

Throughout my two years in the IB program I have experimented with many mediums, and on the whole focused on one of my greatest passions: Mythology. The first year in IB visual arts was focused on investigating and exploring different concepts, skills, techniques, artists, and art genres. This went along with developing and investigating my own style and concepts and the communication of them. The theme of my artwork has been refined from my concepts in the previous year to become BALANCE conveyed through mythology, united by my choice in colors throughout my final year. Examples of two-dimensional and three-dimensional artworks have been explored and incorporated into my process portfolio.

# Bookbinding

This project is the project where my focus on mythology really takes off. For this project, we learned how to create a book from scratch using matboard, paper, thread or floss, and glue. During the process of creating this, I was constantly thinking about what shape the project would take, something that I have struggled with before and since.

I wanted to show some of the categories that legends are placed into and hope to cause some questioning by the viewer as to why these myths and legends are categorized as they are. I purposely left some pages blank so that it is obvious that the number of legends and myths is constantly growing and it necessitated that space be left for them. Additionally, blank pages implies that there are some legends, myths, and stories that have been forgotten--lost to time. Naturally, this was a piece that could be picked up and flipped through.

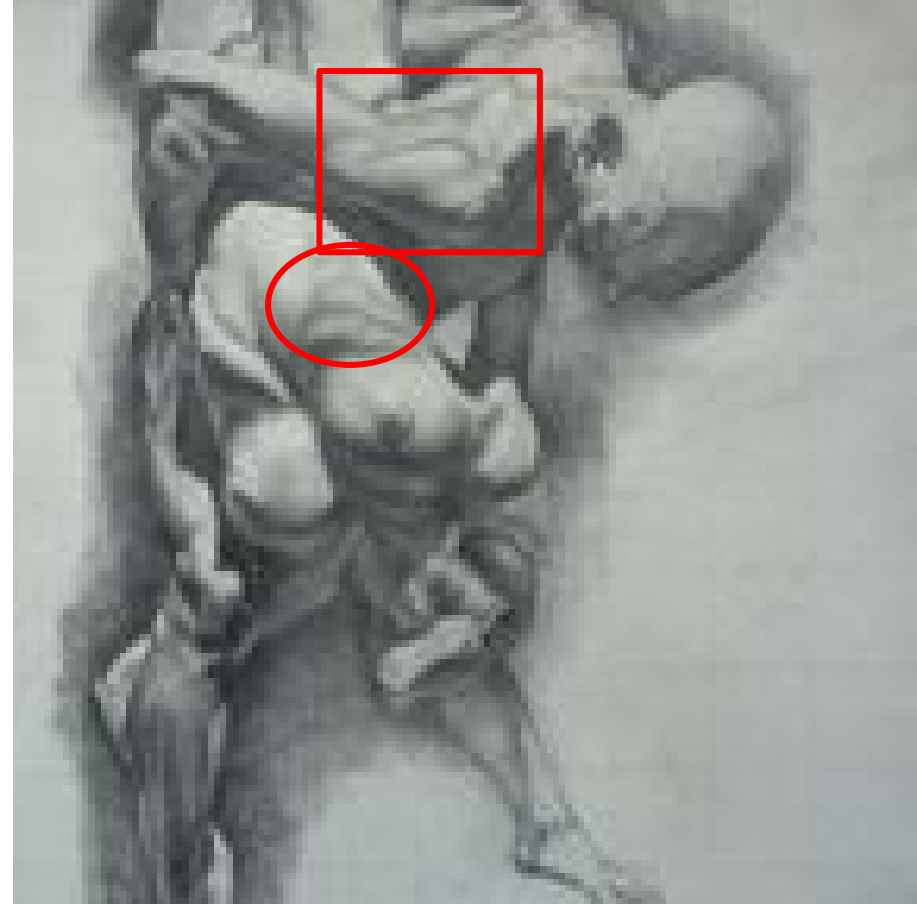


# Critical Investigation

Sabin Howard:

A contemporary artist that portrays human figures in sculpture and drawing in a way that is reminiscent of greek statues(K). Rarely does he use bright hues. Most of his work is in black and white for drawings, and in the natural metal colors in his sculpture. He effectively communicates a primal, rough, powerful feeling through much of his work through the use of rough textures, and a sadness at what is lost by leaving his work unfinished or sometimes broken. This appealed to me, so I attempted to show the same depth of emotion in my work. I was also influenced by his color scheme, which I used elements of-mainly the black and white for the drawings, and natural colors for the cover of my artist made book.

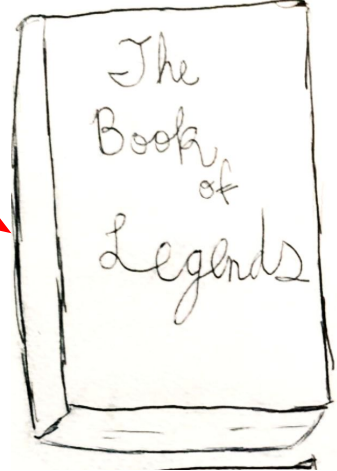
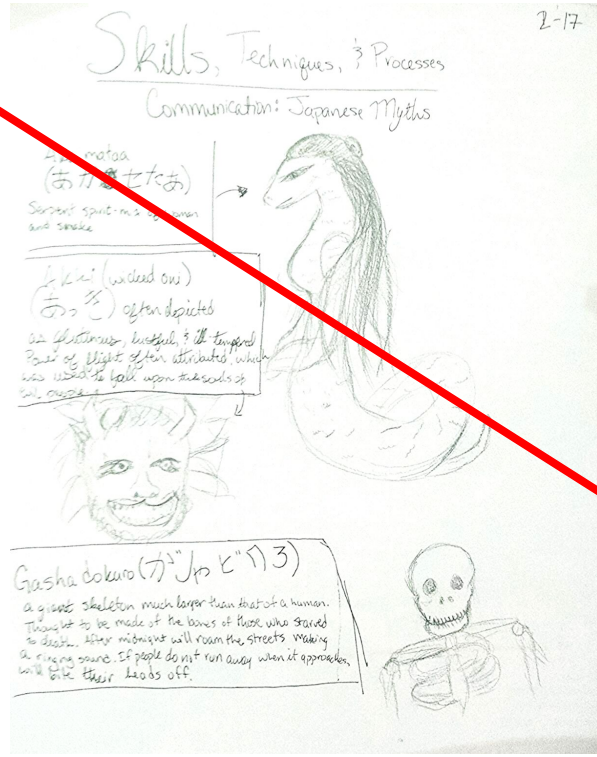
The main way that this artist impacted my work was through his use of shading to define muscles and other anatomically interesting areas. Additionally, the way that the figures within his work impacted how I thought about how to position the figures to convey a type of story and/or movement.



Sabin howard. 8in x 12in. *Sabinhoward.com*. Web.

# Communication

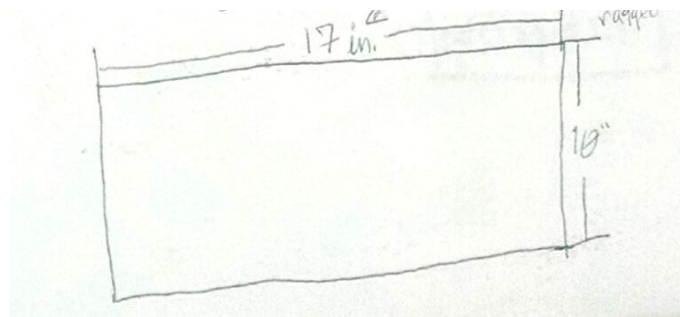
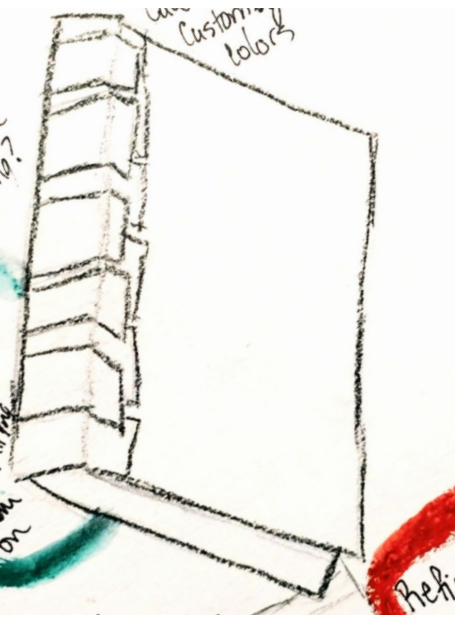
With this concept, there were also some preliminary ideas for what it might look like to communicate my concept. I thought about creating many books but not having anything within them--the instalment of these books on a shelf would be the piece--but there were time constraints that had to be taken into account. Also, using one book with more art within it works better with the idea that while there are many divisions between legends and myths, they can all fit into the category of legend, which is the title on the front of the book.



With some **refinement**, the concept behind this piece was the divisions between legends. Originally, I began with the thought of the divisions over time, which then expanded to different areas, then to simply divisions to encompass the idea that the different legends I showed were all from different times, places, and people, allowing for there to be a comparison of them as well as a way to show comprehension of the scope of myths and legends that I could pull from for later projects.

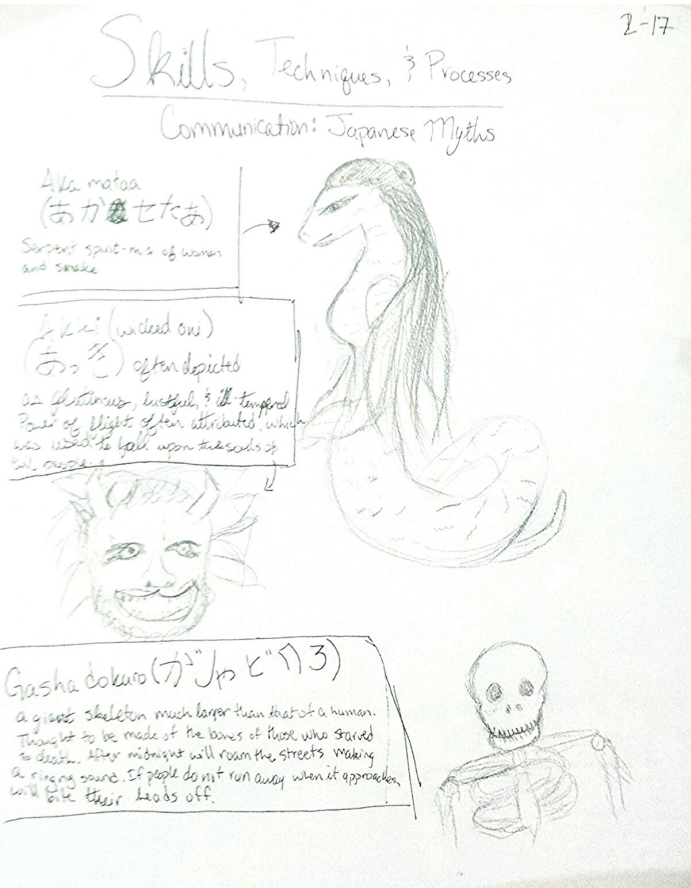
# Skills, Techniques and Processes

For this project I had to learn quite a few new skills. The only skill that I did not have to learn was how to sew between the pre created holes. The first lesson was how to create a cover. My teacher went through part of a class period to instruct us on how to create a cover. The steps were to cut three pieces of matboard: one to be the thickness of book that we wanted, the other two to be the width and length the book was supposed to be, which was supposed to be the same size. The lengths all had to be the same as each other for it to work. These pieces were then taped together before being wrapped in paper, such as what was created in the project before. This paper had to be large enough to encompass all three pieces of matboard and have enough to fold over and glue onto the pieces. Of course, it had to be loose enough around the joints of the cover to bend properly. This process allowed for a lot of modifications and choices, mainly color and texture.





# Skills, Techniques and Processes



After the cover of the book, there came the pages themselves. We also learned this during class, and included the use of a large paper cutter. We had to measure the width of the cover and double that length for cutting. After that, we were to fold each individual sheet in half. We had to put together a certain number of pages, called a signature, which was a group of pages, usually about six. These then had holes poked into them at specific intervals, about an inch apart, and were sewn together with floss, connecting one to another at either the top or the bottom. This had to be done very tightly, to avoid gaps. Additionally, there had to be enough pages to fill the book thickness properly, without gaps. I was not as adept at tightly binding the pages together as I may have wished.

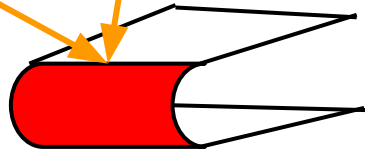
After the book was created, most of the pages had to be illustrated with the legends that I chose. This took a while as well to learn (even though I have a background in drawing) because of the anatomy and detailing that I needed since I chose to have only the title of the legend that was depicted--nothing else. This meant that the focus had to be carefully posed to portray the story of the legend without words. Additionally, a lot of research had to be done to gain the knowledge of legends necessary to pull off my concept. The practice and research had to take place at the same time as the technical skill building and practice, and I ended up creating three different practice books before creating my final piece.



# Reflection

This book gave me many skills that have been useful this year when creating new projects. I have not created any other books since, but I have used the research that I did into different legends from different cultures as a base for my projects this year. Additionally, I have created a few projects that are based around the skills that I acquired while drawing all of the forms that were within this project. With the progression of my skills, there can be additional pieces added later into this work, perhaps throughout my life after this program.

I regret that the binding is so stiff due to the additional layers, which was itself a **refinement** from previous practise books, where I decided that the layers would make the spine more sturdy and fit the implications that I wanted. I could make a **refinement** where the spine could be taken out and replaced with a curved spine, which would allow it to be opened and viewed in a more theoretical stance, without the distraction of having to constantly keep the work from closing. Additionally, this **refinement** would better represent the divisions between time, as older books that were thicker would often have curved spines as well, adding to the impression of an older book binding style.



# Papermaking / Sculpture

I decided to create this work the way it is because it shows how the modern world is shown some legends, with some being thin and nearly see through, while others are thick, with many details, though they may not be seen, changed or lost. My concept for this project was the changes in how a legend is seen. I furthered my understanding of this concept through investigating the art of creating paper. I create a lantern using dowel sticks, thread, and various types of paper. This project allowed my class to create paper, then use that as our medium and create a piece with it. The level of detail and planning that was necessary to pull it off is something that was good for me to work on at the time, and while this project was comparatively short, it taught a lot of the basic skills that are necessary to create works of any quality. These skills include the need for planning, but also being willing to deviate from the plan when it no longer suits what you want to convey, as well as when events do not go your way. There were often times that I still struggle with deviating from a plan that I have created, and creating a work that conveys what I want it to.





# Critical Investigation



I decided to research lanterns in legends. This led me to stories of Jack O'Lanterns, lantern men—also known as will o' the wisps, and Japanese lanterns which were my main source of inspiration for my design. The lantern men, were terrifying little men that carried around lanterns in the marshes and would kill or lure those wandering in the night in the marshes.

Likewise, Jack O'Lanterns were terrifying, stemming from someone who had dealt with the devil twice and wasn't accepted into either heaven or hell when he died, cursed to wander the earth with only a coal in a carved turnip to show him the way.

These two similar legends gave me inspiration for my concept, and the Japanese lanterns for the stylistic choices and potential stitch patterns.

[-http://www.irishcentral.com/roots/history/Original-Irish-Jack-o-Lanterns-were-truly-horrifying-and-made-of-turnips-.html](http://www.irishcentral.com/roots/history/Original-Irish-Jack-o-Lanterns-were-truly-horrifying-and-made-of-turnips-.html)

[-http://myths.e2bn.org/mythsandlegends/story10-the-lantern-man-and-the-wherryman.html](http://myths.e2bn.org/mythsandlegends/story10-the-lantern-man-and-the-wherryman.html)

<http://www.mjwayland.com/index.php/the-lantern-man/>

# Communication

## Formal Qualities

1-10

### Colors:

Blue, Light green (2-3 values), greys, very little range in color, since the pieces of paper were mostly similarly colored, while also being limited due to only having 4 pieces of paper at the beginning

Space: I tried to minimize the amount of space in between the pieces of paper to gain the most coverage of the hand-made paper possible.



### Texture:

The paper is rough thick in places, while other places, sometimes other entire pieces, are thin, with see-through sections.

### Shapes:

Used every where the rectangles of the frame and full pieces of paper, all of the pieces of paper were squares, but I didn't use them to make images. Instead opting for the quicker route that I liked, where each piece represented it's own legend or piece of legend.

### Line



I didn't use very many lines because I began with shapes and wasn't attempting to make a cohesive picture or image.

### Forms

Only one form, a rectangular prism, or box, the 3-D lantern.



Pattern: I attempted to keep the colors close to the other along, instead of putting all of 1 color in one area which lead to something of a pattern.

Variety: the variety of the piece was both varied and limited, as no one piece, in the same that there are similar colors and types of paper throughout.



Balance: there is approximately the same amount covered on all 4 sides of the box, percentage-wise in the hand-made paper.

Proportion: I repeat the same colors and textures because of the paper used to make it, but not shapes.

### Unity:

All on one form.

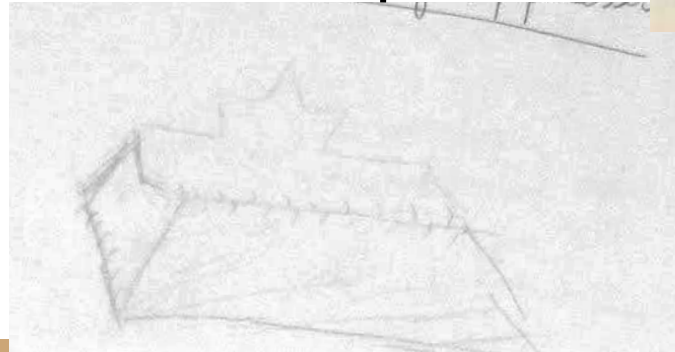
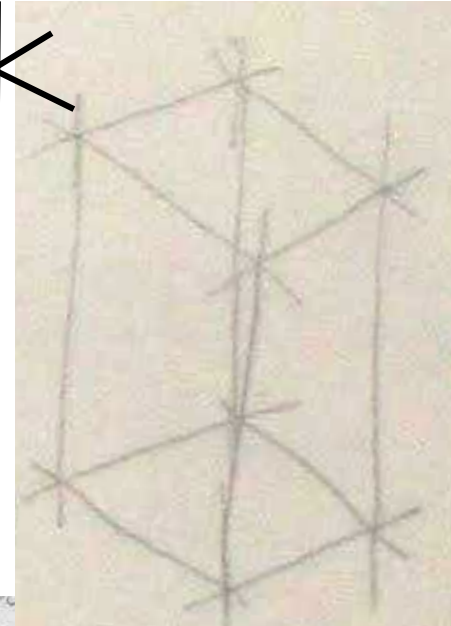
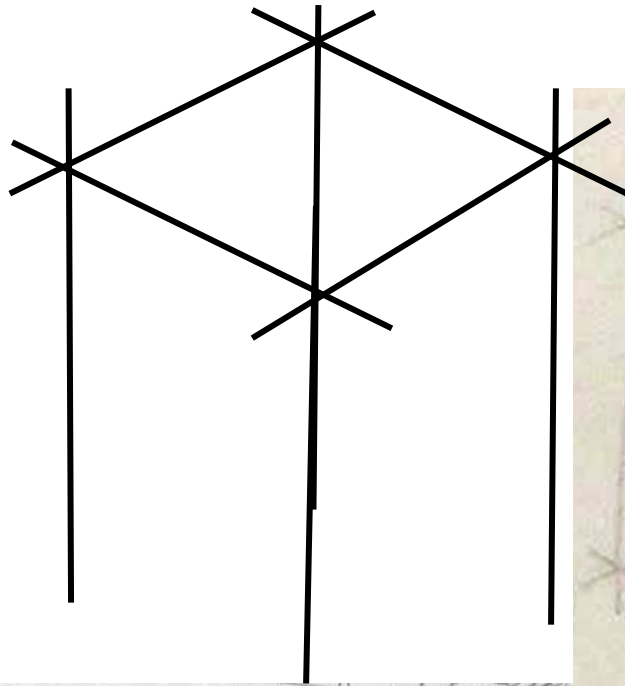
Legends are seen many different ways, and each way is fragile and fleeting, able to be changed or destroyed in an instant. In my piece, my use of a variety of textures and shapes to show the fragility of these legends.

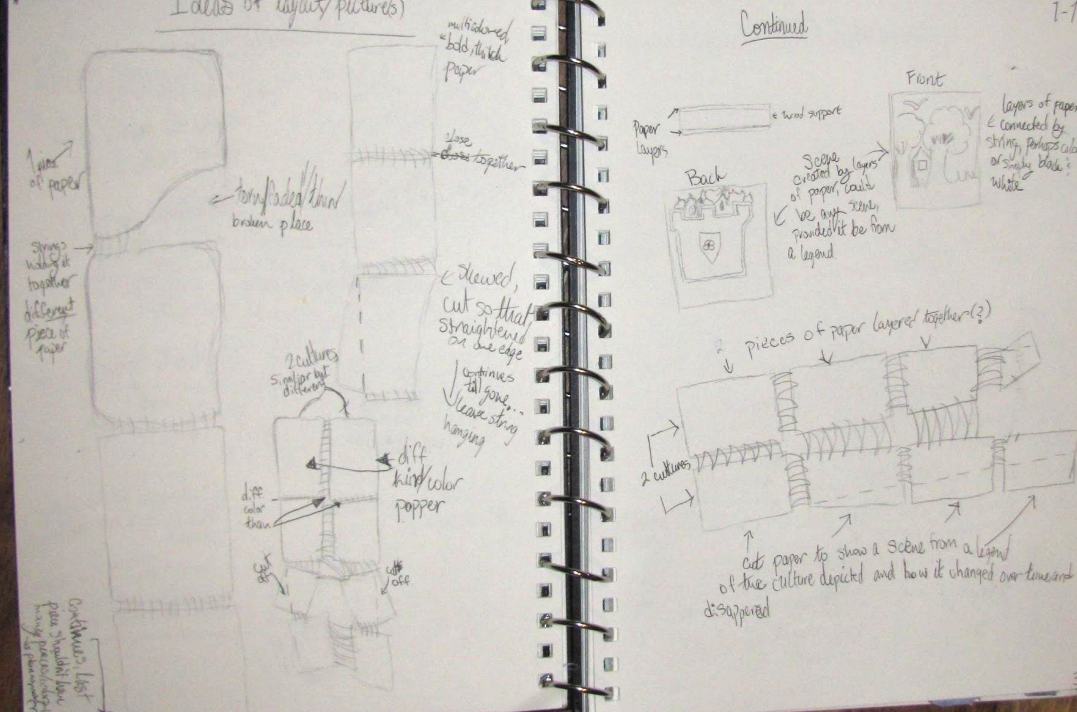
Originally, I thought that I would do something that would use entire pieces of paper. However, as I worked, I realized that doing a layout as I had planned would not properly convey what I wanted, so I began to cut the pieces of paper into random shapes and stitching them together to make a different shape, which eventually lead me to think about a 3-D layout to better show the connections between pieces, and how they do not always combine to create a complete sheet or a complete story.

After a bit more considering, I decided that a lantern would be a good symbol for my concept of the different ways that legends are seen over time because of the idea of a lantern being illuminating.

# Skills, Techniques, and processes

Originally, I was simply going to stitch together entire pieces of paper to create a layout. This changed to smaller pieces being stitched together to create a 3-D object, which I then determined would be a lantern. The next class period, I decided that it would be easier if I had a frame and remembered that we had dowel sticks, which would be perfect to create a frame with, along with thread to hold it together. The frame was by far the easier part of this project. I also added some translucent paper to the frame to give me additional support for the hand made paper. This paper also had an interesting effect when it was backlit. It took some practise to be able to use sewing needles to sew paper pieces together, as it has a habit of tearing. Because of this difficulty, it was time consuming, but had very interesting effects on the texture of the work. I was considering doing something similar this year for my exhibition, but scrapped the idea because it did not fit with the rest of my work.





# Skills, Techniques, and processes

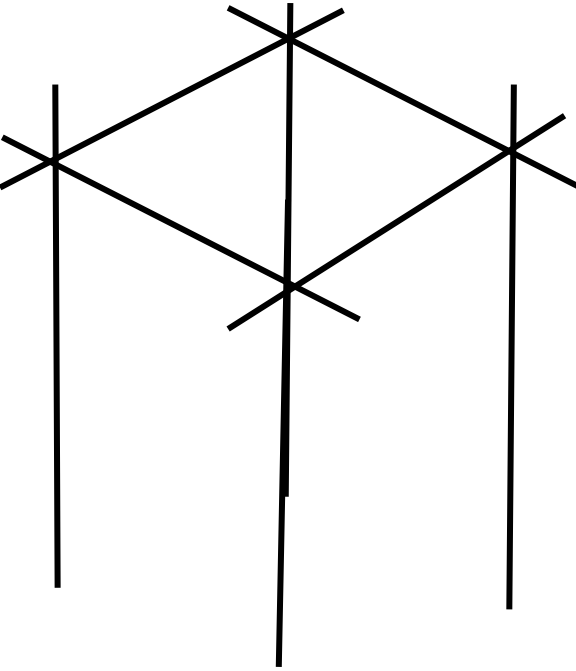
To create the paper, we tore up pieces of paper to create a pulp in water. The group that I was in also used herbs and a small amount of oil to try to give it some scent. While this gave the paper interesting texture and patterns, it did not do what we had hoped. Other groups used a lot of glitter, making it sparkle and giving their paper a much more rough texture than others. Most of the pieces of paper that we created in my group were lighter in color.

The process that we were taught by our teacher was to create a pulp from torn up paper that we would blend together with a little water, then dump into a tub with more water. We would then use a screen to pull enough pulp to create a sheet, in the general shape of a sheet. Then the sheet would be pulled off of the frame with a removeable screen and placed on a pile of about 4 paper towels, screen side up. Then another stack would be placed on top of the sheet and pressed down to get as much water out as possible. Once a good amount of water was taken out, the screen would be peeled carefully off of the paper, which would be left on the pile of paper towels and allowed to dry so that it could be pulled off later.



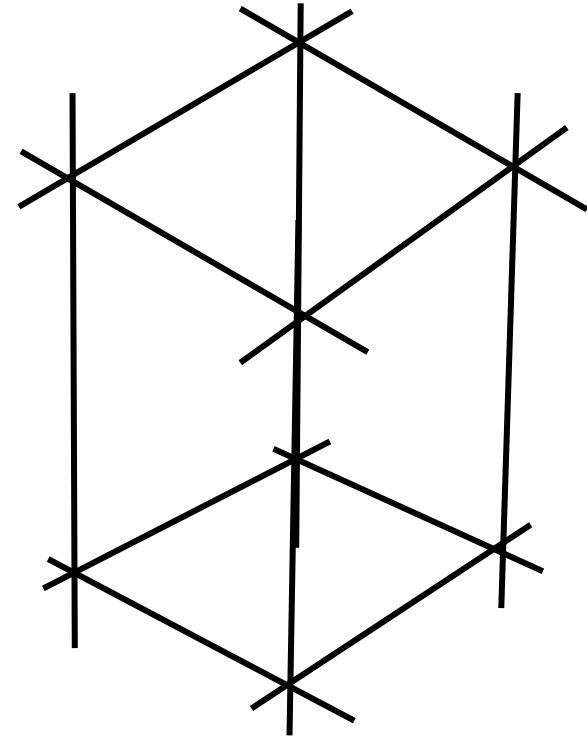


# Reflection



If I were to be given the opportunity to **refine** this project, I would add a support to the base and get rid of the translucent paper that I used to support the handmade paper, leaving an empty frame to better display the handmade paper. I did refine the background paper by stitching them together at the edges instead of simply gluing them onto the pieces of wood.

This project gave me many skills and procedures that I have used this year. I had considered creating a similar project this year, but scrapped the idea because it did not fit well into my ideas. The attention to detail that was necessary to create this project had served me well this year, however. Also, the way that asymmetrically balanced pieces could be used to create a symmetrically balanced full work had an impact on how I perceive symmetrical balance.



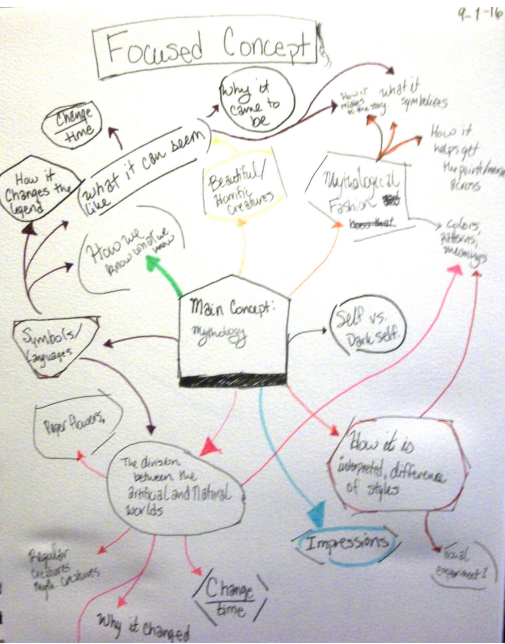
# Artist Trading Cards

My concept for this project is modern impressions of mythology. I furthered my understanding of this concept by researching "What impressions does modern society have about myths?" and focused on sketching with ink. I created 15 playing card-sized sketches of many notable myths and fashions associated with myths using playing cards, white paint, and ink. My intention was to portray the variety of myths from older societies that are oftentimes seen differently in modern society than in the time of their creation. This was the project where I really focused on what my interests and technical skills could come up with for a comprehensive concept. This project did impact what I decided to do, though not in the way that I thought it would initially. It gave me an idea of how to proceed.



# Communication

Initially, I had so many ideas that it was difficult to choose even the concept, so I had to write them all out. What eventually drew me was a concept with an emphasis on the variety of mythology that is available today. This led me to my final concept choice, Modern impressions of Mythology. Since I had an excess of ideas, I limited my color palette to allow me to focus on the lines, shapes, and forms within mythology and limit the variety. I also looked into different forms of cultural fashions from different myths that I wished to portray. Instead of using historically accurate depictions I only used modern interpretations of the myth that I was going to portray. For example, I showed a jack-o-lantern as a carved pumpkin, when in fact it would have been a turnip. This also included fashion styles, as these are often emphasized by modern society. This naturally eliminated some of the less well-known mythological creatures from use, as there would have been few, if any, modern interpretations.

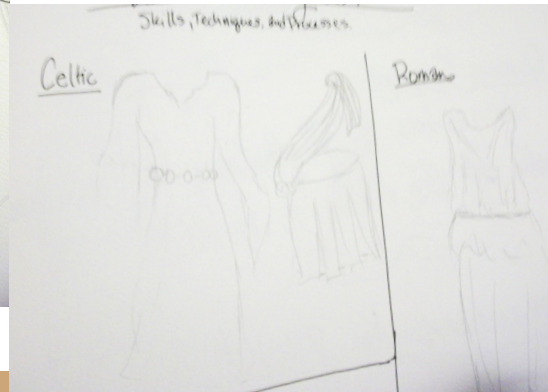
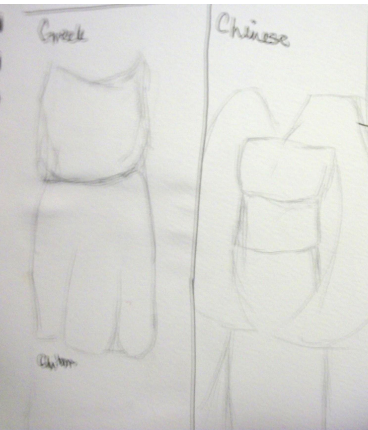






# Skills, Techniques, and Processes

I **reviewed** my use of ink, experimenting with calligraphy ink with a nib instead of the now-traditional pen, and found that while it was an interesting way to draw, it was not practical for sketches, especially ones that were as small as a playing card, and that the sepia ink especially was not viscous enough to make it an effective medium for this project. Before settling on my concept for this project, I thought that perhaps i would do this project on different cultures' ancient fashions and **refined** the skills needed to portray them. Laying the background before I began was a conscious choice at the very beginning of this project because of my wish for a plain background to emphasis the boundaries of the sketches better. It took at least 4 coats of white paint to cover the design of the card side, often more, creating more contrast between the background and the design. I also decided to leave a lot of negative space, symbolizing the lack of context that is often associated with more forgotten or older legends, and is often a defining feature of those legends that are or were passed down through oral tradition. It also symbolized the differences between modern interpretations and older legends through the relative lack of context, allowing for the characters/fashions to potentially be placed anywhere.





# Reflection

**Refinements** that I would have for this project, looking back and reviewing it now, are varied in number. I would use more layers of paint, as well as some type of layer on top of the paint to avoid it being rubbed off, which happened on one of the cards. Additionally, I believe it would have been more **refined** if the project were focused on either modern takes of legends or fashions, which would better create a cohesive pattern throughout the work.

This project was the foundation of my cohesive concept for this year's projects. It also serves as the initial ideas that I had for my concept for this year. The skills that were necessary for this project have helped immensely in the creation of many of my works from this year, giving me the necessary skills to properly **refine** my ideas and works through practise and a willingness to scrap ideas and pieces that did not work.

