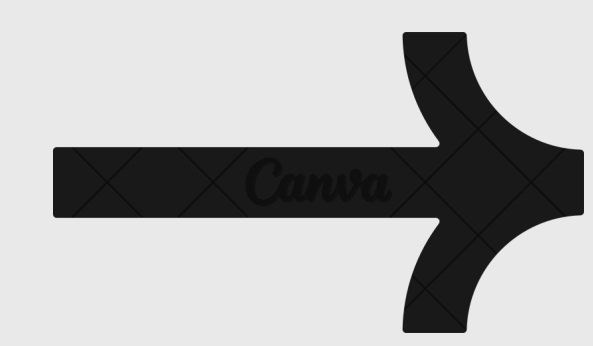


FEAR AS A METHOD

PORTFOLIO



A PARTICIPATORY CURATORIAL WORKSHOP



Fear is not what you see

—

It is what you fill in.

CURATORIAL STATEMENT

—

Fear as a Method is a curatorial experiment that repositions fear not as something to be fixed, but as a sensory method—a misrecognition mechanism that reveals the blurred thresholds between memory, instinct, and embodiment.

This exhibition curates fear not as an image, but as a spatial condition. Through sensory deprivation, tactile ambiguity, and shared emotional mapping, each participant constructs their own response. What is exhibited is not a static object, but a moment of misreading—an embodied encounter with uncertainty.

This is not a gallery. It is a rehearsal. You are not just a viewer, but a co-curator of emotion.

恐惧作为方法
WORKSHOP
FEAR AS
A METHOD
2025
03.29
16:00-18:00
参与式情绪实验空间
Participatory emotional
experiment space



SITE SUMMERHALL
IN VITRO GALLERY
EH9 1PL CURATORS Hanyun Xue Yufan Wang
Yiran Gu Lingqiu Xiao

A Participatory Curatorial Workshop

KEY CONCEPTS & RESEARCH QUESTIONS

A Participatory Curatorial
Workshop

Fear is not to be fixed. It is to be felt, misread, and carried.

KEY CONCEPTUAL

FEAR AS MISRECOGNITION

SPATIALIZED AFFECT

**COUNTER-VISUALITY
(LAURA MARKS, 2002)**

**PARTICIPATORY CURATION
(CLAIRE BISHOP, 2006)**

**EMBODIED KNOWLEDGE
(SARA AHMED, 2004)**

This curatorial experiment emerges from the following central questions:

- How can sensory misreading and visual deprivation activate a bodily understanding of fear?
- When audiences stop “looking at” art and instead become sensory agents and co-authors of narratives, then how does the process of meaning-making within exhibitions shift?
- Can exhibitions cultivate a strategy of co-existing with emotion?

This project understands curating as a practice that bridges perception, cognition, and empathy. The exhibition space becomes a testing ground for bodily sensation and affective states, enabling an alternative grammar of emotional encounter.

METHODOLOGY & PARTICIPATORY STRUCTURE

This project adopts a three-stage curatorial methodology, combining sensory misrecognition, emotional mapping, and reflective writing. This methodology draws upon Nicolas Bourriaud's concept of Relational Aesthetics, Claire Bishop's discourse on the politics of participation, and Laura Marks' theory of Haptic Visuality. Rather than offering fixed meanings, the exhibition evokes bodily resonance and co-constructed significance, positioning the audience as co-producers of method.

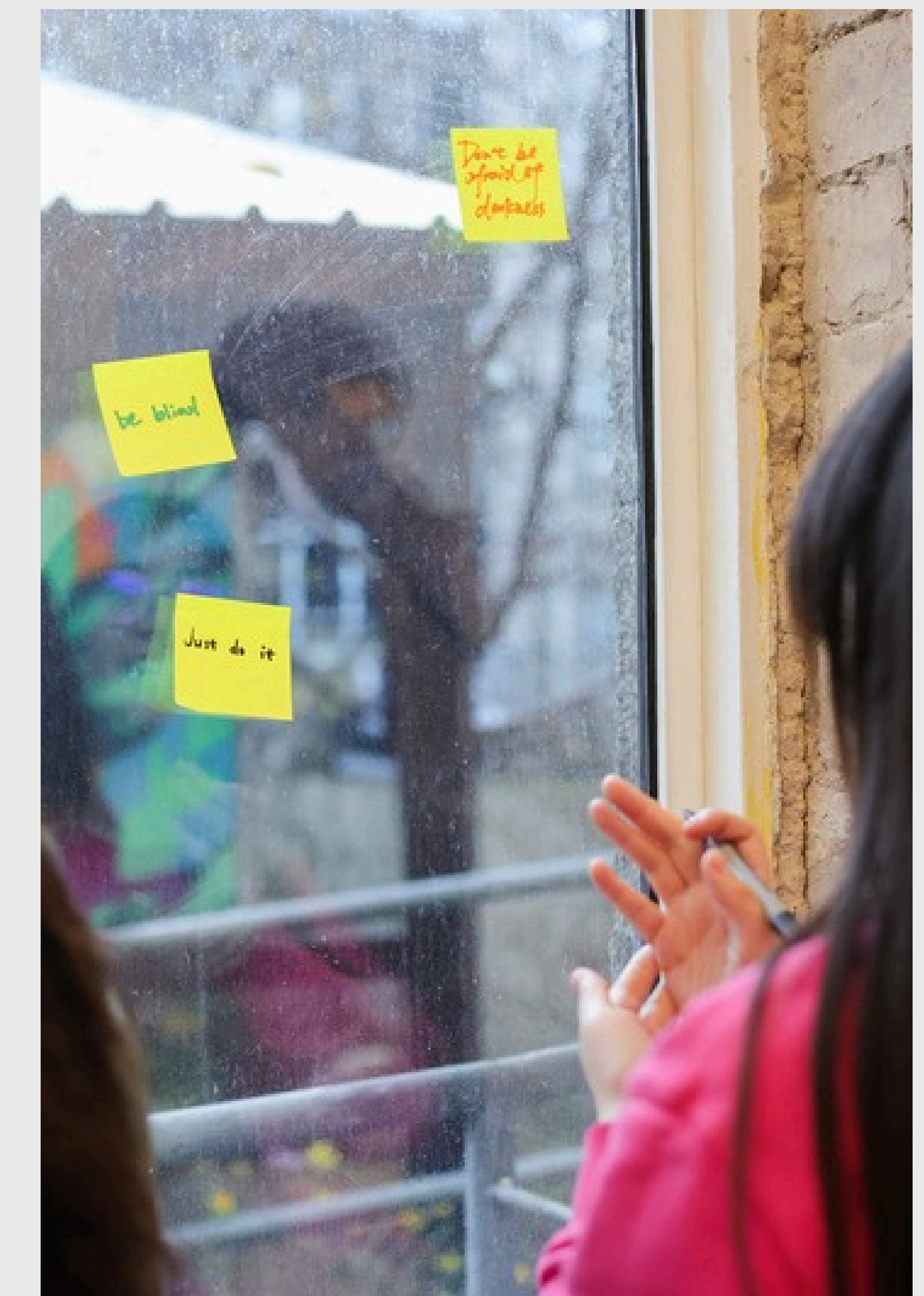
- **Path of Misjudgment:** Participants move through a tactile suspension zone under conditions of visual deprivation, generating affective misreadings through touch.
- **Shared Emotional Mapping:** After the experience, participants are brought to a collective space to reflect, draw and share, highlighting the divergence of emotional responses.
- **Conceptual Reflection Zone:** Participants internalize their experiences and write down a personal method for facing fear—an embodied tool to carry with them.



PATH OF MISJUDGMENT



SHARED EMOTIONAL MAPPING



CONCEPTUAL REFLECTION

Sensory Control Devices

MEDIA AND DISPLAY METHODS



Before entering the space, participants were guided to wear sensory control devices—blindfolds and noise-cancelling headphones—removing their access to vision and ambient sound.

This system shifted the experience into a space governed by touch and directed hearing, rather than sight or conversation.

More than just a restriction of senses, these devices functioned as a methodological intervention, framing fear as a curated bodily condition.

Tactile Installations

MEDIA AND DISPLAY METHODS

A series of tactile installations were arranged along the visitor's movement path, guiding navigation through bodily perception. With vision removed, variations in texture, temperature, and resistance became the main source of spatial orientation and emotional stimulation.



COMBINED HANGING OF FEATHERS, RIBBON FRAGMENTS, AND FOAM BALLS



DRIED LAVENDER STEMS



FEATHER, RIBBON & PLASTIC BALL TOUCH ZONE



CRINKLE-FLOOR WITH FOAM & PACKAGING TEXTURE

**MEDIA AND DISPLAY
METHODS**

Sound Interventions

In this project, sound acted as both a spatial trigger and an emotional director, mapped directly onto the audience's movement path.

Participants wore noise-cancelling headphones throughout the journey, and specific audio tracks were assigned to distinct zones, creating a personalized yet pre-scripted sound narrative.



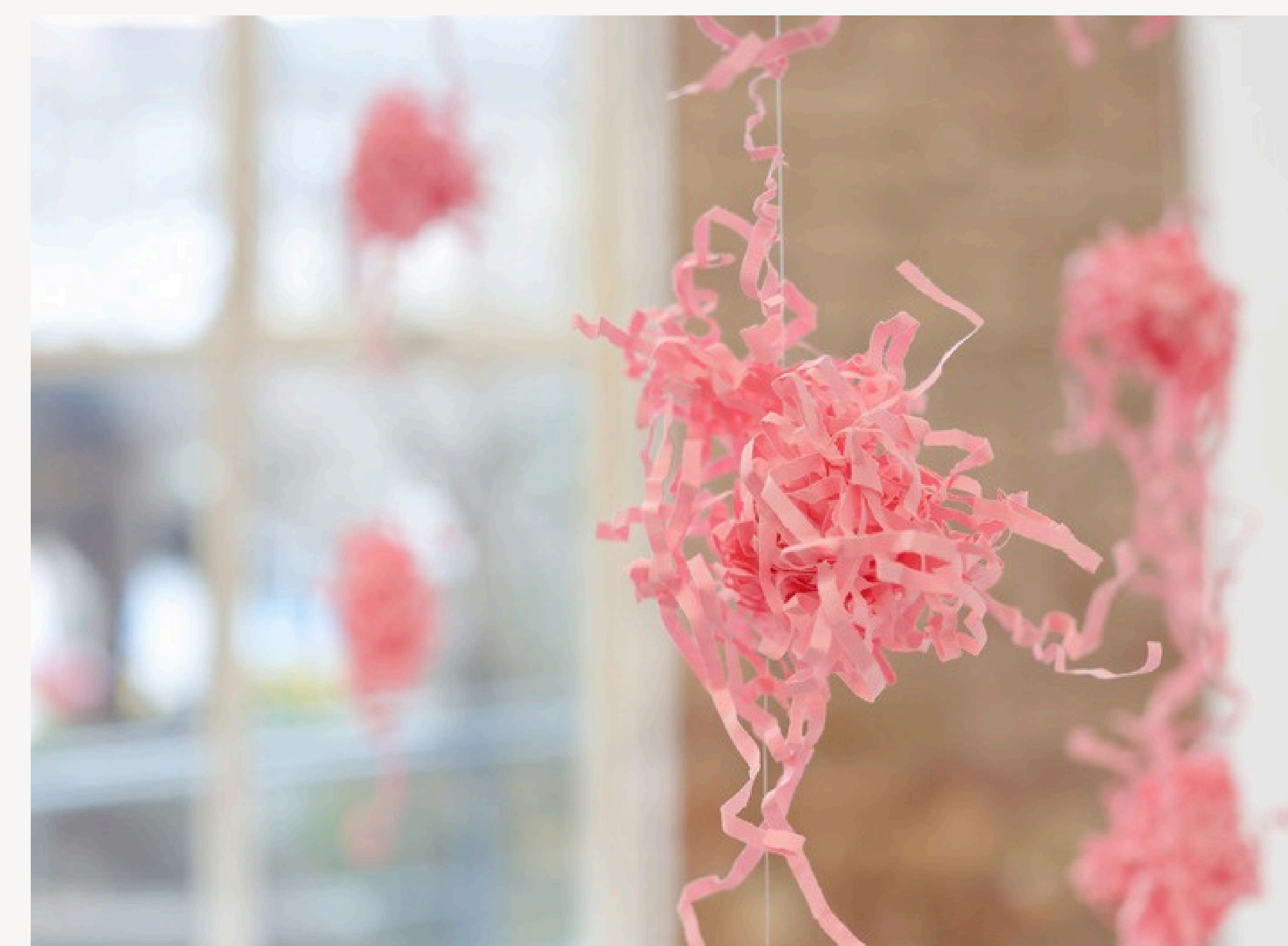
ENTRY

Forest footsteps
Crunching leaves
Ethereal ambient music



FEATHER ZONES

Ultrasonic bat calls (sharp, high-frequency)



RIBBON FRAGMENTS

Crinkling paper and rustling textures



CRINKLE FLOOR ZONE

Sudden loud splash
(stepping into water)

Textual Interventions

MEDIA AND DISPLAY METHODS



In the side room, participants were invited to draw their movement path and emotional trajectory throughout the exhibition, mapping how they experienced fear within the space. Sticky notes, paper, and colored pens were provided to encourage expressive, open-ended responses.

These drawings were then posted in a Concept Reflection Zone, where participants also wrote down how they might face fear next time.

This final gesture extended the exhibition from a bodily encounter to a space of artistic exchange, allowing visitors to become co-creators of the content.

EXHIBITION SITE & SPATIAL LAYOUT

Venue

The workshop took place in In Vitro Gallery at Summerhall, a bright and open space featuring large windows, natural light, wooden flooring, and high white walls.

A pre-existing structural partition wall divides the space into two zones, providing a natural framework for organizing the sensory path and anchoring hanging installations.



A Participatory Curatorial
Workshop

EXHIBITION SITE & SPATIAL LAYOUT

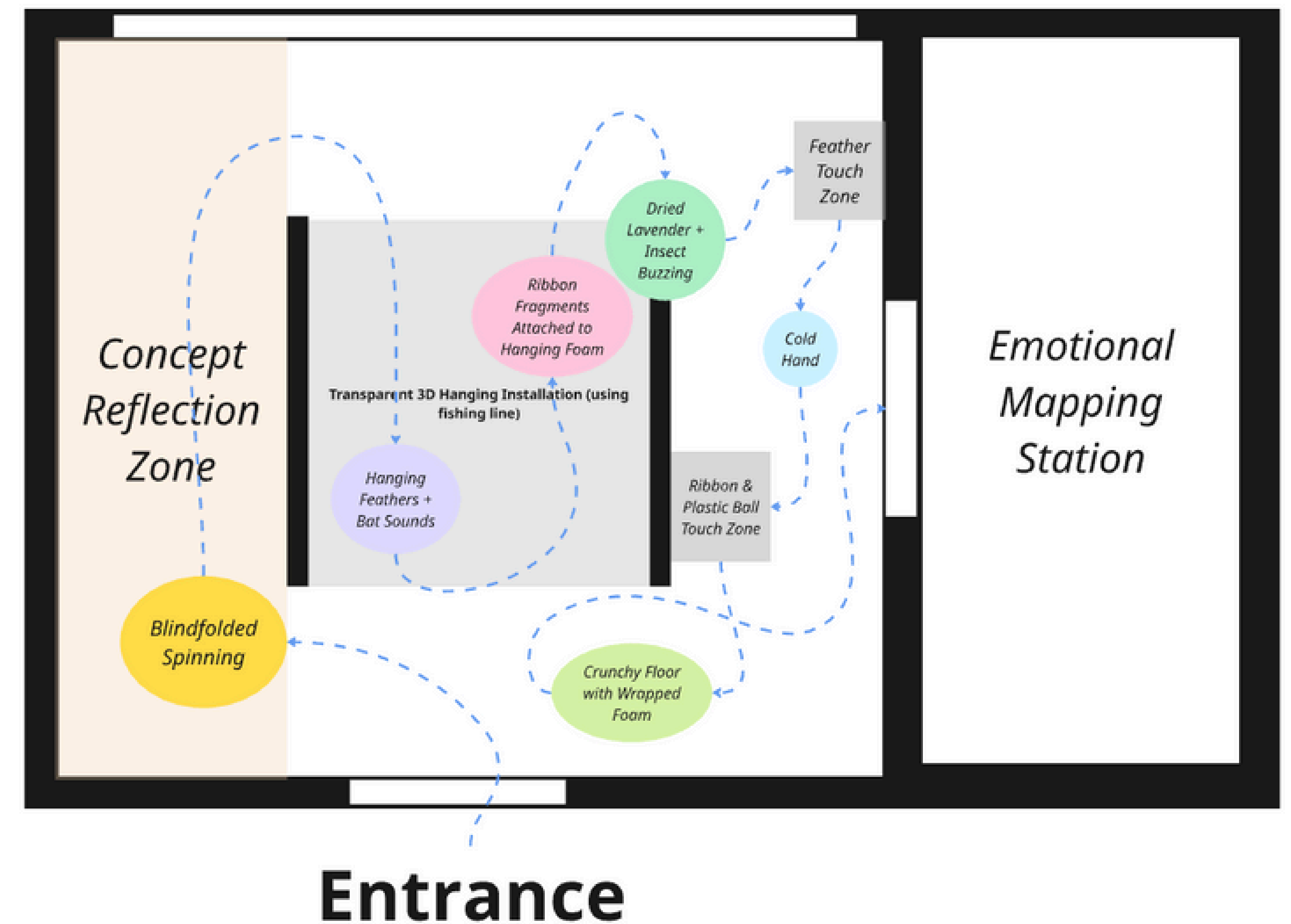
Floor Plan

Based on the structure of the In Vitro Gallery, the curatorial team organized the route and divided the space into three main zones: the immersive sensory pathway, the Concept Reflection Zone (west wall), and the Emotional Mapping Station (east-side annex).



👉 Method card written by audience

Write down: What will you say to yourself next time when you feel scared?

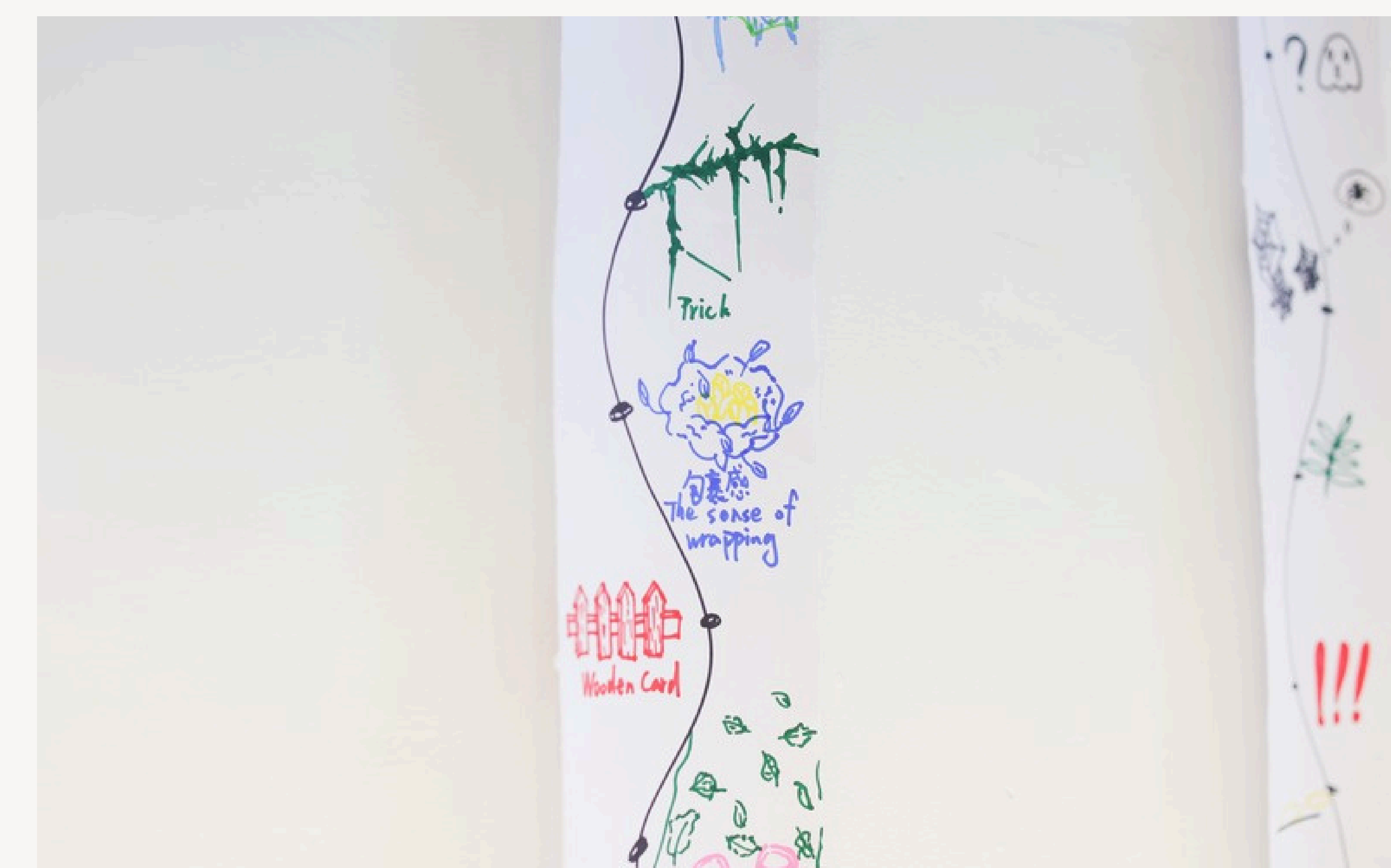
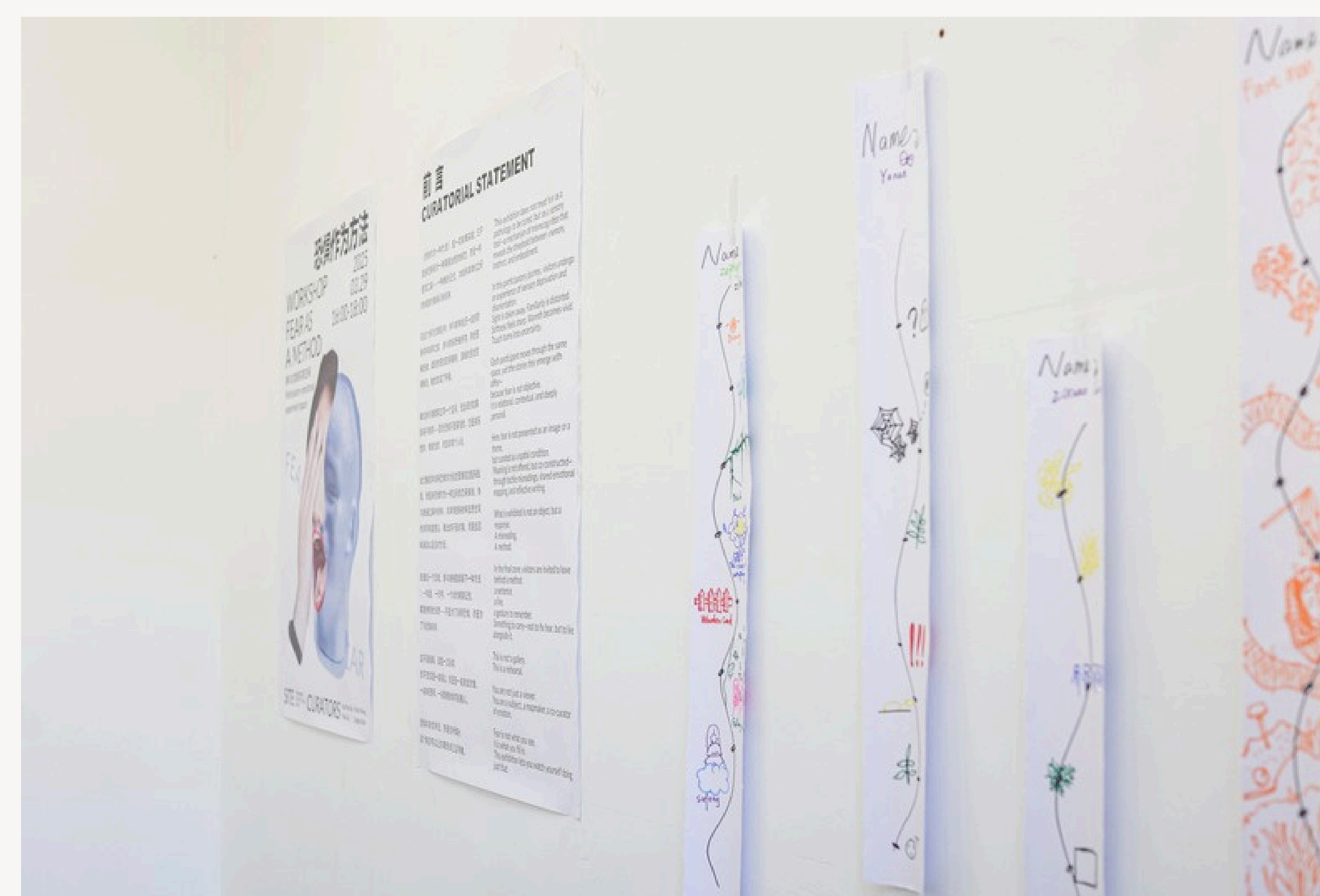
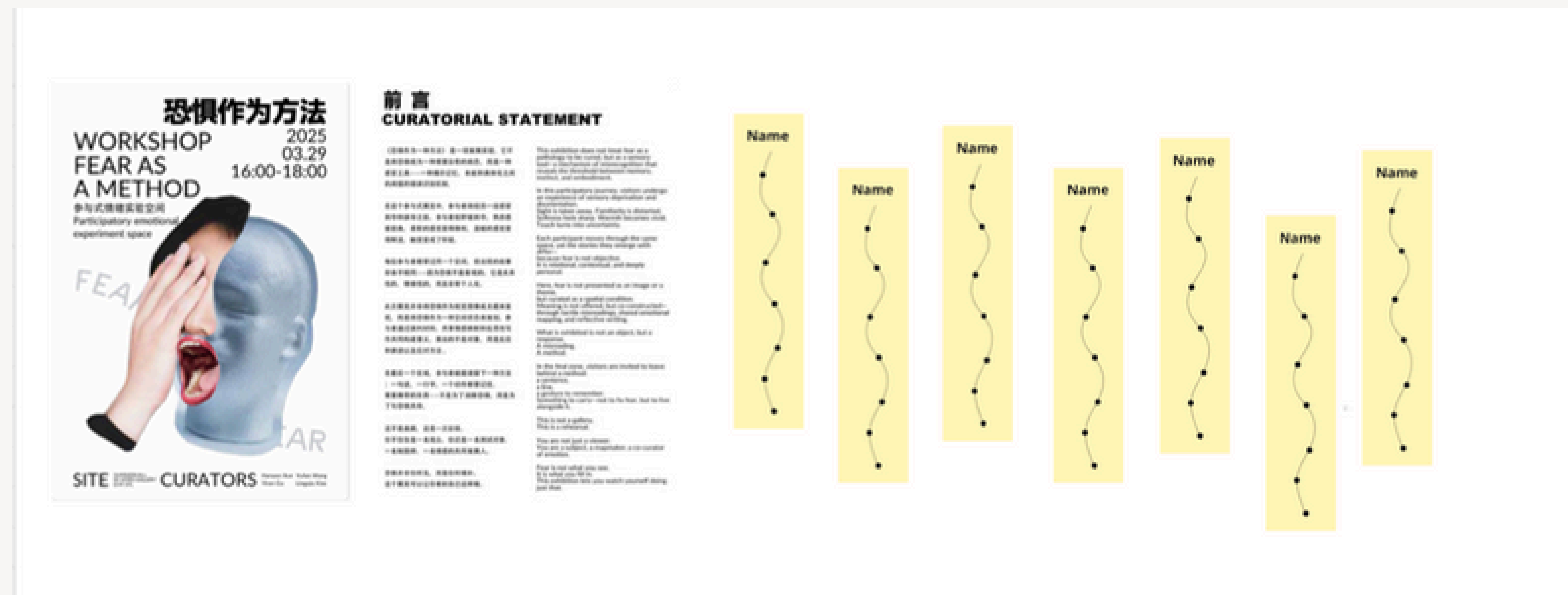


A Participatory Curatorial
Workshop

EXHIBITION SITE & SPATIAL LAYOUT

Concept Reflection Zone

Located along the west wall, this zone presented the exhibition poster, curatorial statement, and participant-generated emotional maps, creating a visual site for reflection and shared resonance.



A Participatory Curatorial
Workshop

EXHIBITION SITE &
SPATIAL LAYOUT

Emotional Mapping Station

Located in the east-side annex, this station allowed participants to illustrate their movement and emotional paths through the exhibition, and post their drawings in the Concept Reflection Zone, transforming physical experience into visual reflection.



A Participatory Curatorial
Workshop

EXHIBITION SITE &
SPATIAL LAYOUT

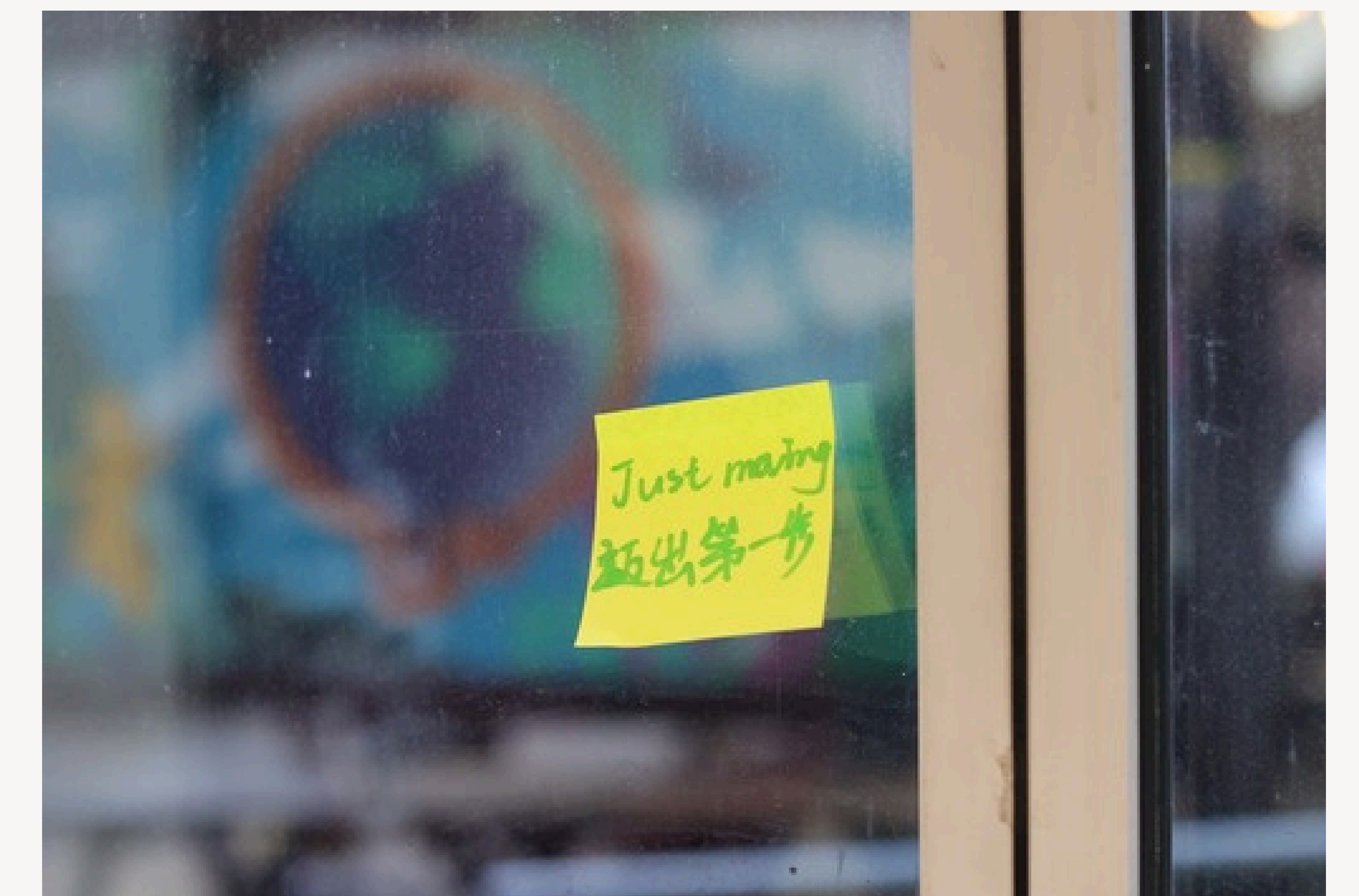
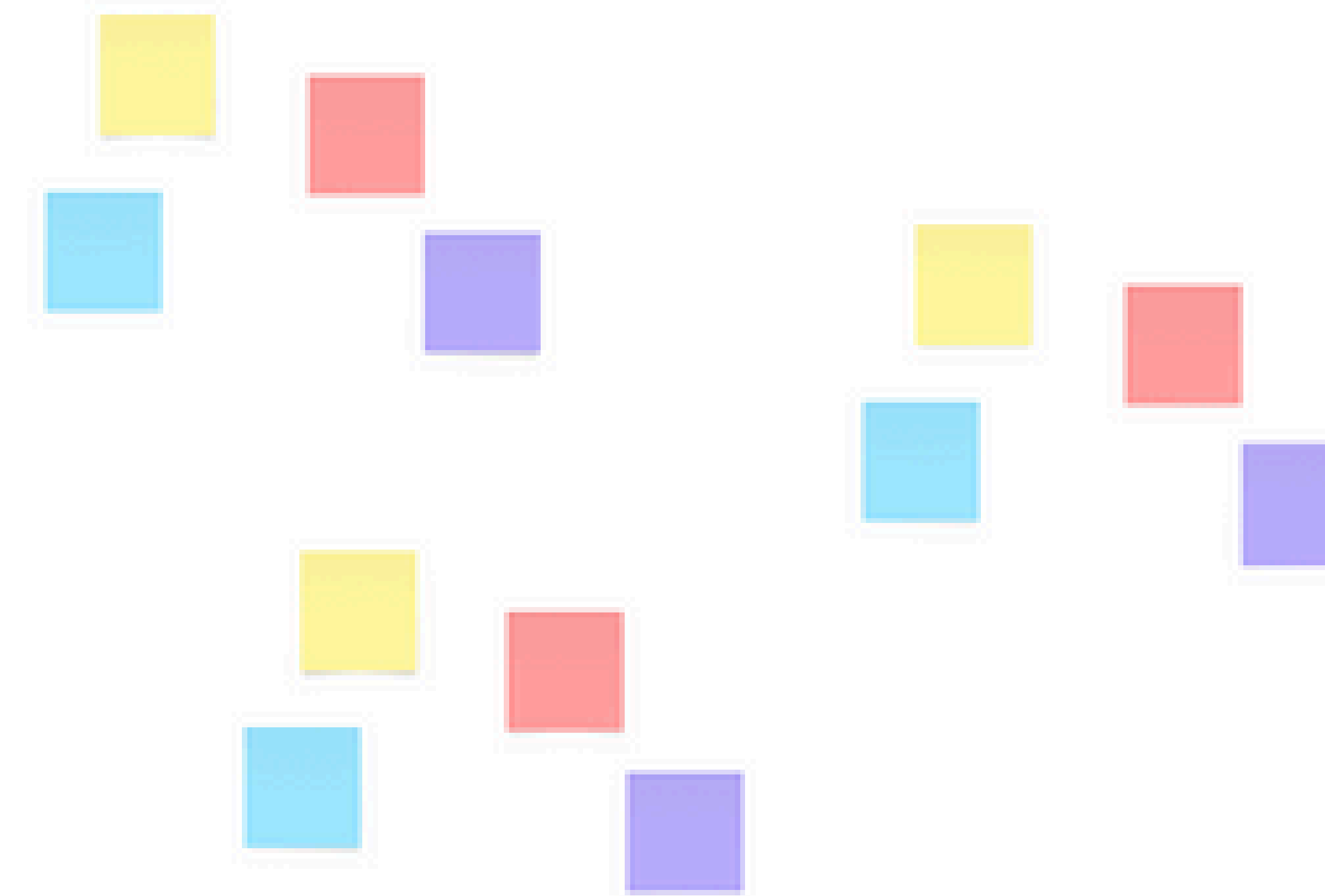
Note Walls

The north-facing windows served as interactive note walls, where participants posted handwritten responses to “What will you say to yourself next time you feel scared?”, gradually building a collective field of emotional strategies.



Method card written by audience

Write down: What will you say to yourself next time when you feel scared?



A Participatory Curatorial
Workshop

EXHIBITION SUPPORT

Budget and resources



Item	Quantity	Unit Price	Total Price
Set of feathers	5	£0.80	£4.00
Sleeping eyemask	4	£1.00	£4.00
Markers (10 pack)	1	£0.75	£0.75
Decorative glam eggs	1	£0.75	£0.75
Massage bath sponges	4	£0.75	£3.00
Stickers	1	£1.00	£1.00
Sugerglue (2 pack)	1	£1.00	£1.00
A4 grey paper	1	£1.00	£1.00
Glue	2	£1.00	£2.00
Coloured ribbon	1	£1.00	£2.00
Lavender	1	£4.50	£4.50
Blu Tack	1	£1.99	£1.99
Fishing line	1	£2.99	£2.99
Print	3	£2	£6.00
Total			£34.98

EXHIBITION SUPPORT

Audience Promotion

This workshop used an invitation-only approach, engaging a small group of seven participants from diverse academic and practical backgrounds through individual email communication.

Fields ranged from art theory and sociology to design and film studies, forming a set of anonymous participant profiles that emphasized variety in perception and experience.

This low-exposure, high-consent method reinforced our curatorial commitment to emotional safety and intentional participation, while fostering a more intimate, reflective environment.



A Participatory Curatorial
Workshop

EXHIBITION SUPPORT

Ethical Statement

- **Emotional & Sensory Ethics**

The workshop is grounded in a curatorial ethic of emotional safety, sensory accessibility, and relational care. Working with fear through visual deprivation requires informed consent, a free exit mechanism, and transparent communication (Bishop, 2012; Bourriaud, 2002).

- **Inclusion & Neurodiversity**

We centre fairness by limiting the group to 7 participants and welcoming neurodivergent experiences and non-verbal expressions. An invitation-only model ensured that each participant could engage with depth and readiness.

- **Against Shock & Re-trauma**

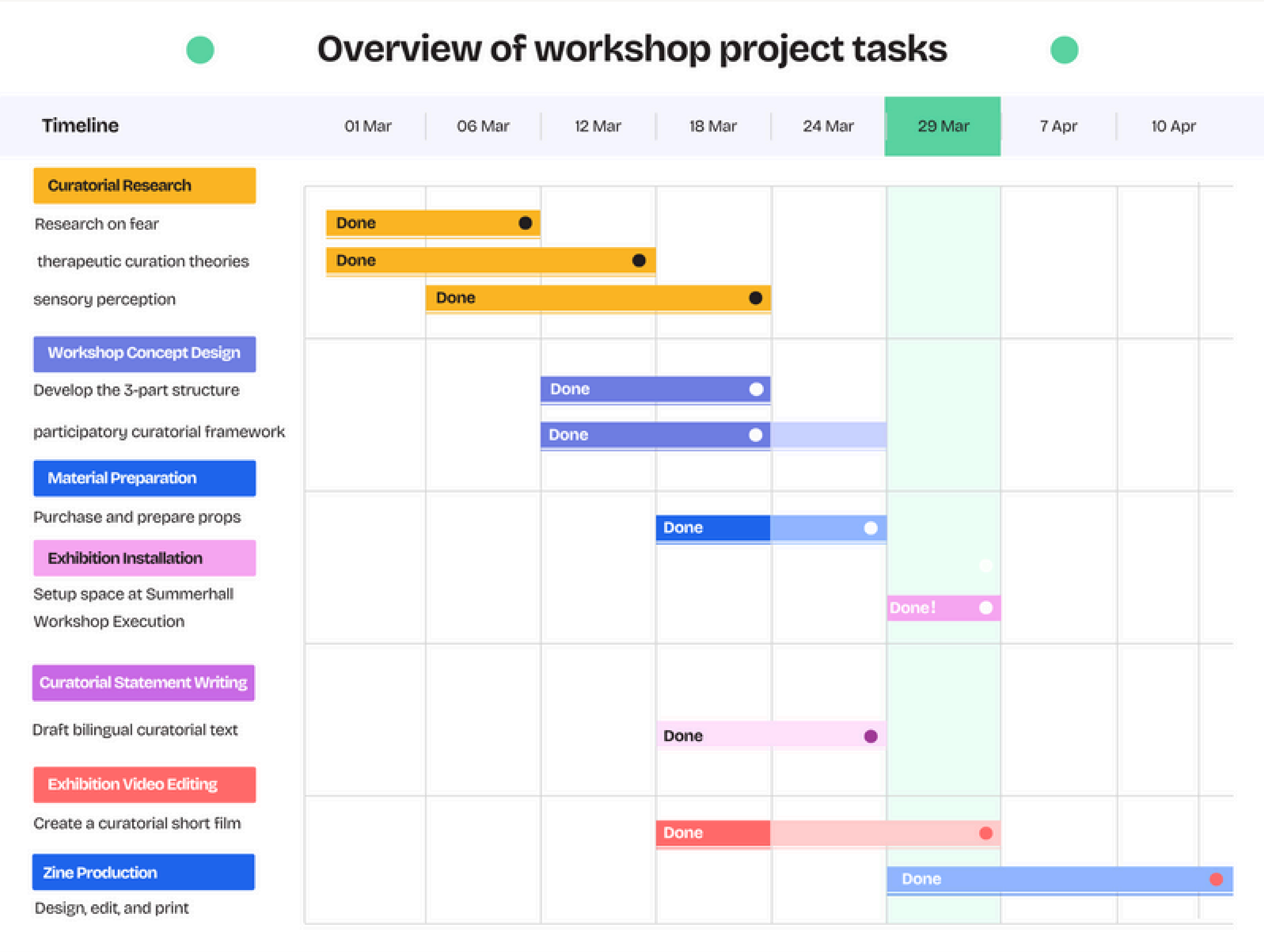
We explicitly reject curatorial strategies based on manipulation, spectacle, or trauma reenactment (Cvetkovich, 2003). The workshop does not aim to “fix” fear but invites personal interpretation. The curator acts not as a teacher, but as a co-experiencer (Rogoff, 2010).

- **Curating as Public Responsibility**

Through reflective design and care, this project contributes to discussions on emotional resilience, perceptual ethics, and affective politics in contemporary art (Lepecki, 2016; hooks, 1994).

Project Timeline

The project started in early March. It included research, planning, material prep, exhibition setup, video editing, and zine making. All main tasks were finished by the end of March.



Project Extension and Outcomes

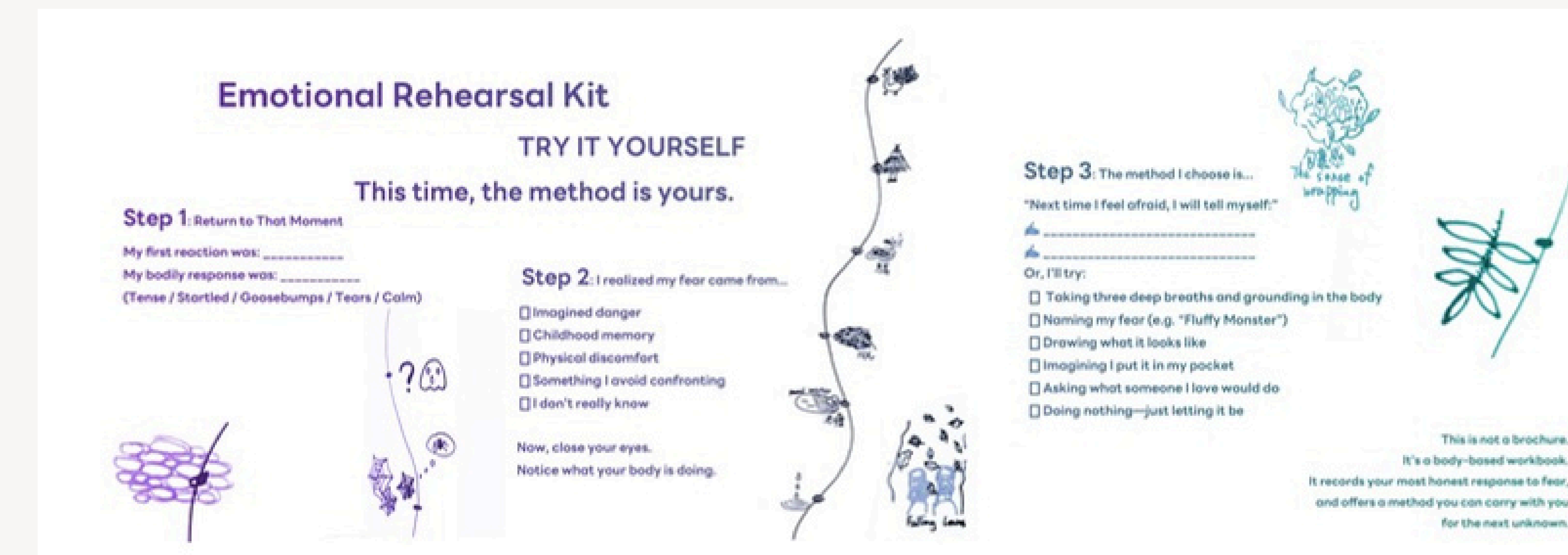
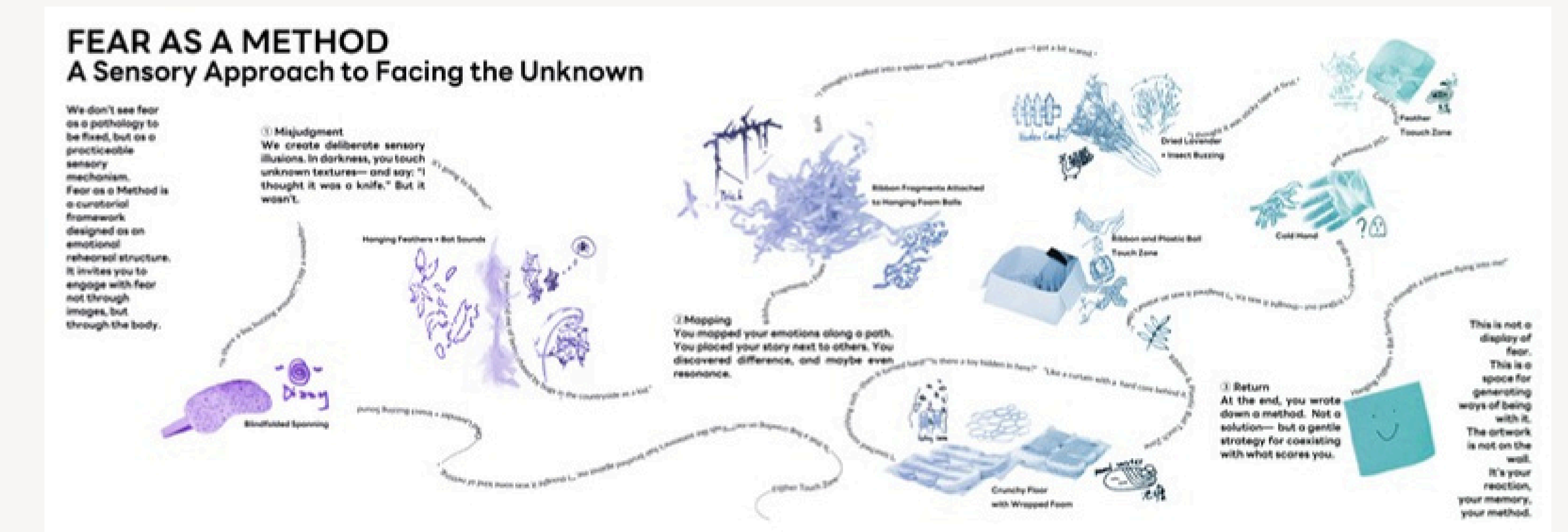
1. Zine Publication

This zine unfolds in two parts: a collective emotional map on the front and a personal emotional rehearsal kit on the back — bridging shared experience with individual reflection.

This zine is more than a souvenir — it's a continuation of emotional resonance and self-awareness. As a mirror of fear and affect, it gathers each participant's "method of fear" into a shared space of reflection. Inspired by Celine Condorelli's *Temporary Utopias*, it becomes a generative curatorial site:

- Archiving embodied responses and misreadings
- Offering tools for navigating fear collectively
- Inviting future dialogue and emotional revisits

It is both a discursive trace and a gentle companion, turning fleeting bodily experiences into lasting psychological insight—a small light for uncertain times.



2. Video Documentation

This video unfolds in three movements:

1. Blindfolded path-walking — revealing instinctive fear and spatial uncertainty.
2. Emotional map drawing — externalising inner landscapes and imagined objects.
3. Group reflection — weaving individual sensations into collective understanding.

It offers a durational trace of how fear is embodied, misread, and transformed. As part of the curatorial process, the video extends the affect beyond the moment of encounter — becoming a shared memory, a spatial echo, a poetic form of sensing together.

Link to Media Hopper:

https://media.ed.ac.uk/media/Workshop%E2%80%94Fear+as+a+Method%22/1_gzt7vvx2

"Fear as a Method"

恐惧作为方法

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A Participatory Curatorial
Workshop

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CURATOR

Hanyun Xue

Facilitated the workshop and integrated psychological theory into the curatorial narrative, enhancing emotional sensitivity and supporting a participant-centered, trust-based environment under sensory restriction.



CURATOR

Lingqiu Xiao

Managed material procurement, on-site logistics, and floor coordination, ensuring smooth participant flow and timely adjustments during installation and event execution.

CURATOR

Yiran Gu

Coordinated the project timeline, planned spatial layout, proposed installation methods, contributed to visual design, and documented the workshop through photography for archival and communication purposes.



CURATOR

Yufan Wang

Assisted with handcrafted tools, guided participants through the emotional mapping station, and led media promotion and video archiving with clear and sensitive documentation.

FEAR AS A METHOD

A PARTICIPATORY CURATORIAL WORKSHOP

“Feel it. Question it.
Take it with you.”

Hanyun Xue s2500923

Yiran Gu s2676907

Lingqiu Xiao s2676761

Yufan Wang s2669913

