



DESIGN ABILITIES



ACTIVITY BOOK

Learn more about the 8 core Design Abilities from the workshop, and put on your Abilities lenses to see yourself, others, and the world around you in a new way.



HELLO.

So, you've just gone through a 90-minute, experiential introduction to 8 core Design Abilities. If you want to continue to explore what these abilities mean, and become more attuned to the role they play in your world, this activity book is the place to start! Check out what's inside, and then jump on in.

EXPLORE *the imagery*

ACTIVITY: *Coloring + Visual Study*

Use a combination of coloring and our sensemaking prompts to help unpack the visual richness of the abilities art. Designed by artist Jason Munn, these pieces are much more than visual icons. Get deeper with a partnered discussion.

LEARN FROM OTHERS (PEOPLE AND CONTEXTS)
This ability includes the skills of empathizing with different people, having new ideas with them and observing and making an informed place and context.

Recognizing the opportunity to see how learning from others is something that happens throughout design projects, both with and across as well as other collaborators and team members. There is a necessity to observe that develops with this ability.

Color one or however you like!

A CLOSER LOOK...

What do you see in this image at first glance?
 What other details do you notice as you study it further?
 How would you interpret its meaning?
 What messages exist with you personally? What does it?

PARTNER PAIR-AND-SHARE
Get a buddy to discuss this image and this ability. Ideally, this would be someone who attended the same workshop as you, but it could be a friend, family member, or even a dog. This is for the most part:
 - Compare notes on what both of you see, and how you interpret its meaning.
 - What questions do you still have? What are you wondering about?
 - If you and your partner were to make your own visual for this ability, what would it be?
 - Capture into sketches or models below.

pages 4-21

SEEK *inspiration*

ACTIVITY: *Scavenger Hunt Walkabout*

Go on a discovery walk to find the best examples of the abilities manifested in the world around you. It's a race for points!

SCAVENGER HUNT WALKABOUT
How many examples can you find to show these abilities used in the world around you? Go for a 1 hour walk at your neighborhood, workplace or nearby. Find evidence from your surroundings. What can you discover on your walkabout?
 (Take a note of what you see in the box below each checklist item (and capture evidence with a picture if you can!))

| | | | |
|--|---|--|---|
| <p>NAVIGATE AMBIGUITY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> an ambiguous object or space where exact use or meaning is unclear and open to interpretation (15 pts) <input type="checkbox"/> someone interacting with this ambiguous object or space (15 pts) <input type="checkbox"/> someone who is in the process of making a decision and is seeking to discover (15 pts) <input type="checkbox"/> a business that is in the process of transitioning to something else (15 pts) <input type="checkbox"/> an individual or group of people who are physically interacting in a way other than using their phone (15 pts) <p>TOTAL SCORE: <input type="text"/></p> | <p>LEARN FROM OTHERS (people and contexts)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> a child who is watching and learning from an expert and directly asked them (15 pts) <input type="checkbox"/> an adult who is learning or watching a child (15 pts) <input type="checkbox"/> someone who is going outside of their usual routine to follow their curiosity (15 pts) <input type="checkbox"/> an interface that listens to the needs and desires of its users (15 pts) <input type="checkbox"/> a business that is actively learning from their customers in an interesting way (15 pts) <p>TOTAL SCORE: <input type="text"/></p> | <p>SYNTHESIZE INFORMATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> a streamlined map that is easy to understand (15 pts) <input type="checkbox"/> someone reading or studying a visual aid such as a map or infographic (15 pts) <input type="checkbox"/> an example of quantitative data being collected or analyzed (15 pts) <input type="checkbox"/> an example of quantitative data being collected or analyzed (15 pts) <input type="checkbox"/> someone that is organizing data and using the result in a new way (15 pts) <p>TOTAL SCORE: <input type="text"/></p> | <p>RAVE/EXPERIMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> someone who is brainstorming ideas out loud with another person (15 pts) <input type="checkbox"/> someone who is thinking by creating something with their hands (15 pts) <input type="checkbox"/> someone that shows evidence of careful work iterations (15 pts) <input type="checkbox"/> someone who is comparing together a new idea to solve a problem or the moment (15 pts) <input type="checkbox"/> a business that is trying several options (product features, sales channels) at once (15 pts) <p>TOTAL SCORE: <input type="text"/></p> |
|--|---|--|---|

pages 22-25

NOTICE *people around you*

ACTIVITY: *Abilities Bingo! (+ Build Your Lenses)*

Be on the lookout for ways the people around you act out the abilities. When you get 5 in a row, you know what to yell!

ABILITIES BINGO
How can you observe your friends, family, and/or coworkers exhibiting the abilities in their work or study life? Be on the lookout for something a person does that really catches that ability. It could be something as small as the way they handle an email or as large as making a big life decision. But what will you always notice something (or someone) exhibiting several examples before they get bored?

How many get 5 in a row, you know what to yell!

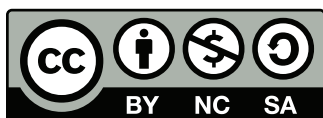
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(FRO)

KEEP ON LOOKING.
The best way to continue learning about the abilities is to continue looking for them in yourself, others and the world around you. Go out and observe your Abilities lenses in person just to keep using and refining it in new ways. For your friends or your dog, or your school, club, or community also share your lens and look for others.

Don't forget to snap a photo of you in your new shades! #AbilitiesBingo

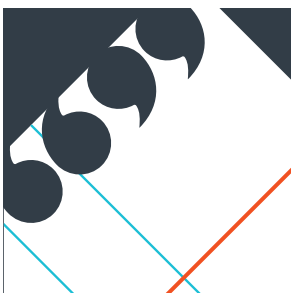
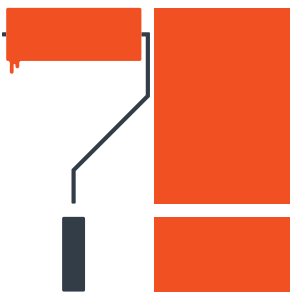
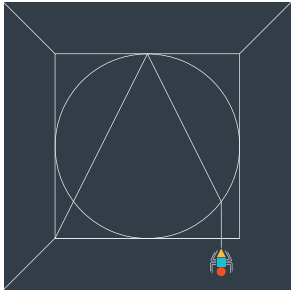
pages 26-27



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WARM-UP!

Can you match the abilities artwork with the name? Take your best guess, and draw lines between the 2 columns to match. (Answers are in the pages ahead... don't peek!)



LEARN FROM OTHERS
(people and contexts)

COMMUNICATE DELIBERATELY

RAPIDLY EXPERIMENT

BUILD + CRAFT INTENTIONALLY

NAVIGATE AMBIGUITY

SYNTHESIZE INFORMATION

DESIGN YOUR DESIGN WORK

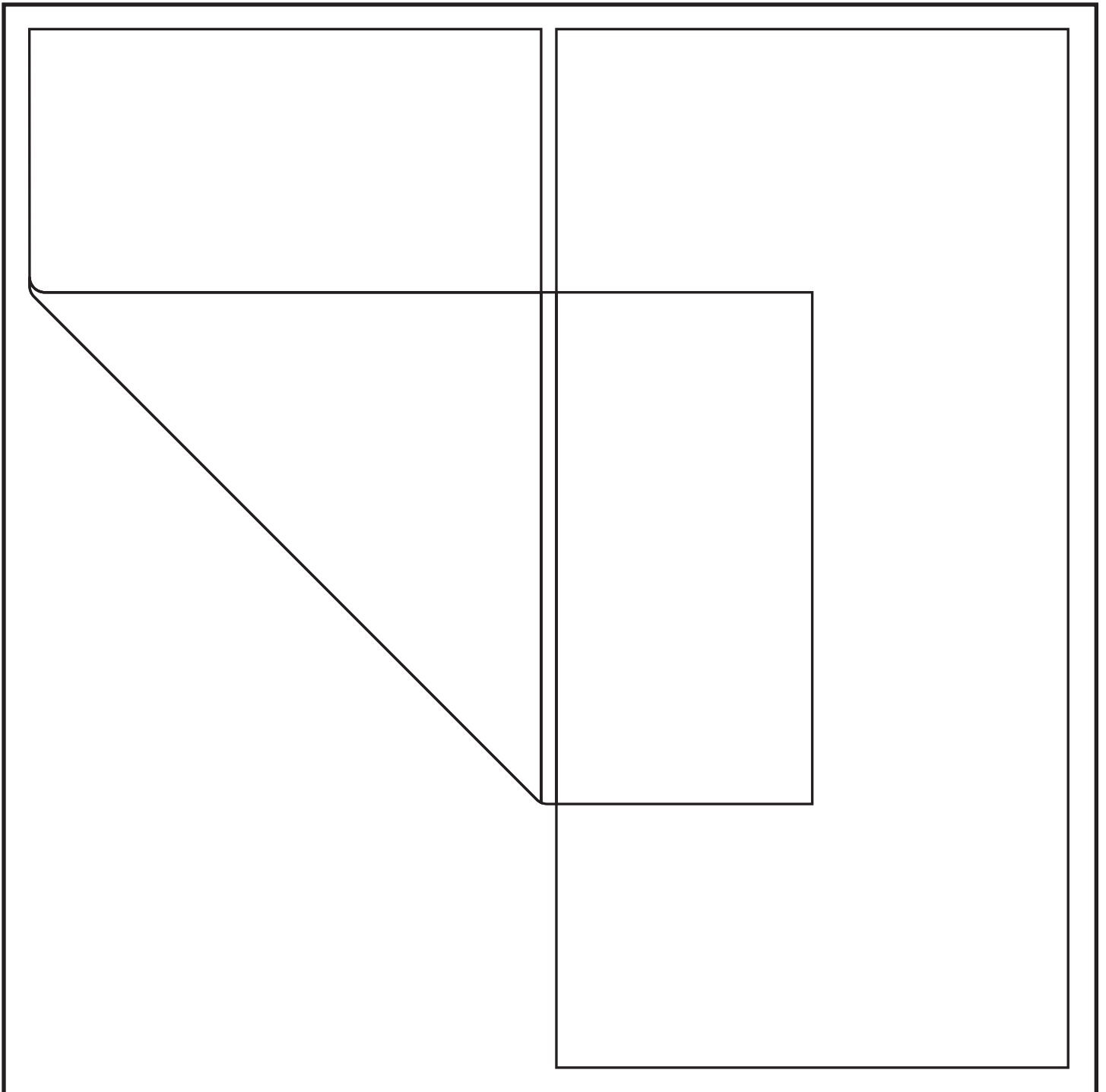
MOVE BETWEEN CONCRETE AND ABSTRACT

LEARN FROM OTHERS (PEOPLE AND CONTEXTS)

This ability includes the skills of empathizing with different people, testing new ideas with them and observing and noticing in different places and contexts.

Recognizing the opportunity to, and then learning from others is something that happens throughout a design project, both with end users as well as other stakeholders and team members. There is a sensitivity to others that develops with this ability.

Color me in however you like!



A CLOSER LOOK...



What do you see in this image at first glance?

What other details do you notice as you study it further?

How would you interpret its meaning?

What resonates most with you personally? What doesn't?

PARTNER PAIR-AND-SHARE

Find a buddy to discuss this image and this ability. Ideally, this would be someone who attended the same workshop as you, but it could be a friend, family member, or co-worker also. This part is the most fun!

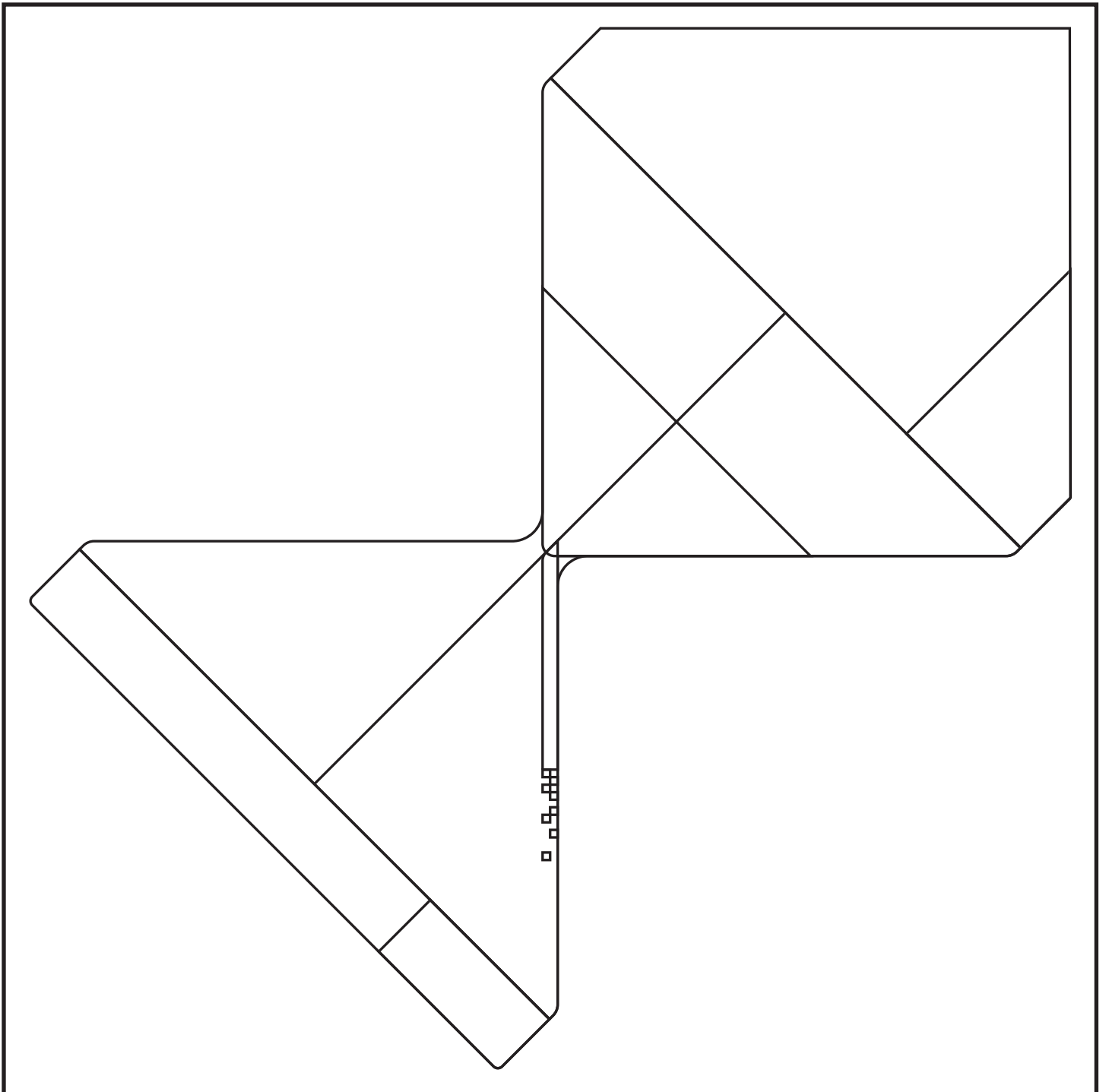
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- > What questions do each of you still have? What are you wondering about?
- > If you and your partner were to make your own visual for this ability, what would it be?
- > Capture notes, sketches, or doodles below.

RAPIDLY EXPERIMENT

This ability is about being able to quickly generate ideas, whether written, drawn, or built.

Brainstorming is a tool within this ability. It's about letting the doing lead your thinking, leading with your hands. In order to rapidly experiment you need to be able to relax your mind into a mode of acceptance and generation and eliminate the natural tendency to block ideas that don't seem on point or feasible.

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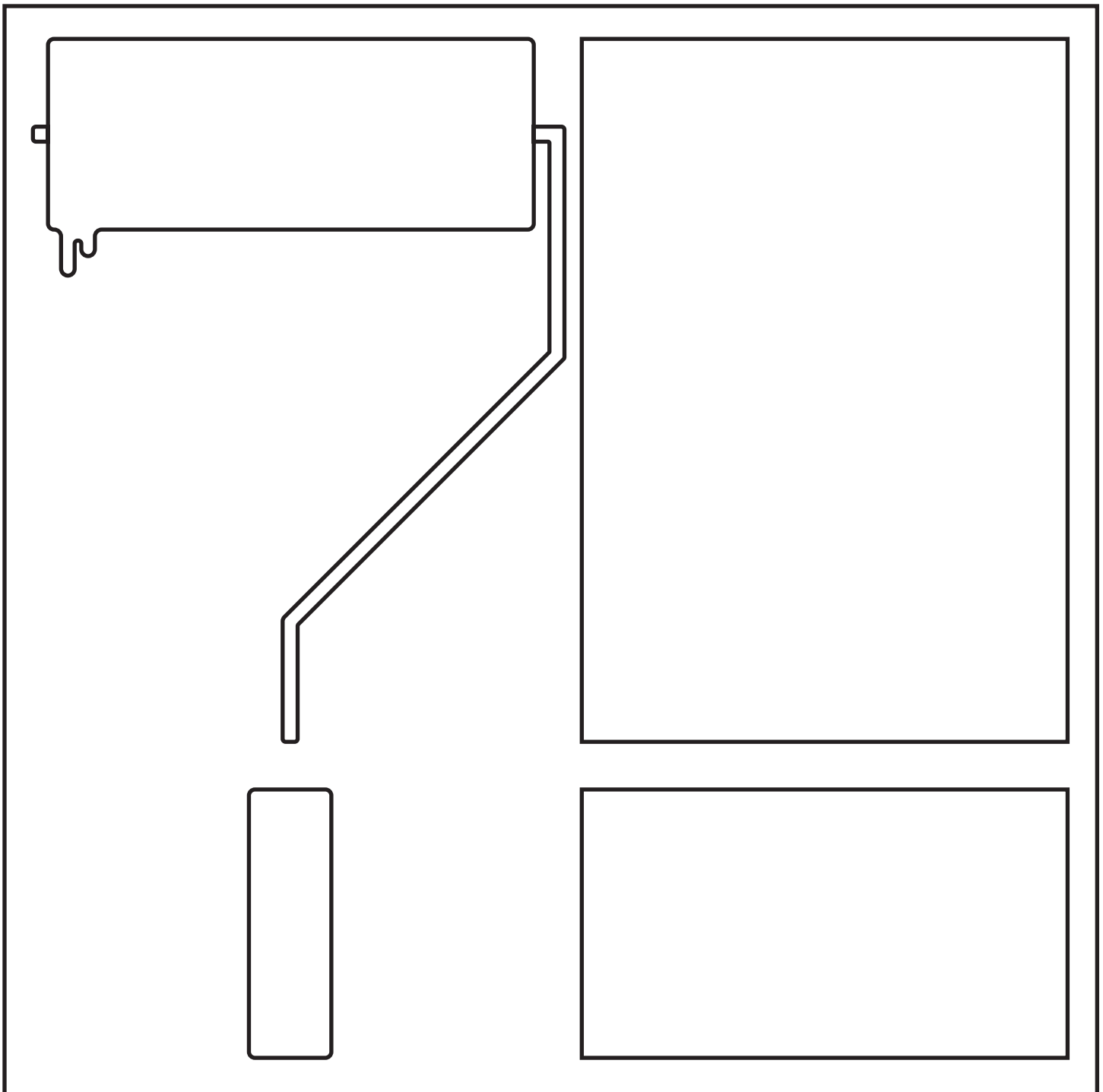
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BUILD AND CRAFT INTENTIONALLY

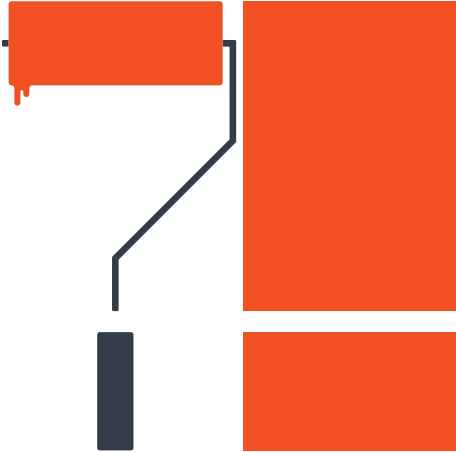
This ability is about thoughtful construction and showing work at the most appropriate level of resolution for the audience and feedback desired.

Details matter when you're bringing an idea to life, no matter if the medium is cardboard, pixels or text. Furthermore, there are many sub-disciplines of design, each with their own set of tools and techniques. UX designers have a set of tools specific to creating human-centered digital interfaces. Architects have an arsenal of techniques to bring new structures into the world. Every other discipline: immunology, macroeconomics, K12 education, etc. has its own methods as well. This ability requires a sensitivity to the tools needed to create beautiful work in the domain that you are working in.

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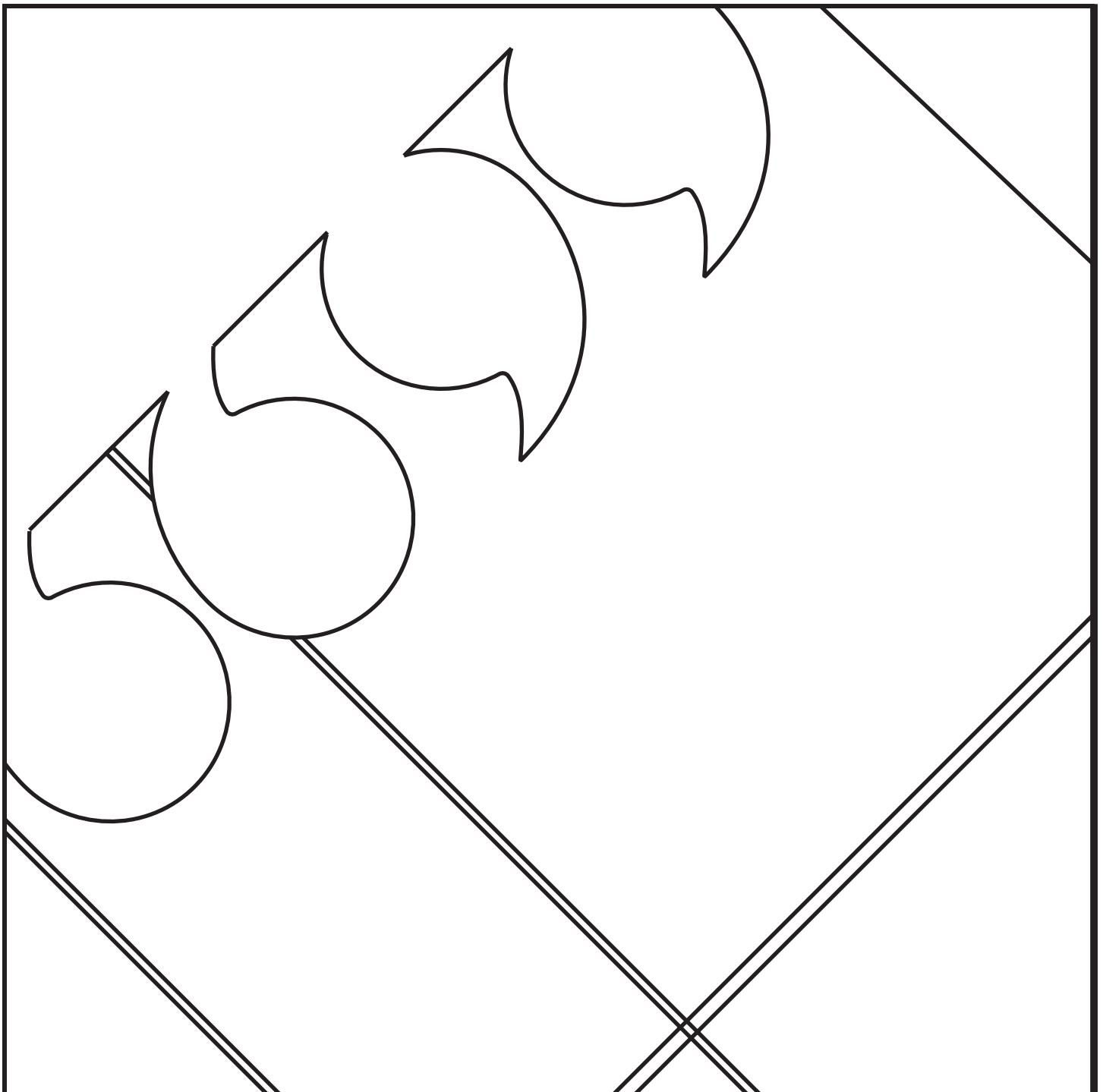
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COMMUNICATE DELIBERATELY

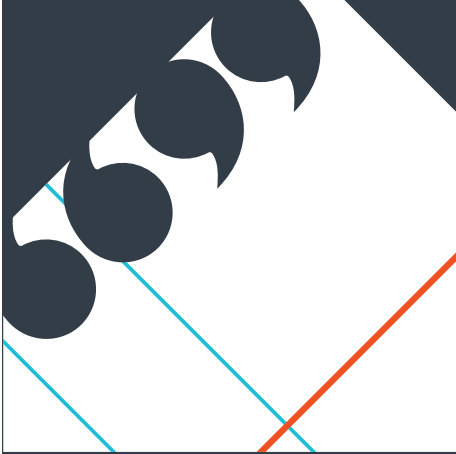
This is the ability to form, capture, and communicate stories, ideas, concepts, reflections, and learnings to the appropriate audiences.

Communication happens in a variety of contexts. This includes reflecting on your performance to a project team or crafting a video to show your product to a potential investor. As we practice experiential learning at the d.school, communication and the storytelling within, are paramount.

Color me in however you like!



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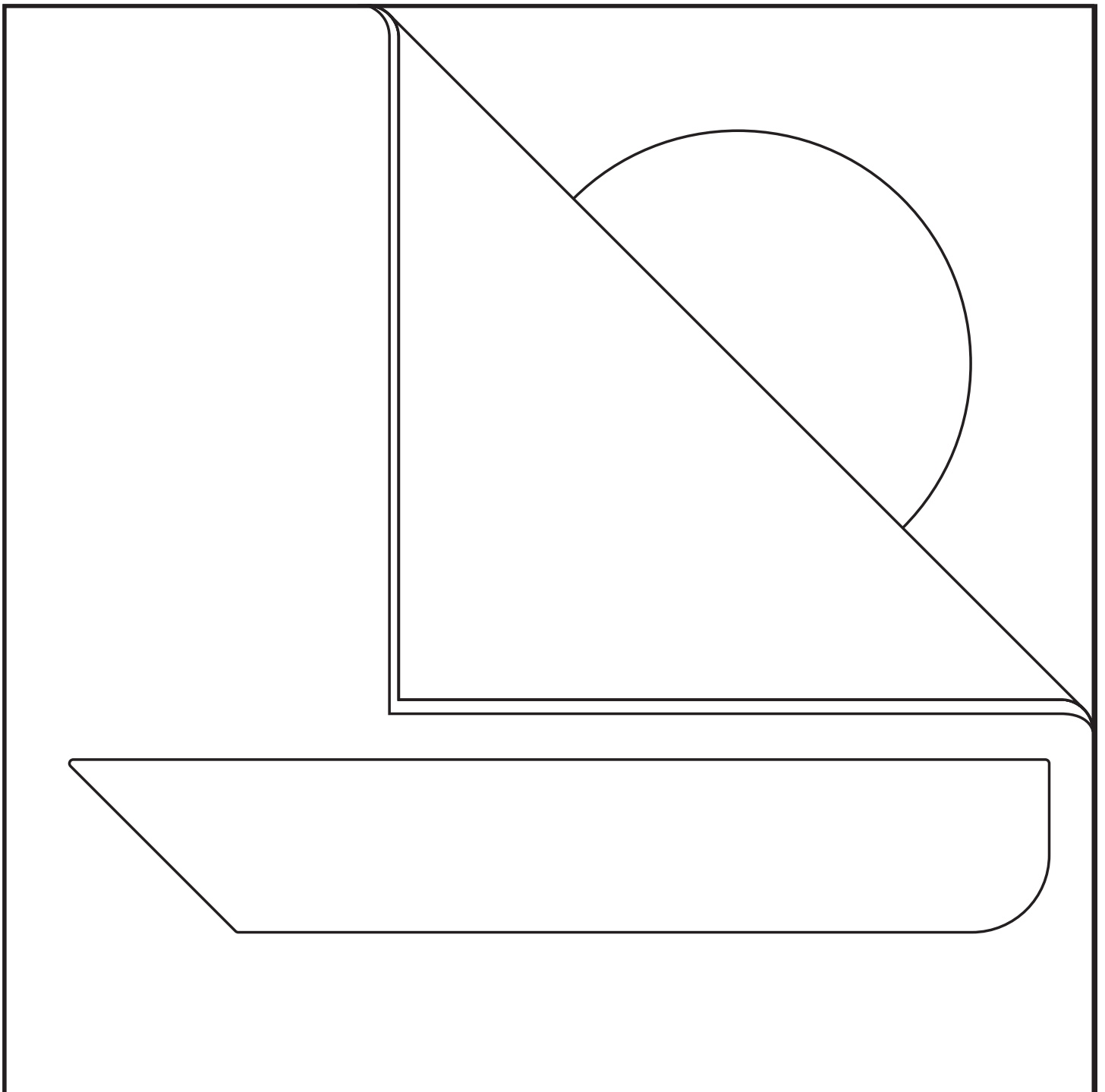
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NAVIGATE AMBIGUITY

This is the ability to recognize and stew in the discomfort of not knowing, and then come up with tactics to emerge out of it when needed.

Design is loaded with uncertainty. There are important skills to learn such as being present in the moment, re-framing problems, and finding patterns in information. Ambiguity can arise within a project, a process, within oneself etc. It's as important to put students in ambiguous situations as it is to give them tactics to emerge from them.

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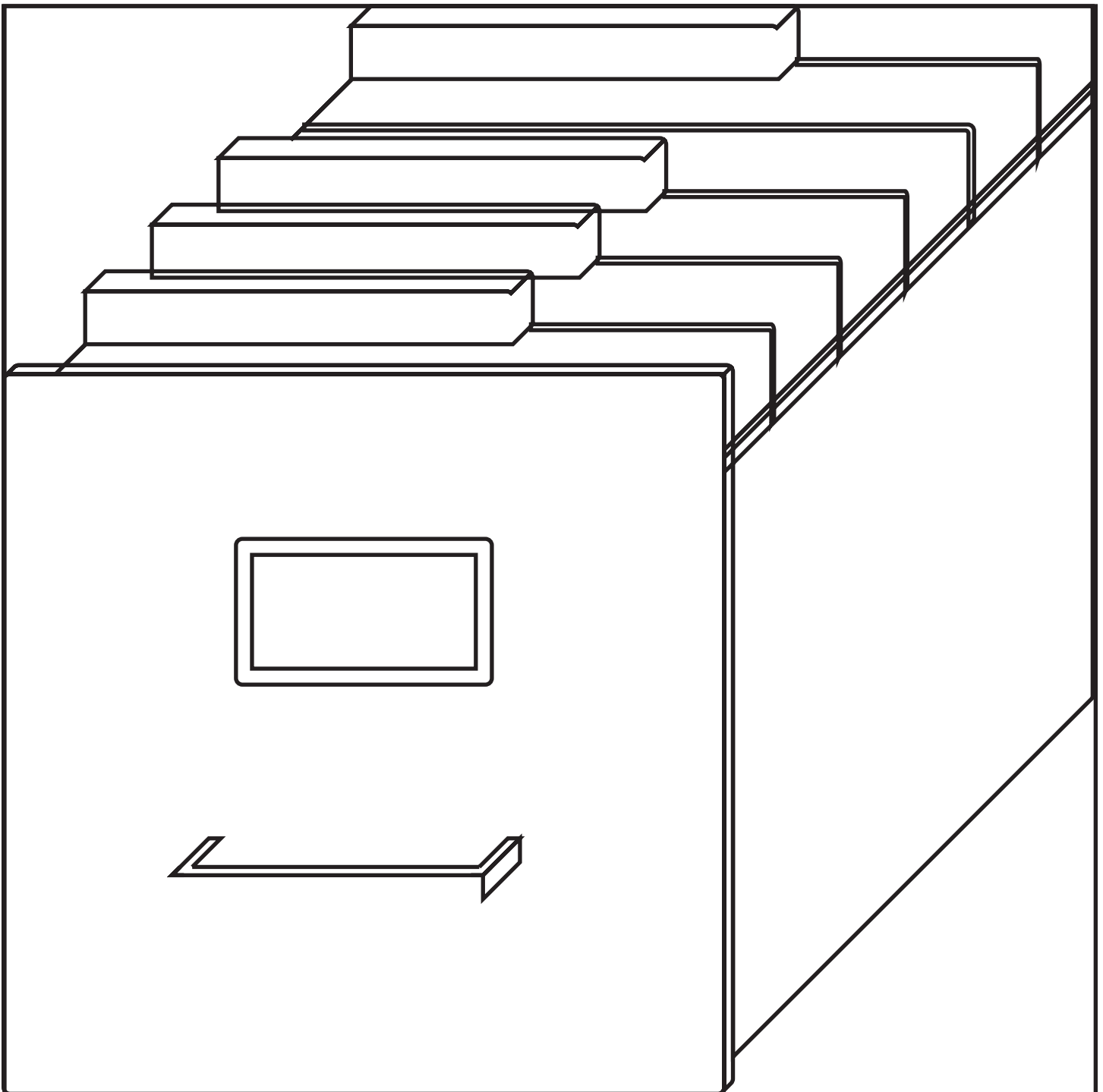
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SYNTHESIZE INFORMATION

This is the ability to make sense of information and find insight and opportunity within.

Data comes from multiple places and has many different forms, both qualitative and quantitative. This ability requires skills in making frameworks, maps and abductive thinking. This ability is hard. Very hard.

Color me in however you like!



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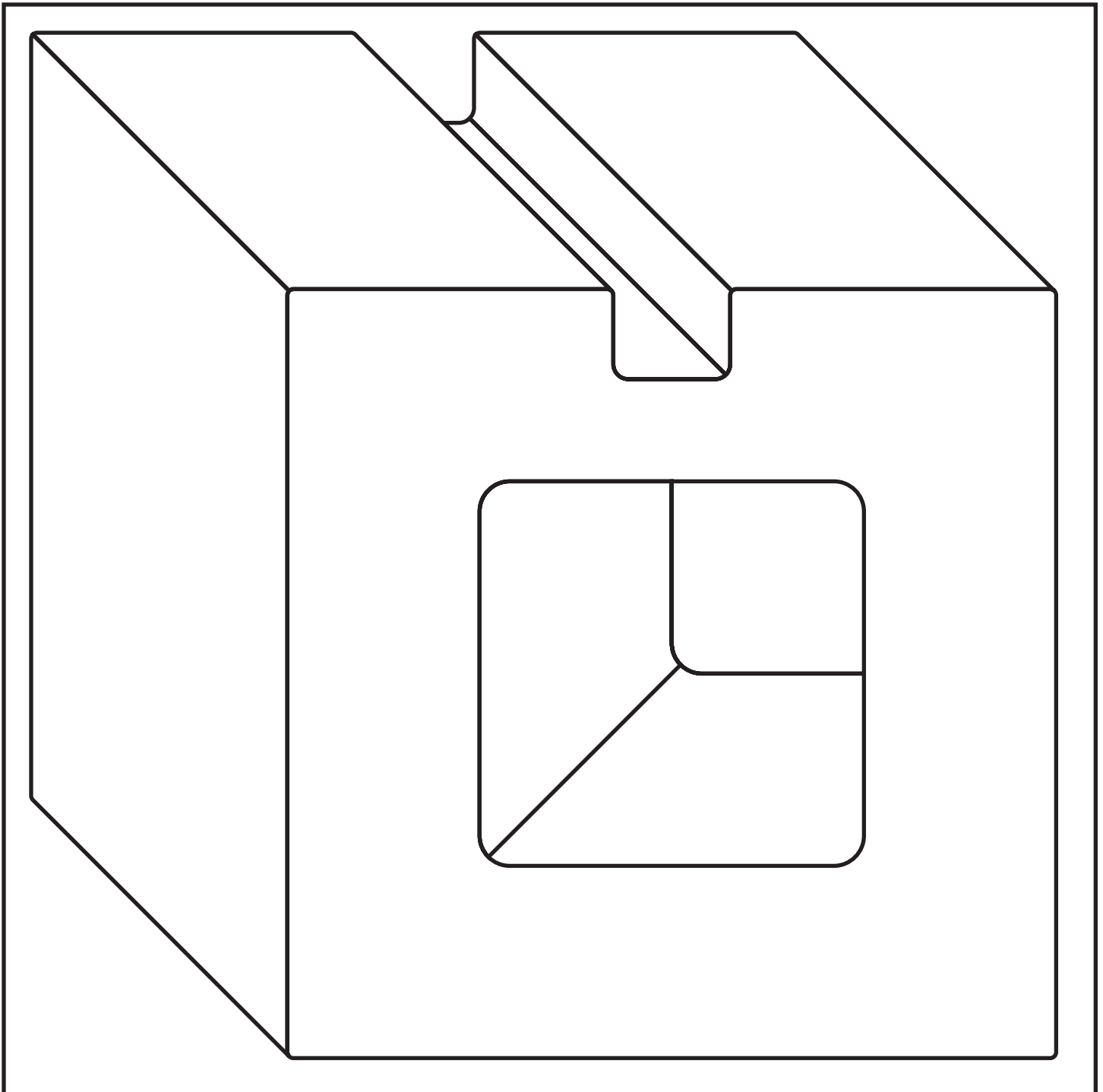
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MOVE BETWEEN CONCRETE AND ABSTRACT

This ability contains skills around understanding stakeholders as well as zooming and expanding on product features.

Everything is connected. When students are building out a new concept, whether a product, service, experience, etc., they need to be able to next the concept within the larger ecosystem that relates to it. We have Ray and Charles Eames to thank for helping us set the scene for this ability, but it also includes abstracting out for meaning, goals, and principles, as well as zooming in to define details and features.

Color me in however you like!



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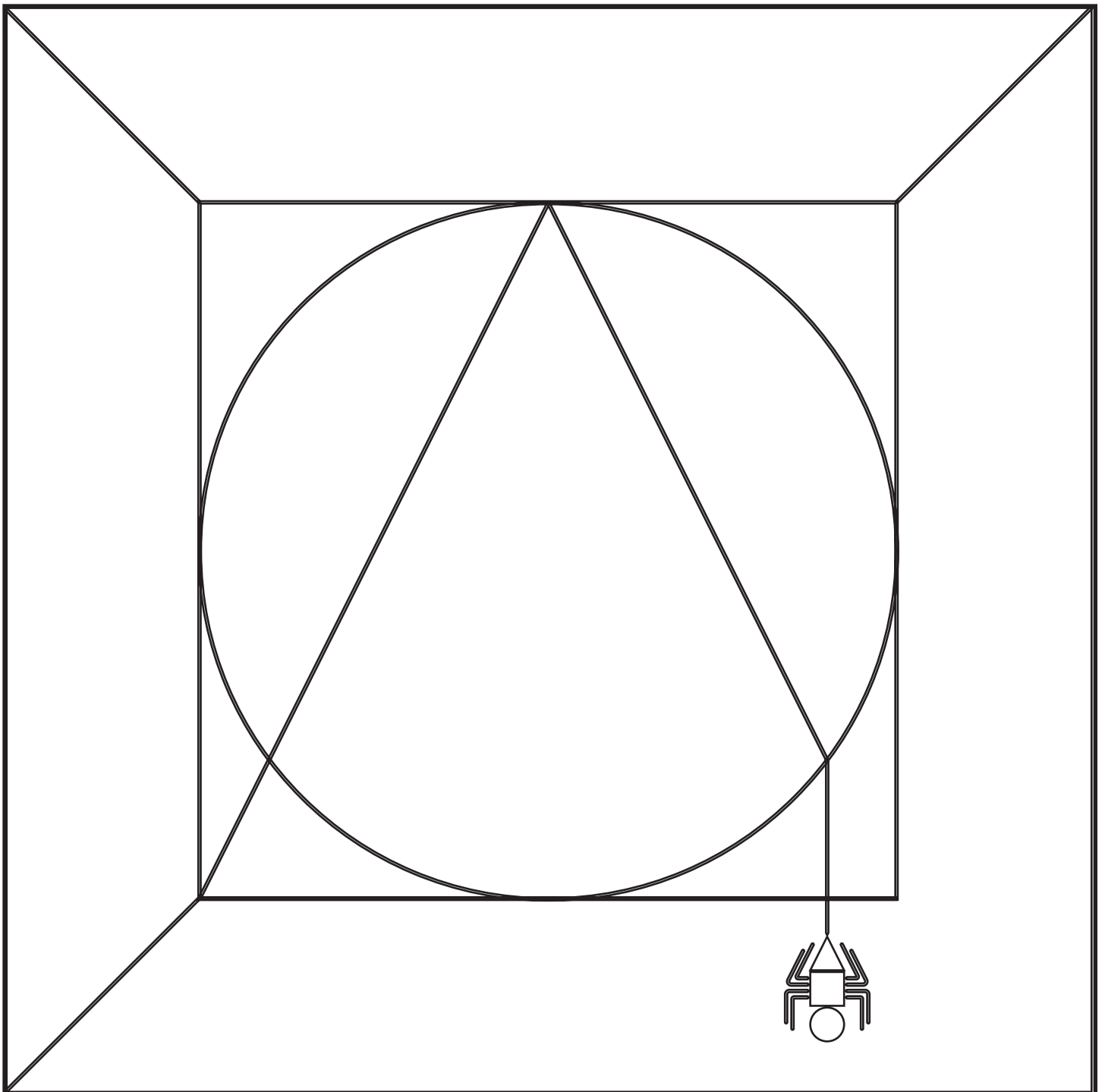
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DESIGN YOUR DESIGN WORK

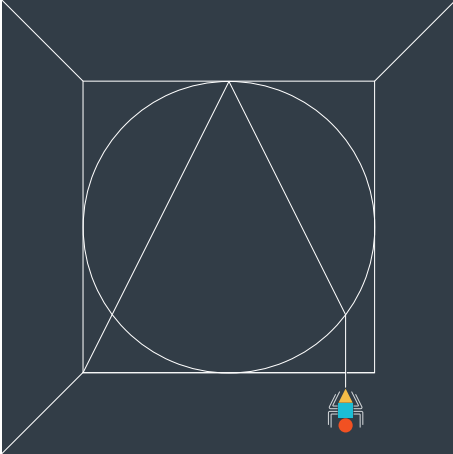
This meta ability is about recognizing a project as a design problem and then deciding on the people, tools, techniques, and processes to use to tackle it.

This ability develops with practice. We see it emerge in our more experienced students. It requires using intuition, mashing up tools and developing new techniques for the challenge at hand.

Color me in however you like!



A CLOSER LOOK...



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LOOKING AT THE COLLECTION

Now that you've explored all of the abilities individually, what do you notice when you step back and look at them as a collection? How do the pieces connect? What are the connections between the abilities. Again, this is more fun to do with a partner!

- > What colors do you see across the collection? Why do you think they were chosen?
- > What common visual elements do you see across the pieces? For example, what colors, shapes, or angles reappear in similar ways?
- > Do you think any thematic elements (colors, shapes, etc.) connect one or more pieces together?
- > What does the collection as a whole say to you about design as a practice?



LEARN FROM OTHERS
(people and contexts)



RAPIDLY EXPERIMENT



NAVIGATE AMBIGUITY



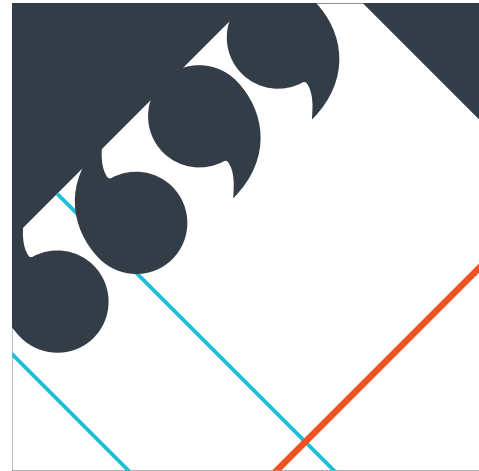
SYNTHESIZE INFORMATION

How do they relate to one another? Reflect on the prompts below, and then draw arrows, circles, stars, or sketches to make

What could they mean?



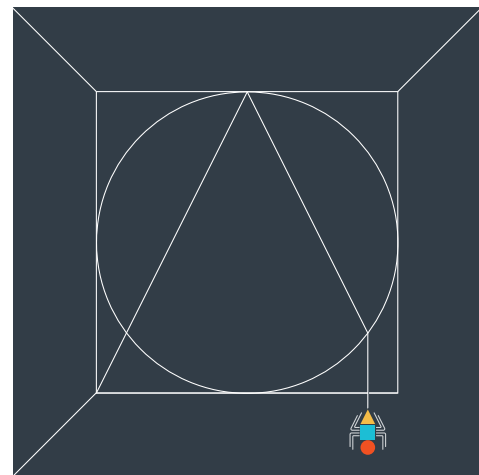
BUILD + CRAFT INTENTIONALLY



COMMUNICATE DELIBERATELY



MOVE BETWEEN CONCRETE AND ABSTRACT



DESIGN YOUR DESIGN WORK

SCAVENGER HUNT WALKABOUT

How many examples can you find for how these abilities exist in the world around you? Go for a 1-hour walk in your neighborhood, exploring a roughly 1-mile radius from your starting point. What can you discover on your walkabout?

Make a note of who or what you saw in the box below each checklist item (and capture evidence with a picture if you can!).



NAVIGATE AMBIGUITY

- an ambiguous object or space, whose exact use or meaning is unclear and open to interpretation (5 pts)

- someone interacting with this ambiguous object or space (10 pts)

- someone who is in the process of making a decision and is stewing in discomfort (10 pts)

- a business that is in the process of transitioning to something else (15 pts)

- an individual or group of people who are physically navigating in a way other than using their phone (15 pts)

TOTAL SCORE:



LEARN FROM OTHERS *(people and contexts)*

- a child who is watching and learning from the people and objects around them (5 pts)

- an adult who is listening or watching intently (10 pts)

- someone who is going outside of their normal routine to follow their curiosity (15 pts)

- an interface that listens to the needs and desires of its users (15 pts)

- a business that is actively learning from their customers in an interesting way (15 pts)

TOTAL SCORE:

TOTAL SCORE ACROSS
8 CATEGORIES



SYNTHESIZE INFORMATION

- a streamlined map that is easy to understand (5 pts)

- someone reading or studying a visual infographic or display of information (5 pts)

- an example of **qualitative** data being collected or applied (10 pts)

- an example of **quantitative** data being collected or applied (10 pts)

- someone that is processing data and acting on the result in real time (15 pts)

TOTAL SCORE:



RAPIDLY EXPERIMENT

- someone who is brainstorming ideas out loud with another person (5 pts)

- someone who is thinking by creating something with their hands (5 pts)

- signage that shows evidence of several quick iterations (10 pts)

- someone who is scrapping together a way to solve a problem in the moment (15 pts)

- a business that is trying out several options (product displays, space layouts) at once (15 pts)

TOTAL SCORE:

SCAVENGER HUNT WALKABOUT (CONT'D)



BUILD AND CRAFT INTENTIONALLY

- a beautifully crafted object that leaves you wondering exactly how it was made (5 pts)*

[Dashed box for notes]

- an example of packaging that is really delightful (5 pts)*

[Dashed box for notes]

- something that was made in under 10 minutes, but feels perfect for what it was intended for (5 pts)*

[Dashed box for notes]

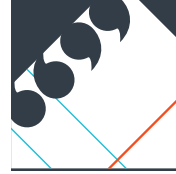
- a public digital interface that feels over-designed for its intended use (15 pts)*

[Dashed box for notes]

- a building or outdoor space whose architecture really enhances human interactions in that space (15 pts)*

[Dashed box for notes]

TOTAL SCORE:



COMMUNICATE DELIBERATELY

- a sign that people actually stop to read or notice (5 pts)*

[Dashed box for notes]

- two examples of product packaging - one really clear and one really unclear in communicating what it contains (10 pts)*

[Dashed box for notes]

- something that tells a story very well (could be an image(s), text on a sign, a collection of things, etc.) (10 pts)*

[Dashed box for notes]

- a store or physical space that eloquently communicates its brand (10 pts)*

[Dashed box for notes]

- overhear someone pitching an idea to a friend or colleague (15 pts)*

[Dashed box for notes]

TOTAL SCORE:



MOVE BETWEEN CONCRETE AND ABSTRACT

- a sign or poster that communicates a larger system at play (5 pts)

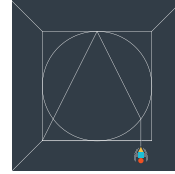
- a product or service that is very tangible, but rates highly on emotional experience (10 pts)

- an employee or worker who is paying attention to higher-level questions or needs vs their everyday tasks (10 pts)

- a manager or other leader considering the details (10 pts)

- a store that has designed the last detail of every product inside, and also clearly communicates brand and mission (15 pts)

TOTAL SCORE:



DESIGN YOUR DESIGN WORK

- a tool that was created for a very specific purpose (5 pts)

- a business or organization whose employees play unconventional but effective roles (10 pts)

- a technique displayed that is unique to a business, ie. how a certain food or beverage is prepared (10 pts)

- A work/office/studio space that has been set up really intentionally (15 pts)

- BONUS: a spider weaving its web! (20 pts)

TOTAL SCORE:

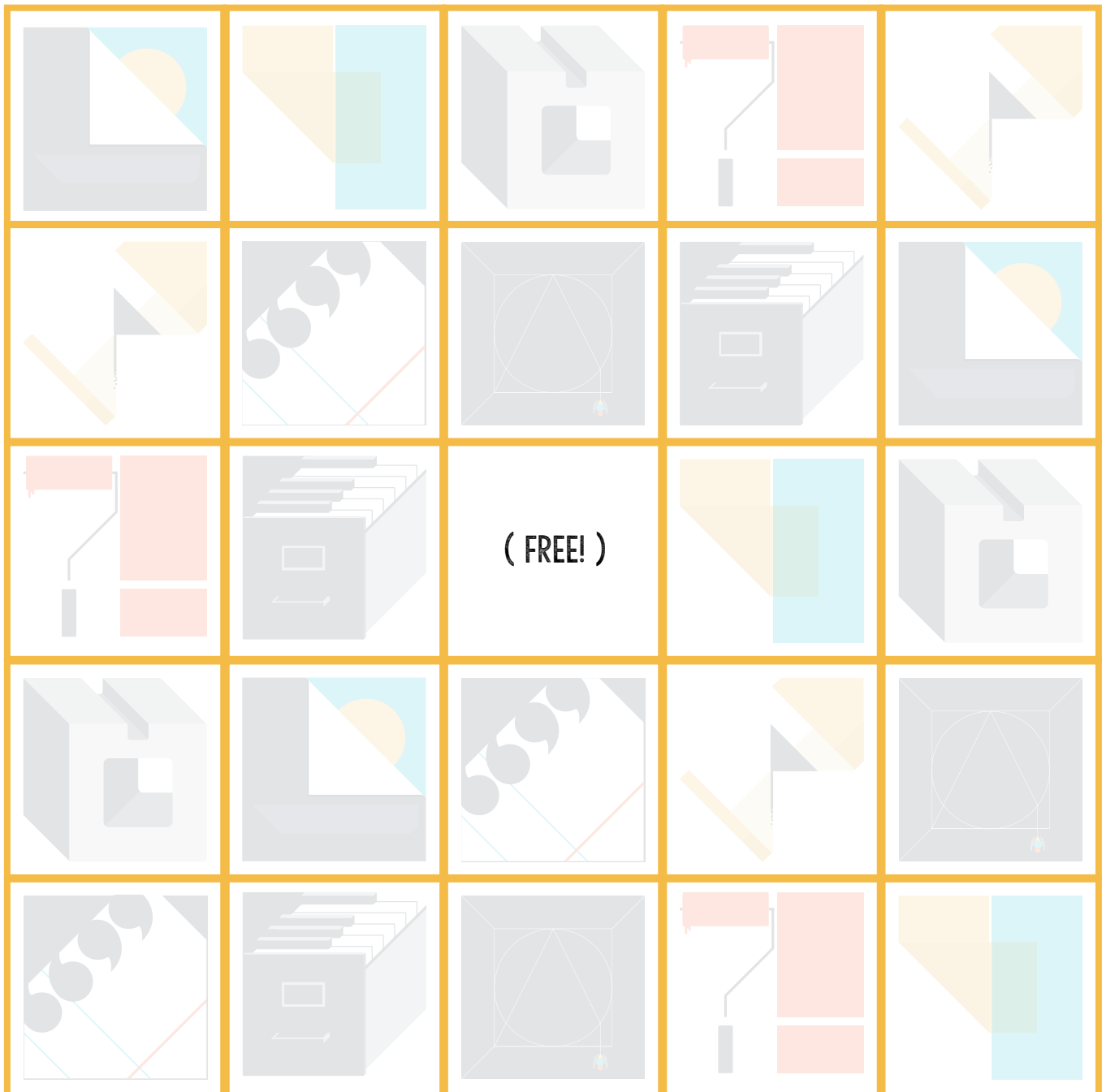
ABILITIES BINGO!

How do you observe your friends, family, and co-workers manifesting the abilities in their work or daily lives? Be on the lookout for something a person does that really embodies that ability. It could be something as small as the way they format an email, or as large as making a big life decision. But wait until you actually witness something (as opposed to reflecting on past examples) before filling in that square.

Once you get 5 in a row, you know what to yell!

Ex:

CHARLOTTE took the time to get feedback on 3 different poster layouts before deciding on a final design, and came up with a new idea in the process



KEEP ON LOOKING.

The best way to continue learning about the abilities is to keep looking for them in yourself, others, and the world around you. Cut out and assemble your Abilities lenses to remind you to keep seeing and noticing in a new way. Put your lenses by your desk, on your bedside table, or somewhere else where you will look at them often.

Don't forget to snap of selfie of you in your new shades! #designabilitieslenses

