



Politics of the Personal

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Under the banner of *Politics of the Personal*, HTHMA seniors were tasked with writing research essays about political topics that personally impacted them. In the final step of the project, students remixed their research into political piñatas with the help of local artist Diana Benavidez, whose work explores the political possibilities of the piñata tradition. As a bonus, students stuffed their piñatas with their original poetry to create a bridge between the course's two main modes of writing. The result was a room full of highly personal and highly political piñatas waiting to be smashed.

Teacher Reflection

This project sticks out as one of my HTHMA highlights of the past five years. Diana Benavidez's work out in the SD arts community served as the project's origin story, which to me felt like the most organic way to develop a project. I had seen her work for so long that it became an obsession of mine to weave it into an English project. The students were excited to tackle a childhood object in a more radical way and I was excited to have a final product that mixed research essay, poetry, and visual art through an unexpected medium. Visiting the Mingei Museum's piñata exhibition was a great way to prime student thinking, and having Diana come to our school to lead a piñata-making workshop made the whole experience feel more collaborative and authentic. Our exhibition felt joyful and thought provoking, and it was rewarding to see students proudly show off their creations to their families and friends. If I were to do this project again, I'd want to have more of a cross-discipline connection (the collaboration with the Video Production class wasn't as strong as I would've liked). But overall, this project reminded me of the importance of engaging with community partners, baking in field trips, and having a performance/interactive element at exhibitions.

—Paola Capó-García



Student Reflection

I really enjoyed this project because I got to explore a new medium and express my chosen topic in a unique way. My piñata was made to represent Filipino-American healthcare workers and was filled with different Filipino candies! It almost felt like a cultural fusion because this tradition is most commonly associated with Latin America, but a nearly identical game exists in the Philippines called pukpok palayok ("hit clay pot"), most likely because we were both colonized by Spain. I felt like I was able to represent a part of my heritage because it's such a flexible medium and it exists in my culture as well!

—Farnelle A.

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