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micro-present

concept + performance.

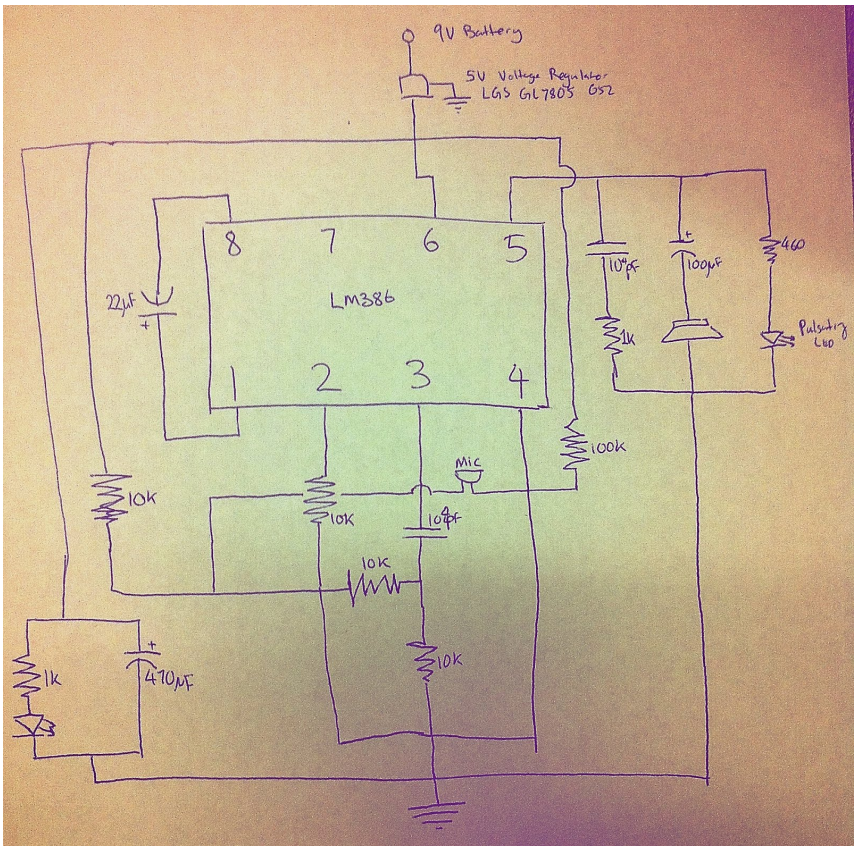
Objects command us. They dictate what we do and are designed with a narrow range of optimal functionalities in mind. Take the class room chair for example. That is a tool that has been re-purposed many times, used as forts, pedestals, and sat on in the most unintentional of ways. These gum magnets were designed for the studious student, but involve so many micro-interactions, from the moment the chair is moved, sat on, or departed from, it can be used as a percussive instrument - able to indicate boredom or applause, a coffee cup holder, a public community board of insignias, or quite simply - under it's intended use - for busily scribbling notes.

"micro-present" intends to bring forward the many subtle interactions in such an object of confinement. This is done through the simple act of amplifying the sound coming from the chair. The combination of such tracks form the rhythm of the unheard classroom. Its' form is integrated as part of the class-room chair environment, with a speaker enclosed in the mundane coffee cup (which also helps with amplification), and microphone encased in a mint container, which invites more attentive participants to play with it (along with free mints), whilst remaining a subtle augmentation of the classroom to others. The amplification of micro-interactions reveals a hidden performance of work and play that exists in all our daily experiences. With multiple modules, the cacophony of sounds can unveil a primal orchestra.

technical.

In approaching this project, I desired something modular, existing on its own (battery powered). I also wanted to see what could be done without the use of the freeduino. Though other components had been ordered, such as the breakout board for Electret Microphone (http://www.sparkfun.com/products/9964), late arrival (on the 2/22) lead me to proceed with a contact microphone for my microphone > speaker system.

Two schematics of reference were found in helping assemble the project a with contact mic: http://www.eprlabs.com/2011/10/5mic-amplifier/ , http://www.josepino.com/?mini_amplifier_lm386 . Neither seemed to really work on its own, mainly due to missing parts. Therefore, the schematics were adapted to make the project work and gradually improved to amplify a lot more sound, by experimentally placing components around randomly, if something worked, then the same technique was used again, or the the value of the component would be changed to see what would happen (e.g. value of 470 uf capacitor > volume, value of resistance in some areas > frequencies / noise). Through the creation process of this project, a feedback loop was established between what could be adjusted and the micro-interactions that could be heard so the final outcome was a system that had been tuned for the desk-chair environment.



(schematic)

(snap shot)