

ARTIST STATEMENT

Natalie Mitchell

As an IDEAS major, studying mechanical engineering, my strength has always been thinking mathematically. However, I also have a creative side and really like to work with my hands, which is why I am also studying product design. My style is a combination of the left and right side of my brain: precise, calculated, and representational. This duality of math and art makes my art very satisfying to make.

My first piece is a collection of 4 square “paintings” using the same 4 colors. I imagined the idea of a man whose shadow is a monster and an eye peering through a rip in a fabric wall. As I developed those ideas, I developed a common theme of a monster hidden within that takes over. To make sure the pieces were cohesive I chose a dark and a light shade of two colors that went well together. I really wanted this fleshy pink for the whites of the eye and a dark green for the shadow monster. Each piece has a different dominating color so that there is an equal representation of each color among all 4 squares. I designed the squares in Illustrator rather than by hand so I can ensure the proper mathematical relationship between each line/shape: tangent, parallel, straight, or curvature level. I then printed, cut out each shape, traced it on painted paper, and then cut it out again. The painted paper creates a beautiful texture and layering that Illustrator could not.

My second piece is a small wooden chest. I have discovered that I crave working and building with my hands. The woodshop is my favorite place. Inspired by Davy Jones’s Chest from *Pirates of the Caribbean* I decided to make a chest. Knowing I did not have the skills yet to make a close replica, I wanted to let the natural beauty of the wood speak for itself. I chose dovetail joints because they are both aesthetically beautiful and have a mathematical formula that

I enjoyed following. I had this exotic purpleheart wood that would make beautiful ornate violet hinges that contrast well against the light poplar wood box. I enjoyed doing the math needed to make the box and planning out which machines to use. By using both my engineering skills and my creativity I was able to build a beautiful and simply complex chest.