

A Button's Day Out

Blade Vavzincak



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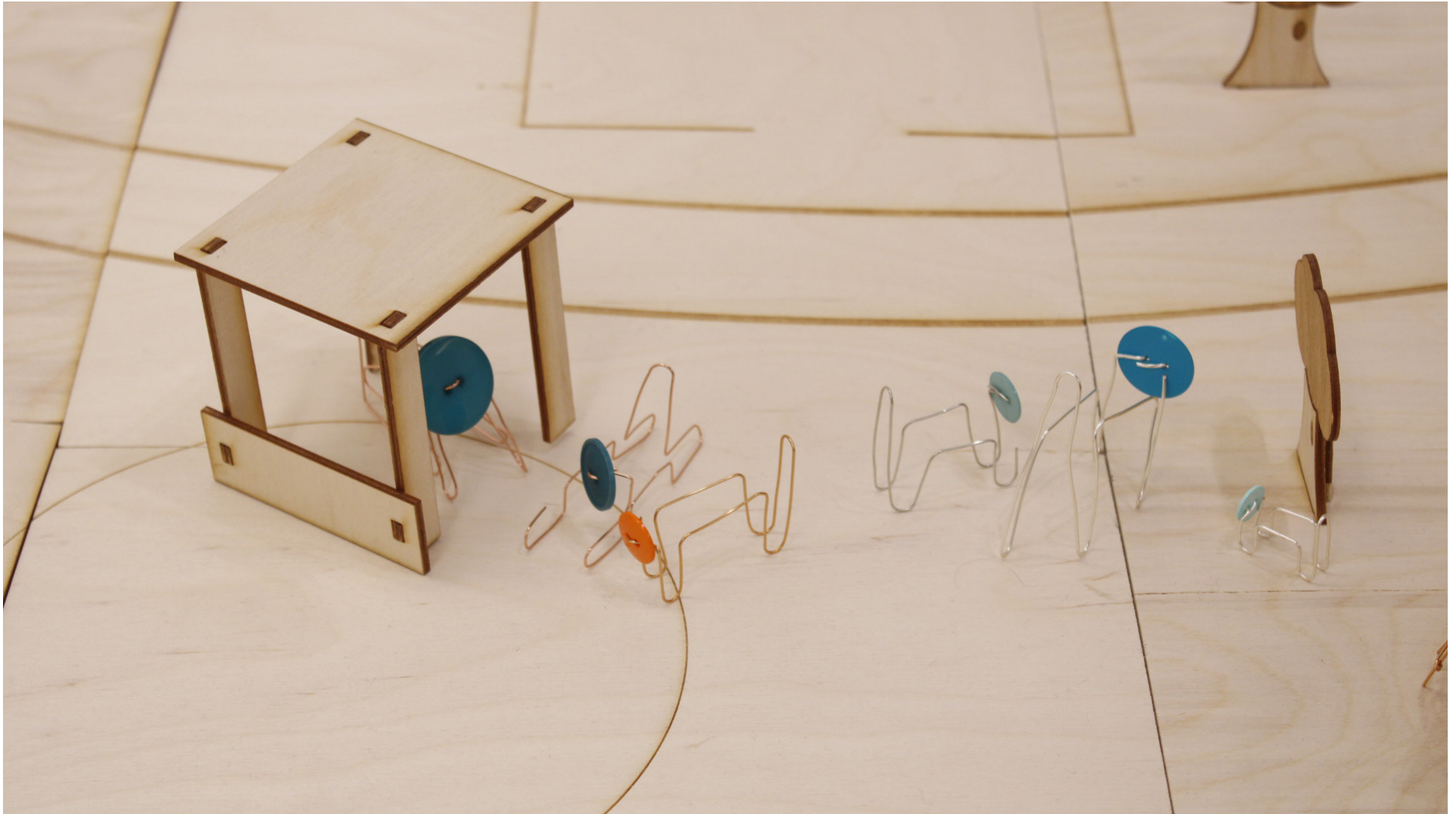
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Artist Statement

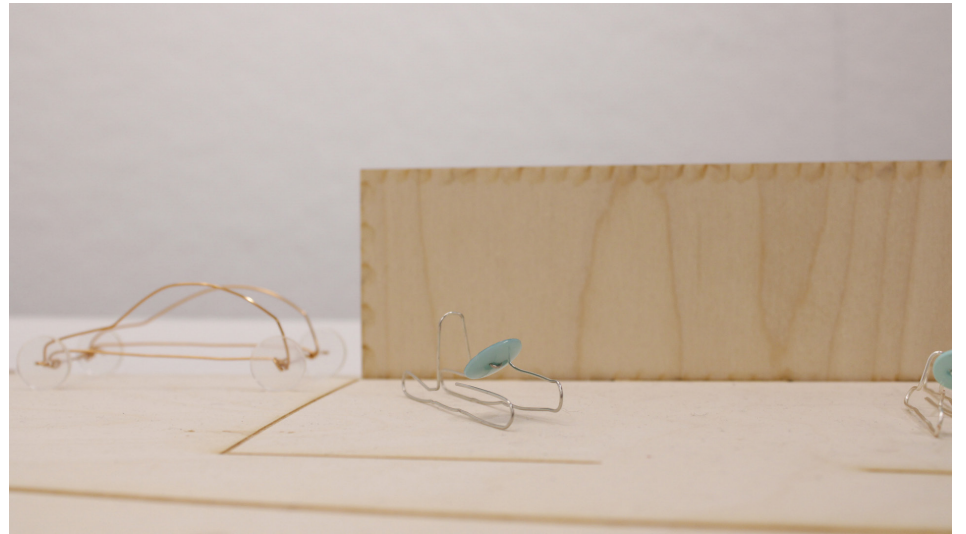
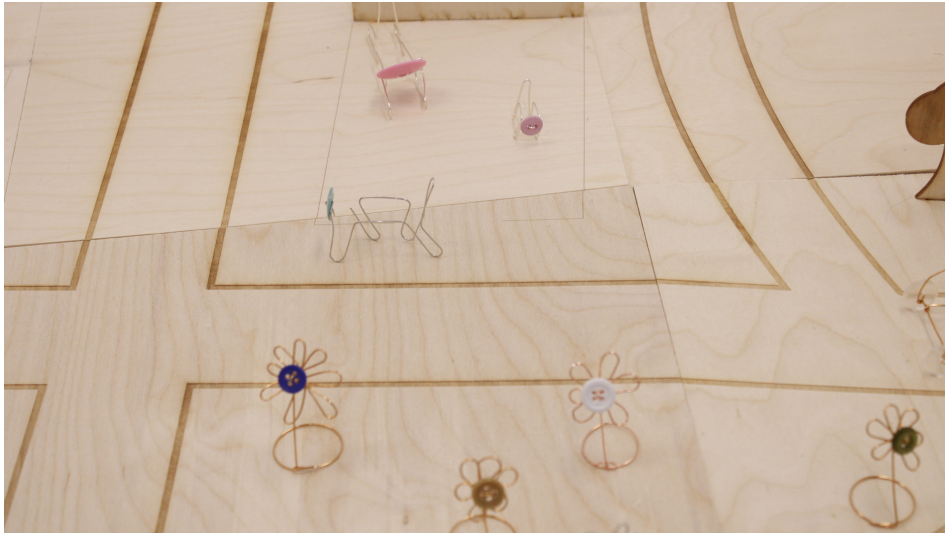
As my college experience comes to an end, I fear the future when I will need to take on more responsibilities and enter the workforce. The thoughts of adulthood conflict with my inner child who wants to push back on this idea of rigid schedules and professionalism which has resulted in a work that blends my adult self and childhood self in a visual form that reminds viewers of the child inside all of us. A Button's Day Out follows the journey of a button coming to life and exploring a town through the medium of stop motion animation using sculptures created from wires and buttons and provides the viewer the opportunity to connect with their inner child and take a moment to remind themselves that just because they are an adult it does not mean they need to abandon the creativity and imagination they had as a child. By intertwining my practices of metal work and laser cutting with childhood creativity, I aim to reject the feelings of responsibility from clothing buttons and the rigidity of metal which remind me of the nervousness I feel towards my upcoming adult life.



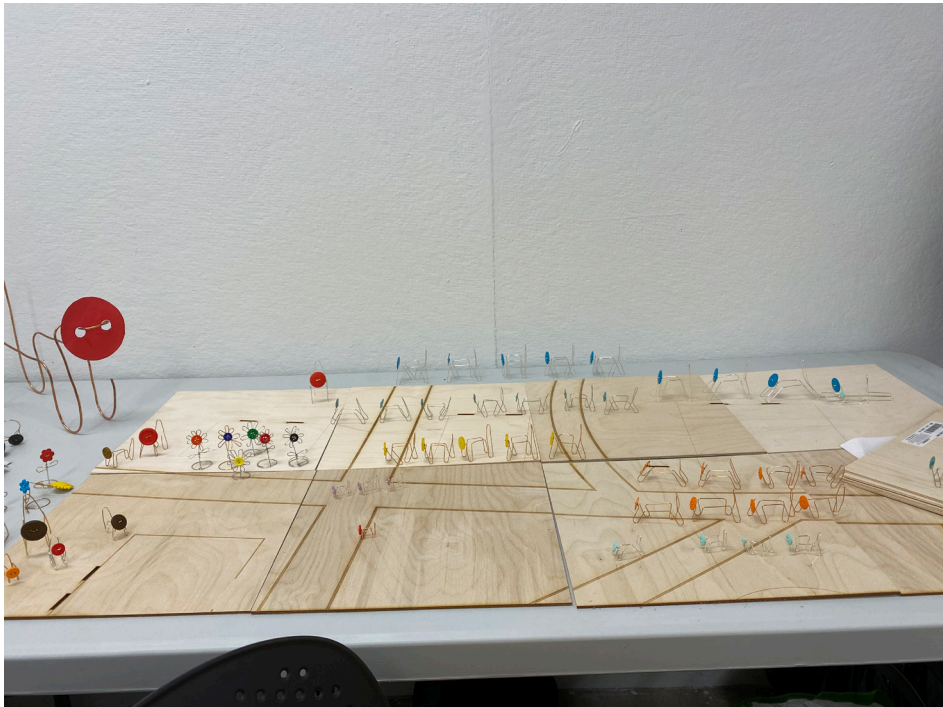
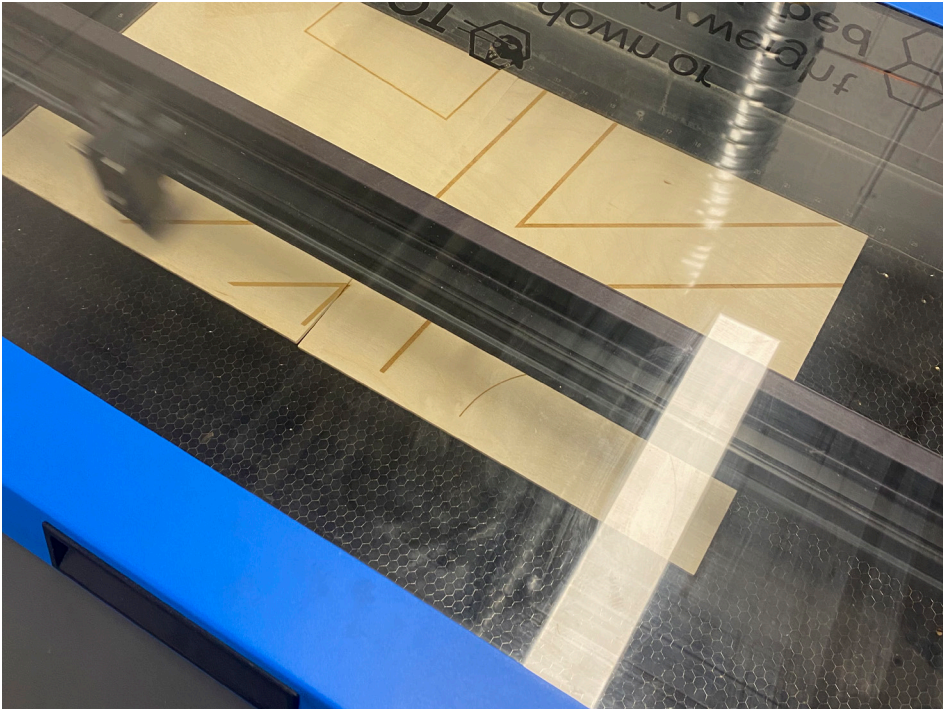


Video Link:

<https://youtu.be/BTTn2GAh5is>



Stop Motion Stills

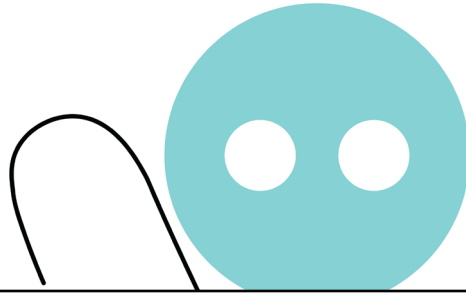


Process Work

This is an interactive exhibit! Feel free to play with and pose us as you like!

Please be careful though, some of us are fragile!






(P.S. Try moving the trees!)

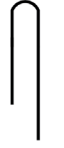



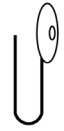

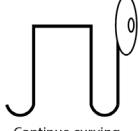
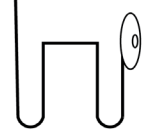

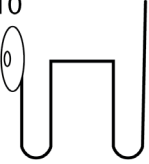







Want to make one of us?

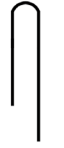
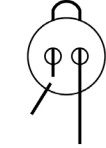




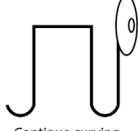
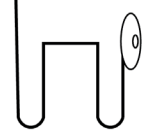

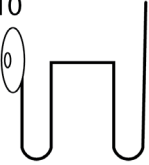
Look in here for instructions!



Materials:     

1  Curve wire near end	2  Slide button onto wire and cut	3  Bend the small part of wire toward middle and long end away from middle. Bend about 90 degrees	4  Continue straight until it is your desired leg length	5  Curve wire to create a foot and create straight line upwards
6  Bend 90 degrees to create body	7  Continue curving wire to create the second leg	8  Curve the wire to the right to create tail	9  Once the tail is created continue downward to create another leg	10  Repeat steps 4-6 towards button to finish sculpture

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Set Design



Photos after interactions in the showcase

Research and Inspirations: Jeff Koons

Jeff Koons describes how the idea began with him experimenting with actual balloons and blowing them up to understand the medium, once he had practice, he decided to use the balloon dog as a base for the project. The way that he describes the sculpture is the most interesting part of the video to me as he describes it as “eternally optimistic” and having the joy of celebrating a birthday party. The reason for choosing the balloon dog was said to be the best suited for being blown up in a larger scale, the other objects in the celebration series include a ring and flowers. The terms of “materialism” and “monumentality” are used by Koons to describe the balloon dogs, but also considers the interior of the sculpture itself with the air to him representing the life of humans. The reflections of the dogs are considered by him to be part of the work itself and representing the life around them which ties back to the idea of the objects just being transponders of the feelings of the viewer.

This information is good for my project where I would like to replicate the feelings of childhood for adults in the form of sculpture and these emotions are experienced by viewing the sculptures he creates. I think the idea of using

smaller objects to get a feel for the form would be blown up in scale was an interesting idea and would be beneficial to truly understand the smaller details of the object. Something that I thought was interesting to consider was the way that he considered the balloon dog specifically to be the “most monumental” of the options he had. While the sculptures began as much larger, it may not be effective in a larger form and other options should be considered. This large scale idea of work was not what I decided to pursue and remained small, but the process helped to refine my ideas. The way Koons described the dogs as a transponder of the emotions of the viewer interested me and experimenting with less meaning in the work had successful results.



Research and Inspirations: Alexander Calder

Alexander Calder's Circus was influential for the project for the way that it helps to give the sculptures life. Creating wire sculptures that feel alive is a difficult task and the basic details of them were effective to me and I took inspiration from them. The work consists of wire sculptures being moved by Calder himself and recording them and making noises for them. The set consists circus actors as well as props like a tightrope and trapeze ropes. The work consisted of many mechanisms that allowed him to use multiple props at once and perform the works live in front of an audience. Created using cloth and metal wire, the sculptures ranged from clowns to lions with wood being used with the horses.

The work allowed me to discover what did and did not work with my sculptures and how I could improve on them to make a video that would show the sculptures I was making as alive. The most important aspect of the work that interested me was the use of color. The smaller objects like kangaroos and ropes are often just a neutral color and the colors are reserved for the performers of the circus to focus the attention on them. Using this concept, I decided on not adding color onto the wood and allowing

the sculptures to have the spotlight. Other things taken from the work were smaller details such as the way the lion can stand from the tail part moving the center of gravity back and still looking natural. The interactivity of Calder with the work was something that I wanted to replicate in my work by allowing viewers to play with the exhibit. The work was very important to me for creating the method of color I wanted to have in my project and creating a stronger visual aesthetic for the work.



Research and Inspirations: Inner Child

The “inner child” of your mind is the part of your subconscious that collects messages before your brain knows what they mean and contains your emotions, memories, and beliefs from the past. Identifying the inner child can come in parts where you remember distinct moments of your childhood, or even as an adult when dealing with emotions relating to other people. The inner child is always present in your life and reconnecting with it can have positive effects and cause overall improvement in the mental state. An inner child has the potential to either cause destruction or happiness for the person depending on your interactions with it. The inner child can cause insecurities and anxiety, or it can cause you to feel secured and loved depending on the ways that you are involved with that part of your subconscious. Two steps are listed as the way to connect with, and nurture your inner child. The first is to get in touch with your inner child and begin a dialogue and relationship with it. The second is to listen to what your inner child is telling you and to work on their issues or their dreams. These steps create a healthier mind and appease your subconscious by relieving your burdens that were not always prominent to you.

The idea of an inner child is something that I have learned to accept and has helped me overcome stress as well as to feel healthy again mentally. This concept of the inner child is important to me as it has caused me to accept myself and I would like to give this kind of feeling to others with my art. Objects to convey these feelings would need to be nostalgic or come from a place of memory that is potentially overlooked by people in daily life. My goal with this project is to create an exhibition to begin a dialogue with the inner child by making the viewer aware of this part of their subconscious and allow them to potentially work with it to live a happier life. The exhibition can only cause the initial step to beginning, but information about this concept is incorporated into the project itself and could help others lead a happier life while also being appealing to the eye.

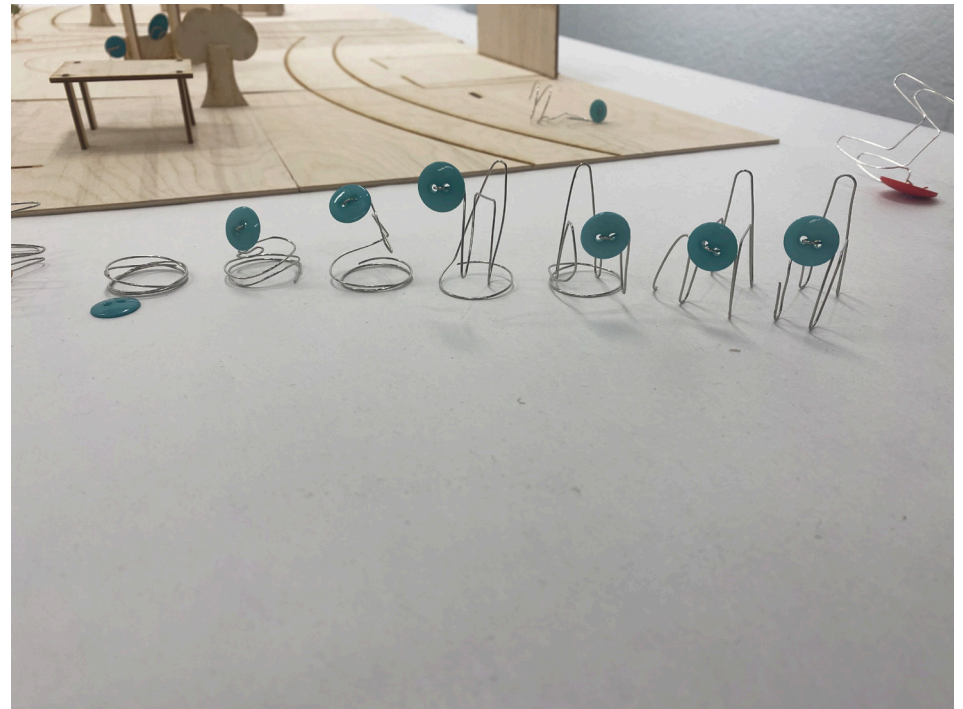
Goldstein, Esther. “What Is an Inner Child: And What Does It Know - Integrative Psychotherapy Mental Health Blog.” Integrative Psychotherapy & Trauma Treatment. Integrative Psychotherapy & Trauma Treatment, June 6, 2022. <https://integrativepsych.co/new-blog/what-is-an-inner-child>.

Research and Inspirations: Art Therapy

Art therapy is the concept of art being used in conjunction with regular healing methods to help the healing process. This method can be used in a few ways, from the person needing the help creating the art themselves to find self-discovery or for them to analyze existing art to work on improving their mental health. The art gives the brain an outlet to express itself subconsciously without needing to think deeply about your feelings and examining the work afterwards can bring to light the underlying problems for the mental illness or other ailments. Art therapy is generally effective for helping to relieve the effects of depression, anxiety, and bipolar disorders. Art therapy is not always just paintings however, and journaling, creative writing, and collages can be used for the healing process as well.

The concept of art therapy is interesting to me as it is important in my personal healing process as well as being a goal to achieve in my art for others. The sculptures will hopefully give the sense of nostalgia and childhood memories but also give an outlet of analysis to people to analyze the artwork to process and think deeper to possibly uncover their own feelings. The idea of the work is meant to

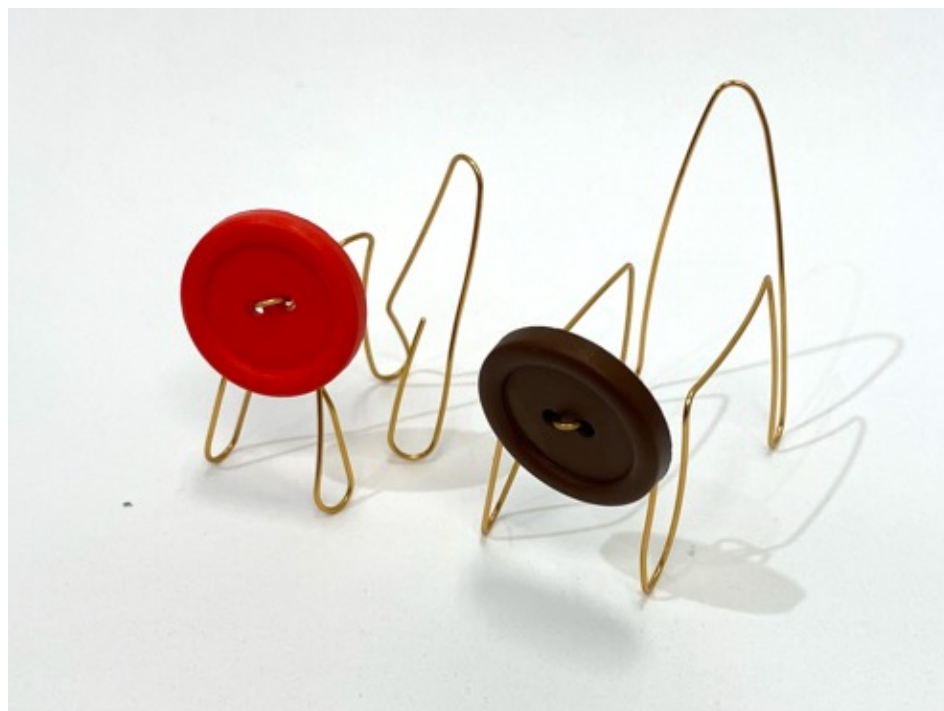
help the viewers and I think that promoting this idea of my life to the viewers would be a good idea as the project itself is an art therapy piece for me. The project helped me to approach my own emotions and create art to help myself and I hope that in the future it may help others be inspired to help themselves.



“Healing through the Arts and Creativity.” Vantage Point Recovery. Vantage Point Recovery, July 12, 2019. <https://vantagepointrecovery.com/healing-through-art-therapy/>.

Work Process

The wire sculptures are simple in design and, with the abstract nature that the wire provides combining with the inspiration of Jeff Koons, create works that allow the mind to piece together what the viewers eyes are looking at. While the sculptures take on the role and personality of my dogs at home, I did not want to make them look exactly as a dog as I feared that would remove the imaginative aspect of them that makes them truly special for



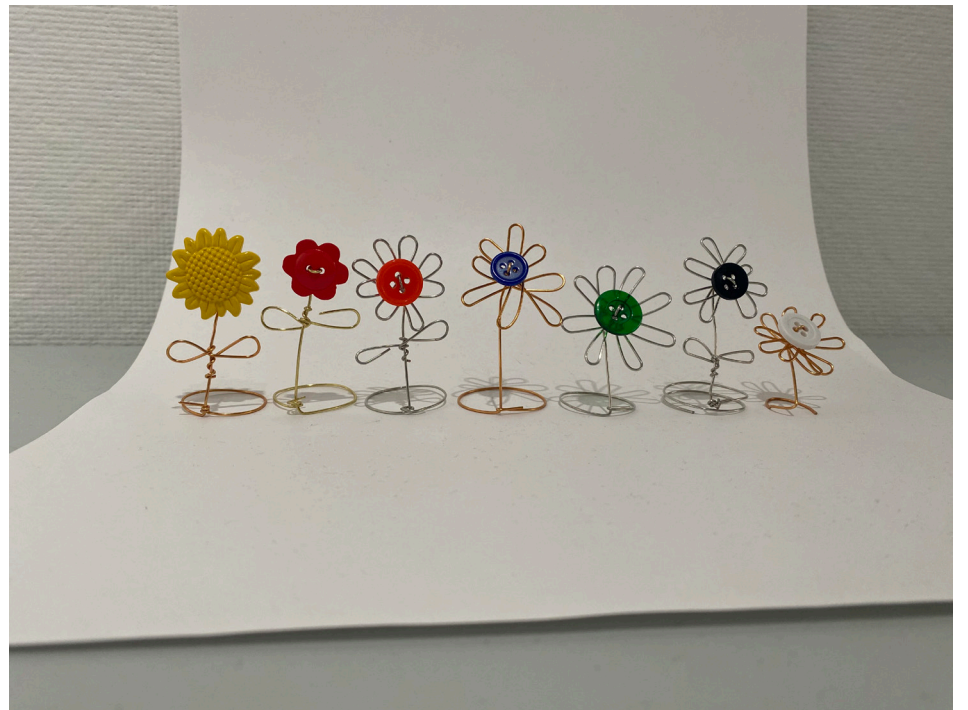
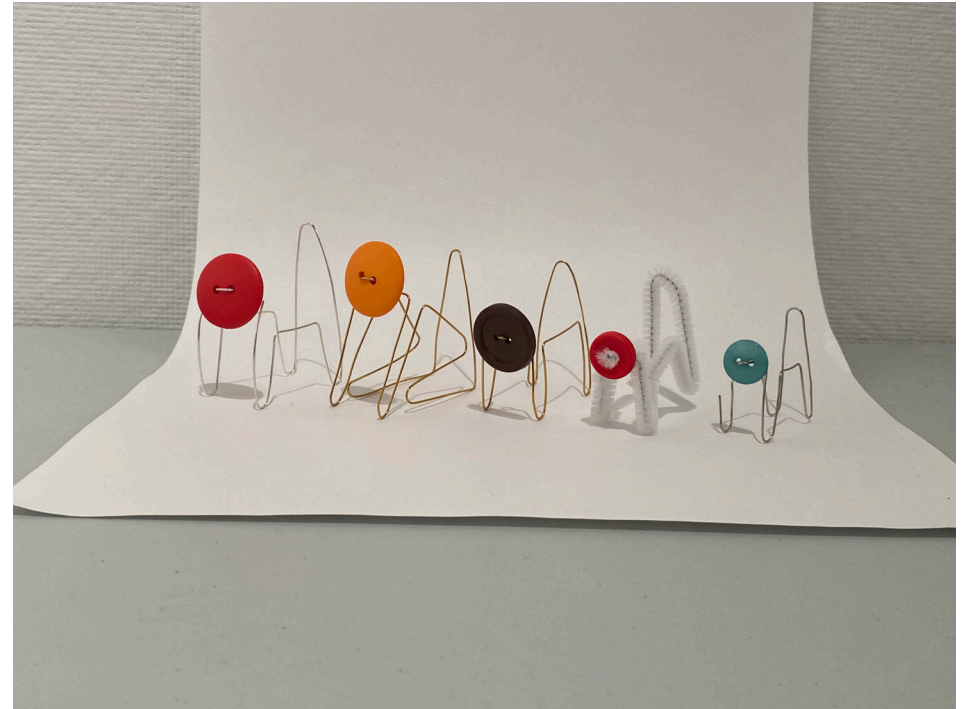
me. I wanted to create works that while initially looking somewhat like the inspiration, would become more fleshed out in their actions and movements on screen resulting in the designs of the sculptures remaining vaguer and more interpretive rather than becoming more doglike.

The map is inspired by multiple aspects of my childhood and is fully realized with the laser cutting that I learned during my time in college. The concept of the map was inspired from both wooden train track toys as well as the classic playmats that I grew up playing with. The design itself is a combination of both the neighborhood my grandmother lives in, as well as aspects from Ann Arbor where I live now to further connect my childhood and adult selves.



The map is intentionally left simple as I made the decision to have the living sculptures be the primary source of color in the work since experimenting with colors made the wires be difficult to see in some cases.

Early wire sculptures of the set furniture were more different than it is in the final product on display. Through a critic review by Rose Sharp, I realized that the world design had inherent issues that I had not considered. By using buttons in the non-living sculptures, it conflicted with the idea of the button representing the “living” sculptures. This made me realize the issues that existed with my idea of creating the props out of wire and buttons and caused me to laser cut wooden props instead which helped it to match the aesthetic of the map more accurately and allow the buttons to be the main source of color in the video.



Conclusion

This work was important for me not only as a major milestone in my time in college, but also for my own self growth. From this project I was able to do more research on myself and the issues that I had in my own life and by using this stop motion project as a form of art therapy I feel that I was able to improve my own life.

The project was eye opening for me to see what I was fully capable of with my talents as I was able to aim big and not be restricted by tight time limits that a normal class would have. With the research and experimentation I did during the project I learned a lot about how I should approach my own art in terms of composition and meaning. I generally never have a meaning to the art that I create so learning how to represent the emotions I want to convey was a fascinating experience for me as I typically work as a jewelry designer where the art is primarily meant to be sold.

While initially created to be a project aiming to help others based on my experiences with my own inner child, it became a passion project of mine and became my own form of therapy for the most part. Being able to see the happiness on those that saw my sculptures was a feeling

that I had not experienced in the past and let me feel more self-confident as well as mentally healthy.

In the future I would love to experiment more with this concept of adulthood and the way that the inner child can be communicated with. The help and encouragement I recieved towards not only my art but myself as a person is something I will always cherish and the project will always be important to me.

