

NoCry Flower Mask
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Materials:

NoCry Face Shield, Artificial flowers, Artificial Leaves, Adhesive Decal, Garden Wire, and Compact Mirrors

Statement:

My goal with this project was to create a contraption that will force me to see the small features of my face up close as a way to heal my negative self-perception and facial dysmorphia.

I began with the idea of self-protection and the action of hiding my face away due to feelings of shame. I then represented that idea by creating a mask out of a NoCry Face Shield and covering it with an adhesive decal to obscure my view. My mask design makes it impossible to see anything once you wear it, which is a purposeful decision, as it represents the idea of hiding away from the world.

In the past few years, masks and face shields have been associated with protecting your face from outside forces and viruses. Notably, throughout history, masks have been used to hide away the wearer's face and identity.

In creating a mask, I address the root of my problem. That is, I suffer from extreme self-esteem and body-image issues. These issues began when I was young and was constantly bombarded with Eurocentric beauty standards advertised on television and on social media. Over time, these turned into insecurities that followed me up to adulthood.

Consequently, in the process of healing this concern, I turned to the idea of self-growth and self-acceptance, and how it is a vital step to overcoming my self-perception issues. With this, I decorated the mask with artificial flowers and artificial leaves, which are materials and symbols that have a double meaning of beauty and growth.

The reason why they are artificial is connected to the idea that changing my personal appearance often felt like a performance (or fake). Much like how artificial flowers aren't the real thing, my perception of beauty was not true to me. The act of adapting my appearance to the current beauty standards has created an unhealthy relationship with my self-image and distorted the way I see my face and my features. I realize that I need to distance myself from this mindset and mend my relationship with my own face. This is where the meaning of "flowers representing growth" comes in.

With this, I attached compact mirrors (another material associated with beauty) at the bottom of the mask; so that when I lift the mask, it lines up with every feature of my face (e.g. eyes, nose, lips). Thus, focusing on the details that I often miss. Essentially, the act of lifting the mask up means I am taking the first step to self-acceptance. Lifting the mask up forces me to see all my insecurities up close, and see them in a new light. Additionally, it forces me to see the personal compliments that I wrote to myself. Writing and reading these messages was the most difficult to do because when you are used to hating the way you look, the most challenging obstacle to overcome is believing that you are actually beautiful. This project attempted to break down that obstacle, and while it did not completely heal my facial dysmorphia, it did show me to appreciate myself more.