

“Scorpio Playscape”

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The Design Brief:

Scorpio Playscape

As a November baby, I am a Scorpio. But I came to my astrological sign somewhat late, since as an Asian, the twelve-year-cycle Chinese zodiac was more important to my family. When I became a teenager, though, my friends started talking about astrological signs. At first I wasn't very interested because I had a close friend who was also a Scorpio but quite different from me. But once I started looking into astrology a bit more, I realized that I am very much a November Scorpio (my friend, turns out, was an October Scorpio).

Scorpios are described as strong, enigmatic, independent, and sometimes secretive. This playscape is developed on both the physical characteristics of a scorpion and the personality needs of a Scorpio. The main slide, for instance, was inspired by the body movements of scorpions with their segmented backs. A scorpion is both rigid and flexible, creating a fun experience.

The shells for children to crawl under before the main slide create a safe space for the children. They are also fitted to meet the needs of a Scorpio, with the area of the scorpion's body inspired to allow children covered as well as exposed, hidden as well as secret spaces, of shadow and light, so that kids can play hide-and-seek or find a refuge for a brief tantrum in between play times.

The central scorpion piece is surrounded by a sandbox, a water dipping area, bench area for other family members as well as a cantilever swing. Scorpions like deserts and semi-arid places, and would be very happy in sand boxes. Sand boxes allow for both open and hidden play, allowing kids to hide away different toys or build sand-castles together with their friends. The solo cantilever swings on the side allow Scorpios and other children to find some alone play time as they wish.

Key Design Elements:

Scorpion scale slide: A key feature of scorpions are their hard back scales. From my earlier sketches, I envisioned the back scales being a crawling-under play area. After seeing how scorpions turn their bodies, I saw a resemblance in the way their body moves and a slide.

Areas for waterplay: The main area for waterplay includes an interval water fountain for children to chase around and be surprised. The secondary one in front of the bench area was made calmer for younger children to play safely under adult supervision.

Sand box: As a child, I really loved sand boxes because it's like playing on the beach but a smaller and easier accessed version of it. Additionally, after an outing to the beach, you need a full body shower because water mixed with sand is very hard to clean off. For that purpose, the toys are made with aluminum as it's easier to clean up and lighter for children to play with, making it safer as well. It would be encouraged for children who played in the water to refrain from jumping in the sandbox.

Cantilever swing: Usually, cantilever swings are thrilling and slightly unsafe as you could easily fall off of it. Even though the feeling of being on edge is part of the fun, to avoid unnecessary injuries, a horse head was added to the shape for a better grip.

My Design Process:



Playscape References:















