



## STUDENT WORK

### Kendra Keefer, MFA

[interdisciplinary artist](#) / [teaching artist](#)

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# Teaching Philosophy

I envision the studio classroom as teeming with possibility and grounded in the limitations of the material world. I strive to craft learning activities that invite students into dialogue with the world as it is, while scaffolding their practice as they learn the skills necessary to move towards making the art they envision. I believe authentic learning can be challenging as well as exciting and joyful.

The oldest of four, I grew up unusually interested in how people learn. Babysitting for younger siblings, leading Sunday school classes, and teaching in summer camps and after school programs made it clear to me that everyone did not learn in the same way and made me curious as to why that was. I brought that experience and curiosity to the first position I took after completing my BFA in Painting and Drawing, teaching child nutrition classes to low income and teen parents through the Women Infants and Children supplemental nutrition program (WIC). At WIC, I worked with many people who had been failed by the education system and I began to wonder why. I began to read pedagogy independently and to try out different learning strategies in my classes. I also saw how structural inequities that limit access to the arts education had impacted my students and the nurses and clinicians I worked with. As Art had always been my lifeline, I was deeply troubled by what I saw as a gaping lack in the lives of many of those around me. I decided to apply to graduate school for art museum education because I wanted to address that lack.

I was accepted into the Marcus Fellowship, which was an intense one-year Master's program at the University of North Texas designed to cultivate leaders in Art Education. I was immersed in the work of Paulo Freire, John Dewey, bell hooks, and Lev Vygotsky, who positioned education as cultural production, built on relationships and relevance. I agreed with them that students needed to see themselves reflected in the curriculum to feel respected and supported in their pursuit of meaningful, authentic inquiry. This is why I continually update my syllabi for each new group of students, and include artists relevant to their intersectional identities, as well as artists from historically marginalized backgrounds.

After my first Master's, I took what I had learned to illustrious organizations like the Art Institute of Chicago and the Dallas Museum of Art. After several years, I realized that while I loved designing programs, materials, and teaching in the galleries, I wanted the time to really get to know and (hopefully) have a greater impact on my students. So, I became certified to teach All Level K-12 Art, first in Texas, then in Massachusetts. The years I spent as a classroom Art Teacher were rich and challenging. I struggled with the inequities of the K-12 system, but I learned a huge amount about how people develop as artists. I also went back to making my own work. In 2021, I began classes at Southern Illinois University Carbondale, with the goal of getting my MFA. Once I achieved that, I began a new adventure of teaching young adults in a university setting.

As a university instructor, I bring proficiency from teaching in a wide array of modalities. From the art museum, I bring a habit of teaching art history and theory as a collection of contested narratives to continually interrogate, revise, and expand.

I also update my class syllabi to include artists relevant to each new group of students' intersectional identities, as well as artists from historically marginalized backgrounds.

From my experience as a K-12 Art teacher, I ensure that my studio production classes ask students to analyze Art and theory while they also develop skill with materials and processes. My goal is that students will begin to locate themselves and their work within broader social conversations and reflect on the ethical implications of their creative choices. In my last fifteen years in K-12 Education, I added trauma sensitive teaching strategies to support students with neurodiversity teaching toolbox. While teaching in higher ed, I have found that accommodations for K-12 and Higher Education look different, but the principles remain the same. For instance, whereas I provided my K-12 learners with a quiet area with soothing books and calming toys, I provide my college students with opportunities to work both independently and in collaboration, and the flexibility to take breaks. I draw from multiple learning styles when I design critiques and studio exercises and design projects that encourage students to explore personally meaningful themes while meeting the objectives of each course.

In conclusion, I remain reflective about my learning relationships with students, keep my courses relevant by scaffolding student inquiry alongside skill with materials and processes, and design learning spaces that accommodate the needs of divergent learners of all types. I instill an awareness of unconscious bias throughout each course and prioritize formative feedback, which helps students to better analyze their own work and builds skills for critique. My goal is for my students to leave my courses with a stronger habit of reflection, curiosity about positionality, experience working both independently and collaboratively, and the technical skills to create their own work.



**Student Work,  
Design I-Surface  
Design**

## ***SAMPLE SYLLABUS -***

### **ART 2278-001-INTRO TO FIBERS AND TEXTILES / SPRING 2026, TUESDAY/THURSDAY,3:30—5:50**

INSTRUCTOR: **KENDRA KEEFER**, she/her,  
[kendrajkeefer@umsl.edu](mailto:kendrajkeefer@umsl.edu)

OFFICE HOURS: by appointment

#### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course provides an exploration of a variety of on- and off-loom weaving and other fiber and textile media and techniques. Basic studio equipment will be provided, though students will need to supply some personal equipment and supplies.

#### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

- Demonstrate an understanding of the history of textiles and fiber arts.
- Apply basic Shibori dyeing, wet felting, needle felting, mixed-media weaving / tapestry, and visible mending techniques.
- Practice foundational methods and studio practices specific to fiber arts.
- Develop technical skills through individual experimentation and progressive improvement.
- Engage thoughtfully in a process-based studio environment

#### **COMPREHENSIVE MATERIAL LIST**

- Sketchbook of your choice.
- Toolbox / tote bag for supplies
- Wool roving in desired colors
- Alternative materials for mixed media weaving
- Access To a Smartphone with recording ability
- Access To a Computer or laptop with Wi-Fi

#### **PROJECT 1: INDIGO / SHIBORI**

##### **RUBRIC - Criteria Description**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Concept &amp; Design Development</b>	Demonstrates thoughtful engagement with indigo dyeing and Shibori techniques, including pattern development and conceptual intention.
<b>Technical Skill &amp; Craftsmanship</b>	Quality of stitching, binding, resist techniques, dye application, and fabric care.
<b>Process &amp; Experimentation</b>	Evidence of process-based exploration, repetition, and willingness to experiment.
<b>Attendance &amp; Studio Participation</b>	Consistent attendance, active participation during demonstrations, dye sessions, and studio work time.
<b>Completion &amp; Requirements</b>	All assigned samples and final composition completed according to project guidelines.

## PROJECT 2: WET AND NEEDLE FELTING

### RUBRIC - Criteria Description

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Concept &amp; Material Exploration</b>	Effective use of wool fibers to explore form, texture, and surface.
<b>Technical Skill &amp; Craftsmanship</b>	Control of wet and needle felting techniques, fiber bonding, structural integrity, and finish.
<b>Process &amp; Development</b>	Demonstrates incremental improvement and understanding of felting processes.
<b>Attendance &amp; Studio Participation</b>	Consistent attendance and engagement during hands-on felting demonstrations and work sessions.
<b>Completion &amp; Requirements</b>	All project components completed and submitted on time.

## PROJECT 3: UNCONVENTIONAL WEAVING / TAPESTRY

### RUBRIC - Criteria Description

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Concept &amp; Mixed Media Integration</b>	Creative use of unconventional materials and thoughtful composition within a woven or tapestry format.
<b>Technical Skill &amp; Structure</b>	Understanding of warp and weft, tension control, and construction methods.
<b>Process &amp; Problem Solving</b>	Demonstrates adaptability, experimentation, and refinement of technique.
<b>Attendance &amp; Studio Participation</b>	Active participation during loom setup, demonstrations, and studio work time.
<b>Completion &amp; Requirements</b>	Project meets size, material, and conceptual requirements.

## PROJECT 4: VISIBLE MENDING

### RUBRIC - Criteria Description

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Concept &amp; Material Exploration</b>	Creative use of thread and fabric exploration of form, texture, and surface in design of project.
<b>Technical Skill &amp; Craftsmanship</b>	Control of stitching, good use of color, structural integrity, and finish.
<b>Process &amp; Development</b>	Demonstrates incremental improvement and understanding of visible mending techniques.
<b>Attendance &amp; Studio Participation</b>	Consistent attendance and engagement during hands-on demonstrations and work sessions.
<b>Completion &amp; Requirements</b>	All project components completed and submitted on time.

### GENERAL RUBRIC SCALE (APPLIED TO ALL PROJECTS)

- A** Exceptional craftsmanship, strong conceptual engagement, consistent attendance, and full completion of requirements.
- B** Solid technical skills and participation with minor issues in execution or development.
- C** Adequate completion with limited experimentation or inconsistent participation.
- D** Minimal effort, technical deficiencies, or frequent absences.
- F** Incomplete work, poor attendance, or failure to meet project requirements.

### ATTENDANCE EMBEDDED IN PROJECT GRADES

Attendance and participation are assessed within each project grade rather than as a separate category. Consistent presence is required to successfully complete process-based techniques, participate in critiques, and maintain safe studio practices.

# Class Schedule

## WEEK 1 - 1/20 & 1/22 INTRO Indigo / Shibori

Tuesday: Syllabus, schedule, supply list.  
What Is Shibori?  
What is Shibori Dyeing?  
 SB 1 Assigned

Thursday: Intro to Dye Room: SB1 in class exercise  
 SB 1 Assigned  
 Shibori Presentation

## WEEK 2 - 1/27 & 1/29 Project 1: Indigo / Shibori

Tuesday:  
 Workday: Practice Itajime and Kanoko Shibori folds. Create several examples to dye on Thursday.

Thursday:  
 Workday (meeting at [Sculpture Annex](#)) Dye fabric

## WEEK 3 - 2/3 & 2/5 Indigo / Shibori

Tuesday:  
 Workday: Practice Nui Shibori (stitching) and Kumo Shibori (wrapping) folds. Create several examples to dye on Thursday.

Thursday:  
 Workday (meeting at [Sculpture Annex](#)) Dye fabric

**\*\* Students need to order Wool Roving**

## WEEK 4 - 2/10 & 2/12 Indigo / Shibori

Tuesday:  
 Workday: Sculpture Annex.

Thursday:  
 Workday: Sculpture Annex.

## WEEK 5 - 2/17 & 2/19 Indigo / Shibori

Tuesday:  
 Workday:  
 NEEDLE FELTING KITS SHOULD BE ORDERED

Thursday:  
**CRITIQUE**

## WEEK 6 - 2/24 & 2/26 Wet and Needle Felting

Tuesday:  
 Intro Presentation to Needle Felting  
 Students should have Needle Felting Kits.

Thursday:  
 Plan projects in sketchbooks.  
 Begin Felting

## WEEK 7 - 3/3 & 3/5 Wet and Needle Felting

Tuesday:  
 Workday  
 Sketchbook Assignment Due

Thursday:  
 Workday

## WEEK 8 - 3/10 & 3/12 Wet and Needle Felting

Tuesday:  
 Workday

Thursday:  
 Workday

## WEEK 9 - 3/17 & 3/19 Unconventional Weaving / Tapestry

Tuesday:  
 CRITIQUE

Thursday:  
 Intro Presentation to a Variety of Weaving Techniques  
 Students should bring any materials they would like to use. We will have looms and string.  
 Plan projects in sketchbooks.

3/23 - 3/27 S P R I N G B R E A K

WEEK 10 - 3/31 & 4/2 Unconventional Weaving / Tapestry

Tuesday:  
Workday  
Sketchbook Assignments Due

Thursday:  
Workday

WEEK 11 - 4/7 & 4/9 Unconventional Weaving / Tapestr

Tuesday:  
Workday

Thursday:  
Workday

WEEK 12 - 4/14 & 4/16 Visible Mending

Tuesday:  
CRITIQUE

Thursday:  
Intro Presentation to Visible Mending History and Contemporary Practice  
Plan final projects in sketchbooks.

WEEK 13 - 4/21 & 4/23 Visible Mending

Tuesday:  
Demo on stitching techniques  
Sketchbooks Assignment Due  
Students should bring any specific fabric and thread they would like to use

Thursday:  
Field Trip to Perennial (Date not yet set.)

WEEK 14 - 4/28 & 4/30 Visible Mending

Tuesday:  
Workday

Thursday:  
Workday

WEEK 15 - 5/5 & 5/7 Visible Mending

Tuesday:  
Workday

Thursday: FINAL CRITIQUE

5/11-5/15 Finals Week

## **SAMPLE LESSON PLAN** (p.1) /adapted from Mathew R. Kelly, Central College

### 2D DESIGN SURFACE DESIGN

#### **FIELD GUIDE ASSIGNMENT**

A field guide is a visual guide to any subject an artist finds interesting. Historical field guides were often scientific, i.e. field guides to the natural world or to human anatomy. Artists and Scientists use field guides as a way of documenting what they know about a subject of interest. They can feature drawings, photographs, video, and more. For this assignment, you will create your own field guide.

#### **Objectives**

Create a Field Guide to a topic of your choice.

Include 4 pages

For each page,

- draw or collage a central image of your Subject.

- Draw or collage 2 supporting images or details that help clarify your subject.

- Write as many facts as will fit in an artistic way that visually supports your image.

#### **Field Guide Examples**

Leonardo Da Vinci created field guides to human anatomy, as well as to inventions from his imagination. His field guides and sketchbooks are wildly popular with artists and others to this day.

[The Field Museum in Chicago](#) uses field guides to convey information to visitors about the natural environment.

[The Intersect Arts Center in St. Louis](#) held an exhibition called Field Guide, described as “an exploration of the ways in which we discover and exchange knowledge that transform our experience of looking at the world.”

#### **Materials**

watercolor, acrylic, pastel, or colored pencil

#### **kendra keefer**

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# **SAMPLE LESSON PLAN** (p.2) /adapted from Mathew R. Kelly, Central College

## **Procedures**

Begin by brainstorming a subject you want to create a field guide for. Some ideas to get started:

- What do you think about when you let your mind wander?
- Is there a subject you are interested in that you feel that others should know more about?
- Is there a subject you would like to know more about?
- Is there a subject that you would like to explore more in your own art?
- Narrow down your list to 3 subjects and write them down:
  - Use bullet points to describe why each topic is so fascinating.
  - Which topic would be the most satisfying and achievable to draw a full page field guide to?
    - Once you've made up your mind, go ahead and put a star to the left of that idea.

## **Minimum Guidelines**

You're allowed to go beyond these expectations and be creative and, but you cannot do less than this. As always, your work will be evaluated on craftsmanship, materials, and concept.

- Draw or collage a central image of your Subject.
- Draw or collage 2 supporting images or details that help clarify your subject.
- Research 10 facts about your subject and write as many as will fit in an artistic way that visually supports your image.
  - Create 3 more pages for your Field Guide, on the same subject.
- You may choose to look at your subject from a different viewpoint or go into more detail on an aspect of your subject.

## **General Assignment Rubric**

Criteria	Ratings	Pts
Craftsmanship & Materials: Your materials meet the requirements of the assignment. The quality of the work looks thoughtful, intentional, and complete.	33 to 0 pts	
Elements and Principles of Design: Your work demonstrates your understanding of the Elements and Principles of design.	33 to 0 pts	
Ideation: The conceptual thinking behind your work meets the goals of the assignment. Your ideas are relevant to the assignment and well thought out.	33 to 0 pts	

**Total Points: 99**

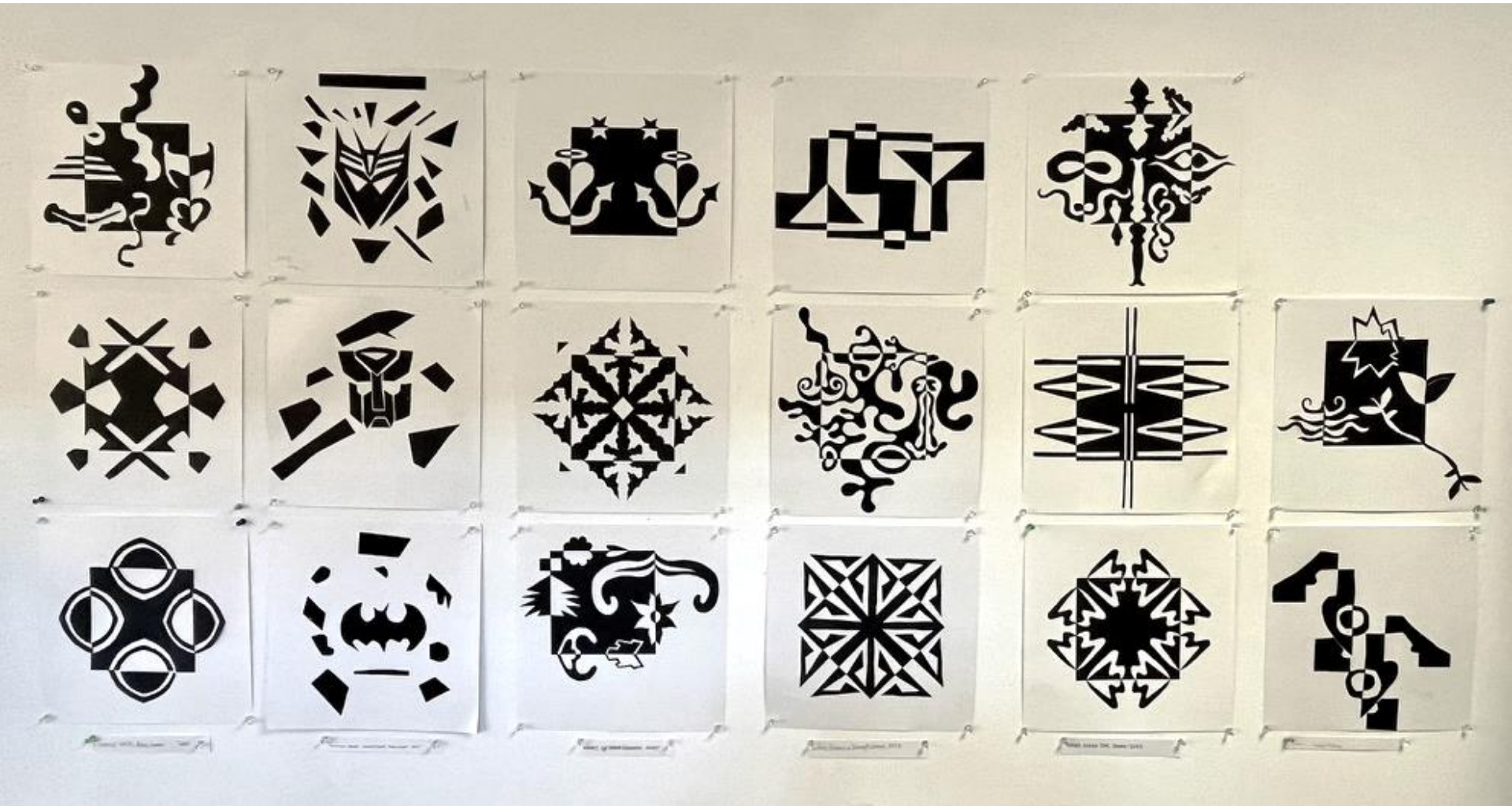
**Student Work,  
Design I-Surface Design**



"There were multiple opportunities to make choices about what we did in our projects."  
-Excerpt from Student Evaluation



Student Work,  
Design I-Surface Design



Student Work, Design I-Surface Design



**Student Work,  
Intro to Fibers**



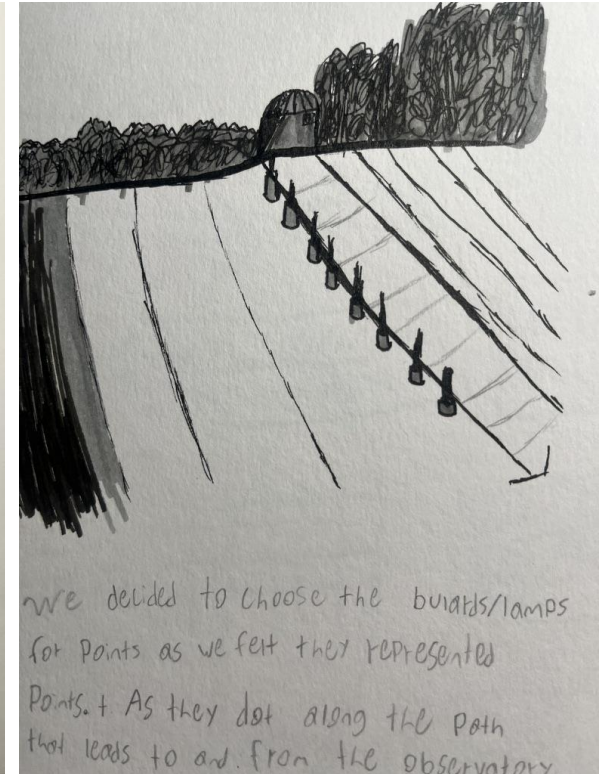
"I came into the course not knowing much about working with fibers but now I have more confidence that I can use the skills that I learned in this course. I actually picked up one of our learning activities as a hobby because I enjoyed it so much."

**-Excerpt from Student Evaluation**



**Student Work, Intro to Fibers**

"The projects were incredibly engaging and made me interested to continue with the different mediums of fiber and textile art."  
**-Excerpt from Student Evaluation**



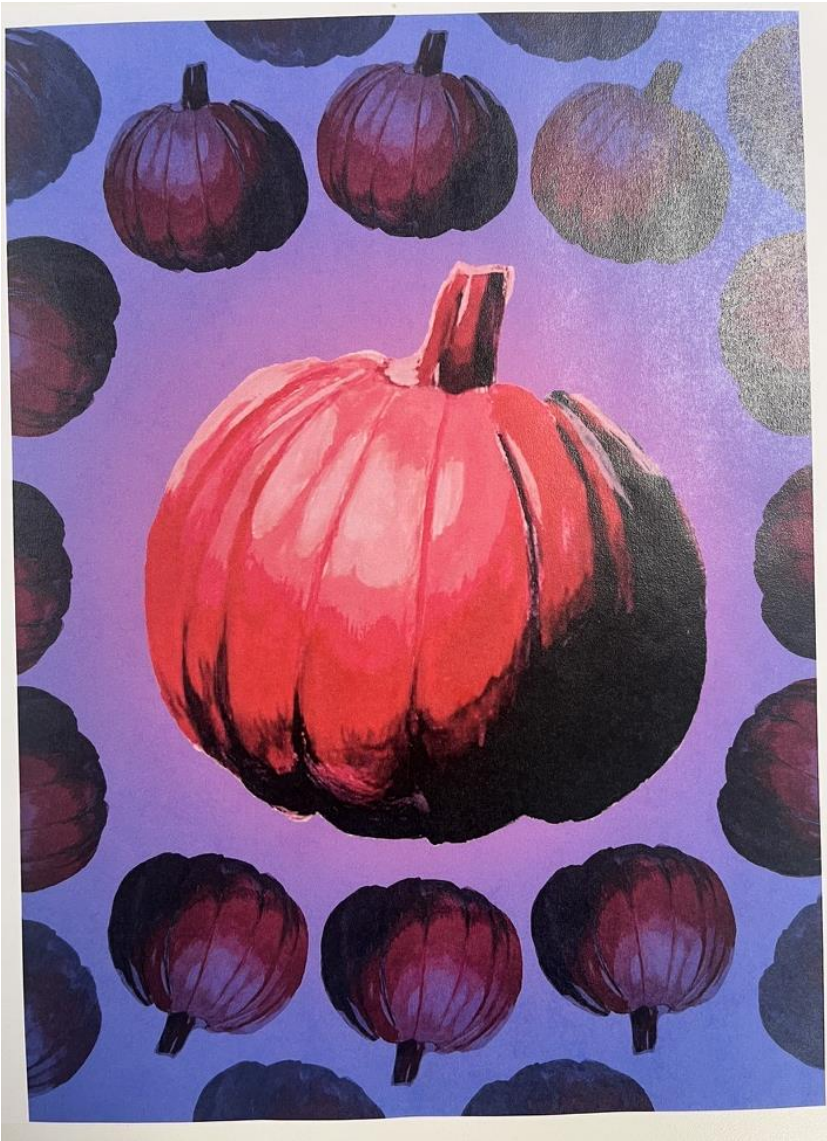
**Student Work, Design I-Surface Design**

"She made sure that we all felt comfortable expressing ourselves with our work."

**-Excerpt from Student Evaluation**



**Student Work, Design I-Surface Design**



Student Work, Design I-Surface Design