

TEEN ART PARK



This publication is dedicated to the youth of Pasadena for whom the Teen Art Park project is envisioned, in celebration of their efforts to make our community more creative and resilient.

Designmatters and the entire Teen Art Park team would like to thank the Surdna and Ayrshire Foundations, whose generosity and commitment made this project possible.

Teen Art Park: A Place for Artistic Expression
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CHAMPIONING A CREATIVE AND SOCIALLY SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY MARIANA AMATULLO

Vice President, Designmatters at Art Center

HOW DO THESE PIECES MAKE YOU FEEL?

The pieces look great, they make me want to keep painting.

WHAT IS THE FIRST THING THAT COMES TO MIND WHEN YOU VIEW THESE PIECES OF ART?

That there are others like me.

WHAT ABOUT THEM DO YOU LIKE BEST?

Creativity.

WHAT WOULD YOU CHANGE?

I would make more.

Anonymous Teen response from a survey with end-users of the Teen Art Park installations, conducted by Flintridge Center staff at Pasadena's ArtNight on October 14, 2011.

Today, there is widespread understanding among policymakers, community leaders, designers and educators that creating public spaces that build flourishing, inclusive communities and promote a sense of belonging, local identity and social networks is a difficult undertaking. Imagining such spaces that target a teen demographic not usually served by any planning or creative process becomes even more of a challenge.

The Teen Art Park project addresses that challenge head on. A community-driven vision for a dynamic public venue with innovative infrastructure and arts programming benefiting underserved populations of teens in the cities of Pasadena and Altadena, it puts forward a compelling case study. Notions of wellbeing and quality of life, as well as emerging issues concerning participation, needs and social capital among a diversity

of stakeholders may well be “soft” indicators of the resiliency and creativity of our built environment, but they are also increasingly recognized as key determinants of cohesive and socially sustainable communities. These are the vibrant communities we all strive to live and work in, as well as to call home: ones in which the design of the physical realm supports social and cultural life, systems for civic engagement and space for all people to evolve and thrive.

What might be new approaches to designing places that can shape the aspirations and opportunities of teens from seriously disadvantaged backgrounds? How might one envision safe spaces for creative expression that these teens can claim for themselves? These interrelated questions provided a critical point of departure for the participatory design research and the proposals presented in this publication. The outcomes of two Designmatters studios, hosted by the Environmental Design Department at Art Center and spanning an eight-month period in 2011, they represent an in-progress framework that is intended to serve as a catalyst for practical action and inspiration, as the next phase of community planning for the Teen Art Park initiative gets underway and takes hold in our community.

**WHAT MIGHT BE NEW
APPROACHES TO
DESIGNING PLACES
THAT CAN SHAPE
THE ASPIRATIONS AND
OPPORTUNITIES
OF TEENS FROM SERIOUSLY
DISADVANTAGED BACKGROUNDS?**

At the core of every Designmatters at Art Center educational project collaboration is the fundamental belief that good design brings value to society—with the potential of especially transformative impact in the context of “wicked” problems and ingrained social inequities. For the design teams that contributed to the Teen Art Park initiative, this was a unique opportunity: an immersive context for co-design and learning enriched by the multiplicity of perspectives and life experiences that the participating teens in the studios imparted.

That opportunity was facilitated by our principal project partners—Flintridge Center, The Armory Center for the Arts, and Learning Works—and we salute their exemplary efforts to mobilize creative resources and effectively engage in social change. Their relentless commitment to serve some of the most vulnerable and promising youth in our community will continue to be of great inspiration—and undoubtedly be the vital impetus that continues confidently driving the Teen Art Park initiative forward.



RESEARCH.





BUILDING THE COMMUNITY THROUGH CREATIVITY

BILL BOGAARD

Mayor of Pasadena

It's fair to ask what this Teen Art Park project is all about. Happily, its significance is coming into focus.

When students contemplate their future, they ask themselves, "Can I do that?"—referring to lots of different things. For most young people today, without experience and without help, getting an answer to this question can be daunting. This is true for Pasadena's youth.

The Teen Art Park project gives students the boost to take that first step. All of us learn what we can do by doing, and then checking the results. Even a modest or a messy result is a great step forward from not having tried at all. After that, it's easier to make the next try.

The goal of this project—and it seems to be working—is to tap into the creative strength of students and their commitment to make the world a better place. Their experience tells them they can do it! The fit with Pasadena is perfect, since we are a creative city that seeks to enrich the community by reinventing urban spaces.

Congratulations and gratitude to all the stakeholders, including Flintridge Center, Armory Center for the Arts, and Learning Works. Once again, these organizations and others are stepping forward to serve and to save young people, providing the setting for youth to create art, to play and to come together in a stimulating and safe environment.

This kind of effort, and the benefit to our young people in Pasadena, would not be possible without Designmatters at Art Center College of Design, to whom I am extremely grateful.

**THE ARMORY
CENTER
FOR THE ARTS**

armoryarts.com

DESIGNMATTERS

at Art Center College of Design
designmattersatartcenter.org



**LEARNING
WORKS**

Charter School
publicworksinc.org/lw

**FLINTRIDGE
CENTER**

flintridge.org

**“TEENAGERS NEED A
POSITIVE
VENUE FOR
SELF-
EXPRESSION”**

Develop skill sets transferable to school and the workplace

The concept was simple: An innovative arts center for at-risk youth in Pasadena and Altadena. A positive venue for self-expression. A place where teenagers could more than just escape from their problems, but would also be encouraged to deal with them through the arts.

Believing that people's lives might be transformed if given the chance to channel their negative emotions into positive ones through the canvas, the wall, paper or a loudspeaker, Art Center students set out to design an art park to foster social change for at-risk teens.

The park concept was developed during a two-term studio project led by Environmental Design students. But it was born over months of conversation among 29 community partners. Among those contributing ideas, insight and resources along the way were the Flintridge Center, the Armory Center for the Arts, Room 13 at Muir High School, La Pintoresca Teen Education Center, Western Justice Center Foundation, Day One, and the project initiator, Designmatters at Art Center.

Form connections with community resources in the arts

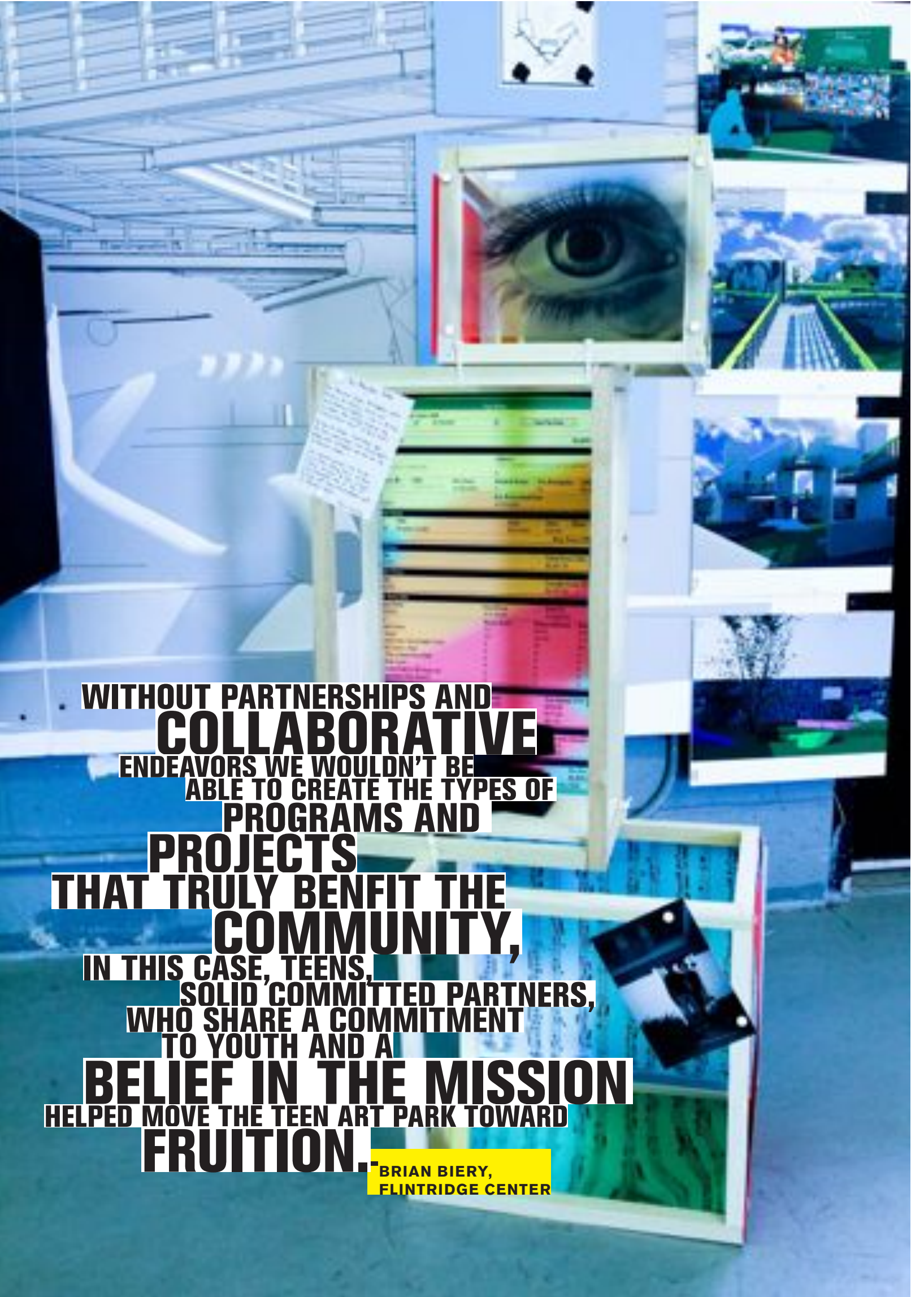
AT THE TEEN ART PARK, ARTISTS CAN:

Practice their crafts

Participate in a variety of arts

The Teen Art Park is envisioned to provide a safe environment for creative expression and human development for underserved teens; it would allow for mentorship toward creative careers and provide a meaningful alternative to gang participation and other potentially destructive behaviors. The park would therefore be not just a destination, but also a starting point for the journey toward visualizing and reaching one's creative potential.

Use the space for performances and exhibits



**WITHOUT PARTNERSHIPS AND
COLLABORATIVE
ENDEAVORS WE WOULDN'T BE
ABLE TO CREATE THE TYPES OF
PROGRAMS AND
PROJECTS
THAT TRULY BENEFIT THE
COMMUNITY,
IN THIS CASE, TEENS,
SOLID COMMITTED PARTNERS,
WHO SHARE A COMMITMENT
TO YOUTH AND A
BELIEF IN THE MISSION
HELPED MOVE THE TEEN ART PARK TOWARD
FRUITION.**

**BRIAN BIERY,
FLINTRIDGE CENTER**

PARTNER FOCUS FLINTRIDGE CENTER

At the core of our committed Teen Art Park coalition of partners is the Flintridge Center, which for 25 years has pursued its vision of a healthy, safe community where families thrive, youth reach their full potential, and equality and opportunity are accessible to all. Like all our dedicated partners, the Flintridge Center believes that by bringing together people who are committed to making a difference, one can build an effective structure for improving lives and creating change.

Brian Biery, the Flintridge Center's director of community organizing, quickly recognized the Teen Art Park project as one that perfectly fit his organization's mission of building hope and resilience in the lives of youth and their families in Pasadena and Altadena. His and the Flintridge Center's contributions were essential in bringing this project to fruition.

For more information about the Flintridge Center, visit Flintridge.org.



With a distant vision in mind --
a creative oasis that might
change, even save, lives --
the design teams and their
faculty mentors embarked on
a road of discovery. It began
with a search for understanding:
Who are these teens?
What do they need?
What do they want?
It ended with a series of
revelations -- not just about
the teens, but also about the
designers themselves.

DESIGN IS A CHANGE-MAKER

DAVID MOCARSKI

Chair, Environmental Design, Art Center College of Design

Our Department's involvement with Designmatters goes back to its beginning at Art Center in 2001. Right from the start it was a way for our students and faculty to take the excellence we practice in all our other department's activities and apply it directly to a variety of socially relevant projects. A decade later, Designmatters continues to give us diverse opportunities to use design to help improve people's lives. Often, these projects take us to other countries: we have explored social-impact design in Africa, Chile, China, Japan and Peru. But in addition to interacting with the larger world, we also get opportunities to apply ourselves closer to home. Since a major goal of our department is to educate global designers with a clear vision of how we live, work and play, we always need to pursue a greater understanding of society and its many interwoven cultures.

When I first heard about the Teen Art Park project, I felt it was something that we, as a department focused on spatial experience, should be involved in. Teens are our future, and how they come of age helps to shape who they are, what they will do and how they see the world. The idea of making a place for young creatives to express themselves and communicate was very intriguing. Understanding the potential of our next generation is never easy, so gaining insight into teenagers who are at risk and surrounded with controversy makes a challenging project of this type even more valuable.

When designing spatial experience, you consider all the motivators that affect the user from the first moment of encounter to the last moment of interaction, as well as the emotional take-away of the experience. Our students and faculty looked at many different ways to create spaces that engaged, interacted and created platforms for the teens to express themselves. Our design process guided us to look at many different scenarios that reflected the interests of the teens without feeling overly designed or forced. Our goal was to create an environment that could be a vehicle for the teens—a place they would feel was theirs by creation, that they could customize—and where they could express themselves and evolve on their own terms. We wanted the teens to be involved in every step of the place making.

**OUR STUDENTS
EXPERIENCED
A WIDE RANGE OF
DISCOVERIES ABOUT THEIR
SUBJECTS, AND
ABOUT THEMSELVES,
WORKING WITH THESE
YOUNG ADULTS.**

As designers, we have to be mindful of making assumptions and reaching superficial conclusions based solely on our own perspective. In many ways, this project was a perfect test of our ability to listen, to learn from an honest interaction with everyone involved in the project, and to see the subject through the eyes of the folks who would benefit most from the outcome. Teens are complicated by nature, and contemplating teens who have already had serious life challenges made this project even more complex. Yet, ultimately, that complexity made for a richer and more satisfying experience.

Design can be a change-maker. It can let people know they are important, that they have value and can make a difference. Our students experienced a wide range of discoveries about their subjects, and about themselves, working with these young adults over two full terms. And the involvement of so many great organizations and individuals—Mikala Rahn with Learning Works Charter School, Brian Biery with the Flintridge Center, Scott Ward with the Armory Center for the Arts—gave us an entrée into this community, allowing us to gain a rich and robust understanding of the needs of these teenagers. As we listened, it was the teens themselves who played the leading role in defining who they are and what they needed. That self-discovery then allowed us to offer moments, places and situations that can hopefully add value to their lives and their futures.

PROFESSOR:



James Meraz

INSTRUCTOR:



Chris Adamick

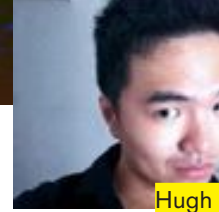
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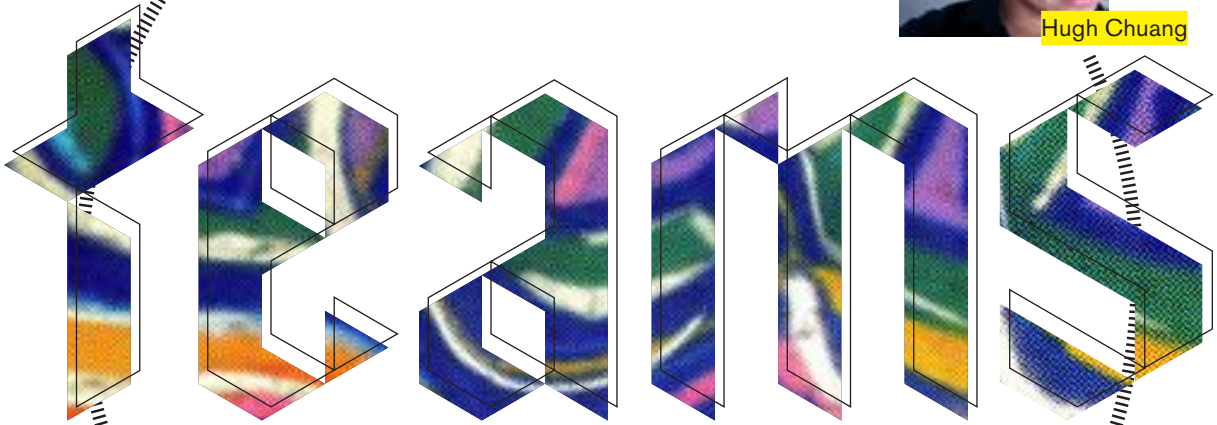
Thomas Kong



Seth Baker



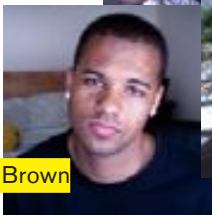
Hugh Chuang



ART PAS:



Adam Cottingham

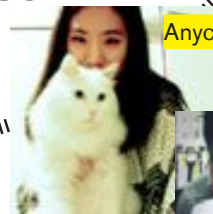


Jori Brown

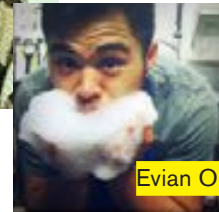


Breon Waters II

FREESOL:



Anycia Lee



Evian Olivares



Joshua Wong



DESIGN BRIEF:

This two-term Transdisciplinary studio was comprised of small teams working to design an alternative and supportive environment for youth from underserved communities in Pasadena and Altadena. The prototype spaces would be called a Teen Art Park, and would provide the means for young people to focus their energy on positive expressions of creativity and to discover new opportunities and social relationships. The goal of creating such a space would require intensive research followed by concept generation and development, design refinement, and finally a build and implementation phase.

SPRING TERM STUDIO

Students conducted human-centered qualitative research, interviewed community service providers and held workshops with Pasadena youth who articulated their hopes for what a Teen Art Park would bring to their communities. These conversations informed the projects in terms of what the Art Park might look like, and how to develop a sense of ownership among the target audience.

SUMMER TERM STUDIO

During the studio's second phase, the students shared their park proposals with local teens and also solicited opinions on their projects' direction from the community partner organizations. Based on this feedback, the students refined their initial designs and went to work constructing prototypes.

A TRANSFORMATIVE PROPOSITION

JAMES MERAZ

Professor, Art Center College of Design

**HOW, AS HUMAN BEINGS,
ARE WE SUPPOSED TO
SUCCEED IF THE
ISSUES WITH OUR YOUTH
ARE NOT RECOGNIZED?**

Susie, Learning Works student

It was an honor and pleasure to play a lead educator role in the Teen Art Park Project along with my colleague Chris Adamick. It was a challenging and intense journey for faculty and students alike. Our students worked passionately in both conflict and agreement to create sensitive design works that I feel were ingenious and thoughtful, and considered real issues and insights drawn both from community leaders and from the subject teens.

Together, our three groups of Art Center students from such diverse majors such as environmental design, graphic design and product design explored various spaces and programming that would encourage self-expression and foster creative skills that reflect new ideas and objectives. Our major goal was to consider and create alternative positive environments for youth to explore various art-making activities. Our research showed that among the few public spaces where teens can congregate and be themselves in a positive and accessible environment, there are even fewer like those that we imagined.

The Teen Art Park project was an educational experience that allowed students to view the world through a new lens, with a new perspective. They approached it with curiosity, sensitivity and hope for sustaining the human condition, and I am proud of what they accomplished.

A PROFESSIONAL APPROACH

CHRIS ADAMICK


Instructor, Art Center College of Design

The most valuable aspect of the Teen Art Park studio, from an educational standpoint, was that the Art Center students developed their project in a professional setting. Nothing involved with the studio was theoretical: the people are real, the problem is real and the design exists in full scale.

Our research, design and implementation happened through interaction with many groups of people who had diverse and sometimes conflicting interests. Experimentation and possibility were certainly a part of the overall experience, and these happened for all of us not just on paper, but in real time while we observed with our own eyes. This way of working presented compelling challenges that were solved through collaboration—a methodology these students will encounter throughout their professional careers—and I was impressed with the way they rose to meet those challenges.

RESEARCH

WRITERZ BLOK



As the Spring term studio commenced, the design team sought to research existing places offering a safe, expressive environment for teens. One such place was San Diego's Writerz Blok community art center, where they were hosted by Sandra Candler, the center's interim executive director. Writerz Blok started in 1999 as a program aimed at steering youth away from vandalism, and toward learning "the art of graffiti." Thirteen years later, Writerz Blok remains a "gang-neutral" success story: a creative space that encourages "artistic expression and entrepreneurial exploration." Art Center students were able to observe this supportive environment firsthand, interact with counselors, program directors and creative youth, and ultimately interpret and apply what they experienced to their own unique designs.



“OUR BIGGEST CHALLENGE IS GOING TO BE
CHANGING THE PERCEPTION OF THE
COMMUNITY TOWARD
GRAFFITI ART. WHEN WE HAD THE
CHANCE TO ACTUALLY **TAG ON A WALL.**
IT WAS LIKE BEING A **KID AGAIN.**
BEING ABLE TO **LEAVE YOUR MARK IS HUGE.”**

SETH

Writers Blok

The future of the Writers Blok rests with the youth it serves. The staff's hope is that they will be able to leave the program in the capable and well-trained hands of the youth of our community for the generations to come. Writers Blok realizes the perception of graffiti has a long way to go as far as gaining acceptance by the general public, but it will continue to facilitate conversations, network writers and beyond the community, and develop resources for graffiti artists wishing to sustain their talent and become self-sustainable by way of their art.

The Writers Blok would like to thank the Jacobs Center for Neighborhood Innovation, The Jacobs Family Foundation, and all of the foundations, organizations, and public and private leaders that have understood the need for an art program similar to the Blok. Their tolerance and generosity these past ten years has made it possible to serve our community's youth, who realize they have always had a graffiti future to look forward to.

“OUR BIGGEST CHALLENGE IS GOING TO BE CHANGING THE PERCEPTION OF THE COMMUNITY TOWARD GRAFFITI ART. WHEN WE HAD THE CHANCE TO ACTUALLY TAG ON A WALL IT WAS LIKE BEING A KID AGAIN. BEING ABLE TO LEAVE YOUR MARK IS HUGE.”


SETH



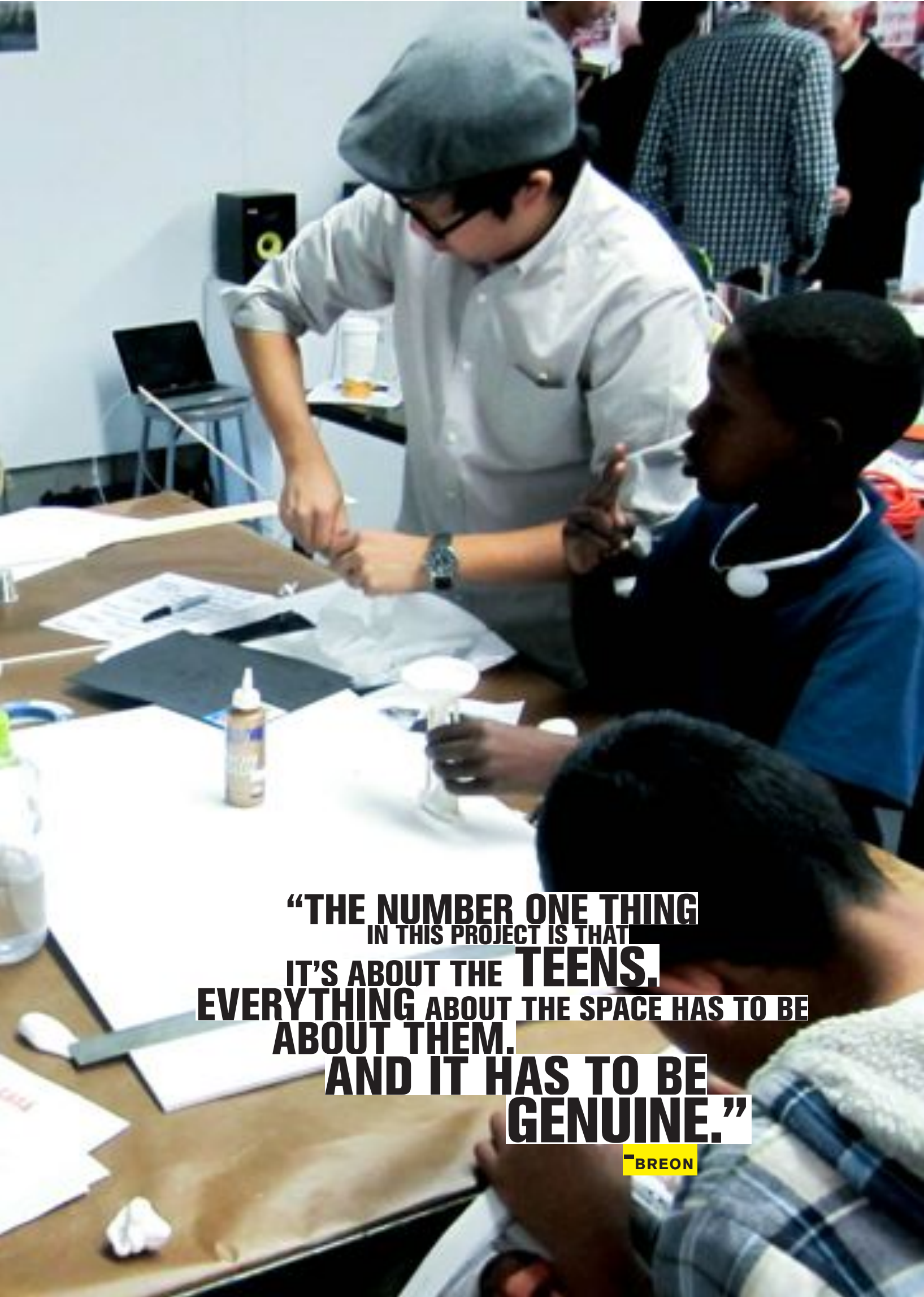
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RESEARCH

**STUDIO
WORKSHOPS**

The human-centered research that is at the heart of designing effective solutions began with intensive workshops in Art Center's studios. Student designers talked, brainstormed, sketched and mocked-up countless ideas alongside young members of the target community. With each interaction, the designers got a feel for what the teens wanted, and the teens got a feel for what might actually be possible. After hours of spirited engagement among the teens and the student designers, the design teams were able to conceive the essence of their original designs. Moreover, they learned that this type of intimate interaction would be pivotal in creating a space that would fulfill the needs of their intended end-users.



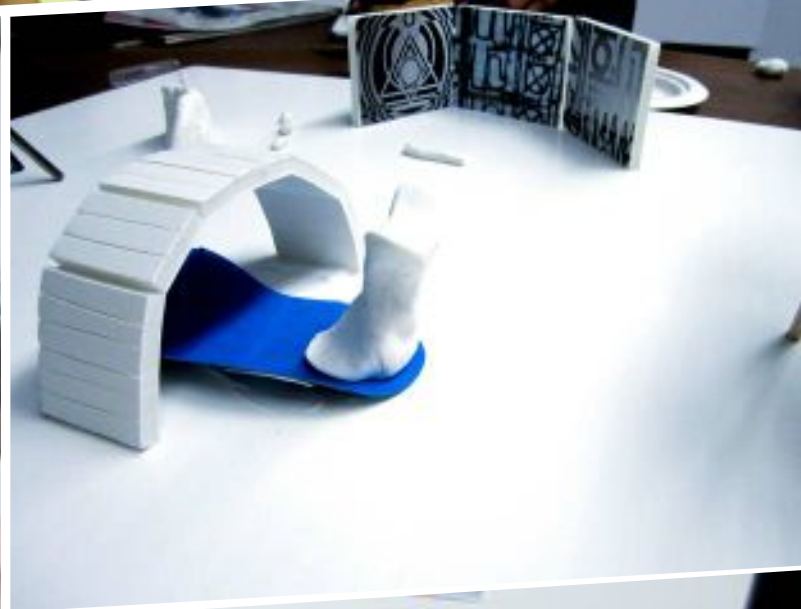
**“THE NUMBER ONE THING
IN THIS PROJECT IS THAT
IT’S ABOUT THE TEENS.
EVERYTHING ABOUT THE SPACE HAS TO BE
ABOUT THEM.
AND IT HAS TO BE
GENUINE.”**

BREON



“So many of the kids we met feel as though society is just pushing them into a corner and leaving them to fend for themselves. All these teens have a deep desire to be heard. Together, we can give them a voice.” **ADAM**





COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

PASADENA ARTNIGHT



The preliminary Teen Art Park designs got their first public showing during Pasadena's citywide ArtNight, in May 2011. In a space provided by Onyx Architects, the design teams were able to showcase their early visions for how the Teen Art Parks would ultimately build out. The ArtNight exhibition was an important step in the evolution of the project designs. Project partners and ArtNight participants alike were able to discuss the project with the Art Center designers, offer feedback and encouragement, and suggest ideas for what might make the project even better. This direct engagement with the community beneficially informed subsequent development of the Teen Art Park design process.





UNDERSTANDING YOUTH IN CRISIS

MIKALA RAHN, PhD

Executive Director, Learning Works Charter School
President, Public Works, Inc.

At Learning Works Charter School we believe that no one is better than anyone else; that you don't automatically deserve respect from others, you gain it. It's what Father Gregory Boyle, the founder of Homeboy Industries, calls "kinship." We're not trying to serve our students, nor are we trying to do something great for them; we're just trying to live with them and understand them. And from that experience, we benefit as much as our students do. Our school is classified as independent study, but we don't call it that because what we really offer is an alternative education program.

We're pioneering a model that doesn't exist in California—a last chance program. We have roughly 400 students that we call "youth in crisis", because they're way beyond "at risk" We have teen mothers and fathers. We have lots of substance abuse issues, and some 30% of our kids are on probation. We have representation from every gang in Pasadena and Altadena. The students who come here didn't survive in other schools. They dropped out, or in some cases were kicked out.

Learning Works is a safe haven. We don't have conflicts, because we offer fresh starts and unconditional love. To work with these students one must be inordinately loving and forgiving every single day. Our basic philosophy is that if we love the students to death, something good is bound to happen. And usually it does. All the emotional support they get here creates movement in their lives.

**WE OFTEN HAVE REALLY HARD TIME
TRANSITIONING PEOPLE FROM
BEING CHILDREN TO
BEING YOUTH TO
BEING YOUNG ADULTS.**


Russian psychologist Lev Vygotski argued that we each have our own reality—our own views, our own skill sets, and our own box into which we place ourselves. He further asserted that we also have a "zone of proximal development," an innate ability to reach another place with some help. But how does one reach that new place? How do you help deliver somebody from their reality to their potential?

As a society, we often have a hard time transitioning people from being children to being youth to being young adults. Educators tend to have a very child-centric mindset. But some of our students have been living independently since they were 6 years old, so by the time they reach 17, you simply can't treat them like most other children. They have a level of survival skills and savvy that they need to be given credit for.


The process of working with Art Center on the Teen Art Park project allowed that to happen. The Art Center designers entered the project with a real desire to understand the culture of our youth. They listened to our students' wants and needs, and built on them. That kind of respect for the "other" perspective is often hard to find. As adults, we forget how much youth—like any other demographic that one designs for—can teach us.

RESEARCH

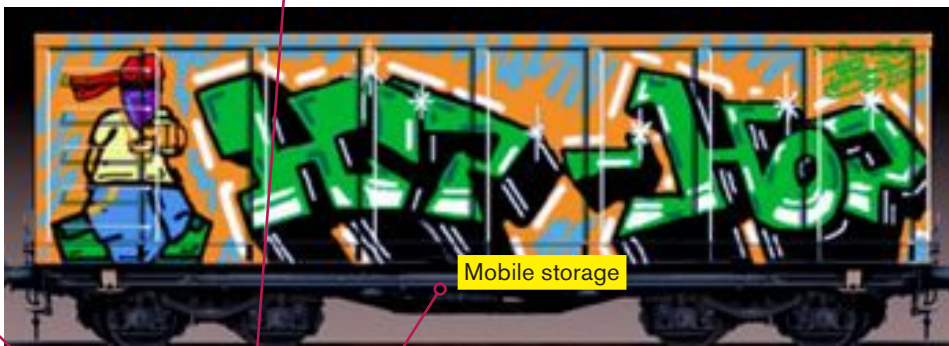
DESIGN RESEARCH



Graffiti art started from the inner city, out of rage toward society.



Adaptive reuse of private & public space




Mobile storage



3D graffiti art

Research Area:
STREET ART



Private & public space for meditation

The design teams engaged in a great deal of background research prior to starting their creative output. They investigated societal and demographic trends. They examined issues of lifestyle, perception and self-image. They considered the effects of traditional and social media on the lives of teens. All of these areas of research—and more—offered valuable findings, but none informed their perspectives, and ultimately their work, more than the direct engagement with the teens for whom they were designing. As they encountered young creatives in workshops and in the community, the designers were able to coalesce the challenges, needs and aspirations of their target demographic with the potential for positive expression and development the Teen Art Park could provide.



Race & gangs



Body image



Censorship & the media



Homophobia



Research Area:
TEEN ISSUES

Drugs & abuse

Sex & pregnancy



Homelessness

DIY

Research Area:
DIY TRENDS

Spencer invents the high-gloss modern culture with his do-it-yourself guide for anarchistic amateurs of music & literature who just wanna have fun! THE TIMES



Art from recycled materials



Information-rich environment

THE RISE OF LO-FI CULTURE

Research Area:
CREATIVE SPACES



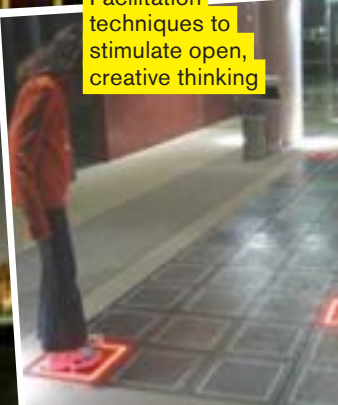
Unique atmosphere



Facilitation techniques to stimulate open, creative thinking

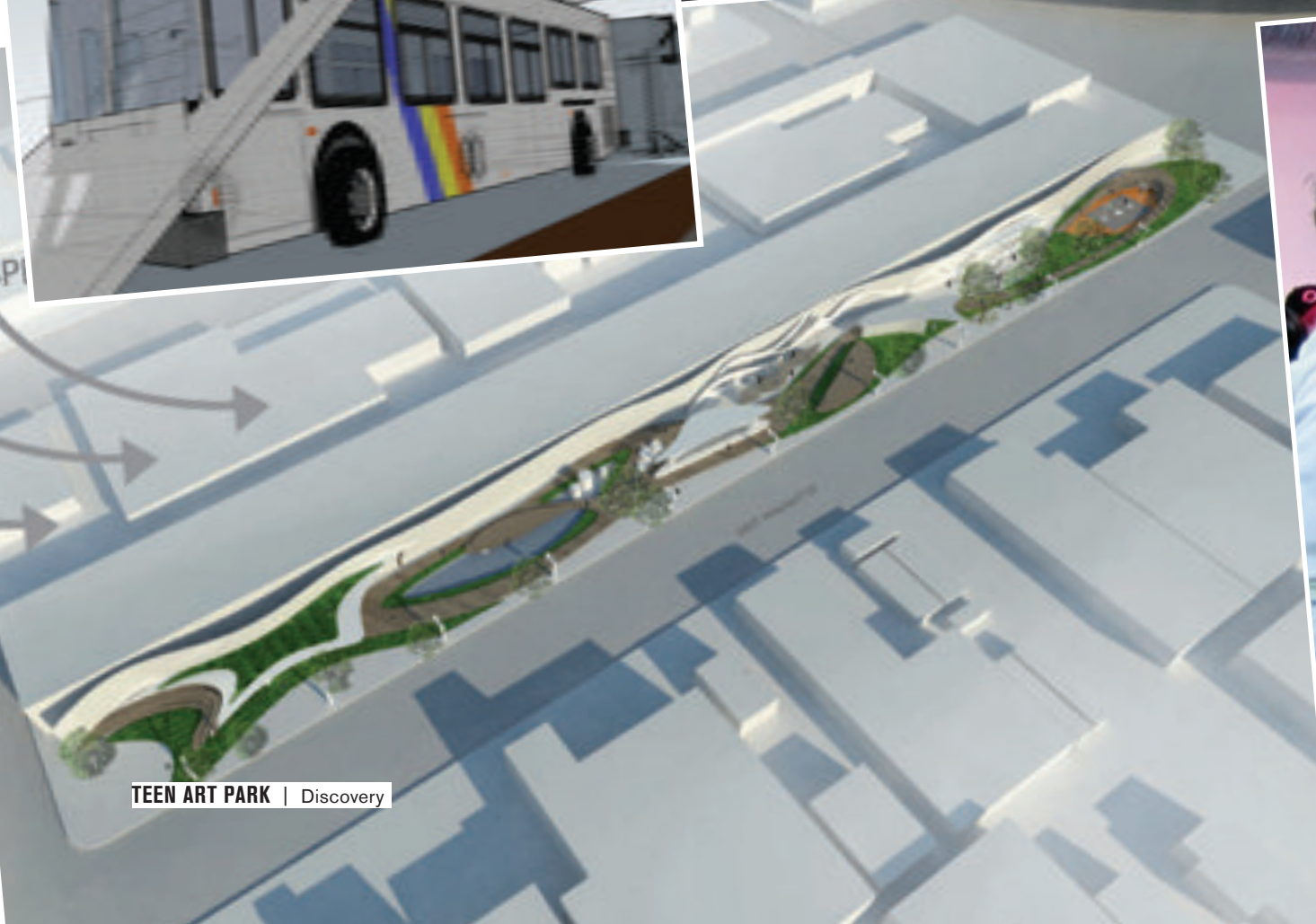
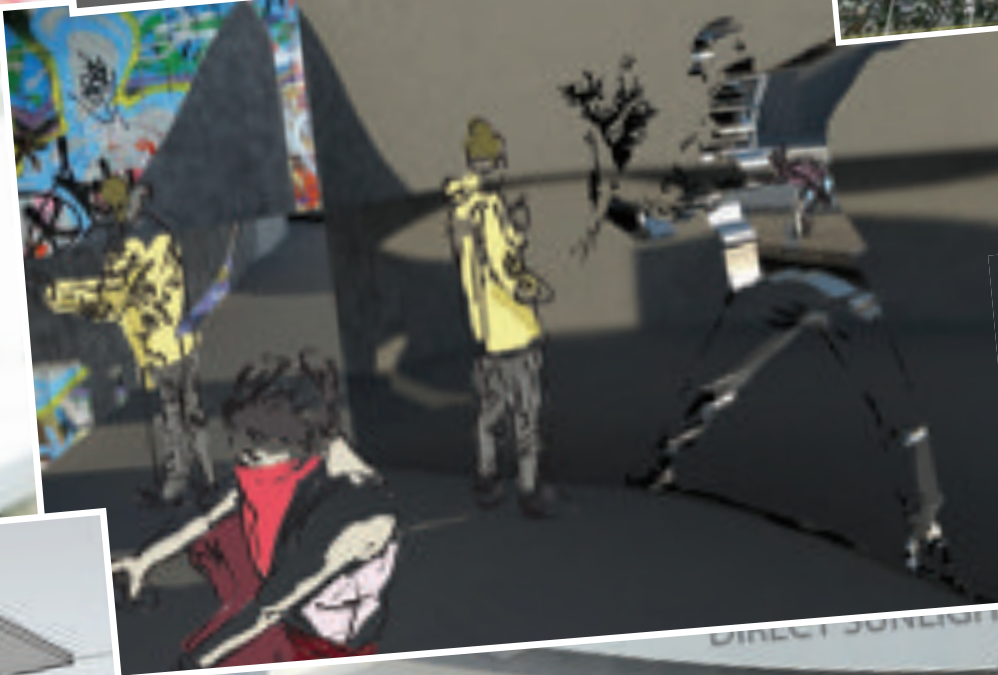
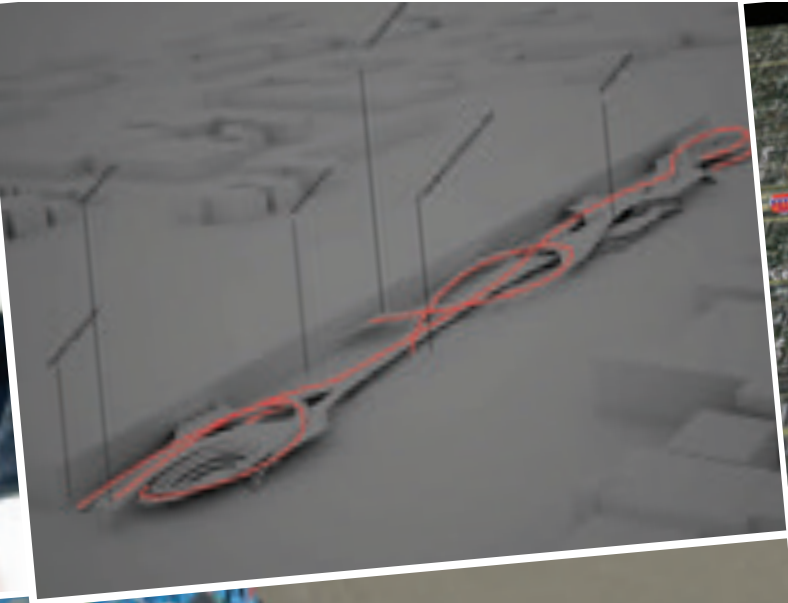


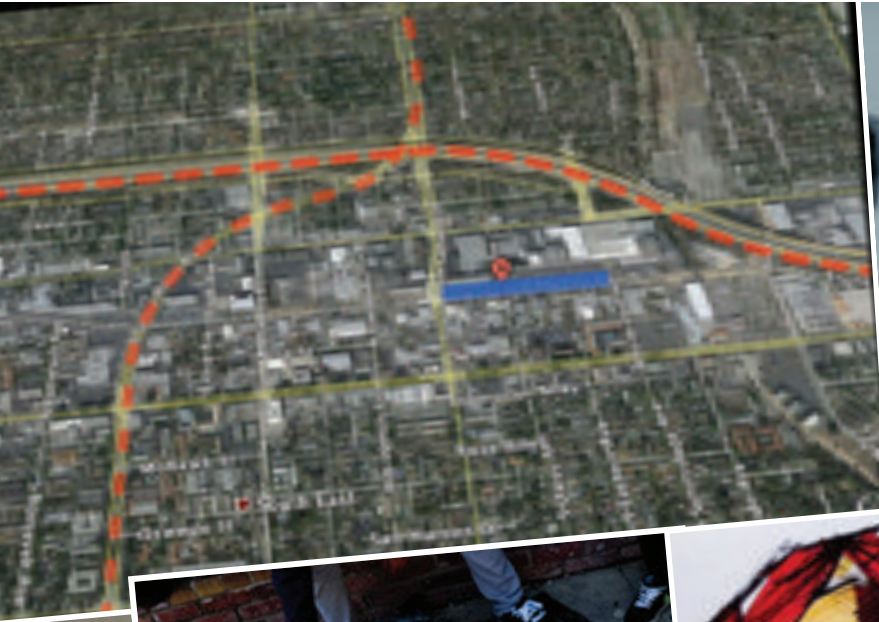
Transformable/mobile



SPRING TERM STUDIO:
TEAM FREESOL

DESIGN PROCESS





Our intention is to connect youth back into the community by creating a balance of formal and informal interventions. We want to maintain the impermanent, informal street feel of the youth art culture while providing more formalized space to display their art. **TEAM FREESOL**



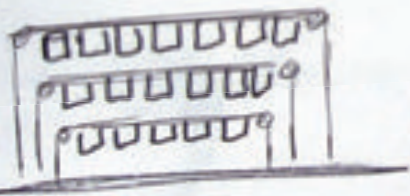
MORE IDEAS

38

PHOTO/ART WALLS

SPRING TERM STUDIO:
TEAM ART PAS

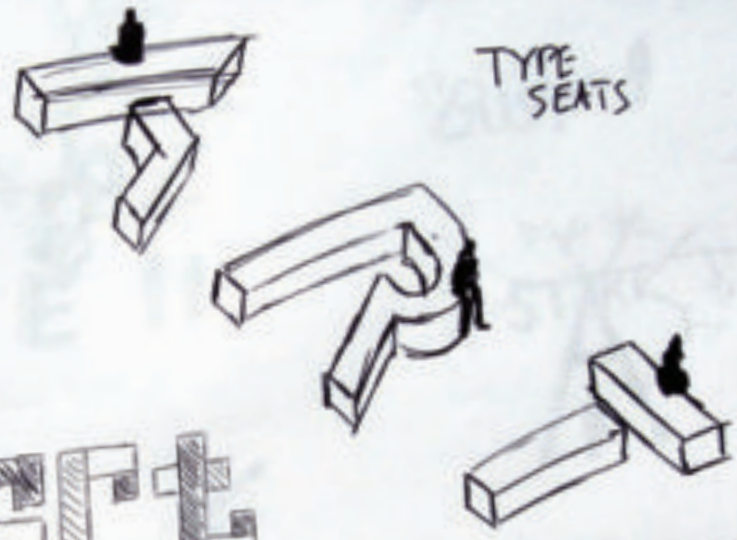
DESIGN PROCESS



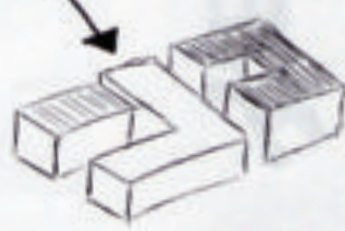
↑ Hanging system like drying laundry

The main focus of our park design is making it "a place to chill, a place to be heard, and a place to grow." Each of these factors can help teens to become stronger individuals.

TEAM ART PAS



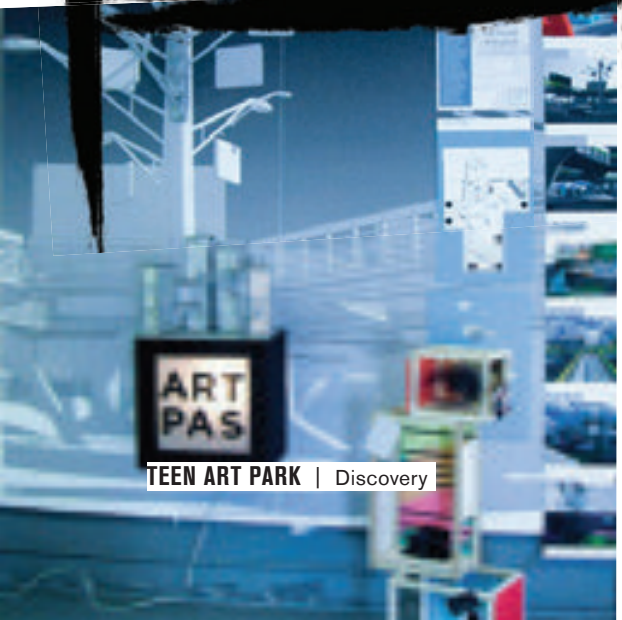
TYPE SEATS



FRESH START

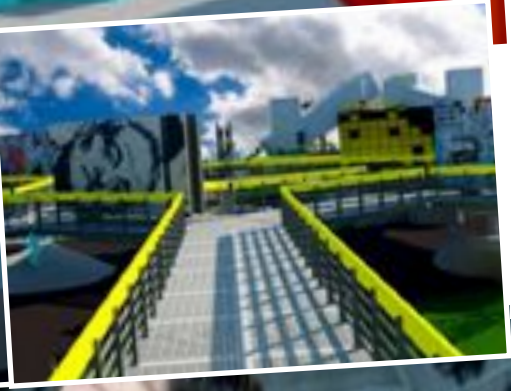


GRAFFI AREA (BA)



TEEN ART PARK | Discovery



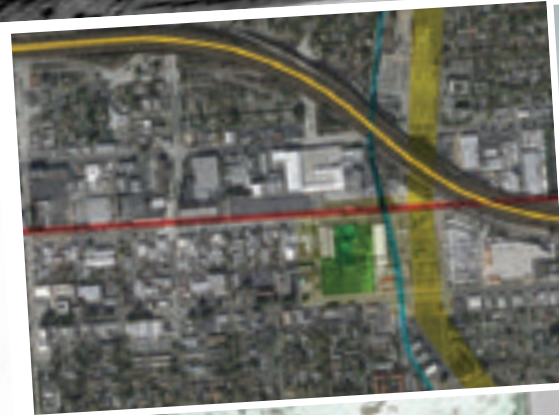


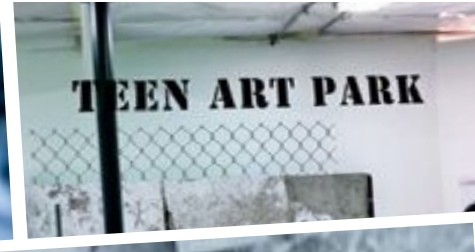
SPRING TERM STUDIO:
TEAM HUB

DESIGN PROCESS

Our research and workshop interactions taught us that teenagers are always changing, physically and emotionally. To connect with that open-ended idea, we set out to design a space that is organic—one that accepts everyone and allows them to grow in that setting.

TEAM HUB





RESEARCH

FOCUS GROUP

After their concepts took shape during the Spring term, the designers sought direct feedback from teens on their preliminary outcomes. They presented their ideas in a focus group that included youth from the Learning Works Charter School (LWCS). The LWCS kids had strong opinions about many elements of the park designs, and voiced their likes, dislikes and questions about the opportunity for the inclusion of different features of groups. The youth also expressed a great deal of concern for the social structure and rules that would guide participation in the park spaces, as well as the potential for creative and even career growth that might arise from the Teen Art Park experience and community.



Safety: Needs to encourage lots of participation

Parking for the park (How is that managed?)

Transportation for youth to this neighborhood

I LIKE HOW ITS A PLACE TO CHILL A PLACE WHERE YOU CAN DO ANY W/O BEING ILLEGAL

HUB DISLIKES:

GOOD PTS. of All THEM

- The Water feature
- The Movable street.
- Amphitheater w/ lawn
- Multi-level

More GOOD PTS. The Post Central office POOL

Entrance is intriguing

HUB LIKES:

Amphitheater

Center for arts

Moveable walls

Walkway on Nina

Name

Could you LIKE - open space

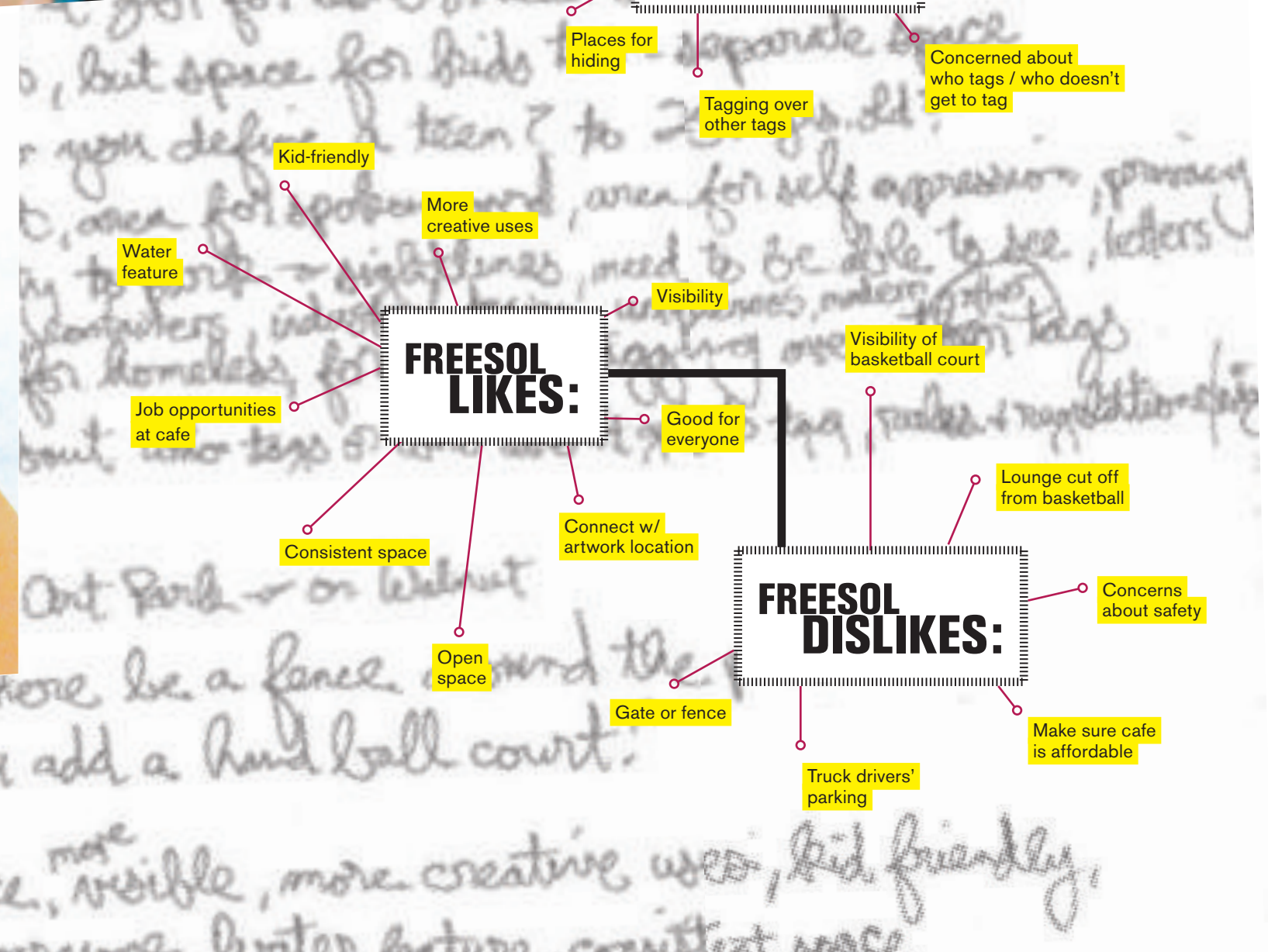


ART PAS LIKES:

- Industrial design
- Area for self-expression
- Area for spoken word
- Uniqueness
- Containers
- Modern
- Privacy
- Letters: 2 levels
- Street lights
- Visibility to park (sightlines)

ART PAS DISLIKES:

- Places for homeless
- Places for hiding
- Tagging over other tags
- Concerned about who tags / who doesn't get to tag
- Rules & regulations

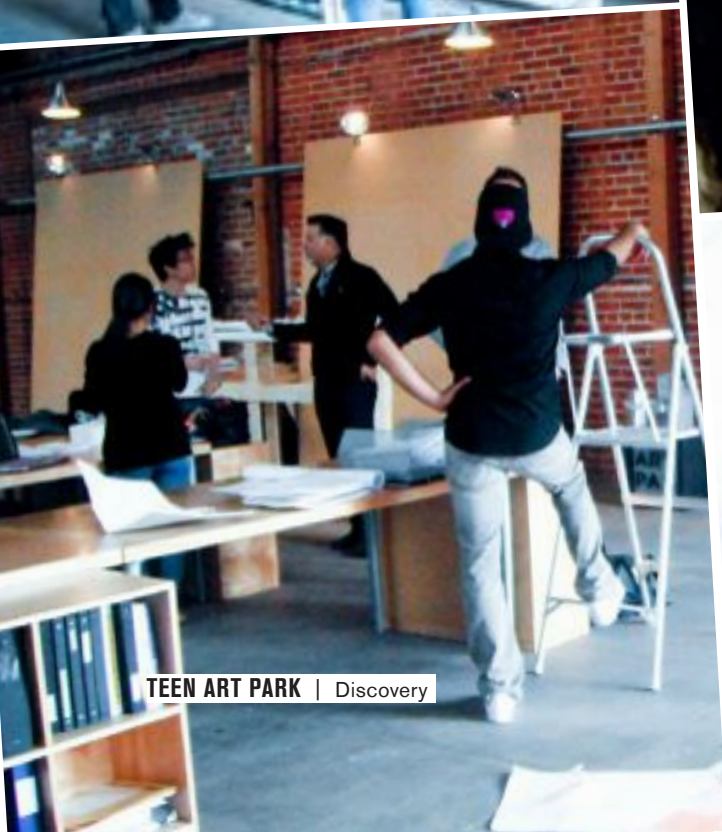


FREESOL LIKES:

- Kid-friendly
- More creative uses
- Water feature
- Job opportunities at cafe
- Consistent space
- Open space
- Connect w/ artwork location
- Good for everyone
- Visibility

FREESOL DISLIKES:

- Visibility of basketball court
- Lounge cut off from basketball
- Concerns about safety
- Gate or fence
- Truck drivers' parking
- Make sure cafe is affordable



HUB HUB
LIKE

THE DIFF. ENTRANCES
NEED BENCHES UNDER TREES
PICNIC AREAS?
MOVING WALLS - GO

CONNECT ART WORKS
LIKE A PUZZLE WALL

NATURAL ALONG PATH AREAS
POOL AREA NIGHT!

FREESOL
FACULTY? 45

To 25 years old?

How do you define a teen?

Is it just for teens or adults too?

ARTPAS:

For teens, but separate space for kids too?

OPPORTUNITIES

Could both areas be parks?

HUB:

Could it have a lounge or teen room?

Could there be a handball court?

Should there be a fence around the park?

FREESOL:

Interaction among different people?



COOL
CROSS
CROSS

The Spring Term designs were further refined based on feedback from the target group of teens and the project's community partners. One key concept that emerged was that the parks might serve as a place where youth could learn from established and rising creative talent -- role models in both street art and more traditional practices -- and perhaps be mentored by them. The Summer Term students then transitioned into physically creating the Teen Art Park environments, and three dynamic, full-scale prototypes were built and deployed in the community.



**STREET ART
IS ALL ABOUT
KEEPING THE
SOUL AND SPIRIT
OF THE STREET -
OVERCOMING
HARDSHIPS AND NOT
COMPROMISING
WITH THE MONEY-
DRIVEN ART MARKET.**

ANYCIA

TEAM FREESOL

SPRING STUDIO

Anycia Lee

Evian Olivares

SUMMER STUDIO

Anycia Lee

Joshua Wong

Building community among teens was the focus for Team FREESOL's design. Our belief that "art is social and social is art" led to an exploration of the connection between teens, their art, their community and their sense of self. The intersection of these factors influenced the design of an environment where street art provides a transformative canvas.

One of our main goals was to maintain the informal street feel of youth art culture while providing more formal spaces for teens to display their art.

Key to achieving these objectives was creating a safe, welcoming environment where teens could enjoy being themselves and discover ways to turn what they already love doing into a productive, even profitable endeavor. In the end, our site included a basketball hoop, an elevated platform for relaxation and hanging canvases that could be rolled out of the structure, painted on and then removed for display elsewhere.

■ TEAM FREESOL



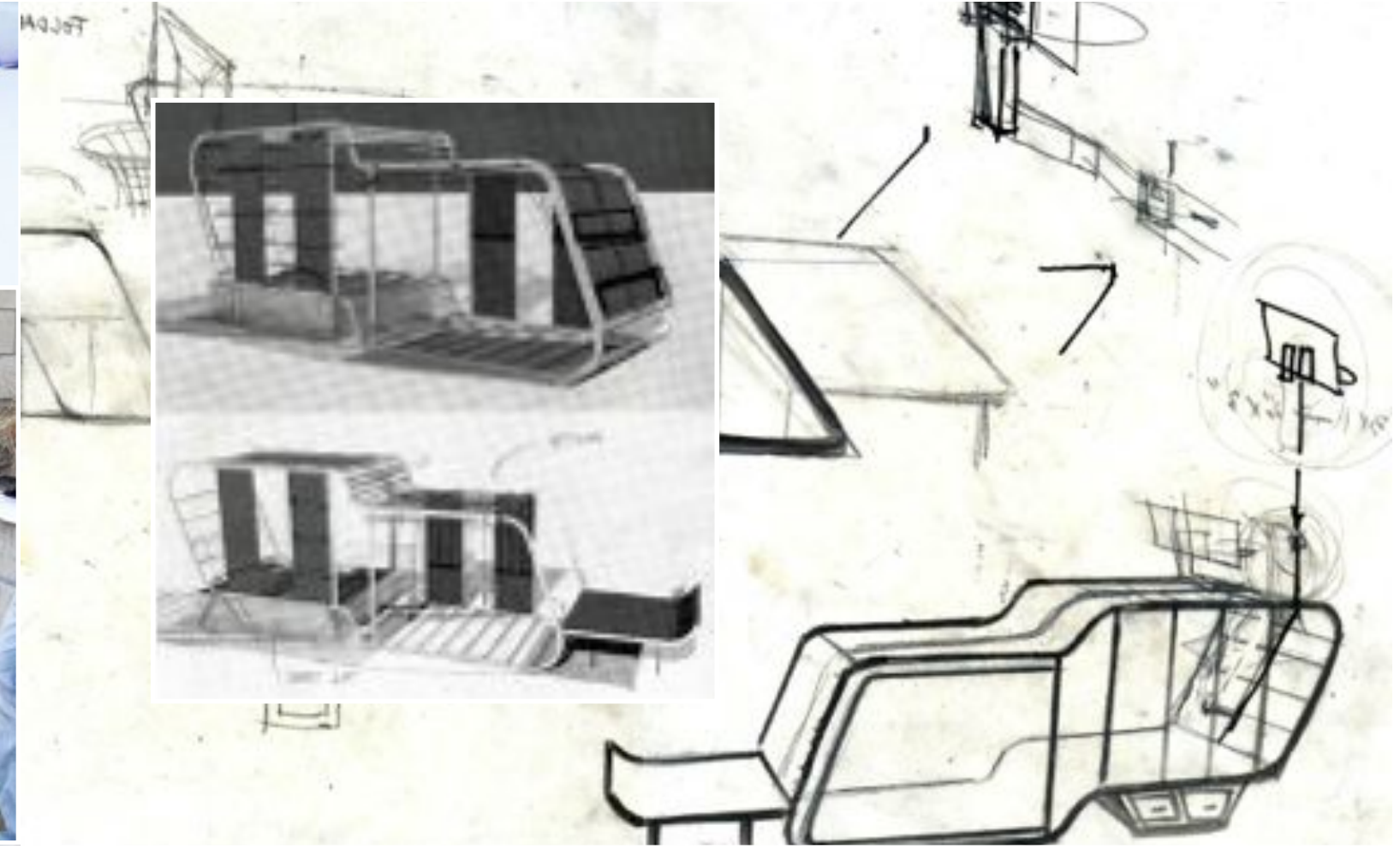
FREESOL IS A TEEN ART PARK DEDICATED TO PROVIDING MEANINGFUL FREEDOM TO THE YOUTH IN PASADENA.

BY FORMER TEENAGER JEFFREY L. CHAMBERLAIN, FOUNDER OF A BOLD AND BRAVE EXPERIENCE IN CHILDREN'S LIVES, FREESOL PROVIDES A SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE SPACE FOR YOUTH TO EXPLORE THEIR ARTISTIC AND CREATIVE POTENTIAL. FREESOL IS A COMMUNITY-DRIVEN INITIATIVE THAT IS THE PROPERTY OF THE CITY OF PASADENA.



TEAM FREESOL
PROTOTYPING





TEAM FREESOL

INSTALLATION & OPENING



TEEN ART PARK | Outcomes



TEAM ART PAS

SPRING STUDIO

Adam Cottingham
Breon Waters II

SUMMER STUDIO

Adam Cottingham
Jori Brown


The central idea behind our Teen Art Park project was designing “A place to chill, a place to be heard, a place to grow.” It was envisioned as a new kind of creative space for teens—both support structure and second home. We began by posing two critical questions:

How do we create a place where people feel they belong? How can we create an environment where conversations can take place and people will work together?

We considered research concerning the vital benefits of play and the psychological effects of color, along with ideas regarding the role of space in facilitating creativity. Then, after weighing additional feedback from teens, community partners and faculty, we designed and built a “miniature urban fun zone,” centering on a half-pipe for skateboarding, billboards for spray painting and a row of lounge chairs for relaxation.

The Teen Art Park as imagined by Team Art Pas would provide the familiar and welcome the unfamiliar, and be a place where people could step out and grow.

■ TEAM ART PAS

A skateboarder with long hair and a black cap is captured mid-air, performing a trick on a ramp. He is wearing a black t-shirt and dark pants. In the background, other people are watching, including a man in a black tank top and another in a striped shirt. The setting is an outdoor park with trees and a colorful mural on the right.

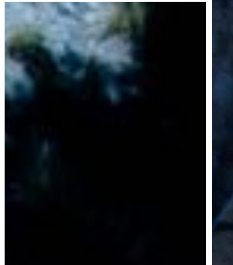
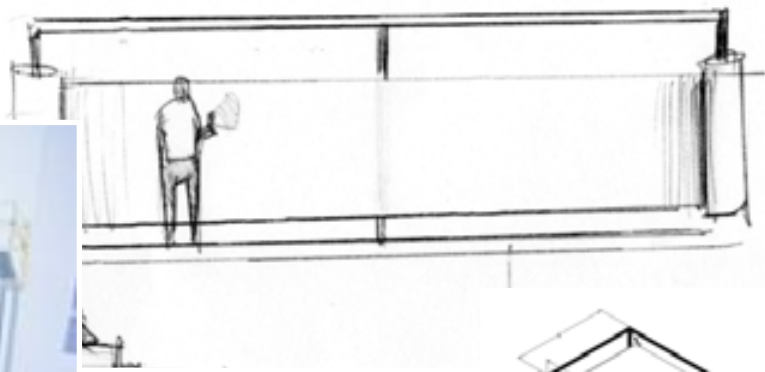
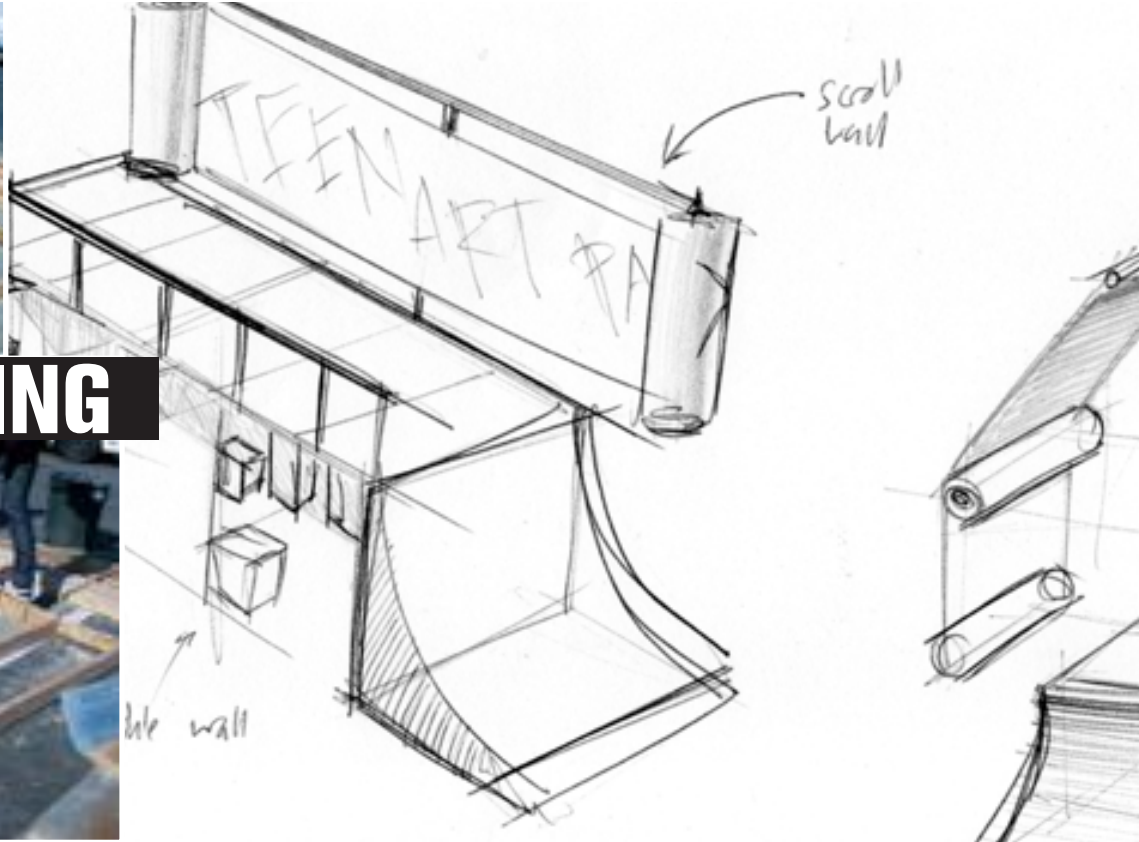
**THE TEEN PARK
WE ENVISIONED
IS ONE THAT WOULD BE A
PLACE OF
TRANSFORMATION,
WHERE YOU COULD BECOME
THE BEST
VERSION OF WHO
YOU CAN
POSSIBLY BE.**

ADAM

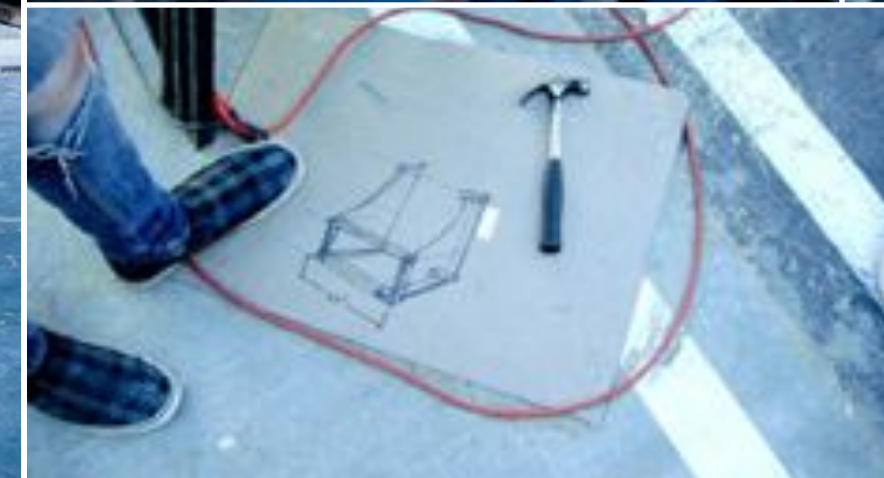
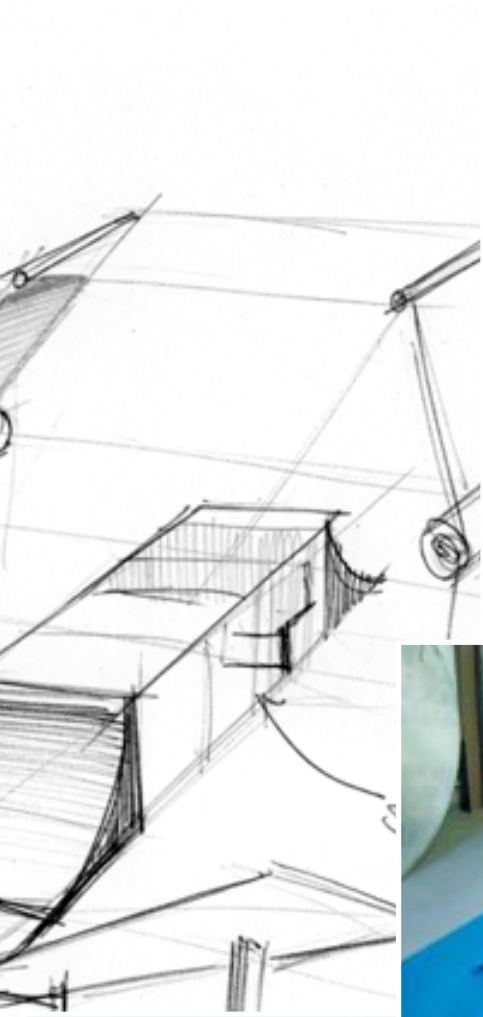


TEAM ART PAS

PROTOTYPING



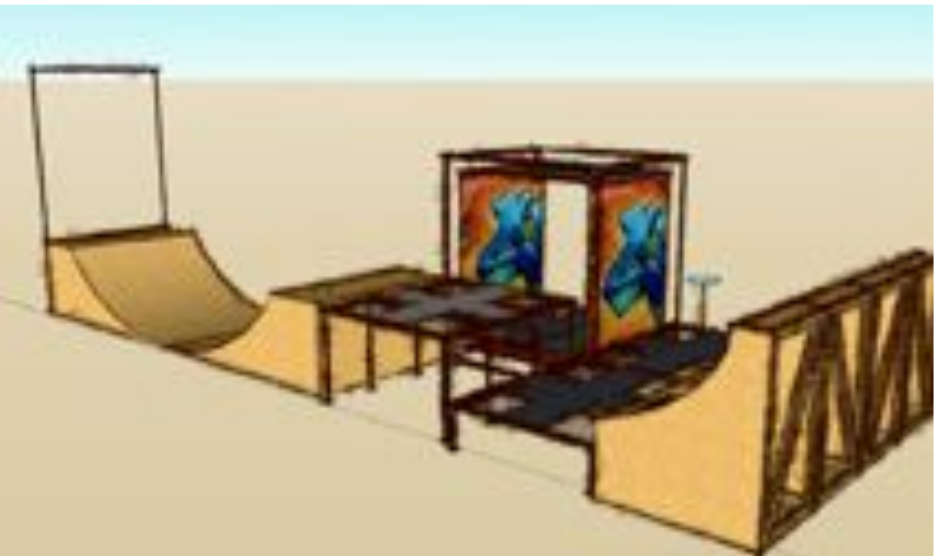
TEEN ART PARK | Outcomes





TEAM ART PAS

INSTALLATION & OPENING



TEEN ART PARK | Outcomes



TEAM HUB

SPRING & SUMMER STUDIOS

Seth Baker

Hugh Chuang

Thomas Kong

To create an adaptable park filled with places that teens could choose to either escape to or actively engage with, Team Hub took inspiration from D.I.Y. and lo-fi culture and envisioned a crossover environment that would fuse natural and man-made elements. Initial designs for the park called for a green space, a space for artistic expression, a space to present art and unwind, a family area for teen moms and their children and, perhaps most importantly for teen development, undefined spaces.

As the parameters for the project shifted from a site-specific environment to a full-scale modular prototype, we had to distill our ideas down to their essence. Team Hub focused on incorporating everyday objects in new and unexpected ways, most dramatically exhibited in the use of foam swimming pool noodles to create a topography for relaxing, as well as the large cylinders that do quadruple duty as lounge chairs, spray paint storage units, paintable surfaces and a “boom box” of sorts for MP3 players.

Through the use of unexpected materials and objects and a focus on giving teens a space that they can inhabit and take over, the Teen Art Park, as we envisioned it, would allow youth to express themselves, relax among their peers and re-imagine their possibilities.

TEAM HUB



**KIDS HAVE IT IN THEM
TO BE CREATIVE
AND EXPRESSIVE.**

THIS INSPIRED ME

**AND GAVE ME GREATER
DETERMINATION TO DESIGN**

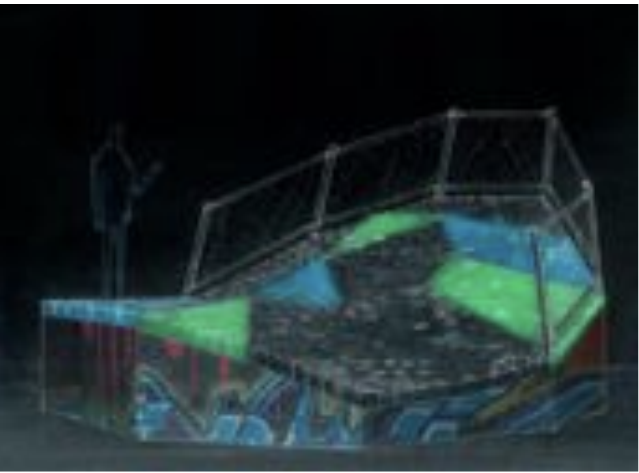
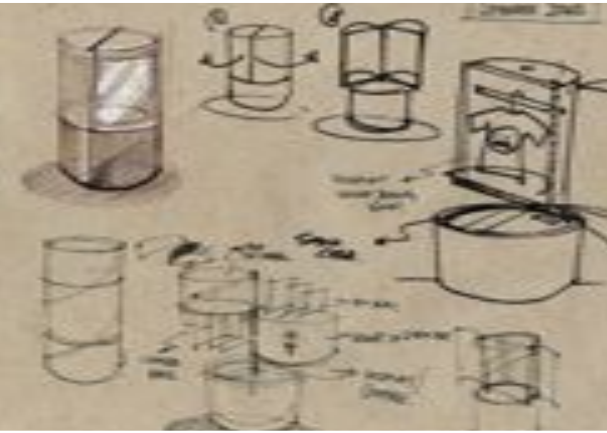
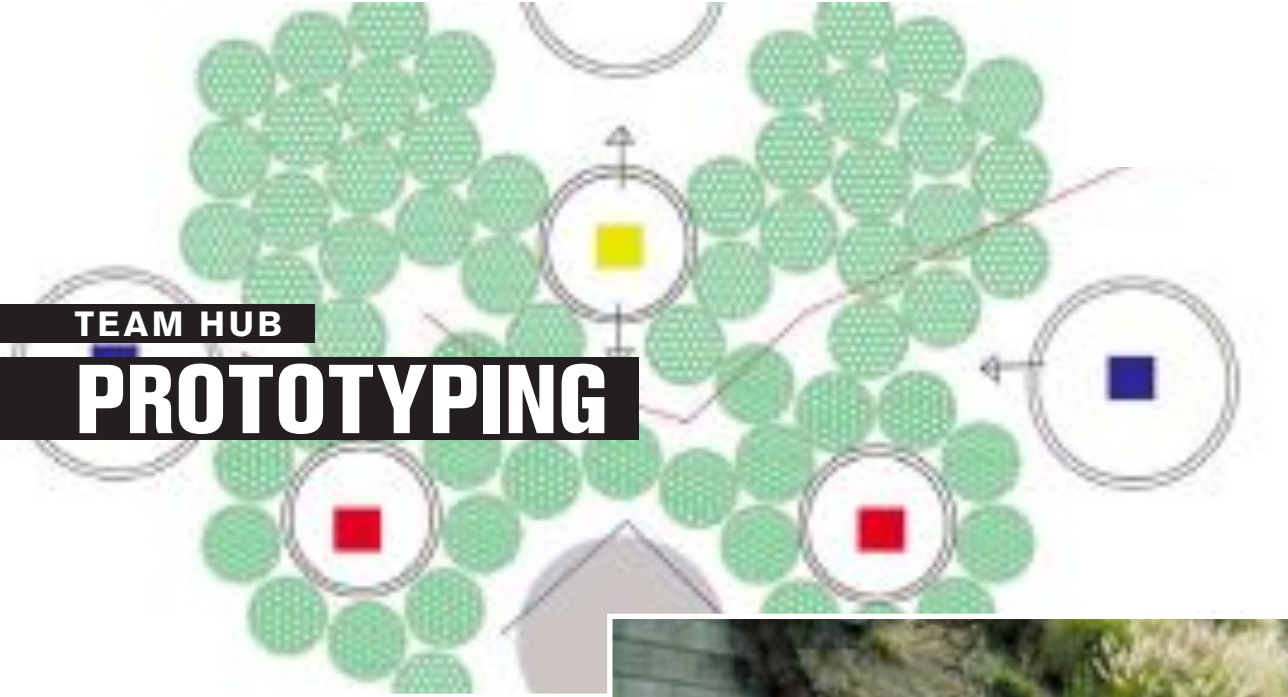
**AN AWESOME SPACE
FOR THEM TO**

**EXPRESS THEMSELVES
AND CREATE WORKS**

THEY CAN BE PROUD OF.

TEAM HUB

PROTOTYPING



TEEN ART PARK | Outcomes

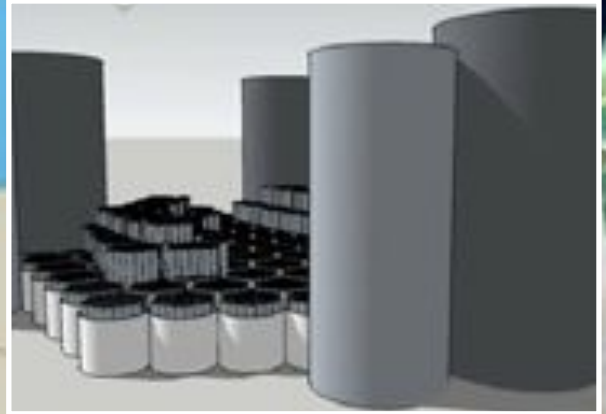
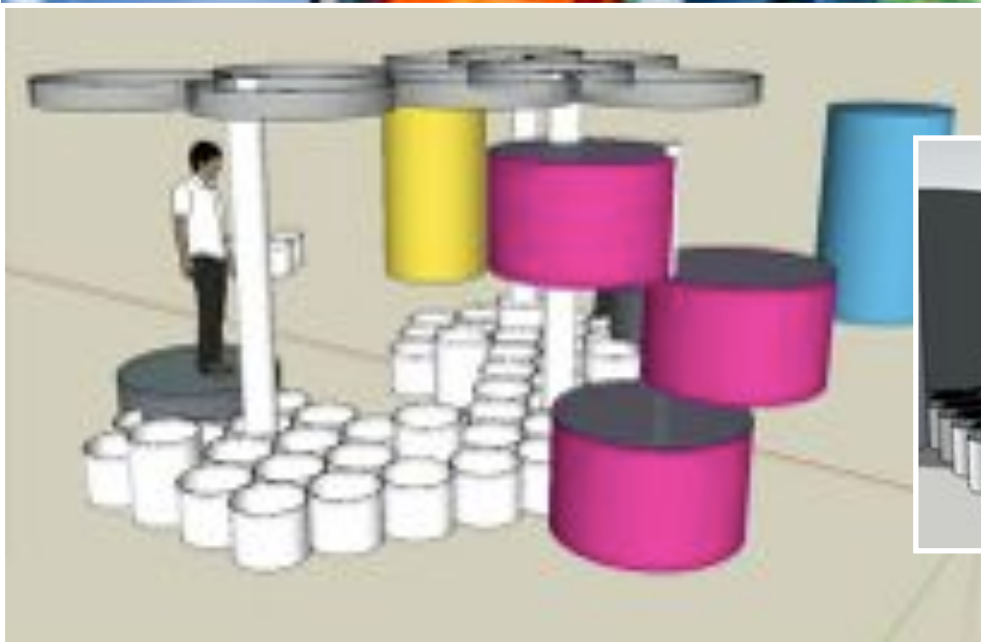






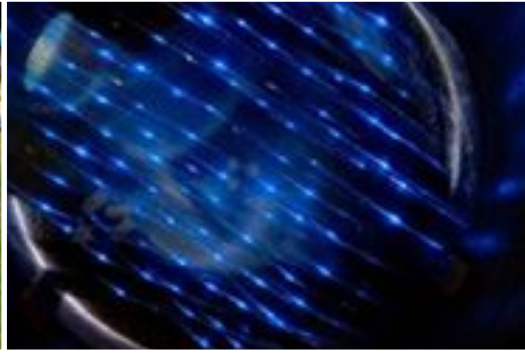
TEAM HUB

INSTALLATION & OPENING



TEEN ART PARK | Outcomes





BUILDING ON THE POWER OF ART

SCOTT WARD

Executive Director, Armory Center for the Arts

Our mission at the Armory is to build on the power of art—to transform lives through creating, presenting and teaching the arts. We believe that art is an essential component of the human experience; a highly effective tool to promote creativity, self-confidence, tolerance, individuality and, at the same time, a sense of community.

The Teen Art Park project fits right into that sense of mission. With young people, educators, community leaders and nonprofits working together to bring art literally into the heart of our neighborhoods, it speaks to a common understanding of the capacity of art to improve people's lives. The individual assets that were brought to the table, impressive in their own right, offered exponentially more insight when allied in a collaboration seeking to enhance the lives of at-risk youth.

Teens present unique challenges under the best of circumstances. They exist in that middle ground between childhood and adult maturity, and are especially vulnerable not just to outside forces, but to their own internal emotional turmoil. It's a time of life when they often feel lost or alienated or misunderstood. With at-risk youth, whose lives can be immeasurably more complicated or trying, these feelings are frequently exacerbated.

**THE TEEN ART PARK PROJECT
HAS POWERFULLY HIGHLIGHTED
ART AS A TOOL FOR INDIVIDUAL
EMPOWERMENT AND
COMMUNITY BUILDING.**

That's why the idea of creating a context in which these teens feel comfortable, safe, welcomed, engaged and entertained has such great potential.

The process involved in bringing this project to (at least experimental) fruition, was genuinely valuable. The participants were able to figure out ways of effectively supporting one another in pursuit of a common goal. The student designers were able to gain insight into the needs of their at-risk peers, and the community youth were able to share their perspectives and understand that they are valued.

Will the Teen Art Park eventually come to fruition as presented? The fundamentals are sound: provide teens a context for creativity and self-confidence, for individual expression and community building, for fun and an escape from a more turbulent existence.

Of course, in order to be sustainable, the space has to meet the requirements not just of young creatives, but also of the ultimate client—in this case the City of Pasadena. That may necessitate some changes to the larger framework, such as a reduced emphasis on aerosol, with all its real and perceived negative connotations. The Teen Art Park project has highlighted art as a tool for individual empowerment and community building, and that alone is an extremely valuable outcome.



COMMUNITY DEPLOYMENT

ARTNIGHT



The Teen Art Park installation, part of Pasadena's October 2011 ArtNight, gave area youth the chance to show off their creativity.





“Our design teams worked thoughtfully, with intent and passion. They created new friendships, and collectively experienced uncharted territories on the way to what we all hoped would be a transformative proposition.”

**JAMES MERAZ,
PROFESSOR, ART CENTER
COLLEGE OF DESIGN**





“ Research, design and implementation of the Teen Art Park happened through interaction with groups of people who have diverse and sometimes conflicting interests. This presents challenges that are solved through collaboration and is extremely valuable from an educational standpoint.”

- CHRIS ADAMICK, INSTRUCTOR, ART CENTER COLLEGE OF DESIGN



COMMUNITY DEPLOYMENT

ARTNIGHT (YOUTH SURVEY)

How do these pieces make you feel?

They make me feel inspired. They look great.

What is the first thought that comes to your mind as you view these pieces of art?

passion for art.

What about them do you like best?

the uniqueness

What would you change?

Nothing

How do these pieces make you feel?

Inspired to keep developing in art styles.

What is the first thought that comes to your mind as you view these pieces of art?

How much dedication most of the artists put into their work overall

What about them do you like best?

Careful detail and creativity. esp. faces

What would you change?

I wouldn't change anything

How do these pieces make you feel?

Amazement

What is the first thought that comes to your mind as you view these pieces of art?

It makes me want to go and draw.

What about them do you like best?

The color and the designs

What would you change?

Nothing at all

How do these pieces make you feel?

They're awesome!

What is the first thought that comes to your mind as you view these pieces of art?

Beautiful!!!!

What about them do you like best?

That teens made them! And the creativity behind the designs. And that they're going back into the community.

What would you change?

Nothing!

How do these pieces make you feel?

Excited, like being in a cool city.

What is the first thought that comes to your mind as you view these pieces of art?

Wow... raw talent + creativity.

What about them do you like best?

the vivid colors

What would you change?

nothing. I would like to see more!

How do these pieces make you feel?

they make me feel connected with art

What is the first thought that comes to your mind as you view these pieces of art? abstract, unique, beauty

What about them do you like best?

their originality

What would you change?

I would have more art pieces

How do these pieces make you feel?

Happy

What is the first thought that comes to your mind as you view these pieces of art? very creative

What about them do you like best?

they are pieces that make people wanna draw
~~like~~ I like the different designs

What would you change?

nothing I think their awesome

How do these pieces make you feel?

They make me feel cool and calm.

What is the first thought that comes to your mind as you view these pieces of art?

I think of the streets in Attadana.

What about them do you like best?

I like the colors and the texture

What would you change?

I would make the colors a little bit more brighter.

ASPIRATIONS AND OBLIGATIONS

FRED FEHLAU

Provost, Art Center College of Design

Why do we make things? Because it's fun? Because it's cool? Because it's an expression of who and what we are? Because we want to tell someone something or give something to others? The answer is all of the above. By making things we make our world—the cultures and communities in which we live. Really good works of art and design reflect both the personality and experiences of the maker and enriches the lives of others.

At Art Center, most of our students are involved in work that is not just for themselves, but is intended to go out into the world. Whether it's a product, a service or a space—or some amalgamation of them all—the studios and classrooms of the College are essentially a departure point for the things our artists and designers make.

The Teen Art Park concepts are likewise intended to be not just an end unto themselves, but a departure point for the people who will use them, and the communities in which they live. Yes, they are designed to serve as a destination for teens; an escape from often oppressive conditions and an alternative to less productive applications of their creativity. But they are also, and I believe primarily, an arena of self-discovery and self-realization; a place where teens can discover opportunities and roads ahead that they might never have otherwise known existed.

When we invited teens who were actively involved in research that helped our designers create these spaces to utilize the prototypes that were deployed, the results were amazing. Although many were doing essentially the same type of work they might otherwise have been doing in the streets—seeking to make a mark for themselves, of themselves—they were doing it here not as loners or rogues. They were doing it collectively—working together in a progression of process and outcome—much as they saw the diverse teams of Art Center students doing in the creation of these park spaces. Moreover, they were discovering that the application of their creativity in this unique but still more conventional environment could well be the beginning of something rather than an end unto itself.

AT **ART CENTER,**
MOST OF OUR STUDENTS
ARE INVOLVED IN WORK
THAT IS **NOT JUST FOR THEMSELVES,**
BUT IS INTENDED **TO GO OUT INTO**
THE WORLD.

So what then is our obligation, as a pioneering institution of creative disciplines, to these teens whose eyes are suddenly opened to an opportunity, to an avenue that they previously might not have known was available to them? Once they can see down that road and have aspirations that their creativity can take them places beyond their present environment?

I believe it's our responsibility not just to show them the map, but also to help them navigate it. We must continue to reach out to community partners and build ways for these teens to develop successful work practices; to provide social and financial opportunities—access and scholarships to Saturday High, Art Center at Night and other such programs.

This project and these designs, then, are more than a blueprint for groups who might ultimately refine and deploy them. They are a further signal of our belief in the power of art and design to foster social change, and our commitment to carry that belief into communities that can benefit from it.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Teen Art Park project and this publication would not have been possible without the many dedicated individuals and organizations who participated in the initiative, including those listed here.

We are grateful for their significant participation in shaping the project, for their strong support of our students and the College, and for their unwavering commitment to our community.

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President

Fred Fehlau
Provost

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Mariana Amatullo
Vice President

Elisa Ruffino
Director

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Department Chair
David Mokarski
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FACULTY

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Professor

Chris Adamick
Instructor

TEAM ART PAS

Jori Brown
Environmental Design

Adam Patrick Easter Cottingham
Environmental Design

Breon Waters II
Graphic Design

TEAM FREESOL
Anycia Lee
Environmental Design

Evian Olivares
Illustration

Joshua Wong
Environmental Design

TEAM HUB

Seth Baker
Environmental Design

Hugh Chuang
Environmental Design

Thomas Kong
Product Design

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Room 13 at Muir High School
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ONYX Architects
onyxarchitects.com

Western Justice Center
westernjustice.org

La Pintoresca Teen Education Center
The Armory Center for the Arts

Mustangs on the Move
Flintridge Center