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BEAUTIFUL THINGS • OCCIDENTAL FINE ARTS CENTER

Old things, made by real people

Our question for the whole trip: who made this,
and why does it look like that?



NOTICE AND WONDER

What do you notice?
What do you wonder?

A radio from 1933.

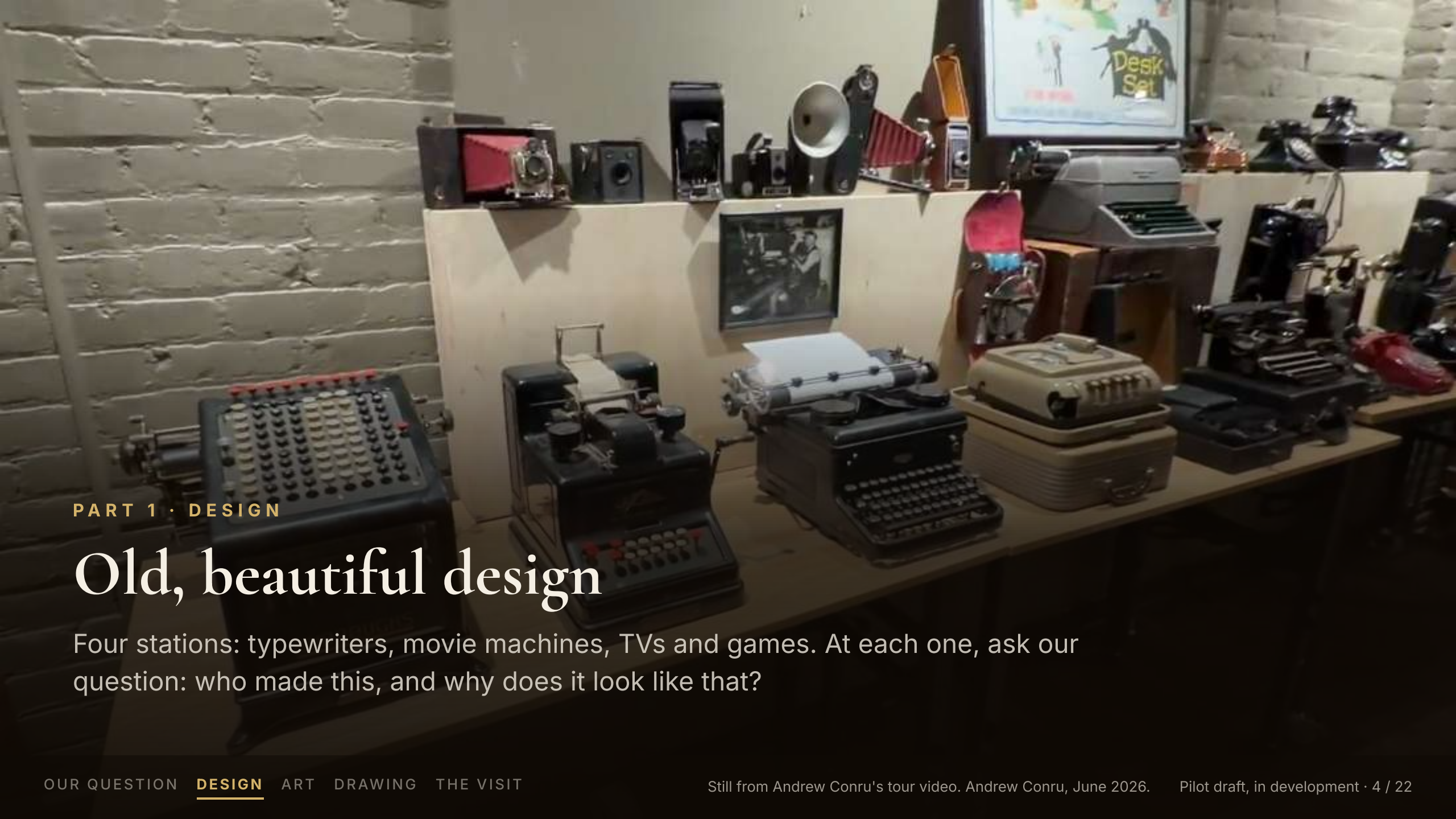
- 1 List five things you see.
- 2 What was it for, and who was it for?
- 3 Why would anyone shape a radio like this?



DESIGNED BY REAL PEOPLE

Designers are real people with names

Raymond Loewy designed that globe radio in 1933. Henry Dreyfuss's team designed this phone, the Western Electric Model 500, made from 1950 to 1984. Dreyfuss studied how people's hands and faces are shaped, so the phone would fit the people using it.

A museum display of vintage typewriters and office equipment. The display is arranged on a long wooden table against a white brick wall. On the table, there are several typewriters of different models and colors, including a large black one on the left, a smaller black one in the center, and a beige one on the right. Above the typewriters, on a shelf, are various other items like a red typewriter, a black typewriter, a small framed photo, and a sign that says "Desk Set".

PART 1 · DESIGN

Old, beautiful design

Four stations: typewriters, movie machines, TVs and games. At each one, ask our question: who made this, and why does it look like that?

Real object · Corona Four portable, 1926

Watch the clip · 1:34

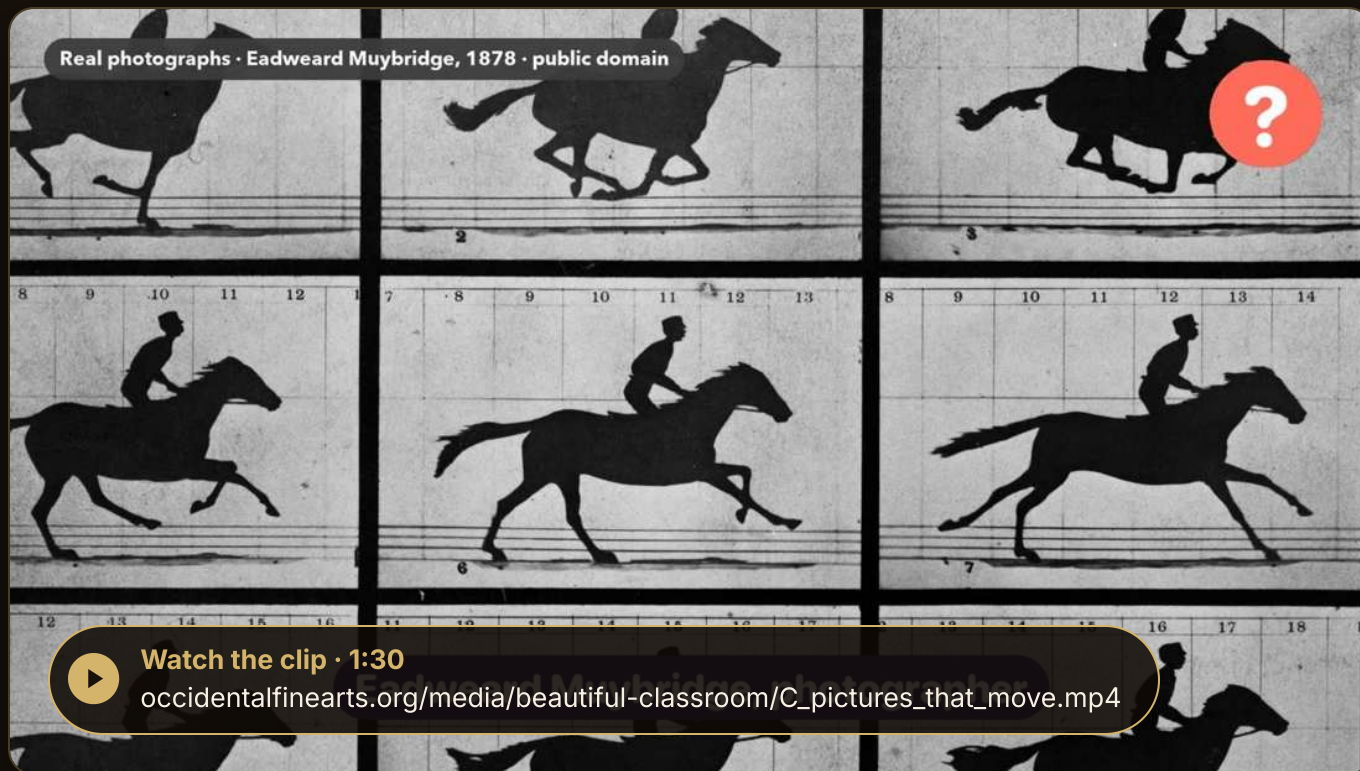
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STATION A · TYPEWRITERS

I Am a Typewriter

- 1 What did the designer add just to make it beautiful?
- 2 No delete key. How would you write differently?

Video · 1:34 · captions available (press Captions)



STATION B · MOVIE MACHINES

Pictures That Move

- 1 Why does a fast row of still pictures look like motion?
- 2 Muybridge's running horse, 1878: art, science, or both?

Video · 1:30 · captions available (press Captions)

Real object · Pilot TV in a wood cabinet, about 1948



STATION C · TVS

Why so pretty?

- 1 Wood, a round screen, a gold ring, Bakelite. Which clue convinces you most?
- 2 What do today's TVs try to look like?

Video · 1:28 · captions available (press Captions)



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Left: real object · Right: AI-made illustration

THEN & NOW



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STATION D · GAMES

Then and now

- 1 The Atari had very little memory.
How can a limit create a style?
- 2 Why make a plastic box look like wood?

Video · 1:18 · captions available (press Captions)

TRY IT NOW

Redesign it

- 1 Pick something on your table.
- 2 Who uses it, and what bugs them about it?
- 3 Sketch three quick redesigns.
- 4 Pick one. Label the choice that makes it beautiful as well as useful.



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PART 2 · ART

Paintings made by real people

A whole wall of cat and dog paintings. Before cameras, people who loved their pets asked painters to remember them.



THE AWWW WALL · FUR

A Red Rose, about 1880

Horatio Henry Couldery painted so many cats that people nicknamed him Kitten Couldery.

- 1 How does he make fur look soft with paint?
- 2 Why might someone in 1880 pay for a painting of cats?



THE AWWW WALL · LOOK SLOWLY

Cats, by Jules Leroy

Four kittens are making trouble.

- 1 Look for one full minute without talking.
- 2 Where does the painter make your eye go first? How?



THE AWWW WALL · A PAINTER'S TRICK

Girl with Dog, 1873

Gustave Walther painted a tiny dot of light in each of her eyes. It's called a catchlight, and it makes eyes look alive.

- 1 Cover the dot of light with your finger. What changes?

Real painting · Horatio Henry Couldery, A Red Rose, about 1880



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THE AWWW WALL · VIDEO

The AWWW Wall

- 1 What makes painted fur look soft?
- 2 Which painting do you want to see for real?

Video · 1:49 · captions available (press Captions)



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GUESS THE SARGENT

One original, two copies

Three versions of one portrait. One is by John Singer Sargent, and two are copies. Find three pieces of evidence before you vote. Does knowing which is the original change how much it's worth?

AI-made illustration

DRAW WHAT YOU SEE



PART 3 · DRAWING

Draw what you see

Artists draw what they see, not what they think something looks like.

Video · 1:26 · captions available (press Captions)



Watch the clip · 1:26

occidentalfinearts.org/media/beautiful-classroom/F_draw_what_you_see.mp4



STEP 1 · LOOK MORE THAN YOU DRAW

Follow the edges

- 1 Put your eyes on one edge of the typewriter.
- 2 Move your eyes slowly, and let your pencil follow.
- 3 Look at the paper only now and then.
- 4 Wobbly lines are fine.



STEP 2 · FIND THE BIG SHAPES

Squint

The details disappear and the big shapes are left. This 1949 Motorola is a box with a circle inside.

- 1 Draw the box, then the round screen, then the details.
- 2 Shade it: find the darkest dark and the lightest light.



STEP 3 · BACK DOWNSTAIRS

Draw a pet from a painting

- 1 A circle for the head, triangles for the ears.
- 2 An oval for the body.
- 3 Fur strokes that follow the way the fur grows.
- 4 A tiny dot of light in each eye. Sign it.

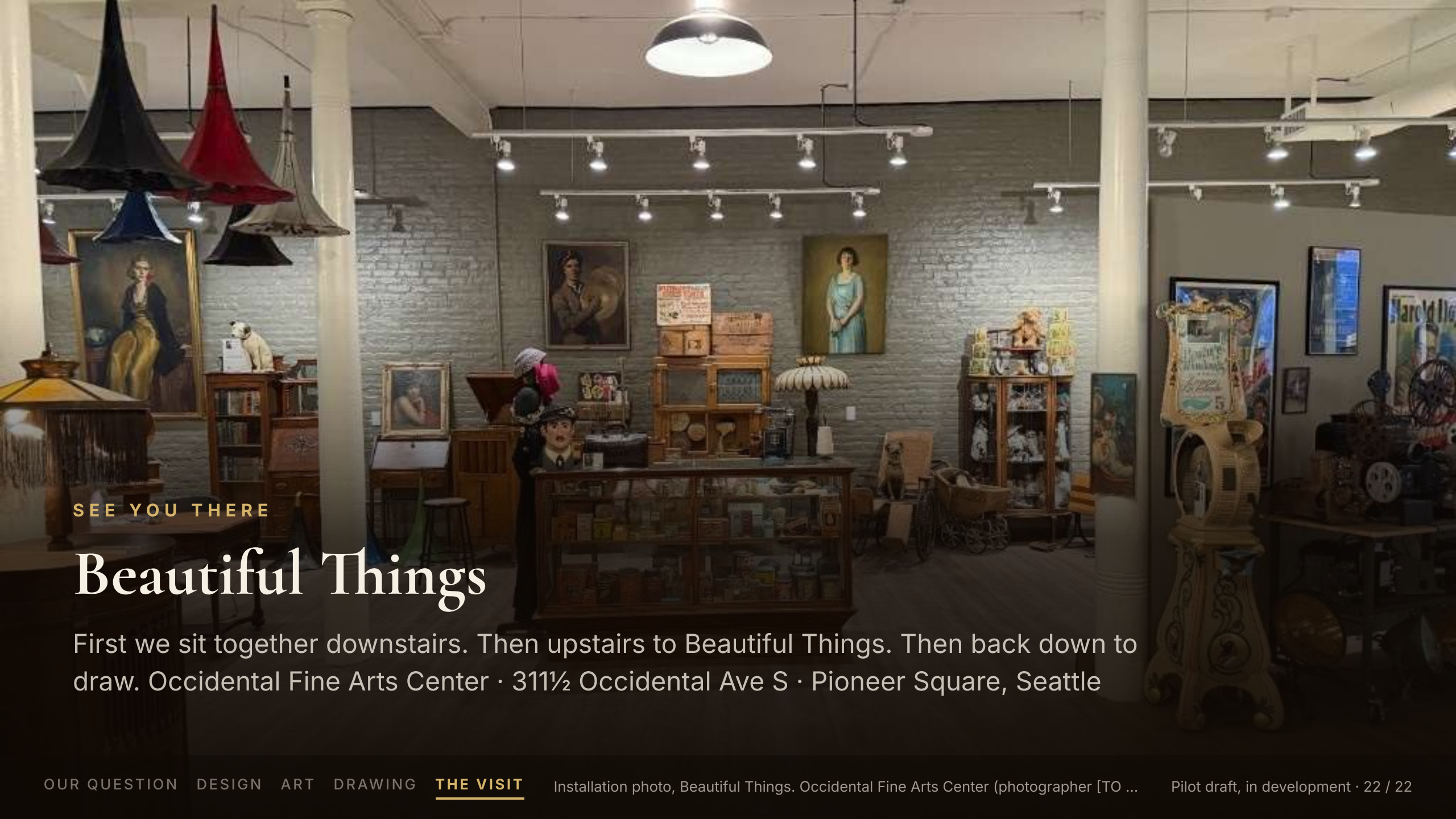
Three rules

- 1 Hands-on only where staff say. Type, crank, dial and play at the stations. Everywhere else: eyes close, hands off.
- 2 Walking feet, normal voices. Talking about what you see is the whole point.
- 3 Stay with your team. Your adult is your home base.

AFTER THE VISIT

Draw it from memory, then make it yours

- 1 From memory, draw one thing you saw at the gallery. Make it big.
- 2 Label one choice a real person made to make it beautiful.
- 3 Next to it, draw it again, redesigned for today and for someone you know.
- 4 Label the redesign: who it's for, what they need, and one idea you kept.



SEE YOU THERE

Beautiful Things

First we sit together downstairs. Then upstairs to Beautiful Things. Then back down to draw. Occidental Fine Arts Center · 311½ Occidental Ave S · Pioneer Square, Seattle