



COMMUNITY BOOK CENTER INTERIOR DESIGN-BUILD

A COLLABORATION WITH

COMMUNITY BOOK CENTER

AND

THE ALBERT AND TINA SMALL CENTER
FOR COLLABORATIVE DESIGN AT
TULANE SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE

WITH SUPPORT FROM

MR AND MRS (ERIN) JEAN PAUL HYMEL

**UNTIL THE LION TELLS HIS TALE,
TALES OF THE HUNT WILL ALWAYS
GLORIFY THE HUNTER.**

– IGBO NIGERIA PROVERB



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COMMUNITY BOOK CENTER

Community Book Center has been a cornerstone to the Bayou Road retail community. Focused on bringing Afro-centric books to the forefront of children's and adult literature, the store has become a destination for scholars, community members, and children from all over the city. The center was founded by Vera Warren-Williams, a former substitute teacher who saw first hand the lack of Black culture in the literature in the schools. She opened the store in 1983 to satisfy that gap in the education system. Since then, the store has become much more than a bookstore. The center is a place for conversation, for presentation, and for retail. Art shows, story telling hours, book discussions and markets are only a few of the events hosted here.



“IT WAS DESIGNED AS A HOME-BASED, COMMUNITY SERVICE, WHERE I WANTED TO PRESENT TO THE MAJORITY AFRICAN-AMERICAN CHILDREN THAT I FOUND IN THE SCHOOLS, BOOKS AND OTHER EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS WITH POSITIVE IMAGES OF THEMSELVES.”

– Vera Warren-Williams

BAYOU ROAD

Bayou Road is the oldest road in New Orleans. The small stretch from Esplanade and Broad Street is a center for independent retail shops. Just next to CBC are a day care center and school bus stops. Within a mile radius sits a series of schools ranging from kindergarten to high school. On any given day, the road is streaming with children and adults alike. CBC is at the center of this activity. Seen as the flagship of retail initiatives for the road, the store additionally sports a large mural completed by the acclaimed local artist B. Mike. This façade, which grounds the exterior within the local identity, attests to the CBC's presence within its immediate and city-wide context.

The Community Book Center renovation is the third project for Small Center along Bayou Road. CBC builds on prior work with Broad Community Connections to create a guide to Bayou Road and a partnership with the New Orleans Redevelopment Authority for the Façade Renew program, which offers design and refurbishment assistance to businesses along several of New Orleans historic commercial corridors. These small interventions combine to strengthen neighborhood anchors and to support Bayou Road's community of African-American women owned businesses. The New Orleans Redevelopment Authority has awarded nearly \$1 million in the past year to property and small business owners on Bayou Road to improve the façade of their buildings in a historically appropriate way.



“

[BAYOU ROAD] ANCHORING THIS STRETCH IS A PLACE OF DISCOVERY, HISTORY, AND GREAT LITERARY WORKS. IT IS ALSO A PLACE OF COMMUNITY.”

– WGNO





QUESTIONS

The design process began with discussion. First the students attempted to understand the past, present and future of CBC. What role has CBC played in it's immediate and far reaching communities? What is the future of CBC? Can the center parlay its current and future business model into a financially and culturally sustainable presence? The CBC's role as a place for children books and as a meeting place for such culturally significant events seem to be at the forefront of our intentions. What is the student's role as a designer? How can students engage with Vera Warren-Williams and her clients to accomplish these end goals? Through listening, brainstorming, and presentation, students began to understand the deliverable for us as designers.



(FROM LEFT)
BRAINSTORMING QUESTIONS, INITIAL MEETING WITH VERA WARREN-WILLIAMS

RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

In order to familiarize themselves with Community Book Center’s mission and message, each student selected a book from the store to read, analyze and draw inspiration from. Early material explorations emerged from interpreting text themes, rhythms, and perspectives. Through these readings and discussions, as well as through small built projects, and field trips to other Black spaces around New Orleans, the students gained a new perspective on the space in which they were going to be working.

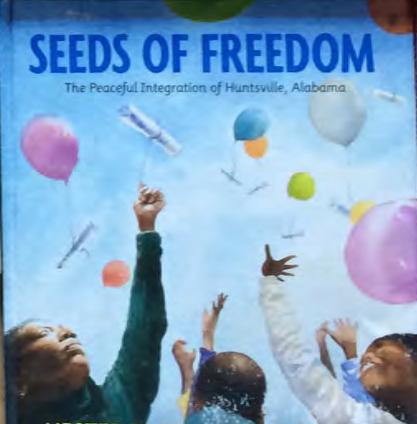
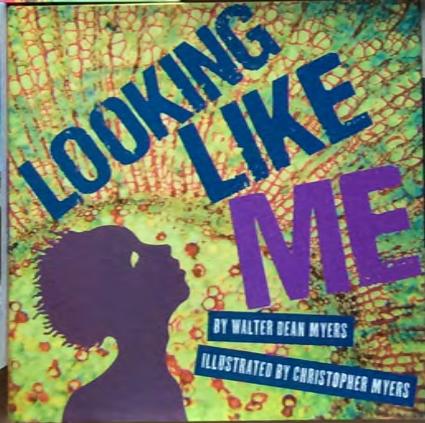
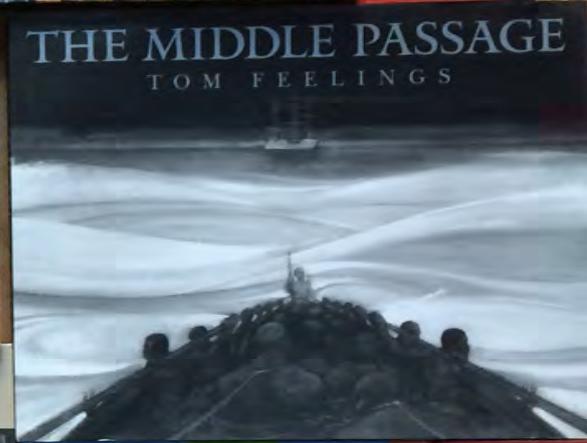
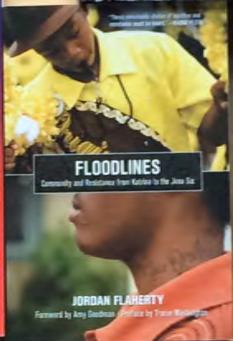
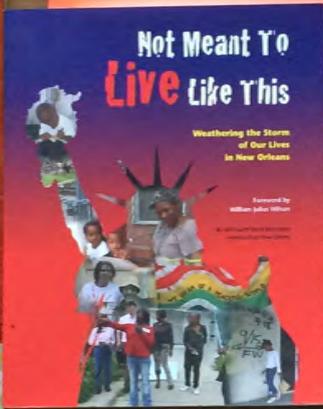
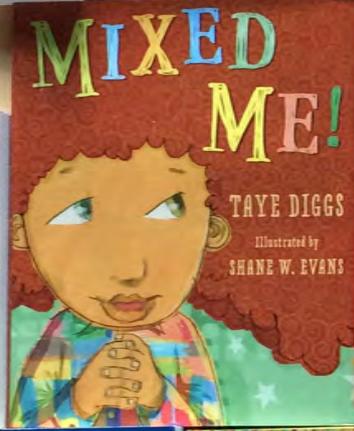
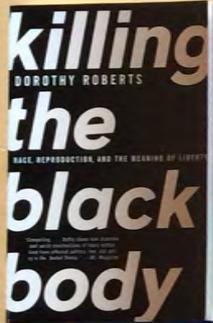
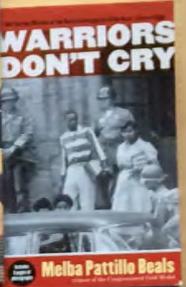
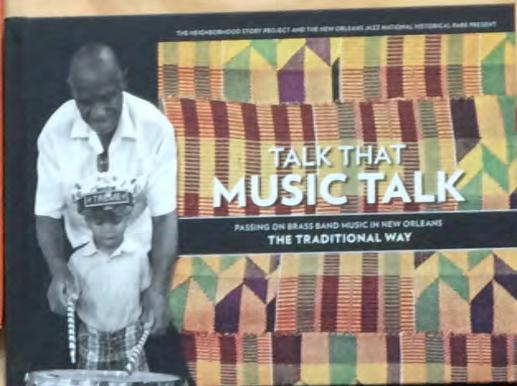
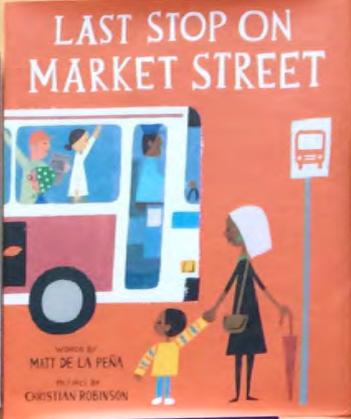
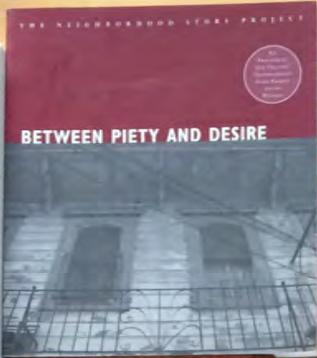
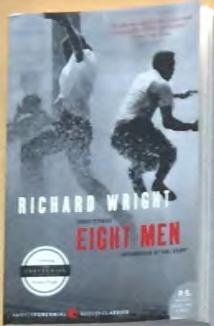
READING LIST:

WHERE ARE THE PEOPLE OF COLOR IN CHILDREN’S BOOKS
WALTER DEAN MYERS

AS DEMOGRAPHICS SHIFT KIDS BOOKS STAY STUBBORNLY WHITE
ELIZABETH BLAIR

OUTRAGEOUS VIEWPOINTS: TEACHERS’ CRITERIA FOR REJECTING WORKS OF CHILDREN’S LITERATURE
JULIE E. WOLLMAN-BONILLA

EARNING “DUAL DEGREES”: BLACK BOOKSTORES AS ALTERNATIVE KNOWLEDGE SPACES
MAISHA T. FISHER

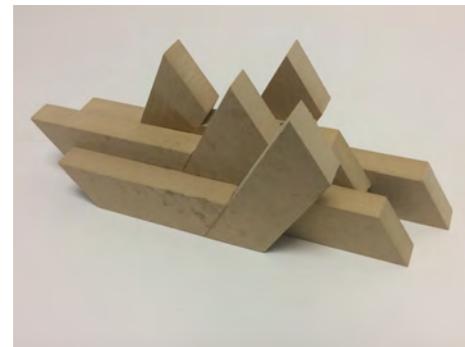


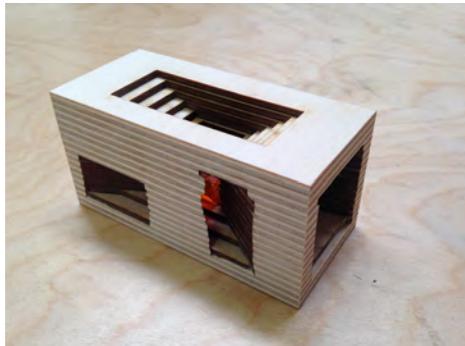
CONCEPTUAL MODELING

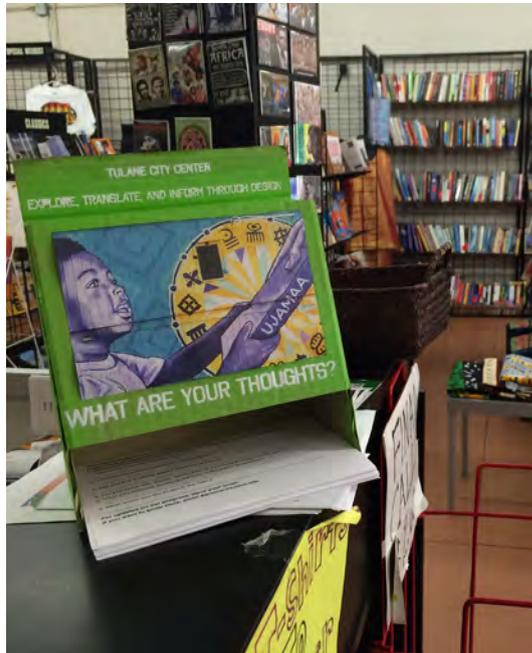
Students worked conceptual to study how spaces could relate to one another. Their studies, heavily influenced through their observations and research of how the community center was used. It consisted of a variety of materials to convey the usage of the current center.

FURNITURE SCALE INVESTIGATIONS

In addition to conceptual models, students also improved their joinery and shop skills by building a piece that could hold a person reading and also display a book. This project built on the reading discussions and conceptual modeling themes while also adding function and scale to the design considerations.





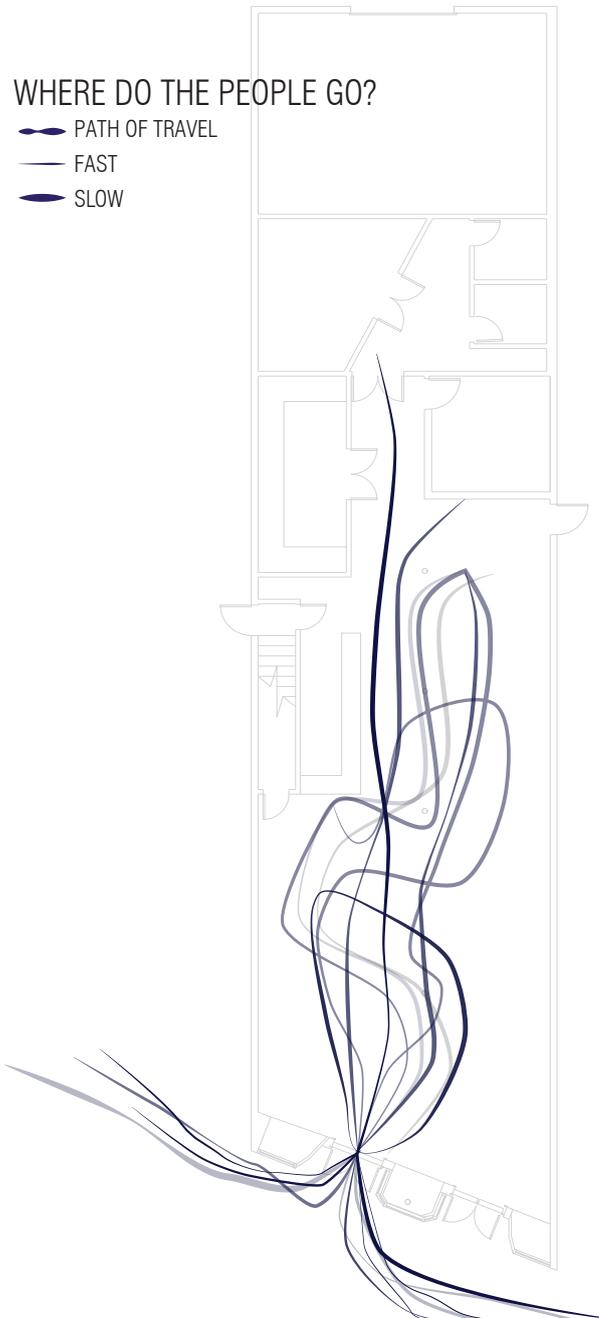


OBSERVATION AND ENGAGEMENT

After research, the students surveyed the current conditions of the store. From observing space usage to understanding larger neighborhood circulation patterns, students began to understand how the spaces were being used on a day to day basis and by whom. In addition to more passive forms of observation, students also surveyed the bookstore's customers and staff to more fully understand how the space functions and the additional needs and opportunities for the Community Book Store space.

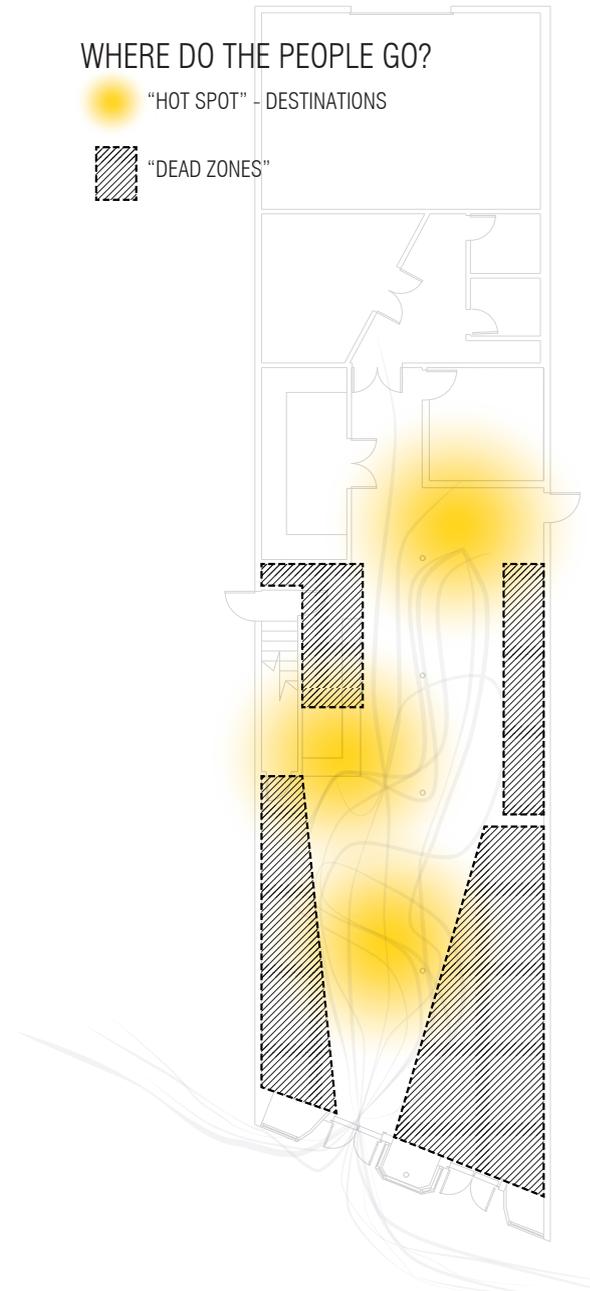
WHERE DO THE PEOPLE GO?

- PATH OF TRAVEL
- FAST
- SLOW



WHERE DO THE PEOPLE GO?

- "HOT SPOT" - DESTINATIONS
- "DEAD ZONES"





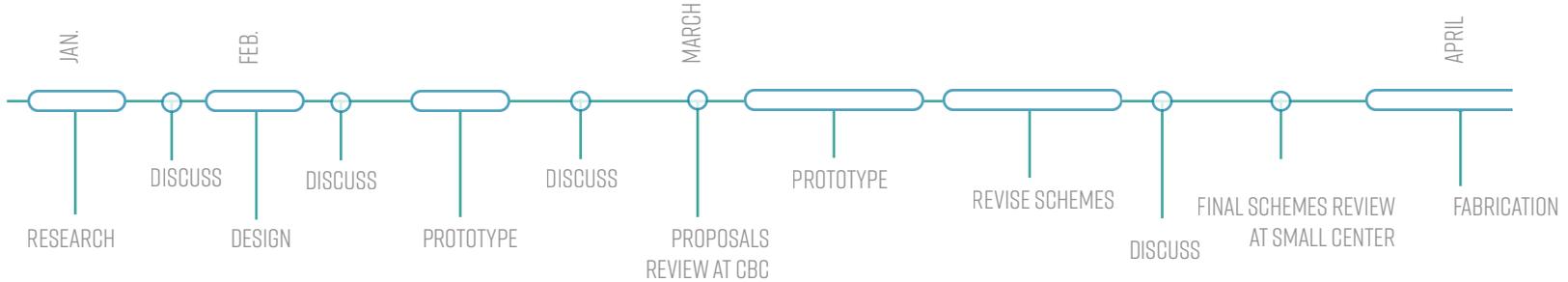
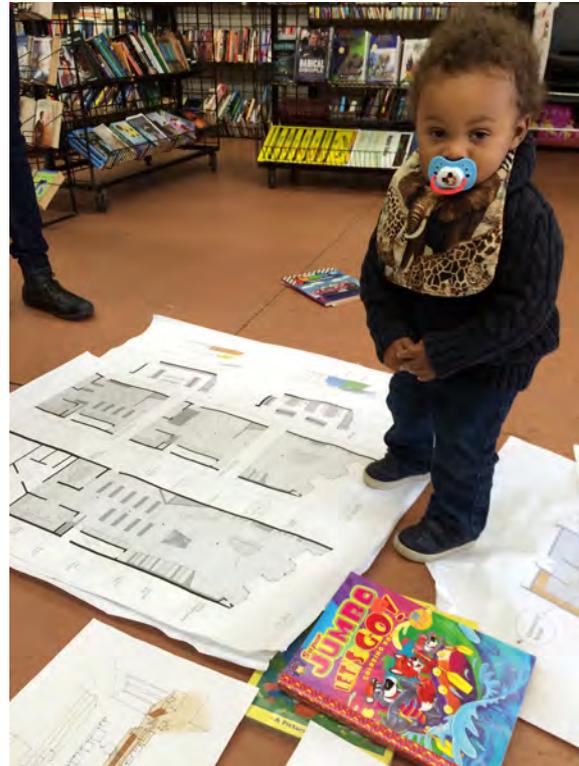
MATERIAL AND PROTOTYPING

Using information from the readings, observations, and CBC stakeholder input students began prototyping potential detail or built elements. Those prototypes were built at full scale and taken to the store for additional feedback. Ideas were then revised revised and reworked to improve their function and size and accommodate concerns about their safety, and material qualities.



(FROM LEFT)
PLYWOOD AND JOINERY EXPERIMENTS, WELDING A PROTOTYPE TABLE FRAME, USER TESTING
TABLE HEIGHTS AND SURFACE QUALITIES, FIRST ROUND OF BOOKSHELF PROTOTYPING

PROPOSITION AND FEEDBACK





STAKEHOLDERS REVIEW AND COMMENT ON EACH SCHEME. SCHEMES INCLUDED PLANS, MODELS, MATERIAL IDEAS AND RENDERINGS

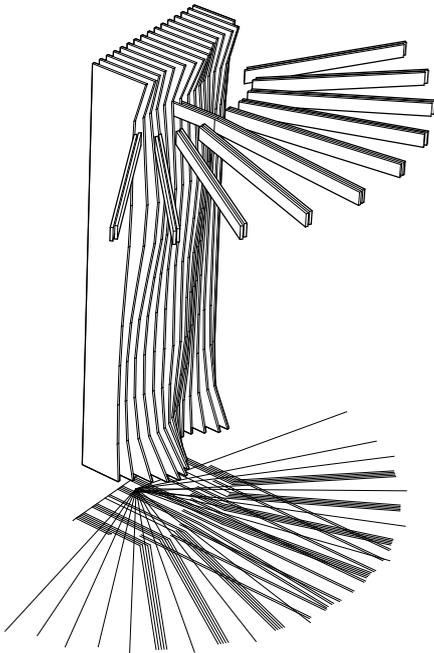
FINAL SCHEME

The final design for the bookstore integrated many of the ideas proposed in the last design review. The front of the store would become a kid and community space, with dedicated stadium seating for larger gatherings and kids height tables and seating. The checkout remained in the same area it had occupied previously, however in the design it began to serve two directions, the kids area, whose counter was shorter, and the adult bookstore area with added retail. The checkout and the pivot wall act as a threshold between the public space and the more quiet intimate space of the bookstacks in the back half of the store. The pivot wall acts dually serving as storage as well as a way to block off the back of the store for public events. Bookshelves line the back half of the walls while rolling shelves allow for flexibility in the center space.

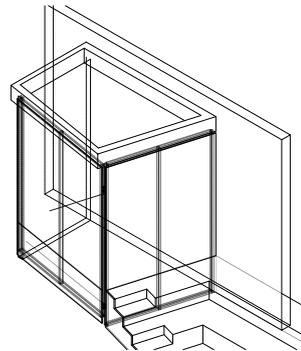
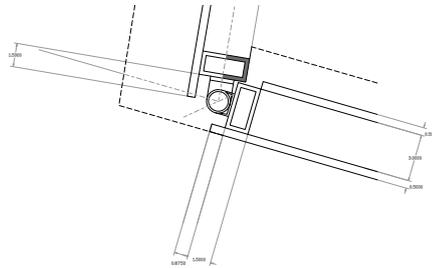


PLANNING THE CONSTRUCTION

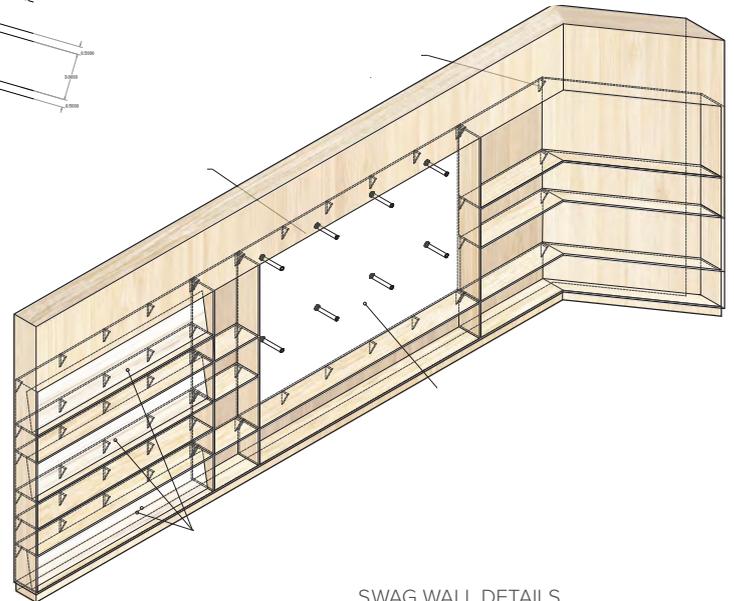
With the design phase resolved, it was necessary to split into teams to get the work done. The first step was creating the pre-fab components, which would allow construction to take place without needing the bookstore to close. The bookshelves, kid's tables, checkout, and stools were created on-site at Small Center, while others worked on preparing materials for the on-site installation of the tree, stadium seating and pivot wall.



BAOBAB TREE



PIVOT WALL DETAILS



SWAG WALL DETAILS

KIDS BOOKS

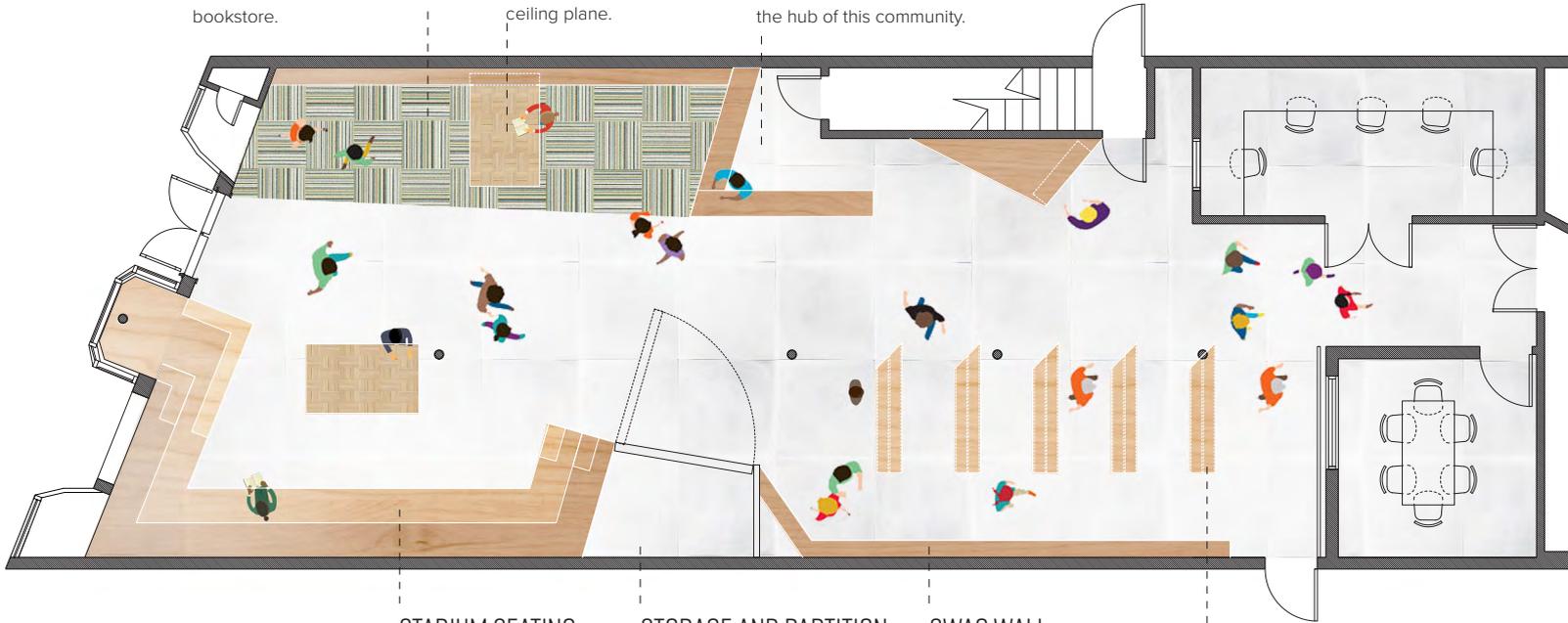
A carpeted area with kid proportioned shelves and table sits in close proximity to the entrance and the stadium seating to reinforce the CBC's identity as a children's bookstore.

BAOBAB TREE

The abstracted tree grows out of the children's area and creates a canopy inside the store, connecting to the wooden panels that create a varied ceiling plane.

CHECK OUT

Located in the center of the store, the check out is the hub of activity. Speaking to the intention of CBC to be a retail space, this also reflect the truth that this center is the hub of this community.



STADIUM SEATING

Accommodating 20-30 people, the stadium seating is designed to encourage conversation, and spectating of the local events

STORAGE AND PARTITION

The pivoting wall allows for easily accessible storage space for seating in the case of a large event. When swung out, the wall also acts as a partitioning device for the more public community space in the front from the bookshelves in the back.

SWAG WALL

The CBC not only sells books, it also has merchandise that reflects the needs of the community. A dynamic merchandise wall, it holds spaces that hold t-shirts, kente cloth, locally produced art and food.

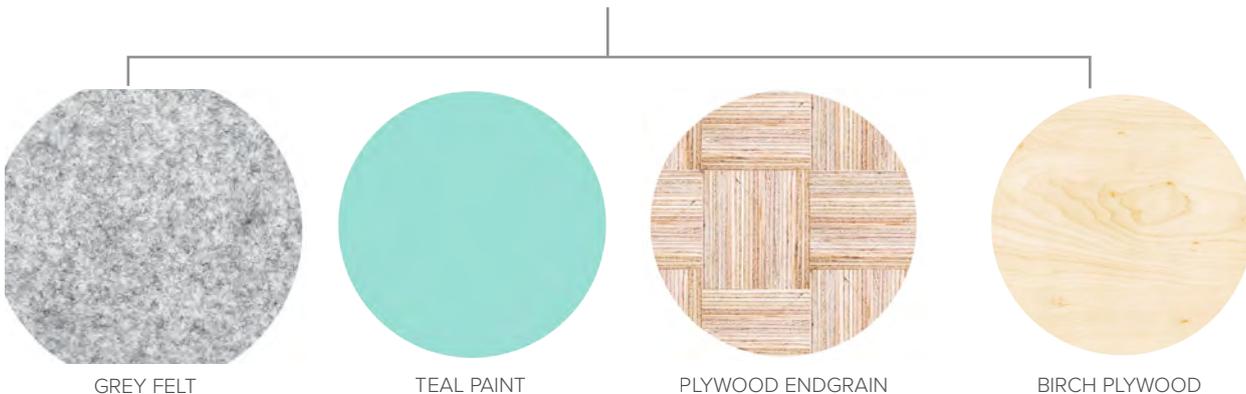
ROLLING BOOKSHELVES

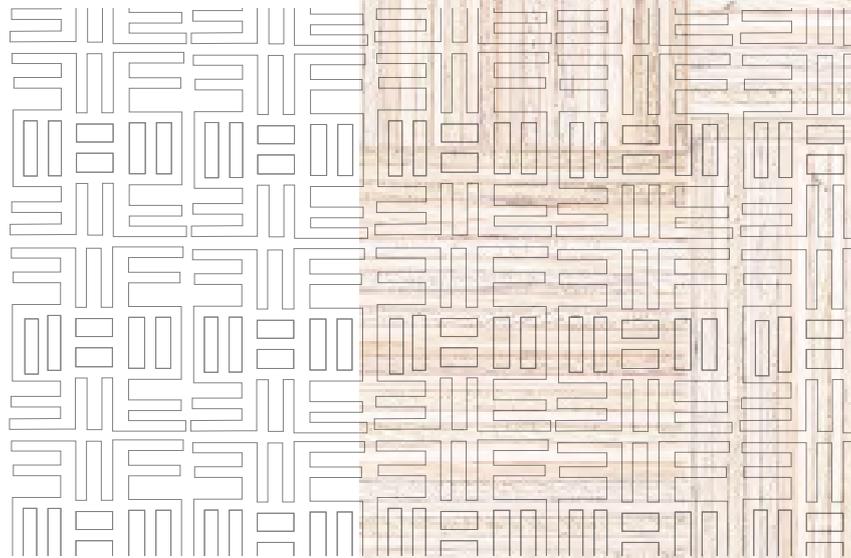
The main bookshelves hold the adult books. Each bookshelf is hoisted on wheels in order for the store to have various display options depending on the events happening that day.

PATTERN

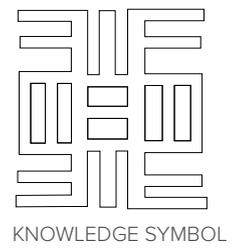
Patterning is a crucial element in African story telling. Kente, a traditional cloth stemming from Asasi culture, is a form of expressing of history and values through a weaving of different patterns. The texture of plywood engrain can be used to express patterns inspired by the Kente cloth and patterning found in illustrations of contemporary Afro-centric literature, both of which are sold in the bookstore.

MATERIAL PALETTE





DETAIL



PRE-FABRICATION



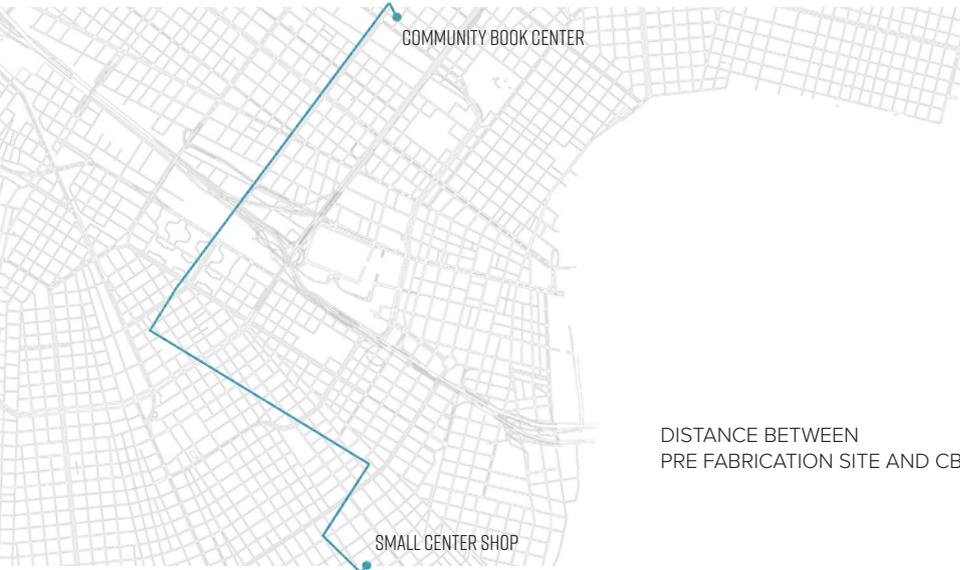
BUILD



SEAL



MOVE



DISTANCE BETWEEN
PRE FABRICATION SITE AND CBC



TRY AGAIN



INSTALL



IN-STORE INSTALLATION



BEFORE



DURING

(FROM LEFT)
PAINTING THE FLOOR, INSTALL SWAG WALL,
FRAMING THE STADIUM SEATING

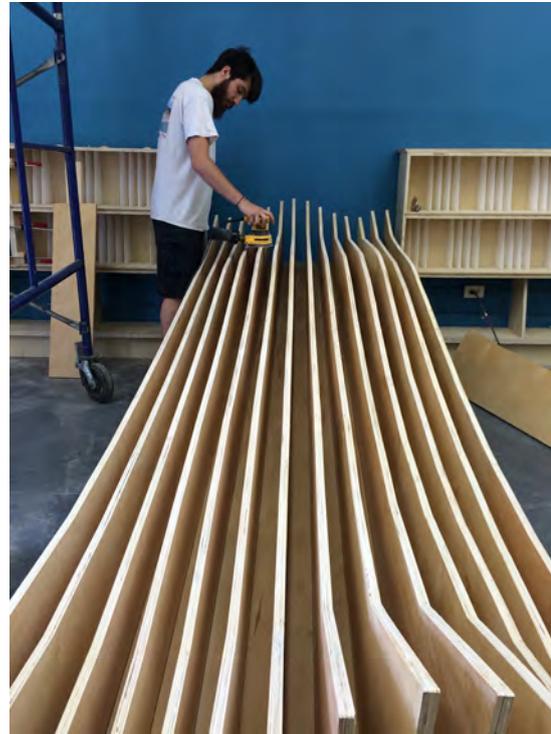


ELECTRICAL



CEILING INSTALLATION



















FINAL PROJECT PHOTOS
BY MICHAEL WONG

Design and construction of Community Book Center in collaboration with the Small Center and Tulane School of Architecture faculty and students. Sponsored by Mr and Mrs (Erin) Jean Paul Hymel. and Tulane's Center for Public Service.

SMALL CENTER Emilie Taylor Welty, Sue Mobley, Maggie Hansen,
Nick Jenisch, Donn Peabody, Shoshana Gordon

STUDIO TEAM Gabby Black, Christophe Blanchard, Jordan Conway,
Katarina Dvorak, Kristen Hill, Maggie Lloyd, Matt Raybon,
Cassidy Self, Fernanda Silva, Jill Thompson, Ben Tulman,
Evan Wagner, Alex Walker

COMMUNITY BOOK CENTER Vera Warren-Williams, Mamma Jennifer

REVIEWERS The clients and neighbors of Community Book Center,
Kentaro Tsubaki, Sam Richards, Emily Baker, Cordula
Roser-Gray, Doug Harmon, Gia Hamilton, Melissa Lee,
Miss Adella, Annette Hollowell

SPECIAL THANKS TO Mr and Mrs (Erin) Jean Paul Hymel
Dean Kenneth Schwartz, FAIA
Tulane University's Center For Public Service
Annette Hollowell, Converge for Change
Milhaus
Michael Wong Photography
Youth Rebuilding New Orleans

THE ALBERT AND TINA

**SMALL
CENTER**

FOR COLLABORATIVE DESIGN



TULANE SCHOOL
OF ARCHITECTURE

