

10 Things
We Learned
in Hayes Valley

August 1 – 31, 2016

Stairwell's

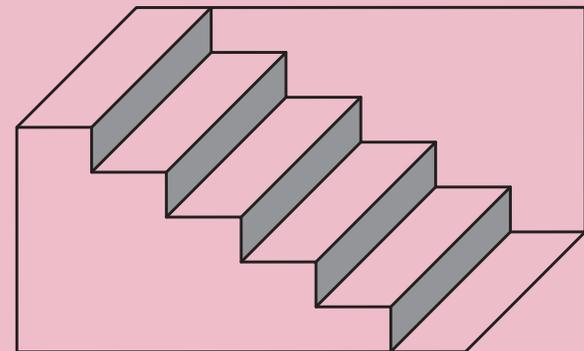
a.k.a. Sarah Hotchkiss & Carey Lin

Week One

1. Stairwell's will be in residence at Hayes Valley Art Works, located at the corner of Laguna and Fell Streets, for the month of August. For this residency, titled "Stairwell's Valley Step Works," we will hold onsite work sessions approximately 5 hours/week and host a final public event on Sunday, August 28.
2. A nice man named Buck bestowed two bags of plums on Sarah this morning, saying they were "for Jay" and "everyone at the lot." He was wearing a shirt that said "Pit Bull Lover."
3. Inside the shipping container where our residency takes place, the letters "OSOC" are written on one wall with light pink oil pastel or paint pen in all caps and underlined. We are trying to guess what this acronym means. Today we came up with four options. Our favorite out of these is "Outrageous Sorcery Overcomes Confusion."
4. The closest restrooms to Hayes Valley Art Works are at the Hayes Valley Playground (at the corner of Hayes and Buchanan) and are labeled "Girls" and "Boys."
5. The Hayes Valley Playground contains a spinning cage-like structure that seems incredibly dangerous due to the speed at which it whips whoever is inside it around. Sarah was super dizzy after riding it.
6. We passed a brick building on our way to the Market Street Safeway that recently had new windows put in. The new bricks surrounding those windows were cemented with bright pink mortar (as opposed to the grayish brown mortar of the old bricks.)
7. A few blocks south of HVAW on Laguna Street, newly built stairs take you to a public open space called Waller Park; it's open 7am-7pm daily.
8. There is a miniature "town hall" playhouse structure in one corner of the lot, surrounded by stacks of small blue plastic chairs that may have once lived in a kindergarten classroom. The clock mounted on the structure currently tells the correct time but not the correct temperature.
9. Of the many artistic interventions on the lot, our favorite so far is a yin yang symbol made out of black and white stones.
10. Carey purchased six bent-tip decorative candelabra light bulbs at the Ace Hardware. Less than an hour later, we found two similarly shaped light bulbs discarded on the grounds of HVAW. Only one of those had an intact filament.

Week Two

1. You can join Xfinity wifi for one hour of complimentary hotspot access. All you have to give them is your zip code and email address. You're limited to just two hour-long complimentary hotspot accesses a month. Hopefully we chose our first hour wisely.
2. We found a note in our planning documents for the residency, written months before our arrival here. It says, "Do magnets stick to the outside of the container?" Yes, past selves, yes they do.
3. We started testing out different ways of exploring HVAW today. In one exercise, two people try to track the number of cars that drive by on Fell St. One gets to count with their eyes open, the other has to listen and count with their eyes closed. The listeners came up about five cars short.
4. We discovered it's hard for Carey to see the stair illusion (below) both ways.
5. The phrase "U BREAK (IT), U BOUGHT (IT)" is written on the inside of our shipping container studio.
6. There are currently 23 satellite dishes visible from the perimeter of Hayes Valley Art Works.
7. The shipping container is not level so if you stick a line of tape onto the side of it using a level, it will look crooked even though it's not.
8. Our level is missing a part that would make it easier to render vertical lines straight.
9. Though brick is not often used in San Francisco building construction for structural integrity reasons, you can see two instances of brick-augmented facades from Hayes Valley Art Works. One is an older building and one is brand new.
10. We are the proud (temporary) recipients of a soccer team clipboard, complete with a dry erase field diagram on the back for the quick relay of time-out plays to team members we have yet to recruit.



Week Three

1. It's surprisingly hard for us to come up with a name for the brief exploratory activities we've been carrying out on the HVAW site. Some keywords that feel right include: warm-up, wander, ramble, and "no sweat."
2. The new condo complex at Laguna and Haight includes a proto-community garden (barren raised planter beds).
3. We discovered a charming tiny park tucked away on Page St. near Laguna.
4. We finished outlining the stair illusion on the outside of the shipping container today and we were happy to discover that we only needed to make one small adjustment to complete the image. Next time, we paint!
5. The color we plan to paint the stair illusion (brown) was determined by the discounted unclaimed custom-mixed paint selection at Ace Hardware on Market St., also known as Handy Handyman Ace Hardware (as listed on their receipt and our credit card statements).
6. Our final event on August 28 is just 13 days away. We are excited to lead an afternoon of fun, free activities investigating HVAW and the surrounding neighborhood — with a Stairwell's twist.
7. There have been more visitors to Hayes Valley Art Works today than any other day we've been holding down the fort in our trusty shipping container.
8. Sarah is very accident-prone. Carey is sad about this.
9. Contrary to what one might assume given the industrious cafe vibe at Boulangerie on Hayes Street, it does NOT have wifi. They do however, serve their lattes in handleless bowls.
10. There is a labyrinth made of white stones in the center of HVAW. At the center of labyrinth is a small pile of objects (perhaps) collected by volunteer patrols of the site, consisting of (but not limited to): a disposable mechanical pencil, a plastic baby, and some loose change.

Week Four

1. There was a red plastic child-sized chair in the center of the labyrinth this morning.
2. Our stair illusion mural (finally done!) is painted a reddish-brown shade of latex paint that Carey likens to the color of The California Raisins. Created in the 1980s for the California Raisin Advisory Board, these anthropomorphized raisins comprised an R&B quartet that was charmingly animated with clay.
3. Built in 1922, the beautiful building located at 300 Page Street originally housed various community residential shelters and rehabilitation spaces for nearly 50 years before becoming the home of San Francisco Zen Center's City Center Temple. While following instructions on a sign at Koshland Park to go across the street for an information booklet on the park (presumably in the Zen Center's bookstore), we were inadvertently treated to a tour of the building and grounds (designed by Julia Morgan). So beautiful!
4. The colorfully decorated garage door we discovered on Week One on Linden near Laguna is actually the back of the Earthbody Organic Day Spa, whose main entrance is on Hayes Street.
5. Disappointingly, our metal slinky does not hop down the steps in the Waller Street Open Space when launched from the top of a flight of stairs. We determined the specific rise/run ratio of these steps is not steep enough for the size of our slinky.
6. Xfinity's supposedly complimentary second hour of wifi didn't work as promised. The result? Sarah was wifi-less this week.
7. On an exploratory walk for Sunday's culminating event, we discovered Koshland Park, a lovely playground, half a basketball court and a "learning garden" complete with winding paths and bilingual signs. We'll be back, Koshland.
8. Each time we pass through Alchemy, the new housing complex around the Waller Street Open Space, it looks a little more lived in. Though certain doors are still just empty frames waiting for their glass.
9. One of the best parts of visiting HVAW on the regular is noticing the changes that have taken place since we were last there. The dance floor/stage is now outside of the miniature town hall in preparation for San Francisco Youth Theater's performances of Hamlet. And the potted plants that once perched on the hill overlooking Fell Street now encircle the stage.
10. We can't believe our final event is so soon — time flew by here at HVAW. We'll miss our shipping container studio and all the kind folks we met while in residence.

