

LEAVING GAÏA BY ANN GRIM

THE METAPHYSICAL MATRIX LABORATORY OF SPACE

One need only look through the CNES or the NASA archives to see the incredible amount of energy that mankind has put into exploring the physics and mechanics of space travel. Beyond the purely scientific reasons for this pursuit, it is clear that the “Trentes Glorieuses” (the decades following World War II) carried a significant degree of metaphysical hope that hinged on the notion that progress and happiness would come hand-in-hand with the advance of science.

And whilst a Bible verse has been somewhat controversially read and broadcast from the moon, very little attention has been paid to the sensitive and meditative side of space exploration.

THE METAPHYSICAL MATRIX LABORATORY

Leaving Gaia is a Metaphysical Matrix Laboratory (**MML**) where the Art is at the core of the project. The creation process of MML has already begun through the impulse of Ann Grim, French visual artist whose ambition is to create a place where mankind could experiment with a different and broader way of thinking. **Its creation** must begin as a visual experience, conceived in the mind of an artist.

Its conception provides the unique opportunity to link the “hard sciences” (physics, chemistry, ballistics, and neuroscience etc...) with the social sciences and the humanities, including anthropology, theology, and epistemology, among others.

How would this space be any different from the few others that already exist on Gaia?

Would we think differently if the universe were to reside just outside our windows?

In space, could we transform our differences into one common thread aimed at working towards a new form of consciousness?

Purpose:

This space can be used as a metaphysical, potentially even mystical laboratory. To achieve this, we must materialise, localise, and conceive a place whose sole purpose is meditative: providing somewhere to reflect on our faith (in a humanist way).

Such a space could be seen as a Sanctuary for shared metaphysical resonance, but it is difficult to implement on Earth.

Per the latest philosophical developments dealing with Anthropocene (mankind's "era" on Earth), a radical change in the position that man holds over nature and the cosmos is underway. Investigations of this phenomenon could only unfold in space, a place where we can, as Bruno Latour put it "look at the Earth face on" (Facing Gaïa). It is here that man can reach a new level of meta-consciousness.

We know that man becomes subject to radical biological changes during prolonged periods in space.

What effect does this have on his ability to perceive the earth, on his capacity to feel and project?

The "ecumene" (inhabited territories) in which our "topoi" (localisations) are situated have, up until now, been considered as inseparable from the biosphere.

But what happens in space?

Where are we situated in what we call the "intergalactic void" (even though it is not, technically speaking, a void at all)?

Will the chora (the symbolic deployment of a space as championed by Japanese architect Tadao Ando), be fundamentally changed?

The project allows us to distance ourselves, transporting us to an unsullied space where we can begin to elaborate a new cycle, and inviting us to reflect on metaphysical concerns.

Do we think differently in space?

How would we reflect on the world, were we to look at it from above and through the lens of a research space that invites us to explore every question we could ever conceive?

Interviews & the “Leaving Gaia” questionnaire

The questionnaire has been designed with the help of Blandine Jonadet, senior strategy planner and expert in Sophrology. It consists of a series of questions aimed to trigger the interviewees imagination about what a Metaphysical lab would represent for them and how they would visualise such a space.

To date, Ann has interviewed some leading figures in the world of Space exploration, Philosophy, Sciences and Environmental Studies.

These interviews will be broadcast through a sound system placed in the centre of the MML’ symbolic representation during the exhibition.

The installation and the experience

This stage of the project will effectively draw on the idea of a virtual reality experience and bring aesthetics and technology together.

The MML will take the shape of an erected “ivory tower”, an architectural structure inviting whomever to step in and embark on an interactive and contemplative journey. The structure will be equipped with a sound system broadcasting the content of the interviews and will also have a virtual reality helmet hanging from the top.

With the aid of a virtual reality headset and 3D technology, the viewer will be transported on a voyage through space towards the MML, as part of a full sensory experience. The journey will be accompanied by NASA space audio recordings. With simple head movements, the viewer can explore the MML as seen by Ann Grim by directing his or her vision towards what he or she wishes to observe and discover.

To build the structures that make up this laboratory, the mechanics of the first rocket would be replaced by an organic compound of the materials used. The very foundations of the structure’s architecture would be reworked in line with anti-gravitational laws to trigger new thought patterns.

The Exhibition of the MML

Ann Grim would like to exhibit her vision of the MML at leading fairs around the world starting in London. The first step of this project offers the chance for full participation. Ultimately, she is aiming for an Institution or a Museum to acquire the MML and display it permanently.

The next step could be **to send some artwork emanating from the lab into space?** Metaphysical Laboratory project will be consecrated by sending an artwork-object into space.

The work will leave its mark on space, a sphere currently untouched by the field of spiritual and of conceptual art. This historical step will be comparable to the planting of the American flag on the Moon.

This artwork represents the project in its entirety, and will be conceived of by the artist through a process that will allow her to define and conceptualise it. Its journey beyond our terrestrial borders will be a symbol of the Metaphysical Matrix Laboratory itself.

LEAVING GAÏA ACCESS TO THE VR

Location: Frieze London

Description: full VR gear including:

1 X headset with integrated VR sound system

1X computer

2X joysticks

4 X sensors

(see Appendix 1 for visual)

Installation:

Each viewer will be fitted with the VR gear by a cultural mediator



First encounter with the VR:

Visual is a white cube gallery with a gigantic burnt wood arch. (See Appendix 2 for visual)

A cartel on the arch, mentions:

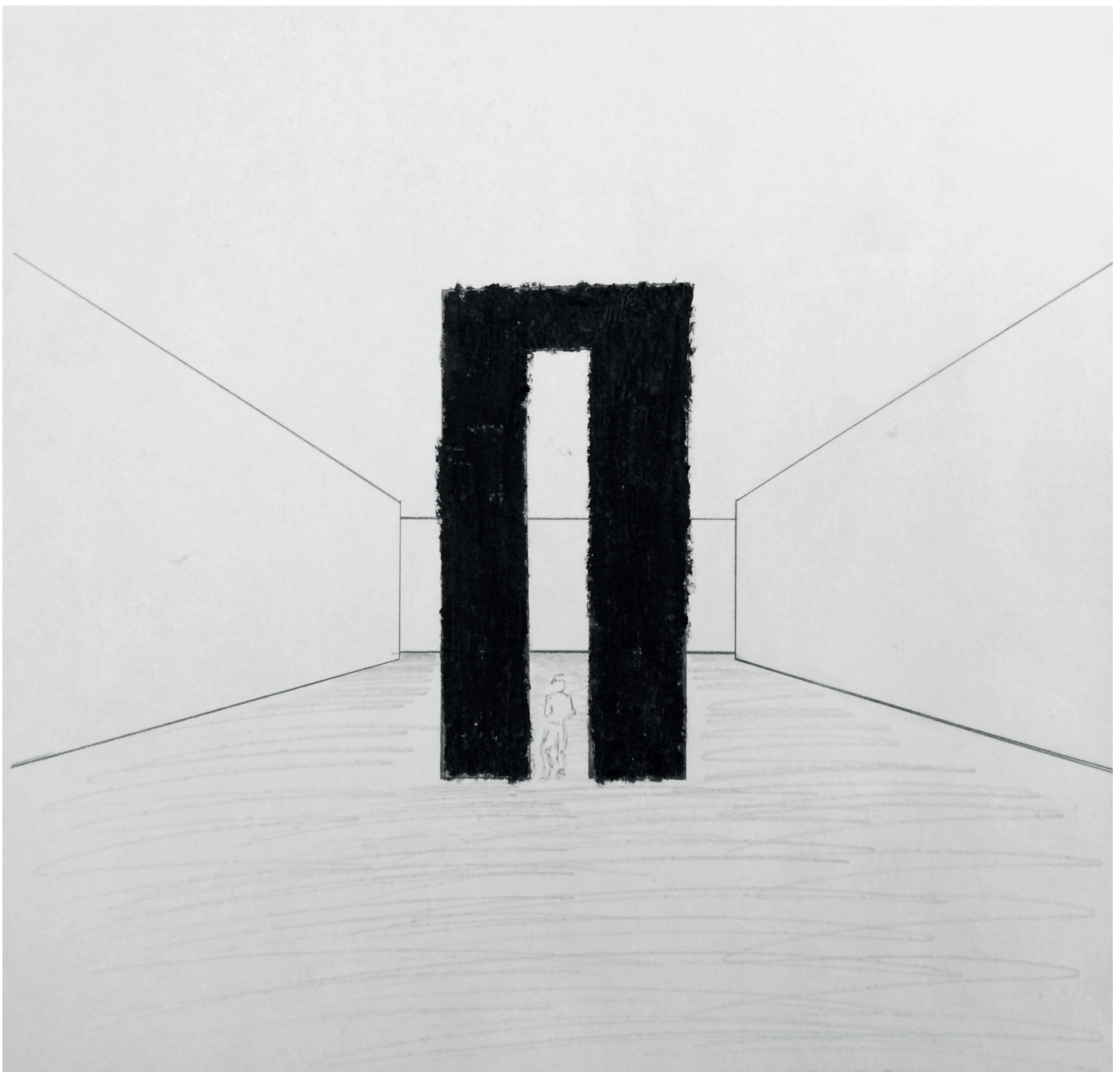
Leaving Gaia, the Metaphysical Matrix Laboratory
Ann Grim and credits.

Voice over:

"The ultimate horizon may be to find a little more sense and a little more beauty in life.
You're welcome to go under the arch now".

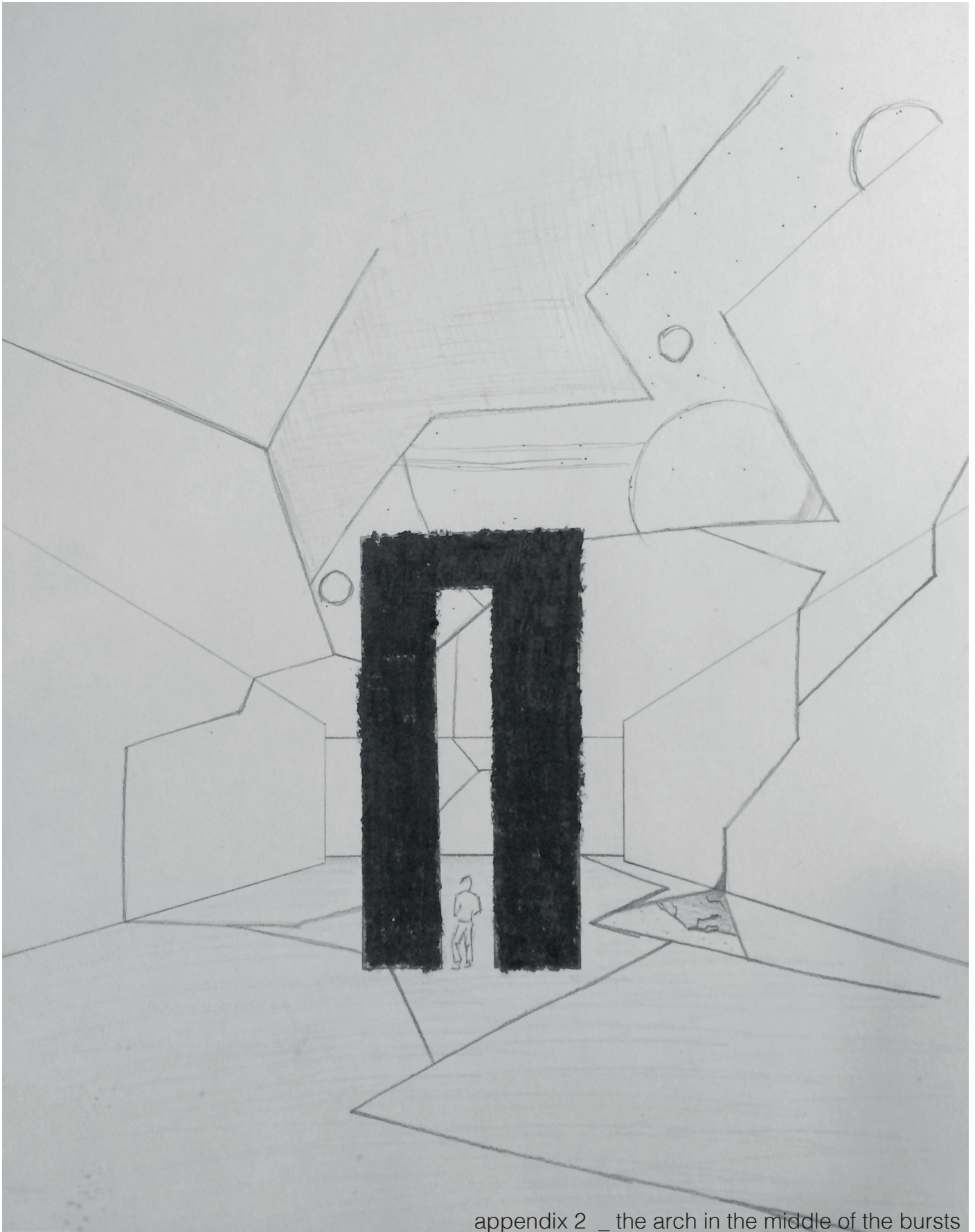
Sound:

More research needs to be done on the soundtrack for the VR alongside NASA recordings of sounds in space.



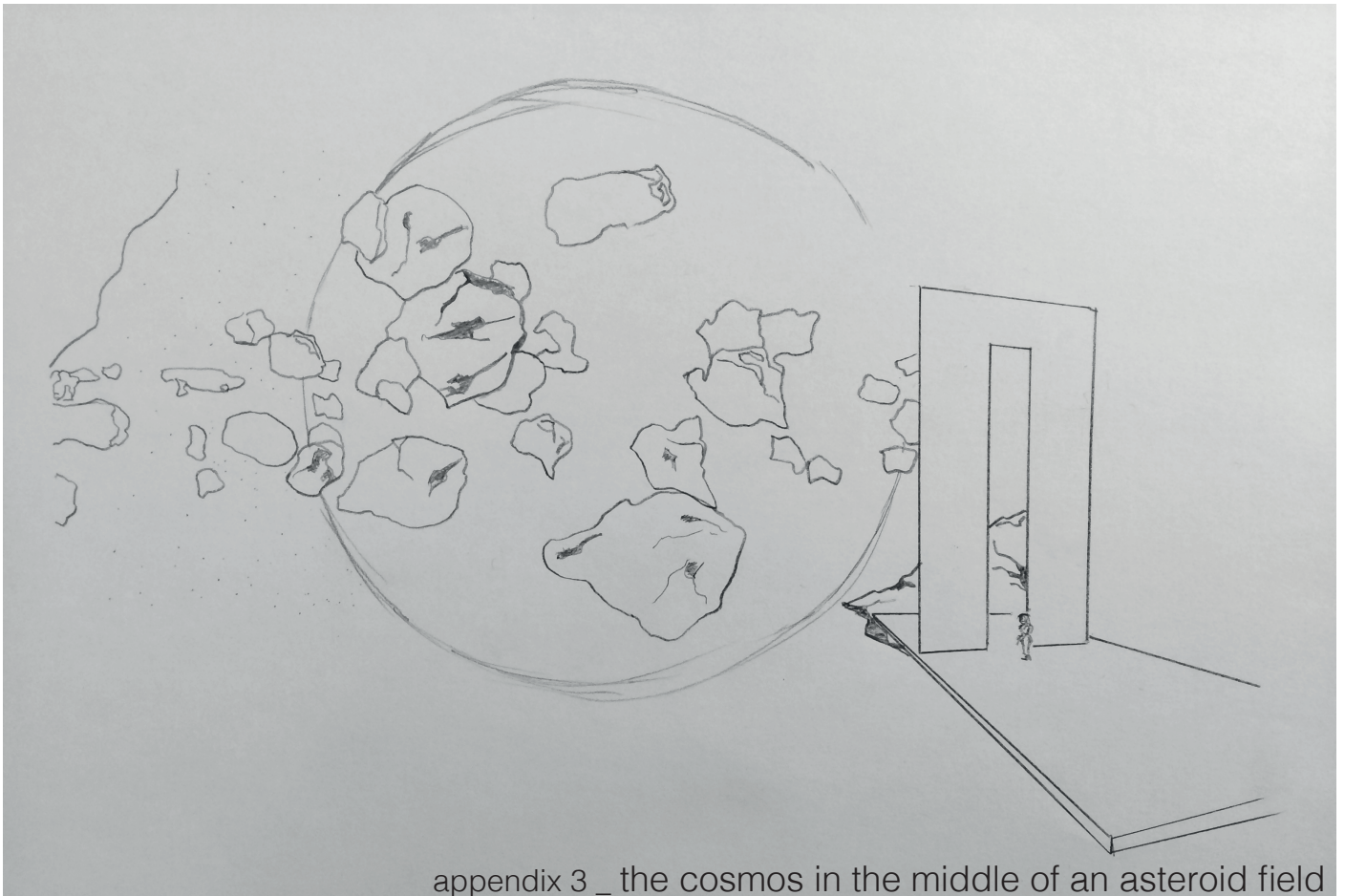
whilst walking under the arch, the environment crumbles.

The only thing left standing is the arch allowing him/her to be beamed out of the white cube and into the cosmos. He/she can use that “arch” to go back in and out again as he/she pleases. (See Appendix 2 for visual)

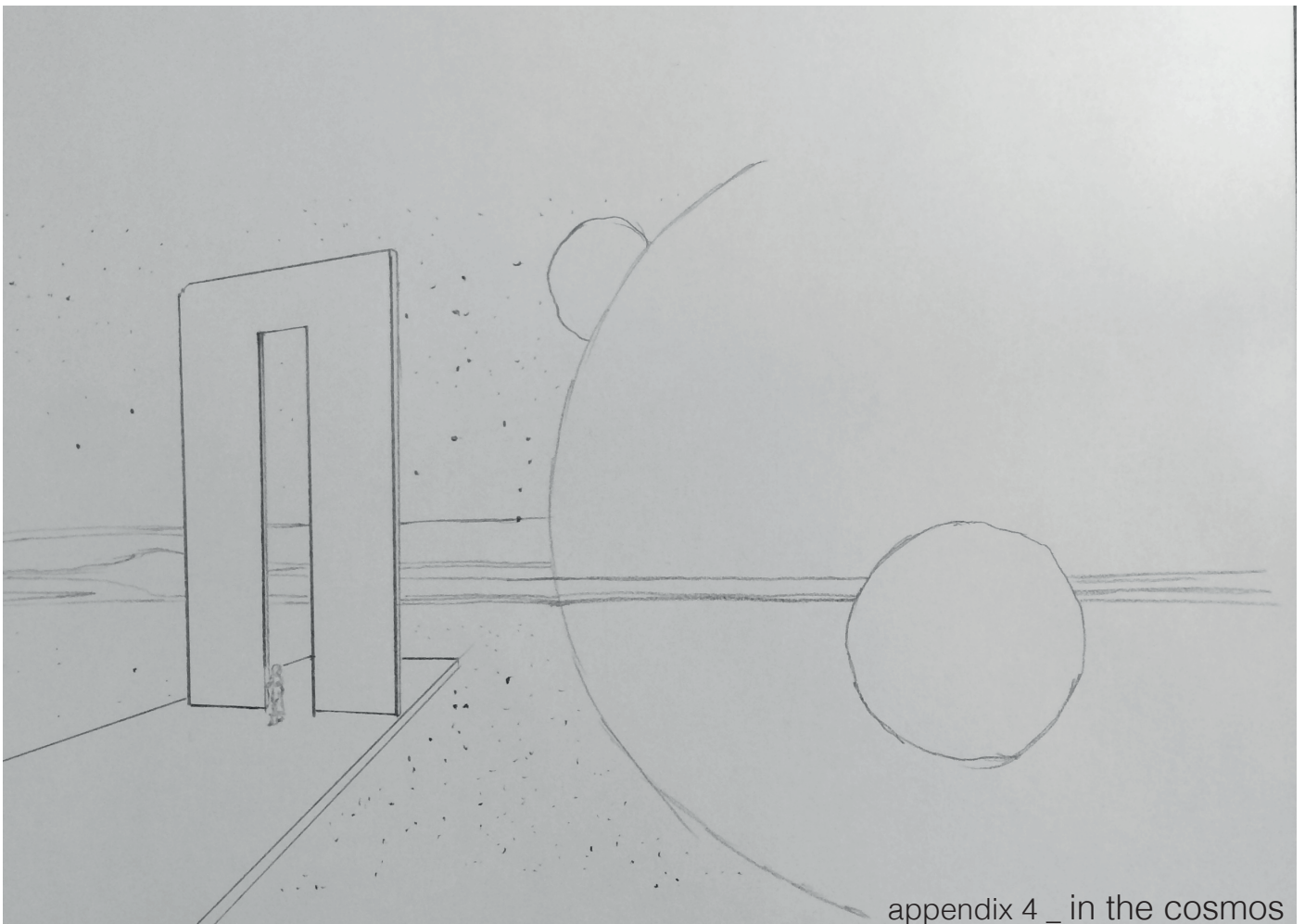


appendix 2 _ the arch in the middle of the bursts

On one side of the arch the viewer discovers the cosmos. He/she can interact with asteroids or stars he/she may come across by breaking them. Thus providing a supernatural rule breaking experience. (See Appendix 3 and 4 for visual)



appendix 3 _ the cosmos in the middle of an asteroid field



appendix 4 _ in the cosmos