

GRIME ON A MOUNTAIN OF HAZE

imprecise instruments of vague spaces.



Anna Märta Danielsson

Degree of Master of Fine Arts in Design – Spatial Design

Konstfack - University of Arts, Crafts and Design

Supervisor degree project: Tor Lindstrand

Examiner degree project: Kristina Fridh

Supervisor report: Maria Perers

Examiner report: Kristina Fridh

Spring 2022

ABSTRACT

This project explores vagueness in space and how it can help us train and sharpen our senses as designers and architects to adapt to the realities of scarcity and how to make less-extractive processes of creating space. Using ephemeral but recurring phenomena such as air flow, reflections, refractions of light and moist in architecture as inspiration, I seek to make everyday-spaces, such as underneath a wash basin, a radiator or behind a door, interesting again. With methods inspired by the land art movement to find new ways of seeing interior spaces, I use attentiveness and the idea to *not destroy or disturb* to observe already existing spaces. The project seeks to tell a story of neglected beauty in forgotten spaces and translating them into (im)material architectural spatial installations.

I hope this project can bring an understanding that protecting and appreciating what we already have is probably more sustainable than constantly changing and readjusting spaces to fit our wants and what we think we need. To train our senses and get new ideas of beauty and function in already existing interior spaces, brings what is out of focus into the light. This might be a way to partly slow down the industry of interiors and redirect how we work as architects and designers to understand that everything doesn't need to change, but if we seek change, we can do it by immaterial phenomena, such as light through the interstices, that will occur as long as there is life.

Keywords: Interior Architecture, Spatial Design, Design, Vague Space, Sustainability, Light, Air, Water, Immateriality, Nature, Installation Art, Attentiveness, Perception.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	1
THE STRUCTURE OF THE PROJECT	7
Why vague?	7
Attentiveness	7
Affirmative	8
Imprecise instruments.....	8
THE PROCESS.....	9
Methods and techniques	9
The parts of the project - The imprecise instruments of vague spaces.....	15
A portal – The Door.....	15
Pipes - Under the basin	19
Hot air meeting cold.....	23
A wet spot	26
Refractions and reflections	29
Shadow of a shadow space	32
Meander – underneath as necessary support.....	34
A Temple for Vague Spaces – starting to collect and reflect	36
THE RESULT – PERHAPS IT COULD BE VERY CLEAR?	42
REFERENCES.....	45

INTRODUCTION

This degree project seeks to develop a sustainable way of working with architecture and design, inspired by methods of environmental artists, such as land artist Robert Smithson, most famously known for his work *Spiral Jetty*, and artists working with nature as a subject in different ways, as Fina Miralles who is juxtapositioning nature and the artificial. But rather than putting the said artificial and natural in opposition to each other, I have tried to consider them as the same. I have also drawn inspiration from architects working with the surroundings and materials already given, especially the French office Lacaton & Vassal and their project *Place Léon Aucoc*.

By understanding natural processes, I want to create spaces with sustainability of nature. The importance of time or understanding of time as a part of the material reality is something Robert Smithson might have called “time’s coordinates in space” and long searched to capture in many of his artworks. In his writings on *Earth Projects*, Smithson states that artists have long been distanced from their own time by society, audience and critics putting more focus on the *art object* than the actual process of making the art, or the mental process of conceiving it. Smithson claimed that this is a way of separating the art object from the artist and by that, exploiting artists of their own work, automatically making us lose a dimension of the art object or piece when viewing it as something stand-alone from the artist (Smithson, 1996, p. 111-113). I have tried to apply the concept of taking time to make something out of experiencing an interior space. To see time as any other material might give a possible new way of understanding what an interior or a space can be. In this way, I hope to create spaces that will last an ephemeral moment that also becomes their full lifetime, just as in nature where different timespans exist simultaneously.

The art critic and philosopher Boris Groys writes in *Going Public* that what we create as artists, designers, creators are bland compared to what nature itself creates:

“It is often said that the wonders of art pale in comparison to the wonders of nature. In terms of aesthetic experience, no work of art can stand comparison to an average beautiful sunset” (Groys, 2010 p. 12-13).

This quote could be read as a part in how humanity have separated itself from nature and other-than-humans in centuries, making *them* into something else than *us*. In contrast, as art historian T.J Demos argues in *Decolonizing Nature* (2016), art has the possibility to change the anthropocentric destructive traditions of this dichotomic view of human/nature with nature as an inexhaustible source of extraction (Demos, 2016, p. 19).

This project started with an urge to discover what makes a place beautiful to me, and perhaps then to others as well.

I initiated the process by visiting a place that seems to always mesmerize me, even though it is a place I revisit several times a year, a nature reserve by the northeast coast of lake Vättern in Östergötland (fig. 1). I realized that one of the main reasons this space affects me the way it does is because it is what it is – a nature reserve with rules on how to behave – not to disturb or destroy.



1 Collage map. Storpissan nature reserve, Omberg.



2 Calcium covered sticks, bark, stones or leaves in Storpissan nature reserve, Omberg.



3 Storpissan stream.

If my role in such space were just to observe and appreciate what happens in nature (fig. 3 & 2), could I by using the same gaze and way of acting find a more sustainable way of looking at and reacting to architectural spaces and interiors and thus develop a less depletive design process? From this viewpoint I asked myself the following question: why even try to make more beautiful things if the most beautiful already surround us? I wanted to use my project as a tool of finding ways of working in a time where we need to re-evaluate and re-design design itself. When making things and spaces is closely connected to the extraction of matter and depletion of the planet, how can we keep on designing?

We live in a world and a system where we have made us dependent on all the things around us. Our world is also unequally structured with all these things; in some places, they exist in abundance whilst in other they are scarce. As philosopher Emanuele Coccia states in *Architecture of Species, Non-extractive architecture, designing without depletion* (2021), architecture is the most primitive form of technology and an artform for adapting to the planet, not only domesticating it but also being domesticated by it. Home is a set of artifacts that allow us to inhabit territories of this planet otherwise not accessible for humans. All these artifacts could be seen as ways of fulfilling our desires of wanting to be a part of universe.

Rethinking or reforming architecture is therefore also rethinking the parts considered merely technological in architecture, Coccia continues, and itself could be considered as matter closer to myth than to material necessity.

“There are no objective and universally valid criteria that allow one to separate activities as purely natural or absolutely artificial and therefore technical. The line of this separation is the result of a historical, and therefore arbitrary, culturally variable, labile, contingent decision. Any activity aimed at transforming oneself and the space surrounding a living being is a technical operation” (Coccia, 2021, p. 268-269).

Even though we have all those technical things around us, we still crave more. As an interior architect and designer, I am active in a field where the desire to produce things that nourishes the crave for more is strong. That’s what keeps us alive. Is there a way out of this loop, a way around this dilemma, where we can still feed our yearn for change and new impressions but do this in a less extractive way? I have tried to make an effort, to resist the exciting idea of inventing new ways of architecting the future by making new solutions to solve old problems. In contrast, by looking at what happens and just appears, sometimes by chance, can we find things that keep our surroundings interesting.?

During my five-year studies at the institution of Interior Architecture at Konstfack there has for a long time been a greater focus on interiors of the public than private and the dichotomy of the two. But the concept of home has (rightfully) expanded to describe more than the private dwelling. Perhaps this is because of the extreme costs of interiors for an individual. Though I would state that we still have the need to study and understand the private spaces and perhaps to do so in the same way as we claim everybody’s right to the public space, we should claim everybody’s right to a private space. To look at and treat the private as we treat the public space, or a nature reserve, not to disturb or destroy. Or to find new potentials of beauty or interest in something as ordinary as for example the underside of a table.

I have used the concept *terrain vague*, used by architect Ignaci de Sola-Morales in the late 1980's as a way to describe spaces in the urban landscape that is fully or partly unplanned or abandoned and thus a space where unplanned activities can take place, or as a space of resistance (de Sola-Morales, 1987/1996). What is vague is not clearly defined, the vague is ambiguous and compared to a strict architectural program the vague space becomes hard to fit into a system of functions such as a bench for sitting, a road for vehicles etc. Vagueness can also be used as a way of expanding and (re)opening space as something other than the enclosed, separated or defined. As sociologists Phil Carney and Vincent Miller states, the vague is something that “resists categories, boundaries, calculations and identities.” What is vague is something that constantly moves and changes to escape the determinative (Carney & Miller, 2009, p. 3).

A vague space is a wanderer and hard to grasp. When we are uncertain, and a space seem unstable, or not set, in relation to what we demand of a space, we become more aware of what is considered deviant. A vague space doesn't always have a direct function for a human body, secondary spaces that become as a result of something else, because of something else. A space that *happens*, that might appear, then disappear and reappear.

How do we capture that moment?

“This is the strength of weakness [vagueness*] that strength which art and architecture are capable of producing precisely when they adopt a posture that is not aggressive and dominating, but tangential and weak” (de Sola-Morales, I. 1987/1996, p. 623).

*I am interpreting weak as a synonym for vague, two words with similar meaning describing something that is not being perceptual strong or conspicuous.

I would like to wander back to the idea of a vague interior space as a nature reserve and what they have in common. Perhaps nothing more than any space that humans have interfered with

by claiming it, colonizing it, building upon it, circle it with visible or invisible borders, or simply by naming it.

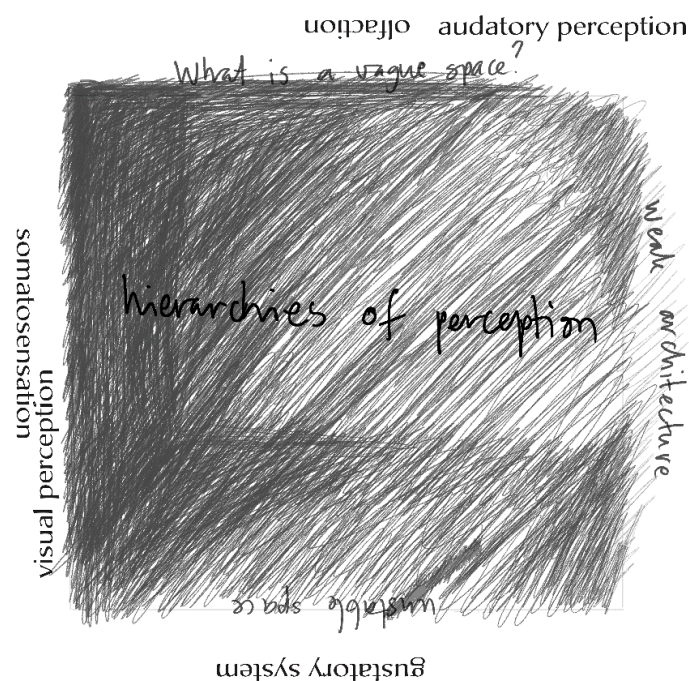
The vague spaces I have ended up with don't always have a specific name and would most likely be described in proposition to something else; besides, behind, under, in-between, through, after, and so forth. The idea of naming them, or giving them attention, perhaps through an invisible, or unclear, border towards the surrounding space or spaces is to treat them as important, as something that is worth paying attention and preserving.

The project questions circulate around how a private space, or in one way any interior, could be made and/or rethought in a sustainable manner. Is changing our way of viewing, or attentiveness as method, enough to change the way we design? Can attention as a design method result in a less extractive practice? How does time spent affect our material surroundings and thus how we perceive them and build relations to them? How does (im)material aspects affect architecture and spaces, things such as air, moisture, light? The intentions have been to explore these questions by experimenting with physical architectural elements and (im)materialities like airflow, light, and reflections.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE PROJECT

Why vague?

The vague became a way of revolting towards my own practice, and a way of revolting towards architecture itself, as something often very monumental. By focusing on the vague and looking beyond the perhaps superficial, or what could be called monumental, finding new ways of practicing architecture or design.



4 Weak diagram and possible hierarchies of perception.

Attentiveness

Attentiveness as a practice is to really pay attention. To be attentive is sometimes waiting to see a change barely noticeable, or just giving something several chances to be understood, seen and appreciated in more than one way. An aim to design *effort*, as something we often lack when creating architecture or inhabiting spaces. Effort is to not overlook any piece and to

deeply care for the spaces I become a part of. Perhaps the best architecture is the one we don't notice unless we pay a little more attention. Attention is also not giving up easily, resilience and resistance to living life in a fast pace.

Affirmative

By working with affirmation, towards myself, what I do and think, I give myself the permission to go forwards with an idea or project. To be affirmative is embracing what becomes and encouraging oneself and the process.

Imprecise instruments

Imprecise is not just another word for vague, though it could mean the same thing. I use imprecise as a tentative search for ephemeral qualities, or things we might take for granted in the spaces we inhabit. Imprecise is what we cannot always place in an exact type of space or function.

An instrument is a tool intended for often very precise work or for measuring levels, positions, speed etc. of something. An instrument can also be used to produce a representation of something else.

An imprecise instrument is thus something that can be used for measuring something ephemeral, or a way of representing something without exactly knowing why and what is represented. An imprecise instrument has the possibility to be used in different ways, decided or invented by the user for the purpose of practicing attentiveness. An imprecise instrument requires time and effort by its user.

THE PROCESS

Methods and techniques

The project is formed by observations, examinations, and experiments of vague spaces.

Observations are made of both private and public spaces. The focus of the observations has been to make an effort to see new things in familiar spaces or see familiar spaces in a new way. The method of observing is how I interpret what Robert Smithson would call the artist's "art of looking", to simply create art by "casting a glance" (Smithson, 1996, p. 111). By observing and reconsider the purpose of an object or space, I believe we can find more sustainable ways of reforming (or not changing at all) our built environment. Something architect Jennifer Bloomer's now 30-year-old project *Tabbles of Bower* illustrates through the idea of sacralizing profane objects of everyday life. The idea is to bring the common into significance and thus simultaneously elevate and devalue what can be considered sacred or profane. By zooming in and visually cutting out parts of a vague space in an everyday environment and giving that specific section more attention, I am creating altars of and for all the single vague spaces I have found and looked at.

"Temple comes from the Latin templum, which comes from a root meaning "to cut." Templum suggests both a place cut out (a special, sacred place) and a small piece of wood cut out from a larger one. Thus the manifestations of the English word temple as a container of the sacred ..." (Bloomer, J. p. 14-15, 1992).

By cutting out parts of a space I have tried to create a temple or an altar space for the vague that I have arranged, or curated, in mixed media spatial installations. These installations will be described more in detail under *A Temple for Vague spaces* (p. 36).

I have moved back and forth between two- and three-dimensional techniques. I have created different kinds of scenarios in different scales with things I have found around me. Amongst

others, small ice sculptures filled with dust and sand, melting and creating a reflective spot on the ground. Hot and cold air meeting and what it looks like when you direct light towards it. Shadows created in the small gap between a bookshelf and the wall. A thin layer of dust on the floor underneath a sofa. The instant when a reflection appears and disappears in a tiny metal pipe in the bathroom.

I want to state that the choice of phenomena and spaces have been haphazardly made, with an idea on them being ordinary and having the possibility to appear in almost any interior (and sometimes even exterior) spaces. But I am also aware of that my personal preferences, fascinations and ideas of beauty and aesthetics have played a part in what have attracted me. Perhaps most importantly I have chosen these more or less immaterial reflections, refractions and results of a material surrounding as a non-extractive layer of the things we find around us for creating other ways of experiencing architecture. I have used a way of looking at things as I interpret architects Lacaton & Vassal's method when re-designing Place Léon Aucoc, in Bordeaux, France. Accepting and deciding that what you have, or what is already there is enough and beautiful to make a place fulfilled.

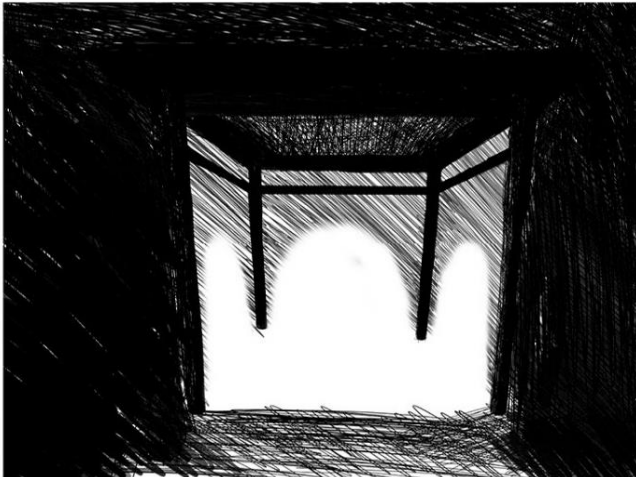
“...with a view to its embellishment. What does the idea of ‘embellishment’ boil down to? Does it involve replacing one groundcover with another? A wooden bench with a more-up-to-date design in stone? Or a lamp standard with another, more fashionable, one? Nothing calls for too great a set of changes” (Lacaton & Vassal, 1996).

We don't *have* to change things just because we *can*. Lacaton & Vassal claims that the creation of architecture starts with thinking of, reflecting and acknowledging what is already there and is in itself an enrichment of a space. That is embellishing enough (Lacaton & Vassal, 2012, p. 14).

Parallel with the interior observations, I made excursions and walks to find similar vague spaces in the public, inspired by Smithson's work *The monument of Passaic* where he have

documented and written about a New Jersey suburb and the very ordinary sceneries of a construction site, a sand-box, large pipes transporting water into the river - what he then described as monuments of that specific place, just because “It was there“ (Smithson, 1996, p. 68-71). Perhaps they were just monuments of that moment, as I read the action of his observations as part of the objects.

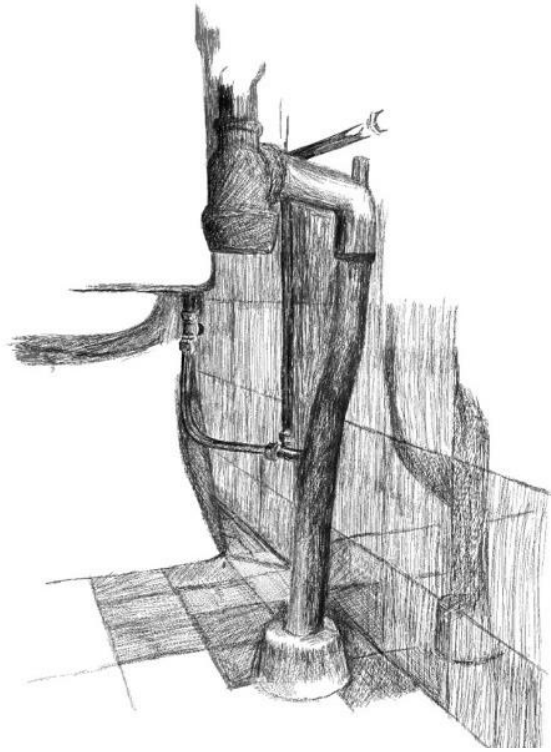
I thought of the idea of comparing or finding phenomena, like the ones I had observed in interiors, in public spaces as a way of grasping something universal and even more relatable for others than only myself (fig. 6-10).



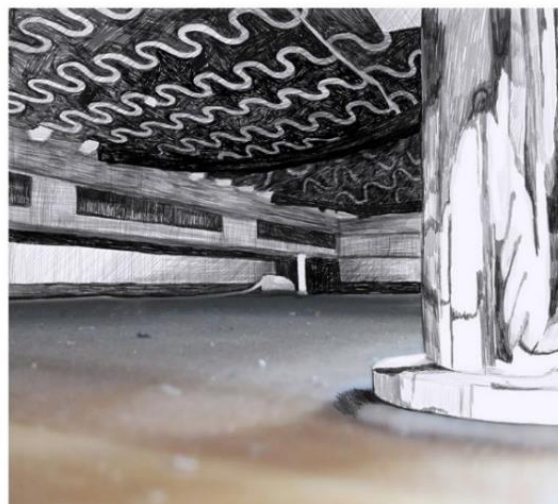
5 From underneath a table and under the subway bridge.



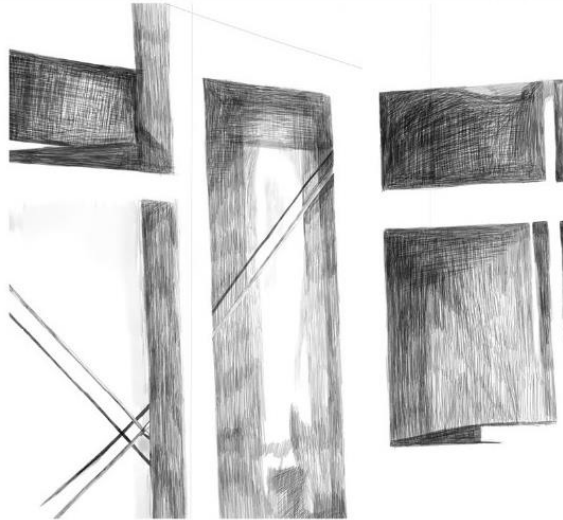
6 A pile of concrete & rebar and the pile of stuff.



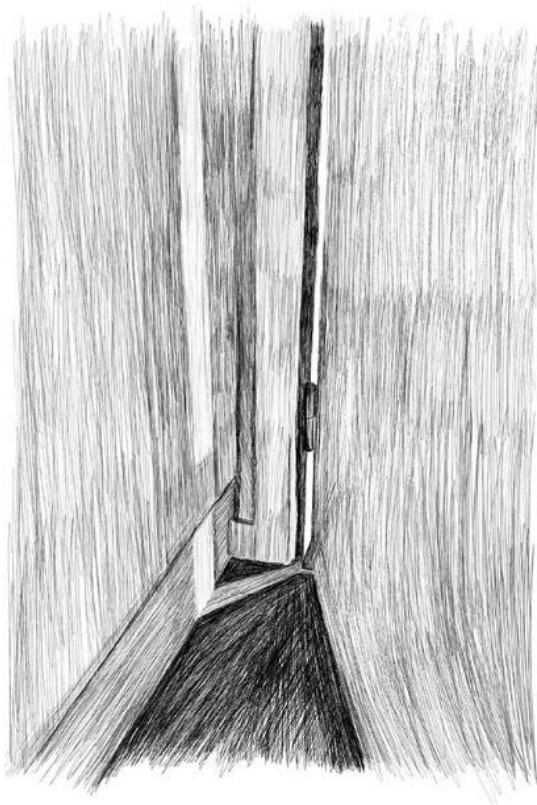
7 Under the wash basin and a dike.



8 Under the sofa and under a bridge.



9 Shadows from a bookshelf and shadows amongst trees.



10 slits of light. The door and in a tunnel.



I have documented the scenarios by video and photography. I have also used drawing by hand (analog and digital pencil) to find and document interior vague spaces that then have turned into full scale models, objects, sculptures or as I have later come to call them, imprecise instruments or altars. By mainly working mechanically and analogue, with drawing, sculpting and spatial installations I have aimed to spend time with and give attention to the vague spaces I have chosen.

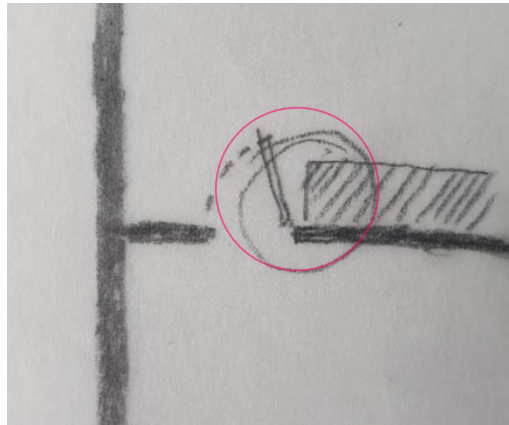
When representing and examining something through many different mediums and materials, I believe you create a closer connection to what it is you are seeing. This could be a way of transforming our relation to often neglected or unnoticed qualities in a space. By representation we form relations and what for example feminist theorist Donna J. Haraway would call “making kin” (Haraway, 2012, p. 99-103). I want to think of looking at our surroundings; both the built, the cultivated and what is left to its own devices, giving it attention and appreciation for what it already is, as a way of “making kin” with space and architecture as a piece in the process of making kin with other species and beings as well as ourselves. By bringing the neglected, or what is not in the center of our everyday spaces, into focus we are creating new “kinship objects” as feminist writer Sarah Ahmed describes a table around which we can gather (Ahmed, 2006, p. 81.) With new types of kinship objects, I believe we can create room for more than ourselves. What can happen when we choose to gather around a shadow, a ray of light, a breeze of cold air or a small puddle of water?

The parts of the project - The imprecise instruments of vague spaces

A portal – The Door

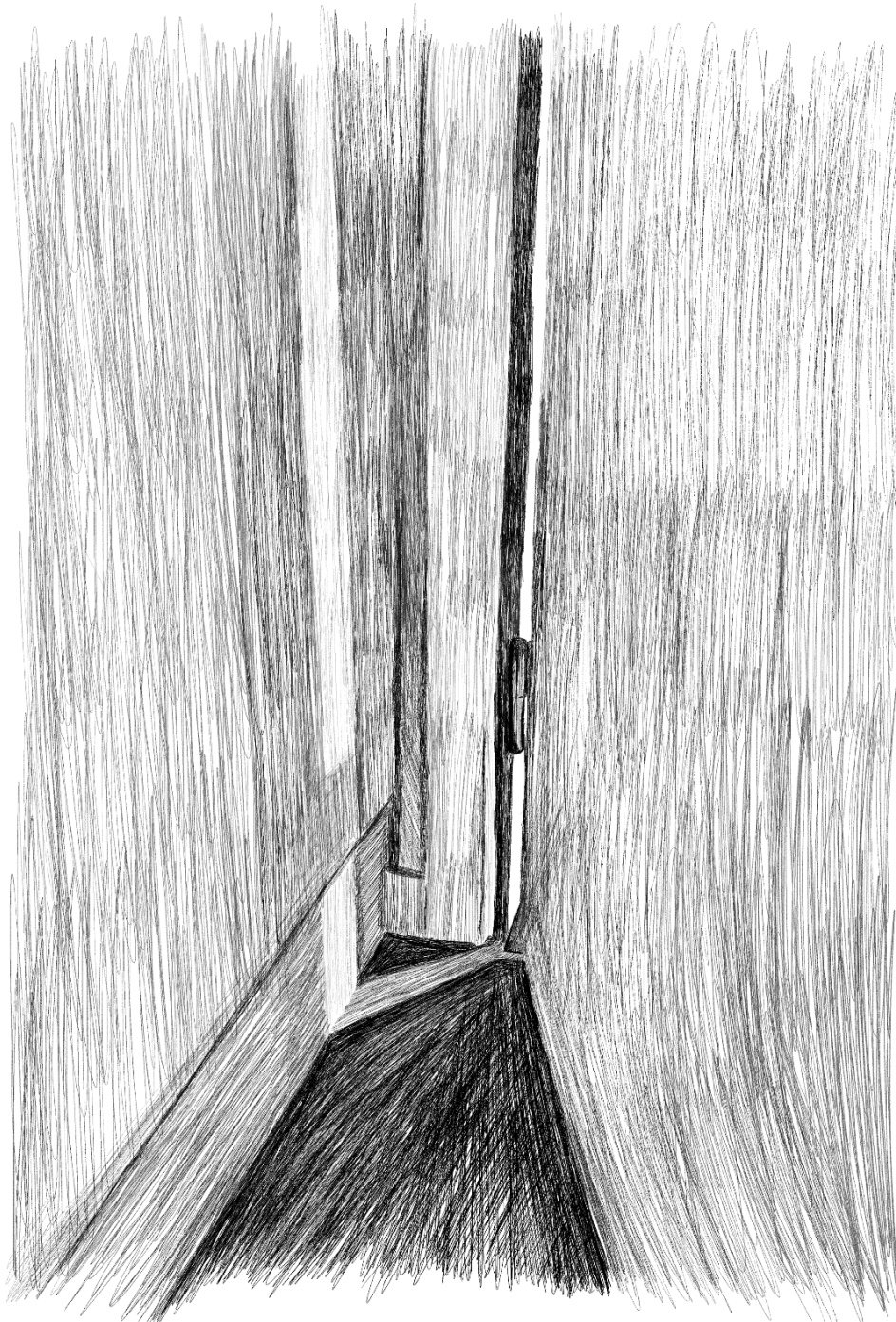
One of the vague spaces I found from attentive observations was the partly enclosed space that occurs when a door opens and folds towards a wall. Then the sun hits perfectly and creates a bright light pattern through the interstice between the door and the casing. Maybe you can see a hint of a reflection from a color on the door. This part started with a fascination of something ajar. What does it mean when something is neither fully open nor closed?

I was observing the backside of my kitchen (or front of living room) door.



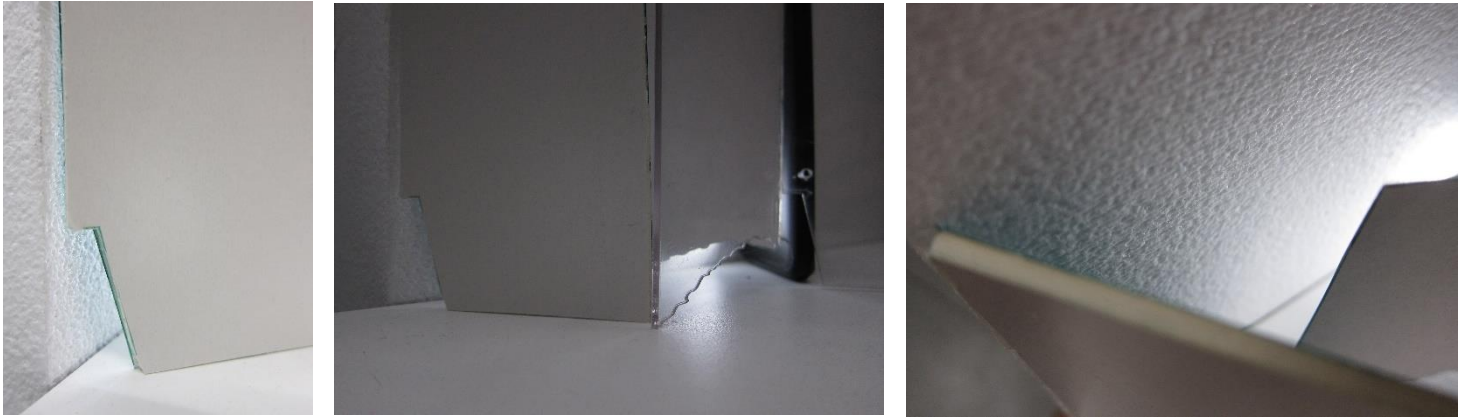
11 Hand drawn plan of the door and its surroundings.

Depending on how much I opened it, the space between the door and wall shrank and expanded. To what can such a space contribute? A space where leftovers gather that might become a meeting place for unwanted inhabitants of human homes, dirt, arachnids, illusions, a space for hiding. When turning around and looking at the space from an opposite direction, from the kitchen, the sun fell perfectly as by coincidence and threw a bright ray of light against the kitchen cupboard.



12 Hand drawing, ray of light flooding in between door casing and interstice.

I made small scaleless models (13) of rest sheets of paper, cardboard and acrylic glass from previous projects. Focusing on the slits created where the sheets met, playing with light and reflections through them, and something was barely revealed. This small space that you can catch a glimpse of, expanding and shrinking, leaving a lot for the imagination.



13 Nook & interstice models. Paper, acrylic glass and foamboard.

I wanted to re-create a section of the door and its surroundings (14 & 16), to put focus on the part that interested me, the gap and the space appearing, changing, disappearing when the door was moving between open or closed. The Door became a portal, the thin ray of light indicating that this is a space in between. Something in front of me and something in the past. The Door followed me because I also met others who reacted to it and told me their stories of it, when they had seen it, and what that moment meant to them.



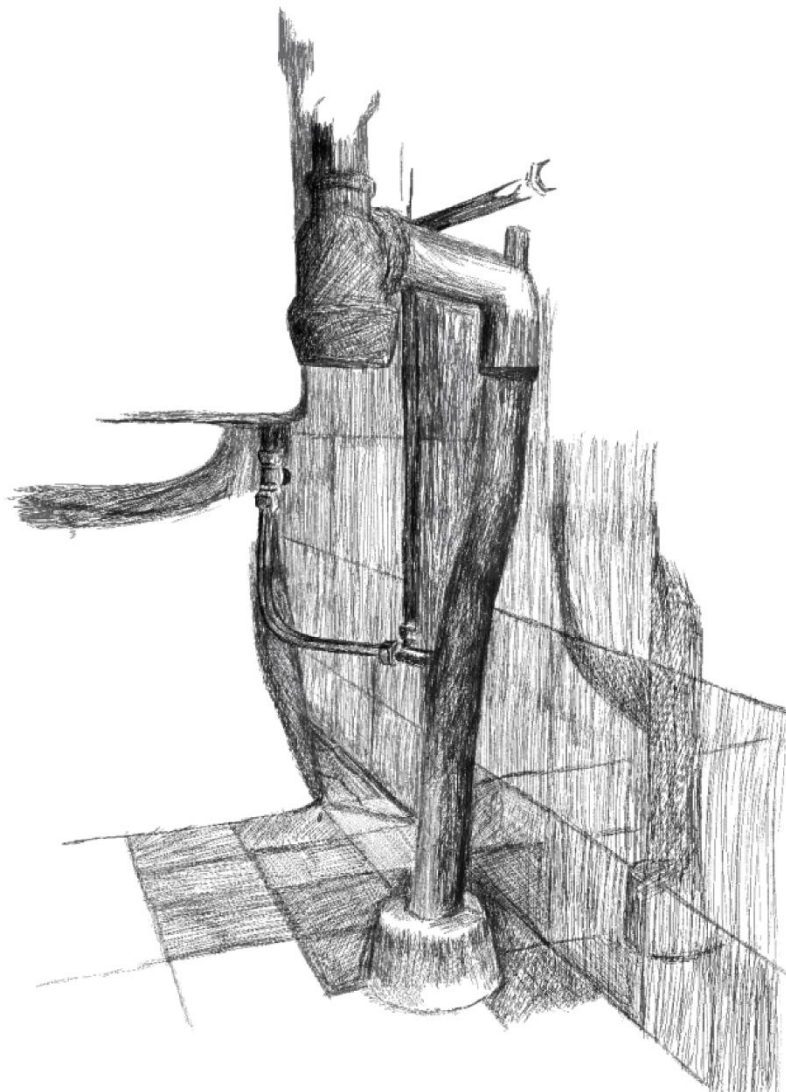
14 A portal / The Door.



16 A portal / The Door. Photo: Ekaterina Lukoshkova.

Pipes - Under the basin

Under the wash basin is a space taken for granted, ignored, hidden and forgotten. Often built in or totally covered. The system of pipes transporting a mixture of water and dirt; remains of soap, grease, hair, skin and other remnants of everyday life, away towards someplace else – where is this *someplace*? Bringing back purified water through the tap. A sudden reflection of light everchanging the hue of the pipes, a pale glowing yellow ray from when the ceiling lamp is lit, distorted colors from my body moving.



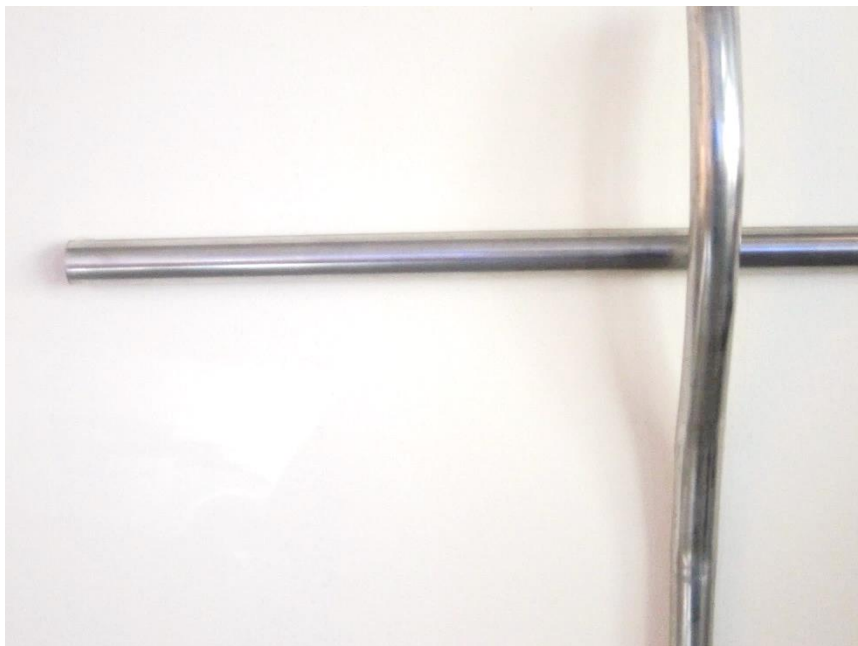
17 Hand drawing of bathroom pipes. Under the basin.

At first, I thought that this fascination for metal pipes was a bit silly, what difference would it make? I don't know why I got really interested to understand the pipes and how they curved to fit inside the room, around each other to always keep the right distance. They are always two leading in, one with hot and one with cold water. Only one leaving.



18 Bathroom pipes. A study of curves and distances.

I made a large-scale prototype of cut out parts of the pipes (19 & 20). I used 60 mm \varnothing aluminum pipes that was leftovers from an old project and imitated the curves from my bathroom pipes, bending them in a pipe bender. By enlarging the curves and the distance between the pipes I wanted to see if I could understand them in any other way.



19 Two pipes.

I found new shapes in the shadows from the pipes, but somehow it felt like larger pipes did not give me any stories apart from being new objects looking slightly like something else. In the end, I bent pipes in a smaller dimension, closer to actual bathroom pipes.



20 Two pipes.

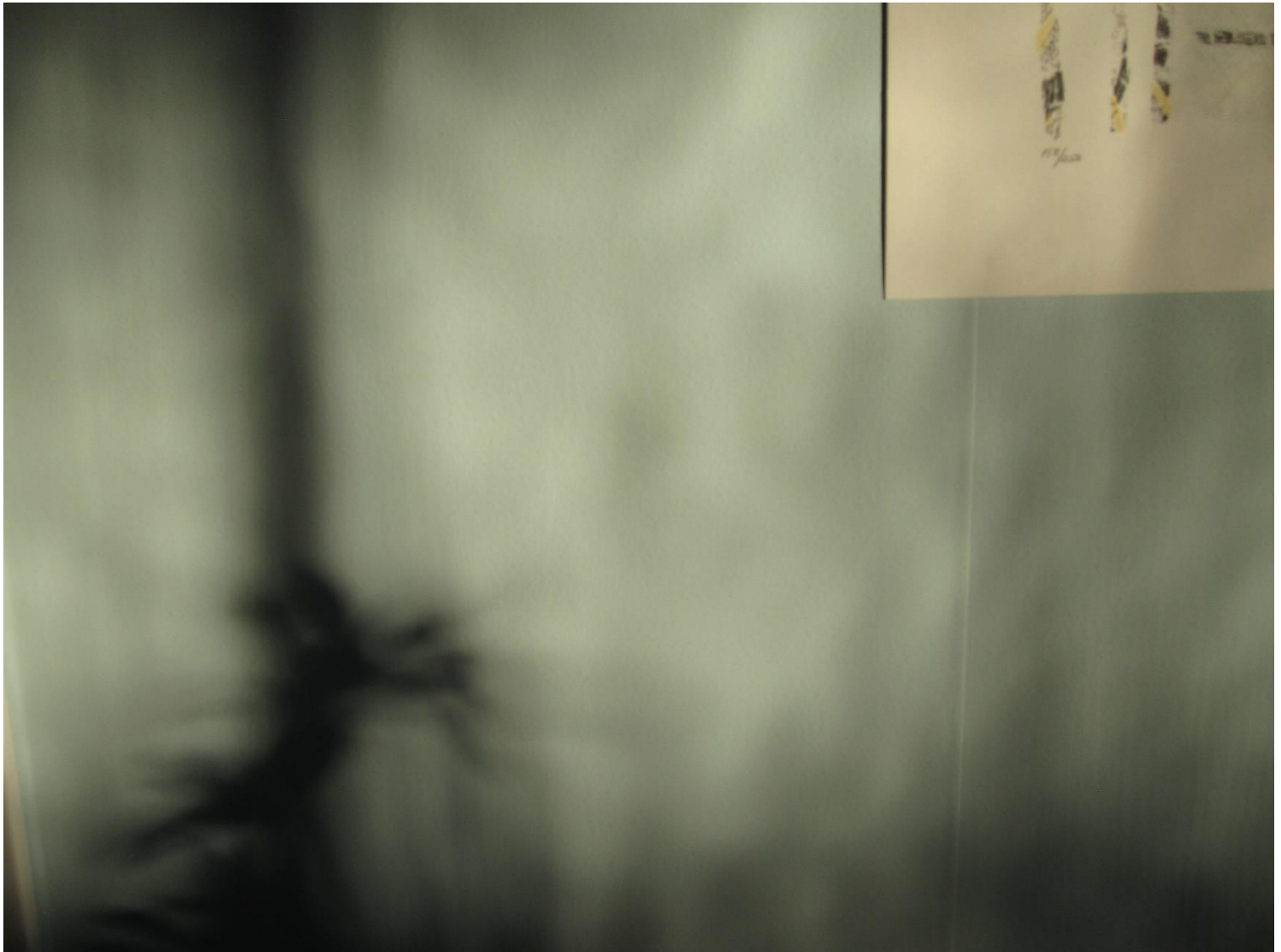
I also made several versions of a hand drawing of the space underneath the wash basin, all of them in a scale close to 1:1. I have deliberately not made measurable technical drawings, since the exact size was not what I was looking for. I wanted to capture the feeling of the space or the space behind, reflected in the glazed tiles.



21 Pipes – Under the basin. Photo: Ekaterina Lukoshkova.

Hot air meeting cold

If you are letting in the fresh air of an early spring morning, a cold breeze on your skin, the smell of cold soil and melting ice. Looking at the sunlit wall, if you pay enough attention, you will see the shadow swirls of hot air meeting cold. This is an inevitable ornament of ventilation in climate regulated buildings of contemporary society, an interior Fata Morgana but with only the air itself being the visible illusion. Something we almost never see, pay attention to, or just take for granted. Throughout the year the difference between the inside and the outside can be shifted so the air streaming into a building is the hot, meeting the cold inside.



22 *Hot air meeting cold.*

I wanted to experiment with the air and perhaps understand what difference in temperature was needed to induce this phenomenon and make it visible for the eye. It was obvious that the body felt it before I could see it.



23 Stills from video. Hot air meeting cold.

I made a small air cooler: a welded metal tube with pipes at the base leading the air out, some ice clamps or cubes and a table fan on top. In room temperature (around 18 °C) the cold air streaming out of the cooler was not immediately visible. When placing it close to a radiator, so the distance between the hot and cold was shorter I might have seen something. I placed the air cooler on top of an infra heater and directed a bright light directly at it, which made the swirls reappear. This made me think of how some (or all?) species or phenomena have their special conditions to thrive and how sometimes all we must do is to sit still and observe until they appear.



23.2 Projection of hot air meeting cold.



24 Air cooler collage. A small fan and a welded metal tube.

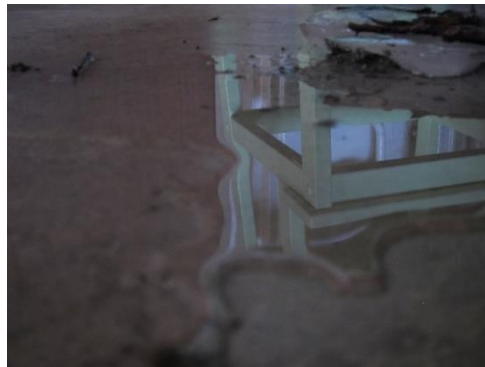
A wet spot

Condense from an ice-cold bottle leaving a round trace on the torn surface of the wooden table. Or as a humid remnant of the hot air that has quickly cooled against a window glass.



25 Condense on glass.

A wet spot still on the floor by the entrance where a pair of shoes used to be. The small splashes of thousands drops from water spilled. Or just what is left on the bathroom floor after a shower.



26 A puddle and reflection.

If we just take our time to watch this spot, before wiped up, we might see our surroundings from a different angle. Shapes that get distorted in the slightly convex surface of water (fig. 27).



27 A convex reflection of windows.

There is not really any way of keeping spilled water, inevitably it will dry up and change its form. We always try to keep our interiors dry and free from moist, but not too dry. Not too wet. Even though we want the water out of place to go away, it is comforting to know it that somehow it will always come back, and it is always there somewhere. “We are all bodies of water“ as cultural theorist Astrida Neimanis have put it (Neimanis, 2013). Spilled water is just a stage of something we are all part of, and we need to take “account of the entangled materializations of which we are a part” as Karen Barad writes in *Meet the Universe Halfway*, on how the so called *cultural* and *natural* world are inseparably intertwined (Barad, 2007, p. 384).



28 A wet spot, bio resin.

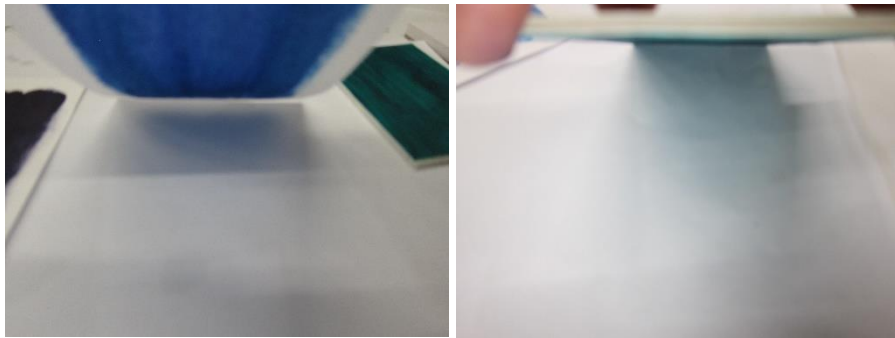
To capture what the water on my floor could tell me I made dripping flat floor sculptures of bio resin (fig. 28). It was a satisfying technique, pouring the liquid from some height to get the perfect splash to create the unknown number of pearly drops. A frozen puddle of water. A now dry wet spot.



29 Casted ice and sand melting into a puddle on the floor.

Refractions and reflections

Refractions occur when one media goes through another, reflections is when one media hit another to return to where it came from or to be projected elsewhere. I have looked at and imitated a series of visual refractions and reflections through directing light towards different material. These phenomena are enhancing and distorting at the same time. The outcome is almost always vague, but it can fill up a whole space and change the setting.



30 Colors reflecting from one surface to another.



31 Reflection from engraved acrylic glass.



32 Refraction through a wet spot. Bio resin and light.



34 Refraction through a window and camera lens.



33 Reflection on a glossy painted door.

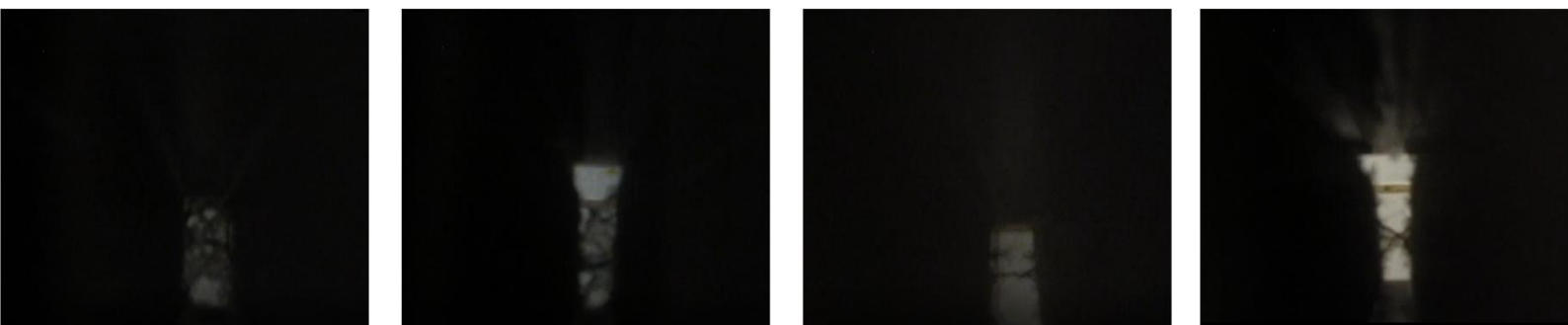
Radiator – a spatial element

Have you ever looked down into a hot water radiator (fig. 35)? Neither had I. Or maybe I had, but never with the purpose of actually looking. I saw a tunnel and I saw several small windows with light flickering on the other side. It reminded me of travelling during nighttime.



35 The top of a hot water radiator.

I captured the space through a short video (fig. 36) by dragging the camera under the radiator and then looping the video, flipping it several times to make the video longer, but without creating a clear start and ending.



36 Radiator - a spatial element. Stills from video.

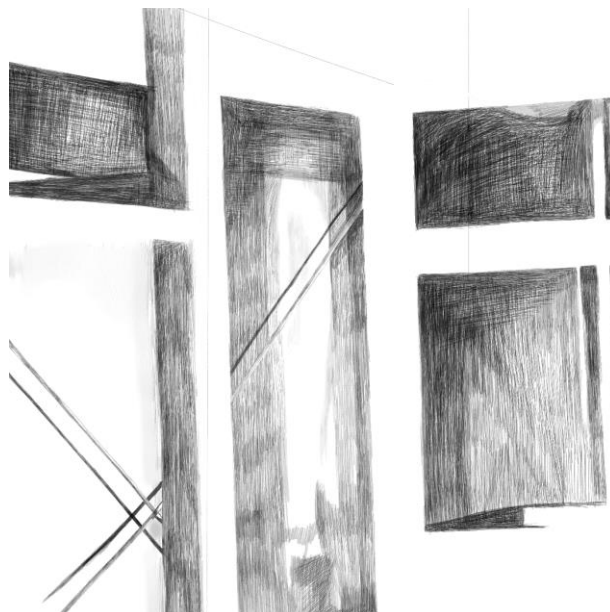
Shadow of a shadow space

In the small gap between a furniture and the wall, or as passing through a door open for a second a shadow will occur. A shadow is almost always there, even though we might not consider it as permanent. Just as a refraction or reflection it is a result of something else or the relation of others, of light and matter.



37 A shadow. Photography.

I documented some of the most recurring, but hidden, shadows in my home. A photography (fig. 37) in low light with very long shutter time could capture the shadow I could barely see with my eye.

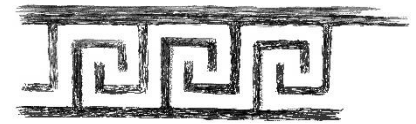


38 A shadow. Hand drawing.

I made drawings of the shadows behind my bookshelves (fig. 38), and how they changed. I wanted to recreate the shadow and engraved the drawings into acrylic glass. Through that I could make a shadow of the shadow, creating a different kind of shadow space.



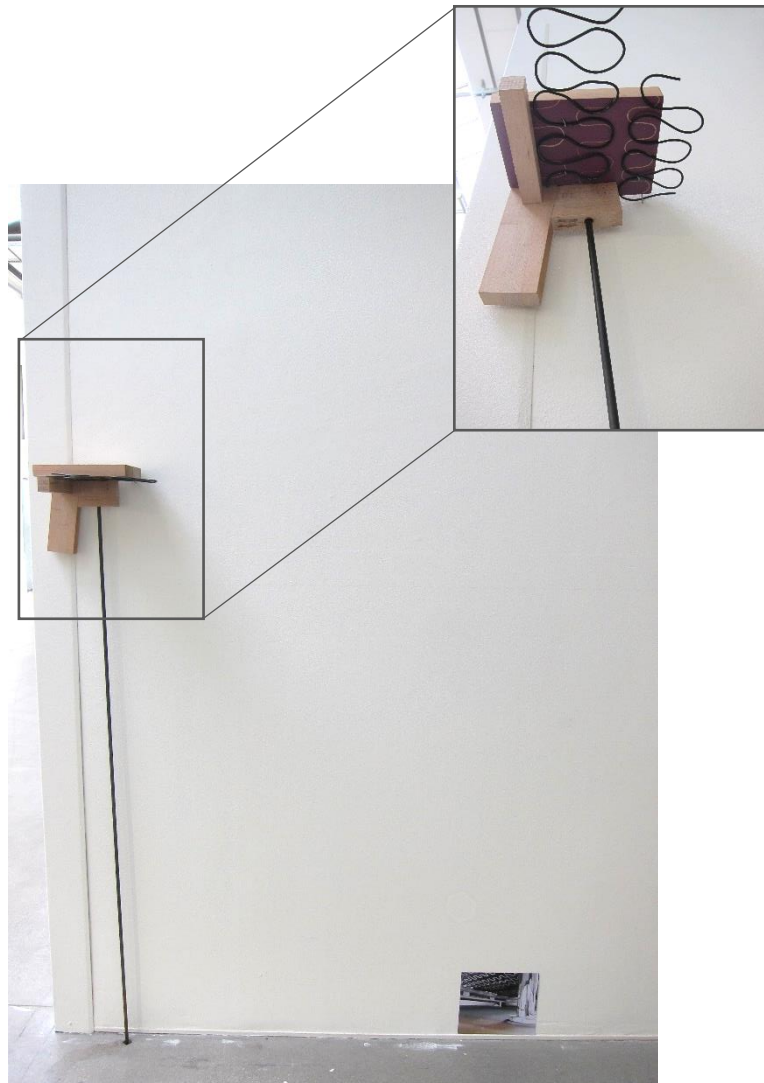
40 A Shadow of a shadow space. Photography, engraved acrylic glass, steel frame, light.



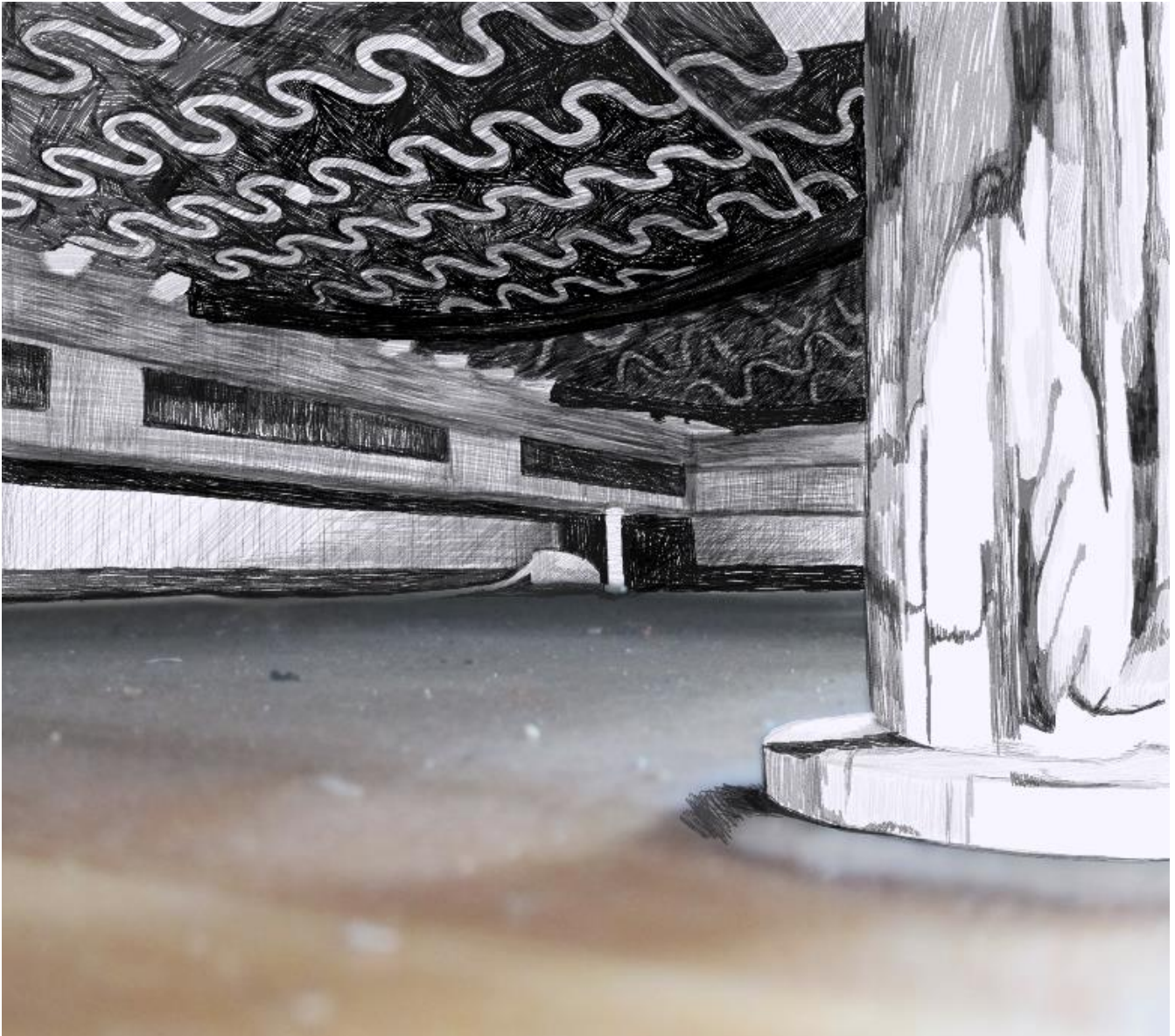
41 Hand drawing of meander border.

Meander – underneath as necessary support

Meander is the natural shape of a river or stream floating through a flat landscape (Wikipedia, 2022a). In architecture and art meander is an ornament border with a repetitive pattern constructed of a line, often in a flowy manner (fig. 41). Historically they are believed to represent unity or eternity (Wikipedia, 2022b). When looking under my sofa I saw the same shapes of rivers flowing through the soft surroundings. Things that primarily fills a practical function, that we might not think of as beautiful. In one way, the shapes of a spring mattress underneath a sofa have more in common with the meandering river than a decorative border, it is there because it is necessary for supporting the surroundings. If we think a river can be beautiful, why not the supportive construction of a sofa.



42 Meander. Section model of the supportive construction of a sofa.

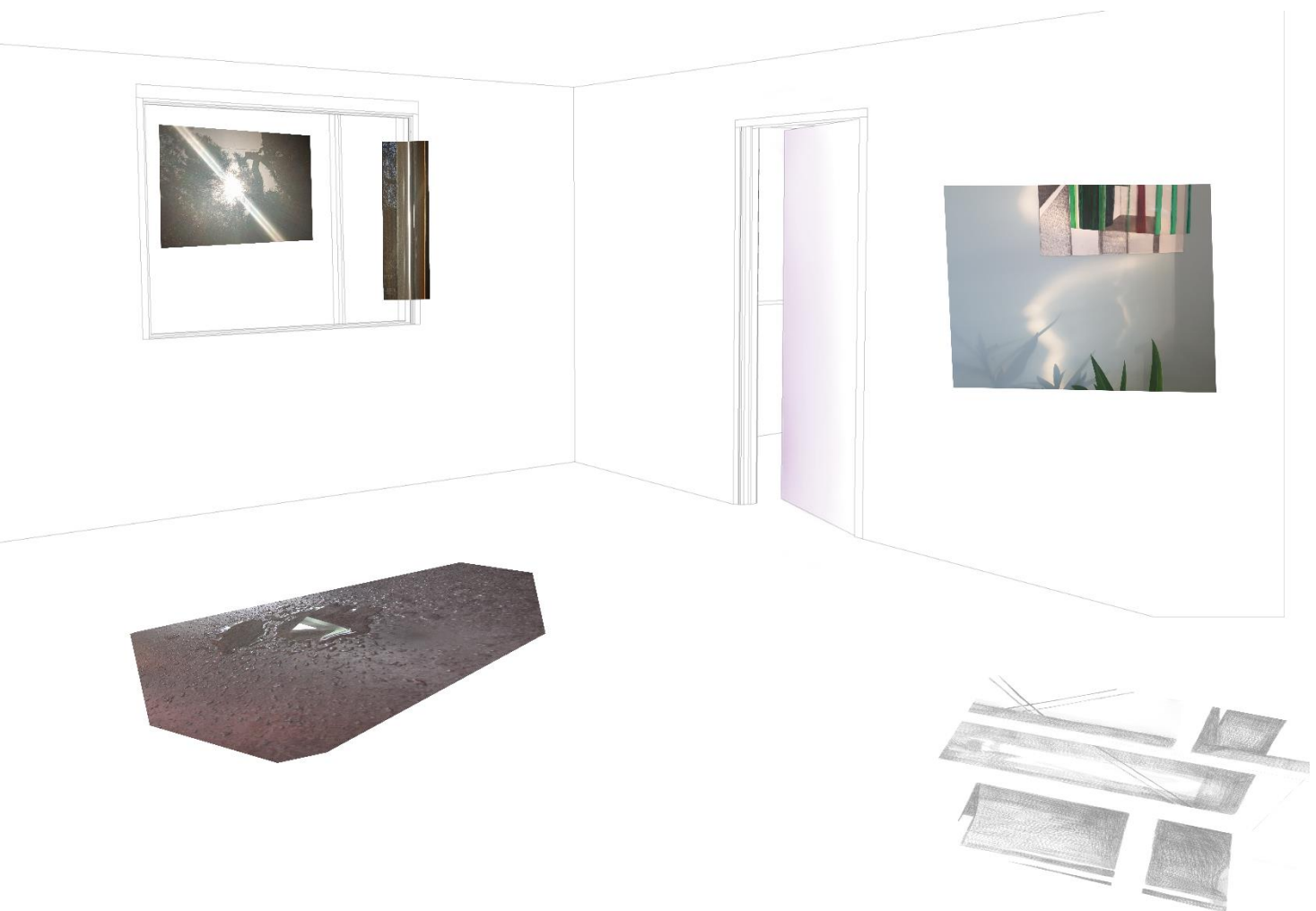


43 Hand drawing. Meander - underneath the sofa.

I studied the shapes through drawing, carving in wood and by bending metal wire to recreate the spring mattress, sort of like human does to recreate meanders in nature by artificially redirecting a river to its “natural” state that we already messed up.

A Temple for Vague Spaces – starting to collect and reflect

The temple here is really nothing religious, whatever that might be. It is about the setting in which all the imprecise instruments were put together in different ways. Throughout the project I have made a series of spatial installations composing atmospheres or scenarios with my material objects and immaterial phenomena, trying them out and getting reactions from others. This was somehow all building up to the Konstfack MFA Degree Exhibition, and ways of trying out how to arrange the different parts of the project together.

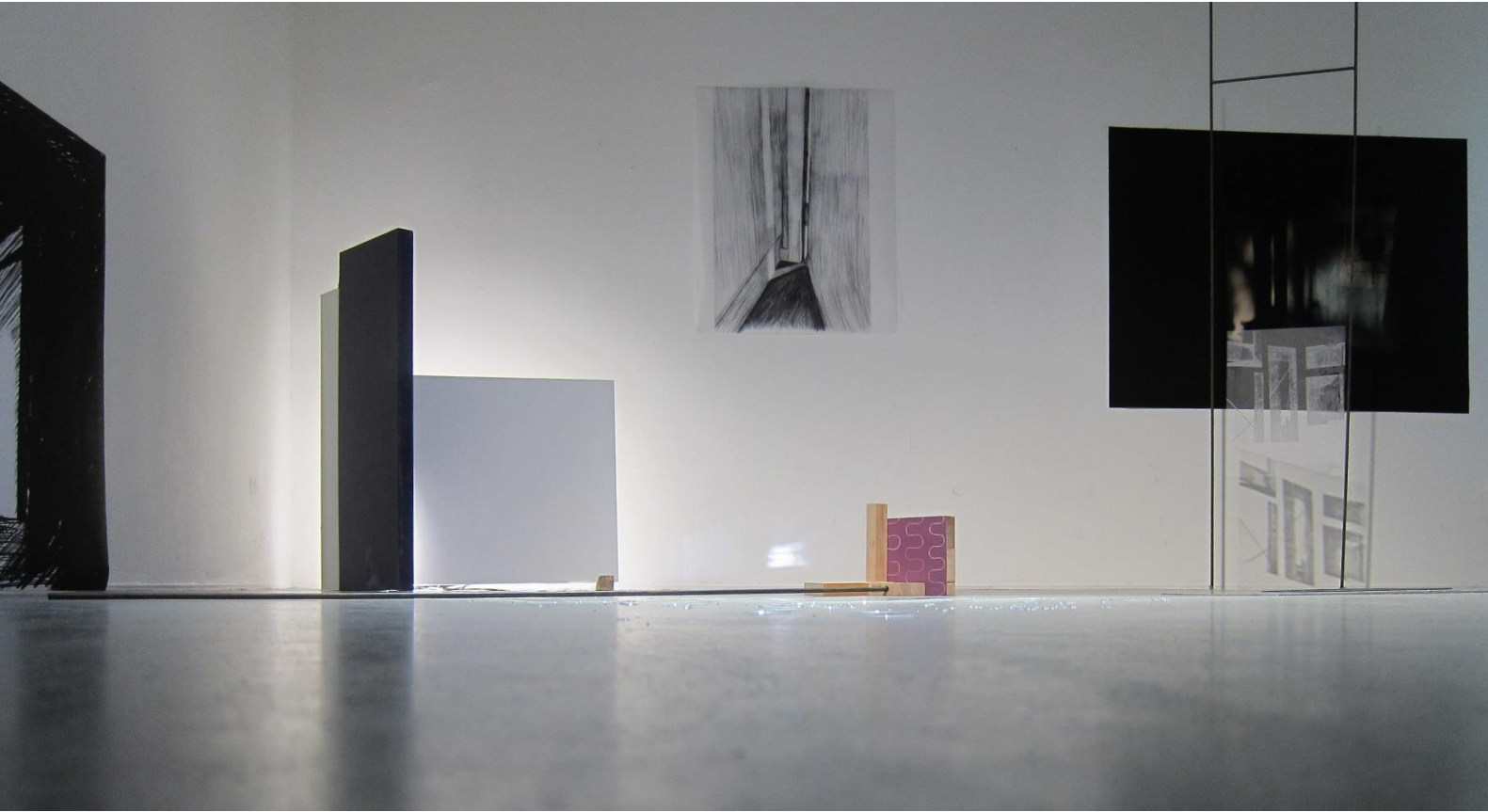


44 Digital collage of the first suggestion for a Temple for vague spaces



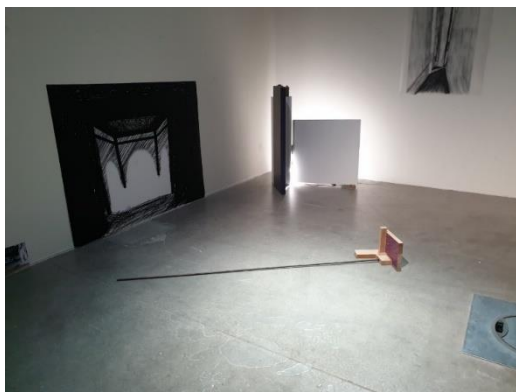
45 First spatial installation of documentation of vague spaces and the Imprecise Instruments

For the first installation, I chose a corner of a room at Konstfack. I gathered all material I had produced and arranged them in a try to relate to the space given as well as create the atmosphere of vagueness and communicate my process. To do all this at once was perhaps not the best way of saying what actually I wanted but it also helped me to understand what others saw, could and could not understand. I also got intrigued by the reactions from others, what others could relate to, create meaning of and found beautiful. I saw that as a piece in the project moving forwards. Things I wanted to keep: mixing media, going low down and (even) higher up using the full volume of the space, moving lights.

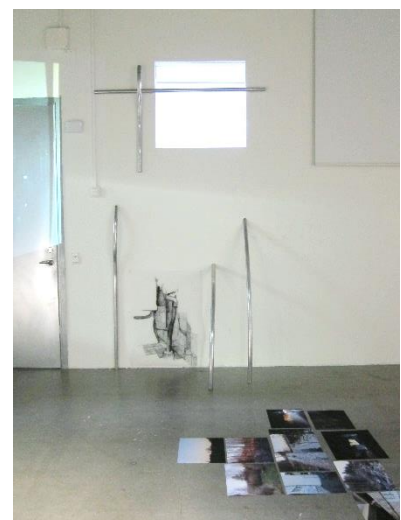


46 – 48 Second spatial installation of documentation of vague spaces and the Imprecise Instruments.

For the second spatial installation, I had produced more three-dimensional versions of my observations and the Imprecise Instruments had all taken new shapes, some were bigger, some smaller and some started to disappear. I used a slightly bigger space than for the previous installation but were still not filling it in a way I have wished for. Installation takes time and effort.



47

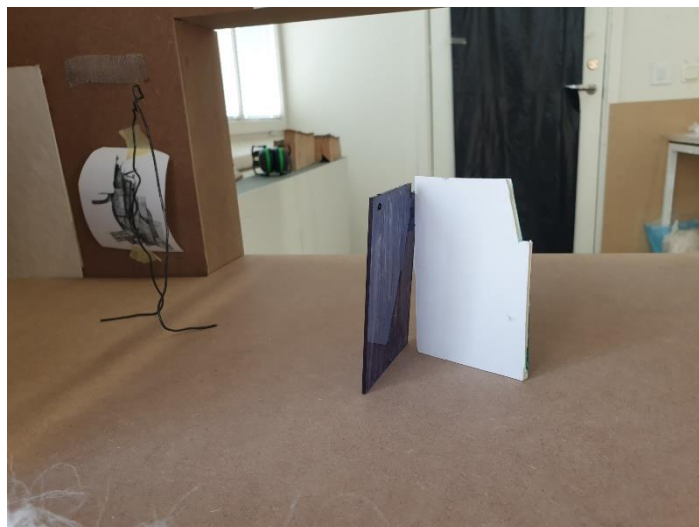


48



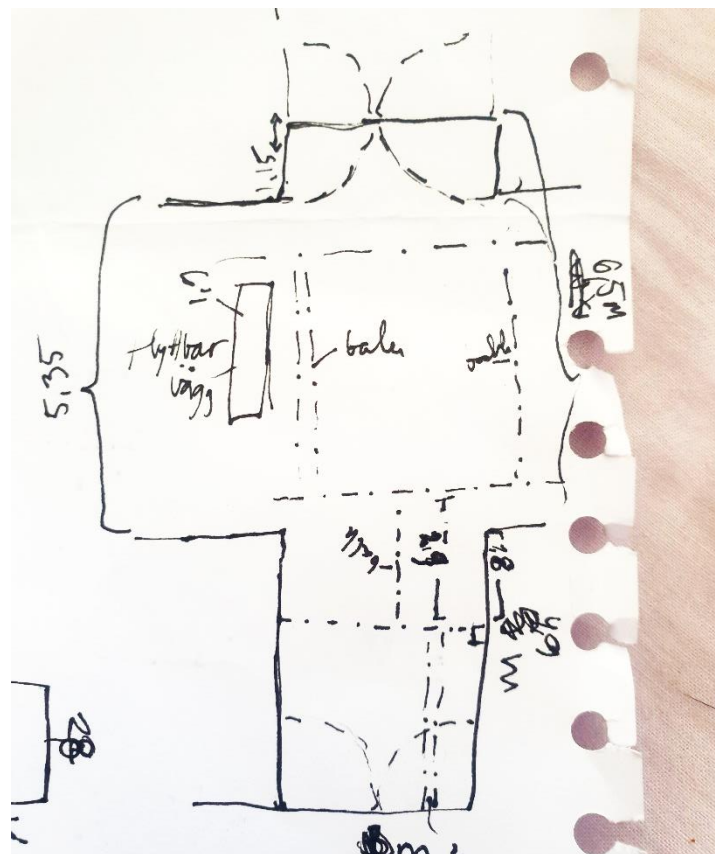
49 Scale model 1:10 for final spatial installation. View through fire damper.

To prepare for the MFA Degree Exhibition I made a model 1:10 (fig. 49,50) over the space I was given to prepare and get some sort of access to work with the space before the installation week. The model helped me get an understanding of the volume of the space, and where and how I could attach things. I found already existing elements of the space that interested me, like fire dampers that I wanted to use for projecting video and light through.



50 some Imprecise Instruments in scale 1:10

The space I was given for the final installation was an intersection of two corridors with three entrances and exits. It was much less enclosed than the previous spaces I had worked with. Therefore, I wanted an Imprecise Instrument to be visible from every direction you and placed them close to or around corners, laying on the floor or hanging from the ceiling. My aim was to not make it obvious if the pieces was a part of the original space forcing the audience to take their time to discover and perhaps even see things I had not.



51 Drawing of installation space for MFA Degree Exhibition.



THE RESULT – PERHAPS IT COULD BE VERY CLEAR?

I have realized there are several ways of working sustainably and they can sometimes be hard to combine. What is best for one individual or situation might not work for another. I have learned that patience and working slowly is perhaps one of the most sustainable ways, and patience is to not let go of things too quickly. To be responsive to the site and its circumstances is necessary and I believe that one of the most important things is taking our time, to not rush a process. Through careful explorations of vague interior spaces, such as underneath a wash basin, a radiator or behind a door – as if they were a protected part of nature – their own ecosystem, I have learned to appreciate *what is already there* in our built environments. To take care of what is around us, instead of making new, is perhaps the most sustainable for our planet. To take your time is sustainable for yourself and gives better conditions for making things better for others. Instead of seeing things, images, and people as something easy to replace, I want us to take care of what is already here and what will always return, if we let it. Perhaps all we need is to start seeing our surroundings differently or relearning to see the most common in new light, with new eyes. It is good to be precise with what we mean by sustainable but also remember that even though we are all entangled in the same material or immaterial reality we might not have the same understanding of it.

I hope this project can revive someone else's joy in creating and thinking with matter as it did mine. As someone having had a long and strong resistance to, and a hard time justifying, what I create, the way of thinking within this process have made me letting go of some of the troubles around my work and accepting that expression through things, spaces and creation plays an important part in the wellbeing and development of our planet. In a positive sense. I have understood that you can create meaningful things and find beauty or at least fascination

and excitement in the most universal or bland if you set yourself into doing it full-heartedly.

And fascination should be considered motivation enough to create or design.

During an earlier project, in a much more obvious Land Art setting, one of my teachers posed a question on the methods and if (how) they could be applied to an interior context, into a sort of *House Art*, as a possible subgenre to Land Art but in an interior setting. For me that question became sort of an eye-opener on the importance in not turning against what is hard to handle but, as feminist theorist Donna J. Haraway puts it, stay in the trouble, whatever the trouble might be. For me the trouble for a long time was finding my place in the field of interior architecture and spatial design as well as accepting the field and profession as a part of my practice. We humans have created environments and conditions that we can or can't live without. I have stayed because of this is what I am trained to do, and what I know, but also because what is hardest to handle, to realize we need to change. To stay is to take responsibility. To stay in the trouble is to not let anyone else dictate the premises of what is important in the development of the profession. I have learned that when you (I) trust your (my) process others are more likely to also do so. I trust myself when I have fun and feel empowered by what I do.

Reactions from others, others' memories evoked, as a confirmation of interest is something driving me forward. Appreciation is not a bad thing, although it's not the only and solely most important thing. Reactions from others is a meeting point and proof of a message reached through.

I believe that working in full, or at least a very big, scale from the start have given me a new way of relating to my work and understanding space much better than in projects where I have started out in a small and more conventional scale for making architecture. To work in full scale or a human spatial scale makes details of human constructed interiors easier to notice and other spaces easier to not neglect. The project made me realize even more how the

full picture, or an entire space, is required for me to understand a place and how easy it is to miss out on things when working in a smaller scale. If I had better conditions for working continuously in larger scales and experiencing spaces created by being in them, I would be able to develop this project even further. Perhaps a test lab of experiencing vague spaces or phenomena inviting others to be a part of it more frequently.

I hope this project can bring an understanding that protecting and appreciating what we already have is probably more sustainable than constantly changing and readjusting spaces to fit our wants and what we think we need. To train our senses and get new ideas of beauty and function in already existing interior spaces, brings what is out of focus into the light. This might be a way to partly slow down the industry of interiors and redirect how we work as architects and designers to understand that everything doesn't need to change, but if we seek change, we can do it by immaterial phenomena, such as light through the interstices, that will occur as long as there is life.

REFERENCES

- Ahmed, Sara.** (2006) *Queer Phenomenology*. London: Duke University Press.
- Barad, Karen.** (2007) *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, Durham: Duke University Press.
- Bloomer, Jennifer.** (1992) Abodes of Flesh and Theory: Tabbles of Bower. *Assemblage* Vol.17, p. 6-29. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3171221?origin=JSTOR-pdf>
- Carney, P. & Miller, V.** (2009) Vague Spaces in: Jansson, A. & Lagerkvist, A (ed.) *Strange Spaces: Explorations in Mediated Obscurity*. Farnham: Ashgate Publications.
- Coccia, Emanuele.** (2021) The Architecture of Species in: Space Caviar (ed) *Non-Extractive Architecture Vol. 1 – On Designing without Depletion*. Berlin: Sternberg Press.
- Demos, T.J.** (2016) *Decolonizing Nature*. Berlin: Sternberg Press.
- Groys, Boris.** (2010) *Going Public*. Berlin: Sternberg Press.
- Haraway, Donna J.** (2016) *Staying with the trouble*. London: Duke University Press.
- Lacaton & Vassal.** (1998) *Place Léon Aucoc [public space]*. Bordeaux, France. <https://www.lacatonvassal.com/index.php?idp=37#> [2022-06-14]
- Lacaton & Vassal.** (2012) In conversation with Mathieu Wellner in: Muck Petzet / Florian Heilmeyer *Reduce Reuse Recycle*. Berlin: Hatje Cantz. <https://www.lacatonvassal.com/data/documents/20130415-18380412ReduceReuseRecycle.pdf> [2022-06-14]
- Miralles, Fina** (2022) *I am all the selves that I have been. [sculpture, photography, drawing, installation]* MACBA – Museu d’Art Contemporani de Barcelona in collaboration with Index and Marabouparken, Stockholm.
- Neimanis, Astrida.** (2013). feminist subjectivity, watered. *Feminist Review*, 103, 23–41. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41819667>
- Smithson, Robert** (1996) A tour of the monuments of Passaic, New Jersey in: Jack Flam (ed.) *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Smithson, Robert** (1996) A Sedimentation of the Mind: Earth projects in: Jack Flam (ed.) *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Sola – Morales de, Ignaci** (1987) Arquitectura de dil, Quaderns d’Arquitectura i Urbanisme in: Sarah Whiting (ed.) Graham Thompson (trans.) *de Sola - Morales, Differences: Topographies of Contemporary Architecture*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Wikipedia** (2022a) <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meander> [2022-06-10]
- Wikipedia** (2022b) [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meander_\(art\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meander_(art)) [2022-06-10]

All photos and illustrations in this report are made by the author
if nothing else is indicated.