Studio Experience  Re-imagined Spaces

**Studio Objectives**

Identify a place or particular space in your school or community that’s unused or underutilized.

Examine how this space could serve the community better and decide what kinds of materials or resources would be necessary.

Develop a plan for a public service announcement-type video that shares your idea with the school community.

Create a video using your cell phone to help explain your idea to others.

Room interior, Stony Arts Savings Bank (prior to remodel and afterward)

Theaster Gates took an old, crumbling savings bank in this Chicago neighborhood and transformed it into a community gathering place complete with a library, screening room for films and a place for worship. How can you take a place that isn’t being used and make it useful?
Pollen from Hazelnut, 2013

At the Museum of Modern Art in New York, Wolfgang Laib took an empty gallery space and transformed it with a large square of yellow pollen from hazelnut that he applied neatly across the floor. This change in color and scent had an immediate effect on visitors and quite literally changed the room from a neutral space for visitors to gather to one that activated multiple senses.

Before You Begin

A public service announcement, or PSA, is intended to raise awareness about a particular issue of public interest. In this studio you will create a short video, much like a PSA, by simply using your cell phone. You may use classmates, friends or family as actors if you choose.

First, find a space or particular place in your community (school, neighborhood or town) that is unused or underutilized. For example, go on a walk and find a space that has potential but is in bad shape for some reason. Collaborate with others and make some notes about what this space could possibly be. Given the proper resources, would there be an opportunity to take this space or place from useless to useful, meaningful and joyful? Can empty rooms be converted? Can vacant lots be transformed?

Materials

- sketchbook or chart paper
- drawing media for planning- pencils, pens, markers
- cell phone for taking photos and video
- computers with basic video editing software
Create

1. After taking that walk as suggested in the Before You Begin section and making some notes on the space you’d like to use as your focus, begin making a list of the resources necessary to transform the space. Will you need particular help? Will you need people with certain skills? Specific supplies?

2. Take photographs of this space from various perspectives and print a small selection of the photos- about four or five.

3. After printing the photos use drawing or painting media to begin working on top of the photos and literally “draw in” a representation of what you visualize. These reference photos may come in handy for your video, so make sure that the drawings are simple enough to convey your idea clearly. What is this space now and what can it become?

4. Next, begin planning a script where you or a friend will explain the idea through a short PSA-type video shot using a cell phone. The video will be between 1-2 minutes long and the script you write should articulate:
   - What this space is used (or not used) for
   - How the re-imagined space would benefit others
   - The kinds of materials and resources needed to transform the space
   - A vision for this space and how it can be used in the future

5. After writing your script, begin shooting your video on location. Feel free to use your altered photographs to help describe your proposed idea. Take more than one video if possible and consider:
   - How camera angle helps convey your idea
   - How close-ups may affect how the viewer understands your idea
   - How clearly the actor(s) is speaking and whether the script clearly communicates the exciting possibility of transforming this space
   - How lighting and time of day may affect how the idea comes across on video

6. Once you have video that communicates your idea clearly, share it with classmates, your teacher(s) and the wider school community.

Reflect

How do you get viewers to consider the potential for your proposed idea? What are the biggest strengths and challenges in your final video? How would people benefit from following through on your recommendation? What kinds of next steps would need to be taken?

Digital Option

Use digital illustration software to create a more realistic representation of what this place or space might look like if the proposed idea was made a reality.
Presenting Your Work

Upload your 1-2 minute video and share with classmates via specific social networking sites, YouTube, Vimeo, a master slideshow, or another format specified by your teacher.

Write about Art

Take a reader through your process and inspiration: What initiated this particular idea? What personal connections do you have to this space and why would you like to see it transformed? What do you visualize happening as a result of this idea? How might you title the project? ½ to ¾ of a page.