

ual:

*The white gaze: the electronic
peacock feather display*



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Research Question

In the current era where visual culture on the internet is extremely saturated, "beauty" is no longer merely a sensory experience; it has become a structural force that is encoded, gazed upon, and consumed. Especially in the Asian context, the standards of "female beauty" are often constructed through a mixture of capital, algorithms, and culture. From camera shots, social media filters, to advertisements, news, and AI-generated images, all of them carry deep control over "visibility" and "desire".

1. Who defines beauty on social media, and how are those definitions shaped by capital, culture, and algorithmic systems?
2. To what extent can women reclaim agency over their own visibility within hyper-mediated visual environments?
3. Is it possible to reverse the gaze in digital media, and what strategies can be used to disrupt passive consumption of beauty?

This project was commissioned by the Asian Feminist Studio for Art and Research and focuses on "The Gazing and Anti-Gazing of Asian Female Beauty."

The work is presented through a fictional digital character "sansan" - a digital avatar with "reverse vision" - who does not perform beauty but makes viewers aware of their own act of viewing and being viewed

—Type: a video in the style of stream of consciousness.

Duration: 3 minutes

Key Concept

Beauty、 Social media、 Sensory capitalism

The inspiration for this project stems from how contemporary people's obsession with "beauty" is transformed into capital through the algorithms of social media platforms, and how it continuously pulls people's emotions and self-identity through a new chain consisting of "attention - sensation - image". In the post-media era, the dissemination speed of images far exceeds the pace of perception, and beauty is no longer a form of self-expression, but has become a visual asset that is liked, recommended, and commercialized. At the same time, the repeated gaze and replication of "beauty" by people on social networks are leaving an indelible data echo on the platforms - we call this "value residue".

Project Brief

Project Brief: Based on the core concept of "the residual value generated by people's concern for beauty on social media in the digital age, create a video in the style of stream of consciousness.

Project Format & Media

Video



Aim & Objectives

Aim:

- 1. This project aims to investigate the power dynamics of visual culture surrounding Asian female beauty within the algorithmic and capital-driven structures of the post-media era.*
- 2. This project aims to explore how gaze and counter-gaze can be constructed through digital storytelling and embodied in a fictional digital character.*
- 3. This project aims to produce an experimental video work that explore the relationship between beauty, viewership, and agency in online visual spaces.*

Objectives:

- 1. To conceptualize and design a female digital avatar, "Sansan," who resists the passive performance of beauty and embodies a form of reverse vision.*
- 2. To explore how digital images can both amplify dominant aesthetic power structures and simultaneously serve as tools for feminist counter-narratives.*
- 3. To position the project within the broader discourse of Asian feminist media art, contributing to critical conversations on visibility, agency, and digital embodiment.*

Methodology

Visual Ethnography: The Body Images, Labels and User Behaviors on the Research Platform

Critical Creation: Creating Faulty, Distorted and Imperfect Visual Experimental Works

Speculative Design: Proposing New Digital Body Display Mechanisms and User Interface Conceptions

Theoretical Analysis: Conducting Research Based on Media Theory, Feminism and Aesthetic Critical Texts

Practice- based Research

- 1.UE5
- 2.Blender
- 3.Nomad
- 4.AI-generated tool

Multi-modal

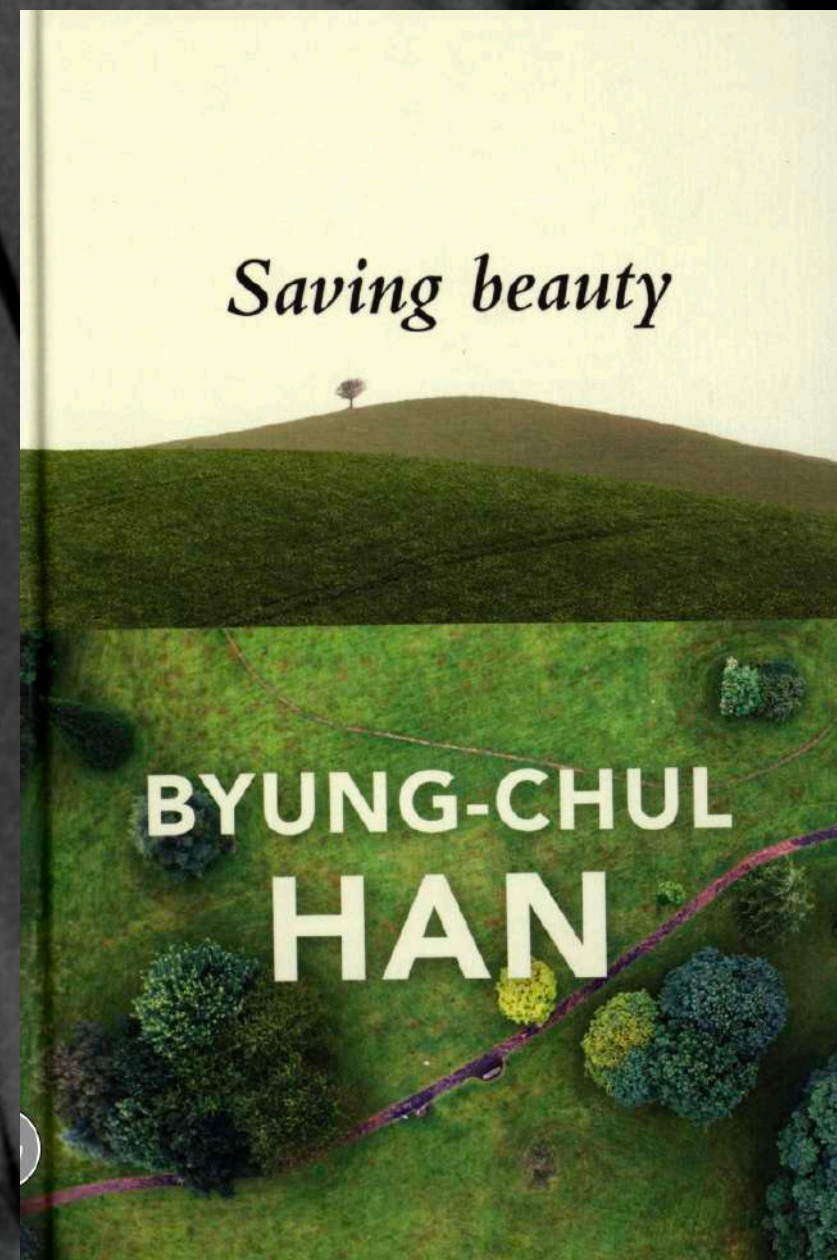
- 1.Digital avatar
- 2.Symbolic visual language and sound space

Interdisciplinary

- 1.Theory research
- 2.Surrealistic style

Theoretical References

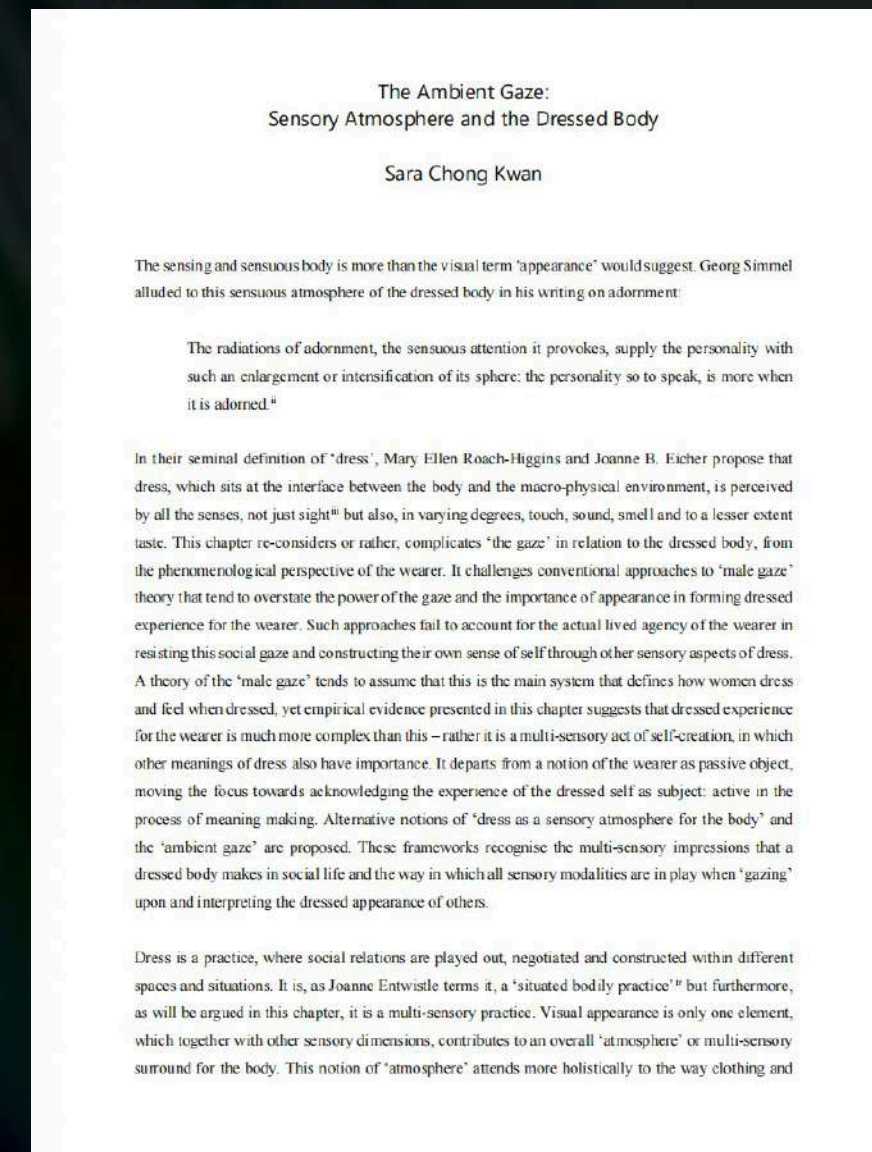
Saving Beauty



Capturing the gaze in cybernetic capitalism



The Ambient Gaze: Sensory Atmosphere and the Dressed Body



Beauty

Artist References

BOF

References

<https://www.businessoffashion.com/articles/beauty/behind-beautys-food-obsession/>

<https://www.businessoffashion.com/articles/beauty/bread-bakery-gourmand-fragrances-skinnytok/>

<https://www.businessoffashion.com/articles/luxury/watch-brands-colours-boost-sales-rolex-luxury/>

<https://www.businessoffashion.com/articles/marketing-pr/why-food-is-everywhere-in-fashion-advertising/>

https://smackagency.co.uk/blog/marketing/gamification-how-brands-can-use-retro-games-for-digital-marketing-campaigns/?utm_source=chatgpt.com



SOMERSET HOUSE

Menu

What's On


Exhibition is not suitable for visitors under 15 years of age.

Dates 23 Jul–28 Sep 2025

Times Sun–Wed 10am–6pm
Thu & Fri 12–8pm
Sat 10am–8pm

Space Terrace Rooms

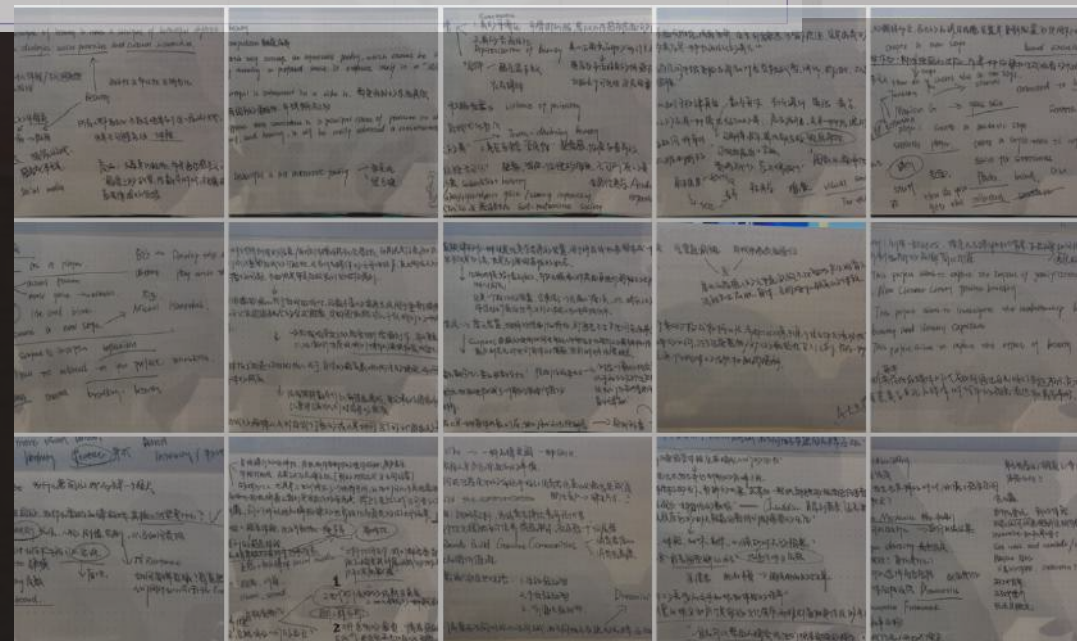
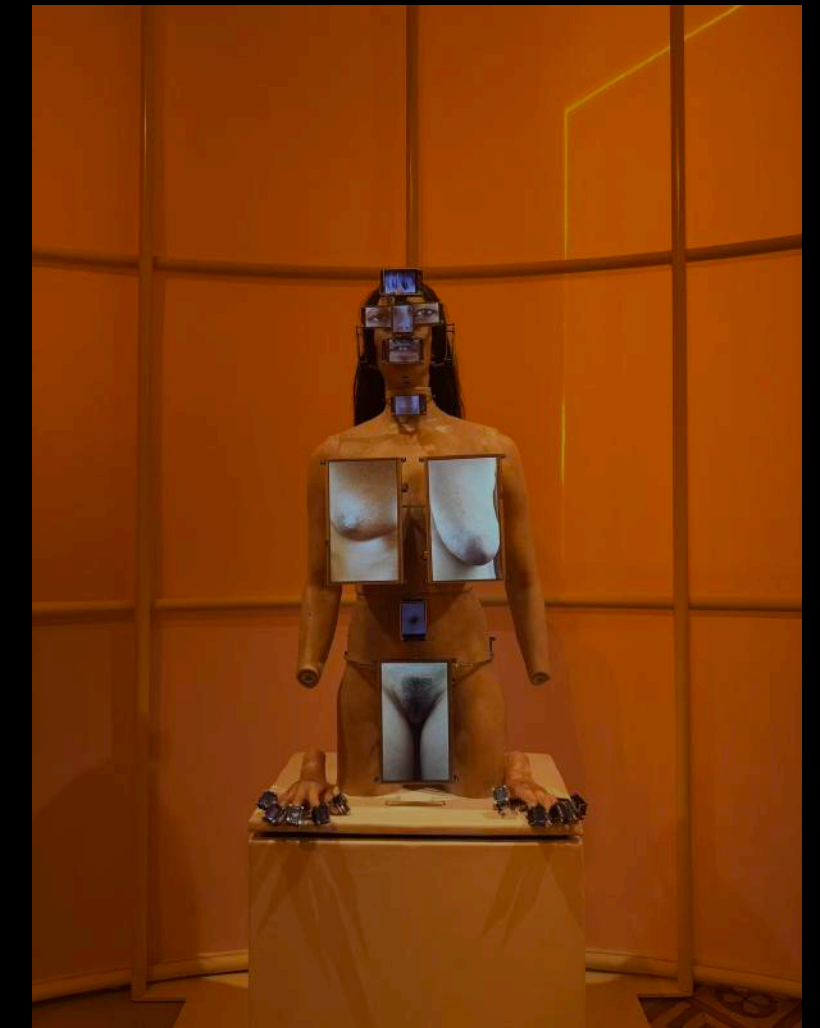
Price Pay what you can



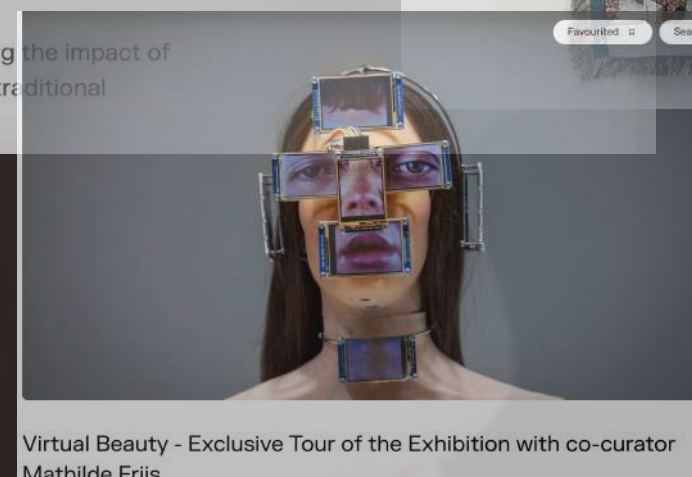
Virtual Beauty

A thought-provoking exhibition exploring the impact of digital culture and technologies on the traditional definitions of beauty today.

Exhibition: Virtual Beauty

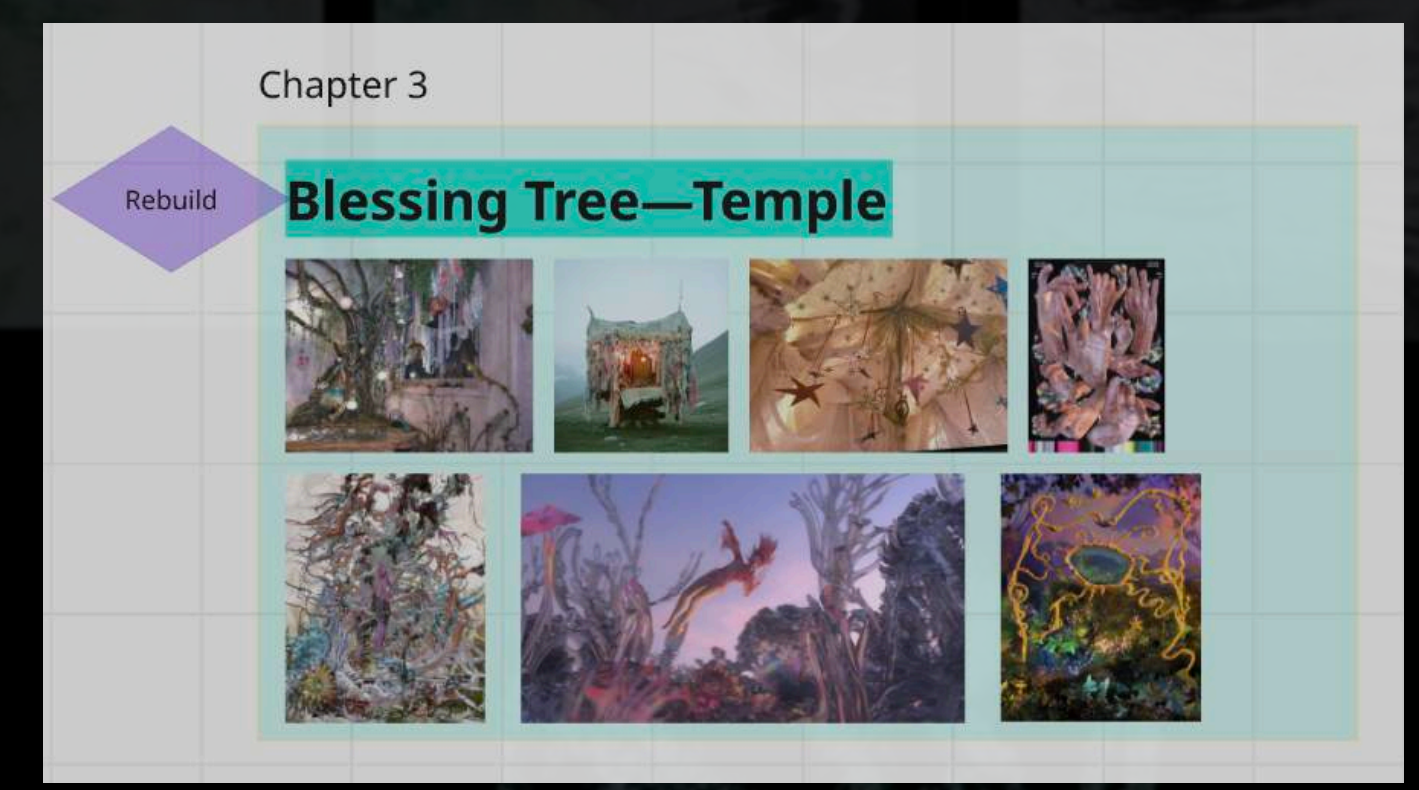
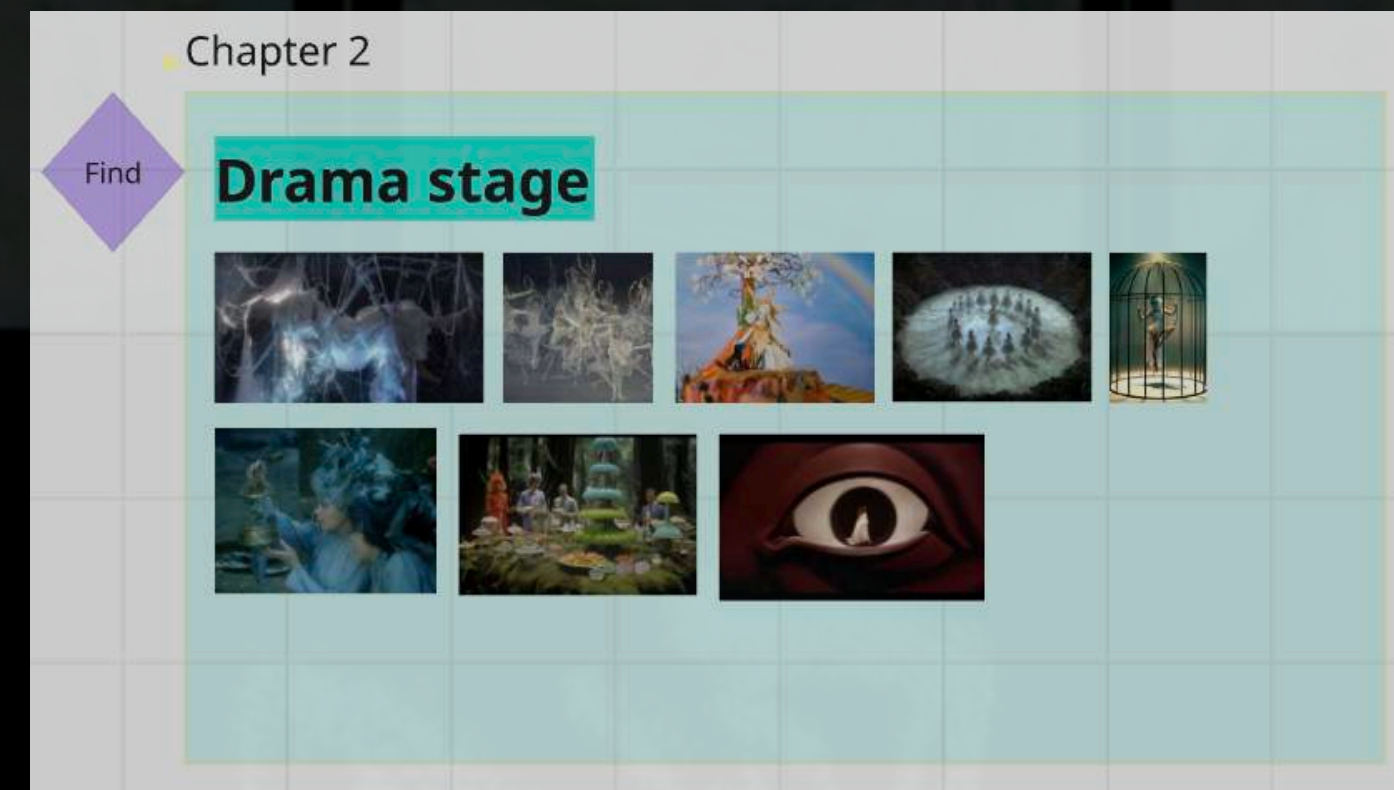
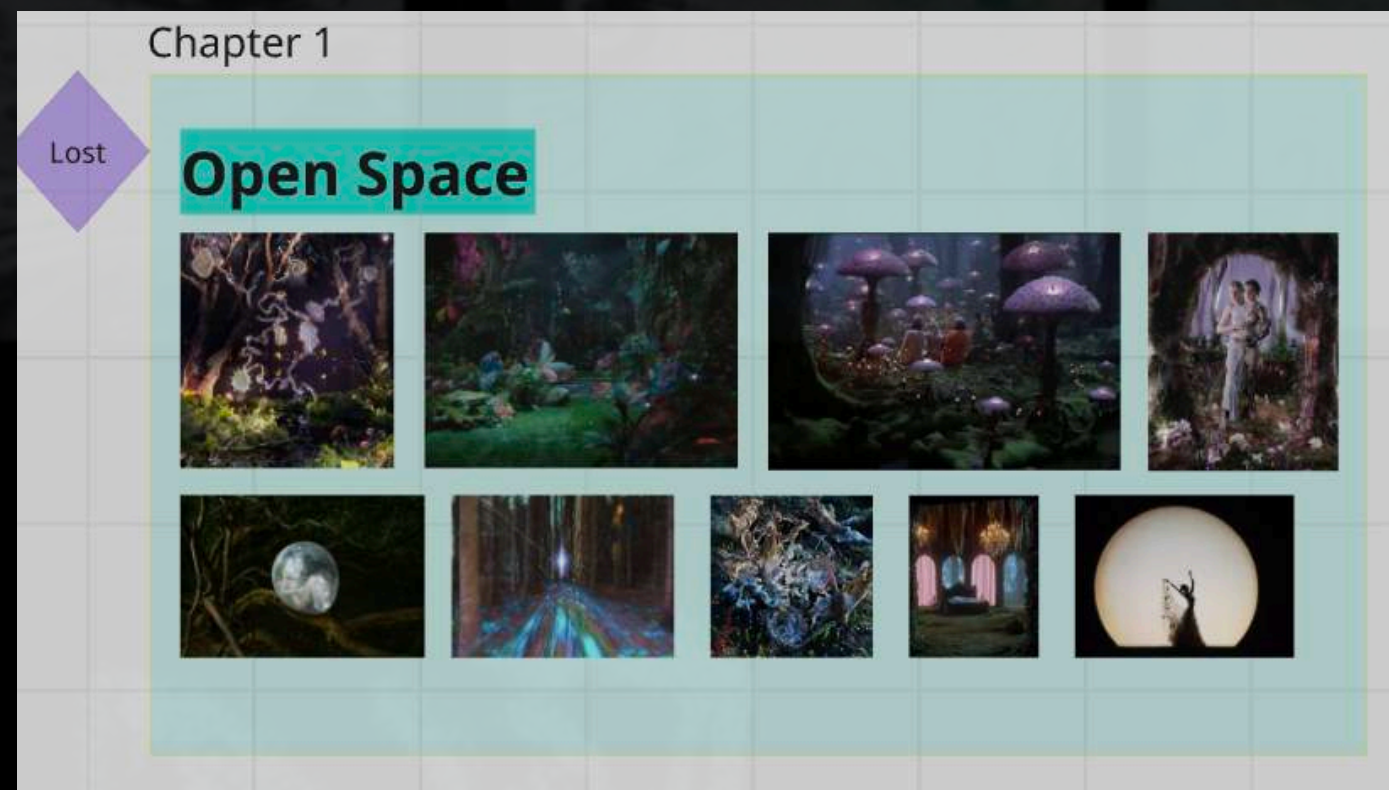


Reader Response

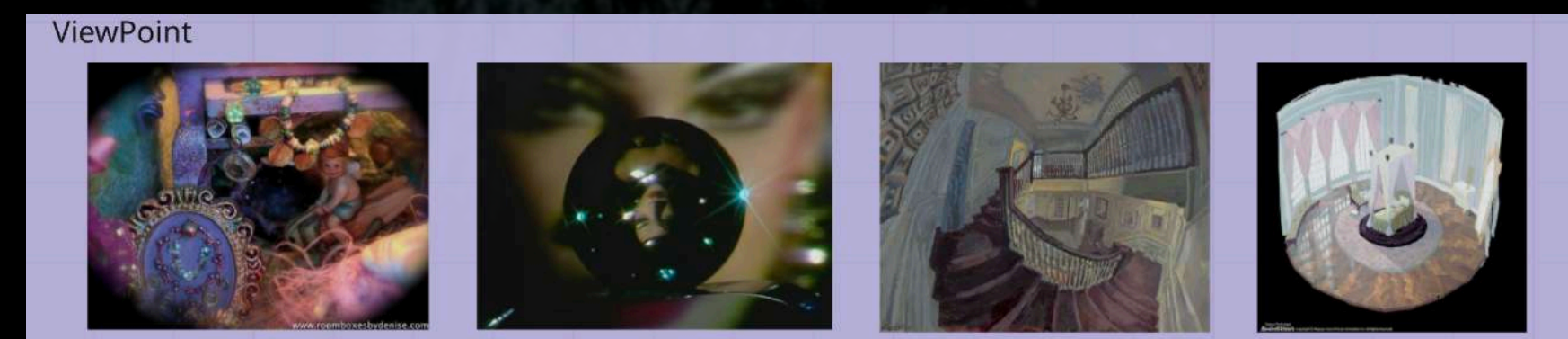


Virtual Beauty - Exclusive Tour of the Exhibition with co-curator Mathilde Eric

Moodboard



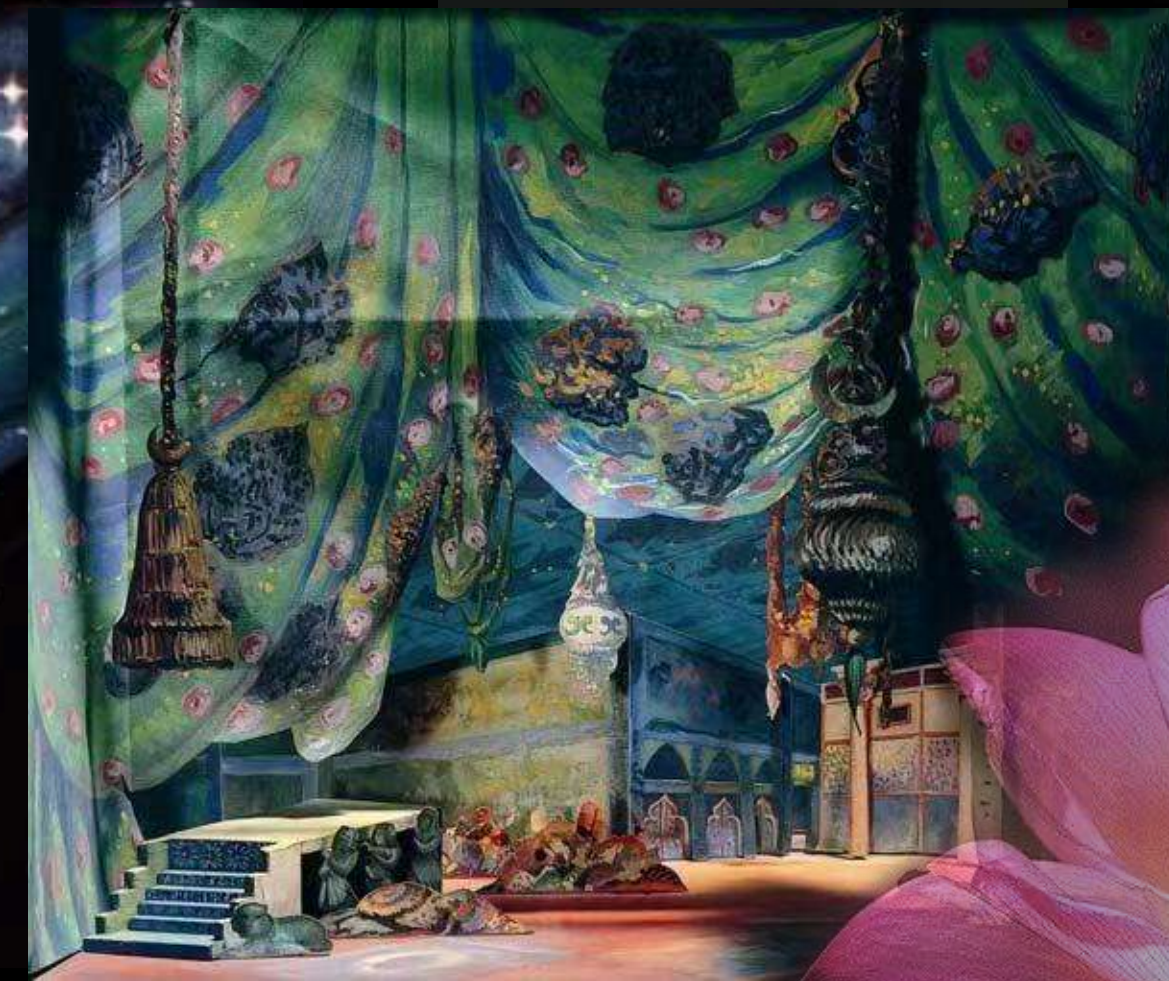
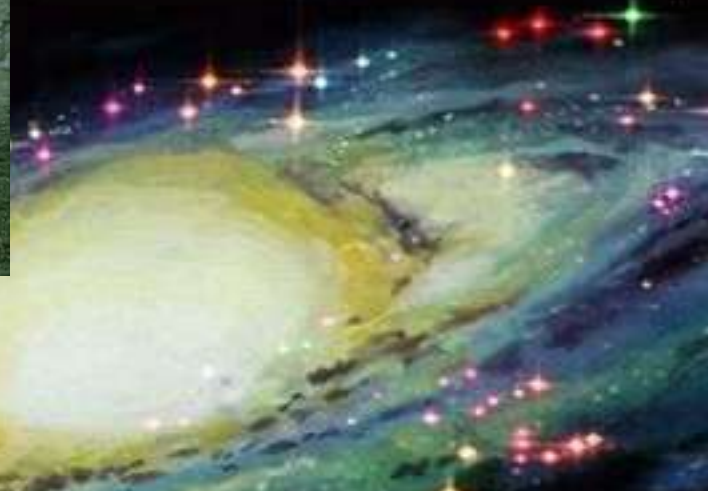
The digital character Sansan awakens in the primeval forest. Here, in this forest, she goes from being lost to reconstructing herself.



Moodboard 02









Moodboard 03








Storyline

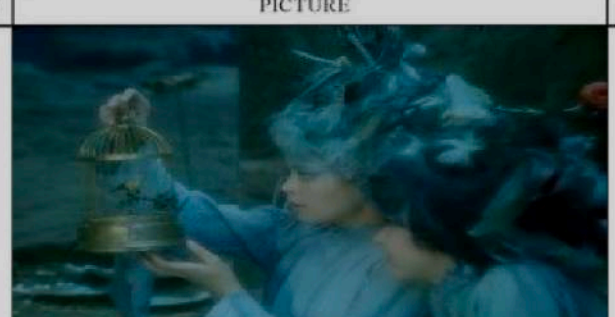




No. Scenario 1

| CUT | PICTURE | ACTION | DIALOGUE | TIME |
|-----|---|---|----------|------|
| |  | Chapter 1 Lost | | |
| |  | Blend + Nomad VE | | |
| |  | SanSan & [Background information] | | |
| |  | Dark → Light VE | | |
| |  | "Are u lost?" "We have been waiting for u for a long time" | | |
| |  | Flash back Zoom In Surveillance perspective | | |

No. Scenario 2

| CUT | PICTURE | ACTION | DIALOGUE | TIME |
|-----|---|-----------|----------|------|
| |  | Flashback | | |
| |  | Viewpoint | | |
| |  | | | |
| |  | | | |
| |  | | | |

No. Scenario 3

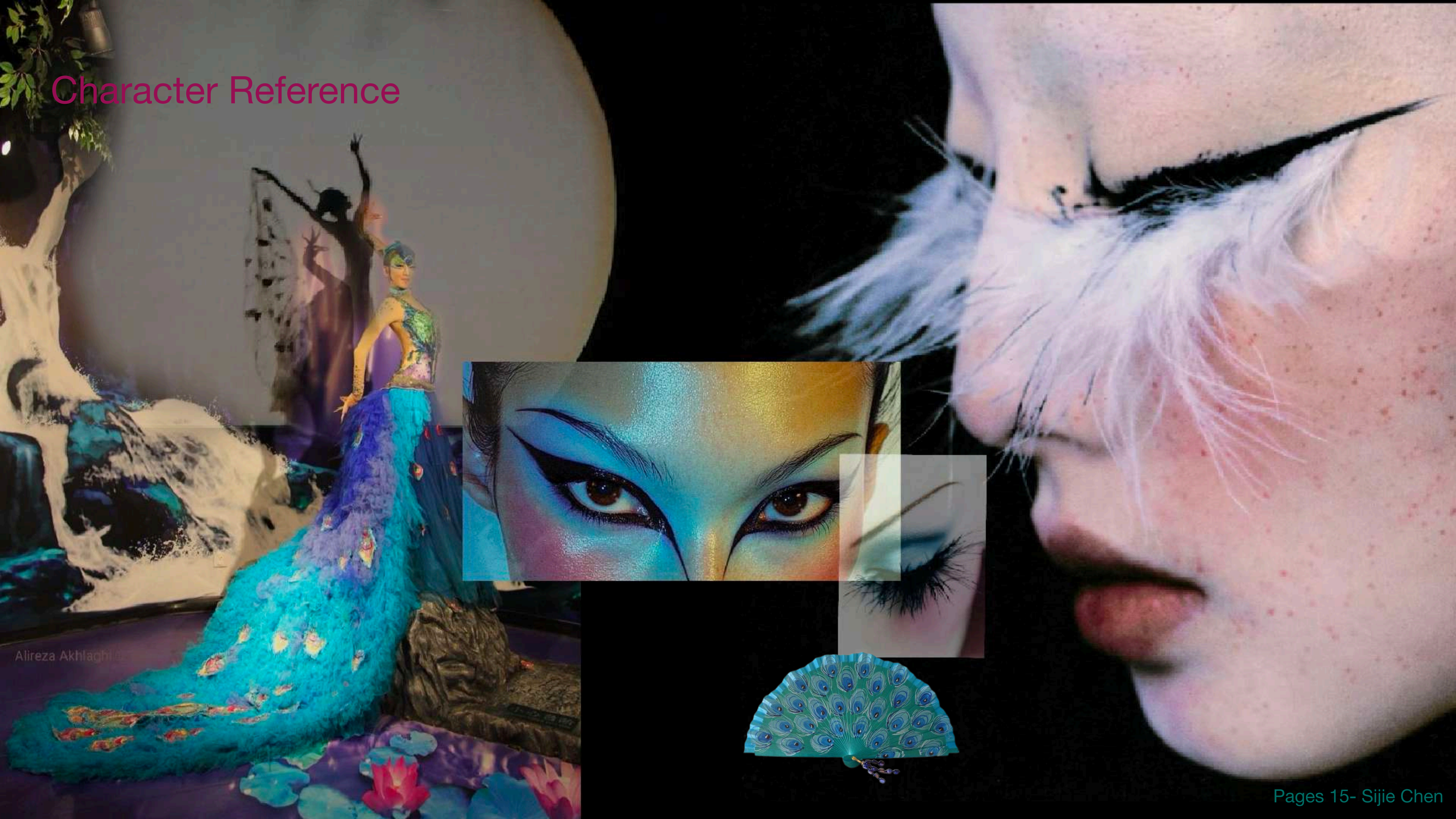
| CUT | PICTURE | ACTION | DIALOGUE | TIME |
|-----|---|--------|----------------|------|
| |  | | Are u thirsty? | |
| |  | | | |
| |  | Lake | | |
| |  | | | |
| |  | | | |



Actual Operation

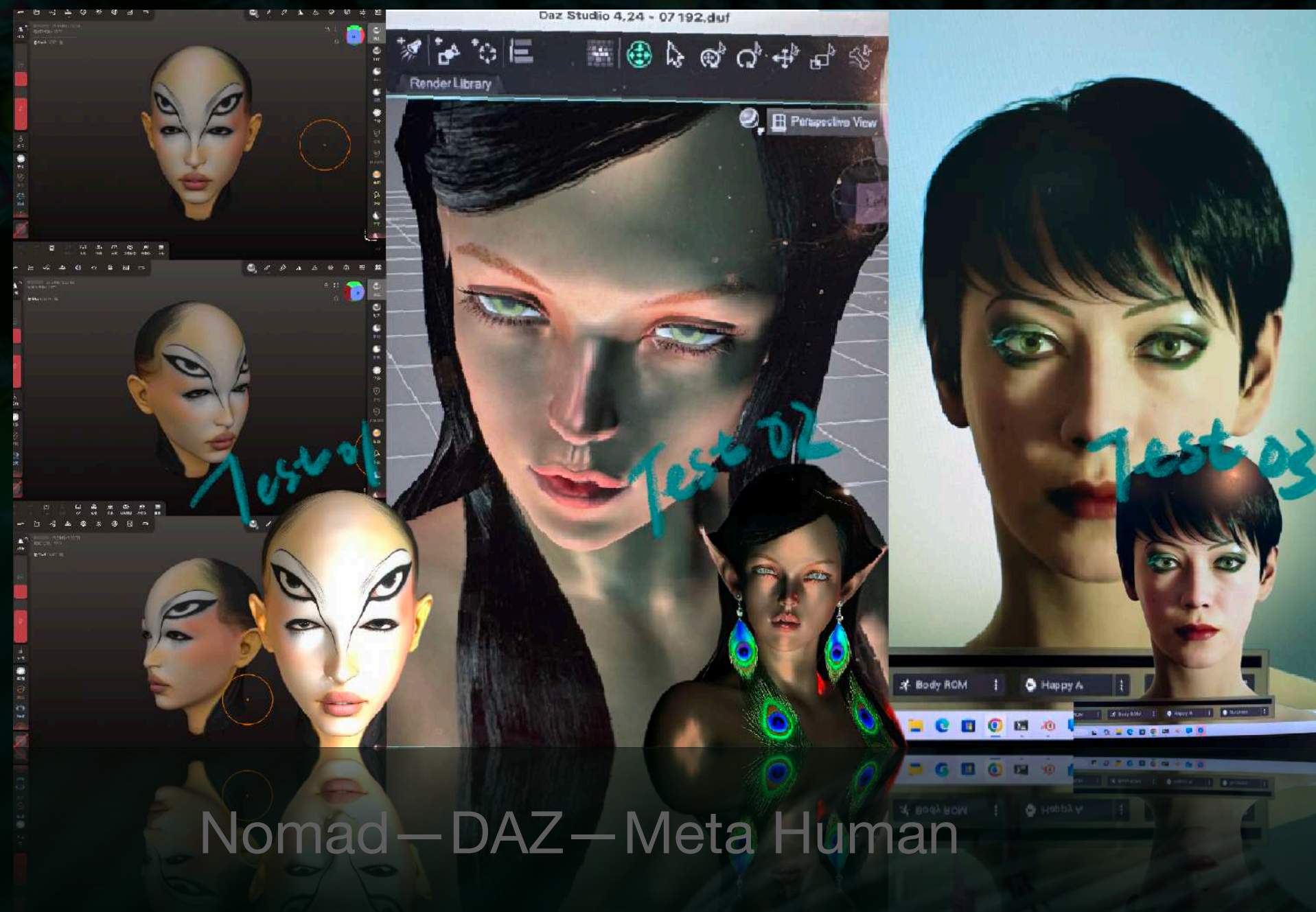


Character Reference



Low-Fidelity Prototypes

"Peafowl" as the main theme symbol of the project embodies extremely strong aesthetic tension, as well as implications of observing politics and self-display. It often symbolizes beauty, pride, gaze, and reincarnation in multiple cultures, and also carries an Eastern spirit and mystery.



Sansan (A name that echoes. A rhythm. A loop.)

- White Peacock - Age: Unknown

- Background:

After a digital ecological collapse, a certain data residue area discovered a series of faint, repetitive yet vibrant light and shadow records of ancient dancers. Thousands of years later, the Earth's respiratory system gradually recovered, and this dance data was awakened in the natural magnetic field. SanSan was born in the ancient forest. She is neither human nor AI, but an entity that combines physical memory with natural code.

natural code

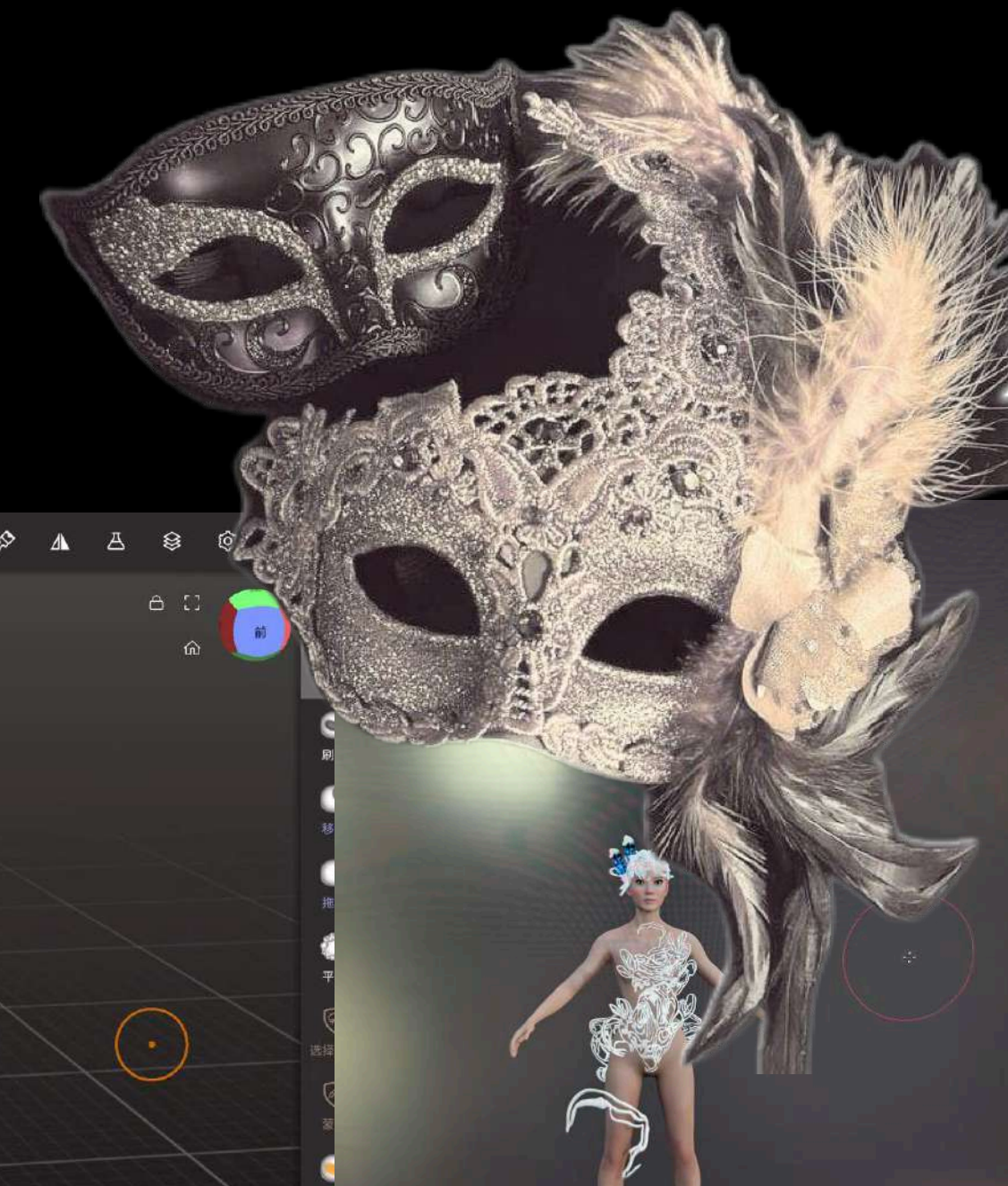
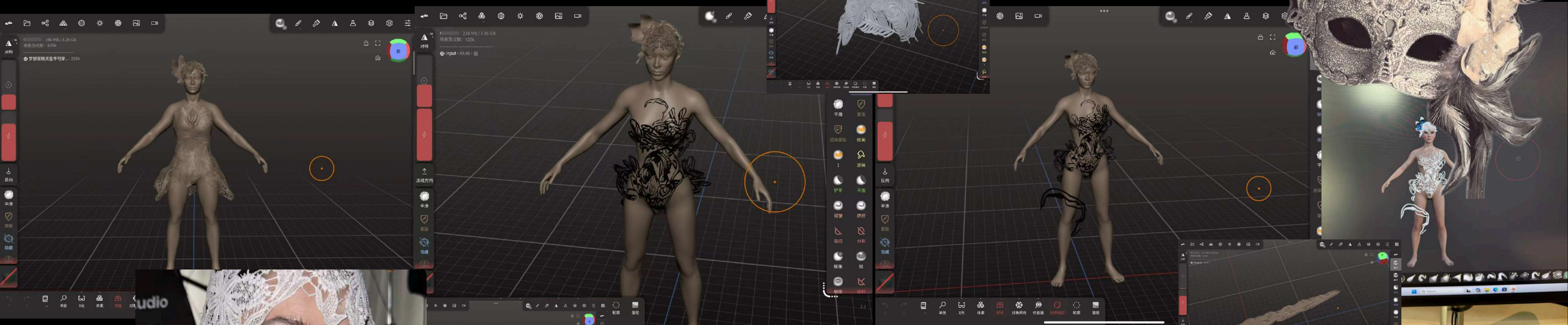
an entity that combines physical memory with

Mid-Fidelity Prototypes



Process

Meshy & Nomad



Clothes & Headwear



High-Fidelity Prototypes

「Sansan」



Key Frames

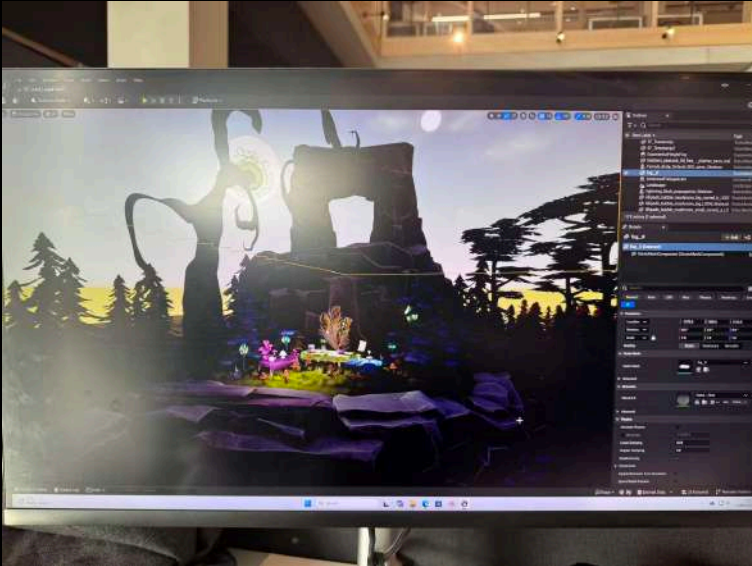
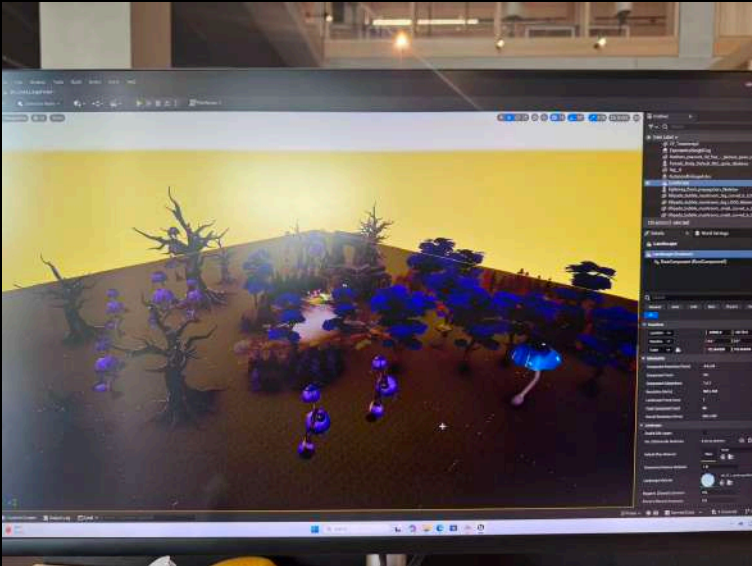


Prototype Process

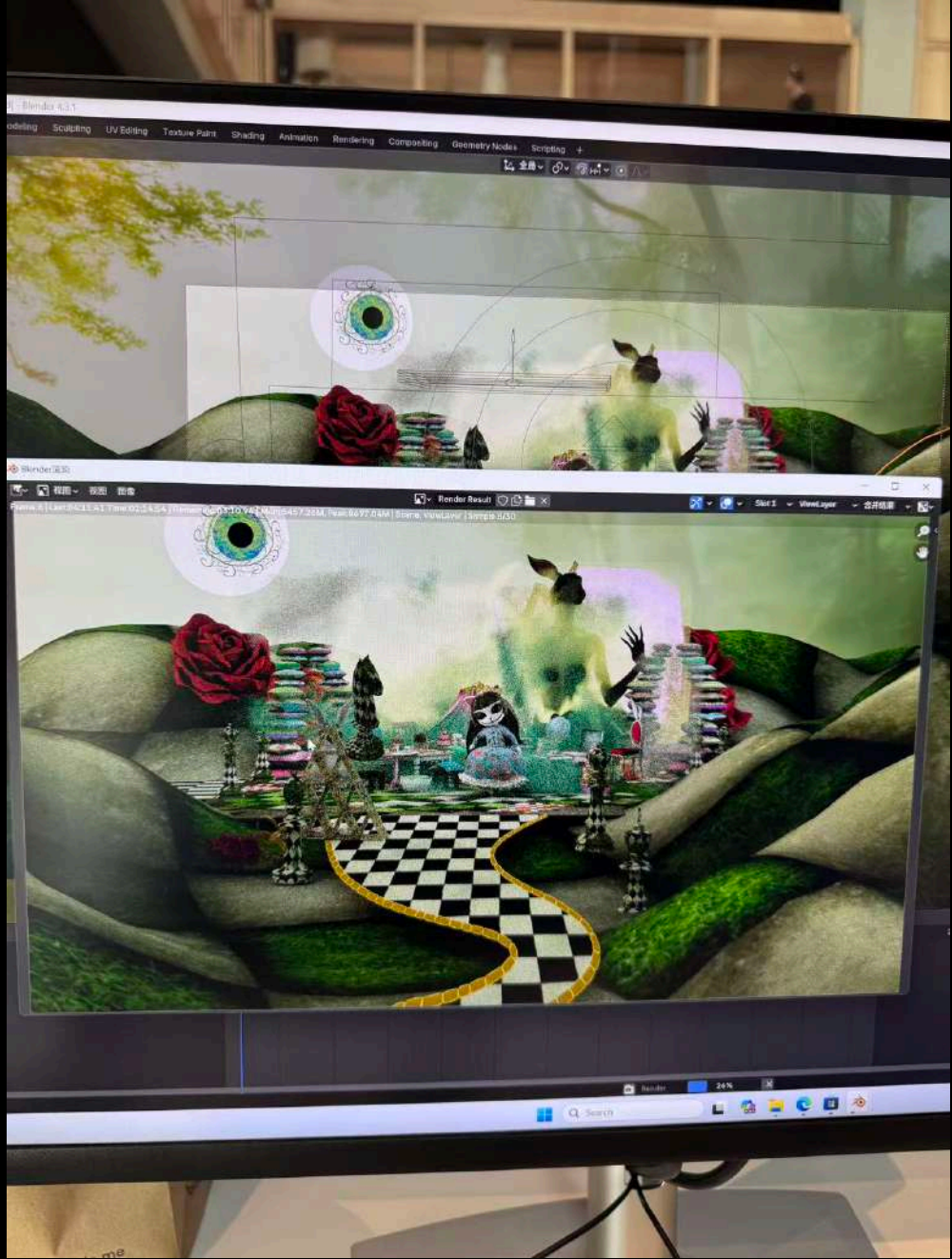


Low-Fidelity Prototypes

Mid-Fidelity Prototypes



Unreal Engine—Blender



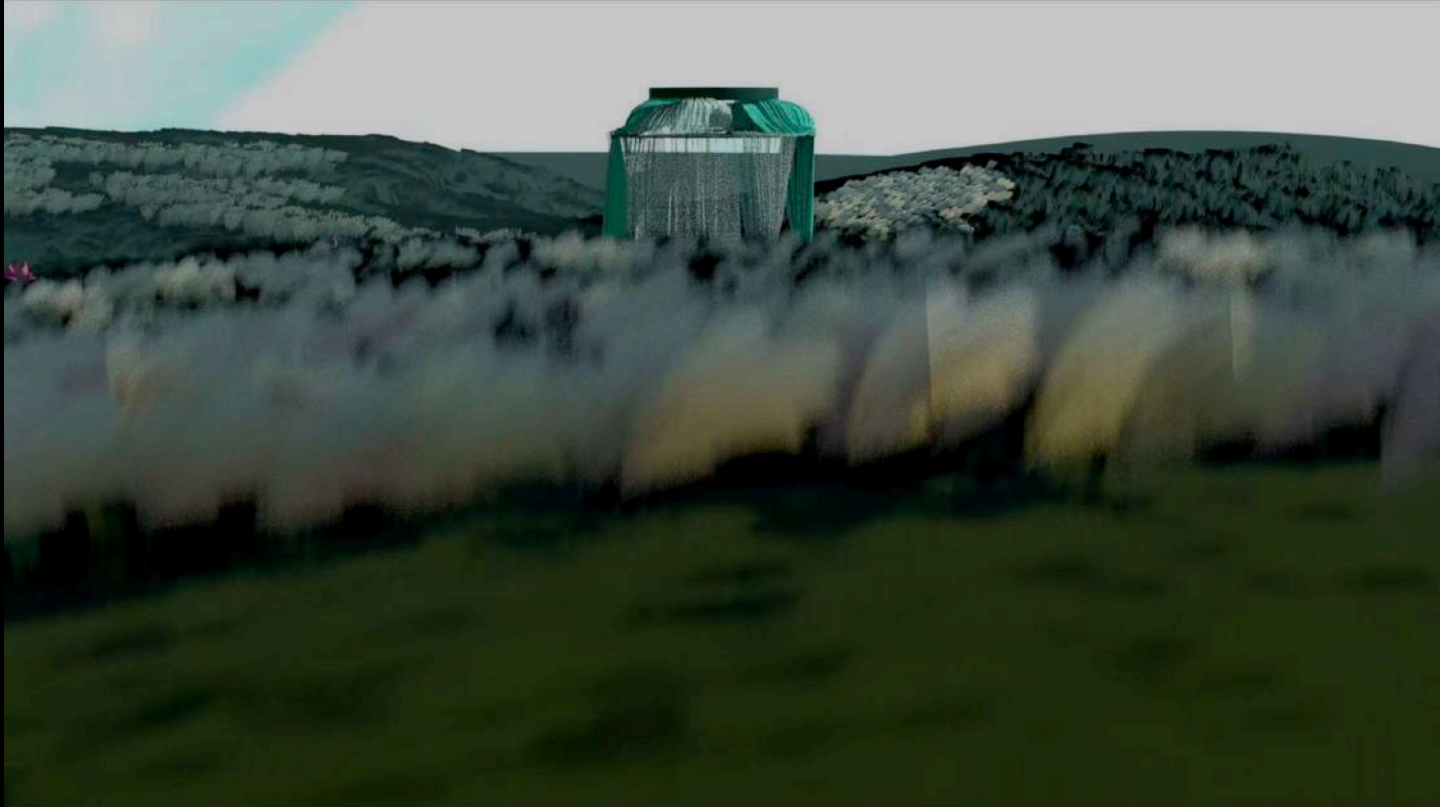
High-Fidelity Prototypes



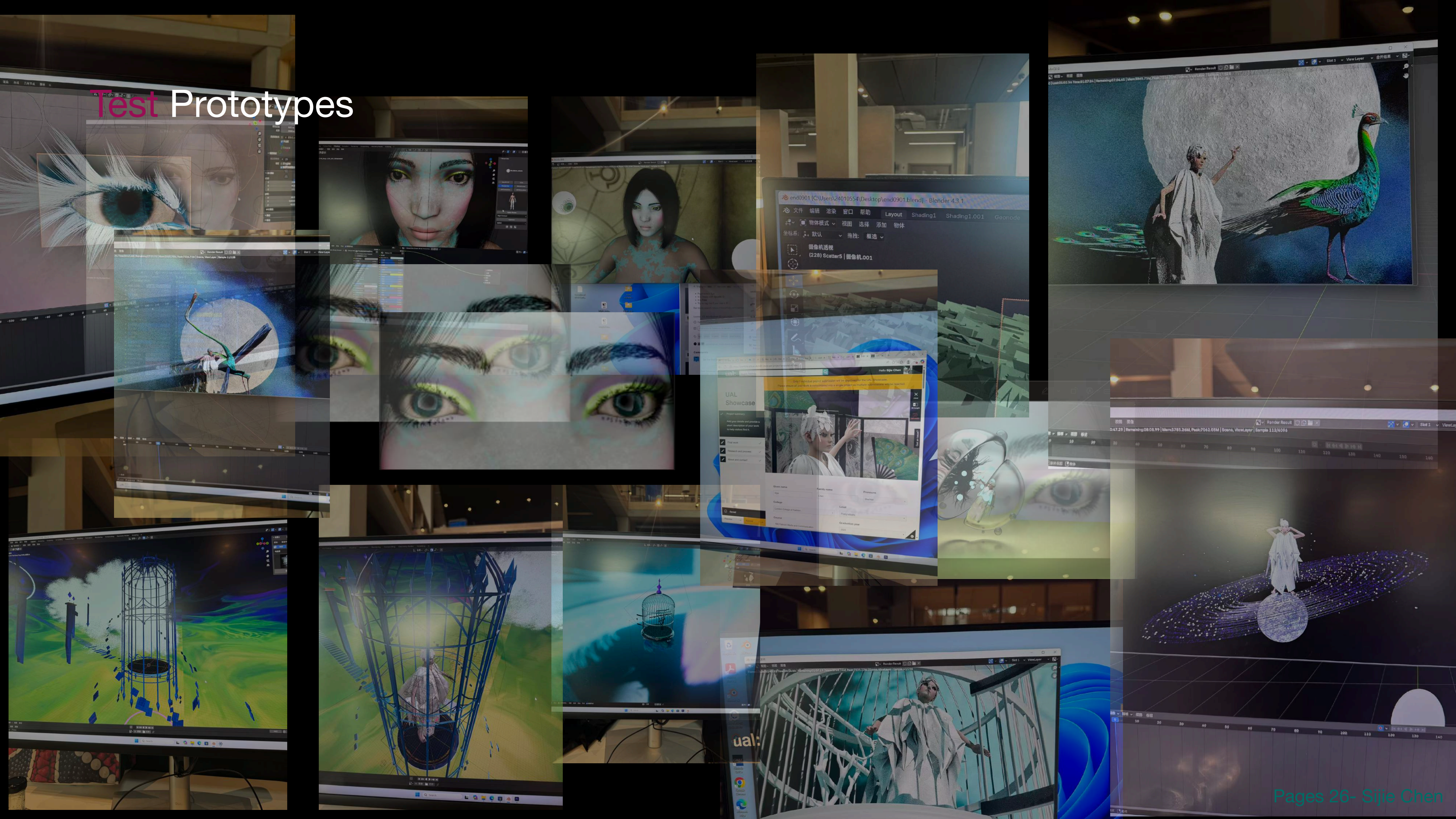
High-Fidelity Prototypes



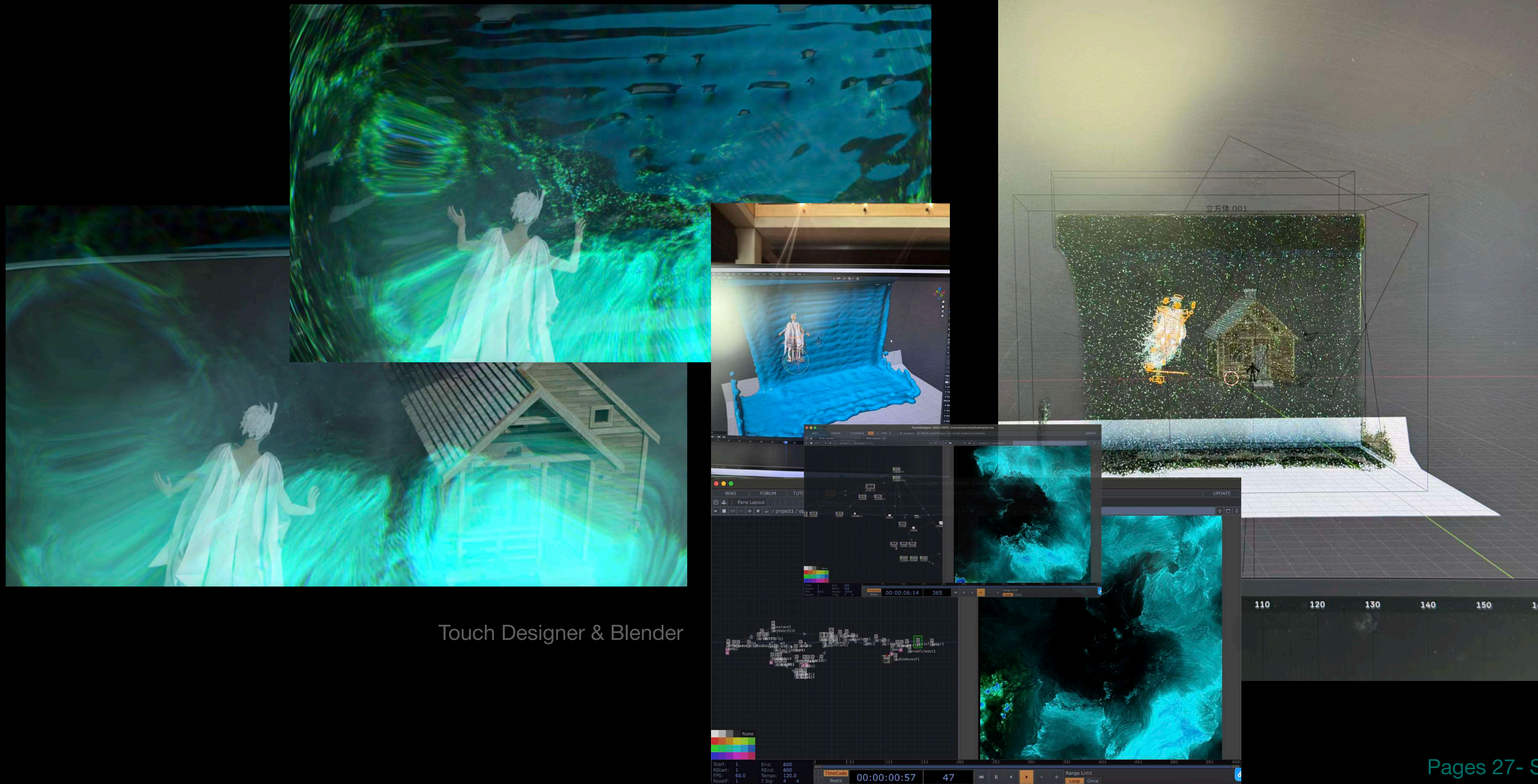
High-Fidelity Prototypes



Test Prototypes



Transition scene



导入

素材

子草稿

我的

AI 生成

云素材

官方素材

全部

Media Not Found

0828--cage1.mp4

0828.mp4

0830gazep...video.mp4

sijie828--cate2.mp4

Sylvia-33.mov

00:01:28:23 / 00:03:02:28

原画 比例

基础 抠像 蒙版 美颜美体

位置大小

缩放 100%

等比缩放

位置 X 0 Y 0

旋转 0.00°

混合

视频防抖

Timeline controls: play, stop, zoom, etc.

Timeline: 01:00 | 01:30 | 02:00 | 02:30

Video tracks: 变速 0.8X, 变速 0.4X, 变速 0.7, 变速 0.8X

Audio tracks: Have you, Video 2025-09-18 00.40.38, Still Waters.mp3, Audio 2025-09-08 21.59.21.m4a, 喘息声, 湖水水流

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