spark.

designs that inspire connection

spark.

We're a furniture design and manufacturing company that aims to inspire and connect people through color & form.

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The Team

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The Artist

Hafsa Ghias

The Graphic Designer

Jonah Shifrin

The Product Designer

Jon'Nae Foy

The Photographer

Katerina Meidanis

The Product Designer

Rachel Slakter

The Social Media Genius

Stephan "Bob" Janigan

The Innovator

How might we transform mundane environments so that they inspire creativity & motivate people to connect?

Executive Summary

Furniture is a universally used product present in homes, schools, businesses and even sitting in public spaces. Often intended to support and reinforce existing behaviours such as relaxing on a couch or sitting in a chair to work on a desk, furniture is rarely considered an agent for change. Spark aims to change that. By using colorful designs and inquisitive shapes, Spark is modeled to redefine the way people interact with the furniture in a given space. Our products transform spaces and draw customers and passer bys to interact with the piece, encouraging people to connect with one another.

We worked with Detroit Community High School students, Bob, Dominick and Jon'nae to develop Spark and our first prototype, Converge. The idea to use a table & chair set to inspire creativity and motivate people to connect was born when we learned that many of the students felt that they did not have the opportunity or a dedicated space to be creative and hang out with friends. Jon'nae's story in particular inspired us. She felt that there wasn't much she could do to change the world, but as we got to know her, we learned that she was really interested in judicial reform and wanted to study criminology. We learned that she was a math whiz and really loved to draw and take photos. But as a high school senior who only needed one credit to graduate and was enrolled in classes that weren't challenging enough, she felt unmotivated. At home, she shared a room with four others and rarely had any time to herself. She felt like she didn't have a space where she could pursue her passions and challenge herself.

We were inspired by all the color in Brightmoor. We saw how in the school, the murals, colors and interesting architecture engaged the students in a way that makes them want to come to school. The Urban Country Tea House, with its sculptures, paintings and hand carved signs made it a vibrant community spot. The color brings the city alive and we want to add on to the beautification in a productive and functional way.

Spark is a customer facing design and manufacturing company that aims to inspire and connect people. Its portable, modular, and lightweight furniture pieces make it easy to disrupt mundane environments. With the interesting shapes and vibrant colors, this disruption of space is intruguing and transformative. Catching the eyes of passersby, these functional pieces are meant to be a gathering space for people of all ages. Every Spark set comes with pre-cut, sanded and primed pieces, an assembly and color guide and pattern stencils that helps facilitate creativity.
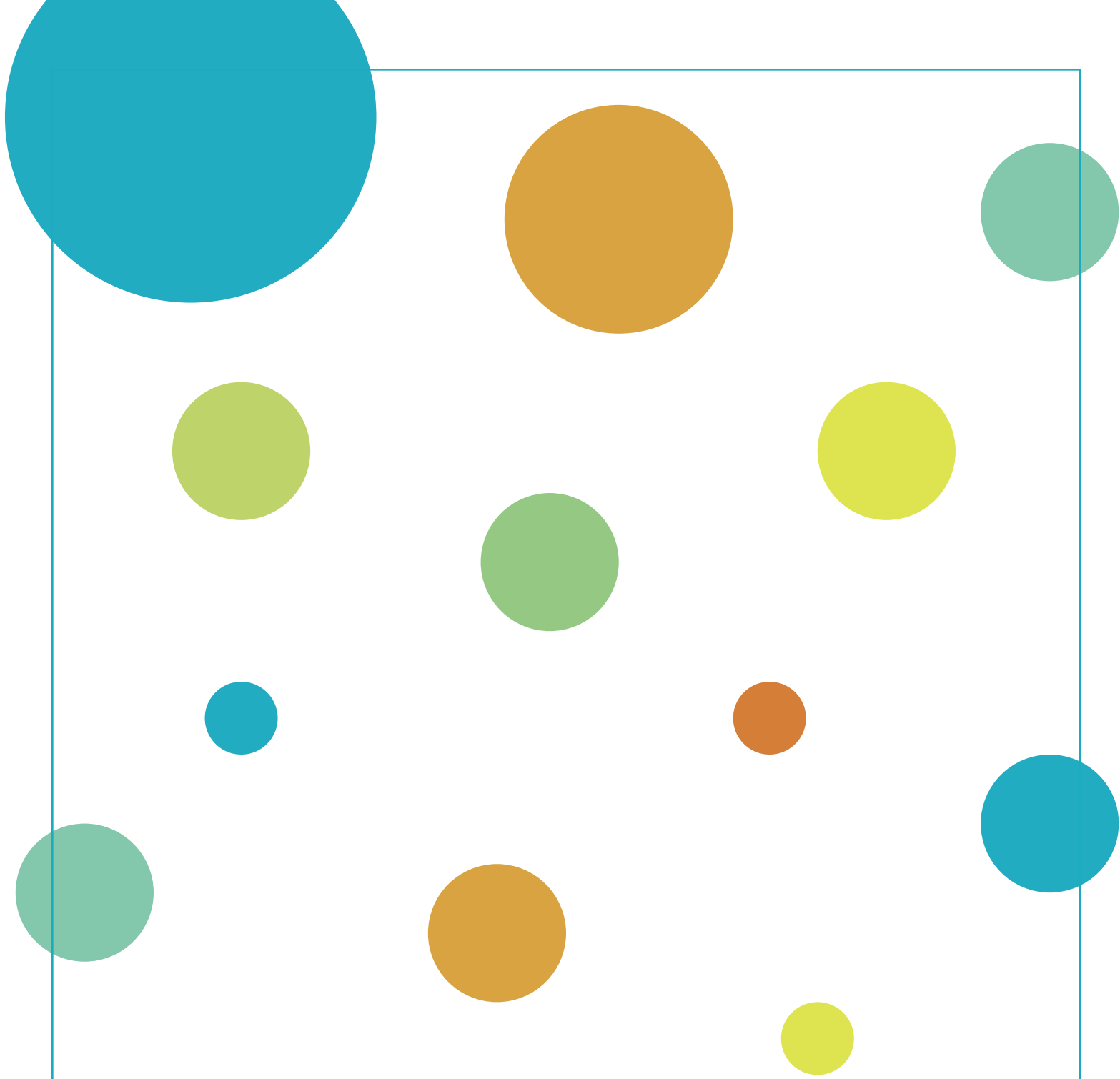
Context

Observations & Research

Top & Bottom Left: Detroit Community High School
Bottom Right: Urban Country Tea House

Observations

Observations & Root Causes

When looking at the scenery of Brightmoor, there is a wide range in the quality of the homes. Some are well kept, with bushes trimmed into interesting shapes; while others are very run down and boarded up, or are now vacant lots. Aside from the areas that are being worked on by the Detroit Community Schools or other people of the city, there really aren't any public places such as parks or scenic, creative spaces. We found that there are community buildings that are mostly for elderly people, and school playgrounds for little kids, but nowhere for high school students. The students at DCH confirmed this, telling us that they spend most of their time either at school or home. When we asked "if you had a space to do art or school work would you use it?" the were quickly to respond affirmatively. One of our students, Jon'Nae, said that she felt like she wasn't challenged in her school courses and rarely is obtaining or learning new skills. Additionally, she said she rarely goes anywhere except school or home and seldom interacts with others. Bob, our other student, said that if he had a place to go and create, be inspired, or sit and make art that he would frequently use it.

Next Best Alternatives, Near Peers & Aspirational Peers

We looked at ways companies and organizations in the community use color to beautify and inspire. Establishments such as The Urban Country Tea House utilize color, form and community to transform an urban farm into an unofficial community center. DCS itself, used colorful murals to transform an old factory into an inviting haven for learning in the brightmore community. These organizations are incredibly successful in establishing powerful emotion using color. but we noticed two things. First, that a primary goal of these paintings murals and colorful forms was to create a platform for community and communication between people. Second, that these beautiful displays of color were stagnant; they existed on pavement and plaster. We wanted to continue this further to create incentives for passersby to take interest and ownership of space.
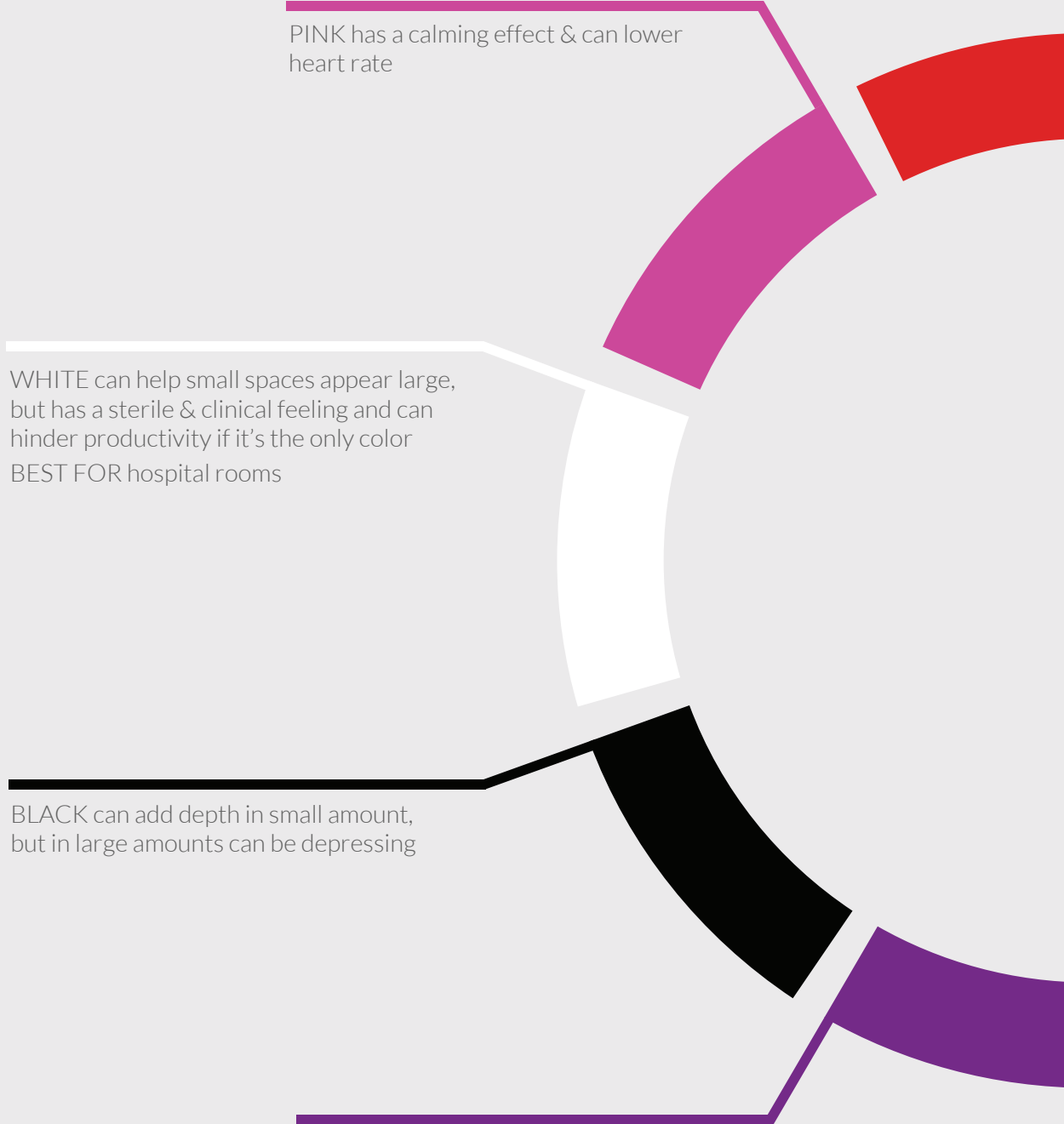
The problem that we want to address is twofold: there is a lot of unused space in Brightmoor and that residents, particularly young ones, don't have many opportunities or spaces to be creative and interact with each other outside of school. To address these issues we decided to explore how color could transform a space, influence people's emotions and how form could influence behavior.
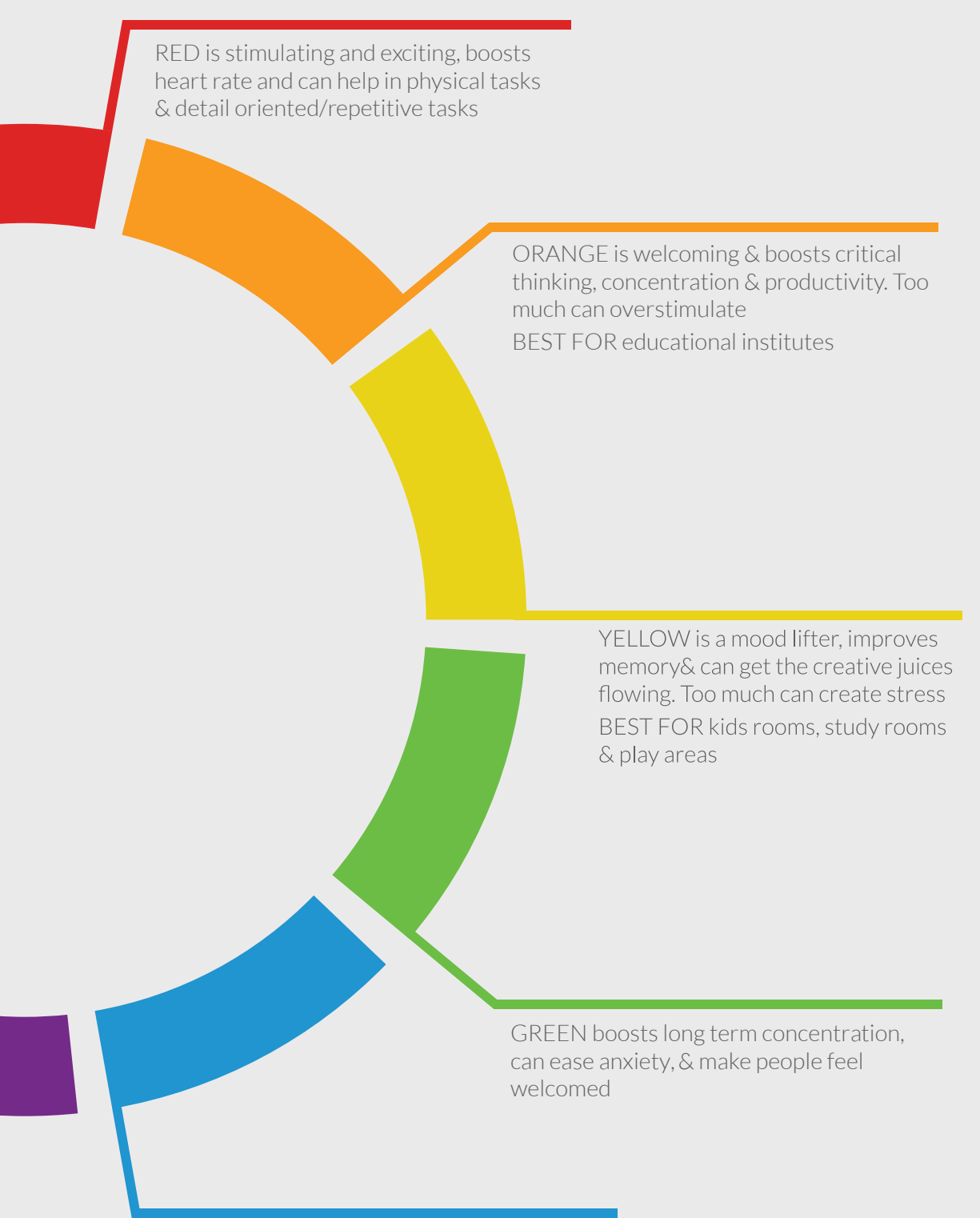
The Effect of Color On Environment

PINK has a calming effect & can lower heart rate

WHITE can help small spaces appear large, but has a sterile & clinical feeling and can hinder productivity if it's the only color
BEST FOR hospital rooms

BLACK can add depth in small amount, but in large amounts can be depressing

PURPLE adds a dignified & dramatic feel & is attention grabbing to kids

RED is stimulating and exciting, boosts heart rate and can help in physical tasks & detail oriented/repetitive tasks

ORANGE is welcoming & boosts critical thinking, concentration & productivity. Too much can overstimulate
BEST FOR educational institutes

YELLOW is a mood lifter, improves memory& can get the creative juices flowing. Too much can create stress
BEST FOR kids rooms, study rooms & play areas

GREEN boosts long term concentration, can ease anxiety, & make people feel welcomed

BLUE has a calming effect, increases productivity and aids in concentration. Too much can invoke feelings of sorrow

Research

The Five Levers of Social Change: Bright Spots, Data & Insights, Public Perception, Policy Shift, and Disruptive Technologies are strategies that we can use to accomplish meaningful change.

Bright Spots

There are many bright spots in Brightmoor as well as within the metro detroit area. In Brightmoor there is the Urban Country Tea House where owner Rosalyn Flint refurbished a home and turned it into a community meeting space where groups of people can congregate. She has also created a greenhouse and an outdoor theater, and plans on creating a volleyball area, ice rink, and other means of building a community. Within the wider area of Detroit there is a group called the Motor City Blight Busters that attempts to unify and beautify the city in a different way by organizing groups of volunteers who clean up abandoned homes.

Detroit Community High School is also a bright spot. The school puts a lot of effort into beautifying the area by the creating the murals and the garden. However there are still areas where they lack aesthetics such as the front entrance of the building, as stated by Bob and Jon'nae. Bright Spots and Public Perception go hand in hand. Starting this school year, there was was a new initiative in the Detroit Public Schools to rebrand and redirect the students, school system, public perceptions, and internal perceptions. The campaign was launched on the last day of school last year with the tagline "Students rise. We all rise." Through the rebrand, Detroit is trying to change perceptions of their public school system. Necessary and inspiring, this bright spot hopes to shine light and change on the Public-School System.

The 606 is a beatification effort done by the Chicago-Park-District to help pedestrians take back a deeply urbanized motor vehicle oriented city and society. The project grew from existing infrastructure of unused train lines to connect 4 entire neighborhoods with approximately 800 new parks. The trail is now home to bike paths and miles of beautiful walkways. By finding the potential in dismal decaying infrastructure the 606 is able to bring life to its surrounding neighborhoods and local businesses.

Data & Insights

Uptake is a for profit company attempting to use data and data analytics to increase the performance and resource & asset allocation of existing companies. They have developed algorithms to change the efficiency and productivity of companies and by using advanced data analytics the company has been able to change the way many existing businesses operate. Uptake is able to disrupt and innovate change by ensuring high efficiency in an ever resource dwindling environment

Policy Shift

After over 16,000 school suspensions were issued, keeping kids at home rather than at school, there was a push to change the rules surrounding school suspensions in Detroit. A culture that punishes kids by preventing them from coming to school is a dangerous slope and can be extremely counterproductive in most instances. "Students should get help from the school when something happens. They should change that around and get help first and see what's going on...See why they got suspended." Had it not been for Westside, recently renamed West Side Academy of Information Technology and Cyber Security, which is also an alternative school for students in trouble academically and with behavior problems, Brown, a student who attented West Side, said "he would have been lost." The policy shift that will keep kids in school rather than push them away from it for disciplinary infractions is a step in the right direction. Further, if the kids had a place to go during that suspension where they could keep challenging themselves, or even a small space that inspires them that they could return to, maybe the problem would improve.

Public Perception

Chicago Ideas is a company that uses public perception and policy change to create change. This nonprofit aims to use the existing power of knowledge to incentivize individuals to enact change for themselves and for their communities. Their goal is to help break down the harsh racial borders between the 77 neighborhoods of Chicago to show the importance and potential of networking and collaboration. Some of their current active projects is to teach the students in underprivileged schools the wonders their city and citizens have to offer. They help guide leadership seminars and sponsor many students to attend and sometimes even speak at events. Using the power of the publics perception of themselves their city and the businesses and people in it Chicago Ideas is moving towards great potential for change in Chicago.

Volkswagen's "The Fun Theory" campaign fits under bright spots, public perceptions and disruptive technologies perfectly. Volkswagen started up a number of different experiments to test the theory that "fun can change people's behavior." In one of their projects, they converted a staircase into working piano keys in a Stockholm subway station to motivate people to take the stairs rather than the escalator. Another project they had was to add sound effects to make recycling more fun! They also conducted a contest with a monetary prize that motivated people to create an experiment with their own take on "The Fun Theory." This theory is not only easy to replicate, but they also changed public perceptions about mundane, but important everyday decisions people make that can make an impact in their lives and on the world. Lastly, through the internet, they were able to reach people all over the world and incentivized them to create their own projects. We can apply this idea to our own project. We have a product that aims to inspire, but we also add a campaign to it that also inspires people to connect and to help people overcome the fear of meeting new and different people from them.

Artist JR created the Face to Face project where he photographed normal people in Israel and Palestine making funny faces. He then printed huge, building sized posters of the portraits and put up a photo of an Israeli and Palestinian next to each other in both Israel and Palestine. He wanted to people to guess who was from Israel and who was from Palestine, but most viewers couldn't tell them apart. JR aimed to focus on the individuals on both sizes of the conflicting nations, commenting that they're all the same – they speak the same language, they eat the same food, the look similar, they practice religion in the same way, etc… JR's campaign is a perfect example of Lever three because his work aimed to make people face their hard set stereotypes and ideas about others! Simply because of the funny nature of the portraits, the size and placement of them, and the lack of any captions and written explanations drew people to them and ponder over what they were seeing. We hope that our table and chair set can also function on its own. Through its form and color we hope people are naturally drawn to it if it's placed in public places.
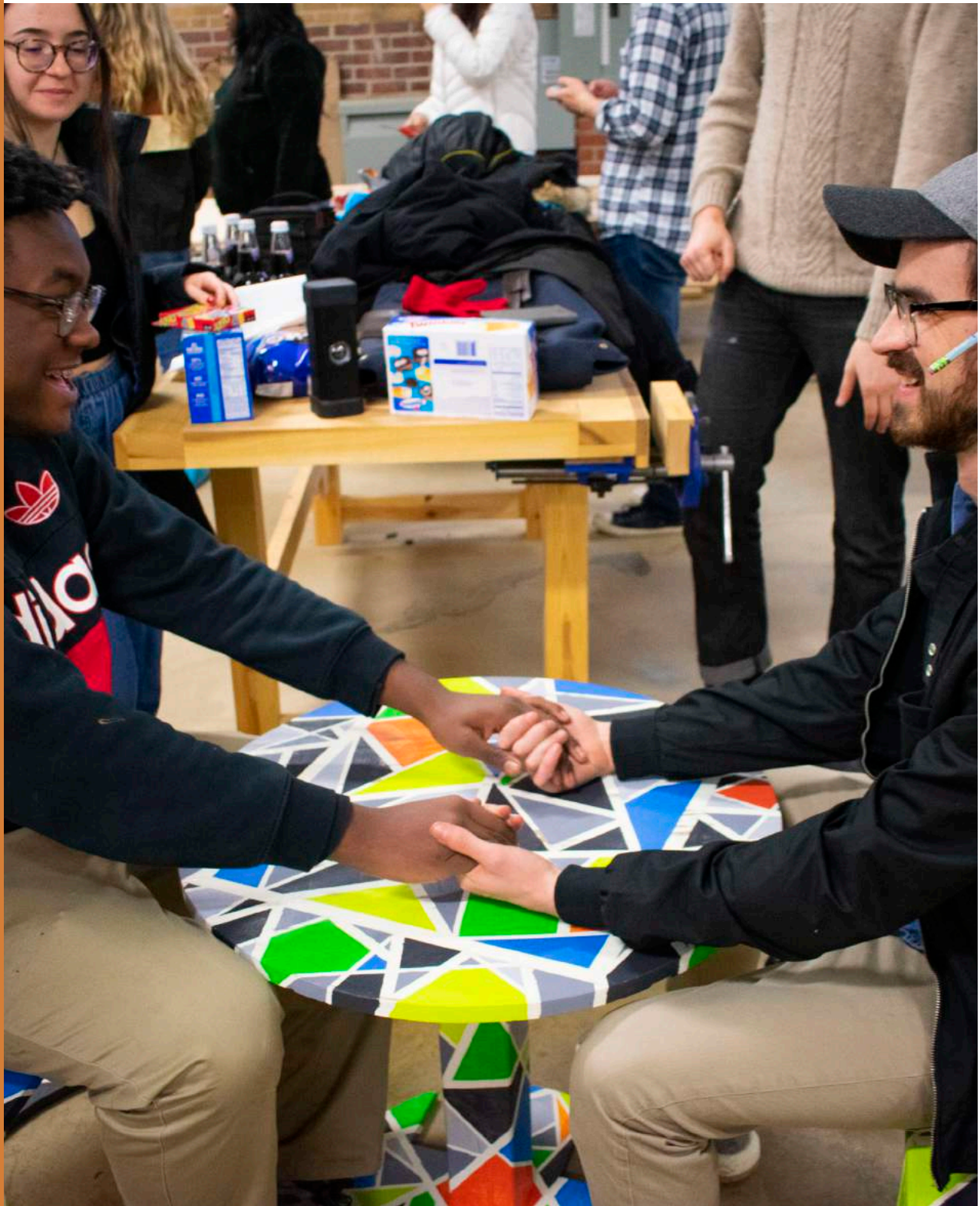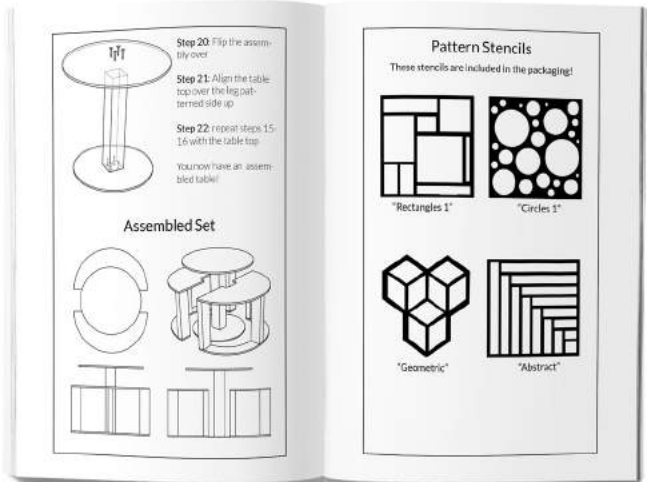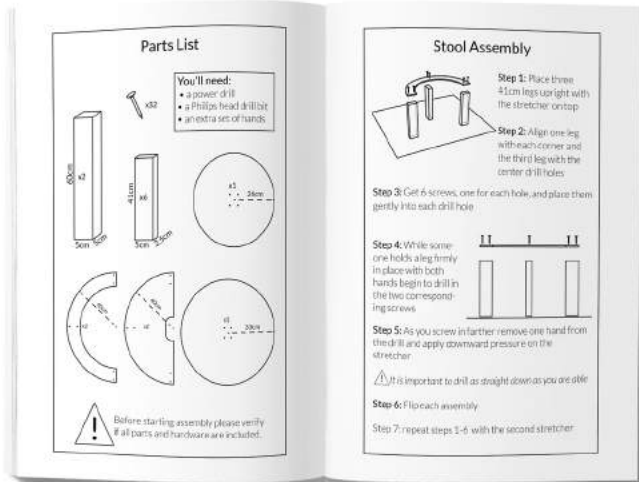
Disruptive Technology

Chicago Redmoon Engineering Theatre was a large scale puppet theatre that aims to help break down the borders between neighborhoods and bring people together through large scale jaw dropping instillation and performance pieces. In the time that they existed, they created a new local festival commemorating the great Chicago fire. In a disruption of an otherwise mundane week, Redmoon spent the year planning a week long installation and performance involving anything from floating parade floats to multistory wooden structures. Instead of making the event a sorrowful commemoration, they celebrated those who perished and the marvel that came from the rebuilding of the city. Using puppets and artistry, akin to that of broadway, the festival drew people in from all over the city. At the end of the festival, they set the entire performance ablaze watching it burn to the ground in a beautiful sorrowful and magical moment of mysticism. By producing art technologies never seen before Redmoon was able to disrupt the flow of an otherwise mundane week to bring the city together to celebrate and commemorate its powerful past.

A.L. Holmes Elementary school has been using disruptive technology in Detroit. By using "blended learning," combining online instruction and lessons with in person teaching, the students have two available avenues in which to learn. They school went from being a low performing school to one that, along with a two million dollar grant, has been able to become highly sought after and have their students excel in their grade levels. "At the start of the 2011 school year, Matchbook targeted reading and math in A.L. Holmes's third through eighth grades. Students received instruction from online teachers along with the school's teachers. According to the Clayton Christensen Institute for Disruptive Innovation, 74 percent of students in reading and 83 percent of students in math made gains of 10 percent or more, with 29 percent of those students making greater than 30 percent gains. As their blended learning methods evolved and adjusted to the school, online teachers were phased out. Holmes turned to the "station-rotation" classroom model, where students were divided into small groups that rotated between computer work, teacher instruction and assignment work." The unique methods in which A.L. Holmes Elementary implemented technology in response to Data and Insights, also mentioned in the 5 Levers, are the reason they are experiencing success now as a school and individual children are being better set up for their futures. What are the benefits of blended learning for at-risk students in struggling urban schools? One is the ease of using data to find which students are struggling and track their improvement. "In particular, for schools that have populations that might be multiple grade levels behind, the benefit is getting better student data," Davis say. "It becomes more and more challenging, when you have students at all different levels, to figure out exactly where the gaps are for students, and how to teach to them at their level." Those data systems provide valuable information to teachers, helping them diagnose and intervene with students who have gone grade levels without filling in foundational gaps they need to be successful."

Converge

spark

Converge
Assembly Guide
spark

Parts List

You'll need:
- a power drill
- a Phillips head drill bit
- an extra set of hands

⚠ Before starting assembly please verify all parts and hardware are included.

Stool Assembly

Step 1: Place three 41cm legs upright with the stretcher on top

Step 2: Align one leg with each corner and the third leg with the center drill holes

Step 3: Get 6 screws, one for each hole, and place them gently into each drill hole

Step 4: While someone holds a leg firmly in place with both hands begin to drill in the two corresponding screws

Step 5: As you screw in farther remove one hand from the drill and apply downward pressure on the stretcher

⚠ It is important to drill as straight down as you are able

Step 6: Flip each assembly

Step 7: repeat steps 1-6 with the second stretcher

Step 20: Flip the assembly over

Step 21: Align the table top over the leg patterned side up

Step 22: repeat steps 15-16 with the table top

You now have an assembled table!

Assembled Set

Pattern Stencils

These stencils are included in the packaging!

"Rectangles 1"   "Circles 1"

"Geometric"   "Abstract"

The Effect Of Color on Environment

Color Guides

Psychology of Shapes

Squares
- Reliable
- Stable
- Order
- Peaceful
- Solid
- Equality
- Masculine
- Strength
- Courage

Circles
- Harmony
- Graceful
- Feminine
- Warm
- Comforting
- Love
- Energy
- Infinity
- Motion

Vertical Lines
- Strong

Horizontal Lines
- Peace

Curved Lines
- Rhythm
- Happiness
- Pleasure
- Generosity
- Feminine

Spirals
- Creativity
- Growth
- Emotion
- Fertility
- Expansion
- Transformation
- Expansion
- Femininity
- Calmness
- Intelligence

Triangles
- Excitement
- Risk
- Danger
- Balance
- Stable
- Masculine
- Progress
- Purpose
- Direction

Sharp Lines
- Lively
- Youthful
- Masculine
- Energy

Pentagons, Hexagons, Octagons
- Unique
- Unity
- Balance

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Mission Statement

We're a furniture design and manufacturing company that aims to inspire and connect people through color & form.

Our Vision

Empower

Brightmoor students to design & manufacture interactive products

Motivate

a feeling of ownership through assembly & personalization of products

Transform

mundane environments through vibrant colors & unique, inviting forms

Inspire

connection & collaboration between people through assembly process & engaging forms

Our Products

Customers will recieve pre-cut, sanded and primed pieces of the product, an assembly guide with example color palettes and color mixing guides as well as vinyl pattern stencils.

Target Audience

Sparks products are geared towards all scales of public community. We see potential customers to be families, schools, public parks departments, communal living spaces, and private businesses with underutilized spaces.

Process

Prototype Stages, Branding,
Marketing & Business Model

Step 1: Explore

We met our Detroit partners, got to know each other through icbreakers, explored how color can affect emotions and a space and explored the idea of creating a student lounge
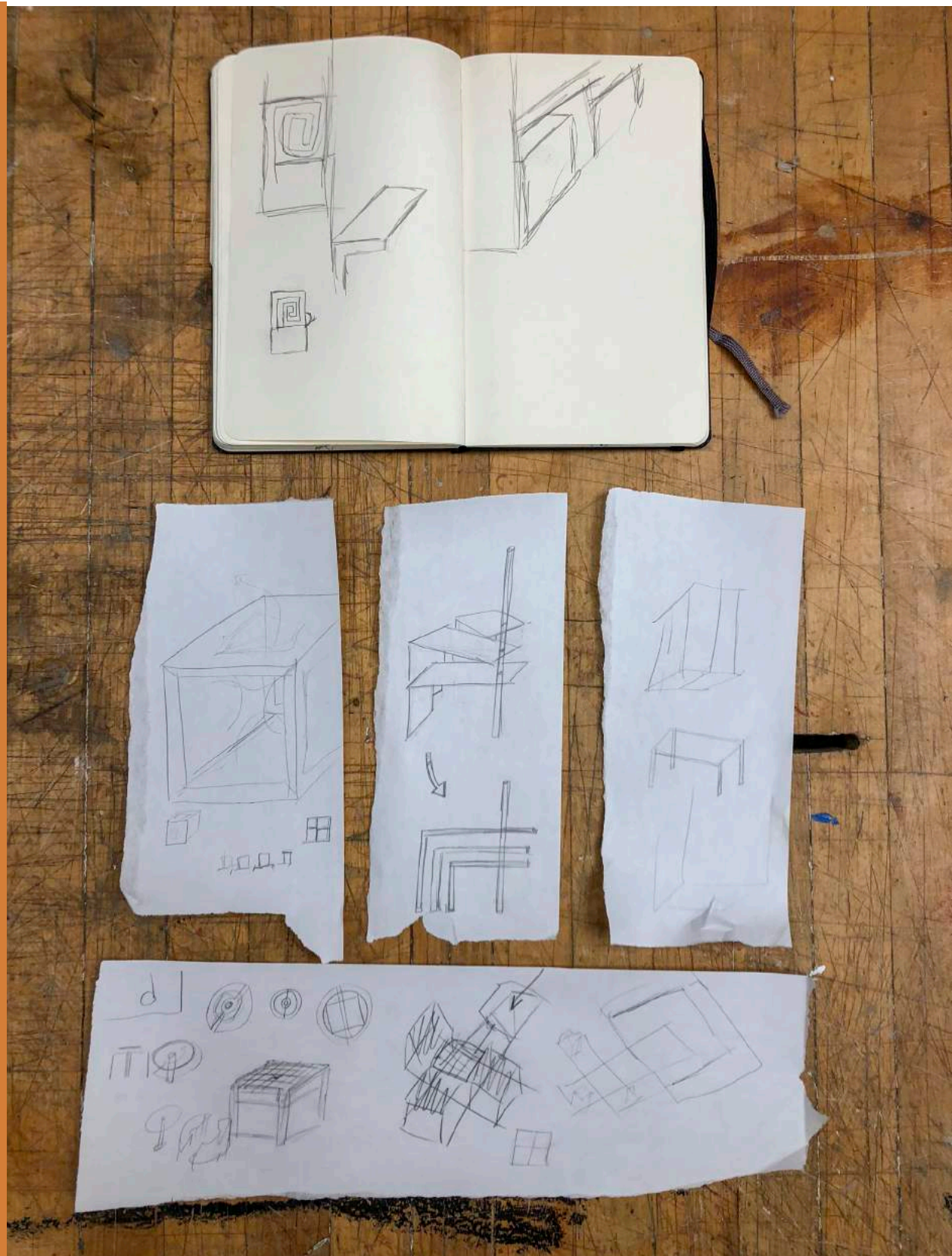
Step 1: Ideate

We decided to scale down and create a sculptural piece that would inspire creativity and motivate people to interact. We eventually decided on creating a table & chair set.
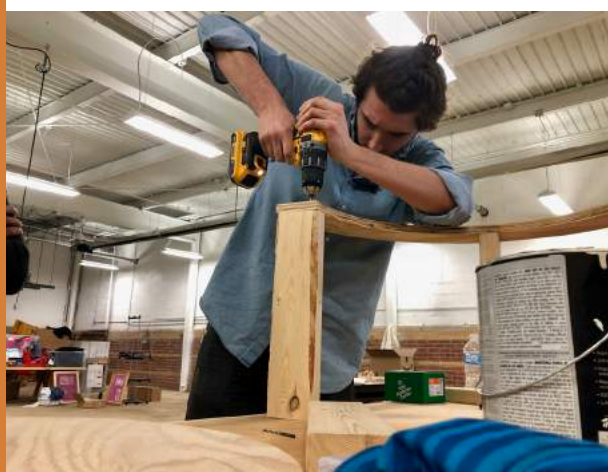
Step 2: Design

We finalized our design, broke it down into separate parts, and started cutting the pieces!

Step 3: Build

We drilled holes into the pieces and assembled the table & chairs using glue and screws

Step 4: Experiment

We built test pieces so that we could experiment with colors and patterns and so we could teach our Detroit partners how to mix paints, paint and use tape to create patterns
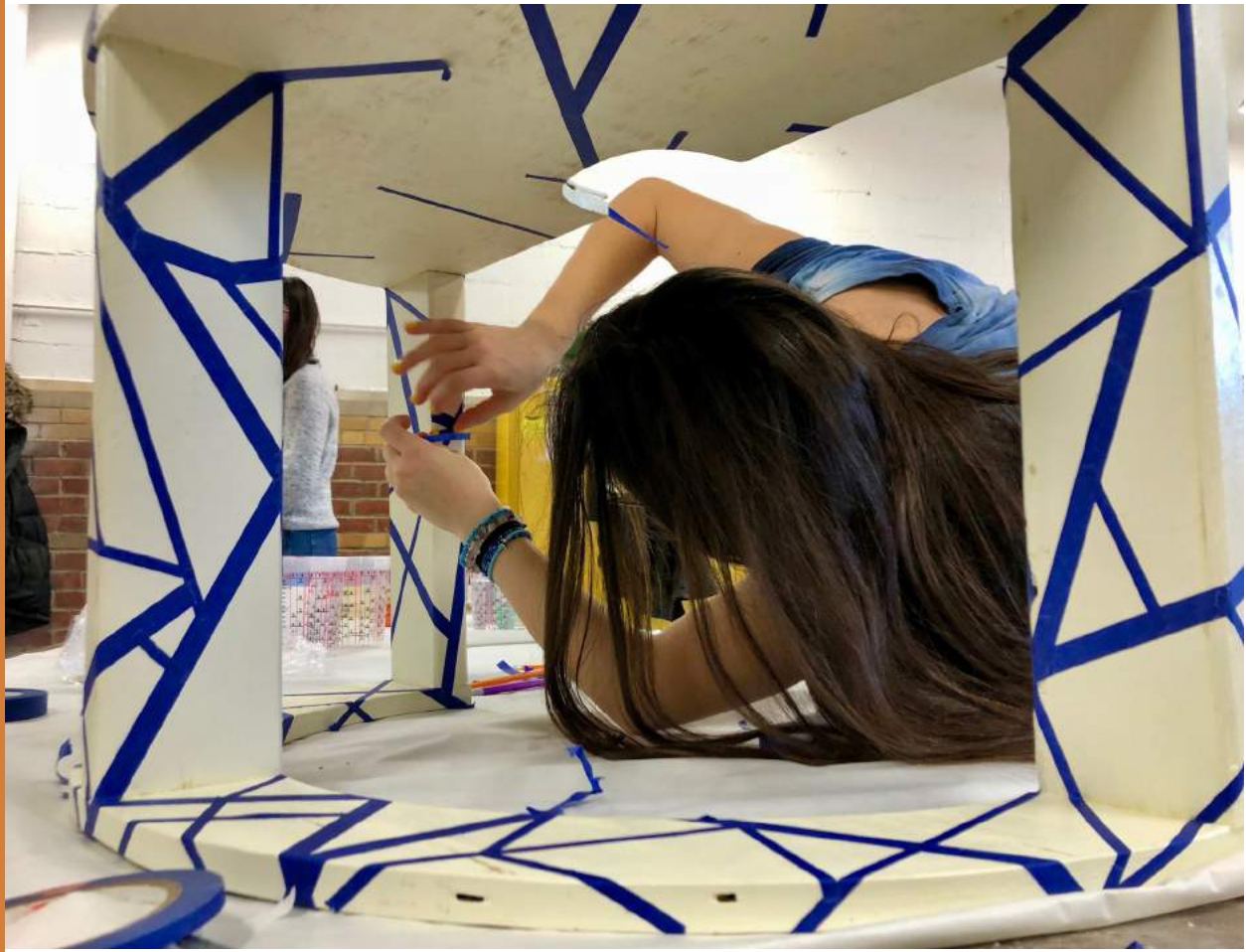
Step 5: Prep

We sanded all the pieces, primed, sanded some more and then used painter's tape to create our pattern!
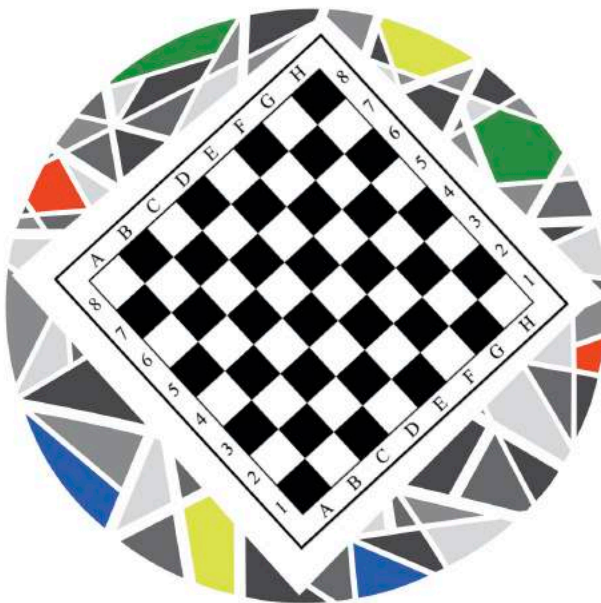
Step 6: Plan

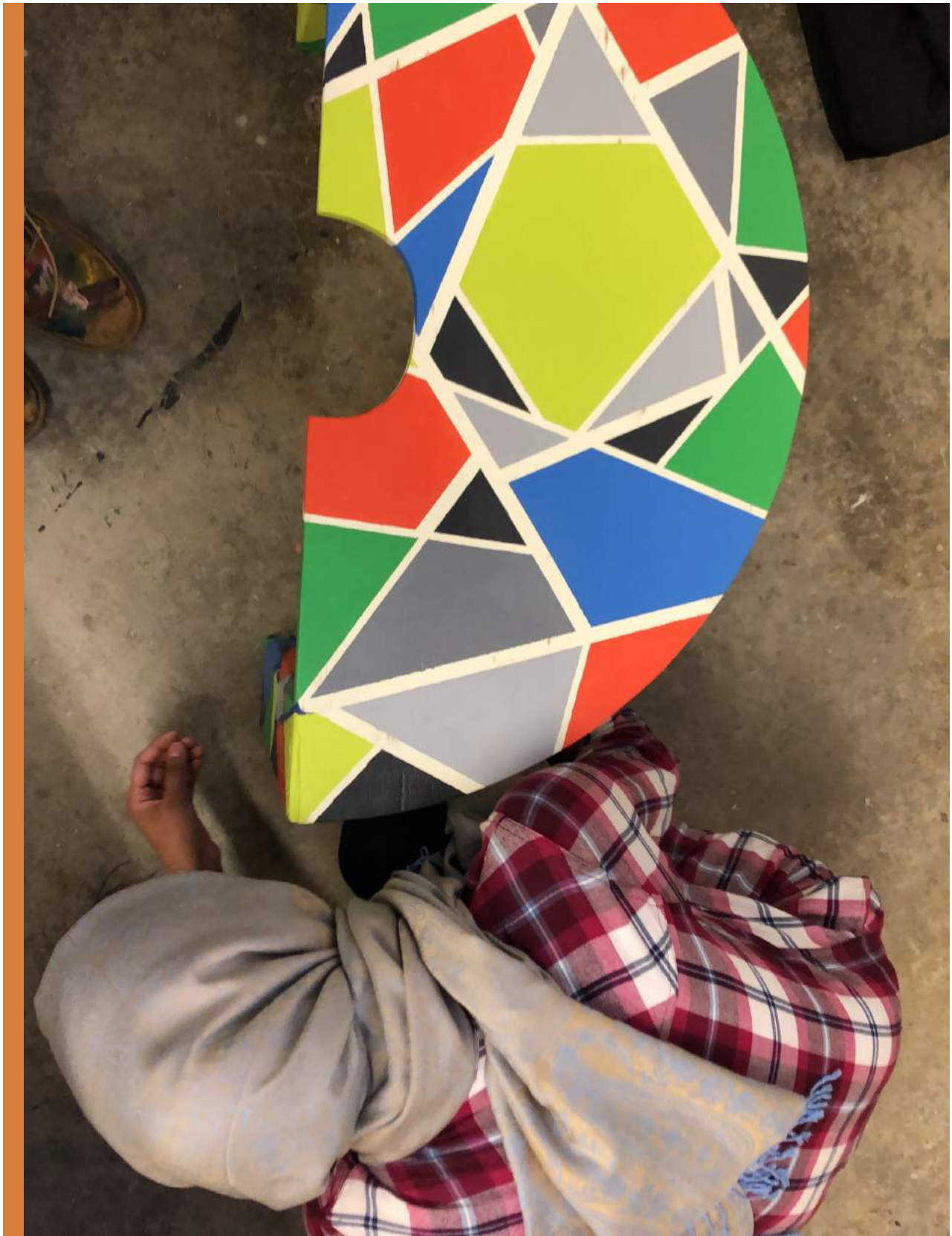*We then planned out what colors we'd use and created a color guide so multiple people could paint efficiently*

Step 7: Paint

We then mixed the colors and painted!

Step 8: Reveal

After adding multiple coats of paint, we removed the painters tape and added final touches!

Step 9: Document

On our last day with our DCH partners, we took photos of our piece being used! We took photos together and also found out that our table is a perfect size for the first grade class!
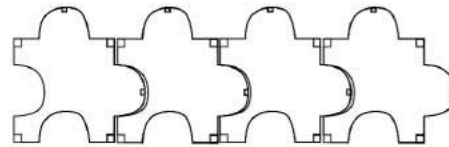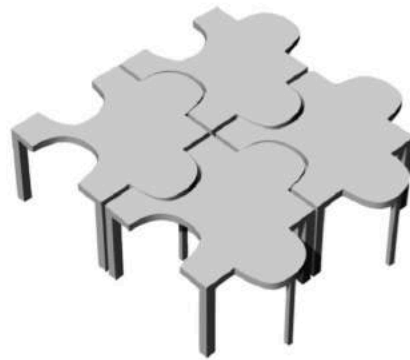
Step 10: Package

We made iterations (we fixed the base & made the piece bigger), developed branding for the product and created an assembly guide which also includes pattern stencils and color guides.
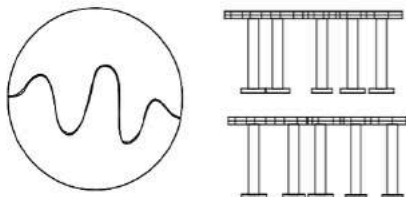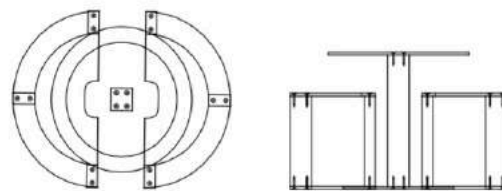
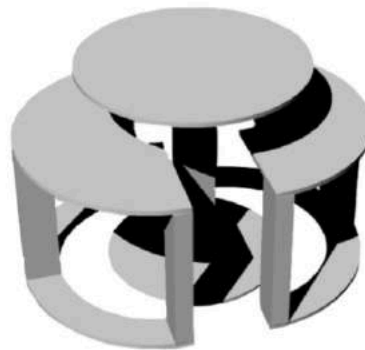**"Meet"**
A Four Person Bench Set
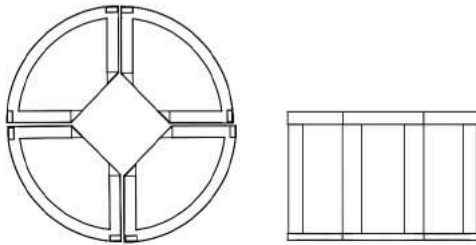
"Join"
A set of benches made for multiple people

"Diverge"
A bench set for multiple poeple

"Converge"
A table and chair set for two people

Step 11: Sustain

We rendered more potential products and developed a manufacturing guide and plan for how the company could live on without us if our detroit partners decided to pursue this project.

Branding

Logo

Primary Mark

Secondary Mark

The curved arrangement of the ovals aims to evoke an inviting and positive feeling. The gradual increase in size visualizes inspiration and the color gradient from subtle, cool colors to brighter more bold colors symbolize the vibrance and spark of energy that unique ideas have.

Typography

Courgette | Header Text

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
0123456789

Courgette Regular

Lato | Body Text

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
0123456789

Lato Regular
Lato Italic
Lato Light
Lato Light Italic
Lato Bold
Lato Bold Italic

Colors

Primary Colors

#D27D37   #2AACC1   #606161

Accents

#D6A23F   #DEE34F   #BDD169   #96C783   #83C6AB

Business Model

Impact Goal

How might we transform mundane environments so that they inspire creativity & motivate people to connect?

Key Partners

Detroit Community High School

Key Activities

Design and manufacture furniture

Key Resources

• Woodshop
• Labor
• Plywood, MDF, Planks
• Primer
• Printer

Value Proposition

We aim to do three things: transform mundane environments through vibrant colors and patterns; inspire creativity by creating a place that the customer can work and create at; and draw people towards the piece through interesting forms and motivate people to communicate and collaborate with each other

Near and Aspirational Peers

• Detroit Community High School
• The Urban Country Tea House
• Street Piano Project
• The Fun Theory Campaign

Need We're Fulfilling

We're creating a vibrant and functional space where people can be creative and interact with each other

Cost Structure

Our first prototype of converge cost approximately $75. Due to the miniscule scale of production the costs are significantly higher than they would be in production at full scale. In working in tandem with DCH and their power tools, the primary overhead of operations would be the cost of a table saw, if they don't already have one. After acquiring this equipment, cost per unit, by buying supplies in larger quantities, would cost at most $47 a unit. With labor costs estimated at $33 a unit, approximately 11 dollars an hour and 3 hours a unit. The per unit overhead would rest at around $80 a unit by pricing each piece around $120 Spark would generate a revenue of $40 a unit after paying its manufacturing team.

A single 4X8 plywood sheet costs 34 dollars
A single 4X8 mdf sheet costs 29 dollars
2 8ft 2x4 planks costs about 5 dollars

Revenue Stream

Since Converge is a high cost venture at about $75 total to make, we will have to sell at a 5% price increase, totalling about $110 per unit. We will need to sell 3 units to turn a profit. To get started, we can apply for grants to get the materials we need that we can forego once Spark becomes profitable.

Marketing Strategy

Market Analysis

To determine the market need, we first looked at specific beautification efforts in Brightmoor. The school is our inspiration – the vibrant colors, inspirational and impressive murals and the unique, open architecture uses color and form effectively. All these things, as well as the amazing and caring teachers, inspire the students to be creative and innovative and engage them in a way that makes them want to be there. Brightmoor is full of public art – something that many other cities don't have as much of. Murals, sculptures and bright colors are sprinkled throughout the city juxtaposing the dilapidation of abandoned houses and large fields of dead grass that can also be found in the city. All these spaces have one thing in common - they're static. People have to go to them, so we decided to create something that was portable and could transform spaces wherever it was placed. Looking globally we have seen projects ephemeral and stationary pushing a similar message. These projects confirm the public's desire for color and connection.

Marketing Plan

We intend on marketing Spark's product line to all consumers of communal space such as families, schools, public parks, communal living spaces and businesses with underutilized spaces. The product's main marketable purpose is to liven up spaces and serve as a space for members of a community to communicate and collaborate.

Diffusion Strategy

In order to integrate Spark's product line into the market place we aim to begin on an individual basis, selling units to families. This would prove the attraction to and utility of our product creating grounds for businesses to purchase the units for their community spaces. After proving the utility of our product to provide innovative change in organizations we would then be able to sell to schools, public and private, as well as government works such as the parks department. By targeting customer basis in this order we intend to grow our clientele exponentially. By generating satisfied clientele we are able to create a support basis with the potential to advertise to future clientele merely based on their interest.

Appendix

Problem Definition &
Approaches, Interviews

Problem Definition & Approaches

On the first day, we came up with a list of questions that were both icebreakers and guiding questions to figure out what type of project our DCH partners would be interested in pursuing.

Intros
• What's your favorite class?
• What do you want to study?
• Who's your role model?
• What are you passionate about?
• What are your interests? What do you do in your free time?
• If you had all the time in the world, what would you do?

Form, Emotion & Color Exercise
• What's your favorite color? Least?
• What's your favorite place? Why? Describe it.
• What do you associate with each color?
• Introduction to color theory & color associations

Real World Applications/ Project Ideation
• What are your skills?
• What skills would you like to learn?
• If you could change something to make the world a better place, what would it be?
•Introduce our ideas. What ideas do you guys have?

We left that day with the idea to create a student lounge close to the school, but had to pivot and landed on the colorful chair & table idea. To get a sense of what the students thought of the idea, we interviewed students at DCH.

• What is your favorite subject/ area of interest?
• What do you do that's creative? (This can be anything: doodling, decorating your room, making music, creative writing, etc...)
• Do you have access to all the supplies you need/want in order to be creative?
• Do you currently have enough space to pursue creative projects?
• Where do you do your homework? Creative projects?
• What do you do in your free time?

We received a wide range of answers! Some areas of interests were math, science, history, Spanish and sports. Many of the students were passionate about and spent their free timeplaying basketball andvideo games, reading, dancing and doodling & drawing. They spent their time with family and friends and most of their time was spent at either school or their home. Many of the students said that they do their homework on their dining room table or on their bed, and would like a dedicated space. Many of the students weren't in creative classes, didn't have access to the materials they wanted, and said that if there was a space dedicated to being creative, they would use it!

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Interviews

Laura Towell

Age 20, Program Assistant at The Children's Playhouse in Boone, NC. Education Major at Appalachian State University

Rachel: How do you think color impacts the children you work with at The Children's Playhouse?

Laura: Even if I don't want to be there because I'm tired or not in the mood at first, I'm always happy once I get there because there's so much color, its bright and it's cheerful because of it. There are pictures of people smiling on the walls, so many activities on the wall of what were going to do next, and you just never have time to think about the past when you're in there. The color of the space (the walls are orange and green with patterned tiles) has a clear effect on the kids as well. Being able to walk in and spot your favorite color, maybe it's a subconscious thing, but it automatically makes them happy. I think that goes for everybody, if you're able to walk into a bright place or see a beautiful, bright, colored object in a space, its just going to allow for a more positive experience and mood. Parents love the place too, they always comment on how it's bright and beautiful, it results in having brighter clients, like pople aren't angry when they're there, it's just not possible.

Rachel: Can you speak further on that effect?

Laura: I think seeing patterns and colors in one place evokes creativity and maybe even inspires a challenge within the children. Seeing something beautiful stimulates them to want to create something cool themselves. So in the space itself, the first thing you walk into when you come in [to The Children's Playhouse] is the art room. Right away people are around creativity. We have examples and different art put out every week, we always provide examples. We have this tile rim around the perimeter of the room and it's very colorful and patterned and whenever kids see it they always go up to it and touch it and think it's very cool. Ill see them go from touching this immediately to the painting station and start mixing colors to make their own colorful, patterned renditions and pieces. I think visually seeing something stimulates them to want to make something cool and colorful.

Rachel: How, in your own life, does color influence your well-being?

Laura: Color has personally affected me as it has an ability to completely transform my mood. If I catch a glimpse of my favorite color (purple) it subconsciously makes me inspired and energized. If I'm in a bright and happy place, it makes me brighter and happier. The classrooms I occupy are white with brown desks and are completely uninspired and don't provide me with any inspiration. I suffer from depression and find myself always happier in a colorful space or using colorful objects in my day to day life. I buy patterned plates and bowls, patterned bedding, my room is covered with colored tapestries. I really try to make my spaces colorful and inspiring, it makes me happier and feel brighter. Color has the ability to transform my mood. If I catch a glimpse of my favorite color, I feel energized.

Diane Slakter
Age 56, Baker by Profession, former owner of a Girls Clothing Boutique

Rachel: How, in your own life, does color influence your life and well-being?

Diane: Determining what color I feel like wearing is a daily topic in my mind. My mood determines what color I feel like wearing. Who I am seeing, what I want to accomplish and how I want to portray myself is dictated by the colors I wear. Color is a huge part of that. I love the colors in virtually every room in my house and the colors I don't love I always wish I could change. Pattern is the same, there are patterns I love and there are patterns I hate and will always hate. Pattern definitely evokes strong feelings of happiness and inspiration or hatred. I have an immediate reaction to pattern.

Rachel: How does color impact your feelings about the spaces you occupy?

Diane: Color evokes other things, it's a source of inspiration because if I'm cooking or entertaining and I've cooked or baked something, once that's done, I always ask how do I make this look the best? How do I display something in a way that enhances whatever I am presenting?

Kendall Caputo
Age 20, Art Therapy Major at Boston University

Rachel: How, in your own life, does color influence your life and well-being?

Kendall: I am an incredibly spacially sensitive person, the things I see around me really have a large effect on my mood- aesthetically and in reference to where they are in the space. I have always been relaxed and drawn to blue tones, so I like to surround myself with those. I would say a color that is really off putting to me is just plain stark white, I think that probably comes from being in classrooms and the stark fluorescent lighting, gives me a lot of anxiety. I am very sensitive to color and materials as well, it's why I study art therapy and why I think it could really benefit a lot of children like me.

Rachel: How does color impact your feelings about the spaces you occupy?

Kendall: I draw a lot of inspiration from the spaces around me where I'm creating. I find the space I'm around kind of dictates in a way what I end up creating. A very bright, patterned space typically makes me make something that subconsciously "fits" into the space I'm occupying, a plainer room allows for probably more creativity because I don't feel as though what I'm making competes with the spaces around me. If something is more industrial, I'll probably make something more graphic. Also, what I'm wearing and what another person is wearing may inspire me to be more collaborative. If I am in a creative/ conducive space and there is someone in that space wearing something that inspires me, ill be the most likely in this instance to go up to a stranger.

Boni Al-Haruni

Age 21, Data Science Major at University of Michigan

Hafsa: How does color play a role in your life?

Boni: Colors play a huge role. I associate colors with different moods. If I am feeling happy, I tend to wear brighter colors. I like warmer months like summer/ spring because the world is more colorful – skies are blue, flowers are abundant in different shades of red, yellow, orange, etc. the converse is true and when I am feeling down, I wear monotone, dull colors. Also my mood goes significantly down during winter times because everything is dull.

Hafsa: What's your favorite place? What characteristics stand out to you?

Boni: My favorite place currently is Ann Arbor during spring time. Ann Arbor is great during spring because I feel stress free and its much more freedom to do things. Characteristics that stand out are the Diag because people populate it, the grass is green and you can lay in it, leaves on trees are back and its nice to lay under them in a hammock.

Hafsa: How does the color of a space influence how you feel?

Boni: Color influences how I feel because like I said I associate color with feelings. If I enter a room with dark colors everywhere it will give me a cold and negative vibe implicitly. However if I were to enter like a room with bright colors (yellow, orange, pink, etc.) I would feel the energy and be more awake and attentive to what is happening.

Hafsa: What role does creativity play in your life?

Boni: Creativity plays a sufficient role in my life because I try to be creative with how I go about my day. Its never really planned out which is bad, but that's how I roll

Hafsa: Are you satisfied with the time you spend on creative endeavors? Would you like to spend more, less, same amount of time? Why?

Boni: I would like to spend more time because as I gotten more busier I became less and less creative. I don't play music anymore which I would like to again

Hafsa: Do you think color and form can play a role in bringing people together? Any thoughts?

Boni: Color does bring people together. I'm not sure how to answer this question.

Hafsa: Are there certain things around you that inspire you to be creative? What are they?

Boni: Yeah when I see a piano I would like to be creative, or if I see great murals it gets me in the creative mood

Hiba Asad

Age 21, Psychology Major at University of Michigan

Hafsa: How does color play a role in your life?

Hiba: Color makes everything more exciting. It adds vibrancy, youth, and an emotional aspect to even the most mundane objects.

Hafsa: What's your favorite place? What characteristics stand out to you?

Hiba: Some of my favorite places are my extended family's homes in Pakistan. The architecture, the smells, and the dreamy nostalgia of places that seem frozen in time all stick out to me. Coming back to homes that were integral at different points in my life bring back memories and emotions. No matter where I am in life, it just feels like home.

Hafsa: How does the color of a space influence how you feel?

Hiba: The color of a space really sets a tone for emotions, I think. The darker and more muted a space is, the darker my mood and headspace.

Hafsa: What role does creativity play in your life?

Hiba: For me, creativity is an outlet for expression. It allows me to approach something with a "blank canvas" mindset and really make it wherever I want.

Hafsa: Are you satisfied with the time you spend on creative endeavors? Would you like to spend more, less, same amount of time? Why?

Hiba: Id love to spend more time creating, but I also think my creativity comes in bursts, and I often start projects and then can't find the inspiration to finish them. I would rather have more consistency for my creativity, so I can still find inspiration in my everyday and then "come back to the drawing board."

Hafsa: Do you think color and form can play a role in bringing people together? Any thoughts?

Hiba: I think color and form have the power to evoke emotions in people, but also to portray messages. If used effectively, they can certainly be used to unify people.

Hafsa: Are there certain things around you that inspire you to be creative? What are they?

I think for me a lot of it is seeing others do things creatively which inspires me. I'm not sure if I can isolate it to a specific thing, a lot of it is emotional and just feeling creative. I also like Islamic architecture and art a lot And like passion projects really get me too and seeing others doing theirs.

Halimah Ahmad

Age 21, Business Major at Wayne State University

Hafsa: How does color play a role in your life?

Halimah: Color influences a lot of my choices in what I choose to buy, display, wear, or even simply like. I tend to be drawn towards the darker shades of colors which is pretty apparent in what I wear and own.

Hafsa: What's your favorite place? What characteristics stand out to you?

Halimah: Although I don't particularly have a "favorite" place, I find much comfort in my bedroom. My shelf on the wall displays a blue gradient in the background and is cluttered with my many trinkets. I have a tapestry, resembling the lantern scene from tangled, hanging next to my bed strung with lights. And of course, my cat asleep on the bed refusing to let me pet her.

Hafsa: How does the color of a space influence how you feel?

Halimah: I think color can have a lot to do with how you spend your time in that room. I find softer colors tend to relax you and therefore make you want to spend time there. Although I am drawn to darker colors, my room actually has much more lighter colored paint, furniture, and decor. Darker colors don't necessarily make me feel sad or unwelcome, but they don't give me that sense of comfort that lighter colors do.

Hafsa: What role does creativity play in your life?

Halimah: Although in business there are so many ways to be creative, I don't often get the opportunity to be super creative in my classes and work. But there are always little areas where I can do just that: being creative in how I approach a problem, how I present my work, or simply how I carry myself. Once entering the working world, I hope to be given even more opportunities and would love to open a business with the help of my creativity.

Hafsa: Are you satisfied with the time you spend on creative endeavors? Would you like to spend more, less, same amount of time? Why?

Halimah: I would like to spend more time on creative endeavors. Like I stated before I don't always get the best opportunities to express myself, but not just in a business aspect. I used to draw a lot in high school and unfortunately, I haven't had much time to do that in my spare time. I also love music and I continue to attend lessons, but there is not much else I do with these talents.

Hafsa: Do you think color and form can play a role in bringing people together? Any thoughts?

Halimah: Definitely! People actually have more experiences and thoughts in common than they realize, and color and form can allow them to realize that. Even more than that, people can learn what they do not know through such objects and strike up conversations with one another.

Hafsa: Are there certain things around you that inspire you to be creative? What are they?

Halimah: Honestly, not really. If there really is any object that "inspires" me, I would have to say my cat. I feel like a lot of the stuff that inspires me are events, experiences, or people around me rather than tangible objects.

X