



COMMUNITY CREATED

2023-2024 School Year

Community Created

- The Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts' *Community Created* is an annual project built for educators, educational partners, students, and community, that offers a collaborative studio activity. The program focuses on one theme per year and includes materials and educators' resources to support art and creativity that connects to the Museum's collection, temporary exhibitions, and site-specific installations.
- For the 2023-2024 school year, *Community Created* will encourage schools and community groups to create their own collaborative art installations that can become a special setting for further art engagements and public engagement.
- The 2023-2024 project is inspired by Natasha Bowdoin's *Spring Song* site-specific installation on view at AMFA.
 - Natasha Bowdoin (West Kennebunk, Maine, 1981 -), *Spring Song*, 2022 - 2023, acrylic on wood, gatorboard, and drywall supported with molded plastic brackets and aluminum pipe, 186 × 241 × 708 in., Commissioned by the Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts, 2022 - 2023.



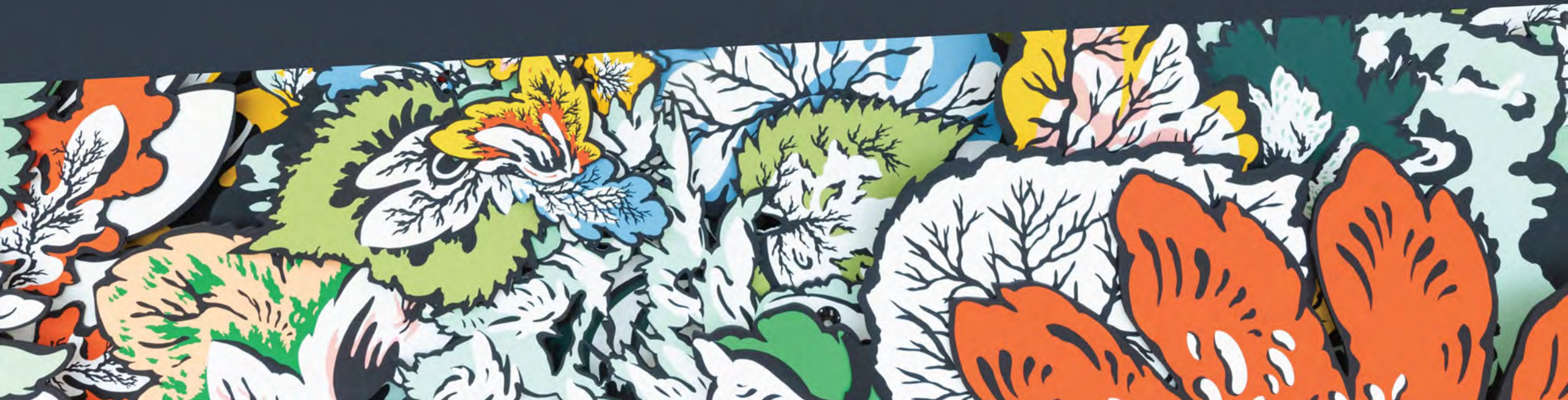


Objectives

- Students will discuss theme through writing poetry.
- Students will explore the work of artist Natasha Bowdoin.
- Students will interpret various sources into individual artworks.
- Students will collaborate to construct an art installation.



LESSON INTRODUCTION



Nature Observation

- Choose a way to observe nature close to home, such as take a walk around your school, explore your yard, or visit a local green space or park.
-OR-
- Recall a personal favorite nature experience:
 - Playing at a park
 - Walking a nature trail
 - Camping
 - Swimming or boating
 - A vacation that includes nature, such as the beach, mountains, desert, etc.



While observing or thinking about your experience with nature:

- Write down descriptive words to describe the environment.
 - Think about your five senses. (What can you hear, touch, smell, see, and taste?)
- Write down any interesting objects, animals, plants, movements, or weather that you observe or observed. Be specific.
- How do you or did you feel being in that environment?



Create a Nature Acrostic Poem / Option 1

- Choose the name of a natural object from your brainstorming page. Write the word vertically down the left side of your page.
- Each line should begin with a word starting with the letter of that line. Each line should describe something about your subject.

Lazy water

Afternoon swims

Keeping an eye out for turtles

Energized by the sun



Create a Nature Cinquain Poem / Option 2

- A cinquain poem has five lines with a structure based on the number of syllables in each line.
 - Two syllables naming the poem subject
 - Four syllables describing the subject (adjectives)
 - Six syllables showing action (verbs)
 - Eight syllables expressing a feeling or observation
 - Two syllables describing or renaming the subject
- Summit
- Rocky windy
- Climbing striving upwards
- Embrace the incredible view
- Mountain



Create a Nature Poem with Personification / Option 3

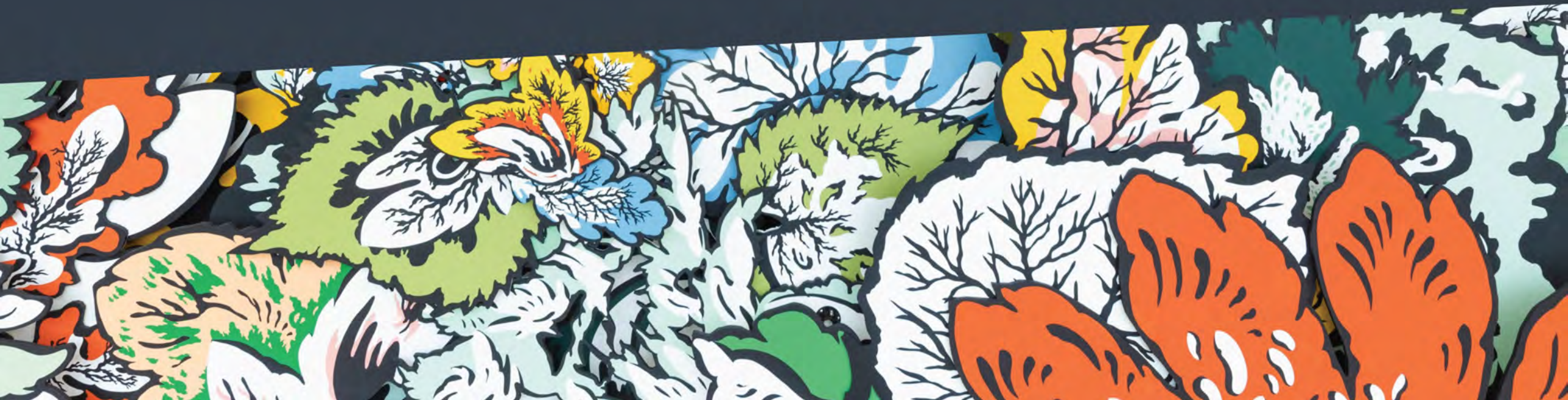
Personification attributes human characteristics to something natural or nonhuman.

- Create a list of nouns and a list of verbs from your brainstorming page.
- Choose one noun and one verb from the list and write the words.
- Then expand your words into a sentence including details and descriptions.
- Put your lines together to create a poem.

The **sky awakens** at dawn with the chirping of the birds.
The orange **flowers remember** to open toward the rising sun.
Meadow **sounds begs** us to listen to the movements around us.
All while the **moon waits** patiently for its time to return.



ARTIST AND ARTWORK



Natasha Bowdoin

- Born 1981 (42 years old)
- Grew up in rural Maine.
- Has presented works in solo and group exhibitions and has been awarded numerous artist residencies and fellowships across the country.
- Associate Professor in Painting and Drawing at Rice University in Houston, Texas.







NATASHA BOWDOIN
SPRING SONG

Boldly colored, larger-than-life flowers and leaves sprout across the walls of the Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts. With its graphic linework and high-contrast palette, Natasha Bowdoin's gardenscape dazzles the eye from afar, while its complex patterning captivates from up close. The artist works spontaneously and organically, creating new blooms in her studio and transforming those from past installations, assembling them on site as she reacts to each unique space. To create her flora, Bowdoin draws by hand on a masking material, cuts out the shapes, and rolls paint where the tape has been removed. After multiple passes of drawing, cutting, and painting, the blooms achieve their clean edges.

The shapes, colors, and lines forming Bowdoin's plants are as equally rooted in botany as in pop culture references such as cartoons, science fiction, children's book illustrations, and textile prints. Theatrical set design is a particularly strong influence—the artist collages layers of blooms on carts that function like stage wagons, mobile platforms that support and transport scenery. Although Bowdoin's playful leaves and petals inspire joy, a sense of anxiety—due to what the artist describes as "aggressive lushness"—complicates the delight. "Nature is a wonderful, terrifying thing," Bowdoin observes. Her installation offers the opportunity to pause and consider humankind's relationship to the natural world, to urge viewers to recognize themselves as part of the ecosystem that necessitates care and consideration as much as it inspires awe and wonder.

Supported by Bank of America

Natasha Bowdoin (West Kennebunk, Maine, 1981 -), *Spring Song*, 2022 - 2023, acrylic on wood, gatorboard, and drywall supported with molded plastic brackets and aluminum pipe, 186 × 241 × 708 in., Commissioned by the Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts, 2022 - 2023.



Natasha Bowdoin (West Kennebunk, Maine, 1981 -), *Spring Song*, 2022 - 2023, acrylic on wood, gatorboard, and drywall supported with molded plastic brackets and aluminum pipe, 186 × 241 × 708 in., Commissioned by the Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts, 2022 - 2023.



Natasha Bowdoin (West Kennebunk, Maine, 1981 -), *Spring Song*, 2022 - 2023, acrylic on wood, gatorboard, and drywall supported with molded plastic brackets and aluminum pipe, 186 × 241 × 708 in., Commissioned by the Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts, 2022 - 2023.



Elements of Art

- Color
- Line
- Shape
- Space
- Texture

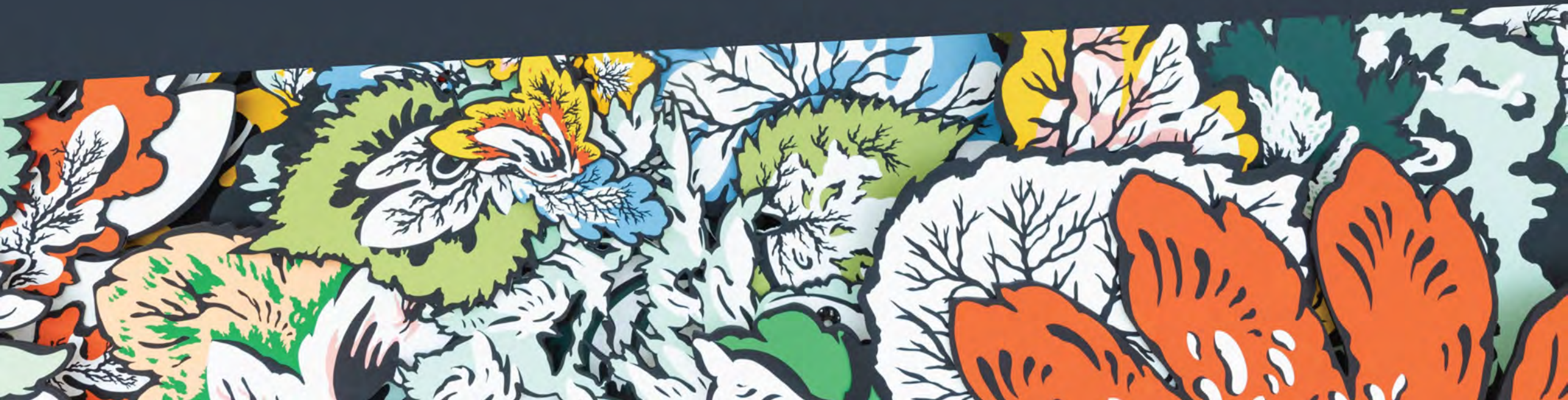


Principles of Design

- Contrast
- Harmony
- Repetition
- Rhythm
- Scale
 - Depth/Layering
- Variety
- Unity



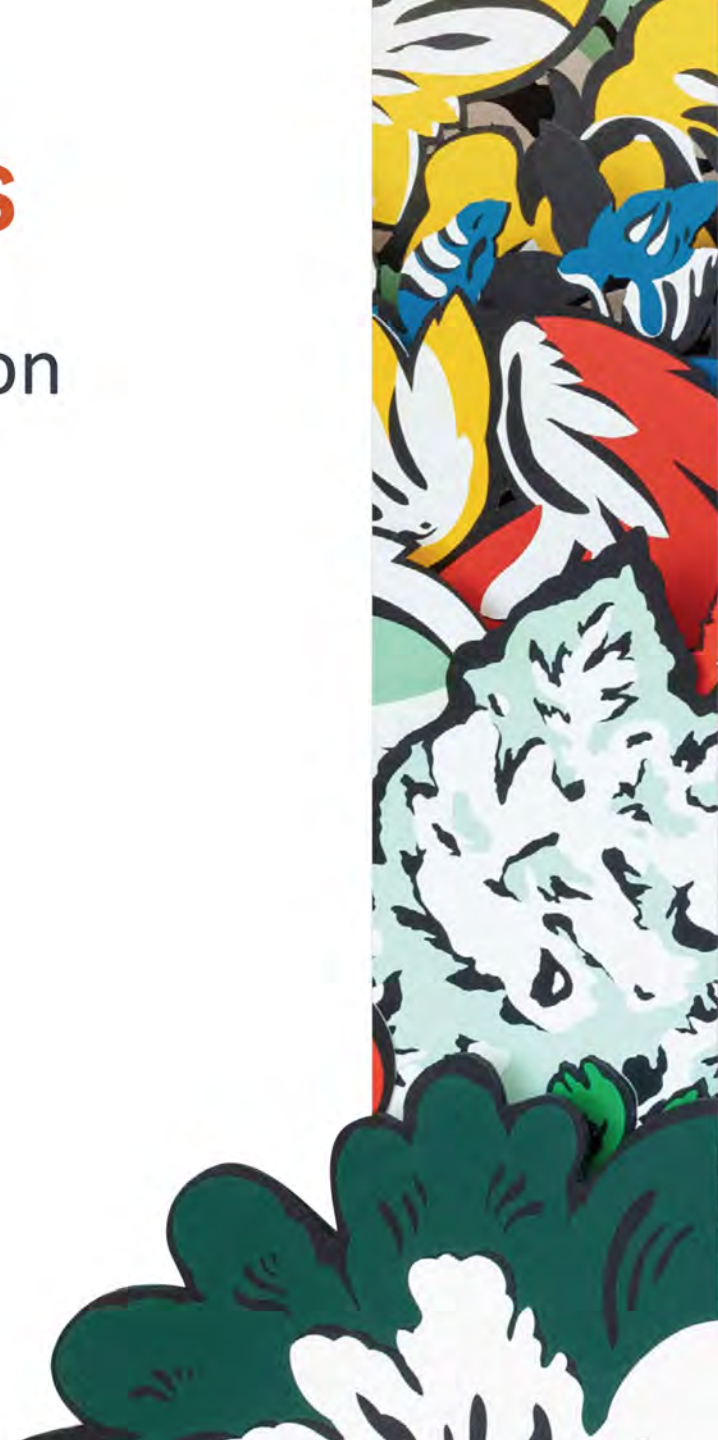
REFERENCE IMAGE RESEARCH





Collect Nature Reference Images

- Draw your own nature images from observation
- Research and collect reference images
 - Botanical Diagrams and Illustrations
 - Photography
 - Book Illustrations
 - Cartoons
 - Fashion Prints
 - Wallpaper
 - Work from other artists depicting nature



ART MAKING



1. Nature Shape Sketching

- Share and discuss the collected reference images in small groups.
- Divide a sheet of paper into quarters.
- In each space, draw a different nature shape
 - Drawings do not have to be realistic
 - Combine elements found in the reference images
 - Include an outline border and inside details like veins or petals
 - Try to create very different shapes
 - Add color if time allows



2. Create the Main Shape

- Choose a sketch to create
- Lightly draw the shape outline
 - Draw large but not to the edge of the paper
- Cut out the shape



3. Add an Outline

- Add a black outline (two options)
 - Trace a larger version of the main shape onto a piece of black paper, cut it out, and glue it to the back of the main shape

OR

- Use a black marker or black paint to paint an outline directly on the main shape



4. Add Details

- Add additional shape details (shadows, stems, leaves, petals, etc.)
 - Use cut paper, markers, or paint

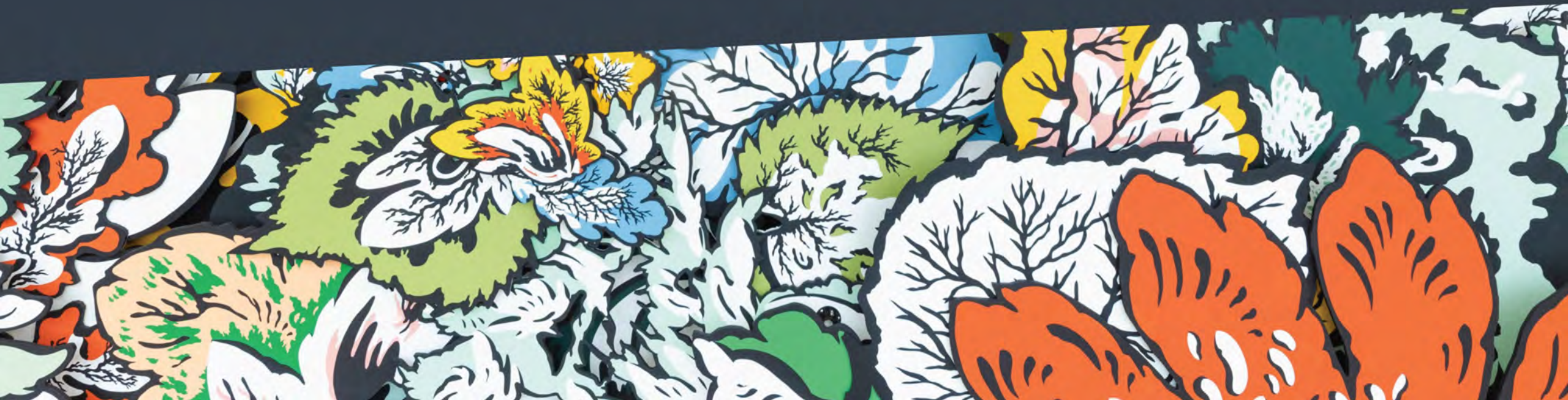


5. Optional: Backing

- Attach nature shape to a backing such as cardboard or foam core with glue or another adhesive.
- Cut out the shape



INSTALLATION





Consider the visibility of the installation location.



Consider how people will move through the installation.



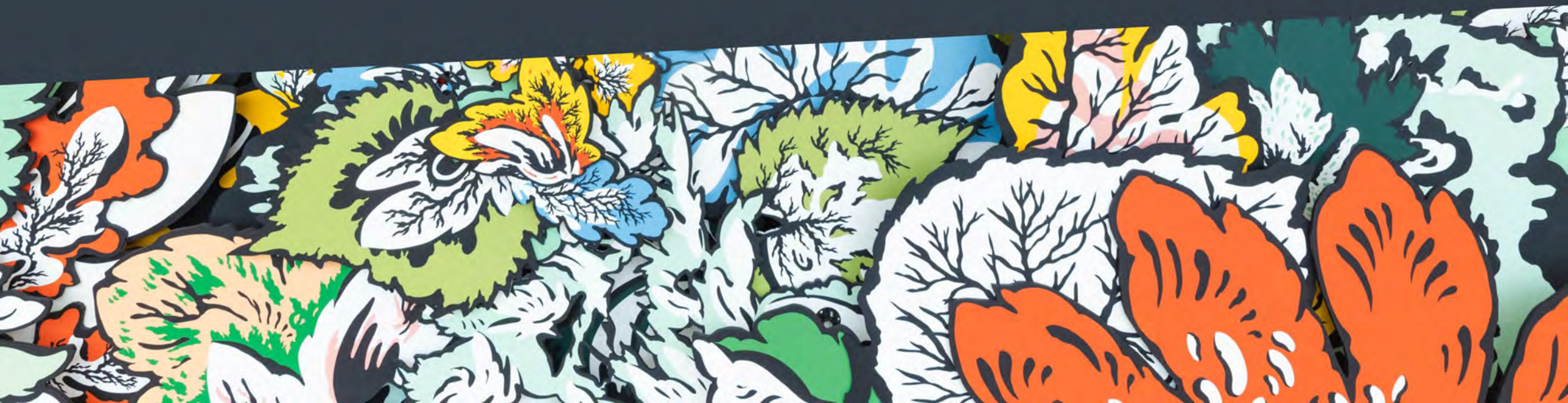
Consider how you want to construct your installation.

Installation

- The Installation can be designed to fit your selected location and needs
 - Artworks can be layered directly on top of each other
- OR**
- Create depth using a variety of structural supports between artworks
 - Try cardboard rolls, which can be painted or covered in paper.



PROJECT REFLECTION



Project Reflection / Option 1

- What was your favorite part of this project and why?
- Did you encounter any challenges during this project? How did you work through them?
- Did this project make you think more about your relationship nature? How so?
- Compare your final installation to Bowdoin's *Spring Song*. What is the same? What is different?



Project Reflection / Option 2

- What was your favorite part and why?
- How did the references you found impact your illustrations?
- What were some decisions you faced in creating the individual artworks and the installation?
- What would you change or do differently next time?
- Discuss how elements and principles of art are illustrated in the final installation.
- Did this project make you think more about your relationship nature? How so?
- Compare your installation to Bowdoin's *Spring Song*. What is the same? What is different?





COMMUNITY CREATED

Community Created is supported by the Alice L. Walton Foundation.