



Foreword

The two day event in May 2011 provided another focal point for the ongoing MEX mobile user experience initiative. The agenda continued the exploration of the existing Pathways #1, 2 and 4, while introducing the new Pathways #7, 8 and 9.

The event thrived on the diverse knowledge and creativity of the group, with participation from both long-standing MEX community members and those joining for the first time. This was the 9th MEX, but once again we were surprised and delighted to see just how many new ideas can be generated when the participants bring such a varied set of skills: engineering, strategy, research and multiple design disciplines, from the visual to the audible.

Most importantly of all, **everyone** played a role in crafting a response to the Pathways, from the speakers and team leaders to the Brunel designers and sponsors.

We have endeavoured to summarise the collective response in this document with two purposes in mind: firstly, to commit the May 2011 discoveries to record; secondly, to encourage exploration and further progress in each of the Pathways.

The MEX initiative continues throughout the year on the blog at mobileuserexperience.com. The next MEX event is in London on 30th November - 1st December 2011. We hope you'll join us.

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Pathway #8

Inspire new forms of creative expression through mobile devices

Facilitator: Mikko-Pekka Hanski

The provocation

1. How does ubiquitous access to new sensors such as touchscreens, gestural input and location tracking change the expression of human creativity?
2. What does artistic experimentation at the boundaries of digital technology teach us about mainstream user experience requirements of the future?
3. How does mass person-to-person communications facilitate new creative experiences through co-operative working?
4. Will person-to-person communications enriched with new channels, such as haptics, emerge as a new form of artistic expression in itself?
5. Are the text-based 'Status Updates' espoused by Facebook and Twitter the zenith of emotional expression or can human moods be better expressed?

The response: visual summary

spraying onto the photo/
light effects after photo taken

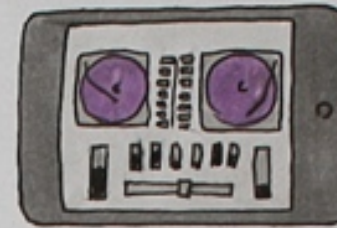


EXPRESSIVE COMMUNICATION

creating for
the masses.



The eureka moment
doesn't tend to
happen - it is
more of a develop-
ment of ideas.



A DJ App allows you to
be creative without spending
a lot of money/taking up a
lot of space.

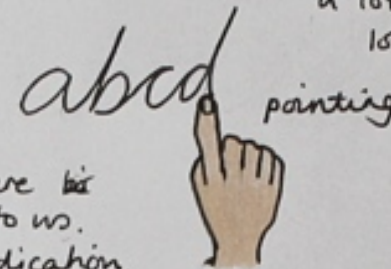
Artistic experiences

- If successful digitally
then buying the
'real' thing is
suitable/worth
it.



painting over
digital images
to enhance/
create.

Natural User
Interface - NUI



(Dealing with things that don't
have a display/screen)

- originality
- Fluency/Number of ideas
- Flexibility
- Elaboration

Accessories
also allow you
to be creative
in different
ways.

This gesture is
natural to us.
clear indication,
which reduces gaps.

Social Networking
Sharing
Content



uploading photos and
visual content to the
world wide web is now
easier than
ever.

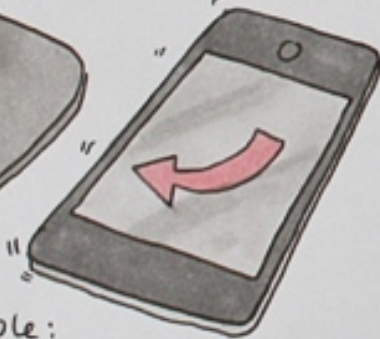


- Allowing people to
share their creations
with everyone online.

#8 INSPIRE NEW FORMS OF CREATIVE EXPRESSION THROUGH MOBILE DEVICES



Directional gestures...
Also for: Flash mobs,
dance routines.



Example:
Letting your mobile
device know that you
are looking for some
flowers and it gently
nudges you in the
right direction.
Prompting.

Digital Decay...



Image
Gallery.



What if...
everytime you
dropped/swiped/
scratched your
phone, the photos
in the image gallery
gradually decayed.
- much like photos
of loved ones in
a wallet - Telling
a story of its lifetime.

a digital copy
can still be
stored but you
will be able to
see the age/life
of an image.

The creative undo...



Accidental art
discoveries
← Night view.



← Daytime view



ghosting
of previous
work to create
new pieces.

← Then creates a
beautiful layered
dusk scene, mixing
the two images
together.

- Allows feedback/comments.
- Negative and positive allows
you to improve your
creations.

The response: insights

1. The embedded person-to-person communication capabilities of wireless devices make them ideal tools for new forms of creativity reliant on shared interactions between multiple people.
2. The proliferation of wireless devices is still being driven by their primary role as communications tools, but this is enabling new digital creative capabilities to filter into the mass market by stealth. Examples include capacitive touchscreens for digital painting, processors for music creation and cameras for digital photography and video. Users can experience new forms of creativity first through the generic capabilities of their mobile devices and are then more likely to buy specialist tools if they decide to pursue an activity further.

3. New sensors are facilitating new forms of creative expression, including ambient light detectors, dual microphones, gyroscopes, digital compasses, GPS, thermometers and capacitive touchscreens and other surfaces. Once included in a device, developers often find additional uses for sensors beyond the manufacturer's original intentions.
4. Mobile devices allow creative activities to happen closer to the user's source of inspiration, simply by virtue of the fact they are almost always nearby. Users can create a digital painting when they come across a beautiful landscape or record their dreams when they wake up because their mobile device is always within reach.

5. Creativity is innate. Interfaces which feel most natural and similar to the physical interactions we already have with other humans are most likely to facilitate creative experiences on digital devices. Haptics adds tactility, an essential element for natural interfaces.
6. New forms of creativity can bring users closer to the old and familiar. For instance, input from motion sensors could be used to ‘age’ digital photographs in the same way a favourite photo in a wallet would develop a patina over time.

7. The potential for new forms of creativity is limited by people's tendency to categorise experiences according to their stage in life. Douglas Adams said: "Everything that's already in the world when you're born is just normal; anything that gets invented between then and before you turn thirty is incredibly exciting and creative and with any luck you can make a career out of it; anything that gets invented after you're thirty is against the natural order of things and the beginning of the end of civilisation as we know it, until it's been around for about ten years, when it gradually turns out to be alright really."

8. Creativity is deeply personal. 10 people in the same room, equipped with the same tools and asked to draw the same thing will all produce different results.
9. If you're trying to encourage users to experiment with new forms of creativity, remember three rules: make it easy to find, simple to use and fun.

Follow-up: questions to consider

1. Mobile devices, by virtue of their ubiquity, are ideal for capturing spontaneous creativity. How will users respond to having digital creative tools with them at all times? What new forms of creativity will emerge, driven by ubiquity and immediacy?
2. How might creative tools be re-built with networked communications at their heart? Will creativity evolve from a primarily solitary endeavour to become an inherently collaborative act?
3. How can the industry accelerate creative experimentation with mobile devices? Which form factors, software platforms and accessories are best suited to promoting mobile devices as creative tools?

The challenge: stimulus materials

Challenge

Propose how the mobile industry can build better tools for creative expression. This is an exercise about imagining the 'paint brushes of the future'.

Expectation

Show a series of illustrated proposals for improving the experience of mobile devices and wireless networks to enable creativity.

Share examples of the art created by the group during their exploration.

Prepare

The basics of mobile creativity, getting to know your team and finding your statement.

Explore

Explore the gadgets and apps; create sketches or models of your possible art piece.

Create

Create a piece of art expressing your idea with your selected tool. Sign it.

Analyze

Think how the exploration and creation revealed the opportunities and obstacles of mobile experience.
Define 5 recommendations for the industry.

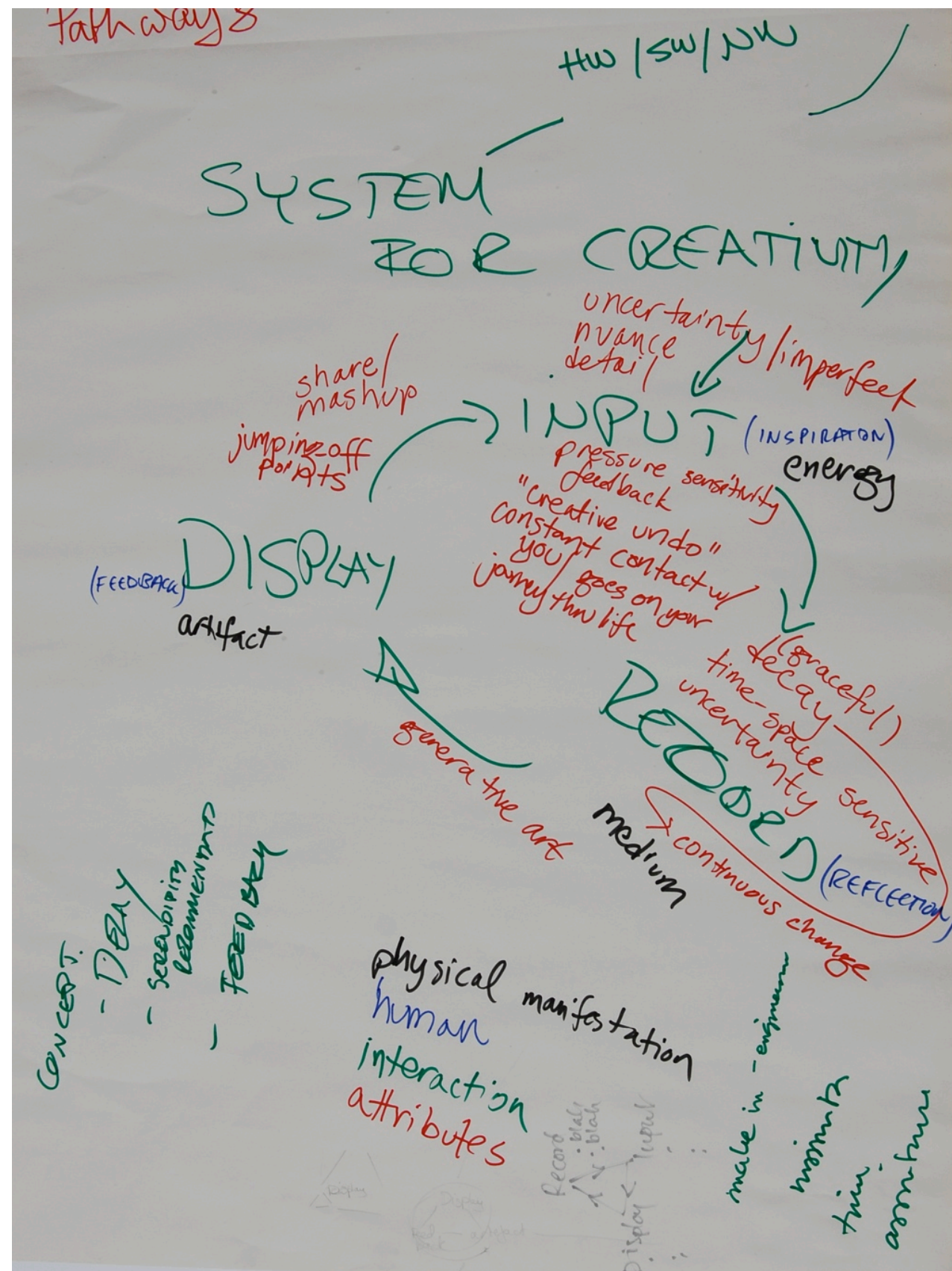
A few thoughts to get you started

1. Experiment with the supplied creative tools to understand forms of artistic expression enabled by new devices.
2. Consider usability problems with the existing tools, both within the specific applications and wider issues such as device form factors and connectivity.
3. Explore how some of the capabilities embedded within the devices could be subverted for creative purposes beyond their original intended use case.
4. Consider how the connected nature of mobile devices and wireless networks could make mass social communication an integral part of the creative experience.
5. Remember your task is to propose improvements to the paint box, not develop the finished canvas.

Tips to make the most of the Pathway

1. Collaborate and let your intuition guide the work.
2. There is no right or wrong answer to this Pathway. Don't pre-judge the outcome, instead let's see how our thinking evolves through the process.
3. Try things without fear within the time available.
4. Focus on the art piece you're creating.
5. Feel free to ask advice from the Brunel designers or your facilitator.
6. Remember you have 4 x 1 hour sessions to complete your challenge.

The challenge: team outputs



The team explored the process of 'creativity'

Micro-identity

Tracking in different cities

2 choices

- Login forever,
- No login at all

Need for a middle man

COMPROMISE
between the two

CHAOS
HAS TO BE CONTROLLED
IN OUR CURRENT
LIFESTYLES

it will always
comeback to
haunt you.



NEED TRANSPARENCY
BETWEEN THE
CORPORATIONS & US.

→ IT WOULD BE BENEFICIAL IF WE
COULD HAVE CLARITY ON THE INFORMATION THEY HAD.

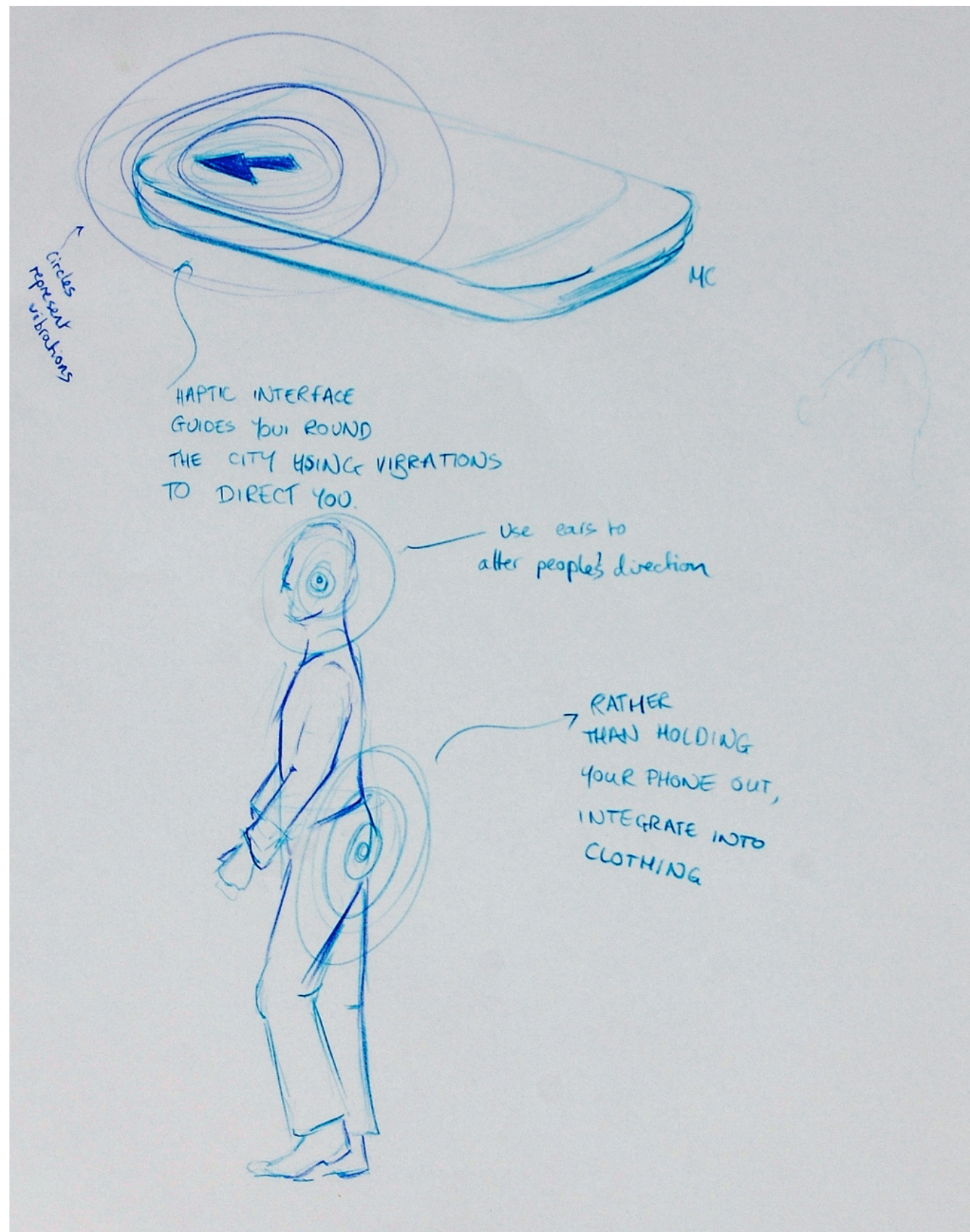
CATAG^{OR}ISATION OF
YOU WITHOUT AN
IDENTITY.

(re: phone tracking,
walking pace, speed
& motion)

DIGITAL FINGERPRINT
WE LEAVE ON OUR
PHONES.

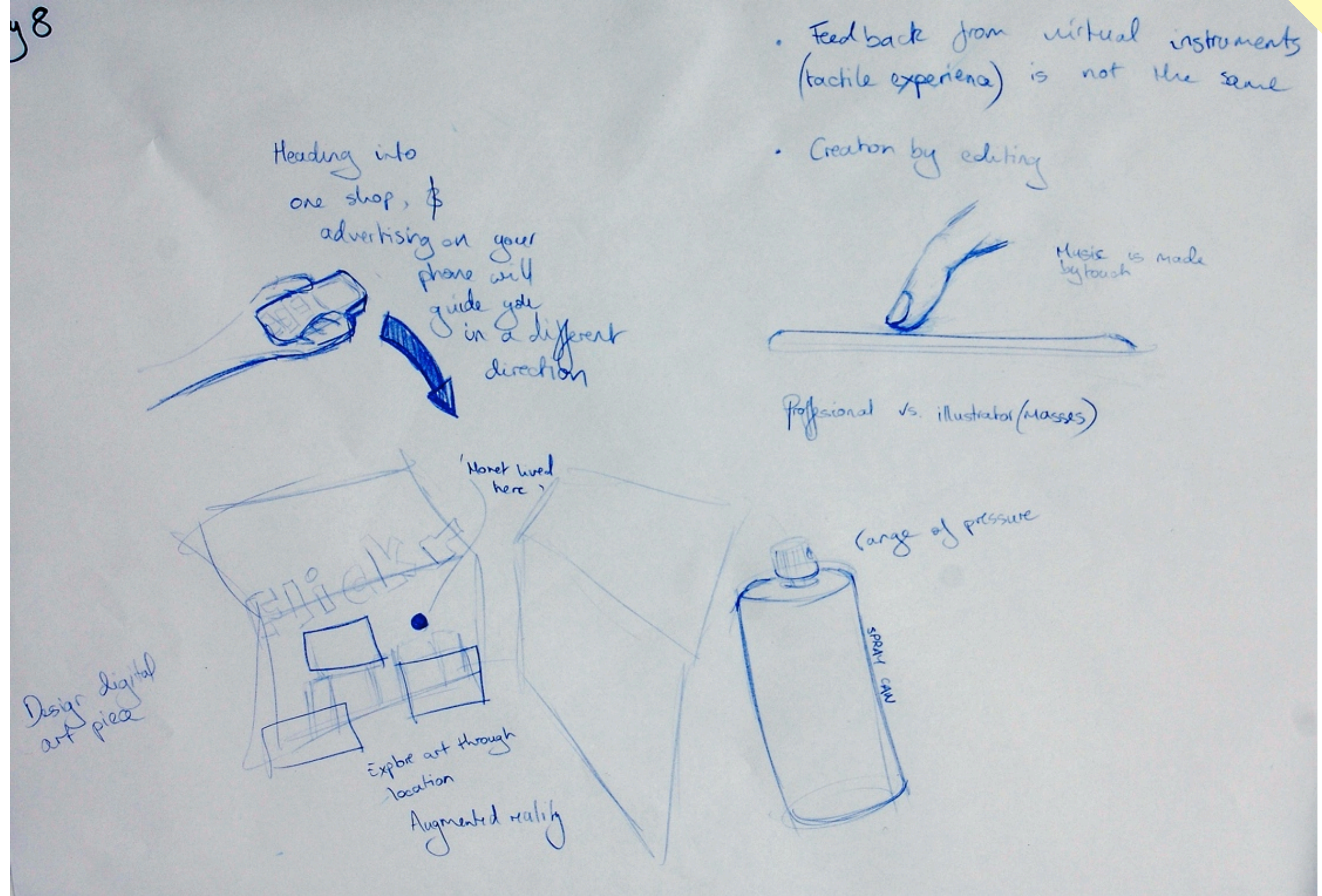
→ BUT COULD LEAD TO
LOSS OF EXPRESSIVE POWER
IN APPS IF USERS HAD MORE
CONTROL OF THEIR DATA.

→ WHO OWNS
THE RIGHTS TO
IMAGES OF OURSELVES
IS CONVOLUTED
& COMPLICATED

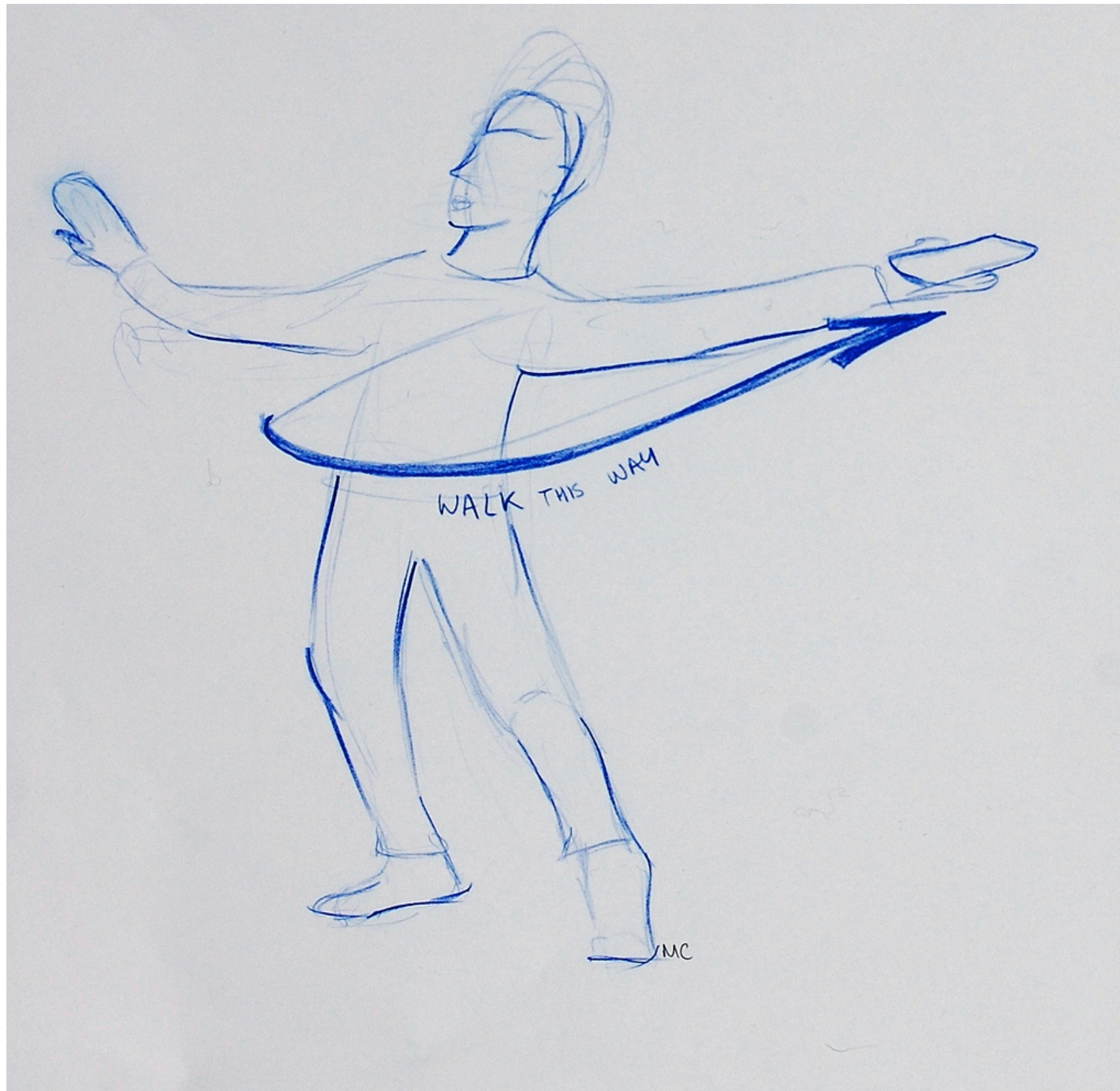


Early concept for how new sensors could drive creative expression

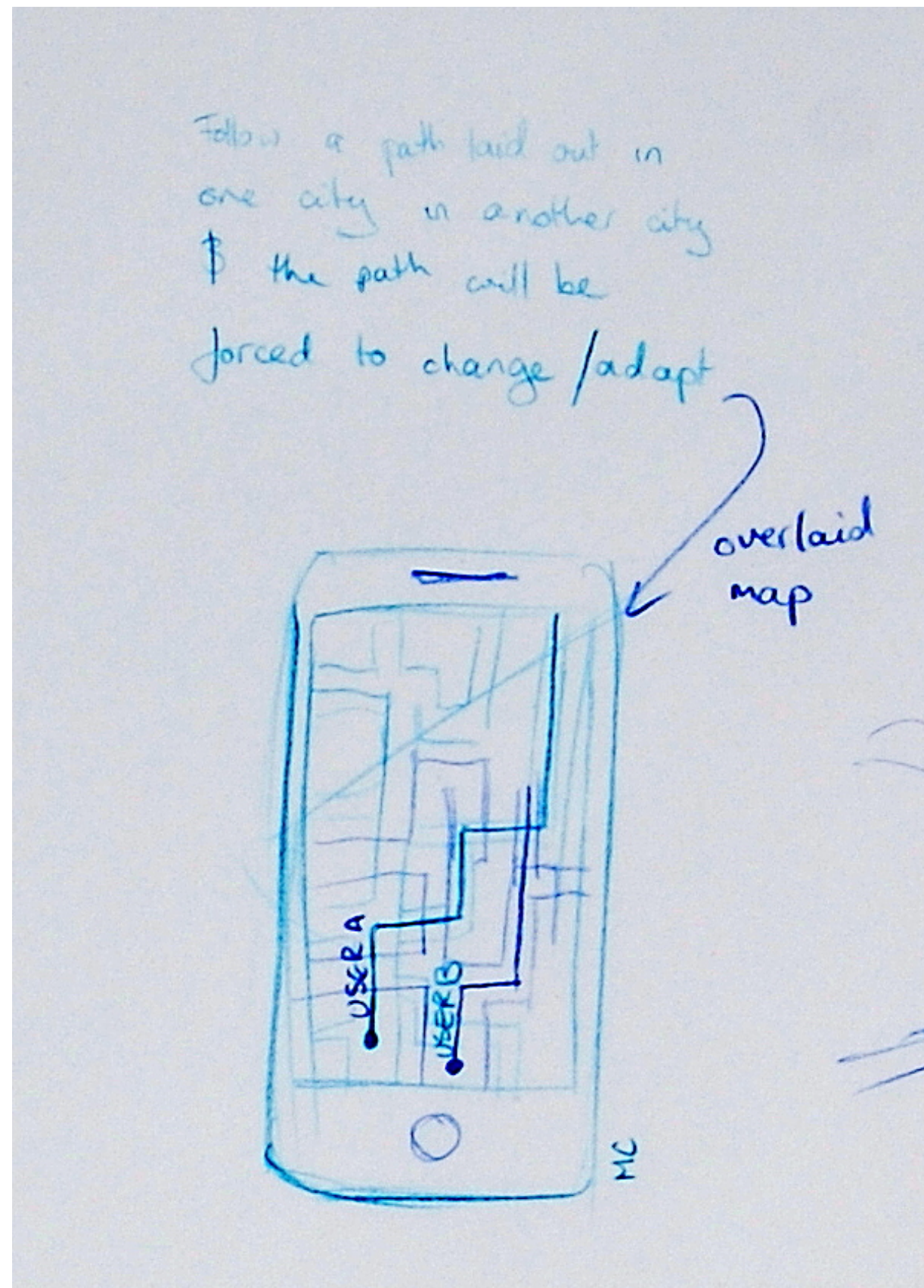
y8



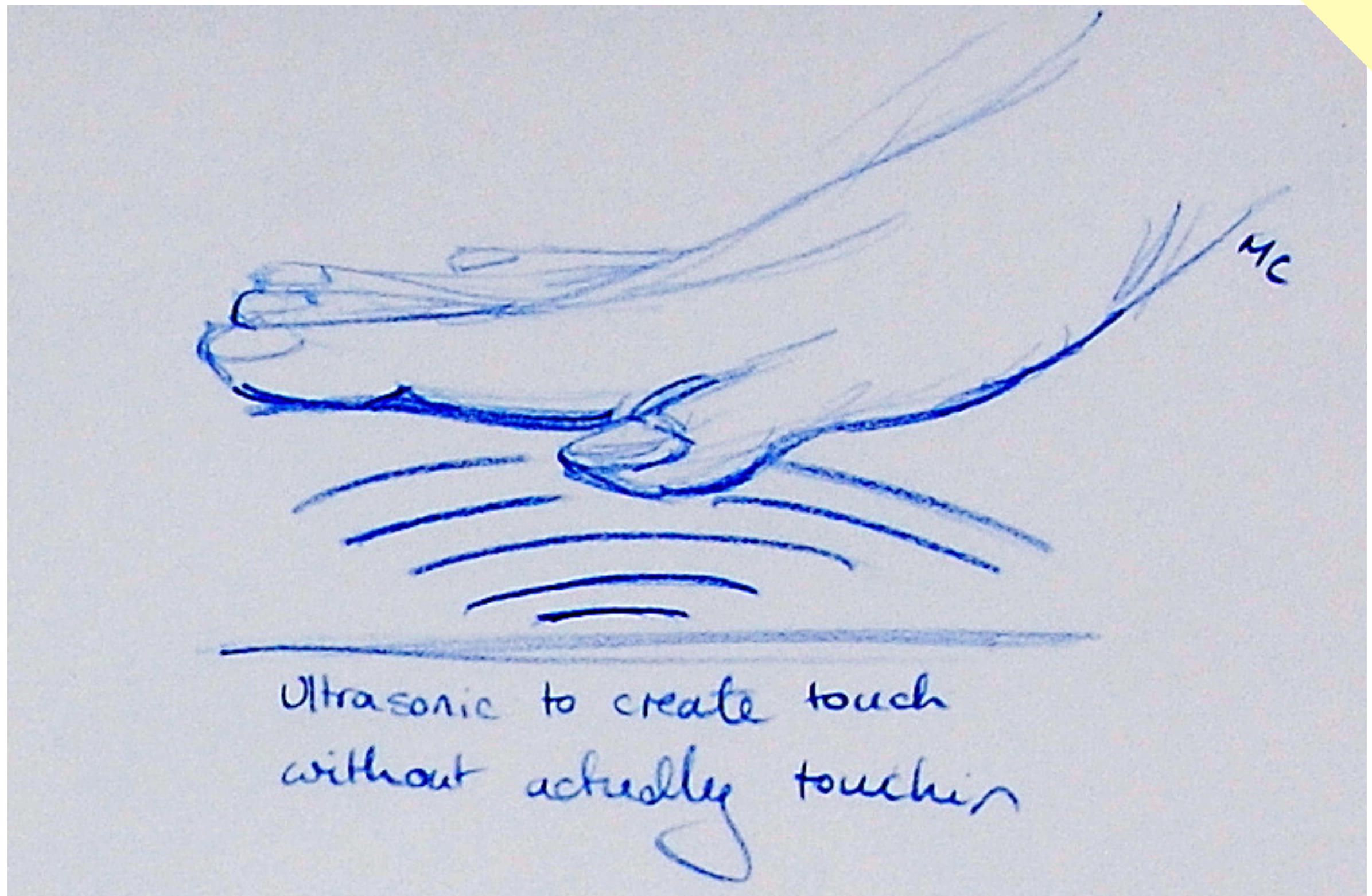
How might existing, physical artists tools be transposed into the virtual environment?



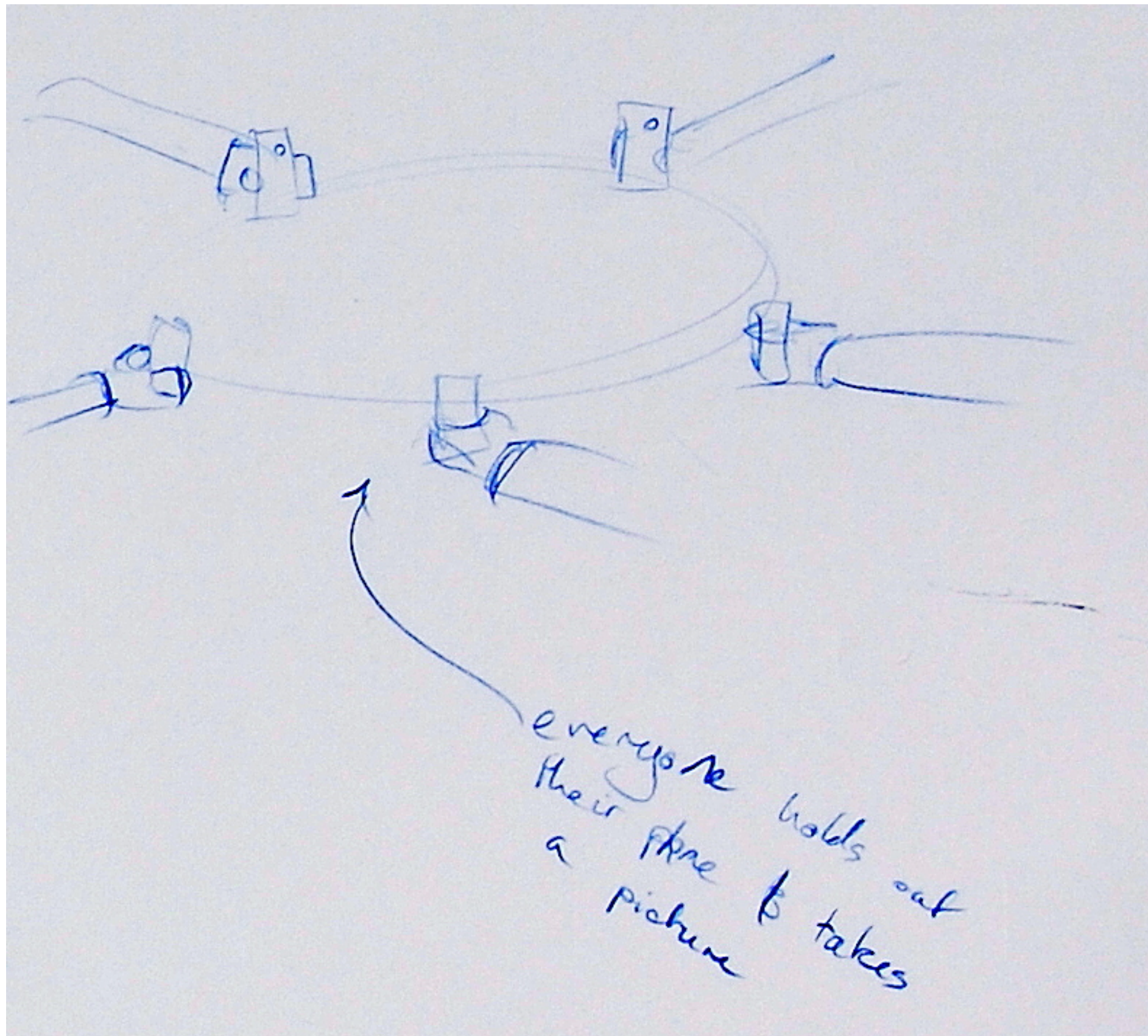
Early concept for a device which uses motion to talk back to the user and guide them



The digital world guides the user through the physical environment. The inspiration comes from digital suggestion, rather than the typical 'user specified' navigation

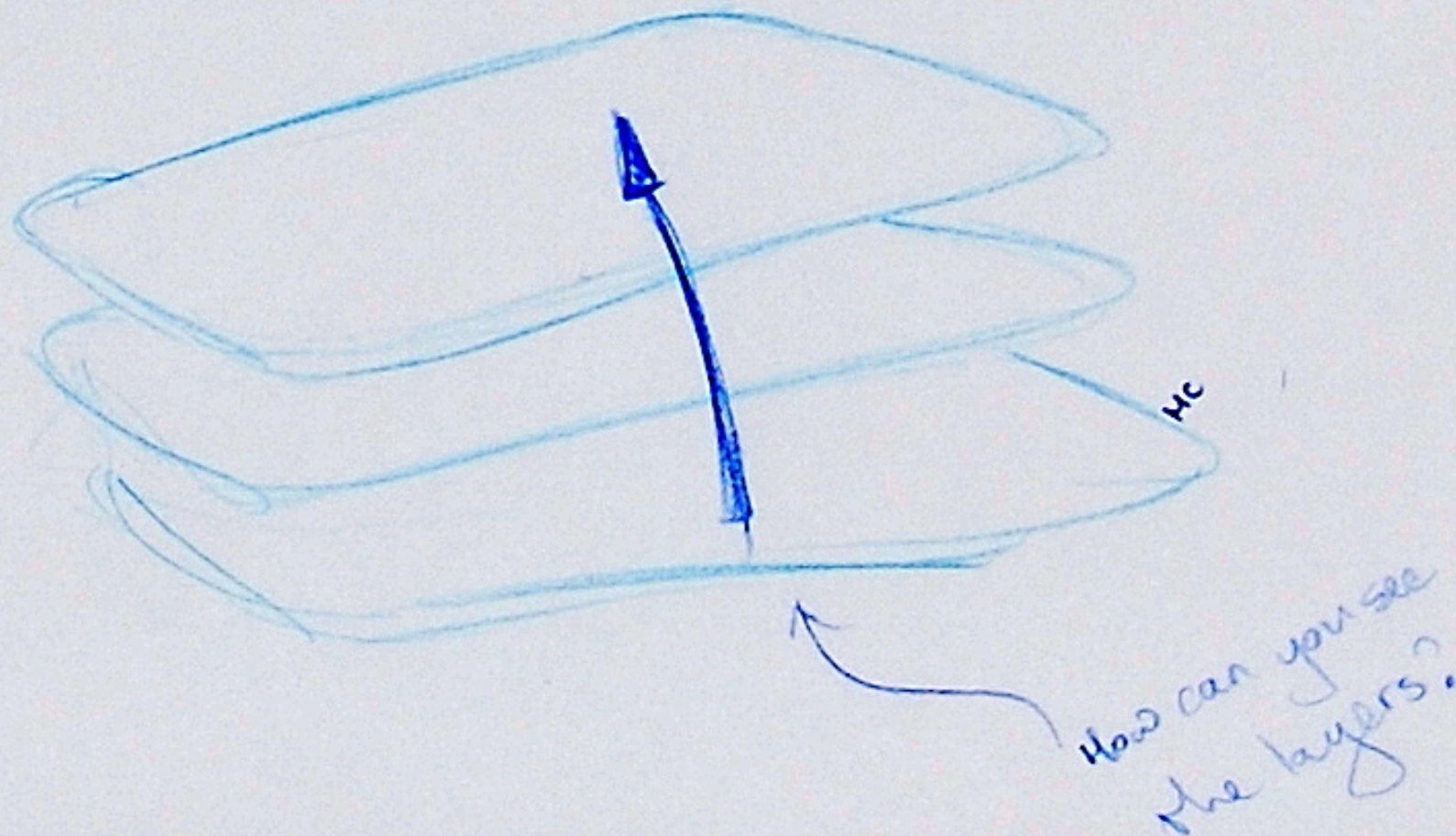


Exploring ways of giving creative feedback to the hand

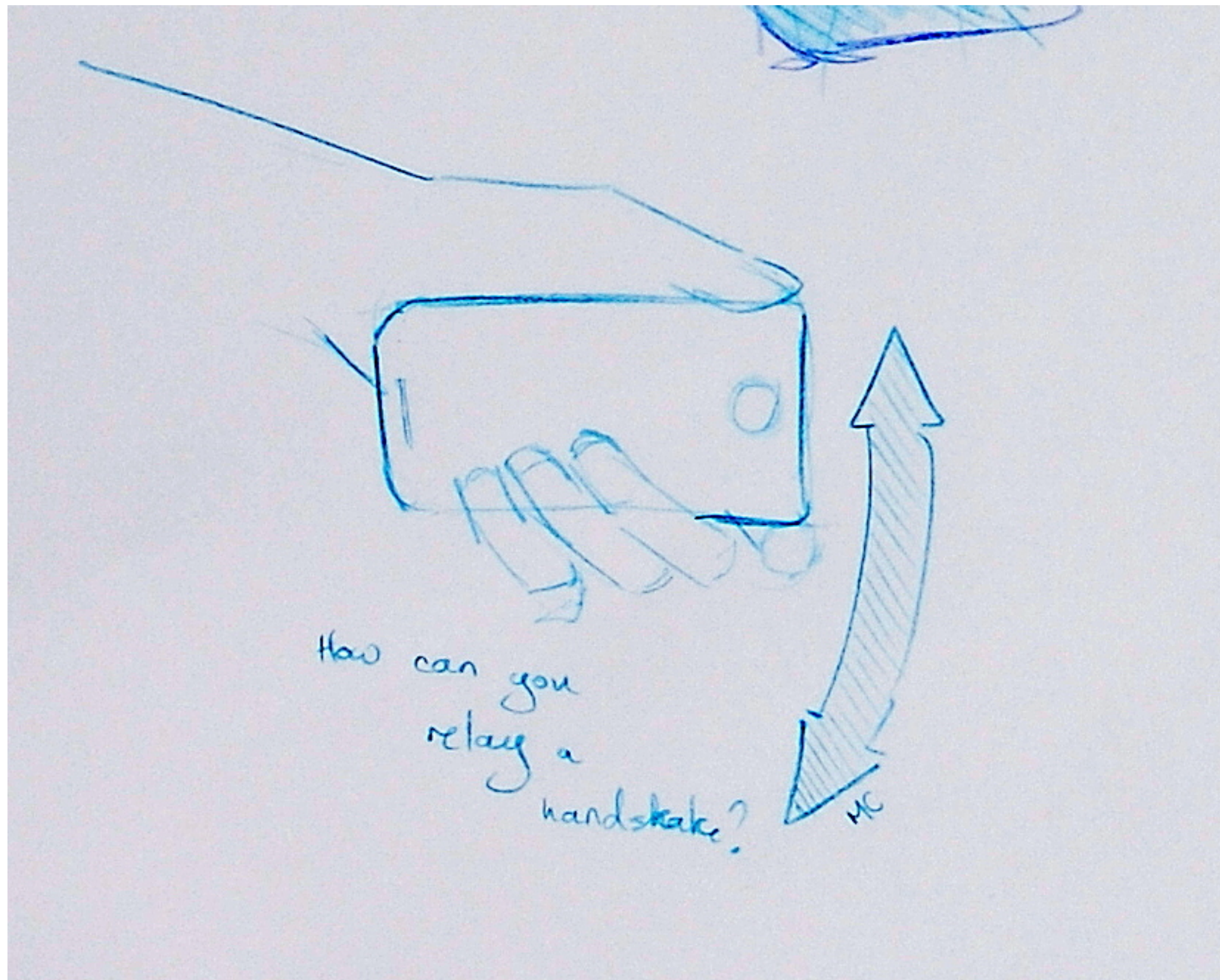


Ideas for how the inherent communications capabilities of mobile devices could allow them to be combined as networks of creative tools greater than the sum of their parts

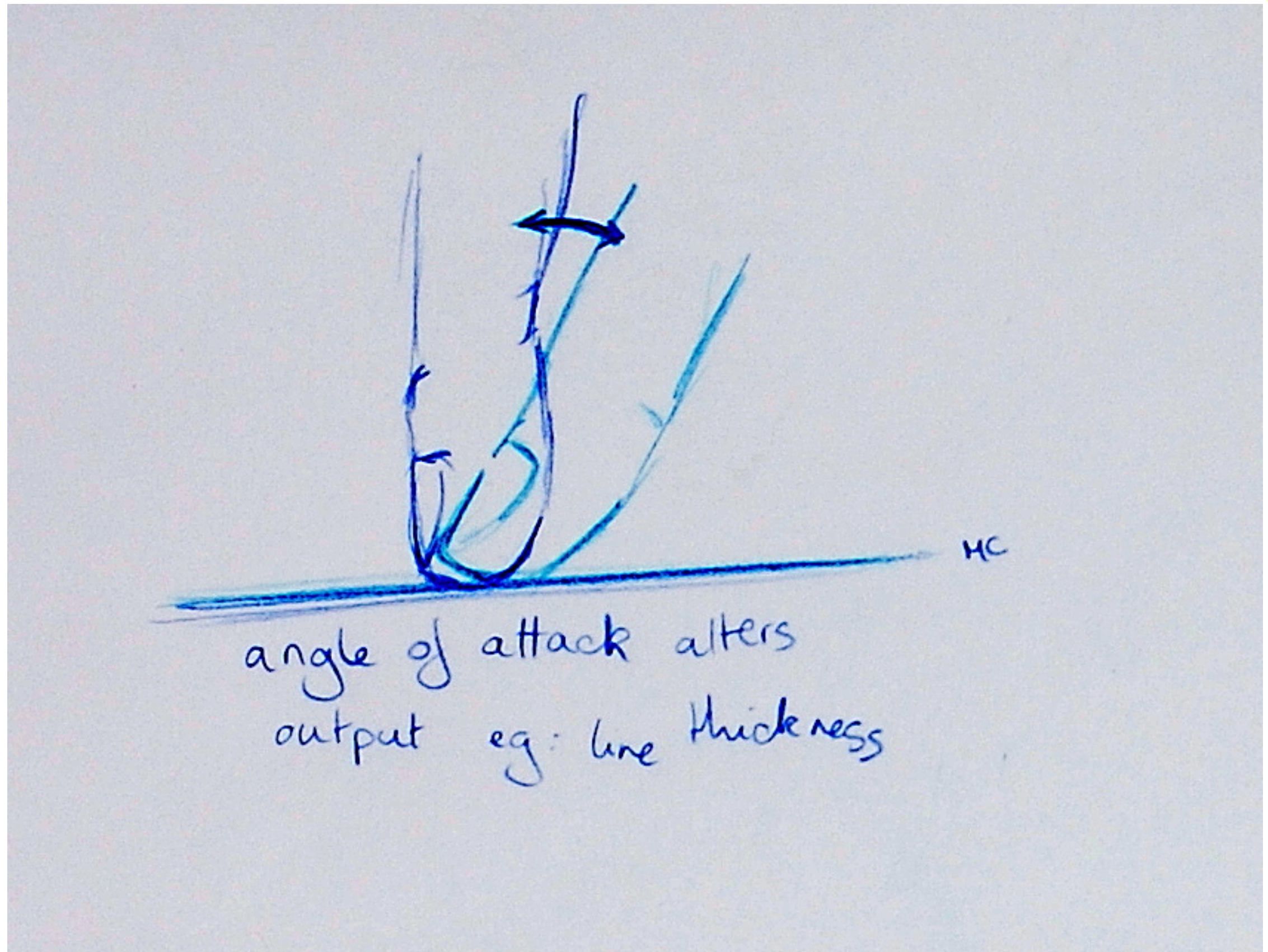
Got the latest \$ that's it
Photoshop & video editing
you can go back & see the
layers, but with phones you
can't.



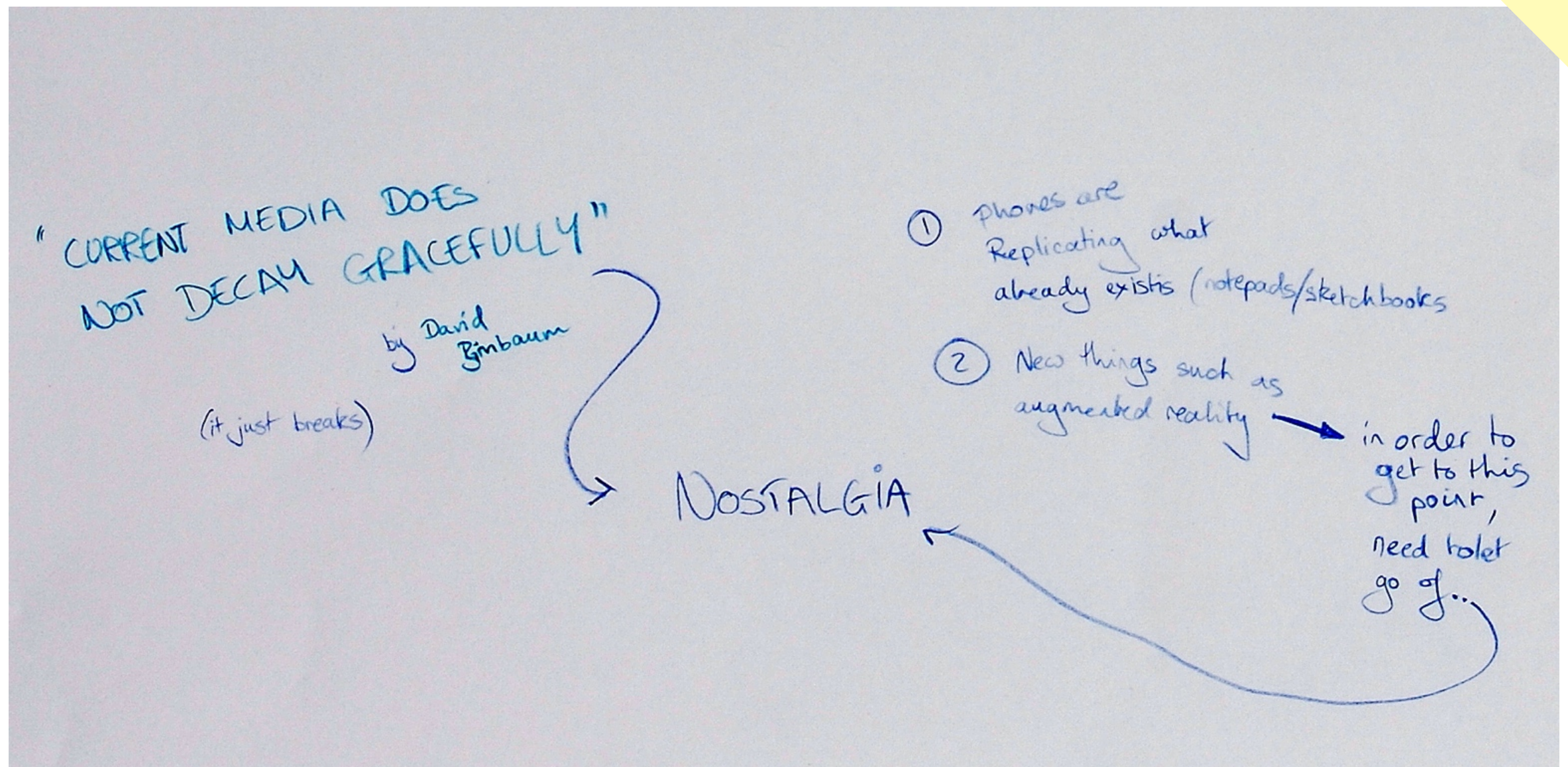
Could mobile devices capture additional layers of images?



Linking physical sensations and mobile devices



New types of touch gesture could translate into new types of digital output

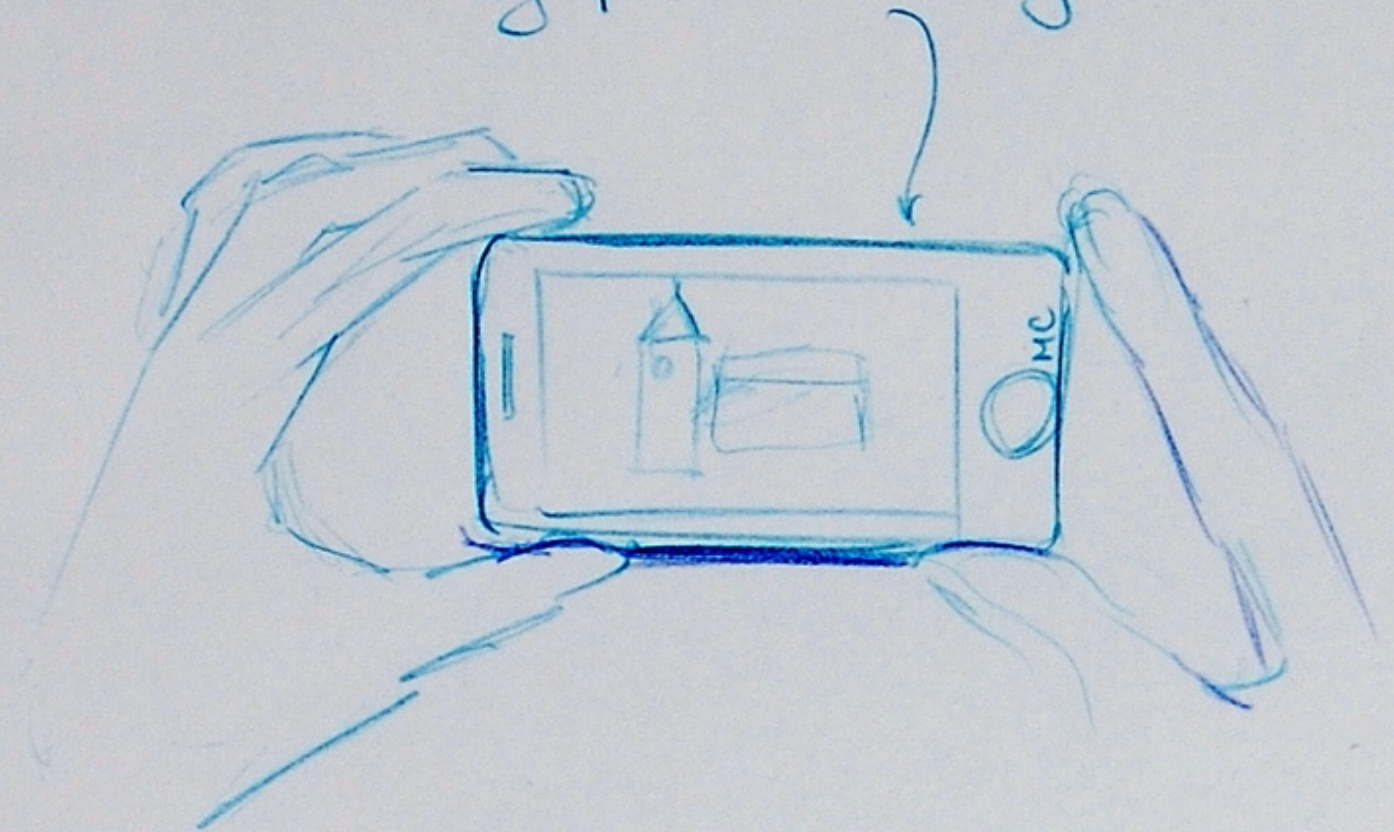


Exploring how the concepts of graceful decay, nostalgia and patina could be manifest in the digital environment



'Dog collar'
→ get a friend to walk
around you to take a 3D
pic of your head!

Camera gives you the
starting point, shows you
an aggregated image
of photos already taken,
∴ giving you the option to
try & take something new.



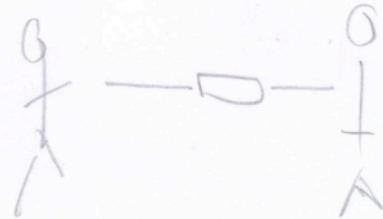
Scenario ①

Dance

controlled by phones (someone else)

act out

walk this way



② ~~AA~~ decay
photo 'interface'



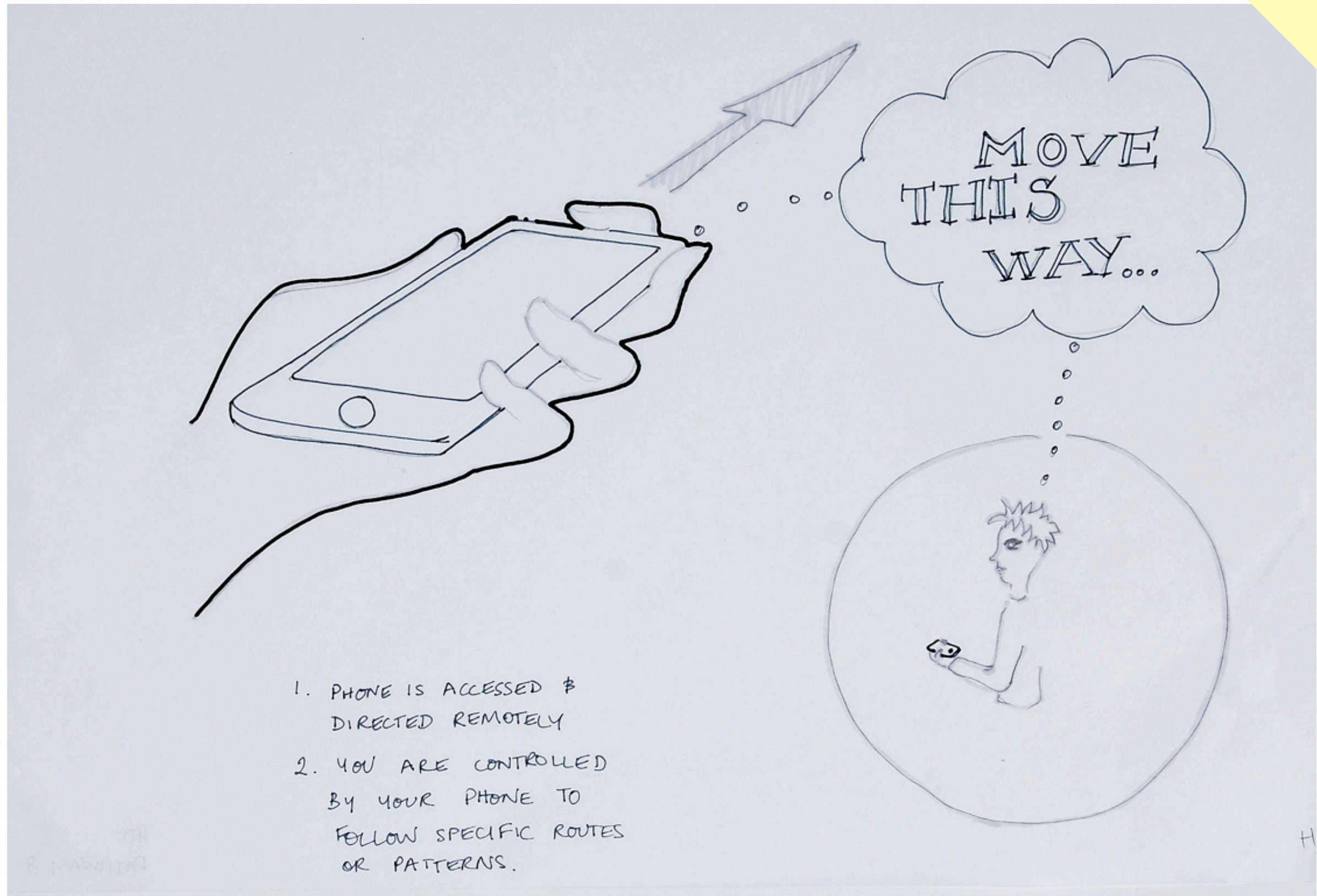
decay

③ photo
create undo

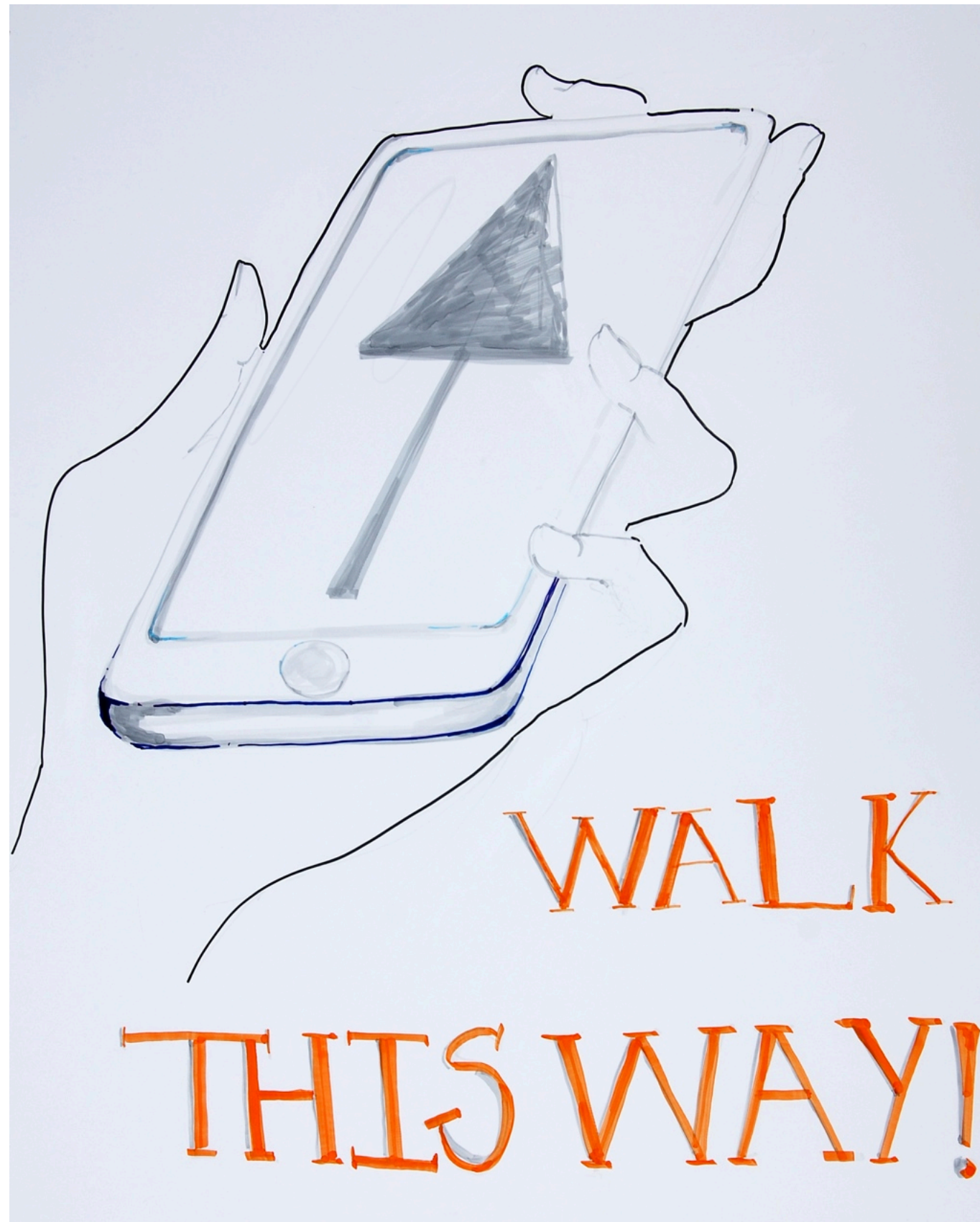
undo echo



How might the motion sensors of mobile devices be used to capture dance?



Final concept for 'Move this way', a phone which guides you by physically pushing your hand to encourage you to explore new, creative places



Brand concept for the service

WALK

~~THIS~~ MY

WAY.



Final concept for a service which uses the motion sensors of the phone to understand how often the phone is dropped and translate those data into a form of 'graceful decay', ageing your phone photos in the same way they would in your wallet



Service concept for a photo application which combines ‘ghost images’ and previously taken shots of the same scene to develop an overall layered image

The challenge: team summary video



[Click to play team summary video...](#)

Further reading

MEX Newsletter articles on Pathway #8