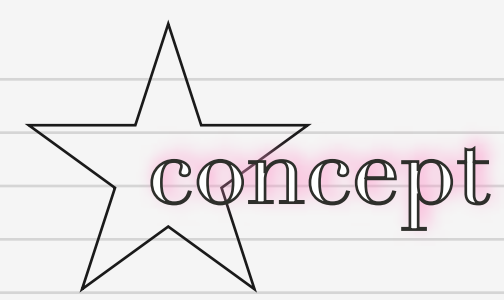


# Concrete Gardens



# The Spectral Space of Demolition and the Suspension of Time

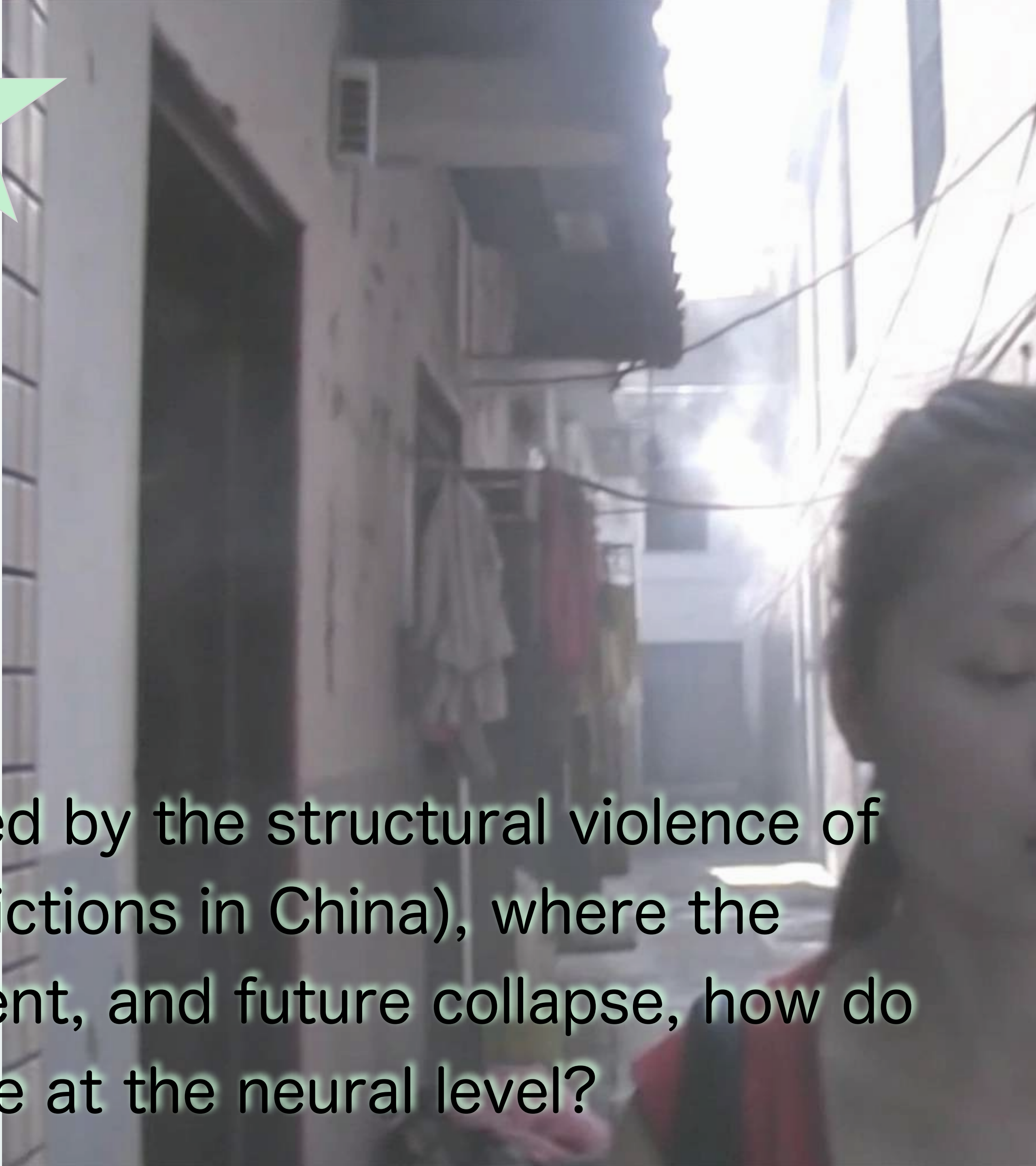


Demolition and relocation not only involve spatial reconstruction but also affect individual experiences and perceptions of the future. Within the stasis created by demolition, space presents a ghostly state: past, present, and future intertwine and overlap, while individuals' bodies and nervous systems anticipate shifts and displacements. This structural disruption of temporal perception influences the subtle flow of spatial order and individual existence.

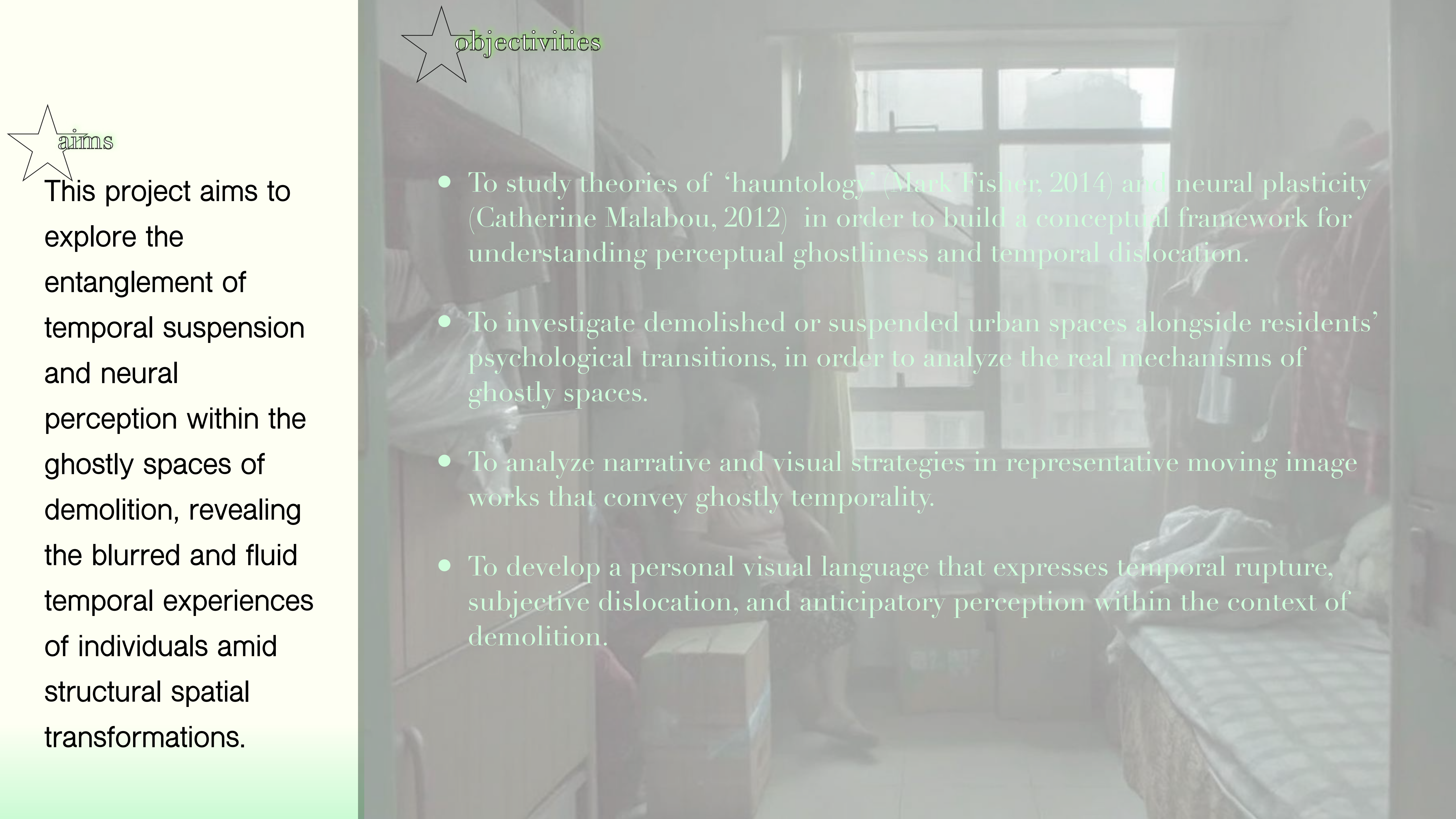
This study draws on the concept of 'hauntology' (Mark Fisher, 2014) and the theory of neural plasticity (Catherine Malabou, 2012) to explore the ghostly spatiality and the suspended temporality generated by demolition.



research question



In the ghostly temporality caused by the structural violence of demolition(e.g., urban village evictions in China), where the boundaries between past, present, and future collapse, how do individuals 'pre-enact' the future at the neural level?



objectivities

aims

This project aims to explore the entanglement of temporal suspension and neural perception within the ghostly spaces of demolition, revealing the blurred and fluid temporal experiences of individuals amid structural spatial transformations.

- To study theories of ‘hauntology’ (Mark Fisher, 2014) and neural plasticity (Catherine Malabou, 2012) in order to build a conceptual framework for understanding perceptual ghostliness and temporal dislocation.
- To investigate demolished or suspended urban spaces alongside residents’ psychological transitions, in order to analyze the real mechanisms of ghostly spaces.
- To analyze narrative and visual strategies in representative moving image works that convey ghostly temporality.
- To develop a personal visual language that expresses temporal rupture, subjective dislocation, and anticipatory perception within the context of demolition.

To address the research question, I will divide the discussion into three stages: 'ghostly space', 'temporal restructuring', and 'neural pre-enactment'. These concepts depict the generative mechanisms of demolition space, temporal dislocation, and bodily perception intertwining. I adopt an interdisciplinary approach, combining spatial politics, neurophilosophy, and visual culture studies, integrating visual cases from Forensic Architecture to reveal fissures of time and perception in the structural violence of demolition.



-The first stage uses 'hauntology' (Mark Fisher, 2014) and 'non-space' theory (Augé, 1992) to focus on the detemporalization and ghostly landscapes of demolition ruins.

-The second stage continues to apply the concept of 'cancelled futures' in hauntology (Mark Fisher, 2014) to explore how demolition policies, propaganda, and spatial practices produce temporal suspension and drift.

-The third stage borrows the theory of neural plasticity (Catherine Malabou, 2012) to understand how individuals pre-enact the future at the neural level.

Ultimately, I will respond to the dislocation of individual perception and the reconstruction of future experience in demolition through experimental visual practice.

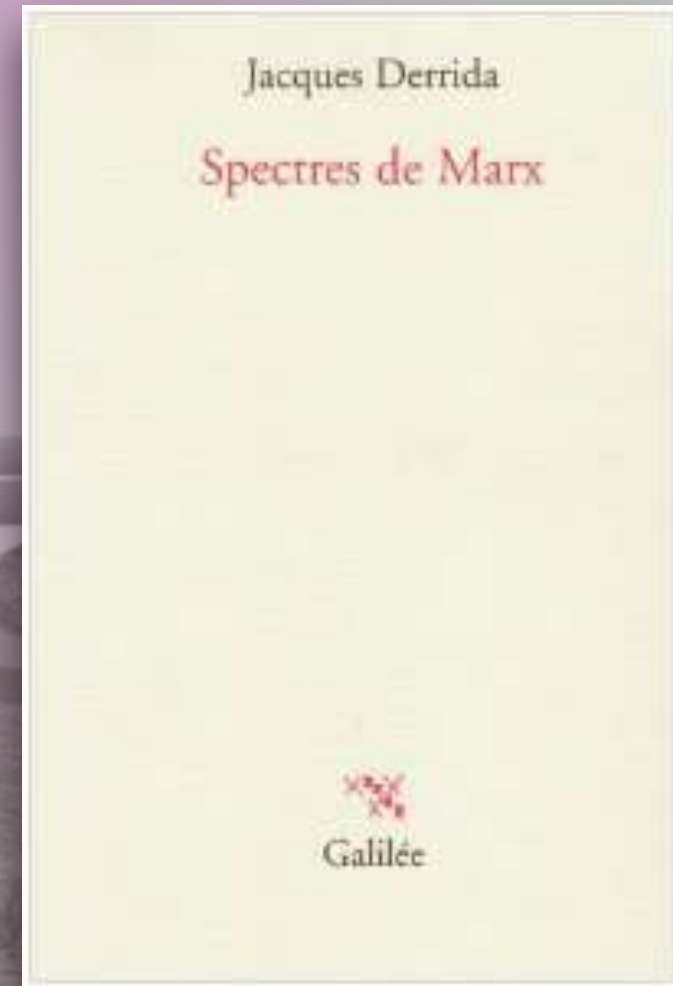
Timeline	Tasks
June-July	Concept & Theme Development • Define research question and theoretical framework • Outline thesis structure and core concepts (Ghostly Space, Temporal Reorganization, Neural Pre-enactment)
August	Prototype & Production • Design and experiment with initial prototypes • Create scenes and characters in Blender • Construct visual elements (spaces, characters, props) and experiment with visual language
Late August-September	Finalization & Integration • Design text and narration • Compose music and sound effects • Edit and integrate video • Complete thesis writing and PPT preparation

Urban villages are typical transitional spaces in the process of rapid urban redevelopment and demolition. They retain traces of history and residents' everyday lives while existing in a liminal state between ruin and reconstruction. Residents experience structural violence through relocation, identity displacement, and disruption of daily life, while leftover objects, ruins, and vacant houses create a ghostly atmosphere. The sense of time in these villages is also fragmented: neither fully past nor yet future, presenting a floating and blurred "fault time." Therefore, urban villages can be seen as concentrated sites of ghostliness, structural violence, and temporal dislocation—spaces that embody real-world predicaments and serve as important contexts in visual practice for exploring perceptual fractures and the pre-enactment of futures.



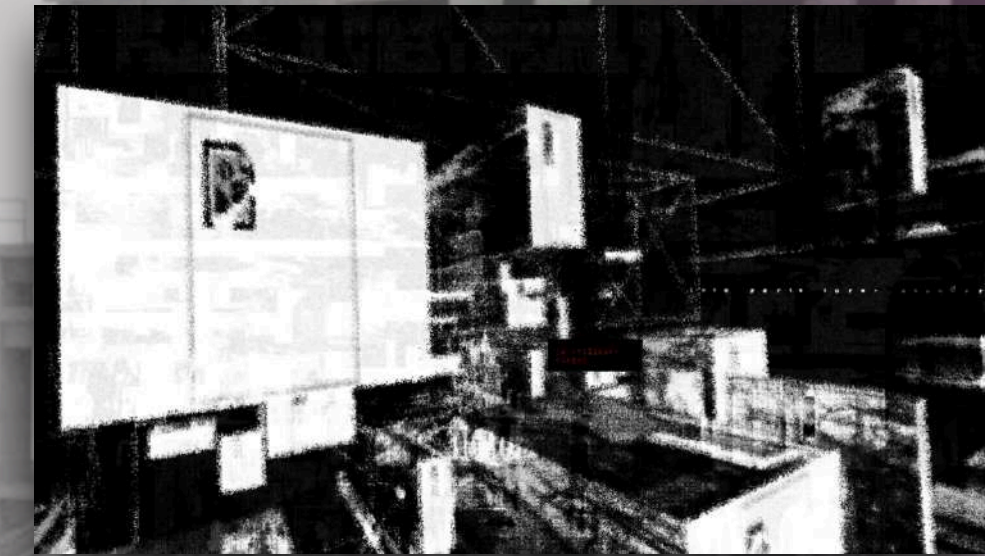
- Hauntology
- Structural Violence
- Neuroplasticity
- Temporal Dislocation

# Research-Hauntology

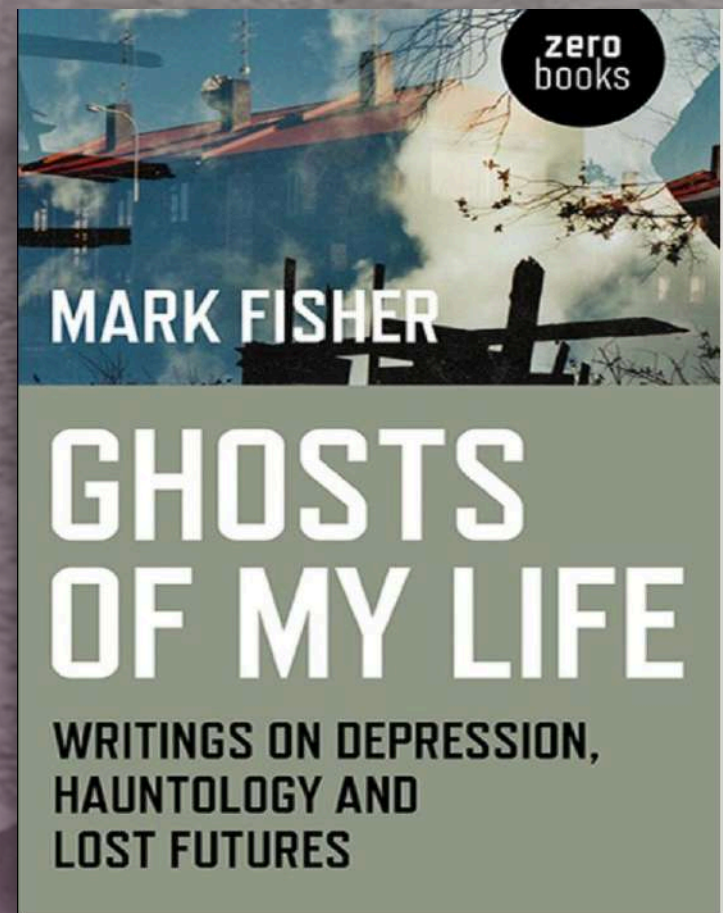


Originator of the concept of Hauntology

- **Emphasis:** Existence is always haunted by the residues of the past and the unrealized possibilities of the future.
- **Hauntology** – The past, present, and future are non-linearly entangled; time and history are overlaid by spectral ruptures.
- **Différance** – Meaning and existence are generated through difference and deferral; they can never be fully “present.”
- **Presence in Absence** – The ghost neither exists as a tangible entity nor fully disappears, but persists in a mode of “absence.”
- **New International** – A non-institutional alliance beyond nation, party, or class, inheriting Marx’s spirit and renewing global systems through critique and collaboration.



Jacques Derrida, «Specters of Marx» (1993)



Core Concepts

- **Lost Futures** – the repression of future possibilities
- **Cultural Stasis** – stagnation of creativity and imagination
- **Hauntological Art** – art that manifests the “ghosts of lost futures” through nostalgia and imagery

Examples

- **Under the Skin** (2013, Jonathan Glazer) → Alien gaze deconstructs human identity, revealing drifting subjectivity and spatial alienation.
- **David Lynch’s cinematic world** → Claustrophobic spaces, dream–reality overlaps, intensifying the psychic sense of haunted space.
- **Christopher Priest’s novels** → Folding and blurring of space and identity, embodying nonlinear narratives and floating existence.
- **2001: A Space Odyssey** (Stanley Kubrick) → Alienated trajectory of humanity’s future, leaving behind an “unfinished ghost of the future.”

Mark Fisher — Ghosts of My Life (2014)

Mariana marangoni- overflowin gardens

<https://marianamarangoni.com/overflowinggardens/>

“Digital Ruins” = Ghostly Spaces in the Network

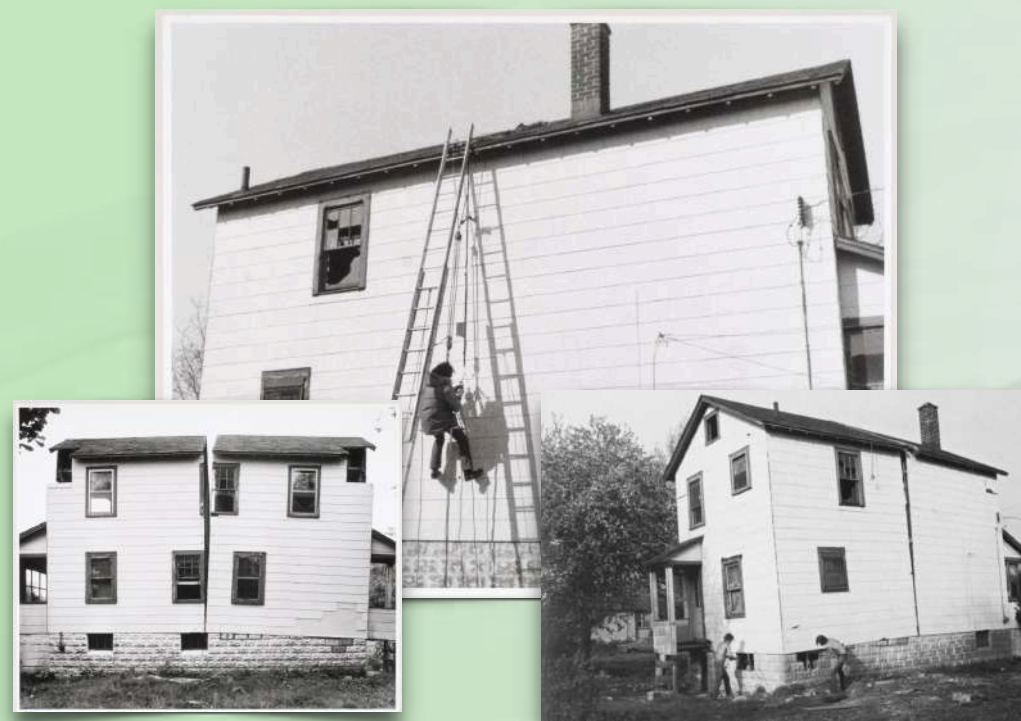
- 404 pages and abandoned code function as the ghosts of the digital age.
- They neither fully exist nor completely disappear, but occupy a state of “**blurred existence.**”
- This condition resonates with hauntological notions of **différance** (meaning generated through difference and deferral) and **presence in absence** (existence through absence).

# ★ Research- Structural Violence

Johan Galtung (1969)

- **Concept Originator:** Norwegian sociologist and founding figure in peace and conflict studies.
- **Core Idea:** Structural violence is an indirect form of violence generated by social, political, or economic structures, manifested as the systematic deprivation of individuals' or groups' basic needs and rights.
- **Classic Definition:** "Structural violence is the avoidable impairment of fundamental human needs."
- **Key Work:** *Violence, Peace, and Peace Research (1969)*.

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/422690>



Gordon Matta-Clark – *Splitting* (1974)

- **Action:** Cutting house → spatial rupture
- **Meaning:** Exposing architecture as power-laden structure
- **Critique:** Space as site of manipulation and control



The Three Gorges Project: Grand Narrative vs. Individual Displacement

- **Real Case:** The Three Gorges Dam, the world's largest hydropower project, displaced over 1.4 million people. Framed as a "great national achievement," it left many residents voiceless, uprooted, and drifting in identity.
- **Film Case:** (*Still Life*, Jia Zhangke, 2006): Set amid the demolition, the film uses ruins, empty spaces, and long takes to convey indirect violence – silenced individuals, fractured identities, and restructured space – producing a haunting sense of loss and powerlessness.



Saydnaya Prison (Forensic Architecture): Reconstructing Violence Through Sound & Memory

- **Real Case:** Saydnaya Prison in Syria is infamous for systematic torture and mass executions, operating largely beyond public visibility.
- **Forensic Architecture Project** (with Amnesty International): Using survivors' "ear-witness" testimonies, they reconstructed a 3D model of the prison, exposing the relationship between spatial design and hidden violence.

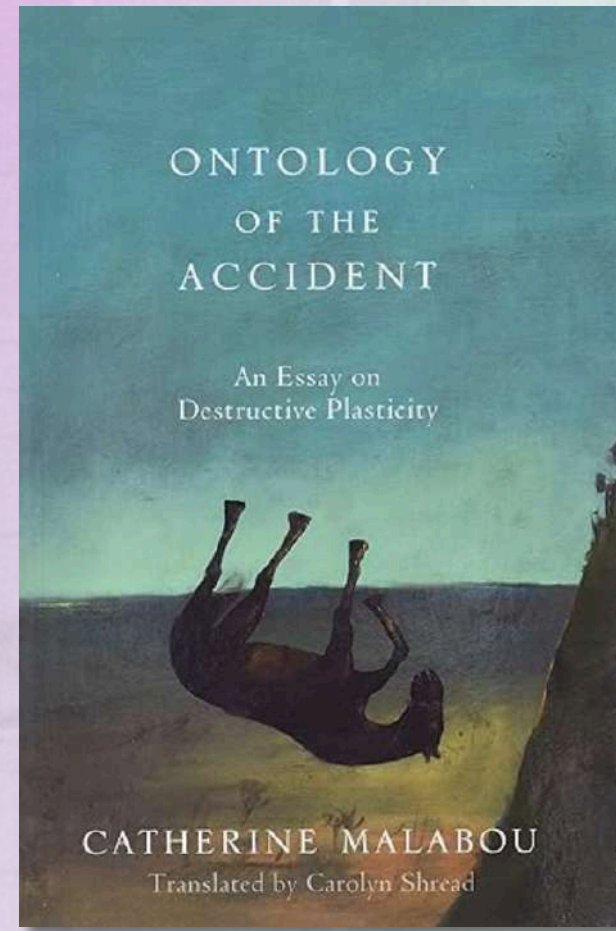


Gaza Rafah Bombing (Forensic Architecture): Visual Traces of War

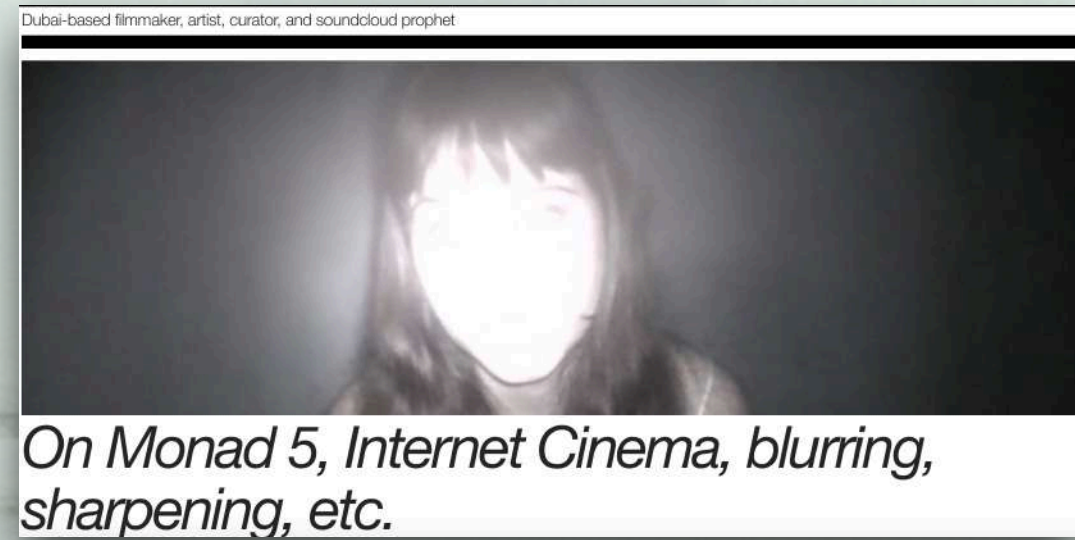
- **Real Case (2014):** Israeli airstrikes on Rafah in Gaza caused mass civilian casualties.
- **Forensic Architecture Project:** By analyzing smoke plumes, shadows, and craters as non-verbal image evidence, they reconstructed the sequence of the attacks, exposing the spatial dimension of wartime violence.



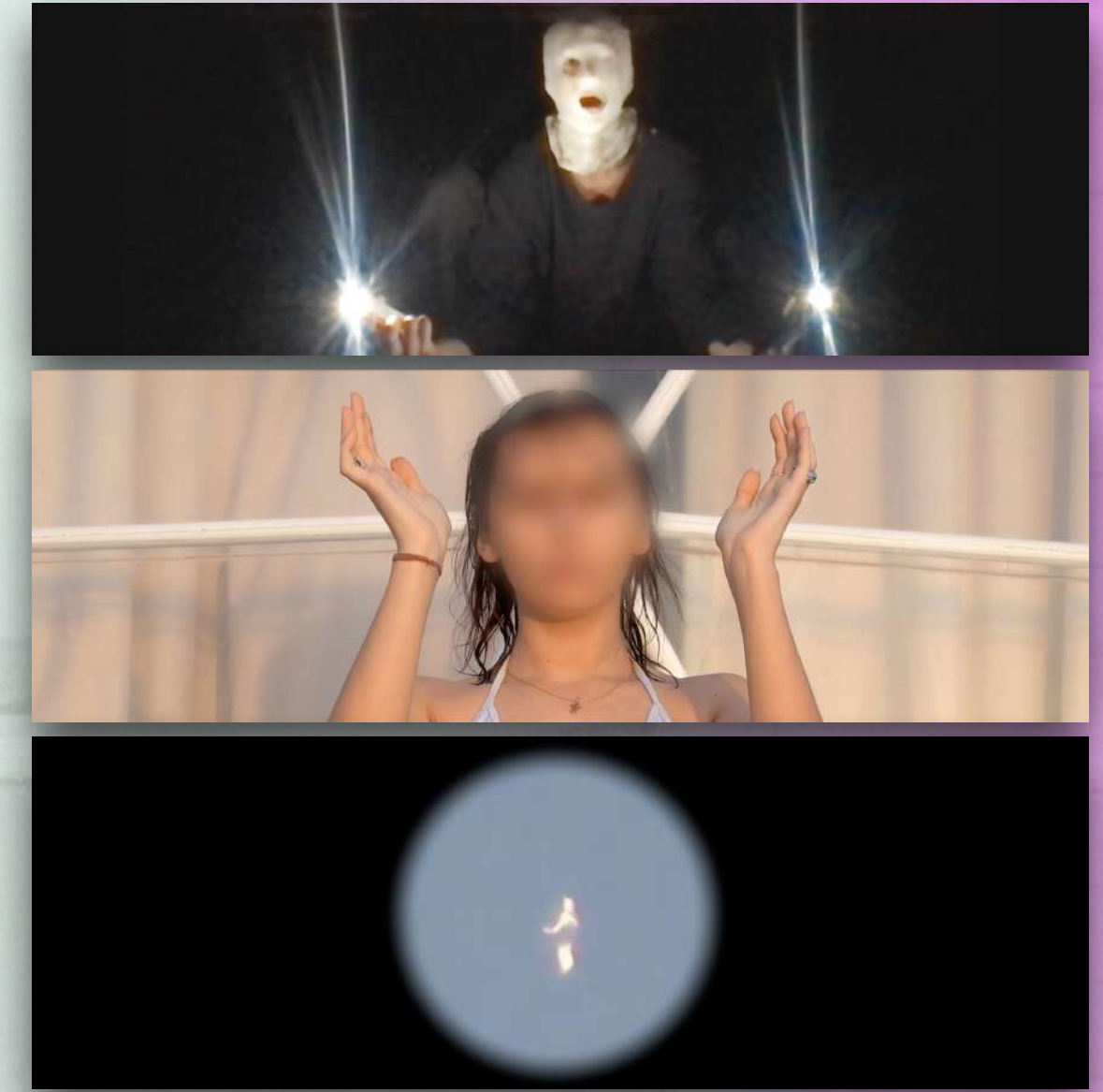
# ★ Research- Neuroplasticity



Catherine Malabou, «The Ontology of the Accident»



Dana Dawud – *Monad*



**Destruction = Generation: Rupture is not only an end but also the opening of new possibilities.**

- **Crisis = Vulnerability: A fragile state between collapse and renewal.**
- **Explosion: Through irreversible rupture and deformation, new forms of subjectivity may emerge.**
- **Ghostly State (the non-existent outside): A spectral existence that persists without external intervention.**

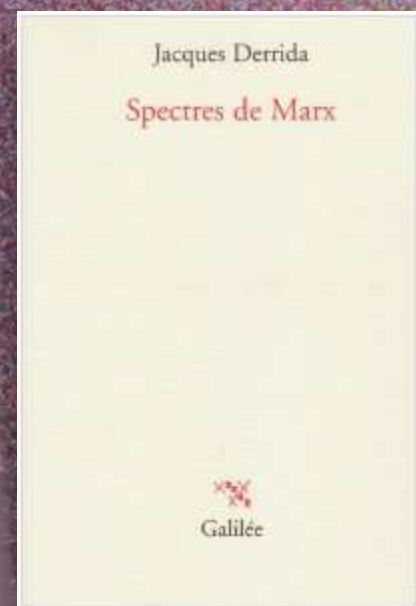
## Artist's Statement / Facts

- **Ongoing experimental film series (in perpetual flux, mutation, and accumulation).**
- **Uses blur, floating imagery, overlapping real-time and film-time.**
- **Blends webcam footage, projection mapping, and texting across real and fictional spaces.**

## Research Connection

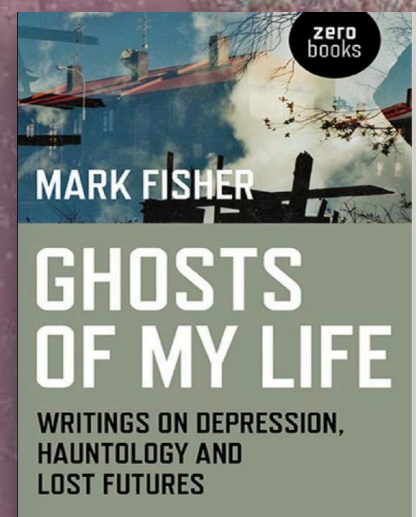
- **Unstable perception: Blur & floating imagery create a sense of rupture and instability.**
- **Crisis & adaptation: Evokes states of fracture and transformation, resonating with Malabou's destructive plasticity.**
- **Future rehearsal: Forces the viewer to reorganize perception, which I interpret as a metaphor for neural adaptation and future pre-enactment.**

# Research- Temporal Dislocation



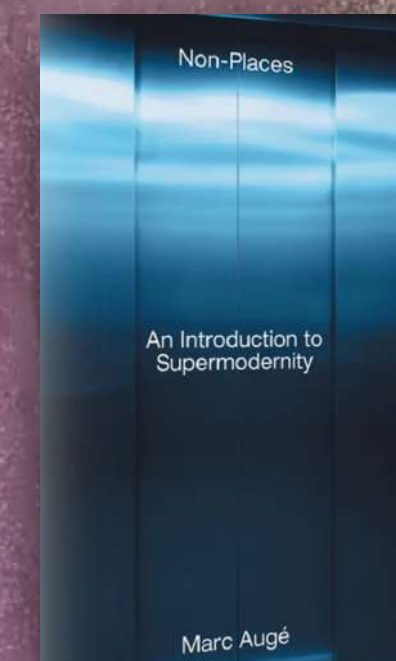
## *Derrida: Temporal Différance*

- **Non-linear time:** Time does not flow in a straight line but unfolds through postponement and folding.
- **Hauntological temporality:** Past, present, and future permeate and interfere with one another, never fully fixed.
- **Manifestation in space:** In demolition or ruins, memory (past), reality (present), and the promised future coexist, yet remain blurred and ultimately ungraspable.



## *Mark Fisher: Cancelled Futures*

- **Loss of futurity:** In contemporary culture, the sense of the future has vanished or been indefinitely postponed, leaving both individuals and society in stasis.
- **Urban displacement:** Processes such as demolition, urban restructuring, or social upheaval deprive people of their futurity, trapping them in an unfinished present.
- **Hauntological temporality:** Time becomes ghostly, where the future is cancelled and the present floats in suspension.



## *Marc Augé: Non-space*

- **Definition:** A *non-space* refers to temporary or transient spaces that lack history, identity, and a sense of belonging.
- **Floating temporality:** Time in non-space is suspended—there is no continuity with the past, nor orientation toward the future.
- **Manifestation:** Demolition zones, transit hubs, and shopping malls often embody this suspended temporality, where individual perception becomes fragmented.



## *Kaili Blues (2015, Bi Gan)*

Through long takes and nonlinear narration, the film conveys a sense of temporal *différance* and suspension. Set in the misty town of Kaili, time seems to stall as characters drift between reality and dream, embodying the theme of a "suspended future."

This cinematic approach resonates with Derrida's concept of **temporal *différance***, Mark Fisher's notion of **cancelled futures**, and Marc Augé's idea of **floating temporality in non-space**.

• **Form:** Thesis written as a news report to reflect demolition's fractured temporality.

• **Context:** A fictional urban village demolition event analyzed through three characters.

• **Framework:**

1. **Hauntological Space** → memory & presence-in-absence

2. **Temporal Reconfiguration** → floating reality & suspended future

3. **Neurological Rehearsal** → perceptual reorganization & future emergence

• **Method:** Narrative combined with AI-generated imagery to visualize the entanglement of space, time, and perception.

# ★ Storyboard

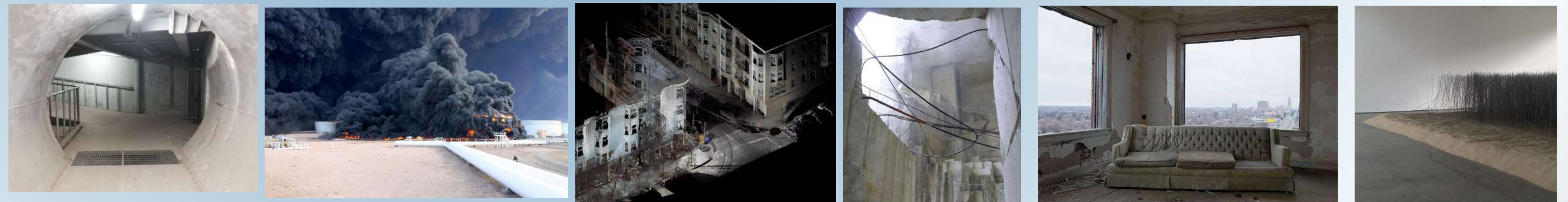
Scene	Space / Visuals	Key Actions	Elements / Motifs	Function / Emotion	Transition
1	Transparent glowing grey house	TV floats, shatters	Glowing building, tower projection	Futuristic illusion / Omen	TV shattering → Black screen
2	Black glowing road	Character blurs/clears → gets locked → water flow	Road, flashing lights, moving house	Urban reality extracted / Foreshadowing body split	Black screen → Flickering lights + water flow
3	Four-chambered room	Furniture floats → character deforms → furniture shatters → insects enter	Floating furniture, split bodies, insects	Alienation / Multiplicity of body and space	Water flow / floating character → gap into room
4	Whirlpool space	Character drifts through whirlpool	Whirlpool, oral textures	Spatial rupture / Temporal disorder	Room fragments vanish → whirlpool emerges
5	Inverted city	Character floats forward	Upside-down buildings, clouds, cityscape	Perceptual collapse / Disorientation	Whirlpool extends into cityscape
6	Pond	Character enjoys → bound by text → brainwashed by broadcast → lightning strike	Policy promise text, broadcast, lightning	Control / Confinement	Inverted city → water reflection → pond
7	Final building explosion	Scaffold binds body → swarm of locusts → transparent box floats → building deforms, sinks → explosion, fragments scatter	Building, glowing plants, insect swarm, transparent box, split body	World collapse / Visual climax	Pond lightning → building appears → explosion

The project transforms demolition sites into surreal, hauntological spaces where ruins, cracks, and inverted architectures collapse time. A drifting character, caught between suspension and collapse, embodies disorientation and a neurological "rehearsal" of the future.

★ mood board

Reality

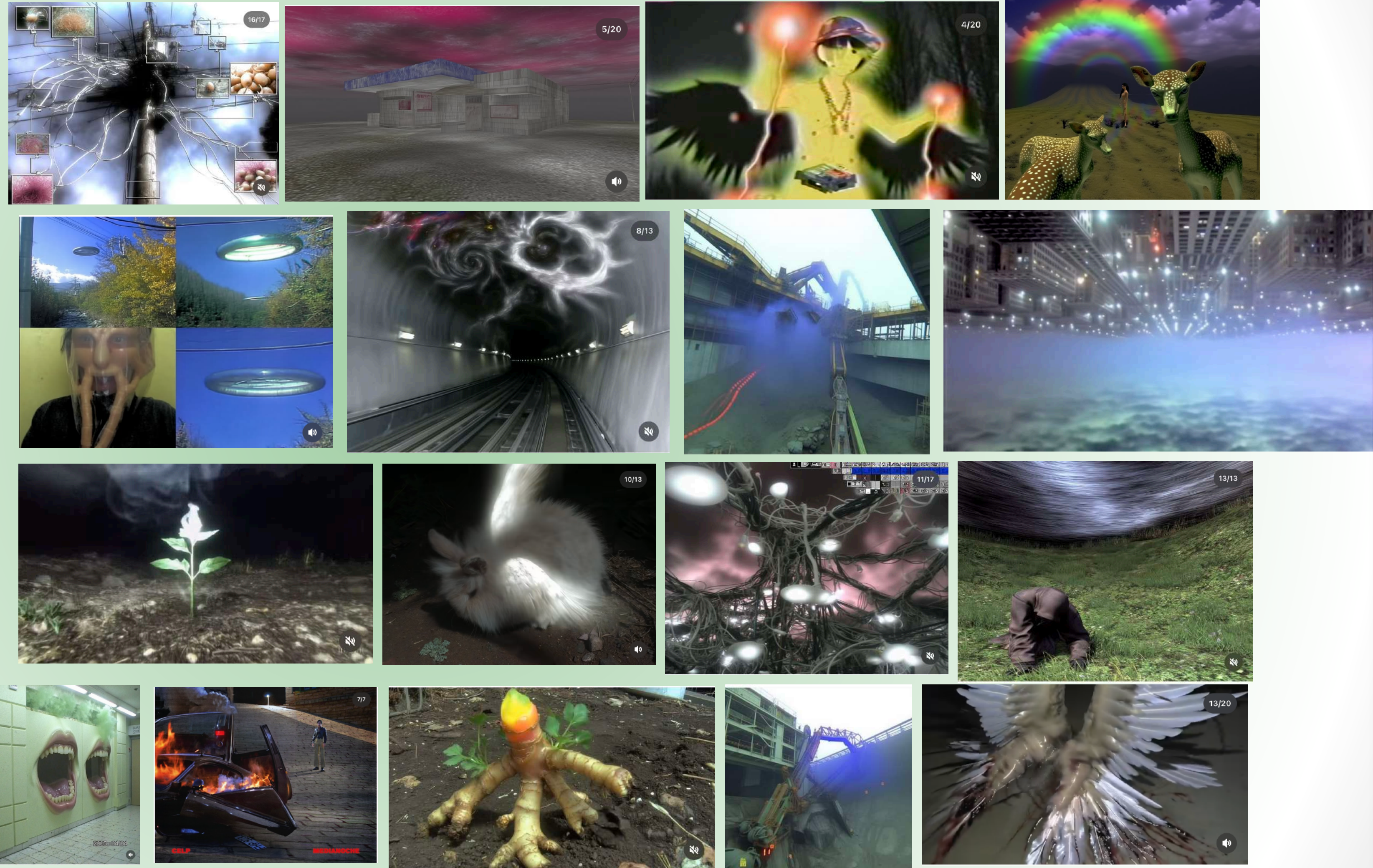
- Visual references drawn from urban villages, ruins, and demolition sites
- Emphasis on the fragmentation of real environments and broken physical spaces
- Dark tones and rough textures highlight structural violence and individual precarity
- Serves to convey the hauntological weight of reality within the film



★ mood board

Surrealism

- Visual elements include floating furniture, inverted spaces, and luminous figures
- Emphasis on temporal dislocation, spatial suspension, and neurological fissures of perception
- Dreamlike colors and blurred lighting create a non-linear sensory experience
- Serve as a visual experiment of temporal reorganization and neurological rehearsal in the film.



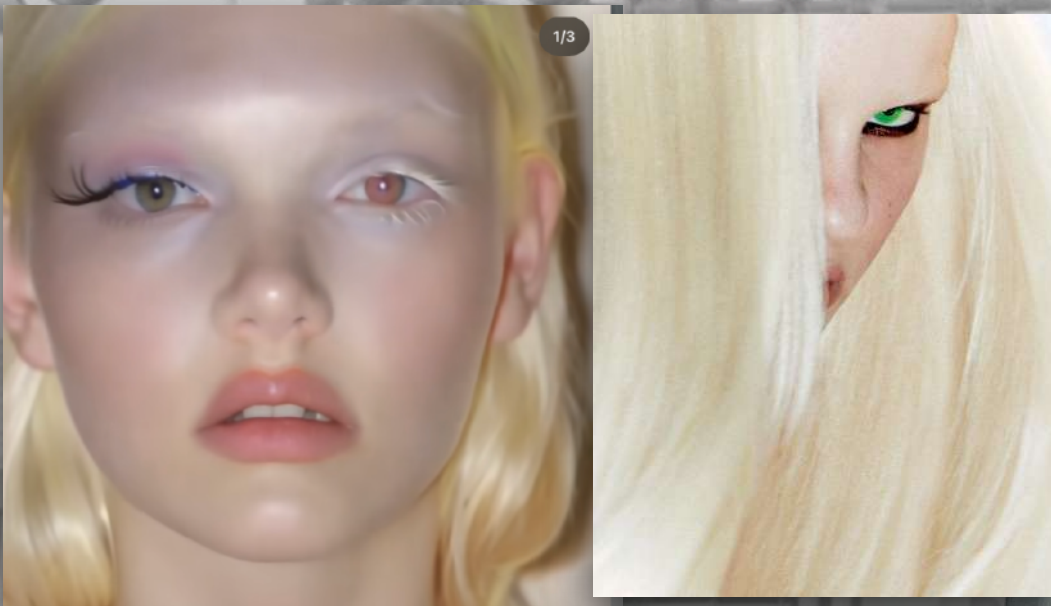
# ★ Character Design



## Process



## Reference



## Process



## Reference



## Ordinary Figure

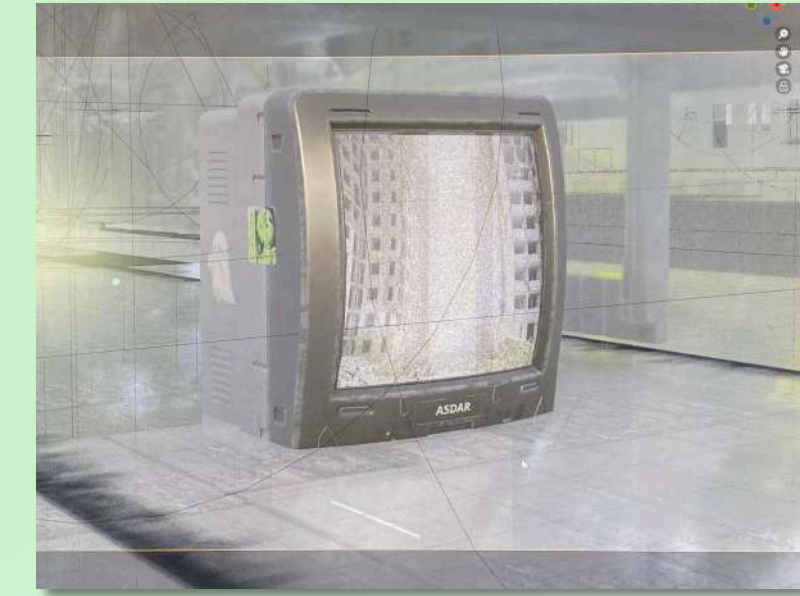
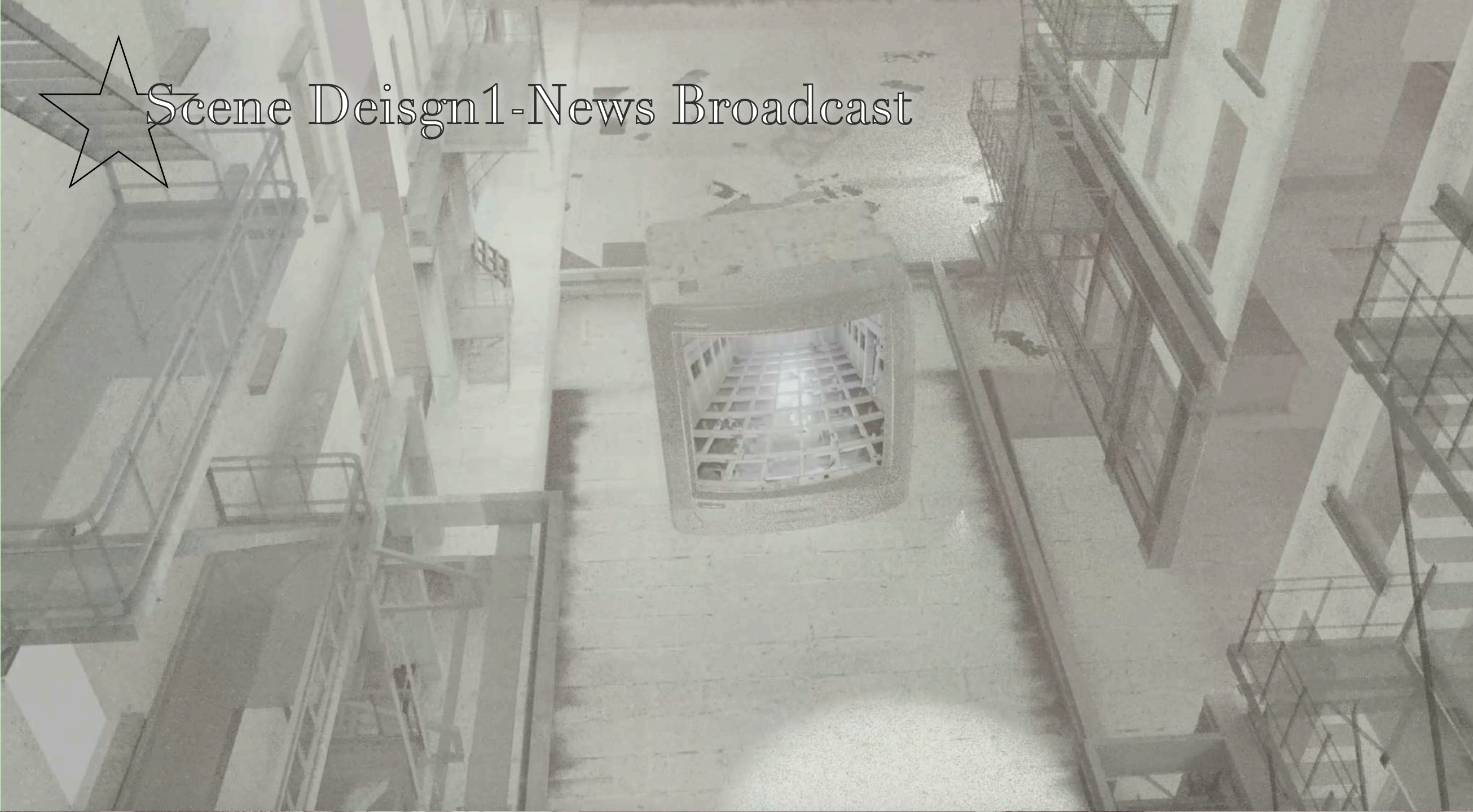
- Represents the ordinary individual experiencing demolition
- Appearance is muted and simple, with plain clothing and a sense of lightness
- Transformation is conveyed through body movement, gestures, and expressions
- Embodies the drifting and disorientation of the individual within hauntological spaces and temporal dislocation

## Transformed Figure

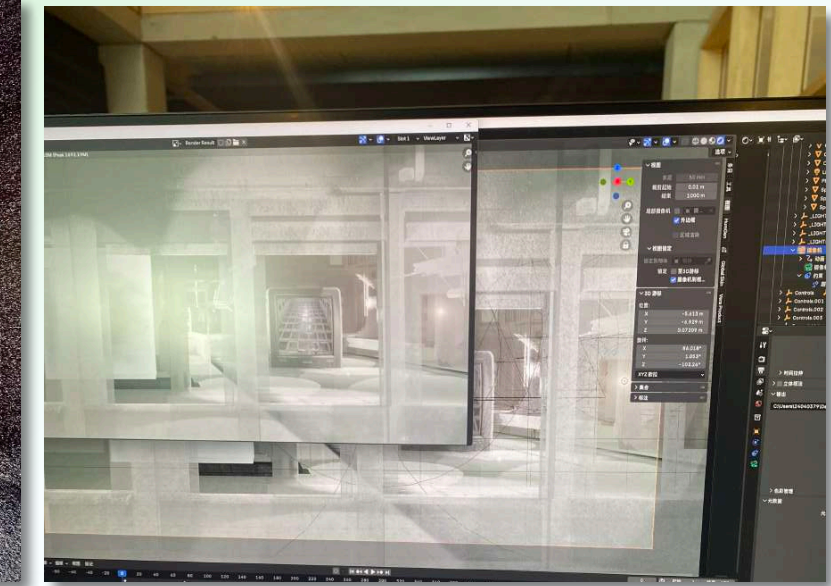
- Body is partially distorted and embedded within architectural structures
- Symbolizes the fusion of individual and space
- Appears in scenes of architectural collapse, serving as a metaphor for the interaction and mutual impact between self and environment
- Emphasizes the entanglement of space, memory, and perception, visualizing neural prefiguration and reorganization under crisis



★ Scene Design 1 - News Broadcast



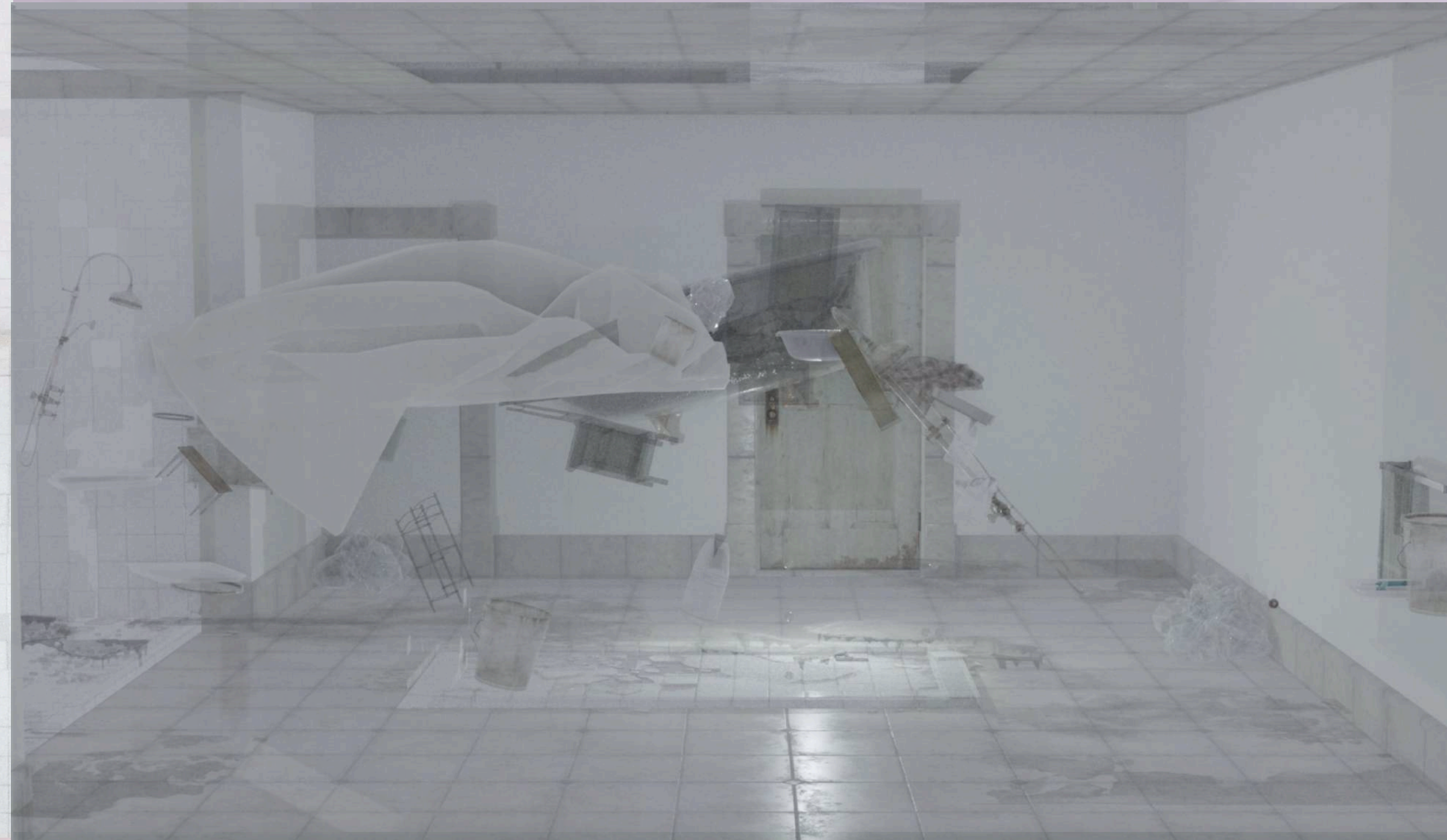
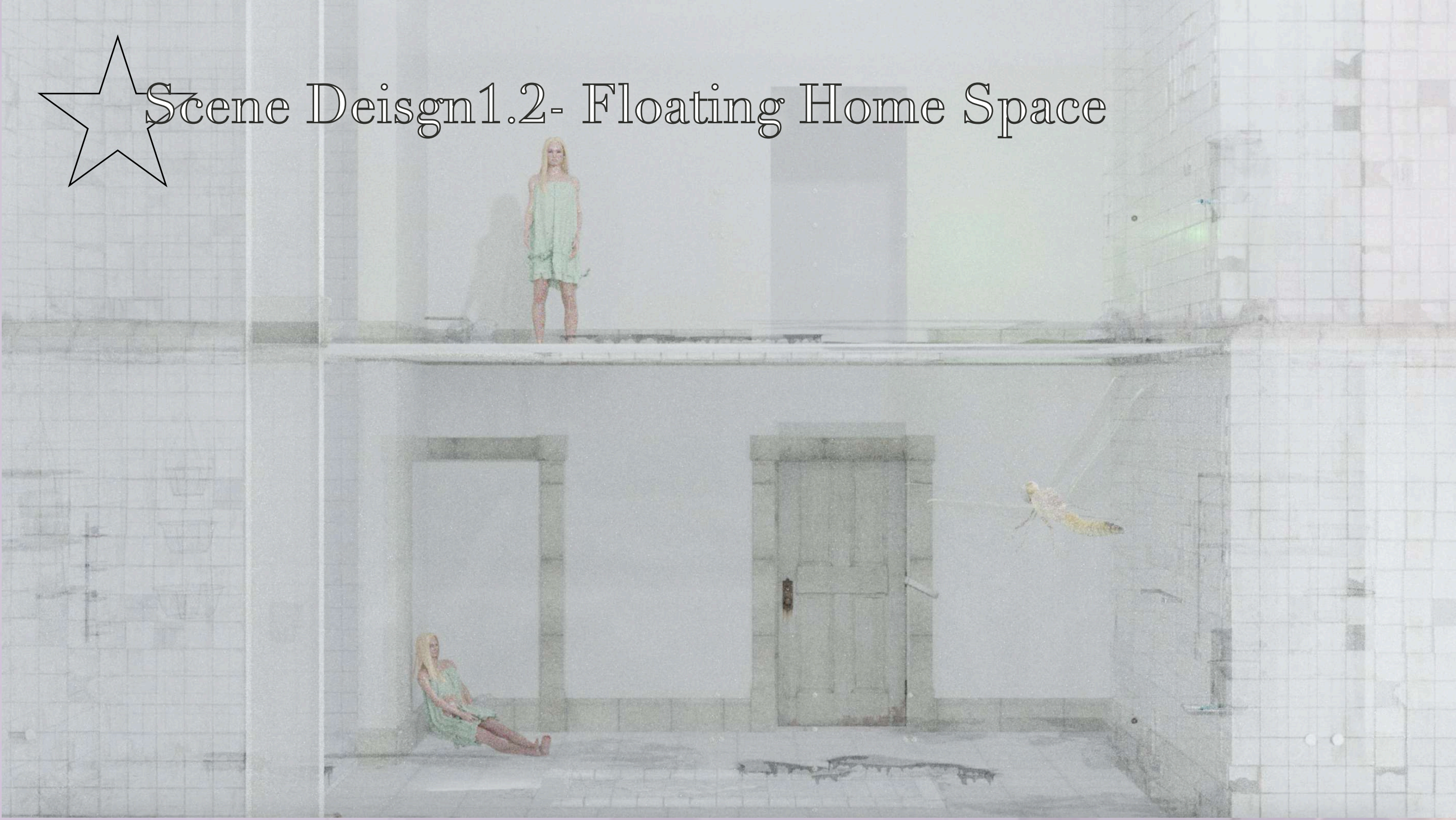
Process



- Gigantic TV as focal point, highlighting the demolition news
- Semi-transparent, ghostly room enhances mystery and unreality
- Introduces ghostly temporality and structural violence
- Connects reality and surreal space, suggesting floating time and suspended futures



# ★ Scene Design 1.2- Floating Home Space



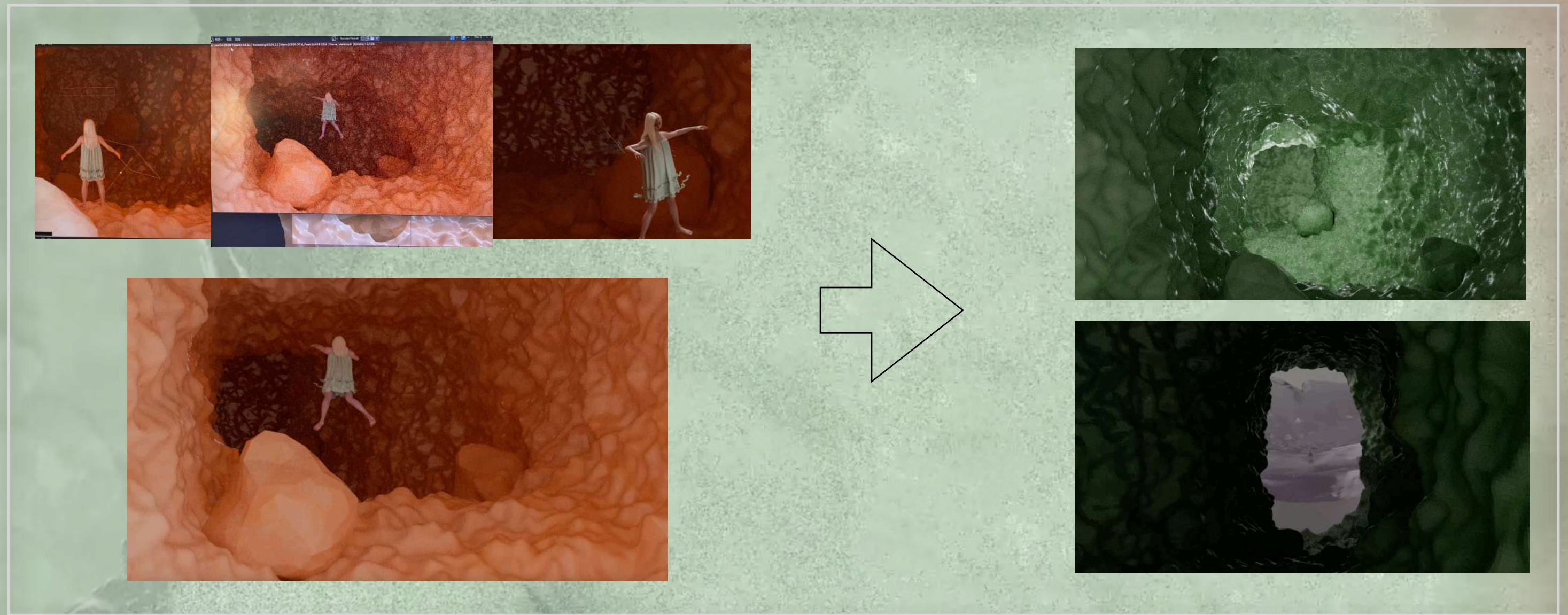
- Extension of news broadcast scene; focuses on micro-scale, personal experience
- Floating furniture and fireflies create a ghostly, surreal atmosphere; fireflies symbolize guidance or potential futures
- Semi-real, semi-surreal design continues the mysterious tone of the news scene
- Visual & narrative role: emphasizes perceptual reorganization and neurological rehearsal of the future, linking macro events to individual experience

# ★ Scene Design 2 - Dark-toned Street / Temporary Space



- **Core Element:** Dark street evoking a semi-underground, temporary environment
- **Spatial Atmosphere:** Between real and makeshift; flickering lights create mystery and instability
- **Character Presentation:** Figures alternate between blurred and clear; silhouettes emerge with changing light, enhancing the sense of ghostly space and temporal suspension
- **Visual & Narrative Role:** Transitions audience from news scene to "reality-hauntological" space  
Highlights character drifting and perceptual fissures amid demolition

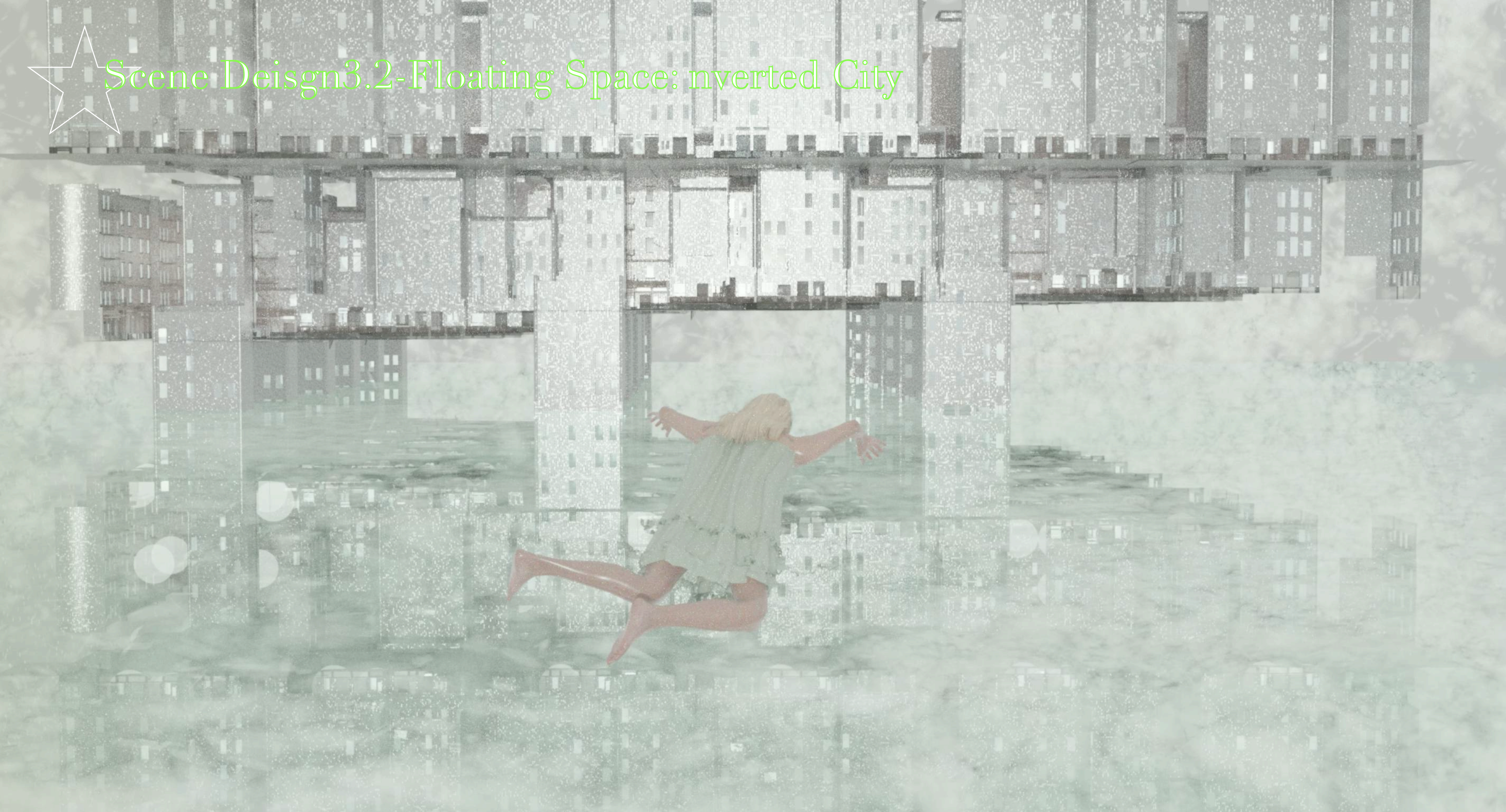
## Scene Design 3.1-Floating Space: Traversing the Mouth



- **Concept & Symbolism:** Mouth-shaped space symbolizes social promises and public reception of demolition narratives
- **Spatial Experience:** Audience drifts through the space, creating immersion and temporal suspension
- **Design & Atmosphere:** Textured surfaces and red-to-green gradient evoke uncertainty and unease, linking to previous street scene
- **Narrative Role:** Visual metaphor for structural violence of demolition and continuity of hauntological experience

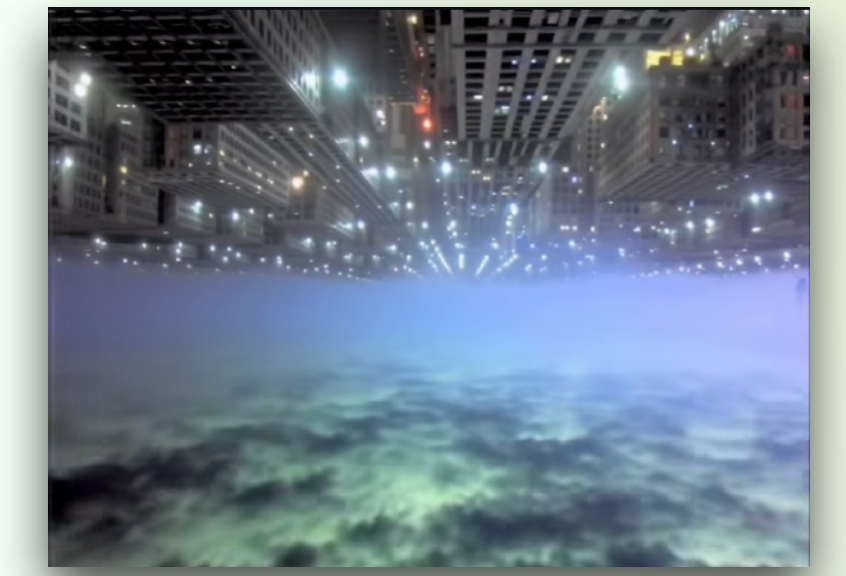


# Scene Design 3.2-Floating Space: inverted City



- **Concept & Symbolism:** Character's perception is dislocated between government promises and cancelled futures
- **Spatial Design:** Inverted city structure, with the city above and ocean below, creating a sense of floating and tension
- **Narrative Role:** Visualizes the character's inner confusion and temporal drift; sets up the final demolition scene
- **Atmosphere & Experience:** Emphasizes hauntological time, suspended futures, and neural rehearsal

## Reference



## Process



★ Scene Design 4- Pond of Promise

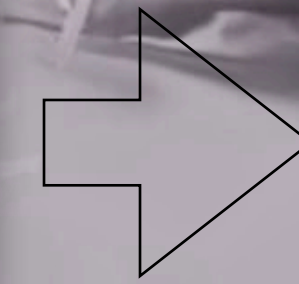
- **Space & Atmosphere: Dreamlike pond, ghostly and surreal; character floats calmly at first**
- **Narrative & Symbolism: Government's repeated promise of a "better life" gradually binds the character, showing language as institutional violence**
- **Visual Elements: Plants as ground base, chains as metaphor for captivity**



Process



After the brainwashing, the character's body becomes transparent.



lightning first used as disruptive transition, later replaced with mist

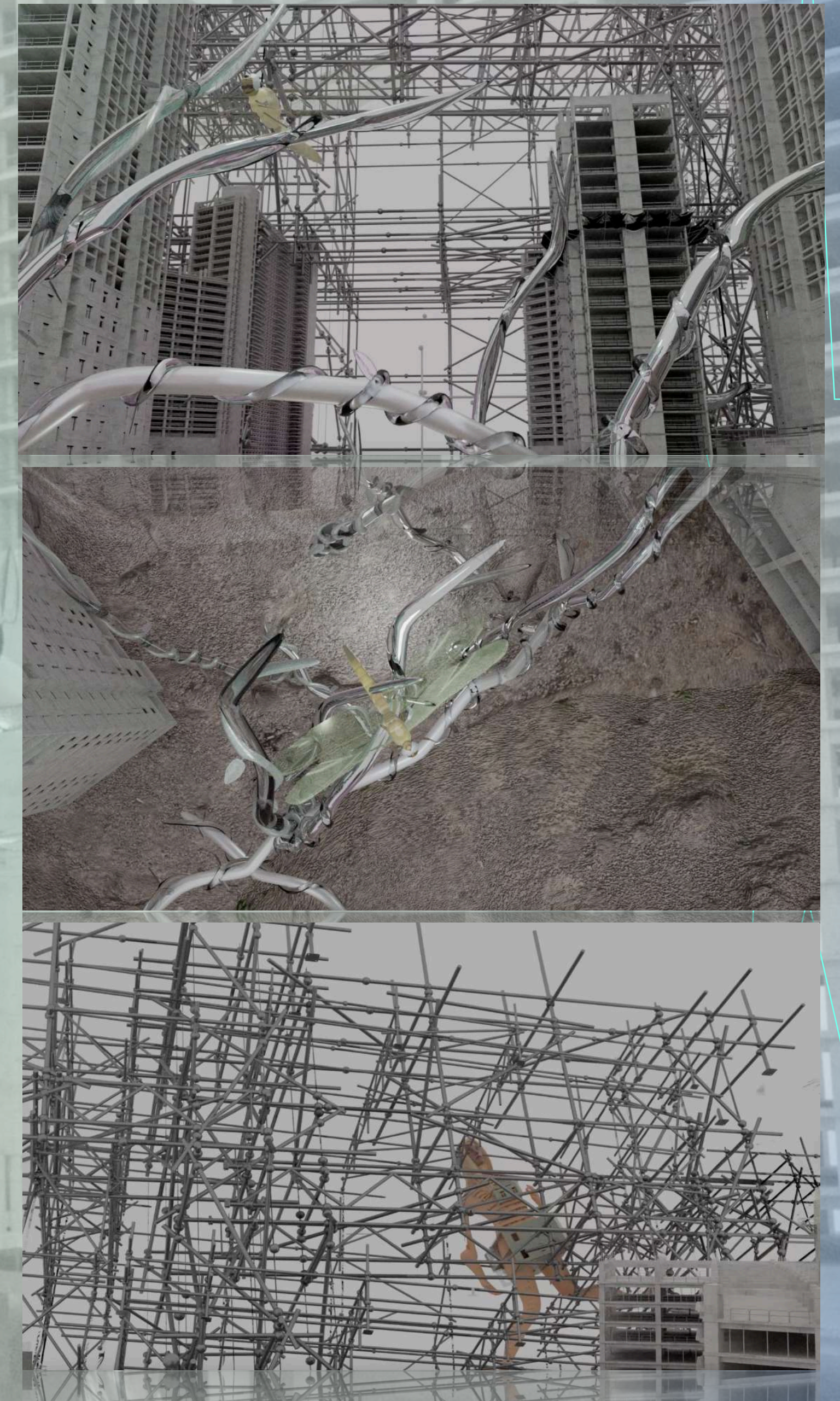


# Scene Design 5 - Collapsing Building

## Process



- Atmosphere: Based on the urban village demolition setting, with glowing plants and smoke-emitting tractors to blur reality and illusion.
- Narrative: The character becomes lost inside the building, floating and entangled in scaffolding. As the structure collapses and the space disintegrates, the story reaches its climax and conclusion, returning the audience to reality.



Scene	Narration
News – Black Street – Narrow Space	My vision flickers. My senses perceive change before reason, as if an unease is closing in. The stagnant air presses against me.
Floating Furniture – Black Street Water Flow – Firefly	Past, present, and future churn and overlap, stirring my touch and memory. The stagnant air presses against me. Body and perception tighten, adjusting in preparation for the unknown. Familiar afterimages of home flash through my mind.
Four Small Spaces – Split Bodies – Green Light	The surroundings tremble. Lingering fragments of home strike my perception like memories colliding. A subtle impulse spreads through me, dragging me toward a blurred yet unyielding promise.
Vortex – Government Promises – Pond Brainwashing	"broadcast I promise... a beautiful future... repeated." The future forced into me – echoes inside my head. Expectation and resistance entangle. I search for an exit in the gap between submission and refusal.
Inverted Space – Demolished Building – Plant Growth	A new force of life surges within me, pulling me outward toward the unknown. Air thickens, time stretches thin, being falters in this moment.
Tractor – Black Street – Three Figures – Falling Ruins	I am split into multiple selves. Each consciousness contending with different futures: fleeing, resisting, or trying to remain.
Falling Plants – Firefly – Descent	Every fleeting calm collapses at once. I am forced to reshape myself again and again in ghostly space, yet I struggle desperately to hold form within the fractures.
Smoke – Collapsing Houses – Old and New Intertwined – Ending	Order dissolves into the currents of time, leaving me adrift. I am torn between ruin and reconstruction, unable to find ground. The yet-to-come flickers in spaces not yet reached... I struggle to gather myself, yet dissolve with every fracture.

**The text unfolds through the character's bodily sensations and psychological responses: from unease, to temporal entanglement and mental constraint, then to perceptual reorganization and fragmentation, finally reaching an extreme state of weightlessness in collapse and reconstruction.**

# Process





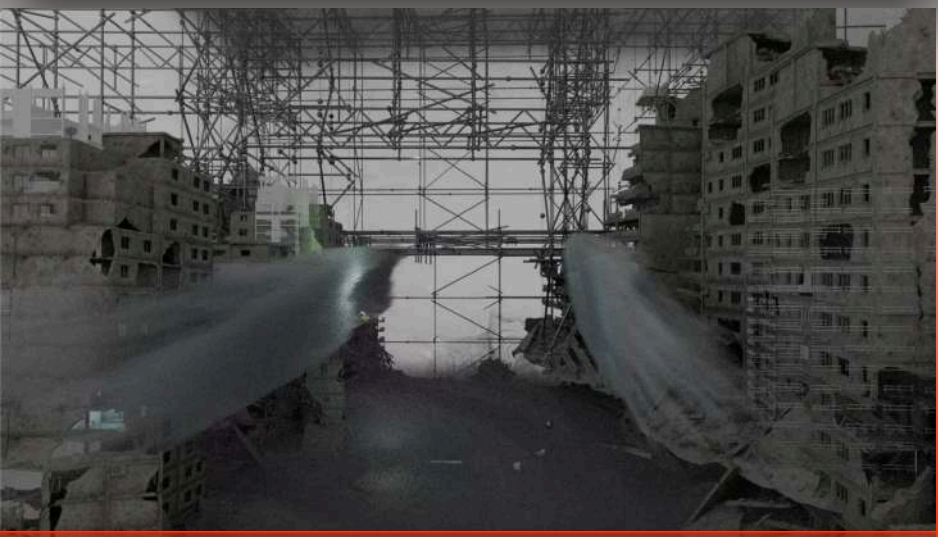
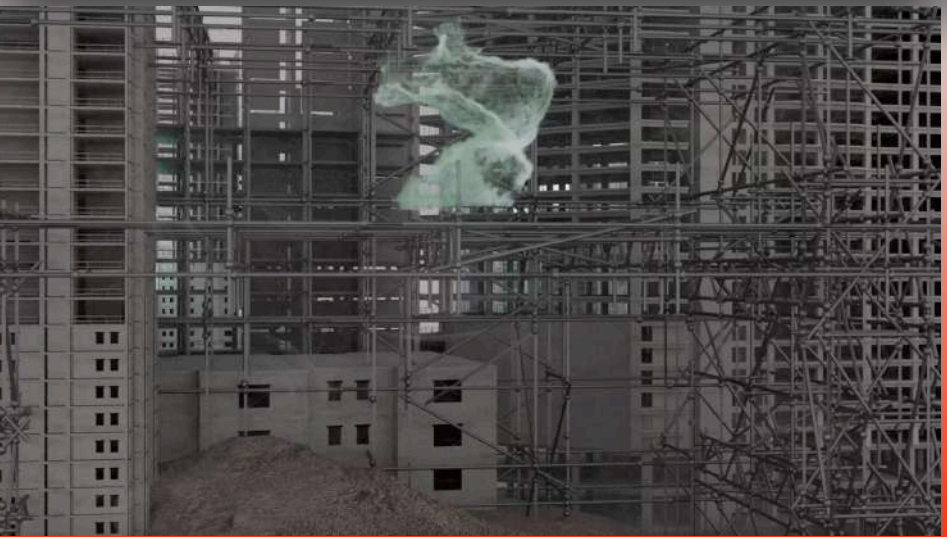
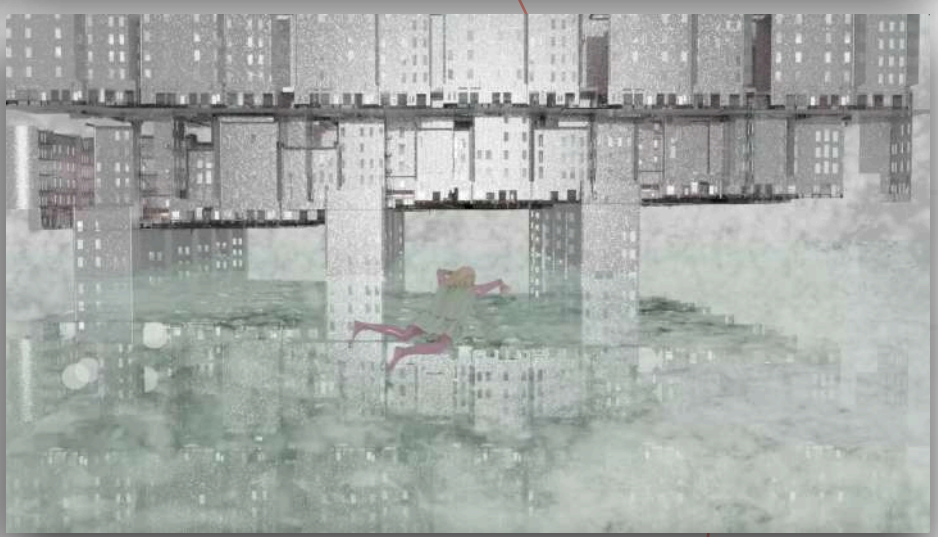
## Tools

- **Blender: Scene and character modeling, animation production**
- **Premiere Pro (PR) & CapCut / Video editing and integration**
- **Eleven Labs: Sound design and voice synthesis for narration and ambient effects**

## Music

- **screen.angel — Heith**
- **The Beach at Redpoint — Boards of Canada**
- **avril — Venus Ex Machina**
- **C3 — Cyclo**
- **Trececerotres — Daniela Lalita**
- **Bartleby Titles — Jonathan Parker & Seth Asarnow**
- **Data Complex — Ryoji Ikeda**

# ★ Key Frames



Thanks



Special thanks to my best supervisor:

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Daniel Felstead & Jenn Leung