

# VAST BLUE ANTARCTICA



a production by



Kimonos Animation Studio

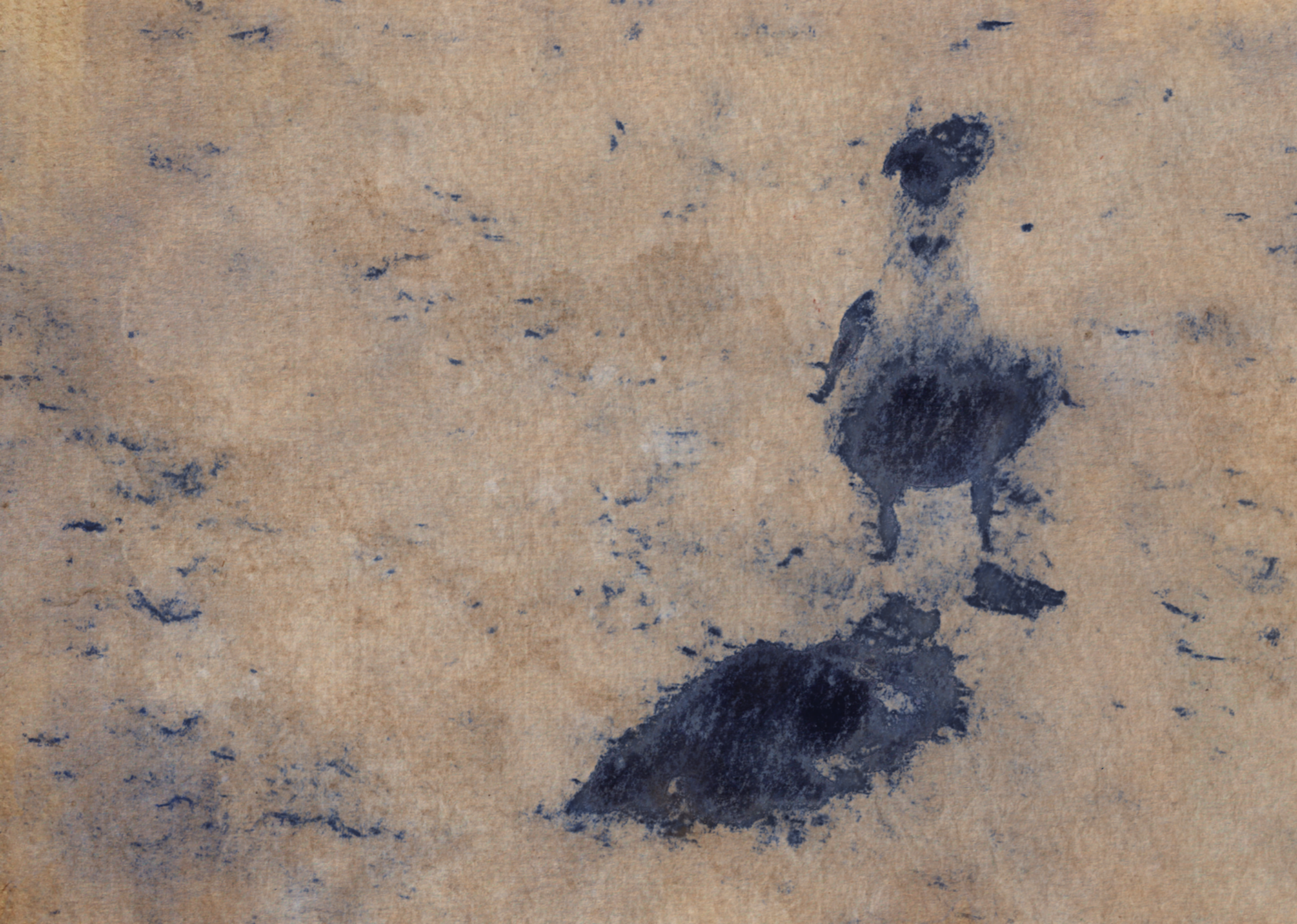


with the support of



Cyprus University of Technology





# Vast Blue Antarctica

[kimonosartcenter.com/antarctica](http://kimonosartcenter.com/antarctica)

Teaser

<https://vimeo.com/685011581>

Feature animated documentary

Mixed Media - 70% animated sequences and 30% live action footage

Format: 4K

Target Audience:

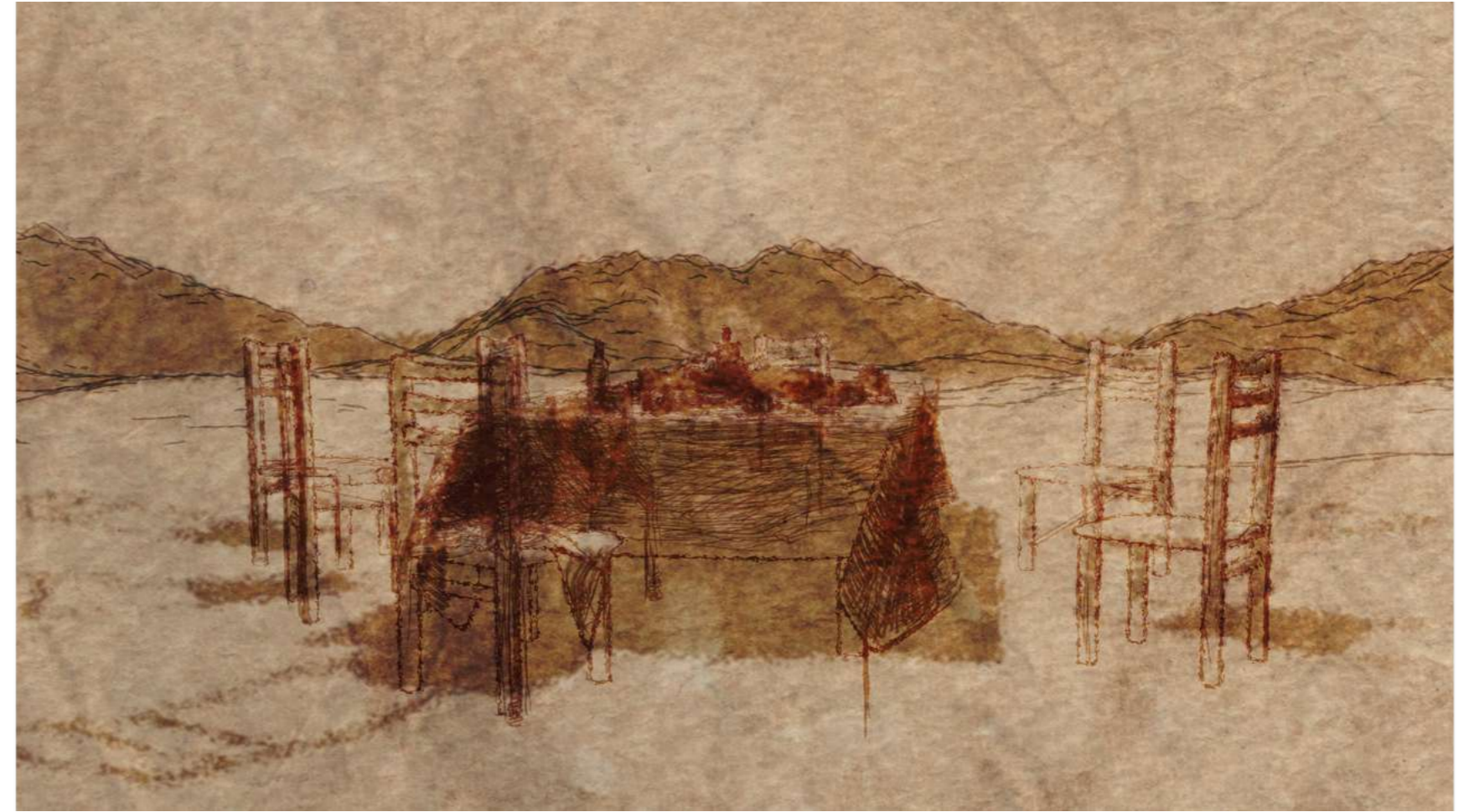
16+ with an interest in science, traveling, climate change, animation and documentary

Produced by Kimonos Animation Studio and IndigoFlicks

With the support of the Department of Multimedia and Graphic Arts of the Cyprus University of Technology



01. Brief concept outline and synopsis



## Synopsis

How does it feel to live in the most isolated place of the planet? Does time matter there? Do you only dream in white? These are some of the questions Alexandre Gautier, a french woodworker who works in the maintenance service for the infrastructure of the french scientific mission in Antarctica tries to answer in this animated documentary. The film follows Alexandre's train of thoughts and reflections about Antarctica, the vast whiteness of the continent, his experience as a worker there, his concept of home, the feeling of exile, isolation, loneliness, death - which is always present - and the purpose of life. His recollections of memories from the past, ponders on his current situation and sketches out his vision and dreams about the future, trying to give an answer to the ultimate question of "where home is?"

## Director's Statement

I first met Alex in Cyprus, a few months before his first trip to Antarctica. I could tell that he was preparing himself for a trip to the unknown. We met again and had the chance to get to know each other better about a month before his second trip. This time he had a bunch of interesting stories to share about his experiences, the people he met there and his work. What made me want to make a documentary about his story though, was his eagerness and his impatience to go back to Antarctica as soon as possible and for as many years he is physically able. What I find particularly interesting in the process of making this film is how differently Alexandre will experience Antarctica in every new trip there and how stronger his bond with the place will be. This film is very special to me, among other reasons, because I find it challenging to create a film about a place that I have never visited and probably never will, even though it is a dream I had as a child. It is really rare to stumble upon a story like the one about Alex and his connection with Antarctica.

This is not another film about Antarctica. This is a story full of excitement and fear, of happiness and disappointment, of the joys and sorrows of life at one of the most isolated places on earth, narrated by an inspired voice. A story of resilience and fighting against the odds. In a place where one would think that you can only find loneliness, Alexandre finds "Home". It is the kind of story that we, as filmmakers, felt that has to find its way to the screen, and offer a unique cinematic experience to the audience.

The animated sequences will serve as a visualization of Alexandre's ruminations, thoughts, dreams, memories and ideas - a visual rendition of his inner voyage in all its complexity and, sometimes, surrealism. It will also serve as a visual way to separate the presentation of Alexandre's inner world to the external one. This is the reason we chose to combine animation and live action footage for this film.

## Treatment

Vast Blue Antarctica is a 70 minute mixed media animated documentary in French language, combining animation with live action, with filming in Antarctica and France.

The film documents the story of a man in search of a country, his inner Odyssey in the vastness of the edge of the world, in quest of an answer to the ultimate question of "where is home?"

The film focuses on Alexandre Gautier, a French woodworker employed by the French scientific mission in Antarctica. Alexandre is a graduate of the National Superior School of Fine Arts of Paris who distanced himself from the art world after the completion of his studies. He took up carpentry, moved to the French countryside and started working in the construction sector. In 2018 he answered a call concerning the French scientific mission in Antarctica, asking for workers. He first joined the mission in the fall of 2018, fell in love with the vast continent and is currently on his 4th expedition in Antarctica.

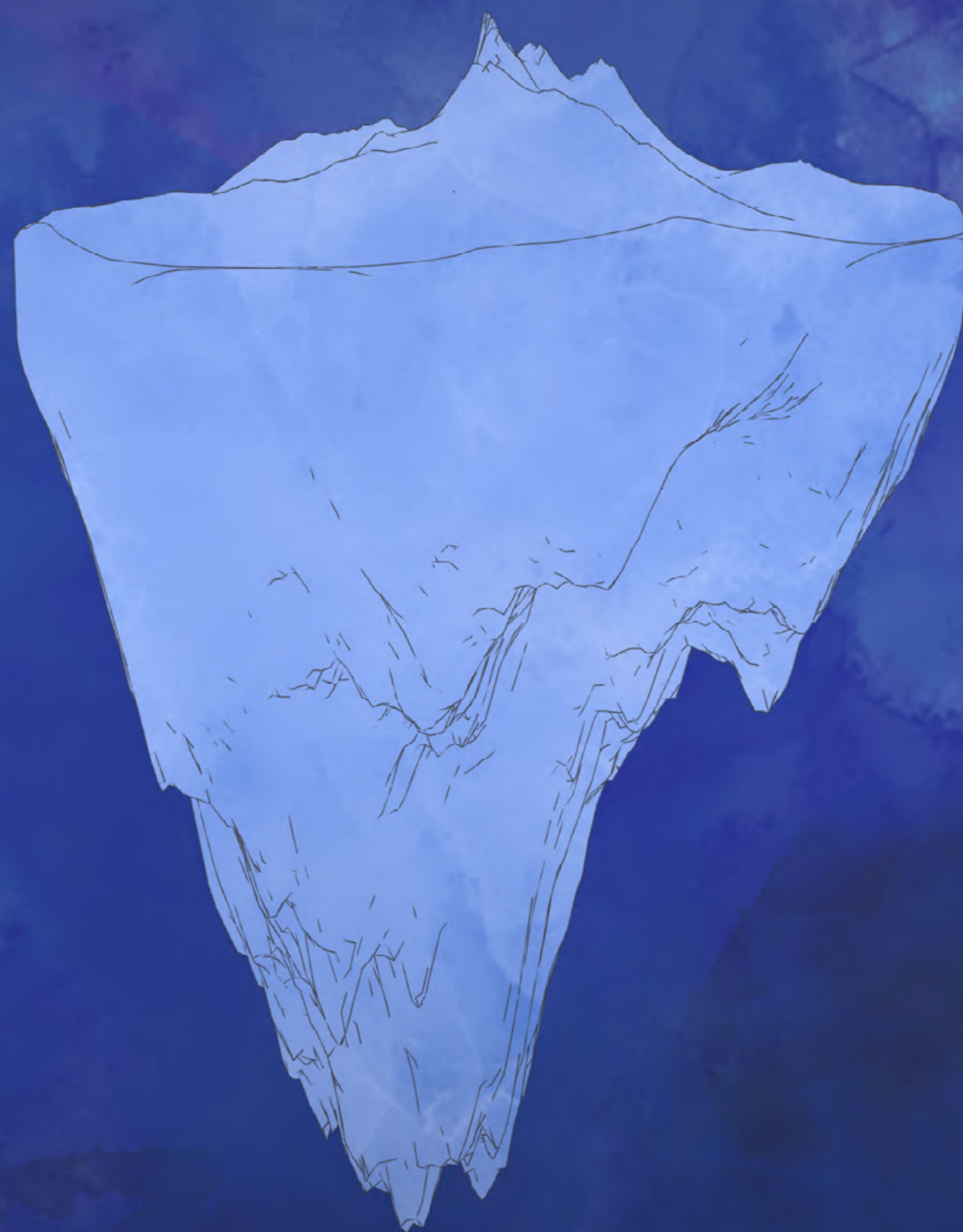
We follow Alexandre's train of thoughts and reflections about Antarctica, the vast whiteness of the continent, his experience as a worker there, his concept of home, the feeling of exile, isolation, loneliness, death -which is always present there- and the purpose of life. He recalls memories from the past, ponders on his current situation and sketches out his vision and dreams about the future.

The film will be structured as a long-distance interview of Alexandre: a series of questions were written and given to Alexandre in closed envelopes before his departure. He opens one per week during his stay in Antarctica and answers the questions on camera.

The aesthetics of the animated part of the documentary are based on the footage, photographs and drawings made by Alexandre. They will be a depiction of his dreams, ideas and memories - a visualization of his inner voyage - and will function as a complement to the actual documentation of the reality that surrounds him.

The purpose of the animation is to underline key moments of the film and to illustrate Alexandre's thoughts and ruminations. Combining live action shots of the landscape and animated sequences will allow us to bring forth the contrast between dream and reality, a tension that the film wishes to examine as a visual rendition of Alex's trip to the edge of the world.

Through the eyes of Alexandre, Antarctica unfolds as an inner space - vast, fearsome and beautiful. A place where one can find a shelter for one's dreams and be in constant danger at the same time.





## Concept Outline

Vast Blue Antarctica is an animated documentary which follows Alexandre Gautier, a woodworker of the infrastructure of the French research base Paul-Émile Victor in Antarctica. Alexandre, a graduate of the National Superior School of Fine Arts of Paris, distanced himself from the art world, after the completion of his studies. He took up carpentry, moved to Auvergne in the French countryside and started working in the construction sector. After answering a call concerning the French scientific mission in Antarctica, asking for workers in order to perform maintenance work, he joined the mission in the fall of 2018, and fell in love with the vast continent. He is currently on his fourth expedition in Antarctica.

The idea of the film was born out of the stories and images Alexandre brought back with him. After his friends' encouragement, he started documenting his experiences by filming and drawing. The film will be structured as a long-distance interview of Alexandre: the lack of direct contact with him during his stay there led us to the creative solution of giving him, before his departure, a series of questions enclosed in envelopes. He was asked to open one per week, while in Antarctica, and to answer the questions.

The film combines live action footage and animated sequences which will form a visual rendition of his trip to the edge of the world. The animated parts, created by the animator Charalambos Margaritis, will be a depiction of Alexandre's dreams, ideas and memories. A visualization of his inner voyage, which will function as a complement to the actual documentation of the reality that surrounds him. This is the reason for which the technique of rotoscoping will be used extensively: because, on one hand, it uses real images and, thus, keeps a sense of real movement and realism that no other hand made technique can have; on the other hand, it is aesthetically grounded on the world of traditional 2D animation. As a drawing technique that creates a drawn movement in a non-real world, it will function as a visual approach between the animated and live action worlds. It will allow us to bring forth the contrast between inner and outer, the contrast between dream and reality: a tension that the film wishes to examine.

Through the eyes of Alexandre, Antarctica unfolds as an inner space, vast, fearsome and beautiful. A place where one can find a shelter for one's dreams and be in constant danger at the same time. The film will eventually try to evoke an answer to the ultimate question of "where is home?" Currently Alex is in Antarctica working and filming his fourth and probably last expedition there. Concept art, storyboards and some of the animated sequences have already been created. For the forthcoming period, the creative team will keep working on the material that Alex will bring back from his last trip. Depending on the circumstances, filming will be scheduled in France and Cyprus.

"Vast Blue Antarctica" participated in the 6th Agora of the Animasyros International Animation Festival organized in collaboration with MIFA - Animation du Monde. It was also presented at the CEE Animation Forum, where it received the Audience Award and the Cartoon Movie Award. Following that, it was presented at the 2021 edition of MIFA.

In March of 2022, the project was also presented at the Cartoon Movie in Bordeaux.

## Key character

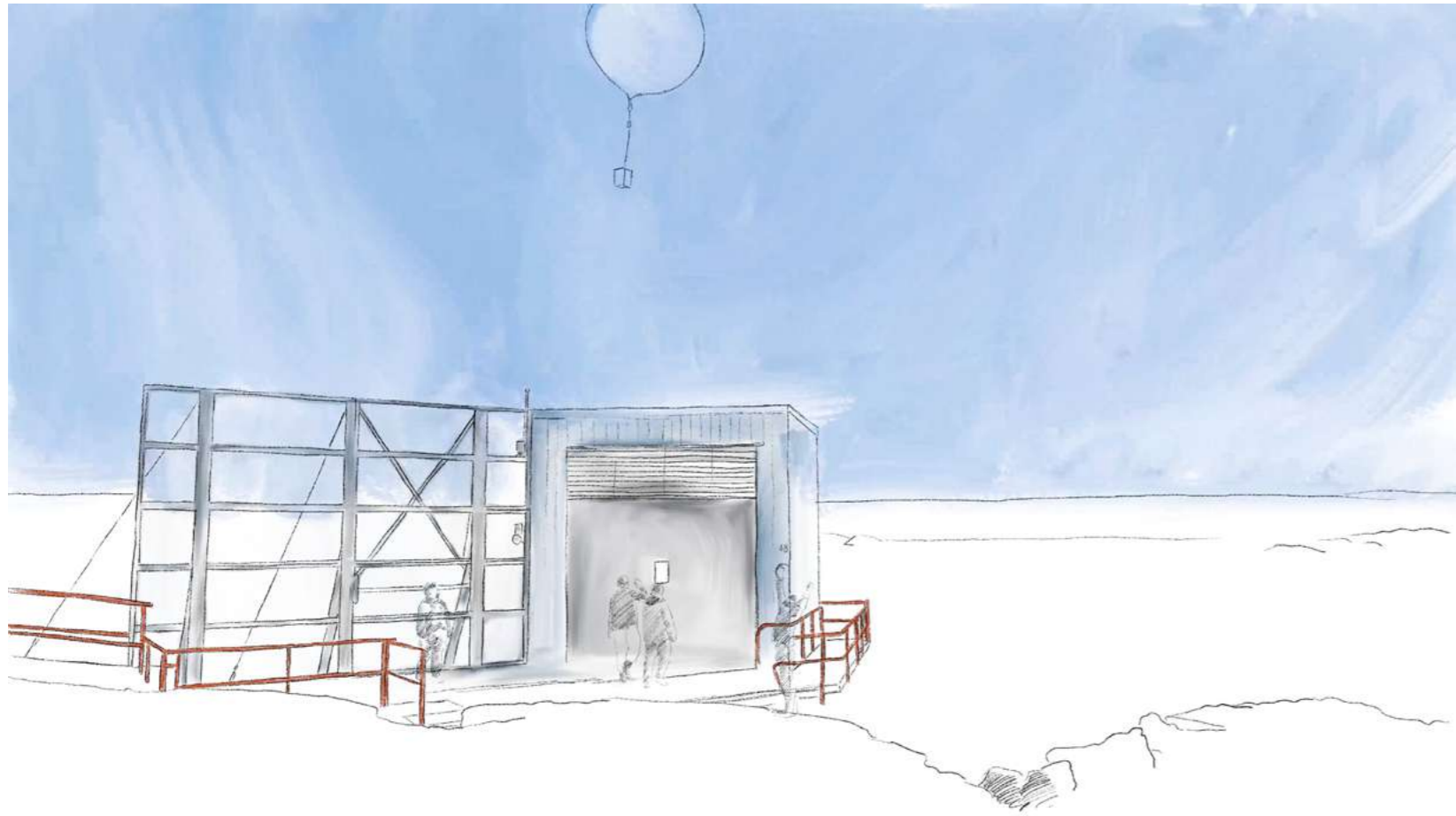
But who is Alexandre?

Alexandre is a graduate of the National Superior School of Fine Arts of Paris. Distancing himself from the art world, after the completion of his studies, he took up carpentry, moved to Auvergne in the French countryside and started working in the construction sector. In 2018 he answered a call concerning the French scientific mission in Antarctica, asking for workers to spend three months there in order to perform maintenance work. He first joined the mission in the fall of 2018, and fell in love with the vast continent. Thus, he decided to continue his trips there. In 2021 he completed his 4th mission in Antarctica under very special circumstances, due to the circumstances global pandemic created.

The idea of the film was born out of the stories and images Alexandre brought back with him. After his friends' encouragement, he started documenting his experiences by filming and drawing. The visual material of the film is recorded mainly by Alexandre Gautier himself, under the instructions and guidance of the director Christos Panagos.



02. Production Team



## Christos Panagos

director

Christos Panagos studied filmmaking at the European Film College in Denmark. He has been involved with the moving picture since 2002. A passion that came as a natural continuation of his love for cinema. In 2005 he created his first documentary and up until today, although he has worked in other genres, documentary is still his favourite.

He has participated in many international productions and his works were screened in film festivals in Greece and abroad, starting with the documentary "Our Stolen Circus" in 2013.

His art installations have been part of group exhibitions:

2015 at the Farvergården Museum East Jutland of Ebeltoft, Denmark, in collaboration with the Danish artist Jette Nørregaard with the project "Luft under vingerne".

2017 with the documentary "Relics" as part of the art installation "The Big Mosaic" which was implemented within the frame of Pafos 2017 "European Capital of Culture".

"Relics" was also an official selection of the program of the 20th Thessaloniki Documentary Festival, Diversions International Short Film Festival of Croatia and the 3rd Paphos International Film Festival in Cyprus.

Founder of "IndigoFlicks", a film production production company based in Odense - Denmark.

Being also in the role of the producer, he completed recently the feature documentary "Science & Orthodoxy around the World", in collaboration with the National Hellenic Research Foundation, a production which required filming in 10 different countries around the world within 2 years. The documentary was officially selected in the 21th Thessaloniki Documentary Festival and this period is submitted in different film festivals around the world.

IMDB link:

<https://www.imdb.com/name/nm5594825/>

Documentary Showreel:

<https://vimeo.com/339524707/e838ff0215>



## Charalambos Margaritis

animation department

Charalambos Margaritis graduated from the National Superior Fine Arts School of Paris (ENSBA) in 2012. His work is centered around animated films, printmaking, drawing, painting and comics. In 2010 he studied the traditional icon painting techniques with the monk Paisios Agrapides in the Cell of Saint Archangels in Karyes of Mount Athos, where he resided for three months.

He currently lives and works in Paphos, Cyprus, where, in 2015, he co-founded the Kimonos Art Center and he directs the Kimonos Animation Studio.

He teaches animation techniques, drawing and printmaking. Since 2019 he has been teaching animation in the Department of Multimedia and Graphic Arts of the Cyprus University of Technology.

Since 2014 he has been collaborating with the classical music ensemble Trio Dell'Arte producing animated films that accompany live musical performances of classical chamber music.

In 2017 he was involved in several ways with the production of the European Capital of Culture PAFOS2017 and, among other projects, was the curator for the project The Big Mosaic, one of the bid book projects of the ECC.

Since 2017, he has been directing the annual international animation festival The Animattikon Project, founded in the framework of the European Capital of Culture, PAFOS2017 and produced by the Kimonos Art Center in Paphos.

Since 2018 he is the ambassador of the European Animation Awards in Cyprus.

His films have been selected and screened in several animation and film festivals around the world. He received the Best Animator Award in Anim8fest International Animation Film Festival in Los Angeles and the Award of Recognition in the IndieFEST Film Awards. He was also a finalist for the Norman McLaren Award in BLOW-Up Chicago International Arthouse FILM FEST.

IMDB link:

<https://www.imdb.com/name/nm10149731/>

Animation showreel:

<https://vimeo.com/339434005/0ce50be492>





## Production companies

### Kimonos Animation Studio (CY)

Kimonos Animation Studio is the animation studio of the Kimonos Art Center. Since its beginning in 2015, it has been organizing workshops and providing animation courses. At the same time it produces its own animated films. It is also regularly involved in international co-productions and collaborations with other production companies and studios. Since 2017, the studio organizes the independent annual international animation festival The Animattikon Project.

### IndigoFlicks (DK)

IndigoFlicks is a production company based in Odense, that specializes in the audiovisual and cultural sector. The company collaborates regularly in international productions which vary from short films to feature documentaries and from music videos to museum installations.

Its latest productions participated in European Capital of Culture PAFOS2017 and various international film festivals across Europe.

The project is also supported by the Department of Multimedia and Graphic Arts of the Cyprus University of Technology.



### Kimonos Animation Studio

Charalambos Margaritis

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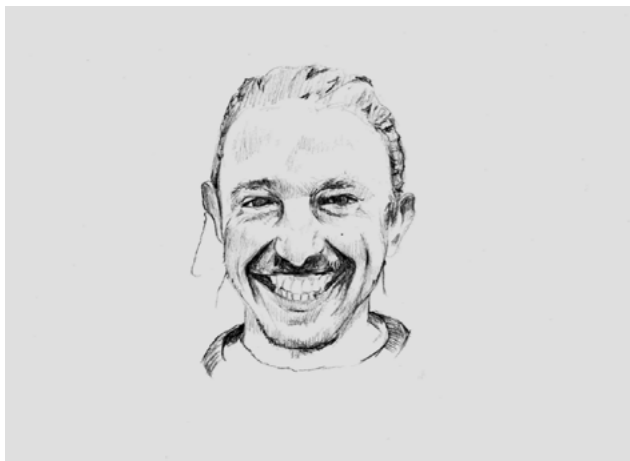
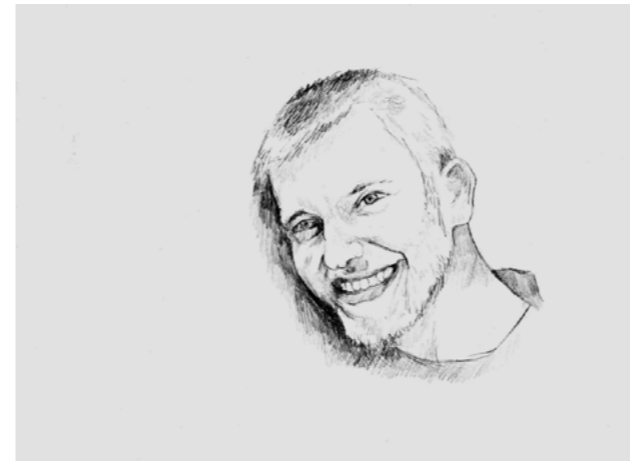
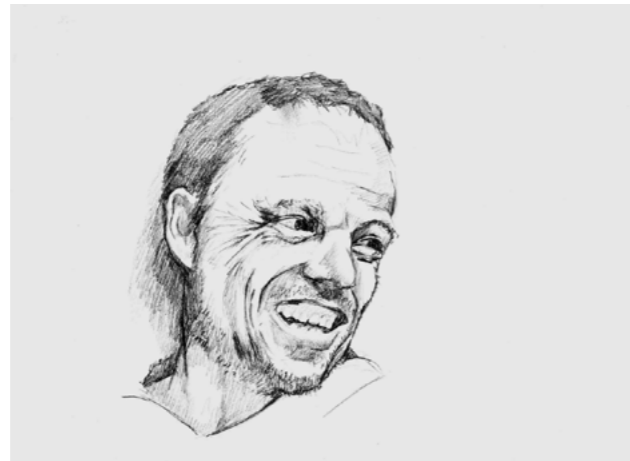
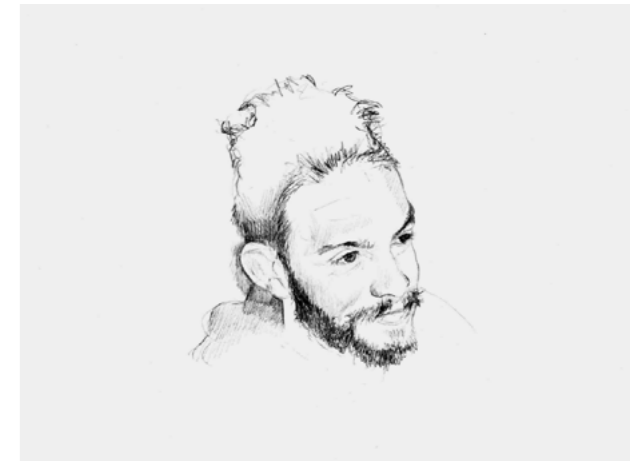
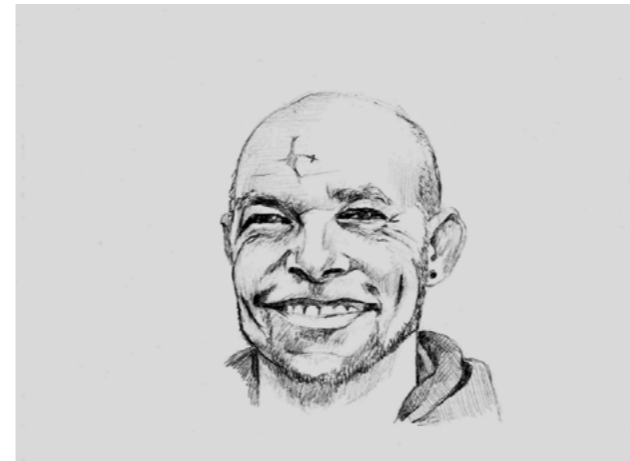
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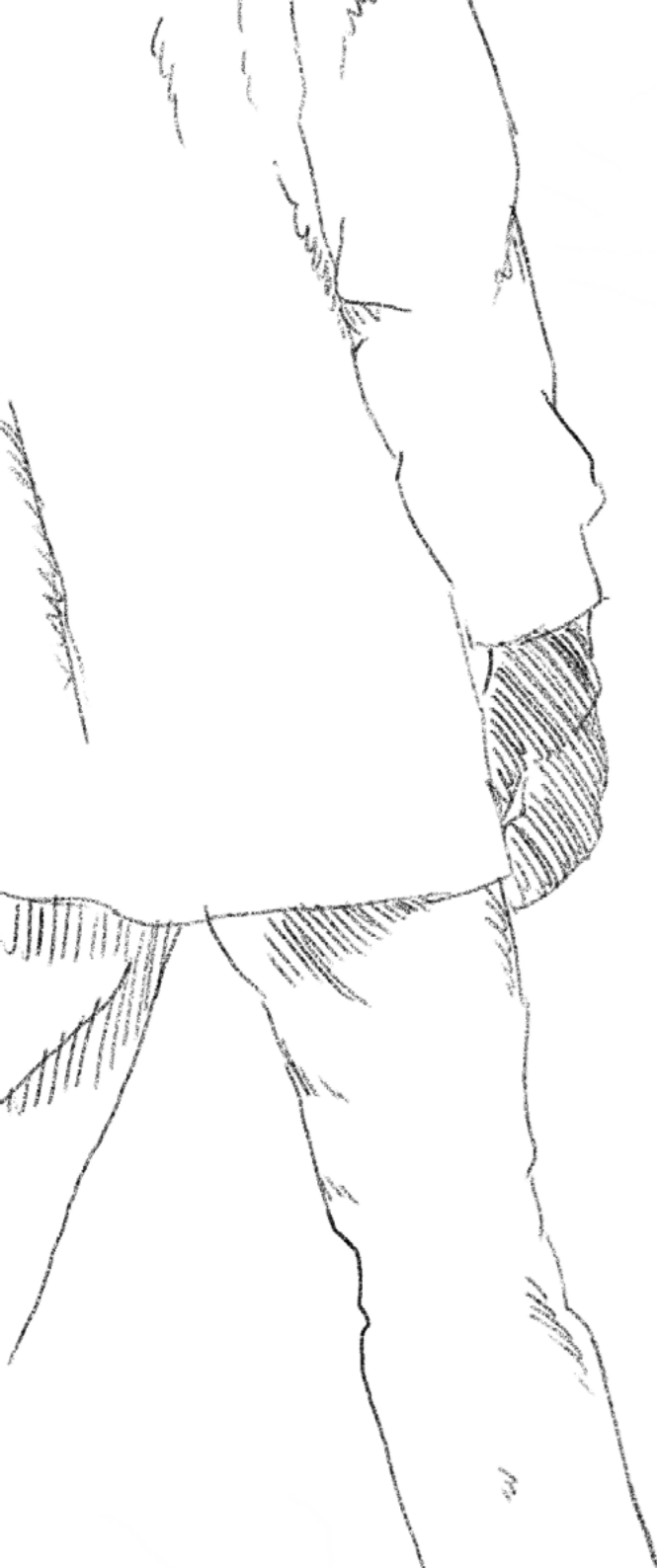




03. Relevant Visual Material  
a. Alexandre's drawings

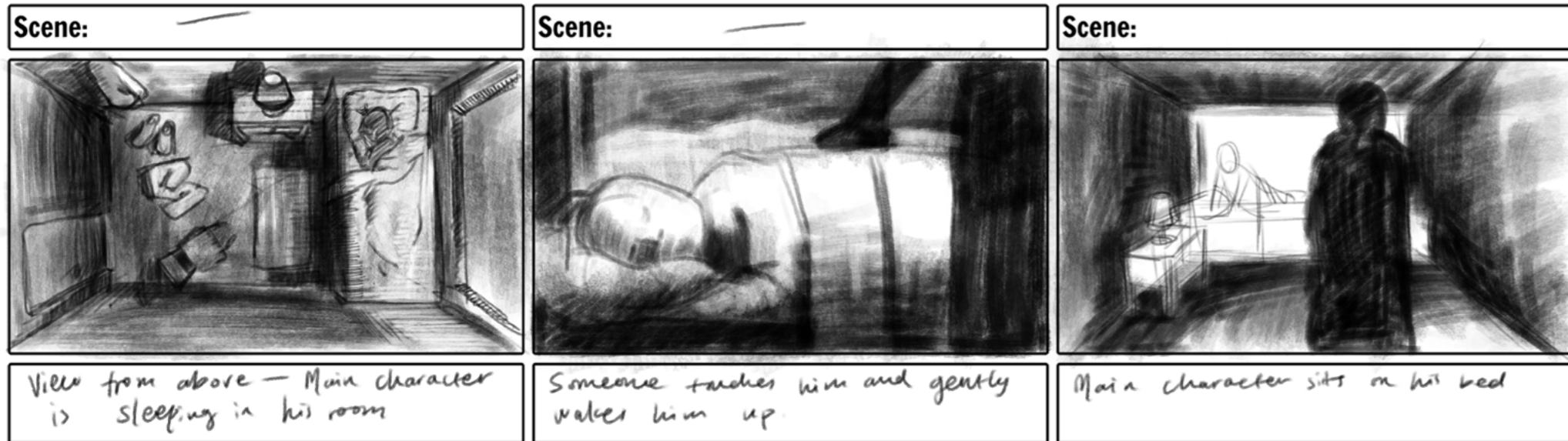






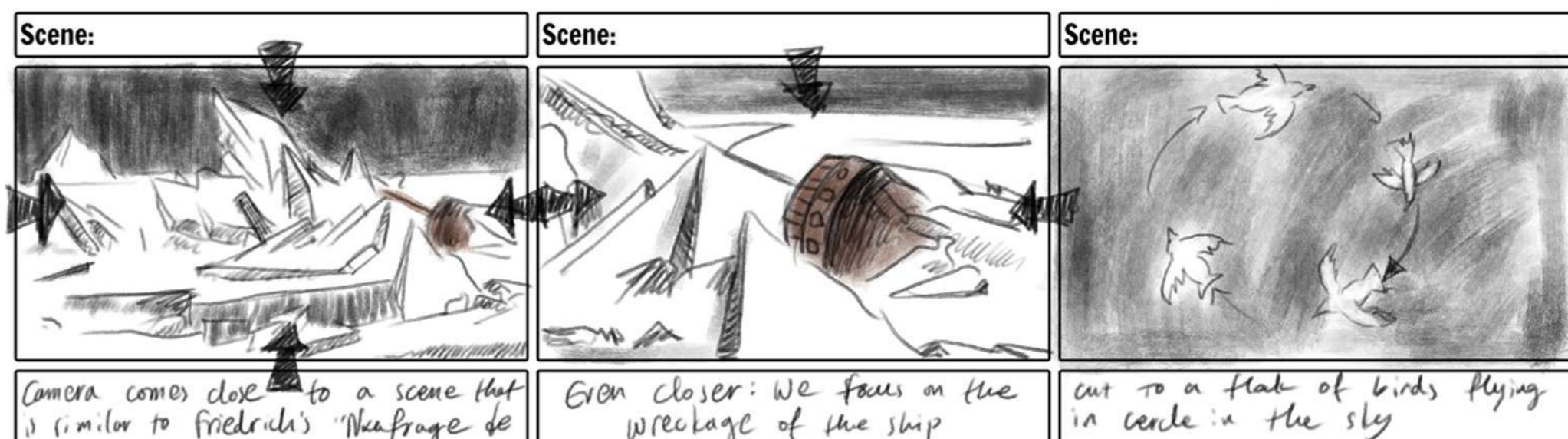
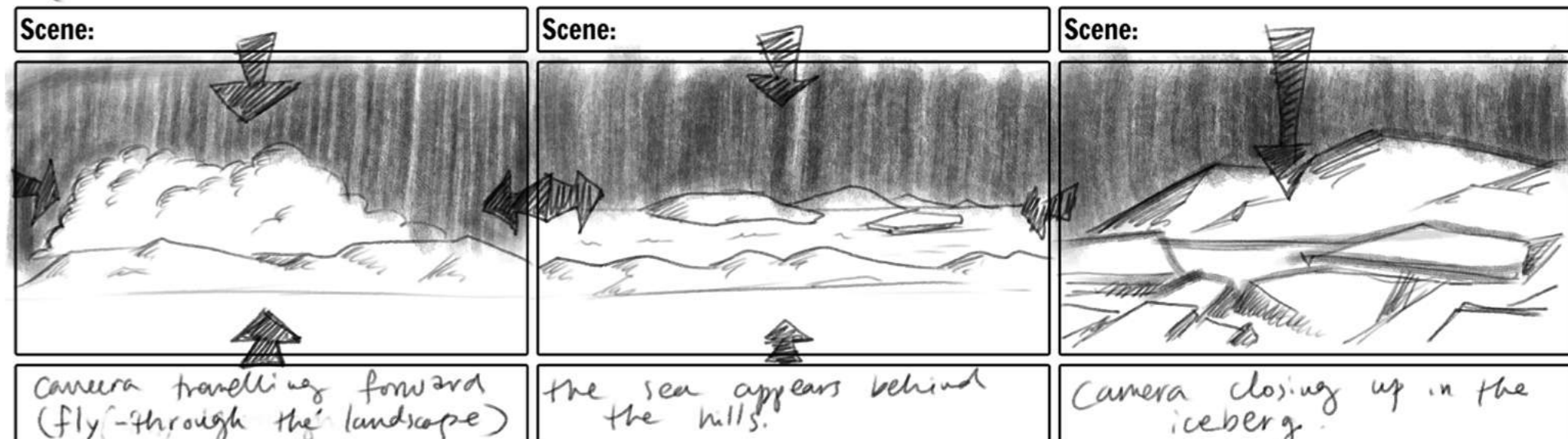
b. Concept drawings and storyboard samples

Storyboard for the "Polar Bear" scene:  
 Where Alexandre narrates a dream he had of a polar bear waking him up and having a drink with him. This happened after a halloween party during which one of his coworkers was dressed-up as a polar bear.



Storyboard for the "Omnipresence of death" scene:  
 Where Alexandre talks about death being very visible in Antarctica - from penguins drifting off, failing to follow the group and eventually dying, to helicopter accidents happening quite often.

ALL-PRESENT  
 talks about death being very present in Antarctica)



Storyboard for the "Blade Runner" scene:  
 Where Alexadre talks about having seen Blade Runner during his stay in Antarctica and that he sees a parallel between his situation and the situation described by the character in the famous "Tears in the rain" monologue towards the end of the film

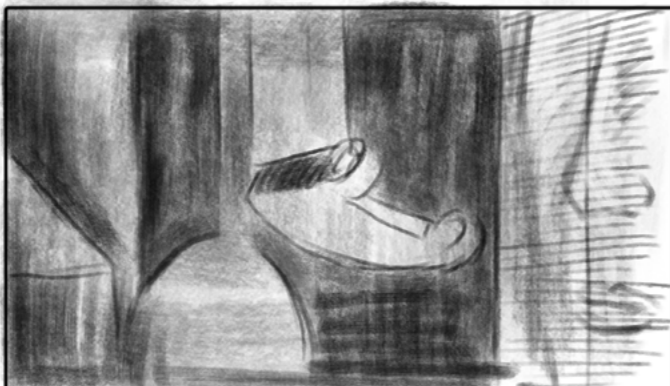
... on the film and the parallels he sees with his  
 ... the "Tears in the rain" speech.

Scene: (Rotoscope scene of the film)



"I rewatched Blade Runner. In the movie there are these biological machines, manufactured by a corporation and sent to space in order to colonise other planets."

Scene: (Rotoscope scene of the film)



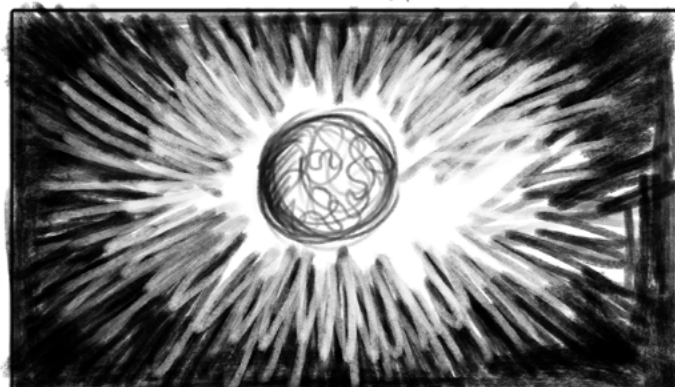
"Some of those robots are technicians, some of them, I think, are prostitutes. They sell their bodies or their work force."

Scene: (Rotoscope scene of the film)



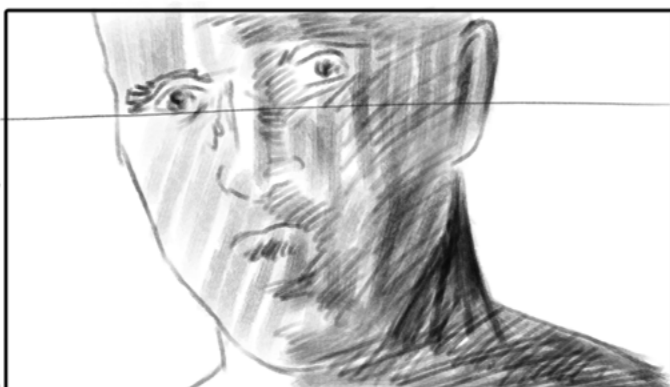
"I was thinking about that scene in the end of the film"

Scene: Exploding star in reference to the content of the speech (CGI)



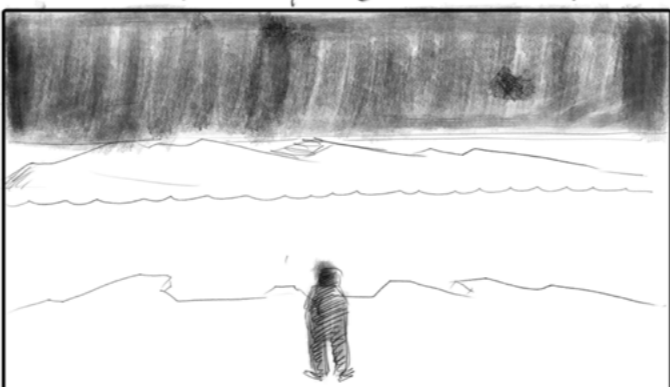
"Where the character, one of these machines, just before he dies, explains that he saw extraordinary things."

Scene: Rotoscope scene of the film



"I don't know why I keep thinking about that scene. I think I see myself in his place - there is a parallel between my situation in Antarctica and his."

Scene: Alex standing in the middle of a landscape (Traditional 2D)



"In the end, the cost of being able to witness all these things is a physical decay. I think of that a lot. How long will I be able to do what I do?"

