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SPATIAL WORK

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Ochichiri Studios

Spatial & Conceptual Design | Material Research | Cultural Narrative

Prepared

— Architecture

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Archeology as Method

My design practice begins with a question that has followed me for over a decade: what does a space remember? Not metaphorically, but materially in the grain of a fiber, the mineral composition of clay, the structural logic embedded in a weaving tradition that predates written language. I design spaces that take this question seriously, and that treat ancestral material intelligence not as reference but as engineering.

I trained in Physiology and Neurobiology before I trained in Design. This sequence matters because it means I approach space the way a researcher approaches a system: as something that can be understood, measured, and intentionally shaped to produce specific cognitive and sensory responses. Neuro-Cognitive Design, the framework I developed and published in Leonardo (MIT Press) is the result of this convergence. It is a methodology for designing environments that are cognitively resonant: spaces where material, proportion, light, and sound work together to produce not just aesthetic experience but felt knowledge.

My materials are raffia, clay, cowrie shell, reclaimed textile, and natural fiber — materials that carry cultural memory and structural possibility in equal measure. I work with Igbo and Yoruba building and weaving traditions because they represent some of the most sophisticated material systems ever developed, and because they offer solutions to questions that contemporary architecture is only beginning to ask about sustainability, carbon, and the relationship between a building and its ground.

The projects in this portfolio are realized spatial environments, immersive installations, exhibition architectures, and performance spaces designed through a process identical to competition practice: concept development, spatial narrative, material specification, team coordination, fabrication, and delivery under compressed timelines. They are architecture that chose cultural institutions as its venue.

Never Realm’s Interlude

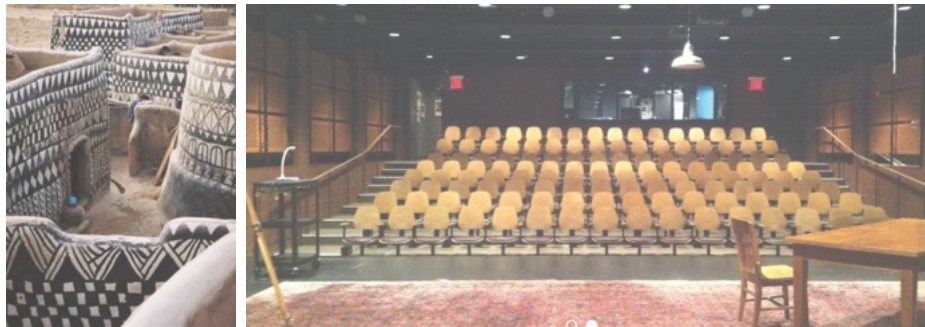
Immersive Spatial Environment | Playwrights Horizons, New York | 2024



Location	Playwrights Horizons, 416 W 42nd St, New York, NY
Year	2024
Scale	Multi-room immersive environment 4-day consecutive runs
Team	50 cross-disciplinary collaborators
Outcome	Consecutive sold-out runs Hundreds of attendees Critical recognition

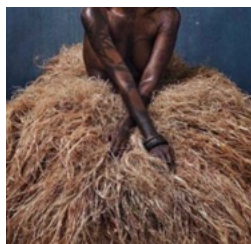
Concept

Never Realm's Interlude is the first theatrical work to fuse West African masquerade tradition with the horror genre but its spatial design operates as architecture. The environment was conceived as a sequence of interconnected thresholds, each defined by a shift in material, light, and sound that corresponds to a movement between cosmological realms in Nigerian Igbo tradition. The audience does not watch. They are held inside the space and moved through it.



Material Strategy

Natural raffia fiber, clay, cowrie shell, and reclaimed textile formed the primary material palette — chosen not for aesthetic effect but for structural and sensory logic. Raffia's tensile properties allowed large-scale suspended forms that responded to air movement and body heat. Clay provided grounding mass. Cowrie shell introduced acoustic micro-textures that shaped the sound environment at a granular level. Every material decision was a spatial decision.



RAFFIA FIBER

Tensile, responsive, ancestral structure



CLAY

Mass, grounding, earth memory



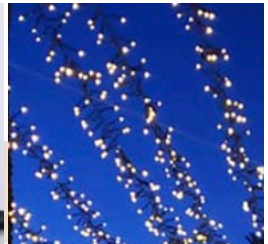
COWRIE SHELL

Acoustic texture, cultural signifier



RECLAIMED TEXTILE

Layered history, tactile warmth

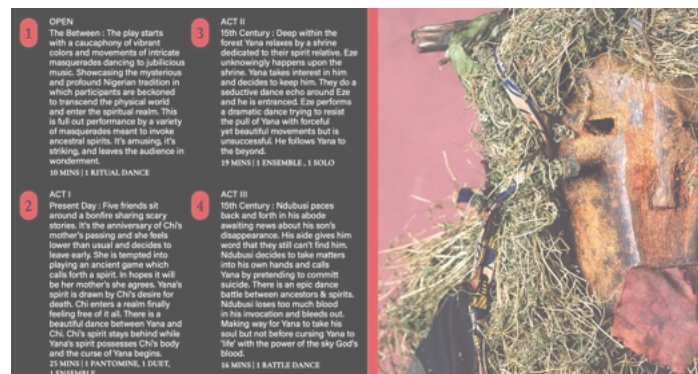


PROJECTION

Immaterial light, spatial depth

Design Process & Delivery

The project moved from concept to installation in a compressed timeline, following a process directly parallel to competition architecture: spatial narrative development, schematic spatial planning, material specification and sourcing, coordination with fabricators and technical consultants (AV, lighting, structural), production management across 50 collaborators, and on-site build-out and technical rehearsal. Design integrity was maintained under deadline pressure through clear documentation, daily coordination, and a structured creative hierarchy that allowed distributed decision-making without sacrificing conceptual coherence.

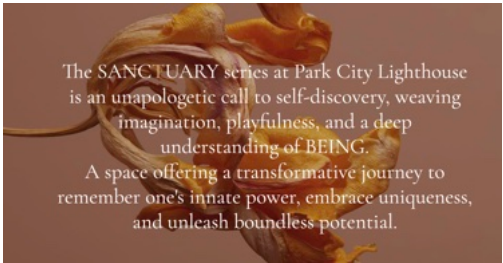


Process timeline: concept ~> spatial planning ~> material spec ~> fabrication ~> installation

Sanctuary

Immersive Installation | Sundance Film Festival | 2024





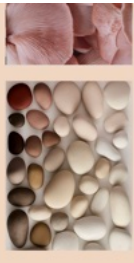
The SANCTUARY series at Park City Lighthouse is an unapologetic call to self-discovery, weaving imagination, playfulness, and a deep understanding of BEING.

A space offering a transformative journey to remember one's innate power, embrace uniqueness, and unleash boundless potential.



"There is no limit to what you, as women, can accomplish."

Michelle Obama



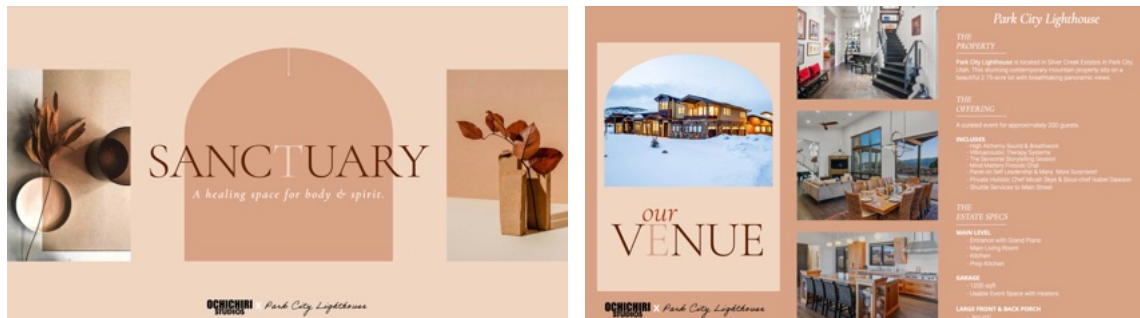
A COMMUNITY PROVIDING A NURTURING FOUNDATION TO EMBARK ON A HOLISTIC JOURNEY OF PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT. THIS UNIQUE SERIES EQUIPS INDIVIDUALS WITH A HEART-CENTERED APPROACH FOR BEAUTIFUL CONNECTIONS.

Location	Sundance Film Festival, Park City, Utah
Year	2024
Selection	Competitive juried process — selected among international submissions
Materials	Interactive, projection, body-responsive spatial design
Outcome	Exhibited at one of the world's most competitive cultural platforms

Concept

Sanctuary was designed as an architecture of refuge, a spatial environment that uses natural materials, projected light, and body-responsive design to create an immersive threshold between external noise and interior stillness. The installation explores what it means to construct safety through spatial means: enclosure without confinement, intimacy without claustrophobia, a room that responds to the body inside it.

The work was submitted through Sundance's competitive juried process and selected for exhibition among international submissions functioning, in effect, as a design competition. The proposal required a clear spatial concept, material strategy, technical feasibility plan, and written project narrative. The selection validates both the conceptual ambition and the demonstrated ability to articulate a spatial idea with the clarity and precision that competition juries demand.



Material & Spatial Logic

The installation integrates natural fiber construction with projection mapping to create an environment where material surface and immaterial light coexist as spatial elements of equal weight. The fiber and light structures provide physical enclosure, tactile warmth, and acoustic dampening. The projection provides depth, movement, and temporal rhythm. The design deliberately blurs the boundary between built and projected space asking the visitor to navigate an environment where the architecture itself seems to breathe.

This integration of material and immaterial is not a stylistic choice but a structural one, grounded in the Neuro-Cognitive Design framework's understanding of how the human visual and proprioceptive systems process spatial ambiguity. The body relaxes when material provides grounding. The mind opens when light suggests depth beyond the wall. Sanctuary is designed to hold both of these responses simultaneously.

REMEMBRANCE I

Multi-Dimensional Installation | 1-54 Contemporary African Art Fair, New York | 2024



Location	1-54 Contemporary African Art Fair, New York
Year	2024
Materials	Natural raffia fiber, matriarchal weaving armature, mixed media
Context	Premier international art fair for contemporary African art and its diaspora
Outcome	Fully booked commission slate Institutional and collector interest

Material as Architecture

REMEMBRANCE I is a work of material research expressed at architectural scale. The installation integrates natural raffia fibers and matriarchal weaving traditions into multi-dimensional portraiture that redefines the relationship between surface, structure, and cultural memory. The work is not a sculpture placed inside a room. It is a spatial intervention that reorganizes the room around itself — altering sight lines, acoustic properties, and the visitor's physical relationship to the gallery envelope.

The raffia fiber construction follows structural principles derived from Igbo weaving tradition, where tension, suspension, and layered accumulation create forms that are simultaneously lightweight and monumental. This is not a metaphor for architecture. It is a demonstration of the same material intelligence that informs low-carbon building practice: working with natural fiber's inherent structural properties rather than imposing form upon inert material.

Relevance to Competition Practice

REMEMBRANCE I is included in this portfolio because it represents the material research dimension of my spatial practice, the ongoing investigation into how ancestral building and weaving traditions can inform contemporary design at every scale. For a firm whose work is rooted in the conviction that material heritage is the foundation of future-facing architecture, this research is directly applicable to competition narratives that require both conceptual depth and material specificity.

The techniques developed in this body of work: natural fiber tensile construction, earth-based material systems, culturally situated material palettes which offer a distinctive and rigorous vocabulary for competition proposals addressing sustainability, cultural context, and low-carbon construction. They are not ornamental strategies. They are structural ones, grounded in centuries of material knowledge.



The Ancestral Circuit

Multi-Format Installation | Fraser Mansion, Washington D.C. | 2025

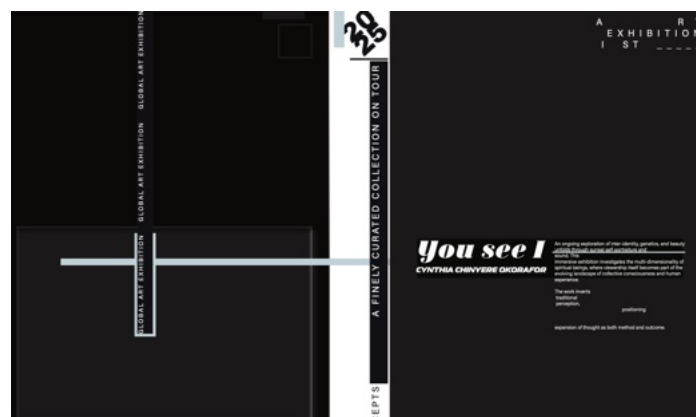
Site-responsive spatial intervention exploring material memory and ancestral construction within a historic architectural context. The work engages directly with the existing building's spatial character, inserting contemporary material interventions that reveal and amplify the latent cultural narratives embedded in the site.



You See I—

Solo Exhibition | Multiple Affiliated Galleries | 2026

Large-scale solo exhibition spanning spatial installation, textile structure, portraiture, and interactive media across gallery environments. The exhibition represents the most comprehensive presentation of the Neuro-Cognitive Design framework to date, translating research into immersive spatial experience at exhibition architecture scale.



Neuro-Cognitive Design

An Original Framework for Spatially and Materially Grounded Design

Neuro-Cognitive Design (N-C.D) is an original research framework that applies neuroscience to how humans experience constructed space. Published in Leonardo (MIT Press, 2026), N-C.D provides a rigorous methodology for designing environments that are cognitively resonant — spaces where material, proportion, light, and sound are specified based on how the human perceptual and proprioceptive systems process spatial information.

In competition practice, N-C.D offers a distinctive advantage: the ability to articulate not just what a space looks like but how it will feel to inhabit — grounding conceptual ambition in neuroscientific evidence for how the body experiences architecture. This is the kind of research-led design narrative that distinguishes winning competition entries from competent ones.

Selected Publications

- “The Quantum Architecture of Awareness: Modeling Identity Through Neuro-Cognitive Design, the Omni Quotient, and Quantum Portraiture” — Leonardo (MIT Press), 2026
 - “Neuro-Cognitive Design: Divergent Beauty Theory” — In process, 2026
 - “Sound as Synapse: Designing Emotional Feedback Systems in Immersive Art” — In process, 2026
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Awards & Residencies

Smithsonian Research Fellowship (Pending)

MacDowell Fellowship (Pending)

Artist-in-Residence, @HOME (2025)

Education

Parsons School of Design — Fashion Design (Spatial & Material Practice)

University of Maryland — B.S. Physiology & Neurobiology

Sotheby's Institute of Art — Art Business

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