

Media Art Strategies
Winter Semester 20/21
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This first semester at Bauhaus Weimar was a challenge for me to understand the abundance of Media Art, and also to perceive which kind of Media Art is more latent in my creative desires at the moment.

The urban space is something that is constantly questioned in my thoughts, specially the city structure of Brasília, my home town. Being raised in a planned city made me an attentive and curious person when visiting other spaces. After some time in the drift of ideas, I realized that Urban Media Art would be what I want to explore this semester - and maybe in the next ones too.

The first idea of this Project course was to do a small intervention in Weimar, adding some little concrete cubes with drawings in some places with emotional connection to me. I observed a variety of maps and did some drawings to help me in the investigation process. I also made some concrete cubes and tried to draw on them, with some material difficulties. The research of concrete artists, urban media art artists, psycho-geography and maps was advantageous.

In February I had to travel to Brazil for 5 weeks and it wasn't possible to bring the concrete material with me. As being in a completely different urban space, I decided to postpone the concrete idea and do something else. In my view, the concrete material didn't make sense in Brasília - because the material is the city pattern. And the scale needed to be bigger to reach what I was looking for.

In this documentation I condensed the firsts experiments, the references during both processes and the construction of the final project.

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What guided me during this project was my connection with spaces, my curiosity with little invisible & forgotten things and my feelings for humans.

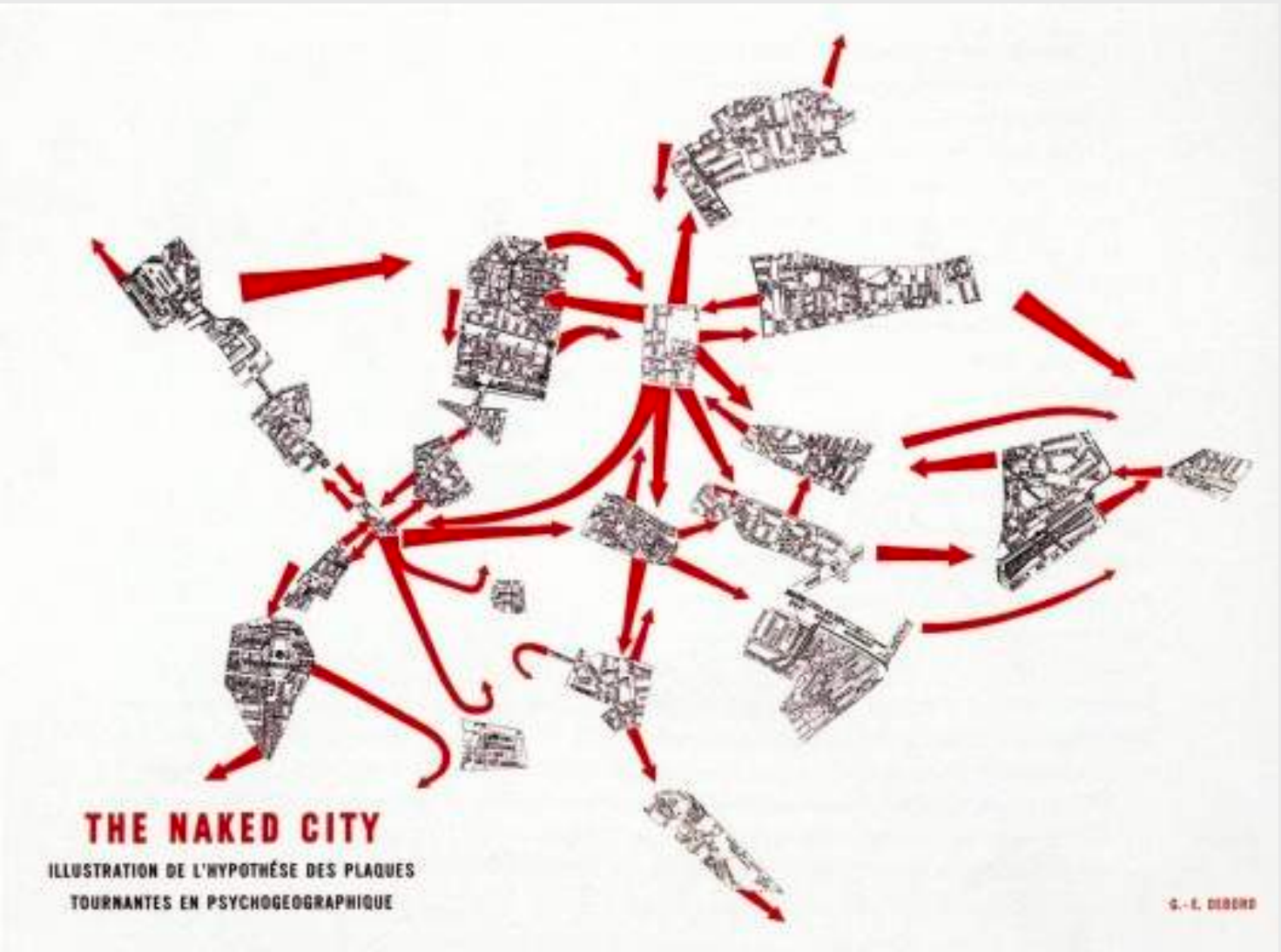
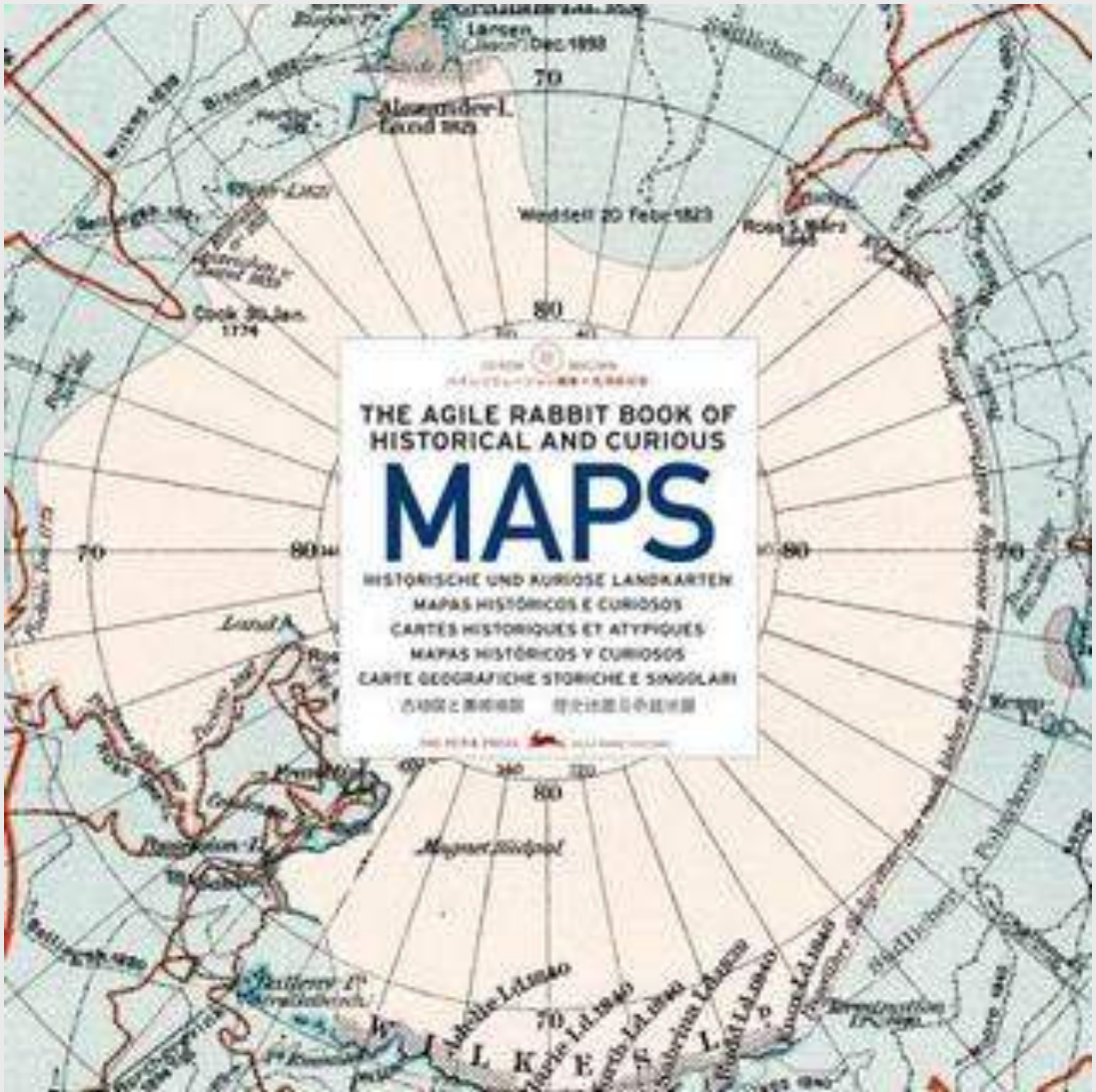
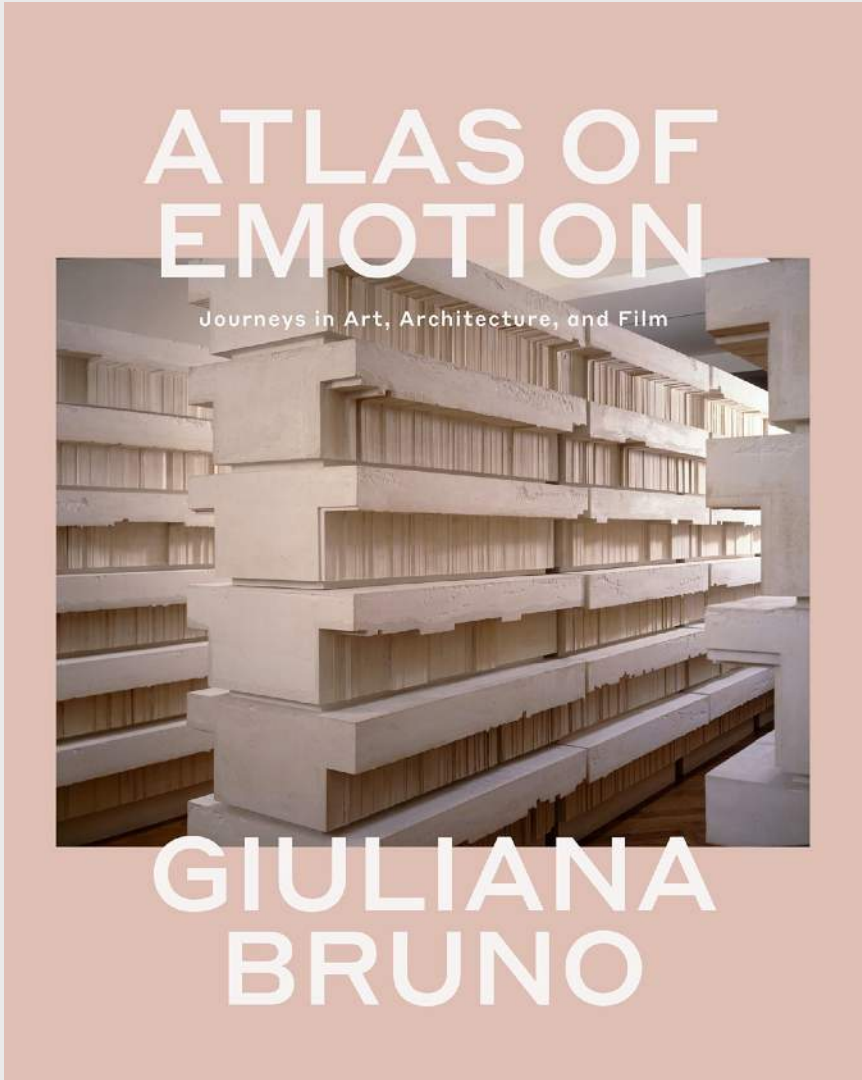
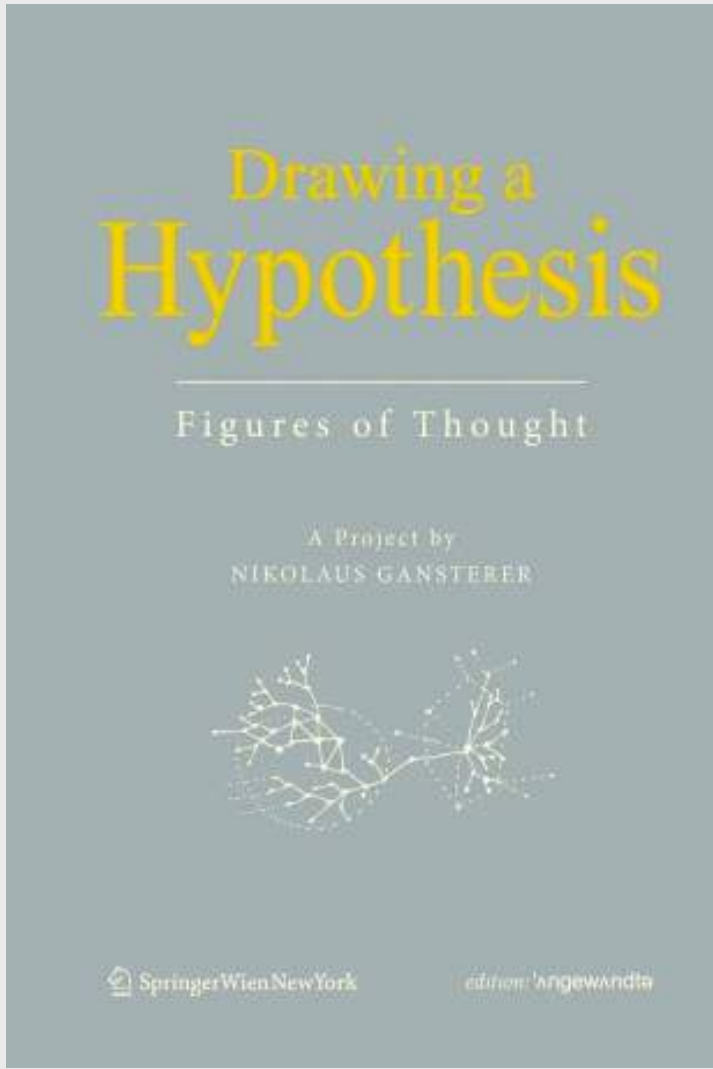
Almost everyday during my walks - in Weimar, Brasília or any other place - I wonder if someone else notice the details and random corners of the city like I do. It's like an intimate dialogue with the street, asking her “Do you feel seen?”.

And the people I crossed during the walk, do they feel seen? Do they feel part of the city or do they feel as an actor in this space? Are they going somewhere or are they just walking in a “dérive” like Guy Debord? What is he/she thinking now: a list of things-i-can't-forget-to-buy or maybe overthinking a conversation that happened last night? Too many questions, but they motivate me to investigate.

During the semester I did some experiments at the Mobile Filmmaking course, exploring with a smartphone my view and feelings about Weimar: the city and the people who lives here. They were uploaded [here](#) and [here](#).

Questions about what art is, what it is to be an artist, the freedom and the fear to fail also motivated - and suffocated - me this semester. I don't know if I will find answers for those questions but until now I understood art is (or should be) something far away from apathy.

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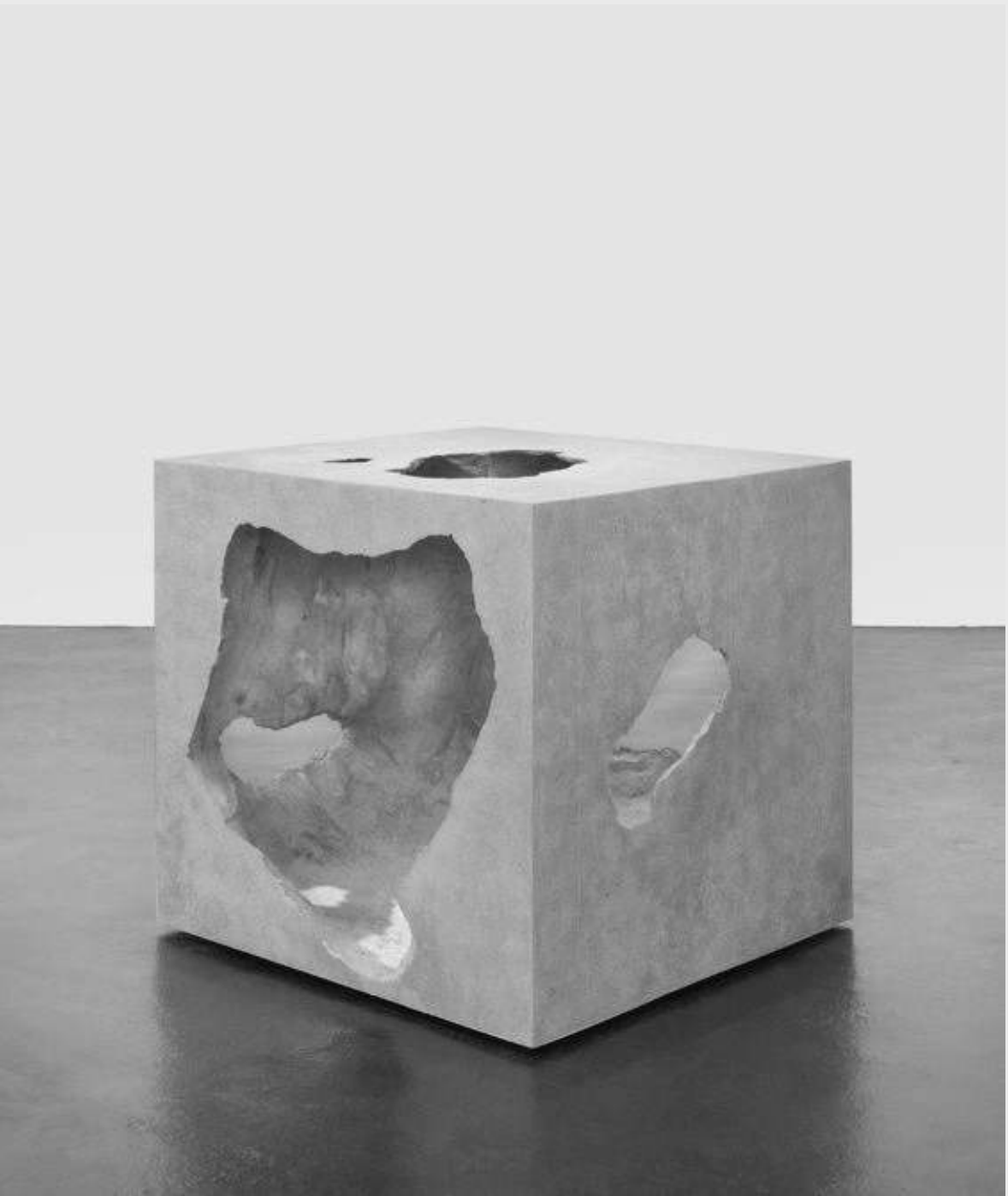
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Isa Genzken



Spatial sculptures by Jost Wischnewski



Olafur Eliasson
The presence of absence

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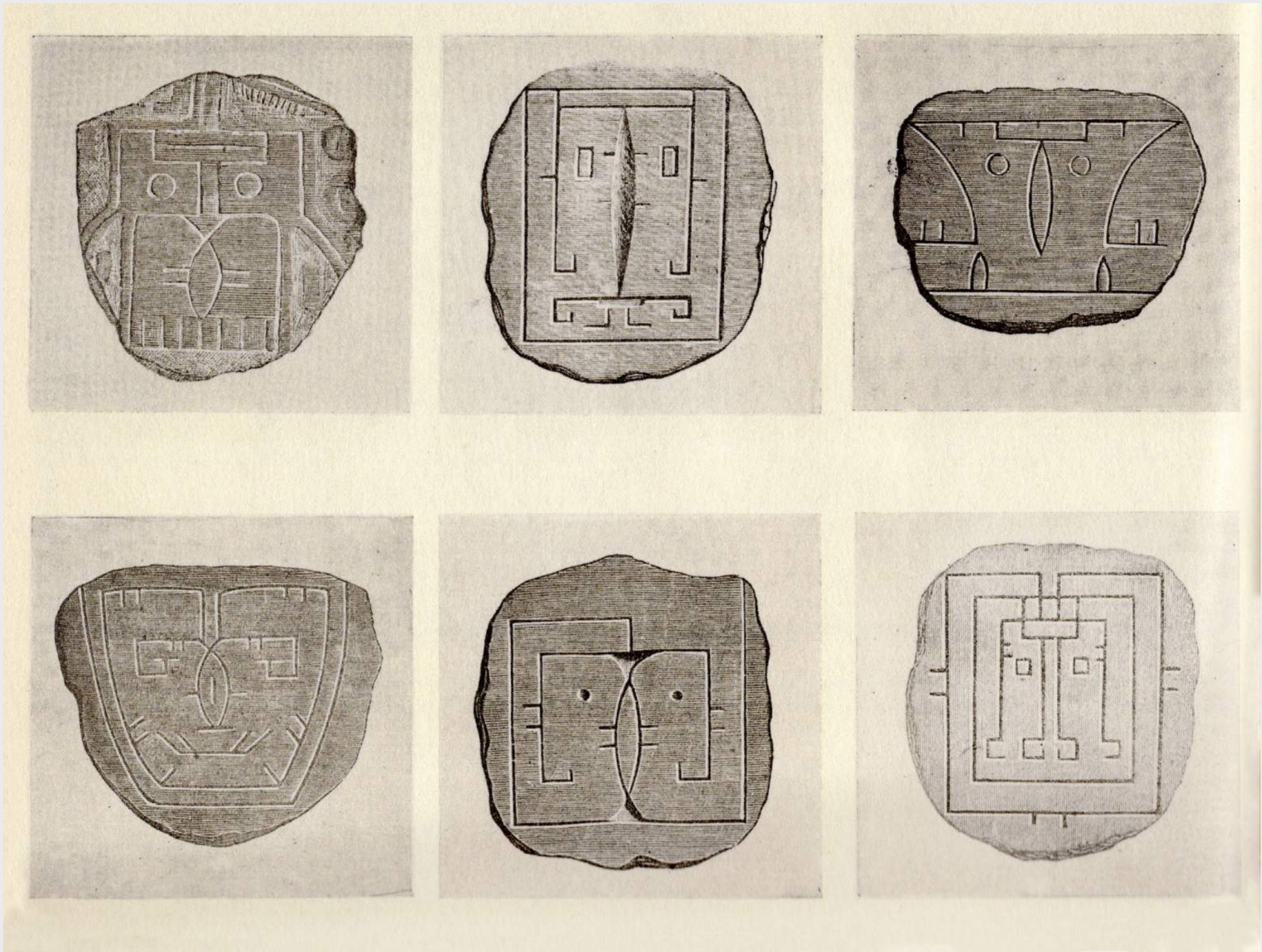
Der Mohammed Brunnen NORBERT RADERMACHER

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Maik and Dirk Löbbert

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Series of etchings depicting stylized faces on stones, created by indigenous populations from Brazil

“The Indian designer

When the Indian draws, he does it by sensations, by syntheses, by idealizations. He never learned to say the truth in the sense of accuracy, copy, repetition: his truth is symbolic, it follows and condensates fixed symbols, but which vary in composition to offer a mixture of legend and the state of the soul. Here are a series of geometric portraits, enriched with infinite and mysterious lines, capable of guiding our thinking in the deepest meditations. This game of forms is not random; instead, it obeys an expressive system, resulting from someone who understands its time and tradition. hit’ psychological capability is absolute, free from all external and superfluous crust. The most refined contemporary painter could not go any further.”

(Original article text featured in Habitat magazine). From Des-Habitat, A project by Paulo Tavares, realised by agency autonoma, in the context of the show bauhaus imaginista: Learning from, 2018/2019.

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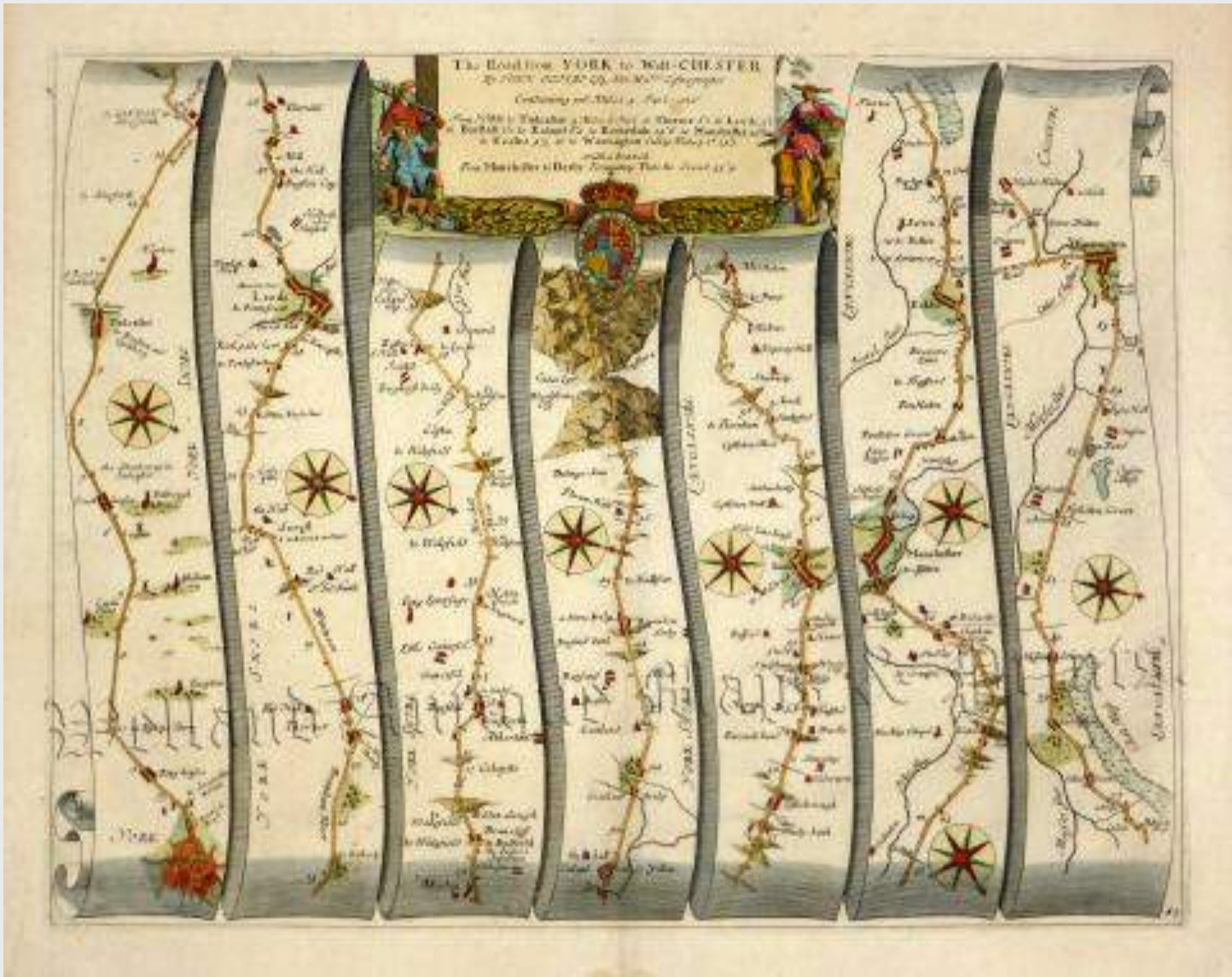
Ingá Stone (Itacoatiara) , João Pessoa,
in Paraíba State in the northeast of Brazil.
More than 6000 years ago.

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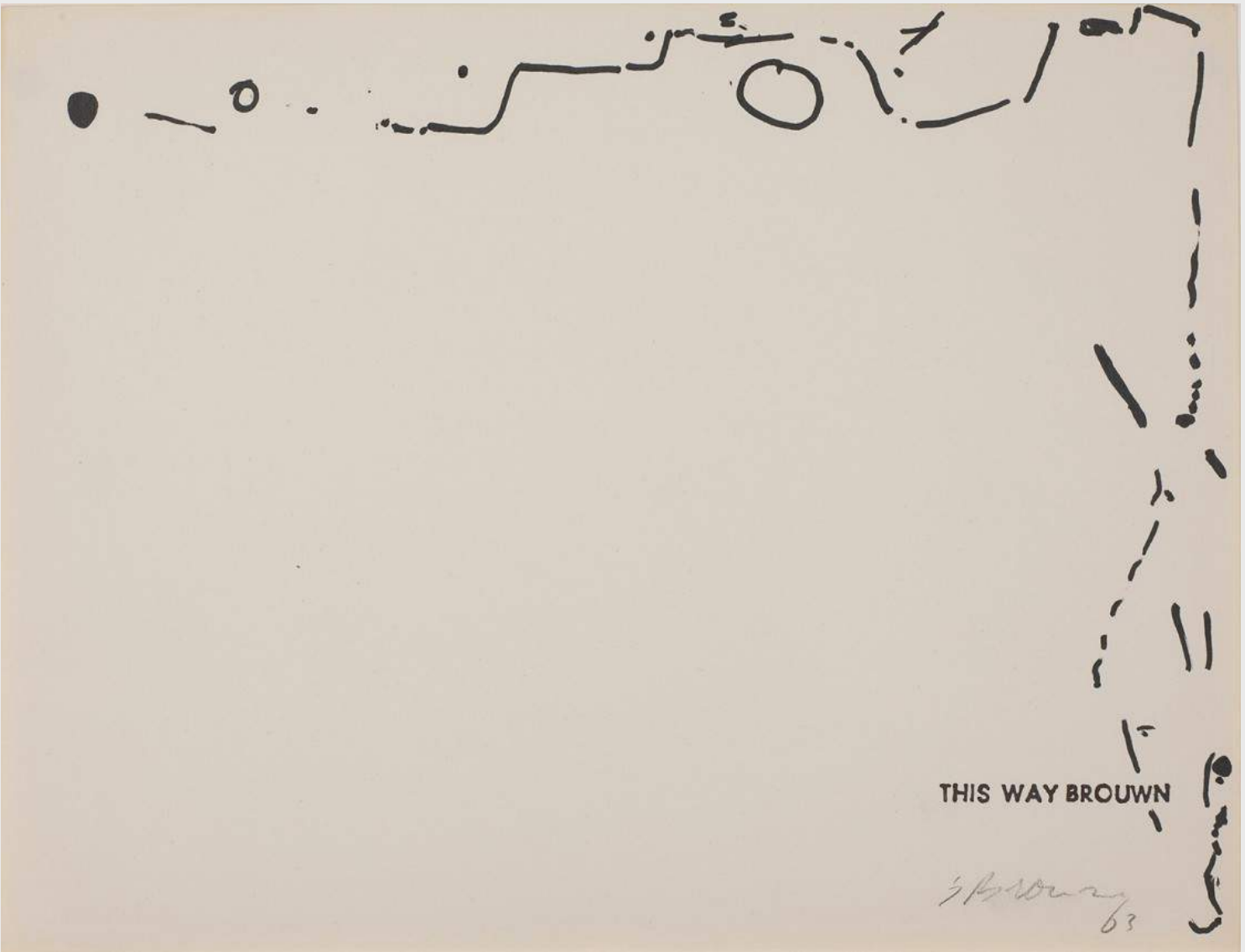


Ingá Stone (Itacoatiara) , João Pessoa,
in Paraíba State in the northeast of Brazil.
More than 6000 years ago.

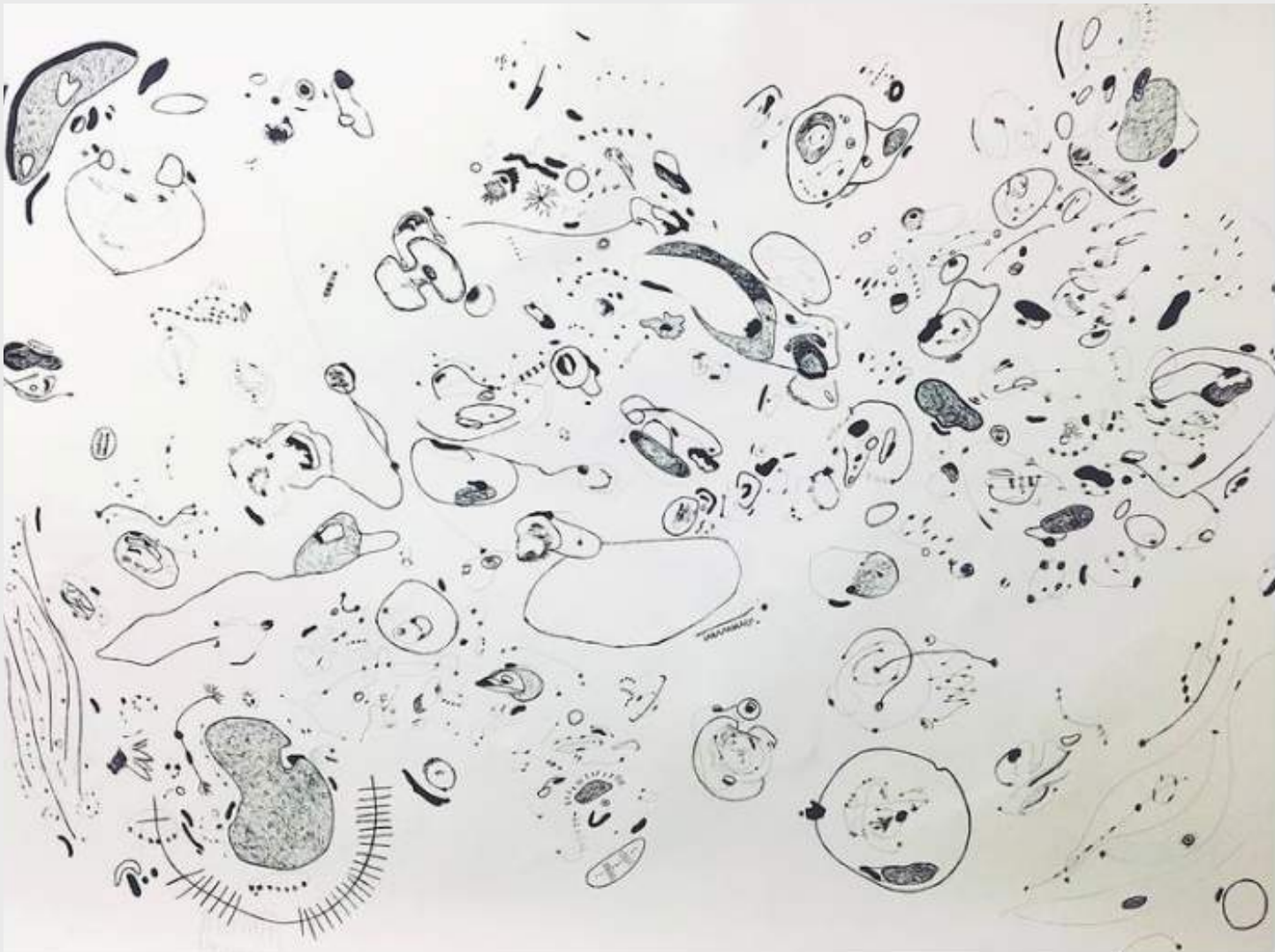
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Map road from John York



Stanley Broun, This Way Broun, 1960–1964

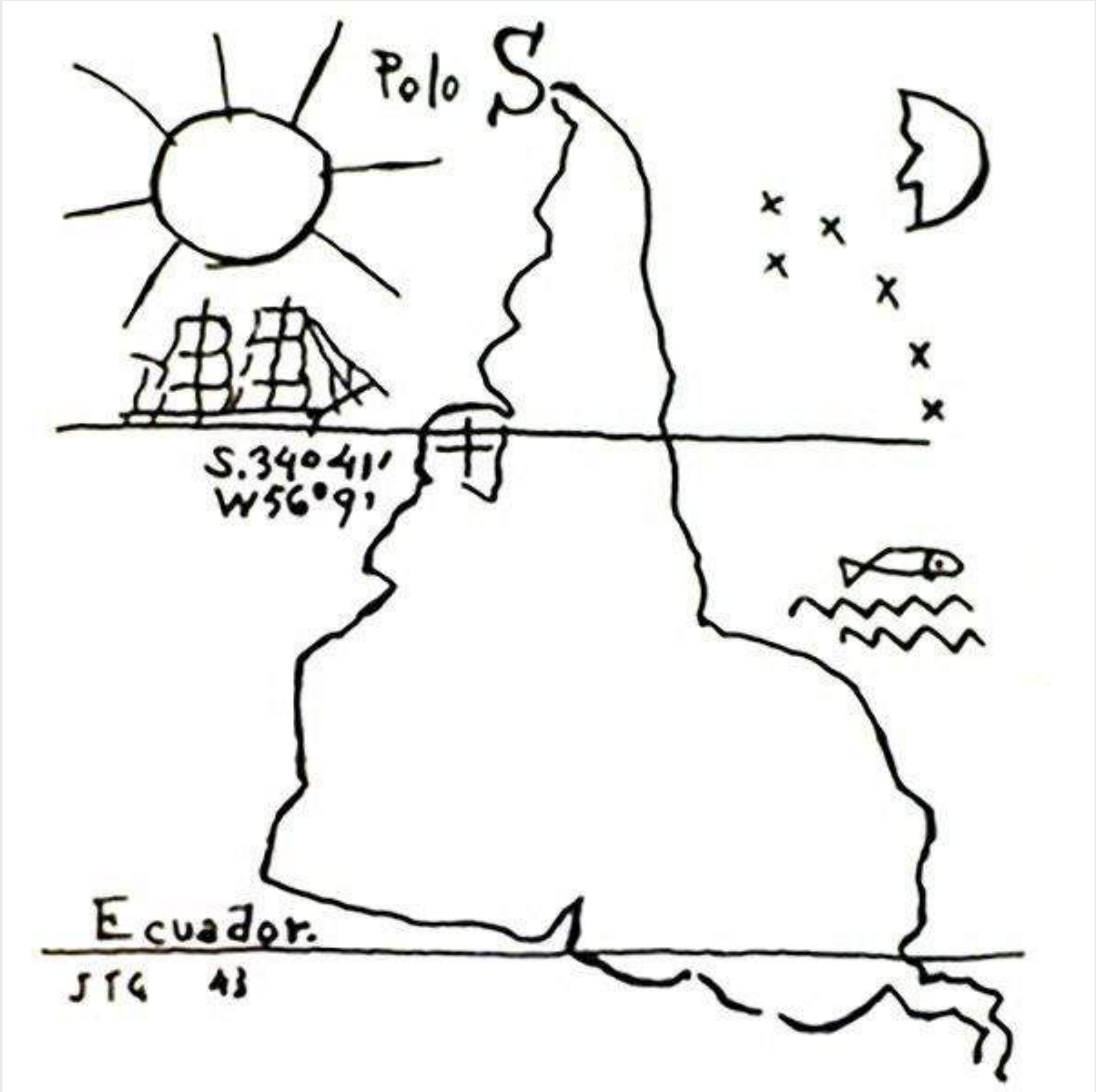


Emotional Map Drawing, Tara Vatanpour



Carte du Tendre

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Joaquín Torres-García, 1943, Inverted America

“Maps have always been part of the imposition of power over colonised peoples. While map-making might be thought of as “objective”, it is fundamentally political, a necessary part of controlling a territory.

Maps inscribe borders, which are then used to include some and exclude others.”

Report “Why Amazonian forest peoples are ‘counter-mapping’ their ancestral lands”:
<https://theconversation.com/why-amazonian-forest-peoples-are-counter-mapping-their-ancestral-lands-84474>

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In the first experiment my intention was to do a micro intervention in some places of Weimar that I have a special connection or memory.

I wanted to manifest, in a simple object, the way I see my connection path with people. We are always finding new people in our journey, but we don't observe closely very often. It's quite impossible to be always attentive. But sometimes we observe. Hours, days, or even months. And in certain point, we decide. Should I "take" this person to my life? If both sides desires a "yes" to this question, then the connection starts: a friendship, a romantic relationship, an academic relationship, etc. After that, we keep them. And as great collectors, we care, we preserve, we protect. The feelings, the unpredictability and the instability of those "steps" are a huge motivation in my life.

To find, to observe, to take, to keep, to collect. I did some drawings trying to find some symbols to each word. After that I experimented to draw in the concrete cube. My first idea was to try some relief drawings, but I didn't have the right materials.

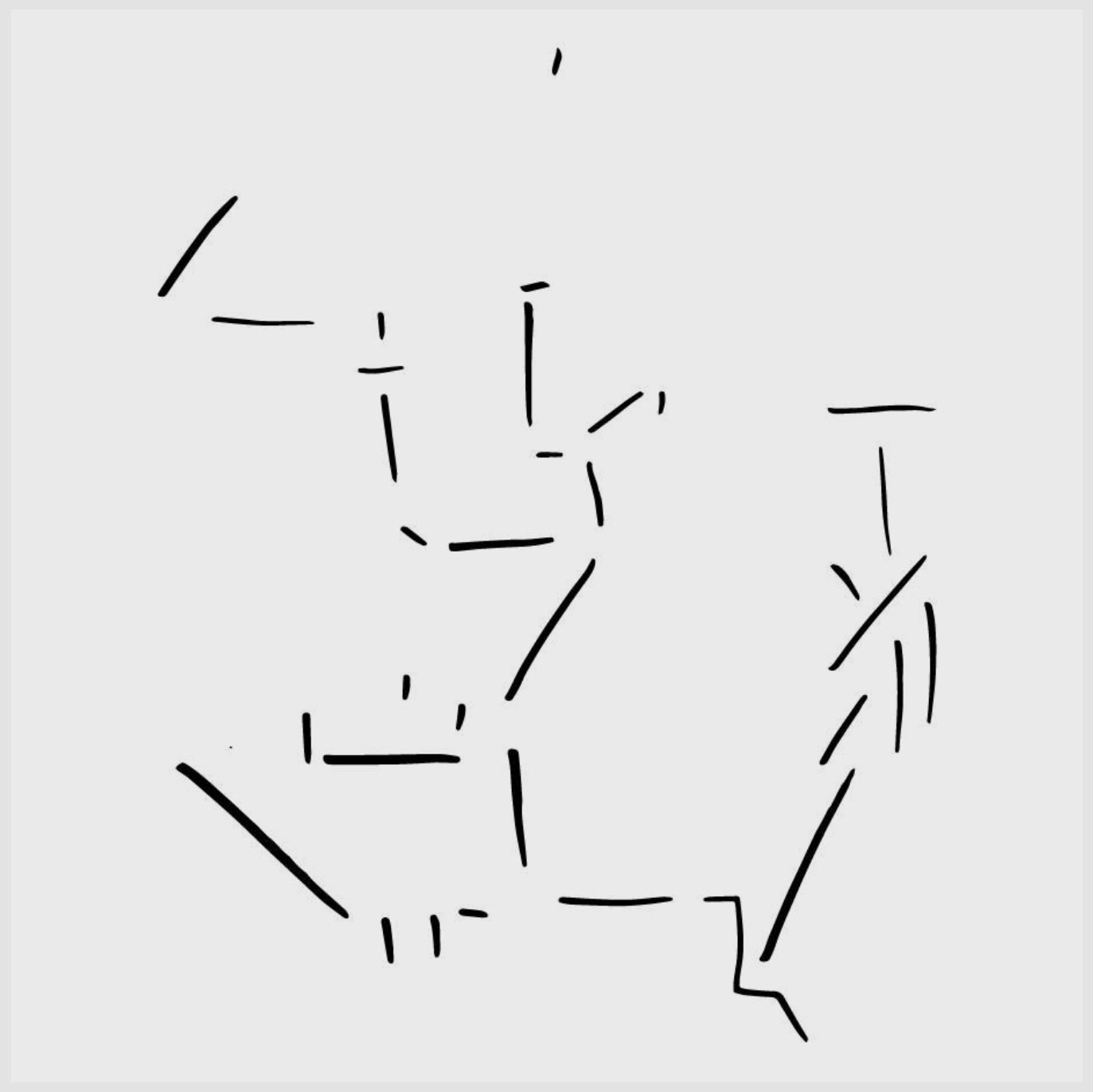
I love concrete. The color, the texture and the coldness. And as a sensitive person, I often desire to escape my own feelings and be a concrete stone for a while. And I enjoy the challenge to "take" a "concrete person" - that kind of human who has difficulty to interact socially or to express his/her own feelings. That's why I decided to experiment with this material.

I also did around 9 maps to help me visualize which areas of Weimar I would put the little cubes. I added the three I liked the most in the file.

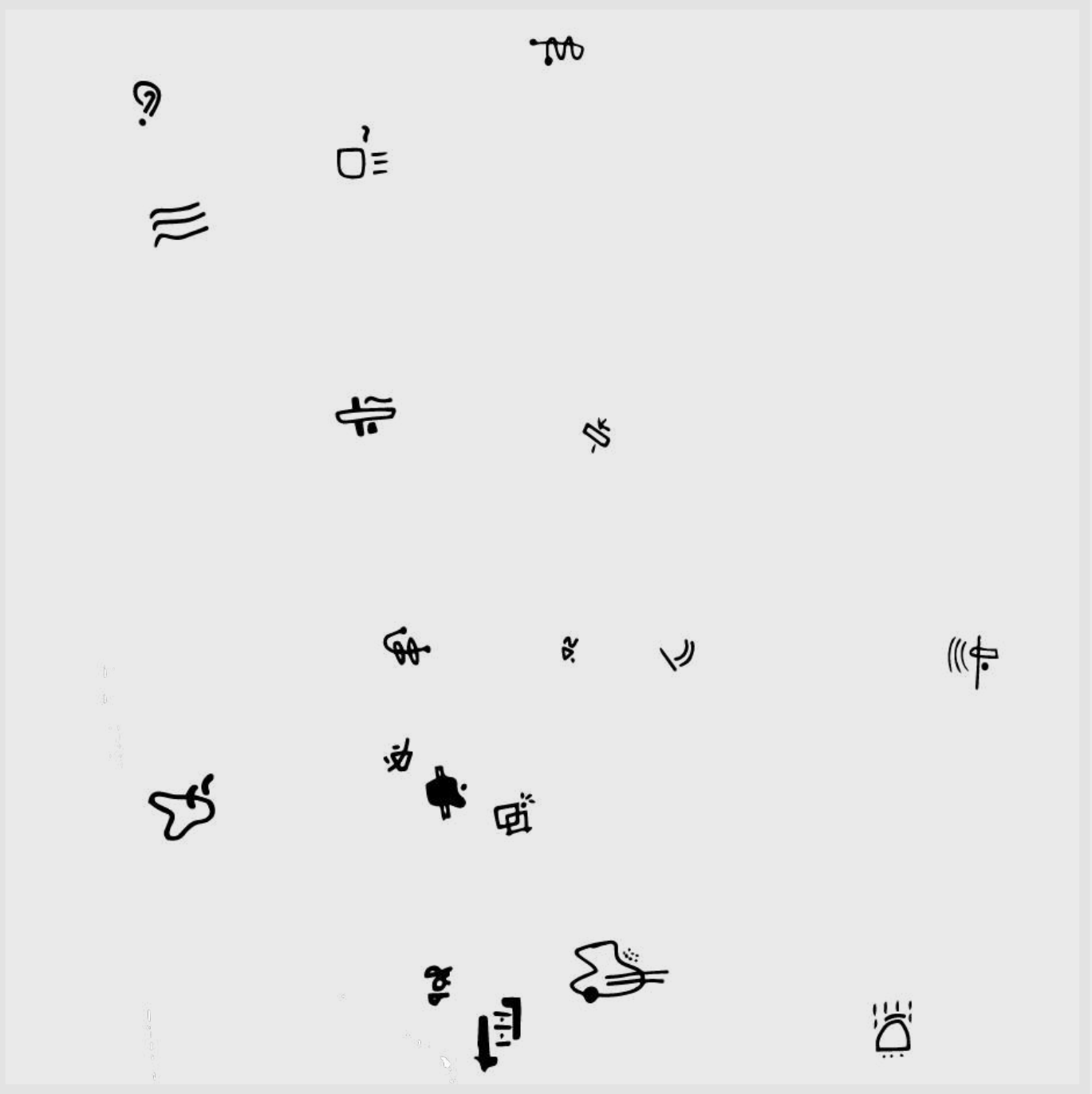
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- to find
- ◉ to observe
- ✎ to take
- ((())) to keep
- ∞ to collect

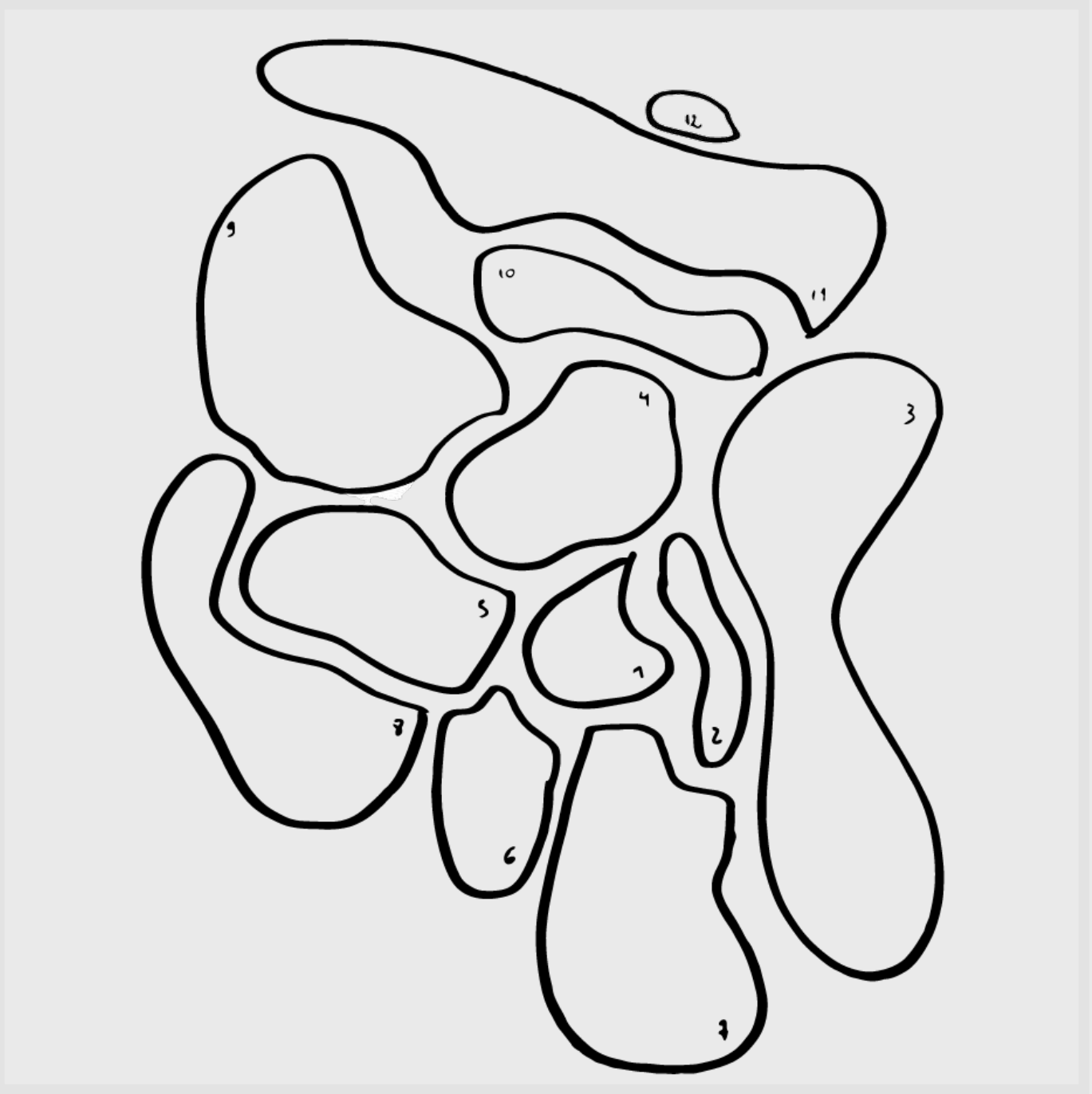
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First try, simple traces.



Symbols of important places to me.

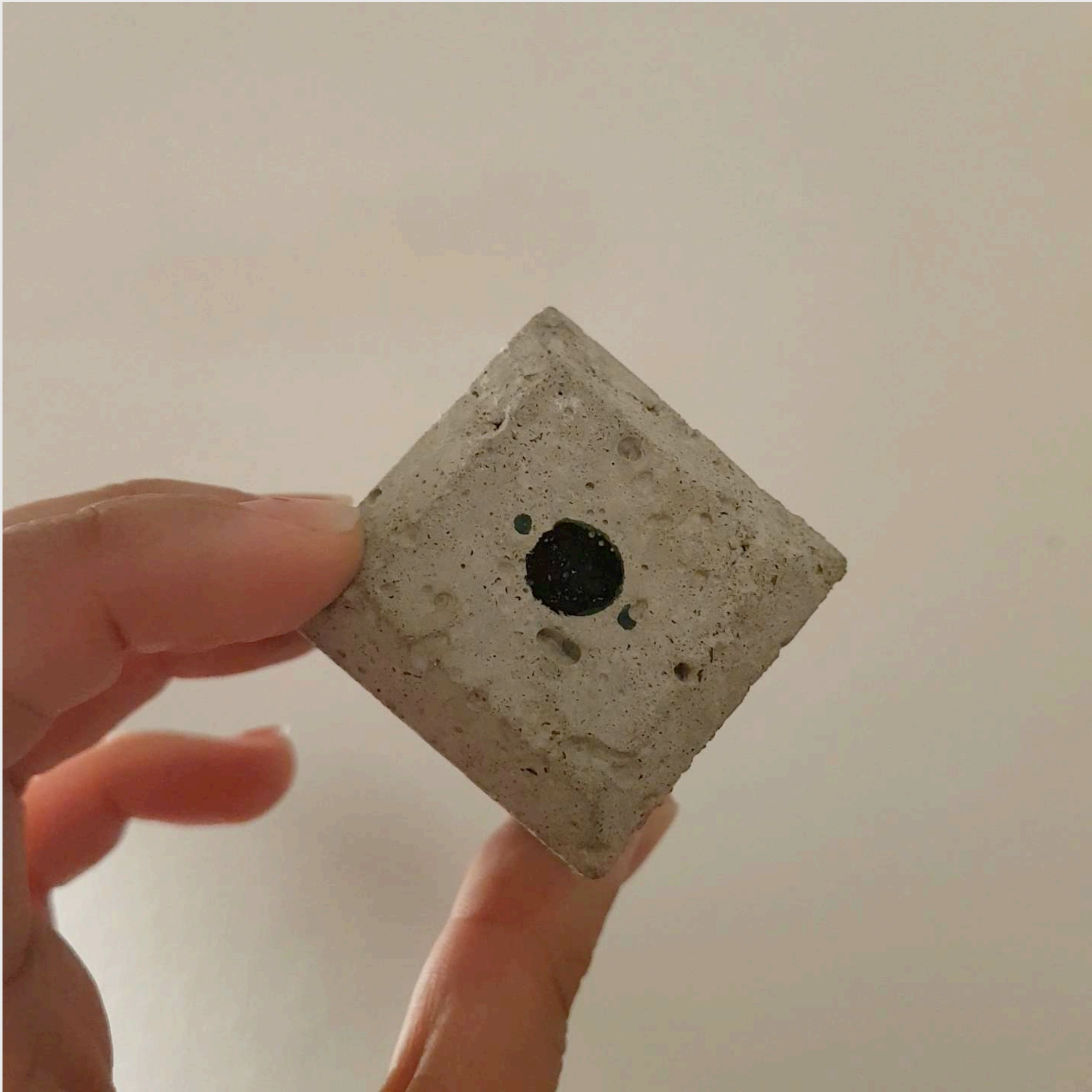


Trying to divide Weimar in areas, according to my perspective. For example, the number 9 is an area I never explored.

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Experimenting drawing in the concrete cube.
Video:
<https://youtu.be/v9wJCNara7k>

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Brasília is a city where it can be super difficult to find a normal corner. There isn't a spot where you can just sit and observe people. The streets are too large, and you don't see many people walking. The city was planned for cars, not pedestrians.

Those characteristics always made me think and question people's behavior in public spaces. When I walk in Brasília I feel walking inside a huge map. The streets without names, just numbers and letters, seems too correct. There are a lot of rules about how to use the space, because the city is listed as UNESCO World Heritage Site. And there is also the "invisible" rules.

During my walks in the city I had some questions in my head:

"Why do I always only see sky + green + building + cars? Where are the people? And how those people expresses themselves in this space?"

"Where is the street art in Brasília? Where is the street art in my Superblock? Why everything is so "clean"?"

"As a planned city, Lucio Costa (the urbanist) considered or thought about urban art in Brasília?"

"Is it possible to plan urban art?"

"How to create urban art in a space with no walls or corners?"

"How to create urban art in this big scale?"

"Who lives here thinks about that? Do they notice those empty spaces?"

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Some buildings of SQS 313

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Two different streets of SQS 313

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Pilotis structure of two different buildings



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Superblock car entrance



Brasília typical scenario: building, tree and blue sky

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SQS 313 Map
Sign designed by Danilo Barbosa
My home in Brasília is “SQS 313 Building C”

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As you can see in the last picture, a Superblock in Brasília is a 500x500m area with 11 or 12 buildings. All with the same height, max. 6 floors. And every building has an open access, no railings allowed. No walls, just pilotis. And a lot of trees between the buildings.

You can walk freely inside a Superblock, there is no official entrance or way out. By car is the opposite, there is only way to enter and to leave. Going inside a Superblock after driving in the monumental street of Brasília, you can feel you reached a human scale architecture. But everything seems so big and empty. It's beautiful, but I always have the impression that something is missing. The other impression is about how “correct” everything is. People usually say “it's an open museum”. And I wonder: which kind of museum?

Walking around my Superblock (313 South) I only found one urban intervention: a graffiti outside the energy building. And it's recent, I think it was made last year after I left.

I had a lot of questions and the pandemic situation made me find even more problematics. I wondered about the people doing home-office work. When they go outside to buy something or just to walk they always observe the same elements: buildings, trees and cars. But someone who lives in another city, São Paulo for example, they also experience street art: some graffiti, or lambe-lambe, or collages, or projections, or little hidden poems, or some random stencil, or any other kind of city intervention. **Why there is no visual intervention inside a Superblock?**

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Why this space is so visually silent? What is not being said there?

It’s also important to say that the Superblocks are elitist spaces inside the Federal District. An apartment with 3 rooms costs around 800.000 and 1.500.00 Brazilian reais (around 115.000 and 215.000 euros). With only 60 years old, Brasília is the most unequal federation in the country. The capital has striking income discrepancies, with neighborhoods with levels of wealth equivalent to some European countries, and others that match the standards of poor nations in Africa.

Thinking about those questions and those characteristics, I decided to do an intervention inside my Superblock using a popular element: the street advertisement banners. They can be found everywhere. They are usually used in front of stores and in the sides of streets and highways. This attitude is forbidden by law and the banners are often removed by the Inspection of Urban Cleaning by Agefis (Federal District Inspection Agency).

Anyone caught in the act of spreading banners on the streets of the Federal District can receive a warning from the Inspection Agency (Agefis), a fine between 400 and 1,200 Brazilian reais (around 60 and 175 euros). I added some banners examples in the next slide.

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Popular banners in Brazil.
It can be found in every Brazilian city.
Usually have a lot of information: text and prices.
It can be green/yellow, sometimes white.

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The intention of this intervention was to instigate the Superblock habitants to observe a different contrast in the every day life, to observe a new strange element, to notice the empty spaces and maybe to think what could be seen in those areas.

I chose 6 places inside the Superblock and observed in how many time they would be removed.

The first one (slide 30, 31 and 32) is a 4,5m x 18m banner in the outside green fence of Building “B”, designed by Oscar Niemeyer to the ministers of the Supreme Federal Court. The building is a security area and it is always protected by four armed security guards.

The second one (slide 33) is a 4,5m x 3m banner in a public exercise apparatus.

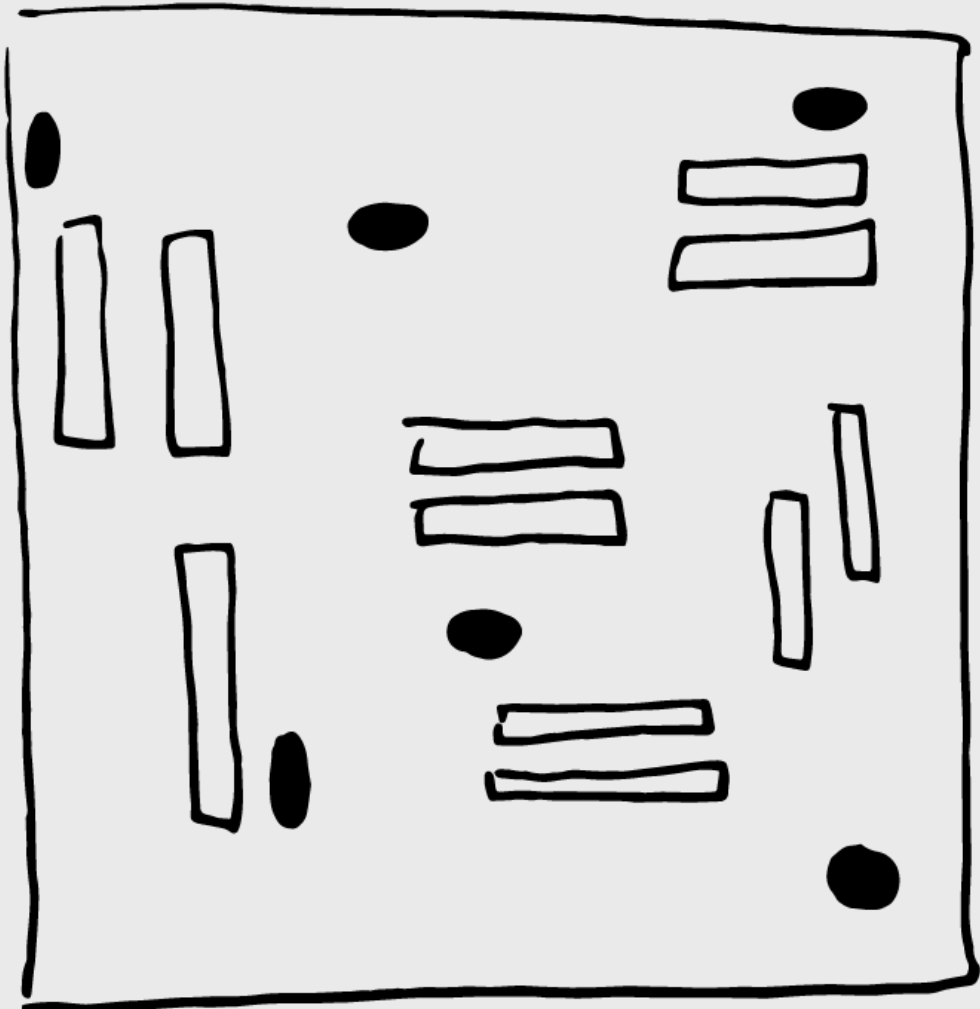
The third (slide 34) is a 2m x 3m banner inside de playground of the SuperBlock.

The forth (slide 35) is a 4,5m x 4,5m banner between two trees, in front of Building “H”. The other one (slide 36) is a 4,5cm x 4m banner on the floor. I observed this path is the most busiest one inside de Superblock, because it is the connection between two big streets and two important transport stops (bus and metro).

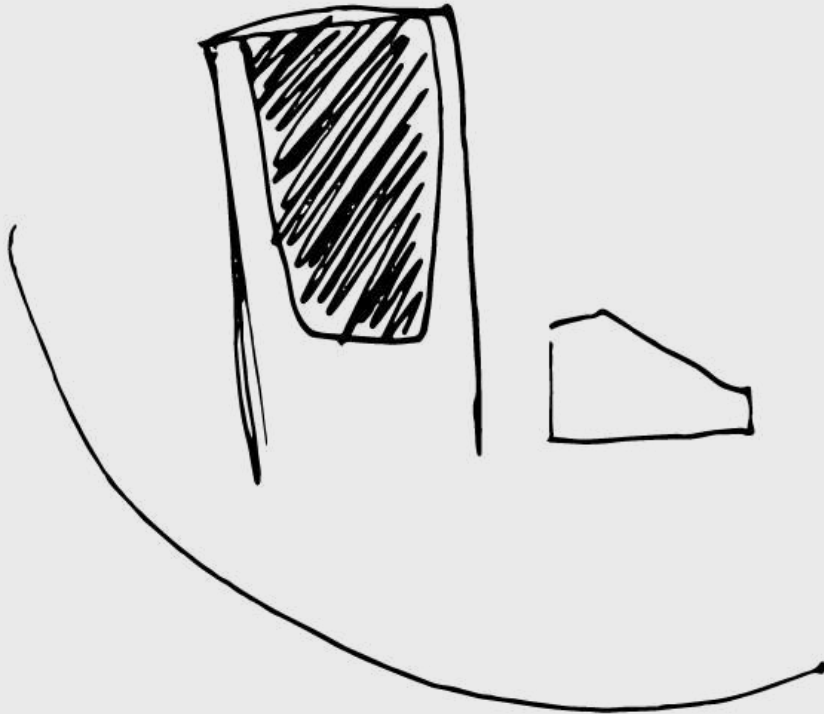
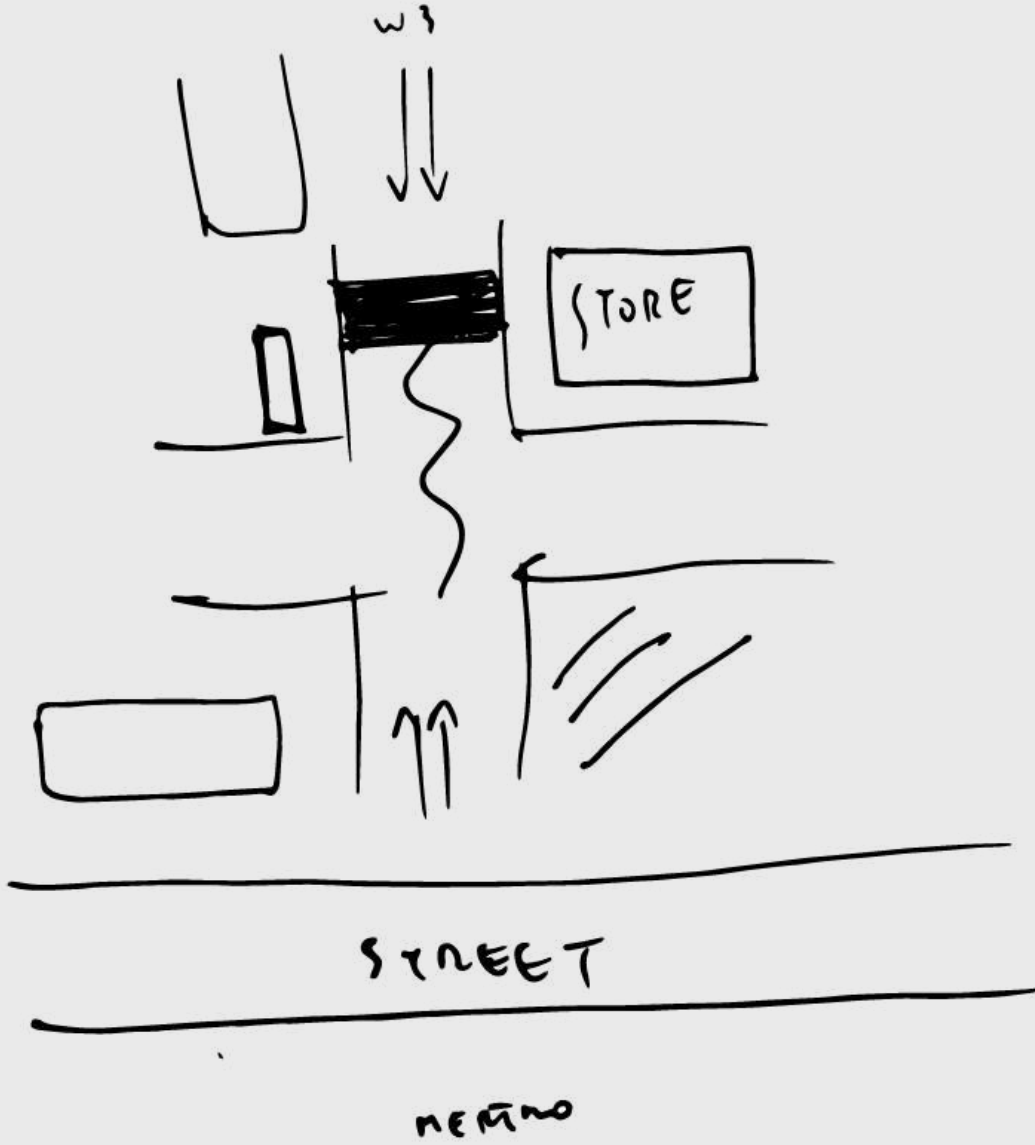
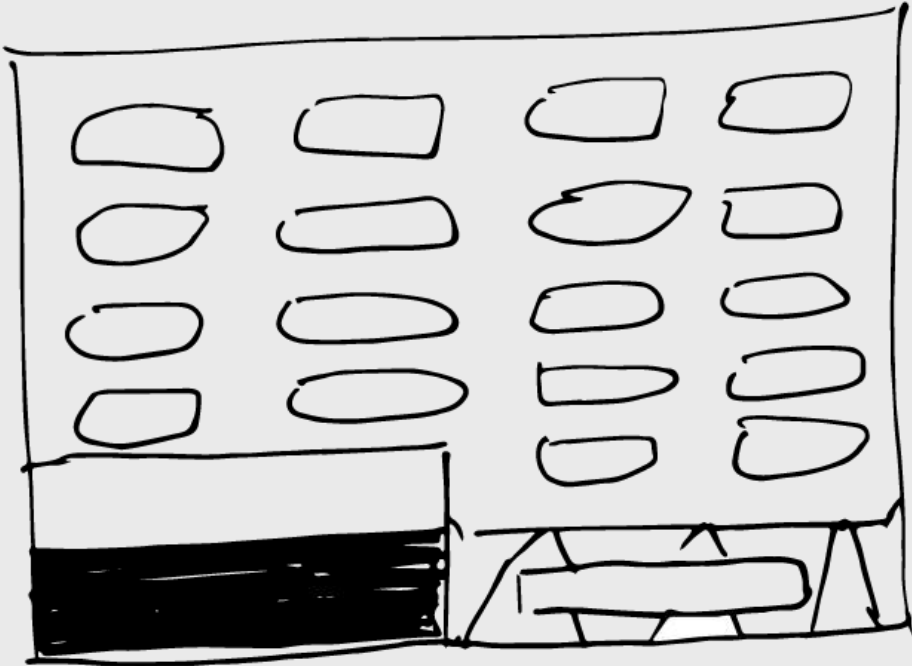
The last one (slide 37) is a 4,5m x 12m banner between two Pilotis of Building “K”.

All banners were added without asking for authorization.

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First sketches



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The helpers:
Ribamar, textile salesman
VV Morais, photographer friend
Caroline Milaré, architect friend
Mirna, condominium manager
Roberto and Mirian, condominium porters

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The intervention was noticed more than I expected. I started to install them around 1pm of March 10th and around 5pm it was done. Later, around 6pm, I met the condominium manager of my building and she told me a lot of people were calling and texting her. They wanted to know what all the banners were about.

During the installation at the pilotis of Building “K”, the porter asked me - in a kind and respectful way - what the banner was about. He told me he wouldn’t remove it, but he needed to know how to explain the situation to his boss. In order to do not harm his work, I told it was a project from my studies and that I was a resident from Building “C”, but I didn’t say my name. Somehow this information spread out in a few minutes.

The other moment that I was approached was during the installation at Building “B”, the bigger banner. This time it was 4 big men and the first question was “What is this? Is this a protest?”. I think this question represents a lot the image of Brasília and the Superblock area. And I’m also sure that this political scenario was even more controversial because the day before all the news in Brazil were about that the former President Lula could run again for the next Presidential election.

In this building I asked why I couldn’t leave the banner there, and they said the area is a public space but the building is responsible for that space. And when I asked what would happen if I didn’t take it off, they said they would call the Inspection of Urban Cleaning by Agefis (Federal District Inspection Agency).

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At this point I wasn't sure of what should I do. To take the banner or leave it there. I talked a lot with the condominium porters of my building because they helped me during all the process: supporting the idea, giving me tips about the cameras in the buildings and sharing thoughts about the subject. And with them I decided to leave it there. The banners had nothing written on them, the security guards had no informations about me. And in less than 2 hours the banner was gone.

In the next slides I added a picture of me being asked by those men, which I think it's an interesting visualization of their posture and use of authority. The porter is in a relaxed posture and the security guards are in the back, also relaxed. I wondered a lot what would be their approach if someone not privilege or resident like me tried to do an urban intervention there.

The final slides are the time documentation. During the week I observed the banners, people behavior around them and in how many time they were removed.

I still have a lot of questions about this work and how it impacted the space of my Superblock. I consider a specific conversation with the porter of building "A" as a summary perspective. He told me the banners made him remind the conversations he has about how he feels invisible in the city. He said "when you are walking and cross path with someone, it feels like nobody notices your presence", because everything is so large and open. Everything looks similar, there is no big distractions.

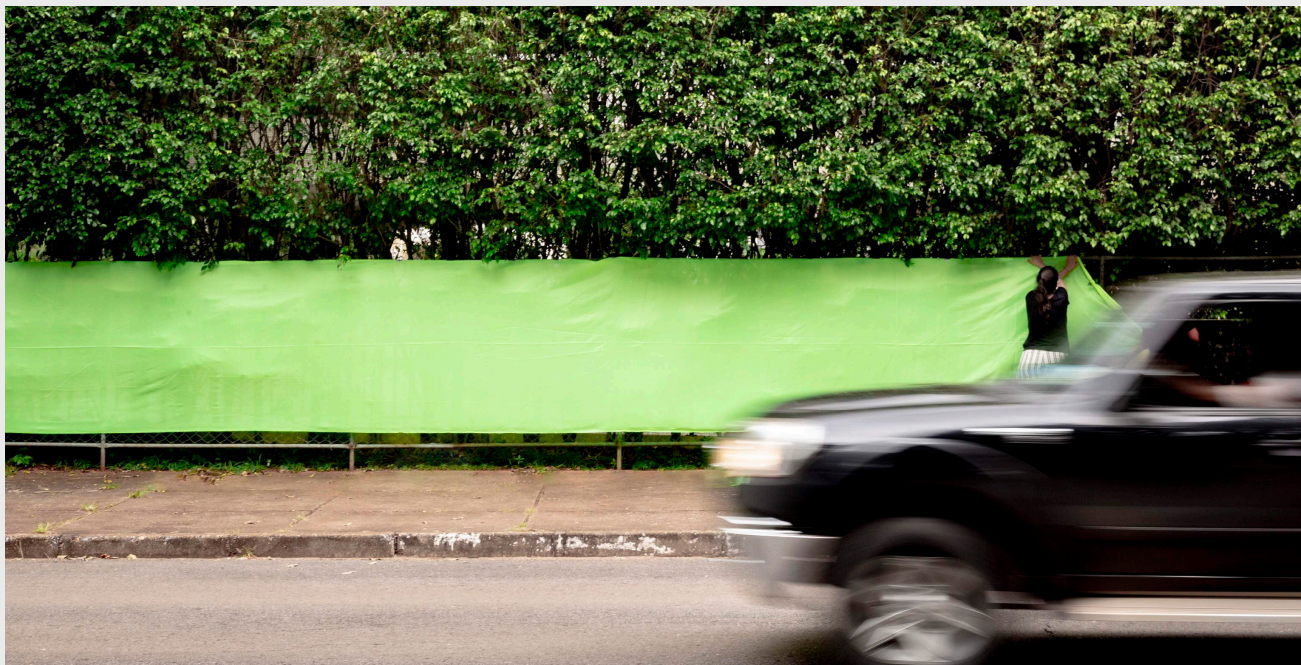
The banners made him think about **how the empty spaces of the city guide us to ignore the presence of the other.**

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The condominium porter of Building “B” and 3 security guards approaching me.

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Removed in less than 2 hours.



Removed in 3 hours.



Removed (by me) after 7 days.
It had any kind of change/intervention.

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before



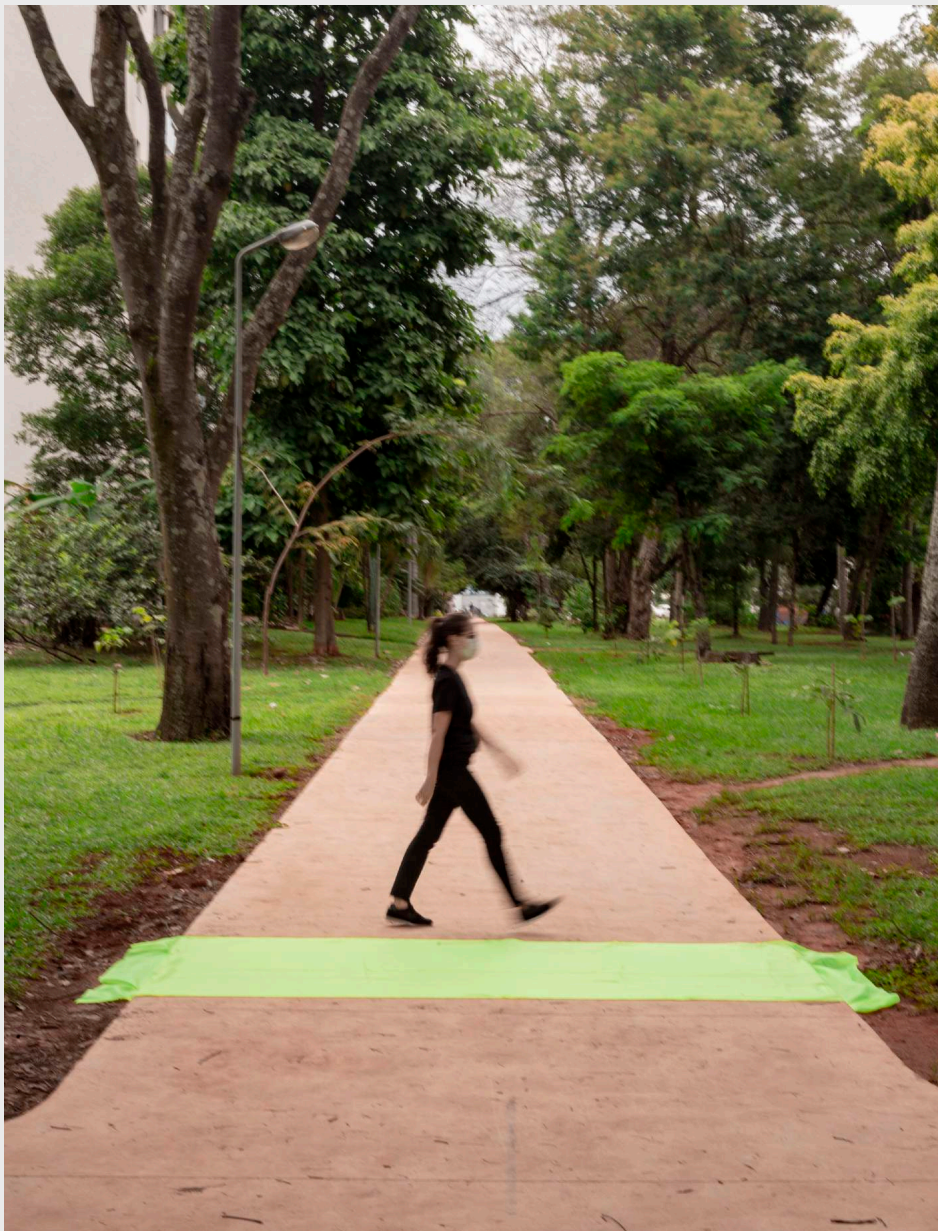
after



Removed (by me) after 7 days.
It was wet and smashed because
of the rain.

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before



after



Removed (by me) after 5 days.
It was wet and smashed because
of the rain.

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after



Removed in 1 day.
The kids were playing with
the textile.

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Prof. Ursula Damm

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