FEEL YOURSELF SENSING

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THE PROJECT: "FEEL YOURSELF SENSING"

MISSION

The project will be an interactive, tactile installation experience. People will experience the art piece by engaging their sense of touch - letting texture dictate a narrative arch to invoke emotion. **The target audience is people who experience impaired vision on any and all levels,** along with their family, friends, etc.

WHY?

Feel Yourself Sensing **creates a bridge** between the art world and those who live with impaired vision or blindness.

BACKGROUND

Visual art is a powerful tool for expressing emotions and telling stories. Impaired vision renders visual art inaccessible and thereby disconnects those with impaired vision from a mode in which they could potentially experience or express emotions or narratives. This installation addresses that issue and **recreates/redefines that outlet.**

CONSIDERING: THE TARGET AUDIENCE

THE CURRENT EXPERIENCE . . .

The target audience for this project is everyone that experiences some kind of vision impairedness from mild to completely blind, along with their friends and family. Visual art is one that excludes those with impaired vision because they are not able to physically access that experience. Likewise people with impaired vision more often than not do not go to museums because of a general lack of access.

EMBRACE . . .

It is paramount that individuals on all levels of vision impairedness are embraced and catered to. By catering to the most impaired the rest of those who fall upon the visually imparied spectrum will be accounted for and certainly those without impaired vision will be able to access and enjoy the installation as well.

FOCUS . . .

Making all the accomodations that will make the general exhibtion space accessible must also be a primary focus. These accomodations may include, creating audio guides, braille translations of any literature and textured floor guides for those with walking sticks to indicate where to stop and start, where an entrance/exits, etc.

VISUALIZING: THE SETTING

The installation will be installed in a:

Minimal

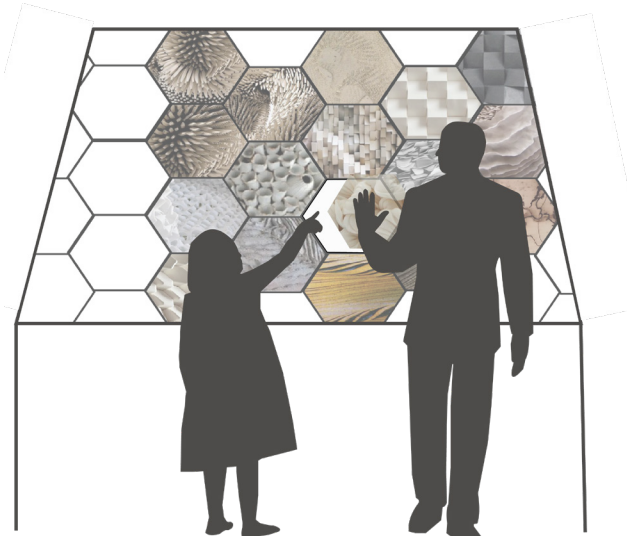
Open Space

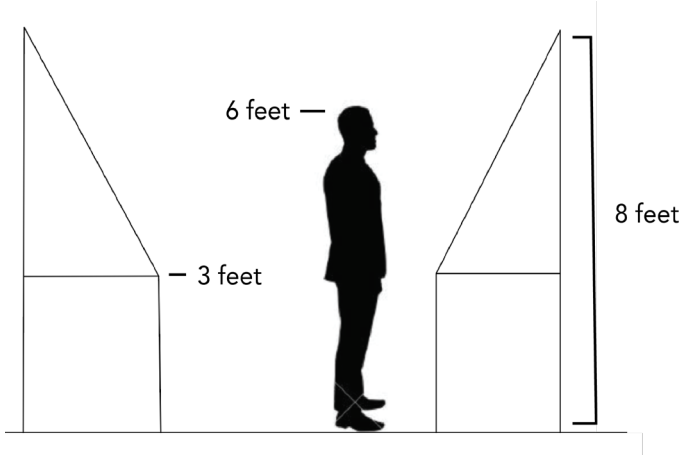
Tall ceilings

White, Bright, Light

Rather than deprive the space of light to emphasize the touch factor it will be very bright (For aesthetic and safety reasons).

VISUALIZING: THE OBJECT OF INTERACTION.





There will be two islands of hexagons one working as a "bank" and the other as a "canvas."

Participants will be prompted to create a narrative or a series of emotions of their own design, either as an individual or in collaboration with a group.

The "bank" will be 6 feet long and three feet wide.

It will be mounted on a table/base that is at a 45 degree angle and 3 feet off the ground.

There will be 24 squares of different textures that can be moved into different places.

DESK RESEARCH: EMOTION & TOUCH; AFFECTIVE HAPTICS

Four haptic (tactile) channels of emotions:

1. physiological changes (heart rate, body temp),
2. physical stimulation (tickling),
3. social touch (hug, handshake),
4. emotional haptic design (e.g., shape of device, material, texture).

"A haptic object/device might help a blind person or someone with autism understand the emotions of the person they're with."*

To express fear, happiness, and anger, participants touched a larger surface area than for gratitude, sympathy, and sadness. Most emotions were expressed with relatively equal intensity. However, for sympathy, participants used significantly more force when compared to fear, anger, and gratitude.

As for the duration between touches, anger had significantly shorter gap duration than happiness and love.

*E. H. Thompson and J. A. Hampton, "The effect of relationship status on communicating emotions through touch," Cognit. Emotion, vol. 25, no. 2, pp. 295–306, 2011.

FIELD RESEARCH: INTERVIEWS

James

James is a 57 year old Legally blind man. He can see fine with glasses and/or contacts. He says he "couldn't survive without his glasses."

This mentality speaks not only to physical implications but also the social arrangement of our environment.

He typically does not go to museums or art exhibitions because he does not view the content as necessarily relevant to him.

The thing that would attract him to an art exhibition would be **being able to have a shared experience with his family.**

Rosalynn & Cindy

Rosalynn is a four year old who is almost completely blind. She was interviewed with her preschool teacher Cindy and her mother.

Rosalynn is in a small, private Catholic Preschool where she is the only visually impaired student

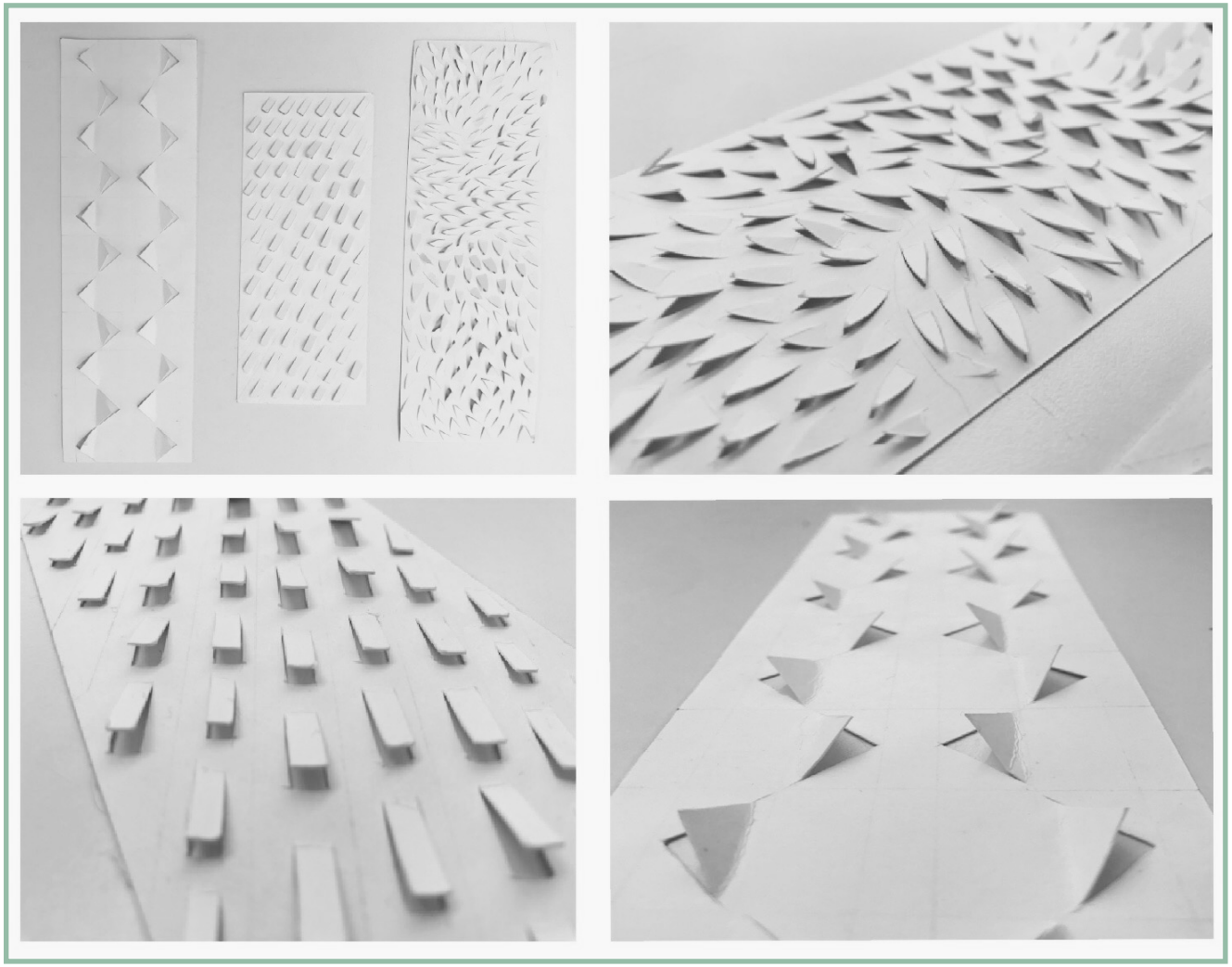
All the children participate in more **touch oriented art** projects than visual, in order to better include Rosalynn.

Cindy cut-out the shape a tree and had kids go and collect leaves and construct a tree by pasting leaves and twigs onto cut-out shapes.

Over summer vacation the kids made touch oriented memory books. Rosalynn used curled up string to represent the ocean.

Hands-on and interactive projects are their primary focus.

RESEARCH → VISUALIZING → PROTOTYPING



Thumbnail sketches and card stalk prototypes inspired by:
Webbing, Honeycombs & Crystalline/Rock Structures

QUANTIFYING AND REFLECTION ON RESEARCH

Reflecting on the Interviews:

Cindy said, **"most often disability is a social problem more than a physical one."**

Our world is centered around sight as the chief sense. We live in a deeply complex visual culture. With this in mind the assumption was in place, prior to interviewing Rosalynn, that she has less of a nuanced undertsanding of the world and a lessened ability to express her thoughts and emotions. This was a misplaced assumption. She employs different forms and senses to communicate and of course has a life experience as complex as any others'.

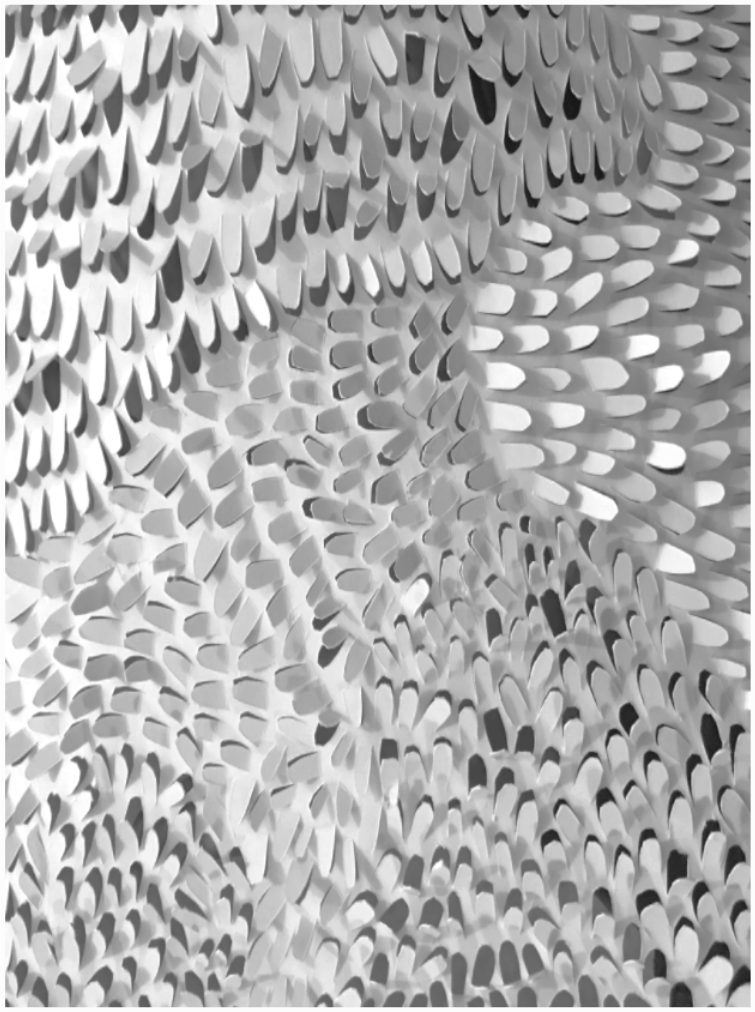
It is much more productive, beneficial and authentic to this community, to facilitate them having or creating their own narrative rather than fixing the series of textures under the assumption that they cannot construct their own experience**.**

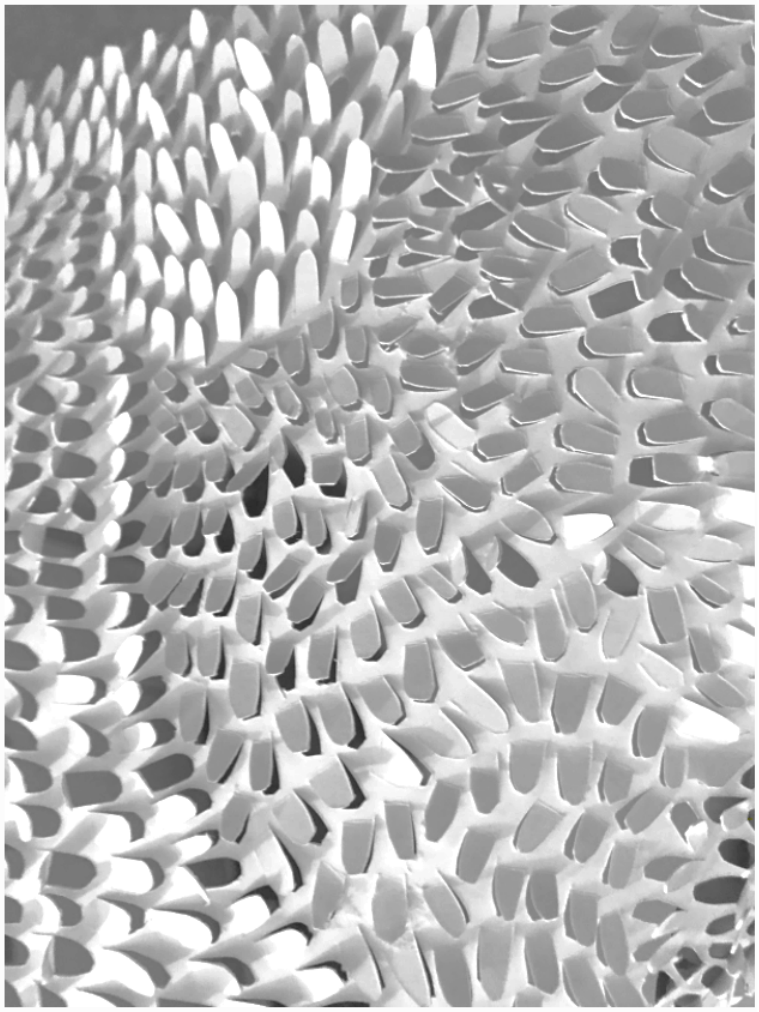
Quantifying the Desk Research:

Without sight, physical space garners accute attention from the blind in order to successfully move through their surroundings. For the visually impaired, touching and feeling the environment is paramount for understanding and orienting oneself in space. Keeping in mind the fundamentality of that relationship and using it to **empower social and emotional communication** (through the emotive textures) is a profound and relevant area to explore.

RESEARCH → VISUALIZING → PROTOTYPING

(FINAL PAPER TEXTURE)





RESEARCH → VISUALIZING → PROTOTYPING

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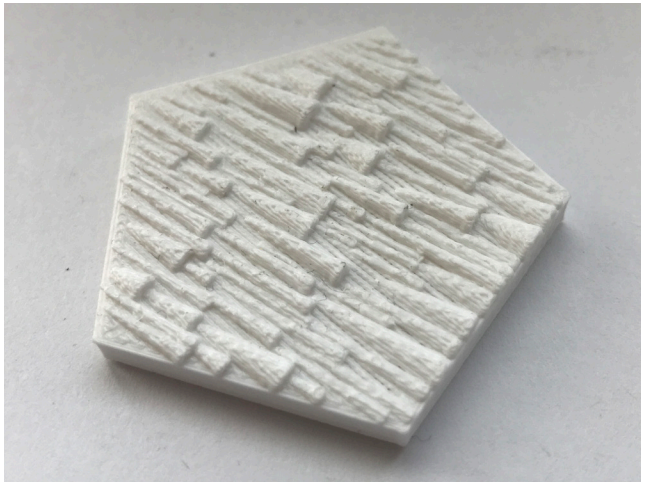

RESEARCH → VISUALIZING → PROTOTYPING

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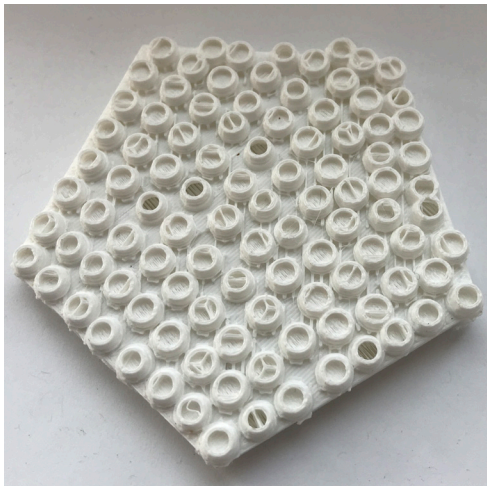
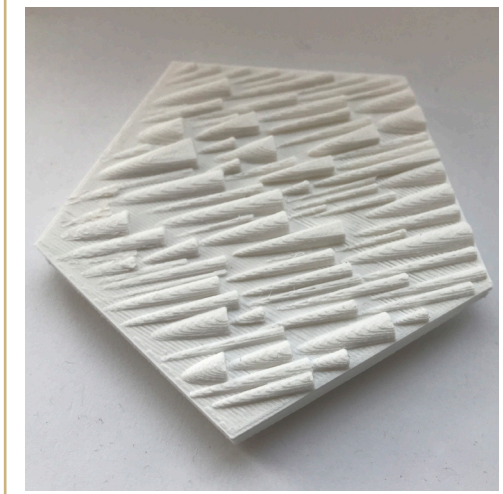
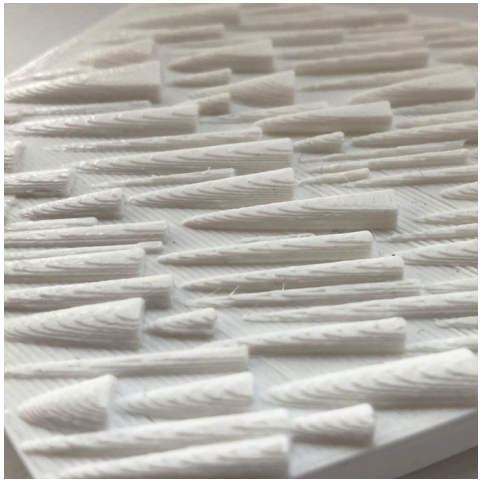
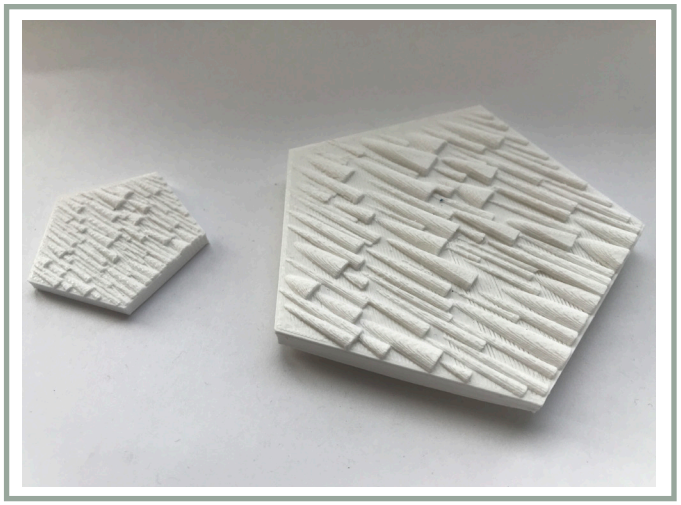




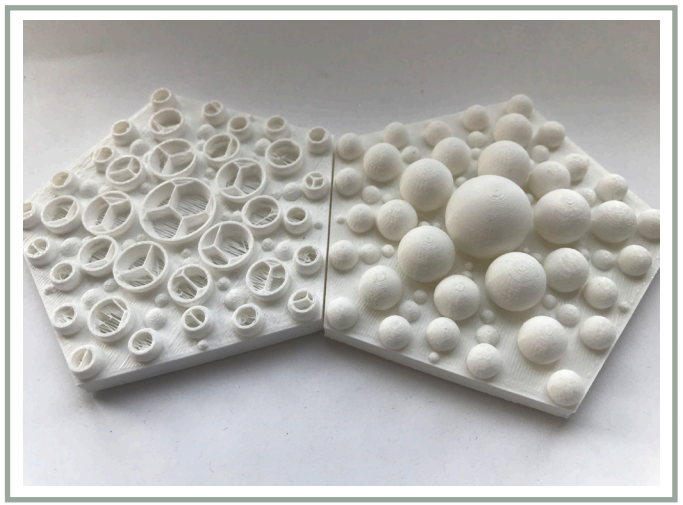



RESEARCH → VISUALIZING → PROTOTYPING

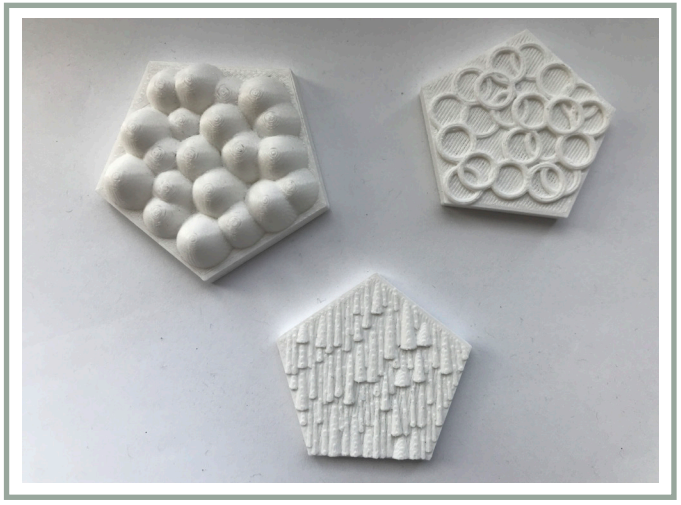
3D PRINTING: CONTINUED



1 INCH DIAMETER VS 4 INCHES



MIS-PRINT & RE-PRINT



THE THREE INITAL TILES

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