

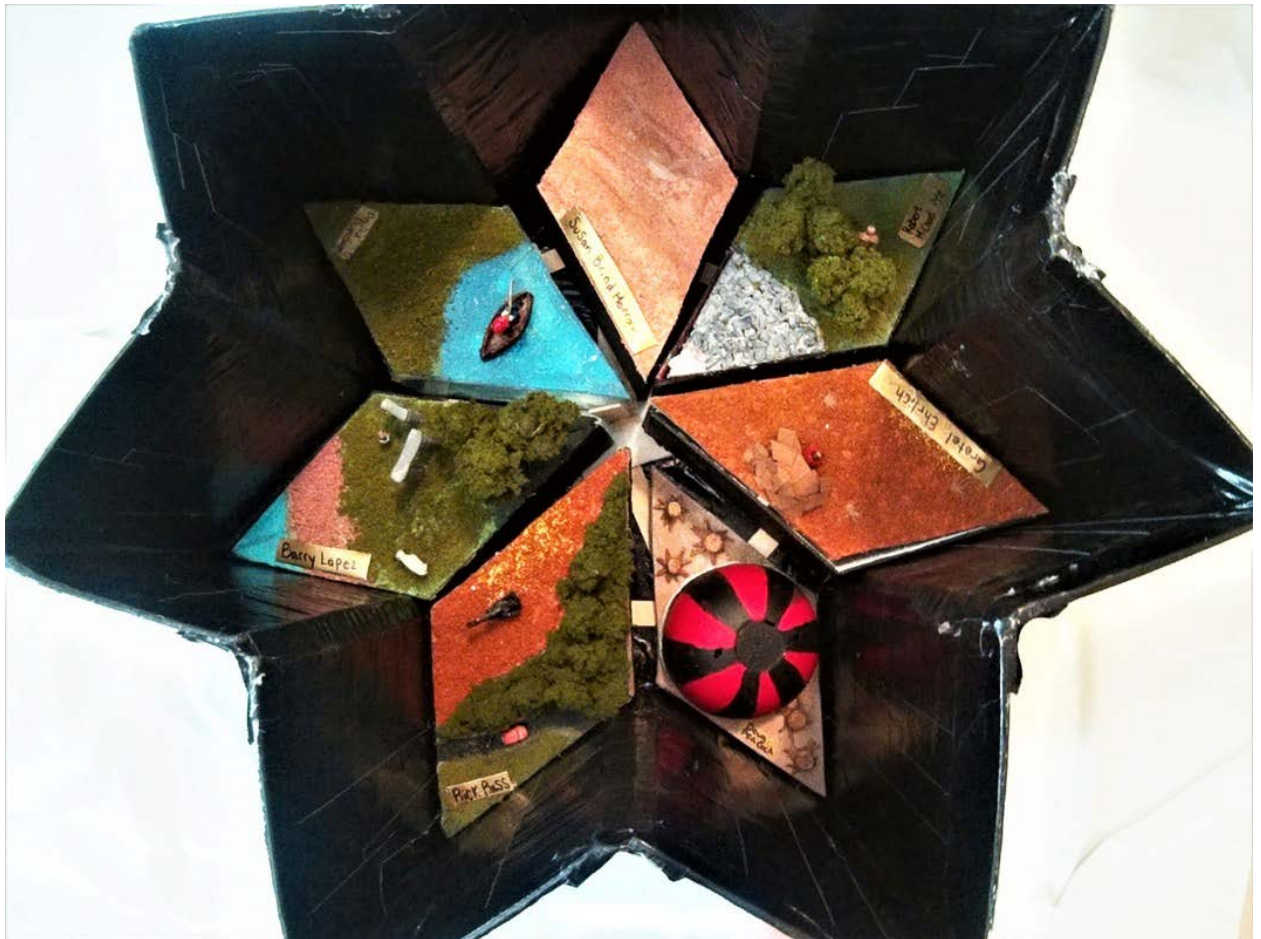
Work on Imagination

by Katherine Brunson



Many of us feel that we are not creative, or that with our increasing years we have slowly lost our innate ability to create. But we could not be more wrong, and that is the point illustrated by this project. In the spring 2017, I presented at the Sowell Collection Conference on a project that I did for a Creative Process class taught by Andy Wilkinson. In this class, we were taught that creativity is not something that is always easy and that it can come in many ways. One day, for class, we came to the Sowell Collection and looked at the beautiful sets of notebooks from various writers in this collection. While reading one of Gary Paul Nabhan's notebooks which made short references to longitudes, latitudes, and markets in a southwestern pueblo, I was hit with an image of a dragon napping behind a fruit stand. I think it stemmed from my ridiculous love for dragons, but there was also this idea in my head. My poetry professor, John Poch, told us while we were reading Walt Whitman that imagination is the blend of the real and the unreal, and I think that's what stuck with me in this moment. So, I designed something that was reminiscent of Rob Gonsalves' *Imagine a Night*. But I had three problems with doing this solo piece as my final project. One, it was too easy and it lacked any real meaning. Two, I am horribly fair, and I felt it was reproachable that I would only be representing one author when there are 21 amazing authors in the collection. And three, the blending of the real and the unreal

wasn't the only way I thought a person could be creative. I decided to tackle a piece that would include all 21 authors and represent the three main pathways I saw to be creative.



The top level in my piece includes authors like Clyde Jones and Walter McDonald, and it represents the type of creativity that you have as a child. It represents the ability to see that world not just for what it is but simultaneously for what it could be. For this reason, all the pieces in this level easily transition from one reality to another. The second layer in this box, however, represents the idea that to be creative sometimes you must force yourself to take another perspective. That's why, in the sections for Bill McKibben and Max Crawford, you must physically turn the piece, looking from another angle, to reveal a completely different scene. The last level is the type of creativity that most of us often forget, and that is the idea that creativity

takes work. Creativity can be passion and impulsive ideas, but more often than not it is sitting down with your own thoughts, and it requires a dedication unparalleled by any discipline. In this layer, with authors like Susan Brind Morrow and Doug Peacock, each piece is a puzzle where you have to figure out how to unlock the creative idea inside. Together all these diamond shaped dioramas came together to form a large star-shaped box. The intention of this design is partly because that's how these pieces fit together, but while any one idea can be a diamond in the rough, a whole group of ideas coming together is what can create something truly spectacular.

I'd like to thank the writers, the Sowell Collection as a whole, and my professors without whom this project would never have come into existence. And I leave you with this parting wish that some part of this project has given you a new insight into your own creativity and gives you a push to keep trying to make the world a better place.

If you would like to read more about the project or see more pictures go to this site:

<http://workonimagination.weebly.com/> .

If you would like to see a video of the original presentation from the 2017 conference go to this

URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7usy5kKacso> .