

Cure Malawi Project

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FROM WATER TO SUMMIT: HEALING THROUGH NATURE AND CULTURE

PROJECT ASK

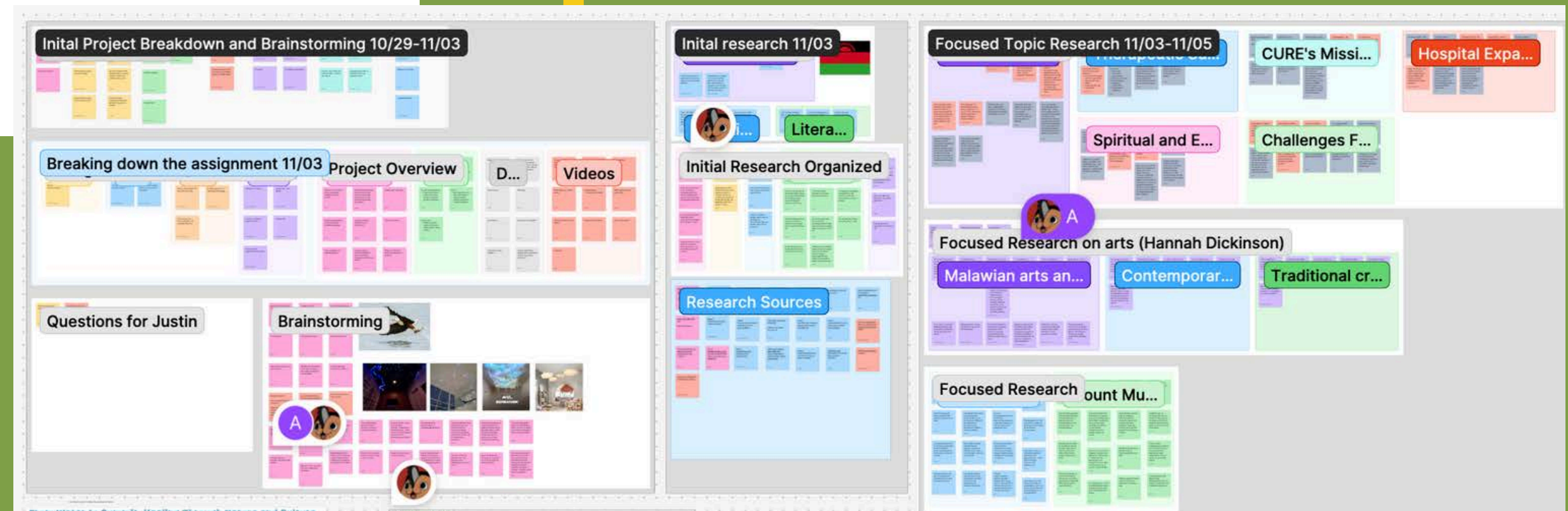
The project asked us to **design and implement culturally-appropriate environmental graphics and wayfinding** signage for the **Malawi Surgical Center** to transform common spaces into **healing environments** that **reduce** patient/family **anxiety** and **support staff well-being**.

PROJECT SOLUTION

Our design strategy focused on harnessing the **natural elements** of Malawi to create a **therapeutic and healing environment**. We incorporated a color palette of earthy, natural colors that seamlessly align with the company's existing visual identity.

INITIAL RESEARCH

- A **whole lot of** initial **research** was done to help lead us in the proper direction for this project.
- We dove **deep into** the **culture** of the Malawian people and what is important to them.
- We found that **art, nature, and family** are the three biggest parts of their daily lives

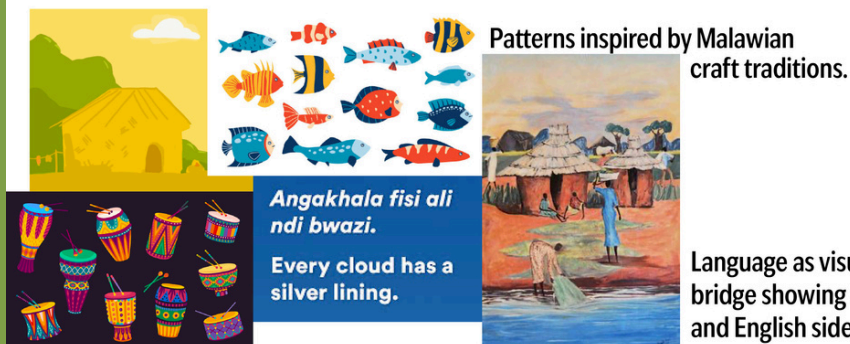


MOODBOARDS

Inspiration & Focus: Moodboards show off initial research ideas, emphasizing the core themes of nature and family connection.

From Water to Summit: Healing Through Nature and Culture

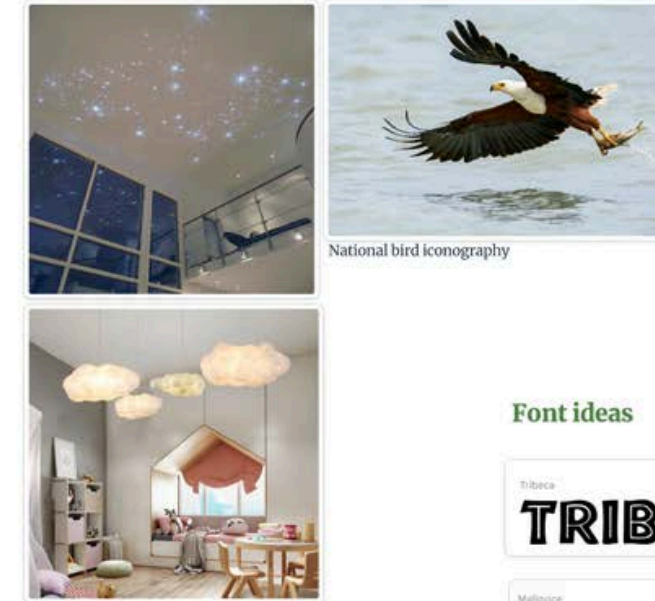
Inspired by Lake Malawi's calm waters and Mount Mulanje's enduring strength we present a visual language for comfort, connection, and renewal



Ruddy
IvyEpic



Nature elements to bring the outside inside, making kids more comfortable



Family traditions reflected in the murals, showing cultural bonds



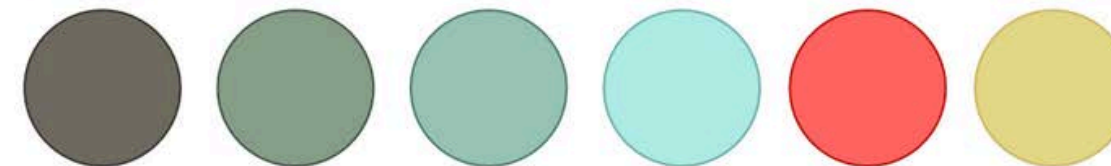
Font ideas

TRIBECA REGULAR

Mallovice Regular

BACKOUT PRINT

Colors to reflect culture and nature



Cultural patterns show casing the beauty of their art



INITIAL SKETCHES

- **Iterative Sketching:** Extensive sketching drove the conceptualization of the wayfinding and mural aesthetic.
- **Visualized Final Sections:** These examples illustrate the completed design evolution from initial concept.



SECTION 1:



FLAT ARTWORK

- **Cultural Significance:** The design directly references Lake Malawi, acknowledging its profound importance and integral role in the local native culture.
- **Thematic Design Strategy:** We are incorporating the Lake's essence as a major thematic anchor throughout the space to honor this cultural connection.
- **Authentic Art Displays:** Artwork showcases indigenous fish species and the native Nile crocodile, providing an educational and visually engaging tribute to Lake Malawi's unique biodiversity.



MOCKUP

Features:

- **Rippled Plexiglass:** Projects a dynamic, water-like texture and light, fostering an interactive atmosphere.
- **Sand-Resined Floors:** Offer a textured, organic look with a sleek, durable finish.
- **"River" Wayfinding:** Provides intuitive and seamless guidance throughout the space.
- **Thematic Signage:** Uses "The Lake" identification for clear, instantaneous sectional orientation.



SECTION 2:



FLAT ARTWORK

- **Cultural Connection:** The art honors the cultural significance of safari habitats, which are integral to native Malawian livelihoods and resources.
- **Biodiversity Celebration:** The artwork prominently features key safari species, elephants, lions, and zebras, to celebrate the nation's diverse natural heritage.



MOCKUP

Features:

- **Immersive Lighting:** Features custom cloud-like light fixtures designed to evoke the open-sky ambiance of the safari environment.
- **Healing Biophilia:** Integrating natural elements ("bringing the outside inside") is proven to foster a sense of peace and expedite recovery in healing environments (Studies show natural views can reduce patient length of stay by 18 hours on average; Ulrich, 1984)



Source:
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/6143402/>

SECTION 3:



THE MOUNTAIN

FLAT ARTWORK

- **Landscape Identity:** These artworks highlight Malawi's natural geography including the dramatic rise of Mount Mulanje. This reinforces the hospital's sense of place by visually rooting the environment in one of the country's most iconic landmarks.
- **Harmony With Nature:** By depicting birds and butterflies in flight and gentle gradients from sunrise to sunset, the art conveys calmness and renewal. This atmosphere is intentionally soothing for patients and families, promoting emotional comfort as they move through the space.



MOCKUP

Features:

- **Indigenous Forest Trees:** Tall, soft-textured Malawian acacia trees create a peaceful transition from mountain to woodland, helping the ward feel grounded in local nature.
- **Local Species:** Colorful butterflies and sharpe's grysbok introduce playfulness and visual interest, encouraging patients to look around and engage with the environment.



SECTION 4:



FLAT ARTWORK

- **Reinforcement of the Zone's Identity:** This zone's brand, The Village, is visually supported through both the artwork and the signage panel. The design creates a memorable identity that aligns with the hospital's larger environmental narrative
- **Cultural Grounding:** The mural draws directly from familiar village scenes, traditional huts, shared wells, and communal activity. By highlighting daily life that local families recognize, the artwork creates a sense of belonging for patients and caregivers.



MOCKUP

Features:

- **Warm, Calming Palette:** Soft oranges, muted yellows, and earthy greens reference sunrise light and the tones of village terrain. These colors create a warm, reassuring atmosphere to help reduce anxiety and setting a gentle, welcoming tone.
- **Community & Care as Central Themes:** Depictions of villagers gathering water and children playing reinforce values of cooperation, care, and togetherness. These themes parallel the hospital environment, where teamwork and shared support drive healing.



SECTION 5:



FLAT ARTWORK

- **Immersive Forest Palette:** We utilized natural green tones to evoke the calming, restorative feeling of being within a dense forest.
- **Authentic Malawi Artwork:** The created artwork reflects the true sensory experience of stepping inside a Malawian forest.
- **Symbolism of Hope:** Strategic depiction of sun rays piercing the canopy highlights the forest's depth while symbolizing radiance, hope, and healing.



MOCKUP

Features:

- **Canopy Immersion:** Artificial vines draped from ceilings and door frames create the illusion of being under a dense forest canopy.
- **Integrated Foliage:** Hand-painted forest plants wrap around the Nurse Station, enhancing the immersive, dense forestry aesthetic.
- **Branding as Structure:** The Cure logo and the company slogan, "Help Kids Heal," are seamlessly integrated into the Nurse Station design.



WAYFINDING

Features:

- **Color-coded zones and intuitive illustrations** clarify the hospital layout, making navigation efficient and engaging.
- **A prominent legend (key)** adjacent to the map clearly links icons to specific hospital destinations, streamlining the wayfinding process.



WAYFINDING

Features:

- **Operation Room Borders:** Features basket-weave inspired door borders for Operation Rooms, serving as a textured design element that thoughtfully integrates the Hut Icon symbolism.
- **High-Contrast Wayfinding:** Utilizes white, clean-lined icons set against distinct color blocks to maximize readability and visual contrast.
- **Thematic Signage:** Directional arrows incorporate the basket-weave texture to maintain thematic consistency across all wayfinding elements.



CONCLUSION

Ultimately, the project's core mission is to create a space where children and families feel **seen**, **safe**, and **supported**. By carefully selecting elements, from mountains to animals, to reflect the **resilience** and **beauty** of Malawi, the design seamlessly blends art with wayfinding. This not only guides patients with confidence and calm but actively reinforces the center's healing mission by bringing a vital sense of home into the care environment.

THANK YOU!

Any Questions?