

Project 01

Sitting Here With You

Concept

Get out doors,
go to Central Park, New York for an AR game.

You,
connect with stories from the past,
connect with people in the present.

Background

Like how Central Park prospers through various generations of design and contributes from surrounding communities, this game leads players through a journey to explore a wonderful hidden town and the spirits behind every neighbor.

Experience

While exploring the unseen town and bringing the spirits together to a party, players could make new connections in the real world and contemplate about their loved ones and local community.

Demo video:
<https://youtu.be/cxJV0aTwjgU>



Collaborate Workshop

Step 3: Event Visual Element Design

Step 1: Seeing the tags

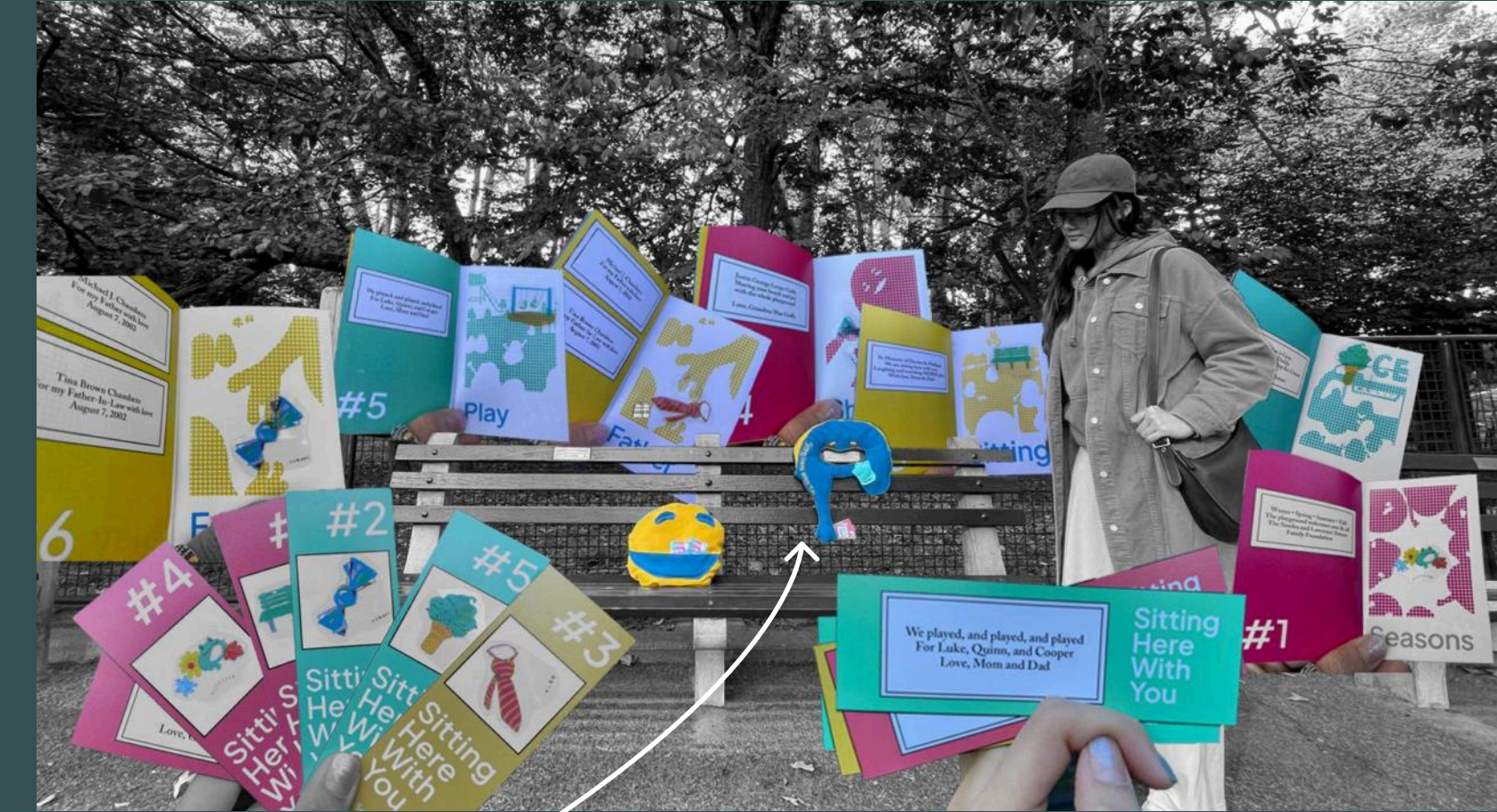
This project started as a collaborative project with James. The project aims to reveal the unseen and navigate a space.

After walking around streets and buildings of New York City, as well as looking at rivers and rocks, we want to look more into the inscribed metal plaque affixed to backs of park benches, and the mysterious stories behind them.



Step 2: Finding the children's park

Finding the Children's Park: After brainstorming many options, we ended up choosing Heckscher Playground in Central Park. Among all the tags about romance and companies, the tags in this park are more about family and happy memories.



Step 4: Installation

We wanted to pitch a sticker collecting event, with cushions on benches that represent characters and relations suggested in the plaques.

People will come in holding a little zine, and go out to collect stickers from the cushions. They will see the tags circled and start wondering about the story behind these nameplates.

Reflection:

I want to keep the idea of navigating space, but with a different method. I want to make people look at the plaques instead of circling them with a cushion. I want a narrative involving surrounding space. I also want more human interaction involved, so it could be a fun playing experience.



*Zine design: James.
 *All Illustrations: Tianchen
 *Cushion design: Tianchen.
 *Production: James leading.

Redesign Research



An Isolated City

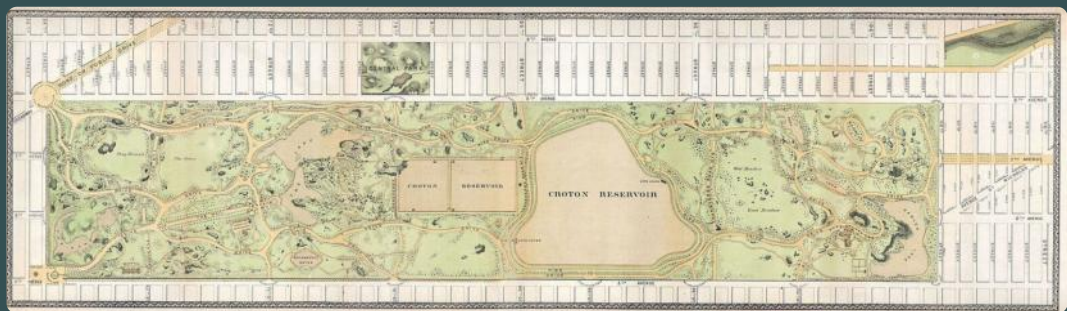
More than half of New Yorkers report feeling lonely at least some of the time. - NYC Health
New York Times published multiple articles describing New York as a **Lonely Town**, and "there were 1 million People live alone." (John, Leland, 2022)

New York City
(partially)

Central Park

A Park thrive with the Community

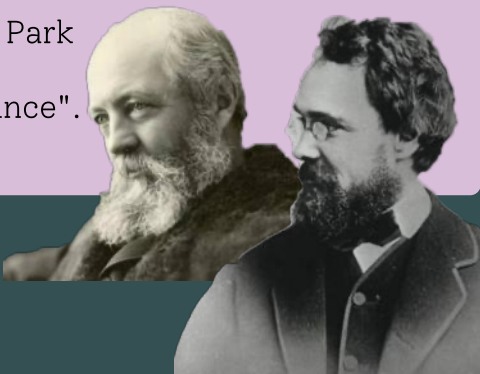
The general design of Current Central Park, "Greensward Plan" is Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux's winning design in an open commission. The park developed after more people come back to play.



The modified Greensward Plan for the park from 1868

"of great importance as the first real Park made in this country—a **democratic development** of the highest significance".

-Olmsted



Frederick Law Olmsted
American landscape architect and journalist
Calvert Vaux
English-American architect and landscape designer



Central Park still continues to revolutionize urban park financing. Cities are cutting back on funding for public parks; as a result, there is a greater **reliance on private financing** options.

Heckscher Playground

Built in 1926 and re-imagined as an adventure-style playground by Richard Dattner in 1970s.



August Heckscher
capitalist and philanthropist

Hermann W. Merke
General superintendent of the Westchester County Park Commission

Richard Dattner
Architect leading the innovative curve for both playscapes and buildings

The Heckscher Playground—named after philanthropist August Heckscher, who **donated the play equipment** ... and quickly became popular with poor immigrant families. The following year, Mayor Jimmy Walker commissioned landscape designer Hermann W. Merkel to create a plan to improve Central Park. Merkel's plans would combat vandalism and plant destruction, rehabilitate paths, and add eight new playgrounds.

Field Research

Designed Unseen Memorials



A Monument that blends in space

The benches are designed to blend in and to be **hard to notice**: "define the edge of the landscape without drawing attention to themselves."

However, what is written there, is **very important** for the people who put them there and **valuable as the meaning** they represent. Author, Dr. Dacia Viejo-Rose, discusses the complex and evolving nature of memorials in societies, and emphasizes that memorials serve as processes involving various meanings, symbols, emotions, memories, and narratives.

From Environment and Social Justice: An International Perspective, we can learn that Memorials could heal people. It also help individuals to **connect with a past event or community**. (Dorceta E. Taylor, 2022 Jun)



Plaques became a isolating line but no one pays attention to them.

Reveal the Unseen

Behind the bench: The Mysterious stories

"There are many places to find joy in Central Park, but my number one would be **the plaques**. As you peruse the Park, read them and enjoy their stories," Conservancy staff member Stormy McNair encourages.

"...Each of the Park's benches has a **story to tell** and is awaiting patiently for you to take a seat and be a part of it."

Sitting on the bench: Feeling like part of the park

Central Park Conservancy Conduct research writes: "benches have served as meeting spots, lunch locales, landmarks, date venues, and ever-present places to stop and watch New York unfold around you."

"The enjoyment of scenery employs the mind without fatigue and yet exercises it; tranquilizes it and yet enlivens it," wrote Park designer Frederick Law Olmsted in an 1865 report. "And thus, through the influences of the mind over the body gives the effect of refreshing rest and re-invigoration to the whole system."

"**Sitting on bench make you feel like part of the park**, and it benefits all New Yorkers"



The Unseen People

Imagine Relations:

I went through the plaques on the benches and noted them down. Paying more attention to the people and events allow me to pull out their relationships as inspiration.



I named the game after this plaque. "Sitting Here With You"

Elements from plaques are pulled out as inspiration.

"Daddy and Chocolate Chip Ice Cream" on the plaque made me imagine that there's a Cake store opened by a father, and the cake they make contribute to the main story.



Discover Characters:

Main character Michael. I picked this name because that's the only repeated name I found on the plaques. One appeared as a son, and the other as a husband.

It feels like there's a story around him.

Character Design (Parcially)

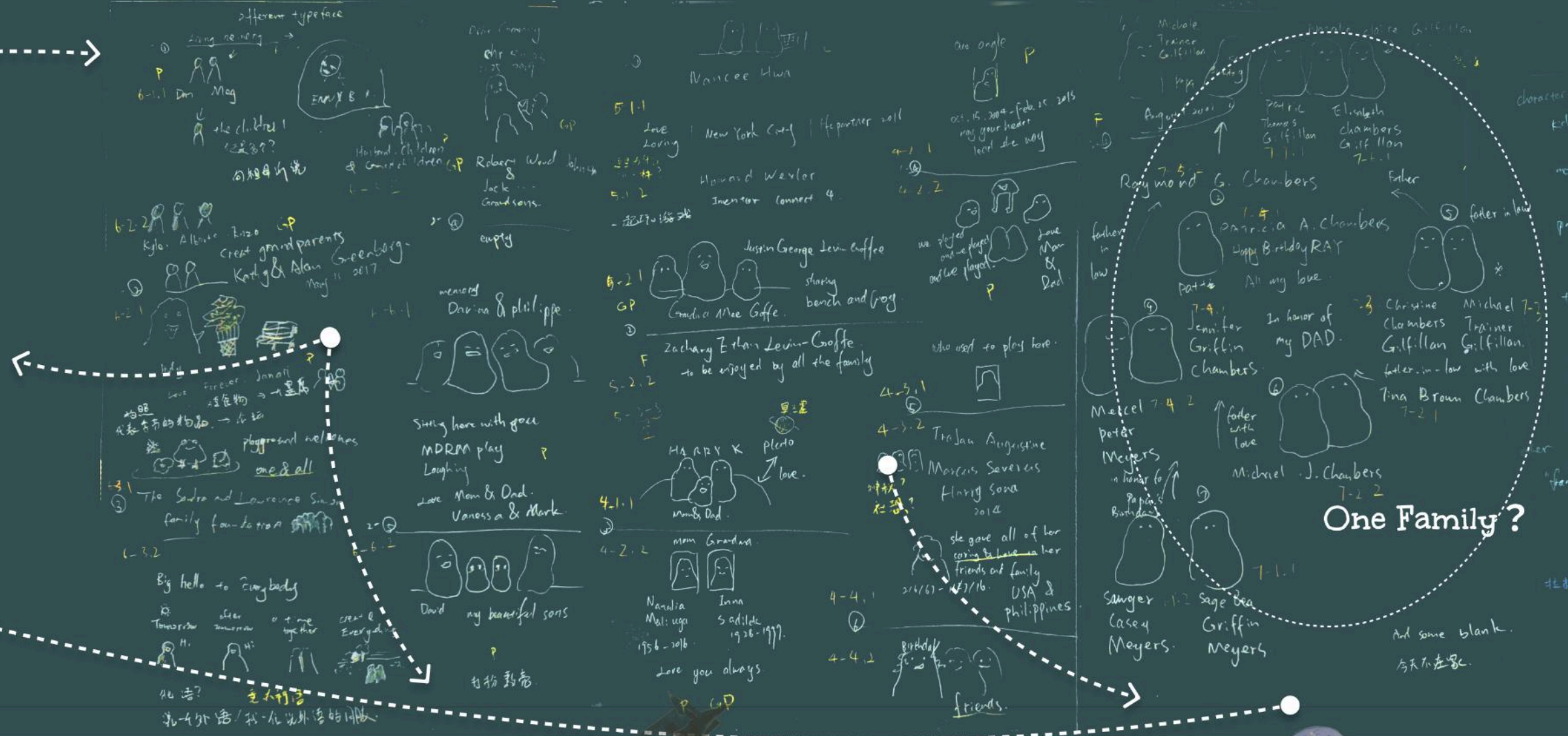


Illustration Style Testing



Michael

Mom

PaPa

Grandma

Mr. Green's family

Ms. K's family

Their spaceship station is powered by friendship, and could go all the way to Pluto

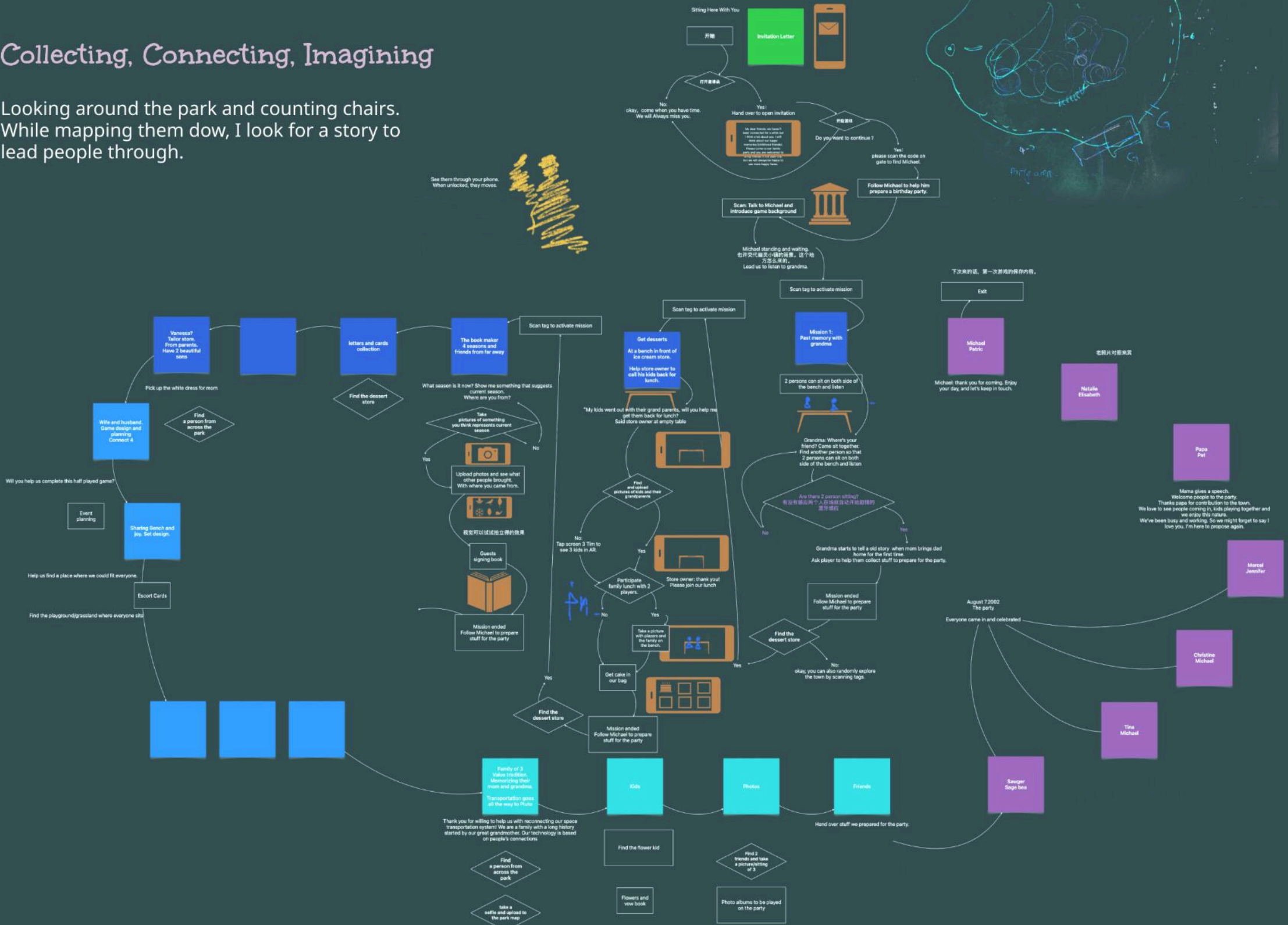
HARRY K
"WE LOVE YOU FROM HERE TO PLUTO AND BACK."
MOM AND DAD

200
190
180
170
160
150
140
130
120
110
100
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0

The Unseen Story

Collecting, Connecting, Imagining

Looking around the park and counting chairs. While mapping them down, I look for a story to lead people through.



The Last 7 chairs in this area all placed in the same date, celebrating "Papa's Birthday"



Map

Each benches are turned in to a imaginary little house, that represent a family and story inspired by the tags on the bench.

Game concept:

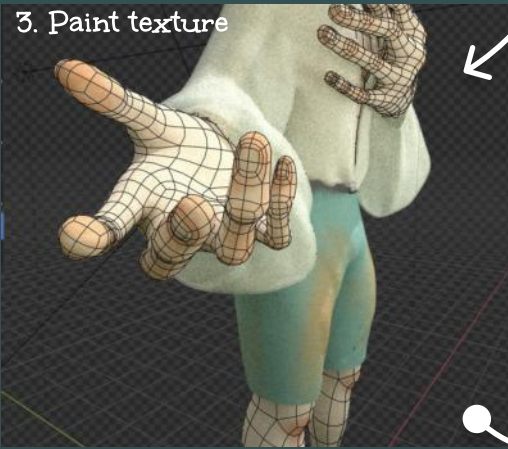
- Walk out of our isolation and go to a park.
- Be part of a community and bring life to Central Park.
- Look at the plaques and discover their stories.
- Connect to the people, memories and relationships from the past.
- Interact and build connections with people in the present.

Technical

3D modeling

I learned blender because it gives more details than Nomad,

1. Posing Character with animation bones.
2. merge pose and Adjust bone proportions



AR Effects

Michael Leading the way: Player follows Michael from the gate to the bench that is the first bench. to start the game.

3 Kids in the Green Family: In one of the sections, players need to find 3 kids to bring to Mr Green, for their family lunch. We offer options that if you can't find any real kid, we show these 3 models alternatively.



Player invite kids to wear AR mask to become part of the game.



5. Test Projecting

6. Filming at the park



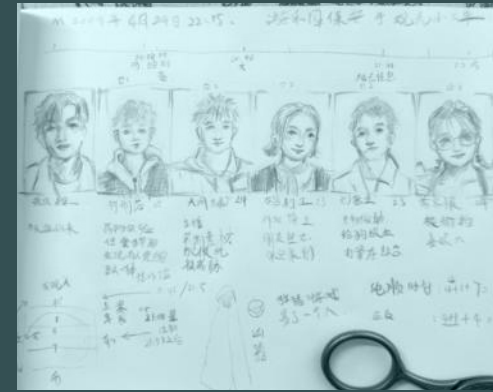
The Game Workflow

Plot

Your old friend Michael sends you an invitation to his father's birthday party. You haven't seen each other since you left your little home town, so you join his preparation for this party.

You meet his Grandma and hear about his parent's love story. Through meeting different people in town and collecting materials for this party, you learn more about how they worked together to build the town.

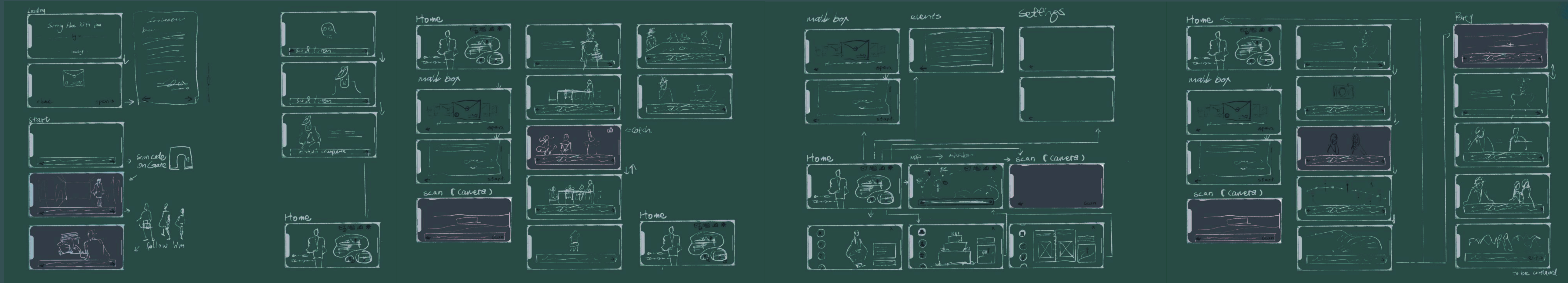
At the party, you meet these people again and realize that this is more than just a birthday party. The people they brought, the things you prepared, Michael's Mom's plan, and all these clues lead to a heartwarming surprise...



Role Play Suspense Reality Show
Plot and Character study.



UI workflow



User Interface



Game Demo



Filming a demo video in Central Park.

Demo video:
<https://youtu.be/cxJVOaTwjgU>