

We aim to examine new aspects of visual experience, particularly in the context of the rise of Artificial Intelligence and mind-video technology. We will focus on mental images that are not readily communicable, such the entoptic phenomena known as **Afterimages**.

Additionally, we will explore the subtleties of human perception and the aesthetics of visual experience.

We live in a digital age of using tools to share our experiences via social media, instagram posts, in a fast paced manner. However, entoptic phenomena are not such a shared experience.

Our project will use Trataka exercises, an ancient form of meditation, as a way to generate and view afterimages. This technique involves candle light in a dark room in which we gaze at the candle and close our eyes to access these afterimages which can take various forms.

We will draw and share these experiences within our group and interpret each others in a slow meditative and intimate manner.

-Entoptic phenomena

Afterimages

Entoptic images have a physical basis in the image cast upon the retina. These images are caused by phenomena within the observer's own eye and share one feature with optical illusions and hallucinations: **the observer cannot share a direct and specific view of the phenomenon with others.**

Afterimages are a common type of entoptic phenomenon. They occur when a person looks at a bright light or image for an extended period of time, and then looks away, causing a lingering image or afterimage to appear in the field of vision.

Afterimages can take the form of negative or positive images, and can last for a few seconds to several minutes. Drug stimuli, such as mescaline, lysergic acid diethylamide and psilocybin, can greatly increase the colour effect in afterimages.

Proposal

Throughout our project we will create a bank of images from our creative processes. We plan to incorporate an immediate recording of what we see, from drawing in coloured chinks on black paper to recording sound and write descriptions - specifically people's verbal description of the experience, and condense each participants response into a soundbite. We will have thorough questionnaire to accompany each interaction. We expect these to be visual and not reveal personal information, for example, *what colour background do you see? How long did your experience last? If this applies to you what shapes and colours do you see?*

Roles

Hester Management / Comms
Michelle Ideation / Writing / Notation
Inbal Website prototype / Notation
Ana Expert / Ideation / Art & design
Fabia Website prototype

These entoptic phenomena are personal and unique, we would like to incorporate the groups creative responses and welcome a range of media. Michelle will consider using photography to create images using light trails. Hester may print images and use paint to map out these visuals. Ana will generate animations.

We aim to complete the group's Trataka experiences with each other and use this starting point to generate creative outcomes using digital means to record and dispel our art on digital platforms such as a website and potentially invite others to create their own Trataka meditative experience.

Timeline

End of Jan Tratakas completed
Mid Feb Interpretative artworks completed
End Feb Content complete

The **Trakata** experience will only involve the adults in our group who are informed and understand the experience and what it is for. We will also use consent forms to formally outline what this may entail for those of us who have not performed this before. Since it is a meditative experience we believe it is a relatively safe activity that eases anxiety. However, the activities will not be carried out alone and will be guided by a group member who has previously experienced this.

We will consider having breaks if needed and the ability to stop if participants feel stressed for any reason by the after images.

Aesthetics

- **What is the formal basis of your project ?**

The formal basis is to examine aspects of visual experience in the context of the rise of artificial intelligence. The outcome is an online resource, an online platform, containing visual artworks. Each artist will express their experience through their chosen media according to their field of practice.

- **How are you dealing with materials, colour, form, ? shape, composition?**

The shapes and compositions will depend on the subject's experience. The materials will be chosen afterwards based on the needs of the artist.

- **What would you like your piece to “feel” like (however you define “feel” to be here)?**

The piece (artwork) should reflect the subject's experience as closely as possible. The outcome is still a work in progress, and will be aesthetically related to the subject, yet professional and clear so it can be used as a tool and be user-friendly.

- **What aesthetic precedents inform your project?**

Aesthetically, the project is based on our own mental images. Conceptually, we were inspired by the fact that this is about the rise of mind video technology. We were inspired by something that could be the rise of a new communication system - people will be able to share the images in their minds with each other! So examining the images in our brains is the basis of it.

- **How do the aesthetics underscore the overall concept of the work?**

[Add details here about how your aesthetic choices emphasize or communicate the overall idea/purpose of the project]

Method

- **How will you go about making your project?**

Each member of the group will take turns experiencing the session.

Their partner (a different group member) will use a recording of the session

as well as a drawing to interpret it. There will be a basic questionnaire to support the session.

- **What methodologies or processes will you employ?**

There will be a drawing session after the trataka meditation. Each of the participants will later employ their own methodology to create the artwork and re-interpreting their partner's outcome.

- **How will you collect and manipulate data and / or media?**

We're collecting media from our brains and translating it into something that can be shared visually. The pieces that are not initially digital will be photographed or scanned.

- **How will you source or modify materials?**

Each participant will source their own materials.

- **How does the way in which your project is created underscore its concept?**

The actual trataka process is faithful to its origins - it's a very primal experience. The outcomes will reflect the experience in a modernized way.

Audience

- **Who is the audience for your work?**

Professional artists, designers, art students, and anyone with an interest in art as a hobby.

- **How are you engaging them?**

The platform should be clear and user-friendly. The digital platform makes it easy for sharing and accessibility.

- **What is the audience's experience of your project?**

Digital experience.

- **Does the word performance relate to your project?**

Yes, it could. The project has potential to progress in different aspects. At this stage, the outcome is a digital platform.

- **Is your work something to be performed; does it itself perform a function over time?**

No

- **Does the word behaviour relate to your work?**

No

- **How might your design / project alter the behaviour of those who come in contact with it?**

It can inspire creativity and make you a better artist!

- **How does the nature of the interactivity, participation or engagement in the project support your overall concept?**

Eventually people will be able to make their own artwork and engage with trataka meditation. People can potentially learn a new skill! In the initial sessions between partners, the two will intimately learn each other's mental imagery.



The Funghirls group utilised the tool of **Trataka** meditation and explored this analogue, seemingly isolated experience, applied/ considered its relevance in a contemporary digitally involved society.

Our more experienced peer with **Trataka** knowledge helped guide our first session. We all congregated at Ana's home, sat in a circle and shared our meditation experiences with one another through various mediums.

-Proposal

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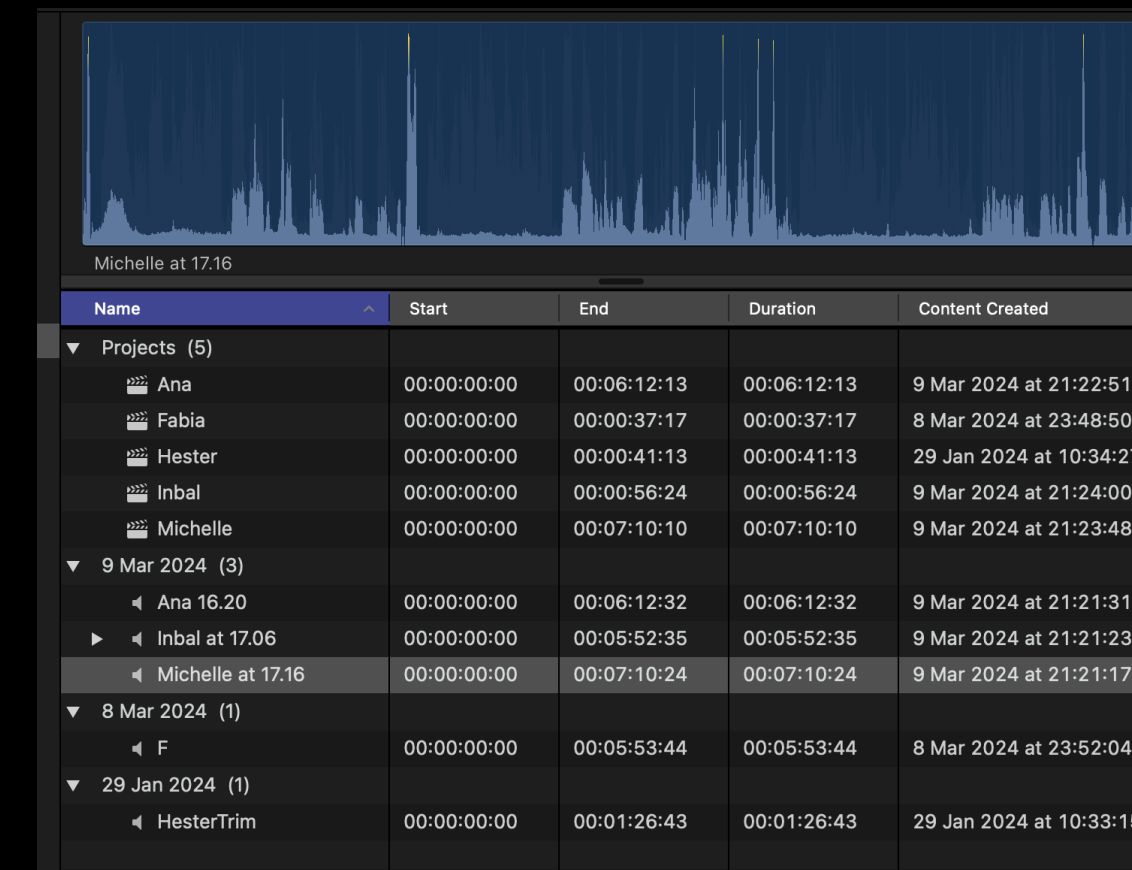
Record

We sat in front of a candle facing its flame about one meter away, eye level, at a fixed position. We then gazed at it, closed our eyes and watched the entoptic phenomenon develop whilst verbally describing it to the whole group in real time.

To revisit and further disseminate the descriptions, we agreed to digitally record each other's speaking about what we each saw, creating three individual recordings per person. The purpose for this was to convert the sound recordings into written transcript or sound edits for others to read, compare or use in their artwork. Recording the our own experience in order to understand the endless ways entoptic phenomenon from the same source can manifest. Each person's description is unique.

Because each person's visual experience of the phenomena differed noticeably despite being at the same location, affected by the same candle flame and during consecutive times, we felt sharing these with each other verbally and visually was important. We began by immediately drawing our visual experiences with coloured chalks on black card to keep the image fresh. We later used the audio recordings and reflected on the shared experience to reinterpret the other persons' visuals using various media. For example, Hester used paint on canvas to map out Fabia's entoptic description. While the images are not carbon copies, the purpose of the activity was to appreciate the extremely varied versions of reality we all share even being within the same room, everyone had left with an unusual image.

-Sound recording



-Chalk drawing



Trataka is known for increasing our attention spans and creates a space for people to strengthen their mind to body relationship whilst enabling a better understanding of what they see and how images are produced optically. Moreover, the activity of meditation provides us with a springboard for creative ideas. By collating these images into a visual and audio bank and sharing this online on a digital platform we intend to inspire other creative practitioners who may be experiencing creative blocks, but also opening this to anyone interested in expanding their understanding of how images are formed in our bodies.

By having a drawing session after the Trataka meditation, each of the participants employed their own methodology to create the artwork and re-interpreting their partner's outcome. We recognised and believed it important to harness the different creative background of our members. We reflected this not only in our role allocation for members but also through our interpretations of each other's visual descriptions. For example, Michelle took on the role as note taker and used their photography background to suggest a creative outcome of incorporating long exposure light trail photographs in her interpretation of Ana's experience. Ana has experience in design and animation and will create a coloured animation of Hester's afterimage. By using each other's strengths and areas of expertise we harnessed an eclectic yet connected bank of images to showcase the creative potential of this project.

-Gazing

Meditating with eyes open, gazing at a fixed point, such as a flame, without blinking for as long as possible. When no longer able to hold the gaze, the eyes close and the subject starts visualising an afterimage in their mind.



While aesthetically the project is based on our own mental images, conceptually we were inspired by the fact that this is about the rise of Mind-video Technology, conversations of personal data, particularly with the prevalence of image sharing on social media apps, and the recent information on the development of Brain-Computer Interfaces (BCIs).

These ideas may increase anxiety about the sharing of mental images and who has access to such private data. We were inspired by something that could be the rise of a new communication system - our process addresses the desire to access and share such visual in a way that the individual may feel safe, in control of share their experiences in self formed groups, digitally and outside of big tech companies. By forming a digital platform to disperse these experiences and our creative outcomes, we encourage people to give Trataka meditation a go, reap it's benefits and perhaps even make artwork themselves by learning a new skill and sharing the session between partners, providing a space to intimately learn each other's mental imagery.

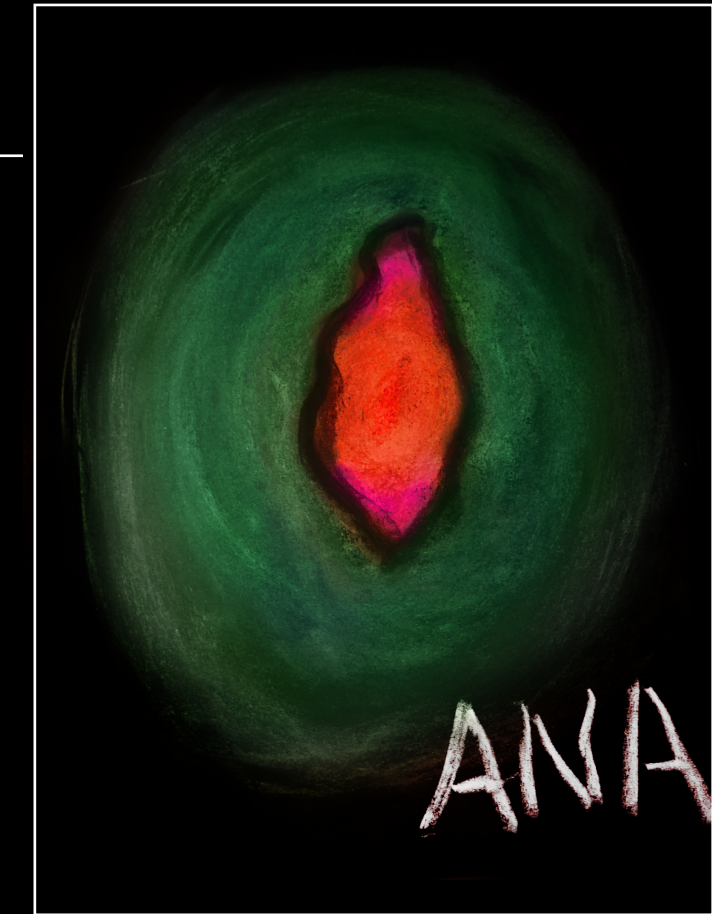
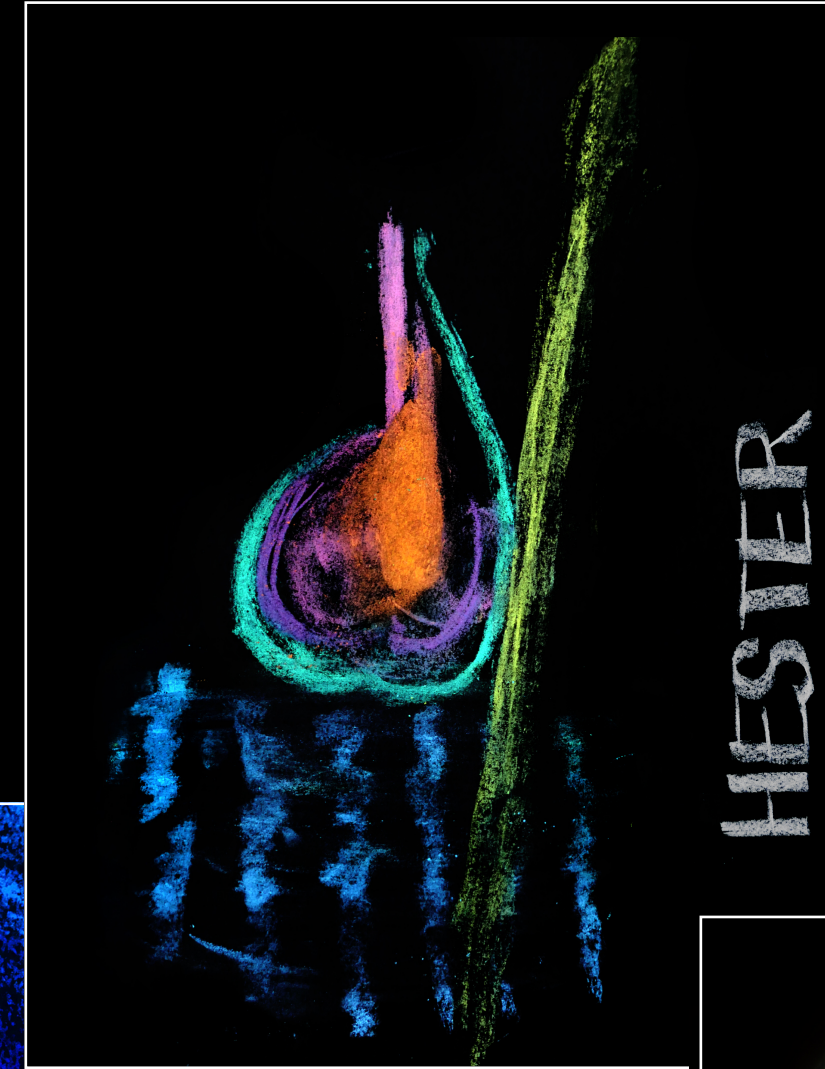
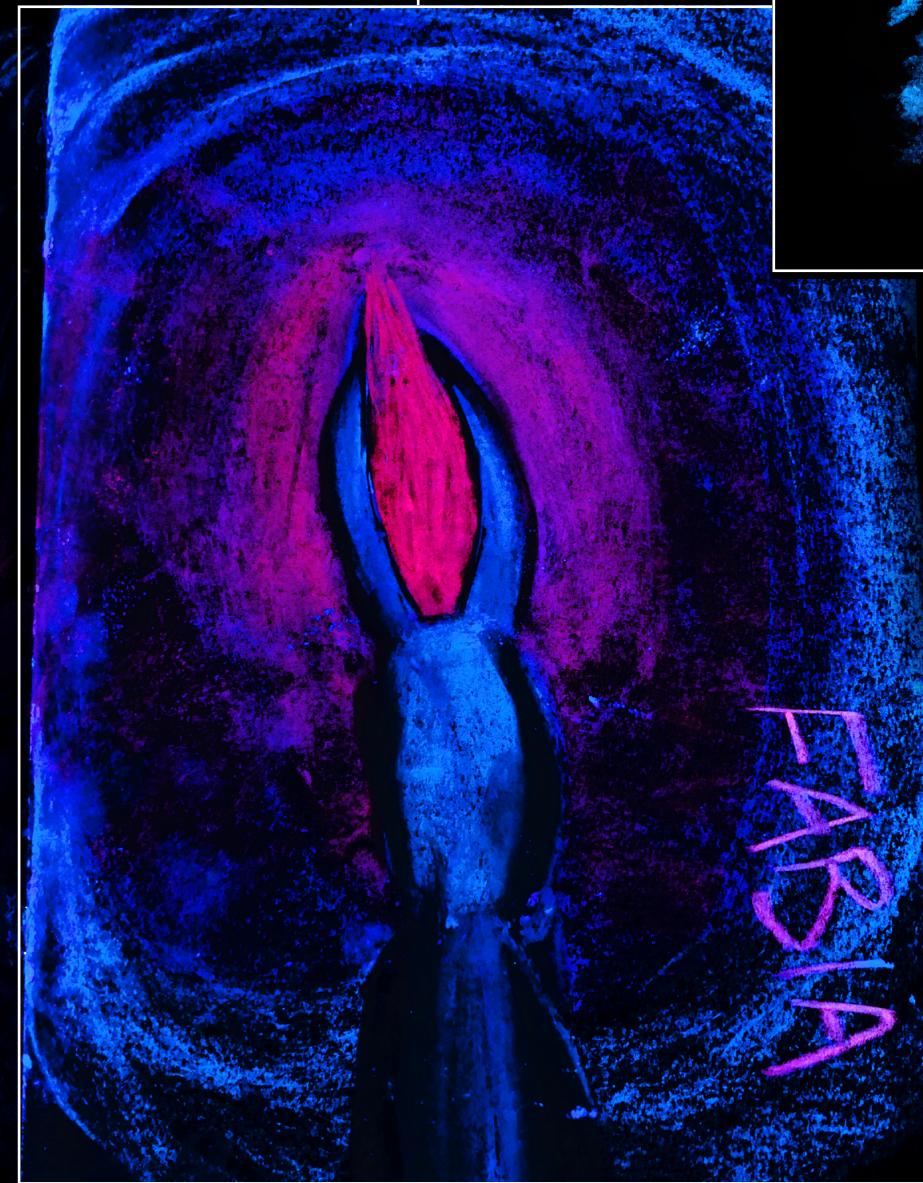
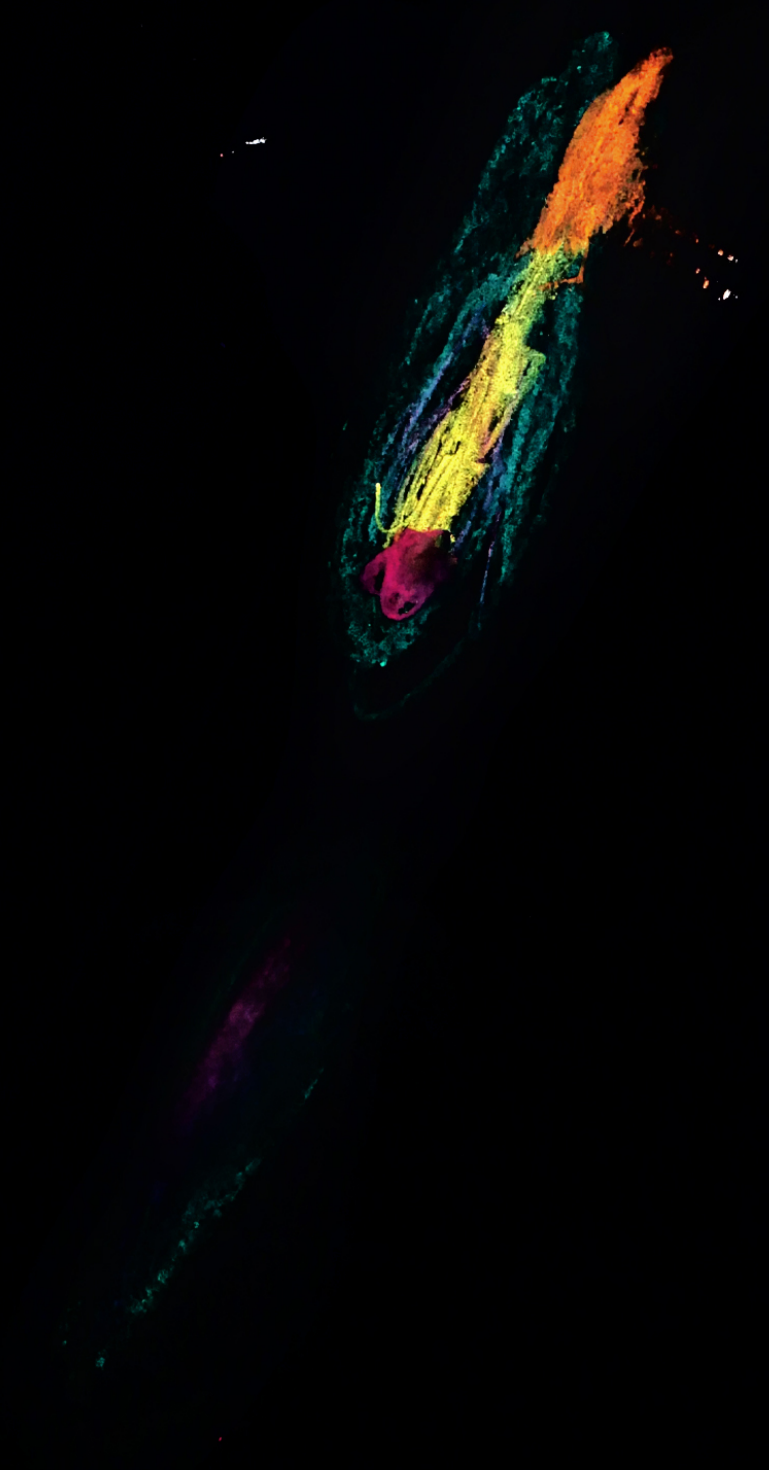
-Website Prototyping

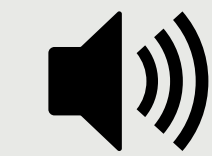
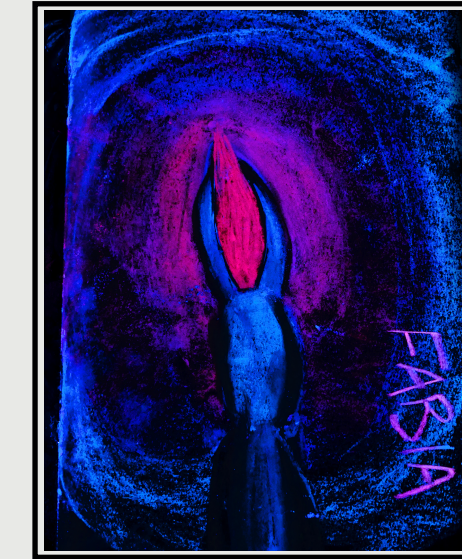


Outline of our Trataka website
Funghirls





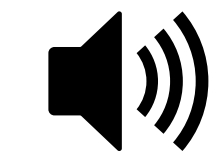
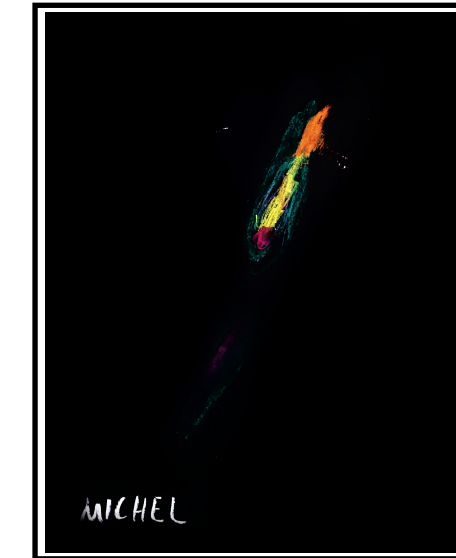




“Blue in the middle, purple outside, figure in the middle, dark blue figure with purple flame hair and it’s gone now...”

“Pink line, blue... like outline and it’s blue around it and pink aura diffusing out the black. Horned figure back again, dark blue with pink flame coming out of their head and then there’s nothing.”

Fabia Martin



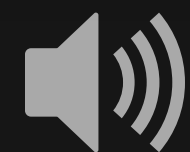
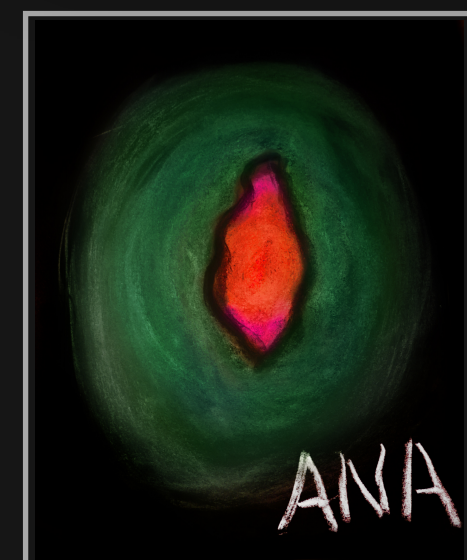
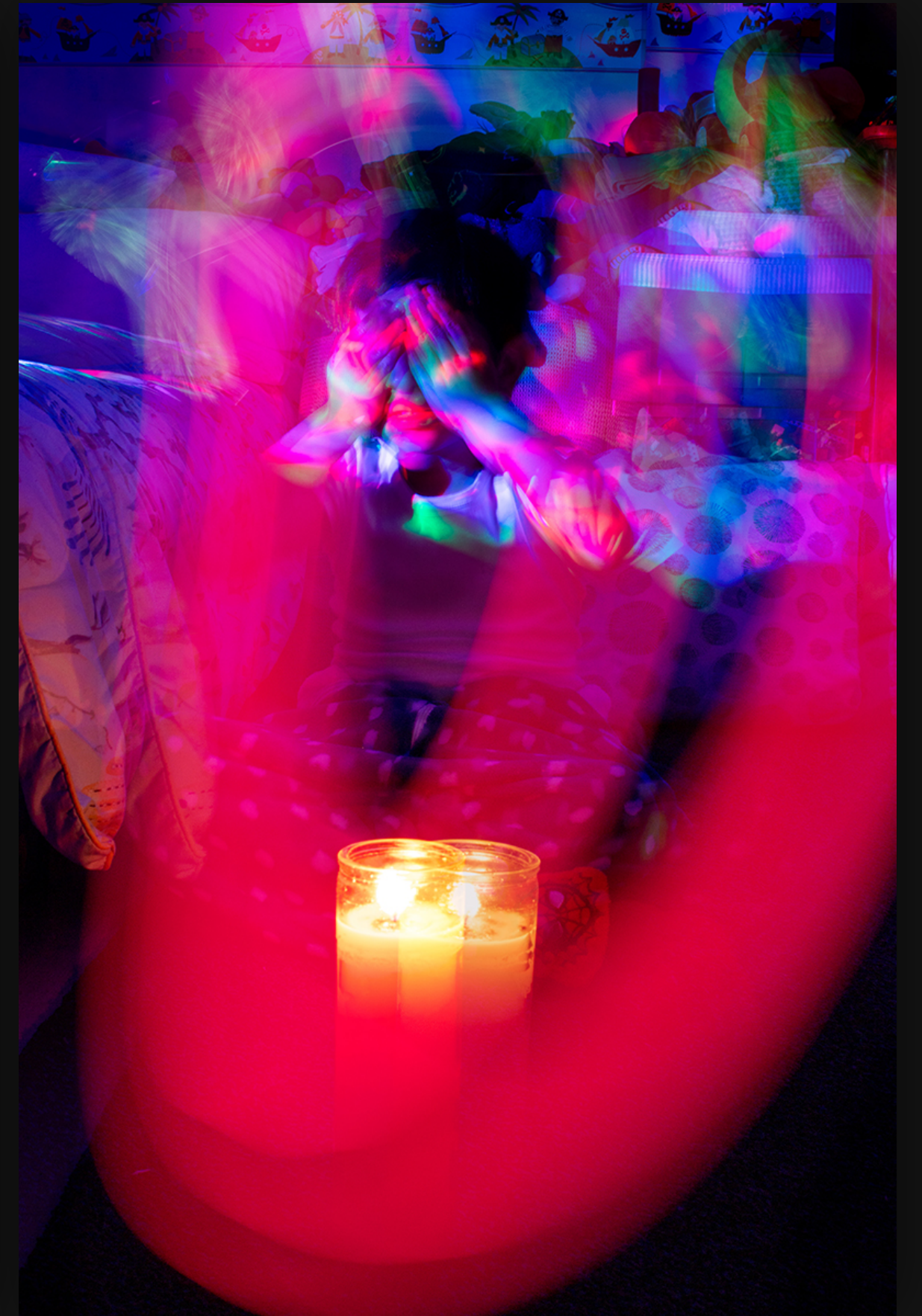
"There's kinda a faint orangey/peachy colour going down and theres the like the same yellow line every two centimetres long with a red ball going down again.

It's kinda a lime green in the middle with a yellow around it and a faded orange surrounding it.

It's very small. Honestly, it looks like sperm.

There's like a little bit of green - like a green outline... it's just there and now turning green. Yeah, just looks like a little creature. That's it."

Michelle Mendieta Mean



"This time it's green, a green explosion: there's a weird shape, it's also elliptic... rising... now it's fully magenta and pink - a red bottom and red top and it's not perfect - it's more like a torch.

Lots of purple light around it and then again the black strong outline. The purple is just a haze.

There's no particular animation, it's just a presence of light. It's becoming really, really dark. The dark outline becoming stronger and stronger... Then it's rising. Orange and green. It looks like an eye upside down... going up and up and up."

Ana Domingues



HESTER #01



“A really long, vertical, blurred bright yellow with green on the outside and then it became like a big bulbous bit in the bottom which was like a rich purple colour.

It keeps going from thin to fat at the base... like a sort of flower bulb, or something, and it's got this black outline that goes down below the bulbous base into another fat line.

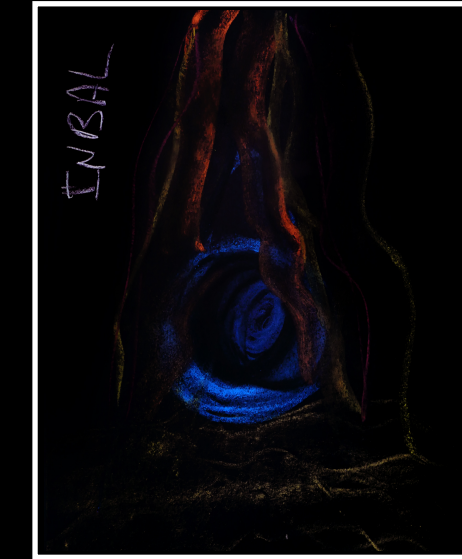
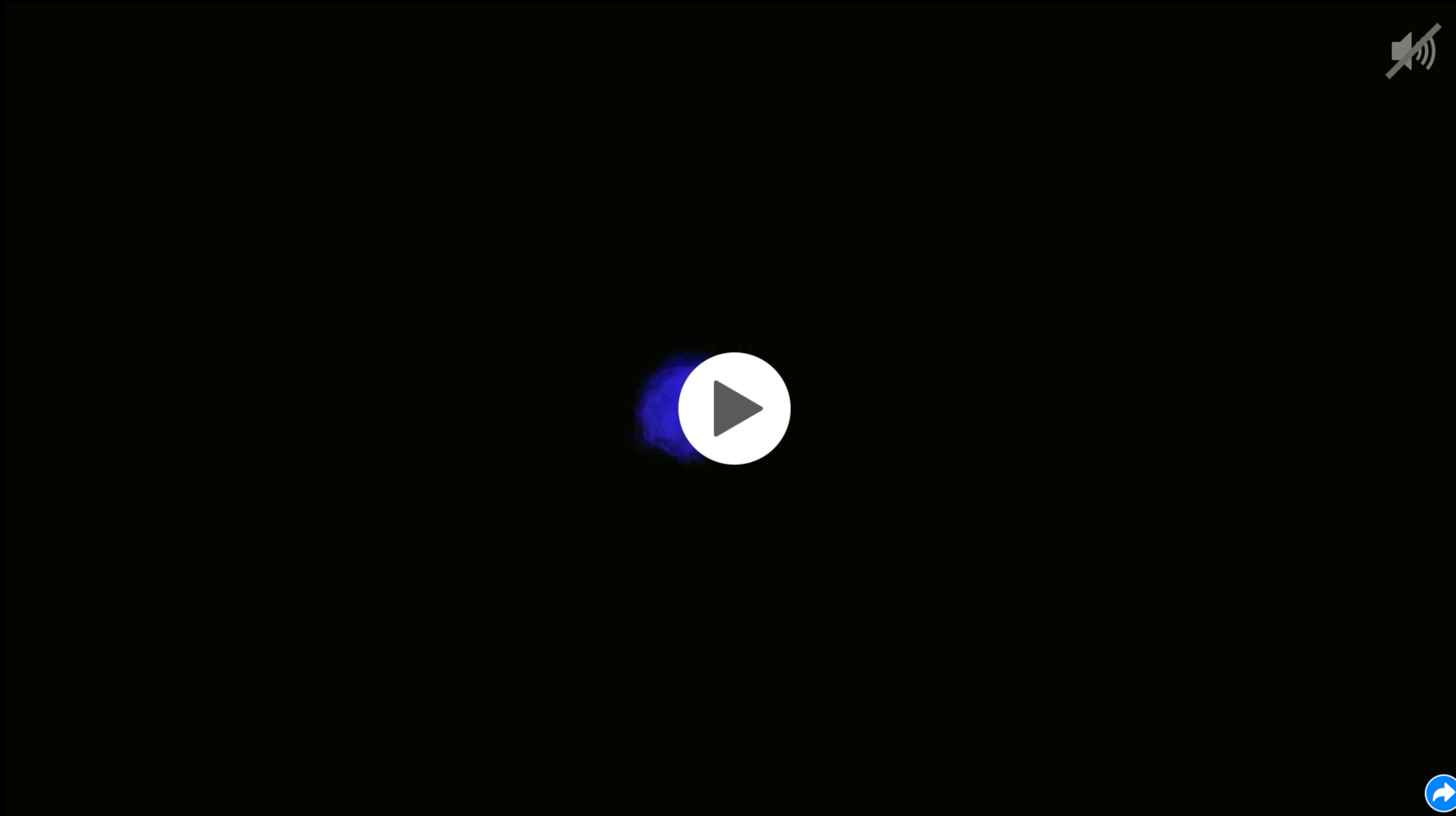
It's got a white centre, pink bottom, orange top. Sort of looks like an onion.

Now I got this flash of yellow going all the way from the top to the bottom of my vision just slightly to the right like a sort of flare.

Now it's just a pink triangle, really hard black outside.

It's fading and it's sort of glowing orange around the black.”

Hester Finch



“Now I see a big ball of blue, shiny blue, like a little dot of dark blue and black in the middle. Almost like fire-orange and red becomes pinky but it goes up and it's like something came from the sky, and goes down and down and takes this ball down with it.

The ball is becoming smaller and smaller, now it's starting to fade. And the fire is turning to this black, shiny, with yellow and orange sides, like a ball of fire that's disappearing.

A black storm like a goldfish...gold, green, like a dark green ground. “

Inbal Erez



THANK YOU