

Intersections

Decolonizing Art from Turtle Island
to The Islands of The Bahamas

Guided by: **Ilene Sova, Ashok Mathur**

Anantha Chickanayakanahalli | 30 May 2022



The Residency

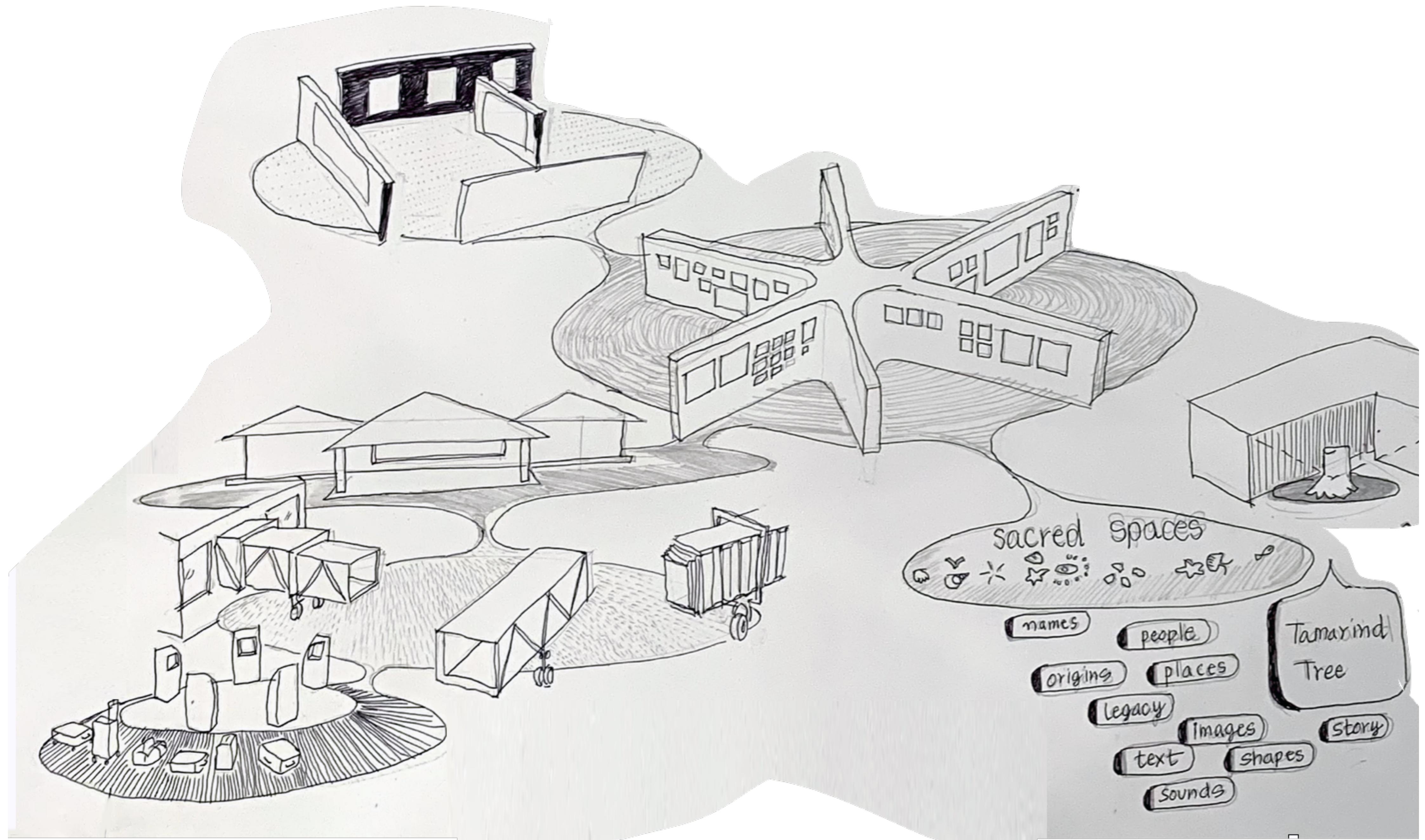


This trip has given me an opportunity to absorb, relate and reflect on the last five hundred years of Bahamas and its myriad representations, as seen in the works of Bahamian artists. I have learned so much and I can relate to so much here. There are things from my homeland I see here. There are Tamarind trees, Gulmohar trees (*Delonix Regia*) of which I have played under as a kid in Mysore, India. I grew up with a Gulmohar tree right outside my house. We have been exposed to so many textures, colours, flora and fauna, art works in the residency. Either there were direct translations of daily life, flora fauna of the islands getting translated into the art work or it was life of people and protest art finding its voice through art. Some of it has stayed with me. Also the painful history of this place comes to my mind, the Lucayans who don't stand here with us and also the sheer courage of the Bahamians who have faced the wrath of colonization.

Image Credit - <https://repeatingislands.com/2018/01/05/antonius-roberts-sacred-space/>

The Visual Journey

I want to stay with these textures for a little more while, these connecting visuals that can bring up conversations. These textures are from the photographs I have taken as we came in contact with them in our residency program. I want us to look around and respect each of them. As the meaning of respect comes from re-'spect'—To look again. I feel each material being locally available being harnessed for art is the kind of culture we should propagate. Let us bring our attention to them. Each material represented in a circle will reveal more art around you based on your proximity to it. If you were to stand in it, it should bring to your view of a few of the artworks made in those materials. It is like me asking myself, "Why should I eat an avocado here if it doesn't grow here? I can just eat plantain instead, right?". This work is me saying, "Let us stay with those materials and be true to them."





The design journey

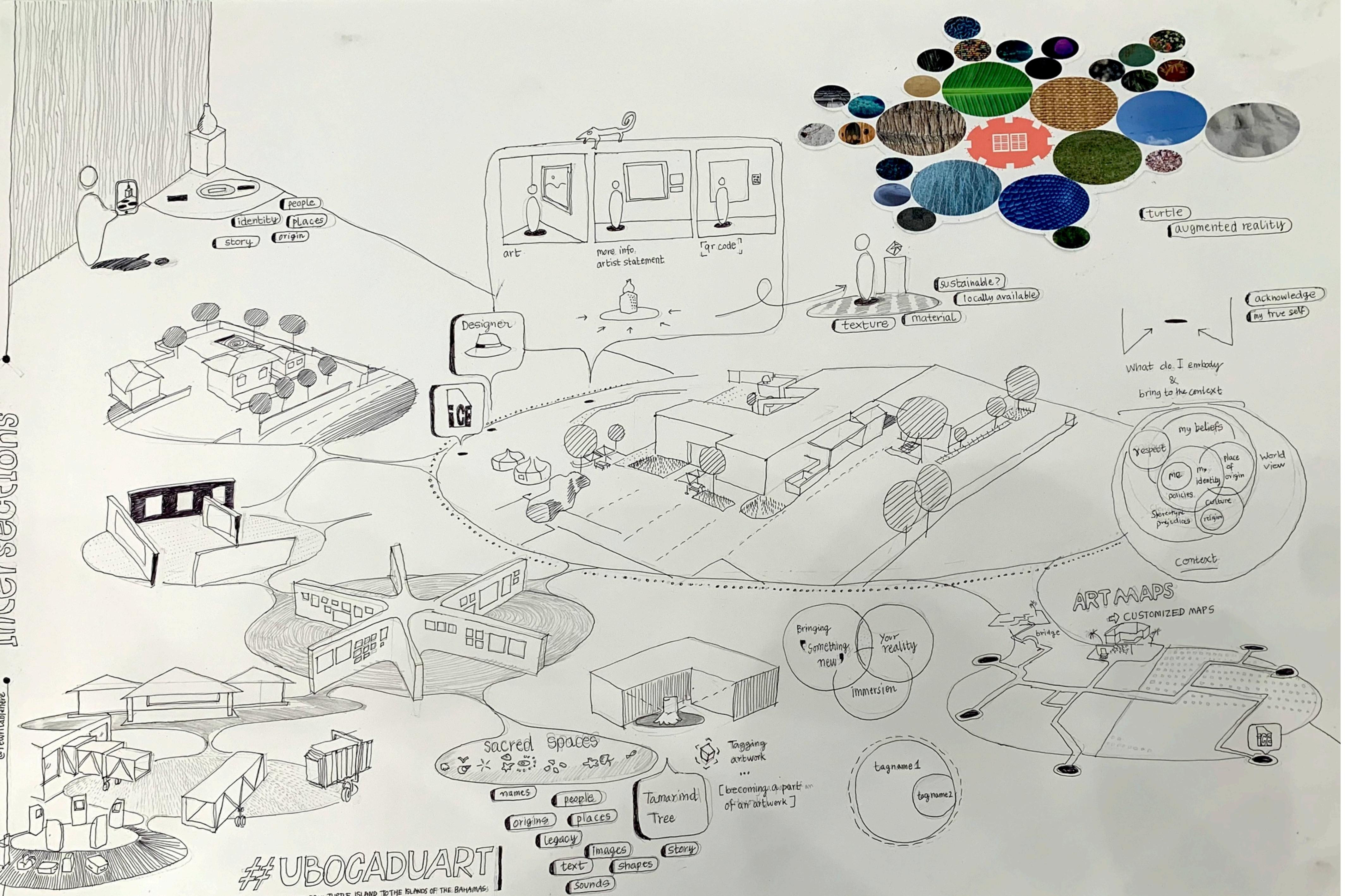
Wearing a designers hat, it took me a lot of time to be able to allow myself to create art work in the residency. As a designer you are trained to solve a problem. With that approach I was trying to see what are others experiencing and where can I come in to transform their creative experiences. Following are two concepts

intersections

@revisitablene

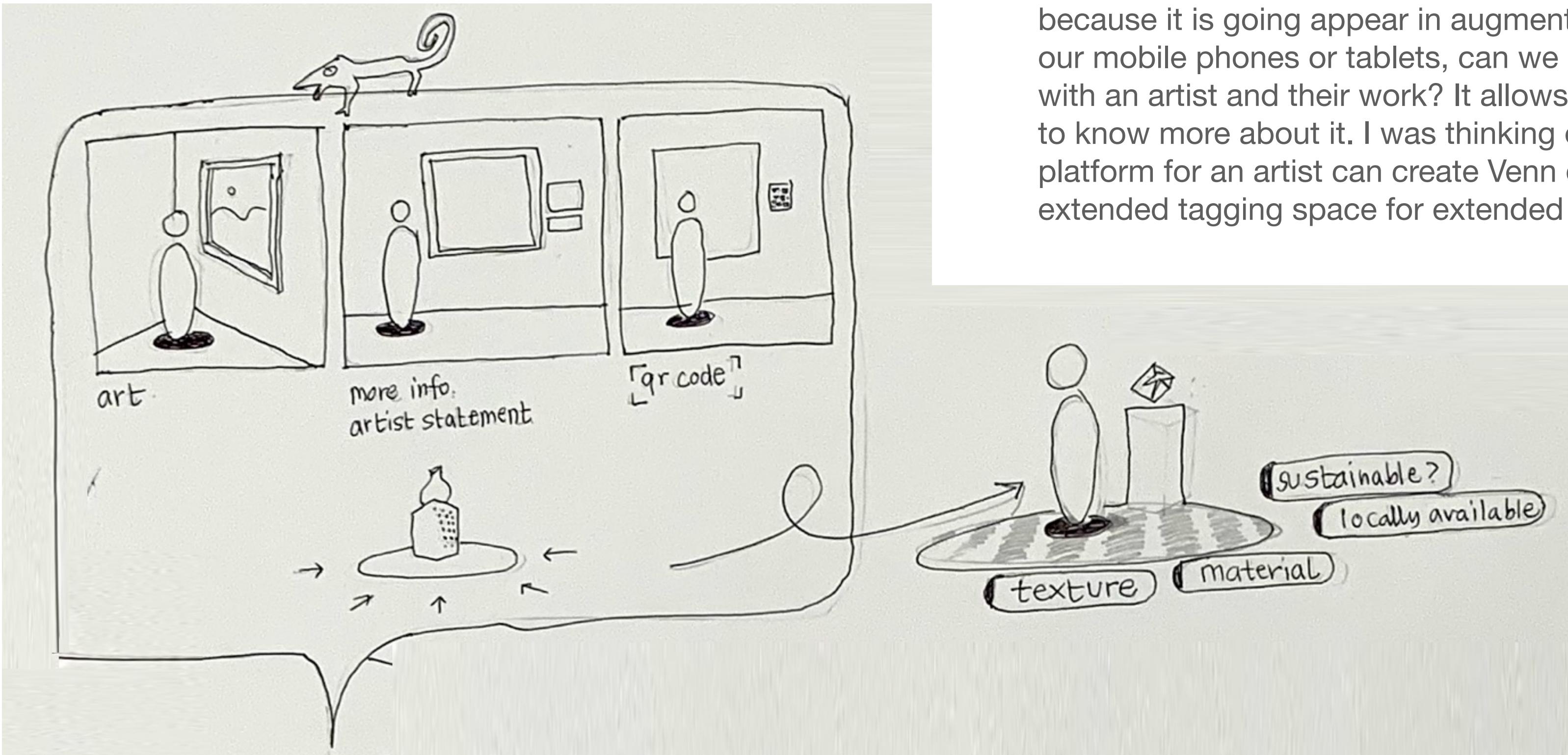
#UBOCADUART

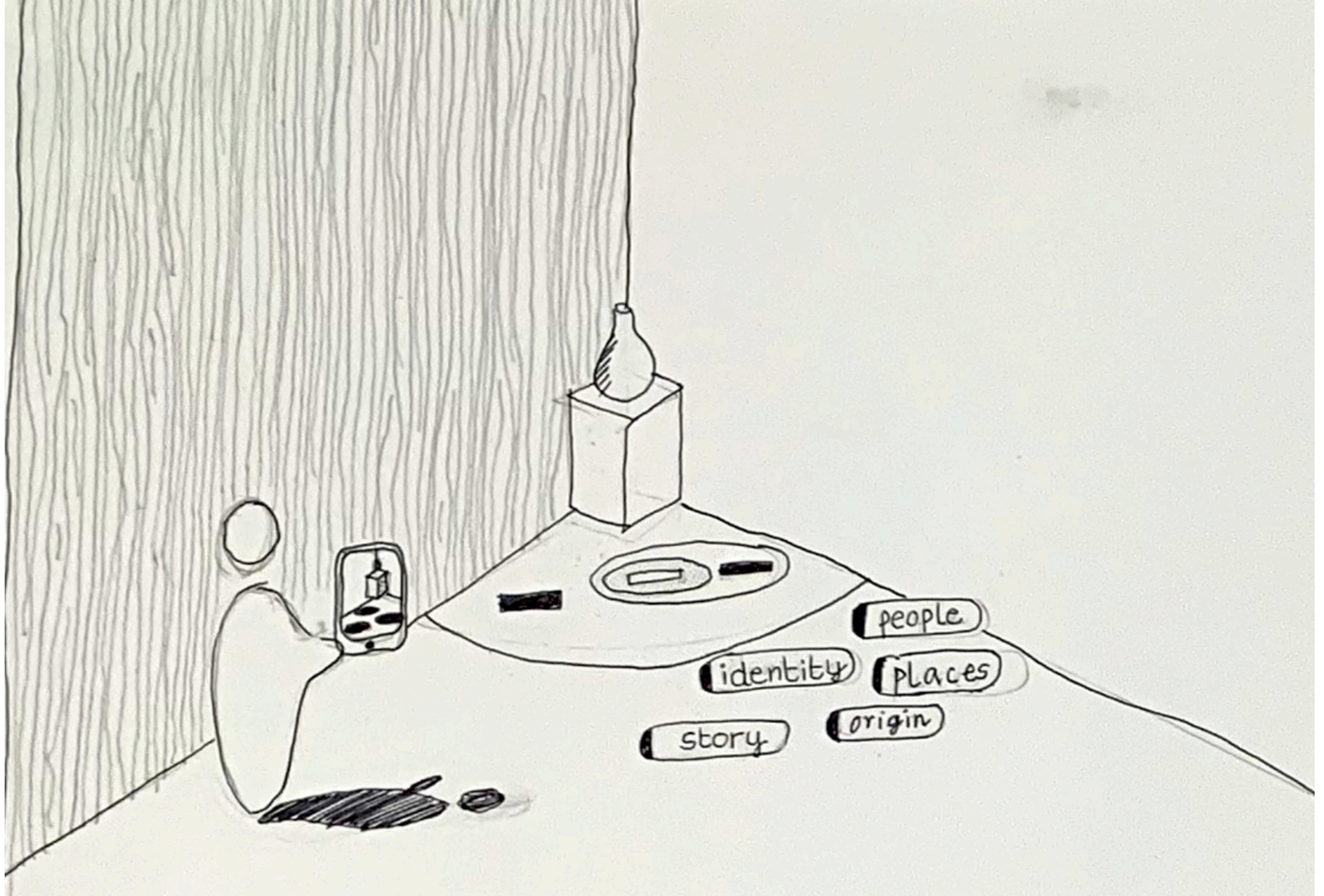
DECOLONIZING ART FROM TURTLE ISLAND TO THE ISLANDS OF THE BAHAMAS



1. Gallery experience

I tried to see if there was a possibility of extending the conversation an artist intends to create in their art work out onto the space where it is curated. This extension is not only not going to overshadow the existing art because it is going appear in augment reality. And using this technology in our mobile phones or tablets, can we create this sort of a new relationship with an artist and their work? It allows anyone who is relating to the artwork to know more about it. I was thinking of an experience of creating a platform for an artist can create Venn diagrams outside the artwork for this extended tagging space for extended storytelling.





people

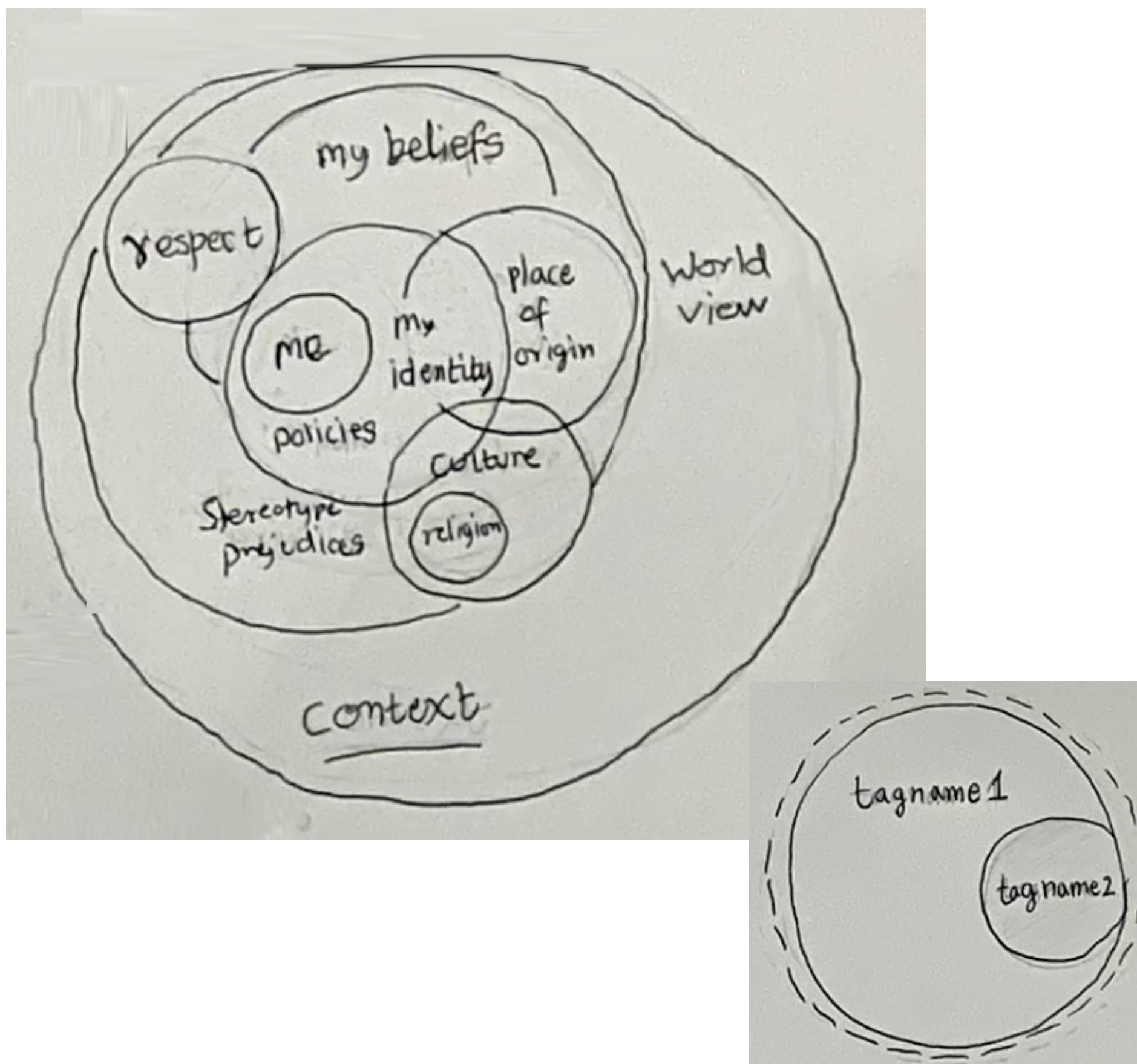
identity

places

story

origin

Venn diagrams

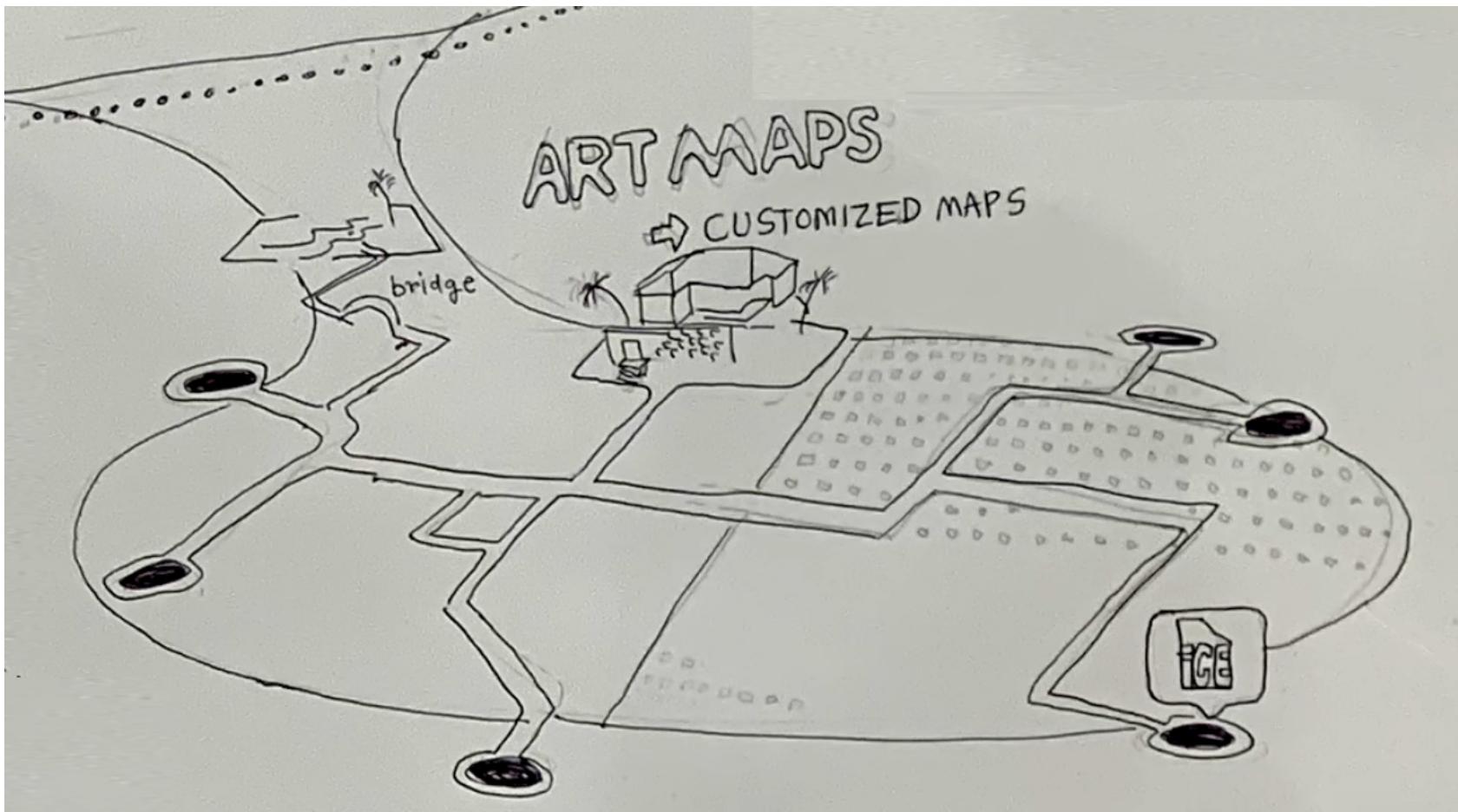


John Venn used this style to depict logical relation between sets in 1880. It became popular for teaching set theory and illustrating simple set relationships in probability, logic, statistics, linguistics and computer science.

Venn diagrams can help us place things out in 2d spaces and are a great way visualize things for comparison, working with proximity of concepts and showing contrast of multiple subjects. For visualizing art, artists and cultural and real-world relationships and challenges — creating a visual conversation with the viewer and contexts could be done in Venn diagrams.

By placing a name or an image or an artefact in Venn circles we can represent concepts like social justice, critical methodologies, Indigenous knowledges and visually create relationships in them without creating a sense of hierarchy. This itself may be the greatest advantage of using the style of representation. Consider each Venn circle holds one concept. If we were to place one Venn circle inside another, there is a sense of belonging that is established in there and less of which is inside which. Although there is a super set and a subset, because all of them can be laid out symmetrical in all directions in 2d, it could be a work around for something going up and something coming below.

2. Contextual Maps



I tried to see if there was an easy way to make contextual maps where the required important aspects of the map can be highlighted and the ones that don't relay information can be scaled down in visual hierarchy as well as scale. This would allow anyone to create stories around places, things and give anchors for greater immersion and share contextual insights.

3. The Turtle

I created an augmented reality sculpture at Project I.C.E. (The Bahamas) because the medium allows one to walk into a space and get immersed into what's being shown to them like a material. So creating a conversation on local materials was an approach that came up naturally there at the residency. I used the shape of a turtle for this 2d sculpture because during our visits in the residency we saw a turtle at Clifton Pier and that is so deeply imprinted in my memory of Nassau.





Thank you.