Making Meaning, Making Love

BRONX LAB SCHOOL
11th 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, Evelín
Rhule, Jaden
Sambe, Diarra
Sarfo Arful, Gabriel
Singleton, Danasia

Spanish–Period 2
Carrasco, Emani
Cobbs, Jaylyn
Davis, Marquize
Ferera, Miranda
Franco, Angeliz
Frias, Aleydy
García, 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, Kamarce
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
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“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.”

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
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

My Utopia
By Flor
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