

## PLAYTEST FINDINGS JOURNAL

### February 6, 2022 - Formal Playtest #1: Creating with Legos

- Legos playful in themselves
- Instructions were unclear
- Thinking about childhood memories did feel activating and slightly vulnerable

### February 15, 2022 - Formal Playtest #2: Baby Yoda with Button in the Legos

- Player liked pressing button
- Would want to pick up Baby Yoda and play with him
- Sort of wanted to just play with Legos instead of being told what to do with them
- Relied too much on affordances and facilitation

### March 2, 2022 - Formal Playtest Day #3: Ball in Class & Outside Fine Arts Center

- Playing with the ball
  - It was intuitive → started with three, then grew
    - Even sort of started with me tossing to nowhere and Alex talking about excitement he had and endless possibilities
  - People changed how throwing ball
    - Some followed new methods, some changed
      - All did both, but some had more tendency to one
    - Different skill sets came out
      - Volleyball, soccer, body hits
  - People joined organically
  - Almost no words spoken
  - Fluid “rules” → more conventions and norms that rules the space\*\*\*
  - I apologized when I “messed up”
    - There was sometimes this “how long can we keep from hitting ground” → low stakes competition created
  - *We played* by experimenting with rules
  - PE shame → is there a shame related to being shamed/excluded for not “doing it right” → feeling unworthy of connection, unable to play/ be silly
    - Tied to my own experiences with yoga
  - Recess vs PE as play vs shame
- Playtest - leaving hopscotch and 4 Square
  - Two (probably visitors) took ball and started kicking it around → very playful, ignored the chalk and just took the ball
  - Kicked it one way and shouted “goal!”
  - My gaze means something → public place → judgmental gaze might bring shame → shame of feeling immature/like a child
  - Guy on phone kicked to wall, kicked around, and then took it away
    - followed and said “hey I need that ball” and he said “oh! It’s yours? Sorry!”
    - but no shame in that statement
      - Then on phone “I accidentally stole someone’s ball”

- AUDACITY as discussed with Karimi later
- A couple people looked at it as walking by
- Breaking the norms of the space with the ball
  - The space where the ball is matters because it brings norms with it\*\*\*\*

March 16, 2022 - Playtest #4: Playdoh and Balls out in Coors area

- Group passing by threw around balls → all presented as men
  - One tried to steal it → left it further away though and did not fully take it
- Two (Men?) played with playdoh while on phone and working on computer
  - Did not create, more sensory
  - They took the playdoh with them
  - They came from the direction WITHOUT the sign
- A group of (women?) came by from direction with sign and talked about playing but then none of them did, they kinda scoffed about it
- Two (women?) picked up net and played briefly and then reset the station in a more organized way than it was before
- When LOW traffic less engaged, and when super HIGH traffic fewer engaged
  - Might be related to gaze
- TLDR: Men seemed to be more audacious to play w/o an invitation, and the gaze of a public place made playfulness less likely when the gaze was more likely to be on people playing

March 23, 2022 - Formal Playtest #5: Shame Monster & Toys in Actual Space

- Felt bad after this playtest → helped me recognize some of my needs as a creator
  - Must be in consistent communication and collaboration with other artists or I tend to spiral out
  - Sometimes I intentionally need to account for my own anxiety about trying certain things (approaching strangers)
  - Consent is super important to my process → I get very uncomfortable and unable to work if I feel that something I am doing violates consent in any way for others (photos w/o permission for example)
- People recognized shame monster and had fun the 2nd time they interacted with her
- Threat of real shame and real world consequences hanging over the first interaction?
  - When the shame was loud and directed at one person and not distanced (other than costume) by silliness, it felt very real and people avoided second hand embarrassment feelings
- Elephant song → so playful! (someone wrote a whole song with their Playdoh creation)
  - They ignored Kr when she as shame monster tried to smash the playdoh
- People need to be invited to play more directly
- Affordances themselves were not helpful
- Shame monster alone feels too powerful – an imbalance that eclipses the playfulness
- Play felt like a trap last time - was going to be shamed for it

March 30, 2022 - Formal Playtest #6: Play Monster Invites People to Play Ball

- Low barrier to entry was very useful
- Playfulness of shame monster helpful in inviting play!
- People went to get their friends and one person made his friend play
- People stood in shade while playing
- Play monster was friendly
- Might want multiple shame monsters
- How do people respond to the shame monster if warned about them?
- B and Ryan were super playful in countering shame monster when we interacted with playdoh
  - A reverse shaming - a mockery of the shame
    - (distinct things)
- What if I put clues in a "book of monster"?

#### April 6, 2022 - Formal Playtest #7: Book of Monster Debut with Real Shame Monster

- People were kinda interested in the book
- Playing is so appealing that it is hard to get it to go higher
  - Leveling up isn't necessary but is there a way to make people aware of it without disrupting their play?
- Easy to ignore shame monster
- Shaming play monster effective at making Shame Monster known while creating distance with actual players
- S wanted to defeat the Shame Monster because he was mean to Kr - wanted to help Kr

#### April 11, 2022 - Formal Playtest #8: AfterDark Hula Hooping

##### Playtester Feedback / Findings:

- There was enough time to play before the Play Monster / Shame Monster presented a problem. Curiosity about how will happen with more people in space
- Enjoyed actually playing and saw lots of varied potential options
- Drawn to big red ball and hula hoop
- Felt they could leave the group's play and decide to get something else, but they did not want to
- Forgot that the Shame Monster was the actor who they knew
- Curious about what happens when / if people respond to the shame monster with more shaming
- Liked that E's costume also had the blue loopy yarn to identify him with the other play monster
- Curious who if anyone hid the Book of Monster
- Instructions were exciting and vague enough that they were not totally certain what to do but felt had a general sense of direction
- Talking to the shame Monster felt like therapy in some ways
  - This was also done with skilled youth educators
- It was useful to have the Play Monsters stay on the north side of the play circle so the participants could be facing Shame Monster and his lair
- Shame Dice was useful and interesting

- They were waiting for a direct invite to join, but also felt comfortable to approach to indicate interest

#### April 13, 2022 - Formal Playtest #9: Test-Opening with Classmates

##### Peer Findings:

- No one talked to Karimi
  - Karimi felt alone for the first time
- Should there be post its or some signs by the fountain
  - "Play with me" and "don't play with me"
  - Might also help to establish space
- How do you get people playing?
- B didn't know to play with any of the fountain stuff
  - Maybe more of a host thing, and do you wanna play with these things
    - Like this is your little house and you are hosting it with playing by fountain
    - And pass on the playing
- Because B "took over", Shame Monster had like a 30 minute conversation
  - Was that B breaking or is that like a bonus round?
- Collective experience vs individual experience - which I am going for?
- What does the shame monster game by being shameful?
  - At one point does the shame monster want to shame and leave?
- Reset maybe happens after "that's a lot to think about?"

##### My Findings:

- Needs to be a set loop for when play monster goes down
  - The third time
- Shame monster reset needs to be refined and present
- Needs to be something that breaks up the convos with the shame monster
  - Stage some exit lazzi
- Think about where else might place the book
  - Somewhere that is more "out of place" and possibly more hidden
- More décor in shame monster area
- Need 2 play monsters - 1 made people less likely to play
- B gave reward to shame monster
- B was already trying to disrupt the shame monster
  - Developing responses from shame monster to indicate continued shame
- What do we do when they ask our name
- What do we do when they ask what we want to play
- B asked if book might be behind the caution tape in shame monster's lounge
  - B asked about shame monster's space
- B was asking to hug the shame monster

#### April 20, 2022 - Formal Playtest #10: Testing Adjustments

- Player said it was "fun" and engaged in a dive game

- Music therapy student
- Should have another name for shame monster when he isn't shaming
- Ring pop was fun and good reward
- The full thing works well when only have 1 player
- Idea for splitting when smaller → Ring Pop can work as that
  - Play monster could have first part of clue
- One person was very interested to play as we were wrapping up
- The idea of Play Monster not knowing where book is seemed to add play
- People don't realize you don't need everything in the book
- People were willing to help me when I was carrying things back
- The disruption of Play Monster getting down can be enough if a full cry isn't warranted by the shame monster's tactic
- Surprising people with an invitation *while they are heading someone on a mission* seemed to activate an anxiety and sense of "hide me" when asking to play. Whereas people who didn't have as much of a place to go felt more interested

#### Broad Observations/Findings

- Gender kept coming up again and again - in terms of shame, audacity, and play in particular
- Simplicity works best! Ease!
- Letting go of the major big theory things helps and they often come back again through the emergence of the play design
- Affordances alone cannot help you
- Invitation was necessary to encourage people to play (adults, not kids)
- People stole things when left unattended → audacity and shame are related
- I need ongoing communicative collaboration with other artists (whether mentors or peers) in order to support my creative process and refine my ideas.

#### PERFORMANCE FINDINGS

##### April 22, 2022 - Final Performance!

- Did not account for someone verbally assaulting the shame monster
- Had not play tested with children
  - Playdoh was finally used
  - Should have done *more* to have adaptable/accessible points for kids to participate
  - Noticed how kids were the ones who came back most frequently
  - In some ways, it became about *kids* playing and I lost some of that return to what is it like for *adults* to play like kids again
    - Mainly observed this with parents
      - Tho maybe sitting and resting while your kids play is a whole playfulness for adults idk
    - Students and people under 40ish seemed more interested to participate / play even if kids were around

- Some people shared the book of monster secrets and began sharing it with others
- The shame monster did get caught talking for a bit, but that seemed okay
- Initially, the shame monster disruptions led the people who arrived in groups to just move away and play by themselves away from play monsters as well
  - If already have a community, can just “isolate” more easily from the disruptive shame monster
- One of my play monsters did not seem super keen on being visibly playful or silly