

To whom it may concern

Dearest,

I feel certain I am going mad again. I feel we can't go through another of those terrible times. And I ~~seem~~ shan't recover this time. I begin to hear voices, and I can't concentrate. So I am doing what seems the best thing to do. You have given me the greatest possible happiness. You have been in every way all that anyone could be. I don't think two people could have been happier till this terrible disease came. I can't fight any longer. I know that I am spoiling your life, that without me you could work. And you will I know. You see I can't even write this properly. I can't read. What I want to say is I owe all the happiness of my life to you. You have been entirely patient with me and incredibly good. I want to say that - everybody knows it. If anybody could have saved me it would have been you. Everything has gone from me

but the certainty of your goodness. I can't go on
spoilng your life any longer. I don't think two
people could have been happier than we have been.

Virginia

VITA VOLUPTUARIA

The accompanying letter is *Virginia Woolf's* suicide note. She was an English writer, who was a pioneer in using the stream of consciousness as a narrative device.

Troughout her life she was plagued by mood swings and associated illnesses. Her first nervous breakdown was triggered by the sudden death of her mother and that of her half-sister two years later.

When she lost her father, *Virginia* had her most alarming breakdown and got institutionalised. Despite this instability she could still continue writing and I believe that these mood swings were a hold on to keep going.

On the 28th of March 1941, *Woolf* left her house and walked to the river *Ouse* where she filled her pockets full of stones and drowned herself.

My fascination with *Woolf* started when my sister told me I should watch the movie *The hours* and I completely fell in love with it. I started reading more about her and also started reading her literary work and that's where I realised what a fantastic writer she was. The melancholic touch in her works is what I find truly fascinating as well as her writing technique the stream of consciousness and that's what I took as a source of inspiration for my master thesis focussing on the feeling of melancholy.

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CONCEPT



DOMENICO FETTI - MELANCHOLY, 1618-1623

MELANCHOLY: AN INTRODUCTION

An exhibition at the *Guislain museum* was a pivotal moment and very inspiring for myself in a way that ever since I saw that exhibition I wanted to use this kind of looking at the world in my architecture. Because for me it is looking in a realistic way, it's about being self-conscious and accepting the fact that there's more to life than just the happy moments. The thing that makes all of this so beautiful is the extremes in life that we know. Its about creating life but also about being able to say goodbye to loved ones, accepting the fact that all of life at one point will come to an end.

To me melancholy is something positive and that's why I want to use it to create architecture. I want to create something that functions as a counterweight to the globalised, computerised, abstract that is now marching through most major cities in the world, and through the lives of too many people.

MELANCHOLY AND IT'S COMPLEXITY

Melancholy is a complex notion where the border between the extremes is wafer-thin. It's about death but at the same time also about life. It is sober thoughtfulness; pensiveness. Some sort of mourning for the past, for the things you've never had, but at the same time it is also being afraid for what's to come. Melancholy derives from the Greek *melas* (black) and *cholè* (bile) and was part of one of the four temperaments matching the four humours.¹

Throughout the years, the interpretation of the notion of melancholy has changed. Some see it as something positive and as a determinate factor to be able to create, others think of it as something negative and not useful. It is not so that in the past it was only regarded as something bad. A passage attributed to *Aristotle* was crucial to this point of view. Drawing attention to the disposition of notable figures, it promoted melancholy to intellectual and heroic status.²

“Why is it that all those who have become eminent in philosophy or politics or poetry or the arts are clearly melancholic, and some of them to such an extent as to be affected by diseases caused by black bile? An example from heroic mythology is *Heracles*. For he apparently had this constitution, and therefore epileptic afflictions were called after him ‘the sacred disease’.”³

The way *Aristotle* approached the feeling of melancholy is a clinical one. And we can still see this way of talking about this subject in more recent works. For example Freud, when reading his work on melancholy, it looks to me as if he is talking about depression. Which, to make things clear, melancholy is not. It is an emotion and not a mental condition.⁴ When you're feeling depressed you're unmotivated and unable to complete even the simplest task. It is something painful and pessimistic. With melancholy there's this specific kind of pleasure by which I mean reflecting or contemplating on the things you love and long for. It is a bittersweet feeling, a mood where we sometimes long for self-reflection. *Freud* did write about this, saying it is narcissism and to me the self-reflecting part of this complex feeling does feel narcissistic. With melancholy we do not want to fall into extreme sobbing and crying and in that way we see similarities with the sublime. Only in the latter we do not want to give in into fear. The two do have something in common: nature. For the melancholic it provides the solitude we seek while for the sublime it are natural objects that evoke this feeling.

The fact that there's pleasure and pain all related to different feelings such as sadness, love, longing... combined with the self-reflecting part shows how there's more than one thing to it.

1 The other 3 humours are blood, yellow bile, phlegm

2 Diego Seixas Lopes, Introduction, now this is lost, *Melancholy and Architecture*, On Aldo Rossi, pp. 15-16

3 Aristotle, “Problem XXX,I,” in Raymond Klibansky, Erwin Panofsky, and Fritz Saxl, *Saturn and melancholy*, *Studies in the History of Natural Philosophy, Religion and Art* (London: Nelson, 1964), pp.18-29

4 E. Brady, A. Haapala, “Melancholy as an aesthetic emotion,” <http://www.contempaesthetics.org/newvolume/pages/article.php?articleID=214> (May 20, 2017)

MELANCHOLY AND REFLECTION

The reflective aspect of melancholy is key to keeping us from falling over the edge into sobbing. We hold in thought memories or imaginings of lost love or distant places; we contemplate them and in this way prolong the emotion. There certainly are cases though in which sadness exhibits most of the features of melancholy; it can be experienced as a mood, it does not always involve crying, and it can involve reflection. But there is a key difference between the two emotions (sadness and melancholy) that lies in the positive aspects belonging to both of them. In sadness the positive aspect has to do with the object, that is, the loss that precipitates sadness must be something that we value. In melancholy the positive aspect may also be connected to the loss of something we value, but there is another more important layer to this feeling, that is the self-indulgent, almost narcissistic pleasure which is a felt feature of the emotion. This feeling feeds on itself and contributes to the aesthetic experience that arises through feeling melancholic.⁵

5 E. Brady, A. Haapala, "Melancholy as an aesthetic emotion," <http://www.contempaesthetics.org/newvolume/pages/article.php?articleID=214> (May 20, 2017)

ALDO ROSSI - ORA QUESTO È PERDUTO, 1975



Dieges ist lange her / ora questo è perduto.

Aldo Rossi 75 AR 75

Aldo Rossi was very interesting to look at. He himself used fragments – *Ora questo è perduto*⁶ – that he used to create architecture with. It is easy to look at this particular etching as something melancholic as it depicts several objects and buildings falling apart. The image represents a collage of his forms. It can be looked at as an allegory about the status of architecture:

‘For this reason the title of the engraving *Now this is lost*, has a special importance: it may sound like an allusion to the inevitable process of decay to which the signs are subjected once they have been evoked from the recesses of memory... But on the other hand, the title, alludes also to a substantial nostalgia, since in representing loss, the engraving mimics a theatrical procedure in order to describe regret for a bygone, organic order of forms, of object-signs, of which the composition is the evocation.’⁷

6 Aldo Rossi, *Dieses ist langer her – Ora questo è perduto*, 1975, etching, collection Bonnefantenmuseum
7 Francesco Dal Co, “*Ora questo è perduto*. Il teatro di Aldo Rossi alla Biennale di Venezia, 1979.” *Lotus*, no. 25 (1979), p. 67.



ALDO ROSSI - SAN CATALDO CEMETERY, MODENA - PHOTOGRAPH BY LUIGI GHIRRI

His biggest and to me most melancholic work is the cemetery of *San Cataldo*. What makes this lugubrious is the fact that it's not finished. It is constructed in such a way that it has rawness about it and the use of symbolism gives it that extra sense of gloom. In his Scientific Autobiography *Rossi* talks about abandoned houses and it seems that this kind of construction embodies the *Cemetery of San Cataldo*:

'Yet in the project this building already belonged to the great mists of the *Po valley* and to the deserted houses on the riverbank, abandoned for years in the wake of the great floods. In these houses, one can still find broken cups, iron beds, shattered glass, yellowed photos, along with the dampness and other signs of the river's devastation. There are villages where the river appears with the continuity of death, leaving only signs, signals, fragments; yet they are fragments that one cherishes.'⁸

The cemetery also has different landmarks that he used to express the symbolism of this design. They work as monuments and to use *Rossi's* own words:

'A monument stands at a centre. It is usually surrounded by buildings and becomes a place of attraction. We have said that it is a primary element, but of a special type: that is, typical in that it summarizes all of the questions posed by the city, but it is special because by virtue of its form its value goes beyond economic and function.'⁹

Earlier on I said that the cemetery is not finished (some parts were not constructed), but I also want to stress that *Rossi* intentionally left some parts unfinished. For example the roofing of the ossuary he deliberately 'forgot' to evoke derelict houses and in that way *Rossi* incorporated the imagery of ruins into the cemetery.

'I remember in the post-war years the sight of *Cologne Cathedral* in that destroyed city; nothing can conjure up the power that this work, standing intact among the ruins, had on the imagination. Certainly the pallid and brutal reconstruction of the surrounding city is unfortunate, but it cannot touch the monument, just as the vulgar arrangements in many modern museums can annoy but still do not deform or alter the value of what is exhibited.'¹⁰ Here we can see that architecture and symbolism are intertwined and that it aims to violence and sadness in order to provoke awareness among people. It became a vessel, and a trigger, of collective memories. *Rossi's* works express a yearning for a lost order, but only in the way that rephrasing a dead language could express a dead civilisation but never reconstitute it.¹¹

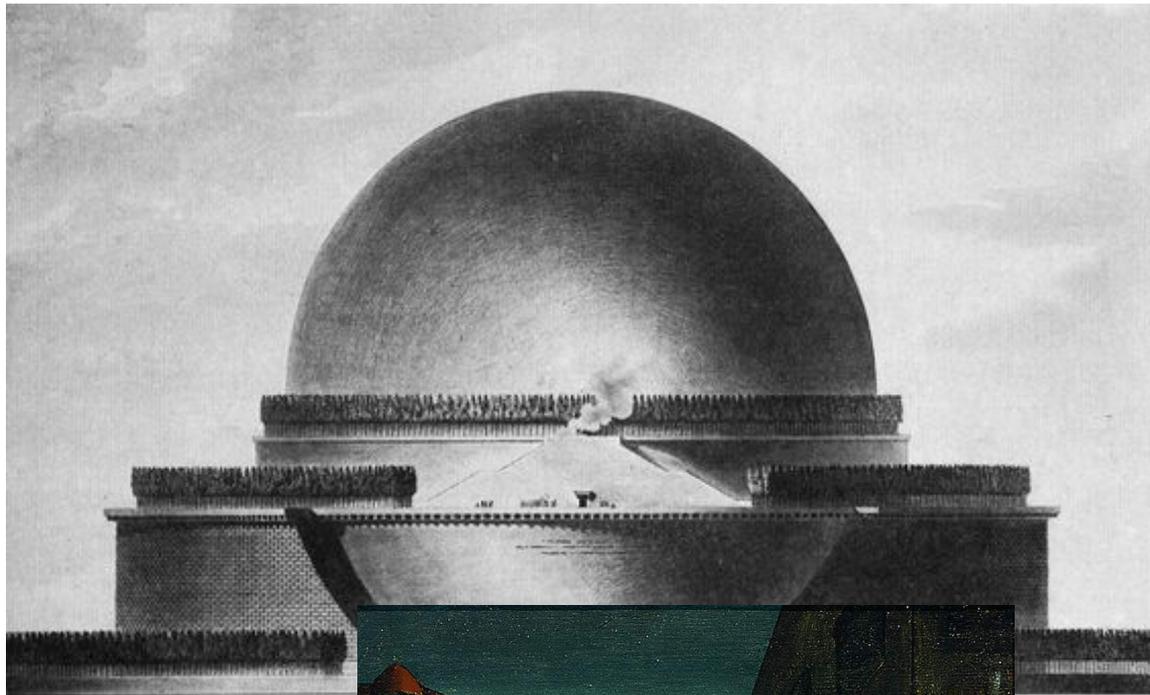
8 Aldo Rossi, Scientific Autobiography, p. 15.

9 Aldo Rossi, Architecture of the City, p. 92.

10 Aldo Rossi, Architecture of the City, p. 124.

11 Diego Seixas Lopes, The cemetery of San Cataldo, Melancholy and Architecture, On Aldo Rossi, pp. 173

ETIENNE-LOUIS BOULLÉE - CÉNOTAPH FOR NEWTON, 1784



GIORGIO DE CHIRICO - MYSTERY AND MELANCHOLY OF A STREET, 1914

Etienne-Louis Boullée wrote about giving character to a work and it's exactly this that allows architecture to provoke notions and/ or feelings. It should provoke feelings in tune with the function of the building. He also described funerary monuments and it is here you can see the influence on *Rossi's* work. 'I cannot conceive of anything more melancholy than a monument consisting of a flat surface, bare and unadorned, made of a light-absorbent material, absolutely stripped of detail, its decoration consisting of a play of shadows, outlined by still deeper shadows.'¹²

Another interesting influence on *Rossi's* work is *Giorgio de Chirico*. The mise en scène as we see in the funerary complex could be compared to la pittura metafisica. Paintings as *Ariadne* (1913) or *The mystery and Melancholy of a street* (1914) depict lonesome figures amid arcades, casting long shadows over empty squares. *De Chirico* painted a classicized space, distorted by perspective, against a looming skyline. Stranded between nostalgia and angst, they both attempted to represent a space pervaded by a similar sense of estrangement.¹³

12 Etienne-Louis Boullée, *Architecture. Essai sur l'art*, p. 106. Translation.

13 Diego Seixas Lopes, *The cemetery of San Cataldo, Melancholy and Architecture*, On Aldo Rossi, pp. 186.

“Besides my other numerous circles of acquaintances I have one more intimate confidant-my melancholy. In the midst of my joy, in the midst of my work, she waves to me, calls me to one side, even though physically I stay put. My melancholy is the most faithful mistress I have known, what wonder, then, that I love her in return.”¹⁴

This subtle emotion is quite essential in understanding a lot of works of art. It gives us a possibility to come to terms with many things in our own lives. In this part I will talk about some of the works that inspire me.

Starting with the engraving of *Albrecht Dürer*, which is a work from 1514 and is full of symbols referring to the artist as a genius. He depicted an androgynous figure in this typical manner of melancholic posture (the head resting on the left hand) while in the other one it holds a compass that at the same time rests on a book.

The geometric figures and working tools are a metaphor for geometry and at the same time for architecture, however they are not being used. The bat, flying above the sea, is showing us the title of the engraving and is surrounded by the bright light of the comet. The image shows beauty and at the same time pain. The woman, the angel and dog look like tormented beings while the background shows the endless, beautiful sea.

Another remarkable work is *Robert Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy*. It's a medical, yet literary work talking about the causes and remedies for melancholy. So this is still a clinical way of approaching the subject. In his texts he makes a connection with the planet *Saturn* that is, according to the four humours, a symbol for the melancholic temperament.

“ Old Democritus under a tree,
Sits on a stone with book on knee;
About him hang there many features,
Of cats, dogs and such like creatures,
Of which he makes anatomy,
The seat of black choler to see.
Over his head appears the sky,
And Saturn Lord of Melancholy.”¹⁵

This brings me to the next artist, ~~with a little jump in time~~, *Edvard Munch* (1863). He has some works entitled melancholy and they depict some kind of man or woman who is in this pensive state of mind. He uses the sea, gloomy evening scenes, contrast with the theme of solitude as a key element in the works to evoke the feeling of melancholy. And this is different from the former since the latter expressed the emotion and does not go into a clinical way of depicting melancholy.



JAN COX - SELFORTRAIT, 1944



ALPENSEE

*Mais moi, à mon tour, je pense !
La Montagne, c'est la Mer,
et la Mer, c'est la Montagne.
Thierry de Cordier (d'après Shakespeare)*

Obviously the works of *De Chirico* (1888) have this melancholic touch and as I've already spoken about him in the previous part, I'm not going to go further into detail here.

Next on is *Jan Cox* (1944), an artist whom I discovered while visiting *Dark Chambers, on melancholy and depression* (2014-2015). Looking at his self-portrait, you can see the pain on the inside. It's a very dark image, only showing half of his face. His hands are in front of his face, looking out of proportion to me. You could truly feel this emotion while standing in front of it, painful and yet beautiful. When you say *Jan Cox*, you say melancholy and it's visible in a lot of his works.

The last artist I'm going to talk about is *Thierry De Cordier* (1954). The work 'Zeeberg' is a very dark image that is a metaphor for his own melancholic moods. It's a wave, yet it could also be a mountain that seems inevitable to climb. There's some sort of threatening in the painting that is a crossing with the sublime. All of his works carry this mysteriousness with them and for me that is the element that is fascinating to it.

THE CASE OF *VIRGINIA WOOLF*



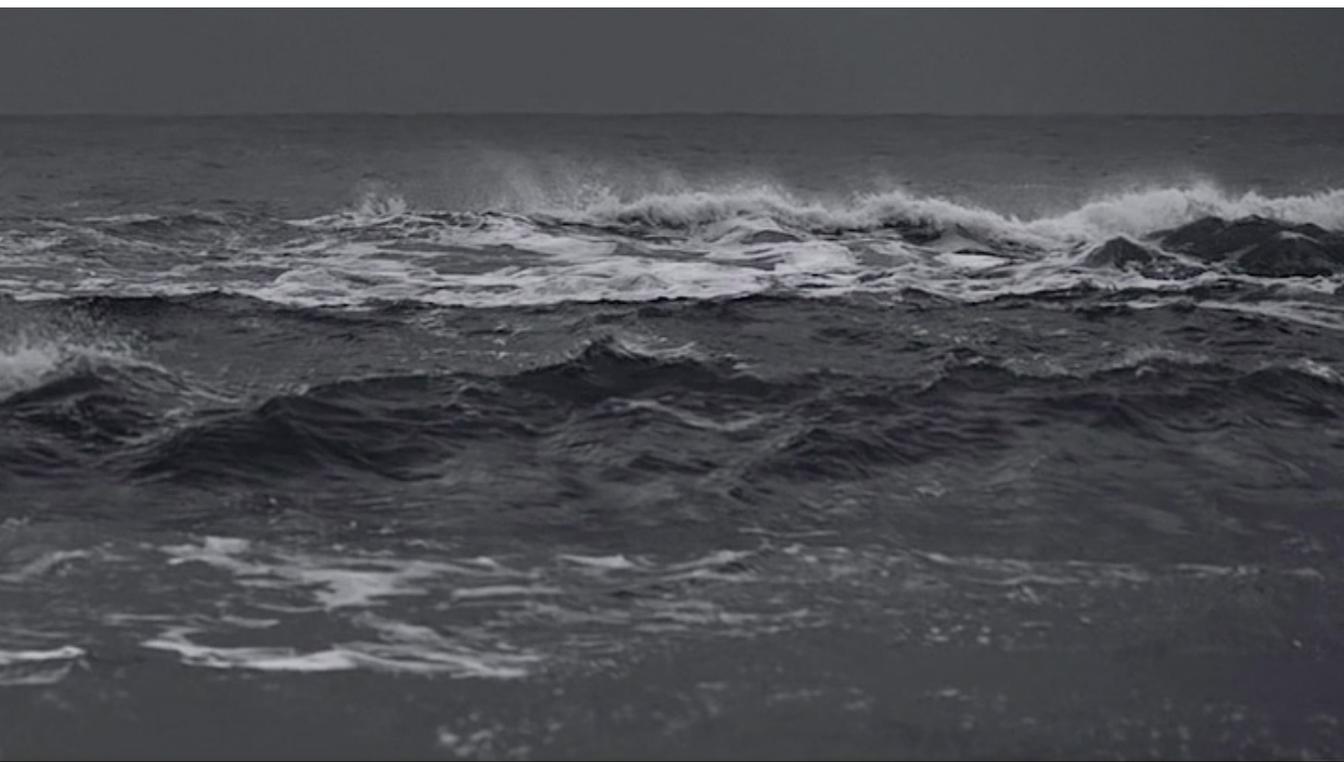
VIRGINIA WOOLF, PHOTOGRAPH BY GEORGES CHARLES BERESFORD, 1902

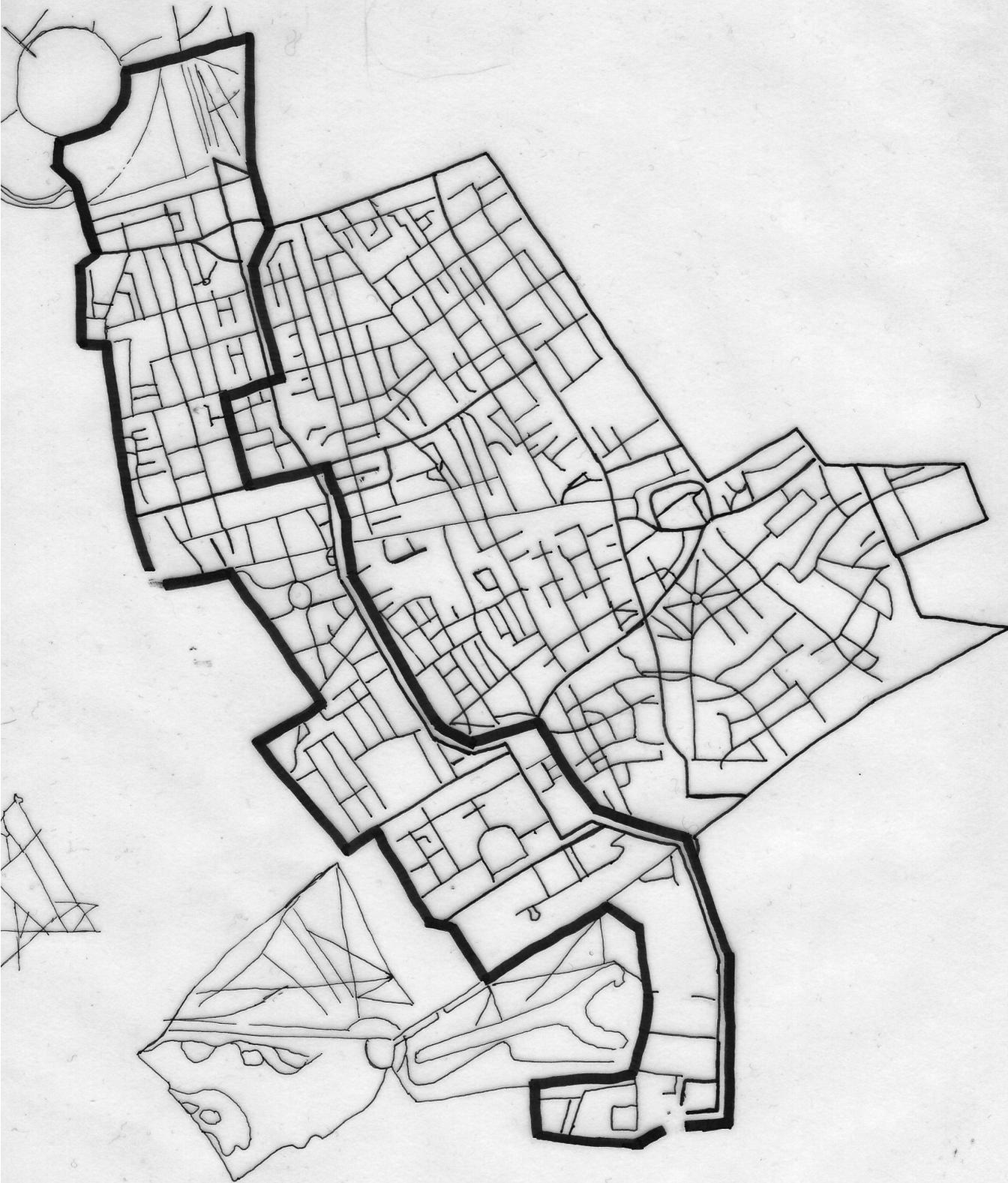
STILL FROM FILM THE WAVES, WOOLF WORKS BY RAVI DEEPRES AND LUKE UNSWORTH



THREE *WORLDS*: MRS DALLOWAY, ORLANDO, THE WAVES

To be able to get a grasp on the subject, I started reading three books by *Virginia Woolf*. To me her writing has that notion of melancholy all over it and it helped me to better understand things. *Virginia*, who herself was a melancholic, puts things from her own life into her books and it was interesting to see how she wrote it, especially in the waves where she uses the stream of consciousness as her writing technique. It shows how the human brain works. It's a technique where she uses fragments and they do not necessarily follow in time. It can jump from one subject onto another without a certain connection between both, and that's what makes it interesting: the use of fragments. Chaotic and complex but it depicts the reality. As I have read the books I chose the elements that were the most melancholic to me and started creating drawings with them. Each novel concentrates on another aspect and that's what made me look at melancholy as a very layered thing, layers as thin as a veil.

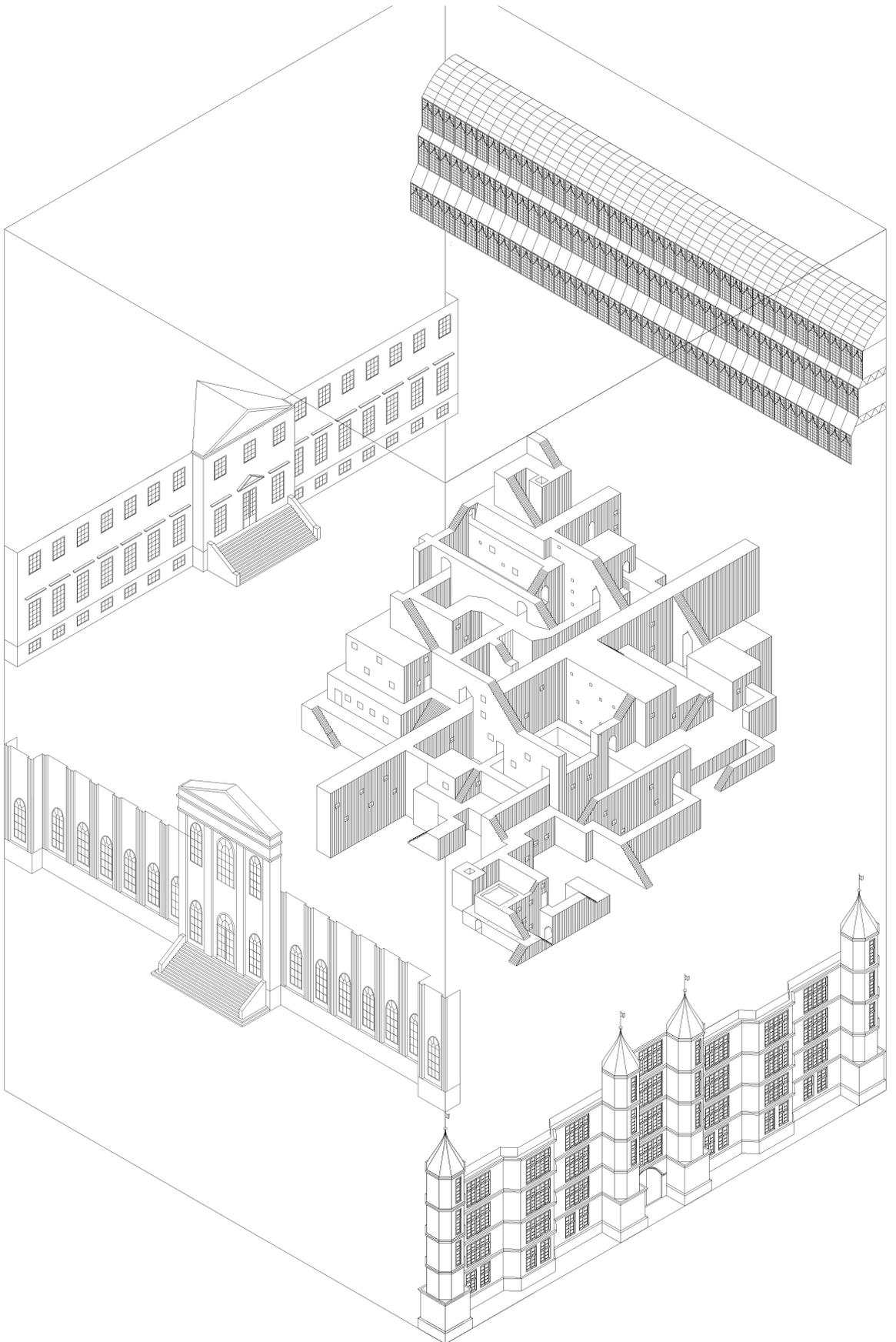




MRS DALLOWAY

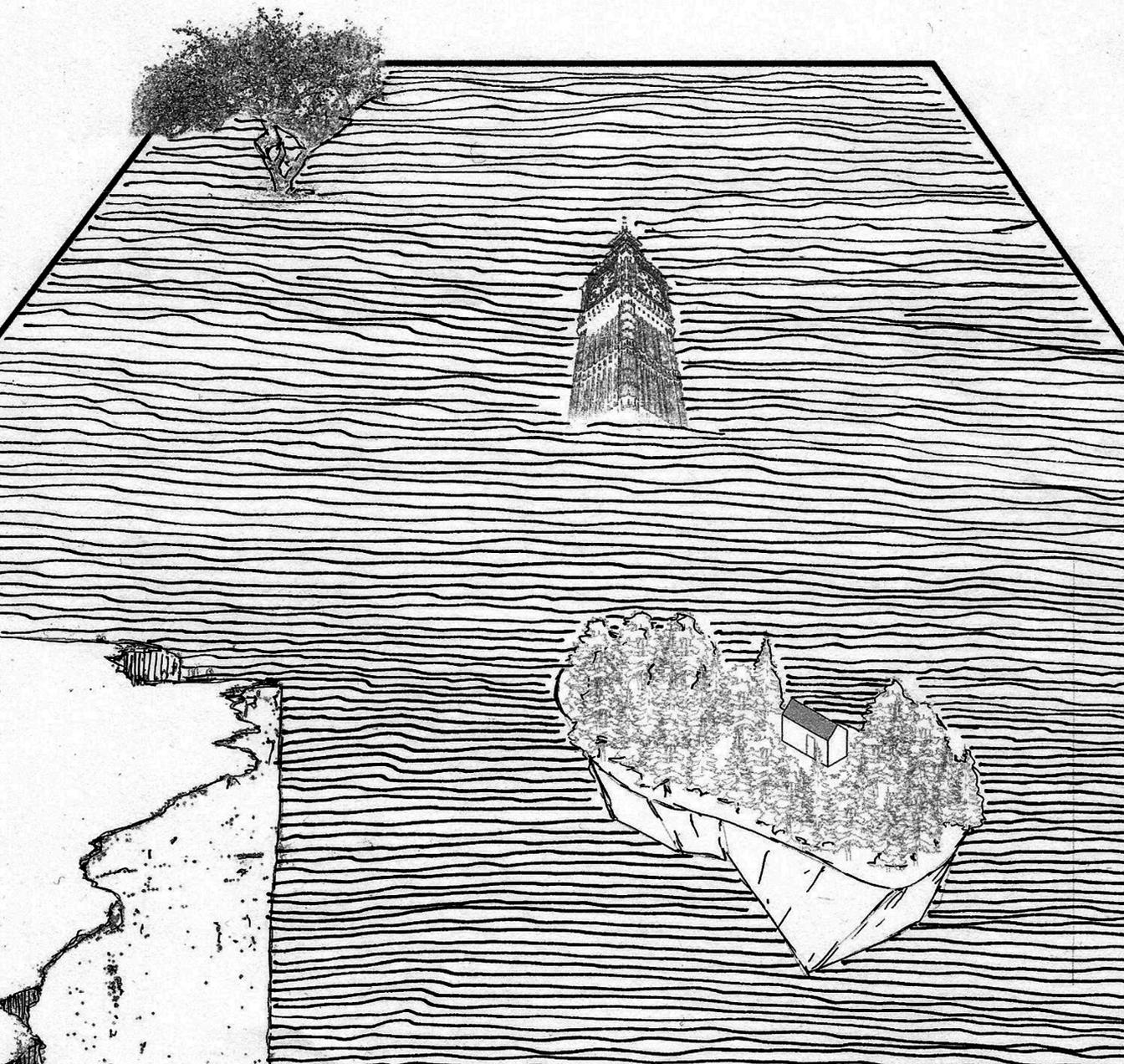
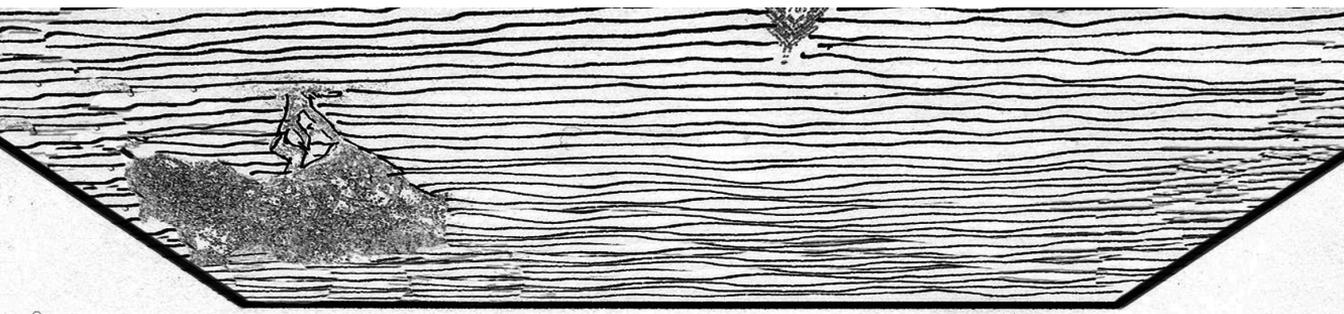
I draw the walks of the 3 characters that do not meet in real life, but on a mental level they do. They meet on this level because of very simple, banal actions that happen to them. For example the ambulance that passes by *Peter*, an ambulance that is on it's way to *Septimus* who just threw himself out of his window. In the end *Peter* and *Clarissa* (Mrs *Dalloway*) come to realize that they are in fact part of the society that made *Septimus* do what he did (it's dated *post WWI*, so you have to realise something very traumatic happened to him). They become aware of who they are and for *Clarissa* it is a moment of clarity, a moment where she's grateful that *Septimus* committed suicide otherwise she might have done it herself. Because someone dies, she values life more. It is contrast.

OWN WORK, VITA VOLUPTUARIA



ORLANDO

I was very much intrigued by the notion of time in the book. , who travels through time and even changes sex, is for me the major thing happening in the book. But through all those constant changes, yes even from man to woman, the house is always there. It becomes the safe spot to return to and is an allegory of time. The house has 365 chambers, one for each day of the year and 52 staircases, one for each week. So time and change are the aspects that I wanted to represent in my drawing. I also thought it felt very astronomical, probably because of the time travelling which is something very sci-fi and very new for the time it was being written. So I drew the house with façades as thin as a veil so you can easily switch period, and a core so very complex that it has enough rooms and enough staircases. Theatres that can quickly change their appearance within the same play inspired me.



THE WAVES

It's very interesting to see the lives of 6 characters as they grow up. It starts when they are very young and live nearby the sea. So the sound of the waves becomes a very important aspect in the book and it is something that always returns. As they grow up each one of them gets confronted with death or with their own choices they made in life. So it's very much about losing a beloved one (their dear friend *Percival*) as well as losing one's own self.

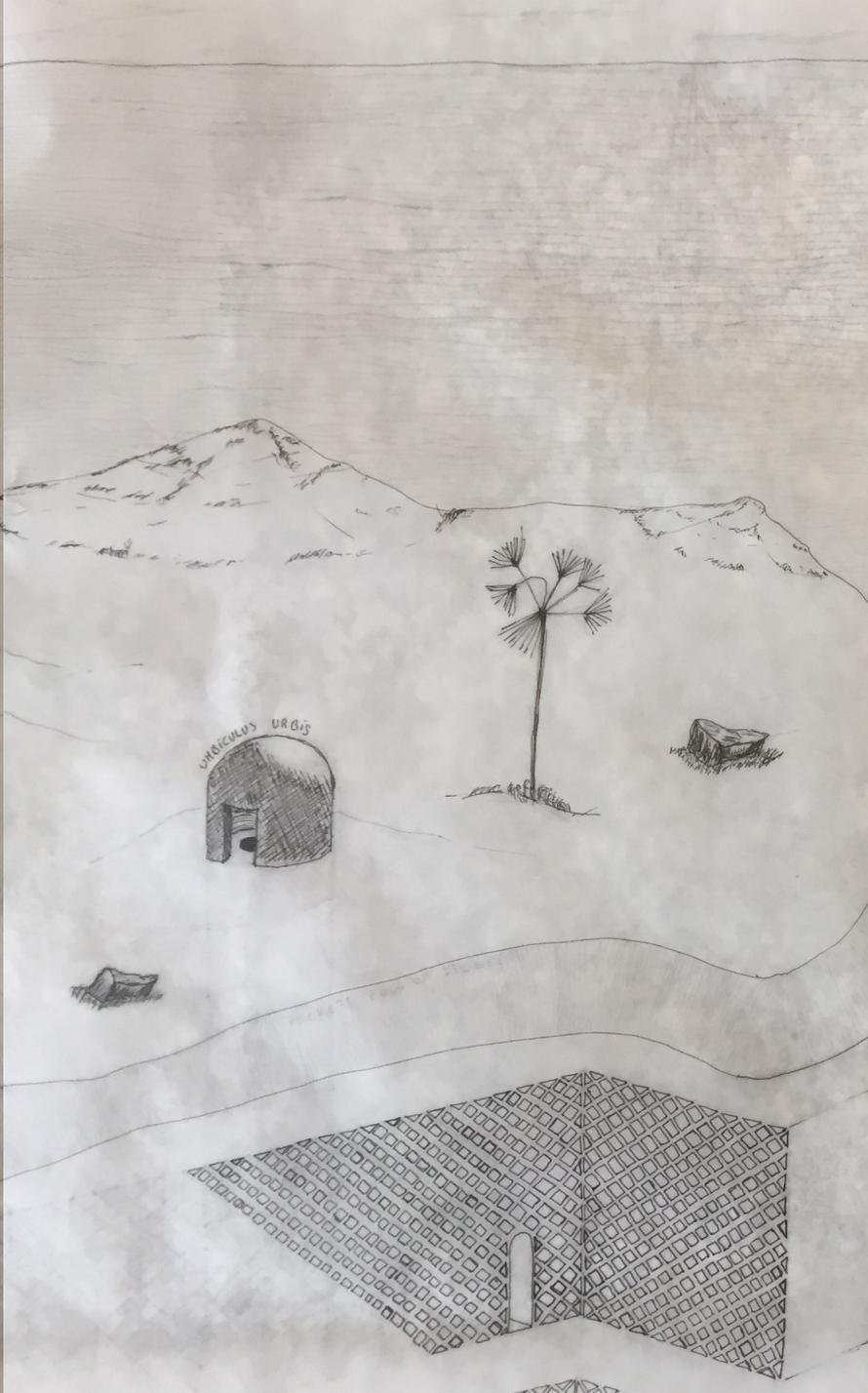
The way that *Virginia* wrote this book gave it some sort of rhythm. You have all of these characters that all have their own moment and the waves become the continuity in the book and are a metaphor for the characters. Again the aspect that gives it the melancholic atmosphere is a very simple thing. For example the fin in the waves that becomes a moment of reflection for *Bernard* or the cliff for the most melancholic character of them all, *Rhoda*. So these moments, you can call them moments of being, were the elements I used to start making a drawing. Elements that pop out of the waves so they create an interruption of the continuity and become a moment of their own. The mirror drawn above is one of the character's moments of realising and is also a reflection of the actions happening in the water.

The books for me represent a triptych: nature, time and a promenade.

PROCESS

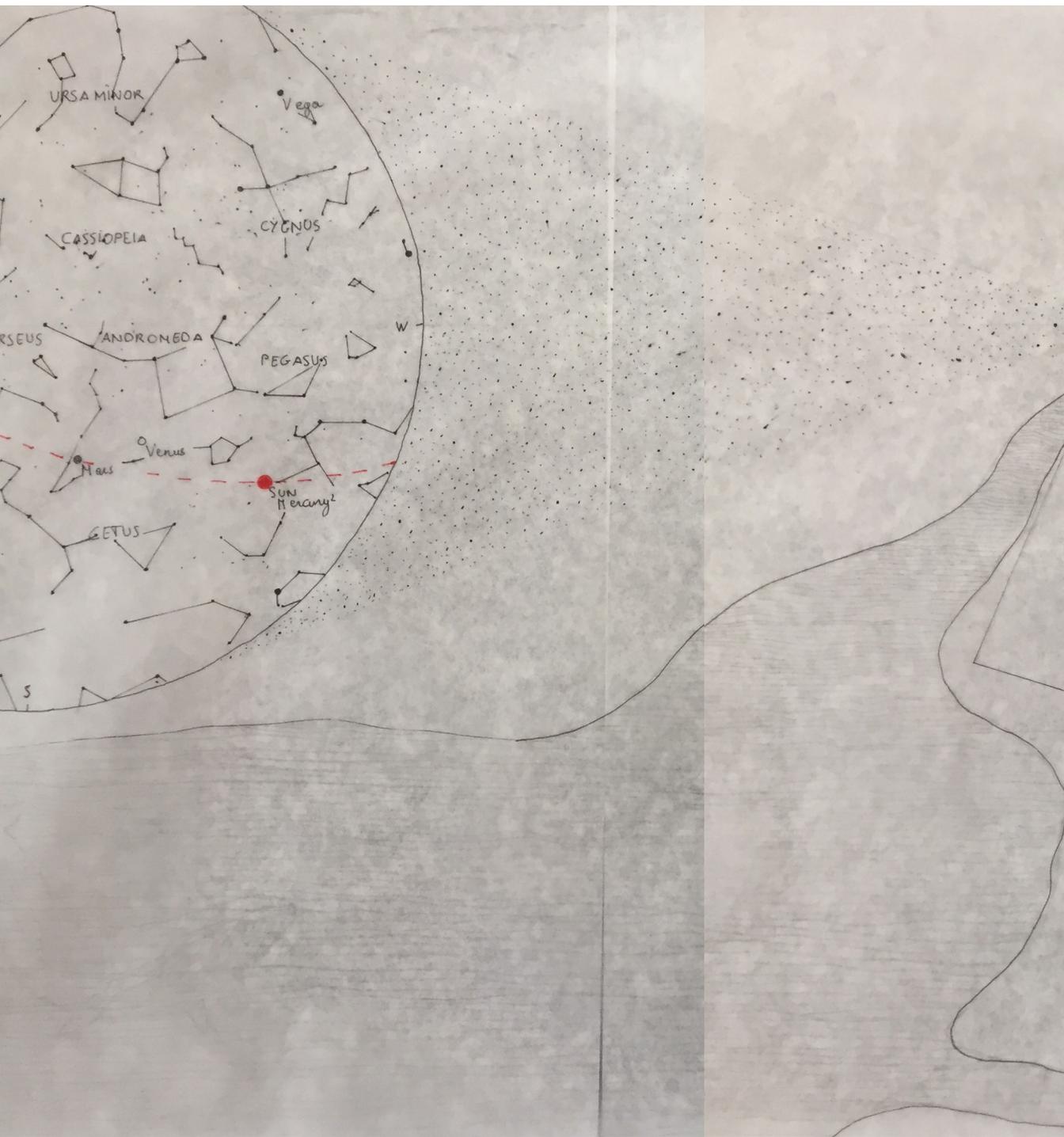


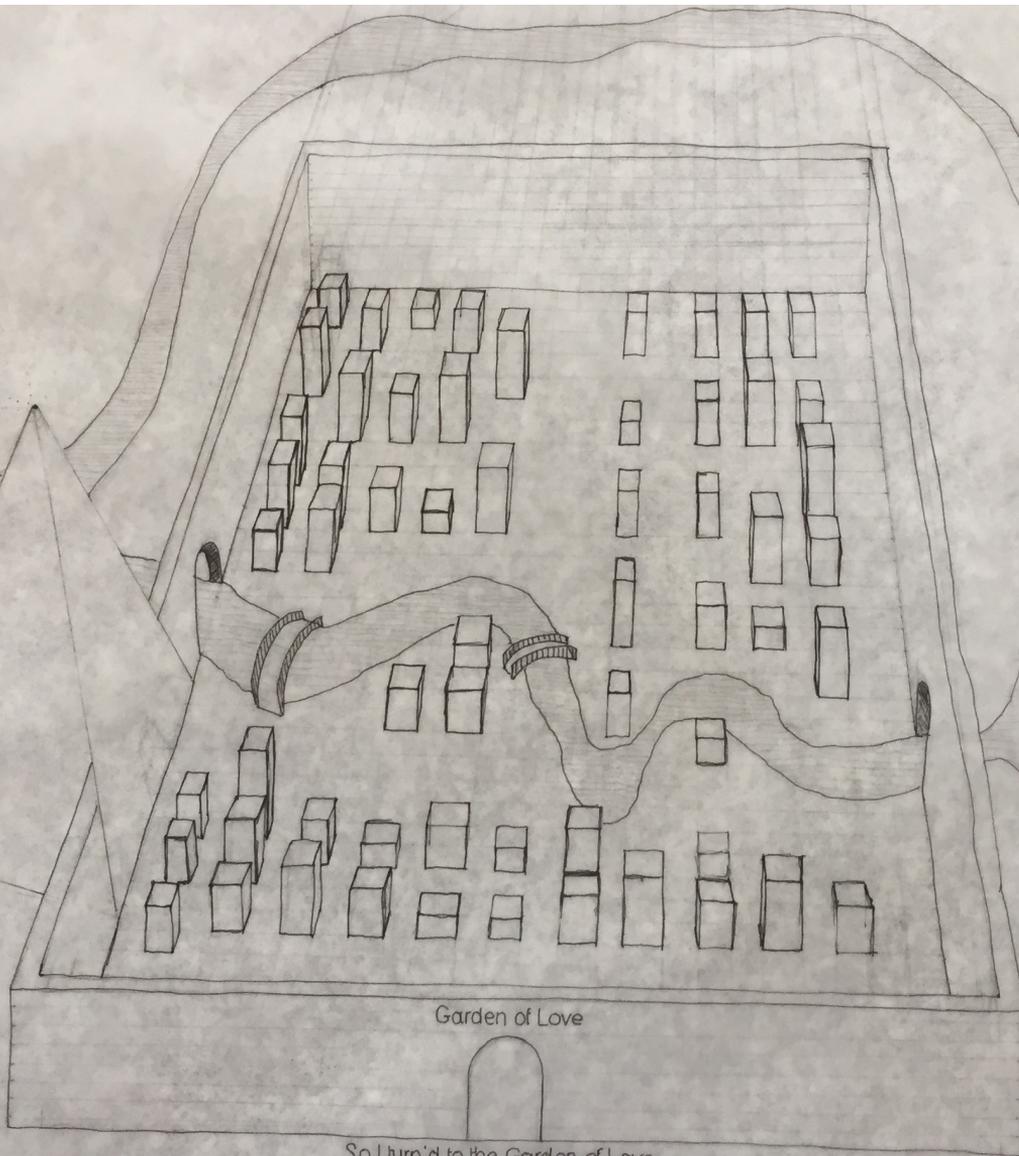
OWN WORK, VITA VOLUPTUARIA











Garden of Love

So I turn'd to the Garden of Love,
That so many sweet flowers bore.
And I saw it was filled with graves,
And tomb-stones where flowers should be;
And Priests in black gowns, were walking their rounds,
And binding with briars, my joys & desires.

But in the end I'm neither *Wolf* nor *Rossi* but I am my own. So I should reflect on my own moments of being and use those fragments to create. What I'm drawing now is my stream of consciousness. You can say that in a way it's an autobiographical drawing where the elements drawn can be of use in my process of creating architecture.

I'm using a roll of tracing paper as my method to put my thoughts in a drawing. As for now there are a lot of fragments from my period in Rome. It's a city that made me feel very much at home and where I got transported into these moments very easily. *Piazza del Popolo*, the parks, my walks in the city without really knowing where I would end were all moments of being. But when I discovered a little book about *Rome* under the surface, I was very much intrigued by this aspect of the Eternal city. So I want to play with the mysteriousness of the world. In my drawing we have this very earthly part, a cosmic one and also a more underground part. Ever since I was a child I've been drawn to mysteriousness, to ancient cultures starting with ancient *Egypt*, and then came ancient *Greece*, *Rome* etc. ... The myths that came forth from these civilizations I find very fascinating. Something that has never existed yet it has always been there. A quote I recently found is very interesting to look at:

“People often prefer to dismiss myths, saying: it's not true. But a way to think about myth is as something that never was and always is. Or as a beautiful lie that tells a much deeper truth. But one way or another when we lose our mythic sensibility, the powers in this world that may not wish us well have a greater purchase on us, a greater hold.”¹⁶

Reflecting on my 'autobiographical drawing', I see a combination of individual fragments working together as a cityscape. Rossi in an article stated that: 'everybody can rediscover himself in fixed and rational elements, in his own history, and accentuate the peculiar character of a place, a landscape or moment.'¹⁷

16 C. Du Cann, "THE MYTHOS WE LIVE BY: UNCOLONISING OUR IMAGINATION," <http://dark-mountain.net/blog/the-mythos-we-live-by-uncolonising-our-imagination/> (June 4, 2017)

17 Aldo Rossi, "La città analoga," *Lotus*, no.13 (December 1976), p. 6.

Within this drawing you can recognise ideas like collection, geometry, the ancient orders, the city and even studios from artists as *Canova* or *Brancusi*. Another big aspect is my connection with *Rome*. And like *Virginia* I had the same feeling of anonymity. The only difference is that with me the violent jolt of the city provoked this feeling, while she got triggered with this emotion because of the *campagna*. She wrote about *Rome* in her diaries, but at the same time you see the eternal city being used in her novels. The melancholic *Bernard*, for example, travels to *Rome* for rejuvenation. And in *Three Guineas* the *campagna* functions as an act to reinvigorate ‘the recurring dream that has haunted the human mind since the beginning of time; the dream of peace, the dream of freedom.’¹⁸

As for my method to create architecture, I’m focussing on my own fragments and combine it with elements that artists use all the time to express the sense of melancholy. Elements or metaphors that truly interest me are emptiness, one’s posture, shadows, landscapes, ruins and the void. Each fragment depicts a moment of my own melancholic moods and therefore it can be seen as a character in the narrative of the melancholic city.

THE USE OF *FRAGMENTS*

A fragment is a part broken off or detached; an isolated, unfinished, or incomplete part. In my autobiographical drawing my fragments are indeed not finished and they are detached from their original environment. They are important since they are the connection between my melancholy and the outside world. They are the basis for my melancholic city and are the characters that are visible in the upper world. Sticking out of the landscape, making an interruption of the continuity, drawing all the attention to them inside the city wall, they function as relicts. Relicts that try to connect the heavenly and the earthly. This is something that we as human beings have always tried to do and still are trying to do even though we do not always want to admit this since we live in a society that doesn't give space to the irrational anymore. Looking back at those fragments, now physically drawn and not only visible in my mind anymore, they allowed me to step back and reflect on them again so I could start constructing the city. I am creating spaces from the intangible phenomena related to melancholy.

CONSTRUCTING THE MELANCHOLIC CITY

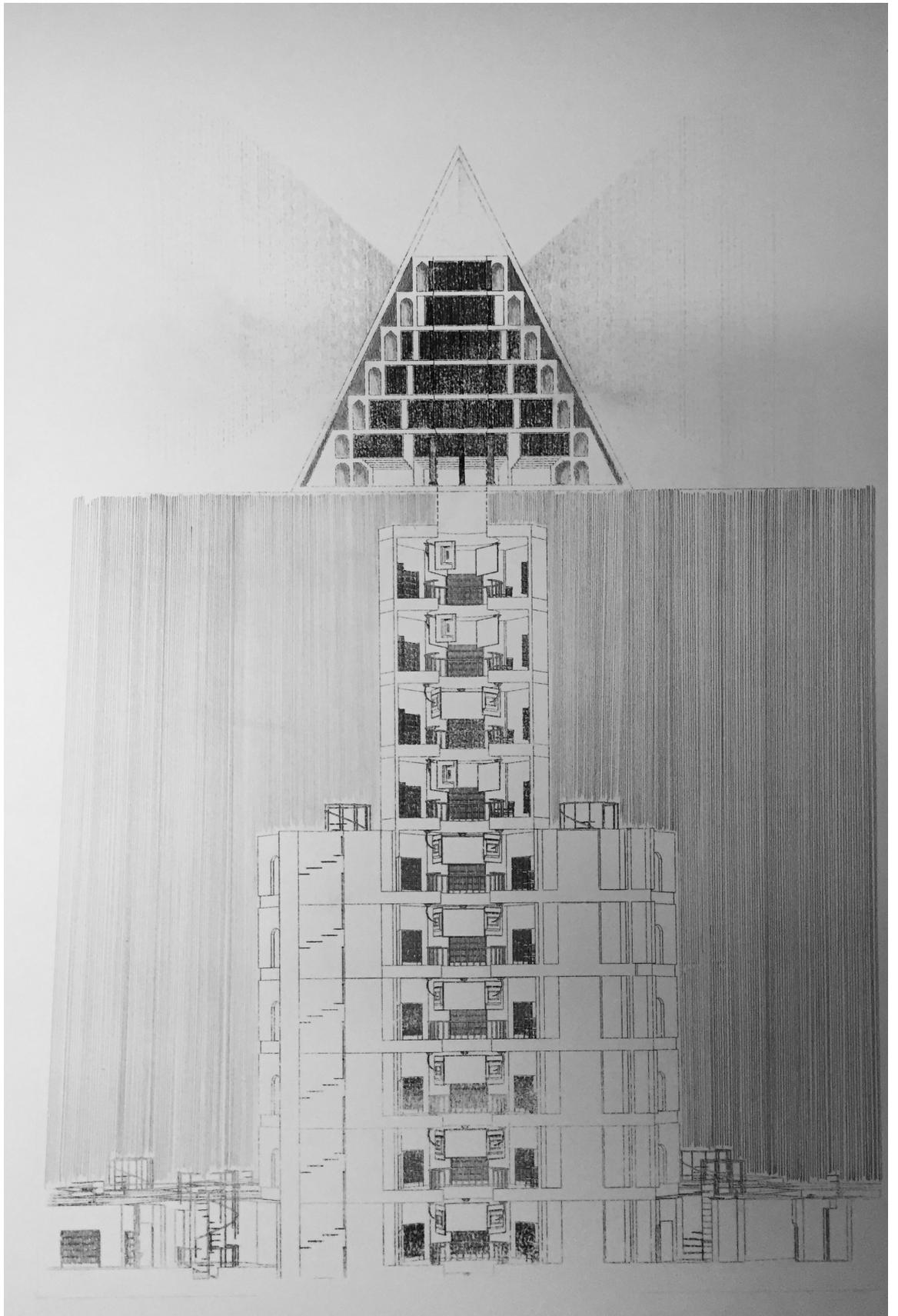
The construction of the city exists in putting together these fragments. It's a cityscape of my own melancholic fragments depicting my vision of the city/ life. For me the most important is the fact that the people live beneath the relicts. They literally stand on top of the people whom are embedded in the earth desperately looking up at the unreachable sky. The dead are put inside the city wall to make a contrast with the living. As I am searching for contrast, estrangement, solitude, disappointment... as main themes inside my city I believe putting the dead above is a first way of creating that contrast. You have the quietness of the fragments above opposed to the chaotic, complex life underneath.

To express estrangement in my world I choose to use different scales which is being translated in very small designs that are in contrast with their enormous environment or with the scale of other projects in the design such as the writers hut versus the tower, perspectives in the earth scrapers. In that way I can create an image that feels uncomfortable, complex and chaotic. The space I create is analogous to the real world however it is a new environment that reflects my mental space.

The solitude is created by the fact that I put the living underneath the earth and the monuments that rise out of the ground which stand alone in the world. The image of overwhelming landscapes combined with the monumental architecture is necessary to create the feeling of being extremely small. However there's a contradiction with the writer's hut that is very small and constructed on the scale of the human being. But I fully embrace this contradiction. It is the exception that confirms the rule. We as human beings will always be contradictory; it's a typical element of melancholy as well so there's no need to even try to avoid being contradictory. We should all start embracing it.

WALL OF THE *DEAD*

The wall of the dead functions as a city wall constructed out of the urns of the people who are cremated. I want to create a world where contrast is a key element and putting the dead above and the living people underneath is a first way to start creating this contrast. The dead become present in the landscape, whereas now we put them away. I believe we should not be afraid of it, since we are all born to die and by putting them so very visible I want to confront the people so they start contemplating about it. That's why I construct a city wall so that in every space you'll find yourself into, you'll be confronted with death.



PIRAMIDE

The first fragment is my pyramid and it functions as a library. A safe spot for all the knowledge we've gained as human beings. As *Virginia* has stated that books are the souls of the writers, it also is the place where all of these beautiful souls come together. The sphere, the shape considered the most perfect, is the indicator of time passing by.

The library of Babel is an inspiration for the design of it. As I had started drawing the section first the floor plan as a result was hexagonal. That reminded me of *the library of Babel* so I used this shape as a basis for the architecture. A building that becomes so complex, so endless that you become discouraged to go find your book.

“When it was announced that the Library contained all books, the first reaction was unbounded joy. All men felt themselves the possessors of an intact and secret treasure. ... At that period there was much talk of The Vindications – books of apologia and prophecies that would vindicate for all time the actions of every person in the universe and that held wondrous arcana for men’s futures. Thousands of greedy individuals abandoned their sweet native hexagons and rushed downstairs, upstairs, spurred by the vain desire to find their Vindication. These pilgrims squabbled in the narrow corridors, muttered dark imprecations, strangled one another on the divine staircases, threw deceiving volumes down ventilation shafts, were themselves hurled to their deaths by men of distant regions. Others went insane... The Vindications do exist (I have seen two of them, which refer to persons in the future, persons perhaps not imaginary), but those who went in quest of them failed to recall that the chance of man’s finding his own Vindication, or some perfidious version of his own, can be calculated to be zero.”¹⁹

The library starts inside the pyramid shape but goes down into the earth as deep as you can imagine. On TV-screens numerous different characters keep speaking, quoting texts from different stories. The noise all of the characters add to the sort of chaos I want to create inside my city. It's also a reflection of how I sometimes experience the world around me. It's often quite a mess inside my head. I can have very high moments, yet seconds later I can hit my lowest point. Sometimes there's just too much stuff going on and I feel completely caught up in the moment which then can result in some sort of crashlanding, however I will never show this to the outside world. It feels very self-destructive from time to time yet it's also something that I need to have since I do not see this as a weakness but as a strength. The second part of a poem by *Florence Welch* she wrote for the music video of *Queen of Peace/Long and Lost* describes it perfectly.

“We’re dying of thirst so we feast on each other
The sea is still our violent mother
The blood round here poors down like water
Each wave a lamb lead to the slaughter
And like children that she just can’t teach
We break, and break, and break
And break ourselves upon the beach”²⁰

THE *DESERT*

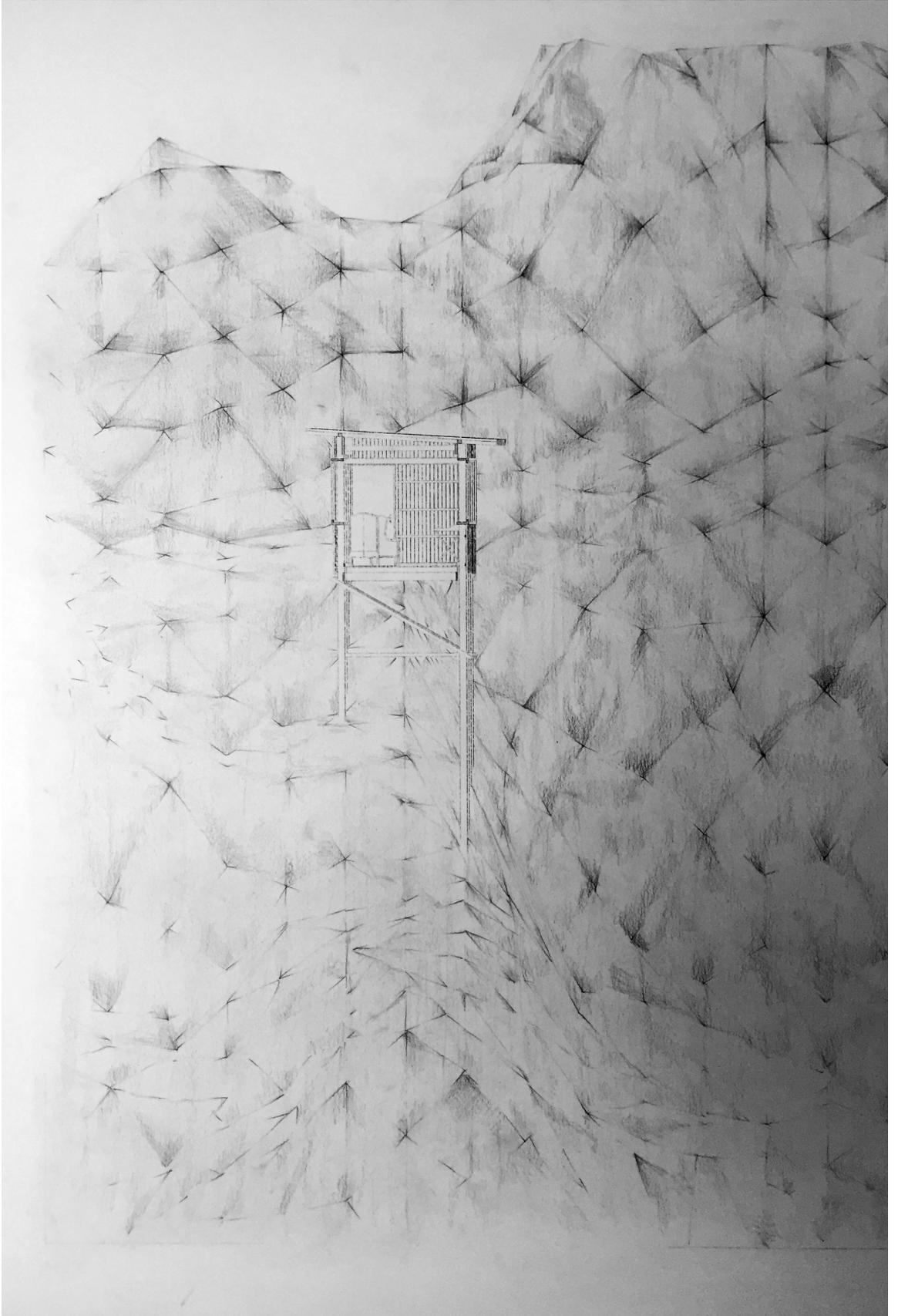
The desert functions as a resting place inside the landscape. It's a space without architectural intervention. This is to make the contrast between the underworld and the upper world even bigger. The only architecture you're able to see is the one of the city wall so you're isolated in the desert while being surrounded by death. Underneath the surface you'll find the housing part, a part that is full of life. All of the buildings are the same; there is no such thing as each his/her own style. In that way I want to give shape to my feelings of being anonymous in the city. It depicts the loss of one's own self, one's identity. The houses have no windows, only openings and are hollow on the inside. There's no design of the interior, but this is meant to be. In that way I create the image of desolate houses.



THE LOST *SCULPTURES*

This is based on the part in my first drawing where there are a lot of sculptures stacked onto one another, an image that's stuck in my head after my period in *Rome*. It was very striking to see a lot of statues, columns etc. deprived from the glory they had in the past. All of a sudden I could stand next to a head that hundreds of years ago stood on top of a body on a column to impress the people. The 'glamour' of it all has faded. You also become aware of the huge scale these sculptures were made of.

The sculptures pop out of the landscape, on the transition zone from the desert to the mountain. Walking in that space somewhere in between the desert and the mountain, the statues create this atmosphere of a desolate space, where you are confronted with a lost glory. For the lost travellers, if you just wander about, you'll be able to find secret passages through the sculptures where you're able to go down inside the city. However you'll find yourself in a web full of stairs where some of them lead to nowhere and you have to start dwelling to find your way back. There's no such thing as a rational solution to get out of the circulation part.



THE *WRITER'S* HUT

Since literature has played such an important role it seemed to me very natural to create this spot where one can isolate himself and write down all of the thoughts swimming inside his mind.

Inspired by the way *Virginia* wrote (sometimes standing, sitting with just a writing board on her lap, no heating in the room etc. ...) and the lyrics of *Björk's Hyperballad* I created a very simplistic writing space, constructed out of wood, standing on top of a mountain. It is the only spot where you can overlook on all of the other monuments and use them to wander, as a source of inspiration.

The mountain, this large landform, represents the feeling of being overwhelmed and is in stark contrast with the smallness of my writer's hut. It's also the highest point in my landscape and houses the axis mundis. Through this axis you can either go down and get lost in the labyrinth that's underneath it or go up and find shelter in the writer's hut. The hut isn't necessarily for writing, contemplation is the key and perhaps writing it down is a tool to get words flowing. Difficult at first, but just like the mountain I believe you have to get up there and give yourself over to it. When you enter the labyrinth (140 meters deep, 30 meters wide) it looks like an impossible mission to get out of it and get yourself moving into the world you'll find underneath the earth. If you do not allow yourself to start dwelling inside of it you won't find the way, so please allow yourself to get lost and discover by wandering around and then you'll find the way out.

Never regret thy fall,
O Icarus of the fearless flight
For the greatest tragedy of them all
Is never to feel the burning light
- Oscar Wilde



HERBERT DRAPER - THE LAMENT FOR ICARUS, 1898

The idea of the labyrinth goes way back to the myth of *Minotaur*.

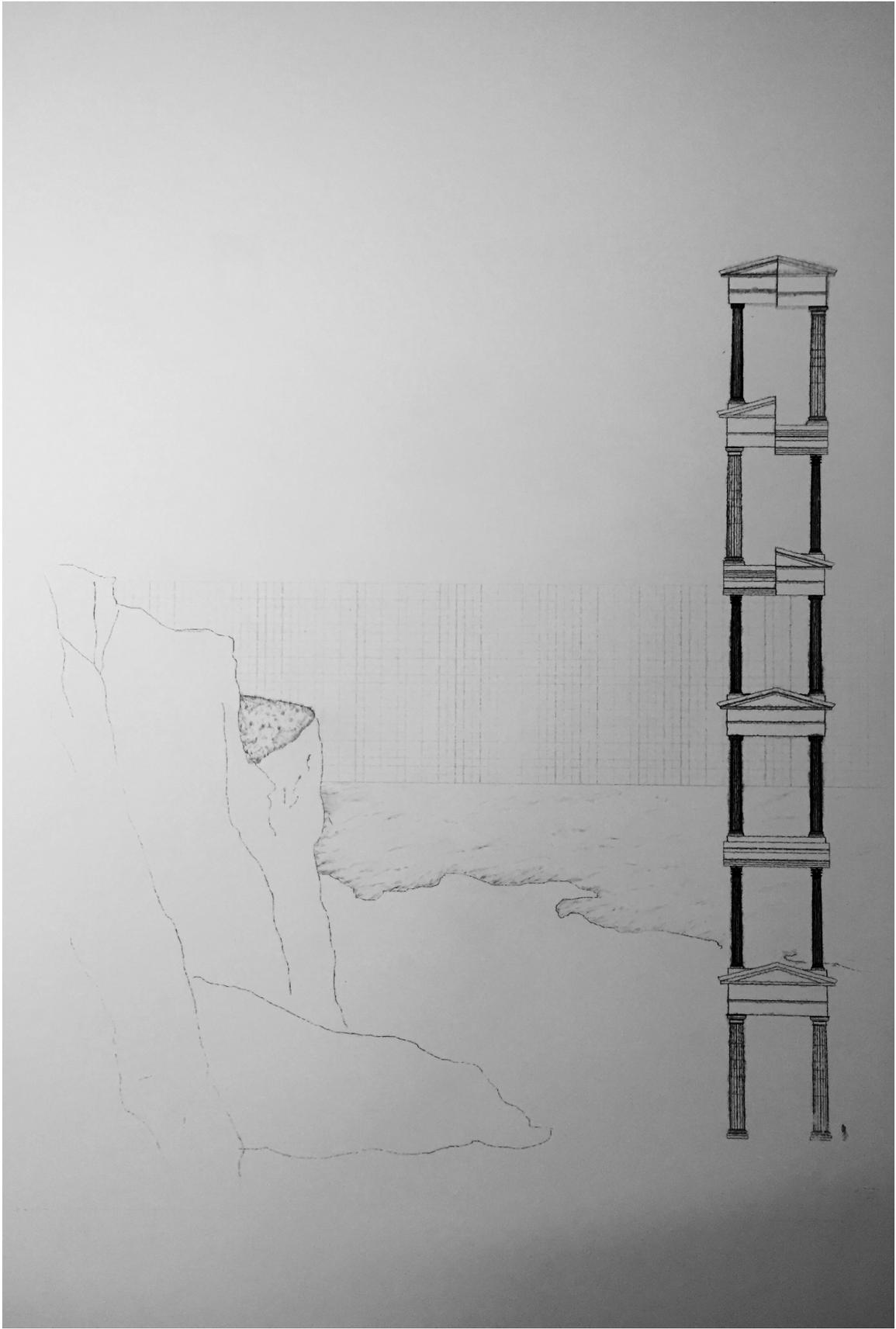
“When *Minos* reached *Cretan* soil he paid his dues to *Jove*, with the sacrifice of a hundred bulls, and hung up his war trophies to adorn the palace. The scandal concerning his family grew, and the queen’s unnatural adultery was evident from the birth of a strange hybrid monster. *Minos* resolved to remove this shame, the *Minotaur*, from his house, and hide it away in a labyrinth with blind passageways. *Daedalus*, celebrated for his skill in architecture, laid out the design, and confused the clues to direction, and led the eye into a tortuous maze, by the windings of alternating paths. No differently from the way in which the watery *Maeander* deludes the sight, flowing backwards and forwards in its changeable course, through the meadows of *Phrygia*, facing the running waves advancing to meet it, now directing its uncertain waters towards its source, now towards the open sea: so *Daedalus* made the endless pathways of the maze, and was scarcely able to recover the entrance himself: the building was as deceptive as that.”

Minos then imprisoned *Daedalus* and his son *Icarus* so that they could not give away the secrets of the maze. This led to *Daedalus* to create wings from wax and bird’s feathers in order to be able to escape from this imprisonment. He warned his son that flying too close to the sun would burn the wax and flying too close to the sea the moisture would weigh down his wings. However *Icarus* got caught up and flew too close to the sun and fell down into the ocean.

“And now *Samos*, sacred to *Juno*, lay ahead to the left (*Delos* and *Paros* were behind them), *Lebinthos*, and *Calymne*, rich in honey, to the right, when the boy began to delight in his daring flight, and abandoning his guide, drawn by desire for the heavens, soared higher. His nearness to the devouring sun softened the fragrant wax that held the wings: and the wax melted: he flailed with bare arms, but losing his oar-like wings, could not ride the air. Even as his mouth was crying his father’s name, it vanished into the dark blue sea, *the Icarian Sea*, called after him. The unhappy father, now no longer a father, shouted ‘*Icarus*, *Icarus* where are you? Which way should I be looking, to see you?’ ‘*Icarus*’ he called again. Then he caught sight of the feathers on the waves, and cursed his inventions. He laid the body to rest, in a tomb, and the island was named *Icaria* after his buried child.”²¹

You can think of a labyrinth as a symbolic pilgrimage. When I was studying in *Rome*, I visited the *Vatican* over 6 times because I'm truly fascinated by it and I can't get enough of it. When I was over there showing it to my family who were visiting, we had to wait to enter the building because of the nuns who were ending their pilgrimage. Walking a path for salvation, for contemplation.

The image of the labyrinth can also be used as a metaphor for a difficult situation, which you cannot escape easily from. In my labyrinth you lose track of the outside world and so should quiet the mind to reach this contemplative state of mind.



TOWER

The tower functions as the entrance for the monument for *Virginia* and stands next to a cliff. The cliff is an element that I used from *The Waves* where it is linked with the melancholic *Rhoda* who probably threw herself off it even though it's not literally written down by *Woolf*. The tower is a collection of the classical orders, put on top of each other in a disordered way yet in the end it fits perfectly together again. The Tower is 105 m high and draws the attention immediately so you want to go there and get a close-up from it. As you get near to the edge of the cliff the sound of the waves breaking on the beach functions as an introduction to the monument for *Virginia*. You'll also discover that there's a wood construction behind the tower, piercing through the city wall so you can enter *For Virginia*. However it seems unreachable from afar and you wonder if you'll ever be able to get to the 'final station'. Using the classical language I do not intend to reconstitute it again, I only want to use this architectural language to express a dead civilization.



FOR VIRGINIA

After walking underneath the tower there's the possibility to enter the monument dedicated to *Virginia Woolf*. The wooden construction leads to the spot where only the sound of the water overflowing is important. It's about being there and let yourself being overwhelmed, to contemplate. Inspired by *The Waves* and *What the water gave me* by *Frida Kahlo* it is a reference to how I looked at the painting by *Kahlo* but also to *Virginia's* last moments. As it depicts someone's end of life, it is also the beginning of life for the city underneath since the water falling down gets filtered underneath the earth and enters trough an aqueduct into the gardens. Again it's contrast and it's the beginning but also the ending of the cycle that marches through the city.



made of them a garland and gave them—Oh, to whom? We launch out now over the precipice. Beneath us lie the lights of the herring fleet. The cliffs vanish. Rippling small, rippling grey, innumerable waves spread beneath us. I touch nothing. I see nothing. We may sink and settle on the waves. The sea will drum in my ears. The white petals will be darkened with sea water. They will float for a moment and then sink. Rolling me over the waves will shoulder me under. Everything falls in a tremendous shower, dissolving me.

“Yet that tree has bristling branches; that is the hard line of a cottage roof. Those bladder shapes painted red and yellow are faces. Putting my foot to the ground I step gingerly and press my hand against the hard door of a Spanish inn.”

MAKING THE *MODEL*

As I am making the models of my city I decided to make segments from them. They are cut-outs from the complete landscape that look as if they are ripped out of a body with veins still sticking out of the segments. Those veins are the connections between the different segments however they are not connected in the model. In that way I give space to the spectator to form his/her own mental connection between the segments, I only give you a starting point. I give you a space analogous to the real one, yet you know that this couldn't possibly exist.

When walking around the models you'll be able to discover more of the city, for example the writer's hut on the mountain that is not always visible, you can only see it from certain points while walking. Some of the parts underneath the ground are still solid rock, so there's no intervention but it again allows the spectator to project his/her own fragments onto it while for me these are still blind spots that I want to further explore.

I choose to paint everything matt black since it adds to the mysteriousness of my design. As *Ann Demeulemeester* once said:

“Black is not sad.
Bright colours are what depresses me.
They're so empty.
Black is poetic.
How do you imagine a poet?
In a bright yellow jacket?
Probably not.”

CONCLUSION

It's become a mental space to me. We as people see things, experience things and make connections between them. For me, my autobiographical drawing where I used the stream of consciousness is an example of this. All of the fragments that are drawn onto the tracing paper are connected with my melancholic moods. I have made this connection with these objects and have rediscovered them by finally getting them out of my head. I see it as some sort of bloodletting that made me aware of my own mental space.

“Therefore I am deformed by connections with everything that surrounds me here.”²²

Leon van Schaik stresses on the importance of mental space, especially on becoming aware of your own spatial intelligence. He starts his book with a very interesting question that goes as follows:

“What if architects, instead of endlessly recombining elements from a stock vocabulary of building forms derived from a preoccupation with shelter, actually designed from our ideas about space, our histories in space, our communal mental space all built upon that combination of inherited capabilities that have evolved into us over millennia, and the unfolding of those capabilities in specific environments?”¹³

So throughout our lives, we constantly are working on our own mental space and I believe that becoming aware of that space is truly important. Being aware of it should avoid you forcing your own space onto others since it'll be more interesting to see multiple mental spaces coming together not knowing what will come out of it.

22 Rossi, A. “A Scientific Autobiography.” Trans. Lawrence Venuti. The MIT Press, 1981, pp. 19
23 Fox, William. Spatial Intelligence: New Futures for Architecture. July 2010. <https://placesjournal.org/article/spatial-intelligence-new-futures-for-architecture/> (accessed June 1, 2017).

It is also an analogous space. By that I mean that it is a world similar to the real world since all of the fragments used are taken from it, yet I construct it in such a way that you are aware of the impossibility for it to be true. However by making the model you are able to enter this newly constructed world. There are still spots that are not designed yet and they don't have to be designed. They add mysteriousness to it and give it an indistinctness (blind spot) that creates space for the spectator to project his/ her own thoughts.

It is an eclectic landscape, reflecting all of the emotions I've felt the past 23 years. Sometimes I'm more of a storm, and then I can be a calm deep blue sea and another moment I can feel like this mountain inevitable to climb. All of this can be quite overwhelming but it's a landscape that shows you how one will never be the same and how one will never be this perfect person you try to be. For me the imperfectness of things and of my own personality is what really interests me. How boring it would be if one were perfect, no?

So this thesis has become a process of awakening where I have peeled off layer after layer to find elements that I could use in order to create. Looking back at it, it is quite a 'destructive' process. But as I've written earlier after reading Virginia's books, it's how I look at melancholy as this very much-layered emotion that you can't possibly put into boxes. It's so complex and so very chaotic. This is also a representation of how this process has started, as something very chaotic not knowing what direction I was heading at, at all.

Yet eventually this destructive process has gained myself a lot of insights and I believe that things did come together in a way that I'm content about it. It's become a collection of personal fragments combined with elements more widely known as metaphors for melancholy to lower the threshold so the spectator can enter the melancholic city more easily.

To end this written addition to the design I want to stress that this personally feels as an ongoing research. This is a (perhaps endless) search for trying to give architecture a 'soul' driven by my melancholy. I can't answer the question if it's possible to construct melancholy, but I can say that it has definitely become my vehicle to create.

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