

GLYNN VIVIAN

The Drawing Room: Kathryn Ashill and Theatre



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Kathryn Ashill: *Fool's Gold*. 2021. Video/Theatre set installation.

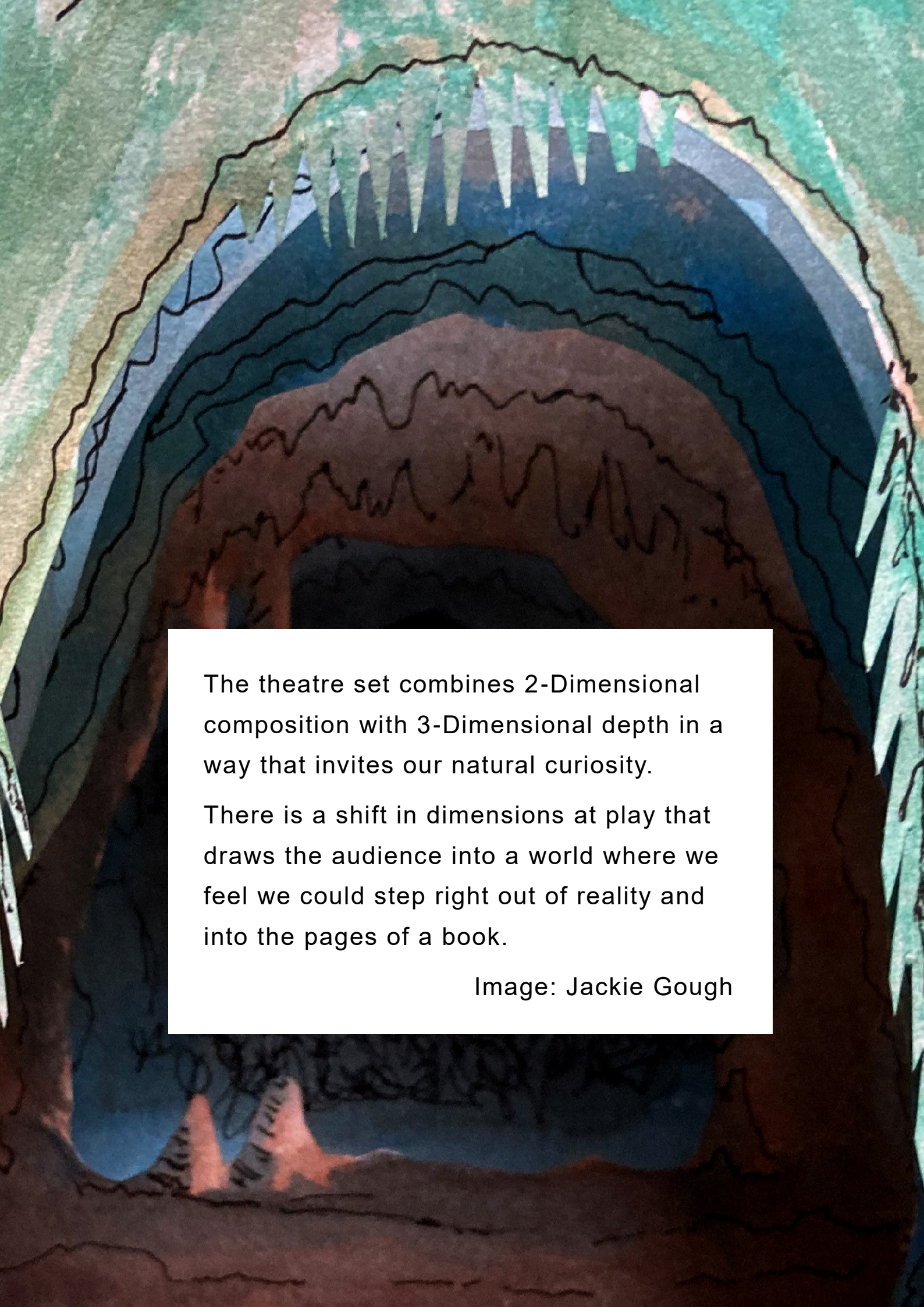
About the Artist

Fools Gold is a video installation which explores the artist's paternal history. Ashill's father would collect her Iron Pyrites (fools gold) from a surface mine near their home deep in the Tawe Valley, South Wales. The work moves between this autobiographical narrative and the history of Louis XIV, nicknamed the Sun King after he danced for courtiers, and also forced them to worship him, whilst he was dressed head to toe in gold.

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Funny and playful, Ashill uses the do-it-yourself aesthetics of amateur dramatics to create costumes and 'sets' in which she performs as both her father and also as the Sun King. Ashill's multi-disciplinary practice includes amateur dramatics, theatre flats, Drag King culture, video and performance in which she uses her personal experiences of high culture and working class identity.



The theatre set combines 2-Dimensional composition with 3-Dimensional depth in a way that invites our natural curiosity.

There is a shift in dimensions at play that draws the audience into a world where we feel we could step right out of reality and into the pages of a book.

Image: Jackie Gough

For this workshop you will need:



- Stiff paper/card (cereal boxes)
- Black fineliner
- Scissors
- Brush
- Watercolours/colouring pencils
- Glue
- Pencil
- Rubber

In Fool's Gold Ashill uses the visual cues of amateur dramatics to explore autobiographical themes. There is a magic to the idea of the mine and the cave and gold, but also a myth. When we look back on our lives, the past can become a distortion of objects and events that linger in our memory more or less depending on our emotional response to them. This can give apparently insignificant objects, places or events, great importance to the development of our minds.

Drawing Challenge 1:

- Write a list of four significant objects, places or events that span the course of your life.
- Write a sentence about each moment and make a sketch of what you remember.
- The sketches can be as distorted as the memories. So if you remember your first teddy bear and it was important to you, you could make it very large in your drawing to represent its part in your memory.
- However don't go too big with the finished drawings as we will be installing them in our caves.
- When you are happy with your sketches use your pen to ink them in and colour the results. You can then cut them out.

Inking in 1:

Inking in is a way of finalising a drawing when you are happy with it. The real advantage to it is that the idea is already sketched out so you can concentrate on how the line looks.

If you regard the sketch as the creative figuring out, the inking in is the final performance. As it is a performance practise makes perfect. Draw out a number of lines and try inking them in.

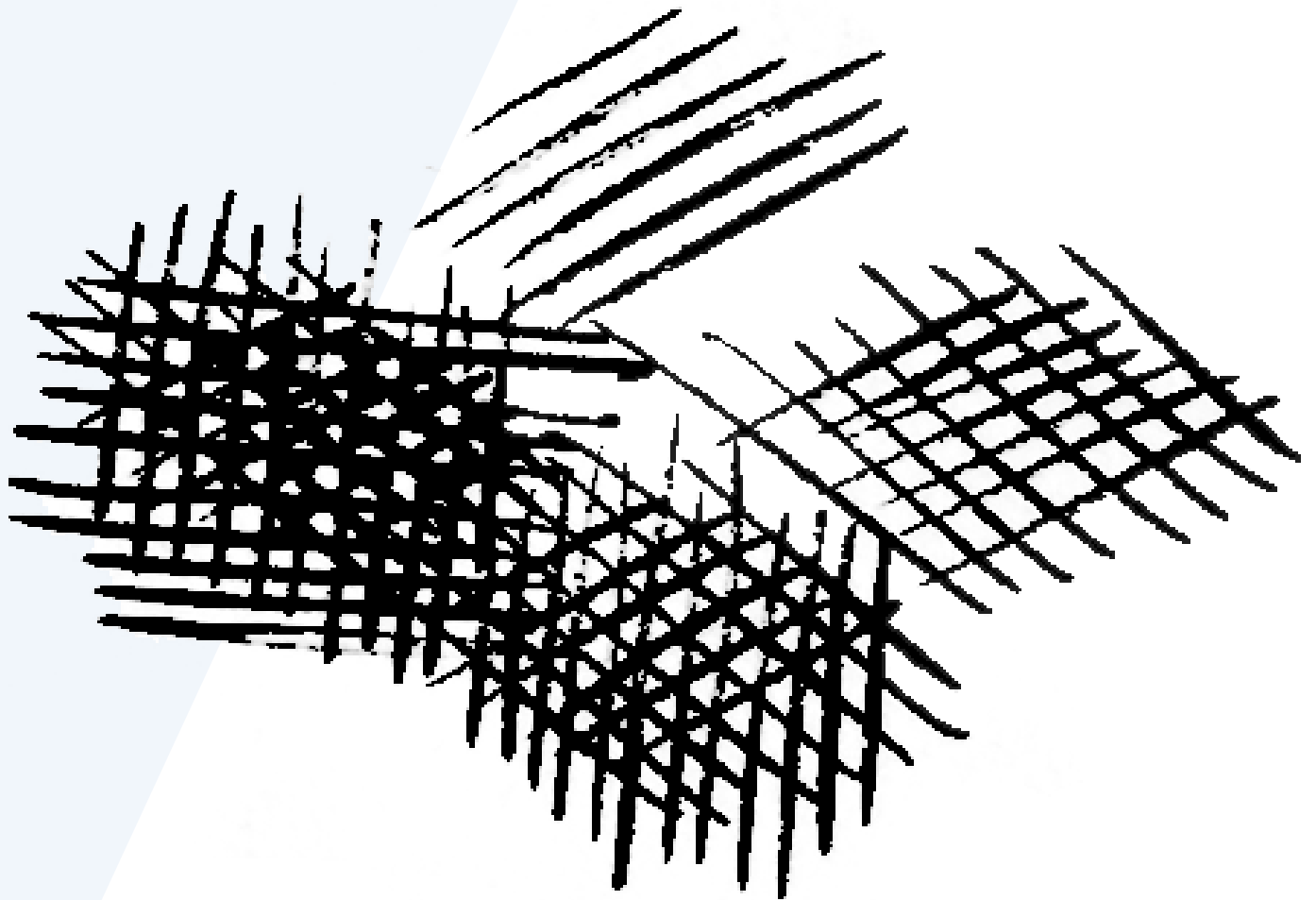


When you are happy with your line try varying speed and style. This can give your finished drawing a variety of different dynamics.

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Inking in 2:

You can shade/texture with pen by hatching and cross-hatching. There are four principle stages that start with simple hatched lines and three more cross-hatches. A good tip for hatching is to draw the lines at speed and as parallel as you can.



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Inking in 3:

When you are happy with your technique you can apply it to your sketch. Think about which inking technique would be most appropriate.

1. Draw out design in pencil



2. Ink in. Here I have used a broken line as the bear is furry



3. When you are happy rub out the pencil marks



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Inking in 4:

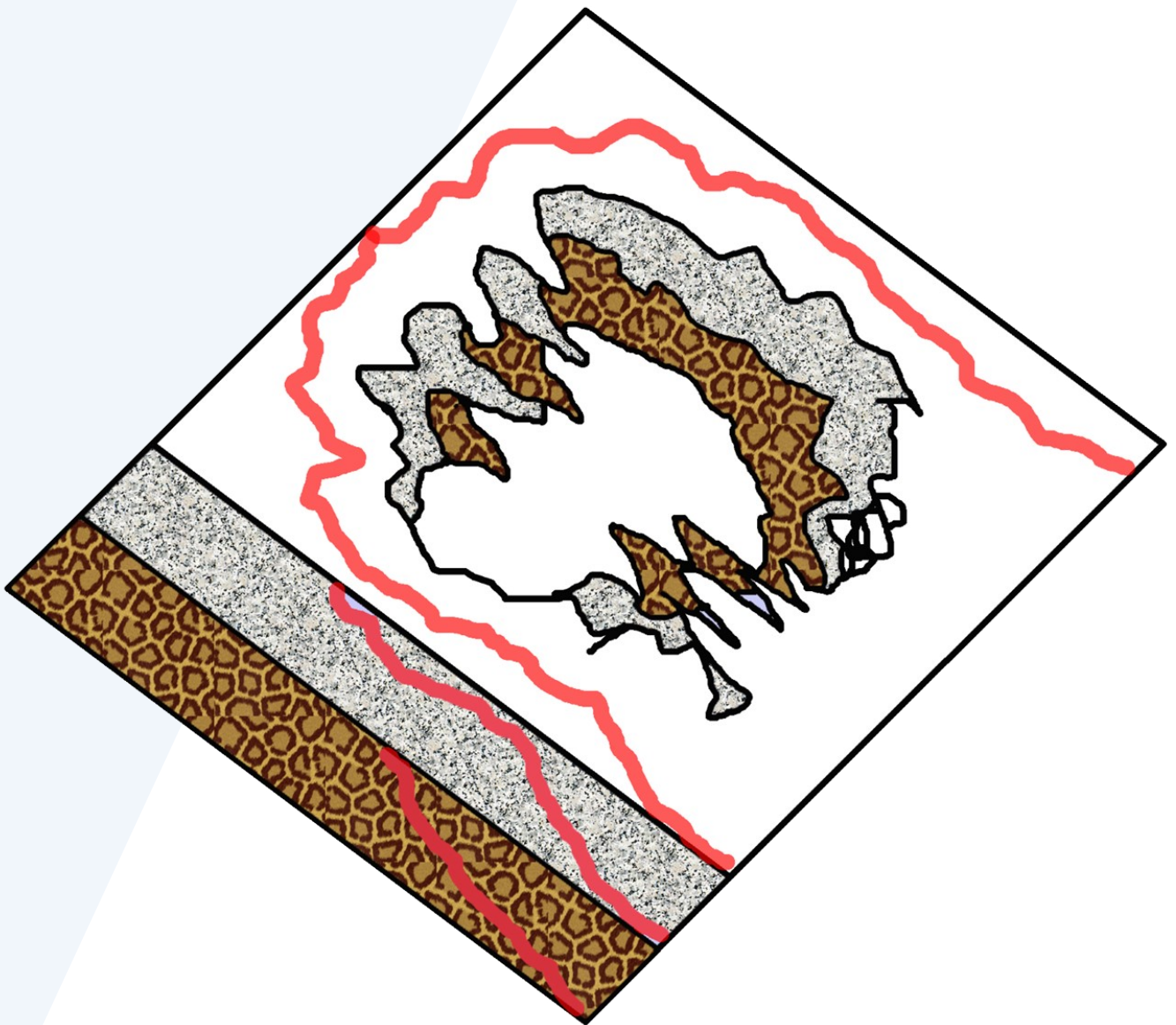
At it's simplest colouring can just be a wash, allowing the pen to do the descriptive work.



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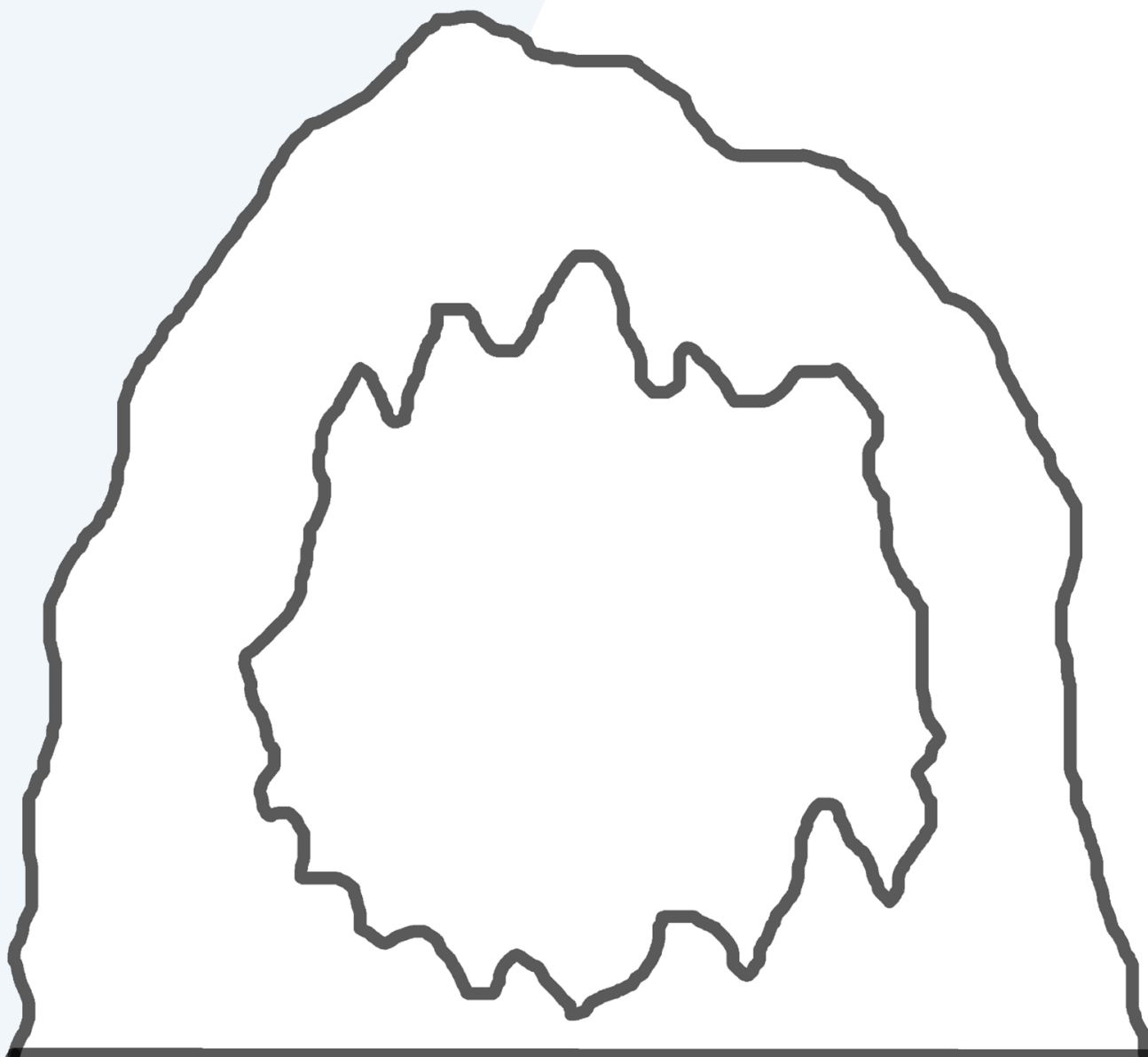
Drawing Challenge 2:

To make our theatres we need to layer up different two-dimensional images on top of each other, each with a smaller aperture than the one before.



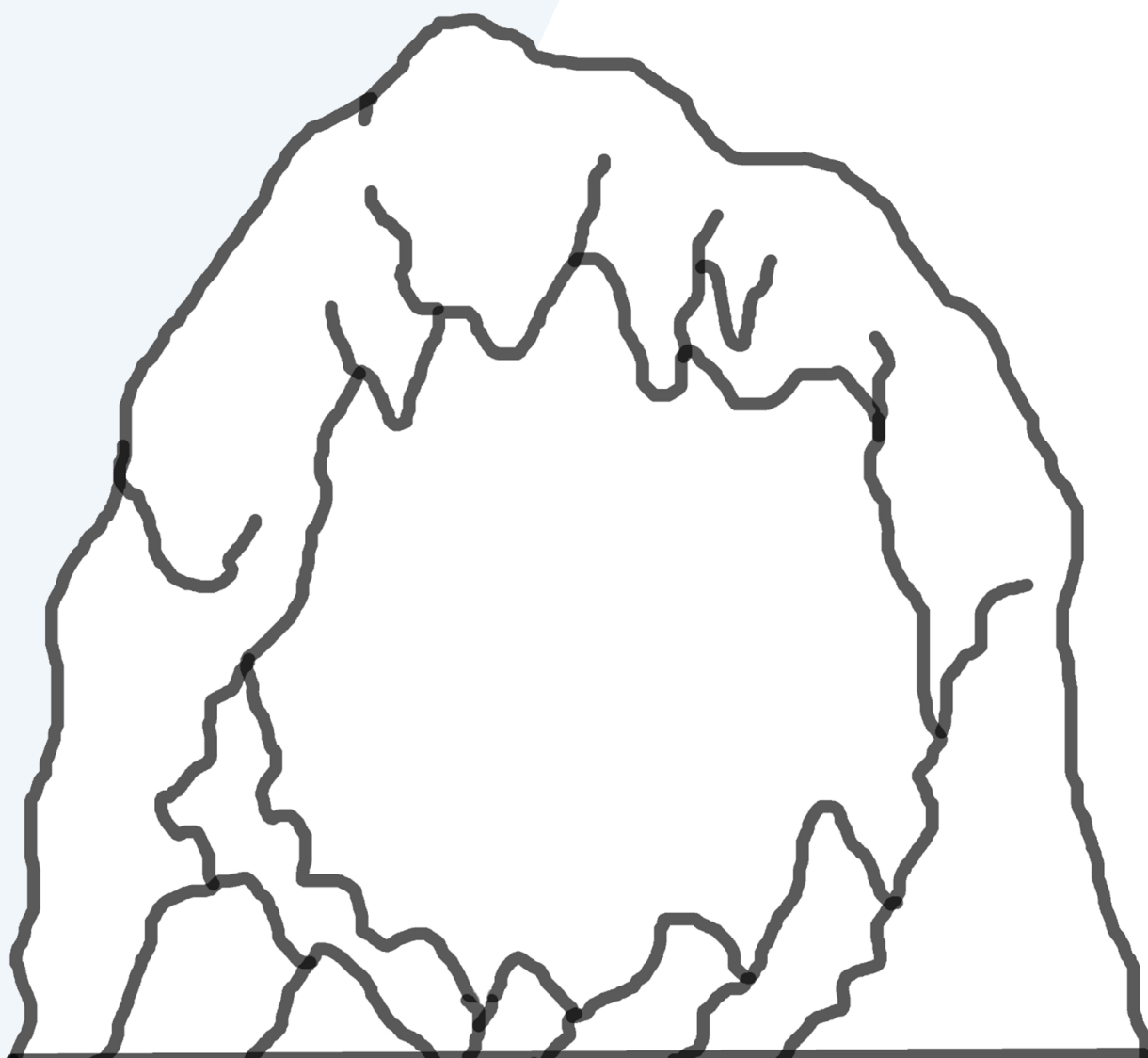
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It is easiest to start with
the first drawing before
drawing out the next one.



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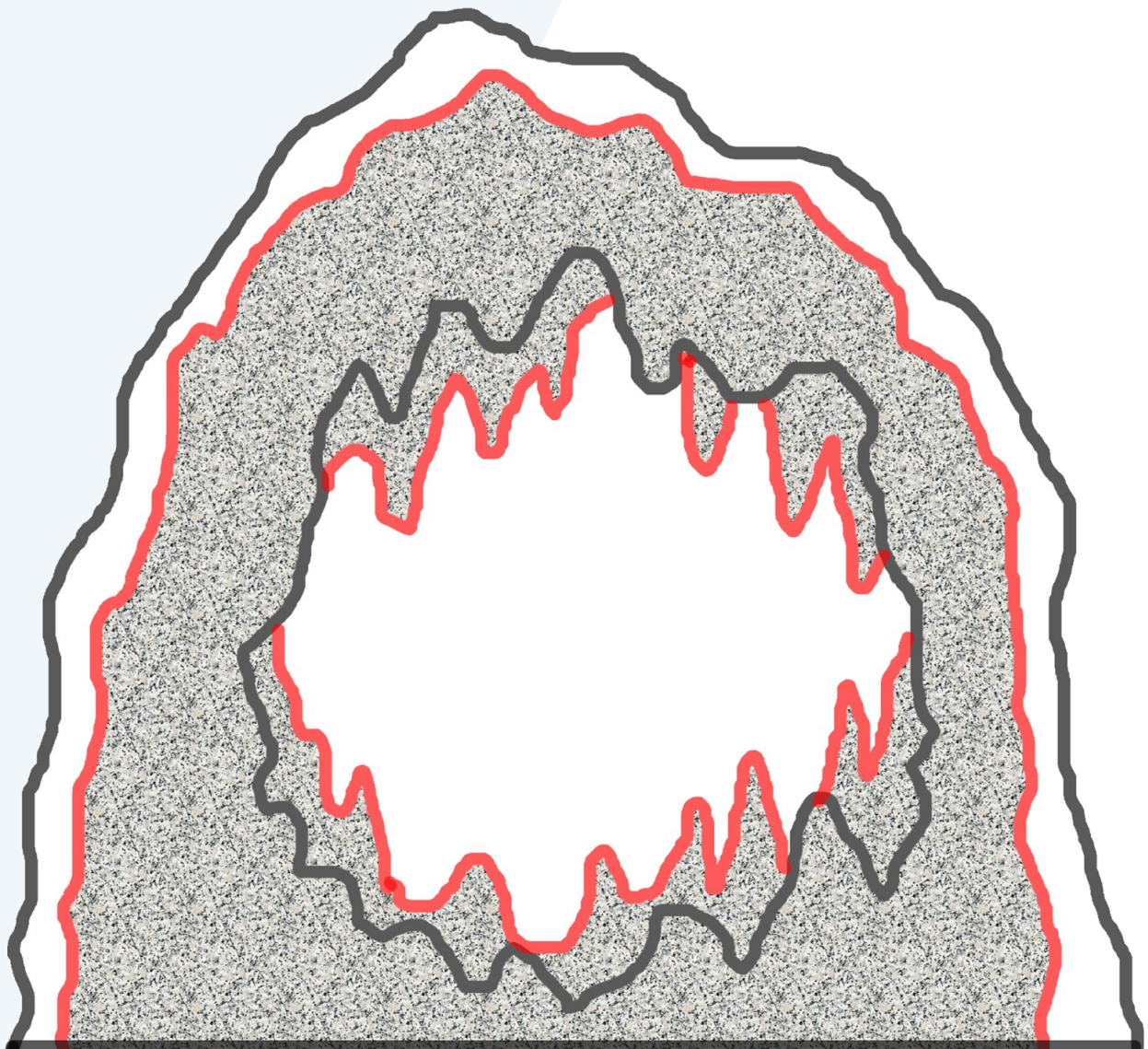
Add details then cut it out.



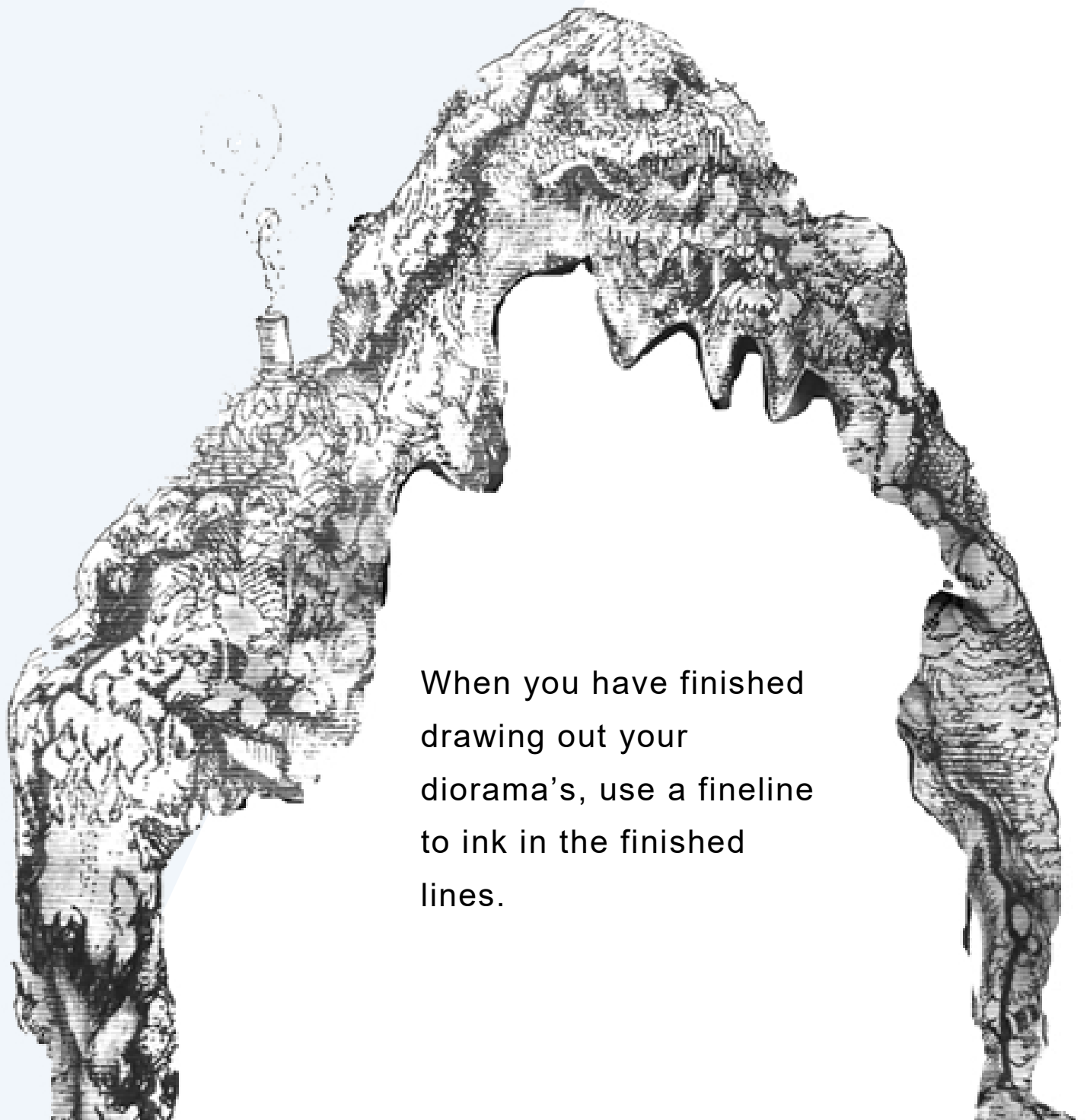
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You can then use it as a guide for layers 2 & 3.

Each layer should have a smaller cave than the one in front.

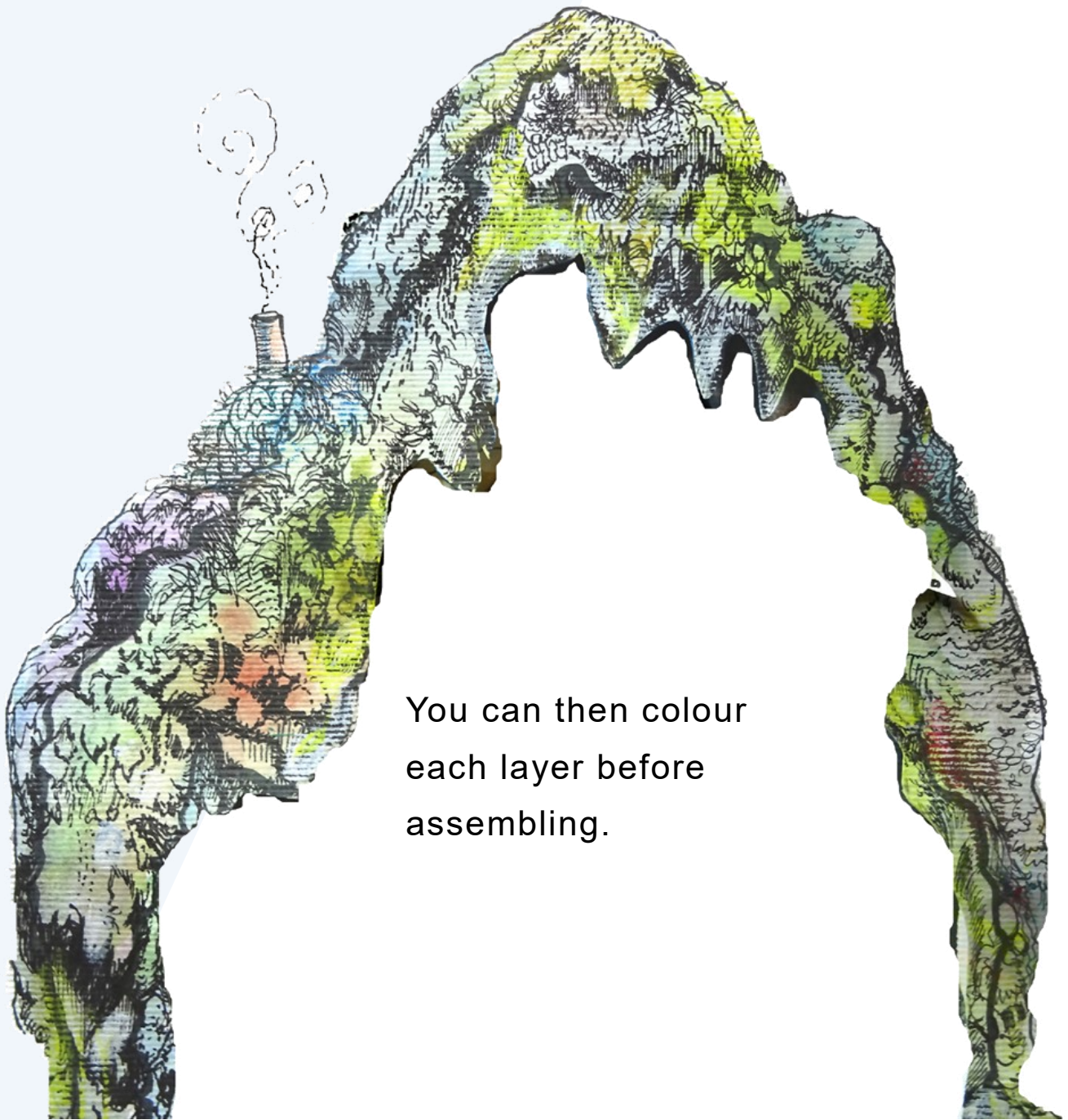


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When you have finished drawing out your diorama's, use a fineline to ink in the finished lines.

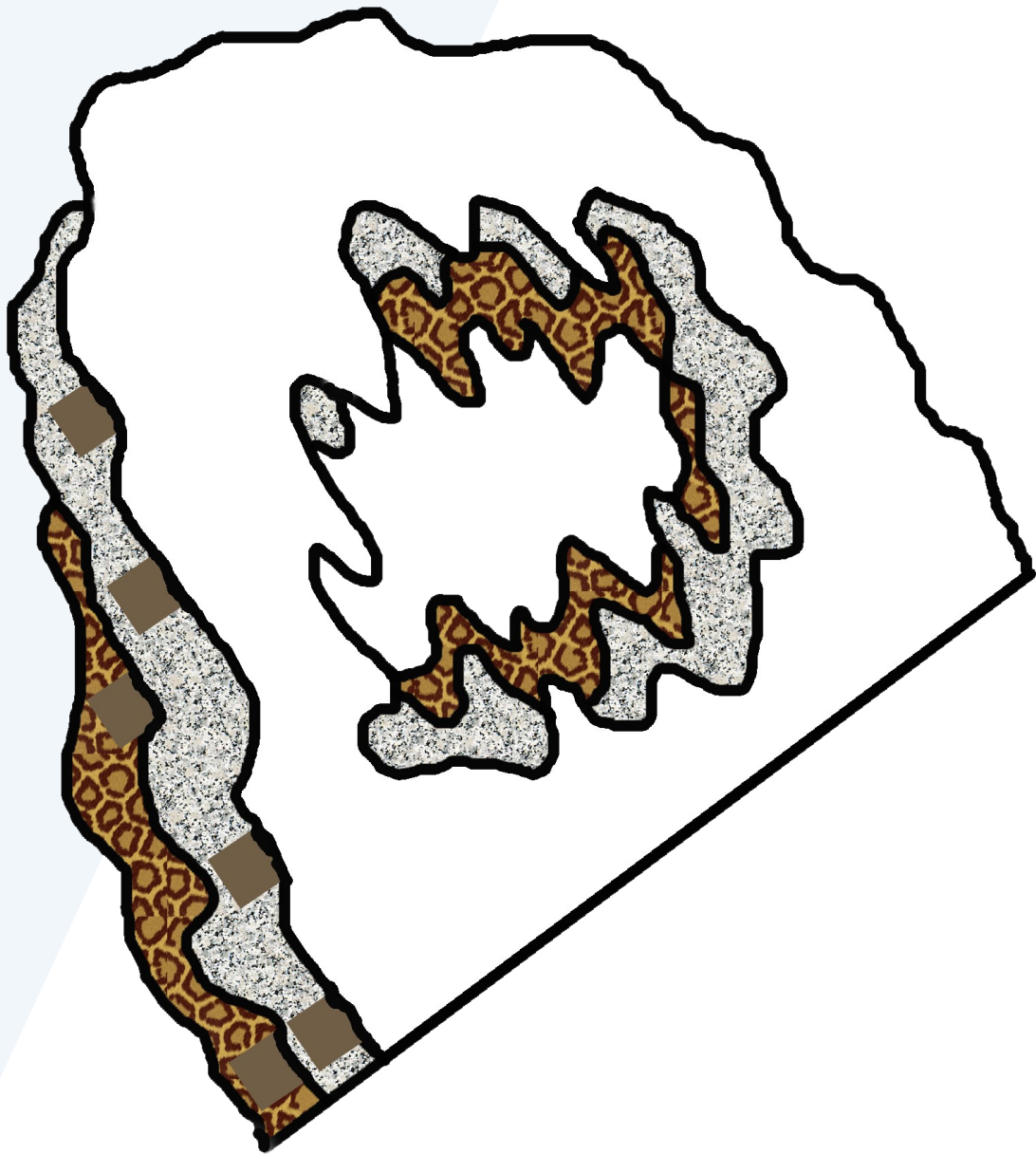
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You can then colour
each layer before
assembling.

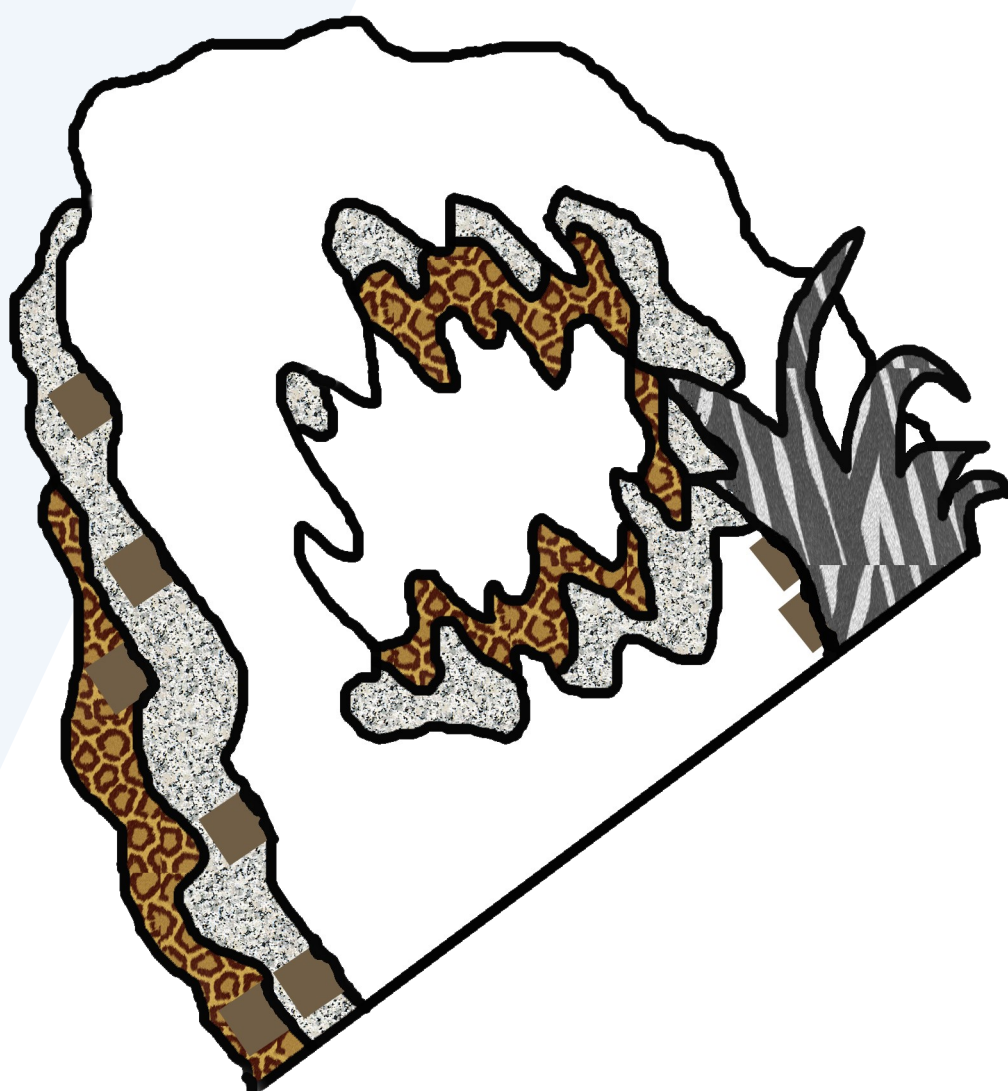
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To separate each sheet stick in card
separators between the layers.



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When you have assembled your cave you can stick in your characters and their objects. You could also add in the sentences you wrote. These can be in chronological order or in any way you like. You can use card separators to stick these in and for any other elements you want to add.



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Example drawing by Wendy Sheridan



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What Next?

- You could add speech and text to your work
- You could create layers based on other themes: Family, Politics, Interests, Seasons or Holidays.
- Try making a theatre out of different materials.
- You can use the idea of separators in any drawing. They can create interesting depth and shadows.
- Try framing your theatre in a box frame to create a beautiful world within a world.
- Have a look at artists such as David Hockney, Tracy Emin, Edvard Munch and Edward Gorey who designed their own theatre sets.
- Or Paula Rego who creates theatrical settings for paintings
- Can you think of other ways the visual ques of the theatre could cross over into your art?



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