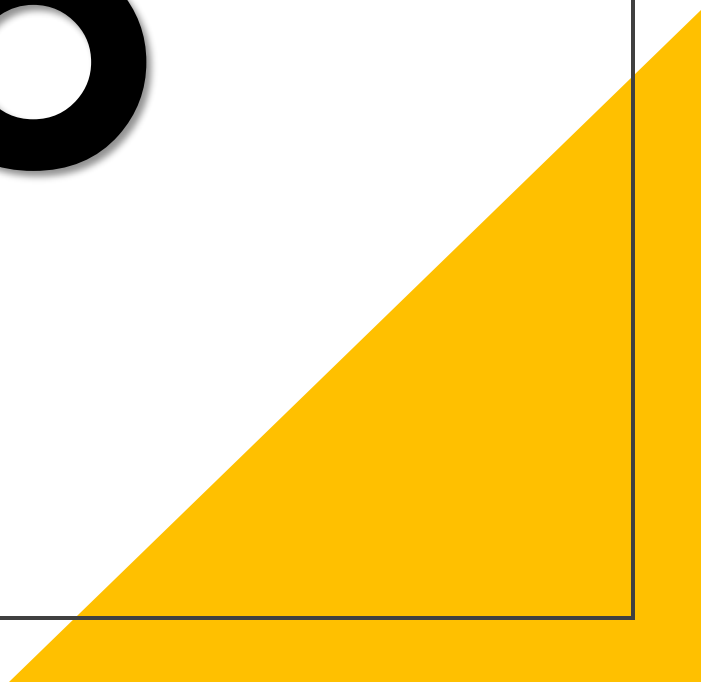
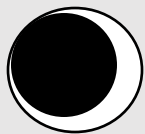


PROCESS

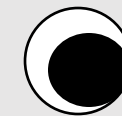
PORTFOLIO

By Sam Aguba IB Photo



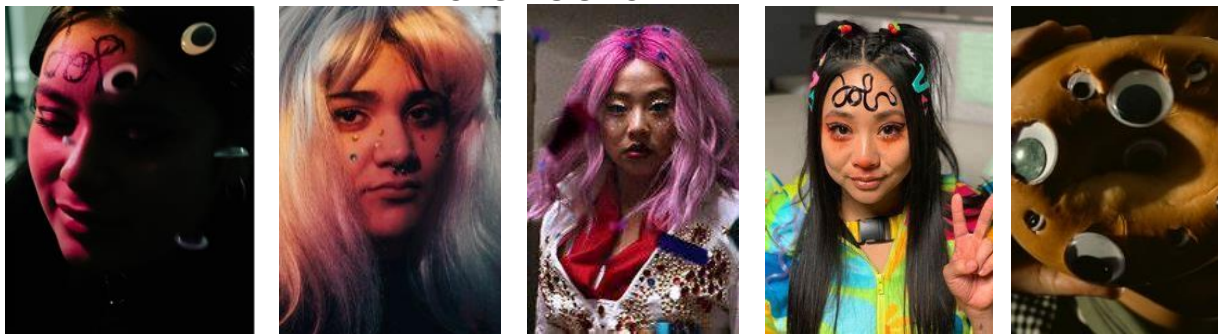


PHOTOGRAPHY SERIES PROJECT #1



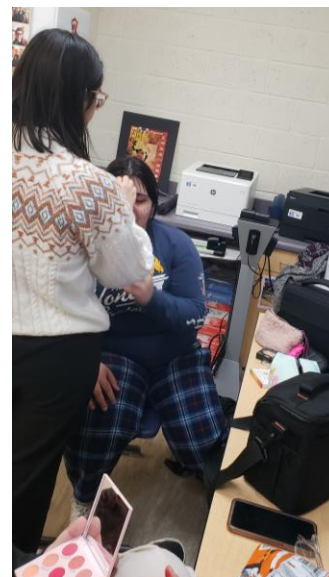
Across the Universe was my photo series collaboration with my good friend, Shayari. In this collection, we incorporated themes and visuals from the movie Everything Everywhere All at Once, a film that we both love and admire. While the pieces in this mainly consist of portraits, the makeup and lighting work was a combination of Shayari and I's personal touches. We hoped to capture feelings of isolation, satisfaction, anguish, and overwhelming emotion in these, things that made the movie the most memorable. In my share of the photos, I most wanted to up the surrealism factor and helped with directing clothing, angling, lighting, and props such as the simple but effective bagel.

INSPO LOOKS



We first started with figuring out which looks we wanted to capture. The costume and makeup from EEAEO is what greatly inspired us, so we took inspiration from Jobu Tupaki's iconic looks. Shayari did basically all the makeup work as she is more skilled with steady hands than I am. We had to figure out what days we'd have time to do our friends' makeup and the days we'd take photos. We would have to rush some days to get enough shots in while working on our own looks, so it was difficult. It was an accepted challenge, however, and we ended up having a lot of fun experimenting and trying out different angles for the finished shots especially. On the left are a few of the photos that made it to my exhibit, either taken or directed by me.

I really wanted to most practice with what I didn't do with my photos typically, which were portraits. This was a chance for me to figure out lighting and editing to get photos I wanted; I usually stray away from portraits because of that very reason, and because I just feel like it doesn't fit much with my style. When Shayari and I brainstormed on using a film we both liked as a theme and it happening to be a surrealist based one, I was a lot more confident because I could incorporate themes most familiar to me. I know a few people who are a lot better at capturing portraits than I ever could, and I really hoped to slightly emulate that through lighting and angles. My biggest challenge was time organization as I found myself confused on what days to shoot and what times to edit and group my photos together, as well as which ones to choose. I believe that in the end, I ended up with a nice group of photos that I ended up using for my exhibit. Editing and matting them saved my life. I most enjoyed the similar lighting that was used throughout the photos I took, as they are very similar to certain shots in the movie, and my main goal was capturing that.

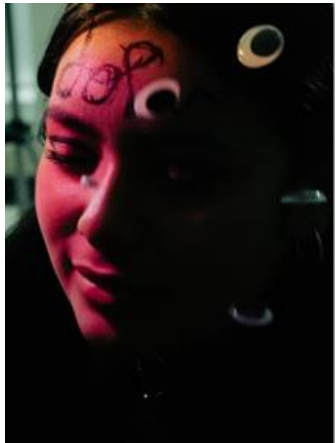


BEHIND THE SCENES

PHOTOGRAPHY SERIES CONNECTIONS



While it's hard to say for sure what I was able to analyze from the visuals during my first watch (I was too distracted by the message and the overload to care), I've watched *Everything Everywhere All At Once* many times more and have caught on a few things from the Daniels' cinematography. They utilized a lot of filters but most focused on the SFX aspect of the visuals. This ranged from shots through broken mirrors to symbolize the multiverse, CGI bagels, fast paced action scenes, and the quick flickering of multiple scenes into one. The cinematography is overall excellent, perhaps somewhat clouded by the emotional themes during the audience's first watch. Shayari and I wanted to expand on this further, utilizing lighting and embracing simplicity over the maximalist masterpiece that was EEAAO. This is why we produced photos that came with a little reference to the movie aside from the makeup that Shayari did; this came in the form of pairing blue Jobu to a googly eyed rock and stuffed bear Jobu to a whirlwind of googly eyes. The portraits by themselves were great, but we really wanted to go the extra mile with creating small but significant props to really add that layer of cinema. I helped brainstorm and direct a few of these, for example, the two shots here.

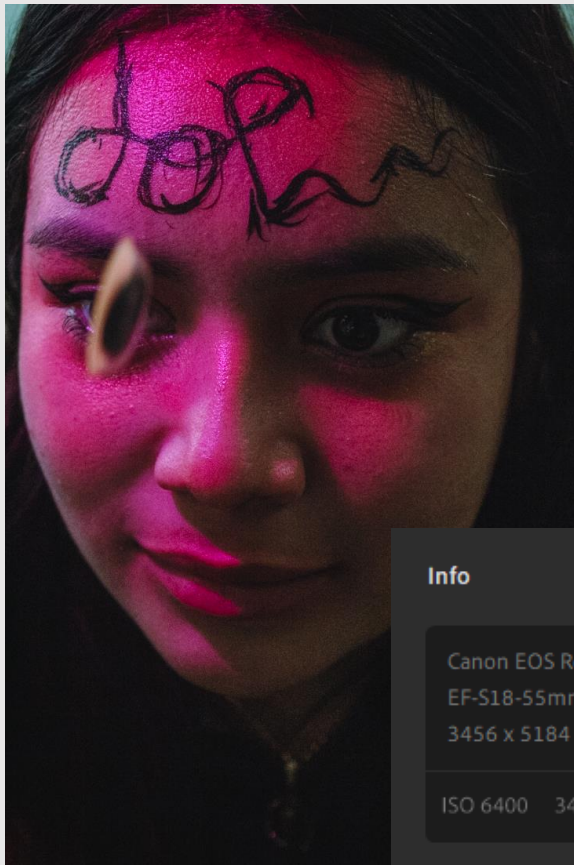


The two photos on the left are shots I'd like to go in depth with. The first one is of my friend Melissa; Shayari did her makeup to replicate the Jobu look above. We could not style her hair the exact same way it was styled in the movie, so we made use of some eyeliner then minimal makeup to finish the look. This is just one of the shortcuts we took with the minimal resources we had. Everything we had from the makeup, prop rocks, bagel, clothes, and wig were all fixed up by Shayari and me. We had to get creative with the outfits, specifically mine, as I was portraying one of the abstract Jobu forms. I had to improvise and chose out several layers of clothes that were all mismatched and overly colorful. The second photo to the left shows a portrait of my friend, Carol, holding one of the rock props I made on the spot. We had collected rocks before class, and I glued on some of my googly eyes to them. Rocks and eyes are one of the biggest figures of symbolism in EEAAO; they represent Joy and Evelyn, their heartfelt conversation, and how we could all be reduced to silly looking rocks in the grand scheme of things. I chose to pair Carol with the rock because I felt it represented some motherly motif; her cradling the rock that in the movie, represents Evelyn's daughter in one universe. Shayari and I chose this specific Jobu look for her because we greatly connect our friend with the calm tones of blue.



REFLECTION & FINAL THOUGHTS

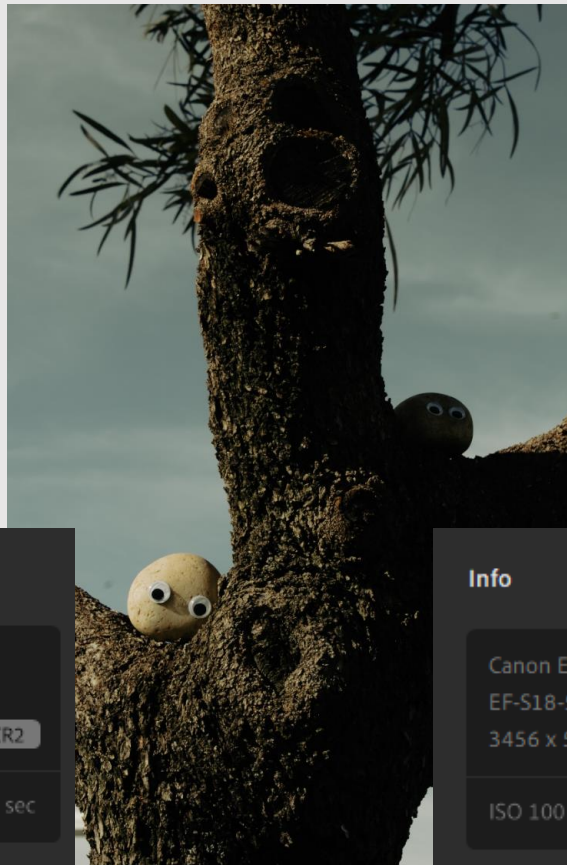
If it wasn't clear enough, Shayari and I were very heavily inspired by this film and wanted to portray some of its most iconic looks in our respective styles. EEAEO provides a story that can relate to us in some ways, so that is one of the reasons we chose it. Our direction for the photos were very loosely brainstormed and we were very free in choosing what we wanted to shoot. We really got the chance to get hands-on with angling, lighting, and even effects, one of the first times we got to curate such a big project between the two of us. I most enjoyed the process that went into this. Spending time with people I like being around and over one of my interests was what appealed to me the most. I also very much enjoyed connecting little props and details to the movie, things I felt would only make sense to either Shayari and I and those who enjoyed the movie as much as we did. We really went the extra mile with this one, using our own equipment (Shayari brought in her own lamp and I helped contribute with the props) and our own ideas. While our series was based off the entirety of a movie, it was one we resonated with and one we had the most inspiration from. Below are some shots I took in the process of our series; a couple of them did not make it into the exhibit, but I am extremely proud of how they turned out alongside the others.



Info

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EF-S18-55mm f/3.5-5.6 IS II
3456 x 5184 • 25.95 MB CR2

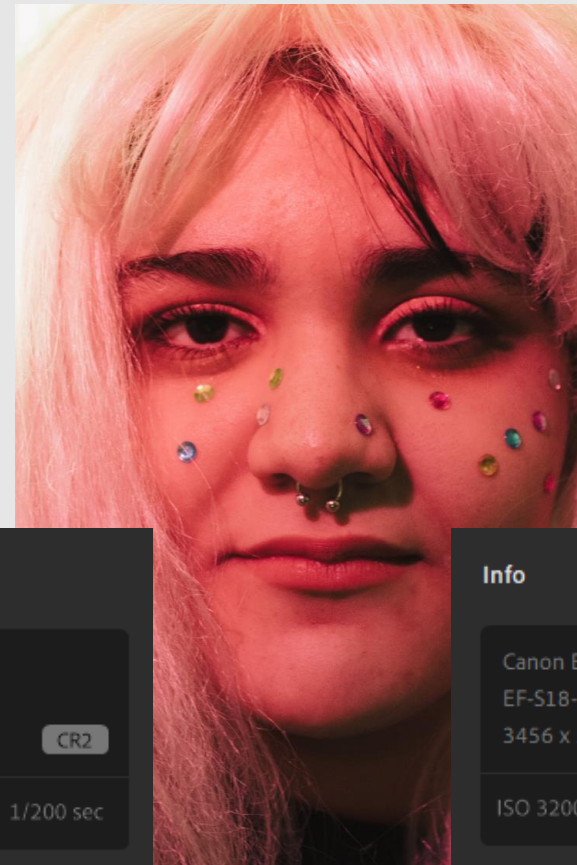
ISO 6400 34 mm f / 5.0 1/500 sec



Info

Canon EOS Rebel T6
EF-S18-55mm f/3.5-5.6 IS II
3456 x 5184 • 21.01 MB CR2

ISO 100 48 mm f / 16 1/200 sec



Info

Canon EOS Rebel T6
EF-S18-55mm f/3.5-5.6 IS II
3456 x 5184 • 27.28 MB CR2

ISO 3200 40 mm f / 5.0 1/50 sec



PHOTO *RE*-CREATION PROJECT #2



For my photo recreation, I chose a promo photo for my favorite movie, *Re-Animator*. The photo features Jeffrey Combs who plays Herbert West. I'm greatly inspired by media like that movie, so I chose it. I also really enjoyed the lighting and overall tone of the photo and wanted to capture that by myself. Herbert West is a personal favorite character of mine, which is another reason I chose it. The process was somewhat tedious as it was out of my comfort zone, but I came out with results I liked.

1. After choosing my photo, I went home to shoot. I had a Canon EOS camera and shot it in automatic and manual. I also had a tripod to help frame and position my photo.
2. For the set, I used a folding table and used my own props from my room. I just so happened to have bottles, tubes, and a microscope lying around, so I used that.
3. For my own appearance and matching myself up to Dr. West, I used my own costume of him. This included some black slacks, a white button up and black tie underneath a lab coat. I had bought a *Re-Animator* syringe prop too, so I used that for the main accessory.
4. My mom helped me in positioning the camera as I prepared myself behind the table. We shot it all in the living room and drew the blinds. I used a table lamp to imitate the source of light in the photo.
5. I tried my best to match up my facial expression to Herbert's, and I posed the same way he did, the best I could. For the headless Dr. Hill that stood behind Herbert in the photo, I changed into a black suit with a red tie. I took separate photos for that one with the help of my mom. She also helped me with taking photos of my side profile so I could edit it into the tray as the detached head.
6. In Photoshop, I first focused on getting the background of my main photo completely black like it was in the original. Afterwards, I edited the headless Dr. Hill into the back and darkened everything except for the prominent parts that was the tie region and the hands. I also cropped out the actual tray from the original photo and edited it in, then later cropped around my detached head to place it in the tray in a separate layer. For the final touches, I worked on the lighting on the face and around the tray especially, so as for it to not look too out of place. I also shaded around the head and used the dodge tool to make some areas lighter. At that point, I was done with what I wanted to get accomplished and ended up with my product.

I ended up really enjoying the entirety of this process despite the challenges I had to overcome with editing specifically. It was still a very fun project that I most liked because it included something I enjoyed, and I greatly wanted to replicate.

MY FINAL PRODUCT
COMPARED TO THE
ORIGINAL

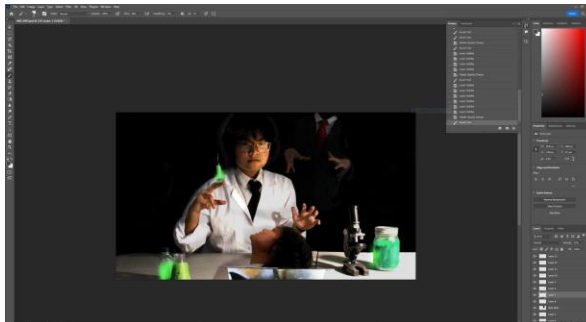
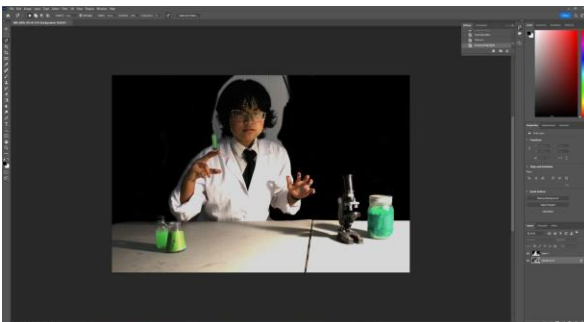


TECHNICAL PROCESS & REFLECTING

This photoshoot required a lot of experimentation to properly replicate the original image. Since this was a one-man operation with some help from my parents under my direction on the angling, etc. I had to figure things out solo. This came down to how I would copy the lighting, the special effects, and the editing. One of my first challenges was the lighting. I had trouble at home using different light sources like lamps to position the perfect light. I ended up touching up this lighting in Photoshop after shooting, which included using certain tools that would focus the cursor on my face only, since that is where most of the light is in the reference photo. My next challenge was editing the different photo layers together and the final edit revisions.

First off, I had no pitch-black backdrop to replicate the original; I ended up just painting over the background in Photoshop and adding shadows in certain areas, so it didn't look too awkward. I also had the issue of my hair blending in with said background, so I added white shadows, then green tint to emphasize the neon glow within the bottles and jars.

It was more of my own touch to slightly stray away from the original; I hoped to add my own flair. The severed head and looming body were one of the easier ones to shoot and edit. My mom helped me take those photos, the severed head being originally from a portrait of me, and my head tilted back, then the body in the background being a separate photo of me with my hands out. I ended up just clipping out the original photo's tray out and using it as an overlay for mine. I only had to erase some parts of the body photo and blend it in with the shadows, but otherwise, it wasn't much of an issue. I also added shadows on my coat and hands to emphasize the ones present in the original as much as possible. While I felt I was really trying hard to match my photo up to the original, I also really had my own creative freedom especially with the props and editing that I ended up enjoying having the pleasure to explore. I think this was one of my first projects where I had the chance to go beyond just media collages and portraits; I captured something I enjoyed creating, inspired from a media that I greatly enjoy and find plenty of inspiration for my other works from.



FINAL RESULTS

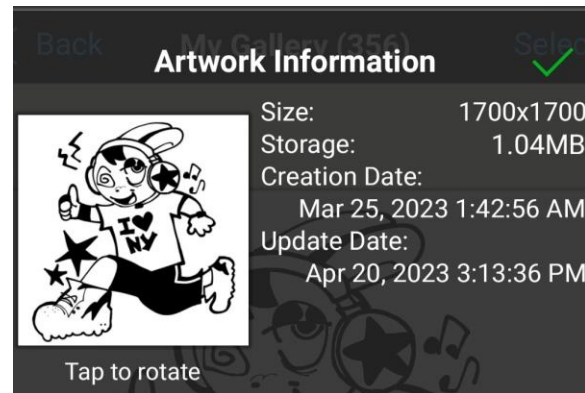
★ SCREENPRINT PROJECT #3

The screen-print project was the most interesting work I had the chance to do this semester. What really differentiates this one from my other works is the fact that it was drawn by me and later, transformed into a real 3D product. I had the inspiration to create a custom work based off a t-shirt I owned; an I LOVE NEW YORK tee.

The inspiration for other cosmetics the bunny wears are simply things I think look nice together.

I already have some experience with drawing anthropomorphic subjects and smaller details that come together to make one piece. I have a general idea of drawing simple art, so I was able to use a mashup of my brainstorming into one doodle. It eventually turned into this, with some cleanup of some lines beforehand. I started this randomly one night; I had the idea of making a cat initially but changed it to an animal that I deem slightly more underrated. I ended up with a bunny sporting cool kicks, a piece that I really enjoyed seeing turned into a physical product.

I didn't start with a sketch, nor a concept doodle. I went straight into making it on a whim early in the morning when inspiration struck. Below is the finished product as well as artwork information for the piece as I completed it on the mobile app Ibispaint X.



After finishing my design, I had it printed and reused the screen-printing process that I used earlier in the year for another assignment. I had help from Shayari in attaining a board meant for screen-printing; after a process of cleaning the prior art with bleach, we found the time to work on bringing our designs to life and fleshing them out to pieces such as stamped photocards and paper creations.

While a lot of the inspiration for this piece came from my own thoughts of what I thought would look the most visually pleasing with what, I also had some outside inspiration from graffiti art and bubbly art styles that inspired what I had in mind for my soft lined bunny.

PROCESS & REFLECTION



My first ideas for creating a screen-print came from my interest of making one earlier in the year. I had created a black screen-print based on a picture of The Ramones that I had gotten from online, and it served as my first experience to creating a screen-print. Shayari and I had initially planned on making matching screen-print stamps that we could use to create tote bags and shirts to sell at our exhibits. We settled on integrating them into our separate pieces that we would display at our exhibits instead.

After figuring out what we wanted to do with our designs, we set out to making them. I went a completely different route, creating a design that was separate from every other piece in my exhibit, but one that I thoroughly enjoyed. I thought of making something simple like a blocky cat head or a string of text, but I finally came up with the final idea early in the morning. I think I was really glued to the idea of creating a bunny with funky clothes, so I settled with that and prepared to create my art in IbisPaint X, which really didn't take too long.

Once I had the art downloaded and ready to print, Shayari and I faced the challenge of having a clean board we could screen the image into. Screen-print boards must be completely clear before transferring the image of choice onto it. Shayari did the honors of cleaning off a used board with bleach, and we immediately started working on it after Spring Break. After painting over the boards with the solution that would allow for the image transfer, we printed out our designs onto transparent sheets that we would set onto the screens and put under a light source. The heat and the light from the lamps we used leaked into the areas where our prints did not block, creating our final screen that we could use to ink our designs wherever we wanted.



The process was a lot easier than before because I had some experience in doing it. Effectively choosing a process for an art piece that I was familiar and comfortable with while still integrating something new is something I was very proud of. While the lack of new materials did create a challenge of the limited time I had with creating the final product, I successfully finished it in time and created several photo cards with stamps of my design that I had the chance to organize into one piece. To the left is what it turned out looking like in my exhibit. I had the idea of ripping one card up because I thought it'd be a good idea. I ended up liking the look of it and settled with a grungy and messy looking styled product. While the only difference was what I designed and how I chose to produce it style-wise, this project went smoother than I thought it would and left me with a satisfied impression of what I could do that is similar to it in the future; creating my own work and producing it into physical art as much as I please.

CONNECTIONS

The art I created for my screen-print project was loosely inspired by 90's graffiti illustrations and punk street art. While the clothing on the bunny is more reminiscent of an early 2000's cyberpunk style that I had in mind, the style of the art itself was inspired by my admiration for that bubbly style and art that popped. Below are a few examples of graffiti that I can connect to my final product as there was a source that I pulled my ideas for the style from.



Keith Haring street art; the dynamic pose of the bunny can be traced back to when I first saw his art and found it effectively fascinating. The two dashes I added to my design could also be interpreted as a reference to Haring's art, where he would emphasize movement with flowy lines and simplistic but bold positions.

Stray street art serves some inspiration for the art style of my bunny. The eyes of the baby in this art specifically is one example of where I got the idea for such a cartoonish look for my screen-print. The blocky lettering also provided some an idea for me when it came to designing the stylistic shoes and shirt with bold letters.



This piece is one I can connect greatly to my own design. From the black and white bunny with cartoonish limbs and bubbly lines, this is most representative of the graffiti that I was most inspired by.

MIXED MEDIA + TEXTURE ★★

Inspired by mixed media collages and other layouts, I really wanted to try incorporating my own art along with a scrapbook type theme. I found a few pieces upon searching up 'surrealist mixed media art,' and set out to make my own, settling on a sketchy doodle in my mind before I printed it onto paper. What inspired me most was the concept of using fabrics, bandages, and other textured scraps to build a visually pleasing piece. I was particularly inspired by using red fabric stitching, anatomical aspects, many other elements and sought out to create a work focused on the human body, utilizing whatever I could find in my room as supplies for the piece.



(only used black & grey)



I started with using various (free) nude references to sketch out the three bodies that appealed to me the most visually. After snipping around it, I used scraps of foil and clippings to put together a collage on a separate piece of paper, one that I'd use to place the body sketches on afterwards. I had the idea of using lined paper to doodle out other body parts, then used them as clippings to scatter them over the collage. I used my Alice in Chains *Jar of Flies* CD booklet to add varying grey/black shades to the piece so it wouldn't just be a combination of lined paper and glue. I used pastels to create a dirty, grainy effect seen partially in the corner.

A lot of this work had to do with my interest in wanting to practice anatomy as well as "filling in the space," and trying to get that maximalist feel. I haven't done many pieces away from Photoshop, so I utilized what I had in my room to end up with what I have now. My greatest challenge was getting creative with what I had and turning garbage into something that flowed alright on paper. Texture as well as surrealism was key, so I incorporated that as much as possible with the lace, stitching, googly eyes, and fly clippings. I believe I was able to convey what I wanted despite my minimal supplies and the small frame I worked within. While most of my materials were chosen on a whim, they created the effect I wanted.



PROGRESS WITHOUT
FINAL EDITS



SKETCHES



TRADITIONAL ART



I really wanted to utilize my drawing and coloring tools for a piece and settled on using my pastels and charcoal. I made a few concept sketches that turned out to be scribbles until I used a bigger portrait board to draw the final product on.

I really wanted to utilize my drawing and coloring tools for a piece and settled on using my pastels and charcoal. I made a few concept sketches that turned out to be scribbles until I used a bigger portrait board to draw the final product on. I originally wanted to make a darker toned piece but wanted to try my hand out at something with a lighter palette. My subject of choice was Riddler from The Batman (2022), accompanied by some cutout bats. I used both a mix of regular crayons and pastels then black charcoal for the line art. I got a lot of inspiration after randomly being reminded that the movie existed. I have made a few traditional pieces of him before, but never anything fully fleshed out, so I wanted to try.

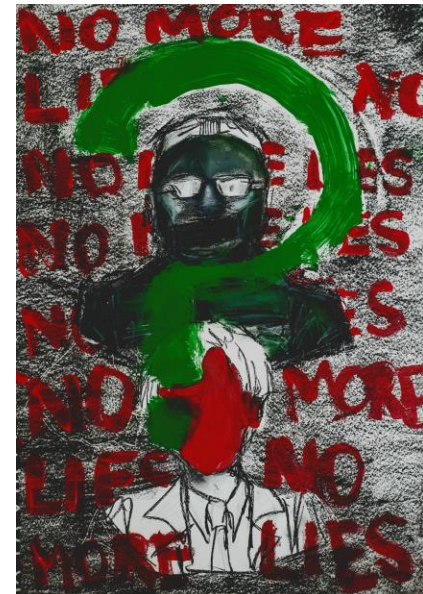
The process took around two to three hours with all my concentration focused on it.

I referred to my old Riddler piece and proceeded to try something with a different lighting and combination of colors. I used a white colored pencil to highlight and exaggerate the lighting as well, specifically in the areas near the mask and on his arm. I used a mixture of yellows and greens seeing as they complement each other well and the pastels blended better than basic crayons.

I'd like to branch out to making more finished pieces such as this. I've only ever made doodles and unplanned pieces especially with my actual art tools, so this was a chance at both practicing and putting what skills I had prior to use. I think I like the coloring of the piece the most, especially the texture that I incorporated; the vague but noticeable lines littered down his coat and in other places were all thanks to a colored pencil that happened to dig into the clumps of pastels. I was *loosely* inspired by Van Gogh with the incorporation of these lines in the coloring, specifically by "Starry Night" that heavily emphasizes flowy lines.



Van Gogh's "Starry Night" and my old Riddler piece.



BLOCKPRINT

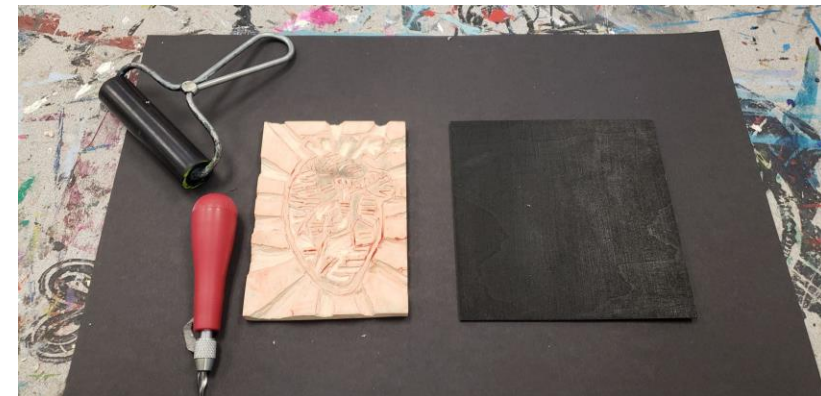
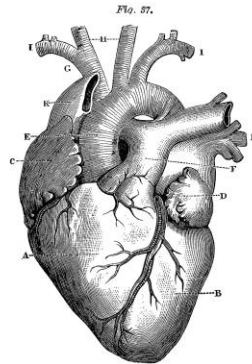
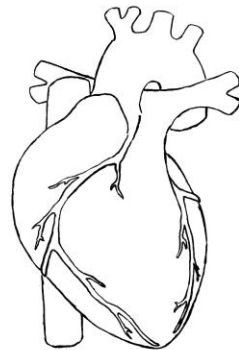
Block printing was one of my favorite processes. We were prompted to choose a photo to transfer onto a carving block that we'd later ink and use as prints later. I really wanted to have a cool, messy looking human heart as my print of choice, so I chose a photo that I later greatly altered to fit my style and skill level. I didn't really do any concept sketches or plan out what I wanted to carve into the block; I just kind of went for it. I really wanted an edgy, solid red print, hence why I chose a bloody heart as my choice.

After choosing my design of choice, I immediately went to carving. I just settled with looking at a variety of anatomical human hearts online and decided I'd wing the rest. It's mostly a reference to old medical journals that had those gritty sketches of human hearts. I began to realize the struggle I'd have with figuring out where veins and lines would be as the design I chose was very heavy on the textured look. I had to start pretending to know where certain lines started and where others stopped. I ended up just going with the general shape of the heart and major arteries to get my design across. I did try very hard to emphasize certain lines to make it look as close to my vision as possible.

After carving with a variety of tools, I chose a simple red ink and used it to coat the block before stamping it onto a wood canvas that I painted black beforehand. I managed to get the entire print on the board and filled in some spots with extra red ink using a paintbrush. My real aim with this project and my choice of design was to get an intricate but simple looking design and to achieve a grimy, textured look.

The only real struggle I had was with carving, but otherwise, eyeballing it and pretending to know where certain lines went saved me real suffering. I know I was able to achieve the look I wanted because I was very proud of the outcome and the bold reds on the stark black; I was also just generally proud of how the carving job came out.

I believe the process I enjoyed the most in this project was getting to see the stamp in its final form. I enjoyed painting over places that needed the touch-up, and I also liked getting more hands-on instead of using the computer for something for once. Below are examples of what I looked at on the site I pulled the anatomical hearts from.

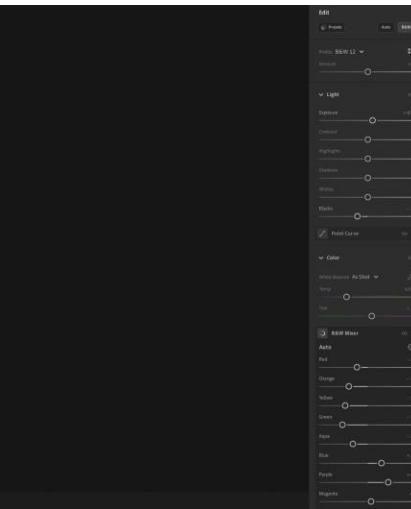


BODY, SHAPE FORM

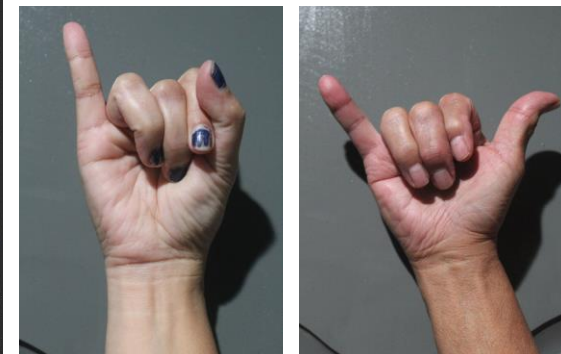
Assigned with a project exploring body, shape, and form, I was immediately inspired to do something based on hands and its shape. I first went with taking pictures of my hand and my other family members' hands, but I wanted to try out something portraying American Sign Language (ASL) and chose to explore lighting and hand anatomy while utilizing a message in ASL. I was most inspired by my own interest in ASL, as well as my desire to capture such an integral body part in an artistic light. I didn't want anything too flashy, so I settled with a few close-up shots and an easy message in ASL: "I love you." The first one to the farthest left is 'I,' portrayed by my mom, the second being 'L,' portrayed by my little sister, and the 'Y' being my dad. Of course, this stands for the simple, but kind message of love as mentioned before.

As soon as I had the chance, I borrowed a camera and went home to ask my family to model for me. I had first intended to just do an assortment of my hands and theirs doing varying poses. It worked well, and I even took a picture of my hand with the camera in the other. It was difficult positioning myself on the floor and finding a wall in my room that wasn't completely cluttered with pictures. Only a little satisfied, I had an idea to implement ASL into my series. Conveniently, I had enough sets of hands to spell out I.L.Y, otherwise, I love you in sign language. I wouldn't have gotten the idea if I wasn't interested in ASL, but thankfully, I am. I liked this set a lot more because it fit my idea of what is unique and the photos themselves are nice in my opinion. This is also what they looked like before I applied two tweaked presets for each set. The backdrop for these photos is a cupboard in my kitchen; I needed a plain one to focus just on the hands, so I settled on this one. It was easy getting photos of my moms and dads, but I had to help my sister up the counter to get a photo of her hand. Otherwise, it was a quick process and I had it all done in a day before I went off to get my pictures edited in Lightroom. This is where I had the chance to experiment a mess around with the shadows, exposure, etc. It was a good way for me to get used to utilizing a program that wasn't Photoshop.

If it means anything, my sister is the youngest (7 years old), my mom is pre-middle aged, and my dad is a bit older. I'd like to think it represents the nice sequence of youth and growing up. However, the series most focuses on the simplistic message of love expressed in the way outside of verbal communication. I used one Lightroom B&W preset and lightly messed around with it to get what I wanted for the series. I also decided to edit the first set I shot and keep it in but separately.



EXAMPLES OF PHOTOS W/O FILTER



LIGHTROOM PRESET FOR B&W FILTER I MADE

SOURCES

“30 90s Graffiti Ideas | Graffiti, Graffiti Art, Graffiti Alphabet.” *Pinterest*, www.pinterest.com/huhhwhut/90s-graffiti/.

“Anatomical Heart Pictures | Heart Diagrams for Learning and Inspiration.” *Clipart-Library.com*, clipart-library.com/anatomical-heart-pictures.html.

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