

# Civic Studio

[notes and digital sketchbook]

## Background Reading on site, melancholia and location:

Miwon Kwon in 'Retracing the Expanded Field: Encounters in Art and Architecture', p.102

BJ That is the end—

GB This *is* the end.

MK But that is also part of the motivation for me to return to it. I did say at one point in my book on site-specificity, while citing Thierry de Duve, that site-specificity is a melancholic practice.<sup>15</sup> And that perhaps is the sort of space that I'm in—a space of a certain melancholy over a relation to the referential world. Both of Krauss's texts allow me to try to hold onto the particularity of location a little bit longer. That is my primary concern, which is about place.

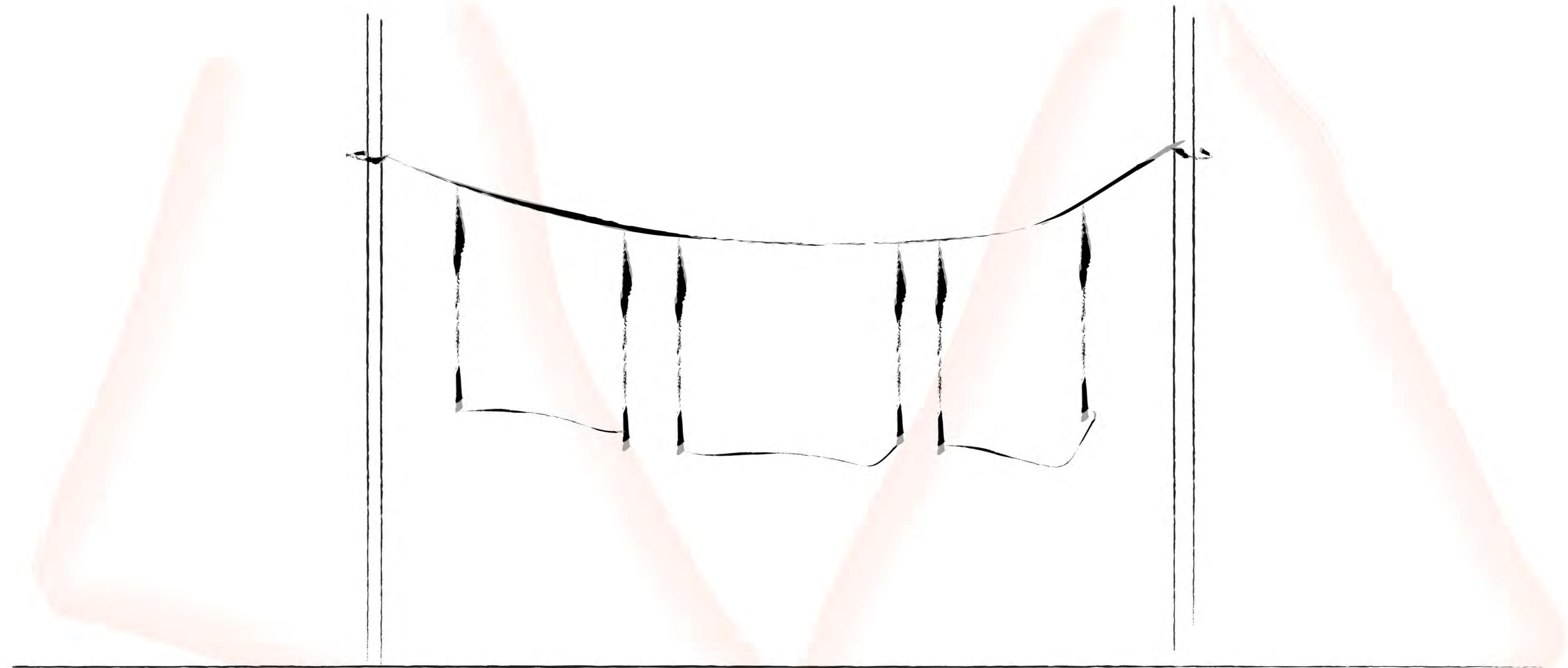
melancholic

mobile

e-flux journal #81 — april 2017  
Elizabeth A. Povinelli, Geontologies: The Concept and Its Territories

outward. The global nature of climate change, capital, toxicity, and discursivity immediately demands we look elsewhere than where we are standing. We have to follow the flows of the toxic industries whose by-products seep into foods, forests, and aquifers, and visit the viral transit lounges that join species through disease vectors. As we stretch the local across these seeping transits we need not scale up to the Human or the global, but we cannot remain in the local. We can only remain hereish.

here-ish



light pool

light pool



sequence is disrupted, outer two are highlighted,  
middle is hidden. might take the images out of time,  
make them more secretive.

in dark

a message to foxes?  
twilight detectors?

## Notes on Michel Serres, in 'Angels, A Modern Myth':

"The first duties of the transporter are: eclipse, stepping aside, flight and withdrawal."

"I see: the worst angels are the ones which are seen;  
the best disappear."

"The body of the messenger appears or vanishes  
The intermediary writes himself out of the picture. He  
must not present himself, or dazzle, or please . . . or  
even appear.

"That's why we don't see angels."

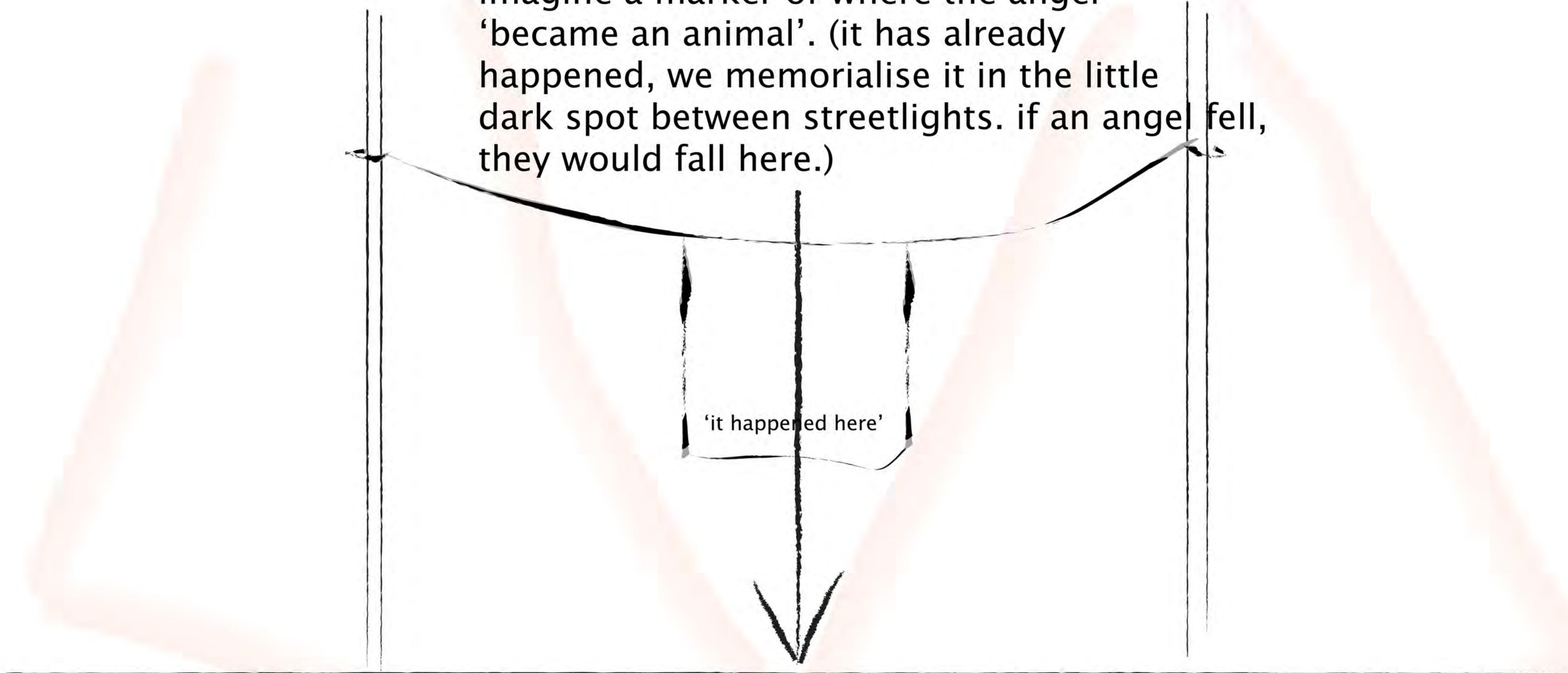
This is how it comes about that  
human relations take on the form  
of women or men, of money or  
animals . . . good or bad angels.

How does the angel come to be  
an animal? As Monsieur

### "How does the angel come to be an animal?"

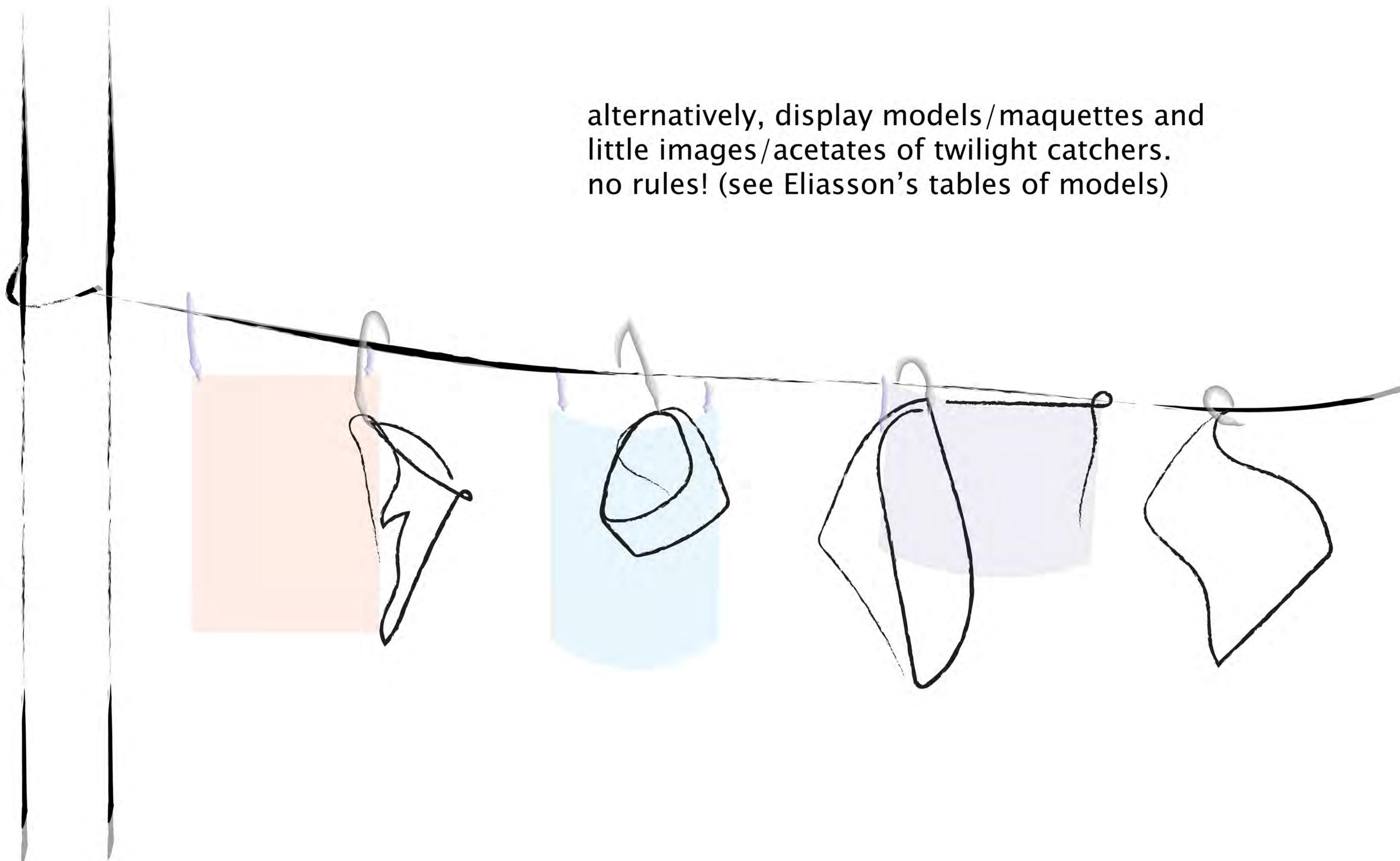
According to Serres, part of the function of the angel is to disappear– vanishing is part of the form.  
Like vampires not showing up in mirrors...what constitutes a CIVIC VANISHING?

place artwork in past tense:  
imagine a marker of where the angel  
'became an animal'. (it has already  
happened, we memorialise it in the little  
dark spot between streetlights. if an angel fell,  
they would fall here.)



fox teeth, vampires, twilights, vanishings

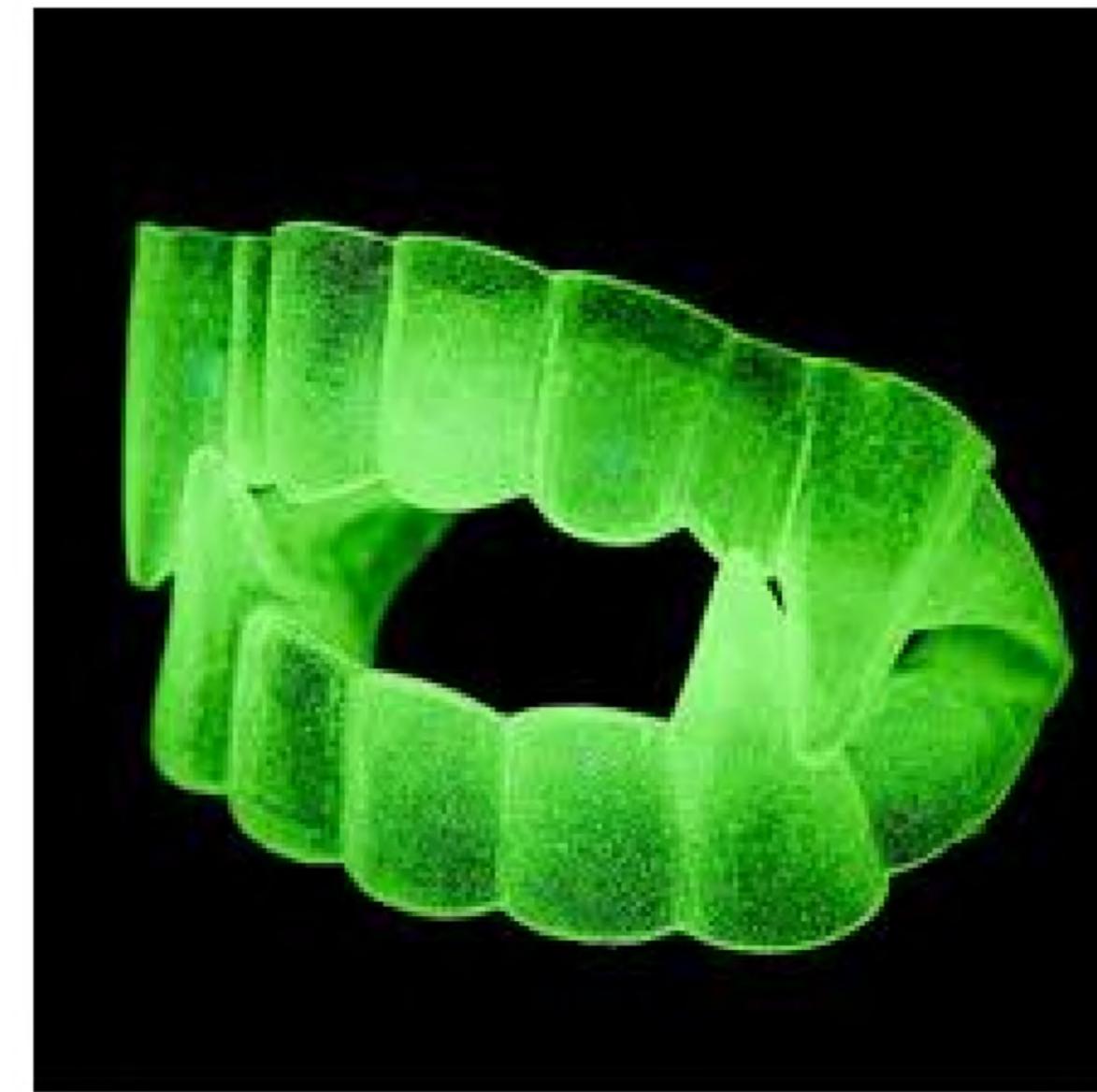
alternatively, display models/maquettes and little images/acetates of twilight catchers.  
no rules! (see Eliasson's tables of models)



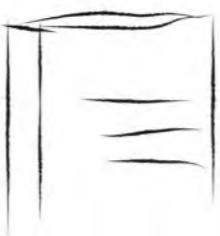
print on acetate?

...take images of the place, the spaces between and Dm in models?

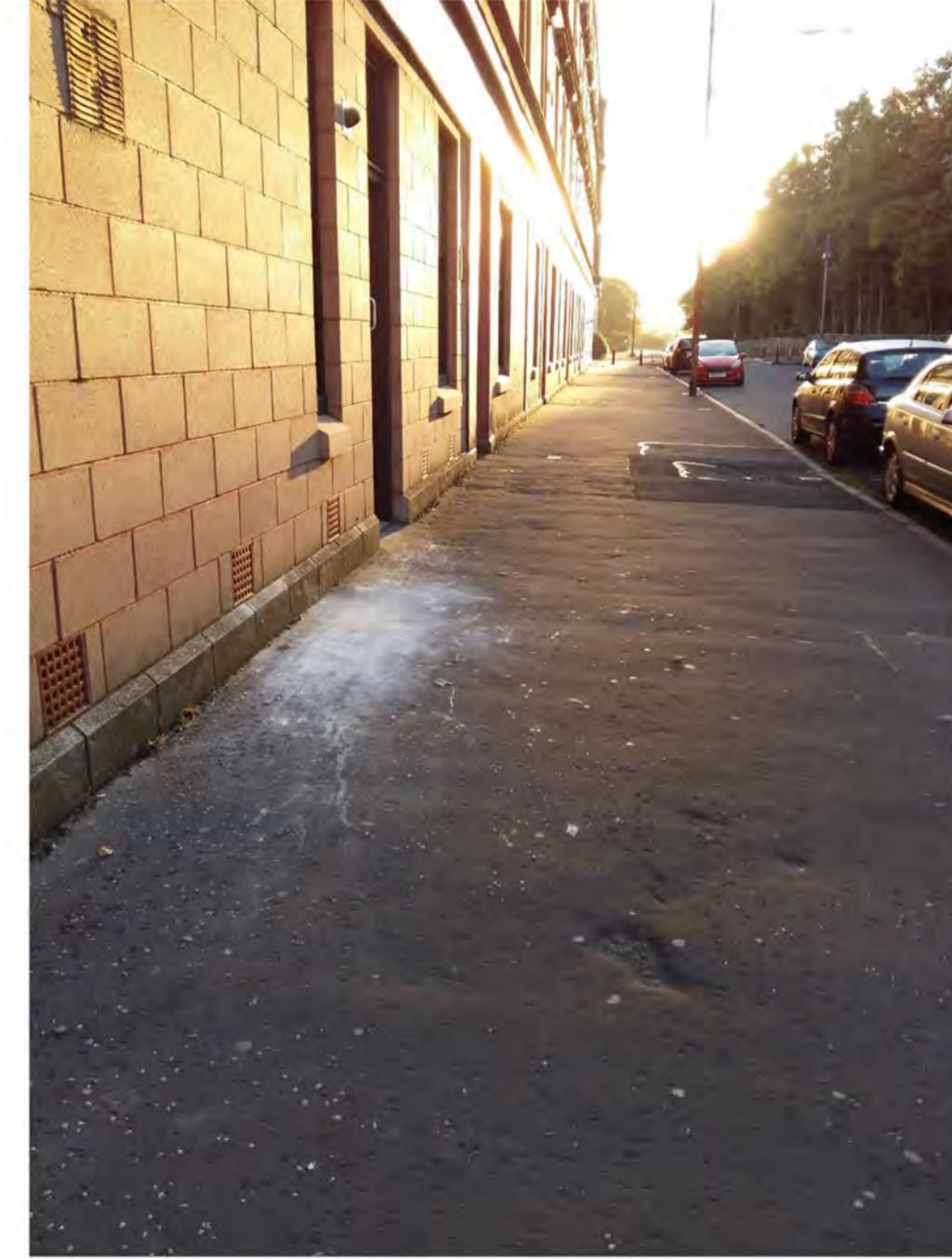
make some teeth, some animal parts



# memorial to the apparition



photographs from the street, primary research:



forensics, as if the angel had already been, and the investigation has been conducted.

pseudo scientific, some filaments, bits of fox teeth, feathers, sequins, spiders?

occurring in the little dark areas. makes you look longer at the foxes too.

# Artist's Research and Influences:



John Smith– stills from *The Girl Chewing Gum* (1976)

“A primary aim of the film was to undermine its inherent illusionism, drawing attention to its own artifice”

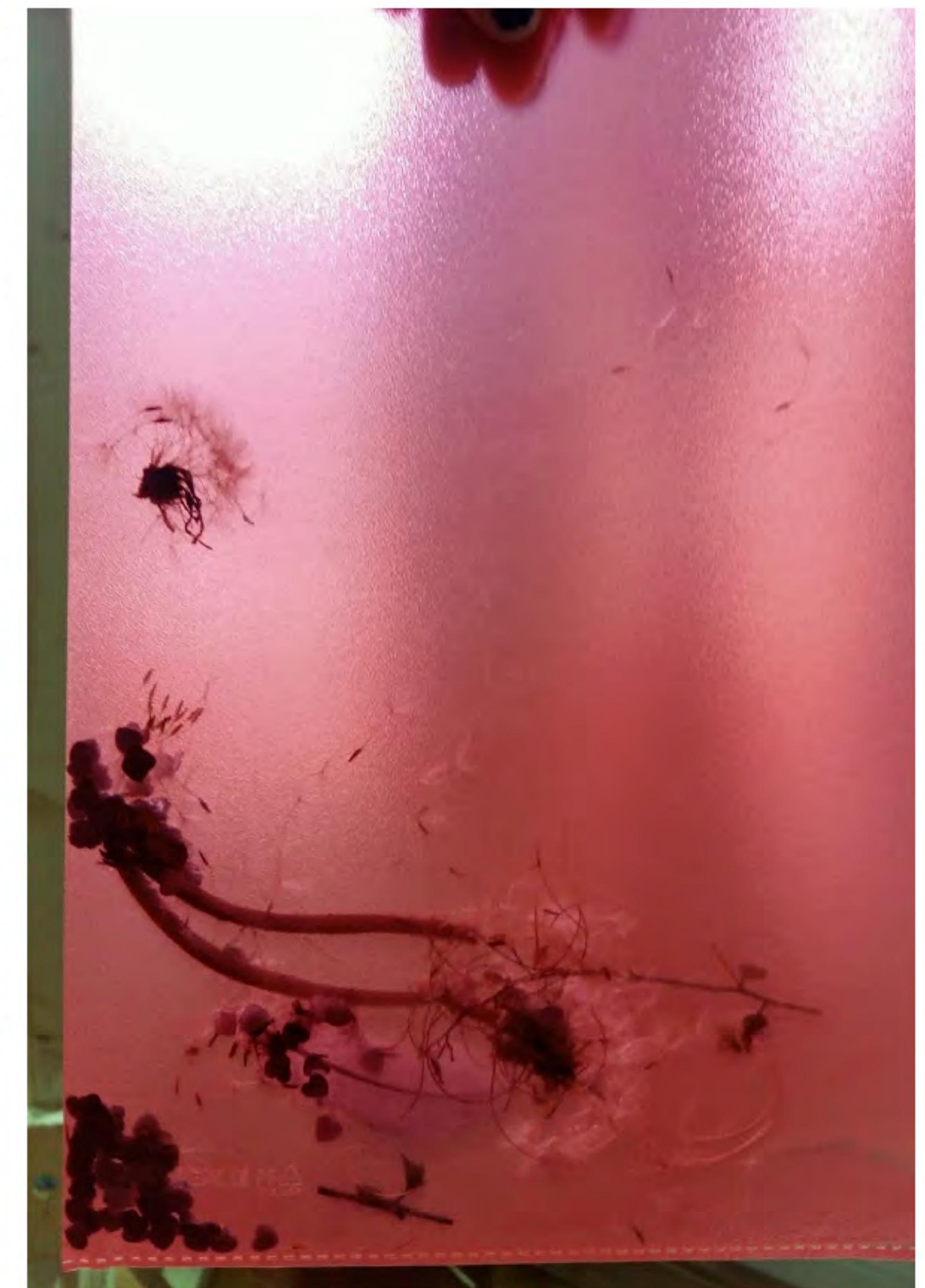


Paul Cantese–  
*Observatories of Uncharted Vitreous* (2011)

“Inspired by his “floaters” (when translucent objects suspended in the eye’s vitreous fluid are projected into one’s field of vision), the artist created an environment in which to explore interior versus exterior contexts of these shadowy forms and the aqueous world in which they are suspended. The illusionary boundary between the physical and ethereal is constructed using reflective Mylar.”



thinking about: what materials would an angel's appearance leave behind?



>method: going for walks and collecting materials.  
Re-aranging into configurations...

>copy the aesthetics of animal tracking/conservation: insinuate that the angel mark is the trace of an endangered animal. I also like the danger– it implies wildness too– and it posits the angel as sneakier than us.



#### ABOUT THE FEATHER ATLAS PROJECT

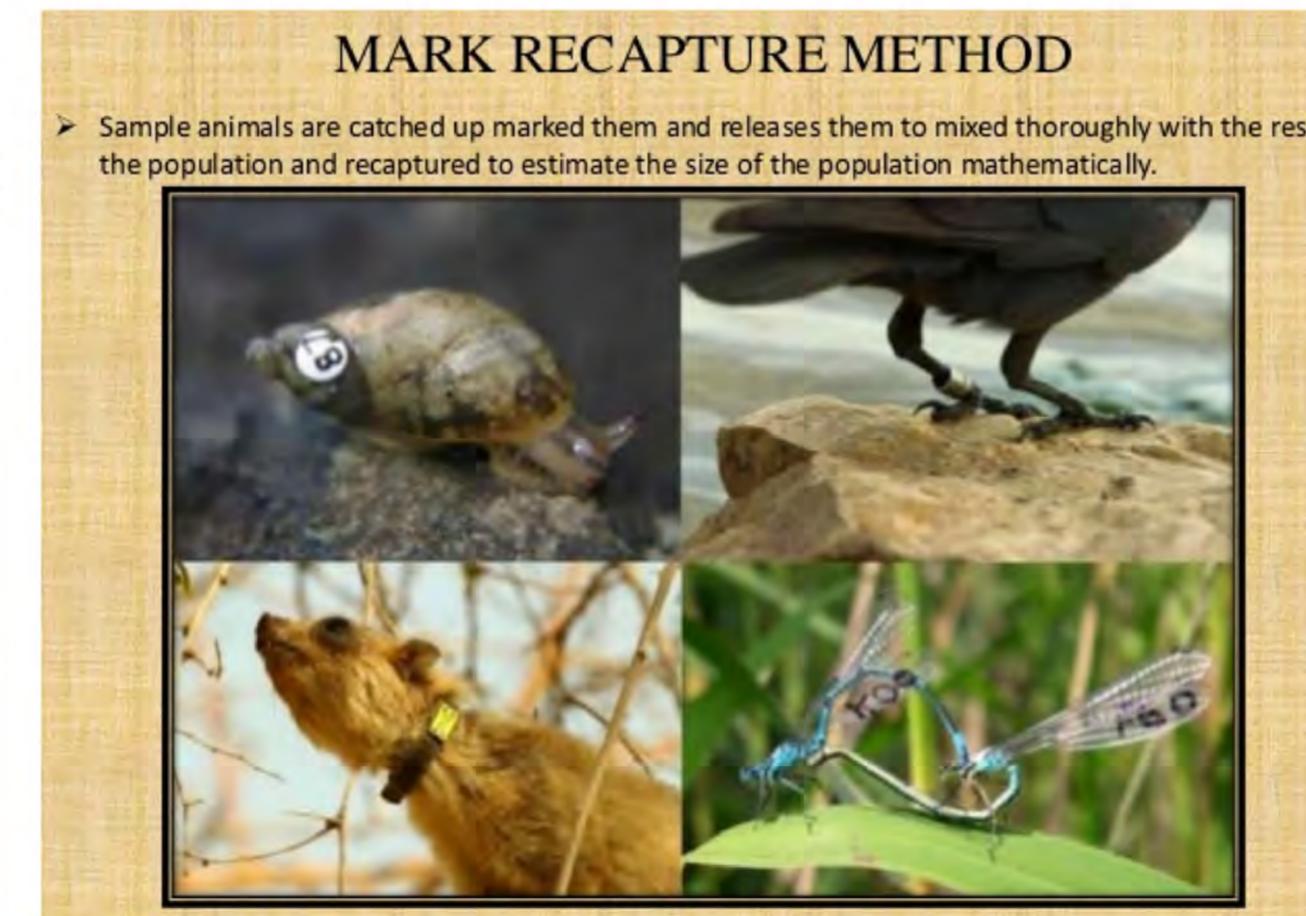
##### Information on the Scans and Image Processing:

For each species, the Feather Atlas typically illustrates all the primaries (outer wing feathers; usually 10), 10-12 secondaries (inner wing feathers), and six rectrices (tail feathers) from an individual bird. Some scans from the early days of the Feather Atlas show a combination of primaries and secondaries ("wing scans"). We are in process of re-scanning these to show separate images for primaries and secondaries.

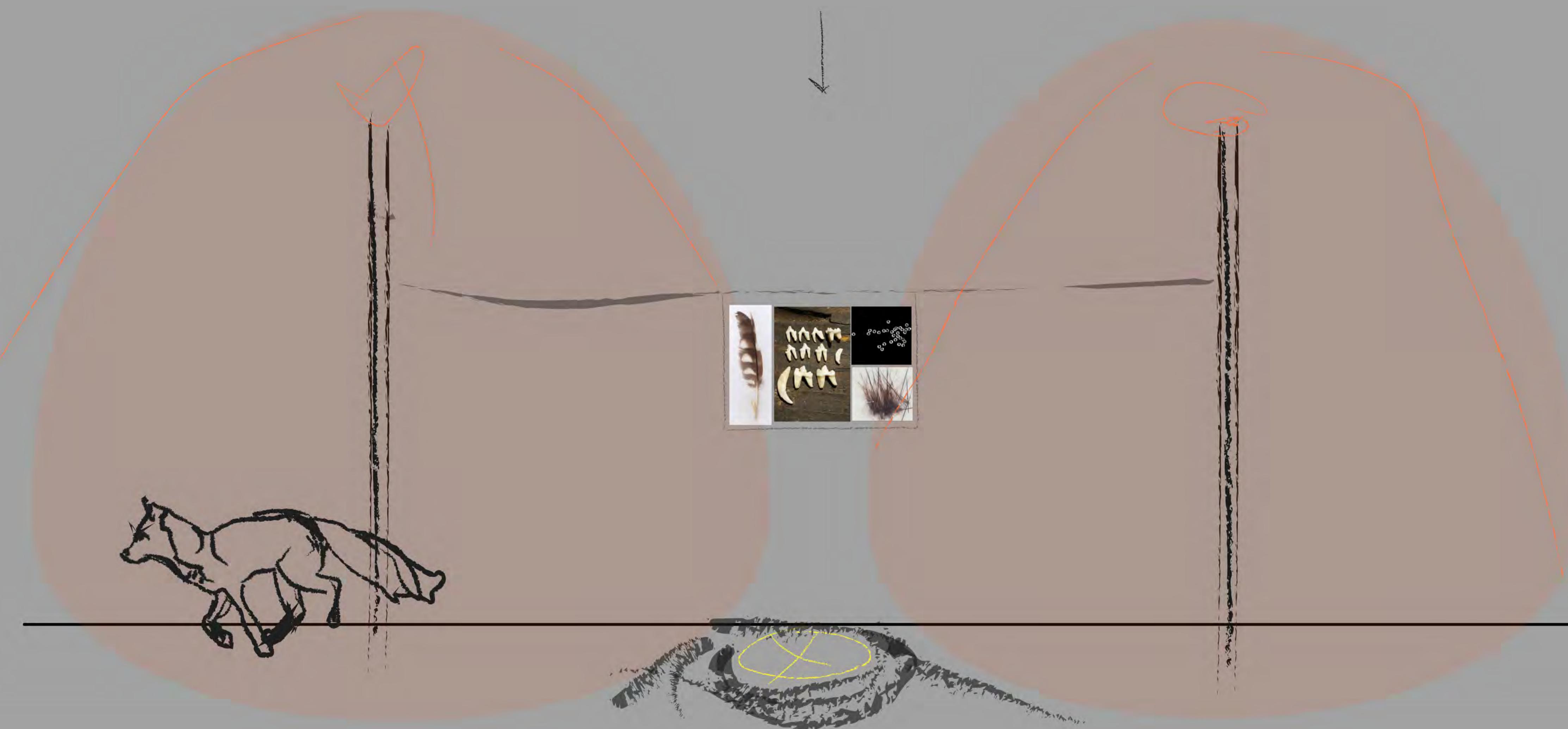
In all cases, the feathers from the right wing and the right side of the tail are shown, with the outermost feather always on the left. Feathers are shown in dorsal view. For a few species with distinct patterns on the underside of the feathers, a ventral view is also provided.

A data table of total feather lengths and vane lengths is provided for each scan, beneath the image of the scanned feathers. This table also summarizes age, sex, and locality data for the specimen represented in the scan. For more information on how the scans were created, go to the [Methodology](#) section. Definitions of feather terms, with illustrations, can be found on the [Glossary](#) page.

All feathers on the Feather Atlas come from salvaged dead birds; no birds are killed to provide specimens.



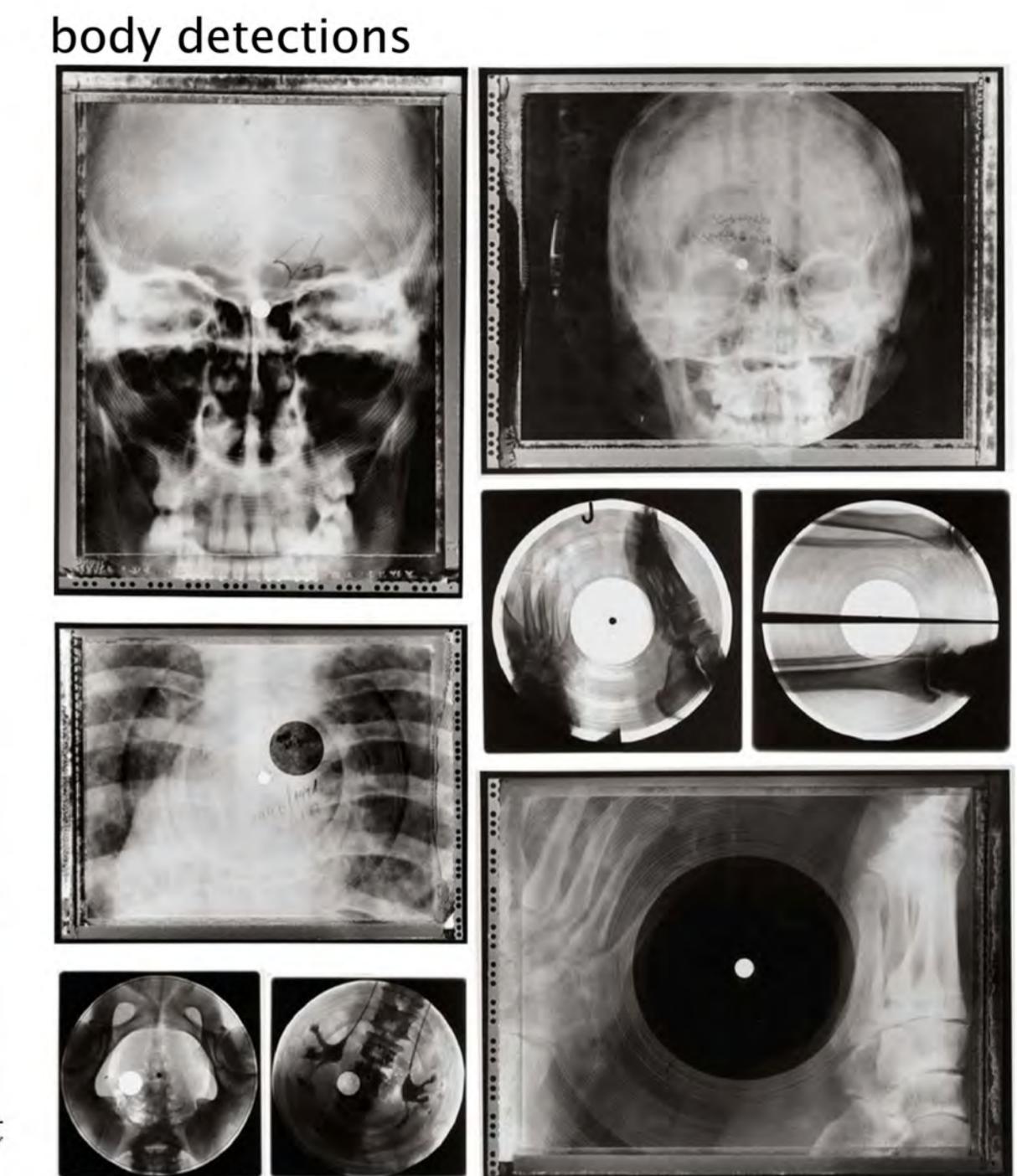
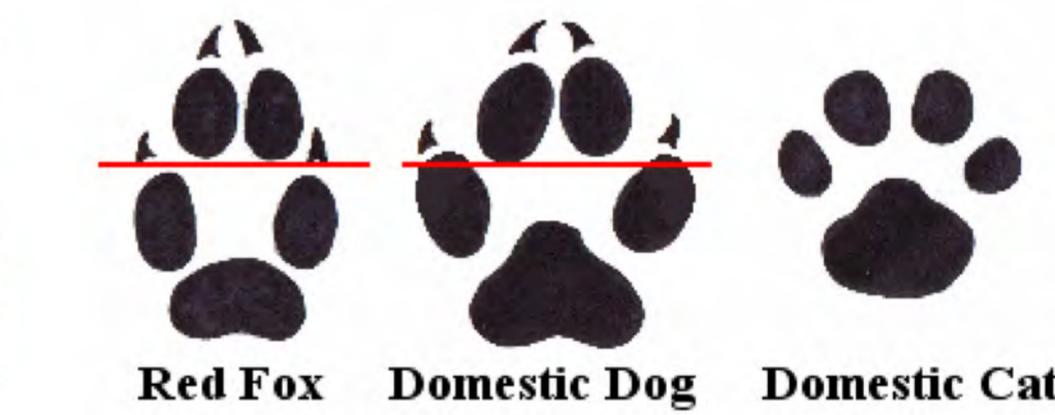
forensics- don't let this idea get away!!



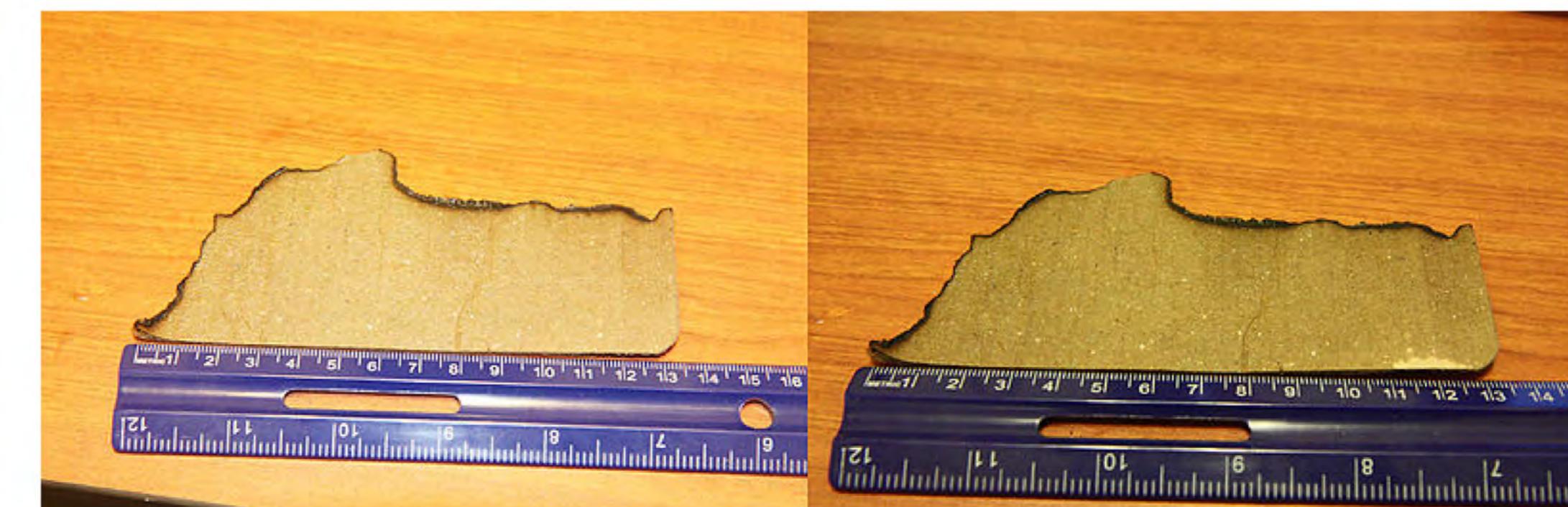
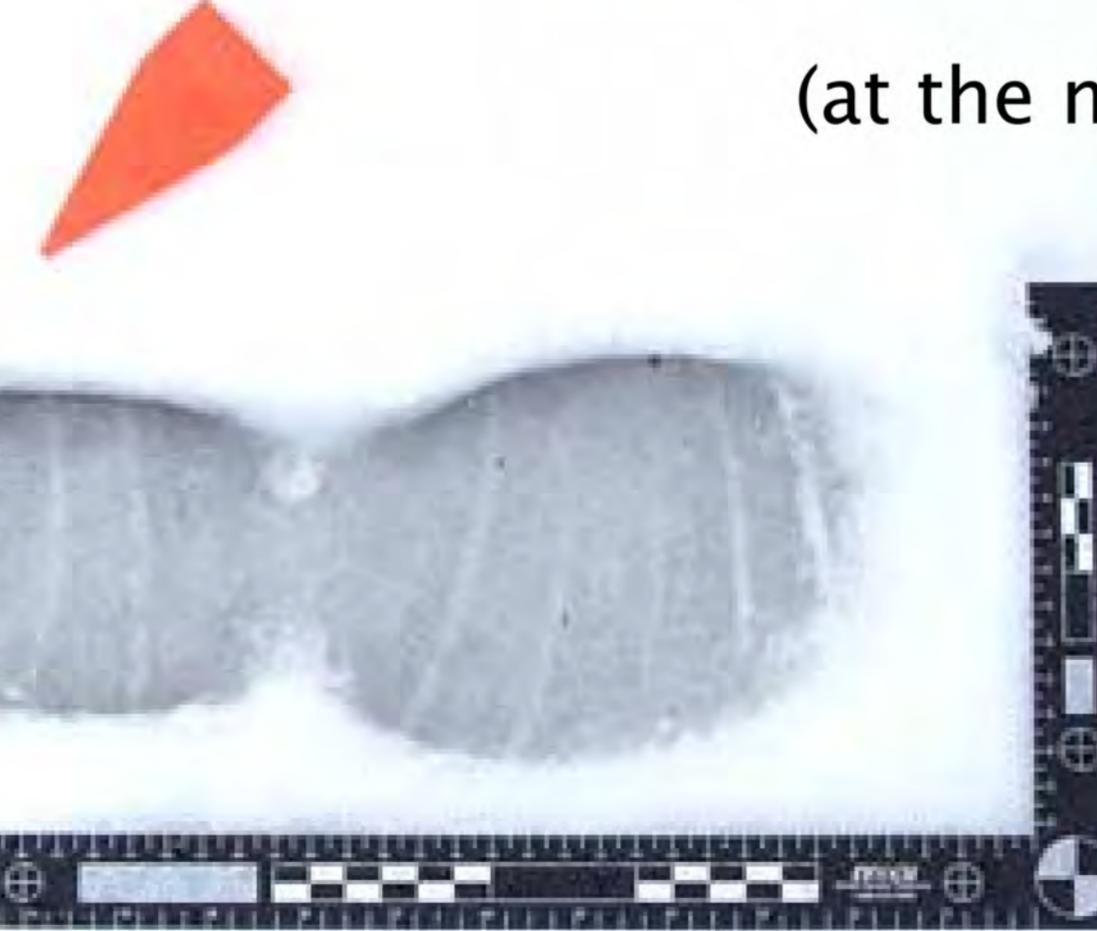
the angel has already been. Images as if flatbed-scanned.  
Could do over time- trials, models, memorials

SITE IMAGES- remember, melancholic, mobile,

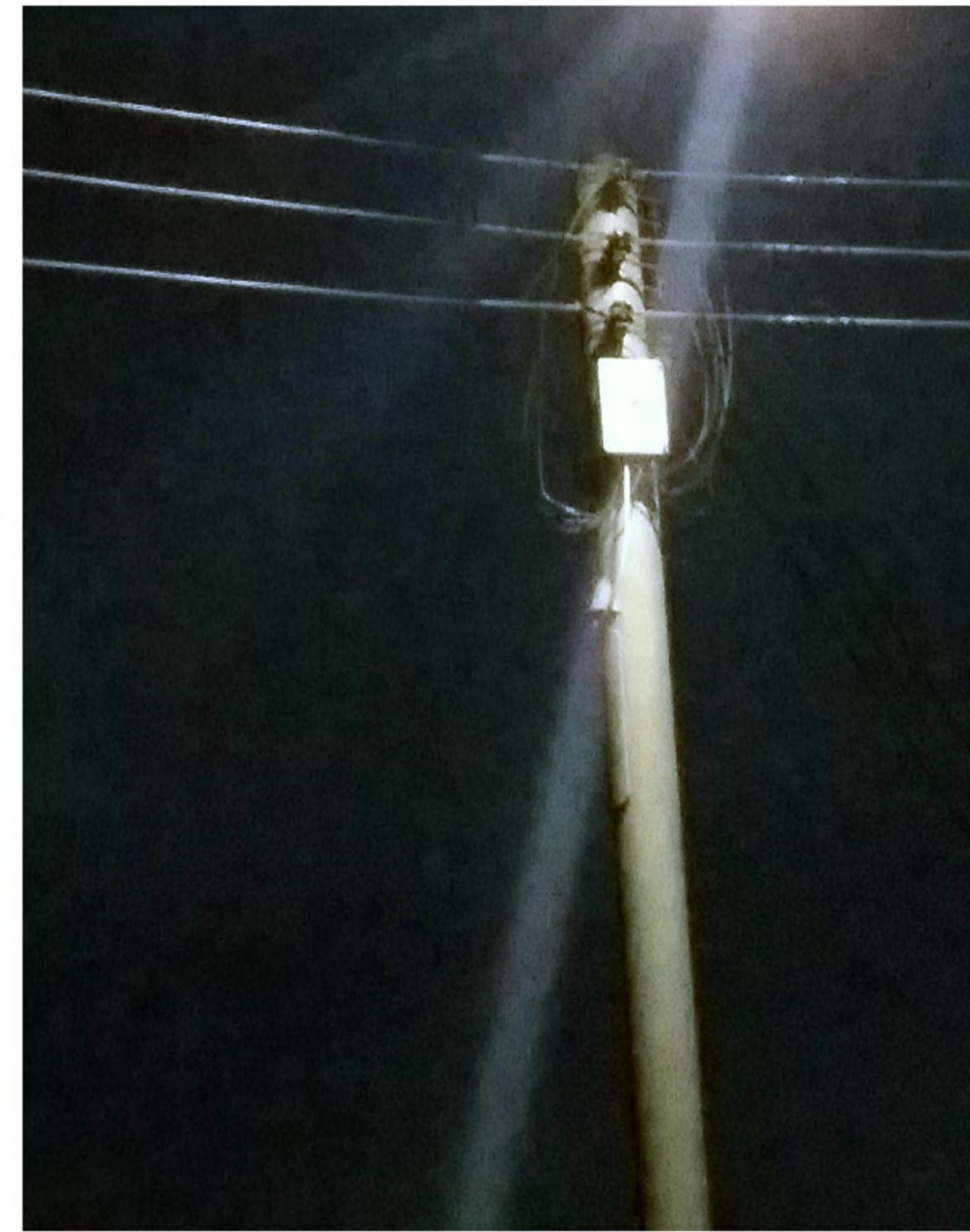
-implant the angelic bits at the site, strewn  
and thus also blur the line btwn animal  
and angel.



(at the moment w. covid too, I think folk are very focussed on traces)



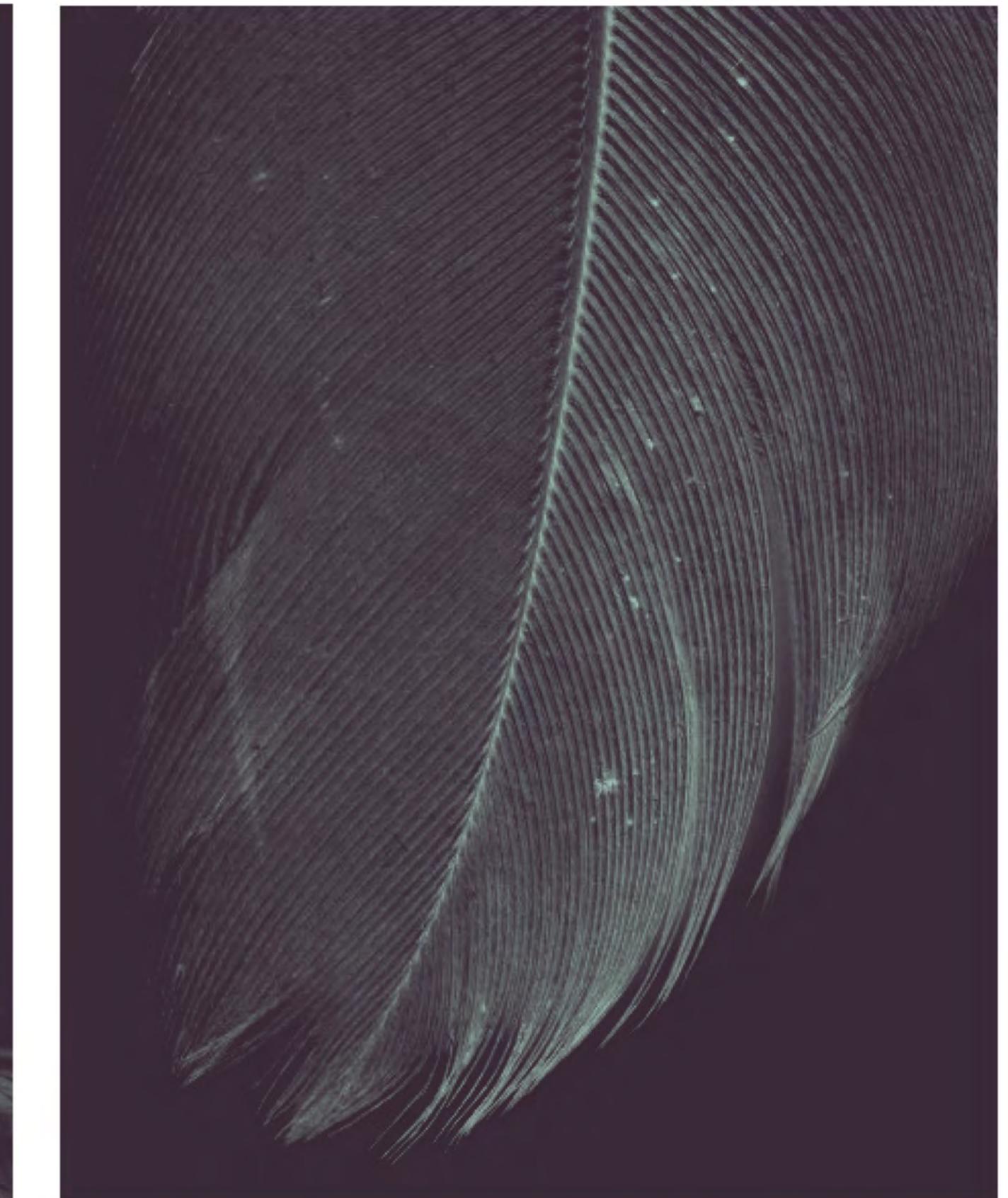
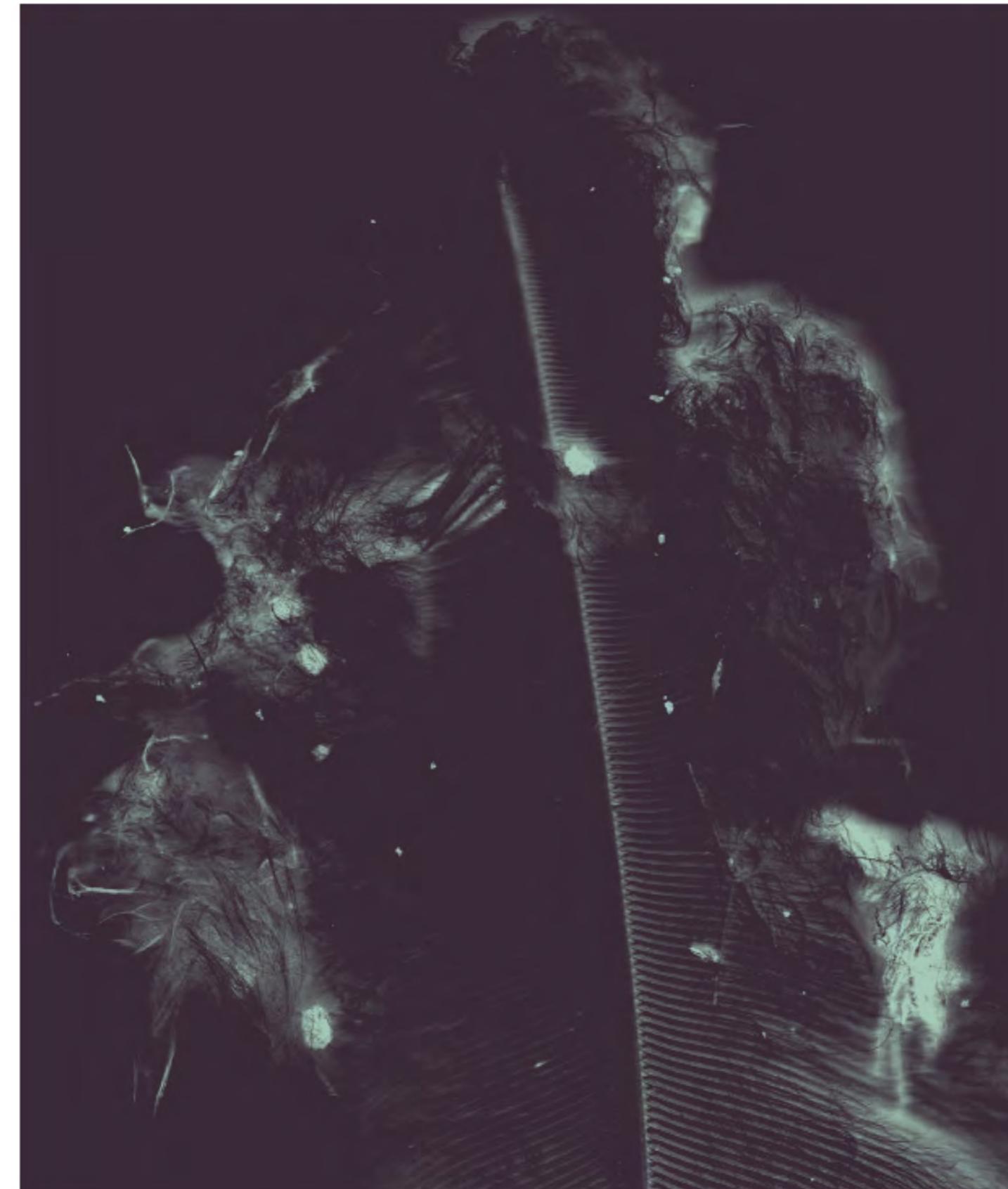
Feathers: found between streetlights.





(tiny feather details)

fine detail on feather, as if X-rayed (Gradient map applied)



I love these little filaments! the directions of tiny lines pressed up against the scanner bed.  
Quite clear contact!

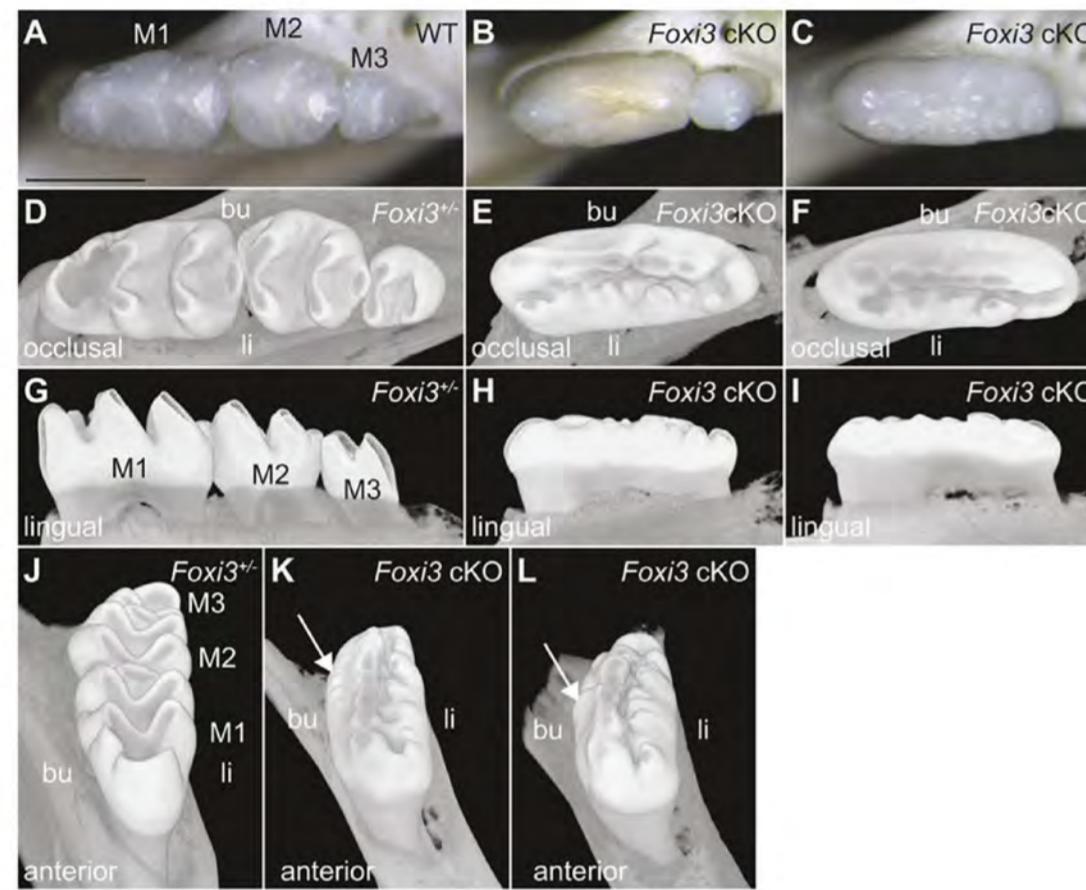
some feather close ups:



caught up in leaf filaments.

# Dimension and Blender modelling animal teeth:

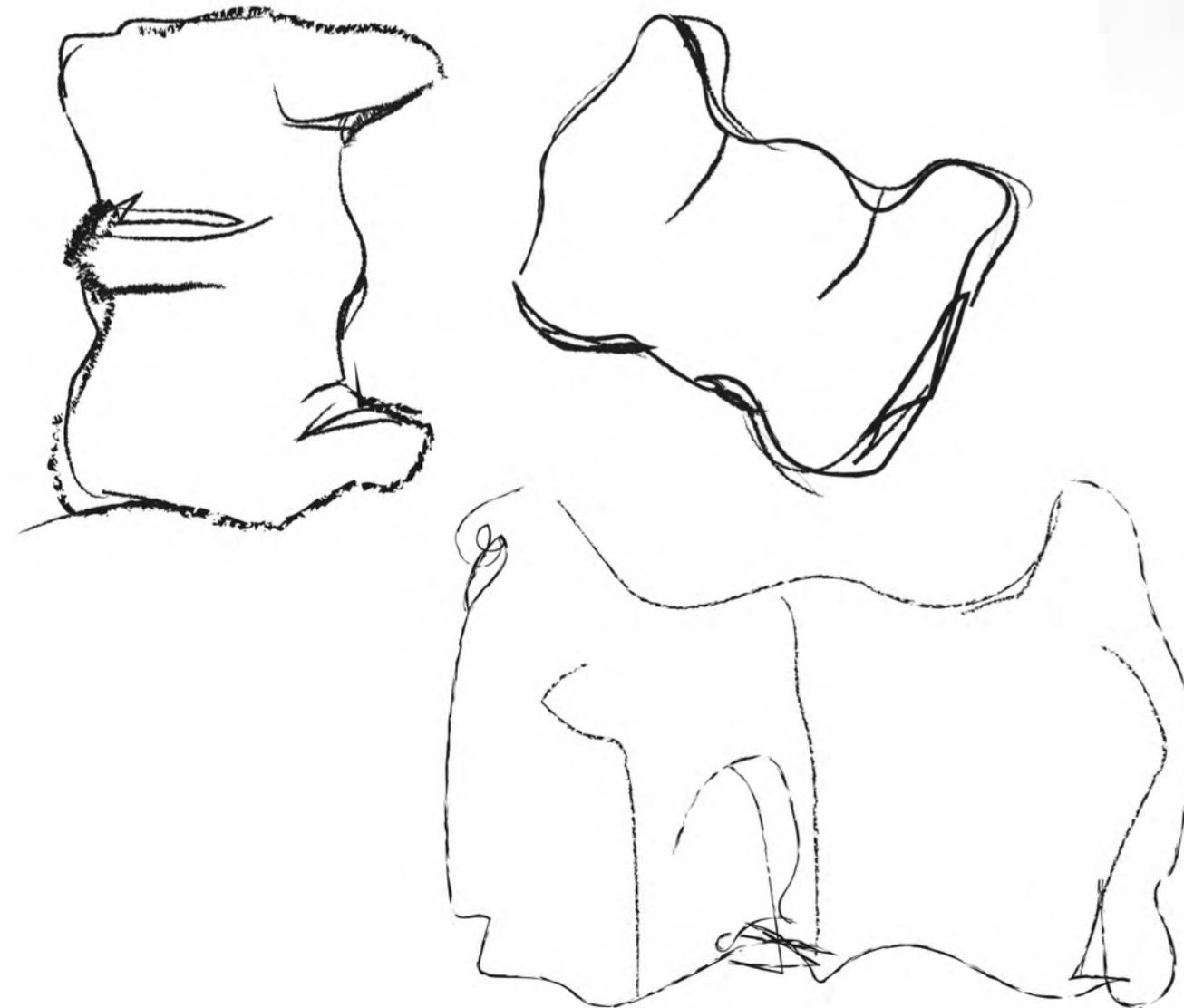
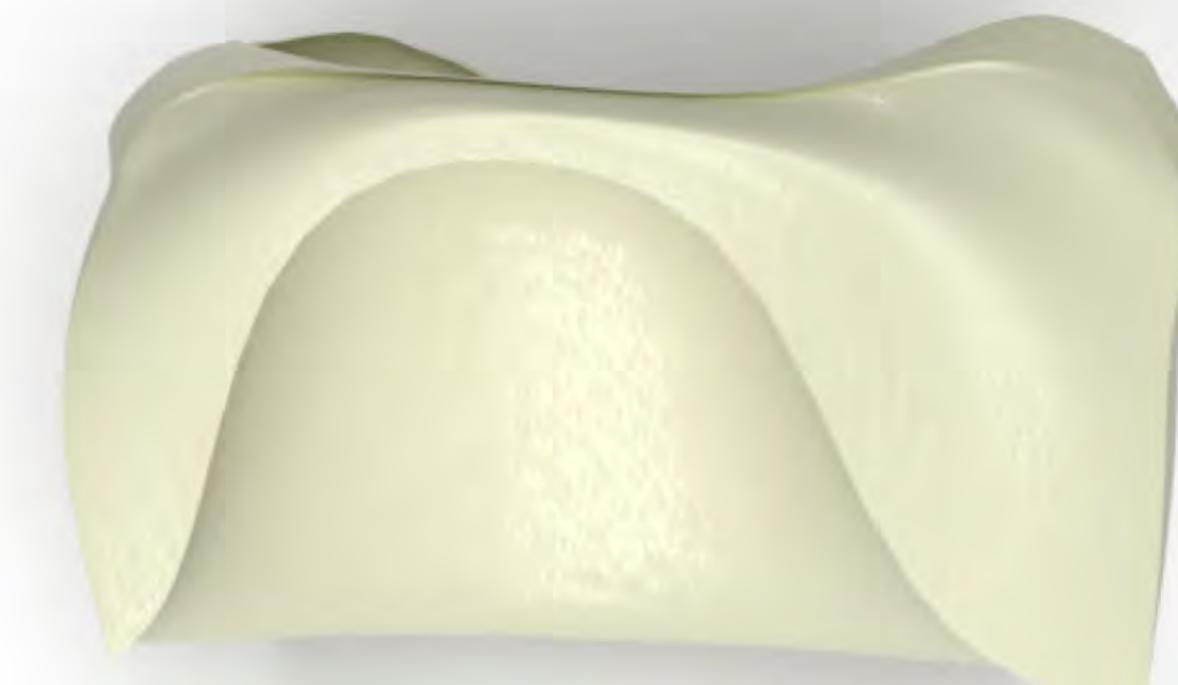
>inserting fiction into the fabric of the street.



01



02





>tests from making a brass ring model



Integrating the modelled teeth and the rings. Playing with light/shadow dispersion to make the image a bit more surreal, take away the sense of a scanned document.

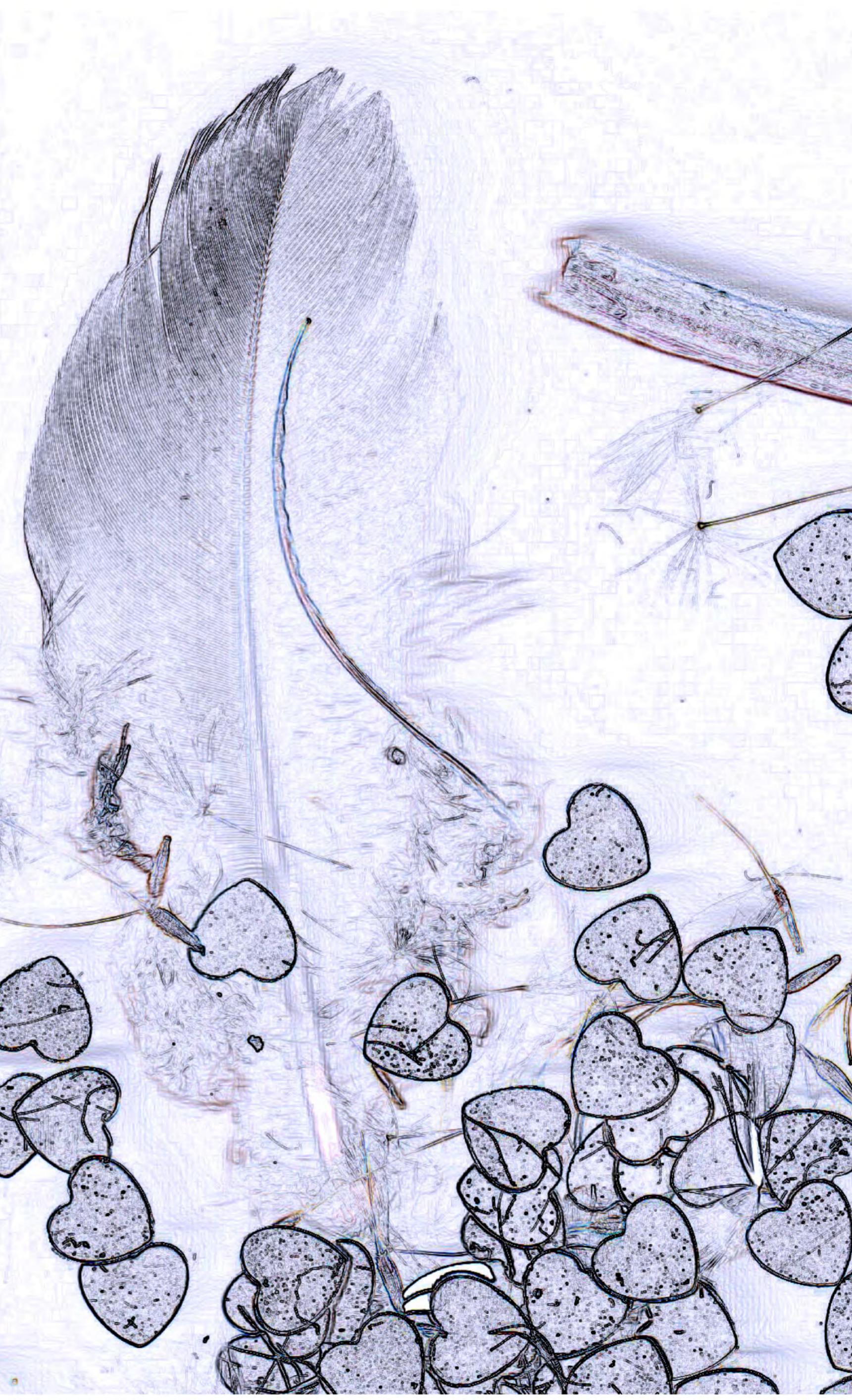


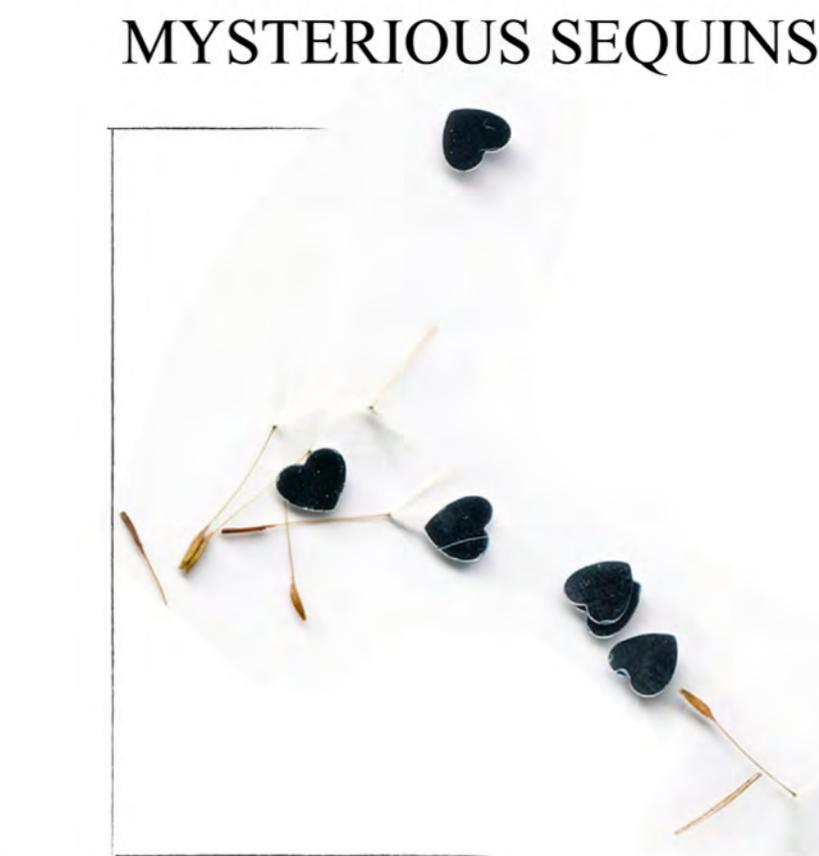
## Colourways, manipulating the scans:



>I like the dusky colours and that curve of the dandelion. Thinking about how to bring these compositions together to look like a natural collection of materials...

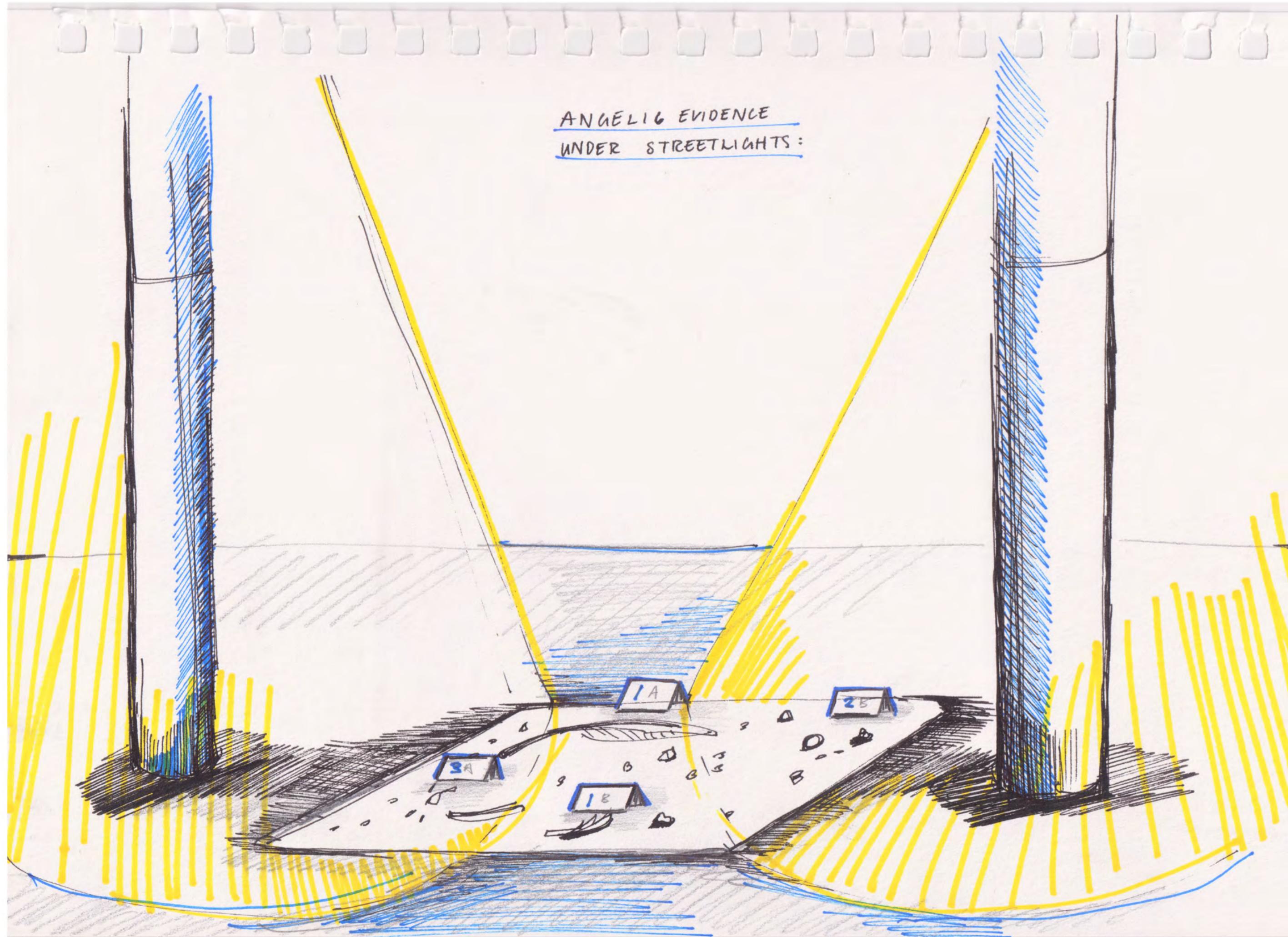
>ruler as marker introduced. Like a forensic meter.





>re-inserting the forensic layouts into the street

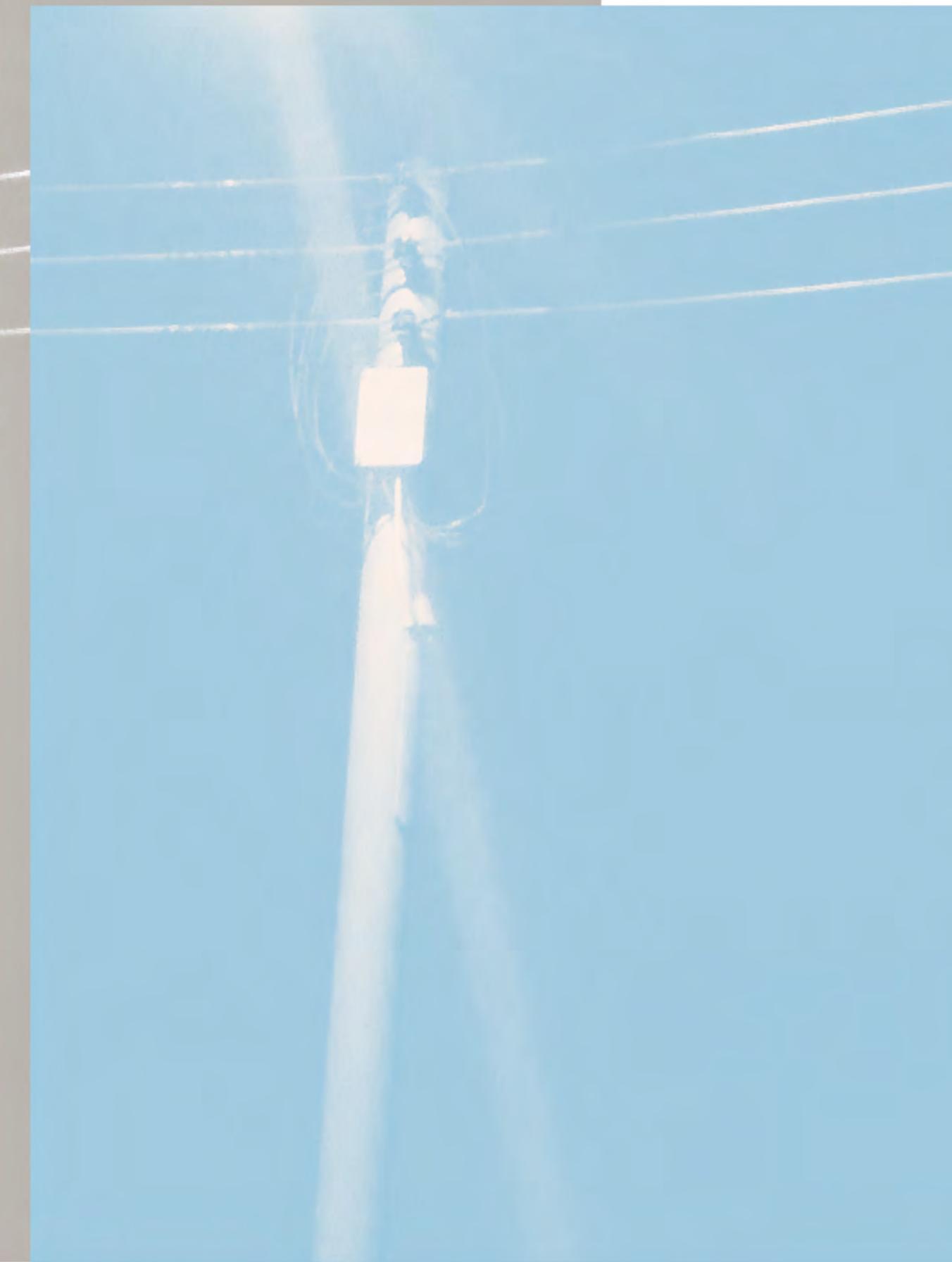
>illustration: showing the array of evidence in its environment caught between lights .



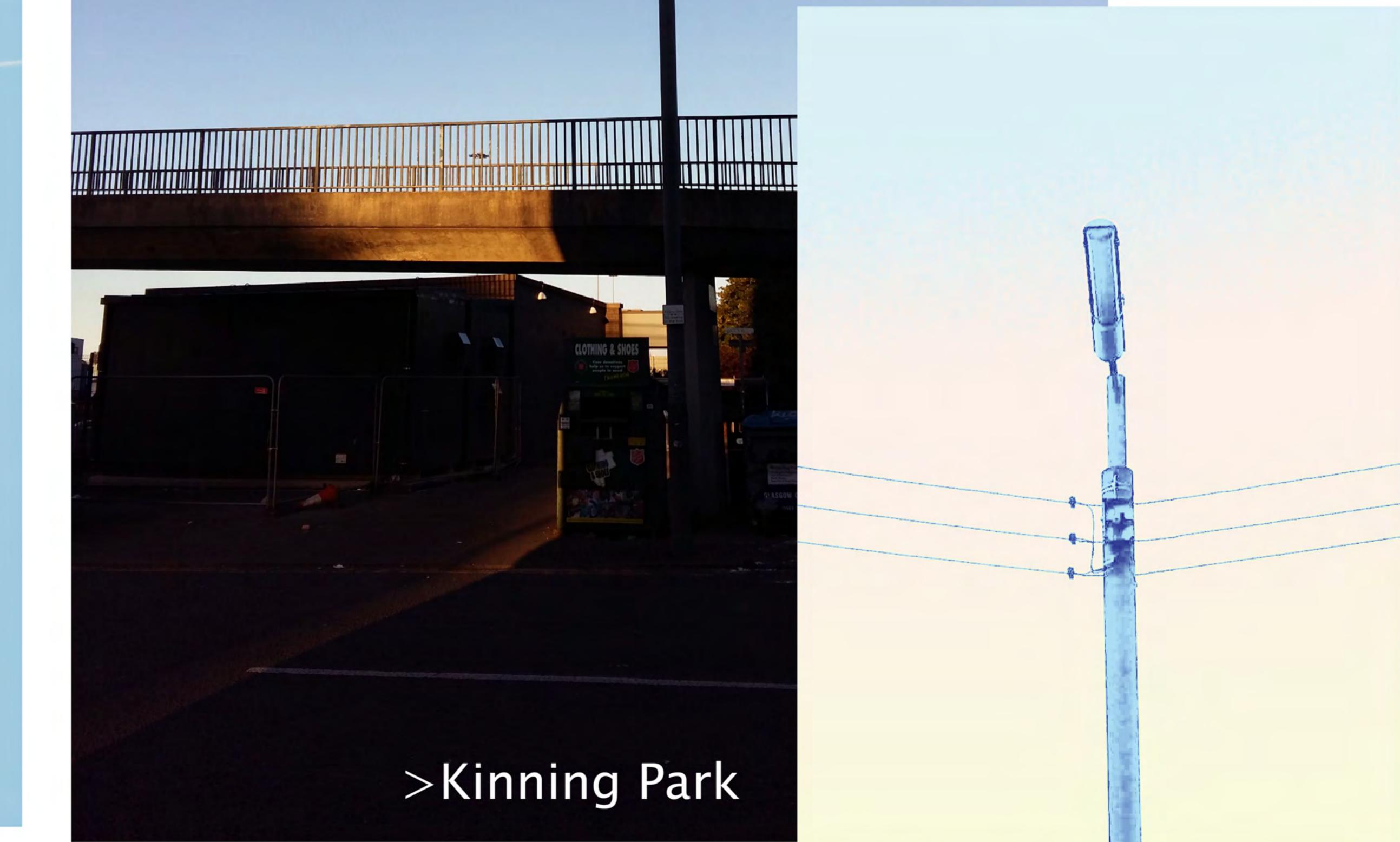
>some experiments with modelling streetlights: initial photographs

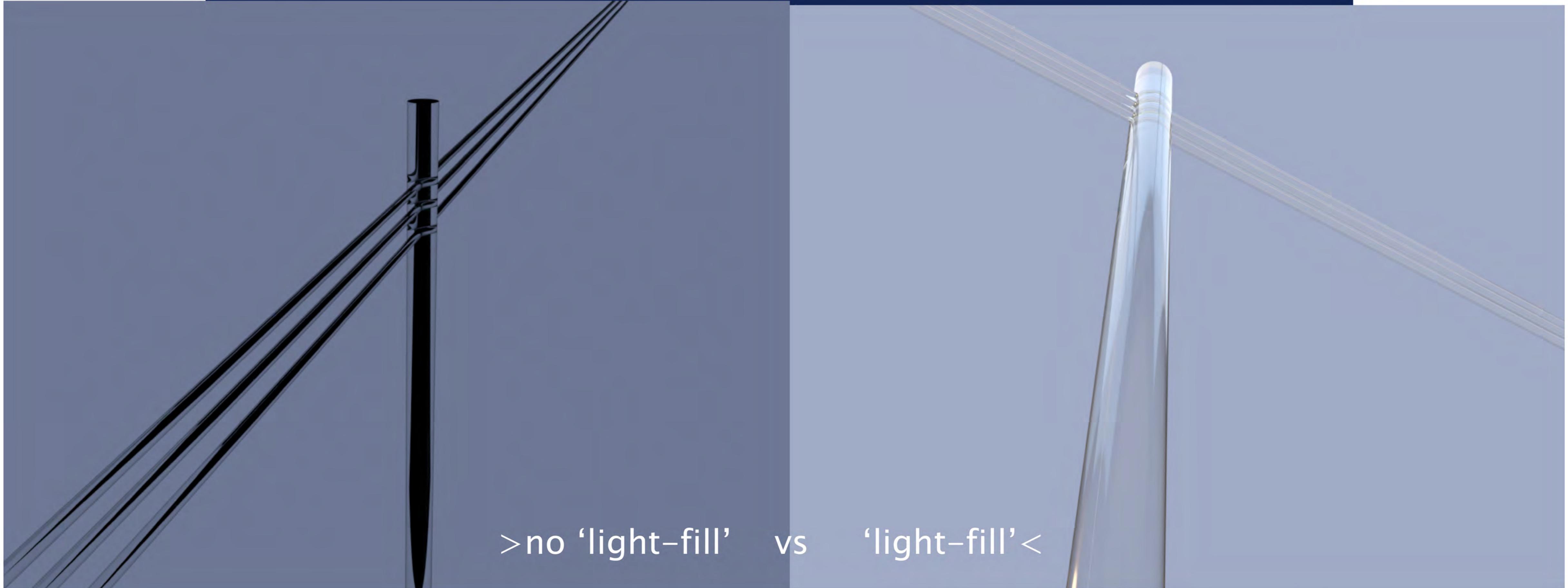


>Greendyke St.

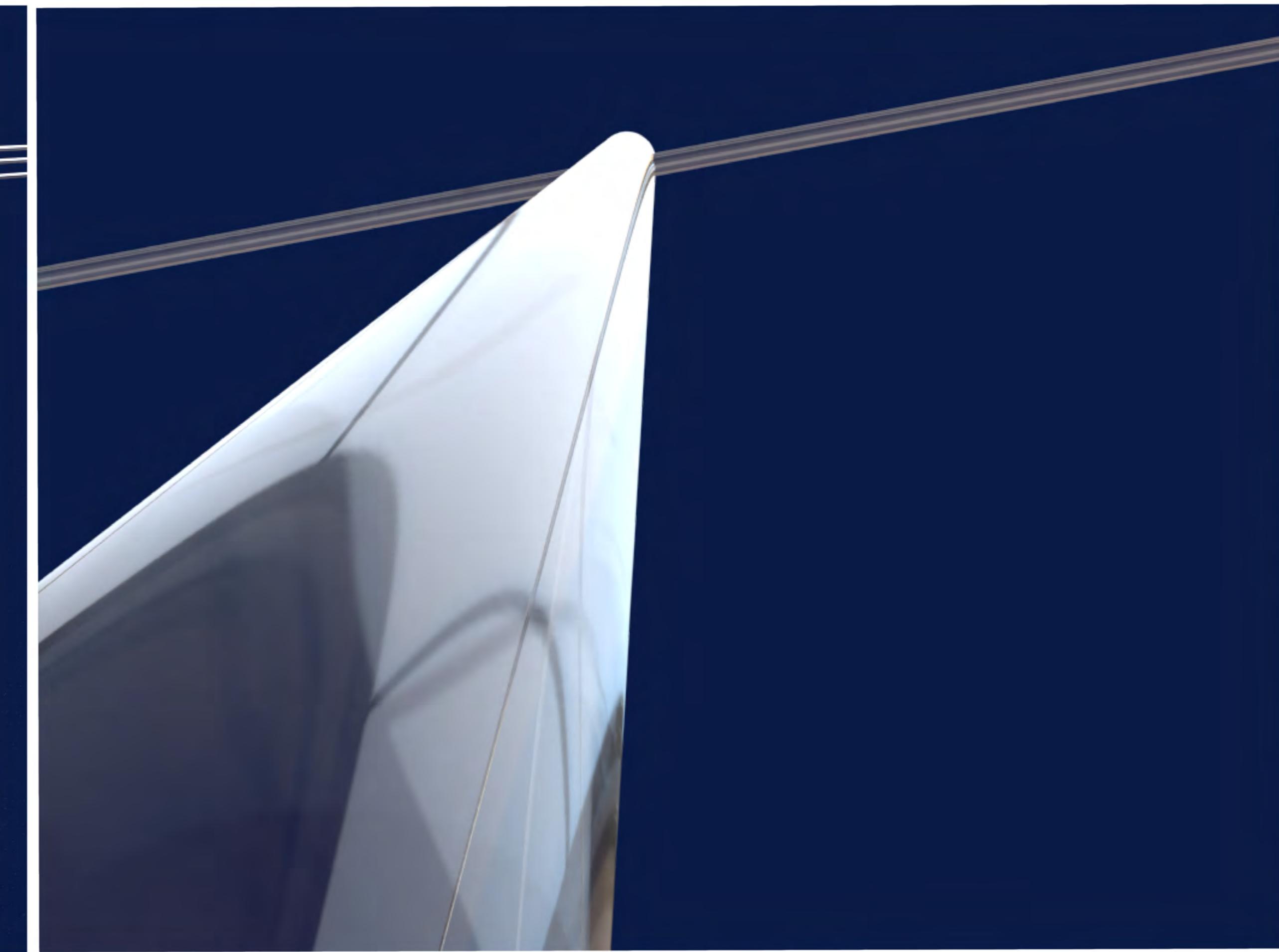
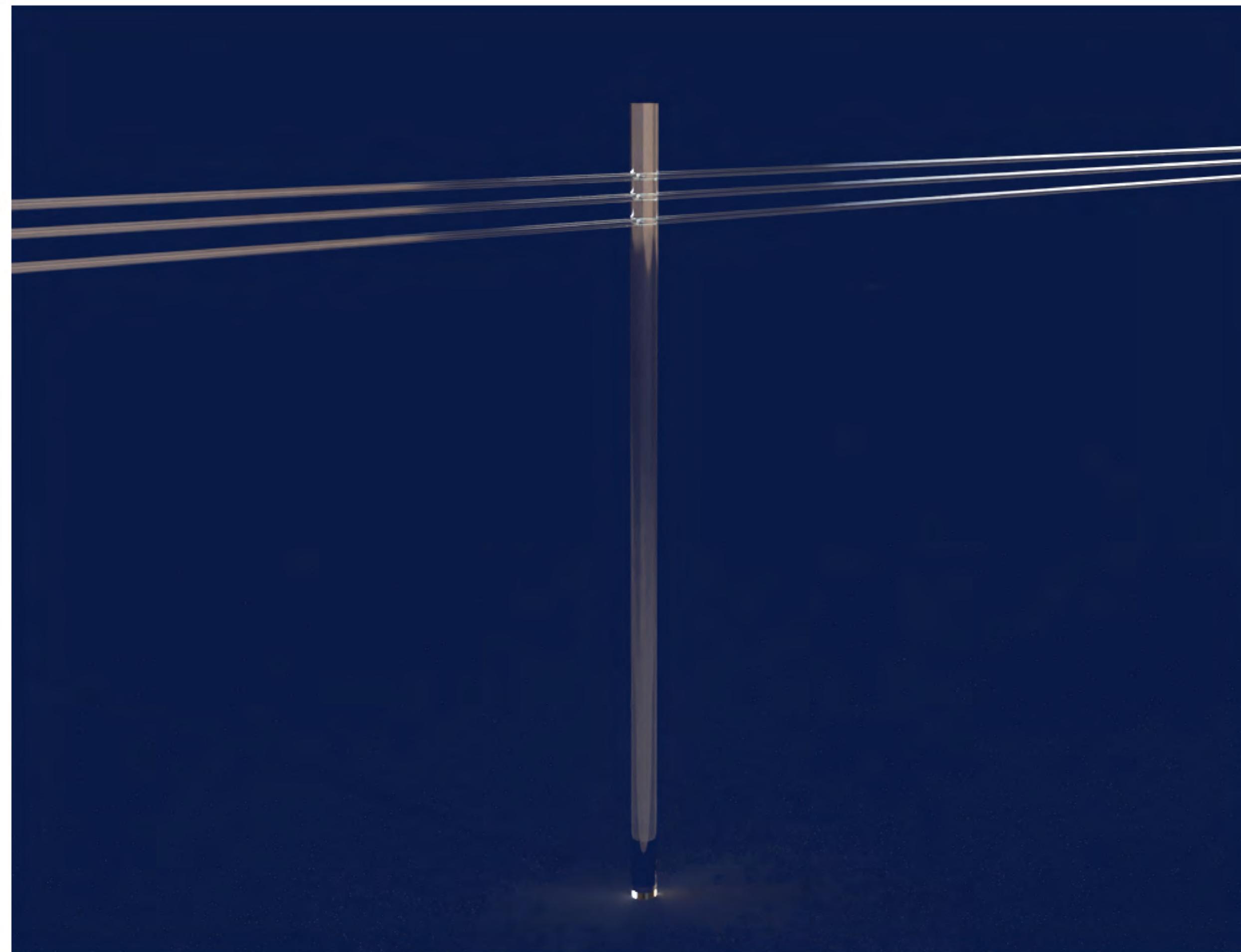


>Kinning Park





>a streetlight built in Dimension, rendered as glass:



>from below

>a wooden streetlight modelled near Greendyke St.



# Some more notes and thoughts on Serres, driving forwards ideas of messengers, transmissions and disappearances:

Quotes taken from an interview conducted by Hari Kunzru

MUTE VOL 1, NO. 4 – ANALOGUE CITY, <https://www.metamute.org/editorial/magazine/mute-vol-1-no.-4-analogue-city>

"I try to put a short circuit between the very ancient tradition of angels in monotheistic or polytheistic traditions, and the jobs now about message, messenger and so on. Because our job – your job is to receive messages, and to send messages in some respect. Your work is about messages. You are a messenger. I am a messenger. I am a professor. You are a journalist. You are an angel. We are angels. Our job is about messages."

"...the reason why angels are invisible is because they are disappearing to let the message go through them..."



"If you read the amount of books about angelology in the middle ages, if translate certain words into modern languages, you see that all the problems were about translation, about messages. These are exactly our problems today."

"we are living in the volatile transmission. This word 'volatile' is angelic form. The transmission of message, of code, of signal is volatile. We say now about money that it is volatile, it is turning into the transmission of codes, of messages."



>He reiterates that morning= death, nightfall=birth, that artificial light clears angels away.

>He is quite sure that the truest 'messages' appear in the dark----- thus the 'traces' occur in the street-light gaps, darker areas, between electrics.

> I like the idea of messages as a kind of lifeblood, and disappearance being a pre-requisite for a good transmission of the message. A positive framing of erasure---feels like it ties into Mark Fisher's idea of 'positive alienation', wherein a cultura experience erases your constructed identity, leaves you freer.

>Would seeing angels erase your identity? ...A medusa head.



I think what I like about Serres is this assertion that angels are a geographic entity, and he examines them through spacial language of weather, topography, localisation. Thinking of angels as a GEOGRAPHIC case study.

Also: Serres makes the point constantly that 'the best angels disappear', that they MUST vanish in order to be angels and carry their 'messages'. I guess this inverts the usual dynamic of apparitions/visitations, where seeing=believing, in a really nice way. Not-seeing= listening to messages! I think that's what I'm trying to get at with the way this project presents 'evidence' – the trick is that the 'evidence' was all already here, nothing new has been added to the street, just re-presented. So the evidence is false (as in, framed in a fictional way) but equally quite true to the real world, to the state of the street.

In this way, the angel is already gone (it is always already gone!). It is up to us to see the messages that are already here. in short: you can stop now, put down your brush! you don't need to search for angels– they're already here.

"I think that Deleuze is a geographer, and I am too a geographer. We are not historians."

a geography of angelic occurring?

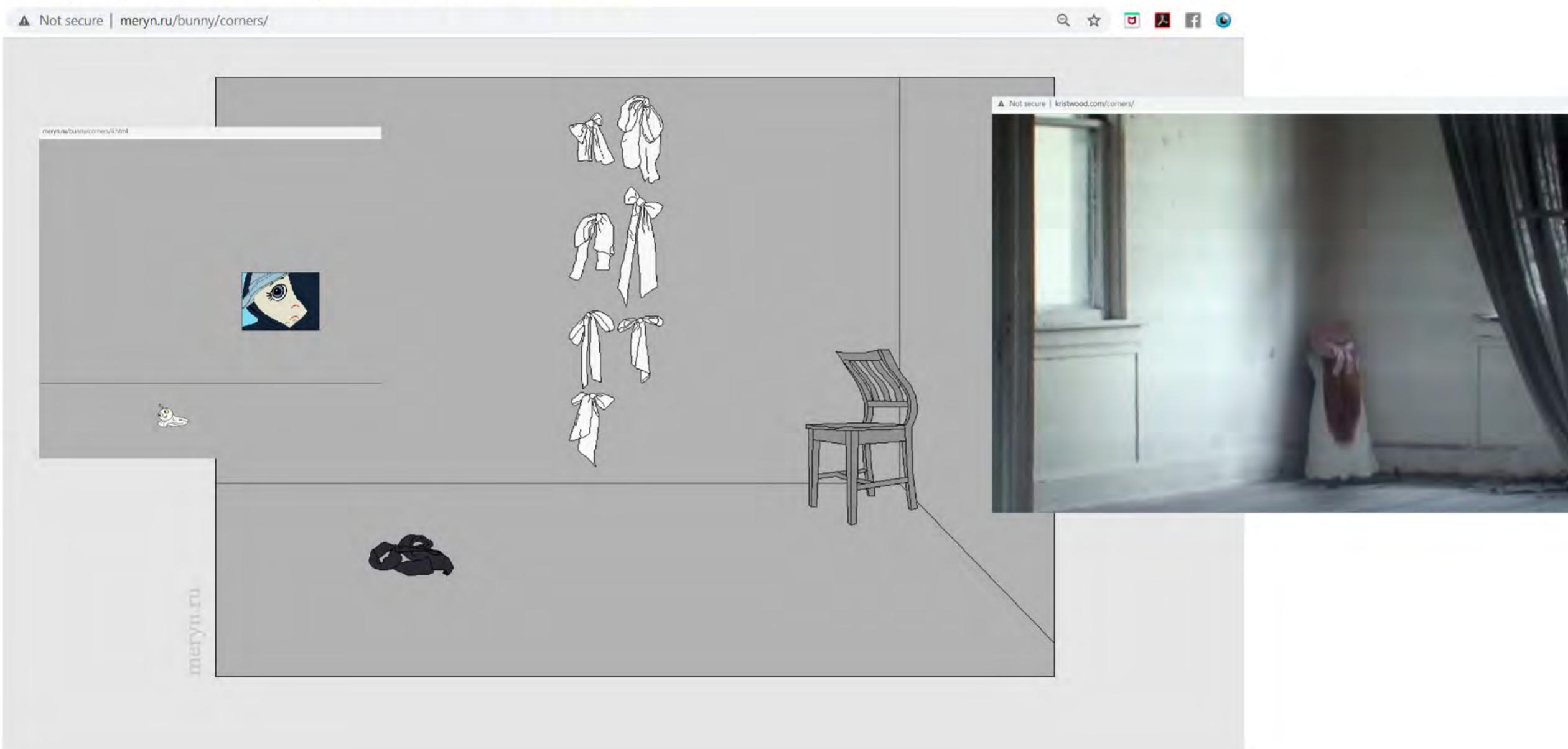
There is no origin, no point of departure for Serres. "We have always been travelling. I think that the human species is always travelling – we are the Dasein in the sky, not in the land. Do you see what I mean? We are wandering. This is not a new state of things. It is a very ancient state of things. I think the Dasein is in the atmosphere.

What do I mean by 'angel'?

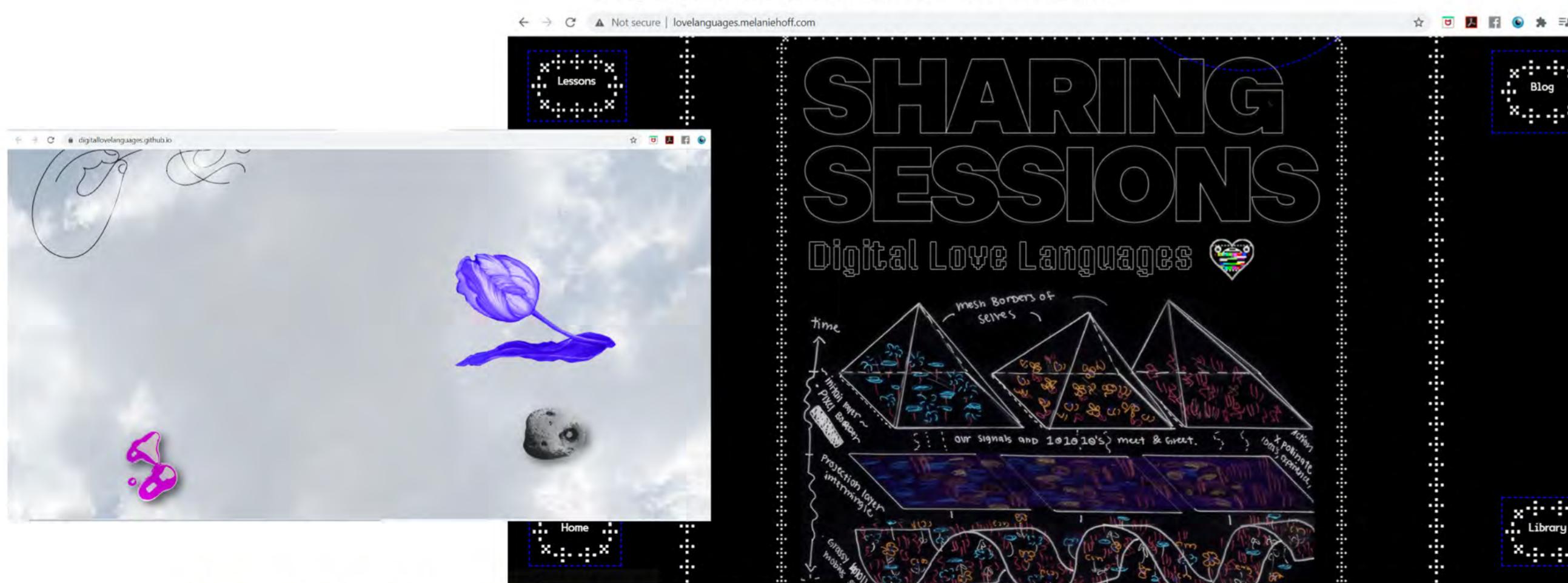
What animal?

# Websites used as inspiration, further artists research:

<http://melyn.ru/bunny/corners/>



<http://lovelanguages.melaniehoff.com/>

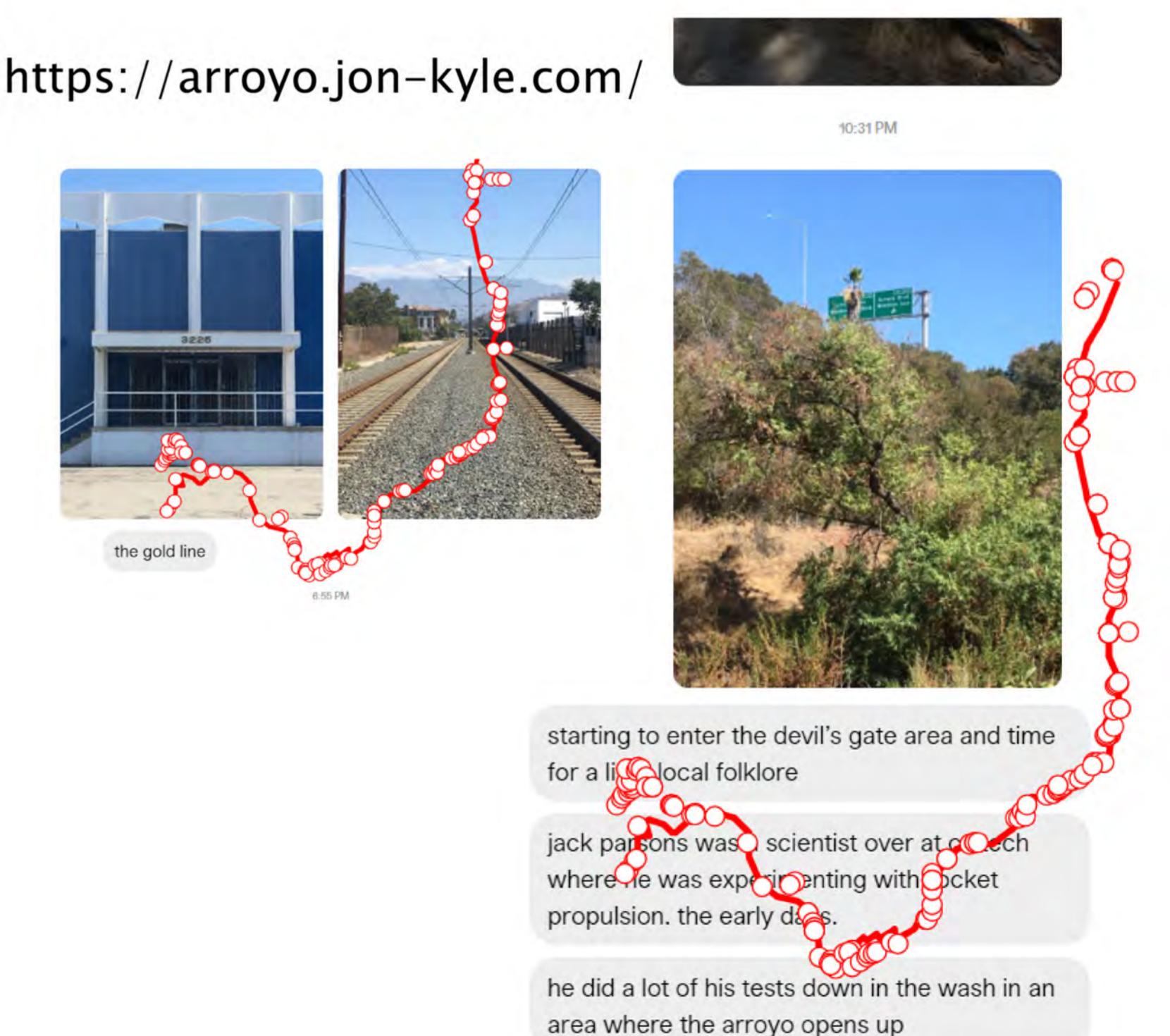


<https://digitallovelanguages.github.io/>

<https://solar.lowtechmagazine.com/about.html>

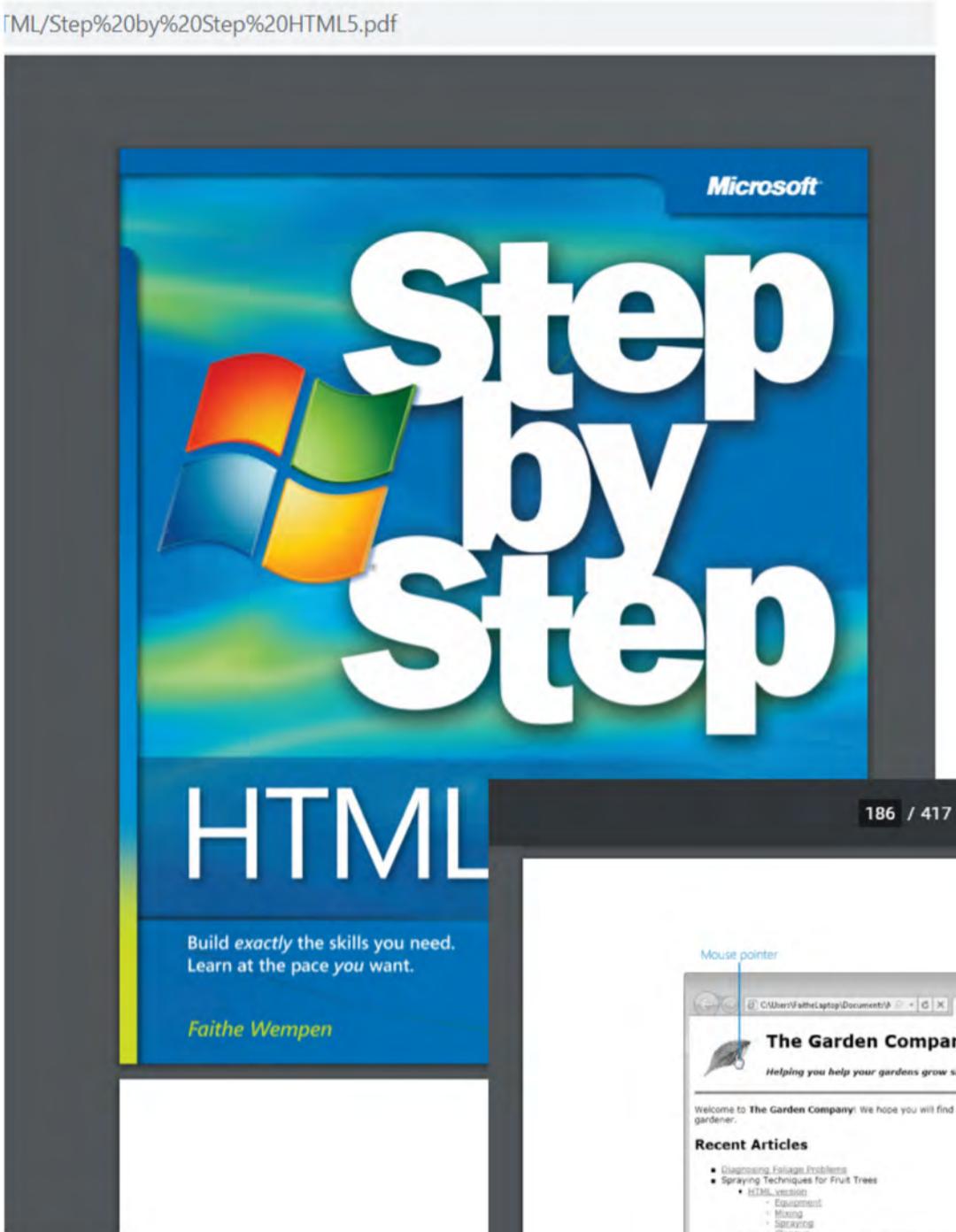


<https://arroyo.jon-kyle.com/>



# website development notes and sources:

## introduction to HTML:



A screenshot of a website for "The Garden Company". The page includes a note about using thumbnail graphics for better website performance. It shows a comparison between a full-size image and a thumbnail version of a tree graphic.

## contemporary web design

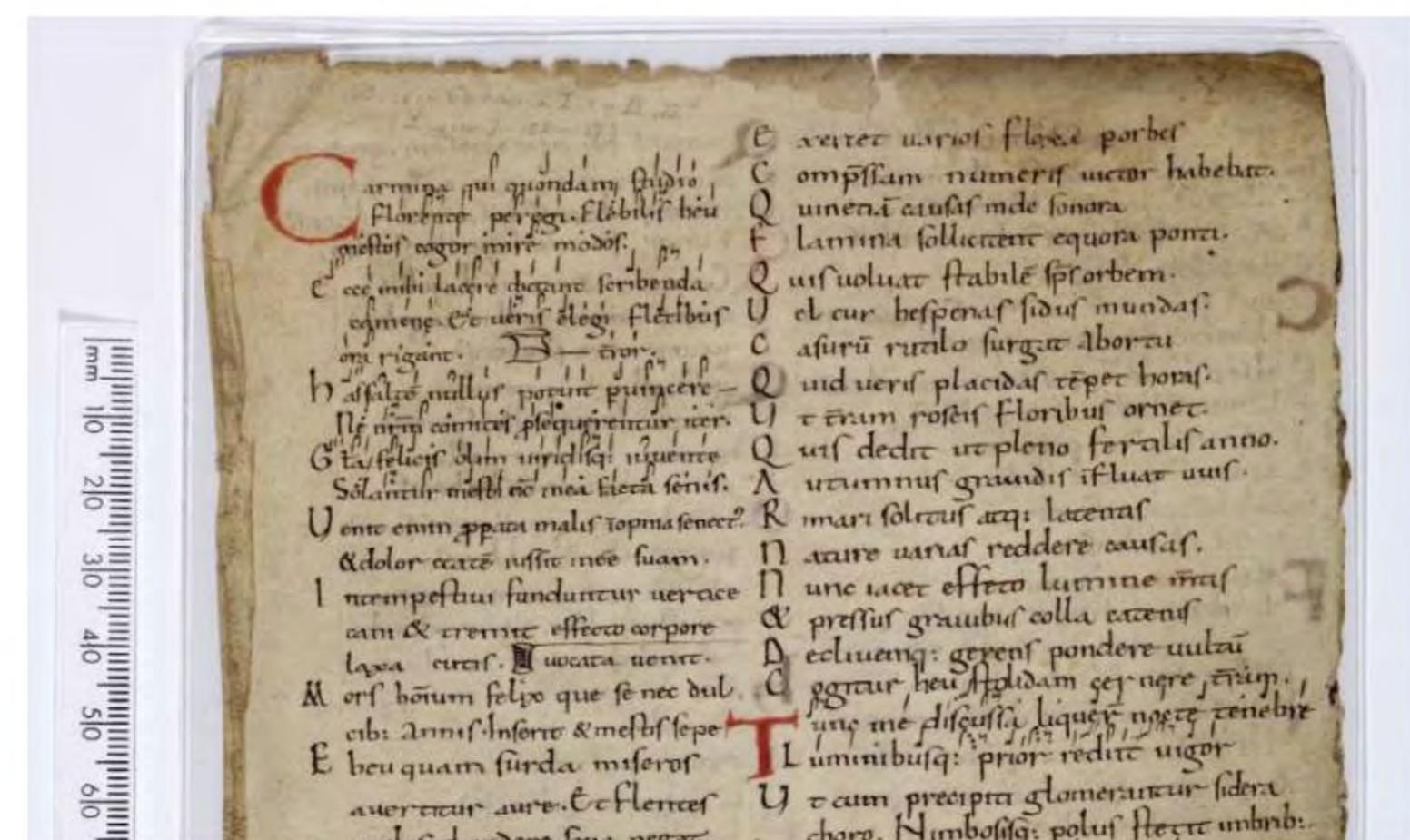


## antique books and documents



▲ A Manual of Mathematics (*Jinkōki*), by an unknown author. Photograph: Richard Lane  
Collection, Honolulu Museum of Art

## 1800s, display of catalogues and archives:



# Outcome: website 'Book of Traces' at <https://civicangelanimal.cargo.site/>

The image displays six screenshots of a website titled "BOOK OF TRACES" arranged in a 2x3 grid. The website has a purple header and footer, and a white central content area.

- Top Left:** Home page featuring a purple background with faint white line drawings of animal tracks and a quote: "...And how did the angel come to be an animal?". It includes links for "COLLECTED EVIDENCE" and "ABOUT".
- Top Middle:** Contents page showing a list of pages (01-06) and three small images of feathers.
- Top Right:** Contents page showing a list of pages (01-06) and three small images of feathers.
- Bottom Left:** Contents page showing a list of pages (01-06) and four numbered items (1-4) with labels: "PER TOOTH", "2/4 FOX MOLAR", "3/4 MYSTERIOUS RING", and a feather image.
- Bottom Middle:** Contents page showing a list of pages (01-06) and three numbered items (1-3) with labels: "MYSERIOUS HAIR", "2/2 MEASURED UP FOR THE RECORD", and a feather image.
- Bottom Right:** Contents page showing a list of pages (01-06) and three small images of feathers.

**BOOK OF TRACES**

FINAL ENTRY TO THE BOOK OF TRACES,  
CATALOGUED 01/10/20

LET THE RECORD SHOW DEFINITIVE PROOF OF ANGELS HAVING BEEN AND GONE:

IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THEY HAVE SINCE BECOME ANIMALS.

[ABOUT](#)

**BOOK OF TRACES**

This small 'Book of Traces' is based on some of geographer/philosopher Michel Serres' ideas about angel visitations, outlined in [Angels, A Modern Myth](#). In this book, Serres asks the question "...how does the angel come to be an animal?" p.103. I love this question, and try to approach it here. Serres also maintains that we sometimes have an obligation to disappear in the city, and that this is the key part of any angelic visit: "...the worst angels are the ones which are seen; the best disappear" p.106

Taking the form of a hypothetical logbook, the project converts Serres's propositions into the past tense. Here, the angel has already become an animal and disappeared. The book then has the task of finding the traces in its wake. In a way, it's an attempt to get into the some of the more melancholic or haunted subtext in Serres' book, and imagine what marks an angel-made-animal might leave on these Glaswegian streets.

Serres ultimately argues that a visitation by angels is a geographic event as much as a spiritual one. I like this reading, and have tried to put it at the centre of this project.

The images contain a blend of real objects and fictional 3D models, all drawn from the streets around the skies in the illustrated icons

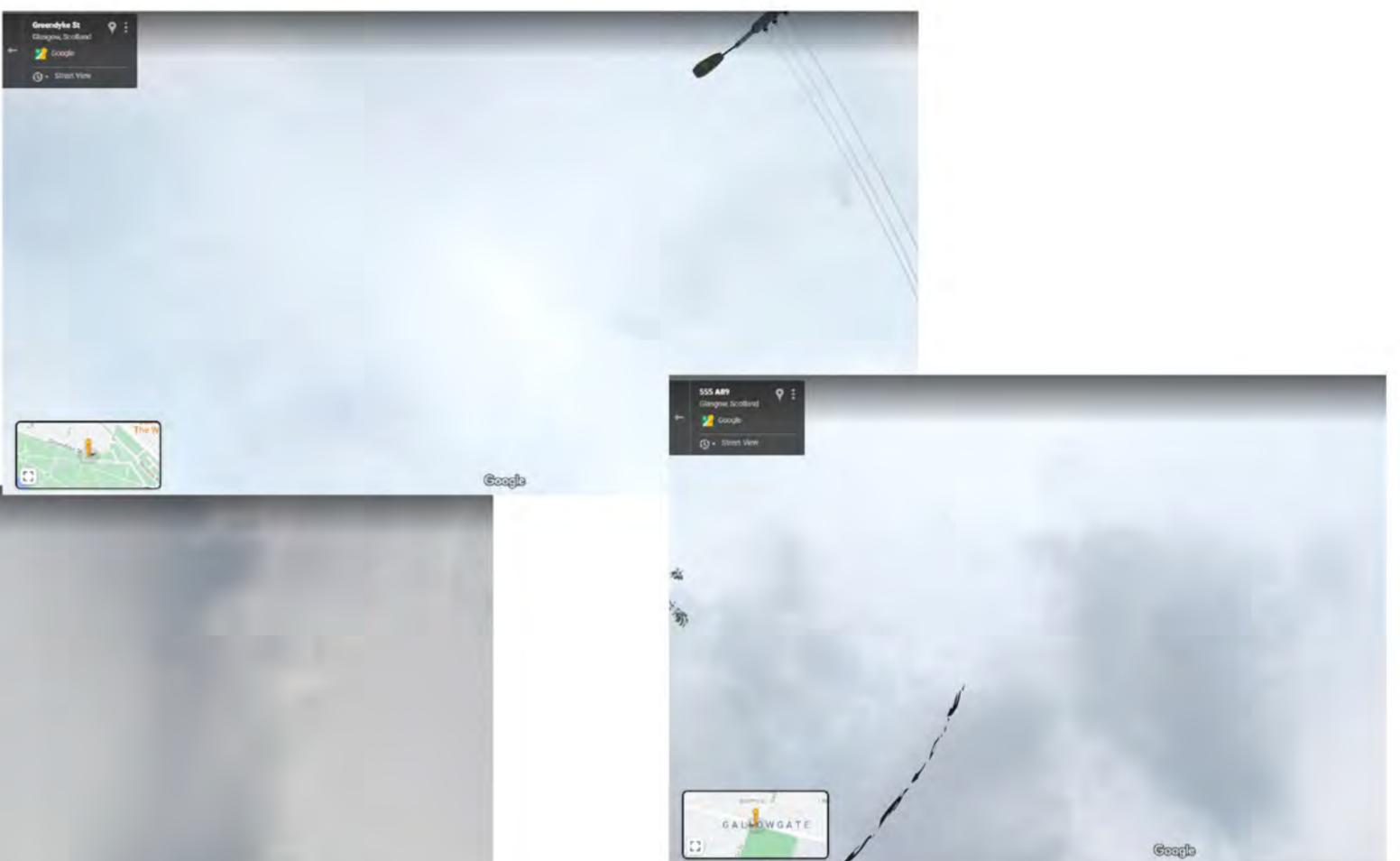
[ABOUT](#)

**BOOK OF TRACES**

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*Page N° 02*    *Page N° 05*  
*Page N° 03*    *Page N° 06*

external links:



[bb172f9bd1e0199378566023b6ab0cc.pdf](http://arena-attachments.s3.amazonaws.com/1674650/bb172f9bd1e0199378566023b6ab0cc.pdf?i=1517351213)

**ANGELS  
A MODERN MYTH**

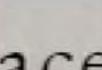
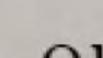
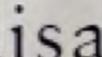
**MICHEL SERRES**

**BOOK OF TRACES**

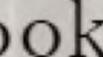
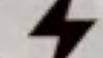
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*Page N° 03*    *Page N° 06*

## >Project Summation, in ‘ABOUT’ section on the site:

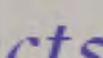
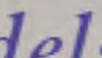
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