



Top 8 Finalists

Venture Overviews

UP/Start Venture Competition 2023

Elana Wallach

'23 (Fiber BFA)

ORA



ORA is a multifunctional clothing brand that makes transforming garments & accessories. Our products can be flipped upside down, worn inside out, turned on their side, personalized, & worn dozens of ways. They're adjustable in size, length, modesty, formality, color, & functionality to accommodate changing bodies, tastes, & needs over time.

For the price of one, customers can create dozens of looks, silhouettes, and styles for any occasion. Most importantly, they're easy to understand, simply constructed, and have higher-than-average profit margins while remaining uniquely accessible to our customers.

The brand's name itself, based on the words "or a" emphasizes our concept even further: our products can be a bag or a belt, a pant or a dress, a short or a shirt. Because we offer such new and unique alternatives to harmful consumerist habits within the fashion industry, we have the potential to redefine how clothing is worn, designed, and understood in the retail market.

Ellis Edwards

'23 (Animation BFA)

e-Sprout



My business seeks to gamify the process of growing plants; so that children in urban communities develop a stronger bond with nature. It falls within two industries; interactive entertainment and agriculture.

One of the main products to be purchased from this venture is called e-Sprout, a portable device that contains the virtual persona of a physical plant. Think virtual pets, but instead of a pet it is an extremely expressive plant with a clear personality trait. Pairing the eSprout with the second main product, the plant collar (a device that senses soil moisture, temperature, etc) will help connect the physical plant's well being to its digital counterpart.

The link between the virtual and physical means that the amount of effort the child dedicates to playing with their plant pal will produce valuable resources for the child's future and by extension benefit the world as a whole.

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Kendra Bray

'23 (Business of Art & Design, Entrepreneurship MPS)

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Endless Dolls



Endless Dolls is a doll crafting supply brand that will offer a variety of doll heads & doll bodies with interchangeable parts made of a semi soft resin that can easily be drilled, painted, sanded, & modified by doll customizers & artists.

The doll bodies come in three basic shapes offered in Muscular, Slim, & Roundie. Each basic shape comes in 8 different sizes; Adult Breast, Adult Chest, Teen Breast, Teen Chest, Preteen Breast, Preteen Chest, Unisex Child A, & Unisex Child B.

Endless Dolls will also offer 51 different skin tones for each size & shape focusing on providing a variety of different brown & dark brown skin options typically not seen on the market.

Angela McQuillan

'22 (Business of Art & Design, Entrepreneurship MPS)

Chimera



Chimera is an online art gallery that offers high quality art that inspires audiences to become more informed and engaged with advances in science and technology.

Featuring talented artists experimenting with fresh ideas, we give people the opportunity to see the world from a new and exciting perspective. We offer unique, unprecedented artwork that explores impactful multidisciplinary exploration to propose a better future.

Our mission is to develop meaningful interactions between artists and community audiences through exhibitions, workshops, lectures, and experiences led by experts, with a focus on futures thinking and speculations about broader social, environmental and political issues. Chimera customers can come to the physical gallery space or to our website to view monthly art exhibitions and purchase art.

There are offerings for high-end customers who collect original art, as well as affordable options for customers who prefer to buy prints, books, and other merchandise.

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Laura Akromas

'23 (Business of Art & Design)

Darling City



Darling City is a maker of premium newborn toys uniquely themed to your city! Toy designer- Laura Akromas captures your cities food favorites into interactive soft toys aiming to bring loved ones and their cities together through play.

Food brings people together; you miss it when you move away. The idea started in Buffalo, NY, Laura sent Buffalo food essentials to loved ones. Motivated by the isolation brought about by the Covid pandemic, Laura designed and sent sewn Buffalo food creating an interactive soft book for her newborn nephew whom she could not meet.

"Think of Darling City's soft book as an ode to your city, these toys are an experience-not only engaging baby but giving you happiness and that nostalgic feeling."

Childhood development research influences textiles, colors, and designs used in each product. Laura also feels that exposing baby to different cities food and cultures early on will "teach love" hoping to shape the youngest generation to love no matter what.

Natalie Bates

'22 (Business of Art & Design, Entrepreneurship MPS)

Addison Baldrige

Baldrige Studio



Baldrige Studio is a sole proprietorship transitioning into an LLC, offering catered private music lessons to creative minds in the Baltimore-Metro area since August 2018 that is expanding to contract additional teachers to reach additional community members with the universal language of music.

Baldrige Studio offers a collaborative culture to inspire teaching artists to innovate their instructional posture from archaic music pedagogy traditions to focused, elite technical training. Our private lessons provide one-on-one teacher-student training to best equip students of all ages to achieve their musical goals.

We are dedicated to creating a welcoming atmosphere that equips students technically while challenging them creatively. We will achieve this by implementing personalized curriculums structured around each student's needs, professional goals, and preferred repertoire. We see that our teachers and students thrive in this environment as we expand our company and services.

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Natasha Fray

'22 (Business of Art & Design, Entrepreneurship MPS)

Nocrastination



There are about 10.5 million US adults who have been diagnosed with adult attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). There are many more adults who haven't been diagnosed who are also struggling to stay on top of their tasks.

The market is lacking productivity apps that cater to the specific needs of an adult with ADHD and I want to change that. "Nocrastination" will be a productivity app that will track habits, assist with daily organization and reminders, feature a Pomodoro timer, and allow the user to set time limits on apps for optimal focus.

For \$1.99 a month, you can avoid lost opportunities due to procrastination and get control over your life with the press of a button. The "Nocrastination" app will be your own personal assistant that will keep you on task.

Gabriel Chez

'22 (Interactive Arts BFA)

Chloe Azcuy

'24 (Interactive Arts BFA)

Matthew Grand

'24 (Graphic Design BFA)

Alex Rosales

oopsduck



"oopsduck" is a collective of artists, many of whom are queer & people of color, running a worker-owned creative studio. We are individuals who work under the same banner to better face the challenges of being freelancers, while also being able to fund, create, & publish our collective's larger multimedia projects & surrealist productions.

When we're not serving our clients with audiovisual needs, we use film & animation, music, & interaction to uncover truth in the extreme ends of the human experience.

Inspired by local worker cooperatives like Red Emmas, Baltimore Bicycle Works, Joe Squared, & other companies that support working people, oopsduck joins a larger movement to address wealth inequality by providing job & financial security in an equitable democratic workplace.

We also believe that responsible media culture has the power to transform people's values, creating real socio-political impact on an individual level that shapes communities & culture.

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