

Creative Expression Artist Statement:  
Roderigo Doll

After analyzing characters, studying the Ottoman Empire, and learning about passion and lust, it came time to demonstrate our application of knowledge of the play *Othello* by Shakespeare. One fragment of the project assigned to us was illustrating your character. I was assigned Roderigo; a character that was on the side lines, but played a big role. I had this secret attraction to Roderigo because I felt we were similar in some ways in personality. Though that's not necessarily a good thing, I still decided to illustrate what I envisioned Roderigo to look like throughout the play.

The process began with sketching a basic model of the doll, while thinking of the human body shape and minimizing it to a hundred times smaller. This would soon become my basic pattern where fabric would lay over a mold of Roderigo. To do this, you have to vision the body in separate pieces. There are the arms, legs, head, and torso. Based off of the different sections, I cut the fabric that was marked by the pattern. Pinning the fabric together, I was in the beginning process of sewing it. This eventually evolved into a doll of the Roderigo character.

Roderigo is a character that I view as a rather pathetic fellow. He means well and tries hard, but relies on others for his imperfections. While reading the play *Othello*, Shakespeare portrayed him as lengthy man, tall and slender, curly hair that is grown to make him look like a Q-tip, but covers his nitwit personality with pleasures that come with wealth.

From the beginning, I knew exactly what I wanted Roderigo to look like. Based off of my inspiration, I started to sketch out a vest that had an armor/corset feeling to it. It would be tight and molded to his body. Underneath his vest is a basic white cotton short that flares at the top and is gathered at the bottom. The neck of the shirt hugs his chin while blossoming around his face. Along with his vest and shirt is a cape that drapes over him. While creating him with a cape, it depicts part of the play. In the beginning of the play, we see him as a wealthy man, and when getting closer and closer to the end of the play, he gets poorer and poorer in money and in spirit. Money is something that can easily go away and can be easily taken away from you. I made it there to symbolize that he once had money, but as easily as a cape can be drawn off, so can your money off your back. With that, the cape is black on the outside and white in the inside. The combination of black and white symbolizes mourning and cheerless occasions. During most of the play, this side of Roderigo was depicted through him not having a lover and always relying on “honest” Iago, in return for nothing.

While envisioning this in mind, creating him was something I have never done before. This was my first experiment with sewing a doll and creating miniature clothes for a figure I saw in my head. What we have been taught in school, I completely abandoned. I had no idea what I wanted to create exactly or how I was going to do it; there was no outline. I started with a pencil in hand, sketching out the basic shape of him. Neatly placing the pinned fabric underneath the foot of the sewing machine, I first lightly pushed the pedal and eventually gained confidence. The turns of Roderigo’s face underneath the needle allowed me to mold his head however I wanted to, deliberately giving him a nose with sharp turns and long female like legs. Once creating the body of the doll, I wrapped a measuring

tape around the designated areas of his body, then wrap the measurement tape around my neck, remove the pencil from my mouth and jot down his measurements. I could see it, my future as a tailor. Sewing, cutting, and designing took up the majority of the day. As a tailor needs patience, that is something I don't have. I had to re-do his body two times as well as his clothes. Making clothes for a character that is a foot tall, your fingers have to be diligent and work in a tight manner. This was an experience of demonstrating patience, experimentation, creativity, and ultimately managing a project effectively.

As I started with no goal or finished product in mind, I had no expectations. That made it an interesting journey; a mysterious one. As I pulled through to the end, I ended up creating a piece of art that showed the works of my imagination. When you read anything, you play it in your head as your own little movie. It was amazing what I envisioned while reading *Othello* appeared in front of me in a three dimensional figure. I have never done anything like that before.