CREATE at Arizona Science Center includes the renovation of the former Phoenix Museum of History into a “maker space” environment that provides hands-on, STEM (Science Technology Engineering Math) and Art learning opportunities with a focus on K-12 education, colleges and universities, and local community. As a destination that supplements the interactive exhibits and learning programs of the Center, CREATE invites visitors to make, iterate, and build themselves. Organized around a central social commons to foster collaborative relationships, the space provides a series of flexible workspaces that can be adapted for a variety of individual, small team, or larger group projects. As a flexible space, three zones can also be set up to allow for several classes to engage design and “making” challenges as part of the educational programming of the facility. More specialized design resource areas open into the workspace environment and provide the opportunity for more focused and self-directed “making”. It is in these spaces that more sophisticated resources such as 3d-printing, robotics laser cutting, art, sewing, and wood working are made available to further challenge and foster a culture of creativity.

The design for the space, itself, reflects and inspires this culture of “making” by utilizing industrial materials – the same that can be found in the wood shop – and using them in inventive ways. In using this approach, simple materials like plywood are used to give the space a dynamic formal expression while respecting the project budget; the entire renovation was delivered for under $80/sf. This includes extensive demolition and re-construction to allow an open and accessible relationship to the existing lobby and re-definition the entry experience as a gesture inviting visitors from the public plaza beyond.