THIS WEEK IN

Hello from flux!

We are four Entertainment Technology students from Carnegie Mellon working on a pitch project. Throughout the semester we want to explore the question, "Can a space communicate a story about the people who have been through it?" The first half of the semester will consist of designing and prototyping ambient and tactile interactive experiences. The second half of the semester will be expanding two of the prototypes, fabricating them into full-scale installations, and polishing them since they will live within the ETC building itself. Each installation will absorb information about the space and foster a personal connection between the visitor and others who have and will experience it. We can't wait to get started!

We're excited to dig into our prototypes, and we plan to build four prototypes by halfway through the semester. Then, we will spend the second half fabricating and installing two polished installations. The first idea we plan to pursue, codenamed "Scales," collects ambient data about the intensity of activity in a space such as sound volume or movement and displays this information as light of different colors and brightness. The second idea, codenamed "Jars," is a message in a bottle. When people speak into it, the jar glows from the inside as if the message is trapped and trying to break free. The next person to open it will release the message and hear what the person before wanted to say.
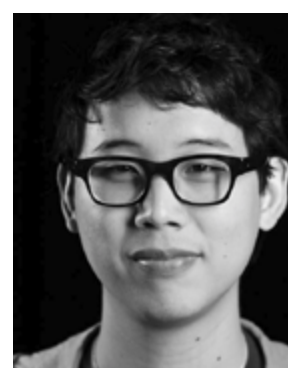
Throughout the week we've been focused on solidifying our team identity, refining our direction, and even building our first prototype. Anisha created our logo and a draft of our half-sheet, and has been working with Yotam to refine the project description - quite an early start! Jason dived right into the Arduino and started to prototype our Scales idea. Elwin has been researching our technical concept, looking into various ways to process information such as audio and how to meet our power requirements.

As a team we've explored different form factors for our scales idea, from an array to more circular, flower design. We also discussed what type of input variables we would measure and what kind of space requirements different designs would need. We discussed how the traffic of a space would influence the installation and even considered adapting the idea to be a meeting table. Throughout the week we also toured the building, discussing potential spaces so we could propose our installations for specific locations.

Meet the Team

Anisha brings her background in architecture and fabrication to seamlessly integrate our installations into the design of an existing space.

Jason brings his background in electrical engineering to expand our technological limitations and build something people would want to interact with.

Elwin brings his background in industrial design to encourage people to think differently about their social context and interactions.

Yotam brings his background in psychology to engage people not only with the installation but with each other.

Current Challenge

While this is our pitch, our project is heavily vested in the ETC. It is just as much their project as it is our project since we intend for them to live on in the building after we've left. We also recognize the faculty and staff will be maintaining what we build, so maintenance considerations are also on our minds. We plan to put together a proposal to discuss each space in the building and highlight what kinds of prototypes we feel would be appropriate in each space.

Looking Forward

We have given ourselves two weeks for each prototype, so next week is our final week on the Scales idea. We really want to nail down a form factor, and explore what different colors could represent on the display. The plan for next week is to produce a miniature example of the Scales installation so we can illustrate our idea in a clear and understandable way.