

# Making Meaning, Making Love



## BRONX LAB SCHOOL

11<sup>TH</sup> GRADE

2022

Principal: Sarah Marcy

Teacher: Yeslan Hernandez

Teaching Artist: Imani N. Ford



In this 9-week residency, students focused on expressing their emotions through the material first and language second. This process occurred over the course of three projects: the belonging sculpture, the diaspora collage, and my utopia project.

For each project, students had the freedom to choose their materials. I set limitations for each project. For the belonging sculpture, they could use material, but no words. For the diaspora collage, they had to incorporate magazines and materials to make their collage. For my utopia project, they had free reign to design their ideal or perfect world.

Students pushed themselves and worked within their individual needs and limitations to make work that had meaning for them, even if it did not have meaning for others. In this sense, they learned that specificity, authenticity, and vulnerability are foundational to artmaking.

I never asked students to sign their work. It was most important to get them to author their objects through the material. I know whose work is whose, but I decided to leave them unsigned. In retrospect, I think their relationship to the projects, concepts, and ability to use language dictated whether students signed their work. Although signing work is often an indication of ownership, I am unsure which projects students show more mastery over, their signed or unsigned work.

However, I took heed of this. I named the belonging sculptures based on students' explanations about how and why they used materials. I also want to show them that their most abstract work has meaning. We can create a new language for abstraction and our most complex emotions. Because students could draw and write, I left the diaspora collage untitled. I feel those pieces beg for me not to touch them. They feel more concrete, less supple. Last, students wrote on or signed their my utopia projects. So, I titled each project using language from the students' work.

I hope you enjoy.

*Spanish–Period 1*

Abreu, Justin  
Castillo Torres, Keven  
Currie, Antone  
Domenech, Jayden  
Edgar, Leyla  
Gikunoo, Hannah  
Hernandez Tiburcio, Jan  
Hoxhaj, Valon  
Lomotey, Gilbert  
Maldonado, Priscila  
Mollison, Kieron  
Nugent, Kareem  
Nunez, Carolyn  
Pascual, Hansel  
Pastor, Evelin  
Rhule, Jaden  
Sambe, Diarra  
Sarfo Arful, Gabriel  
Singleton, Danasia

*Spanish–Period 2*

Carrasco, Emani  
Cobbs, Jaylyn  
Davis, Marquize  
Ferera, Miranda  
Franco, Angeliz  
Frias, Aleydy  
Garcia, Daniel  
Gikunoo, Roberta  
Guevara, Ilianna  
Herrera, Brian  
Jerez, Crystal  
Lawrence, Brian  
Linares, Devin  
Morenigbade, Rilwan  
Nova, Felicity  
Nunez, Rene  
Pariall, Dandre  
Paul, Shania  
Perez, Johan  
Roberts, Shelia  
Rosado, Ebony  
Ulysse, Kevin

*Spanish—Period 3*

Arias, Erik

Armstead, Jaden

Blatch, Adaxia

Couvertier, Ninoshka

Coward, David

Diakite, Mamadou

Edwards, Kyamesha

Frye, Kamaree

Greenland, Justin

Hodge, Joshua

Issaka, Charles

Jaca, Jude Nicolas Keirt

Noble, Najai-Vanice

Nyarko, Elijah

Ramos Gomez, Florangel

Reynoso, Bryan

Rodriguez Tlamani, Christian

Smith, Katelyn

Smith, Parrish

Sosa, Lisamarie

Stewart, Lenesha

Williams Jr, Colin

Yanogo, Biancka

# Table of Contents

Quotes On Belonging	6
The Belonging Sculpture	7
Quotes On Diaspora	31
The Diaspora Collage	32
Quotes On Utopia	53
My Utopia Project	54
Quotes On Self-Acceptance	63

“You only are free when you realize you belong no place—you belong every place—no place at all. The price is high. The reward is great.”

“I belong to myself. I’m very proud of that. I’m very concerned about how I look at Maya. I like Maya very much.”

—Maya Angelou, *A Conversation with Maya Angelou* by Bill Moyer, 1973

# The Belonging Sculpture



*The Singing Star*

Sculpture

2022

Paper, thread, a tack, and piper cleaners





*Hang girl*

Sculpture

2022

Paper, paper clips, a tack, paper clips, and pipe cleaners

*A Still Transformation*

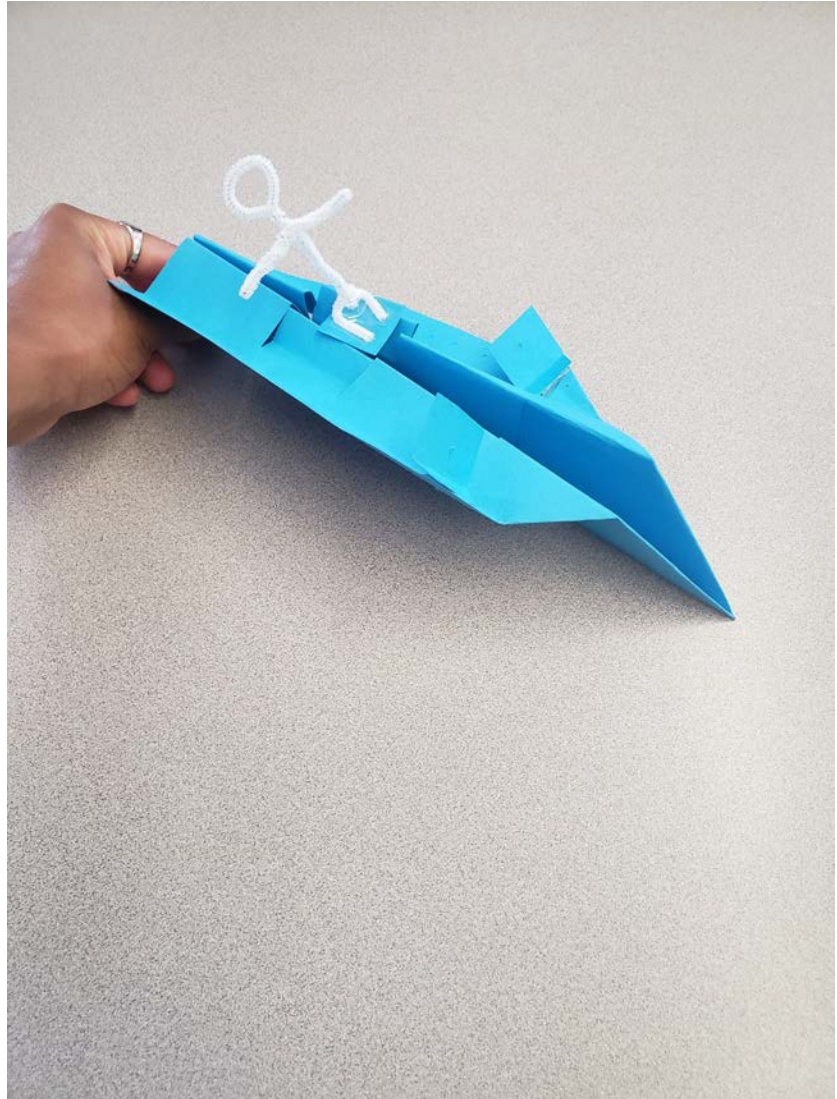
Sculpture

2022

Paper, tacks, tape, pipe cleaners



*Along for the Ride, Man*  
Sculpture  
2022  
Paper, tape, pipe cleaners





*Playing with Fire*

Sculpture

2022

Paper, pipe cleaners, rubber bands, threads

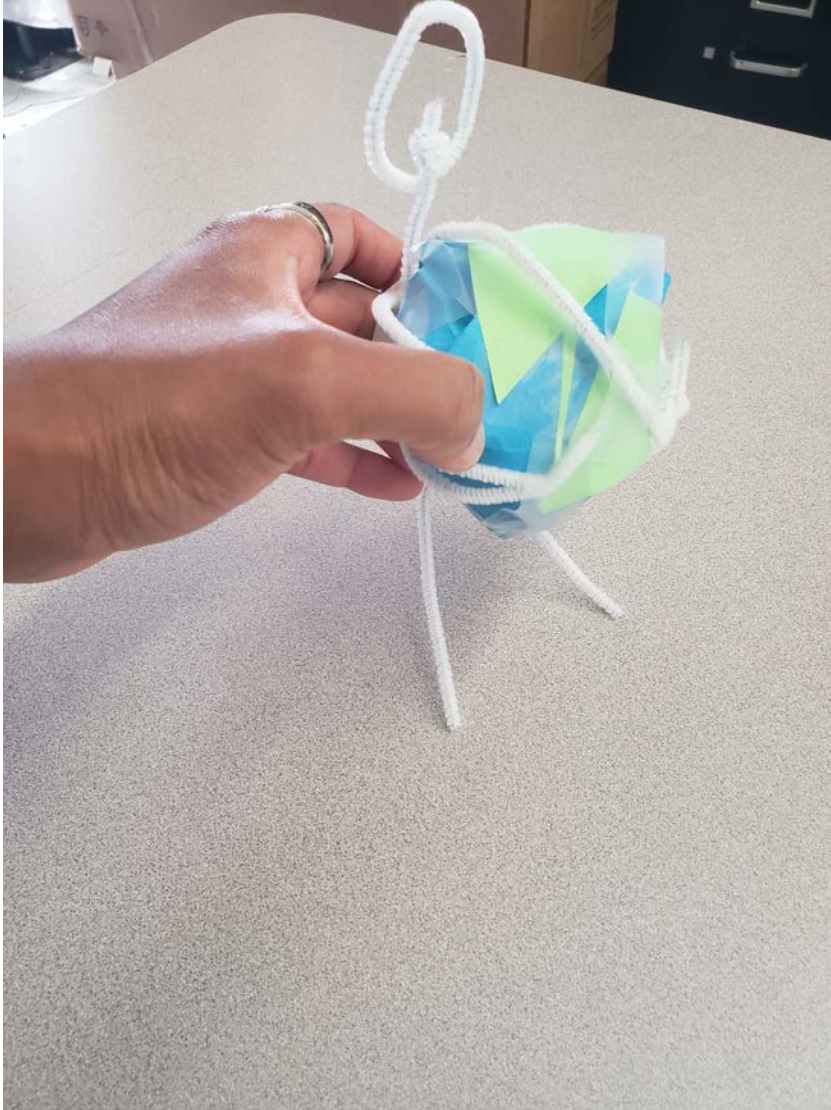


*World in Hand*

Sculpture

2022

Paper, tape, pipe cleaners

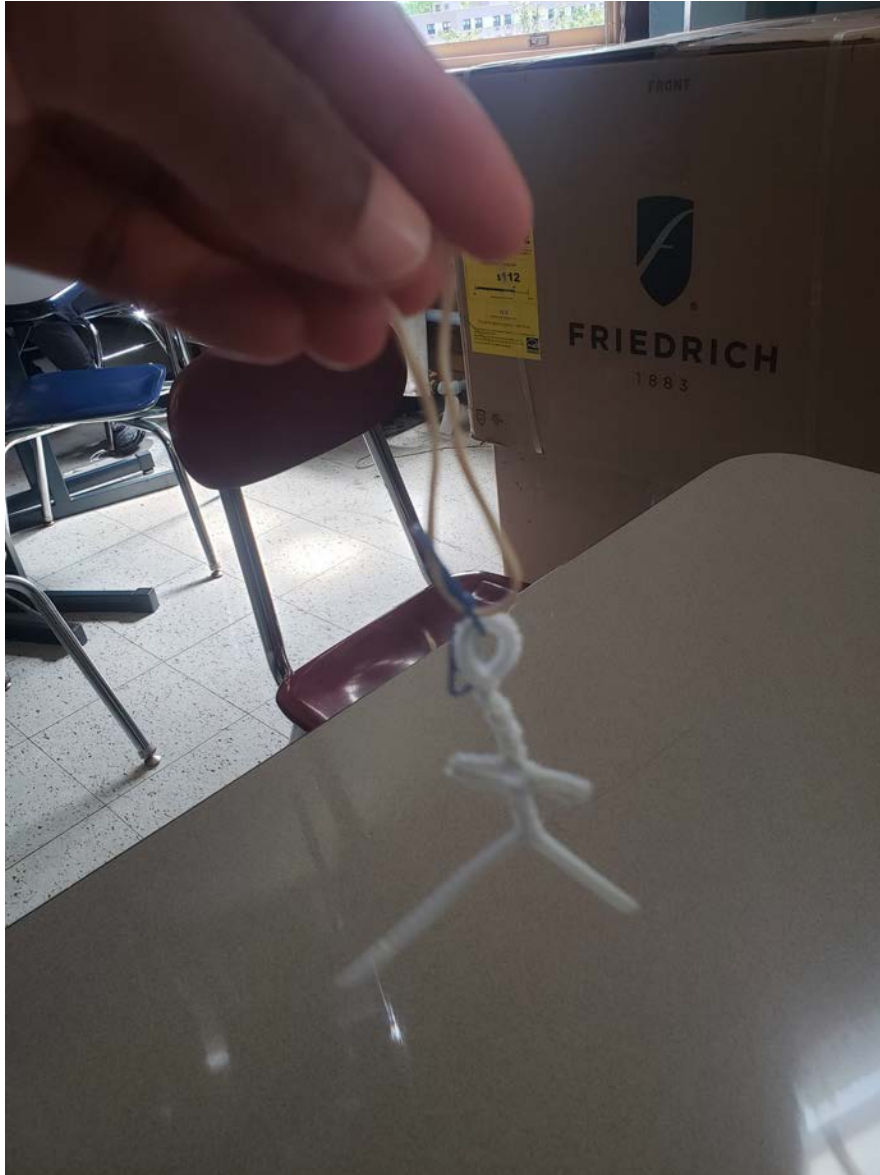


*Hanging By A Thread*

Sculpture

2022

Rubberband, Paper clip, Pipe cleaners



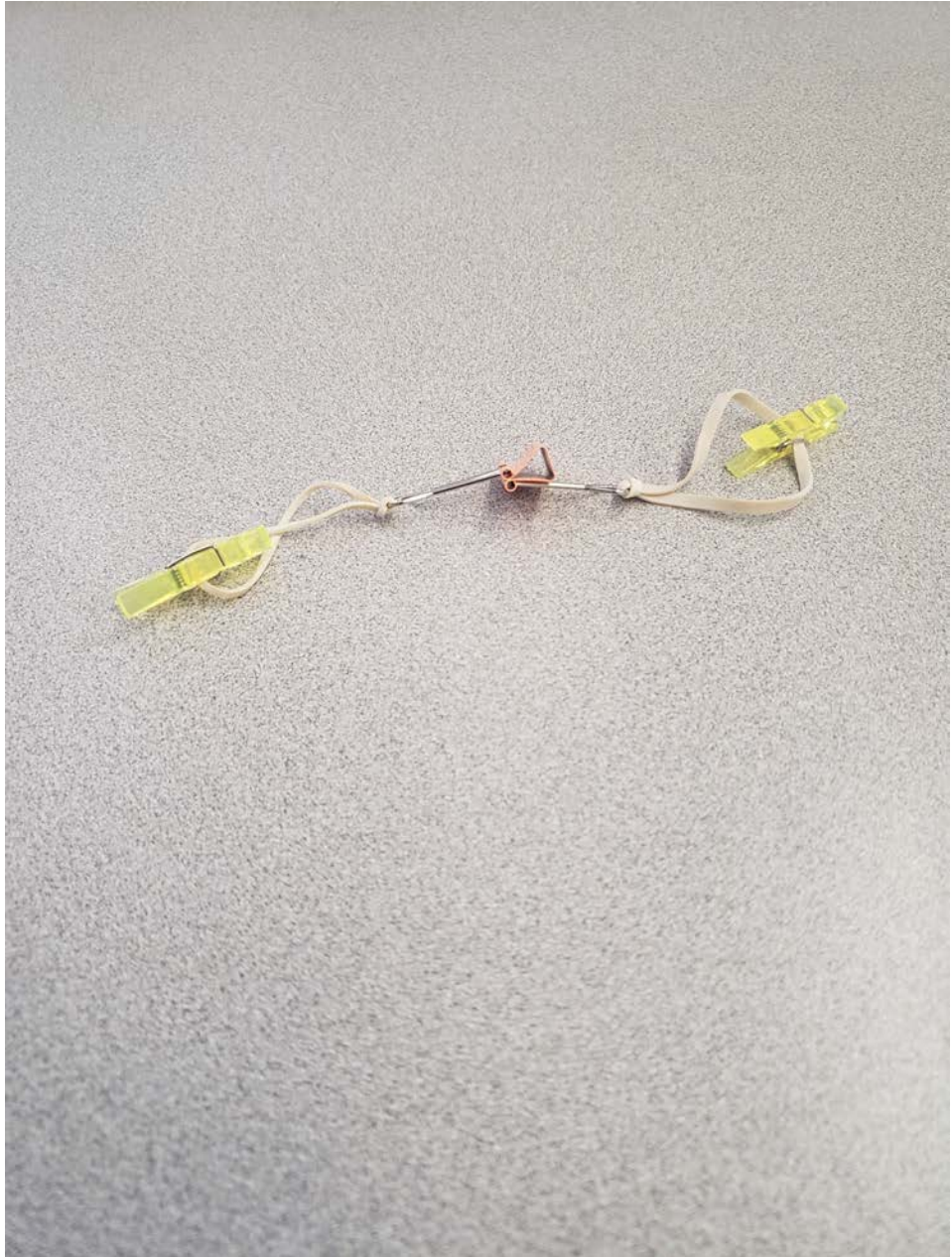


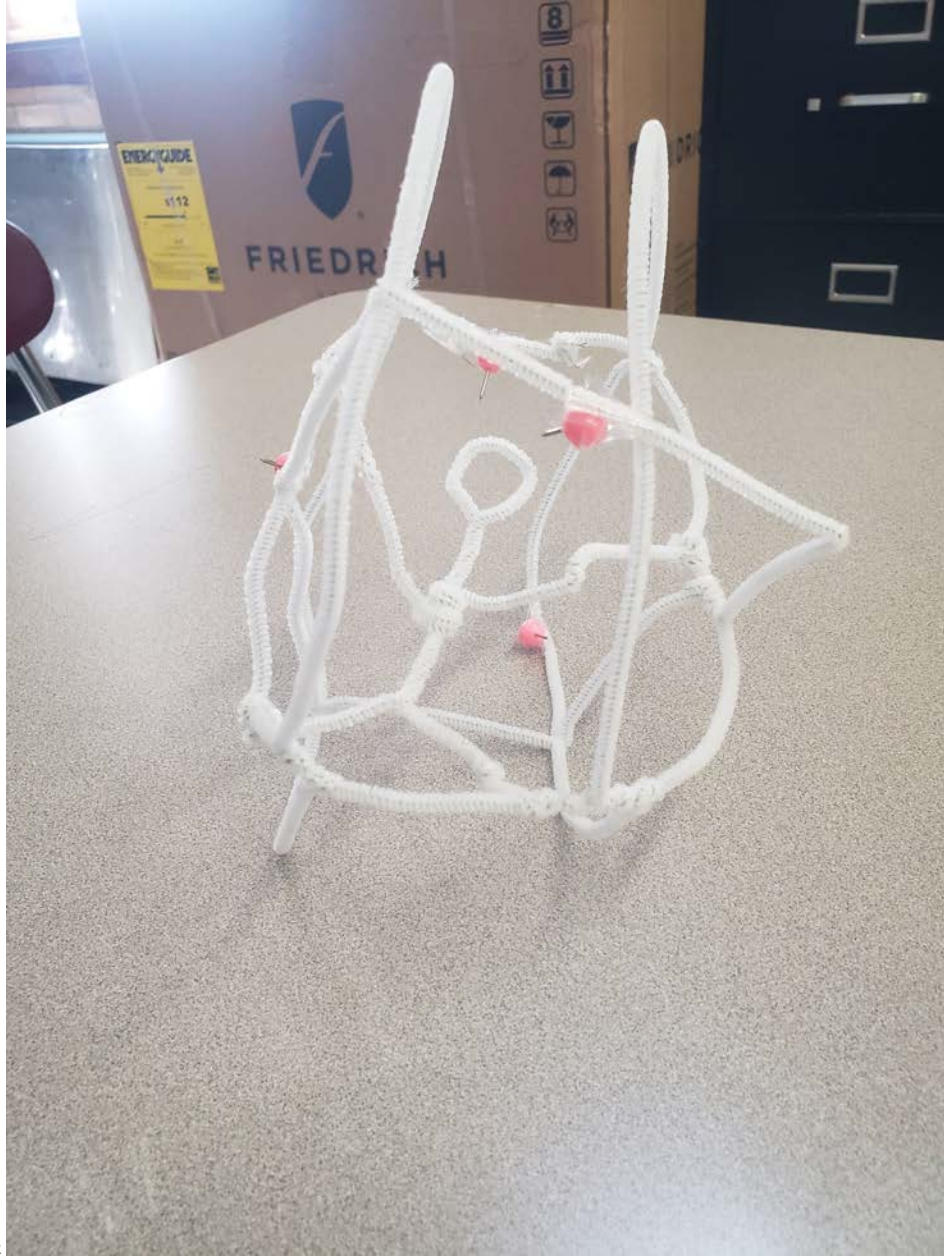
*Double-Jointed*

Sculpture

2022

Rubber band, metal clips, plastic clips





*In A Wheel of My Own*  
Sculpture  
2022  
Pipe cleaners, tape, tacks

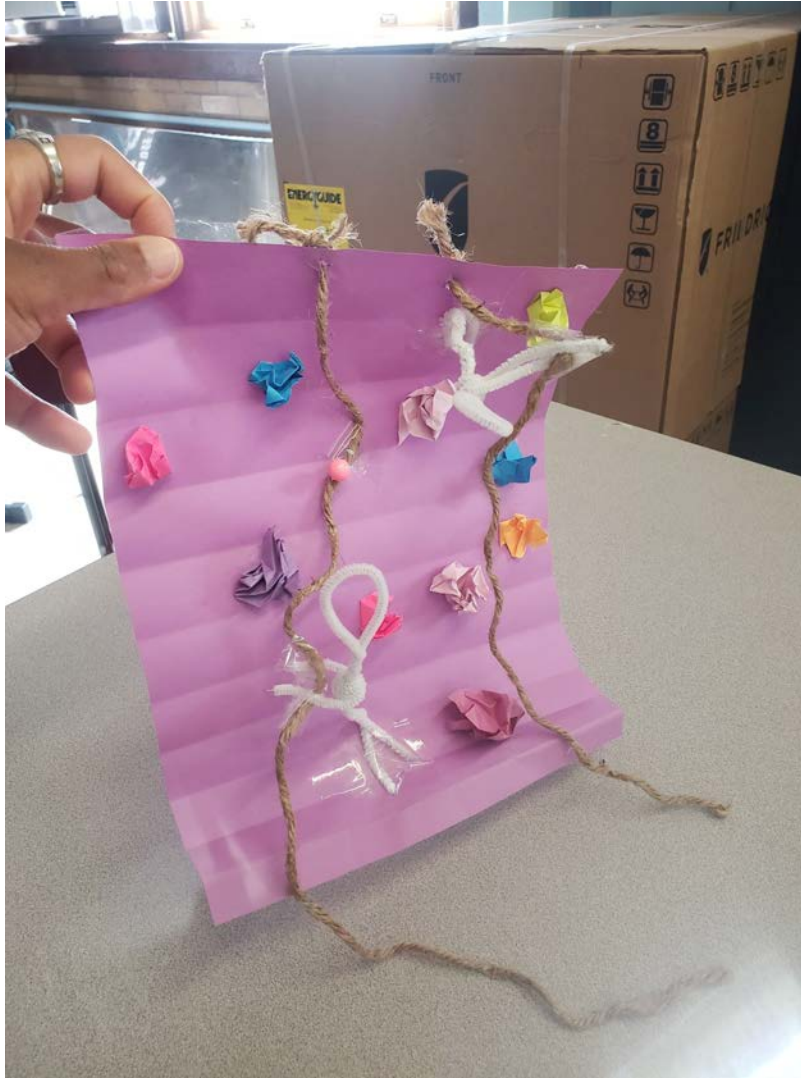


*Man-Made Wall*

Sculpture

2022

Paper, pipe cleaners, thread, tacks

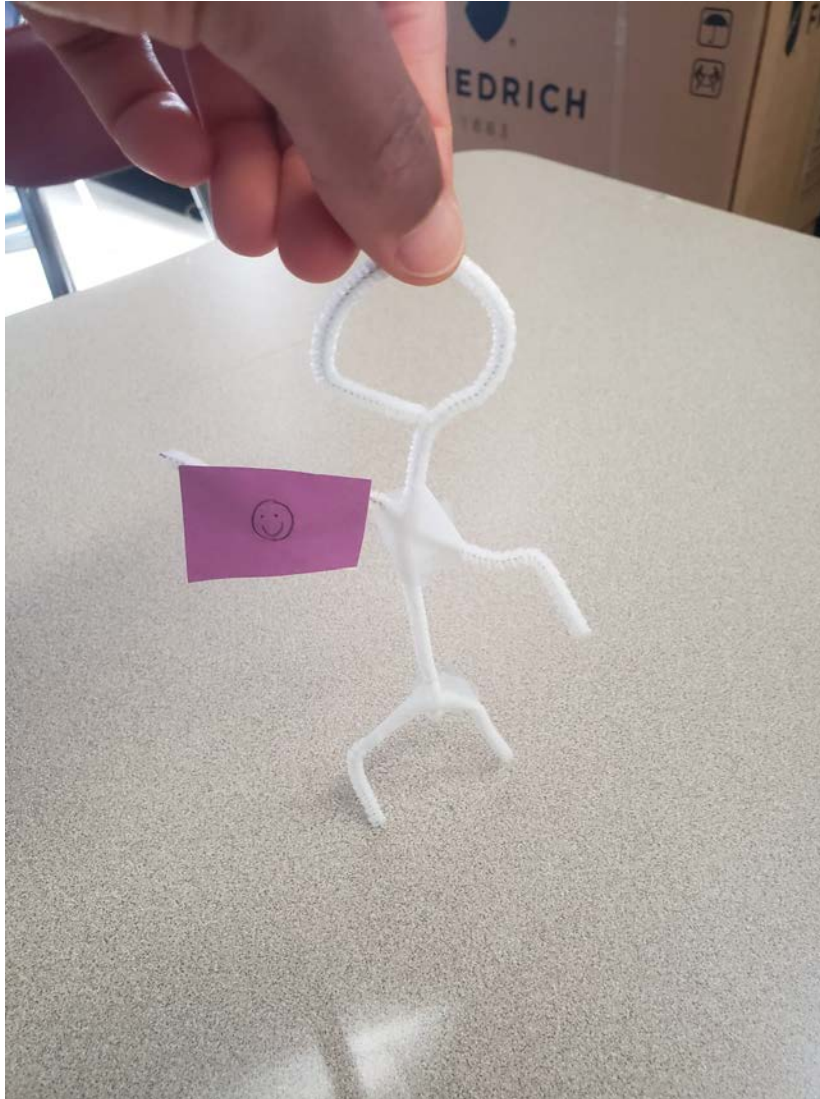


*Hi!*

Sculpture

2022

Paper, Pipe cleaners, Tape



*Chillin'*

Sculpture

2022

Pipe cleaners



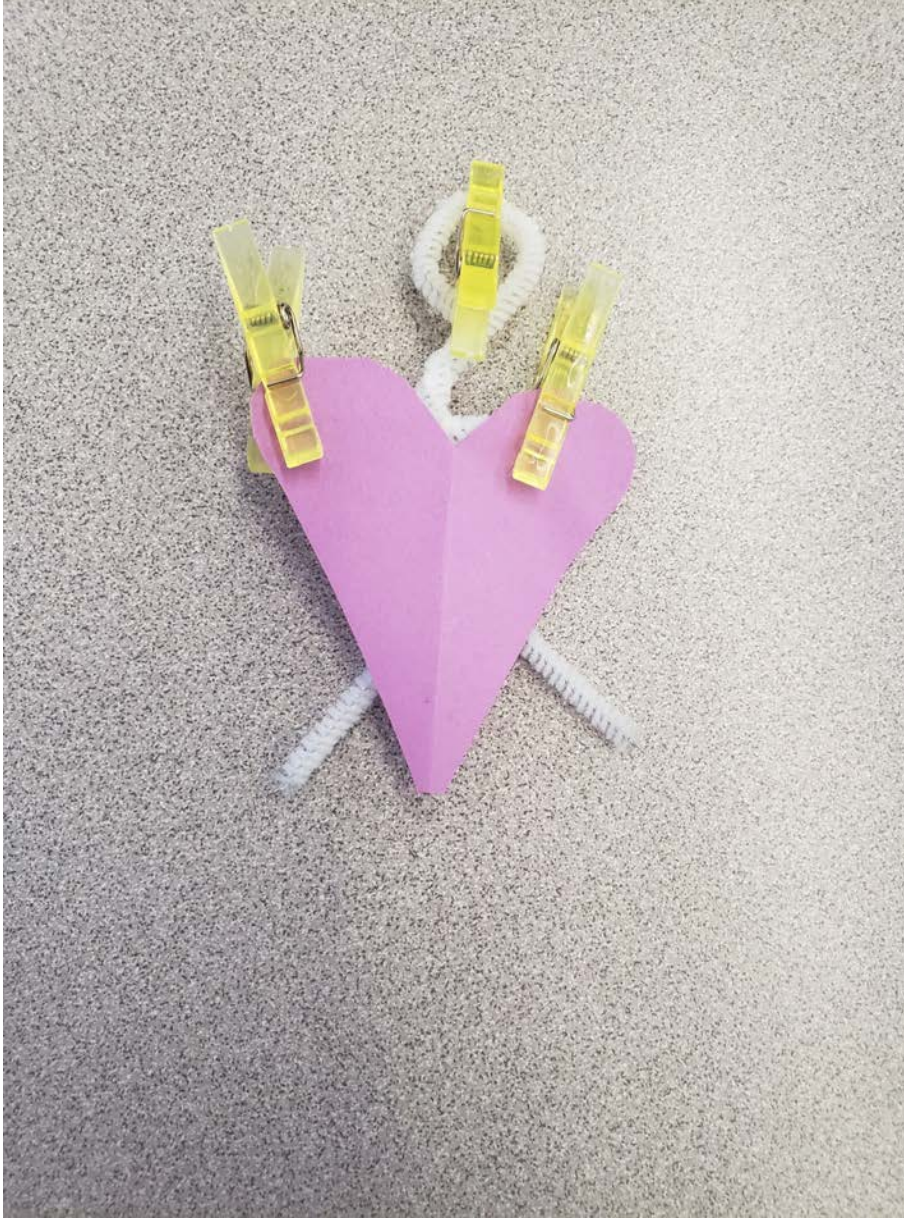


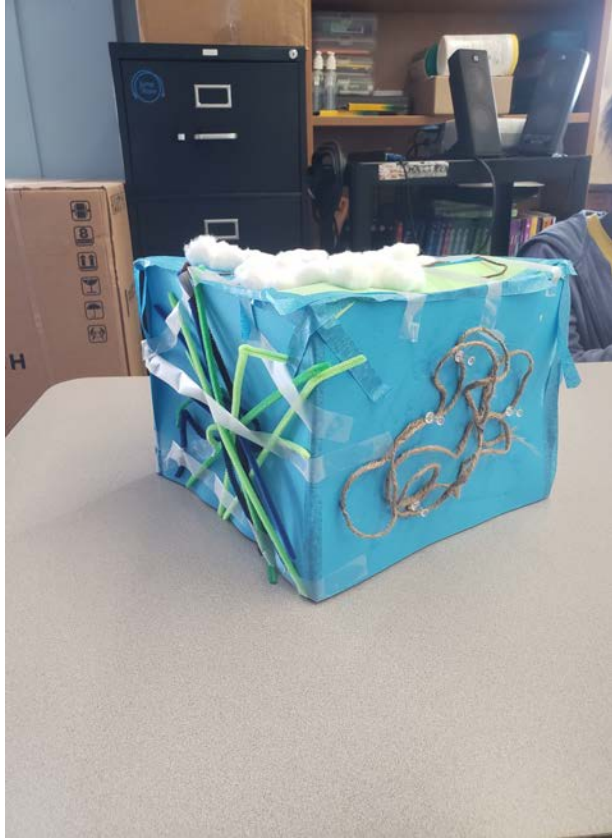
*Clipped Heart*

Sculpture

2022

Paper, pipe cleaners, plastic clips





*The Diaspora Cube*

Sculpture

2022

Paper, Thread, Cotton balls, Tape, VIBE magazine circa 2004, pipe cleaners



*Pressure*

Sculpture

2022

Paper, thread, rubber bands, paper clips

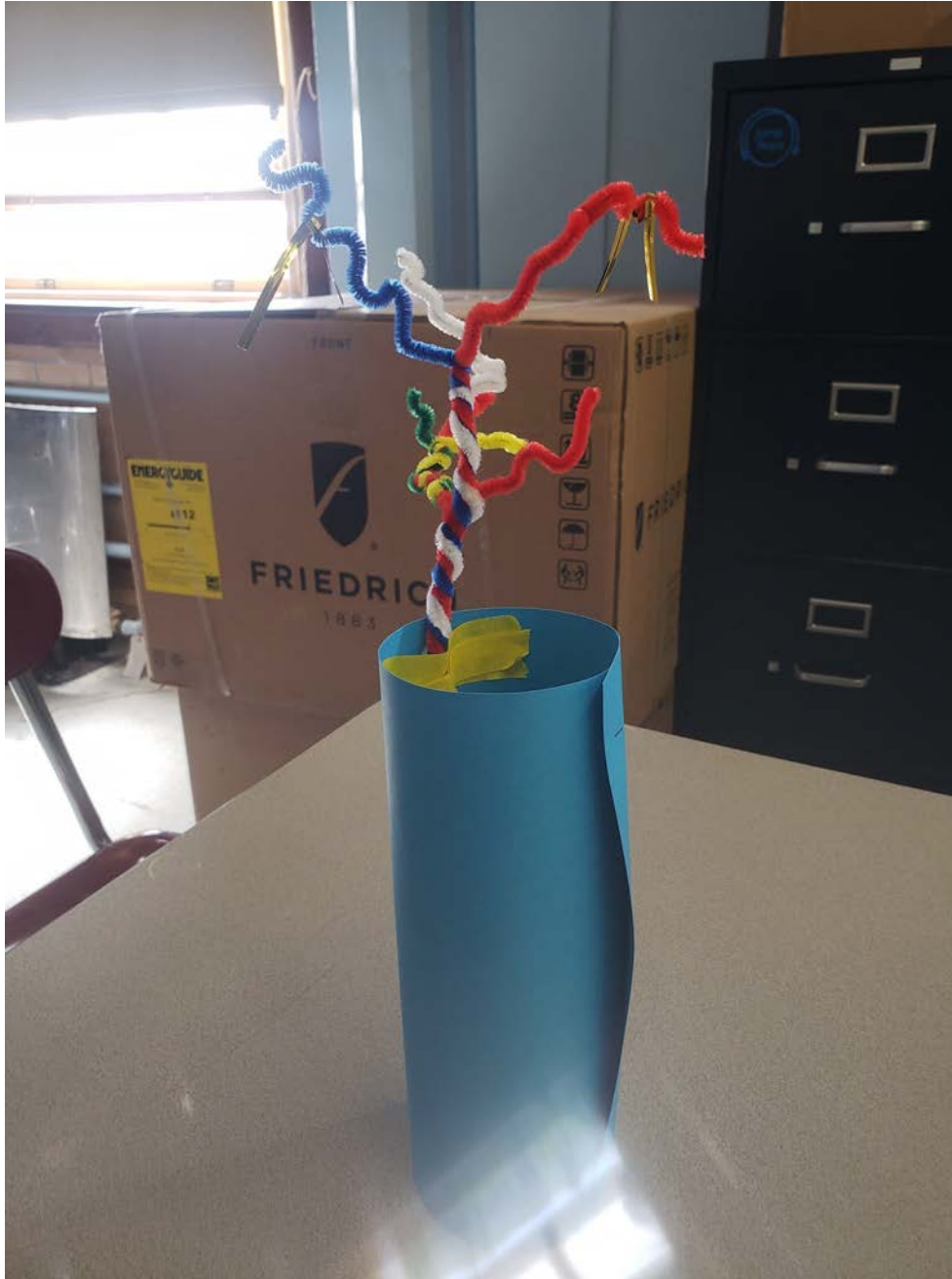


*Fireworks*

Sculpture

2022

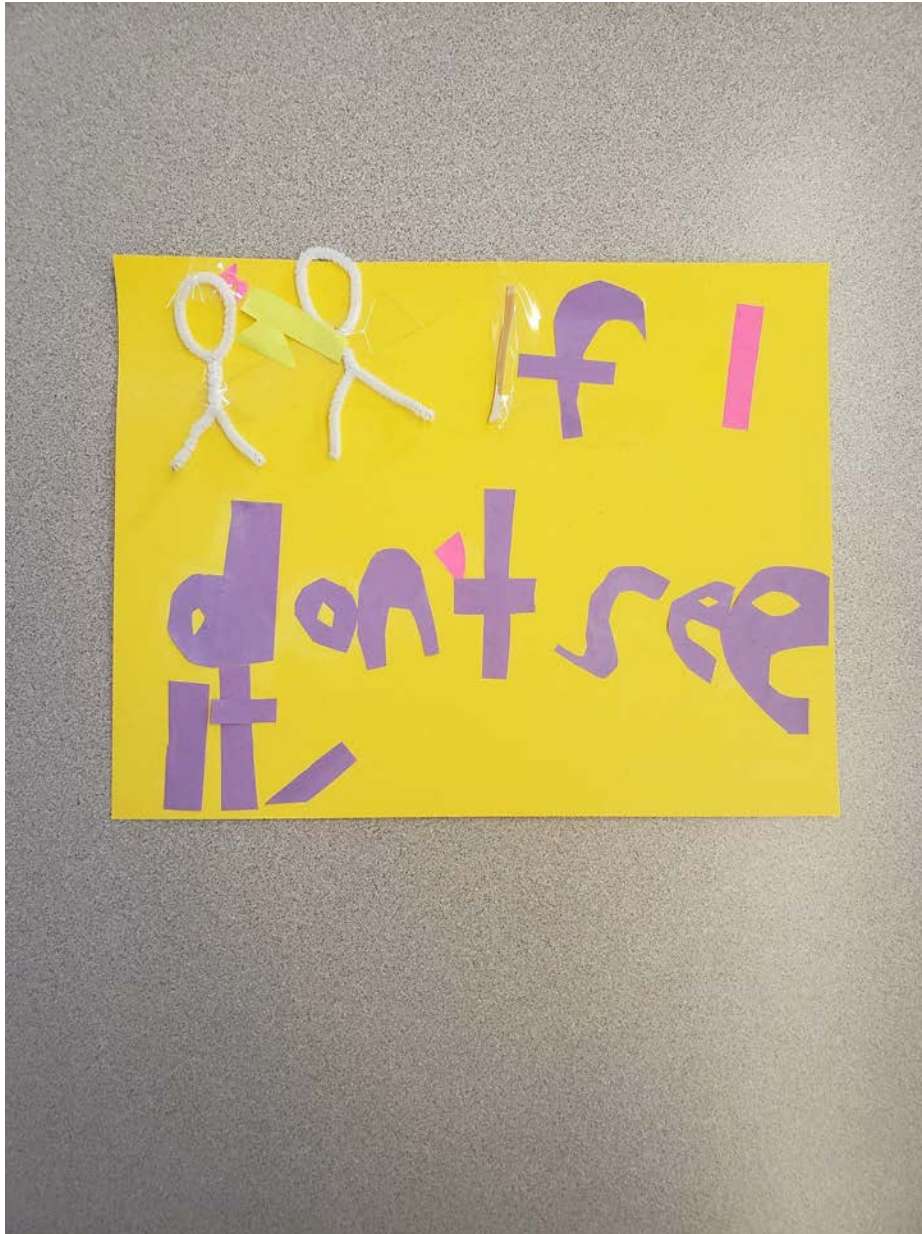
Paper, tape, pipe cleaners



*Invisible*

Sculpture

Paper, rubber band, pipe cleaners



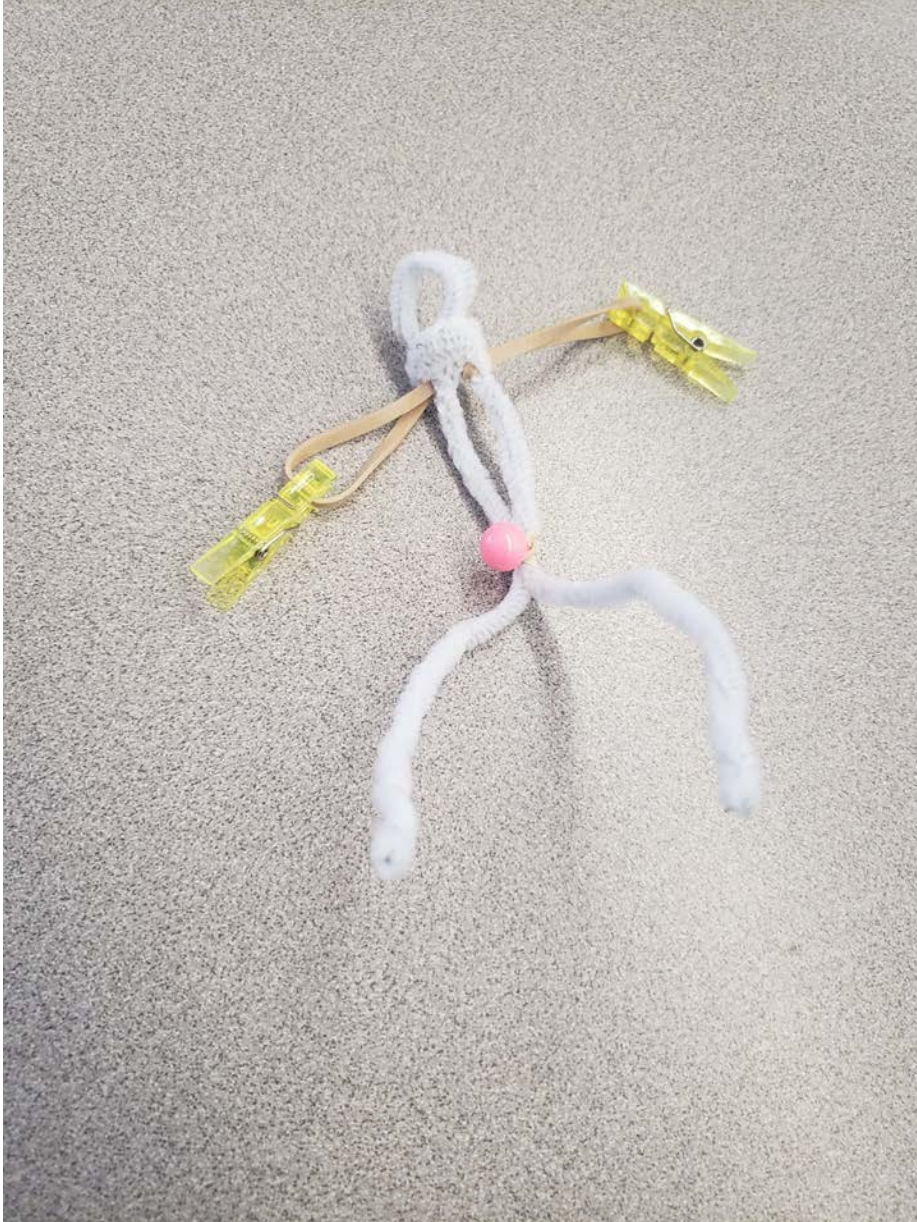


*Pinned Down*

Sculpture

2022

Pipe cleaners, rubber bands, tack, plastic clips



*Wired*

Sculpture

2022

Paper, pipe cleaners, tack

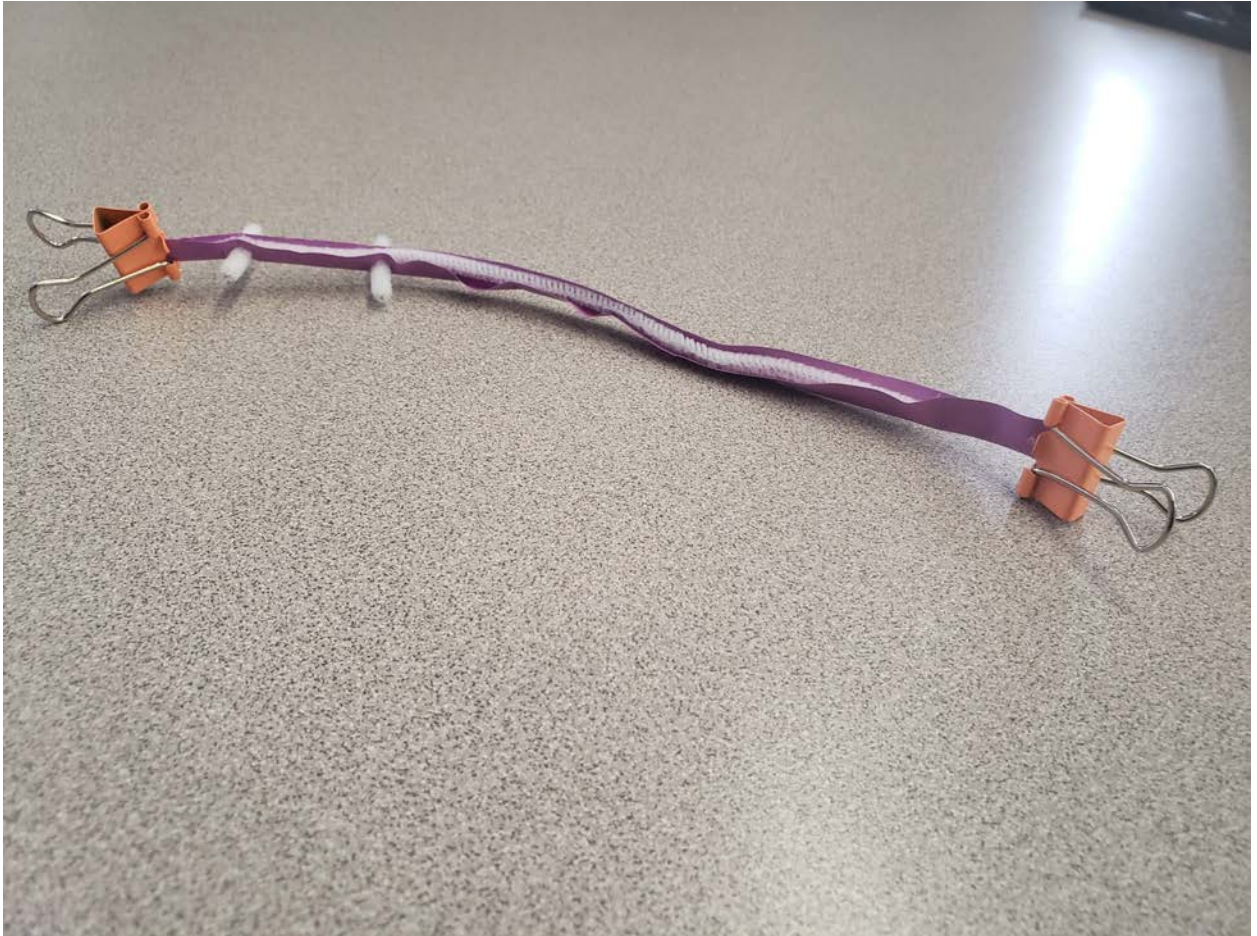


*Braces*

Sculpture

2022

Paper, pipe cleaners, clips



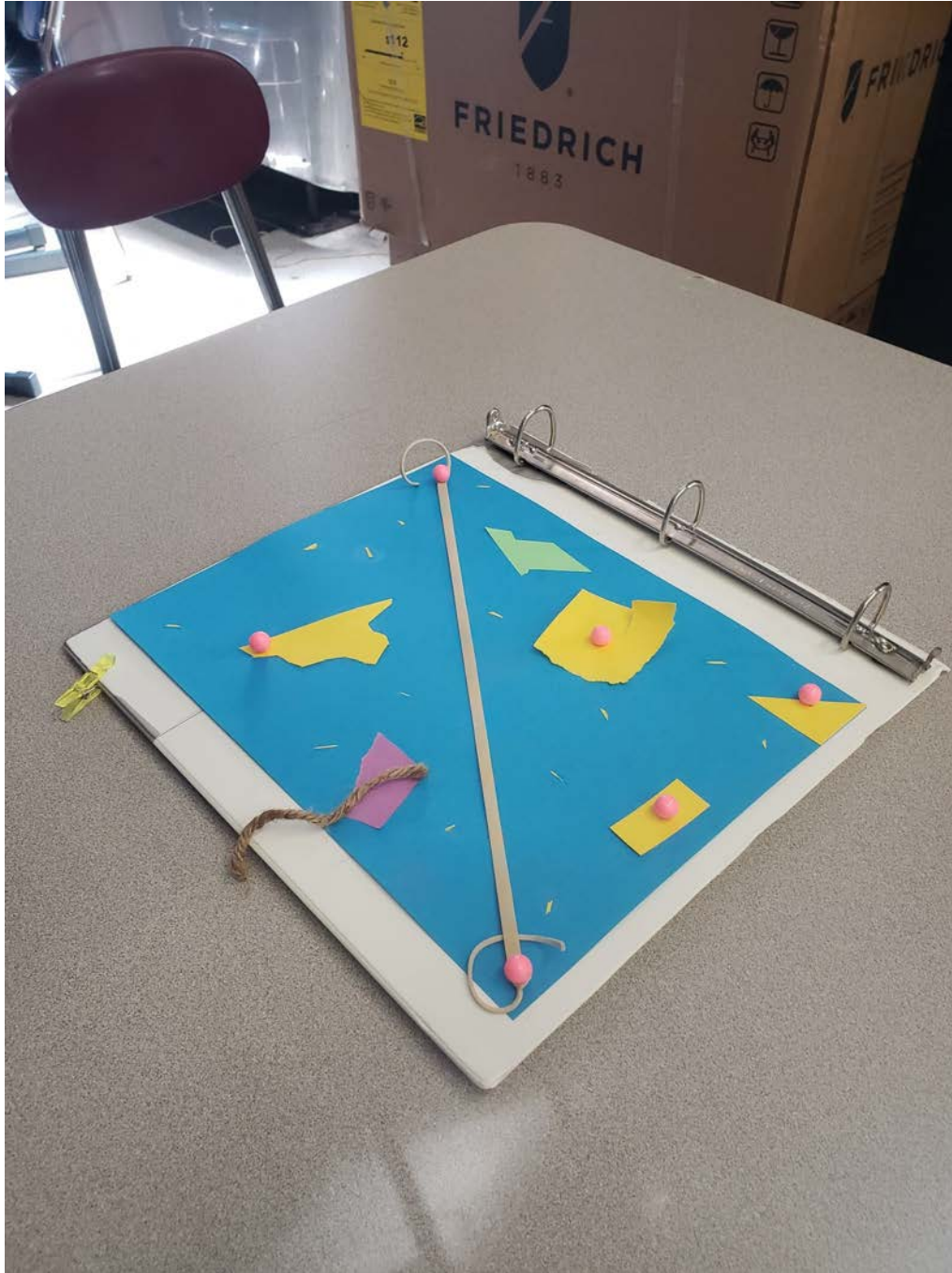


*Between*

Sculpture

2022

Binder, rubber band, tack, paper, thread

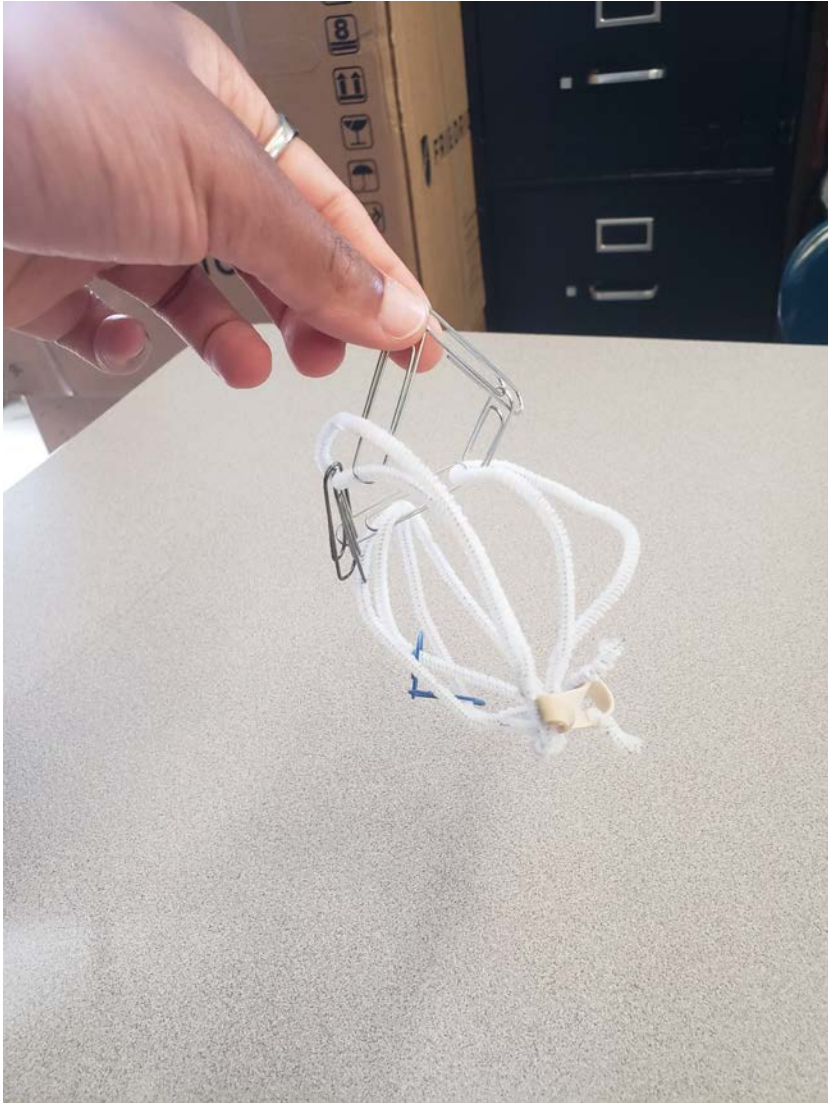


*Connection*

Sculpture

2022

Paper clips, pipe cleaners, rubber bands

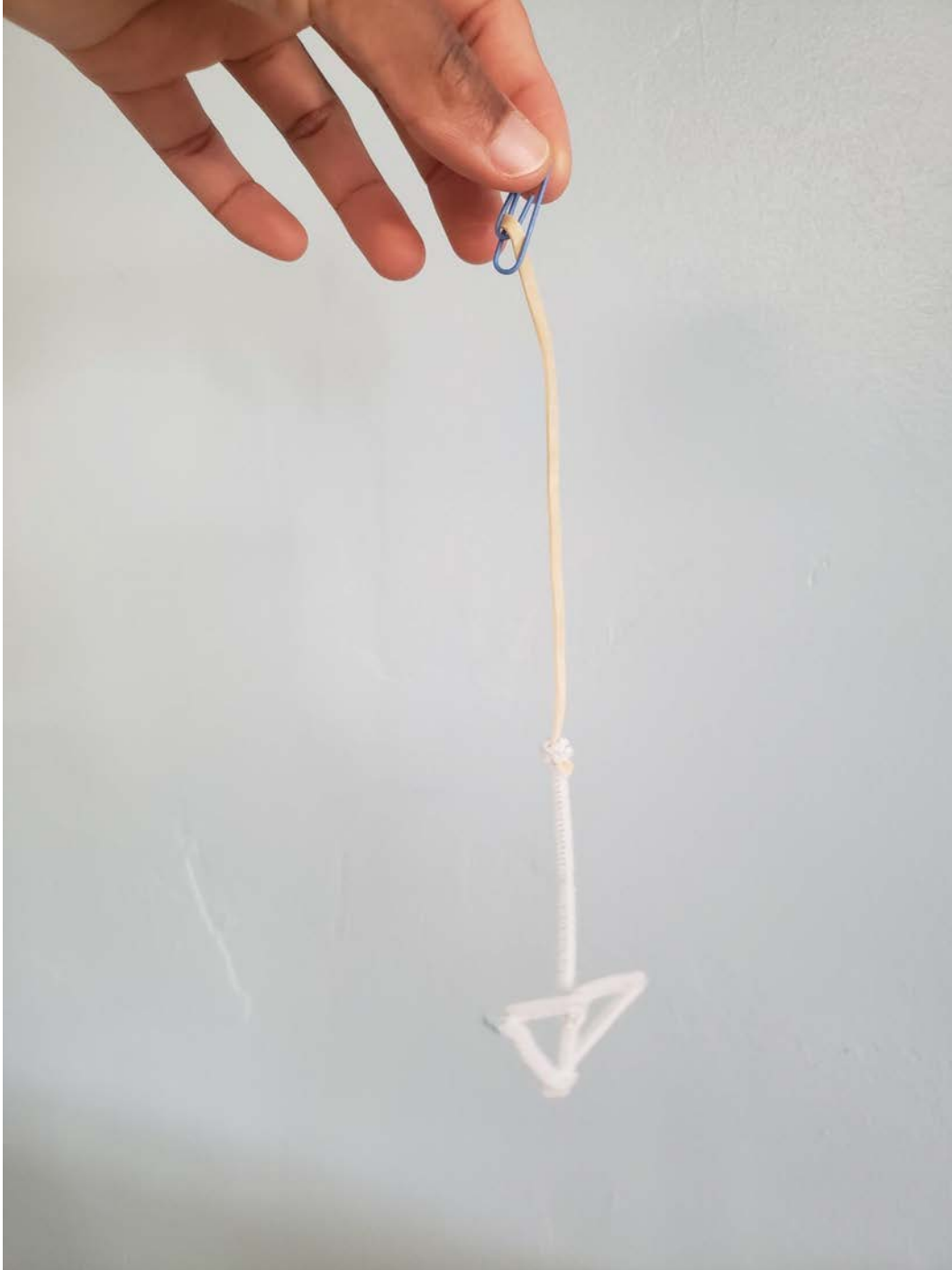


*Arrow*

Sculpture

2022

Paper clip, rubber band, pipe cleaners



“Cultural identity, in this second sense, is a matter of “becoming” as well as “being”. It belongs to the future as much as to the past. It is not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history, and culture.”

–Stuart Hall, “Cultural Identity and Diaspora,” 1996

## The Diaspora Collage



Collage  
2022

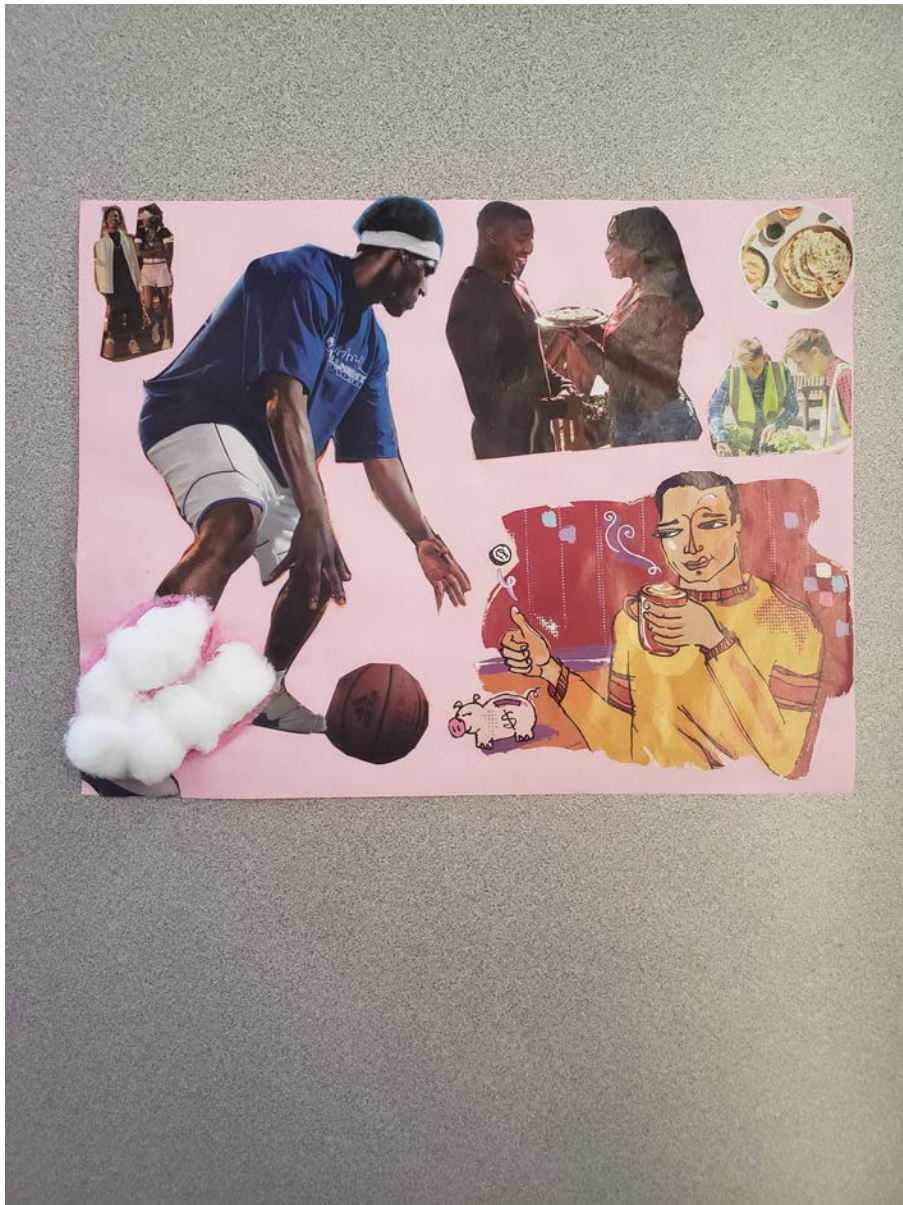
Paper, VIBE magazine circa 2004, tape



Collage

2022

Paper, VIBE magazine circa 2004, cotton balls, pipe cleaners

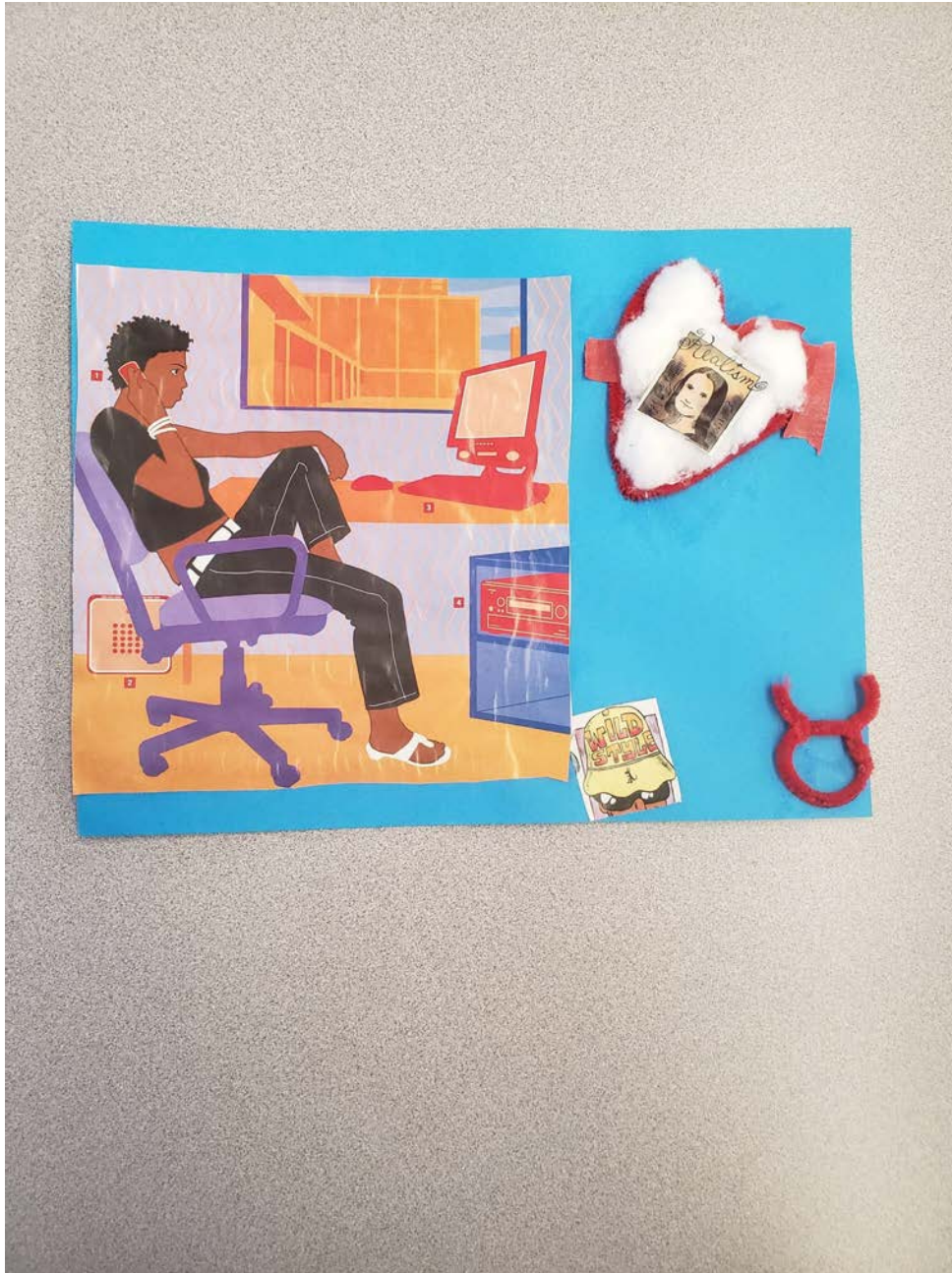




Collage

2022

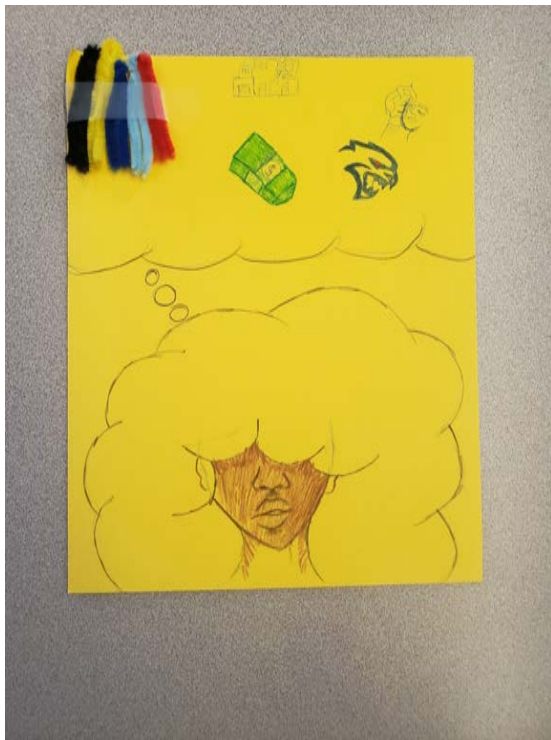
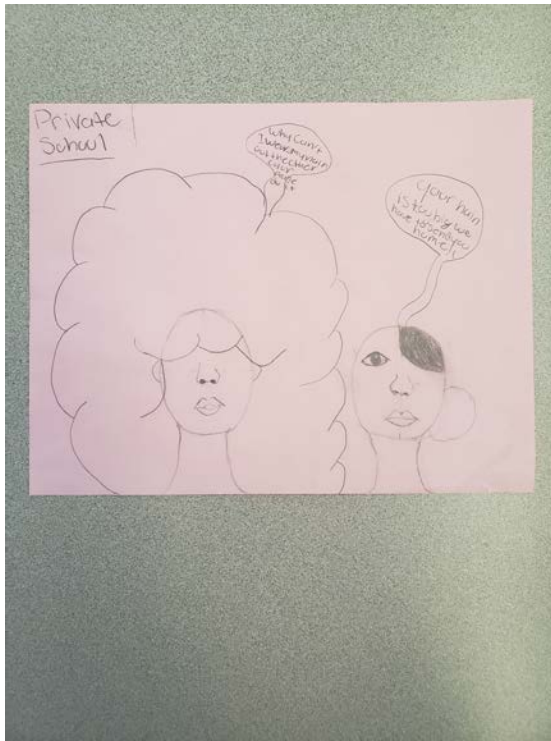
Paper, VIBE magazine circa 2004, pipe cleaners, cotton balls, tape

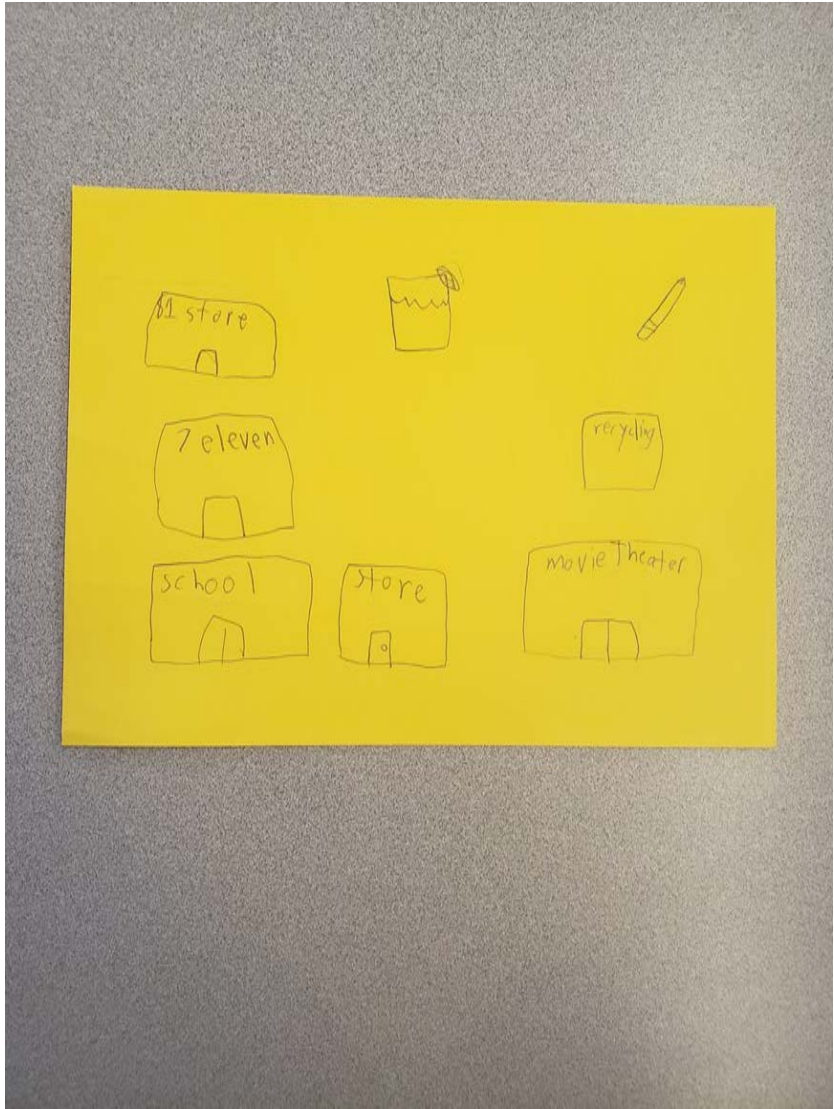


Collage

2002

Paper, pencil, colored pencil, tape, pipe cleaners



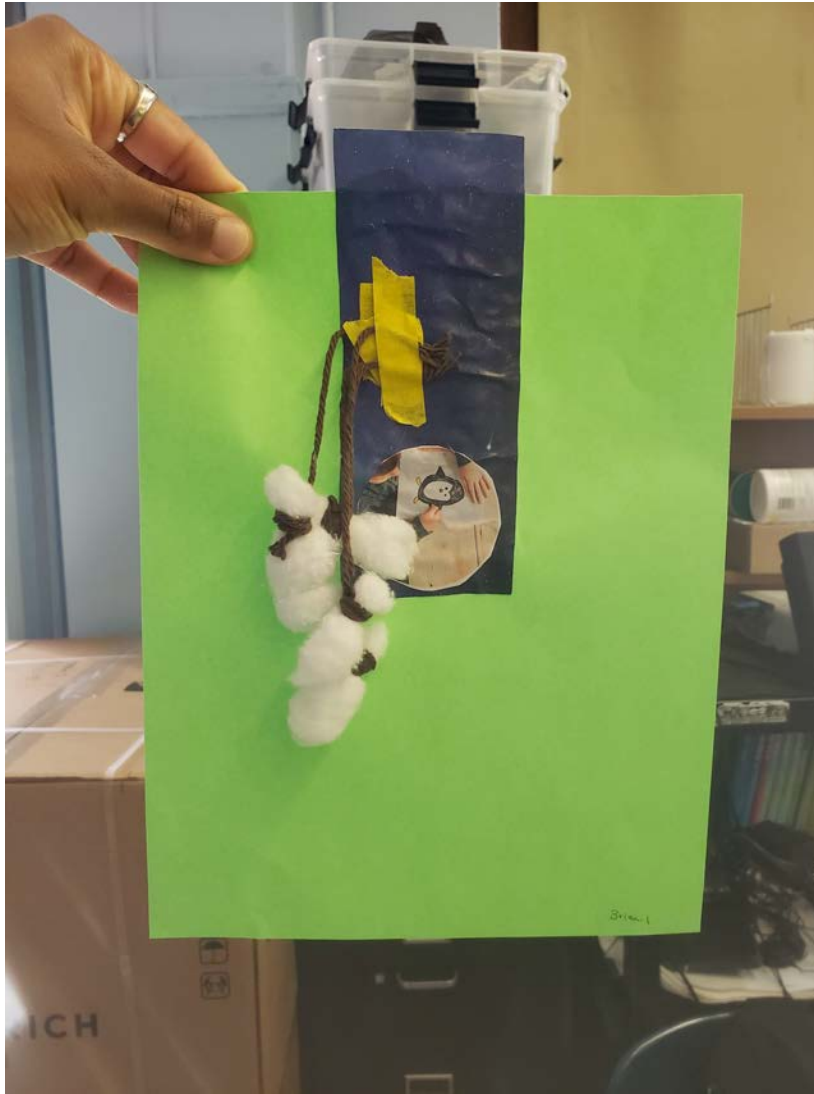


Drawing  
2022  
Pencil on paper

Collage

2022

Paper, VIBE magazine circa 2004, thread, cotton balls

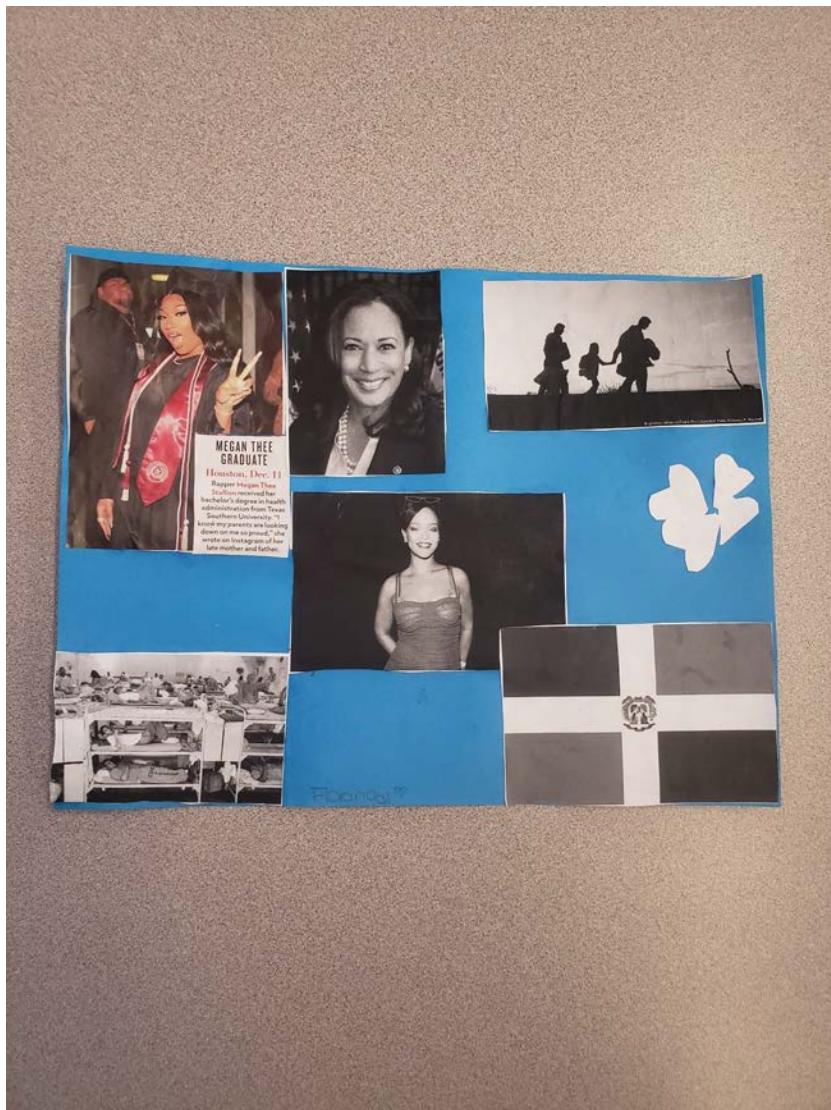




Collage

2022

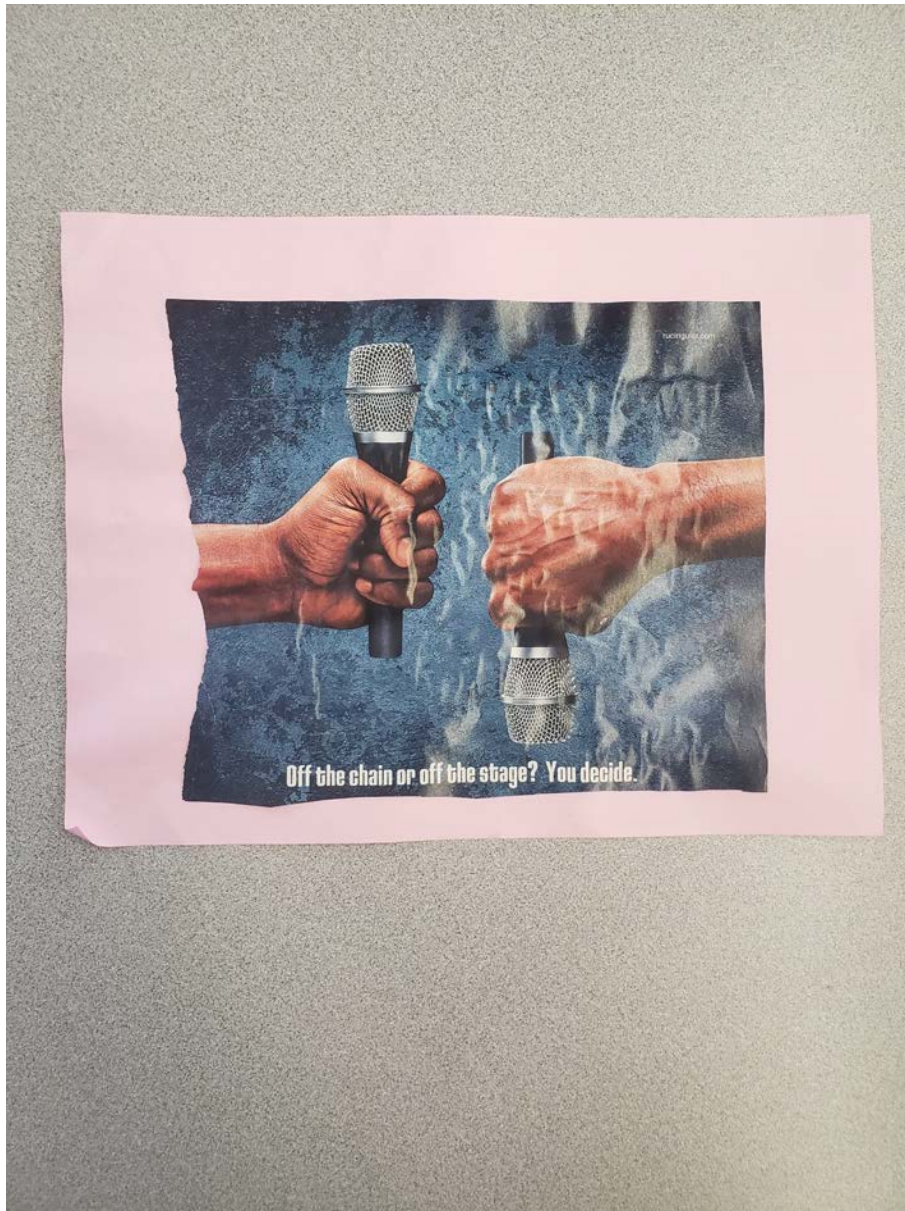
Paper, Found pictures, People magazine circa 2022



Collage

2022

Paper, VIBE magazine circa 2022

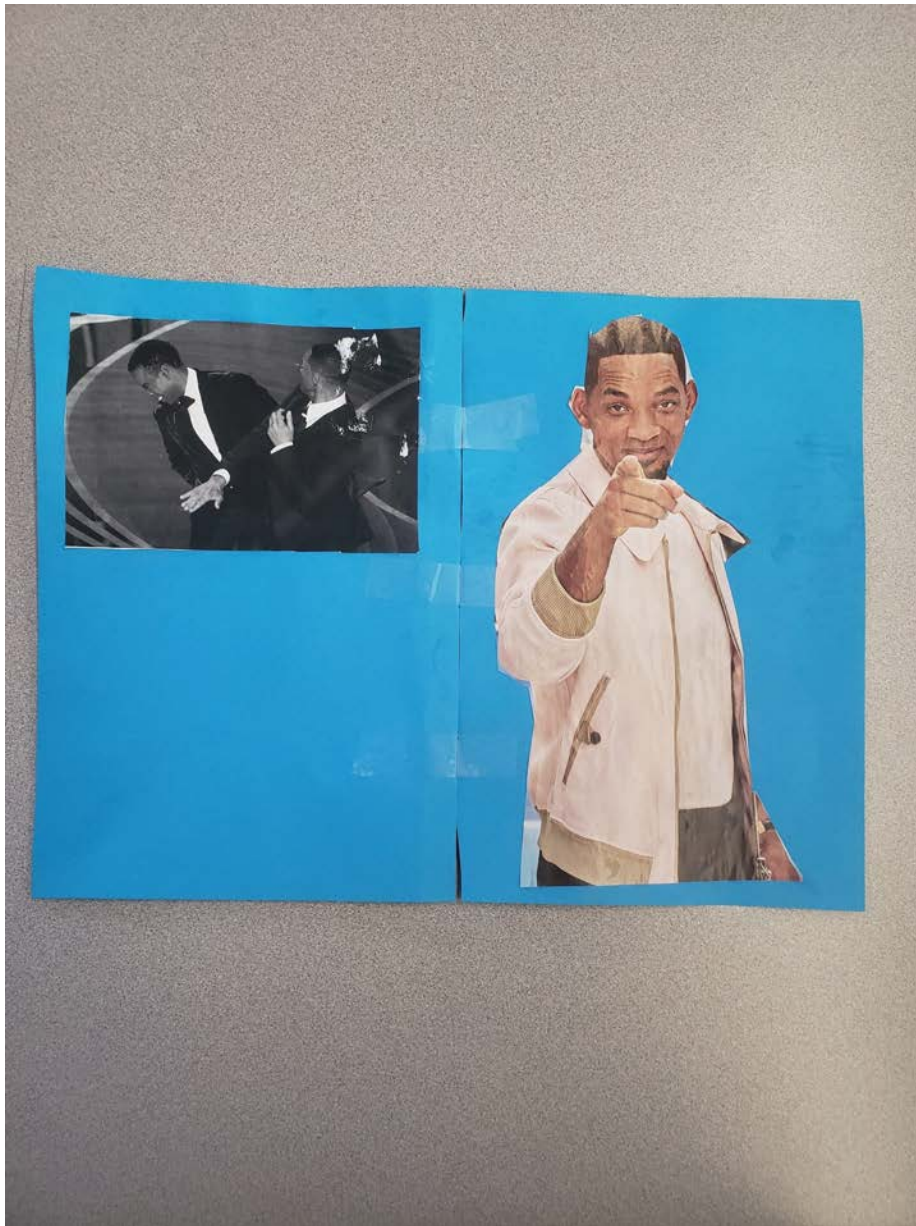




Collage

2022

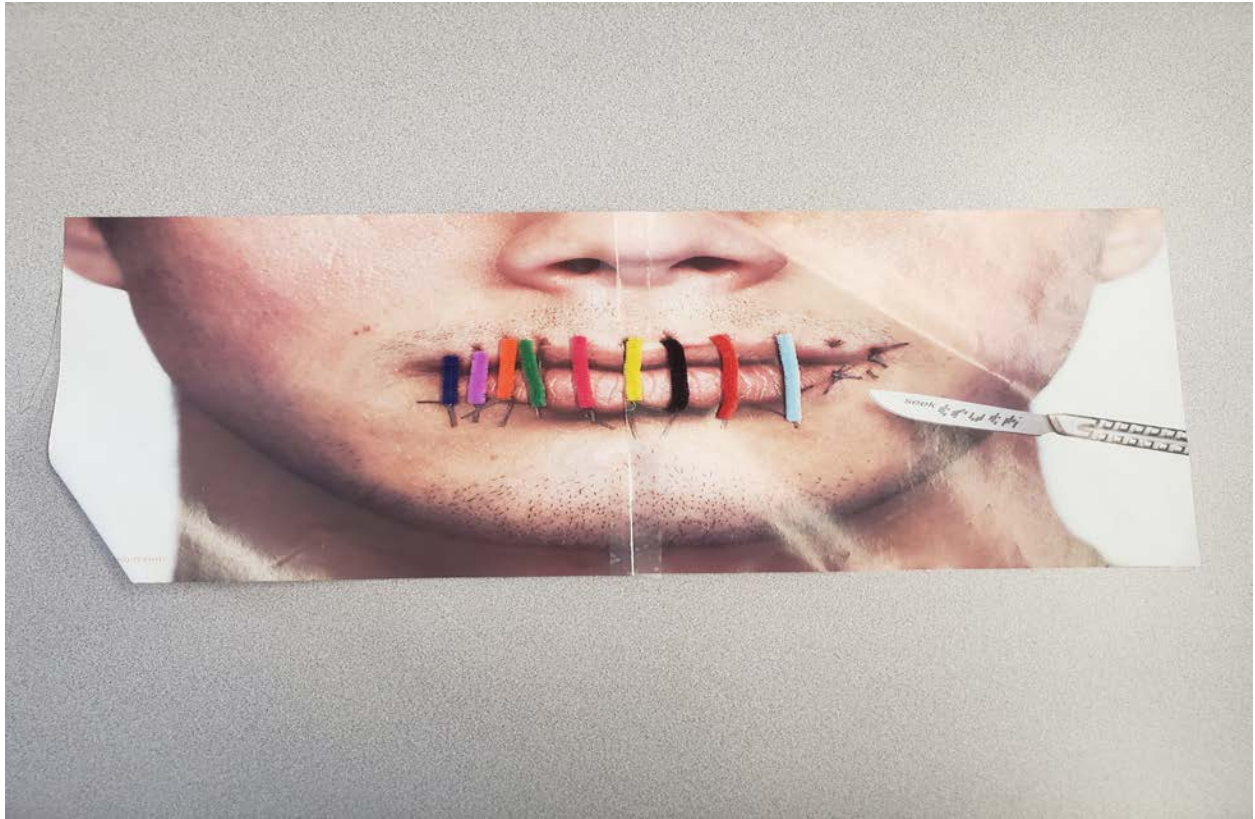
Paper, People magazine circa 2022, found pictures



Collage

2002

VIBE magazine circa 2004, pipe cleaners



Collage

2022

Paper, pipe cleaners, cotton balls, found pictures, VIBE magazine circa 2004

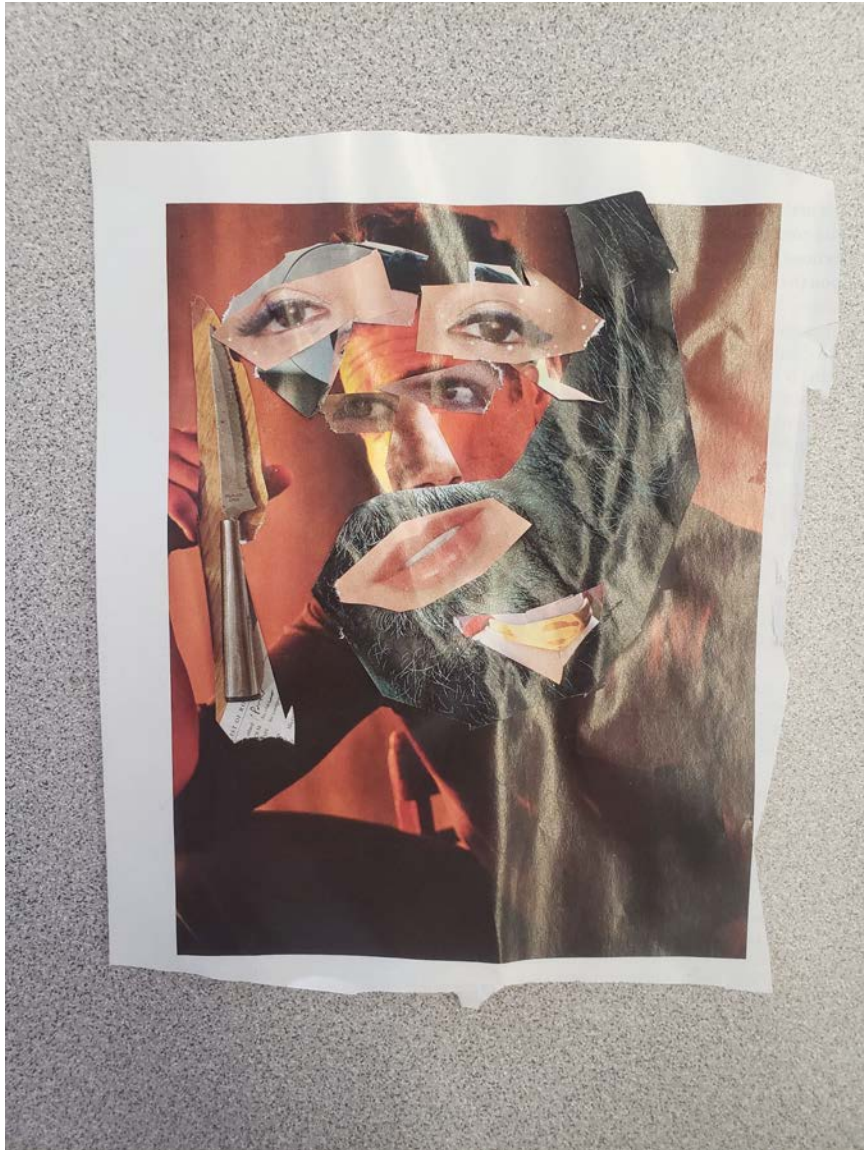




Collage

2022

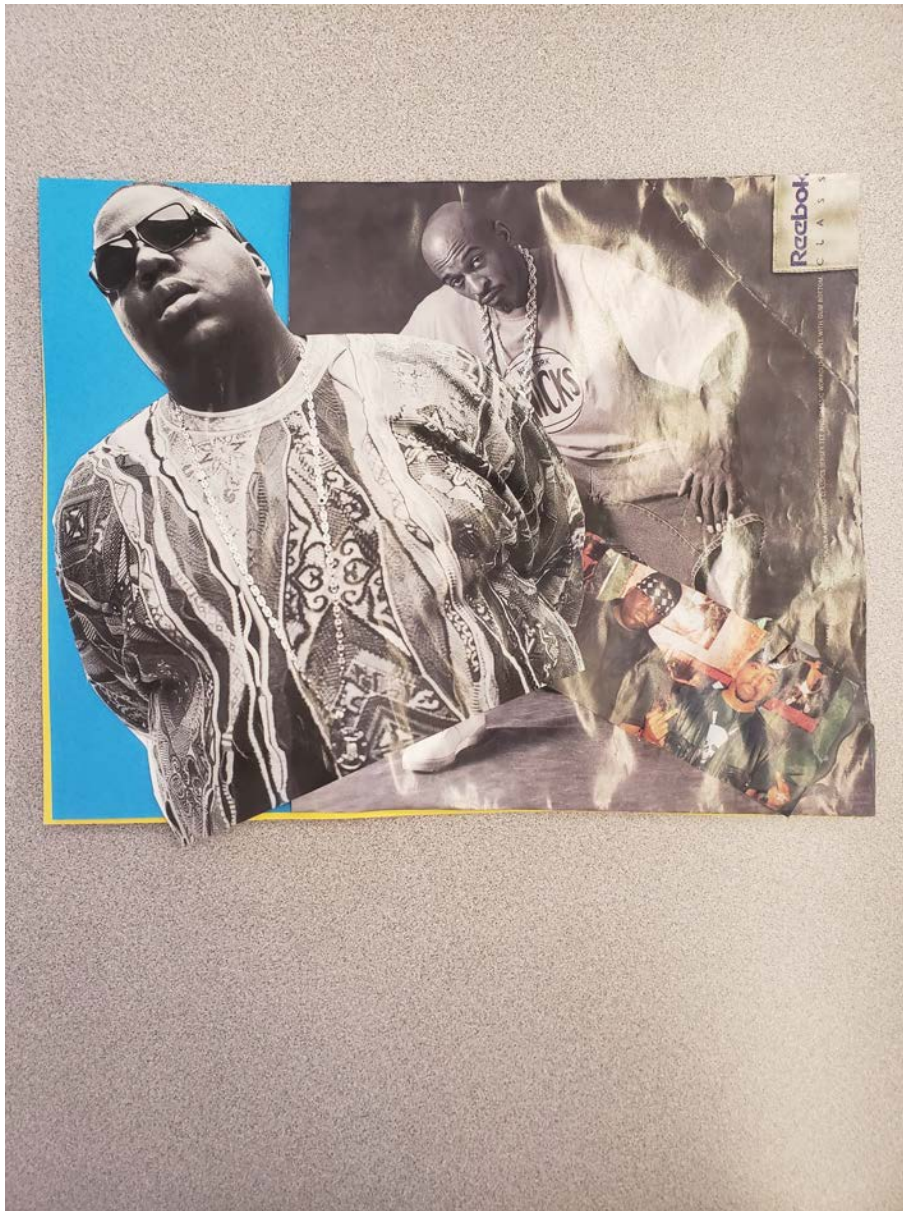
VIBE magazine circa 2004



Collage

2022

VIBE magazine circa 2004 on paper

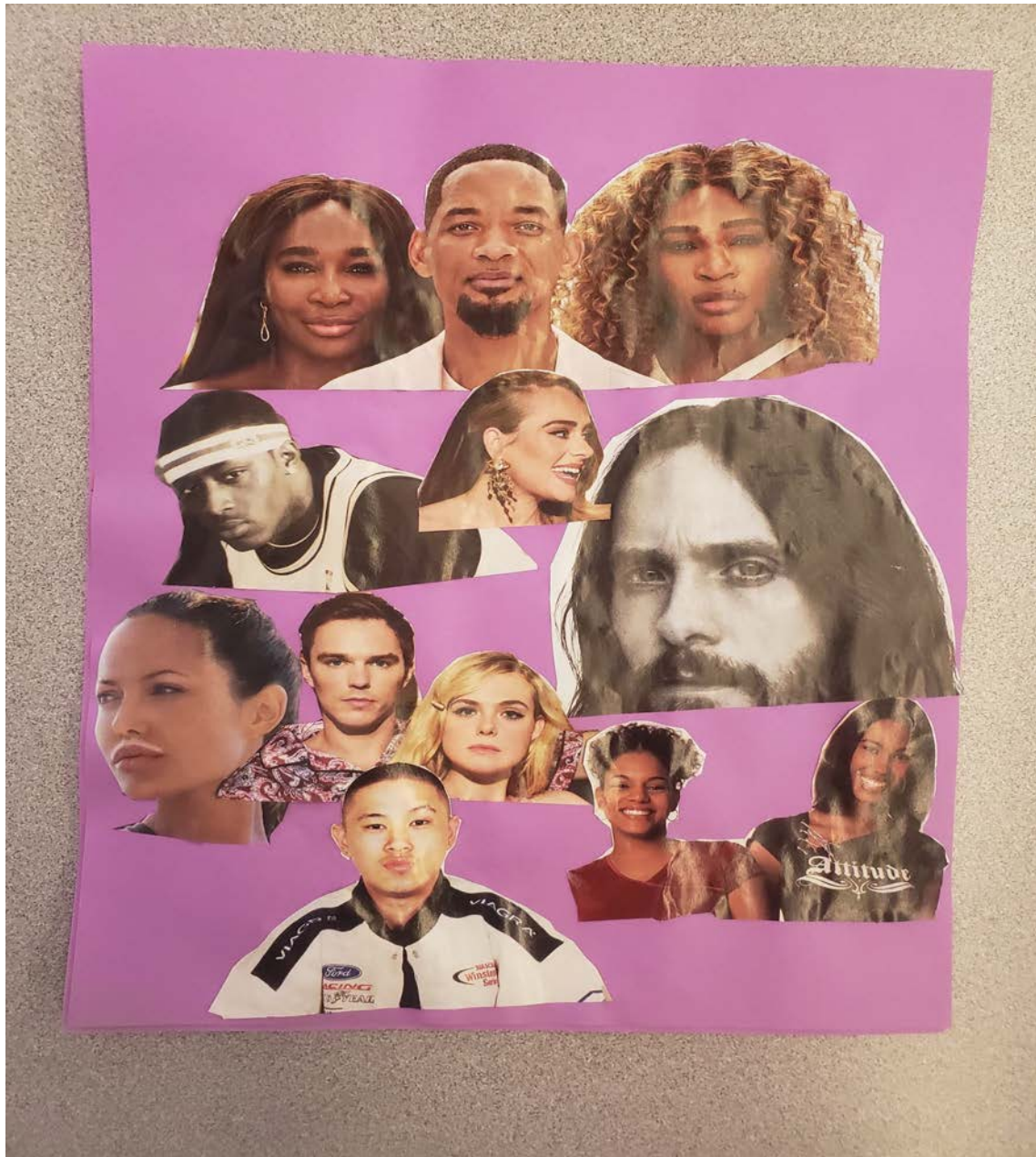




Collage

2022

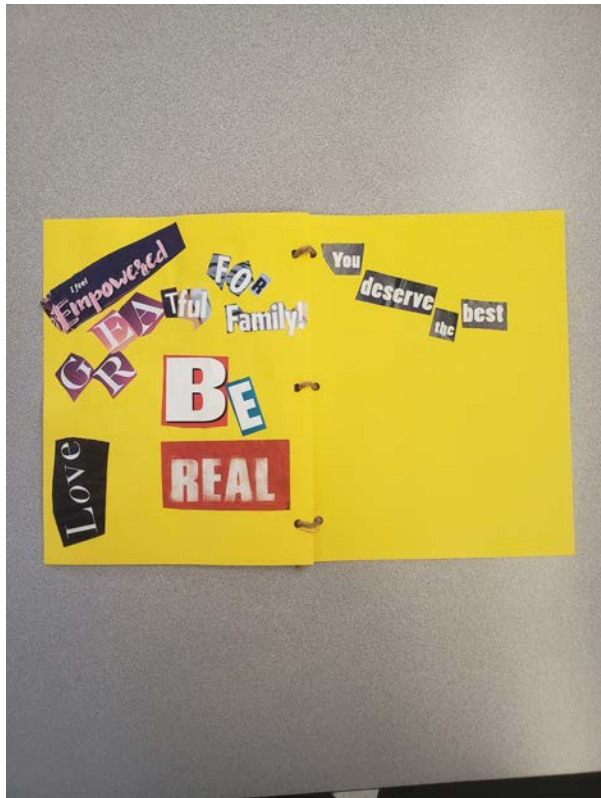
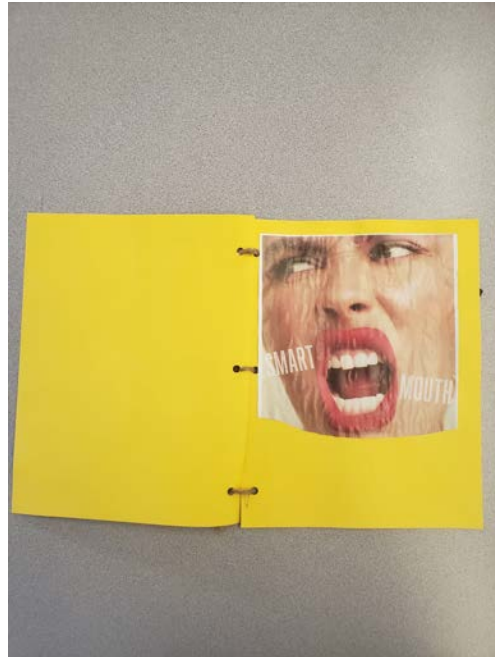
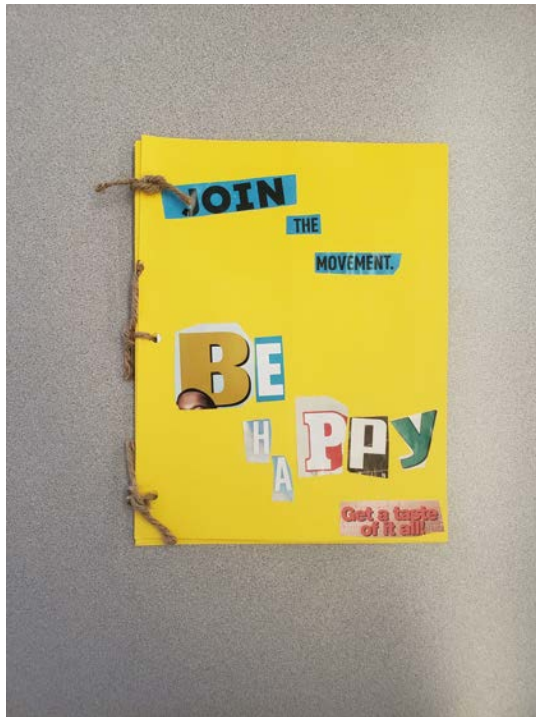
VIBE magazine circa 2004, People magazine circa 2022 on paper



Collage

2022

VIBE magazine circa 2004, thread, tape, tack, cotton balls

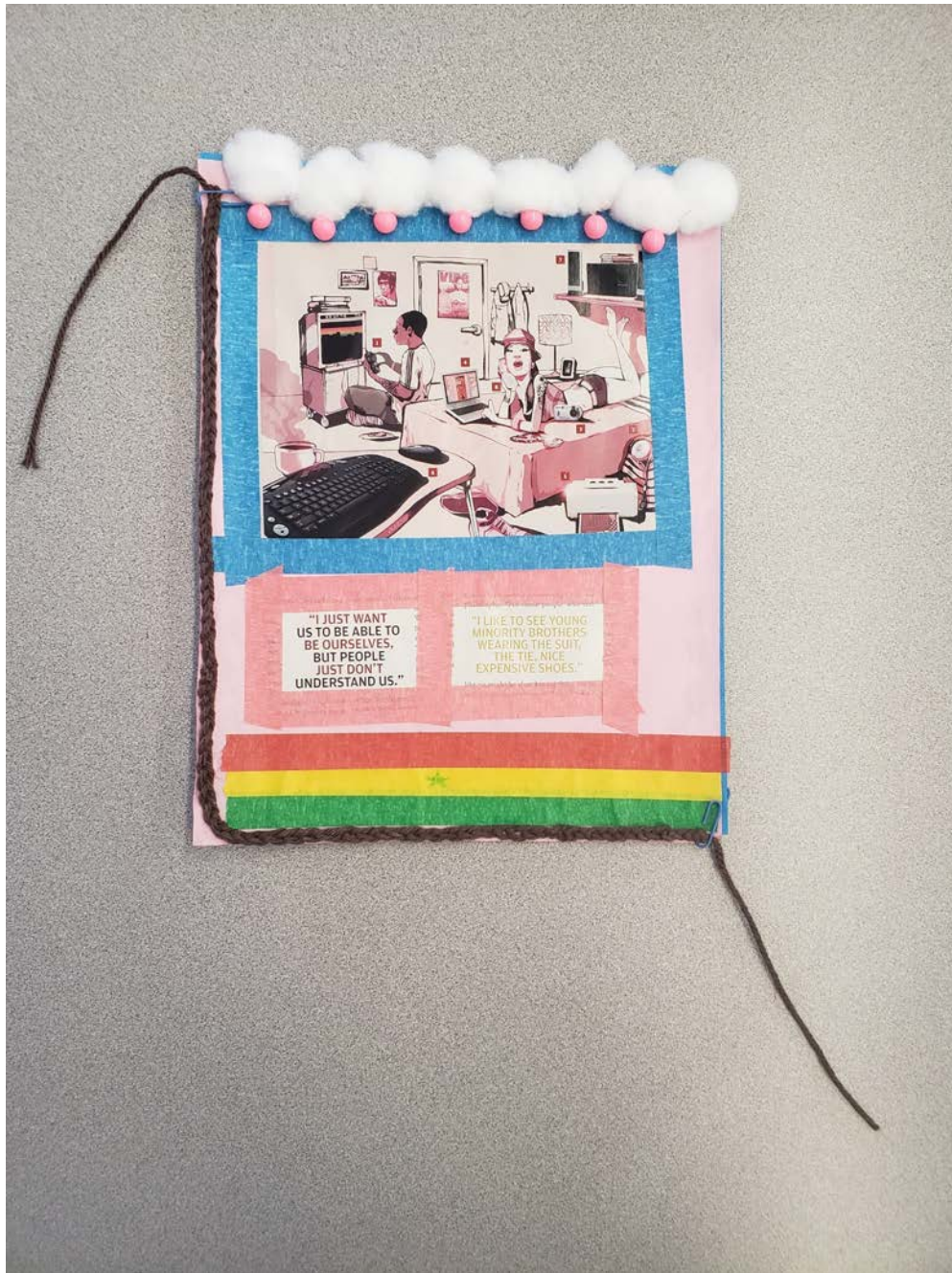




Collage

2022

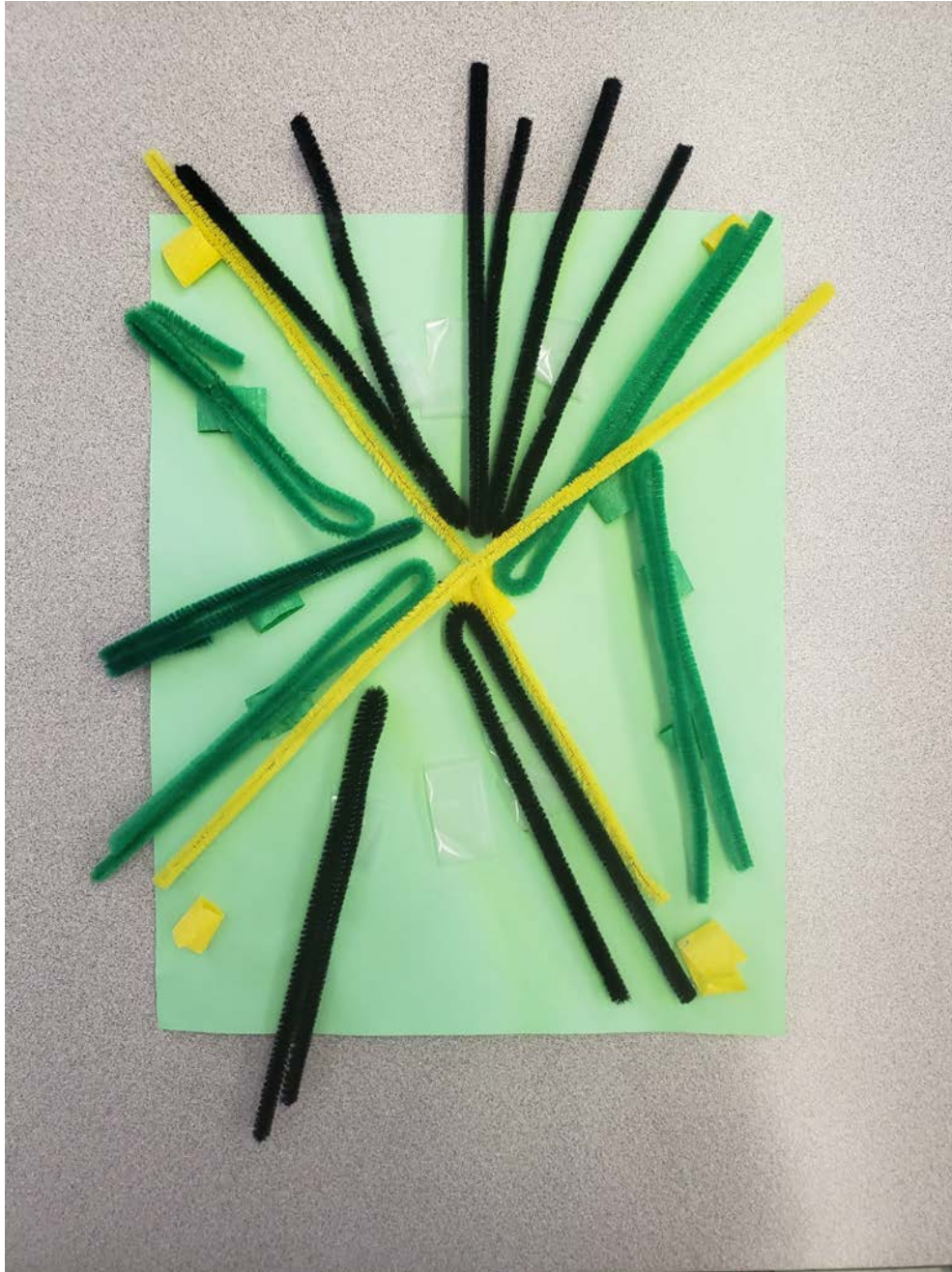
Paper, VIBE magazine circa 2004



Collage

2022

Pipe cleaners and tape on paper

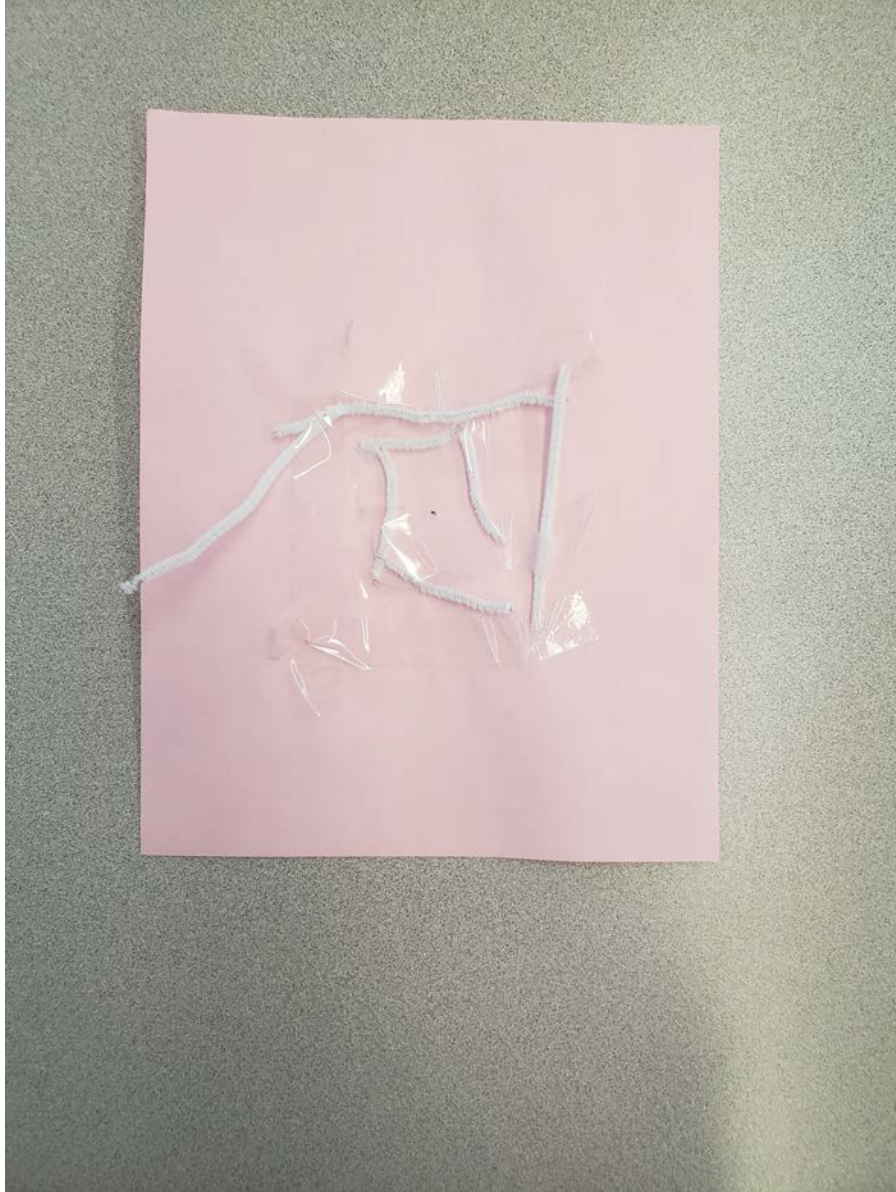




Collage

2022

Pipe cleaners on paper

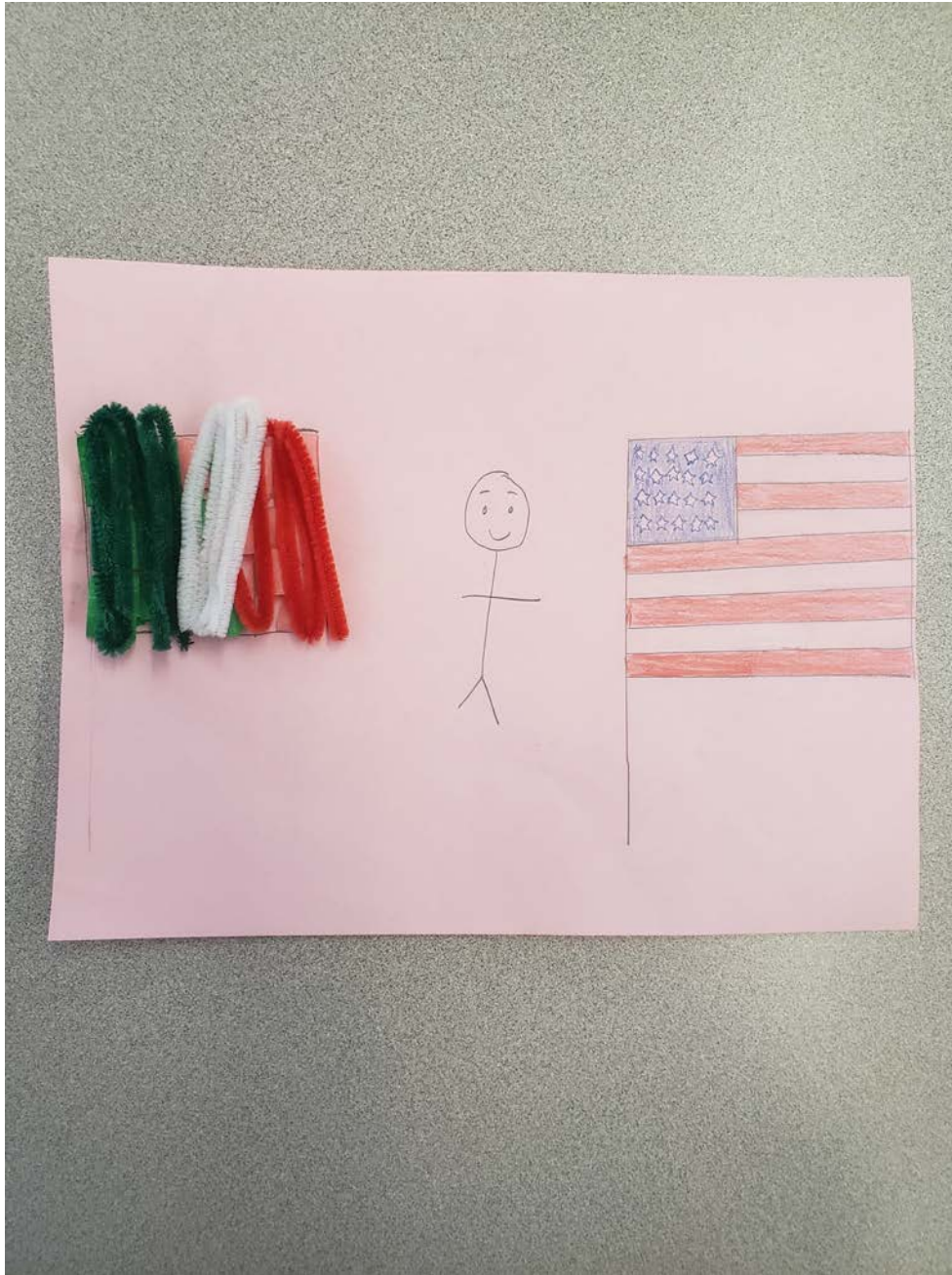




Collage

2022

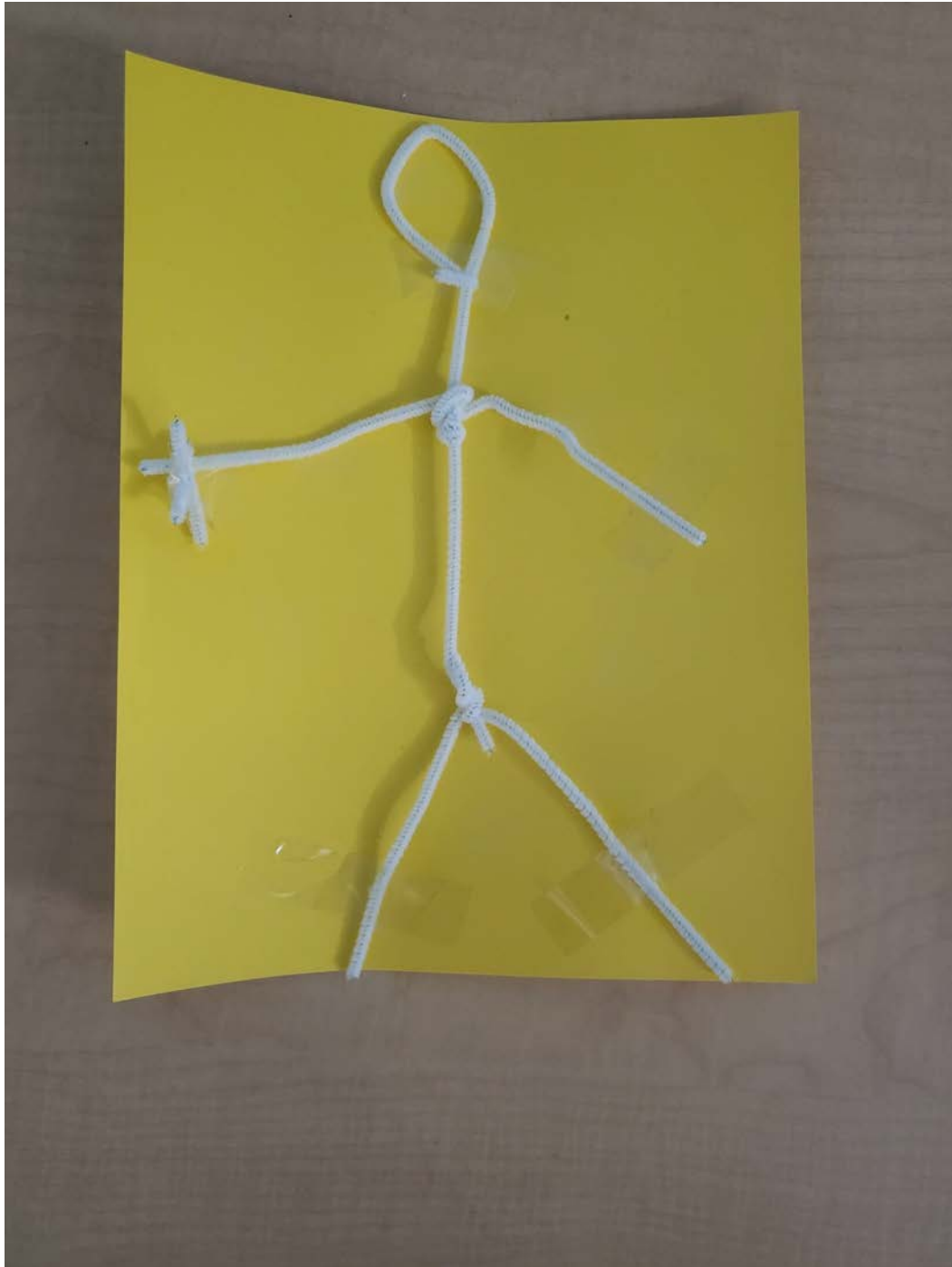
Pipe cleaners, pencil, colored pencil on paper



Collage

2022

Pipe cleaners and tape on paper



“It is my belief that minoritarian subjects are cast as hopeless in a world without utopia.”

“The future is only the stuff of some kids. Racialized kids, queer kids, are not the sovereign princes of futurity.”

“Queerness should and could be about a desire for another way of being in both the world and time...a desire that resists mandates to accept that which is not enough.”

“Maybe the ordinary is not quite the term to put into the position of being negated.”

–José Esteban Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity*, 2009

# My Utopia Project



*Be Kind to Everyone*

2022

Drawing

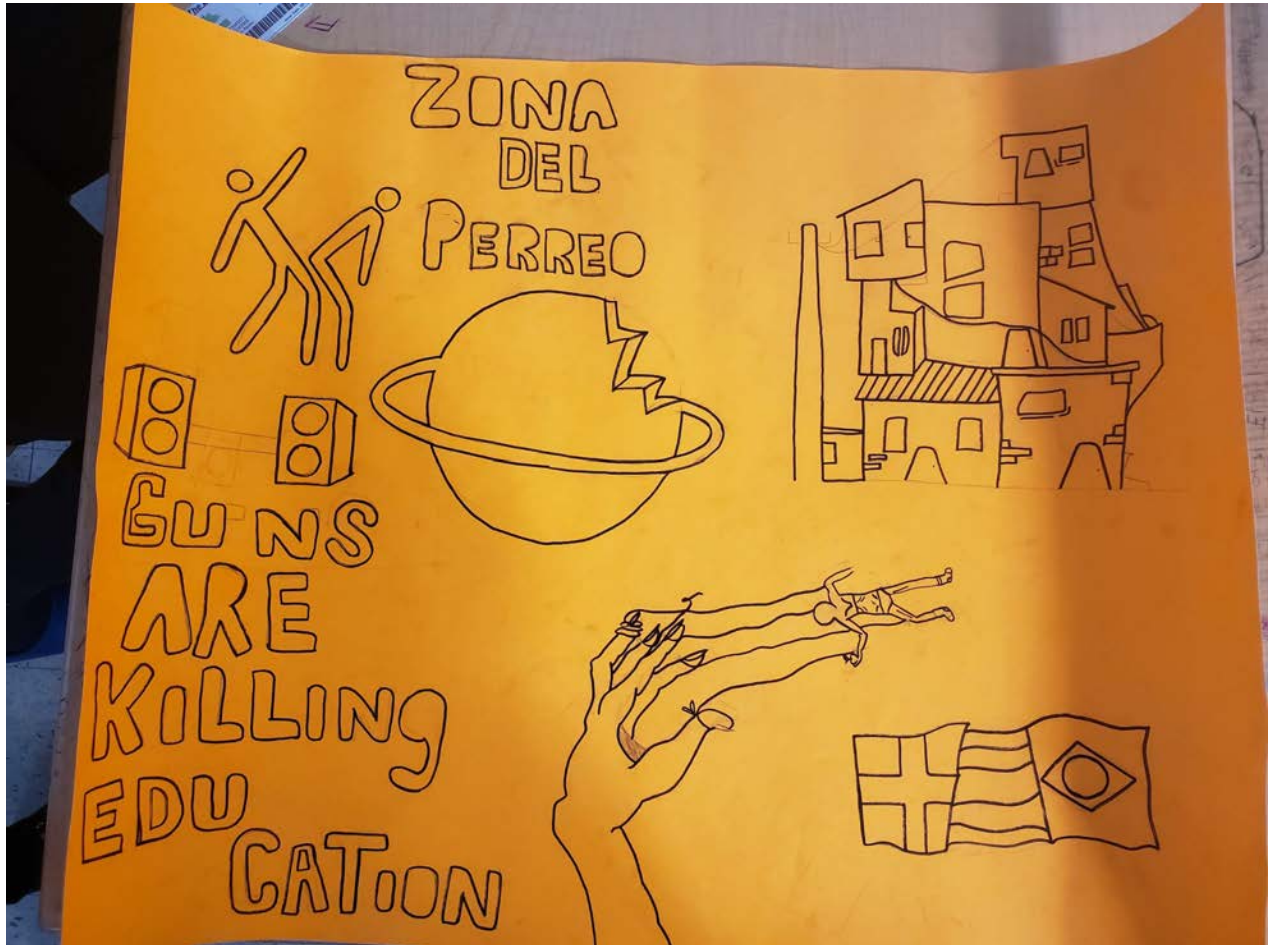
Paper, colored pencil

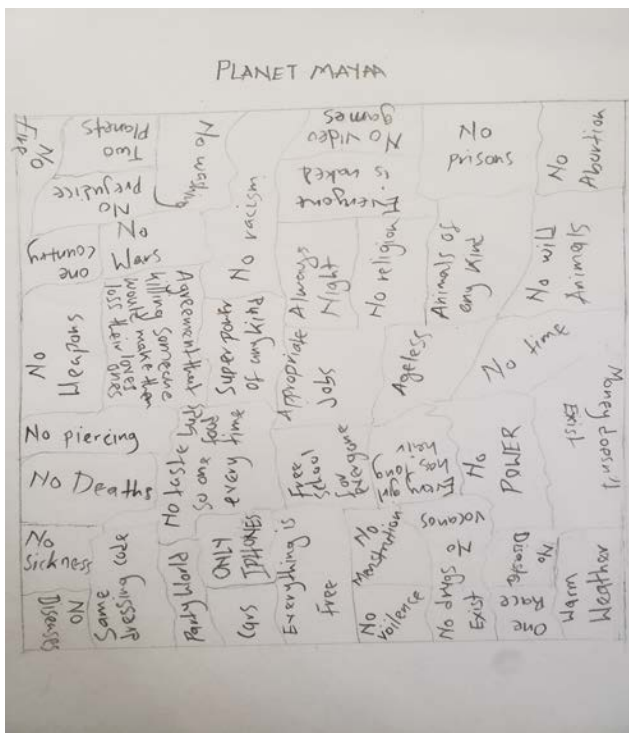
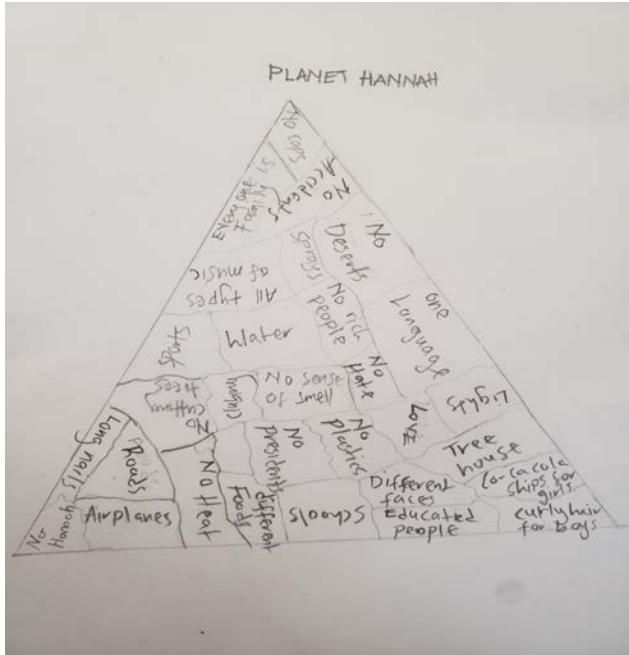


*Zona Del Perreo / Guns Are Killing Education*

Drawing

Paper, marker





From Hannah's Mind / A Planet of Shapes

Drawing

2022

Pencil on paper

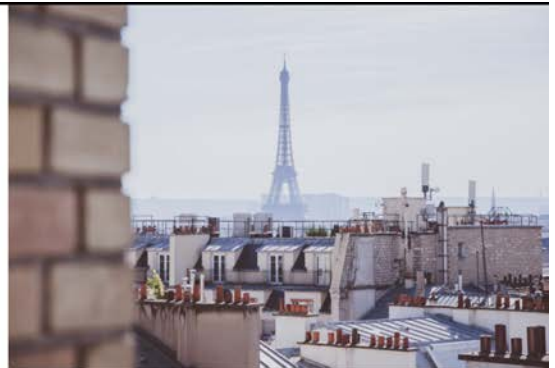


*Florangel's Utopia*  
Virtual Utopia  
2022















*This is My Utopia! A place where everyone is accepted and happy.*





“It took many years of vomiting up all the filth I’d been taught about myself, and half-believed, before I was able to walk on the earth as though I had a right to be here.”

–James Baldwin

Yeslan, thank you for your guidance, transparency, and  
warmth.

Students, thank you for sharing your time, energy, and spirits  
with me. Thank you for showing up for yourself. Thank you  
for trying new things. And thank you for being you.

Good luck and remember to lead with love.

Mx. Imani, CWP '22