


BRIEF

The project, titled “Assettate cca” (Sit down here), aims to enhance the experience of senior tourists (60–80 years old) in Naples by transforming public benches from mere urban furniture into emotional and social resting spots. The goal is to connect the growing segment of slow tourism, which seeks authenticity and comfort, with the city’s true soul, represented by local elderly people like Franco. The concept is based on three core values: **Slow down. Listen. Share.**



BACKGROUND

Naples is one of the most visited cities, with strong growth in tourism among people over 60 and foreigners. These travelers seek “slow” experiences but report a severe lack of comfortable, shaded, and well-signposted resting points. Research confirms that a bench is not just about resting, but an “emotional micro-space” (43.8% use it to observe the city, 56.3% would like to hear local stories). Visitor satisfaction is highly dependent on the quality and distribution of these benches.



REQUIREMENTS

The project calls for a “phygital” (physical + digital, but low-tech) solution that makes every bench a place for rest, meeting, and storytelling.

Requirements include: clear signage with large fonts and simple icons; a way to connect senior tourists (like Lucia) with local elderly people (like Franco); and transforming the bench into a symbol of “positive slowness” and connection, where visitors can discover local stories and the city’s soul. **Suggested budget:** 20.000€



1

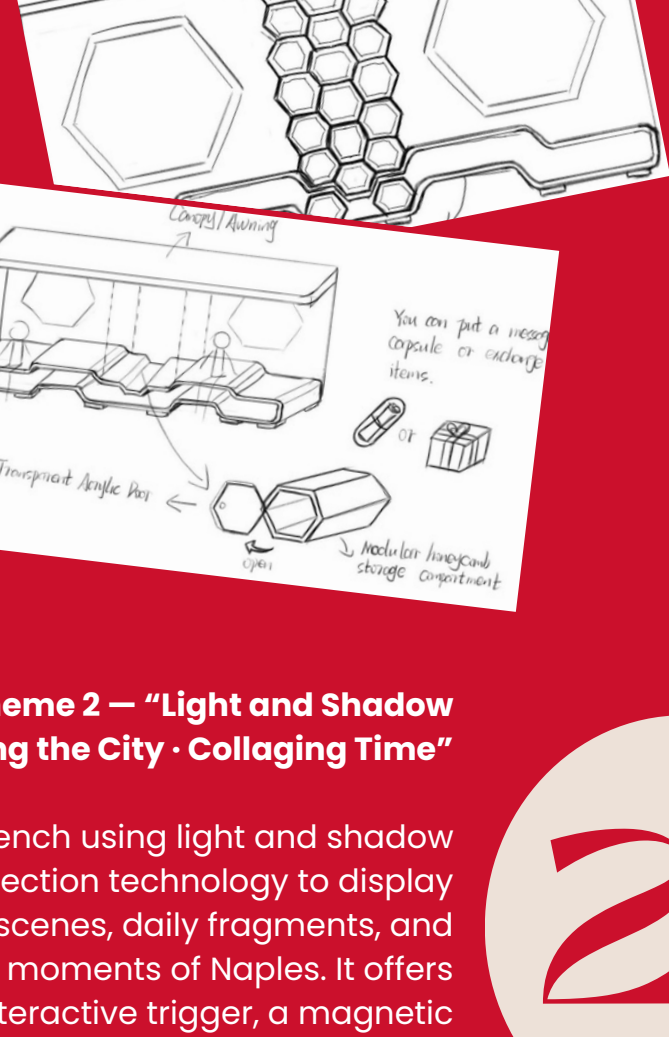
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INITIAL DESIGN

At first, the team 3 provided us with three proposals:

Design Scheme 1 – “Voices of Time”


An elderly-friendly bench transformed into an “emotional communication post” featuring time capsule messages, a blind box exchange with story cards, and a Collective Memory Wall. It also includes voice message boxes and a large-font electronic time album to ensure easy participation for seniors



2

Design Scheme 2 – “Light and Shadow Recalling the City - Collaging Time”


A bench using light and shadow projection technology to display historical scenes, daily fragments, and seasonal moments of Naples. It offers an interactive trigger, a magnetic message board for memory collages, old photos, and a Naples Slow Travel Guide, plus digital extensions through QR-based storytelling and a light-and-shadow check-in.



3

Design Scheme 3 – “Neighborhood Chat”

A face-to-face social bench designed to encourage real interpersonal connection. It includes a central interactive table with a topic turntable (12 light social topics), warm lighting atmosphere, ergonomic seating, and lightweight digital tools like a QR code for local stories, “bench memories,” and cultural context.



Our feedback:

After these initial proposals, we informed the design team of our preference for **Design Scheme 1**, while requesting a few changes: keeping the blind box exchange, the time capsule messages, and the voice message boxes, but removing the collective memory wall and any structural modifications to the physical bench.

IMPROVED DESIGN


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After our feedback, they sent us three new proposals, completely different from the previous ones.

1

Concept 1 – The Talking Bench

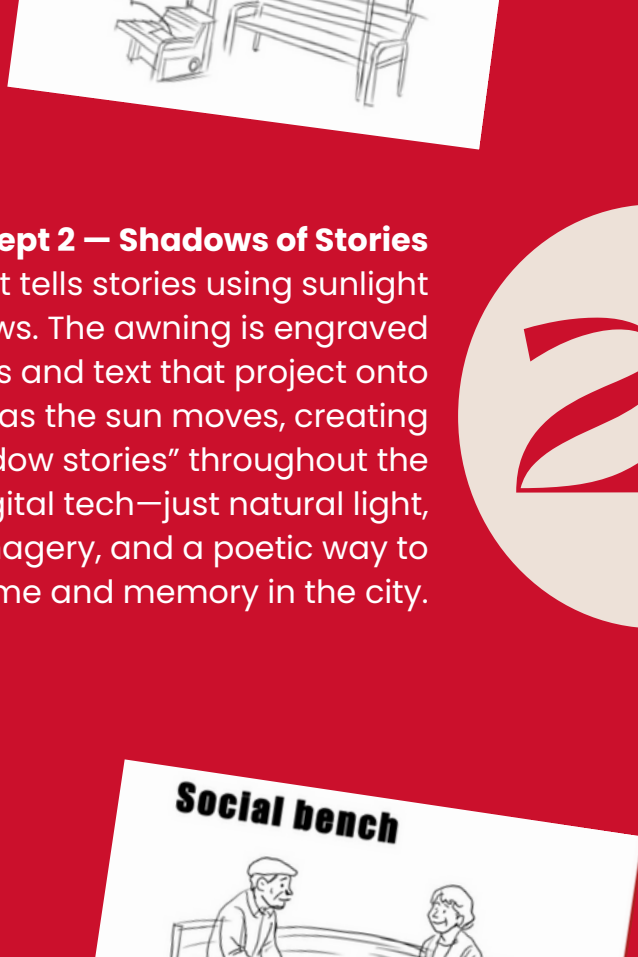
A bench that “speaks” through a small solar-powered audio system. When someone sits down, it plays Naples’ sound memories—stories told by locals, dialect songs, and ambient sounds like waves. It’s a simple, low-tech, sensory experience that turns Naples’ oral tradition into an urban storytelling installation



2

Concept 2 – Shadows of Stories


A bench that tells stories using sunlight and shadows. The awning is engraved with figures and text that project onto the ground as the sun moves, creating shifting “shadow stories” throughout the day. No digital tech—just natural light, cultural imagery, and a poetic way to show time and memory in the city.



3

Concept 3 – The Social Bench

A bench designed to spark face-to-face conversations. Two semicircular seats face each other with a central story tray holding QR codes for listening to local elders’ audio introductions and small topic cards to break the ice. A little plant in the middle symbolizes connection. It creates a micro social space where visitors and locals can easily interact.



Our feedback:


Given the confusion, we asked them which proposals were actually the final ones, and we reiterated our preference for Design Scheme 1 from the first set.

IMPROVED DESIGN 2


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After this request, the design team sent us three bench sketches, despite the fact that we had clearly stated the impossibility of physically modifying the benches


1



2



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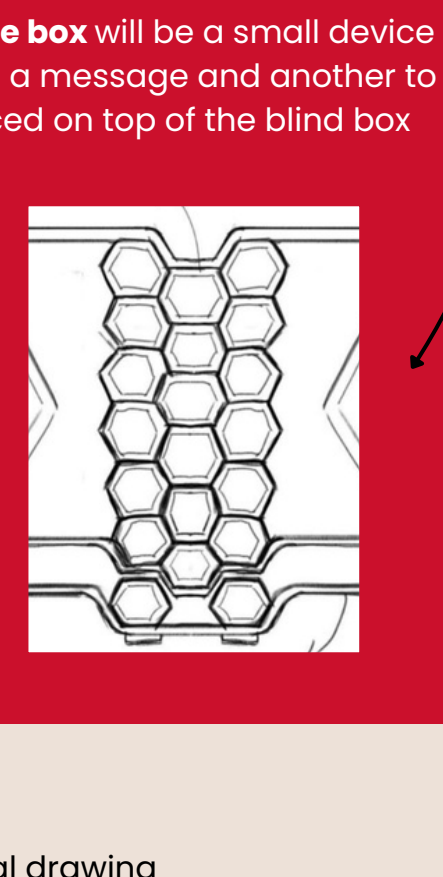
Since they did not provide any further material, we proceeded independently with the creation of the final design.

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FINAL DESIGN

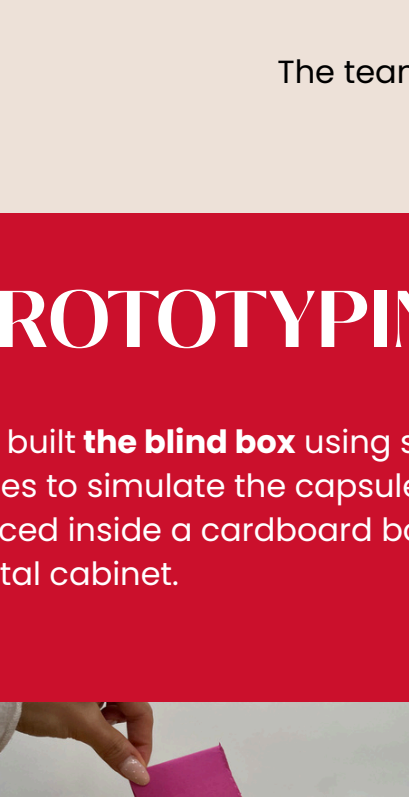
The final selected design includes the time capsule messages, the blind box, and the voice message boxes.


The **time capsule messages** consist of an iron box with a top opening for inserting a written message, and a side opening for retrieving a message to read. On the side of the box, there will be a small pocket to hold pens and slips of paper.




The **blind box** (partly similar to the proposal made by the team) is made of an iron cabinet placed next to the bench, containing capsules filled with various items such as postcards, small gifts or personal objects.

Finally, the **voice message box** will be a small device with one button to record a message and another to play it back. It will be placed on top of the blind box cabinet.





Design proposed by the team designer for the blind box





The team didn't provide us any technical drawing

PROTOTYPING

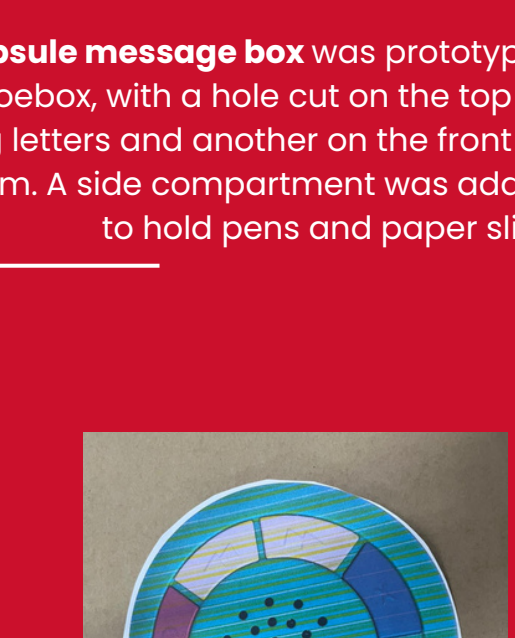
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We built the **blind box** using stacked cardboard tubes to simulate the capsules, which were then placed inside a cardboard box to represent the metal cabinet.



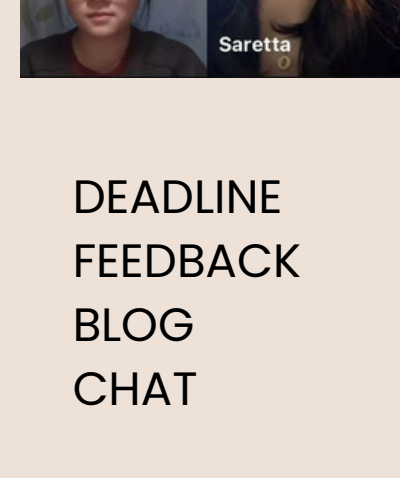


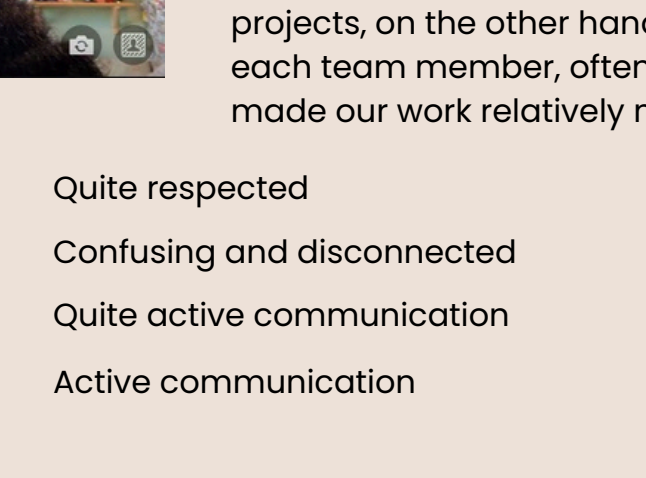
The **time capsule message box** was prototyped using a shoebox, with a hole cut on the top for inserting letters and another on the front for retrieving them. A side compartment was added to hold pens and paper slips.






For the **voice message box**, the prototype was printed and mounted on the blind box, taking inspiration from an existing device.






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COMMUNICATION



Our communication with **Team 3** was pretty good, we were connected through our blogs and also we had chat and meeting on WeChat. They have always been **kind and enthusiastic** about our project for their brief. But we have encountered some issues with receiving feedback on our work and with creating the true solution to our problem.



The final proposal was partly completed by us, since the materials provided did not address the various feedback that had been sent. The feedback on our projects, on the other hand, was sent individually by each team member, often in conflicting ways, which made our work relatively more complex.

DEADLINE

Quite respected

FEEDBACK

Confusing and disconnected

BLOG

Quite active communication

CHAT

Active communication

★★★★☆

FINAL EVALUATION

The course is well structured and very exciting: **you learn while having fun**. The collaboration with students from other countries was wonderful (even if sometimes difficult due to time zones) and the experience of working in the class with classmates was fantastic. The project gave us the **chance to connect with another culture** and get a closer look at the **design world**. The prototyping phase was definitely the most engaging: it showed us that sometimes even limited resources are enough to come up with real solutions. A **special thanks** to our Chinese team. Despite the various difficulties and misunderstandings, they were always very kind and collaborative.