



DESIGNING AN INTERACTIVE ART INSTALLATION

LIFE TICKS BY

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LIFE TICKS BY

Life moves pretty fast. If you don't stop and look around once in a while, you could miss it.

—Ferris Bueller
from Ferris Bueller's Day Off

When juggling the various activities of Olin, it is unavoidable to fall into a routine. It definitely makes our lives more manageable. But as we continue with our lives within routine, we slowly become numb to the subtle changes of our surroundings. By being stuck in the daily grind, we fail to enrich ourselves in realizing something new, sheltering ourselves from the unpredictable and unexpected.

Life Ticks By gives community members an opportunity to re-evaluate how they utilize their time throughout their daily lives. The art piece enables them to take a moment of reflection so that they take a break from routine. It encourages people to pause, take control, and become more aware of how obsessive regularity correlates to passively living. Ultimately, Life Ticks By allows people to manipulate their personal time, forcing them to realize that they need to stop and look around once in a while to gain control of their lives.

PROCESS OVERVIEW

1

Gather inspiration

2

Select a location

3

Develop a theme

4

Generate interactions

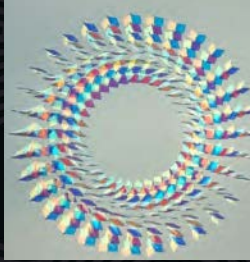
5

Explore symbolism

6

Refine final concept

GATHER INSPIRATION



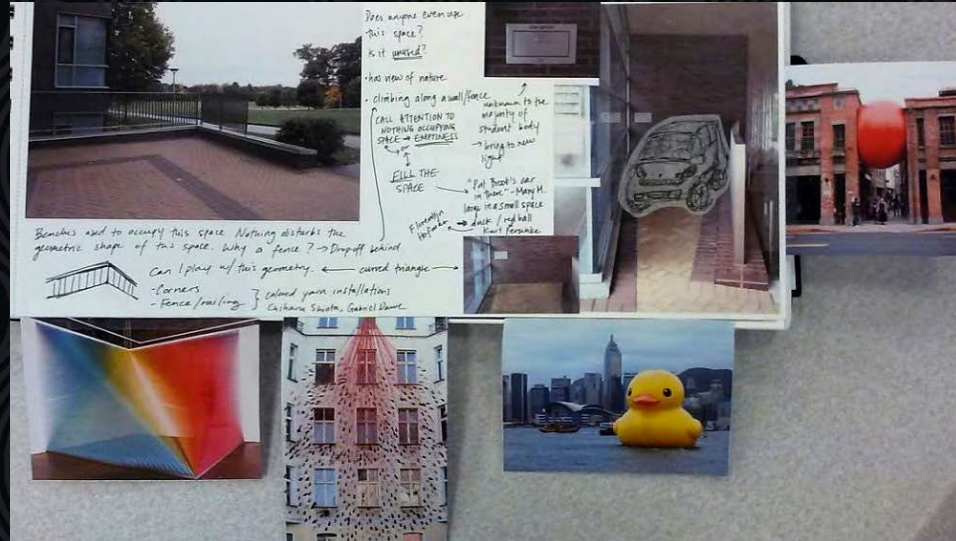
It's hard to start from a blank slate. Right from the beginning and throughout the process, I am constantly browsing books and sites that take me into the art world. When I look for inspiration, I look for the type or art or designs that strike something within me. I may not be able to decipher what exactly, but it leaves an aftertaste in my mind. Because I retain visual information better, I chose to create a pin board to collect all the things that inspire me to be creative.

Of all the images that I saved, the pieces that resonate with me are the ones that convey a sense of wonder and play. They are able to create a suspended moment in time that enables the audience to interact with the art piece – whether it is immersing someone into a space or enabling them to use their senses. What inspired me the most was the unexpected element of public art installations. The piece is exposed to the criticism and judgment of all types of people, and I can imagine that much thought was put onto how the purpose or message of the art can be properly conveyed to people. Oftentimes, the reaction of the audience is main goal of the piece.



SELECT A LOCATION

Because the art installation takes place at Olin College, several locations were surveyed and narrowed down based on many factors. The characteristic that all locations had in common was that each space is not widely used by the Olin community. They are often overlooked and would provide a large opportunity to change how people may interpret the space. In the sketchbook, I was able to annotate specific features of the individual spaces and sketch preliminary ideas.





factors for down selecting a location

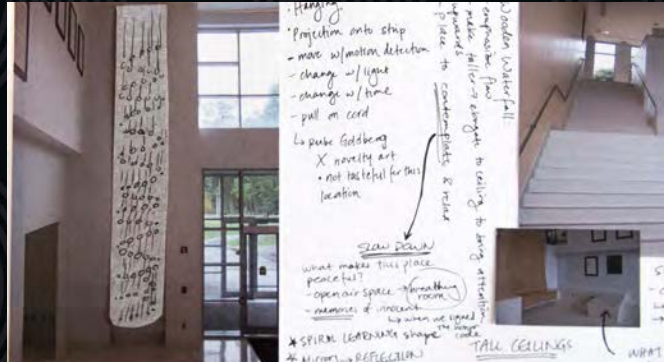
NOT OBTRUSIVE TO THE COLLEGE'S FUNCTION

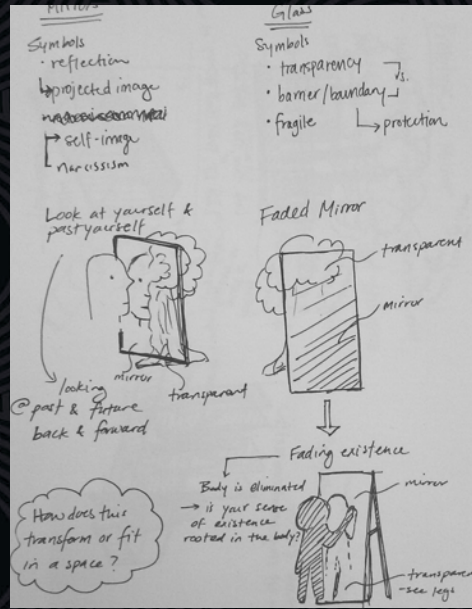
HIGH POTENTIAL FOR A VARIETY OF THEMES

CREATES A LASTING IMPRESSION

HIGH FOOT TRAFFIC

Originally, I selected the tall column alcove in the lower level of the Campus Center as a non-obtrusive location for an art installation. The atmosphere of this space suggests a sense of reflection. This is primarily because this location contains the very meaningful and nostalgic Honor Code documents, which were signed at the beginning of every Olin student's college career. Likewise, the unnatural silence of the very large space provides an area for contemplation. The architectural elements, such as the stone stair cases, tall ceilings, and the wooden waterfall, promote an environment for the community to envision the non-trivial.



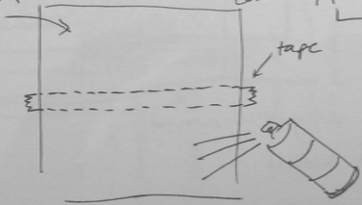


The location's characteristics inspired a mirror concept that literally and figuratively enables the audience to reflect. Inspired by a furniture piece called Fiction Mirror by Glas Italia, I wanted to place a similar material within the alcove. This would inspire passersby to look at the reflective surface and reflect upon their time at Olin College. However, the unexpected, faded transition to transparent glass will enable the person to simultaneously look forwards. In context of the location, the special mirror would allow community members to reflect upon the past while looking forward into the future. Unfortunately, I was not approved to use the space due to the high symbolic importance of the location. Therefore, I moved onto another location that has equal potential.

Prototype : Mirror

- not brightly reflective w/ krylon paint, but has a faded tint that still gives crisp reflections
- DO NOT USE EXPO MARKERS
→ alcohol removes the paint & causes streaks

How to prevent spray on top area?
Cover w/paper?



→ might cause a line, which is unfavorable for faded look.





My decision to choose this lobby space for the art installation was due to the fact that students often use this location as a transitioning area. Despite its high traffic, the space is rarely used for something meaningful, and is perceived as a place to walk through to get to a final destination. Acknowledging students' routine and habits, this location is simply within the common path that links point A to point B. This space holds promise in being the location where students can break routine and diverge from the path they normally take. I aim to not distract, but to enlighten my community of a new perspective that may come from taking chance.

DEVELOP A THEME



The characteristics of selected art works and locations were analyzed to determine correlations amongst themes. From analyzing several types of art installations, I was able to determine the themes that attract me and seem relevant to the Olin culture. Looking at these themes helped me widen the diversity of concepts within the chosen location.

themes

DISCOVERY OF THE UNEXPECTED

REFLECTION & CONTEMPLATION

MANIPULATION OF LIGHT

COMMUNITY GATHERING

TEXTURE OF MATERIALS

SIZE JUXTAPOSITION

PLAY & NOSTALGIA

COLORS



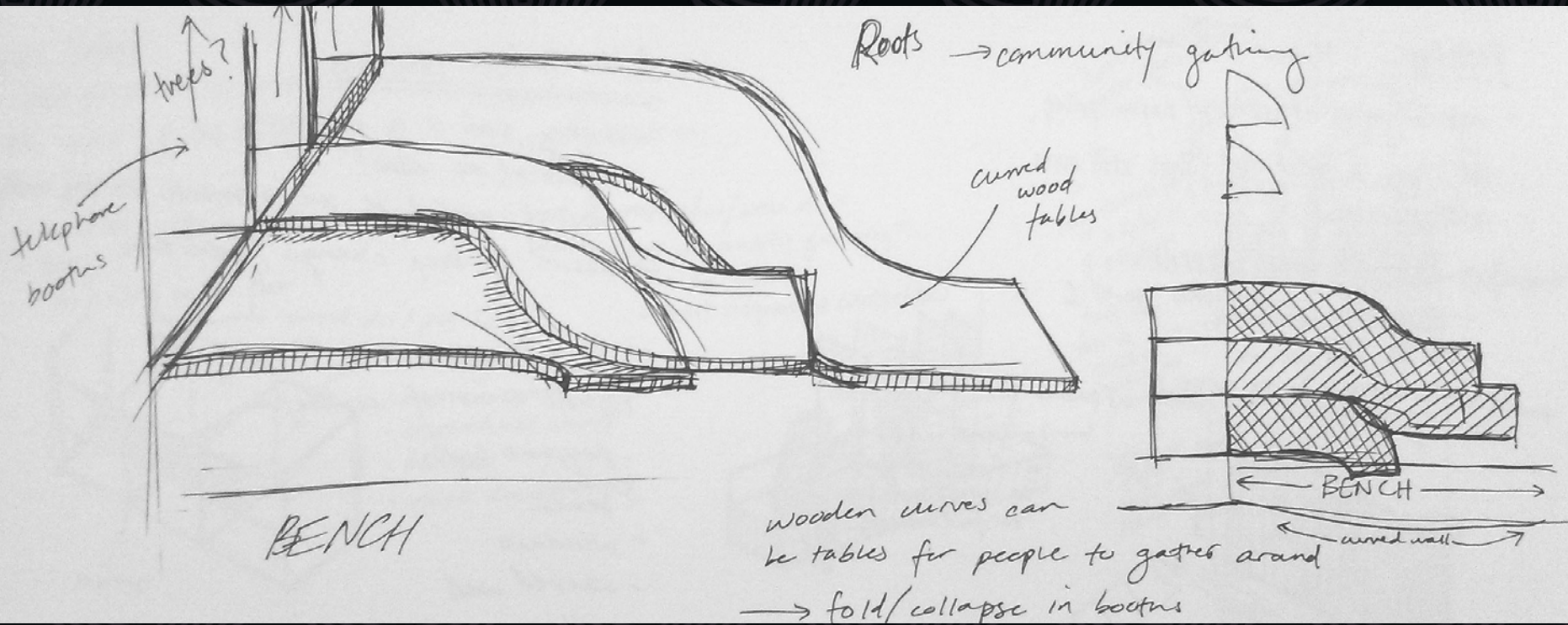
Early on, I was conflicted between wanting to create an installation that was awe-inspiring but also meaningful. Of all the art pieces selected, two main categories were the apparent favorites: art that induces playful, child-like behavior and art that sends a thought-provoking message of self-awareness. These two themes contrast greatly, and one theme tends to undermine the other should a concept combine elements of the two. I questioned how I was to make a meaningful statement while attracting a diverse community.

Because of presence of a tightly knit community at Olin, the chosen theme extends to reflecting upon one's existence within the community. The art piece will create a small moment that causes the user to perceive things differently. I want members of the community to be able to rally around my art piece, sharing each other's perceptions of that moment. The installation will empower community members with a newfound awareness and discovery of one's self.

GENERATE INTERACTIONS

What comes easily to me is the ability to make creative interactions for potential installations. The disadvantage of this thought process is that I often create awesome interactions that exist solely to be innovative and unique – they lack true meaning. Therefore, ideas that are interactive for the sake of being fun and attractive to a wider population does not align with my intent to make a worthwhile statement, of which can possibly make a difference in the community.

As I engrossed myself in the space, I began to realize that the lack of use and attention to the space may be a call to bring the community together through the installation. I did not want to be obtrusive nor disruptive of the quiet space – maintaining some level of privacy, but in the comfort of others. Several concepts explored methods for community members to be brought together in a more comfortable yet temporary gathering location. Other ideas were generated after observing the flow of traffic through the space, and I wanted to see how changing the flow would draw attention to the overlooked space.



Can you use architecture to draw attention in a certain direction?

Circular shape has infinite vantage points
→ no definite direction → eyes go up & around & down



Can we use these structures to disguise the ugly boxes?
- hooded / balcony / awnings / feeding
→ give more sense of privacy or enclosure

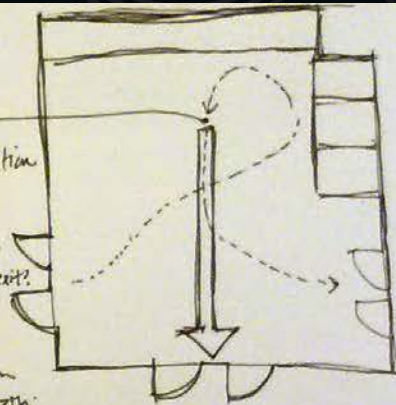
Geometric patterns play w/ light & cut-outs
→ swooping organic structure conveys movement with the eyes



Point of reflection / contemplation

Draw attention to the entrance/exit?

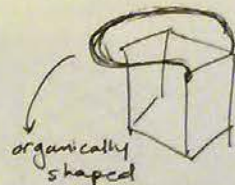
- Make a path to the ~~attention~~ main attraction
@ telephone booth



Draw attention towards the oval

→ What are they looking at?

- Different POV
- Different exit/path



← Painted w/ final direction

Take a moment. Here, grab a seat and relax.
Notice that pattern of light that appears
only at this time of day? Was that always
there? Or am I just not observant enough?

- (A) Notice the subtle changes in a repetitive location,
or
- (B) Notice/bring attention to a neglected space.

Are these the same?

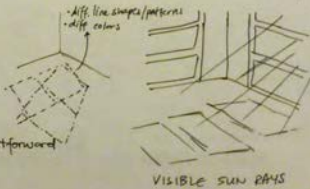
→ What are the differences?

- ① Flexibility in size and presence of the installation
— subtlety ~~can~~ can hinder/limit options in order
to present the surprise or discover factor
- ② Sense of Discovery
— need to make something that is not entirely straightforward
→ able to re-interpret everytime
— contemplation^(B) or reflection^(A)

Subtly draw attention
OR Force attention.

LIGHT

- create a light pattern w/ specific shapes & architecture
- Draw attention to day & night light patterns.
- Lines are outlined on floor



Despite the vast number of diverse and sometimes contradictory ideas, the theme of calling attention to the underutilized space resonated in all of the concepts. It is not my intention to make the space stand out, but to have the community realize that they have not noticed the space before the installation's existence. I question why people have become very unaware of things that are present in their daily lives. Just like the space, opportunities are often overlooked, and I wanted to give my peers a wakeup call by helping them become more aware of the subtle changes and beneficial risks that come in life. Following a similar message as the mirror concept, I decided to focus on how individuals of a community can reflect upon their actions and beliefs at Olin.

EXPLORE SYMBOLISM

It is a ubiquitous occurrence for all members of the Olin community, faculty and students alike, to feel the lack of time. With high expectations to succeed, individuals feel the need to overcommit and overload themselves with activities and commitments. I wanted to give the community a sense of time and the ability to think about how one's time was wisely or poorly spent.

hourglass

While exploring symbols of time, the hourglass became the most prominent and memorable. It implies not only time, but also flow. With magnetic sand, I thought I was able to control the flow of time – being able to pause and position the iron filings within the glass. In comparison to other symbols of time, the hourglass abstracts time. The time it measures is a start and finish. There are no numbers. I chose to explore magnetic hourglasses because, in comparison to normal sand, the iron filings are manipulated by some external force. This force can be interpreted both figuratively and literally. Unfortunately, using hourglasses was too logistically difficult for the final concept. Instead, I decided to use clocks as a more controllable medium.

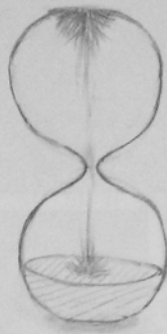


Magnetic Hourglass → Turn back time

Freeze time

Watch time pass

TOP MAGNET IS ACTIVE



SAND TRAVELS UP
INSTEAD OF DOWN

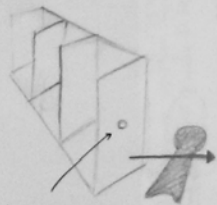
• dependent on the
direction of people
walking

↓ Down: people walk
forwards towards the
AC

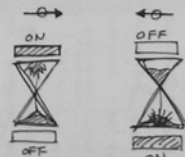
• always in a rush
• time is running
• race against time

↑ Up: people walk
towards the cafeteria

• time to take a break
• spend time w/others
• rush to get food



Put sensor on the
side of the booth to detect passersby



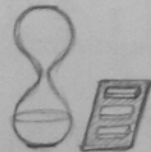
use electromagnets
to control direction of sand

Buttons vs. Sensor?

→ standing in front of
hourglass → can't control
motion

How do you freeze time?

→ Turn on both magnets.





bell alarm clock

NOSTALGIC, VINTAGE, RETRO

ALARM, WAKE UP, LOUD

PERSONABLE

ORNATE

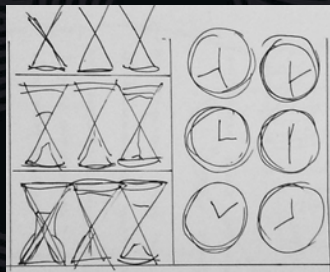
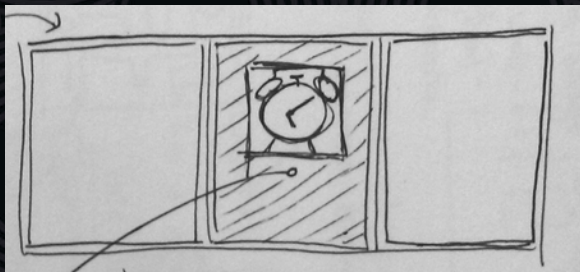
FLAT
GENERIC
MODERN
CLEAN, PLAIN
SIMPLE, MINIMALIST
circular wall clock



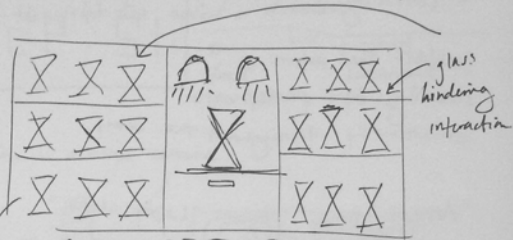
The bell alarm clock comes with preconceived implications. Using specifically an alarm clock also holds the expectation that the alarm will ring. Because the wall clock is very plain, the installation's message can be more effectively conveyed without conflicting ties to another message. I chose to use the alarm clock, despite its existing connotations, because it gives a more relatable feel to the installation. Due to the clocks representing individuals within a community, it is appropriate to give the clocks more character as to not dehumanize the relationship between time and daily living.

REFINE FINAL CONCEPT

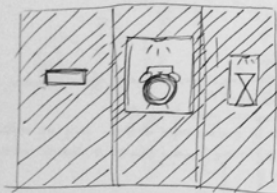
It was of utmost importance that the materials used in the installation had to include mirrors. The user cannot avoid looking at his face when observing the motion of the mirrored clock. When I look at mirrors, I can't help but think it's a portal. When I see myself, I first see the most noticeable features of my face, but then my mind begins to wander further. The physical image in front of me phases out of focus as I start to daydream. I return to relevant memories. I cringe while regretting that mistake. I crack a sly smile while rejoicing a success. I remember and reflect. By giving people the capability to make the clock run backwards, I gave them the opportunity to look at how much has changed. I hope for them to realize the monotonous pattern of routine. Lastly, I require them to see how routine, despite making life more manageable, ironically prevents people from actively living life. I want them to see how routine makes life tick by.



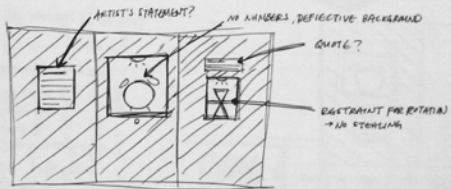
Small space w/in a space
 → portals in 3 boots (divided worlds)



→ represents diff people & their timelines
 - different tracks → fast, slow, stopped
 - a crowd of sheep
 = all moving @ the same rate
 ⇒ yars is on a diff. track



How does the hourglass & clock integrate w/ or w/out arrows? The symbols seem forward. Why do I have the hourglass?
 → used as a controller for backwards movement
 Cannot move sand backwards!
 → USED TO USE CLOCK!



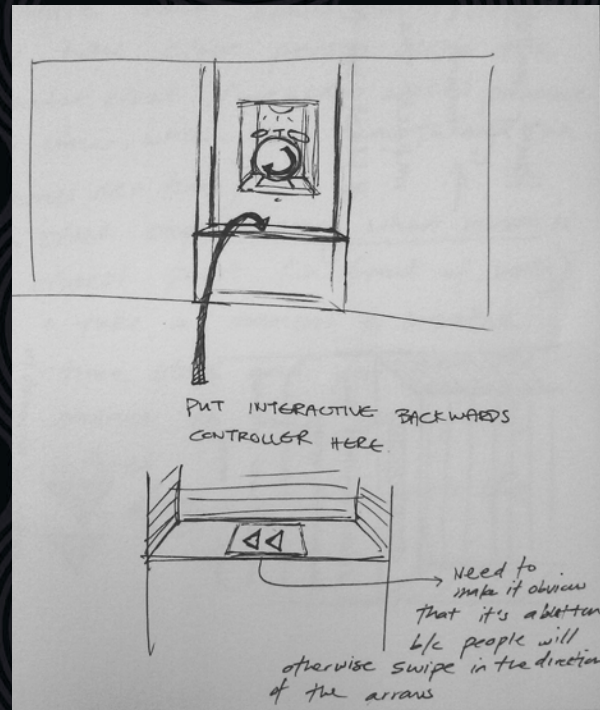
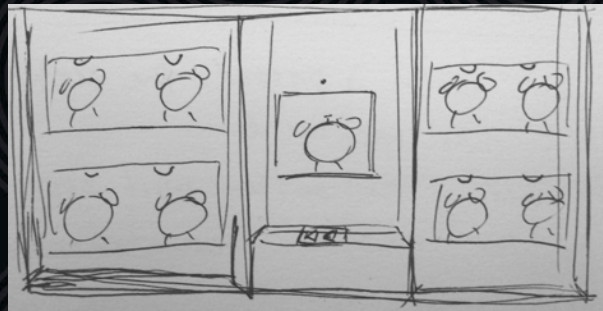
2 Types of Interaction:

- ① Proximity sensor - closer the user gets, the slower the clock (center) rotates until stopped
- ② Hourglass - reset time by turning the hourglass and starting the rotating motion of the clock (center) again.
 → makes time run backwards (overrides stopped time?)

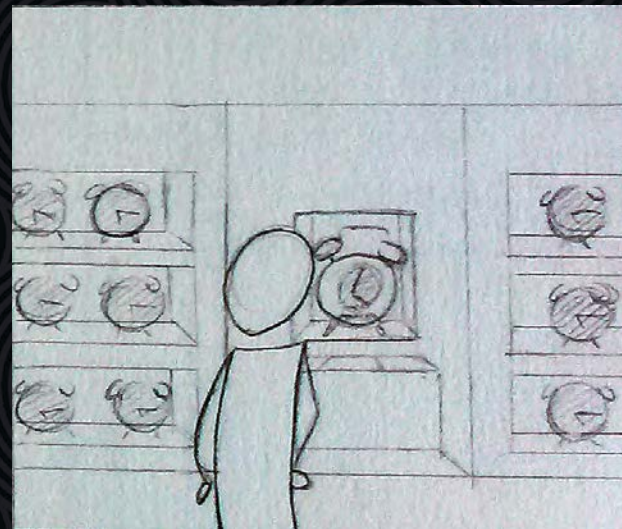
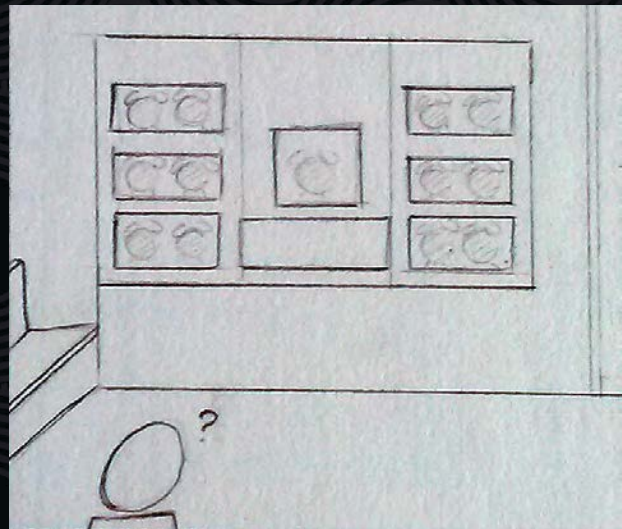
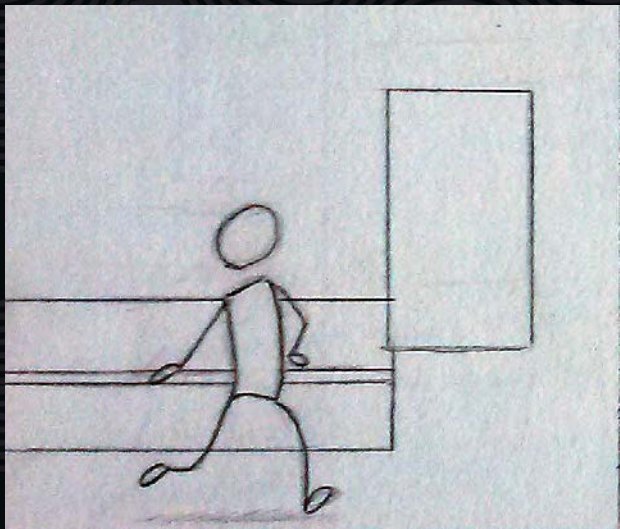
appearance

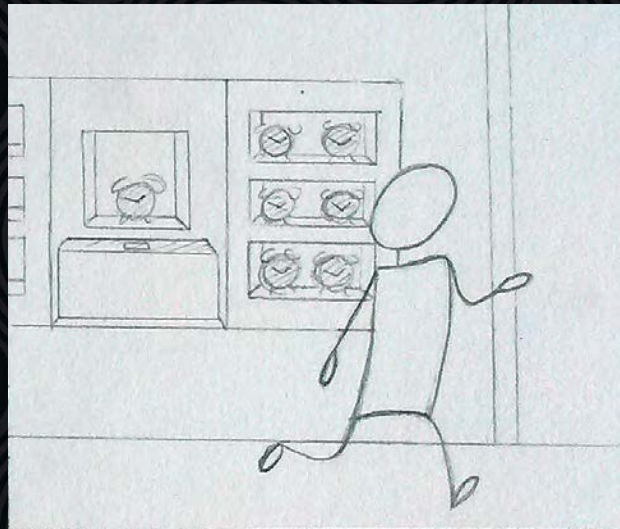
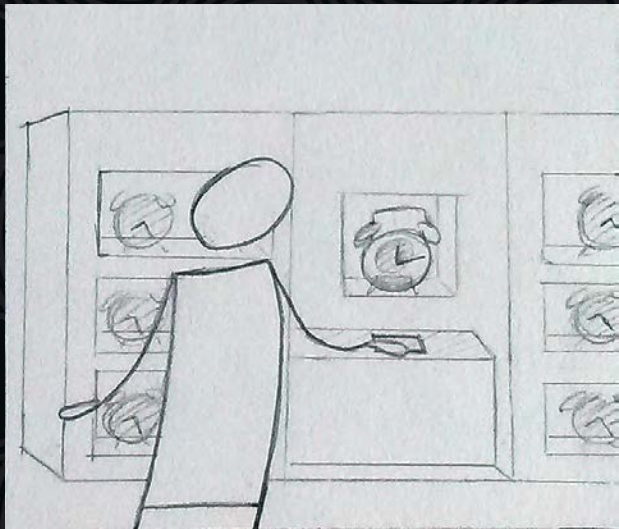
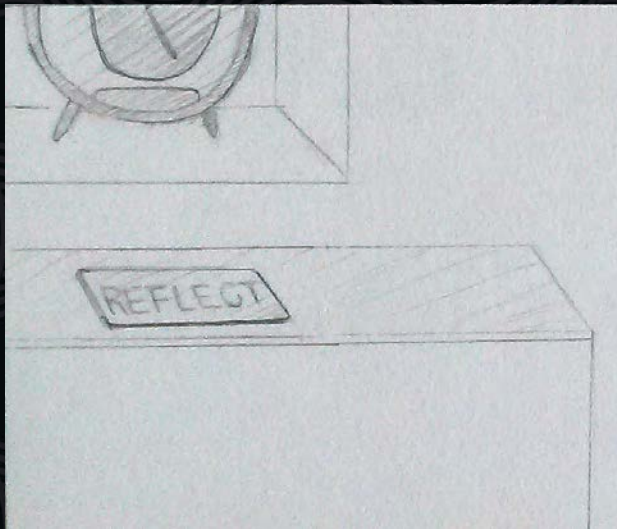
Chrome plated bell alarm clocks will be arranged and displayed in the payphone booths in the Campus Center side lobby. Each of the clocks will be numberless and have a simple set of hands (hour and minute). The clock face will be replaced with a mirror. The clocks are arranged in two to three rows on the side booths; meanwhile a single clock will be placed in a recessed shelf in the center booth. In front of the recessed section is a low shelf, which is the location of The REFLECT button. The button has a mirror-like finish and will sit flush with the rest of the mirrored shelf. Because the booths are currently open on the top face, a lid will be placed at the top so that all wiring and internal components are sealed and not exposed.

The appearance of the installation should not deter people from approaching it. Therefore, I do not desire the "glass case" look that conveys a museum feel. I want people to act upon their curiosities and touch the installation. Due to the framing and shelved structure of the art piece, it suggests a tone of significance and importance. The booth surface will be simple and contain minimal trimming. The color of the overall frame will most likely be black and matte. The texture of the material should convey quality, such as the smoothness of Corian, a stone-like surface often used to substitute for granite. Should I proceed with a wood finish, the wood must match the color and texture of the wooden bench nearby. Any raw materials used, such as plywood, will not be exposed.



interaction





interaction

In its passive state, all clocks rotate clockwise at an accelerated speed, representing time passing by as people go about their normal routines. The speeds at which the clocks spin convey the loss of control of one's time as time is constantly running.

As a person diverges from routine by approaching the center clock, the clock responds by slowing down. The slowing motion connotes the start of regaining control of one's time, whereas others continue about their routine - all the surrounding clocks continuing to tick by. The person chooses to take a moment to breathe, stopping their personal time and pausing one's routine. In the midst of infinitely moving clocks, having the isolated, center clock freeze gives the user ownership over his time.

Now that the person has a hold of his time, he can feel empowered over his life by further manipulating what they can do with the time in their lives. The REFLECT button gives the user the option to turn back time, encouraging him to contemplate how he has gotten to this stage in his life.

By pushing the mirrored button, the paused clock hands slowly turn backwards (counterclockwise), and overtime, it matches the speed of the other clocks. The release of the button stops the motion of the clock hands. This backwards motion is meant to represent the contemplation of the past; however the user should be able to, at any time, return to the present, exemplifying his influence of his own time. Further emphasizing the reflection aspect of the installation, the numberless clock face will be mirrored and placed at eye level; therefore, users have no choice but to look at their physical reflection, which stimulates them to think deeply into the matter.

Once the person has gotten what they wanted out of the art piece, he will walk away. Detecting the decreasing proximity of the person, the ceased clock gradually regains speed in the forward, clockwise direction. As the user returns to his routine, the clock joins the pace of the surrounding clocks - representing the reintegration into a community.

