Experimentation with Different Mediums

Over the two years spent making pieces in art, I was able to experiment with many different mediums. Because of this, I had to learn how to utilize a variety of tools, techniques, and programs to be able to produce advanced work that fit the criteria that it needed to fit.

The very first medium that was new to me was Photoshop. The first piece I created was the digital collage, which needed to be created using Photoshop. Not only did I need to learn Photoshop for this piece, but I also needed it to be able to format other pieces to be able to print off larger pieces like my Ephemera piece, which I obviously could not bring into school because it was made out of sand.

I had to learn how to do two different kinds of prints. dry point, and block print. For the block print, I had to be able to create an image and transfer it to the linoleum carving plate, and use the correct carving tools. I had to make sure not to carve too deep in order to not carve through to the other side and make a hole. I had to determine which carving tool would be most effective in order to carve out my desired image. For dry point, I had to learn the correct amount of pressure to apply so that I would not carve all the way through to the other side, just like with the block print. If you carve all the way through to the other side, the ink will go through and make a whole mess.

Experimentation with Different Mediums

The most significant medium that I had to learn to work with was paint. I had to learn how to stretch my own canvas, gesso it, and learn different techniques for painting. I was given three flat paint brushes as starters for the self portrait. I did go out and buy more to have more variety and experiment with the different things I could do with each brush. While painting my self portrait which was the first painting piece that I did, I realized that I found the flat brushes the easiest to use compared to the round and angled brushes. I found that they worked the best for painting backgrounds, and were the most effective for what I needed for my pieces. After that, I used flat brushes for all my paintings. The only time I did not use them was for smaller details, like the flowers on my tryptic piece *Complacency*.


The last medium that was not necessarily new to me, was collage. I had made collages before the process this time was different. Before taking the HL Art course, colleges were mostly just things I cut out of magazines that I thought were pretty, but now while searching for images, I had to think of ways to connect them all, through meaning, and on paper. Especially for the assemblage/found object mixed media piece, *Way,* everything had to be very specific in order to convey the intended meaning. That whole process was new to me for collages.

The digital collage is a two-dimensional Adobe Photoshop piece. While planning for this piece, I was thinking about the photos that I would be able to take, and what meaning the piece could have with the photos taken. For this piece, the photos I took had more aesthetic value than metaphorical value to me, as I assembled the images together to create a meaning for the piece after everything else in the process. This piece emulated Michelangelo's *Creation of Man*, seen on the Sistine Chapel ceiling.

While this piece emulates the *Creation of Man*, while making this piece, its intention was mainly to create a energetic and bright piece that a viewer could enjoy with its bright colors, and selected images. Photos taken were of vibrant flowers in my backyard, and of my cat stretching on the ground, which was a moment of opportunity for this piece, as it fit perfectly with the *Creation of Man*, and is what originally made me think of that piece.

My research was focused on the time period Michelangelo lived in, and the art movement he was in. My research was also focused around which art movements had strong ties or references to religion, however when I finished the project it was less focused on religion. The other planning ideas that I had for this piece were also based in the Renaissance period, and looked at Bernini's sculpture *The Ecstasy of St. Theresa*, and Michelangelo's *Pieta*.
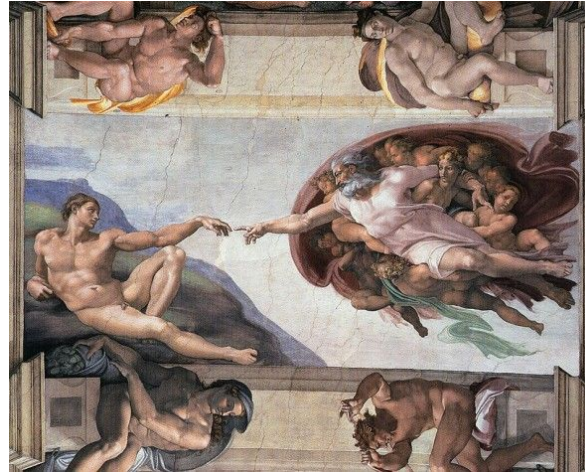
Creation of Man, Michelangelo
"Michelangelo's Creation of Adam - ItalianRenaissance.org." ItalianRenaissanceorg. N.p., 2016.

Pieta, Michelangelo
@westerncivforum. "Michelangelo's Pieta - ItalianRenaissance.org." ItalianRenaissanceorg. N.p., 2016.

"The Ecstasy of Saint Theresa." Artble, 19 July 2017, www.artble.com/artists/gian_lorenzo _bernini/sculpture/the_ecstasy_of_s aint_theresa.

Process and Development: *Magnanimous*

To begin this piece, I created a new file on Photoshop that was 24 x 36 inches, with a resolution of 170 pixels per inch. I then opened each photo and began to manipulate them. The flowers did not have to be manipulated as I was just planning on using them as a background for the image of my hand, and of my cat. I used the quick select tool to outline my hand, opened refine edge, and began to clean up the edges of my hand where it looked choppy, and you could still see the carpet underneath. I then moved my hand to the image of the flowers. I did the same with the body of the cat, however this was more difficult because of his fur. The contrast of the bright flowers against my hand and my cat (which are both gray/brown colors) is significant, and something I feel draws attention to the piece.

Overall, this process was not exactly difficult, but it was not my favorite. What I took away the most from this was how to resize images so that I would be able to edit and print other images without them looking pixelated.
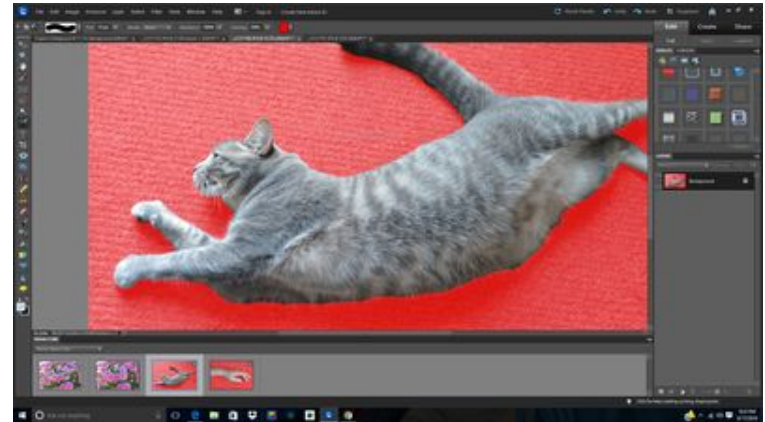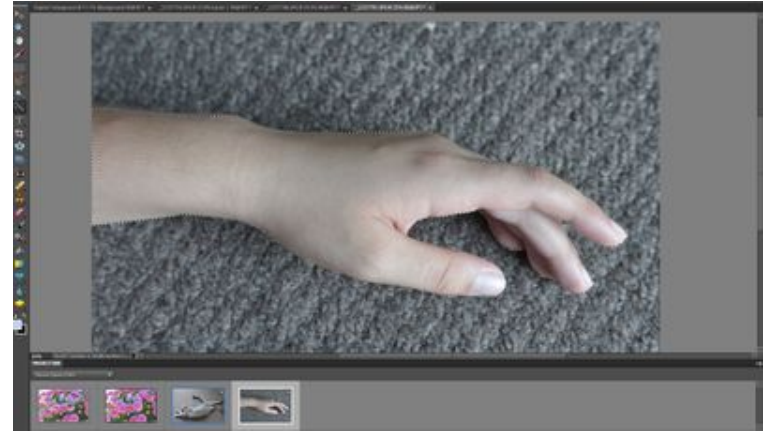
Artist Inspiration: *Great Muse I-III*

These pieces were the first three that I created with a theme in mind. The first piece in this three part piece was a block print. When I started planning for this piece, I was originally going to do something related to greek mythology, and use patterns that were common in greek art, however I changed it to be more focused on the ocean and marine life, though I kept a border that was inspired by Greek patterns. For this piece I was inspired by David Baroncelli and Kevin Brant who are marine artists. Because I did not want a lot of blank space on the print, I also drew inspiration from the Impressionist movement, which helped create the movement of the waves/water on my print. While researching for all three pieces, the central theme that I had was the ocean and illegal fishing, not really of smaller fish, but of whales and other animals because it had more meaning to me, based off of what I have learn in my Environmental Systems and Societies class.

The second piece for this theme was a dry point. Because I had focused the first piece on human impacts to marine life, I did the same for this piece. For this piece I was inspired by Francis Bacon's *Figure with Meat.* I chose this piece, and Bacon because his art was very grotesque and often showed violence and suffering which I thought was appropriate for the meaning of the piece. My artwork was affected by Bacon's work because of the bones depicted in my piece, which is related to the carcass in *Figure with Meat*.

The final piece for this theme was a self portrait. I was inspired by cover art for Ernest Hemingway's *Old Man and the Sea*, as well as Picasso's Blue Period. I chose the Blue Period because of its somber mood. I thought that it was appropriate to have a blue painting to represent the somber mood that I felt about the neglect of marine animals. The painting is the first piece that I created that had a monochrome color scheme.

Planning and Process: *Great Muse I*
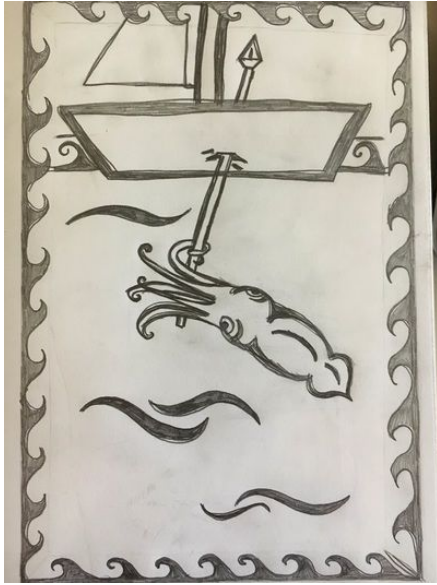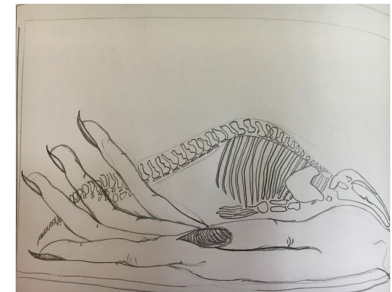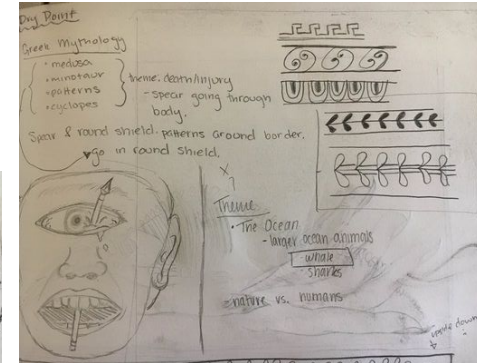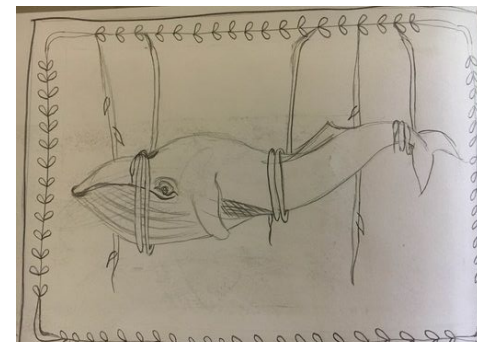

Print 1

Print 2

The block print is a two-dimensional piece. After I finished my planning sketches and completed the final image, I had to fill in the back of the sketch with pencil lead so that I could transfer the image onto the linoleum plate. I experimented with three different carving tools so that I could carve out large spaces like where the water was, and with smaller carving tool so that I could be more precise with the border pattern. I had to go over the carvings twice to make sure they were deep enough, and to make sure that the waves would come through in the print to create movement. When I started the printing process, I had to make sure I had enough ink on the plate so that I could get a clear and clean print. I ended up doing three different prints. The last print that I did was the one I chose for the final piece.

Planning and Process: *Great Muse II*

The drypoint is another two-dimensional piece. For this piece, I also had planned on doing something from Greek mythology, and had sketched a cyclops. When I changed my theme for my block print, I knew that I was going to draw a whale, but then I didn't know how, or what else I would put in the piece. My first sketch was a whale tangled in vines. The second sketch I made, which was the one I chose for my piece shows whale bones in a human hand, which I was able to relate to Francis Bacon.

The next thing I did after I had my final sketch, was tape the carving plate over the drawing so that I could begin carving. This process was difficult because the carving tool hurt my hand. It was also difficult to figure out how much pressure to use while carving. Because the plate is so thin, I did not want to apply too much pressure because then I would carve through to the other side. For this piece, I had to go back and carve several times to get it deep enough so that it would not look like the third print that I did.

1. The first print used too much ink and came out looking blurry.
2. The second print used less ink and came out a little lighter than the first print.
3. The third print did not use enough ink at all.

Planning and Process: *Great Muse III*

The self portrait is a two-dimensional piece. In order to prepare for this piece, I did photoshop myself onto the cover I was using as inspiration. I did not take a long time to photoshop myself onto the cover because I just needed a rough idea of how it would look, so that I could project the image onto the canvas and trace it. After I did this, I was able to begin painting. I painted the water a darker shade of blue, and a darker blue even still for the waves. After this, I began to paint the boat. I used a thinner flat brush, and a round paintbrush to get the desired effect. I first used a light gray as a base for the boat, and later went over it with a darker gray to create the lines to make the boat look like it was actually made from wood. I did the same with the edge of the boat, using a mix of dark gray and blue. When painting the sky, I painted it white, and then mixed a light blue and painted around the white part. I slowly started making the blue lighter around that area, and started blending more and more white in, until I had painted it completely white again.
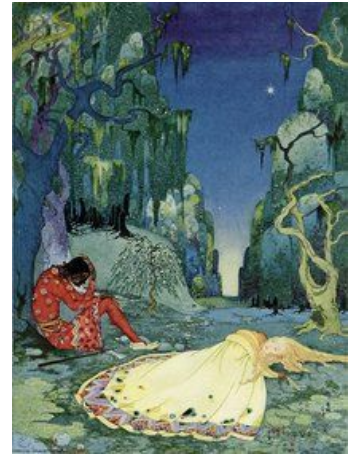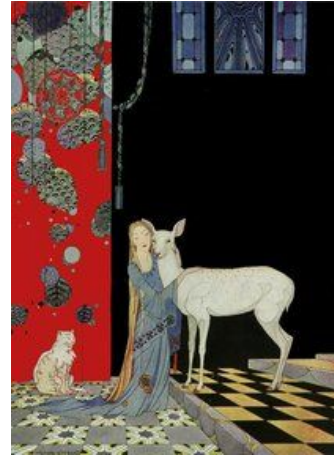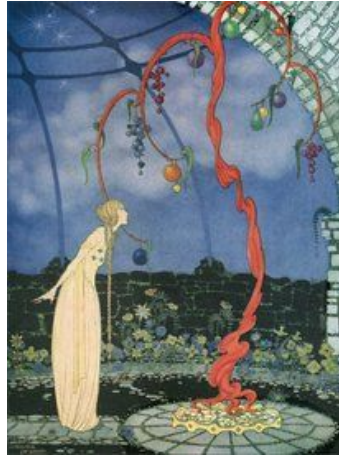
I made skin tone using white, yellow, red and a small amount of brown. I would mix this with white and brown to make different parts of my face like my eyebrows and the lighter and darker parts of my eyes and nose. The last thing I painted was my hair. I mixed brown with a small amount of black, and painted a bottom layer. Then I added some white to the paint I mixed to create a lighter brown, and again after that to get the different colors in my hair. For my hair, I used a thinner brush to get cleaner lines than I would have gotten with a widder flat brush.

Developing Ideas for Tryptic: *Complacency*

The Tryptic is the second painting that I completed. My artistic inspiration for this piece was Virginia Frances Sterrett. I specifically focused on her illustrations from French fairy tales. I also chose to incorporate roses into all three panels that would represent different feelings. The first panel of the tryptic is emulating *Princess Rosalie.* I chose to have mixed colors of roses because they symbolize confusion. I chose this because the first panel is supposed to represent who you think you are, and at the time, I did not know.The second piece that I chose was *Blondine Threw Her Arms Around Him.* I chose yellow roses for this piece because they symbolize friendship and caring, and other gentle emotions like joy and admiration. I chose this color because the second panel is supposed to represent how the environment affects me. The third piece that I chose was *The Forest.* The third panel is supposed to represent how I affect my environment. This piece has the darkest background, because each panel is a progression through life. Its starts out bright and warm, and slowly gets colder and darker.

I used the Art Nouveau movement as further inspiration. Looking at pieces from Sterrett, and then looking at pieces from the Art Nouveau movement, I saw qualities of the movement in Sterretts work. When planning for this piece I knew I wanted the pastel colors of the Art Nouveau movement, and the flowers and plants. With those elements, there would be a contrast against the dark backgrounds and other elements of Sterretts work.

"Virginia Frances Sterrett, Complete Color Illustrations." *Virginia Frances Sterrett Art: The Complete Illustrations*. N.p., n.d. Web. 27 Jan. 2017.

Process and Reflection: *Complacency*

To begin this piece, I first painted all the backgrounds. By doing this, it would be easier to complete the rest of the painting because I would not have to worry about staying in any of the lines that I traced after projecting the images onto the canvases. For all three panels, I used a pink/red color for the tree that connects all the panels. This color creates contrast between the dark background colors. I also used a lot of soft pinks for the dress, because it creates emphasis on the girl in each panel, especially the second and third one.

Panel 1:
This panel required me to learn a different technique for painting. For the other two panels, and for the self portrait, everything was essentially blended together, and very smooth. However for this piece, the flowers could not be blended, and that was a little difficult for me.

Panel 2:
This panel was difficult for me because of the deer. I had never painting an animal before. The animals that I had previously done(whale, squid) were not as difficult because they did not have legs or difficult body shapes. Also had to use grey/black in moderation because the deer was white.

Panel 3:
The final panel was difficult because the girl lying on the ground. I did a lot of sketches trying to get her dress to not look like a mess on the ground, or like a complete circle. I think it turned out mediocre.

Artistic Inspiration: Collages

I completed three collages. Two were two-dimensional, and the other is a mixed media sculpture.

I was inspired by Joseph Cornell for the first collage. This was the first sculpture that I made. I was inspired by Cornell shadow boxes. I was also inspired by Kara Walker, and her use of color. Her pieces were black and white, as to not distract from the meaning of her pieces, and to keep them simple.

For the last collage, I was inspired by the work of Ciara Phelan. Phelans collages are often seen in advertisements. She often mixes different mediums for her collages, which I found interesting. For my piece, I mixed part of a block print with images to create a collage in her style.

"Setting for a Fairy Tale." Guggenheim, 9 Feb. 2018, www.guggenheim.org/artwork/903.

"ARTWORK." Holly-Anne Buck, www.collagism.com/#/flawless/.

The second collage that I completed was inspired by Annegret Soltau, and Holly-Anne Buck. I was interested in Soltau because of the way she used different materials to create collage, specifically her use of string to tie things together. I was inspired by Buck because of her incomplete human figures.

"Portfolio." Ciara Phelan, www.ciaraphelan.com/portfolio/.

"In Past ShowEmancipating the Past: Kara Walker's Tales of Slavery and Power at Bellevue Arts Museum." *Kara Walker | The Emancipation Approximation (Scene #18) (1999-2000) | Artsy*,

"Motherhood 1977-86." Annegret Soltau, www.annegret-soltau.de/en/galleries/motherhood-1977-86.

Planning and Process: *Backyard*

My intention for this piece was to show animal cruelty in the entertainment industry, specifically the circus. I was inspired thematically by Kara Walker, as her pieces often represent topics that are not generally talked about. The piece is called Backyard because it is a circus term for where all the performers and animals are prepared before a show. This assemblage piece was tedious to make. The hardest part about it was cleaning the bones that would go into the shadow box. I had considered just buying fake bones, but they looked really bad. Instead, I cleaned some chicken bones in bleach, and it ended up looking grotesque, and exactly how I intended it to. Because of Kara Walker's use of black and white in her pieces, I had painted the frame and background black, so that the white bones would create contrast with the background.

Overall, this piece was not something I intended to repeat. The process of creating a sculpture was not something I thought I was very good at, and I enjoy painting significantly more, as I feel I have learned more technique for it.

My intention for this piece was to show corruption in government, and how everything we see about politics is really just a show. I was inspired by Annegret Soltau's themes and use of materials because she dealt with difficult topics, and the style of Holly Anne Buck and her collages. For this piece, we were told to find images to reconstruct a human form. At first, I had just been cutting out images that I found aesthetically pleasing. I had several images to choose from and I ended up forming them to be the top half of what could be a human. There was demonic looking head. The pillars from a Greek temple would represent the rib cage. The pillars on the building are often seen on large political buildings in the U.S. as well as other countries, so that would represent the government. The face used was paired with horns from a different image, making the face seem more demonic. This, paired with the temple, would represent corruption in the government. The image behind the body is that of a stage/theatre, which is representative of government being a show, with the public only being able to watch without being able to change how the show runs.
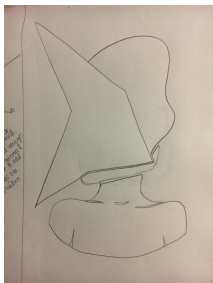
Originally, I wanted to focus on a whole body like many of Phelan's advertisements, and like some 1950's advertisements, however, doing a block print of that I thought would be too difficult. So I focused on a different piece by Phelan that shows the lower half of a man's head, and a large geometric shape behind various other photos and papers that Phelan added to her piece. I chose to do the actual block print of just the lower half of a face, and large shapes. This will add contrast to the other images that will be added to the piece, as well as paint, and paper. I did about 5 different prints. The first few that I did, did not look as clean around the figure like I wanted it to, so I carved more from the background so that there would not be lines in the background of the piece. I wanted the sides to be clean. I did a few more prints after this and finally got one that was how I wanted it to be. After I had all the prints done, I looked for different images to incorporate into the piece. Phelan often uses flowers, other people, everyday objects, and words in her collages so I found images like that. I also added some paint to add more color like Phelan does in her pieces.

Experimentation with new medium: Ephemera

This ephemera piece was something very new to me. For the first time, the only tools that I used for this piece were my hands, and a ruler to make sure everything was symmetrical. For this piece, I was working in the sand, which was fun, yet difficult at times. There were outside factors that could have ruined the piece in the early stages. Because I was working at a public beach where dogs run, I was worried that a dog would run through the piece. I also had to work quickly, and keep putting water over the sand. Wet sand was easier to work with, and with wet sand you could more clearly see the image I was making. The dry sand would fall apart, and I would have to redo sections. I could not just dump water over the piece or it would wash away, so I had to use a spray bottle to keep applying water to the piece without ruining it.

For this piece, I was inspired by artist Andy Goldsworthy. His sculptures rely heavily on things found in nature. This includes sand, snow, rocks, and leaves, as well as more items. Goldsworthy creates his pieces outside and the only record of them once they are destroyed are the photographs he takes of them. I chose to emulate Goldsworthy because of his use of things in nature such as sand. I knew when the piece was introduced that I wanted to use sand. Many of his pieces look very simple, but I found through working on my piece that a large amount of planning and patience go into the creation of his pieces.
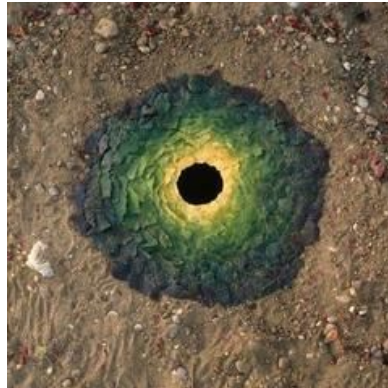
"Andy Goldsworthy - Melt." Andy Goldsworthy - Melt. N.p., n.d. Web. 01 Dec. 2016.

Cultural Connections: *Way*

During this project, I was inspired by Mayan culture, Specifically, the Mayan calendar. The Mayan Calendar consists of three separate calendars and almanacs, and its last cycle predicted the end of the world on December 2012, which obviously did not happen. The only calendar included in the cycle that has a direct link to the days of the year is the Haab, or the civil calendar. To this day, the calendar is significant when recognizing Mayan culture, which is why I chose it for this piece.

While this symbol is very old, it is still relevant throughout time, as any calendar is, however this calendar is a symbol and widely recognized throughout Mexico as well as other countries where the Maya resided.

"Ancient Scripts: Maya." *Ancient Scripts: Maya*. N.p

"Calendars Exhibit." *The Mayan Calendar | Calendars*. N.p., 2008.

CHAN 'sky'
WINIK 'person'
WITZ 'mountain'
K'IN 'sun'
B'ALAN 'jaguar'
X'AK' 'fire'

BAK 'bone'
WAY 'spirit'
JUUN 'book'
JA' 'water'
AJAW 'lord'
MUYAL 'cloud'

IX 'woman'
CH'AM 'to grab'
K'LX' 'quetzal'
CHAN 'snake'
CH'UL 'holy'
CHOK 'to scatter'

JAAB' 'year'
YAX 'blue/green'
PAKAL 'shield'
TOK 'flint'
NAJ 'house'
K'AL 'twenty'
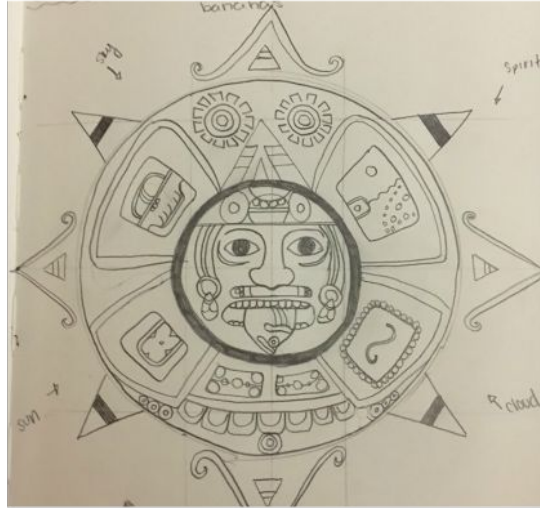
To do this project, I went to the beach early in the morning to have good light, and I set up a camera and film the whole thing process. In total, it took me 2.5 hours to create the Mayan symbol. When I finished, and uploaded the video to my computer, I edited it to be a time lapse video, because no one would watch a two hour video of me molding sand.

First I chose an area near the water because I needed to keep bringing back and forth a bucket of water to get the sand wet, So that I could flatten it, and have an easier space to work with. Then, I formed a grid, like I had on my planning sketch so I could work section by section. I had to keep spraying the sand with water because it would dry up and crumble or blow away. After I had pressed down the sand and had the gird, I began molding the sand, starting at the larger triangles.

This piece ended up being 5 feet square. The process for this piece was similar to the process of my sculpture *Backyard.* It was very tedious.

Comparative Study Pieces: *Familiarity, Displacement*

These pieces were made for my Comparative Study. The artists that I studied for my Comparative Study were Stephanie Barenz and Andrew Wyeth. I chose these artist because of their monochrome color schemes in their work. By doing this, I was able to continue doing monochrome work like my self portrait.

Barenz creates monochrome paintings that represent how movement to a new place or a new part of life can be disorienting, and how that can be resolved by the hospitable actions of neighbors or friends. Because of this, many of her pieces feature homes, and lines that move across the piece in order to show movement to a new place.

Wyeth also creates monochrome paintings, however for my Comparative Study piece, I chose to focus on *Moon Madness,* a piece that is similar to Barenz work. It depicts familiarity and a home. For my piece, *Familiarity,* I emulate both Barenz and Wyeth.
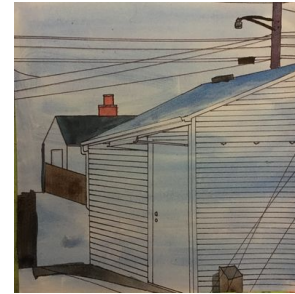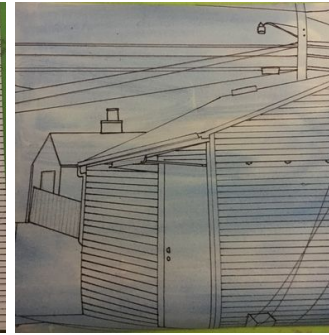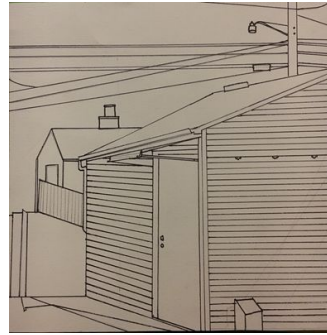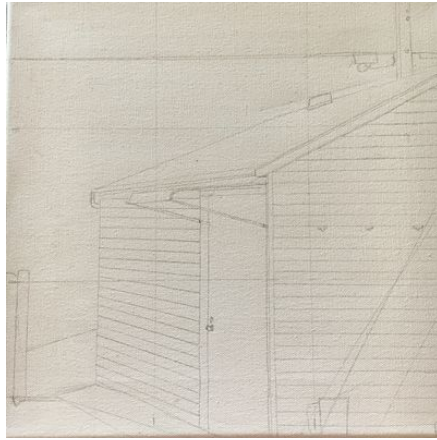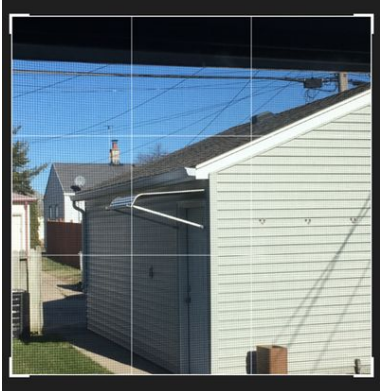

"Here We Are at the Vanishing Point." Stephanie Barenz, www.stephaniebarenz.com/here-we-are-at-the-vanishing-point.

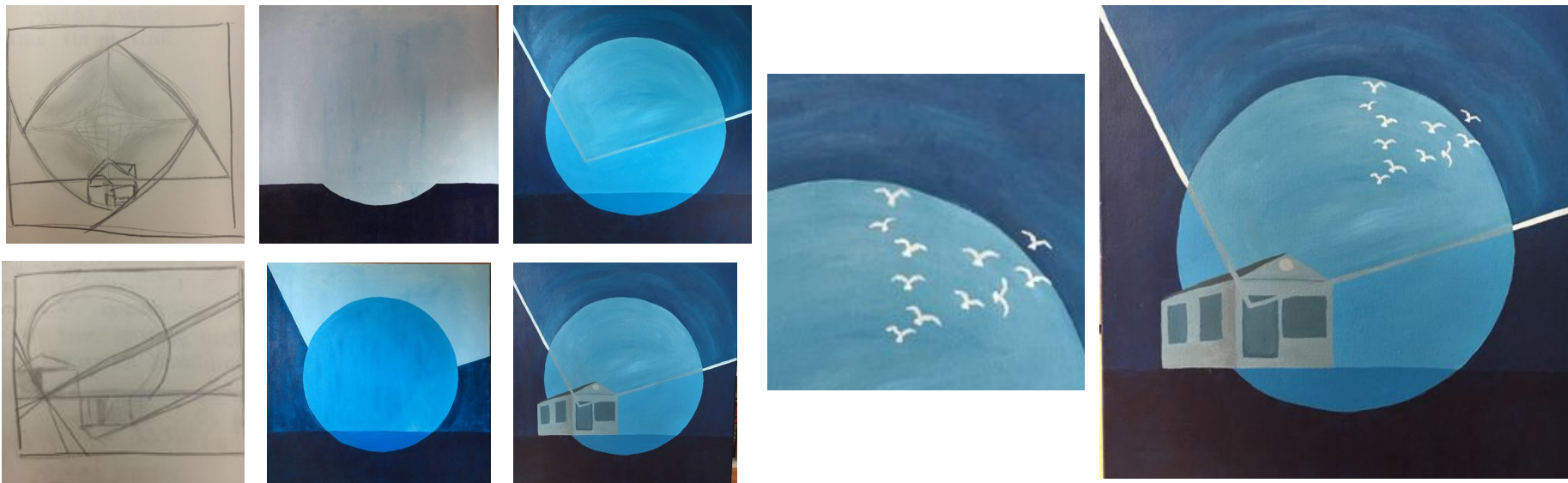"Traverse." Stephanie Barenz, www.stephaniebarenz.com/traversegallery. Accessed 6 Sept. 2017.

"Moon Madness Art Print by Andrew Wyeth." Moon Madness Art Print by Andrew Wyeth - Brandywine Museum Shop,

Planning and Process: *Familiarity*

While planning for this piece, I had originally intended to do another acrylic painting, but as I started painting, I was not happy with how it was turning out, but I did really like the planning sketch that I had done. I later changed to do a watercolor painting in the style of Stephanie Barenz. Because I used the same image, I was able to connect the piece to Andrew Wyeth as well. The first thing that I did was cut the watercolor paper into a 23 x 23 cm square. After that, I put a 9 square grid over the paper so that the image would not be distorted. After that, I drew the outline of the buildings and power lines. Once I had that drawn out, I went over it again in pen so that it would still be visible through the watercolor paint. After I had the whole drawing outlined in pen, I began to paint. First I painted the whole piece in a layer of blue. This is similar to Barenz pieces which are very monochromatic, and have varying hues. For parts of the piece where roofs or walls were darker, I would mix blue with black, brown with blue, or blue with green.

Displacement is an acrylic painting based directly on the work of Stephanie Barenz. My intention for this piece was to create a monochrome painting with clean lines and geometric shapes as Barenz does in many of her paintings. This painting I feel was successful because I was able to blend all the colors and create a smooth looking painting with clean lines. For my self portrait, I used mostly blues and cool colors, and I wanted to continue that for this piece. This is unlike Barenz, who uses very muted tones like browns and oranges, and grays. Those colors represent home, and are more welcoming. I wanted to use more blues to emulate once again Picasso's Blue Period, because the feeling of moving on from a part of life can be a somber moment. For this piece I used many different shades of blue. The hardest part of this piece was the birds. I experimented with several different brushes to try and paint birds that actually looked like birds.

Exploring the concept of neglect

Many of my pieces revolve around neglect, whether it be to animals or to oneself or to others. I would not call it an obsession with the way that people work, or think, but it angers me sometimes, thinking about the actions certain people take. That is what inspired my dry point specifically. In my Environmental Systems and Societies class, we were learning about how laws had been passed in order to stop illegal fishing and whaling. But there are still countries that found loopholes to those rules, or simply don't care about them, and that angered me so much. I just don't believe that it's necessary to be killing whales, or abusing animals. I showed the abuse of animals in my piece *Backyard.* In that piece. In my block print, I showed a squid attacking a boat. I did that because I wanted to show the reverse of human actions, which is something that people generally don't speak of. People don't like to speak of abuse, or neglect to animals, which is why I felt compelled to male art about it. Not to bring awareness to the issue, because I feel like everyone already knows. I just want people to acknowledge the issue more, and not act like it doesn't exist.

Neglect Continued

The neglect and mistreatment of animals was not the only thing I focused on. Several of my pieces focus on the mistreatment of others and to ourselves. The piece *Corruption* is about the mistreatment that people face at the hands of a corrupt government. The piece *Identity* focuses on stereotypes faced by women, and the pressures that they put on themselves.

Another piece that focuses on the neglect is my tryptic piece *Complacency.* Specifically the third panel. The last panel is dark, and the girl is lying on the ground. The three panels together show the progression through life, and the last panel is representative of the fact that we all end up alone in the end, and that death is coming for us all. I wanted to show with the first two panels that we should not neglect the things we have in life that are beautiful and that we have people around us and with us that make things better.

Reflection

Overall, I feel like I have learned a lot through the creation of this body of work. Starting with research skills. The HL arts course is heavily based on writing as well as actually making art. For each peace I had to research the artist, and the meaning behind the pieces, and their art movements. We had to plan how to incorporate the artists style into our own work. One of the more difficult things was learning how to write about art, because in every other class, it has been drilled into our heads that we can never use personal pronouns, but when writing about our own art, we have to talk about our own process and ideas, and it was difficult to break the habit of not using personal pronouns.

Another thing that I have learned through this course was how to plan for projects. Planning not only helped the process of creating projects in this class, but in every other class as well. I learned to have multiple ideas for projects in case one did not turn out how I envisioned it, or if there isn't enough time to complete a project, I will always have a backup.
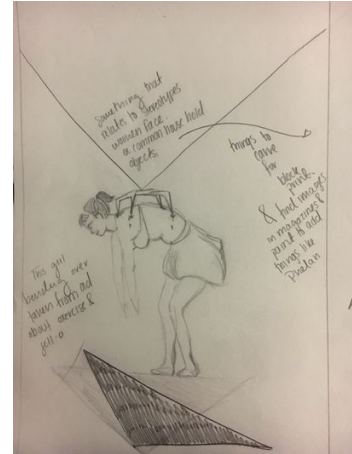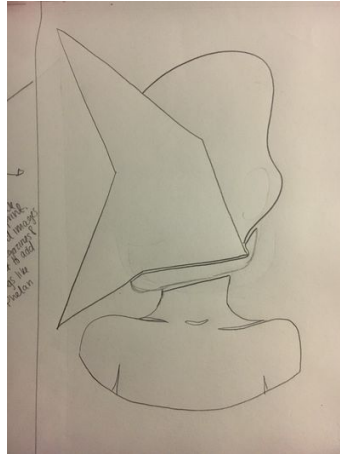
Reflection

My body of work has grown a lot over this course. I did many different types of projects. From painting, printing, collage, sculpture, and digital manipulation, I learned many different techniques for creating different types of art. For each piece, I had to consider which medium would convey the theme/idea of my piece the best. I learned which mediums were easier for me, ones that I liked better than others. I found that painting, and printing were my favorite mediums to use. Digital manipulation using Photoshop was interesting but too complex for me, and I did not feel like I could create a more complicated piece than I did with *Magnanimous.* Collage was interesting, and simple to get themes across with, however it was tedious, and when looking for images if you don't take your own pictures can get time consuming. This is because you don't know what images will be available, and its harder to plan for a piece if you don't know what images you have to work with. Sculpture was also not my favorite. I like the pieces that I made, especially *Way.* Working with sand was fun and a good change from painting and printing. Working outside was enjoyable, but not practical for me. I liked the piece but because it was ephemeral, it was gone, and I like to keep my work. Overall, I was pleased with all the work I was able to create over the two years of the course.