



## Fantastic Beasts

Dan Allen

Art

Eleventh Grade

High Tech High Media Arts

This project seeks to explore how humanity has identified with the animal kingdom, channeled the power of our fellow creatures through imitation, and built mythologies around the nexus between human and animal lives. We began our project by creating the inspiration for our final busts, using Photoshop. Each student took a picture of themselves and found an image of an animal online. Then we combined these images into a human/animal hybrid. Once our two dimensional instructions were created, students set about casting their faces in plaster and making Papier Maché busts of themselves. Using the images they made in Photoshop and the traits that were attributed to their animals, students added various materials to their busts creating the form of their Fantastic Beast. Then the creatures were primed and painted. During the exhibition, several busts were displayed with full bodies. Students collectively built these mannequins days before exhibition, as a method to explain the process of their project.

### Teacher Reflection

Doing a semester-long project with eleventh graders can be a daunting task. I found that breaking up the steps and making each benchmark a deliverable, made for an engaging process. The students found something different in each task, and completing a long project showed them their growth in a very tangible way.

—Dan Allen

### Student reflection

At first, I had my hesitations about a semester-long project. I thought it would get boring over time and I would lose interest in it. However, looking back on it, and seeing the final outcome of my spirit animal project, I have been able to realize that what we were able to do in a semester was pretty amazing. I really felt proud of what I was able to do with my project and it was really gratifying to see the fascinated, incredulous faces of visitors during the exhibition. It was that moment when we exhibited our projects and saw the steps that we took laid out right in front of me that I realized that we really did a lot. I was able to learn so many different things, from how to make masks and plaster positives, to learning about the color wheel and how to paint eyes. Overall, it was a really great experience and I'm really proud of what I was able to do.

—Deanna C.

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