

HOTEL CREATIVE CHALLENGES

SUMMER 2020

THE PROJECT



Cardboard Citizens, a theatre company who work with people affected by homelessness, have been working with St Mungo's hotel in Wandsworth. The hotel has been housing former rough sleepers and those experiencing homelessness.

Participants were sent a creative challenge each week and provided with a bag of art and craft materials to use. They were encouraged to respond in a variety of different ways, e.g. writing, drawing, photography, collaging, music-making.

Participants then joined an online feedback session sharing the inspiration and ideas behind their work and offer constructive feedback to one another.

Theatre maker Matthew Evans led on the creative direction with Citz Engagement Manager Jessie supporting with project management.

THEMES

Each week was based around different challenges to the participants:

- Week One - The Senses
- Week Two - Scale
- Week Three - Maps & Lines
- Week Four - Think Outside The Box
- Week Five - The World Around Us
- Week Six - Review and evaluation

To see all content created for the project, head to the News Page on our website: cardboardcitizens.org.uk/our-news

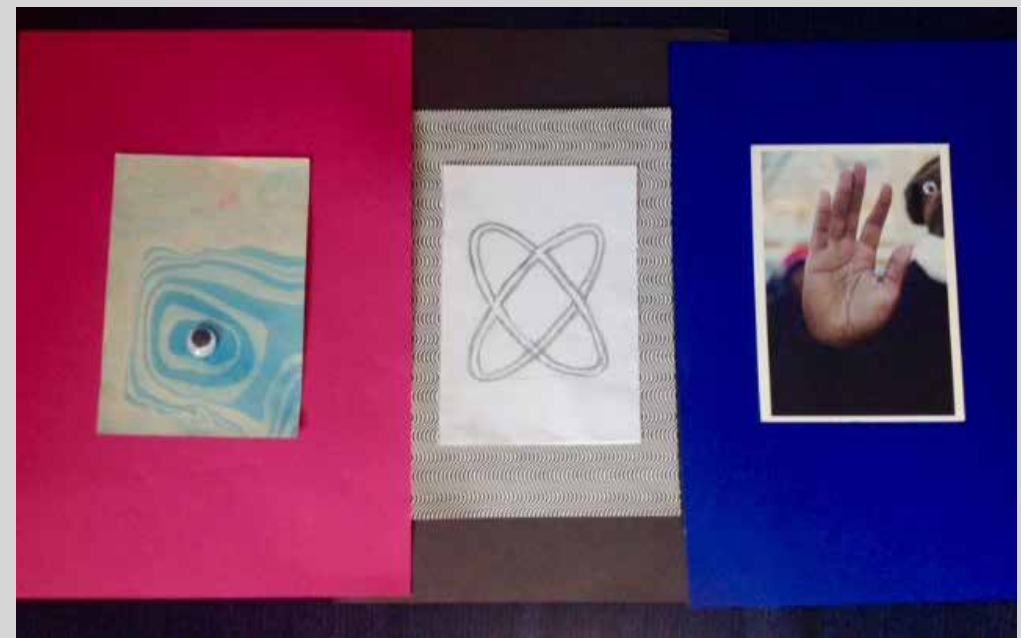
THANKS FOR SUPPORT:



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CRISTIANO





STEVE



ALICIA

LEAN DIVE IN

Hi, I'm Aare, I'm 15. I live in Marin County, California. I'm the founder and president of the Chaos Computer Club at my school. When I graduate I want to become an Information Systems Security Manager. My mom, Dineh, is my inspiration. She became best friends with Sheryl Sandberg at Harvard. Then my parents moved to Cali, where my mom wrote her PhD on Women in Tech and Society. Today, she's a Lean In Mentor and Organisational Consultant for Tech Start Ups. Best of all, she's mom.

My dad, Kai, works in the department for Information, Data, Network and Communication Science at UC Berkeley. His specialization is Machine Learning and Optimization. He is like Cardamom Icecream: very subtle and sweet and cold. He's not mean, he's introvert: like a cat. When he's home he's most likely sitting in a corner with a tech magazine. He's a messy mad scientist and leaves copies of Wired, Tech-briefs and E&T just lying around.

My sister Reineh is 13, she's my best friend. Straight A student, she's always on the honor role. That's because she studies my old notebooks and tests, and where I made mistakes and got Bs, she doesn't! She wants to teach Math, IT and Science but I think she should think bigger. We do pretty much everything together. We run, swim and play basketball. Just the other day we were shooting hoops on the drive when...

"Mom, mom, mom!"
 "What is it, Reineh?"
 "Aare's collapsed, I think she hit her head."
 "Is she breathing?"
 "Yes!"
 "Ok, don't touch her, I'll call an ambulance."

KAI, I CAN'T GET THROUGH ON YOUR CELL. I'M IN AN AMBULANCE, AARE FELL AND HIT HER HEAD PLAYING BALL. MEET US AT NOVATO COMMUNITY HOSPITAL.

I don't know how long we've been waiting. My watch says 7:27 so it's like, 4 hours since the accident? I don't know when dad arrived, everything's a blur. We sit in the waiting room not looking at each other, not talking, cell phones forgotten. There are magazines in the corner, but looking at one seems irreverent. We wait. Around 9pm a doctor enters.

“Dr Beckmen,” he’s addressing dad, but looking at all of us. “I’m Dr Stein, my team is caring for your daughter. She’s in a coma.” Mom gasps. “She’s breathing unaided, but she has sustained prolonged neurological damage. We’ve run some tests and our diagnosis is motor neurone disease.” We exchange a look, we’re all thinking the same. “If she wakes up,” he continues, “she will be severely physically impaired. She may only have months to live.” We’re in shock. Hot fat tears begin streaming down my face. Mom falls into a chair as if propelled by some unseen force. Dad just stares at the doctor. “We’re continuing to observe her condition. I recommend you go home and get some sleep.”

I wake up in some strange place. The first thing I realise, I can’t move anything except my eyes. I hear beeps and see blinks from machines. I’m in hospital. I lie there, paralyzed, waiting. I start counting the beeps to keep track of time, but I lose count. Eventually a nurse enters. “Hey, you’re awake.” She says “I’ll call your mom.” She notes down whatever’s on the monitor and leaves.

Mom and Reineh arrive with kisses and hair stroking. I don’t want to be fondled. I want to get up and walk away from this, but I can’t move. I can’t talk. I can’t even grunt or form words with my lips. I can’t pull faces. I can’t do anything. I’m panicking. Omg what’s happened to me! A doctor walks in, he looks at me and smiles. He has a kind face, it helps me relax.

“Miss Beckmen,” he calls me, I want to laugh, but I can’t, “three days ago you collapsed and hit your head. You were brought here to Novato Community Hospital, you’ve been in a coma. My name is Dr Stein, my team has been caring for you.” Mom and Reineh have pulled up chairs on the other side of the bed. Mom has her hand on my shoulder, but I can’t feel anything. They’re both smiling, but their eyes are filled with fear. “Miss Beckmen,” I look at the doctor, “I’m afraid the prognosis isn’t good.” He’s not smiling anymore. “Miss Beckmen, you can’t move because you have motor neurone disease. Miss Beckmen, you don’t have very long to live.”

Now I’m home, in my room. I don’t know how or when I got here. I’m totally disoriented. I’m still connected to machines and mom is trying to force-feed me porridge. I don’t want porridge. I want pancakes: with blueberries, smothered in butter and maple syrup. She puts down the porridge and picks up Tech-briefs. She reads me an article about bitcoin encryption and cyber-currencies, it’s interesting. Then she tells me she’ll be back in a little while and leaves. I’m alone. I just lie here and think, moving my eyes over all this familiar stuff.

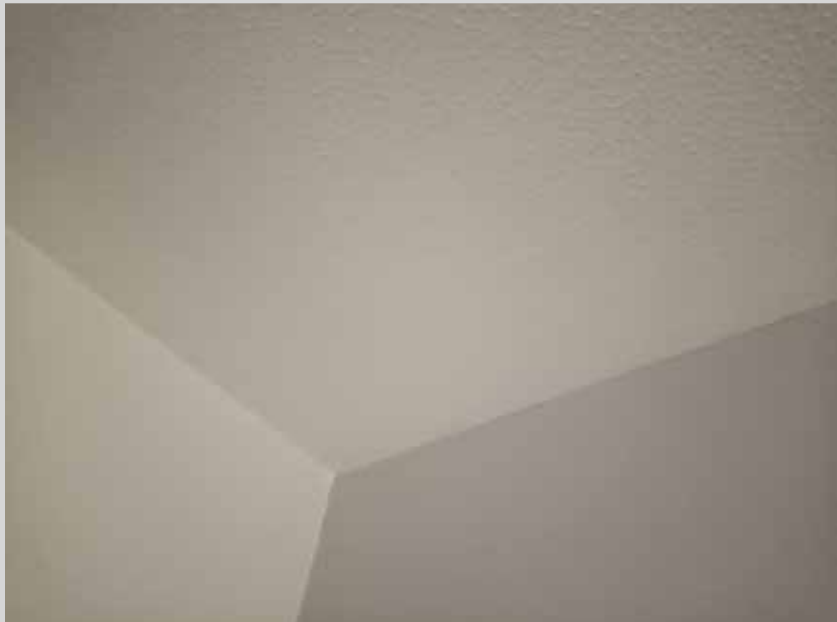
Eventually mom comes back and changes my diaper. I don’t smell anything so I guess I didn’t poop this time. That’s the only way I know, and I’m glad. I’m glad when mom doesn’t have to clean that up. She leaves and comes back with lunch. Mom’s cream of broccoli soup: I’m excited, but it’s not. It’s puréed sludge. The doctor said I only have a few weeks to live. Why am I eating sludge? Mom is an amazing cook. What is going on? I keep staring at mom, imploring her with my eyes. I want to cry. She stops trying to feed me. She sits there, looking at me. I don’t know how long we stay like that. I have no sense of time. Eventually she leaves.

Reineh bursts in, full of energy. My heart nearly jumps out of my chest and I want to laugh. I can’t. I can’t even create a smile. I just look at her. “How you doin, sis? Good day?” She’s climbing onto the bed, there’s no space, but she’s making my soul sing and I can’t stop her. “So Mr Joseph said you need to get well in time for the inter-school math championships, cos they need you. Steve from the computer club said they’re holding elections and do you want to run. And Athena’s coming over on Saturday after cheerleading to cheer you up, she said.”

She keeps going, telling me all the gossip from the day, but I can’t keep up. She could say anything. It’s how she talks: her energy lifts my spirit. I want to laugh and make jokes with her. All I can do is lie here and listen. Eventually she leaves to do homework, and I’m alone again. I feel different, I feel alive in my soul, happy: excited about life. I close my eyes and enjoy the feeling.

I’m sitting on a jetty on the shore of a lake. My bathing suit is covered by a thick cosy towel. My knees are pulled up to my chest and I’m warm in my manteau. Fall colors brighten up the far shore: orange, gold and brown streak through deep rich greens. Beyond the horizon, snow-peaked mountains continue on into heavenly realms. A brisk breeze ripples the surface of the lake. I stand and let the towel fall. The cool air is refreshing on my skin. I raise my arms and dive into the cold, crisp, clear water. The cold consumes me, shocking my body: I feel alive. I swim through the water, downwards, twisting and turning, playing, finding depth. I’ve become amphibious - there is no impulse to inhale or exhale. I feel at ease in the transparent blue. Suddenly, a warm current tugs at me. I panic. As the current becomes stronger it takes control of my trajectory. It pulls me deeper into the depths. I try to scream. I open my mouth. I suck in a lungful of water. I try to cough it out. The contraction of my lungs causes me to gulp in more and more water. The current pulls at me. I’ve lost control. I can’t fight. The contractions of my lungs ease. I’m floating: down, to the bottom of the lake.

LEO



I WOULD LIKE TO MAKE
A
POEM

I WOULD LIKE TO MAKE A POEM
THERE'S NO HUGE SIGHT OR CREME
SIMPLY NOTHING
LESS THAN AIR

I WOULD LIKE TO POEM SILENCE
SIMPLY NOTHING
LESS THAN AIR

I WOULD LIKE TO MAKE POEM
I FANCY THE MURDERING OF SILENCE
SILENCE IS ANNOYED BY POEM
T
NOW
I FEEL READY TO MAKE A POEM
I DON'T WANT A MAKE THE POEM



IAN



MEHDI



Universal theory is a kind of logic, which views objects in relation to its whole. The theory is based on energy, which are neither materials nor energy. They combine in a complementary manner and form, a method for explaining relationships between objects. It's a dualism of creation.



You can Be IN and OUT of the room, there is no difference where you are. You can see peaceful feeling in Horizontal lines, attention in the Vertical ones, energy in the Diagonal ones, high energy in Curve ones and eventually perception in Combination lines. Everything is connected.

It's mostly about the dynamic range and focus of your vision. When you're inside, you're close to a window, and you can selectively focus on that window without anything in the room fighting against your view. In short, your eyes detect light, not dark. So, give them light, and the dark does not interfere. Outside, your eyes are adjusting to the ambient light. The light indoors, even if they have artificial light turned on, is no match for the sun. And if you're trying to look in a window, chances are you're too far from that window to avoid the bright ambient of the surrounding area. Light does absolutely interfere with your ability to see darker content.



ALFREDO



RHEA

I'm used often, but often forgotten,
I'm cleaned daily but almost absently,
I'm placed in a space and forgotten until called upon.

If you hold me under running water the wrong way I cause a Tsunami,
If you leave cereal stuck to me it creates a stain on my polished stainless steel,
If you dip me in sugar, I will make your life sweeter.

We are small, although we are big,
We are alone; however we thrive when integrated with others,
We are one, on the other hand we are different.

Be the spoon.