

Environments Project: Oakland

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Environments Project Process: Oakland

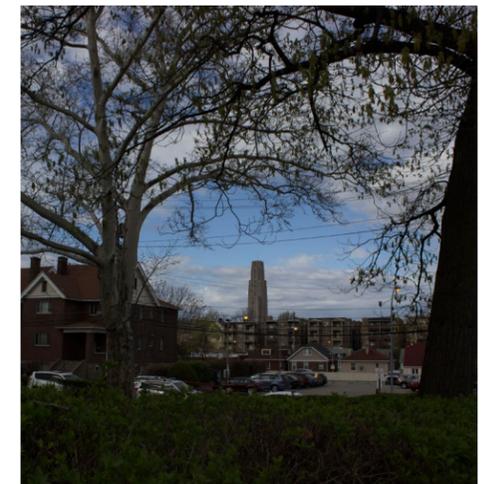
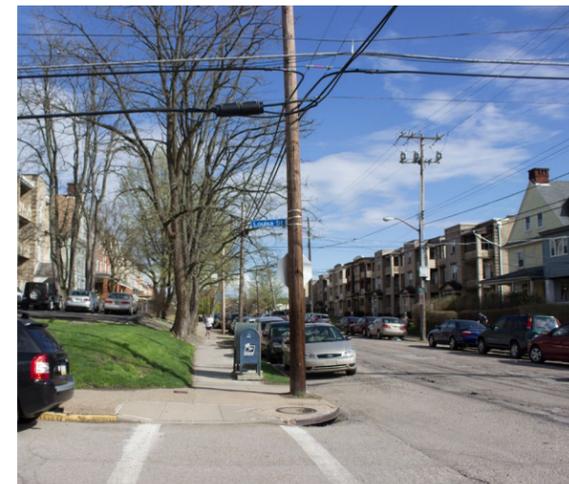
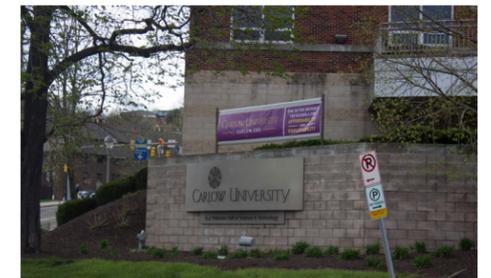
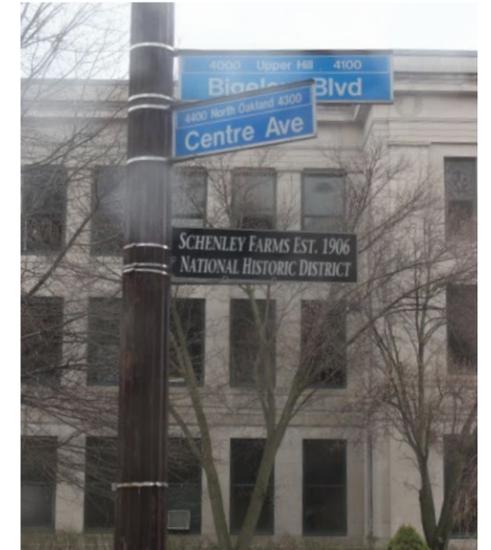
Oakland Observations

In our first exploration of Oakland, we observed a variety of elements in this neighborhood:

- Academic and healthcare centers (UPMC, University of Pittsburgh, Carnegie Mellon University, Carlow, and Mercy Hospital)
- Cultural centers: Carnegie Museum of Art, Carnegie Museum of Natural History, Carnegie Music Hall
- Schenley Park/Plaza, Phipps Conservatory, Schenley Farms Historic District, Cathedral of Learning
- North, West, Central, and South Oakland Neighborhoods
- Second most populated neighborhood in Pittsburgh (22,210 permanent residents, which does not include students)
- Mostly students (there is an additional 50,700 temporary residents in Oakland)

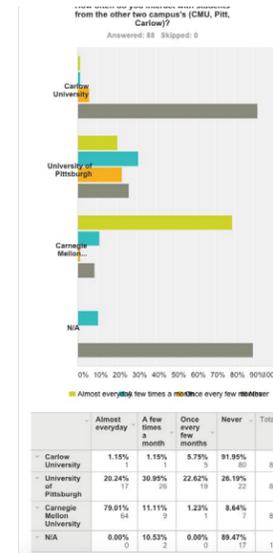
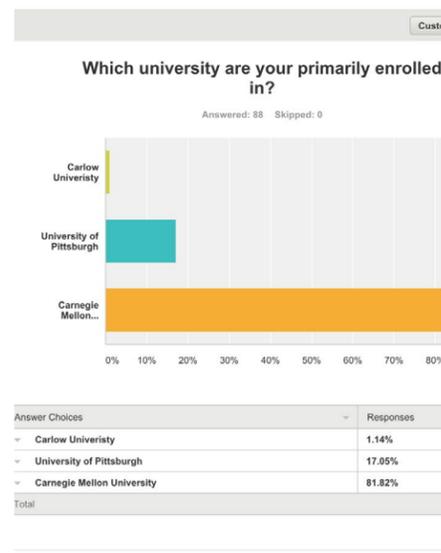
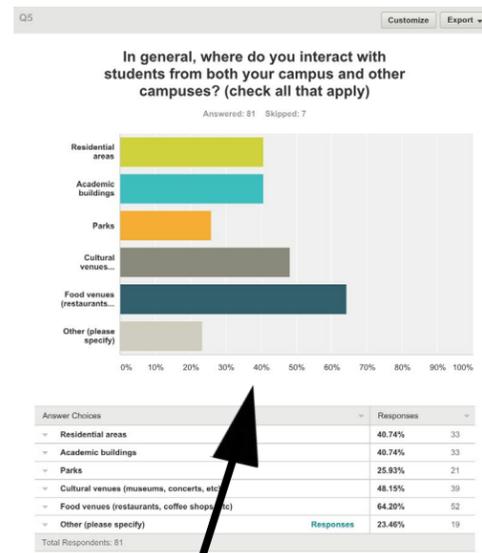
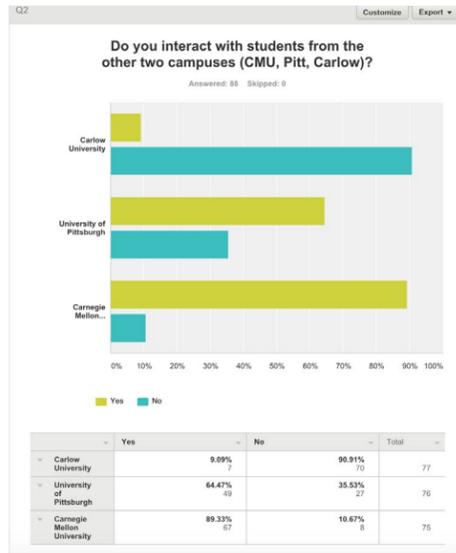
Questions:

- Why was each hospital named so specifically?
- What school districts/high school and elementary schools are located in Oakland?
- What is there outside of the students?
- What is the dominant religion?
- Is there a way to incorporate the healthcare and education together? Can we provide something for the students



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Student Survey



Our data proved that when students interact, a large portions of their outings are to cultural venues throughout Oakland. This point encouraged us to explore deeper into the cultural arts of Oakland, and examine their relationships with the students of the neighborhood.

Student Population



13,285 Students



34,934 Students



2,346 Students

In order to gain more information on the students of Oakland, our group sent out a survey to gauge the amount of interaction between campuses, and where those interactions took place.

We were looking to see if there was a problem socially that we need to solve. We wanted to know if being associated with the other schools in Pittsburgh/Oakland was important to the atmosphere and going to school in this city.

We thought that it might be important for collaboration, ideas, conjoining the campus cultures, exploring Pittsburgh, sharing academics and breaking barriers.

Through the expansion of your social network, we believed that it would create a more meaningful college experience

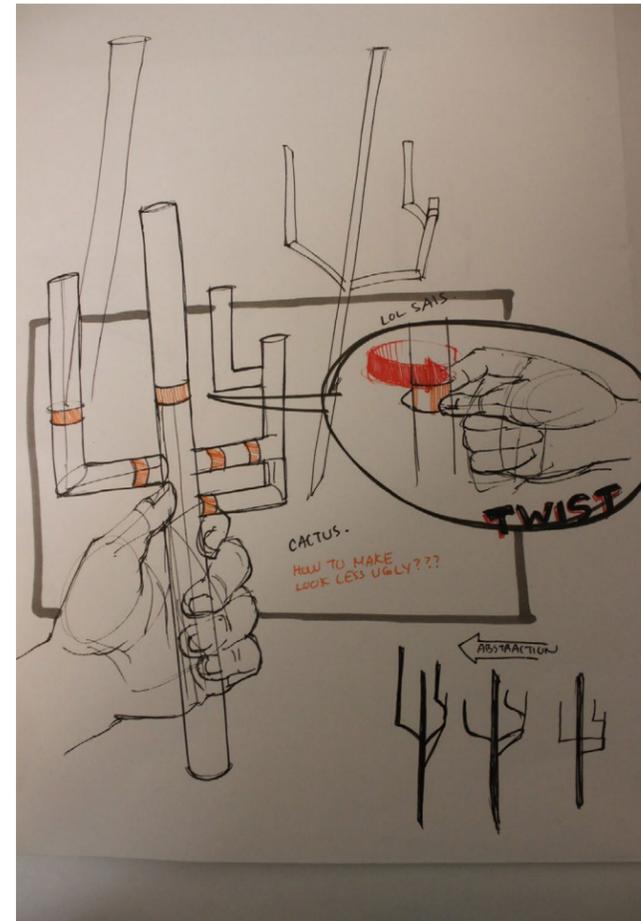
Survey Questions:

- What university do you go to?
- Are you friends with people at other universities in Pittsburgh?
- If yes, which university do they attend?
- If no, do you want to get to know students at other schools?
- Is it important to you to have friendships with students at other universities? Why?
- Where in Pittsburgh do you and your friends hang out?
- Do you want to get to explore the city more?

In Oakland there are around 50,700 students between the three universities: Carnegie Mellon University, University of Pittsburgh, and Carlow University. When exploring Oakland our group was taken back by the vast amounts of students. This informed our idea of making something enjoyable for the students of Oakland.

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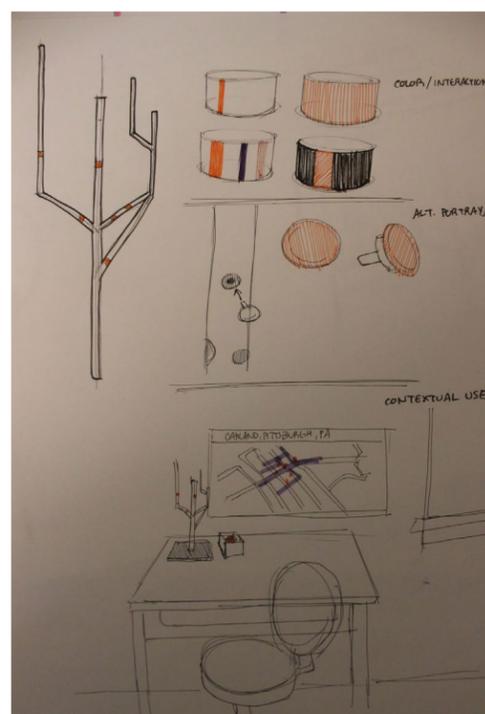
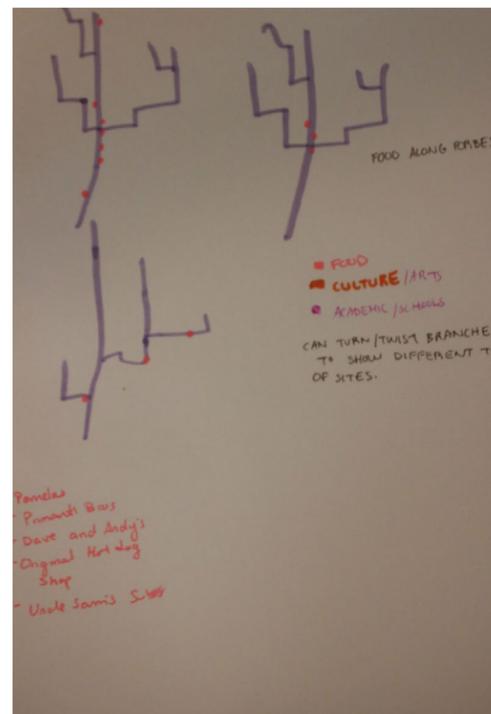
First Artifact Idea



In Oakland there are around 50,700 students between the three universities: Carnegie Mellon University, University of Pittsburgh, and Carlow University. When exploring Oakland our group was taken back by the vast amounts of students. This informed our idea of making something enjoyable for the students of Oakland.

Our first artifact was centered around creating a kinetic movement interaction. We wanted to find a way to inform the students of the diversity of Oakland and providing them with the necessary information to understand what the neighborhood has to offer.

The kinetic movement was meant to be an enticing element of the artifact. Rather than simply displaying information to the students, we wanted them to uncover and discover the facts about Oakland.



We began to focus on the idea of the oak tree and branch after during extension research about the neighborhood and its four parts (see next page). We realized that the nature and preservation of Oakland has been a significant part of the neighborhood's history.

After deciding how our artifact would inform the students about the opportunities of being in Oakland, we figured we would try and create this artifact on a larger scale to fit in Schenley Plaza. Schenley continues to embody the idea of Oakland and historic preservation through the numerous projects like the Plaza, the restaurant, and the space itself. By placing this type of artifact in Schenley Plaza, we are working towards informing the students about Oakland on a different level.

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Exploration of Oakland Neighborhoods

SOUTH OAKLAND

- Frazier Playground
 - ultimate frisbee park
- Sestilli Nursery
 - family owned landscape shop
- Four Mile Run Park
 - in a neighborhood called "four mile run"
 - named for a stream about four miles above the point that emptied into the Monongahela River
 - settled in the early 20th century
 - church: st. john byzantine catholic church - est. 1910 - church attended by warhol's family
 - portion of schenley park
- Function Hollow Fields
- St. Regis Parish
- Hemophilia Center of Western PA
- St. George Antiochan Orthodox Cathedral
- Zulema Parklet
 - public green site
- Pittsburgh Playhouse
 - performing arts center through point park univeristy
- UPMC Aesthetic
- Oakland Sunshine Daycare
- Magee Hospital: Schmidt Christalyn

CENTRAL OAKLAND

- Forbes Ave Restaurants: Dave & Andys - 1983
- Oakland Square Historic District
- Andersen Playground (pictured below)
 - dinosaur playground, park of schenley
- Phipps Conservatory & Botanical Gardens - 1893
- Flagstaff Hill
- Edward Manning Bigelow Monument

NORTH OAKLAND

- Schenley Farms Historic District
 - national registry of historic places
 - two districts: oakland civic center historic district & schenley farms historic district
 - residential development of the early 20th century
 - franklin nicola plan in the "city beautiful" style for oakland
 - important architectural movement
 - includes Cathedral of Learning & Heinz Memorial Chapel
- Carnegie Museum of Natural History
- Carnegie Museum of Art - 1895
- University of Pittsburgh
- Carnegie Mellon University
- Mellon Institute
- Mellon Institute Library
- Schenley Plaza
 - restored for use in 2006
 - pittsburgh parks conservancy
 - second phase in 2008: mary schenley memorial fountain
 - full-service restuarant: the porch at schenley
 - future plans for restoration of the magee memorial fountain
- Soldiers & Sailors Memorial Hall & Museum
- Petersen Events Center
- Western Psychiatric Institute & Clinic of UPMC (WPIC)
- St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Cathedral
- St. Paul Cathedral
- Ryan Catholic Newman Center
- Oakland Catholic High School
- Craig Street Restaurants

WEST OAKLAND

- Carlow University
- Forbes Ave Restaurants: Pamela's - 1979
 - The Original Hot Dog Shop - 1960
 - Primanti Brothers - 1933
- Montefiore University Hospital
- Landslide Community Farm
 - neighborhood in "soho" - intersection of uptown, west oakland and the hill district
 - dedicated to providing a healthy food source to the community
 - project of education and mutual aid



- Moultrie Street Gardens
 - part of "grow pittsburgh"
- Welcome to Uptown
 - revitalization vision
 - public art
 - tree symbol
 - james simon 2012
- Darragh Street Park
 - part of university of pittsburgh
 - near residences
- UPMC Presbyterian
- Falk Clinic
- Lily Baptist Church
- Dunseith Parklet
- Friendship Community Church
- Shalom, A Peace Church Community of Brother Francis & Sister Clare

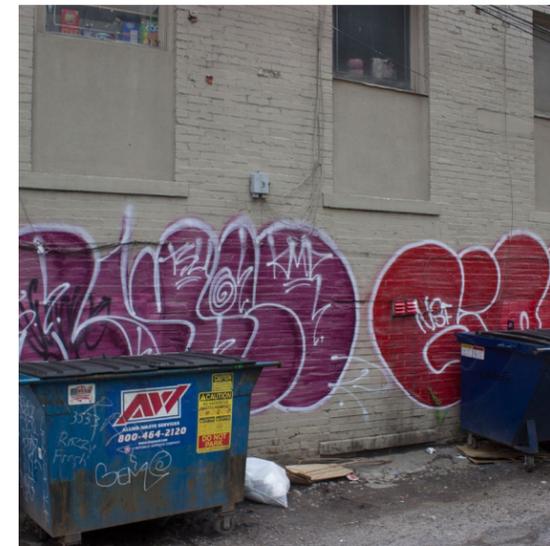
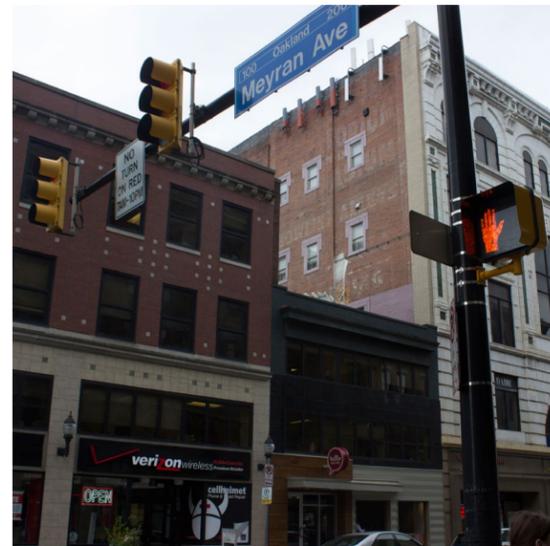
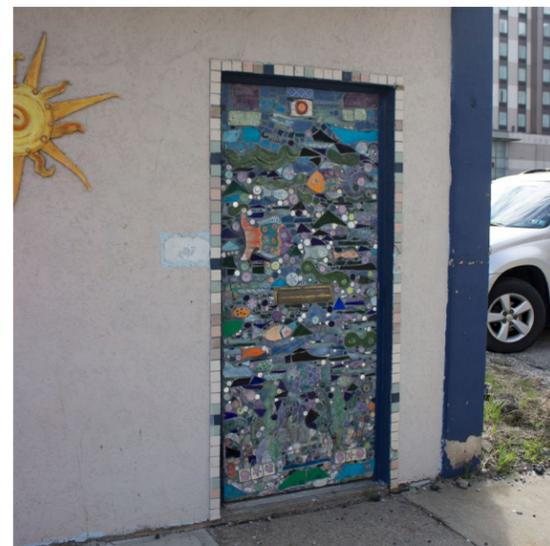
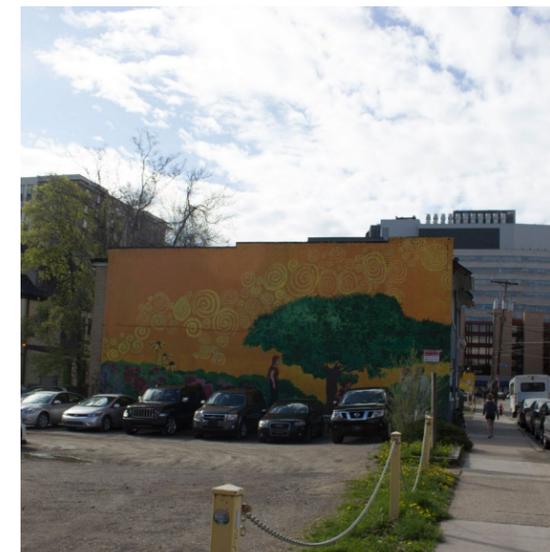
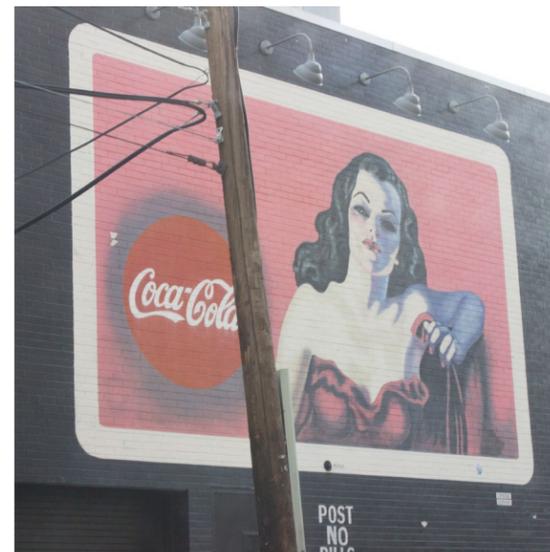
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Exploring Oakland: Street Art

After exploring the idea of a historically informative artifact, we decided to move forward with some of the ideas and scrap others. We needed to understand the location and placement of our artifact and why we were placing it. We wanted to know whether the connections we were making for people needed to be implicit or explicit. We wanted to know if there was a different way we could imply the parts of history and elements of Oakland to the students.

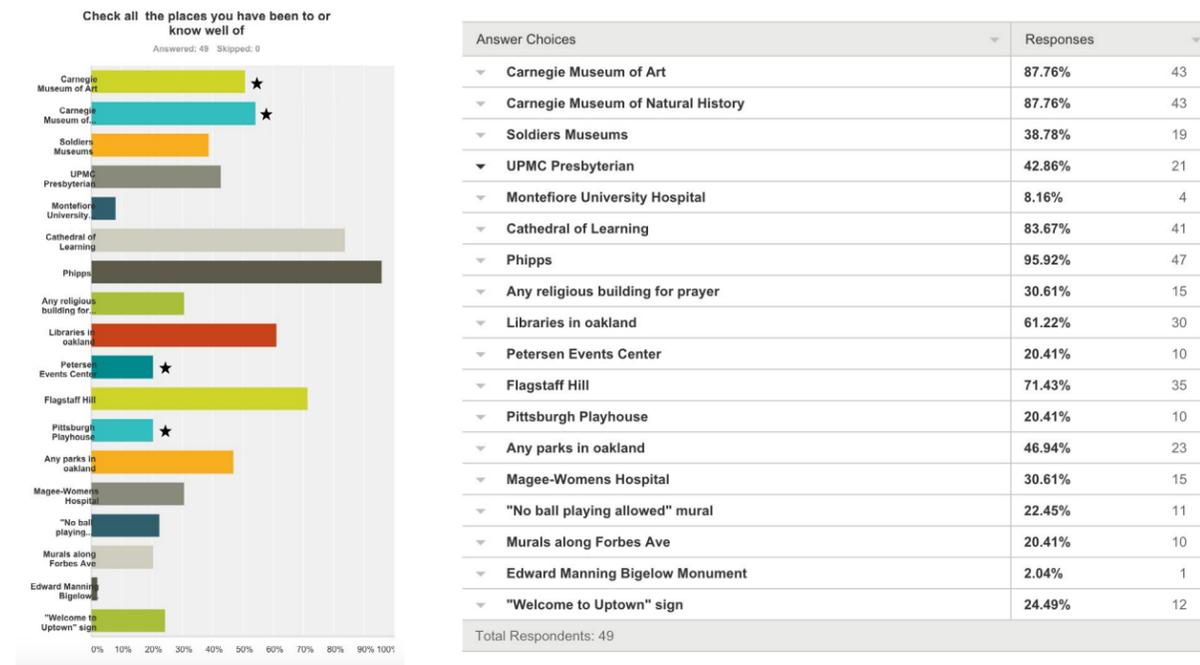
We went out into Oakland and walked around the majority of its perimeter. Since the neighborhood is central to the North, West and Central portions, we walked through these. We discovered that Oakland is very diverse, with each street representing a different ethnicity and industry. Additionally, we found hidden gems, or street art along each of these streets.

This led us to reinvent our artifact and our idea. We knew we wanted to be creating a space and something the students could benefit from. It could establish some type of socialization, academics, stress relief, information or art. Our decision was to create a space or artifact that would inform students.



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Cultural Arts in Oakland

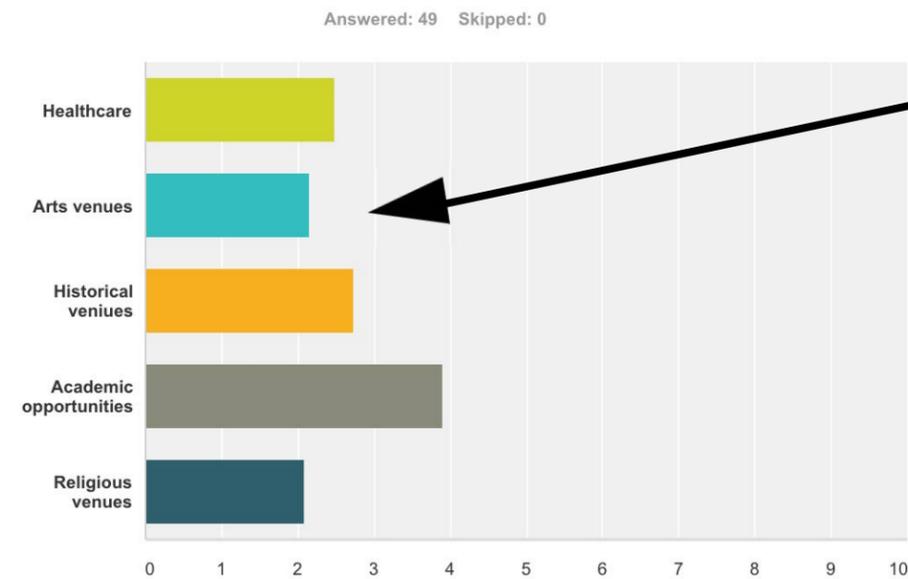


The next step was to send out a survey to see what we needed to inform the students of Oakland about. We were struggling to figure out what would be interesting and beneficial to the community. After conducting some research and this survey, we understood that the students lacked knowledge about the cultural arts that were right at their fingertips.

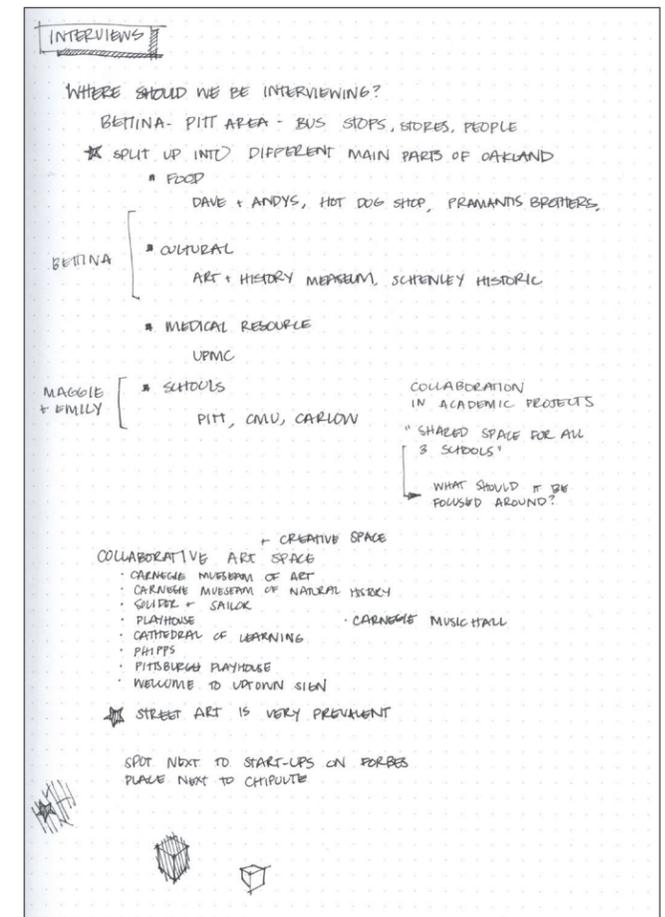
Our emphasis was placed on reducing this lack of connection to the cultural arts. We brainstormed through products that encourage collaborative art, beauty, making a statement, trying to revitalize the community or keeping it simple. After discussions about art walls, monuments, murals and stickers, we landed on the possibility of an infographic or artifact that was informative and would allow the students to make the connection to the cultural arts in their own way.

We also surveyed which specific venues of Oakland students were most informed about. We chose the art venues that students were the least familiar to include in our product.

Please rank your knowledge in the following about Oakland (1 being best and 5 being worst)



In our next survey of the students we found that students are less knowledgeable about art venues in the area, compared to other types of large establishments in Oakland. This informed our decision to focus our product around the cultural arts venues in Oakland.

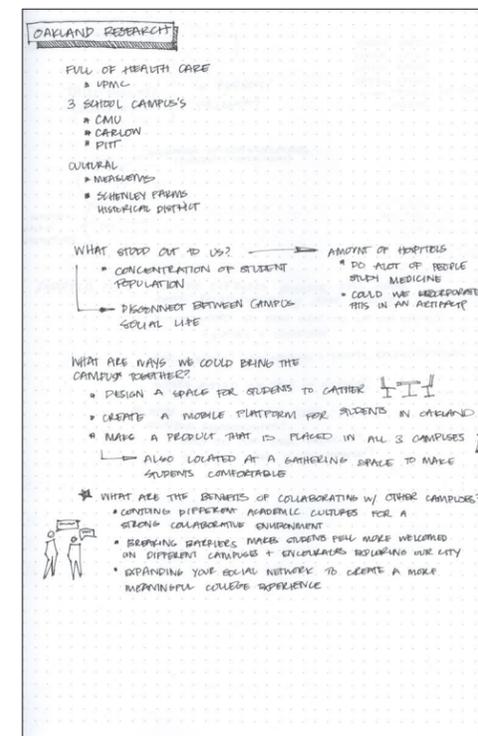
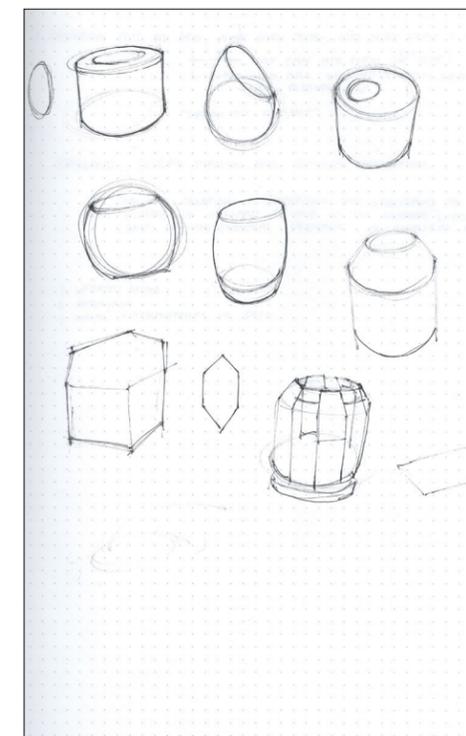
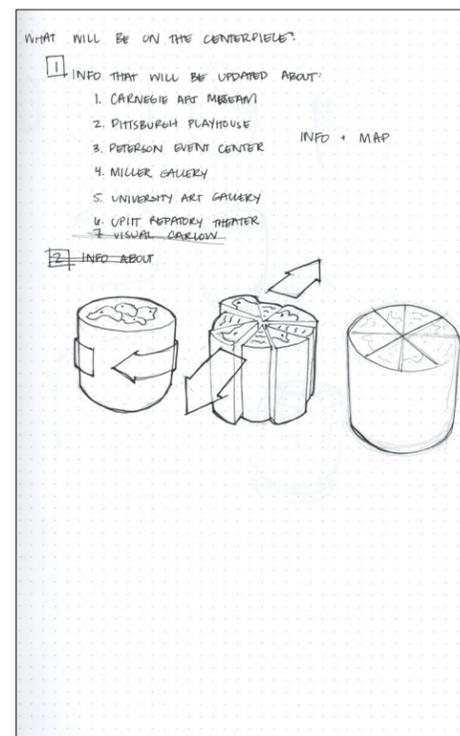
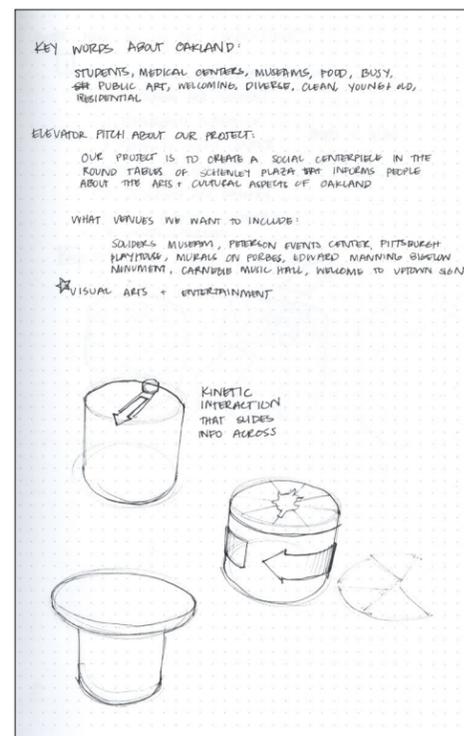
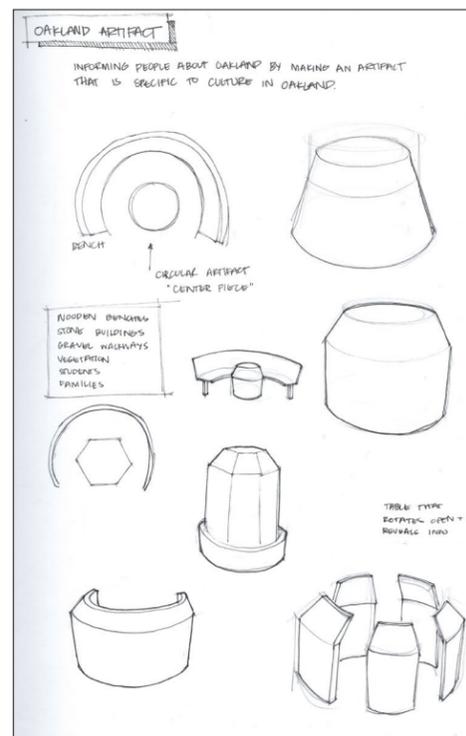
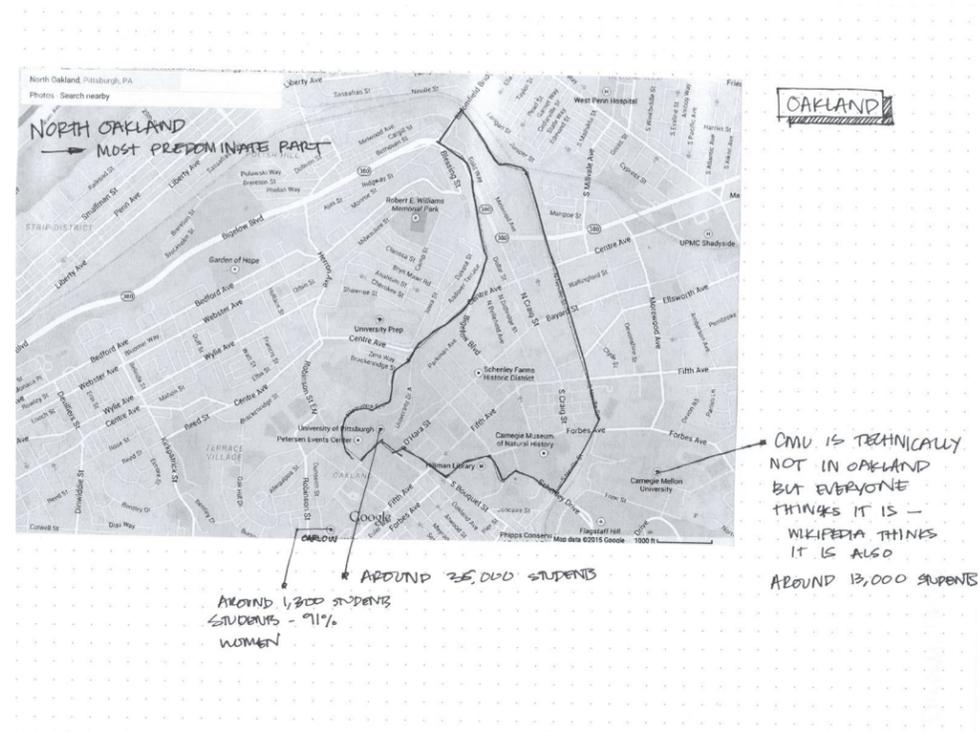


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Creation of the Centerpiece

We struggled with the idea that we needed to be creating something with a purpose. After a reflection and analysis of our neighborhood, we came to the conclusion that there really was not anything missing from Oakland but there were things that could be improved. We wanted to place an emphasis on what was already there: the cultural background.

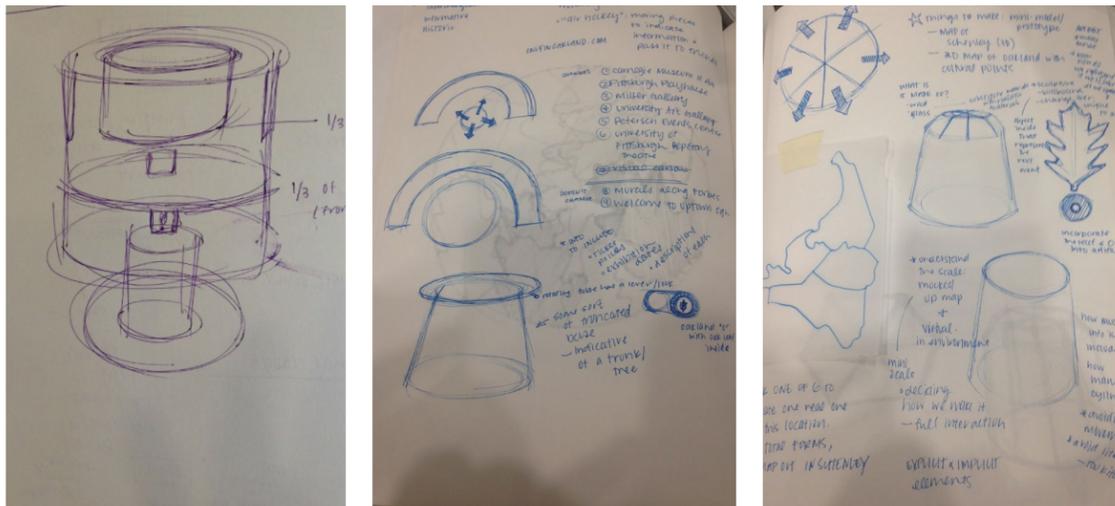
We moved forward by trying to implement an artifact into an environment. The artifact would be informing something about the neighborhood, could only fit in this neighborhood, and was something specific to the neighborhood. We chose to enhance Schenley Plaza because it met all this criteria. Plus, it was a natural gathering space, allowed for other events and had easy access to food. We would be designing a statue/monument/table (which led to a centerpiece) for the curved benches in Schenley.



Environments Project Process: Oakland

Multiple Iterations + Exploration of Materials

The first iteration created a very “exhibit” like object. The piece was constructed from a paper ellipse, wrapped with walnut barc paper. We used a piece of thin plastic to simulate the idea of glass covered the top with an elliptical piece of stained balsa wood.



After evaluating this artifact, our idea was being to come through. We wanted to be displaying something about the constantly changing exhibit but we did not want the piece to be too fragile or delicate so that people would want to touch it.

With the second iteration, we still wanted to include the glass piece for the artifact but decided to make it more sculptural than exhibitional. By this we mean that the form and the beauty of the elliptical shape was our focus. The artifact is a second thought that you see when you look into the artifact and interact with it.

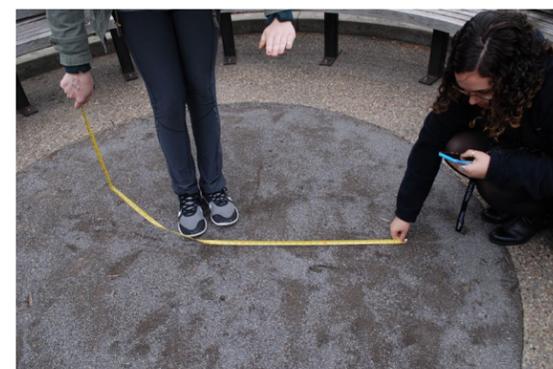


From this iteration, we moved to establish the interactive mechanism, the kinetic movement, or the rotation. We felt that we need to reiterate the artifact to change the base, the colors to match the benches at Schenley Plaza and how the viewer interacts with the artifact. In addition to the rotational mechanism, we would be adding slit windows on the sides so that people could peer in to see artifact and further understand the information.

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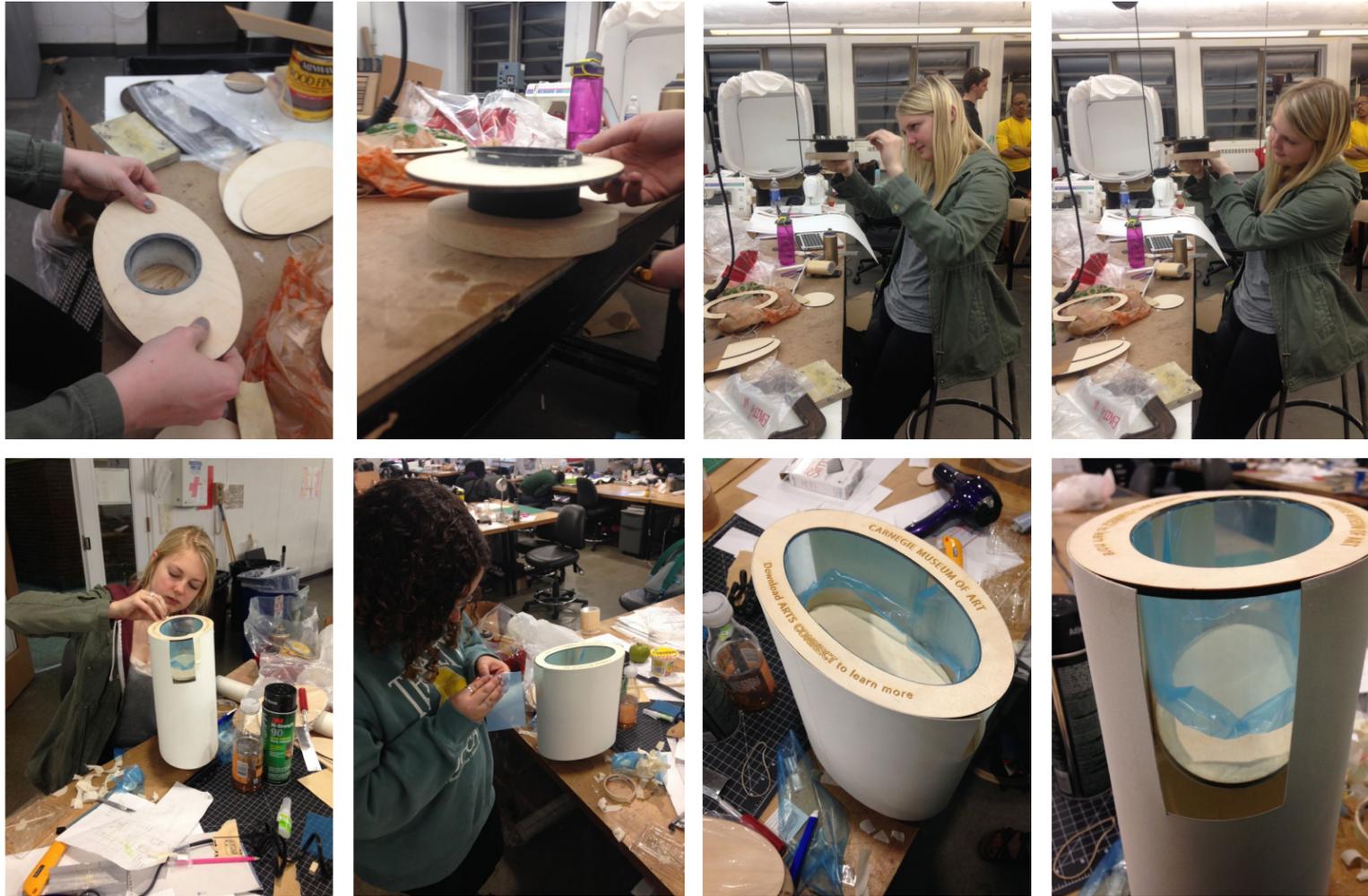
Visiting the Environment: Schenley Plaza

After making each of the iterations, we decided to visit Schenley Plaza to re-evaluate and re-explore the space we had chosen. The first time we went to get measurements for the final iteration. We examined the woods and metals used so that we could effectively pick the correct stains and materials. The second time we took pictures and observed the people. They were chatting and enjoying the day. The curved benches seemed to be the source of socialization and our artifact would fit in perfectly.



Environments Project Process: Oakland

Building the Final Artifact



For the final iteration, we decided to make a 1:3 scale. The body of the model ended up being about 12 inches tall and about 10 inches wide. We created a support system inside that was comprised of three laser-cut ellipses that were wrapped by cardstock and mahogany veneer.

To improve on our last iteration and create a more realistic piece, we laser-cut the etching on the top piece. It reads: "Carnegie Museum of Art. Download ARTS CONNECT to learn more." The idea is that this will encourage the students to pull out their phones and look up our digital component to further explore the cultural arts. Additionally, there is a black band, made of plastic and spray painted, that wraps around the artifact and displays the Oakland branding logo.

The bottom ellipse of our elliptical body had a whole cut into it to allow the PVC pipe to stick through so that we could create our rotational device. On the outside of the body, there is stopper that was created through a ring that hugs the PVC. On the inside, there is a wooden circle that serves as a lock for the mechanism. The piece rests in a circular base that has a divet for the PVC. The artifact rotates on the PVC so it is not pipe that is moving up the body of the artifact.

On the sides of the artifact, there are slits cut into the cardstock and the veneer so the audience can peep in. Inside you see a plastic chamber that was slide into place from the top. To close the artifact, a thin piece of artifact sits on top. The implication of this is so that the exhibitional curators can change the artifacts to correspond with the current events.

Each element had to be placed together with extreme care and precision. It was a long process that presented many challenges along the way. We felt that we learned how to rely on each other and take a step back when it was necessary. It was a process of balance and complexity that led to an understanding and appreciation for form, craft and technique.

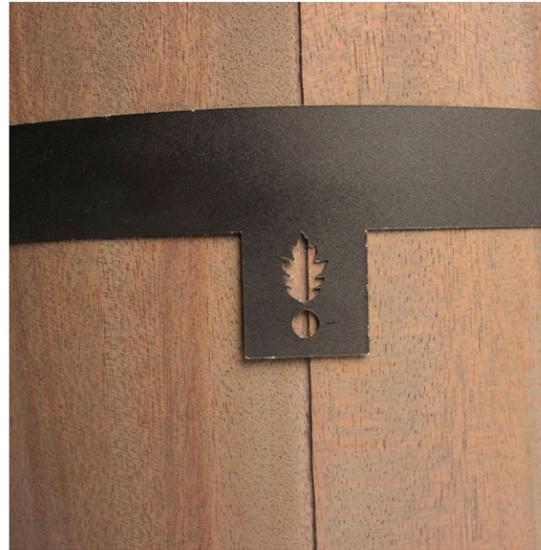
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Final Artifact

We have created a centerpiece that encourages the connection that students have with the rich presence of the cultural arts in Oakland.

Our goal for this was to find a way to tie the existing elements of a neighborhood back to the people who define it. The final artifact is a representation of what is happening at the Carnegie Museum of Art. It is a type of branding and information that can be provided to people who go and sit within the curved benches at Schenley Plaza. It encourages, but does not force, a new idea of how to understand the neighborhood of Oakland. We were able to demonstrate and represent the knowledge about a place and its diverse elements through our explorations and observations.

The decision of using Van Goghs apple was informed through visiting the Carnegie Mellon Musuem of Art.



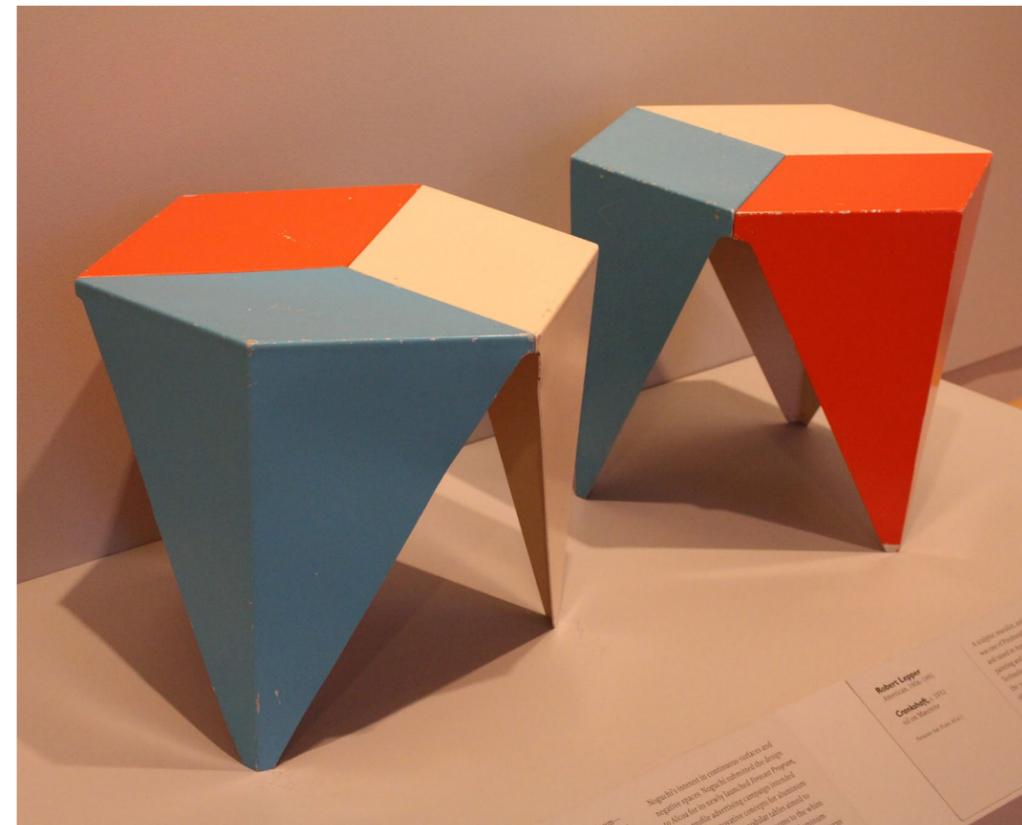
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Visiting the Carnegie Museum of Art



To better understand the events center that we were representing within our artifact, we decided to visit the Carnegie Museum of Art. While we were there we got the opportunity to interview some of the staff. The museum currently had about seven different exhibitions going on. One of them allowed the viewers to watch as the archivists restored and preserved some of the older artwork.

While speaking to the employee, we got a better sense of the current exhibits. Just like Van Gogh's they focused on color and the process of creating an artistic work. This is important to us because of process of design. We felt that we should relate to our artifact and the representational element, but it should be something relatable to a general audience, as well.



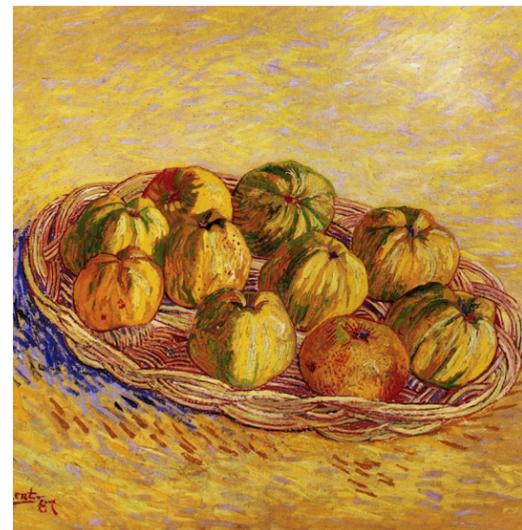
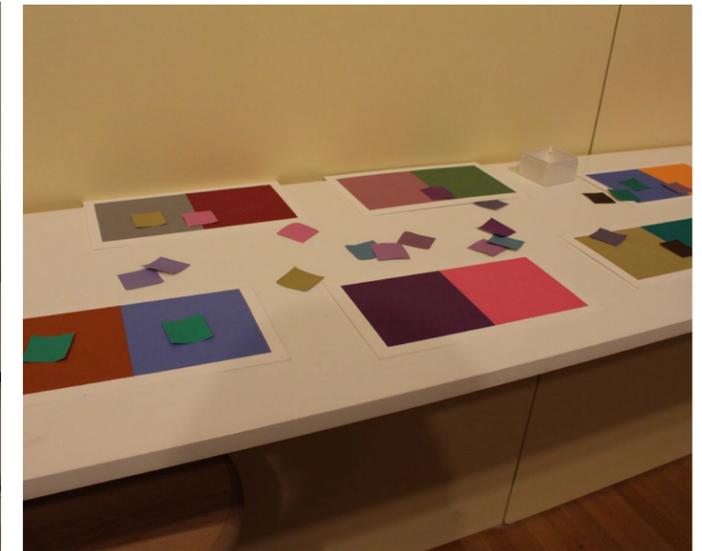
We thought that we might use some of the chairs and the layout of the museum as inspiration for artifact. Looking through our photos, we realized that we were inspired by one of the sculptural chairs. The tri-colored ones were significant to our research because two of the six current exhibits focused on geometric shapes and three dimensional forms.

Environments Project Process: Oakland

Representing an Exhibit

To continue from the idea of color and communication as a our representational element, we decided to focus on the “Visiting Van Gogh” exhibit. Currently, there is a show running with four pieces centered around the impressionist painter. His work delves into the understanding of color and brushstrokes. To implicitly and abstractly imply this event, we created an apple that focused on Van Gogh’s style.

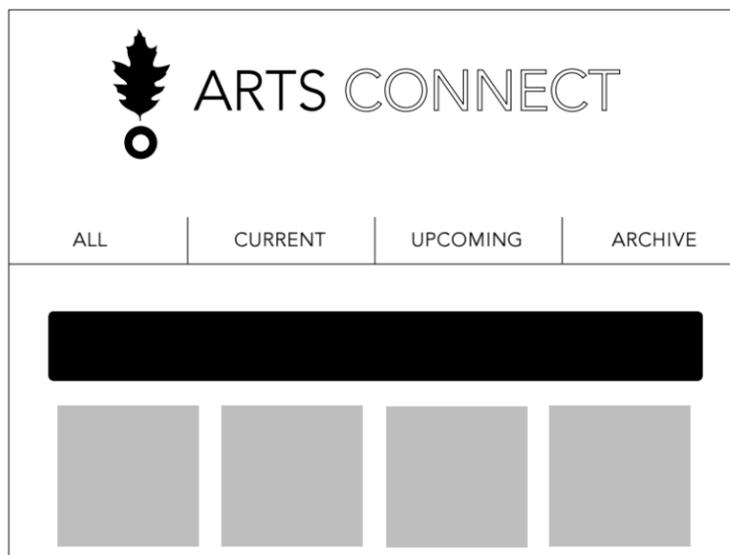
We chose to focus on Van Gogh’s color theory and brushstrokes because the exhibit does an examination of the artist’s methods. The museum created displays with color swatches for little kids to play with. There was a light box to show the mixing of the cooors using transparent sheets. They included a color wheel and balls of yarn to represent the way Van Gogh used to sue tarn to mix his colors.



Currently, the largest exhibit at the Carnegie Museum of Art is a feature about Van Gogh and his still life, Still Life, Basket of Apples. To represent this feature, we painted a faux apple in the style of the artist.

Environments Project Process: Oakland

Incorporating a Digital Component



The second part of the project was presented as digital component that would be an enhancement to our physical object. First, we had to determine who we are, what were we doing and who were we designing for. We wanted to the form to be the drive interest. We wanted to interaction to draw our audience in.

We are creating a centerpiece that encourages the connection that students have with the rich presence of cutlural arts in Oakland.

The statement above has been driving us through the exploration of the physical object and our digital component. The digital part was mostly about creating accessability to the information we were presenting so that people would act in a particular way because of the information.

To develop the idea of the digital application, the first iteration began with layout ideas. The prominent problem was sizing and how to fit it to the screen. Additionally, the logo had its own composition. Its size could convWey different ideas of connotation and readability.



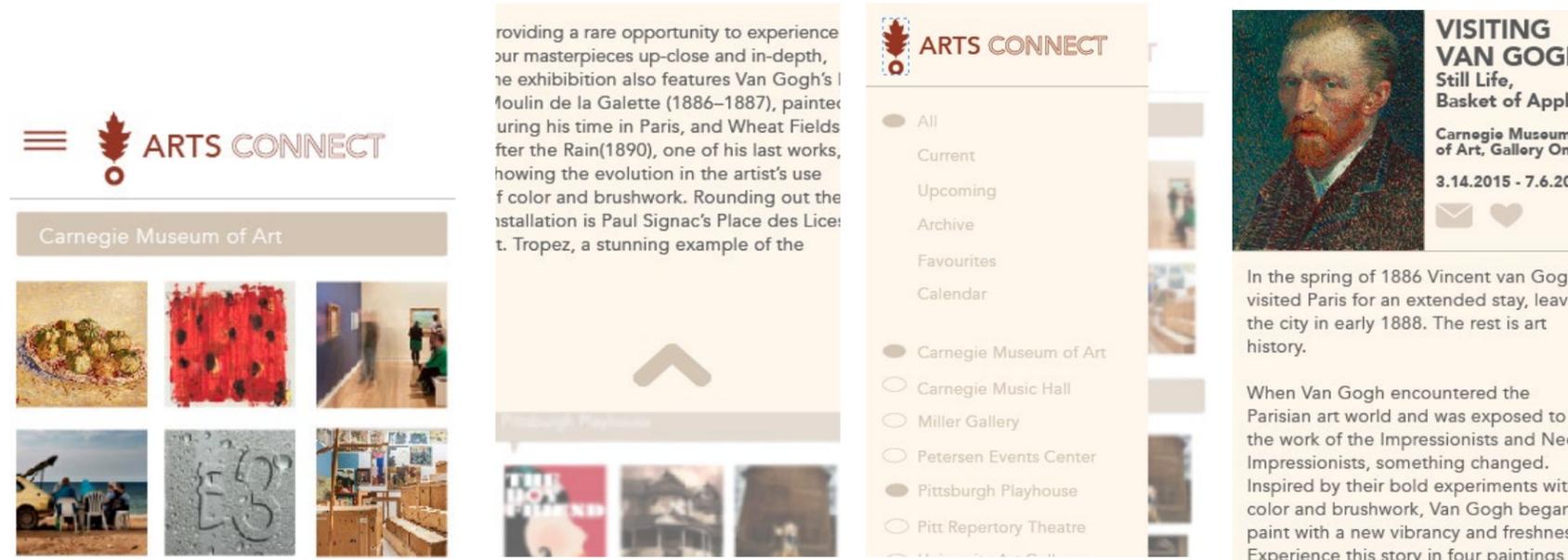
We realized that the application needed an additional visual connection with the physical artifact aside from the color palette. As the physical artifact has a strong ovular shape, we tried different ways of incorporating an oval or sweeping motion into the visual design. However, the ovular design broke the cleanliness of the header; instead, the oval design in the pullout menu provided sufficient connection.

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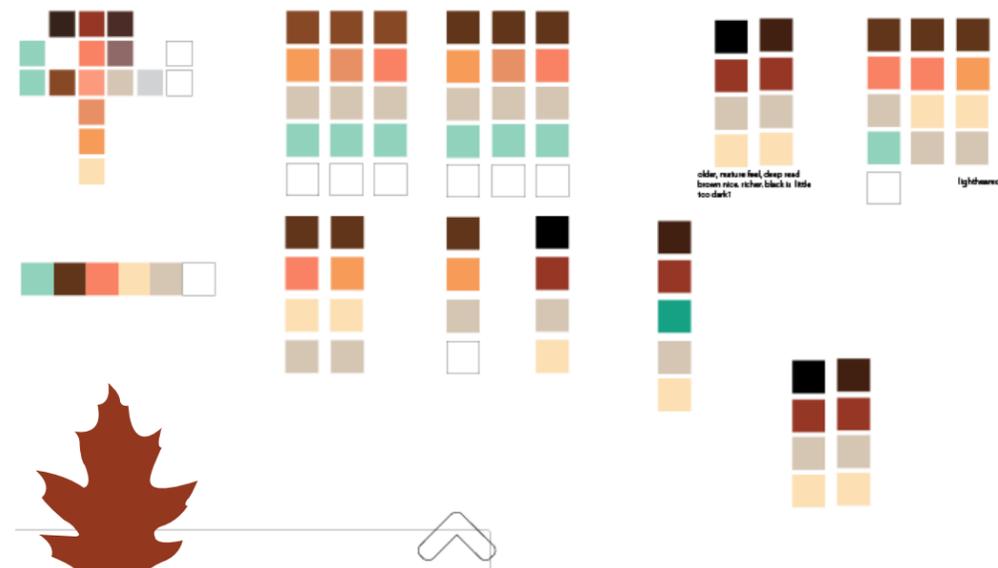
Color Theory + Graphics

The color swatches explore the colors associated with the branding of Oakland and the natural colors that relate to oak trees. We played around with orange, red, brown and gray tones. After several iterations, we decided that a combination of black, sienna, gray and cream allowed for the best contrast and best represented the area.

The exploration with the graphics involved peer criticism to understand what people were looking for. There was time spent observing real-life applications to learn how to make things the most “app-like.” Further iterations studied the visual connectivity of the fonts, the display and functionality of the application. To create the illusion of this being a reality, certain features like the blurred pages were added to display situations of usage.



This shows early iteration of the oval graphic present in the pullout menu. We decided to rearrange the placement of the venue names so the function had less ambiguity. We also decided on the predominantly white color palette so that when the user selected an option, the yellow highlight would protrude; on the other hand, a predominantly yellow background with white highlights would cause the focus to recede.



This shows iterations of different layouts for the events page. After observing existing phone apps, we concluded that application layouts not only require larger text, kerning and leading, but also allow full bleed in images.

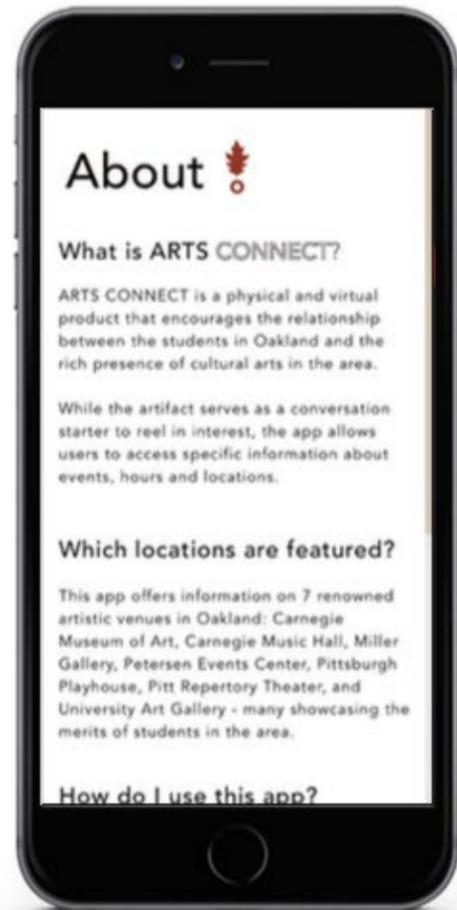
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Digital Product: Final

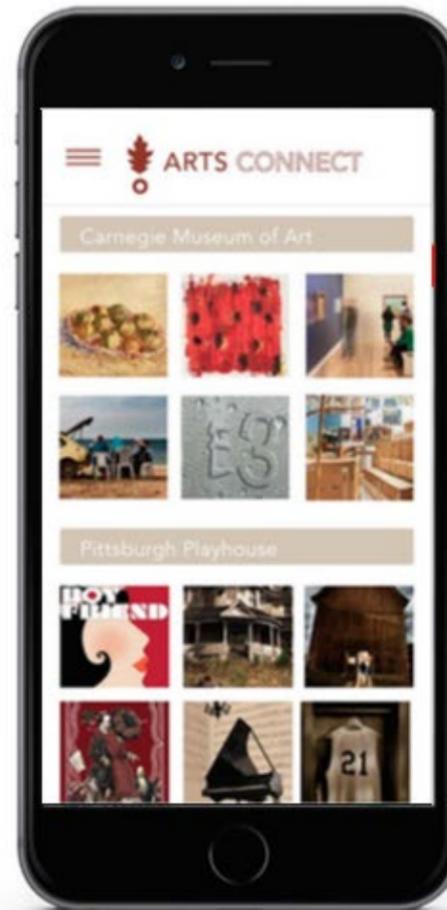
ARTS CONNECT is the digital counterpart of our artifact placed in Schenley Plaza. While the physical component serves to reel in interest the app allows users to access in depth information about events, hours and locations.



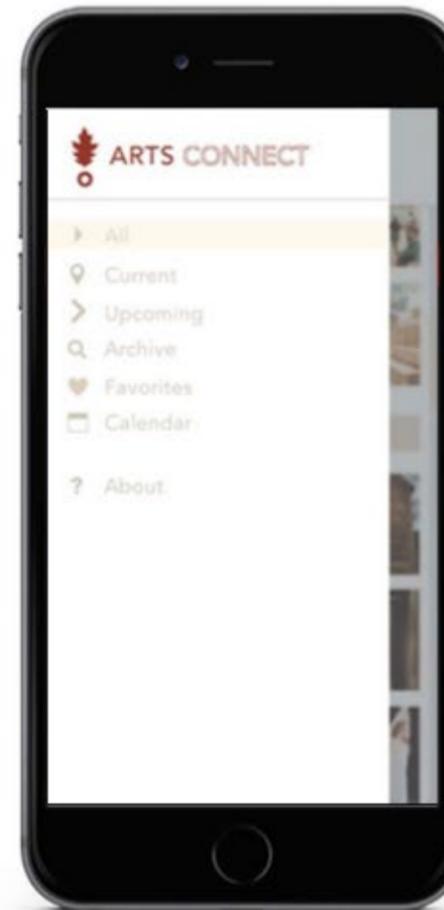
For the final iteration of the digital component, the colors were explored between white and cream. The colors were finalized and the elements that we wanted to feature were decided on. This evolution from beginning to this result established the ideas that our project was cohesive and would work to create the urge from students to explore the cutlural arts.



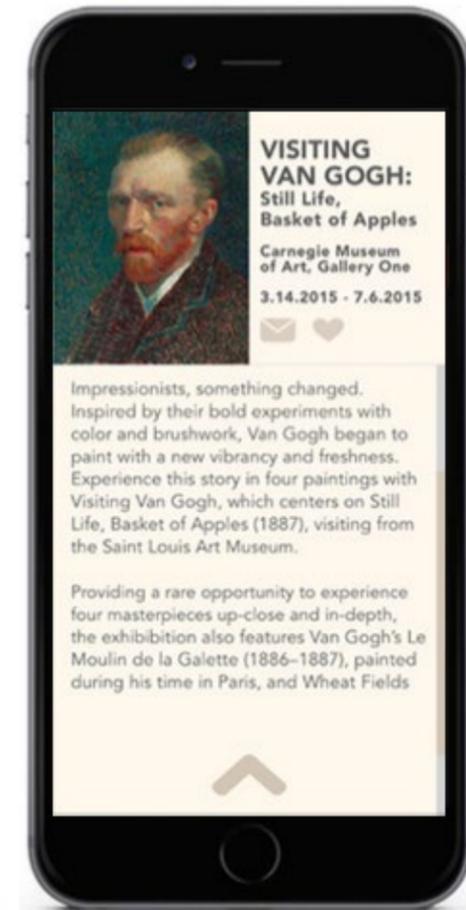
The About section appears at startup the first time the application is installed. This provides explanation on the goal of the ARTS CONNECT project in both its physical and digital form; the physical remains implic- it and minimal while elaboration is accessed through the app.



Once the user reaches the main page, they can browse events from all 7 venues in oakland. This screen contains a scrolling function, and users can tap on icons of events to show more information.



The main menu allows users to customize the home page or narrow down their display options. Under the "All" option, users can select specific venues they prefer. We used an oval graphic to implicitly recall imagery used in the physical artifact.



Each event contains information regarding context. Special events showcased in the physical artifact will also include descriptions linking the artifact to the event. For instance, Van Gogh's visiting collection is showcased in our physical artifact; and so, there is descriptions linking the artifact to Van Gogh's work.

Environments Project Process: Oakland

Final Thoughts + Summary



This project taught us how to effectively work as a team, communicate our ideas, and delegate our work. We enjoyed this project and how it allowed us to use what we've learned about products and communications to inform designing for an environment. In conclusion, our team feels that we were able to come together and design an effective physical and digital artifact for the neighborhood of Oakland.