

Studio MATA

Selected Works

Poetry, printmaking, film & spatial design by Zana Azra

WORKS 2017 – 2025



Portrait by Nadirah Zakariya (@nadirahzakariya)

ABOUT

Studio MATA by Zana Azra

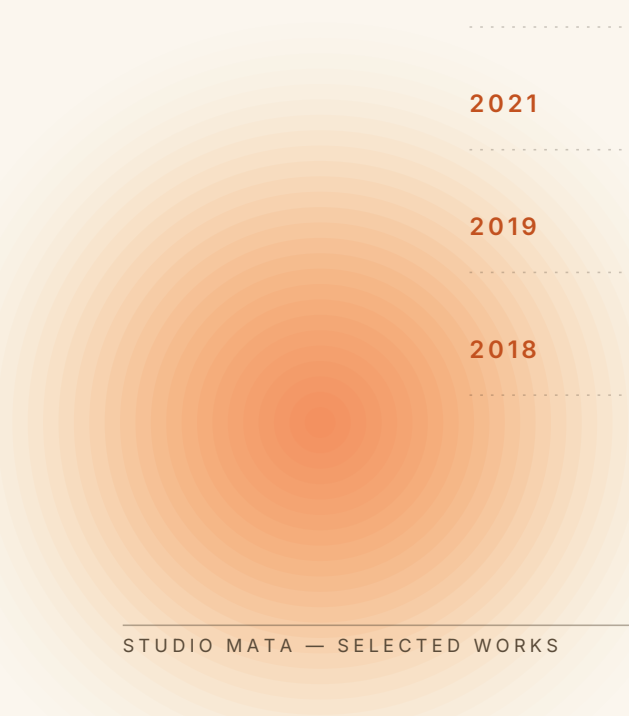
Zana Azra is a multi-disciplinary artist from Kuala Lumpur whose practice weaves together poetry, printmaking and film to navigate the world both within and around her. Through a deeply personal lens, she explores themes of identity, memory and connection, using art as a love letter to those who shape her journey.

She completed her architecture degree at the Architectural Association in London, attaining RIBA Part 1 and BA (Hons) Architecture, specialising in printing, project presentations and event coordination as a student assistant at the AA Print Centre alongside the AA Public Programme.

On completing her degree, she returned to her home town of Kuala Lumpur to pursue a career in the Malaysian contemporary arts scene, assisting notable art curators and collectors. She took part in her first group exhibition in June 2023, with all six of her works sold during the month-long exhibition. Following this, she founded her own self-led practice — now Studio MATA — as a platform to share her explorations.

Now based in London, Zana continues to experiment with mediums and narratives, fostering dialogue between self-reflection and collective experience, with a keen focus on communication, community and the concept of home. She is currently learning Italian and Portuguese, to complement her fluent English and Bahasa Malaysia.

Category is...



2025	Sun Cycle	five suns, five states
2025	Dear Cycle,	an archive of emotional weather
2023	Fruity Fems	watercolour & ink · a little bit fruity
2022	studio ABYZ	narrative & meditative drawing
2021	Fluid Home +	architecture · Austin, Texas
2019	Feeling Home	architecture · living with technology
2018	Final Home	architecture · Portmán, Spain

SERIES · 2025

Sun Cycle

Sun Cycle No #1 : Sun Down

A deep exhale — a collapse into darkness where everything folds inward. It is the moment after holding on too long, the hour of helplessness and deafening isolation, where light recedes, and with it, the need to perform. A complete surrender.

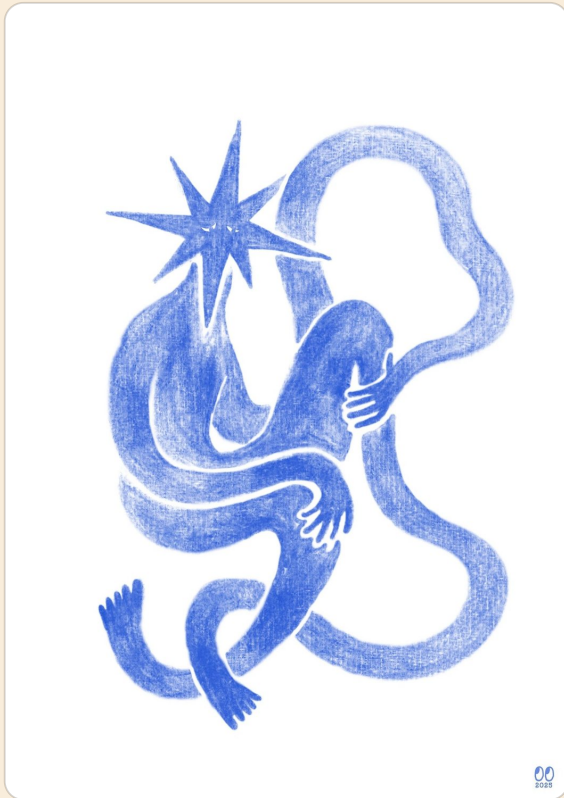
Between joy and sorrow, stillness and motion, clarity and overwhelm, this series emerged from quietly observing the sky over several days — early sunrises, slow sunsets — and gently personifying those transitions. I tied them to my own emotional states, finding resonance in the daily, natural magic of the sun's rhythm.

The sun becomes a mirror: how we dim and blaze, fall and begin again. In noticing its cycle, we begin to notice our own — and in doing so, find language for self-soothing, connection, and change.

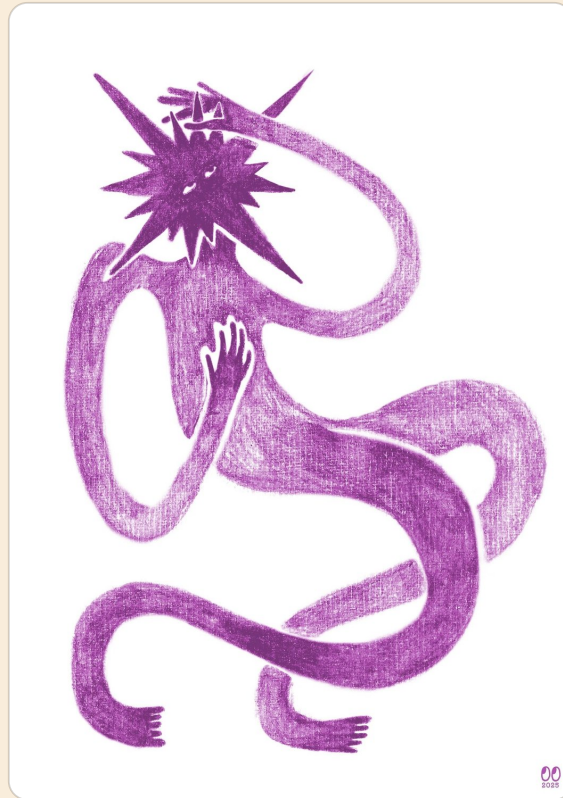


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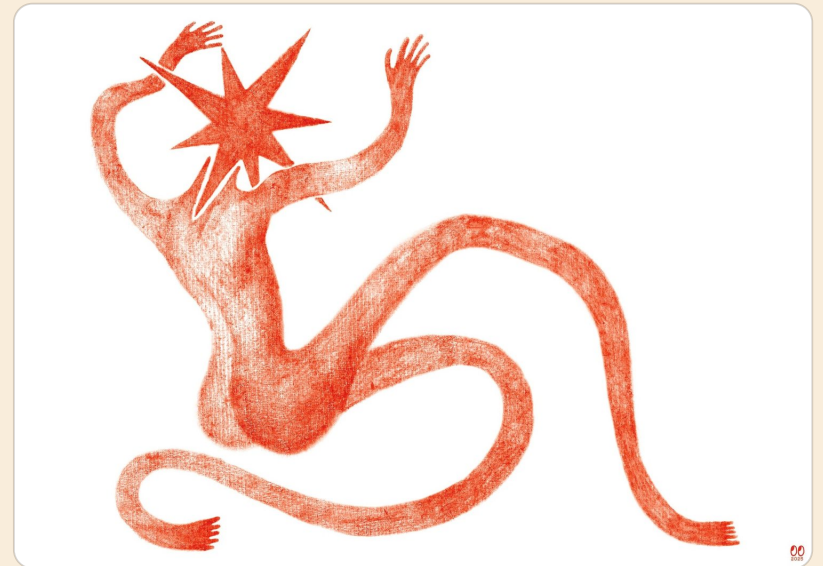
No 1 · Sun Down — coloured pencil, 2025



No 2 · Sun Fade



No 3 · Sun Glare



No 4 · Sun Rise



No 5 · Sun Shine

SERIES · 2025

Dear Cycle,

For most of my life, I treated my menstrual cycle like something to overcome. Something to suppress, push through, or pretend away. In 2021 I started paying attention. Listening to this quiet internal conversation. These drawings are a record of that shift. A small archive of emotional weather.

This cycle I gave each emotion space to move. And in that softness, I noticed something: my cycle moves like nature does. Like the moon pulling tides. Like the leaves turning colour when seasons change. All going with the flow of the universe.

Through this kinder lens, I now see menstruation not as a burden, but as a rhythm. I love rhythm and in turn Dear Cycle... I love you too, and all your shades. ♥

Six days. Six flow states:

DAY 1

Sadness

DAY 2

Resistance

DAY 3

Pain

DAY 4

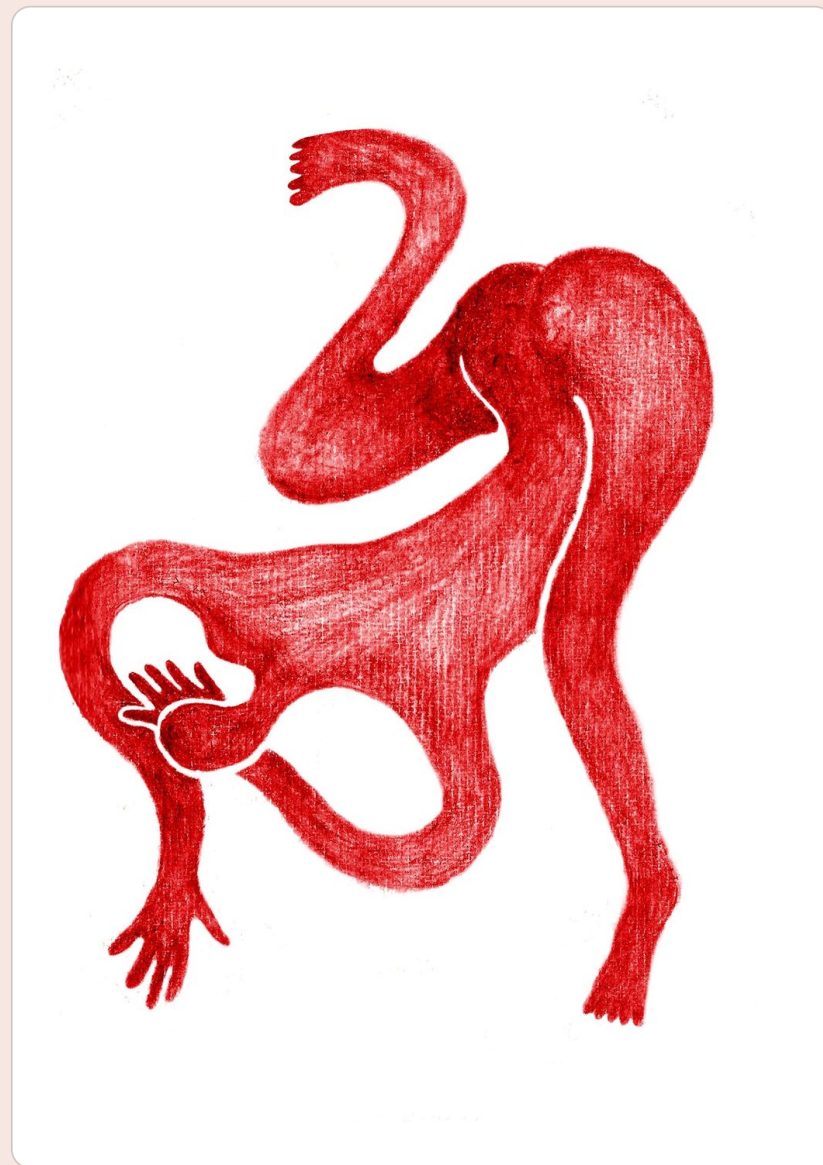
Pleasure

DAY 5

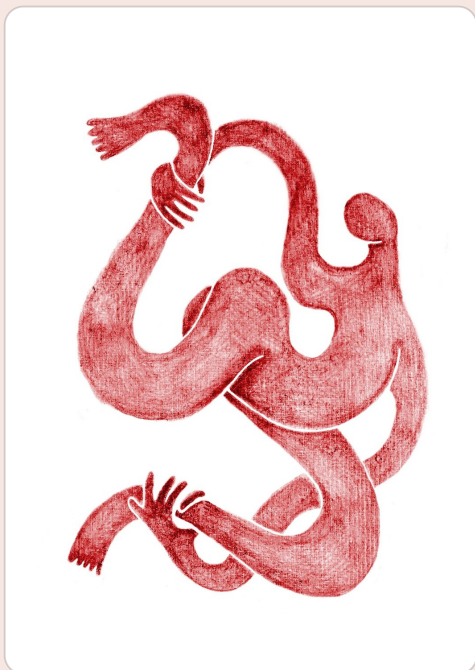
Surrender

DAY 6

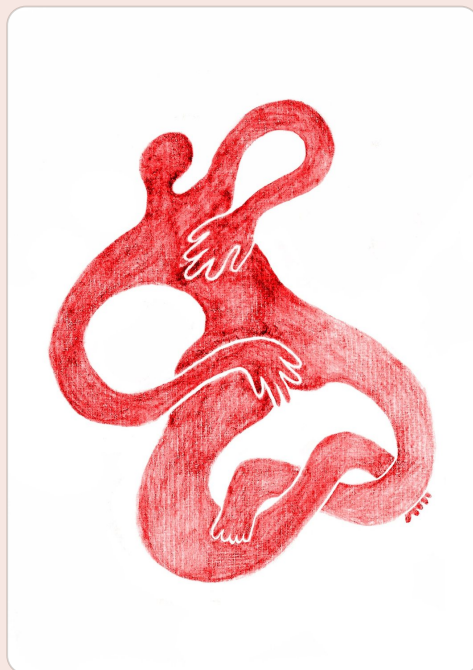
Joy



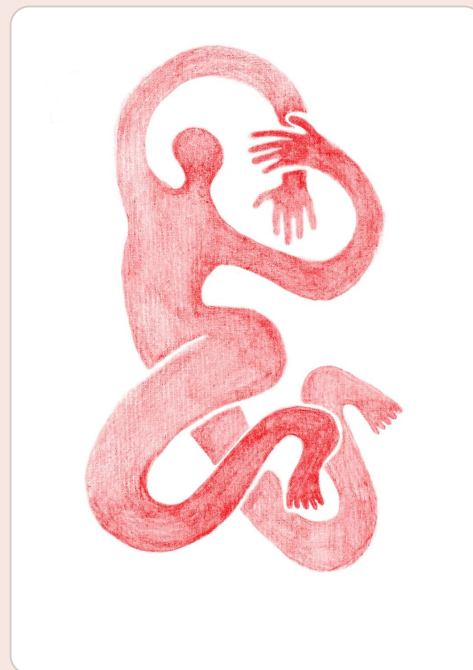
Day 1 · Sadness — coloured pencil, 2025



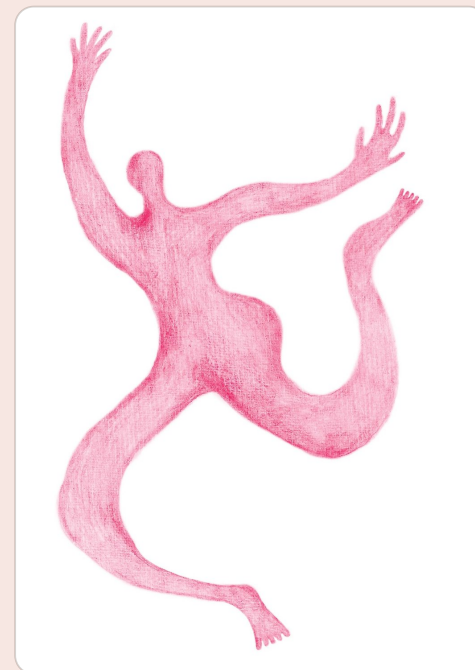
Day 3 · Pain



Day 4 · Pleasure



Day 5 · Surrender



Day 6 · Joy

SERIES · 2023

Fruity Fems

Fruity Fems is a series that came to fruition in London after attending a drawing workshop at Eye to Pencil Drawing Studio, where we were given Renaissance paintings as reference to interpret from our own point of view.

Drawn to the beauty and intimacy of subtle Sapphic moments within these paintings — albeit some bizarre positions and situations — and continued in Malaysia, this series is an amalgamation of the inspirations that envelop me today: nature, Renaissance paintings and historical art, an infatuation with colour, and my admiration for the women who fearlessly love other women.

Each piece represents the etymology of the colours in the Pride flag, the scenes highlighting the quiet moments within these verbose paintings where women share intimate moments that are a little bit fruity...



Pop My Cherry

WATERCOLOUR AND INK ON PAPER · 34 x 44 CM

Sex was always used as a weapon to shame and control while growing up. In its orientation, expression or desire, sex was shunned yet expected as a woman. The question would always linger — why would the universe create sex as a natural part of life, only to be demonised? Queer love has shown me it's possible to embrace both, that the two are inseparable. Both are to be celebrated.



Orange You Lovely

WATERCOLOUR AND INK ON PAPER · 34 × 44 CM

In childhood, I was taught to be homophobic. The environment, religious and familial context fuelled this view that gay people should not exist. In 2012, Macklemore released his song "Same Love" — a song of solidarity to legalise same-sex marriage in Washington at the time, expressing his frustrations with hip hop and homophobia.



Lemon Ladies Lepak

WATERCOLOUR AND INK ON PAPER · 58 × 67 CM

The first painting in this series, begun in London. After a lemon-pasta binge and a romantic night of poetry, the next day I attended a free-hand drawing workshop where we were given references of Renaissance paintings to springboard from. In some of these iconic paintings, I noticed how the women in these scenes were strong, sensual and at times Sapphic in plain sight. So I brought them together to "lepak".



Green Is Her Favourite Colour

WATERCOLOUR AND INK · 34 x 44 CM

I've never had a favourite colour, but with my love for nature and her blossom, I think green is growing on me.



Serene Sapphire Sirens

WATERCOLOUR AND INK · 34 x 44 CM

I love the ocean. The wetter I am, the better.



The Universe in UNI

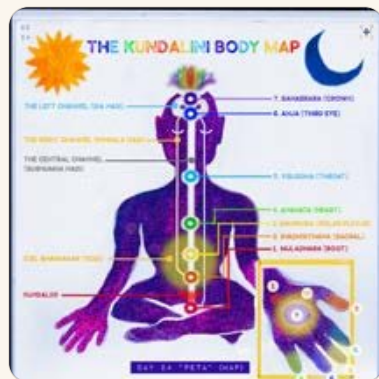
WATERCOLOUR AND INK · 34 x 44 CM · SOLD

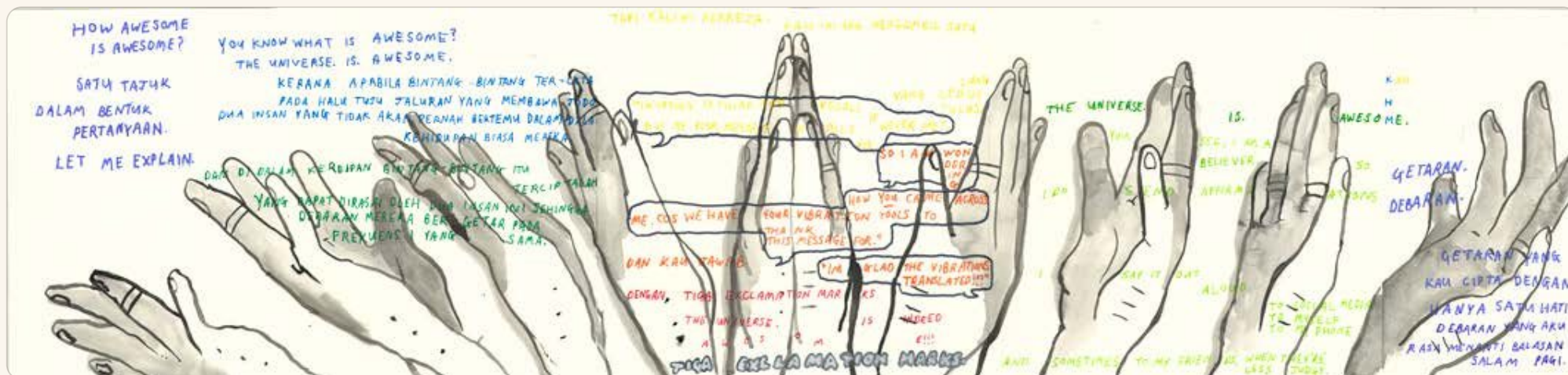
One of my favourite flowers is the *Clitoria ternatea*, commonly known as the butterfly pea. The genus name is a direct translation of the local name of these plants in Bahasa Indonesia (Ternate), *telang*, meaning "clitoris", after the blossoms' shape. I found the universe in my own clitoral bush. It was magical.

SERIES • 2022

studio ABYZ

Self-led practice exploring narrative and meditative drawing.



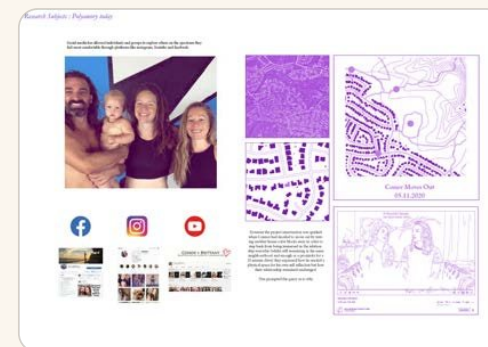
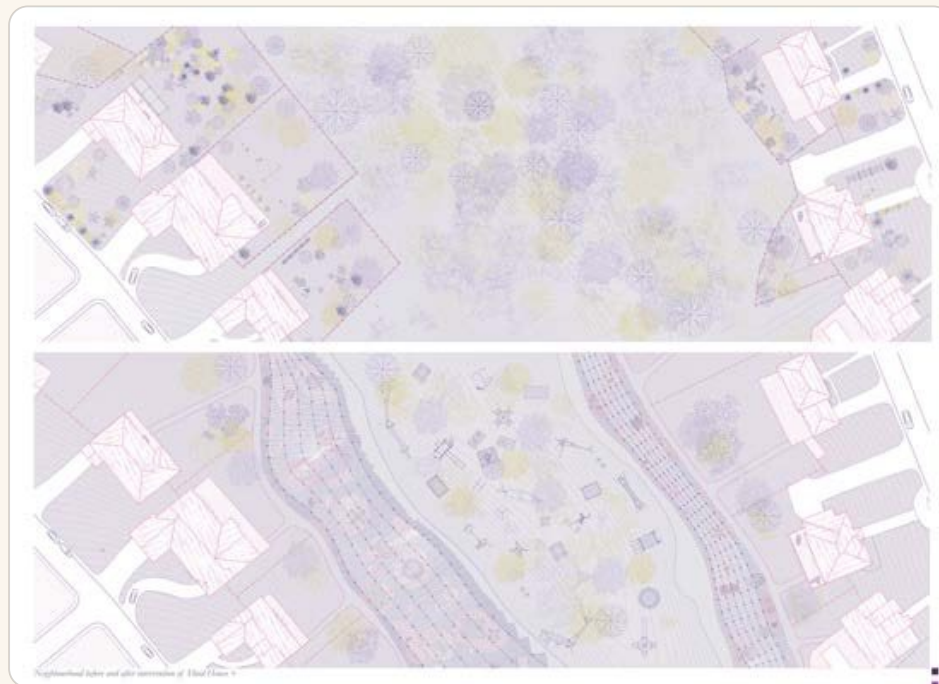


Self — lost practice. Narrative and meditative drawing, studio ABYZ, 2022.

Fluid Home +

The project proposes a reconfiguration of the “cul-de-sac” housing typology in the context of suburban Austin, Texas, through misusing the law and identifying loopholes in existing ownership and land code. Fluid Home + aims to provide easements through its proposal to support the dynamic of emerging groups of LGBTQIA+ families to inhabit the neighbourhood fluidly and fill the gap between existing modes of living.

The proposal creates a stage for 42 homes through a series of platforms, facilitating a self-build initiative which would join the backyards of each property under one meandering roof — with the ambition to open up the neighbourhood by means of DIY-ing the vernacular, allowing a spectrum of activities to be performed and practised.





Fluid Home + — project collage. Joining the backyards of each property under one meandering roof.

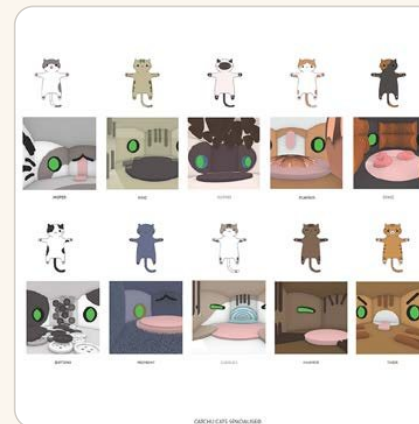
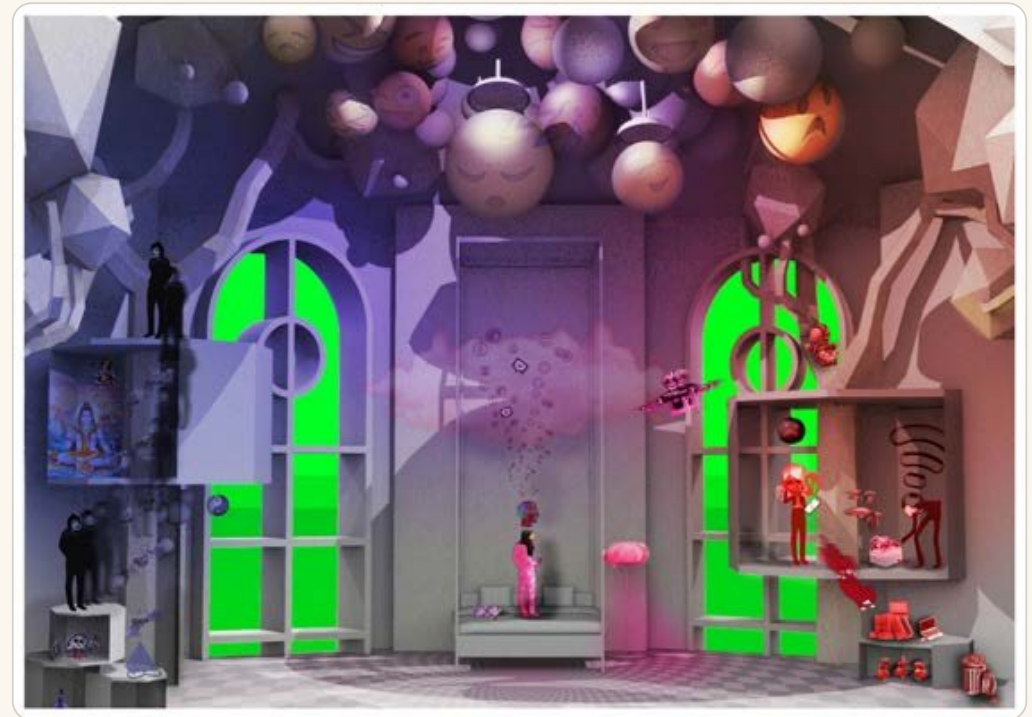
Feeling Home

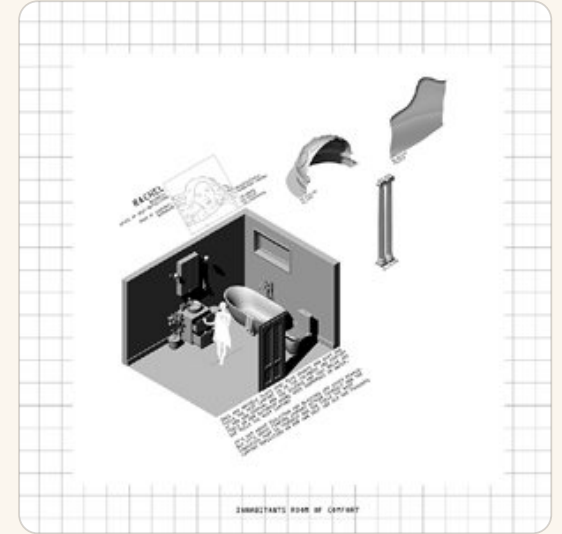
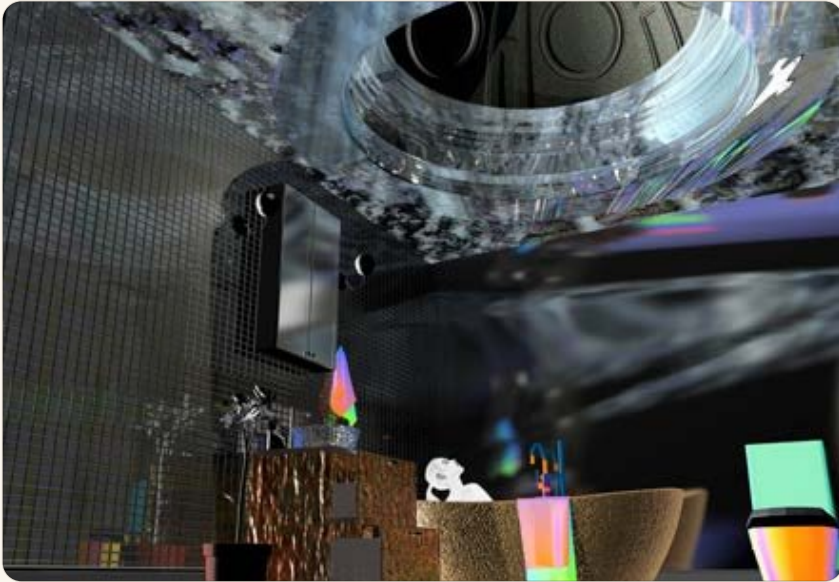
"What we call home is increasingly defined by what is outside, not by what is within — including input from all kinds of communication networks. Home is the place where we ingest all this information [or imported goods] from the outside, all of this foreignness." — David Morley, 2000

Throughout the 20th century, the home was a place of social and technological change. The fantastical dream of the 1950s fully automated home and the nomadic user is now becoming an evident reality.

Today, the traditional notion of "home" endures, but increasingly mobile lifestyles powered by Wi-Fi, smartphones and apps make us global citizens, physically and virtually. A recurring theme of living with technology is how it takes care of us.

This project is an investigation into how our immersion with the virtual will change the way we view, live, and interact in and with domestic space. As architects, how do we respond to these new site conditions of ALIVE spaces and designed care?



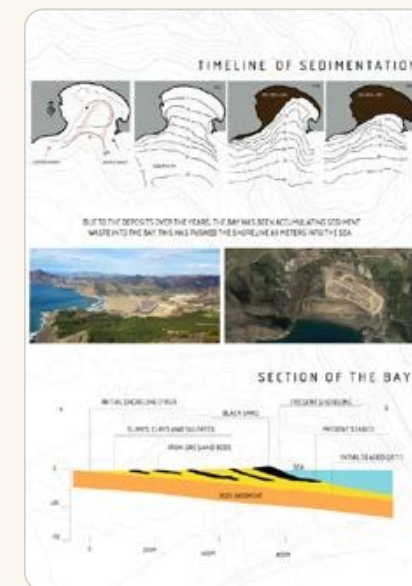
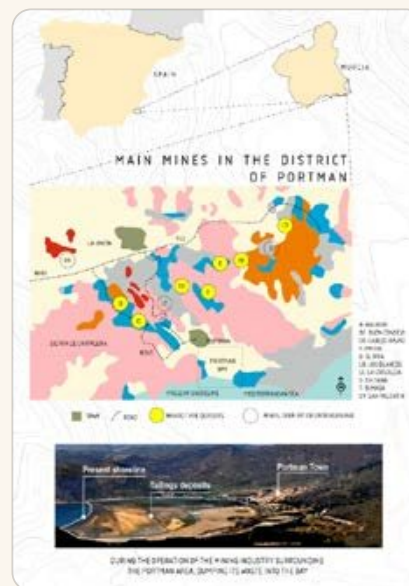
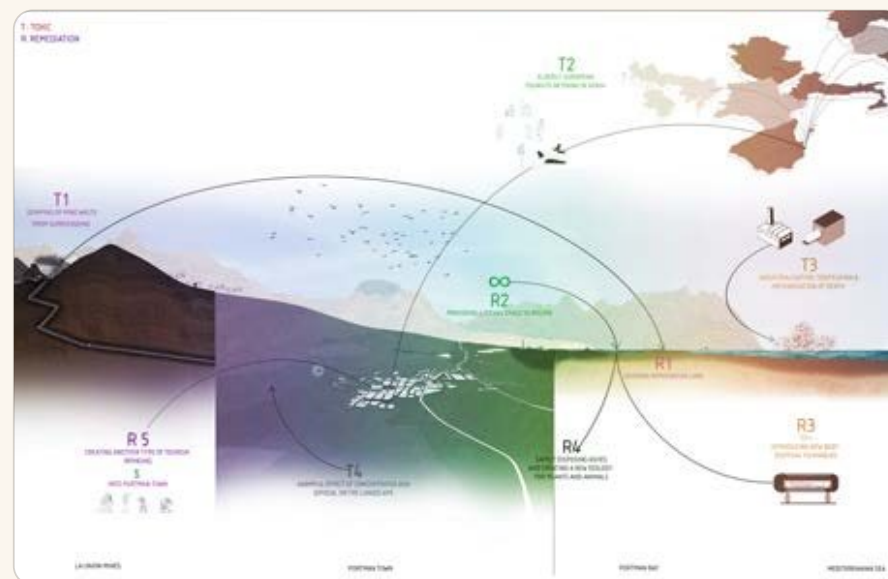


Using character Rachel to demonstrate how her mood is elevated when her spatial companion is fully activated.

Final Home

This project explores the historical and environmental impact of Portmán, a former mining town turned tourist destination, and proposes a new, eco-friendly ritual for handling death. In the 1950s, Portmán suffered significant ecological damage from mining activities that pushed the shoreline 60 metres into the sea — one of the largest ecological disasters in 20th-century Europe. Despite its polluted past, Portmán attracts many retirees, primarily due to its favourable climate.

The proposal links tourism and the town's history to develop an innovative approach to post-mortem processes, highlighting less toxic methods of body disposal — water cremation (resomation and promession) — over traditional burial and cremation. This approach aims to create a meaningful and less mechanised experience for the deceased's loved ones, drawing on global rituals related to temperature. The proposal includes designing new spaces and paths that incorporate these elements, inspired by local stories and environmental needs.







Say hello

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