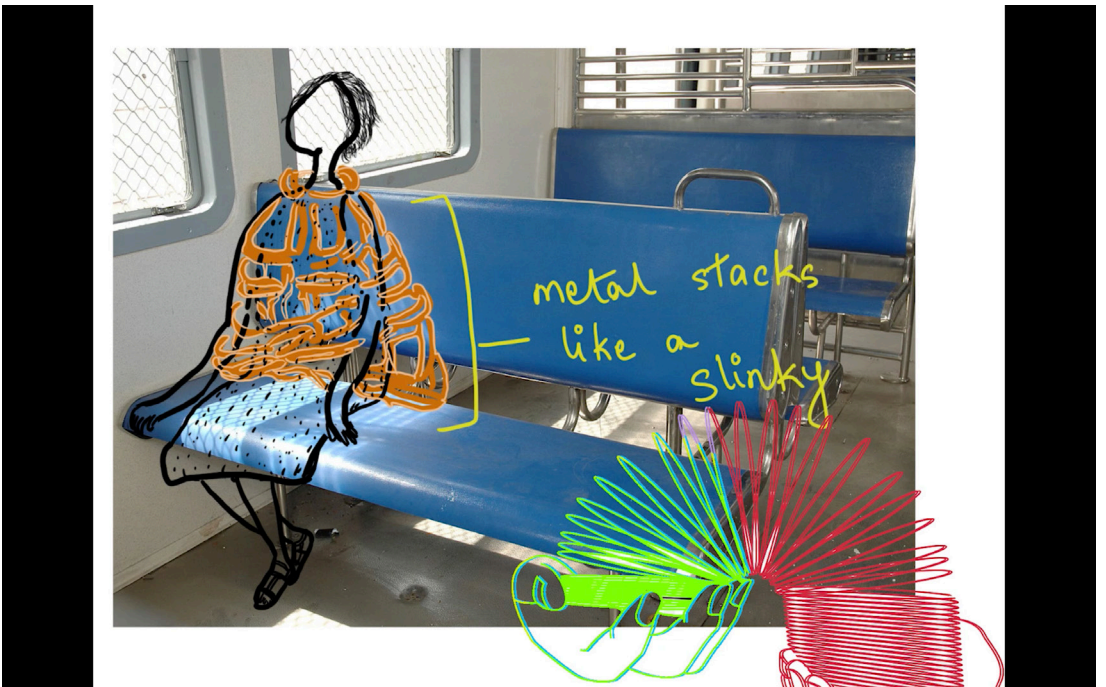
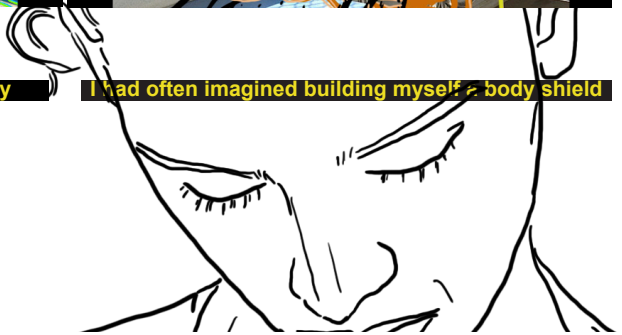
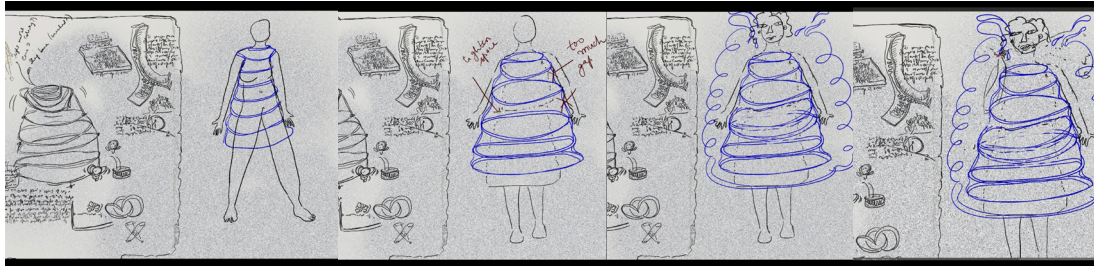


as a young girl growing into a woman's body

I had often imagined building myself a body shield



a collapsible metal-wire-birdcage-like enclosure



when worn above my clothes would add a layer of protection from straying hands in crowded spaces



where I am unable to fully protect myself.

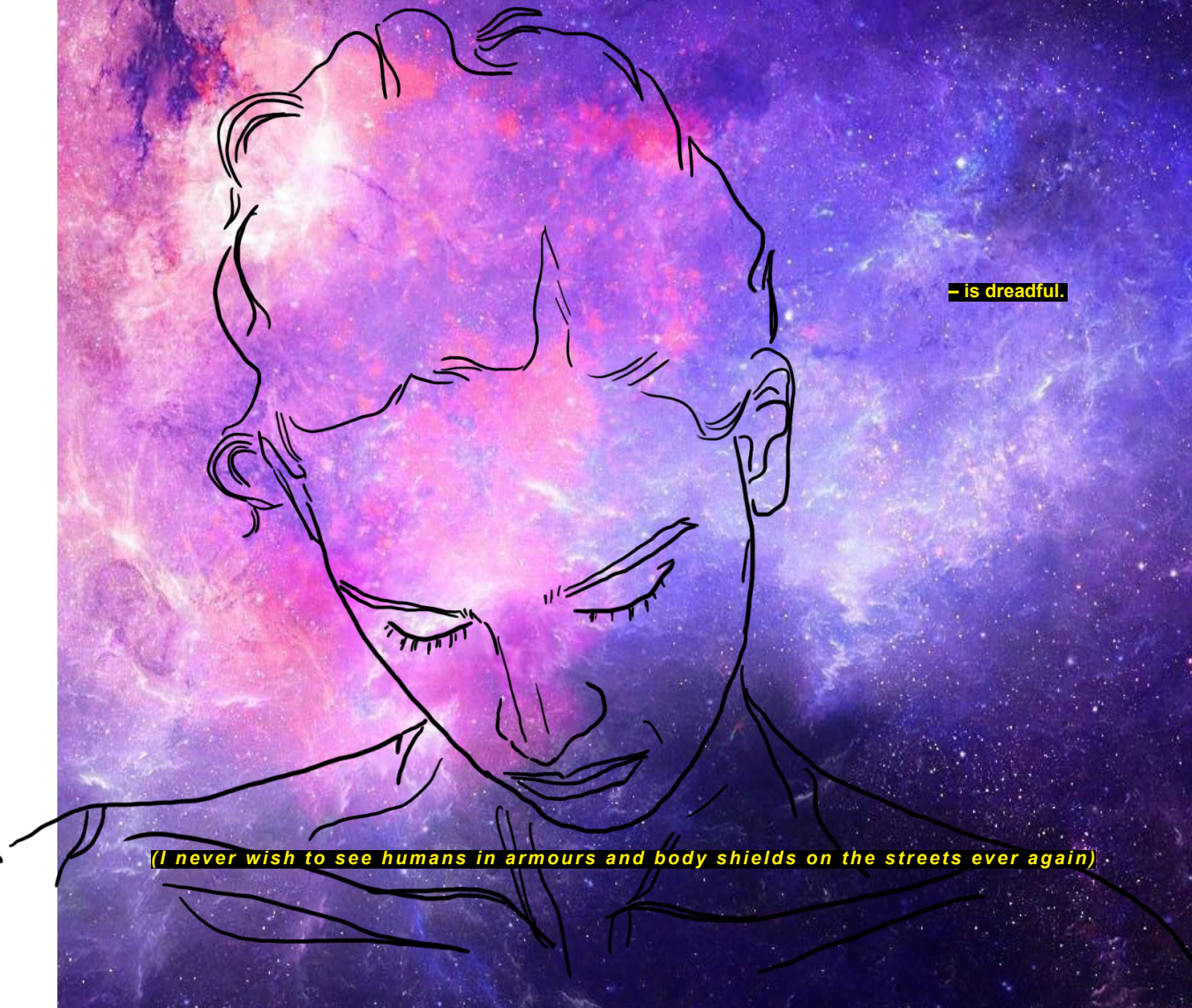
collapsible [bird-cage-like]
metal body suit

this would make my body morbidly visible



and yet, comically inaccessible.

the idea of any body shield though becoming a regular and normalised



- is dreadful.

(I never wish to see humans in armours and body shields on the streets ever again)

I had witnessed the military engulf the streets of Mumbai during the riots in 1992



and even amidst the mayhem and the fear, I recall thinking of the vests as, somewhat—

—endearing

with accelerated militarisation in the country, we have seen the body shields go from being this—



clunky, off-fitted vests

I'd imagined that it functioned somewhat like a kangaroo's pouch



where they'd scoop up the wounded and the lost

to deliver them to their families

to the more *h o s t i l e*
more *s o p h i s t i c a t e d*



of today.

body armours, meant to always look a little ominous



and maybe meant to inspire fear

throughout history, has always looked a little suspect to me

besides, not only do the police and the military have complaints of chronic back pains

from lugging these heavy, ballistic-plate body armours

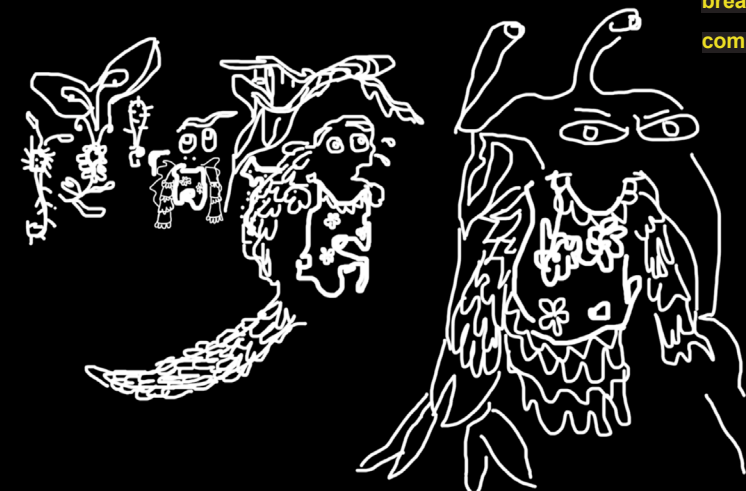


but many of these unisex vests aren't even suitable for women with larger breasts.

- even a tad bit ridiculous



breasts-
coming a full circle





once again made to become a reason

for not being able to protect womxn from bodily harm

breasts-

