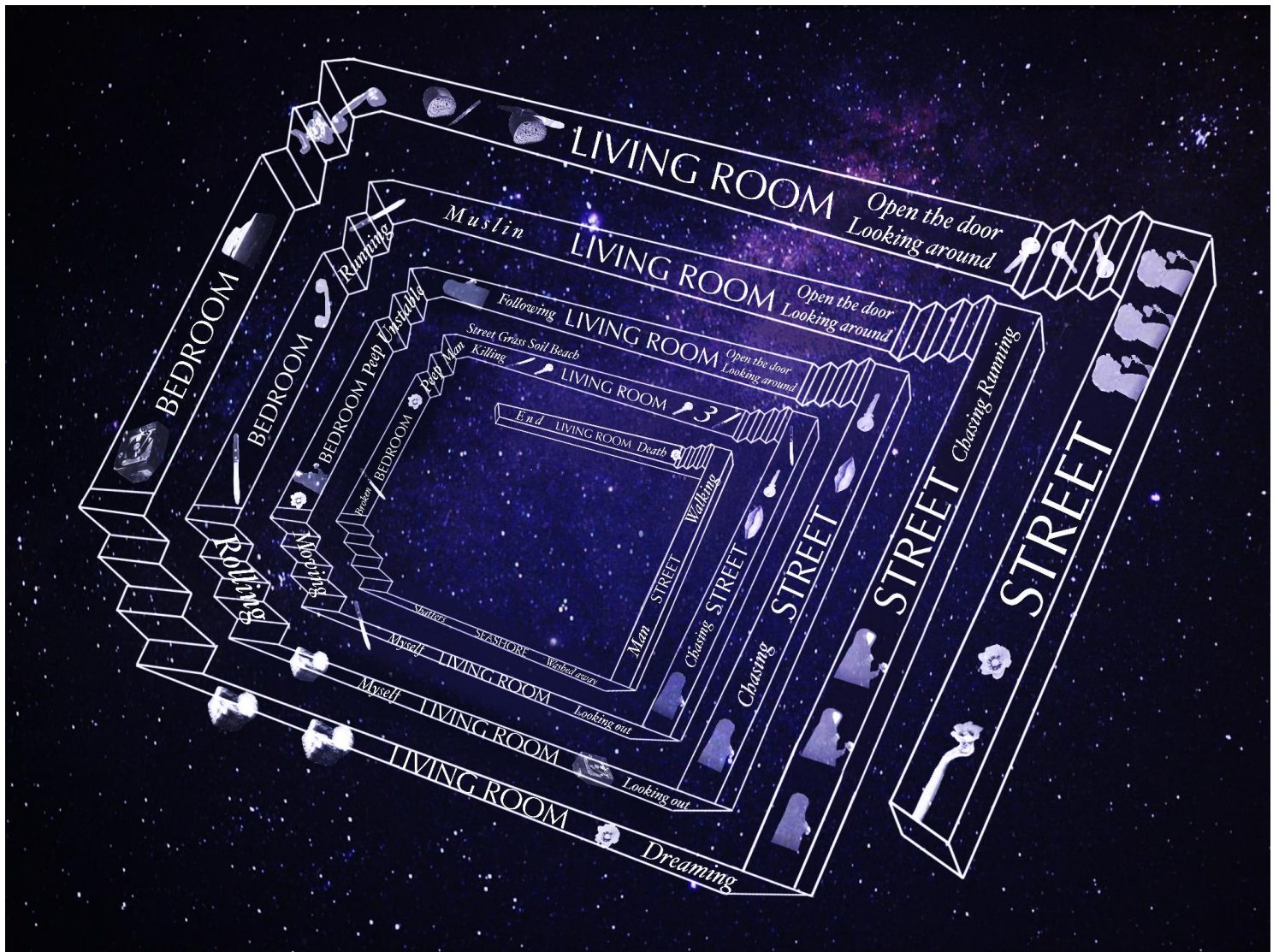
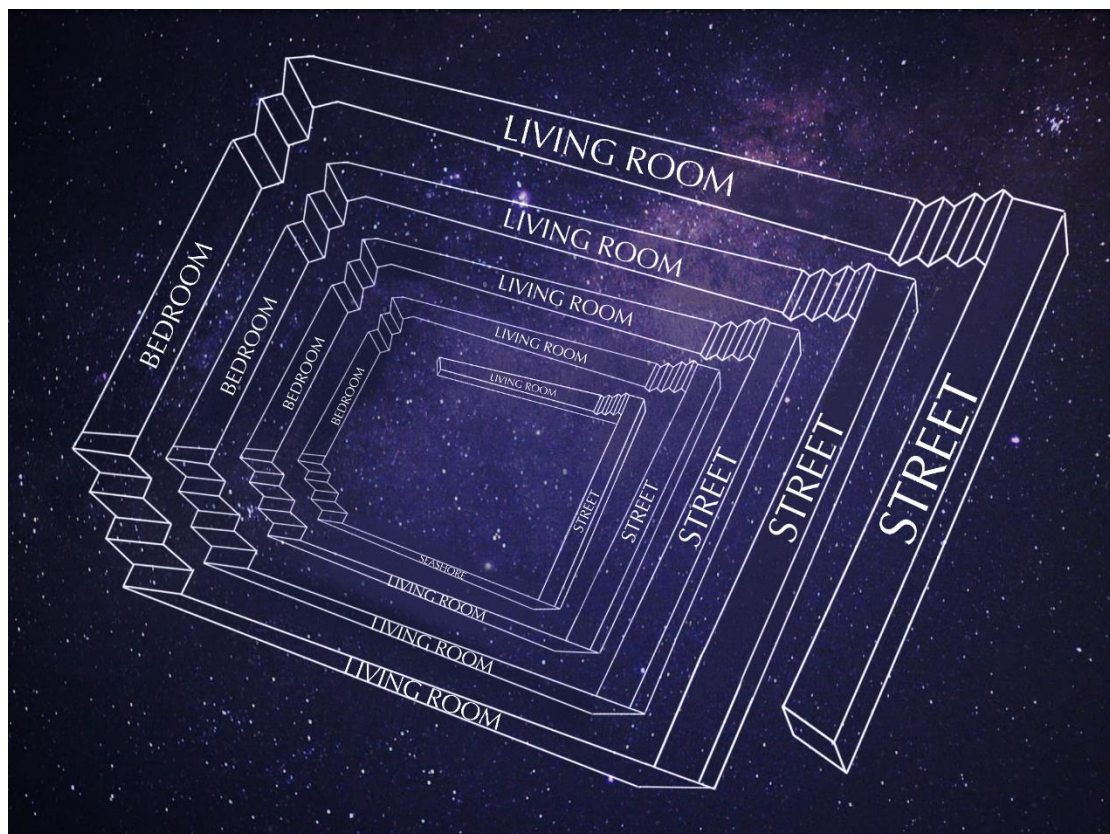


Zhou Zixuan: “*The Circular Stairs: Objects, Actions and Mind*(A Pictogram for Maya Deren’s *Meshes of the Afternoon*, 1943)”

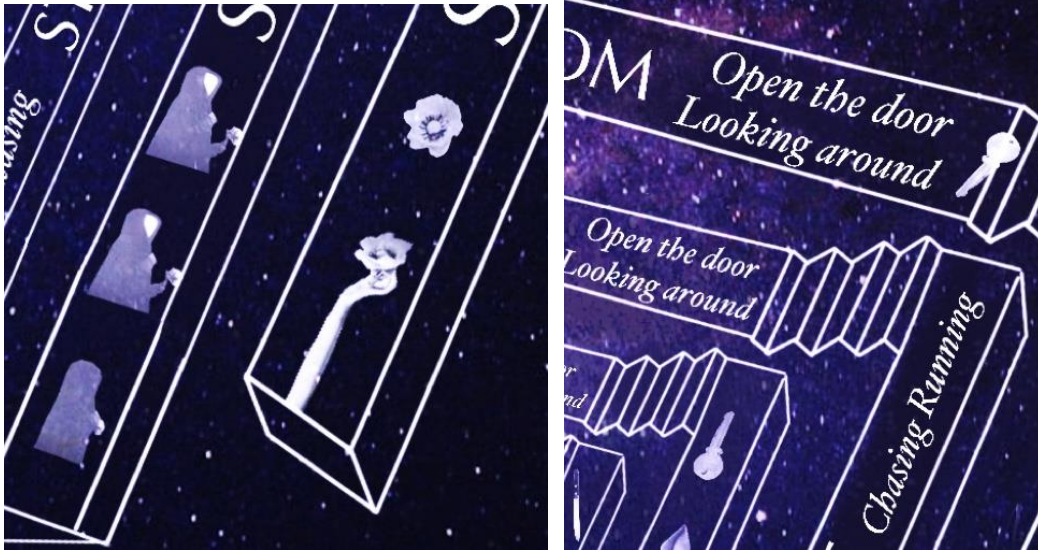


Legend:

This pictogram is called *The Circular Stairs: Objects, Actions, and Mind*. The overall shape is imaginary circular stairs. It represents the loop in the film, including four and a half periods. Each period is divided into four parts according to the change of the locations in the film, including street, living room and bedroom. From the outermost loop to the innermost, the living room changes to the seaside in the last part of the fourth loop according to the film. In the pictogram, there are stairs between the different locations, which refers to the film. In the film, stairs are the connection between different locations, so I also use the stairs as the link between different parts. The starting point of the stairs is at the outermost loop. If viewers follow the stairs from the outermost loop to the innermost loop, they will gain a feeling that the loop is getting deeper and deeper. The viewers can receive an experience about getting immersed into this loop. The background picture is the universe, which represents the human mind and creates a mysterious feeling. The whole picture creates a fantastic and abstract space, as well as creates a sense of timelessness to the viewers.



For the details, I take advantage of collage and texts. I cut the objects from the film to use as the symbols. The objects in the pictogram are those that are significant for the main idea of the film. Also, I use the texts to describe the actions of the protagonist. The symbols and the texts work together to show the timeline and the development of the film.

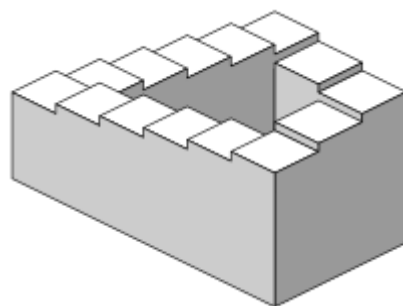


The colors of the pictogram are black, white and purple. The stairs and the details are mainly black and white. The color tone of the whole picture is purplish, which creates a vibe of mystery and fantasy. I only use three colors, which can make the pictogram clearer and simpler.

Statement:

In Maya Deren’s *Meshes of the Afternoon*, the film plot highlights surrealism, dream, and the human mind. The film’s dream narrative utilizes loop and repetition, emphasizing the objects and the characters’ actions in the film.

The overall shape is inspired by the Penrose stairs, which is also known as the endless stairs. I choose this shape for presenting the loop of the film narrative. But the loop in the film is not unchanged. Each period has different points, so I change the Penrose stairs to this shape, which shows the development of the film. At the same time, the imaginary shape reflects the surrealism and unreality of the film. In my opinion, the period of the loop is like the layers of the dream. When the loop runs from the outermost part to the innermost part, the dream goes into the deeper layers.



For the background image, it is inspired from an intriguing view that the brain or the mind is connected to the universe. The universe is the complex of the human mind. Therefore, I use the picture of the universe to represent the human mind. Since *Meshes of the Afternoon* highlights surrealism, I add the element of human mind in this pictogram. In the pictogram, the stairs seems exist in the universe, but actually in the

human mind.

For the detailed part, it is inspired by the collage art and the hypergraphy. I combined the picture and the texts together to show the development of the film. The cutting picture can directly show the contents of the film. The texts can help the viewers more easily to understand the pictogram. Moreover, in the timeline, some objects are used repeatedly, which reflects the repetition in the vertical dimension of the film and the open symbolism of objects in the film.

Image Resource:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Penrose_stairs#/media/File:Impossible_staircase.svg