

The background is a complex, abstract composition. It features several large, dark, textured brushstrokes that resemble ink or charcoal marks, scattered across the frame. These strokes vary in orientation and density, creating a sense of movement and depth. The background is filled with soft, organic, light-colored shapes that look like watercolor washes or smoke, blending into each other. There are also several small, solid black circles and some faint, curved lines scattered throughout the composition, adding to its intricate and layered appearance.

ANIMA

A FILM BY CHARLES MENUT

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The doll



The collector

ANIMA
WHAT IS IT?



The woman in black

SYNOPSIS

A collector explores streets and abandoned places. He finds treasures to put in his backpack. Exploration and treasures. This is what makes the collector work. But off the roads. In dark places. There are frequencies, underground forces that make the movement.

In one of these places lives a woman in black. She repairs porcelain dolls. But there is a doll, who gives off something, with her glass eyes. Those eyes that never blink.

The woman in black can no longer stand this look, she puts the doll in the box of oblivion. Thrown away the box, thrown into black space. In the darkness that reduces existence to breathing in the shadows. But the box is found by the collector.

Buried, nailed, sealed, but found the box. In the backpack the doll.

And the forces set in motion, the frequencies take the collector to unexplored lands.

For a desire to tell something with sound, to work with it in the film. Sound gives depth, it opens up additional space within the scenes.

It is he who gives weight to the sound of footsteps in the empty house, it is through him that things begin to exist behind the darkness.

It is through sound that the dizziness of a dark room is born. That's why I made this film, so that with sound, we get to know each other a little better. That was my impulse. I wanted to tell emotions with sound on images.



Woman's spare parts in black

PREMISES **OF THE FILM**

Doll head at the beginning of the film



WHY DOLLS?

I was walking down the street, thinking about the movie. I knew I wanted to work with sound. And one of the genres in which sound is particularly important is the horror genre. But what theme for horror? What direction should you choose for the film?

Then I saw a porcelain doll in a window. The doll was worn out. The people next to me said she was scary. The doll is a good horror movie theme. It causes a kind of fear or unease in those who watch it.

It's still pieces of plastic or porcelain, but it affects something in the brain. I think it's because it looks like a human face, but it's not.

And our brain doesn't understand. Don't understand why this thing with a human face, why it doesn't move, why it doesn't breathe. And it continues to stare at us. We become a small mammal again in front of a hungry carnivore, it scares us into our animal brains.

So I went with that.

I had the skin of my film, the skin of a porcelain doll.

WHY BLACK AND WHITE?

Porcelain dolls belong to a time of the past. A rather distant time. A time with photographs and films mainly in black and white. These two colors were in harmony with the era of porcelain dolls. It worked well. The theme and colors matched.

And then, there is power in black and white. Something that is outside of reality. We are not disturbed by all the shades of color. I have the impression that images penetrate the brain better. That the illusion of projection in the cinema room is more powerful. There are fewer colors to process. We navigate through three shades: black, white and gray. And within each of these colors, subtle variations.

This reminds me of the numerous screenings of films by Ford, Resnais, Cocteau, Bergman, Hitchcock...

Coming out of these black and white films, I realized that reality was more colorful, more saturated. It's a film release that I wanted to share.

When you leave the room after having been crossed by so much black and white. By so many variations of gray. Suddenly everything becomes more intense in colors. Experiment, observe the color of the streets coming out of a black and white film, you will see how different its intensity is.



The collector's library



The studio of the woman in black

I had the skin of my film, porcelain skin, with black and white blood circulating in the sound organs. Now I needed the bones to support this bag of meat. I needed a solid backbone, something that draws from my insides, and for which I have a need for expression, a need harpooned in my flesh and which I need to speak about.

In January 2017, I faced an unnatural death. A brutal and violent death, which grips you and upsets you.

Subsequently, this is how life goes, the older we get, the more deaths we experience.

On the road of existence, there are all kinds of people, people who move forward, people who stumble, and people who stop. Stephen King's novel *The Long Walk* (1979) transcribes this well, I think.

This emergence of death made me aware of the ephemeral nature of existence and the importance of enjoying the present. The past no longer exists, the future is uncertain, the only thing we have is the present. This is the only moment we can count on to live.

Death is by definition the end of everything. There is nothing in this state. We don't take anything with us. All we leave behind is the impact we had on the people who are still here.

This impact continues to exist as long as it still makes sense to people. It is a part of our light, this light that we have inside of us, which does good and comforts in dark times.

At death, there is nothing. It's over. We can't do anything more. But first, we can create pleasant moments with the people around us. Power this little vibrant light between beings.

INTENT

OF THE FILM



Light in the hand of the woman in black

This is the intention that I have, the solid framework that supports the body: to show that there is a light in each of us and that this light has an impact on those around us.

It's the background noise that accompanies the collector's story. The collector collects, he accumulates. But when the end of his existence comes, everything he owns disappears into nothingness. His possessions are nothing. His body turns into sand. He is a loner who lived with porcelain dolls. He is surrounded only by them. But he took care of it, and from this care, from this attention, emanates this luminous vibration.

This same luminosity which transforms plants into oxygen and makes the world breathe.

We all have a luminous vibration to take care of those and those around us. This is the spinal intention of the film.

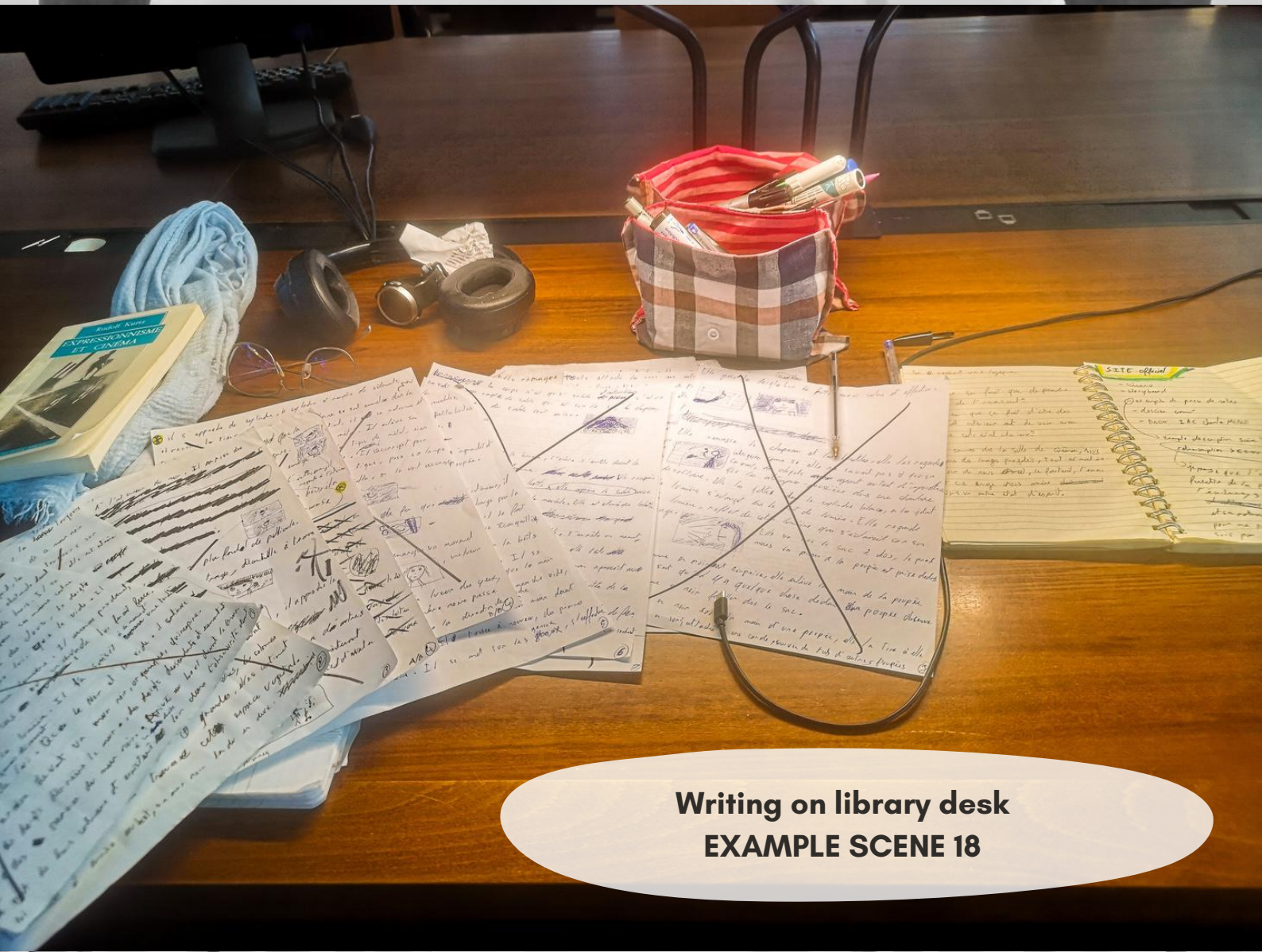
SHOTS WRITING

I work mainly with pen. These handwritten notes present my way of writing a scene before organizing it on the storyboard.

I think we see a side of personality in writing.

If I add these handwritten notes it is to introduce myself, to give an account of what I am in my way of drawing letters to create sentences and set the rhythm.

The cross in the center comes when I have correctly transcribed the scene in storyboard, I cross out the page to know where I am.



Writing on library desk
EXAMPLE SCENE 18

Il entre à l'intérieur. A l'intérieur du mur, il aspire des

~~Il y a des choses qui sont dans le mur, il les aspire et les fait entrer dans sa bouche.~~
~~Il y a des choses qui sont dans le mur, il les aspire et les fait entrer dans sa bouche.~~
~~Il y a des choses qui sont dans le mur, il les aspire et les fait entrer dans sa bouche.~~
~~Il y a des choses qui sont dans le mur, il les aspire et les fait entrer dans sa bouche.~~



Une grande salle vide composée d'un plafond de pellicule.

Il a une des cette salle au plafond étrange, semblable à travers celle-ci, les yeux sur le plafond.



Il batte contre quelque chose



il approche la

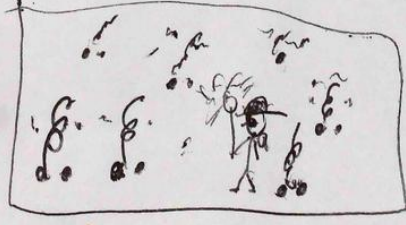
lumière, l'objet commence à se balancer, il ~~se balance~~ se

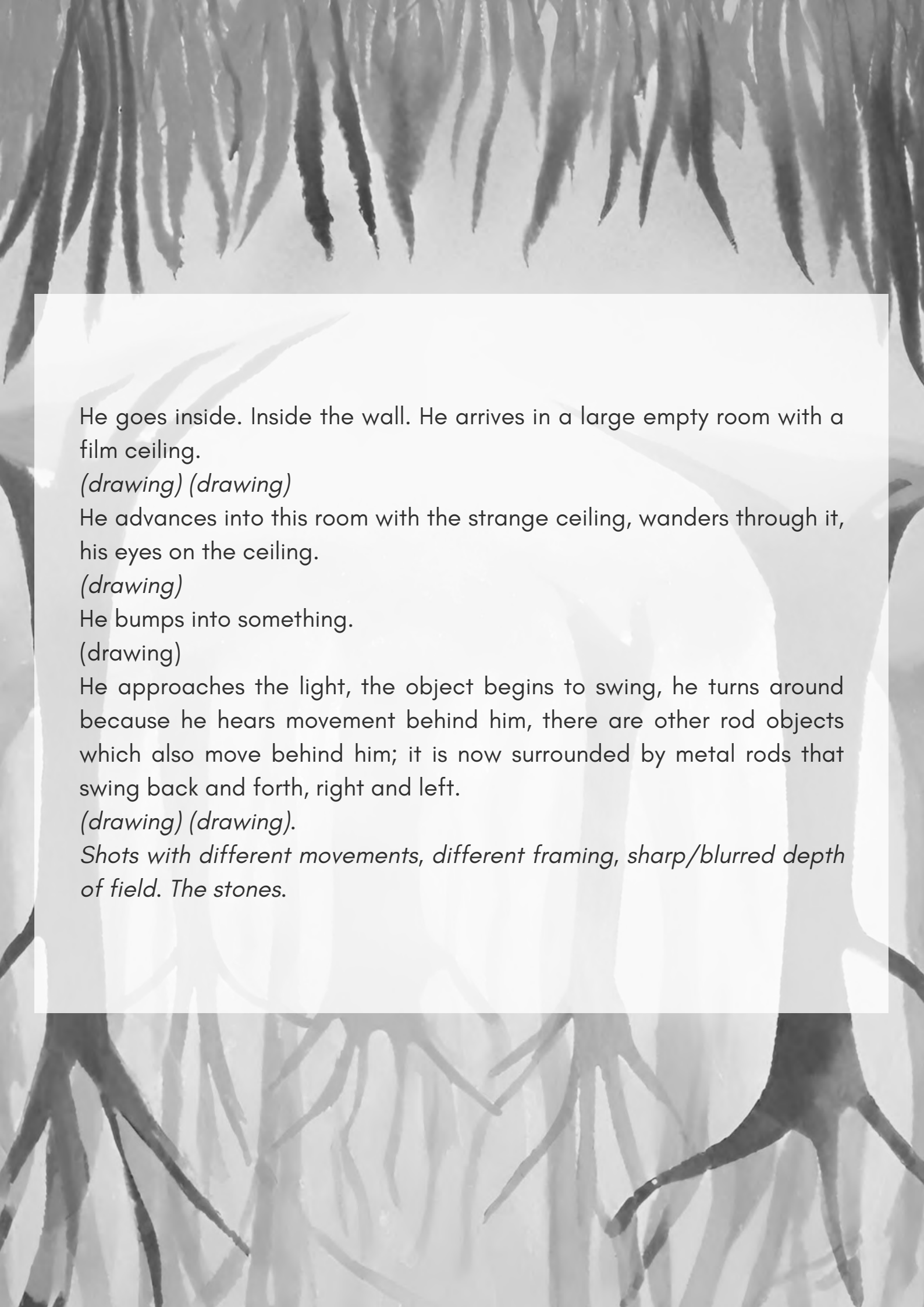
retourne car il entend bouger derrière lui, il y a des autres objets et tige qui bougent aussi derrière lui, il est maintenant

en train de ~~se balancer~~ de tiges de métal qui se balancent d'avant en arrière, de droite à gauche.



(des plans avec les
≠ nouvelles, ≠ cadavres)
pfderr de champs (not/plois) → les pères





He goes inside. Inside the wall. He arrives in a large empty room with a film ceiling.

(drawing) (drawing)

He advances into this room with the strange ceiling, wanders through it, his eyes on the ceiling.

(drawing)


He bumps into something.

(drawing)

He approaches the light, the object begins to swing, he turns around because he hears movement behind him, there are other rod objects which also move behind him; it is now surrounded by metal rods that swing back and forth, right and left.

(drawing) (drawing).

Shots with different movements, different framing, sharp/blurred depth of field. The stones.



He watches the stems move, he notices that the room around him is filled with objects of all kinds. There is a cylinder in the middle of the room, a light emerges from it, he approaches, there are clothes inside, he looks inside. (*drawing*) (*drawing*)

He walks towards a piece of furniture where there are wooden boxes, he opens one, it contains sand, a shadow crosses him.

Ⓟ il s'approche du cylindre, le cylindre est rempli de viténants,
 il excute les tiges de métal de la colonne se sont enclées dans la
 poupée, il sent que quelque chose le retient, il ~~se~~ se retourne et
 voit la poupée prise dans les tiges de métal. Il enlève son
 sac à dos, il ~~se~~ torture pour défaire les tiges de métal, rien
 à faire, elles sont bloquées dans la poupée. Il succroqpit pour
 être ⊕ il taise afin de défaire les tiges, pose sa lampe
 pour éclairer la poupée; loin des la salle, on le voit accroqpit
 en train de défaire les tiges.



Accroqpit toujours, il peine à défaire les tiges de fer qui ~~se~~
 sont attachés tout autour de la poupée.



Pendant qu'il était de défaire les liens, il remarque un mouvement
 dans les yeux de la poupée



~~Il~~ à l'instant de ses yeux; concentré sur la lueur des yeux,
 il entend un mouvement à côté de lui, une ombre noire passe
 sur son visage à lui. Il tourne la tête dans la direction de
 l'ombre.

He approaches the cylinder, the cylinder is filled with clothes, he steps back, the metal rods of the column are tangled in the doll, he feels that something is holding him back, he turns around and sees the doll caught in the rods of metal.

He takes off his backpack, he works to undo the metal rods, nothing to do, they are stuck in the doll. He squats down to be more comfortable in order to undo the stems, puts down his lamp to illuminate the doll;
(drawing)

Far away in the room, we see him crouching down, undoing the stems.

Still crouching, he struggles to undo the iron rods that are attached all around the doll.

(drawing)

As he tries to undo the ties, he notices a movement in the doll's eyes,
(drawing) (drawing)

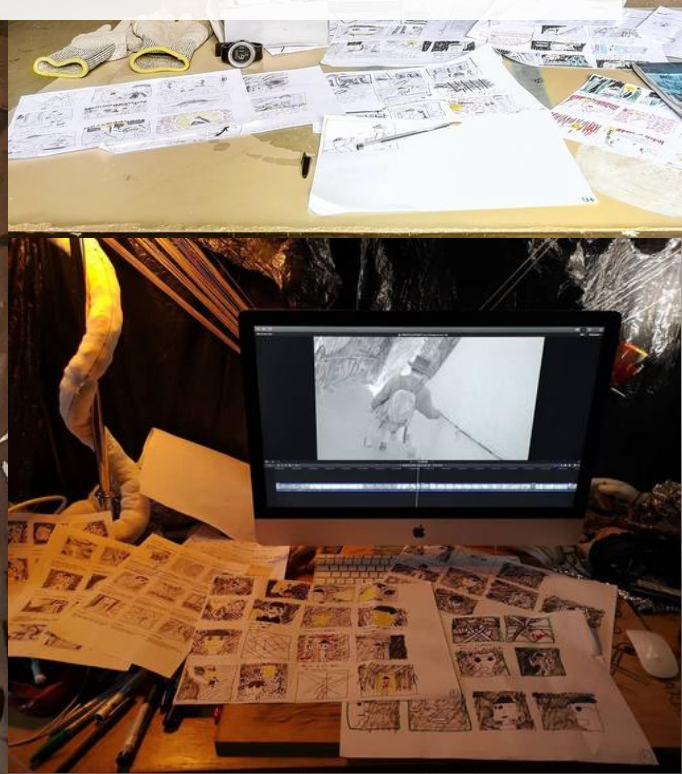
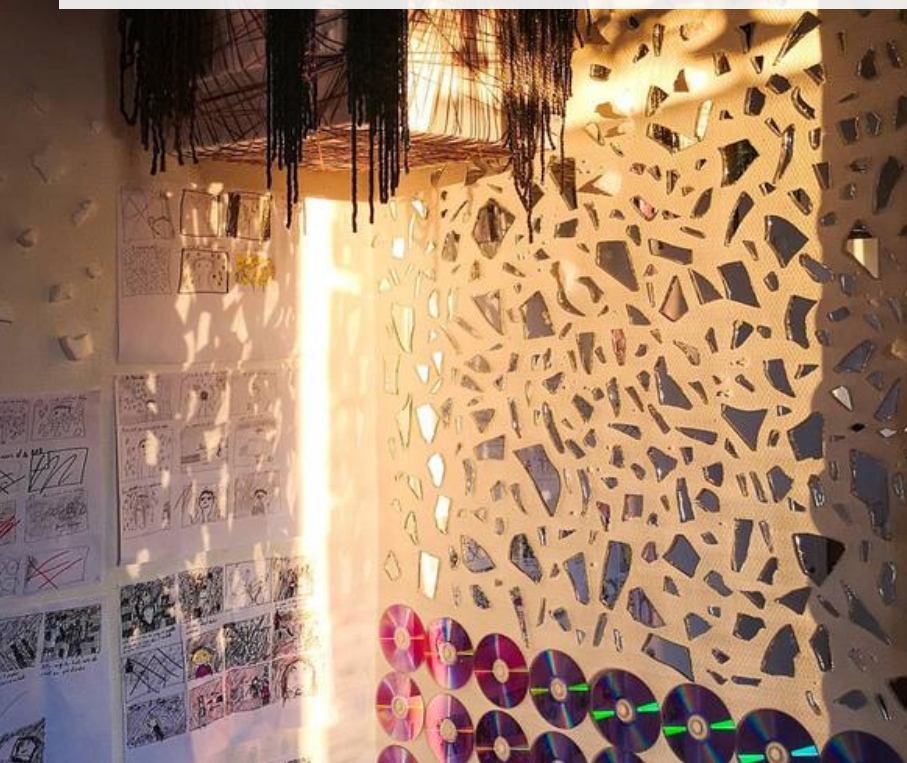
a glow inside his eyes; Concentrated on the glow of the eyes, he hears a movement next to him, a black shadow passes over his face. He turns his head in the direction of the shadow.



STORYBOARD

There are knots in the letters when you write. Drawing the plans, and the action inside, unravels the letters of the scenario. What we imagine, the scene, how it should happen. It becomes more visible, more precise when drawing. Ideas become more real when you put them on paper. When we take them out of the mental fog in which they float while reading. We know the number of shots. A simple glance is enough to know where we are during filming. Faster. No need to read the lines to find the atmosphere. This is one of the first steps towards reality in the film.

I drew the entire film in storyboard, it helps me a lot. To see clearly. I project myself into the scene. And I find the angles, the actions to tell things.



Scène 18

Plan 01

Scène 18



Il passe le mur noir.

Il regarde aux alentours. -----
Il avance.

Plan 02

Scène 18



La salle possède un plafond de

pellicules brillantes. -----
Il poursuit sa marche.

Plan 03

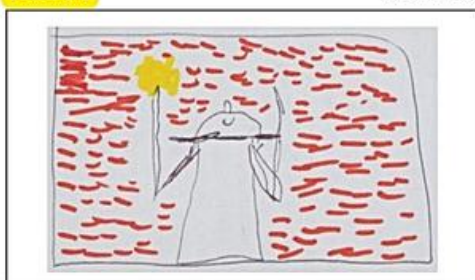
Scène 18



--- Il éclaire le plafond de pellicules. ---

Plan 04

Scène 18



La tête levée, il avance dans
cette salle immense. -----

Plan 05

Scène 18



Il tape contre quelque chose.
Il baisse la tête. -----

Plan 06

Scène 18



--- Il regarde, c'est une spirale de fer. ---
Elle est en mouvement.

Plan 07

Scène 18



----- La spirale bouge. -----
----- Il recule. -----

Plan 08

Scène 18



----- En reculant, ses pieds tapent -----
----- contre une autre spirale de -----
----- fer en mouvement. -----

Plan 09

Scène 18



----- Il est dans un champ de spirale -----
----- en mouvement. La terre tremble. -----

Plan 10

Scène 18



----- Il traverse le champ, paniqué. -----

Plan 11

Scène 18



----- Il sort du champ de métal. -----
----- Devant lui, un cylindre argenté -----
----- lumineux. Il s'approche. -----

Plan 12

Scène 18



----- Il regarde à l'intérieur. -----

Plan 13

Scène 18



----- Il se relève. Regarde autour de lui. -----
----- Il fait demi-tour. -----

Plan 14

Scène 18



----- Des lianes de fer sortent du cylindre -----
----- argenté. Elles attrapent la poupée. -----
----- Le collectionneur est stoppé. -----

Plan 14

Scène 18



----- Il dépose son sac. Essaie de défaire -----
----- les lianes de fer. -----

Plan 15

Scène 18



----- Il essaie de défaire les lianes à -----
----- la lumière de sa torche. -----

Plan 16

Scène 18



----- Il aperçoit quelque chose sur -----
----- la poupée. -----

Plan 17

Scène 18



----- Des mouvements lumineux dans -----
----- l'oeil de verre de la poupée. -----



EXAMPLE SHOTS
SCÈNE 18





EXAMPLE SHOTS

SCÈNE 18





EXAMPLE SHOTS

SCÈNE 18



TREATMENT AESTHETIC AND DRAMATIC

To approach this idea of luminous vibration, which is rather poetic and dreamlike, I favored an atmospheric film with a dreamlike aesthetic.

An atmosphere where image and sound have a strong importance. This atmosphere is created with a desire to remove objects and materials from their primary function by giving them a second, more poetic one, so as to constitute the disturbing universe in which the characters evolve.

This universe obeys the laws of dreams, with its fleeting appearances and its sensations of incompressible logic.

The aesthetic intention of the film is to let oneself be carried away by visual and auditory sensations to touch the world of dreams and the poetry of moving light.

The dramatic tension is based on a process of gradation: the more the film progresses, the more we shift into the world of dreams, the strange and the horror.

The characters are driven by action rather than by thought that would dictate their actions; they operate by instinct. They live in the present and act in the moment following their intuition.

It is within the poetry of the settings that the characters evolve. The settings reflect the mental state of the characters.



**How the light works on
the scenery with the
creatures**

**Props under
construction for one
of the film's sets**



The sets were built with recovered or donated materials. These are simple things whose use has been misused. Among them, we find trees, blank DVDs, plastic sheeting and even Kodak boxes. There's something calming about making it all. Build a fragment of the world and film the actor's feeling inside.

It was important to have a mix, an alternation between so-called "natural" settings and constructed settings. This alternation between the two creates harmony. We went to several different places. We filmed in streets, city stairs, an abandoned photo studio, a forest and even a cave with bats.

SCENERY



Black room

Forest





Film room

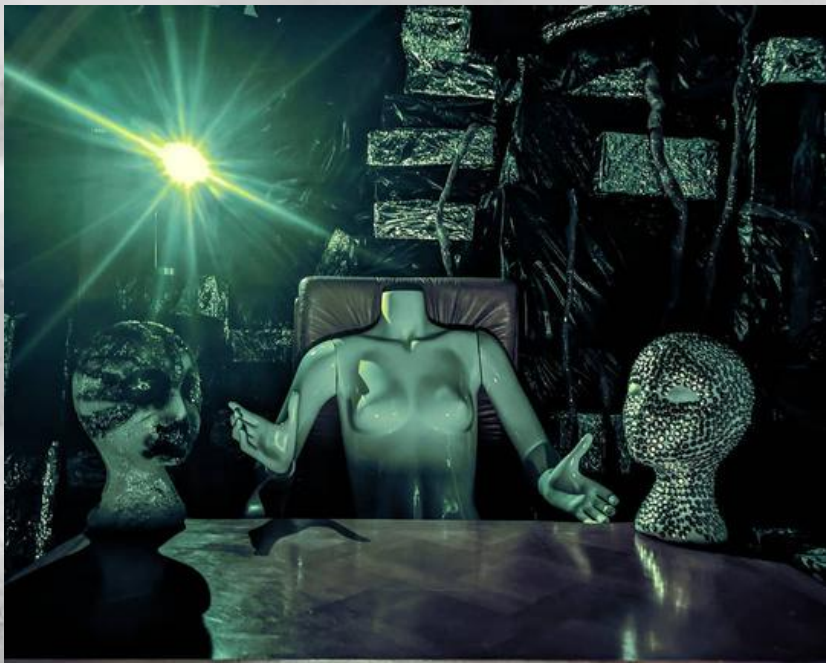


Tools



Modified trunk

Woman in Black Studio





Spirit head



Collector's armchair and the spirits around the doll



Bureau de femme en noir

FINANCEMENT

The film was financed gradually over five years (June 2019–March 2024).

I am a seasonal photographer, I mainly work in summer and winter. At the end of each season, I put money aside. This money constitutes a reserve from which to draw for water and food on set, materials to make the sets, and the post-production part. I then organize the time so that I can be immersed and available for the different stages of the film.

I made this choice because it seemed to me to be the most accurate in my eyes when I started thinking about the film.

I had looked at the existing funding, the aid that was offered, but I found it so difficult, so complicated to understand. It really is a job in its own right to write grant applications.

When I talked with people at festivals and film associations, I saw how cool the other projects were, how well people knew how to talk about their film, their series. Wow, but she tells her film with full intensity. Wow, but he explains his intentions so clearly.

Ha, but how do they know precisely what their film will produce? It seems so complex to me, and yet it's so simple in his voice, in his words, in his eyes.

Well answer: people are just better.

It makes me want to see their film made.

But, what about me?

Yes, who am I?

I'm nobody, who would want to put money in my eyes? Who would want to bet on my desire?

There are so many more projects and better people.

I have no chance of getting funding, it's impossible.

So what do I do?

Do I live with the frustration of carrying out a project that will never see the light of day?

Do I accept that there is, perhaps, a chance of producing this film with grant files full of letters and numbers?

No, I can't, I can't do it like that for this film. I will not arrive there.

I will be carried for a time by my enthusiasm, then by having silences in the return emails, absences of responses and polite promises; han well, it'll just wear me out and tire me out, then I'll give up.

People are already getting started on projects that are important to them and excite them.

Who are you to come and bore them with your proposal? You were forgotten, archived somewhere. It's normal, you don't exist. If you existed we would have refused you. Your action would have had an impact somewhere, but there is nothing there, nothing but silence.

And then you're doing it wrong, that's for sure. That's why we're not responding to you.

The only thing I'm going to succeed in is dreaming about the film without ever seeing it.

One more ghost film that will haunt my head among the stillborns and aborted people in the drawer.

So, we have to do it differently.

Just actually do it, go through the motions, make the mistakes, learn and then move on. That's all there is to do.

I am lucky to have time, to be able to organize it. It's a luxury, it won't last.

Let's take advantage of this precious opportunity to do what seems most right to me at this moment in my life.

Too bad for what I don't have and hurray for what I do have.

There is a lot of pleasure in writing the scenes, storyboarding, building the sets and bringing out the emotion with the actors.

Really, I like it so much, it's so lively and pleasant.

It brings a lot of pleasure like cooking, and it's even more fun when you share it with people you like.



Coal hands fluctuating in the membrane

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