PAUSE + PLAY
A DESIGN BUILD STUDIO
MASTER OF INTERIOR ARCHITECTURE
FALL 2017
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Children learn about the world through play, and play is inextricably linked to cultural context. Children reproduce and recreate their cultural environments within free play activities (Lancy, 1996), but increasingly, children’s opportunities for play no longer exist in proximity to culture. Many factors, including both parent’s engagement in the labor market, the rise of video game culture, the wide availability of highly structured toys, and parental safety concerns, have marginalized play in favor of less healthy, less creative activity (Gosso/Carvalho, 2013).

Pause + Play seeks to connect the dots between children and culture through the most engaging modality: play. ASU’s Master of Interior Architecture students have partnered with sixth graders from Porter Middle School to co-design a play environment that encourages play within cultural context. Through games, conversations, and hands on prototyping techniques, as well as parent and grandparent interviews on
their cultural connections to play, ASU and Porter students have designed an active and interactive environment, using poetry, traditional games, Arduino technology, and physical structures that encourage movement and creativity.

Pause + Play provides a playful, empowering atmosphere where children are active agents in their own cultural, as well as creative education.

References:


OUR CULTURE + PLAY

Members of the Fall 2017 Master of Interior Architecture Studio and where and how they played.

Joseph Daite
Walking along the river in the Philippines

Dalah Altassan
Sitting by the fire drinking tea in Saudi Arabia

Maryam Ali
Breathing the salty beach air while riding up the sand dunes in Qatar

Jessica Tsepal
Swam in the oceans and hiked the mountains of Hawaii

Jen Gryhel
Enjoys the Arizona sunset after a hike

Edy Robles
Eating seafood on the beach of Mexico

Milagros Zingoni
Drinking mate with friends in Argentina

Bradley Cantin
Explored the Desert of Arizona looking for rocks and snakes

Courtney Davis
Grew up playing by the creek in Virginia

Joseph Date
Walking along the river in the Philippines

Jessica Tsepal
Swam in the oceans and hiked the mountains of Hawaii

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Enjoys the Arizona sunset after a hike

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Grew up playing by the creek in Virginia

Joseph Date
Walking along the river in the Philippines
Semester Begins - Project Introduction
Design Concept Participation Design Studio Organization
Precedent Case Study

Visit Porter Elementary Collaboration experience
Design Concept + Participation Design
Review - Experimental Model Schematic Design + Design Activism

Schematic Design Drawings, Models, Photomontages, and Collages.
ASU Students from The School of Music Collaboration
Finalize Prototype Design

Design Development - Construct Full Scale Details/ Materials/ Drawing/ etc.
Skype with Kids from Porter Elementary to Show Progress

Begin Fabrication in Shop

Final Documentation: CD's, Book, Website, etc.
Begin Building Prototype
Final Review at the Idea Museum with Reviewers and Porter Elementary

Final Adjustments To Fabrication
Transport Prototype to the Site - 2 Day Setup
Festival Begins November 17th-18th

PAUSE + PLAY TIMELINE
The Project
The Main Street Prototyping Festival, a free event, will feature 20 temporary prototypes (created by artists, architects, designers, students, makers, urban planners and others) that activate public space and engage the community toward enhancing connectivity and vibrancy in downtown Mesa. Prototypes include concepts for gathering places, virtual reality experiences, structures that offer space for interaction, performances, places to play and share in art making, and ways for passersby to offer feedback about their community.

Mesa Arts Center, Neighborhood Development Corp. (NEDCO), Local Initiatives Support Corporation Phoenix (LISC) and Downtown Mesa Association (DMA) are collaborating to engage creative minds and the community in testing ideas that respond to dreams, needs and desires of citizens and visitors. These prototypes seek to answer the question, How does a city design itself, and more importantly, what does downtown Mesa want and need?

Associate Professor Milagros Zingoni applied for a grant from the Festival, making our studio the first funded design studio at ASU. Our studio’s goal was to explore the relationship between design and build, academia and community, theory and practice. In the process of making an atmospheres for children, we set out to explore play in the context of culture and tradition, and to learn by making and playing together.

In collaboration with youth from the City of Mesa, we created a workshop to explore culture through the eyes of children as the first phase of the design process. Designing with, rather than designing for, a community not only has a greater impact in that the installation belongs to the community and reflects their values and desires. Pause + Play offers the opportunity for social practice and collective action between children from the City of Mesa and MIA students in the ideation process of the installation.
Located on the South side of Main Street in an alley nicknamed “The Sliver Lot,” Pause + Play will be the only prototype that is not in the pedestrian’s right of way. This will allow festival goers to experience Pause + Play slightly out of context with the rest of the festival. The lot is between a pawn shop and a smoke shop, and occasionally hosts an outdoor movie night on a painted tv screen. With the Main Street Light rail station close by, and several active local businesses, this part of Main Street has good foot traffic, and the atmosphere of the festival will increase it. This lot also connects two of the more distant prototype sites with the rest of the festival, increasing the likelihood that festival goers will walk by more than once.
Culture + Play
We spent the first few weeks of studio defining culture for ourselves. What is Culture? What does it include? How does it manifest in our lives? We created collages, wrote personal definitions, and reflected through poetry on the ways in which culture connects and defines us.
Where I Come from...
I come from a family that values love and unity.
A family that is built on diversity.
A mother that has Canadian blood flowing through her veins.
A father that only knows of his artificial background, but not the truth.
For my dad, my personal hero,
He does not wear a cape,
or have super powers to others,
but to me, his heart has powers,
to me, he is my hero.
For my mom, a kindred spirit,
A woman that prides herself on the success of her kids,
She helps me to succeed even when it wasn’t an option, she
Does all that she can,
Raising a young boy into a man.

Culture and play,
By my own way,
Through my imagination,
Across generations,
It was our home way,
Playing and having fun,
For all mankind,
East to west,
It’s all the same

The warmth,
and Spice that hits the lips.
The silky robes that speak within the humidity which meets my hair.
It cannot compare to how the seawater brings it back naturally.
Textured
free
nomadic.
I am nothing but a grain of sand with other grains that are all home
Like me.
Walking towards the sun
Home.

Culture is the place where we live, which is unlike any other, in the history of time and space and the plants that grow here, and soil, and what it’s made of, and how much sun and rain we get

Culture is our language, and the way we change it, just a little so that we sound like no one else and so we can tell if you’re not from here

Culture is the songs we sing while we work the songs we sing to the babies the songs we sing after one too many

Culture is what we cooked and how we cooked it and what we ate and where we ate it and at what time and on what day and the words we said before we ate it and the conversations we had after the meal was over

Culture is the clothing we make, and like, and wear and the colors we paint our houses and the murals and their subjects and the statues we put up in the middle of our places for everyone to see

Culture is how we make our money and how early or late we rise in the morning to make it and what our fathers do and what our mothers do

Culture is who lives in our homes and how many generations and whether or not you move out first or get married first

Culture is the place that we go to pray our celebrations and our rituals

Culture is who lives here, and how.
"Creativity is contagious, pass it on"

Working with Porter School

Meryem All here, this week we focused on the power of brainstorming towards the theme of our prototype - Culture + Play. One of the exercises we are having the 6th graders from Porter Elementary School take part in is creating a poem on culture; what does culture mean to you? Each student will interpret what culture means to them, and in turn, we, the graduate students, did the same exercise. In addition to having the students make a poem on culture, we also are asking them to create a collage that embodies their poem - a collage that reflects culture and what it means to them. In addition to us creating a poem, we also created a collage that reflected our poem.

The aim of this exercise is to not only see and interpret what culture means to everyone, but to gather ideas on what our ‘skins’ could be for this prototype - finding ways on what materials we can use, and how to use such material. Perhaps we can literally take the poems of the children and display them? Maybe we can use their collage in a way, or the colors of their collages? There really is an endless way of gathering such material.

This exercise is also to appreciate each other, love one another, and respect all. There is no wrong way of doing this exercise, but it is an exercise that should be fun and awakening to oneself. We will keep you all updated on what our findings are from these exercises and how we end up being inspired for our skins! Thank you, Meryem.
03 Participatory Collaboration
The Masters of Interior Architecture Studio is diverse, but none of us is from Mesa, Arizona, the site of the prototyping festival. It was essential to us to collaborate with students living in Mesa, and get to know the culture of their community, as well as talk with them about ways in which they play.
Our collaboration with Porter Elementary School was mutually beneficial. Porter participates in the AVID program (Advancement Via Individual Determination), a component of the college readiness system that aims to close the achievement gap by preparing all students for college readiness and success in society.

We connected with Amber Amaya, one of the 6th grade teachers at Porter, and she was instrumental in helping us get the whole 6th grade involved in the project. Her commitment to the project made it possible for us to engage the students in a meaningful partnership.
PORTER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DEMOGRAPHICS

- Hispanic: 46%
- White: 40%
- Black: 7%
- American/Indian: 3%
- Asian: 2%
- Two or more races: 2%
- Hawaiian/Native Pacific Islander: <1%

62% Students from Low-Income Families
Heads Up, Heads Down

Players stand in a circle with their heads down. A caller calls, “Heads up!” Players raise their heads and look directly across the circle at another player. If that player is looking back at them, they are both out. They step back and the circle tightens up. The caller calls, “heads down. Heads up!” The play repeats until all but the last person is out.

Cover the Space

Players walk around the room, filling the space evenly. When the caller calls freeze, players silently group themselves by an aforementioned category. Categories might be what they are wearing on the top half of their bodies, what they are wearing on their feet, or the color of their eyes. When the groups have formed, the caller points to the group and all members shout what the group is about, for example, “Blue sneakers!” or “Tank tops!”

The game leads easily into conversations about peer groups, culture, and perspectives.

Thumb Grab

Players stand in a circle. Each holds their right thumb up, and then takes their left palm and places it over the player to their left’s raised thumb. On the count of three, players try to grab their neighbors thumb without being grabbed themselves.
We asked the 6th graders to interview their parents and grandparents on how they used to play when growing up. This activity not only allowed the students to conduct their own research, but it encouraged them to imagine what play was like without the access to technology that they have now. By reading each other’s interviews, they could also examine how culture influenced their parents and grandparents’ play.

STUDENT-LED INTERVIEWS

We asked the 6th graders to interview their parents and grandparents on how they used to play when growing up. This activity not only allowed the students to conduct their own research, but it encouraged them to imagine what play was like without the access to technology that they have now. By reading each other’s interviews, they could also examine how culture influenced their parents and grandparents’ play.
Finally we handed out paper, scissors and tape and the students designed their own ideal play spaces. They created imaginative and fantastical structures, while we helped them understand scale and spatial relationships as they worked, and then had them describe their structures in writing. They were energized by the process, and couldn’t wait to tell us about their creations.

We collected them and took them back to the studio for inspiration and analysis.
We brought the student-created models back to the studio for further study. We used the descriptions of their play structures to hone in on what their ideal play experience would involve. While we couldn’t address all of their desires due to liability concerns, we were able to pull out several of their ideas to inform the content of the installation. Climb, Jump, Inhabit, Art Wall, and Circle were all key components in the final installation.
STUDENT CULTURE COLLAGES

From our discussion in the workshop, students created illustrated culture poems synthesizing their thoughts and sent them over to us.

We applied content analysis to the work and created the graph below. We began to see these works as patches in a quilt, an idea that had emerged in some of our early explorations. We wanted to convey that these pieces were greater than the sum of their parts. Our concept for the canopy began to take shape out of these conversations.
It was important to us keep the Porter students invested in our design process. We held Skype sessions with the 6th graders to show them our entire design process as it unfolded. After our final Skype session they sent us these words of encouragement to keep our motivation high - and it certainly did just that.

**VIRTUAL PARTICIPATION**

Words of Encouragement

- "I hope it will be a great playground that you are making for the public?" — Amelia
- "You are doing a great job! I hope there are no problems?" — Adrian
- "The building looks fantastic so far! Keep up the good work! I love all the designs and great ideas that are incorporated." — Alymne
- "So far, I think it is very excellent and very creative!" — Kaydance
- "I will be visiting when it is done." — Sierra
- "It looks great! You are doing good!" — Aadan
- "That is so cool how you guys just asked 6th graders for ideas and the structure models, and that you just to build off of that?" — Angelina
- "I like how you guys all have a job and an electrician guy." — Calvin
- "I really like your progress that you are making every day!" — Rilee
- "I think you can make this! So stay determined and you'll be able to finish it!" — Eva
EARLY ITERATIONS

For practicality and fabrication purposes, the design concept evolved around a “skeleton + skin”, the skeleton being the structure, and the skin being a material that overlays the structure and allows content to be displayed. We went back and forth on whether or not the space should be enclosed and inhabitable, or a series of planes or panels one could journey through. We were almost split down the middle on that decision, but went with an open exploratory space. Interestingly, our final design ended up creating both types of experiences, after all.
Immersion space

Another way of gathering data from the students was by asking them to interview their parents and grandparents on how they used to play when growing up. The stories were genuine, fun, heartfelt, and truly a touch of nostalgia that we were hoping for. From this exercise this is where the ‘Immersion Space’ was born. We wanted to create a space that was intimate with visual and audio stories of the parents and grandparents assignment, a place where one could escape to and reminisce on.

Bench

Our first true attempt at gathering information was handing all the 6th graders pieces of cardstock and asking them to create something out of them - to create something that they would like to play with/on. It became clear that the 6th graders of Porter were looking for something that was climbable. From that idea, that is where the ‘Big Bench’ was born. Because most of these children had the perception that ‘playing’ was around the notion of video games, using this cardstock exercise brought back their imagination - rediscovering play. The big bench does exactly that, it is a discovery of play because once it is being touched and climbed on it creates music from the moyees that the ASU music students installed within.

Skin

Placed under the canopy/skin are scattered vinyl cut words in different languages. Another assignment that involved the children is where we asked them to create a poem on culture. With these poems we did a word analysis on the most popular used words on how they described culture. These poems also included drawings on culture, which most of them included flags of their heritage. Using all the flags they drew, in addition to our nationalities, we translated the popular word analysis into those languages, thus those words were placed under the whole skin/canopy. Inspired by the song, The Sky is Our Neighborhood, the canopy illustrates the way that many pieces can come together to create a beautiful whole.

Triangle Seats

Playable/Modular seating with branding colors.

Structure

The structure is what helps us keep everything together, such as events like this, The Mesa Prototype Festival, that support the fabric of the community.
We started with a loose sketchy playscape inspired by nature and the idea of children playing outdoors. The skin, or canopy, would carry the data and concepts of culture gathered from the students, and the playable area would also incorporate stories, like a monument, that could be read and explored up close, but carried the texture and mass of thousands of words when viewed from far away.

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INCORPORATING CONTENT

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MY MOM WOULD JUST GO TO THE FIELD AND PLAY WITH HER SISTER OR SHE WOULD GO TO WHERE THERE WAS TREES AND A LITTLE HOUSE AND MY DAD WOULD JUST PLAY WITH MARBLES OR HE WOULD PLAY MEXICAN GAMES WITH STICKS.

MY DAD PLAYED WITH COWS AT THE RANCH AND WOULD PLAY JUMP ROPE AT THE FARM. MY MOM GRAND PARENTS DID NOT REALLY PLAY ANIMALS EVEN MY DAD HAD CHORES WITH ANIMALS.

MY GRANDPARENTS PLAYED KICK THE CAN. THEY SAID ON A BAD DAY YOU WOULD GET YOUR FOOT STUCK AND WHEN YOU PULLED IT OF IT WOULD RIP THE SKIN OFF YOUR FOOT.

NAVADO SHOE GAME (PLAYED ONLY IN WINTER SEASON). WHEN MY GRANDPA WAS YOUNG HE USE TO PLAY A GAME CALLED NAVADO SHOE GAME IN THE HOGAN WITH FAMILY MEMBERS. THE GAME INVOLVED MOCCASINS, A ROCK, A STICK, AND DIRT. THERE WAS TWO TEAMS AND 4-6 PLAYERS ON EACH TEAM. THE GAME WAS THAT THE MOCCASINS (4) HAD TO BE DUG INTO THE DIRT. HALFWAY, THEN THEY WOULD HIDE THE ROCK. INSIDE ONE OF THE MOCCASINS FOR THE TEAM TO TRY AND FIGURE OUT WHERE THE ROCK WAS BY TAPPING ON THE DIRT AND MOCCASIN WITH THE STICK AND SAY IN NAVADO - ITS IN HERE OR ITS NOT IN HERE. IF THE TEAM FOUND THE ROCK THEY WOULD GET A POINT. IF THEY GUESS THE ROCK IN ONE OF THE MOCCASINS BUT WASTN'T THERE THEY WOULDN'T GET A POINT. THIS IS THE NAVADO SHOE GAME MY GRANDPA PLAYED WHICH HE PASSED DOWN TO MY MOM TO PLAY WITH HER SIBLINGS AND FAMILY. I LOOK FORWARD TO PLAY THIS GAME ITS ONLY PLAYED DURING WINTER SEASON.

MY GRANDPA PLAYED WITH ANIMALS BONES AFTER HIS MOM MADE MENUDO. MY DAD PLAYED WITH MARBLES, DIRT, STICKS, AND HIS BIKE. MY MOM PLAYED WITH TOY CARS LIKE HOT WHEELS.
MATERIAL EXPLORATION

An exploration of recycled cardboard tubing as both structural support and play-able surface.
MATERIAL EXPLORATION

The canopy design underwent a series of evolutions through the prototyping process. Stitching was initially introduced within the design, having various cords representing playfulness. This method did not give us the structure we needed. Screws were introduced to provide a more permanent option.
Interactive Technology
A touchboard is the hardware that works with the Arduino IE platform, which is an open-source software that is flexible and easy-to-use. It uses code transferred from a computer on the physical board itself that includes instructions for what the board is supposed to do.

It is intended for artists, designers, hobbyists, and anyone interested in creating interactive objects or environments whether using lights, audio or both. We used it in the floor of the immersion space to activate the grandparent stories the students at Porter shared with us.

The wires from the board connect to metal plates that when stepped on activate the sound programmed into the board. It took a few tries to get the right level of sensitivity. We ended up using aluminum foil to increase the sensitivity to the touch board.

WHAT IS A TOUCHBOARD?
Our collaboration with the students from ASU’s School of Music resulted in an interactive, playable bench. A device called a Mogee was placed inside the top portion and an access panel was screwed in place. When stomped on, tapped on with mallets or knocked on, the bench makes melodic notes. The goal was to create an element of surprise and discovery within what seemed to be an ordinary playscape.
Our collaboration with the students from ASU’s School of Music resulted in an interactive, playable bench. A device called a Mogee was placed inside the top portion and an access panel was screwed in place. When stomped on, tapped on with mallets or knocked on, the bench makes melodic notes. The goal was to create an element of surprise and discovery within what seemed to be an ordinary playscape.
Fabrication
The Festival
My grandparents played kick the can. They said on a bad day you would get your head stuck and when you pulled it off it would stand up and hit you.
The Future
We are honored and excited to report that PAUSE + PLAY will be taking residence in downtown Mesa’s IDEA museum, where it will be climbed on, sound activated, and graced with the stomping feet of hundreds of kids each week.

We can’t think of a better place for it.
I learned that one can be making a greater impact than originally intended learning outcomes.
-Milagros

I will never design a piece again without thinking through the joinery from a construction standpoint.
-Courtney

Design-build changes lives!
-Edy

I learned how to work in a group with people from another culture, and that allowed me to grow.
-Dalal

There's always room to incorporate new technology in design, and I really enjoyed that.
-Joey

The importance of collaboration and the benefits of a team with a diverse skill set.
-Jess

This project has taught me the importance of designing WITH a community, rather than FOR a community.
-Brad

It's amazing when you can actually play on your project!
-Jen

This studio has taught me to allow events to change me, to be willing to grow.
-Maryam
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Mesa Center for the Arts - The Main Street Prototyping Festival

Airpark Signs & Graphics
Gretchen Wilde + Sean Gavigan
ASU Maker Space

Brian Marshall - “Sliver Lot” owner
Ryan McDermott

The ASU Design Shop
Patrick Plehn + Jesus Orozco + Mark Fromeyer + Benjamin Bednarz

Ed's Custom Welding

Lightvox Studio- Karin Santiago

Fuzion Printing LLC

Porter Elementary School
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