

# Recess!

For this project, we want you to explore parts of your interest / identity / story that may be "off the map" or "frivolous" or "taboo." This could be a guilty pleasure, something you've always wanted to investigate but worried it might be not "designerly" enough, or a topic you worried might make others uncomfortable, but makes you happy. You are near the midpoint of your voyage through the program, and on either side, there is schoolwork. In the middle, take some time to do what you truly want to do. "It's your recess!"

Some examples of REAL "Recess-type" projects we have supported in the past include but are not limited to:

- "I've become known as the serious systems designer person... but I'd love to explore fashion, and in particular, shoes."
- "I've been spotting examples of power dynamics and class dynamics in design work, and even in our classes, but I haven't been sure that it's ok for me to talk about that kind of stuff. I want to do a project about how people in power receive and incorporate feedback, especially negative feedback."
- "I want to make a toaster that works like a pendulum, and is beautiful."
- "We've been really obsessed with the way people think about death as an individual and what legacy they want to leave behind – I don't know where else we can research this."
- "I'm really interested in the community of people collecting beanie babies around the world. I want to interview them and understand the appeal of these furry creatures."
- "I'm kind of embarrassed because I've studied architecture for so long, but I don't feel great about my ability to draw. I want to learn to sketch."
- Dream Flying from class!

The goal of this project is to come into deeper wholeness as a designer, and work not to get caught into narratives of "who you are" and what you are "supposed to do." You came here not just to pursue "important, lofty" work but also to pursue your whims in a serious manner; to pursue your joy with the secret understanding that enjoyment and fun may not in fact be opposed to important work, but central to it. Your beanie babies will likely lead to solar panels, we promise. But like Eames, you must have faith that "Eventually, everything connects." And have the bravery to discover new parts of yourself.

Think of this as a deeper, more advanced version of the reflective exam at the end of Needfinding 1. We want you to take your skills of Needfinding and apply them not to the world, but to yourself.

## The Advisory Structure

This is a solo mission. But you're not doing it alone! You will create a 3 person 'advisory board' in which you and two other peers will help each other in a relationship of coaching and mutual investment. So, choose your advisory-mates wisely! **What matters for your advisory is less similarity of topic than similarity of approach/values.** You want to surround yourself with people you want to enable, and be enabled by – so while healthy debate and skepticism is important in the design process, that may not be ideal for your advisory. You want trust and an attitude of deep investment – literally, if you were investors, these are the people you'd be happy to invest in and vice versa. Topics are liable to change; it's the people who make the advisory. This advisory will meet every Thursday until the end of the quarter!

## The Weekly Show and Tell

Once a week, on Thursday, bring an artifact that embodies your learning and progress for the week. This is non-negotiable. This could be a physical thing you made, or a research board or presentation that showcases what you've learned this week. Every week, we will use this as a jumping off point with your advisory to figure out how to move you forward.

## The One-Pager

## The Final Deliverable (Submit via this assignment)

What is your final deliverable? We don't know – this will be determined by your advisory. It should be something that feels good to you, to your advisory, and truly honours the learning journey you have been on, and challenges you just enough. Whatever "it" is, it should represent a genuine effort to embody this part of yourself – it should make you feel proud, and you should feel good about putting it in your portfolio as an embodiment of what interests you as a designer.

## The Final Reflection(TBD)