

Daisy Macari

What I see when I pee



This project encourages and indulges the feeling of Pareidolia; the psychological phenomenon when the mind creates meaning, or patterns, where none actually exist.

Pareidolia is responsible for that shadowy face that haunted you every night you couldn't sleep. It is the reason you just had to show all your friends the potato that resembled your grandad, and it is why you kept that adorable pebble and named him Edward.

Our innate desire to personify reveals how our minds are hard-wired to empathise and understand others through their facial expressions. Using a setting of a bathroom, a space that you are often alone, I hope to create the playful feeling of discovery that Pareidolia achieves. And I challenge you;

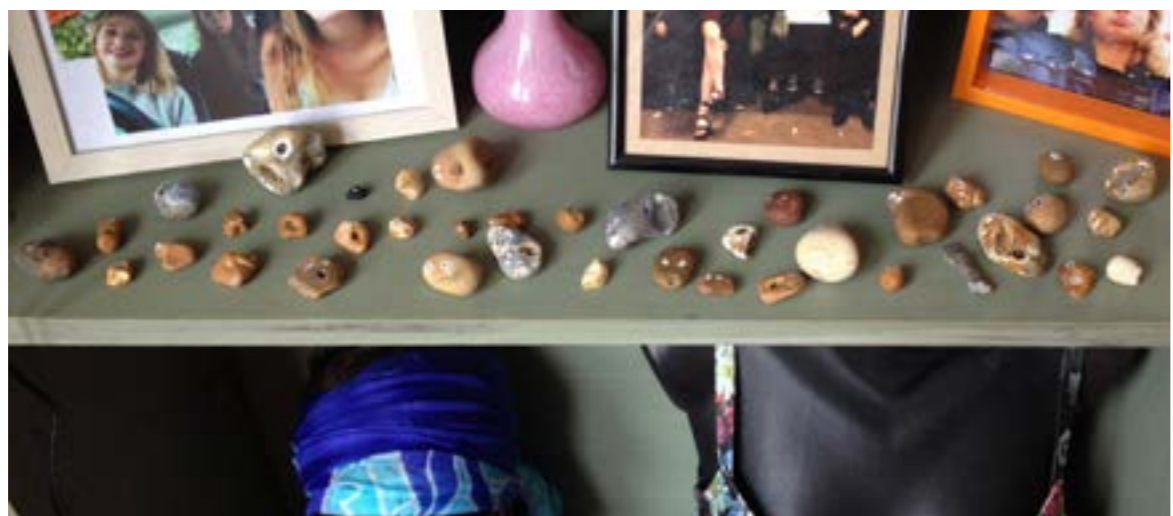
what do you see when you pee?

Where it began:

A few friends and I spent an hour or so finding and collecting stones at the beach. Each stone was chosen because of its 'perfect mouth' and was swiftly accessorised with two cartoonish Tipp-Ex eyes. Each face held a different character and every new expression made us laugh.

Our delighted amusement made me question this act;

what creates this urge to give objects human attributes?

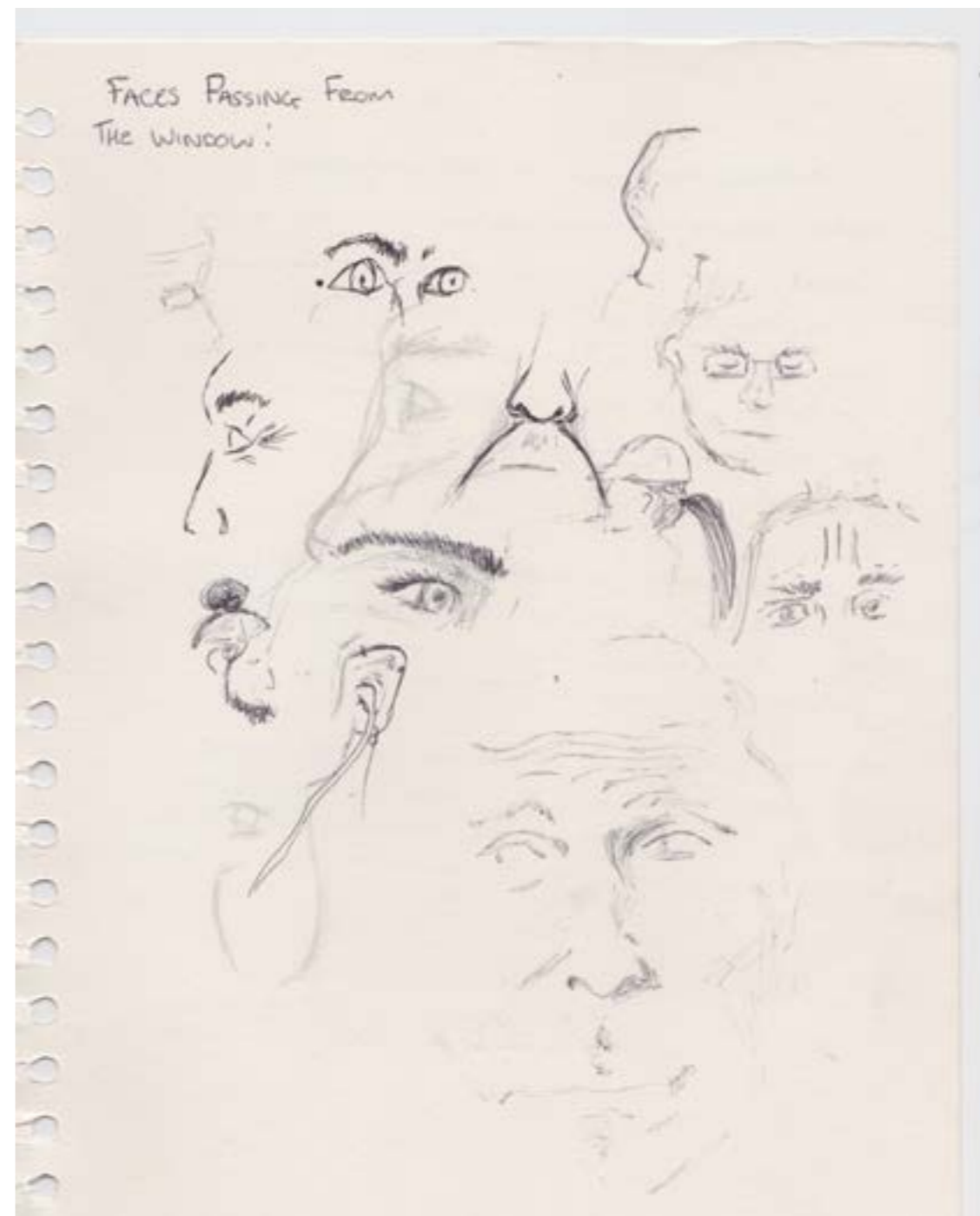
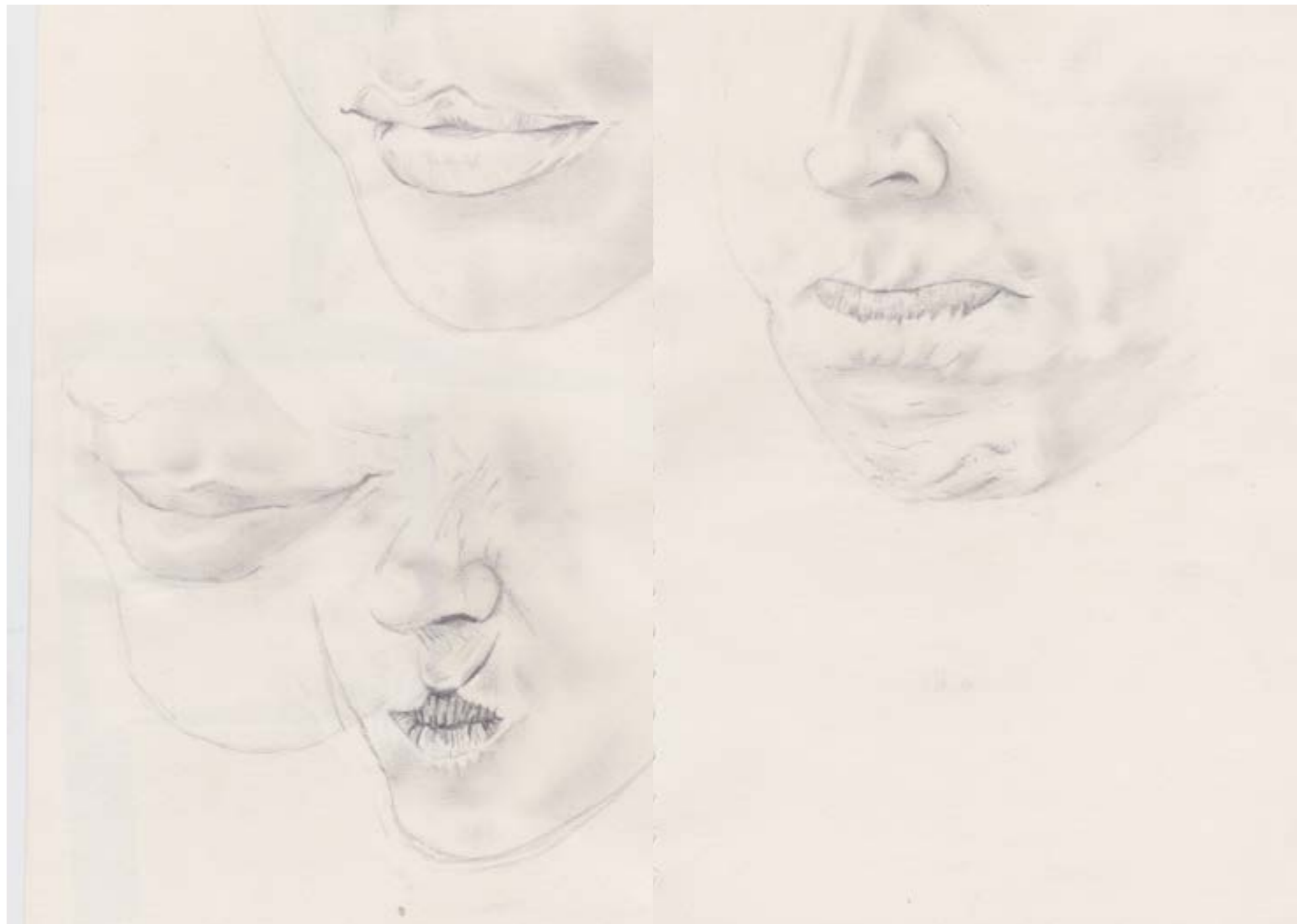


Pareidolia:

A human condition where the mind perceives a familiar pattern or creates meaning where none actually exists. Most common is the face on the moon.

Pareidolia takes its effect on just about everyone, and often on the most mundane of objects.

This innate desire to personify reveals how our minds are hard-wired to empathise and understand others through their facial expressions. Through this act of personification we also gain a sense of amusement and humour.



First drawing challenge and expression drawings:

I challenged myself to draw as much of a stranger as I could before they walked past me on a busy street (as shown on the left). This showed what features were most important to me in those few seconds. Eyes or a face wrinkle/expression seemed to be a common feature. This reiterated the importance of human attributes that I was questioning, as I kept drawing bits of the face that were communicating a mood or characteristic. The sketches show what information my mind uses in order to empathise and identify these strangers.



Anthropomorphism:

The treating or showing of animals, objects and god as if they are human in behaviour, character or appearance.

Anthropomorphism is commonly associated with the way we try to identify with animals. Similarly to Pareidolia there are endless examples of how we as humans naturally anthropomorphise. By projecting our own emotions onto animals and objects alike, we show how our human subjectivity helps to empathise and categorise the things we interact with daily.

Propositions:

For Propositions I decided to manipulate some everyday objects into faces, and by extent characters. Using objects like tea bags and chewing gum, I made them hard to notice at a first glance. These Proposition pieces were very successful, it gave me a chance to define the project and gain feedback.

Through this research I found that people really engaged with this idea of discovery. The pile of mundane objects confused the audience as they tried to find it's meaning, once they found the fist face however their reactions were amused and excited. This drew them in and they would search to find more, creating an almost childlike feeling of play. I realised it was this playfulness that I want my work to evoke.



Chewing gum faces- Proposition models



Cashew nut faces- Proposition models



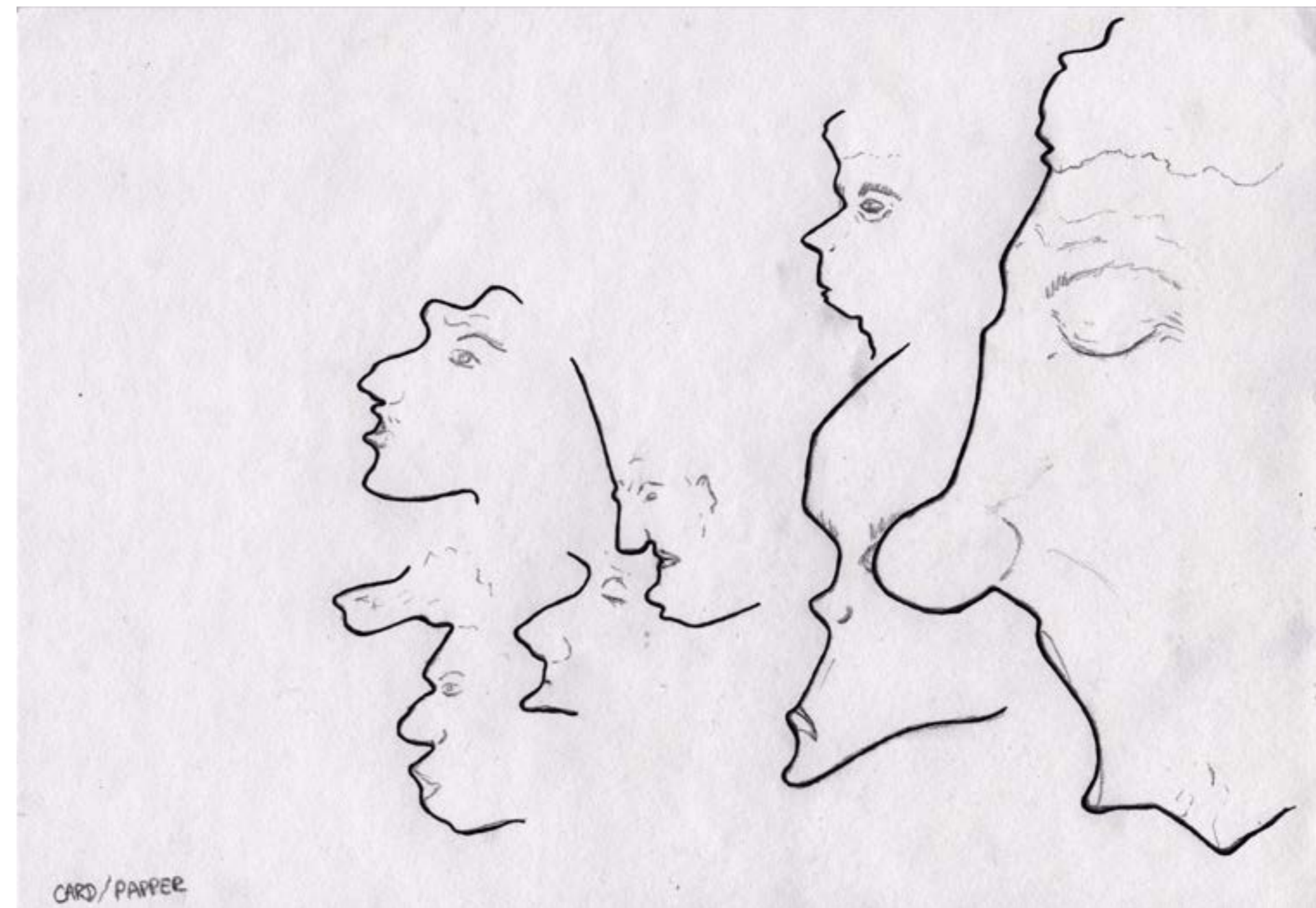
Tea bag faces- Proposition models

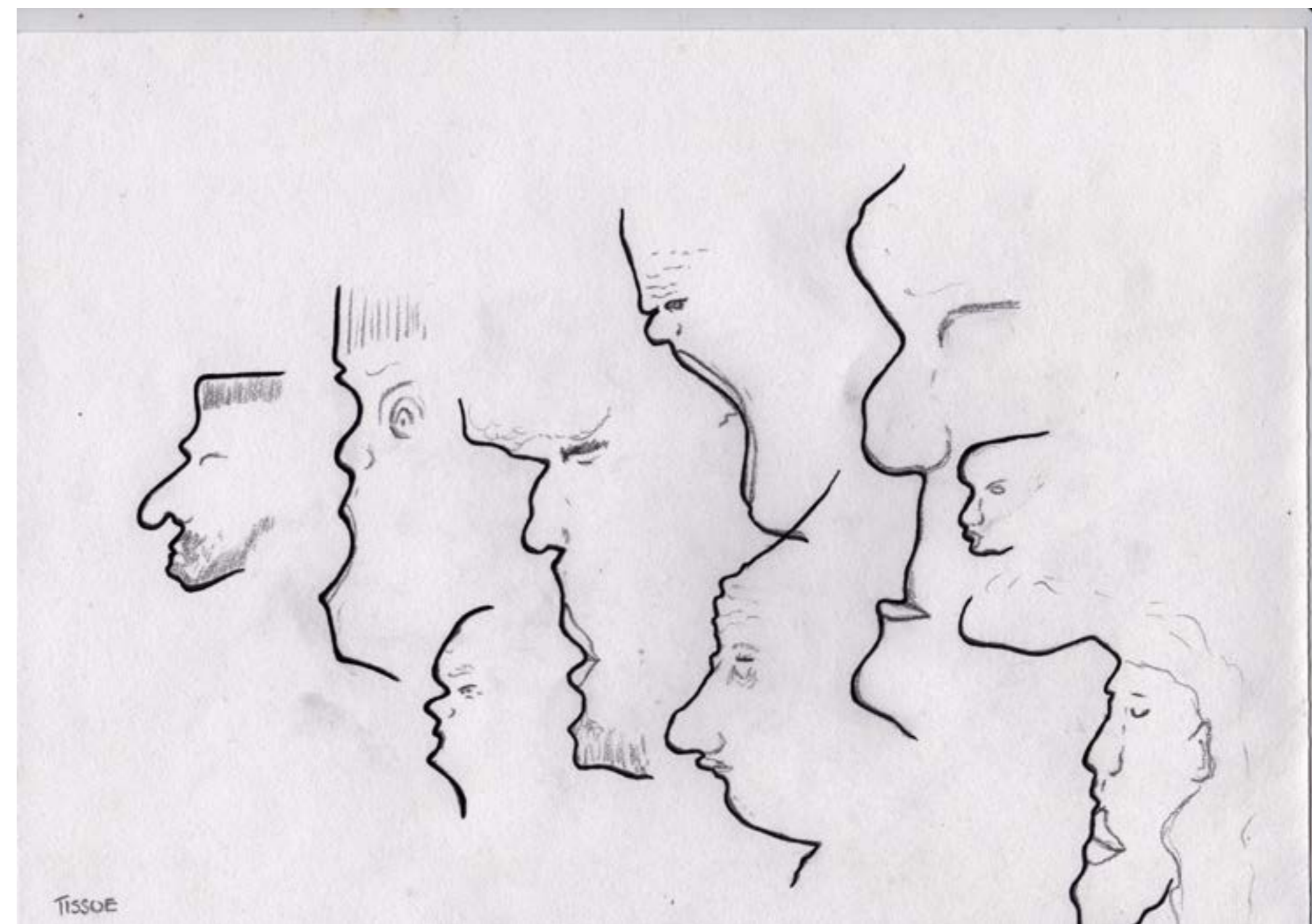
Second drawing challenge:

Casting a shadow from some crumpled card, tissue and fabric. I dropped each on the page and quickly had to find a line that resembled a face, marking it with a pen before moving its position.

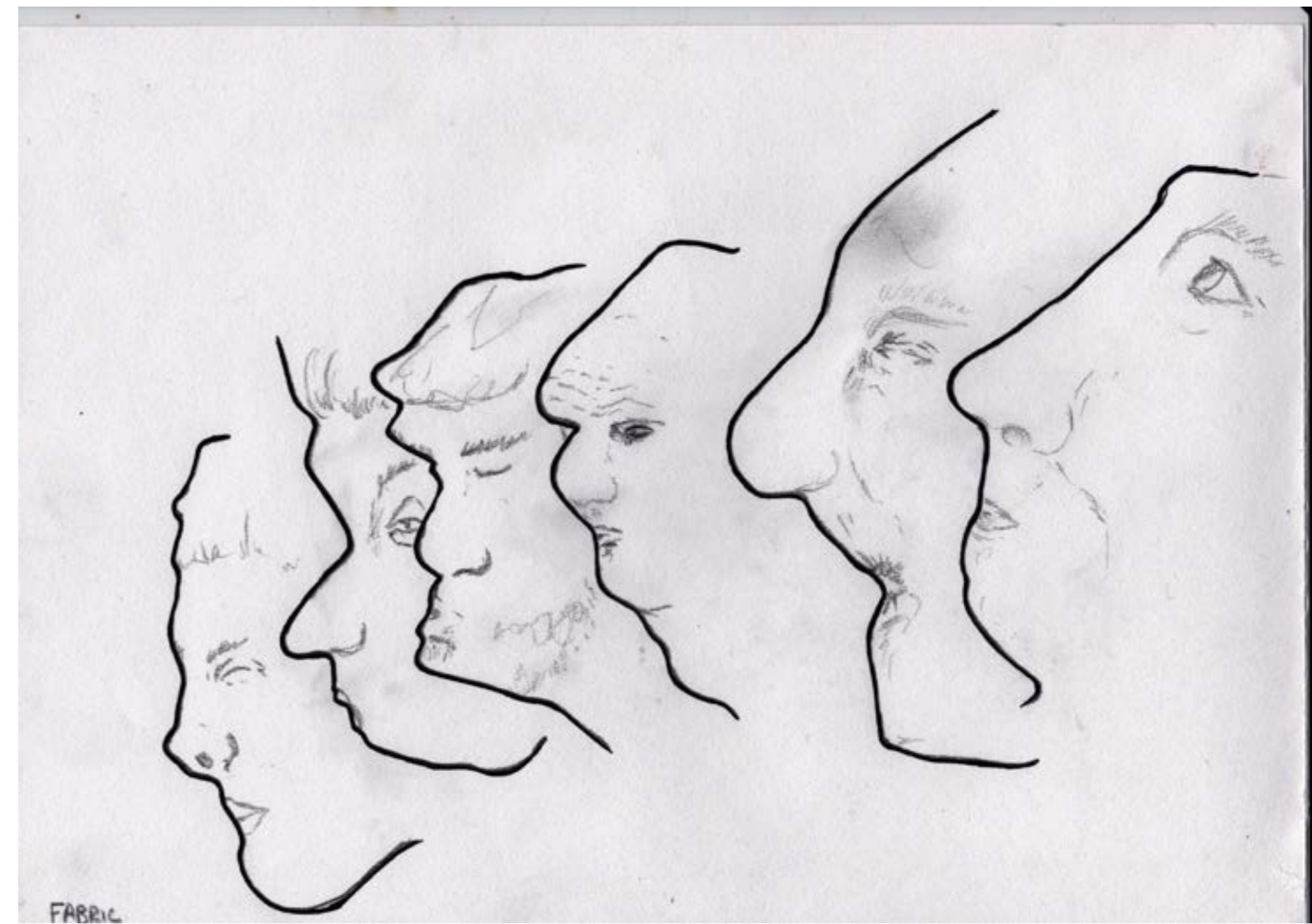
I then went back over the lines with a pencil and filled in the character I saw. This challenge allowed me to examine the way my brain processes and identifies faces, investigating expressions and character implications from linear silhouettes, similar to the last challenge it forced me to do so in a small space of time, resulting in very immediate drawings helping to understand my mind's natural links and patterns.







TISSE





Queen Marry II



Portrait Gallery Third Drawing Challenge:

I decided to visit the National Portrait Gallery with the task of finding unintentional faces within the portraits. This offered some humour in my research, and proved to be harder than expected. The majority of the faces I found were within clothing wrinkles, on this trip I was often drawn to the eyes of the character I saw. I got a friend to join me for this challenge so we could compare drawings and experiences. She found that her drawings were often focused mainly on the nose. This trip gave me the opportunity to investigate what communicates and is considered a face.



Prince Phillip



John Desmond Bernal

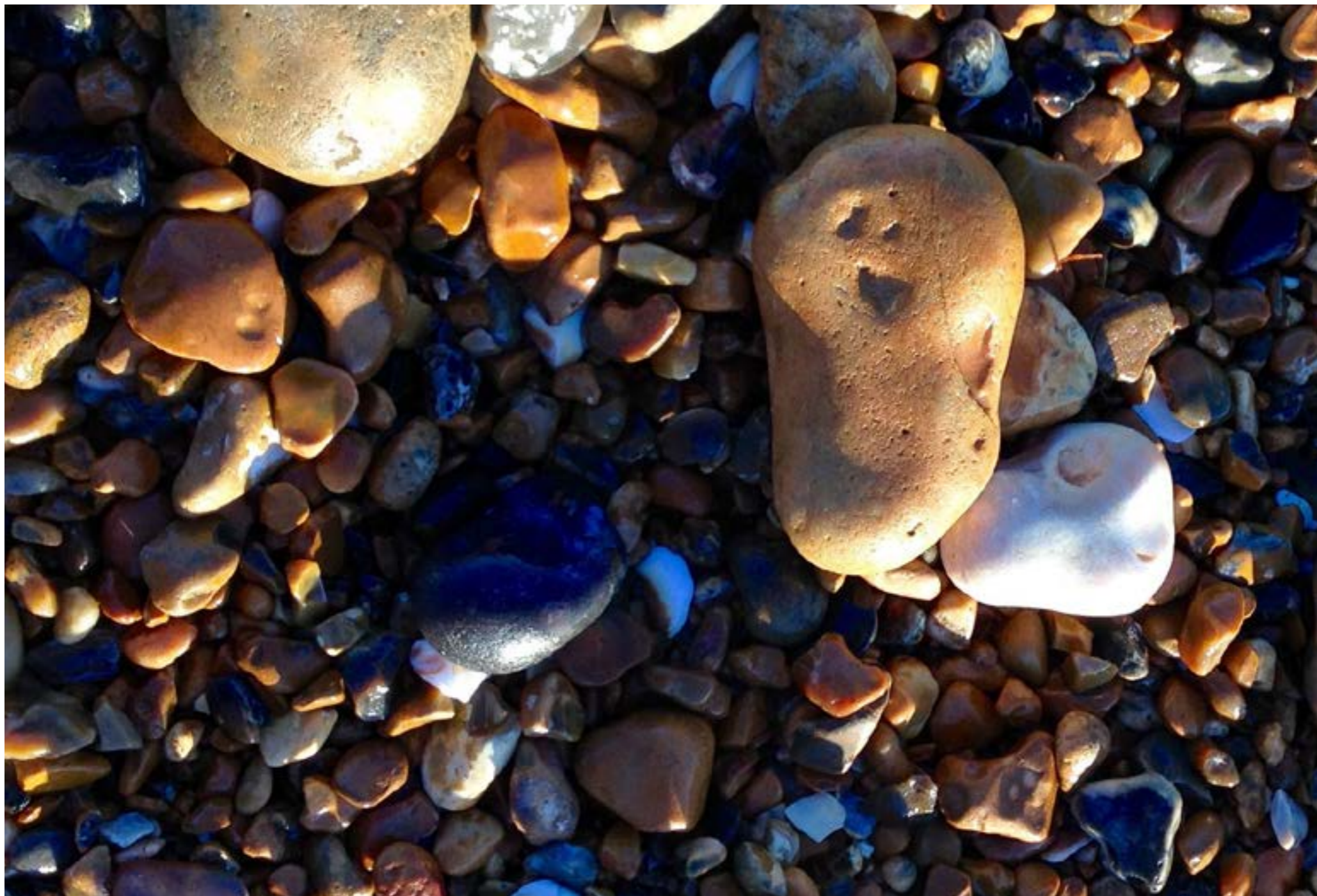


Photography Research

Along side my work and research I have been documenting my own experiences of Pareidolia, photographing all of the faces I have seen over the past year. Discussing this project with people I have found many coming back to me saying they cant stop finding faces, this research was a way of recording this experience in my daily life. I found that the images got more obscure as the year went on. These Photographs show the faces in their original context. Often found when I was walking or in places I was very familiar with. This gives an indication to what mind-set I was in. For example, the familiar places like my bedroom shows quite a relaxed and potentially tired mind.

Once these photographs started to accumulate I decided that they should be presented in a book format as a separate piece. To do this I went through my collection and chose a range that showed the diversity of faces and places, and a mixture of simplistic to obscure.

Having this book in my degree show will reinforce how common Pareidolia is. By offering the audience more examples of objects (outside of my created faces) it gives some overall context that could help them relate to and picture in their own lives.



Pareidolia Poem:

I created a small poem as an opener for my photography book. Each section is based around one of the faces in the book and organised it as if they were separate sections of a day. The Adjectival proses of creating a poem meant I could personify the characteristics of these faces.

Wrinkled t-shirts, thrown over a chair, watch me as I frantically search for my phone. Her nose high with an exaggerated arch and her eyes drooped, making it hard to feel the normal warm comfort of my own bedroom.

The toast pops, but the butter is hard. Each drag of the knife turns the crust into a sad, empty frame. The toaster watches my frustrated failure with an amused grin, lightly mocking my daily struggles.

Each step replays a friendly autumn crunch and gangs of fresh-faced, open-mouthed leaves excitably giggle at me crossing the road.

To-do lists fill my head as I sit down to pee. Mid-thought a small but defined profile pauses my worries. His whimsical Punch and Judy chin stands out prominently on the back of the cubicle door. His slightly jagged profile suspended for a mindless moment.

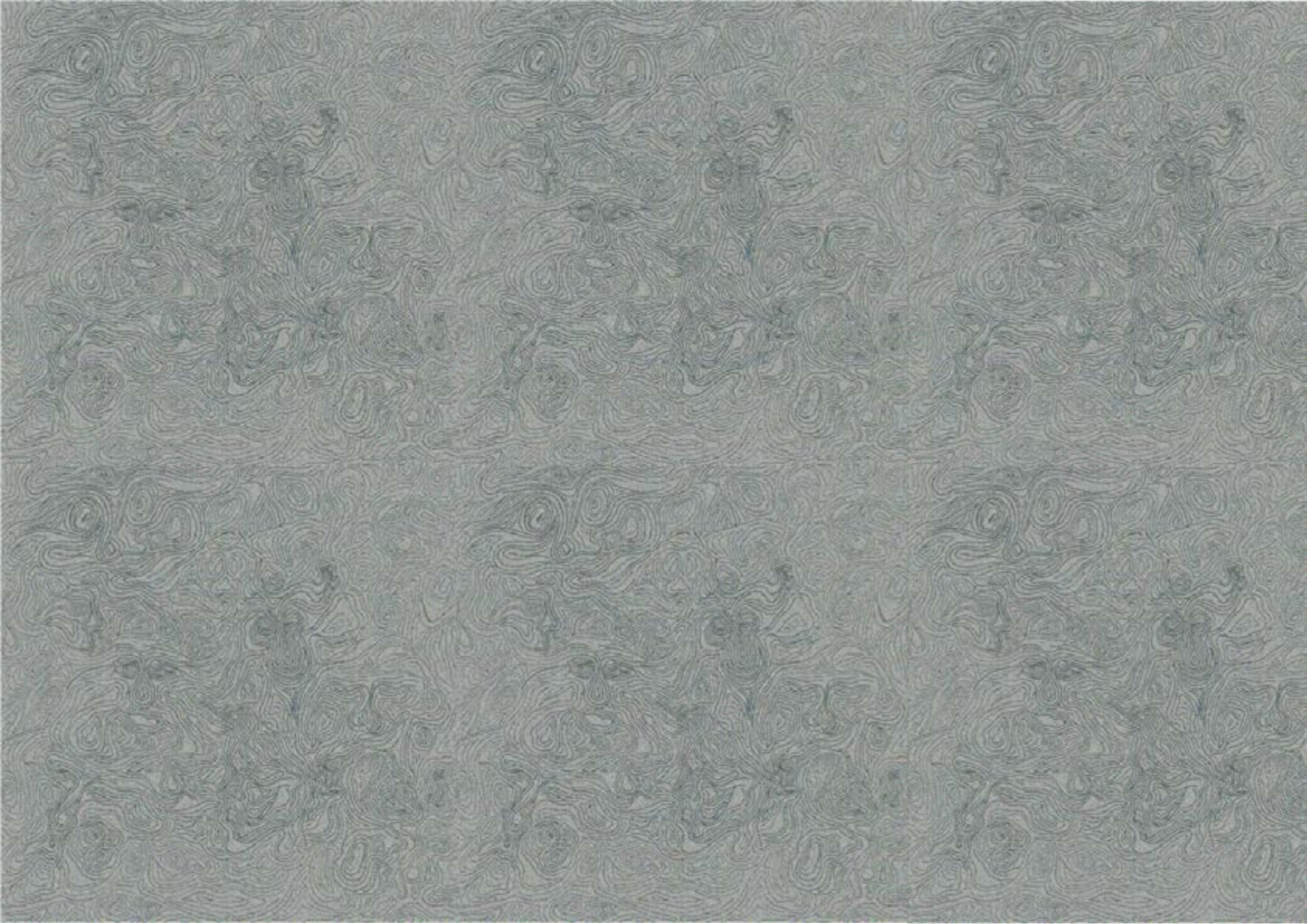
With a drowsy head, my easily influenced, empathetic body copies the extended yawn that the moon wears. Every evening she offers this same laughably appropriate, and tired expression. A Pareidolia cliché that is comforting non-the-less.



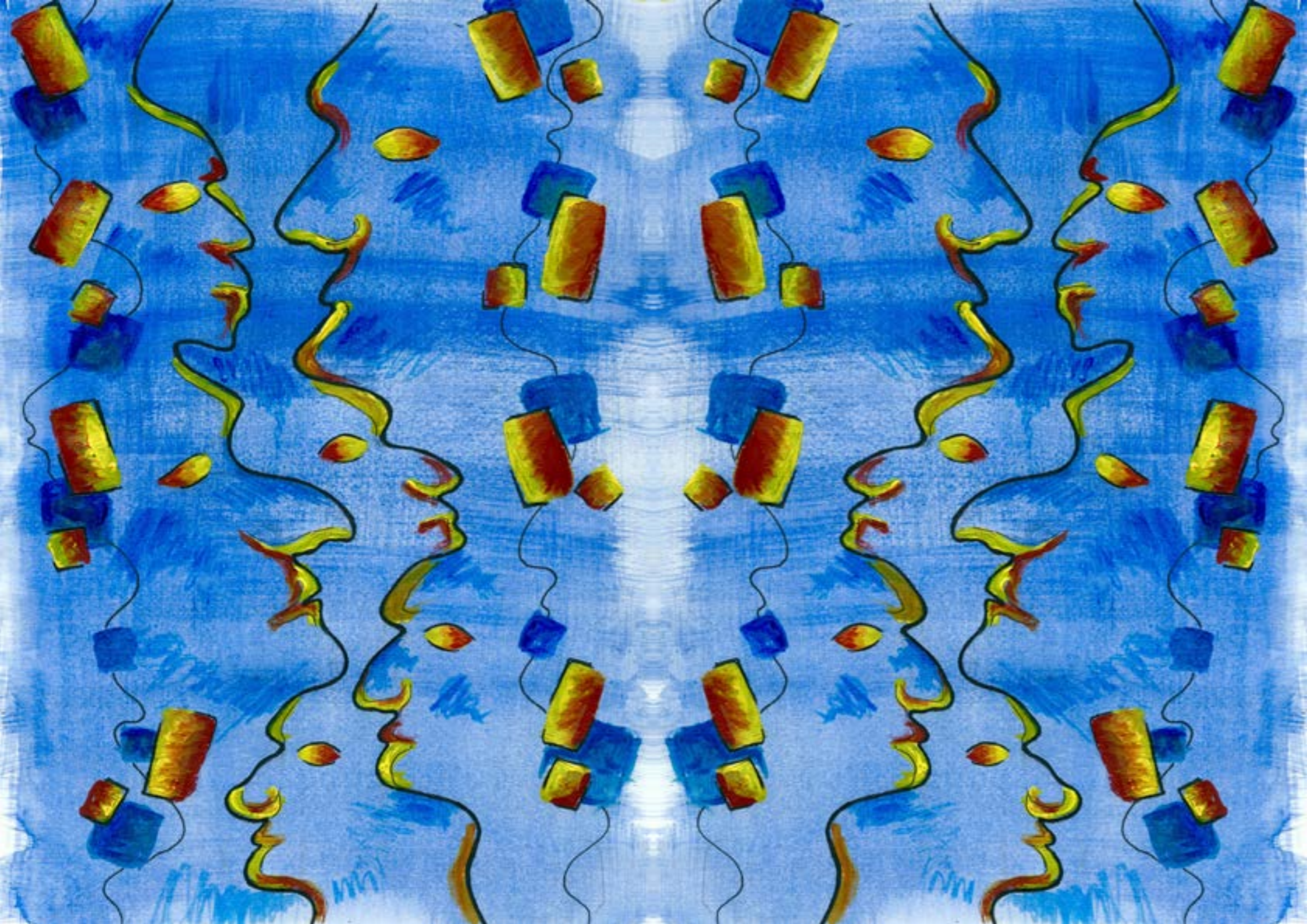
Spaces:

At this stage I felt the project was too broad. I was struggling to see where I could take it and how to further my ideas in 3D. To solve this problem, I started to look back at my key points of intrigue, notably, the uses of humour within Pareidolia and the playful nature of these moments of discovery. In order to focus myself more I decided to look into where these faces are found. To do this I took note of where I was when I saw the next few faces. They were discovered in a train station, on the back of a bus seat and in the bathroom.

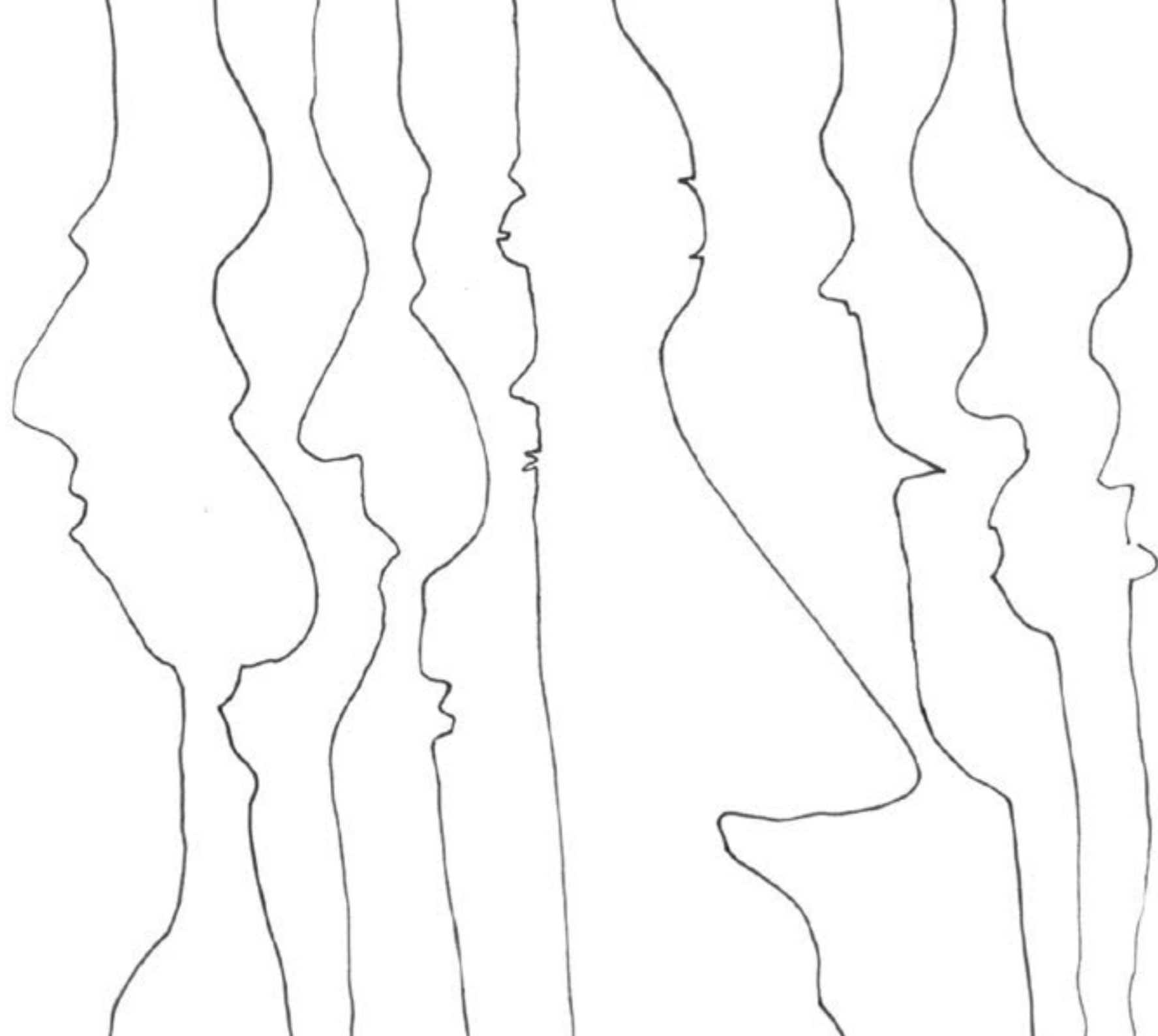
Using these spaces as themes I explored ideas through decoration design, matching drawings with Photoshop and playing with linear patterns and face shapes. I tried to find a link between the spaces; the train station and bus stop are very similar. However they all give us room to drift into mindless imagination. By this I mean they are all spaces that are either very similar or familiar, we are often doing mundane tasks or simply waiting in them, giving our mind time to wonder. This is a vital point in the development of the project. The investigations into these spaces lead me to the realisation, if I were to try and recreate these moments of discovery, the setting is hugely important. These spaces embody our everyday lives and encapsulate the mind-set in which Pareidolia takes place.



On the left page modified drawing, example of potential train station flooring.
Above on the left photo from National Rail. Above on the right found face at train



On the left page bus pattern drawing. Above on the left photo shopped bus seat image.
Above on the right found face on the back of a bus seat.



On the left page line pattern drawing. Above on the left photo shopped soap dish image.
Above on the right found face in the bathroom.



The Bathroom:

I considered creating something in a public space, like a bus stop, using inspiration from graffiti and perhaps vandalism (like burn holes found in the acrylic timetables). However I came to the conclusion that these public spaces do not fully translate the feeling of Pareidolia. The bathroom increasingly seemed like the correct setting to base my work around, as the ultimate human reflection room. Not only do we perform mindless day-to-day tasks there, but we are often in a tired and unfocused head space whilst performing them. The bathroom is also a private and personal room where thoughts aren't often imposed upon. Mindless imagination is easily achieved when you're brushing your teeth, having a bath or sitting on the loo. A bathroom is a familiar space that can be recreated without necessarily having cogitations of ownership, compared to a bedroom for example; bathrooms have a fairly universal and simplistic setup to them. It is this that makes the bathroom a perfect unexpected setting to focus and indulge my created Pareidolia.

On the page opposite is a basic set up of the bathroom space I would like to create, this allowed me to note what parts of the bathroom I would focus on making and manipulating:

- ① Tiles
- ② ToothBrush
- ③ Toilet seat
- ④ Mirror frame
- ⑤ Bathroom Accessories

Tiles





I started with tiles; flat surface patterns or risen 3D tiles are equally achievable and offered many opportunities to develop faces within. I decided that an exaggerated risen tile surface would work well as a three-dimensional face would evoke more of a reaction than something flat.

I began by roughly pushing plasticine over the tile shaped base and caving into plasticine. I really enjoy this way of working as it so immediate, I was able to use some of the shapes already formed in the plasticine to direct into face shapes making very organic looking patterns. I created a set of four of these tiles.

Because of undercuts in the form I decided it would be best to create a mould out of silicone and experiment with different effects in Jesmonite. Casting in plaster and creating the form in ceramics would not of been possible from the shapes I had made, however Jesmonite offers a wide range finishing and stains that I was keen to explore.



What You See When You Pee
How many faces do you see?

14	11	
15	12	
16	13	
14	11	
9		
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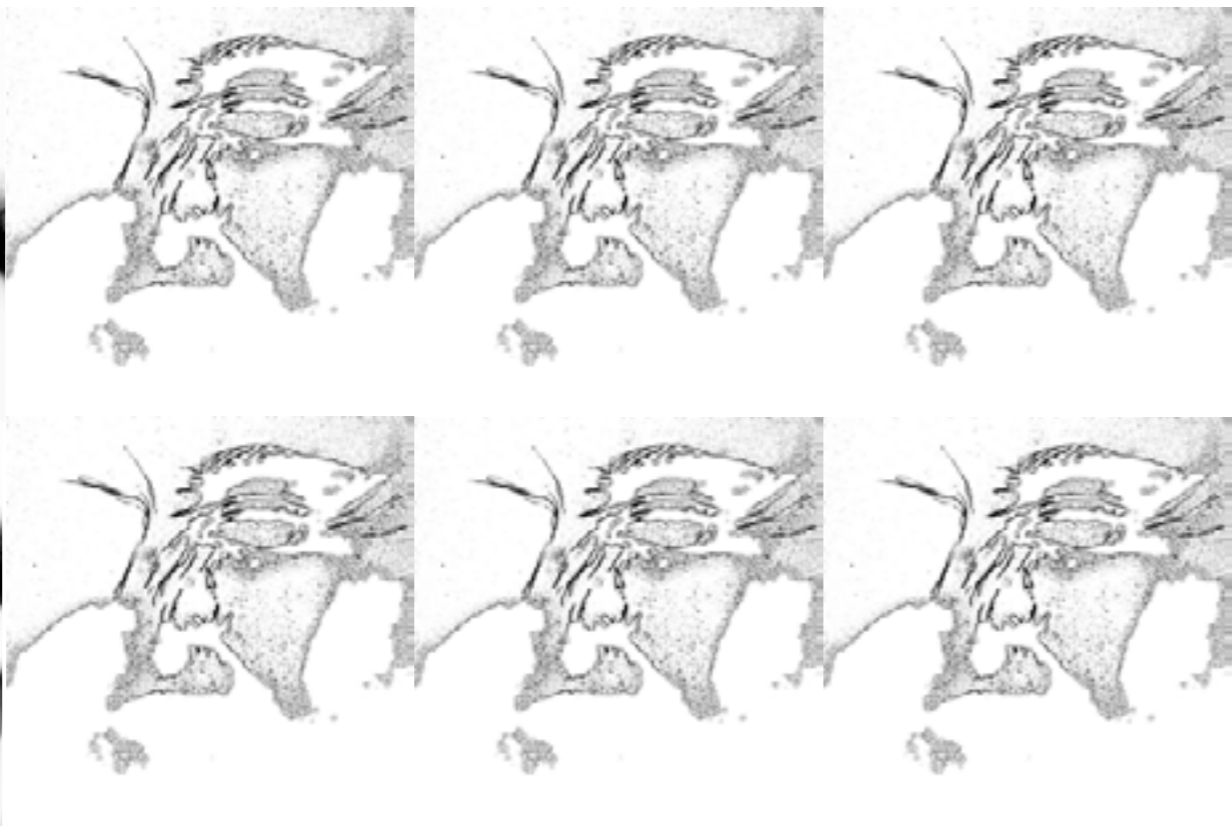
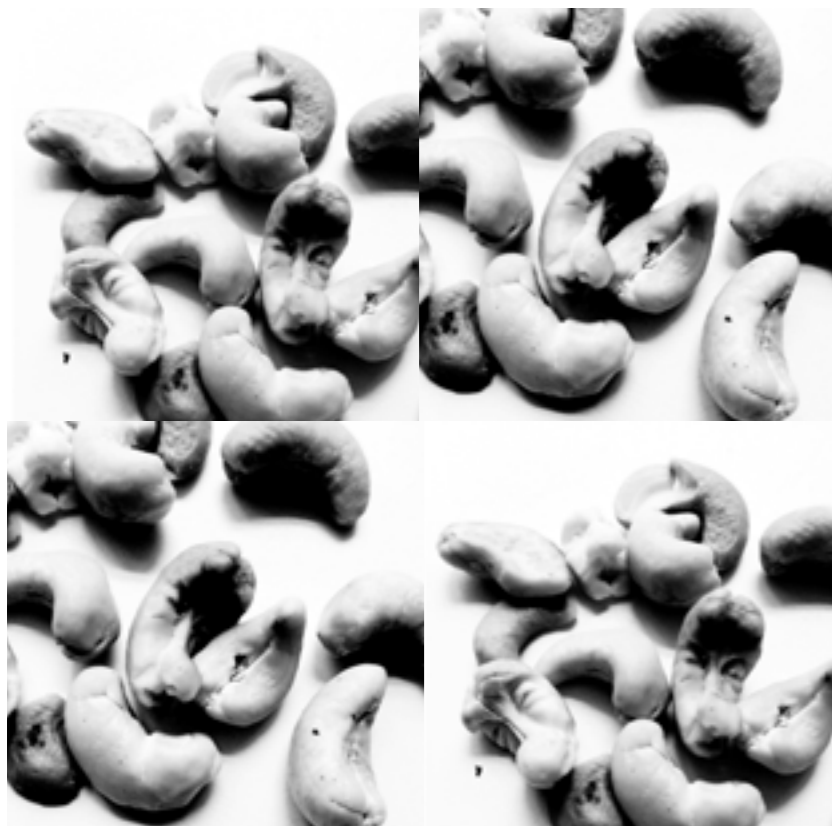
I was happy with the colours and textures I managed to achieve with these Jesominte tiles, I managed to get a very ceramic feel to the material. However once I started to put them together and explore the pieces in the context of a bathroom (as shown on the right) the textured pattern seemed too much. The decoration was too exaggerated and wasn't convincing enough for a normal household splash back, and although I wanted the faces to have a three-dimensional feel I decided this was not suitable within the tiles. Looking at the tiles together I decided this style was worth revisiting for something in the bathroom that's more decorative than functional, like the mirror frame.



Although I decided these tiles weren't suitable, I wanted to gain some feedback on my work so far. I hung the four different tiles on the back of a cubicle door with a feedback form to see what would come of it (shown on the right). It was really important to me to start getting people to engage with my project, especially people that had no prior knowledge of the project.

Somebody wrote at the end of my title (what you see when you pee) "and poo". Somebody also commented; "must have been a long wee" after a person said they found 18 faces. These conversations and light-hearted humour proved that I was on the right track. I was really pleased that these tiles created a space for communication between strangers in spot that is so secluded and private.





I started to explore different surface patterns for my tiles, using Photoshop to play with repeat patterns using images of prior work (shown on left page on the left) as well as editing drawings (shown on left page on the right).

I looked back over the liner drawings I had been producing over the project and decided that these translate really well onto a tile. I created more wavy illustrations like the one I had produces for the train station floor (as shown on the right). These drawings are a lot crisper and delicate; it is this subtlety of pattern that the Jesmonite tiles were lacking. These liner drawings also lead to some hypothetical design ideas for dot-to-dot tiles (as shown on the far right)





Above laser cut acrylic.
On the right plaster two-part mould of
laser cutting.



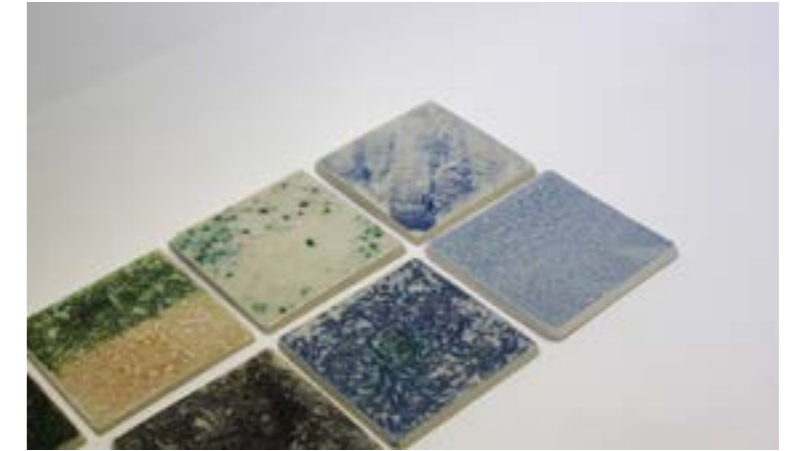
Although I knew that I wanted to use these illustrations on my tiles, I knew I still didn't want to make the tiles completely flat. So I decided to get the illustration laser cut into some acrylic. I cut it so that the design sat out from the back; this gave me a bit of texture to the tiles, making them more interesting while keeping the pattern clean. I decided to have the pattern coming out rather than engraved as indents might leave space for bacteria if used in a working bathroom, and the lines are more prominent this way.

I then made a plaster two-part slip casting mould from my laser cutting. I decided make a mould for clay as ceramic seemed a more suitable material and there was no risk of undercuts.



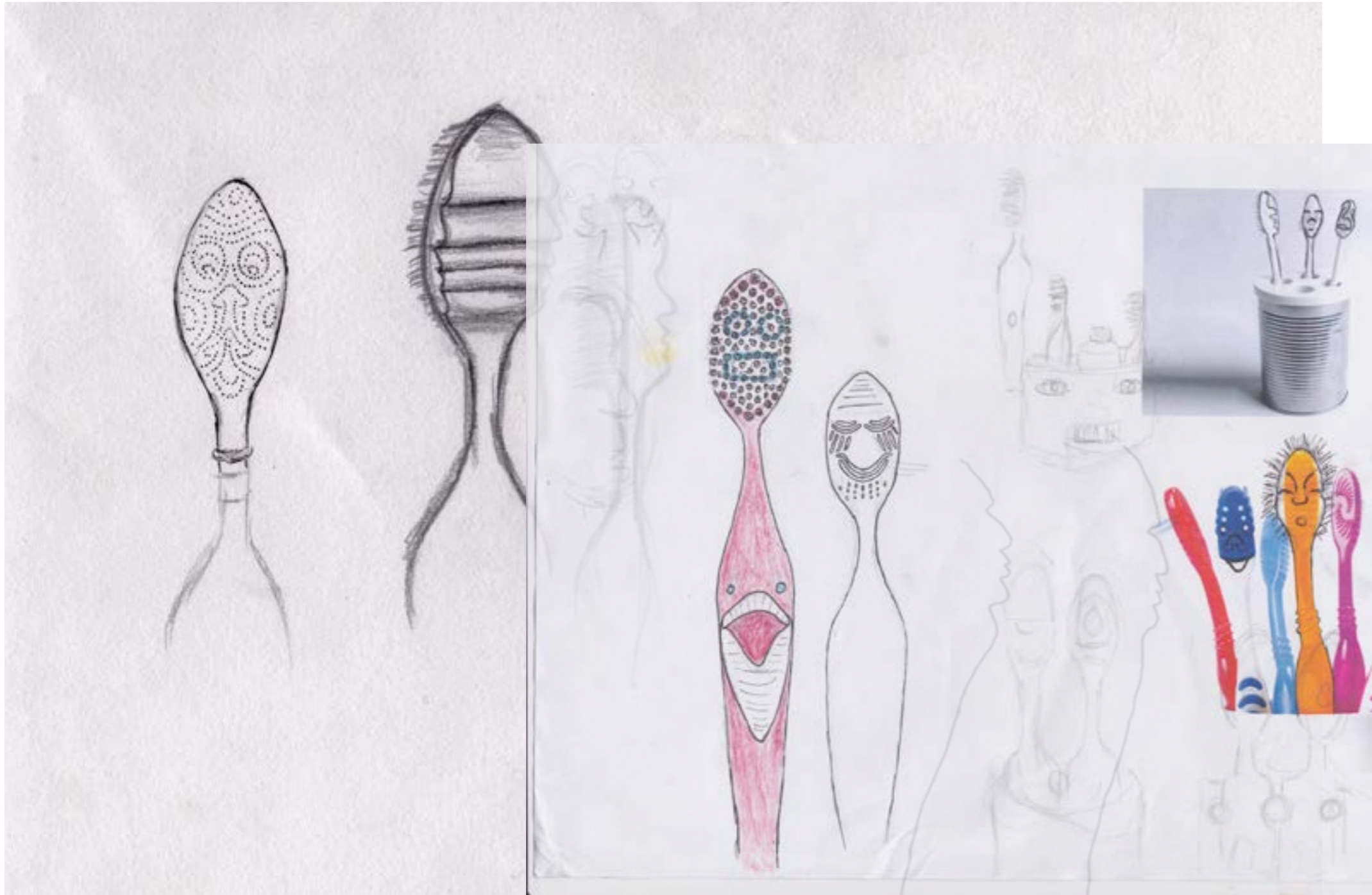
Final Tiles:

Using a variety of different methods I explored colour and surface form: casting with coloured slip, rubbing back to reveal different coloured clay, painting with slips, use of oxides and coloured glazes. The use of coloured slips proved to be very hard to achieve as my design was so tight slip would clog up the relief pattern. I decided to then use coloured glazes, these were very successful as it allowed the relief lines to show through while still giving a subtle transient colour to the pieces. I decided on two shades of blue (as shown on the left). Blues are a very typical bathroom shades that I will carry through the project in order to keep my pieces more cohesive.

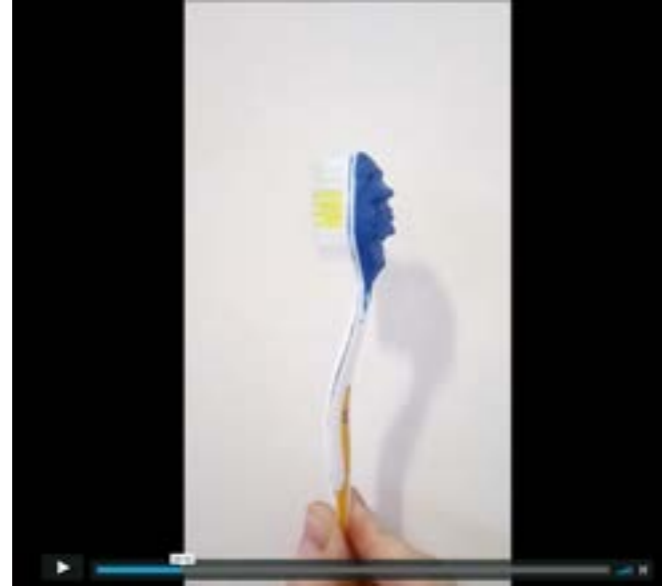


Toothbrush





My toothbrush pieces developed through drawings (shown on the left), I worked through multiple ideas looking into the bristles and different ways they could combine into a face once put together. I particularly liked the idea of bringing the research into silhouette forward. Similarly I thought the toothbrush was the perfect object to demonstrate the uncertainty of Pareidolia by creating a piece where the face is only seen at certain angles or times. I decided to develop a tongue brush for the back of the toothbrush that would combine these two ideas.



I made plasticine models to explore the shapes and shadows cast from the tongue brush (stills from videos of models are shown on the left). I then created a mould of my models experimenting with Jesmonite, silicone and Fimo.

Model video link:
<https://vimeo.com/home/myvideos>



Final Toothbrush:

The casts from Jesmonite were too hard and shiny making it a very unconvincing attachment to the toothbrush. Similarly I found Fimo was visually too hard for the back of the toothbrush. I decided the silicone was most aesthetically pleasing and the best material when colour matching to the toothbrush. I decided to make three of these pieces; two blues and a green relating the colour back to the tiles.

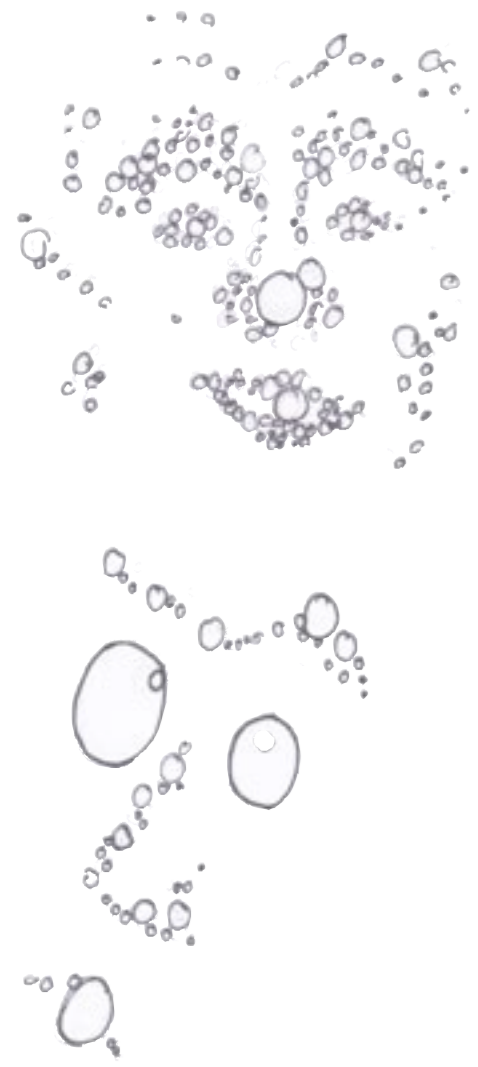
Toilet Seat





Image above sourced from colouredtoiletseats.com

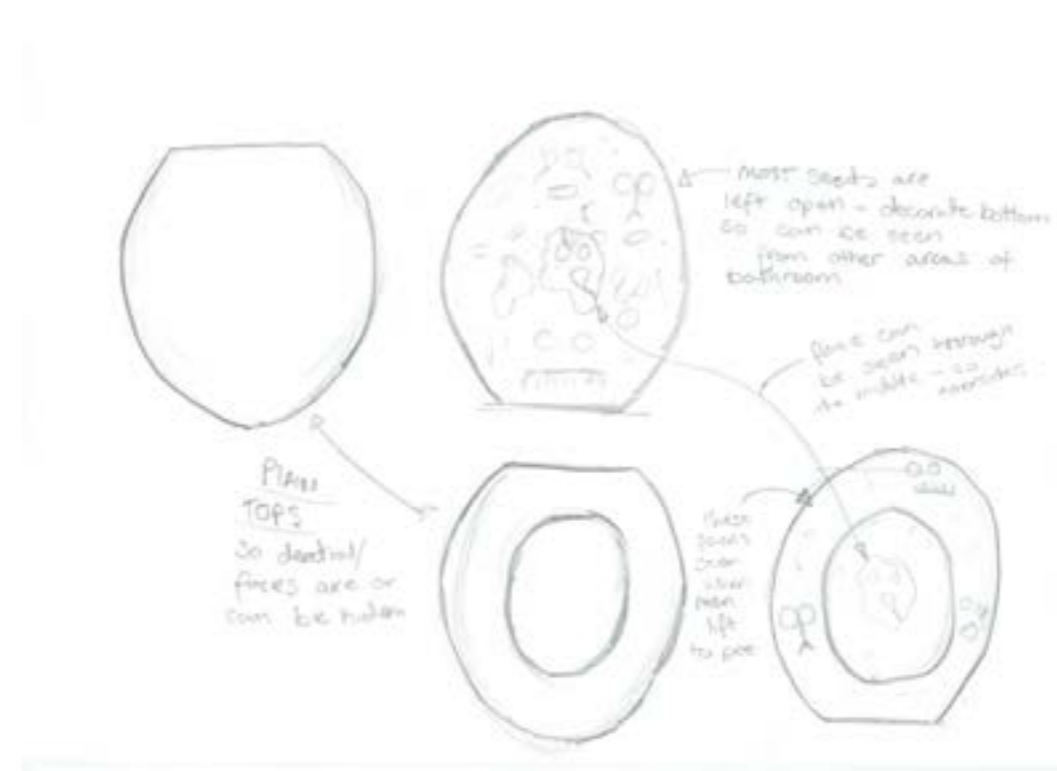
I started to look into possible designs that might be common to see for a novelty toilet seat. Classic toilet seats consisting of sea life scenes or bubbles within the seat. I used a sea life animals and bathroom objects to build faces (as shown on the left).



To develop these ideas I quickly moved into material investigation, as in order to make I toilet seat I knew I had to laminate acrylic, which I had no prior experience in. Because of this I decided to create samples that would allow me to learn the skill of laminating while simultaneously exploring possibilities to create faces. I attempted to create fake bubbles that I could organise into a face by drilling into clear acrylic before laminating. The drill holes worked well as bubbles, however I found detail was lost once laminated making it a very subtle design. I also tested laminating hair which worked really well long as it was strands rather than shavings. Although I really liked the look of having the physical hair within the plastic, the hair was a bit too gruesome to have on the toilet seat. What was being displayed in the seat needed to have a clear obvious link to a bathroom. It was after this that I moved onto laminating objects that are found in the bathroom (as shown above). To do this I had to adapt the laminating technique by building walls around the acrylic and using resin to fill over the objects before placing the top layer of acrylic. There was a chance that this would not work, however each sample laminated very flat and strong.



I decided to use bathroom objects with in the seat, as I really liked the depth it give. These objects also offer a great link to my photography research, as each of my other pieces have faces that are completely created by me these objects have structured shapes that I am only able to organise into faces. In order to work out if this would achieve the desired aesthetic I had to collect a large amount of bathroom objects and assemble them together in variety of ways. Through this processes I was able to understand how to create the seat and worked out objects like the always rapper and wipes were too busy to use.



When deciding what part of the seat I wanted the objects to be viewed from, I was limited by the fact I could only have one side see-through as the objects have to be glued down before the resin is placed over or they would move throughout the curing process. I decided the seat should match the theme of hidden and have the tops as plain white lids, keeping the characters out of sight. This also meant that the faces are viewed when a man lifts the lid to urinate, playing into the mindless acts that sorrowed the bathroom and heighten the act of Pareidolia.

Where to place the end stoppers was carefully considered. I tried out different sizes and shapes but decided on a simple small white circle, as I wanted to keep in mind that the stoppers naturally resemble a face when looking at the toilet bowl as the mouth. I was considering using blue stoppers to tie in my colour match and also bring out the bits of blue within the objects inside the seat however this was too distracting from the objects themselves, and the white matched with the top of the seat making the design a lot neater.

Final Toilet Seat



Mirror Frame





When starting the mirror frame I decided to look into different expressions that might be pulled in the bathroom (shown on the left). The idea behind this was to enhance and explore the link between the mirrored reflection and the projection of our own emotions and attributes onto objects. I decided if the faces surrounding this mirror 'reflected' the moods of the bathroom it would be a nice nudge towards the psychology of Pareidolia and anthropomorphism.

After exploring different shapes of the frame, deciding to go for a minimal rectangle shape, I started to create Jesmonite sample (as shown above) using my old tile mould. Using metal fillers and tints I explored how to enhance the decorative style these moulds offered. I was really happy with how the metallic filler worked with the shapes in these pieces; it really enhanced the weaves and details within the tiles. I decided that this was the right path to take for the frame. I considered tinting the frame with a blue (shown on the right) however I didn't feel the blues in the samples worked as nicely as the ones with just fillers (shown on the left). The silver and dark silver are a lot more convincing as metal, and although I liked the light silver I decided that the darker one had a more tactile and realistic feel.



Final Mirror Frame:



Bathroom Accessories





To sit along side these pieces I decided that I needed a few more faces around the bathroom in order to gain the full 'Where's Wally' effect. I want my degree set up to be an immersive experience, with the bathroom looking lived in. These accessories will enhance this hyper-realistic bathroom.

After deciding against having hair within my toilet seat I decided that I could use it as a feature in the sink drain, the natural curled shapes work well when manipulating it into a face. I looked into creating soap and soap dishes that worked off each other to create a face, as well as the a patterned toothbrush holder that finds its eyes from toothpaste splatters and wrinkled towels with crooked smiles.



