

Fire and Water

1-week “sketch problem” in
beginning design...30 years ago

John Reynolds, University of Oregon

Beginning design in those years was one term of 10 weeks.

Typically, several small scale design projects were given.

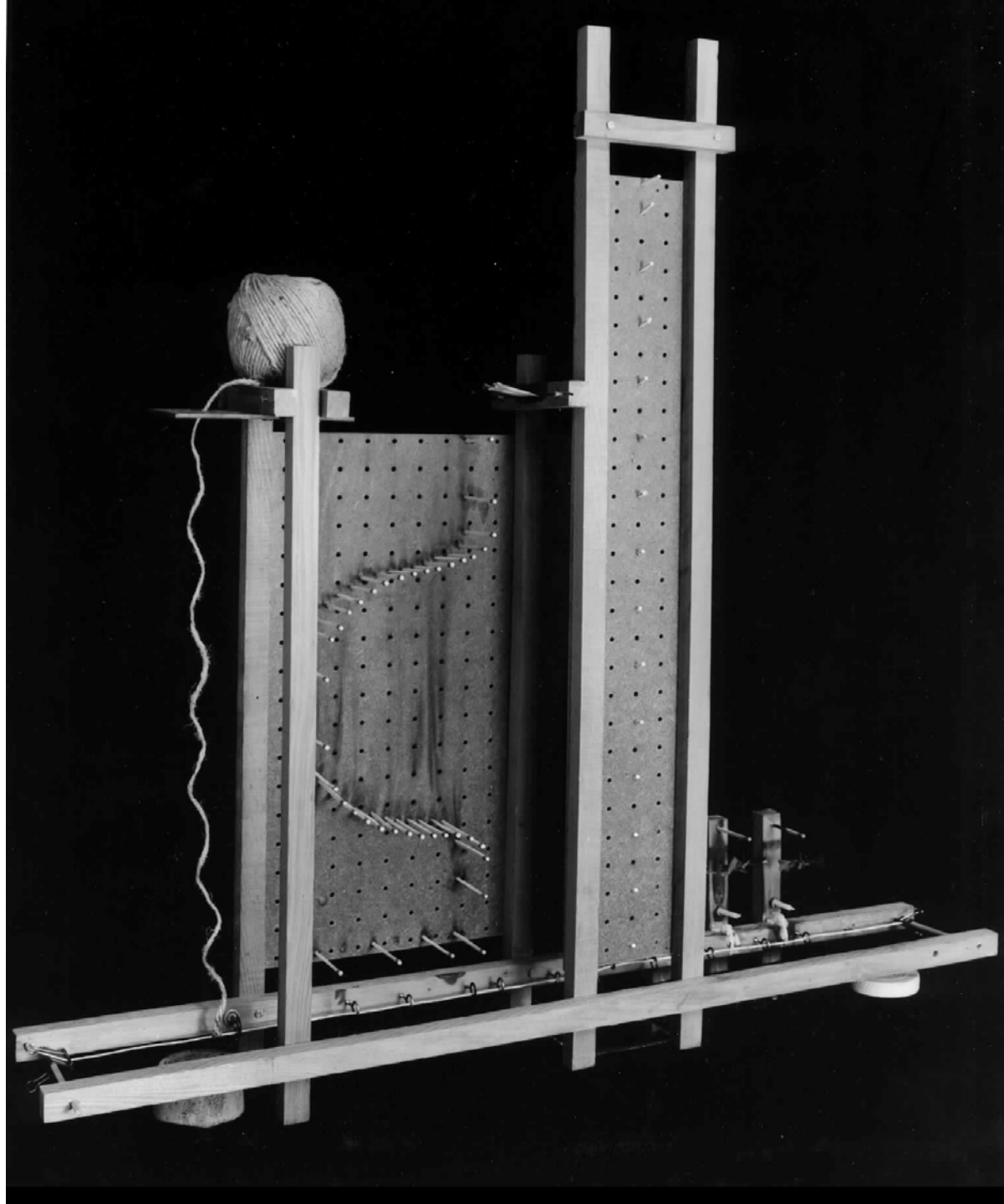
I wanted to encourage the beginning design students

- to reach beyond drawings,
- to explore both the third and the fourth dimensions,
- and to explore other senses [in addition to sight].

“To experience architecture as a performing art.”

The idea for fire and water as a design exploration began for me in 1967, in Prof. Gyorgy Kepes' seminar at MIT.

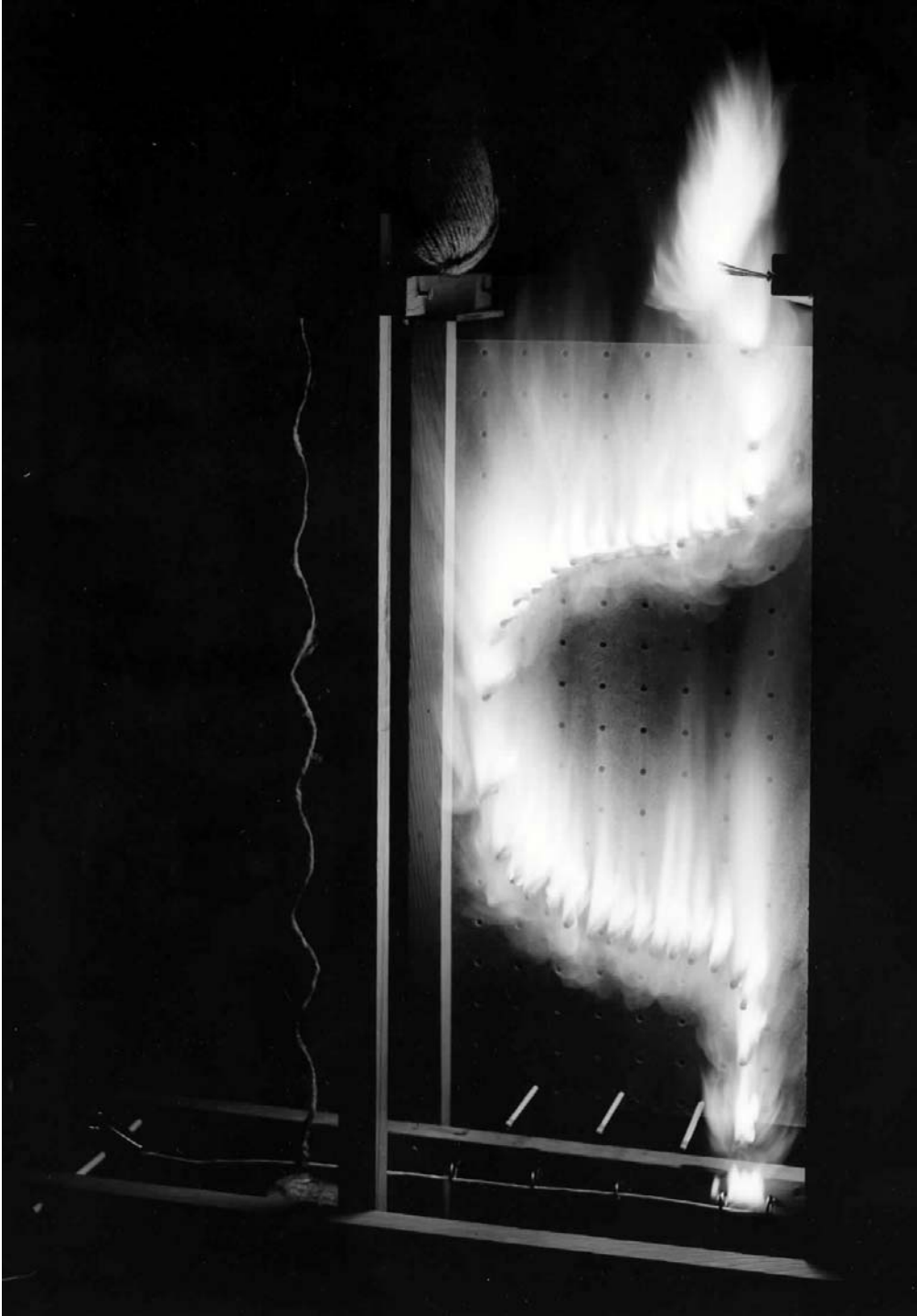
Prof. Kepes' topic was "sequence" and he challenged each seminar participant to design and present a sequence of our choosing.



The sequence began at the right end, burning slowly to the left



A parafin-soaked string was the wick. The fire almost died as it passed through each supporting brass eyelet. This encouraged the viewer to identify with the flame.



180

ARTS AND CRAFTS SECTION, SPRING 1973

STUDIES OF FIRE AND HEAT ON WATER AND MOISTURE....USE WITH

Two of the most widespread "services" we find in architecture are the two systems providing water and heat. As typically installed, the plumbing and heating systems are almost invisible, inviting minimum interaction between us (the users) and them (the systems).

Yet—two of the most fanciful and popular "features" of many buildings are fountains and fireplaces, where water and fire are displayed to eyes, skin, ears, and/or noses and tongues.

This is an opportunity to design with moving and changing elements of fire and/or water; the result should delight as many of our five (six?) senses as possible.

You can consider it a "toy", a "kinetic sculpture", an "event", an "appliance" ...whatever encourages you to be creative with fire and/or water.

Hint: whatever you can afford, transport and store and operate safely.

schedule: Assigned late Friday, April 18.

Monday, Wednesday: Planning, construction, rehearsals
Friday (April 25): Performances.

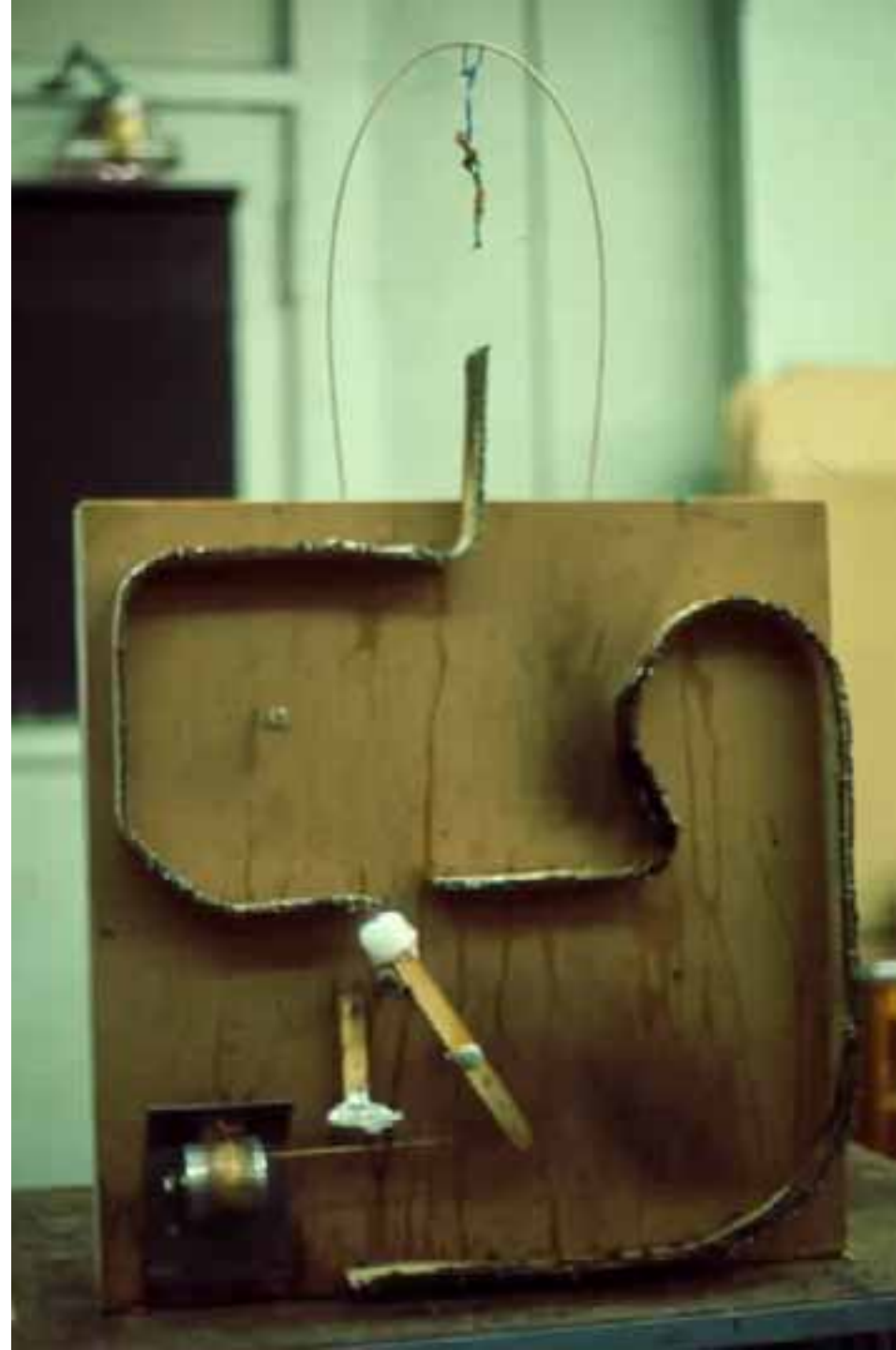
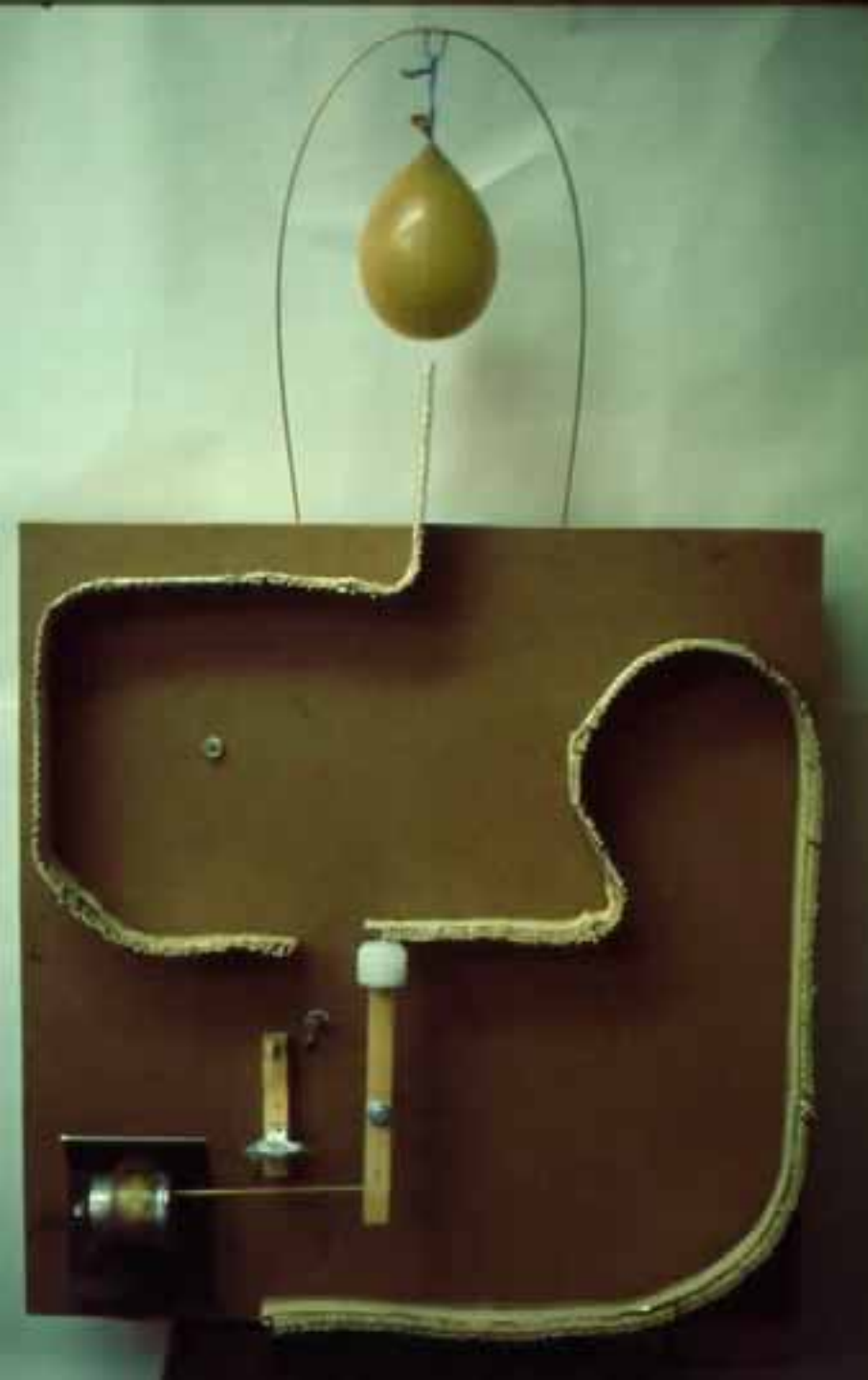
Spring 1975....
First time used in
beginning design.

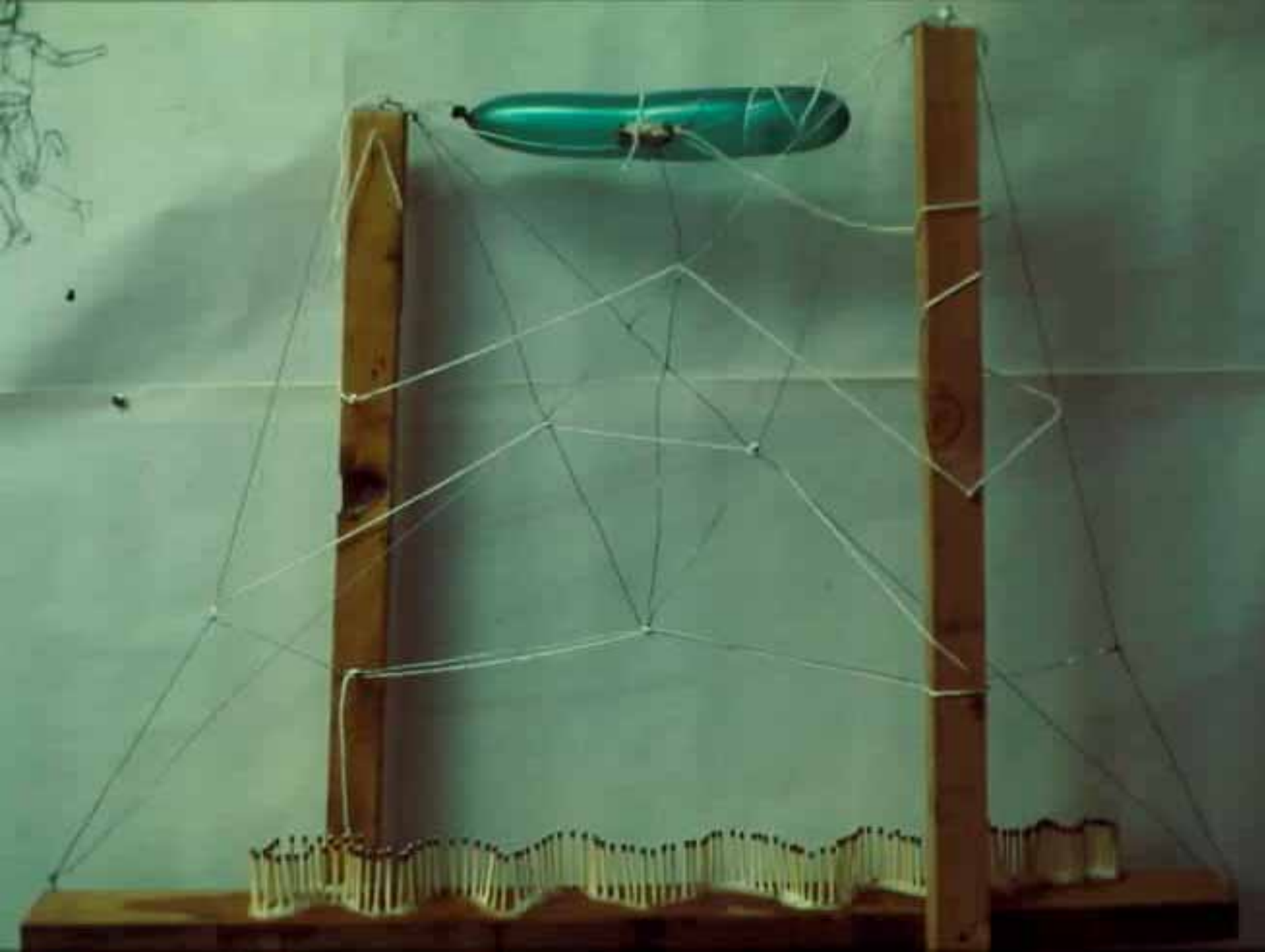
Spring 1979,
Used a second time.

“...consider it a toy, a kinetic sculpture, an event, an appliance, whatever encourages you to be creative...”

1979 Freshmen







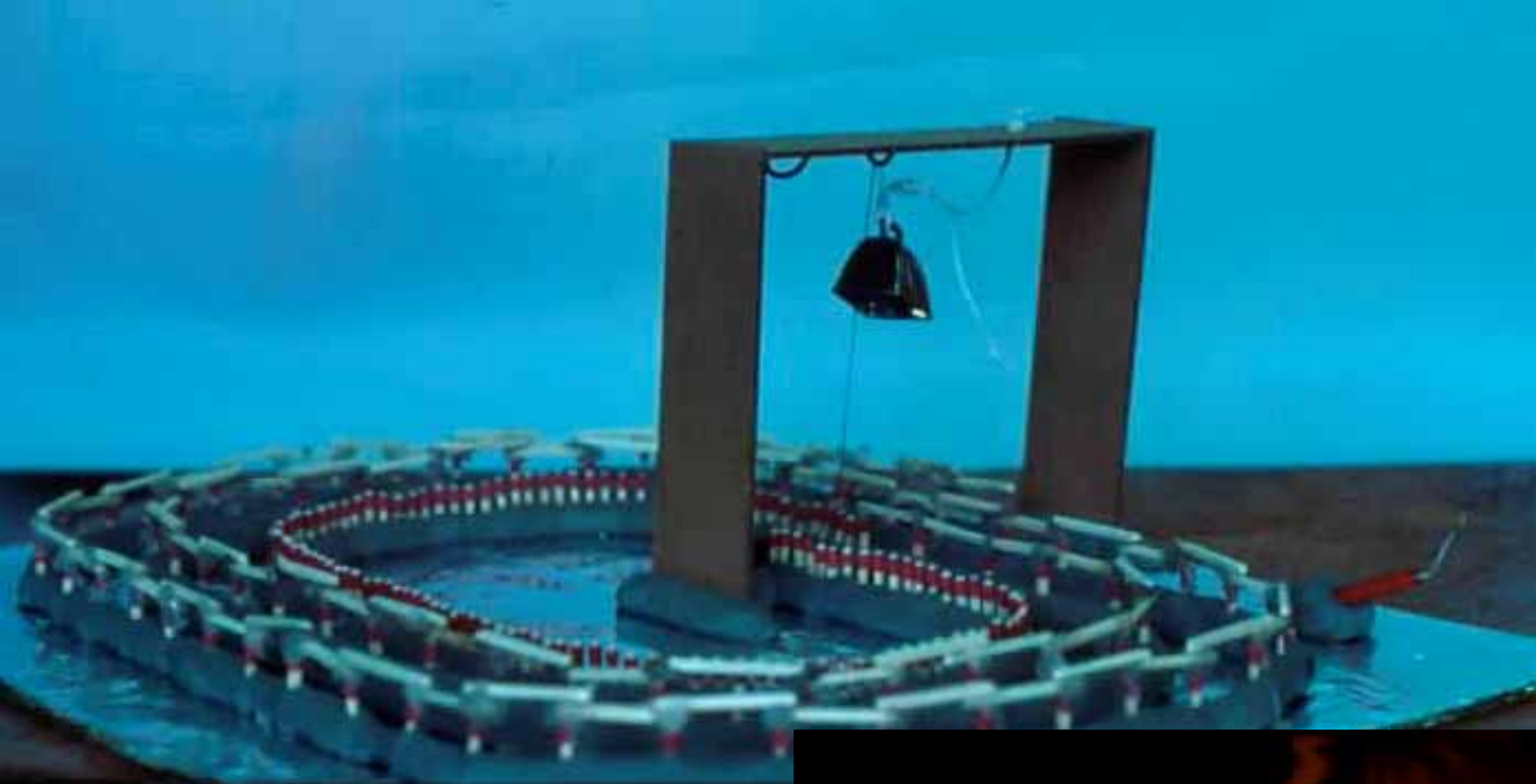


Water-filled balloons suspended over fire were a popular approach.

This one was called the “Hidden Assassin.”

Fire moved quickly up the ramp, but just before it reached the balloon.....

The fire burned through the thread, releasing a pin on a spring that prematurely popped the balloon, soaking everything.



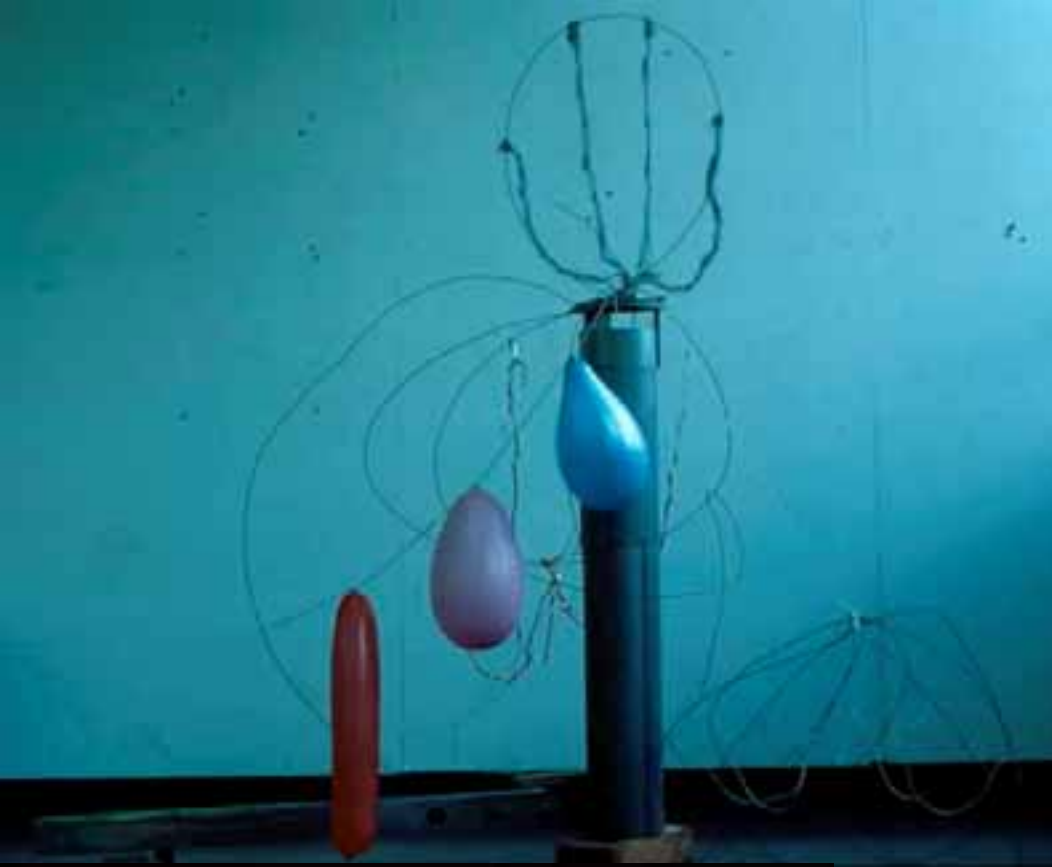
This approach went horizontal, and set up a race, perhaps in honor of Oregon track star Steve Prefontaine?



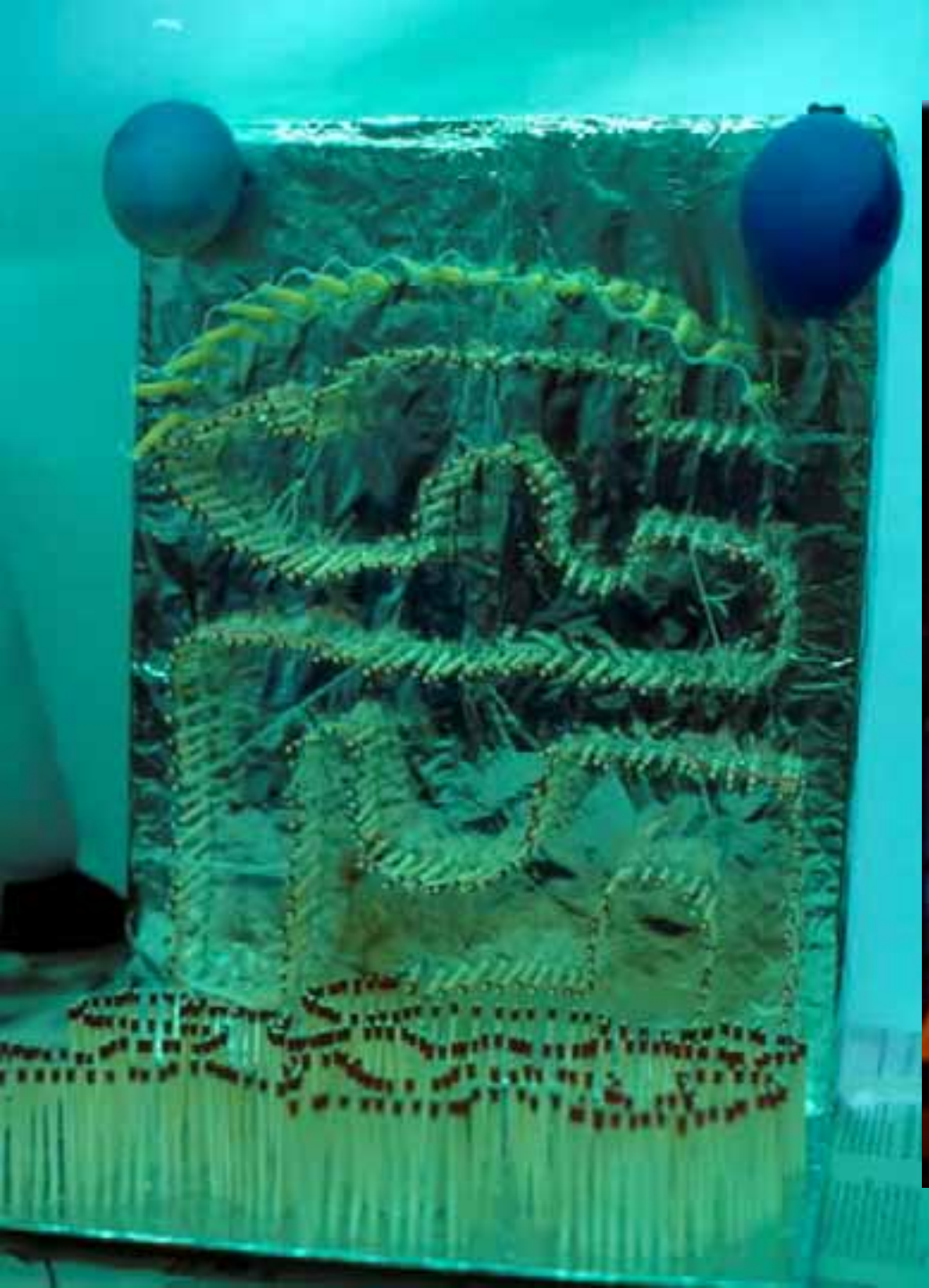


Exploding air-filled balloons provided acoustic excitement, [and annoyed adjacent classes].





Safety was, of course, an issue....



Tea-maker



Kool-Aid maker

A freshmen's fascination with beer







Two mystery solutions.....can you help predict the sequence?



The Beginning Design studios back then mixed architecture, interior architecture, and landscape majors.

Now principal in an Anchorage firm -----▼

▼----- Now principal in a large Portland firm, GBD

