



wabi_

written, directed and edited by

Raphaël Baget and Dino Mujic

Story Elements



Project introduction and synopsis



wabi_ poster

Title : wabi_
Format : 2.39:1 ; 16:9 (*memories*)
Duration : 10min 57sec
Process : Color
Used technique : 3D Animation
Target Audience : people who grew up in the early 2000's, Queer community, Misfits,...

Synopsis

Trapped in his nostalgia and haunted by the impermanence of things, a sad little ghost is unable to pass through the liminal space he occupies.

summary of the story

The film opens with an old computer screen turning on. Words appear on screen with blank spaces between them. It reads "the quiet and bitter _ feeling of nostalgia. _ being stuck in the liminality between the nearly gone and the not yet over _ the space left behind by what was and will never be again. _ the impermanence of things." Then a word is typed "wabi_". The camera zooms into the blinking text cursor and we enter a place in between.

There we find ourselves looking out of an apartment window. The sky is obscured by multiple giant skyscrapers. Suddenly the TV turns on and we hear a bunch of other sounds of electronic devices, seemingly to keep someone company. We take a look around the apartment. We see old consoles and VHS tapes with hand-written titles on them, a sad, dried up christmas tree with decoration scattered across the floor, an empty fridge, a cup of ramen being heated up in the microwave and a sink full of dirty dishes. On the christmas ornament we notice a distorted reflection of someone passing by. We go inside their room and find a computer with an old pinball game. Suddenly the screen turns off and in the reflection we see someone illuminated under the bedsheet. The protagonist of this story is revealed, a little ghost. He posts a photo of his birthday cake on social media and puts the phone on the bedside table. Suddenly a notification sound pops up and the ghost immediately jumps to take a look, hopeful that someone reacted to his post. But it's just a reminder to go to the laundromat. Next, the ghost is inside the metro on his way to the Wong Kar Wash Laundromat. There he receives another notification. He takes out his phone and sees a reminder to buy groceries. He goes to the supermarket, which is decorated for Halloween. Short memories of Halloween candy and a jack-o-lantern quickly flash before him.

He continues to make his way through the aisle, when suddenly he receives another notification. He checks his phone, only to see yet another reminder to go pick up his laundry. He returns to the metro but in the middle of the ride, the metro comes to an abrupt halt. Without hesitation he takes out his phone to keep himself busy. Just outside of his window, a beautiful glowing ghost flower is growing inside the tunnel. A beautiful moment which the ghost doesn't notice because he's on his phone. Back at his apartment he takes a shower and dries himself with a hairdryer. He begins to shave the fuzzy parts of his sheet and more memories of cutting paper snowflakes appear, distracting him just enough that he accidentally cuts a hole into his sheet. He inspects the hole and decides he has to go buy a new one immediately. So he goes to the mall. The mall is filled with Christmas decoration and a version of Silent Night is filling the empty halls. The ghost passes by old stores he used to go to as a kid, including a fast food restaurant. This one especially brings back a few memories again. He continues his way to the bed store to buy a new sheet. He goes in but we stay outside and look around the mall. We see a gumball dispenser, a claw machine, a ball pit for children, all while sounds of a lively environment slowly come back. The ghost steps out of the store and all those sounds suddenly disappear. He makes his way down the escalator but receives another notification on his phone. This time a reminder for the screening of his favorite movie tonight at the cinema, which he totally forgot about.

summary of the story

Luckily the cinema is on the top floor of the mall. He buys some popcorn and goes inside the auditorium. Time passes and he watches the film. After the film ends, he takes out his phone to log it on letterboxd. But suddenly a glowing artifact appears. This artifact has been secretly following him throughout the story and we only saw glimpses of it. But finally the ghost notices it. The artifact rushes out of the cinema and the ghost runs after it, leaving his phone in the process. He follows the artifact inside an old electronics store and begins searching for it. He sees a door with colorful lights shining through. He opens it and finds a giant room with red drapes and only one object inside it, an old computer. As he walks closer, the artifact goes inside the computer and turns into fishes inside the screen. The ghost touches the screen and it begins to ripple. The image gets mirrored and we find ourselves on the other side. The fish inside the screen freeze into ice blocks. Snow starts falling on the keyboard and a door opens, shining a beautiful and warm orange color through. This breaks the color palette. We're suddenly in the POV of the ghost as he walks through this door and a snowy environment. We see a snowman as more memories flash of him building this snowman. This completes the process and we now find ourselves inside a giant and emotional memory sequence.

Christmas, sitting inside the shopping cart, old games, toys inside cereal boxes, a full fridge at your childhood home, searching for easter eggs, pillow forts and old cartoons. This crescendos in a memory of watching fireworks and then a black screen. We hear a click an old fish lamp turns on. We see a few more memories but slower, such as a giant dinosaur statue, a card that falls between the wooden floor, and a pool that then disappears, leaving a mark where it used to be on the grass. The little ghost sees himself inside the reflection of a tv and we see his childhood self, with a dinosaur themed bedsheet. This image is juxtaposed with all the memories we previously saw, resulting in an explosion of feelings. The image of the ghost gets burned in the screen as we see the words from the beginning again. Suddenly, the blank spaces get filled in. It reads "the quiet and bittersweet feeling of nostalgia. being stuck in the liminality between the nearly gone and the not yet over can bring a new perspective. what can be found is a fleeting beauty that emerges from the space left behind by what was and will never be again. and through that, an acceptance of the impermanence of things.". This then changes 'wabi' to 'wabi-sabi'. A "monitor is going to sleep" messages appears and we cut to black.

the look

the simpsons at night



the simpsons at night

the simpsons at night



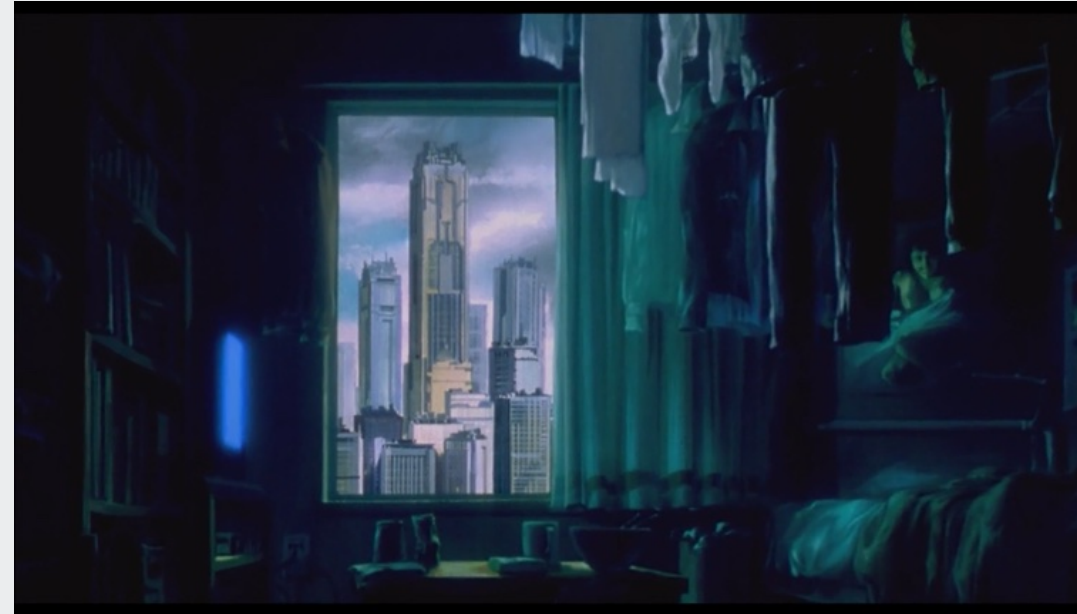
We were heavily inspired by the way 2000s cartoons (such as The Simpsons) depicted nighttime. Rather than muted colors and blacks, they often opted for beautiful purples mixed with blues. This creates a really atmospheric and nostalgic look. Nights don't look scary, but calm and peaceful. This directly influenced our color palette.

we realized while doing the research for the visuals of wabi_ that this very specific tint of purple and blue were very nostalgic for a lot of people and that they were eagerly waiting for it to return.

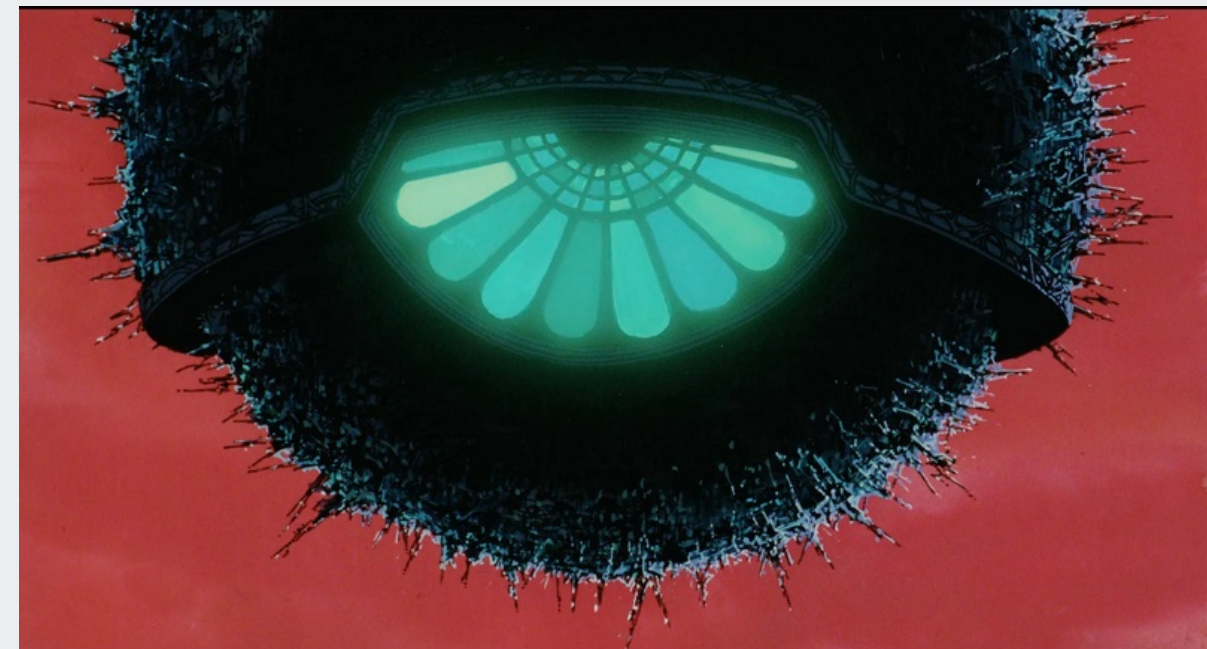
the look

Something we tried to replicate a bit was the way older anime looks and feels. Before the digital age, they of course had to use analog film to photograph it. They captured each cel usually on 16mm film (and in special cases 35mm). This gave it that signature film grain and a nice halation that we especially found interesting. We used a film emulation and played with different looks. We ultimately decided on a Fujifilm Fujichrome Velvia 100 emulation, with some custom tweaks to get the desired look we were after. This is most noticeable with the lights (such as the neon) and how it behaves. The grain is also something that adds a ton to the nostalgic feeling and offers a great contrast to the memory sequence, which has that early digital camera look. They're very different, but both nostalgic in their own ways.

Ghost in the Shell - Mamoru Oshii



Neon Genesis Evangelion - Hideaki Anno



Angel's Egg - Mamoru Oshii

liminal spaces

example of liminal spaces



example of liminal spaces



example of liminal spaces

Something we wanted to include early on were liminal spaces. Both of us have been obsessed with them for a long time. Liminal Spaces are a popular internet aesthetic that have gained in popularity in recent years (and are also slowly making their way into mainstream media like with the movie 'I Saw the TV Glow', the show 'Severance' or A24's upcoming film by popular YouTuber/Filmmaker Kane Pixels). While nowadays a lot of them tend to go more into the horror direction, we had more interest to capture what made it so fascinating in the first place.

The term “Liminal Space” is used to describe a place or state of transition/change, either physical (like a doorway) or psychological (the period of adolescence). It’s an in-between stage that made perfect sense for our story to be set in. Time has no real meaning here. Our ghost roams these places that are completely devoid of people. Not necessarily because they are, but because that’s how isolated and alone he feels. Liminal Spaces usually convey a strange feeling of nostalgia, sadness and eeriness. They feel surreal. They have both a comforting and uneasy effect on us. This was perfect for the atmosphere we wanted to create.

early 2000's

We both had our childhoods in the early 2000s and tried to capture this time we grew up in. While 80s and 90s nostalgia is already very popular and everywhere (because people who grew up then have money now to buy and consume these movies, shows, products), 2000s nostalgia is about to become big. Trends around it are already growing fast on social media, especially ever since Covid.

We want to be on the forefront of that, to offer a different look on nostalgia for our generation. One that isn't entirely consumerism based to fill some void of sadness, but instead teaches about acceptance and to embrace that bittersweet feeling that time has passed.

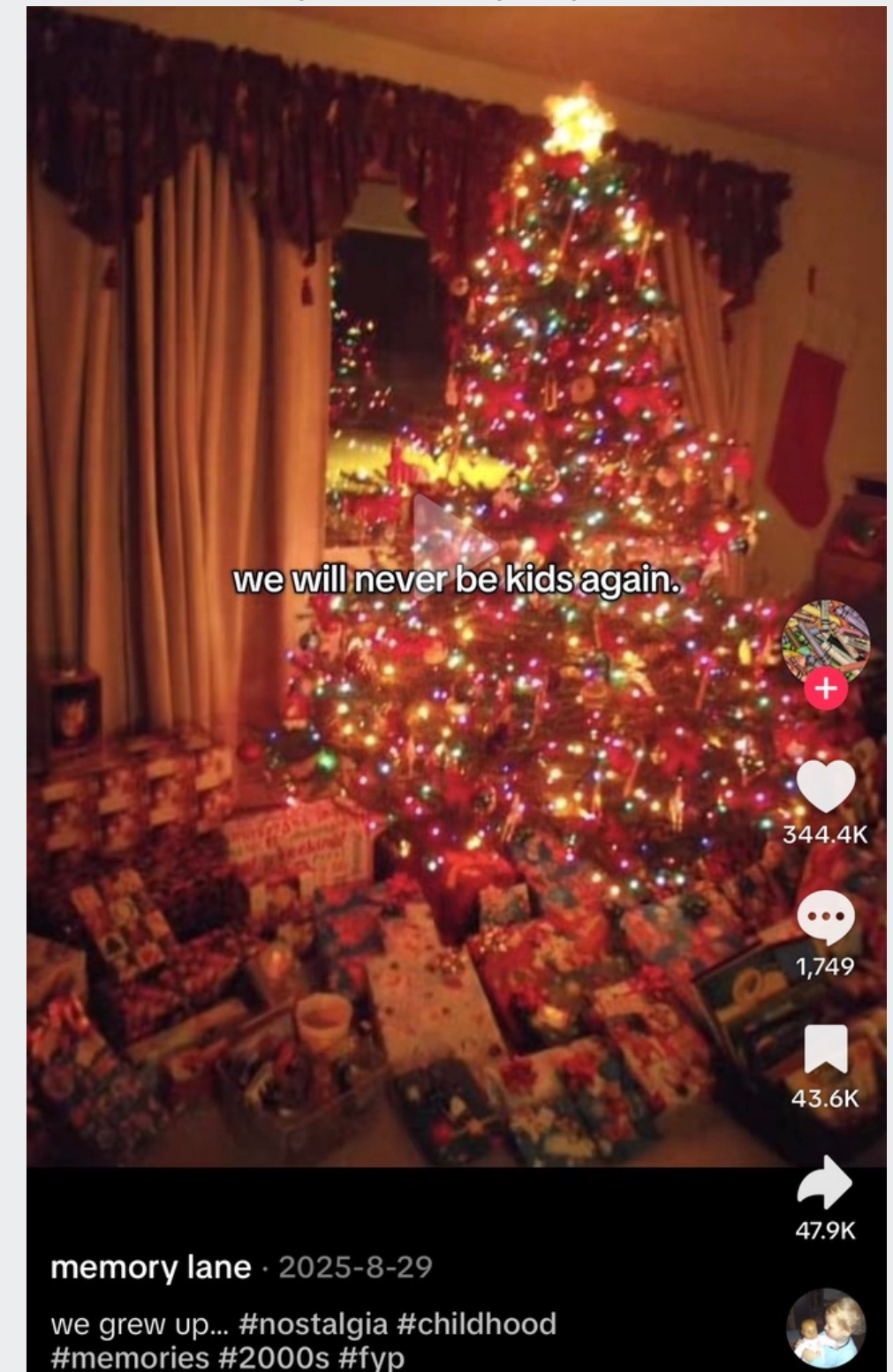
example of nostalgic content about growing up in the 2000's



example of nostalgic content about growing up in the 2000's



example of nostalgic content about growing up in the 2000's



aspect ratios and shaky cam effect

When you look at liminal spaces online, they're usually stretched out and wide with low ceilings, highlighting the emptiness and confined feeling of them. We wanted to convey this with the aspect ratio (2.39:1). The story takes place in the underscore between wabi and wabi, that has the shape of the aspect ratio as well.

The aspect ratio change with the memory flashes breaks out of this confined space. It's also the aspect ratio of older digital cameras (16:9).

With the shaky camera effect we wanted to give a more personal feeling by recreating that home video look. But also mixed with more modern techniques to again, create this in-between state.



showcase of the 2.39:1 aspect ratio



showcase of the 16:9 aspect ratio

movie inspirations



After Yang - Kogonada

For the memory sequence, we looked at the way the movie 'After Yang' treated and showed memories. POV shots showing the beauty of small moments in life.

We both love Yasujiro Ozu and his meditative filmmaking style. His signature pillow shots evoke so many feelings that lie deeper, underneath the story. That's something we needed for when the ghost is inside the bedsheet store. To give the viewer some time to calm down and to show there's so much the ghost is not noticing because he's so distracted and rushing from place to place. For us it also helped to further establish the atmosphere and show more of the environments we carefully created.



Equinox Flower - Yasujiro Ozu

video game references



examples from the video game 'Jusant'

We both love video games and grew up with them. I, Raphaël, have been working in this industry for the last 5 years as an environment artist and i feel like it shaped my way of working and telling stories. Since the ghost is not speaking, I focused on putting details and visual abstractions that are bouncing of each other to tell the story of wabi_ and make the visuals speak for themselves.

I played the game 'Jusant' while working on wabi_ and there were some very interesting passages that remind me of Ozu's pillow shots. To give some context, 'Jusant' is a game where you explore the ruins of an old civilization through visiting places, reading notes and listening into seashells. When you listen into those, you can hear the sounds of what the place might have sounded like when it was still full of people. That's something we kind of did in the mall part of wabi_

intention

The two of us met on Instagram. We started chatting and noticed fast that we share a lot of similarities and the love for similar things. This makes our communication very interesting because sometimes we'd say things like "like how you feel when watching this scene/listening to this song" or "that feeling when you smell/taste..." and we'd both immediately understand and then try to deconstruct this feeling into something we can then add to our film.

But we're also different enough where we can bring unique perspectives and ideas that the other person doesn't understand first or sees differently. The important thing is the mutual respect.

Working on this short film was also a way for us to get in touch with our childhood selves. During the entire process, we shared memories, showed each other old photos, talked about traumas and defining moments in our lives. This not only bonded us really close together but also helped us create a deeply personal story that we think reflects outward. The entire process was really special and healing for us.

intention wabi-sabi

We first stumbled across the term ‘wabi-sabi’ while on a trip in Japan. And ever since then, it has become such a big part of the project, to the point where the entire short is centered around that word.

Like a lot of Japanese concepts, it's really hard to put into words outside of its original language. When you look it up, the common explanation will tell you it's about seeing beauty in imperfection. We felt like this was a very western and simplified way to understand such a complex concept. So we looked more into it and found a really interesting definition in ‘The Book of Tea’ by Kakuzo Okakura. It says that ‘wabi’ was used in ancient times to describe a bad feeling of missing something or being sad things aren't the way you want them to be. Later, the meaning of the word evolved into a more positive one with the addition of the word ‘sabi’. There's a beauty that emerges from the state of things not being how you want them to be or them being non-present. It's also about the moments right before the beauty (before a flower blossoms) or right after (when it dies). It was right then that we realized that the concept of wabi-sabi made perfect sense for what we were trying to say and the story we wanted to tell. It also merged itself perfectly with the concept of liminal spaces and their aesthetic.

intention wabi-sabi

Our idea with the entire short film is to put wabi-sabi into a more modern context. It's an older Japanese philosophy/concept that requires a lot of context and backstory to fully understand. We wanted to give younger people and the modern audience an easier way in and we thought using technology as a metaphor for the acceleration of life and storing something that stays the same way forever, was the perfect way to do that. And with AI being a big topic, we also saw wabi-sabi as sort of the antithesis to it in a way. We wanted this film to be like a translation of this concept, to understand the feeling of it rather than just the words. And hopefully get more people interested to dig deeper into this way of life.

intention

Why a ghost?

We chose the ghost because for one, it could be anyone under the sheet. So it's easier to relate and see yourself despite of age, gender, look, etc.

It's also a metaphor for feeling invisible, not feeling seen by the world or people around you. The ghost is haunted by the passage of time and thus roams this liminal space, completely alone and unable to pass through it. He's stuck.

Since ghosts are super popular and have had a ton of different looks in pop culture, we needed something unique that sets our ghost apart and makes him recognizable. We thought the look with the Doc Martens shoes did exactly that.



project state

The short film is completely finished and a standalone story. But we also want to use it as a proof of concept, to pitch a feature film. We already have ambitious ideas and want to take the story of this little ghost further. We're currently writing the script. It has themes of escapism and shows the love for human made things and physical media.

We're a small team but we want to expand and bring in more creatives.

We also have ideas to make anthology stories of different ghosts and their personal struggles. Each in a different art style and set in other environments and niche internet aesthetics.

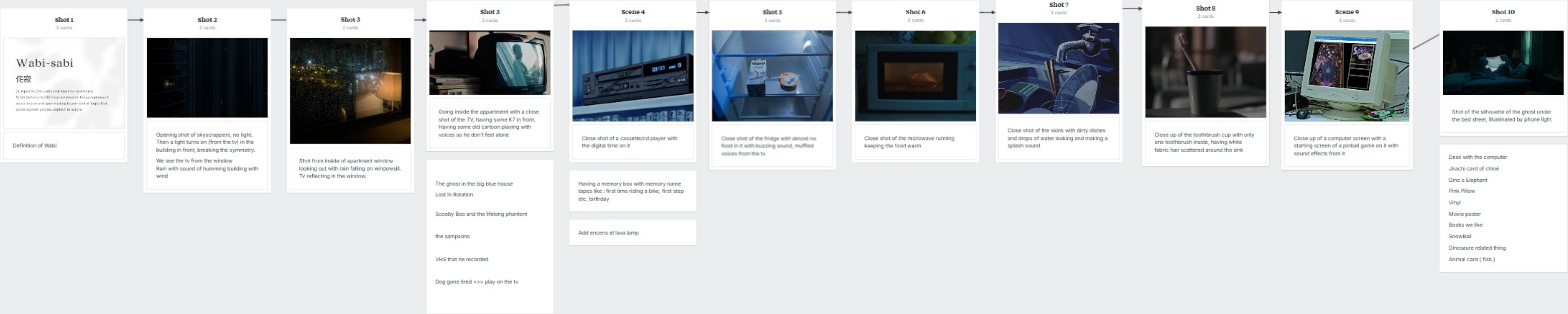




Visuals Elements

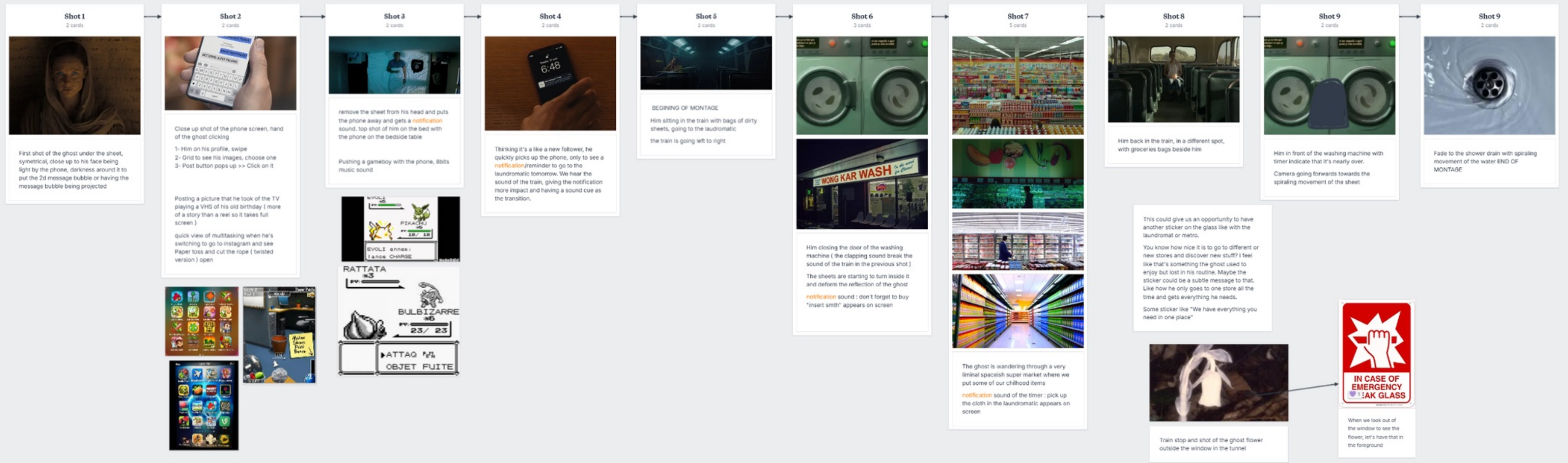
Storyboard

scene 01



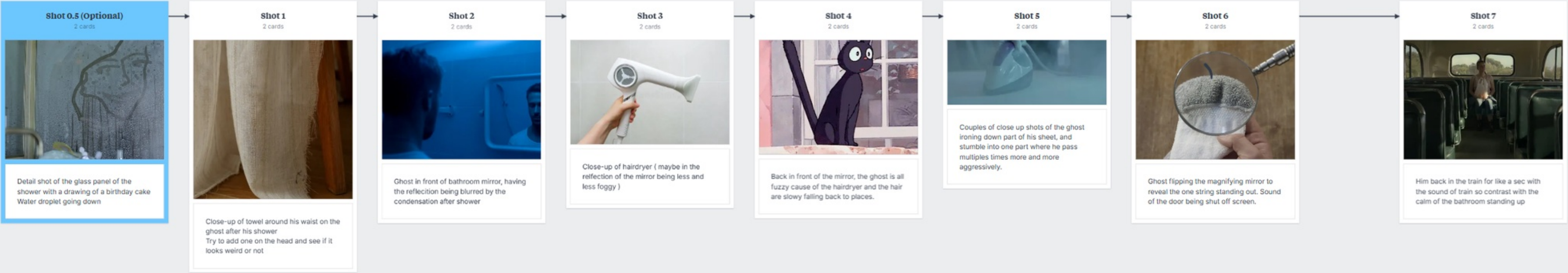
Storyboard

scene 02



Storyboard

scene 03



Storyboard

scene 04 pt1

Scene 1
2 cards



Establishing shot of the mall with the tiny ghost walking around

Scene 2
2 cards


shutterstock.com - 1410007227

Close-up of the escalator with ghost putting his feet on it and going up

Scene 3
2 cards



Shot of him going up the escalator in the mall

Scene 4
2 cards



Ghost walking through mall, passing different stores to get to the sheet store

Find some stores we liked as a child

Video DVD Rental place with movies poster and cardboard stuff

McDonalds/Fast food/Ball Pitt play ground

Toys R Us

Electronical store

Sheet/bed Store find a name for it ?

Scene 5
2 cards



Him standing in front of the bed sheet vitrine and looking at some sheet inside. His reflection is out of focus but can be seen on the new sheet

Scene 6
2 cards



Wider shot of the ghost entering the shot

Scene 7
2 cards



Close-up of gumball machine with rain dropping sound from the next shot already hearable

Scene 8
2 cards


shutterstock.com - 2048218631

Close-up of slippery warning sign with a puddle next to it and raindrops falling from the roof

Scene 9
2 cards



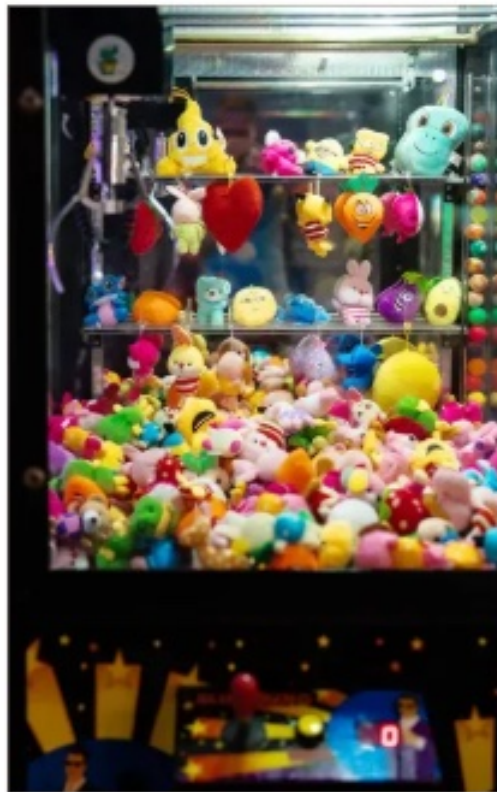
Close-up of vending machine humming sound with previous raindrop sound in the distance but quiet

Storyboard

scene 04 pt2

Scene 10

2 cards



Close-up of claw machine with sounds and lights to invite to play. Raindrop and humming sound from previous shots in the distance

Scene 11

2 cards



Close-up of ball pit from fast food place with McDonald's beeping in the background. Raindrop, humming and claw machine sound from previous shots in the distance

Scene 12

2 cards



Ghost coming out from the store (same shot as the when when he enters it) All the sound goes silent when he step out.

Scene 13

2 cards



Shot of him going down the escalator in the mall with the bag of sheet. Gets notification sound

Scene 14

2 cards

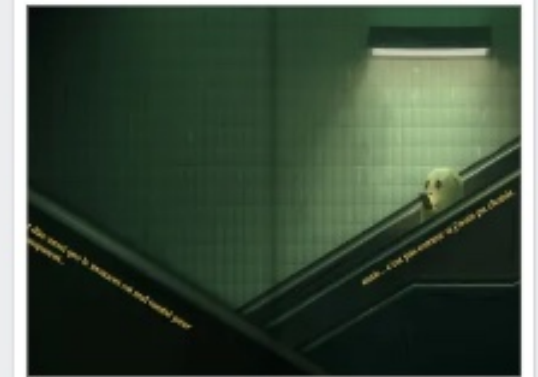


Close-up of phone with notification/reminder to go to the cinema

No need of this one, we can put the notification on the screen

Scene 15

2 cards

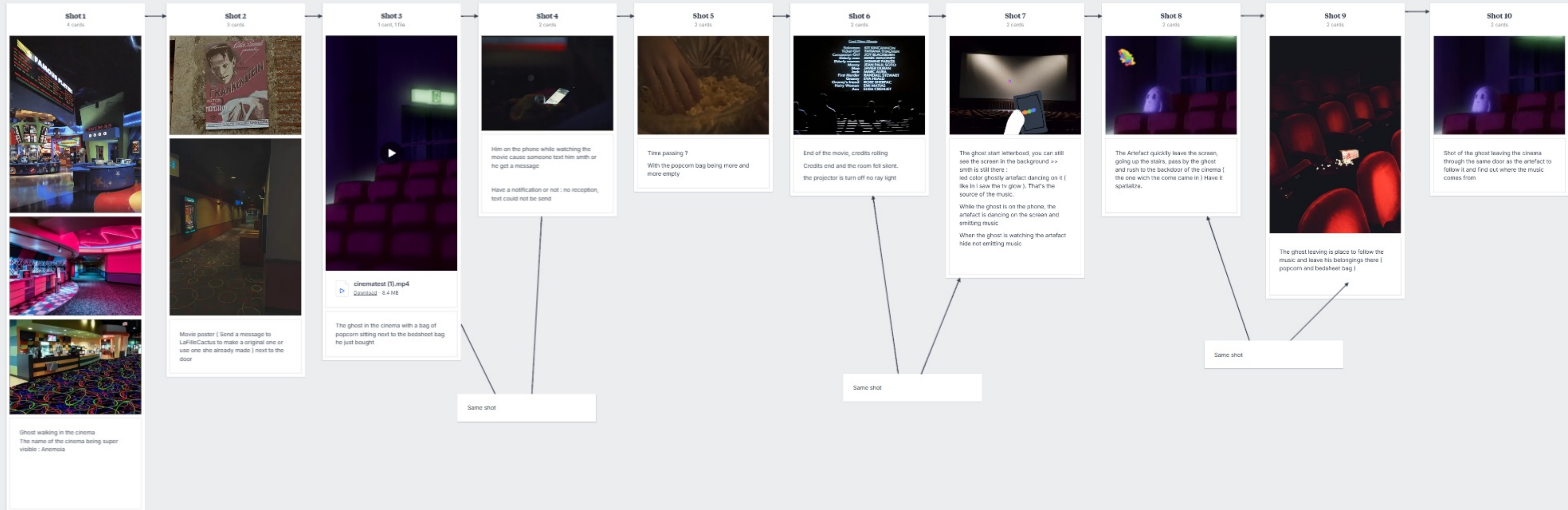


Shot of him going back up

I merged thoses shots

Storyboard

scene 05



Storyboard

scene 06

Shot 1
2 cards



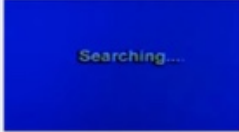
Kind of security camera angle shot of the mall with different stores, the music artefact goes into the frame first, left it and then the ghost



Shot 2
3 cards



Shot of the facade of the store, the vitrine is full of screens of different size. All those screens are linked to a camera that shows the inside of the store. First the music artefact goes by the store and enter the shop (you can see it inside in the screens) then the ghost store by, watch the screen and then go inside as well (you can see the ghost doing the same parcours inside the store in the screens)



Shot 3
2 cards



Shot through a shelf full of books, the ghost walks in the store, screen on the foreground that displayed no input/ searching

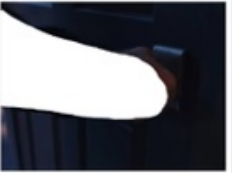


Shot 4
2 cards



Ghost sees a backdoor to the office of the store, just slightly open. The artefact goes inside, wind of the movement shaking the door in the process just a bit.

Shot 5
2 cards



Close-up of the door and the ghosts hand slowly pushing it open.

Shot 6
2 cards



Shot from inside the room of the door opening and the ghost standing there.

Shot 7
2 cards



Counter-shot reveal of the room with an old computer in the middle and the artefact floating above it. The screen of the computer being empty water. The artefact goes into the screening

I did some change here, divide this into two shots > one counter shot where you see the computer and the middle of the room and the artefact circling it and a second shot more close where we actually see the artefact entering the screen

Shot 8
2 cards



the artefact turns into fishes of different colours that swim in the water -> screensaver
Blue
Purple
Green
Yellow
Red
Orange

Shot 9
2 cards



Close-up of the screen with the reflection of the ghost coming closer. Then his hand appears as he tries to touch the screen. As his hand comes closer, we see static appear.

Shot 10
2 cards



Extreme close-up of the fabric reacting to the static like hair on a balloon and standing up.
Camera goes from left to right

Shot 11
2 cards



As the ghost's hand touches the screen, it gets a water ripple effect

Shot 12
2 cards



Camera still go from left to right, passing on the side of the big screen (darker area) and have this shot mirrored. Snow start falling, the fishes in the screen turns ice blocks

Shot 13
2 cards



Close up of keyboard being covered with now

Shot 14
3 cards



The camera go trough the door

visuals



mall environment 01



mall environment 02

visuals



parking lot environment



cinema environment

visuals



grocery store environment



wacdonald's environment

visuals



some 2D texture elements made by Sofiane Saez



visuals



some examples of how our memories translated in wabi_

visuals



some examples of personal objects and their wabi_ counterparts

movie shot references

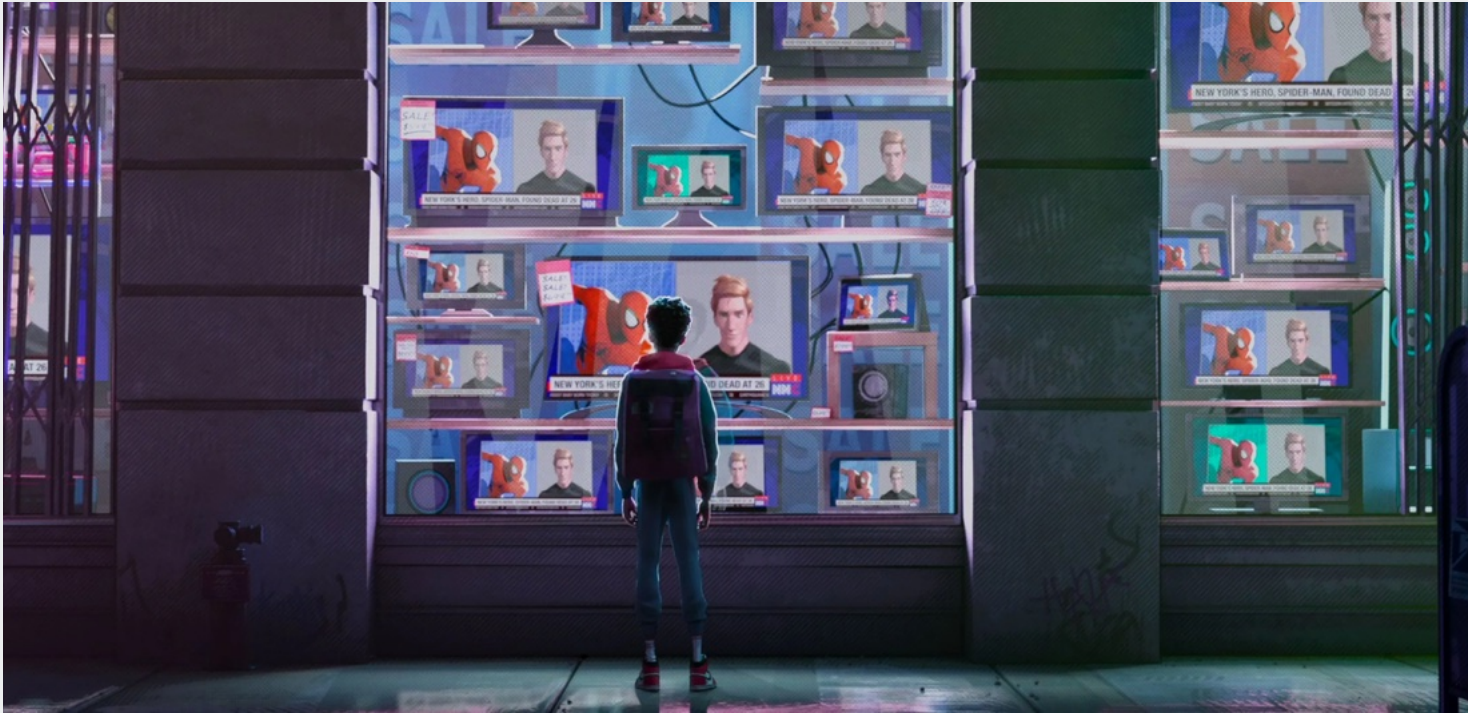


Only God Forgives - Nicolas Winding Refn

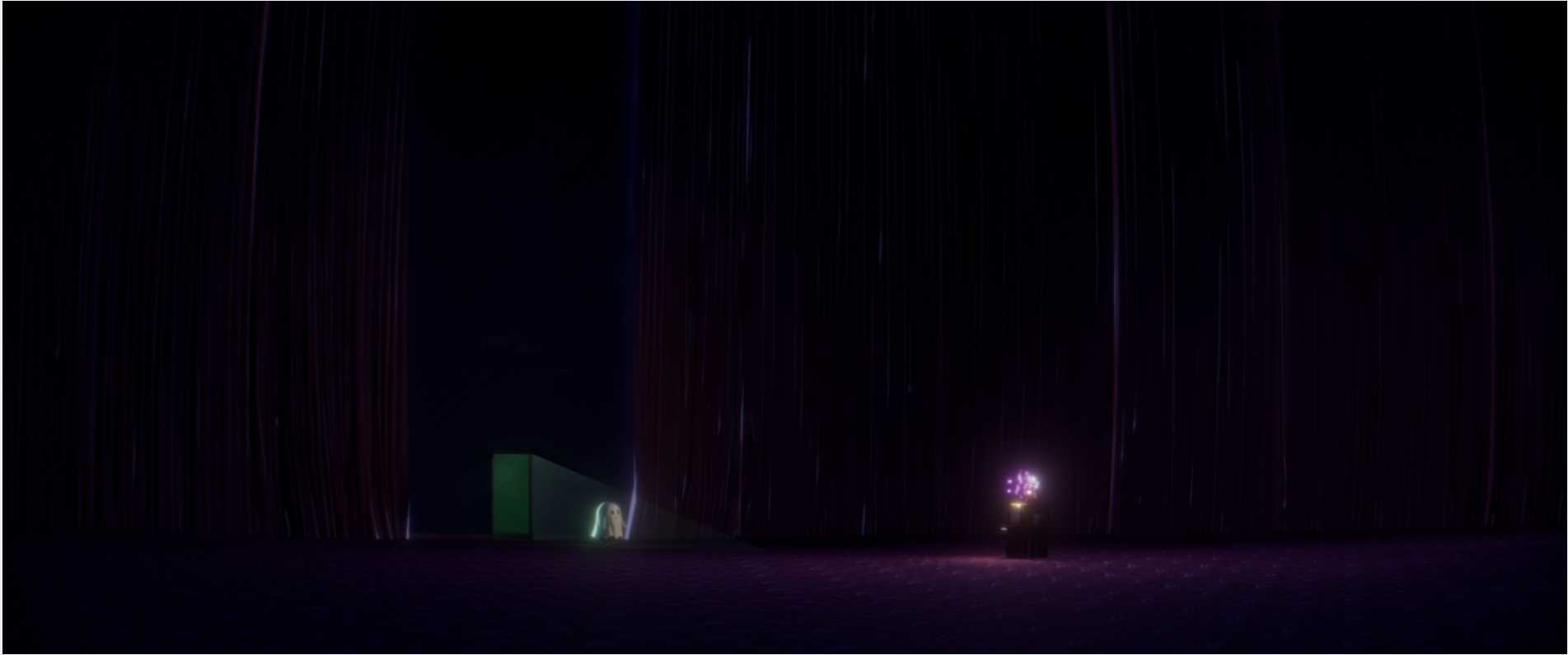


I Saw the TV Glow - Jane Schoenbrun

movie shot references



Into the Spider-Verse - Peter Ramsey, Bob Persichetti & Rodney Rothman



Twin Peaks - David Lynch

movie shot references



Ted - Seth MacFarlane



Decision to Leave - Park Chan-wook

visuals



the little ghost



his shoes

visuals



administrative elements

e

d↓po

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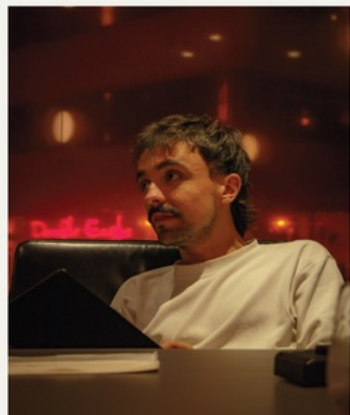
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RAPHAEL BAGET

3D ARTIST

For the past 5 years, I've been working in a 3D agency, alternating between creating video games and experiences for luxury brands and artists. Today, 3 years ago i did my first awards winning short film Birth of Death and now i'm very proud and happy to finally present you wabi_

STUDIES

Lycée François Talma
2015 - 2017 | Bac ES

Hetic
2017-2020 | Bachelor Real Time 3D

SKILLS

- Modeling
- Animation
- Texturing
- Photoshop
- Video Editing
- Audio Editing
- 3D Real time
- SFX
- Storyboarding
- Artistic direction
- Narrative Design
- Writing

EXPERIENCES

- 2025-2026 **Director/Writer/Author on Wabi**
 - Working in pair with another director and align our vision
 - Create a story from scratch and leveling my skills on all of the aspects of the production

- 2022-2023 **Director/Author on Birth of Death**
 - Making of a short film on my own
 - Storyboard, script, artistic direction , animation, post production etc...

- 2020-2025 **3D Artist / Environment Artist for Monochrome Paris**
 - Making of interactive experiences for luxury brands and artists
 - Modeling, texturing, animation and environnement for the game Tandem : A Tale of Shadows / 1900 / Unseen
 - Art Direction

CV



DINO MUJIC

FILMMAKER

Dino Mujic (born September 18, 1998 in Lörrach, Germany) is a German/Bosnian writer and director. From a young age he had a fascination for psychology and with his film, he wants to dive into what makes us human and show the beauty in everyday life.

In 2020 he created the Instagram page 'Every Shot a Painting', where he shares his love for cinema with the world ever since.

STUDIES

IU University
2022 - now | Bachelor Digital Media

SKILLS

- Writing
- Directing
- Producing
- Marketing
- Social Media
- Editing
- Storyboarding

EXPERIENCES

- 2024-2026 **Writer/Director of 'wabi_'**
 - Working with another director and aligning our vision
 - Improving all my skills in the entire production

- 2025 **Assistant Director of the short film 'Afraid'**
 - Helping the director realise his vision and overseeing a production

- 2024-2025 **Writer/Director of my first short film 'The May Bench'**
 - Making my first short film from Writing, Planning, Financing, Directing and Post-Production to Marketing

- 2024-now **Work at the Vitra Design Museum in Weil am Rhein**
 - Experience in daily museum work and networking
 - Planning and Managing

thank you