



# ***Qawka-a***

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## Project's Idea

My project *Qawka-a* is an interactive sculpture that expresses my deep love for music. Music is the soul of my life and I listen to various genres of music in different languages. When I listen to music, my cochlea is at work transferring soothing sounds to my ears, while I try to figure out the instruments played.

Sketching a conch one evening, I thought from within and outside the box, and connected the conch's resonant sound to a cochlea. This laid the foundation for my musical sculpture and I named it *Qawka-a* which means both cochlea and conch in Arabic. I chose to investigate this topic of tangible musical artwork, so it interacts with the audience and lets visitors strum the *Qawka-a*.

As a creative artist, I aim to present a unique, symbolic and innovative sculpture that brings out my passion for music and art and translates it into an exclusive masterpiece. My 3D sculpture has spirals, and the spiral tops interconnect with a curved structure with strings passing through it. The overall concept of my project is to let visitors interact with my tangible musical sculpture by strumming the strings to produce music, feel cheerful and relaxed through the soothing sounds, and admire the beautiful sculpture.

## The Creativity Process

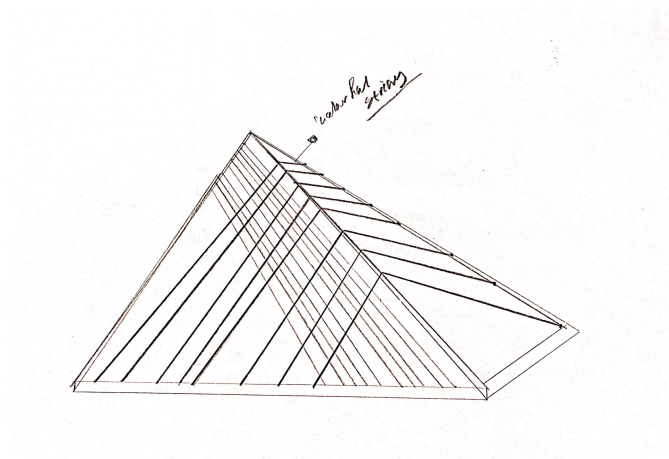
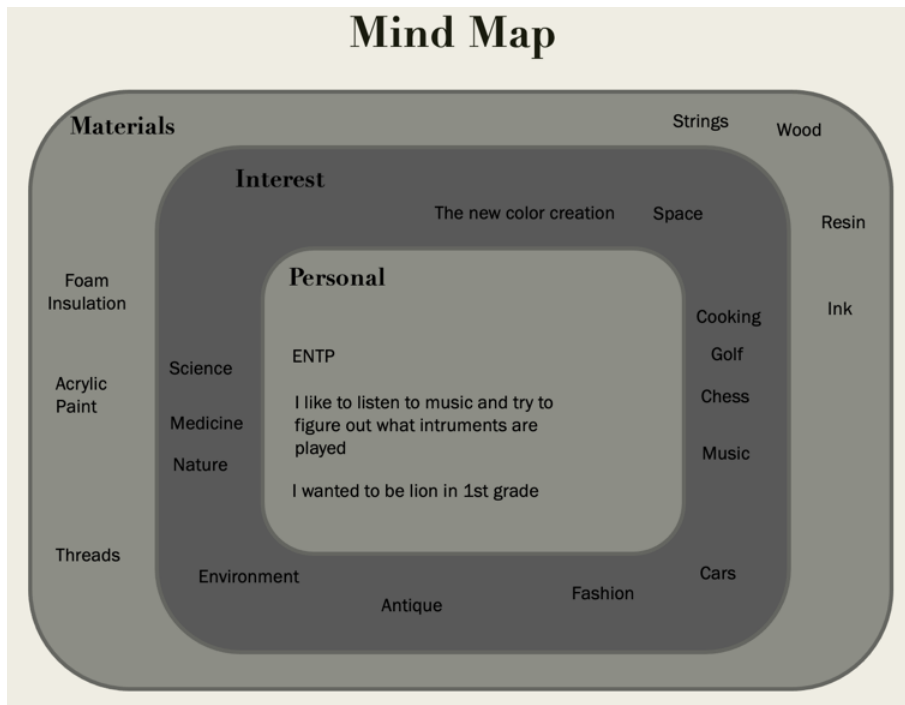
My research path was enjoyable, and I faced very few challenges. I started my research with the question of how I can connect music with art and create a unique masterpiece. I did some research to find answers to artists who have inculcated music into their artworks. I was fascinated to come across Barbara Hepworth's curved art sculptures and the one I found particularly eye-catching was *Oval Form with Strings and Color (1966)*. This is the inspiration for my musical sculpture.

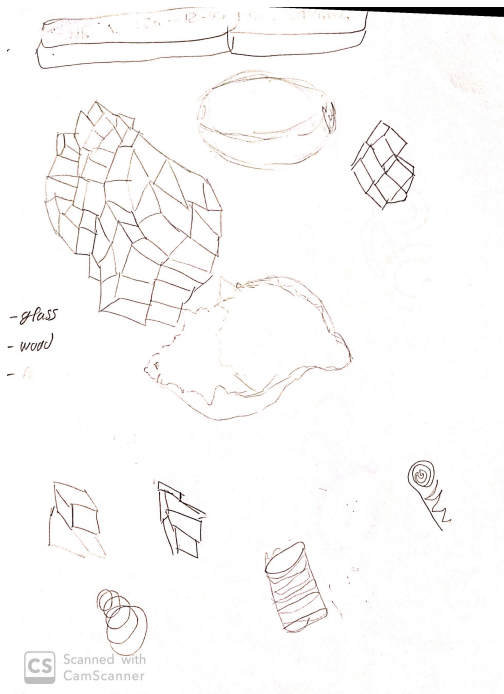
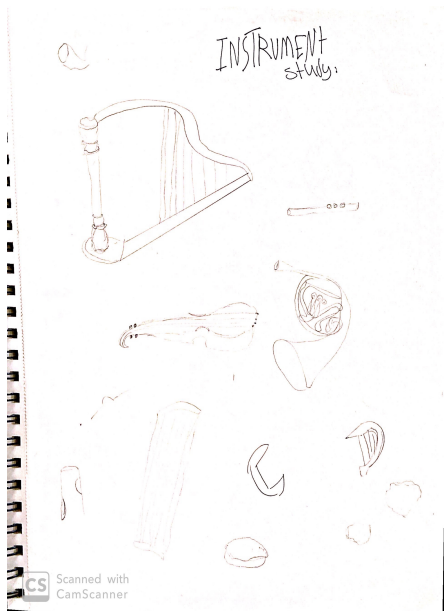


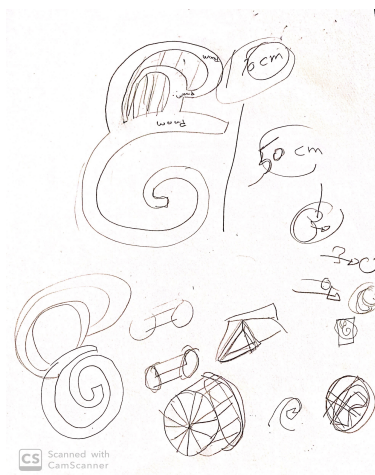
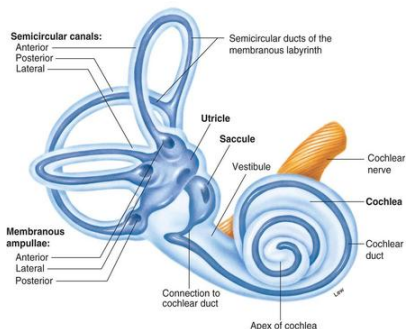
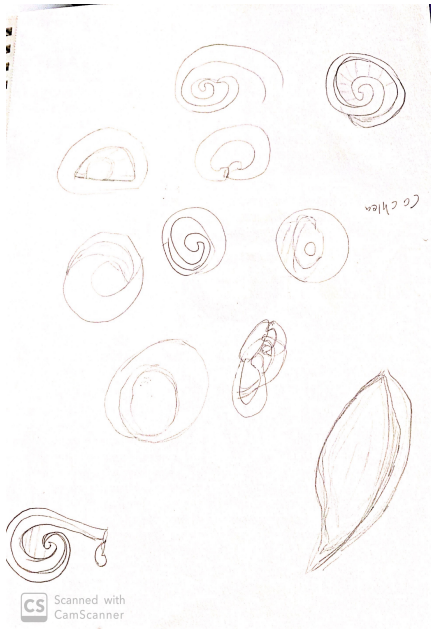
Regarding the difficulties faced, I struggled with creating an extraordinarily innovative tangible sculpture that also creates music, my deepest passion. At the beginning, it was very challenging to design a sculpture that looks exquisite and also produces music by interacting with it. I felt uncertain about its curved shape, functionality and whether the artwork would actually create soothing musical sounds. I was worried regarding how the spirals, strings and loops would look as a finished product. I was truly fascinated by the concept of integrating art with music, the two most treasured passions of life. What I loved the most was getting the golden opportunity to incorporate both my cherished interests of art and music into my senior project.

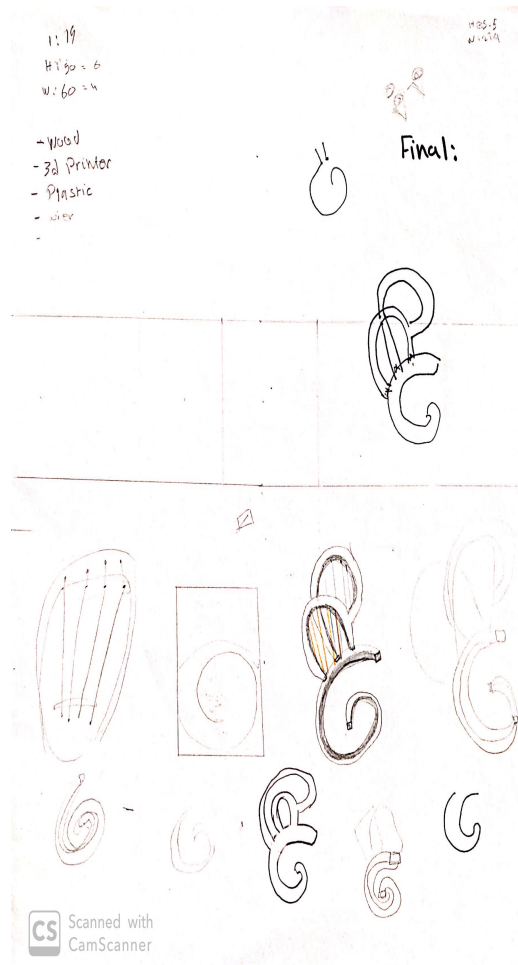
The original idea for my senior project was to create a 3D triangle (musical instrument) because I have played the triangle at school for National Day celebrations. Initially, the idea was to use wood to create the triangle, but then it became clear that the triangle may not make a musical sound and look extraordinary. So, I headed towards a new direction and thought of creating a musical instrument resembling a cochlea and relating it to my unique ability of analyzing sounds made by various types of musical instruments. I developed this idea further by researching

human physiology related to ear and the formation of sound. Walking through the university campus, I gazed at the drawing of a conch, connected it to the sound it makes and started sketching the conch called Kawka-a in Arabic which also means the cochlea. It suddenly hit upon me that I must create a musical instrument resembling a cochlea to interfuse my deep love for art and music. That was my Eureka moment!!!





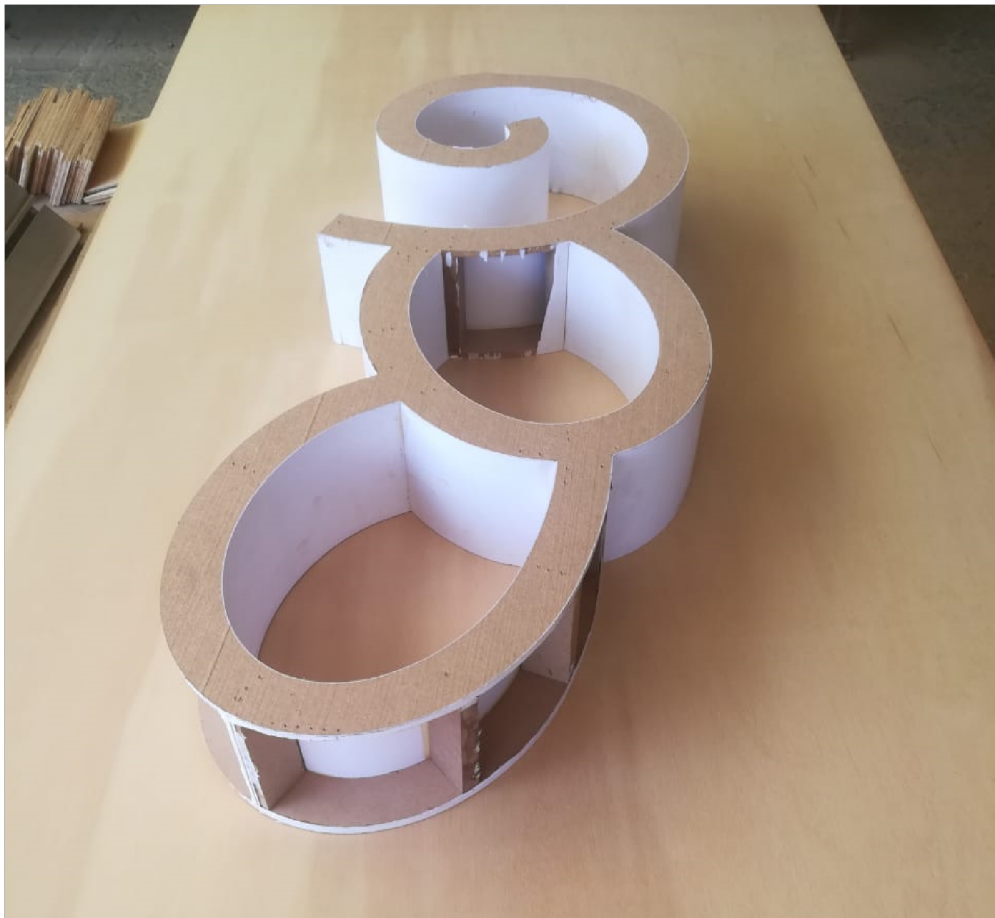




To represent the idea of cochlea, I created geometric shapes of conch and sketched its many different forms. To emphasize, I sketched several curves and loops, trying to create a unique design for my musical instrument. Based on the idea of looking closely at the cochlea during my consultations with my ENT, I developed drawing my musical instrument into spiral shapes like a cochlea.

## Technical Process

In terms of medium, I had already decided to use wood for my musical sculpture. I researched various kinds of woods, their unique colors and the most suitable one regarding durability, quality, aesthetics and price. I also focused on putting the strings in the right position so they make musical sounds like a guitar. Initially, I considered oakwood or mahogany but gave it up as the sculpture would become very heavy. So, I incorporated plywood to build the structure and included metal strings and plastic tuner. Inspired by Barbara Hepworth's artwork *Oval Form with Strings and Color* (1966), I developed my sculpture into a unique and innovative work of art.



To get the size





**Tracing**



**Jigsaw for cutting shape**



**Cut-out of the artwork**



**Router for hollowing out parts for weight reduction**



**Two sides of the cut-outs**



**Layers on top of each other**





**Trimmer for rounding the edges**



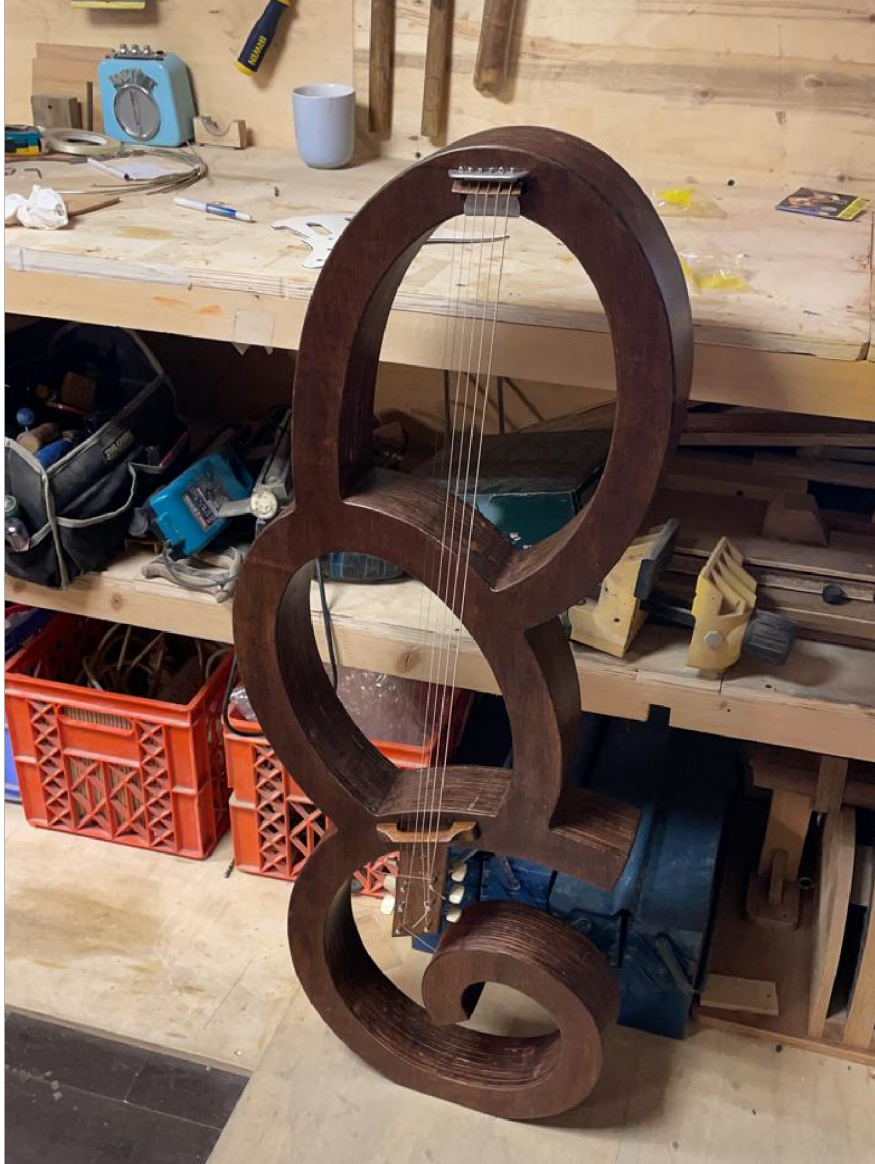
**Orbital sander for sanding the final piece**



**Choses Red Mahogany 225 painting stain.**









## Value of my Project

The value and importance of my project is symbolic and closely combines my profound love for art and music with fascination for human body functioning. I chose to explore this topic in my project as I believe it is important to integrate science, hobbies and passions into exquisite and exclusive art. The underlying message of my project is that art has no boundaries, and we can incorporate art in every fundamental element of life.

## Installation and exhibition

The installation requirements were simple, and the process was pretty quick. I had to take into consideration how to safely transport my musical sculpture and its pedestal. Through the exhibition, I wanted to create an immersive, interactive and tangible experience for the audience. I wanted my audience to engage with my musical sculpture and admire its exquisite beauty. I tried to create an exhibition space that would induce feelings of happiness, awe and elegant beauty. I have included two armchairs and a center table for my visitors to relax after walking around the exhibition halls. I also wanted to serve coffee and chocolates based on Arabic traditions of hospitality and warmth. Sadly, I was instructed not to serve anything, and I felt disappointed.

During my interactions with the viewers, I observed that all of them loved my musical sculpture. They also loved its unique and innovative shape. One visitor is a guitarist and he enjoyed playing on my musical instrument, *Kawka-a*. A few visitors were scared to touch it and they said they

did not want to damage such an attractive masterpiece. Some visitors asked why I did not have an enclosed area to showcase my artwork as they said it was looking lost and inconspicuous. Additionally, Professor Asma Belhamar commented that she loved my artwork and felt proud of me. Most importantly, the respected Dean, Dr Kevin Badni, liked my musical sculpture and tried strumming the strings.

## **Final Outcome**

I thoroughly enjoyed working on my musical sculpture and I am proud of myself for creating a unique, interactive, innovative and exquisite musical sculpture. Overall, this was a meaningful and rewarding experience as I gained valuable knowledge, skills and rich experiences related to art techniques and designs. I have developed step-by-step at various stages of the entire process and this project has motivated a budding artist like me. This project has challenged me as an artist to never ever give up and work hard to make my dreams come true.

During the presentation, I got some good feedback concerning my sculpture. The respected Dean, Dr Kevin Badni, appreciated my artwork and interacted with it. Additionally, Professor Mahdi Sabet said it is elegant and creative. He suggested to cover the artwork from the back for better sound. I explained that it is hollowed out for good sound quality, to which he replied, “excellent idea”. I got good views regarding the medium, the technique and innovative concept and shape. The feedback I received was definitely encouraging and positive. From the presentation, I learned how to discuss my ideas, gain confidence and accept constructive feedback.

If I were to do the project again, I would do a deeper research into attaching the strings to get a better sound outcome. I believe it would have been better if I'd used maple wood, rose wood or walnut wood.





To sum up, I thoroughly enjoyed every step of creating my unique and exquisite musical sculpture. I thank my professors, family and friends for supporting and encouraging me through various stages of my senior project.