
Willem de Kooning Academy
Minor Digital Craft
Written Statement Anna Saaltink

Fantastic Forgeries / Tools of the Trade

'Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication', Leonardo da Vinci. {•}

As a fashion designer I am not so much into trends. I am mainly interested in 'simplicity' and 'clarity' while communicating. I am inspired by art and people. [1]

As a student, and as a resident of a dynamic and modern multi cultural city I am socially engaged and witty.

my craft

{•} In 2012, in an effort to explain my craft, I am sharing my preoccupation(s), while introducing one of my HEAD projects [2], *Experimental Jacket and Urban Jeans* {•}:

'During landing with the airplane I am always admiring the top view of the landscape below. In the view of these landscapes {•} I see in different field divisions. They interest me, especially their geometry. These field divisions remind me of paintings of the Dutch abstract painter Theo van Doesburg {•}, a member of Dutch 'de Stijl'.

The paintings of Van Doesburg are flat (2D), abstract, minimalistic and geometric. The top view is reminding me of that. But in fact the field divisions seem flat, (2D) from the top view in the air, but we know that, putting all the fields together it is in fact 3D: the earth. I wanted to combine this contrast between 2D and 3D in one outfit but also I work with their similarity the geometric forms.'

More specifically concerning my current minor project: I selected *Mon Premier Amour* (1953) by Man Ray. At first hand, I selected this bright painting because of its aesthetics, and because I got curious by the multi interpretable title.

But after researching the painting and Man Ray – surprisingly – I started to notice quite some resemblance(s) with my own practice.

Probably my selection, was not really intuitive after all, and was triggered by some kind of recognition – as if we are 'sharing' the same concepts. Like Man Ray in *Mon Premier Amour* {•}, I am working with collaging, 'layering' geometrical shapes, and color as well.

new tools

Traditionally the tools and media of fashion seem somehow restricted, because in the end it is always some kind of fabric which has to cover the body. Like they say: "The fashionable woman wears clothes. The clothes don't wear her." [3] Mary Quant (1934), or "One is never over-dressed or underdressed with a Little Black Dress." Karl Lagerfeld {•} (1933).

The tools of fashion – a pattern made out of fabric sewed together by a machine – seemed fairly analog . . .

In this context, it's quite amazing some 'old' industrial techniques, like weaving and knitting, in the recent past first digitalised to re-entered the profession. While some emerging technologies [4], like for instance 'smart textiles' {•} [5] and '3D printing' [6] are stretching the domain currently.

Meanwhile 'sustainability' – *cradle to cradle* [7] – 'customising' [8] and 'co creation' are other influential concepts changing design elsewhere. 'Globalism' and 'cross cultural collaborations' will probably broaden the profession even further [9].

Apparently the traditional analog fashion designers toolkit [10] needs to be updated by now. [11] Of course not only the Macbook, including the Adobe Suite should be added. But which tools the standard future toolkit will contain, is rather hard to predict at this very moment . . . Still I'd like to mention the repertoire I encountered during the last months while studying *Digital Crafts*: special fibers (that light up when you make a picture), the arduino (handling chips and relay's, movement, sound, led light, et cetera), spray and glue's, which are replacing fabrics, or melting fabrics together to eliminate the sewing machine.

my position

Compare the next quotes: "I don't do fashion. I am fashion." Coco Chanel (1883-1971), "I don't design clothes. I design dreams." Ralph Lauren (1939), and "Clothes mean nothing until someone lives in them." Marc Jacobs (1963). Inevitable fashion is moving away from plain *shamanism* [12] {•}, while some forward marketing thinking is introduced, although we all know the profession nowadays sometimes equals a form of entertainment or glamour. For instance recently *The New York Times* informed its readers under the heading "An invitation or a provocation?" about (again) John Galiano who has been named by Renzo Rosso to be the creative director of Maison Martin Margiela . . .

Fashion is rather resilient and seems to re-new itself constantly. It has to; the principle seems to be embedded in our designer genes.

Although fashion seems to be an area that has remained relatively untouched by technology, recently the potential is high lightened by the work of designers like Hussein Chalayan who is "creating a micro geography with the body, and two dresses like tv screens with led's" [13], and Iris van Herpen: "Most of my concepts are fairly abstract. I don't like creating a new image based on an old one." [14] Both designers are crossing borders and are focused on looking into the future of Fashion.

Still, in this context it is, in my opinion, it is important to mention the craft itself – no matter which tools or media are used – is, in essence, something concerning 3D, since the 'main object of study' is the human body. (Both Chalayan's {•} and Van Herpen's {•} designs represent a shaping of the body.) So, no change in this retrospect. To conclude: fashion is presumably somehow related to architecture and sculpture as well . . .

implications

I am an open and curious designer. No doubt, 'to digitalise' is important. Still in the past we did not really have the chance nor the time to study 'new technologies'. Enough other challenges within Fashion anyhow.

Again, 'to digitalise' is important, and by now the main reason to select the minor *Digital Craft*, which enables me to focus, widen my horizon and discover new grounds.

Thinking about . . . , re-thinking my role as a fashion designer – you know, in the near future I will be working on my graduation project – there is another fashionable segment which, at least at WDKA, seems to be omitted.

I am wondering why children wear {•} is neglected?

I love children!

I am fascinated by them, and especially interested in children's perception . . . Children seem to observe the world differently.

When discussing the issue, my classmate Bor told me the next story. Its an excellent example of a different perception by a child – in this case Bor's nephew Jim – which is not completely in sync with reality. Mind you, *our* reality . . .

According to Bor, Jim was very excited, when he visited his uncle for the first time, because the man lives single, anti squat, in a huge gymnasium. (Obviously because the uncle can n't afford to rent a nice apartment.) Afterwards Jim immediately spread the news to all his friends: '*my uncle is very rich, because he lives in a gymnasium all alone*'.

The perception of a child is pure, honest and not influenced by norms, values or knowledge. They think out of the box mostly, and are not afraid to tell so.

Children are always willing to try, because they are not aware of the mature concept of failure. By now I know I am not a drawing artist nor an illustrator. So I avoid drawing . . . But as a child you just don't care. *All kids are artists!* {•}

The magical thinking of children – the blurring boundary between fantasy and reality – is inspiring! I'd like to study this subject, if possible within the minor *Digital Craft*.

Besides because research concerning children's 'Fantasy Orientation' gained some new insights:

"Engaging in fantastical worlds might advance children's theory of mind skills because in fantasy children must imagine alternative realities (e.g. imagining a world where people can fly), a skill that might be helpful in understanding others' minds (e.g. imagining that a person could have a false belief about the world). In a short-term longitudinal study, we found that preschoolers' fantasy orientation predicted improvement in theory of mind over the time period examined." (A)

"The distinction between fantasy and reality is basic to human cognition . . . Children have traditionally been thought to confuse the boundary between fantasy and reality. However, the view that children confuse fantasy and reality is at odds with a large body of research showing that children as young as three years are able to make various other non-reality/reality distinctions." (X)

"Adult thinking about children tends always to the grimly instrumental. But there is a deeper and more interesting question to ask. Why are children and fantasy linked at all? Why does the marvellous, the wonderful, the fantastic seem to be the natural territory of

childhood? And why do children spontaneously choose the unreal over the real? From an evolutionary perspective children are, literally, designed to learn. Childhood is a special period of protected immaturity.

What we call play, allows the young to learn in this protected, safe way. These everyday theories are much like the formal, explicit theories of science. Theorising lets children understand the world and other people more accurately." (Y)

the link

To connect children's 'Magical Thinking' with the minor Digital Craft; in an attempt to trigger children's fantasy like any UC designer [15, 16] would do, I discussed, and 'decomposed' a digital device, with ten children in the age between 4-7 years, and interviewed them each individually during an hour at a number of addresses in Rotterdam. As digital device I selected an iPad, this object is very popular with children from this age and I was sure they could tell me a lot about this device. To my surprise the knowledge of children concerning The Digital is actually quite amazing:

Céline (7 years) predicted a lot of wires, inside the i-pad, connected with a lightning switch, which transferred all data to a satellite and back . . . Céline told me – in confidence – she had been thinking a lot about the touchscreen of the i-pad lately . . . to conclude there must be a some kind of magnet inside which moved around in sync while your finger swept . . .

Lior (6 years) explained the i-pad's mechanism was in fact supported by *a family* – a mother, a daddy and a child – who *internally*, by turn, supported all movements of the user(s) outside. He suggested the family was in fact at sleep, when the i-pad's battery was empty and needed a re-load . . .

Anyhow, all children were convinced of the usage of some kind of complex ingenious wiring, and at least a set of powerful batteries supporting the performance of the i-pad.

Youri (6 years) – who by the way is planning, like his father, a career as engineer – not only succeeded in drawing a memory chip quite precisely, but also in presenting a 'printed circuit' while discussing the i-pad {•} [17] . . .

Once positioned in the role of engineer, constructor, or designer the kids imagination' really started to flow.

Hein (5 years) suggested to visit and explore the i-pad in an astronaut suit to prevent short circuit and/or electrocution at all times . . .

Céline would store and secure all her secrets in the i-pad for ever, if she could produce her own . . .

Frauke (7 years) would favour a voluminous *girafant* [18] living in her i-pad very much . . .

After the first sessions, I realised my prediction about children's perception, especially their fantasy concerning the functioning of the i-pad, was not really very accurate . . . I expected their stories and investigations to be much more a live and free, but they were mostly quite realistic. I wondered if I could still reach my goal: create a tool to trigger fantasy?

In co-creation [19] WE produced a number of interesting collage's and outfits. {•} As it seems my intention to decide upon 'design moves' together, seems valuable in the end.

At this very moment I am preparing a wired *rapid prototype* – a first *Tool of the Trade* – loaded with touch sensors and LED's to explore the children's MAGICAL THINKING and *validate* the first *Tool of the Trade* together. [20]
Meanwhile I am planning two group sessions with children at BSO in Amsterdam [21], and at a primary Rudolf Steiner school *Wonnebald* in The Hague [22].

In this context it is interesting MIT developed StoryMat: a soft intelligent play mat that records and recalls children's storytelling activities.

"Storytelling plays an essential role in children's daily activities. Listening to others' stories and sharing their stories with others are activities through which children make sense of their inner world and the world around them. While computers are emerging in children's world by means of educational tools or games, there is a considerable lack of computer mediated systems that simply support children's everyday storytelling activities." (Z)

to be continued

On special request, to round up in a nutshell, and to avoid misunderstanding. [23]
Please be aware, I am not only interested in children's wear, because I am a fashion student with a fascination for the little creatures wearing those lovely miniature outfits. For already some time I am wondering why children's wear seems to be a kind of niche within fashion, and if the subject – a kids collection – might be a suitable challenge for my graduation project, and beyond.

?

When exploring the origin of my fascination I soon traced 'children's fantasy', probably because it might be possible to connect 'fantasy' – to imagine, to dream – with the minor *Digital Craft*.

While trying to answer the 'how-might-we-question', 'How might I trigger children's fantasy by up-to-date 'tools of the trade' as part of my craft?' I discovered new grounds like 'user centred design', including 'rapid prototyping' [20] and 'co-creation' [19] . . .

The latest additional option, to create a tool for kids, which in fact resembles a catalyst to start playing and use imagination, is very promising but still needs development.

Maybe the spread of a hacker culture [24] amongst the very young – opposite to the contemporary passive consuming of pre fabricated software – is innovative?

It shows the project itself is starting to resemble an adventurous journey . . .

The Tools of the Trade is not completely finished yet, but well documented until now.

Please check for the most up to date status at <http://opensource.wdka.nl/wiki/>

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notes

1

<http://cargocollective.com/annasaaltink>

2

I studied Fashion Design at the Haute École d'Art et de Design in Geneva from 2010-2013. > <http://www.hesge.ch/head/en>

3

All quotations are marked by double apostrophes ("example"). The sources are numbered from A-Z and presented below in just another list.

4

<http://waag.org/nl/event/smart-textiles-deaf-2012>

5

http://www.newscenter.philips.com/nl_nl/standard/about/news/press/2014/20140214-philips-ontwerpt-hedendaagse-versie-17de-eeuwse-halskragen-voor-rijksmuseum.wpd#.VKfqXEvsfLQ

6

<http://motherboard.vice.com/read/this-knitting-machine-is-like-a-3d-printer-for-clothes>

7

Waste = Food via <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2xhgsKenR5w>

8

http://store.nike.com/us/en_us/pw/mens-nikeid-running/1k9Z7puZ8yz

9

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DXoefx5Iq2Y>

10

The content of a traditional fashion designers toolkit: pencils/crayons, markers, scissors, cutting board, tape or ruler marked with body measurements, dress form or mannequin, pins & needles, pattern making kit, colourful spools, chalk wheel & loop turner, sewing machine(s), iron, and pressing tools.

11

<http://www.clicknl.nl/nextfashion/2014/03/31/van-mode-tot-technologie-de-creatie-van-een-nieuw-materiaal/>

12

A shaman is a transcendental practitioner in 'primitive or tribal cultures', who is believed to be able to encounter and interact with the past and the future. In North American cowboy-and-indian stories the shaman is 'the medicine man'. Contact and consult good and evil spirits, cure illnesses, et cetera. Some leading fashion designers resemble shaman's when reflecting on the past, or are forecasting the future.

13

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ae81FcczsI8>

14

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9vZktNvLCaI>

15

In *user centred design* its essential to question, observe and/or involve users during both the research and execution phase to match all demands.

16

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/User-centered_design

17

http://opensource.wdka.nl/wiki/File:Scan1a_16.jpeg

18

Girafant – the beast is a combination of two Dutch words: giraffe and elephant.

19

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Co-creation>

20

A *rapid prototype* is just beyond a sketch, to confront others with a first 'as if' model, which by the way desperately needs improvement.

In *user centred design* a prototype is *validated* amongst users during the execution phase to adjust and improve the (final) design.

21

<http://www.ateliercreart.nl>

22

<http://www.wonnebald.nl/over-de-school/organisatie/fit>

23

On special request: "Ik zie nog niet een duidelijke link tussen wat je schrijft over je interesses mbt tot mode en je tools of de trade project. Licht dat toe. Groet, R."

24

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hacker_\(hobbyist\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hacker_(hobbyist))

sources

A

Dore & Lillard, *Theory of mind and children's engagement in fantasy worlds*, University of Virginia.

X

Tanya Sharon and Jacqueline D. Woolley, *Do monsters dream? Young children's understanding of the fantasy/reality distinction*. Emory University, The University of Texas, USA.

Y

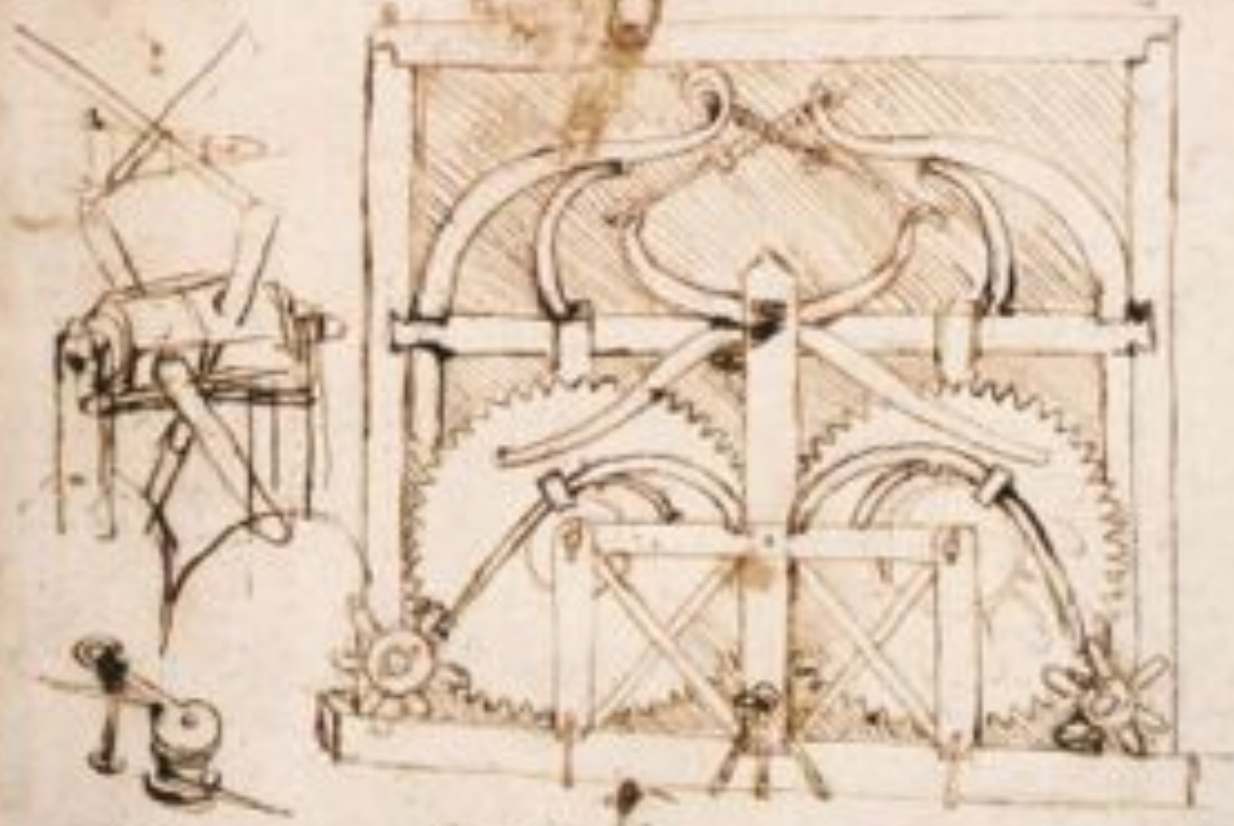
Alison Gopnik, *The Real Reason Children Love Fantasy* via http://www.slate.com/articles/arts/culturebox/2005/12/the_real_reason_children_love_fantasy.html

Z

Kimiko Ryokai and Justine Cassell, *StoryMat: A Play Space with Narrative Memories*, MIT Media Laboratory via <http://www.media.mit.edu/gnl/projects/storymat/>

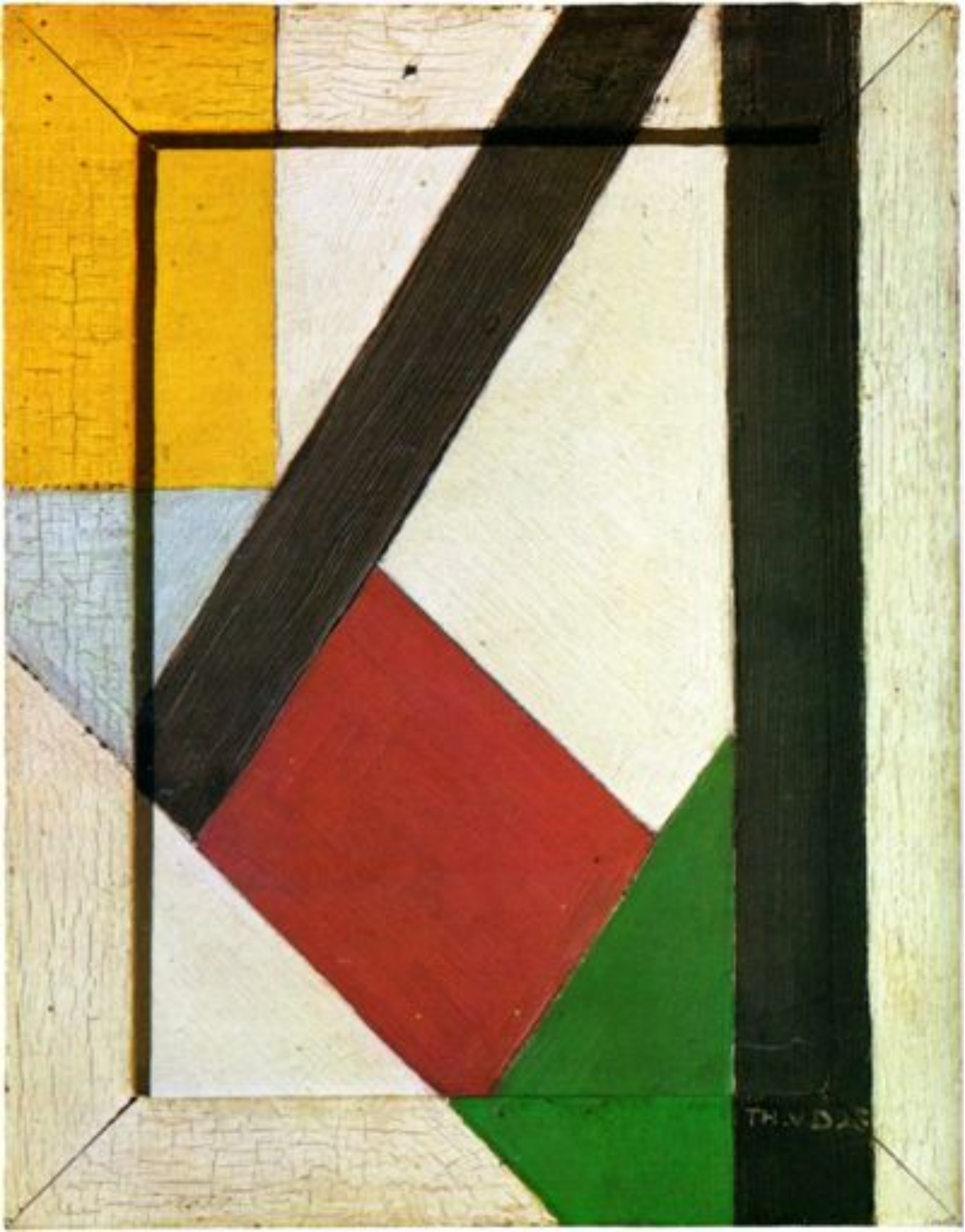
images

- Leonardo da Vinci ('siegemachine' of 'automobile').
- "A Genève, la HEAD cultive sa pépinière de futurs stylistes".
- Experimental Jacket and Urban Jeans, 2012.
- Airplane view: Holland from above.
- Theo van Doesburg, *Compositie*, 1928. Olieverf op karton.
- Man Ray, *Mon Premier Amour*, 1953.
- Karl Lagerfeld, Little Black Dress.
- Philips designs on request of the Rijksmuseum.
- Philips Lumalive 'Woven electronics' fabric platform.
- Three shamans.
- Hussein Chalayan, *Collection One Hundred and Eleven*, FW 2007.
- Iris van Herpen.
- Look book: stylish-winter-wear-trends-2014.
- 'Wisseltekening' (two sided decorative drawing) by Anna Saaltink (5 years).
- 'Wisseltekening' (two sided decorative drawing) by Anna Saaltink (5 years).
- Youri's 'printed circuit'.
- In co-creation: collage's and outfits.







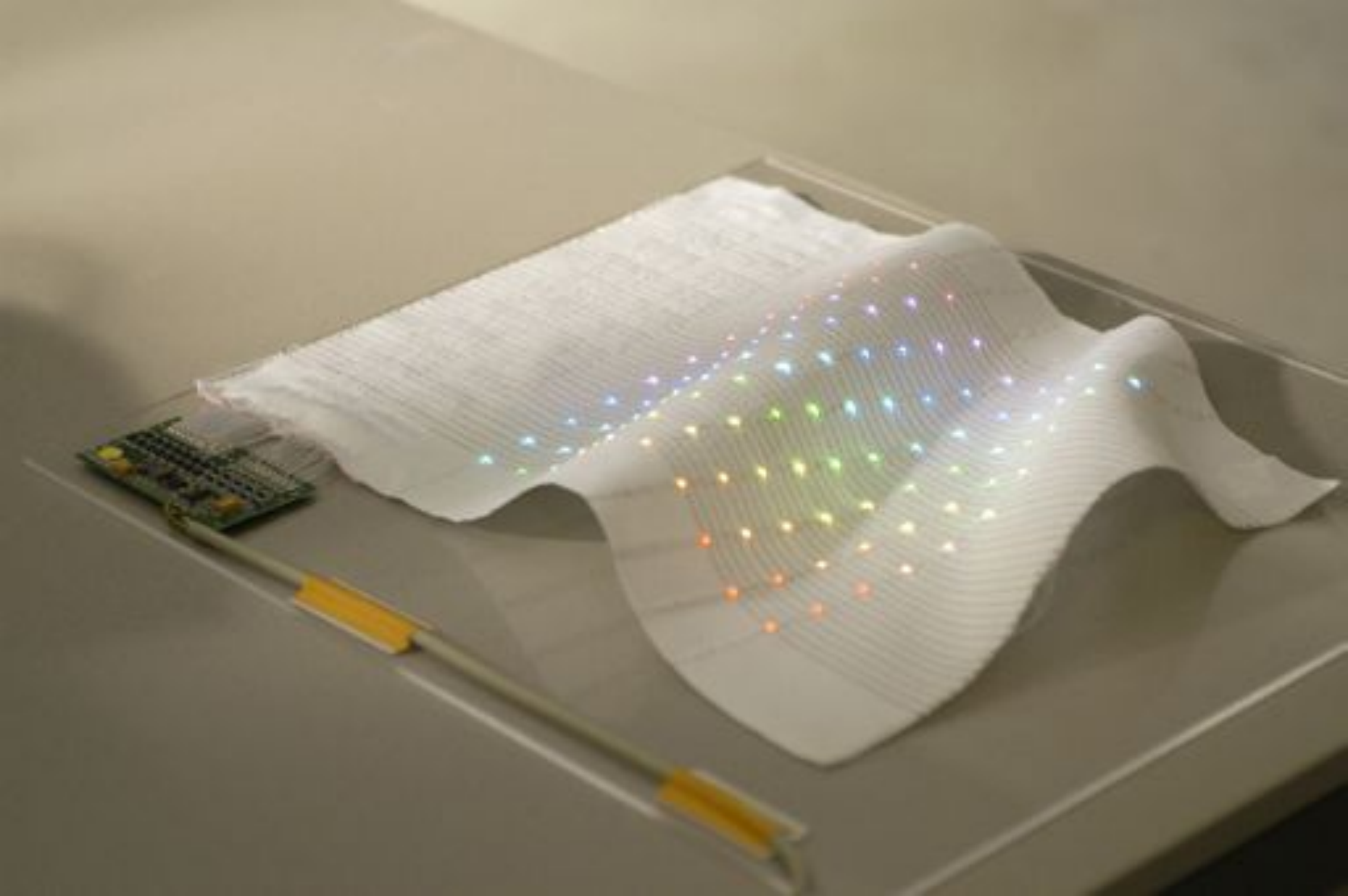


TH. V. DAS













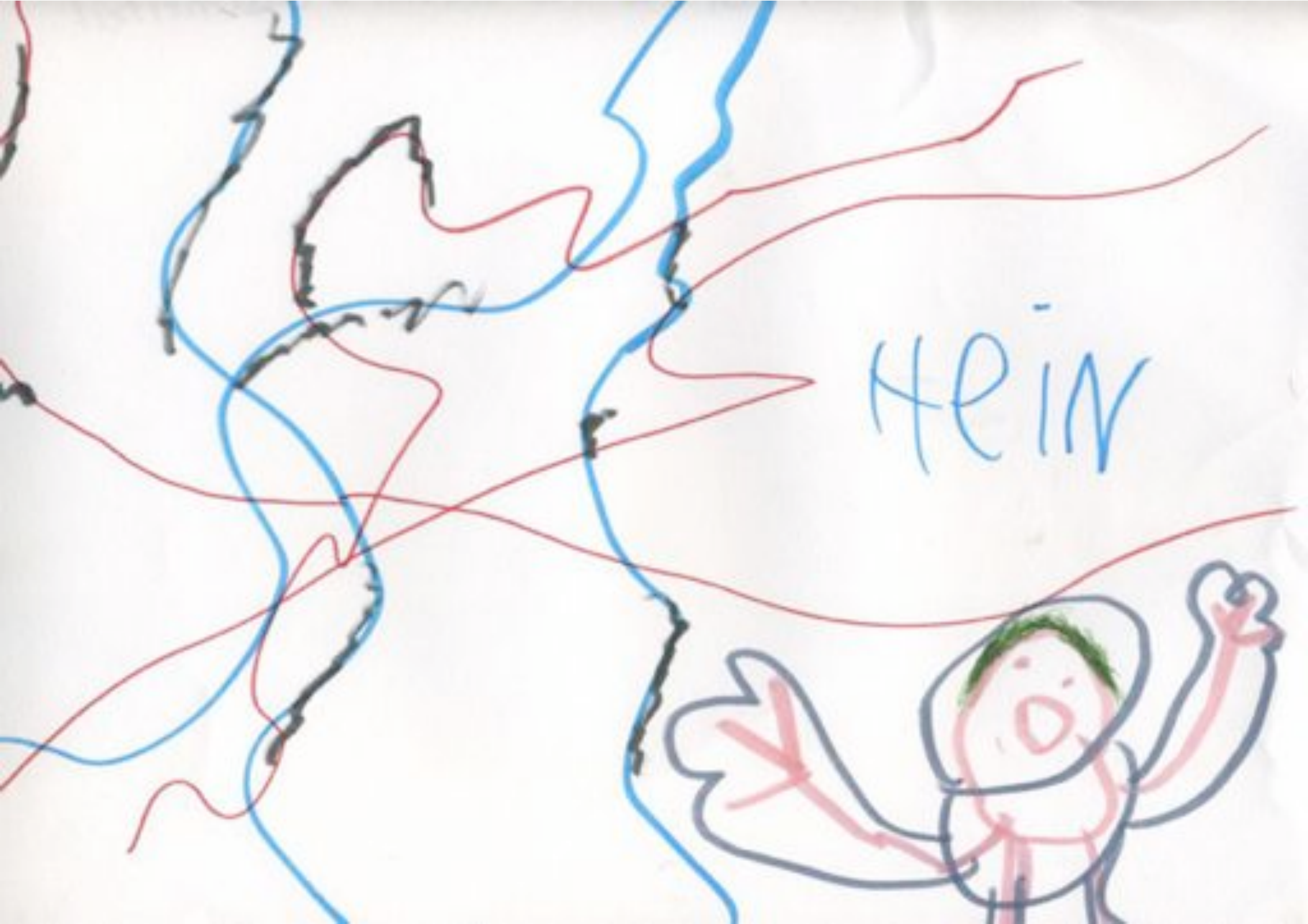




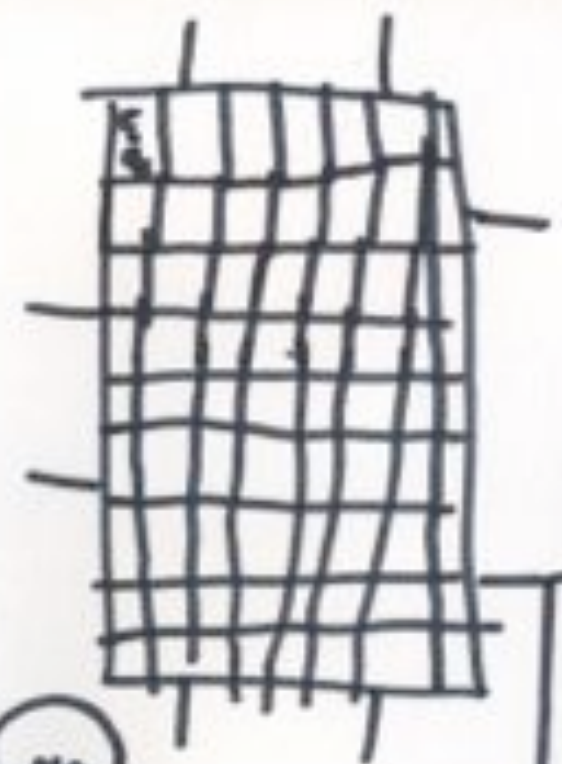




Hein



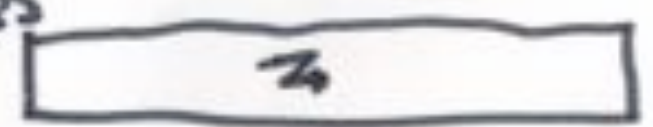
ZOMAKJEEEN
AIPAD



ZOMAKJEEEN
TV



← ZENDEPS



← LENS ← KANMESHIMHOORJE



