

Practice Cultural Diversity Claiming Spaces Project

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WHAT IS IT?

First, when we were thinking about the idea of reclaiming space we started asking questions like what kind of space represents us the most? Or what is the thing that we lack in our lives that we want to bring to that space? Our school has a big international community with lots of different backgrounds and cultures. We, as a group, make part of this community too. Sometimes the differences are small or big but we realized that our group is connected by a very specific thing, which is nostalgia. Feeling that comes from the need for belonging.

We thought of ways to represent this feeling which came out in many forms. Having a meal together like Sundays at your grandma or having tea at a certain hour or just a piece of scarf that reminds you of all the women that wear them in your country.

This school is the main reason why many students came to the Netherlands. Yet this school does not have one single place that is dedicated to international students. We realised that this situation has created something very special, a bond. All the internationals here are helping each other out and are trying to create their own community so they don't feel alone.

We decided to create a venue/ space where we can share our culture with other people and represent it. Space that also brings the opportunity for us to reconnect with our cultures.

Our project, therefore, works with the idea of supporting the cultural diversity within our school and encourages all students to express themselves freely and share their culture with others in a special space. We thought that this space could be a good fit for gatherings, lunches, dinners, lectures given by students that want to point out problems that bother them or their community, themed events, anything that can bring people for cultural exchange.

WHERE IT'S HAPPENING?

The space we decided to work with is the open area at the Wijnhaven entrance.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

The first idea was to redesign a space that is already very popular and used on school premises. The space is currently fully open and can be used by anyone at any time. We liked the idea of an open space that people could enter at any time and adapt to themselves. We did not want the space to be selective. We wanted people to have easy access to it. At the same time, we realized the importance of an intimate atmosphere and agreed that in order to create a sense of safe space, we must divide the space in some way. We have come up with various proposals of how to 'cover' this space. Inside, the furniture could be divided and changed according to the event held in the space. The set of the furniture would remain the same (as we know it now) but it would be possible to decorate and add elements that have a certain cultural and personal colouring/mood. E.g. carpets, table cloths, sheets, etc. These items would be in some storage space and all students could have access to it. After each event, the space can be transformed to the original settings. The space itself works as a station. We thought of a way of making it accessible to everyone so students can book a timeslot and organise by themselves events.

Potential problems or arguments

- Could not be a permanent installation..

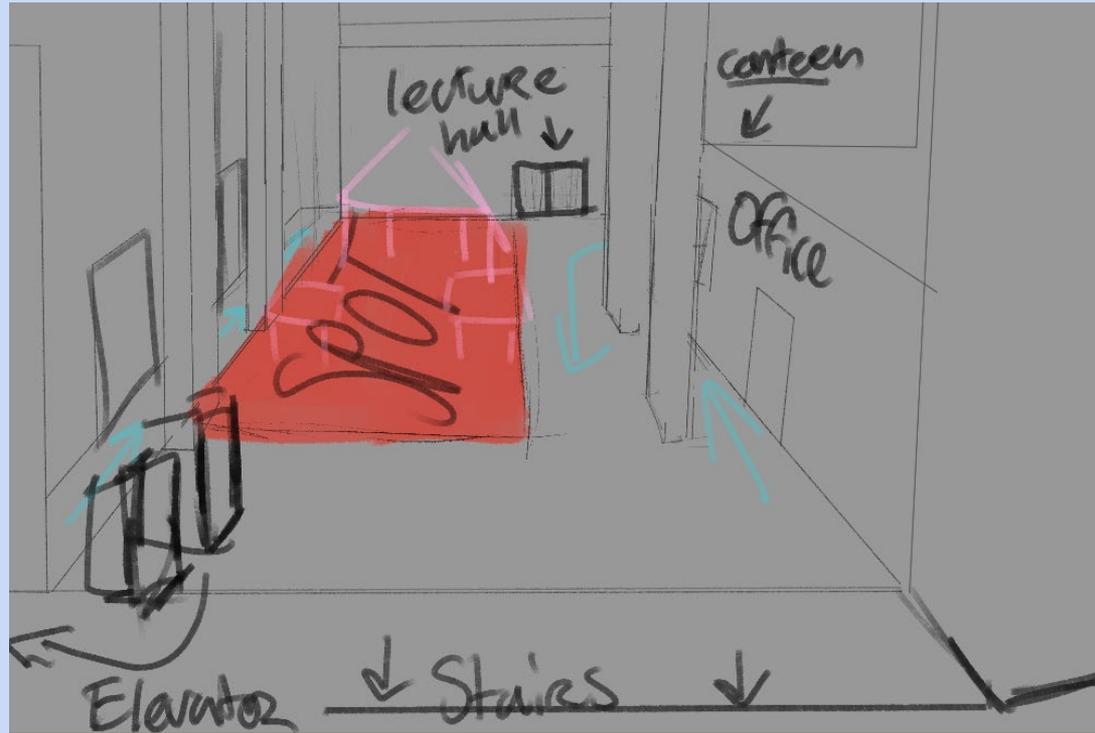
Well the point of the space is that everything is modular, you can roll up the rug, you can fold the blankets, fold the tent, store all the pillows and chairs into a closet. They even sell Modular cooking ranges for collapsible indoor events and offices. Need the microwave to heat lunch? no problem roll it over and plug it in.

- I want to use the space's equipment for an art installation.

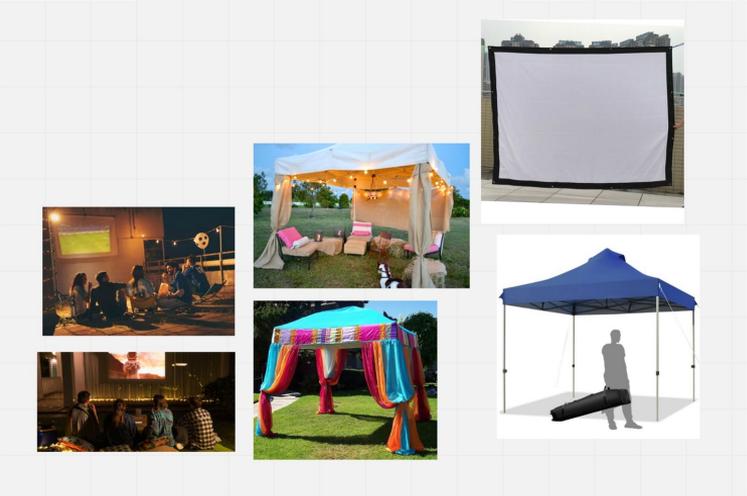
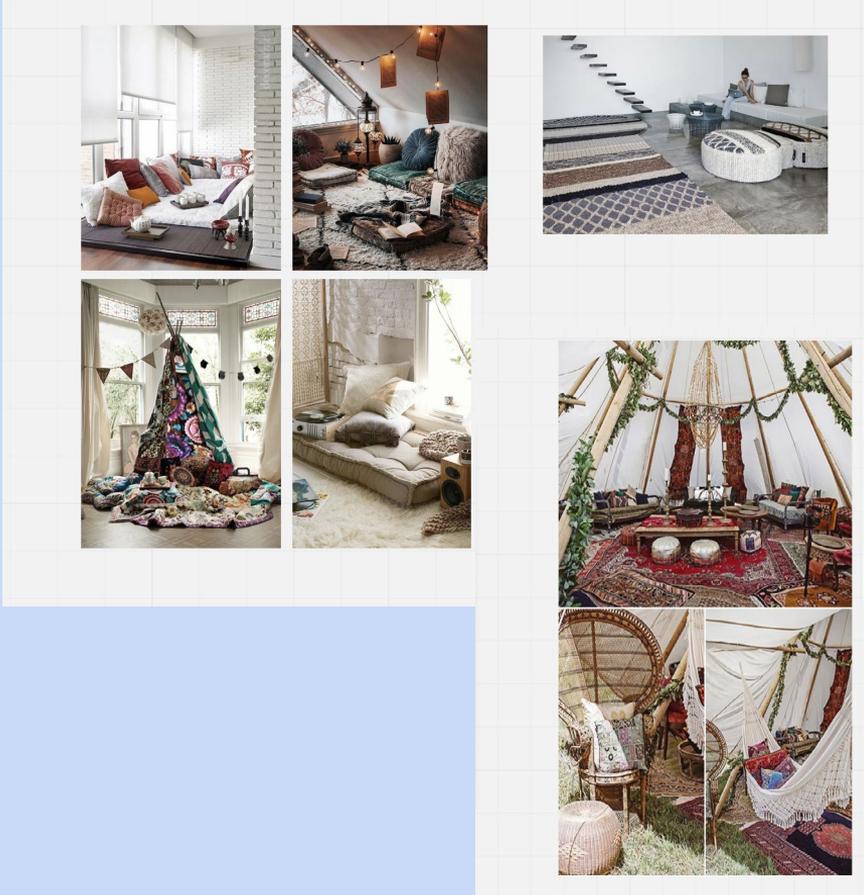
Sure rent the space and assemble the space to your needs! its for everyone to enjoy and experience so even if you wanted to have a presentation or film (Movie Club) there on thursdays you are free to!

- I just want a soft chair to sit on and read a book. I don't really want to socialize

Relax my friend, if the space is open and there is pillows left you can pop those headphones on, find a corner and chill.



Moodboard for our space







module



The space
designed in a
Romanian
way



Space with some
mexi/californian
celebration decorations



Movie space or just overall relaxing while eating and maybe some visuals on the projector.

