

# Borrowed Horizons

- Speculative Design · Interactive Installation
- Individual three mouths project.

“Borrowed Horizons” explores the commercial relocation and replication of iconic landmarks. Removed from their original cultural contexts, these symbols often appear visually misplaced, creating a sense of emotional distance.

The installation features a vintage-style window whose view changes as viewers open or close the panes using touch sensors. RFID cards introduce global landmarks—such as the Merlion, the Sphinx, and the Statue of Liberty—repositioned within incongruous landscapes. This displacement invites reflection on how cultural icons become interchangeable commodities once detached from their origins.

Through simple interactions, the work reflects on authenticity, cultural context, and the shifting identities of landmarks in a globalized visual world.



Inspiration

I am a travel enthusiast and have visited 11 countries, including Fiji, Malaysia, Turkey, France, and Russia. As a Chinese person, I have sometimes struggled to adapt to local cuisines and therefore sought out Chinese restaurants abroad. In doing so, I often noticed how “Chinatowns” and “Chinese culture” are frequently copied and pasted into different countries in a rather simplistic and crude way.



When I saw a Sphinx—an icon usually found in the desert—standing on the water in my hometown, Shijiazhuang, I once again felt a strong sense of unease and dissonance. Both in China and abroad, there are many cases where architectural styles or cultural symbols from other countries are appropriated, and from the perspective of architecture or environmental design, such practices often create a sense of incongruity. This feeling makes me lose my sense of security.



Background Research

**Identity**

Identity refers to the distinct characteristics, meanings, and symbolic qualities that make a place recognizable and different from others.

**Continuity**

Continuity refers to the persistence of a place's physical form, cultural patterns, social practices, or historical layers over time.

**Environmental Fit**

Environmental Fit describes how well a place supports and aligns with the needs, behaviors, and expectations of its users.

**Liveliness**

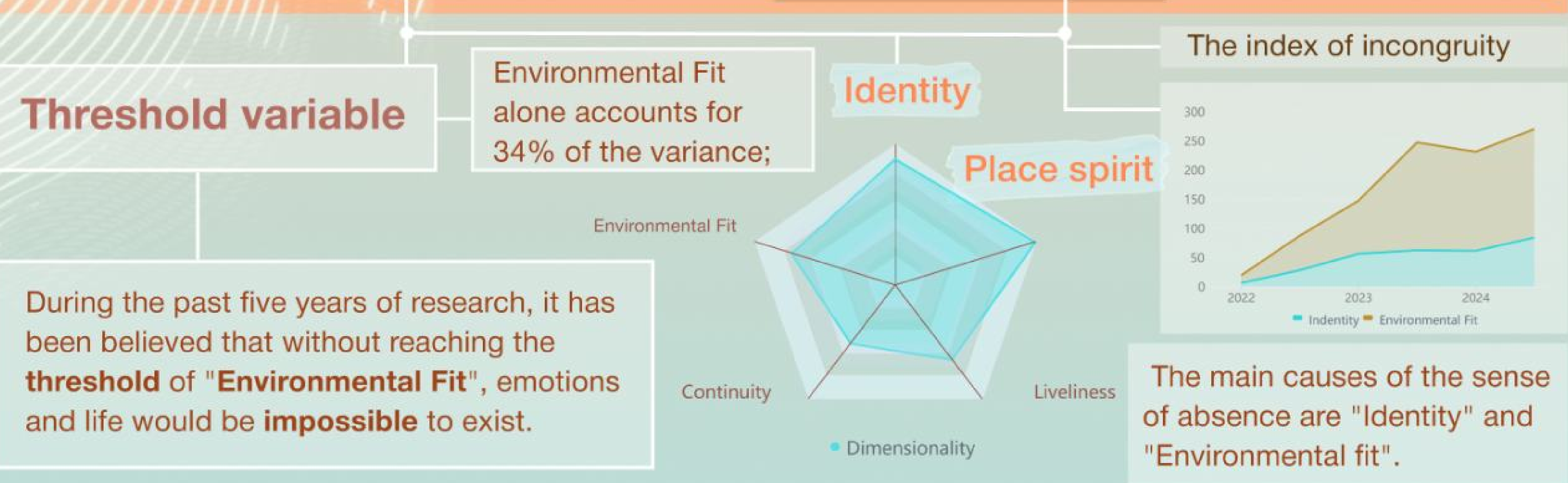
Liveliness refers to the degree of activity, social interaction, diversity, and vibrancy present in a place.

**Place spirit**

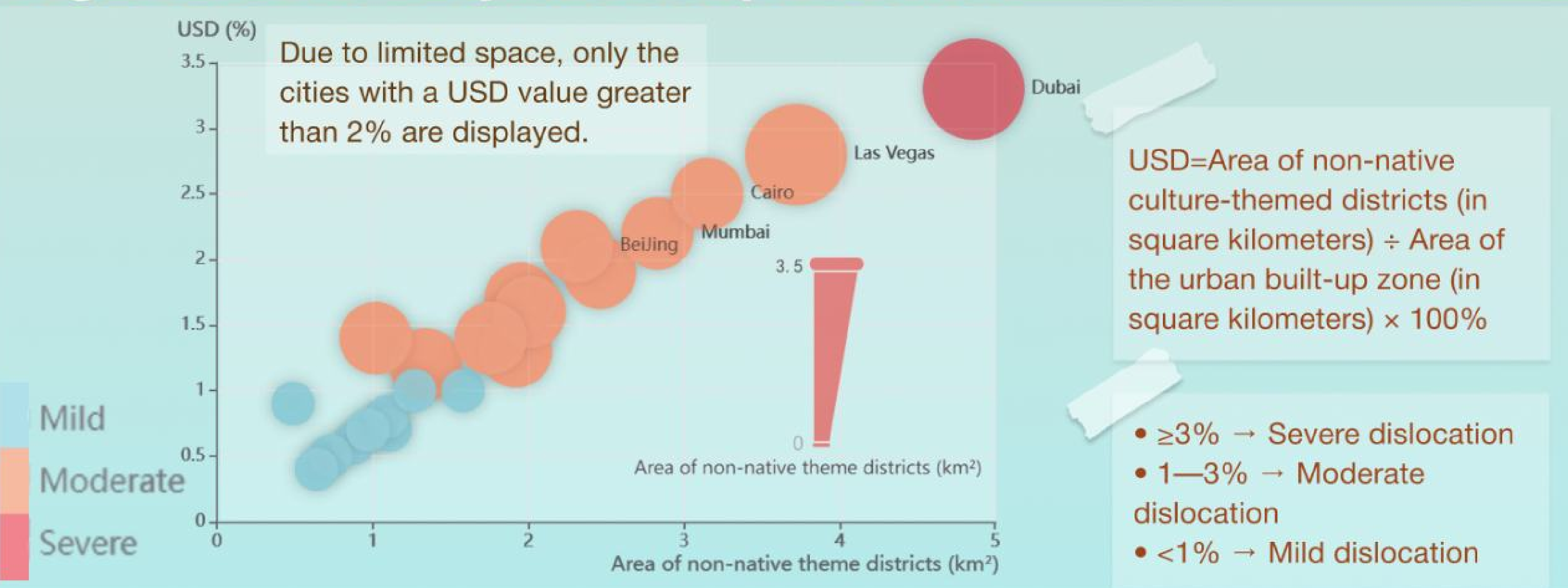
The significance of place spirit lies in the fact that it makes the space truly become a "place", rather than an abstract "space"

Experiential quality that gives a place its special character. It captures how a place “feels” to people.

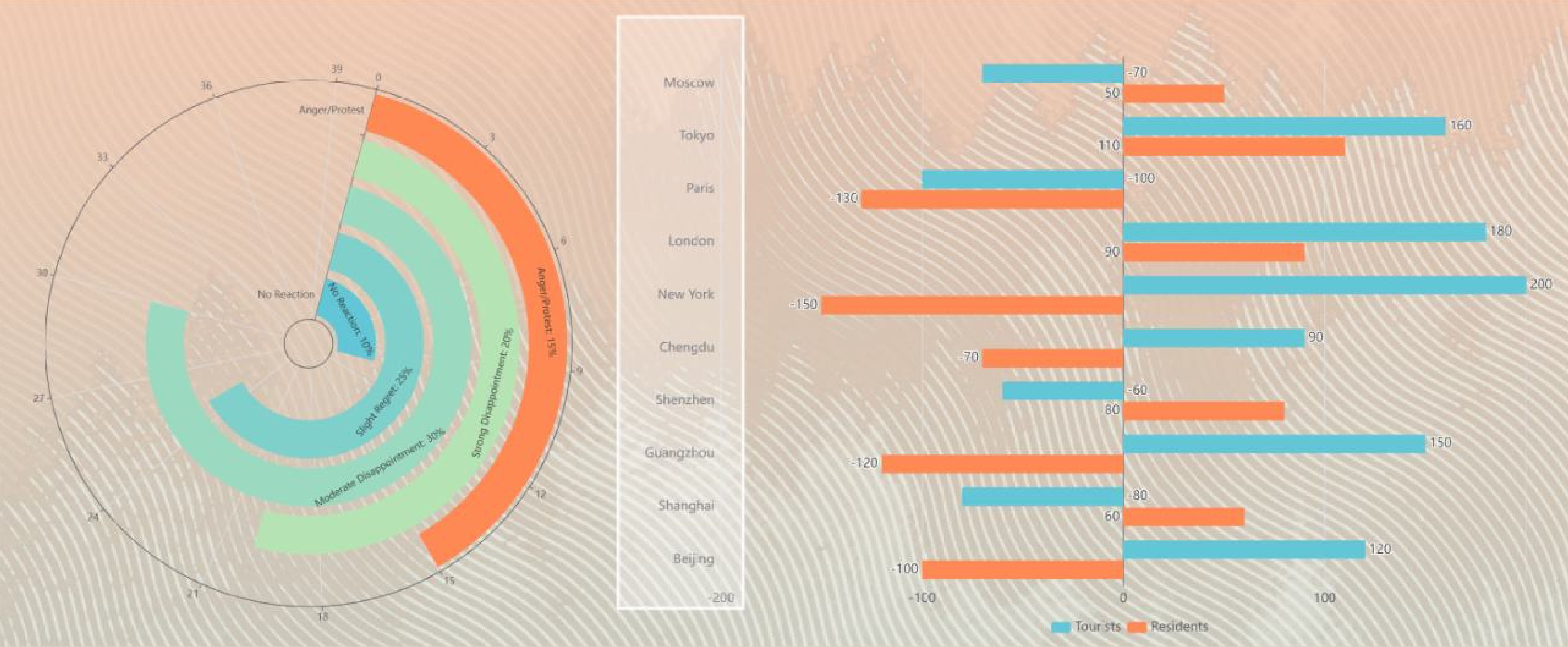
Place Spirit, often related to “genius loci,” refers to the unique atmosphere, emotional tone.



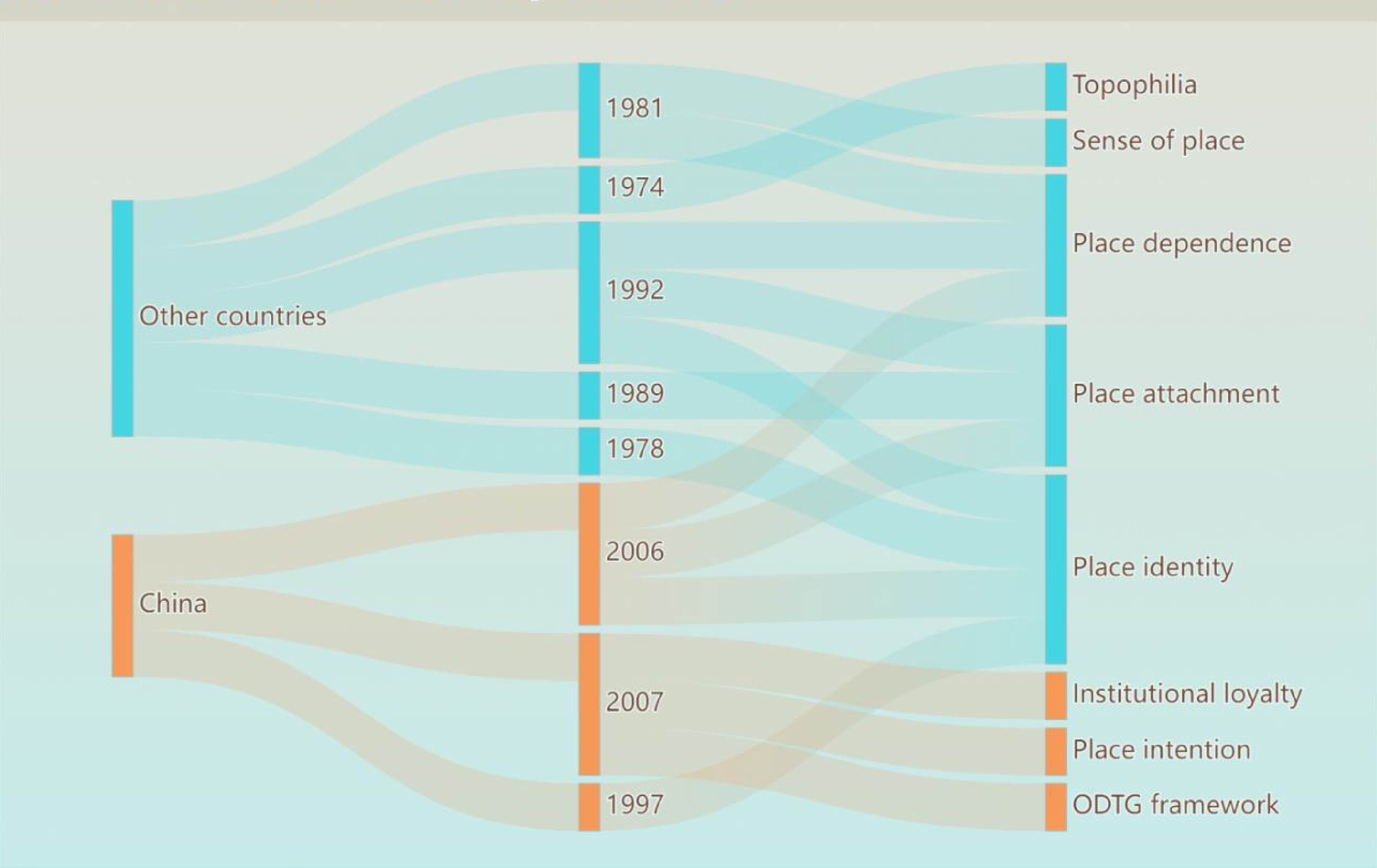
Degree of Urban Symbol Displacement



Emotions to Relocation or Loss of Landmarks



Research on The Theory of Place



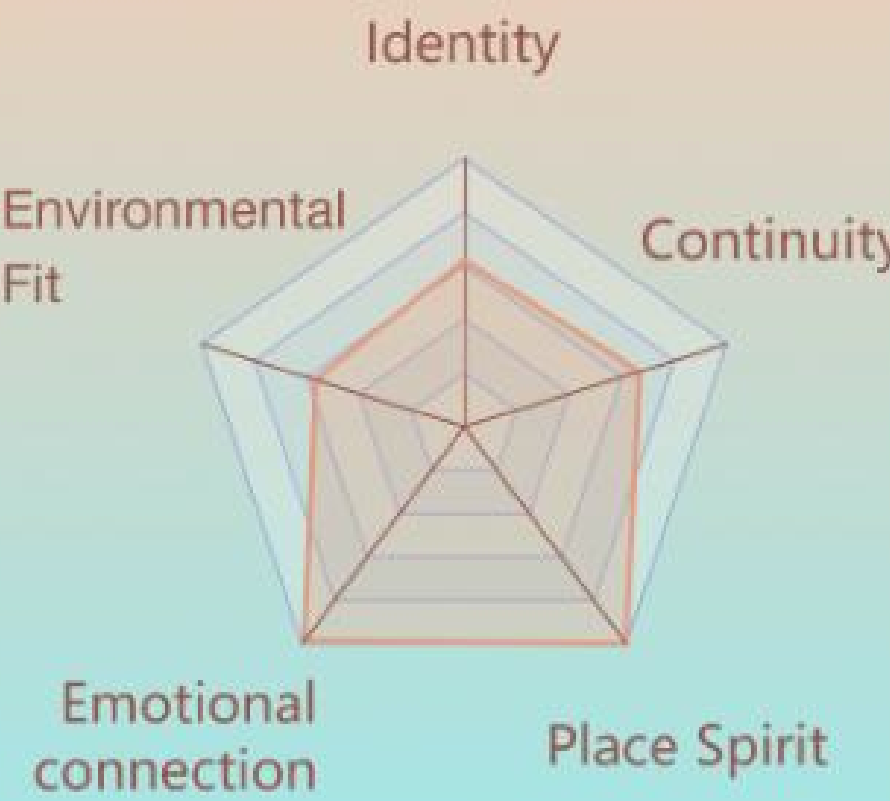
Conclusion

Place spirit is vital because it gives a setting its unique character, turning space into a meaningful place. It connects people emotionally to their environment, preserves cultural and historical depth, and helps prevent uniform, generic design. By shaping how people experience and value a site, place spirit becomes a key driver for creating environments that feel authentic, memorable, and lasting.

Interview



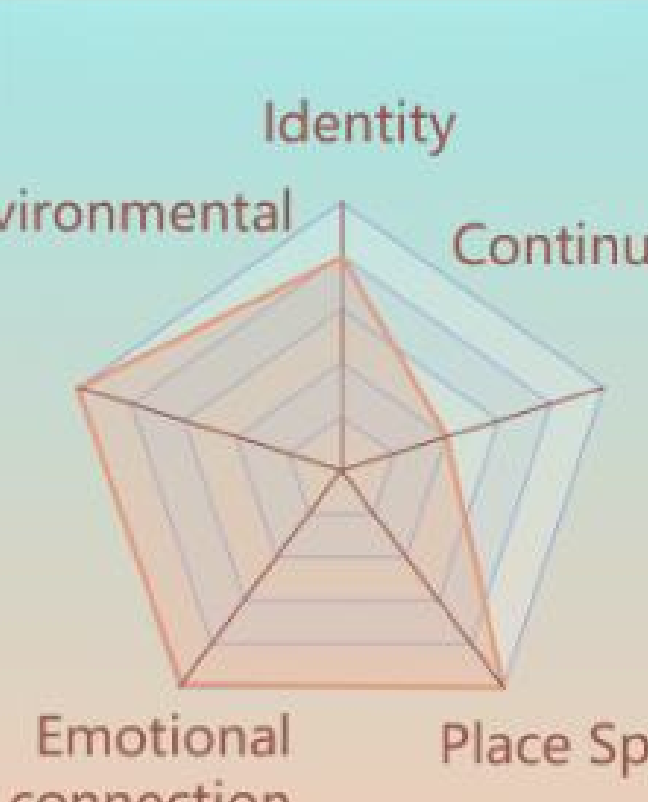
STUDENT. Zhang



Identity  
Continuity  
Emotional connection  
Place Spirit  
Environmental Fit

**Q: Have you ever encountered a landmark being misappropriated?**

“ I have experienced this. When I was studying at university in Tianjin, there were many replicas of European landmarks here. Among them, the broken-armed Venus statue was placed in an open-air square.” ”



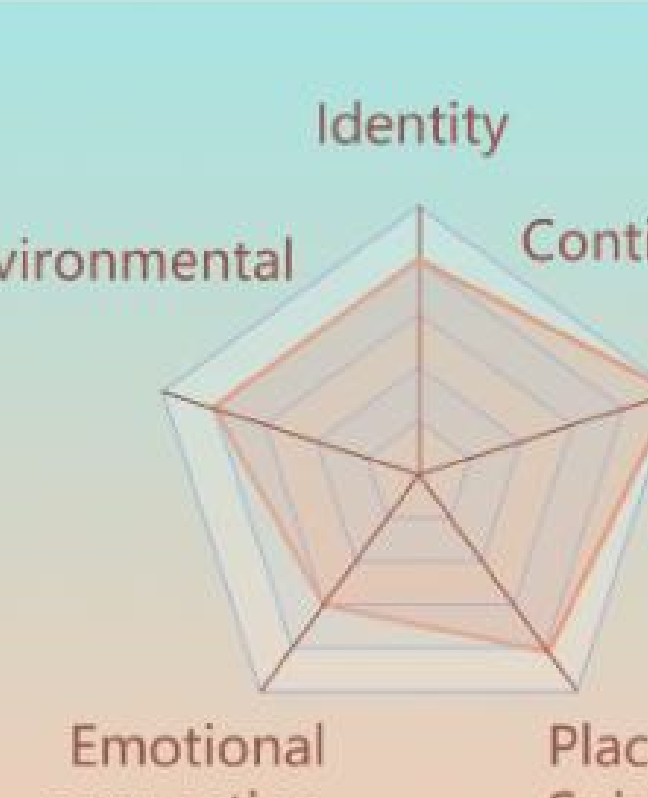
Identity  
Continuity  
Emotional connection  
Place Spirit  
Environmental Fit

**Q: Do you think these iconic landmarks have lost their sense of place?**

“ Yes, such a phenomenon does exist. However, the mistake lies not in the act of copying and reproducing. ”



ARCHITECT Zhao



Identity  
Continuity  
Emotional connection  
Place Spirit  
Environmental Fit



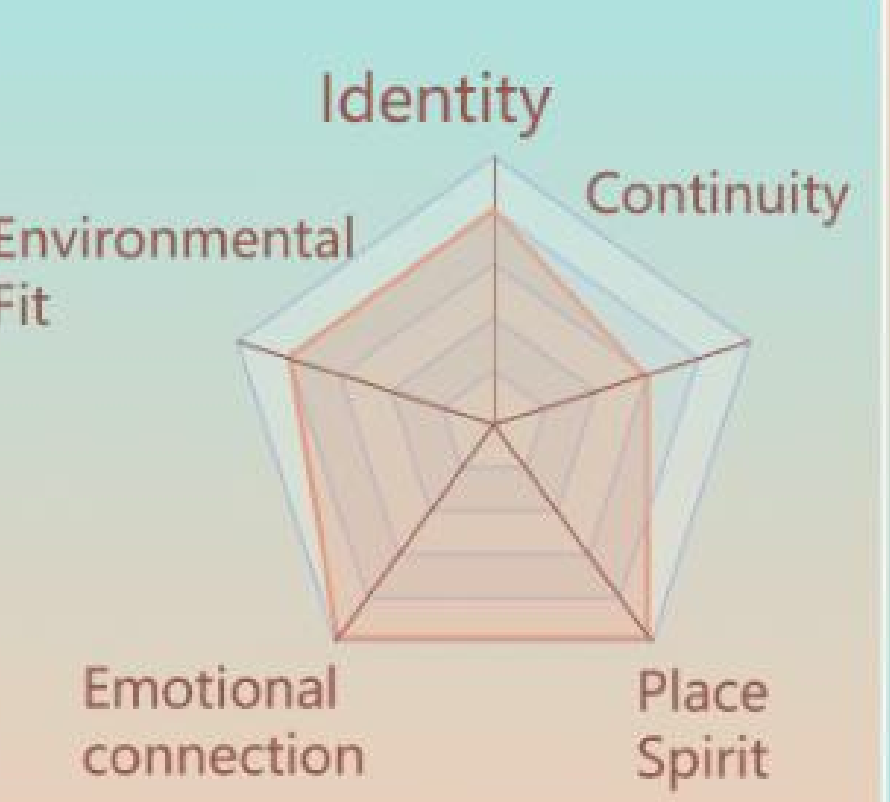
Student. Huang

**Q: What are your thoughts on the appropriation of iconic landmarks?**

“ Actually, I'm not opposed to appropriation per se, but sometimes I do have a strange feeling about these appropriated things. I have no idea where this feeling comes from. ”



Doctor. Xiao Tong



Identity  
Continuity  
Emotional connection  
Place Spirit  
Environmental Fit

**Q: What causes the sense of incongruity on the appropriation of iconic landmarks?**

“ I think the loss of the sense of place has made these landmarks seem distant from the local people. They lost their original environmental support and the continuity of their historical culture. ”

**Conclusion**

- Place spirit connects people emotionally to their environment, preserves **cultural and historical** depth, and helps prevent uniform, generic design.
- By shaping how people experience and value a site, place spirit becomes a key driver for **creating environments** that feel authentic, and memorable.



Case Studies

Drones to 'rebuild' the Sagrada Familia



Italy, Roman Colosseum



Ruins of Gothic church



Whick Chapel Abbey

- **Background**  
The Dutch artist duo Drift collaborated with the drone art company Drone to redraw the appearances of various buildings, presenting the looks of historical sites or future buildings in the real world for people to see.
- **Influence**  
This case study taught me that abstracting architecture through points and lines can reveal the essence of a building more effectively than direct imitation.  
Emphasized abstract elements also encourage reflection and invite people to pause and engage with the site.

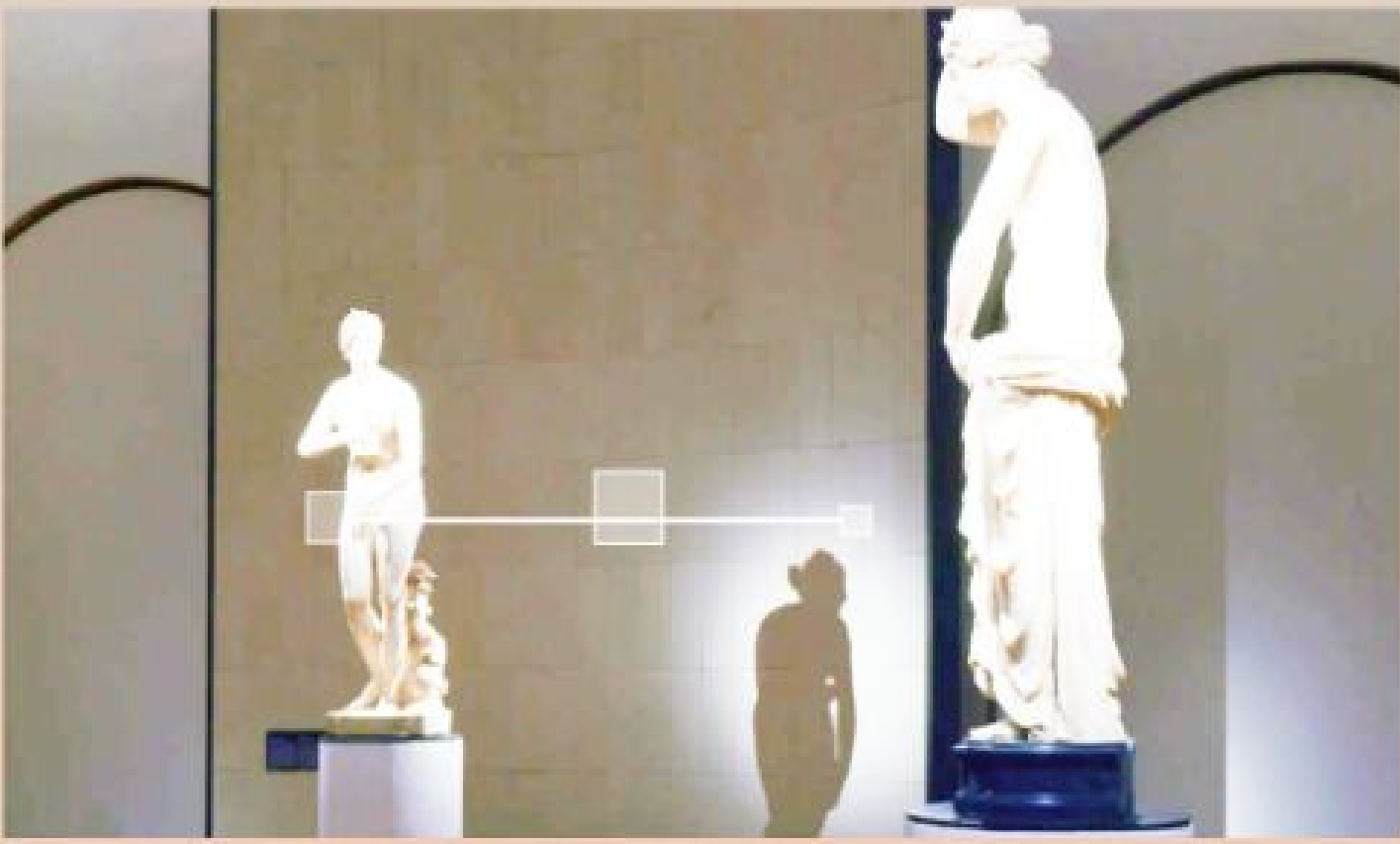


Borealis

- **Background**  
Borealis is a large-scale outdoor light environment installation created by Swiss artist Dan Acher. It uses powerful directional beams and artificially created fog layers to create a dynamic and colorful sky scene.
- **Influence**  
It made me realize that design should begin with an intention to shape emotion and atmosphere, followed by the choice of an appropriate medium. To evoke emotional responses to a landscape, a poetic and aesthetically expressive approach is essential.



Field Research



**Problems & Potentials**  
Replica of Medici Venus has been placed in the Federal Office for Central Services

**Cultural & Historical Context**

A nude replica of the Medici Venus was placed in a Brazilian government service center, conflicting with the space's existing atmosphere of authority and order.

Removed from its original cultural context, it was perceived as inappropriate or even pornographic rather than artistic.

Carinhall → Deep Lake → Salvage

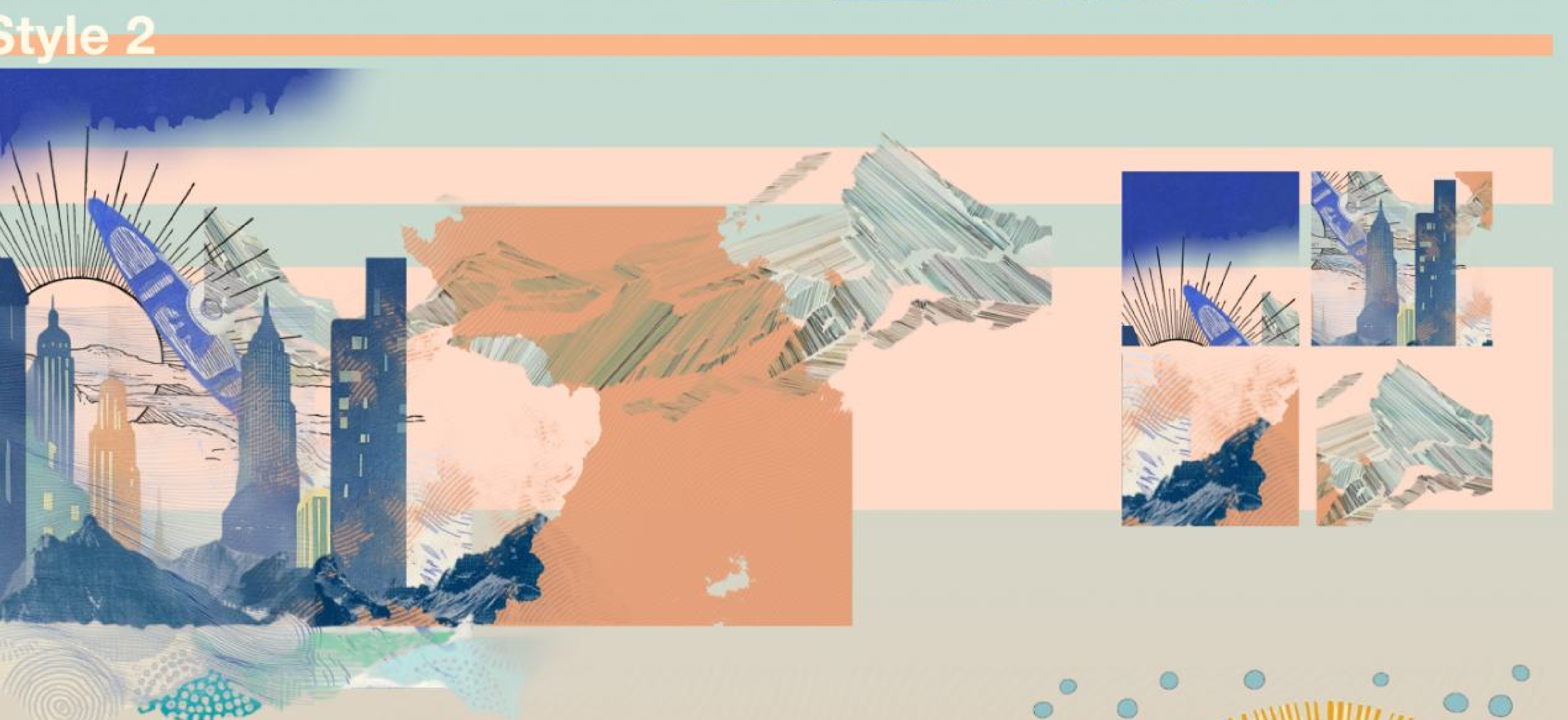
Grassi Museum ← Berlin Office

Mood Board

Style 1



Style 2

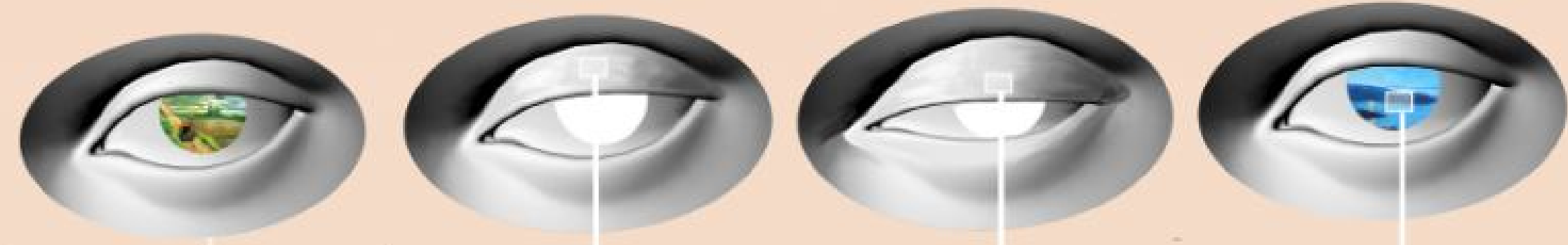


Style3



# Design Concept

## Strategy 1- "Eye"



The iris part is made into a landscape picture.

Opening and closing the "eyelids"

Change the scenery displayed on the screen.



Developed the first strategy based on the photography works of National Geographic

Creating an eye that can switch to display the changing scenery.

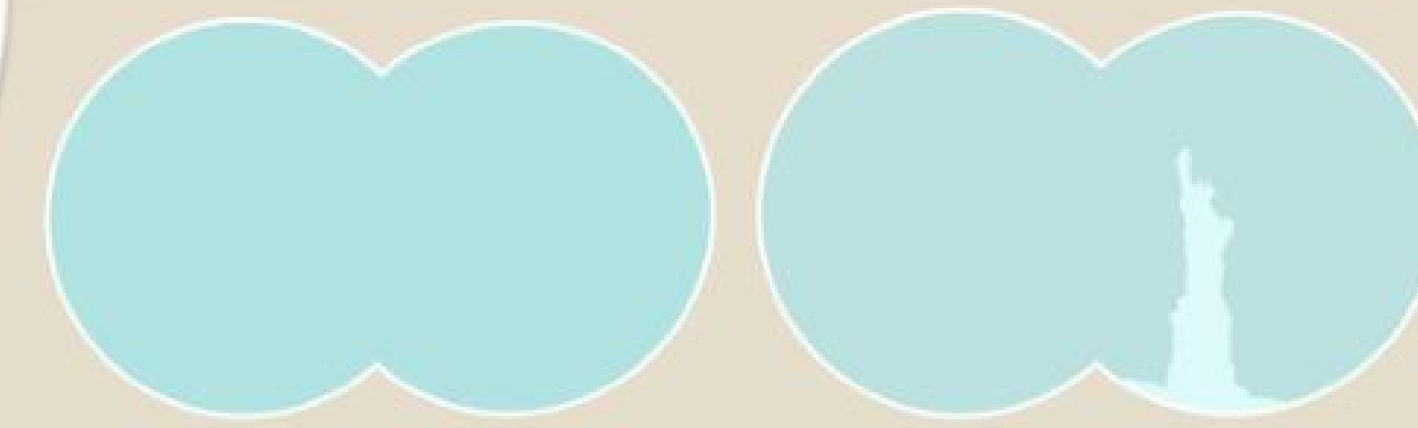
Limitations Interactive? Landmark? Thinkability?

## Strategy 2- "Telescope"



Using a telescope to observe things usually implies a prolonged sense of immersion.

Print the lenses of the landmark laser-printing telescope onto them, but this method does not allow for the switching of elements.



## Strategy 3- "Window" -- Final Scheme

The window captures the moment when people look out of the room, and it represents the most private and genuine spatial experience.

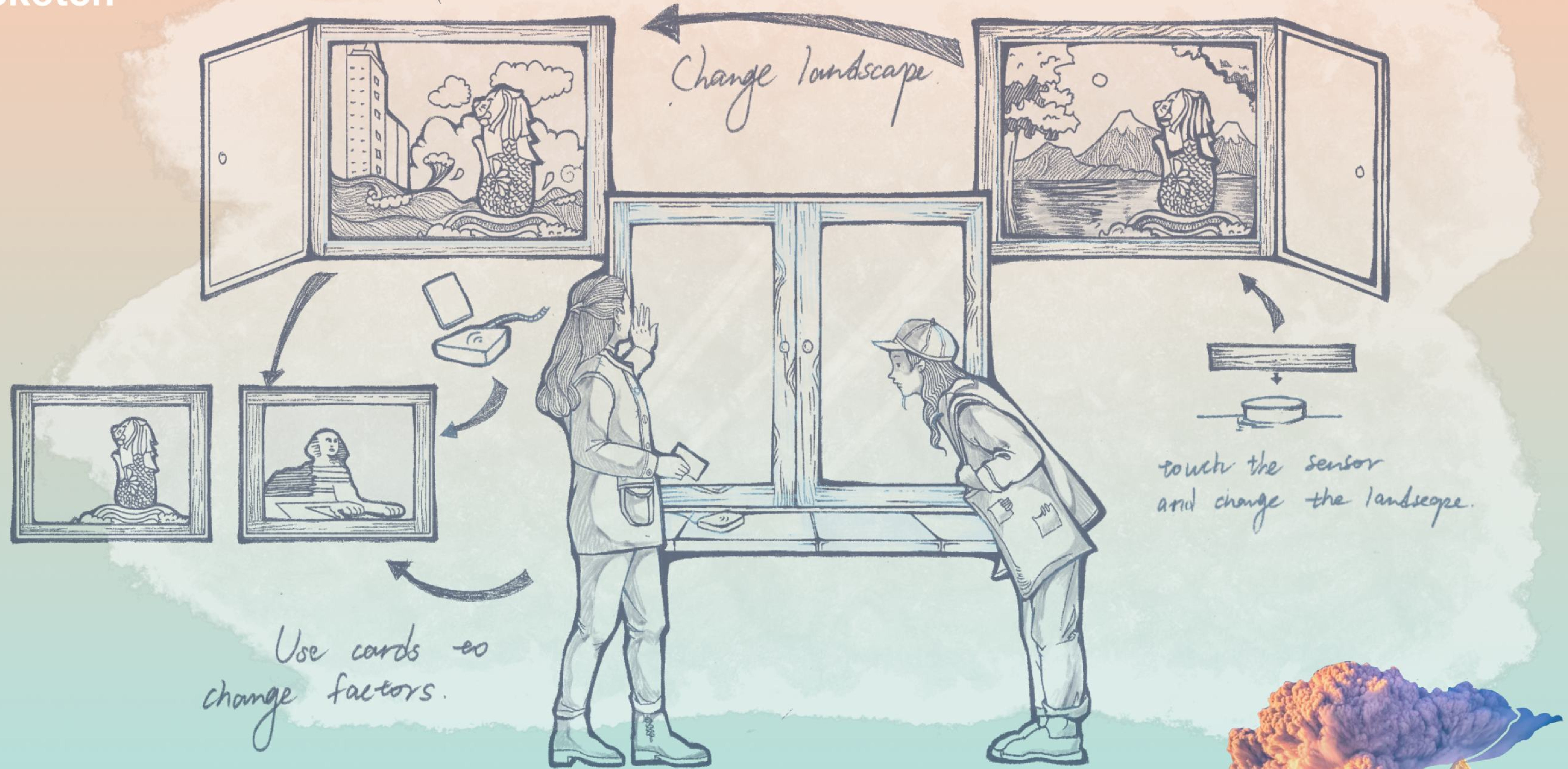
Windows serve as the interface between the space and the city



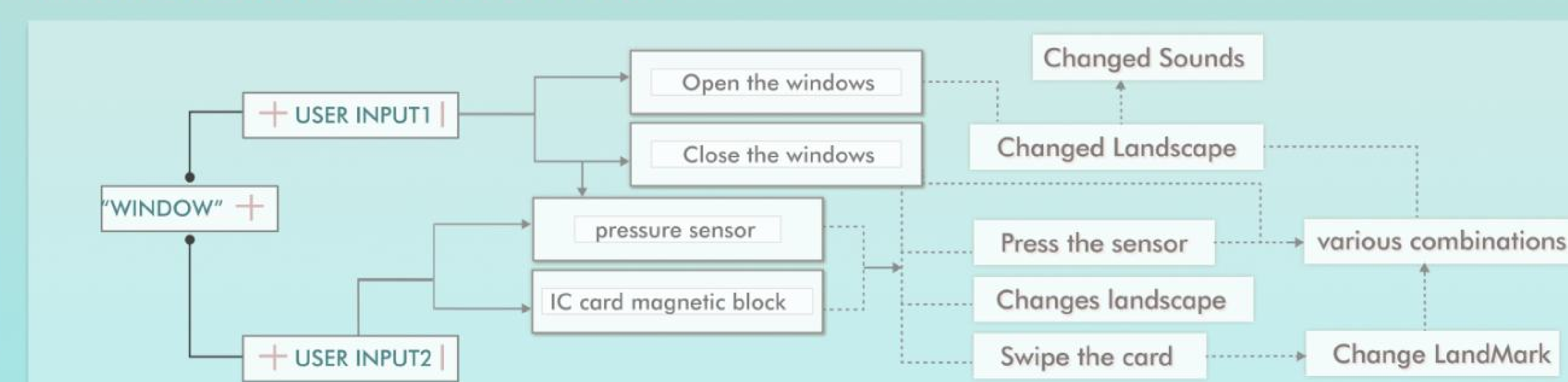
Windows are the best symbol for understanding the spirituality of a place.



# Sketch



## Audience interaction flow



## Landscape characters

mountain scene

hydrology

cover



Element Generation

Landmark Extraction



We have discovered the most typical examples of appropriated cultural symbols everywhere - the Sphinx, the fish-tailed lion, and the Statue of Liberty.

AI-Generated Iteration-Factors



Simple painting style, simple line drawings, vector graphics composed of lines, the Sphinx, ukiyo-e colors



Simple drawing style, simple line drawings, vector shapes made from lines, Muted tones, The Statue of Liberty

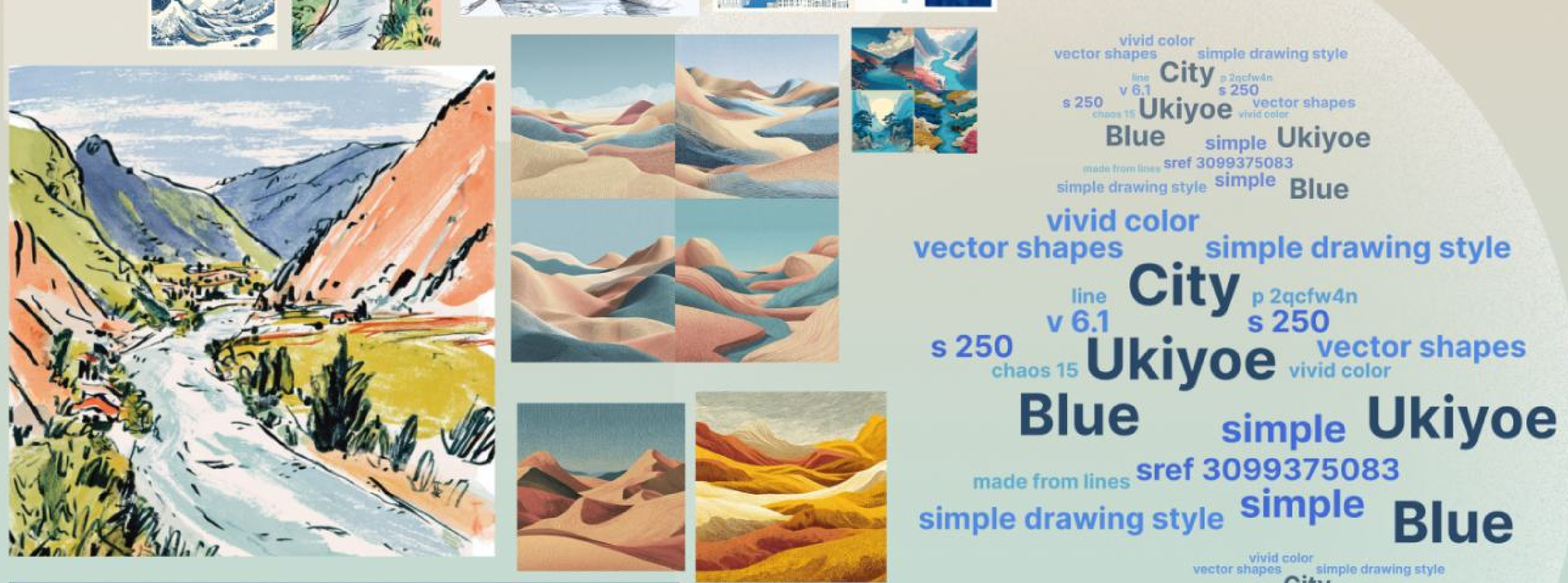


Simple painting style, simple line drawings, vector graphics composed of lines, soft tones, Singapore Lion Head Statue, ukiyo-e prints, blue and orange, lines

AI-Generated Iteration-Landscape



vivid color  
vector shapes  
line  
s 250  
chaos 15  
City  
Ukiyoe  
Blue  
simple  
Ukiyoe



vivid color  
vector shapes  
line  
s 250  
chaos 15  
City  
Ukiyoe  
Blue  
simple  
Ukiyoe

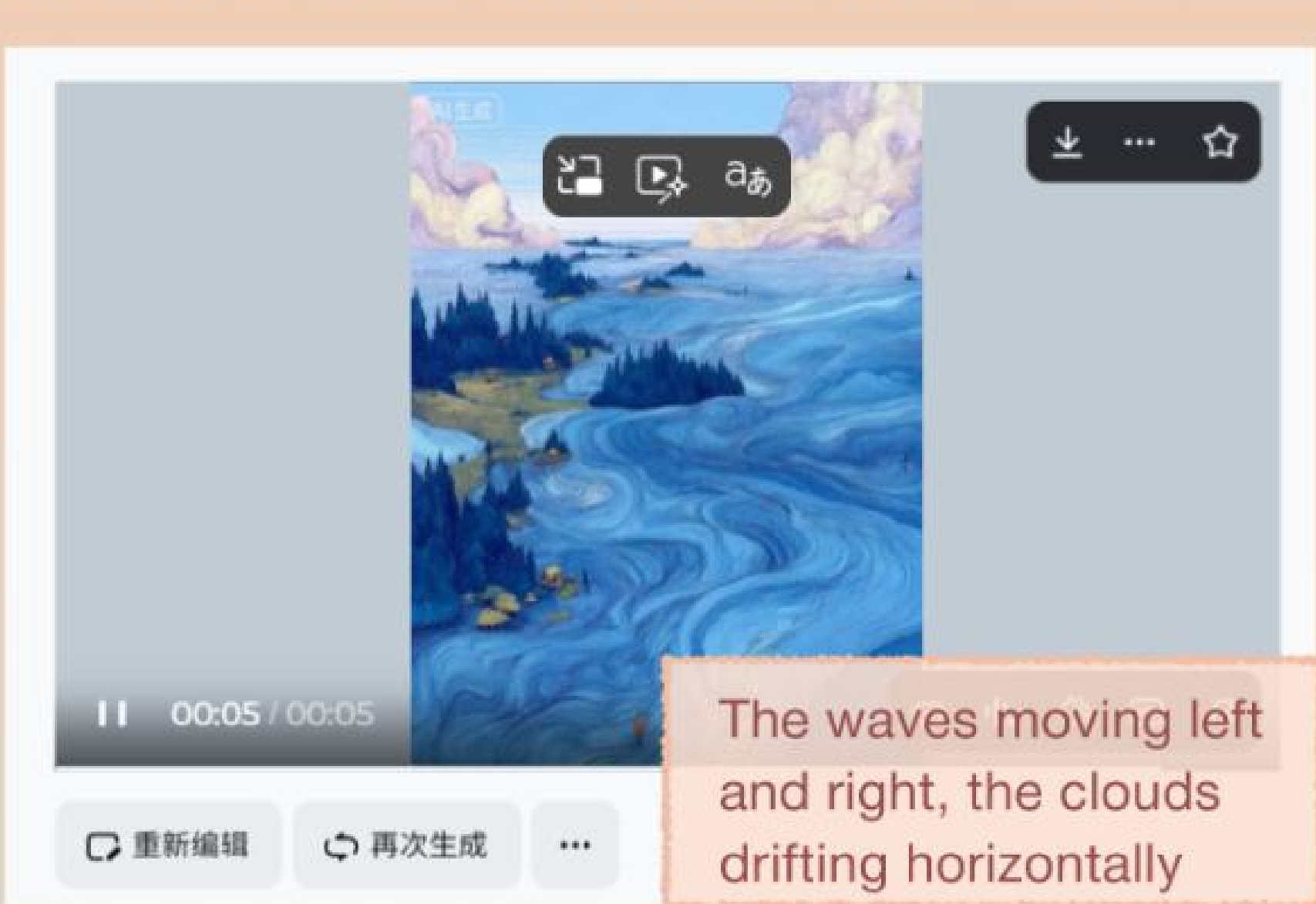


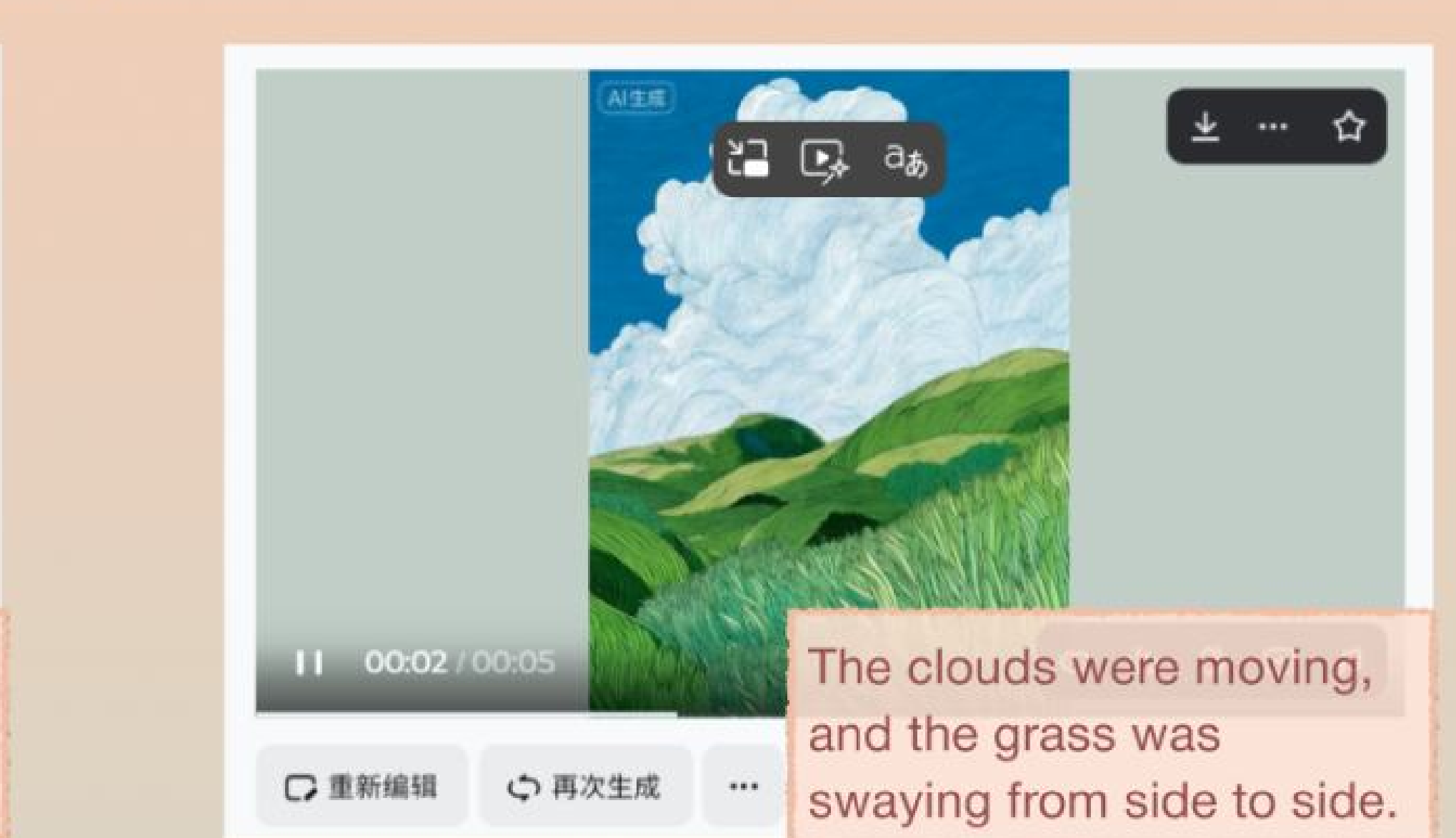
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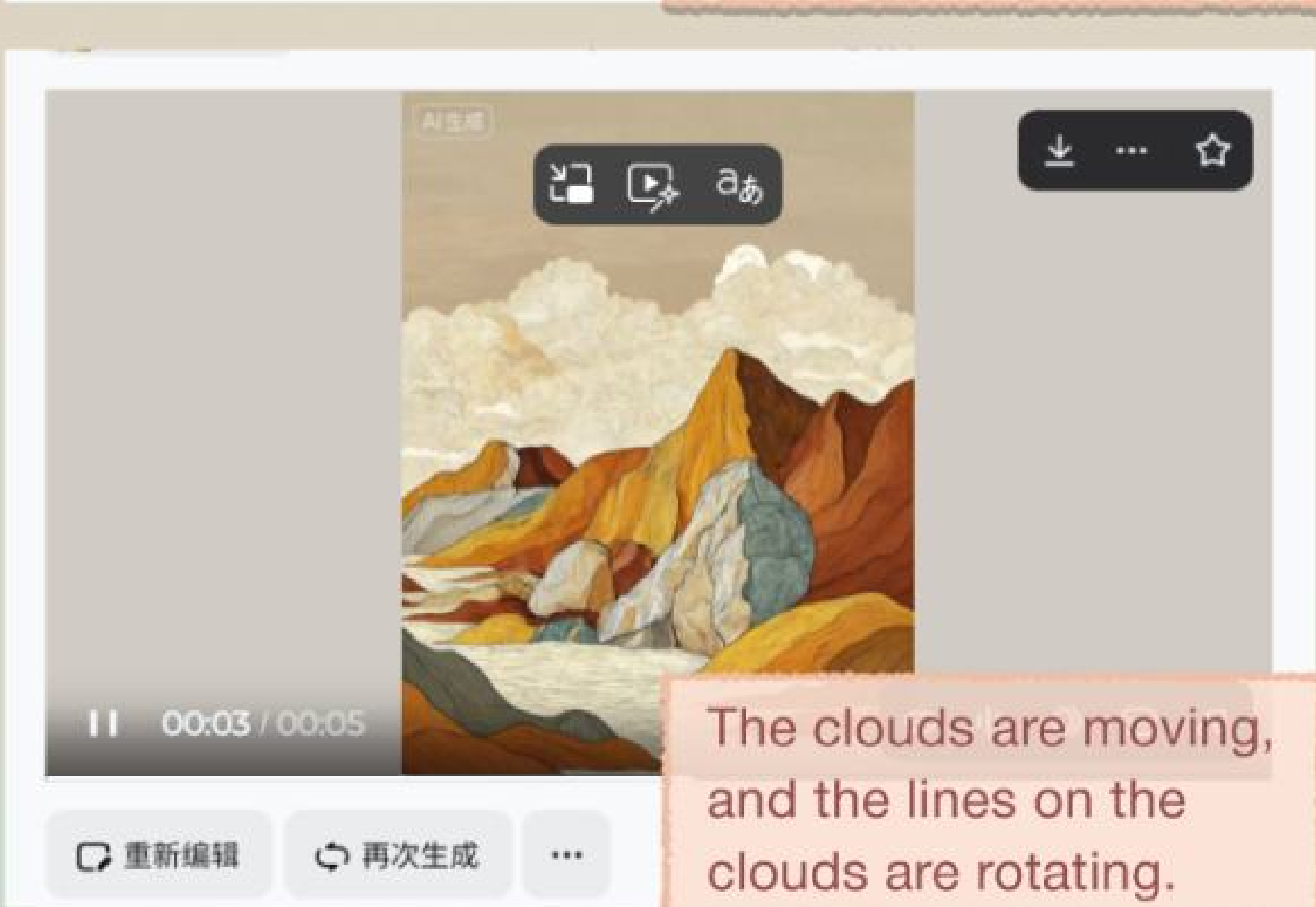


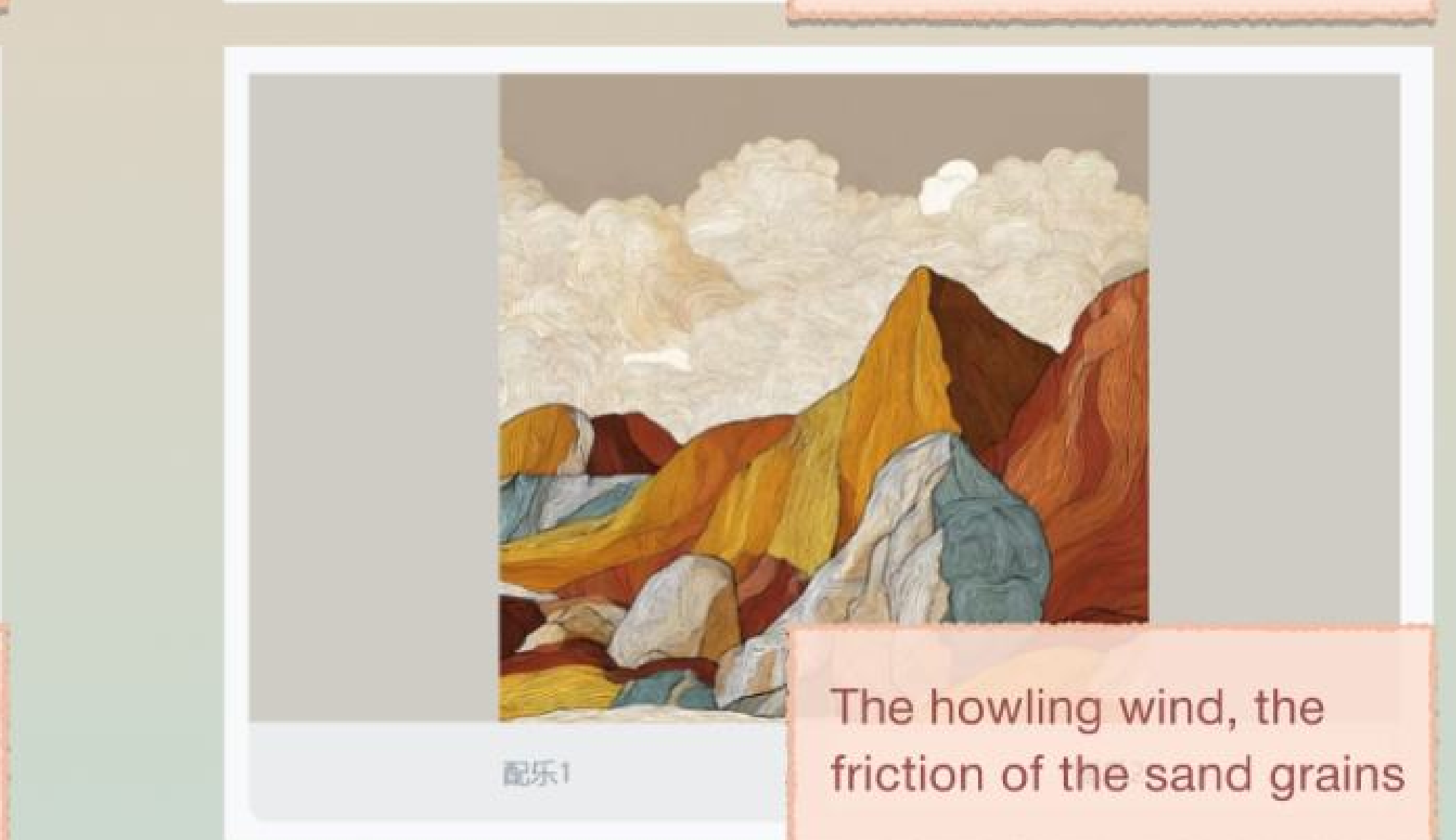
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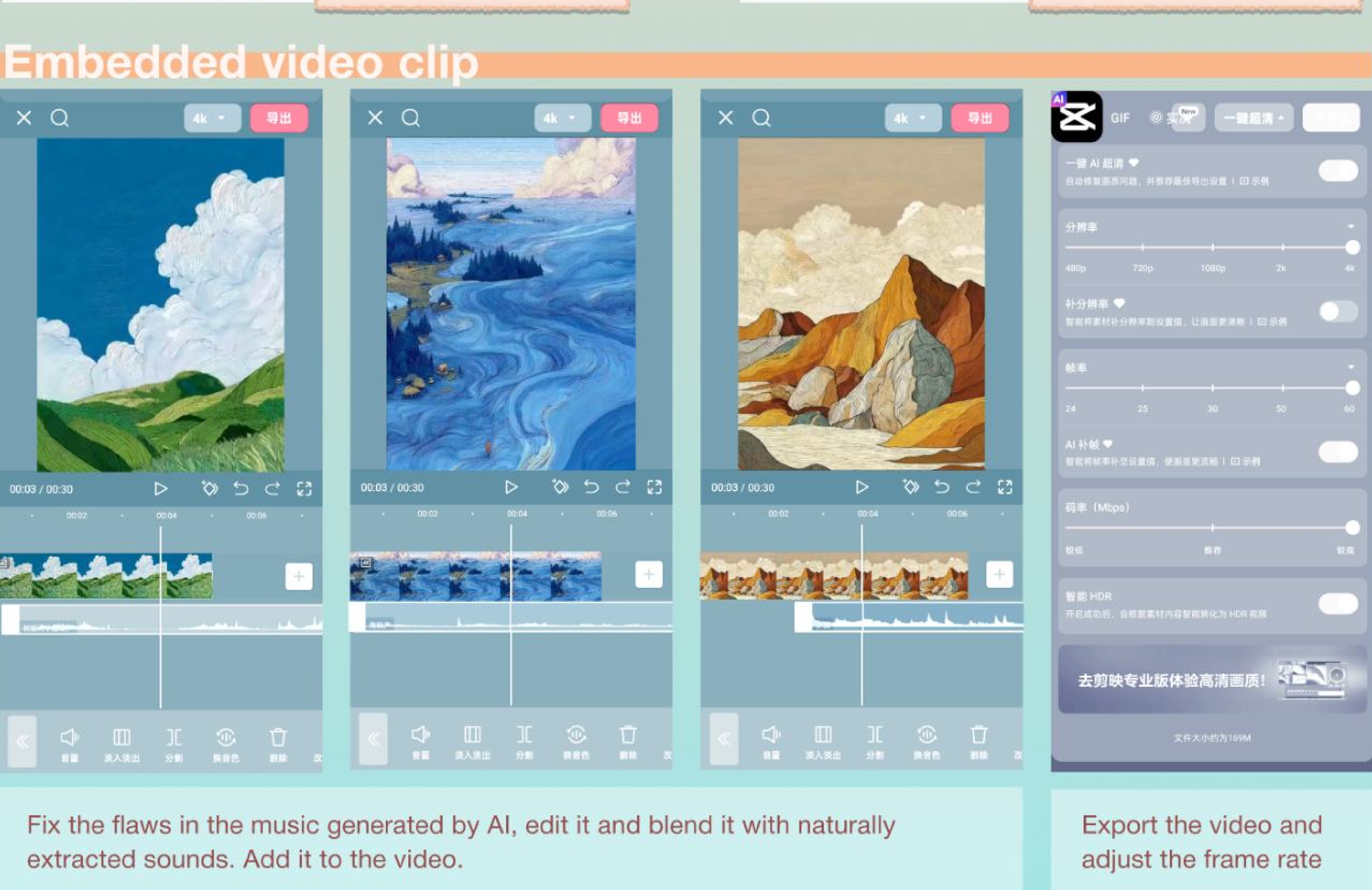
AI Video Generation --Adjust the dynamic content according to the instructions.









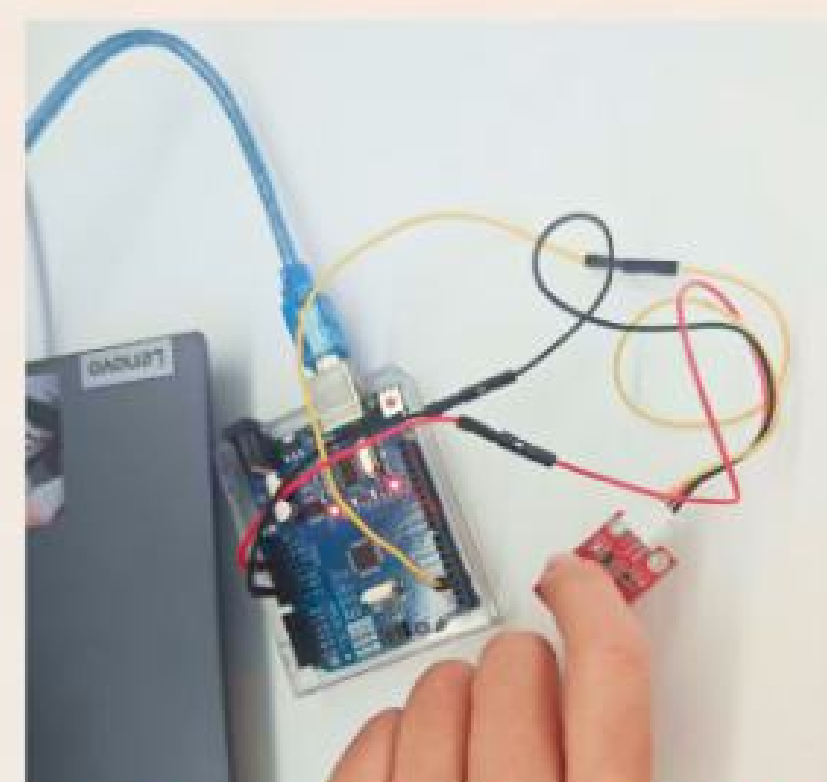


Fix the flaws in the music generated by AI, edit it and blend it with naturally extracted sounds. Add it to the video.

Export the video and adjust the frame rate

# Technical Process

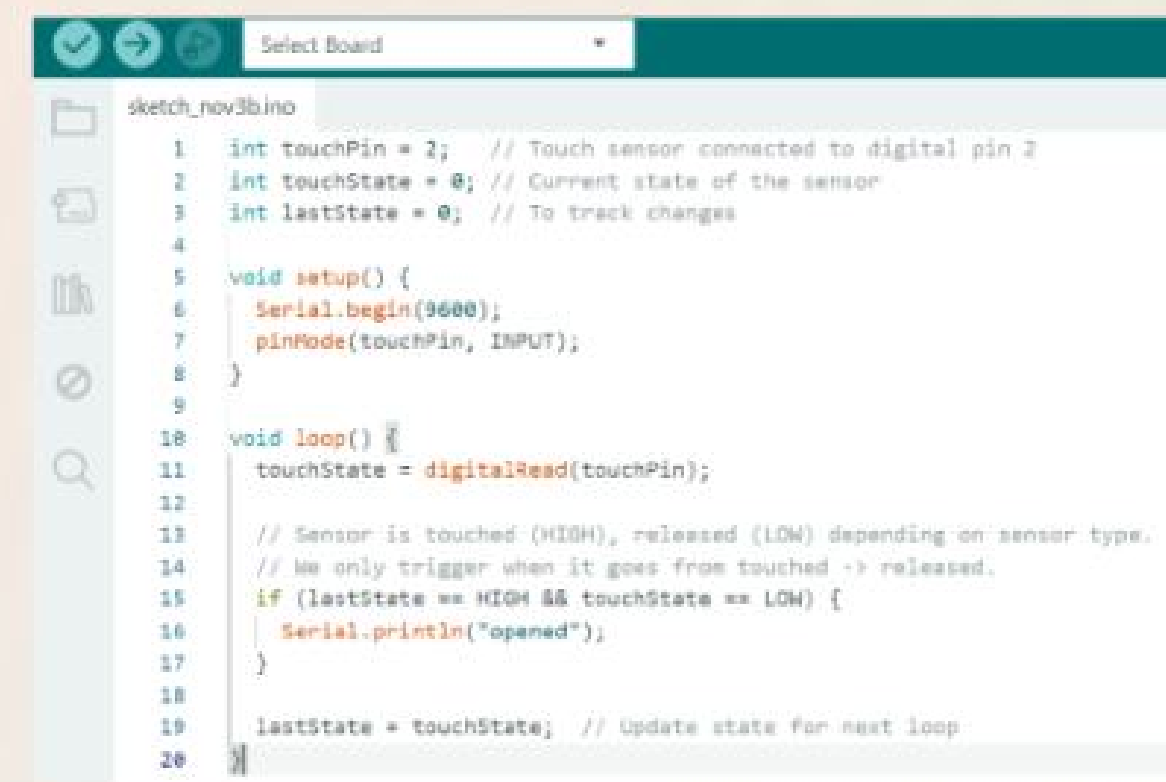
## Step1 Connect the potentiometer cap and Arduino UNO R3, using Arduino IDE for code testing



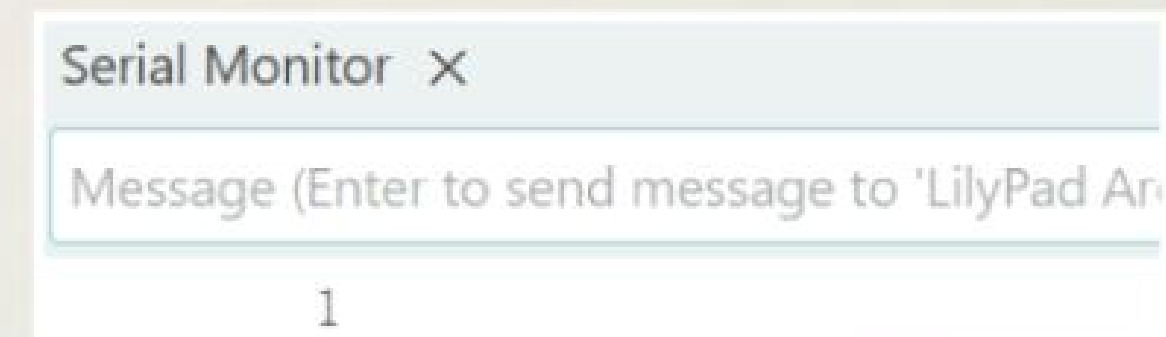
- Connect Arduino UsB



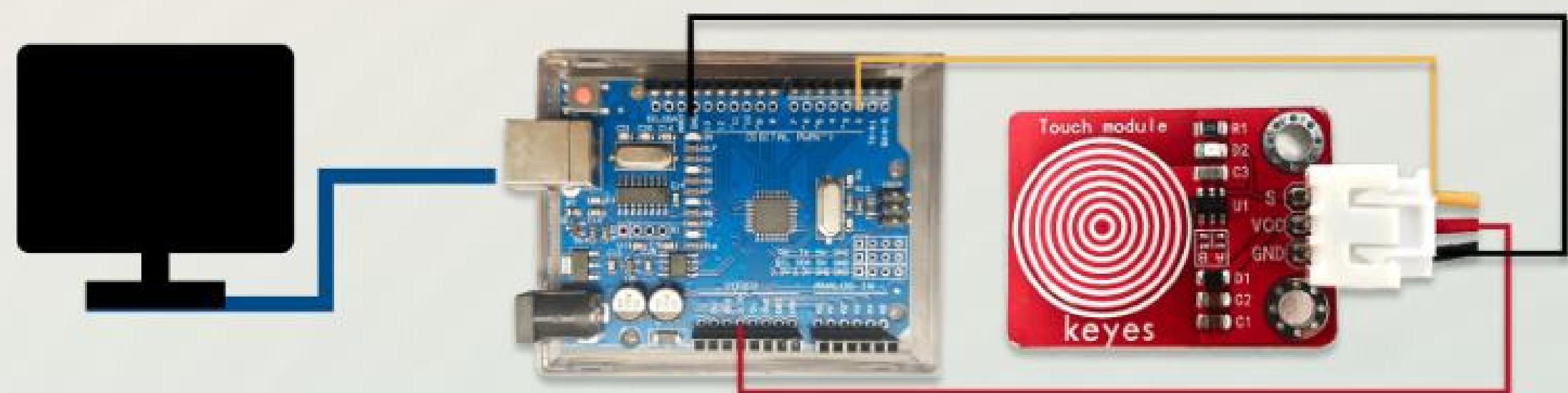
- Touch the sensor and release the hand. The serial Monitor will print 1.



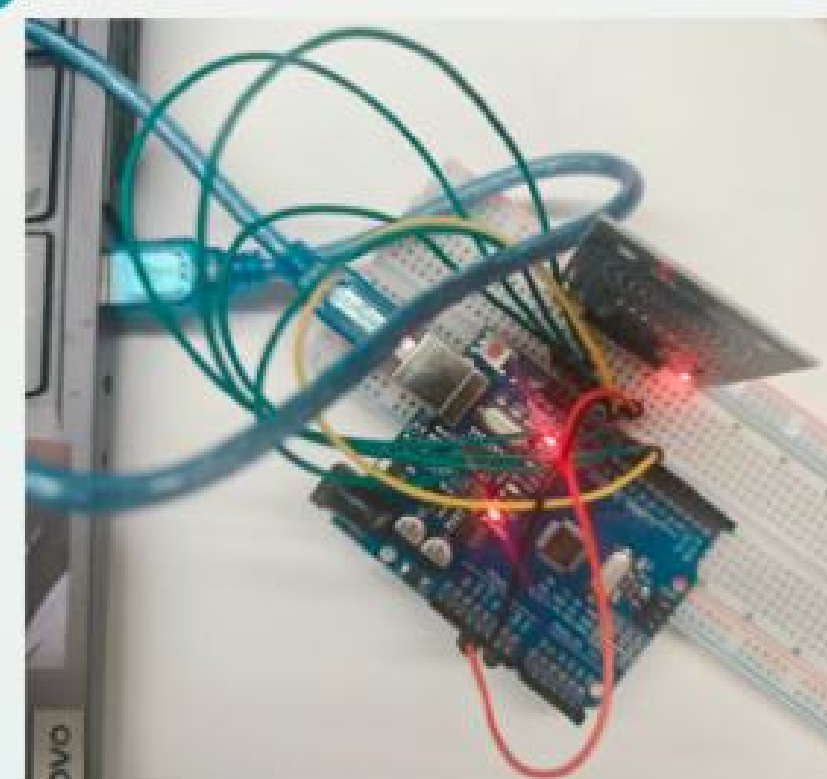
- Upload the code.



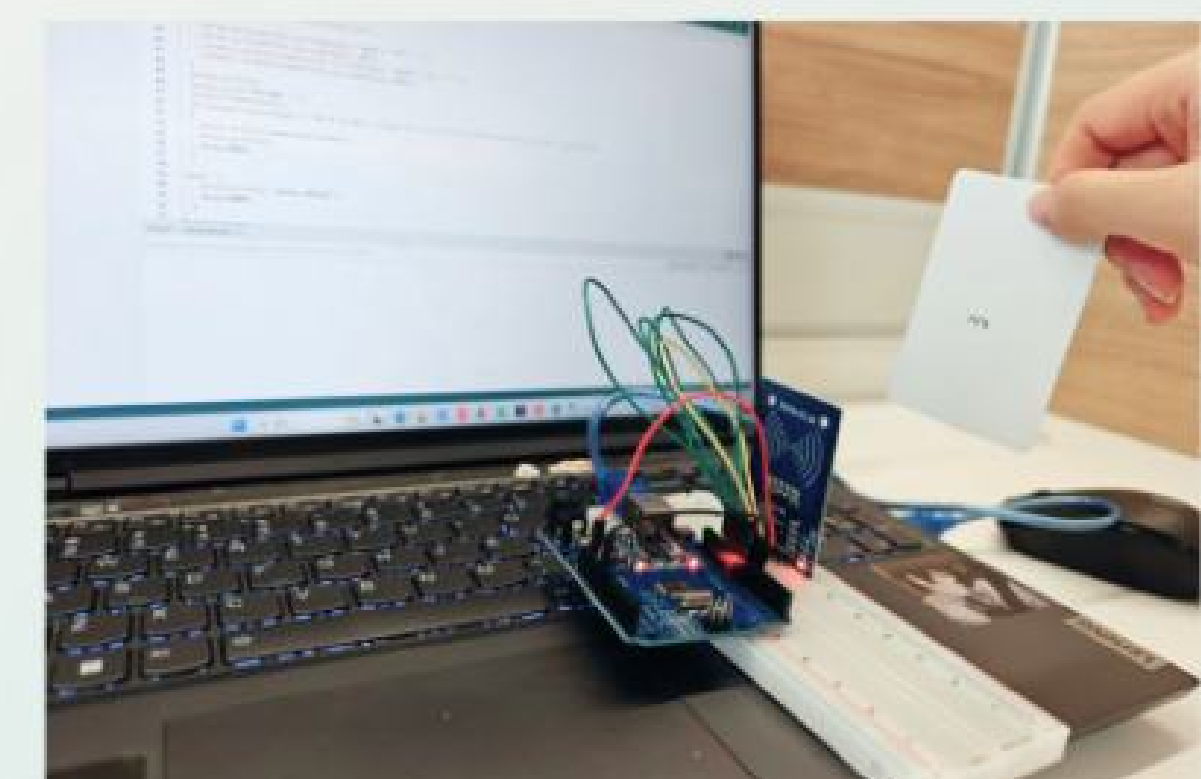
- Output signal, Fixed on the window frame, touching it will change the view.



## Step2 Testing RFID with arduino Uno



- Connect RFID with arduino Uno

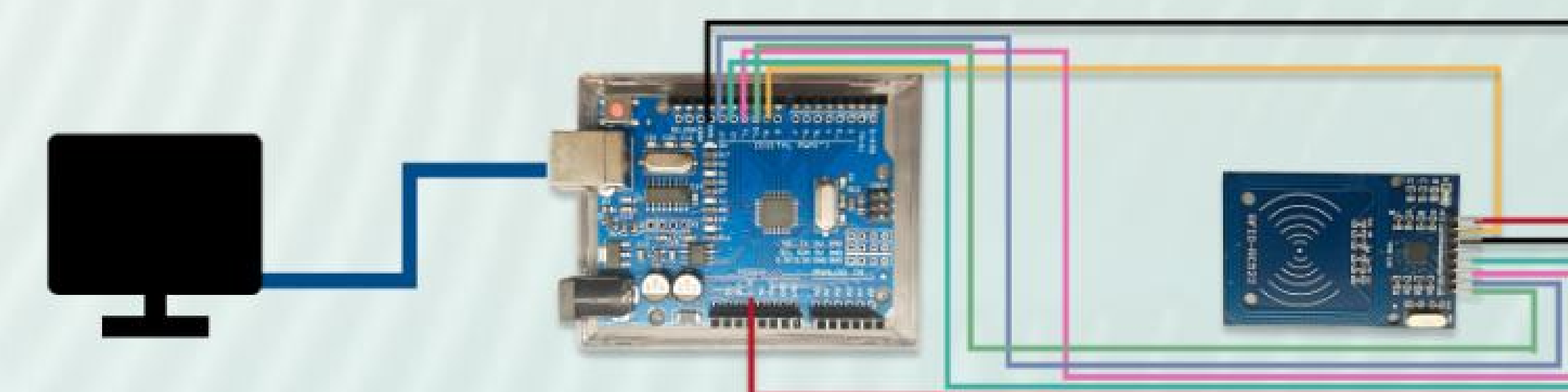


- Identify the card NUIDtag and record it



PICC type: MIFARE 1KB  
A new card has been detected.  
In hex: A5 1E 09 05  
In dec: 165 30 9 5

- Out put the NUID tag



## NUID tag of characters



The NUID tag is:  
In hex: C2 D7 0F 05  
In dec: 194 215 15 5

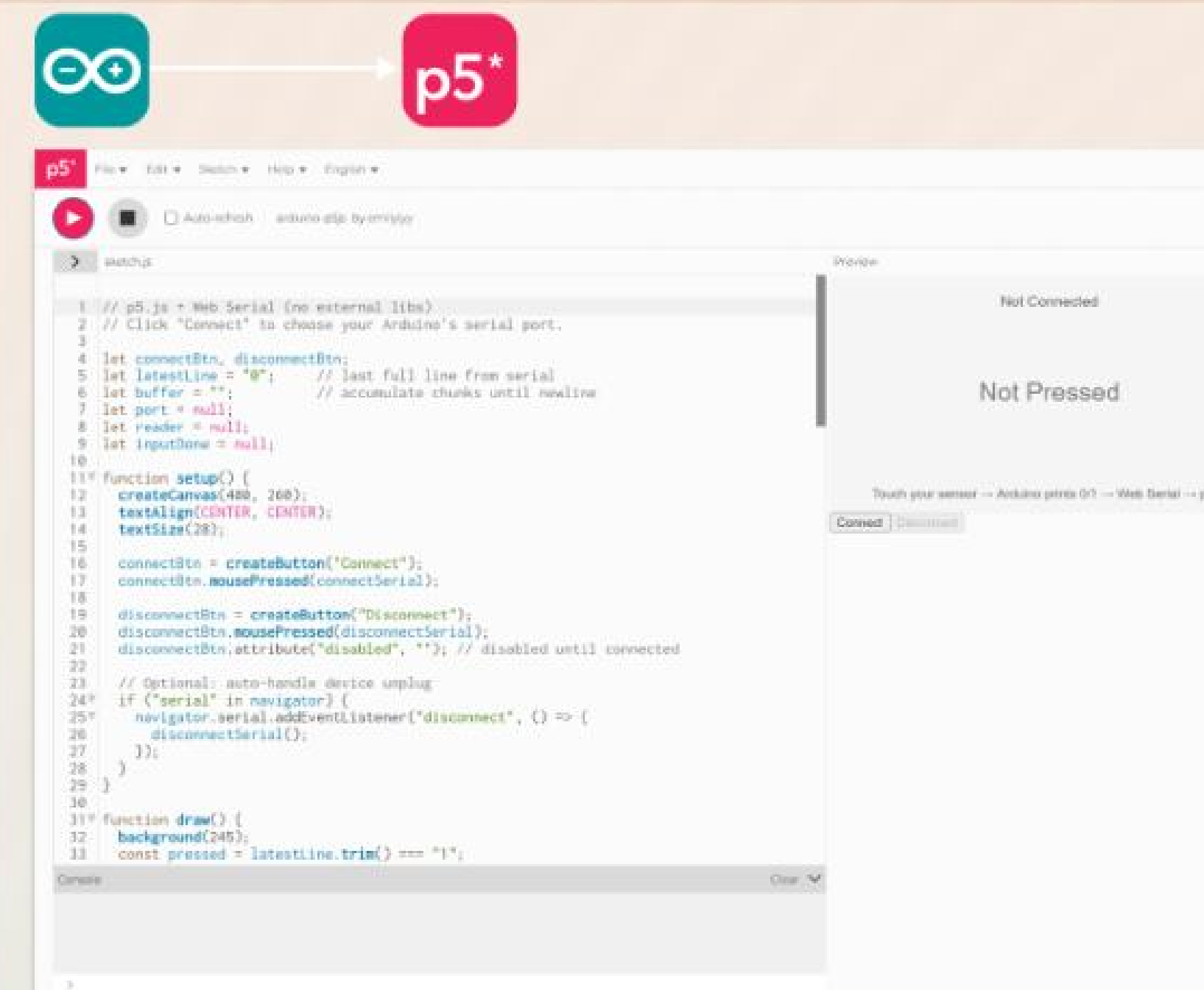


The NUID tag is:  
In hex: 04 13 0E 9F  
In dec: 4 19 14 159

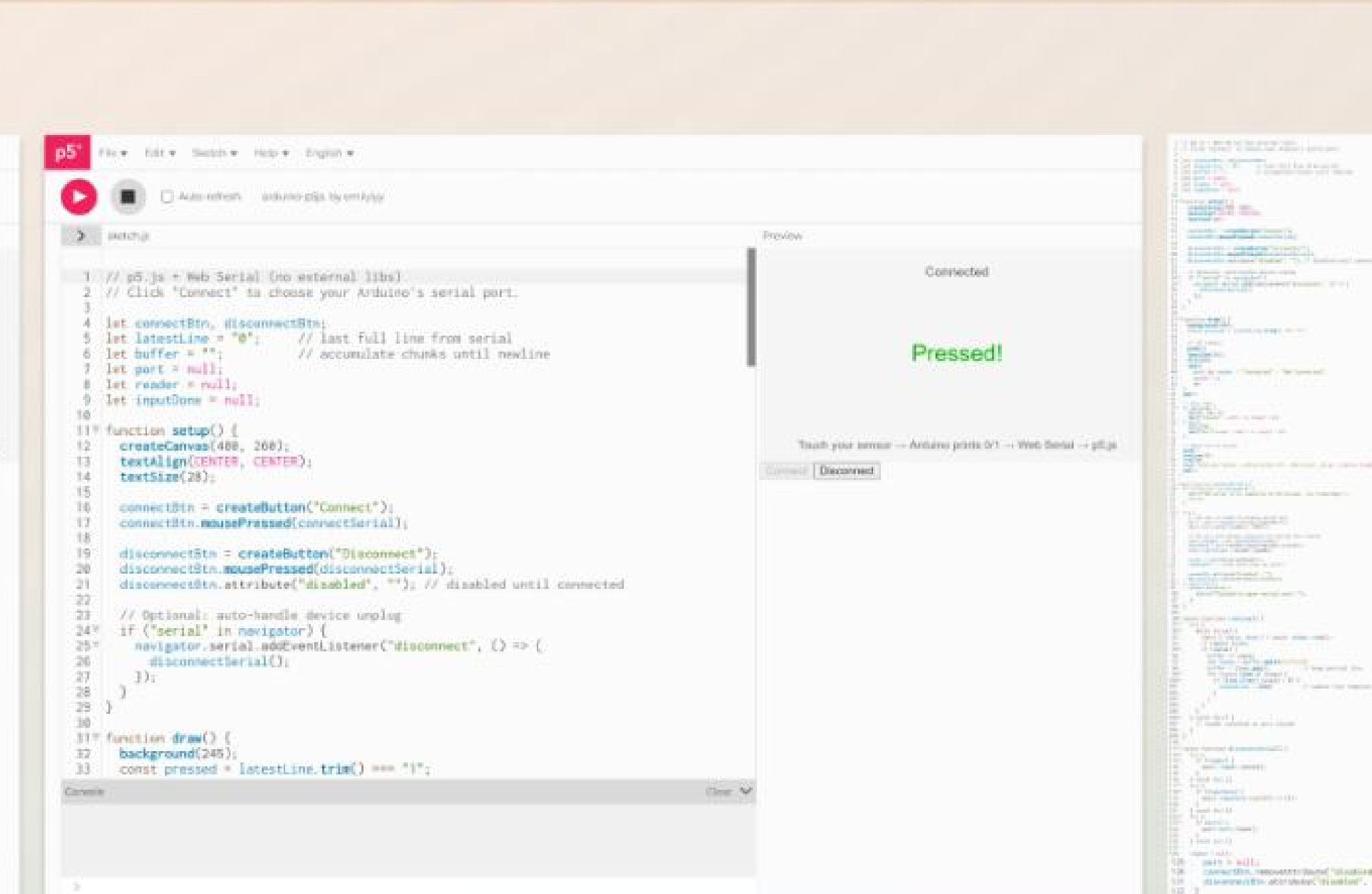


The NUID tag is:  
In hex: A5 1E 09 05  
In dec: 165 30 9 5

## Step3 Upload the code and connect d5.



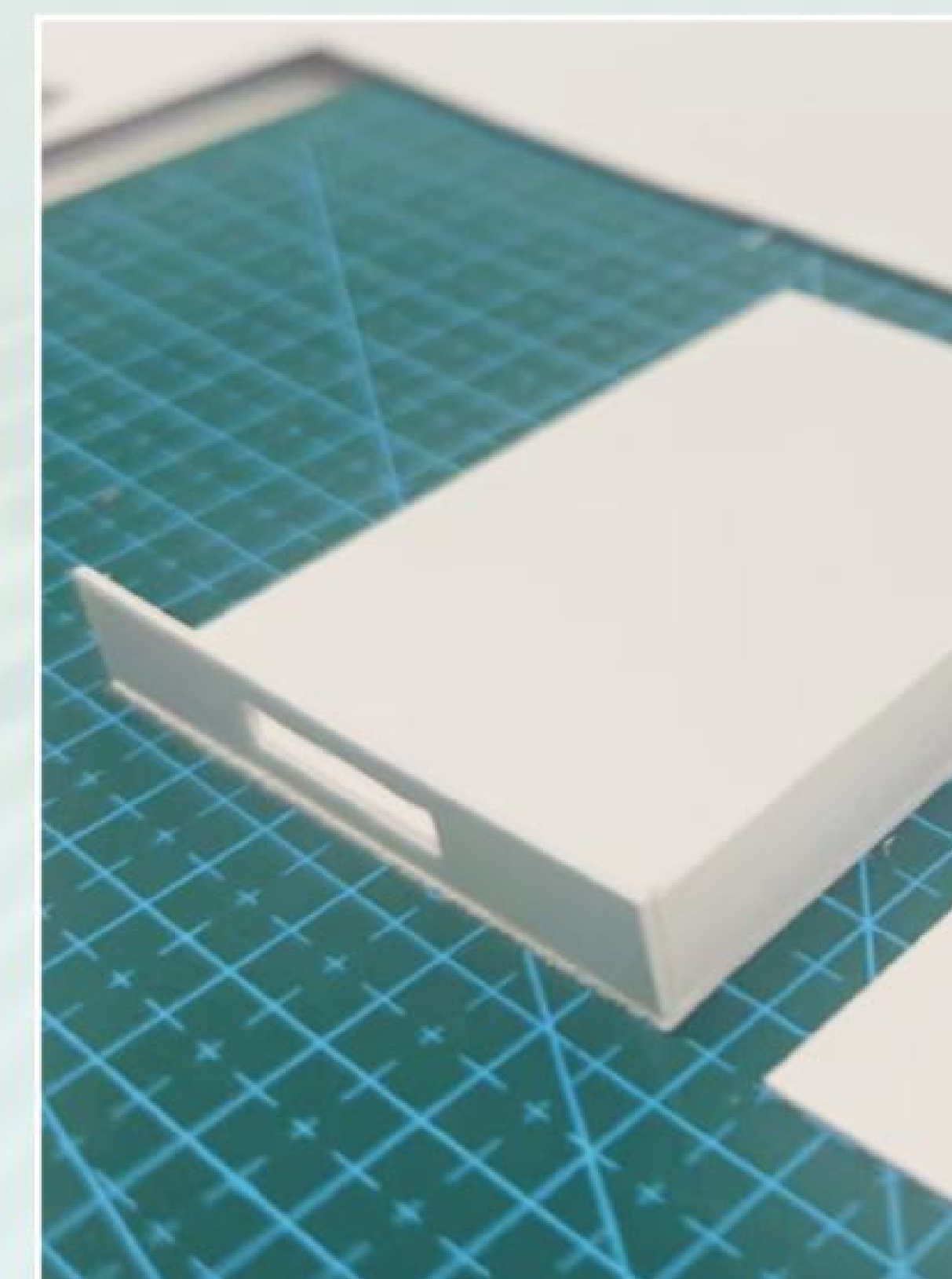
- Select the Arduino's serial port



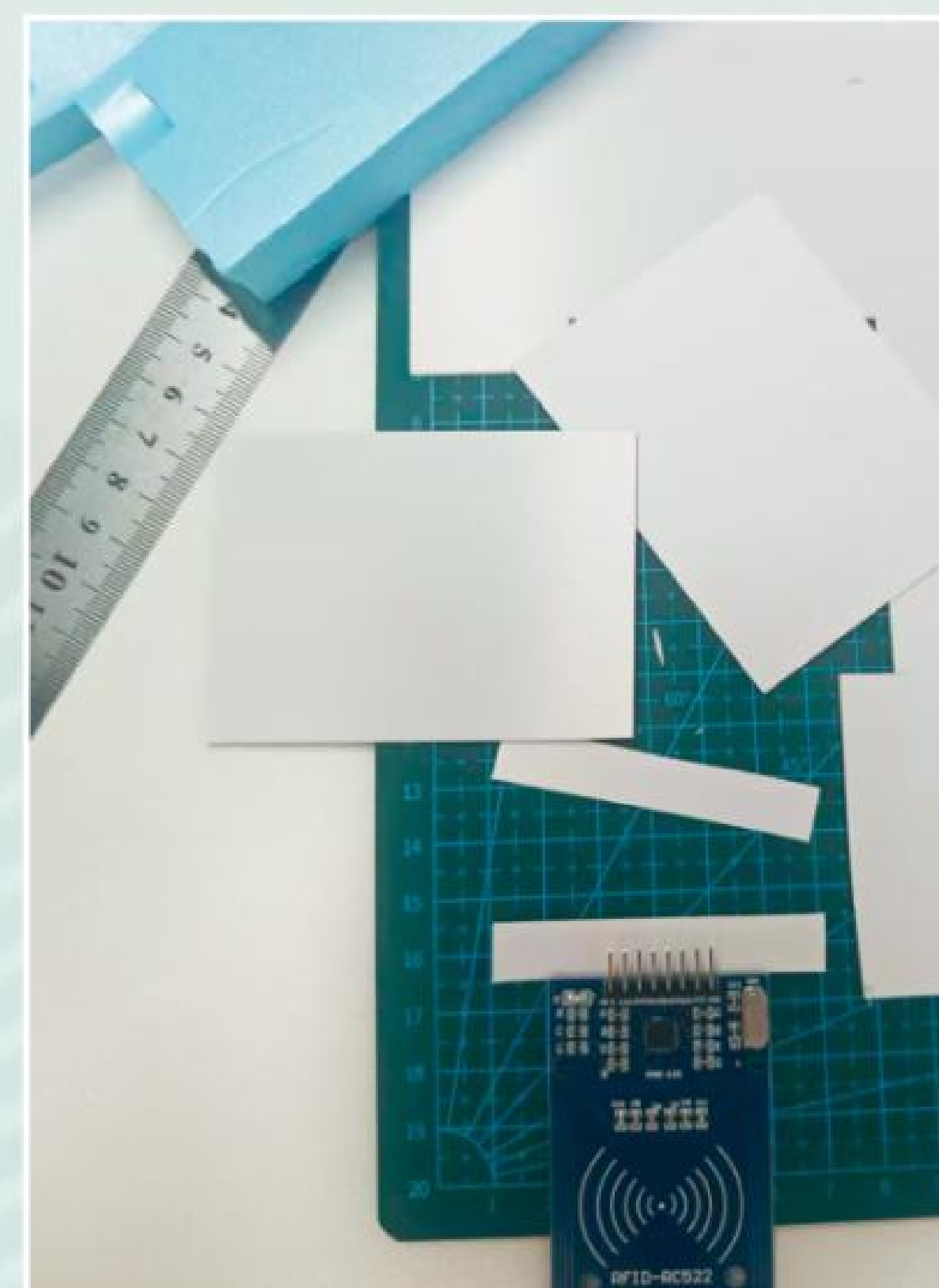
- The browser opens the port and continuously reading data

# Fabrication

## • Installation of the card-swiping sensor box



- Cut PVC according to the RFID size to make the card-swiping box.



- Measure the size of the RFID and make a record



- Attach the custom-made acrylic sheet to the RFID card.

## • Backdrop build



- Then, using the markings on the wallpaper and PVC, cut accordingly.



- Cut PVC and wallpaper according to the outline



- Adjust the code and the screen so that the opening faces directly towards the video playback area.

## • Overall setup and debugging



- Measure the size of the screen to determine the size of the background.



- Install and fix the window frame and the sensor.



- Start the computer, connect to D5, and then display.

# Outcome

STEP1



- Swipe the RFID card, and the window scene will change to show the corresponding character.

STEP2



- The corresponding characters of the card will be displayed in the scenery shown in the window.

STEP3



- Replace the RFID card and use the card of another character

STEP4



- The characters in the window change according to the different cards you swipe.

STEP5



- Close the window. The touch sensor behind the window frame will be activated and the background will change.

STEP6



- The scenery and sound effects change after opening the window.

