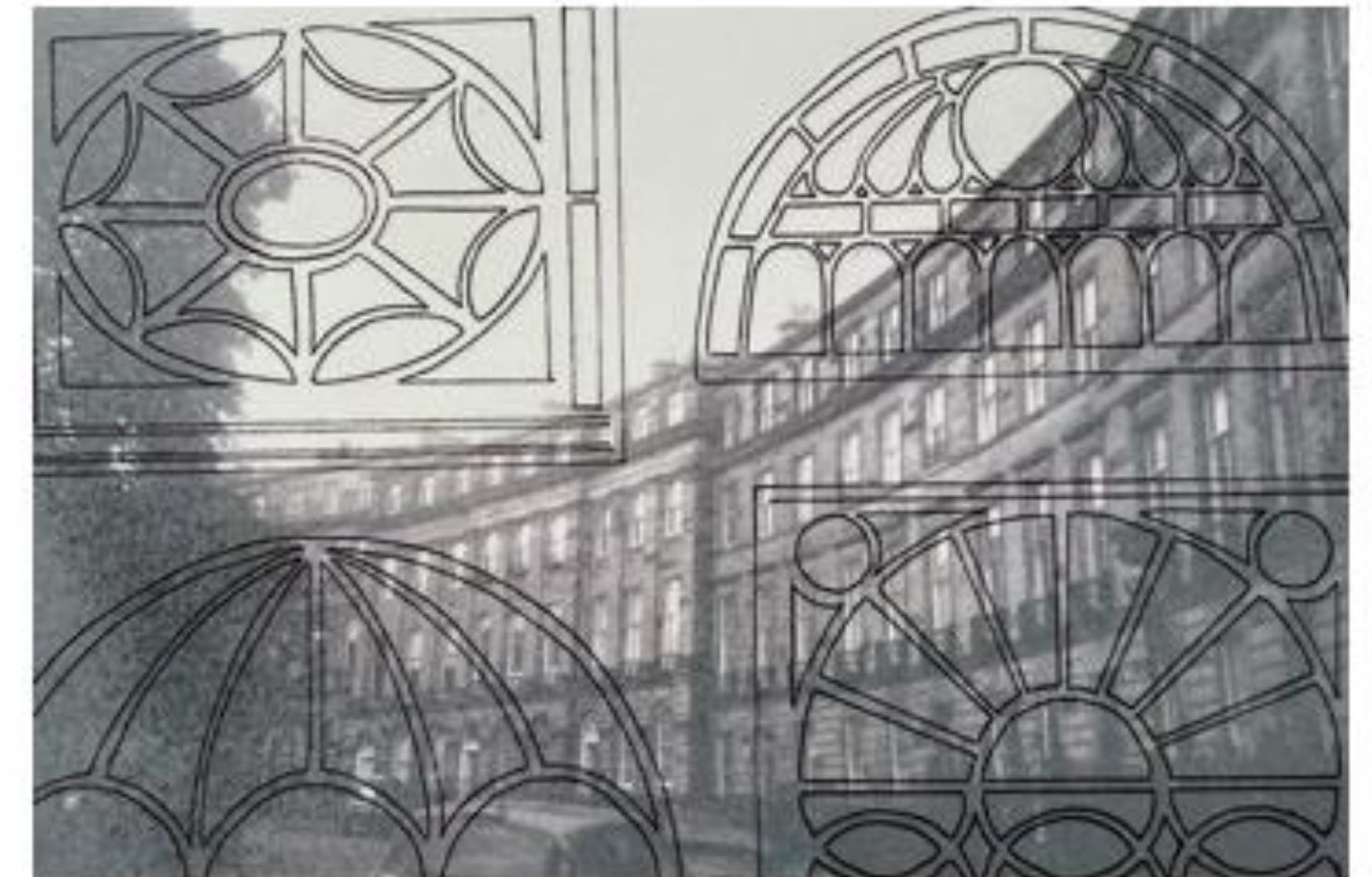
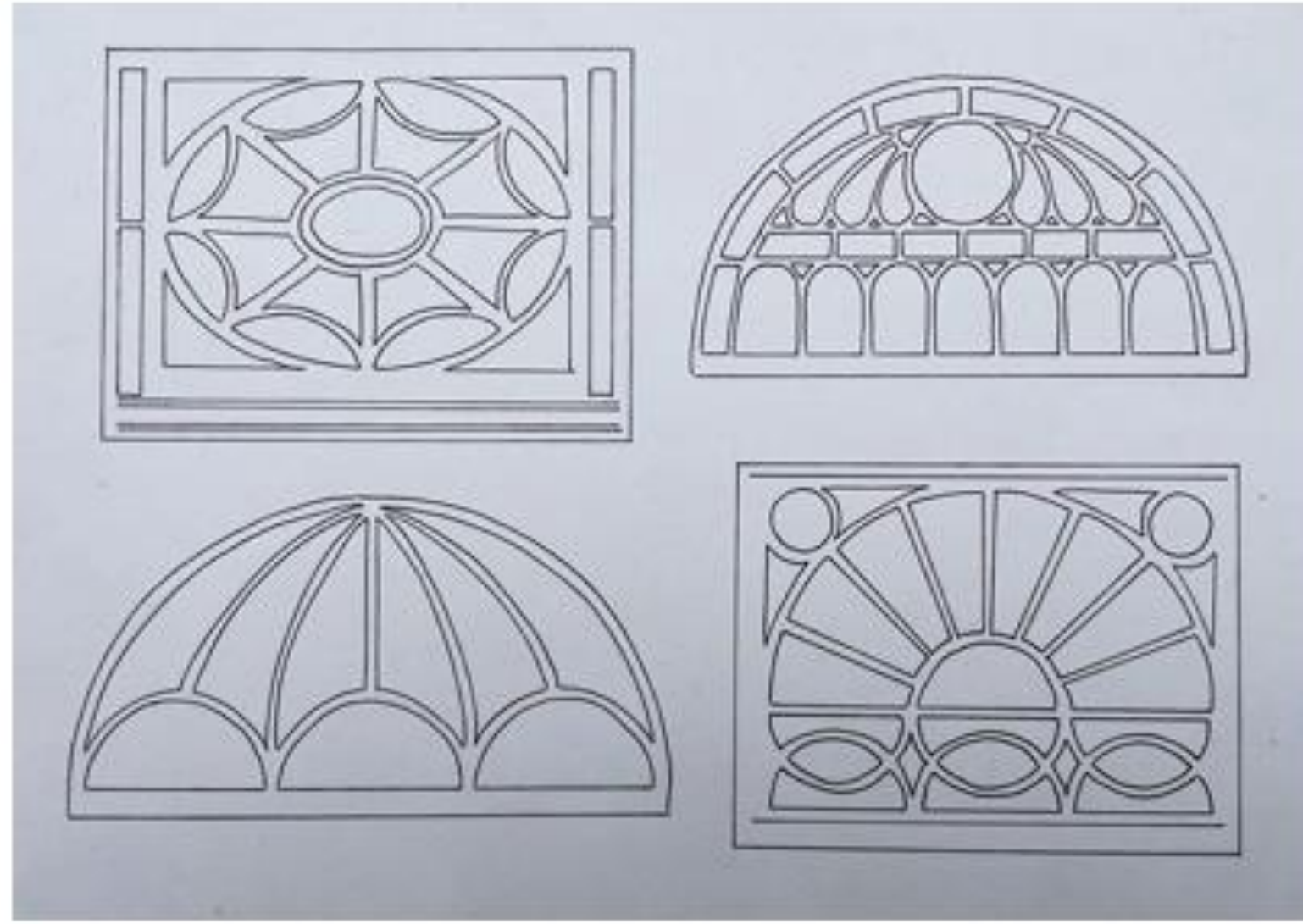
# Ella Ritch

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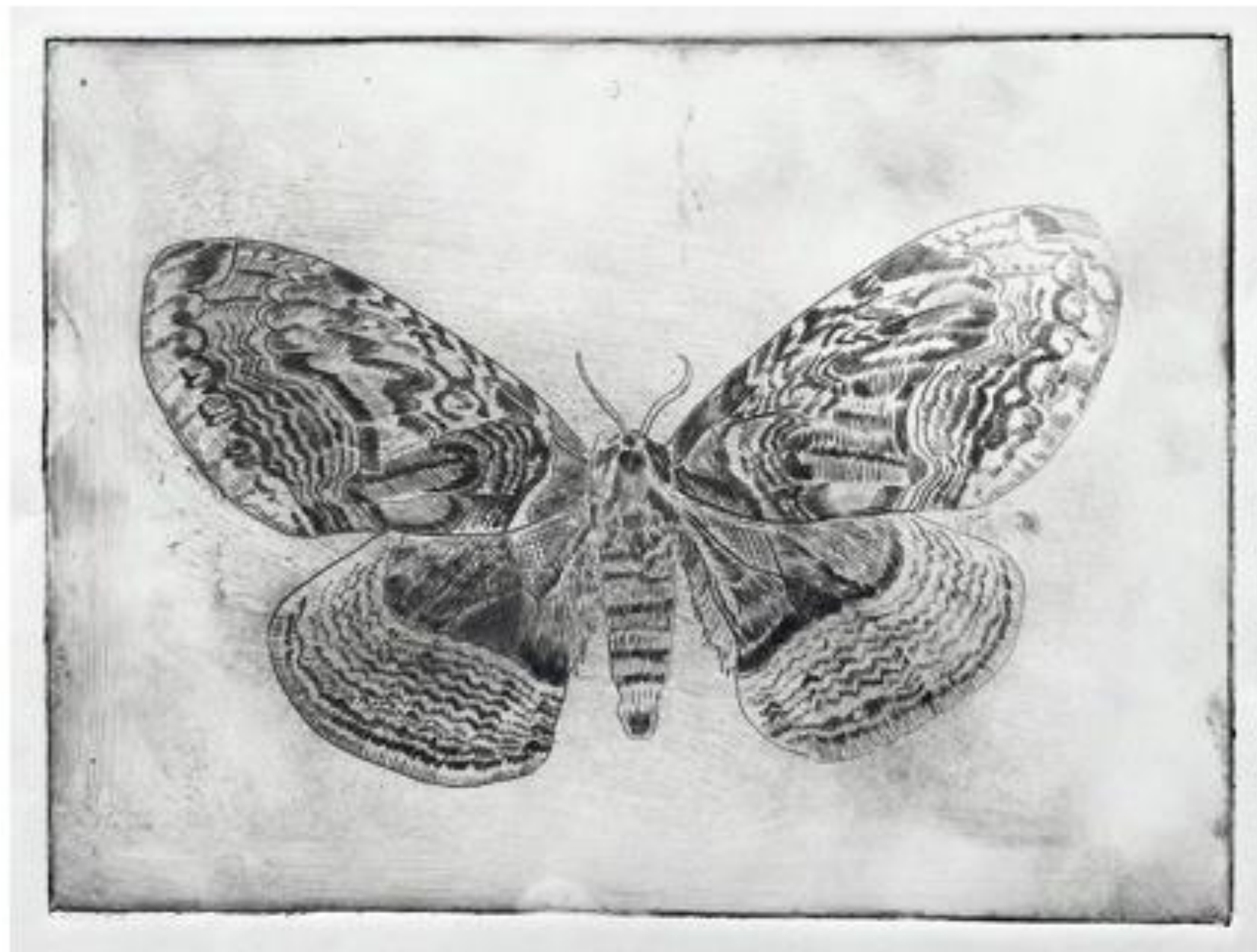
Year 1 Communication Design



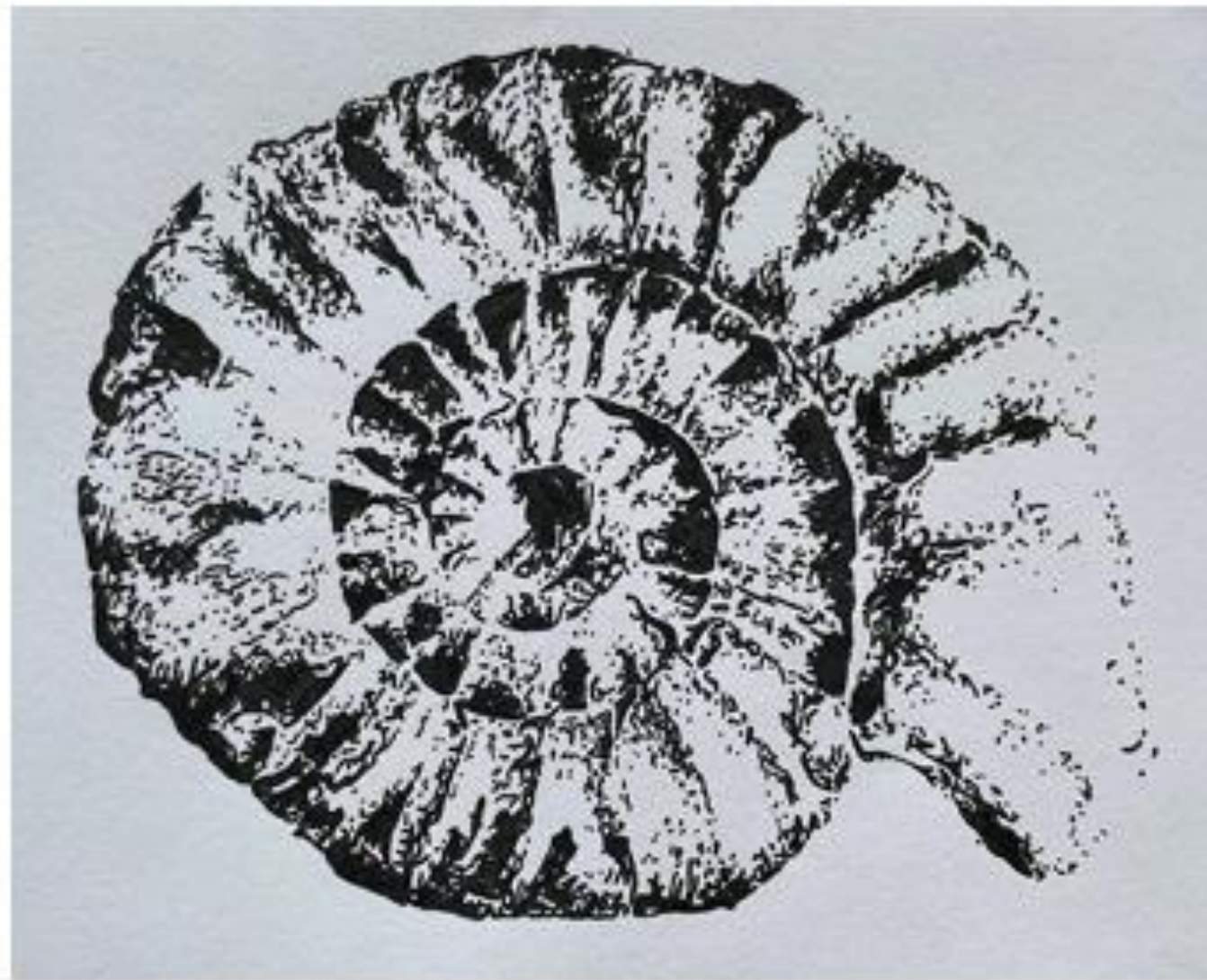
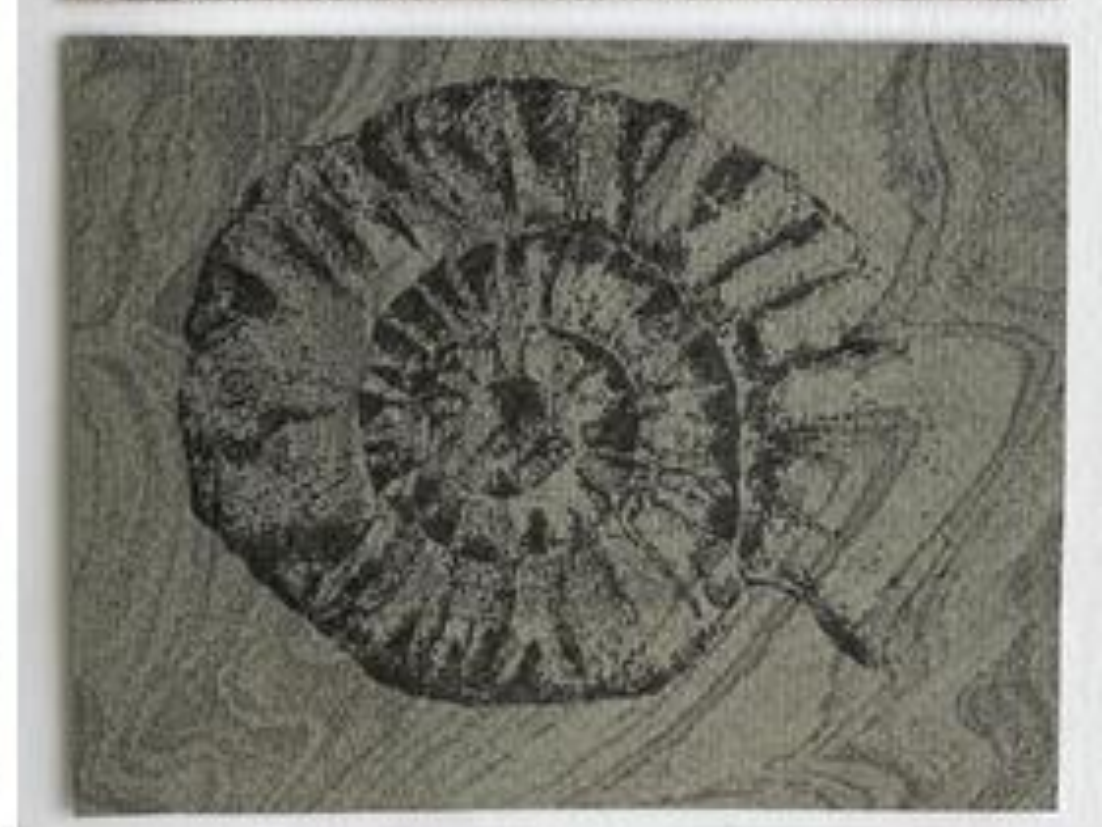
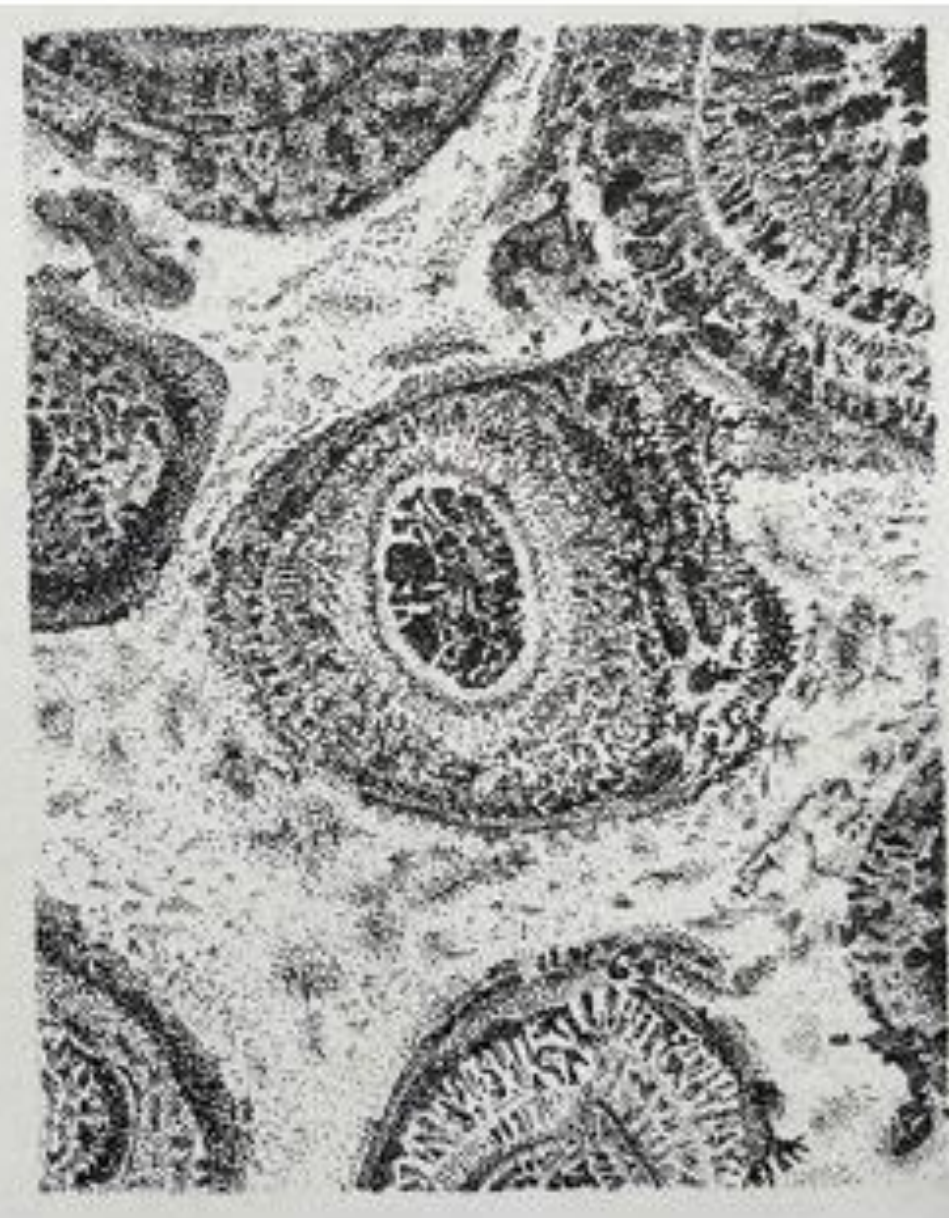
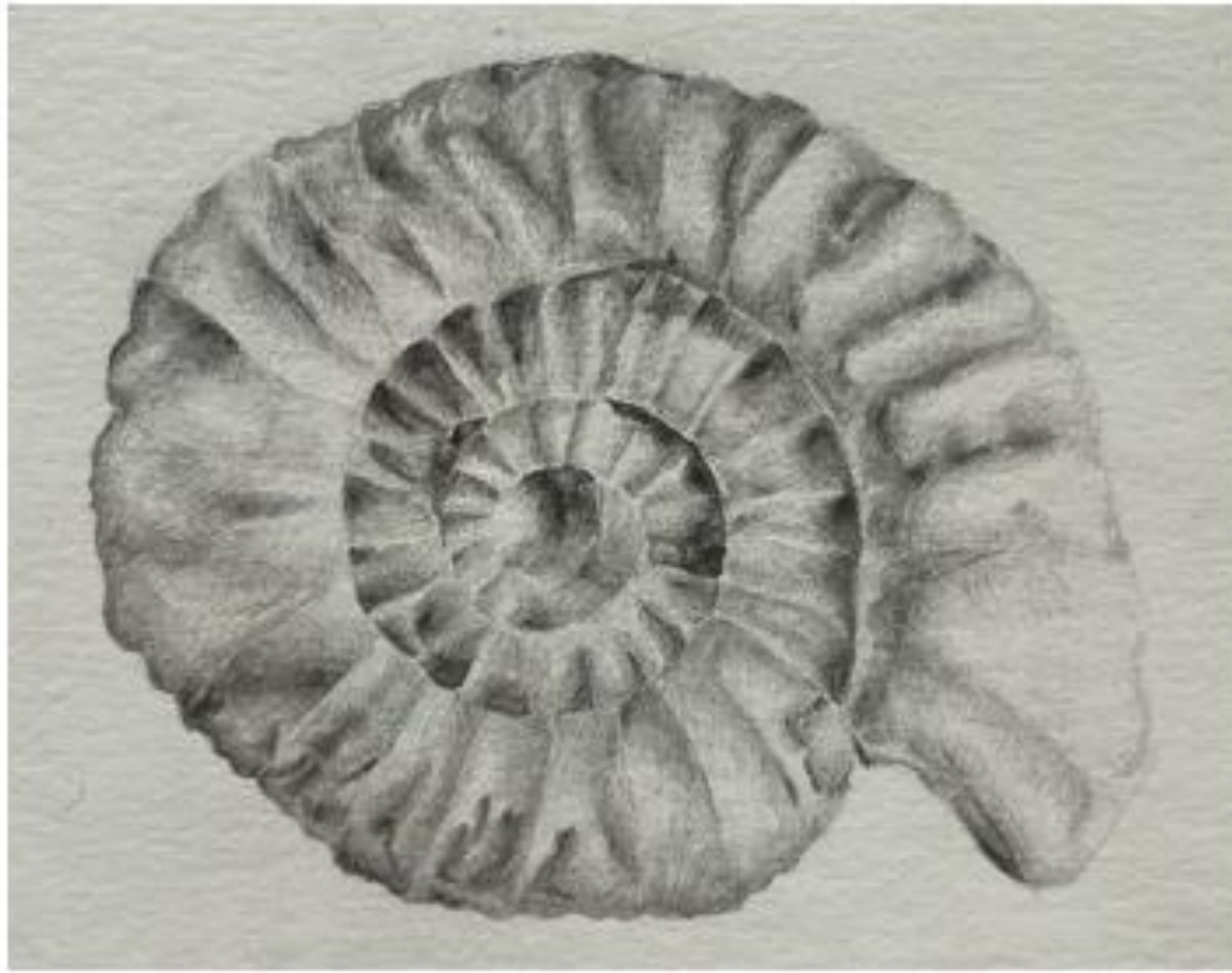




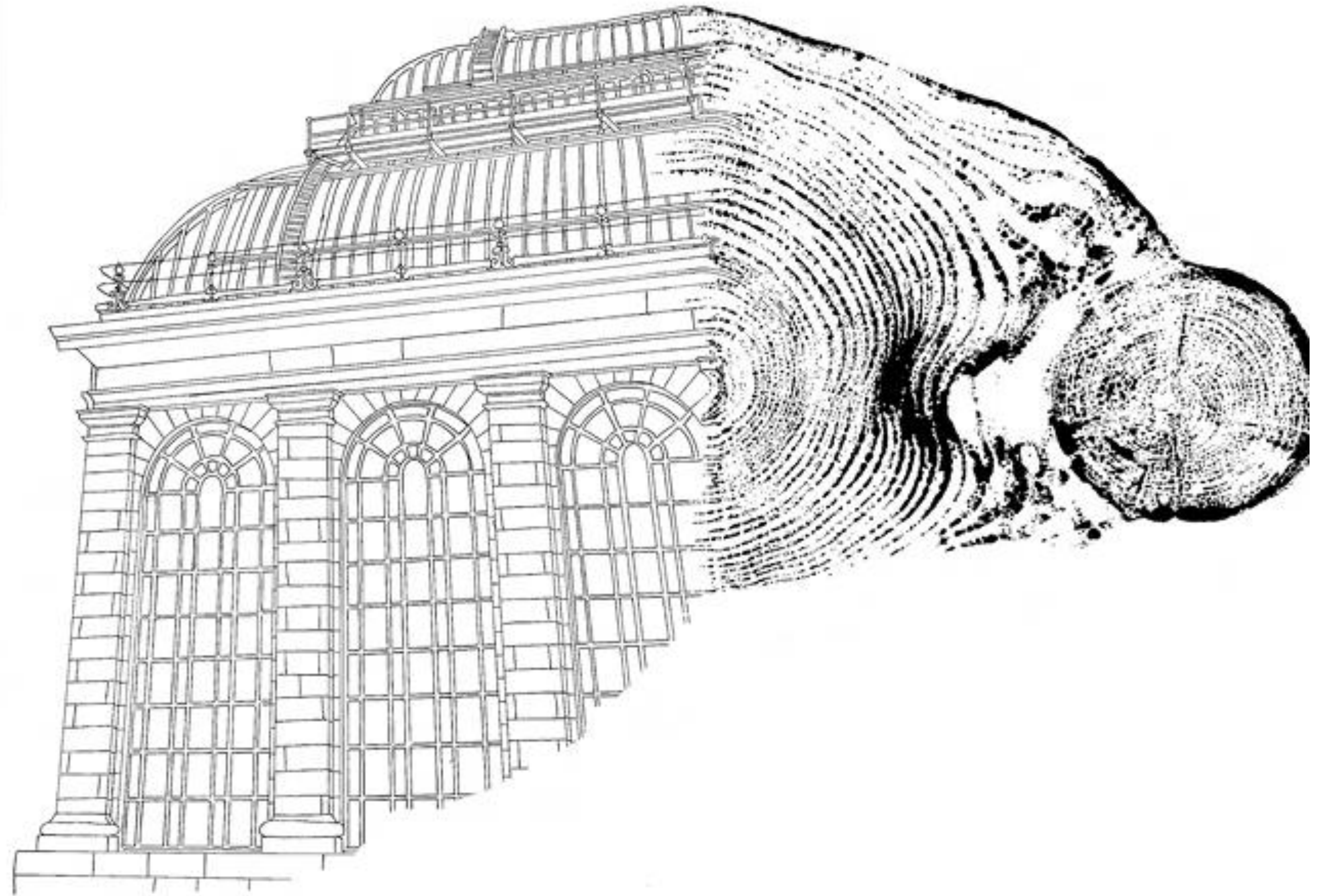
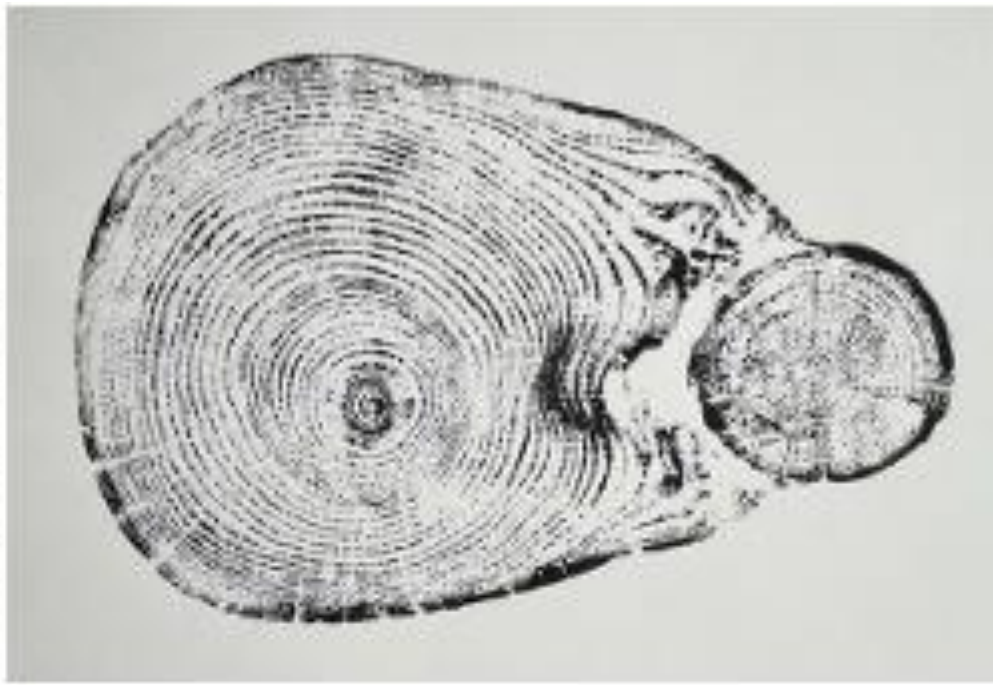


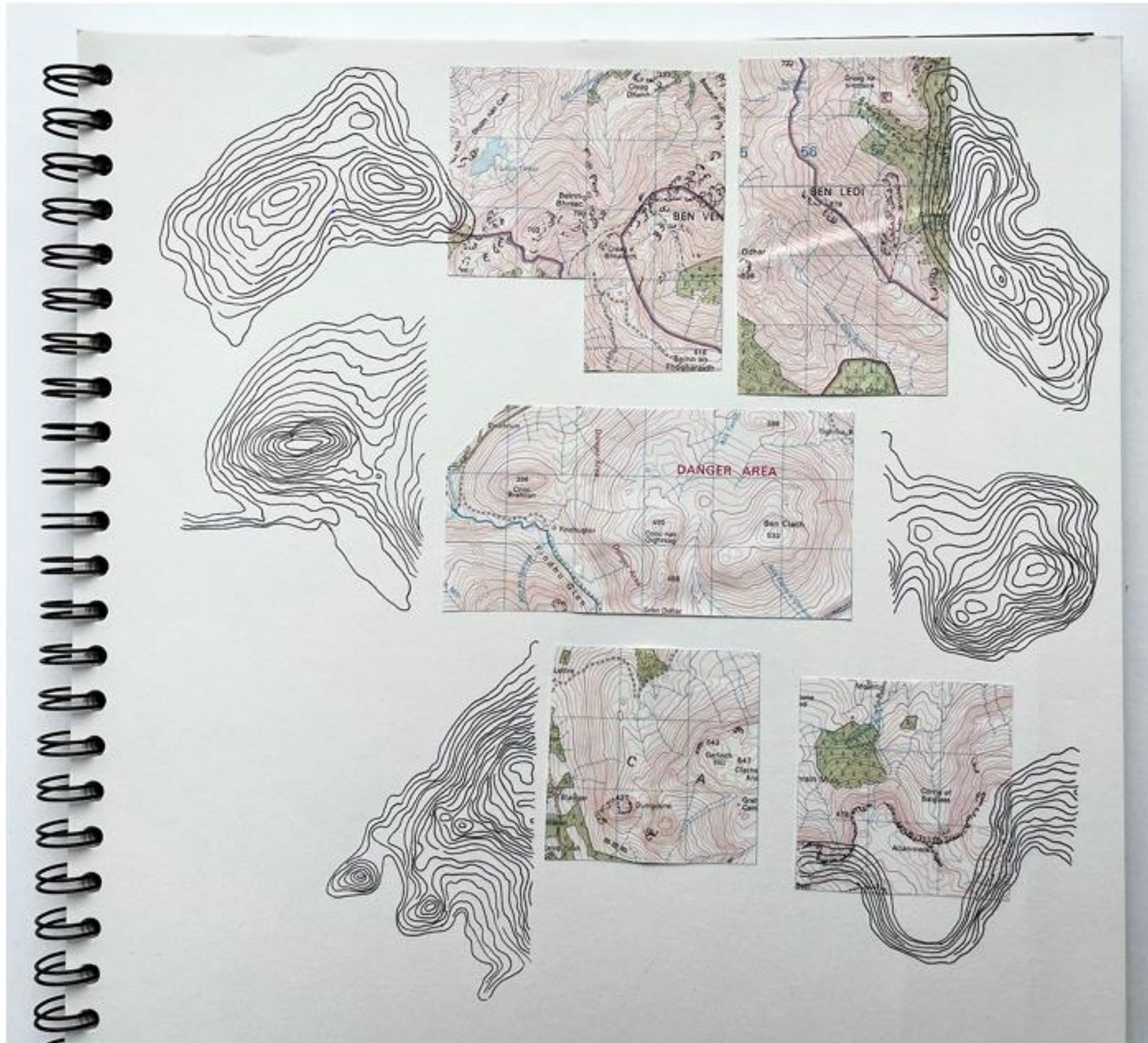


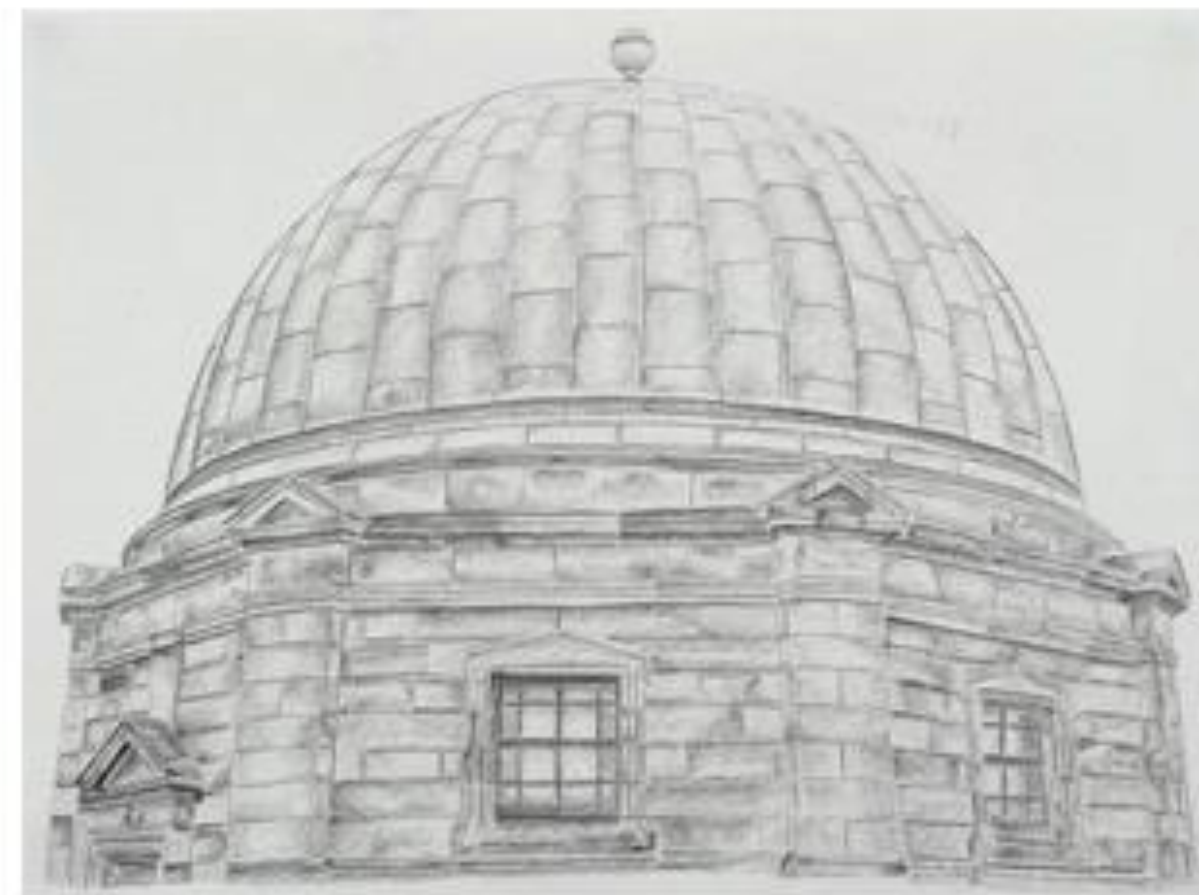
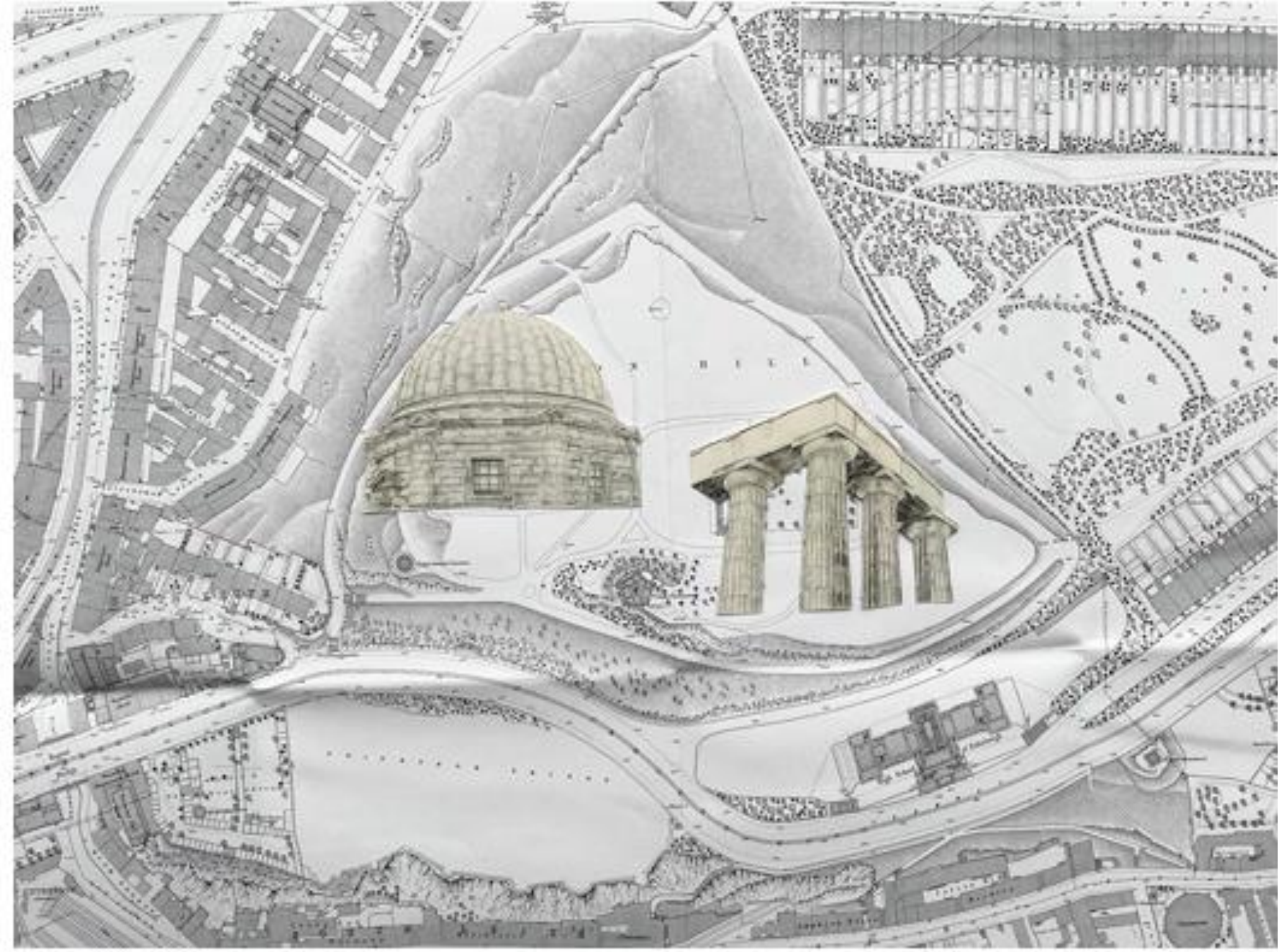
Drypoint etching, linocut and cut paper collage

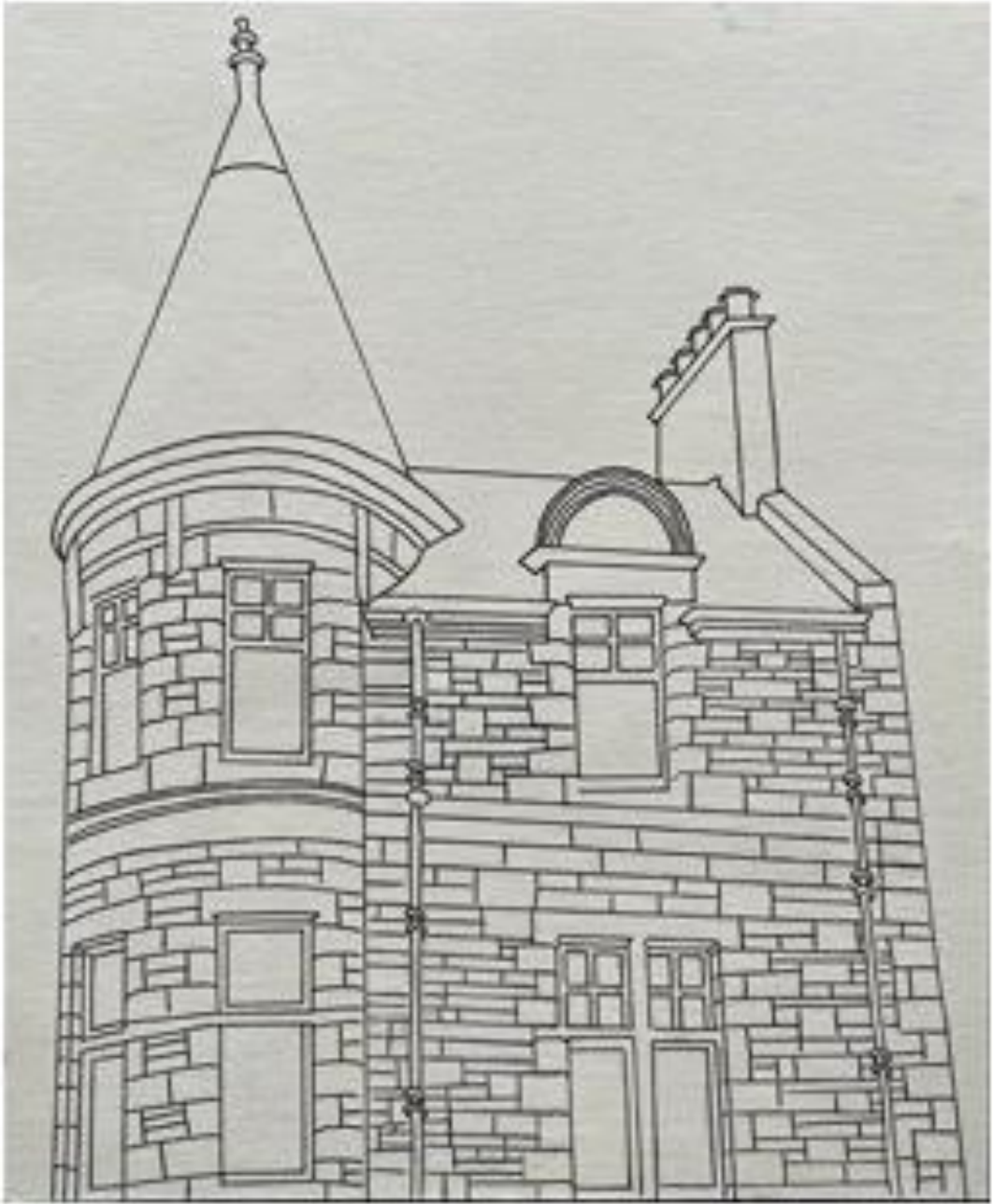
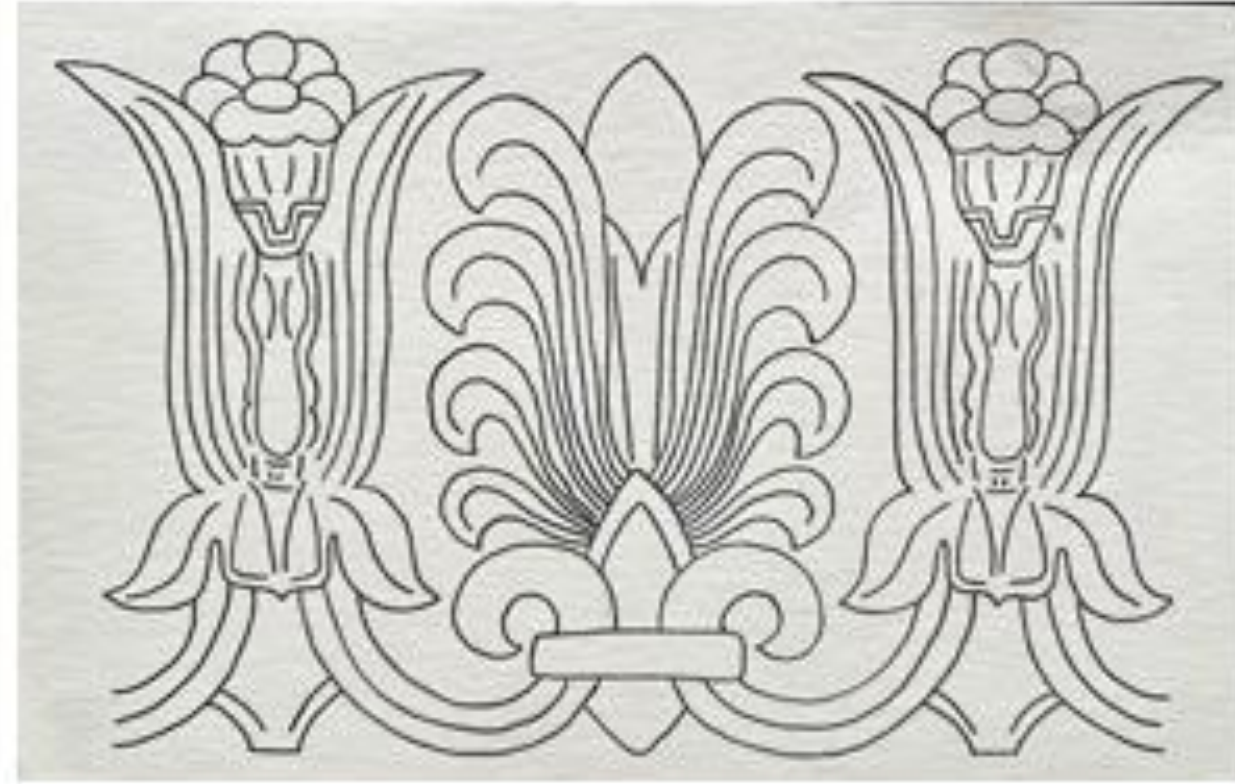




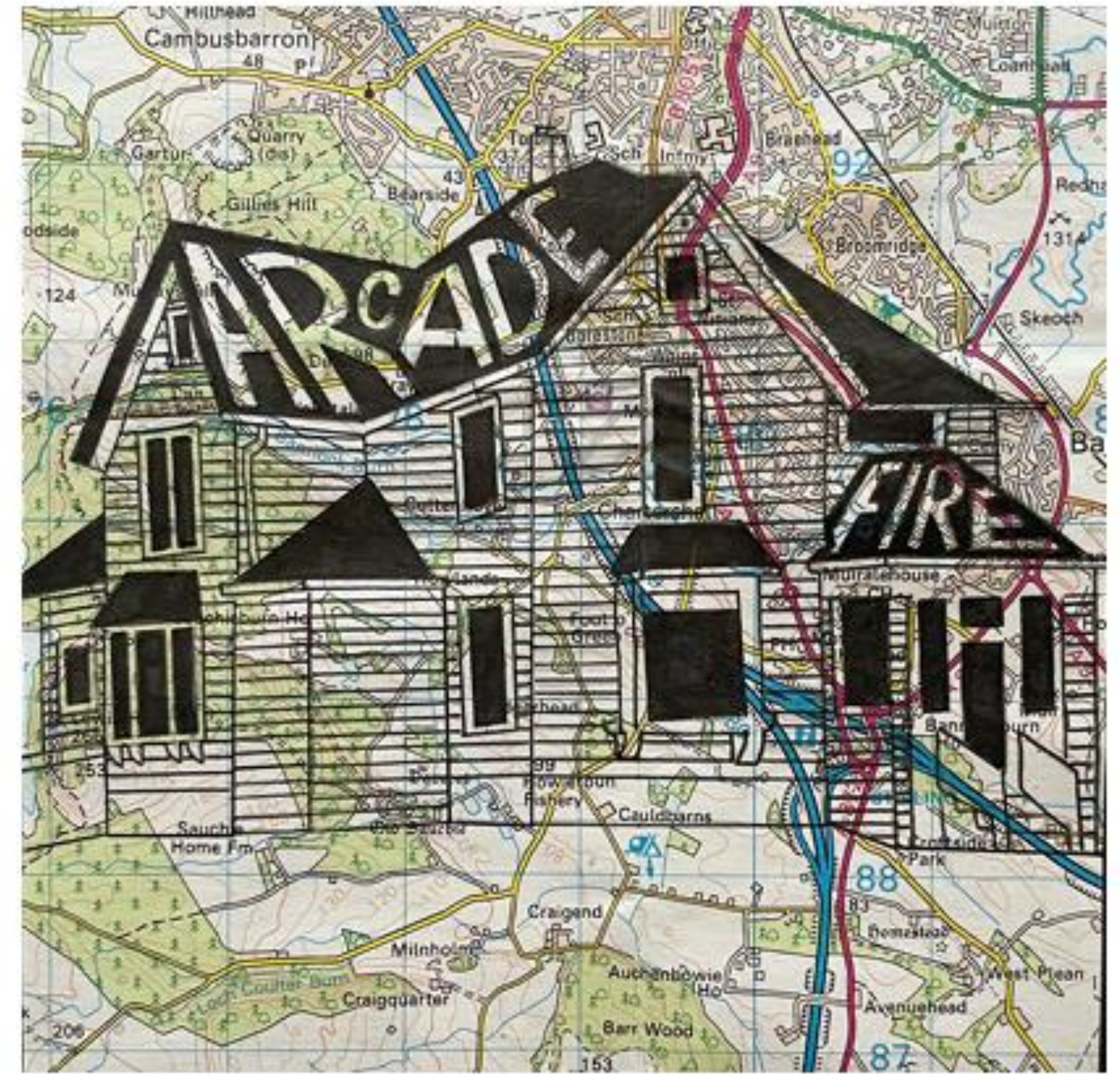
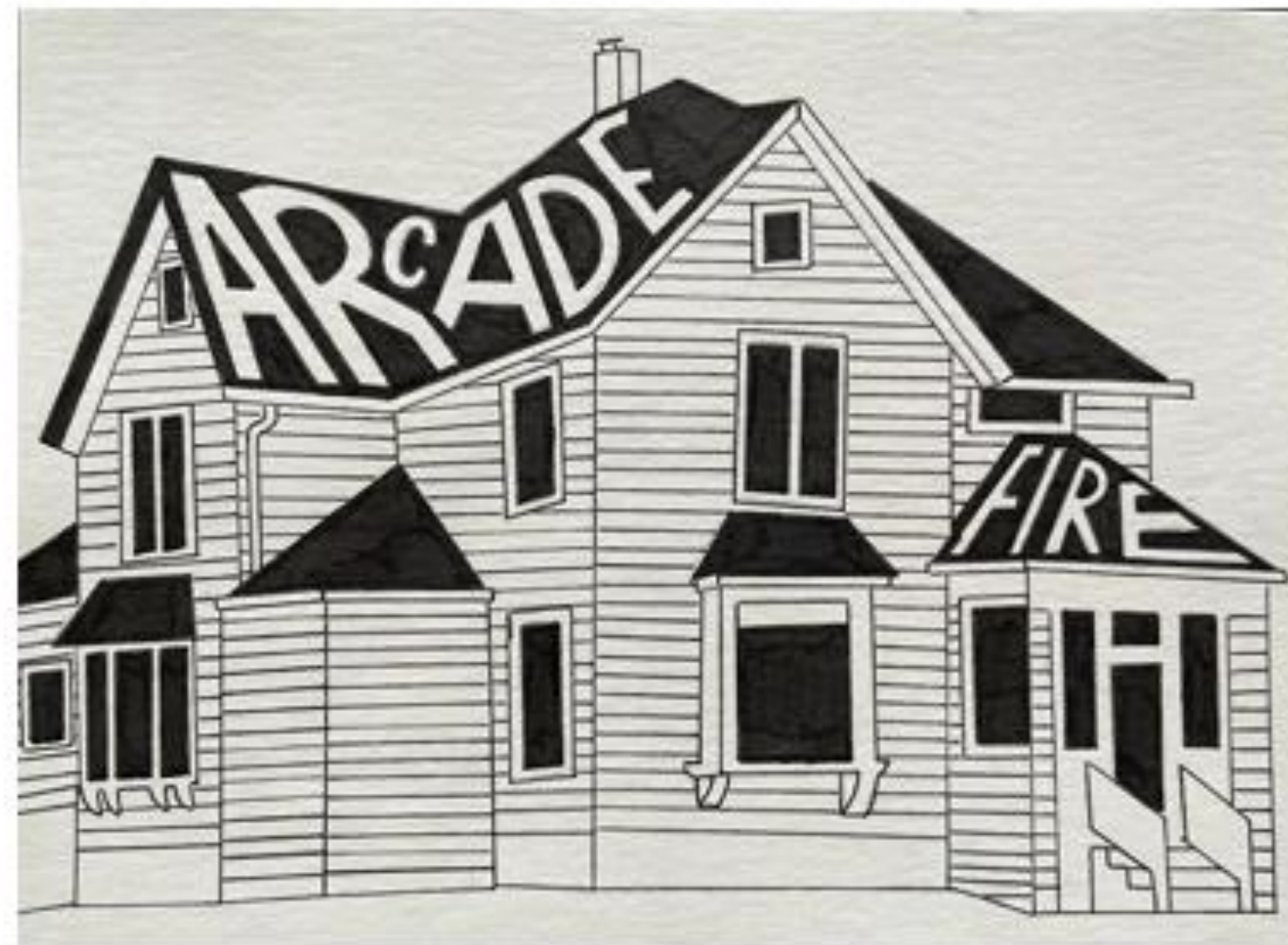




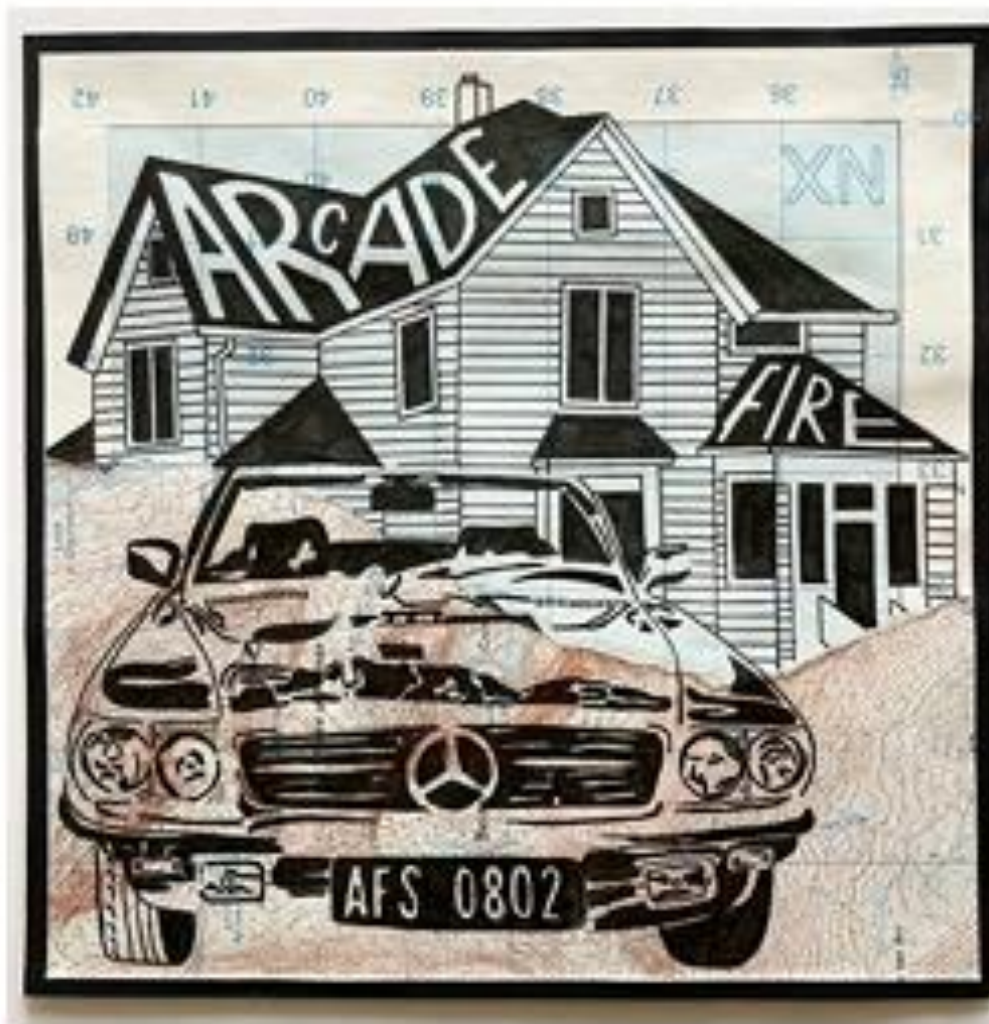


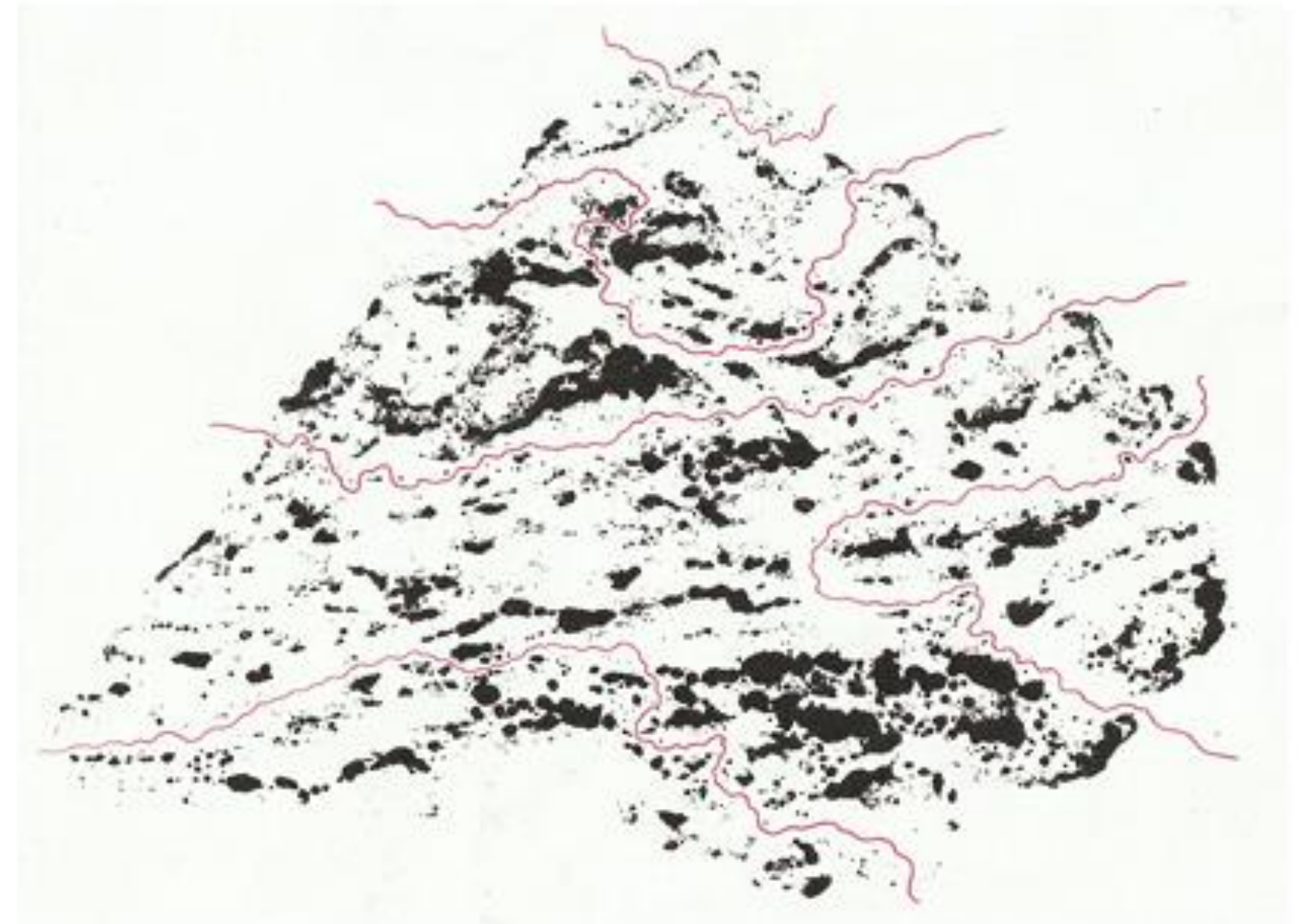
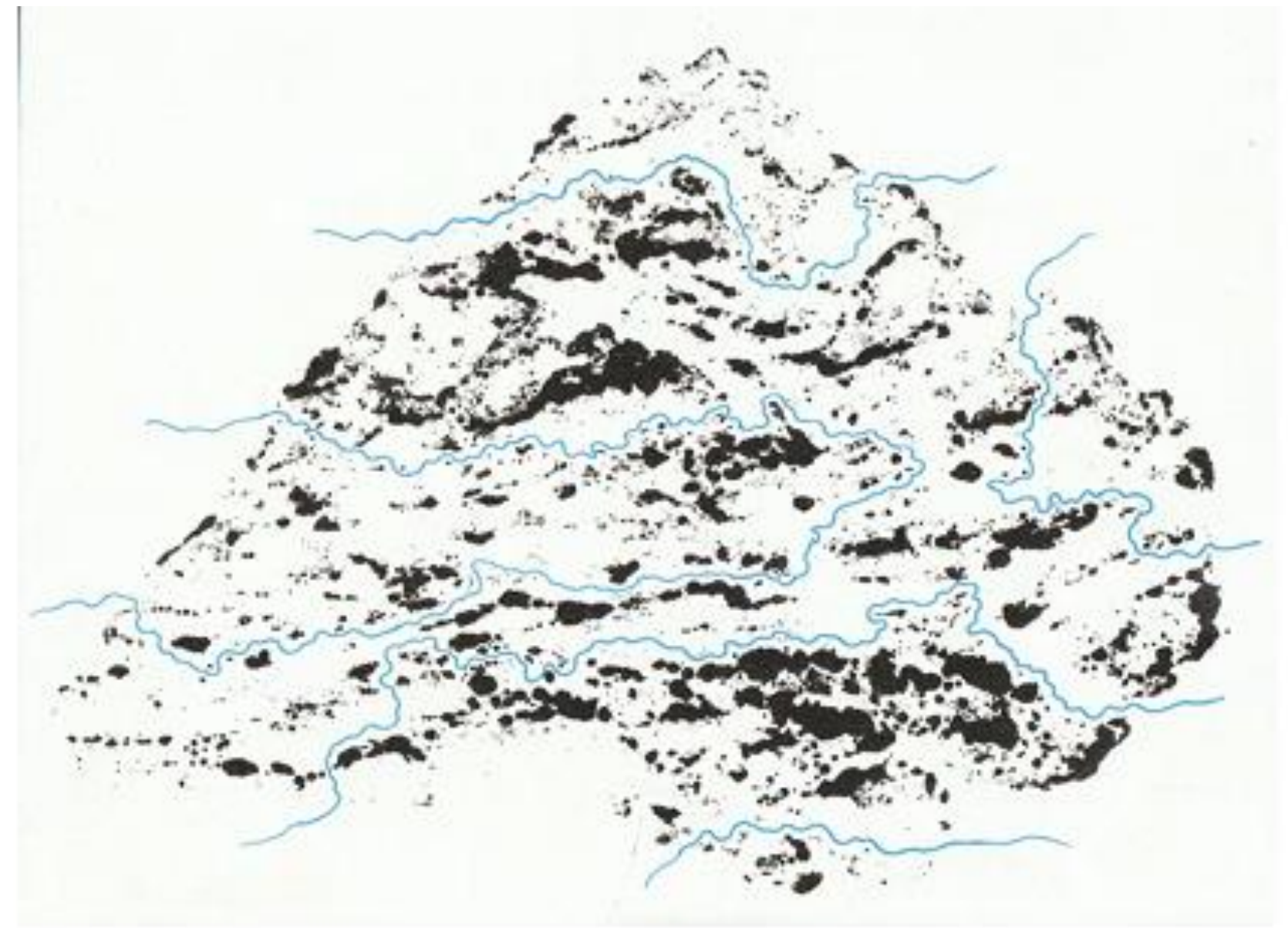






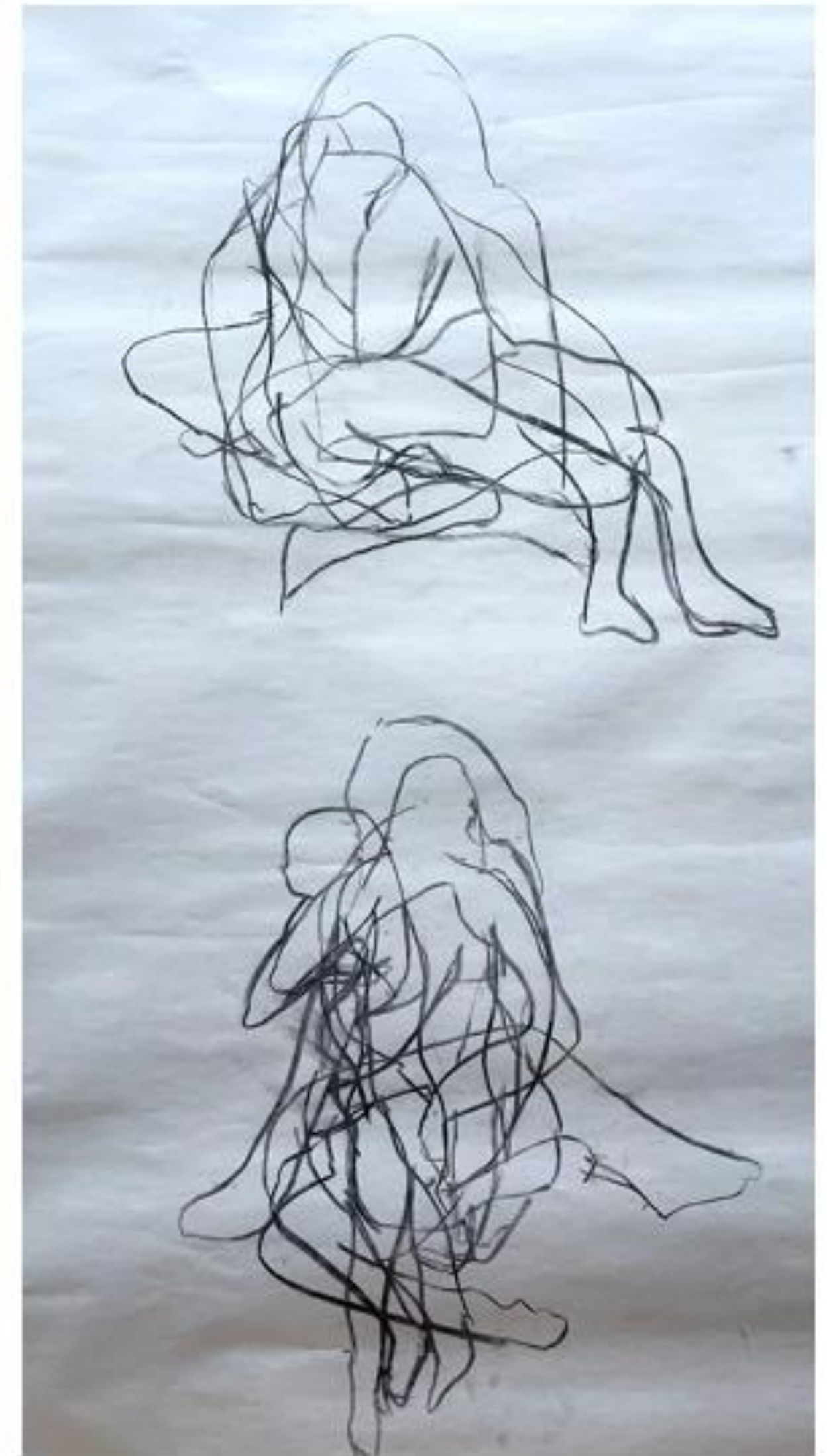
Research for album cover project





Rock prints with autodrawing project



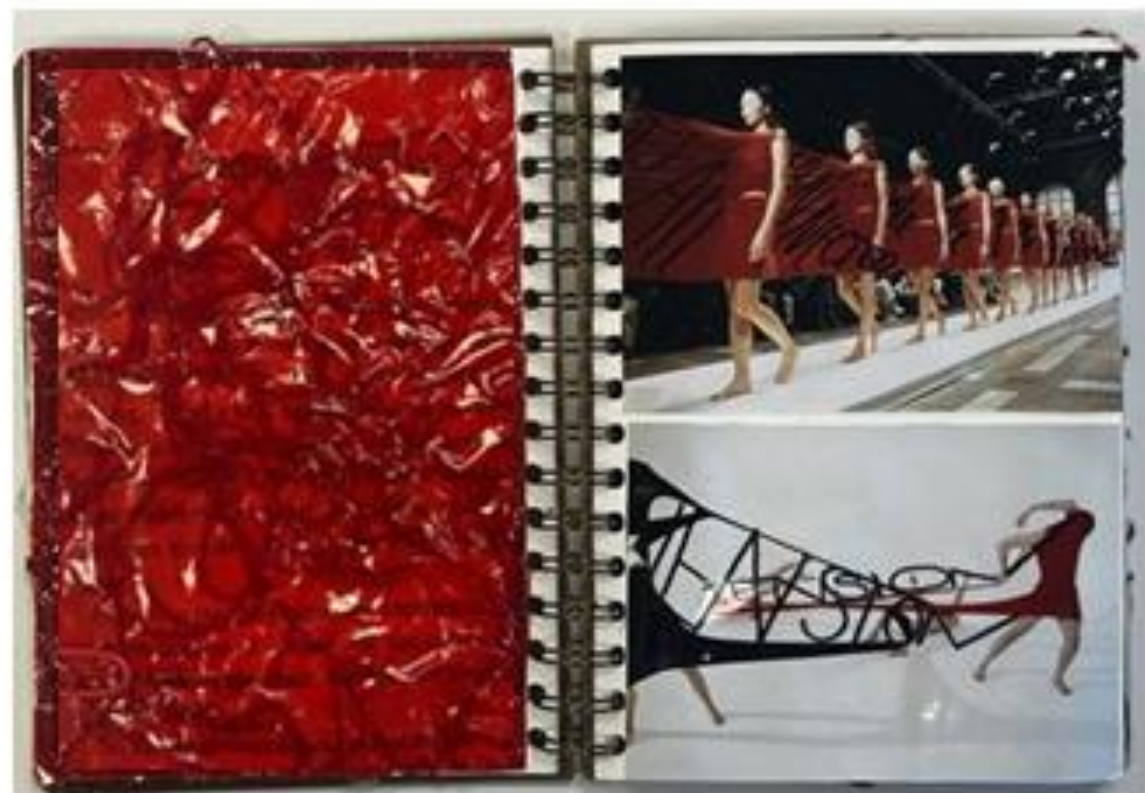
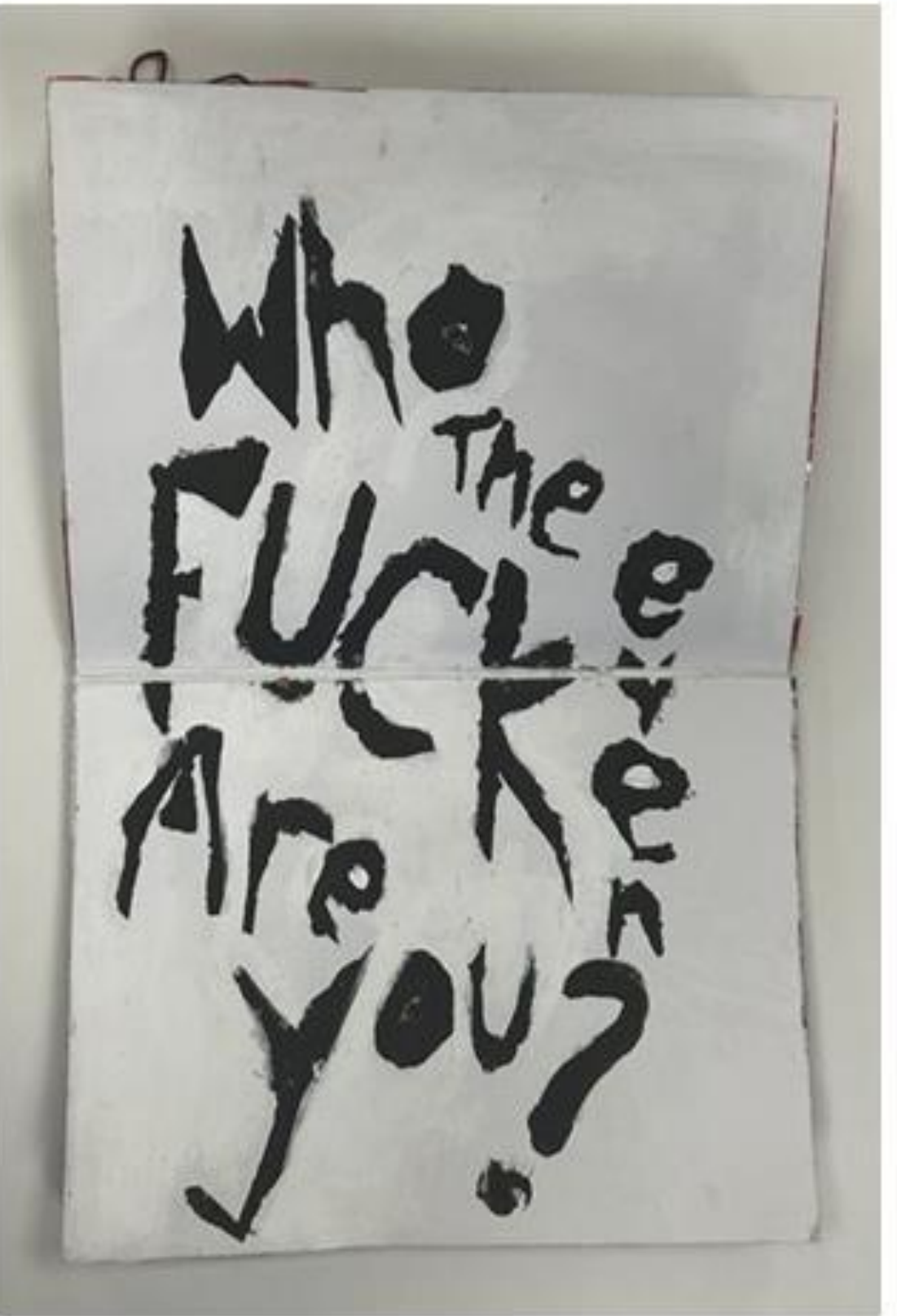


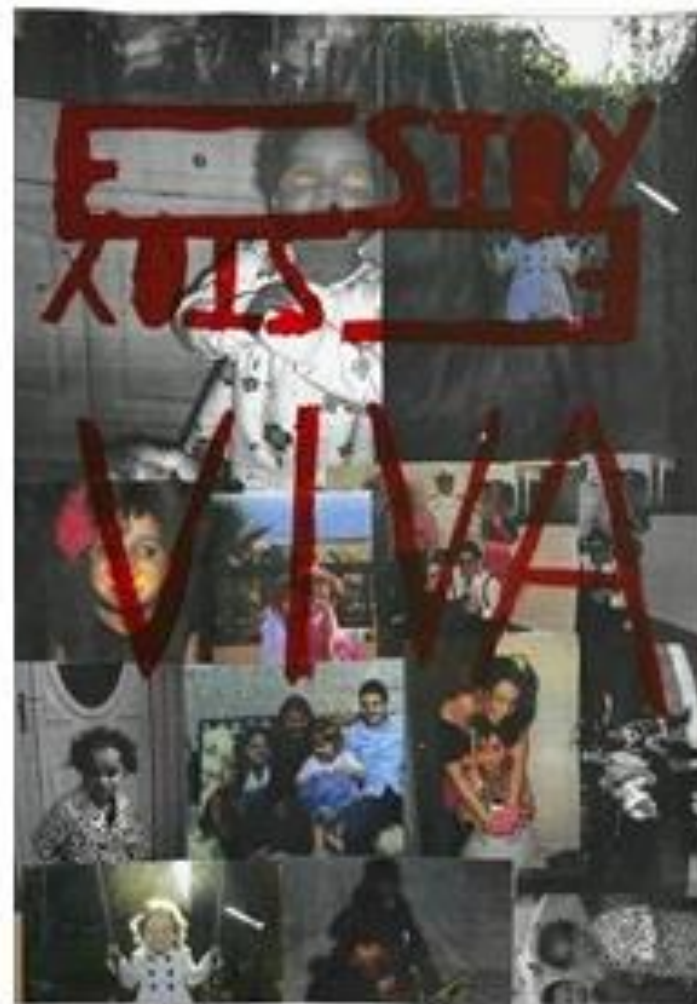
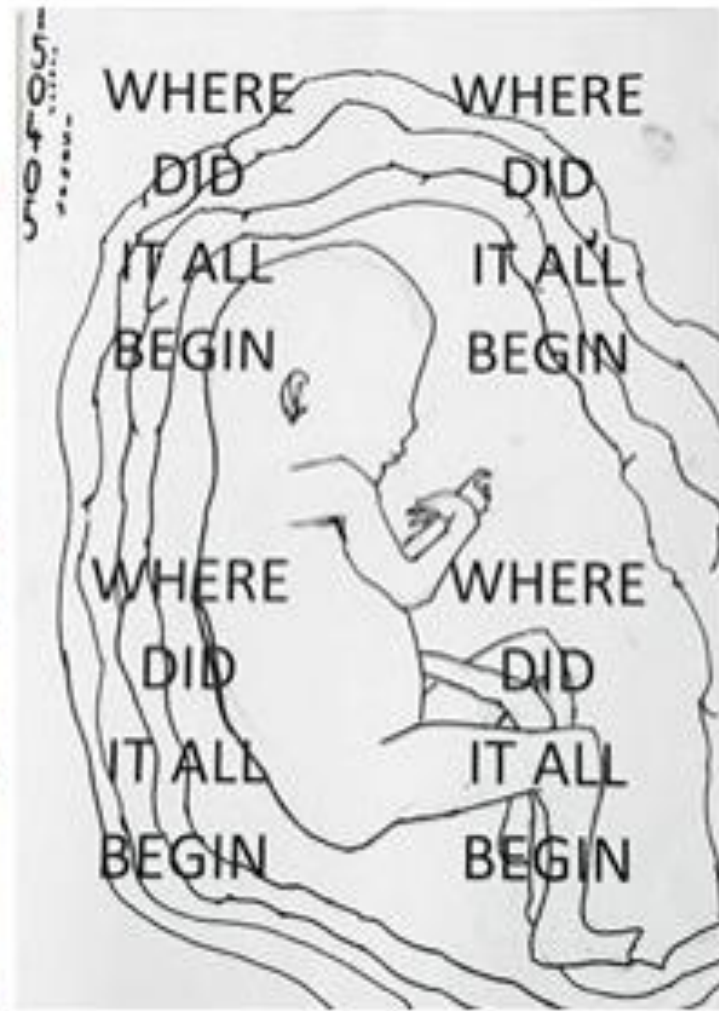
Life drawing focusing on movement

# Lola Hughes

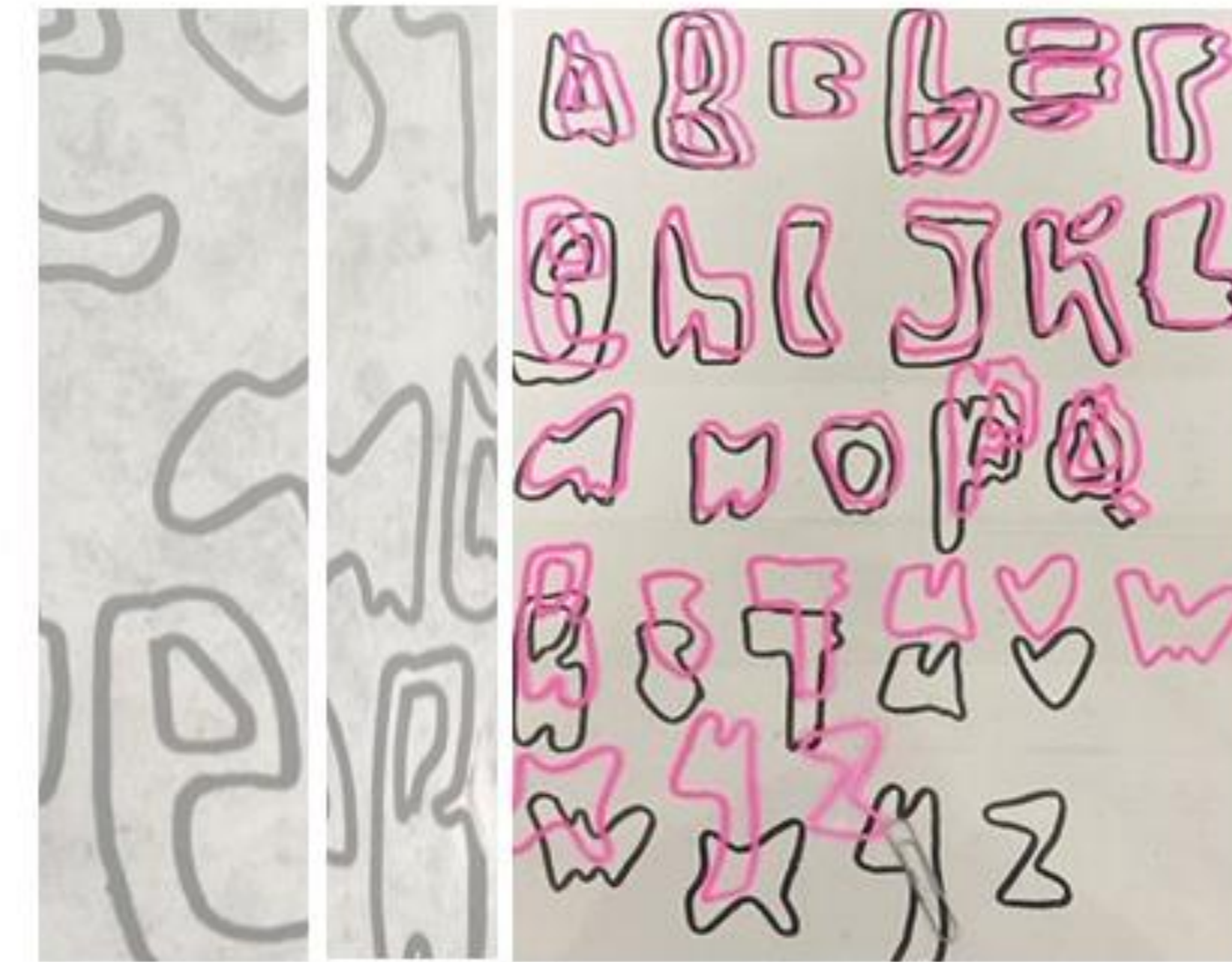
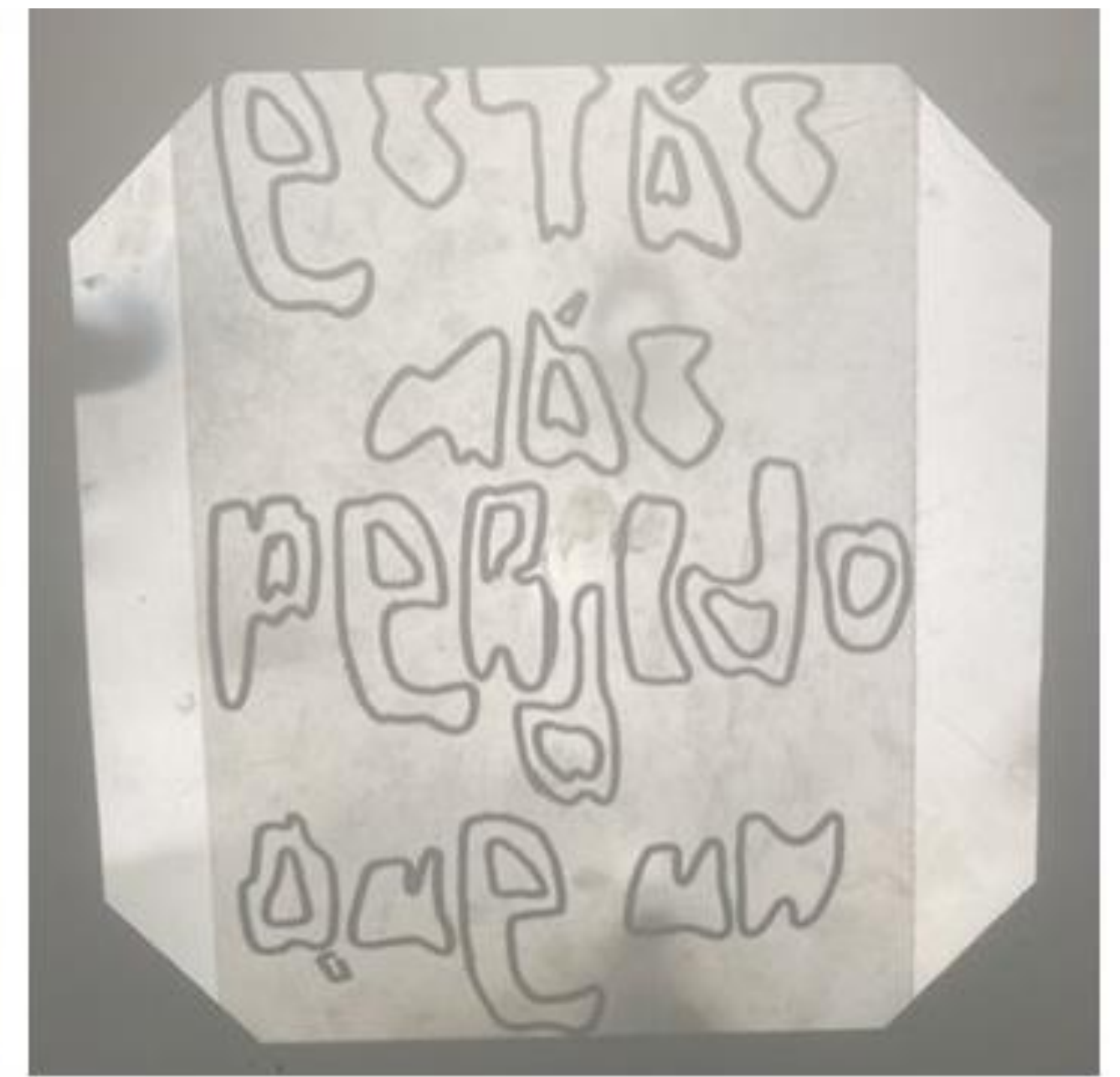
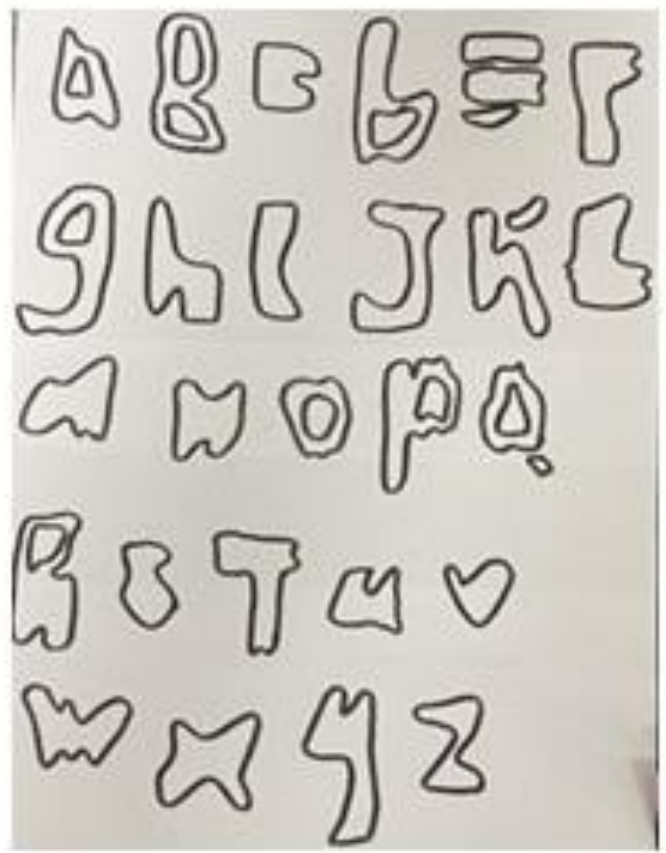
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Year 1 Communication Design









Font made from repeat pattern



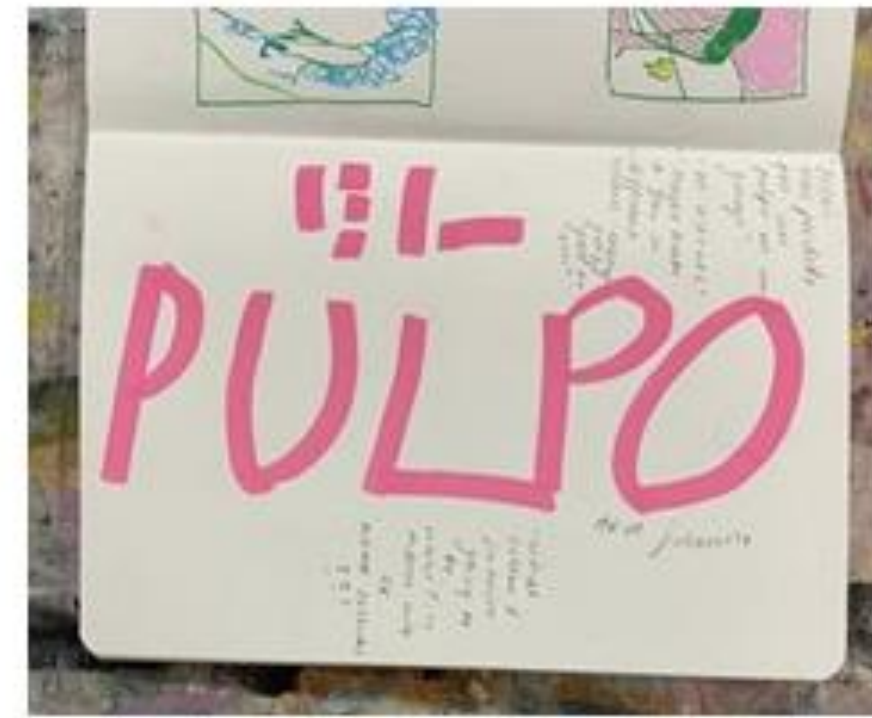
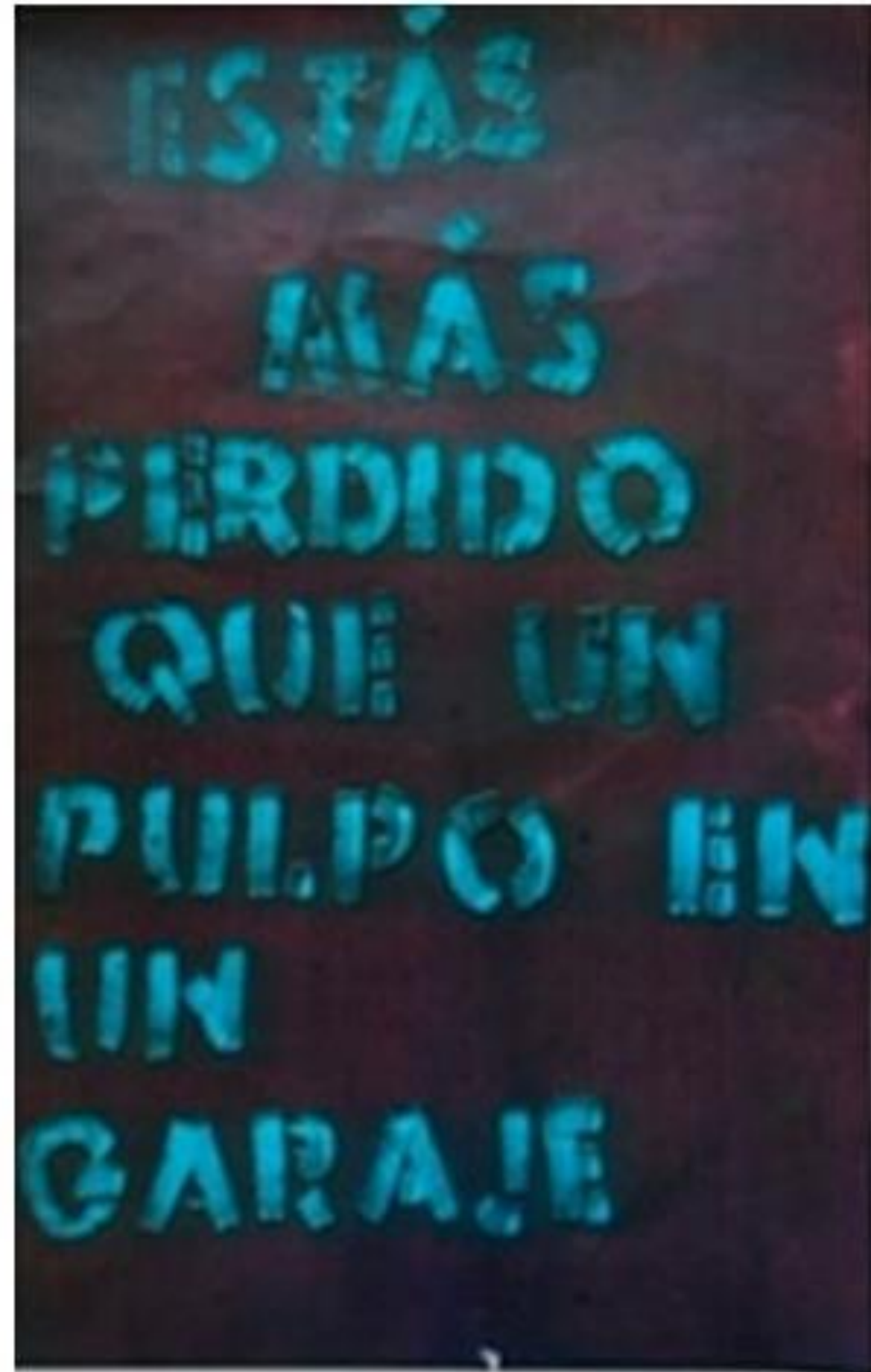




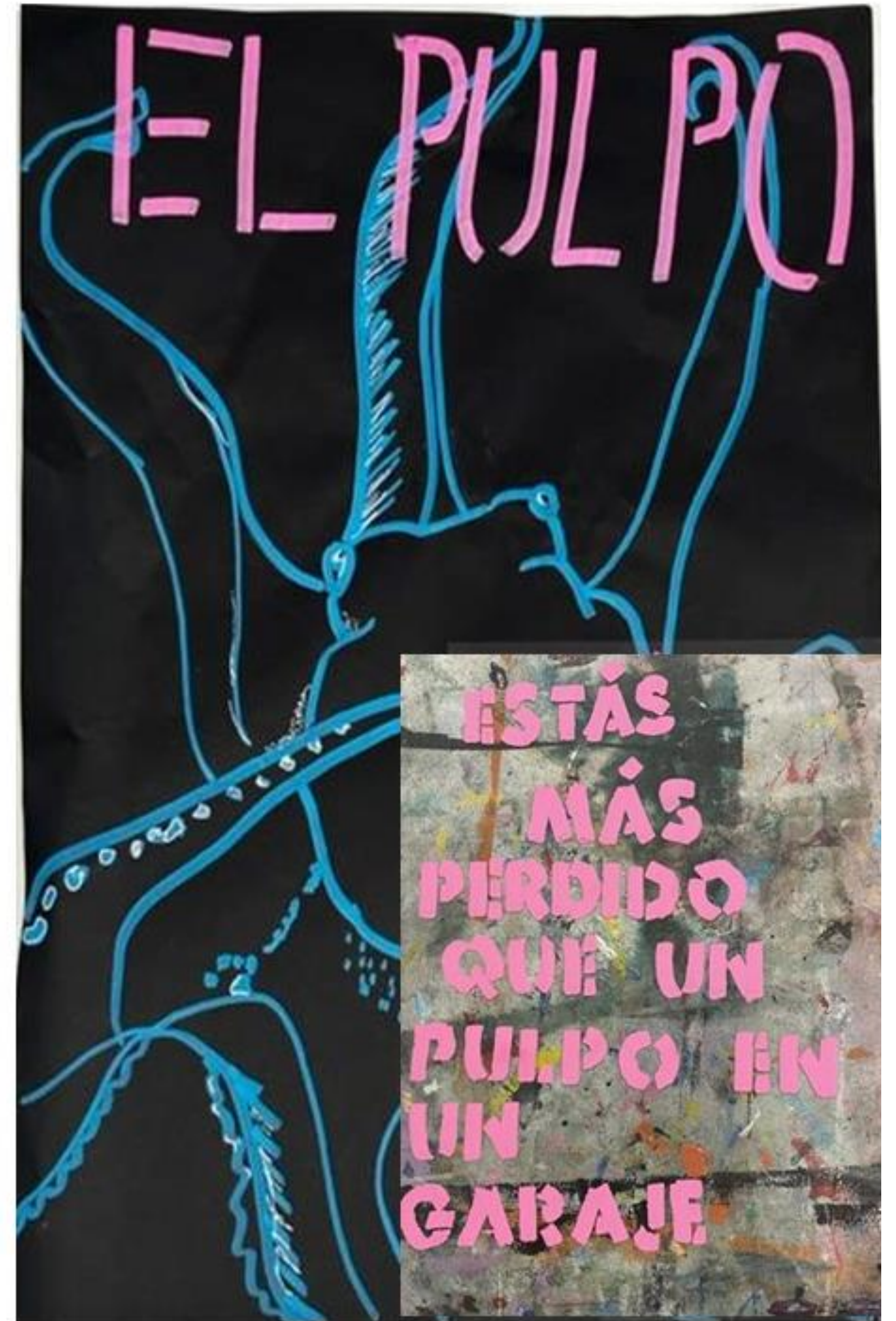
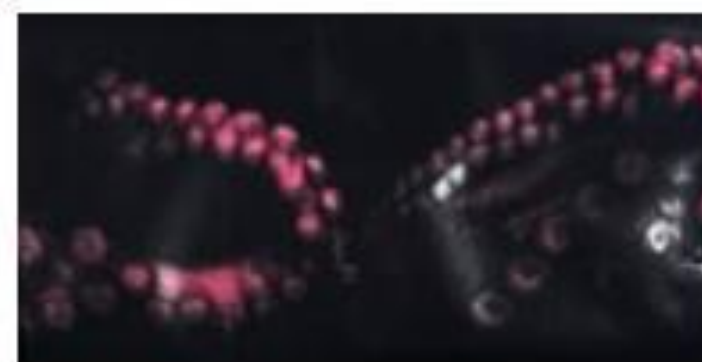
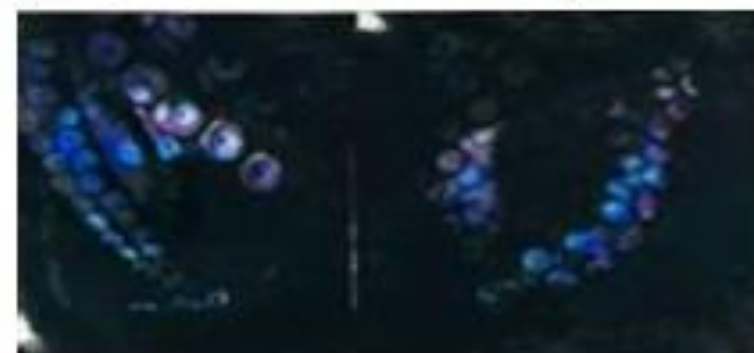
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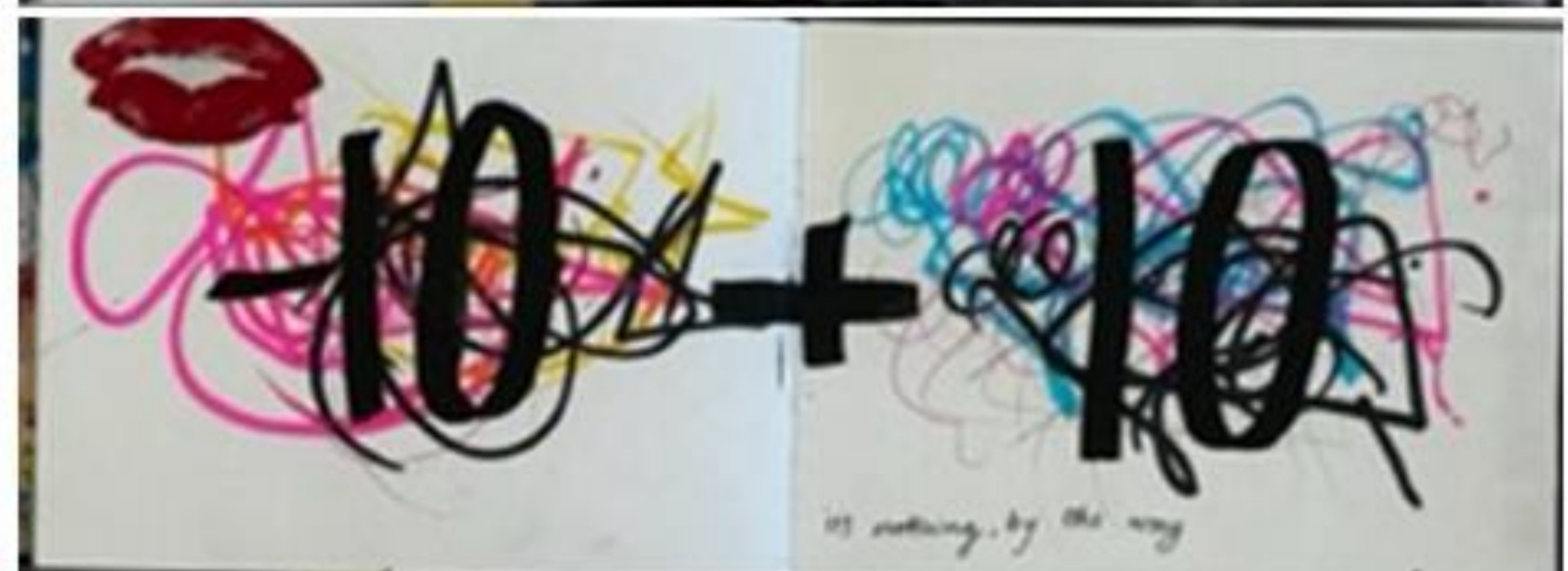
You'll be more lost than an octopus in a garage  
- A Spanish idiom for sticking out like a sore thumb.



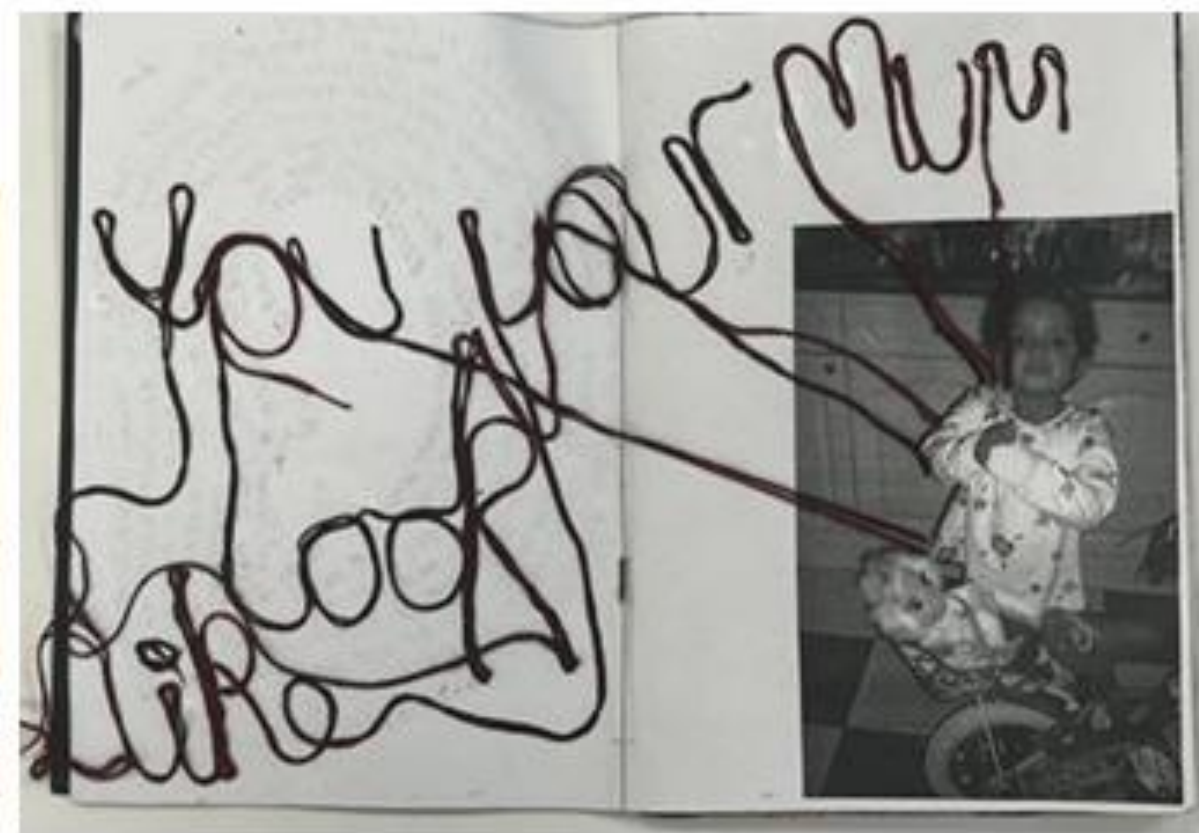


Acetate, Wire, Clay & Plastic cups

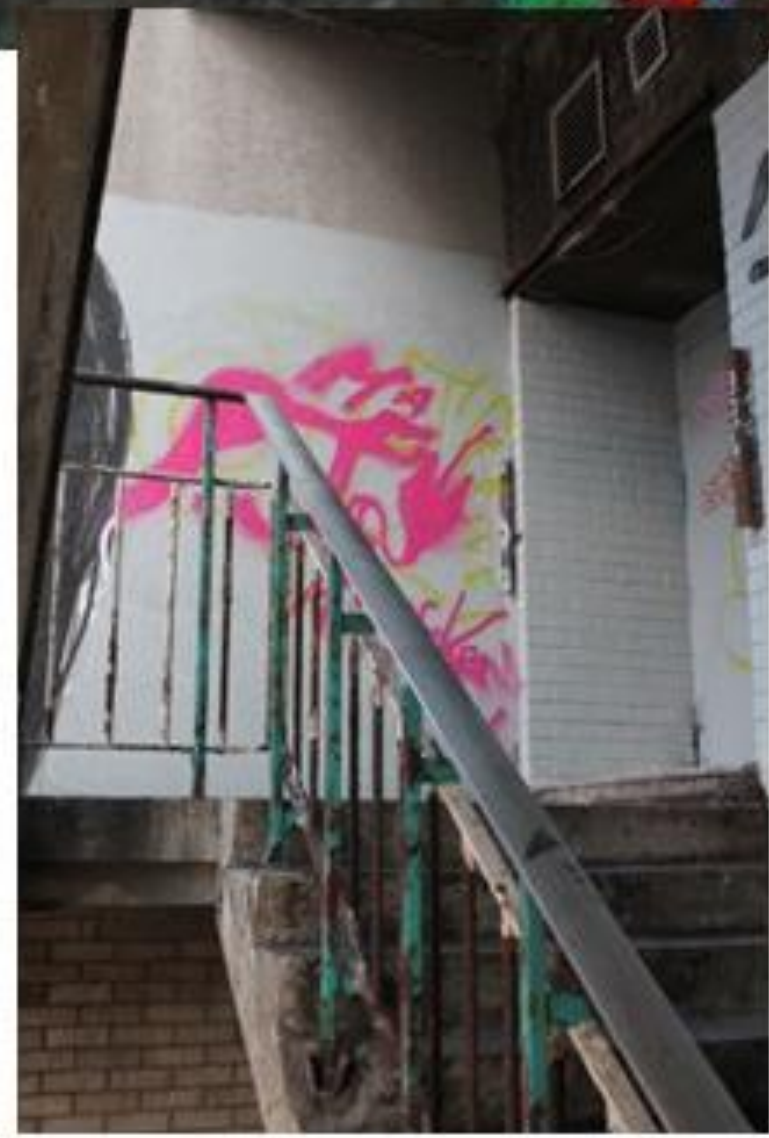








A5 sketchbook examples

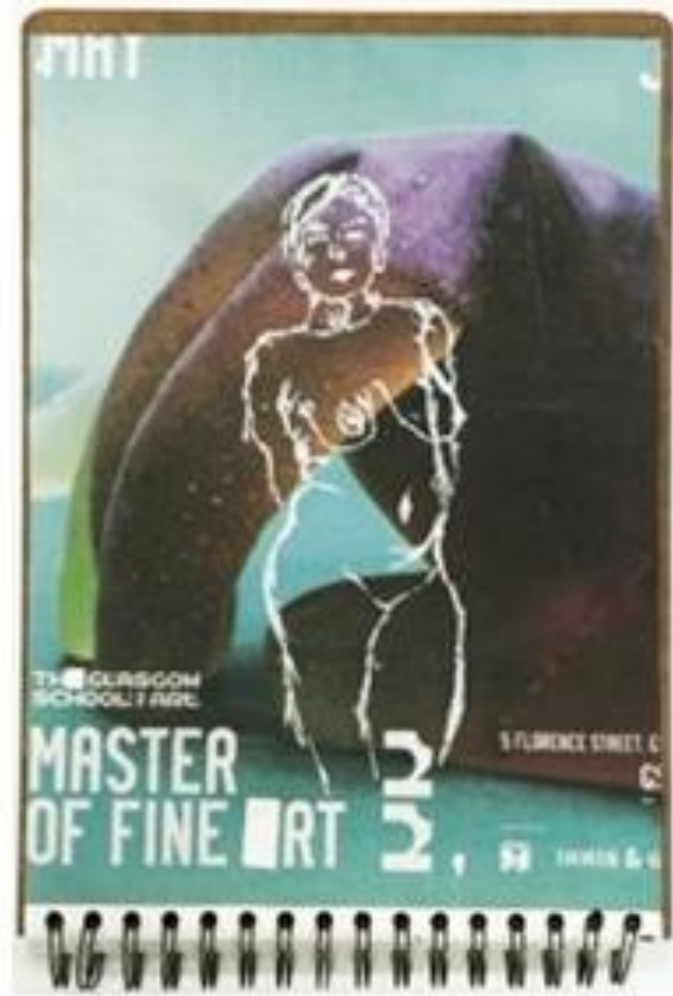
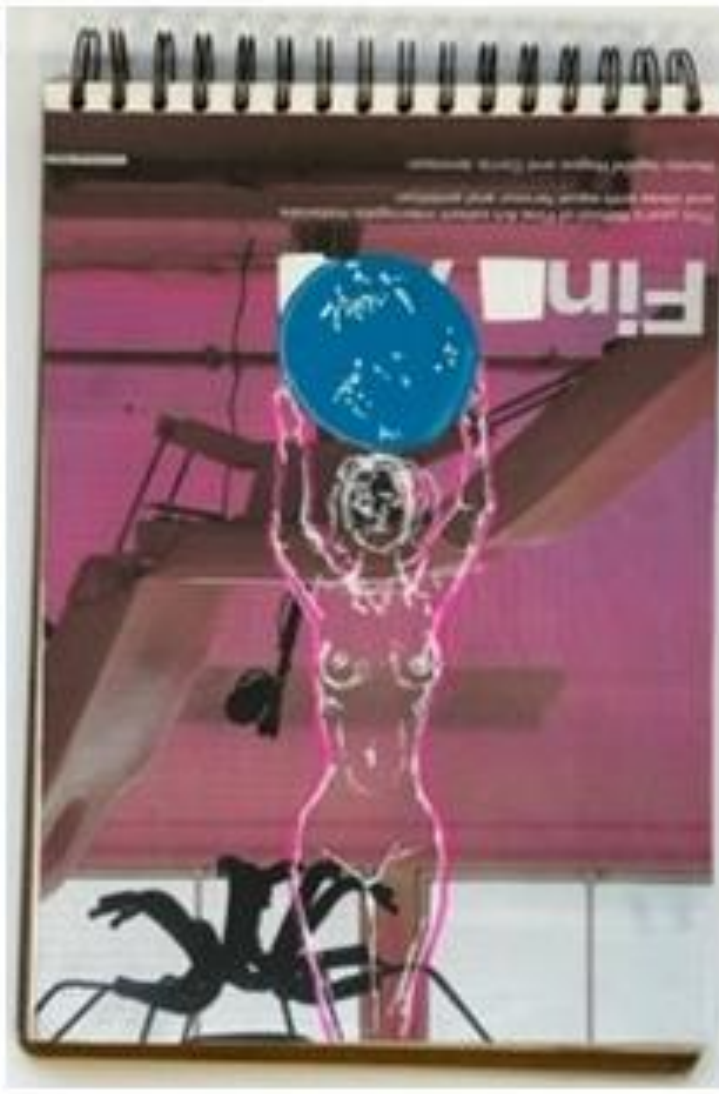




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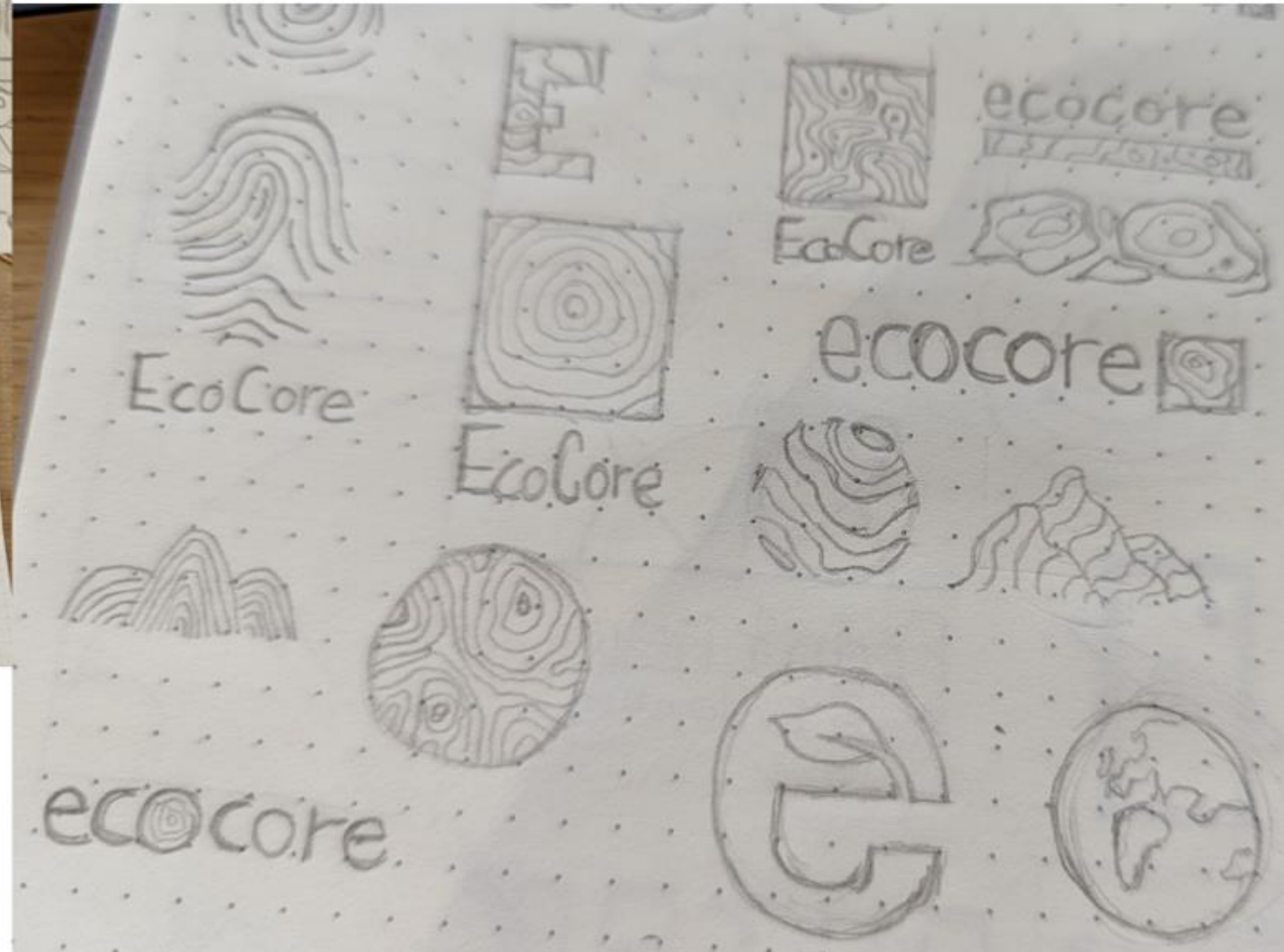
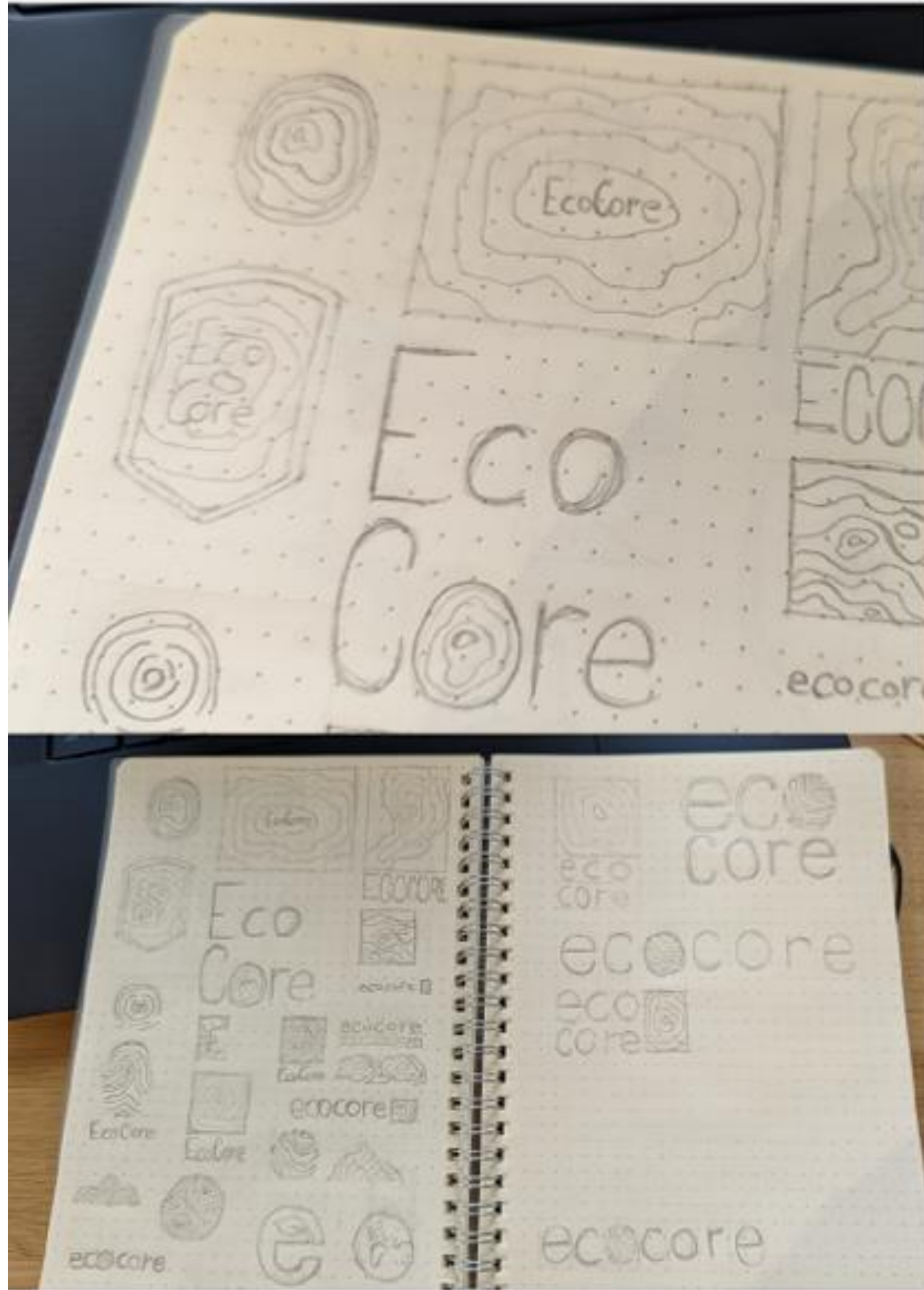
Life drawing examples

# Craig Reid

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Year 2 Communication Design

Project: Ecocore rebrand  
Client: Carbon Watchdog / Ecocore



This project was for a charity combatting climate change, previously named Carbon Watchdog, and were looking for a rebrand.

Digital draft notes: behind the ideas

- We all have a responsibility to protect the planet
- Rivers, earth, landscapes
- Combining element, singular visuals were not quite working
- Simple logo design with several meanings all linking to the Earth and climate change.
- Topographical maps
- Lakes and rivers
- Fingerprints
- The world
- Waves and oceans

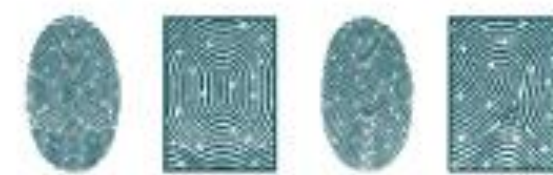
Concept 1



Topographical maps, geography, earthy.



Concept 2



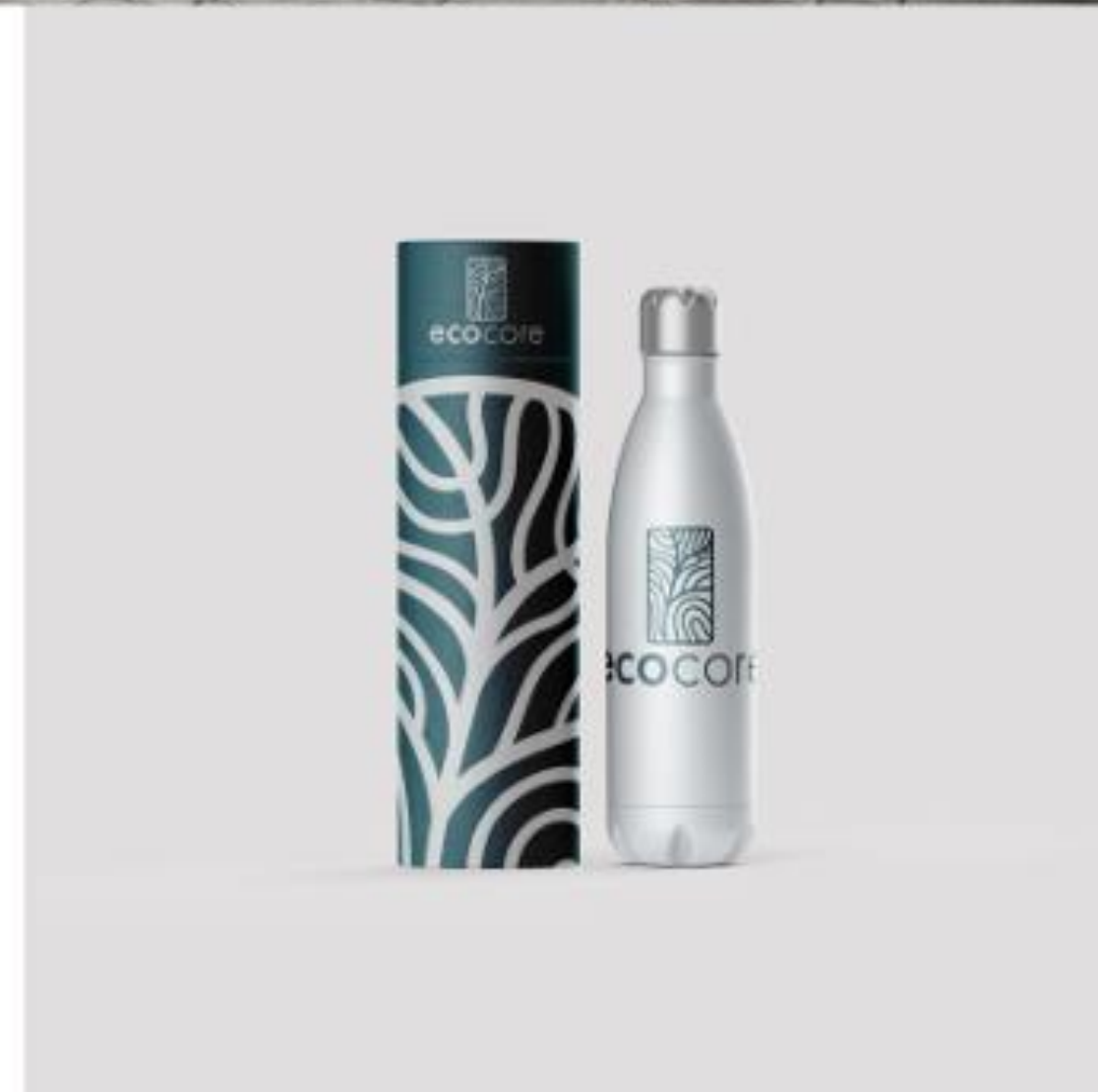
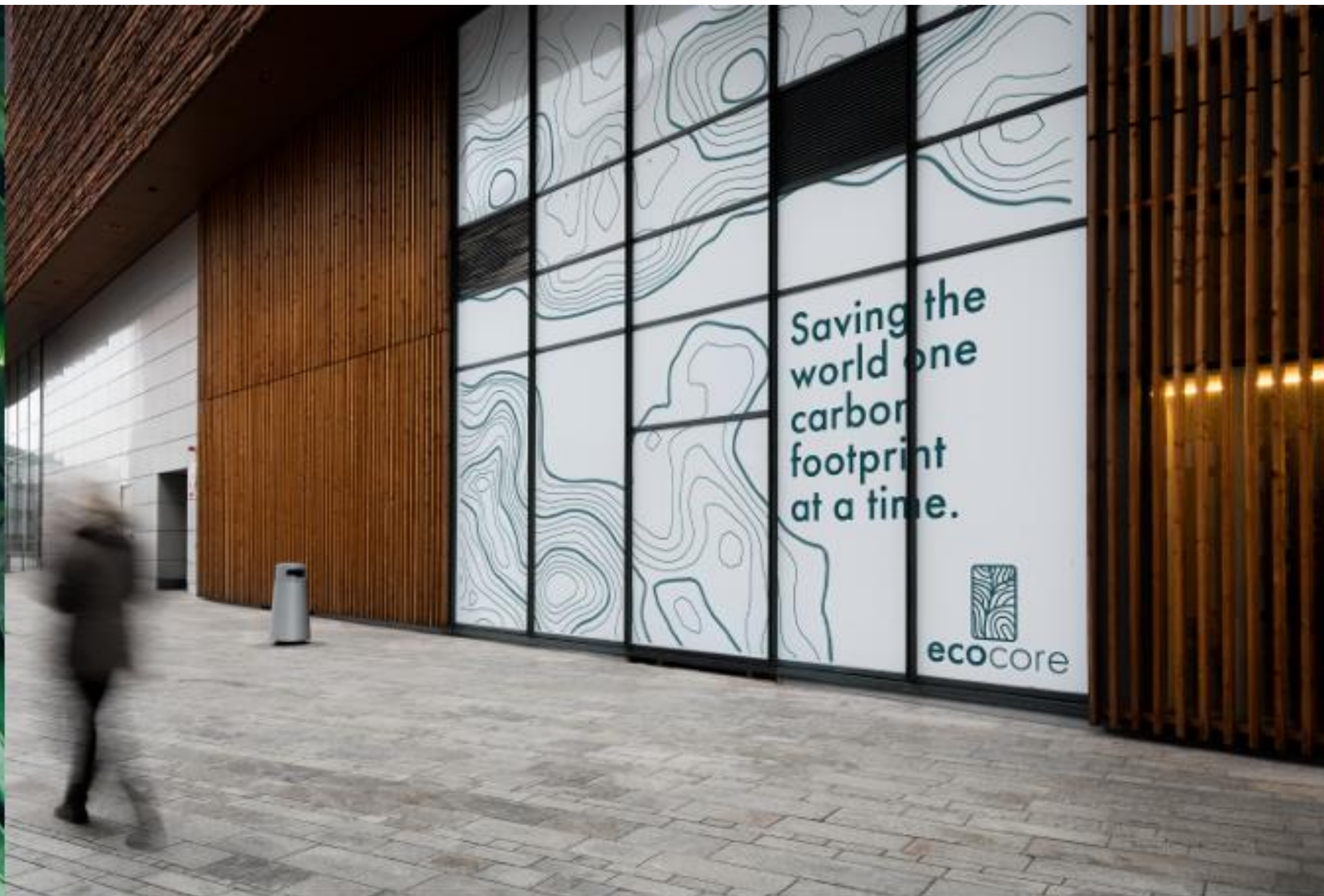
Fingerprint, waves, earth, home.

Concept 3



Leaf, rivers, life, fingerprint.





Project: Bridge 2 Business rebrand  
Client: Young Enterprise Scotland



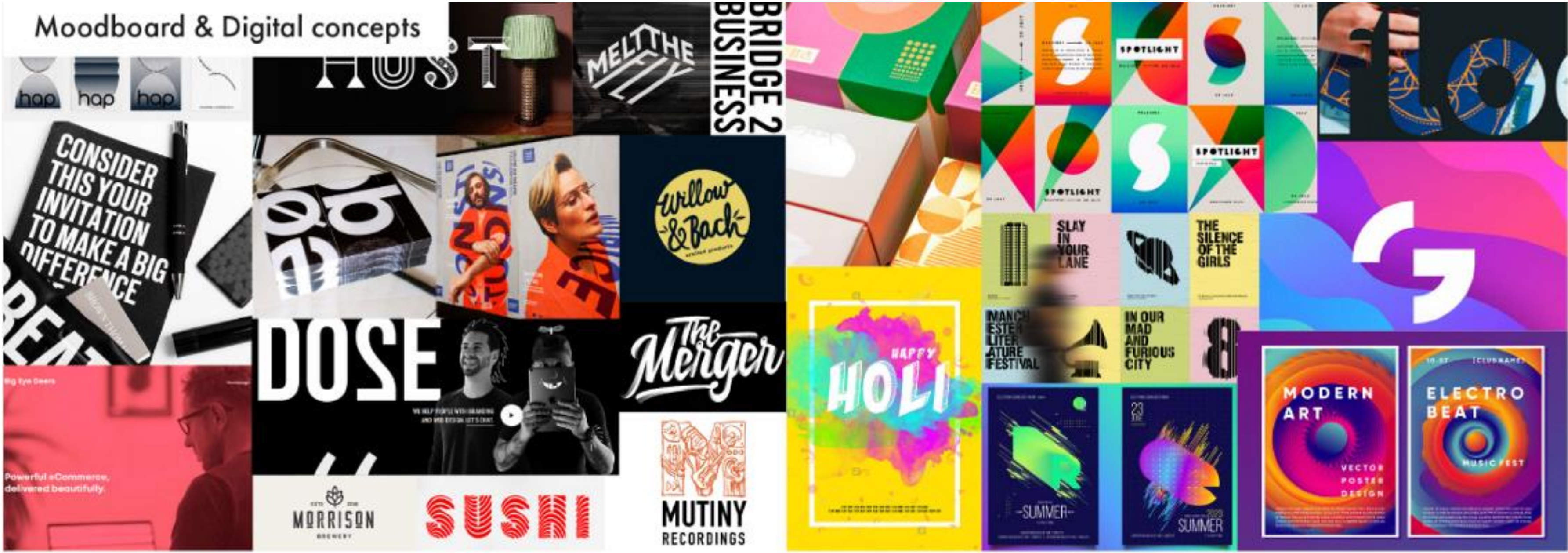
Initial sketches



Idea behind the logo: Erasmus bridge supports simplified to geometric shapes, since Bridge 2 Business is funded by Erasmus, so links back to its beginnings.

Inspiration  
(Erasmus bridge - Rotterdam, Holland)





BRIDGE 2 BUSINESS BRIDGE 2 BUSINESS  
 BRIDGE TO BUSINESS BRIDGE TO BUSINESS

bridge to business

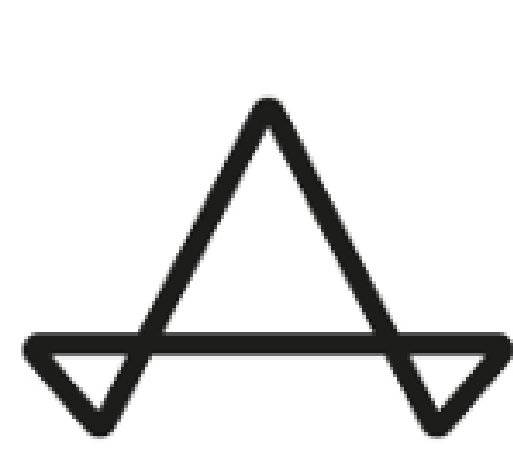
Bridge to Business

BRIDGE 2 BUSINESS  
 BRIDGE 2 BUSINESS  
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 BRIDGE 2 BUSINESS

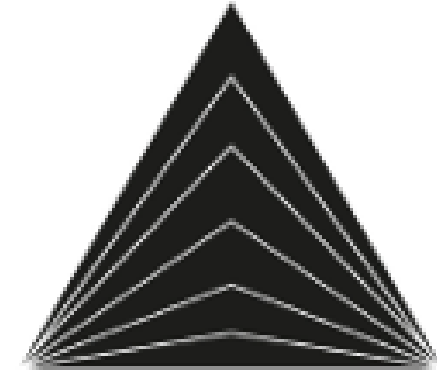


bridge to business bridge 2 business bridge 2 business





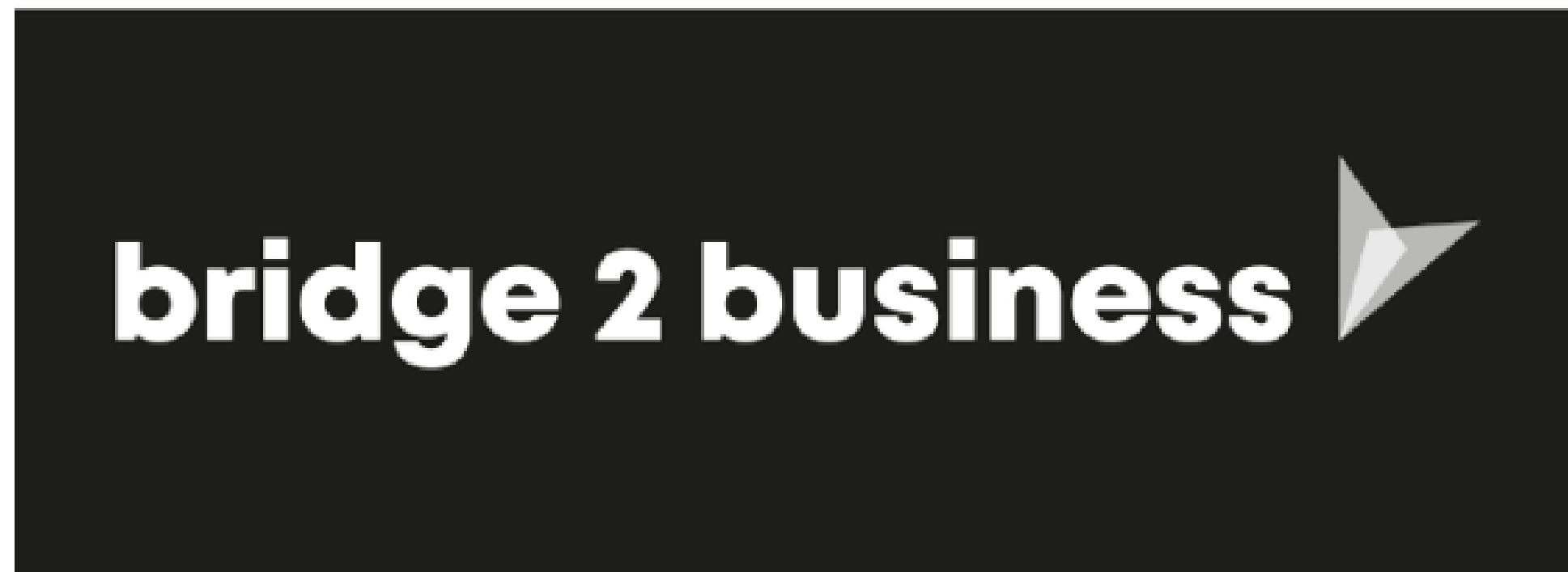
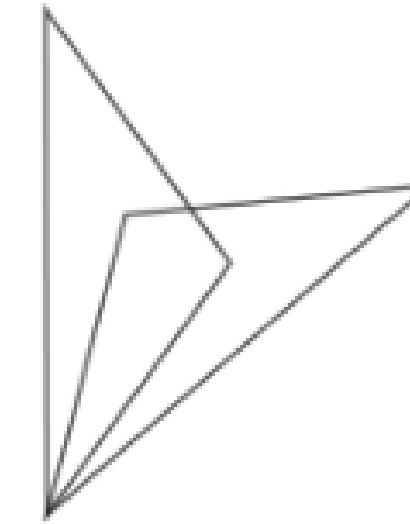
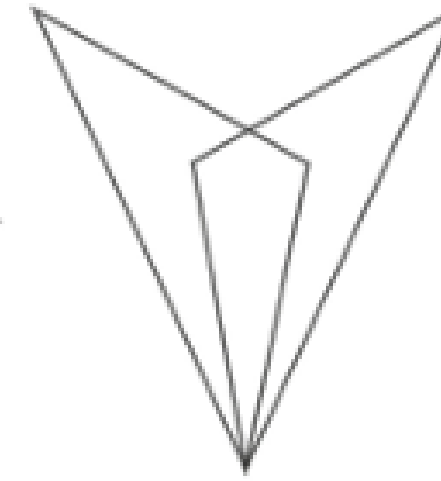
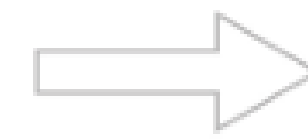
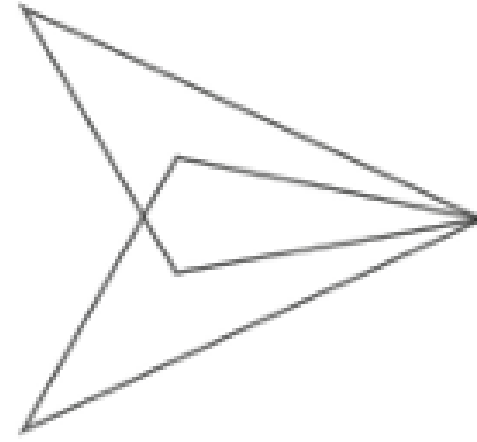
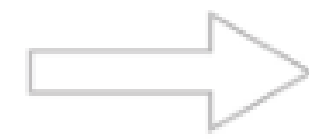
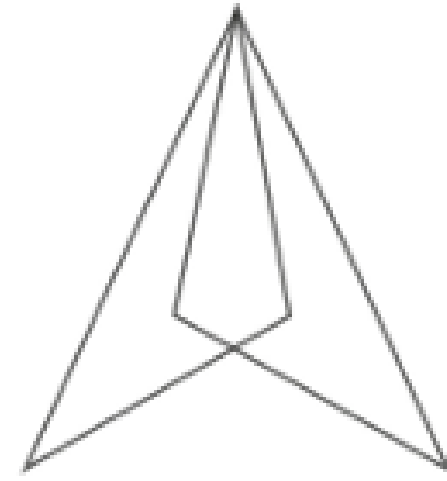
**bridge to business**



**bridge 2 business**



bridge 2 business



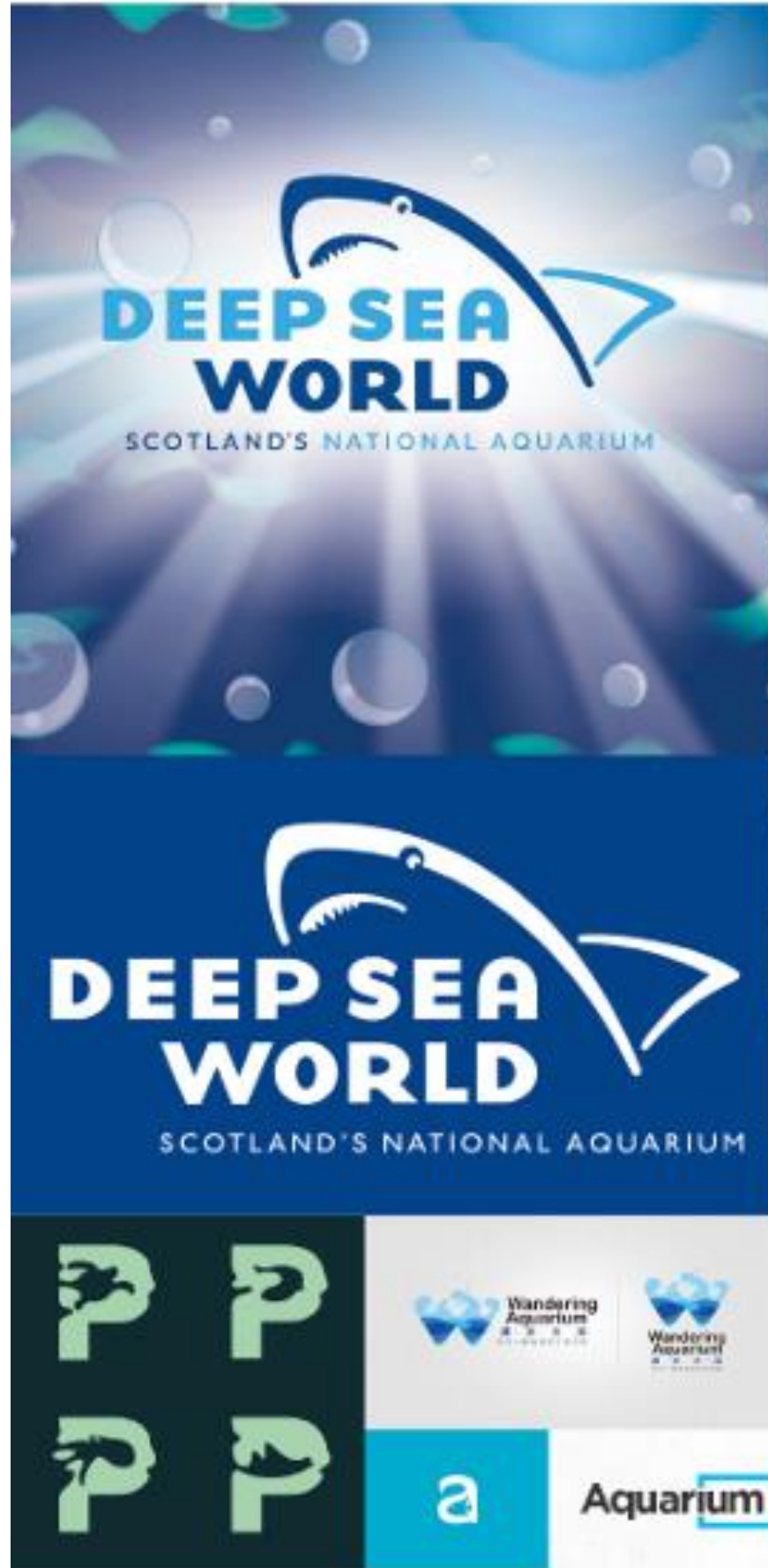


Old VS New logo design. Not a complete rebrand, but an evolution of the brand that still retains a part of the brand's history and heritage.

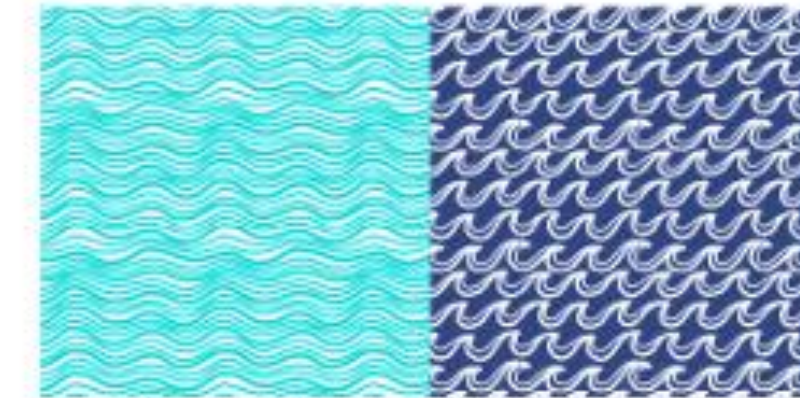
**Project: Deep Sea World reimagined**  
**Passion project\***

Project prompted after visit to aquarium\*

Original logo



3D depth adds personality to designs



Wave designs could be used for leaflets/brochures



Coral designs

Use white space?



Great colour and style

**Deep Sea World** - Righteous  
**Deep Sea World** - Poppins Bold  
 DEEP SEA WORLD - AMATIC SC BOLD



deep  
**SEA**  
 world  
 deep  
**Sea**  
 world

deep  
**Sea**  
 world

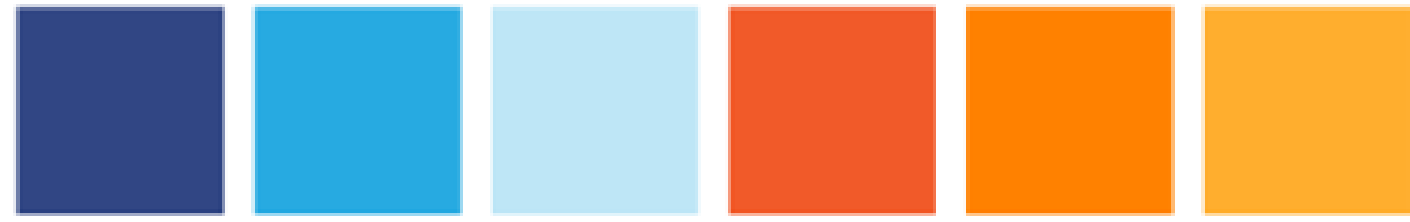
ocean  
 depth  
 levels



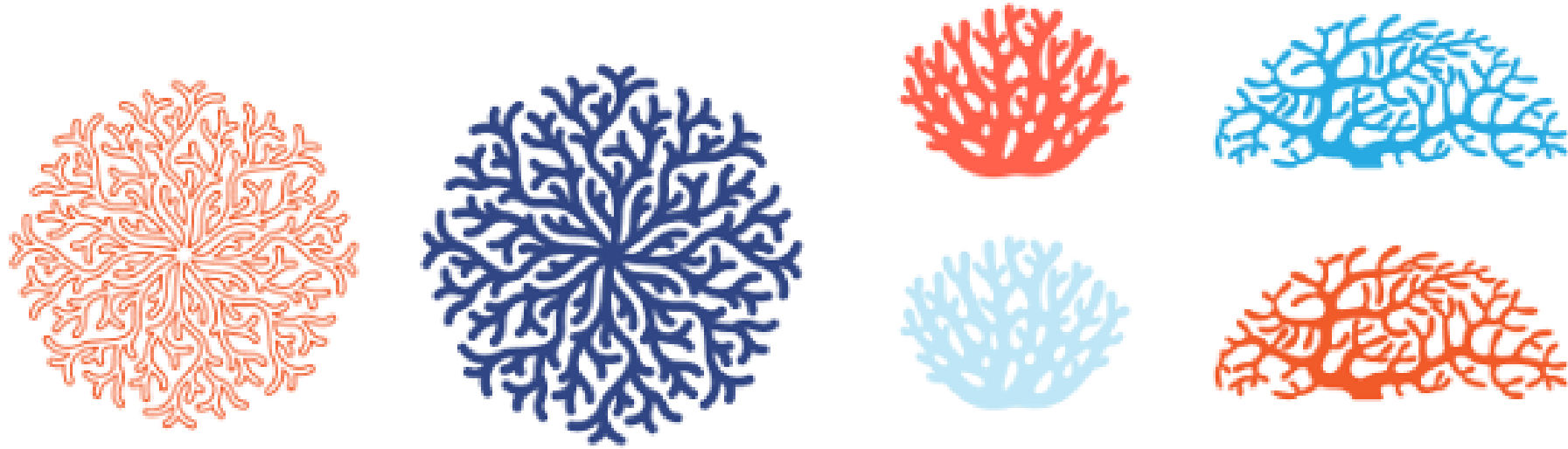
Logo inspirations

**Deep Sea World** Scotland's National Aquarium  
**Deep Sea World** Scotland's National Aquarium

New logo type layout

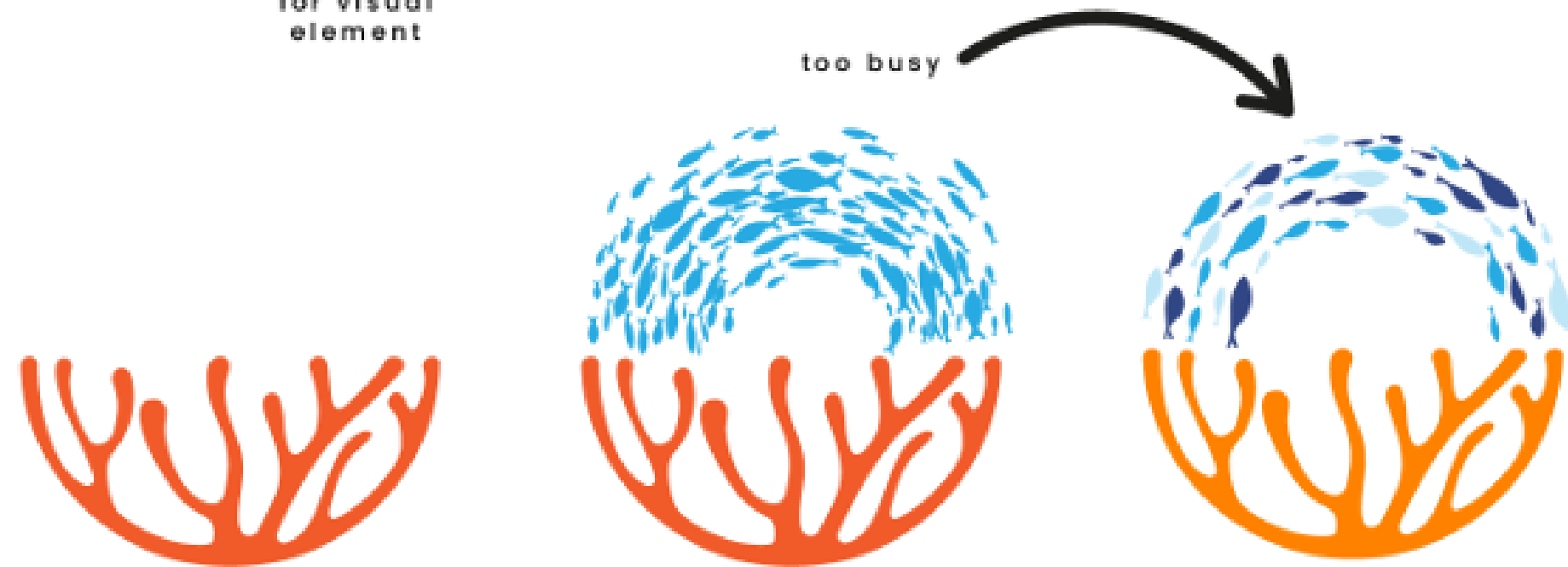


Potential colour palette



Inspiration for visual element

too busy



flip  
dij



**Deep Sea World**  
Scotland's National Aquarium

**Deep Sea World**  
Scotland's National Aquarium

**Deep Sea World**  
Scotland's National Aquarium

**Deep Sea World**   
Scotland's National Aquarium

**Deep Sea World**  
Scotland's National Aquarium



**Deep Sea World**  
Scotland's National Aquarium

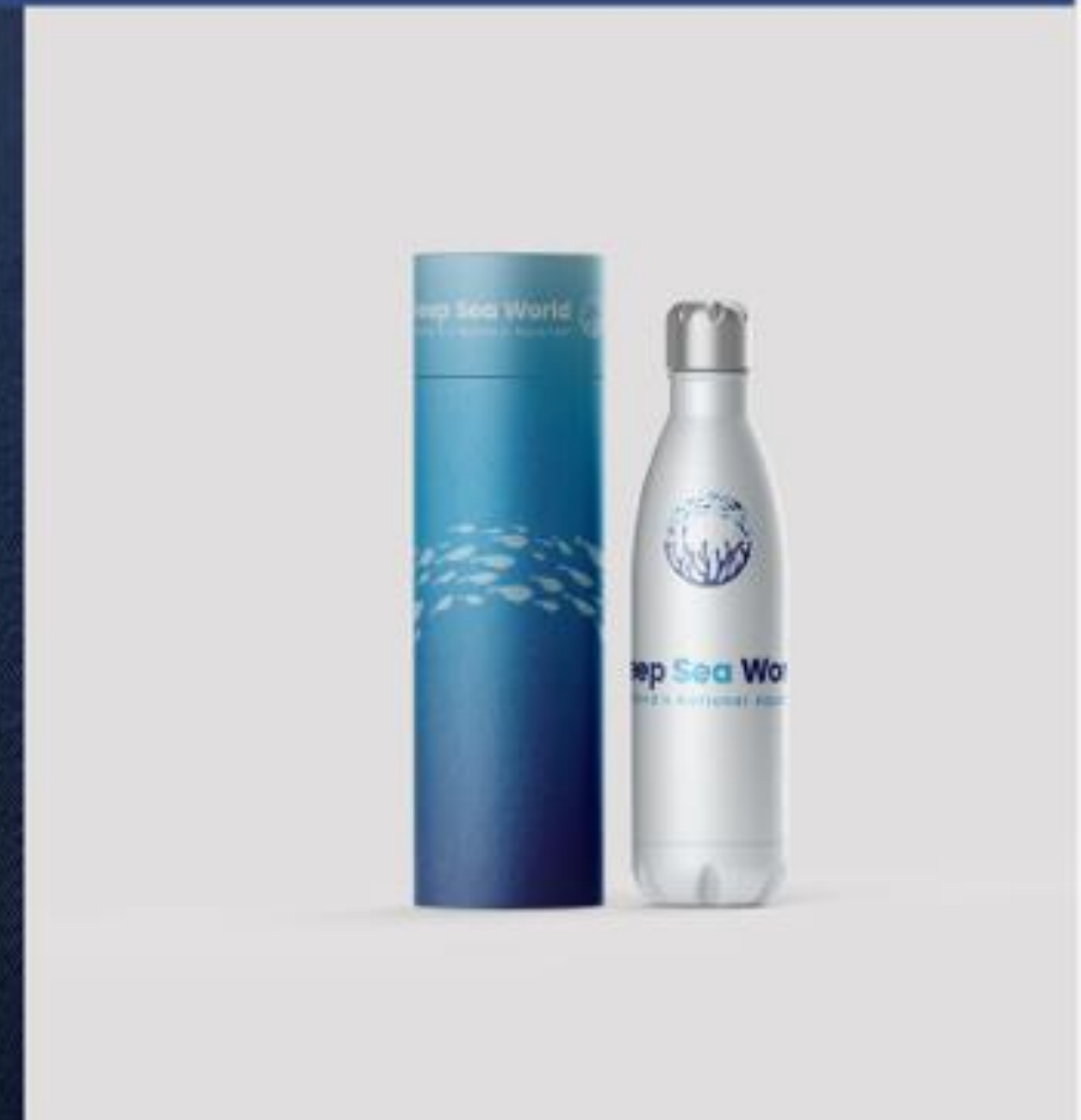


**Deep Sea World**  
Scotland's National Aquarium



# Deep Sea World

Scotland's National Aquarium



## The Concept Stage

With the direction and style in mind, I decided to firstly look at the typeface that would best represent the theme of Nooch. Several handwritten typefaces were chosen to take further including Yumogi, Fredoka One, and Sue Ellen Francisco. The Laisha typeface had a fun personality but looked far too modern and formal for the goal we were looking to achieve with this logo design.

## Digital Concepts

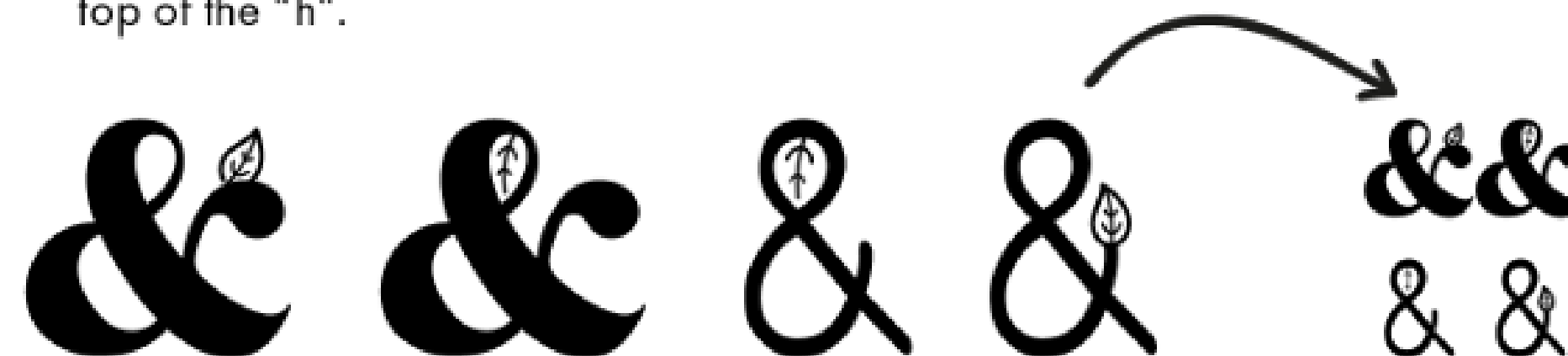
Taking the digital concepts forward I decided that a combination of a bolder Font paired with the Sue Ellen Sanfrancisco Typeface worked best. From here I looked at what illustrative elements could be added to give the brand a much more recognisable look.

Using an ampersand in "bar & kitchen" is a design choice made as it not only shortens the type below "nooch" but also adds a flare of style. I began implimenting a leaf design onto the ampersand to further cement

the Nooch brand. Unfortunately at smaller sizes this is incredible hard to see, so this design was ultimately removed.



A smaller but eye-catching detail was needed, so a singular leaf was added to the end of the logo at the top of the "h".



nooch bar and kitchen  
**nooch bar and kitchen**

nooch bar and kitchen

**nooch bar and kitchen**

Fonts from top to bottom: Yomogi, Fredoka One, Sue Ellen Francisco, Laisha

**nooch**  
**NOOCH**

Alturism Font

**nooch**

font: Original Font

nooch  
bar and kitchen

Above: Typeface pairings

**nooch**  
bar and kitchen

**nooch**  
bar and kitchen

nooch  
bar and kitchen

**nóoch**  
bar & kitchen

**nooch**  
bar & kitchen

nooch  
bar and kitchen

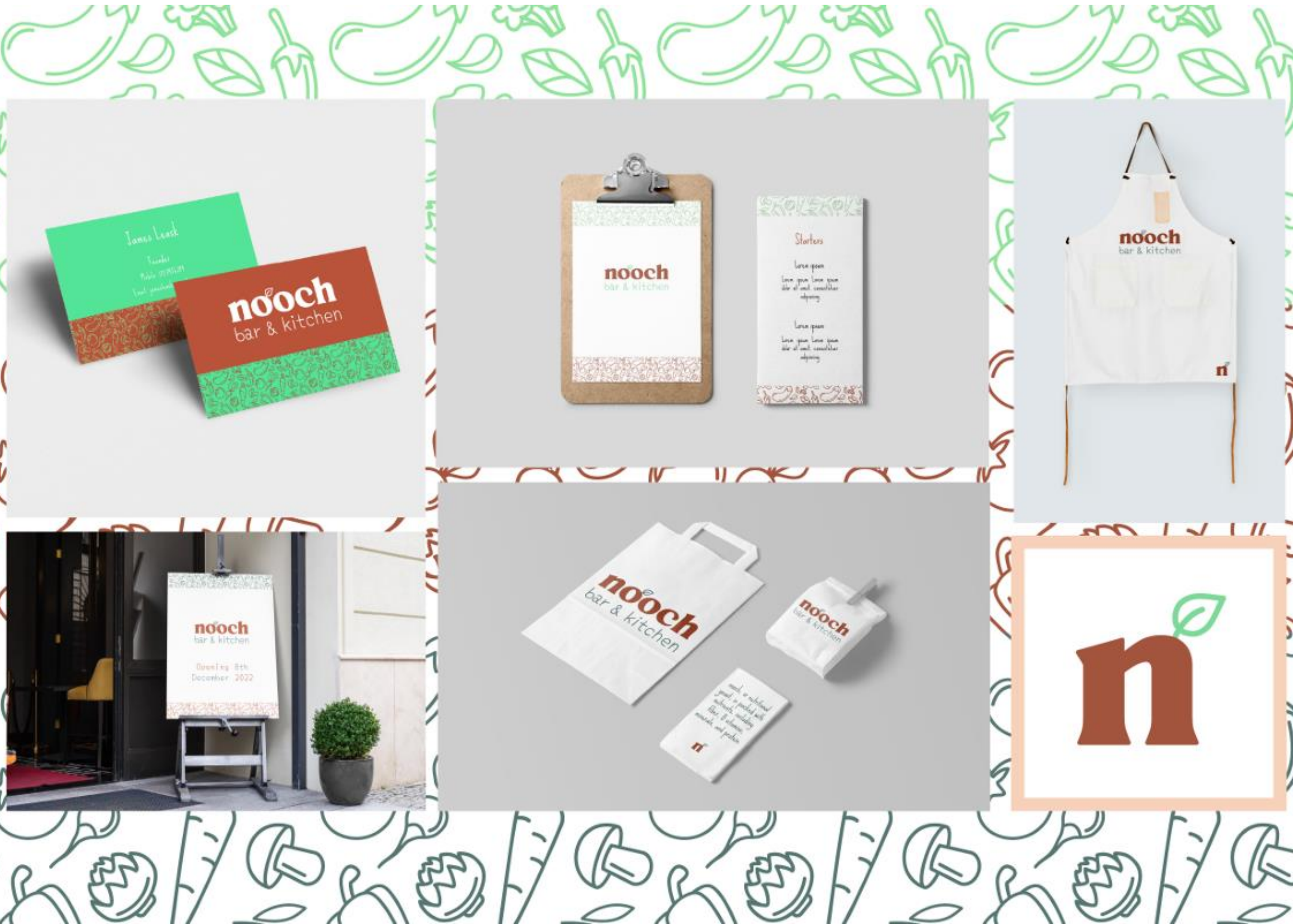
**nóoch**  
bar & kitchen

**nóoch**  
bar & kitchen

**nóoch**  
bar & kitchen

Digital refinements  
of concepts and  
on to the chosen  
and final logo  
design picked by  
the client.





# Maddison Hutchison

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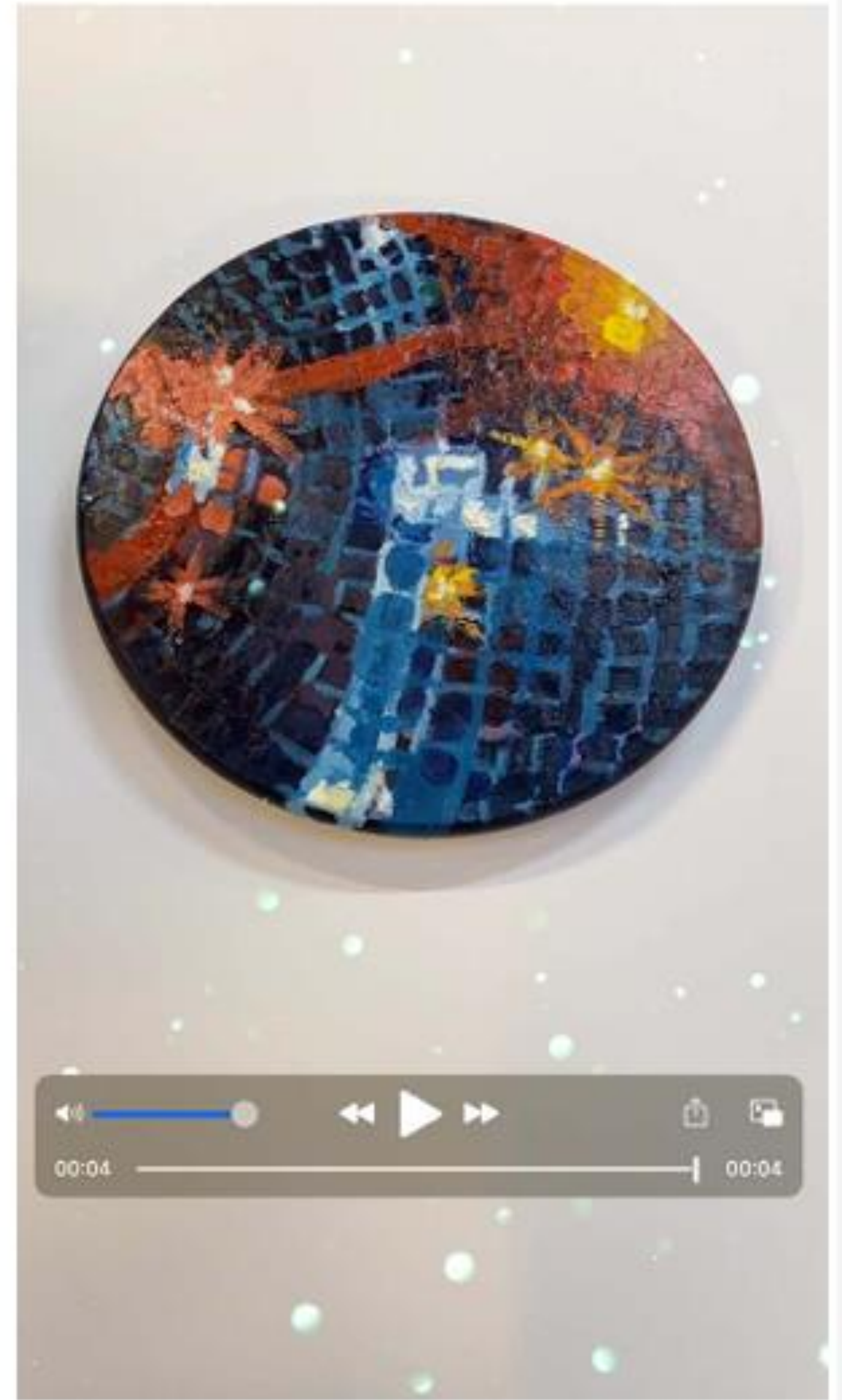
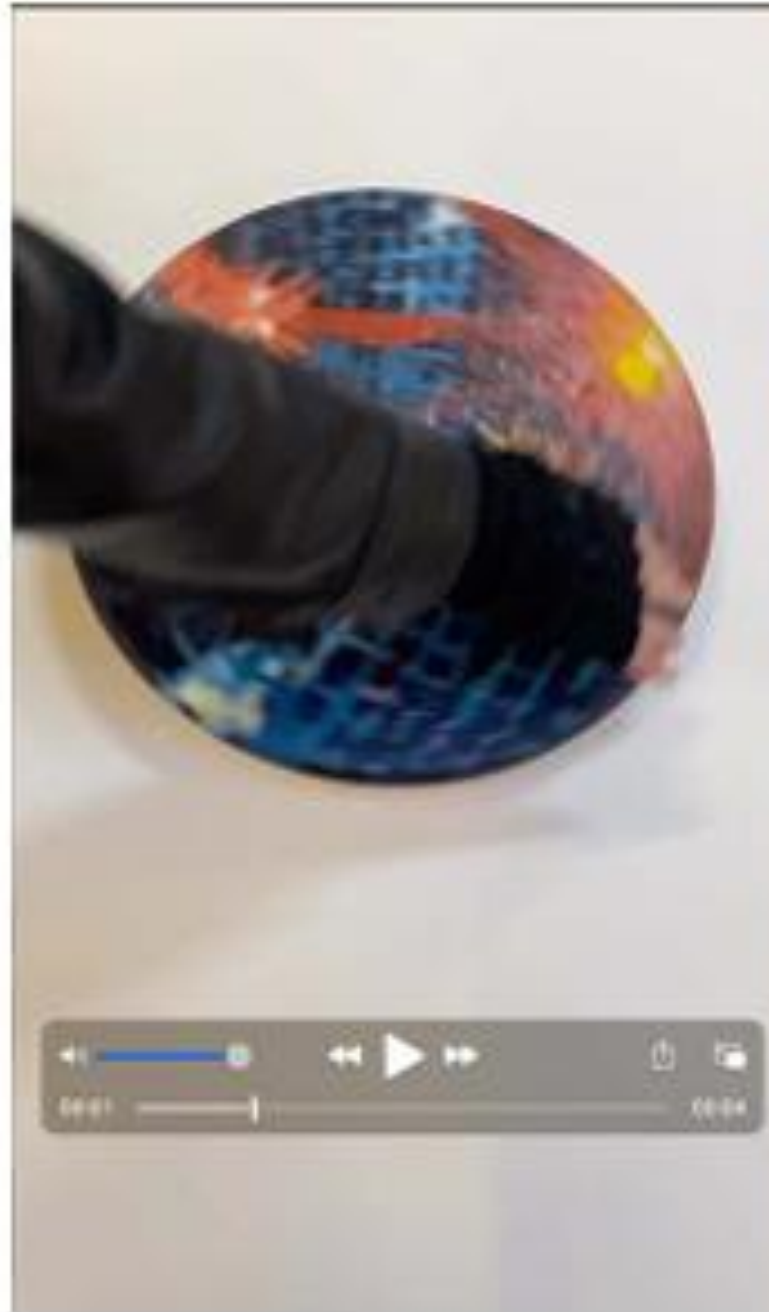
Year 2 Communication Design









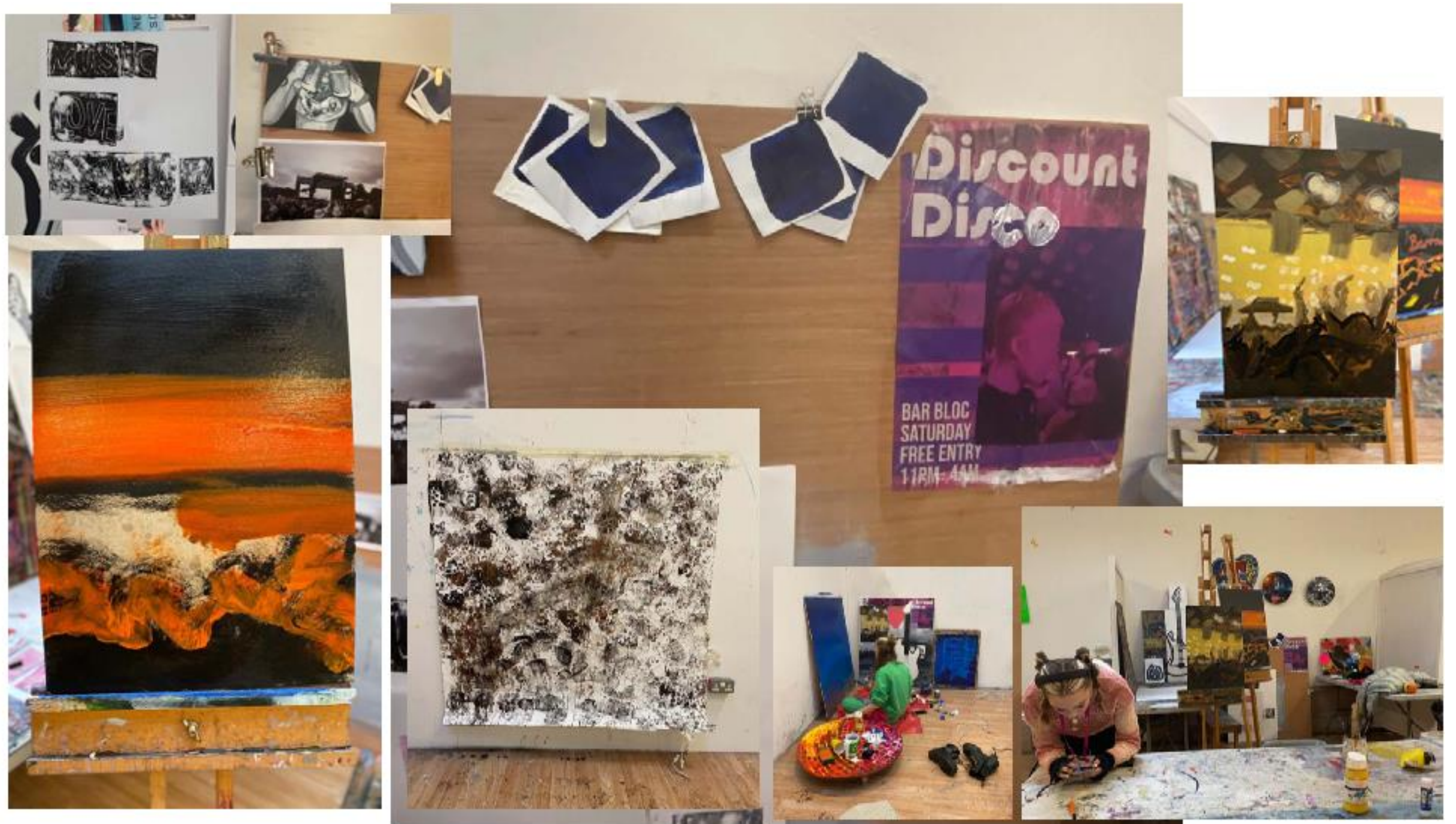






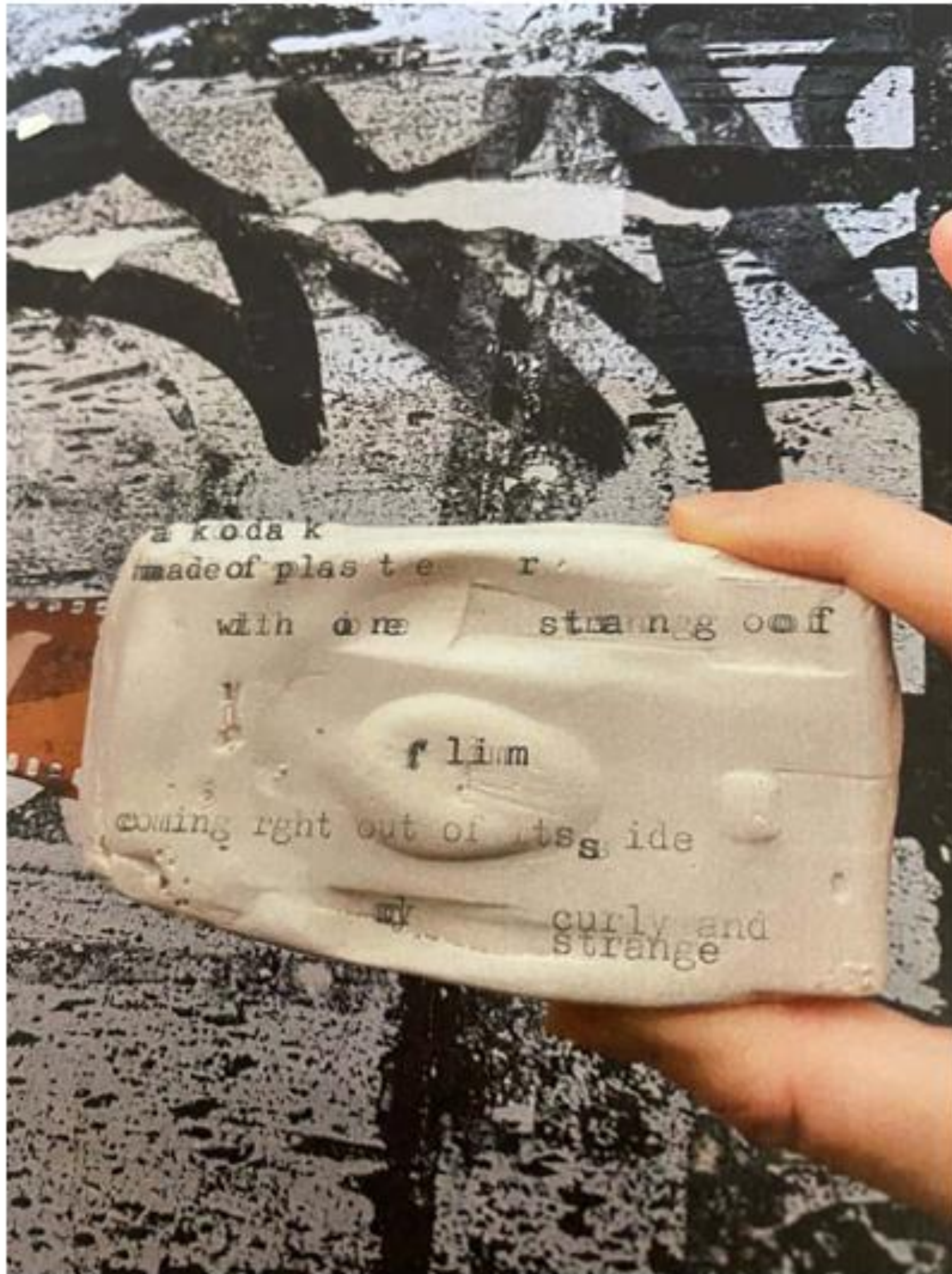




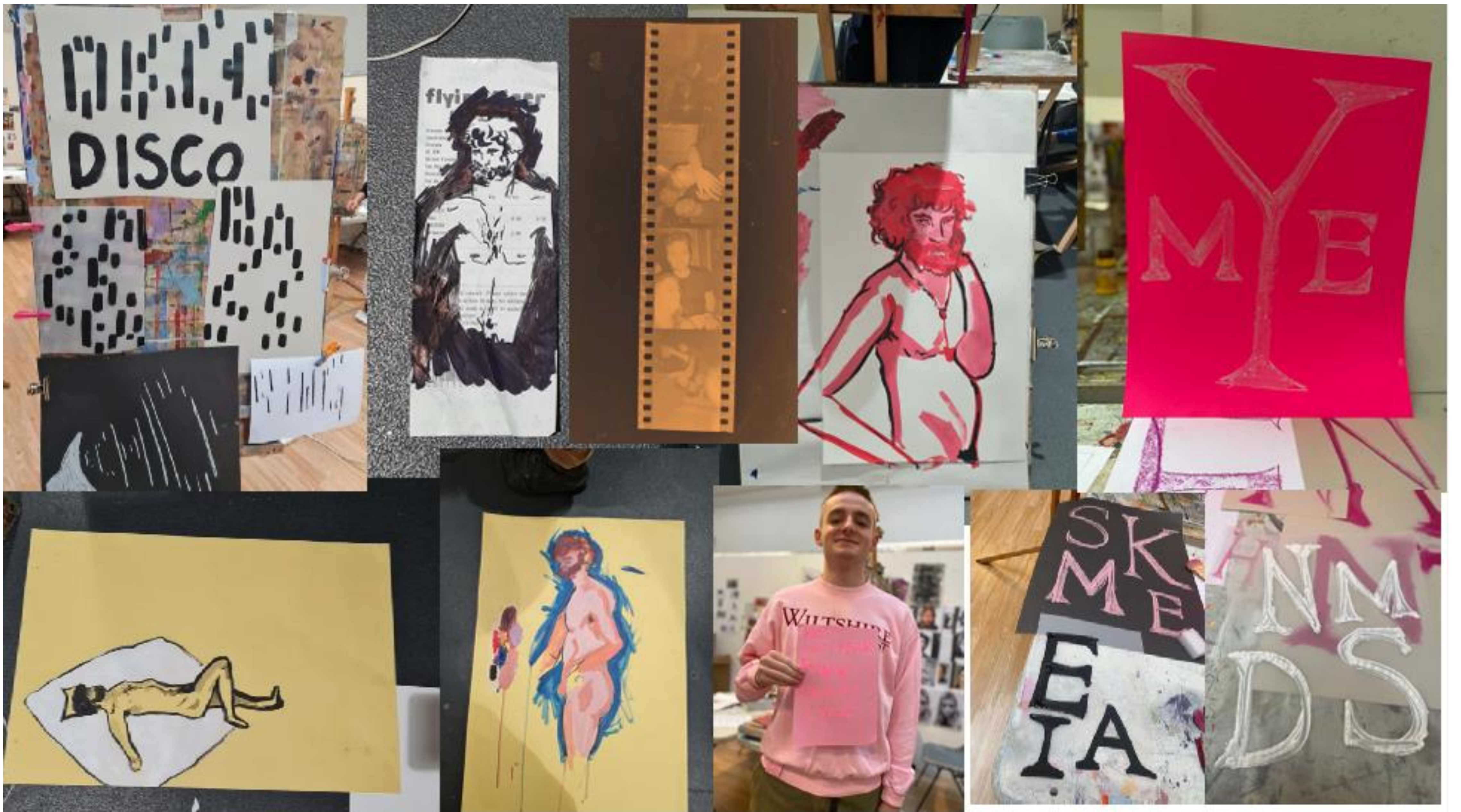




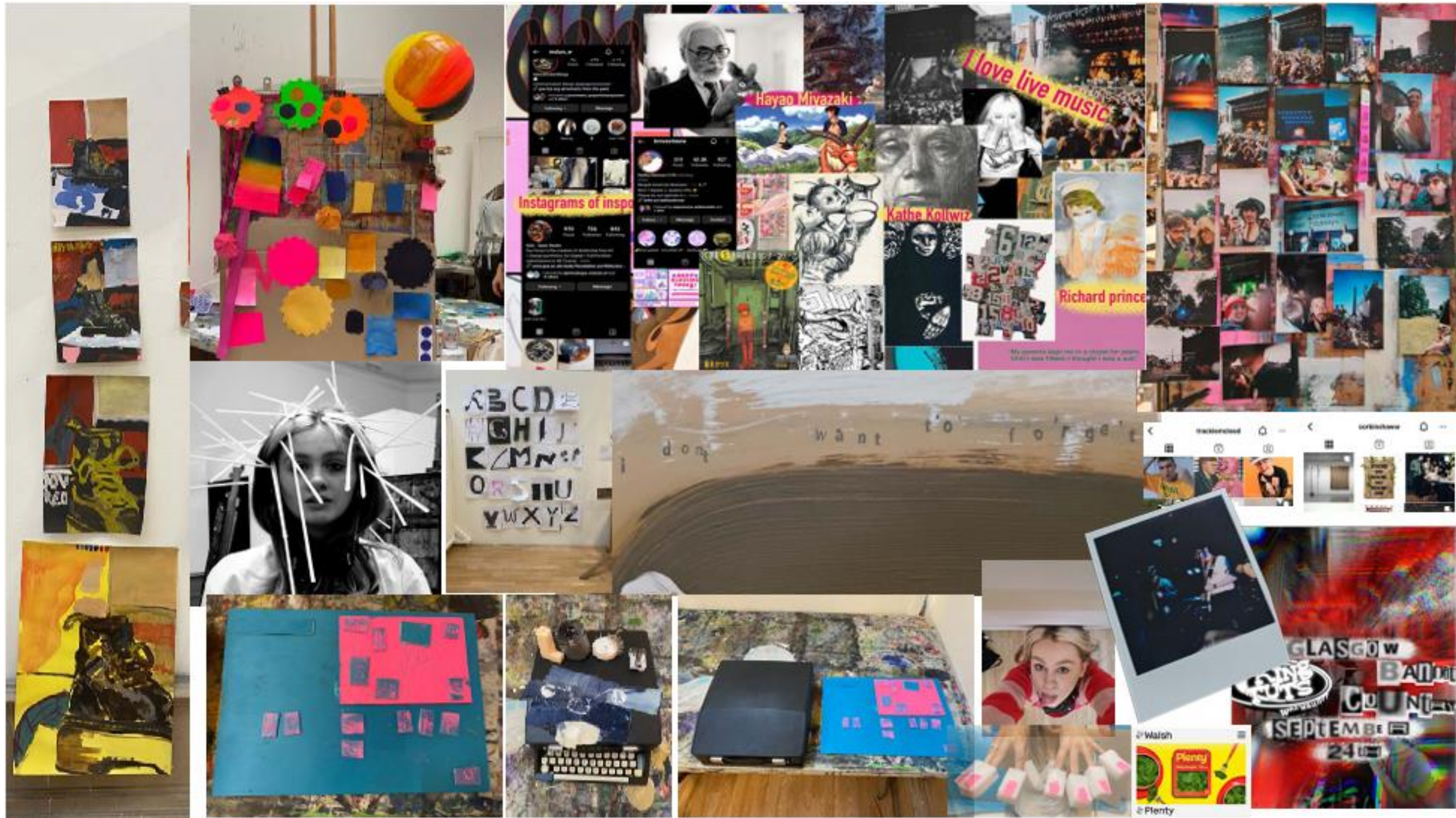








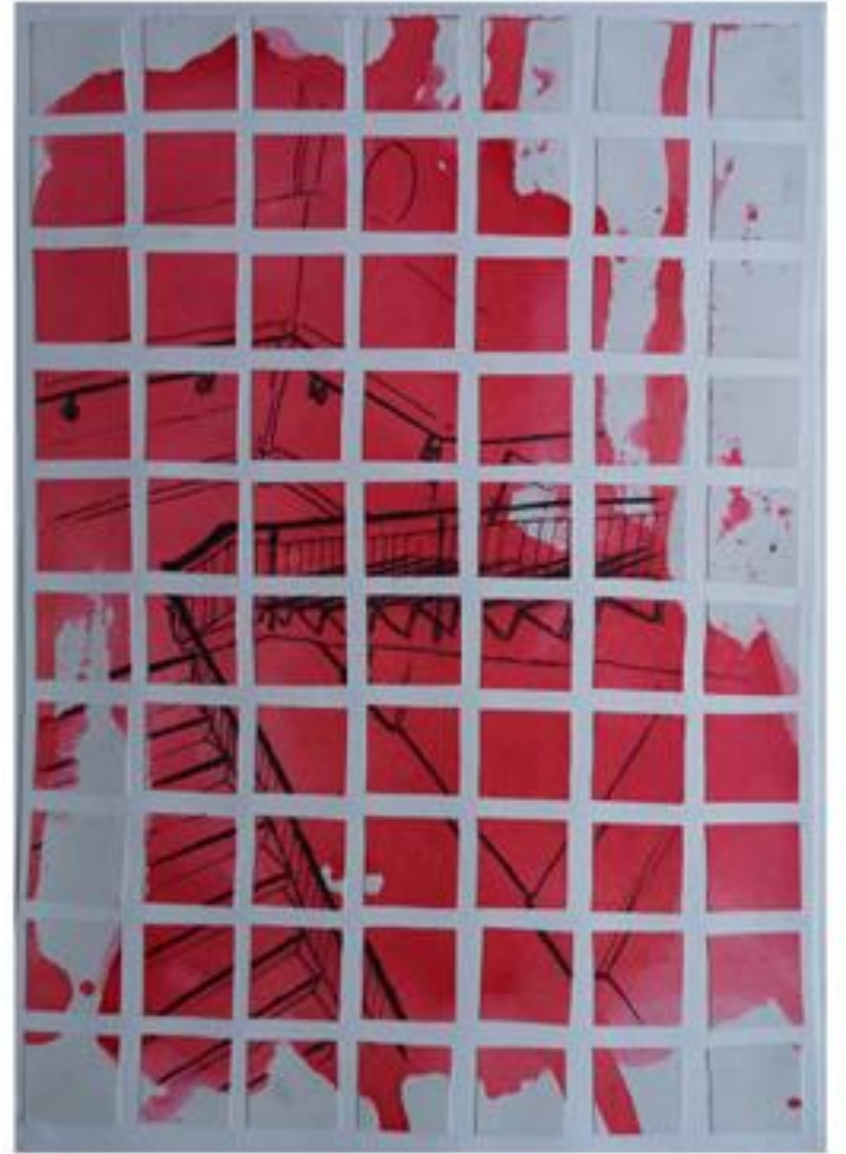
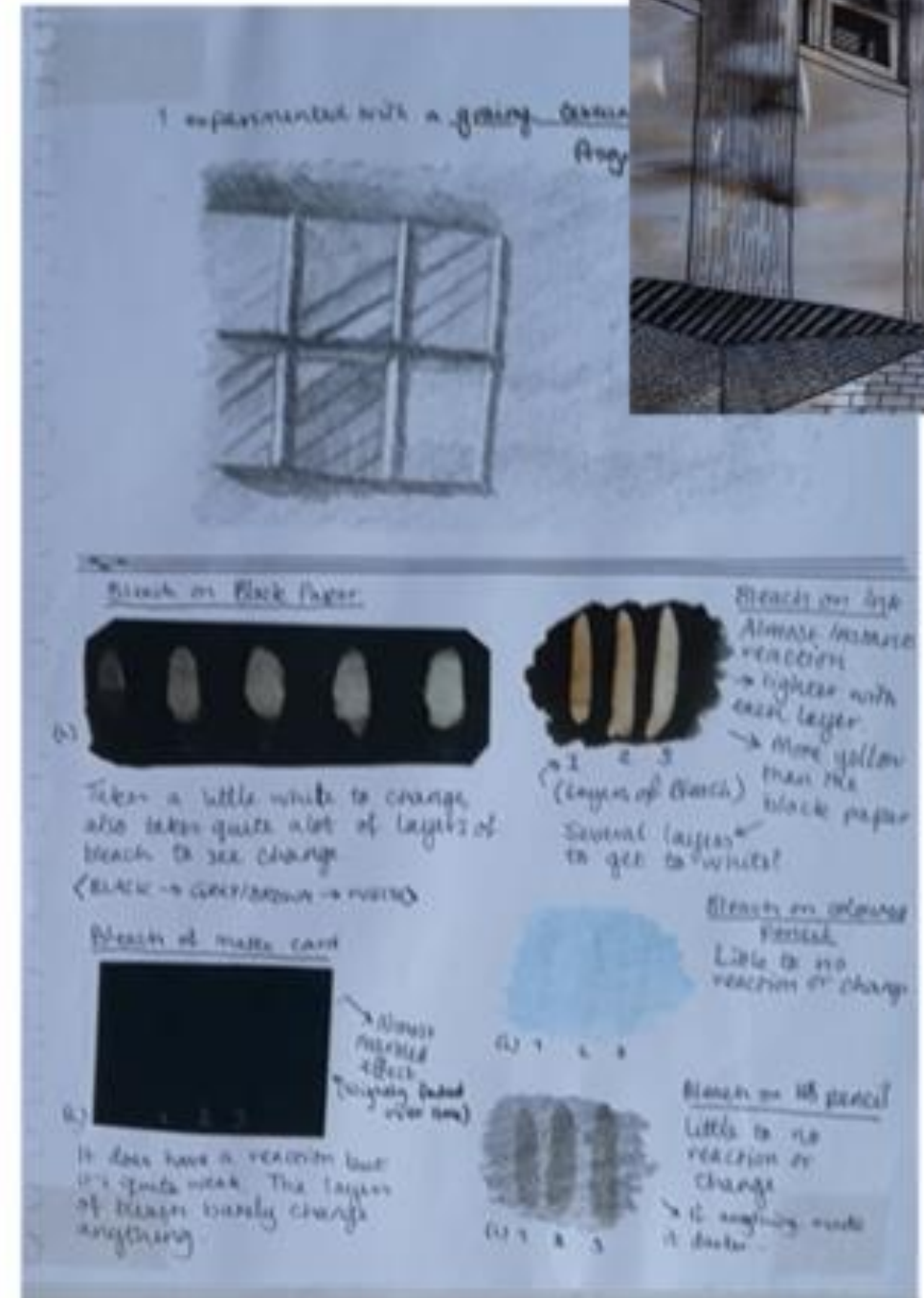
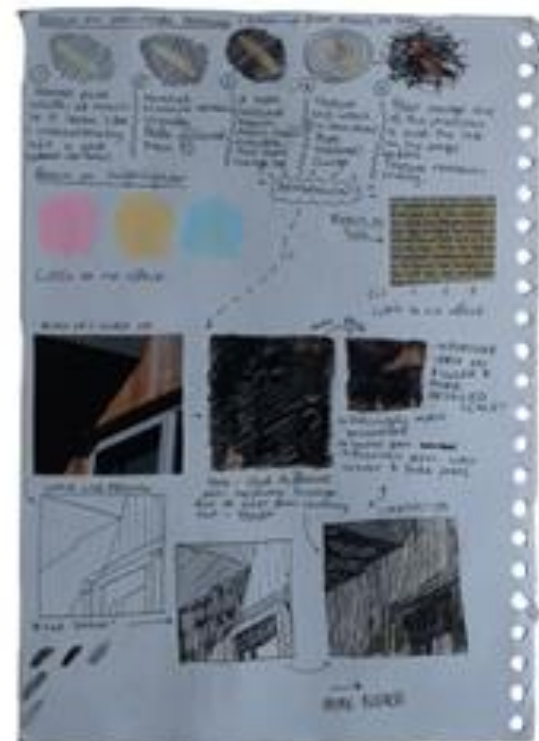




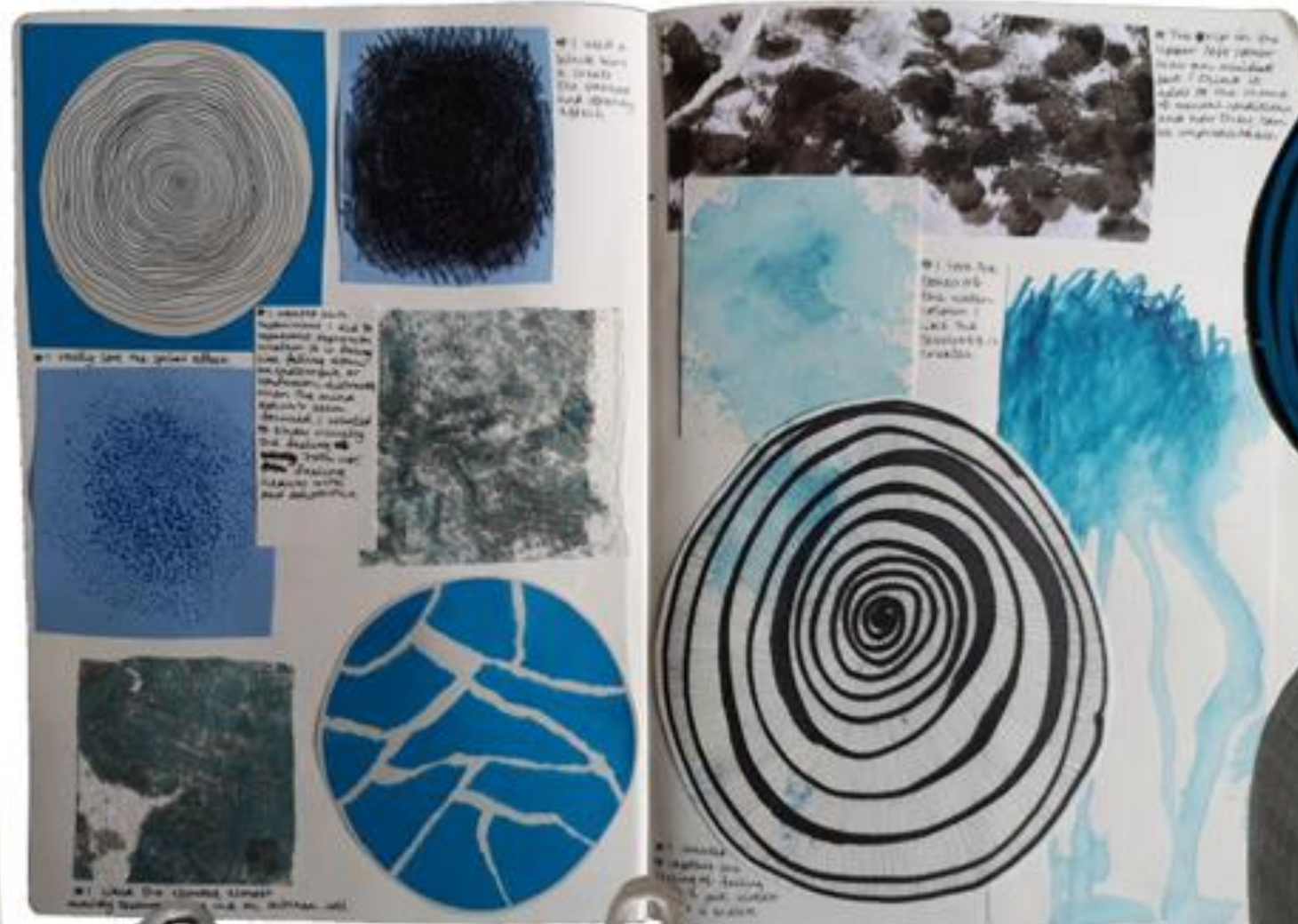
# Emily Waddington

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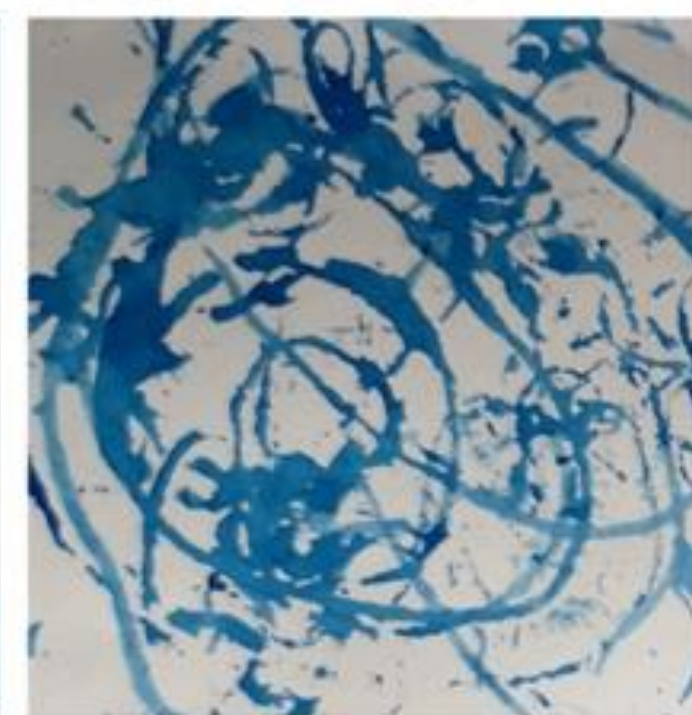
Year 2 Communication Design





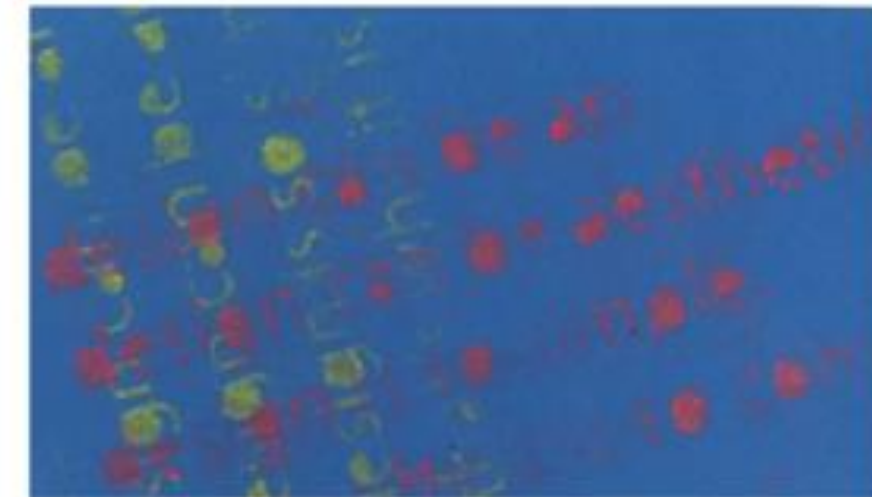


Too long in  
this condition

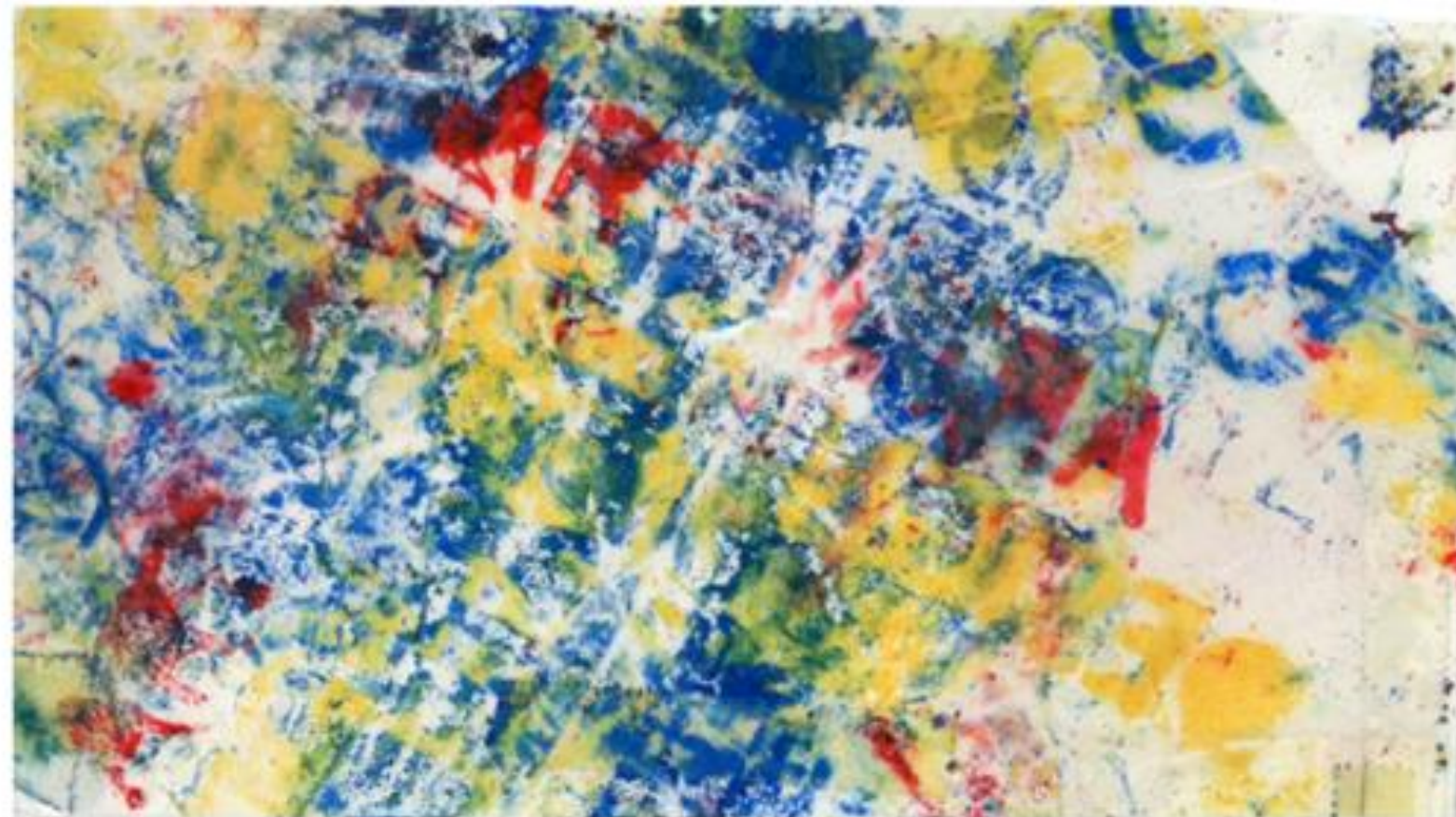




design can be art.  
design is so simple.  
that's why it is so complicated.

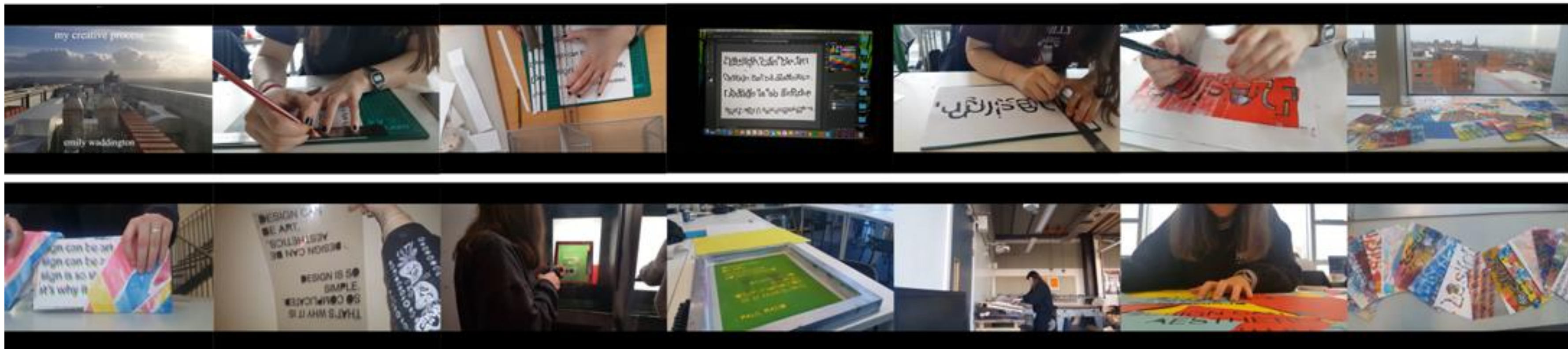


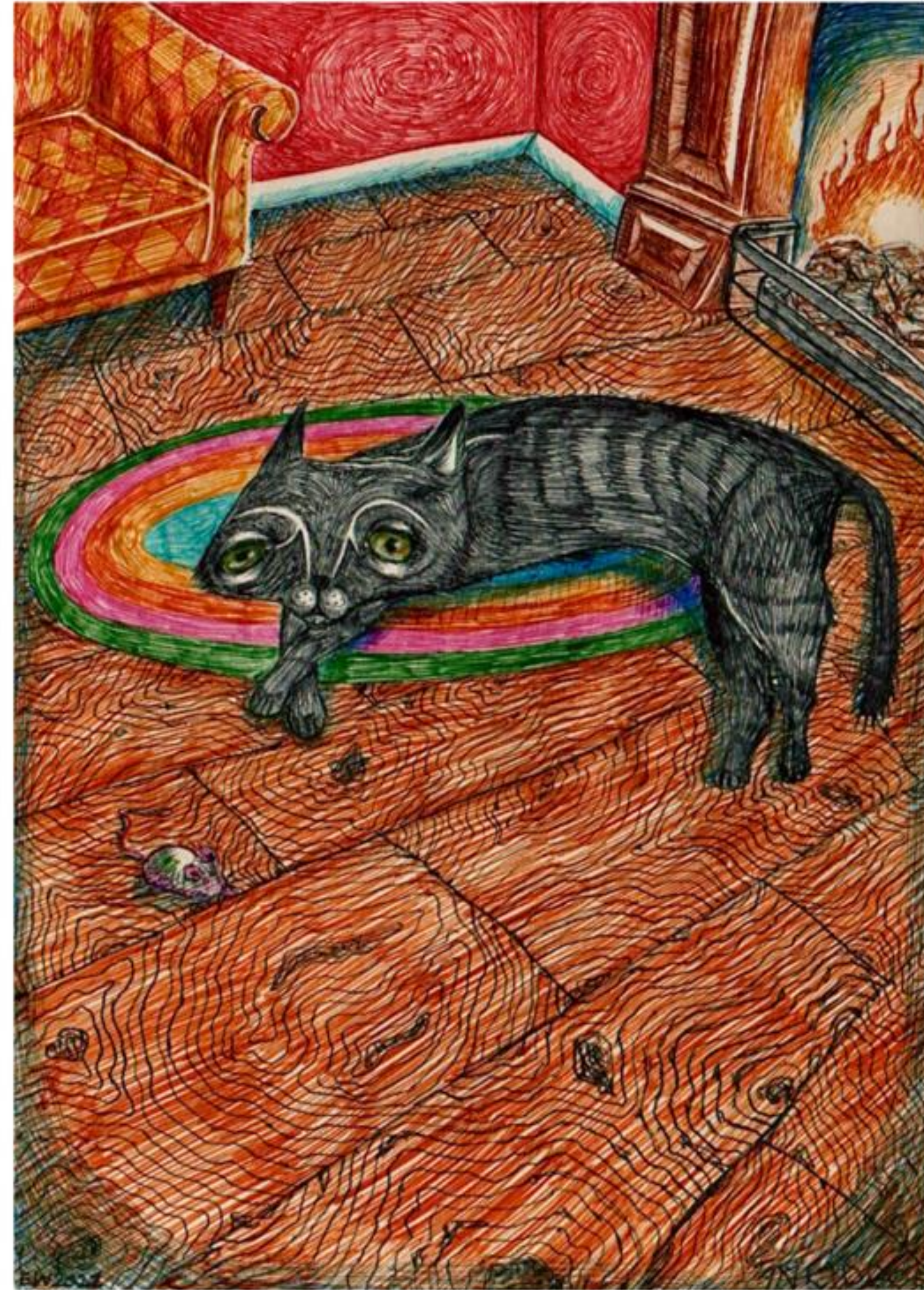
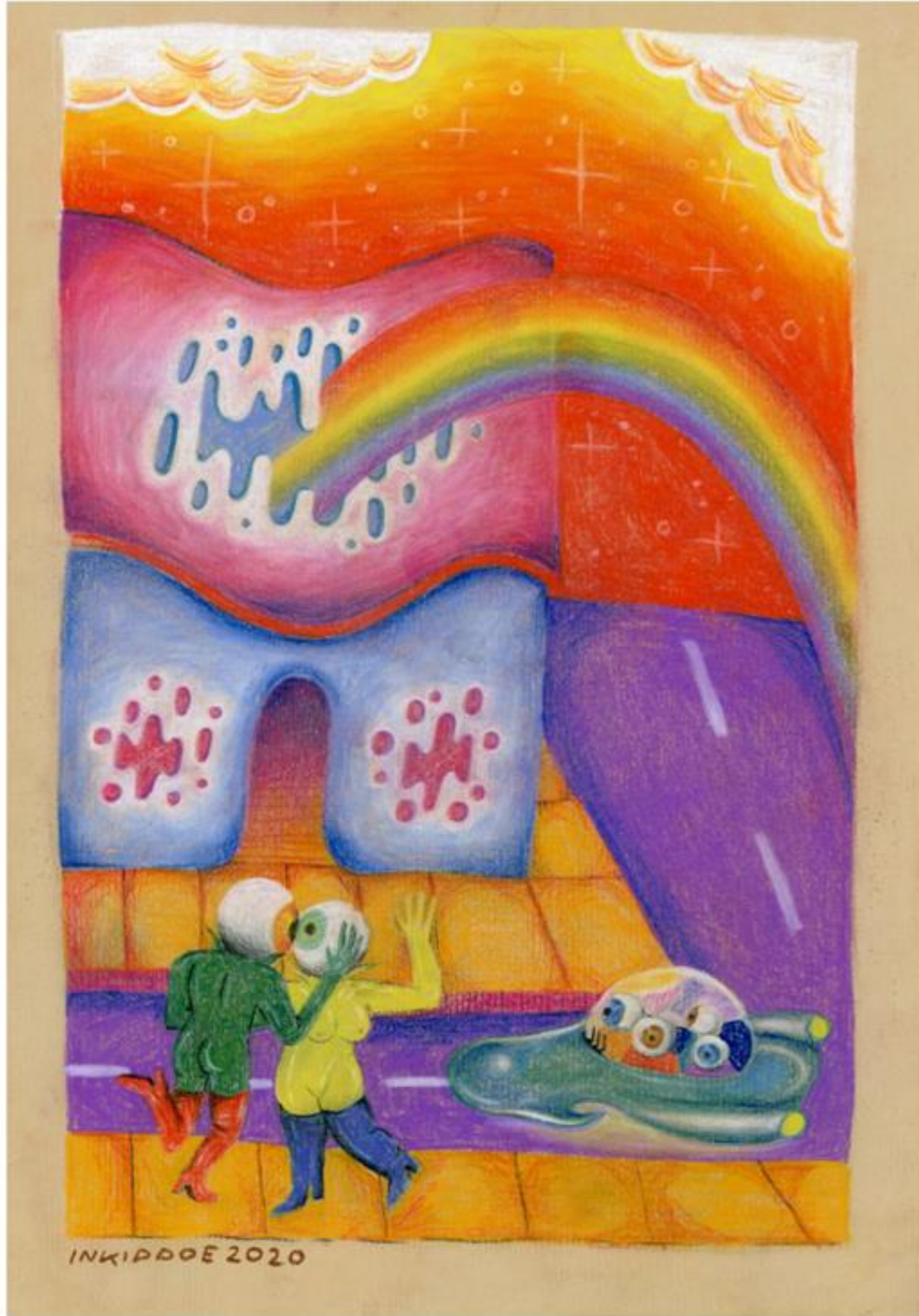
design can be art.  
design is so simple.  
that's why it is so complicated.





<https://youtu.be/Pf1BkQGF2SA>















Glasgow Women's Library Project

In this project I created a Zine based of Muriel Spark's short story "The Girl I Left Behind Me".



## Seven Sins Salons

Designs developed and used for wallpaper and staff uniform.













# Haldis Jorgensen

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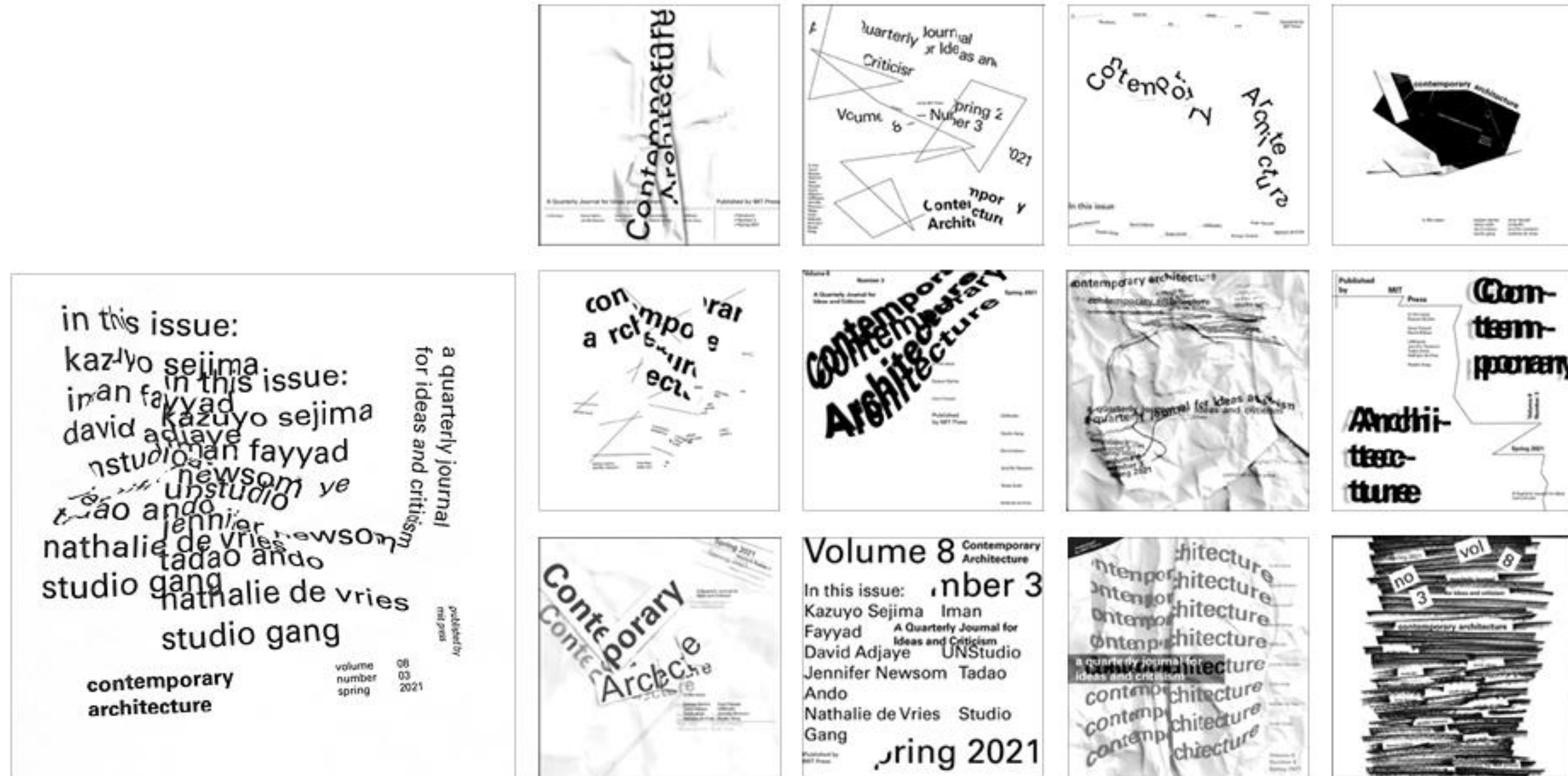
Year 3 Communication Design

# Experimental Typography

Typographic Structures / Spring 2021

Size: 7" x 7"

I created these typographic structures as my first attempt to experimental typography. I wanted to step away from the computer and the digital realm and work as much as possible in analogue. I cut the design into pieces, glued it together, crumpled the paper, used vellum paper, water, etc.



## Fleeting Moments

Book / Spring 2021  
Perfect Bound: 11" x 17"

This is a book with a collection of 27 photos taken throughout Spring 2021. It is a book with photography inspired by fleeting moments and longings lead by nature, light and movement. Timing, sequencing, mood, temperature are employed in my image choices and in the sequence. I wanted to capture a narrative that would communicate curiosity for the viewer. The book cover is also my own photography.



## Great Writer Series

Booklet / Fall 2021  
Folded: 8.5" x 11"

This is an 8 page booklet introducing Margaret Atwood's early life, her writing, and how *The Handmaid's Tale* became an award-winning TV series 30 years after she published the dystopian novel with the same title. I wanted to make a connection with Atwood's time in West Berlin when she was writing the novel on an old German typewriter. This explains the choice of a typewriter font for the introduction as well as the headlines.



Original cover explorations below - I ended up using these as inspiration for the introduction



## Association Typographique Internationale

Poster + Word Mark / Fall 2021

Poster: 3ft w x 6ft h

For this project I created a typographic word mark for a typographic conference. I started with designing an alphabet that was stencil inspired. It was important that it could be used black on white as well as reversed out. For the final poster I wanted to work with negative space in order to convey the negative space already present in each letter. This negative space leads the viewers eyes from the top of the poster to the bottom - like a river that lands on the typographic word mark.



ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ  
GHIJKLSTUVW



## Cinema Series

Poster + Brochure / Fall 2021

Poster: 22" x 33"

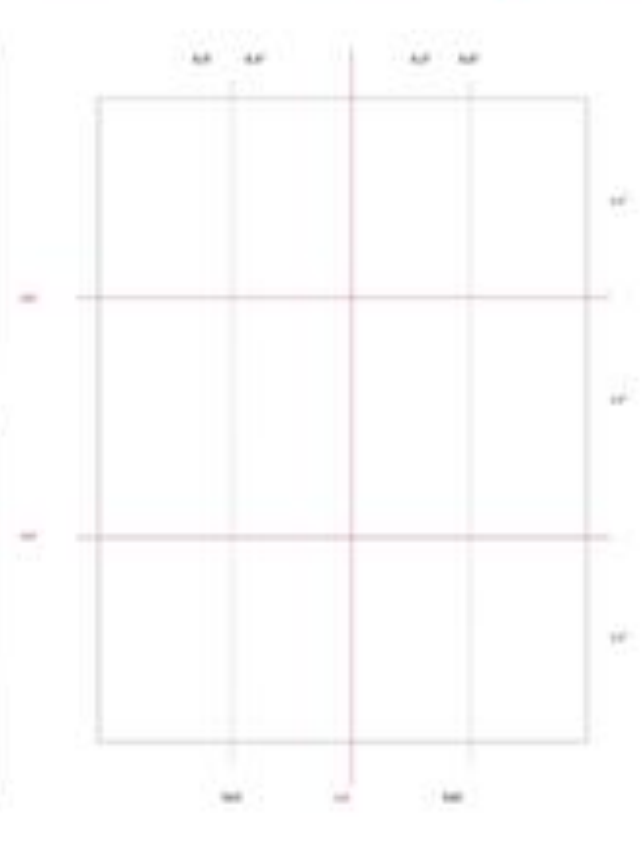
Brochure: 5.5" x 11"

I worked with Neo Noir as my chosen genre for an ArtCenter Film Club Poster. The poster/brochure must appear with two colours and two type-faces along with a synopsis of the 10 films on the program. This poster serves two purposes – a poster that also can be cut into a brochure. I wanted to capture the high contrasting light, and the femme fatale feeling that are some of the characteristics of Neo Noir. I was inspired by how Bruno Monguzzi uses the placement of bars - like a plan guiding you what to read next.



# Cinema Series

Poster + Brochure / Fall 2021  
Sketches + Poster Explorations



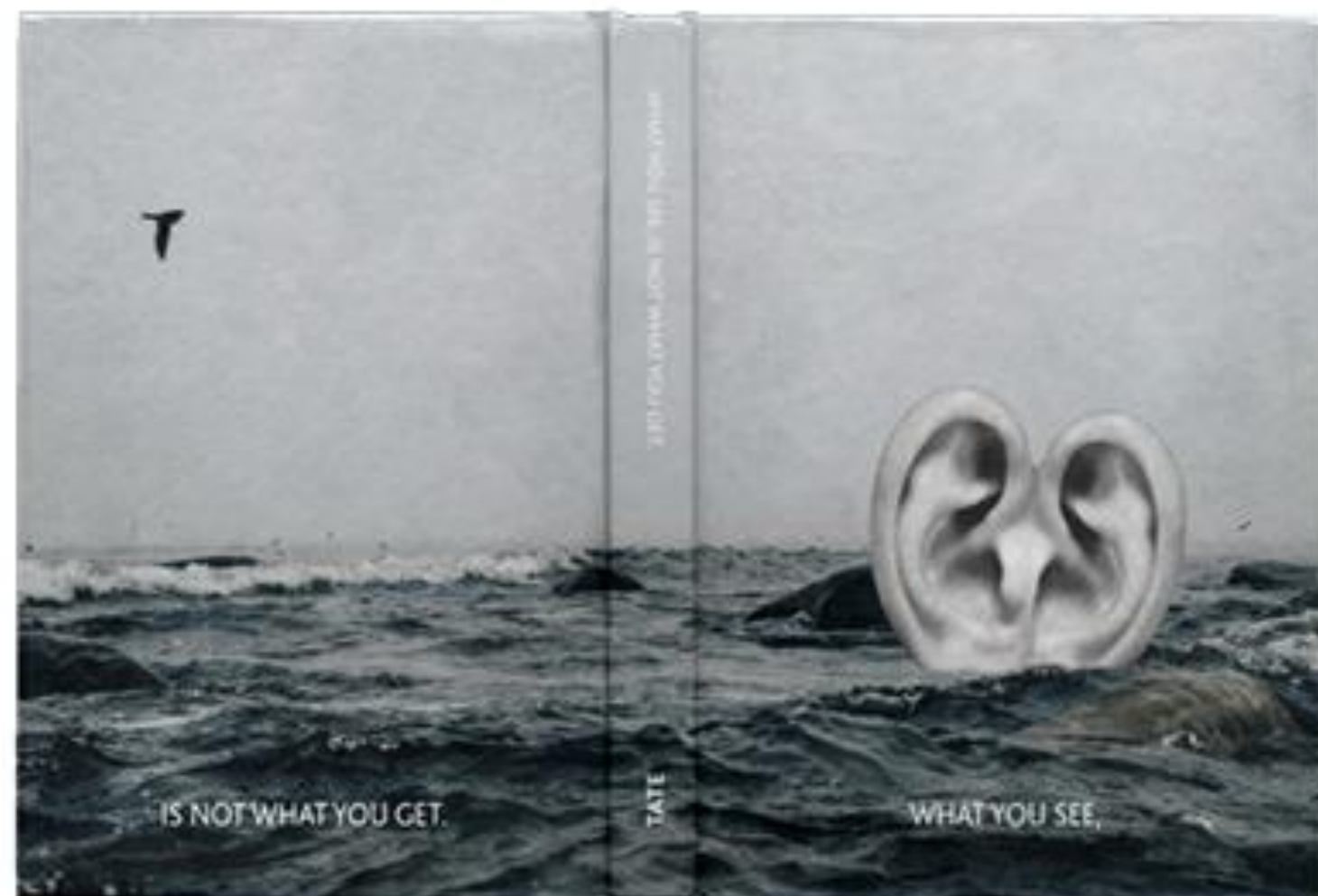


## What You See Is Not What You Get

Book / Spring 2022  
Hard Cover: 7.5" x 9"

For this project I worked with Surrealism as my chosen ism to explore. My idea with the book was to present the varieties of Surrealism. I wanted to incorporate visual art that portrayed the different techniques that artists used during the time, as well as images that draw the viewer into a world that we cannot explain. It was important that the images made people curious.

The black line that goes through the center of the book introduces a surrealist poem, by the French poet Paul Éluard, and gives a second read throughout the book and creates a little contrast because of its smaller pt. size. To give a nod to Surrealism when it came to the body copy I introduced some movement. The movement comes and goes like waves throughout the book. Sometimes there is more movement, and sometimes there is less.



## Above the Clouds

Hypothetical Exhibition / Fall 2022

Catalogue: 6.63" x 10.25"

Poster : 24" x 36"

Through the process and design of the catalogue, I developed a typographic system and visual language which would be used to promote the exhibition (poster) and applied spatially (wall texts/gallery space).

Outer Space gives rise to the fear of being alone in the universe, but also hope that there may be life or at least conditions for life elsewhere in the universe. This exhibition explores how these fears and hopes have shaped and been shaped by art. Throughout centuries, people have looked into the sky for answers, but the only concrete evidence we have of visitations from outer space are the meteorites that fall on the earth every year. Yet, where scientific observation refuses to give further answers, art promises to show what the great beyond may look like. From saints and angels to aliens, portals and spacecrafts, art has provided a way for humans to imagine outer space and to conceptualize their role in relation to outer space.





## Unites States Postal Service


Identity System / Rebrand / Fall 2022

This rebrand aims to capture the identity of USPS in an elevated form. The new logo is a simple form, but complex in its meaning. At first glance, the logo is an arrow communicating movement and direction, but the combination of small triangles in the arrow point to all the directions USPS is delivering to.

The pattern on the posters, which comes from the arrow, represents a way of mapping while the images should give a sense of geographical destination. I wanted the poster series to tell a story about family and a journey that produces a feeling of connection.








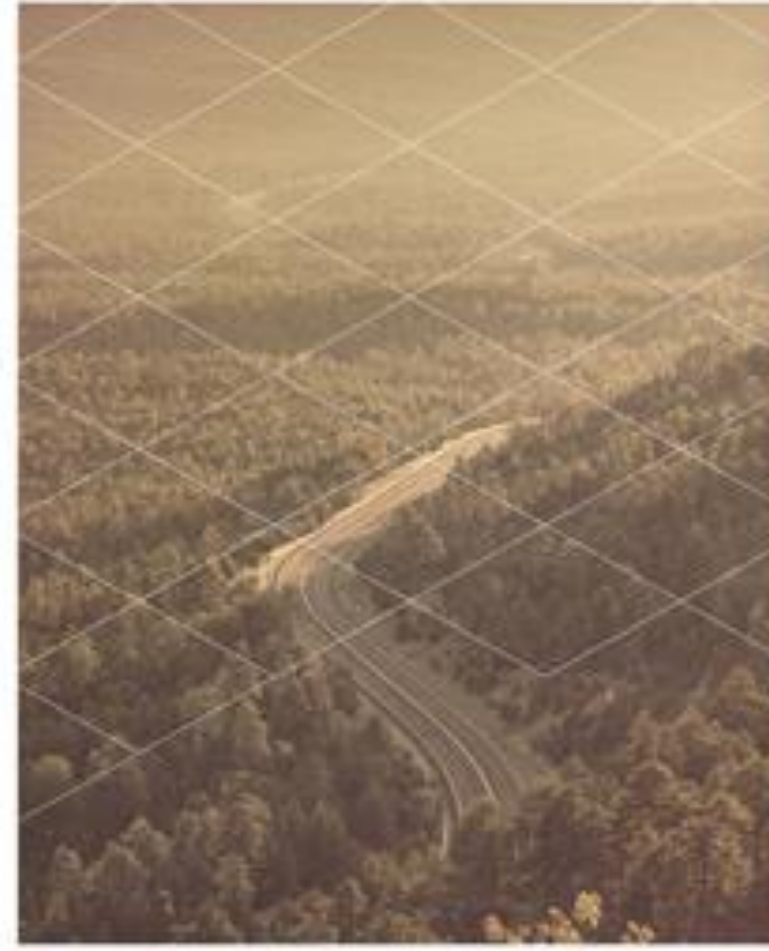
**DISPATCH. DEPART. DELIVER.**

USPS International Mail services go to more than 230 countries, including Great Britain, Canada, Japan, Mexico, and Australia. Global Express, Priority Mail Express, and Priority Mail include international tracking as well as insurance.





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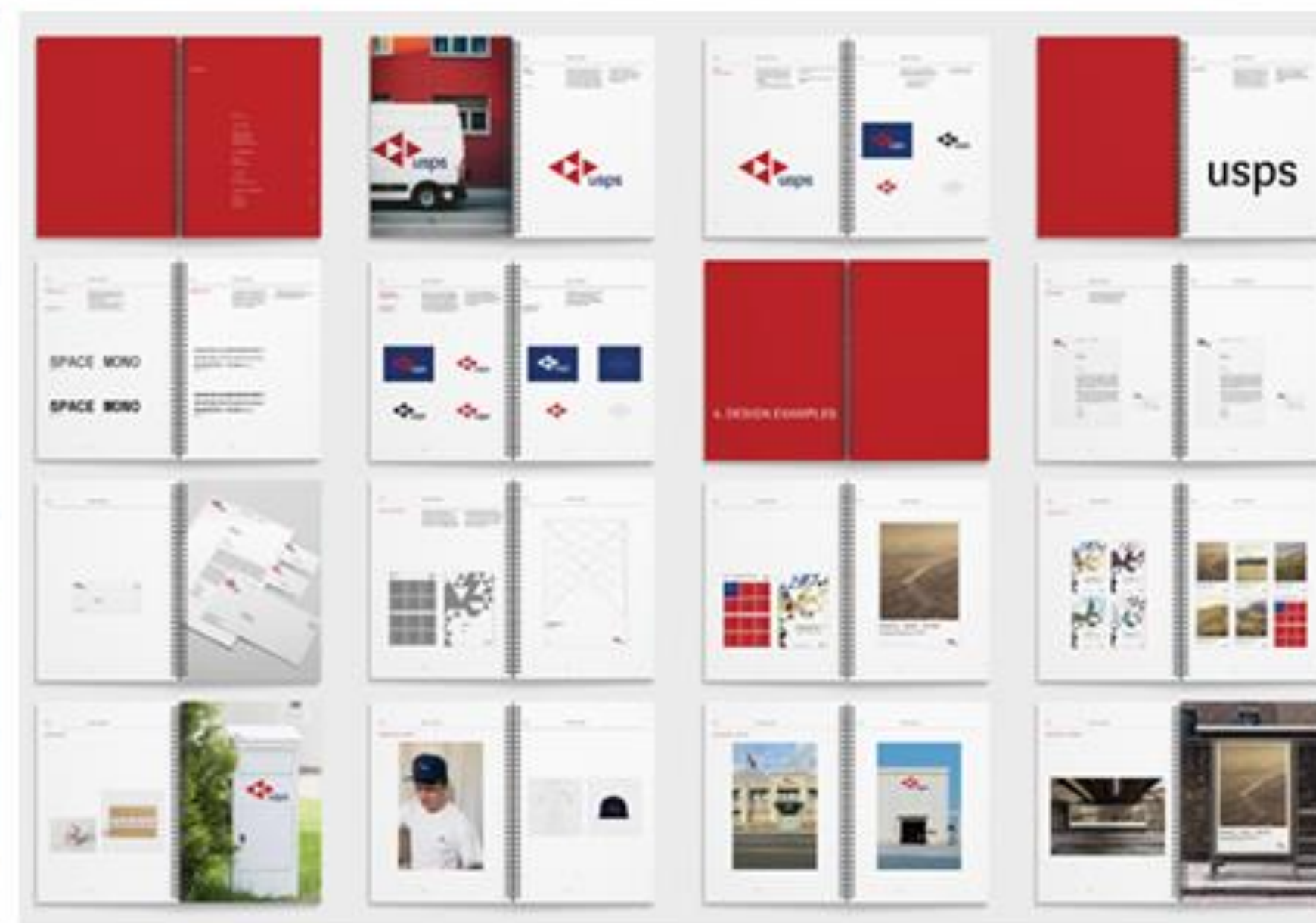
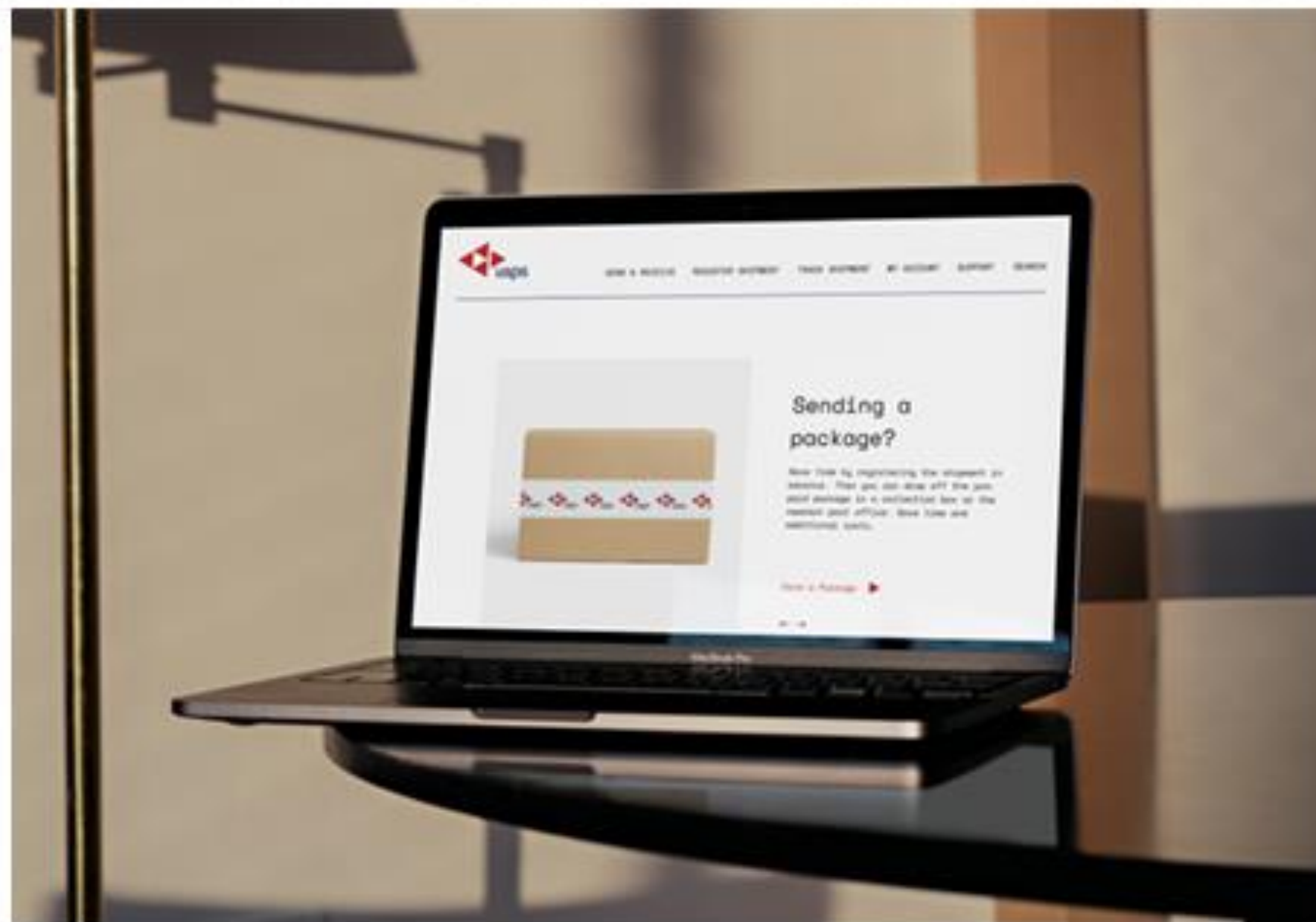
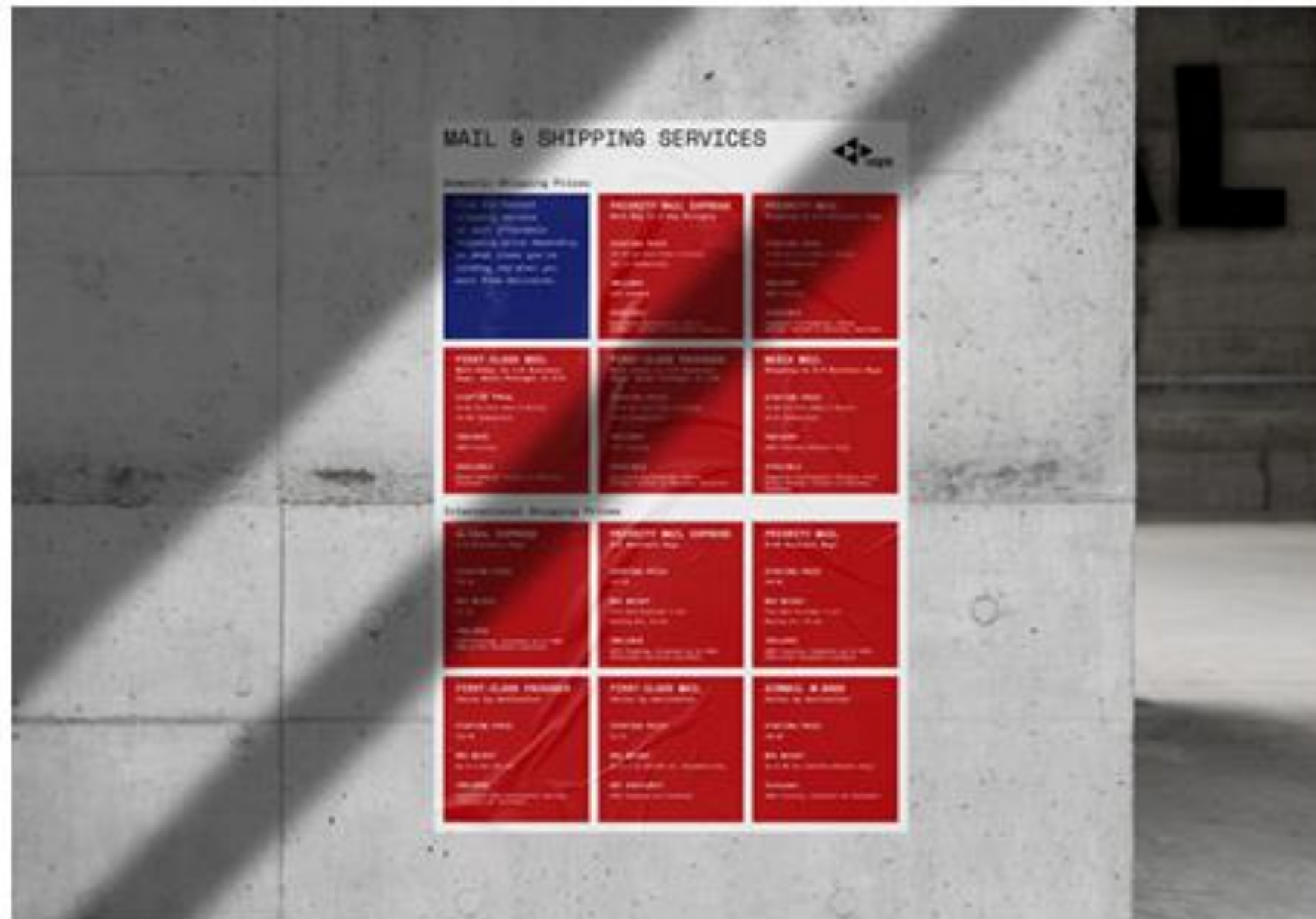
USPS International Mail services go to more than 230 countries, including Great Britain, Canada, Japan, Mexico, and Australia. Global Express, Priority Mail Express, and Priority Mail include international tracking as well as insurance.




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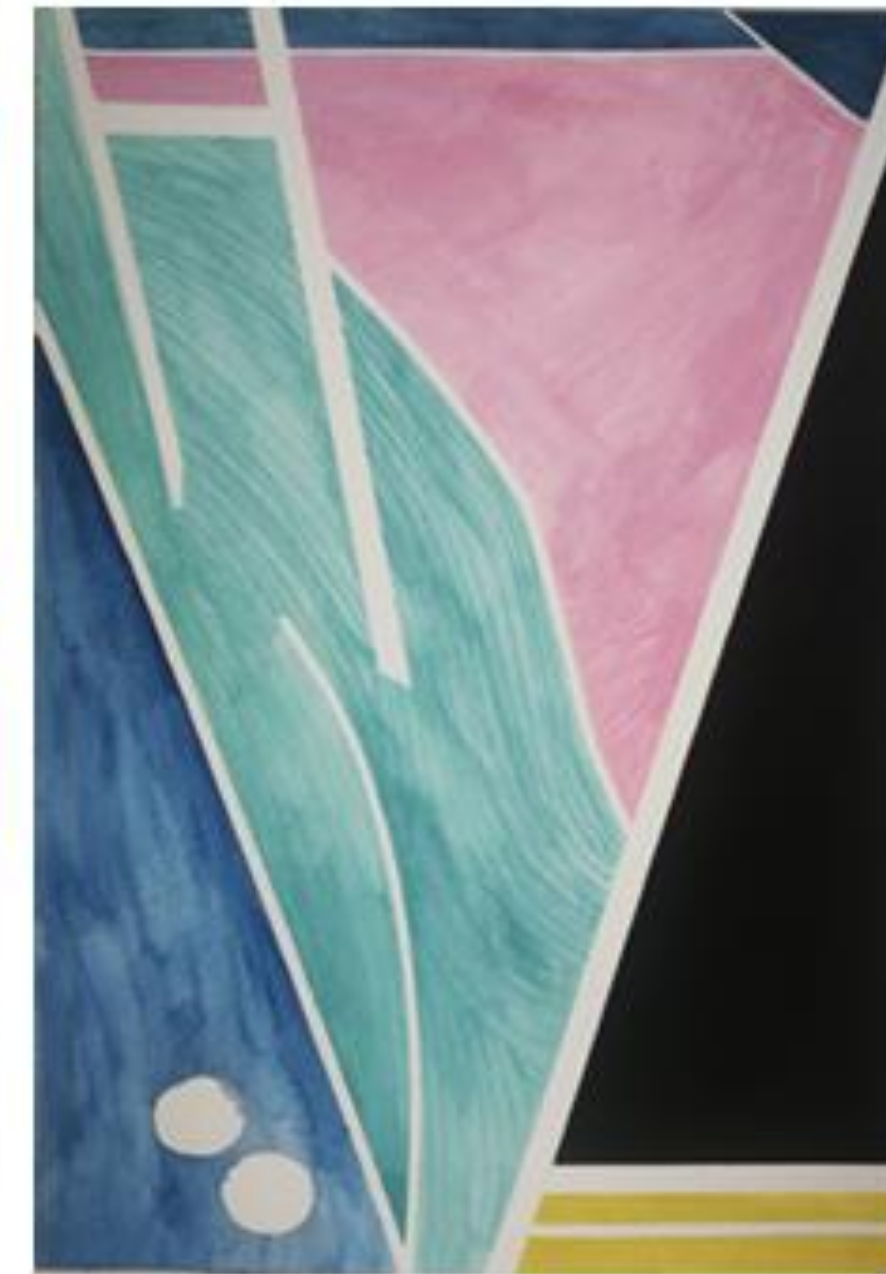




# Adendum

Personal Works / Spring 2020

These works were part of the portfolio I submitted in my application to ArtCenter.





# Adendum

Personal Projects / 2020

These works were part of the portfolio I submitted in my application to ArtCenter.

