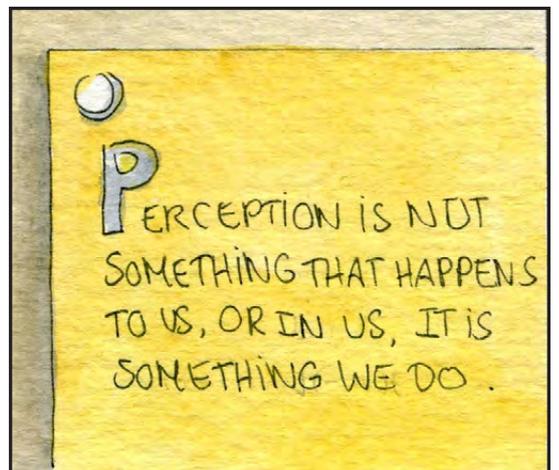
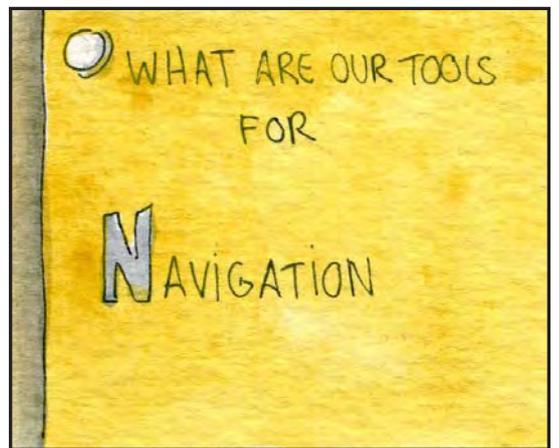
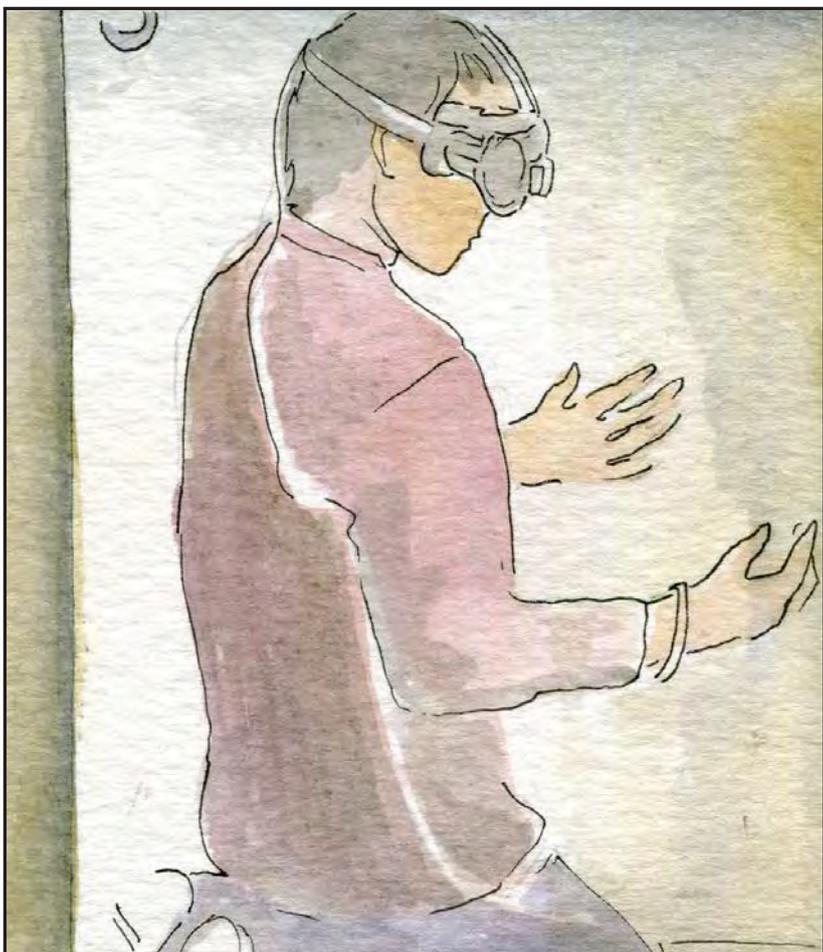
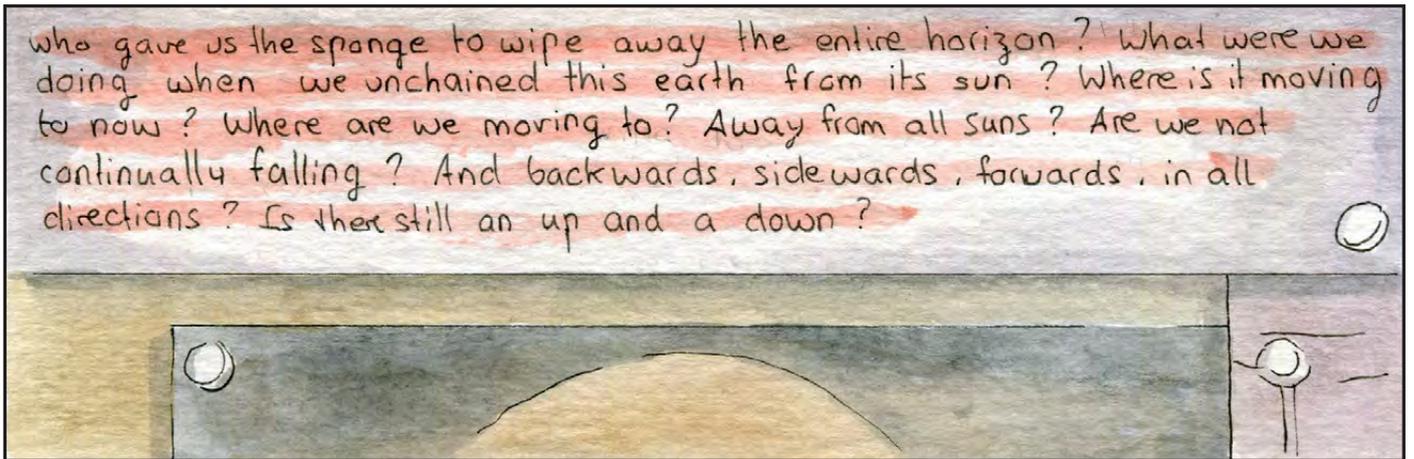
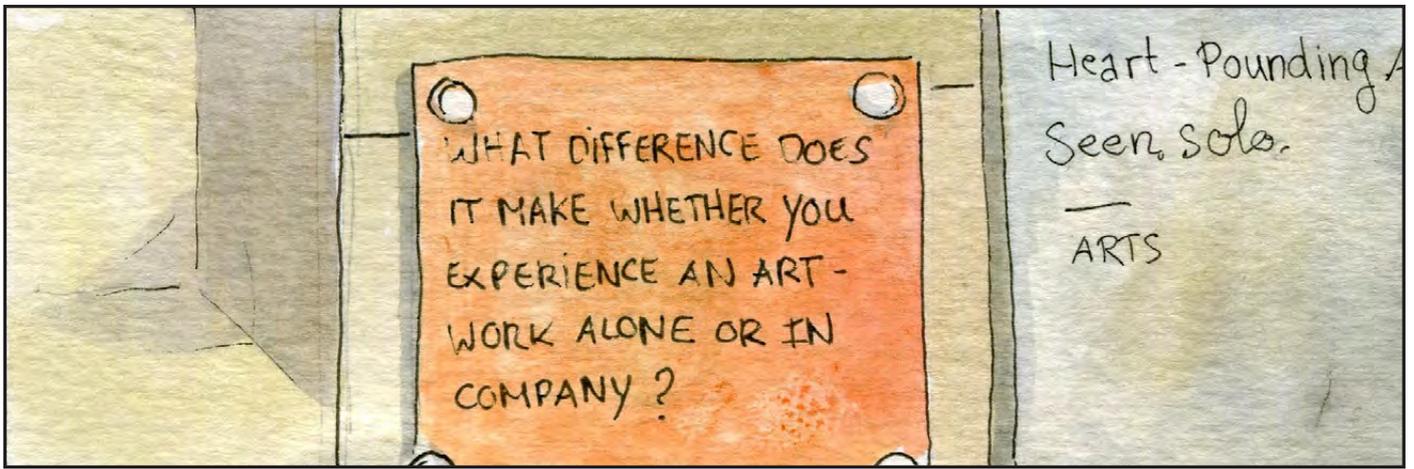




After Image

#InRealLife





I had just walked out of the show 'In Real Life' - a retrospective composed of some 40 works spanning Ólafur Eliasson's career - when I saw, sitting on the shelf of the shop area by the exit, the book eponym of the show. Its summary caught my attention: 'provide readers with a compass', 'a 360-degree view of the frames of reference that inform Eliasson's work'.

Something else intrigued me: on the exhibition leaflet it is mentioned that there is no fixed 'route', and that the yellow line on the 'map' is merely a suggestion.

FUTURE

When so much of the vocabulary used around the show is about orientation, I resurfaced from 'In Real Life' estranged from reality and as if a yellow film was covering my eyes - feeling like I had melted away and lost all sense of direction, unable to link my thoughts in a coherent whole. Like Narcissus lost in reflection, I found myself shot with colours, shattered by a kaleidoscopic vision.

ELSEWHERE

ELSEWHERE

MY NOW

MY NOW

HERE-NOW

YOUR NOW

YOUR NOW

SEEN-NOW

SEEN-NOW

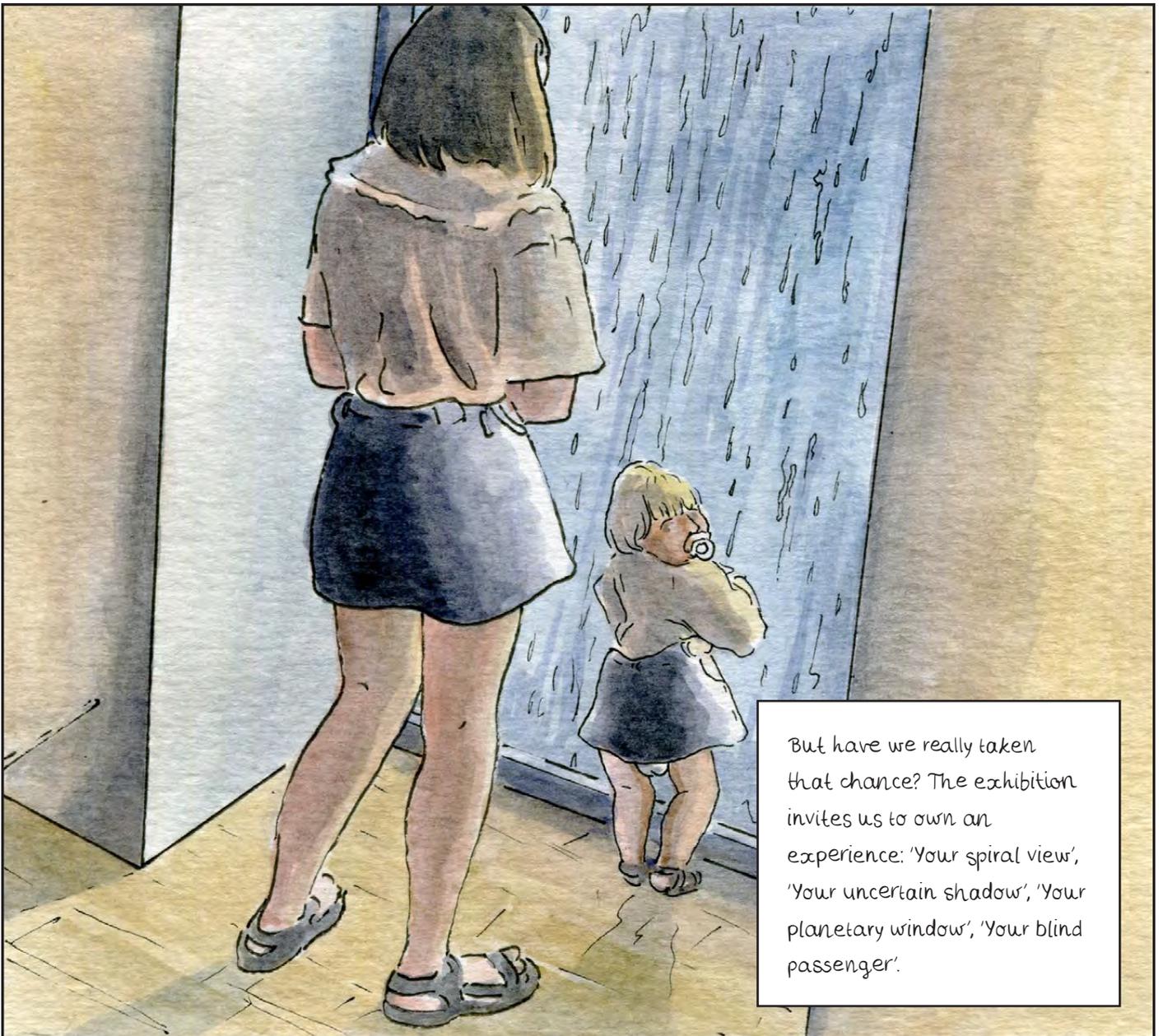
YOURSELF

MYSELF

I felt lost. De-routed and I wondered: why did the Greek hunter melt away - why did I feel like I had too?

PAST

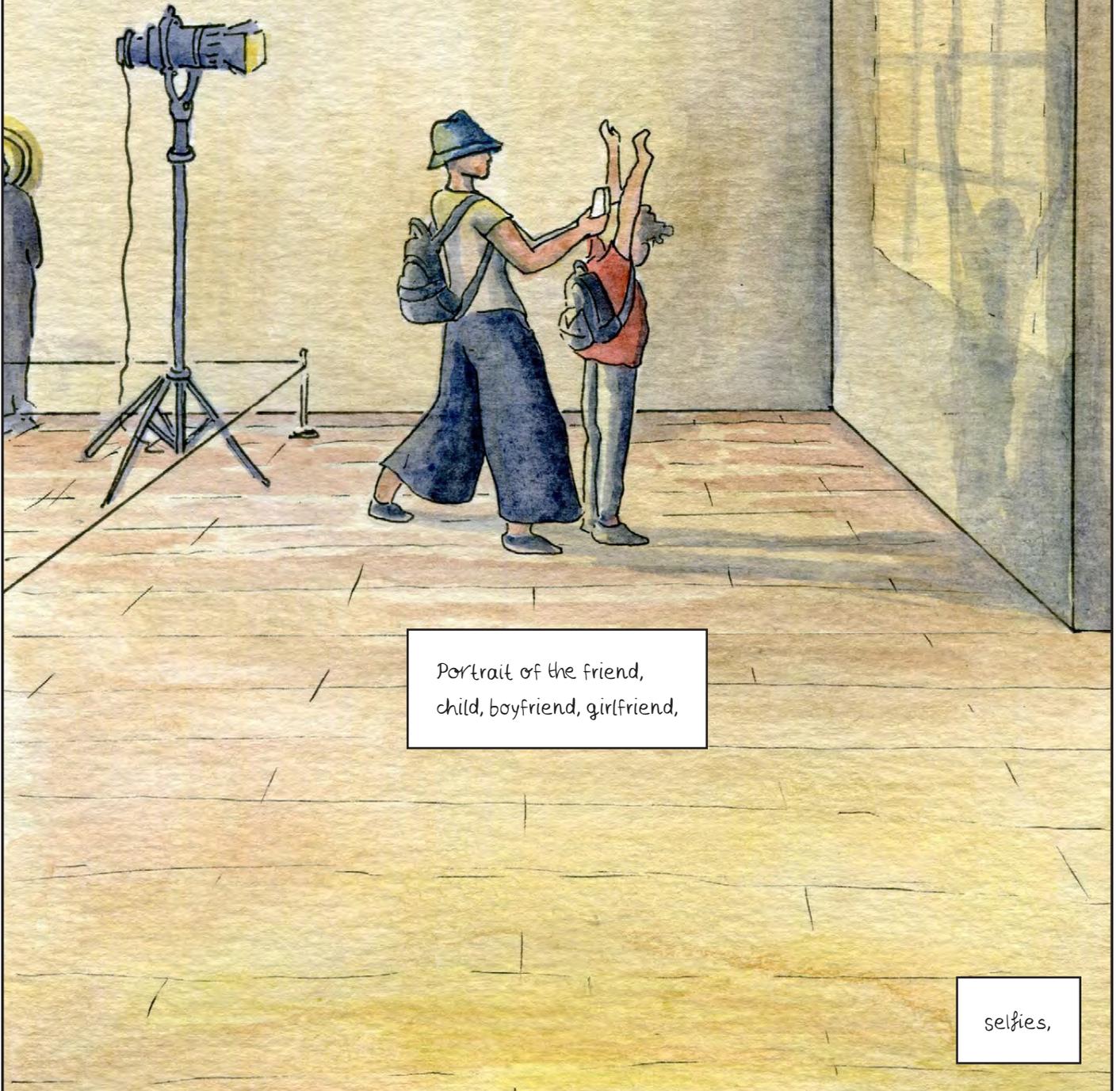
Eliasson is giving a chance for visitors to step out from behind their screens, enter a space that is not outside of the 'real' world, but offering a window to it.



But have we really taken that chance? The exhibition invites us to own an experience: 'Your spiral view', 'Your uncertain shadow', 'Your planetary window', 'Your blind passenger'.

Forthwith reflections, shadows and colorful lighting effects play the Narcissus in us. In a frantic reflex, we unsheathe our phones, ready to shoot, hashtag, share.

Reappropriating ourselves the exhibition through our phones.



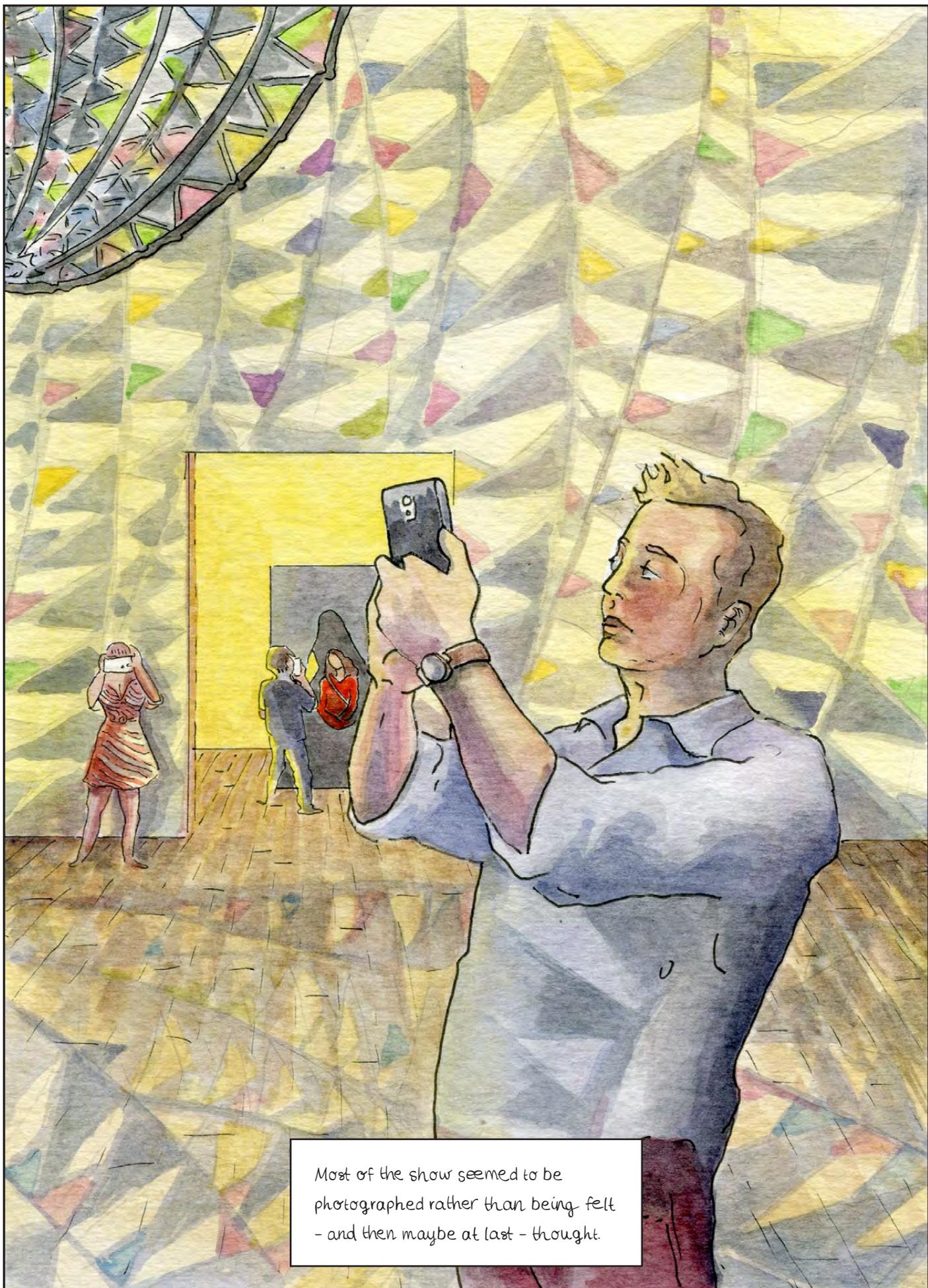
Portrait of the friend,
child, boyfriend, girlfriend,

selfies,

almost continuously scanning, gliding
lightly over the surface of the show.



Missing the point?



Most of the show seemed to be photographed rather than being felt - and then maybe at last - thought.

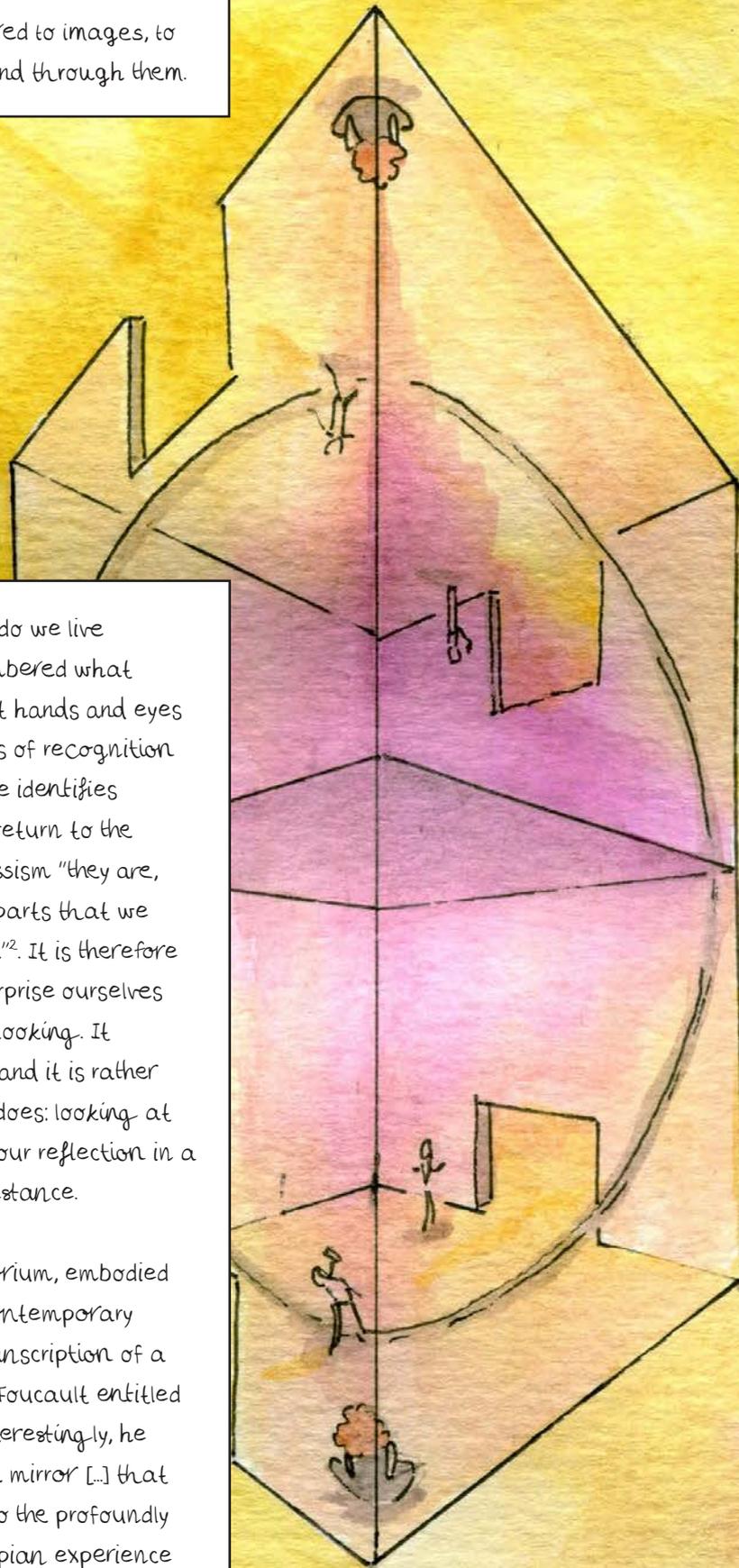


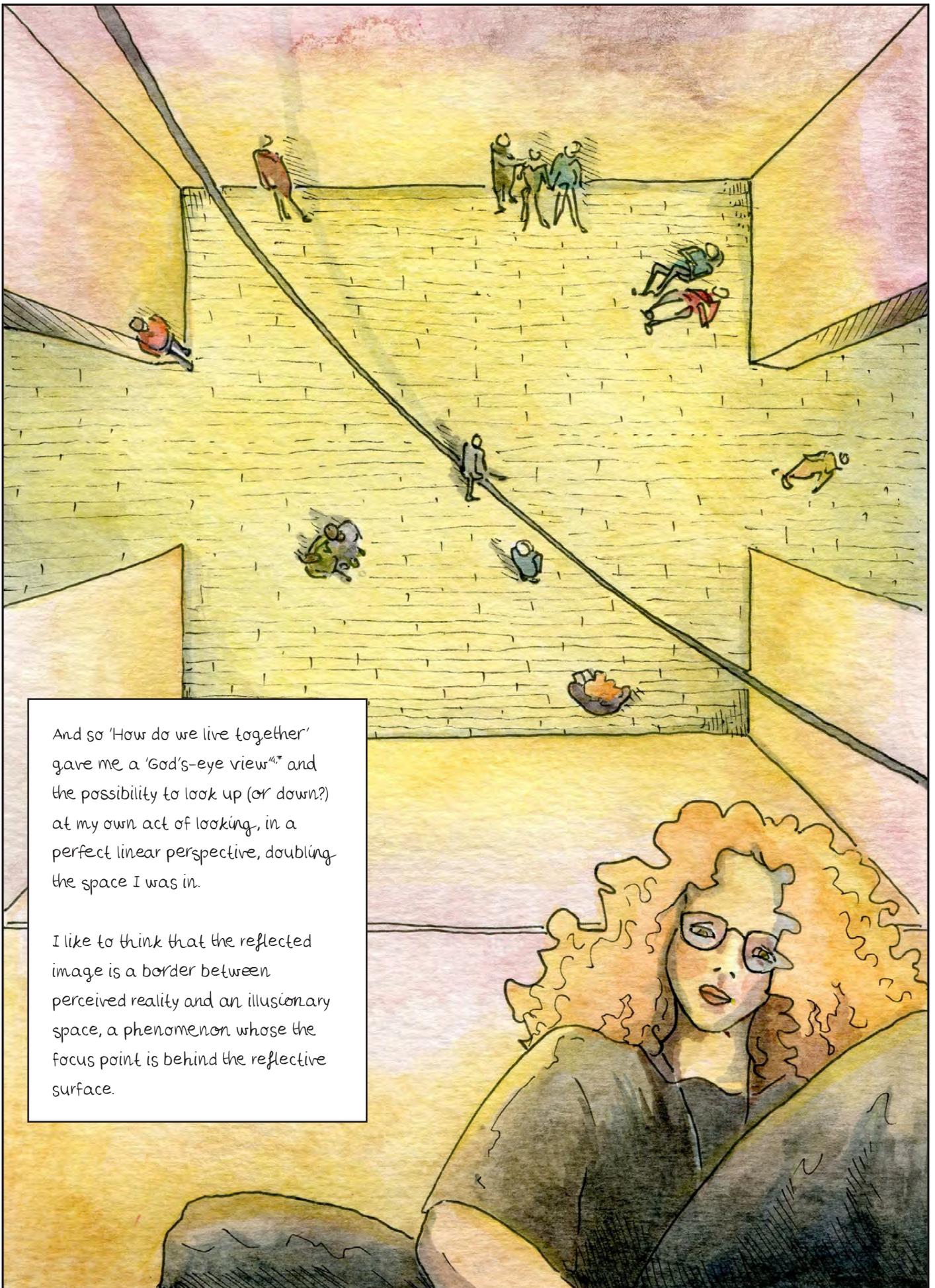
"Feelings are fact!" claims Eliasson. So I tried to understand the impression that the show and its participants had left with me. And came back, twice.

And so I surrendered to images, to think with them and through them.

As entering 'How do we live together', I remembered what Derrida said about hands and eyes as being "the sites of recognition through which one identifies the Other" and to return to the question of Narcissism "they are, paradoxically, the parts that we see the least easily."² It is therefore very difficult to surprise ourselves in our own act of looking. It happens though, and it is rather uncanny when it does: looking at the reflection of your reflection in a fitting room for instance.

In the book 'Sensorium, embodied experience, and contemporary art' figures the transcription of a podcast by Michel Foucault entitled 'Utopian body'. Interestingly, he says that "it is the mirror [...] that assigns a space to the profoundly and originally utopian experience of the body"³. And it seems to me that this unanticipated embodiment through reflection is a source of great curiosity.





And so 'How do we live together' gave me a 'God's-eye view'^{4*} and the possibility to look up (or down?) at my own act of looking, in a perfect linear perspective, doubling the space I was in.

I like to think that the reflected image is a border between perceived reality and an illusionary space, a phenomenon whose the focus point is behind the reflective surface.

* In her essay entitled *In Free Fall: A Thought Experiment on vertical Perspective*, Hito Steyerl writes about how recent technologies provide us with aerial views that simulate the horizon, and by doing so, give us the impression of free fall. Whereas the observer was constructed by the vanishing point in early linear perspective (1028), the observer tends today, facing the loss of a stable horizon, to feel groundless.

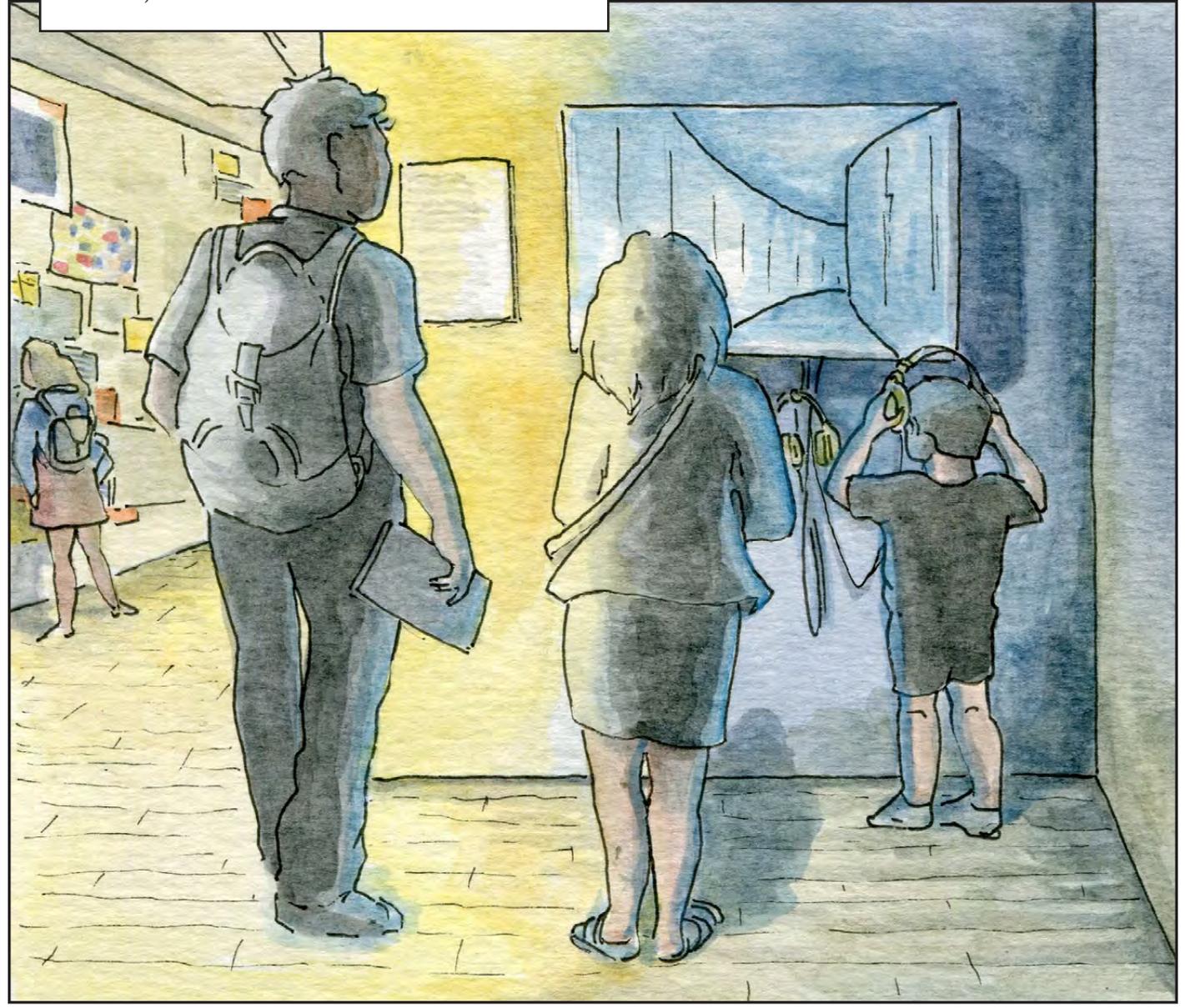
ARCHITECTURE

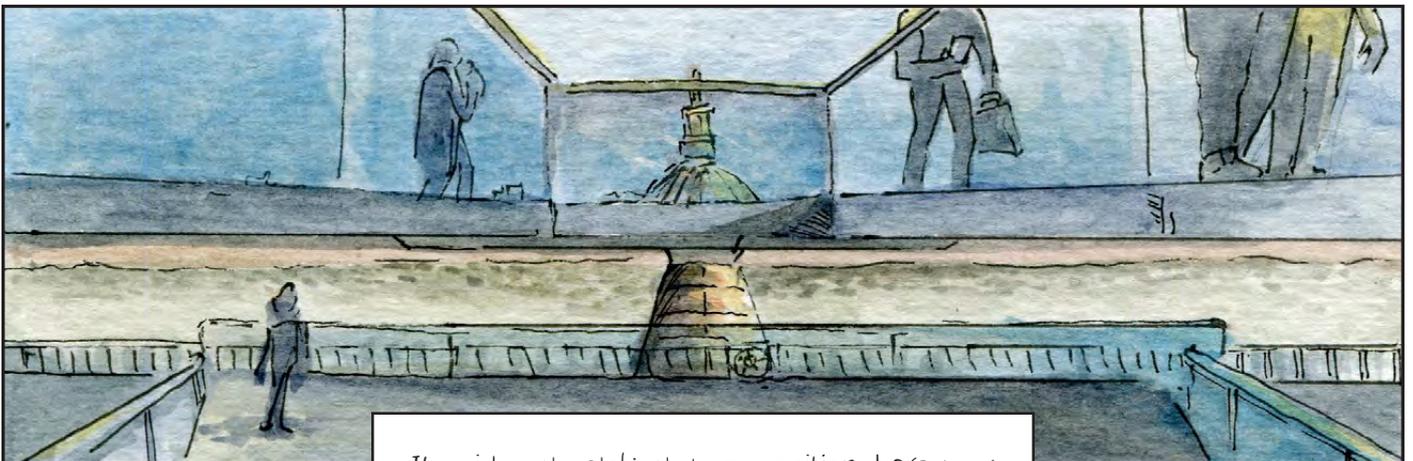
Eliasson's interests in movement
movement



This illusionary space is also shared by rainbows or the horizon, as they "are perspectival and therefore exist in no particular location"¹⁵.

I found an echo to this thought in Eliasson's documentary about the Fjordhus. Indeed, he says that Architecture - or how a building opens - is what creates movement. And I felt that movement as walking across Millennium bridge, and how the horizon, so stable in linear perspective, couldn't actually be more unstable in 'real' life.



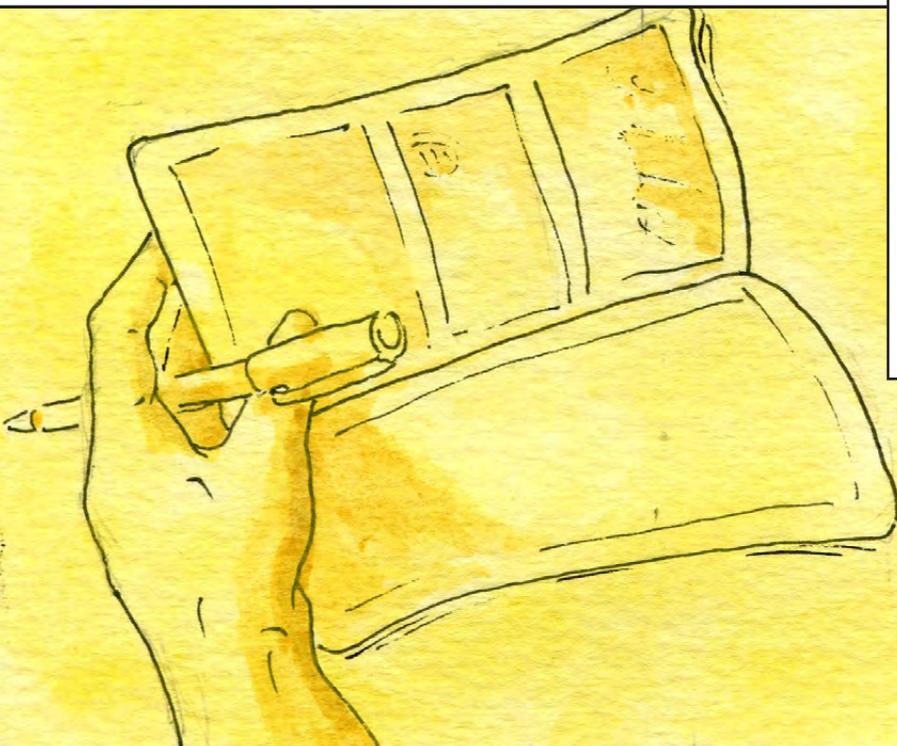


It exists only relatively to my position, here-now.

'Your blind passenger' however, made me feel quite the opposite: instead of a perfect linear perspective and the vanishing point in which I could feel embodied, it seemed that someone had wiped away the horizon and thus erased the vanishing point with it. I suddenly became aware of the little I could see of my body: the blurry frame of my glasses, my hands - gray under the yellow light, the tip of my nose. It was almost the 'negative' experience of being lost in a dark room. I had lost all sense of scale.



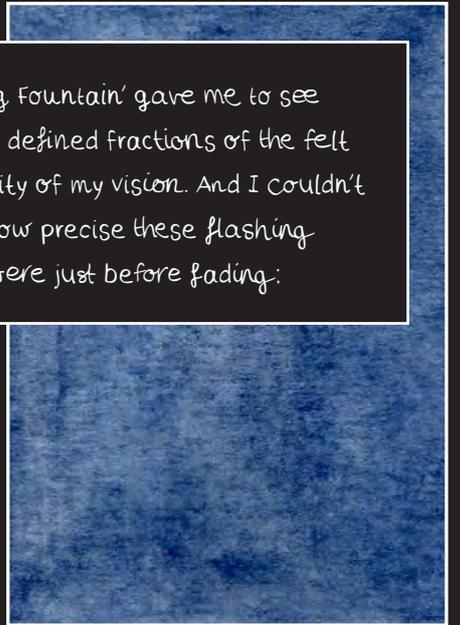
I looked up at the ceiling, whose corners are the only visible perspective lines, and I felt grounded again. Redirecting my gaze straight ahead and in the blink of an eye, here I was, floating, free-falling through the dense fog which had made me cough and my eyes water. I preferred the floating sensation.



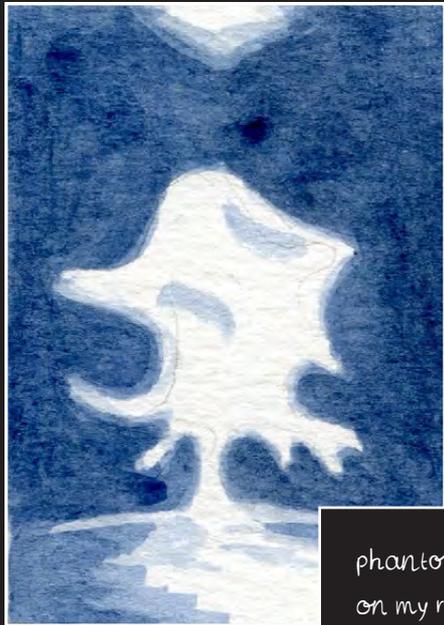


'I hope you are not a ghost' said an invigilator going through the 39 meter long corridor.

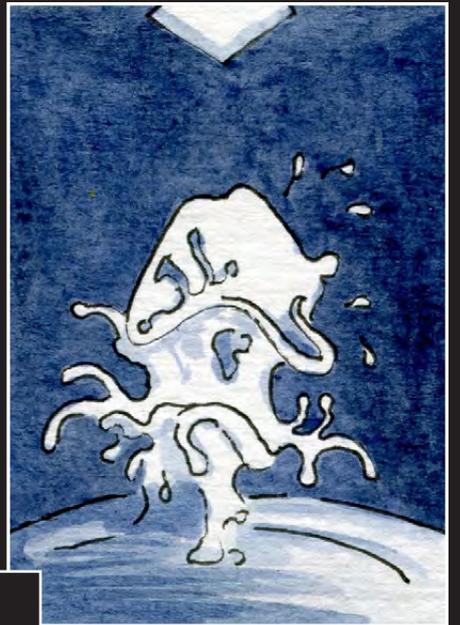
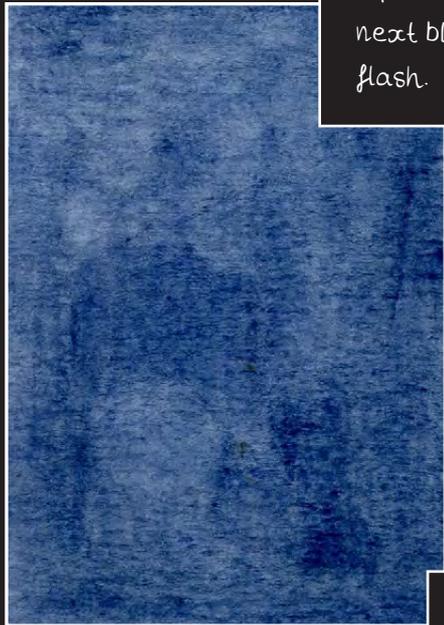
I carried on my visit, wandering, bouncing from one room to another, returning from time to time to the Expanded Studio, to then come back to a particular detail of the show. Threading my way in, constantly oscillating between full awareness of my body as a tool opening the space, arranging left and right, up and down, to then notice its disappearance, its undefined boundaries. Both open and closed, blind and aware.



'Big Bang Fountain' gave me to see incredibly defined fractions of the felt continuity of my vision. And I couldn't believe how precise these flashing images were just before fading:



phantom images on my retina, soon replaced by the next blinding flash.



It was like extracting stills from a video.

Is the richness of our visual world an Illusion? Transsaccadic memory for complex scenes

1 Introduction

Not only are we blind to many aspects of our personal visual world, we are also surprisingly unaware of this fact. Under normal circumstances, for example, we do not notice that we blink; that we have large retinal blind spots; that our instantaneous spacial, chromatic, and temporal resolution varies dramatically. Several

On the pin-board wall, I read with great interest about transsaccadic memory: the neural process that allows us to perceive our surroundings as a continuous flow of images, almost like a movie. And how, in order to understand complex events and allow them to insert themselves in a comprehensive whole, we believe that felt continuity.

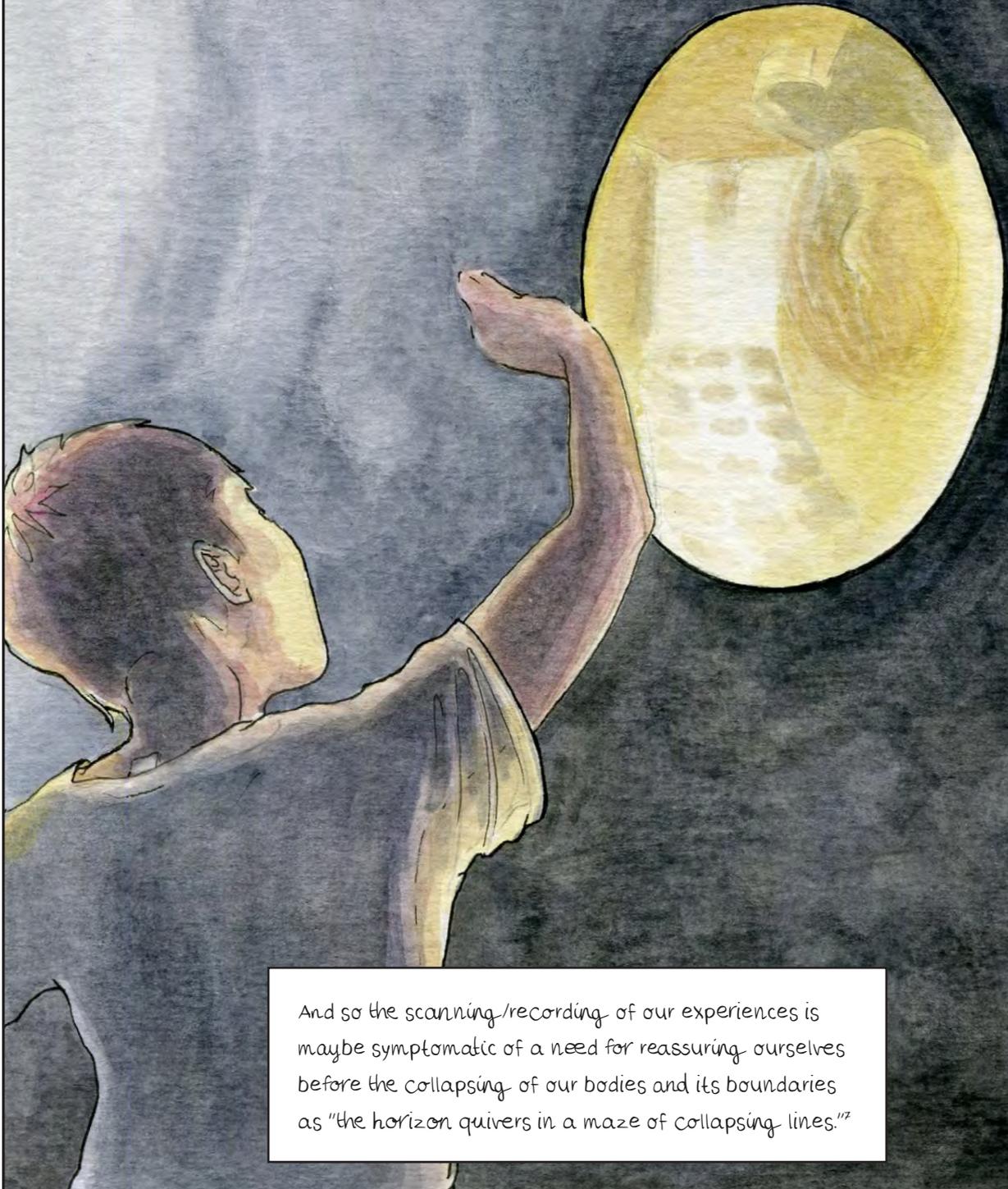


Dizziness

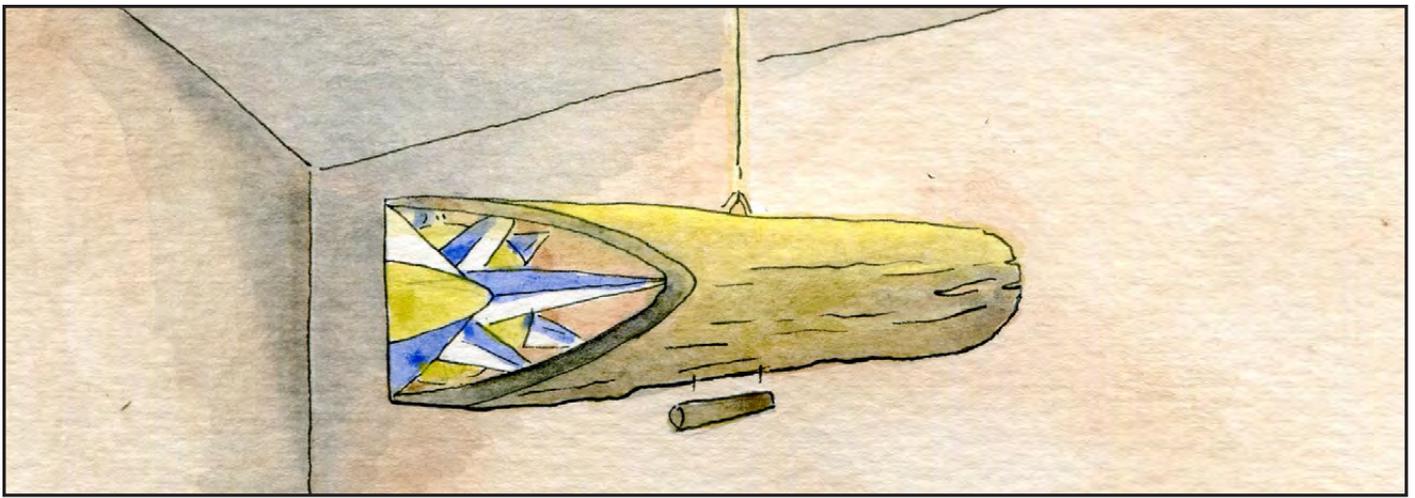
Navigating the
Unknown

There is no meaning un...
creates a multiplici...
Here is what I, Dizz...
you... Confusion, qui...
of purpose. Leave's...
lost. Hold on to your...
on to hope.

Realising how much of our visual world, as Eliasson highlights it, is an illusion I started to understand why Narcissus melted away. This ghostly body, which reveals itself in saccades at the bend of shop front window, a mirror, a selfie. I also wondered if narcissism was less about beauty and more about the curiosity towards our own act of looking. Maybe my dizziness was due to this body I could in turn feel and lose, sometimes embodied in a reflection, sometimes floating away, as perspective disappears and vanishing points diverge.



And so the scanning/recording of our experiences is maybe symptomatic of a need for reassuring ourselves before the collapsing of our bodies and its boundaries as "the horizon quivers in a maze of collapsing lines."¹⁷



Yet, imaging is fragmenting again, or rather, quadrilling the space of our visual world. The Intensive use of phones first distracted me, but as I started to wonder what it meant, I tried to use it as a means of taking notes, gathering details on which to train on later and to think the sequencing of our visual world. A tool for orientation and narration which I hold tightly, slowly pivoting on myself, elbows towards my body, holding my breath - like a rotation axis, absent of the panorama.



I had been warned: the term 360-degree view evoked earlier, made clear that the visitors were central to the show and invited to wander, to navigate the work of Olafur Eliasson - at the risk of disappearing or getting dizzy.

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3. Sensorium: Embodied Experience, Technology, and Contemporary Art, ed. by Caroline A. Jones and Bill Arning, 1st MIT Press ed (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press : The MIT List Visual Arts Center, 2006), p. 229 - 234.
4. In Free Fall: A Thought Experiment on Vertical Perspective - Journal #24 April 2011 - e-Flux' <<https://www.e-flux.com/journal/24/67860/in-free-fall-a-thought-experiment-on-vertical-perspective/>> [accessed 8 September 2019].
5. Pin-Wall, Extended Studio, for the complete list of contents and credits see <https://olafureliasson.net/inrealliferesources/>.

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