



Mary Elizabeth Handler

MET

2024, Mixed Media

10x11x12 inches

MET is about the overwhelmingness of creativity. New ideas are not something one can easily avoid. Naturally, all things are eventually overtaken. Art comes to life through inspiration and floors our imagination.

MET is constructed out of the pages of the *The Metropolitan Museum of Art* by Howard Hibbard. The installation is inspired by the beautiful artwork within the pages. This piece is a testament to the creative process, as viewers are inspired by the works of others to create their own interpretation that will hopefully inspire another in an endless cycle.

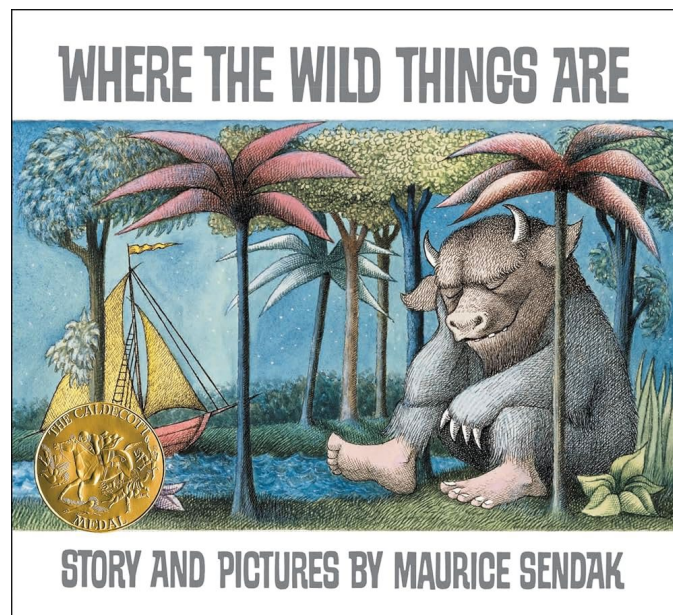


Research Paper

(Prior to Starting Project)

My original concepts were based on songs. I wanted to take the more fantastical approach and create the same emotions and sense of wonder these songs brought me.

“Something’s Not Right” by Lily Allen and “Welcome to Wonderland” by Anson Seabra were the songs that inspired my concepts for this piece. Their detailed lyrics and slow pace give time for enjoyment and are able to achieve that next level of connection. This connection is what I hope to replicate. I want the same levels of passion and desire felt in these songs. These stories are moving and create the need for longing for something in life. They both build another world based upon their lyrics and notes that are easily translated, interpreted and reinvented by the listener. Artistically, I want to mock the style of the illustrations of the classic children’s book *Where the Wild Things Are* by Maurice Sendak.



The sketching, hatching and development of implied texture literally draw my eyes into a magical world that is realistic enough to deceive the eye but appear plausible and believable. The earthy color scheme also establishes natural enchanting beauty and wildlife aesthetic. The

illustrations feature a sense of childlike wonder on each and every page. The pallet is youthful, ominous and draws attention to the viewer's curiosity about the imperfections and secrets of life. I want to potentially mimic the beauty, style and depth of detail through my material choices. I was thinking of using printed paper, cardboard and potentially fabric scraps to create the illusions of emotions cleverly illustrated into the book.

I also love the idea of incorporating trees. I love how their growth is symbolic for so many people for a variety of reasons. I see them for their strength, perseverance and experience that they accumulate. They also serve as a foundation for shelter and protect many other species that would not survive without the existence of trees. Their support is nurturing and is a vital component that I want to continue and develop within my piece. I love the design of the major tree in Swoon's 2014 Brooklyn Museum installation, Submerged Motherlands.



The drama of the tree's layered bark elevates the sculpture to appear greater than it seems. The necessity of the tree is exemplified and calls for attention. The style of the tree also creates this sense of age and wear that gives it an unknown visible history. I love how she also mixed a variety of colors to create the layers and depth visible from a distance. When close to

the tree, the colors separate to create bold individuality and represent the diversity of the events the tree has survived. The tree feels otherworldly, magical and ordinary all at the same time.

As much as I love a stylized approach to the installation, I genuinely appreciate realism as well. The artist, Matthew Albanese, specializes in miniature models and creates hyper realistic natural environments with a variety of materials. His piece, “A New Life #1” is a breathtaking photograph of his installation. The world stands on its own and appears to be very real.



I found Albanese’s work to be incredibly inspirational due to his mastery of the craft. His resourcefulness and creativity shines through like sunlight in this piece. His manipulation of materials is definitely a factor that I will be drawing from for my own creation. The ingenuity and skill provided with the level of detail and deception are what takes his installation to the next level.

I definitely love the idea of messing with scale in this project. I love the idea of giant mushrooms and flowers that really make the piece feel like a fantasyland. I found inspiration

from Carsten Höller's installation Mushroom Room. The installation was created in 2000 and has giant mushrooms protruding from the ceiling.



The mushrooms capture the essence of playfulness in the bold color, scale and placement of the sculptures. By suspending them from the ceiling, the mushrooms are above the viewer forcing them to look up in childlike wonder. Using the area above the viewer requires physical interaction to fully enjoy, immersing them into the creative world of the artist. Höller's minimalist approach creates dimension, depth and focus. The simplicity and magic of the design is something I would love to replicate. However, I would probably be more eccentric and fill a lot more space with objects rather than leaving so much contrast between the positive and negative space. I would add flowers and do a complete wildlife scene to enhance the natural wonder of the false environment.

(Post Project)

As I began searching for a container for my installation, I found a copy of *The Metropolitan Museum of Art* by Howard Hibbard. My inspiration evolved to include the work

from the book. My creative process was very much divergent as I ended up in a much different place than originally intended. My inspiration became the book itself as I loved the pages, artwork and room for creativity within the structure. The cover of the book instantly gave me nautical vibes, which once I started carving out pages, is what led to the idea for a ship. The modern adaptation of the classic Christmas carol, *I Saw Three Ships*, by Pentatonix, and the song *sail away* by lovelytheband, are what helped me come up with the design of the ship and the concept of a super elaborate pop-up book. The addition of the kraken was made to support the armatures that were holding up the cover of the book. The kraken brought the whole piece to life as it provided depth and detail to attract viewers. The tentacles created dimension and made the installation much more interesting from alternative perspectives. This piece has become a testament to the creative process because of its adaptability and consuming nature. The process of construction was enchanting as I was immersed into the process with intense focus and devotion. The development of ideas were natural and flexible as they were challenged and changed frequently within the design process.

Works Cited

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