

Adult. Play. Grounds.
Establishing Places for Play in the Everyday Life of Adults

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A thesis
submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Master of Architecture

University of Washington

2020

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Program Authorized to Offer Degree:

Architecture

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Abstract

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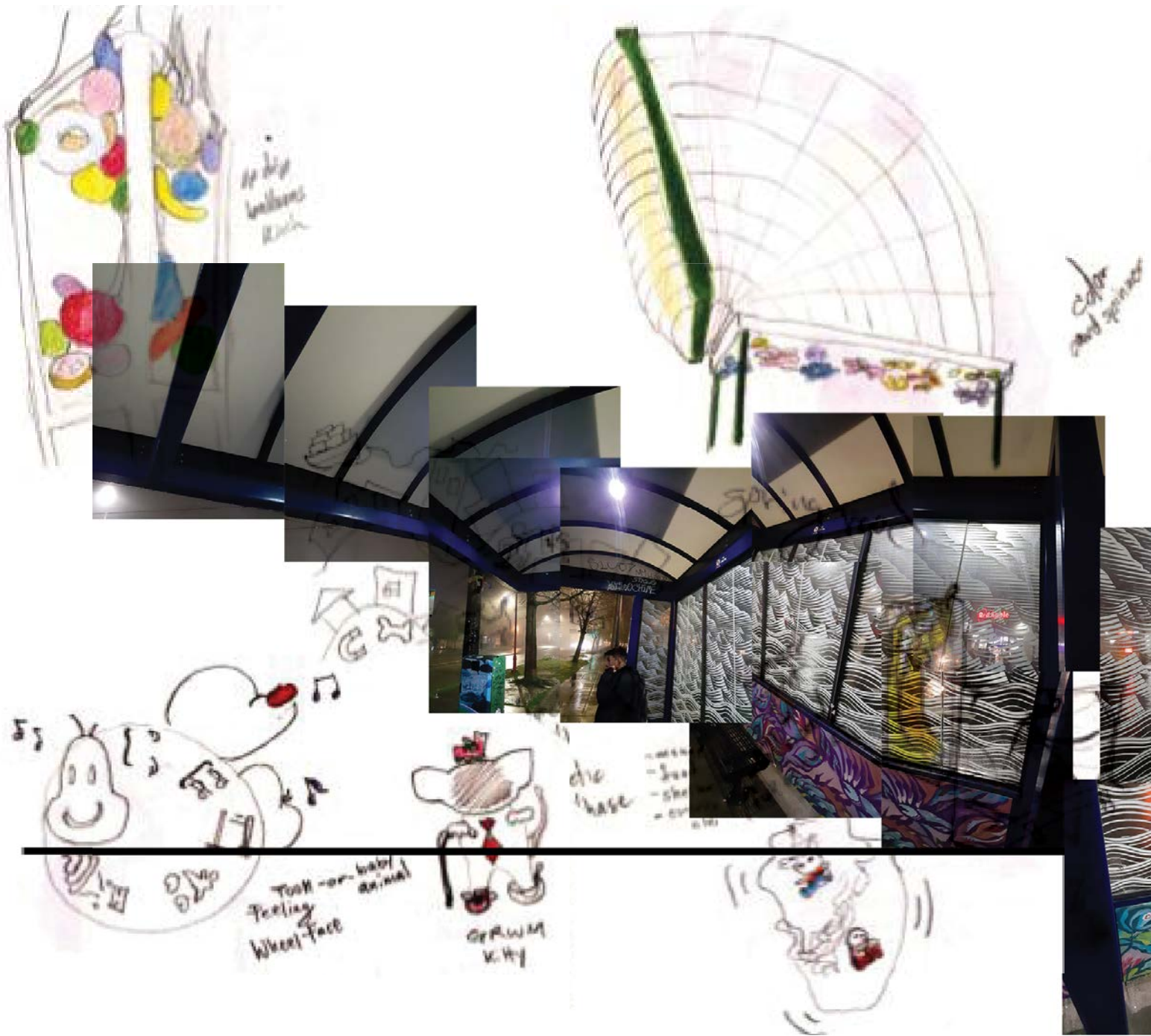
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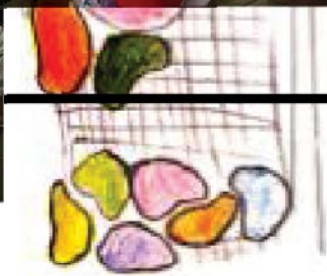
Architecture

Because of a notable lack of social infrastructure, in support of a healthy work/play balance in the routine lives of adults, I propose the public transit environment be given a new social identity that invites play. The new identity, as reflected in an environment's design for non-commodified play, uses transit environments to define psycho-social well-being as a valuable pillar of community health. This thesis aims at conceptually identifying existing infrastructure with the intention to systematically increase interpersonal learning and discourse. Transit's opportune qualities may establish an innovative practice of creating an experientially balanced public realm; giving play a place.

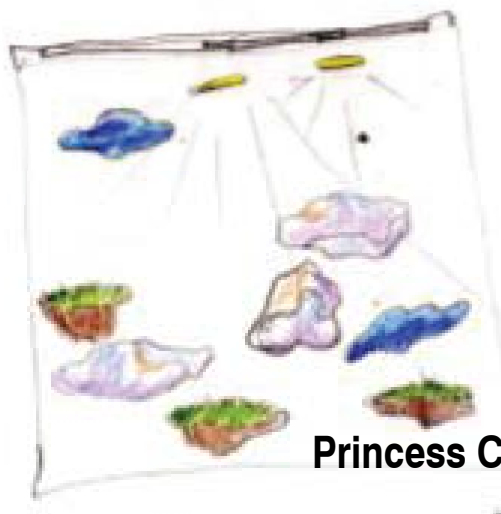


ADULT **PLAY** GROUNDS

Establishing Places for Play in the Everyday Life of Adults



Bugs
in a
Silkworm
(story
restaurant)



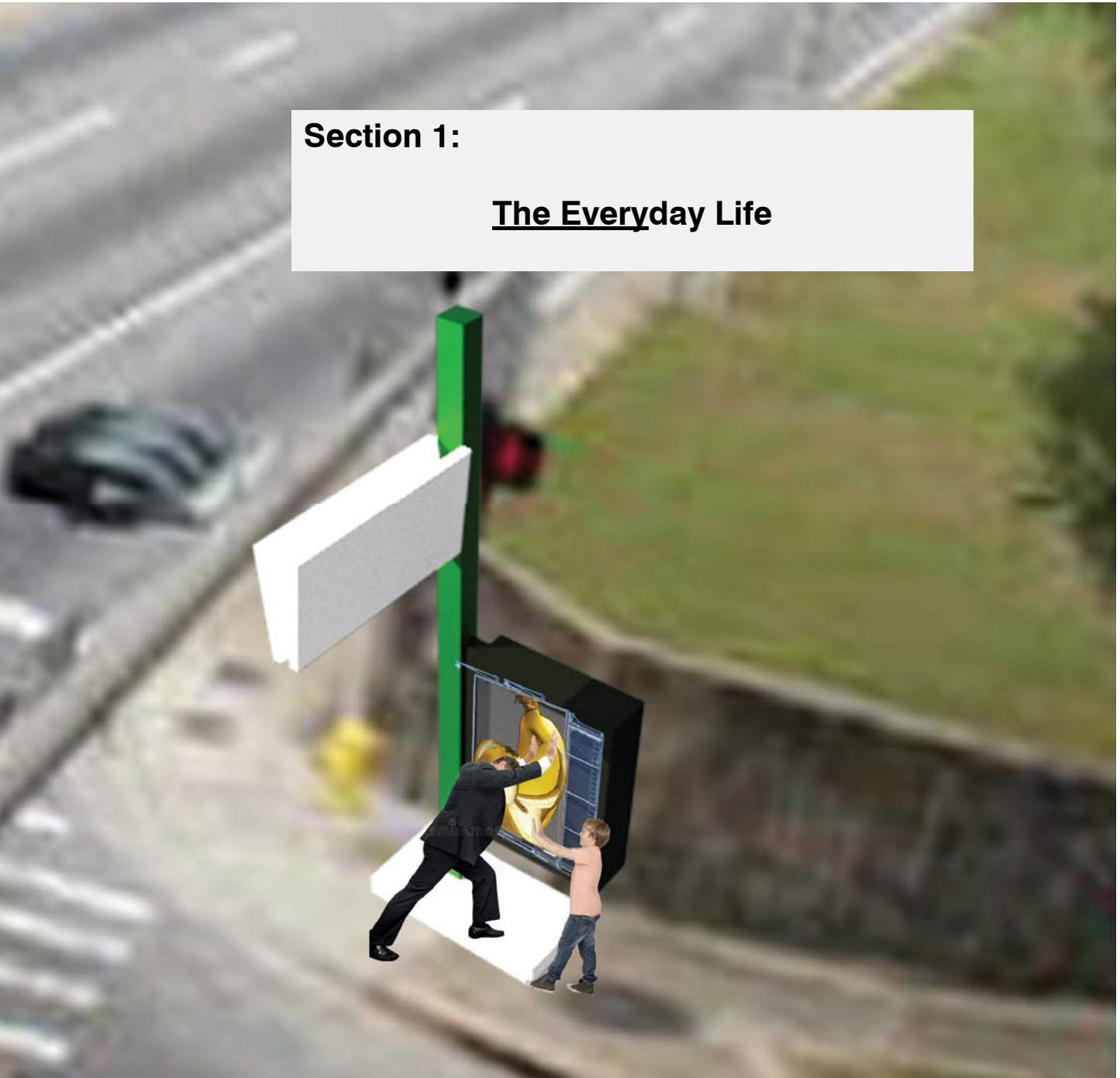
Princess Coleman

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Section 1:

The Everyday Life



Issue:

Most of what would be considered a public space falls under the infrastructure sector of the built environment. Roads, sidewalks, parks, and beaches may be public, and libraries, transit stations, and road rest stops are generally semi-public. These spaces are semi-public because they are generally indoors and require funds for supplies and maintenance as well as rules for safety. These rules control the process of using the space as well as the behavior within the space, without necessarily being said or directly communicated. Within this situational space, how are these unspoken rules maintaining the environment? Better yet, how are these unspoken rules limiting the environment?

There is the occasional sign and the rare authority figure, but generally, these semi-public spaces impose a somewhat choreographed behavior nonverbally. The steps to occupying and using semi-public spaces are made clear by its users. They openly conform to the understood choreography, in addition to expecting visitors, other than themselves, to fall in step. But these spaces are not choreographed in a literal or even direct sense.

“Through the expressive implications of his stream of conduct, through mere participation itself, the individual effectively projects this acceptable self into the interaction, although he may not be aware of it, and the others may not be aware of having so interpreted his conduct. ...The elements of a social encounter, then, consist of effectively projected claims to an acceptable self and the confirmation of like claims on the part of the others.”¹

1 Interaction Ritual pg. 105

The choreography is communicated via clear and direct signage or via the observation and interpretation of the behavior of others within the space. Going against this performance may be perceived as low class. One may even go so far as to presume this observed behavior as ‘best behavior’, and anything otherwise as ‘worst behavior’ without any clear in-between. This raises the question of, what does acceptable behavior look like? How might an individual retain their natural forms of behavior and expression and still portray themselves as ‘successful’ citizens?²

The conclusion I draw from this is that social norms grow rigid in the face of ambiguity and occlusion. In an attempt to avoid association with a lower class, individuals are subtly encouraged to perform prescribed actions that may be less sincere than doing something else; something that is not inherent to the space but instead telling of the individual.

Sincere thoughts and actions have been associated with psychosocial health in many ways. The sort of thoughts and actions that sincerely express mood, state of mind, and affinity build understanding between one’s self and strangers. Performances that explore emotional,

2 Idib.

mental, and physical expression do not seem to have a place within the choreographed control placed on semi-public spaces and most public spaces. This raises the questions, are public spaces a space for gaining understanding and exposure to others? Are public spaces a place for sincere performance or play? If not, then where is? Where is there room for play in daily life? How can the public embrace play as a free and sober, enjoyable activity for all ages? Might public spaces that support daily life also support playful behavior?

Spaces for casual exploration, experimentation, and discovery for adults is somewhat of an oddity, which reinforces judgement towards adults that try and fail or attempt to learn something new. Creating spaces for adults to play and showcase failure may simultaneously encourage organic community building, allow for social place making, and exercise interpersonal learning habits.

By embracing this sort of space, we create opportunities for a place to safely embrace playful behavior. Using theories on spectatorship, symbolic interactionism, and reversal theory, a Play Place offers different form of empowerment to the environment co-creators. The co-creators of place may then shape a more rounded experience, possibly to the extent of experience curation. This sort of play place type of space, much like a hopscotch pattern on the ground, has a qualitatively assessable impact on the surrounding area.

Hello, I'm Princess Coleman

Establishing Play in the Everyday Life of Adults



*Hello, I am Princess. And what better
way for me to tell you about my ideas
than with my face.*

Proposal:

The conclusion I draw from this is that social norms grow rigid in the face of ambiguity and occlusion. In an attempt to avoid association with a lower class, individuals are subtly encouraged to perform prescribed actions that may be less sincere than doing something else; something that is not inherent to the space but instead telling of the individual.

Sincere thoughts and actions have been associated with psychosocial health in many ways. The sort of thoughts and actions that sincerely express moods, state of mind, and affinity more effectively act as a way to build understanding between strangers; that is beyond meeting

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What I mean by establishing play in the everyday life of adults is every-thing in-between work and home. All of the places adults routinely visit accumulate to create the overall life experience. Of-course there is the occasional trip or celebration and for some, these deviations are more common than for others. But the accumulated daily experience still out-weighs the occasional deviations.

the minimum criteria of safety. These mysterious performances that explore emotional, mental, and physical expression, or simply put, play, do not seem to have a place within the choreographed control placed on semi-public spaces and some public spaces. This raises the questions, are public spaces a space for gaining understanding and exposure to others? Are public spaces a place for play? If not, then where is? Where is there room for play in daily life? How can the public embrace play as a free and sober, enjoyable activity for all ages? Might public spaces that support daily life also support playful behavior?

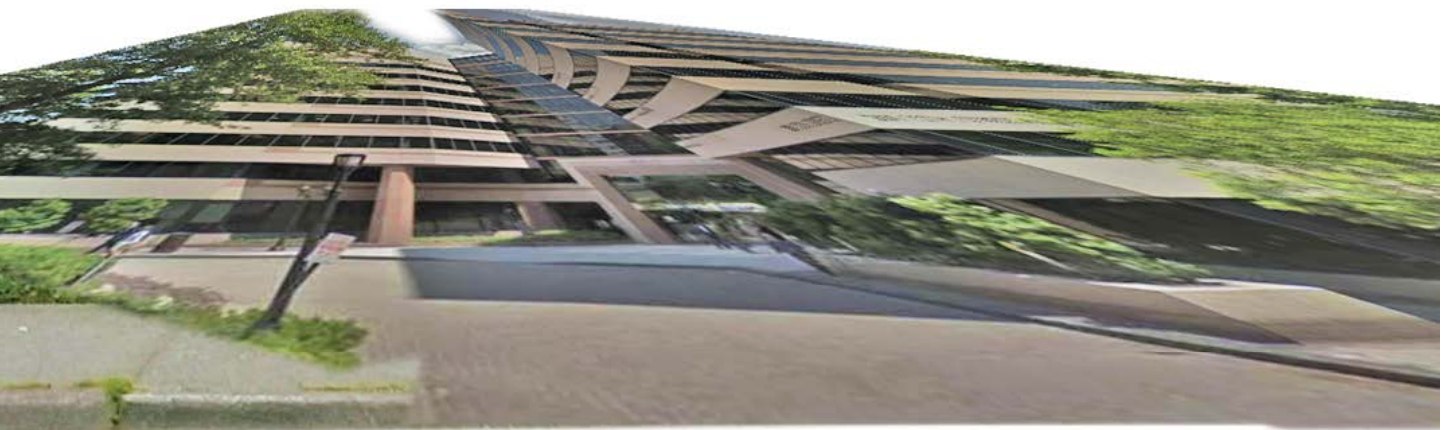
Spaces for casual exploration, experimentation, and discovery for adults is somewhat of an oddity, which reinforces judgement towards adults that try and fail or attempt to learn something new. Creating spaces for adults to play and showcase failure may simultaneously empower the co-creators of a community, allow for social place making, and exercise interpersonal learning habits.

By embracing this sort of playful space, we create opportunities for a place to safely embrace playful behavior. A Play place functions as a co-created shaper of place experience, potentially to the extent of experience curation. Much like a hopscotch pattern on the ground, a place's playful impact on the surrounding area may be qualitatively analyzed, with theories on spectatorship, symbolic interactionism, and reversal theory.



Section 2:

Criticism and Theories



Analysis

So, how might the experience of public environments suitably serve evolving goals?

As a child, I had hoped that after I had escaped institutional education that I would finally be free to be myself and explore the world for what it really is rather than what I have been told to see it as. Truth is, I don't feel like I ever escaped. Jobs available to me operated with a similar structure and I had few opportunities to express or explore without paying handsomely to gain access to amenities and events that were being sold as special. I, as a member of the city, had been sorted by my position within the dominant social structure, then compartmentalized by my environment.

It is through a pragmatic¹ application of municipal and social systems that the daily life experience is shaped. What planners and designers consider to be a pragmatic use of resources is what is going to drive the formation of the environment within which people live, love, and die. Outside of work and home, there are private institutions,

¹ Pragmatism is one of the originally American philosophies and it is also difficult to pinpoint because of the many contradictory stances that loosely fall under this label. Here Pragmatism is used as it is described by William James in a 19th c. document. In the Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Pragmatism claims that, "an ideology or proposition is true if it works satisfactorily, that the meaning of a proposition is to be found in the practical consequences of accepting it, and that unpractical ideas are to be rejected." The maxims that fall under this philosophy paraphrase as no sense can be made from unknowable facts and "the utility of a theory is a matter of its problem-solving power" and "all beliefs and theories are best treated as working hypotheses which may need to be modified—refined, revised, or rejected—in light of future inquiry and experience".

with their own internal codes of conduct and cost of access, and then there are public and semi-public spaces. Outside of bought access to extracurricular, private access spaces, an individual is ushered through a seamless flow of productive action and appropriate social ritual as a daily life experience. At no point in this flow is there enough elasticity to sincerely express selfness. That is, unless otherwise created with social rebellion, embarrassment, or the risk of choice-shame. There isn't a socially integrated destination for self-expression that isn't sold as a commodity.

A book that is informing much of my research into this topic is *Space, Difference, Everyday Life: Reading Henri Lefebvre*. In it, a collection of essays critically examine Henri's theories on the lived spaces of everyday life.² The first essay refers to the "departmentalization of mind" taking place in the commodity form of space. Theodor Adorno makes note of the change in knowledge production in the essay implying that this change is larger; to the point of "academic capitalism".

² Henri Lefebvre is referenced here as a pillar of knowledge among the research used in political, economic, and humanitarian conferences and discussions. His theories about the lived spaces of everyday life is the subject of analysis covered in the essays that fill the text cited.

"The analogy between industrial practice and knowledge production indicates that university work even of the critical variety now mimics the commodity form more clearly than ever. -- Entrepreneurial scholarship approximates the time-space of fashion, where the commodity fetish establishes itself through the worship of the marginally new but structurally repetitive."³

³ Henri Lefebvre pg.4 The book notes Theodor Adorno's complaint about the commodity form appearing in intellectual work in *Minima Moralia: Reflections*

The famous time cycle for fast fashion, that is habitually produced in globally destructive ways and discarded quicker than the time it took to fabricate and transport the goods to the consumer public, has been adopted by broader industries including but not limited to knowledge production. The way in which we understand the world has shifted its priorities to efficient production of “marginally new” information rather than thorough examination and exploration of the world and our conception of it.

This same condition, referred to above as commodity form, has impact beyond that of occupational valuation, but also in socialization. A text titled *Interaction Ritual* by Erving Goffman identifies instances where social understanding is built upon assumption and ritual until deeper communication may take place.⁴ Without a consensual time or place for sincere expression or deeper communication, an individual may find themselves “Compromised in every encounter which he enters”⁵. Therefore, both time spent at work and in public spaces has been warped into a time-space of production rather than living as ‘self’. The risk of compromising the present ‘self’, that has either been developed to or presumed to present a successful physiognomy, is a threat towards the

from Damaged Life, 1951. He notes how the procedures that were encouraged fostered a “servile ‘departmentalization of mind’ that was ready to be used for whatever practical purpose power had for it.” In reading this, the essayists expanded on his evidence by adding the practice of translating permutations into postmodern culture.

4 Erving Goffman has an endearing quote in *Interaction Ritual*, 1967 that explains this position. “Various kinds of recurrent encounters in a given society may share the assumption that participants have attained certain moral, mental, and physiognomic standards. The person who falls short may everywhere find himself inadvertently trapped into making implicit identity-claims which he cannot fulfill. Compromised in every encounter which he enters, he truly wears the leper’s bell.” (pg.107)

5 Idib.

interpretation made by others or self. The threat of being thought of as being behind or falling short of a make believe status quo is motivation enough to conform to ritualistic standards.

Understanding that this 'commodity form' appears in many different systems, is also to understand that the structure of our lives are informed by ritualistic spaces. Within these ritualized spaces, deviation or underperformance results in embarrassment, a social shame. Erving identifies the functionality of workspaces that have mixing spaces where one ritualized self crosses over with another ritualized self. He states,

“Embarrassment, then, is built into the establishment ecologically. Because of possessing multiple selves the individual may find he is required both to be present and to not be present on certain occasions. Embarrassment ensues: the individual finds himself being torn apart, however gently.”⁶

⁶ Erving identifies the dynamic present in some workplace mixing spaces

This dynamic has been present for as long as there have been cafeterias in the workplace, but what this exemplifies is the necessity to maintain multiple 'selves' within a shared space. The ritual, upon which the multiple 'selves' depend on in order to exist, also separates them from one another through a predeterminate valuation system. A system that orders interaction via roles that are set to be played by individuals involved. These roles are usually preconceived without the acknowledgement of 'self' but with identity factors such as

where people know you from different parts of your life and your position within the social structure is different. This quote is from (pg.110) where he breaks down embarrassment and how it acts as sort of a self-inflicted punishment for difference.

gender, race, and lifestyle. This system is put in place by the external “co-presence”⁷ of others whom also abide by the system.

Erving’s dramatization of being torn apart implies an alternative singularity of ‘self’. In speculation of a place for this singular ‘self’ to exist, some clarity around the issue of an internal co-presence conflict would benefit the process. A place generally free from ritual, or at least inviting towards ritual subversion actions, may reveal a reflexive ‘self’, if not a medially expressive one. Whatever ‘self’ presents itself in the absence or subversion of interaction ritual depends on the motivation driving the action or inaction. Interaction driven by enjoyment rather than the avoidance of risk may take a similar form as ritualistic interaction but with a difference of psychosocial intention and valuation process. This assumes that a student running home from school in pursuit of a prize would run more joyfully than if they were running in avoidance of an angry dog.

⁷ Erving uses the term co-presence on (pg.1) to explain that interaction takes place in the presence of more than one individual. The same term may also be used to conclude that what takes place within ritual does not equate to the co-presence need for interaction, rather it is more of a no-presence because most actions are obligated, predetermined, and anticipated.

Well, the experience of most environments is a result of the anticipated place’s identity, the behavior of those within the place, and the space itself. That is, based on Symbolic Interactionist theory.

Also, the experience of places depend on the mental state of those experiencing the moment. So, a person that is stressed

might not find your new craft studio charming. Which is fine, based on Reversal theory, people need to regularly switch from Telic to Paratelic states.

Although, the natural swing in mental state is kind of hard to do if every place you routinely visit prompts a relatively telic state of mind with ritualized behavior. Even the empowerment that comes from knowing that the environment is partly a product of your own behavior is taken away by the prevalence of ritual behavior and detachment.

M.J. Apter's Reversal Theory⁸ is an exploration of the motives and motivational mental states for human action. In his research, he identifies a few meta-motivational states that greatly parallel other theories often cited in research on play and happiness. A popular theory that comes from Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's similar research is that of Flow⁹, the self forgetting motivational state that has been interpreted by some as true, attainable happiness. Apter, rather than defining a path to happiness, defines a path to understanding why humans are pleased by something in one moment, then displeased by it in the next. A quote from Apter defining Reversal Theory reads,

8 Reversal Theory is a theory of meta-motivational states and the natural alternation between them. He is able to specify the meta-motivational state driving the enjoyment of an activity at one moment then the sudden lack of enjoyment in the same activity at a different moment. He also identifies a few triggers that may cause a switch in meta-motivational state and therefore changing the target of enjoyment. M.J. Apter has written many books exploring the topic. My most used source for information on the subject is his book titled, *Reversal Theory: Applications and Developments* 1985.

9 Flow is a the theory of self forgetting happiness immersed in activity.

“Yet the way in which a person experiences his or her world (phenomenological field) is clearly structured in various ways. It is in this sense that reversal theory can be thought of as a ‘structural phenomenological theory of human action’. (see Apter 1979): it is concerned both with experience (phenomenology) and with the systematic interpretations given to events within experience by the person (structure).”¹⁰

10 This quote is from pg. 2 of *Reversal Theory: Applications and Developments 1985* by M.J. Apter. In this quote there is a reference to an older text of his titled *Human Action and Theory of Psychological Reversals in Aspects of Consciousness vol.1: Psychological Issues*.

This affirms the structural nature of environmental experience and the power of interpretations within this structure. Though the focus here is on a more internal experience rather than an external, social one, Apter’s theory implicates an internal conflict between motivational states and their targets of satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

In seeking space for a speculative singular ‘self’, some understanding of meta-motivational states, or how we come to value positive experiences and avoid the risk of negative experiences, would help to understand social interpretations of ‘self’ in the absence or adjustment of social ritual.

Conformity to ritualistic interaction is presented as an if/then phenomenon where embarrassment or shame is the negative outcome of deviating from the ritual. Erving touches on this by resolving that those deviating from the “rules for behavior while in the presence of others” are consequently “psychotics” and “cut ups” because they have chosen to subvert

the structure of social organization, or as he says “the organized association of persons present to one another”.¹¹ There is a clear preference for structured interaction in Erving’s statement. He also seems to disregard any potential for deeper and more sincere structures for interaction and communication. By excluding a speculative opportunity, those involved in the phenomenological interaction are limited to either/or options rather than a presentation of nuanced sincerity. With the motivation for social interaction as role performance, a ritualized process is pragmatic. Conversely, if the motivation were for understanding, then ritualization would be too limiting for sincere communication.



The loosening of ritualized interaction in everyday-life spaces is not an intervention that intends to produce ambiguous public interactions, but to tune these spaces to functionally support changing goals. A pragmatic social system worthy of municipal support depends on the motivation for the social system and the motivation for individual participation. Apter makes note of the results of a motivational change as “Anxiety and high tension have been converted to excitement and low tension not by any change in the situation itself, but by a change in her interpretation of that situation.”¹² The same logic applies to the interpretation of a general situation of occupying and/or using a type of space. A change in



¹¹ Erving takes a clear stance on the social ritual by defining them as “the rules that make orderly face to face communication of the linguistic kind possible” pg. 148 in the 1967 Interaction Ritual text. By using an individual’s behavior within the context of these rules to label them as psychotics, he shows that he holds the rules of the ritual over other forms of understanding individuals socially. For him the line between the socially acceptable and socially deviant is drawn at the extent of ritual interaction.

¹² Apter’s quote is from pg. 16 of the *Reversal Theory* text. *He is speaking in terms of an individual’s motivational switch but the same applies to general motivational switch. In this example the individual’s intention of an action changes and therefore, the resultant feeling from the action, and the interpretation of the success of the action, is changed.*

interpretation of a space translates into a change in performance ritual, and therefore, a change in potential interactions within the space. Phenomenological fields or interactions, where a particular 'self' would usually be presented as evidence of achievement, conformity, or sanity, frame the interpretation of an individual's public persona as dependent on the clear and conscious presence of an appropriation ritual. The public persona then exists as a process through which the individual assumes performative roles that accompany the space. A change in a space's appointed roles then results in a shift in the behavior of the various persona's that occupy it.

In terms of creating understanding in public and semi-public spaces, changing social goals for a space means changing the purpose and identity of the place. A place's identity is directly connected to its purpose. This identity would convey an understanding as to how the place is to be used and occupied, just as a library's identity helps to convey an understanding of the space and how it is to be used. This comes full circle to the interaction and usage ritual appropriated for the place. A change in identity for a place directly impacts the social ritual performed within it. This means that the everyday life experience of people experiencing a place has the potential to be directly impacted by a change in a public places identity. When an empty lot becomes a park, the public responds accordingly with a newly appropriated ritual for the occupancy and usage of the space. The socially flexible space and sincerely communicative usage ritual sought after for psychosocial wellbeing need only be applied to an identity and then that identity be given space.



Bus Stop Collage

Speculation

The conclusion I draw from this is that social norms grow rigid in the face of ambiguity and occlusion. In an attempt to avoid association with a lower class, individuals are subtly encouraged to perform prescribed actions that may be less sincere than doing something else; something that is not inherent to the space but instead telling of the individual. It is through a pragmatic application of municipal and social systems that the daily life experience is shaped. The environment is tasked with the duty of compartmentalizing our lives. Outside of bought access to extracurricular, private access spaces, an individual is ushered through a seamless flow of productive action and appropriate social ritual as a daily life experience. The socially flexible space and sincerely communicative usage ritual sought after for psychosocial wellbeing need only be applied to an identity and then that identity be given space. We task the environment with marking the boundary of compartmentalization.

©Presented within the context of the book on Psychosocial Wellbeing



This project is a proposed solution to a cultural issue with psychosocial wellbeing and detachment. By cultural, I mean the lived culture of American societies. Designers and planners are working to address issues surrounding sudden urbanization and mass migration to urban centers. In the wake of this migration is a minefield of othering. This othering could be left to spiral out of control or it can be addressed with a platform for discourse. Something in the shared public environment needs to say something like, “Y’all have more in common than you think.”

Speculation: self + self +self² = me

>> Surrealist Speculation of Self Production

An essay in the *Space, Difference, Everyday Life* collection titled "Lessons in Surrealism" by Sara Dadal-Melsio, makes a claim about the impact of surrealism on relationality. She claims that surrealism frames relationality between disparate fields of experience as an expressive event that would not have occurred under the logic of specialization. The unsettling qualities of some surreal ideas can be reduced to an uneasiness of the practiced mind in response to incongruences¹ in an otherwise familiar, specialized world. The assurance offered by systemized lifestyles and a coherent procession from childhood to adulthood to old age, creates a false security that is only as strong as the vigilance through which it is consciously adhered to. In a way, surrealism is more a practice of revealing associations that are mentally possible as a result of imagination, but not regularly presented as part of the conceived world.

Interestingly, the natural response to incongruences in the world of someone untrained by a systemized lifestyle, a child, is humor. Based on the evidence presented in the early childhood education article on infant humor by Eleni Loizou, young children use their existing knowledge of the world to create humor by altering or exaggerating it. Children respond to social incongruences with humor² and as a result, feel entertained and playful. Based on the interaction ritual, adults generally respond to social incongruences with shame and feel embarrassed³. At some point in the

1 According to Eleni Loizou, a phenomenon that is incongruous is anything that "violates our conceptual patterns" such as flying pigs or a shoe worn as a hat.

2 Eleni quotes Moreall's 1987 definition of humour as "higher cognitive functions operating in playful mode."

3 On pg. 100, in the Embarrassment and Social Organization section of his text, Erving refers to moments in interaction where one does not or cannot respond accordingly and is therefore "present with them, but he is not 'in play'." The individual is out of step with the ritual and is therefore a road block for those attempting to converse.

development of the general adult, incongruences become something to find and eliminate. While practicing for a life of perfection, adults practice creating consistency and develop a distaste for too much variation. This, as a general and shared attitude, naturally expands to encompass the structure by which adults live and co-create.

A surrealist approach to such a phenomenon would be to de-specialize the relationality amongst the two experiences. Of the many assumed rigidities of an interaction phenomenon, a surrealist consideration would render them fluid and allow them to drip onto each other. The empowering humor tactics⁴ of the developing toddler would shift the motivational state of the disoriented adult from self dejection to outward expression. In interaction, the child manipulates the situation to get a social response from others, rather than punish themselves for not maintaining consistency. This phenomena subverts the rigidity of time within the interaction, rendering a previously ritualized event absurd. This sort of approach may lead to a general change in response to difference all together. Rather than snuffing out embers of difference or deviation, bask in its warmth and show it belongs in the moment by giving it space. A pragmatic assessment of the changed interaction mentioned above, after applying a surrealist de-specialization tactic, may expand to add fluidity to the public environment.

The surreal qualities associated with self cloning is absurd but it is normalized in the adult environment. This practice preserves the notion of the perfected self, a self supposedly achieved at the end of the adulthood procession⁵, untarnished by failure⁶. Un-ritualized interaction threatens the perfect self with the risk of embarrassment. Therefore the consistency practice mentioned above is habitually applied to the public environment as a form of maintenance but is actually more of a threat to wellbeing. Complacently accepting the internal disconnect between various selves makes accepting external disconnects easier. Cities tend to

4 Eleni explains Empowerment Theory in relation to humorous toddlers as violating the expectations of caregivers in exchange for a sense of satisfaction and power. For adults, the role of caregiver may be expanded to include anyone with a higher social position but the resulting feelings are the same.

5 In America, children are legally required to attend school from grades 1 through 12. The final year of the mandated education system coincides with many other age based drop offs like free federal health insurance, legal liability, and prison sentencing.

6 Motivational speaker, philanthropist, and entrepreneur Oprah Winfrey is quoted as saying, "Failure is a stepping stone to greatness" in many interviews and publications.

be designed for compartmentalization, spatially isolating an individual's multiple selves from one another, actively combating any notion of a space for singular self. Charles Montgomery, author of *Happy City*, mentions in an interview that the greatest environmental hazard to living in the city is social disconnection.⁷

Most of adult experience is already surreal upon consideration, but it has been ritualized into the societal system of production. The most valuable aspects of purchased experiences, expression and interaction, is available and abound where there are people. But for all that people already possess, they are sold the idea that what they have isn't valuable and it does not deserve space in a 'successful' citizen's life⁸ or a 'successful' city. Most of adult time and place has been neatly sorted into ritualized, 'productive' performances. Bars and various clubs have found a way to profit off of the lack of space for expression and interaction; all of which is kept separate, in time, space, and identity image, from the 'productive' person's generalized image.

The success of places such as bars and clubs shows that the pursuit for experiential space is common but most available sources have been commodified. Seeking an additional self, with a separate time, space, and image, is a practice performed for workplace professionalism and child friendly personification. For example, a person would display different mannerisms, clothing choice, and tones of speech when speaking to children compared to when speaking to business partner. Ironically, this sort of habitual 'self' re-creation is also done in bars and clubs in attempts to express and interact with a general other. Whereas the commodified place for sincere expression and interaction becomes yet another place for fabricated identities.

7 The International Journal of Play quotes Charles Montgomery in the article *The Playful City: Constructing a typology for urban design interventions*, "Charles Montgomery (2013) (author of *Happy City*) in an interview: Social isolation just may be the greatest environmental hazard of city living ...worse than noise, pollution, or even crowding. And the way we've built cities – suburbs with no central meeting place, prioritizing the car and the condo tower, passing restrictive zoning bylaws – has made the problem worse. If we're concerned about happiness, then social disconnection in Canadian cities is an acute problem".

8 Erving describes what I referred to as a successful citizen as a "well-integrated role".

“Charles Montgomery (2013) (author of Happy City) in an interview:

Social isolation just may be the greatest environmental hazard of city living ...worse than noise, pollution, or even crowding. And the way we’ve built cities – suburbs with no central meeting place, prioritizing the car and the condo tower, passing restrictive zoning bylaws – has made the problem worse. If we’re concerned about happiness, then social disconnection in Canadian cities is an acute problem”⁹

⁹ Happy City is about the transformational power of urban design. Charles

Though the argument towards rejecting ritually derived co-presence¹⁰ may seem to suggest a reduction in socialization, socialization is a valuable and beneficial source for reinterpreting co-presence. The goal in allowing more plasticity in interaction is not to limit interaction, but to subvert ritual self segmentation. This elasticity is allowing space in ordered interaction for change, evolution, and re-discovery. Particularly in recent years, the many changes in identity and identity roles have stretched the ritualized forms of interaction and social critique.

Speculation: health + joy + comfort = wellbeing

>> Surrealist Speculation of the Wellbeing System

Montgomery examines the role of the city and the role of the city member in their attempts to be happy.

¹⁰ Co-presences is a term used in Erving’s text on the Interaction Ritual to define social interaction as a sum of multiple cognizant presences.

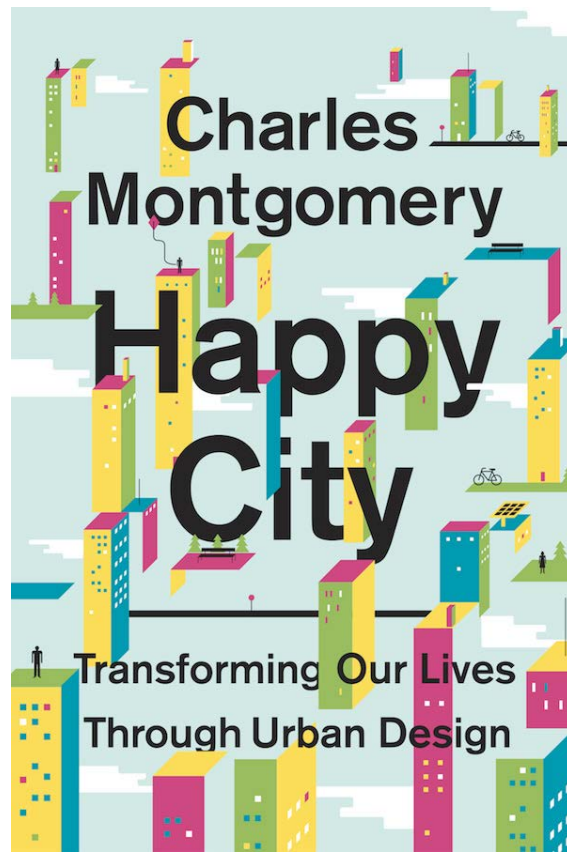


Image from *Happy City* book cover

Charles Montgomery, author of Happy City, mentions in an interview that the greatest environmental hazard to living in the city is social disconnection. I believe this to be true because the main thing blocking consensus on cultural goals is a lack of understanding between di-verse groups. But how can one consider tactics for bringing people of di-vergent philosophical stances together when a notable lack of interaction is preventing understanding amongst neighbors. Social connection is how people become communities and it should be valued as a priority that is given space.

Socialization amongst groups and individuals is paramount for understanding, and therefore, it is vital for achieving unity at any level. The fluidity of surrealist thinking allows for a wider range of solutions to various psychosocial issues. This means that a variety of social issues may be addressed with a gamut of actions and interventions if someone is able to dream of it.

An example, of this would be the treatment kit designed to support children during hospitalization. The students of Delft University of Technology's industrial design department were challenged to create a mechanism that would support a child's transition in and out of extended hospital stays. Freya Ruijs came up with a kit that offered the child a role to play when tackling the difficult circumstances inherent to their stay. These props render the child a pirate, an explorer, or an investigator with a few themed props and documentation tools. These props also had the benefit of offering a coping strategy of choice to the child by reframe the experience as an adventure rather than a hardship.¹¹ Freya's kit supported the child's psychosocial needs by providing a referential frame and performative role for the child to understand and process their feelings during their hospital adventure¹².

The built environment has the ability to offer the same support to the public through similar means. There are non-intrusive ways of supporting the average citizen as they come to understand and process

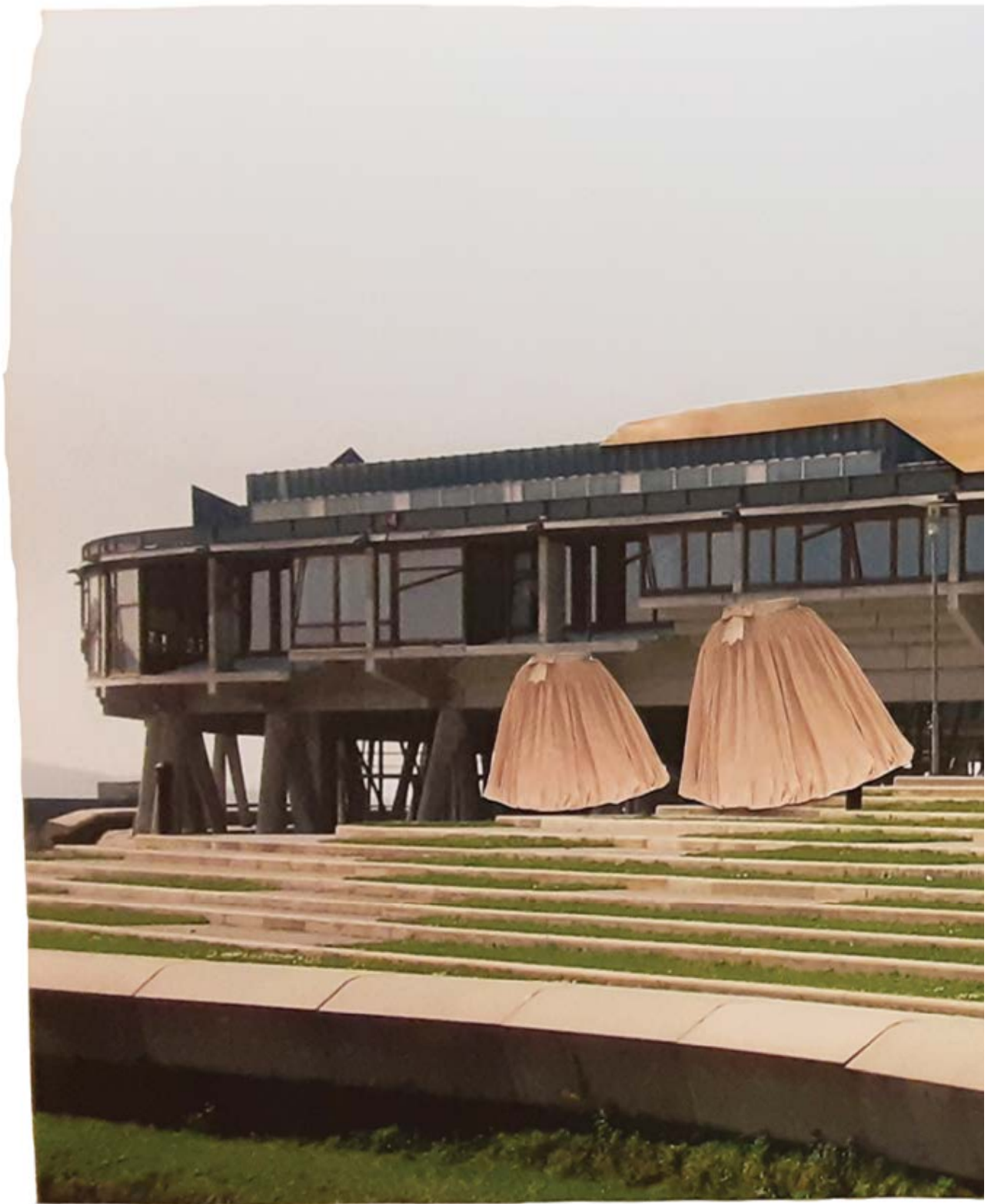
11 Freya Ruijs created an "adventure kit" for children enduring extended times in hospitalization which contained "a passport [identification], a flag [for marking the bed as a safe domain], a storybook [for recording experience], and four sets of toys [for dissociative character exploration as a coping strategy], each set representing a fictional character."

12 Freya quotes M.J. Apter from his 1989 text titled Reversal Theory: The dynamics of motivation, emotion, and personality. He states, "'So rather than preventing negative emotions, the design should somehow support the children in dealing with these emotions.'"

the journey of life, adulthood, citizenship, etc. Although buildings are generally privatized, the general public still occupy public spaces. These spaces function as a product of the values and priorities of municipal systems. Because of this, the priorities of municipal systems have impact on many perceivable levels, including the local common lifestyle and camaraderie.

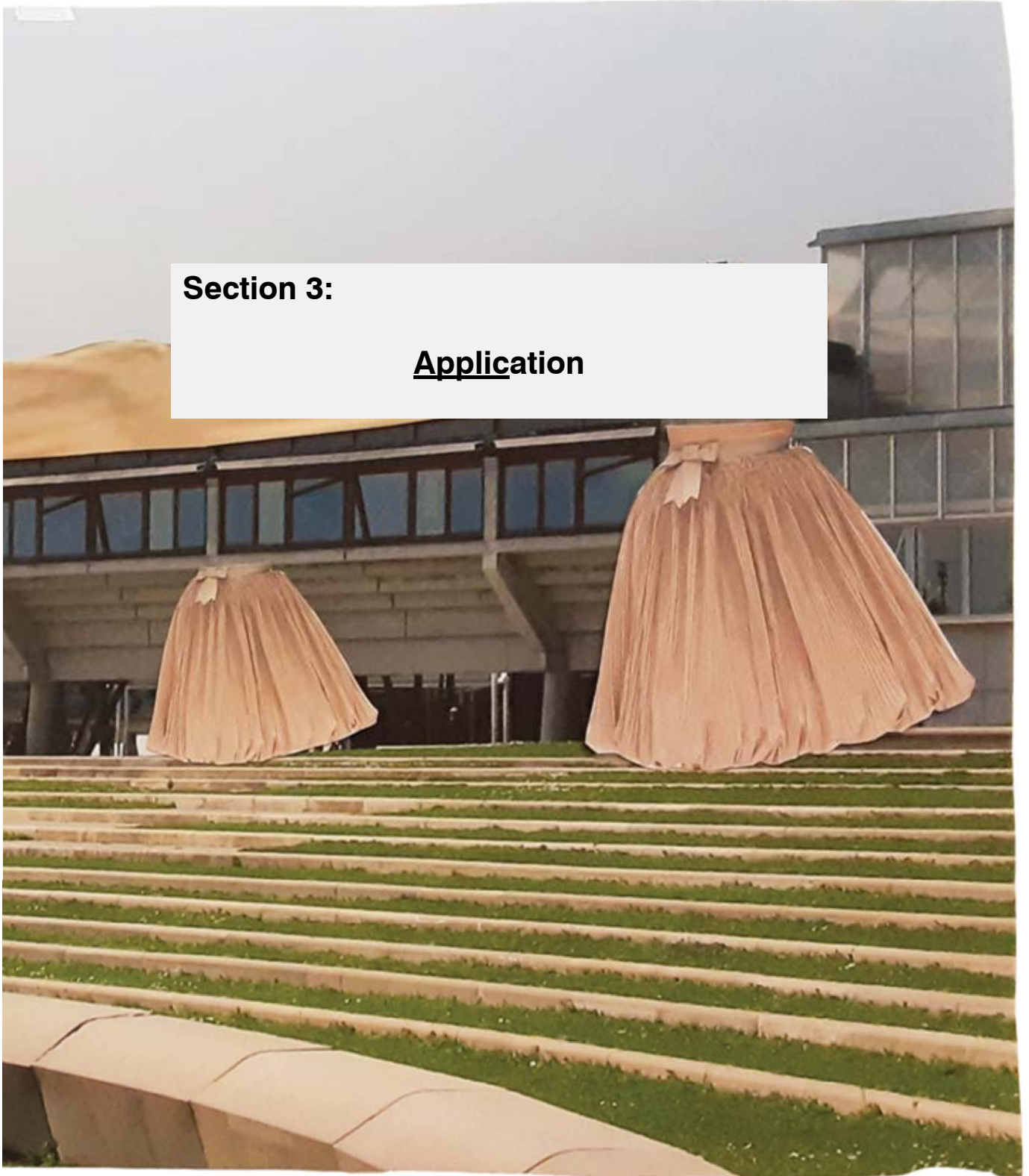
This includes the previously observed practice of self cloning and the lack of space for sincere expression and interaction. Somewhere in the municipal services, some consideration may be put towards psychosocial issues of a systematic nature so that public support for these needs do not seem relatively surreal. This sort of consideration may clarify a municipality's intention to support its citizen's health, happiness, and comfort. Until then, an insular branch of the public services system, that is accessible and claims space, may serve as a device for wellbeing.





Section 3:

Application



Discourse

Where does symbolic interaction meet ritualized interaction?

Ex. Public Art and Public Parades



While evaluating the psychosocial value of public places, I am looking at social factors as an external contributor with symbolic interactionist theory and psychological factors as an internal contributor with reversal theory. Externally, Symbolic Interactionism provides a good foundation for analyzing social factors and offers insight for altering the appearance of public service to invoke a response from visitors. Internally, Reversal theory explains triggers for casual switching of meta-motivational states

People want to be seen and heard. The flamboyant marching band of the black south is a tradition that started with the black soldiers of the Civil War not being afforded the same recognition as their white peers. As a result, the soldiers, who were naturally sharing what they learned in the military, relished marching in public in full uniform. This was a moment of recognition and patriotic celebration, but it was also a rare time where black people were allowed to gather in public with less harassment and persecution for simply being and expressing themselves. The march has grown into a device of political outcry and cultural pageantry but it started as a ritual that gained greater meaning because of a lack. The black soldiers and university students participated in a symbolic interaction with the performance. The original performance of military duty exemplified a march as an attention grabbing show of gratification. But the interpreting the event understood it to be a sanctioned gathering of joyfulness and entertainment.

In a collection of essays on the *Interaction Ritual* written in 1967, author Erving Goffman connects public performance, or action and inaction, to the presentation of self. He states,

"Rules of conduct impinge upon the individual in two general ways: directly, as obligation, establishing how he is morally constrained to conduct himself; indirectly, as expectations, establishing how others are morally bound to act in regard to him."¹ "An act that is subject to a rule of conduct is, then, a communication, for it represents a way in which 'selves' are confirmed--both the 'self' for which the rule is an obligation and the self for which it is an expectation."²

1 *Interaction Ritual* pg. 49

2 *Interaction Ritual* pg. 51

With the logic presented here, the rules of conduct, whether acted upon or not, are presenting a self to the public. Whether that self is a sincere to the individual is not a concern of the ritual, rather it is homogenizing obligation and expectation.

In this collection there is a segment on "Mental Symptoms and Public Order" where Erving explains the significance of social rules:

"Rules for behavior while in the presence of others and by virtue of the presence of others are the rules that make orderly face to face communication of the linguistic kind possible; but these rules, and many infractions of them which psychotics and other cut-ups systematically exhibit, are not themselves to be considered first of all as communications; they are first of all guidelines (and their disruption) of social organization, the organized association of persons present to one another."³

His choice of words for those performing social infractions are telling

3 *Interaction Ritual* pg. 148

of his time but also the regard he has for those that do not stay within their place in a social organization framework. The “psychotics and other cut-ups”⁴ exhibiting systematic difference may understand the social organization to be

4 Ibid.

What influence does space potentially have?

Ex. Tectonics and Zoning

“By direction, Davey means that architecture has an influence on how people behave in space (he does not want to fall into environmental determinism, but notes that the form of urban space must have some influence on the way spaces are used). More broadly speaking, designs suggest ‘how people might live.’⁴⁵ The designer’s direction is, therefore, a representation of space --not only is it a prescription for the configuration of urban form, but it makes assumptions about the spatial practices of the users, their understandings of space, and the symbolism carrying the designer’s intentions.”⁵

5 Space, Difference, Everyday Life pg. 270 - 271

Based on the zone designation, a certain type of use and business sector is likely to be prevalent in an area. With that information, I can assume a general motivational state that matches the majority of the workforce. I can also determine a behavioral tendency that matches the majority of the workforce, and subvert their general social role.

What kind of speculative place is this?

Ex. None place and Conceived place

Based on the place identity, a place's purpose and priorities may take shape in one way or another. Transit defined as a none-place, where people remain anonymous and hold little significance, causes othering and offers little in support of discourse or sincere expression. Whereas a third place acts as a more social and interactive surroundings for a shared service, favoring personhood over citizenship. Somewhere between none place and third place, I am placing Play Place, whom allows for relative anonymity while designating an area as a space for selective expression and social experimentation.

“Rising to this challenge would, for Lefebvre, constitute the production of a new type of space in relation to abstract space that ‘carries within it the seeds of this new space’ --differential space.³⁸ Lefebvre writes extensively about the contradictions and quantity, production of objects in space (commodities) and the production of space.³⁹ He suggests that “inasmuch as abstract space tends towards homogeneity, towards the elimination of differences or peculiarities, new space cannot be born (produced) unless it accentuates differences.⁴⁰”⁶

“Henri Lefebvre’s conceptual triad provides a framework within which to address an alternative role for architects attempting to engage sustainability within the field of ecological and social diversity. For Lefebvre, space is a social product consisting of three

6 Idib. pg.267

elements: representations of space, or 'conceived space,' which for my purposes includes not only the drawings and images produced by the designer but the material manifestations of those designs in the built environment; representational space, 'lived space' or the symbolic values produced by the inhabitants; and spatial practice, 'perceived space' or the ways in which spaces are used.⁴¹ These elements are not independent, and it is the interaction between them that results in the production of space."⁷

⁷ This is the footnote cited in the above quote from Space, Difference, Everyday Life pg.267.



Placing psychosocial wellbeing as a priority for public services highlights unexplored opportunities for environmental influence. Environments, such as transit hubs and bus stations, may then act as social infrastructure in addition to transportation infrastructure.

My intention is to find non-commodified social infrastructure. Private environments such as bars, venues, and event spaces position play for adults as a commodity although play is free and abundant. Free play is accessible, it's mentally freeing, and it offers the opportunity for interaction with others whether that be verbal, nonverbal, or physical.

What present system has a clear identity and opportunistic guidelines for an expansion of conceptual service to inspire unusual behavior? Ex. Transit

Public transit is a systemized function of public places that is accessible by design. This type of environment would act as a perfect vehicle for establishing play environments as part of a greater network. Transit exists within an isolated time space whereas participants are dependent on the system's locations and schedules. In this system, participants are already semi-detached from their duties, and their many selves, including the physical one, are in a state of stasis. This sort of play environment would act as regular interaction at the crossroads of one's own private and professional self and someone else's selves. This sort of placed interaction would allow for low stakes discourse with others.

Interestingly enough, the perfect solution to a need for interactivity and interpersonal learning, is play. For adults, play reduces stress, improves brain function, boosts creativity, and improves relationships. All this is done with low stakes interaction in a familiar environment. In smaller towns, a place like that might be the local post office, but for cities that are large enough to spawn cities around itself, places like this are a little harder to find.

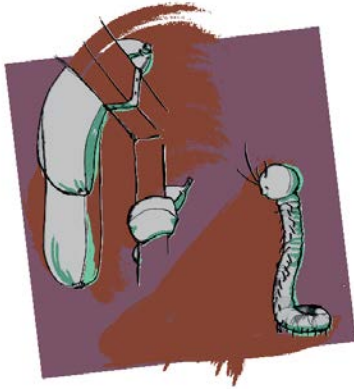
Play
allows the mind to enter a self-forgetting state of mind through self-motivated activity.



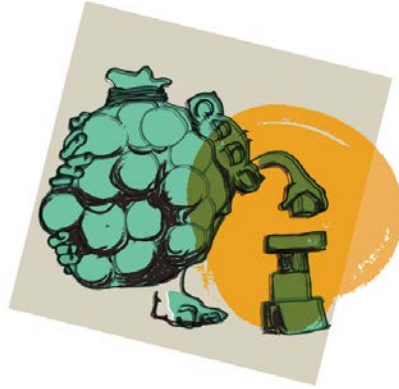
Play is an activity that allows the brain to switch to a self-forgetting state of mind through self-motivated activity. Ideally the activity is engaging enough to take participants through the three stages of interaction, the invitation stage, the exploration stage, and the immersion stage.



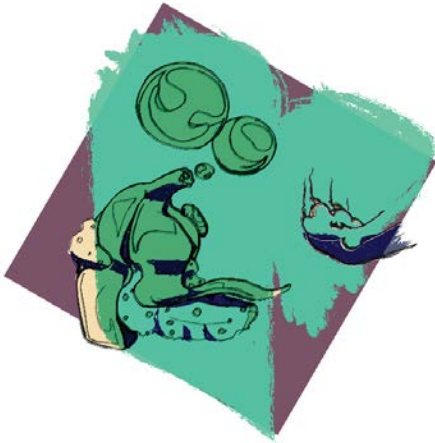
There are four general categories of play. Sensory play, dealing with exploration of the senses; Fantasy or Role play, where make believe either aligns with or subverts a level of pretense; Construction play which involves creating and making; and Challenge play which tests one's abilities.



Fantasy



Construction



Sensory



Challenge

Precedence

For an intervention that clearly defines a play place and prioritizes understanding, Coherence is key. Simple forms of play are easiest for people to understand without direct language. Familiar props and sources of nostalgia also bolster function recognition and positive associations with objects within the play place hence forth referred to as toys.



To identify opportunities for play that may be executed with ease, appropriate scale, and as little disruption to functionality as possible, I would first determine a local affinity to typify the environment and then determine a fitting place identity for the present environment and an imagined environment.



Images from NL Architects website

Das Netz by NL Architects

An example of a socially alive public space causing a performative response in public is Das Netz in Berlin by NL Architects. The scale of the toy rope structure fits the scale of the environments four story buildings and populated street. It is designed to support the weight and antics of adults in a downtown area. Das Netz provides a physical form of open play. It offers both physical challenge and opportunities for fantasy play.



Images from SansFacon.org website

Limelight by Sans Façon

Another example is Limelight by Sans Façon. This traveling, minimal project fits the downtown business core needs by causing as little obstruction as possible. The light singles out individuals and prompts them to perform something worthy of the extra attention. Even surrounding spectators are passive participants in the impromptu performance inspired by the intervention. Limelight acts as a prop for fantasy play and performance.



Images from Daily tous les jours website

Another example is the **21 Swings by Daily tous les jours** with Luc-Alain Giraldeau and Radwan Ghazi Moumneh. The colorful swing toys are safely spaced from the passing pedestrian traffic. The installation populates a deep street between bulky downtown buildings while inspiring whimsy from passersby. 21 Swings acts as a prop for sensory play with its bright colors and dynamic gestures.

Though most examples of this type of intervention are placed downtown to benefit tourists and high density areas, my intention for this initiative is to support local psychosocial wellbeing on a closer to home level.

There is a particular vulnerability in the edge cities and sprawl tracts emanating from urban centers. The commute times are longer and the routine immersion of commuting people into the experience of infrastructural systems is proportionately larger. A lack of social infrastructure may drive distant areas to feel more like a trap than a haven.

Business sectors that occupy edge cities and sprawl tracts are generally seeking lower cost, industrial and commercially zoned properties. Generally, jobs as business that seek industrial zones involve repetitive movements and herd-like organizational structures. These workers spend much of their time in a self-conscious state of mind resisting time table pressures and loss of individuality. They may enjoy an opportunity for making a mark of individuality and releasing leftover stress.

Whereas business sectors that occupy commercial and neighborhood commercial zones usually deal with not-entirely-sincere service performance. These workers spend much of their time in a self-conscious state of mind detached from temporal time and identity via uniform duties and appearance. They too may enjoy an opportunity to show their individuality and a fun chance for sincere expression.

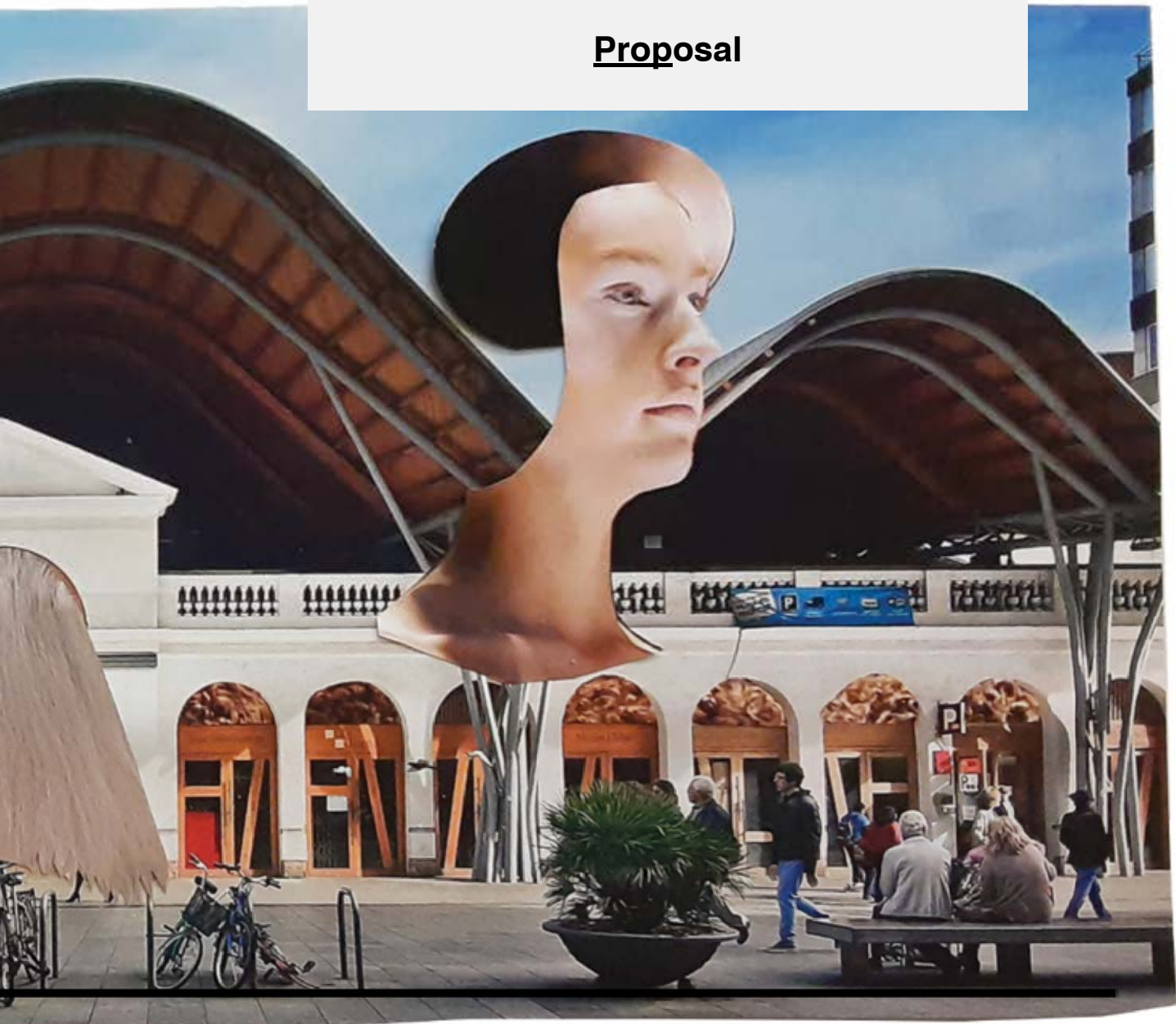
A full play to place taxonomy could inspire a play response for every destination. It could inspire a nationwide shift towards more holistic forms of work compensation. Transit as play could become a cultural adaptation to modernization. An innovative step towards a fun tradition leaning into change rather than in resistance of it.





Section 4:

Proposal



My Goals >>

My goals with this project are to: Integrate play into the everyday life of adults.

How I plan to do that is by:

Defining a playful environment identity within the public realm where playful behavior is accepted.

Support public understanding of time spent playing as productive time unhinged from self-consciousness and personal duty for the sake of experiencing the here and now.

These may be summarized as defining a playful environment identity and support public understanding. These goals are not so different from civic public relations where municipalities work towards identifying areas of interest and informing citizens of plans for local and adjacent neighborhoods.

I am going to show you how interventions are socially defined within the public environment, and how the public will come to understand that their very presence co-creates the intervention experience.

How I evaluate these designs is based on how the designs fit the area typology and how the design clearly delineates its area of influence as a space for play. Let us consider how the designs provide play value, social value, and the possibility for passive participation while keeping in mind possible reactions from prominent populations in the area.

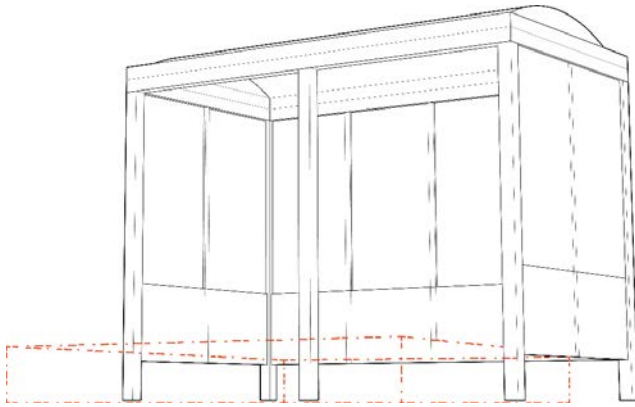




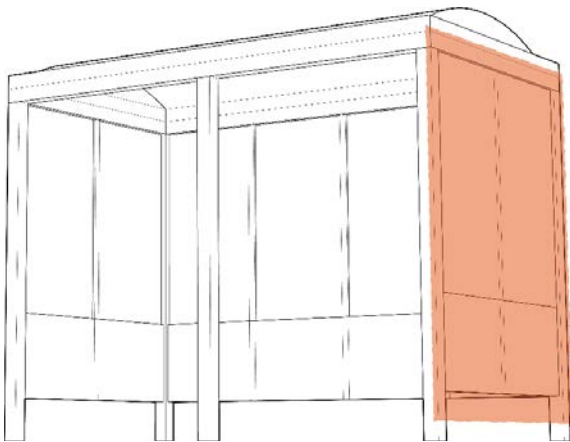
Play Value Social Value possibility for
Passive Participation

Limitations V. Opportunities

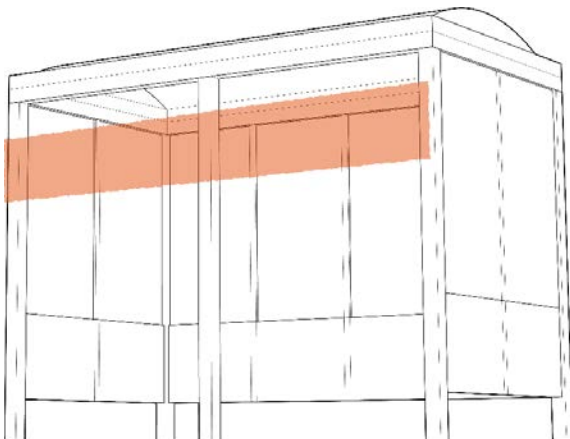
Here are the Safety limitations from the Federal Transit Administration's Guidelines for the location and design of bus stops:



No Obstructions below 18 inches

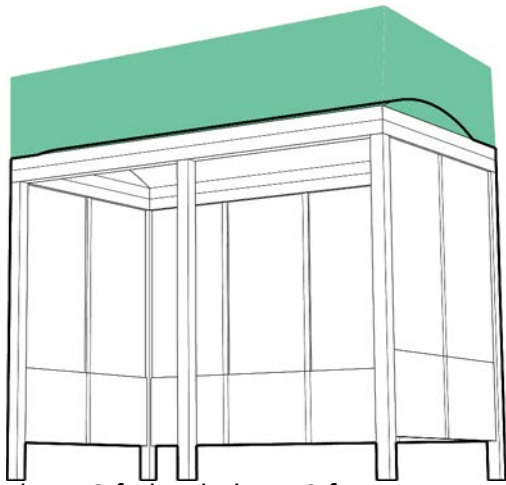


Nothing blocking view of incoming traffic

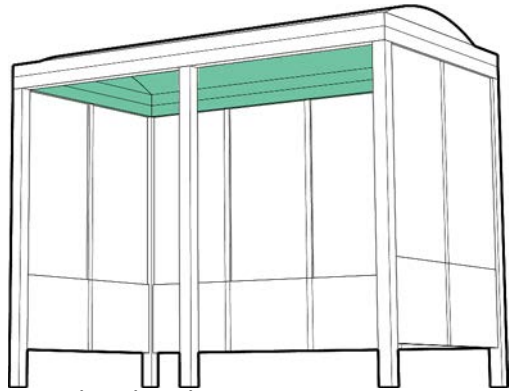


Nothing head height with a barrier below

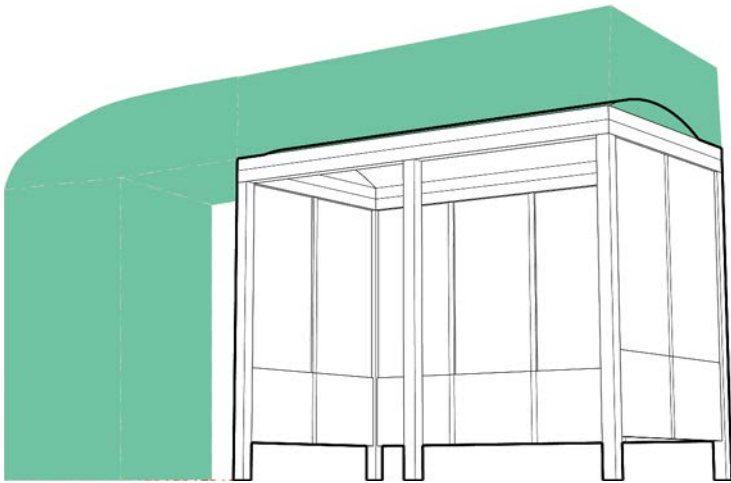
Based on that I notice a few spots where there is build out potential in the target areas surrounding metro Seattle.



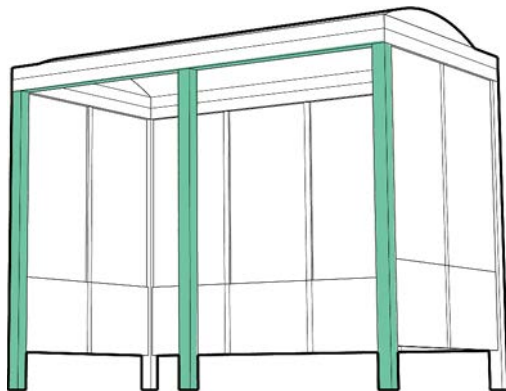
above 8 ft. but below 12 ft.



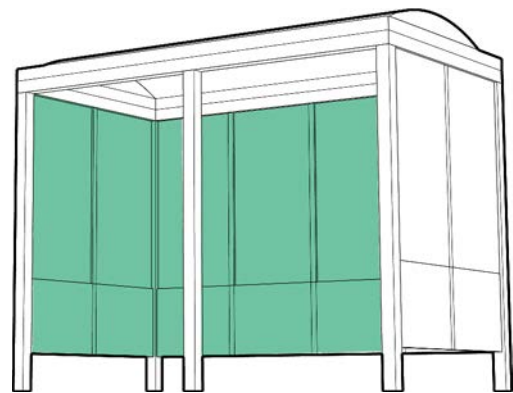
at ceiling height



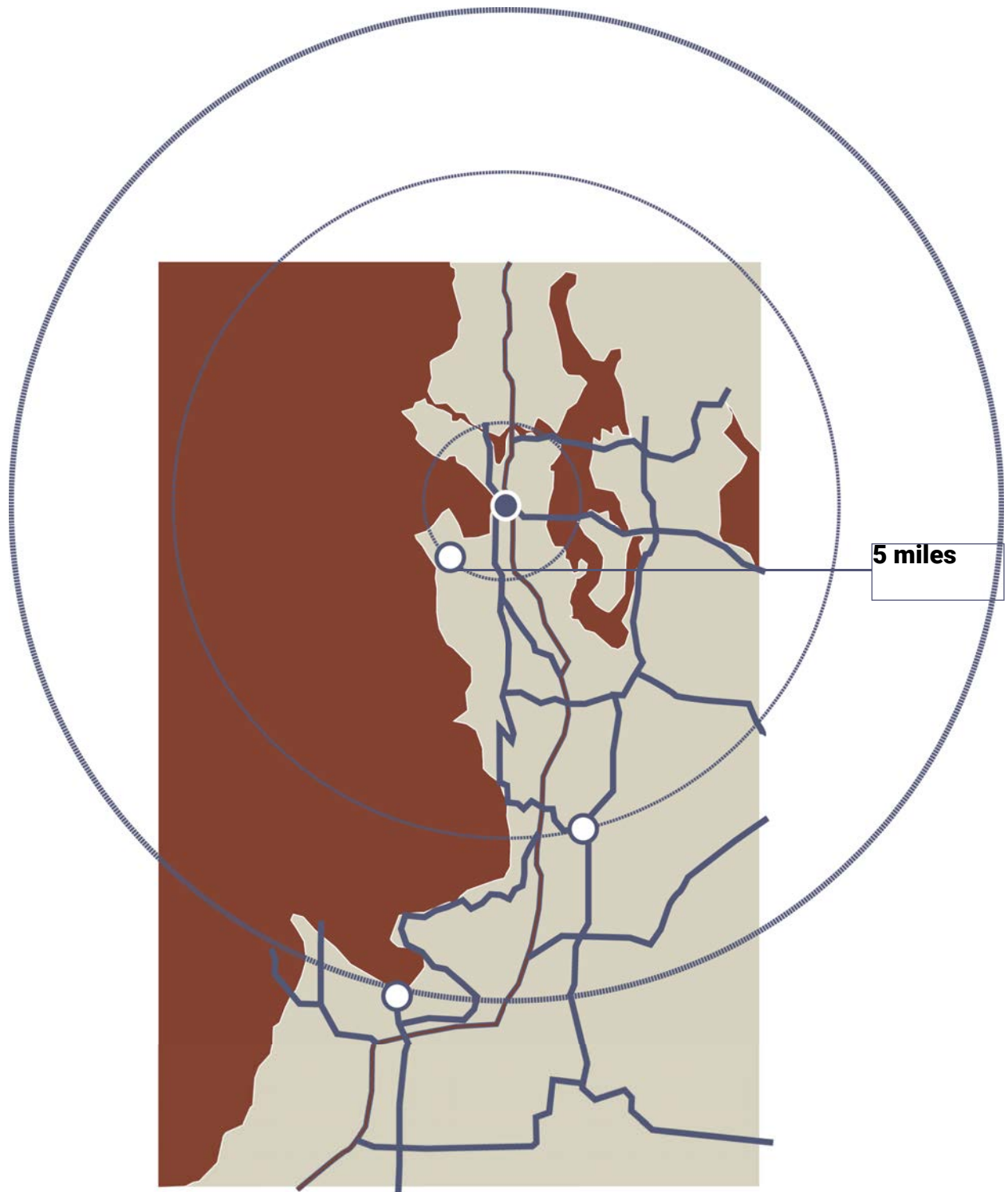
an independent or adjacent structure 3 ft. away from the original



on the structural posts



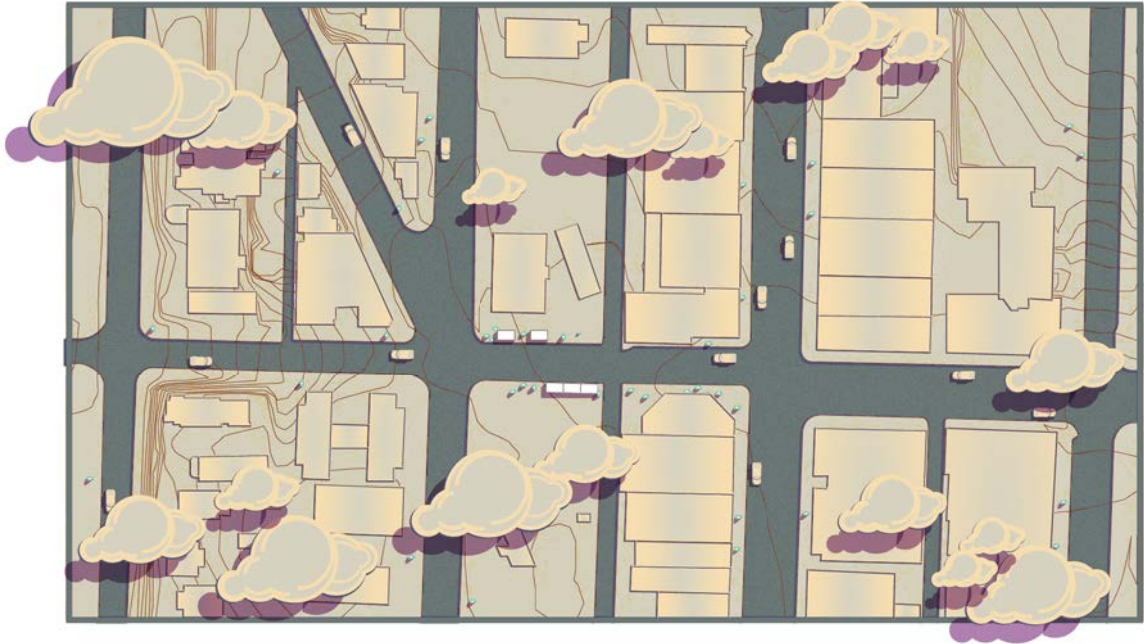
towards outgoing traffic



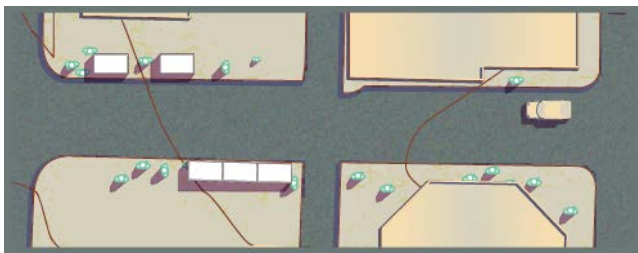
West Seattle, Washington

In West Seattle, there is a stretch of bus stops that line SW Alaska Street between California Ave SW and Glen Way SW. The immediately adjacent lots are zoned as Neighborhood Commercial with both Single Family and Multi Family Residential zones all around. This stretch is small in scale and is connected directly to a high traffic avenue. This locations adjacency to residences and commercial social places makes it especially impactful. A Play place here would easily garner high volumes interaction. But, to be sure that this play place does not sacrifice its priority for interpersonal learning in exchange for a broader appeal, elements of parallel play and sincere expression through vulnerability drove the design for this location.





1" = 128 ' Plan Drawing of West Seattle's SW Alaska St between California Ave SW and Glen Way SW



1" = 64 ' Plan Drawing of West Seattle's high density transit hub along SW Alaska St



Area street Elevation collage



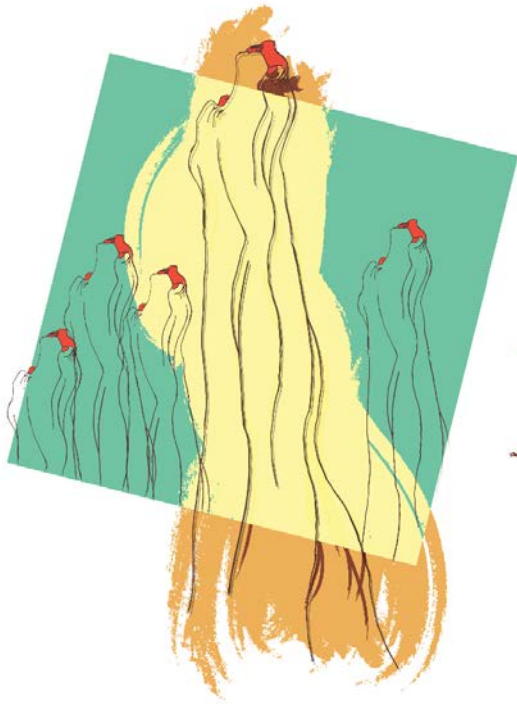
Voronoi Feelings, Faces, and Places

The Voronoi Feelings, Faces, and Places design fits this location well. It features a 33 foot mural with adjustable faces that change to exhibit various moods or expressions. The interactive faces support emotional intelligence and stress relief.

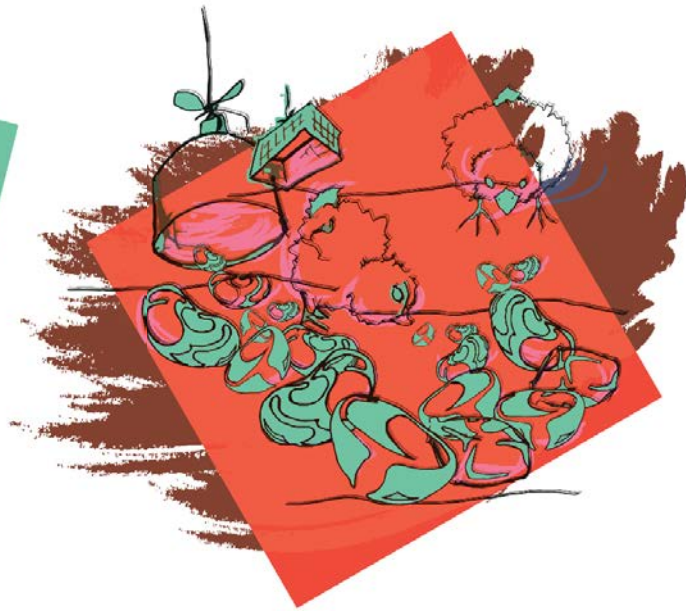
Perspective Rendering with scene photo



Both Independent and Parallel play are possible with the static postures displayed in the mural, representing common social interactions, and the independently controlled facial features and accessories, causing infinite narrative interpretations. The Voronoi Feelings, Faces, and Places will allow participants to portray a second self through which they may process internal conflicts and emotions, possibly sharing commonalities with others waiting nearby.



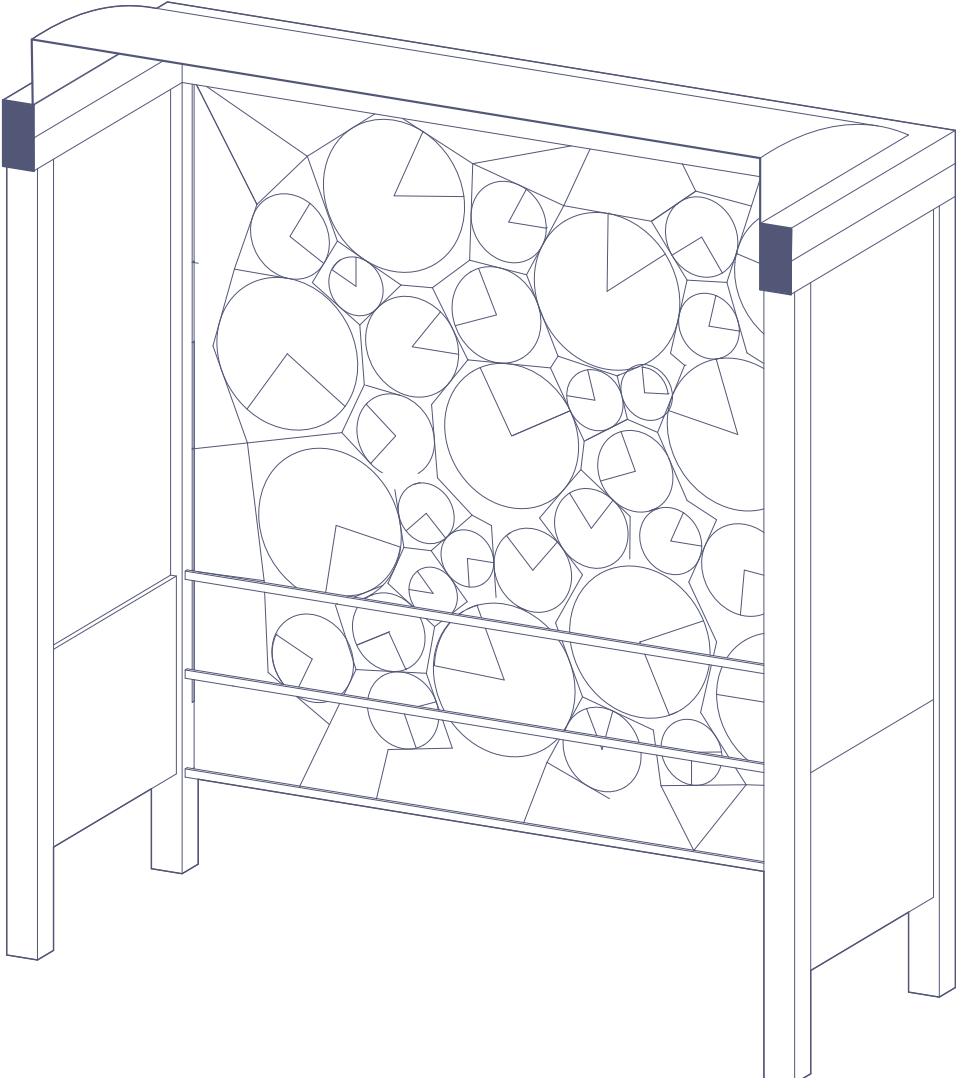
Sincere Expression



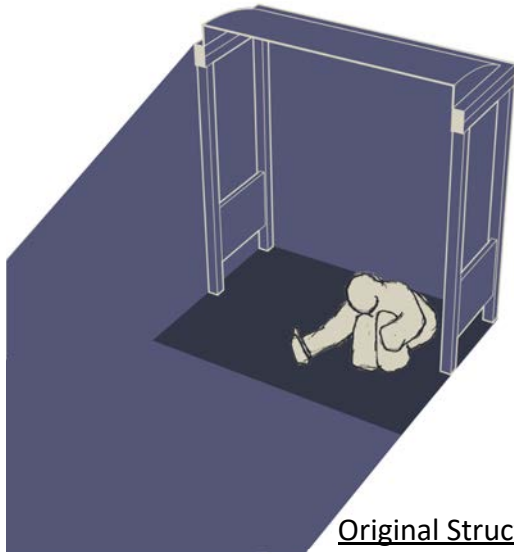
Parallel Play



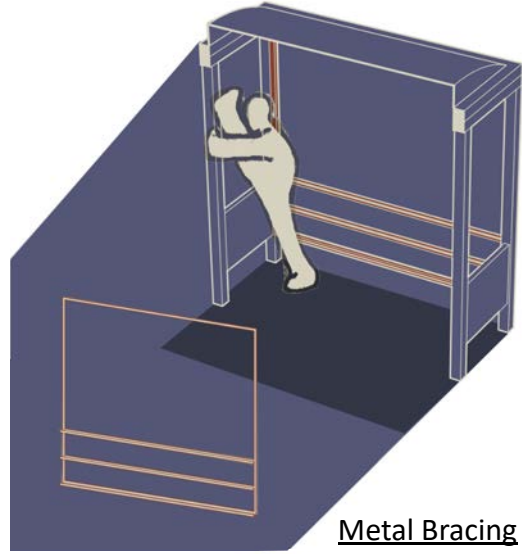
- 33' Mural facing SW Alaska St
- Facial features and accessories printed on spinnable discs
- Partially adjustable faces and building placement
- Fosters Interpersonal Learning and Emotional Intelligence



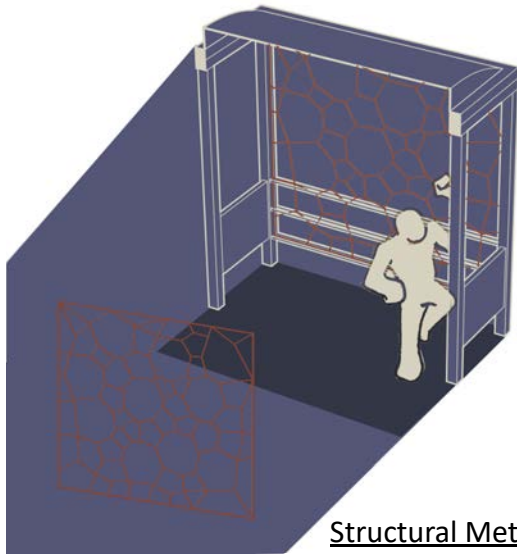
Isometric Section



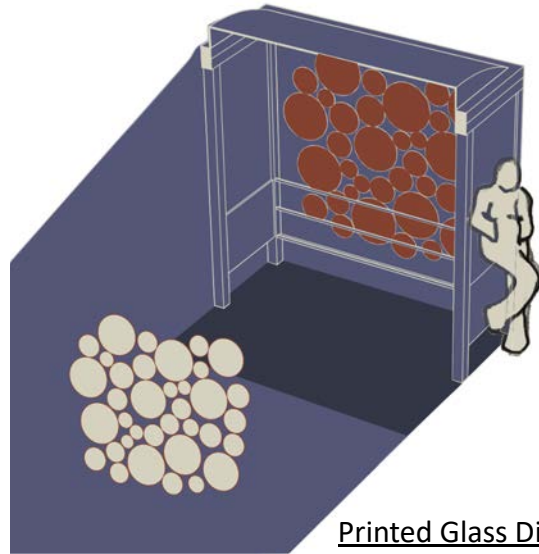
Original Structure



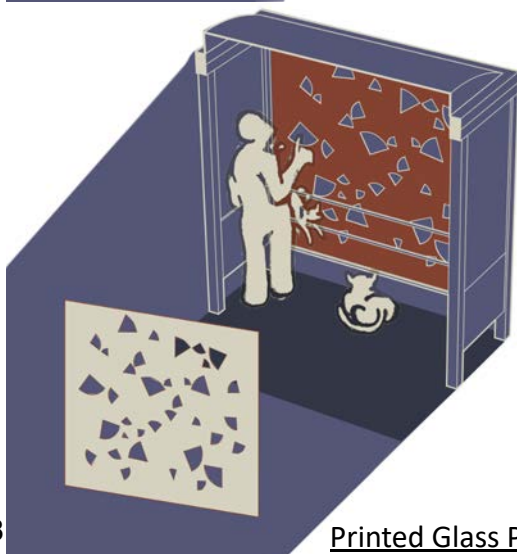
Metal Bracing



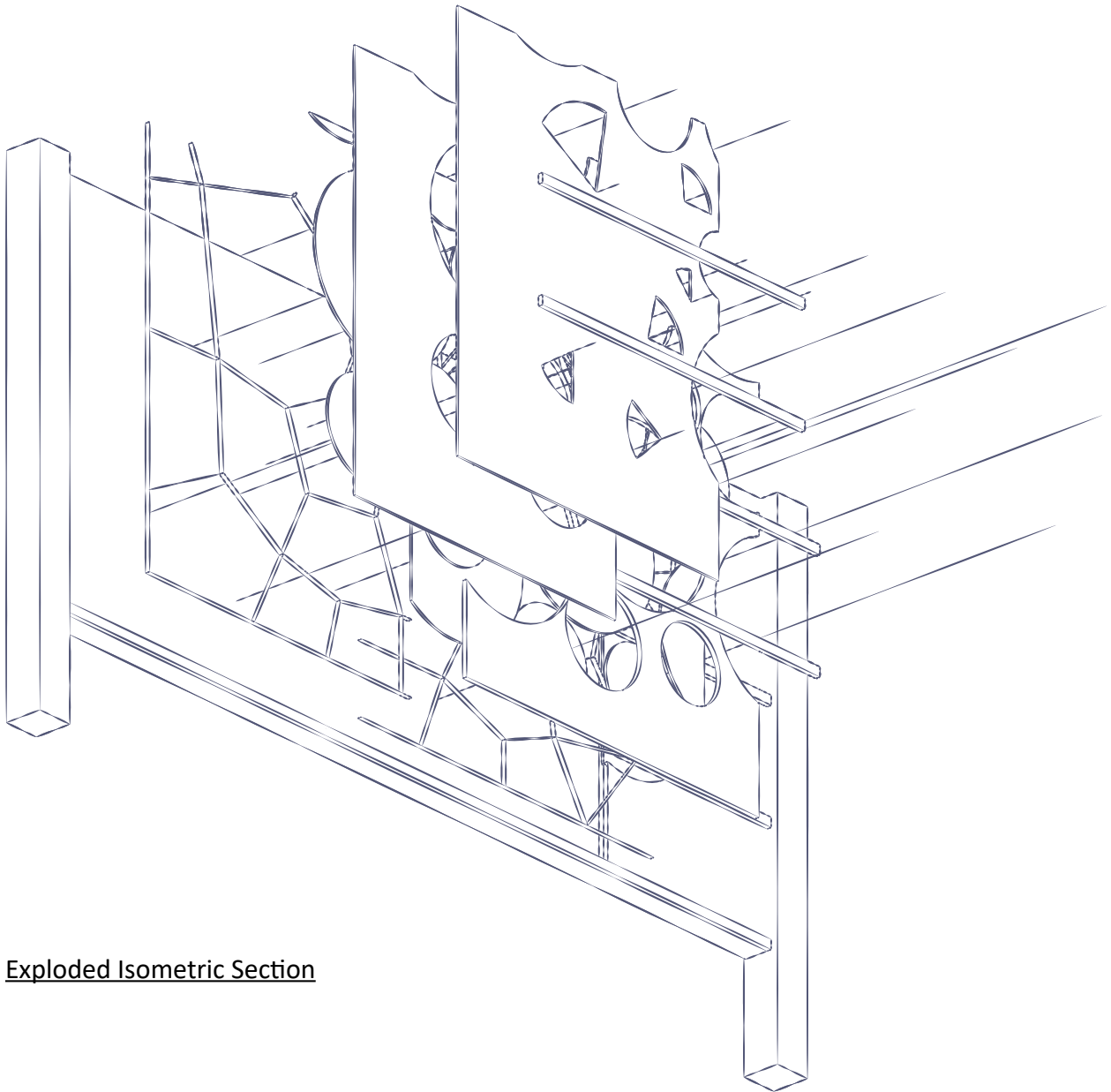
Structural Metal Frame



Printed Glass Discs



Printed Glass Panel with Cutouts

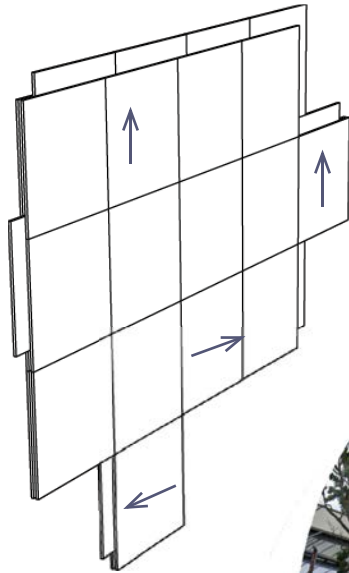


Exploded Isometric Section

A less personal alternative for Voronoi Feelings Faces, and Places design at a similar location would be the Slidey Tiles, Story Mapper. This design is much like the feelings and faces option, but instead of an interaction based mural, the rear glass depicts an abstract map of the area with avatar characters overlaid in front of it. The avatars may be used to navigate the map for fantasy play or be used as a story telling device as it passes over board game like obstacles.



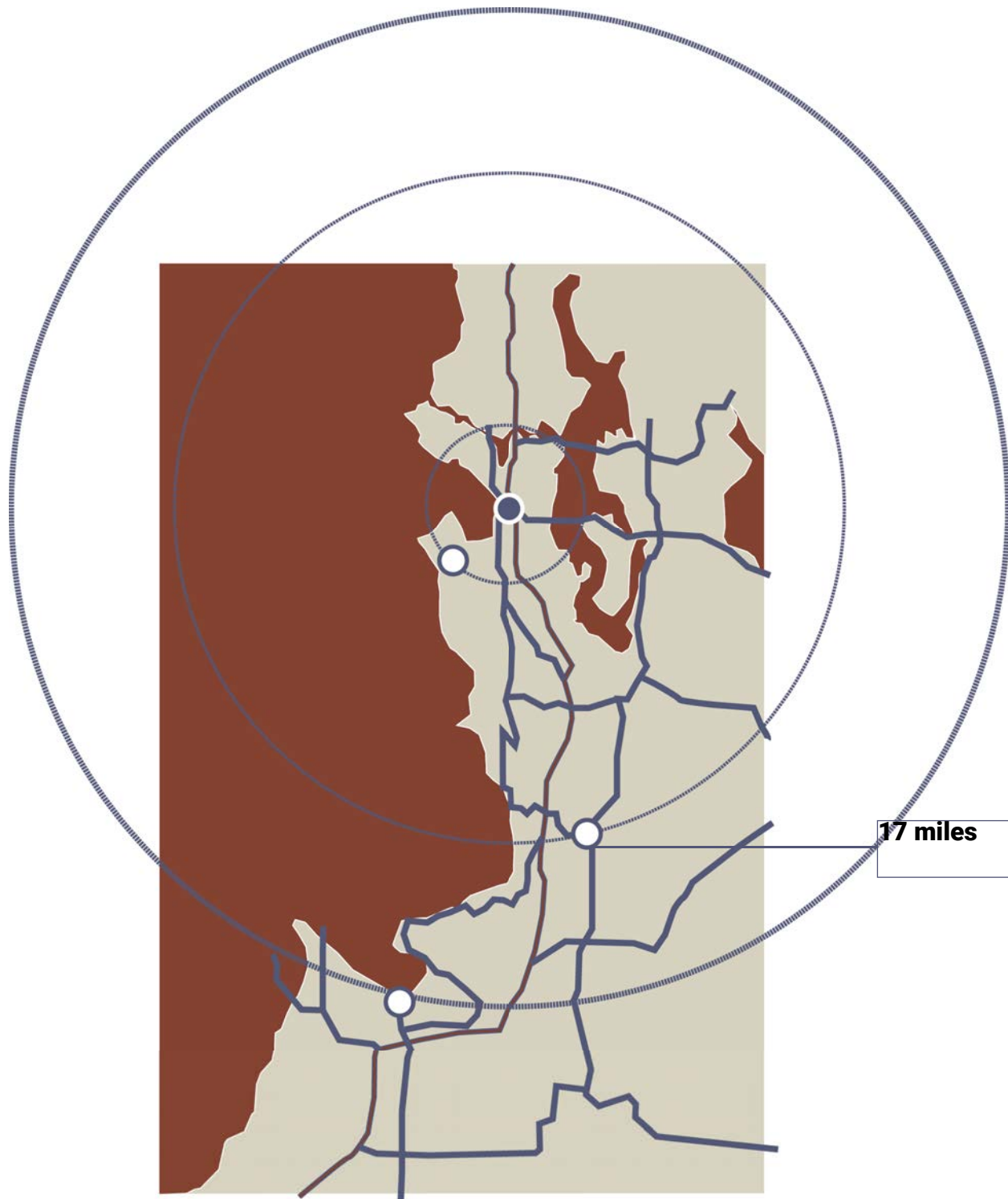
Slidey Tiles Story Mapper



Usage Diagram



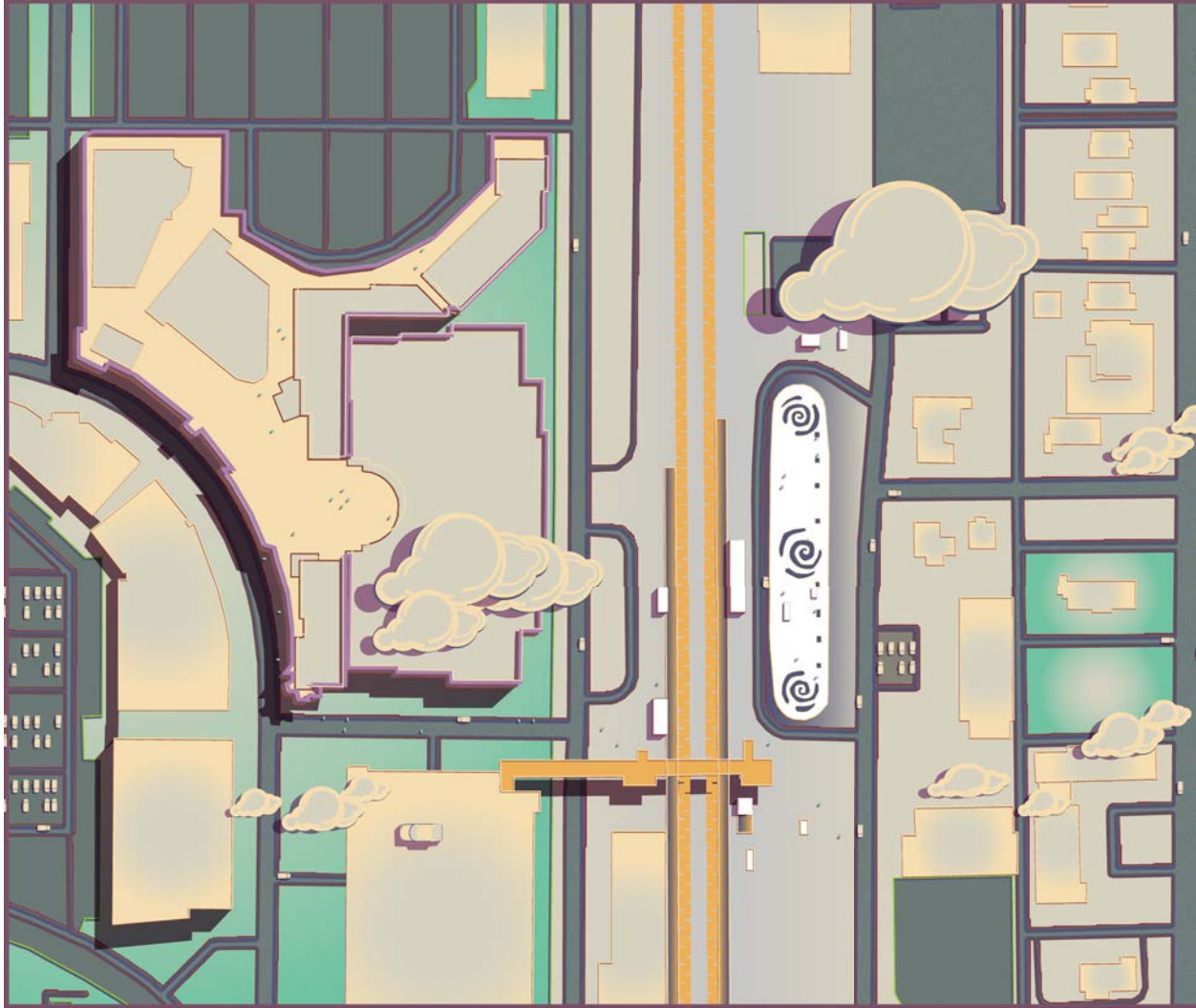
Perspective Render with Scene Photo



Kent, Washington

Kent, WA is a city that is 17 miles south of Seattle. Across the train tracks from a mall and shopping center called Kent Station, is a bus terminal also called Kent Station. This area is larger in scale but with wide open spaces due to the many roads and open parking lots. The bus terminal sits in a Commercially zoned area with large campus-like buildings littering the horizon over the otherwise single story typology. This location's adjacency to very different destinations, with different associated mental states and social rituals, makes it an indeterminate space with a broad demographic. A Play Place here would be visited by many different people with different needs. To keep the social risks low and maintain so form of interpersonal learning, a bit of low liability Fantasy play mixed with inviting Construction activities would work here.

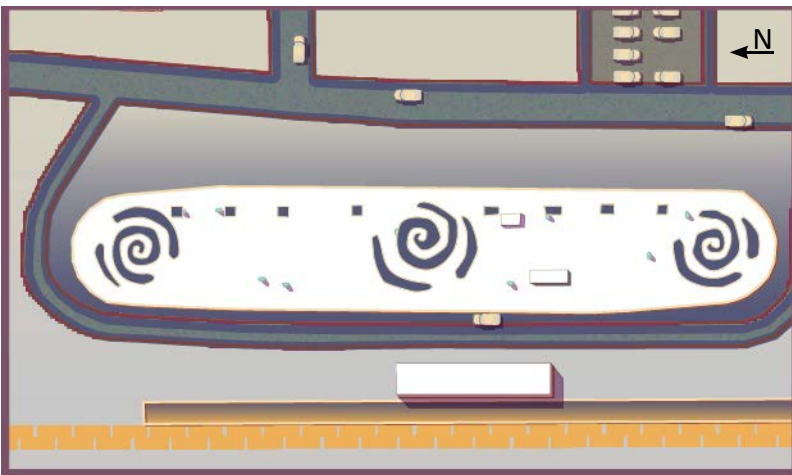




1" = 128' Plan Drawing of Kent Station



Area Elevation Collage



Transit Hub Plan Drawing 1" = 64'



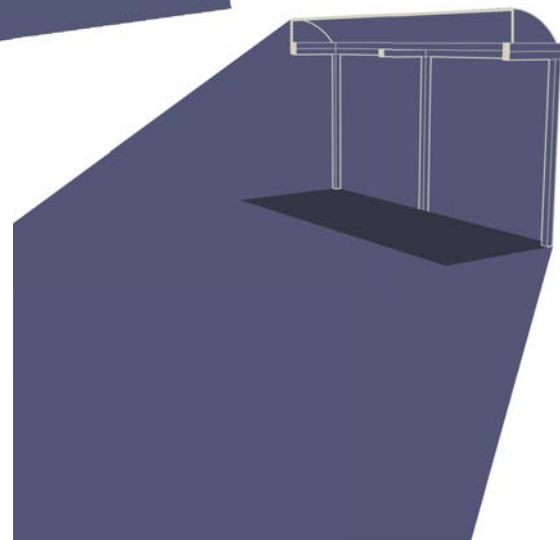
Wire-Maze Dance Runway



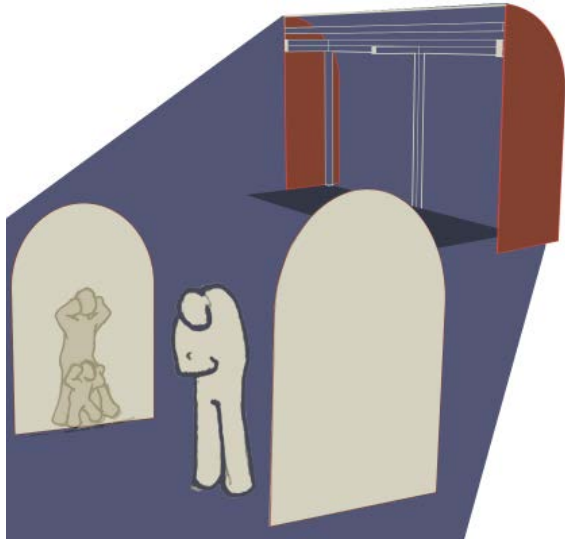
Perspective Rendering with scene photo

The Wire Maze runway along with a few space filling and eye catching toys would serve this location well. The design plays with visibility and physical communication in order to get people to experiment with how they interact with strangers. Large Commercial properties usually support transit by taking advantage of branding and destination mapping.

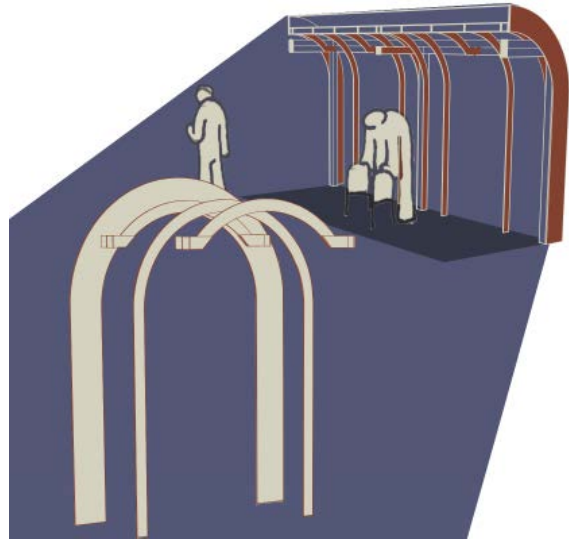
This design directly references a classic children's toy which makes it easier to understand the functionality of the toys. The usual beads that litter the wire maze are abstractions of branding props and destination iconography. Playing with the Wire Maze entails placing your hands on the beads and following them along its wiggling path along a runway. From the outside, this appears to be some kind of dance. From the inside, this appears to be more challenging than it may seem.



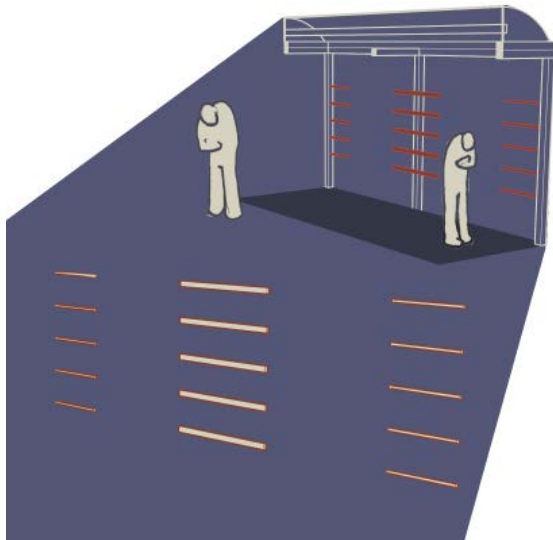
Original Structure



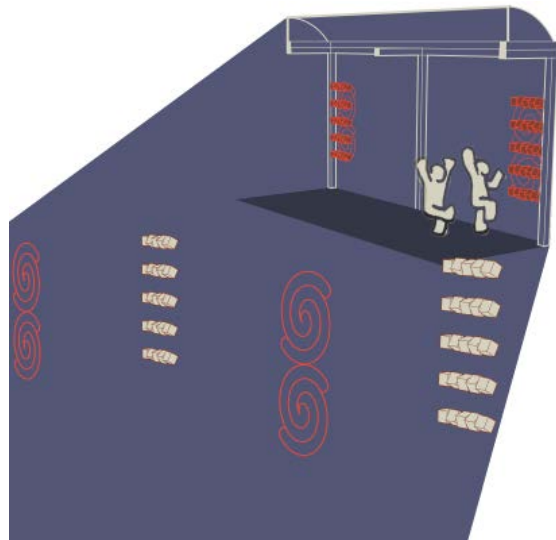
Curved top Glass end Panels



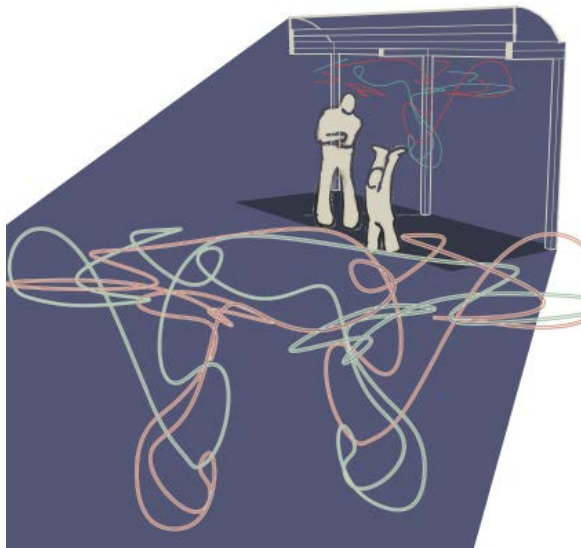
Curved Metal Structural Arches



Curved top Glass end Panels



Curved Metal Structural Arches



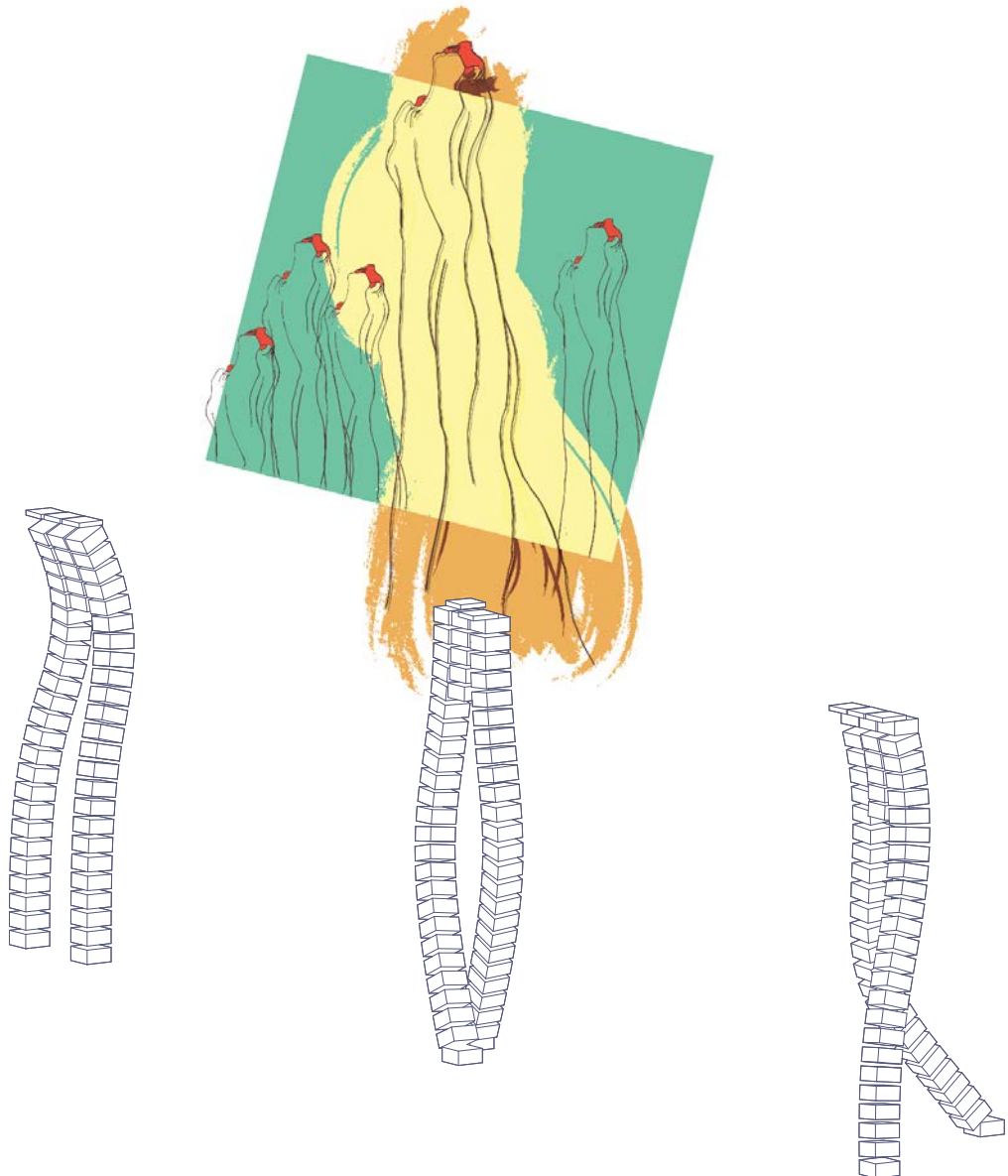
Thick Gauge Wire Paths

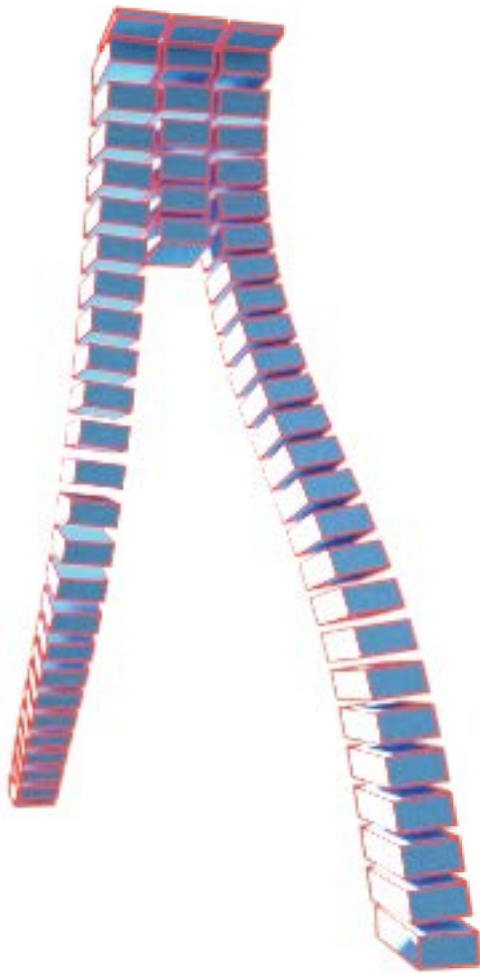
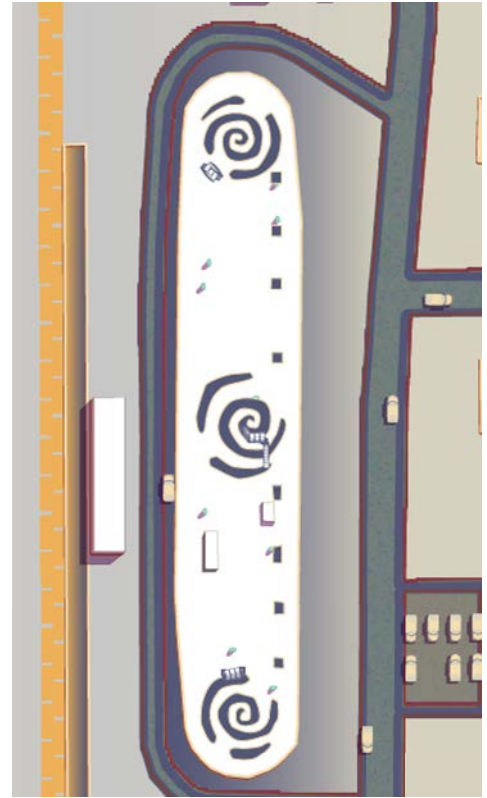
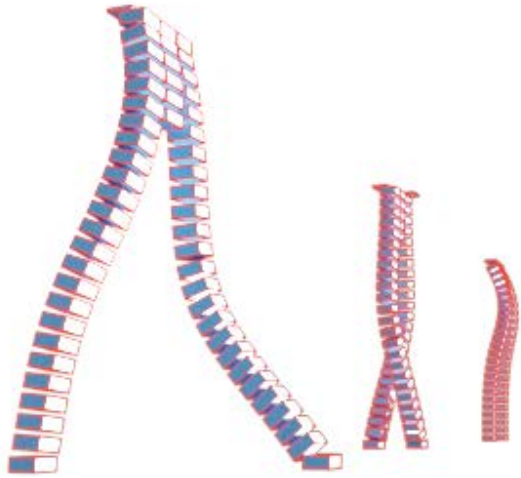


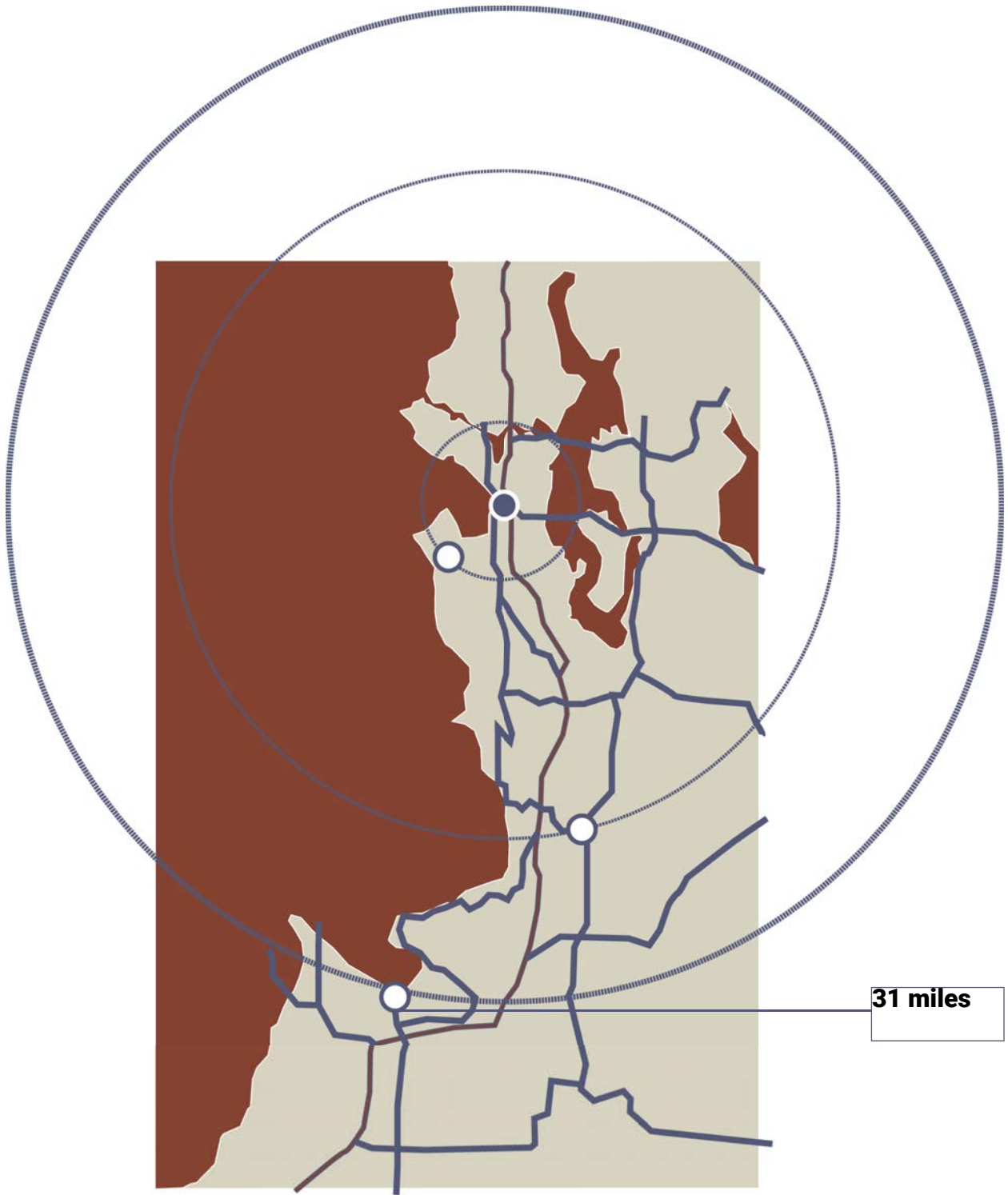
Curved Metal Structural Arches

Wiggly Pants

In order to shrink the scale of the open Bus Terminal and offer additional shelter, the large Wiggle Pants toys is used to create smaller pocket of occupiable space. These 15' toys respond to the push of passersby by buckling a little and the stacked-box legs may be spun to create a complete object inside the boxes. These gestures allow the structure to be vulnerable towards participants and imply that there is more than meets the eye.





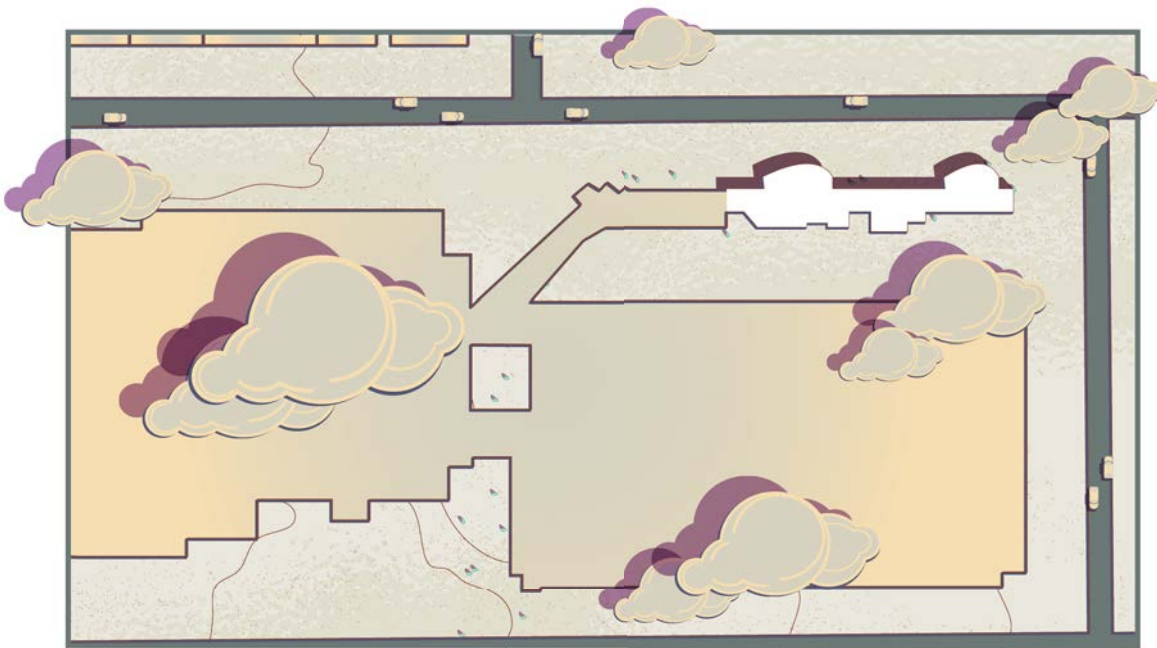


Tacoma, Washington

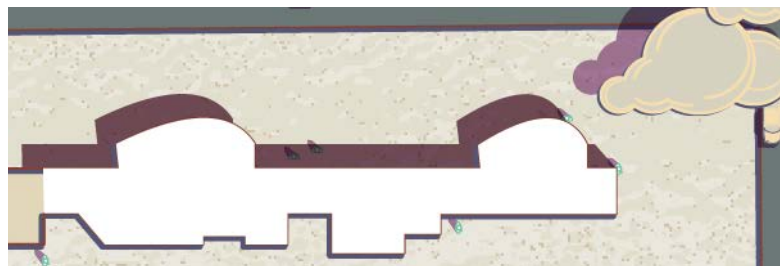
30 miles south of Seattle is the great city of Tacoma WA. There lies four industrial size blocks of present and future, multimodal transit centers, including heavy rail, light rail, buses, and a park and ride. This is a transit environment if there is one. The transit and industrial building typology conquers the area with little paths that navigate between the metal and truss based structures.



Particularly, the Tacoma Dome Station and parking structure pays careful attention to the pedestrian access to the many available modes with a beautifully accommodating design by Merritt Architects. The high walled stretch of street that faces Zone E, the bus terminal portion of the large building, is too large for an interactive and non-obtrusive intervention but the structure used throughout the large building is a space frame with plenty of space between structural members. Here is where an intervention can influence the tone of this part of the park and ride without needing additional structure of its own. That being said, it is also a priority for this location to be inviting towards all the other transit and community locations that surround the station.



1" = 128' Plan Drawing of Tacoma Dome Parking Structure



1" = 64' Plan Drawing of Tacoma Dome Bus Transit Area (Zone E)

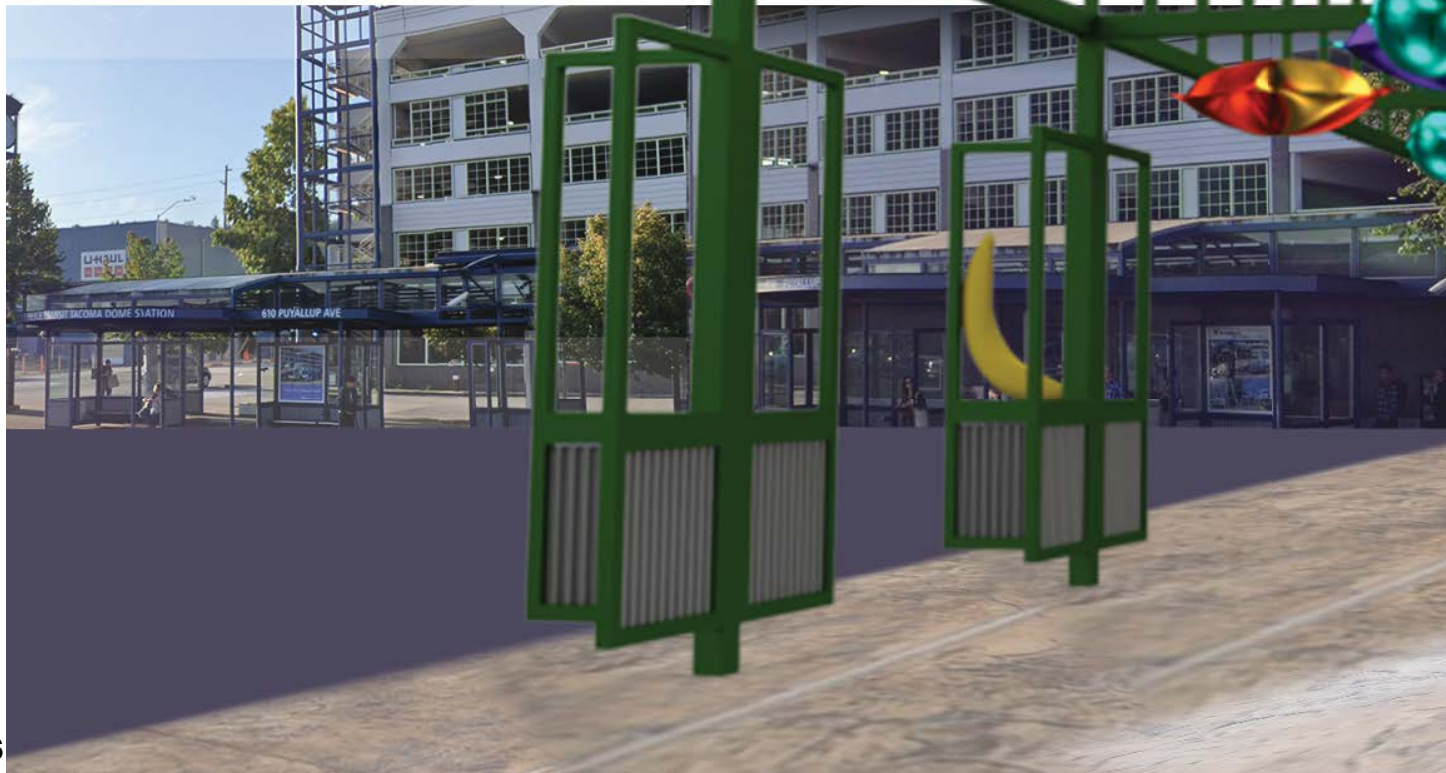


Area Street Elevations Collage

Toy Realm Drip Canopy

For Tacoma Dome Station, a single canopy of vibe teasing works well when paired with many smaller toys beneath. This effectively translates this peninsula of a structure as a toy box with independent social dynamics from the station and parking proper. This site is influenced by rush hour density shifts, so it needs all the space it has, and pre-work post-work mental states, so it needs to be reactive rather than intrusive. A Constructive play mixed with a little sensory stretching would support the needs of this site well.

Perspective Rendering of Transit Hub





Slidey Color Tiles

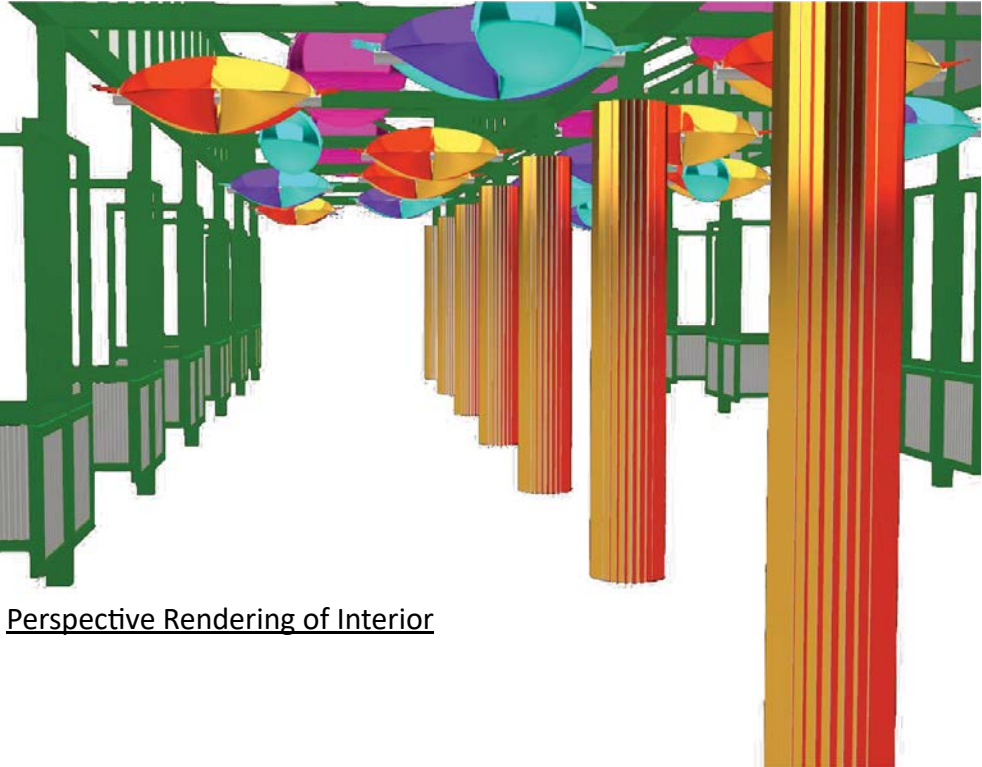
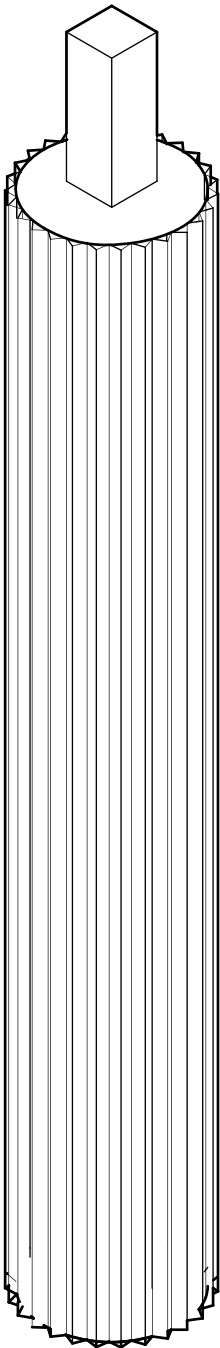
The atmospheric Slidey Color Tiles provide Constructive play. They may be arranged into any 8-bit pixel image formation.



Slidey Tiles Usage Diagram

Dancing Columns

The Dancing Columns are angled, reflective slices of a dancing image spliced with the same dance in the opposite direction. This provides some Sensory play as well as Fantasy play for those that attempt to do the Column dance.

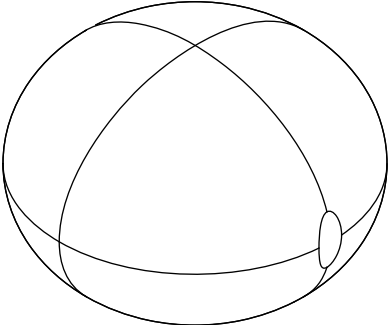
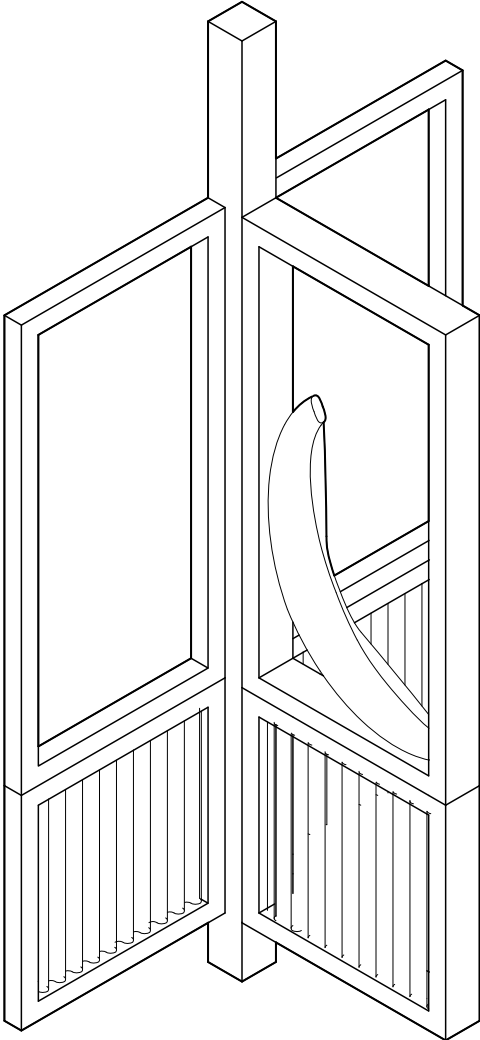


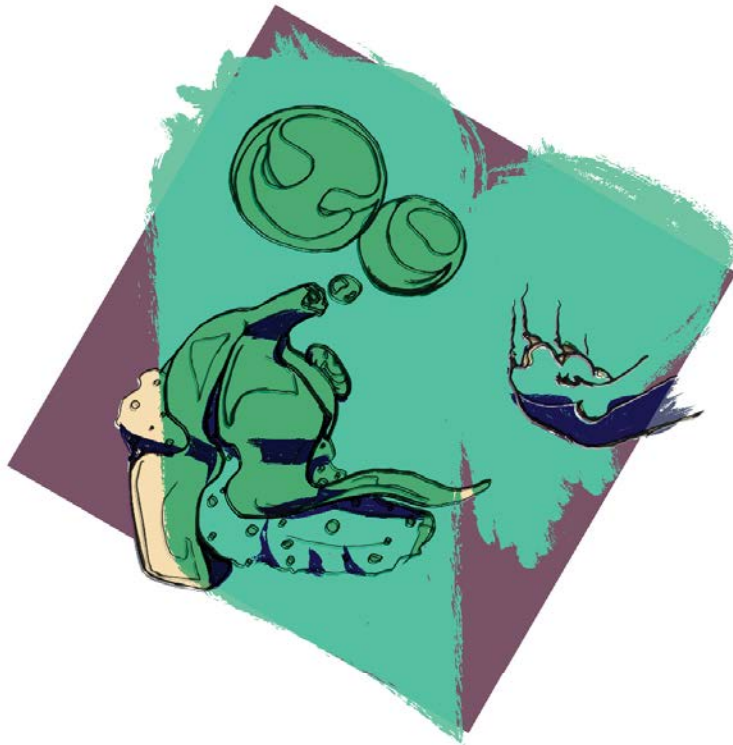
Perspective Rendering of Interior

Isometric Drawing of the The Dance column

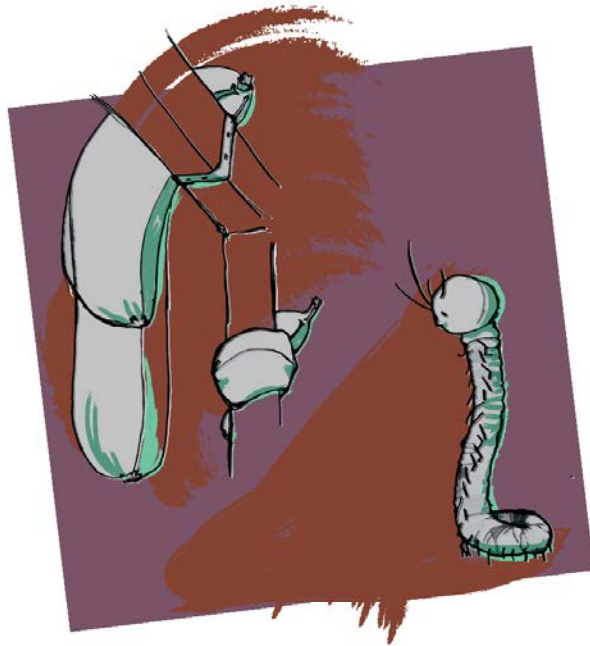
Smashed Banana

The Smashed Banana toy is hanging around and about the entire space, stretching, squashing, or knotting for anyone who dare explores the physical potential of this squishy banana.





Sensory Play Diagram + Squashed Banana



Fantasy Play Diagram + Stretched Banana

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“Thank You”