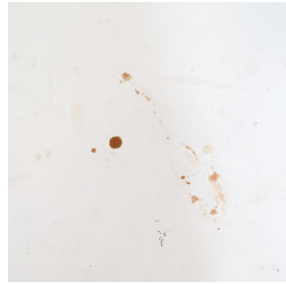


Échoes in the Rental world



Contents



01: *Whispers of the Walls*



02: *Exploring the Body-Space Relationship Through Performance*



03: *Ethnographic Study of Everyday Objects in Rental Housing*

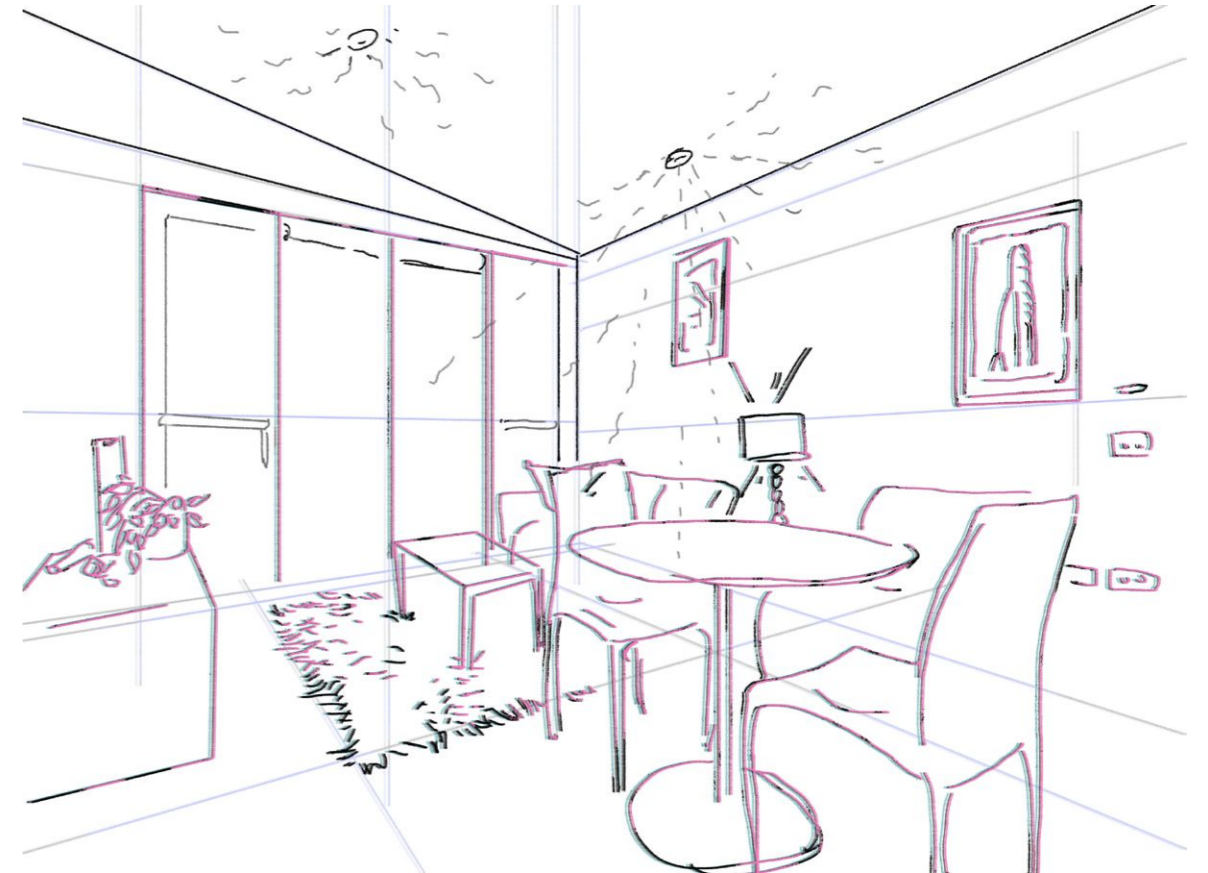


04: *Mutual Influence Between Successive Tenants*



05: *Female International Students in London Rental Housing*

About the project



In the vast rental market of London, the experiences of female international students are often overlooked. This project explores intimate stories unfolding within a small area of their temporary residence.

Renting apartments is an important space for female international students to establish their lives and identities. The temporary nature of rental apartments conceals their profound significance as a repository of memory and identity. For many people, especially international students exploring complex new cultures and fiercely competitive housing markets, these temporary spaces have become powerful places to showcase themselves. Through the integration of personal ethnography, interviews, photography, video, and performance art, my project investigates the interplay between memory, identity, and space in these rental properties.

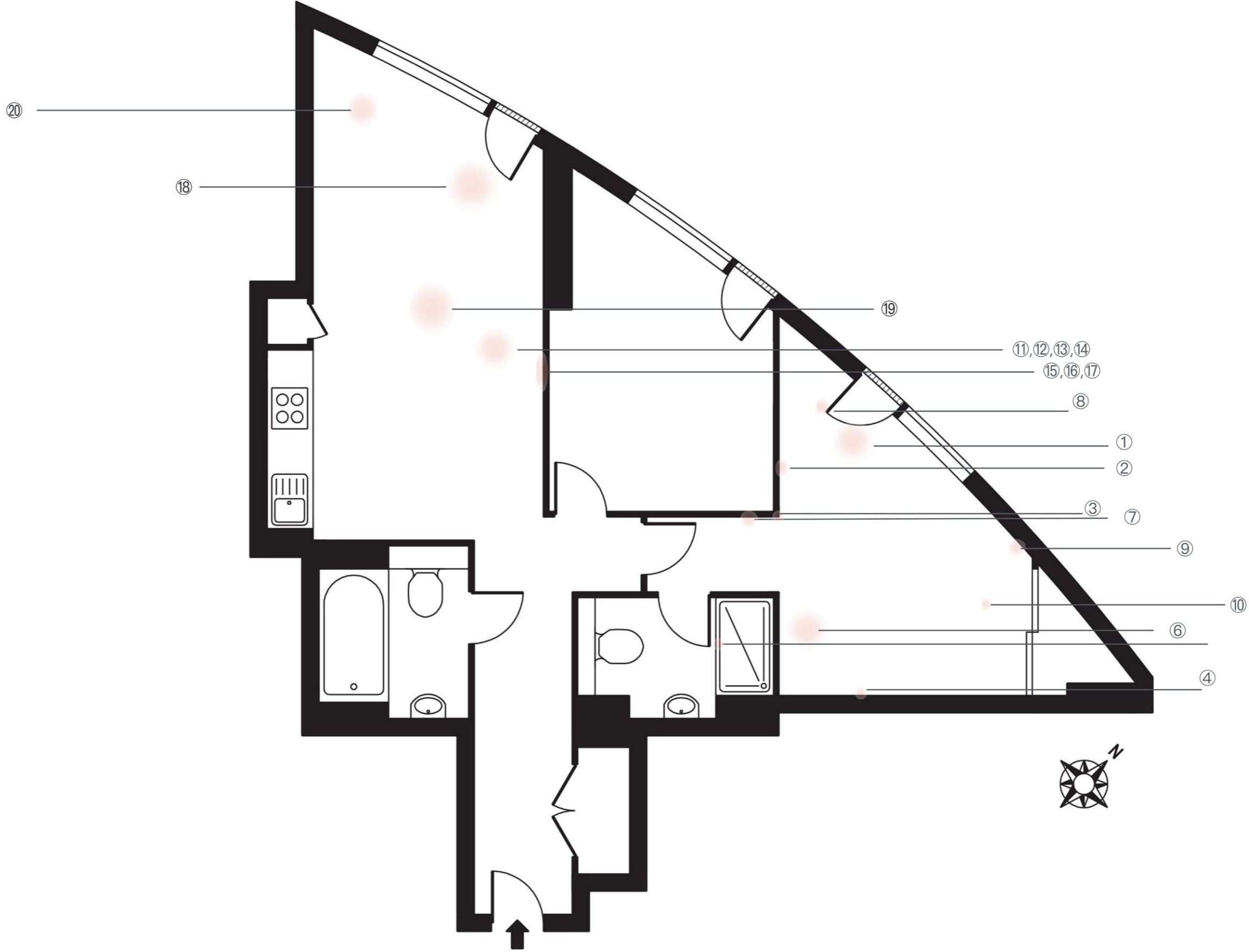
It examines how physical and emotional traces in these spaces reflect and shape individual and collective identities, revealing how past tenant experiences, gender, and personalized spaces promote self formation in temporary environments. Ultimately, this project emphasizes the importance of leased space as a place where personal emotions, cultural backgrounds, and social identities intersect and express themselves.

The project focuses on 1. how traces left by past tenants are linked to the experiences of subsequent tenants. 2. the role of the body in shaping and experiencing space. 3. how women personalize rented spaces in order to express their own identities.

01: Whispers of the Walls



Traces Map



①



Bedroom carpet with brown spots
Brown eyeshadow spilled on the floor

②



Linear stains on the west wall
Unknown cause of formation

③



Bedroom walkway wall
Scratched by boxes and large objects

④



A flash of brown on the south-east wall.
It appears to be the sap of a swatted insect.

⑤



The bathroom door.
Each time the door was hit hard
by the other side, causing it to
dent inwards

Partially torn carpet
Yellow stains have been vigorously removed and,
although trimmed, still appear to be uneven.

⑥

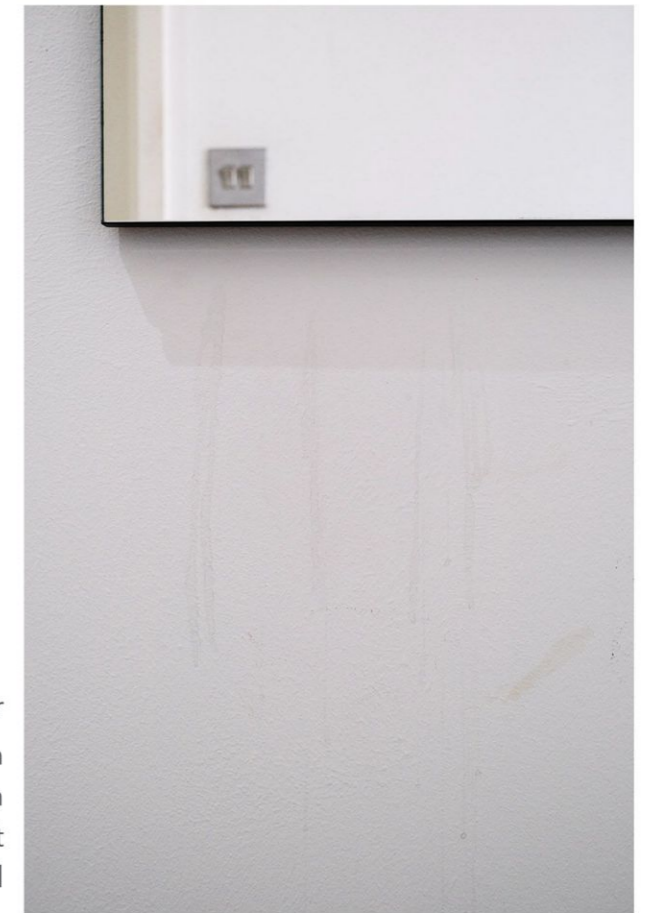


⑨



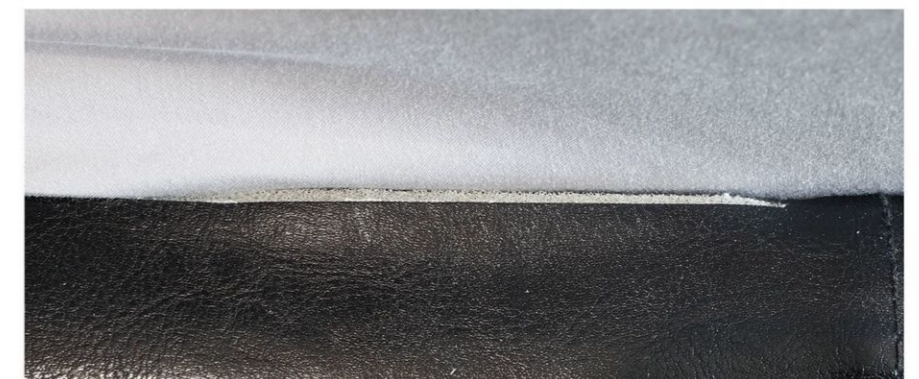
The wall by the window
At a height of
approximately 1.6 metres,
the wall has been scratched
with a coloured paintbrush.

⑦



Wall below the mirror
When cleaning the full length
mirror, the cleaning solution
stayed down the glass and left
water marks on the wall

⑩



Right side bed
The right side of the
bed is partially
scratched on the
leather part of the
bed, a very straight
line of scratches.

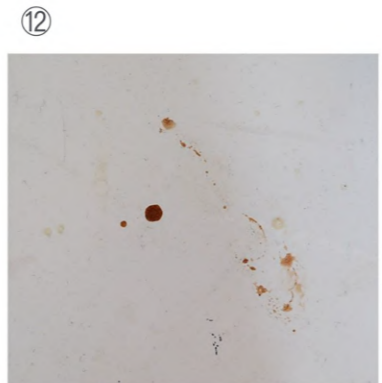
⑧



Carpet indentation
The desk is placed in one place for a
long time and the legs of the desk
leave an indentation in the carpet.



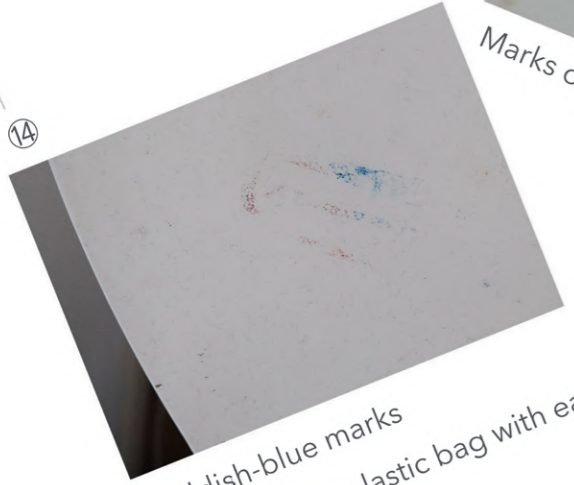
11
Red mark in the upper left corner
Red gunk left by an object with a sticky



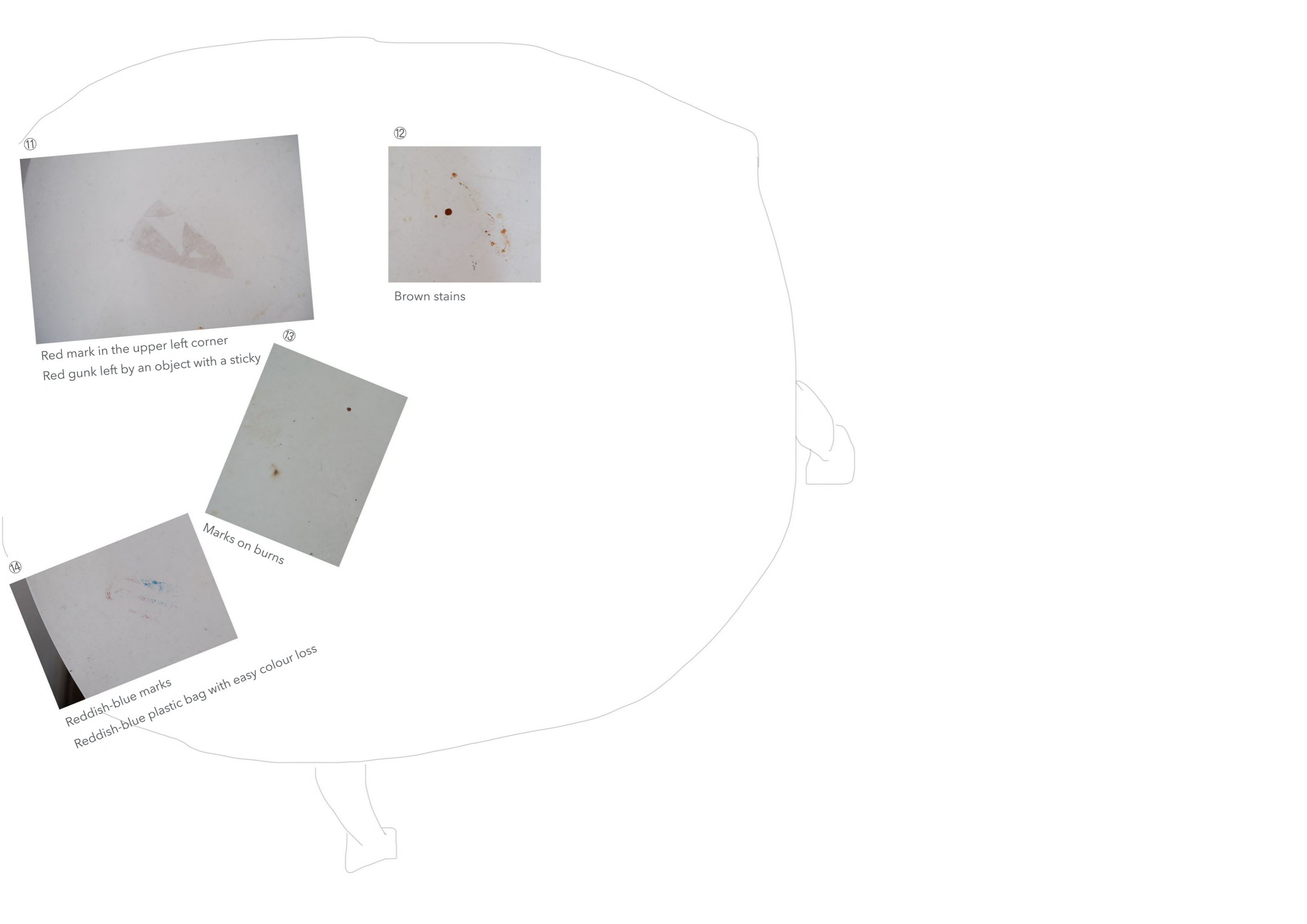
12
Brown stains



13
Marks on burns



14
Reddish-blue marks
Reddish-blue plastic bag with easy colour loss



18 Black Curved Curve



19 Black double straight line



20

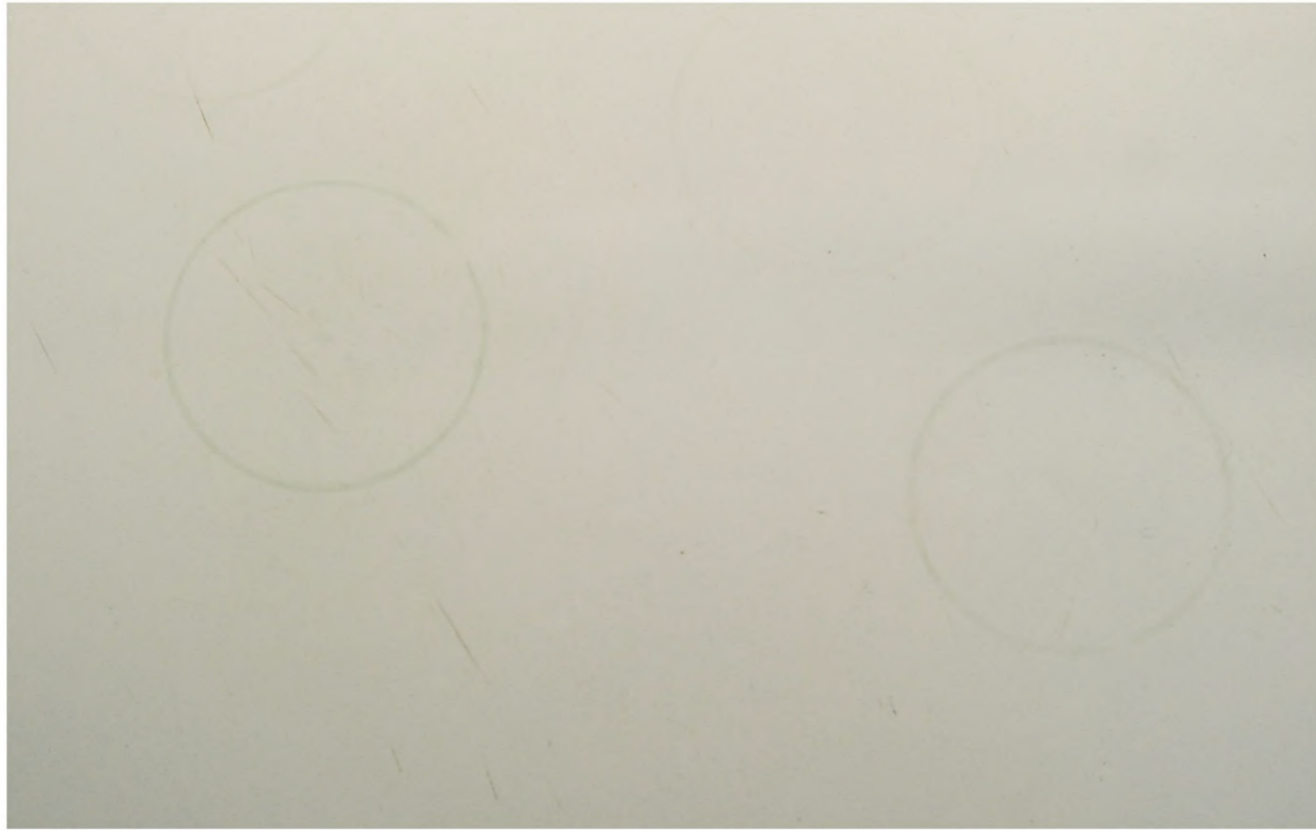


Black thin line

21



22



On the kitchen countertop, two circular marks, presumably juice left along the walls of a cup, imprinted on the tabletop.

23



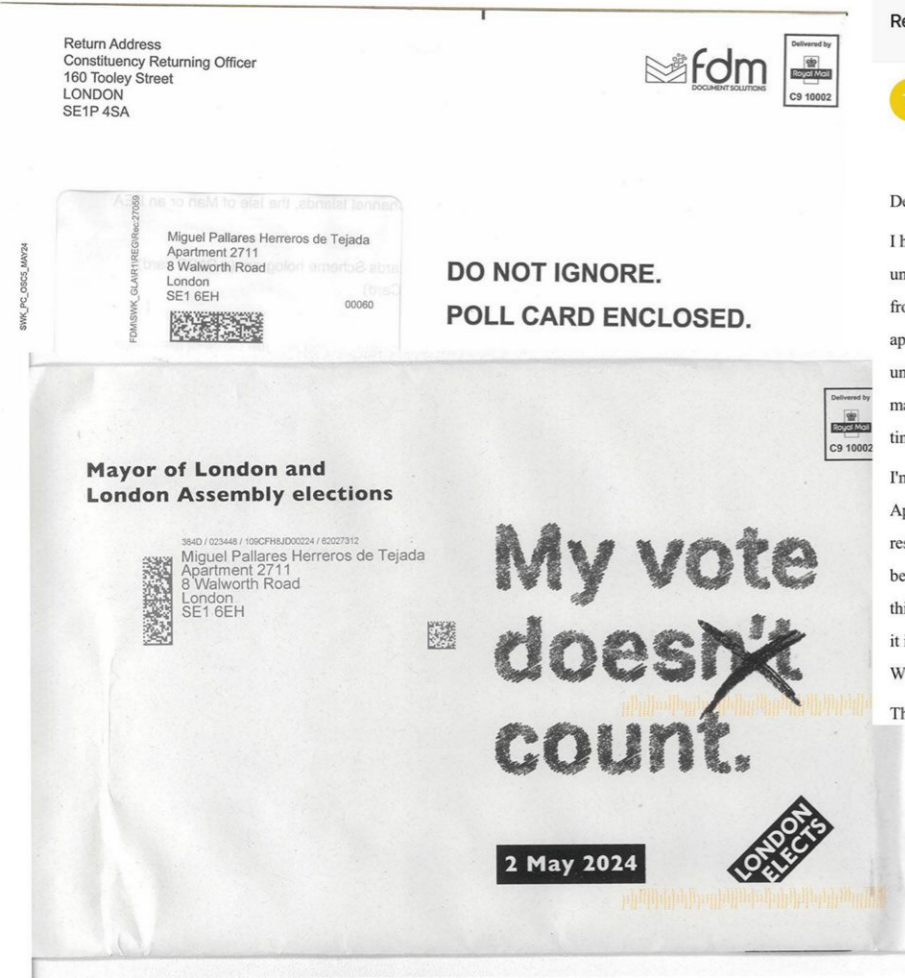
White burn marks on induction hob

24

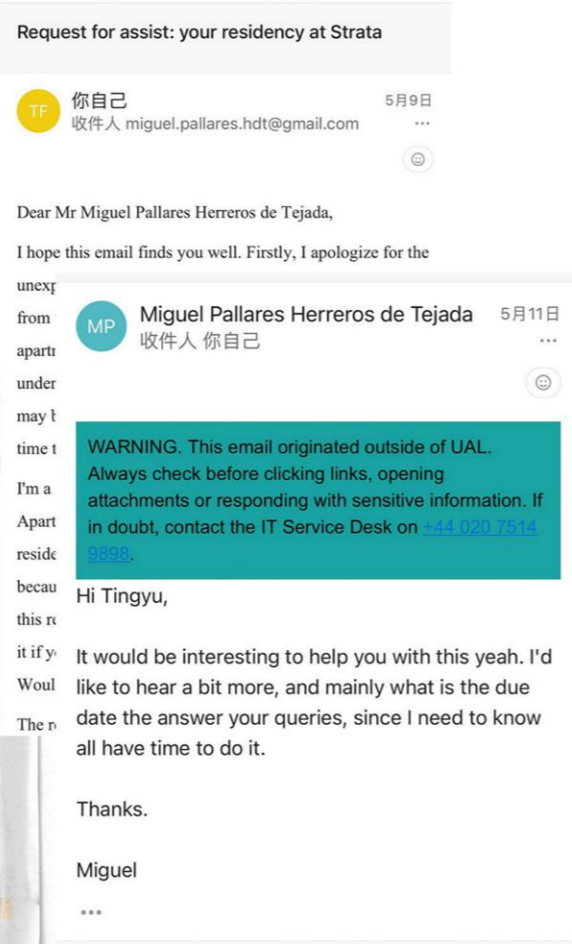


Scratches on the metal side of the kitchen countertop

The link between me annd previous tanent



former tenant: Mr Miguel Pallares Herreros de Tejada



former tenant: Mr Francesco Murracini



former tenant: Dr C Thomson



former tenant: Agate Grafa

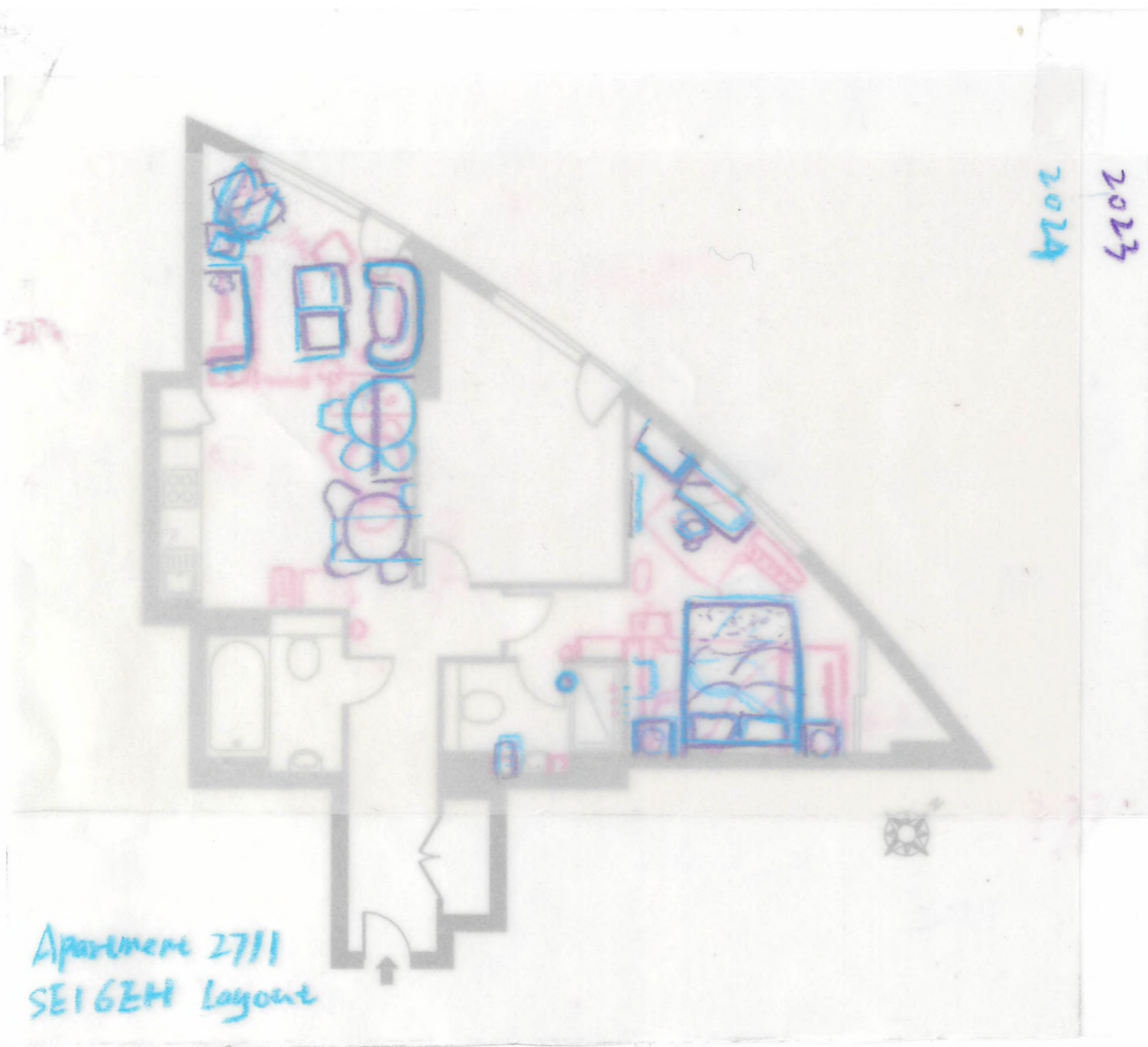


Former tenant: HAOSEN WANG



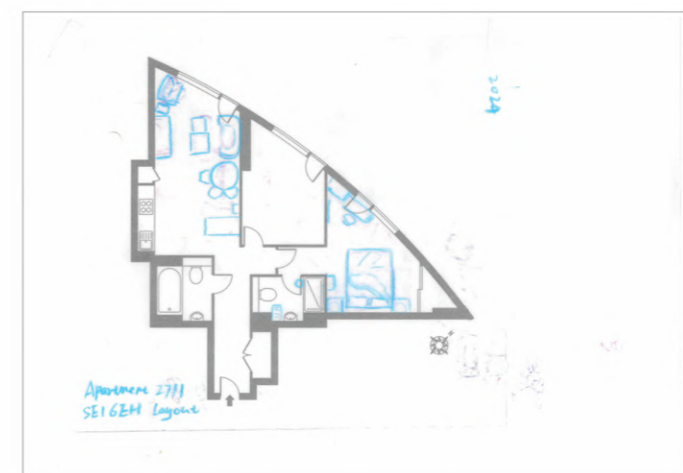
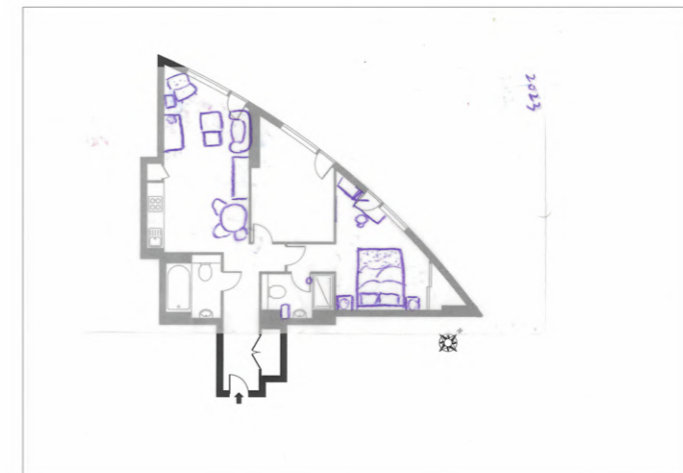
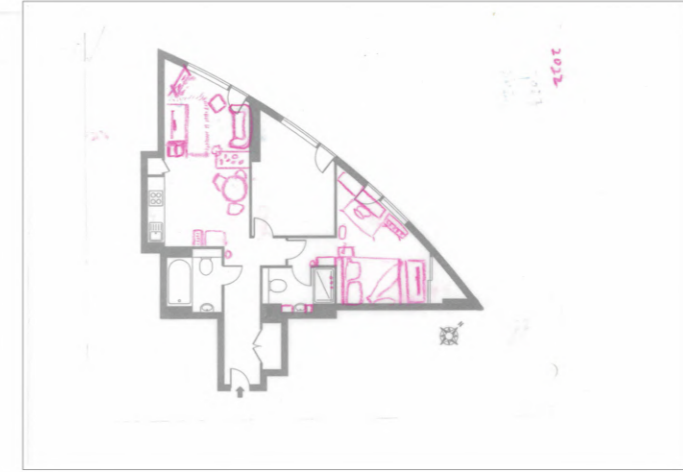
Former tenant: De heer C.K. Chow

2021-2024 Changes in space layout



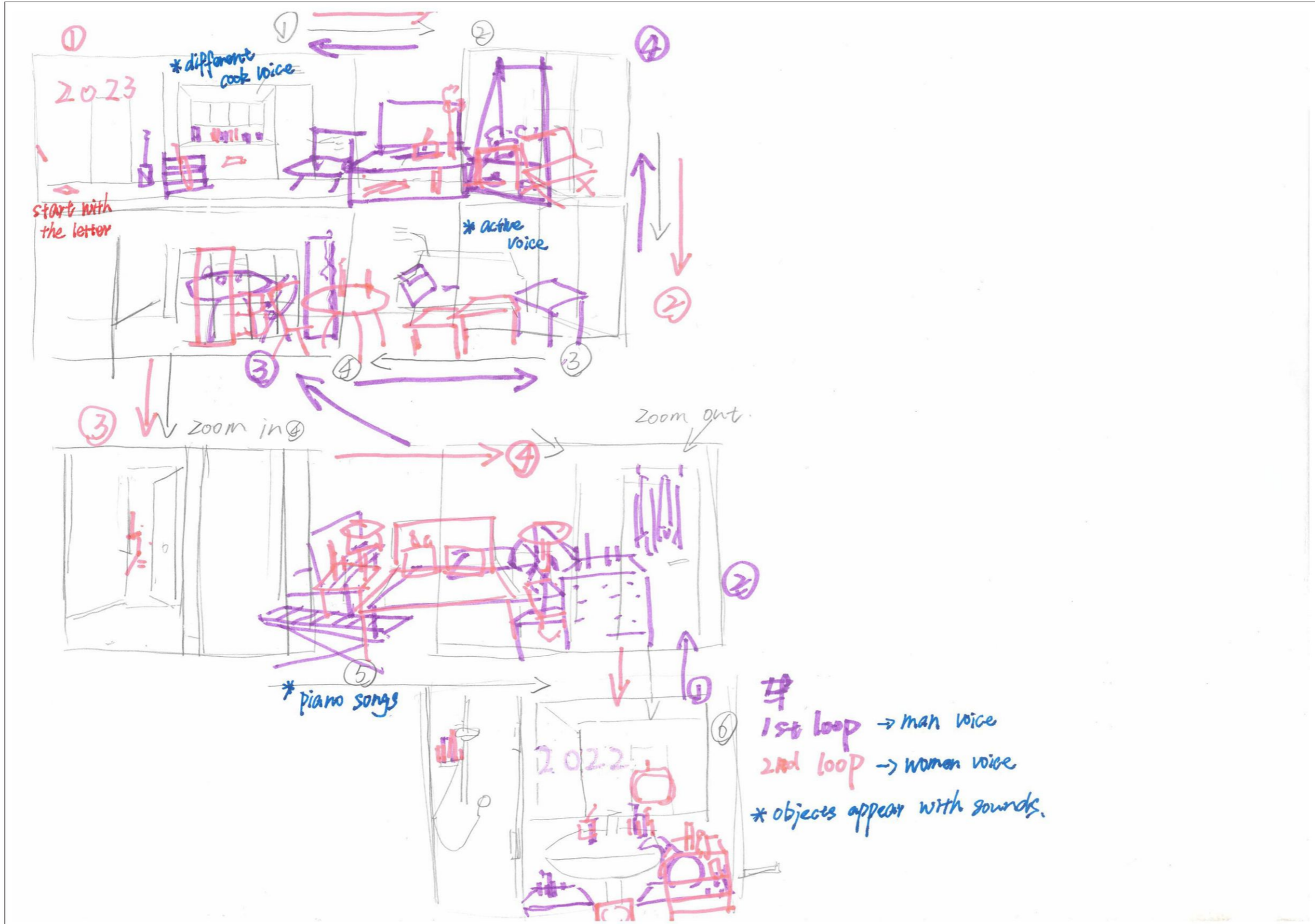
Apartment 2711
SEIGEM layout

2022
2023
2024



Apartment 2711
SEIGEM layout

Storybord





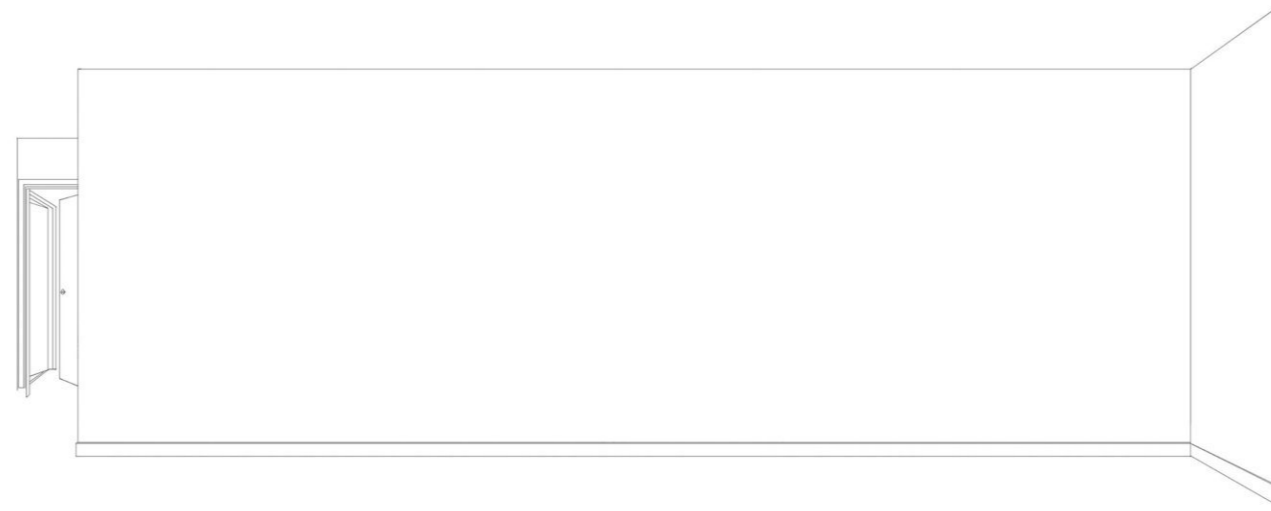
Primitive



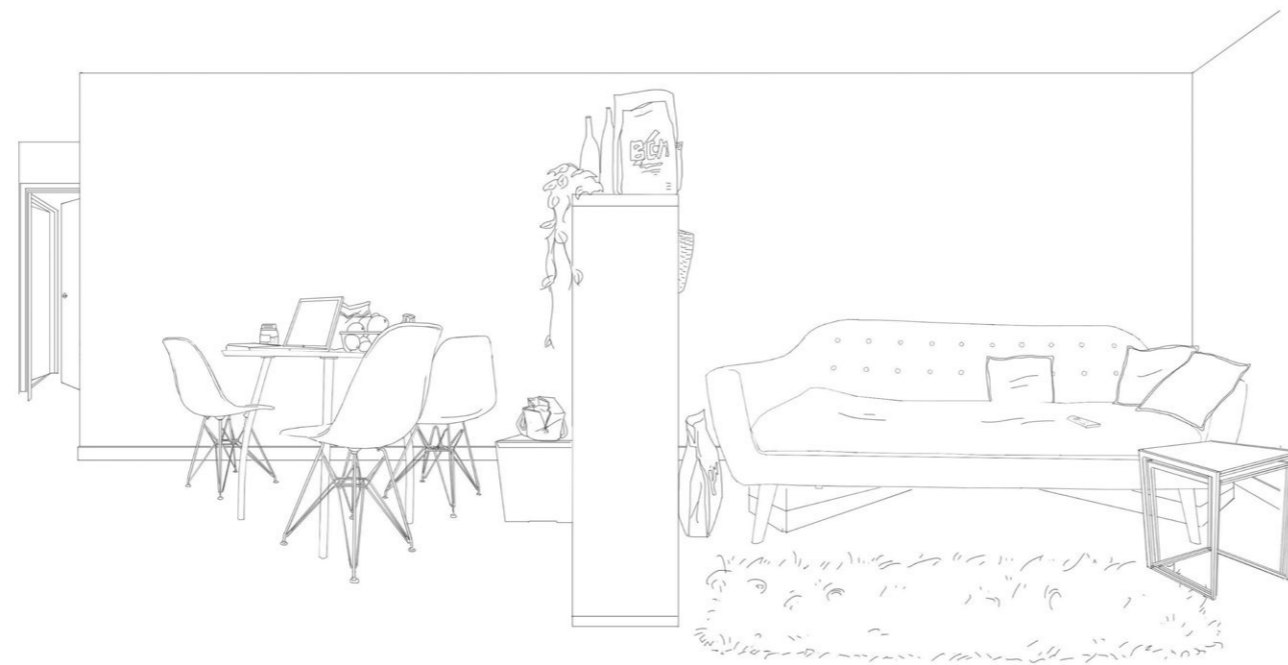
2021.9-2023.9



2023.9-2024.5



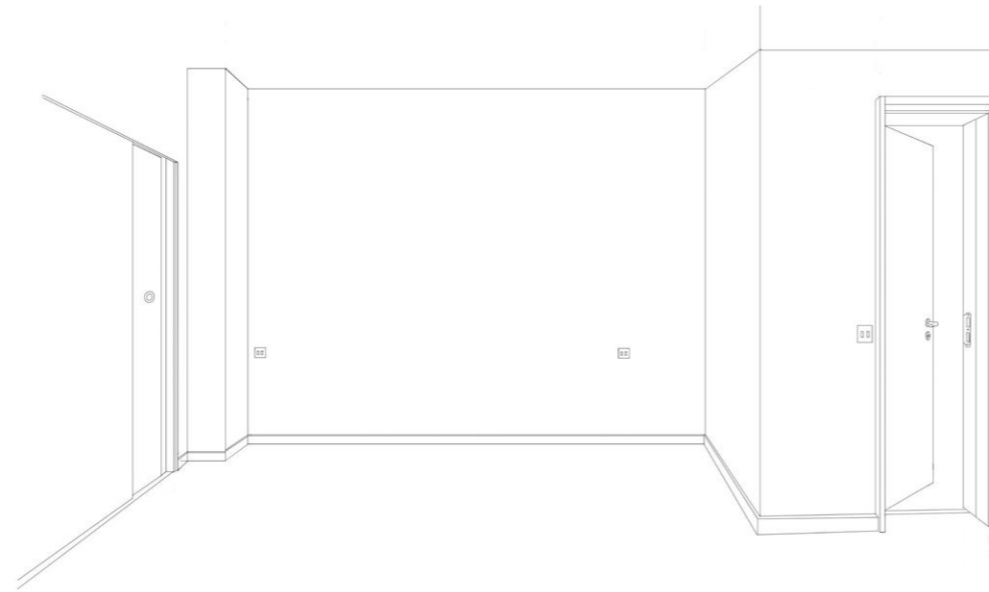
Primitive



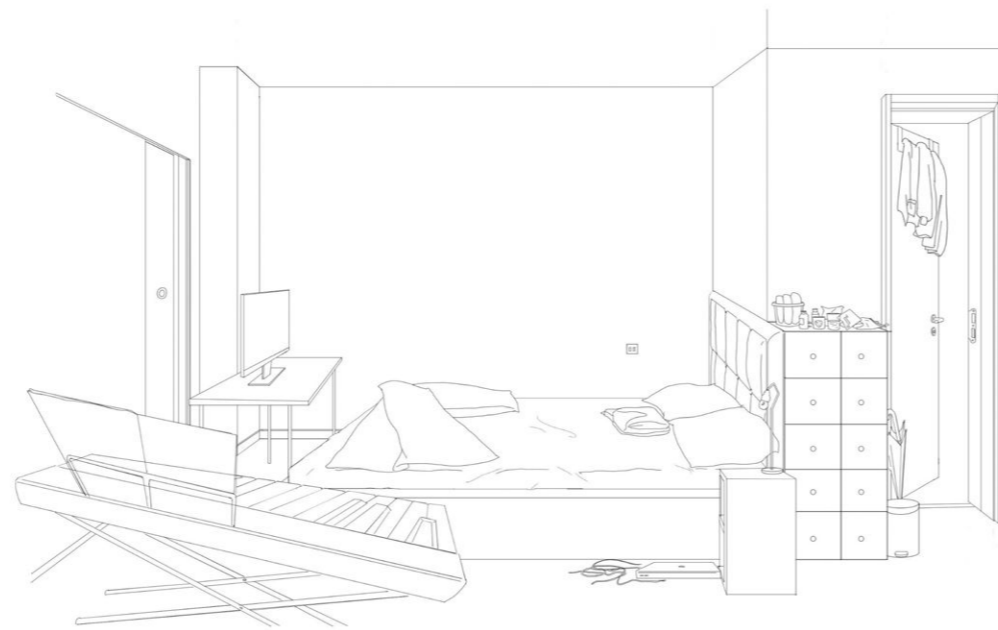
2021.9-2023.9



2023.9-2024.5



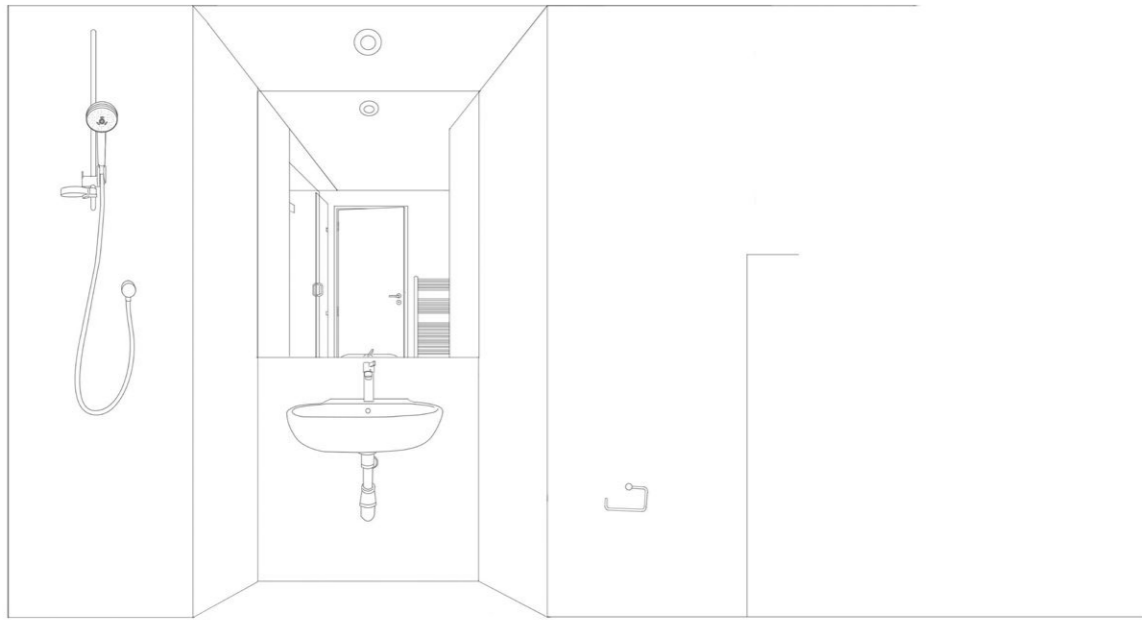
Primitive



2021.9-2023-9



2023.9-2024-5



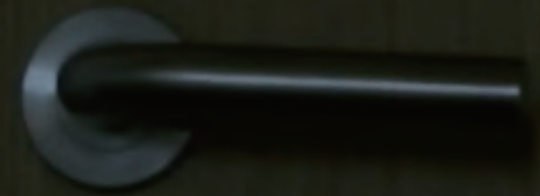
Primitive



2021.9-2023.9



2023.9-2024.5

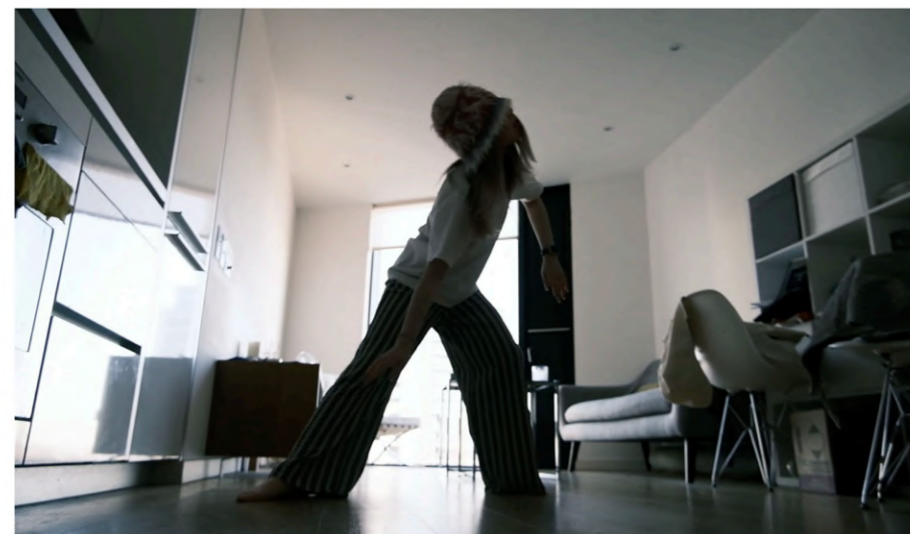
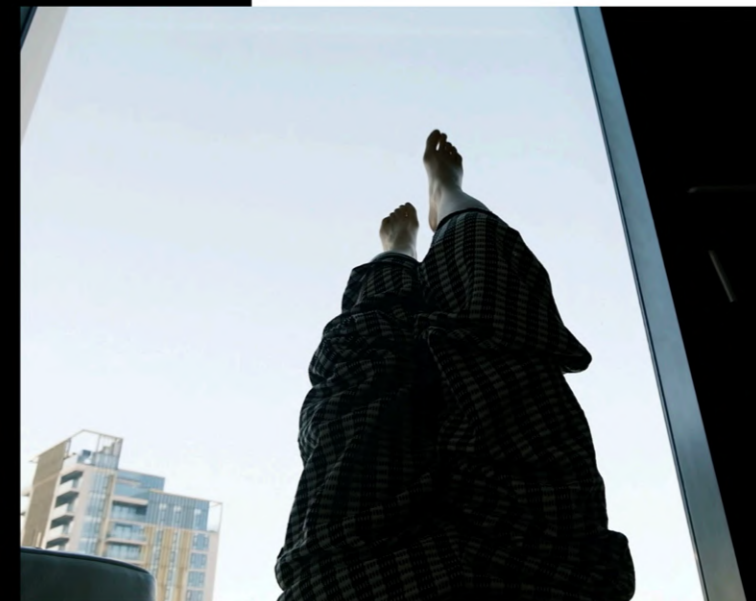
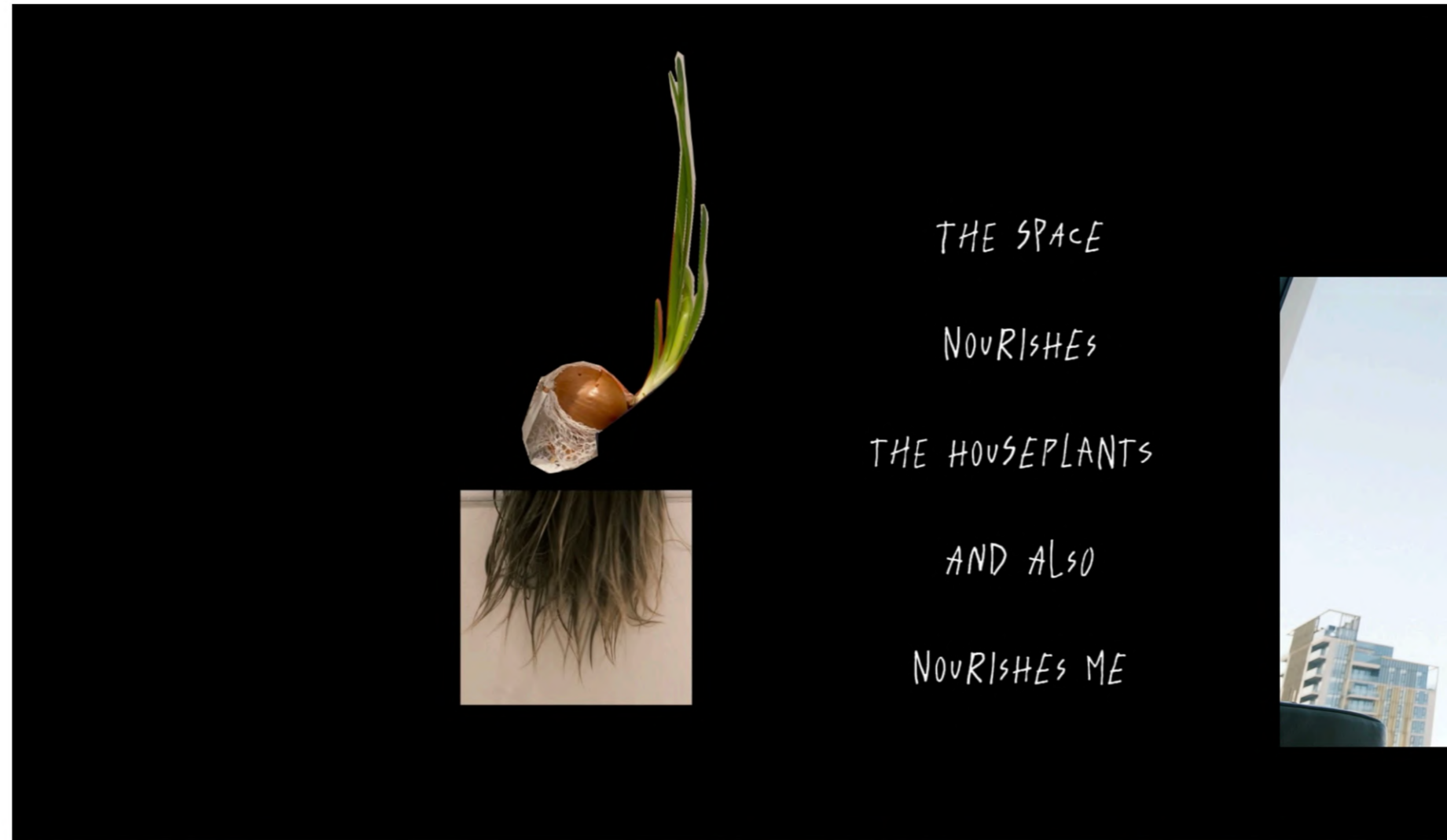


"The Letter" 35s
<https://youtu.be/-h0e3oFGq60?si=0Jlz-3YAc1Azvlbx>



02: Exploring the Body-Space Relationship Through Performance






"Home" 5min

<https://youtu.be/eG5QGd4swhg>



"Sisyphus" 9min20s

<https://youtu.be/cxJrZluSGO0>

A composite image featuring a woman in a white shirt sitting at a desk on the left, a woman lying on a bed in the foreground, and a woman holding a teddy bear on the right. The background shows a large window with a view of a city skyline and construction cranes. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent dark banner containing text.

Exploring the way tenants create traces - using me as an example

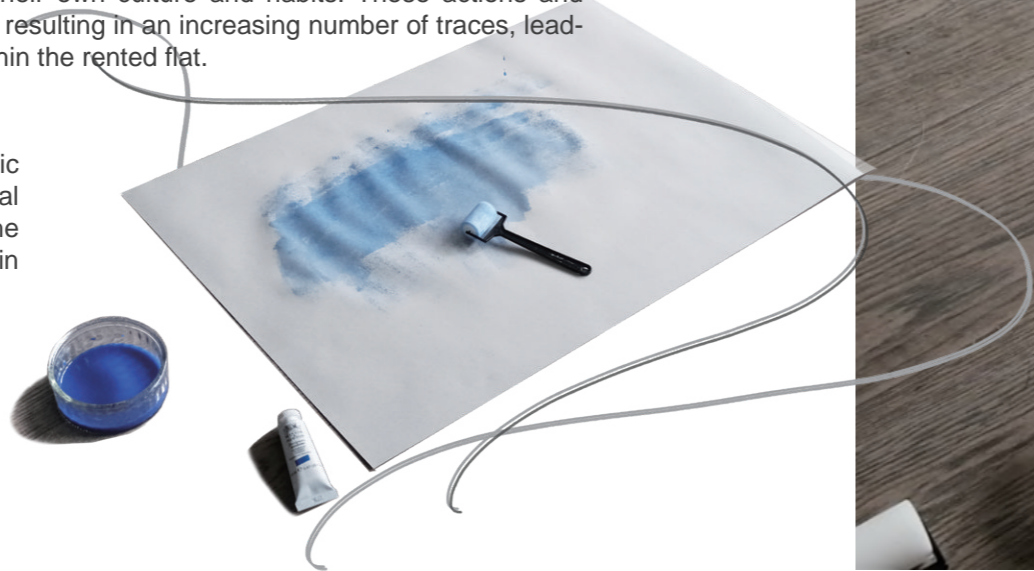
My Trace Intervention Space

These seemingly trivial details are crucial evidence in the individual's life process, recording each inhabitant's unique experiences and traces of life. Our actions within space and the space itself influence each other. Our bodies, like pens, leave marks on each other's surfaces. Some marks fade over time, while others remain as evidence, offering glimpses into the experiences and stories of previous tenants, thus revealing the history and memory within the living space. As time passes, these marks transform into emotions—memories. This rented flat becomes a vessel for such emotions, a carrier of memory and identity.

I try to visualise the traces I produce in space, using different materials and approaches. The location I chose was the kitchen, because it seems to me that the kitchen space is the one where my personal background and the outsider's identity collide most intensely. Western kitchen and food, and through my behaviour, I transform these into Chinese dishes. The traces produced here provide a glimpse of the space's constraints and disciplines on my behaviour and in turn my personalised presentation of the space.

The rented flat serves as a caregiver; the tenants living here are influenced by the space. These traces correspond to the actions of those residing in the flat, actions taught to the tenants by the rented space itself. Tenants not only inherit these actions but also the aesthetics associated with them. Tenants from diverse cultural backgrounds integrate these with their own culture and habits. These actions and behaviors gradually become digested by our bodies, resulting in an increasing number of traces, leading to the gradual formation of collective memory within the rented flat.

space is not merely a physical entity but a dynamic place generated through bodily practices and social interactions. I utilise bodily practices to explore the interplay between traces, memories and identities in rental spaces.



Experimental attempts

Experiment 1



I spread the watercolour paint evenly all over the paper and then taped abrasive paper to the soles of my feet. When a person walks on the paint-covered paper, the abrasive paper on the soles of their feet rubs the paint off the paper as they move with their steps. But the result of the experiment was that the marks were not very obvious.

Experiment 2



I tie the brush to my foot and when I move, the brush on my foot moves with me and the brush leaves a mark on the white paper. After the experiment, I found that the contact area between the tip of the brush and the paper was too small, and when the movement was large, the brush could not make contact with the paper. Therefore this method is not desirable.

Experiment 3



Again this time there was still the option of tying something to the foot, but this time it was changed to a roller. The roller has a much larger contact area with the paper and because it is a water-based pigment, the trajectories can be clearly seen to overlap as the same path is travelled and changes in time can be seen.

Motion Extraction and Transformation

In experiments with trace visualisation, I recorded not only the movement of the body through space, but also behaviour and body dynamics. I recorded the process of making dishes and extracted these specific movements, our bodies have the potential to record and become containers. True memory takes refuge in gestures and habits, in a subliminal form of the body's inherent self-awareness, in unstudied reflexes and deep-rooted memories that become a fragment of the memory of this era that belongs to this rented room.

These actions and behaviours are gradually digested by our bodies, producing more and more traces, and the collective memory carried by the rental house is gradually formed. I use the form of video to capture the visual traces in the flat to show the daily behaviour as a trace of preserving the past, creating a collective memory belonging to the space of the rental house in a spontaneous form.



Rice



Stir-fry veggied



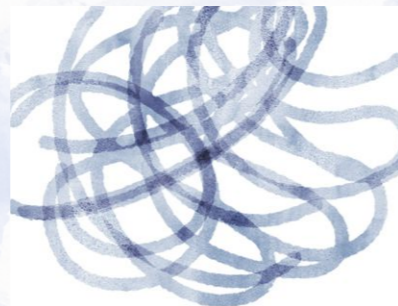
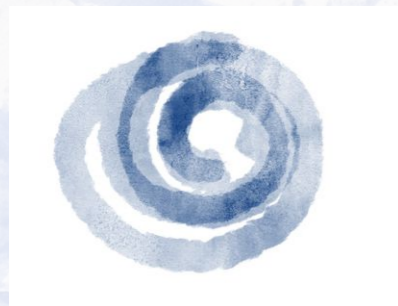
Steamed Egg with Minced chicken



Scorched Okra



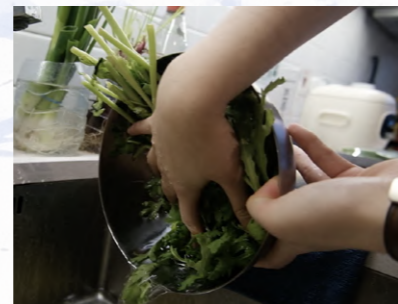
scrambled eggs with tomatoes



Wash rice



peel



Wash vegetables



Mtincemeat



Cut



Beat an egg



Stir-fry





||





video: <https://myqrcode.com/en/qr/218c75a8>



Exploring Psychological Space in Rental Housing

How does the body participate in the home space? French theorist Michel de Certeau, in "The Practice of Everyday Life" (1980), discusses that "space is a practiced place" and that the body itself is a fragment of space. He emphasizes that space is not merely a physical entity but a dynamic place generated through bodily practices and social interactions.

03: Ethnographic Study of Everyday Objects in Rental Housing



Rental House Primitives



A classic of modern home design - Barcelona Chair

It sets the main tone of the ambience of this rental house with its simplicity.

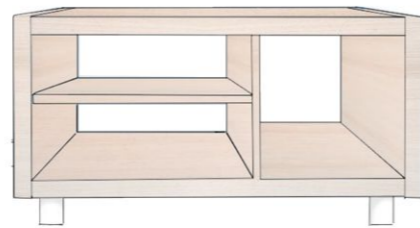
The chair was used for a long time until May 2024, when it tilted significantly to the left side.



White resin seat, metal legs

2023.9 One of the screws has disappeared, and the seat and legs are always misaligned into two parts when moving.

2024.2 I found extra screws in the storage room and replaced the one that was missing.



TV cabinet

in original wood with weight and black resin feet

2021-2014.5 The position of the TV cabinet did not change



Table lamp

with a black fabric shade and three glass globes strung on a lamp post.

2021-2023.9 The table lamps in the house are stored away.

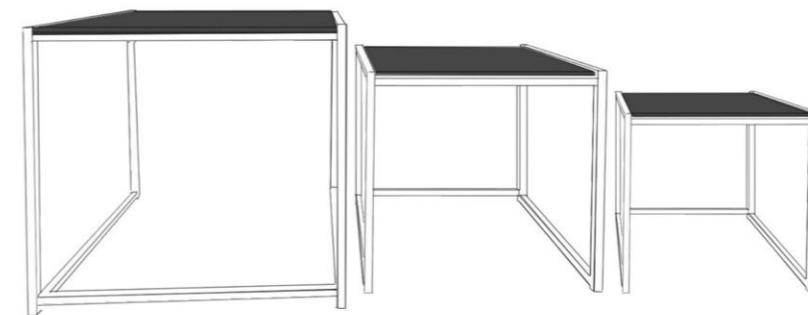
2023.9-2024.9 The table lamps that were dusty in the storage cupboards were once again taken out, and a pair of them were placed on each of the pair of bedside tables in the bedroom.



Pair of log nightstands with metal cabinet door pulls

2021-2023.9 They were placed on either side of the bathroom sink and were used as shelves for bathroom clutter.

2023.9-2024.5 They were restored to their original function and placed symmetrically on either side of the bed.



Black glass table top with metal frame

Coffee table set of three, minimalist style, high and low heights can be combined and nested at will.

2022 the medium height and the shortest coffee table nested together were placed in front of the sofa, the tallest coffee table was placed next to the kitchen countertop and it was used to hold the microwave oven



2023.9-2024.5



2023.9-2024.2



2024.2-2024.5



2023.9



2023.9

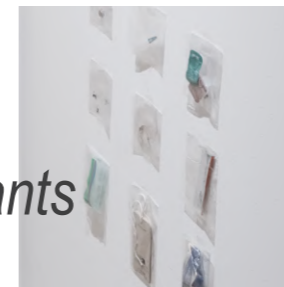


2024.1



2024.5

04: Mutual Influence Between Successive Tenants



Mutual Influence Between Tenants

Type: experiment
 Time: 2024.10.10-24
 Location: apartment2711, strata, walworth Road, London

The impact between successive generations of tenants is examined through the collection of traces left behind by each tenant during their time in the rental property, including objects, furnishings, and photographs, with a particular focus on the emotions and stories conveyed by these traces. Each tenant's objects add a layer to the evolving collective memory of the space. In this way the impact of tenant to tenant is studied.

Living spaces, such as rental houses, are not only physical spaces, but also important places for individual life experiences and expressions of identity. By personalising the space (e.g. arrangement, decoration, traces left behind), tenants can express their identity and emotional context in the rental house. This use of space can in turn influence their sense of self-identity.

The objects left behind by former tenants are more than just remnants; each object and trace becomes a potential element in a larger collective memory; they become active factors in shaping individual and collective memories within the rental space, contributing significantly to its unique narrative and influencing how each tenant shapes and understands their experience of the flat.

The traces and objects from myself

My room is not a place where things are arranged neatly, and various small objects are scattered in every corner of the room. A doll hanging on the curtain



Someone who like reading had to take notes from a novel and take photos. Maybe like all kinds of interesting how things.

a friend brought me a gift when she traveled

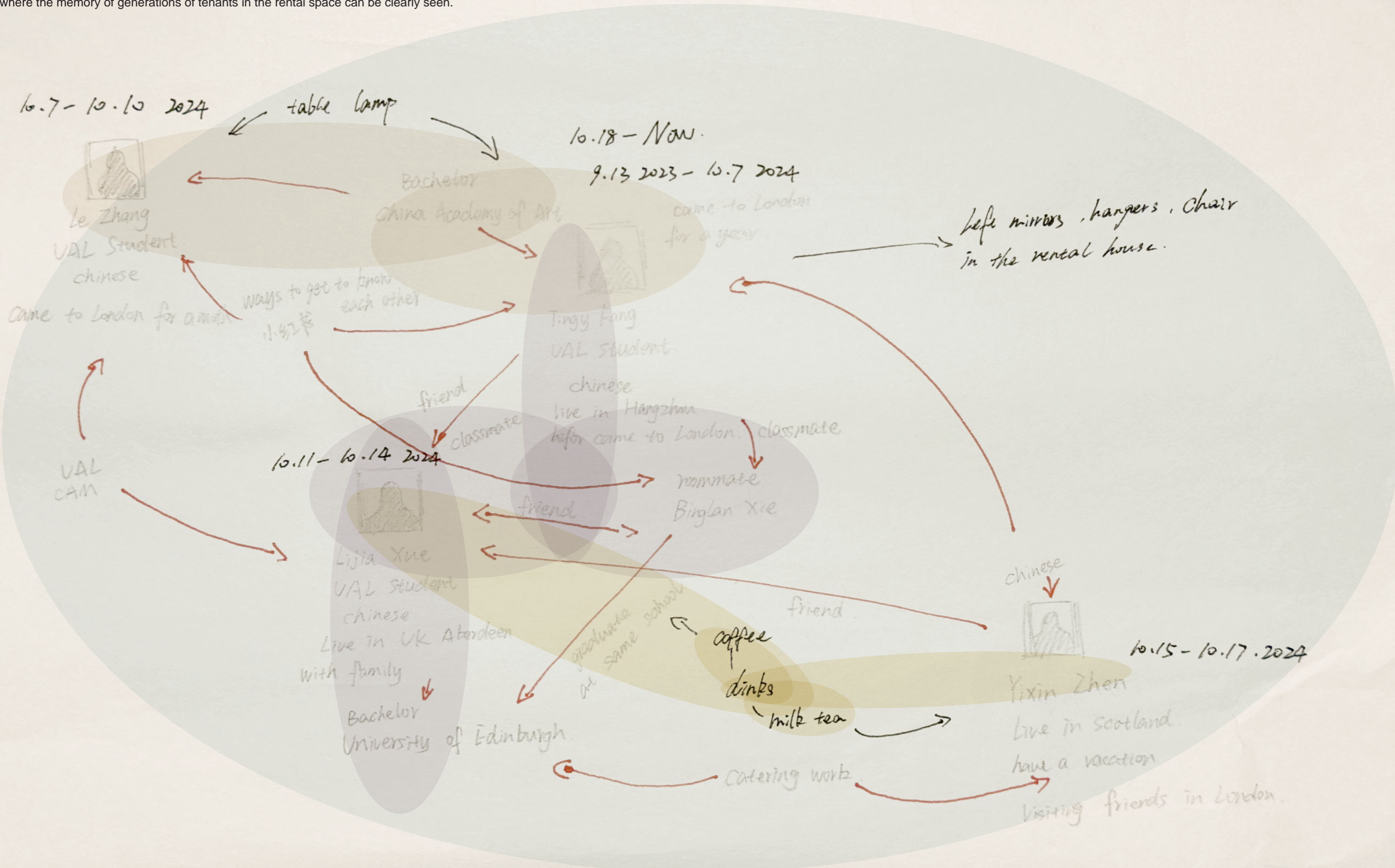
There are refrigerators sticker from all over the world on the radiator, and various dolls are placed in this area, which become a display area.

I really like to take photos especially polaroids, cause they can be placed on my desk. And I'm a fan of fashion, I like to wear, as you can see, the storage space in the room is too small for me... poor inductive skills.

Tenant Relationship Map

Rental houses record the experiences, identities genders, and pasts of their occupants. Generations of tenants live here, and the relationships and history of the house are constantly renewed and changed.

This layering of individual experiences into collective memory creates a 'layered' sense of the past in the rental house, where the memory of generations of tenants in the rental space can be clearly seen.



The Unseen Apartment

This experiment I collection of tenant-left-behind items and their subsequent exhibition as a form of data visualization and analysis.

First I Collection of Residues: I leaving behind a mirror and storage containers before vacating the apartment. After a period of occupancy by subsequent tenants, I returned to collect and document evidence of their presence, including: Physical Traces: Wear and tear on the space, marks on walls, stains, etc. Leftover Personal Items: Unintentionally left-behind items reflecting aspects of the tenants' lives and identities.

In addition this exoerimentt I want to know how tenants rearranged pre-existing items and/or modified the space. This included documenting the use of the initially left-behind objects (mirror and containers).

The observation that the mirror and storage boxes were actively used by the subsequent tenants reveals a form of "inheritance" of domestic artifacts. This demonstrates a continuous flow of spatial practices and material culture within the rental space, highlighting the collective nature of memory embedded within a seemingly transient environment.

The crucial point, however, lies in the variations observed in the use of the objects. Differences in the spatial practices suggest a dynamic interplay between inherited items and the tenants' individual cultural background and spatial practices. This shows that the inherited objects aren't simply adopted passively, but instead are adapted and re-interpreted to fit the unique spatial needs and cultural sensibilities of each succeeding tenant.



Collecting and Displaying Exploring Identity Through objects

This portion of the study focuses on the observation of how objects and spatial practices are inherited and adapted by subsequent tenants within a single rental unit. The methodology involved:

Leaving artifacts: Intentionally leaving behind items (a mirror and storage boxes) in the rental unit upon vacating. These items acted as "cultural probes," testing how the succeeding tenants would interact with them.

Observing post-occupancy: Returning to the apartment after the next tenant(s) moved in to observe the use and placement of the initially left-behind items.

Documenting use and adaptation: Noting changes in the arrangement and use of the items. For example, did the tenants use the storage boxes in the same way? Did they integrate the mirror into their existing decor? Were there variations in their spatial practices compared to the original arrangement?

Name: le zhang
Length of residence: 2024.10.17-10
Items left behind: candy wrappers, apple cores, empty crisp bags

The girl who likes to snack in her room. Connection with the tenant:I borrowed her converter head.



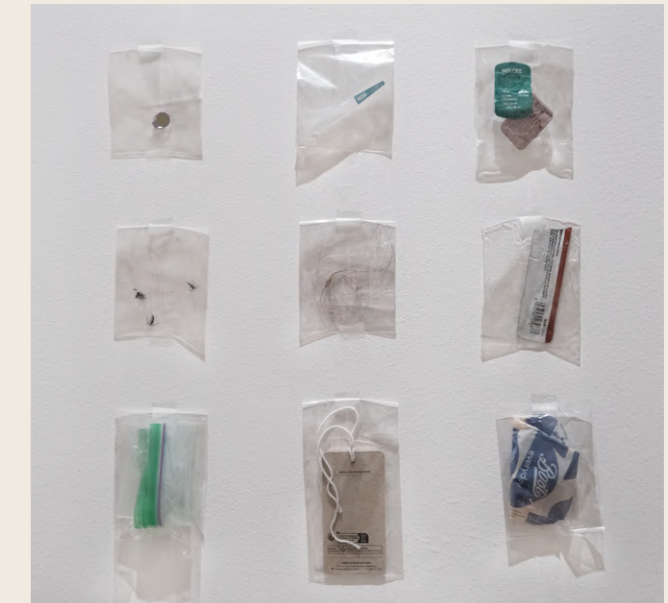
Name: Lijia Xue
Length of residence: 2024.10.11-14
Items left behind:Coffee cup, make-up remover, contact lens case, anti-stringing tablets

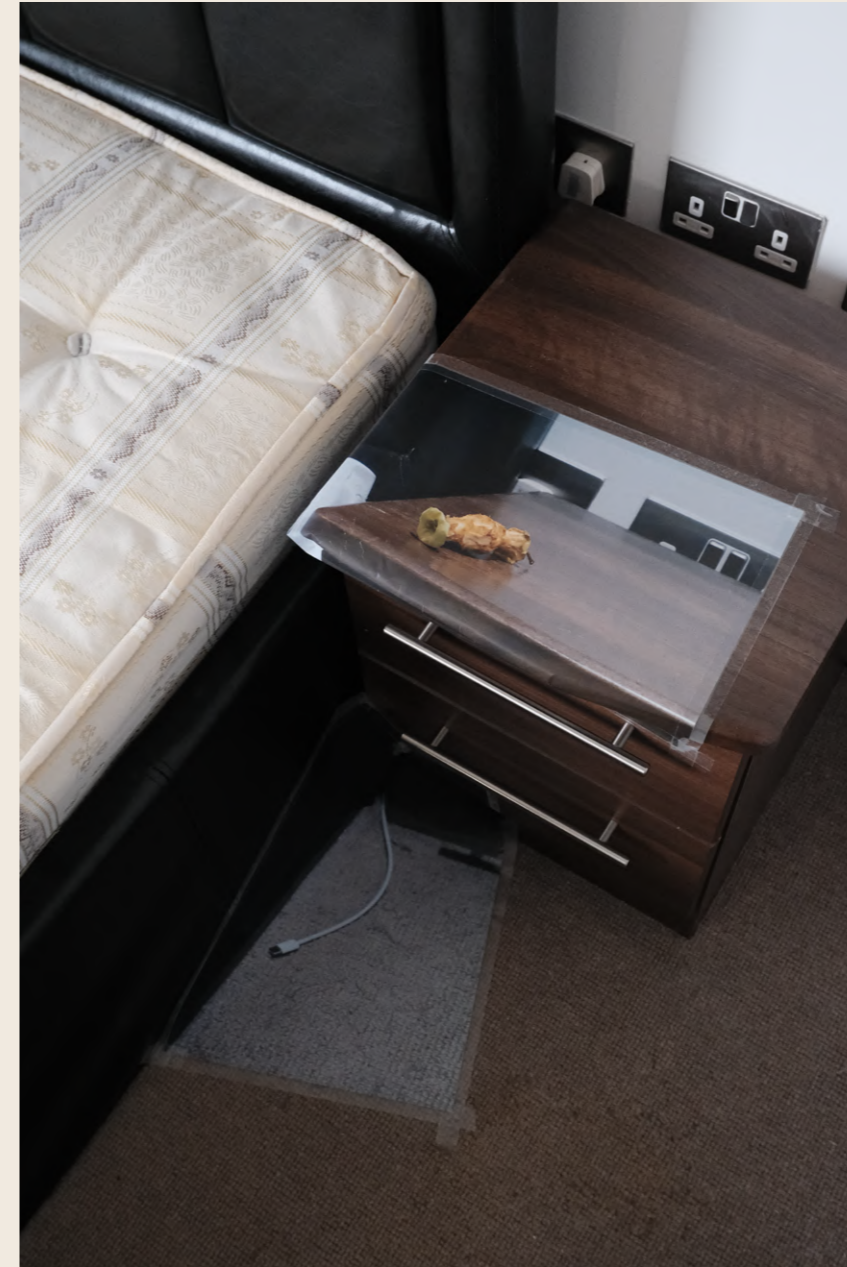
Loved the cleanliness and used the washing machine. Used hangers left by previous tenant.



Name: Ylxin Zhen
Length of residence: 2024.10.15-17
Items left behind:Trademarks, contact lenses, false eyelashes, storage pouches, disposable skin care products

Sophisticated girl who wears a lot of make-up, a lot of disposables, borrowed sheets from the last tenant.

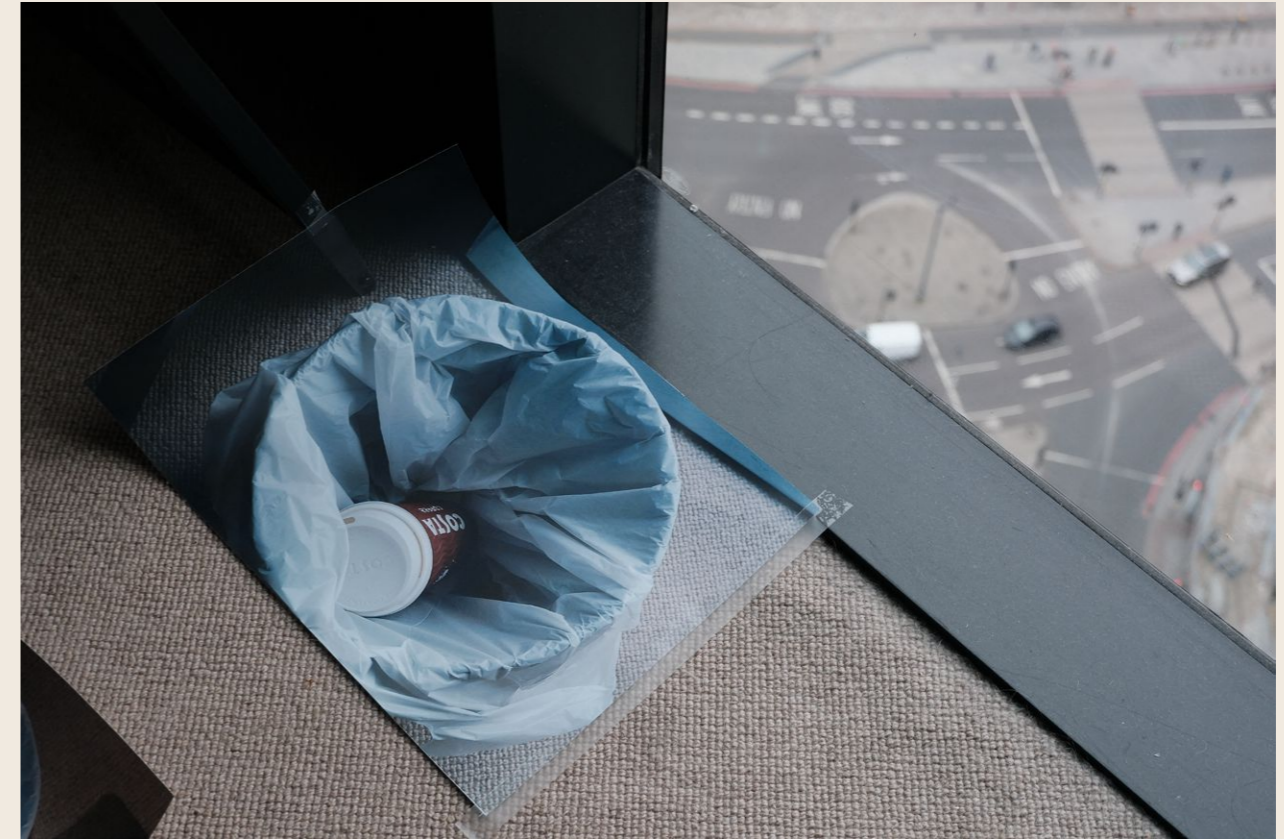




How easily overlooked traces create dynamic, layered histories in the context of transient habitation?

This project investigates the formation of collective memory within a transient residential space—a rental apartment—by analyzing the traces left by successive occupants. The methodology centers on a physical intervention and visual representation of these layered traces to explore how individual experiences contribute to a shared history.

The experiment involved photographing traces left by past tenants in a single rental apartment. These traces included physical markings (e.g., wear and tear on furniture, scuff marks on walls), remnants of personal belongings (e.g., stains, partially removed adhesive, traces of past furnishings), and evidence of previous tenants' use of the space (e.g., the arrangement of furnishings, remnants of decorative choices). Each photograph, documenting a unique trace, was then printed and affixed directly to the corresponding location within the apartment. Crucially, after each photograph was applied, it was immediately covered with a blank sheet of white paper, obscuring it from immediate view.



trace represents the unique contribution of a former tenant to the space's history, emphasizing that a place is not shaped by a single experience or memory, but by the accumulated traces of many individuals over time.

The dynamic nature of memory: The act of layering emphasizes that memory is not static; it is continuously shaped and reshaped as new experiences accumulate, obscuring previous layers. The visible traces themselves and the act of documenting them through photography and layering highlight that much of the history of an apartment remains hidden from view, yet this unseen history still exerts a powerful influence on the current inhabitant's experience.

This experiment directly demonstrates how individual traces contribute to the creation of a collective memory within a specific space, a process relevant to the ongoing study of the ways identities are formed and changed in relation to transient living spaces.

This layering process, applying the image to the location of the trace, then immediately covering it with blank paper—served a specific purpose. It physically embodied the layered nature of memory, demonstrating how each successive experience in the space, though potentially visible in traces, becomes obscured over time, as new layers of occupation and experience accumulate. The white paper acted as a visual metaphor for the forgetting and obscuring of past experiences, as new layers of memory are created by subsequent tenants. The act of covering a trace, then re-covering it to reveal another, mirrors how collective memory in this temporary environment is continuously shaped, revised, and overlaid by new occupants.







05: Female International Students in London Rental Housing

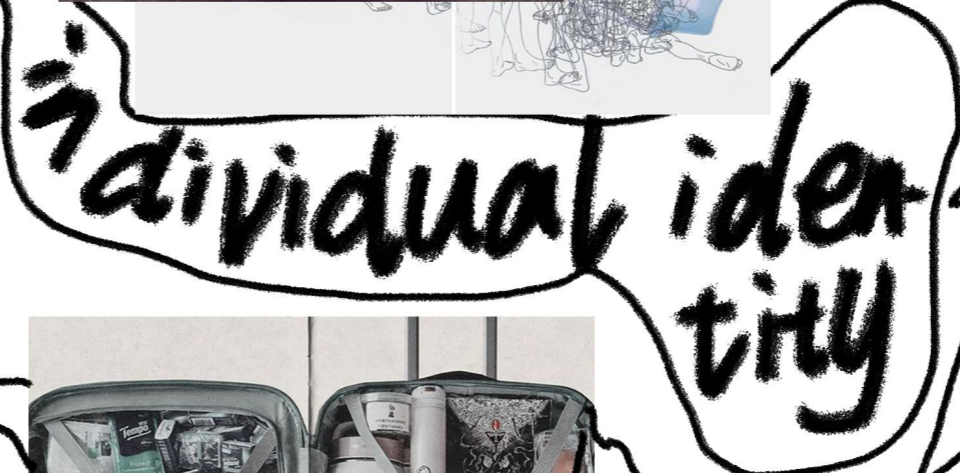


Unlike individuals who reside long-term in fixed spaces—whose personalization may primarily reflect personal preferences and styles—the personalization efforts of female international students are not merely decorative choices. Instead, they represent a proactive attempt to create a sense of home and belonging in a fluid and unfamiliar environment. The traces they leave behind thus carry profound significance, revealing strategies for positioning their identities and establishing self-awareness in such contexts.

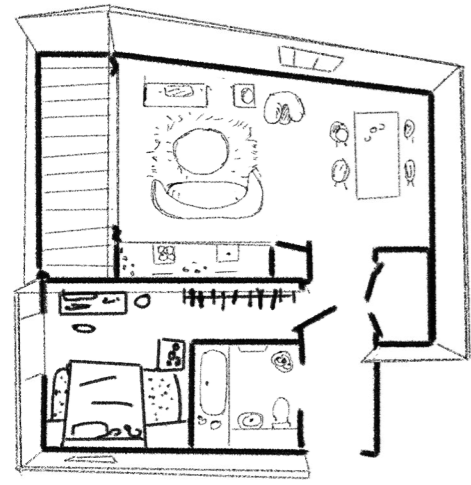


My survey of female international students renting in London further sheds light on the mutual influence between the rented spaces and this demographic. Through their sharing, I gained deeper insights into how the rented flats and this group mutually affect each other. In conversations with them, I learned about their life experiences, reasons for choosing rented accommodation, feelings in the space, habits, and their understanding of identity.

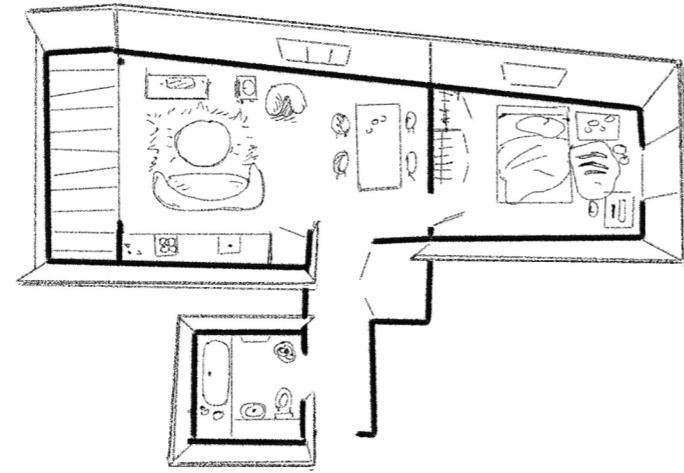
Female International Students in London Rental Housing



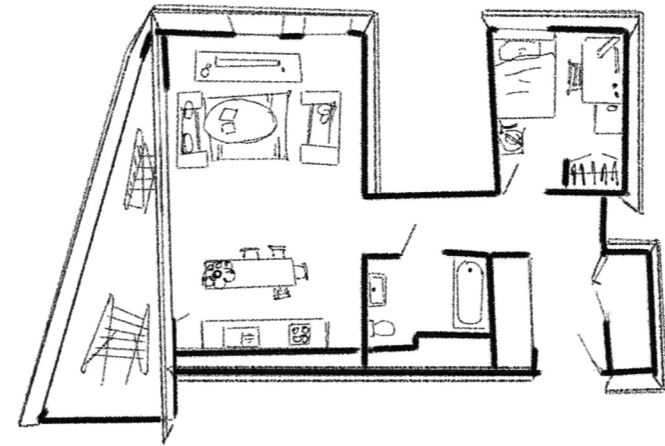
Female Study Abroad Students in London



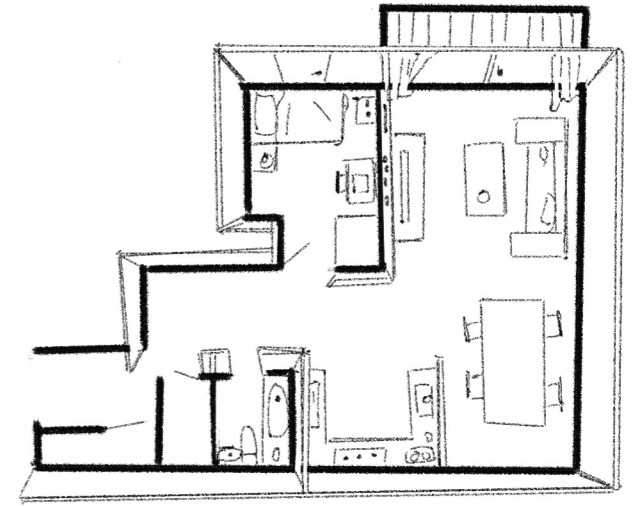
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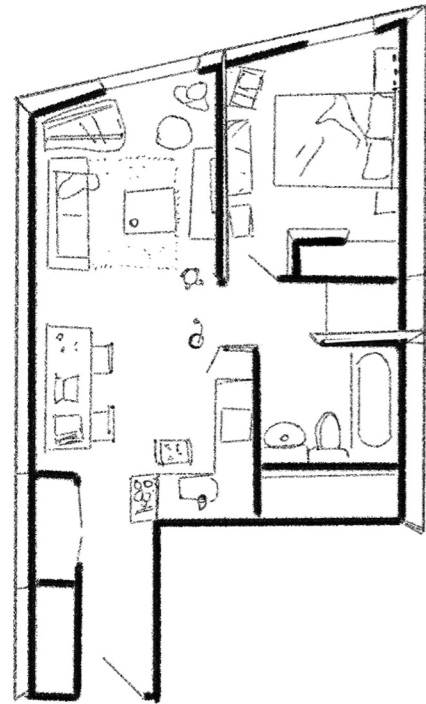
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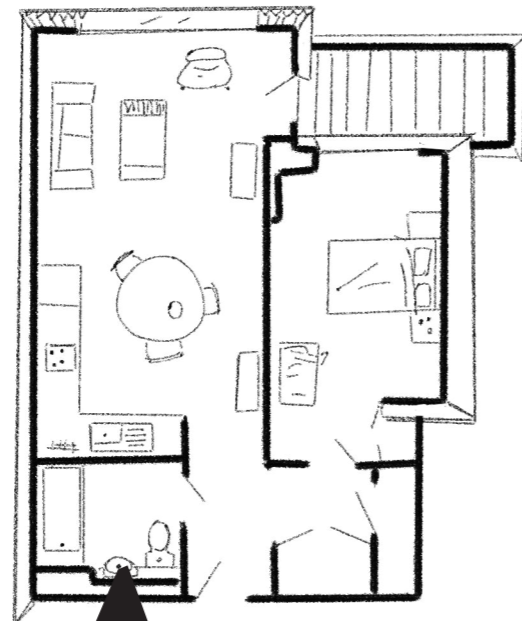
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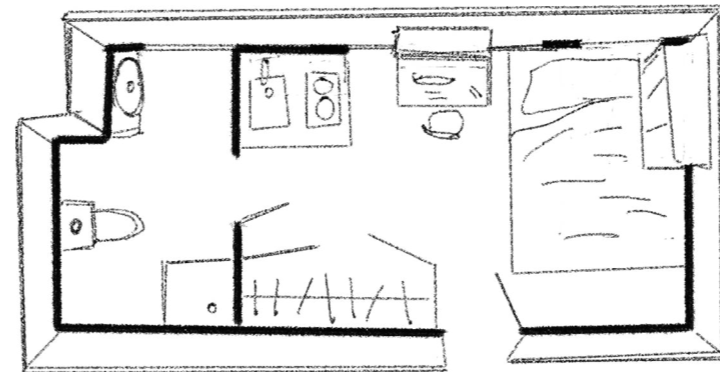
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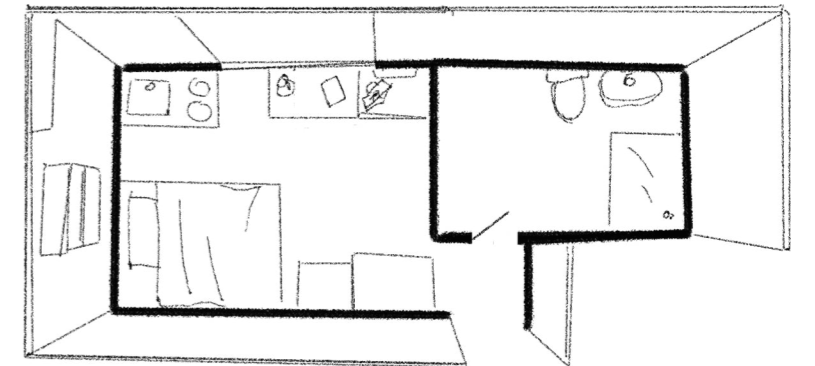
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06



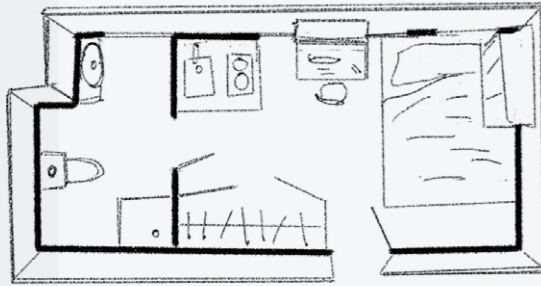
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08

Archive

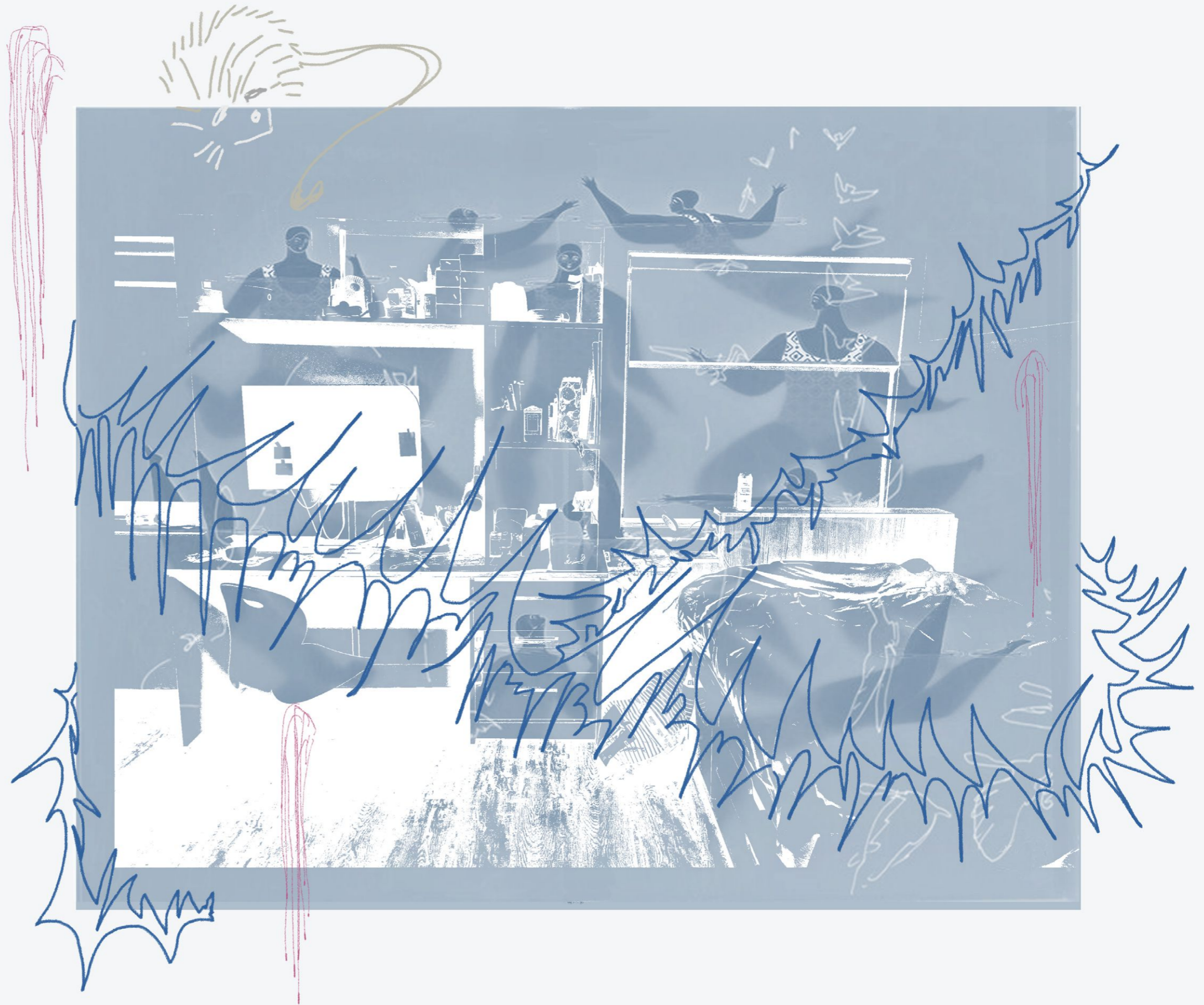
Tenant's name: Le Zhang
Length of residence: 2 month



After graduating from undergraduate, I did a year of freelancing and came to London this September to study MA Illustration at ual. I chose this flat because 1. it is close to the school, so I can save part of the commuting cost. 2. student flat, the bill is included, so I don't have to pay the utility bills by myself. 3. the flat is an old building in the 19th century, with a wooden structure and lots of greenery. It's my favourite classical style.

It seemed small and a bit depressing compared to the previous house I lived in my own home, the kitchen and toilet were small, although there wasn't much cooking either, the bed was particularly small and the equipment was old.

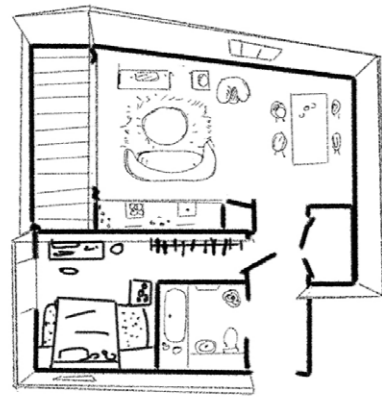
The walls and furniture are grey and cold, and my room has a backdrop of sunlight all day long. I feel lonely and anxious, I'm a homebody and the friends I've made so far are from class and don't live together. Plus I procrastinate a lot and put things off until the last minute every time, which leads to anxiety.



special section

The room is almost undecorated (unless it's cheap). 1. two decorative posters brought from home (posters of Hayao Miyazaki's film - The Little Man Who Borrowed Things, because I love that film, and there's a lot of greenery to love) 2. a little mouse doll that I picked up for 3 pounds at Ikea, which sits at the end of my bed. (Because I used to have a flowery branch mouse, but mice have a short life span, and it stayed with me for more than 2 years and then left, I miss it)

Tenant's name:yingxuan Bao
Length of residence: 3 month



I'm a 22 year old grad student . I've been living in this flat now for about three months or so, and before that I lived in STUDIO for a whole year.

I chose the house I am currently living in because it is very quiet, safe and the rent is reasonable, and it is close to the school. The living experience is very different from living in the university dormitory and my previous home, because it is the first time that I really live on my own in an unfamiliar city, and the mentality will be very different.

The first room was very small, living alone combined with the fact that people I didn't know lived all around me, my friends lived far away, and I didn't really like socialising with people myself, so I spent a lot of the past year commuting to and from school alone. I enjoy being on my own, and I was still mostly comfortable while staying in this room, but it's just that it's so small, so it's still a bit inconvenient for me. My feelings for my first room actually came from the neighbouring shops, because at that time I was going abroad by myself for the first time in a completely new country, and I didn't know my way around, but when I first came here the shop assistants around the neighbourhood and the staff at the reception desk were all particularly kind to me, and they were all very eager to help me, and this kindness continued until I moved out of that flat, and the second thing that I remember particularly well was my bed, because I chose a room with a bright light, and it was so small, so it was still a bit inconvenient for me. Because I chose a room with particularly good lighting at that time, so as long as the winter time, the sunlight will all shine on the bed, and then I just lie quietly on the bed to sunbathe comfortably. Now the rented house is more warm and spacious, because there are friends who can talk at any time, we can sit together to discuss a lot of things, and not like before, one person to deal with all the things and we will take care of each other to go to the supermarket together, so stay here will be more humane than the previous room.



special section

I think the most challenging thing about living as a female international student is actually the safety issue, no matter any aspect, the living environment, the neighbourhood, the previous tenant, the landlord, the roommate, the agent are all dangerous elements engraved deep in women's minds, and no one can be completely free from worrying about these as a female. I'm already considered a relatively bold person, even living in this house with my roommate, at night I'm always woken up by hearing small noises, as well as the sound of the next door neighbour opening the door always scares me into thinking that someone has broken into our home.