

ART AS ACTIVISM HOUSE



ever

WE

I welcome
change, but
sometimes I
wish I could
change how

I WELCOME CHANGE but sometimes I wish I could change back

*An exhibit of art projects about creating community by students in the
Art as Activism House, part of the Global Village at Douglass Residential College.*

April 21 - May 2, 2022

Mary H. Dana Women Artists Series Galleries, Douglass Library
8 Chapel Drive, New Brunswick, NJ 08901

Instructor

Eva Mantell

Artists

**Ally M. Boehm, Sasha R. Dasaro, Upasana Ghosh, Shreya Gupta, Zakiya Jones, Iman Khan,
Julia C. Kizar, Jane E. Matto, Nicole Mitroff, Gabrielle Moore, Jinnie Pang, Callandra D. Peters**

Sponsored by **Douglass Residential College** and the **Center for Women in the Arts and Humanities / Mary H. Dana Women Artists Series**, a program of CWAH in partnership with Rutgers University Libraries.

Cover: Ally M. Boehm

Douglass Residential College's Global Village Learning Communities offer a year-long experience in themed "houses." The Art as Activism House explores women in art as change agents around the world and connects students to their inner activist through multi-modal creative expressions. Many of the artworks presented included the participation of viewers who contributed their own sketches, poetry and stories throughout the duration of the exhibit to help shape a larger expression of community.

The **Mary H. Dana Women Artists Series** is a program of the Center for Women in the Arts and Humanities in partnership with Rutgers University Libraries. The Series was founded in 1971 by Douglass graduate and artist Joan Snyder (DC '62) under the leadership of Library Director, Daisy Brightenback Shenholm (DC '44), and is the oldest continuous running exhibition space in the United States dedicated to making visible the work of emerging and established contemporary women artists.



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I WELCOME CHANGE but sometimes I wish I could change back

It's Fall 2021 and we meet in person in the classroom/studio. Listening. Who said that?
The masks can make it hard sometimes to match a voice to a person.

We are tentative and cautious. It's strange to be here but it's so much better than the isolation of the previous two years.

It's a studio class, but also an academic class. In reading assignments we are cautioned not to make assumptions about the experiences of others. We are cautioned not to colonize, not to exploit. A definition: Art and Activism is a practice for the social critic who wants change. With caution: mind your ego and privilege.

The Broken and Repaired Vase is an art assignment of fragments assembled into a whole. It's a concept that lets others into your artwork, while you have shaped the form, shaped the question or prompt, and defined the limitations and the materials. Form and process and lots of interaction create a decentralized artwork.

The part about the vase being broken is shorthand for this broken world. The part about repairing it is shorthand for a wish to fix it.

In 1979, Mierle Laderman Ukeles spends a year shaking hands with and thanking all 8,500 sanitation workers in New York City. "Thank you for keeping New York City alive," she tells each one.

Art can be about what we choose to care about and what we choose to pay attention to. Ukeles brings her care and her attention to real people, to workers at the margins, to urban ecologies and to the environmental crisis.

In 2016, Simone Leigh creates *The Waiting Room* at the New Museum in NYC, making a space for self-care, yoga, massage, classes about herbal medicine. She brings her care and attention to a community in need of healing from trauma. She brings her care and attention to injustices in health care, policing, gun laws and the criminal justice system.

Art can be an unfolding experience. Art can be an unfolding human story.

In 2020, Marietta Bernstorff presents *The Patchwork Healing Blanket / La Manta de Curación*, sewn from over 600 hand-made fabric patches from around the world. The Healing Blanket is a work in progress, as more patches are added, and more voices come together to protest an epidemic of gender-based murder and violence in Mexico, made worse by the pandemic of Covid.

When students take on *The Broken and Repaired Vase project*, they create spaces for one another. They make spaces for one another for reflection, for improvisation, for free associating. They make spaces for introducing themselves to one another through drawing, painting, through sharing memories and the music they like to listen to.

After Winter break we meet on Zoom for two classes, because there's a spike in infections. That passes and we return to one another in the classroom/studio. By Spring 2022 for a brief moment it seems possible to risk

taking off the masks to rediscover our faces. How the muscles tense around our mouths to form words, to frown or smile. How our features fit together.

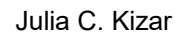
But masks go back on quickly. We're better off than we were a year ago, two years ago, but still.

The project enlarges for the Spring Semester and students are asked to imagine a project so enormous that it is unfeasible, unrealizable, ridiculous. Why not? We are so cooped up here, and the proposal is such a big part of an artist's work.

After this expansion of thinking, a necessary contraction, as actual things, or representations or documents, will need to fill the gallery for the final exhibit, the culmination of our year's work. With the hope that thinking big has shifted the energy in the room, the students now create spaces for the larger community at Rutgers to introduce themselves, and to become a part of a changing idea of community.

Special Thanks to my students, Hasnaa Mokhtar, Madinah Elamin, and Nicole Ianuzelli.

Eva Mantell | May 2022



KITCHEN

Use 1-2 index cards to write a recipe that is important to you (favorite dish, family recipe, memory, etc.). At the top of each card, write the name of the recipe. Then, write a 1 sentence description of the dish and where it comes from. Write the ingredients and preparation instructions and, if you'd like, you may also include a website with more detailed instructions. At the end, write why this dish is important to you. Please feel free to write in the language of your/your recipe's culture and to include a drawing of the dish. If there is someone at this station with you, please feel free to talk with them about their day, story, or card. Make a connection... perhaps a friend to cook with! :)

Thank you for your contribution!

ART STUDIO

Use an index card to express yourself: draw a doodle or write a poem. The work may relate to your day or life story. If you're comfortable, please write a sentence at the bottom of the card about the work. If there is someone at this station with you, please feel free to talk with them about their day, story, or card. Make an art buddy!

Thank you for your contribution!

OFFICE

Use an index card to write a note to a person, place, object, (etc) of your choosing. This note should be meaningful to you in some way, and you may choose to display it in the office (using poster putty), give it to someone, or keep it for yourself as a tool for thought and healing. If there is someone at this station with you, please feel free to talk with them about their day, story, or card. Make a connection. Perhaps you will make a pen pal or a friend. :)

Thank you for your contribution!

Julia C. Kizar

Dear Lonely College Students,
 I'm sorry you are feeling
 this way and going through
 this. Please know it has
 nothing to do with you and
 you are perfect. Your people
 are out there and you will
 meet them at the right
 time. In the waiting, be your
 own friend. Explore what
 you want. Treat yourself. Take
 care of your spiritual, mental,
 and physical health. Work
 on your career. Talk kindly to
 yourself. With or without people
 this is your life. Live it.
 Love,
 another lonely student

Dearest Tuki,
 Thank you so much
 for being the best
 roommate I could ask
 for. You are such a
 great friend and
 person, & I am so
 grateful to spend
 each day with you.
 You are so smart,
 so funny, so talented,
 so kind, so loving,
 so caring, so lovely.
 I know we will
 stay friends forever
 because our
 connection & bond
 is so strong, we
 were written in
 the stars. I love
 you and wish you
 the best. -Nico



Julia C. Kizar



Callandra D. Peters



Gabrielle Moore



Ally M. Boehm

Strength in Shared Experiences

My service project is a way to bring people together from different regions having different perspectives, experiences, and journeys in life. In today's world, it is imperative to realize that we are navigating through this reality together. Otherwise, people feel alone, isolated, and misunderstood. This can lead to alienation and can leave us feeling disconnected from our community, and in a broader sense, from the rest of the world. We also feel disconnected from our inner selves and try to seek external connections to fill the void.

The idea is to create a piece together as a community where each piece of paper represents a part of someone else's life. When all the smaller pieces come together, they form a more beautiful and whole picture. This is analogous to an individual's life where we come across different people and they influence us in unique ways. They leave a mark and shape who we are today. This process will continue.

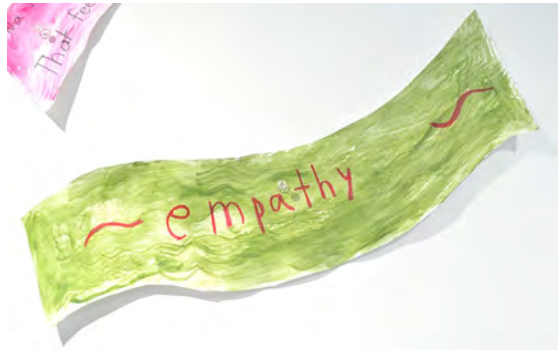
The audience can feel closer to strangers through their lived experiences, and understand how similar we all are in so many ways. There is strength in numbers, and we are stronger when we stand together. When experiences of feeling disconnected and connected merge, they complete each other. We cannot feel connected without ever experiencing disconnection. This project can potentially be expanded to other campuses, schools, and countries, and can impact people globally.



Upasana Ghosh

Instructions:

- Take either one or multiple pieces of paper of any shape, size, or color (white/brown).
- Write about a time or instance where you either felt connected or disconnected.
- You can also draw or doodle something that makes you feel or remember a time when you either felt connected to yourself or to someone else or disconnected from your inner self or from the world around you.
- It is an interactive piece; therefore, I would encourage you to look around and read other people's responses and experiences. You can address somebody or reply to another person by putting your piece of paper adjacent to theirs.
- Please use the supplies provided here and use the pushpins to place your piece on the wall.



Jane E. Matto



Sidewalk Storytelling

Presented By: Shreya Gupta

Initiative to envelop the sidewalks that construct the navigation of our communities with symbolic representations of those living in it. Community members participate by materializing their voices whilst forging strong connections with their neighbors, emphasizing the idea that every story is important, no matter how big or small. Visitors get a deeper look into the chronicles of the people who inhabit the area.

Too often, we find ourselves on our phones while we walk, and this project hopes to compel people to put them away and take in the beauty of the present, as no two sidewalks are the same.

Stage 1: Blueprint

Map was designed with picturization of community infrastructure and possible modes of storytelling.

Stage 2: Prototype

Hypothetical sidewalk block was realized on paper. Meaningful icons were illustrated inside a person's silhouette to tell an autobiographical narrative.

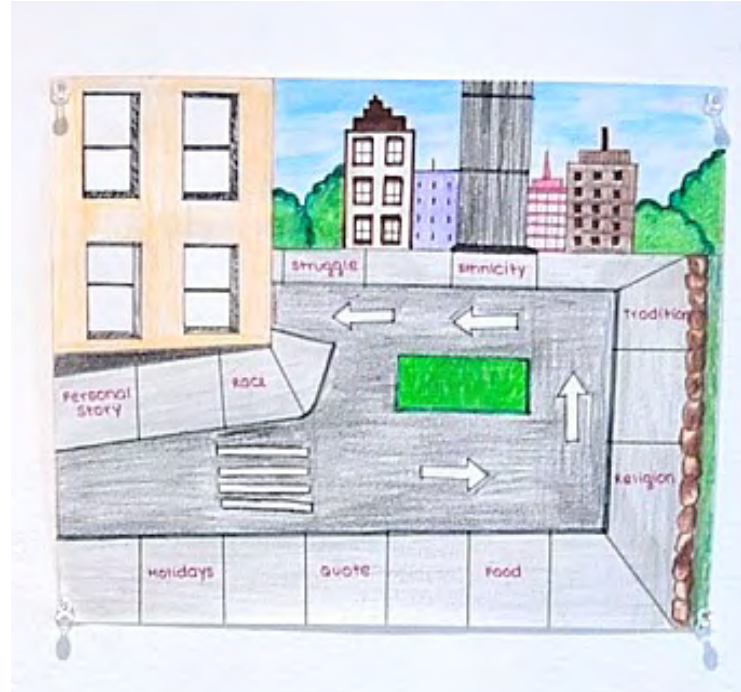
Stage 3: Artist's Contribution

Cement blocks representational of a sidewalk were painted with symbols telling of the artist's life.

Shreya Gupta



Shreya Gupta





Julia C. Kizar

Nicole Mitroff

The process of this piece was asking people what color they feel that they are versus what color they think society/ their family wants them to be/ projects onto them. I wrote down the colors and used paint markers to paint the colors onto rectangular sheets of paper. Each person had two pieces of paper: one of which represented the color that they were and the one that society wanted them to be. I then cut out a circle from the pieces that represented the people themselves, and glued these onto the ones that society wanted them to be. Then, I taped the backs of them all and lined them up so that each person had their own line.

The purpose of this piece was to show how we cut out pieces of ourselves in order to fit into the molds of others, and in the process, we lose ourselves.

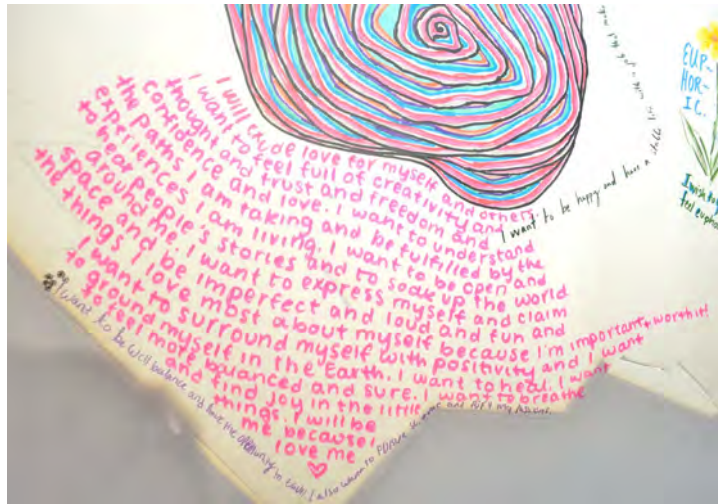
The questions it raises: Who are we when we compare ourselves to what other people/ society wants us to be? How can we learn to be whole again? How can we learn to stop comparing ourselves? How can we see and show how unrealistic the standards that we compare ourselves to are? How can we learn to accept ourselves as who we are? How can we see ourselves as enough when the world we live in profits off of insecurity?

The concept of community: We are all in this together, whether or not we talk about it out loud with each other, we are always comparing ourselves to something out there, striving to be someone that we aren't, playing and replaying phrases like "why can't you be more like..." and "if only I had...". We need to stand strong in who we are and support each other, because we all have something to bring to the table/world. When we compare ourselves, we are taking a big piece of ourselves out, we are trying to change against what we truly want and who we truly are. When we embrace ourselves, we make a whole within ourselves and our communities.



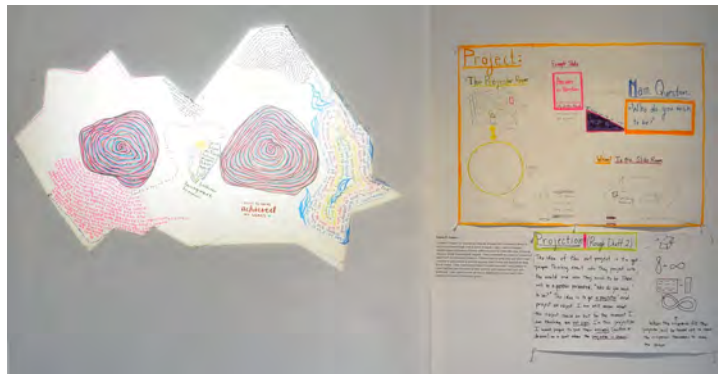


Jinnie Pang



Sasha R. Dasaro

I created “Project” by overlaying irregular shapes onto a projector which in turn cast a mask image onto a piece of paper. Later, I added irregular hypnotic eyes composed of many different colors to make the idea of seeing into your future clouded and magical. I then presented the mask on a piece of paper with the following invitation, “Please draw or write who you wish to be.” I wanted to give people a place to express their hopes and dreams for their future selves. I was inspired to create this piece because I want people to know that they are not alone in their wish for self-improvement and self-fulfillment. I also want to invite all of you reading this to take part in this project and answer the prompt above.



Project:

• The Projector Room



Example Slide

Answer
to Question

City in the West
from north side
was moved

How much did you spend?

2000

- Answer: the

Main Question:

Who do you wish to be?

Where? In the Slide Room



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Projection: (Rough Draft 2)

The idea of this art project is to get people thinking about who they project into the world and who they wish to be. There will be a question presented, "who do you wish to be?" The idea is to get a projector and project an object. I am still unsure what this object should be but for the moment I am thinking an oo sign. In this projection I want people to put their answers (written or drawn) on a spot where the projection is shown.



8 or ∞



When the responses fill the projector will be turned off to leave the responses themselves to make the shape.

Sasha R. Dasaro

(Left to Right)

Top

Nicole Mitroff, Upasana Ghosh,
Callandra D. Peters, Gabrielle Moore

Middle

Julia C. Kizar, Jane E. Matto,
Jinnie Pang, Iman Khan

Bottom

Shreya Gupta, Ally M. Boehm,
Sasha R. Dasaro





Ally M. Boehm



Julia C. Kizar



Zakiya Jones



Zakiya Jones

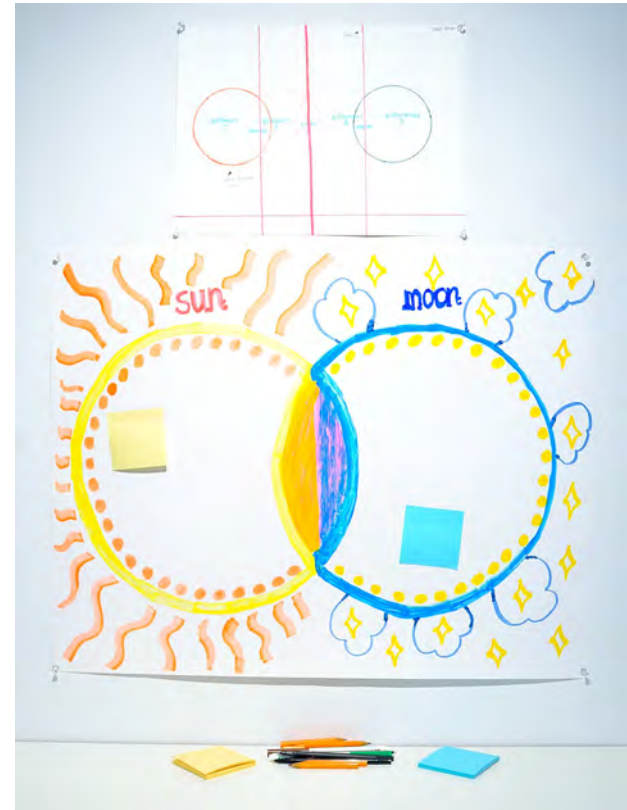
Iman Khan

"The Duality of Life"

Instructions: Let your feelings guide you to which side you identify with. Place the corresponding color sticky note on that side of the poster. (e.g. yellow for the sun, blue for the moon)

Description

This piece represents a venn diagram of the sun and the moon. The message of my piece is that we are all more similar than we think even in our differences. For example, the sun and the moon are seemingly opposites, but in reality, they are both a part of nature and depict the natural flow of life. As the sun shines, the moon disappears, and as the sun goes down, the moon reappears. There is a mysterious beauty in nature. I believe there are signs all around us in life, especially in nature. Thus, although there may be two different groups with opposing beliefs, at the core, each person is human just like the other. My aim is to show not only that we are more similar than we think, but also that there is beauty in our differences as well. The important thing is we must not lose sight of what makes us similar and connects us all to one another, and in turn, not lose sight of our collective, shared humanity.



Iman Khan



Gabrielle Moore



Callandra D. Peters
Take a flower leave a flower

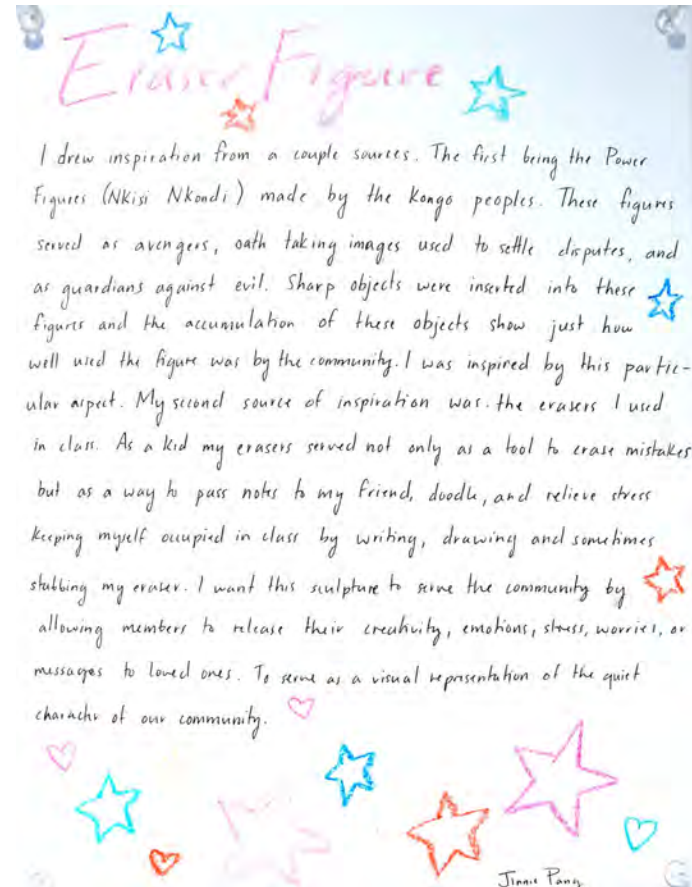


This project captures the use of two love languages, gift giving and words of affirmation, to help the community by bringing joy to others. This idea started from youtube videos of social campaigns where the creators of this project stand in crowded cities and give out free hugs to whoever needs them. As pedestrians walk by they have the opportunity to receive a hug which has resulted in some recipients having a saving grace and giving them hope for the next day. This struck me because as a society we can tend to face large amounts of isolation and in America alone 32.8 percent of the population suffer from depression. For my project instead of the concept of hugs I had the idea of using flowers and combining it with art. Since flowers are a gift you receive as a gesture of love and prosperity. As you typically receive them when something tragic or something happy or exciting occurs. Since I wanted flowers to be gifted to

people, I thought of the idea of origami flowers. Origami is joyful and brings memories of childhood which fosters joy and acknowledges the need for inner child healing. To incorporate more than one love language I also have words of affirmation and quotes embedded in the origami flowers. So as people receive origami flowers they are struck by two love languages to hopefully spark joy and healing as a way to uplift the community. A Vase of origami flowers is displayed with the intent of prospective observers to take a flower if they feel they need an uplifting change in their day. If you want to continue the chain of positivity there is origami paper and instructions on how to make a origami lily along with wire to wrap around and a pen to write an uplifting message.



Jinnie Pang





Gabrielle Moore





Ally M. Boehm

what's in the frame? is an exploration of mind vs body vs memory that gives a three-dimensional collage-like experience of growth and change. Moving through these multiple dimensions, what's in the frame? is able to look at contractions and make them whole. It

aims to explore concepts of examining yourself at your worst versus you at your best, how others see you versus yourself, social media versus reality, and how you define yourself. We see these external versus internal struggles in our daily lives, and the frames give us a lens through which to look at these struggles whole. The mirrors let us confront them. When we look at them in different ways, we receive different outcomes. I want you to come

to the piece with grace – for yourself, for your past, present and future. The frames and scopes of our lives are all different; from strangers to lovers. People know us at different levels. What is inside your frame is outside someone else's.

Write a note on my cards, leave a picture, add a flower; bring something that adds meaning to the frames in your life.

Crochet Capsule 3/21-3/2



This project focuses on making small, personalized crochet pieces that revolve around how people are feeling day-to-day. This is meant to show how we change over time and how no one is static.

Each person was asked to complete a daily survey where they put their name, the date, and what color they were feeling that day. The options were Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Purple, Pink, Black, and White. There was an optional section where the surveying person

could elaborate on how they felt or why they felt that particular color. Then, I created the pieces day by day, keeping each person in the same line of the pieces each week. This allows people to see how they themselves have changed and how no one is static. It also lets us see bigger changes and trends in feelings, whether this is dependent on the temperature, the state of the atmosphere, etc.

The purpose of this project is to not only display how people change over time, but also to allow people to take more time to connect with themselves daily and do self-check ins about how they feel.

Some feedback I got about this project was that people really enjoyed having daily-check ins, but they also often forgot about them because of all of the overwhelming things going on in their lives. This made it even more important for me to remind people to do the survey, since it would be the only time that people would have to reflect during the day and sit down to collect themselves. Other feedback that I got was to incorporate the colors Gray and Brown.

ROUGH DRAFT 2 - a little more realistic

PROCESS

STEP 1: Ask whoever wants to participate. Class members what color they associate w/ what emotion

Red ■ Yellow ■ Blue ■ Black ■
 Orange ■ Green ■ Purple ■ White ■

STEP 2: Do a survey of how people are feeling - either a paper survey or create a digital google form
 ↳ record results for 1 week & check in w/ people to make sure they're completing it

Art as Activism Survey
 Name _____
 Date _____
 What color are you feeling today? _____

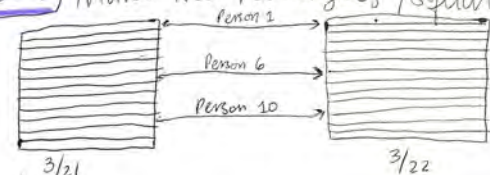
STEP 3: Include an optional space at the bottom of the survey to be able to journal/spill more about how you are feeling // why you are feeling a certain color. Then add whether they feel comfortable sharing that response in the exhibition.

Optional Journaling:
 Why are you feeling this color today?
 Do you feel comfortable sharing your response in the exhibition?

STEP 4: Assign each person a spot. since this project is also about change over time, each person will have their own same spot/line in each weaving.

STEP 5: Create a spreadsheet with everyone's names & responses

STEP 6: Make the rectangles/squares



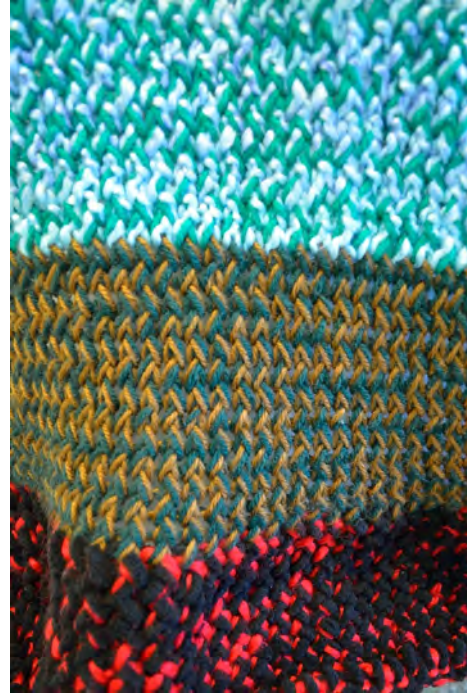
↳ can have a special meaning to how long/wide each square/rectangle is...
 ↳ can do the # of stitches for the # of the day it is of the month, or the # of hours in a day
 ↳ a static vs a growing/ changing number

Static
 pro: more uniform look to the piece
 con: not sure...
 ex: # of people in the study
 • 22 for 2022
 • any random #

VS
changing
 pro: shows how people & days/ time is changing
 con: could look awkward when we get to smaller values
 ex: # of daylight hours
 • day of the month
 • # for the age of the person?



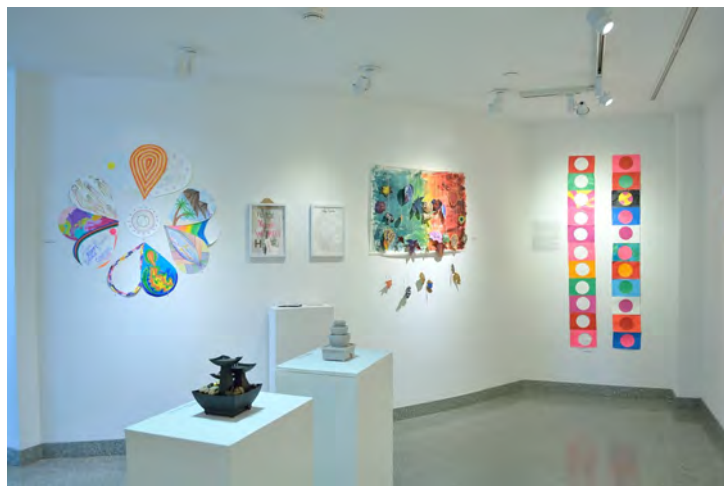
Jane E. Matto



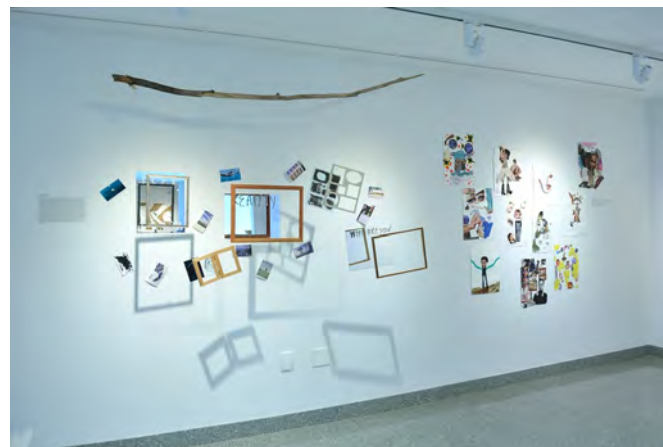
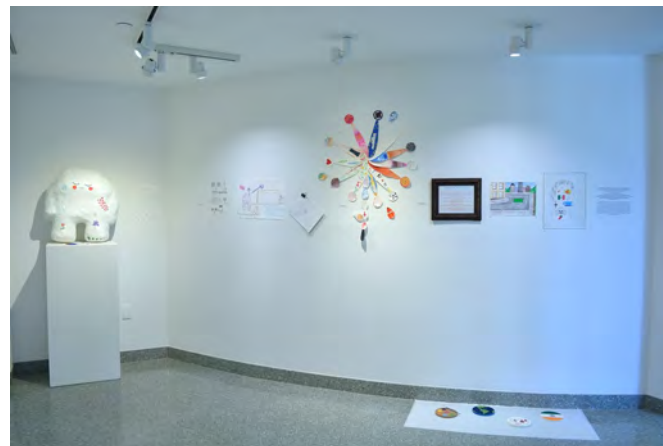
Jane E. Matto

For my Art as Service project, I have knitted a long, thick scarf using many different colors of yarn. The scarf is divided into 17 “sections”, each a combination of two different color, that represent the different stages of my life. In order to decide which colors would represent each of these periods, I thought about what was going on in my life at that point, what I was interested in, and what experiences were most emblematic of that age. After this project has been displayed, I will donate it to someone in need, such as a person in a women’s shelter or even a citizen of Ukraine. I hope that by donating this scarf, which I see as almost an extension of me, I can bring comfort to whoever wears it, as if I’m giving them a hug.





Installation views





Installation views

ART AS ACTIVISM HOUSE 2022

Ally M. Boehm

Major: Communication

Minors: Digital Communications,
Information & Media and Gender &
Media

Class of 2025

Sasha R. Dasaro

Major: Psychology

Minor: Women's, Gender & Sexuality
Studies

Class of 2024

Upasana Ghosh

Major: Biomedical Engineering

Minor: Psychology

Class of 2022

Shreya Gupta

Major: Psychology

Minor: Biological Sciences

Class of 2023

Zakiya Jones

Major: Communication (specializing
in Strategic Public Communication &
Public Relations)

Minor: Creative Writing

Class of 2023

Iman Khan

Major: Psychology

Minor: Women's, Gender & Sexuality
Studies

Class of 2022

Julia C. Kizar

Major: English

Minors: Creative Writing and Turkish

Class of 2023

Jane E. Matto

Major: Psychology

Minors: Creative Writing and Italian

Class of 2022

Nicole Mitroff

Major: Landscape Architecture

Minor: Environmental Planning &
Design

Class of 2024

Gabrielle Moore

Majors: Exercise Science and
Plant Biology

Minor: Medicinal & Economic
Botany

Class of 2024

Jinnie Pang

Majors: Linguistics and
Psychology

Class of 2023

Callandra D. Peters

Major: Plant Biotech

Class of 2023

CENTER FOR WOMEN IN THE ARTS AND HUMANITIES

The Rutgers Center for Women in the Arts and Humanities mission is to **advance the contributions of women in the arts and humanities** by facilitating research, hosting visiting scholars and artists, mounting exhibitions, and engaging in university-community partnerships with artists, performers, scholars and cultural-makers. Our vision is to bring high quality educational and cultural opportunities that serve this purpose to diverse global, national, regional, state, and university audiences.

CWAH is a university-wide unit reporting to the [Vice President of Academic Initiatives](#) under the auspices of the [Office of the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs](#). CWAH is a consortium member of the [Institute for Women's Leadership](#), at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey.

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