

Garnerred

Madd Kruidenier

Thesis Portfolio SP22



ARTIST STATEMENT

Madd Kruidenier is a line-heavy illustrator/designer, specialising in story-driven illustration and text design. Originally from the Netherlands, Madd grew up mostly in the UK and moved to the US at fifteen years old. They now draw from a variety of influences between the three countries, and often make work about their feelings surrounding 'home.'

Madd recently graduated from the Pacific Northwest College of Art in Portland, Oregon. Through their work, they attempt to capture the human experience in all its charming glory, working both traditionally and digitally to do so.

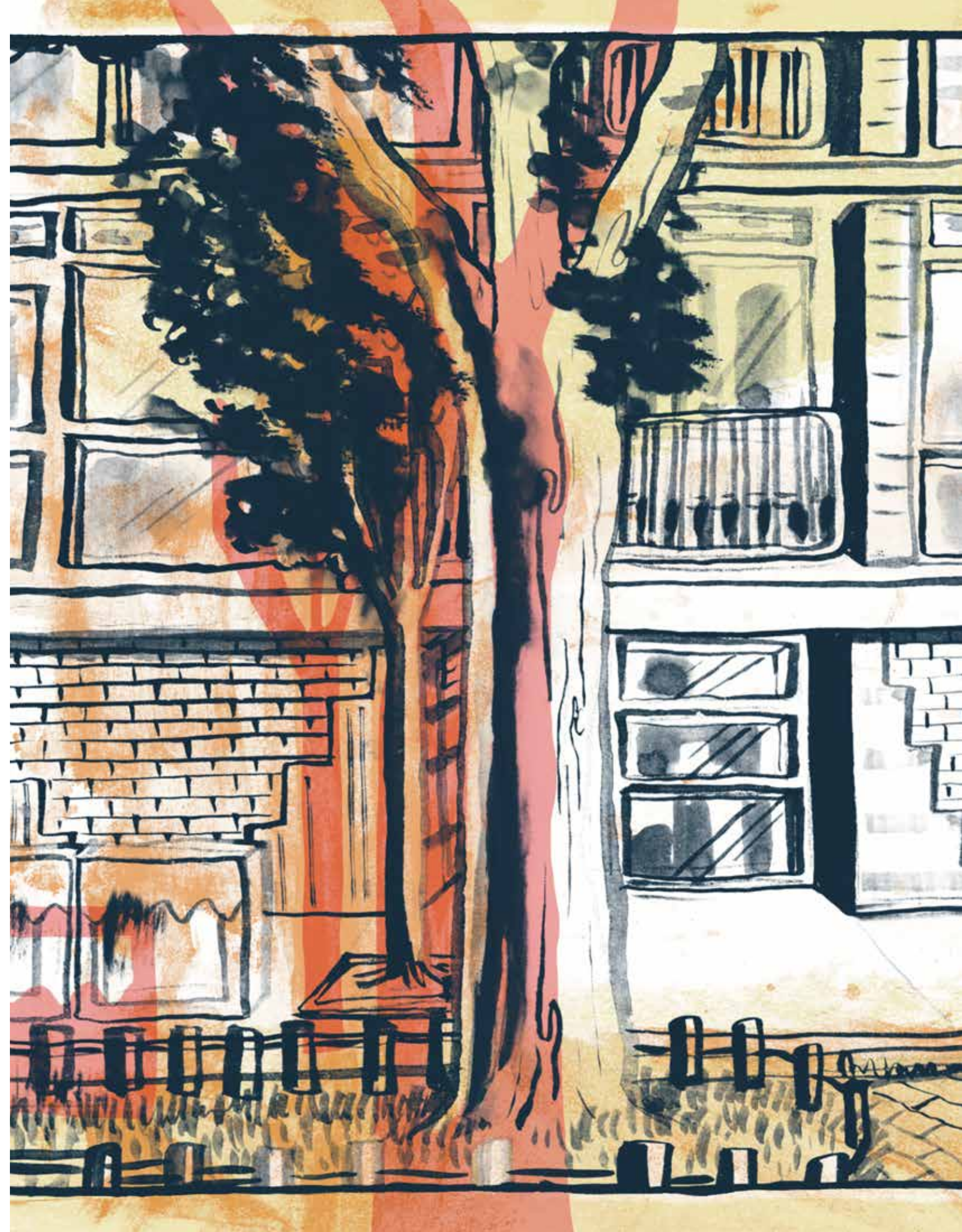
Madd works in a muted but colourful palette, pushing texture, linework, and impulse. They try to include hand-drawn type in most of their work, typically giving a piece a nonsensical caption or phrase. The words are not often planned, and usually exist to add texture to the image.



THESIS PROPOSAL

We are shaped primarily by our environments, and by the mundane moments we experience in them. In a 75 page visual memoir, I will report on the arbitrary memories that make us, and the influences our environments have. Through a series of prose vignettes, digital illustration, hand type, and collage, I will explore emotions that arise from the places I have called 'home.' My memoir will follow a singular representative character for ten chapters throughout the ten houses I've lived in, and through the moments I associate with them.

When it comes to 'why,' my reasoning is fairly simple. I've moved a few times impactfully, and have developed a slightly confused view of 'home.' I was born in the Netherlands, and my extended family has lived there my whole life. We moved to the UK when I was very young, only a year or two old, so for the most part I grew up in a small farming village in Cambridgeshire, visiting the Netherlands a couple times a year. When I was fifteen, my family moved to San Diego, California, which I admit did break me a little. Around then is when I started to properly consider what 'home' means to me, and how I classify it. When I was eighteen, I moved up to Portland for college, and I've been here for the better part of four years now, almost longer than I lived in San Diego.



THESIS PROPOSAL

This memoir is an opportunity to define what home means to me, and to unravel my feelings surrounding the many that I've had. I hope my book will appeal to a mass market of people, but I'd like to speak especially to those living outside their country of origin. Everyone struggles with the concept of home, and we are all constantly trying to decipher our formative memories, but I find this to be more common or intense amongst expats and immigrants. Hopefully, this book will become a commentary on the nurture our spaces provide, and will be both personally impactful for others and cathartic for me.

The final project will be separated into ten chapters, not including the introduction and conclusion. My introduction will explain the concept of the project, give it a little bit of context, and my conclusion will reflect on the distance I've travelled and have yet to travel. Each chapter will be dedicated to a house I've lived in and to a strong arbitrary memory I have from it; the book will be chronological, starting with early memories from 2001 and ending with recent memories from 2021. The chapters will all have a title page, and two following spreads containing semi-narrative prose and illustration; the introduction will be just one spread, and the conclusion will be three. Each of the ten title pages will be a full-bleed maximalist illustration of the front



THESIS PROPOSAL

door to that chapter's assigned house. These drawings will be brightly coloured, texture heavy, and intricately lined.

Throughout the ten chapters, there will be a recurring character representative of me, who will age and change as the book goes on. At the beginning, the character will be young and essentially a 'blank slate,' but by the end they will be almost fully grown, having collected accessories and elements of their appearance from the preceding houses. For example, I spent a lot of time in one of the homes playing card games, so in recognition of the royal face cards, the character will carry a colourful monarch's sceptre from that house onwards.

The visual elements of the work will adhere to a mixed media approach, meshing digital illustration with traditional collage and photography. My practice revolves equally around digital comic work and a hands-on type of journaling; my sketchbook is often a combination of graphic hand-type, figure work, and layered backgrounds of found imagery or paper scraps. I am incredibly interested in recording and reporting on 'human moments,' the arbitrary memories that fly under our radar but tend to highlight a more romantic aspect of life. It is due to this, and to my collaging, that my work often emulates diaries or journals. It feels very personal and sometimes nonsensical to others. With this book, I will



THESIS PROPOSAL

strike a balance between graphic design and illustration, using my love of the mundane and my understanding of materiality to create an intimate scrapbook diary.

I want to print multiple copies of the finished book, with the finals being hardcover coffee-table books, sized at 8" x 8", and totalling 75 to 80 pages. I'd like for the cover to be glossy and thick, sized a little larger than the paper. The paper will be matte and toothy, so the texture of the scanned work isn't completely lost, and its weight will be about 120gsm to 150gsm, something heavy and substantial. I will be using an external book-printing company to make about ten to fifteen final copies.

When it comes to influences for this project, I am pulling from both visual and written work. In a research class this past semester, I assigned myself twenty-four books to read for memoir inspiration and comprehension. I won't discuss every single one, of course, but four of them stood out to me.

My first influence is *Maus* by Art Spiegelman, a comic memoir trilogy published from 1980 to 1991, and the only graphic novel to ever win a Pulitzer Prize. The book describes Spiegelman's parents' survival of the Holocaust, and conveys the intricacies of Spiegelman's relationship with his father in the present day. *Maus* is high-contrast, rendered with heavy black lines, and rife with visual metaphor; all



THESIS PROPOSAL

the people within the book are anthropomorphised for clear reasons. I want to draw from this, adding metaphorical aspects to my character as they change throughout the book, and giving them physical qualities that relate directly to the houses I've chosen.

My next influence is *Seconds* by Bryan Lee O'Malley, a graphic novel published in 2014. This book follows the story of Katie Clay, head chef at an emerging restaurant, who gains the ability to fix her past mistakes by eating mushrooms she finds in her basement. O'Malley works with a very saturated colour palette and focuses on just a few primary colours throughout the novel. Ideally, I want my colours to pop in the same way and for each of my chapters to get the most out of their own limited palettes.

My third influence is *The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien, a book of linked prose vignettes published in 1990. The vignettes describe moments from O'Brien's time in the Vietnam War as a young man, with specific focus on fighting on the ground with the 23rd Infantry Division. His writing is incredibly emotional and descriptive; the honesty and metafictional aspects of this book have led me to read it over and over, and it always hits just as hard as the first time I read it.

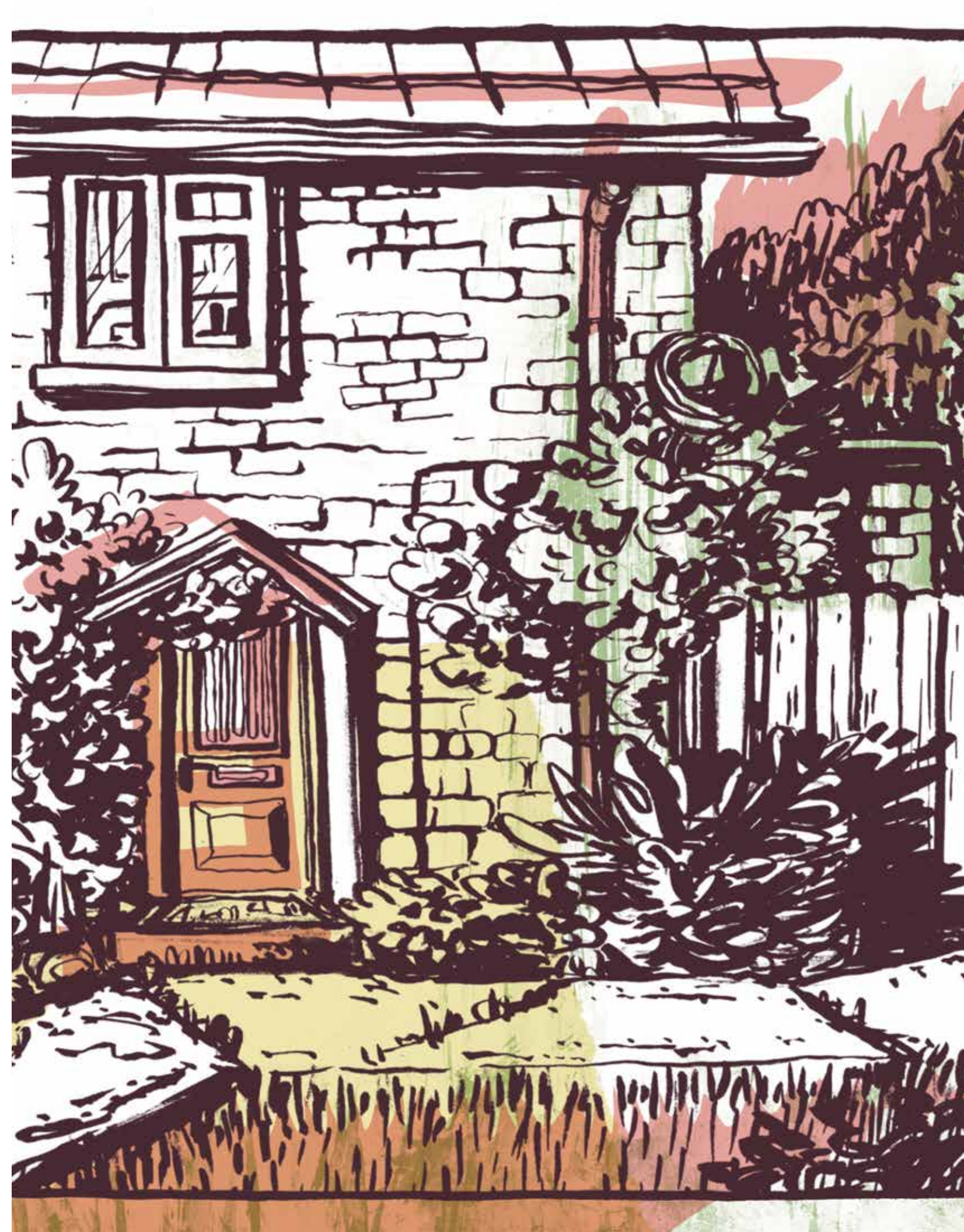
My final influence is *The Bell Jar* by Sylvia Plath, a



THESIS PROPOSAL

semi-autobiographical novel about Plath's struggle with depression, published in 1963. The book follows Esther Greenwood, a promising young writer in her early twenties who suffers a depressive breakdown and experiences the lackadaisical mental healthcare available to her in the sixties. Plath's attention to prose is what draws me to her writing. She uses unorthodox descriptions, and makes sure not to ignore the impact punctuation can have on a sentence. I aim to emulate both O'Brien and Plath for the prose in my project, writing honestly and tangibly, and with a heavy emphasis on emotion.

As I mentioned earlier, my current practice revolves mainly around both digital comic work and traditional sketchbooking, involving found imagery and mixed media collage. I try to work between the two, but I think there could be much more integration, and that is what I'm aiming to do with this project. Recently, I have been interested in making dust jackets and movie posters, which both give me a lot of opportunity to integrate hand-type into my digital art. These projects also let me lend tangible evidence to qualities of existing works, and allow me to recontextualise stories through my own lens. I tend to think of my digital work as more surreal and finished, something I can manipulate as much as I want, and a place where I can mess around with



THESIS PROPOSAL

digital texture instead of traditional texture. Occasionally, I try to incorporate similar elements of the collage I use in my sketchbook work, but mostly I use digital art to explore the capabilities of the program, and see how polished I can get something to look. My visual journaling is something I see as less finished, and instead as something more raw and personal.

My sketchbook doesn't always have to mean anything to me; the only requirement is that it displays evidence of my thoughts and my presence. I have always been interested in visual journals; there is something so vulnerable about the pages people craft with no intention to display. Most scrapbook-type works are created from a pure desire just to make something, and I think that is why I love it so much. I try to bring this vulnerable element into my work, recording moments and expressing phrases that people tend to forget a week or two after they happen. The subject of this project is so personal, and I hope for it to read like a journal or diary. When it comes down to it, the concept of 'the day-to-day' makes up most of life, and I want to show people that our little moments are worth just as much as our big ones.

What I'm really trying to get at with this project is the wholeness that insignificance provides me with. When I remember my childhood homes, the first things that come to



THESIS PROPOSAL

mind are not significant, one-time events. We get so wrapped up in the 'important' memories and places, but the moments that quietly pass us by are so much more. My homes are characterised for me by moments of familiar mundanity: the creak of upstairs floorboards, the shape my windows cast onto my floor at night, and the click of a dog's nails on mottled hardwood. With this book, I aim to prove how significant our insignificance can be. My intimate diary-esque memoir will show the moments and the places that stick with us, and the mileage we all amass throughout our lives.



ABSTRACT

Garnered is an illustrated memoir consisting of ten chapters, each dedicated to a house Madd has lived in. This project was a way to explore the concept of belonging somewhere, and to understand that the places people live are more than pieces of trivia. Through a combination of collage, illustration, and prose vignettes, *Garnered* demonstrates that we are a collection of parts and places, and that we are not defined entirely by our point of origin. We are made of our homes, as they are made of us, and this will always be true.



ORAL PRESENTATION

[As delivered on April 26 for Focus Week]

Thank you all for coming to a 9:30 defence, I really appreciate that level of commitment from you all.

As Zack said, I'm Madd. I'm an illustration major, graphic design minor, and this is what I've been doing for the past year, give or take.

This project is an 84 page illustrated memoir exploring my connection to the homes I've gathered and what they've come to mean to me. It's sized at 10"x8", and consists of ten chapters, each one dedicated to a house I've lived in.

This has been my thesis idea for about four years, and I thought maybe it would change as I got older and learned more about my creative process, but my mind has apparently been made up from the moment I learned about the thesis process, even if I didn't fully know it.

Why is this project important to me and why did I choose to do it? I was born in the Netherlands, grew up in the UK, and moved to California when I was fifteen, then up to Portland when I was eighteen. I've always kind of been the foreigner at school or to friends, so gradually I began to put a lot of stake in belonging somewhere, or more specifically belonging somewhere else than everyone else around me. I started to both reject and embrace the idea of being the foreigner, and it became so interwoven in my identity that I



ORAL PRESENTATION

began to define myself through places instead of the person those places were helping me become.

I am very much a foreigner hiding in plain sight at this point; I don't have a very noticeable accent, I don't dress very obviously as someone from somewhere else, and this idea of not being recognised as other but feeling that way is very much how I came to understand all aspects of my identity, whether it was nationality or gender or artistic process. Containers for my memories became very important for developing this idea, and I understood that my houses have their own identities, that all those contribute to my own. As I grow into myself, it seems clearer and clearer that I am a sum of parts that make up a whole.

Evolution from the original proposal: My project hasn't pivoted very much from my proposal, the base idea is very much the same, but there are bits and pieces that have changed. Originally, the project had a much younger voice, including a more abstract character representative of me that would collect pieces from their environments as the book progressed. As I developed it, the voice leaned more adult, and the narrative became less about embodying who I was at the time, and more about how the person I am now reflects on those past moments and stages.

Audience: I wrote this mostly for my younger self,



ORAL PRESENTATION

because at the time I didn't see myself represented in this space when I needed it. Of course people write about immigration, and about moving, and about being from more than one place, but as a teenager dealing with a lot I wasn't motivated to read a dense essay or vague poetic exploration about the subject. I read a lot of creative writing and graphic novels, but this subject wasn't really explored in that space. So anyone experiencing something similar in that age range, that is who this book is for.

Writing the text: The project really started with free-writing, and me trying to figure out what each house meant specifically, what I associated with it, and what I took from each one.

I wrote the first draft last semester when I started ideating. This draft changed and fell into place once I started defining imagery, and the book became a push and pull between text and illustration.

Next steps: Before I send it in for printing, I will adjust value/hierarchy on the content spreads, add some colour, making sure the text sits correctly.

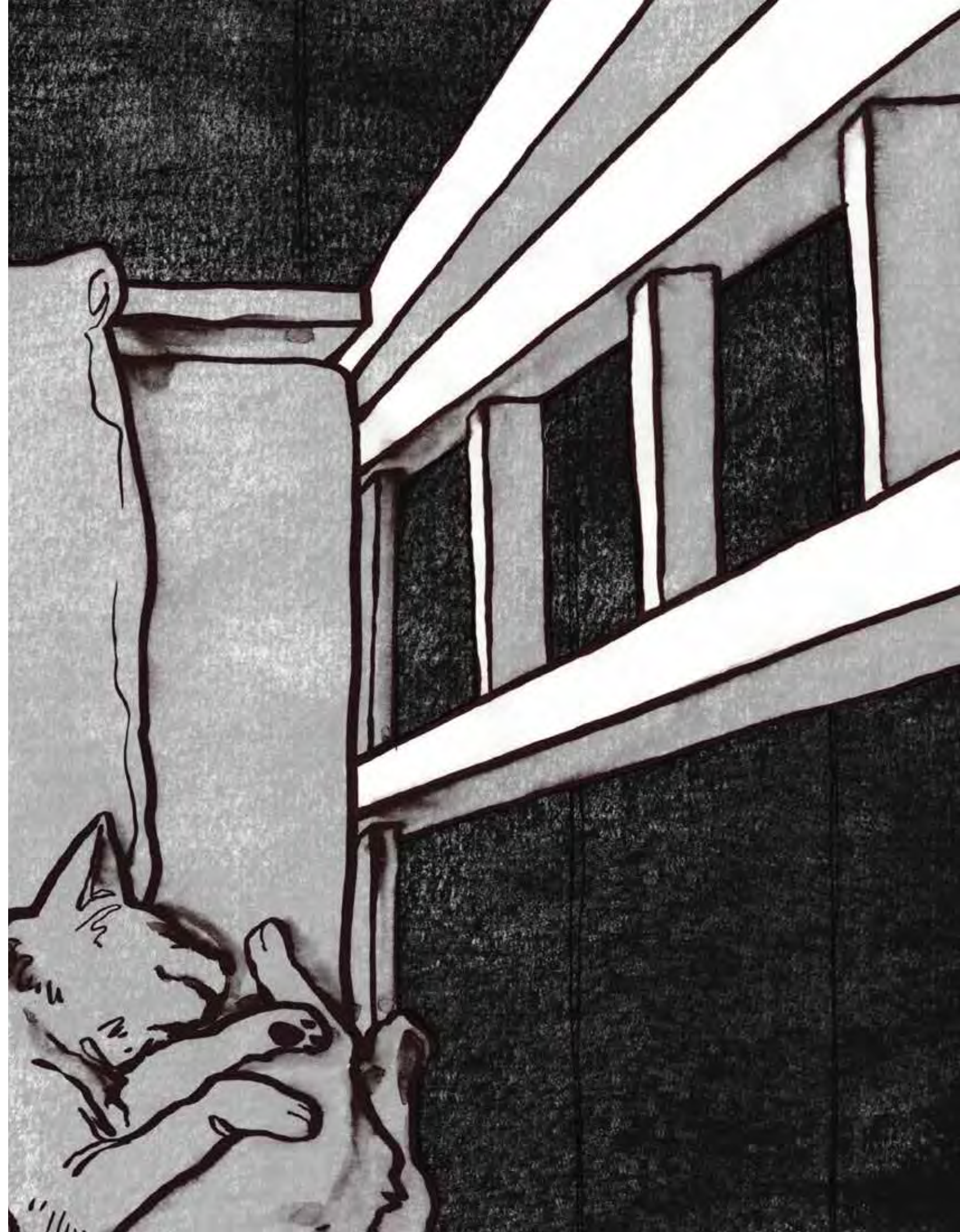
Walk audience through the book:

- Chapter titles (risks), content spreads, line and shape interaction, internal narrative (snippets from house, each a memory, then how they create one picture as an overall.



ORAL PRESENTATION

- Cover seeds the language!
 - Chapter titles breakdown on wall (type and photos and collage element).
 - Collage, photos, type, drawings, textures, lasso and misregistration.
 - Drawing the houses was first, drawing myself in specific moments and memories, and then parts of the houses.
 - Content spreads breakdown on wall (composition and creating the imagery).
 - Lines & textures (the traditional elements, and how they interact with each other, why traditional).
 - Colours/palette (narrative segue, pulling from the photos on the title pages).
 - Writing the text physically (why my handwriting, why is the hand element so important, why not the font you made, the textboxes).
 - I'm currently developing hindsight, so my thoughts may change as I reflect on the project in the next few months.
- My content was influenced by:***
The Year of Blue Water by Yanyi
Written influence; trans author writing in short prose poetry vignettes about immigration and experiences surrounding gender.



ORAL PRESENTATION

***The Bell Jar* by Sylvia Plath**

Written influence; semi-autobiographical book about Sylvia Plath's experiences with mental health in her early twenties and her time in the hospital during those years.

***The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien**

Written influence; semi-autobiographical book about O'Brien's time in Vietnam, written in short narrative vignettes that don't necessarily have a chronological order.

***Seconds* by Bryan Lee O'Malley**

Fictional graphic novel involving bold shapes and colour and full spreads, plus a lot of architectural drawing.

***Belonging* by Nora Krug**

Illustrated memoir about Krug's relationship with her nationality, and how she reconciles where she is from with the culture of that place, and how it relates to her life now.

Rob Davis

British graphic novelist with surreal fiction and plotlines, ink and texture heavy, very formative for me growing up.

Art Spiegelman

Polish-American cartoonist who popularised the illustrated memoir; *Maus* was one of the first books to be a graphic memoir, and remains one of the most popular; came out in 1980 and is still first and only graphic novel to have won a Pulitzer prize.



ORAL PRESENTATION

Why these people in particular? Why does my work live next to them?

Printing the booklets for defence:

Six copies (proofs of concept), talk about challenges, book arts room and letterpress and learning to bind books.

Do I like it as a digital pdf? Is this a proof of concept and where do I segue from there? What would you change about the printed copy?

Outsourcing:

Professional hardcover copies, then sell them with free sticker sheet/bookmark included, keep this run as a limited edition.

Pitching:

Pitch the idea as a proof to some independent publishers. I'm leaning more toward European publishers; I might be biased but I think a more line-heavy approach, like 70's-80's comic work, is where I like to consume work and where I like to live, so it makes sense that I want to work with that space.

Function in contemporary culture and european comic specifics. How does it relate to a contemporary audience?

Does it live as a comic or as a visual memoir? It echoes comic work but isn't quite there. I think it sits more as an art



ORAL PRESENTATION

book, or a sequential portfolio; like a demonstration of the things I like and want to do.

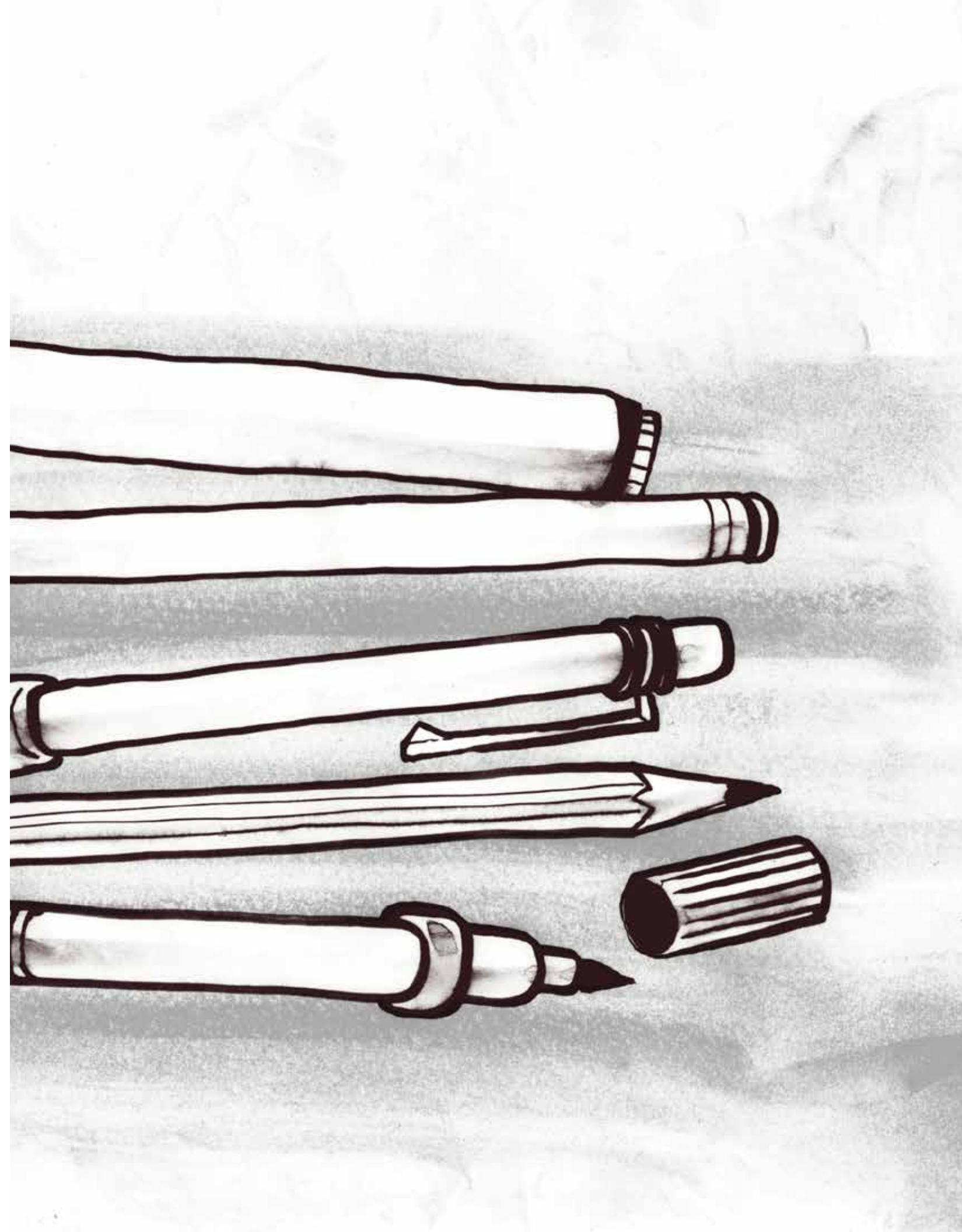
How does the project fit historically in the framework of illustration and design?

There aren't a lot of illustrated memoirs; I did a separate project about contemporary memoirs and where the written and graphic ones intersect.

Influences like *Maus* by Art Spiegelman of course, *Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi, and *Fun Home* and *Are You My Mother?* by Alison Bechdel are the most prominent ones, but off the top of my head there aren't a lot of others in the public eye. I think this is a semi-untapped market, and a subject that is worth exploring through both imagery and text, instead of just one or the other.

Where does this fit in my overall portfolio? How does it serve my career goals?

I'd like to go into publication or book making, so sending out these mockups to publishers seems like a good step for moving in that direction. My intention is to do that, to print further more professional copies of the book, or maybe to extend it into a longer story, and really do the emotions I have about the subject justice. I know there are also a couple book arts fellowships, some grants, and residencies or studios focused on this subject area that I might look into as



ORAL PRESENTATION

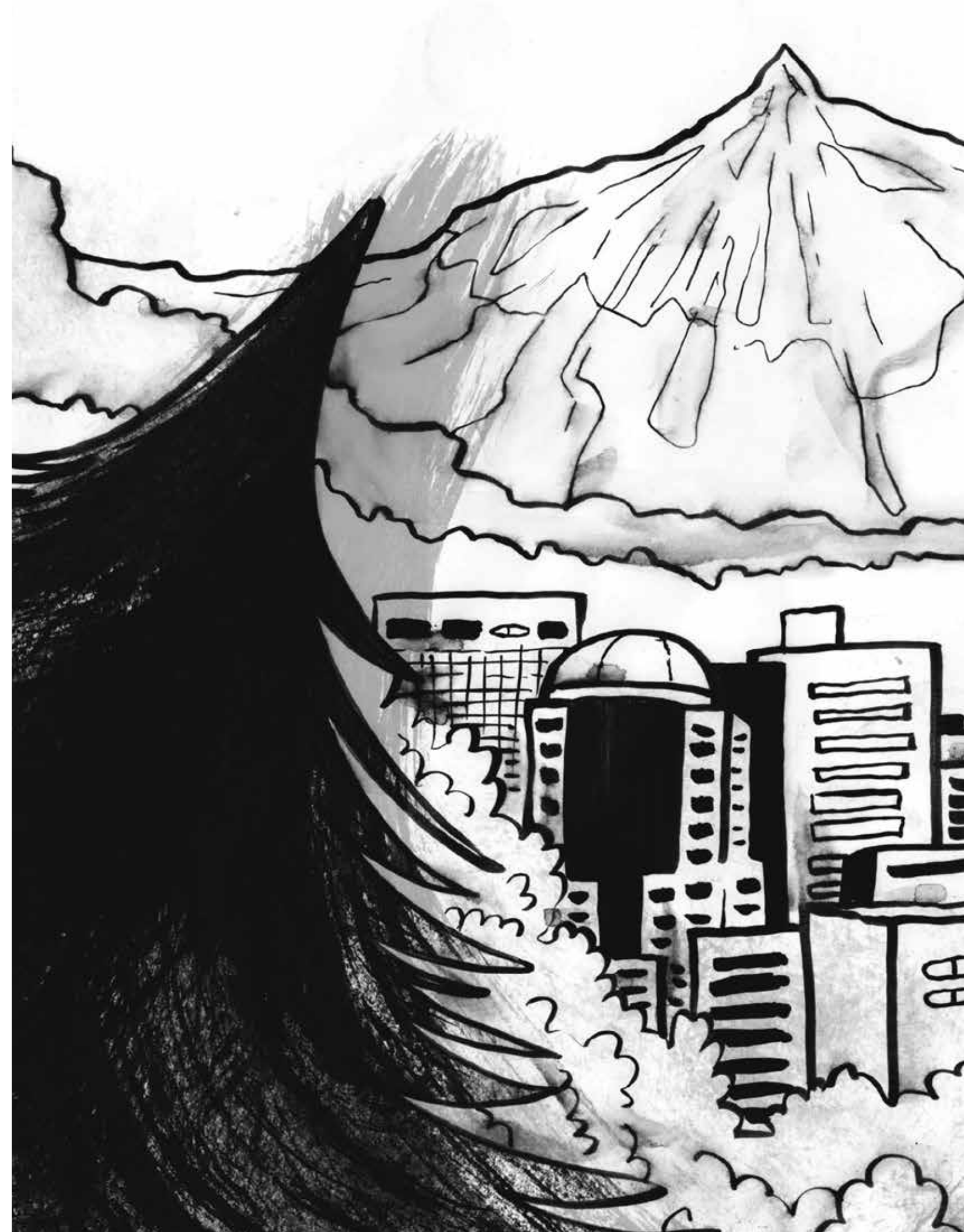
well.

Summary:

So this illustrated memoir about my collected houses and their contribution to my identity is the hardest I've ever worked on anything. I'm really proud of where it ended up, it was an incredibly cathartic process, and definitely one of discovery.

Thank you very much for coming and listening to me talk about this project for a while, it means a lot to me that you came (again at 9:30 in the morning).

I'm now going to open up the floor to questions from the panellists.



CREATIVE BRIEF

1 ■ PROJECT VISION

Garnered serves as a chronological narrative of my growing up, both written and visual, through the lens of houses I've lived in. The book has ten chapters, each devoted to a house and a few prominent memories, as well as a conclusion conveying a more abstract description of how it feels to be from a lot of places. This book will speak to the home we slowly build within ourselves, cherry-picked parts from those we grow up in.

2 ■ AUDIENCE

This book is aimed at a general mass market, but I'd like for it to speak specifically to those who have made significant moves in their lives, or those who have collected a lot of their own houses. I know if I had read something like this right when I moved continents, it would have felt reassuring in some way, or like proof I could get through it. If I read something like this closer to the age I am now, it would have a different impact, but an impact nonetheless. My hope is to show those who are homesick that it does not remain that way forever.

3 ■ METHODS & MATERIALS

Garnered is an 84 page illustrated memoir about the ten houses I've lived in. It has ten chapters, each dedicated to a single house, and has an emphasis on prose poetry. All the linework, collage, type, and texture was created traditionally and then scanned in; colours and final arrangements were done digitally with a combination of Procreate, Photoshop, and Indesign. The final copies for thesis were printed as proof-of-concept booklets with a staple binding and a fore-edge trim on the guillotine. During the summer, I will outsource printing, and sell a limited run of 75 hardcover copies at 10" x 8".

4 ■ COMPARATIVE MEDIA

Similar work to *Garnered* sits within the graphic novel and illustrated memoir world. Most notably, this work lives alongside *Maus* by Art Spiegelman, *Are You My Mother?* by Alison Bechdel, *Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi, *Belonging* by Nora Krug, and *The Motherless Oven* by Rob Davis.

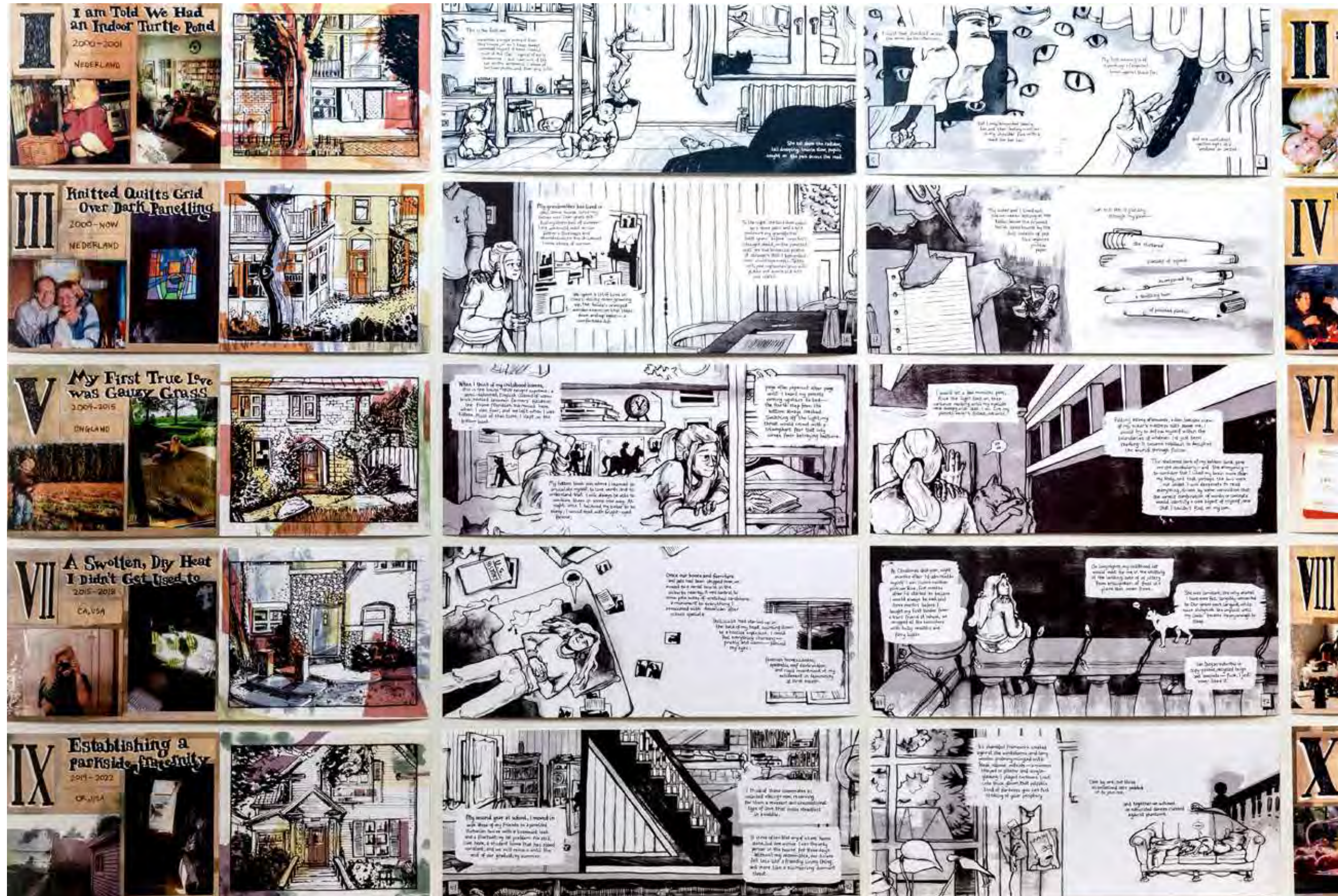
5 ■ MARKETPLACE APPLICATION

This book will live for now as a proof, and in the future as a limited run of 75 copies that I will list on my shop, and sell directly to consumers. I'd like for this book to be evidence of my ability to complete a large project, to handle many moving parts and types of media. If there ends up being demand for more copies, I will print more, but I see this memoir as more of a significant addition to my portfolio instead of something I want to get published on a larger scale. This being said, I'd like to soft pitch the idea to some independent publishers, and ideally it would sit on the same shelves as the influences listed above.

THESIS DOCUMENTATION



THESIS DOCUMENTATION



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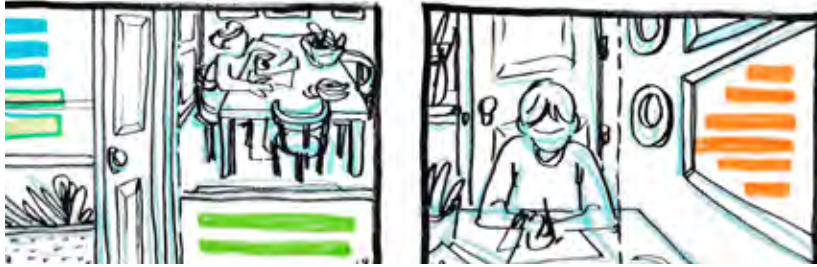
THESIS DOCUMENTATION



THESIS JOURNAL

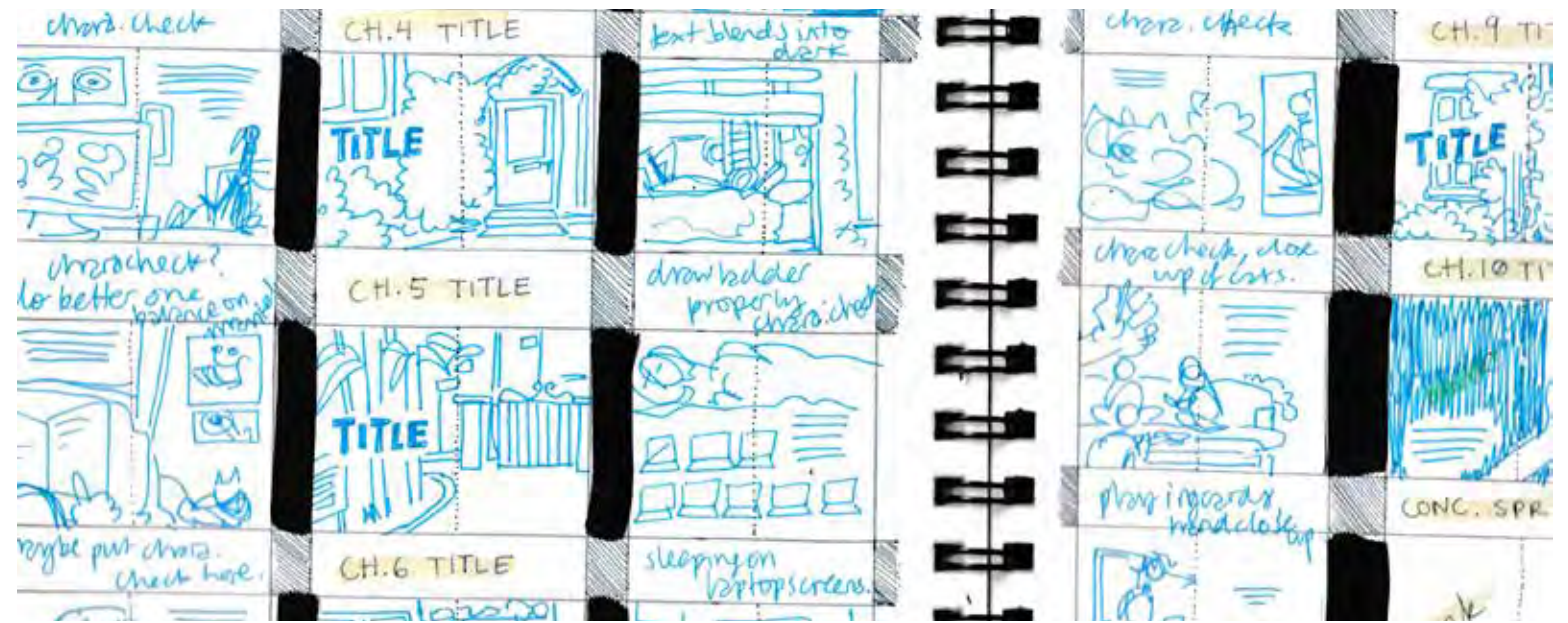
over the course of countless dinners. On the left, the cupboards brimmed with crafts, we would spend hours sitting at the table under the photos, unconsciously retaining the dull squeak of felt tips against printer paper.

• 3 SPREADS; TITLE PAGE + CONTENT



conservatory, leaving the area for a coffee table sat golden and worn on top of a white marble mantel. We sat on the coffee table, the dog dubbed American television for hours. Nickelodeon way to subtitled late-night sitcoms and South Park string to each pixel.

• 3 SPREADS; TITLE PAGE + CONTENT



POTENTIAL MEMORIES:

- my little pony in the attic.
- formal breakfasts.
- the swing!
- the piano.
- dubbed tv & cartoons.



drinking on the low coffee table. the mirror in the hallway. sanne & saar, the chocolate labs. magnum's & mickey mouse ice cream. reading at night way too late.

- opa's wardrobe.
- the landing towels.
- the small christmas tree.
- the coat closet.

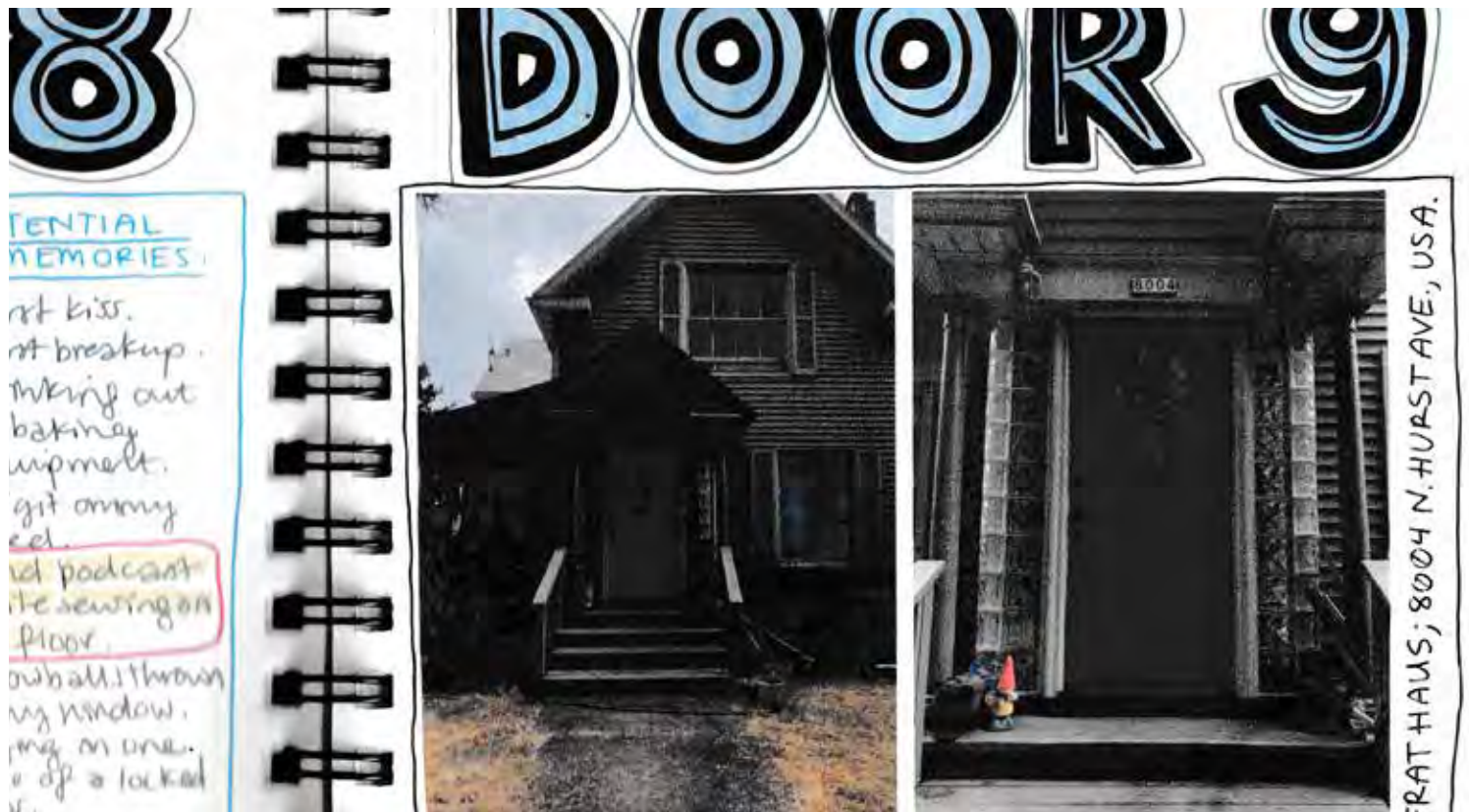
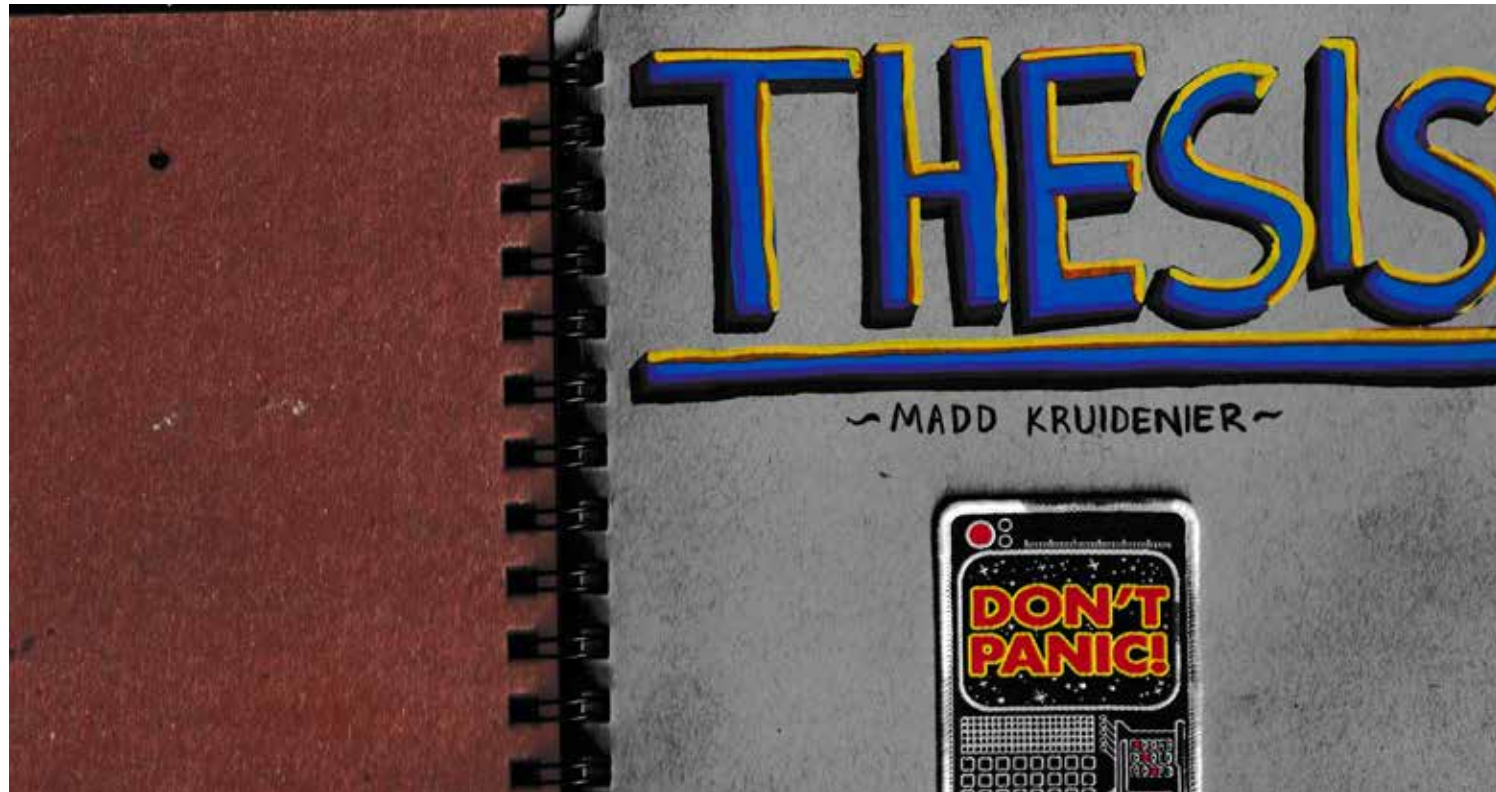
DRAFTING TEXT

THE ORANGE HOUSE: the carpeted step clanged against the front door. The mirror falling from the top of the wall.

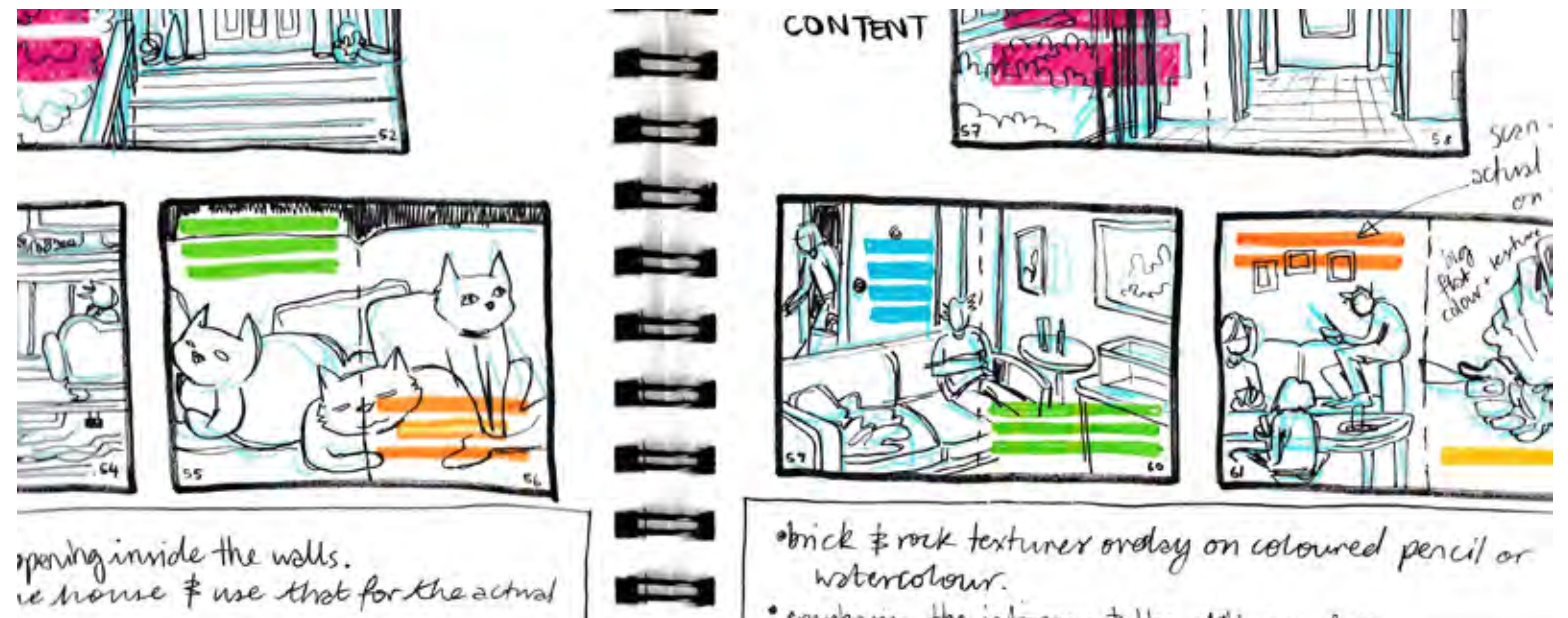
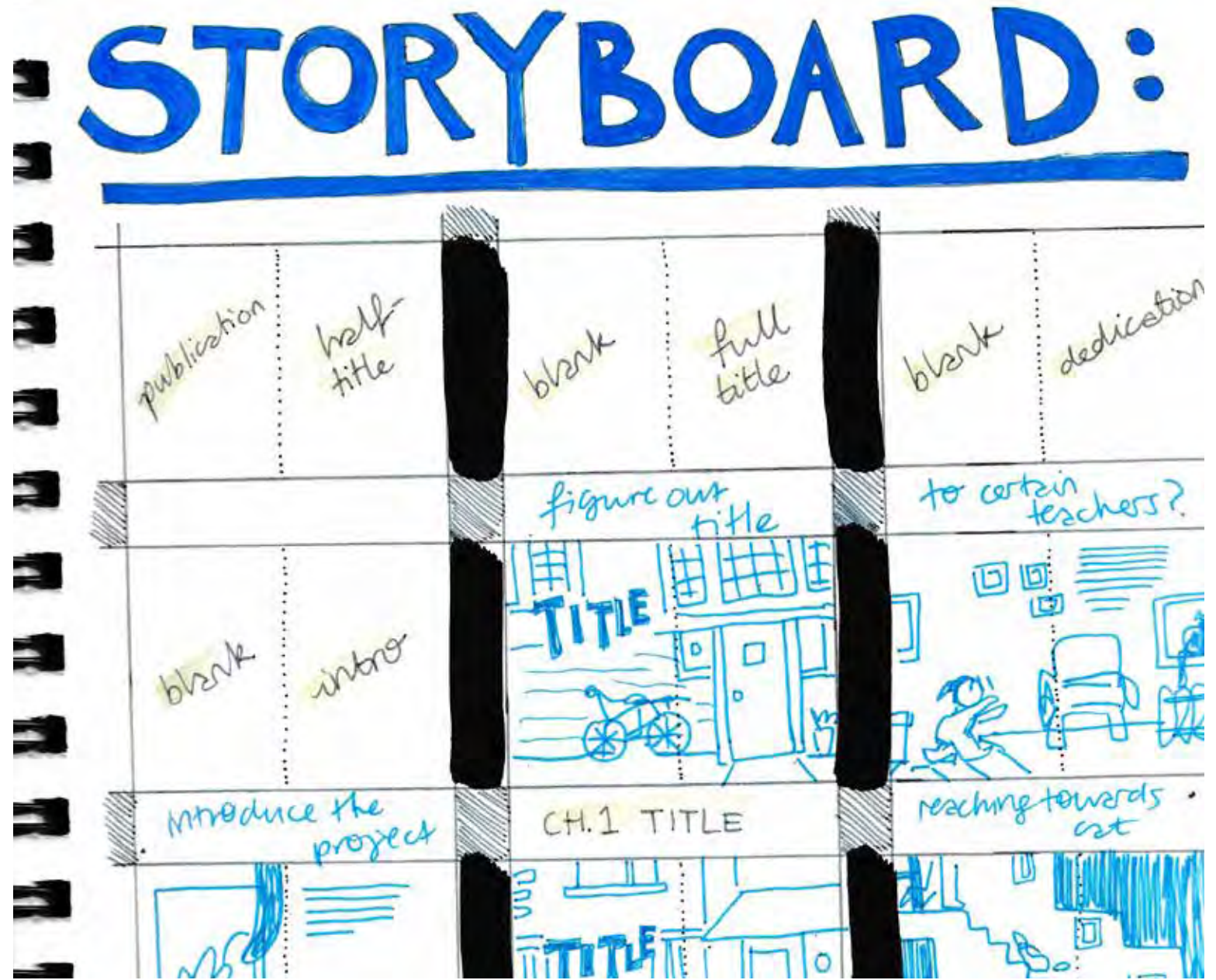
THE WORLD: involves a step down for a three foot metal photo of an outside houses made room was full of plastic table under the photos,

AFTER THE OTHER: round, and a large squat and the TV sat on the

THESIS JOURNAL



SP22 / Madd Kruidenier / Garnered / Illustration



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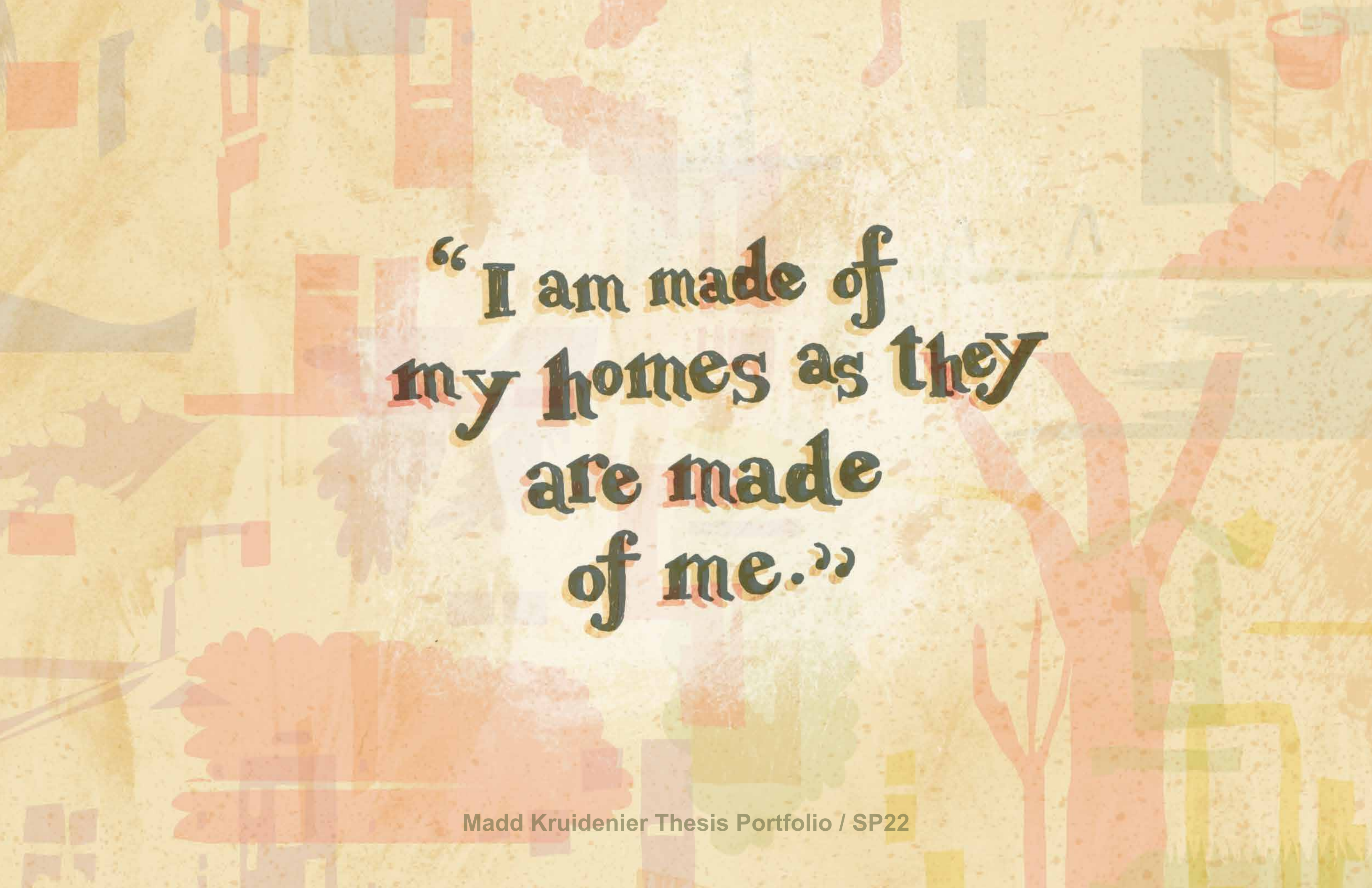
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**“I am made of
my homes as they
are made
of me.”**