direct (message)

Digital Access to Artistic Engagement for Older Adults

**What We've Done
and
Where We'll Go**

Project Overview

- Collaborative community arts project
- Engaging older adults in Guelph, Hamilton, and London
- **Goal**
  - Make arts more interactive and accessible for older adults.
- **Method**
  - A co-designed prototype platform that uses software, digital networks, hardware, and place to explore how digital technology can increase access to artistic engagement for older adults.

THEORY OF CHANGE:

STRATEGY 1:
COMMUNITY-BASED RESEARCH

Focus Groups
Arts-Based Workshops
Surveys/Interviews
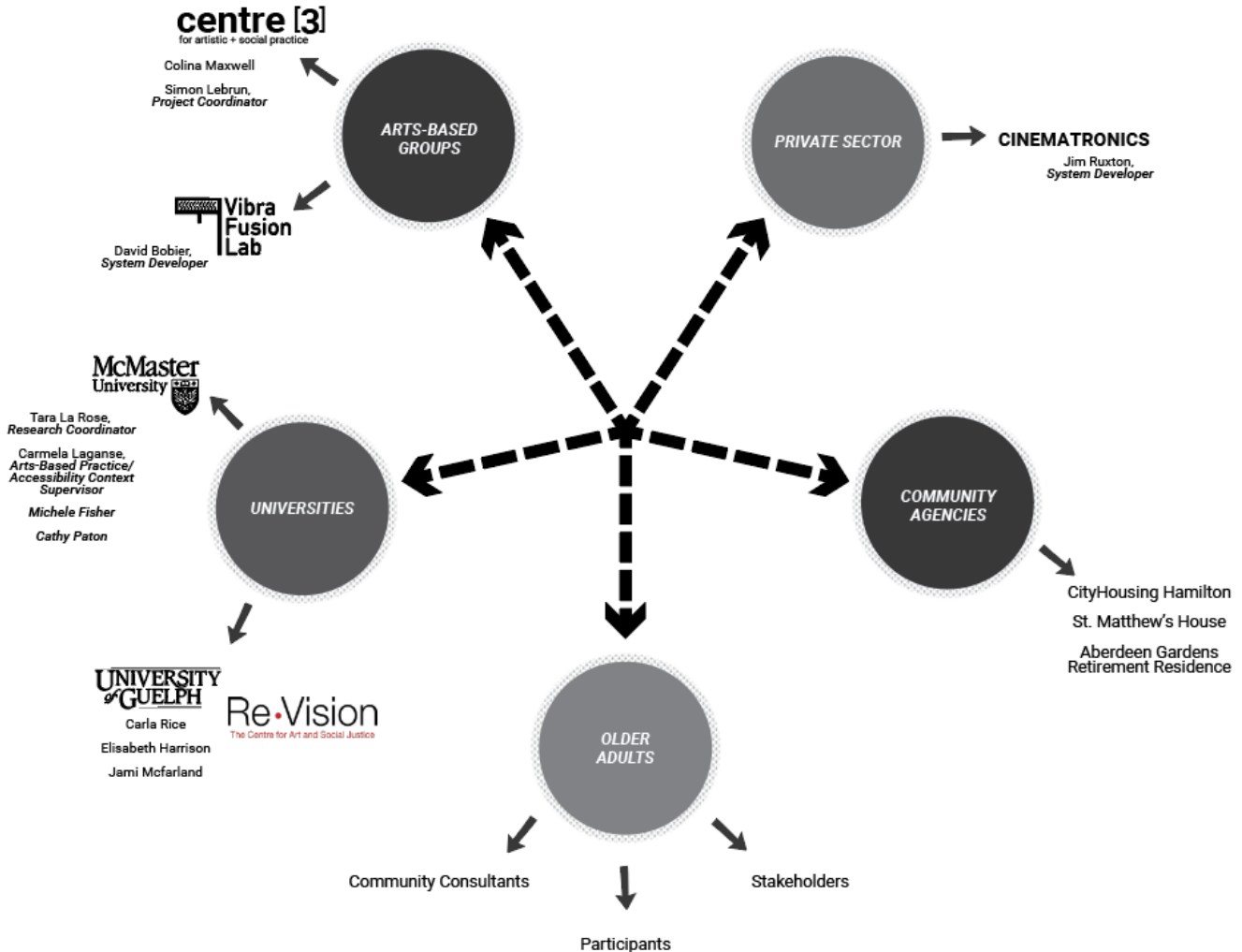
STRATEGY 2:
PROTOTYPE DEVELOPMENT

STRATEGY 3:
TESTING & EVALUATION

Alpha Testing
Beta Testing

By 2022, *direct[message]* will have researched, designed and tested a digital prototype that will help increase access to the arts for the aging communities in Guelph, Hamilton, and London.

Project Team

centre [3]
for artistic + social practice

Colina Maxwell

Simon Lebrun,
Project Coordinator

Vibra Fusion Lab

David Bobier,
System Developer

ARTS-BASED GROUPS

PRIVATE SECTOR

CINEMATRONICS

Jim Ruxton,
System Developer

McMaster University

Tara La Rose,
Research Coordinator

Carmela Laganse,
Arts-Based Practice/ Accessibility Context Supervisor

Michele Fisher

Cathy Paton

UNIVERSITIES

COMMUNITY AGENCIES

CityHousing Hamilton

St. Matthew's House

Aberdeen Gardens Retirement Residence

University of GUELPH

Carla Rice

Elisabeth Harrison

Jami Mcfarland

Re·Vision
The Centre for Art and Social Justice

OLDER ADULTS

Community Consultants

Stakeholders

Participants

Phases and Timeline

Phase I   - July 2019 to May 2020 (10 months)
Phase II   - June 2020 to May 2021 (11 months)
Phase III   - September to March 2022 (7 months)
Phase IV   - April 2022 to July 2022 (4 months)
Phase V   - August to November 2022 (4 months)

Research Approach

1. What are older adults' needs, desires, and barriers to creating and experiencing the arts?
2. How can digital technology, including live video streaming, be used to facilitate older adults' access to and engagement with the arts?

Community Consultants

● Recruit participants
● Administer survey
● Coding and analysis
● Platform co -design
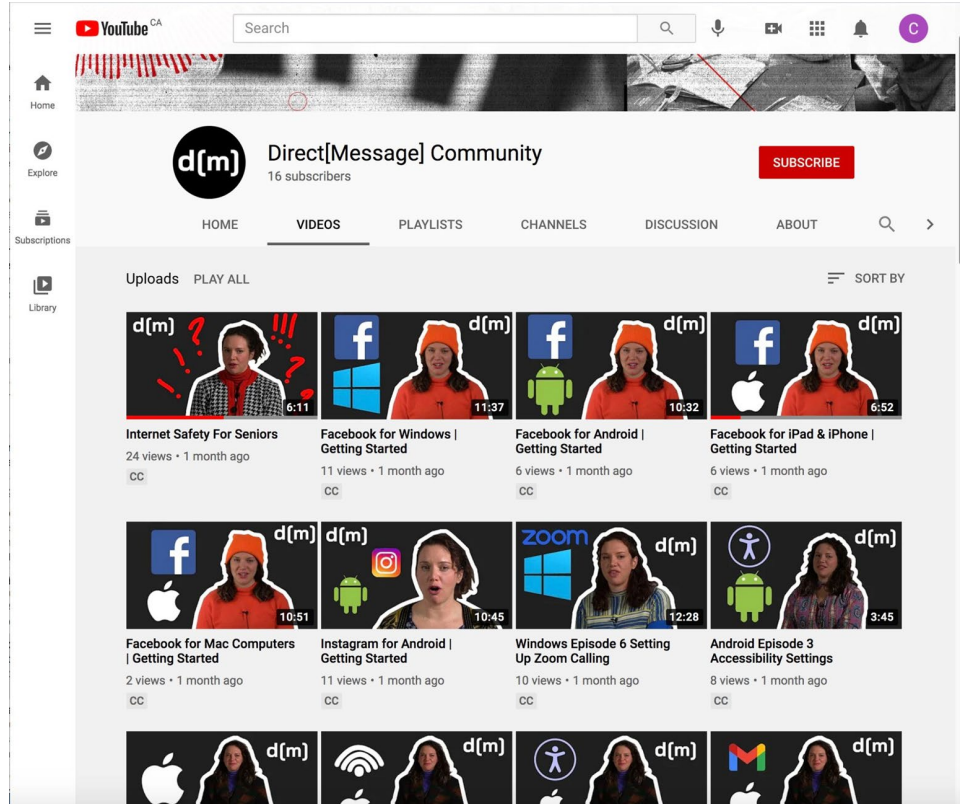
Screenshots from physically distanced Zoom meetings with Direct[Message] Community Consultants

Digital Literacy

To respond to the barrier of digital literacy, we developed **direct[message] Tutorial Videos**:

- a series of videos produced in consultation with older adults
- funded by New Horizons for Seniors Program
- supports older adults to develop skills at thier own pace and foster intergenerational engagement.

direct-message.ca/tv

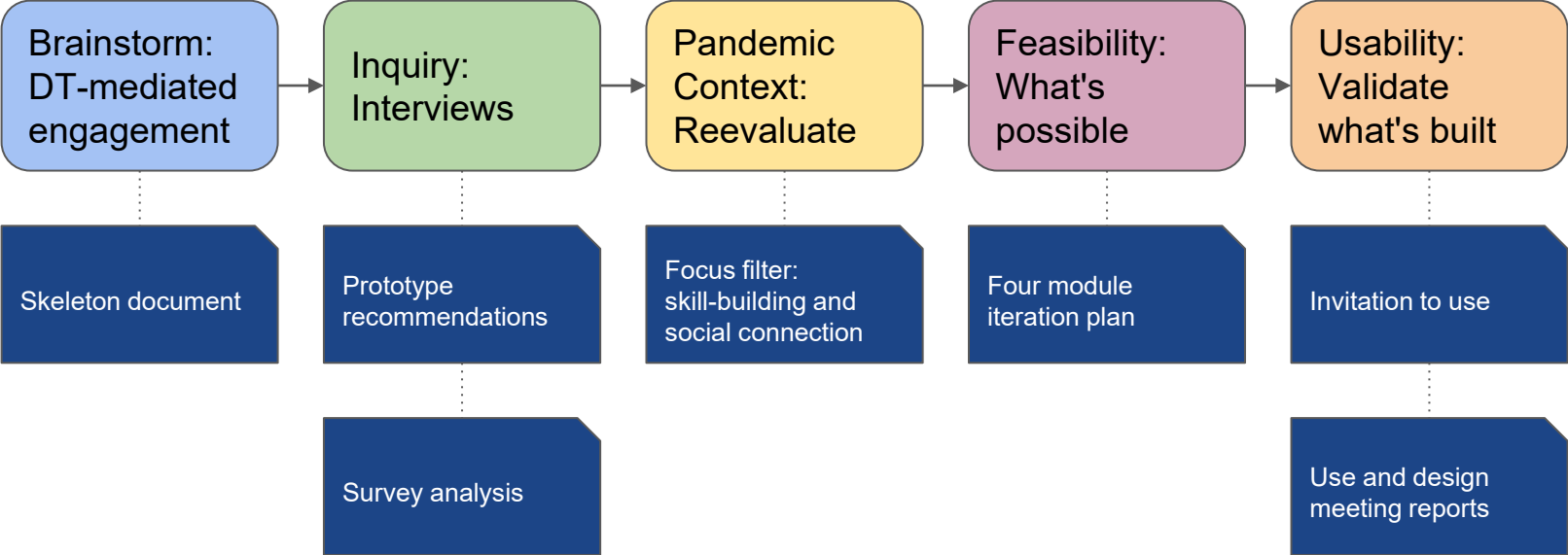# Phase II - Development Team

1. Jim Ruxton put together the skeleton document to outline a possible route for a web based platform for virtual arts access
2. Recruited Simon Lebrun as our Web Developer/IT Specialist to bring this approach to fruition
3. After making the tutorial videos, Carmela and her team discovered a big barrier is the number of windows one has to click through to get to a particular site or program
4. Started to rapid prototype some simple hardware pieces (keyboards) to make it easier for folks to navigate/access the web platform

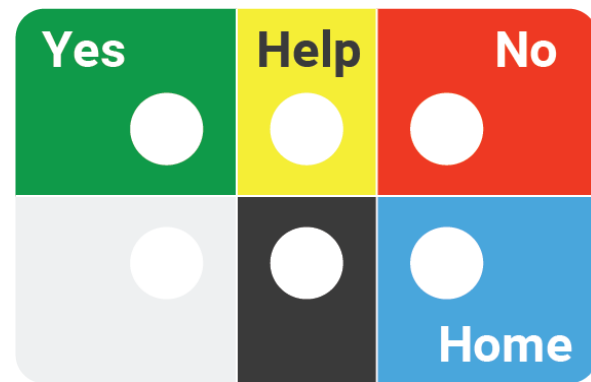# Platform Development Process

- Scoping review
  - Interdisciplinary review of literature
  - Existing hardware/software systems, platforms and processes similar to the project's prototype goals
  - What different arts organizations were using to offer their programming digitally

- Initial challenges and opportunities developed from analysis of interviews with older adults and service providers

Platform Development Process

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Brainstorm:          Inquiry:          Pandemic          Feasibility:       Usability:
DT-mediated          Interviews        Context:          What's             Validate
engagement                             Reevaluate        possible           what's built
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Skeleton document

Prototype recommendations

Focus filter: skill-building and social connection

Four module iteration plan

Invitation to use

Survey analysis

Use and design meeting reports

Prototype Development

Platform Evaluation

- Re-vision/BIT has made a Mitacs grant possible so that a new research stream coordinated by Jami McFarland can formalize the platform evaluation process

- The findings from evaluation activities can be published, and so can be widely distributed

- Ethics approval through Guelph REB

Platorm Content

- Centre[3] and project team members are inviting older adult artists and artists interested in making their practice best suited to older adults to blue-sky, develop, and record content to deliver through the platform.

- Jami McFarland is leading a review of the Bodies in Translation archive for pieces that can be highlighted through the platform

- We are piloting cross-pollination programs in addition to publish-and-host
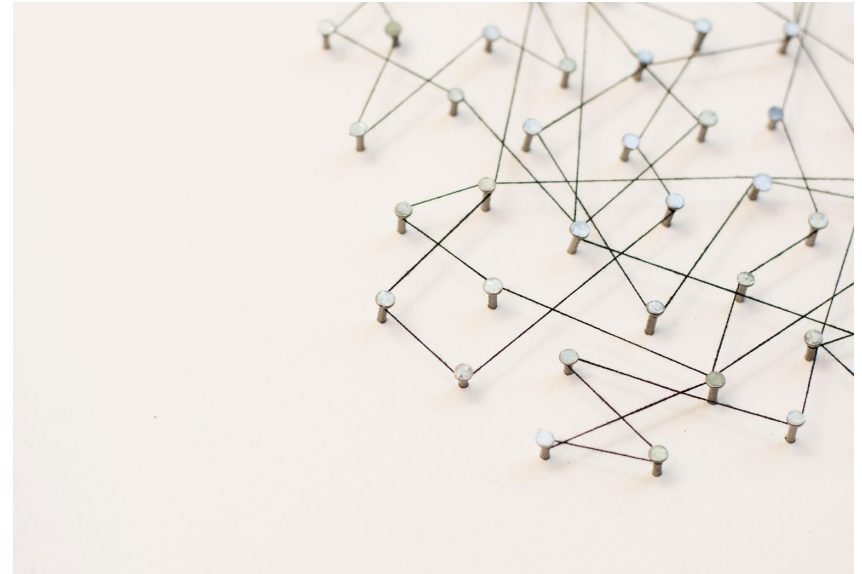
Platform Audience (Phases 4 and 5)

- Audience development in phases four and five

- General outreach
  - to the channels identified by survey respondents (e.g., Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, podcasts, newsletters)
  - in accessible language
  - to highlight the artistic engagements identified by survey respondents as appealing

- Building audience over time with social media best practices

- Sharing tools with similarly motivated groups
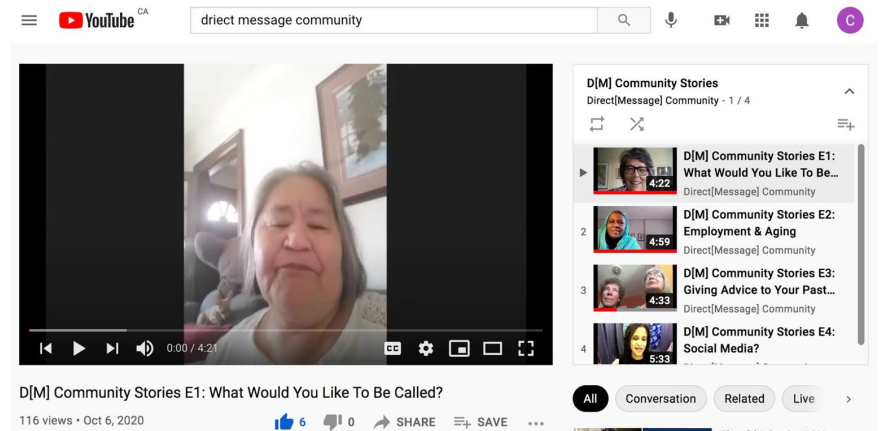
A Prototype: Re-Use

- ## The administered survey
  - The survey, instructions to deploy open-source tool in inexpensive hosting environment with appropriate data safeguards, survey process training and tools training for facilitators
- ## The web platform
  - Code and instructions for deploying, modifying, and extending the direct[message] platform
- ## The hardware and alternative interfaces
  - Design, production files, reasoning, and experienced challenges for interfaces to the web platform (e.g., specialized simple keyboard; sound-and-vibration handhelds, walls, and chairs; self-contained computer for television use; integration with telephone, IM, and SMS)
- ## The data
- ## Published articles
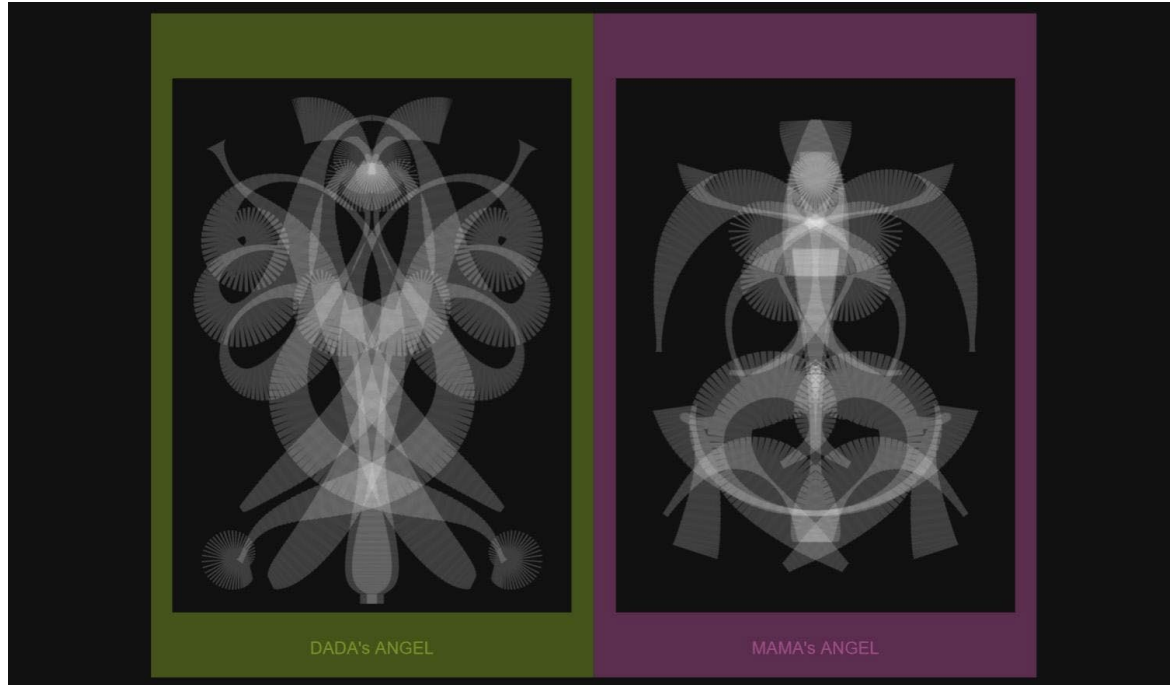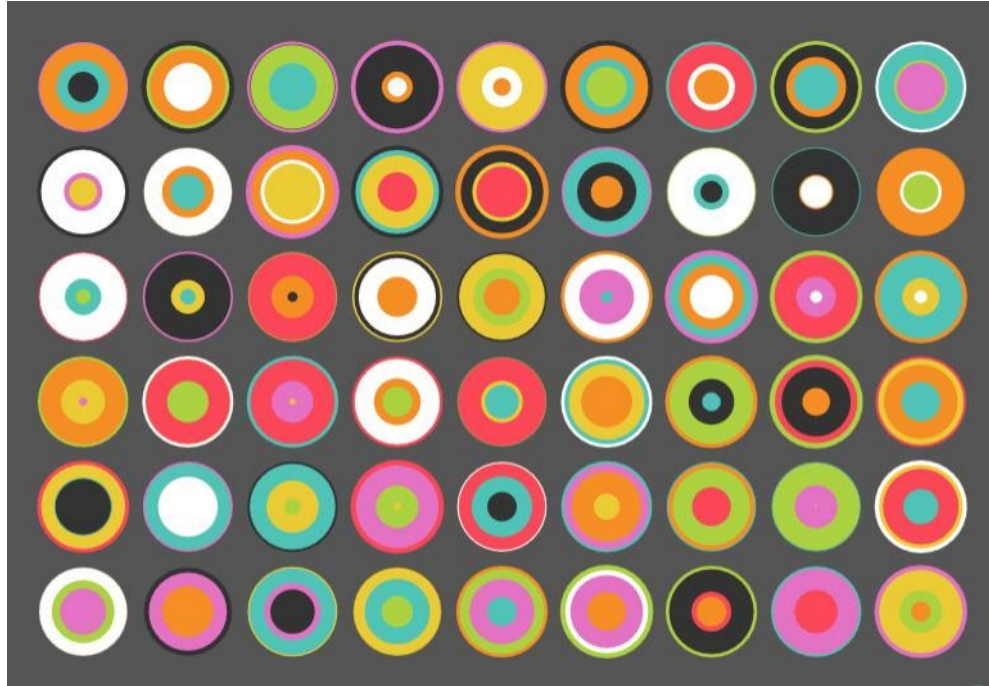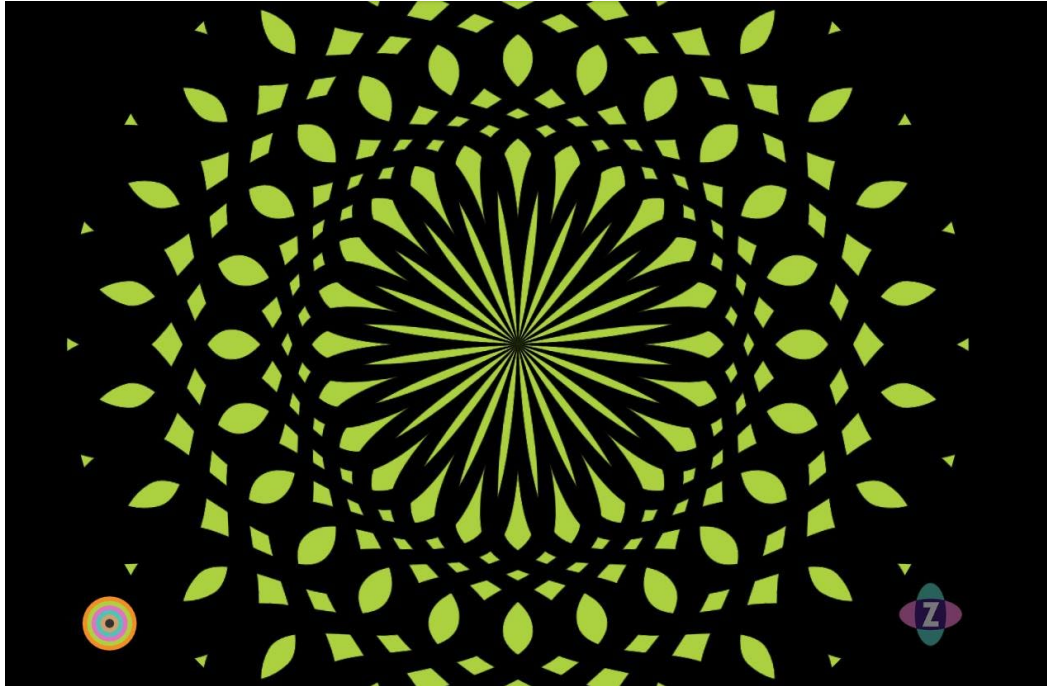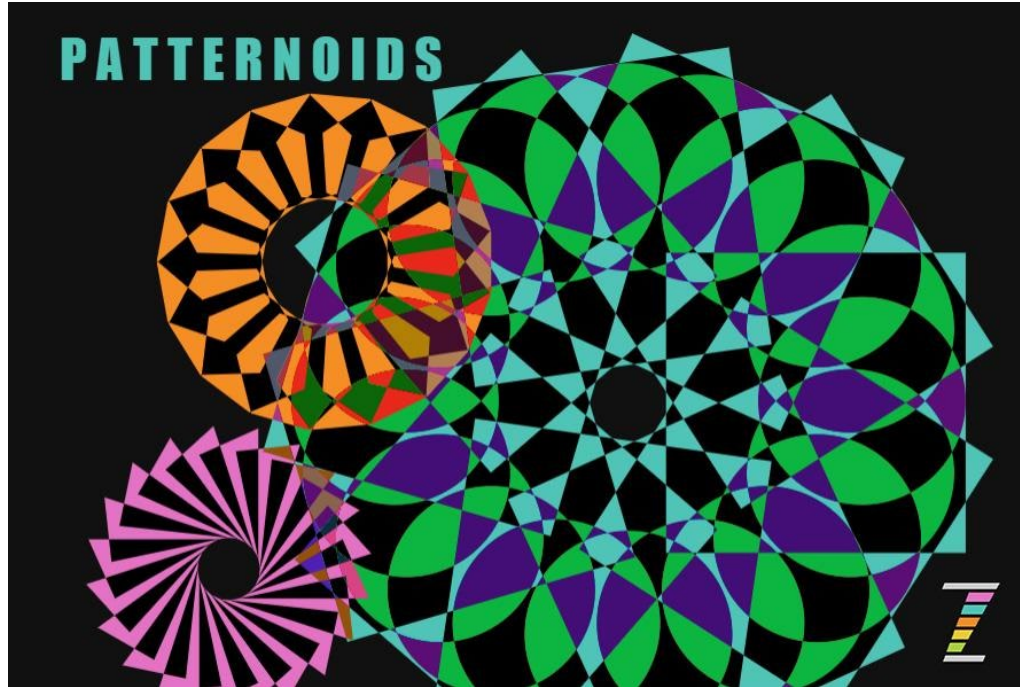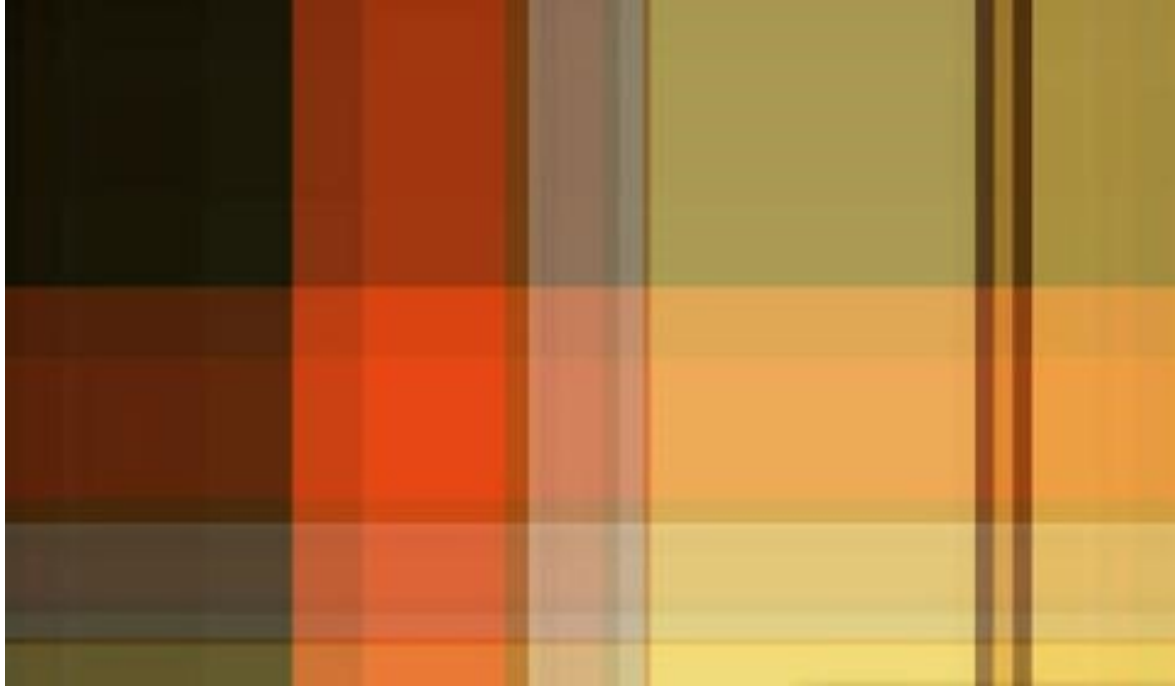- ## Digital assets supporting artistic engagement

Making Art with the direct[message] Keyboard
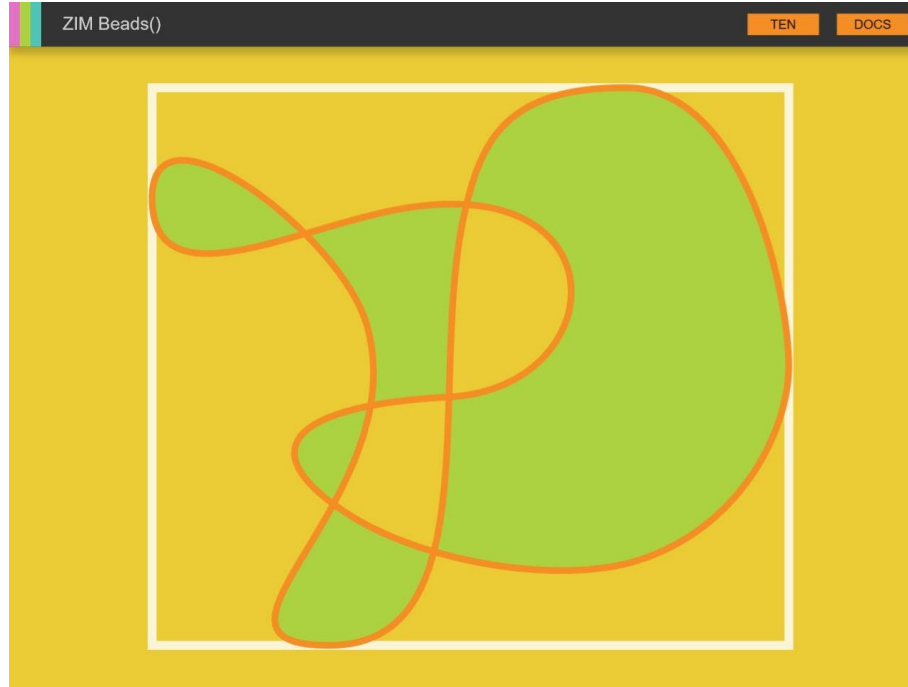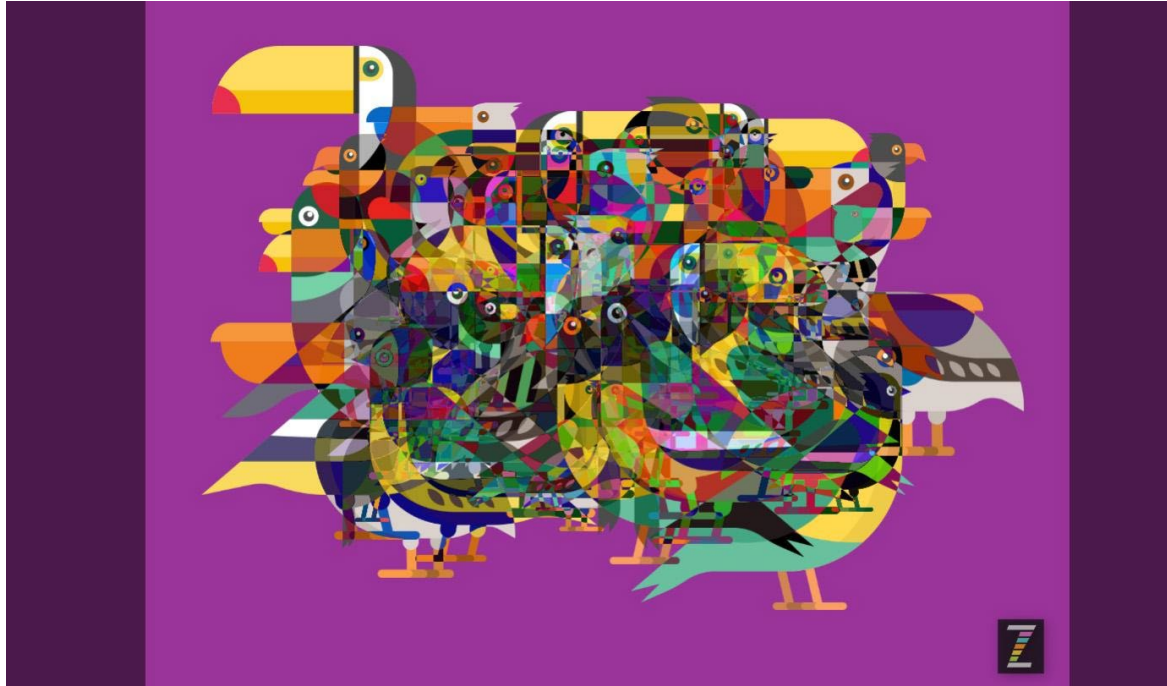
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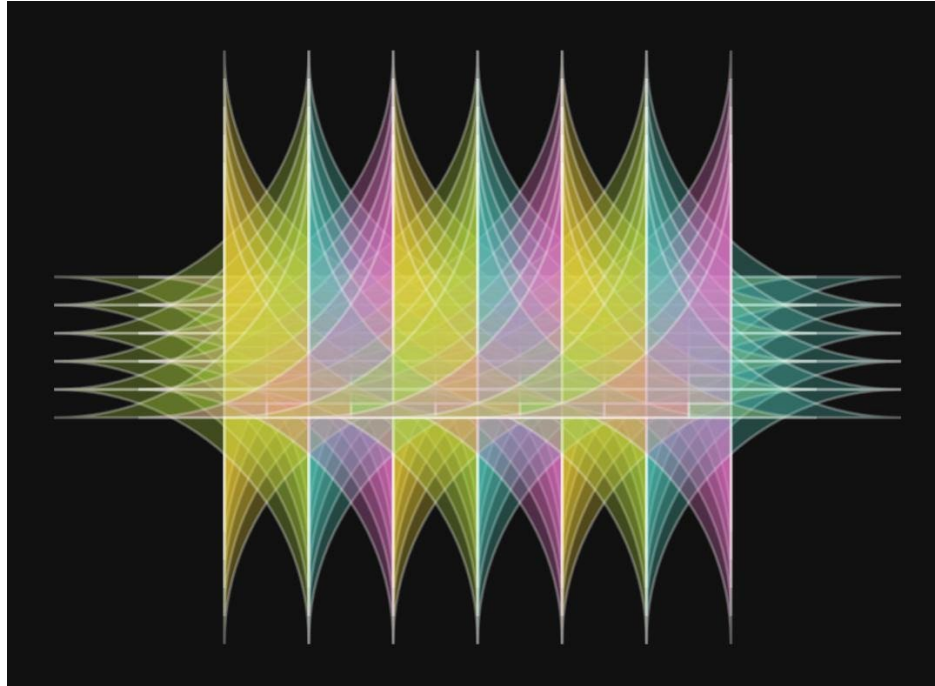
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Making Art with the direct[message] Keyboard

Making Art with the direct[message] Keyboard

Making Art with the direct[message] Keyboard

- Tartans
- Flowers
- Quilts
- Coat of Arms
- ?