

TWINKLE

FOUR RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Think of a context and an environment where you would like to intervene. Where will you present your project? Who is it made for?

I was largely inspired by David Rose's "Enchanted Objects: design, human desire, and the Internet of things". At first, I searched inward to consider what was enchanting and meaningful to myself, and why that was the case. Society's countless encouragements to 'be who we are' are often overshadowed by multiple factors. Whether we are meant to 'fit in' from a corporate economical standpoint (buying the newest clothes, hiding our skin and hair's imperfections, etc.) or a corporate work standpoint (going with the flow, listening to the boss, etc.), we are constantly being reviewed and judged on what we can offer others. Needing to make money, and needing to be appealing, we often don't slow down- self-care quickly bought in bath salts and junk foods as a quick, tantalizing reprieve from our daily lives.

This project would ideally be displayed in a corporate environment- whether the lobby of an office building, or the middle of a shopping centre. It would be surrounded by curtains-- allowing the visitor to peek in unhindered, but simultaneously feel as though they are entering another world- a world where they are allowed to be themselves, curious and unabashed.

Think about the kind of relationship you wish to foster between your users and the artifact or installation. How can you use your project to destabilize the users and make them reflect on themselves, their environment and society?

Reminding others that it's okay to slow down and simply bask in and appreciate our imperfections and humanity is the primary goal of this installation piece. The twinkling stars, imperfectly and uniquely crafted, will lower enough to be able to be touched when they sense a presence-- when they are touched, lights in the form of constellations up above will be activated, encouraging the visitor to take their time and examine every star, encouraging them to touch

and notice the differences between the stars, and enjoy their individuality. This project would ideally pique the user's curiosity, enchanting them enough for them to think curiously and fondly back on it. It is a physical manifestation of the time we should all take mentally to ground ourselves and remember our differences and imperfections make us undeniably unique. Even if we are unable to immediately make big changes to our lives, it is extremely important to have a strong mental space where we are able to affirm ourselves and allow ourselves to feel a curious wonder about the world- to allow cynicism that the world has forced upon us to melt away to make way for our authentic selves.

Think about the notion of empowerment. Is your artifact really helping or challenging its users in any way or is it just another psychological prosthesis?

I do think the main core of the installation is showing and not telling- something that keeps messages from feeling inauthentic and hamfisted and instead allowing the users to derive their own special meaning from the piece. Whether it is an escape, a moment to breathe, or something all that much larger and empowering and encouraging individuality, the installation can encompass all of those things and become what the user makes of it. There are installation pieces I have visited years ago that I still think about to this day- perhaps not because I have discovered the meaning or intent behind them, but because they are enchanting and magnetizing in a way that I can think fondly back on in relation to the personal experience I have had with them. I would like this installation piece to mean the same to others- to show a wide range of imperfect but shining stars, and allowing users to truly interact and discover the differences and beauties between them.

Think about something meaningful. What are you trying to tell us with your project?

The project title Twinkle, as well as the theme of stars, does derive from the classic children's song, 'Twinkle Twinkle Little Star'- in a way that's both comforting and enchanting. The full version of the lyrics has one particular line that is inspiring:

*"When the blazing sun is gone,
When he nothing shines upon,
Then you show your little light"*

We are all our own unique light- together, we form constellations, and even galaxies, but as opposed to one gargantuan force, we are appreciated for our uniqueness. We are meant to be unique and different, whether in a social sense, a corporate sense, or otherwise. Our identities are our own- and that is empowering and important to recognize.

SENSORS AND EQUIPMENT

Immediately, the first sensor that comes to mind is a motion sensor. When the user enters, the stars will lower based on a motion sensor- when it detects motion, it will trigger the motors, which will have the stars lower invitingly and light up, allowing the user to walk among them and touch them. This draws attention to the stars and brings them down to 'our level'- something that makes them instantly relatable as objects, as opposed to having them already hanging down when the user enters.

The stars themselves would be strung up with conductive thread, hand sewn together with it as well. They will be plushies with an LED light inside of them, radiating a small amount of light that makes them inviting and warm.

By touching the conductive thread, the user can directly convey that they are touching a certain star, which will send that data up into the main cluster of electronics up top- activating a specific constellation of LED lights. Each star will activate a different set of LED pins, further cementing past their physical forms' differences that they are unique. The user will feel compelled to touch all of the stars to view the differing constellations.

When the user leaves, and there is no movement for a certain amount of time, the stars will slowly rise again, waiting for the next person to enter.

SIMILAR PROJECTS

FIELD OF LIGHT by Bruce Munro

Field of Light is an installation piece, displayed outside over rolling plains, hills, and a valley, comprised of 50,000 solar-powered lights that cover them. It's made to complement the environment it is placed on as opposed to competing with it. The hills look as though they are "drawn with light". The users are meant to feel cradled by the valley, becoming somewhat separate from the world while appreciating nature, the lights, as well as the stars above. The lights become their own stars at night, although minimally lit so they feel comparable to the stars in the sky. Munro explains that the immersive quality of the landscape is sort of a physical magical realism. He considered that he felt most connected with the world when he was immersed in the pre-existing natural landscape, wanting to highlight this sense of connection using light. He feels that art connects people and has the potential to call our similarities to attention, promoting empathy and compassion.

LIGHT IS TIME by Tsuyoshi Tane

Light is Time is a mesmerizing installation featuring 80,000 suspended main plates, which are the basic component of a watch. Users can take a look around, as well as notice the watches on display. The light shines off of the main plates, creating beautiful light refractions at different angles. The artist, Tsuyoshi Tane, equates time to light- as without light, time would not exist. He explains that ever since we as a race have digitized, measured and otherwise quantified time, we have forgotten about its relationship with the essence of light. Because we spend all of our time trying to save it and partition it, we lose the richness of the light that allows time as a construct to even exist, as well as the wonders of the universe and the pleasure in our lives. In the end, this installation urges us to reconsider time, and to slow down and allow light to return to time.

INFINITY MİRRORED ROOM—THE SOULS OF MILLIONS OF LIGHT YEARS AWAY by Yayoi Kusama

Yayoi Kusama has multiple infinity mirrored rooms as installation pieces, all feeling fairly different from one another. Her early mirrored rooms were much more colorful and well-lit. However, the Souls of Millions of Light Years Away has hundreds of LED lights hanging and flickering in a pattern- the mirrored room only heightening and amplifying the experience. The user activates the installation, but also becomes a backdrop to the ethereal environment, nearly invisible in the dimly lit space. This installation is a quiet place for contemplation among the stars in the galaxy, visitors reflecting on existence, time, and their relationship to the world. The space looks nearly infinite despite its limited space- the visitor likely feeling overwhelmed by the existential theme.

The Difference

Each of these installations is beautiful in their own right. Each of them is expansive and ethereal, and use lighting and multitudes in very alluring ways. My project, on the other hand, is a much more closed and intimate space with much less to be overwhelmed by. The space is, firstly, interactive: it responds to the visitor entering the space and encourages them to touch the stars that slowly descend. These pieces are not interactive, nor do they respond to human curiosity past the visual experience. The intimacy of the small space, as well as touching the stars and exploring, makes the space unique to everyone- no two people will visit and see and touch the space in the same way. While the aforementioned installations may be similar in theme, the theme isn't personal and intimate- not bad, but simply a different view and experience emerges from a person's ability to touch and explore unhindered. The installation's stars are also imperfect and soft to the touch, a direct comparison to our unique selves, inside and out. The childlike creation of them makes them inviting and nonthreatening, prompting one to feel comfortable and calm. The location is also crucial- these installations would ideally be based in an area where one must act on their curiosity, and take the time to see what's inside. The installation would not make much sense at a gallery, where visitors are meant to meander through; placing it at a corporate location directly challenges the notion of a person only being worth their perfection and productivity, and allows people to perhaps find a place of peace to find their most authentic selves.

STORYBOARD





