



01: Beneath the Nautical Chart

—A Contemporary Reflection on the History of Portugal's Maritime Colonial Economy

Stop-motion animation

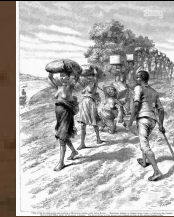
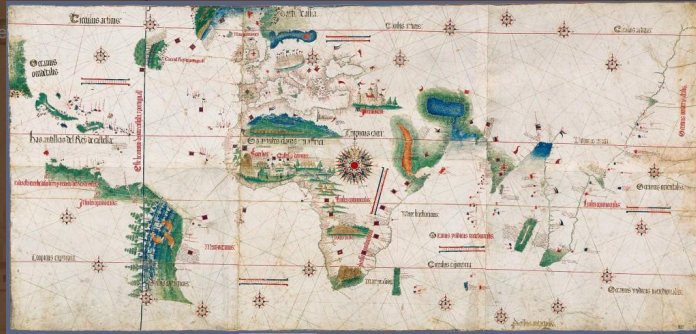
3' 07"'

This stop-motion animation uses ships as narrative threads, moving between history and the present. It traces the expansion of Portugal's maritime power, showing how voyages under the banners of "discovery" exposed the underlying dynamics of economic domination and inequality.

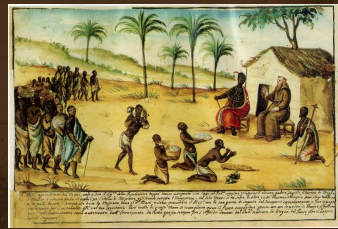
Through sea routes, ports, and flows of resources, the work reveals how the colonial economy transformed the ship into a "tool of exploitation", a greedy octopus. In this historically burdened voyage, *Beneath the Nautical Chart* not only questions how countries arrive at today's global landscape. Through taking advantages of inequality? Through exploitation? This work reflects these issues and also imagines an economic future that resist the logic of extraction. It is where countries collaborate peacefully for a common future and a common opulence.

Background Research 1: Portugal's Maritime Economic History

This project stems from my long-standing interest in Portugal's maritime economic history. It focuses on how the country leveraged shipping dominance and capital expansion to build a trans-Atlantic, African, and Asian trade system. Through this research, I came to realize that the economic plunder and systemic control of expansion under the guise of "discovery" initiated the early formation of global economic structures.



Background Research 2: Colonial Phenomena in Portugal's Maritime Economy



I found that Portugal's maritime expansion was inseparable from colonial phenomena. Frankly: resource extraction, forced labor transfers, and restructuring of external economies to benefit itself. This led me to reflect on the systematic ideology of colonial expansion... Is it really good for the world? For Portugal itself? But I know it caused destruction to those that received it...

Background Research 3: Economic Inequality after Decolonization

Challenges of Globalization - exploitation of labor



In the contemporary context of globalization, it is necessary to re-examine how peripheral states and regions remain subject to economic colonial structures. These asymmetric relationships did not vanish with the formal end of colonialism. The unequal treatments of other countries through political and economic violence did not disappear as we live in a peaceful country, enjoying life. Exclusion of countries out of free-trade agreements, tariffs imposed on countries that decreases the overall consumer surplus and export/import revenues still exists... This project takes such dynamics as its starting point to explore possibilities for global cooperation built on flexibility and fairness instead of any kind of unequal treatment.---

Animation Concept 1: Portuguese Ships and the Expansion of Economic Maps



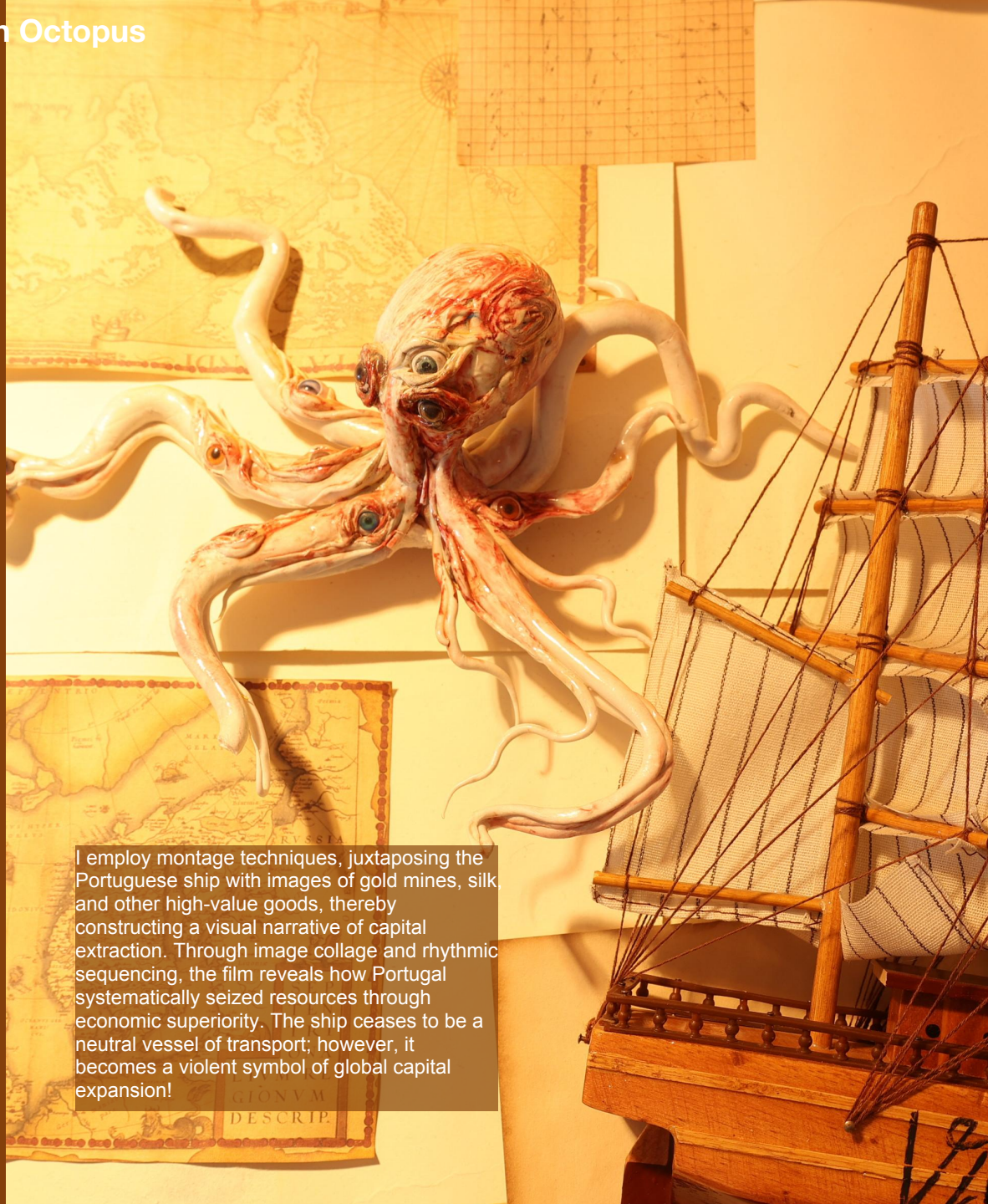
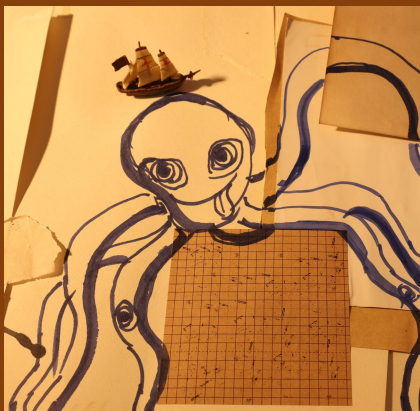
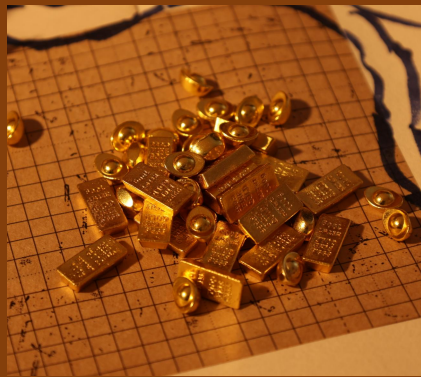
The narrative is based on a map I created, following a Portuguese ship departing from Lisbon to reconstruct early global trade routes. Combining stop-motion imagery with historical maps, the animation illustrates how Portugal used maritime routes to extend its economic reach to Africa and Asia, creating a cross-continental economic system. In building the visuals, I used hand-made maps, globes, and historical charts to collage a fictional "road of economy." The overall style of all chosen visuals recreates the scenes of Portugal maritime routes.

Animation Concept 2: The Portuguese Ship as an Octopus



In the animation, the Portuguese ship carries the metaphor of colonial expansion and resource plunder. To highlight how Europe, in the wake of the Industrial Revolution, exercised structural oppression and economic extraction in Africa, I fused the imagery of a ship with that of an octopus. The octopus's tentacles represent the limitless extension of economic control, grasping resources and steering trade routes. Essentially, this presents globalization, exploitation, and domination.

Animation Concept 2: The Portuguese Ship as an Octopus



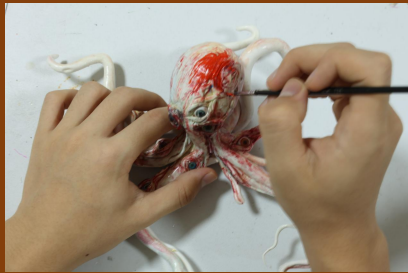
I employ montage techniques, juxtaposing the Portuguese ship with images of gold mines, silk and other high-value goods, thereby constructing a visual narrative of capital extraction. Through image collage and rhythmic sequencing, the film reveals how Portugal systematically seized resources through economic superiority. The ship ceases to be a neutral vessel of transport; however, it becomes a violent symbol of global capital expansion!

Animation Concept 3: Labor Exploitation in the Colonial Economy



The animation also focuses on labor exploitation within colonial systems. By depicting the invasion into Indigenous communities, this film highlights the violent and systemic oppression enacted by Portugal's maritime expansion for the seek of resources and economic benefits. I emphasized on how indigenous Africans lost their freedom and their lives, if they have resisted, eventually being enslaved as labour power, not anymore as human. This reveals the way colonization turned people into "transportable and tradable resources".

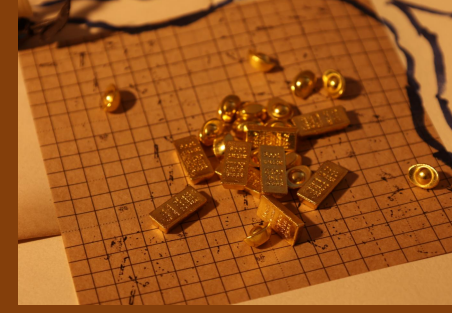
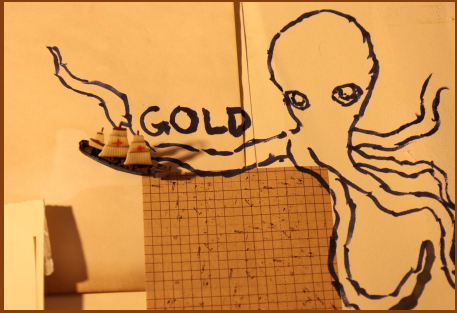
Animation Production Process



For this film, I created extensive map-related visual materials, including hand-drawn charts, collaged terrains, and simulated routes. The project moved through multiple stages including textual research, conceptual setting, prop-making, and stop-motion shooting. The final three-minute animation was completed with over 3,000 individually photographed frames.

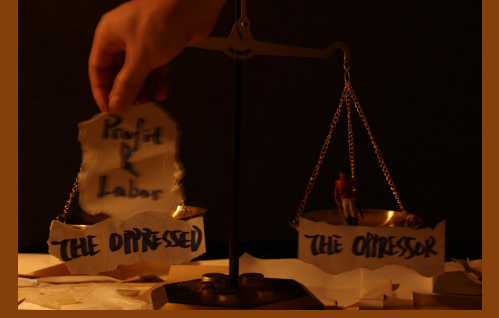
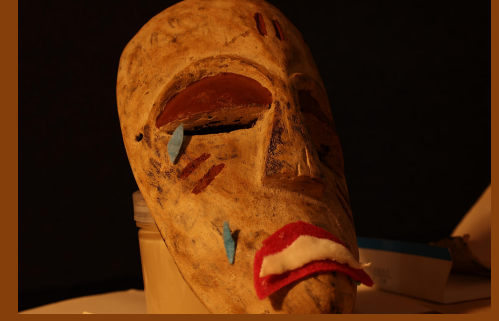
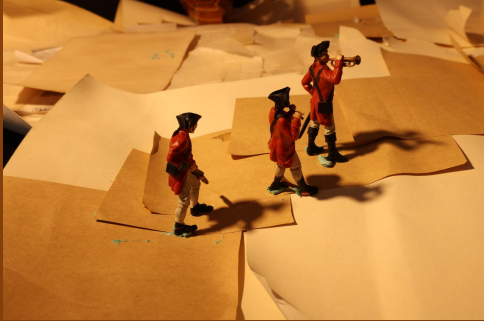


Animation Screenshots



The story begins with me “becoming” a Portuguese ship, departing Lisbon, rounding Africa, and sailing toward East Asia. Yet as the journey unfolds, the ship gradually transforms into an octopus-like form: a tool of capital expansion and resource extraction.

Animation Screenshots



The film presents the most brutal side of colonial systems: treating human labor itself as a commodity. This process lays bare the entrenched inequality that was created through Portugal's expansion. The act of expansion is just Portugal's way of development, but its impact was detrimental to these countries and people that were exploited for such a purpose. In the closing, I want to call upon everyone to reimagine and practice genuine global economic justice in the future world.