

Thijs van Loenhout

# Portfolio (Digital, March 2023)

By Thijs van Loenhout. This document is structured as follows:

## Section A

This section contains projects inspired by how I deal with myself. A keyword for me is 'intimate directness'.

A1 Book of T

A2 Stray away with me

A3 Teabreak

## Section B

This section contains projects centered around the exploration of different media. Each medium has their own unique characteristics, and I love finding, exploiting, stretching and blurring them.

B1 A Triptych that explores different methods of visual storytelling in different media:

B1a A webcomic read as one vertical page

B1b An out of context page of a non-existent comic

B1c A storyboard for a physical illustration book

The style is kept consistent through all to let the medium shine.

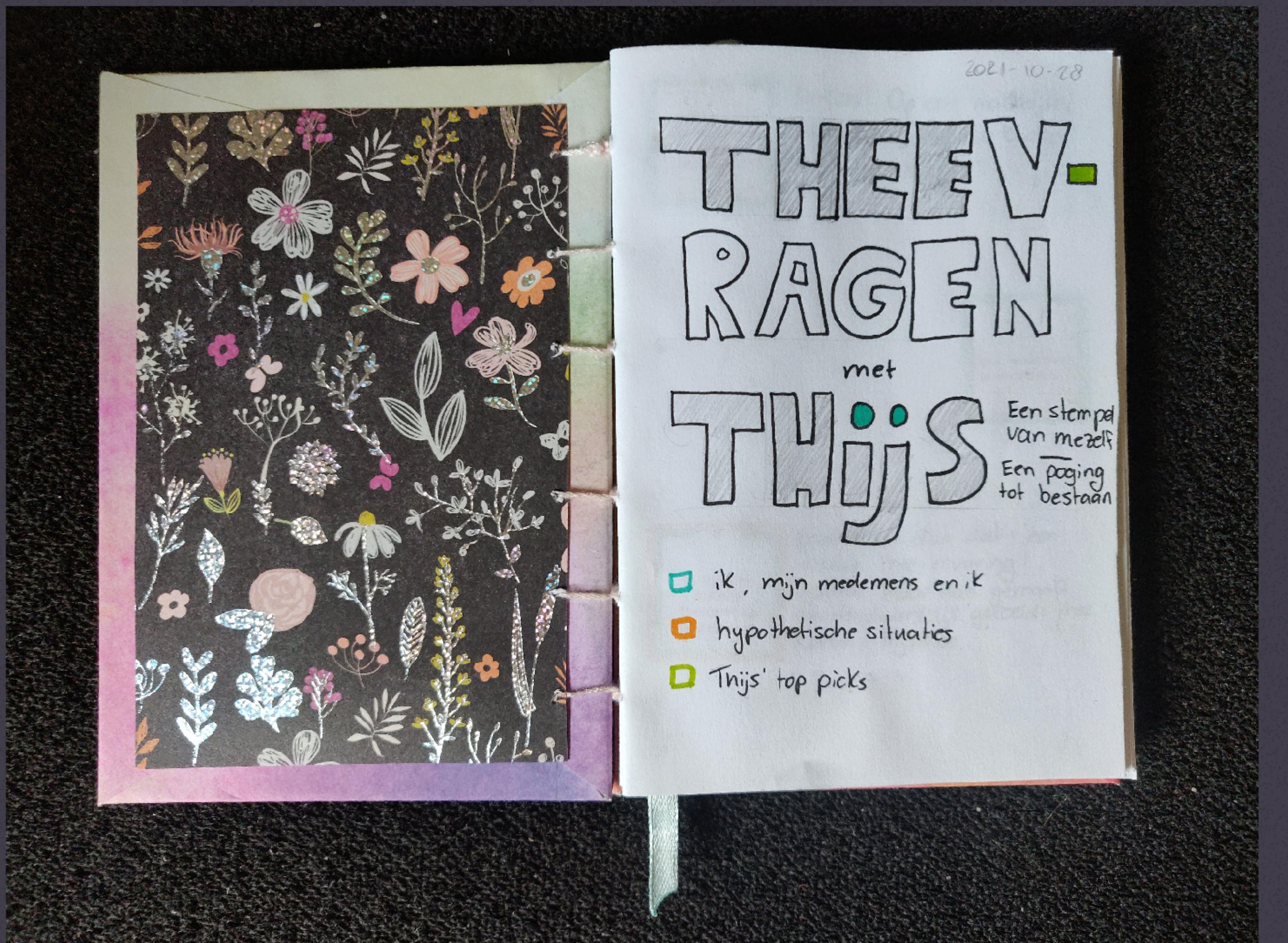
B2 The World Cinematic with Wes Anderson

## Section C

For the projects in this section, I chose a single theme that has been important to me in the last year:  
randomness and perfectionism

C1 Dicentric

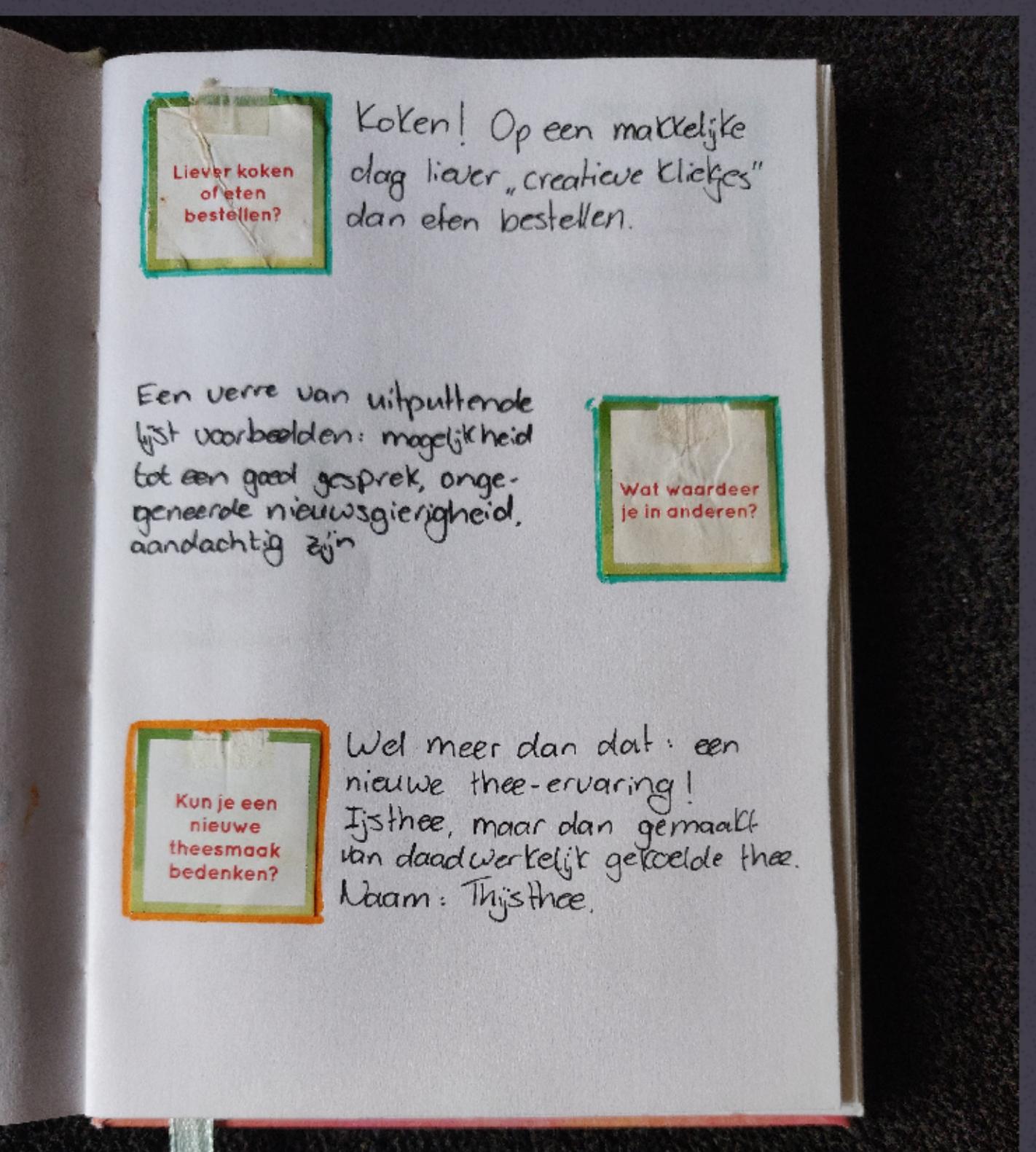
C2 Portfolio



## A1 - Book of T (book, ongoing)

This self-bound book contains questions from Pickwick tealabels, and my answers to them.

I see it as very valuable -- as well as fun -- to take the opportunity to answer these often seemingly trivial questions with serious introspection. It was important to me to make the book myself, to carefully create a reflective playground.

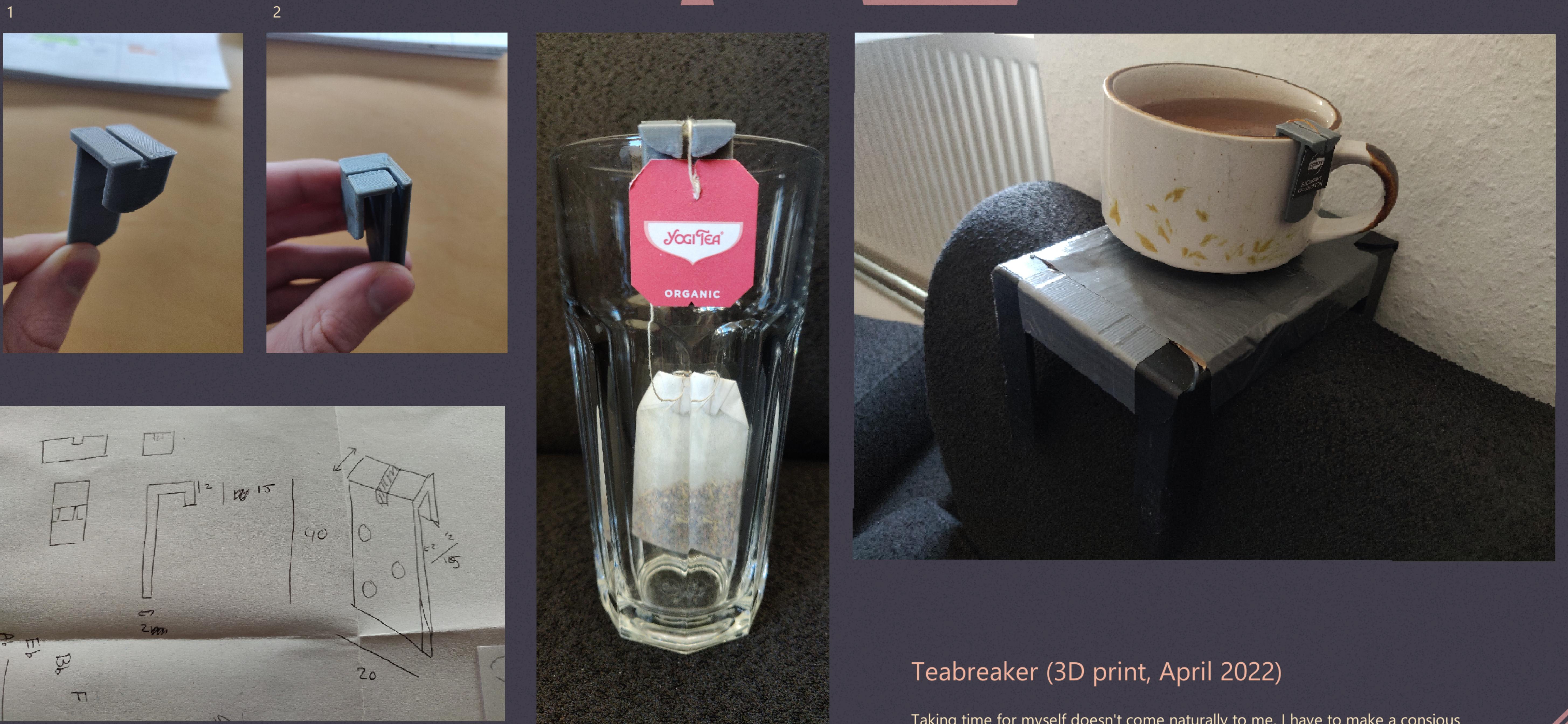




# A2 - Stray away with me (Zine, January 2023)

Since moving to a new city, I've been feeling estranged. I try to remind myself that there's a beauty in this feeling: the beauty of seeing the world through a new perspective and the unique curiosity that accompanies it. This feeling -- the friction between the angst and excitement of feeling lost -- is captured in this zine. Some pages are hard to read, to encourage a different way of looking. Deliberately confusing instructions are given. Readers are invited to remove the staples that hold the zine's structure, and set it free. In the spirit of the content, copies have been hidden throughout Utrecht.

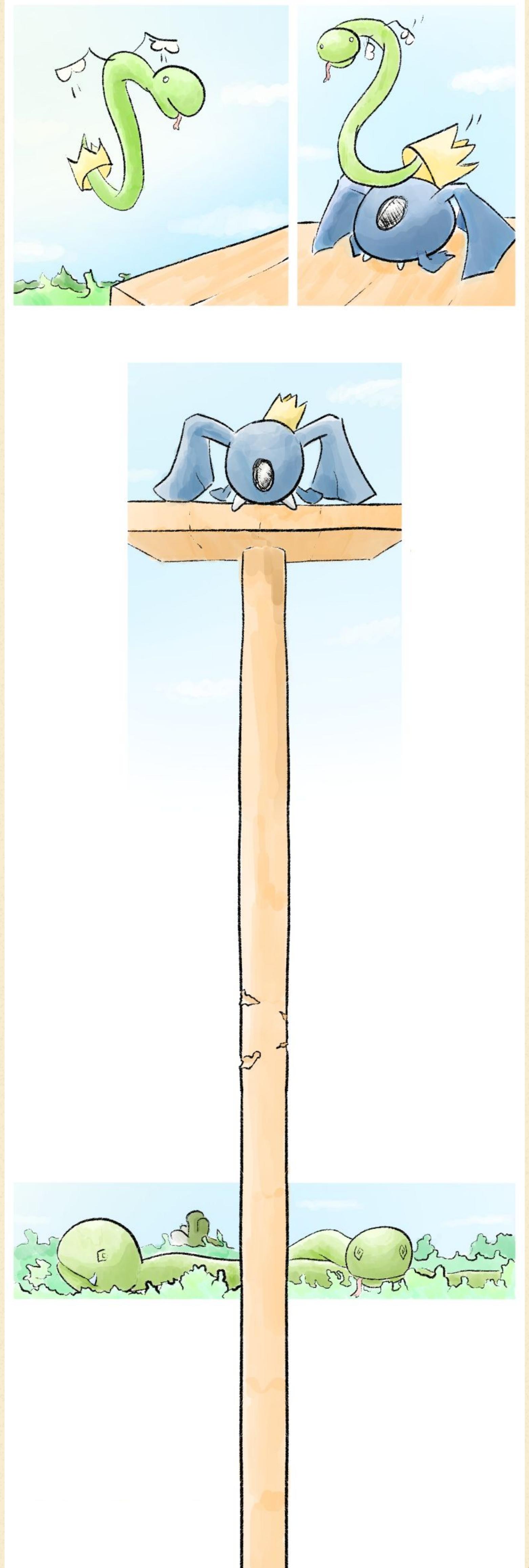




## Teabreaker (3D print, April 2022)

Taking time for myself doesn't come naturally to me, I have to make a consious decision for it. A teabreak is a tool for this. However, I noticed any time I was pooring water over my teabag, the bag slipped into the cup. So far for relaxing! Teabreaker solves this issue, by 'breaking' its fall.

The design started as a quick sketch (3), which was adapted into a CAD model (4). After several iterations (1, 2), any cup of tea is a perfectly relaxing experience. In fact, I've noticed the extra care put into the beverage translates to extra care for myself.



## B1a - Doodlemom (Digital, March 2020)

Doodlemom is a webcomic, consisting of one, long, vertical page through which the reader scrolls. This creates an element of time, separating it as a medium from regular comics. This comic plays with this element, for example by using characters' gazes to create anticipation (1), or create transitions that require actual time to pass (2).

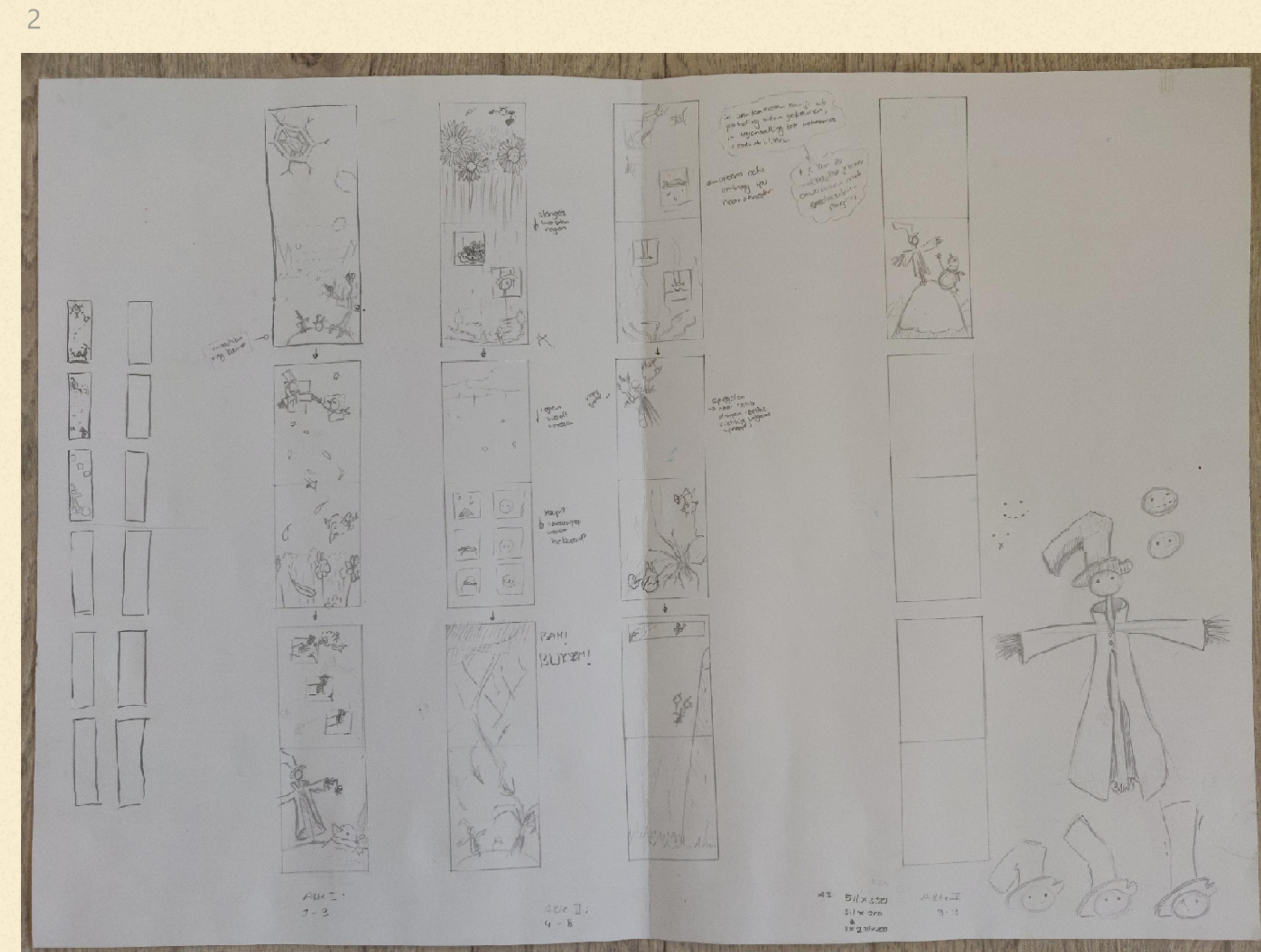




B1b - Untitled (Watercolor, August 2022)

(1) is an out of context page of a non-existent comic.

The main challenge was to create the illusion of there being more. Absurdity can be exploited to great effect.



B1c - Untitled (Storyboard, ongoing)

(2) is a storyboard for an ongoing illustration book project, following from a 5-course workshop (November - December 2022). Spreads are laid out top-to-bottom, left-to-right. Spread 6 depicts a sudden strike of lightning. Here, the action of flipping a physical page is used to enhance the story element of surprise. After this event, action moves in an upward direction -- opposing the reading direction --, creating visual friction, until the final story resolution.

## B2 - The World Cinematic with Wes Anderson (Essay, June 2022)

The French Dispatch (Wes Anderson, 2021) is a movie framed as a newspaper. This is a characterizing decision for Wes Anderson, whose works are celebrations of storytelling devices. Anderson is able to blend media and style in a wholly unique, very authentic style. This is very inspiring to me.

This essay reviews the experience of watching all of Wes Anderson's movies in order of release date -- a project I did with Steven Bronsveld. The wording and visualization of the essay try to capture Anderson's unique style of (visual) storytelling.

It has been published in Nijmegen Student Magazine 'Thabloid'.

**THE WORLD CINEMATIC WITH WES ANDERSON**  
STEVEN BRONSVELD & THIJS VAN LOENHOUT

Spoiler Note: we try to keep spoilers about the story to a minimum and believe the viewing experience won't suffer from the details in this article.

**OPENING ACT AND WHERE OUR JOURNEY BEGAN**

Some time ago, we started a new project. Watching all movies of one writer/director.

We are both quite fond of watching movies occasionally, but had never done so on a regular basis or analysed any in a serious form. We liked the idea of reviewing movies in the broader context of their director and needed a semi-regular activity together. We instantly liked the idea. Watching movies this way, we could look at them from a different perspective. Each director has a different take on movies, different camerawork, choices in music, ways to approach stories, composition of scenes, etcetera. Watching a movie sometimes seems to require more effort than watching a series (even though they tend to be longer), mainly because a movie would likely take up the better part of an evening. But watching all movies in order would make each individual one part of a series; a goal to work towards. This made watching them quite effortless and fun.

The choice of the director to start with was an easy one: we immediately jumped to Wes Anderson. We both hadn't seen many movies of his (Steven ones, Thijs none), but had heard a lot about him as a director. His cinematographic style was supposedly quite unique and interesting, and his movies were well acclaimed. The subreddit r/accidentalwesanderson, a place where images in Anderson's distinctive style are posted, suggested that we would at the very least have some interesting visuals to look forward to.

There is a difference in watching movies of the same director in contrast to watching them in isolation. For starters, you get to see the development of the director. In our case, the inaugural movie of Wes Anderson was "Bottle Rocket" by no means a cinematographic masterpiece (it was very clear that the movie was made on a low budget (\$5 million, which is not that much for a feature-length movie). The story was nice and we easily sat through the 90 minutes of playtime.

After this first movie, the real Wes Anderson came to light. We now highlight some of the interesting and outstanding aspects of his movies.

**AN EXPLORATION WITH STEVEN & THIJS**  
STEVEN BRONSVELD & THIJS VAN LOENHOUT

Poems don't always have to rhyme, you know. They just have to be creative.  
- Sam, Moonrise Kingdom

**COMPOSITION AND COLOUR, THE DOORSTEP TO ANOTHER WORLD**

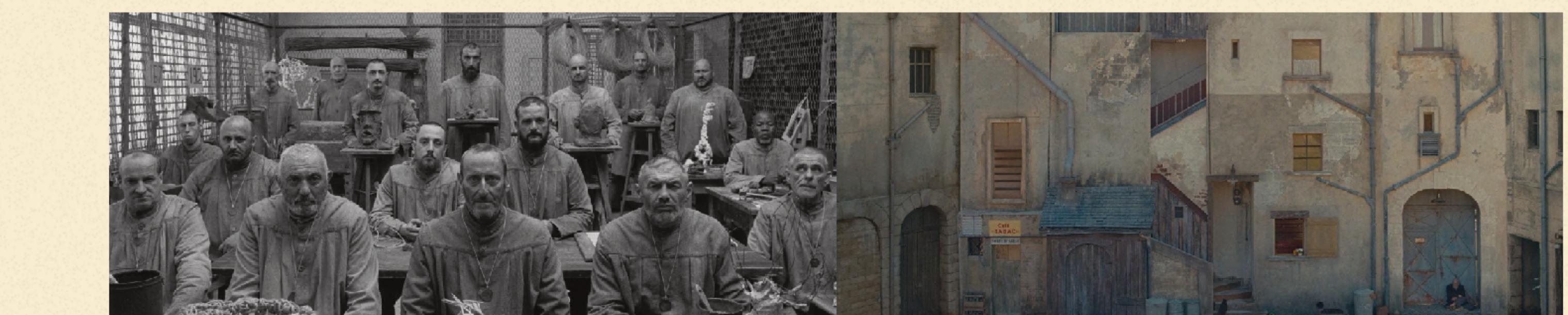
Look forward to a random frame in any of Anderson's movies and you're likely to be greeted with colour. Lots of it. Bold, in-your-face palettes are used to great effect to set a tone, distinguish characters and separate different parts in the movie. After your eyes have gotten used to the cacophony of colour, your brain is still confused, symmetry. Lines everywhere, from openingshots to all-out fights: they were symmetrical! We are not used to seeing this world. With any single frame, a Wes Anderson movie makes sure you're reminded of the 'following': you're in a different place now. A magical and whimsical, yet uncannily real place. A theme park care fully curated for you to experience.

However, let's not skip to a random frame yet! Any theme park starts at the entrance, with the exception for this one. Though this entrance is an attraction on its own. There's no gentle introduction to these visuals. You'll need to rely on another screen to enter.

Close your eyes. A cute little tune is playing (mark our words, every one of Anderson's films starts like this). Allow yourself to bob along. Don't you recognize this? A memory from years long past? Slowly open your eyes. You're surrounded by cingling hues, an invitation every movie's opening challenges its viewers to accept.

This use of color is two-fold. For one, every frame is a joy to look at, even taken in isolation. One could fill an entire picture book with screenshots and not be bored (it has even been done.) The other reason, however, is more subtle. By accepting the visual world of Wes Anderson, the viewer also (unconsciously) accepts they are willing to suspend disbelief for the stories. The visual remarkableness sets the stage for remarkable stories to be told.

Finally, his camerawork is just as symmetrical as his composition. Almost exclusively moving the camera in straight lines, making 90-degree turns and almost never using a hand-camera. He's also fond of a 'slice through' technique where the camera moves through a cross-section of a building.



*I did He just i throw My Cat Out Of the Window?*  
- Kovacs, Grand Budapest Hotel

*The incidents that follow were described to me exactly as i present them here, and in a wholly unexpected way.*  
- Author, Grand Budapest Hotel

### CHARACTERS AND CONTENT, A GUIDE THROUGHOUT

Luckily for us, the movie recognizes its theatrical essence. The story that's about to unfold is, more often than not, even recognized as such: a story. Four out of Anderson's currently ten films spanning career contain frame narratives (raamvertellingen: stories within stories).

Though these layers may appear confusing, the viewer is welcomed each time by a cast of characters even more colourful than the world they inhabit. A sour master to whom the sour duties are a matter of life and death. A quirky teenager only able to express himself through grand theatrical plays. A washed up oceanographer with a bright red hat. His validation-seeking right hand man, also wearing a bright red hat.

Moreover, with each film, you're sure to encounter several familiar faces (or voices, in the case of stop-motion films). While this may seem offputting to some, to us this was wonderful. Most actors play similar roles in each film. This way, by the time you're at the umpteenth movie, you feel like you're already familiar with a character the first scene they are in.

Bill Murray especially serves as the guide throughout, appearing (and often starring) in 9 out of 10 films. It is through Murray that some of Anderson's films' most important themes are expressed: isolation, life past your days of glory, unlikely heroes and the question what is family?

While these themes can be serious and bleak, Anderson never fails to present them in a playful and lighthearted style. As he puts it himself:

All the movies that I've made aren't entirely comedies, they're comedies and they're dramas, and I'm sure they're about emptiness.

Anderson's creative partners behind the scenes too, are not seldomly frequent collaborators. Owen Wilson, with whom he shared a dorm in college, co-wrote and starred in their debut film and embodies the off-beat, whimsical personas that stand out as remarkable even in the context of the movie world.

### CLOSING ACT WITH OUR CLOSING THOUGHTS

It's clear Wes Anderson is passionate about storytelling devices. His movies are celebrations of books, theatres and newspapers. With a unique style, he is able to translate these loves to a new medium: movies.

Each of his movies was fun to watch and brought a unique experience. Atmospherically, each movie was extremely captivating and pleasant. And, as we hoped, the scenes were a joy to look at. Watching all movies in order gave us a new perspective with respect to the unique characteristics of Anderson and the more subtle similarities in his movies (other than the obvious compositional similarities). We really are excited to have watched these movies the way we did, and we can fully recommend this experience!

If you feel inspired to watch some of Anderson's movies, but want to start with just one, we recommend trying out the Grand Budapest Hotel.

We have already started with our next director: Stanley Kubrick.

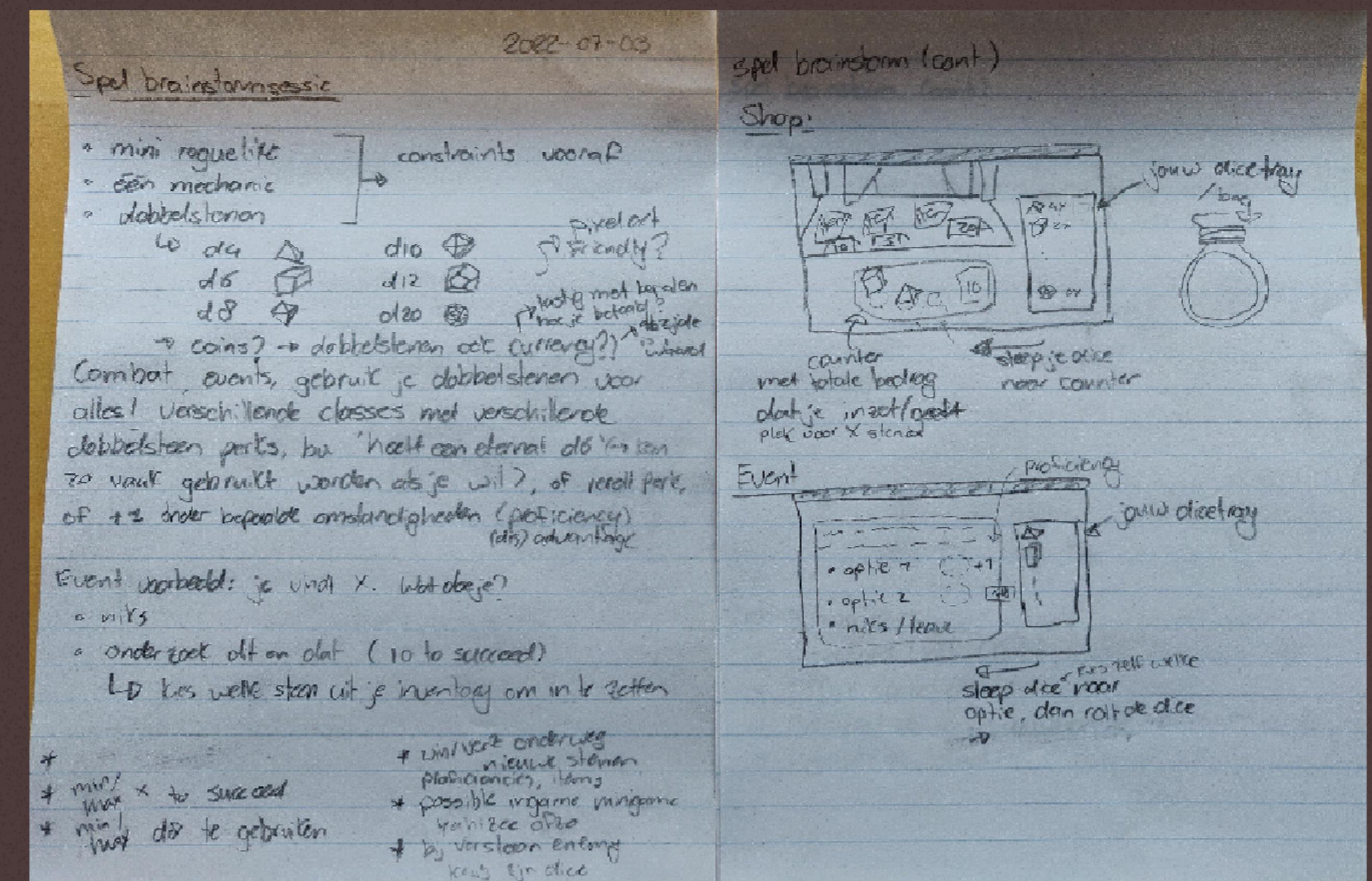


## C1 - Dicentric (Web game, July 2022)

'Roguelike' is a genre of games wherin mastery of randomness is the primary gameplay element and -- to me -- the main appeal. Video games can provide an amazing experience by the interaction they provide. This way, it serves as an intersting medium to explore randomness.

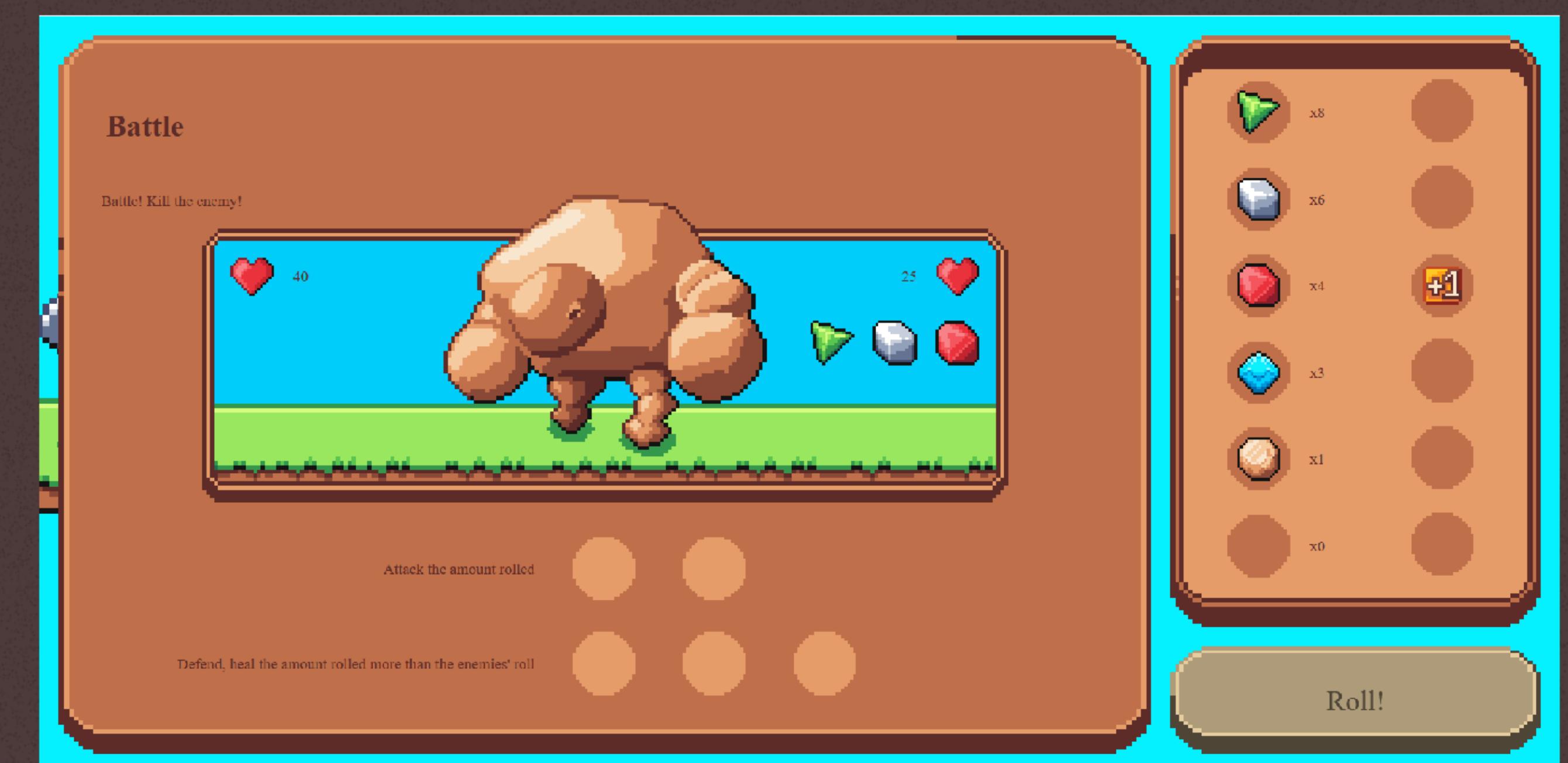
Together with Steven Bronsveld and Siëna van Schaik, I participated in the GMTK Game Jam 2022. We created a small roguelike game 'Dicentric' within 48 hours completely from scratch (Javascript programming and visuals). It is open source and playable for free on the web.

Entry page: <https://1-steven-748415.itch.io/dicentric>  
 Game: <https://stevenbrons.github.io/dicentric/>



Initial brainstorm I had done prior and unrelated to the jam

Screenshot from Dicentric

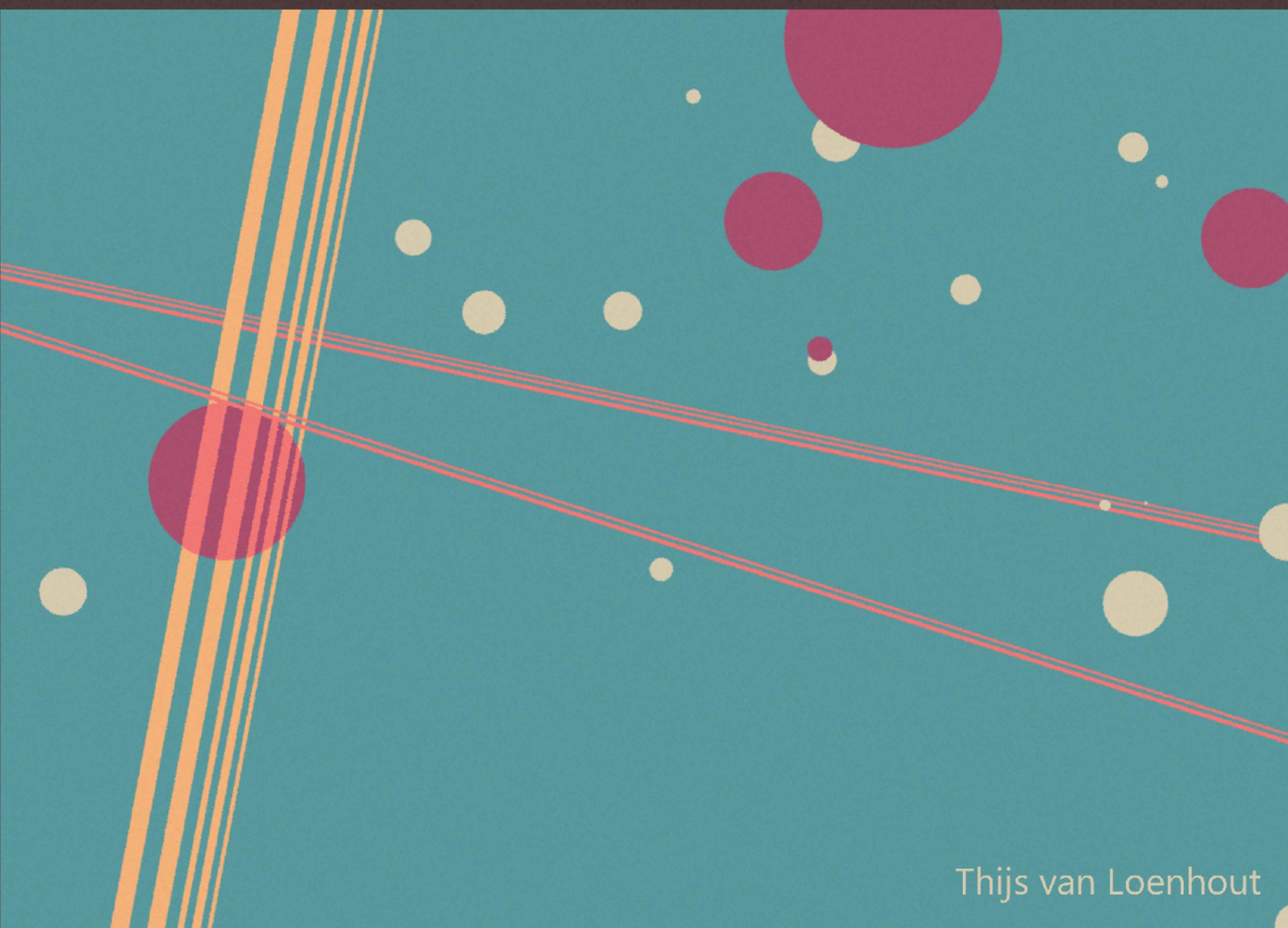


## C2 - Random Compositions / Portfolio (Digital, Dec 2022 - March 2023)

I am perfectionistic -- proudly so. However, I do recognise my head cannot wrap itself around everything all the time. This might be the origin of my conflicting relationship with randomness. To challenge myself, I decided to give up some autonomy over my portfolio by randomly generating the compositions.

The pages are generative art pieces produced with a processing script and curated by me. I have chosen this language, as I believe it should aim for approachability. As a result from human-computer collaboration, it is part of the artwork.

Code can be found on GitHub: <https://github.com/Nyxaeroz/RandomCompositions>



```
File Edit Sketch Debug Tools Help C - Random Composition... X Java ▾

CompositionTest ▾
1 // parameters for image and preview size
2 int canvas_width;
3 int canvas_height;
4 int display_width;
5 int display_height;
6 boolean use_preview = false;
7
8 // parameters for color picking
9 Table table;
10 int total_palettes = 676;
11 int total_colors = 5;
12 int palette = floor(random(676));
13
14 // parameters for generation
15 boolean generate_batch = false;
16 int fuzzyness = 5000000;
17 boolean use_rect = true;
18 float intersection_thold = 0.6;
19
20
21 // used for saving generated images
22 import java.io.File;
23 PGraphics toSave;
24
25 void setup() {
26   //size(424,300);
27   size(1754, 1240);
28   canvas_width = 3508/2;
29   canvas_height = 2480/2;
30   display_width = 424/2;
31   display_height = 300/2;
32
33   table = loadTable("colors.csv", "csv, header");
34
35   // for controlled batch generation:
36   if (generate_batch) {
37     for (int i = 0; i < 10; i++) {
38       createComp();
39       savePNG();
40     }
41   } else createComp();
42   print(palette);
43 }
44
45 void draw() {
46
47 }
48
49 // automatic name generation, including palette and iteration number
50 void savePNG() {
51   // loop to choose unique file name
52   int i = 0;
53   File new_comp;
54   do {
```

This has been great.

Collecting my projects and finding themes running through them has been a great experience of reflection (A) and it has encouraged me to share my projects with others (C). In a way, this portfolio is a project on its own, a completely unique medium (B).

I very much look forward to doing more project, finding new themes and expanding on this document, and myself.

~ Thijs