

Quiet Resistance

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Identifying the Problem

Virtual Life

My Virtual Life began when I was 10 years old and I made an account on Facebook. It was innocent fun in the early days; Farmville, “liking” for a tbh, overusing emojis, and the early days of memes.

As time went on, I observed how social media became more about capital than connection. The founders of Facebook were using the ways advertisers catch our attention, and began to implement features that were designed to prey on our psychology, attracting us to social media and keeping us there.

Today, a countless number of social media platforms have emerged, all with slightly different functions, yet trying to capitalize in the same way. There’s one for videos, one for really short videos, one for pictures, one for 160 characters of thoughts, one for interests and one for networking (to name a few). There’s something for everyone!

Beyond social media, we have found other ways to exist online. I look at virtual reality, and see how it smacks of consumerism and capitalism. Buy virtual land, build a virtual house, fill it with virtual things; buy a virtual car, boat, or jetski; all so that you can show them off and sell them for more later on (just so you can buy even MORE after that).

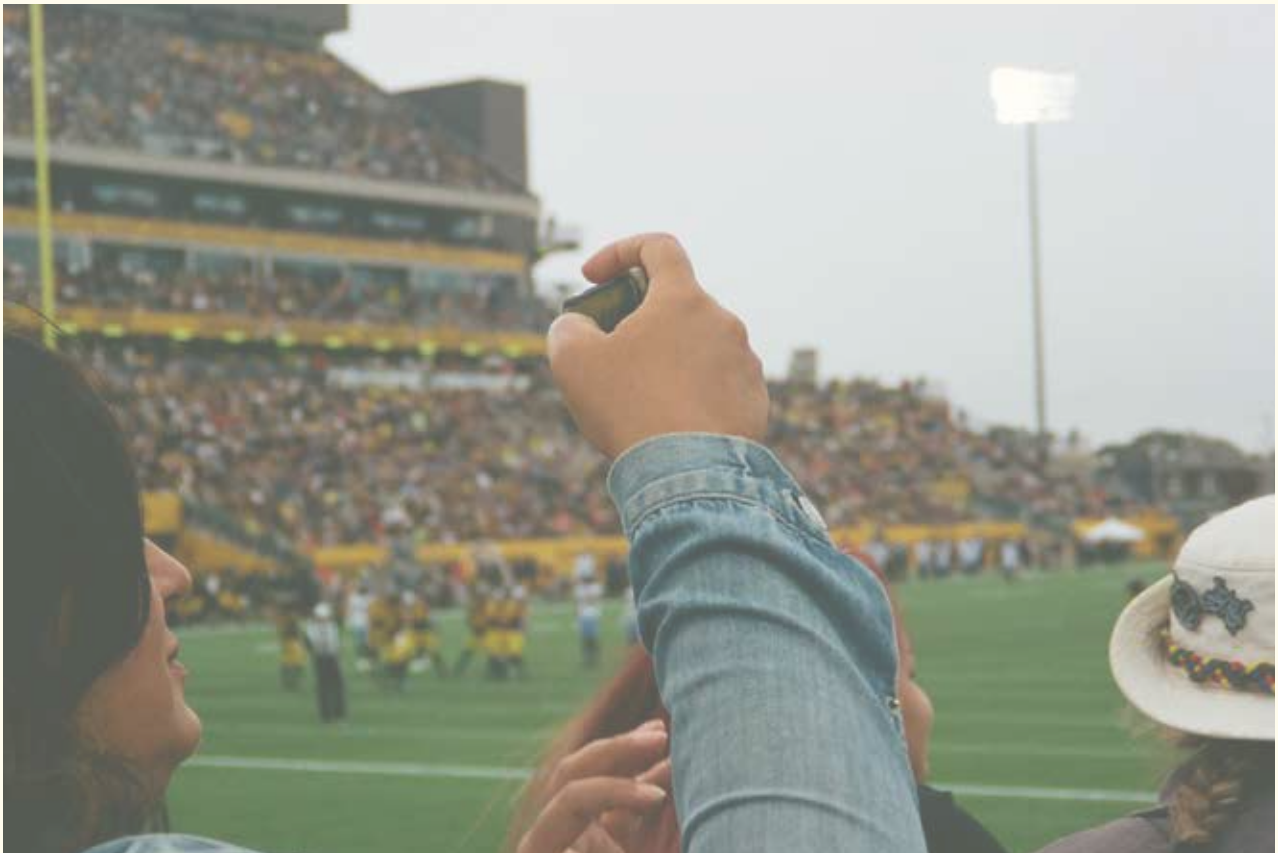


figure 001: photo of a photo

These things compose my definition of Virtual Life. It's the representation of ourselves that we create and live vicariously through on the platforms technology has enabled.

There are some phenomenal strengths to Virtual Life; we have never been so connected. There is an endless stream of art, music, movies, TV, news and opinions at our disposal.

However, Virtual Life comes with its own downfalls; overstimulation and subsequent dopamine addiction; individualism and subsequent polarization; pressure to be perfect in thought and deed and subsequent anxiety; an avalanche of information and subsequent misinformation.

Then there is the problem of compromised privacy. Our private information is a commodity to companies that work in the Virtual World; they buy and sell it to other companies who can sell us what they have determined we need through our information. Have you ever been talking about something and then get an add for it on Instagram a few hours later? That's not a coincidence.

Depending on who you are, these things might even out, but one thing is true: when you spend your attention on Virtual Life, you aren't spending it on Real Life; when you spend money on Virtual Life, you aren't spending it on Real Life. *Investing in Virtual Life comes at the cost of investing in Real Life.*



figure 002: Smoke Break

Understanding the Problem

separating the self

One of the most widely known theories of the “separated self” is Freud’s theory of the psyche. He likens the mind to an iceberg with three depths. The Superego is the only part of the mind visible to the world; it holds all of the morals and standards that we acquire from family and society. The Id and the Ego live beneath the surface. The Id is the most primal part of our brains, controlling our urges and cravings for food and stimulation. The Ego is the mediator between our primal desires and our outward facing image. *The promise of Virtual Life is that our most base sociological desires of connection and affirmation will finally be fulfilled* through the crafting of an idealized version of ourselves.

Christian Mystic and Trappist Monk, Thomas Merton, speaks of the idea of the False Self in his book, *New Seeds of Contemplation*. The False Self is rooted in the fear of rejection. It is a version of ourselves that we present to others; a facade that signals that we are knowledgeable, capable, powerful and honourable. It’s not wrong to strive to be all of these things, Merton suggests that when that desire is rooted in fear of rejection, we’re only pretending to be those things, rather than genuinely being them.

The False Self and our Real Self are essentially sub categories of Freud’s outward facing Superego, which when played out through *Virtual Life, becomes a mask we hide behind* to become a cool, calm, articulate and virtuous person, when those things might not be true for the Real Life version of ourself.

Visionary media theorist Marshall McLuhan also saw this division between person and technology in the 1960’s. He saw how technology acts as an extension of our selves to improve our efficiency, but also how, through creating these extensions, we subject ourselves to our own “self-amputation,” which requires numbing a part of us. (McLuhan, 42-43) He uses the example of the wheel being an extension of our feet. When we delegate the function of movement to the efficiency of the wheel, we surrender our awareness to the speed and the inherent danger that comes with it, through numbness. Without numbness, we would be terrified of moving at 100 km/hr.

Virtual Life is undoubtedly an extension of our Real Life. Let’s take online discourse as an example. How many of the inflammatory words said between people in Virtual Life would be said face-to-face? The Virtual world numbs us to make us feel big and important and others seem small and simple. *Virtual Life numbs us to the fact that the profiles that we are interacting with are Real people.*



figure 003: Infringing



figure 004: Necessary Infrastructure

accepting inevitability

Technology and Virtual Life feel like a necessary evil. It's nearly impossible to not exist online when that's where everything is shared. It's how we hear about engagements, babies, birthdays, and concerts. It's a way that we stay connected to friends. We can see what they're up to and what they are thinking. At this point, we rely on it too much and it feels like we'll need it forever.

Although Virtual Life will likely continue to be a part of our lives, there is a more thoughtful way to engage with it. In *How To Do Nothing*, author Jenny O'dell acknowledges that social media and its attention-hungry disposition makes it hard to balance existing in both the Virtual world and the Real one.

“We have to be able to do both: to contemplate and participate, to leave and always come back, where we are needed... To stand apart is to take the view of the outsider without leaving, always oriented toward what it is you would have left. It means not fleeing your enemy, but knowing your enemy, which turns out not to be the world, but the channels through which you encounter it.” (O'dell, 61)

Rather than giving up and moving to the woods, O'dell proposes that we “stand apart”. *When we stand apart, we give ourselves the space to reflect on the Virtual world and then decide how we want to interact with it going forward.*

~~THE 430/4/20/20~~
 IT IS MY RESPONSE?
 MAKING?
 EMBRACING THE 'REAL'
 SOLITUDE PERSONAL
 MEDITATION PRAYER
 ENJOYING THE CREATIVITY
 GROUNDED IN HUMILITY

RESIST	EMBRACE	FOR
COMMERCIALISM	COMMUNITY	GO
INFLUENCER	PATIENCE	WHAT WE
PERFORMANCE	FREEDOM	ARE
PERSONALITY	IMPLICITY	UN
DIGITAL PRESENCE	REAL MATERIAL THINGS	BE
MORE AND MORE	FRIENDS	AM
DEPRESSED OR	SAYING LESS	FRACTION
EXHAUSTION	LISTENING	
WHAT WE'VE SEEN	ENOUGH RESTRAINT	CONTROL AGENCY

What am I Trying To Say?

IS THE FRUIT OF SOCIAL MEDIA
 BAD
 - DIVISION
 - INDIVIDUALISM
 - FALSE SELF
 SELF
 - PRESSURE TO PRODUCE
 - PRESSURE TO
 - SELLING YOUR
 BECOMES 'REAL SELF'
 FOR OTHERS

SO SOCIAL ME
 FALSE SELF
 PERFORM
 METAVERSE
 "DIGITAL LIFE"
 A MIDDLE GROUND BETWEEN
 TECH. AND REAL LIFE.

figure 005: Journal Collage

recontextualizing

So what does all of this tell me about my relationship to Virtual life, and how do I bring that into the context of this project?

Throughout the rest of her book, O'dell reflects on time, places and phenomena that keep her present and connected to Real Life. She talks about bird watching, understanding ecology and the history of the land, silent retreats and sitting in the rose garden.

These responses to Virtual Life brings to mind the primary subject of Merton's writings: contemplation. For Merton, contemplation is a spiritual practice, but it's a similar headspace to the contemporary notions of meditation and mindfulness. He says:

'Contemplation is the highest expression of our intellectual and spiritual life. It is that life itself, fully awake, fully active, fully aware that it is alive. It is spiritual wonder. It is spontaneous awe at the sacredness of life, of being. It is gratitude for life, for awareness and for being.' (Merton, 27)

Both of these authors seem to suggest a way of immersing oneself in the unmanufactured or in Real Life.

When I spend time in contemplation focusing on Real Life, I feel more connected to myself, and when I'm more connected to myself, it's easier to live in a way that is more true to the real me in the context of Real Life, and Virtual Life as well.

Through this project I will represent the things that I look to to remain connected to Real Life and ultimately, to the real me. To distill down to four values, **Nature, Relationships, Imperfection and Stillness** are the things that ground me in Real Life. **I want the furniture that I create to enable and also represent my quiet resistance to Virtual Life by using these values to inform my design.**

WHAT IS
FOR
FANS TO
HUMANS
SHOULD
CREATED
ND
EXTENSION OF
MOUTH
AND EARS
AND EYES
MARSH
MC

Values

NATURE



figure 006:White Oak Endgrain

My connection to nature was strengthened in the summers that I worked at the greenhouse; planting sunflowers, watching them grow, then cutting them down, and watching the bees and clouds while I worked. Growing up in Niagara, nature was always close by. My friends and I would spend our days exploring ravines, hiking trails, and swimming in the river.

Ironically, I had never associated the wood I use to make furniture to the trees that I'm surrounded by. They always seemed to be separate things. It wasn't until I was sanding some white oak parts at work when I noticed the complexity and depth in this tiny section of end grain (fig. 006): a commingling of late wood, early wood, medullary rays and pores. Even though I was on the clock, I couldn't help but take a few minutes to stare into the depths present in this minuscule fraction of a tree.

Time spent in nature is supremely peaceful. I find that when I am surrounded by nature, I feel better. Maybe it's understanding my smallness amidst it's vastness, maybe it's some evolutionary inclination. Maybe it's how nature is so effortlessly powerful, seen through volcanos, hurricanes and thunderstorms, or how it creates ecosystems that sustain its own specific ecology and adapt to change when needed.

When I compare the environment of Real Life and the environment of Virtual Life, Virtual Life feels coercive. Sure, likes, follows, comments and views feel good, good enough to keep us coming back for more - doing exactly what it was designed to do. Our attention is one of our most valuable resources, and Virtual Life seeks to exploit it in the pursuit of capital. Nature, on the other hand, doesn't need us to sustain itself. In fact, it would be better without us. Nonetheless, it provides for us. The trees create oxygen, the soil produces food, the wind and water create energy. Nature is always giving, without needing anything in return.

I remember there was a time when I felt so comfortable and content being alone with my thoughts. I felt like I was talking to a friend. We would go for walks, listen to music or do nothing at all.

Some associate stillness with meditation, contemplation, or prayer. Whether focused on a specific deity or just on the present as many contemporary self help thinkers might say, stillness is a time for emptying your mind to focus on your life; the things that trouble you, things that excite you, things that you're grateful for and things you're not sure how to feel about. In a word, it's confrontational.

I see stillness as direct response to the pull of Virtual Life. Virtual Life often acts as an escape from the hard and complicated things. In Virtual Life, there are a lot of voices telling you what to wear, what to invest in, who to like, who to believe, what to think; It's a lot of noise.

When we make time for stillness, we shut out the noise of our Virtual Lives (and Real Lives for that matter) enough to reflect on the reality of our own lives. In stillness, I ask myself important questions like "Why did I react in that way?", "What is really important to me?" and "What kind of person do I want to become?". Through stillness, I realize my problems are not as scary as I think, that I need to make an apology, and that I'm lucky to be alive.

STILLNESS



figure 007: Place of Stillness

IMPERFECTION



figure 009: Peeling Back

I make mistakes every day, and I don't think that's uncommon.
Imperfection is beautiful. Imperfection is what makes me, me and you, you.

In life, we inevitably encounter suffering, struggle and loss. These times of adversity produce empathy, gratitude, sensitivity and a deep heart, if we are able to reconcile and heal. Who would you be without the adversity you have endured and healed from?

When I think of imperfection, I think of how hard it is to acknowledge our own. It takes humility to admit when we are wrong. When we do make mistakes, it is hard for us to forgive ourselves and easy to believe that our mistakes define the kind of person that we are. When we embrace our imperfection and forgive ourselves, we grow from our mistakes rather than let them define us. On the other hand, it can also be hard to extend forgiveness to others when their imperfections affect us. It takes humility to forgive others.

I've seen how Virtual Life is a place that we become the best, most ideal version of ourselves; the very realization of our False Self. Virtual Life has built up an expectation that people need to be perfect. However, the world is a better place when we share our imperfection. Our vulnerability makes space for other people to accept their imperfection as well. In spaces where imperfection is normalized, we can bear our scars without fear. We don't have to hide them, conceal them, or work around them. We can celebrate them, and even showcase them, because scars are a part of our story. This is a freedom of Real Life that cannot be found in Virtual Life.

“Friends are the spice of life.” Sometimes, after hanging out with friends, I realize that I’m still smiling and laughing at things that were said, and that’s when this phrase comes to mind. There’s nothing like being with people that understand you at a core level and still choose to stick with you.

When I talk about relationships, I’m talking about community; supportive, affirming, creative, honest. People that you can trust with your thoughts and ideas, people who want to see you succeed, and people who you want to succeed as well. A vestment of mutual trust. Community used to be all we knew, but is becoming hard to find in our increasingly individualistic society.

Another thing I value about relationships is the coexistence of different beliefs. During the pandemic, social media became the de facto way for most people to connect, and after it was over, it was surprising to actually talk to people and hear the complexity of their beliefs that explain why they think the way they do. This made me realize how social media homogenizes our vision to see the world in a binary “us and them” way, through its inherent function of information dissemination; feeding us the opinions of people we respect and agree with, but also broadcasting the most extreme and controversial perspectives. In the framework of Real Life, we have the opportunity to form deep relationships that transcend our differences.

The reality is that people are so much more complex and beautiful than we experience in Virtual Life. In Virtual Life, we can’t see facial expressions or read body language, and can’t know the depths of a person. Virtual Life does not give enough information to form an accurate picture. We see what we want to see of a person without their feedback, and they get to be who they want to be without any feedback from us.

RELATIONSHIPS



figure 008: Searching Together

Searching for Answers

Precedents

When I look for inspiration, I try to first look outside the practice of furniture making. I often look to things that are adjacent like architecture and sculpture so that I can make direct connections to materials and forms that can be used as jumping off points for further visual ideation.

Studying how artists see their work makes their objects all the more rich and profound. It helps me to understand how I can incorporate ideas about life into things that I make.

Seeing an artist's work in a series also helps me to get a better grasp of an artist's overarching visual language and how I can make a visual language of my own.

Isamu Noguchi and JB Blunk

Isamu Noguchi creates balance through the how the forms he sculpts out of stone ebb and flow around each other. Noguchi said that the spirit of these objects existed before he touched them. When I take in the work of Noguchi, there is a spiritual feeling to his pieces. He approached his materials with reverence and approached his task as revealing what the piece of stone wanted to become.

Noguchi's friend and contemporary JB Blunk shared a similar belief. They both shared a respect for natural materials that permeated their work in sculpture. They would both work with the imperfections of natural materials that were presented to them. They both took cues from the shape of the material as it was presented to them to inform the features and final shape of the work piece.

The outcome of this respect for natural material is an object that reveals the unforced beauty of Real Life.



figure 010: Venus by Isamu Noguchi



figure 011: Chair by JB Blunk



figure 012:Untitled by Donald Judd



figure 013: Brutalism: Fyodor Dostoevsky Theatre for Dramatic Arts

Donald Judd

Donald Judd's geometric forms create strong visual tension as seen in figure 012. I think what makes this piece so effective is the scale of the two pieces, but also the materials chosen. Even though the metal tube is much smaller, it is understood that it is much heavier.

When creating an art object, or a sculpture as Judd does, it is important to view the materials in a more contextual way; not seeing them for what they are, but for what they are perceived as. Judd observed how some materials are so synonymous that they essentially become a colour. When creating visual language, connecting characteristics of materials to other ideas like wood being warm and metal being cold, or wood being light and metal being heavy can create narrative in a piece. In this piece, I can feel the tension between these two very simple shapes.

Judd's use of familiar and pure geometric shapes communicates an idea very clearly, especially when it is displayed as a series of variations on a theme as Judd's work is often shown. The juxtaposition of basic geometric shapes makes the work rich with tension, yet understandable.

Judd's work reminds me of a minimized representation of Brutalism. Brutalism uses the same bold geometric motifs as Judd does, but because of the scale at which it functions, this style of architecture is free to morph these motifs to different scales and orientations.

Both Brutalism and Judd's sculpture work use an elemental design language that emphasizes the relationships between parts.

While looking for furniture precedents, I wanted to find furniture pieces that had the potential to uphold the values that I am working with. I was looking for how furniture designers create narrative in their designs.

I began looking for furniture typologies and objects that have a place in ritual; incense holders, candelabras, kneeling stools etc.

I wanted to look closely at lounge chairs because there is a natural connection between sitting and stillness. Chairs are unique objects because they have the ability to change your posture and your perception.

I was also searching for examples of how furniture designers create a visual language in the context of a collection. I was specifically looking for how they spread a language through different typologies of pieces

Trading Lounge

Olivia Bossy



figure 014: Steel foot, reminiscent of Judd

The chunkiness of these chairs gives the materials the space to express themselves. The elemental quality (or just how non-sinuous they are) breaks the whole down into individual parts, making it more digestible and understandable. This quality highlights the proportional choices made by the designer.



figure 015: Trading Lounge by Olivia Bossy

Glyph alpha and beta,
by Kwangho Lee for Hem

This collection of furniture reminds me of how architecture duplicates motifs in different ways. This collection of furniture is an example of implementing a visual language that is simple but also interesting. The colours and ability to rotate the pieces are a plus.

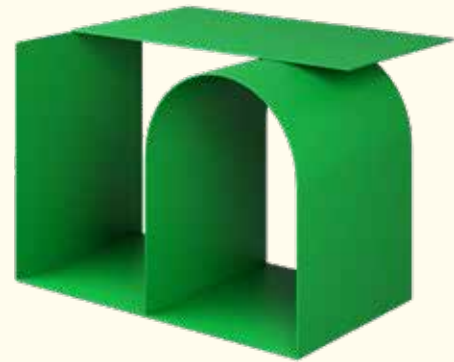
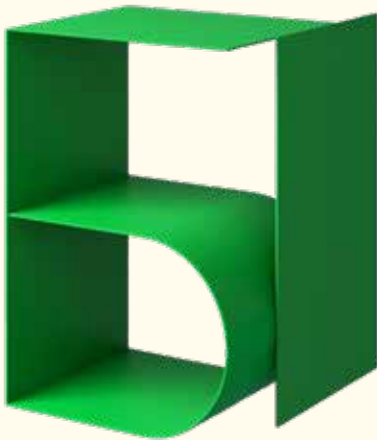


figure 016:Beta



figure 017:Alpha





figure 018: Lounge Chair by Marzia Chierichetti



figure 019:Lounge Chairs by Mini Boga



figure 023:Puffy Lounge Chair by Faye Toogood and Hem

more furniture, sculptures
and architecture that
inspired the next phase of
design



figure 025: Masonite stool table and Bench
by Patrick Parish



figure 026:Kelly Console by Christopher
Stuart



figure 020: Deborah
Lea Credenza by Kate
Duncan



figure 021: Bunker Church by Claude Parent
and Paul Virillio



figure 024: JB Blunk Residence



figure 027: Shiva Pentagonal by
Isamu Noguchi



figure 029: Stonebody-Soapstone carved by CNC



figure 030: Carving Experiments



figure 031: Turning Experiments

Creating A Visual Language

Practicing Imperfection

Last year, I made an interesting discovery while experimenting with cutting soapstone on the CNC. When I was preparing the stock for the CNC, I accidentally trimmed material off of the wrong side, meaning I would not have 2 perfectly clean sides. The outcome from this mistake was a fascinating mixture of perfection and imperfection. Both the machined and raw surfaces had their own beauty. The beauty and honesty of imperfection was something that I wanted to chase with further material studies.

I did some exploration into how I might bring about the natural beauty of materials. I worked with wood, soapstone and metal in different ways, using different sculpting methods and machining techniques. I found the most interesting results came when I used a material that was not perfect. I picked up some salvaged 4x4 beams from a wood supplier just for their mass and realized that machining these salvaged posts was giving me a very similar result to my experiments with soapstone on the CNC. When machined, these posts revealed nail holes that had oxidized, voids left over from their previous function, or small cracks that occurred through the years.

The characteristics of the material became the driver of forms during my tests. The scale of a piece of material, the density and direction of the grain and the piece's "imperfections" made me wonder, how can I machine this piece in a way that highlights this materials uniqueness? Similar to Noguchi and Blunk, the imperfection of these pieces were not to be hidden or avoided, but used to present the authentic well worn beauty of this natural material to the viewer.

These physical tests helped me see how different forms (cylinders, flat faces, spheres, convex profiles) reacted to imperfect materials, and gave me some starting points for further designing.

Separating & Combining

A visual language is a set of rules and constraints that are used during the design process. Using visual language as a design tool keeps everything cohesive. It keeps all of your ideas in the same realm, keeping everything the same amount of normal or idiosyncratic. This method can be used very rigidly or very loosely. It's meant to simplify the decision-making process by limiting options.

To begin making a visual language, I analyzed the forms and aesthetics I have been researching and the ideas and values that I have been trying to describe. I want to find crossover between ideas and forms so that the objects I make are infused with meaning. For example, my desire to represent how every person is made up of their own unique set of stories and parts plays well metaphorically with Donald Judd's elemental design. Drawing on Judd's ideas, I began sketching.

My starting point for sketching forms was based on a geometric shape. From there I might extrude that profile, extrude a profile out that profile, or round over certain edges, in different orders or different ways. I would then combine these forms with a complimentary form, usually in a different axis to begin forming the framework of a piece of furniture. Out of this process, I found a few options for a visual language that I wanted to explore further, so I used each option to sketch full pieces of furniture.

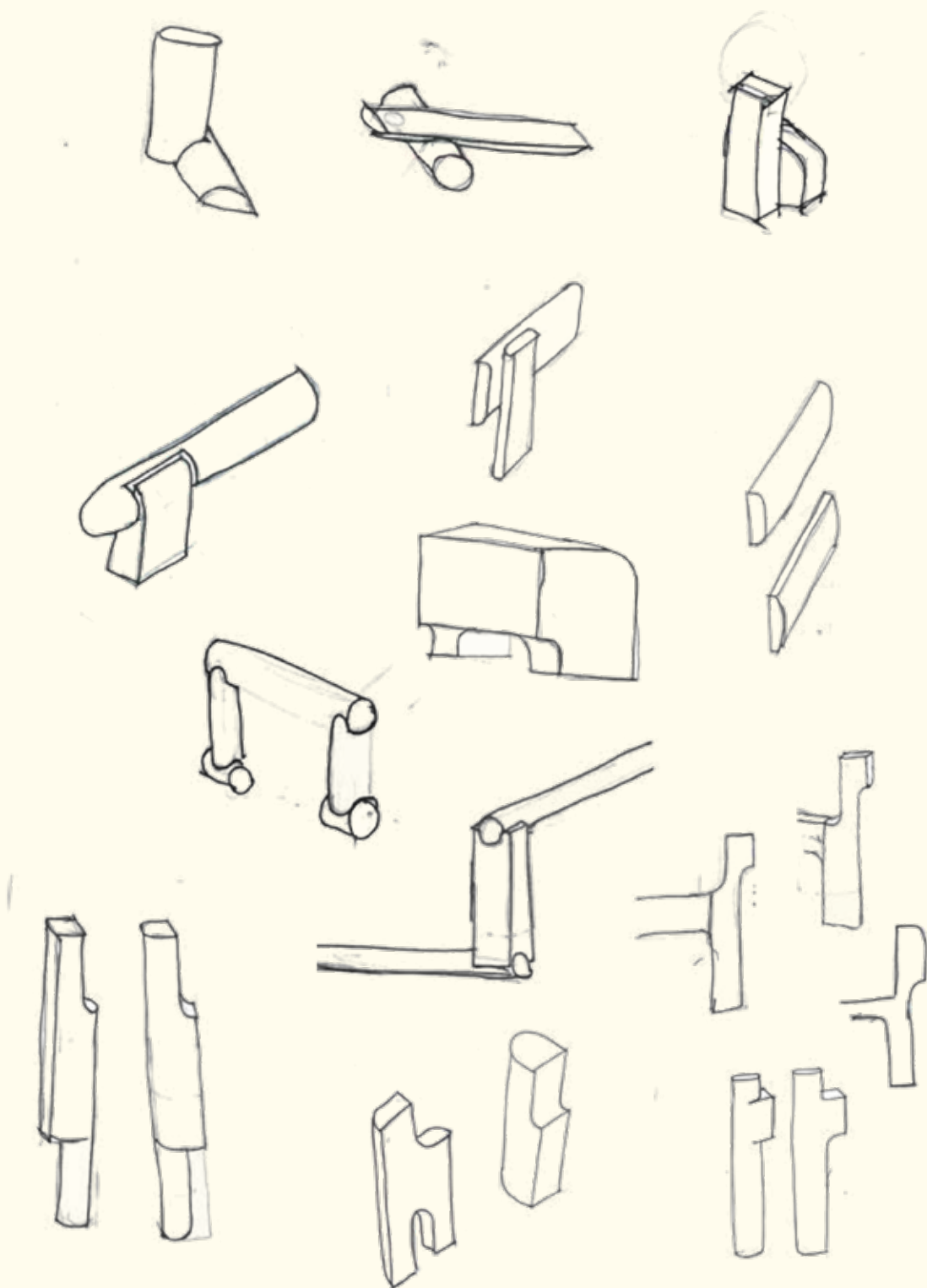


figure 028: Sketches of relationships between forms

Quiet Resistance Taking Form

Chairs

I wanted the chairs to actively present the complexity of the materials. I wanted this beauty to be within reach; able to be felt and examined similar to my experience with the white oak.

I wanted the pieces I made to embody how each person is made up of many stories and experiences. For this reason I focused on the relationships and connections between parts. I wanted there to be clear delineations between the parts while they are still part of the same whole.

Meditation furniture was a point of interest for me because I wanted to understand the ergonomics of stillness. A common theme among meditation chairs, stools, and benches are that they are low to ground and they are made to be undistracting ergonomically so that the user can fully immerse themselves in their moment of stillness. For this reason, I decided to design with upholstery.

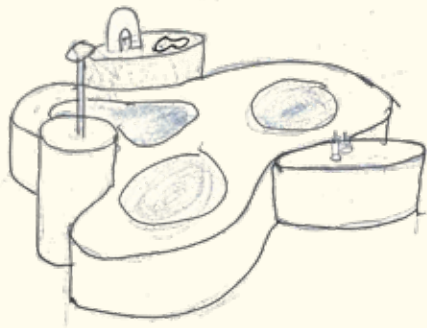


figure 033: early concept for multi-person seating

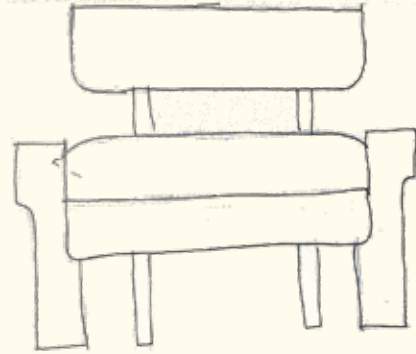


figure 034: focusing on nesting joints

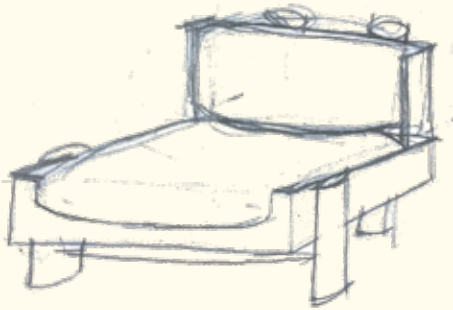


figure 035

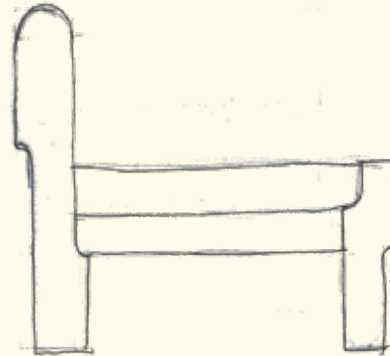


figure 036

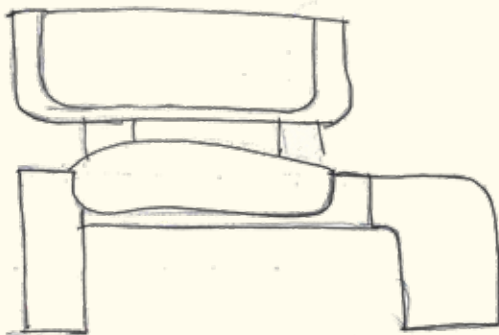


figure 037: utilizing a big fir block for one leg

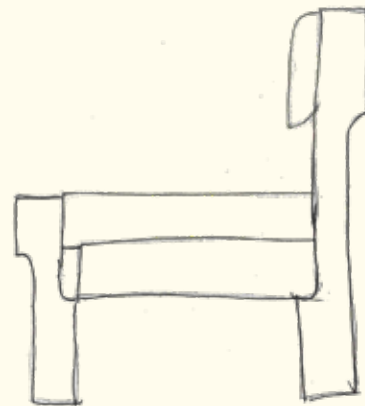


figure 038



figure 039: Early concept exploring a flat seat w/ tactile legs



figure 040: First concepts of chairs with a cushion; exploring elemental design



figure 041



figure 042



figure 043: Exploring upholstery and frame relationships



figure 044: Fine tuning side profile



figure 045



figure 047



figure 046

figure 048: utilizing a big fir block for one leg, thinking outside of the form factor of the beam

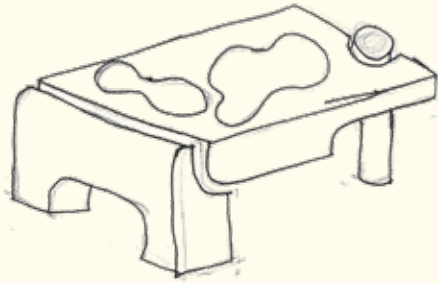


figure 049

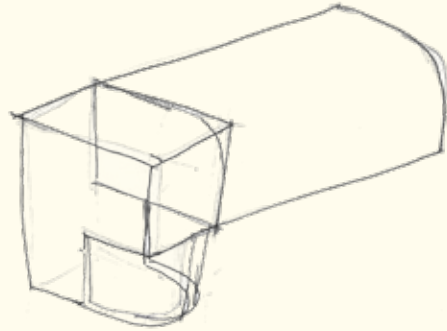


figure 050



figure 051



figure 052: integrating soapstone



figure 053



Table

The table was inspired by the form of found material. At a wood supplier that I frequent, I saw that they had 2 foot long offcuts from their Douglas Fir timber framing beams. These beams are very large cross sections, ranging from 12 by 12 to 12 by 8. I initially picked up these beams to make a large sculptural carving out of it, but I was unsure of how to begin the sculptural process so I sat in the shop for a few months as I waited for ideas to develop of what to do with such a large piece of material. In the same spirit, I bought a large chunk of soapstone. I was able to find a piece of material that matched well with my large block of fir.

As I began developing the elemental visual language while keeping these materials in view, I could imagine how the elements could fit together in ways that represented the visual language in a larger scale.

The table as a typology is interesting because it can be used as a platform for display, like a plinth but can also be a focal point in itself.

Light

The idea to create a lamp came about after the table and chair ideas were well underway. As I was thinking about what I had in mind, it seemed that creating a light would be a good way to round out the collection.

The form of the light was informed by some a significant piece of material I picked up early in the year. I picked up some wood for some ancillary studies and as I was cashing out, the owner came up to me and told me that one of the beams I grabbed was salvaged from a distillery in Toronto. The workers who installed the beams had signed their names on one of the faces with a date in 1930. Before I left the owner said “make sure you do something good with it” so thats what I am aiming to do. I want to preserve and showcase the markers of this material’s old age. What better furniture type to choose to highlight than a lamp!

I wanted to use stone again in this piece to spread stone throughout the collection, not just one piece. I first imagined using the same soapstone as in the table but then a professor suggested I look into alabaster. I realized that this change in material would require a change in form as well. Soapstone as an opaque stone, lends itself to creating a directionally focused light where as alabaster as a translucent stone, is better suited to ambient light. This evolution can be seen through the evolution from directional (figure 053) to a more ambient light and even a sconce made out of bent metal (figure 056).



figure 053



figure 054



figure 055



figure 056



figure 057



figure 058

Creating a Solution

The Act of Making

The greatest joy I have found in this work is in revealing what is already present, and out of that, composing objects that draw a person into that inherent beauty. I bring an intention into making choices; I choose where to place knots, where to use figured grain or straight grain, what piece of stone to use and how to orient it. These choices make these pieces of furniture more than just pieces of furniture.

At this point, furniture is ubiquitous and has a societally prescribed meaning. However, through the years of being in this program, I have seen that furniture is much more than furniture. Furniture affects our posture and our perspective. Furniture creates a feeling in a room. But most of all, furniture is a portal to the natural world.

As I chisel and shape wood, I am revealing the years of history that this tree has lived through; I am witness to where worms made their homes, branches have formed, and holes have been drilled. As I form and polish stone, I am revealing the different layers of sediment that have been compressed together over hundreds of thousands of years. I am seeing how impurities have leached in to create fissures.

When working with materials, I am staring into the soul of Real Life and I am connecting to an existence that I am also a part of. Like us, trees live and grow, produce and provide for others, are struck with adversity and grow in spite of it, get sick, and eventually die.

Confronting the reality of death is unsettling, but rousing. When we acknowledge that our days are numbered, it inspires us to fill them with meaning. What will you choose to fill your days with? If I get to fill most of mine with uncovering the beauty of this life with words and objects, I'll be happy.



figure 059



figure 061



figure 060

Windbrace Chair



figure 061

These chairs are made to be a platform for stillness and conversation. Ergonomically, they sit lower to the ground than most chairs, which removes a person from their typical perspective. The change of physical posture opens the door for a change in emotional posture as well.



figure 062



figure 063

Waxed canvas is hard wearing and has a feeling of durability to it. This material carries marks of use with it through time. These qualities and also the rich, neutral colours that I found made this an easy choice.

Windbrace Chair



figure 064

I decided to make 2 different chairs in order to facilitate face to face interaction. In making two chairs, I am also able to represent how every individual is composed up of many parts, and all people are different. The two chairs look similar at a glance, but when you spend time with them, you can see the crossover between the two, and also the ways in which they are different.



figure 065



figure 066

Both chairs are made from reclaimed wood from Ontario barns. I was attracted to the dense grain and the imperfections that these beams bared, so in the process of fabrication, I was very mindful about where certain features would land as you can see in this piece through the knots, nail holes and graphic grain on the front faces.

Timberframe Table



figure 066

The scale of the materials in this table bring the intricacy of nature and the beauty of imperfection closer to our perception.

Every wavering in the grain tells a story of an event in the trees life and how it still continued to grow. A tree's growth is affected by many factors. Proximity to new trees growing or old trees dying can affect the density of growth rings. Natural causes such as fires, dry seasons, infections, and insects can introduce defects. All of these factors result in subtle changes in the grain of the wood that I reveal through working with it.

Choosing stone to work with is always a funny process. At the stoneyard, all of the pieces look rough and dirty and you really can't tell what the end result will look like. I was very surprised when I applied oil to see an array of reds, blues and browns, striking hairline veins, and small deposits of metal.

Working with this material was challenging because the machinery in our shop is not meant to work at this scale. This forced me to work more with hand tools which brought me closer to the process of transforming material.



figure 067



figure 068

Caskhouse Light



figure 069

Using stone in the table and the light tell the story of each stone tells the story of its origin; where it's from, and what that place's environment was like, and the events that caused erosion and compression. The process of stone forming can take thousands to millions of years, so again we see the wisdom and longevity of nature. The alabaster shade shows the intricacy of nature.

Many choices went into this piece; I chose a piece of stone that was very imperfect. It had a very clear fissure through it and lots of veining, but I decided that I wanted to use those things in the final piece. after breaking the piece out to a rough block, I chose which side would be the face of the light. With the beam, I chose to preserve the face of this piece with writing on it and make it the front face to make it prominent. Along with that, I decided to keep the hole at the bottom so it would remain visible and not hidden. It is also milled so that the hole is off centre.

All of these small choices make the light an embodiment of Real Life through marks of imperfection and signs of age.



figure 070



figure 071







figure 073



figure 074







figure 076



figure 077



figure 078



figure 079



figure 080



figure 081



figure 082



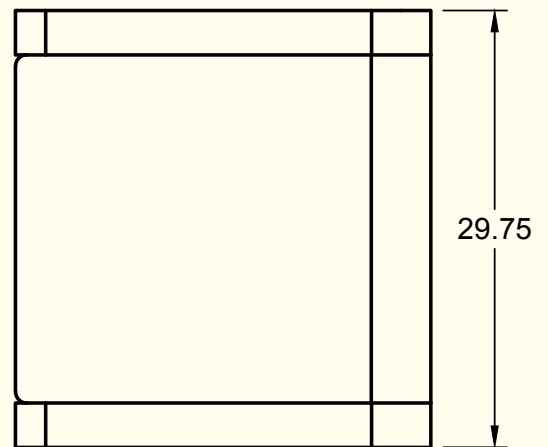
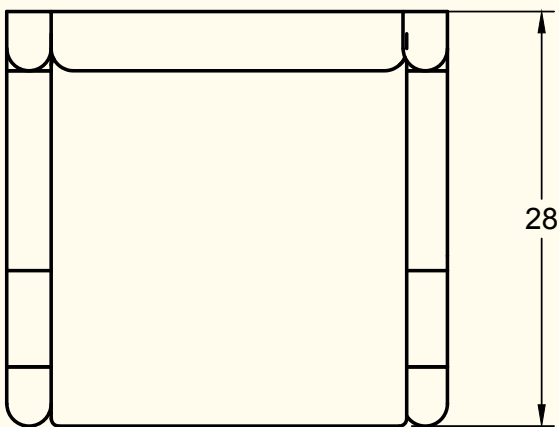
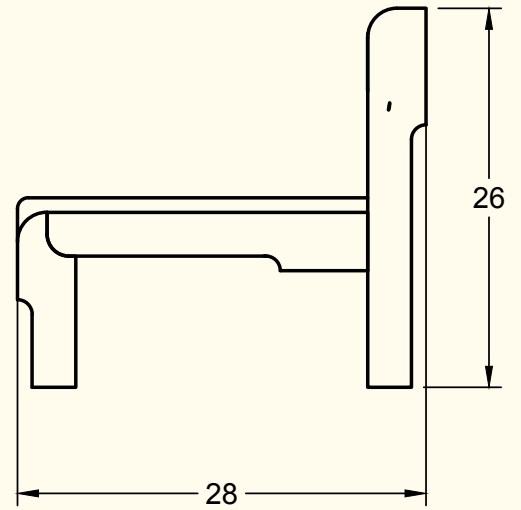
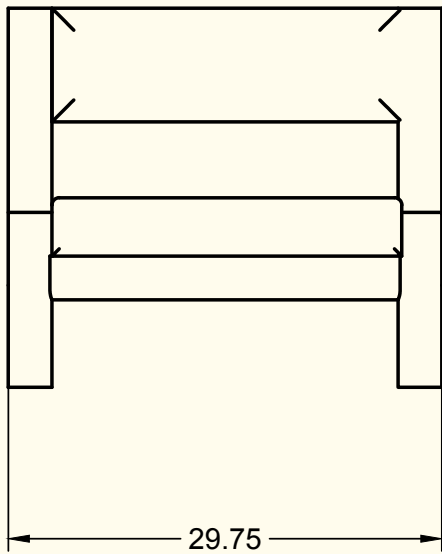


figure 084



figure 085

Dimensions



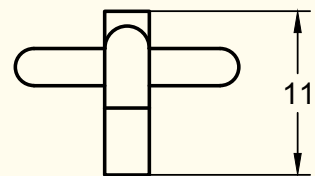
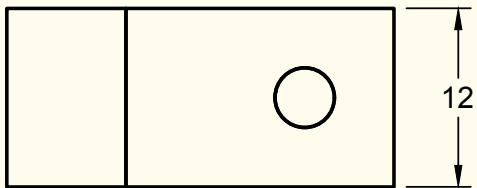
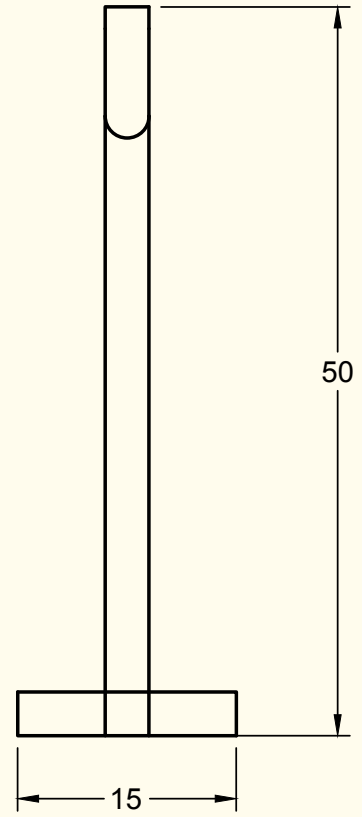
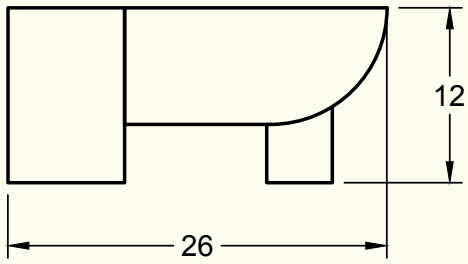




figure 087

Where to Next?

I chose to pursue this topic because I saw a need for change in my own life. I have felt a loss of self at the hands of Virtual Life. With all of the opinions, ideas, and expectations that exist in Virtual Life, how could one not?

This project has taught me to take note. In focusing on this topic for so long, I started to observe who I am in Virtual Life and what Virtual Life is doing to me. I see why I instinctively reach for my phone to open an app or type in a website. I recognize the high of the notification and the low of the binge. I notice how I'm being used for my attention and my information. I realize what the Virtual world makes me think of others.

In choosing this topic, I have also spent some time taking note of Real Life. Aside from the four values I decided on, I also came up with some questions and actions that directly connect with Real Life.

Questions:

What do you love most?
What do you believe about yourself?
What is your deepest desire?
What is your most core value?
Who are you becoming? Is that who you want to be?

Actions:

Do one thing at a time
Go people watching
Learn about trees
Think about nothing
Think about your thoughts
Think about what you're grateful for

Thanks and Acknowledgements

For the past five years, I have been able to use the land that belongs to the Anishinaabe, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, the Wendat, the Métis, and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation as a place to learn and grow as an individual. I am so grateful for their stewardship of this land. As a settler on their land, I aim to steward the land in the same way through how I live and work.

Kirsten and Andrew- Thank you for your feedback, affirmation, advice, patience and time.

All those who I have been classmates with - Sharing this space with you over the past five years has changed me for the best in many ways - thank you.

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I love you all!



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