

behind closed doors



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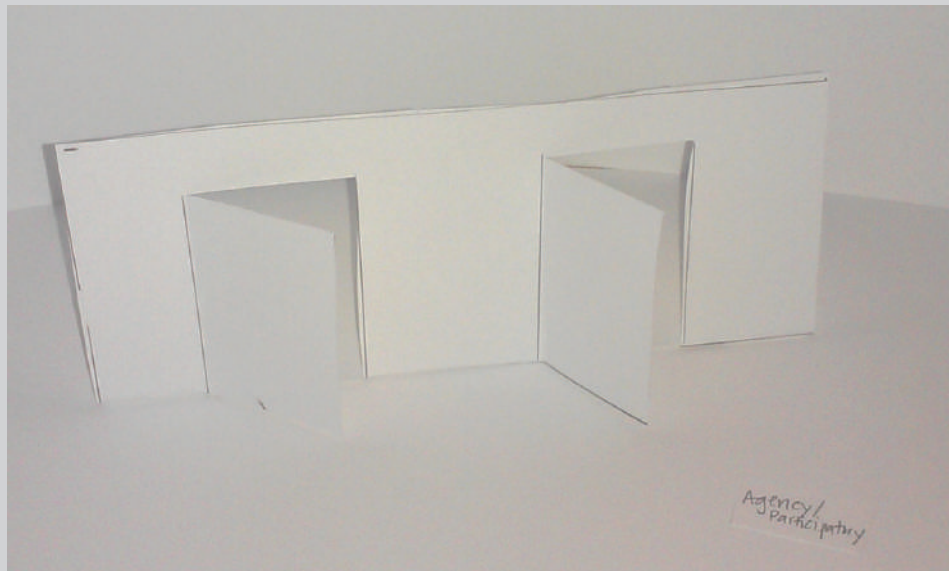
| concept |

though middlebury claims itself to be a progressive place that is “committed to the value of a diverse and respectful community”, the lived student experience proves otherwise.

with many students experiencing instances of racism, harassment, and alienation (with varying degrees of administrative response) to each of these instances, we decided to acknowledge and inform about these topics, giving people within the large middlebury community a chance to confront and potentially resolve their experiences.



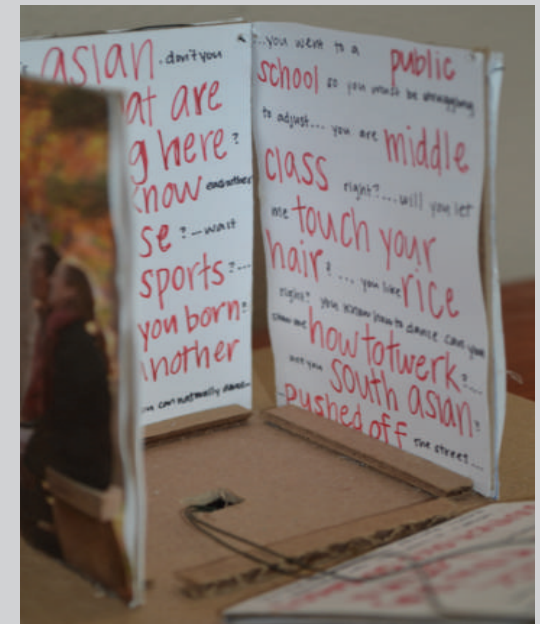
concept models



Precedent I

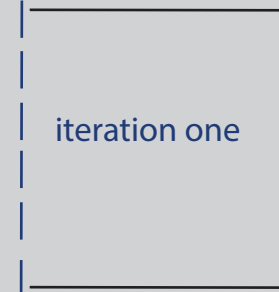
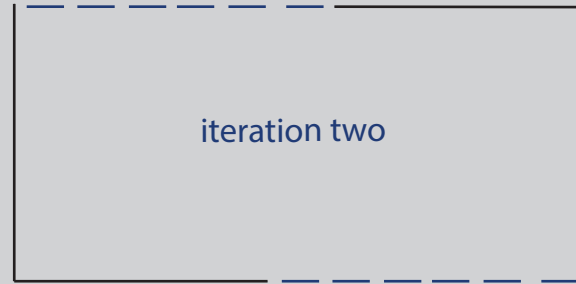
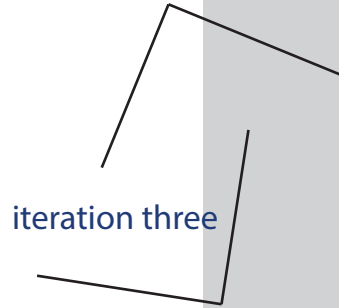
after seeing Vito Acconci's "Safe House" installation, we were fascinated with the idea of double imagery and enclosure and wanted to recreate those themes in our piece.

a group member explored the issue of microaggressions on campus in a previous class and created a small cardboard iteration of it. our installation was an expansion of it, prompting viewers with a broader question and creating a life size version.

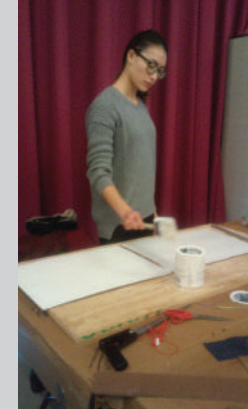
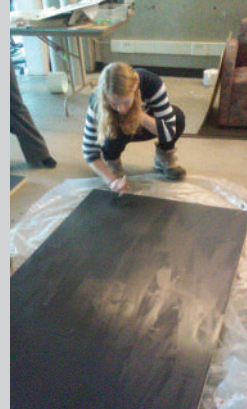
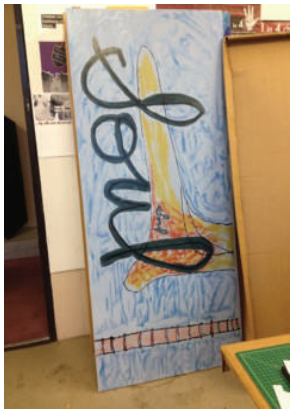


I materials I

the items we chose to incorporate into our installation were primarily determined by what was available to us in the studio. the structural base for our project consists of four wooden panels held together in two L-shapes by steel brackets.



the sides of the panels facing the interior space are painted with black chalkboard paint and the exterior walls are made to resemble freshman dorm doors. The whiteboards, pre-attached in the dorms, are made out of small wooden panels and painted white.



door knobs are also attached to the panels to create a further impression of a real door. on the interior we used paint markers to have permanent quotes to spark viewer's thoughts and we provided chalk for the viewers to share experiences of their own.

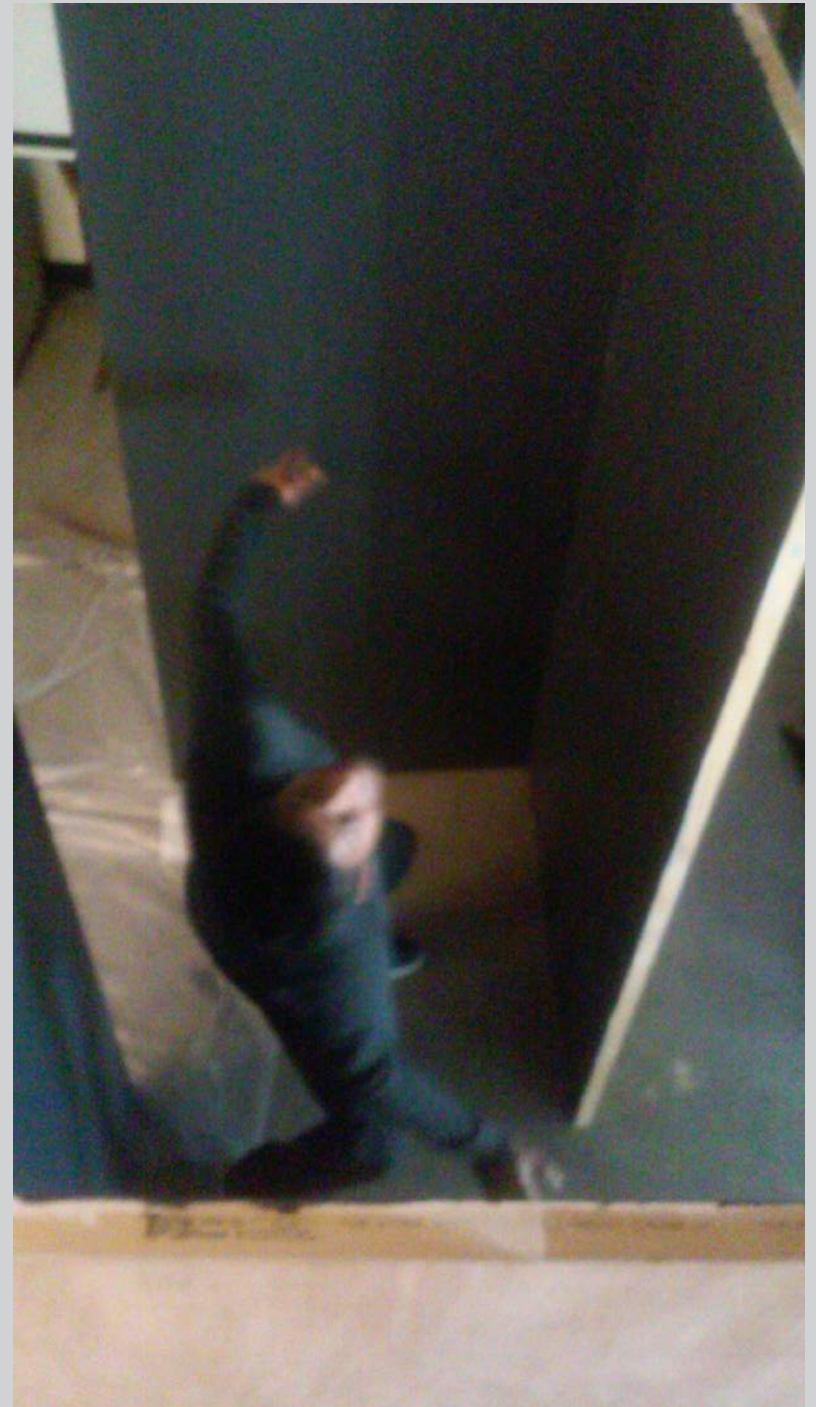
| experience |

the exteriors of each panel are made to resemble dorm room doors - the generic freshman-year door that we have all opened and closed at one point or another and hoped to shut something out. they constitute the exterior of this space because they are common to all - as common as the kinds of experiences documented on the interior. they symbolize the facade that gets built to ignore what exists behind them. our piece attempts to provide insight into the problems the [middlebury](#) community hides behind closed doors.

the piece is designed to incite interaction, and to touch viewers through the intimate experience it provides. the space is small and each wall is filled with the intimate experiences of others. brief comments and stories engender a unique curiosity - not lengthy accounts, but lines similar to overheard dining hall conversations.

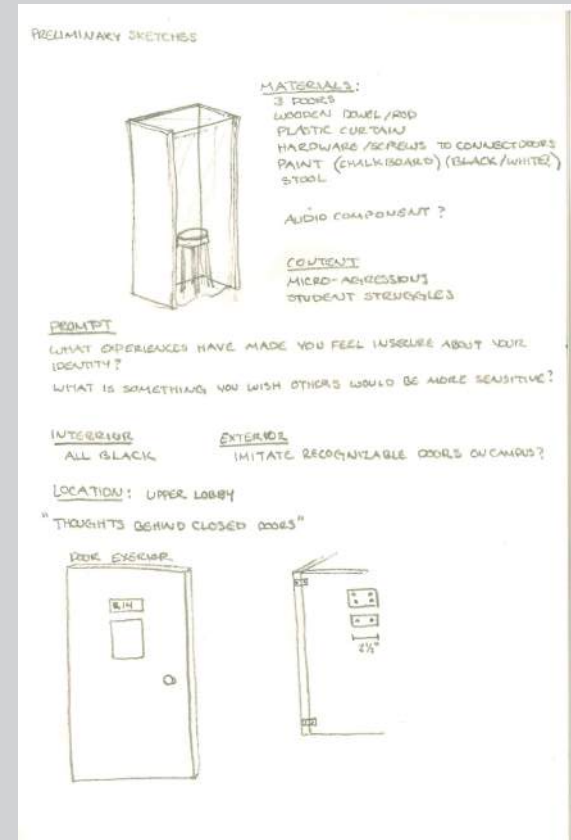
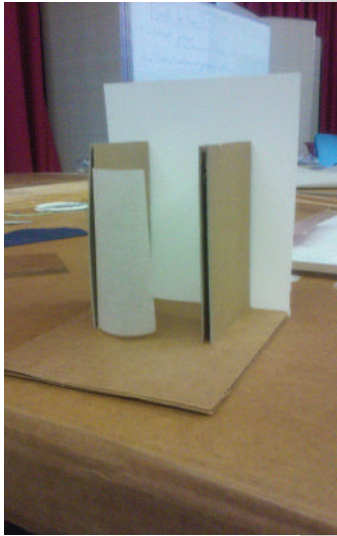
the greatest impact of the comments is the insight they provide into the lives of students at middlebury. the conversations students have had in which the ignorance or pure aggression of many of the privileged on this campus become clear are shocking. we highlight the simplicity and anonymity of these short quotes in chalk to emphasize the horrific nature of many of these experiences that people bury under the surface and bring it into an academic context.

the participatory nature of the piece in that it allows you to pick up a piece of chalk and write about your own experience changes it all. our piece does not reiterate the us vs. them mentality but instead allows everybody to contribute and create a space for everyone to show how they have felt alienated because of their identity.

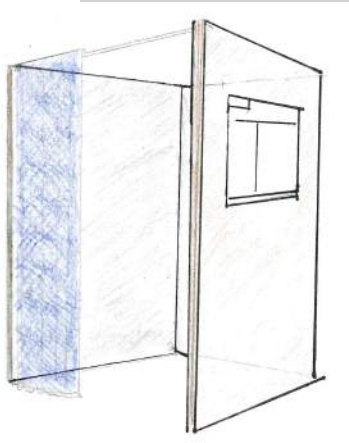


first iteration]

our design has changed greatly since its initial iteration. we felt strongly about the idea of creating a space within a space and the weight of that choice and we preserved that theme throughout but in various configurations. initially our design resembled that of a voting booth or a bathroom stall with the walls of the space enclosing the viewer and giving a very intimate and potentially uncomfortable experience.

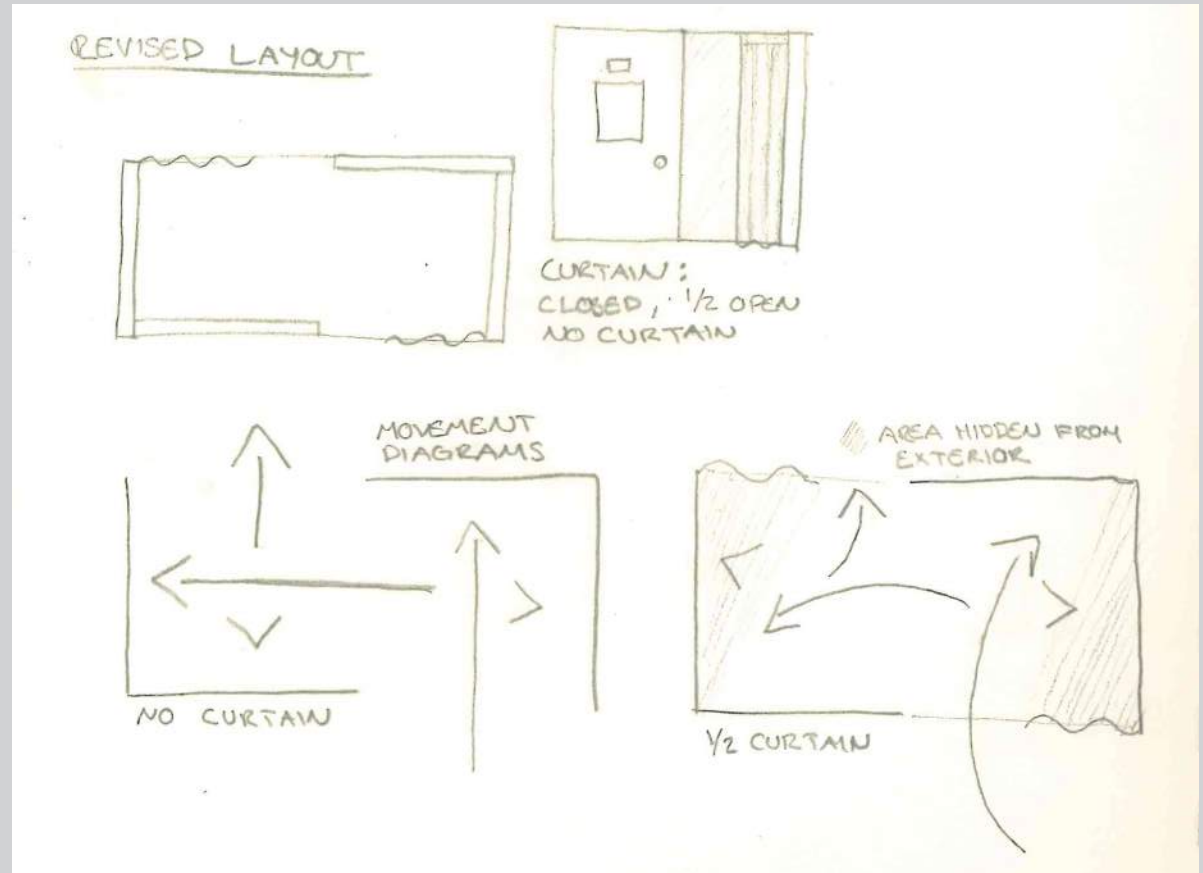


we initially considered using a sheet of plastic to serve as a cover for our piece to provide the viewer with some privacy. but after acquiring the material, decided to change it to a navy fabric that matched the ever familiar [middlebury blue](#)



「second iteration」

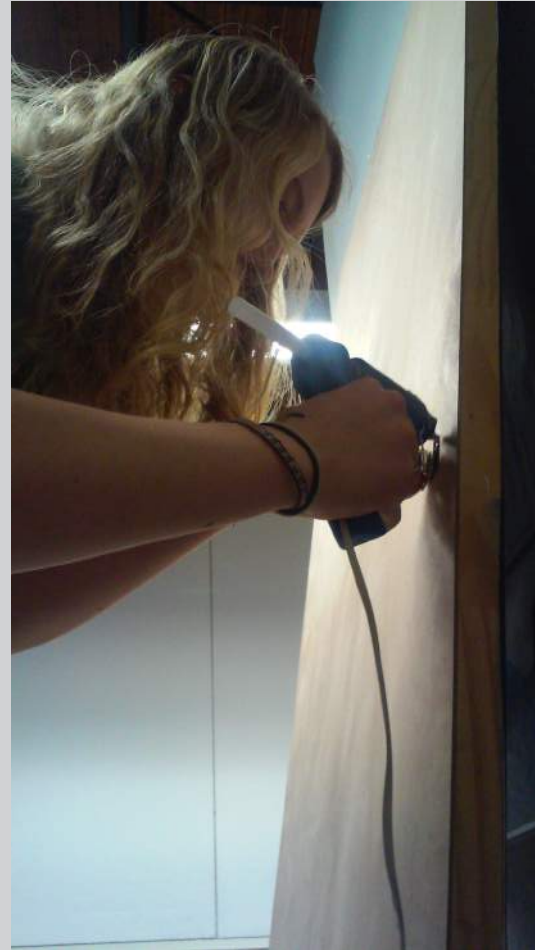
iteration two



after peer reviews, we contemplated the idea of closing the space, adding audio, as well as adding more features that would further represent and connote the door imagery we were going for.

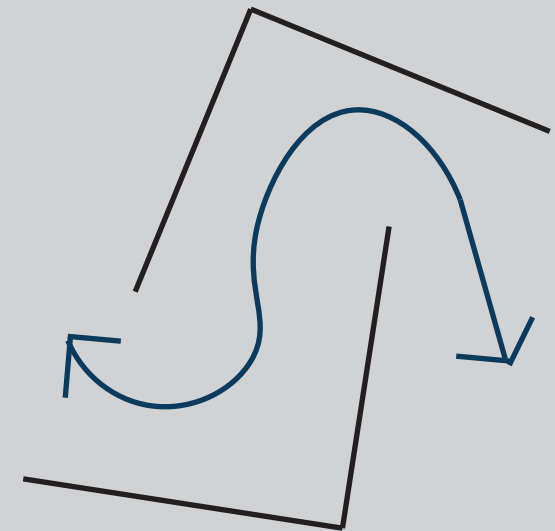
visiting architect David Sellers also gave us advice on how to attract our audience. playing with form and structure, we decided to open up our space into the “L-shaped” sections to hav easier flow and more access to the space at one moment.

I building process I



I installation day I

we maintained the two separate L-shaped structures but played around with how to arrange them in the space. instead of maintaining a simple rectangle shape, we decided to shift it slightly askew to create a more unpredictable experience. this shape generated distinct experiences for people viewing the panels or for others entering and exiting the installation without removing the privacy aspect.



plan & circulation

I continued installation |

