

BRINGING A POEM TO A GUNFIGHT

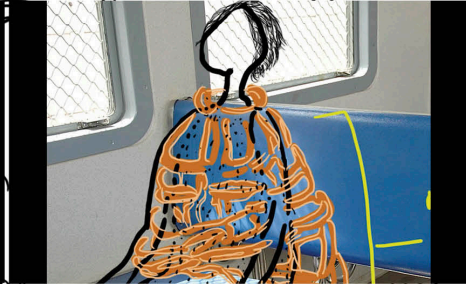
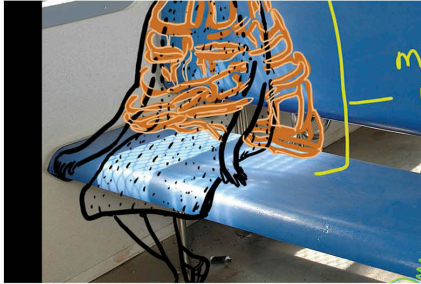
SHUBHANGI SINGH

The contribution has been reworked and reversioned from the video work, *Bringing a Poem to a Gunfight* (2021).

Bringing a Poem to a Gunfight looks at armours and bodies and puts forth the two parallel inquiries within the discourse on movement, visibility, control and identity. It inquires if public safety automatically equals nation building by the way of militarization.

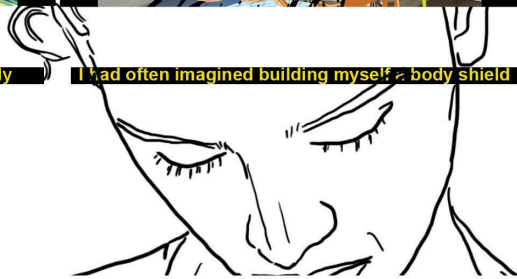
Shubhangi Singh's practice ranges from moving image, text and lecture-performances to installations. Her work often draws upon existing knowledges to address movement, identity and queries related to the body and its relationship with its environment.

Singh considers ideas of absence and absencing in her work as a way of reflecting upon what is visible, particularly in relation to memory, the labour of memorialising and history.

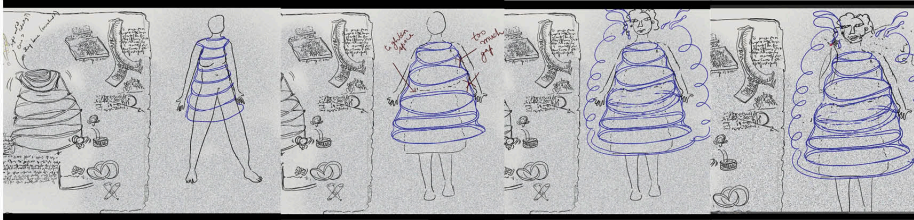


as a young girl growing into a woman's body

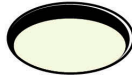
I had often imagined building myself a body shield



a collapsible metal-wire-birdcage-like enclosure



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



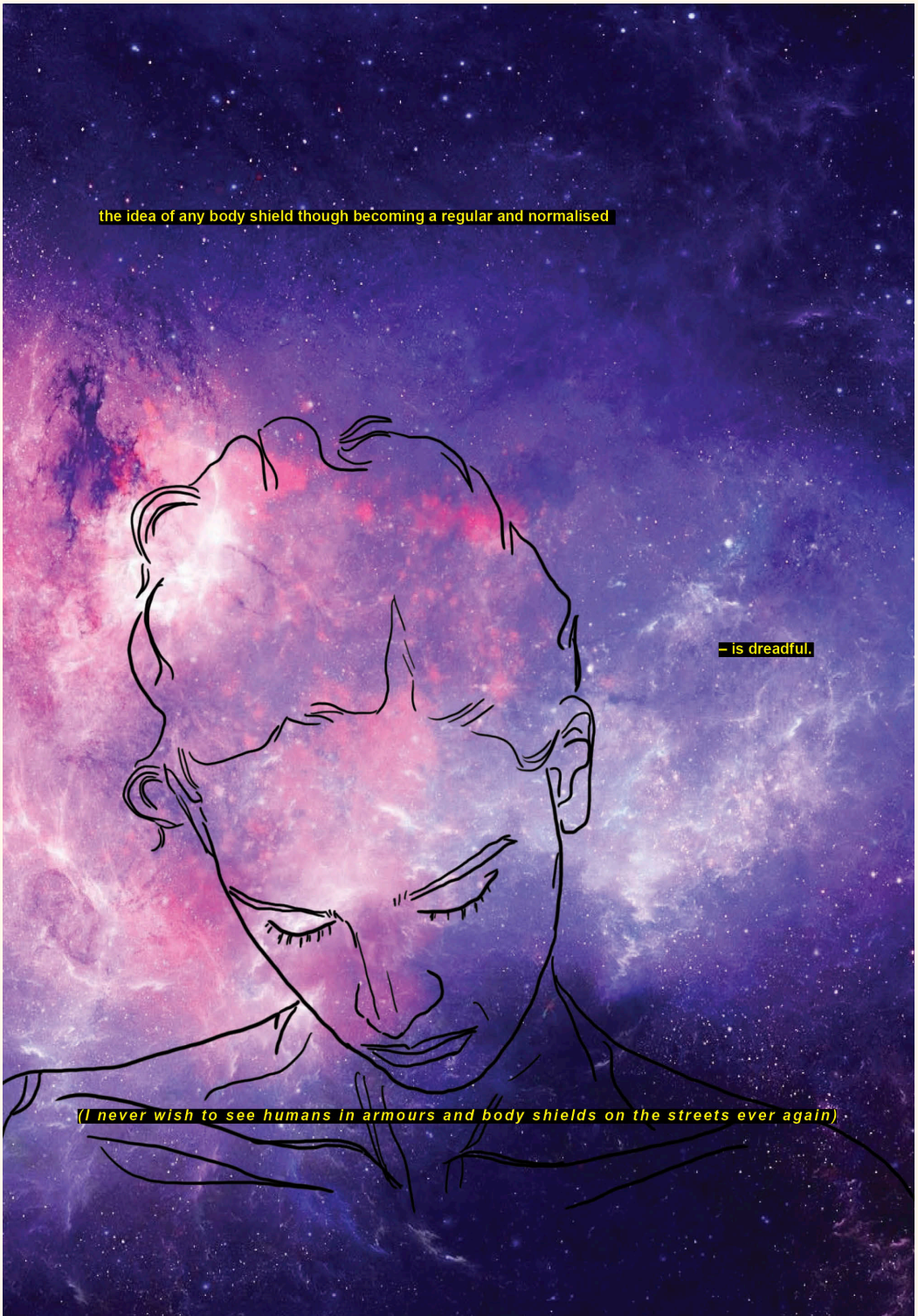
where I am unable to fully protect myself.

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

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

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



clunky, off-fitted vests

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

MODULAR



TACTICAL



VEST



of today.

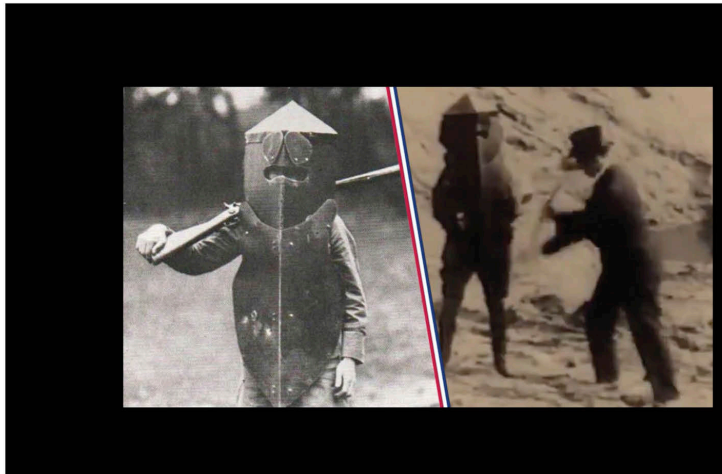
body armours, meant to always look a little ominous



and maybe meant to inspire fear

throughout history, has always looked a little suspect to me

- even a tad bit ridiculous



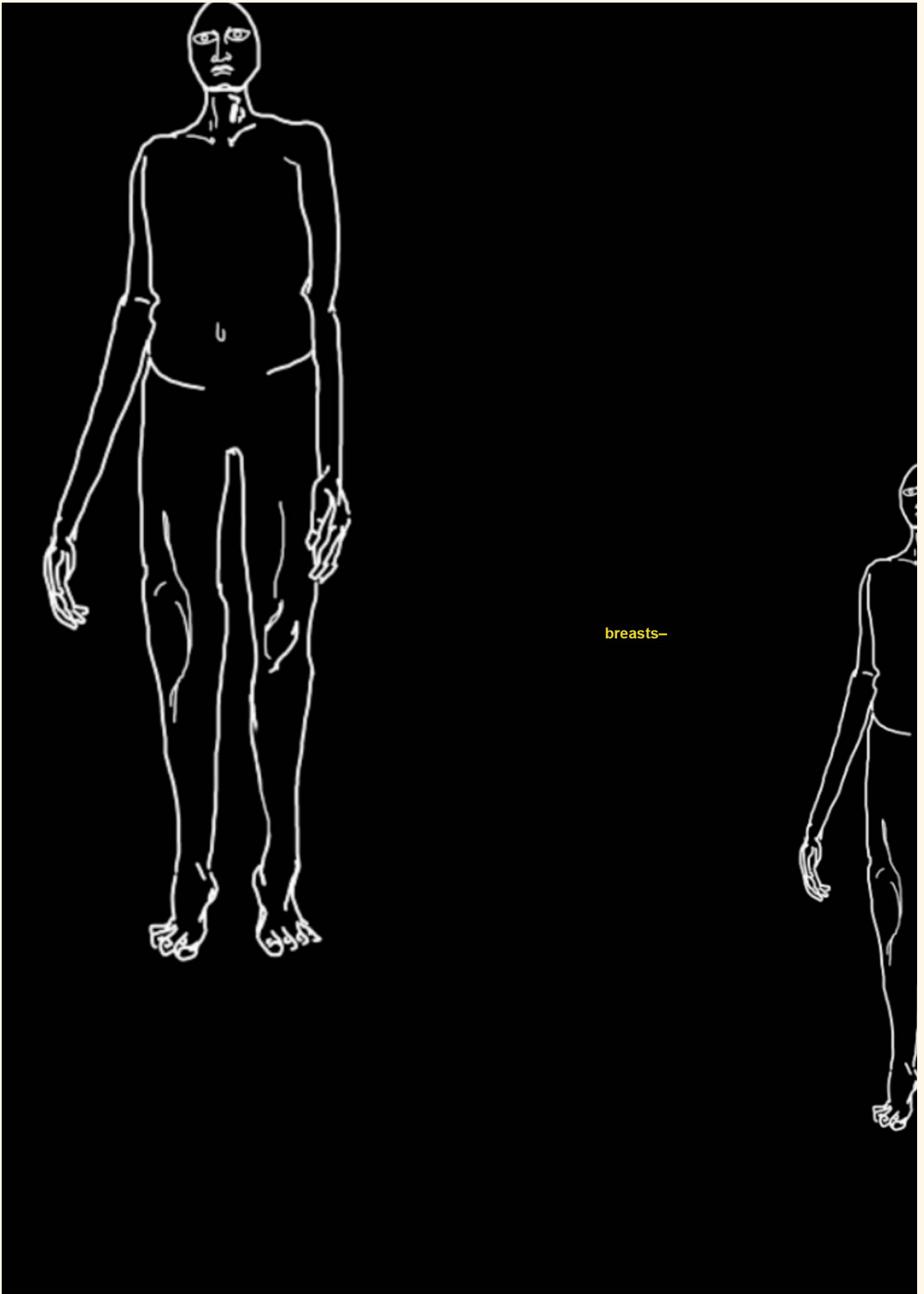
besides, not only do the police and the military have complaints of chronic back pains

from lugging these heavy, ballistic-plate body armours



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





once again made to become a reason

for not being able to protect womxn from bodily harm

