

**Space + Something**

**By Bettina Nelson**

# **SPACE + SOMETHING**

VISUALISING THE PHYSICAL EQUIVALENT  
OF A FEELING THROUGH A DIALOGUE  
WITH CAPO GROSSO, A LIGHTHOUSE



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## INTRODUCTION

A few years ago I came upon a very special and secret place on Levanzo, the smallest of the three Aegadian Islands a couple of kilometers west off the Sicilian coast. The place was Il Faro di Capo Grosso; an isolated and abandoned lighthouse situated on a panoramic spot on a peninsula, overlooking what seemed like an eternity of bright blue sky and deep blue sea. Though it stood clear that the lighthouse had been deserted for a long period of time, the place still felt alive and full of integrity despite its ruined parts plunging into gravity, exposing layers of wall paint and beautiful architectural craftsmanship. The place seemed open and welcoming, yet it was strongly characterized by something else - a 'something' that made my heart beat rapidly fast and increase the adrenaline in my veins. It was a 'something' derived from another substance that at the time could only be described as a sublime experience – it was hard to explain, perhaps only to be experienced. The feeling was similar to an energetic force that I could practically mold, an abstraction or a movement that I could feel physically in my body and mind. My traveling companions, on the other hand, agreed with me in calling the place 'special' but not in the same elevated extent as I had, only in the sense of it being an actual lighthouse.

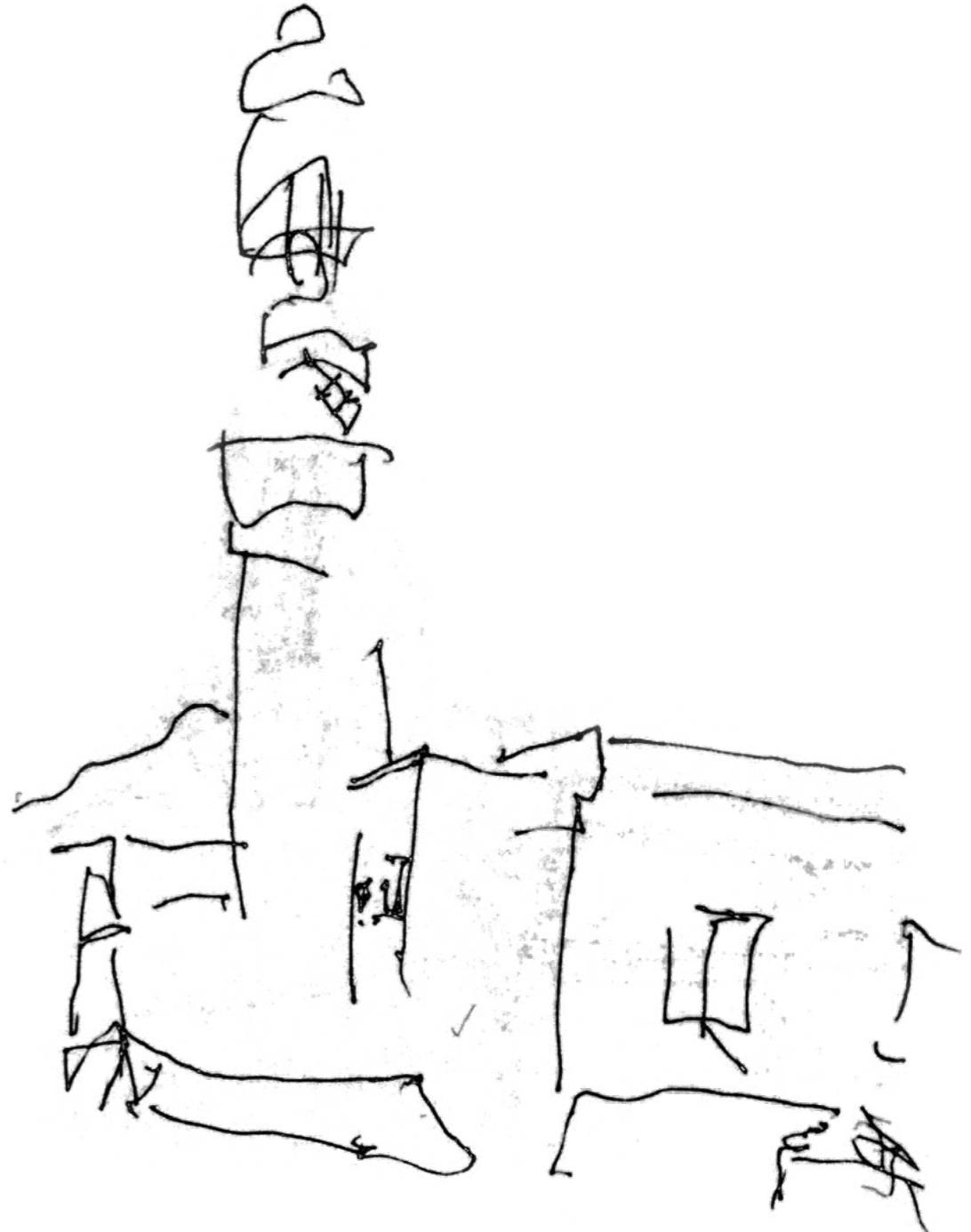
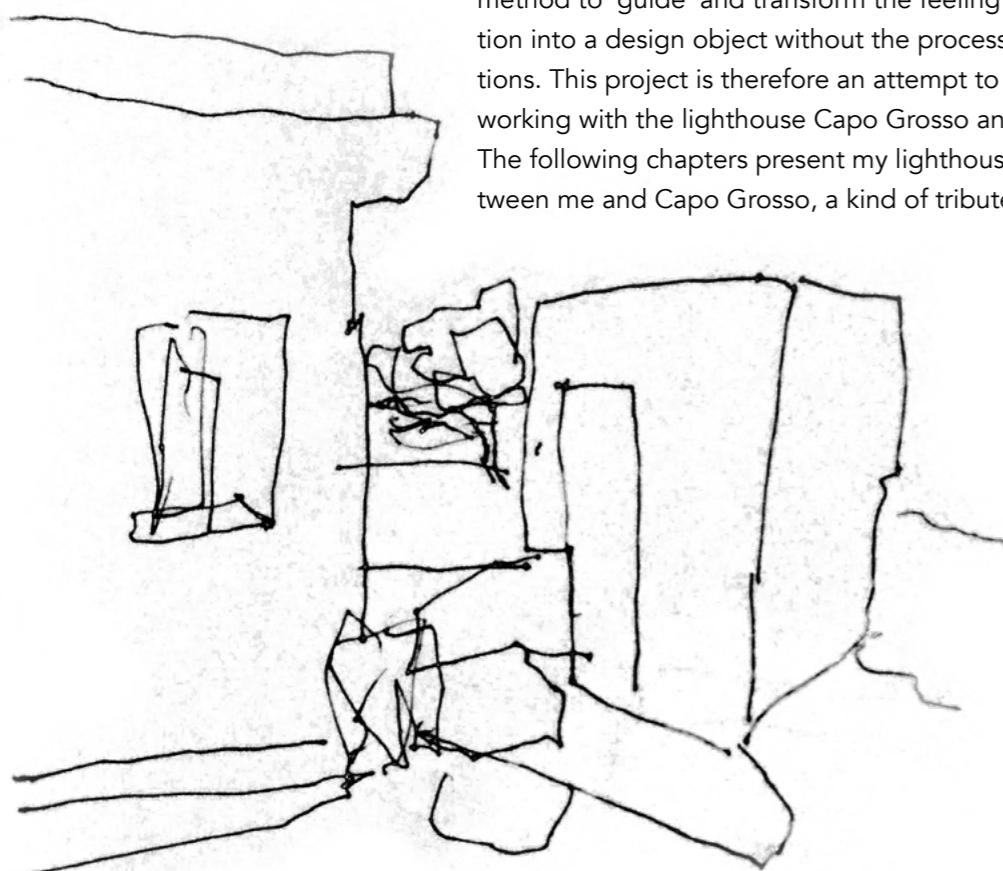
The place had for that reason a notion of 'a talking environment' - not as a single voice, but as a choir. It was as if the lighthouse represented a set reality, yet its appearance had different meanings - physically and abstract, and that both were equally important and intertwined with the other.

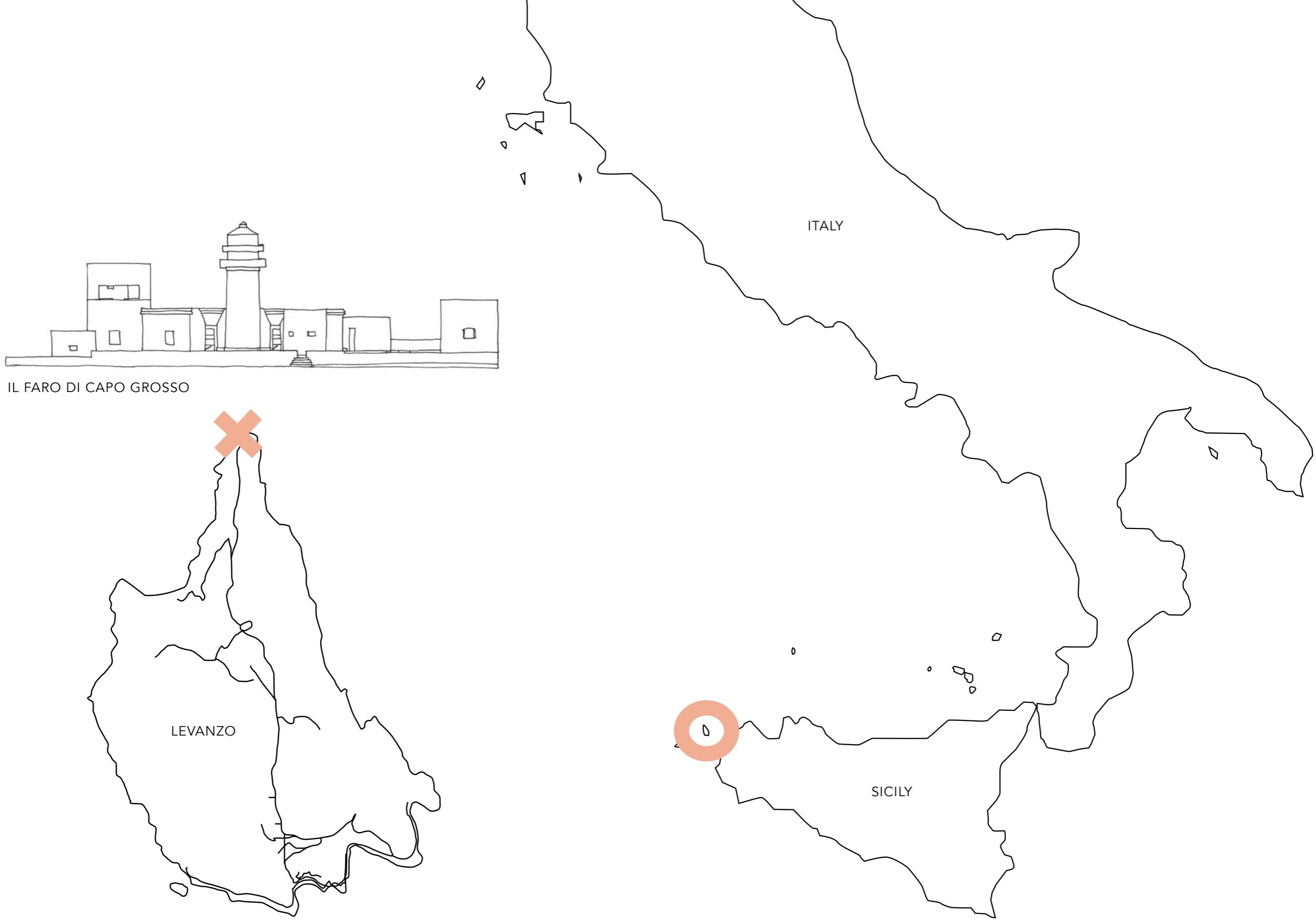
During the following years, I repeatedly returned to the lighthouse, in the same way as it repeatedly returned to me in my dreams and fantasy, enticed to discover its secret beyond its initial purpose of being 'just' a lighthouse. I therefore wondered if it was possible to experiment with the lighthouse equation by making the physical appearance, the space, more abstract, and that 'something' graspable and solid, in order to illustrate and visualize my place-specific feeling from the lighthouse entity. In other words, if the lighthouse was an equation of different observations, what was the physical equivalent of my feeling derived from Capo Grosso - what was that 'something'?

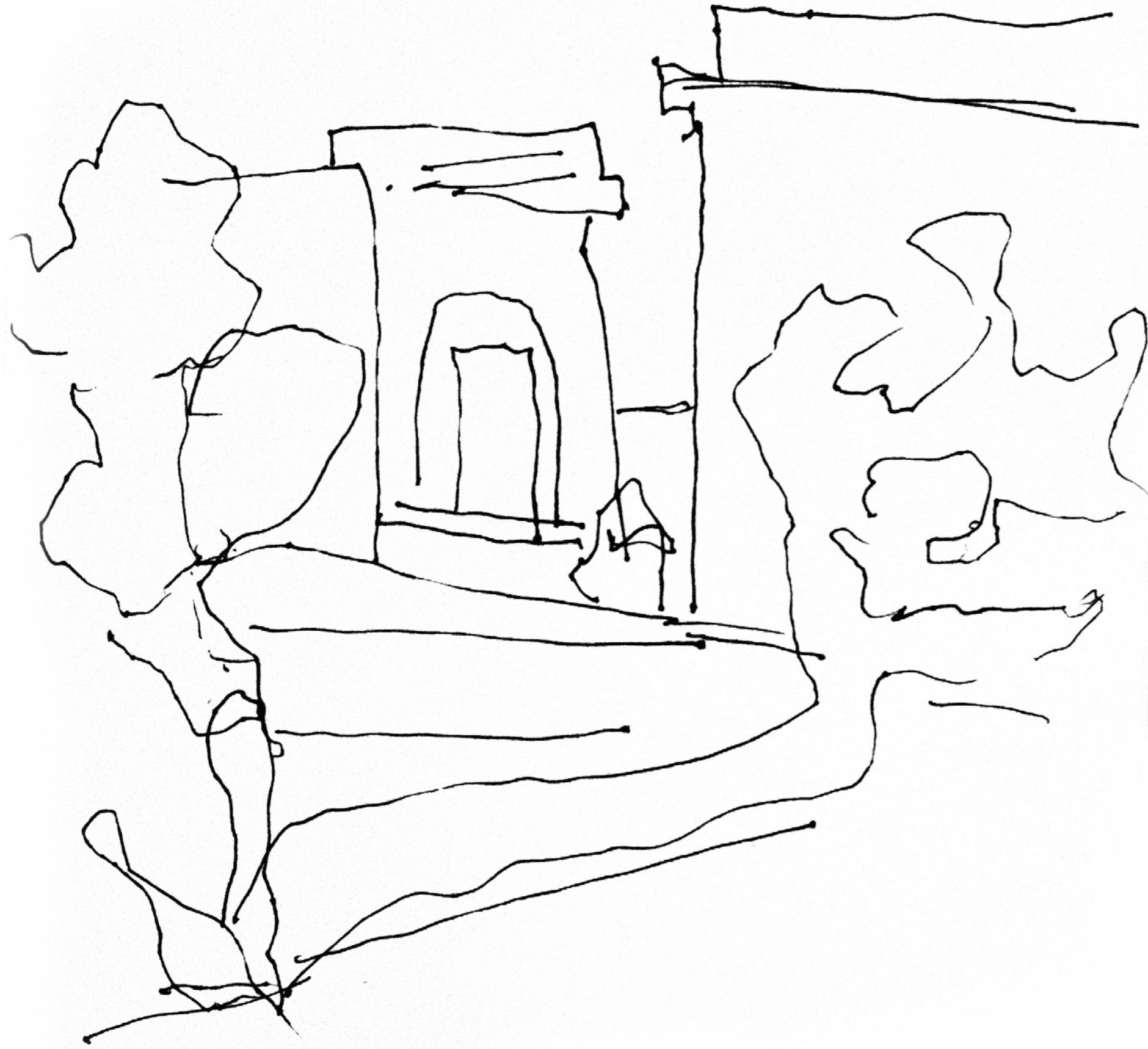
## THE PHYSICAL EQUIVALENT OF A FEELING

I have always been intrigued by those specific moments when a place, an object or perhaps a picture, catches the eye and evokes one's feelings. It is an unconditional and sudden 'something', which moves us, jolts our day-to-day perception, and, in the field of architecture, design, and art, inspires us in our work and becomes a source of inspiration, a guideline or an energy that drives the work forward. In fact, as opposed to more traditional furniture designers with rational ideas of how to make a chair or a table, I have begun all my projects by working with feelings, making that 'something' into an equation to be solved and translated into physical shape.

However, the path leading from a feeling to a solid object has not always been straight. I have often experienced that though the feeling might have been clear to begin with, it has been difficult to find a method to 'guide' and transform the feeling from its origin of inspiration into a design object without the process sprawling off in all directions. This project is therefore an attempt to approach this difficulty, by working with the lighthouse Capo Grosso and its 'something'. The following chapters present my lighthouse story, a dialogue between me and Capo Grosso, a kind of tribute for our 'relationship'.







**SOMETHING**



## 'SOMETHING'

The boat ride from the small, yet busy harbour of Trapani in Sicily to Favignana, the largest of the three Aegadian Islands, was an experience in itself. If I was looking for a tranquil journey on the deep open sea, I was soon to be disappointed; instead I had unwillingly become an extra in a Fellini movie. The boat was packed with screaming children, dramatic hand-gesticulating adults and a few bikini-topped foreigners. It was an Italian cliché, but it was real and it was happening.

My father was enjoying every second of this trip, embracing and breathing it all in, as if it was the sweetest air and the greatest of entertainments - much to my annoyance. This was back in 2008 when my father and I for the first time joined the Italian wave of tourists, not knowing that we would soon return year after year, to the Aegadian Sea.

The small port and the connecting town center had that same hectic flow as our fellow passengers. It was somewhat noisy, but in a strange way, uplifting. We were instantly struck by the different kind of air; fresh, salty sea water mixed with the sweet aroma from lemon and oranges, which, we later found out, grew almost everywhere across the island in small gardens that people had made from the old limestone quarries. Making our way into the center we passed several wheel-barrowed fish-stools, and, not to forget, the big 'South African rugby brothers' who owned the small but very popular tobacco on the left-hand side of the pier. It was as if the port and town were preparing us for something beyond its walls, and perhaps, beyond the island itself.

My father knew he had come home.

I knew I was close.

After having found a room near the square, we set out to explore. Since the island was completely flat, with only an exception of a huge mountain ridge which shaped the island into a butterfly, it was fairly easy to move around. With the transportation of two rented bikes, we explored the old rock caves that had been re-made into beautiful vibrant gardens, we swam in the blue lagoon with its white sand and crystal clear water, and we ate fresh fish in the buzzing town square together with the freshly squeezed orange juice from the street green-grocer. The island flawlessly lived up to its reputation - it was paradise itself.

But to me there was something missing. Something was unsettling and I realized it was the fact that I was never alone. It wasn't just the passing of the few cars the island had to offer that disturbed the tranquility of rural life. It was the people. There were people everywhere and I was unwillingly a part of this crowd.

I was never alone.

On a particular crisp morning, when the air was clear, I happened to look over to the small neighboring island and I noticed that not many boats seemed to go in that direction.

I wanted to go in that direction.

And at that exact moment when my feet touch the ground of the island Levanzo, I knew I had found something.

I had come home.

We did not know then that the island was one of Italy's most important archaeological sites - famous for the 'Grotta del Genovese', a cave with Neolithic paintings and Paleolithic drawings, and, furthermore, for the island's marine archaeology, rich of artefacts from numerous sea battles (the most important when the Roman Empire destroyed the Carthaginian fleet and hastened the end of the First Punic War). Yet the island was not overcrowded with tourists. In fact, the tiny port and small village to which we had come barely showed any signs of human activity at all, despite its 450 permanent inhabitants. The small information office was open, offering the local archaeological tourist-package. Although the physical remains of ancient cultures did seem pretty interesting, the offer was much too expensive for our taste. Instead, we explored the island on our own.

My father and I set off along the one and only road in the late afternoon sun, unaware of what our final destination would be. We had packed some bread and water, and if I remember it right, we were discussing weather or not to 'steal' a cactus off the island, and if it would survive an airplane ride or not.

We found Levanzo, with an area of 5.82 square kilometers, to be a steep, rugged island with little visible cultivation besides some small sheep farms and one very lonely, but social donkey. We could see terraced hillsides, lines of dry stone walls dividing fields and gardens, and small stone shelters across the island, proofs of an agricultural past, but all was now overgrown, forgotten or ignored. The vegetation mainly consisted of small bushes - some that were familiar, fennel for example, and other wild-flowering plants. Also, some cone tree plantations were scattered around the island, but funny enough, properly protected by wired fences.

The peak of the island, Pizzo Monaco, with a height of 278 metres, shaded parts of the valley from the sun, and kept the path cool for us. Its steep drop consisted mostly of rock with little vegetation, but I remember it being a shelter for the hundreds, or perhaps the thousands of small birds flying above us, catching insects as they sailed the wind. The melody of their singing and the buzzing of the insects were trapped by the valley, and it made the most beautiful sound. Almost like a constant humming, with an odd whistle here and there, creating the soundtrack of our journey.

After a couple of kilometres on the dry, red-sanded path, which felt like a sacred walk-way, we noticed the lack of motorized vehicles, which added even more to the integrity of the scenic beauty and tranquil presence.

Maybe an hour had gone by, when we realized we had slowly walked up-hill for about four kilometres from the south to the north of the island. Suddenly, we were pleasantly surprised when we came upon a rather different scenery. A tower surrounded by some buildings appeared in the distance, positioned on a sloping, blooming hillside, balancing on the edge of a cliff overlooking the sea. Coming up closer to the complex, we saw that the tower was a lighthouse and quite well preserved, but that the other buildings were partly in ruins.

It was clear that the place was deserted, and it had been so for quite some time. However, it felt surprisingly welcoming. Unfortunately, my father's knee had by now begun to 'play up', so he sought refuge under the branches of a fig-tree, stretching his legs out in front of him in the shade.

I was now alone.

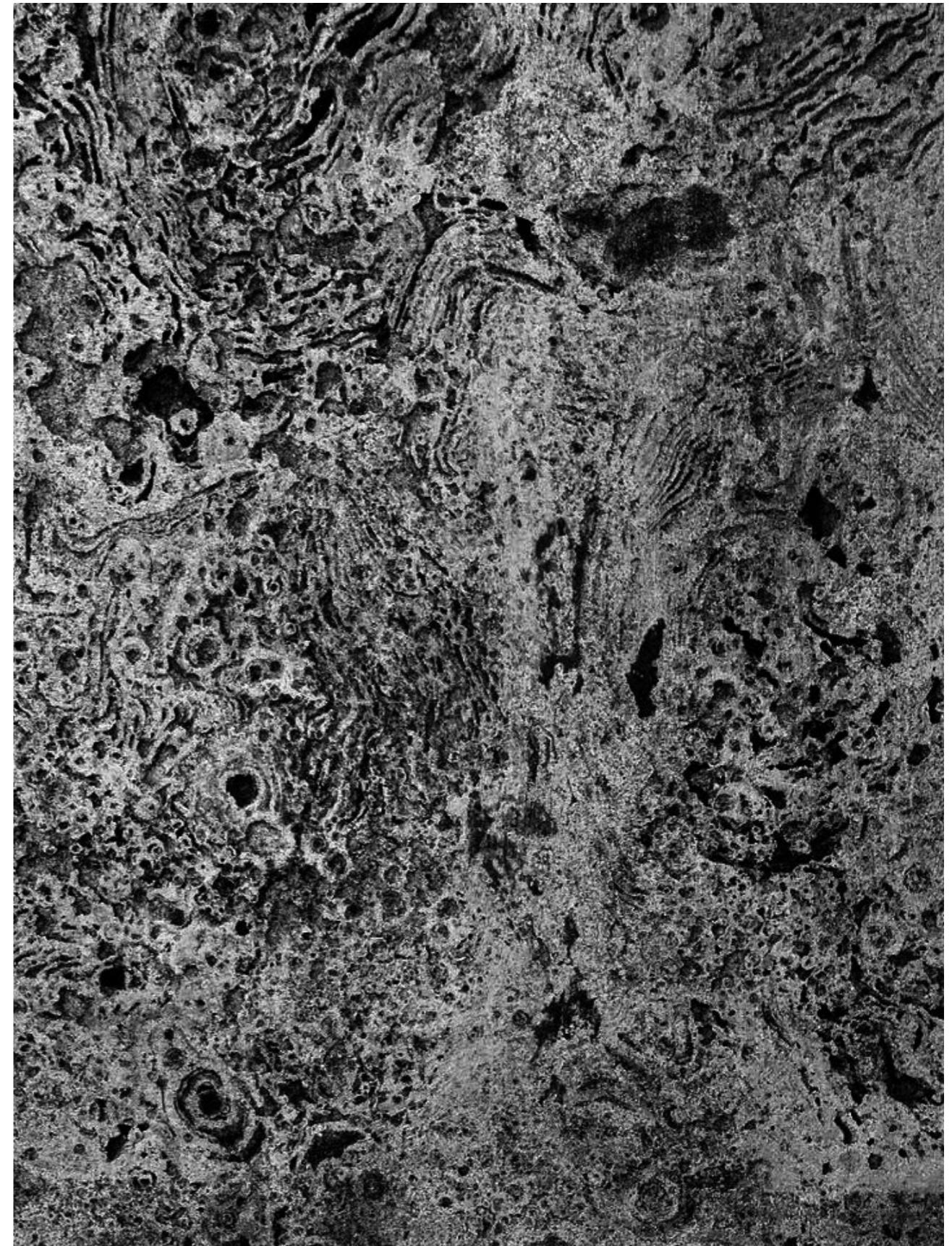




Silently I walked around the premises, I didn't want to disturb the peace. At first glance, the area seemed rather run down and the overall appearance was of something in a mess. Huge bushes were growing here and there, and the low stone walls had begun to plunge into gravity, giving an impression that the place hadn't been taken care of for quite some time. And it hadn't, and that saddened me in a way.

After I had taken the few steps from our 'sacred path' into the lighthouse premises, I found myself in a wide expanse of open space, decorated with concrete and limestone bricks, bordered by low stone walls that divided the area into lanes and quadrant patches. Some patches were even decorated with beautiful hand painted tiles. Unfortunately, some of the tiles were missing from the terraced grounds, revealing the obvious fact that there had been visitors there before us, taking a little bit of the lighthouse with them. I was actually tempted to do the same, a little souvenir for myself. However, the weather naturally had a great impact on the place as well, doing its bit to tear it apart. Where the sun had dried the white paint off the outer walls, the wind had blown the crumbles away and made the limestone vulnerable towards harsh storms and rain, eating into its core. The devastation was a fact, and probably difficult to avoid without the maintenance and love from a caretaker.

Walking around the main building, I approached the lighthouse tower that was openly located towards the sea. It was situated in front of the relatively large main building, dividing the main buildings entrance of a quadrangular courtyard into two. I remember that I didn't particularly like the lighthouse tower itself, and that I felt frustrated because it blocked the view from the main building. I mean, if considering that the main building was ever to function as anything else, there would always be this 'great tower in the way'. Silly, I admit, but that was how I felt at the time. I later found out that the lighthouse tower dated back to 1858, while the connecting main building had no registered date, but it was assumed to be from the same period. The height of the tower was said to be 68.5 meters from sea level, with the nominal capacity of the light being 5.5 kilometres. However, this was before the renovation of the tower, and when that took place, no one on the island really knew or remembered. The lantern on the other hand, that was once regulated by a mechanical system of gears, had now been replaced by a military-run, modern automated satellite system. The lighthouse tower itself was therefore well-preserved, intact and functioning, and would probably always be so.







The lighthouse buildings bore traces of classical architecture both inside and out, with colourful walls, arched ceilings, patterned floors and entablature of pediment cornice and frieze. I walked carefully through room to room, experiencing its space, smelling a smell of sea salt pleasantly blending with the smell of the mountain herbs.

Sadly, the inside had also had its fair share of extreme weather over the years, with ceilings hanging half way down to the floor, and walls baring their pink and yellow limestone bricks behind peeling wall-plaster. However, what I saw might not have been much to one without imagination, but to me, the many empty rooms, bare walls, and sand-covered floors were also rich with history and secrets - history and secrets I desperately wanted to take part of, despite its deteriorating presence. This place was rich with opportunity - think of all the things one could do with such a place! I felt that I wanted to take part of this opportunity, make it into mine.

Moving along inside, I discovered that the main building was divided into two living sections, due to the two entrances and a thick bearing wall between them. The sections were in turn divided into different independent departments, indicating that a large number of people once may have lived here. At one of my visits, one of the locals told me that the lighthouse used to be inhabited by two families at a time, which took turns in caring and maintaining the lighthouse lantern. Sometimes, but very rarely, the chief of Italy's lighthouses would visit, and there was therefore always a compartment in the house ready and waiting for him. He also told me that these families were one of the richest families on the island because of their steady income from the state, and that the house was therefore always nice. But after the modernization of the lighthouse in the 50's and the 60's, the families were now long gone, with only one 'lighthouse-ancestor' still alive. With a chuckle my source then told me that he himself, when he was a much younger man, once had a romance with a blonde young 'beauty of a woman', who was passing by the island in a sailing boat with her parents. They had fallen instantly in love, and upon her departure, had a 'one-evening-thing' in the lighthouse building - much to the annoyance of the one 'lighthouse-ancestor' who then still lived on the island.

I wondered, how many more had sought the privacy of the desolate environment for a romantic tête-à-tête?

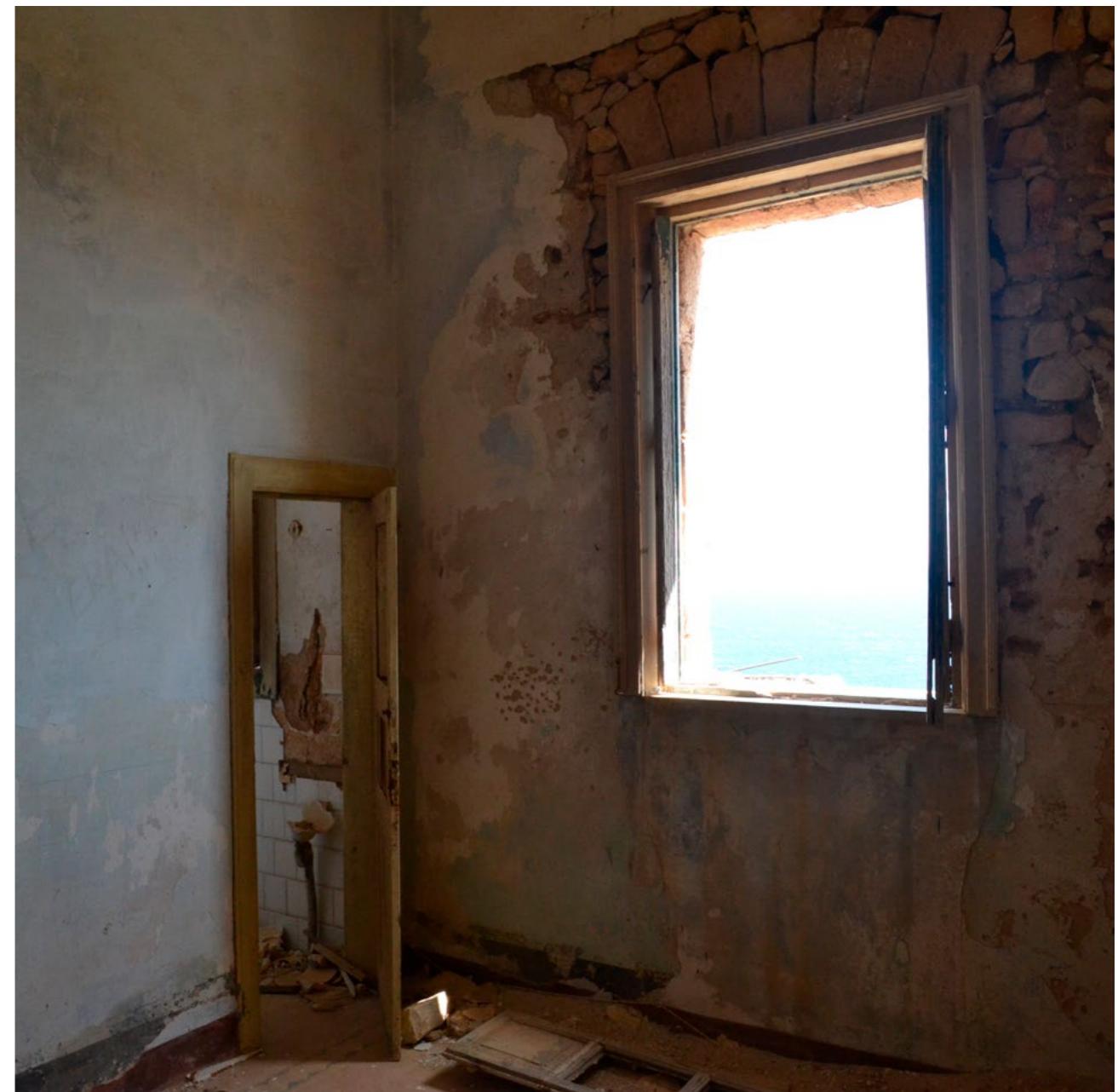


Although my experience of the place was of something decaying, something held back in the past, other things reminded me of the continuity of energy, such as the yellow moss that was creeping in on almost every surface visible, functioning as a visual symbol of change. Furthermore the wild bushes had their charm, showing off their magnificence in shape and size in contrast to the bare concrete surfaces. *Touch me and I will prickle you*, they said. They were the new inhabitants, together with the wind, the sun and the rain.

A significant thing that caught my attention was the difference of elevation and the forced change of direction. I noticed that the different layers created by stairs, steps, and tilted surfaces, made me slow down. This small physical challenge of walking up and down and turning corners in this semi-maze made me conscious of my own existence. It was as if the physical space of Capo Grosso somehow was forcing me to take it slow, making me aware of myself in these surroundings. I was aware of detail, for example where I would put my foot, the height of that elevation, or the slight rounding of a wall that I had to corner to get from A to B. Furthermore, when I slowed down, I noticed the unseen energy of a breeze that was softly blowing. It made me stop and appreciate the place, appreciate its weird twists and turns interacting with my body, or, more or less, the dictating of my way of passage. It was a kind of mutual acknowledgment between me and the lighthouse taking place - I was seeing it, as it made me conscious of myself.

Just like the lighthouse outside surroundings, the inside was full of small passages, independent departments, windows and doors, and changes of elevation. It was as if the inside was a kind mirroring of the outside, or at least in the terms of making me aware of my surroundings. However, the entity of the main building appeared somewhat unsettling. Not unsettling in a negative way, but in the sense that the natural flow of the building was disturbed by walls that should not have been there, or by small rooms that seemed unnecessary. The 'unflow' of the premises, made me reflect on my surroundings and my presence there. Perhaps I felt a bit unsettled because I also became aware of the fact, that my father and I were all alone here by the lighthouse, maybe also on this part of the island. It made me a little jumpy, realizing I was actually rooting around on private property, intruding. The thought of this made me even more aware of my surroundings, registering detail I perhaps wouldn't have noticed before, as in a mild fear, that something threatening could be waiting around the corner. It made me think 'what if?'. The feeling made my heart beat faster.







Although, I did not perceive the lighthouse as threatening in its appearance, but rather as odd or strange, I stood absolutely still, frozen, listening if I could hear something out of the ordinary. The building and I had began to communicate, but what the building was saying was hard to translate. It was a feeling. A feeling that was difficult to explain and could perhaps only be experienced, and maybe only there. It was a feeling of a sudden outburst, an urge to run, a direct flow of energy radiating through my body. An adrenaline filled rush. The feeling was similar to an energetic force that I could practically mold, an abstraction or a movement that I could feel physically in my body and mind. But I was physically hindered by the premises itself.

My breath had instead became heavier.

I moved soundlessly outside again. The sun had begun to settle, giving the premises an orange red glow. I saw that my father was now sitting by the larger of the three service buildings, leaning against the north wall. He was facing the sea and sun, sheltering from the wind that by now blew quite heavily. That particular building had a great vaulted ceiling, two windows and two smaller holes in the roof, where birds some times flew in and out. It also had its own little paved entrance.

On the east side of the premises, there was another small service hut. It had probably been a stable once, since it had an earthen floor and there were still traces of hay. But particularly noticeable was a small quadrant window, through which I saw nothing but the ocean that reflecting the sunlight, burning my eyes. It was a deep blue backdrop against the dark wooden window frame. It was hard to not be mesmerized by the waves roaring far down below.

Another strange little building on the premises, I immediately referred to in my head as the The Pie-hut because it was shaped like a quarter of a cake. It had no windows, only a door-opening, and next to it stood the fig-tree, the only tree on the premises. The Pie-hut had probably been some kind of storage facility, due to the dirt floor. But the small hut was somewhat pleasing in its odd presence, since the size and shape beautifully interacted with the connecting stairs that rounded the corner of the main building. It was so beautifully put together, it was almost unnoticeable due to the perfection of its creation. I couldn't help but wonder if the architect or creator of the lighthouse building, actually had the ulterior motive of bringing wonder to the minds of observant visitors?

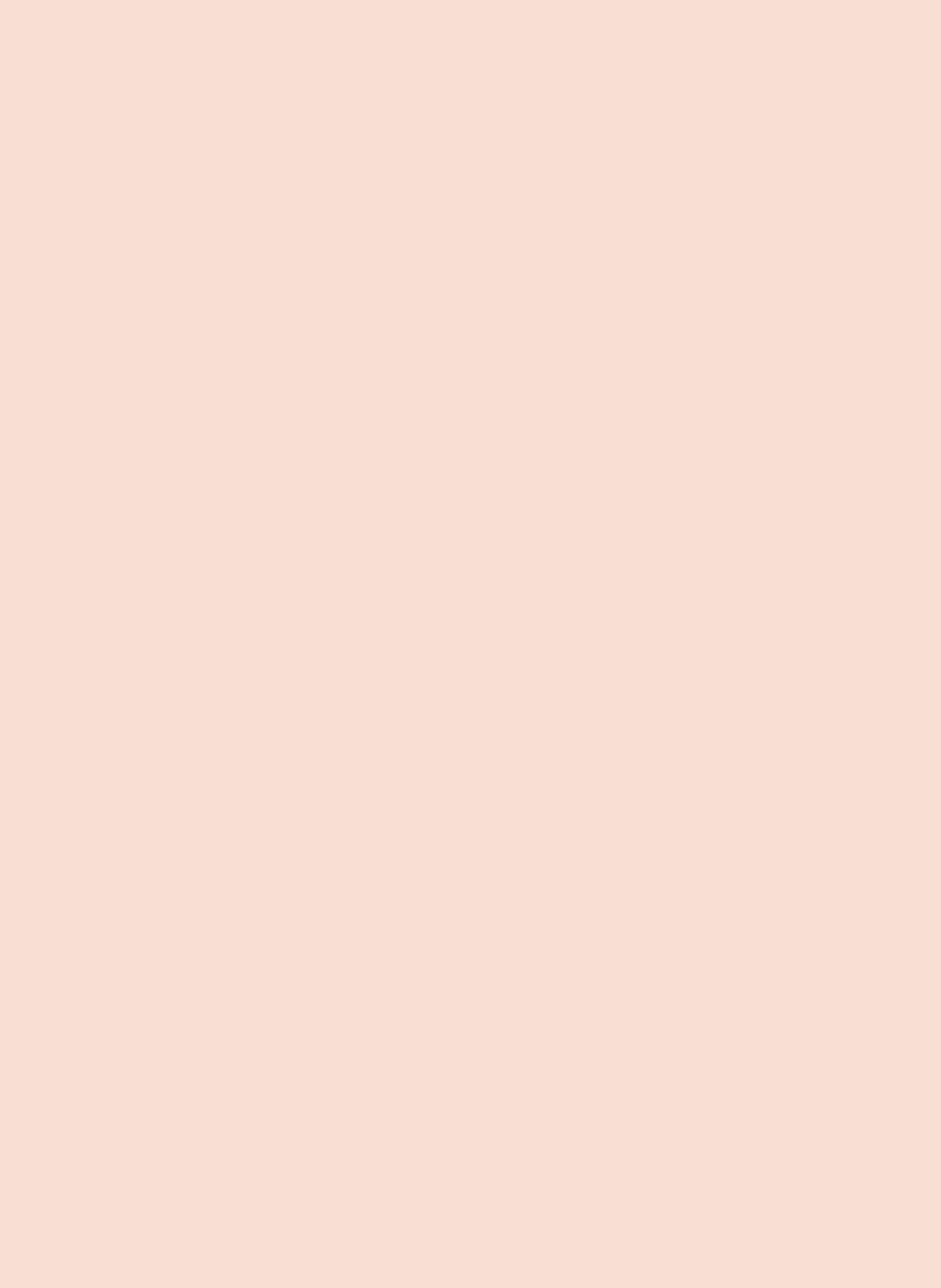
We had spent a little over two hours at the lighthouse. Time had flown, and we decided to go back to the harbour and catch the evening boat back to the mainland. It was also much cooler by now, and I had to put a sweater on. My father did the same. While I had been exploring, he had picked the few ripe figs off the fig tree and saved them as a surprise for our walk. We ate them in silence, contemplating our experiences as we walked down the mountain and through the valley to catch the evening boat. I was mesmerized by this place, enchanted. My father was too, but in a different way. He had found peace at the lighthouse, a more harmonic feeling, emphasizing the importance of the lighthouse as a refuge.

When we approached the port of Trapani I looked back to the island of Levanzo, and saw a faint light going on and off in the distance. It was Capo Grosso, my lighthouse. I had not taken any souvenirs from the place, as first tempted, but instead I had that 'something' of a feeling with me. A feeling I could not put words to, but a feeling that would last longer than any physical souvenir ever would.

In the following years I returned twice to Capo Grosso and each time the lighthouse was a little bit different. More people had been there, taking a little bit more of the lighthouse with them, would it be a piece of marble stone work, or a hand painted tile. The wood framing the windows had begun to decay, and the doors were hanging off their hinges. It was upsetting to see the premises slowly crumbling, but never the less it was a symbol of time and change. The presence of energy flowing through the building was however still there, whether it be the smooth breeze waiting around a corner, or the light from the sun finding its way inside the building and reflecting on the walls, creating dramatic contrasts against the cool terrazzo floors.

Though my love for the lighthouse remained the same, I too had changed over the years, and the idea of 'taking the opportunities' the building had to offer had faded. But entering into its core again and again, that same strange feeling of excitement mixed with unease always became apparent: I wanted to jump to my feet and run, but the surroundings always made me slow down. The feeling of that 'something' was therefore always present, but never really solved on location. I didn't believe the experience to be 'sublime' anymore, the feeling had to be something more closer to myself, something rational and explainable, perhaps even measurable. After all, the feeling was within me. It therefore occurred to me that I had to find that specific moment, when that 'something' would move me.





**THE                    MOMENT  
                  MOMENT  
                  MOMENT**

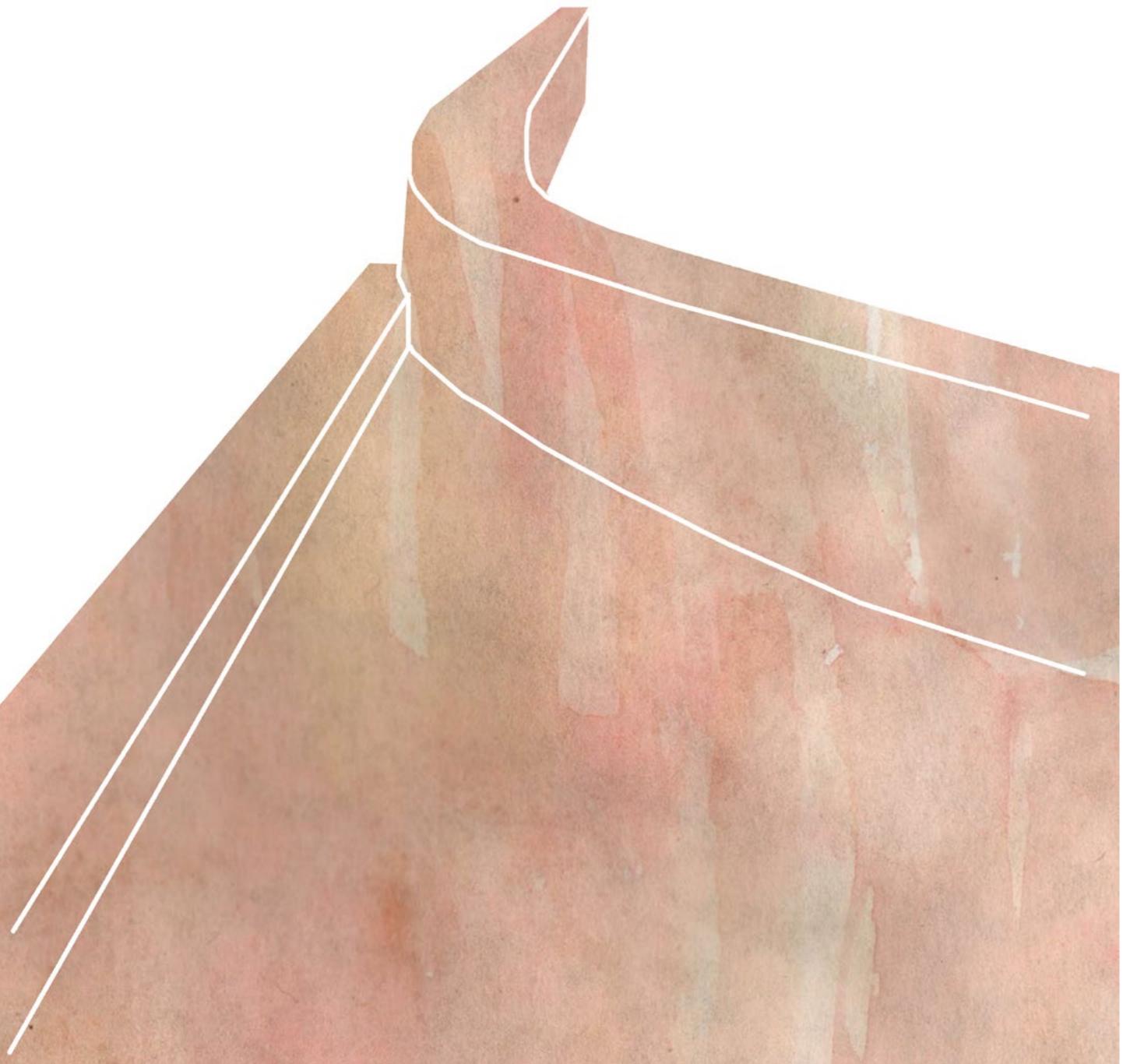
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OF  
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## ATMOSPHERE

It is not difficult to understand why a lighthouse is a strong symbol for humans, as it has been symbolically cited as a metaphor for different matters for as long as we can remember in life, art, and literature. It is a solitary, standing strong on its lonely spot on the edge of land – often on a small island or even a skerry – where it endures the elements. Literally and metaphorically, lighthouses have pointed the way, either in the direction you should go, or in which direction you should not go. It is a light-carrier and a counselor, an outpost against the endless, the unknown, the wild and unpredictable, but its most important function is as a saviour that brings comfort with its light – as a navigational aid.

Although, the above description does paint a full picture of the functions of a lighthouse, it does not compare to the feeling I had with the encounters of Il Faro di Capo Grosso. I therefore wonder if my feeling actually had anything to do with the place being an actual lighthouse, or if my sensory connection was reacting to something else. The contemporary Swiss architect Peter Zumthor approaches this matter with asserting that places should be seen as atmospheres, in opposition to the initial purpose of the place. Instead he emphasizes the sensory aspects of the architectural experience as the things we instantly feel moving us, a first impression, and the capability of immediate appreciation. He describes what creates an architectural atmosphere as ‘this singular density and mood, this feeling of presence, well-being, harmony, beauty...under whose spell I experience what I otherwise would not experience in precisely this way.’<sup>1</sup>

In relation to Capo Grosso, this poetic description of an atmosphere within an aesthetic approach, would refer to the sensorial qualities that the lighthouse radiates, and as mentioned, an immediate form of physical perception, a reaction, recognized through emotional affection - my feeling of ‘something’. The description demonstrates the importance of an atmospheric approach, since it sums up the entity that is ever being felt when being in, and in the memory of the place. One could therefore say, that my feeling from the lighthouse is *place-specific*, and not general. The atmosphere deriving from the lighthouse makes my feeling unique and perhaps impossible to be felt anywhere else but there, and within my mind. The atmosphere is therefore a kind of intimacy between the lighthouse and myself, the mutual acknowledgment that takes place when I move around its premises, similar to a relationship.

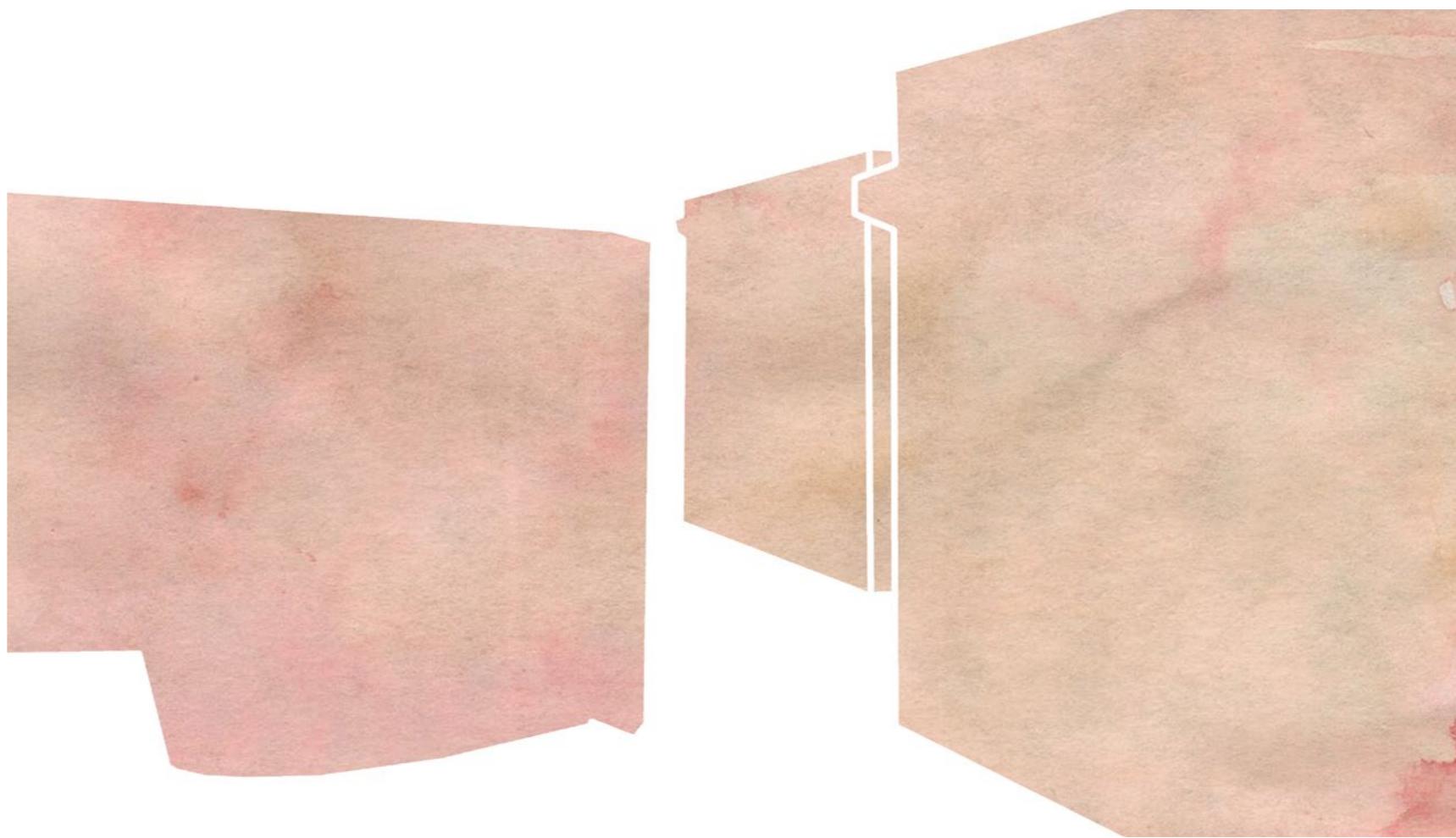


## SPACE PLUS 'SOMETHING'

However, atmosphere as a matter to others I find too generic without the substance of what the atmosphere is telling us, and how, when defining a place. What I see and feel in the lighthouse, is not necessarily what somebody else would see and feel in the same place, as it is *my* relationship with the lighthouse. An interesting entry into this subject is the opening chapter of the anthology *Constructing Place, Mind and Matter* (2003), edited by Sarah Menin. She addresses the matter by taking up the challenge laid down by the Polish architect Amos Rapoport's argument that 'place' has become a buzzword, with the meaning of 'place' being space plus 'something'. Rapoport asserts, that 'place' is never clearly defined, and hence vague, because 'something' within 'place', is never completely explained when talking about 'place'.<sup>2</sup> And furthermore, in rational terms, 'place' is taken to be so familiar as to all conceptual analysis are avoided.<sup>3</sup> Rapoport means that because we don't know that 'something', 'one person's place is another person's non-place', that the definition of 'place' is so culturally and sub-culturally variable that it is indefinable.<sup>4</sup> Although Menin doesn't fully disagree, she argues that 'something' can be untangled and explained, but only within a mental discourse, asserting that the material of a place also is a construction of the mind when perceived.<sup>5</sup>

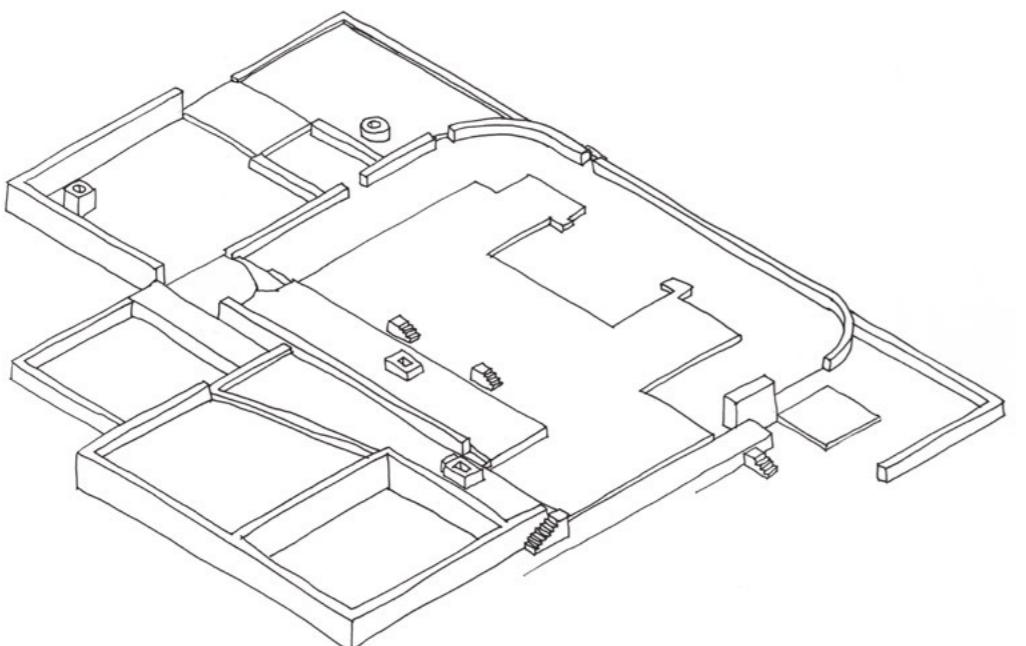
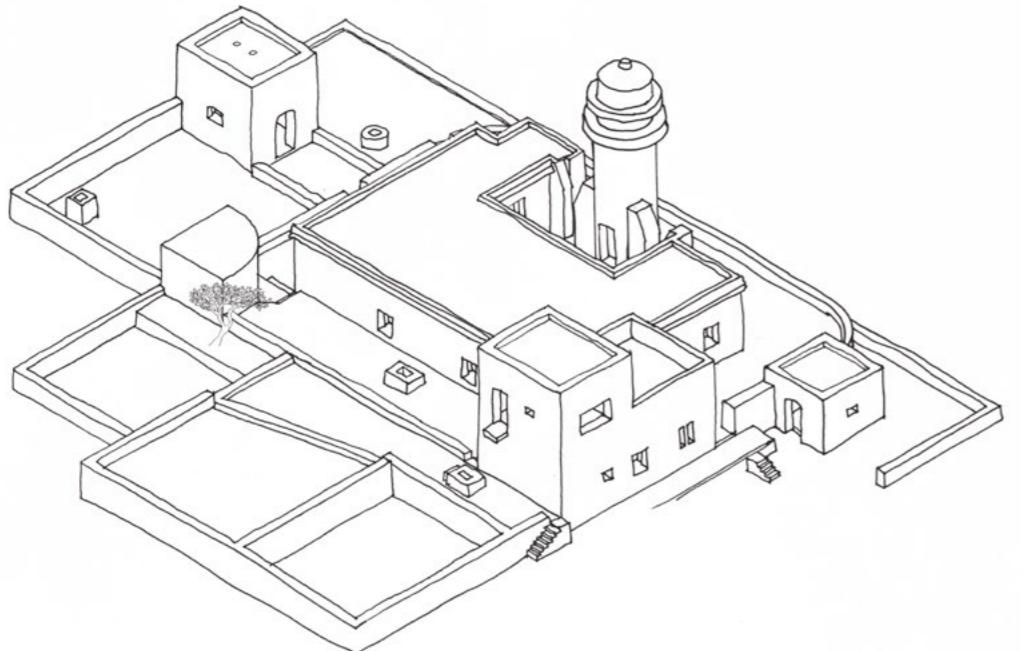
The 'place' being space plus 'something' according to Menin's theory, could therefore be approached by arguing that space within a 'place' is to be defined by the *external stimuli* that resemble a kind of reality of the place. Space could, for example, include the set, architectural elements and objects, material and colour (among others) – things we can perceive and react to – when the 'something' within 'place' is how we conceive, perceive, construct and interpret that space, the external stimuli. 'Something' is, therefore, the outcome of our perception, the generated mood or tone of space, the atmosphere, giving us a feeling, shaped through our senses, a bodily interaction. In other words, the theory of space plus something should be considered as a theory of how an atmosphere is created and perceived, and what the atmosphere has to say through our senses.

In relevance to the lighthouse, the space consisting of walls twisting and turning, steps elevating up and down, small passages making me brush against the prickles of a bush and tilted surfaces making me aware of shifting latitude, make me feel 'something'. The space of the lighthouse is therefore not shapes 'stapled on top of each other', but an atmosphere, perceived through my personal approach, creating



that unease, yet energetic feeling of 'something'. Furthermore, the theory of space plus 'something' underlines the importance of talking about a 'place' in particular terms as a complexion of matter and mind, in contrast to set connotations and expectations of how the place usually is understood. The lighthouse is therefore not only a lighthouse, but can also be anything depending on the eye of the beholder - me. The concept of dividing a 'place', into space plus 'something' I therefore find particularly efficient in its theory and in relation to understanding Capo Grosso since the 'external stimuli' is the sum of the atmosphere, and in turn the cause of my feeling. To understand the external stimuli would mean to understand my feeling. In this context, I can reflect on the difficulty understanding my place-specific feeling. I had been looking at the lighthouse as an actual 'lighthouse', not as 'space plus 'something''. This generated the frustration of not understanding the atmosphere, because it did not match the general idea of a lighthouse. Perhaps that was why my travel companions would go as far as to call the place 'special' but nothing more. I had experienced the space differently.

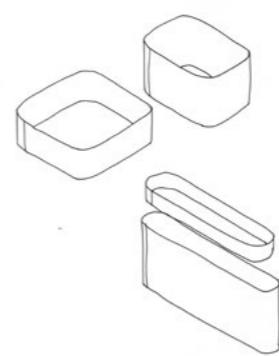
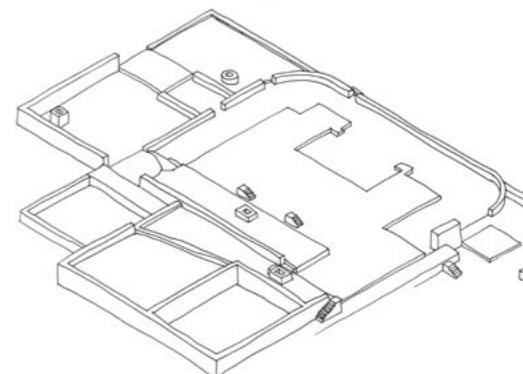
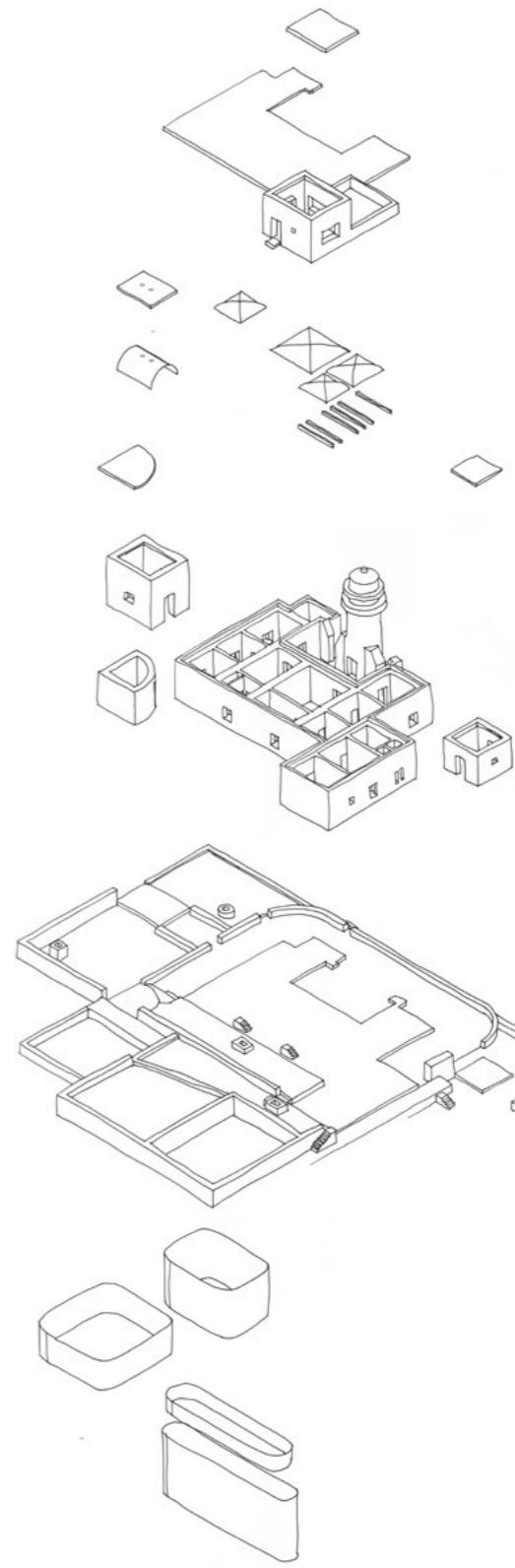
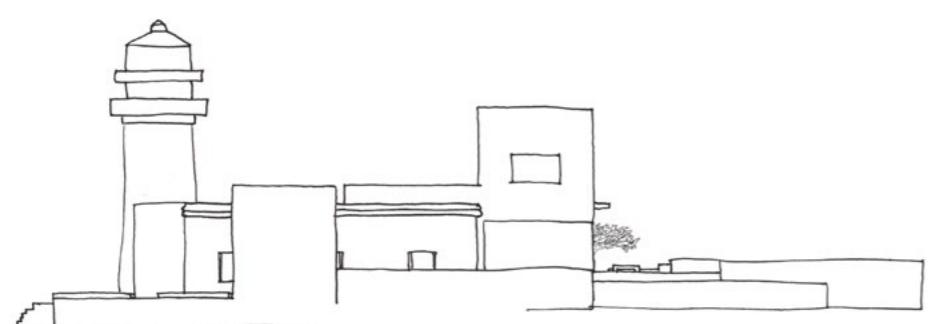
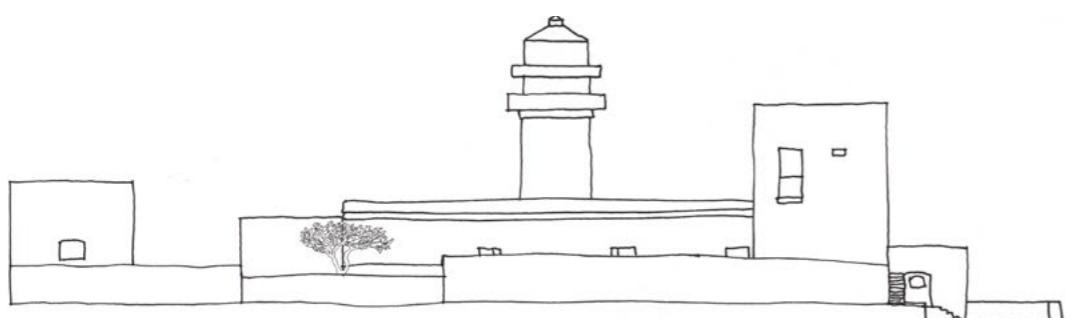
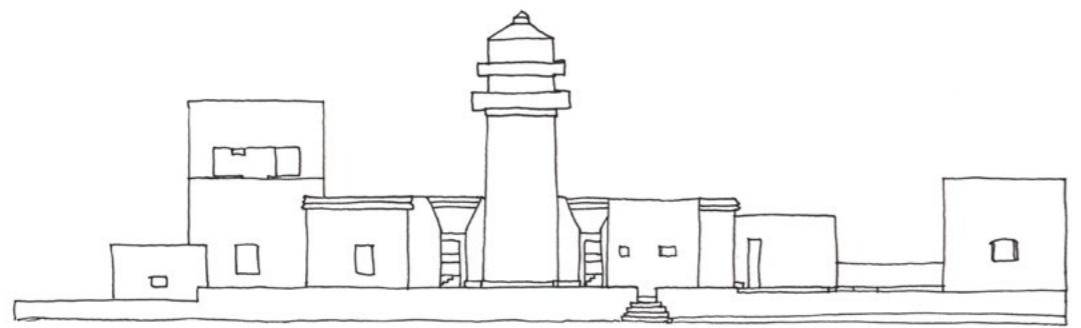
## PERCEPTION



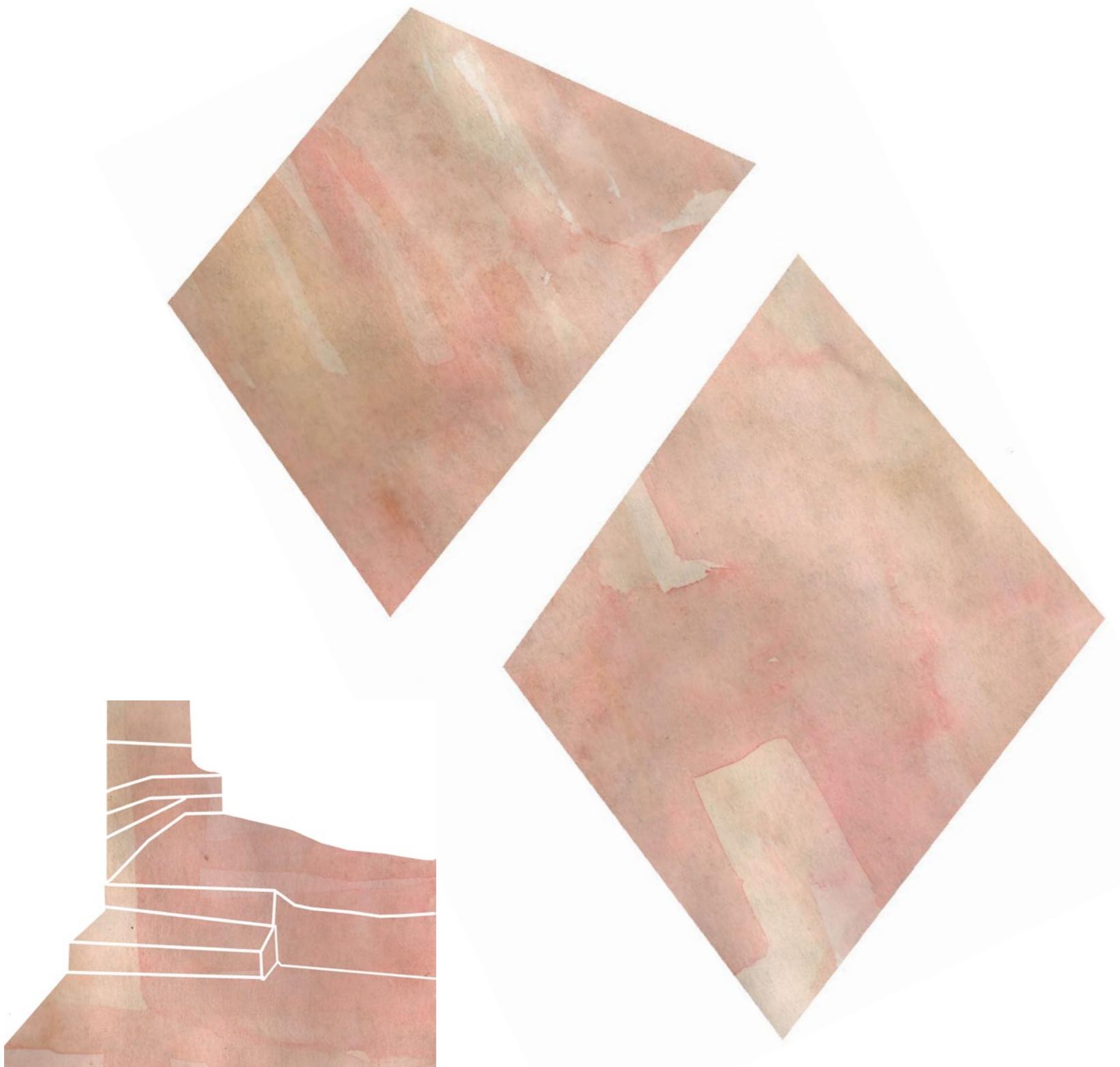
If the above picture represents the place, the second one represents the space, the external stimuli, stripped of the set expectation of being a lighthouse.

The difference of perception between my father (and also, my other travel companions) and myself, interests me since we had experienced the lighthouse together. We could agree that the lighthouse represented a set, physical reality, a space made up of objects, angles, light and materials – and, not to forget, a lighthouse-tower – but our experience of the atmosphere was different. Reflecting on Plato's famous line 'Beauty is in the eye of the beholder' (quoted by Zumthor among numerous others),<sup>6</sup> 'something', or the perceived atmosphere, is nevertheless, understood differently from person to person. The ability of perception of space – to organize, identify, and interpret sensory information (see, hear, or become aware of something) in order to represent and understand an environment – is influenced or touched by other external factors. Our perceptions are therefore never, what we see is what we get, as implied within the Rapoport critique of 'place', but coloured by former experiences and cultural knowledge through our whole lives, making a 'place' our personal interpretation of space.

This makes my intention with translating this 'something' into its physical equivalence rather difficult since my perception of the lighthouse is personal. There is therefore no guarantee that others will understand my feeling equally. However, the French phenomenological philosopher Merleau-Ponty, addresses the issue of perception arguing that the physical body is the main interpreter of a place since it is our bodily senses that derive the structural qualities from the surroundings, the space. Therefore, the body's role in the perception is central, because it is the body's movement that generate and fulfill the concept of place and thus all objects in that space, merely by existing in that space.<sup>7</sup> He argues that body and mind cannot be separated and divided as subject and object, asserting that the perception of the bodily senses influences what is perceived by the mind. Body-for-others, on the other hand, is not to be conceived as an object in the world, but as our sole means of communication - we are therefore not autonomic beings, we have mutual understandings on a basic level. The perception, or experience of a place is, to be understood as highly individual since it is bodily evoked, but the feeling however can be explained and understood by others, but not necessarily physically felt.



## BODY - EMOTIONALLY AWARE



This explains our difference of perception and why the lighthouse didn't 'speak' in a single voice to my traveling companions and myself, but as a choir, telling us different things. We could understand each others feelings, but we didn't necessarily need to experience them. The above theoretical perspectives of 'place' within the discussion of atmosphere, space and difference of perception demonstrates that these 'sub-topics' are not autonomous, but highly intertwined with each other. The *atmosphere* referred to the sensorial qualities that a space emits, being the immediate form of physical perception, and is recognized through the evoked body; *space* is the external stimuli that evoke the senses creating a tone or mood, a 'something', that in turn creates the atmosphere of a place; and our *perception* of that place is personal since it is derived from our bodily senses; experiences lived through us, our body, influenced by our everyday impressions. What we can see is that the recurrent theme throughout this sub-topic discussion is that the mind and body are inseparable and dependent on one another.

What comes to my attention within this discovery is that what makes mind and body inseparable is the bond, or bridge of *emotions* and *feelings*, linking the body with the mind. The Portuguese-American professor Antonio Damasio in neuroscience, explains that feelings are our 'mental experiences of body states', which arise when the brain interprets emotions, themselves physical states arising from the body's responses to external stimuli.<sup>8</sup> Emotions are therefore the immediate form of the physical perception, a bodily reaction, and the natural instinctive state between mind and body deriving from one's circumstances, mood, or reaction to external stimuli. Feelings are the mental experiences of the body state, which arise as the brain interprets these emotions from the perception of space. An example of such order of events could therefore be: being threatened (by space, external stimuli evoking the body), experience fear (the evoked emotion), and feel horror (the feeling of 'something' in the mind). In other words; the feeling in the mind is evoked by emotions raised from bodily circumstances: body- emotion- feeling - mind.

To understand the feeling, I have to understand the emotion. Feelings and emotions can, therefore, be argued to be the two sides of the same coin. With this description of the intimate relation between emotions and feelings, I understand that if the coin can flip and spin, so

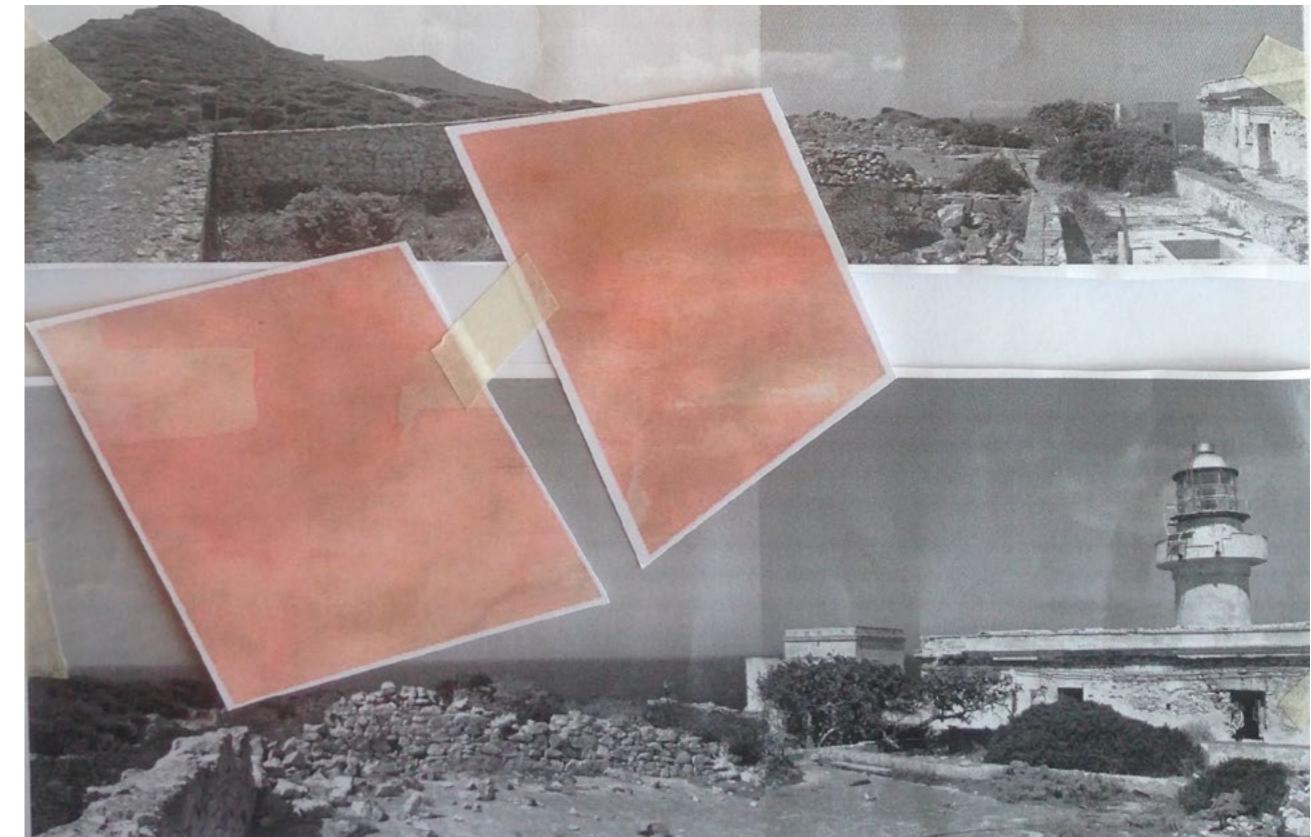
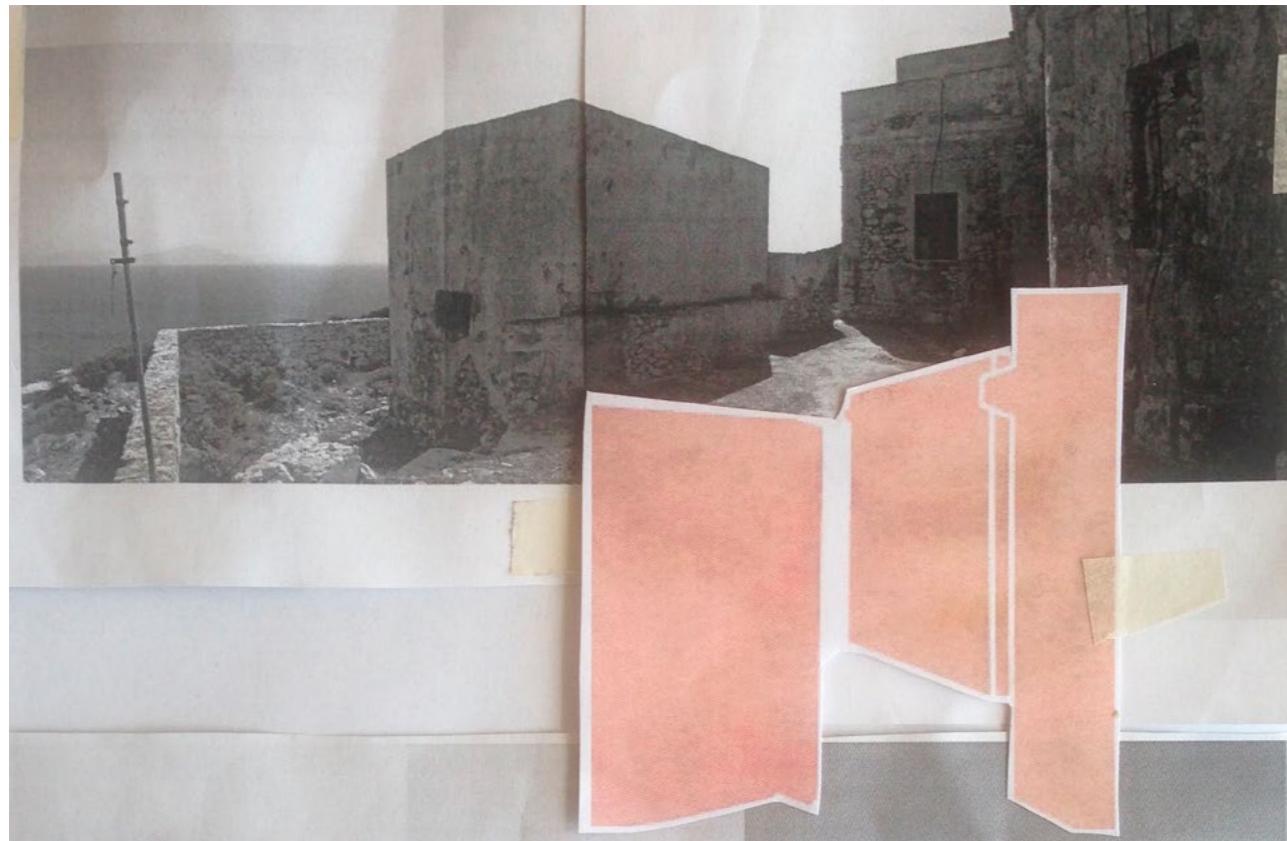
can the order of the above events. Body- emotions-feeling- mind, can therefore in reverse become mind- feeling- emotion- body. This would mean, that in order to understand my unidentified feeling, I need to find the emotion that sparked it. To find the emotion, I must go back in 'place', in memory, to understand the sensorial qualities that the space radiated. In this attempt, I need to be attentive to both mind and body to understand the feeling - I need to be *emotionally aware*.

## MEMORY

However, the German philosopher Gernot Böhme in his essay *Atmosphere as the Subject Matter of Architecture* (2005) argues that 'we must be physically present' to experience space in its complete entirety, and that 'participation is an affective tendency by which our mood is attuned to the nature of a space, to its atmosphere.'<sup>9</sup> Going back in memory is therefore not a real option according to Böhme, since 'the decisive experience takes place only when we take part through our presence in the space formed or created by architecture'.<sup>10</sup> This claim is shared by memory-theorist Eva-Karin Karlsson, author of the essay

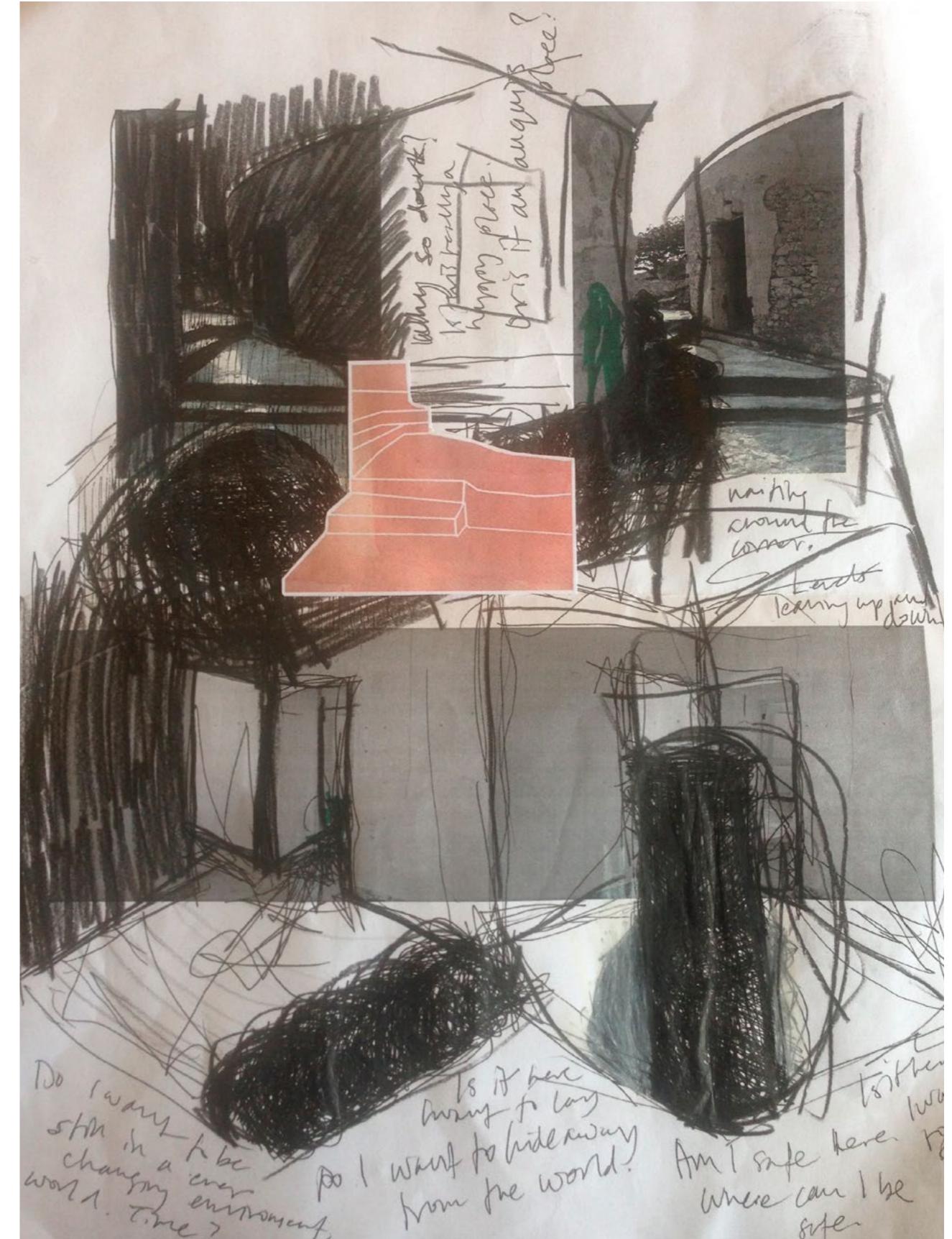
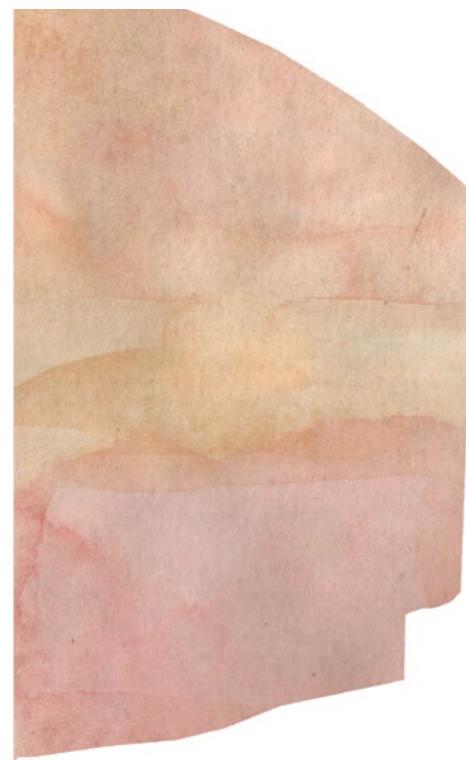
*Berättelser om minnen* (Stories about Memories, 2010), arguing that it is not possible to talk about the past on the basis of memory, because memory is a reconstruction that depends on different circumstances. A memory can therefore never be considered as a 'truth', but as a variation of a truth.<sup>11</sup> The Swedish psychoanalyst Clarence Crafoord goes on to assert that a memory is transformed over time into a myth, a kind of archetype, and when the memory has become a myth, it is told from the narrator's perspective, from how he or she wants it to be perceived, in favor of what actually happened. Although, that a memory changes, does not mean that one is forgetful, rather that the memory fulfills different needs each time it is remembered.<sup>12</sup>

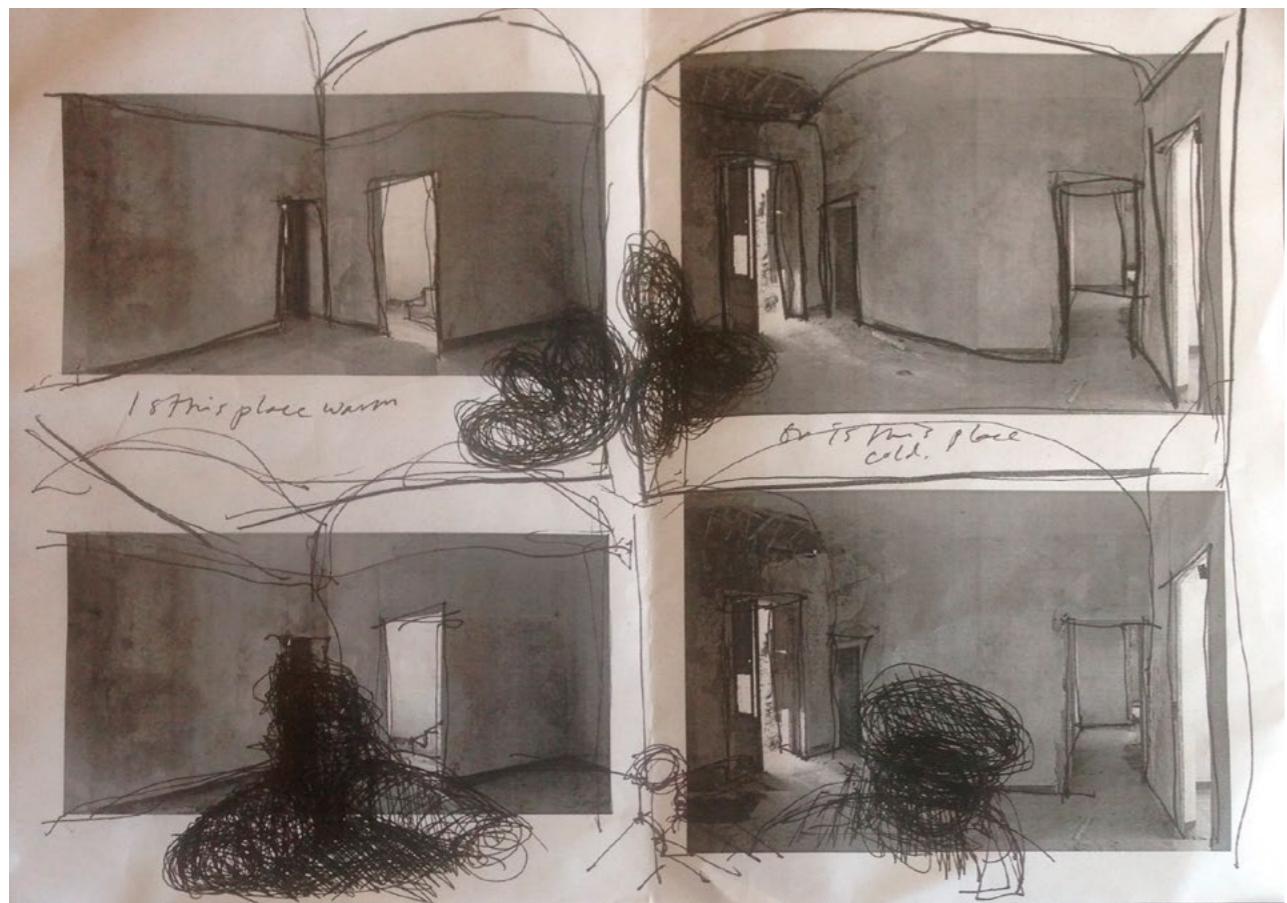
The English philosopher Dylan Trigg addresses the issue of memory from a different perspective. In his book *The Memory of Place – A Phenomenology of the Uncanny* (2012), he argues that 'we carry places with us'. It is a double act between place and body framing the centrality of place; where the place is given as an anchor in time for our identities through memories. He writes: 'our bodies not only orient us, but also serve as the basis for an entire history, at all times producing a self that strives toward continuity through retaining and returning



to places.<sup>13</sup> I find this claim rather absorbing because it means that we are both here and there, that I am the result of every place I have ever visited in both my mind and body (thus our personal perception of space). This theory helps me to better understand my relation to the lighthouse and my memories of it, memories that I have allowed to be held in that specific place of a feeling. In turn, being held by the lighthouse also means being able to return to it because of its role as a base of those memories in a material sense. Being in place is therefore not temporally static, rather, as Triggs asserts; our memories pursue us as we pursue place, both forming an ambiguous zone somewhere in between.<sup>14</sup> My lighthouse is therefore always with me, within the memory of the unidentified feeling, I carry the 'place' with me. By carrying places within us, as a memory or a feeling, constructed or reconstructed – they are embodied in us, 'the continuity of one's sense of self'.<sup>15</sup> This means that the problem of the unidentified lighthouse-feeling from the past can be fully understood in the present since the perception of the lighthouse-space will always be embodied within me– the memory of the place is the emotional insight of the past.

Therefore, to find the moment of movement that evoked me emotionally, I must be emotionally aware within the memory of the lighthouse.



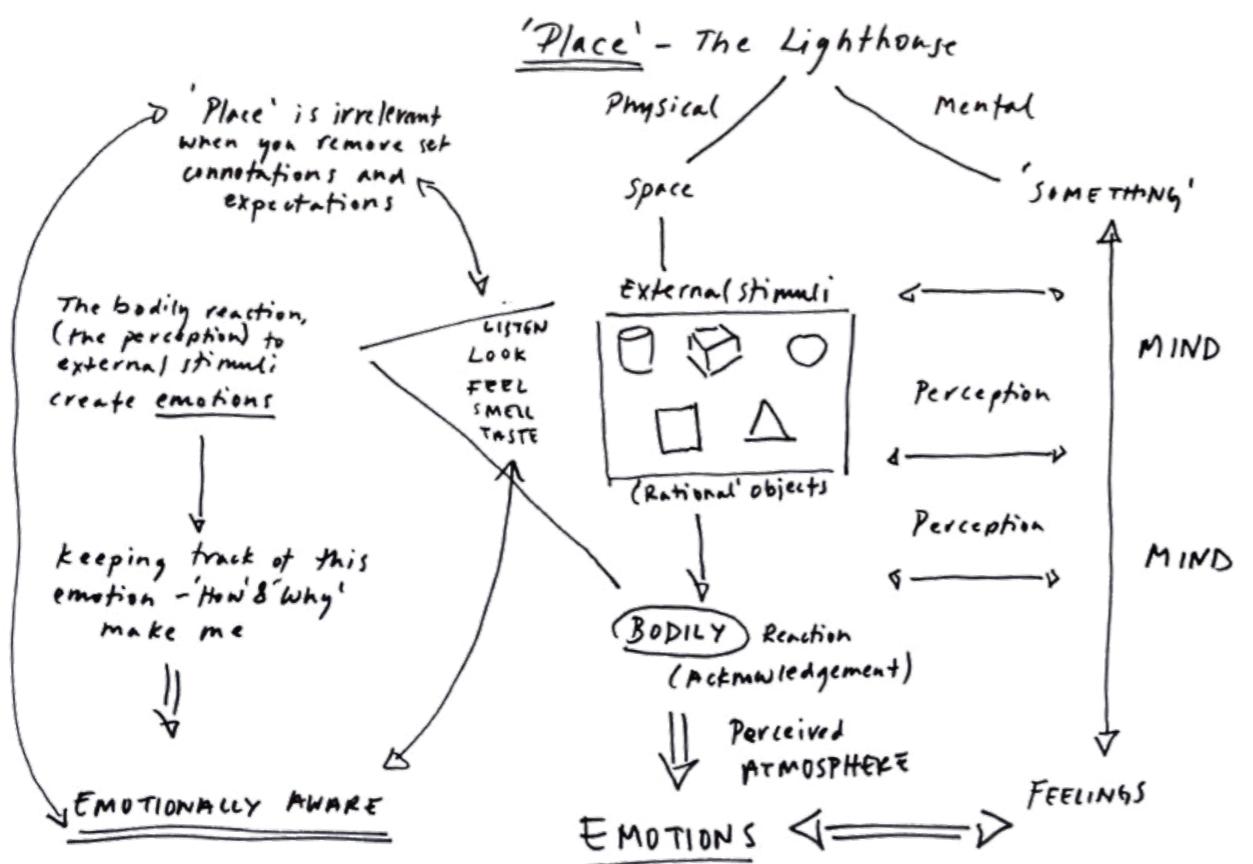




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## EMOTIONALLY AWARE

As stated in the introduction, the attempt to translate the unidentified feeling into its equivalent physical form has proved to be difficult. This is partly because I have not had a method to do so, but also because I have not known the factor sparkling the feeling. Through the discussions of the previous theoretical chapter, it has come to my knowledge, that the ability to be aware of my emotions, is the key to both my unidentified feeling, and the moment of movement. Emotionally aware may at first seem like a term only used in a psychological discourse, but in the process of revealing the mechanisms behind the feeling, I have discovered that the method of being emotionally aware can also be used as a method for uniting mental and physical order. To be emotionally aware, is therefore to be attentive to both body and mind.



The examination of emotion is not easily described, because of the simultaneous activity of several structures that go back and forth between them. This prevents the process from being linear, but crisscross.

Although the above theoretical discussion demonstrates the complexity of the concept of 'place', and that the physiology of emotions is not easily described, being emotionally aware within 'place' means to be free of set connotations and expectations of a place. Instead 'place' should be perceived through mind and body, fully open for taking in the atmosphere. In the process of analyzing a place through the conscious act of being emotionally aware, the significance of what the place means for me through my embodied emotional history, will appear in the moment of movement. Being attentive to the movement, that sudden 'something', which moves us, is being attentive to the emotion it evokes.

An example how emotional 'observations' can help understand a place, is when the Danish architect Jørn Utzon used a type of emotional awareness when building his summer residency Can Lis, in Mallorca, completed in 1972. Utzon prepared preliminary sketches and drawings, but these underwent changes as the building proceeded. Utzon was namely watching his workers, studying them throughout the course of the day, observing where on the premises they would eat lunch, enjoy breaks, and drink their afternoon coffee – all in relation to the elements of the premises; the light, the shade, the wind, and of course, the views. These observations resulted in a house where walls that were under construction, were torn down, only to be built up again in a new place, optimum the use of light and views custom to Utzon's daily agenda. Whether the feelings were described or shared with Utzon by the workers, the story does not reveal. But it is an example how emotional 'observations' can help create configurations in a way that were not considered in the first place.

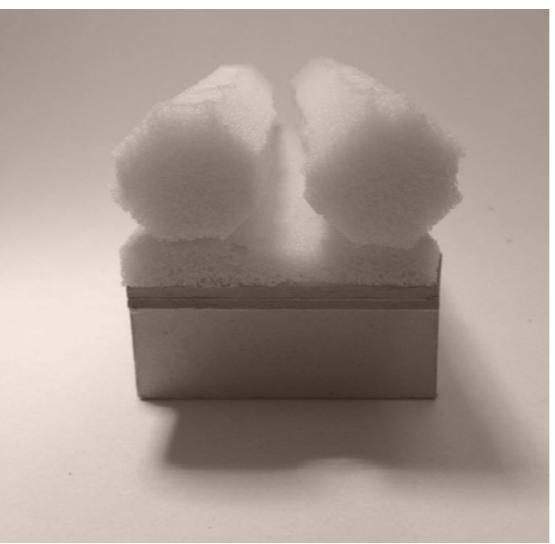


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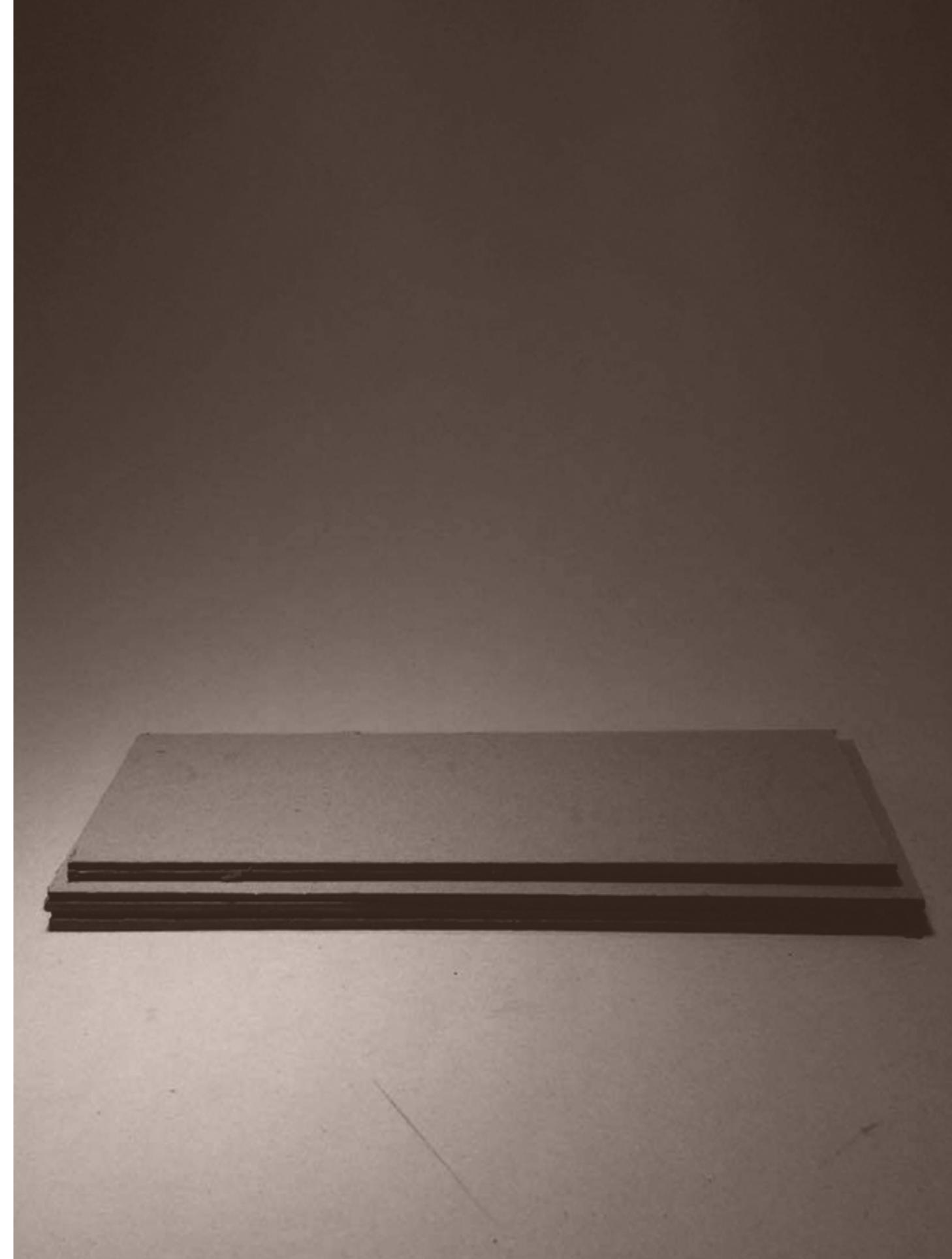
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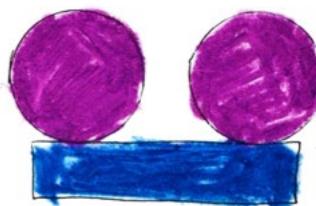
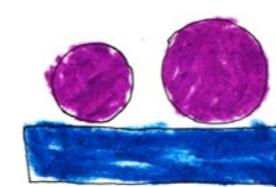
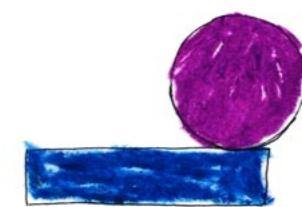
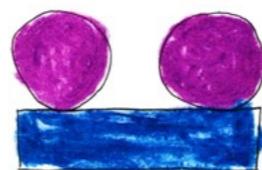
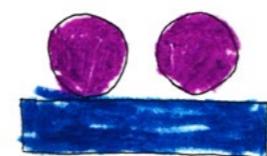
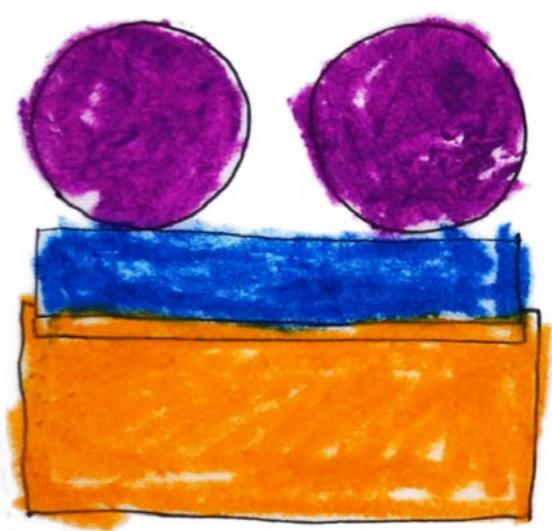
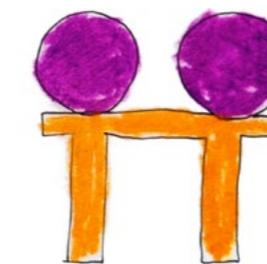
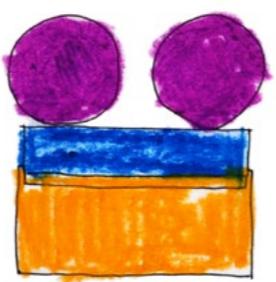
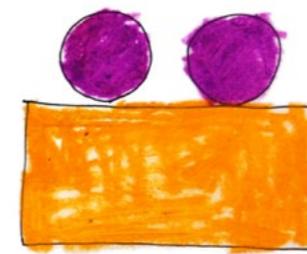
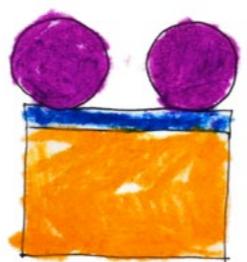
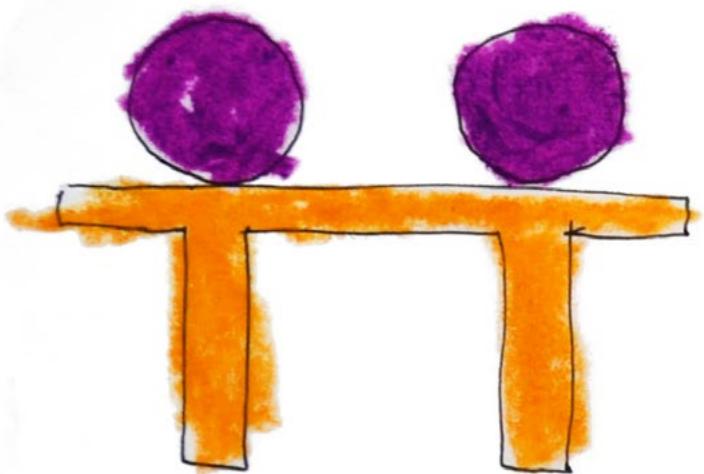
## ANTICIPATION

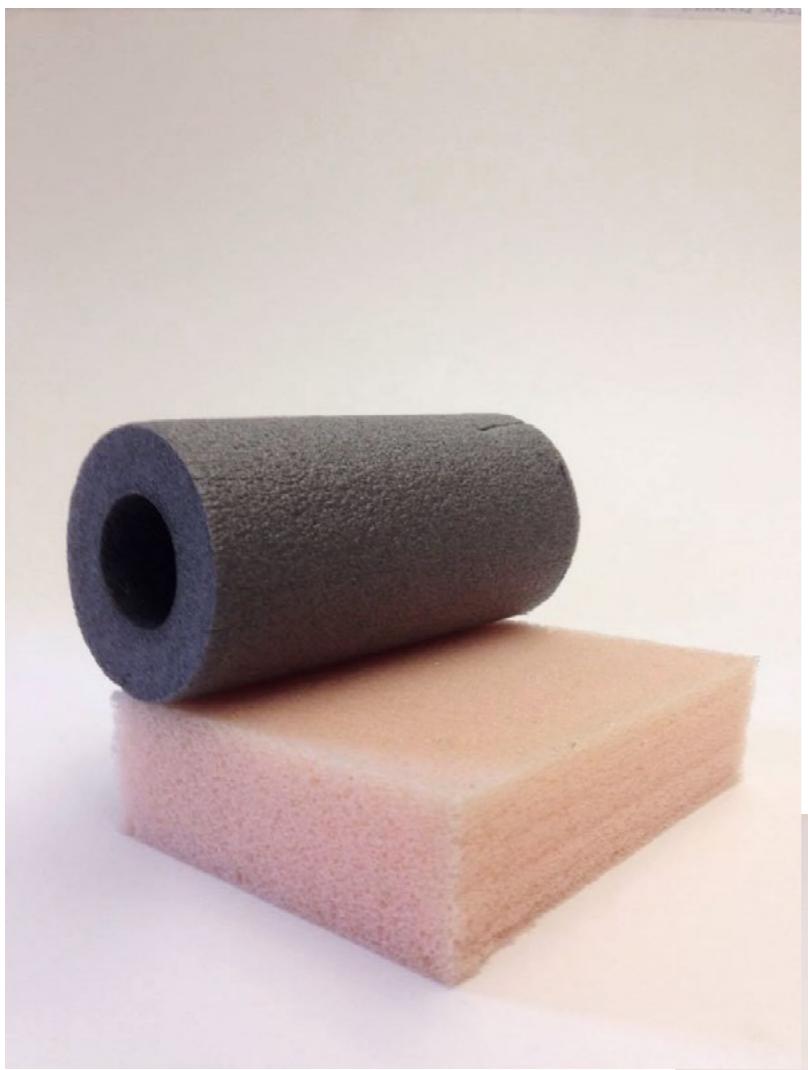
In the process of writing down my lighthouse-story through memory, I noticed that certain things had evoked me emotionally through my body's movement. The lighthouse space that consisted of walls that twisted and turned, steps that elevated up and down, small passages that had made me brush against the thorns of a bush and the tilted surfaces that made me aware of shifting horizontal angles - had all made me feel different things, but also made me very aware of myself within these surroundings. I had felt a rush of excitement and enthusiasm when first coming upon the premises, and then later a feeling of fear from not knowing what was hidden around corners or hidden in rooms yet un-entered. This had made my heart beat faster and my breath heavier. I was exhilarated and I could feel the adrenaline in my veins. However, the experience had also left me with a feeling of unease, a bit discontent. Perhaps because I had realized that I was powerless from acting on these feelings. Partly because the lighthouse potentiality wasn't 'mine' to experiment with, but also because the premises would not allow me to move quickly due to the arrangement of elements in a particular 'hindering' way. The external stimuli of shapes, twists and turns, had evoked my body in contrasting emotions. The feeling experienced partly involved a pleasure in considering something expected or long-for event, but also involved a feeling of suspicion or fear. The feeling was therefore (or still is) similar to an imitation of having to wait for an opportunity, and also, not knowing if that opportunity is to be a success or a failure. It is a loss of control regulated by the surroundings, but also the gain of energy due to the excitement. I realized that the feeling of 'something' was *anticipation*.

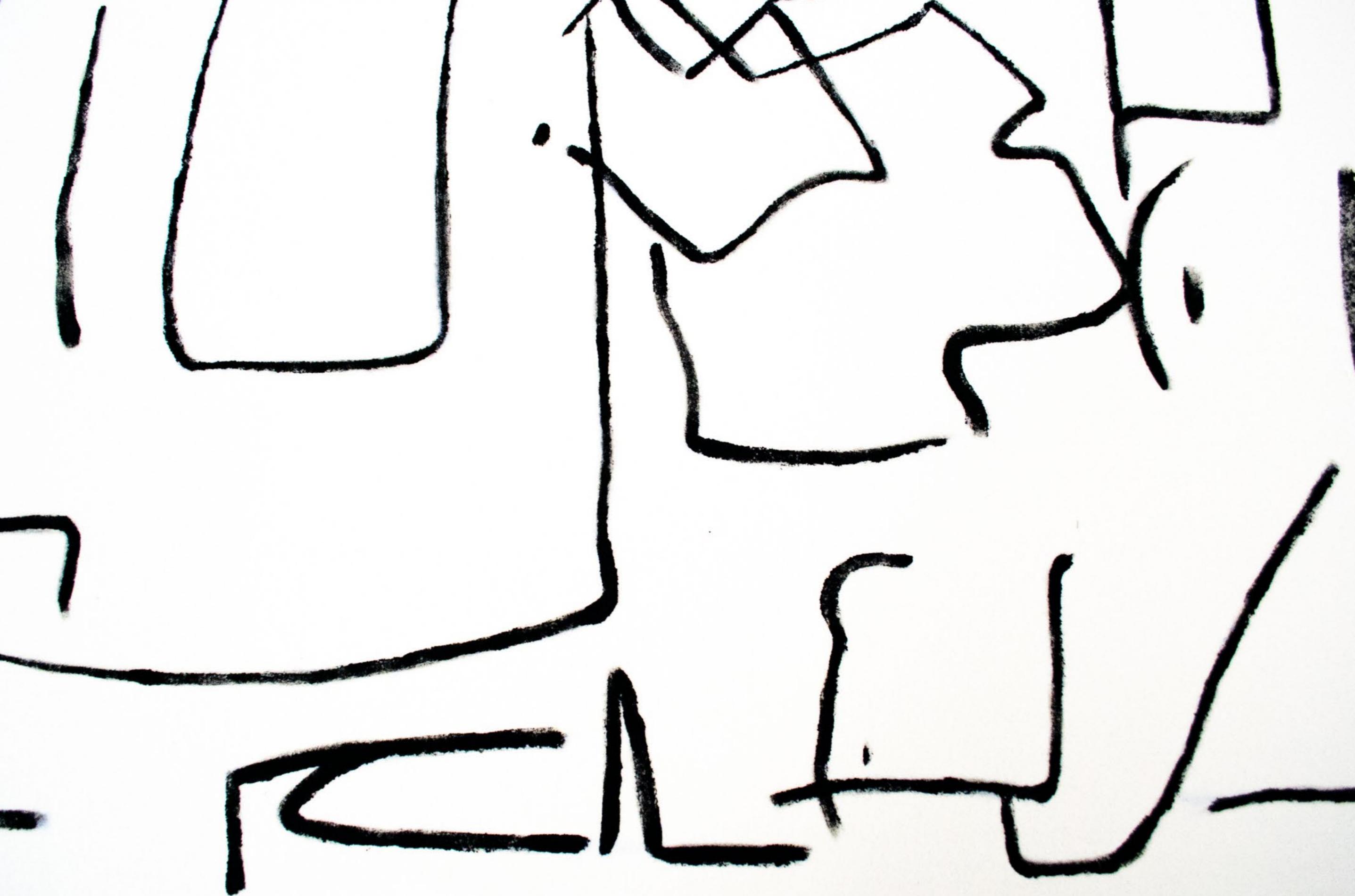


Anticipation, or being enthusiastic, is an emotion involving pleasure, excitement, and sometimes anxiety in considering some expected or longed-for good event. However, a part of the considering of the 'expected' or 'longed-for good event' also means that the event may never happen - hence the anxious feeling. In my case the anxiety consisted of the feeling of unease and powerless, since I could not physically or psychologically influence the circumstances. The feeling of anticipation experienced is therefore for me similar to the act of lying, or sitting down, in order to gain strength or energy. But, when it is time for me to get up, the strength or energy is not there. The *will* to get up is present, but the power to do so is not. I am simply under the spell of wanting to do something, but hindered in both mind and body. The following chapter is my attempt to physically visualize anticipation, through experimenting with the above comparison.









# THE PHYSICAL EQUIVALENCE OF IL FARO DI CAPO GROSSO

The purpose of this study was to experiment with the lighthouse equation by making the external stimuli, the space, abstract, and the unidentified feeling of 'something' understandable, in order to illustrate and visualize the place-specific feeling into its physical equivalence. In order to proceed with this task, I learned that I needed to perceive the 'place' not as a lighthouse through set connotations, but as a space plus 'something' - as an atmosphere. The initial purpose of the 'place' being a lighthouse was therefore always irrelevant for my place-specific feeling. But, by approaching the lighthouse from an alternative emotional perspective, broadened my sensorial qualities to perceive the 'something' more clearly, and led me to understand that the key to my feeling was the bond of emotions linking my mind with my body. By understanding this, I could be attentive to the lighthouse space through the method of being emotionally aware. This allowed me to detect the unidentified feeling through the moment of movement by going back in memory to retrace the steps of my mind, feelings, emotions and body that together created the feeling of 'something' - the feeling of anticipation.

In order to depict the physical equivalence of the feeling of anticipation, I have chosen to work with a smaller 'sitting arrangement', which I have decided to call Sam. I wanted Sam to be of something familiar, a kind of foundation with set connotations, just like my first approach towards the lighthouse equation. However, the familiarity is of subordinate value due to the different arrangements of the obvious characteristics a 'sitting arrangement' possess. The placement of the cushions creates a hesitation of whether or not Sam is a chair to be used for sitting. The design is thereby not obvious, creating mixed feelings of excitement and powerlessness, since you don't know what will happen when you sit on it, or if you even will sit on it. Regardless of the choice, the external stimuli of Sam, her familiar shape, strong formations and elevations, evoke the body in contrasting emotions. The feeling experienced may partly involve a pleasure in considering something expected - I will sit down - but also involve the feeling of suspicion or fear, due to the different shape contrasting from the normal - will I sit down? The feeling may therefore be similar to the notion of waiting for an opportunity, and also, not knowing if that opportunity

is to be a success or a failure. It is a loss of control regulated by the object, but also the gain of energy due to the felt rush of excitement. Sitting on Sam (or, rather in Sam) evokes the same feeling - should I be sitting here. Yet again, the feeling of sitting relaxed and comfortable is not obvious - you anticipate if you should stay or if you should go. One is for that reason lost in anticipation since one is both considering something expected, but also anxious towards the physical obstacle - the unease of sitting on something not fully self-explanatory. Sam makes you therefore anticipate the moment, both in her perception and physical challenge.

## FOOTNOTES

- <sup>1</sup>. Ben Anderson, *Anderson, Ben, Encountering Affect: Capacities, Apparatuses, Conditions*, Surrey, 2014, p. 154.
- <sup>2</sup>. Sarah Menin, *Constructing Place, Mind and Matter*, London, 2003, p. 1-2.
- <sup>3</sup>. Dylan Trigg, *The Memory of Place – A Phenomenology of the Uncanny*, Ohio, 2012, p. 2.
- <sup>4</sup>. Sarah Menin, *Constructing Place, Mind and Matter*, London, 2003, p. 1-2.
- <sup>5</sup>. Ibid. p. 1.
- <sup>6</sup>. Peter Zumthor, *Atmospheres, Architectural Environments - Surrounding Objects*, Berlin, 2006, p. 17.
- <sup>7</sup>. D.W. Hamlyn, *Filosofins historia*, Nørhavnen, 1994, p. 353-355.
- <sup>8</sup>. Ibid. p. 353-355.
- <sup>9</sup>. Böhme, Gernot, *Atmosphere as the Subject Matter of Architecture*', Basel, 2005, p. 402.
- <sup>10</sup>. Ibid. p. 402
- <sup>11</sup>. Karlsson, Eva Karin. *Berättelser om minnen - en studie av tre sätt att berätta om sin barndom i bilderbok*, Kristianstad, 2010, p. 47.
- <sup>12</sup>. Clarence, Crafoord Barndomens återkomst. En psykoanalytisk och litterär studie, 1996, p. 29.
- <sup>13</sup>. Dylan Trigg, *The Memory of Place – A Phenomenology of the Uncanny*, Ohio, 2012, p. 11-12.
- <sup>14</sup>. Ibid. p. 9.
- <sup>15</sup>. Ibid. p. 9.



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