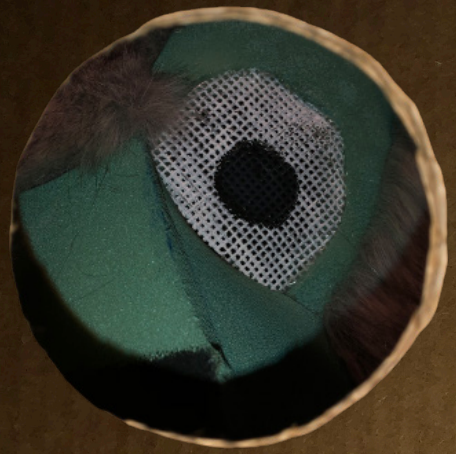

The Sense of Wonder

Jeremy Vega
Anim/VFX
Spring 2021

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About the Artist

Artist Bio

JEREMY VEGA, Mixed Media Artist

Jeremy Vega is an artist living in Clarksville, Tennessee and is currently a student at Austin Peay State University. He is mainly interested in animation and puppetry. His work often shows off as playful and interactive for the viewers. Currently, he is focusing on puppet making by enhancing his skills and teaching himself how to create different varieties of puppet personas and puppet engineering.

He has shown work at the 52nd Annual Juried Student Exhibition, where he was awarded the Olen Bryant Sculpture Award and the 53rd Annual Juried Student Exhibition. He has also participated in the Living Gallery Artist Residency.

You can find the artist's work on Instagram @jesterjeremyv.

Resume

Jeremy Vega

jeremyvega82@gmail.com | 719-432-8167 | Clarksville, TN

Experience

2D Computer Animator | Partnered Director
Whitted Productions LLC | Clarksville, TN | April 2020 – August 2020

- Computer animation using Harmony Toon Boom
- Prepared scenes by setting up characters, props, and backgrounds
- Crafted character performance, utilizing both key-framed and motion capture technique
- Storyboards and rough sketches using traditional art techniques such as pencil on paper
- Acted as the main character
- Voice acted several characters
- Collaborated closely with a writer, content expert, and voice actor.
- Managed a geographically separated team working on various logistics initiatives from excess management to sourcing solutions.

Character Performer | Prop maker and repairer
Royal Entertainment | Clarksville, TN | December 2018 - Present

- Interacted and communicated nonverbally with guests as a Disney character
- Created quality, safe, and efficient interaction between character and guests
- Made sure that everything goes smoothly and according to plan
- Made props and signs for events
- Fabricated/assemble props for theatrical productions and sets from a variety of materials

3D Printing Student Advisor
Austin Peay State University | Clarksville, TN | September 2018 – November 2018

- Manage and maintain production line of 3D printed projects on 2 printers
- Advise and troubleshoot customers with Tinker-cad Software
- Worked to help people print if needed
- Inventory management of consumable materials used in the 3D printing process

Projects and Awards

Living Gallery Artist Residency, Austin Peay State University | Sept - Dec 2019

- Selected by a faculty jury to be in a dedicated space for student creative research for a semester long artist residency (experimenting with ideas of movement, sculpture)

Living Gallery Art Show, Austin Peay State University | May 2019

- Art show presented by ten selected students (sculpture)

52nd Annual Juried Student Exhibition | 2019

- Received the Olen Bryant Sculpture Award

24 Hour Animation Contest | 2020

- Participated in a collaborated group as a Toon Boom subject matter expert

Summer Research Award 2020, Austing Peay State University | Summer 2020

- Chosen to make a proposed project of making giant puppets from various materials

Education

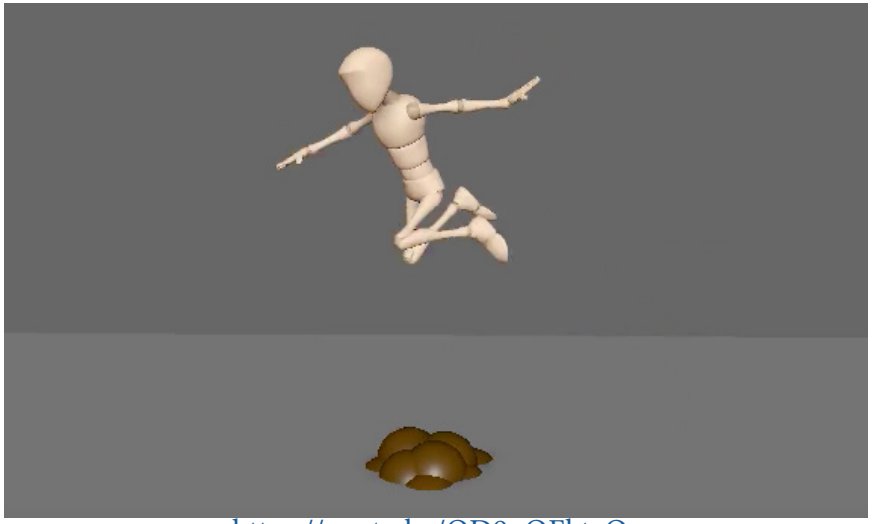
BFA: Art with concentration in Animation + Visual Effects
Austin Peay State University | Clarksville, TN | May 2021 anticipated graduation

Portfolio

https://youtu.be/bmQLnrEQE54

https://youtu.be/Edw7GBw018c

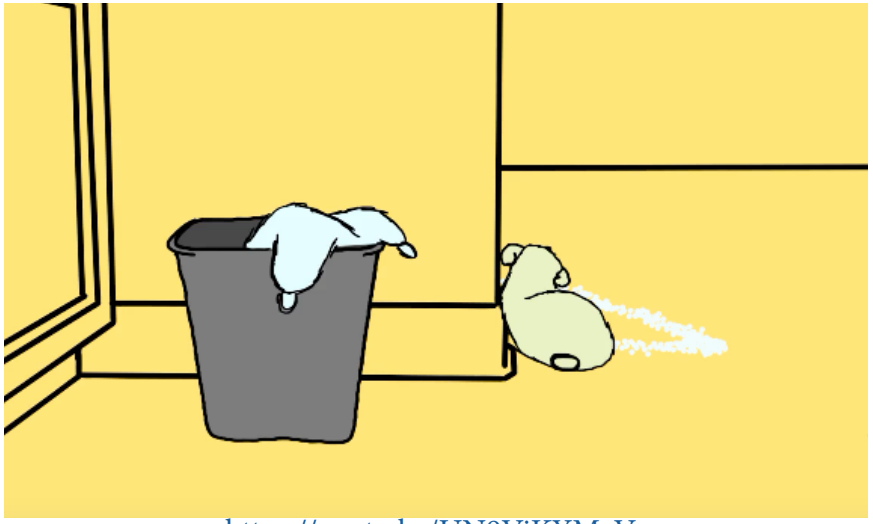
https://youtu.be/XDZ6kF97lQs



https://youtu.be/OD9oOFktaQs

Portfolio

https://youtu.be/EGQha9Eo46U



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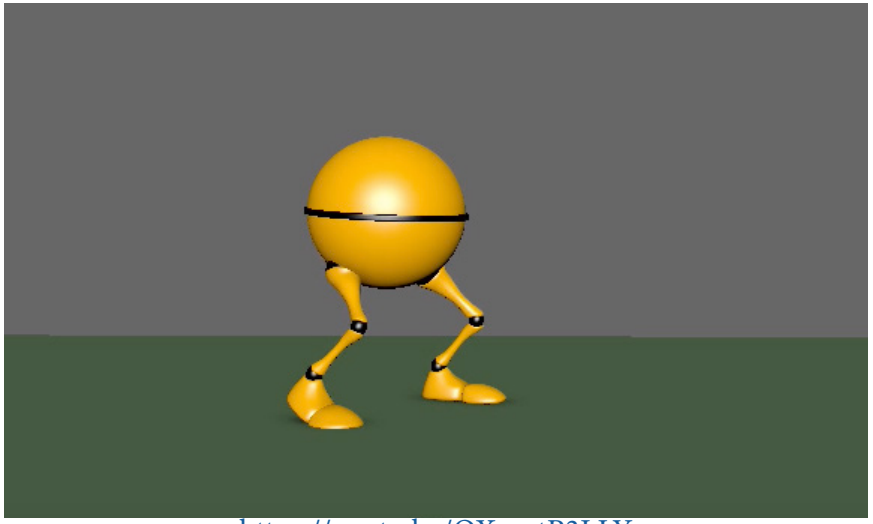

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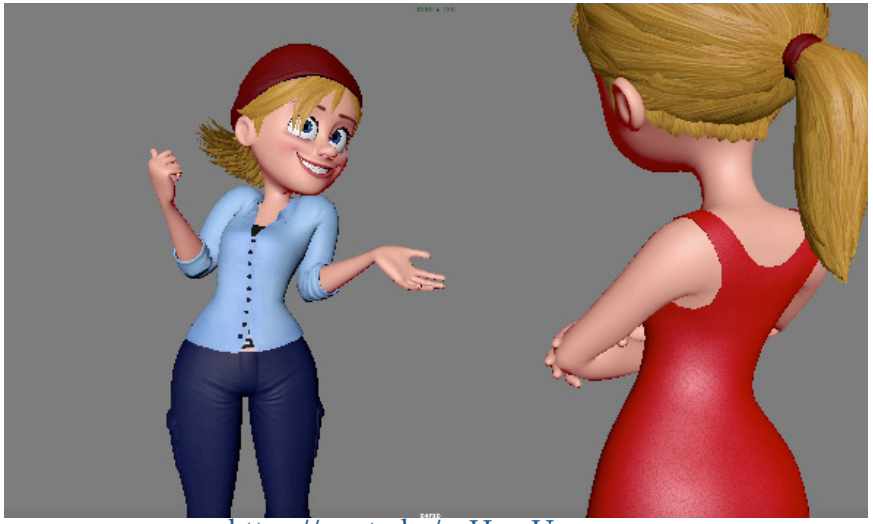

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Portfolio

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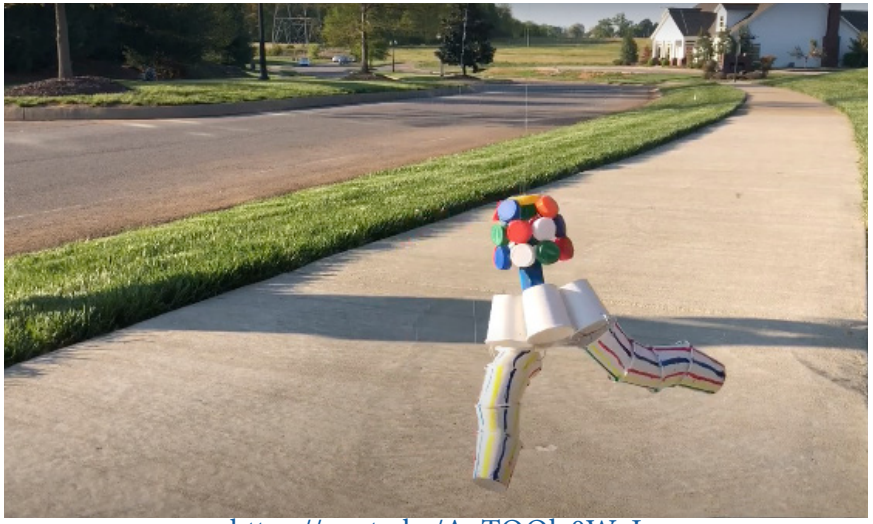

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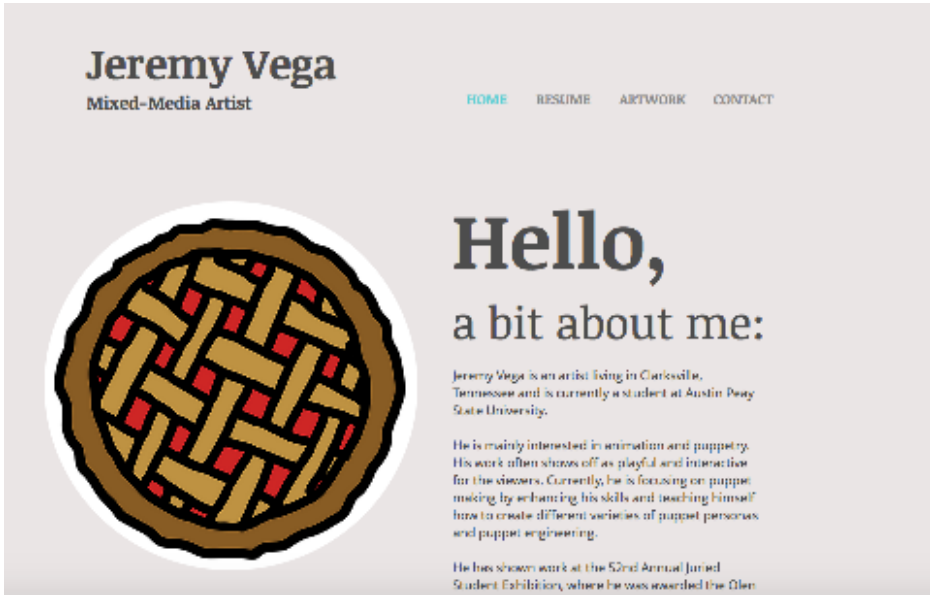
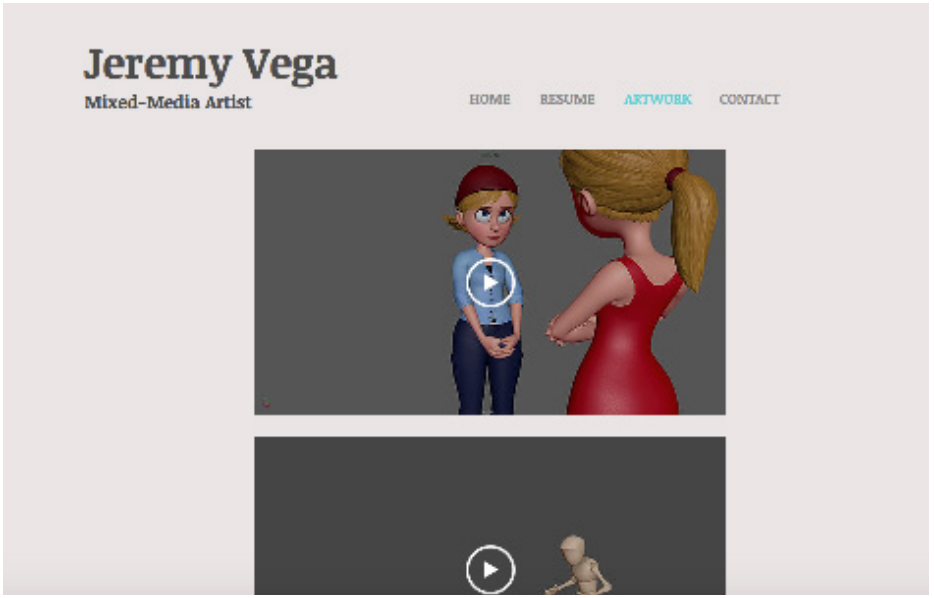
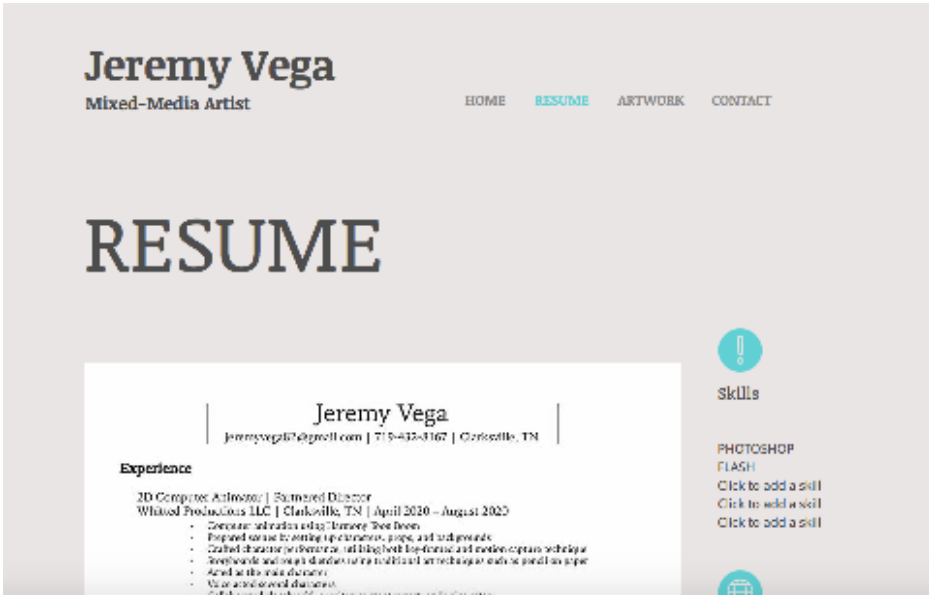
Website







https://jeremyvega82.wixsite.com/my-site/

Pre-Production

Thesis Statement

Through the use of imagination, I will bring out the child-like quality from people by creating a unique environment and interactive characters that are manipulated/animated by a person while it being so much more than that.

Thesis Proposal

My current work works heavily around interaction with people, without it, my work gets lonely. Interaction fuels my puppet characters and gives them life. Without it they collect dust and deteriorate. It is difficult for me to communicate with people and it has caused me to have little to no friends/ people to hang out with while growing up. I do not want that for anyone else, so I created characters that want to communicate in replacement of that lonesome void that I accumulated. My characters are like my children; I do not want them to end up like an outcast but have a better, more social life. Nowadays, life is highly virtual. To combat this, I am creating a physical environment for the guests. It is difficult to initiate a conversation, much less turn it into a long meaningful bond between two people. The characters will create a positive experience between themselves and those they interact with. So I, as the host, will proactively initiate conversation between the guest and the puppetly characters.

I also plan on documenting my puppet characters into one visual effects piece where they will all be doing something together.

Content of Thesis

How can I create the sense of fun, togetherness and belonging – not only for myself, but for other people as well? For my senior thesis, I am creating an event/ environment where people can gather (safely distanced) while meeting and talking to puppet characters.

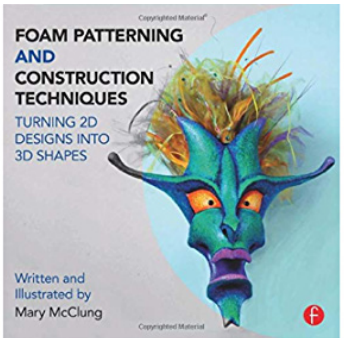
What I want to show with my senior thesis is a sense of togetherness/ community. I want everyone to have a good time, chatting, getting to know the colorful puppet characters both big and small, as if they were any normal person. I hope that my senior thesis awakens that child-like quality of having an imagination and not worrying about anything; to enjoy the time they have in this world. I am basically the host of this get-together, therefore I will introduce some people to some of the characters. Being the bridge between the puppet characters and people, and to make the start of the conversation easier.

However, at the very core, this senior thesis is about loneliness. I have struggled intensely with being alone for so long, having no one to communicate nor hang out with, not being able to talk about literally anything while growing up. Seeing other people have that just made it hurt more. It was and still is difficult for me to communicate with others because I had acquired a shyness. With everyday being tedious, waking up, go to school, eat and then sleep, over and over every day as a child and teen just slowly broke me. Now I despise the word "lonely," it triggers a very deep emotion in me making me unable to speak.

I do not want that for anyone else, so with this show I want people to interact with the characters, connecting with them and building a special bond and a memory that will be with them for a long time.

Research/Inspiration for characters

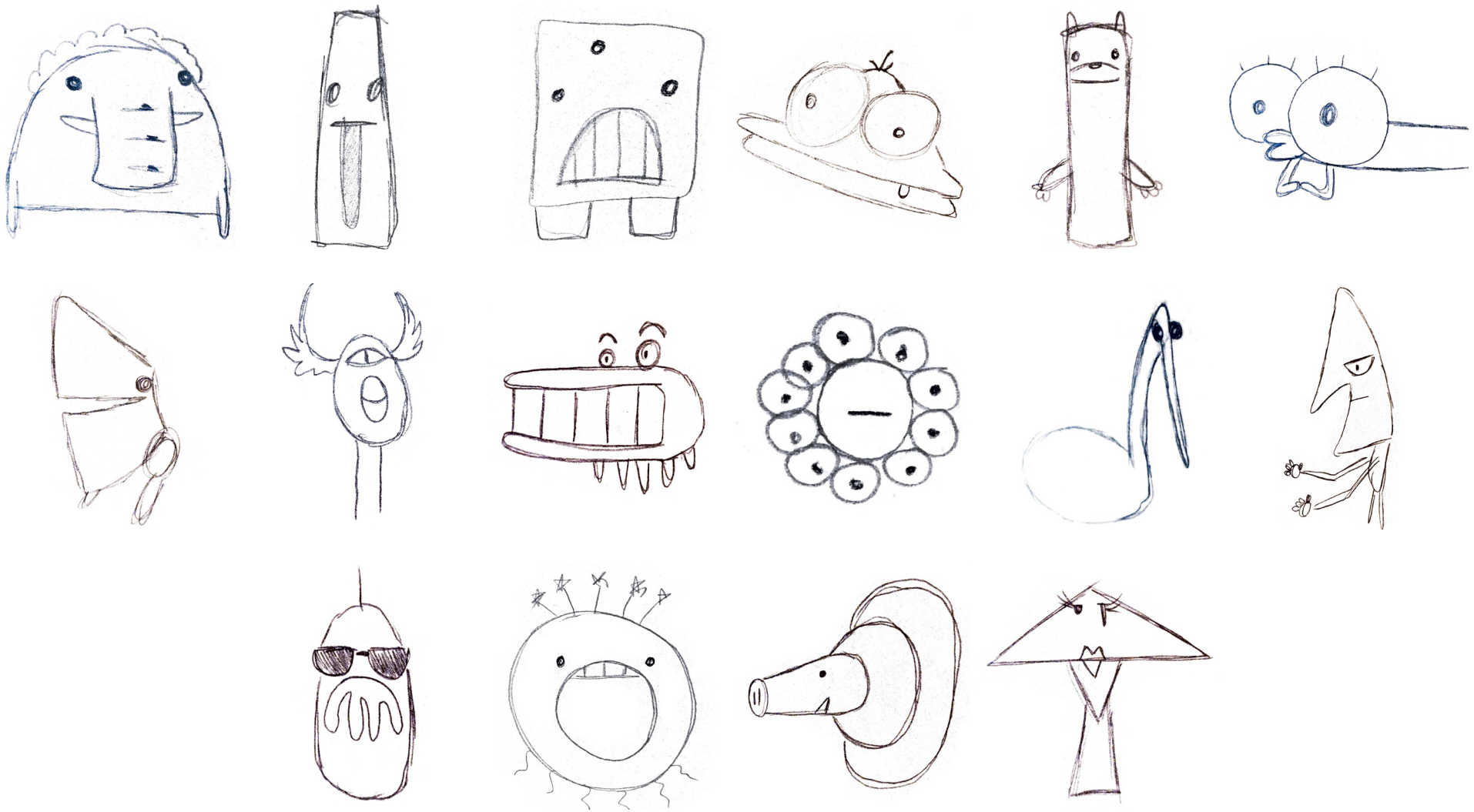
Mary McClung



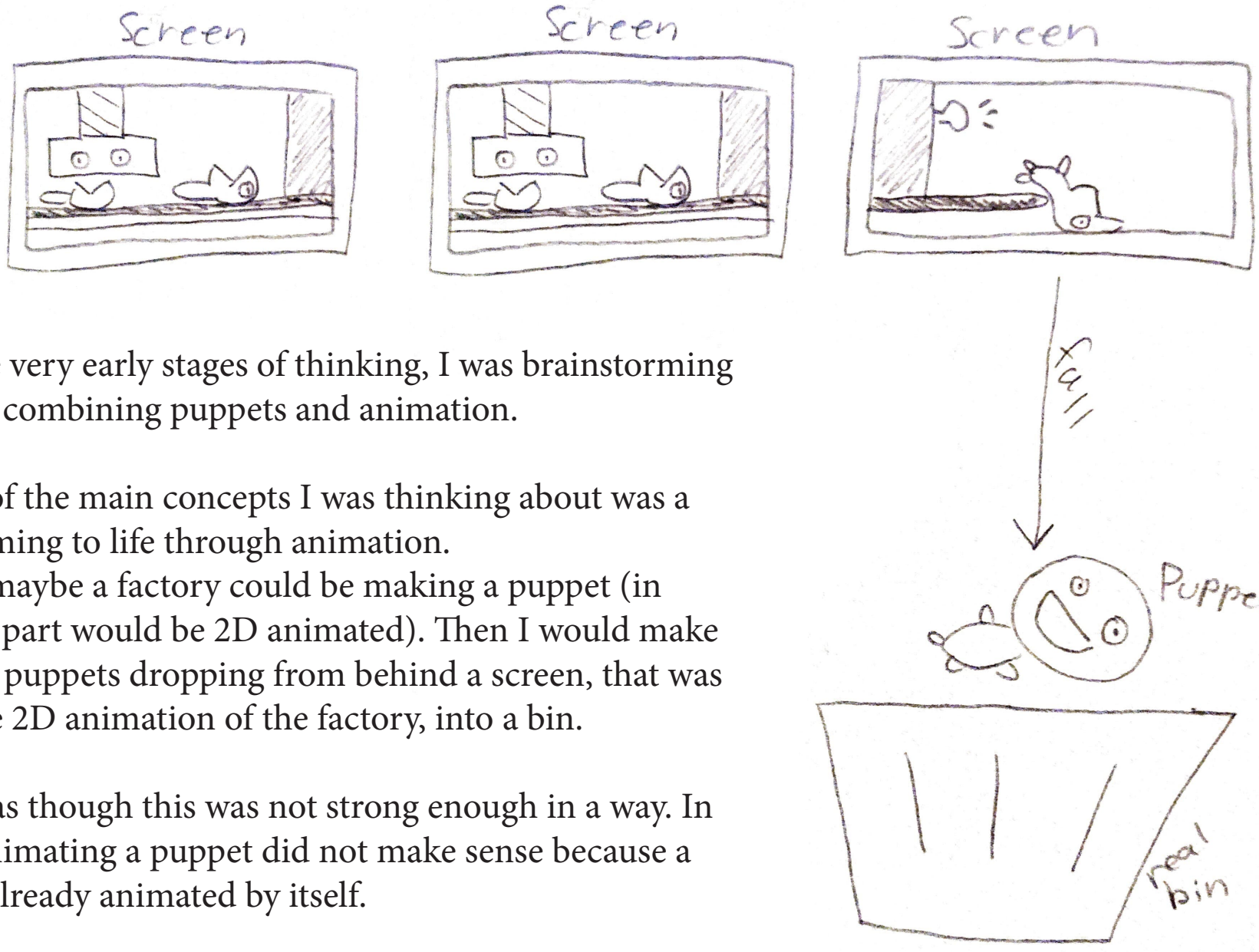
In the Heart of the Beast
Puppet and Mask Theatre

Pablo and Efrain Del Hierro
“Poncili Creación”

Character Sketch Ideas



Failed Ideas



In the very early stages of thinking, I was brainstorming the idea of combining puppets and animation.

One of the main concepts I was thinking about was a puppet coming to life through animation.
I thought maybe a factory could be making a puppet (in which this part would be 2D animated). Then I would make a bunch of puppets dropping from behind a screen, that was playing the 2D animation of the factory, into a bin.

I felt as though this was not strong enough in a way. In the end, animating a puppet did not make sense because a puppet is already animated by itself.

Failed Ideas

I was originally planning on making an actual puppet show with a host, cameras, audience, etc.

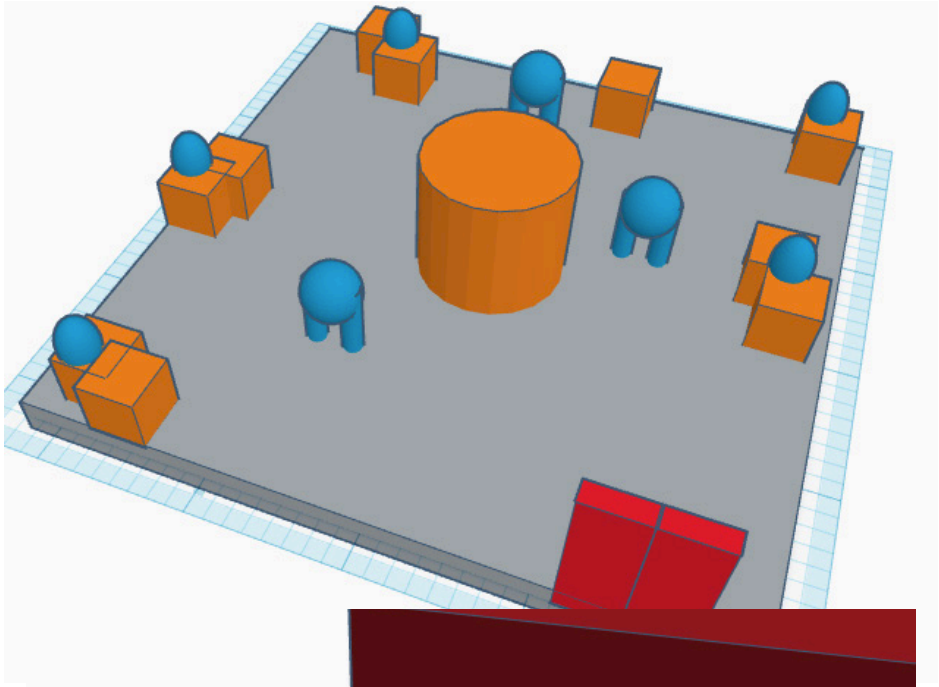
I scrapped this idea because I kept calling this a “puppet show” which caused me to think in that way, but that is not what I felt I wanted.

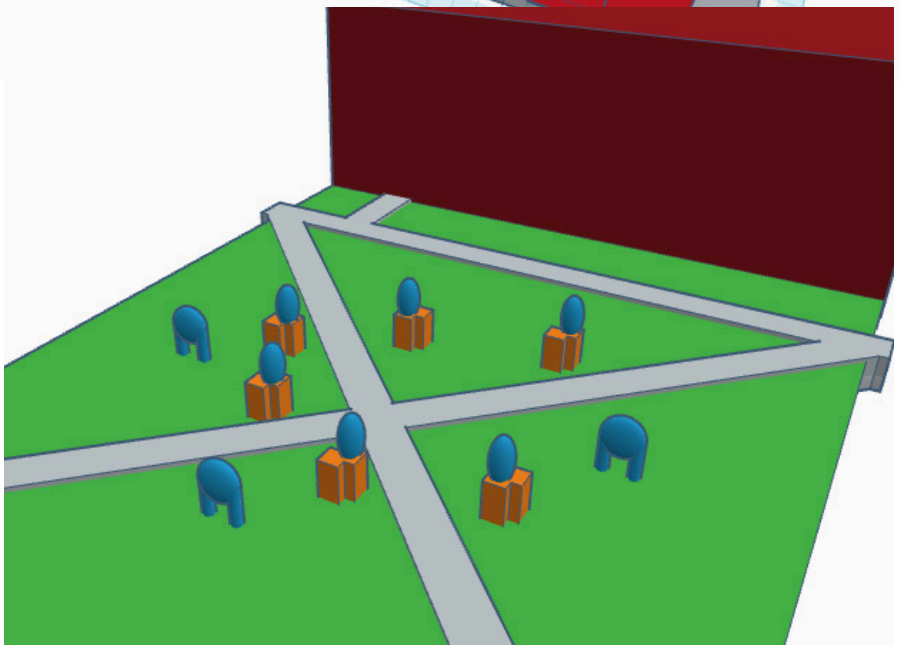
Failed Ideas

This idea is basically what I am working on now, however I was going to make puppets, along with several objects in which the volunteers would be inside.

This was changed due to the fact that I was going to pay all my attention on the objects as much as the puppets as if they were equal, when in reality I wanted the puppets to be the main focus for the audience and myself.

So I decided to make one object for the volunteers who are operating the hand puppets to be in.





Red = Door/Art+Design Building
Orange = Objects for volunteers to be in
Blue = Puppets

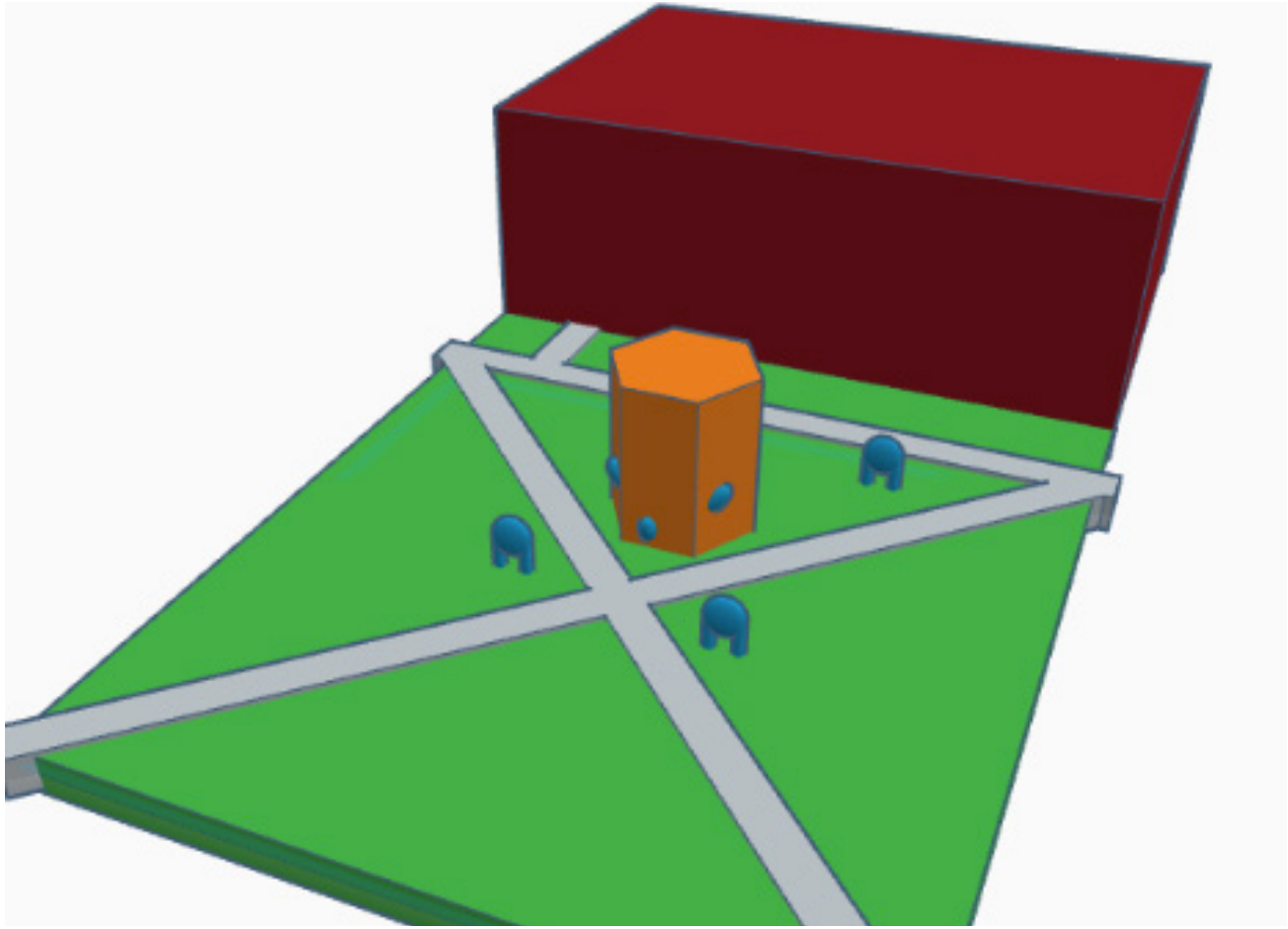
*NOT TO SCALE

How the Space will Look

Part of my piece is 10 ft tall and roughly 20 ft wide all around. The structure is made out of PVC pipes covered in a giant 30ftx30ft cloth, and the edges of the cloth will be pinned into the ground like a tent. This structure is basically the center piece of my project. There will also be a few people who are part of my piece walking around the area along with myself and guests who decide to see and participate in my senior show.

Red = Art+Design Building
Orange = Centerpiece
Blue = Puppets

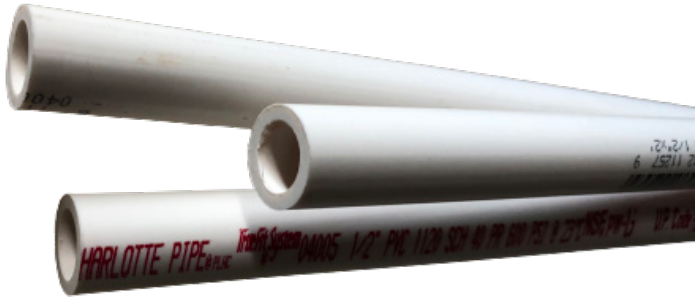
*NOT TO SCALE



The Different Parts of the Centerpiece

PVC Pipes

- Holds everything up being the bones of the structure



Pulley with rope

- Will be used to pull everything up to its final position, and to take down when the event is over.

Cloth

- Used to act as the outside hiding the puppeteers and the structural support on the inside
- Katharina Grosse inspired
- There will be holes where the smaller hand puppets will peek out from

Creation of the puppets

Main Materials:

- Poly cushion foam
- Hot glue
- Spray paint
- Fabric
- ETC.

I start with a basic shape, then I go off of that shape seeing what would look good from my mind space.
I experiment with different materials but tend to use upholstry foam for most of my characters because it is a material that is flexible and I could get a lot for a decent price. Plus I like working with this material in it's raw state.

What the Characters will be Doing

The bigger puppets will be wandering around talking to each other and anyone who stops by. The smaller hand puppets will be peeking out of the centerpiece with the puppeteers inside, also talking to each other and any passerby.

Characters will contribute to a lively environment by talking to each other as well as the guests I will introduce some guests members to some of the characters since I am the host of the event. The puppeteer/character will lead the conversation with a script that I will give them for what that character likes, dislikes, interests, hobbies, etc.

Storyboards for VFX piece

For the VFX piece, I will either:

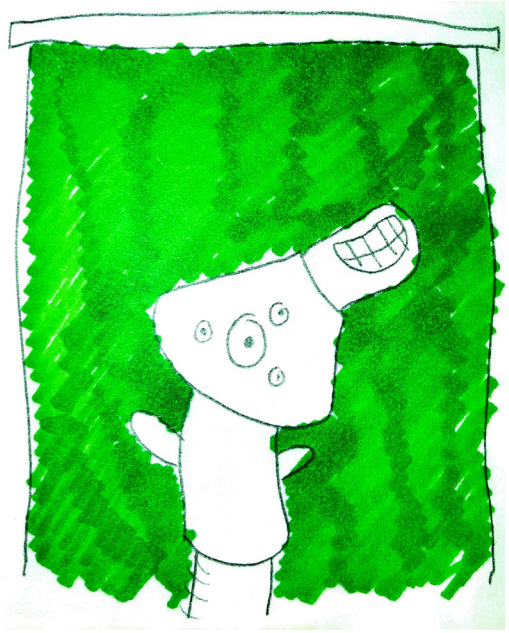
Make a one shot video where they are all dancing on the same screen.

or

Create a short where all the characters come out of a portal and enter our world in amazement.

Plan for VFX piece

The smaller puppets will be filmed separately from the scene, they will be put in front of a green screen, where I can remove the green color from the video post recording.



The lifesize puppets however will be a bit trickier. I will use the split screen effect, where I will film them in the actual scene where it is taking place.

In the idea where they are all dancing in one screen, I will just film the lifesize puppets in a different part of the screen. Then in post I will put the seperate parts of each video, where the characters are dancing, together with all having the same background.

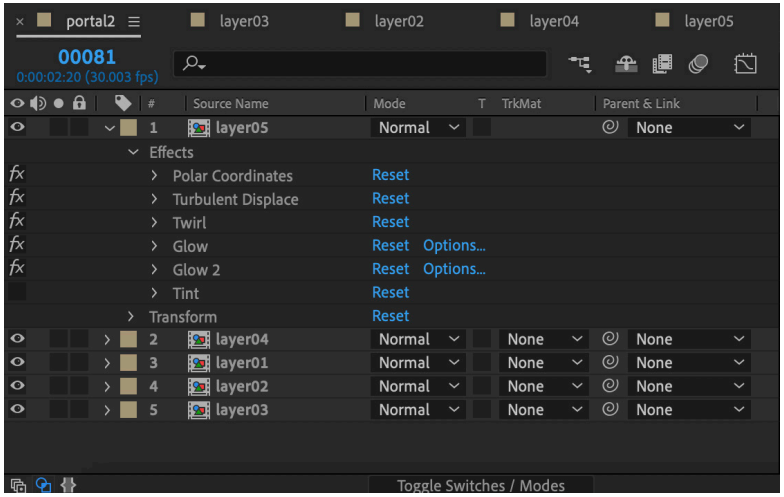
In the short, I will do the same idea, but the section of the video where the lifesize puppets are moving across the screen, I will move the split screen to move with the character.

Research video explaining split screen effect:
https://youtu.be/8p99e1q2BRs

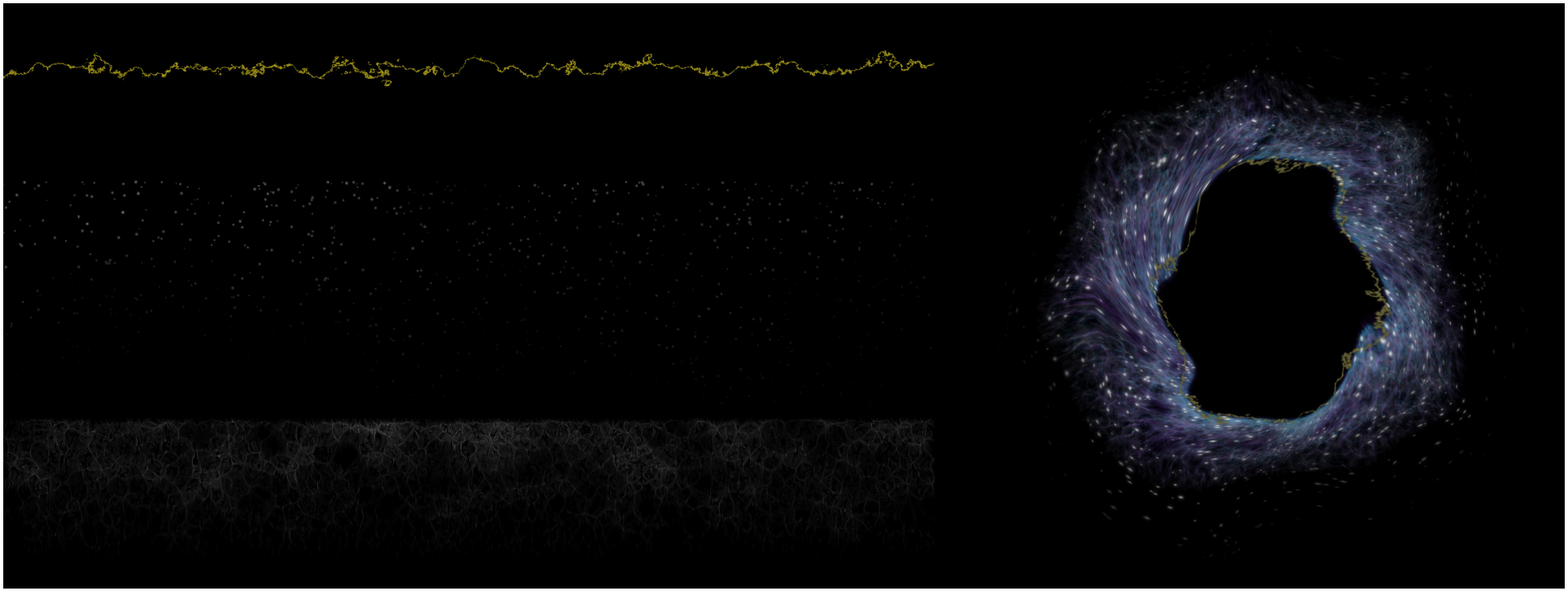
Making a Portal

Not knowing how to make a portal, I looked up on YouTube for the information that I needed, and so all I had to do from there was to adjust it to my liking.

Then I just imported the portal into the scene with the characters.



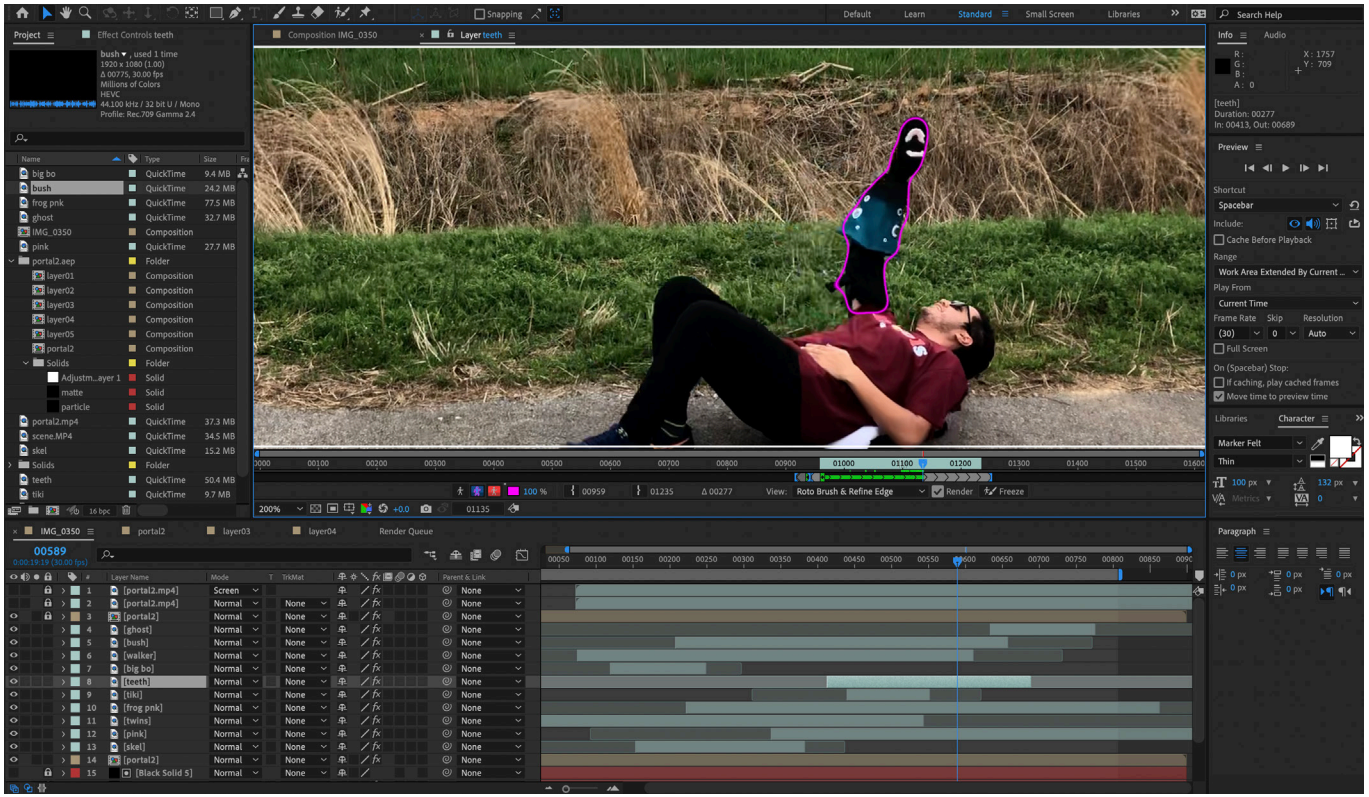
Done in Adobe After Effects.



Rotoscoping the characters

I had to rotoscope/roto out (cut out) for each character, for each scene, and for each frame. That way I can insert them onto the same scene/background. At this point, I did not have all of my volunteers yet, so I had to film each character doing their thing individually, that is why I had to do the rotoscoping.

I ended up doing this for both hand and lifesize puppets, so they would all have the same lighting/shading to them.



Done in Adobe After Effects.

Vfx Final Video

Volunteer Puppeteer

I will have a casting call for the 11 puppets

- Make a poster for volunteers who are willing to be a puppeteer
- Ask the art faculty if they can email my poster to all art students
- Ask the theater department if they can email it to all of their theater students (if possible)
- Post poster on Austin Peay App if anyone is interested in participating
- I will pick out how many puppets I have finished of volunteers and some extra in case one cannot make it the day of.

I will make bios for each character

- Scripts will essentially be about who the character is
- Will be given to volunteers in advance of the puppet showing
- I will train the volunteers individually of what to do and what not to do

Casting Call for Puppeteers!

Who: Created by Jeremy Vega
What: It's an event for a senior thesis project where guests interact with puppet characters! You get to be the puppeteer.
When: This thesis show takes place Spring 2021.
Where: The Quad (APSU) between art and theatre building.
Why: You will have fun!

"The Sense of Wonder"

Small hand puppets and big wearable puppets	Live action and fantasy based	Get trained to be unique puppet characters

If interested or have questions, contact me: jvega6@my.apsu.edu

Overall Schedule

Nov.16-22
- Build a puppet character

Nov. 23-29
- Build the central object - foundation

Nov.- Dec. 30-6
- Build the central object - pulley

Dec. 7-13
- Build a puppet character

Dec. 14-20
- Build a puppet character

Dec. 21-27
- Build the central object - cloth

Dec.- Jan. 28-3
- Build the central object - finish

Jan. 4-10
- Build a puppet character

Jan. 11-17
- Build a puppet character
- Check and see if everything is working/test

Jan. 18-24
- Build a puppet character

Jan. 25-31
- Build a puppet character

Feb. 1-7
- Build a puppet character

Feb. 8-14
- Finish puppets
- Find some volunteers

Feb. 15-21
- Complete puppets

Feb. 22-28
- Complete puppets

Mar. 1-7
- Make Thesis Book

Mar. 8-14
- Finish Thesis Book

Mar. 15-21
- Have all Volunteers
- Work on VFX part

Mar. 22-28
- Complete centerpiece
- Work on VFX part

Mar.- Apr. 29-4
- Have meeting with volunteers/meeting/setup
- Work on VFX part

Apr. 5-11
- Finish everything and take it all to campus

Apr. 12-18
- Dress Rehearsal/seeing what is working

Apr. 19-25
- Fix Anything that needs to be fixed

Apr. 27, 2021
- Senior Thesis Show

My Goals Throughout

When They Enter Area

Feel CURIOUS as to what is happening as they head towards the event - not knowing what is about to happen.

As They are in Area

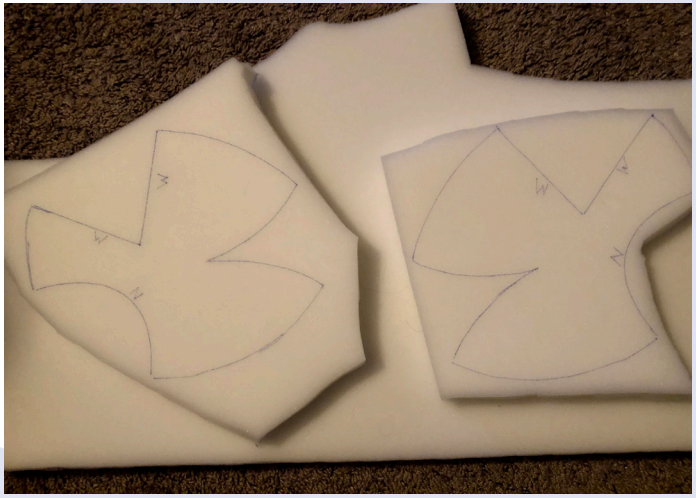
Get to KNOW the characters and TALK with them. Creating/ building a one-of-a-kind

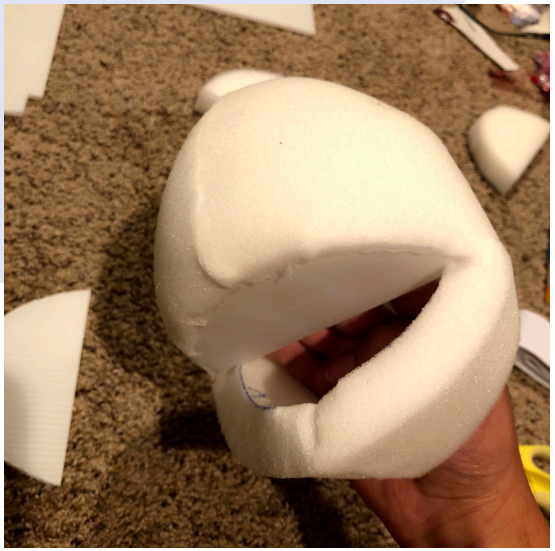
When They Leave

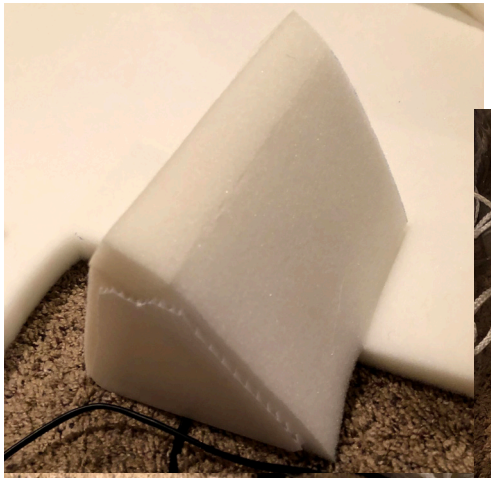
Feel NOSTALGIA and have a CONNECTION with a character. Like when one sees a movie with a memorable character.

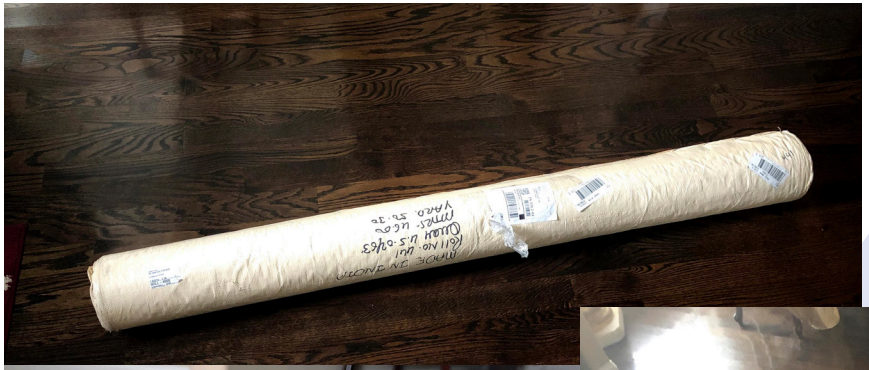
Production

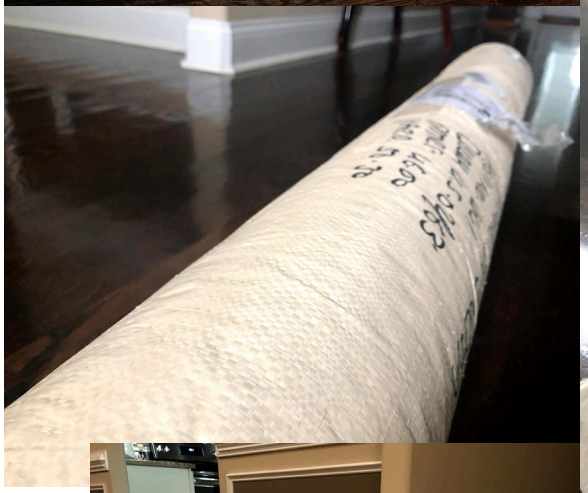
Casa
4.99-29.99 yd
DOORBUSTER
2.99



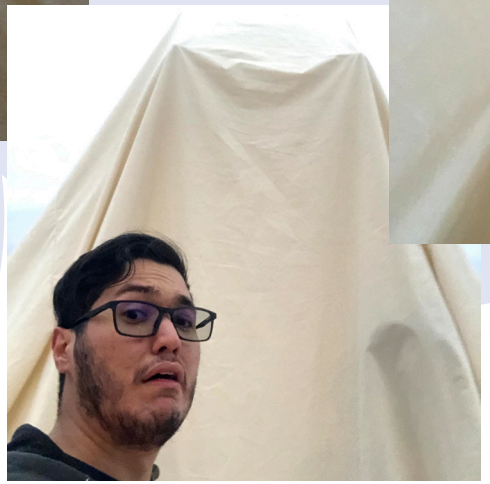


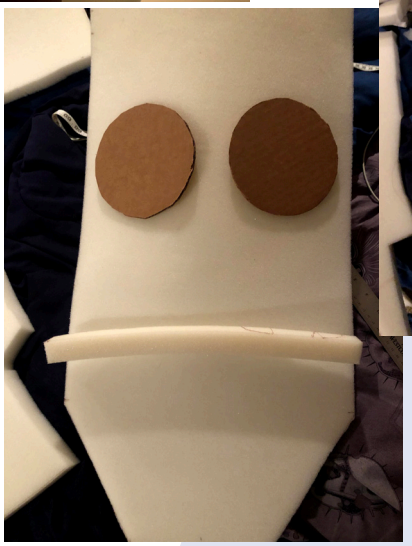


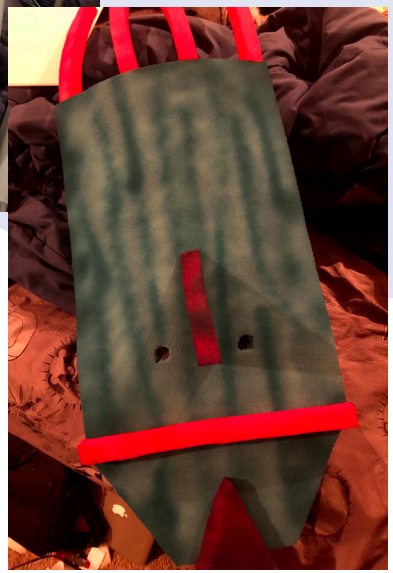


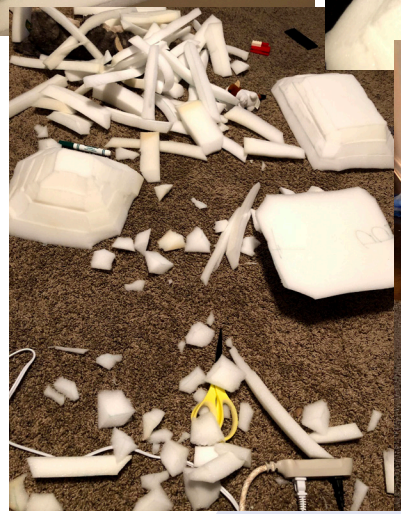


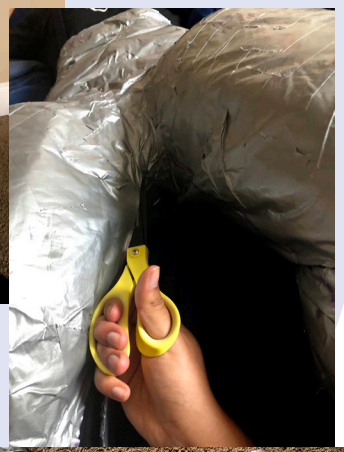
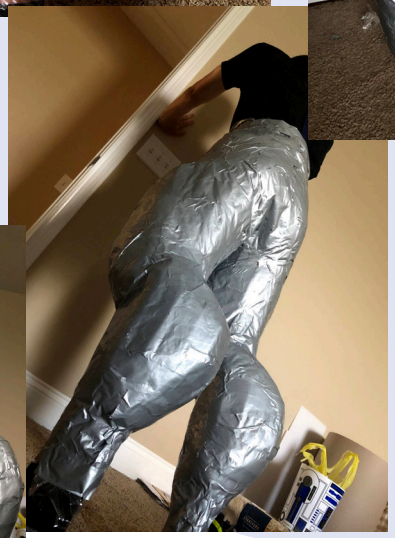
150 ft of fabric to sew = pain

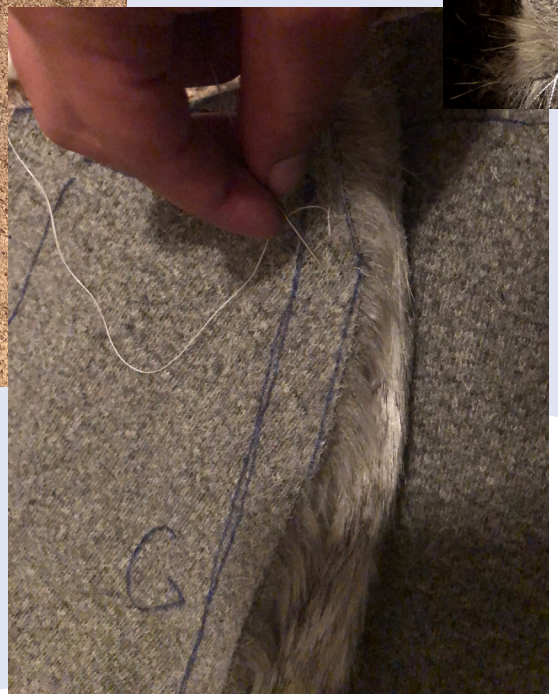


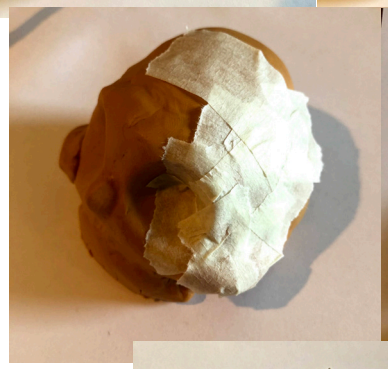


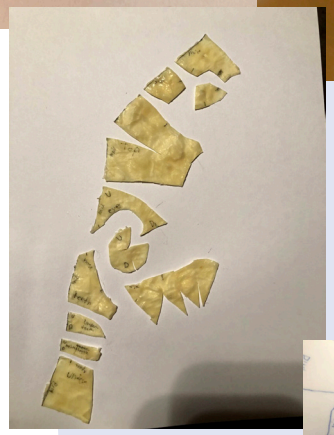
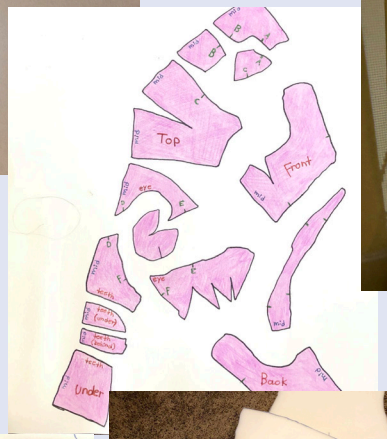






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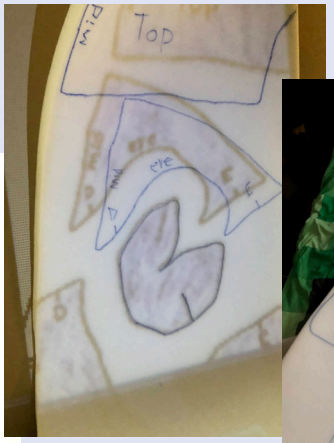
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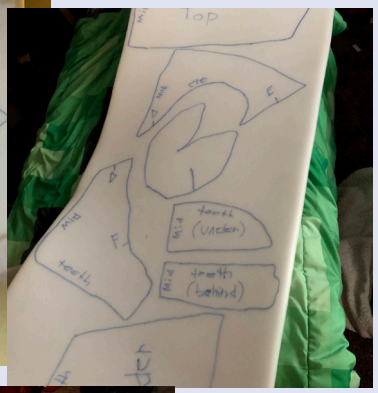
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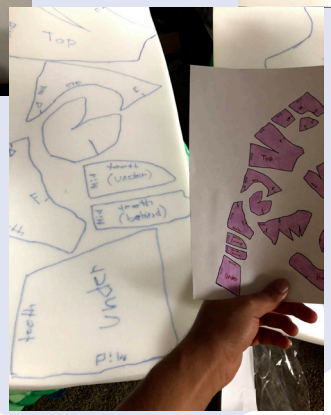
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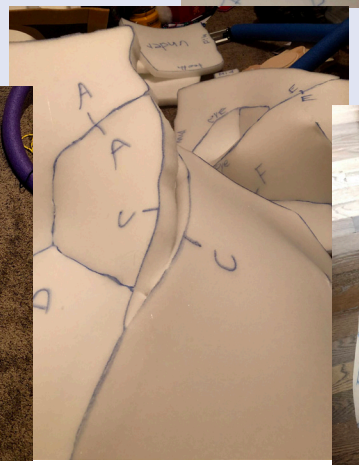
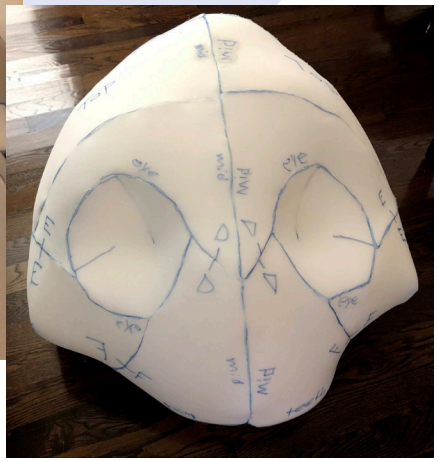

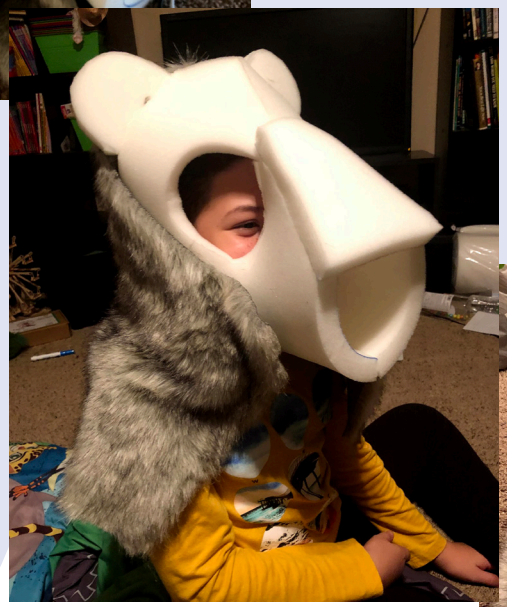

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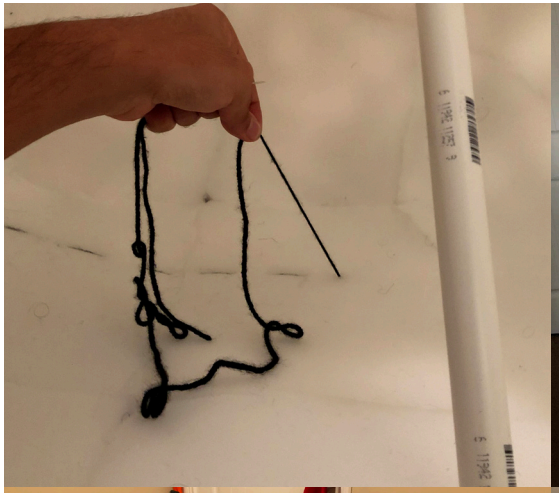
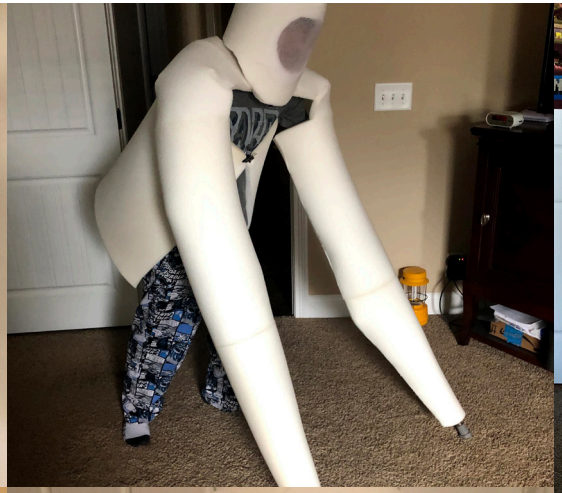
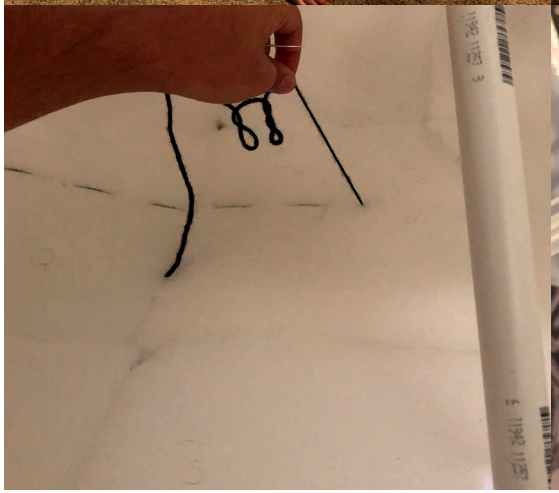



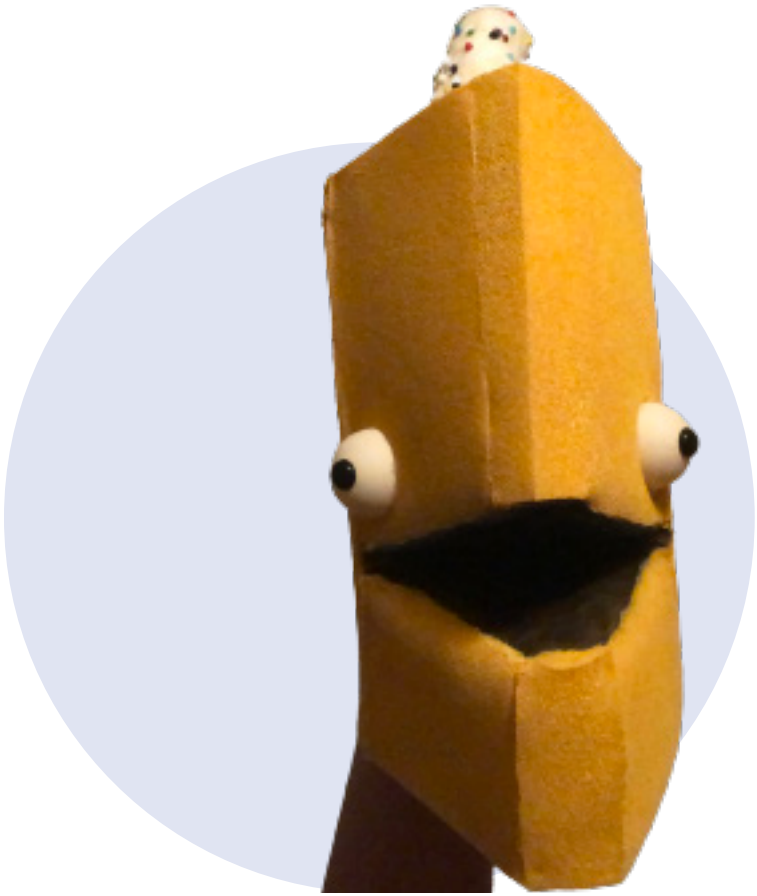
NECRAFT
BUZZ LIGHTYEAR
INFINITY & BEYOND



Final Project

The Different Characters

Mortis



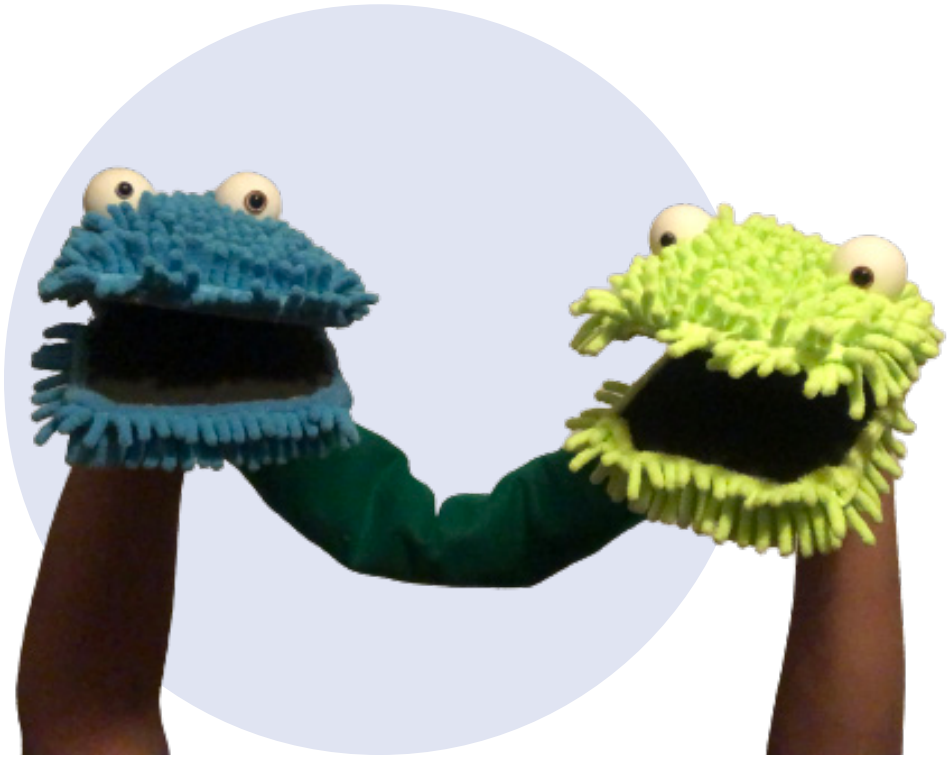
Likes: Talking to others

Dislikes: Forks

About: Everyone tends to think that Mortis is a slice of cake because of their shape and frosting on their head, but alas, Mortis is not edible cake.

The Different Characters

Ziggy and Biggy



Likes: Each other

Dislikes: Each other

About: Since they are with each other all the time, they tend to get on each other's nerves. Although they keep each other's company so they are never alone.

The Different Characters

Shwampi

Likes: Damp areas and chewing things

Dislikes: Bad dental care

About: Shwampi used to have horrible teeth and was insecure about it. But with a lot of toothpaste, brushing, flossing, and mouthwash, they are now proud of their pearly whites. Therefore showing them off whenever possible.

The Different Characters

Ghost

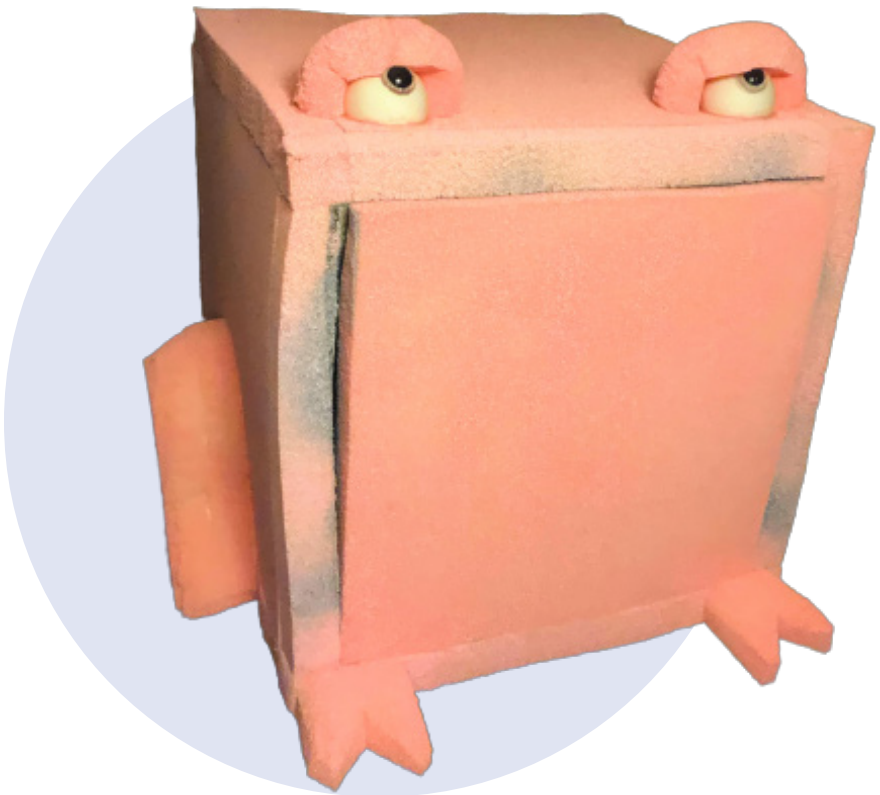
Likes: Ghost

Dislikes: Not being a ghost

About: Ever since childhood, Ghost has always been fond of ghosts and always hoped that he would die just so he can become one. However, it was taking them too long to die naturally, so Ghost decided to pretend to be one!

The Different Characters

Grug



Likes: Unkown

Dislikes: Everything

About: (uncooperative)

The Different Characters

Fruit Punch

Likes: Joking around

Dislikes: Party poopers/Grug

About: This masked character is very child-like. Some might even say it is a child in an adult's body. Fruit Punch is always playing games with people, trying to bring out the smile in everyone.

The Different Characters

Vigo

Likes: Stickers

Dislikes: Judgement

About: Vigo is often mistaken as death, therefore being avoided. Their large stature and deep voice can be intimidating, however with time, you will find that they are a gentle giant.

The Different Characters

Big Bo

Likes: Howling/singing/opera

Dislikes: Bad vocals

About: Big Bo is inspired by howling, and so enjoys howling tunes as though they are singing. Although their howling is not great, but don't tell Big Bo that.

The Different Characters

Zepologgin
(Zeep for short)

Likes: Peace

Dislikes: Loud noises and wrongful doings to others

About: Zeep is an elderly fellow who does not talk much. Even though most of their color has faded/been mixed together, they still manage to keep some color to them. With all the years Zeep has lived, they have knowledge that can be of use to others.

The Different Characters

Mrs. Fizz

Likes: Joining others in conversati

Dislikes: Not having hands and having to walk everywhere

About: Mrs. Fizz has a husband who she loves dearly. She is quite the chatter box when it comes to conversations. She tends to butt in when she sees others having a good time.

The Different Characters

Patches

Likes: Being alone

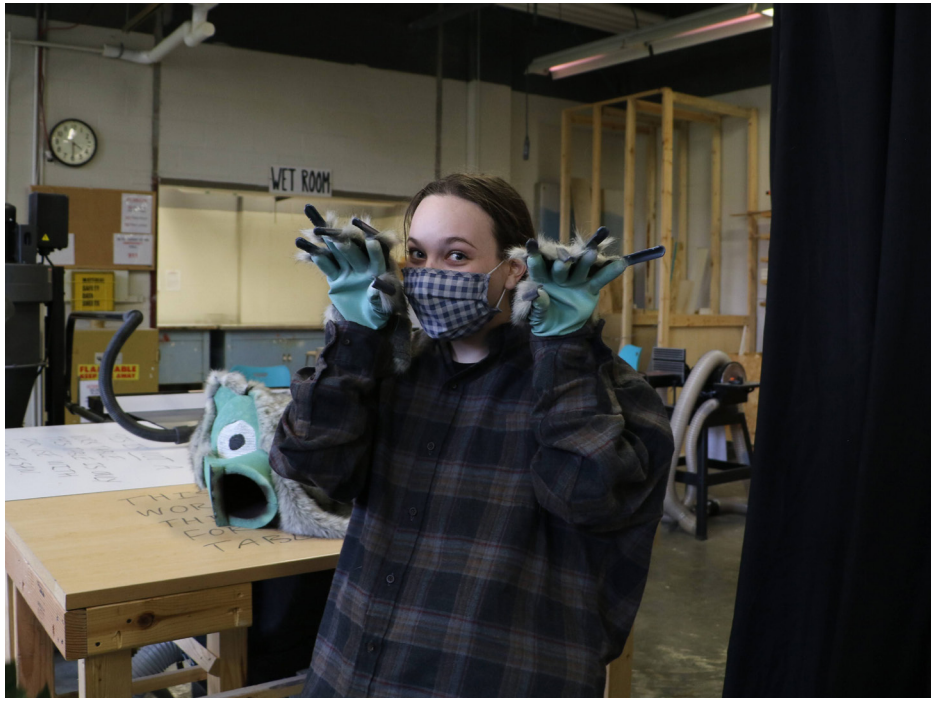
Dislikes: Being the center of attention

About: Patches suffers from a broken heart after trusting someone for so long. Therefore Patches does not trust many people anymore and does not want to deal with anyone in hoping that the feeling of pain will not be brought back up again.

Hydro-
Cal
Plaster

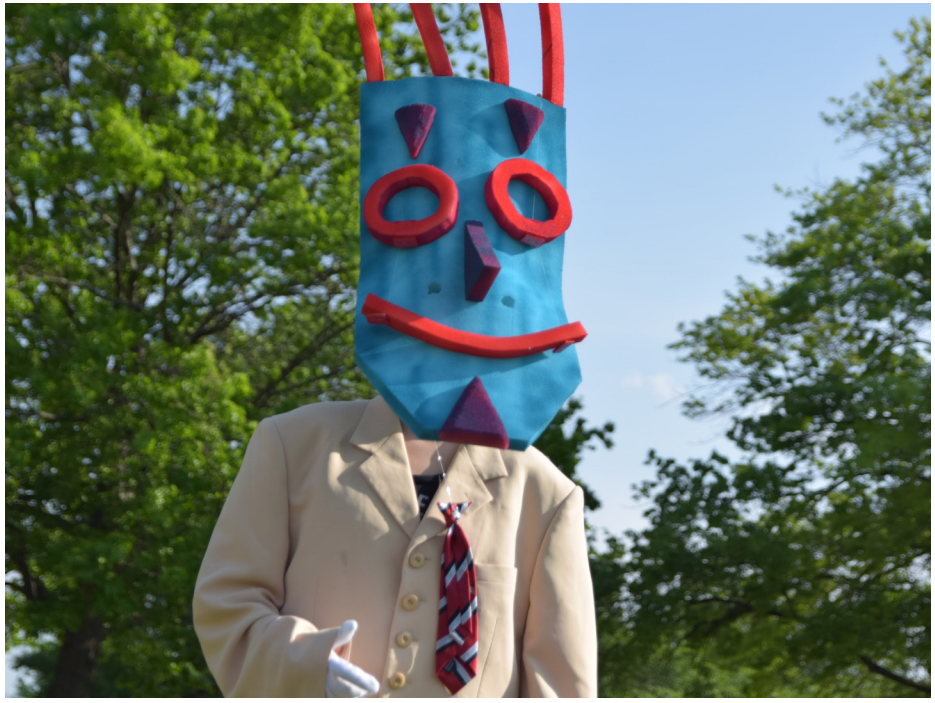
WET ROO

ET ROOM


WET ROOM

ROMA

Wesley
8



TRAHERN

Post Production

Summary of Experience (before event)

The summer right before my first senior thesis class I had been chosen to do a Summer Research Award where I created three lifesize wearable puppet characters. From that, I had decided to continue it and make more for my senior show.
Since I was in a studio art senior thesis class and then went to an animation/vfx senior thesis class, I got to see first hand the differences between the two which was very exciting because I am very fond of both! As I started in the studio art thesis class, I was mainly planning what would the space look like, making the characters, figuring out why I was making this/what was my goal, etc. In the Animation/vfx thesis class, it was more about the pipeline, taking feedback and changing things in order for it to be more successful, etc. It was strange going from one to the other, it even felt like I was doing everything backwards when I got into the animation/vfx thesis class.

Making the puppet characters was the easy part, it was mainly the idea of what I was trying to do and how this would help me in what I was trying to say, that was the tricky part for me. I am not that much of a deep person so it was hard for me to even figure out what I wanted from this project. In the beginning I was just having fun, but this process made me realize more than that.

Another difficult part for me with this project was finding volunteers to portray the characters. I had tried reaching out in a lot of places, spreading the word, but only got two people from it. So once time was running out, I reached out to people individually and that seemed like the option that worked best for me.

Summary of Experience (during event)

I know I wanted a lot of these characters, so that it would feel like a community of characters coming together. But I never knew how successful it would be. However, I just felt as though I had to go with it and whatever happens, happens. It was really strange being in charge of something, I kind of felt like I had no idea what I was doing and I was just running around making sure everyone had their character and such. Then it was like five minutes till the event started and I myself still needed to get dressed! It was hectic, but fun at the same time. I am usually the guy in the back, quiet, not knowing what to say and such, so this was really different for me. Some things were falling apart during the event (structurally) which was honestly quite funny, I don't know why. So I had to fix some things during the event.

I also had no idea what to do with myself, because I was always thinking what each character would be doing, but not myself! So that was unplanned, but fixing some of the characters gave me something to do I suppose.

Seeing everyone being in their character was truly magical for me. Having to build them from scratch while they were just laying in the corner of my room, to seeing them all move around independently being their own entity was just so great to witness, I loved it. Although, I didn't even get to take it all in because of my focus on making sure everything was going well and nothing was falling apart. However, looking back at it through the documentation made me realize how special that day was and how much fun everyone was having, which was my goal from the very beginning.

Some Volunteer's Experience

"Putting on your suit was super empowering. I felt as though I could do things I normally couldn't do and receive no judgement because I was a creature that existed outside the realm of humans. It was absolutely amazing. Leading up to the performance I had my doubts and anxieties but they were immediately subdued when I put on the suit!! And I got to meet so many cool people who paricipated!! I loved interacting with the kids and the faculty a lot!! I was kinda sad when it was over and wanted to interact more but it was such an amazing experience. If you ever asked me to do this again I would in a heart beat!!!!! Thank you so much for this opportunity!!"

"Before we started in all honesty once I saw how hot it was outside I was kind of dreading getting into the costume!! And I had no idea what to really expect for what we'd be doing so I was kinda scared since I knew the costume was kind of big. But once I was in the costume and moving around it was super fun even with all the heat!!! The kids were scared of me at first which was hilarious, and trying to be in character was fun! Overall super happy I came to help and would totally do it again!"

Some Volunteer's Experience

"I had a blast working with everyone. I'm so glad everything worked out smoothly, and that you were able to find all the volunteers needed. It was wonderful to get to see familiar faces in person after being stuck at home for so long. The experience was fun and new since I'd never performed in an exhibition before. You did an amazing job and I look forward to seeing what comes next for you."

"When it comes to new and fun experiences, Jeremy's puppet show definitely takes the cake. I wasn't nervous to help him bring his characters to life until I saw them in person. After seeing all of his creations, and figuring out where I fit into his vision, I was almost overwhelmed by the life and personality each puppet carried. I became worried, because I wanted to make [the character] as close to what he imagined as possible. I am sure I did not come close, given that Jeremy's imagination and his creative energy take on a life of their own, one that is hard for someone to recreate without instruction. Luckily, with Jeremy's foresight and skilled approach at managing everyone who was taking on a role in his show, it wasn't hard to guess who he saw the characters as. He not only instructed us on how to use and care for the puppets, but he also gave us character sheets and references for the puppet we performed as. The amount of energy and dedication that not only went into the puppets and props, but that also went into the planning, management and execution of his performance shows great care and professionalism. Jeremy has always been smart, crafty and creative, and thanks to his hard work, and the hard work of the volunteers, I believe people were able to see a deeper, more imaginative side to him and his art -- a side that I look forward to seeing in the world more, and was honored to have the chance to experience, first hand."

Special Thanks

My family

Heather Abels

Scott Raymond

Virginia Griswold

Simon Woodall

Janice Gonzalez

Emma Griffis

Christopher Whitted

Claire Layne

Isaiah Wade

Veronica Wallace Cruz

Vianca Cruz

Lauren Maurice

Caitlin Macdonald

Mariah Mendoza