

Ares Awakening

a pseudohistorical visual piece for Plasmata

TREATMENT FOR ARES AWAKENING

Ares Awakening is a 10-minute looping 3D animation displayed on a 10m x 2.5m LED wall, strategically positioned amidst the trees in Pedion tou Areos, Athens. This pseudo-historical piece immerses viewers in a surreal, magical world, exploring the themes of confinement, imprisonment, and the isolation of minorities. Drawing on the philosophical ideas of Michel Foucault, Donna Haraway, and Gilles Deleuze, the work interrogates the structures of power and freedom, whilst also alluding to the park's historical association with the dictatorship of Ioannis Metaxas.

The physical installation is augmented by a bronze sign, inscribed in archaic Greek in the style of Metaxas' time, which serves as a cryptic warning: "*Do not open the door again—what lies beneath must remain sealed forever.*" A faux underground hole next to the sign further embeds the narrative, suggesting the creatures' origin in a hidden, dark space beneath the earth. Together, these elements bridge the divide between the digital and the physical, encouraging viewers to reflect on the complex layers of history and identity embedded in this public park.

context

The story unfolds in three acts, beginning with the escape of smaller creatures and building to a powerful, introspective climax. Set in a world suffused with blue fog, the creatures slowly make their way from right to left, emerging from an underground laboratory. The sequence is carefully crafted to evoke a sense of tension, the creatures' flight from confinement paralleling broader themes of control and resistance.

Act I

the small & the many

Act II

escalation & complexity

Act III

goat – us

narrative
OVERVIEW

Act I

the small & the many

The animation opens with a series of small, luminous creatures—fireflies, glowing bacteria—escaping from the depths of the underground prison. These ethereal beings flit erratically across the screen, their glow soft yet disorienting. Their movement, chaotic and unfixed, serves to symbolise the beginning of a gradual and uncontrolled liberation.



narrative
overview



Act II

escalation & complexity

As the video progresses, larger creatures begin to emerge: goats with two heads, glowing tentacles sprouting from their backs, and pigs whose bodies shimmer with an iridescent, almost spectral quality. These animals move with greater purpose but are occasionally interrupted by the faint sound of military marches from the park's historical past.

Marching Formations: The creatures respond instinctively to the sound of the marches, forming brief, eerie processions that mimic the oppressive regimentation of the past. These formations dissipate quickly, and the creatures return to their chaotic, disordered movements.

Rising Complexity: The scene becomes increasingly complex as the creatures overlap, moving in and out of each other's paths, creating a dense, interwoven tapestry of motion. This layered approach mirrors the growing tension in the narrative, as the creatures' movements reflect both their individual desires for freedom and their collective struggle for autonomy.

narrative
overview



Act III

goat – us

The climax introduces an oversized goat, its features unsettlingly human-like. Wearing a pristine white porcelain mask, it stands in the centre of the frame, surrounded by the other creatures. Its gaze, both fixed and unblinking, seems to challenge the viewer, a silent yet potent communication of responsibility and consequence.

The goat's mask is subtly cracked, with faint glimmers of light spilling from its fissures, symbolising fragility within its imposing presence. The creature remains motionless for a long, contemplative moment, as though attempting to convey a deeper understanding of the events that have unfolded.

After this period of intense silence, the goat slowly turns away, and the loop begins anew, leaving the audience with a lingering sense of unresolved meaning.

narrative
overview



Creature Forms in Ares Awakening

The creatures of Ares Awakening are inspired by the magical worlds of Studio Ghibli as well as the pseudo-biological research of Aias Kokkalis on multi-species assemblages, drawing on both organic and surreal elements to create a unique visual language. Each creature is categorised according to its anatomical, aesthetic, and movement characteristics, contributing to the overall atmosphere of freedom, chaos, and magic that permeates the piece.

1. Ethereal Swarm Creatures
2. Translucent Flow Creatures
3. Hybrid Animal Forms
4. Majestic & Over-sized Creatures
5. Apparitional, Ghostly Entities



1 Ethereal Swarm Creatures

Anomalous, luminous beings that float freely in the environment.

Anatomy: These creatures have no fixed, stable form. Instead, they exist as glowing particles or fluid-like shapes, resembling fireflies or abstract swarms of microscopic organisms.

Appearance: Their glow fluctuates, with some glowing brightly and others fading in and out of sight, creating an ephemeral quality.

Movement: The creatures move erratically, darting in random patterns, often clustering and dispersing in response to environmental changes, giving them an air of spontaneous freedom.

creature
forms



2 Translucent Flow Creatures

Larger, semi-organic beings with fluid, gelatinous bodies.

Anatomy: These creatures have semi-transparent, gel-like bodies that allow internal glows to pulse through their forms. Their limbs or tentacles undulate like water or smoke.

Appearance: Semi-formed and constantly shifting, they resemble jellyfish or floating aquatic organisms, their soft skin shimmering in the mist.

Movement: Gliding slowly, these creatures move in elegant, fluid arcs, undulating with grace and synchrony. Their slow, controlled movements evoke a sense of calm amidst the chaos.

creature
forms



3 Hybrid Animal Forms

Creatures based on common Greek animals, transformed with fantastical and magical features.

Anatomy: These creatures are more defined, resembling real-world animals such as goats and pigs, yet enhanced with supernatural elements. For instance, a goat with two heads and glowing tentacles, or a pig with ethereal, swirling fur.

Appearance: Their bodies are adorned with glowing patterns or otherworldly features, such as tentacles that move independently or glowing eyes that pulse in rhythm with their movements.

Movement: These creatures move with intent and purpose, their steps deliberate but occasionally unpredictable. The goats may charge in sync, their two heads swaying in tandem, while the pigs might stagger, their bodies rippling like fluid in motion.



4 Majestic & Oversized Creatures

Large, commanding beings that are both awe-inspiring and intimidating.

Anatomy: Towering and immense, these creatures possess complex, almost machine-like forms, yet remain biological in nature. The oversized goat, with its human-like porcelain mask, is the epitome of this category.

Appearance: Detailed and intricate, these creatures carry a presence of ancient wisdom. Their bodies may feature ornate symbols or patterns, glowing faintly from within, and their sheer size dwarfs the other creatures.

Movement: Slow and deliberate, these creatures' movements are heavy, each step resonating through the environment. Their presence alters the atmosphere, disturbing the fog and shifting the air around them.



5 Apparitional, Ghostly Entities

Ethereal, fleeting creatures that blend into their environment.

Anatomy: These creatures are barely formed, existing as vapours or half-transparent outlines of animals. They seem to be partially consumed by the fog, their features indistinct.

Appearance: Flickering in and out of view, these spectral forms are often perceived as mere shadows or brief flashes of light, haunting the space between visibility and invisibility.

Movement: Their movement is disjointed and ghostly, as if they are constantly shifting, flickering between forms and dimensions. They pass through the environment like whispers or smoke, leaving no lasting trace but disturbing the stillness of the fog.



TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Display

The animation will be projected on a high-quality 10m wide by 2.5m tall LED wall with as close to the ground as we can. The wall will be set within a park-like environment perhaps enhancing the bottom part of it with additional plantation, surrounded by trees to ensure that the work harmonises with the natural surroundings and encourages viewer engagement from different angles.

Resolution & Format

The 10 min looping animation will be rendered in 4:1 ratio and 3440x860 resolution and exported in Rec709 color space. The delivery format will be encoded in ProRes 422, DXV and H264 and encapsulated in Quicktime MOV format for specific uses by ONASSIS Stegi.

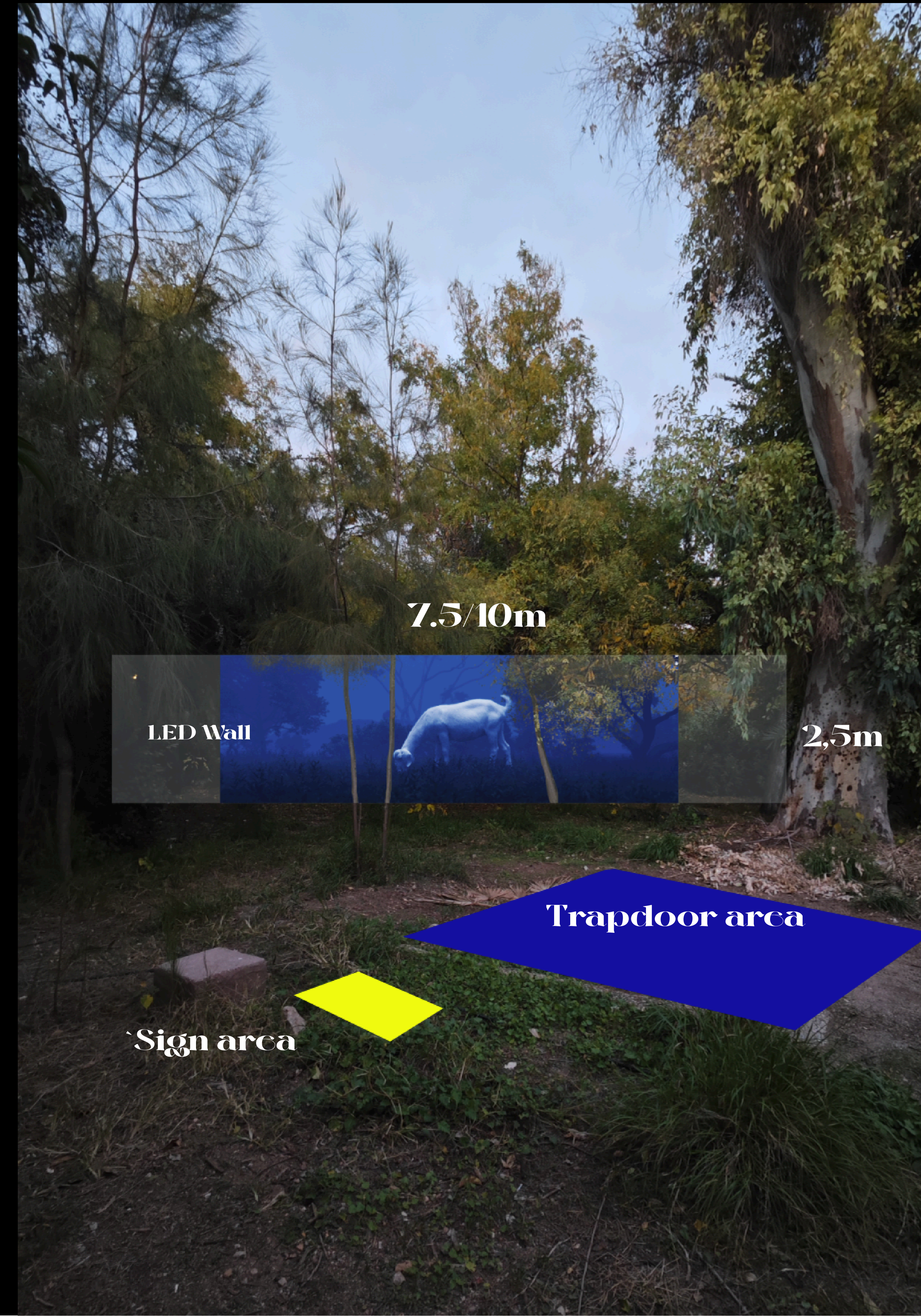
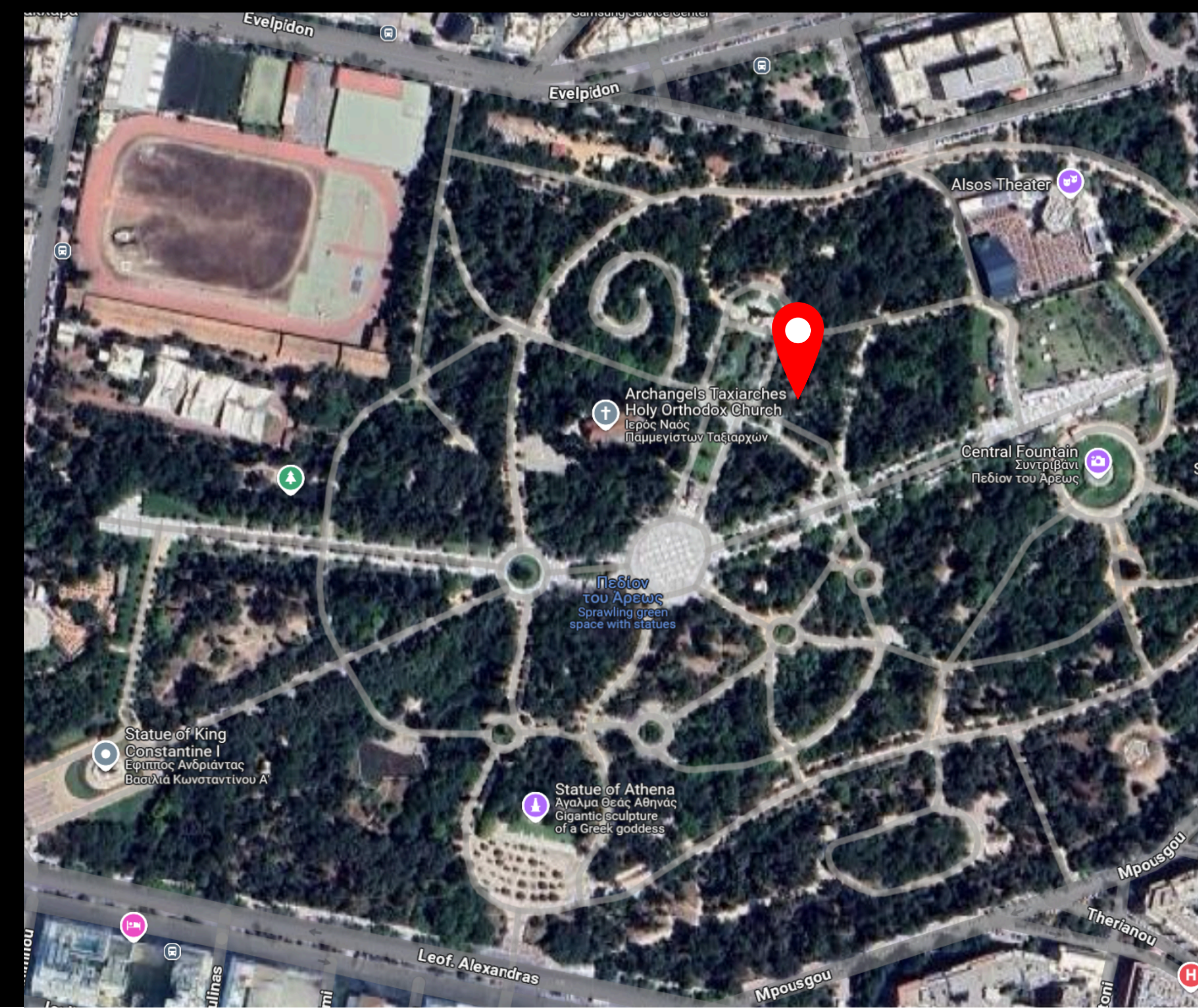
Lighting considerations

The environment will be designed with a heavy use of blue fog to create a mystical, dreamlike atmosphere. This effect will interact with the creatures, producing a sense of dynamic fluidity as the figures move through the mist. The colours and brightness of the animation will be adjusted to contrast with the natural light conditions of the park, ensuring that the visuals remain vibrant even during the evening hours when the installation is most active.

Trapdoor & Sign design

The physical part of the video installation constitutes of the construction of two physical items:

- 1) A fake trapdoor on the ground in front of the video wall in the form of metal grills carefully placed under soil and leaves with a subtle purple light coming from underneath.
- 2) A bronze sign on the ground next to the trapdoor, processed to resemble something that existed in the park since the time of Metaxas with the appropriate Greek idiomatic language as well as the typography of the era.



Audio Design

Sound Atmosphere:

The soundscape will consist of ambient environmental sounds mixed with eerie, dreamlike noises. The sounds of the creatures will be soft but varied—whispering winds, the crackle of glowing tentacles, the soft hum of ethereal wings—and they will seamlessly integrate with the background fog. This creates a sense of movement even in the stillness, encouraging the viewer to feel immersed in the world of the creatures.

Military Marches:

At certain moments in the animation, as the creatures form marching formations in response to distant military sounds, these marches will be faint but persistent in the audio. These sounds will be purposefully distorted, creating a surreal and haunting presence that both connects the piece to the park's historical context and reminds the viewer of the ever-present, oppressive force of the past.

Climactic Silence:

As the oversized goat with the porcelain mask appears, the sound will fade into an eerie silence, drawing focus to its slow movements. This absence of sound will build tension, creating a sense of weight and anticipation. When the goat slowly turns away, a subtle shift in the soundscape will return, signifying the end of the cycle and the beginning of the loop again.

Cost Analysis

DESCRIPTION	EST TIME	COST	
Services			
3D Modelling			
<i>modelling of all the creature species with anatomical considerations for animation, At least 3 species from each of the five categories</i>	3 Jan - 14 Feb	15.500€	<i>All costs have been calculated with a fixed 500E daily rate not including weekends, as per all my projects apart from rendering which has a lower cost due to its nature (renders have to be restarted in case of crashes or delegated to render farms to catch the deadline).</i>
Rigging, Animation, Grooming			
<i>create skeletal rigs for each creature and animate them according to the work's plot. Grooming (fur and hair design and simulation) for the creatures that boast furry parts.</i>	17 Feb - 28 Mar	15.000€	
			TOTAL COST 38.200€ + VAT
Environment design + Sound design in parallel			
<i>Vegetation and landscape design, Sound design can start now as all the animation is complete</i>	31 Mar - 11 Apr	5.000€	DELIVERY
			6 MAY
Rendering Compositing Delivery			
<i>Rendering the sequence, compositing all the layers and exports for all deliverables</i>	14 Apr - 5 May	2.500€	
Trapdoor & Bronze plate			
<i>Perhaps this could be done by the ONASSIS team, indicative cost as I haven't gotten offers for this.</i>	-	200€	

Conclusion

Ares Awakening is an immersive, transformative experience that combines a visually compelling narrative with an exploration of deeper philosophical themes. The creatures, inspired by nature and fantasy, embody the tension between captivity and liberation, control and chaos. Their ethereal, fluid movements evoke a sense of both mystery and wonder, drawing the viewer into a world where the boundaries between the real and the magical, the living and the imprisoned, are blurred.

The installation challenges viewers to reconsider the dynamics of power and freedom, inviting them to reflect on the relationship between history, identity, and the creatures—both human and non-human—that shape our world.

living forms
studio

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