GENERATIONAL LIBRARY

annotated workbook

T R D C J

5% of people living in the same neighbourhood as someone under 18 are over 65, compared with 15% in 1991

Intergenerational Foundation (2016)

our critique

Humans by nature are social animals that have relied on collective compassion and support for eons. While this innate chracteristic is embedded within each and every one of us, contemporary advancements in technology and fixations on hyperindividualism have created a barrier between generations that disincentivize such connections before they even happen. Although intergenerational relationships have historically proven to benefit all parties, our current stigmatisms and beliefs provide limited opportunities for such systems to thrive.

In a world where mutual dependency between generations is front and centre, how might our relationships and understanding of each other change? Can there be more to our perceptions of intergenerational values besides an acknowledgement of age? Through our Generational Library, we seek to explore how the sharing of personal experiences and knowledge can be a facilitator for stronger communal bonds.

INTRODUCTION +
CONCEPT OVERVIEW

our motivation

As university students, we seldom interact with those outside of our age group. When we were children however, we were lucky enough to be surrounded by grandparents, aunties, cousins or other family friends of all different ages. To this day we still cherish and value these relationships as well as the lessons learned.

We aim to explore ways to emulate these intergenerational relationships with those outside our family and discover what tools are necessary in doing so.

Dedicated to the the inspirational family members that helped raise us ♥

bridging age differences

Building intergenerational relationships paves a route to success in early life and is a key to future happiness and well-being.

The Youth and the Elderly are those that are most likely impacted due to financial, emotion, mental and physical limitations.

benefits for the young

Children blossom not just in the embrace of parents, but also from the commitment of other adults who encourage and mentor them.

Urie Bronfenbrenner, child psychologist & co-founder of Head Start preschool program (2016)

benefits for the elderly

Older generations who spent time caring for the next generation were three times as likely to be happy as those who did not.

George Vaillant, Harvard Study of Adult Development (1938 - Present)

the problematic cycle

Surfacing the invisibles that prevent more intergenerational relationships from forming and the consequences that follow.

01 Existing Structures

Concept of generational segregation is reinforced by our existing structures of housing policies, ageism and hyperindividualism that disincentivizes open connections.

Hyperindividualism is the tendency for social actors to understand themselves as disparate entities rather than primarily as members of collectives or groups.

02 Heightened Divide

Disconnect removes opportunities for social interaction and learning from each other which leads to greater individualistic tendencies that promote non-empathetically driven competition.

The chasm that separates the beliefs and behaviors belonging to members of different generations grows larger and creates generational gaps.

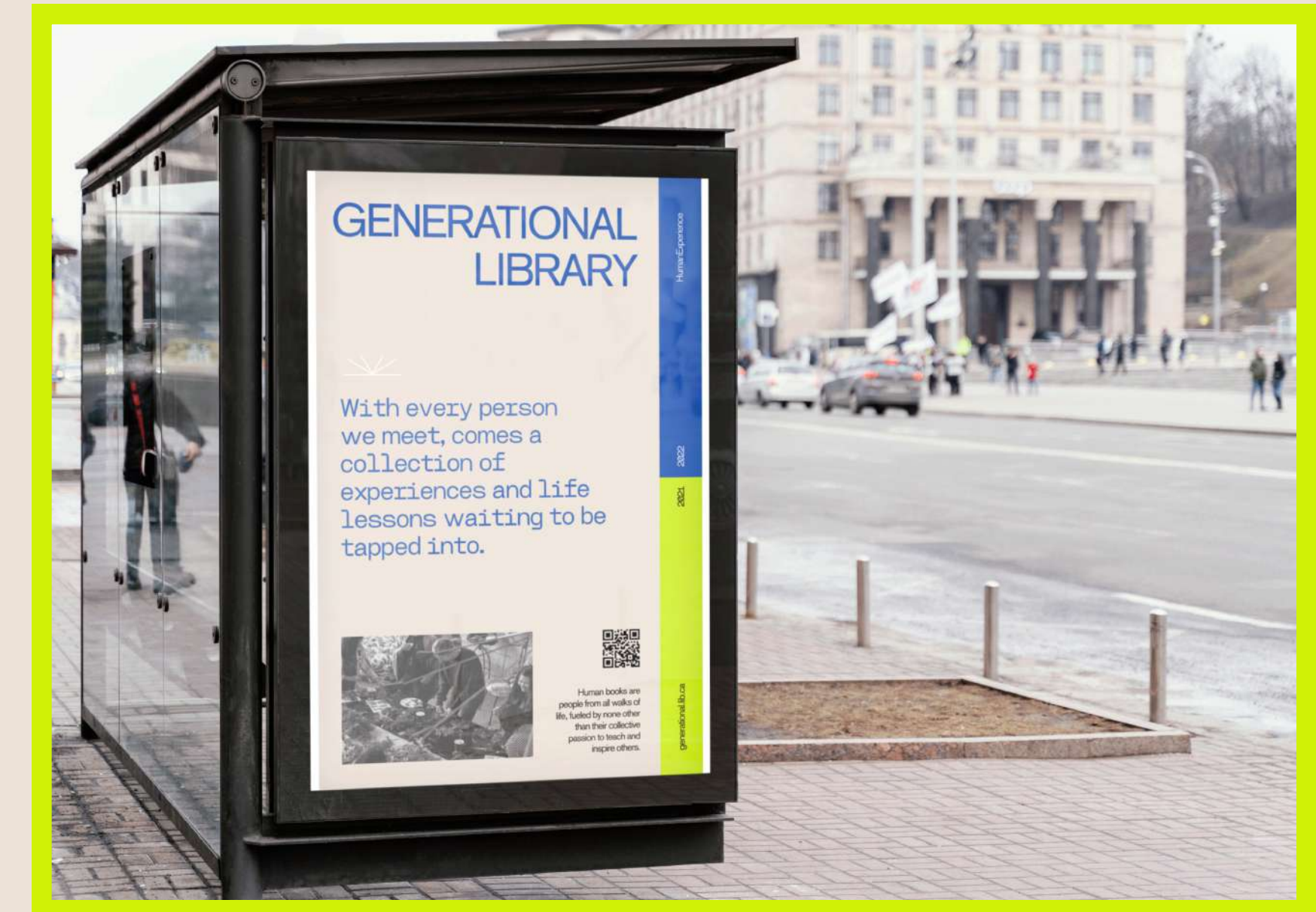## 03 Repercussions + Repetition

Lack of social cohesion drives feelings of loneliness that harm the health of the young and old which helps perpetuate already existing structures.

Shifting baseline syndrome and generational amnesia also occurs as knowledge is not passed down from generation to generation.

concept overview

Our project aims to facilitate and redefine intergenerational relationships through the Generational Library where people of all ages are invited to "check out" human books and participate in on site activities such as cooking or drawing. One can learn about the Generational Library through public service posters around the city or through our website. From there, those interested can book a session with a human book or simply drop in to participate in group events. To memorialize their experiences, participants can record notes in their journal provided by the Generational Library.

How we might foster intergenerational relationships by creating a space that encourages bonding through storytelling, shared activities, and knowledge transfer?

leading questions

How do we mimic the natural bond we have with our friends and non biological relationships with the elderly?

How can we engage seniors in intergenerational activities so there is a mutual benefit for parties involved?
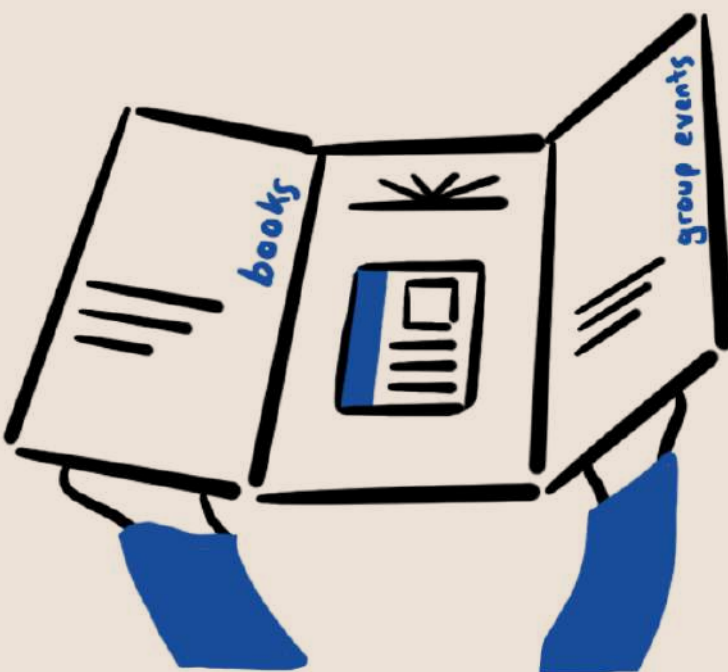
How can younger generations gain and and benefit from a relationship with the elderly that does not seem contrived and vice-versa?

How can we create an environment that facilitates storytelling and knowledge sharing among different generations?
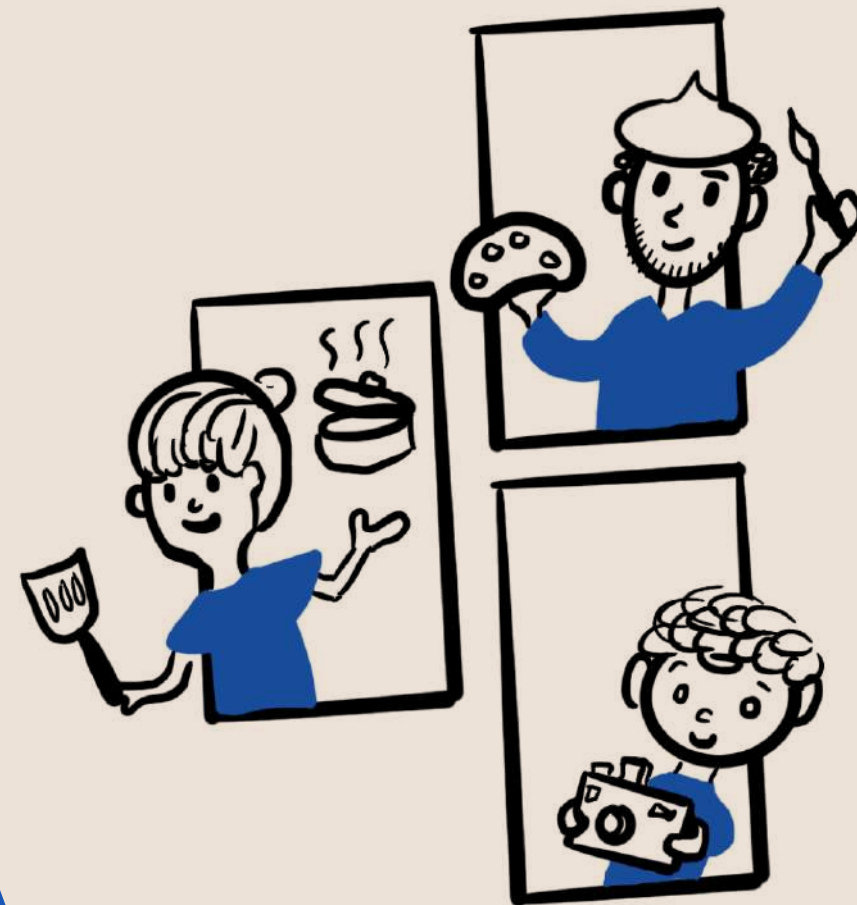
interactions + touchpoints

notice the poster

How can we communicate to audiences to inform people of the Generational Library and encourage them to visit?

"How is this different from a regular library?"

How can we provide an onboarding package that clearly introduces newcomers to the library's offerings?

"What can I access with my library card?"

sign up for a library card

browse the collection and book a session

How can we showcase speakers and stories to make them compelling enough to explore and revisit?

"What types of shared experiences are offered?"

How can activities be used as a facilitator in navigating new relationships and encourage conversation among different generations?

"How can I feel comfortable with talking to strangers?"

meet with your "humanbook" or participate in group events

reflect on your experience and collect memories

How can we provide a platform to recollect shared experiences and value lessons learned from each session?

"How can I easily share these unique memories with others?"

BACKGROUND
RESEARCH

domain precedents

Human Library

The Human Library is a safe space for people to have conversations they would not normally have access to. Every human book represents a group in our society that is often subjected to prejudice, stigmatization or discrimination. Just like traditional books, they have titles that describe their experiences like Black Activist, Chronic Depression, Survivor of Trafficking, Transgender, Holocaust Survivor, etc.

Grandma's Recipes

Grandma's Recipes is a Japanese documentary series that features the stories of ten Japanese women who experienced World War II and their relationship with cooking. Through the act of cooking and talking about food, the series unravels deeper layers of the society, spanning discussions of religion, family, and war.

inspiration

We take inspiration from these two precedents that highlights the values of human connection and shared experiences. While the Human Library provides us with ideas to frame our concept and the invisibles we want to unveil, Nakamura's Grandma Recipes series helps us envision how conversations could be facilitated to emphasize the importance of nurturing intergenerational relationships.

ElliQ

A robot with voice recognition technology that helps the elderly navigate the internet and stay social.

Japan's Valley of the Dolls

More than 350 handmade dolls were arrayed in Nagoro to make the vanishing village alive again.
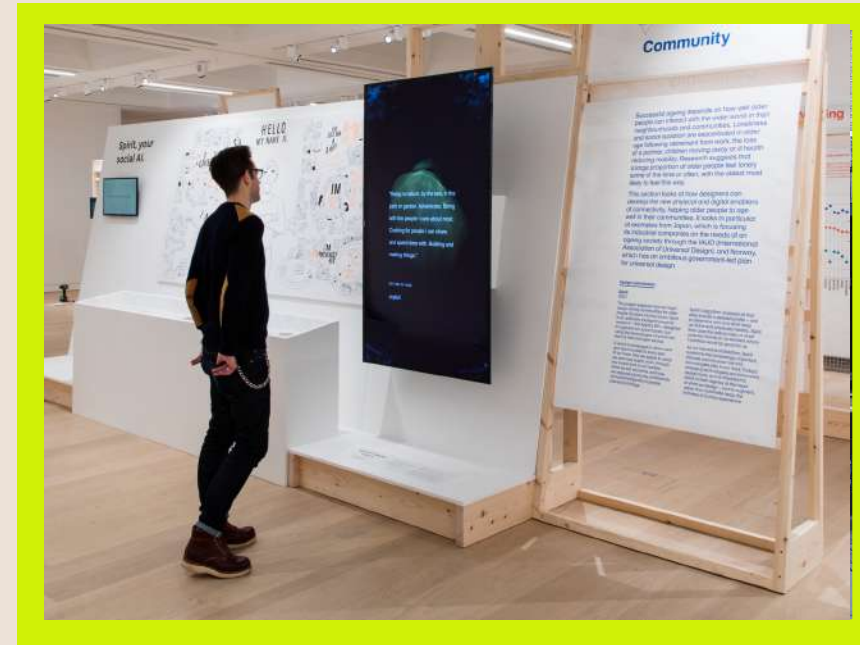
New Old Exhibition

An exhibition that looked at how design can help people lead fuller, healthier and more rewarding lives into old age.

Nesterly

A homesharing service designed to build intergenerational connections while increasing access to affordable housing.

speculative precedents

Sprit: Your Social Assistant

This IDEO-designed speculative design is an AI personal assistant focused on helping elderly people build communities. IDEO imagined a world where Spirit can have access to every part of our lives: who we talk to, what we eat and watch, how we respond physically, emotionally and psychologically to people, places and things. This data is then analyzed to build fine-grained user profiles and create recommendations for how we can improve conversations, meet potential friends and augment our social bonds.

Negentropic Landscapes

This project reimagines hospice care at the level of urban planning and community organizing to build a model that represents a mix of intergenerational infrastructures and volunteer-led hospice services. An arrangement example of this is how senior living and childcare services are organized together surrounded by green space and intergenerational activities such as gardening and arts and crafts.

These speculative design precedents inspire us on the ways we could explore the topic of intergenerational relationships in an aging society and the different mediums we could use to engage with the public. While Spirit examines the role of emerging technologies in building strong communities for the elderly in the future, Negentropic Lanscapes demonstrates how we could help develop shared values and collective understandings between generations by incorporating intergenerational activities and infrastructures into our community spaces.

proposed concepts

Educational Framework

Utilizing an intergenerational structure, education shifts focus from existing hyper-individualistic teachings towards a greater collectivist model that cultivates more shared knowledge.

Custom Caregiver Robot

A highly customisable robot companion designed to help younger generations fulfill their duty as caregivers for the old. The way the robot behaves, what it says, how it says it, and even the tone of voice can be customised to accomodate individual needs and preferences.
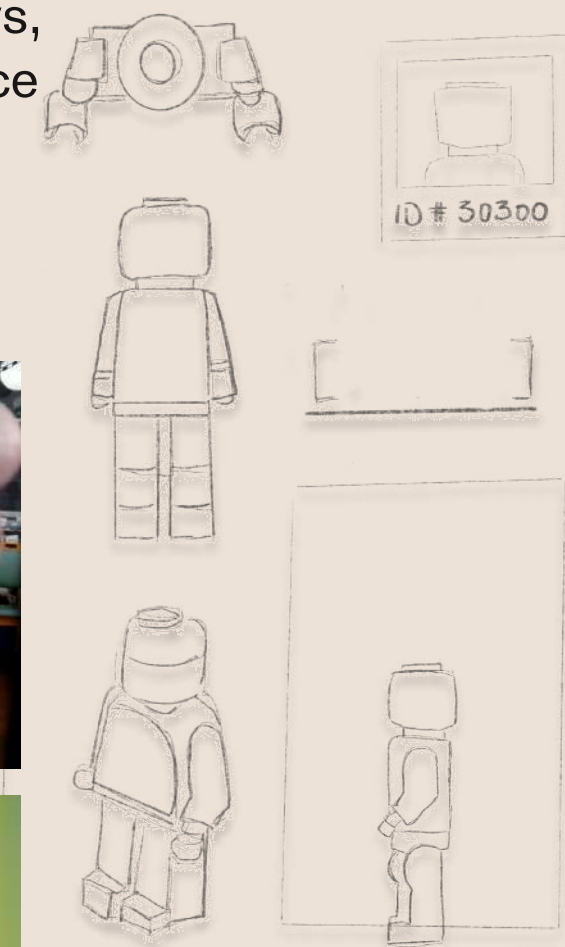
Intergenerational Library

A place where all generations can acquire new skills and obtain valuable life lessons by participating in a wide range of intergenerational activities and engaging in one-on-one conversations with a "human book".
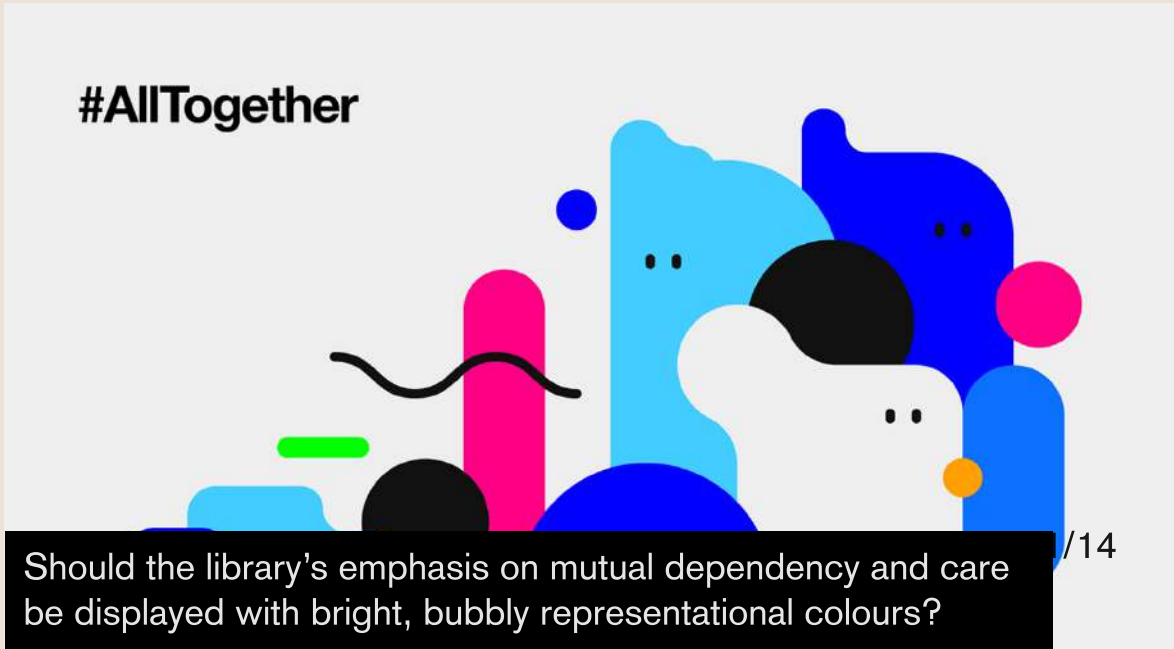
ARTIFACT IDEATION + FINAL FORMS

developing the form

In the context of this world, we imagine that these libraries act as places where people will go for their informative needs and their casual past time; almost like a home away from home.

With this in mind, we looked to consider how we could visually communicate the harmonious weaving of generations and what assets could be showcased to highlight the libraries' services.

#AllTogether

Should the library's emphasis on mutual dependency and care be displayed with bright, bubbly representational colours?

CONSIDERED ART DIRECTION

vol. 02

OUR CREATIVE TEAM

MEET *Lauren*

DRINK OF CHOICE

BEER   WINE   COCKTAIL   MARTINI

FAVORITE BINGE SHOW:

Forensic Files

YOU CAN ALWAYS FIND ME...

chillin with my dogs

MY GO-TO OUTFIT

LEGGINGS   JEANS   DRESS/SKIRT

FAVORITE THING ABOUT WORKING AT HBI IS...

the amazing women

Munt met een missie

'Eigenlijk liegt een munt op alle fronten'

Or with a neutral back that allows individual personalities + elements to stand out with strong accent colours?

FINAL ART DIRECTION

INFORMATION GUIDE

BOOOK.LAND FALMOUTH EDITION

FALMOUTH UNIVERSITY

©2020

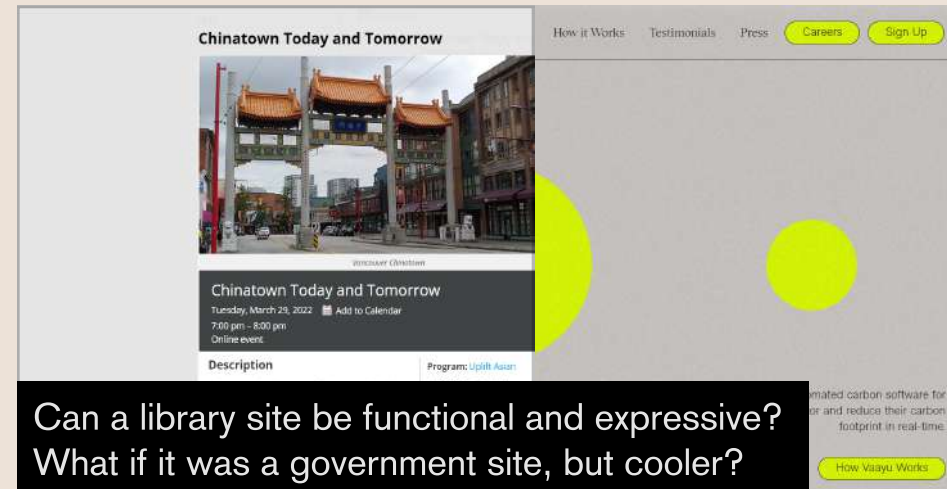THE SPEAKING MACHINE

Can our real life understandings of physical assets (books, texture, collages, handwriting, etc) be translated digitally to convey experience?

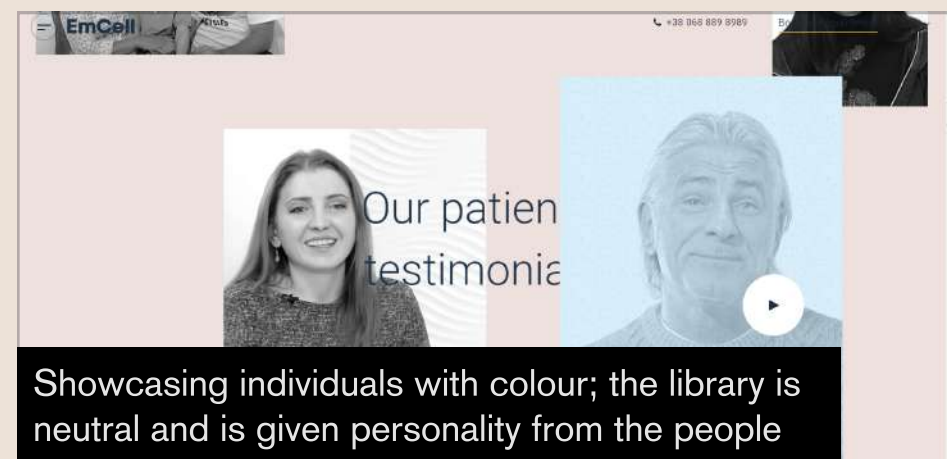Use of modular grids to display photos and info?

the used + unused
assets exploration

Can a library site be functional and expressive? What if it was a government site, but cooler?

Open exploration and online avatars?

LIBRARY WEBSITE

A digital touchpoint that showcases the library. Considered having it be an interactive experience, but the focus of physical connections was lost.

Showcasing individuals with colour; the library is neutral and is given personality from the people

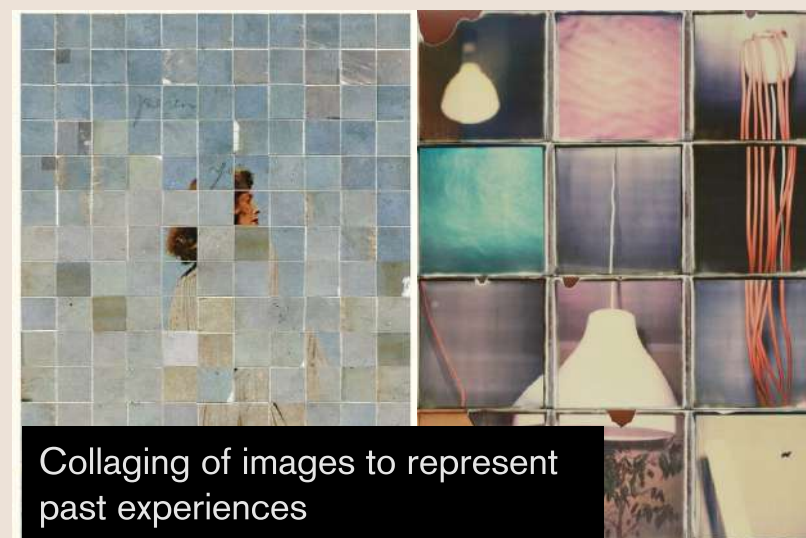How can we currate the experience of joining the library?

Perforated cards to provide texture and NFC connections between people to transfer info?

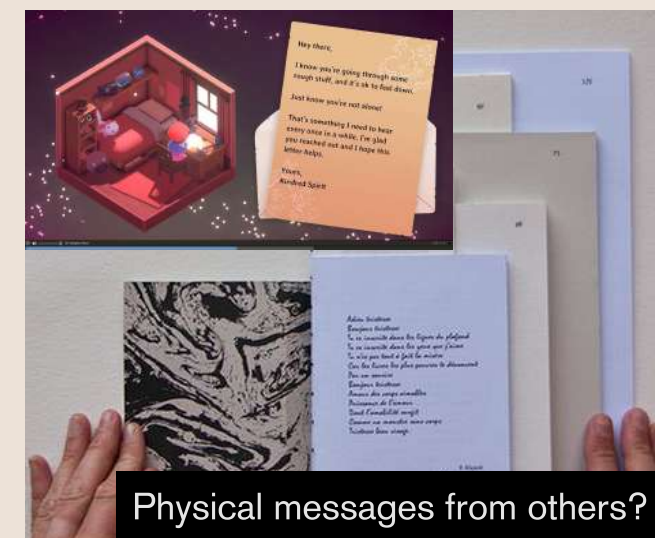Dropped as it didn't seem feasible to create physically and the connection qualities were adapted into the journals

BROCHURE + LIBRARY CARD

Physical onboarding kit that orients people with how to use the library.

DIGITAL + ~~PHYSICAL~~ JOURNAL

Keepsake for people to write their encounters and takaways with others from the library.

Physical journal was not made due to time, but we imagine that people could have such a version in this world.

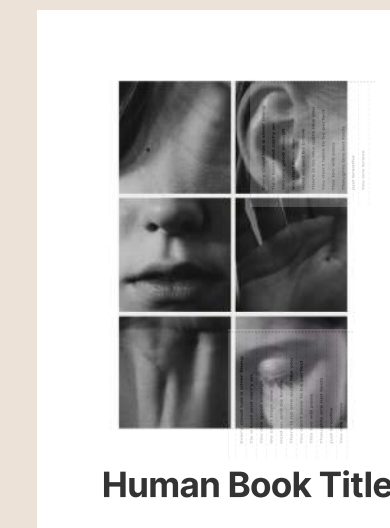Collaging of images to represent past experiences

Physical messages from others?

PUBLIC POSTER

Acting as the (likely) first contact with the library, the poster would be an intro for people.

Tearable poster was considered as a way to tease at experiences and provide a takaway, but was dropped as connection aspects were adapted and imagery might've been too visceral.

Human Book Title

Like a sacred token of wisdom that's never lost

Tearing away paper reveals picture of experience/person underneath

Imagined that the interior furniture and layout could be created to show how connections could be facilitated.

Idea was abstracted to providing images and details of familiar activity areas as that was enough to evoke understanding.

How can we accomodate the interests and needs of generations?

Storytelling and Poetry Reciting Chair

Can we replicate a sense of hominess for people that come?

What do generations look for in a physical space?

Would the introduction of a digital entity augment/ defeat the quality of conversation?

EACH PLAYER WRITE A MESSAGE TO THE OTHER. FOLD AND EXCHANGE. OPEN ONLY ONCE YOU TWO HAVE PARTED.

Can artifacts be used to facilitate connections?

Considered to be a possible way to help facilitate connections within the library and accomodate for varying communication styles.

Shifted away from this as it directed the conversation too much towards just talking and not learning from each other.

Memento that enables people to trade personalized visual artifacts.

Concept was adapted into the idea of using a journal to detail and memorize encounters.

Could people connect/discover each other through the book?

Personalized messages like pen pals create memorable experiences

Breakdown areas like mall maps?

Could people see others in the room?

Physical fixture that allows people to see what activities are happening in rooms.

Not explored as details of offerings were used elsewhere and creating a floorplan wasn't necessarily more effective than just alluding to what could exist.
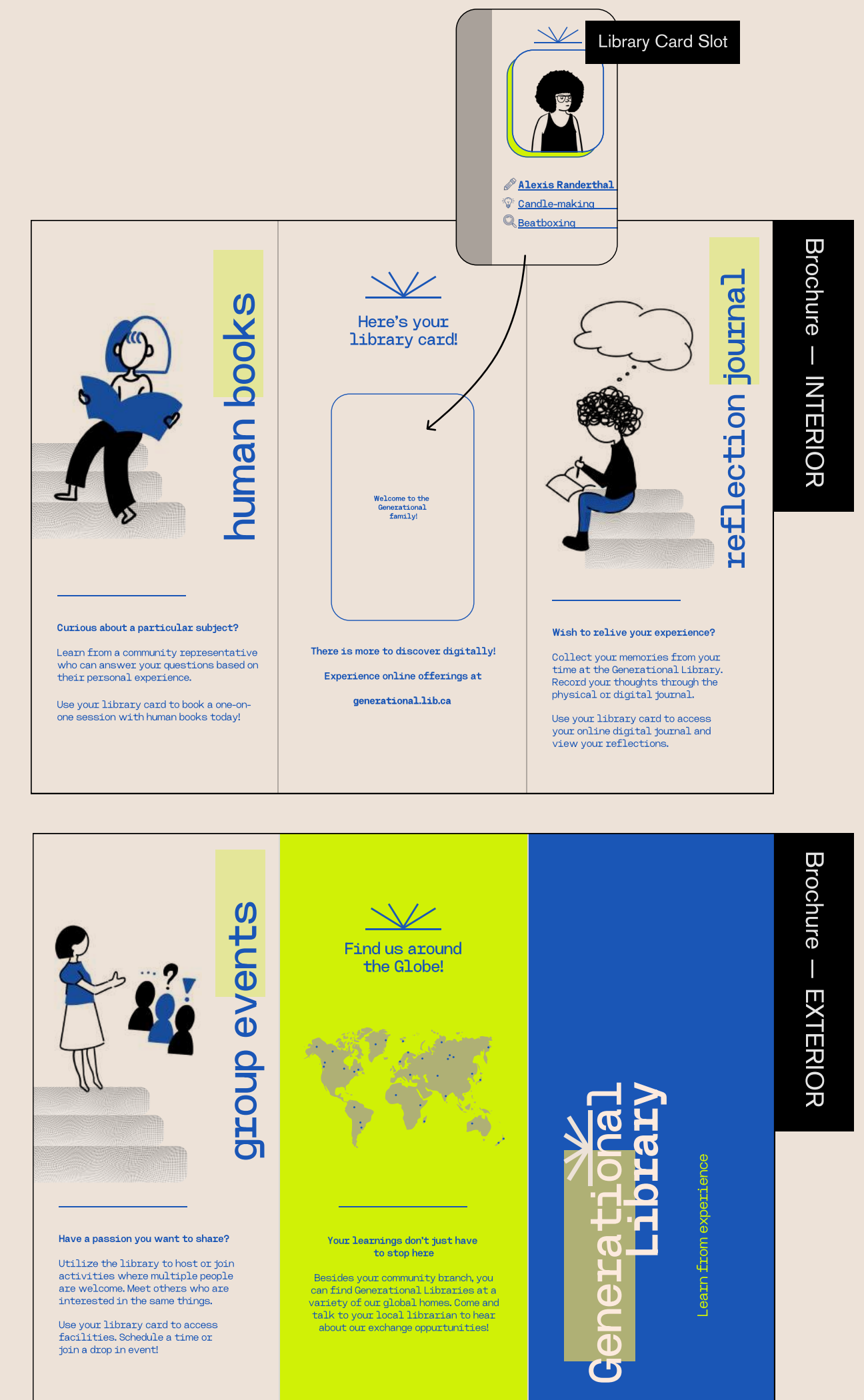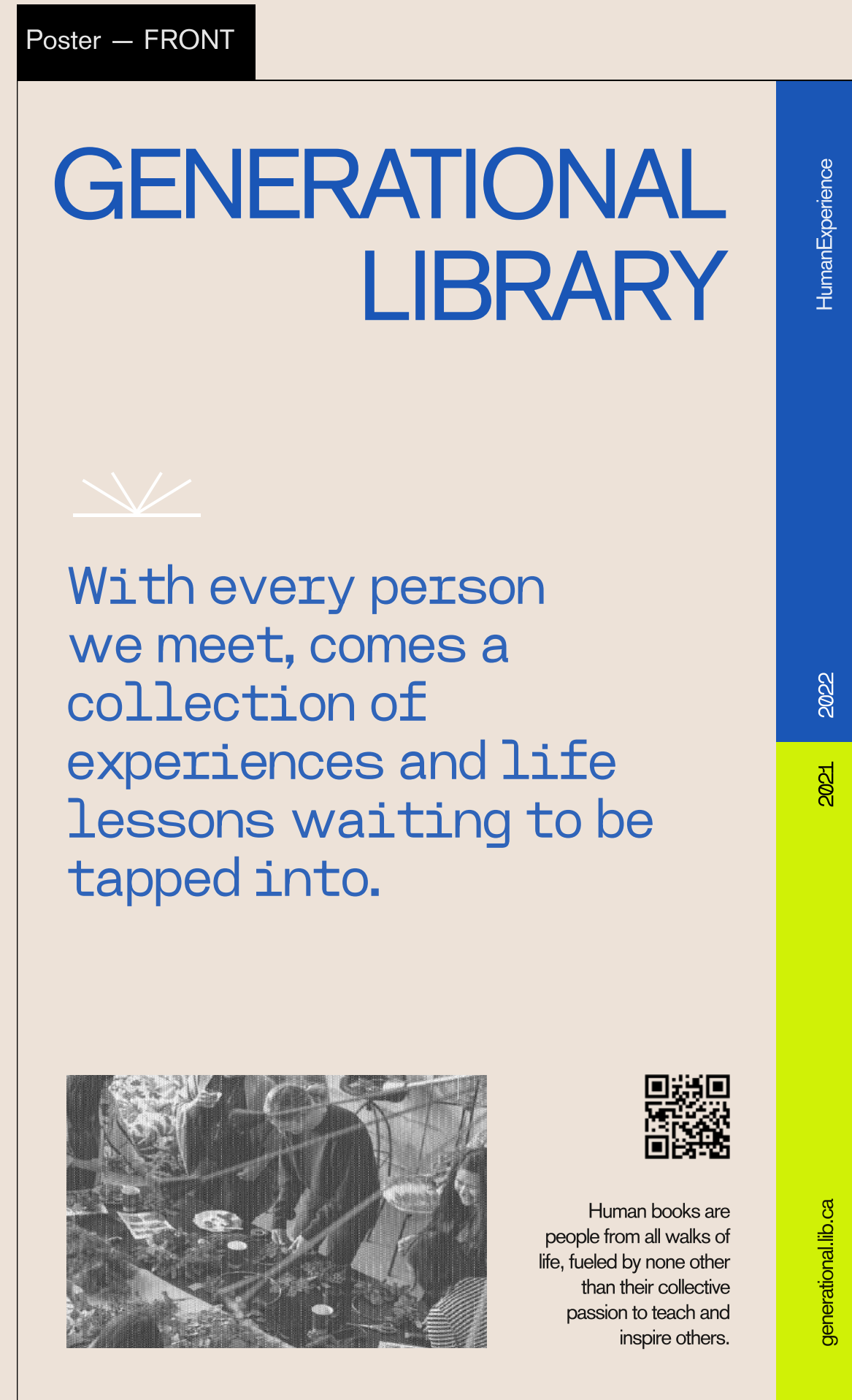
final forms

01 Informational Poster

This public poster was thought of as a way of providing a subtle link to the library's mission of challenging common stereotypes and prejudices.

Its design hints at the incredible richness of the human condition, and invites people to rekindle the kinds of conversations that are built upon empathy – in an effort to promote an innate curiosity about others' lives that are often hidden in plain sight.

02 Onboarding Brochure

The purpose of this brochure was to welcome new members of the generational library by providing a general overview of all the branch information and services it offers. This complete guide created for newcomers includes useful pointers on how to book facilities for activities, what to expect during drop-sessions, along with tips and information on how they can utilize their generational library card and get the most out of their learning experience.

Communciating this introductory information through a physical medium such as a brochure, serves as an alternative to those who may not have immediate access to our online resources.

Poster — FRONT

GENERATIONAL LIBRARY

HumanExperience

2022

2021

With every person we meet, comes a collection of experiences and life lessons waiting to be tapped into.

Human books are people from all walks of life, fueled by none other than their collective passion to teach and inspire others.

generational.lib.ca

Library Card Slot

Alexis Randerthal
Candle-making
Beatboxing

Brochure — INTERIOR

human books

Curious about a particular subject?

Learn from a community representative who can answer your questions based on their personal experience.

Use your library card to book a one-on-one session with human books today!

Here's your library card!

Welcome to the Generational family!

There is more to discover digitally!

Experience online offerings at

generational.lib.ca

reflection journal

Wish to relive your experience?

Collect your memories from your time at the Generational Library. Record your thoughts through the physical or digital journal.

Use your library card to access your online digital journal and view your reflections.

Brochure — EXTERIOR

group events

Have a passion you want to share?

Utilize the library to host or join activities where multiple people are welcome. Meet others who are interested in the same things.

Use your library card to access facilities. Schedule a time or join a drop in event!

Find us around the Globe!

Your learnings don't just have to stop here

Besides your community branch, you can find Generational libraries at a variety of our global homes. Come and talk to your local librarian to hear about our exchange opportunities!

Generational Library

Learn from experience

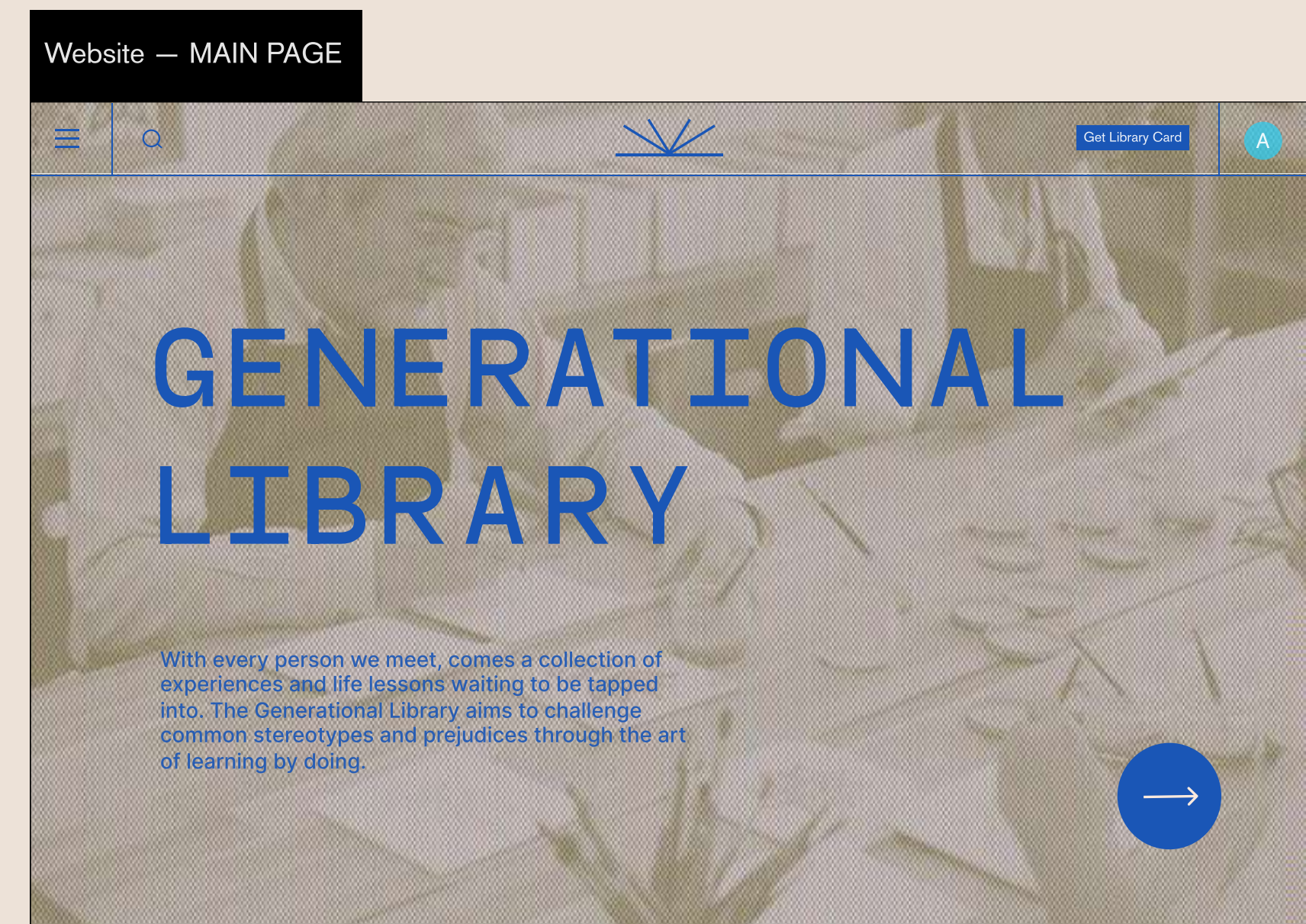# final forms — cont'd

03 Library Website

This platform offers a space where like-minded individuals can have their first hand experience of engaging with someone different from themselves. The educational hub encourages a self-paced learning environment where users can delve into the vibrant life stories that are showcased in our online curated collection of human books.

Participants may choose to further their learning by signing up for one-on-one sessions or hands-on activities with the human books themselves, followed by the option of having a digital journal to document their journey from beginning to end.

04 Library Card

The library creates a safe framework for different modes of experiential learning, with the aim of having participants find a common ground with everyone that they meet. We believed this goal could be achieved by having the individual's interests identifiable on their carry-on generations library card in order to facilitate these peer-to-peer type interactions.

Anyone who possesses a particular type of knowledge, or experience with a given subject can thereby take on the role of a mentor anytime. By signing up for a generational library card, users have access to materials, content and on-site facilities that they can use to either attend or conduct activities of their own.
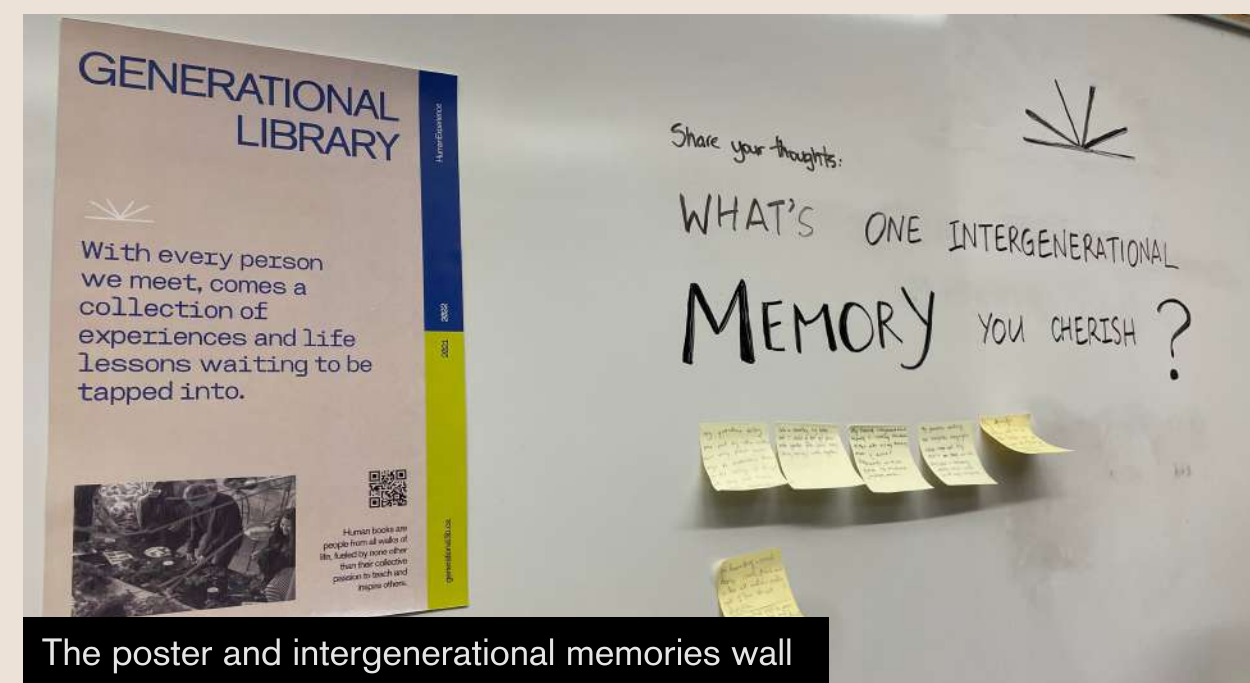
Website — MAIN PAGE

Get Library Card

GENERATIONAL LIBRARY

With every person we meet, comes a collection of experiences and life lessons waiting to be tapped into. The Generational Library aims to challenge common stereotypes and prejudices through the art of learning by doing.

Card— FRONT

Alexis Randerthal

Candle-making

Beatboxing

Card— BACK

I agree to be responsible for all materials borrowed on this card and for payment of any charges at all libraries at which it is registered.

Please report loss of card or change of contact information directly to our library.

generational.lib.ca

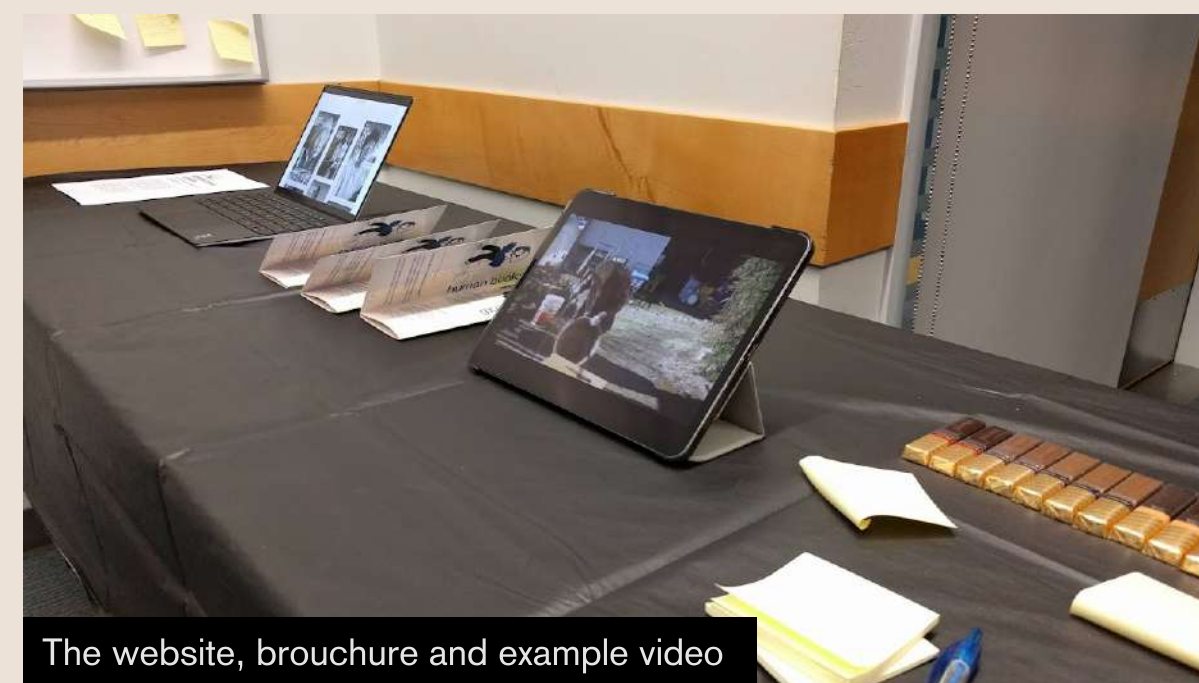3 1234 12345 6788

our reflection

what we learned

1
Helped in re-evaluating how we can structure approaches to framing problems (i.e "What If and Then What?")

2
Made us more aware and appreciative of the existing intergenerational relationships all around us

3
Further enforced our understanding of those in other generations in that we truly all do have value, and therefore just have to bring it out from each other

4
Relationships are everywhere, but we have to put in a little extra effort to tend to these relationships and care for them like a growing plant for them to be meaningful
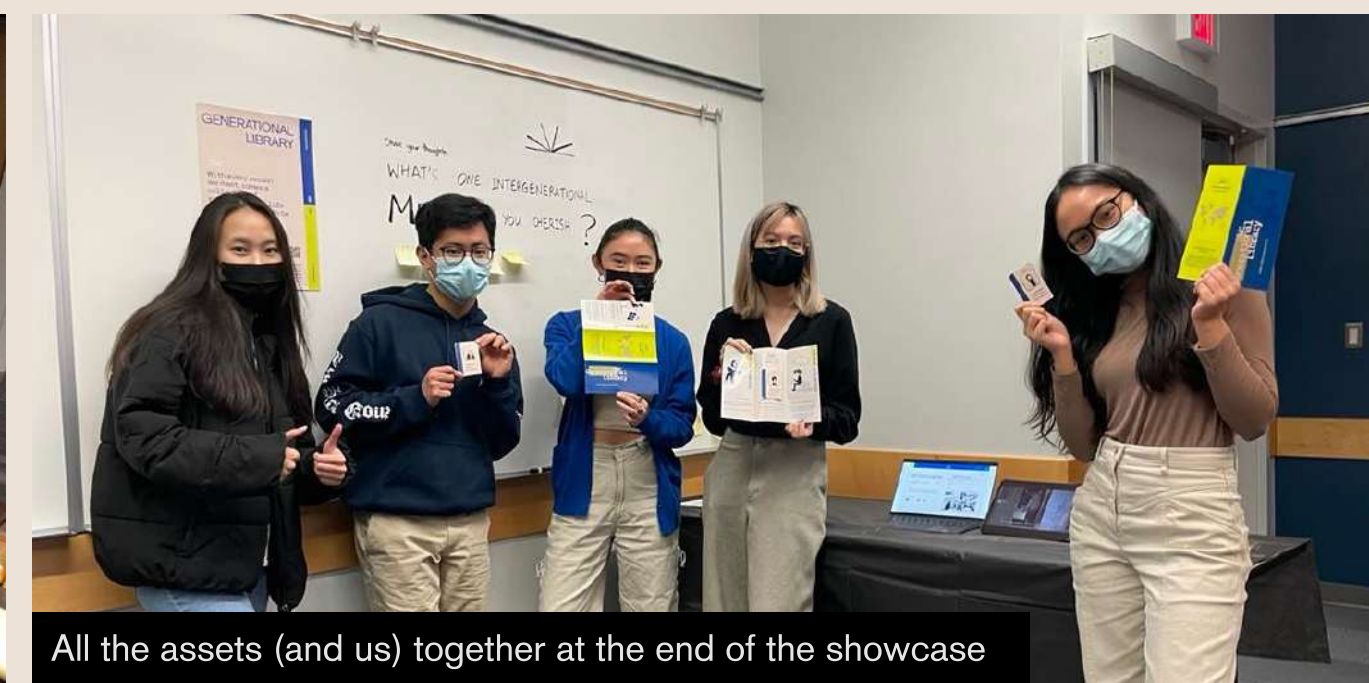
what we would do differently

1
How can we rename "Human Books" to indicate a more symbiotic relationship that is alive and flourishing?

The initial named that was coined was somewhat distracting as it had undervaluing connotations and didn't fully describe the potential of each person

People have a one way and passive relationship with books the way we currently interact with books and libraries

2
Allocate resources to create a physical version of the personal journal

Allows the option for the collecting of memories without the just use of a digital platform

The poster and intergenerational memories wall

The website, brochure and example video

All the assets (and us) together at the end of the showcase

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BACKGROUND RESEARCH

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https://www.bostonglobe.com/ideas/2014/08/30/what-age-segregation-does-america/o568E8xoAQ7VG6F4grjLxH/story.html
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DOMAIN PRECEDENTS

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https://www.fastcompany.com/3067220/why-you-should-be-designing-for-your-73-year-old-self
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https://designmuseum.org/whats-on/pop-up-exhibitions/new-old
https://humanlibrary.org/
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SPECULATIVE PRECEDENTS

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https://designawards.core77.com/speculative-design/105284/Negentropic-Landscapes

ASSETS EXPLORATION

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