

Miriam Craddock



The Scapegoat

I am a visual artist whose practice spans painting, video, performance and mask-making. The mask-making aspect of my practice is a relatively new addition. During lockdown the need to create community and work alongside collaborators, as well finding new ways to make/display work in non-conventional spaces, became increasingly important. This meant that the characters I had been painting came to life in cardboard, papier-mâché, poster paints and the movement acting of my flatmates.

The work featuring these characters, comes in three the short films 'Scapegoat' 1, 2 and 3 which depict narratives collaged together from biblical and Ancient Greek accounts of scapegoat rituals. The work aims to draw comparisons between the historical stories and contemporary society, scapegoating being an especially prevalent theme during the post-pandemic world. The films attempt to condemn this recurring human nature in comical, and yet sinister plays; showing it as the absurd performance it is.

Scapegoating has been a communal ritual appearing across different religions and cultures; and these stories help us to understand aspects of human behaviour and motivations. The characters in the films portray a community of allegorical characters feeding a scapegoat a cardboard banquet of figs, barley cake and cheese and banishing him to live on an island, before sacrificing another goat at sea; believing that this will solve their communal problems. As source material to inform the narrative I looked to the Iambic poet of the 6th century BC, Hipponax, who accounts specific scapegoat rituals in Ancient Greece that exist today in fragments. And aesthetically I pull from Kids TV, cartoons and Doctor Who aliens.

Scapegoat 1 - Still



Scapegoat 2 - Still



Scapegoat 3 - Still



ER.



Costume plan sketch for 'Scapegoat 1'

Scapegoat 1 - Narrative Video/Performance

The narrative for 'Scapegoat 1' was collaged together from the biblical story of Judah and Tamar in Genesis 38 and of the scapegoat in The Book of Leviticus. The story expresses aspects of 'human-ness', peoples ability to do wrong and the complexities of circumstance and judgement. The underlying themes of sexism as well as the scapegoat narrative are all too familiar in contemporary society. Tamar (the only woman in the story) by law must marry the brother of her dead husband, so he can provide for her, but her father-in-law forbids it. He sees her as a cursed woman. The story depicts a mine-field of human motivations that then get 'solved' by the banishing of a goat to walk the wilderness forever, taking with him all thier sins. I use the allegorical characters to produce a confusing and absurdist play mirroring contemporary society.

The Ritual, The Violent Performance – A Parody



Costume plan sketch for 'Scapegoat 1'

J U D A H



Costume plan sketch for 'Scapegoat 1'

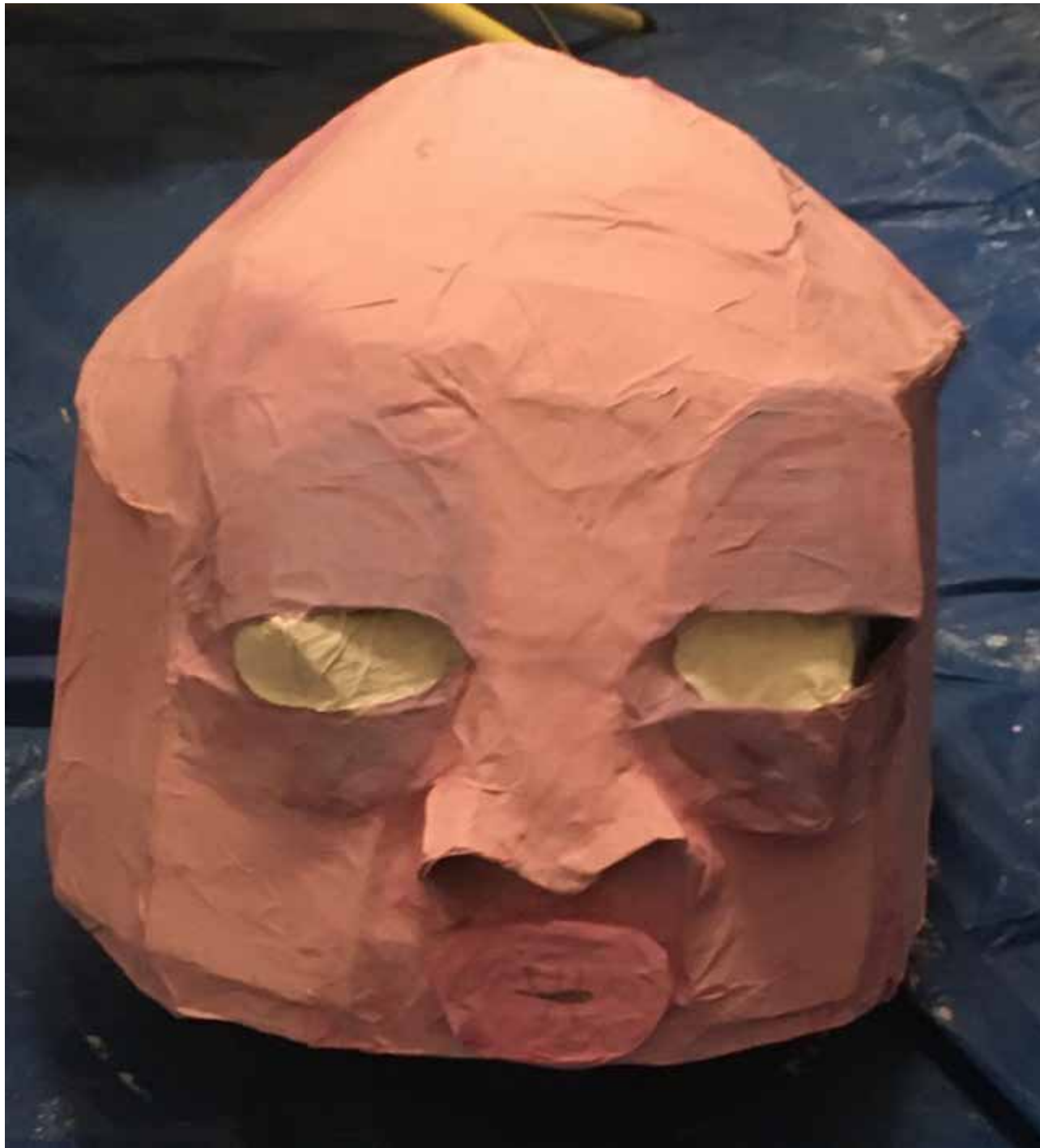
T A M A R



Costume plan sketch for 'Scapegoat 1'



Sontarans - Doctor Who



Costume progress photograph for 'Scapegoat 1'



Costume progress photograph for 'Scapegoat 1'



Flee from my heart, con-
triver of ill,
Flee very quikly,
Flee from my limbs,
Snake!
Fire!
Evil-doer!
Flee to the depths of the
wilderness.

From the script for 'Scapegoat 1'

Costume plan sketch for 'Scapegoat 1'



Progress photograph of costume for 'Scapegoat 1'



Costume plan sketch for 'Scapegoat 1'



Dress rehearsal for 'Scapegoat 1'

Scapegoat 2 - Narrative Video/Performance

The second film focused on specific scapegoat rituals from different accounts in Ancient Greece specifically referencing the Iambic poet Hipponax of the 6th century BC, who had written about the treatment of his enemies as pharmakoi (scapegoats); and is thought of as the 'inventor' of parody/comedy in literature.

In many of the accounts the scapegoat was someone from the margins of society, which interestingly could have been from the 'top' or 'bottom' for example a king or a thief; however a king would usually not want to be killed, so the solution for this would be to choose a thief or a poor person and treat them like a king before casting them out of society and thus adding more value to the sacrifice. This relates to scapegoating today often swaying between tokenism and appropriation, whilst still using marginal groups as someone to blame for societal problems- a dangerous combination.

He is chosen
one to die
and one for
the island.
The first ~~lamb~~ Goat
'Grab him -
where he may
suffer many evils

He will shiver
struck by the cold
When he disappears
into the foam
May he puke up
much seaweed
at the farthest
end of the sea.
The second
dressed up like
a King fed with
barley cake and
figs.
hit him with

The Fig branches
tie a red ribbon
round his horns
and chant ~~as~~
is this incantation
as he is banished
to crumond island

I bid you flee
from these houses
of ours I call
on Zeus, the
avenger

of ills, ~~Herakles~~
Herakles sacker
of cities, Iatros
Nike and Appollo
flee at once,
flee she wolf,
flee, dog, at once
you and PROKROPOS
ATE inmate. Raving
let them run
each to his own
home.
and resume
normal life.

IAMBIC POETRY

128-129a Hexametri

128 Ath. 15.698b

Πολέμων δ' ἐν τῷ δωδεκάτῳ τῶν πρὸς Τίμαιον περὶ
τῶν τὰς παρωδίας γεγραφότων ἱστορῶν τάδε γράφει
"καὶ τὸν Βοιωτὸν δὲ καὶ τὸν Εὐβοιον τοὺς τὰς παρ-
ωδίας γράψαντας λογίους ἂν φήσαιμι διὰ τὸ παίζειν
ἀμφιδεξίως καὶ τῶν προγενεστέρων ποιητῶν ὑπερ-
έχειν ἐπιγεγονότας. εὐρετὴν μὲν οὖν τοῦ γένους Ἰππώ-
νακτα φατέον τὸν ἱαμβοποιόν. λέγει γὰρ οὗτος ἐν τοῖς
ἐξαμέτροις·

Μοῦσά μοι Εὐρυμεδοντιάδεω τὴν ποντοχάρυβδι,
τὴν ἐγγαστριμάχαιραν, ὃς ἐσθίει οὐ κατὰ κόσμον,
ἐννεφ', ὅπως ψηφίδι <κακῇ> κακὸν οἶτον ὄληται
βουλῇ δημοσίῃ παρὰ θῖν' ἀλὸς ἀτρυνέτοιο.

1 Εὐρυμεδοντιάδεα A (rec. West), corr. Wilamowitz.

3 κακῇ suppl. Musurus, κακὸς Cobet, κακῶς Kalinka
ὀλεῖται Cobet (rec. West)

¹ See n. 1 on fr. 118A. ² On this topic see Athenaeus
15.698a-699c and especially Degani's introduction (pp. 5-36) to
his *Poesia parodica greca* (Bologna 1982). ³ Boeotus of

HIPPONAX

128-129a Dactylic Hexameters

128 Athenaeus, *Scholars at Dinner*

Polemon,¹ inquiring into the composers of parody
as follows in the twelfth book of his *Address to*
should say that both Boeotus and Euboeus³ who composed
parodies are skilled in words because they play with dou-
ble meanings and, although born later, outstrip the poets
who preceded them. It must be said, however, that the
iambic poet Hipponax was the founder of the genre.⁴ For

Tell me, Muse,⁵ of the sea swallowing,⁶ the stomach
carving⁷ of Eurymedontiades⁸ who eats in no or-
derly manner, so that through a baneful vote deter-
mined by the people he may die a wretched death
along the shore of the undraining(?) sea.⁹

Syracuse and Euboeus of Paros wrote in the 4th c. B.C. Almost
nothing has survived.

⁴ Arist. *Poetics* 1448a12 calls
Hegemon of Thasos (5th c.) the founder of parody, but by this
he means that Hegemon made parody a profession. ⁵ The
first of several epic parodies in the poem. For the opening cf.
Hymn to Aphrodite 1.

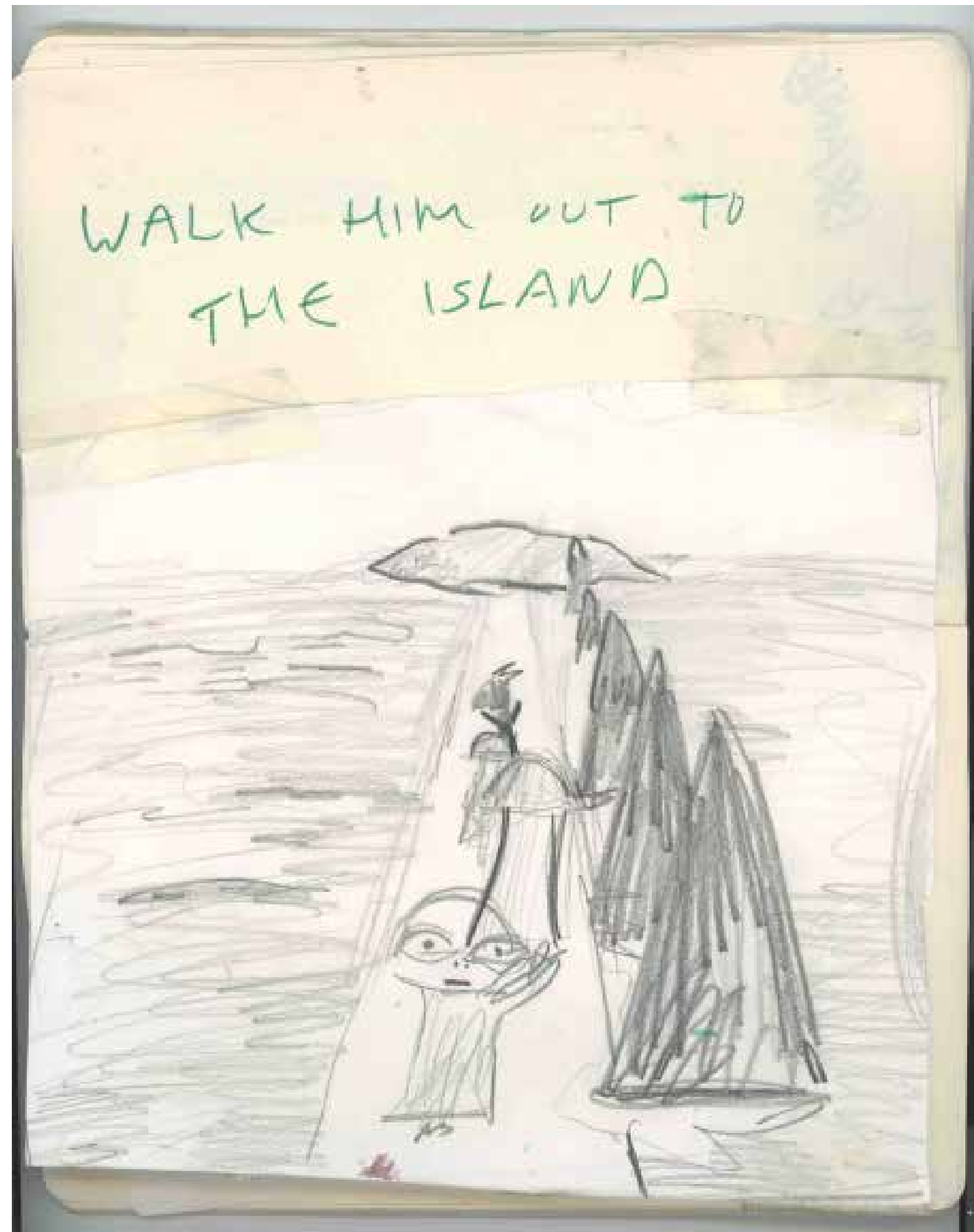
⁶ Literally 'the sea-Charybdis,' i.e.,
his drinking is compared to the famous whirlpool which "sucks up
the dark water" (*Od.* 12.104). ⁷ Literally 'the knife-in-the-
stomach,' i.e., he does not take the time to cut up food before
eating it, relying on his stomach to perform the function of a knife.

⁸ There was a Eurymedon, king of the Giants (*Od.* 7.58 f.),
but it is unclear what relevance, if any, this has for identifying
the patronymic.

⁹ It seems that Hipponax is alluding to the
pharmakos ritual (cf. fr. 5). For an excellent discussion of the
poem see Degani, *Studi* 187-205, 216-225.

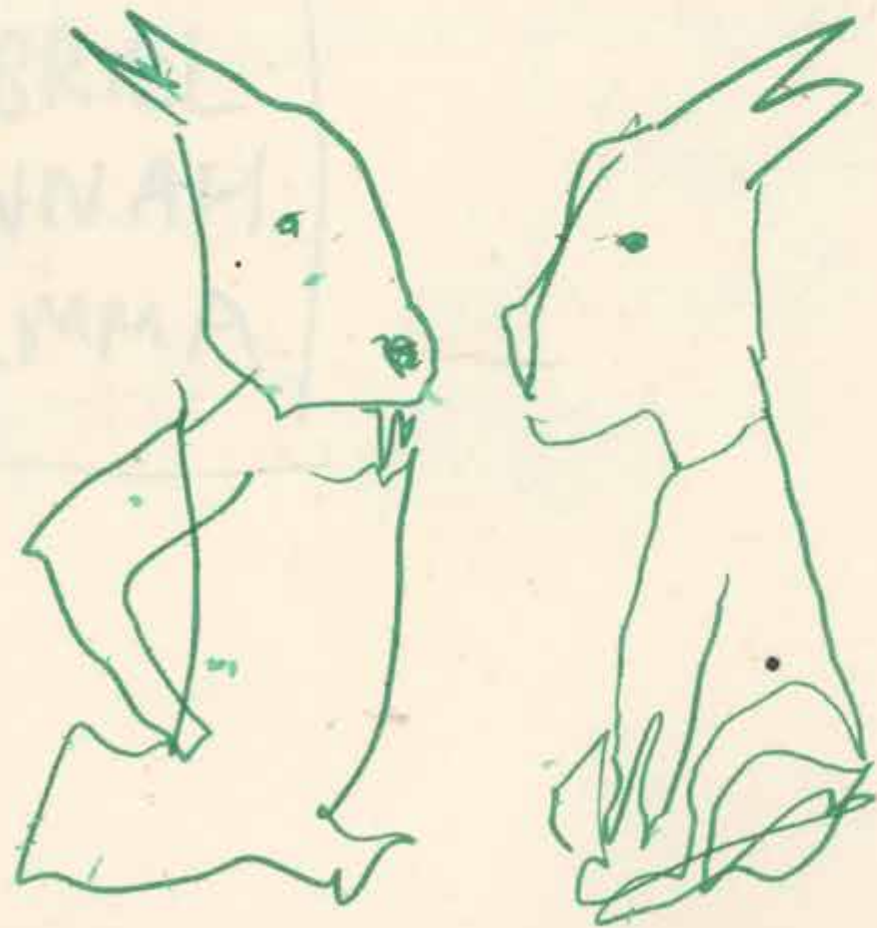
The Sterile Seas

Casting scapegoats out into the sea and using the water to wash away sins, was hugely symbolic in the Ancient Greek rituals; and the reason for locating 'Scapegoat 2' at Cramond Beach. Cramond brought it's own dramatic history into the story with the incorporation of the concrete causway, built during the Second World War as an anti-boat boom. The video/performance uses these existing structures and landscapes to create a mythology combining true history with a fictionalised reality.



Sketchbook page planning 'Scapegoat 2'

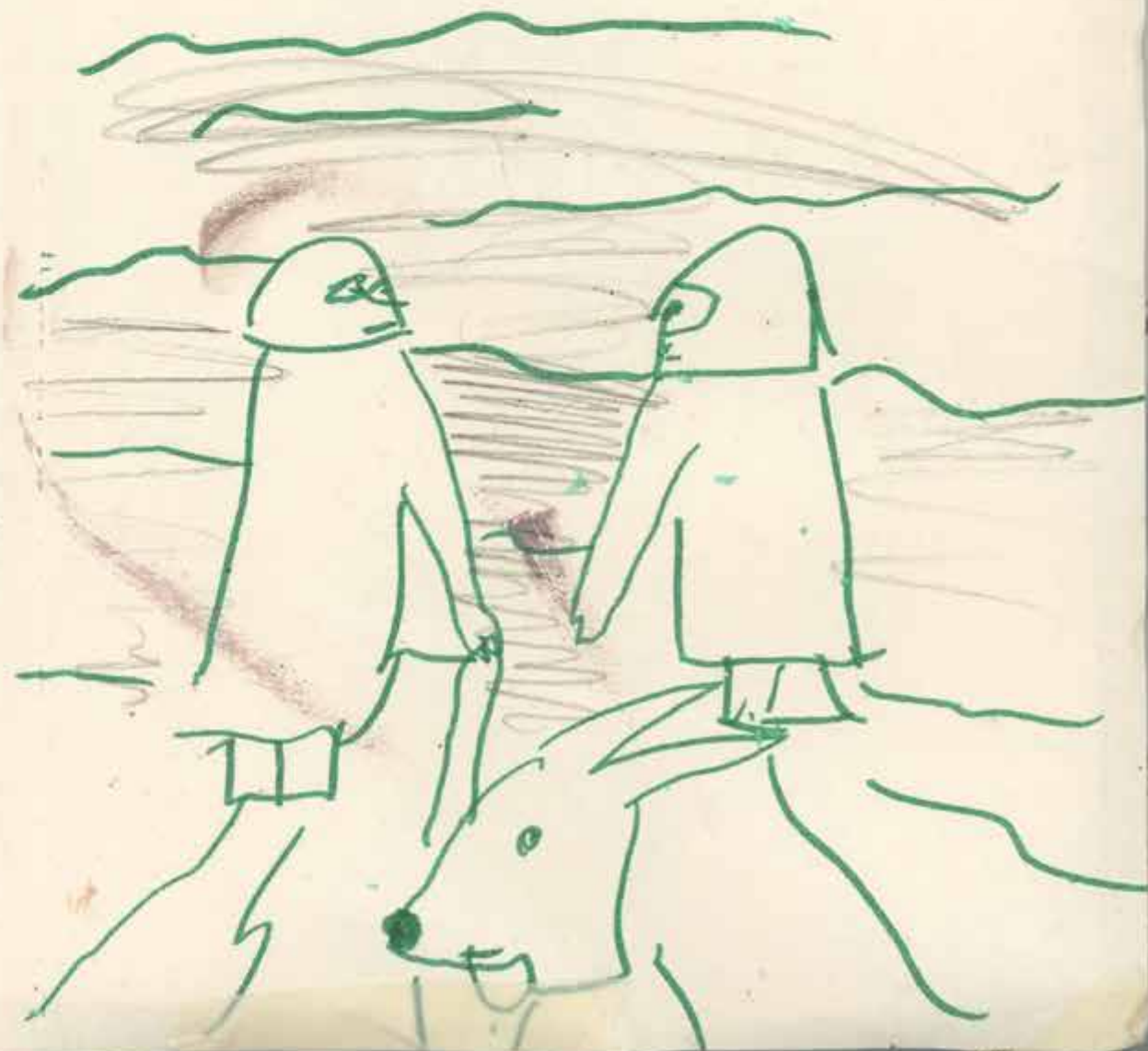
shot of
both
Goats



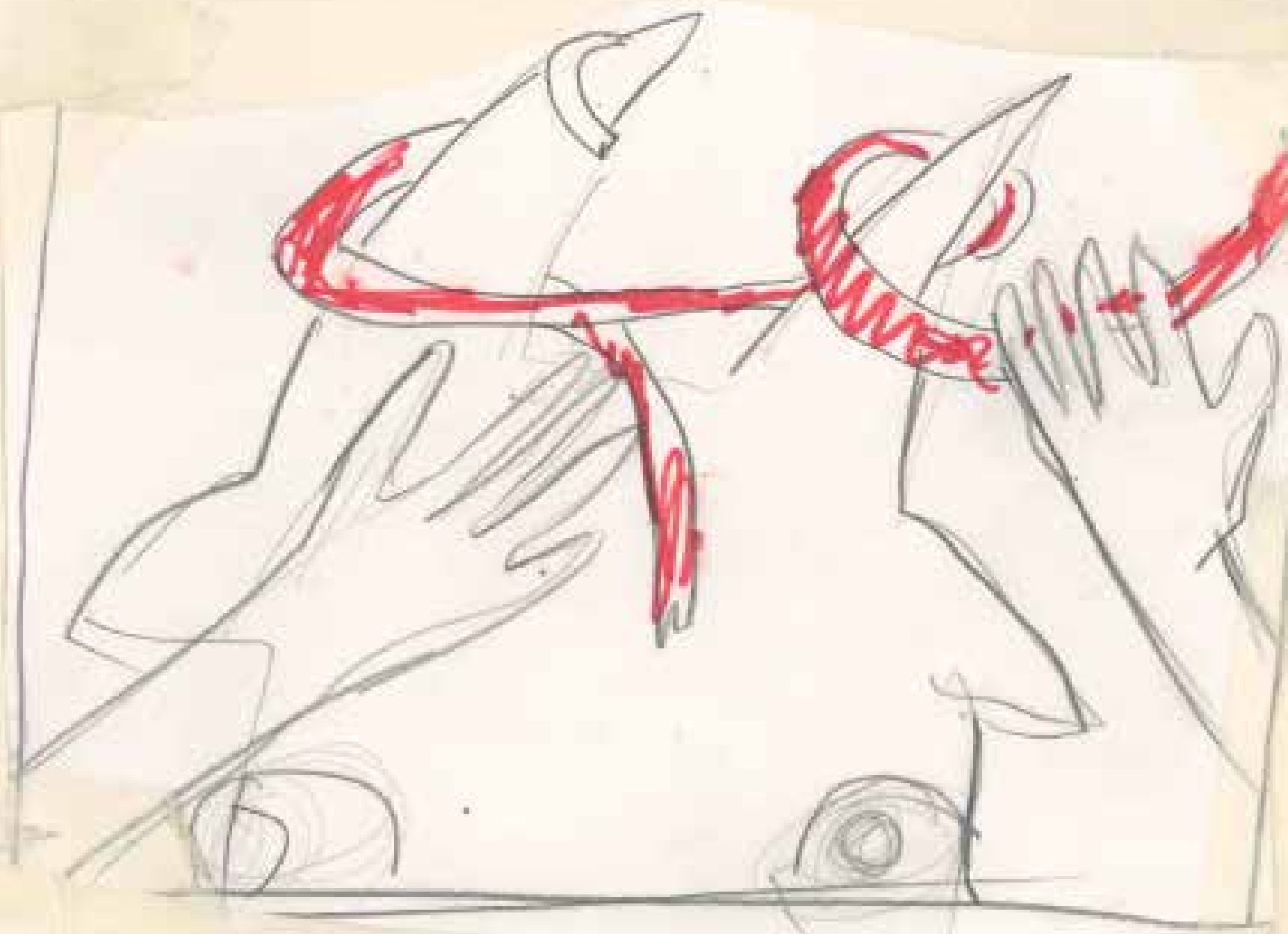
SCAPEGOAT

NO. 1 is
sacrificed

- Waked out to
sea



AP HAS HARDS WITH
A RED RIBBON



Sketchbook page planning 'Scapegoat 2'

~~Sketch the~~
~~Sketch the~~

Dress the
scapegoat as
a king

DRESS THE SCAPEGOAT



...and provide within his grasp dried figs, barley cake and cheese, such as pharmakoi eat, to purify the city and be struck with fig branches...



Progress photograph of the cardboard banquet for 'Scapegoat 2'



Progress photograph of the cardboard banquet for 'Scapegoat 2'



The aftermath of 'Scapegoat 2'



On location 'Scapegoat 2'



Physical Degree show proposal: Projected instillation of video
'Scapegoat 2'

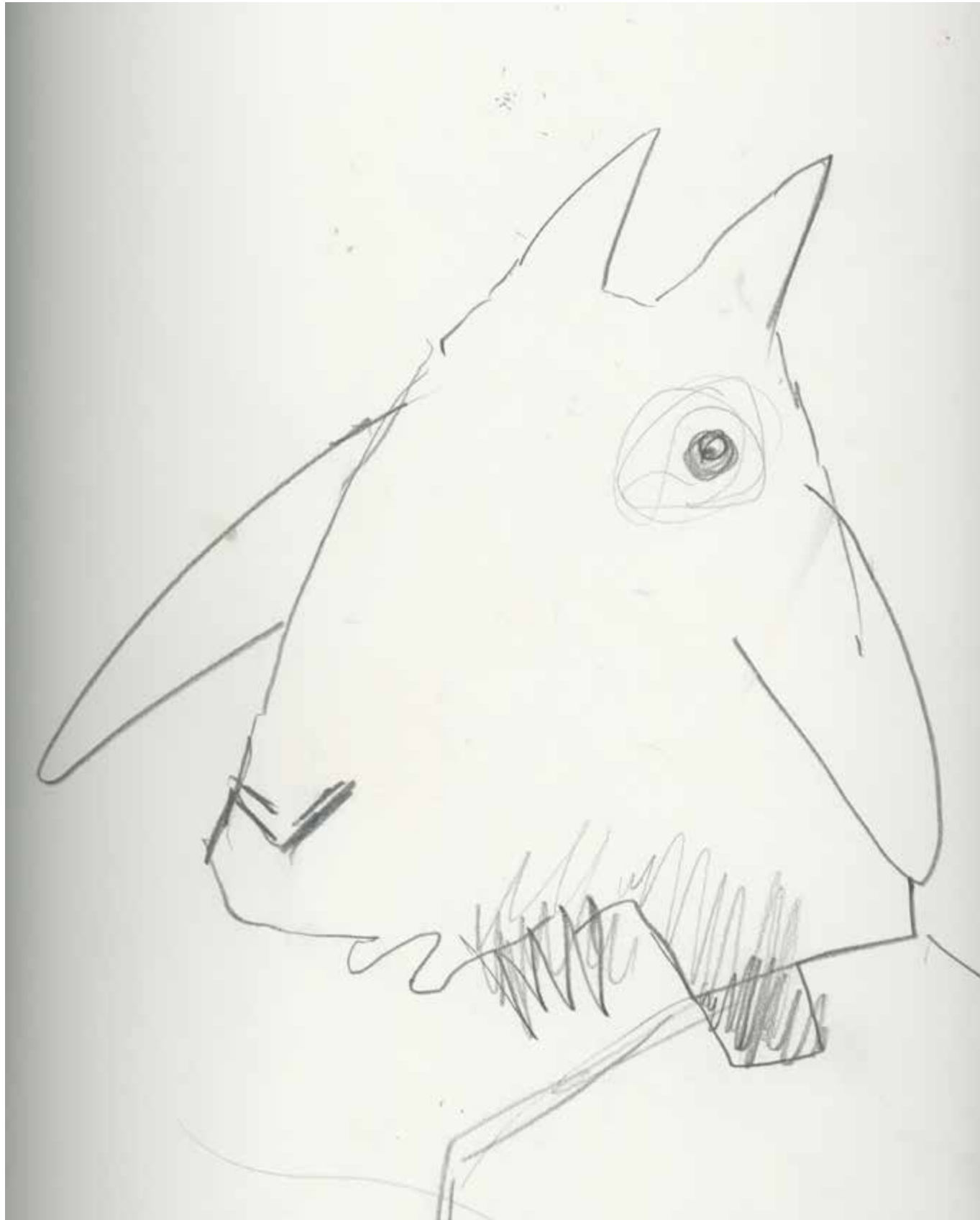
Scapegoat 3 - Narrative Performance Walk



Me testing out the costume for 'Scapegoat 3'



Plan sketch for 'Scapegoat 3'



Plan sketch for 'Scapegoat 3'

In collaboration with Lorenzo Rangoni-Robertson (who played the scapegoat). The narrative of the final instalment follows the goats banishment from the city of Edinburgh to the wilderness (Arthurs seat and the Salisbury Craggs). It was interesting to see how people reacted to a giant Goat walking around Edinburgh, many pretended he wasn't there, some took photos others shouted "is that a unicorn?". A performance walk was the ultimate culmination of the scapegoat story, replicating how the ancient rituals would play out, in connection with a specific city or town. The performance closes the gap between artist and audience and seemed a fitting way of displaying work in these times of social distancing.



Plan sketch for 'Scapegoat 3'



Plan sketch for 'Scapegoat 3'



Progress photograph 'Scapegoat 3'



Progress photograph 'Scapegoat 3'

The End



I am hugely indebted to all my flat-mates/friends for thier collaboration in the three installments of 'Scape-goat' which wouldn't have been possible without them! Thank you to Gemma Smith, Gabriel Levine-Brislin, Olivia Byass-Smithies (and her van), Madeliene Wood, Hannah Draper, Maria Wrang-Rasmussen, Max Swift and Lorenzo Rango-ni-Robertson (who walked around Edinburgh dressed as a goat and got in the sea in Scotland!).

For more:

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