

Mary Elizabeth Handler

Research Reflection

MET

Spring 2024

Creative Process and Visual Research

For an artist, accumulating research is done through taking ideas, techniques, aesthetics, and methods from other scholarly and creative works. Artists draw their inspiration from the world around them by absorbing everything that exists and selecting to keep elements that stood out to them for a variety of reasons. Although direct quotations and references may sometimes be lacking or presented rather abstractly, they can be found within the artwork without a doubt. Inspiration takes a variety of forms and is given new life through the creative cycle. In my experience, the creative cycle takes place when the artist sees something, gets inspired, creates their own interpretation and releases it back out to the world for the next artist to come across. The cycle is continuous and constant as we all share the same passion for individual interpretation and creative thought.

The creative project submitted was designed for Installation Art, a course that falls under the Art, Media and Design major. The project was to build a miniature installation in a unique container that could realistically be replicated on a life size scale. The project could be fantastical or realist, but had to draw the viewer into the world created. The project was divided into three parts, the first part being the preproduction and research paper. This was the phase in which I heavily used the library to search for and come up with ideas. The second part was the development phase and construction of the final masterpiece. I was so enveloped in my own creativity that I had very minimal documentation of the physical creative process taking place. I

was simply so inspired and motivated that I kept working without taking a step back for reflection until the installation felt completed. Lastly, the third part was the reflection and cumulative research from the prior two stages presented formally with citations. This was when I collected all of my chaotic thoughts and compiled them in an orderly fashion so that they made sense to viewers. Additionally, I composed my artist statement and photographed my finished piece for formal presentation.

I tend to often find my inspiration within the Kellogg Library here on campus. Books have always been a powerful source for me to learn about and gather ideas from. Whether my tactics are listening to music while free writing or doing visual research, the library is always overflowing with thoughts and feelings for my artistic mind to reinterpret as my own. I stumbled across the book, *Where the Wild Things Are*, by Maurice Sendak, when doing a visual search in the Juvenile section on the fifth floor. I often use the Juvenile Section to find visual inspiration because of the high quantity and quality of illustrative material. *Where the Wild Things Are* has captured my attention and imagination since childhood. The artistic style and vibrant storytelling abilities are features that resonated with myself and my goals. The book played an influential part in creating the style of art and willingness to try abstract and rougher techniques to achieve and enhance the overall design. When it came to rough drafts and sketching out ideas, I came to the library for quiet spaces where I could plug in my headphones and play music to move my mood. Almost every single piece of art that I have created has stemmed from a singular feeling that is rooted in a specific song that pulled at my heartstrings. Whether the feeling is positive, negative or ambiguous, it was most likely discovered from a random playlist that was enjoyed while working within the walls of the Kellogg Library.