OLOF: SPACE BEAR

Handmade Filmmaking Lensed Through a Cosmic Mythological Narrative.

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ATTESTATION OF AUTHORSHIP

"I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the Acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning."

Verity Tolcher _____ 20th May 2018

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ABSTRACT

Olof: Space Bear. Handmade Filmmaking Lensed Through a Cosmic Mythological Narrative, is an art practice as research project that drew upon mythological narratives, and handmade making methods, as a platform to develop a preproduction package for a short silent film. The proposed moving image project, outlined in this research report, is a designed preproduction film package. The story of the film is about a bear travelling through space to discover his missing soulmate. The practice is interested in the universal aspects associated with falling in love and the narratives that this core human experience produces. This project tells its story through the nature of my making methods, which combine physical materials with digital processes. Through the work, I aim to draw an emotional response from the viewer, through the creative application of materially tactile tools such as, paint, thread, fabric, together with any other elements that I was able to use produce a texture from. The iterative experiments were reviewed and refined, and then photographed and combined with digital media to make a moving image sequence.

The practice is iterative in its approach and compiled what I determined to be the most valuable storytelling methods and visual techniques for this project through the material and sound experiments, conducted during the making process. These investigations have been recorded through methodical journals where each process had multiple inquiries along with reflections on the final choices that were made. The project is aligned with dramaturgical methods of thinking, in particular Robert Lepage's 'techniques of performance creation' as discussed in Aleksandar Saša Dundjerović's biography of him.

LIST OF FIGURES

The image used on the cover page and the images used throughout the book that have not been captioned or have been used in the appendices are all original pieces of photography. They have been a source of inspiration during this whole period of study and have been shot in different parts of the world.

Introduction

Contextual Review

This speculative practice-based research project is a preproduction package for a short narrative film, based on cosmological themes, supported by influences drawn from science fiction and horror genres. The short film's working title is Olof: Space Bear. This contextual review of knowledge presents investigations into key written and practice-based texts to position the research project. This chapter was designed to support choices, iterative experimentation with materials, and technical considerations, presented and discussed in the research methodology chapter. To support the making methods, research was also undertaken with a focus on selected stories from Greek mythology alongside literature that supports an understanding of the key technical aspects of the project, for example: sound design and Foley, cinematography, and history of special effects.

Methodology

This chapter presented the methodological framework for this project, which is positioned as an art practice as research project. As such the research resided through the production of material experimentation and reflections being the most active part of the processes and procedure applied as the core methods of the project. The tools that had been used to generate design ideas were: analogous experience, visual documentation, and self-reflection. I explored these methods in this chapter, along with examples of how these have been put into action, with links back to the supporting contextual components that had informed their making. This research facilitated the idea of combining slight digital techniques with the handmade materials

- (handmade being the primary technique and digital being used to subtly manipulate still images created by myself to make them more fitting to a cinematic environment).

Results and Findings

The main aim throughout this process was to lay the foundations for the making of a short film in the future. By having considered all avenues within the context of creating an academic project, the film will then have the potential to build upon and expand the in-depth research and fully conceptualised ideas. The future of this project is discussed in this chapter. Due to the practice-based nature of this project, this chapter aims to help present some written accompaniment to preceed the bulk of the findings which can be seen in the appendices in the form of journaling and material experimentation.

Chapter One

Contextual Review

Introduction

This chapter explores the different aspects that make up the sections of the preproduction for this project. These have been split into: narrative structure, handmade development, and sound generation. The aim of these factions was to consider the audience's psychological engagement with the film's narrative, utilising a range of different designed aural and visual devices that used the aforementioned frameworks to organise the thought process of the creative project.

Narrative Structure

A traditional three-part structure was used for this project as it was deemed most appropriate for this cause. The narrative took inspiration from tales of Greek Mythology, which also utilised this configuration, so the tone of the story is in keeping with this theme. This section discusses the research into the technicalities of storytelling, the mythology that has informed its making, and the characterisation of the protagonist.

When researching storytelling methods, a clear reference point of particular interest is contained within John Yorke's *Into the Woods: How Stories Work And Why We Tell Them*, specifically in a section about the 'Kuleshov Effect', named after Russian director, Lev Kuleshov. Yorke examined how when writing a screenplay, the primary focus should be on "showing", rather than "telling". This had a material impact in shaping the project, as reading this book at an early stage in the research process finalised the idea that this film would not contain any dialogue. He discussed how "If an audience is presented with disparate images they will assemble them into a meaningful order."[1], even if there was a juxtaposition between said images. Consideration was also given of how an audience can find it rewarding to figure something out for themselves, therefore implying that leaving some mystery and room for them to find the answers was vital. An example given in the book by Yorke was from the film Ryan's

1   John Yorke, Into the Woods: How Stories Work and Why We Tell Them, 1st ed. (London: Penguin, 2013).

Daughter (1970) where when a woman expresses her sexual frustration to a priest, he tells her not to nurse her wishes or there will be trouble. Cue a cut to a "tall handsome stranger disembarking from a bus, lit in striking silhouette against the sea."[1]. This was signifying that this is exactly what the woman wants, and also that he will be the cause of trouble to come. The viewer does not need a narrator or obvious dialogue to spell out what this scene means, as it is easier to instead show them and allow them to interpret the visuals themselves. This was deemed relevant as it showcased the exact aim of this project which is telling the story through sound and visuals without any dialogue or narration. In order to do that, there had to a strong tale being woven to keep the interest of the viewer. Tales from Greek mythology had a special interest due to their nature of love, heartbreak, misery, and drama to name a few of their themes most of which have yet to be fully realised on the big screen. Choosing to take inspiration from these premises was due to them being and will always be relevant to a human society as the ideals are transcendent in nature.

The narrative for the film aimed to cross genres of fantasy and horror and so the research progressed leading to cosmology in particular, especially with the setting of the film being situated in space. Such a combination allowed for the exploration of dire circumstances along with the open world that fantasy brings. The theme being explored was how such conditions are able to bring characters together and cause them to form a stronger bond, something that has been deeply explored in Greek Mythology. *Plato's Symposium* discusses the nature of love and what that encompasses in the form of a collection of conversations between himself and other Greek philosophers. In a speech by Aristophanes, he recites the myth concerning soulmates in order to try and explain why people feel "whole" when they are in love. The myth reads that when humans were first created they had four legs, four arms, and a head with two faces. Zeus however split them in two because he feared their power. This left each person doomed to spend the rest of their lives trying to find their other half. "Each of us when separated, having one side only, like a flat fish, is but the tally-half of a man, and he is always looking for his other half."[2]. This concept was one that has served as an underlying theme throughout the narrative and the whole creative process. It is something that an audience can connect

2   Plato, The Symposium, trans. Geoffrey Steadman (2009).

with using their own experiences of romantic or platonic love and can therefore allow them to understand the character's motivations.

The structure for the story being told needed a protagonist to follow in order that the audience may be taken on a more emotional journey than environmental visuals alone could provide. An example of this that has been a great source of inspiration in many ways was the BBC's exceptional Blue Planet documentary series, within which David Attenborough's narration offers factual insight told in an anthropomorphised conversational story manner. This, coupled with the fact that many of the most awe-inspiring moments within the series were free of his voice-over with the visuals simply accompanied by suitably stirring orchestration, permitted the audience to empathise with the animal characters created through these stories and become invested in their outcome. This project hoped to achieve a similar goal, only allowing the visuals and the handmade design elements to speak for themselves in place of voiceover work. In order to begin characterising the bear, the research had to draw from other fictional bears.

The research examined the making of Winnie-the-Pooh, as an example of a humanised animated character, as the idea of using a bear as the main character had already been established. Winnie-the-Pooh is a clear example of a much more docile approach to the characterisation of a bear, when compared to its real-life counterpart. The original books were written by author A. A. Milne who based the characters in his books on his son, Christopher Robin's, soft toys. Winnie-the-Pooh was named after his favourite animal to visit at the London Zoo, a bear named Winnipeg; Winnie for short. This bear originated from Canada where its' mother was killed by a hunter on the outbreak of World War One. A member of the Canadian Cavalry Regiment purchased the bear cub from the hunter and named it after his home city of Winnipeg, Manitoba. He took Winnie to England with him where she became a pet and a mascot for the regiment. Due to Winnie being adopted at such a young age it was easier for her to engage and socialise with humans and was therefore more comfortable around them. Winnie was described as 'playful and gentle' leading to her later becoming a much loved part of the London Zoo, even having a statue dedicated to her. Disney then

took on the role of animating these films, beginning in 1966. They took the characters from the stories and made them even more approachable to a younger audience by using more vibrant colours and simpler lines for the design of them in order for them to fit more into Disney's style. Pictured in Figure 1 is one of the original ink sketches for the book series by illustrator E. H. Shepard. This led to experimentation of styles of design for the lead character in the story as well as the nemesis he meets along the way, discussed in the methodology chapter.

< Fig. 1

Handmade Development

So as to allow freedom for the creative process – taking the role of the leading force for navigation throughout production – this project was approached with an open mind. Prior to the commencement of the making process some investigative research took place into various methods of practical effects, with matte painting in particular proving to be the greatest influencer. Many films from the 1970s and 1980s used this method to create vast environments on hand painted backdrops as digital media art was still undergoing development at this time. The 1970s became a highly creative decade for the film industry as tight restrictions on elements such as language, sexuality, and violence had been loosened. Hollywood was open to taking more risks with younger filmmakers thereby allowing a new generation of filmmakers to rise, people who chose subject matters that questioned the truth of the times. The artwork in Figure 2 was produced for The Empire Strikes Back in the late 1970s. The original idea was to use blue screen technology to create the landscapes needed for some of the scenes however they instead hired painters, such as Pangrazio, to paint matte landscapes on plexiglass using oil paint. Stop motion animation was then used for the filming of elements such as the AT-ATs (All Terrain Armoured Transport). By examining the methods that were used an understanding was formed of the practice which was then applied to this project in a series of small detailed paintings. There is a mirroring effect happening as the methods of production in this practice began by experimenting with the old ways of creating. However by embodying their same mentality, the project could learn from past faults and evolve using digital manipulation. In this context, the learning curve included animation styles which have been examined in the following paragraph.
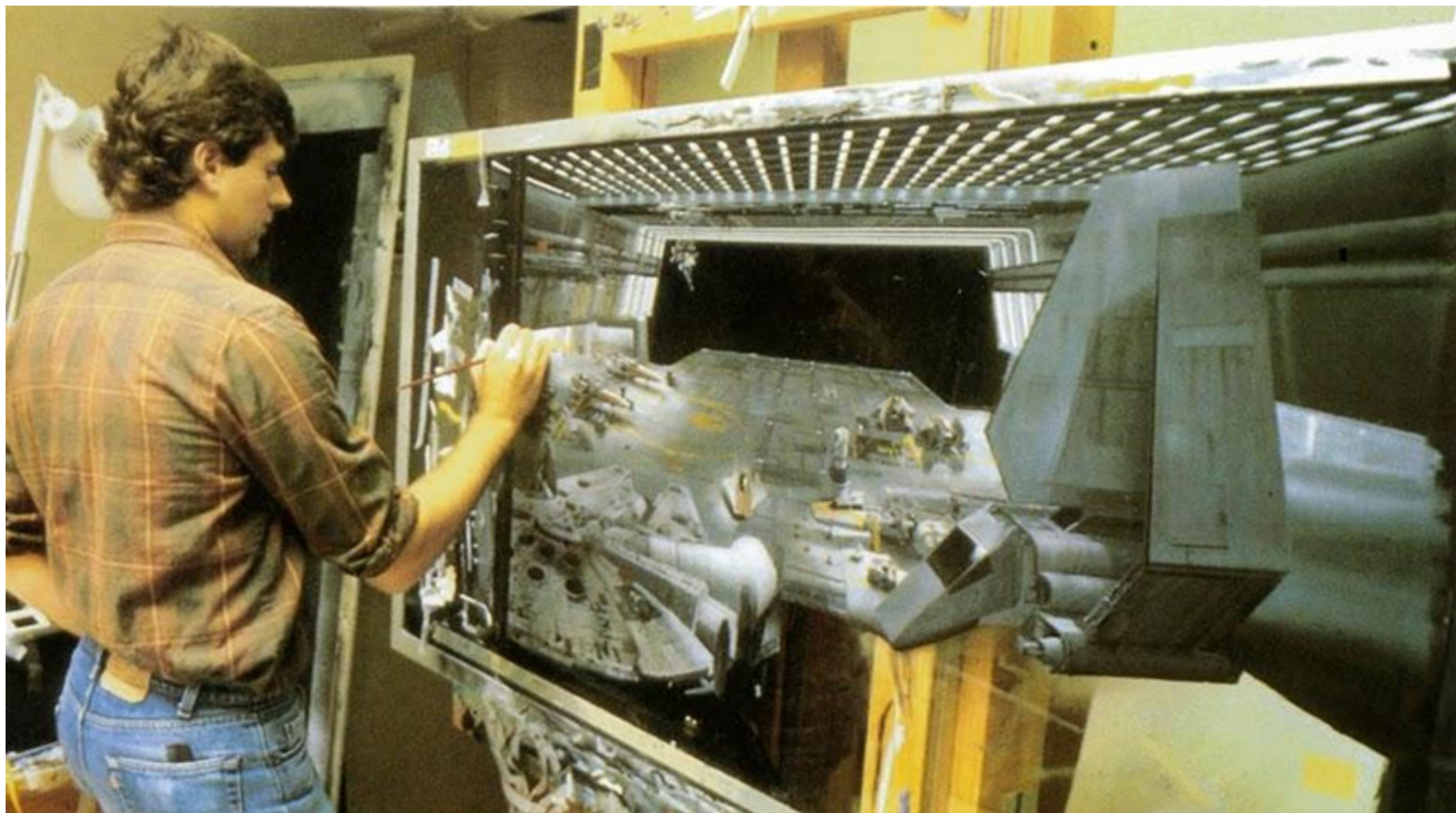
^ Fig. 2

A study by Andrea Comiskey in *Special Effects: New Histories/ Theories/ Contexts entitled (Stop)Motion Control: Special Effects in Contemporary Puppet Animation* examines the apparent superiority of the hands-on making of stop-motion animation in a section of the study The Handmade Imperative and although acknowledges how CGI has been integrated into many contemporary animations still promotes the tactile interactions as being a more emotional medium than its digital counterparts. Comiskey discusses how many modern animation studios, such as Laika Entertainment, have taken the handmade approach as a means of film promotion and rarely mention the huge role that digital effects later play instead celebrating tangibility. She states that "some irregularities and artefacts of the hands-on production are process are not mistakes to be rejected or hidden but virtues central to the medium's appeal."[3] This was highly relevant as this film aims to demonstrate the charm that tactility brings however will also not shy away from the production quality that digital elements bring. The ability to immersive not only the viewer but also myself in the created world with a palpable craftsmanship throughout the production process was a concept kept when moving forward. This style however is not suited to this particular project as the goal is for a completely smooth aesthetic style, highly difficult for a novice in this field. Instead, for this process taking the physicality of material from stop motion animation and combining it with digital media seemed the most alluring road.

This led to the inquiry of other methods of moving image; cinemagraphs[4] and the Multiplane Camera[5]. The style of a cinemagraph lends itself to the ideals of what was wanting to be achieved for the aesthetic of this film, that being the subtly of one element having movement within the frame. The Multiplane Camera is able to bring depth to otherwise flat images. By combining these two effects, the desired result is that the complexity of a stop motion animation process is removed without having to

3   Dan North, Bob Rehak, and Michael Duffy, Special Effects: New Histories/ Theories/ Contexts (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).
4   Photographers Jamie Beck and Kevin Burg coined the term cinemagraph in 2011, which refers to an artistic photograph with one element having of the picture having slight movement.
5   The Multiplane Camera was designed by the Walt Disney company in 1933. By firstly separating a flat piece of artwork into different layers with transparent parts left to allow for full view of all sections, the pieces are then moved past the camera to create the illusion of a 3D world.

completely digitise the scene, the handmade is not lost on this process. This meaning that with some digital manipulation the handmade effect is still able to be at the forefront of the work without the inexperienced construction of a stop motion animation. This also relates to the sound as the digitised sounds being created allow for the creation of developed music and sound effects without the need to master every existing instrument.

Sound Generation

This section of review began by considering the art of Foley which opened up a whole new world of creative sound making. Foley, which relates to the addition of recorded sound effects after the shooting of a film, was a key part of the narrative as it helped to drive the narrative where there was a lack of dialogue. As the sound was deemed to be at least as important as the visuals, sufficient focus had to be given to this element of the process. The use of aural landscapes was a means to bring in the audience and allow them to fully submerge themselves in the world being created around them. "The sonic experience might enhance the narrative of the film, or it might actually distract and cause discomfort. Either way, it has impact."[6] Vanessa Ament, author of *The Foley Grail: The Art of Performing Sound for Film, Games, and Animation*, discusses how sound can be used as a storyteller in the sense that an audience can emotionally connect with, whether that be before unheard sounds that make your skin crawl or the realistic sounds of rain falling that you would never question to be fake. The message taken from this was that the key to making convincing Foley is experimentation and creativity. For example, the flapping of a bird's wings can be made by hitting an old ballet shoe lightly on your hand and the crunching of bones is often made with celery. This was pertinent to this project as the sound deserves just as much thought and experimentation as the visual aspects. This led to an exploration of how an audience could react to the visual stimuli during their viewing experience and how the soundscape for this film could influence their perception. This study is called psychoacoustics.

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6   Vanessa Ament, The Foley Grail: The Art of Performing Sound for Film, Games, and Animation, 1st ed. (Focal Press, 2009).

The *Principles of Psychoacoustics* chapter in *Audio Watermark* defines psychoacoustics as "investigating the statistical relationships between acoustic stimuli and hearing sensations."[7] Similarly to the visuals, the sound has been built up using a variety of textures to create a more captivating soundscape that currently uses a mix of digitised instruments along with electronic sound effects. In the future however, again mirroring the visual aspects, this will be a combination of live recorded audio and computerised effects juxtaposed next to each other. The idea of sound allowing for a greater experience for an audience has even been tested. In a two-part experiment to examine "whether film music increases a viewer's susceptibility to narrative persuasion"[8], Terman and Costabile discovered that there was indeed a greater feeling of transportation reported by the participants. In the first experiment, an audience viewed a short film – first with its original soundtrack, followed by watching the film again without any music. The second experiment had the audience watch a short film, that was originally meant to be a silent film, that had a musical soundtrack added. This serves to comply with the theory that the sound elements for the short film are able to cause a reaction with the audience.

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7   Yiging Lin and Waleed H. Abdulla, Audio Watermark: A Comprehensive Foundation Using Matlab (2015).
8   Kristi A. Costabile and Amanda W. Terman, "Effects of Film Music on Psychological Transportation and Narrative Persuasion," Basic and Applied Social Psychology 3, no. 35 (2013).

Chapter Two

Methodology

Methods

This project utilised some of Robert Lepage's dramaturgical methods, discussed in the eponymous book detailing his working processes. Aleksandar Dundjerović helps explain how transformation plays a key role in Lepage's creative process. "He does not want to start from set goals and pre-defined outcomes; rather, he is interested in discovering goals throughout the rehearsals."[1] Although this idea relates more to the actors in a theatre performance, in this instance it has been used as a guide for the craft to take control of the direction of the project outline. Rather than taking a finalised concept for how the mise-en-scène for each set and location will look and recreating it, this project looks at how this can be achieved by undergoing the process and using designs and materials discovered along the way. Lepage uses geography as a way of transforming each performance, as the shows he has produced and directed travel around the world, as he wants the actors to be able to go on a "journey of self-discovery"[9] and throw themselves into the culture of their new surroundings. This was an idea that this project embodied, both in the fictional narrative as well as the silent stories behind its making. Olof, our protagonist (the Space Bear), must grow and develop as a character as he encounters territories, situations and experiences previously completely unknown to him. He must integrate himself into these different worlds to hopefully discover his missing partner as well as protecting himself from any danger. I, as the creator, also had to venture out into new and unfamiliar methods of design production and filmmaking in order to advance the creative process as well as moving to a new country to undertake this study. Another point to be considered was how Lepage feels that the synergy between actor and audience is a fundamental part of the performance. I believed this to be of particular relevance to this project as the short film was made to be viewed and enjoyed by an audience who is able to understand the narrative and the meaning behind it. This can be done by evaluating the visual scripts and ensuring that a cohesive narrative is there and is followable by a viewer who has no prior knowledge of this project and the context it falls under. In order to do this, frameworks had to be put in place in order to guide the making in a forward direction.

Frameworks

1   Aleksandar Saša Dundjerović, Robert Lepage (New York: Routledge, 2009).

Frameworks

Lindy Candy describes practice-based research as an "original investigation undertaken in order to gain new knowledge partly by means of practice and the outcomes of that practice."[2] This project was in alignment with this way of thinking due to the nature of the narrative and the wholly unique art style and sound compositions. The process has involved a rigorous iterative approach of making where analogous experiences have been visually documented before being examined and explored multiple times. This has then been followed with reflections that involve selecting which material artistic outcomes will be applied and utilised in the final film project. A case study example of this was when the practice was curious about the movement of a piece of soft material through the air. I wanted to somehow gather this data and transfer it into an abstract interpretation. Data was collected through motion capture. The dots show the journey the material, in this instance a flag, went on. When some of these points were joined together they formed interesting and anomalous line patterns as seen in Figure 3.

These patterns created from the motion capture reminded me of mountains and their peaks. These lines were then taken and drawn freehand to create layers of lines crossing over one another and intertwining, shown in Figure 4. After the lines were combined, they seemed to form map-like shapes. When considering these two forms in conjunction - mountains and maps – my thought process then led me to further visualise them as contour lines as featured in ordinance survey maps. The multiple lines in these maps form intricate details that were interesting to mirror through using the movement captured from the flag. Figure 5 shows the image that was created using pen and paper. After scanning the image, it was then digitally altered, as can be seen in Figure 6, where the colours were inverted. This second illustration has developed more depth with the greater content of black. This is something I then studied once more, but now with colour. I wanted to create a piece more tangible, that was able to explore a more detailed level of texture. I used different tones of purple thread to create this.

2   Linda Candy, "Practice Based Research: A Guide," (2006), accessed 20.05.2017, https://www.creativityandcognition.com/resources/PBR%20 Guide-1.1-2006.pdf.

I made a decision to use this texture for a planet and so discovered that for this particular piece the detailed lines were what made it particularly effective. Each line that had been drawn by hand followed its own unique path and curves. When drawing with pen there were limitations as to how thin I was able to make the lines and how close together they could be before merging. Therefore, I determined that thread would be a great option to try next as each thread remains notably separate even when overlapped with each other, something not achievable with pen. This was also able to create more interesting options when it came to photography as close ups would give me greater detail, and long shots would create the illusion of rolling hills, craters, and varying heights and depths. This was then furthered with the use of colour, allowing darker colours to give a sense of being more distant with the paler shades of purple being the peaks, which is similar to how contour lines are used within ordinance survey maps. A key part of this was drawing and sewing by hand without the use of computers or machinery – each imperfection tells a story.
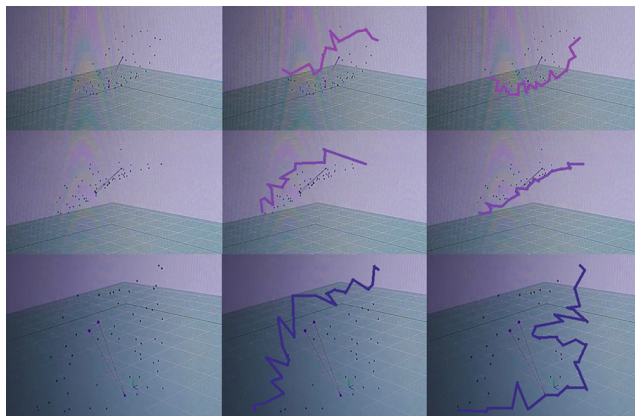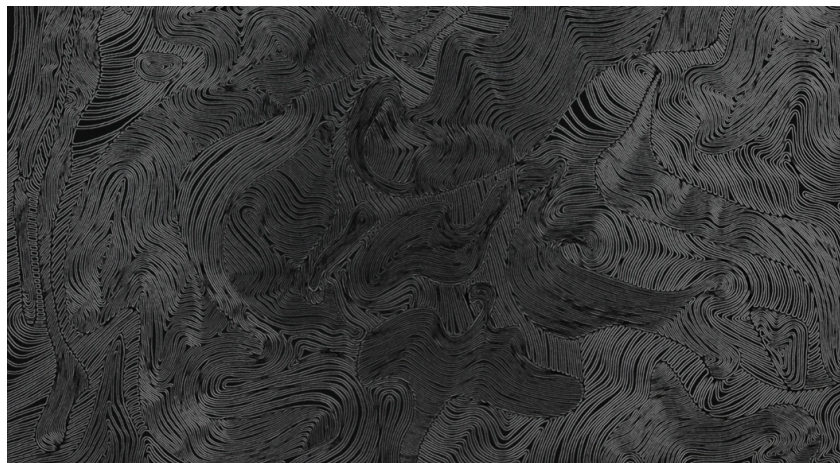
Fig. 3

Fig. 4
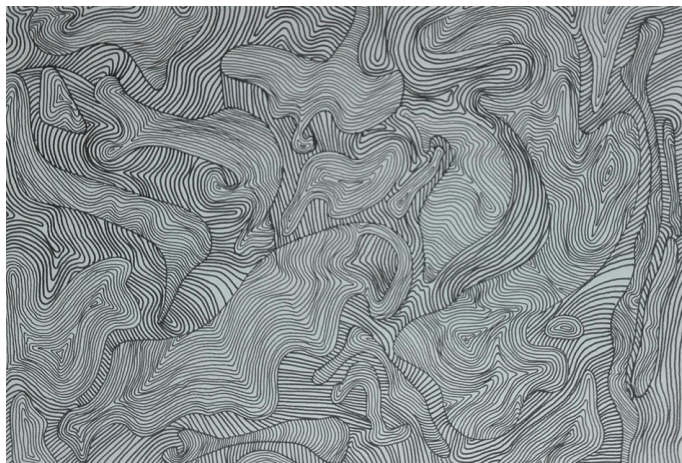
Fig. 5

Fig. 6

Handmade

The Handmade was the main feature of this project with aesthetic sense aiming to explain why this is the most effective way of telling this particular narrative. Aesthetic sense is ingrained in an individual's world view and can be cultivated but not taught as it is difficult to verbalise the appeal of a work of art. There is a definite appreciation of items that are crafted by hand that is lacking within the digital world. There is an understanding that each part of handcrafted mise-en-scène is unique and unachievable to recreate in the exact same way by any other person. When creating something handmade, the time spent on such a process allows for self-reflection which furthers the idea of a piece being generated of its time and from a specific point of view. The process was able to shift and change during the production stages due to the ease and fluidity of alterations allowed with this style of making. At any point, methods that were not working could be ended along with notes as to what problems there were and new ways of working with the tools could be tested. In theory, using the handmade to craft each aspect of this film allows tacit knowledge to guide the viewer and in turn become a part of the story itself. The premise of the film must allow for this to be ingrained within the tale by having an engaging narrative.

Storytelling

The project examined the Kuleshov Effect and how this editing technique can be applied throughout a film, using it as a framework, as considered in "Into The Woods: How Stories Work and Why We Tell Them", by John Yorke. By taking the 'showing, not telling' premise of this idea to its extreme, the audience must become active participants in order to fully understand the narrative and take more meaning away from it. So as to make this journey for the viewer more comfortable to follow, the narrative of the story used the three-act structure, often credited to Greek philosopher Aristotle. Using this structure, the story had the environment setup to be an artistic impression of a space-like world with the inciting incident being our first introduction to Olof, him drifting through space unconscious and wounded. We then follow Olof, confused and disorientated, exploring plan-

ets in search of someone. He is nervous and tentative at every turn as he does not want to get hurt – this causes him to miss vital clues about the whereabouts of his partner. In order to stick to a very linear structure, there will be clues and signs for the audience to see instead of a flashback scene that derives any attention away from the journey of the bear. The feeling of the narrative is to almost reflect that of using one long continuous shot, with no expositional dialogue or setup narration. This is to allow the audience to discover different elements for themselves in real time with Olof. As discussed by Yorke, it is more rewarding for the viewer to unearth the truth and find clues without distracting them and pulling them out of the flow of the narrative with information that they are able to gather themselves. Next we see him gaining more confidence with these new surroundings however allowing the environments to get the better of him. This does not cause any personal harm to him at this point however foreshadows the future danger he encounters. He then meets a creature that draws him in and manipulates him. He then manages to escape its clutches before journeying to the edge of the universe. The confrontation then sees him continue to explore to but no avail. The resolution follows the bear to the edge of the universe where all hope is lost before the twist of his other bear finding him. This elemental structure relies on design to advance a fresh take on a centuries old story.

Storyboarding and Sound Design

This project used storyboarding in place of a script in order to visualise the structure of the narrative. Figure 7 shows the opening sequence. It is set in outer space where our protagonist, Olof, can be seen floating through space. He has just been ripped from his bear companion and is unconscious for the entire time. I wanted the audience to feel a sense of dread when listening to the music. They don't know who this character is yet or what he has been through, but I want them to be able to understand from the offset that he is not in good shape and is possibly still in imminent danger. The tone here is intensely ominous and creates a slightly harrowing experience for the listener. I have tried to give the soundscape a space feel through the String Tub and the light tinkle of the Nightshade Bells. These sounds, although not being accurate to space travel, are able to simulate this environment for the listener. The twinkle of the stars and the swirling air create a familiar sound environment for the viewer.

As this is the opening scene, the tone for the rest of the film has been set with the music. The visuals and textures must cohabit the same space as the sound and complement each other when needed. Therefore, the sound was vital for putting across the mood and whole tone that is trying to be set.
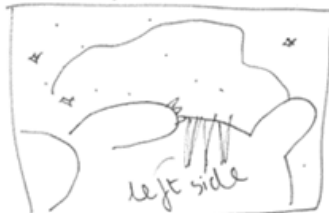
The scene shown in Figure 8 sees Olof on a new and unfamiliar planet. The aim is for each of the different environments that he visits to reflect different parts of his personality, thereby allowing the audience to get to know this character through viewing his experiences and how he interacts with his surroundings. The sound has been used as a tool to help the audience understand him too as it is able to illustrate his emotions. This planet is for showcasing his more innocent and playful side. The 'space snow' that he examines he is not fearful of, he is merely intrigued and quizzical about its nature. In the sound byte, Foley Art, discussed in the contextual review, has been used to give the desired effects of him trudging through the textured soil and the sound of the snowfall which has been given a light higher pitch to try and give the snow its own unique nature. The sounds have been layered and built up as the snowfall gets heavier and heavier until you can only hear the strong winds to create an intense overwhelming soundscape, the audience needs to be able to empathise with Olof and experience what he experiences. The aim is to make this wind seem claustrophobic and create a sense of urgency, with the audience understanding Olof's panic when the storm hits and rooting for him to get out of this situation safely. We can then see some footprints, that he assumes are his, that are leading back the way he came. This sequence wants the audience to first feel a sense of relief that he can find his way back to safety however as he follows them we can see that his prints are much larger than those on already on the ground. Tonally, the intention is to have given this scene some mystery, particularly with the final images, and let the audience begin to indulge in piecing together parts of the story on their own.

OPENING SCENE

SPACE!

(probably going right) ✓
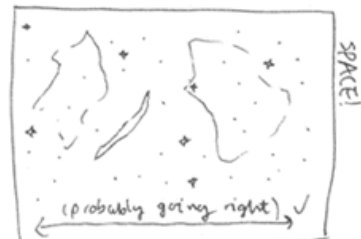
Very slow camera shift/pan
♪ either silence or white noise

POW!

We see something floating through
space, can just about make it out.
♪ sudden BWAM

We get in closer to see a bear floating
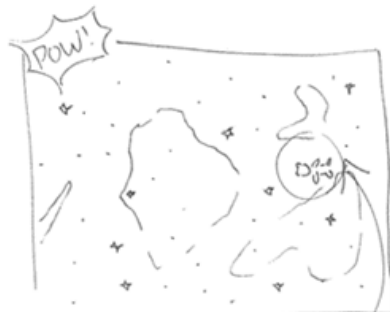through space
♪ bwam fades out as music tinkles in

CLOSEUP

left side

We see Olof gently touching
a wound on his side, still
fresh and bleeding

COULD MINOR GET FURTHER AWAY!

Olof is staring up in the sky, he is
the focus of this shot.
♪ music begins to intensify, doom feeling

CAMERA SLOWLY PANS UP

We see this shot of bright stars,
but what is it!

Then move to this shot of bears

This is Ursa major & ursa minor, here we
can see they are apart (at the end they
will have come together in the sky in an
embrace) The lights come on blinking on to
reveal this, made by making pin pricks in
the paper and then shining a light behind
(flickerings at first) before bright white

♪ sound at the reveal
BWAM and fade with a
downward spiral eeee...♪
nail on chalk boardesque.

CLOSEUP (bear face)

tears in his eyes

♪ HOW CAN I MAKE IT
FEEL LIKE EVERYTHING IS MOVING NOT JUST STILL IMAGES...
FILL WITH GLITTER, GLOSS AND LIGHTING?
USE GLITTER?

Fig. 7

SNOWY-ESQUE PLANET

to enter each planet, small vacuum to enter? (has to walk a little first)?

bear sets foot on planet. Wide shot of him from the back. Standing still, looking around in wonder.

tail wiggles as he plays with snow.

bear thumps down in the snow, brushing his paws lightly against the snow either side of his tush.

CLOSE UP

picks up a pile of snow, it melts away quickly in the palm of his paw.

light snow falls. bear looks up.

bear stands up. snow gets heavier.

thick flurry. bear arms in air

moving shadow in the distance, drawing closer. takes a few steps back

snow gets too thick, too windy to see out into the distance

MUST GET BACK TO PORTAL!

looks around in anguish

sees footprints in the snow, follows

we see as he moves that the prints he follows are much smaller than his.

Fig. 8

Chapter Three

RESEARCH AND FINDINGS

Concept and Development

This matter has been illustrated fully in the appendices., where photographic evidence of journaling has been shown. The concept was first conceived through a requirement to have a short animation for a coding class. This is where the bear and his backstory began to form. The decision-making process for all the making combined iterative production with practice-led research. This allowed for each new way of making and experimenting with materials to first be fully researched before pushing each material in a new direction.

Discussion

The experimentation of materials and textures shown in the appendices quickly began focusing on a single colour – purple. Taking inspiration from those who choose to use a monochrome palette in more recent cinema I decided to concentrate on this limited palette using the colour purple, along with black and white accents. This does come with its own restrictions and finding certain types of materials in this colour has not always been easy but has then compelled me to use the ones I have found in new creative ways. Limitations have also come in the form of budget constraints and the confined nature of New Zealand. Many supplies or materials have been too expensive or difficult to find or even get into the country at this time. The implications being that certain creative avenues that this project needs to explore have not been investigated, yet. This does however give many new opportunities for exploration in the future when I will be continuing this project from another part of the world.

Conclusion

This project was able to broaden the scope of methods of creating and filmmaking, opening the door for a more discerning future film to be produced. From this process, I have learnt that trial is the essence of discovery and error leads onto improve-

ment. By using an iterative approach, the textures produced through different mediums helped to formulate new ideas that later influenced the narrative. For example, throughout the making the feel of the materials as I was using them affected how I then later interpreted them on screen. With soft materials such as wool, I saw the setting that these were being used in as safe, comfortable environments for the space bear. This then could allow for manipulation by curbing people's conceptions. For the future, I hope to secure funding for the making of this film through programmes in the United Kingdom and Sweden. However, even if self-funding is necessary, I wish to fully realise the movie concept and create an artistic piece of moving imagery. As this has been a solo journey, I would also like to look into collaboration and how that could affect the outcome. By working with someone who is an expert in the field of sound, whether that be sound design or the playing of a particular instrument, new and exciting film ideas could be approached.

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Chapter Four

Appendices

An example of photography that has inspired other practical work through the lines and shapes found amongst them. All are naturally forming elements and plants.
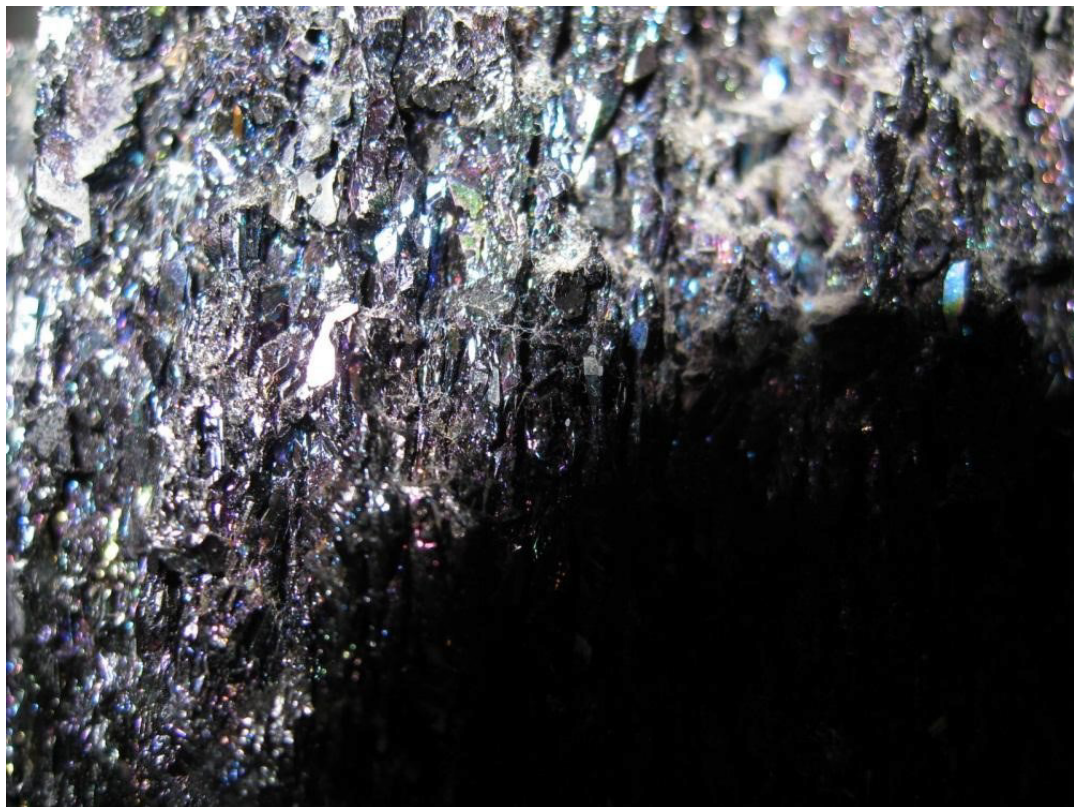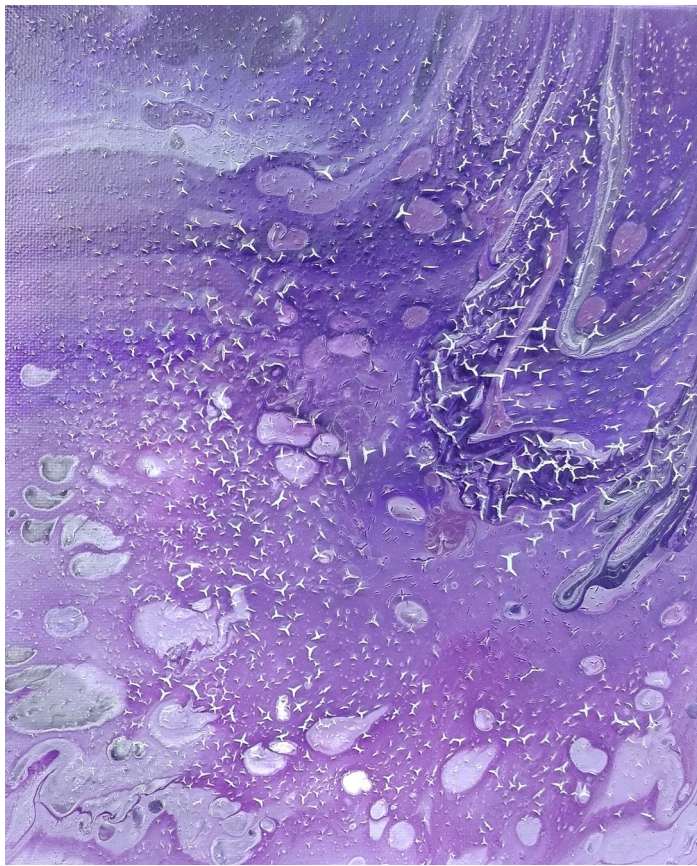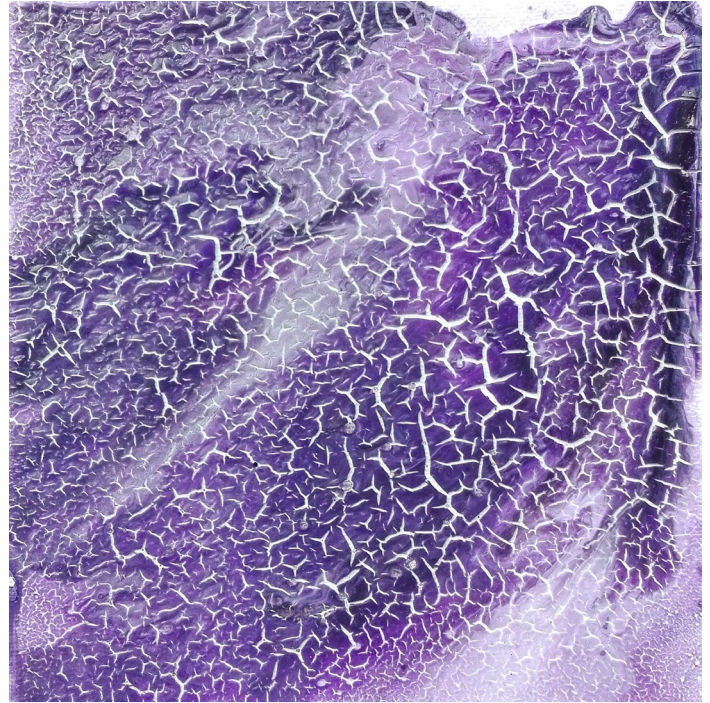
A series of experiments made using acrylic paint, pouring medium, and treadmill lubricant (all on canvas). The fluid paintings each have varying amounts of the ingredients to see what effects and textures could be created.
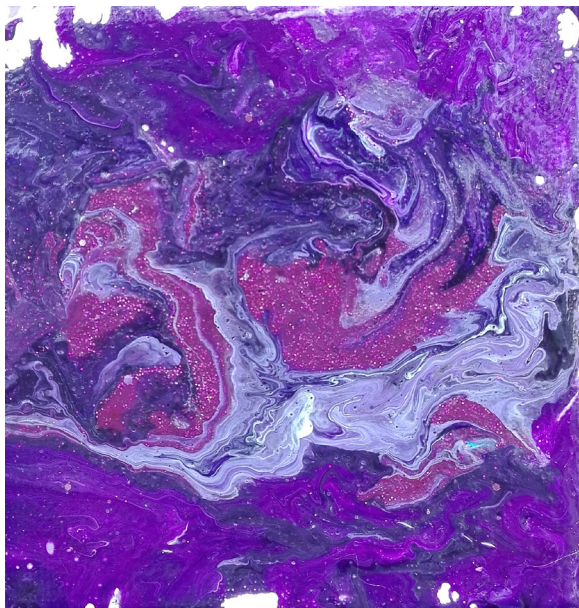
Experimenting with the design for outer space. The same painting technique has been used in both however the above image used tape to block of areas in triangular patterns to reflect constellations which relate to the Greek Mythology underpinning the narrative of the film. This style was also tested to see if it could help create new dimensions by having the bear overlaying the white-out sections.
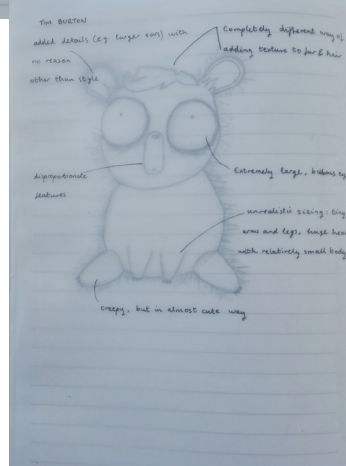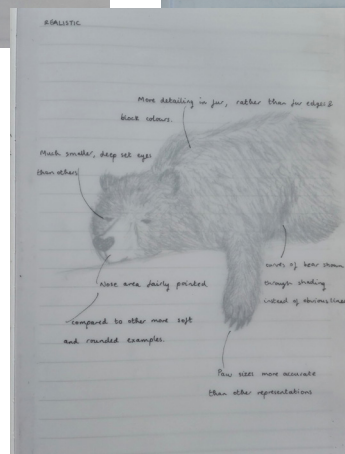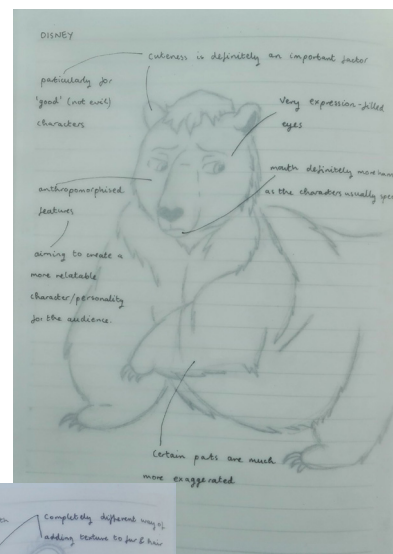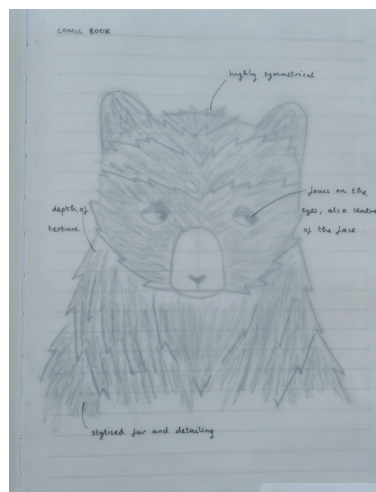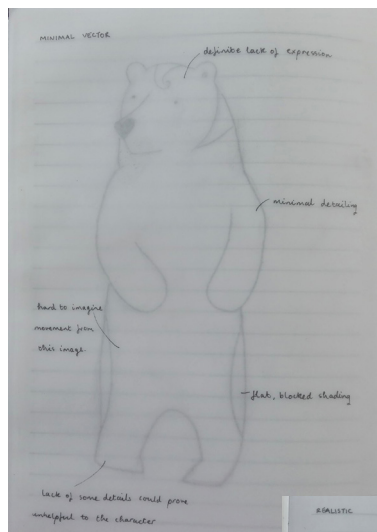
Collection of journal entries showing exploration of animation styles applied to the protaganist of the story: Olof the Space Bear.

Examples from journals of the development of the protagonist. With initial sketches and notetaking, skeletal interpretations to help understand how bears move around, and a textual sample using felt and stitching with thread to see the look of the overall bear in this form.


Two different endings (can be put to user testing)

① We follow the story of a lonely bear in search of his other half. He is however very optomistic about the journey he's about to go on. He visits different planets and meets a variety of interesting characters. By the finale he ends up at the very edge of the universe where there is absolutely nothing only darkness. Finally we meet the other bear who has also been searching for him however the kept just missing each other (footprints in the snow). We see the flashbacks to the moments they were so close they embrace his sadness (from after breaking down) evaporates.

② (A few variations) He still ends up at the edge of the universe, depressed:
• We go back to very first scene of him looking at his scar. He sits back down breaths out heavily. Fin. (it was all a dream)
• He thinks he feels someone touch his shoulder, there is no one there. He gets up, gets in his ship and returns home. He goes into hibernation. We see the seasons go by outside (small hill with stone in front of the hole and a tree) the tree becomes overgrown and slowly dies. The bear never comes out.
• The bear comes along they have a beautiful life together. (similar style to the end of La La Land) go back to him still sitting alone we see him crying sadly until the darkness eventually envelops him.

Once the audience is decided (children/young adults/adults) the choice of ending can be determined.
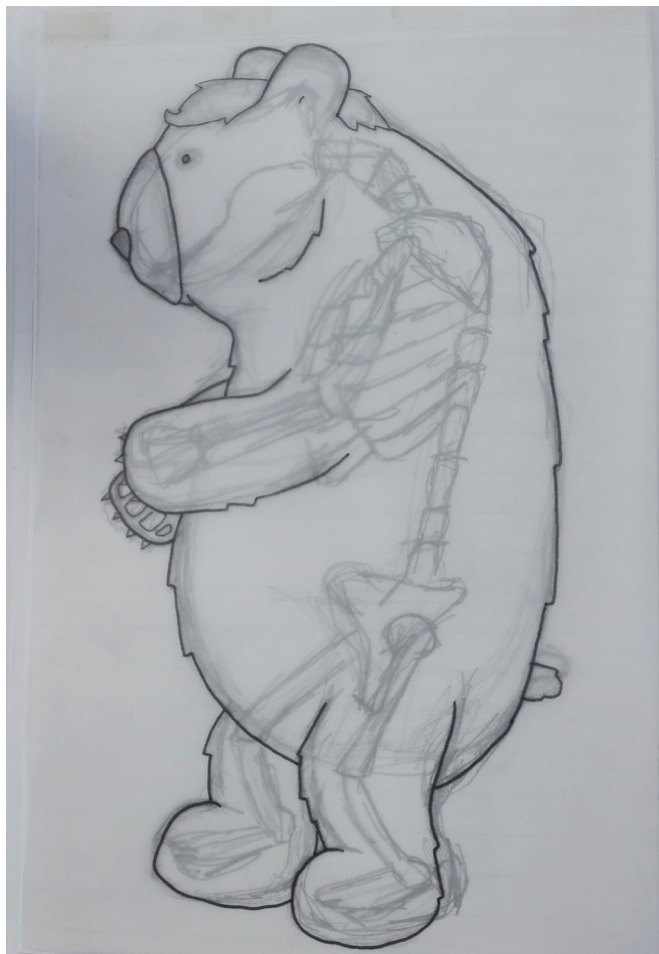
Bear made from felt with details using embroidery thread.