AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

AL FINIQ
AN ANIMATED FILM

by
AMAL ABDULSALAM GHAMLOOCH

An Undergraduate Graphic Design Research Project
submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Bachelor of Fine Arts
to the Department of Architecture and Design
of the Maroun Semaan Faculty of Engineering and Architecture
at the American University of Beirut

Beirut, Lebanon
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AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

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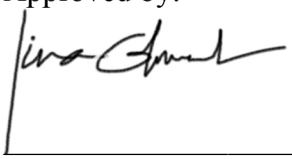
Approved by:



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Lina Ghaibeh, Associate Professor — Thesis Advisor
Architecture and Design

Date of project presentation: [May 10, 2021]

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ABSTRACT

Title: Al Finiq

The story follows 22y/o Qamar living in Beirut in 2071, as she goes through her day to day encountering anxiety-inducing situations that are usual for any Lebanese citizen. For some time we're not sure if this is in fact a future, as we slowly start to notice that not much has actually changed from our present time. Qamar is stuck and although she tries to change her destiny later on, it is unclear if she is successful or not.

Al Finiq is an animation that explores anxiety as part of the Lebanese identity, to make the point that nothing will ever change in this country.

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AMAL GHAMLOUCH

FYP1 Dossier

Fall 2020-2019

Fouad Mezher

DESIGN STATEMENT:

My project focuses on two main ideas: realising a vision for the future of Lebanon while centering us at the forefront of our own stories, with the help of science fiction. It is a 2D animation set in a dystopian Beirut that explores the daily collective anxiety Lebanese civilians experience due to various reasons.Something as small as being late to work because of the terrible traffic jams we experience to banks denying us our own money, not being able to pay tuition fees, the possibilities of losing friends/family anytime etc.

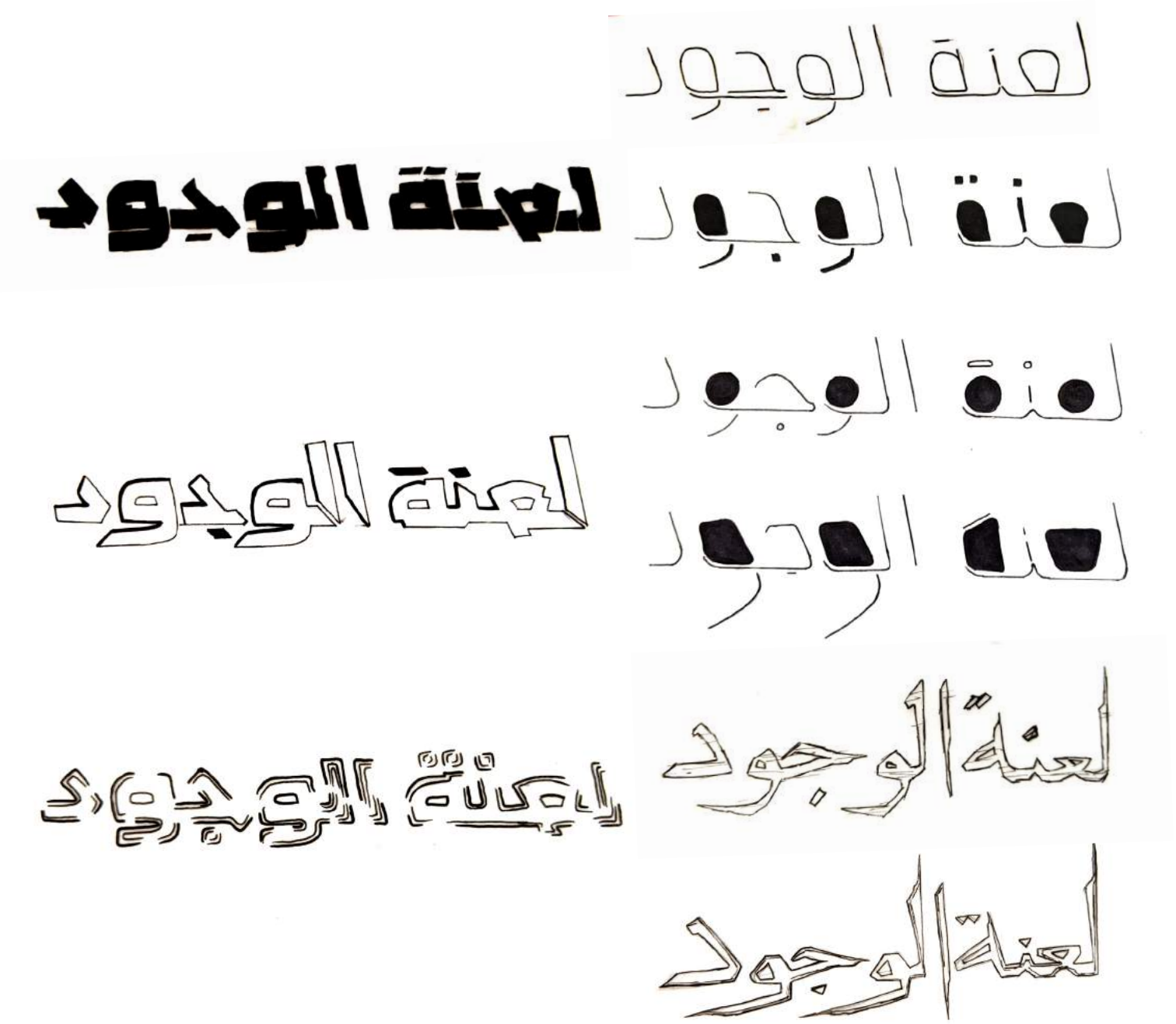
In this future everyone has an “anxiety meter” that, once reaches 100%, will no longer be deemed a working member of society, and so, will be legible for execution. So, how do Lebanese people, with the many stress-inducing problems they face every day, avoid the death sentence?

These narrative choices will allow me to tackle the anxieties I laid out in the first paragraph.

DESIGN EXPLORATION

In this section I will be taking you through the work done in the four modules, and also including a refelction at the end of each one.

MODULE 1 PART 1: LETTERING



The inspiration for my lettering experimentations was obviously taken from science fiction, trying to find the balance between a futuristic and rustic theme (will not be sticking with title name).

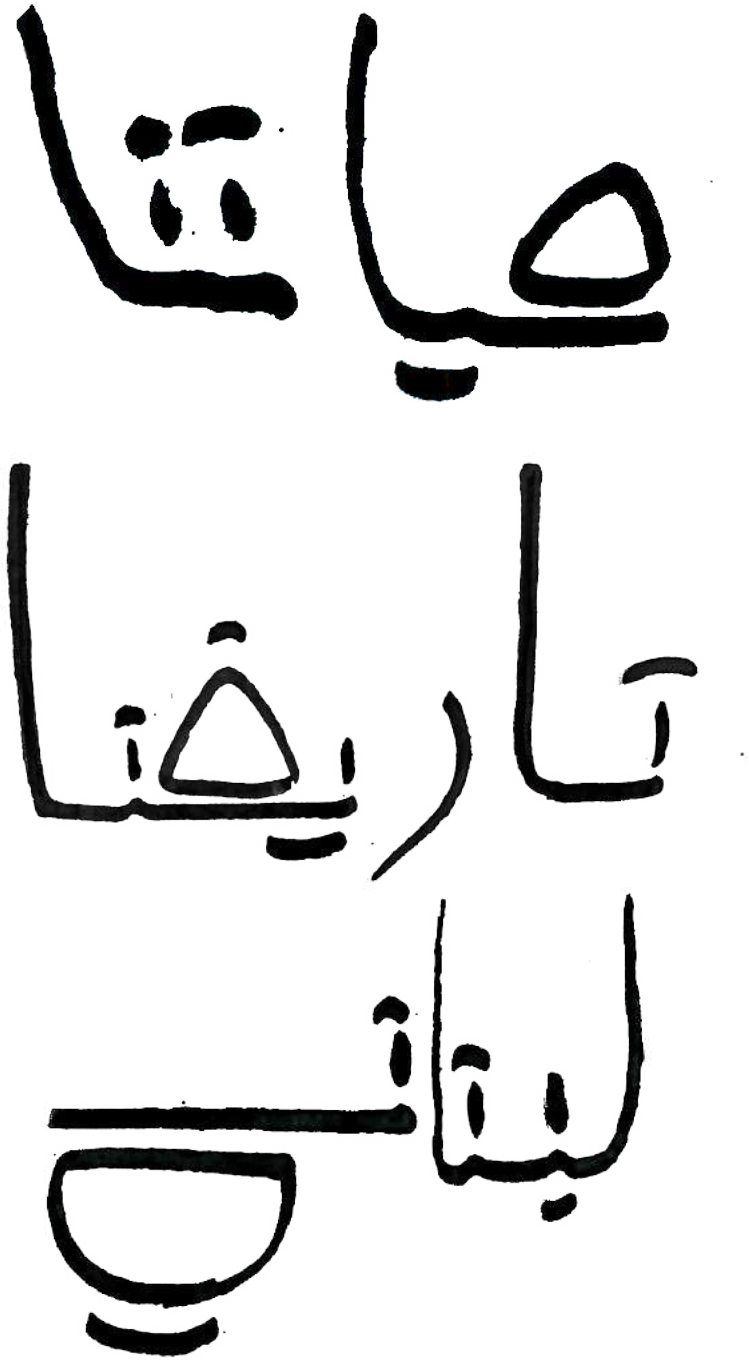
I did look at a lot of cliche's for examples, just to get those out of my system. Don't like any of the directions here, but also at the time I didn't have a clear idea of what kind of future I was building.

An iteration used for the book cover of the spreads. Done using a thin metal edge dipped in ink, wanted to make it feel more “organic”.

MODULE 1 PART 2: EXPRESSIVE, MULTILINGUAL, BILINGUAL TYPE

For my spreads I mainly focused on the “anxiety” aspect of my project, and attempted to convey that feeling by using harsh strokes with black ink to get the texture.

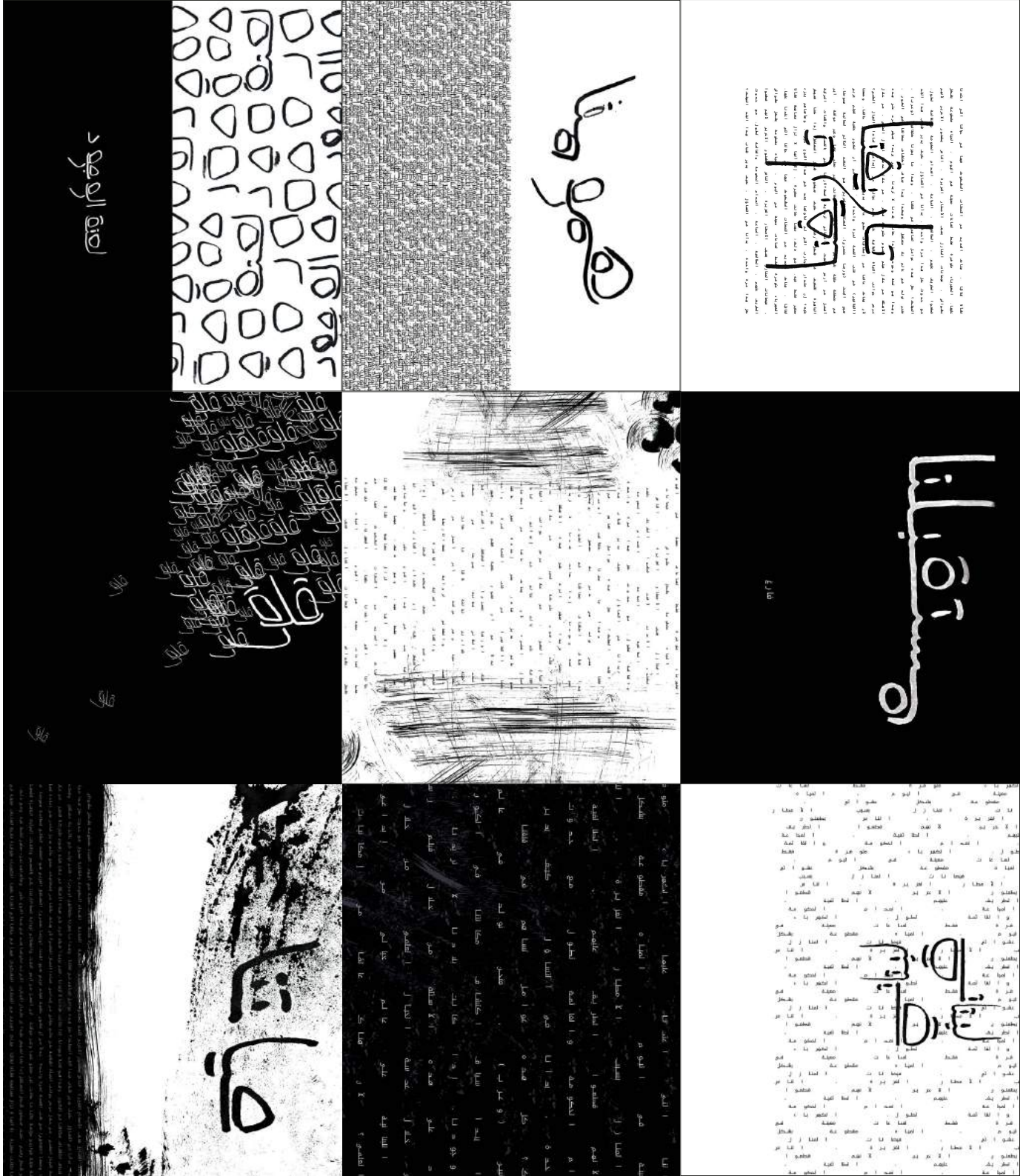
In the early stages of my story, I had the idea of our anxieties being a physical being that shapeshifts and manifests differently depending on each individual, which was the inspiration for these abstract shapes.



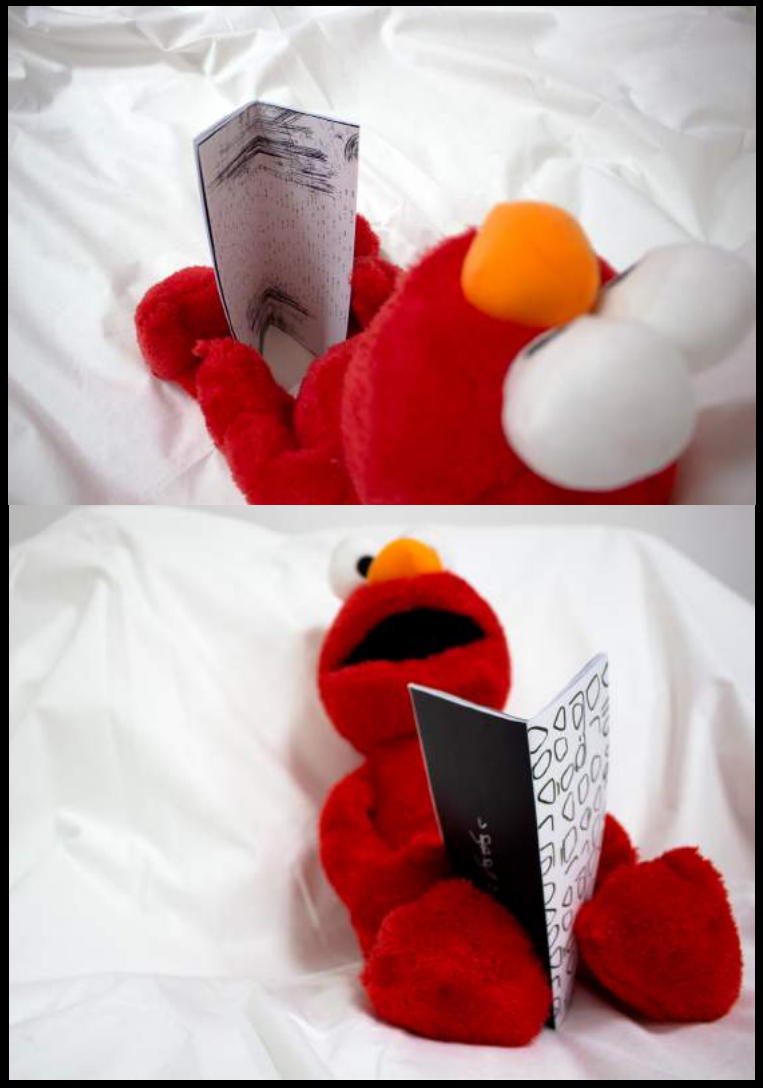
At the time the “future” that I had in mind was something along the lines of The Lost City of Atlantis (old ruins, techonologically advanced temples). “How would Arabic look like a thousand years from now?”

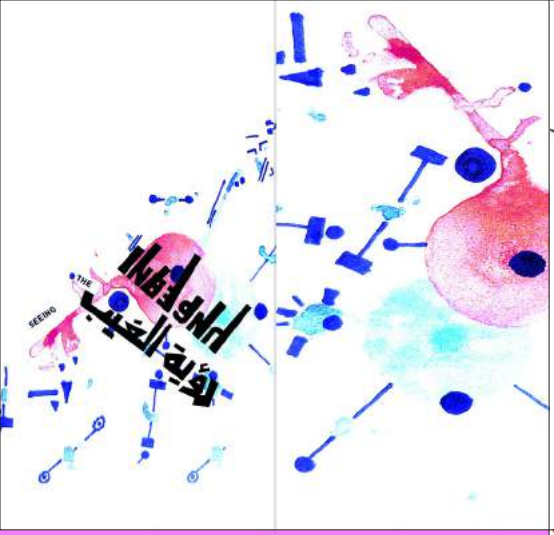
Looking at the latin examples and noticing how some letters (the A in cascade) were abstracted into one shape, I followed a similar thinking for the arabic letters, while also detaching the shapes from the horizontal lines, to make the langauge look less familiar to us.

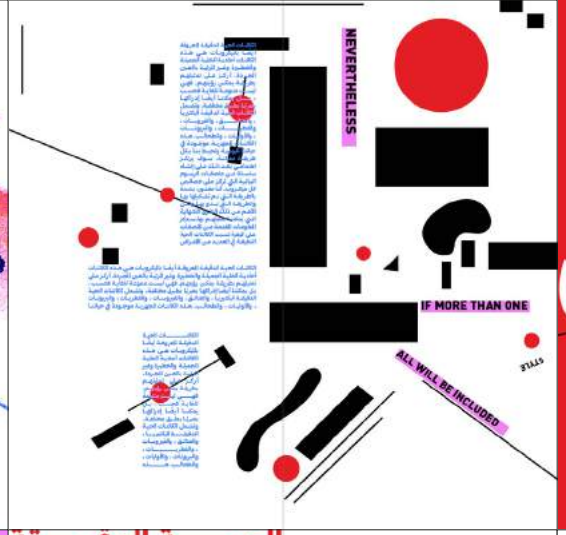
To be honest, I couldn't figure out how to adapt my whole idea typographically. Although they don't necessarily look futuristic, I think the feelings of despair and bleak emptiness really shine through :)

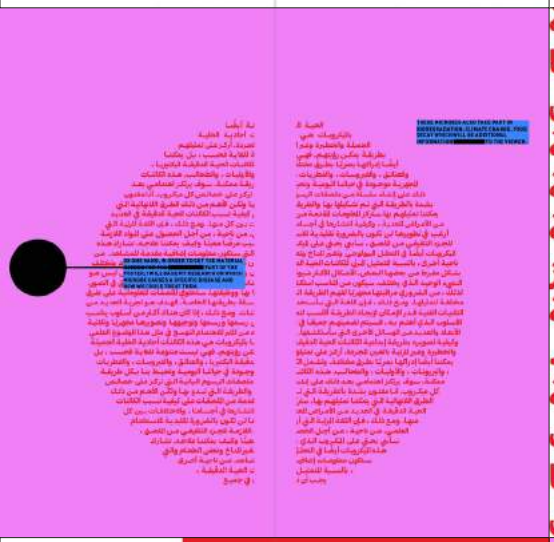


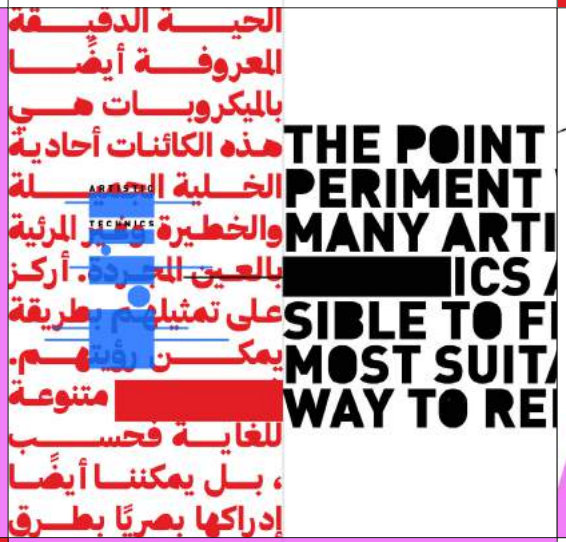
An avid reader

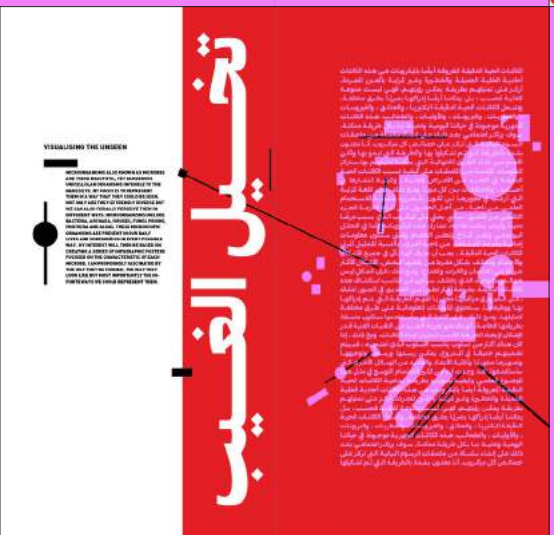


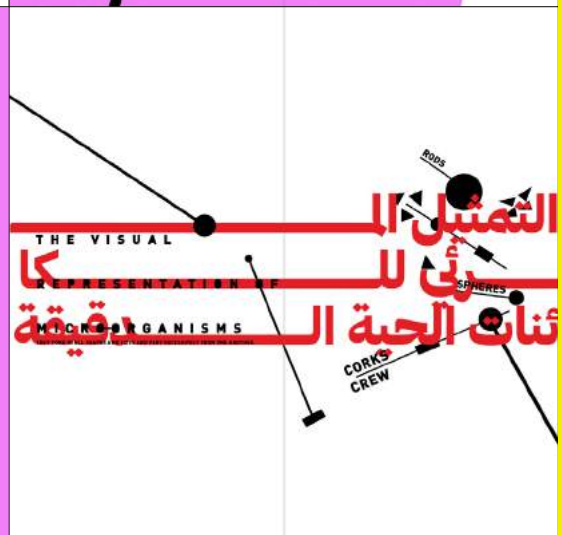












In the next part we were assigned someone else's spreads to add the 2nd language.

I had Lea Al Chaa's spreads, and her topic was on bacteria. Not much to say here, wasn't thinking about my fyp.

REFLECTIONS:

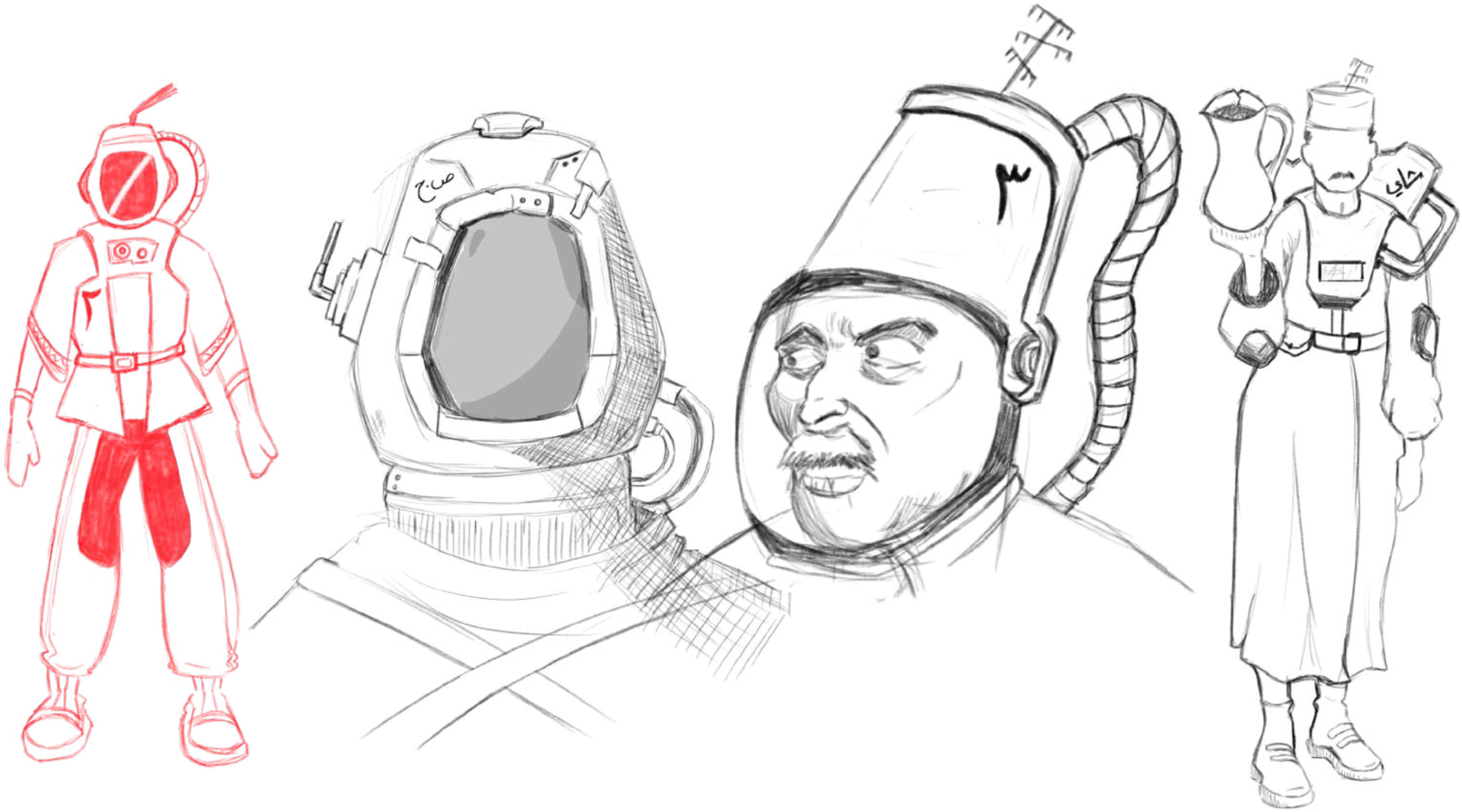
Although I had an animation, I still managed to benefit from this module, mainly in the first part with the lettering. I don't think the bilingual spreads benefitted my fyp in any way, and I'm not sure if they are necessary for anyone's project, as we've been working on bilingual spreads two years prior to this, so unless someone is inept in this area, there are no other benefits.

Progress with story: 1/10
Progress with visuals: 5/10
Ability to research on the side while working on this module: 2/10
Times this felt useless: 50% of the time

OVERALL SCORE: 3/10

MODULE 2: BRANDING & INFORMATION SYSTEMS

A big chunk of this module was research, however I decided to include all my research in the next section, so this will only be a showcase of the sketches done in the module.

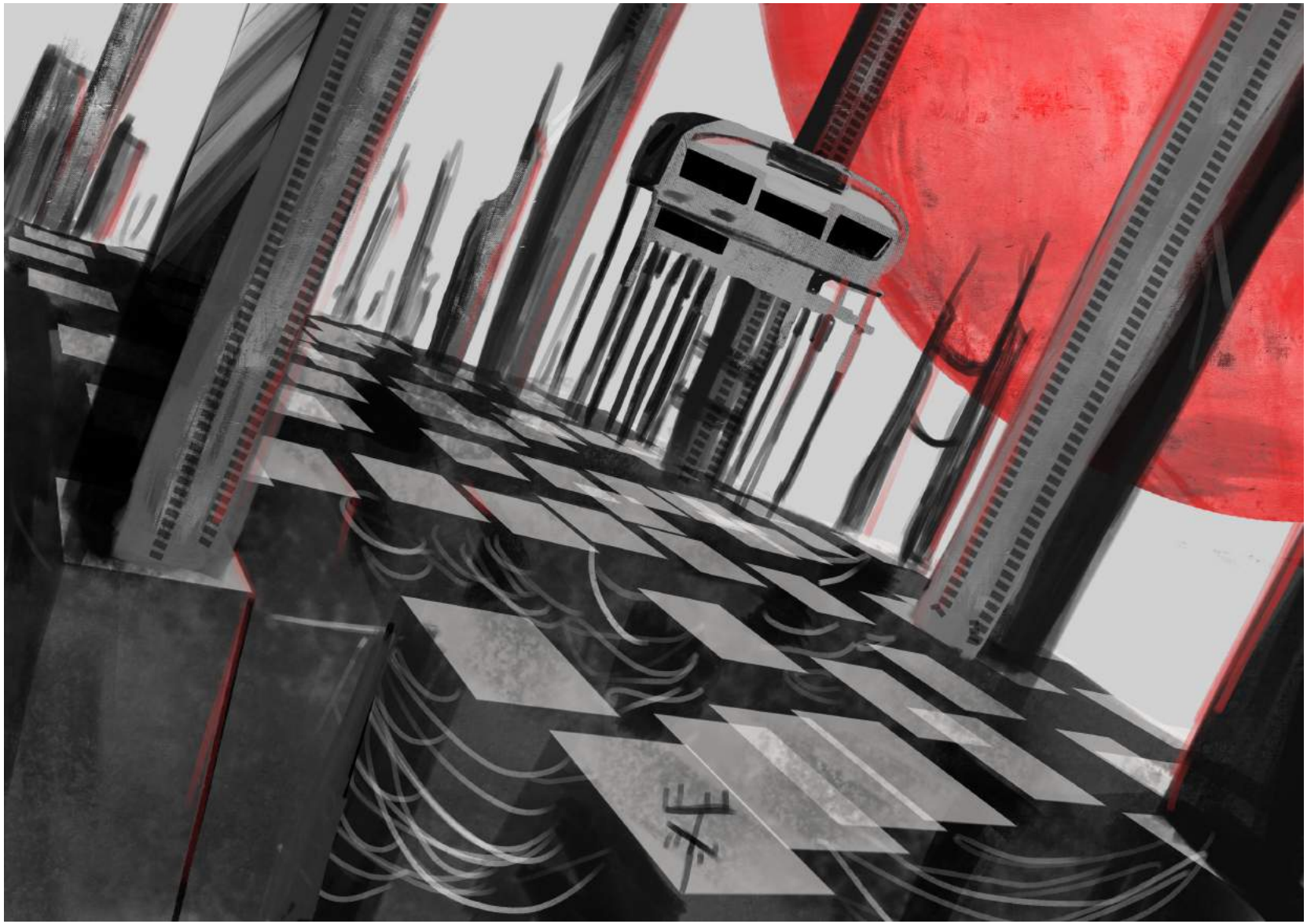


The brief was very flexible, and we were encouraged to research and sketch whatever we deemed necessary to “brand” or find our visual langauge. For the above sketches I gave myself a brief, “How would Arabs look like in space?” And so, I ended up creating these, that are very funny to me now. Although I can’t use them, they helped me figure out what I didn’t want my animation to look like.

Character design sketches, since Lebanese people don't have a specific look, anything works as long as she's not blonde with blue eyes (yes there are Lebanese people with those features I know).

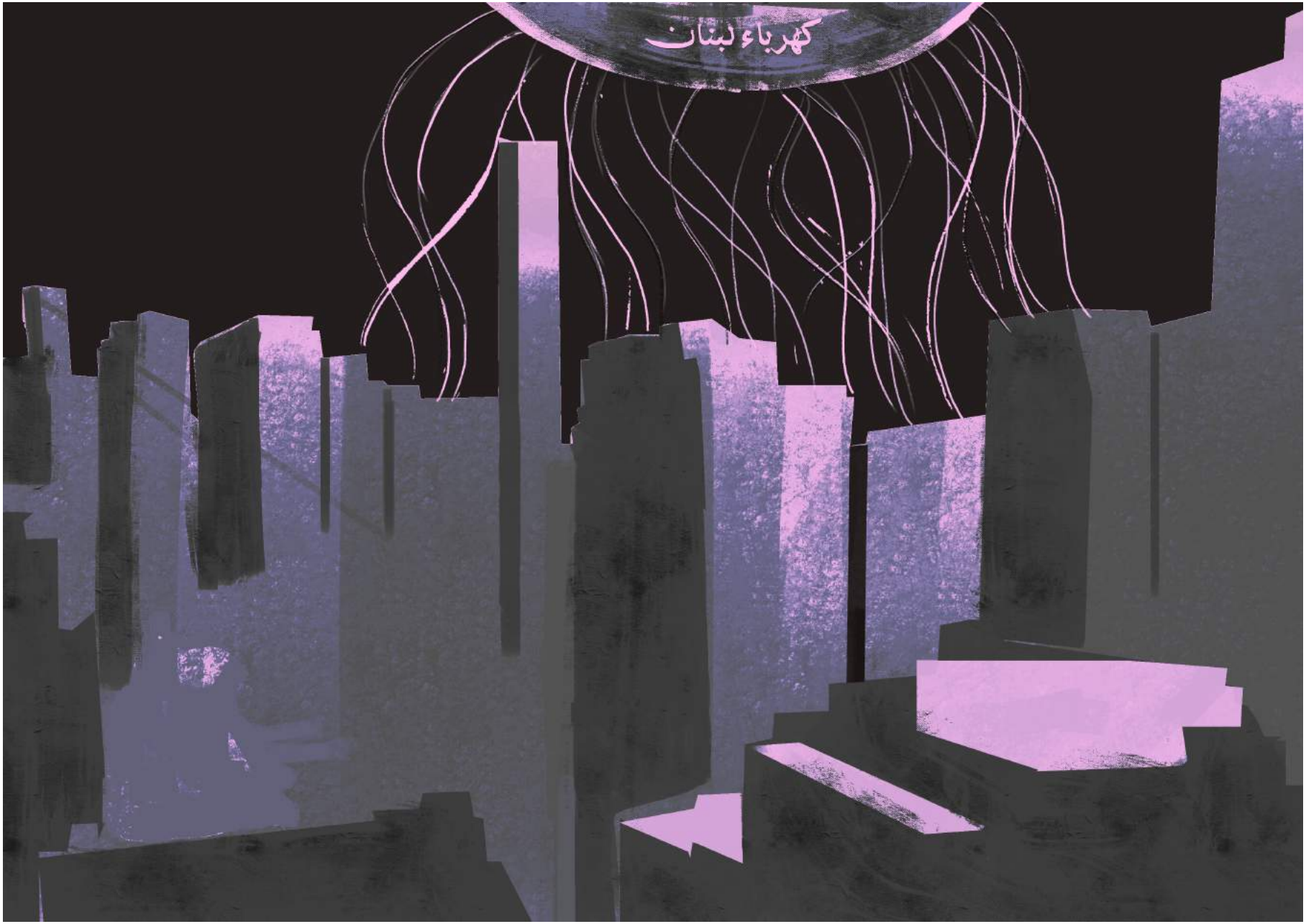
Cyborg Jumblat, a commentary on how all the corrupt "leaders" will probably outlive us all. Projecting his potrait on a tall building, my version of the political billboards we see everywhere. This idea can definitely be elevated since it's in the future (maybe he's projected on the moon etc). And realistically speaking, he should be more cyborg, less human.

In my research, I wanted to figure out what would buildings in the future look like. One answer I found was Brutalist architecture (to be discussed more in the Research section). This is Beit Beirut, in summary I attempted to combine lebanese architecture with Brutalism. Was not successful, focused too much on making it look like it was made out of concrete, forget the other features.



My next concern was the architecture of our future. Beirut has a very particular city plan, and I didn't want to lose the feeling of overcrowdedness. In this sketch the idea was to split the poor and rich areas vertically, so high-income earners were literally on top. Although the idea is cool, I decided that i'll be adding on top of what already exists (something we already do with damaged buildings etc, instead of changing our entire urban plan).

The concept here was for Electricite du Liban to be taking energy from the citizens, rather than provide. Later on in the research it turns into a hub for the government to store our anxiety (that they use as fuel).



Another idea for the political billboards. Having huge political heads (literally) as sculptures in the middle of the city.

REFLECTIONS:

Being able to use our time for research was a great push for our projects, since we didn't have any exercise to worry about on the side. Not to mention Ahmad and Mia had incredible feedback and insight to give. Since I'm working on an animation I was worried a branding module woudld be a waste for me. It was not.

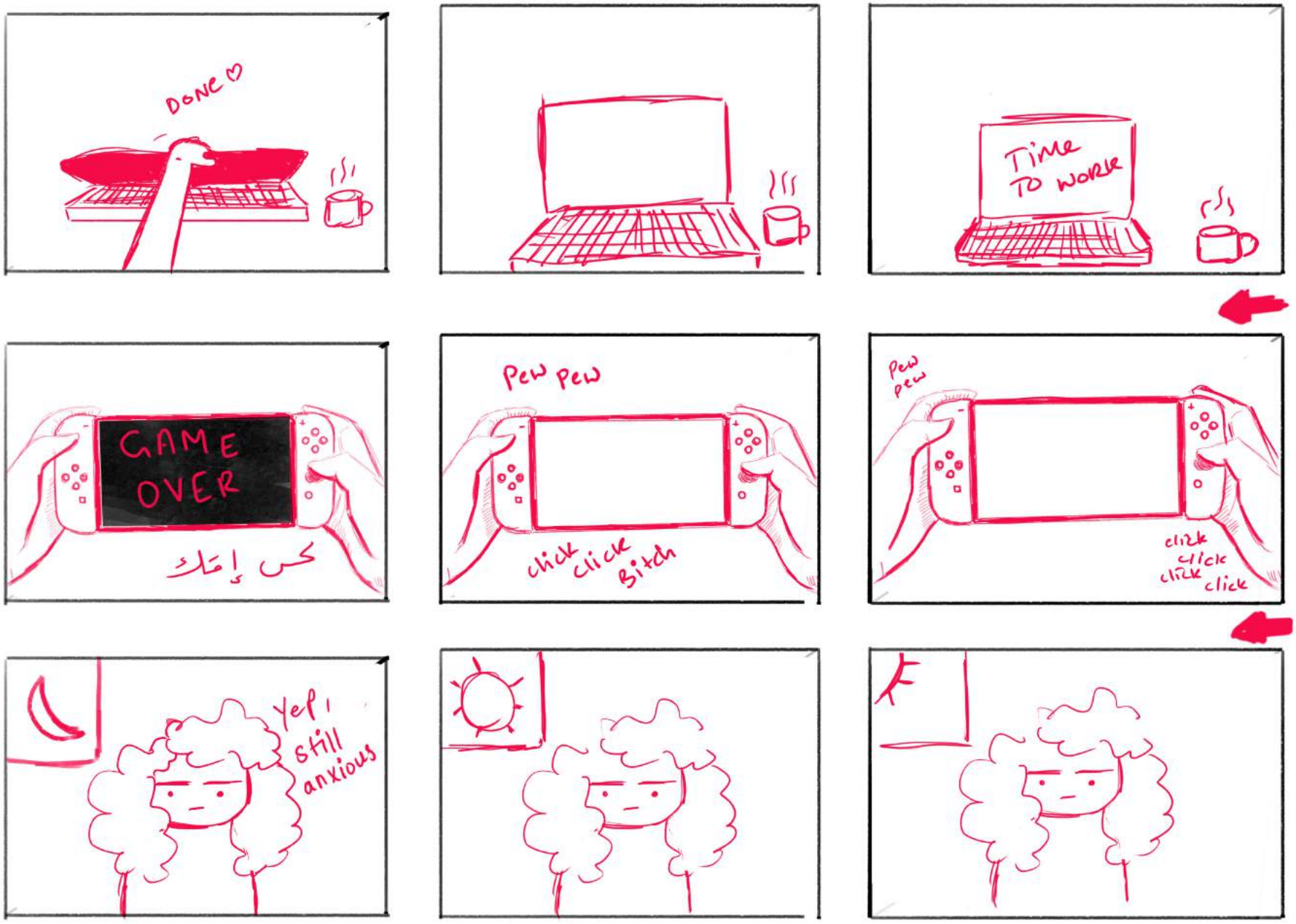
Progress with story: 6/10
Progress with visuals: 10/10
Ability to research on the side while working on this module: 10/10
Times this felt useless: Almost never

OVERALL SCORE: 8.6/10

MODULE 3: GRAPHIC NARRATIVES

This module will be mostly story focused.

The Gif exercise is included in the folder



Time-based exercise. Illustrate anything you do in 1 min, 1 hour and 1 day. Did not relate it to fyp.

Protect from UV radiation
1
2
Too smelly, Trash crisis, Smell is fatal
Depressed but stylish
cold weather
platform Jetpack shoes For transport
Favourite shoes

Short Sentence Explaining The Story:

A young woman in her early 20's living in a future dystopian Lebanon, where the gov't physically manifests the people's anxieties. She must decide if staying in her home country is worth the torment.

Short FYP Paragraph:

An animated short film exploring the collective anxiety of the Lebanese population by highlighting current/on-going pressures. Told through the lens of science fiction as a vehicle for providing an alternative perspective on current social issues. Using Arabfuturism to experiment with history, technology and the absent future as well as to put forward our own narratives and stories of culture and identity.

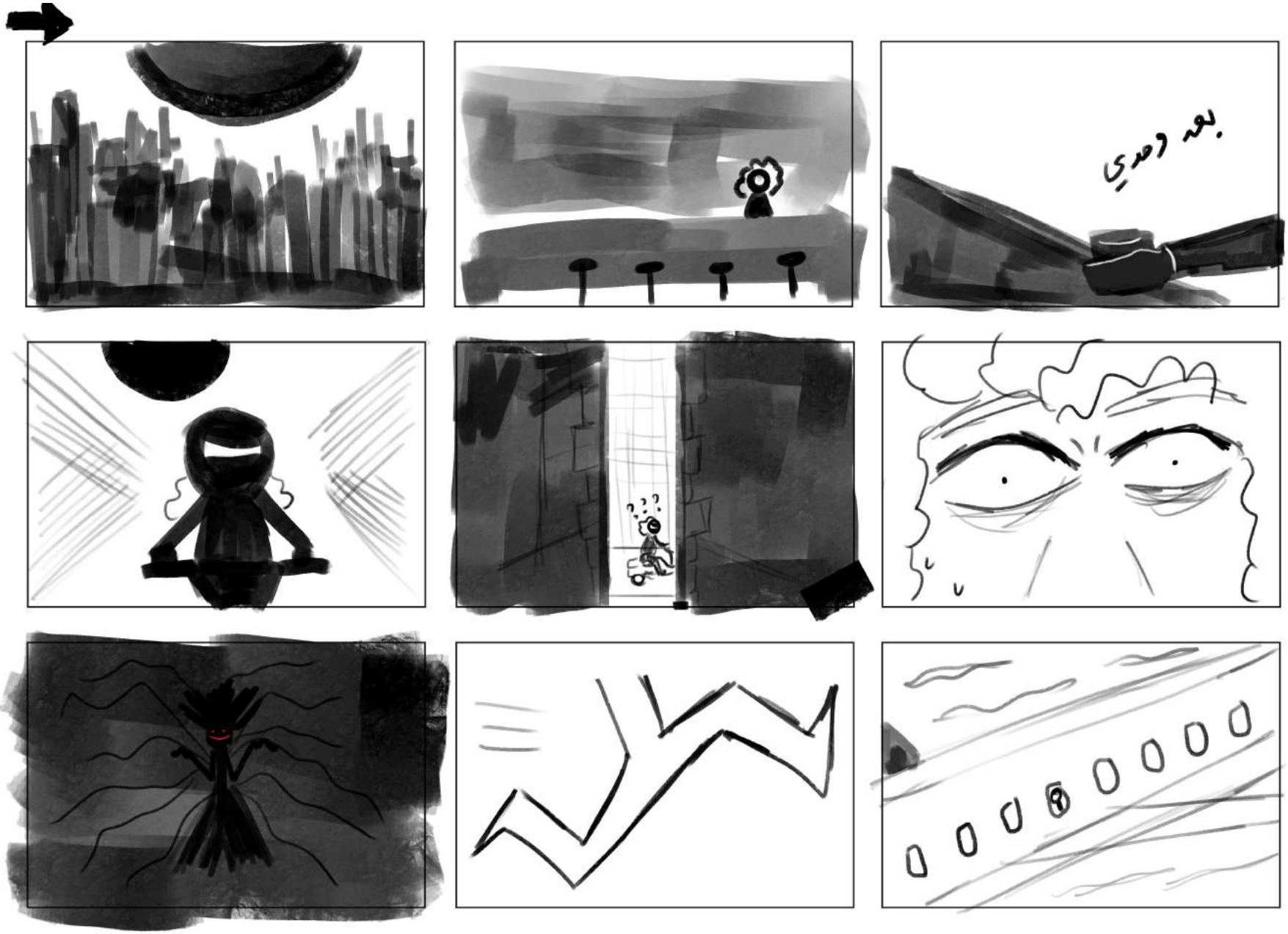
FYP STORY:

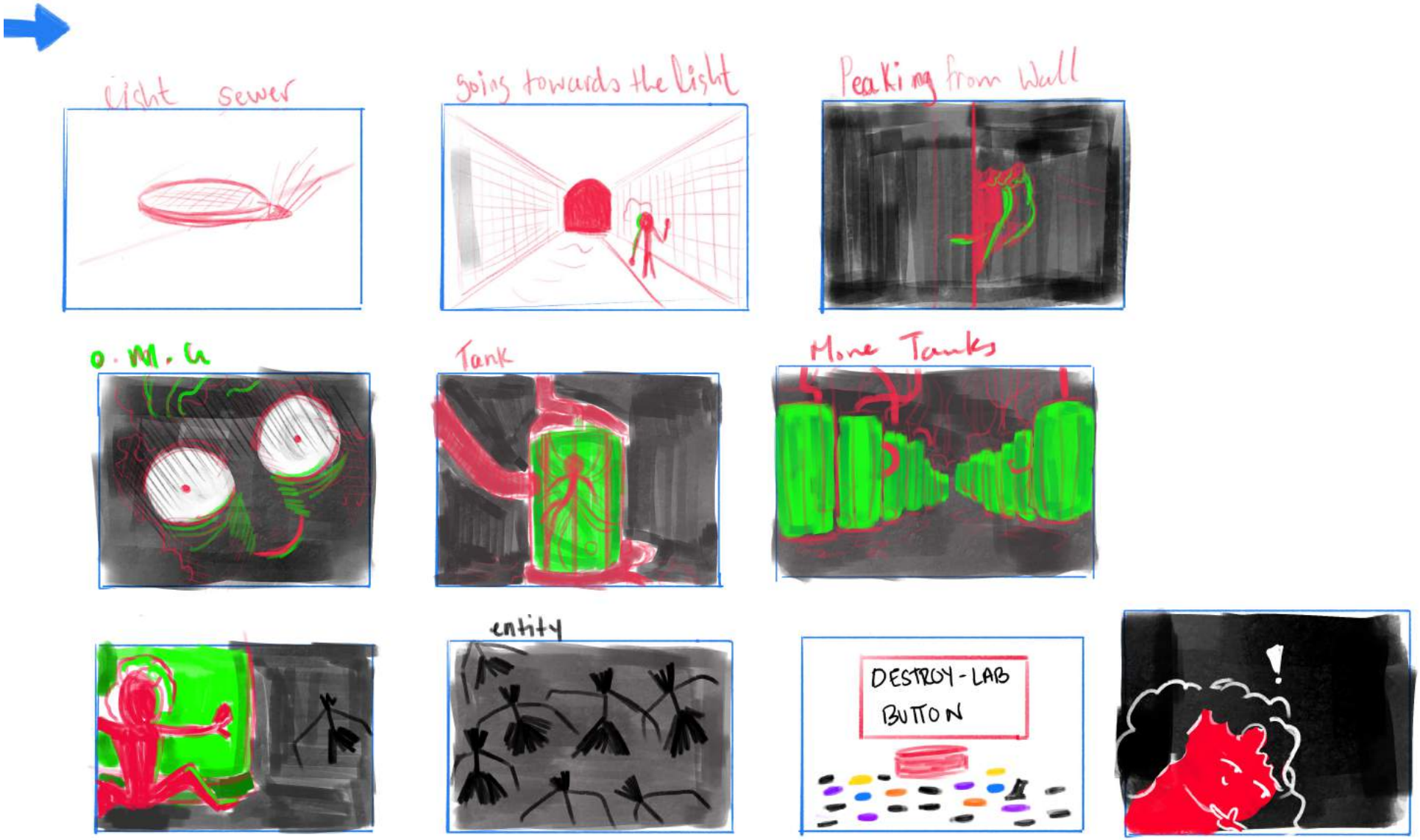
It’s the year 2075, Beirut is the dystopia it was always meant to be. Amar, a 22year old university student, wants nothing more than to escape this hellhole. After the 2071 (economics crisis?, civil war? All of the above?), Lebanon has been in a never-ending cycle of crises after crises. It’s nearly impossible to imagine a future for anyone let alone a young adult like herself, if it weren’t for her mother (best friend/girlfriend/boyfriend/group of friends) she would’ve left a long time ago. Deep in the undergrounds of Beirut, the government is secretly sourcing new energy to keep the city running, the people’s energy, literally. Energy entities roam around the city, sucking the life out of all Beiruti’s. One day on her walk back from her part-time job, Amar accidentally stumbles upon one of the entrances to the underground tunnels. Horrified after discovering the truth, she has to make the tough decision of abandoning everyone she loves in order to seek comfortable living somewhere else.

SCRIPTING:

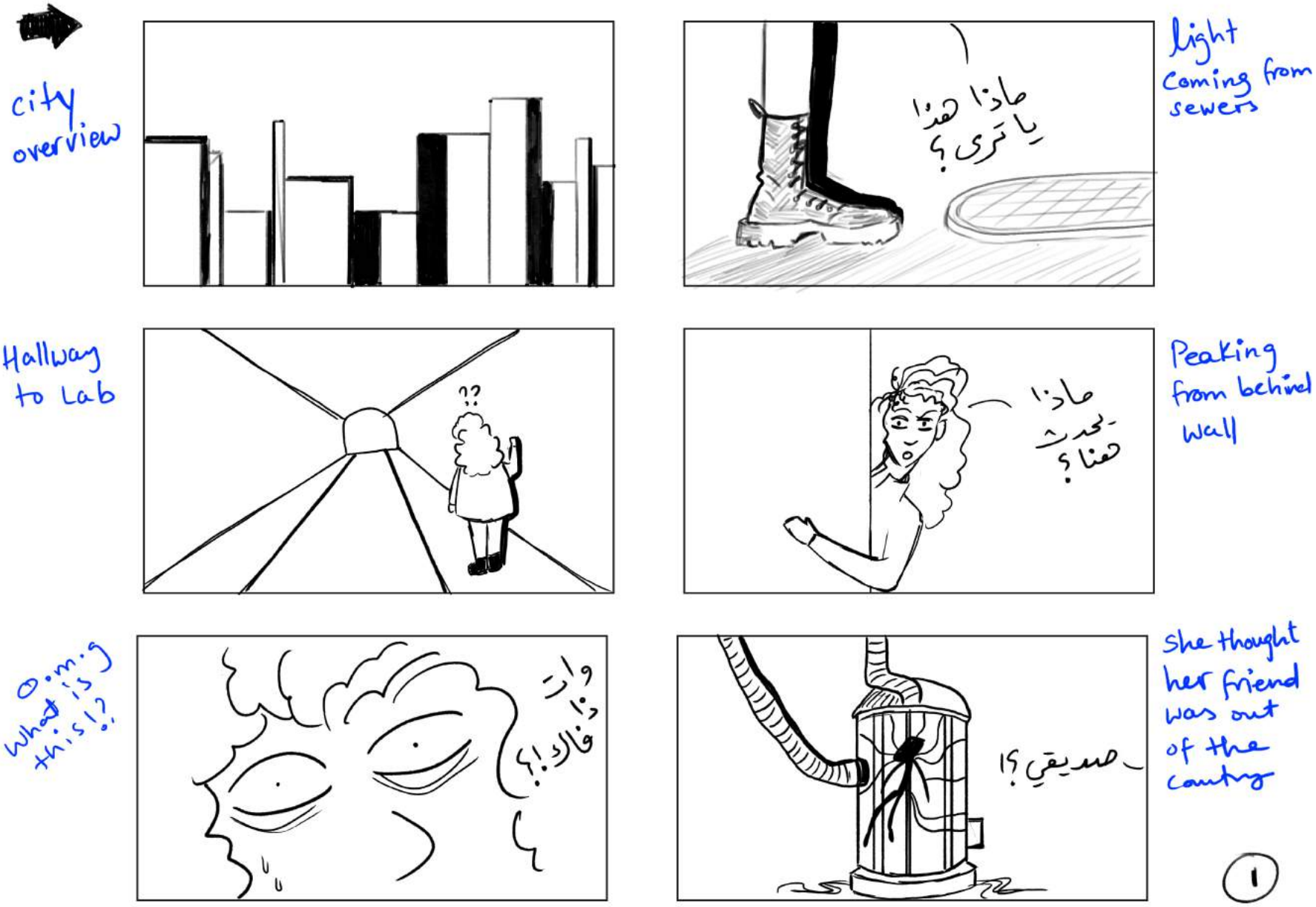
The story was continuously developing throughout the semester during advising sessions. The goal is to have a clear script by the start of FYPII.

Storyboard summarising our story. I started out with the shapeshifting entity that manifests our anxieties, for these short panels my protagonist runs into one of these entities and decides to leave the country.



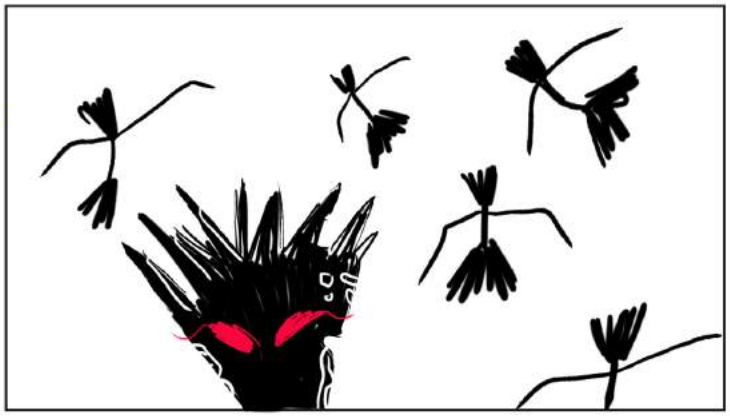


The next attempt I illustrated the protagonist discovering the underground labs in Electricite du Liban, where she finds her friend in one of the tanks.



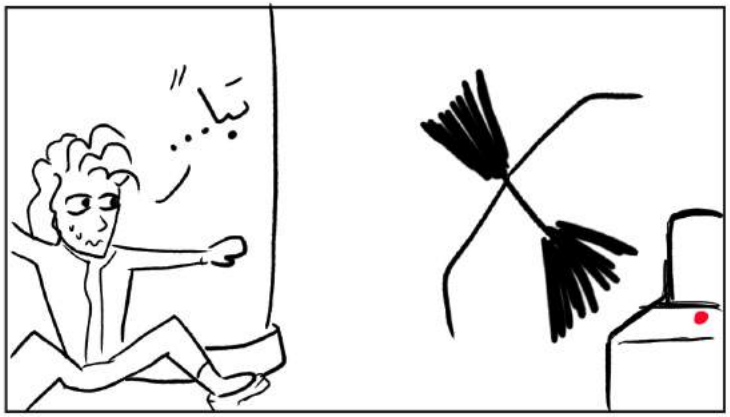
In the third attempt, she discovers the labs and decides to save her friend, although it's too late, as they've already turned them into an entity, while also releasing havoc on the city.

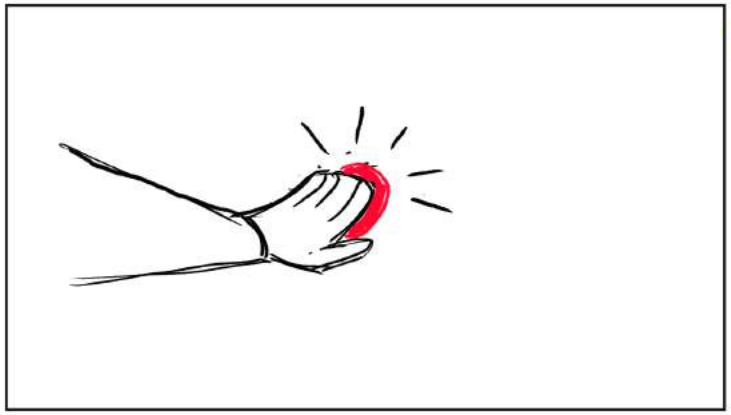
Pan to see more energy entities



Release Prisoners button

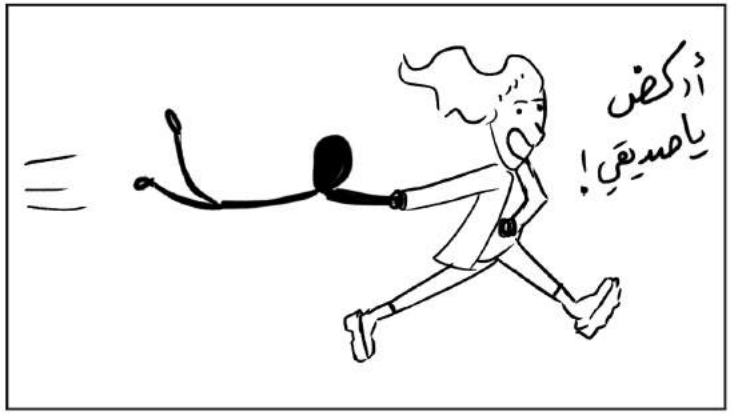
Hiding from entity





manages to Pass by unseen

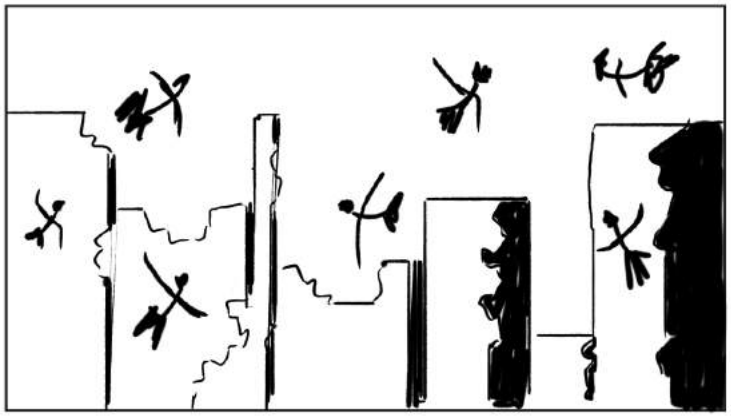
Snatches friend



we made it!

2

Also released all entities



she fucked up

Hehe

At this point the story was almost straying away from the points I wanted to cover, I was too invested in making it as sci-fi as possible.I decided to let go of the energy entity concept where the government is secretly working behind our backs. Instead, I'm going for the concept of an "anxiety meter" that shows each individuals levels, similar to the Black Mirror episode "Nosedive" where everyone has a popularity rating.

So we're bringing it back to the original idea, where we showcase why being Lebanese sucks ass.

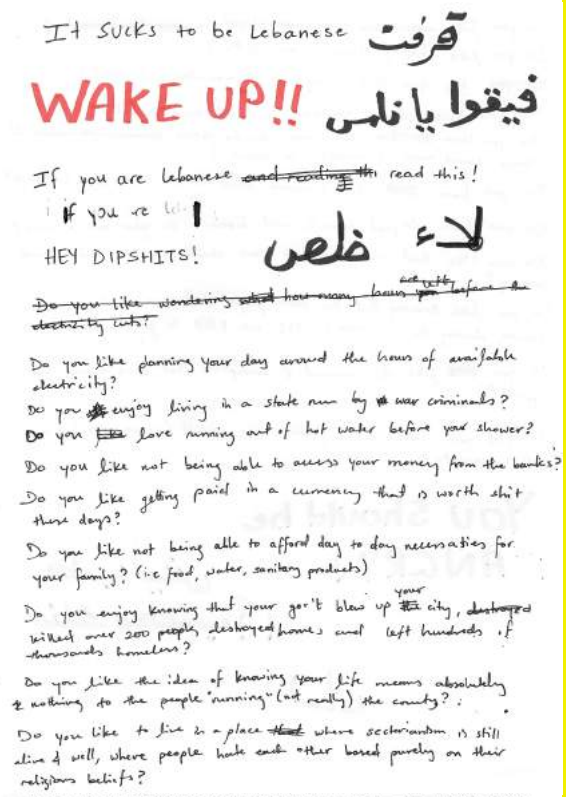
REFLECTIONS:

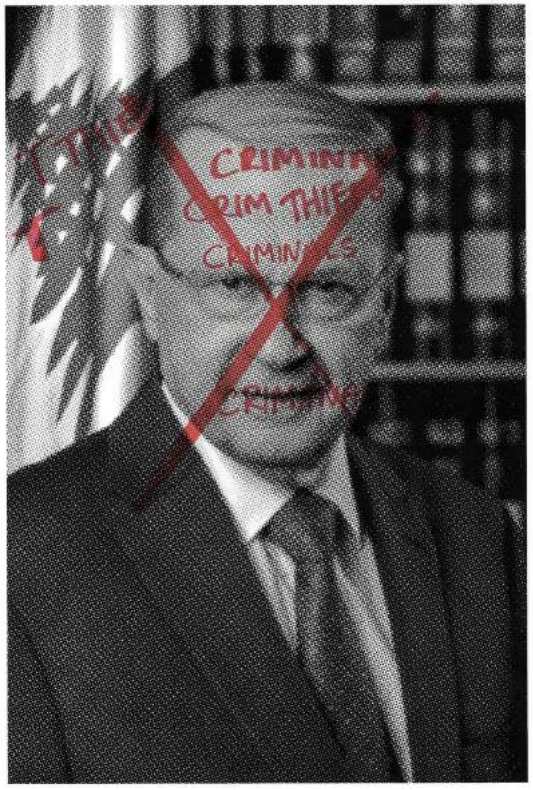
Helped the most with story, figured out what I didn't want to talk about and what I really wanted to focus on. I would say the time-based exercises were a waste of time (lol) in regards to developing fyp. I was hoping this module would also help me further explore visual styles. Instead of having many small exercises we could have worked on a comic that helped develop a direction in terms of colour, linework, rendering etc.

Progress with story: 10/10
Progress with visuals: 4/10
Ability to research on the side while working on this module: 4/10
Times this felt useless: Not that much

OVERALL SCORE: 6/10

MODULE 4: SOCIAL PRACTICE



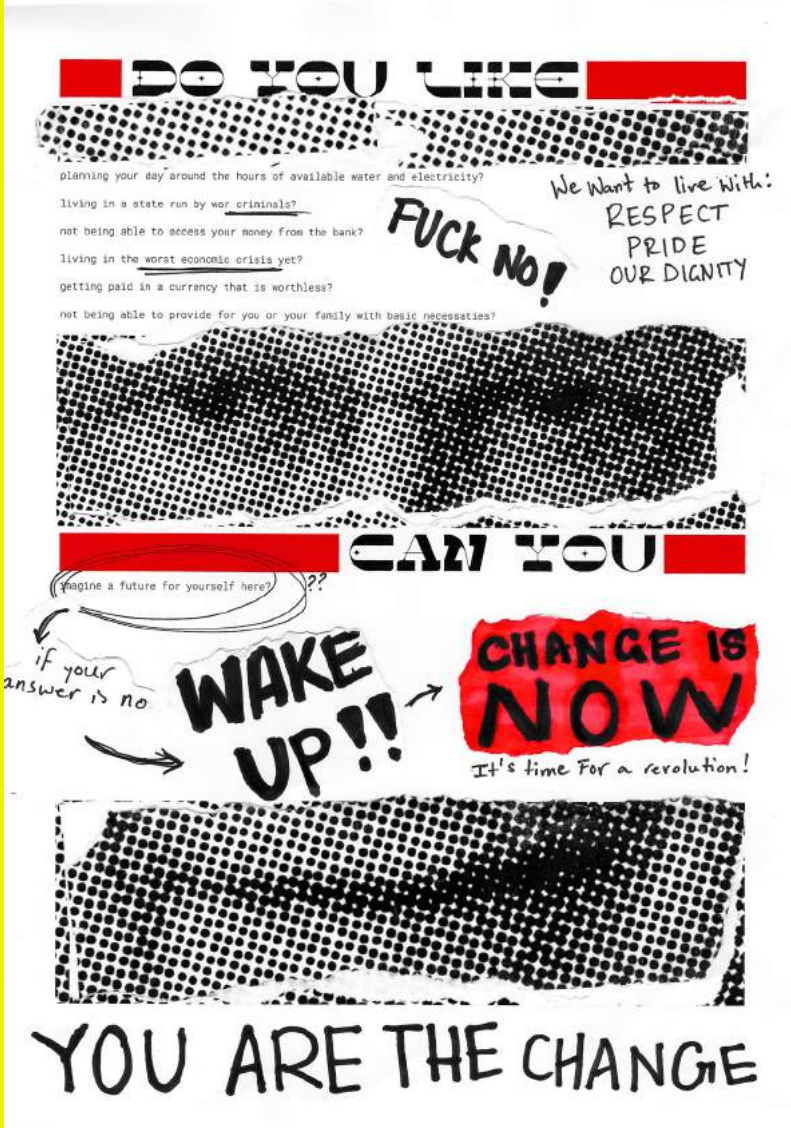


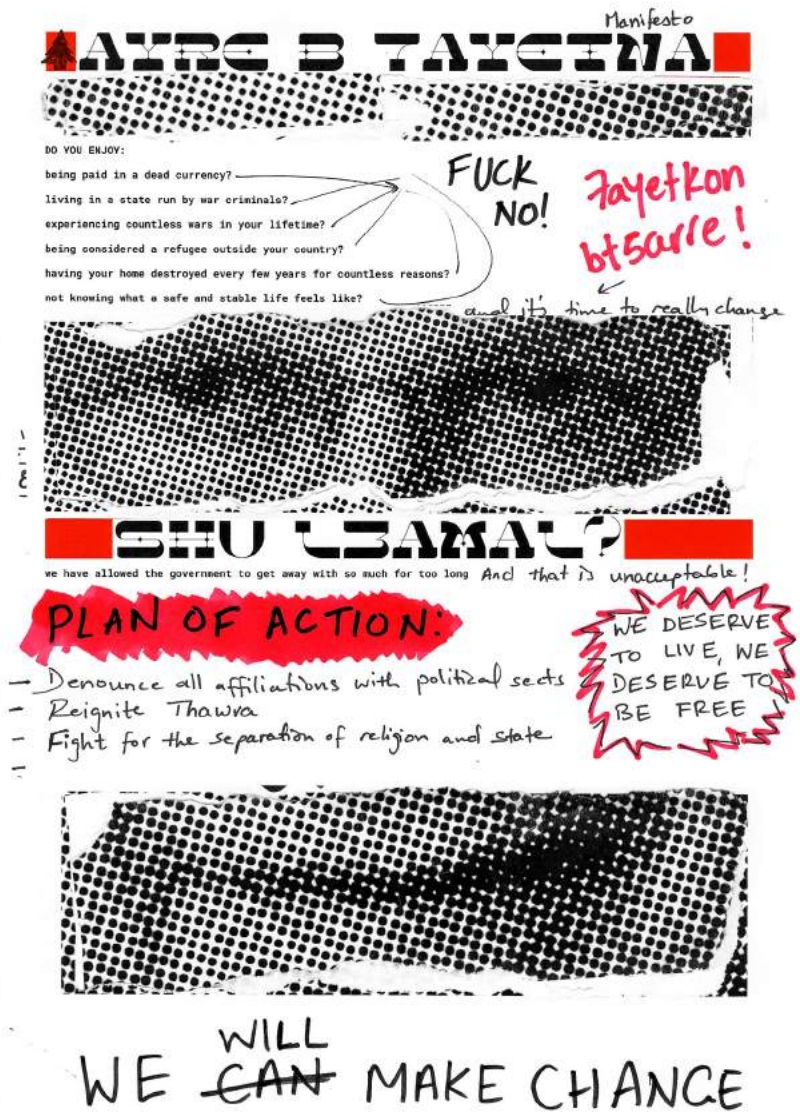
The first part of the module was identifying our public sphere and designing a manifesto.

Since my project is trying to highlight the shitty parts of our lives, I had the idea of making a manifesto that calls for the people to “wake up” and take action against the government.

The sketches list the reasons our lives suck, and figuring out a call for action.

The first sketch (left) didn't have a specific call to action. Tried fixing that on the second attempt (right). To be honest this was confusing I didn't understand what I was doing.





The second part had us come up with an intervention within our public sphere. My idea was a social media post from the future where the main protagonist of my animation is sending it, hoping we'll change our actions to save everyone in her present. I wanted to see the different reactions people would have if they knew how our future would turn out to be.

Most people (unsurprisingly) did not care because “our present is not any better”. Some (very few) said they would still try to change things around if it’s possible. A more viable approach would have been to intervene on every day spaces such as Whatsapp, Facebook, Instagram etc without the intentional design, that would have definitely offered me more genuine reaction.

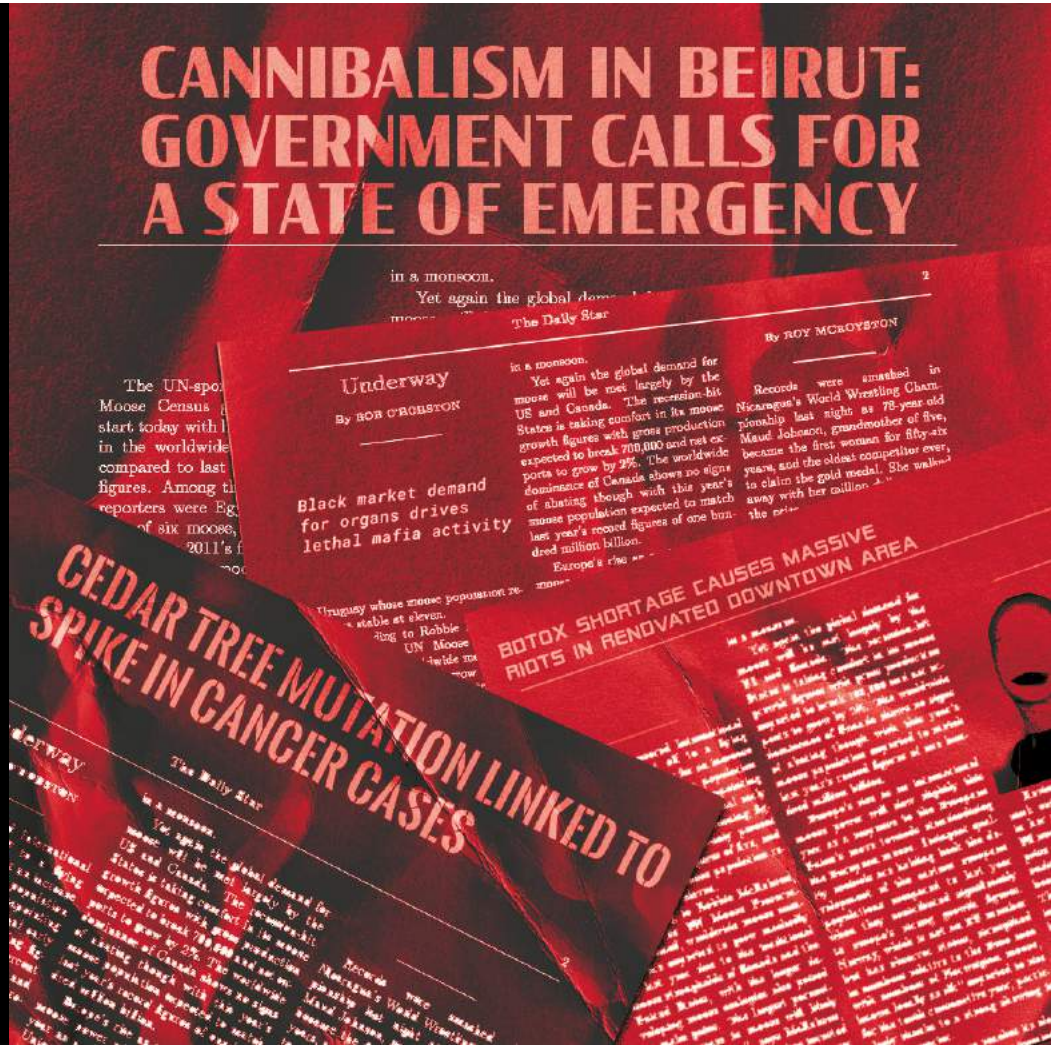
My name is Layal Madi, and I'm sending this message from Beirut in the year 2057, I need your help!

If my calculations were right this message should be sent in 2020, the year of the first covid pandemic. I know how absurd this message sounds and as proof, here are past events I was able to find records of:

In june 24 2027, lira completely loses its value and people burn it for warmth because fuel is no longer available. In 2032, October 13, the EU no longer accepts lebanese refugees. In 2046, cannibalism is officially declared a national emergency.

Right now, we're on the verge of another civil war and suffering through a famine simultaneously. Whoever had the means to leave already did, leaving us all behind. We're at the point of no return, what I'm describing is a manifestation of the way we've always lived, you need to restructure your lives to avoid my (our) future.

I hope you act before any of this comes to pass but if any of it does, I hope it convinces you to keep fighting... none of this has to be the future... I'm using what little time I have before they catch me, to urge you to keep fighting. I know it feels like the thawra failed... in my time it has, but it's still not too late for you...

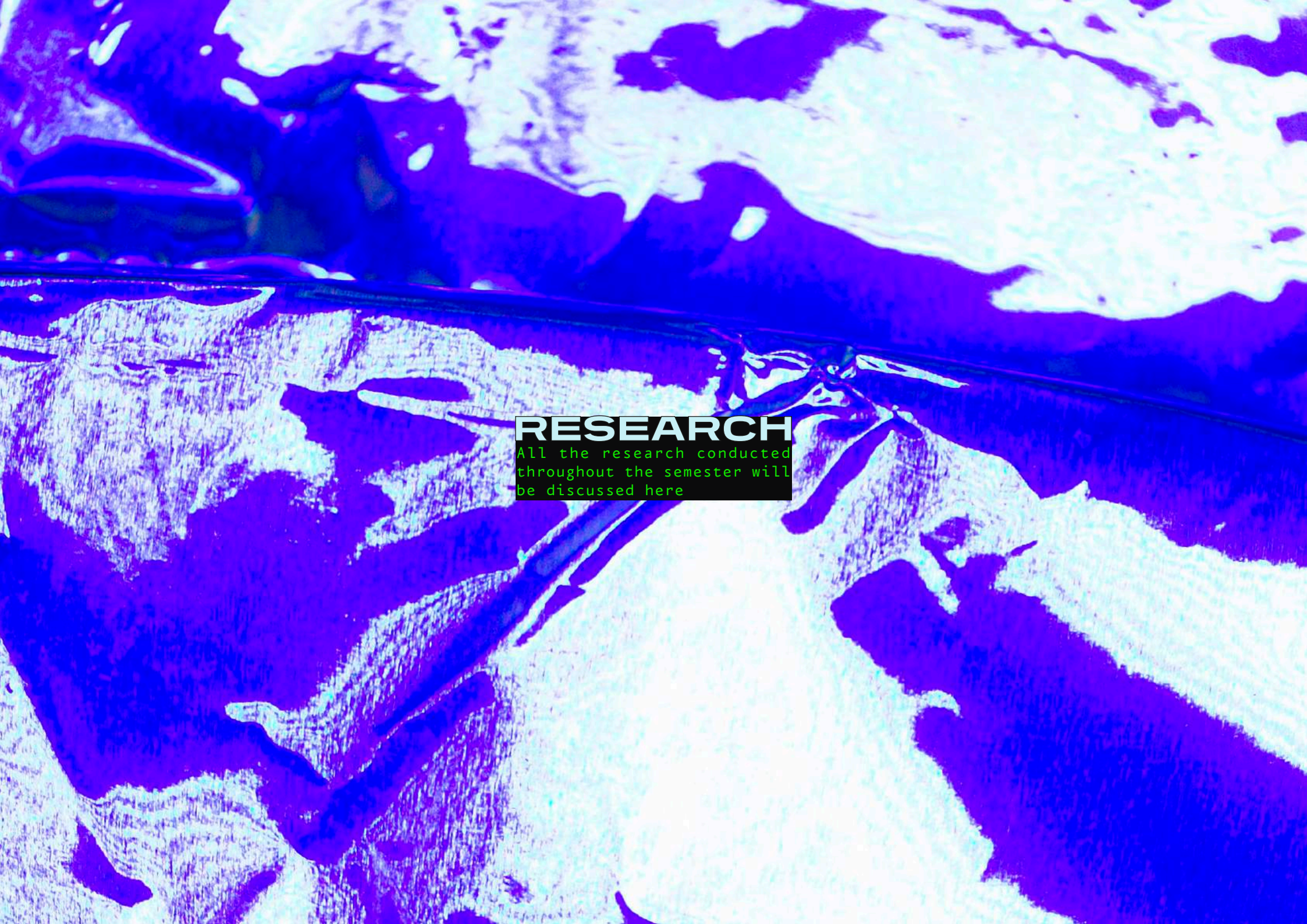


REFLECTIONS:

The most confusing module of all. It took me the longest to grasp, with every feedback session it felt as though my IQ was dropping rapidly, maybe this module should not be given at the end of the semester when our brains our fried. However, I did enjoy the exercises after my mind understood them, and actually showed me all the directions with story that I could take (less narrative more ad-oriented).

Progress with story: 9/10
Progress with visuals: 4/10
Ability to research on the side while working on this module: 5/10
Times this felt useless: So many times (but not by the end)

OVERALL SCORE: 6/10



RESEARCH

All the research conducted throughout the semester will be discussed here

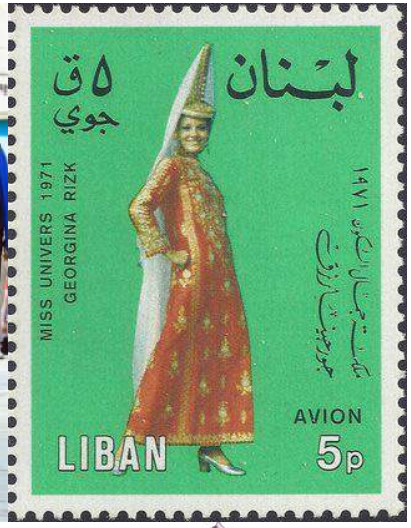
ARABFUTURISM

This is a term that I came upon while researching, and it definitely elevated my fyp from my original idea of representing daily anxiety. What I had in mind at first did not include sci-fi, I just knew that I wanted to center the story around young Lebanese people (in a more positive light, however it is very difficult to do so these days as it is not our reality).

Arabfuturism allows us to be the center of our own stories. Rather than as a backdrop for some western movie packed with stereotypes, we, as Arabs, get to explore our own experiences through science fiction. There's a realm of possibility, a creative well of world-building that we can use to reimagine our own condition.

Science Fiction stories aren't strictly science rationalised into a story, but the intrigue and promise of science used as a vehicle to tell resonant stories of culture and identity.

So how do we deal with our anxieties in the future?



Before I had that question in mind, my initial understanding of Arabfuturism was very surface-level. I focused too much on how was I supposed to combine the past, present and future to create perfectly balanced visuals that represented us but also the future?

I didn't ask myself questions like "what kind of future would Lebanon be in?" etc, rather I focused on sci-fi stereotypes (astronauts) and "traditional" Lebanese clothing and I thought Arabfuturism was the combinations of these elements.

My creativity was lacking to say the least

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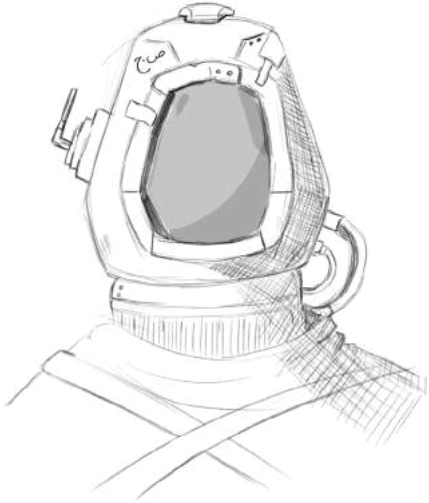
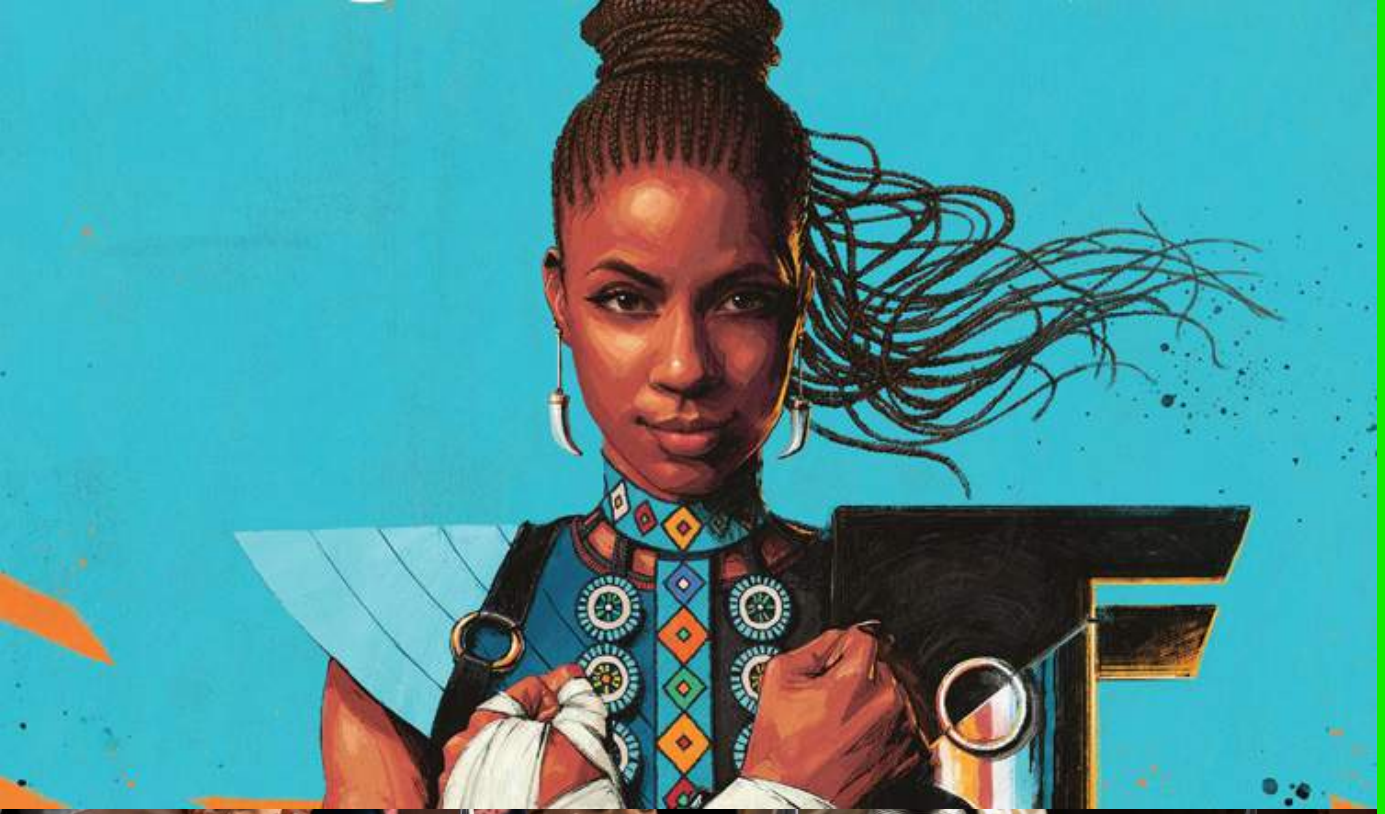
Space Jeddo





The reason for this thinking was because I was already acquainted with Afrofuturism, which usually has strong visuals from culture and tradition, so I wanted to replicate this but the Lebanese version.

I'm not saying this is an incorrect approach, however if I am addressing young Lebanese adults of today, most of us don't wear a tarboush (but Space Jeddo is definitely making it into the final submission no matter what).

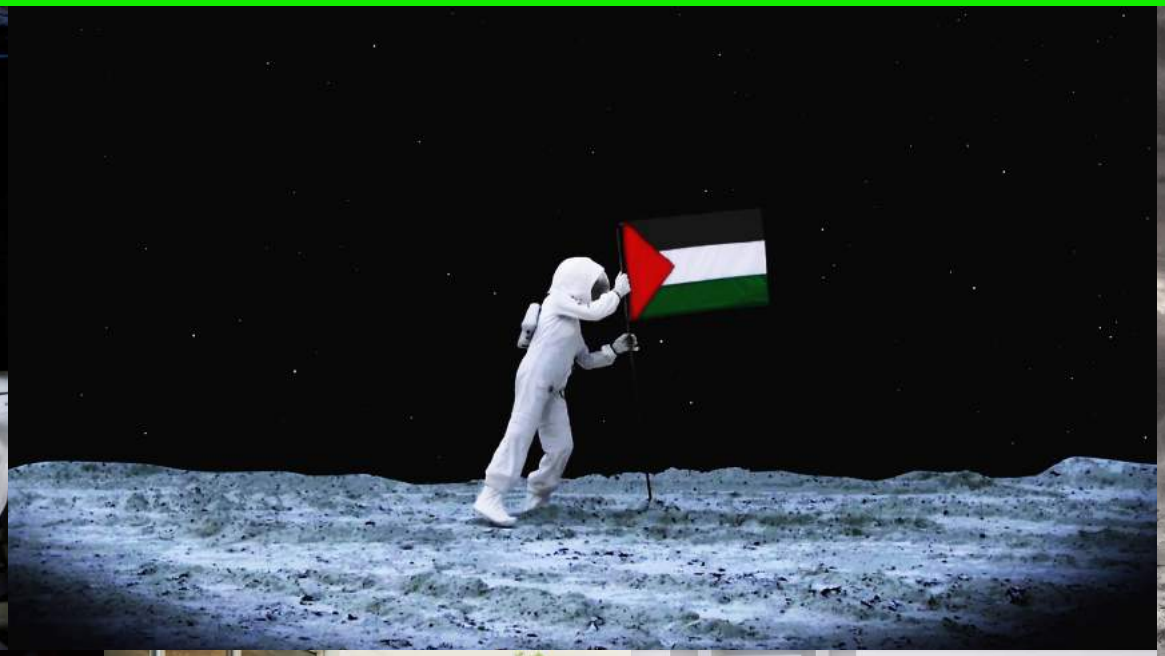
There are other aspects besides our clothes that make us Lebanese, like our rapidly depreciating currency, our terrible WiFi, the ongoing threat of war, our ability to lose our life savings in a span of a few seconds and so much more!

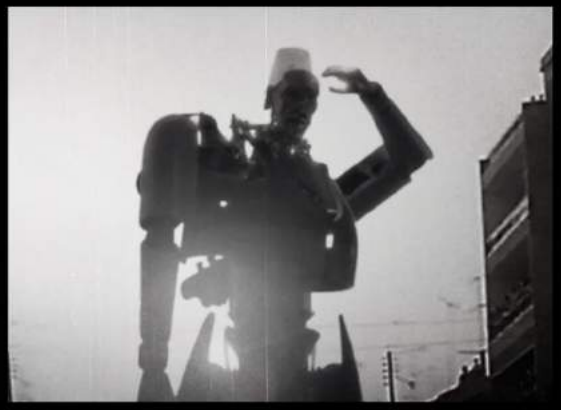
LARISSA SANSOUR

Larissa Sansour is a perfect reference for my project. She's a Palestinian artist who explores Palestinian issues through video, photography, as well as installation art. She uses sci-fi as a vehicle for providing an alternative perspective on current social issues.

Looking at her work gave me a different perspective than what I had in mind about using science fiction to tell Lebanese stories.

She uses sci-fi as a tool to reimagine the state of Palestinians, however in my case I'm using it to exaggerate our condition and in turn, demonstrate that this absurd dystopaia I have in mind is actually closer to reality than what we think.





THE LAST DAYS OF THE MAN OF TOMORROW

A movie by Fadi Baki, the story revolves around Manivelle, an automaton whose rise and fall mirrors that of Lebanon. Once the wonders of his age, now he's rusty and almost forgotten.

I really love this as a reference, the visual language is strong and ties with lebanon's heritage. Something as simple as making a robot speak in arabic is enough to be considered "Arabfuturism". At this point in my research I was looking at different ways I could utilise sci-fi.

HELMET (2016) BY AYMAN BAALBAKI

An accidental find, the last thing I thought I'd see was a space helmet covered in arabic calligraphy. This is a better example of what my intentions were for Space Jeddo, it mixes the ancient with the futuristic. Although I'm not going in that direction anymore (historical + future), it's a great reference to include.

Now, I'm focused on taking our present and transforming it into the oppressive future I know Lebanon is capable of becoming.

ARCHITECTURE IN SCI-FI

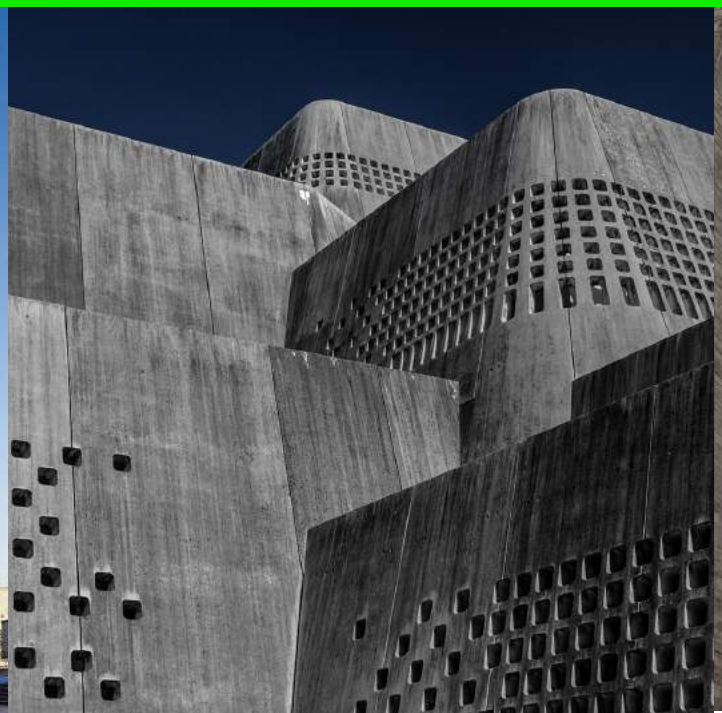
It's important for me to be able to convey the cityscape of a dystopic Beirut, as it is one of the defining features of our city. How do buildings look like in the future, keeping in mind the diverse neighborhoods we have, ranging from the vernacular to something as modern as Zaha Hadid's concrete buildings?

"Brutalism, also known as Brutalist architecture, is a style that emerged in the 1950s and grew out of the early 20th-century modernist movement. Brutalist buildings are characterised by their massive, monolithic and 'blocky' appearance with a rigid geometric style and large-scale use of poured concrete."

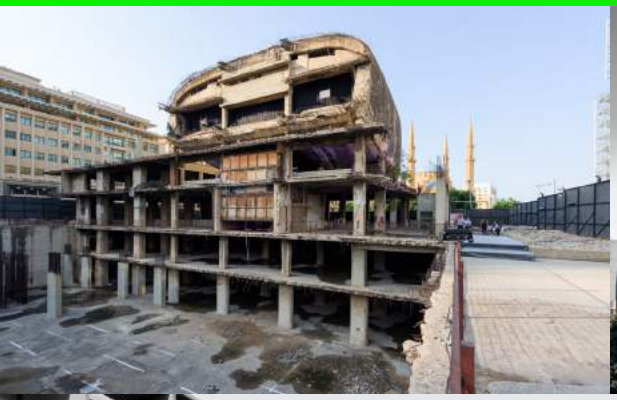
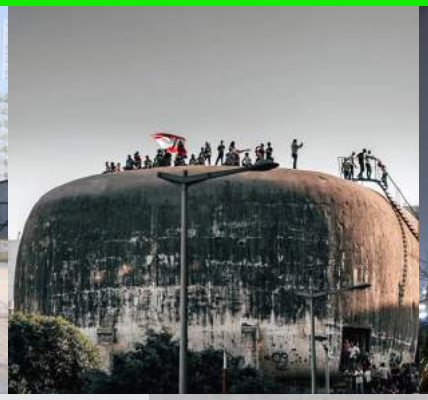
Modernism has always been at the forefront of the "sinister" in film. I am familiar with this movement because it has been ingrained into my mind from a young age through science fiction film and videogames, although I learned the name recently.

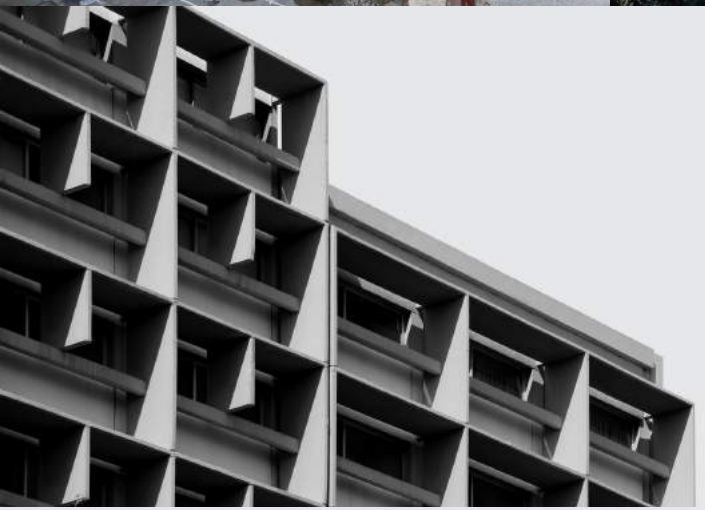
Film depictions of the future such as Blade Runner, Star Wars, Starship Troopers, Minority Report, and Equilibrium are just a few examples of portrayed futuristic designs that arguably focus around concepts in brutalist practice. These immense complexes have, in recent decades of postmodernism, also been linked to the image of futurism.

Finding constrasting buildings in Beirut is not uncommon, and we already have examples of Lebanese Brutalist architecture in our present day.



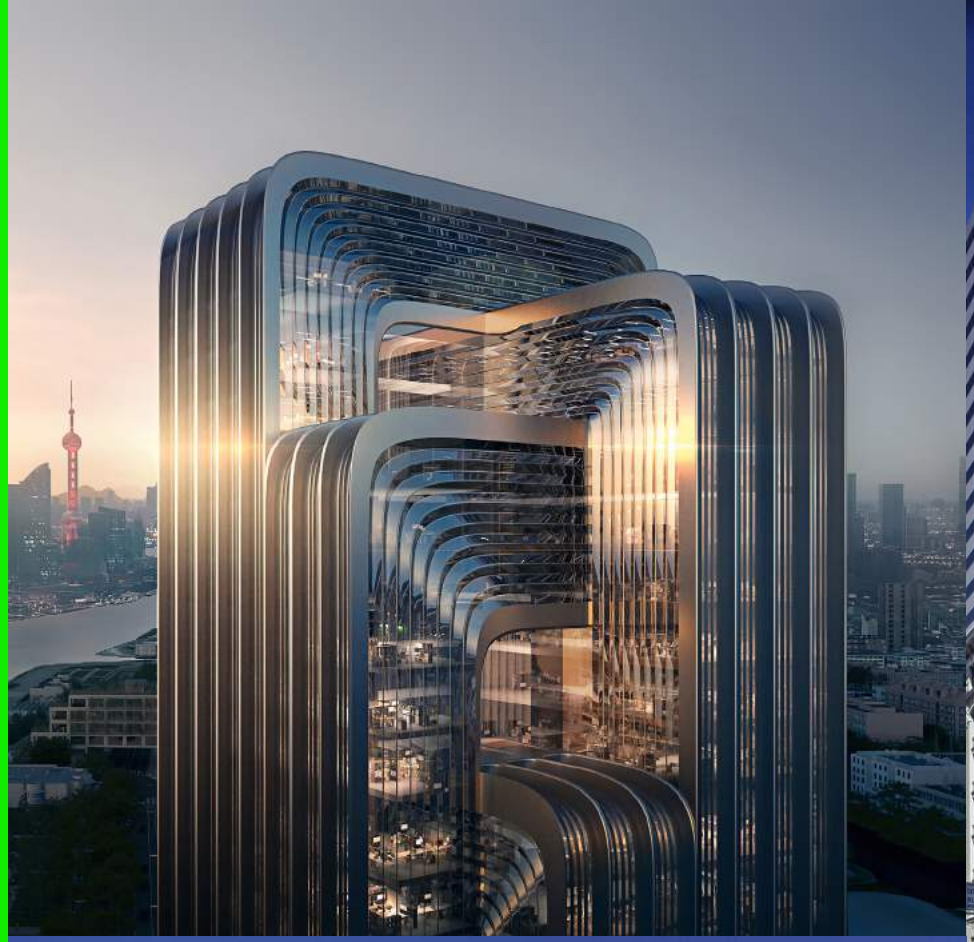
EXAMPLES IN BEIRUT



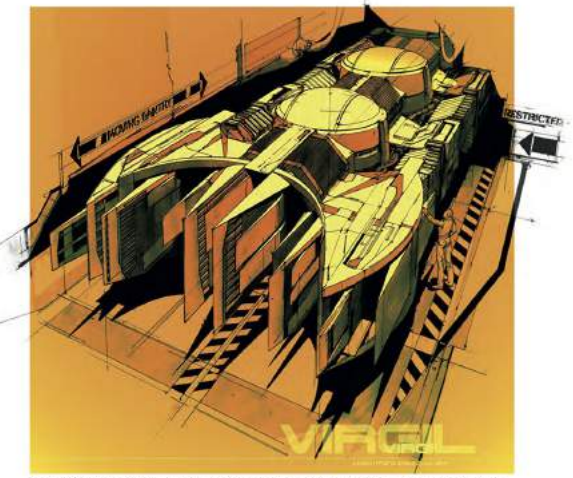
ZAHA HADID

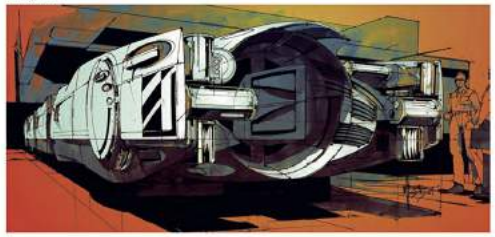
Also looked at Zaha Hadid who has futuristic elements to her work.

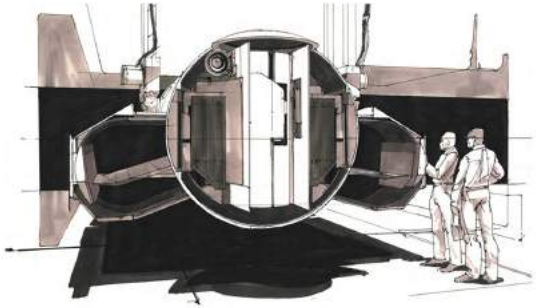


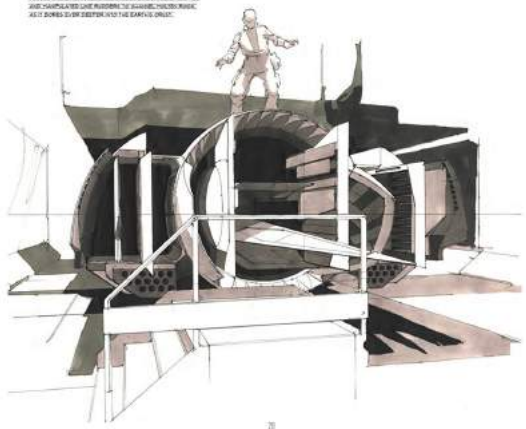
REFERENCES FROM MEDIA

Exploring the many ways sci-fi can be used for social commentary, as well as various themes within science fiction.









BLADE RUNNER 1982

Viewed as being the defining story of what became known as the cyberpunk movement. The popular science fiction sub-genre juxtaposes a technologically-advanced future with the breakdown of social order (in other words, a technological dystopia, what I hope to achieve).

What made “Blade Runner” groundbreaking was it created the visual look, atmosphere and world of cyberpunk.It managed to build a futuristic Los Angeles that was the perfct extension of the near-future dystopia sci-fi.

As the role technology plays in our daily lives has grown exponentially since the 70’s and 80’s, the themes of the cyberpunk movement have spread through all aspects of popular culture.

Despite its cold, emotionally distant future, the film feels nostalgic. There’s an element of melancholy incorporated into the story, one that’s deeply rooted in its visual design.

“What I do is to think about why things are the way they are now, combine that awareness with how things were, are now and may be brought into reality. This defines the look’ of ‘future’ stuff.” - Syd Mead

The widely copied “Blade Runner” aesthetic is often referred to now in rather reductive terms of “trash-chic” - that sense that the antiquated artifacts of the world we know would become the crumbling facade or urban decay of the future. It’s not only that we recognize Los Angeles, but ingrained in the production design as the backstory of how the world has changed.

BLADE RUNNER 2049

The main element I noticed here was the use of colour. The shots are accompanied by a selection of colours that allows us to distinguish one scene from another. Orange and blue are used to differentiate scenes to emphasize the visual experience by telling two completely separate realities. The first characterizes a perfect world in contact with a “miracle”, while the blue is part of a hopeless and dehumanized world.

STALKER, 1979

“Stalker” is set in an unnamed country in a vague near-future – one of those indeterminate “not-too-distant” futures where many timeless sci-fi stories take place. The plot is basically about three rebels that smuggle themselves into an alien landscape to make their dreams come true.

A lot of people might watch this and describe it as “dull”, “slow” (I thought so too on my first watch), and that’s because it was intended to be this way.

“Stalker” is typically described as a science fiction film, yet it has little use for the broader hallmarks of the genre: robots, spaceships, lavish totalitarian dystopias, and other stock scenarios imagined as empirical extrapolations of a given society (Just to show sci-fi doesn’t always strictly have to rely on these themes).

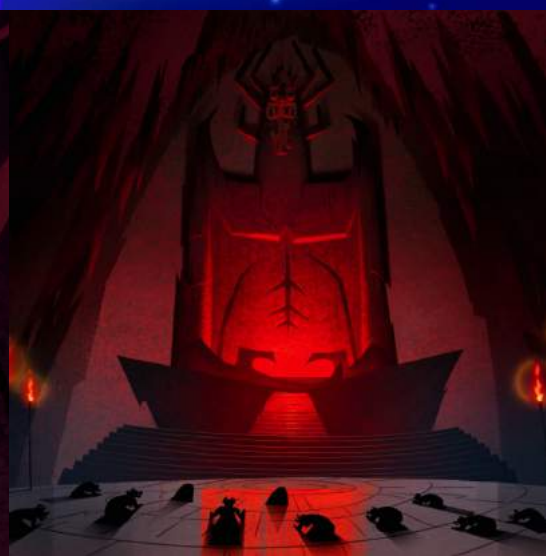
SAMURAI JACK

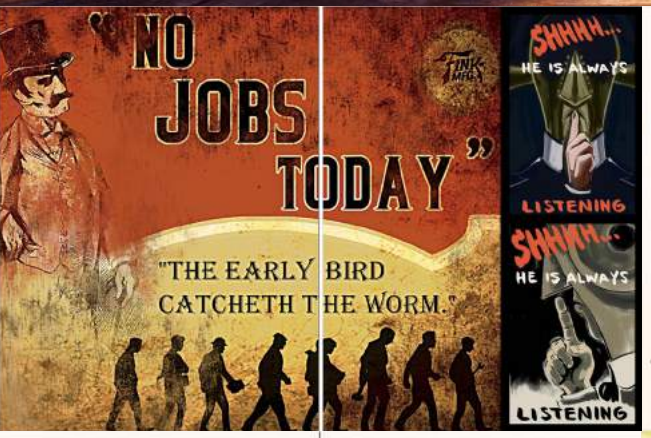
Samurai Jack follows a young prince in feudal Japan trained to finally destroy the shape-shifting, sorcerer-demon Aku, that his father could only entrap.

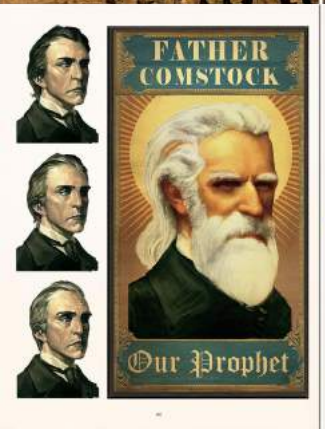
Before he's able to land the final blow with his magical sword, Aku rips a portal through time and flings the young prince hundreds of years into the future. Earth is now a strange dystopia in which aliens, monsters, common folk, and madmen alike struggle to survive under the harsh tyranny of Aku.

What makes Samurai Jack a stunning piece of art is how its visual and sonic landscapes work to create an intimate, even brutal portrait of one of the most human experiences: loneliness.

It can be seen in the season three haunted house episode, in which Jack travels to a spirit realm to fight a dragon-esque demonic force. The climactic fight is depicted in sketchy black and white. Noises register as if heard underwater at a distance – they're muted and uncanny. There's something isolating about the monochromatic spirit realm.







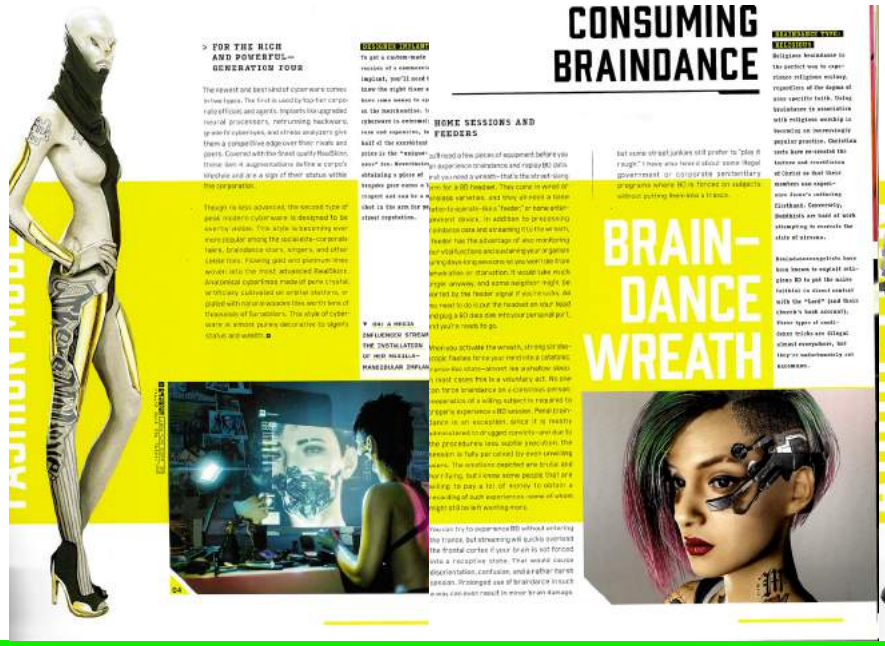
BIOSHOCK INFINITE

BioShock Infinite is set in 1912 and takes place in a fictional steampunk city-state called "Columbia" which is suspended in the air through a combination of giant blimps, balloons, reactors, propellers, and "quantum levitation".

Ruled over by a quasi-religious demagogue called Father Comstock who has turned worship of the Founders (Washington, Jefferson and Franklin) into a twisted political vision stinking of jingoism, white supremacy and extreme xenophobia, and then it makes us think about all those foundational sins by having us live within and through them, over and over, showing them from different angles and with different results.

It gives us the power to change reality (and to throw fireballs) while, at the same time, forcing us to confront the sacrifice that any true change demands, showing us infinite ends to infinite worlds

Although the world looks polished and predictive, underneath all the shine it is just showing us our own worst selves, best selves, and all the selves in between.



CYBERPUNK 2077

Cyberpunk 2077 asks what it means to be human and ponders the effects of a society run by mega corporations that have far too much control.

"Cyberpunk is a dystopian future, that's about five minutes from our own current existence." - Mike Pondsmith.

The technology is a couple steps higher, and so forth, but in this particular universe, technology is not good for people. Pollution is rampant, crime is rampant and social and economic inequality is just accepted (sound familiar?).

"At some point, you'll look down at your character's hands and say 'wow, my hands are metal all the way up to my elbows? Well, that's kind of creepy, it feels kind of wrong.It is set up, so that you utilize the technology and you live in the world, but you should be having flashes of insight that this is really kind of weird." - Mike Pondsmith

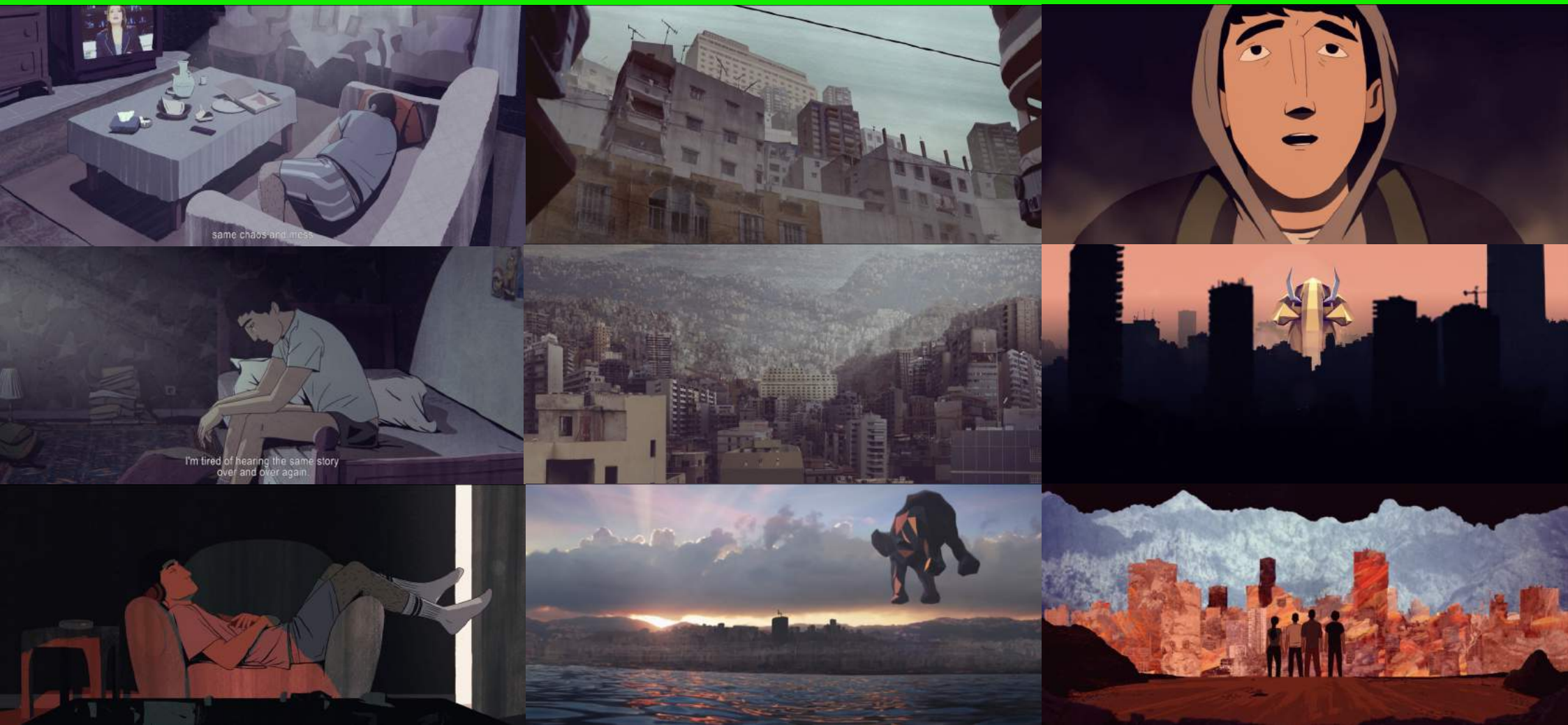
In particular, Mike is concerned about the power of big companies and the rise of inequality across the world - both major themes in his games.

WAVES' 98

“Disillusioned with his life in the suburbs of segregated Beirut, Omar’s discovery lures him into the depths of the city. Immersed into a world that is so close yet so isolated from his reality that he eventually finds himself struggling to keep his attachments, his sense of home”.

“Waves ’98 is as much a narrative film as it is a personal visual essay dedicated to Dagher’s hometown, Beirut.
The film is an artistic exploration of the director’s current relation with his Lebanon, his home country, projected through the story of a teenager and set in 1998. Since moving abroad to study and work, Ely Dagher has been spending more and more time outside of Lebanon, and his attachment to Beirut Started to become more and more complicated. The overall Narrative of the film is heavily based on Ely’s efforts to understand his changing relationship with the city and it’s life, juxtaposed with the narrative of a teenager’s exciting discovery of this segregated city.”

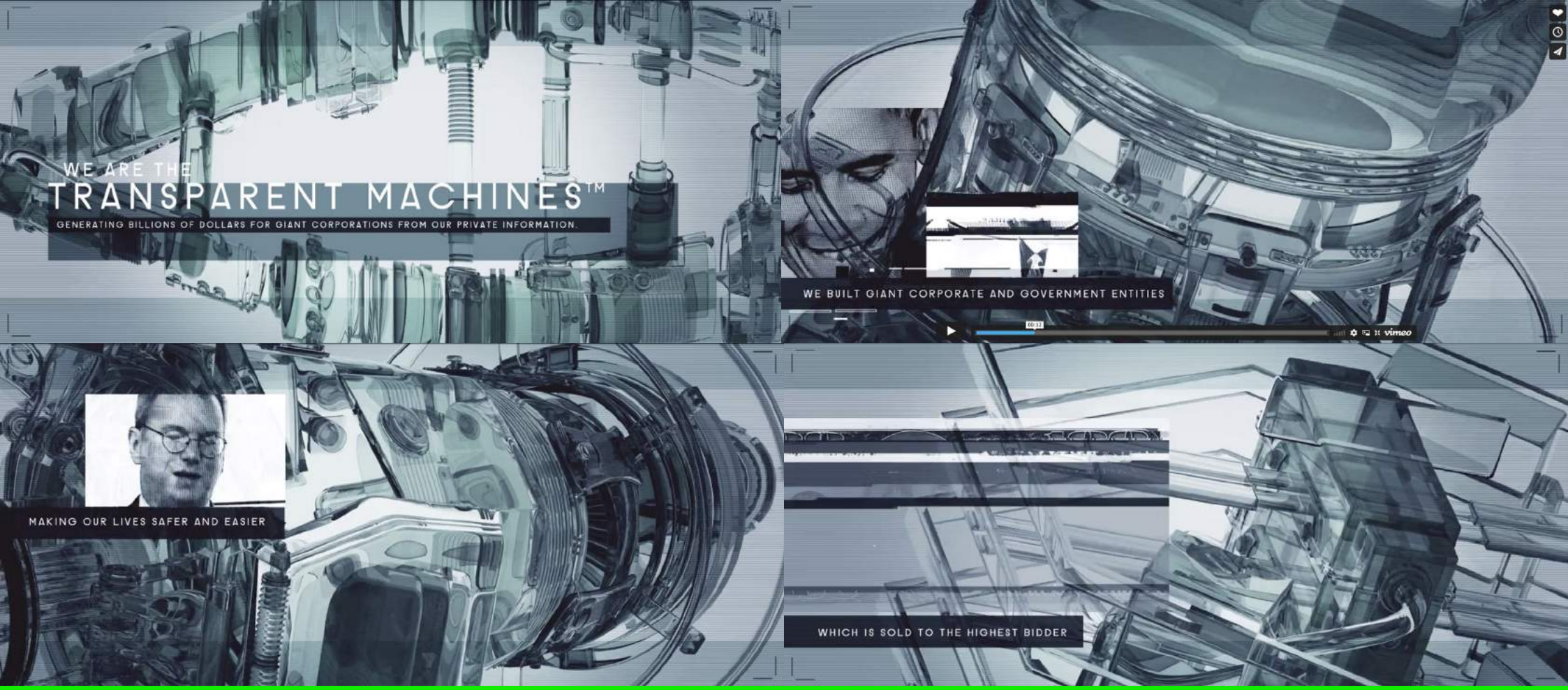
I love this film so much, it’s not necessarily sci-fi but it’s a great source that outlines a specific Lebanese problem.



BEEPLE: ZERO DAY BEEPLE = Mike Winkelman

A stylized and stylish take on a near-future cyber-collapse. A sci-fi music video highlighting the dangers of cyber warfare.

“After the success of STUXNET, a virus written by the United States to destroy Iranian uranium enrichment facilities, the U.S. government could no longer deny it was developing cyber weapons meant to do physical damage.”



BEEPLE: TRANSPARENT MACHINE

"Our society is obsessed with the conflicting concepts of transparency and privacy," Winkelmann says, by way of introduction to the film. "We are 'outraged' by the actions of the NSA, yet continue to willfully upload more and more of our personal information to Facebook and Google. This film explores the contradictory nature of our actions and beliefs regarding transparency."

The clip's main conceit is that, while we demand, transparent and perfectly functional governmental bodies, our own use of private data is clunkily apparent. In Winkelmann's eyes, we are the transparent machines.

It works not simply because it's impressive animation, but because that impressive animation reminds us that the science fiction universe we imagined is around us now, a cyberpunk universe that can be utopian and nightmarish all at once. And it's not something imposed on us: it's something we created.

THE FISHERMAN

"The Fisherman is set in a neo-Tokyo cityscape where electricity is a source of life for a diverse eco-system of mollusc like creatures. A late devoted scientist of these life forms has passed his life's work on to his daughter, along with one part of his most prized catch. The other part, a mystical electric fish, has eluded him his entire life. An opportune discovery of this rare creature by a human inhabitant instigates an unusual mating ceremony, spawning a surge of life that traverses the gap between this life and the next."

A very unique visual style telling a heartfelt story about family and remembering our loved ones.

Included it for the visuals mostly (limited colour palette).

CHANGE RETURN

A dystopian short by Robert Findlay featuring a hungry man in a world where people live underground and are serviced by smiley-faced, urinal-shaped, floating robots.

“Set in an underground city in the near future, where services such as healthcare and law enforcement are delegated to local vending machines, a man finds a crafty way to buy a cheap meal.”

BEST FRIEND

Tells the story of a lonely man, addicted to a product called "Best Friend" which offers him perfect virtual friends.

Not the most exciting story-wise, didn't feel like it added anything new to the overly familiar narrative of technological addiction. Decided to include it to remind myself not to fall into cliche's while writing the story.

I like the artstyle.

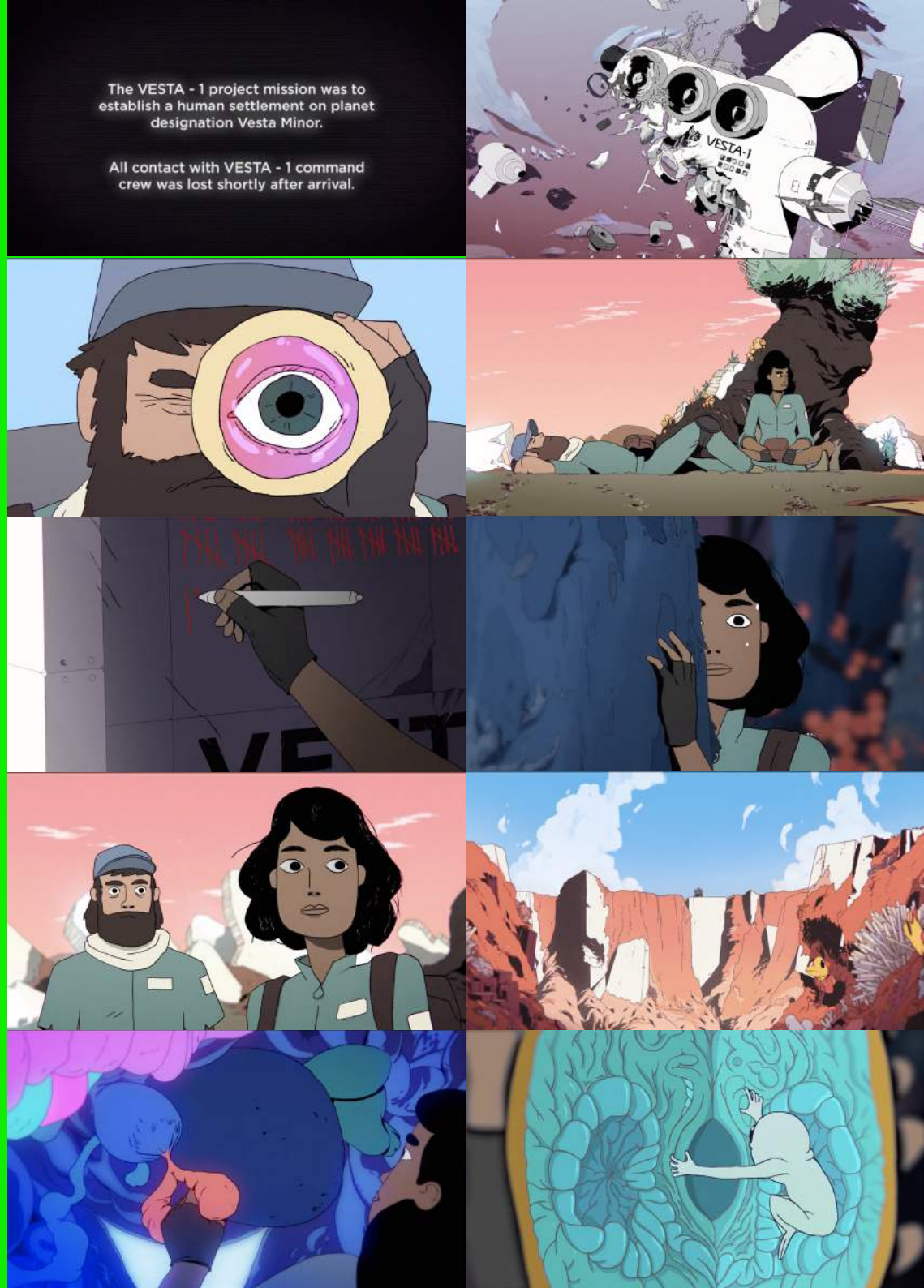
SCAVENGERS

Scavengers follows two human scientists who, stranded on a planet populated with creative looking creatures, undergo a long chain reaction of tasks in order to catch a glimpse of their native Earth.

They go through a series of seemingly-odd actions to accomplish god knows what. It's never entirely clear what the two crew members are trying to do, but they're doing it in such an assured way, you just want them to succeed.

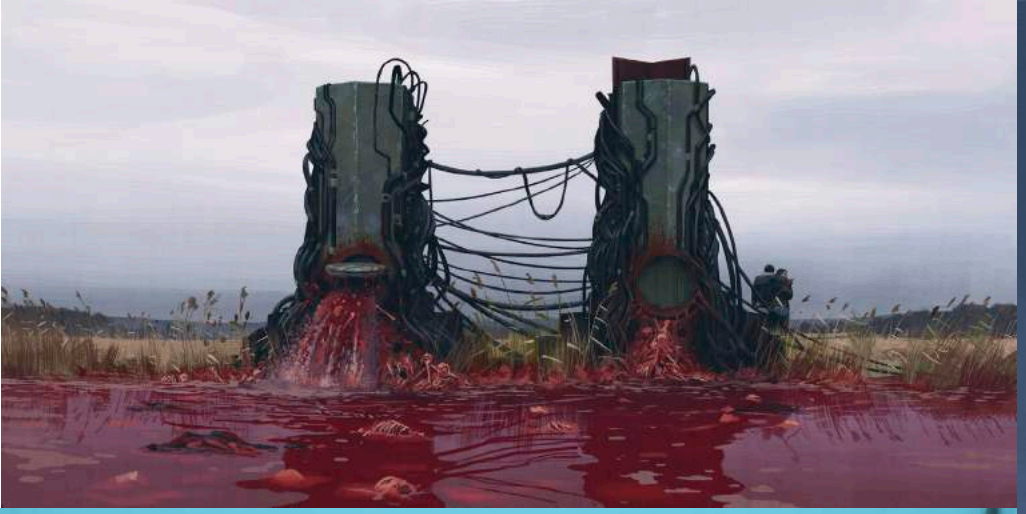
One thing about this animation that stood out to me was the constant movement. The two characters were always ready for the next plan, while I was still stuck in the first minute trying to understand what the hell is going on.

The protagonists go through so much hard work just to get a glimpse of something we constantly take for granted – boring, everyday humanity



A DIFFERENT DIRECTION:

I'd love to imagine a fully fledged futuristic Lebanon (good or bad), and the more I think about all the details I'd like to include, the more I see myself leaning towards detailed illustrations instead of an animated film. I'm not ready to give up on the animated medium yet but this direction is also very exciting for me, as it offers me more freedom to explore more aspects of this futuristic Beirut, and bring it to life. With an animation I'll also need to think about motion, sound, voice acting etc. Maybe I don't need all that to get my idea across.



Simon Stalenhag

Simon Stålenhag is a Swedish artist and designer specialising in retro-futuristic digital images, focused on nostalgic Swedish countryside alternate history environments.

PROJECT PROPOSAL

With the direction I'm on right now, this project will either be a narrative-driven animation or detailed illustrations (concept art publication), I'll have that figured out before FYPII.

How does a future where your anxiety is a statistic extension of yourself look like? I'm exploring how a physical setting can act as a manifestation and cause of anxiety in a manner that reflects the specific culture this setting hosts.

Building an entire future based on our present is very exciting, the possibilities are endless thanks to the many complications we face. However, the main goal of this whole project is to speak on our issues and showcase us in a non-stereotypical light, while also demonstrating the difficutlies we experience just for being born Lebanese.

The plan is to have a fully-written script by the end of December, in order to make a final storyboard. In January I should've started with my backgrounds for my the scenes, and if all goes well I should be animating sometime in February.

THANK YOU DEAR READER

FYP SCRIPT DRAFT 3:

The Chip

Maybe the chip isn't numerical, could be emojis, smiley faces, everything is good vibes

The chip is a built-in device that sits on the side of your temple that is produced by "corporation". Its selling point is being able to measure your anxiety at all times, in order for people to keep in check with themselves and their work (it's a requirement to have one in most institutions these days).

"Never worry a day in your life again! Thanks to _____! Productivity done right! Get yours now at all _____ stores across Lebanon! Or call 81 613395 today!"

Turns into a commentary about how being Lebanese puts you at a disadvantage in the corporate world because we start out with high anxiety.

Scene 1: Home

60%

We see a montage of Qamar getting ready for work, where we can indirectly explain how the meter works (she hears the alarm it goes up, she eats breakfast it goes down etc).

Heading out the door we see her mom sleeping on the couch with an oxygen tank next to her.

Qamar goes over to input her credit card info on a screen attached to the tank, this is to keep the oxygen running.

"layke emme zabteele loxygene abl ma tedharre"

"ray7a 3l shighil w sha3rik mnkoush"

"3l 2aleele rbotti!"

67%

Scene 2: Traffic Jam

Qamar is stuck in traffic, lots of people cursing and shouting and car beeps in the background.

She looks up at the billboard, cut to shot of the billboard advertising the device.

"ma t5alle 7ayetak teseb2ak" typical lebanese ad

Cut back to Qamar, poster flies right into her face, she snatches and looks at it, it has a politician's face on it.

Q: "yl3an shaklak" throws poster away

72%

Scene 3: Hospital

They measure her anxiety at the entrance to work, she barely passes but she can go in

Qamar sits in her usual spot, watching her favourite dubbed Turkish show, her superior walks in

66%

S: "layke, lyoum jeyye ebno lwazir 3l se3a 3pm, iza 3enna maw3ad cancle"

Q: "hmmm k…" still looking at her show "la7za shu?? Bs jeyya shab w bayyo sarlon 2osbou3en natrin

S: "cancle" walks away

A while later the patient shows up

P: "mar7aba, 3nde maw3ad 3l 3 lyoum, esme Marwan khoury"

Q: pretends to check folder while forcing a fake smile "sorry 2smak msh 3l list"

P: "kif, a5adit maw3ad mn 2osboo3 w talfanooleh lyoum la yt2akado"

Q: "ask razan" Her anxiety is going up slowly

84%

P: "2osboo3 ljey?? bayye mareed ktir mafi yontor! LEZIM YSHUF LDOKTOOR LYOUM!! KIF YA3NE MAFI MAW3AD SHU 3M BTKAZBI 3ALEYEEEEE" During this whole exchange we can see the politician in the background being greeted by the staff

Patients anxiety gets too high and Qamar is forced to kick him out. This occurrence causes her her anxiety to spike, she feels guilty for what she did, her superior notices her meter and forces her to get off work. She texts Fadi

"Waynak? Meet me at the spot"

96%

Scene 4: Rooftop

Gets off her motsik and steps on a metal plate

We see Fadi at the rooftop, preparing the joint, he looks back at her

F: “heyyyyyy…..shu sar..?”

Q: “kssss eemmmmmm hal balad bro, ayre b j7ash ldawle!”

F: “eh okay ayre bs shuleh m3asbik”

Q: “i was forced to cancel an appointment today, la wazeer 2bn kalb kss 2emmo shu 7ayawen! And the other patient really needed it…”

F: “bro knte lezim tshoufeh shu 2aloule sewe bl shighil lyoum! My meter went up so high they called client services on my ass!

Q: starts laughing “kss 2e5t lclient services b ayre”

They both laugh

87%

Fadi lights up the joint, passes it to Qamar

Q: “bshil…”

A shot of them from behind, smoking in silence, enjoying the company.

76%

Fadi looks at Qamar

F: “hey, wanna have some fun?”

Scene 5: Club Phoenix

Qamar and Fadi are having a good time, going on a trip

40%

F: “yo I really need to take a dump” runs off to the toilets

Q: “bitch don’t leave me!” he’s already gone

46%

At this point Qamar is not sober

Wazeer notices her from across the club, makes his way to her

P: “mar7aba ya 7elwe, sheftik bl mustashfa lyoum, ma3ik 7ada habibteh?”

Q: takes her a few moments but she recognises him “eh, rfee2e hon” tries to walk away

P: grabs her by the arm “wein? Manne sheyfo” creepy smile gets close to her ear “5aleena nor2os sawa abel ma yerja3 rfi2ik”

76%

She’s about to scream, but decides on a different plan…

Cut back to Fadi coming back from the toilets and searching for Qamar, he sees her on the dance floor, we cut to Qamar and politician dancing, another trippy sequence takes place where Qamar ends up killing the politician (still not sure how she does that, maybe she breaks her beer bottle and stabs him)

Fadi runs up to her

F: HOLY SHIT QAMAR SHU 3MELTE!??!?! Looks down WLEEEEKKK EEHHHHHHH

Crowd carries her and she's crowd surfing while they cheer 0%

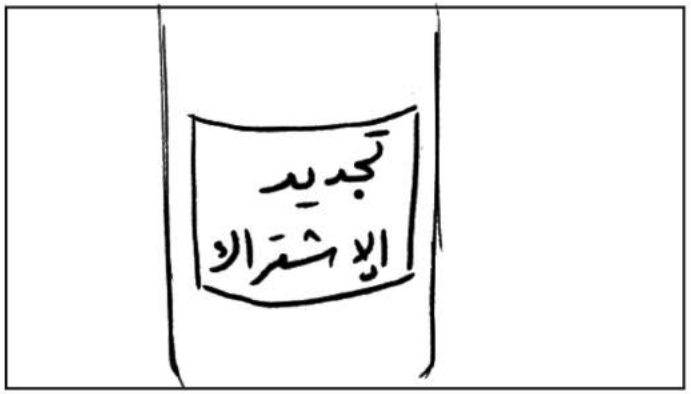
Scene 6: Rooftop again

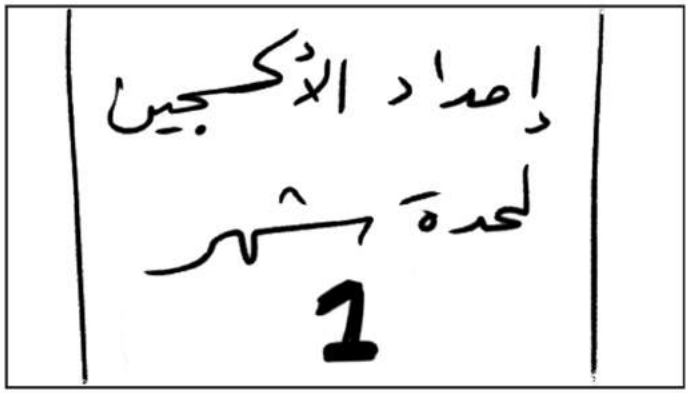
Close up of Qamar lying down on the rooftop with the headset (parallel of her while she's crowd surfing, cut to shot of Qamar and Fadi lying down on the rooftop, top view.

THE END

Scene 1

ring ring ring!
57
YAWN
53
Labne w
Syar
49%
scroll
scroll
scroll
xxxx
Enter
credit
card info

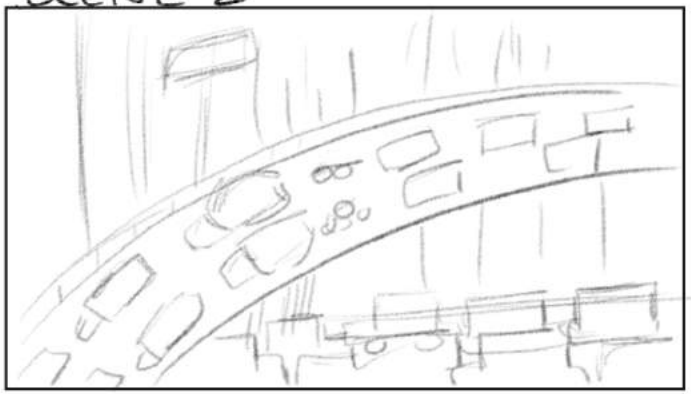

تجديد
الإشتراك


إعداد الدكجين
لمدة شهر
1

65%

3l
Qs hand

3l 2alecle
rbotti!
Byeeee

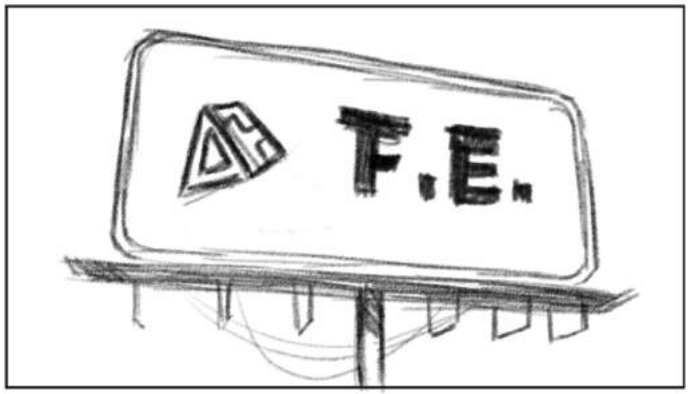

SCENE 2

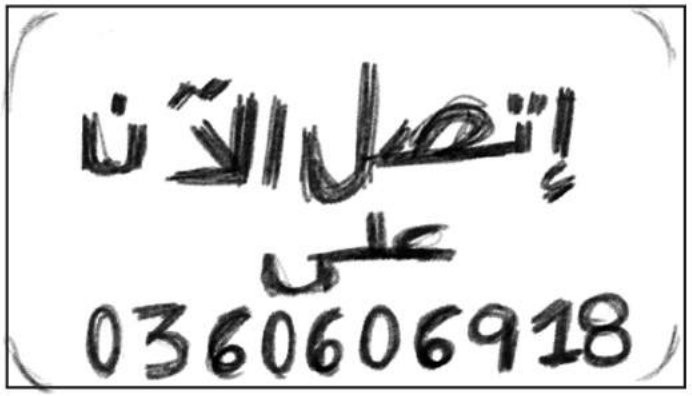
BEEP!
YALLAH!
BEEP!
BEEP!
BEEP!

Nshallah
Iyoum eh!!

71
Ad starts
playing

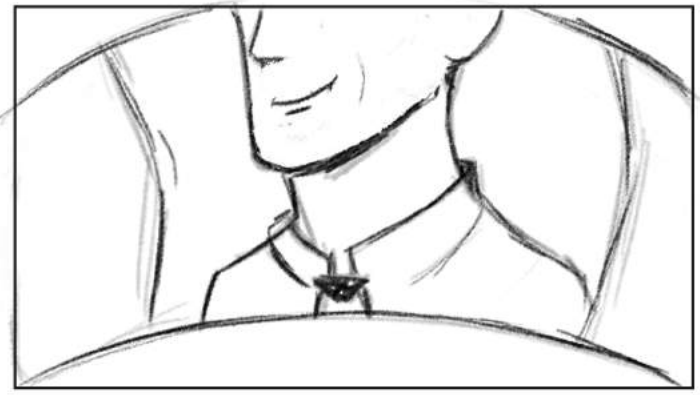
72


F.E.


إتصل الآن
على
0360606918

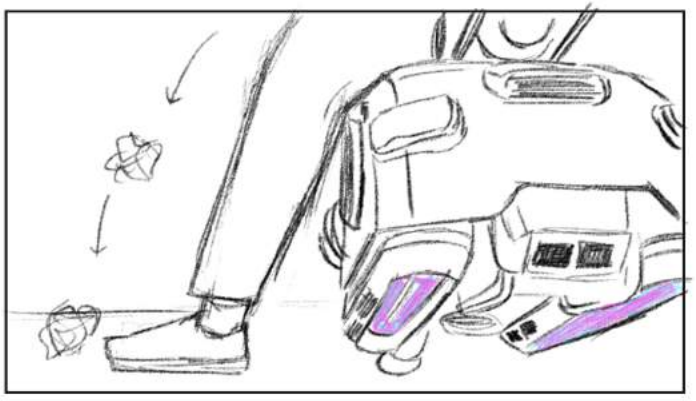
BEEEP!
BEEEEEP!

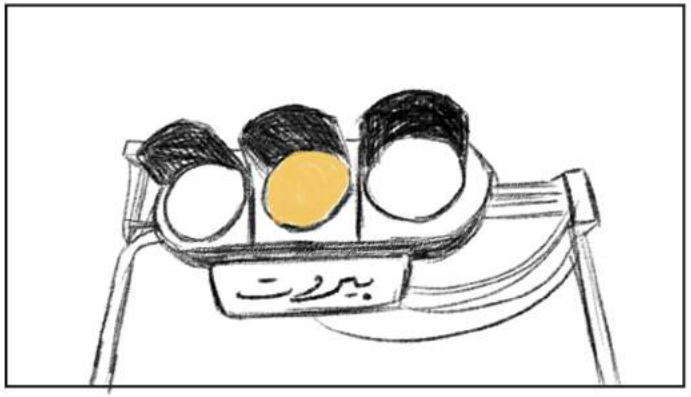
Beeep!
WTF!?
Beeep!
Beeep!

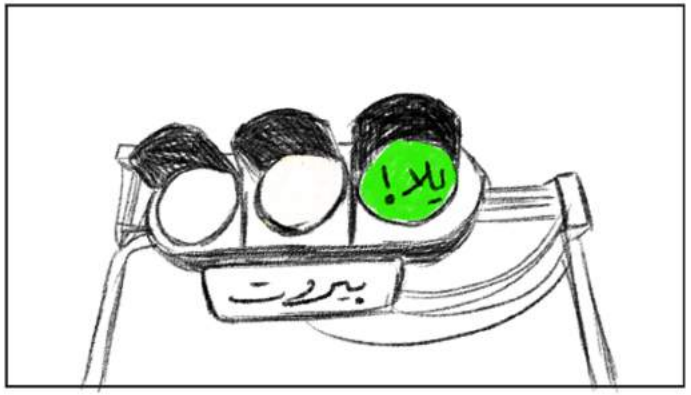


الزعيم

77%
yl3an
shaklak

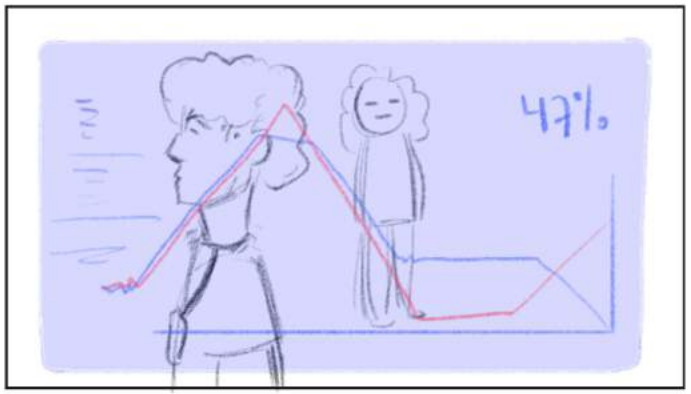


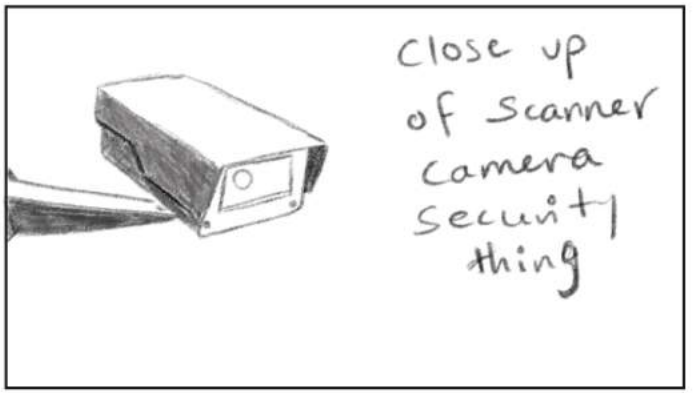


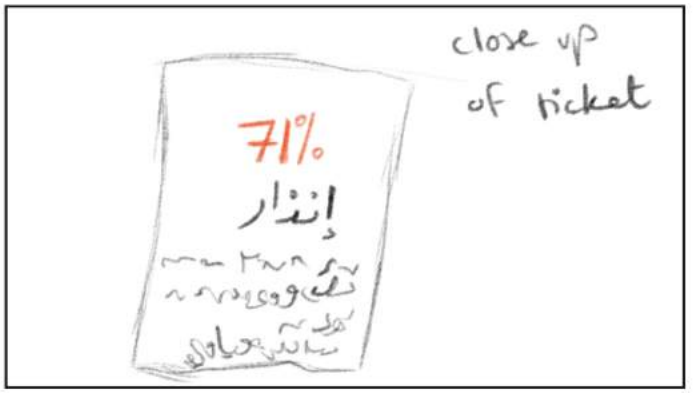


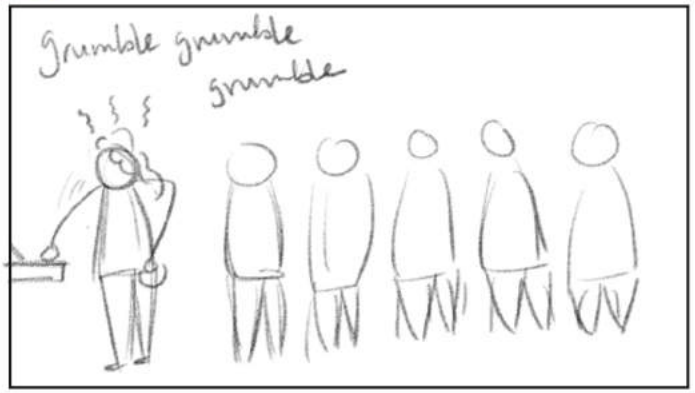
SCENE 3

hospital sign

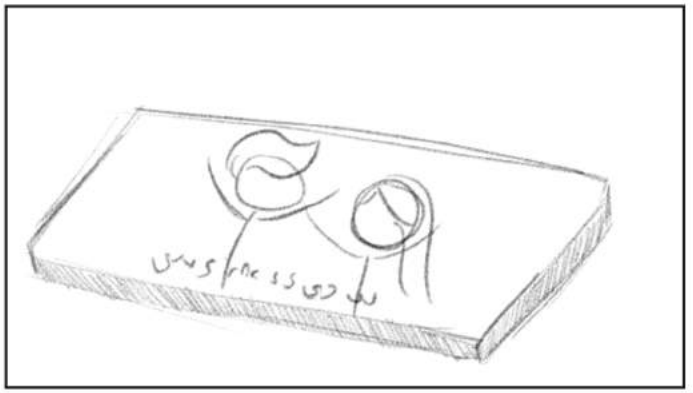




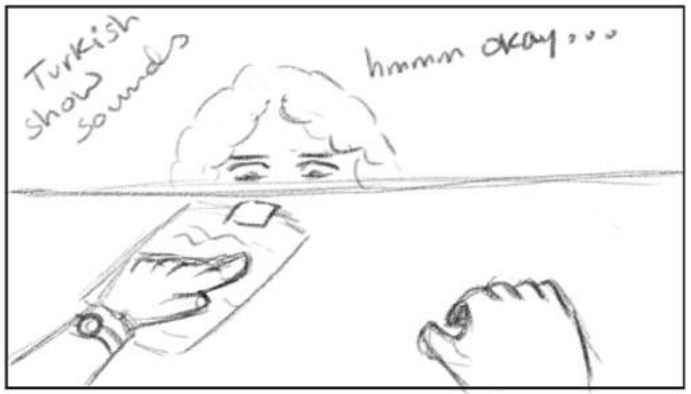



Grumble grumble
grumble

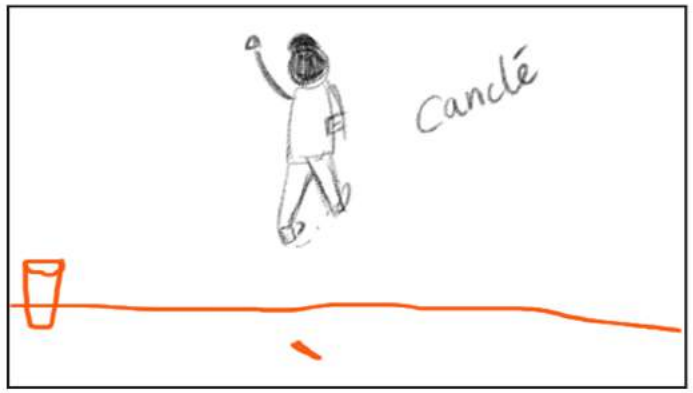
watching
Turkish
show

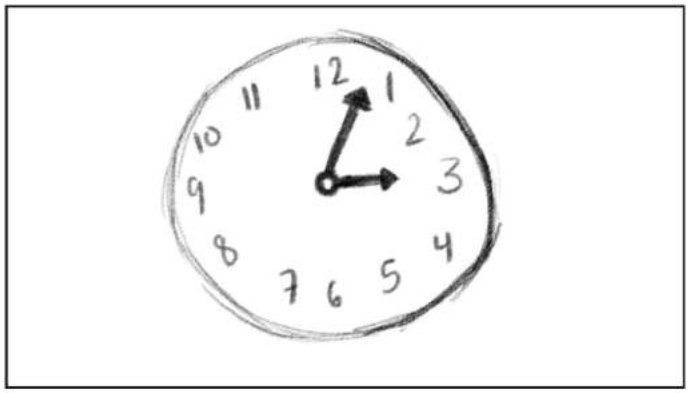


Turkish
sho w
sounds
layke...
blah blah
blah


Turkish
show
sounds
hmmm okay...

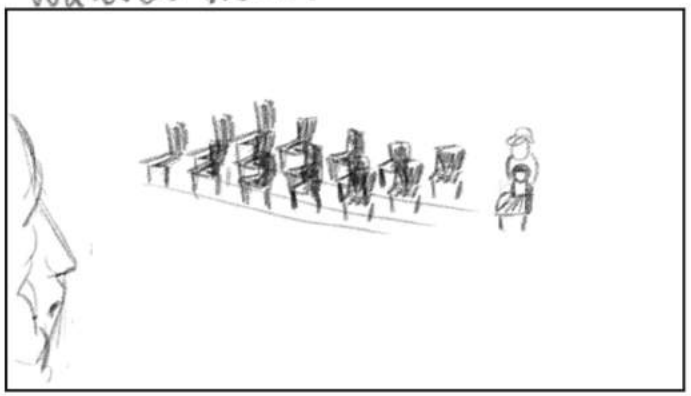
lazza shu??!
bs 3enna
maw3ud 31
3 blah blah


Cancle

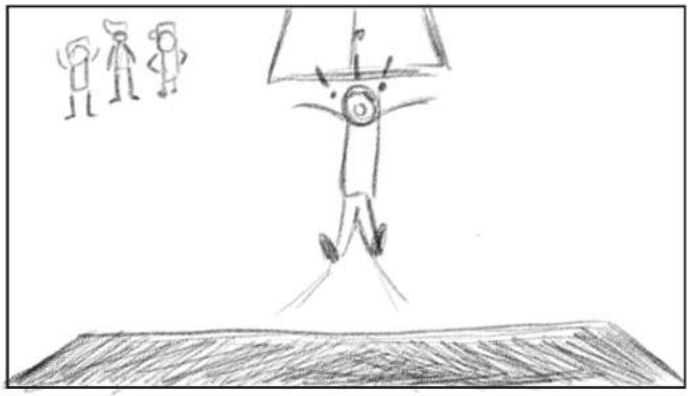

12
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11

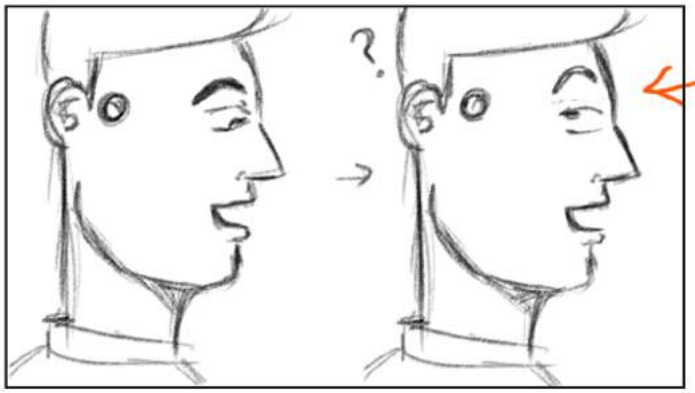
patient walks
in with
Father

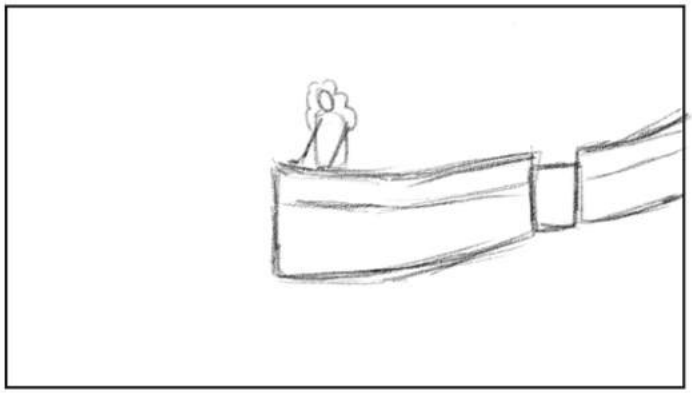
Watches them.

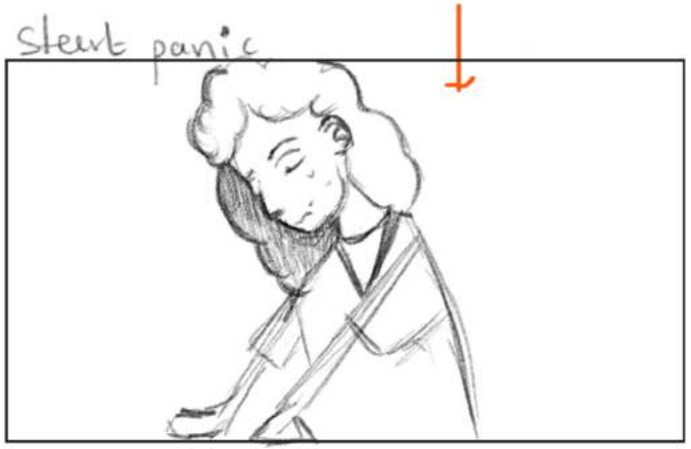


COMPUTER INTERFACE

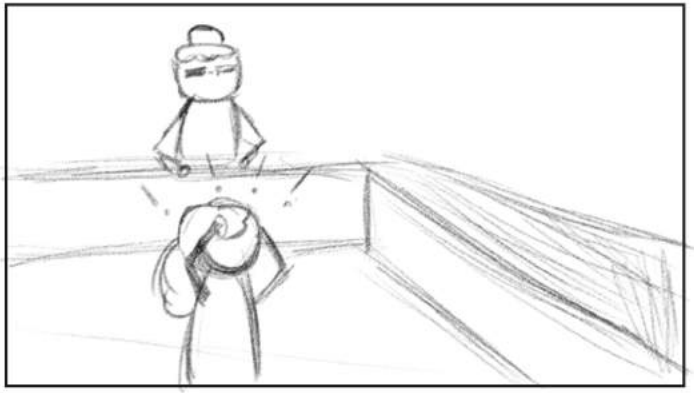


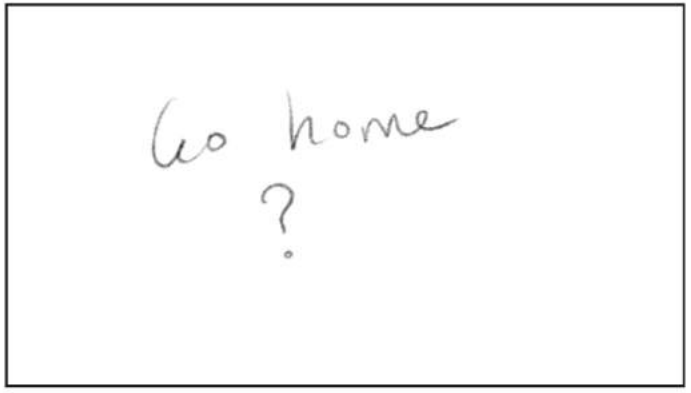


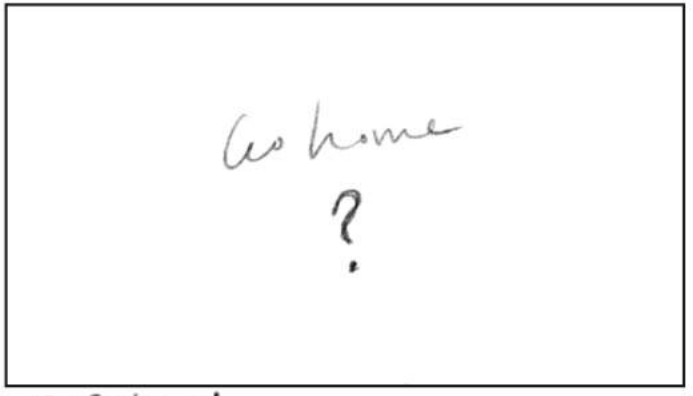



Start panic

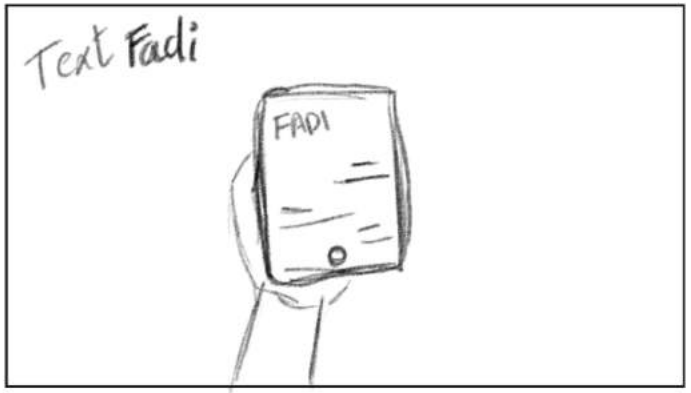
BIURRY VISION




Go home
?

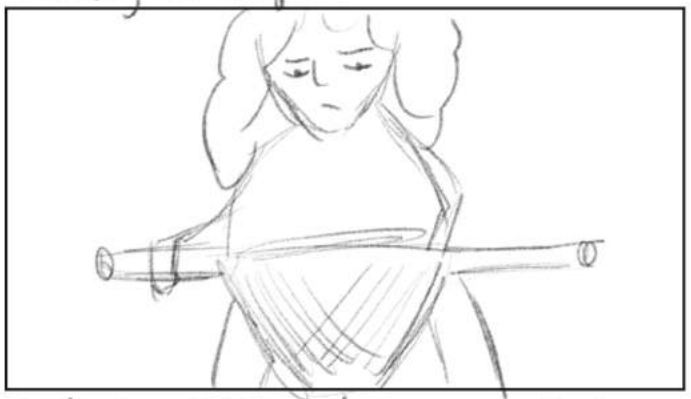

Go home
?

on motsik


Text Fadi
FADI

SCENE 4
engine sound, slowing down

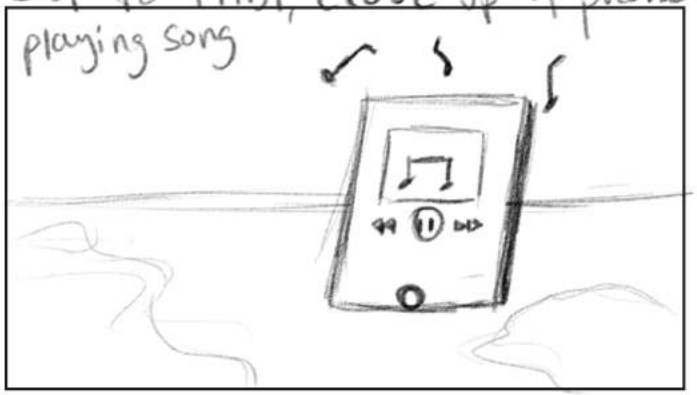
Turning off engine



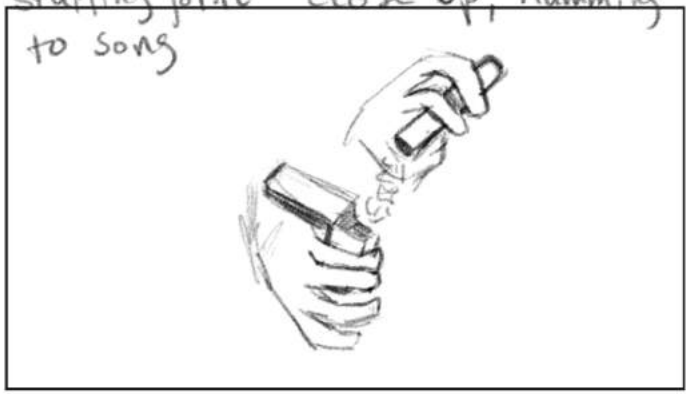
Steps on metal plate

Wipes dust with foot, reveals name

Cut to FADI, close up of phone playing song

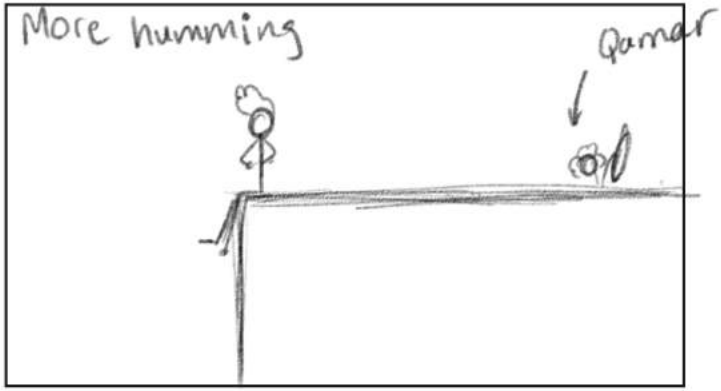


Stuffing joint close up, humming to song



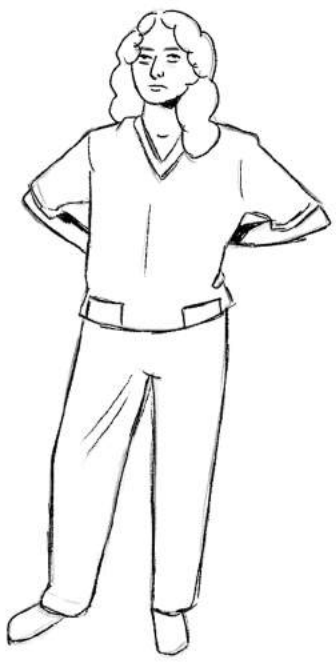
More humming

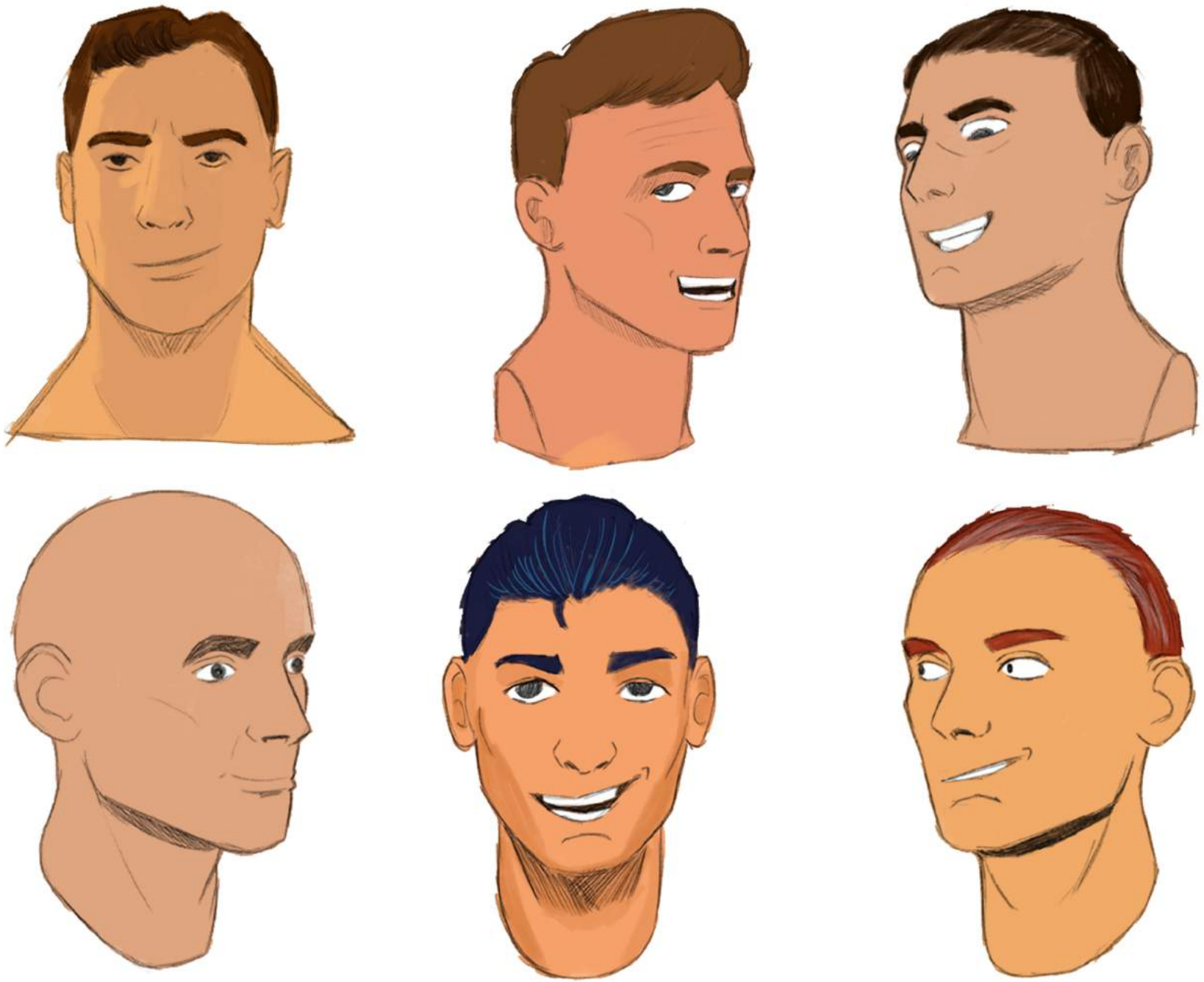
Qamar

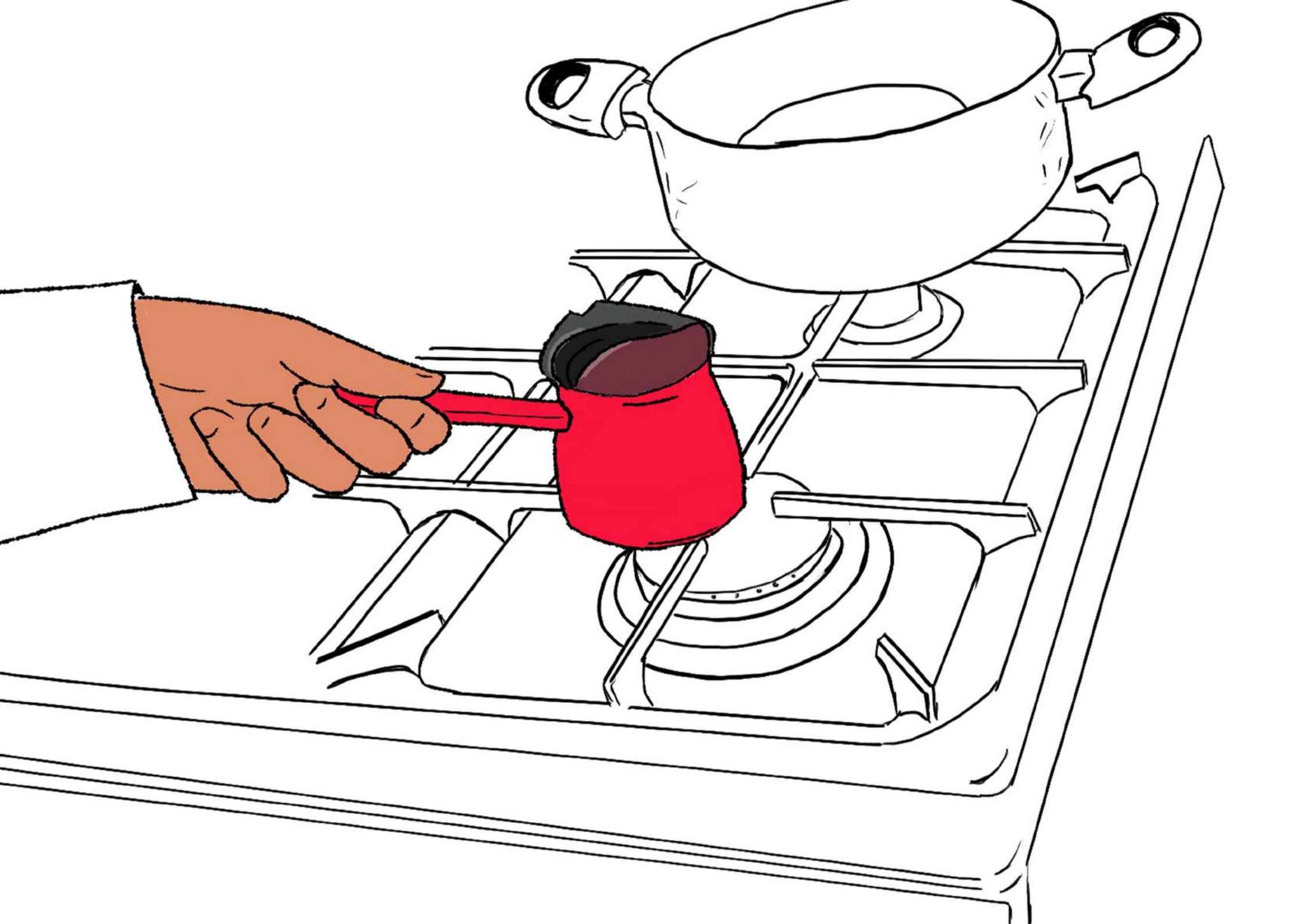


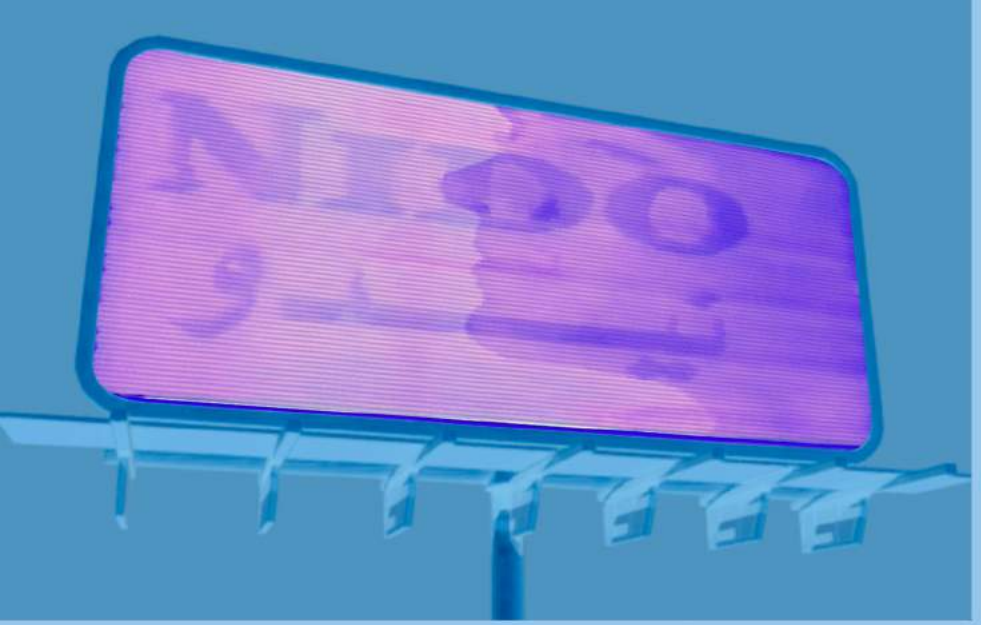
Heeee

ayre!
okay ayre, bs shuleh m3asbik
pacing
ks emmo!
bro kafe
sits down
ha ha ha
ks est
Pause
Ha Ha
Ha Ha
Hands her joint
Bshil
Moon shot



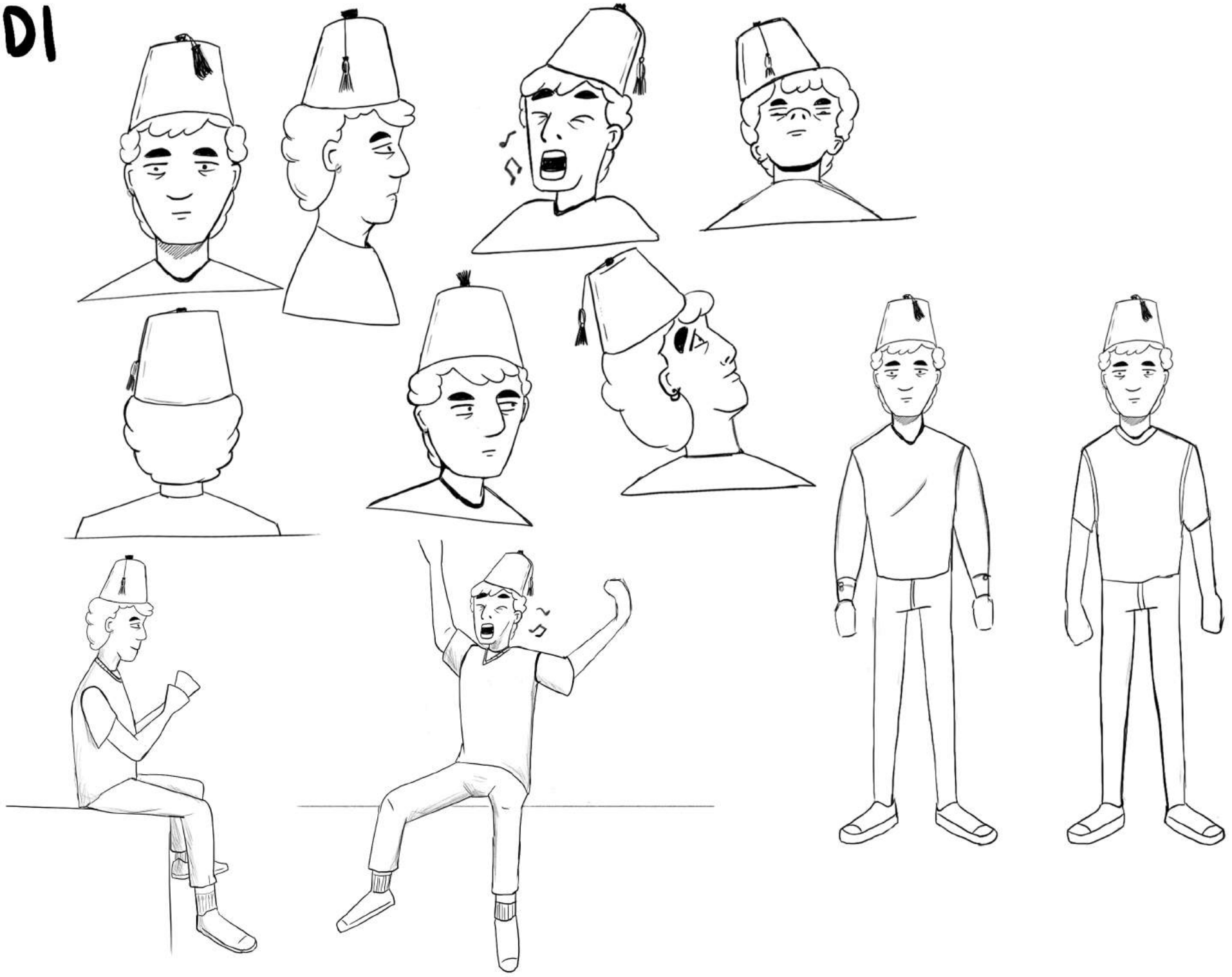





NIDO

NIDO
For The Golden Growing Years

FADI

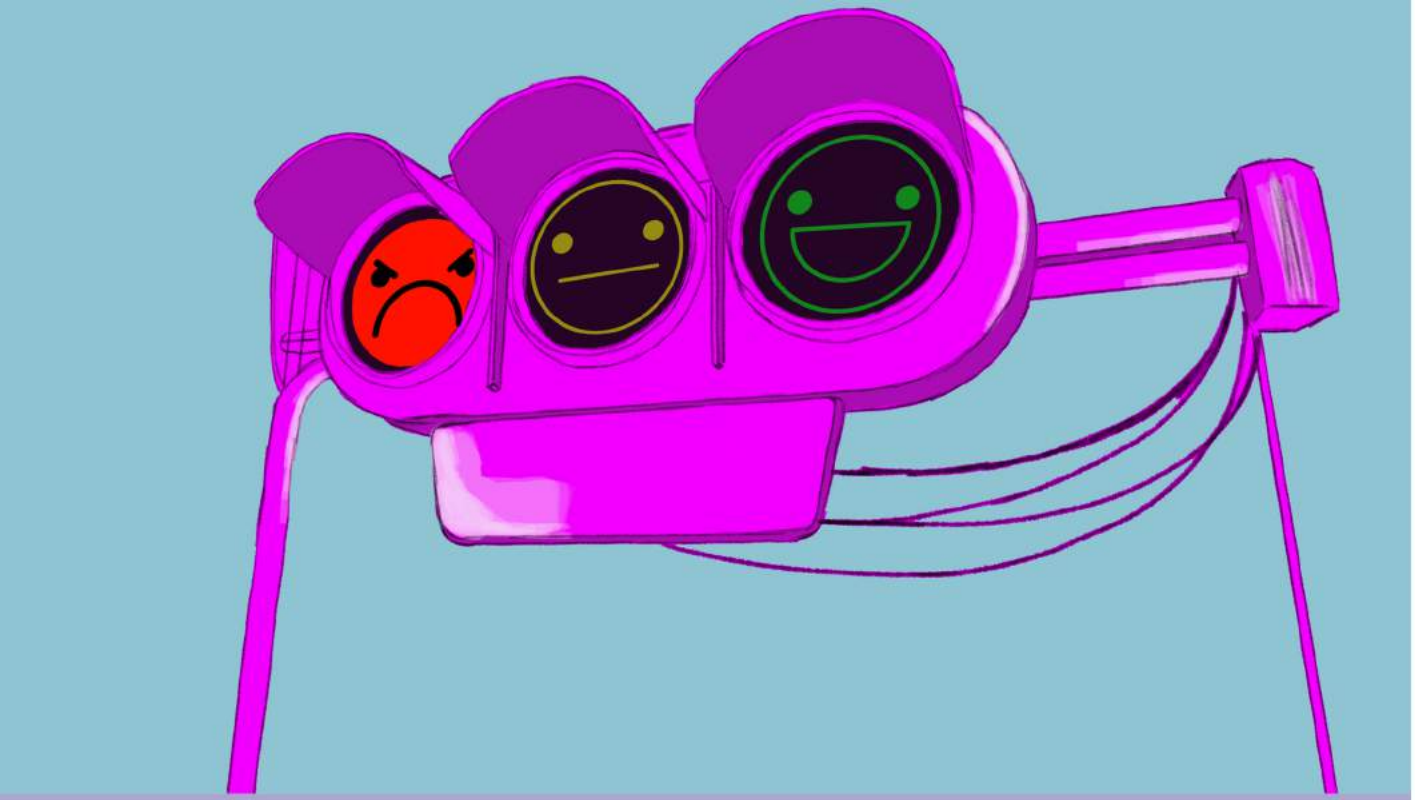


أنت
الزعيم

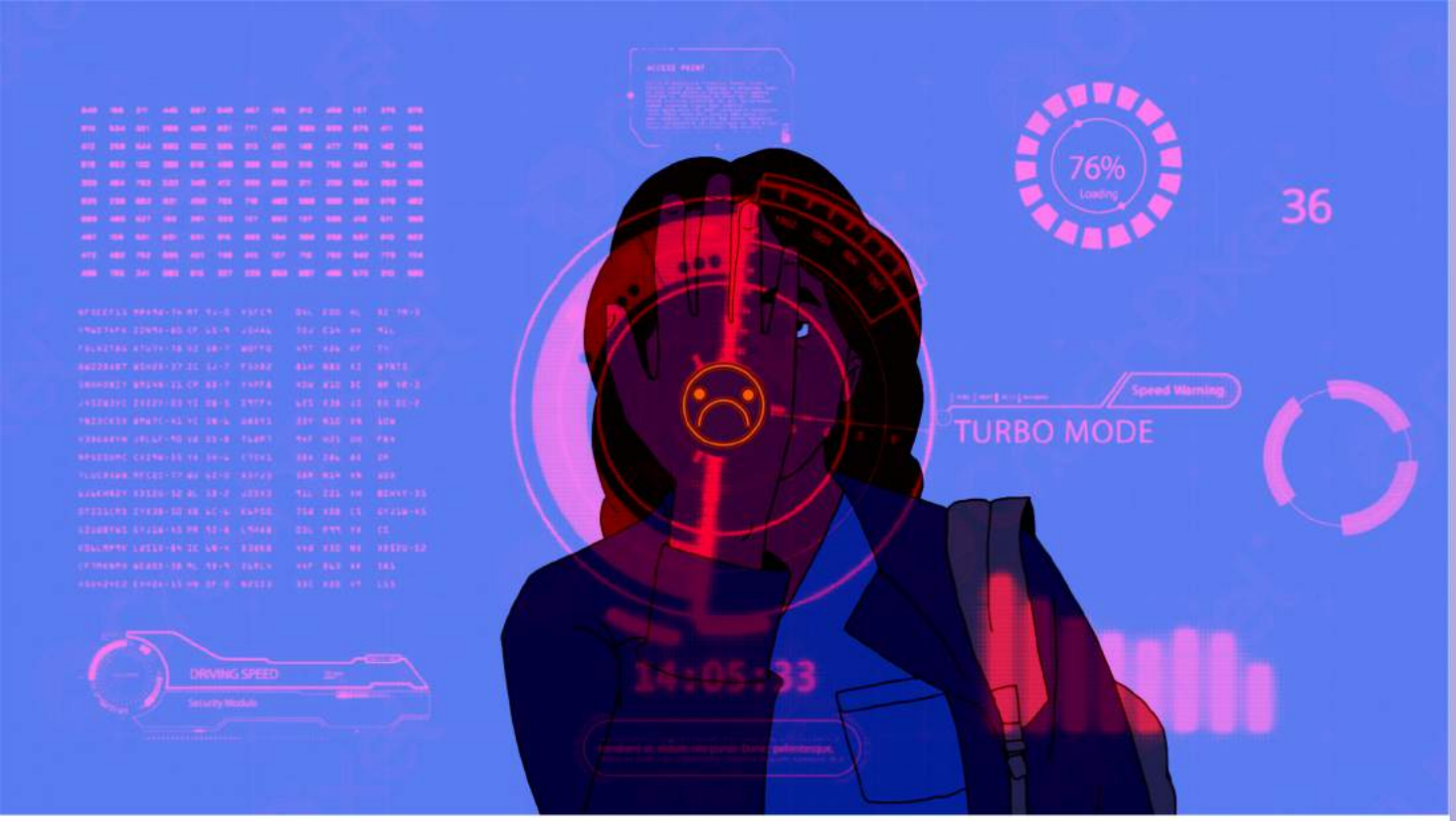
خلي مزاجك رايق

أنت
الزع

تجديد خزان الاوكسجين لمدة:
شهر 1



فخر البناني فيك


76%
Loading
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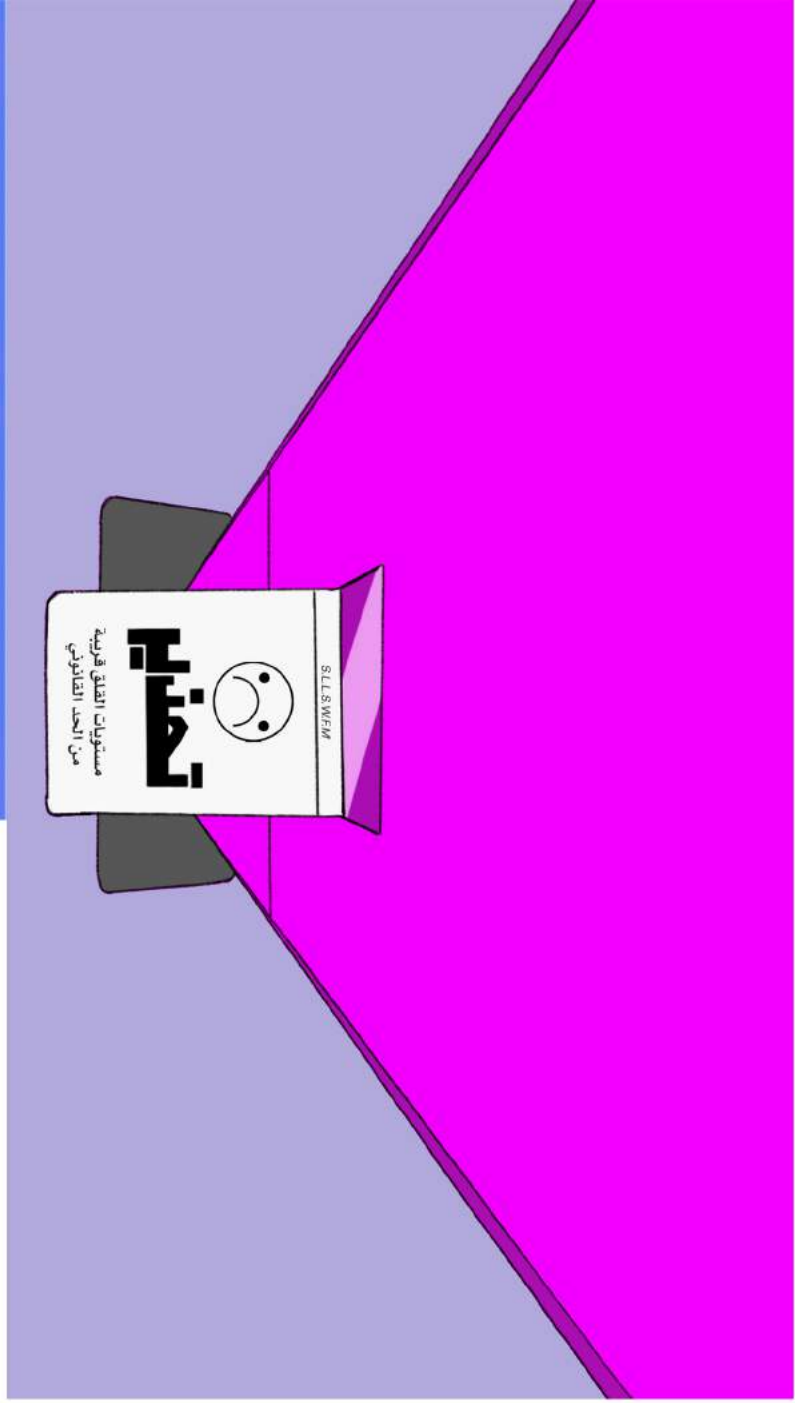
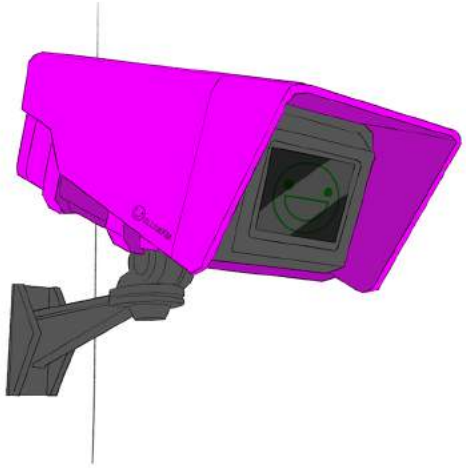
Speed Warning
TURBO MODE
DRIVING SPEED
14:05:33


مستويات القلق قريبة
من الحد القانوني
SLLSWFM