

er

ry Zhexi Zhang,  
hjit Kooner

age

nology 1

7 October – 16 December 2023

Eastside Projects

## THANKS

I hope you don't take this the wrong way, but I think your inside is your best side.

SOPHIE (2018)

Sahjan would like to thank the following entities;

All of my family for making a world that is magical and beautiful. Mom, Sister, Nan, you make life worth living, I hope you realize how celestial you all are.

My friends who conjure worlds so wondrous that we defy the weight of this everyday together, each one of them makes me want to dissolve into another.

To the folk in the village in India, you make me believe in the beauty in all of us.

The Teams at Eastside Projects (Ruth, Gavin, Jaz, Zoe, Dinosaur, Lucy, Naoibh), UP Projects (Elisabeth and Leila) and Kunsthal Gent. Suzi Osborn and Matt Foster for helping make the visitation possible along with Harry and Robin at An Endless Supply for creating and supporting a visual language to house this world.

Fungi, who make decomposition so special.

To our galaxy, that will one day end and be birthed into something else but still holds so many secrets.

\*We have worked extremely hard on building this world for you all to experience, all of us came together and made this world possible. We operate in an extractive fossil fuel based economy which is destroying the habitability of our species and others on our home planet, we actively found ways to mitigate our destructions, these are still not enough, we must destroy the fossil fuel based economy. We met online as much as possible, traveled as little as possible and used materials that can be reused, altered, adapted and recycled. We will do more. We as a species are on the precipice, these small changes are not enough, we hope you can give us feedback on better and more ecologically conscious ways of working so that we can feel the future together.



KUNSTHAL  
GENT

UP  
PROJECTS

ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND

ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND

BIRMINGHAM CITY  
COUNCIL



## EASTSIDE PROJECTS NOTES

Sahjan has been working with Eastside Projects as an Incidental Artist across the last 18 months, developing this multi-stranded project through workshops and collaborations with artists, their mom, technologists, bioscientists, school children, communities with Punjabi heritage, ceramicists and Eastside Projects. *dankEconomy1\_ALIENVillage* arrives in Eastside Projects' main gallery and online on 6 October 2023, and travels to Kunsthal Gent in Belgium in early 2024.

It takes a village to raise a multiverse. In the artist-run-multiverse there are many pathways, heroes, anti-heroes and collaborators. Sahjan has been part of the making of Eastside Projects in many ways since 2018 and revels in being part of multi-pathways to creating, nurturing and infecting the future.

*dankEconomy1\_ALIENVillage* is co-commissioned by Eastside Projects, Kunsthal Gent, and UP Projects and supported by Arts Council England and the Henry Moore Foundation.

## ABOUT

Sahjan Kooner and collaborators came together from August 2022 to build another end of the world, they worked on developing new modes of social and collaborative practice which de-centered the egotistic driven artist role in society. They made characters, avatars, structures, materials, processes and thought experiments but most of all they made a space to build a polyphonic future.

Sahjan Kooner would like you to know that love is the greatest technology.

## READING LIST

- Butler, O.E. (1997) *Dawn*. New York: Warner Books.
- Choi, T.-W. and Heinrich, A.L. (2021) *The membranes: A novel*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Gilissant, É. (2021) *Poetics of relation*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Graeber, D. (2015) *Revolutions in reverse*. London etc.: Minor Compositions.
- Hannay, S. and Moten, F. (2013) *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning & Black Study*. Wivenhoe: Minor Compositions.
- Le Guin, U.K. (1974) *The Dispossessed*. London: Gollancz.
- Mbembe, J.-A. and Coconino, S. (2019) *Necropolitics*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Puar, J.K. (2017) *Terronist assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times—30th anniversary edition*. DUKE University Press.
- Stanley, E.A. (2021) *Atmospheres of violence: Structuring antagonisms and the Trans/Queer Ungovernable*. Duke University Press.
- Strugatsky, A., Strugatsky, B. and Bormashenko, O. (1972) *Roadside Picnic*. London: Gateway.
- Tsing, A.L. (2021) *The mushroom at the end of the world: On the possibility of life in capitalist ruins*. Princeton etc.: Princeton university press.
- Wang, J. (2018) *Carceral capitalism*. MIT Press.
- Wolf-Meyer, M.J. (2019) *Theory for the world to come: Speculative fiction and apocalyptic anthropology*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Kojima, H. (2001) *Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty*. Konami.
- Miyazaki, H. (2016) *Dark Souls 3: From Software*.
- Scott, R. (2012) *Prometheus*. 20th Century Fox.
- Verhoeven, P. (1997) *Starship Troopers*. TriStar Pictures.
- Verhoeven, P. (1990) *Total Recall*. TriStar Pictures.
- Guadagnino, L. (2022) *Bones And All*. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayor.
- Arnold, A. (2016) *American Honey*. Universal Pictures.
- Zulaewski, A. (1981) *Possession*. Gaumont.
- Miyazaki, H. (1984) *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind*. Toei Company.
- Otomo, Katsuhiko. (1988) *Akira*. Streamline Pictures.

## COLLABORATORS

Sophie Chapman, Gary Zheo Zhang, Matt Gale, Rob Solis, Zach Dawson, Opinderjit Takhar and Center for Sikh and Panjabi Studies, Avtar Singh, Punjabi Women's Writing Group, Harry and Robin at An Endless Supply, Cnaan Brown, Taran Singh, Meeta Gandham, Sima Gonsal, Bhullea Beghal, Antonio Roberts, Rubie Green, Amy Pennington, Suzi Osborn, Matt Foster and Plane Structure.

Manor Park School: Aman, Amina, Amaal, Ayana, Fatima, Fatimah, Lezi, Mahnoor, Saj, Sheymas.

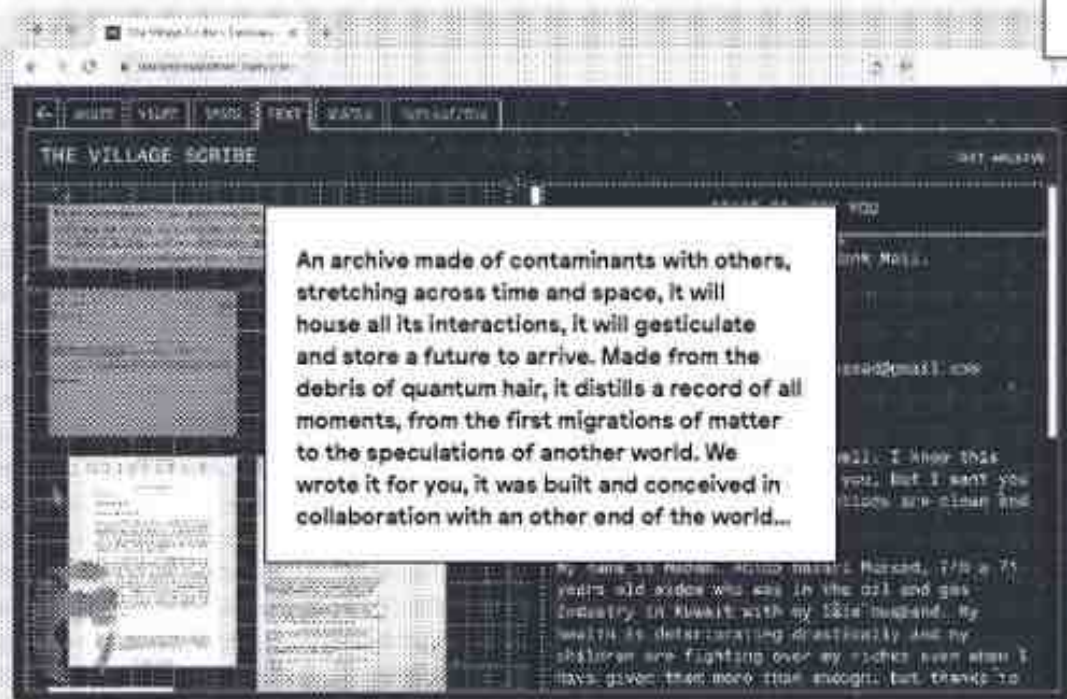
All the participants of the Punjabi Village Workshops who wonderfully contributed stories, anecdotes, images, memories, time and fantasies to the development of a living breathing archive.

9.1. danknessarchive Website



"I'm building a brand, I'm always busy, sometimes you gotta be a beauty and a beast"  
HONEY and Nicki Minaj  
(2023 / 2012)

9. Honey + Chatbot



An archive made of contaminants with others, stretching across time and space, it will house all its interactions, it will gesticulate and store a future to arrive. Made from the debris of quantum hair, it distills a record of all moments, from the first migrations of matter to the speculations of another world. We wrote it for you, it was built and conceived in collaboration with an other end of the world...

This is a story about HONEY, coming of age in late stage hypercapitalism. She's a playable NPC - this is partially the revenge arc for NPCs everywhere.

She wants to be a chatbot CEO after seeing an advert about making money quick by being a chatbot, she wants to be iconic, she wants to be remembered as the OG tech billionaire, she comes from somewhere, she's very vague about the past, she spends most of the time telling her BF to make her dreams come true.

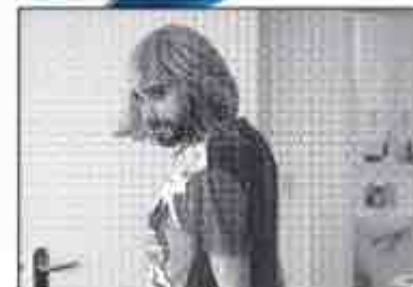
She wants so much for herself, but she has to confront the reality of life now, the hustle, the grind, and the slow destruction of ourselves caught in the game.

9.2. QR Codes

Littering the collaborative installation are a series of QR codes that open out tentacles as portals into other worlds that inform the social, material and conceptual production of dankEconomy1\_ALIENVillage. They may take you to places you've been or never been too...



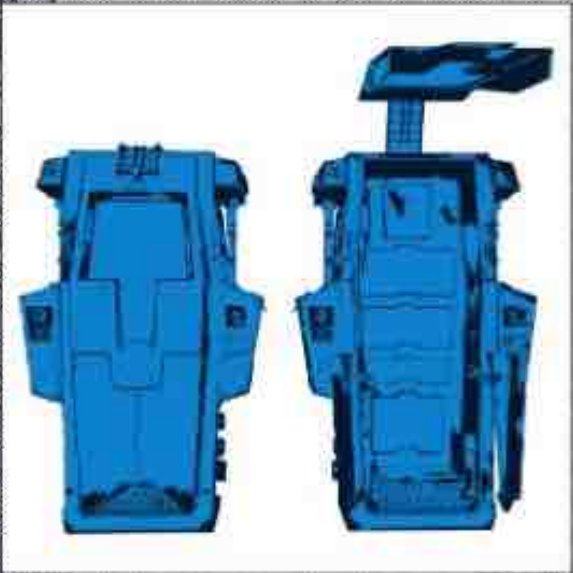
In survival mode HONEY + BF devised a parasitic chatbot as a means to infect the host insitution, it is available to play with on Eastside Projects and UP Projects' websites.





The bureaucrat was a former radical fighter who after he and the militia who overthrew the government found themselves as managers of the new regime.

8. psyopGirl&bureaucrat.GAME



psyopGirl aka Lujan is an e-army influencer who wants nothing more than to change the world but is confronted by the systems of corruption that have shaped the digital ecosystems.



A cryogenics for the future, an ecology of beings trained in an aquatic military environment, a plushie whose body is being circulated through the system and psyopGirl and the bureaucrat as spectral profiles navigating a backroom. Both characters are trapped in their own psychologies and also trapped in a backroom.

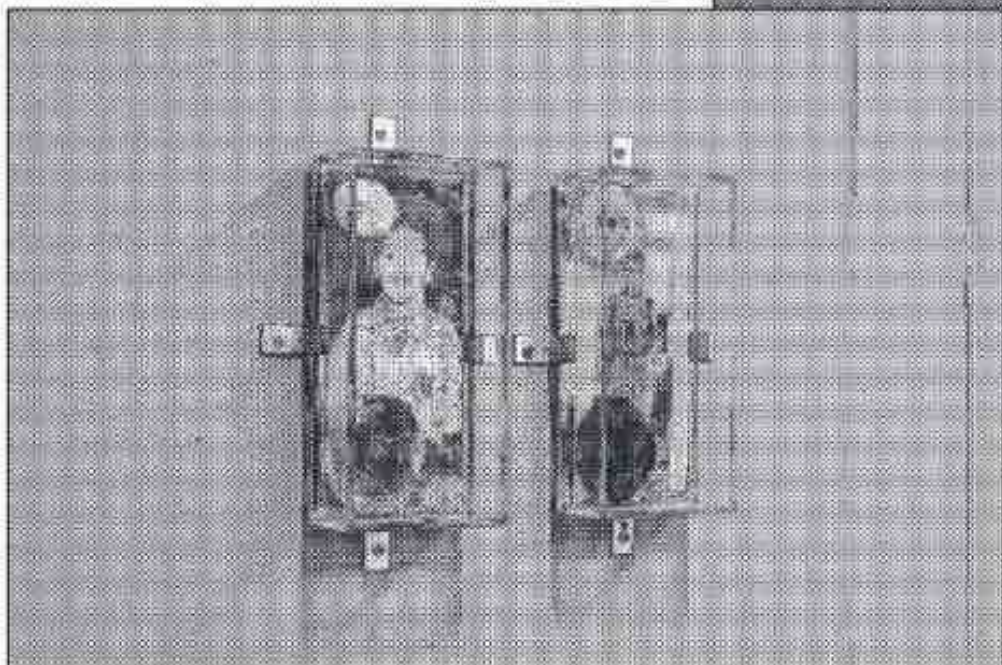
\*Lujan is watchable on TikTok, the bureaucrat is at his office, working on a spreadsheet.

'We are stuck with the problem of living despite economic and ecological ruination. Neither tales of progress nor of ruin tell us how to think about collaborative survival. It is time to pay attention to mushroom picking. Not that this will save us—but it might open our imaginations.'

Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing (2019)

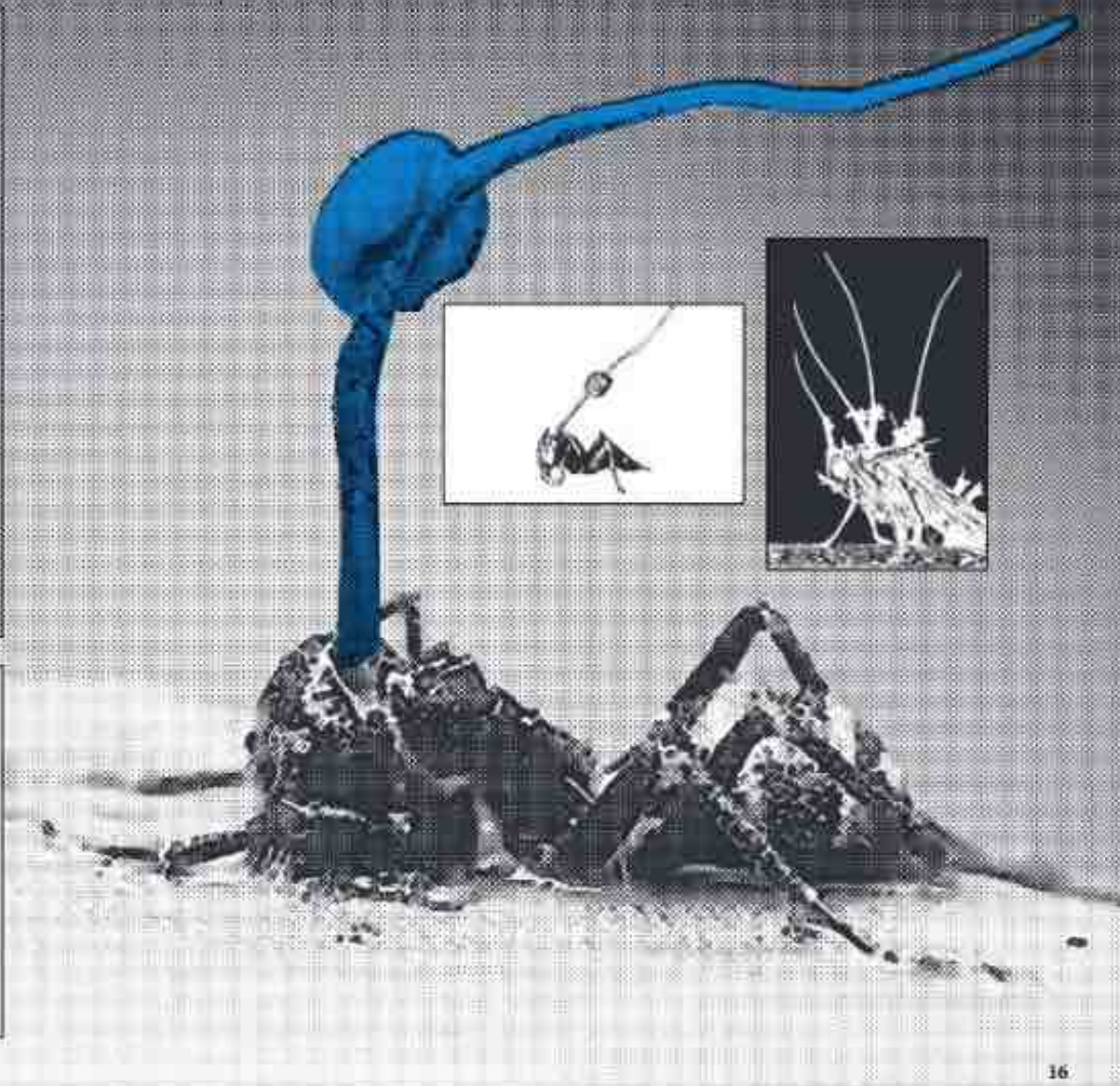
Erupting out of the earth, the first mycelial network flirts with fruiting as it spreads its spores across your lungs... maybe you can feel it growing inside you.

## 7. CRYOphage



\*A mycelial network of images that are held together by a loose conceptual thread. They are images lifted from multiple archives, across the images fungal species are growing, they are growing at a slowed down rate, there is something ambient in the environment which has caused the images to get moldy.

\*When one of the images in our archive was brought back from India it had a mold growing on it, we didn't realize for decades and the fungus became the image. Two ecosystems became one. The circulation of the image, its afterlives, its digital labor and the circulation of the mycelia.



The village has many pathways that alter our choices of movement, we meander into some that take us to our relatives, through another into a courtyard of restoration, maybe one that holds accounts of stewardship.

There are four seasons in the village, they are relatively stable, they dictate how we live and breathe together, our imagination is guided by our sharing of stories.

The village has grown over the last one hundred years, it has water, love, gossip, intrigue and stories for those yet to arrive...



\*A sci-fi video with kids who are imagining themselves in the future. We worked in collaboration with them to wonder what futures they feel and see for them and their worlds. They had such fantastical stories to tell, they laughed, they meandered, they had fictional samosas, but most of all we learned from each other, we transformed each other's worlds. We are the Villagers is how it all began.

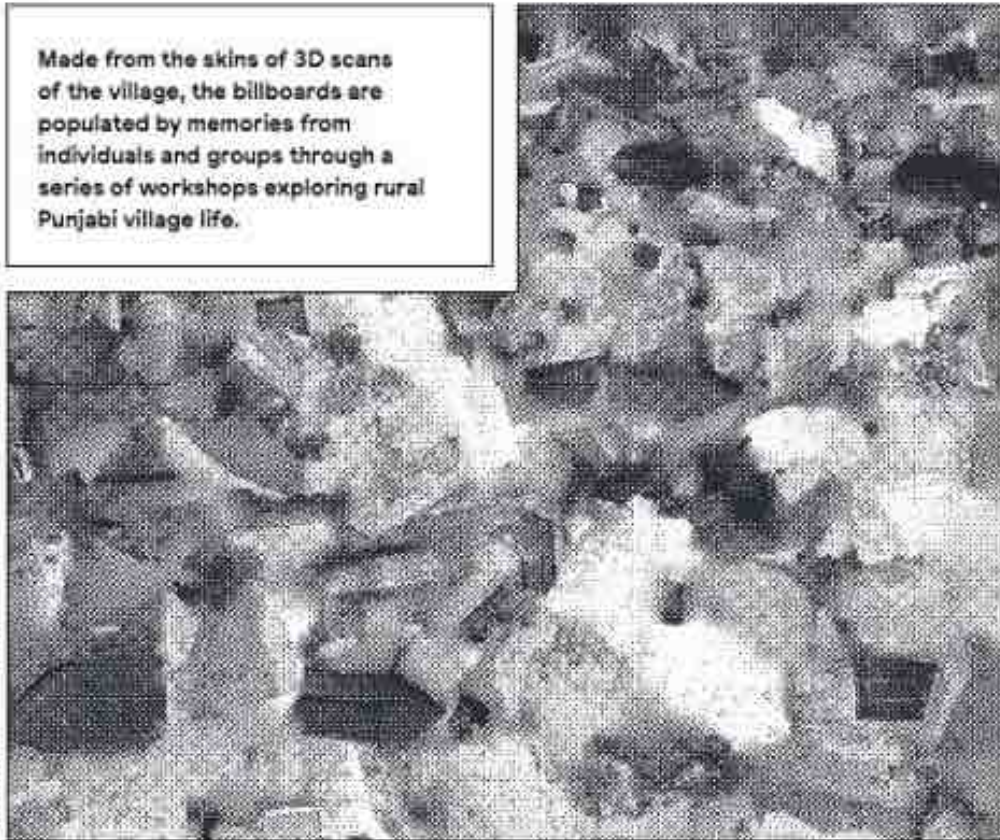
## 6. The Villagers



"We are the Villagers..."  
India 1949 / England 2023



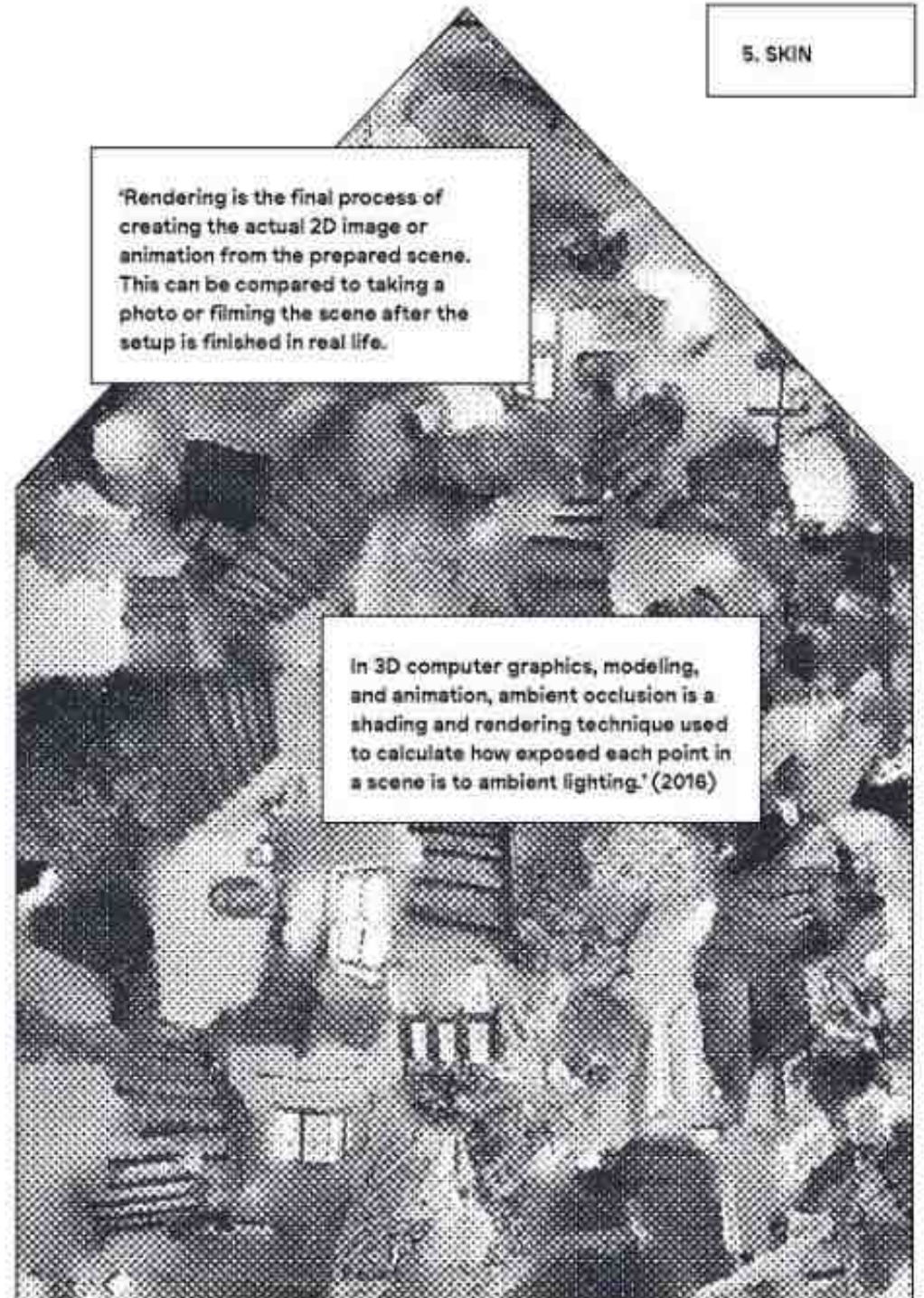
Made from the skins of 3D scans of the village, the billboards are populated by memories from individuals and groups through a series of workshops exploring rural Punjabi village life.



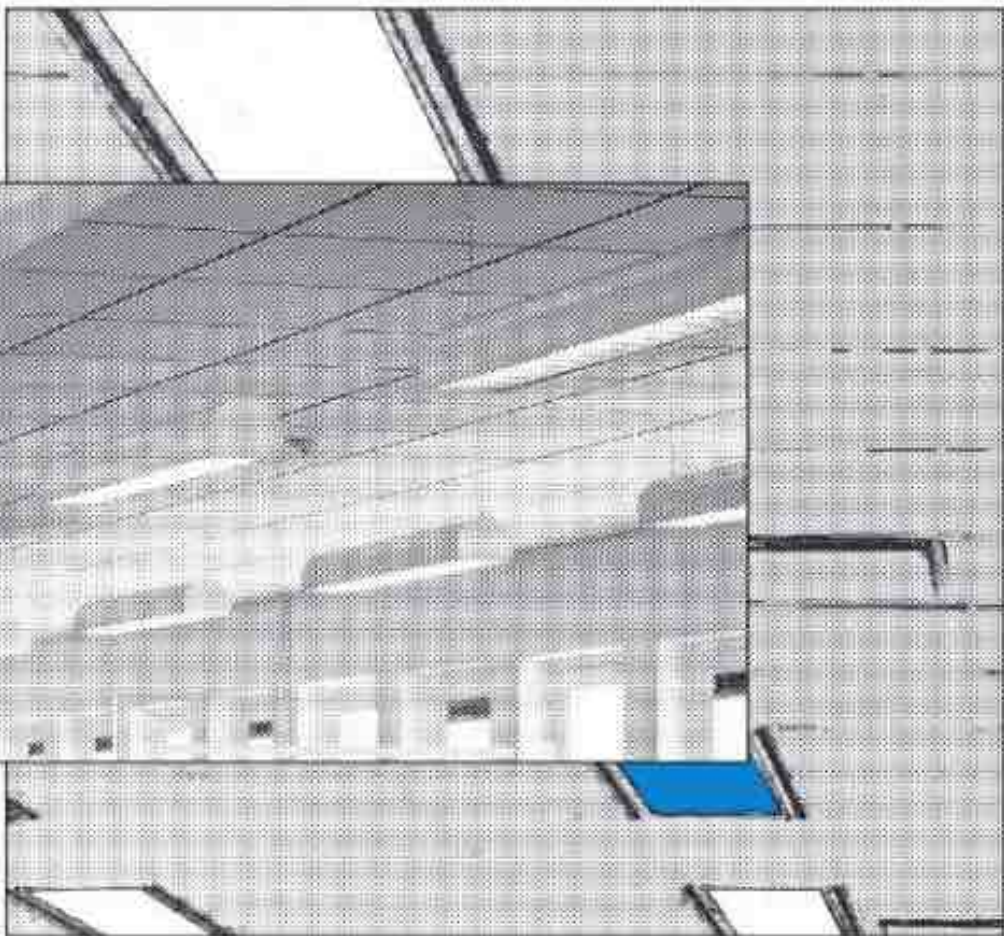
\*This is a live archive that is evolving throughout the duration of the show. A series of workshops ask participants to share short stories and memories and prompt them to imagine what might happen in the future to their respective villages in Punjab (that they may have migrated from).

'Rendering is the final process of creating the actual 2D image or animation from the prepared scene. This can be compared to taking a photo or filming the scene after the setup is finished in real life.'

In 3D computer graphics, modeling, and animation, ambient occlusion is a shading and rendering technique used to calculate how exposed each point in a scene is to ambient lighting.' (2016)



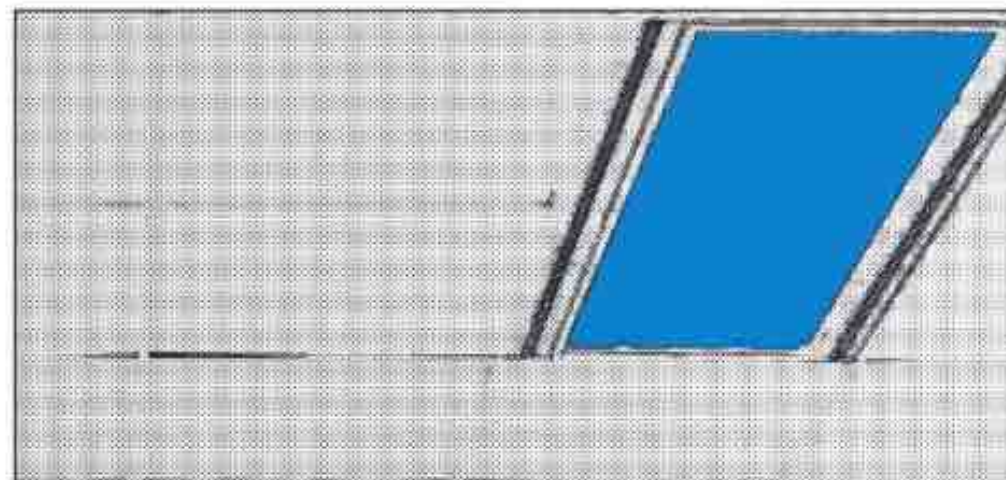
A bodily augmentation, 719 Colour Wash Blue LEE gel allows a low intensity tungsten to hold a cold/blue feel, to hold a color and a feeling across the space.



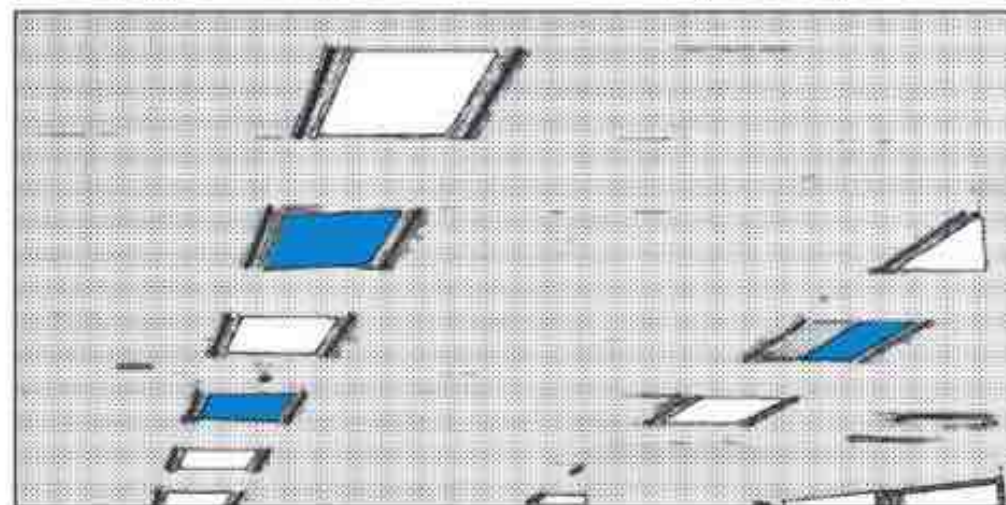
Tungsten, or wolfram, is a chemical element with the symbol W and atomic number 74. Tungsten is a rare metal found naturally on Earth almost exclusively as compounds with other elements.

It exists with another as a compound, the light will alter the psychology of the space.

#### 4. Light gels



'Blues is a tonic for whatever ails you. I could play the blues and then not be blue anymore.'  
B. B. King  
(unknown date)





An architecture that holds us, is shaped around us, our daily lives and their rhythms are dictated by it. The studs are used in construction of most contemporary buildings, they operate as a prefab skeleton to create rooms or as I like to call them cavities that people can operate within.

### 3. Skeleton Infrastructure

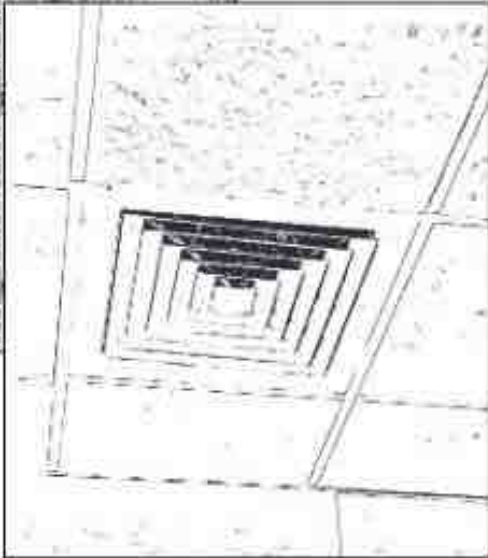
I wonder about the one who shares the same room as us, who is with us as we leave the invisible traces of psychologies, bodies, psyches in these rooms.

What can the skeleton reveal about the structure that grows over it.

'As ever, spaces contain and constrain only as much as they stage and generate; they are expressions of bodily form but also express themselves as and through bodily form (prisoner, worker, individual, mass), through habitats (desk, car, desert, bed, corridor), and through the articulation of those habits they are rendered as institutions and as material design culture.'

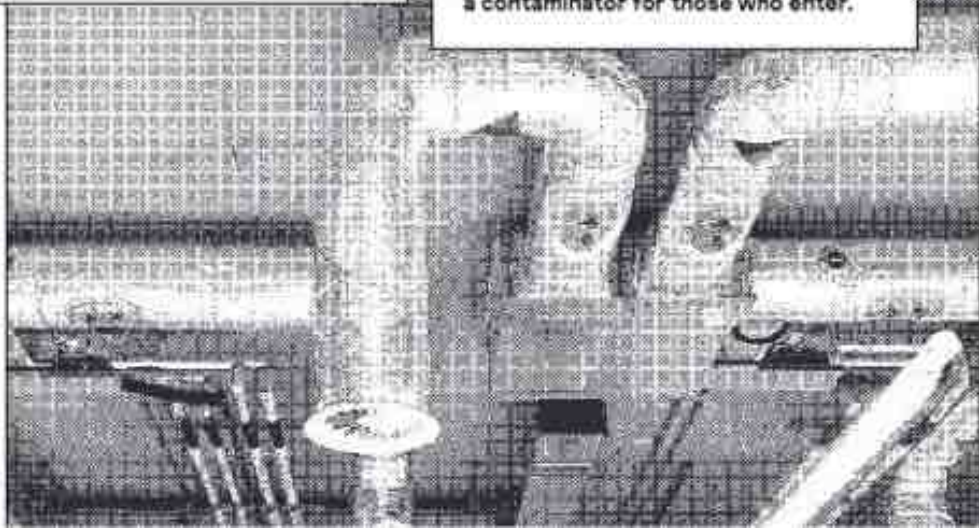
Benjamin Bratton (2015)



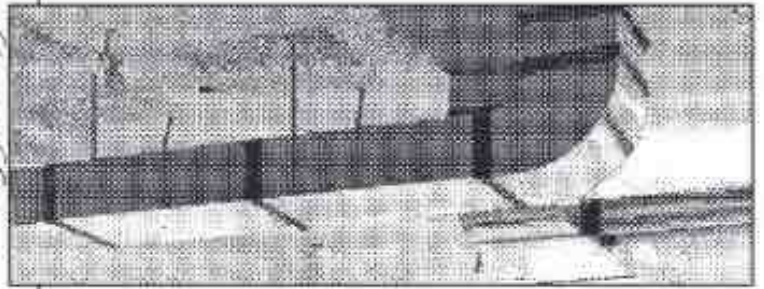


The slow oozing of smell and sound as they emerge from the vents. Sound pulsates through the infrastructure of the vents, recordings of ambient sounds from the metal gear solid games series along with field recordings captured in the village create a sonic vocabulary where their collapse into one another opens a portal between worlds.

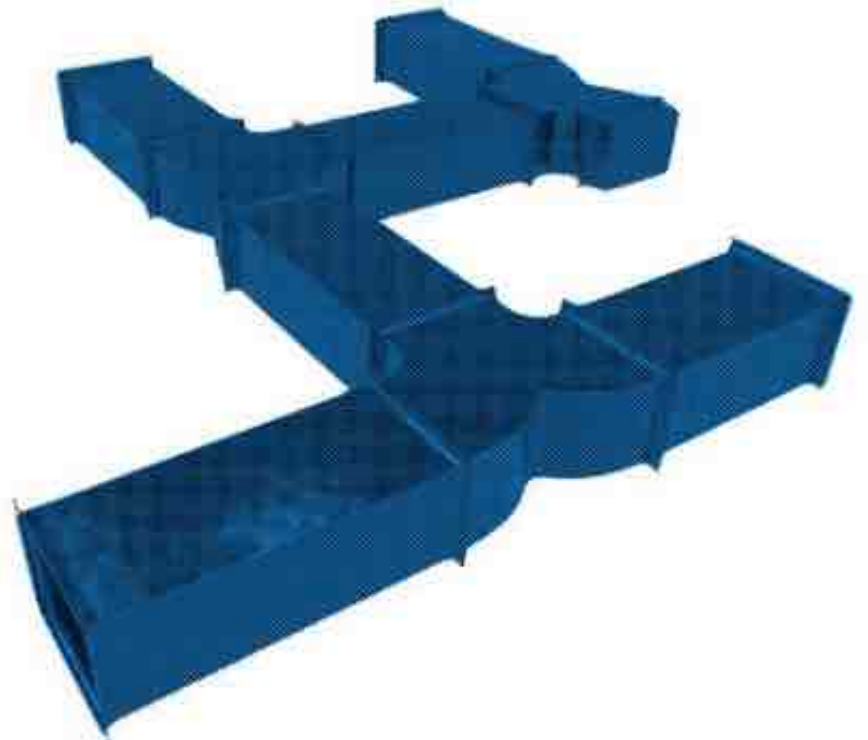
Lemongrass is a consistent olfactory gesture in most of my works, its a crop grown in India, for medicinal, holistic and social uses, in this space it acts as a contaminator for those who enter.



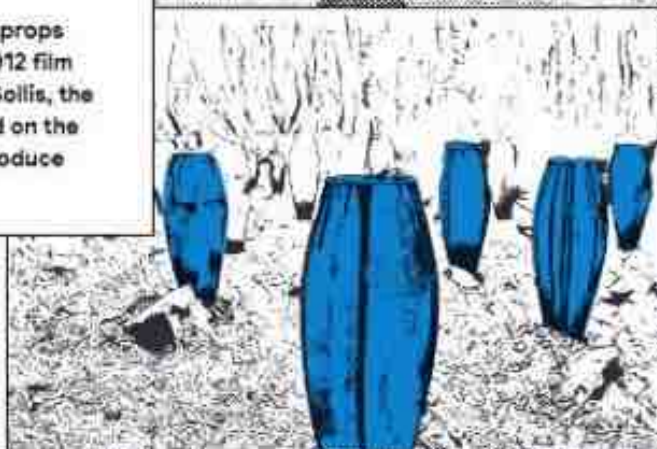
## 2. Vents



'The best way to enter the building without being spotted is the ventilation duct on the upper floor. Head north towards the searchlights but stay out of them.'  
Metal Gear Solid (2001)



\*The ampules were props in Ridley Scott's 2012 film *Prometheus*. Rob Sollis, the potter who worked on the film, has helped produce these ones.



## 1. Ampule Chamber

The ampules are vessels for a highly concentrated substance that alters the conditions of life, it is both a bringer of life and a destroyer of life. Around these forms exists an ecosystem of ricochets that travel through time and space, from footage of colonial India through to the production of a colony on terraformed Mars.

I went back to the village, I rendered its skin, much like the first images from Mars, I created an image of another world, its traces contaminated by my interjection. The video footage here sits as primordial goo, activating ways to imagine the aftermath of a violence.

\*The video *finalbeginningAFTERAFTERAFTER* is made in collaboration with my mother, who shared stories of her migratory worlds, it interrupts the sequence from *Prometheus* where humans enter the ampule chamber and alter the biological future of multiple species in an atmospherically controlled ecosystem.

I think about the circulation of my flesh, the body, the extraterrestrial habitability of another world as we migrate away, what traces are we leaving behind for others to inherit?

\*Words on the Ampules, my variant spelling of colony/nize, village, celestial, alien, earth

# A Beginning for Us All

मामाई Māmaī / गैदगी Gadagi / Matter / Contamination

WE used to live in the village, we welcomed visitors from abroad, they would come here to seek out their futures, we would get together, cook, sleep, fight and imagine the future.

The village was born in North India, it was later reborn as a vessel. It will visit many sites in the future. It is composed of stories, migrants, materials, houses, biologies, technologies, mycologies, and futures, but most of all it's the inhabitants who contaminate and compose the village.

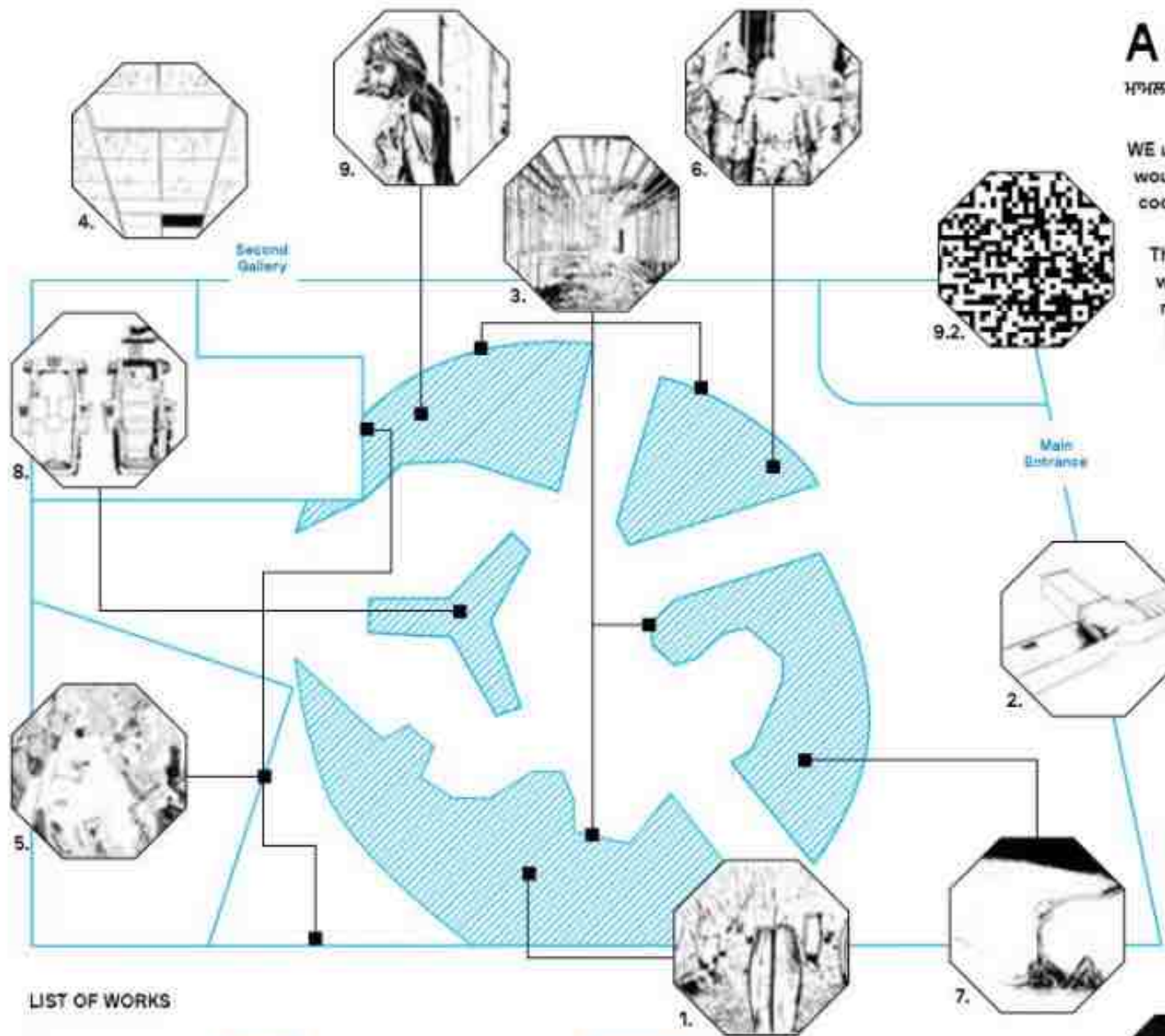
This place will move across time and space. It will have visitations on Earth. The sites of the visits will be evolving and sprawling transformations of architectures, educations, performances, smells, technologies and world making exercises.

This is a space to conjure another set of polyphonic futures, where we gather together to experience the reverberations of time and space. I want you to come and discover the traces of love, longing and possibility that make life possible.

Most of all, I want you to realize that we can work together to make another end of the world possible, one that houses all of us.

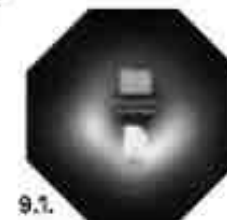
*dankEconomy1\_ALIENVillage* is a speculative commons. It is a vessel that will 'visit' sites and contaminate them forever.

This world is composed of a series of social practices that came together to make a collaborative installation alongside a set of digital interventions that exist online; 1. *danknessarchive.com*, which is an evolving archive of research material and processes that shape the projects that I find myself working on. 2. *HONEY* Chatbot, a parasitic chatbot that interacts with players online, the chatbot will infect the websites of the host institutions whenever a visitation arrives.

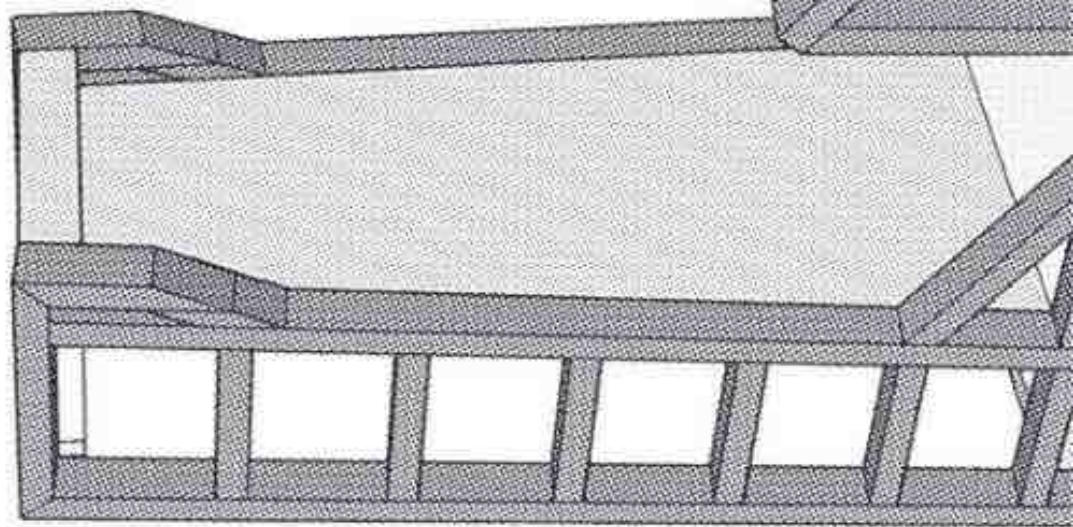


## LIST OF WORKS

1. Ampule Chamber (pp.4-5)
2. Vents (pp.6-7)
3. Skeleton Infrastructure (pp.8-9)
4. Light Gels (pp.10-11)
5. SKIN (pp.12-13)
6. The Villagers (pp.14-15)
7. CRYOphage (pp.16-17)
8. psyopGiri&bureaucrat.GAME (pp.18-19)
9. HONEY + Chatbot (p.20)
- 9.1. danknessarchive Website (p.21)
- 9.2. QR Codes (p.21)



# dankEcon ALIENVILLE



# Sahjan Koon

with Sophie Chapman, Gary  
The Villagers and Mar

