PROJECT CONCEPT

Based initial conversations with representatives from the Lund Home, Art from the Heart, and Virgin Pulse, I’ve developed a concept to reflect the concerns and strategies they identified, a focus on the natural world, a sensitivity to color and form, and techniques for incentivizing behavior change.

I was surprised to discover that jigsaw puzzles have been used as prompts for initiating therapeutic discussion and stimulating patient journaling. It made sense to me, that closely examining the relationships between puzzle pieces, and struggling with those that don’t seem to fit, followed by the ultimate satisfaction of uniting those pieces into a single accessible image, could be used as effective models for behavior change. Honestly, many of us over the last 2 years of house confinement can attest to the therapeutic benefits of jigsaw puzzles.

I propose three inter-related puzzle formats for the Residence Center.
First, is the single image from which the puzzle pieces are based. The content is a stylized integration of the natural systems, earth, air, water and fire. Each element is reliant on the others surrounding it. A metaphor for our own inter-related psyches. The iconography is my own, developed over many years of living and working with individuals in the Middle East and Central Asia, seeing their visual culture and listening to their stories.

The image developed for this presentation is an example of my style and content imagery. The landscape and colors gravitate toward blues and greens. The elements have been modified to soothe and allow the eye to travel toward a progressively brighter background.
Second, are the puzzle pieces themselves. I’m proposing 10 irregular-shaped pieces. Irregular shapes attract the eye and invite inspection. In a visual manifestation of our natures, each piece has a dominant element with other supporting elements present.

I’m proposing the puzzle pieces be hung in groups of three, in pairs and singly, above eye-level and out of reach of accidental damage. Although visually complex, they aren’t intricate and can be understood from a distance.

Each puzzle piece is a high-quality giclee print roughly 24-30 inches varying in both length and width. Covered with UV-museum-grade Plexiglas to prevent breakage and fading.

The frames are laser-cut wood composites, a light-colored wood veneer on the top surface, laminated to a hard composite supporting frame and bolted to the surface wall.

Below, I’ve indicated where the puzzle segments could be located on the current architectural drawings and placed them in the available room renderings to better visualize the project concept and intent.
Recovery Residence: Multi-purpose Room
Location: 3 sections west wall, 2 sections north wall, 1 section east wall

Recovery Residence: Living Room
Location: 2 Sections mounted singly

V. Hird
Recovery Residence: Dining Room
Location: 2 sections, north east wall

V. Hird

Recovery Residence: ELEMENTAL LANDSCAPE
Location: East wall public corridor or south wall waiting room

V. Hird
Finally, I’m proposing a 5-minute, looping animation as the final component of this inter-related proposal. Each puzzle piece’s composition is explored, shifting slowly between air, earth, sky and fire, sharing characteristics before clarifying and assembling as a single image. I’m suggesting it as a therapeutic ‘screen saver’ for the TV monitors in the Living room and Multi-purpose rooms.

I envision 4 outcomes for the animation.

1) The active animation of puzzle pieces slowly being explored and assembled to create a single accessible image that could be used as a journaling and discussion prompt.

2) The animation promotes techniques for absorbing new information by slowing down interpretation of how we see.

3) Provide a restful focus for visiting family, patients and staff. The animation shifts focus, taking pressure away from the patient, family member and/or staff by sitting with patients and looking with them instead of at them.

4) Promotes reflection, self-awareness, and mindfulness for both patients and staff.

I’ve provided a Puzzle GIFF https://vimeo.com/671765966 of the landscape image to give you an idea of the direction in which I would like to go.

I would also direct you to a 1-minute excerpt from my recent video ‘The Unattended Moment’ https://vimeo.com/672133989 although drawn in black and white - it will give you an idea of the slower pace I have in mind for the Puzzle Animation.
Qualifications

Work Experience
All my commercial commissions have come in on time and on budget. Trained as a framer and conservator, I’ve installed artwork at IBM’s Essex Junction facility, and the General Electric Plant at Lakeside. I also purchased, framed and installed the artwork for the then newly renovated sections the Fletcher Allen Hospital, and newly constructed McClure Wing. Installations at the hospital required state of the art strategies for installations in their high trafficked areas, using security solutions on a variety of surfaces from terrazzo to brick, wall board, plaster and wood. The process needed constant coordination with architects, construction workers and hospital staff during the construction. Additionally...

‘Art in Action’ was a successful VCA commission that required a non-negotiable schedule for completion of 12 original framed artworks, a firm budget and year-long commitment to community outreach.

Finally...
I’m a practicing artist with over 40 years’ experience in art installation both nationally and internationally.

Accessibility- I live within 15 minutes of the project site. I have retired from teaching both domestically and abroad. So, I’m usually available for mtgs, both scheduled and unscheduled.

Excellence in Art
My proposal is built on the unique cosmology I have developed over the last decade. Exhibitions related to this theme have been exhibited in NYC and abroad and can be reviewed on my website (https://valeriehird.com/bio)

Awards in animation
My animated shorts have been recognized and received awards from IMDb’s Film Freeway, LA’s JellyFest, Montreal and Toronto Film festivals, WRLPN world indie festival and UK’s Aesthetica Art Prize

**Management** My management style is collaborative. My large, long-term international projects viewed on my website, (https://valeriehird.com/projects) The Maiden Voyages Project and Genesis Tree NY, both document my record of meeting installation schedules and with budgets spanning 1 to 3 years. All communication was digital coordinating time zones, countries, languages and the individual schedules of project participants, and volunteers.

**Communication Skills** – I have 20 years teaching visual communication at ST Michaels College, Champlain College, NYU Abu Dhabi, University of Jordan, American University of Dubai – I

I even learned how to receive and text in Arabic!