

*From What Could  
Have Been*

*to*

*Who Else Could I Be*

*to*

*Where I Am Now*

From What Could Have Been  
to Who Else Could I Be  
to Where I Am Now

by

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Furniture Design  
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Rhode Island School of Design  
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Have you ever caught yourself wondering,

*What if?*

Have you ever thought about what you would be doing right now, right this exact second, if you had made a different choice, taken a different path, said yes instead of no, or the other way around?

Or

*Do you ever wonder  
about your other selves?*

At first, these questions might seem like random fantasy thoughts or passing regrets. But for me, they grew into something deeper: an on-going curiosity about the lives I didn't live. The possibilities I never followed. The versions of myself that might be out there somewhere, shaped by the choices I didn't make.

This book is an exploration of that curiosity. Not another Marvel comic. And definitely not the one with Thanos or variants of Tony Stark.

It began in a moment of uncertainty, a turning point where I found myself asking not just what I wanted to make, but who I really was. From there, my head was flooded with questions about identity, decision-making, and the idea of the

*multiverse.*

The theory that suggests for every action taken, another version of reality branches off, led by another version of you.

Through this project, I began to see these alternate lives not as far-off fantasies, but as mirrors. Each one reflecting a different version of who I could have been, and who I still might become. It made me think not just about possibility, but about regret, longing, growth, and acceptance.

*I invite you to this journey of asking.*

Asking for more versions of myself.

Asking what it means to live with choices, both made and unmade.

Asking how we find peace with where we are, even while we imagine where else we could have gone.

These pages trace a process of making, physical objects, but also meaning. They're about translating abstract thought into tangible form. Using material, movement, and interaction to hold the emotions we rarely know how to name. The objects I've created are not solutions. They're invitations. To reflect. To question. To wonder. To feel.



Because maybe the point isn't to figure out which path was "right."

Maybe the point is realizing that whatever path you're on, this version of you, right here, right now, is just as valid, just as whole, just as real as any other.

*And maybe, out of all the versions out there,  
this one is exactly where you need to be.*

*What Could  
Have Been*

*Who would I become in an alternate universe?*

*The question that started it all.*

This question randomly popped into my head at 2 a.m. (classic), while I was lying awake trying to figure out about what on earth I’m doing for my degree project. Pretty sure it was the night before our first DP meeting, which feels extremely on brand for my sense of timing.

I was feeling the pressure.

REAL PRESSURE.

I mean, this is the project that’s supposed to wrap up my time as a furniture student at RISD. The project. The “conclusion of an era” kind of deal. And there I was, panicking about what I’m even interested in anymore. What am I passionate about? Do I even know?

Then, somewhere between the panic and the procrastination, a question just floated into my brain: What would Palm in another universe be doing right now if she hadn’t come to RISD?

How nice would it be if another version of Palm didn’t have to think about DP?

Would she still be making furniture? Would she have stuck with Painting? Stayed in Textiles? What if she actually got into ID when she tried to switch majors (yes, I did try)? Or what if she never left Thailand and became a full-blown theater kid?

These kinds of “what-if” thoughts seem to crash my brain every time I’m at some major life turning point. And this time, it hit hard. My head was full of questions about all these hypothetical versions of me, while this version of me, the one here, in this universe, was struggling so badly trying to figure out her actual future.

And of course, the next challenge is, how am I supposed to turn that into a degree project??

No one gets it.

“Palm, you’re supposed to make furniture. Tangible objects. Real things. Not... existential multiverse spirals.”

But the thing is, I couldn’t stop thinking about that question. Even when I tried to think of something new that I might intrigue me. However, I kept circling back. So eventually, I thought, okay. Fine. Let’s embrace the chaos. Let’s make weird objects inspired by this weird question, and maybe the meaning will show up along the way.

That’s when I had a little solo brainstorm session. Asking myself more and more questions: What even relates to this idea of alternate selves?

Obviously, Marvel came up, specifically Loki, one of my favorite TV shows. I got obsessed with the show’s whole vibe: retro-futuristic sets, outdated technology that feels familiar but slightly wrong, muted earth tones with that occasional pop of color, and the overall aesthetic of timeless absurdity. Most importantly, the multiverse theory.

In Loki, there’s this idea of time-slipping and branching timelines where every decision creates a new universe. And I thought, what if that’s what I’m trying to get at? What if every version of “me” who made a different choice is out there living her own weird little timeline?

Then Selina (shoutout) sent me this article about the Many-Worlds Interpretation of quantum mechanics. It basically says the same thing but with a more scientific approach: every action with multiple possible outcomes creates a new reality. While we experience only one path, Infinite Palms, each shaped by different decisions, coexist in parallel dimensions. Though I will never get to meet them (or I might?), they’re out there, doing their thing, just like I’m doing mine.

So now this project isn’t just about making furniture. It is about making objects that could embody this abstract idea related to the theory of the multiverse. Objects that feel familiar but slightly off.

But in the end, this isn’t just about me or my what-ifs.

These questions have pushed me to explore the idea of multiple selves and how the choices we make ripple across the realities we live in, realities we could have lived in. By translating this abstract multiverse theory into physical, strange, curious objects, I want to invite people to pause and reflect. To think about their own decisions. Their own infinite timelines. Their own could-have-beens.

My goal is to open up space for interpretation, for people to project their own narratives, feelings, or memories onto these objects.

*Because I believed that, there are more versions of us out there than we think.*

*Who Else  
Could I Be*

Who Would I Become in an Alternate Universe?  
2024

15” x 15” x 18”  
Aluminum, maple, magnet stones, neodymium magnets, casted resin, graphite, wax

This is my first object from the Fall Semester. My first attempt.

The first object that asked, “Could this idea really work?” Could I take something as abstract as the multiverse, and as personal as my own self-doubt, and turn it into something tangible?

Inspired by the chaotic motion of a pendulum, the invisible pull of magnetic poles, and the structured logic of cartography, this piece became my first map into the unknown. It blends scientific principles with poetic uncertainty, using materials as both metaphor and medium. The process itself was experimental, messy, and intuitive, just like the thoughts behind it.

The piece invites interactive engagement, allowing the audience to interact with the object by placing magnets and guiding the pendulum’s path. As the choices are being made, magnets are being placed, the pendulum swings and draws invisible lines across a symmetrical map embedded within the piece, visualizing the branching paths and parallel selves that exist within multiverse theory. Each decision and interaction becomes a metaphor for the chaos and beauty of decision-making, illustrating how even small actions branch into limitless possibilities.



This piece doesn’t offer answers. It offers movement. Play. Reflection. It exists somewhere between control and chaos, just like decision-making itself. It’s meant to provoke the same questions that started this project:

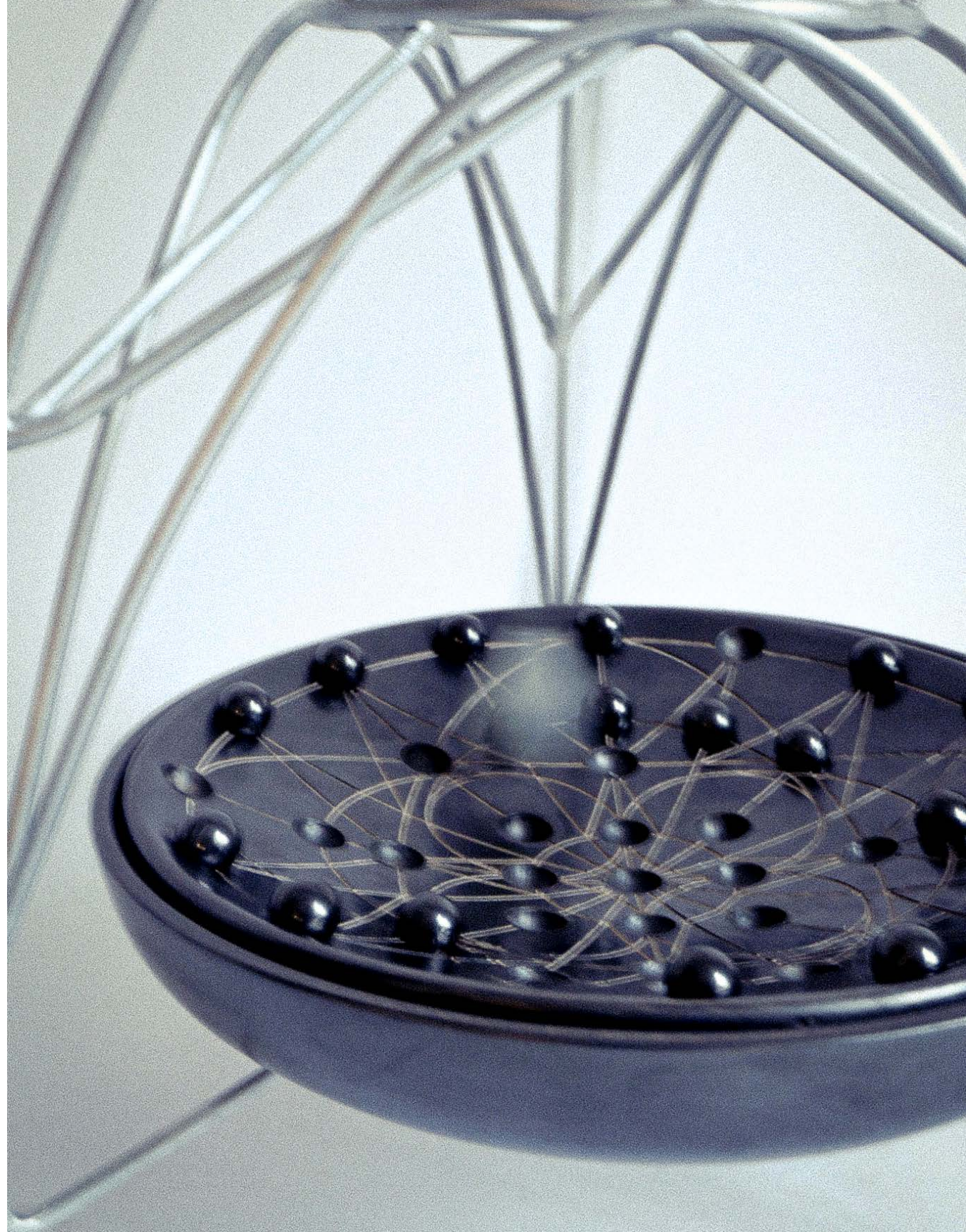
What choices have brought you here?  
What other lives could you be living?  
And what might still be possible from this point forward?

In the end, this object doesn’t try to solve anything. It doesn’t promise clarity, or closure, or even understanding. What it does is give form to a feeling, a visualization of how I imagine the multiverse might work when we interact with it. It’s my way of showing the invisible becoming visible: how each decision shifts your path a little, and how new possibilities branch out infinitely.

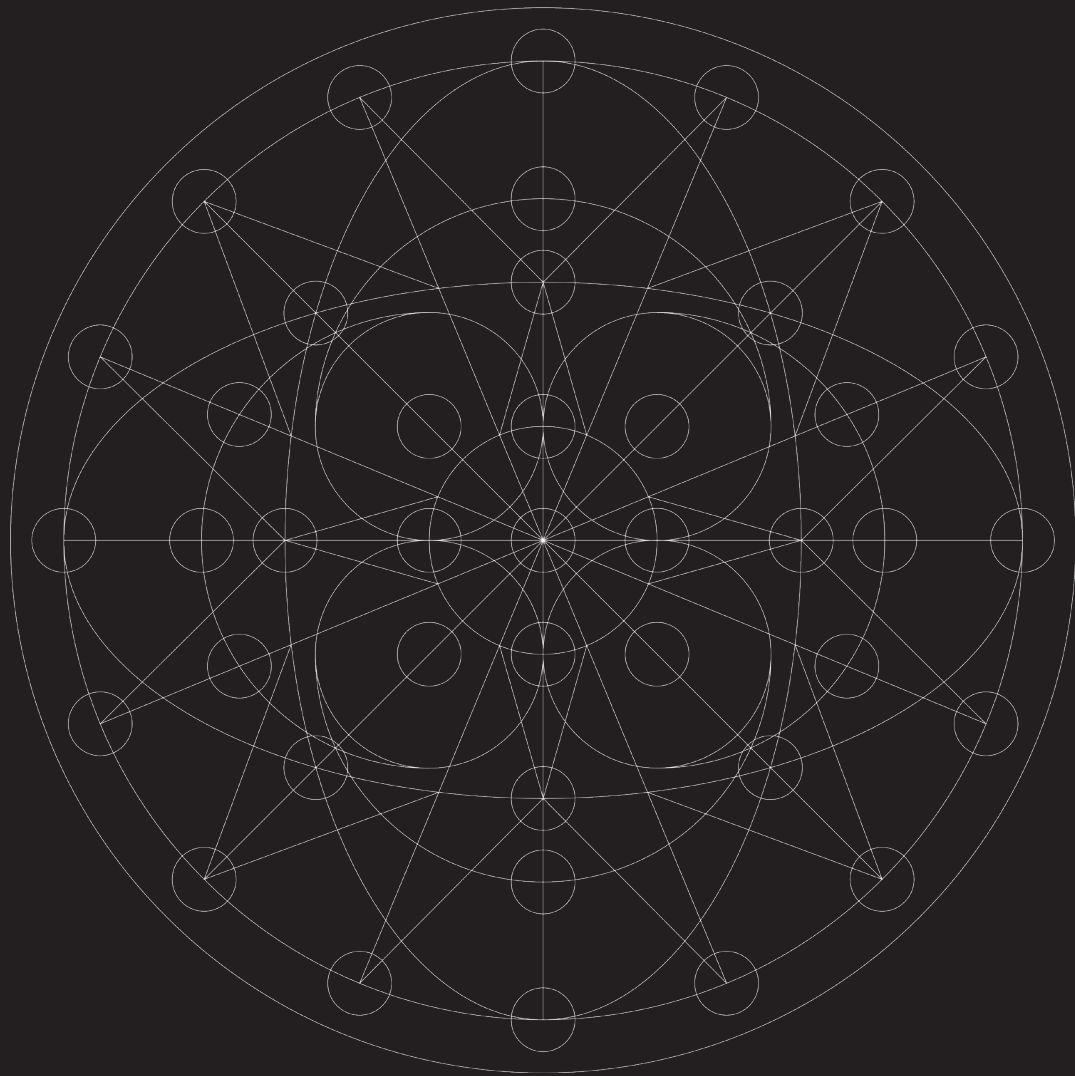
By giving shape to motion, and structure to chaos, this object invites you to reflect on the beauty of decision-making itself, the way it’s never perfect, never linear, but always full of meaning.

And maybe, like me, you’ll leave it not with answers, but with more questions.  
And maybe that’s the point.









multiverse map no.1



Rhino 3D model

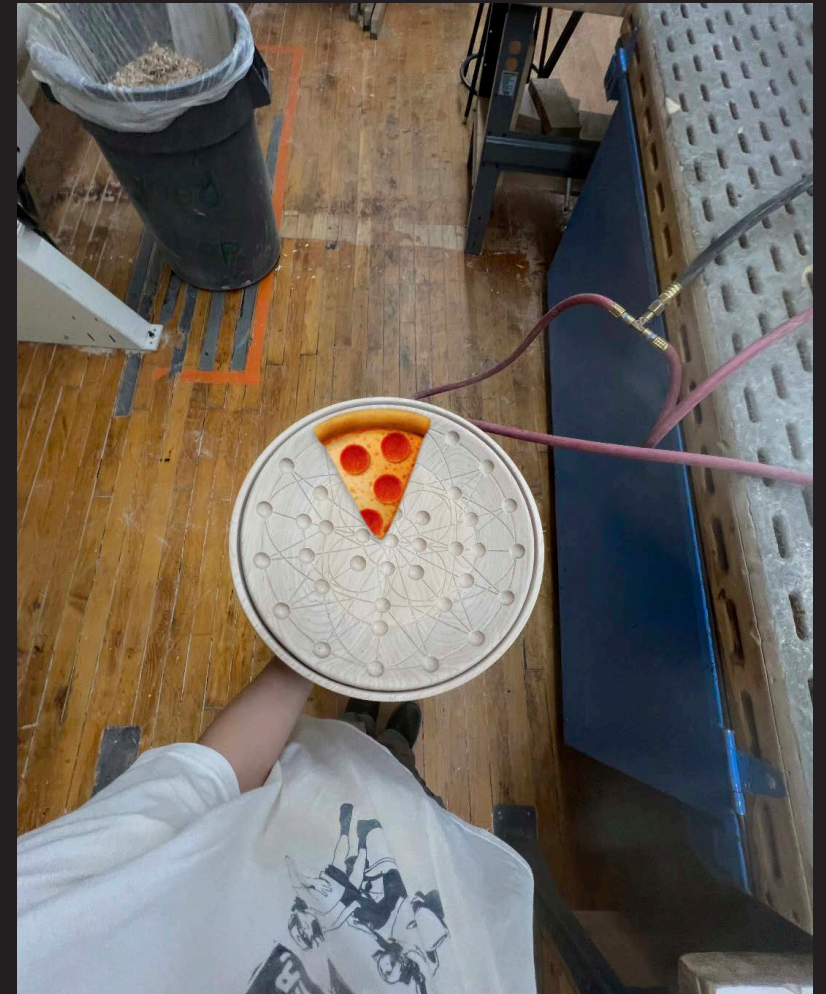




my worst nightmare: welding aluminum wire frame



CNC on maple



(pizza) bowl turning





pendulum mold for resin-casting (with the help from Jack!)



graphite & wax finish



first assembly of everything



first swing testing

*The Three Stages  
Between:  
What Was,  
What Could Be,  
and What Is*

As I kept digging deeper, I realized that this curiosity about alternate versions of ourselves isn't just a "me" thing. It's just a human-being thing. I mean, who hasn't stayed up at night replaying that one scene over and over like it's a full-blown K-drama flashback montage (because I did), and just for a single "what if"?

Or

Sending that text. You know the one. (oof)

Or

Cutting your bangs in the middle of the night. (can't you cut it during the day?)

Or

The time you didn't tell someone how you really felt...

Ouch.

That realization is what inspired me to expand this project beyond just a personal rabbit hole into something more philosophical and emotional. It became not just about "What if I had done things differently?" but "Why do we even ask that?" and "What are we really searching for when we do?"

Then came The Midnight Library.

A book recommended by Lothar <3

This book hit me like a ton of introspective, metaphor-laced bricks.

The story follows Nora Seed, who, in the depths of despair, decides to end her life. But instead of dying, she finds herself in a strange library that exists between life and death. Each book on the shelf contains a version of her life that could have happened if she had made different choices, the lives she could've lived. From Olympic swimmer to rock star to happy suburban cat mom, she gets to step into each of them and see what might have been.

'Between life and death there is a library,' she said. 'And within that library, the shelves go on forever. Every book provides a chance to try another life you could have lived. To see how things would be if you had made other choices . . . Would you have done anything different if you had the chance to undo your regrets?'

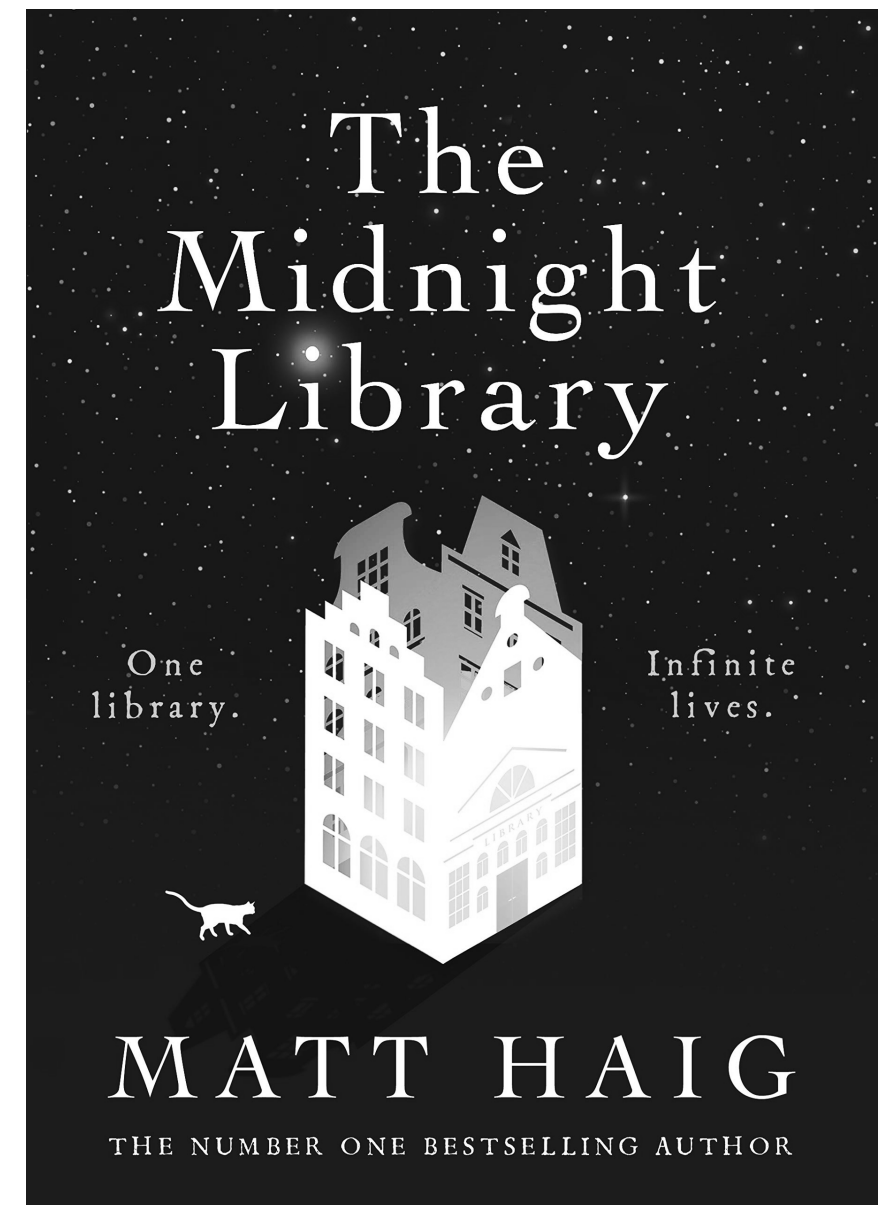
But as she flips through these alternate realities, she realizes something profound: there isn't one perfect life waiting out there. Each version has its own trade-offs, its own joys and regrets. And ultimately, the life she tried to leave behind, messy, imperfect, hers, is the one she wants back.

'It is not the lives we regret not living that are the real problem, it is the regret itself.'

That line stayed with me. It's poetic. It's heart-wrenching. It's painfully relatable.

And it got me thinking: maybe we don't just crave glimpses into who we could've been. Maybe what we're actually looking for... is a way to make peace with this path we're currently walking one.

'We can't think of any of these other version would have been better or worse. Those lives are happening, it is true, but you are happening as well, and that is the happening we have to focus





After finishing *The Midnight Library*, I sat with it for a while.

Eventually, I started to see a shape forming, not just in my mind, but in how I wanted this project to unfold.

I realized I didn't want to just show alternate realities. I wanted people to feel the way I felt. I wanted to poke at the emotions behind them: regret, longing, hope, confusion, and occasional existential panic. So I broke it down into three stages, loosely following Nora's journey in the book, where these stages became the backbone of this project.

My goal is to translate existential themes into tangible objects and interactive experiences with an exploration of the emotional journey between what was, what could be, and what is, the three stages that shape our sense of self and satisfaction.

### *What Was*

acknowledged the root of regret and the longing for different outcomes.

### *What Could Be*

represents the realization that every choice leads to infinite possibilities.

### *What Is*

centered on accepting and finding contentment in the present.

I created three interactive objects, one for each of these stages, and they all speak to one another. They don't exist to solve the problem or make your regrets go away, but rather invite you to engage with your hands, your thoughts, and your feelings. To reflect, play, and maybe leave with a few more questions than you came in with. I hope to create a space where people can navigate their own relationship with past choices, future possibilities, and ultimately guide them towards acceptance of the present.



*What Was*  
The First Stage:  
Recognizing the Root  
of Regret

## What Was 2025

12" x 10" x 18"

3D printed PLA, glass bowl, ink, metallic silver spray paint

What Was represents the first stage: recognizing the Root of Regret.

We've all had those moments, whether it's a job we didn't take, the text we didn't send, or that one very questionable haircut in 2017. "What Was" is about facing those little ghosts or nightmares that follow us around whispering *what if...*

Inspired by a mailbox and the act of inserting a letter to the unknown, everyone is welcome to write down their deepest regrets, big or small, and insert them. Inside? A pool of black ink that swallows it whole. Your regret dissolves and disappear into the void. Many regrets go unspoken or are buried deep within us; some are forgotten, some are carried with us for years, but this object offers a symbolic way to acknowledge and release them.

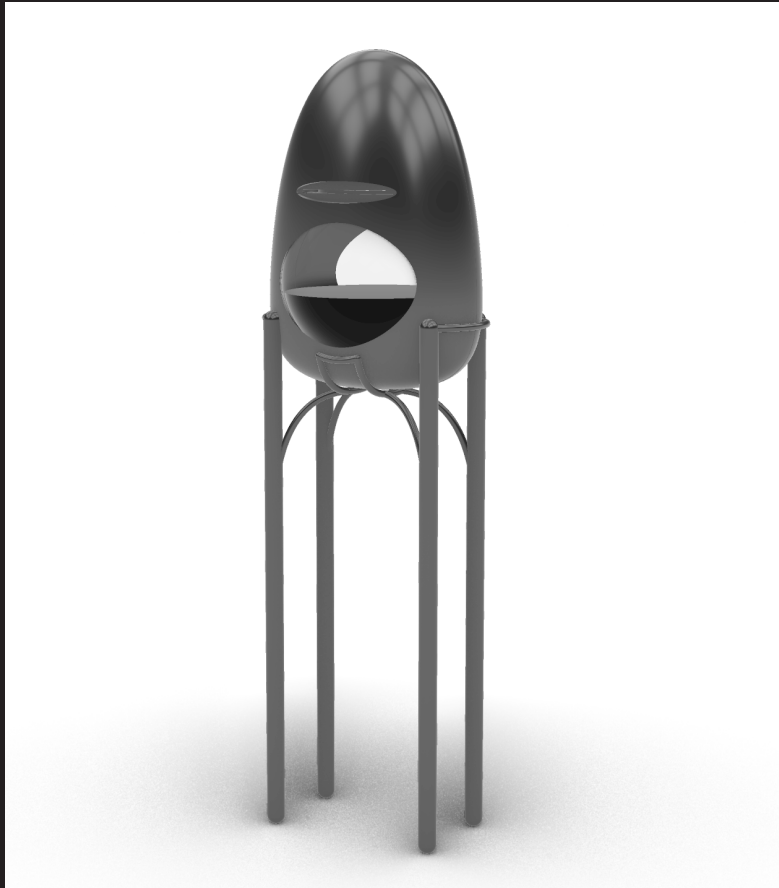
However, this doesn't erase regret forever. Even if some regrets never fully fade, the act of writing them down, confronting them, and letting them go, into the darkness of the mail box, becomes a cathartic gesture.







regret-writing party during the senior midterm crit

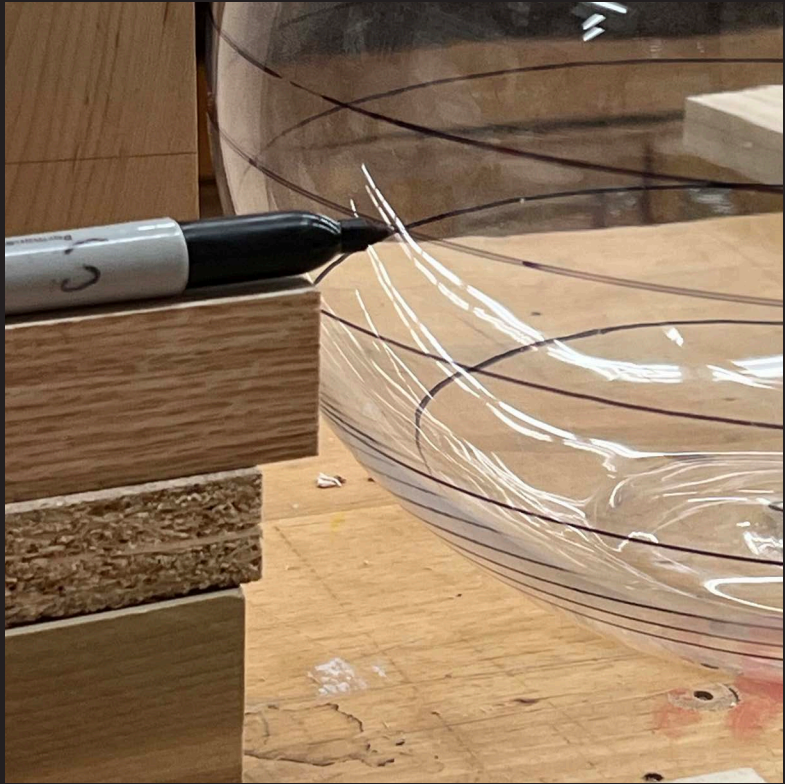


the legs that I ended up not making because...



3D printed file

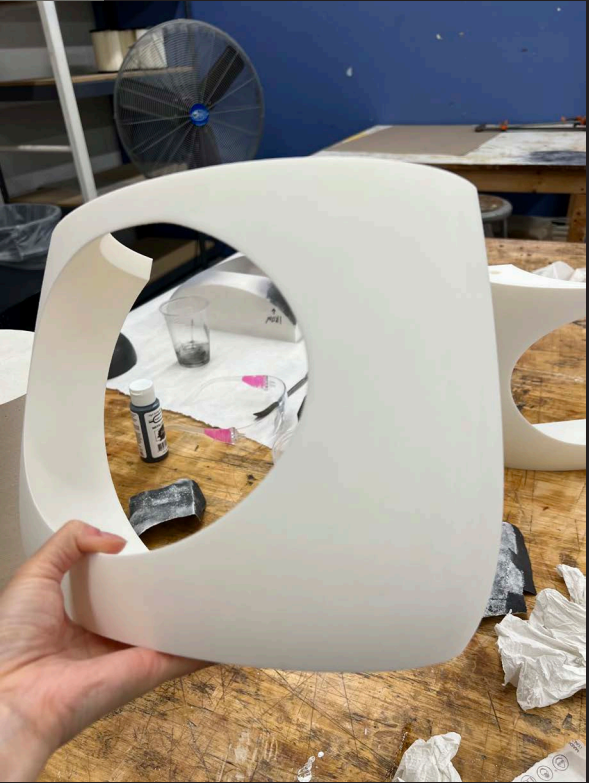




how I measure the bowl I bought from amazon... (suggested by Joe)



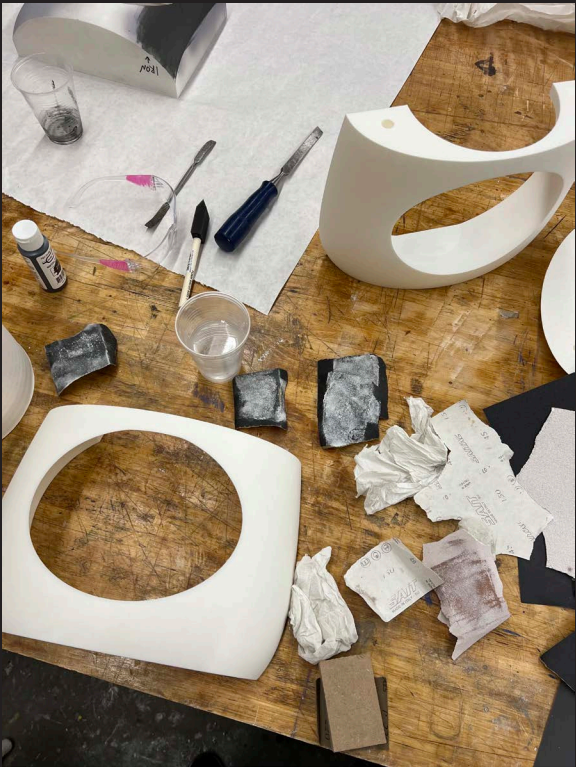
3D printed top with a twist lock lid



3D printed body



successful prints yay:)



378647759 days of sanding



538920274 layers of automotive primer





very funny but not so cute epoxy glue up



fill the gap with glazing putty for the 264738th times



metal coating paint finish (that I ended up not liking)



(so I) refinish with metallic silver spray paint (instead)





*What Could Be*  
The Second Stage:  
Acknowledge the  
Infinite Possibilities



## What Could Be 2025

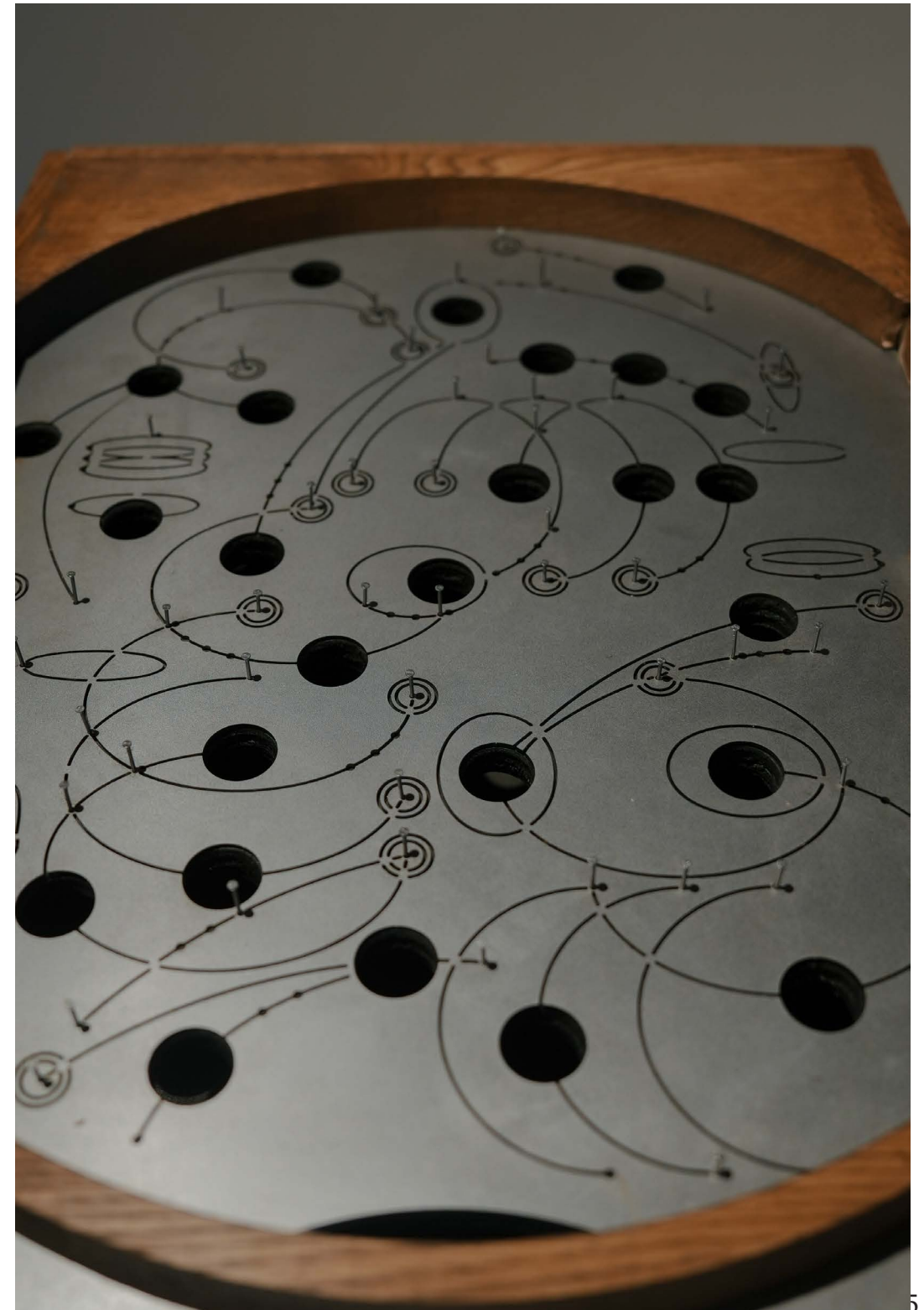
15" x 23" x 14.5"

Red Oak, mild steel, nails, plywood, steel balls,  
compression spring, ink, early American stain

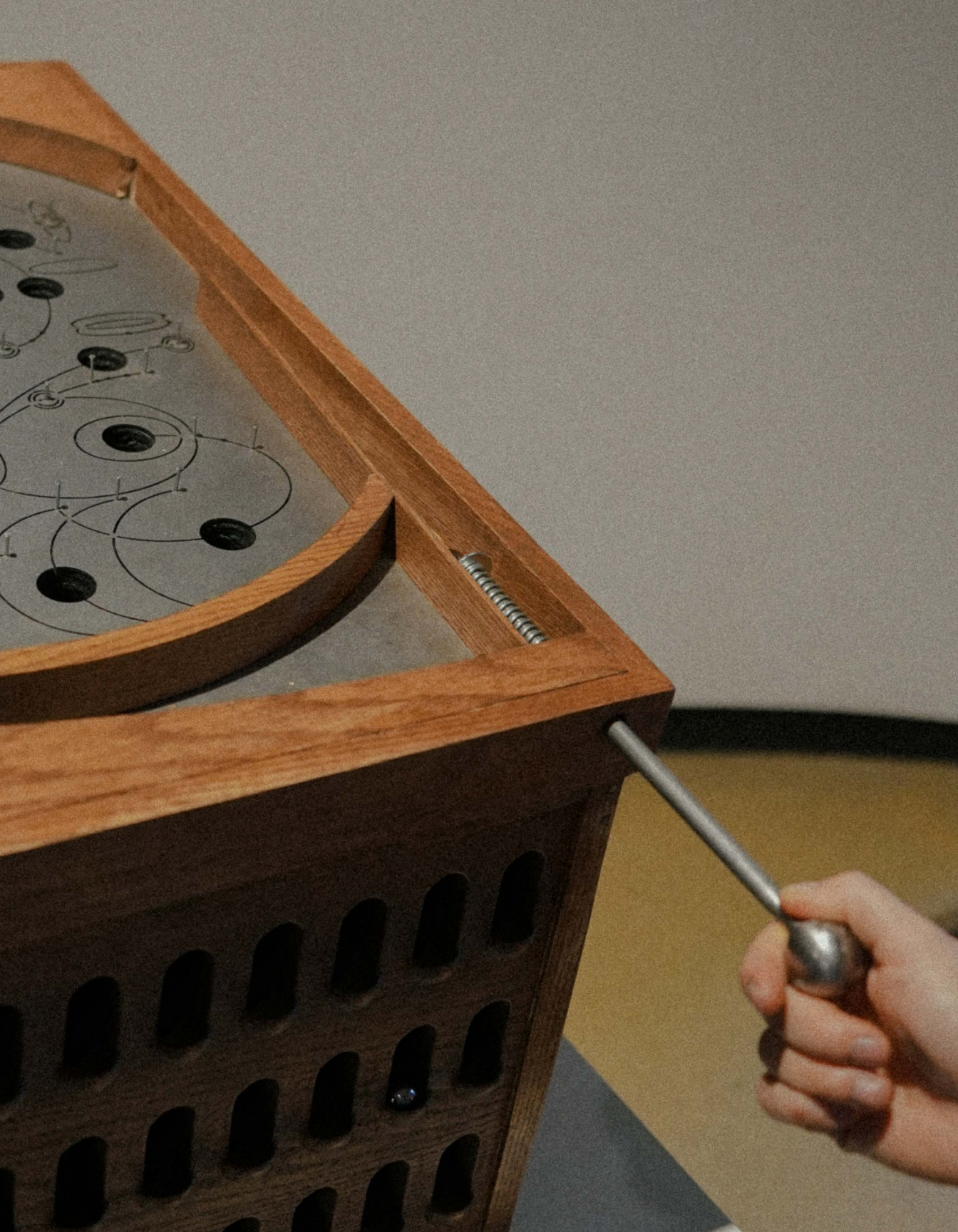
What Could be represents the second stage:  
acknowledge the infinite possibilities.

This piece takes inspiration from a bagatelle pinball machine and the idea that *every decision could lead to a different outcome*. After launching the ball, it bounces unpredictably down the machine and eventually landing in one of many possible windows, each representing a different path the ball (and metaphorically, a life) could take.

And just like life, you don't get to control where it lands. You nudge it, you let it go, and it *just happens*. This object doesn't exist to tell you which version of your life is right. It's here to remind you that each possibility, each path, is valid. That uncertainty is not only inevitable, it's beautiful.

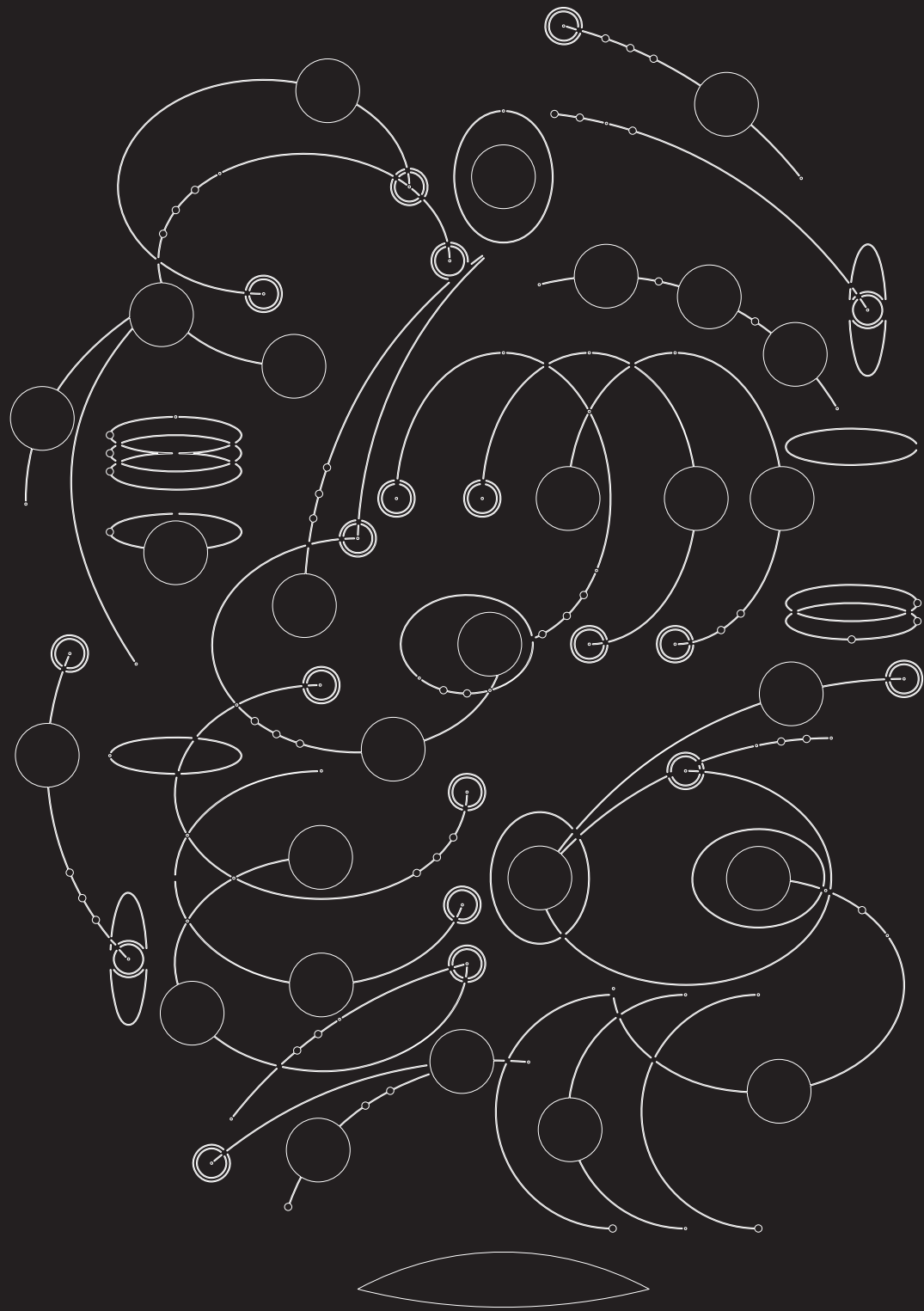












multiverse map no.2



Rhino 3D model





full scale prototype



my initial plan to make a hidden spline and ended up forgot to set the depth and cut through the wood...



CNC Red Oak front window

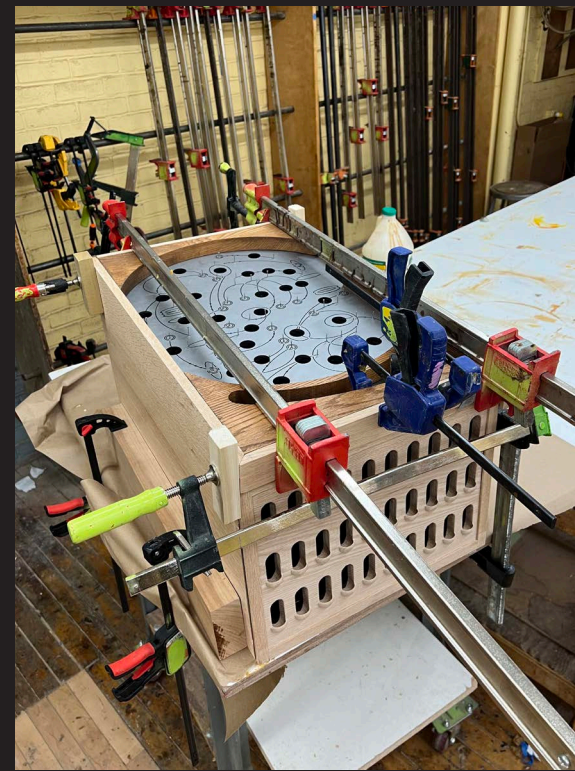


thanks to Joyce, I covered it with a frame

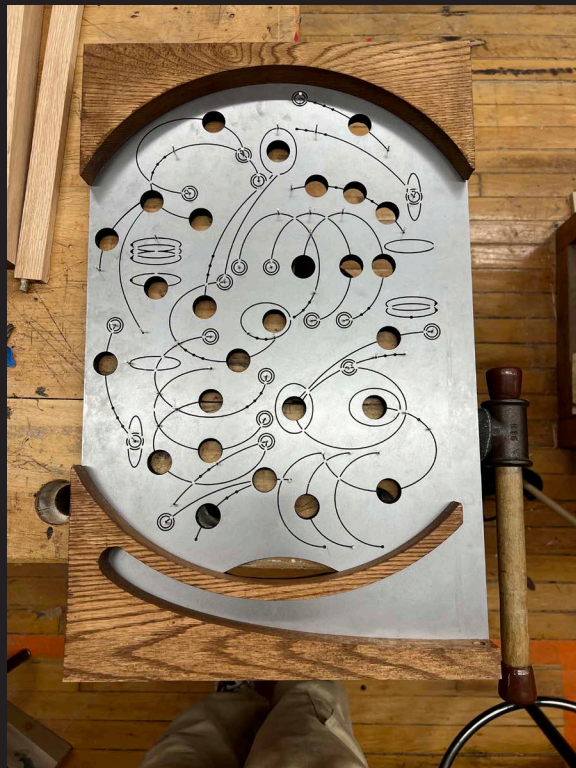




first dry-fit with inside panels



very interesting glue-up



laser-cut-map on sheet metal with pre-finish frame



finishing at 3am where I refused to leave bank although public safety came.. (pls don't tell Joe)



*What Is*  
The Final Stage:  
Accepting the Reality





What Is  
2025

8” x 9.75” x 11.25”

Steel, pasta machine, 3D printed PLA, metallic silver spray paint, malachite spray paint, metallic paper

What Is represents the final stage: accepting the reality.

This final object is all about acceptance. A grounding moment.

“What Is” is inspired by a combination of machines: The classic time-card punch, A print press machine that etches and emboss textures onto the paper, and yes, a pasta roller.

You get a 3x3-inch square of paper, and you choose where to feed it into the machine. As you crank the handle, a fragment of an endlessly looping, embossed map is pressed onto your card. Think of it like printing a slice of the universe.

No two cards are the same, but they’re all part of the same repeating map, representing the infinite paths out there. And you only get your piece. Just this one square. And that’s the point.

This object doesn’t ask you to chase more, it asks you to pause. To look at what you’ve been handed and say, “This is where I am. This is mine.”

You don’t need to understand the whole map. You don’t need to see all the paths.

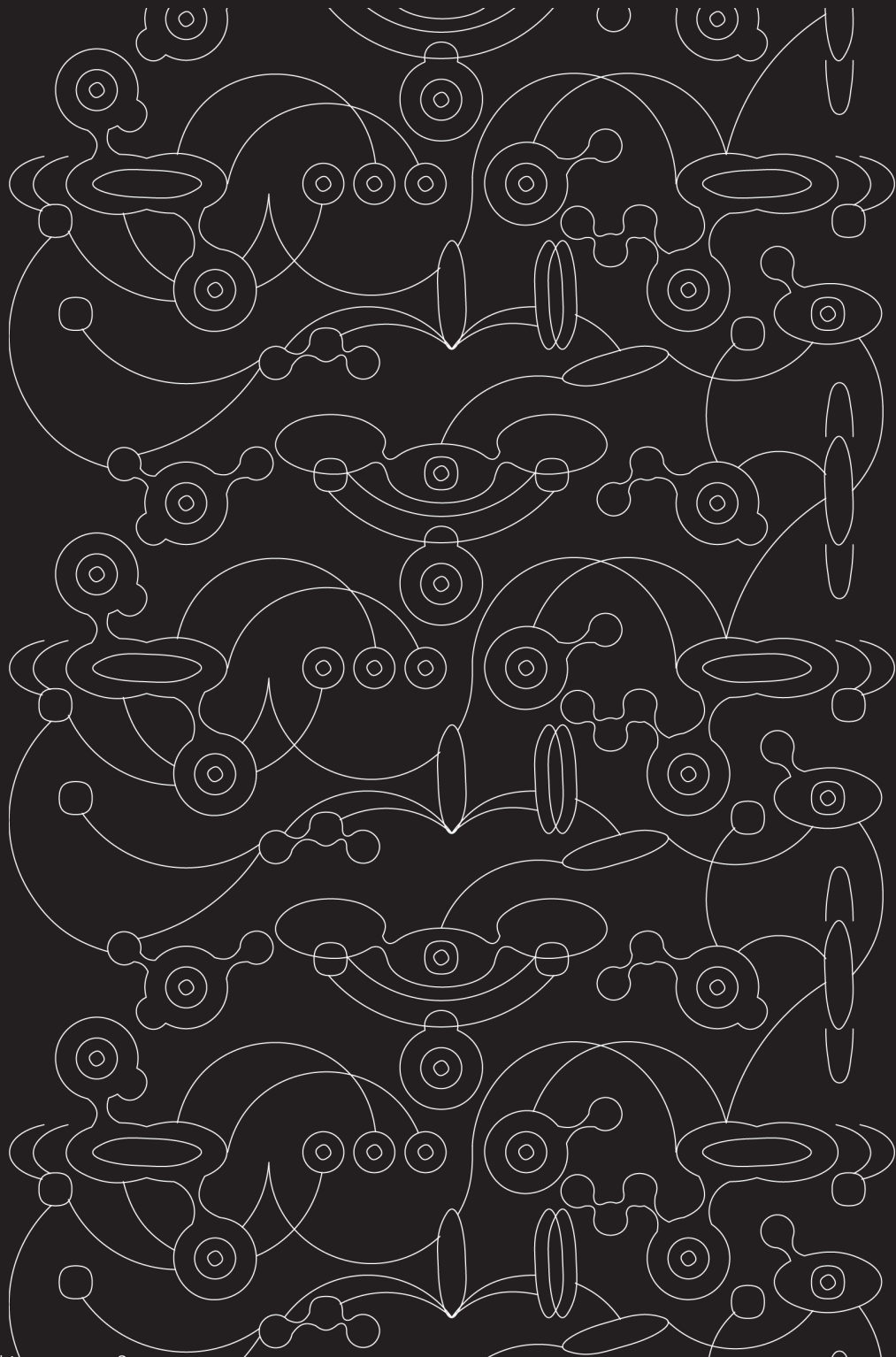
You just need to honor the one you’re walking on.

A reminders that you’re already enough, right here, in this exact version of your life.









multiverse map no.3



Rhino 3D model



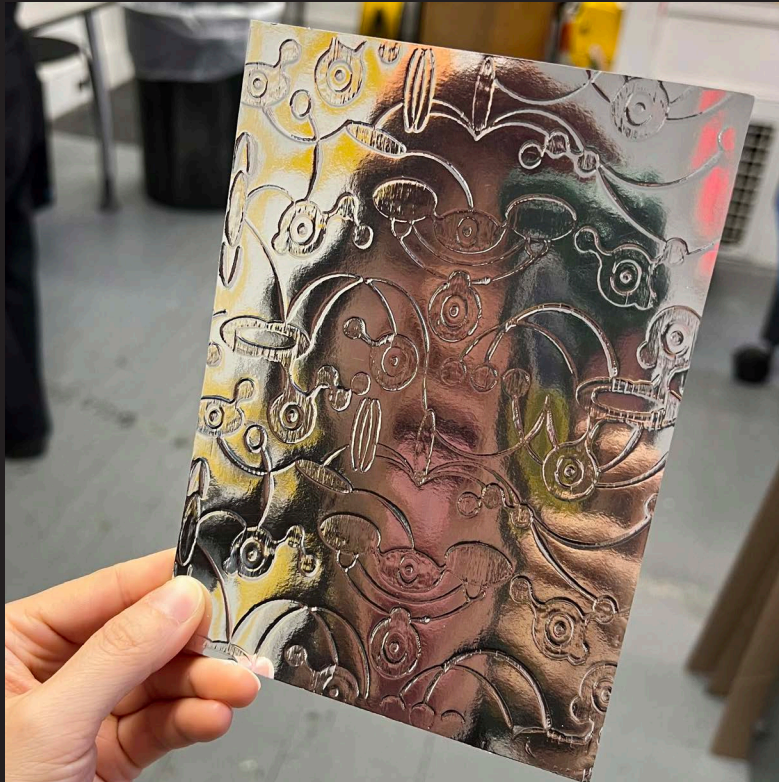
I bought a pasta machine and took apart the machine



discover .FlowAlongSrf command in Rhino and wrap the map around cylinder



insert the 3D printed embossing tube into the machine



my first embossing sample on a metallic paper

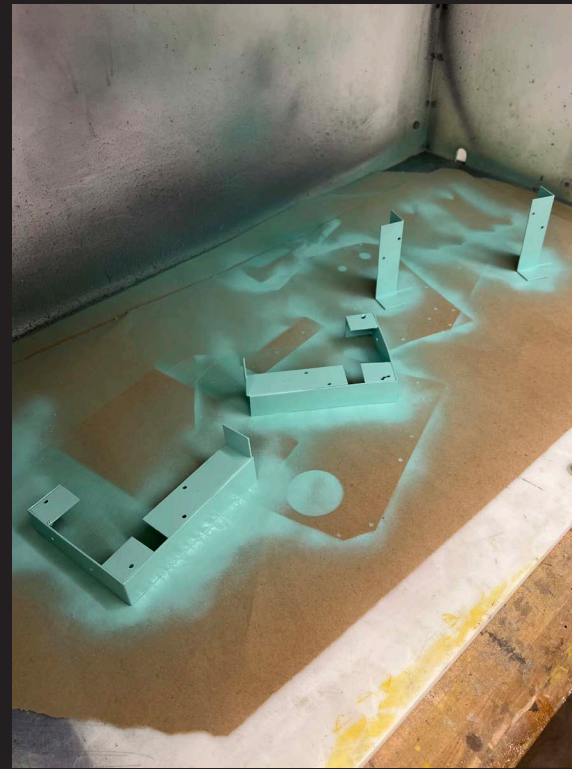


3D printed top piece fit test





my first attempt working with bending sheet metal



malachite spray paint finish



is it cake? but is it metal? with metallic spray paint



hardware is so hard but screws are pretty cool



*Where I  
Am Now*

Looking back at this whole journey, I’ve come to realize that this project wasn’t just about exploring the idea of the multiverse, it was about navigating through the very real, very messy stages of my own life. It started with stress. Crazy stress. The kind that makes you question everything: your choices, your identity, your entire existence. Then came the regret, the late-night overthinking, the spiral of wondering where I went wrong, or if I did at all. That eventually turned into curiosity. I found myself fascinated by the idea of all the other Palms out there, the ones who made different choices. I wanted to know who they are, what they’re doing, what they care about. And after spending time imagining all those different lives, I finally arrived at a strange and quiet feeling: acceptance.

Not happiness, not sadness. Just contentment. A feeling that says, “This is where I am. And that’s okay.”

Through this project, I’ve come to believe that this feeling, of never quite feeling enough, of always wondering what else could have been, is a universal experience. It’s not something to solve or fix. It’s just part of being human. And that’s totally fine.

My hope is that, as you interact with these objects and ideas, you get to experience those three stages too. That you get to pause and reflect on your own past decisions, your own could-have-beens, and your own current self. I hope it helps you value where you’ve been, make thoughtful choices for your future self, and maybe avoid the “bruh, what?” moments when you look back.

And hey, while I might feel a little jealous of some other Palms out there (like the one who stayed in Thailand, gets to eat my mom’s cooking every day, and never had to suffer through a single snowstorm in Providence), those Palms wouldn’t have gotten to make any furniture. No woodworking, and don’t even think about welding. So I guess, in the end... I’m a pretty cool Palm actually.

And this version of me? She’s doing just fine.

Thankyou

## WORK CITED

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