



Visual Alphabet

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The goal of this project is to create an alphabet using common objects and tell a story with those objects. The alphabet as we know it was first displayed using everyday objects. Now they are merely symbols but we know them as letters that we can read and sound out. Taking this idea and working off of it, I will try and go back to when the alphabet was first created, by using everyday objects to form the alphabet we know today.

The purpose of this project is to gain experience in storytelling, understand the importance of visual communicating in everyday life, and create a unified series of images that will form my alphabet.

For this project I will be using Adobe Photoshop, Indesign, a camera, and what ever objects I decide to use.

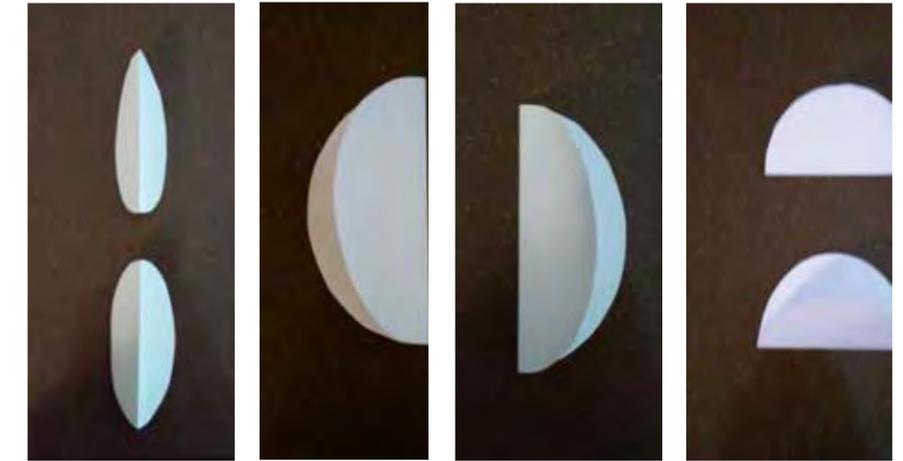
The process for this project has 3 parts: Part one is conducting research by finding inspiration online and all around me. Then I will come up with 20 unique and creative ideas to form an alphabet. I will sketch a few letters of each on paper or with a camera. Then I will choose 5 of the best ones and do the hands on experiments with them using the real objects. Part two I will take my best alphabet creation and complete all 26 letters and create alternate versions of each letter. Part three I will make a poster of the alphabet, print it on 11x17in, and mount it on foam core for display.

For this first step of the project I simply gathered ideas. I searched online on websites such as pinterest, behance, and google. I found pictures which I've included on pages 6-12. These pictures all gave me ideas as to what to think about, how to get a different perspective, and what to use for my alphabet.

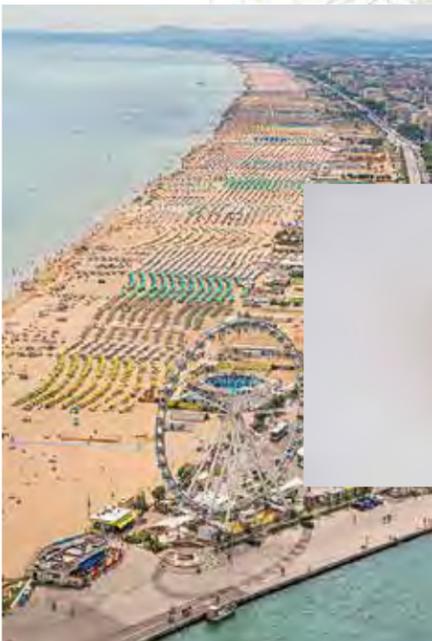
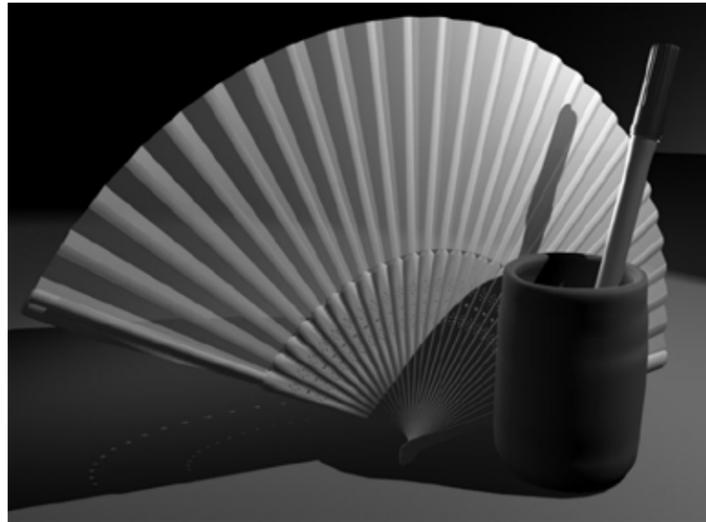
I learned from this step that research is everything. If I didn't take time to think about the project I would have gotten some bad ideas! Research is one of the most important steps to any project, especially when I need to gather ideas.

For my sketches I drew out 20 ideas from the inspiration I had from the photos I found online and from things I saw in my day.

I chose 8 sketches that I liked and actually experimented with them. A quick peek at one of the experiments is here on this page. For this alphabet I played around with the use of negative space to make letters.



Negative Space Idea



The first picture of the fan inspired the idea to try and use little fans to make an alphabet.

The picture of the donuts made me think about using one donut to form the entire alphabet and it slowly gets eaten away by the end with letter "Z." Maybe it would be just crumbs by then.

The cards make me start thinking about the different angles I could use to make letters (out of anything) but using the sides instead of the faces of things. For instance; coins. It made me think about turing a coin on its side instead of just using its face.

The picture of umbrellas on the beach reminded me that I could use things that are already there that I don't have to manipulate but just try and capture a picture of it.

When I saw the map I got the idea to find letters using google maps. I did away with that idea quickly however because it didn't involve me doing anything but going around taking a picture here and there. I was not being creative enough.

The twix in this set of pictures is what gave me the idea to use chocolate but especially that fun caramel to form letters. This became my final project idea.



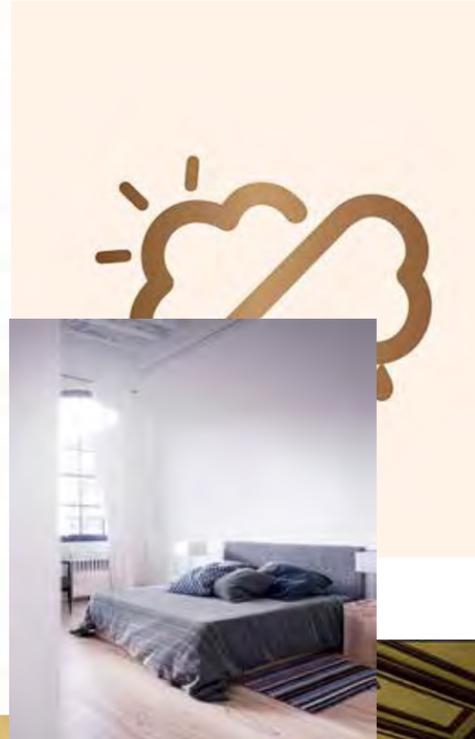
The first alphabet with the straight boxed letters got me brainstorming about using objects that were fixed and could not be bent. I thought that would make an interesting alphabet.

The banana alphabet made me think to try and use a carrot to form letters. This later became one of the visual experiments I tried.

The red and black alphabet has letters that look like strips of paper folded over to form the curves. This got me thinking about the different ways to 'bend' an object.

The alphabet made from various things made me see that using multiple objects gets confusing and isn't as clean as when the same object is used throughout. It unifies the alphabet more when there is some consistency in the elements making the alphabet.

The picture of paper is just balled up paper but I included it in my research because it showed me that the simple manipulation of one object can have many possibilities. And I won't know until I physically try them.



The pencil shavings alphabet I thought looked very clean, well done, and had a constant element throughout. I included this picture because it was a good example to me.

The picture of a bed made me think about how I could start the alphabet with a clean bed, only one pillow out of place to make a lower-case 'a.' Then by 'Z' the bed is unmade and the letter is being formed by the sheets.

The picture of the taxis made me think about finding negative space in places I wouldn't normally look to see letters.

The picture of circles reminded me of coins and to try and use as few coins as I could to make the alphabet.

The building gave me the thought of using different and unexpected perspective as I take the image of the object I'm using to form the alphabet. Or it made me think that maybe I could find letters it just depended on my perspective.



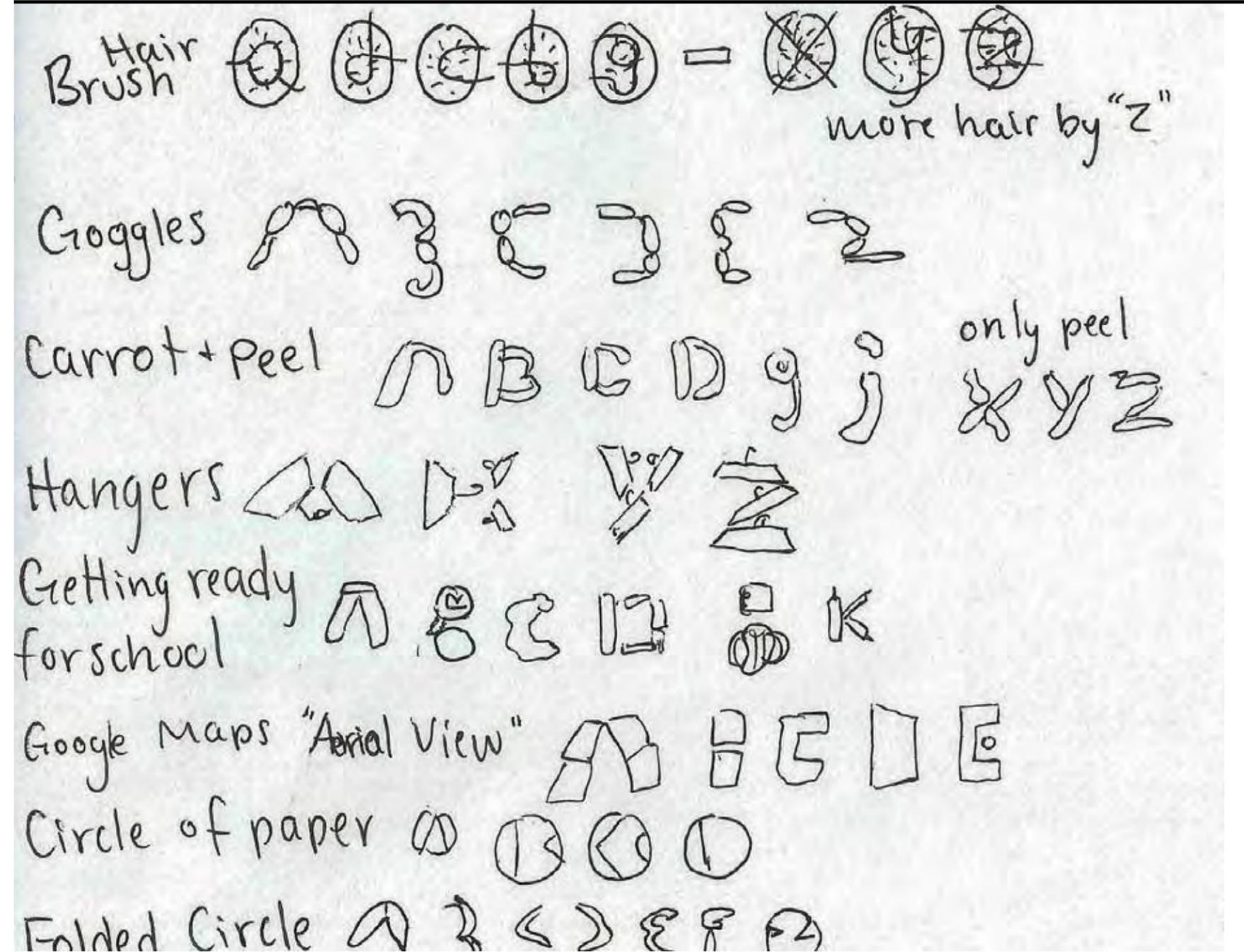
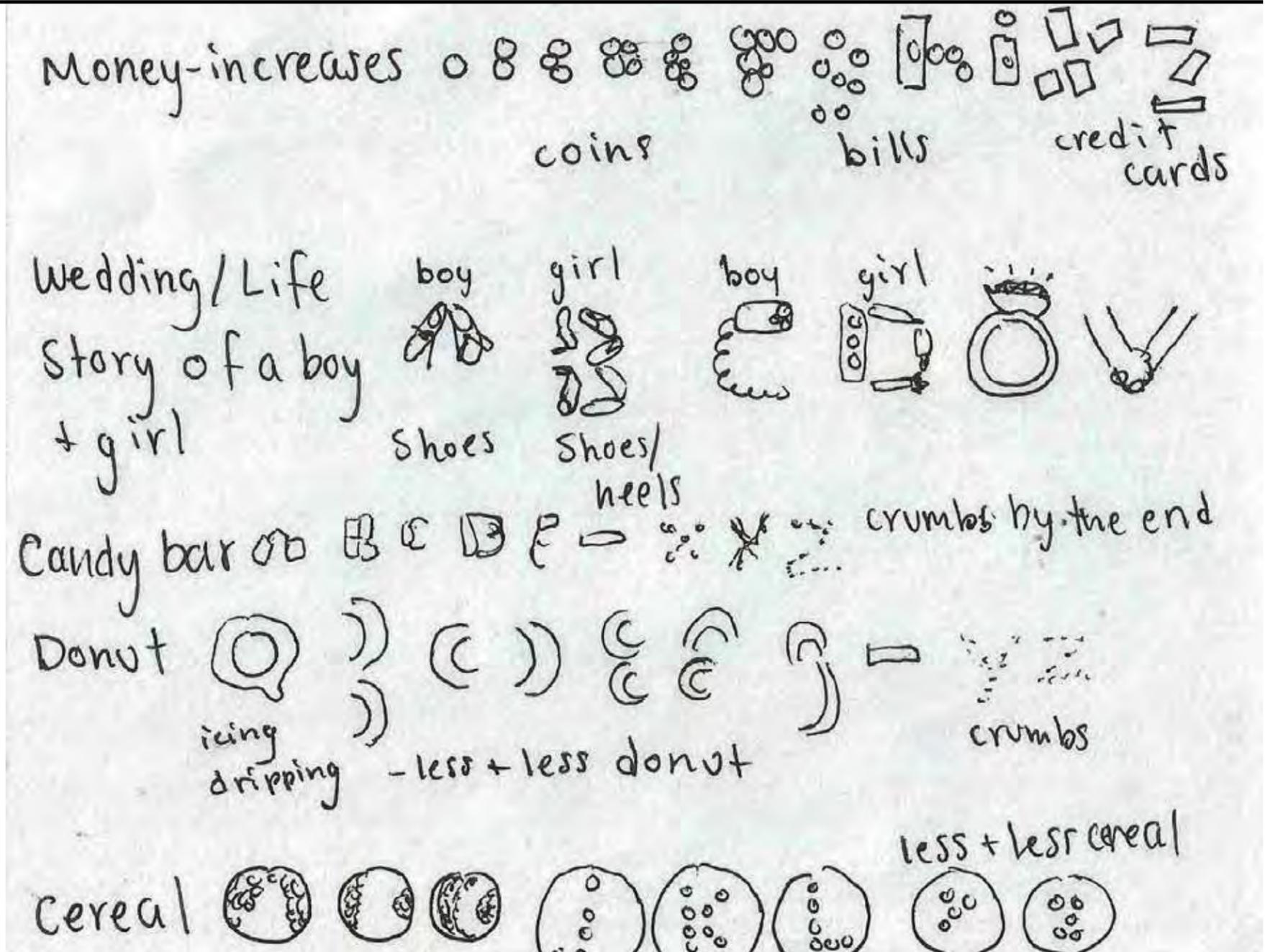
The picture of the “G” gave me the idea of adding fun and different restrictions and to ask questions like what if had to fold every letter somewhere or what if every letter had to have a cross or overlap on some part of it?

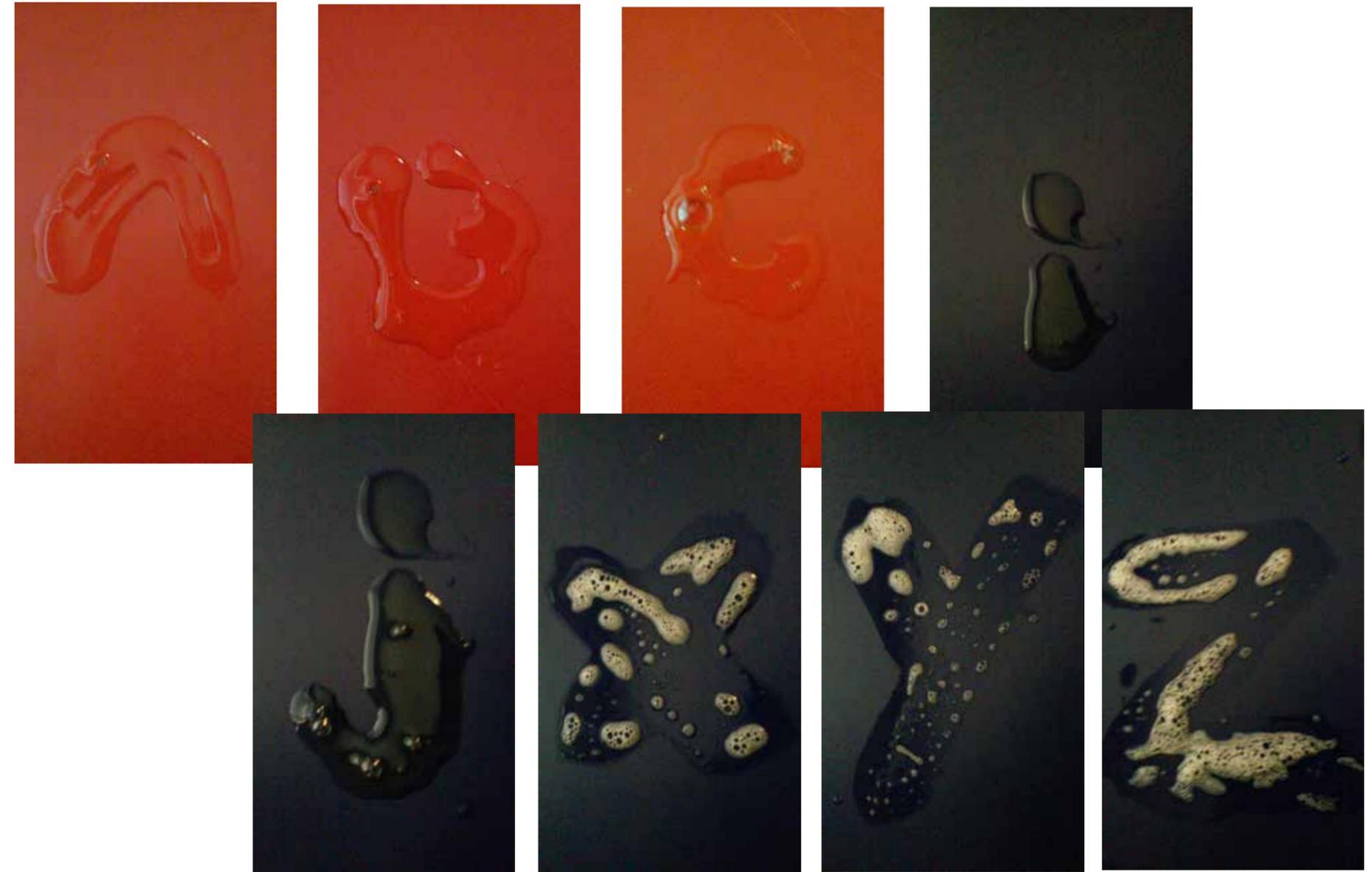
The building that looks like an A inspired me to look at things that are already set in place but to find letters from them and take pictures to get my alphabet. I later found out this looks messy and letters are hard to find this way.

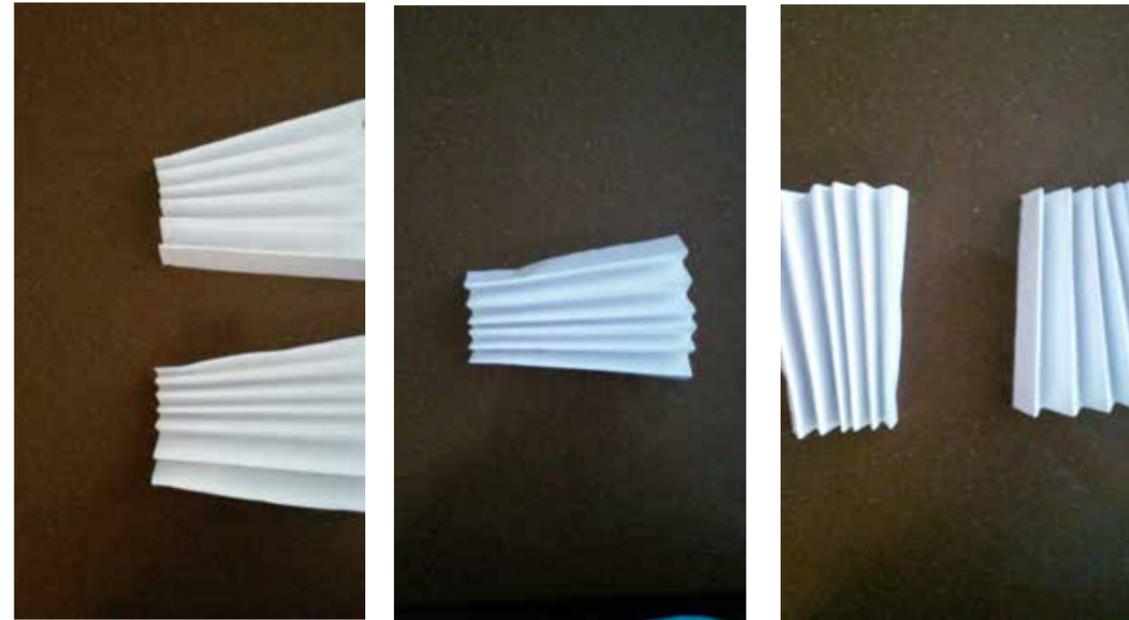
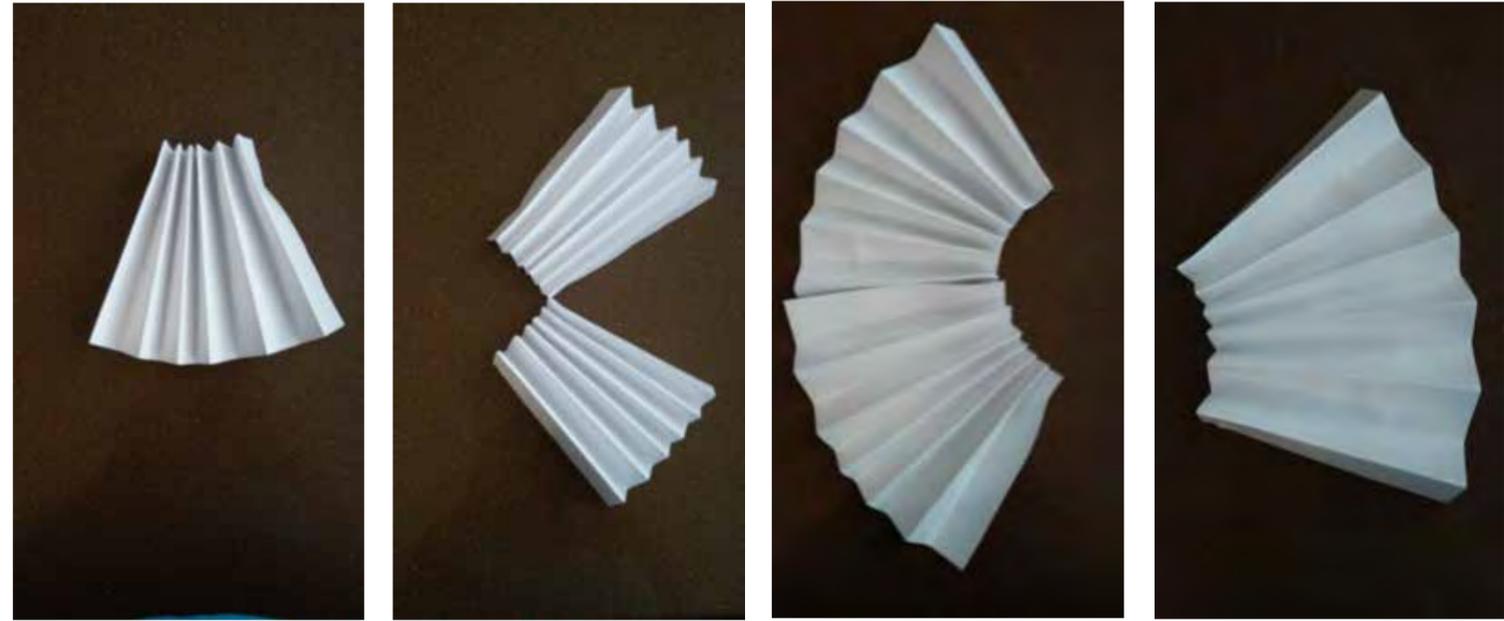
The picture of the metal parts gave me the idea of making the alphabet out of a vacuum hose.

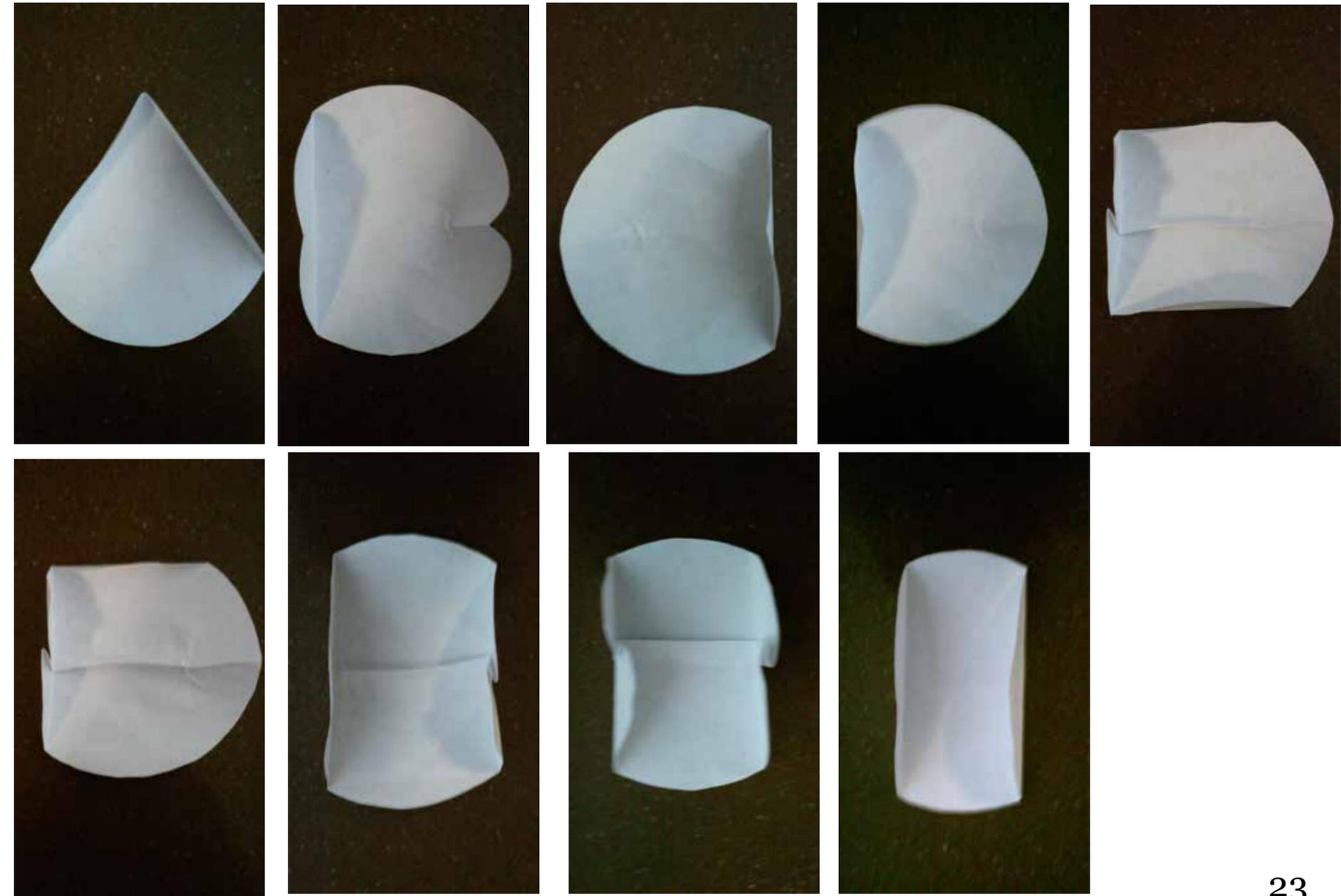
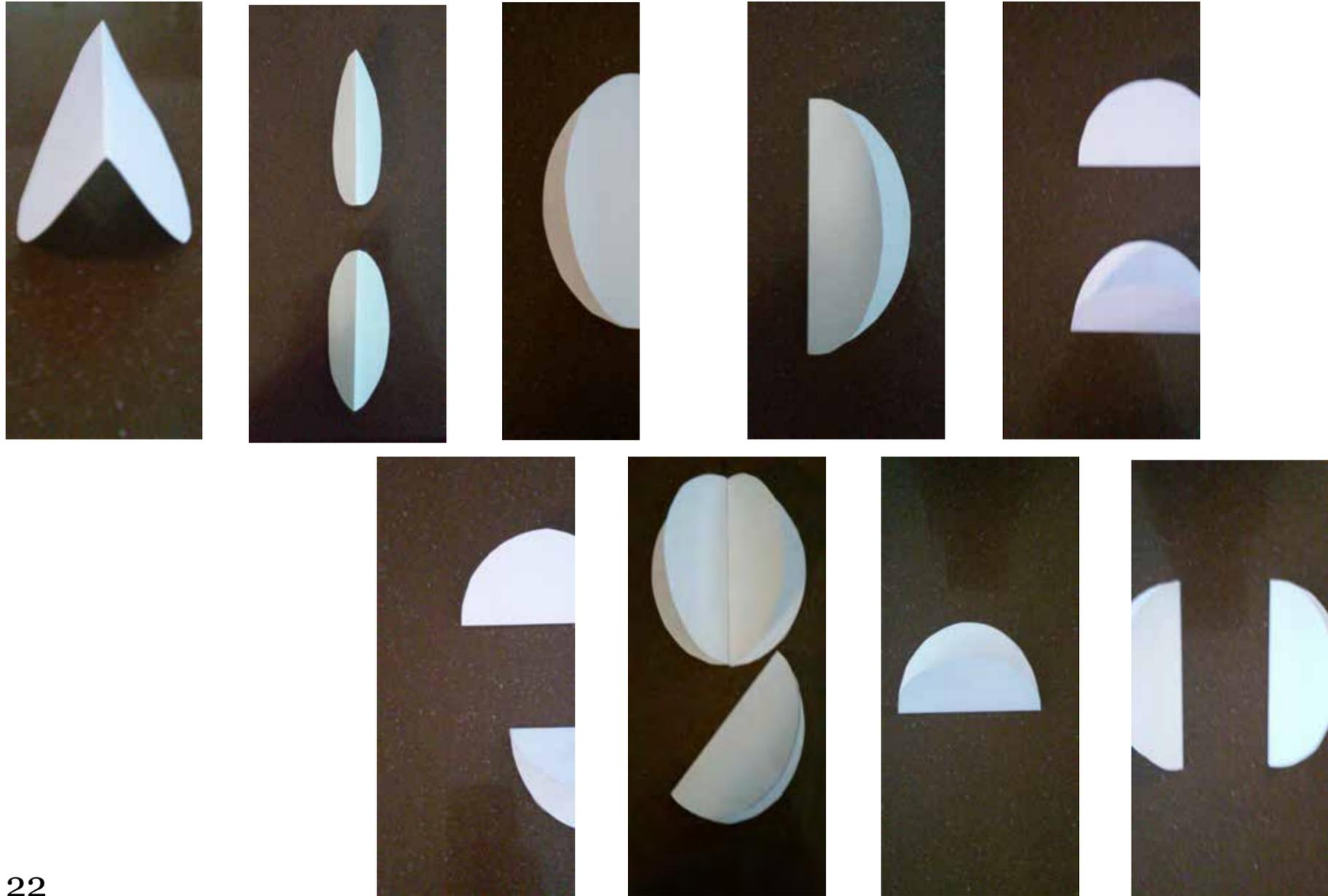
The picture of the cups on plates gave me some perspective ideas and the idea of using kitchen utensils or food to form the alphabet.

The books that form a spiral made me wonder what an alphabet would look like if I had to make the letters by overlapping things to make circles.









Part 1: Visual Experiments

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This step in the process was definitely frustrating. I chose to play around more with my twix alphabet idea. The first time I tried it I took pictures of all 26 letters made out of twix and uploaded them to photoshop to knock the background out of them. Once I did that I layed them all out using Illustrator to see how they looked together. I didn't know until then that the lighting had been slightly different for about every picture. So one letter was light, and the next was dark. I tried fixing a few letters in photoshop again but this didn't seem to help. Then I decided I needed to get a nicer camera and make sure the camera was fixed in hopes that that would keep the lighting consistant.

What was really interesting about this step was the process I took to come up with the first twix alphabet. First I began with questions such as:

How can I form letters without completely breaking the bar?

What makes the twix beautiful?

What are the least number of breaks to be made? 3?

What if I only have crumbs forming the letters at the end?

What color should the background be?

What do twix go with? food, drink?

What if I could only hold the twix instead of set it down?

What if I could only stack them?

With these in mind I began some research online just to get more ideas. I watched some videos and looked at pictures

of twix. The next step was to begin manipulating the twix into letters. Now here is where the exciting surprise happened. Right before I picked up a twix to start brainstorming, I saw some batteries. I took 3 batteries and started making the alphabet. I thought I wouldn't be able to do it with only three but turns out it worked great! I made every letter and quick too! Once I had experimented with the batteries I went to do the same with a twix bar. In my initial questions I asked, "How many breaks will I have to make to form all the letters of the alphabet?" Again, to my surprise it only took ONE break!

My experimentation with the 3 batteries right before moving on to the twix prepared me to have the creativity and patience to know that I would be able to do the entire alphabet with the twix with one break. This is because breaking the twix once forms three parts, the bar, camamel, then the rest of the bar. So I simply referenced the alphabet I had made more easily with the batteries and all of the sudden I had a beautiful creation out of breaking a twix simply in half!

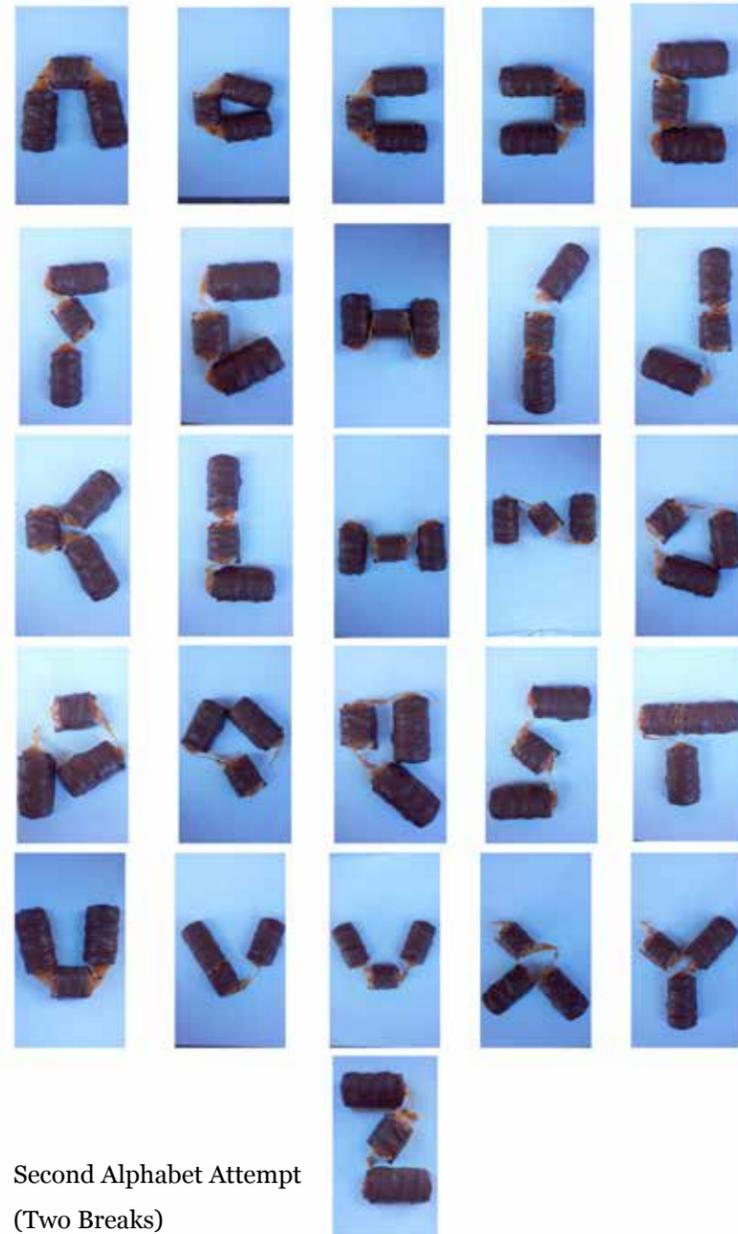
*I show the battery pictures here because they were such an important step in the process, not because I liked the idea for the final project.

The second twix alphabet is my experimentation with more breaks. I decided that one break made a more unique alphabet because of the restriction.





First Alphabet Attempt
(One Break)



Second Alphabet Attempt
(Two Breaks)

For this step I choose my favorite alphabet alteration and displayed the slphabet on an 11 x 17 inch foam core poster board.

I went to a photo services on campus to take the pictures for the final alphabet. We used a Nikon D800 DSLR camera. We were able to keep the lighting more consistant with flash and the pictures were done inside so we didn't have to worry about the light changing and the camera adjusting between each picture. I thought we would need to mount the camera in order for the pictures to come out with the same color, but that was an unessesary ussumption.

The funny thing about this step was realizing that not all my letters were the same case. In my final that I was about to print I realized that the "I" was really lower case while all the other letters were upper case. I wasn't going to go back to photo services and try to get another picture just for the "I". I also didn't want to risk that letter having different lighting, or for the break to be different. (I used the same twix for every letter). That's when I realized that we had taken two different pictures of the letter "H". The one I didn't use looked just like an "I" if turned on it's side. So I was quickly able to switch the "H" out for a new upper case "I."



Lower Case "I"



Upper Case "I"

For my first poster here on the right, I presented the letters in what I thought at that time to be a great layout. However I realized later from critique from others that the “Z” needed to have some more letters with it. It didn’t look right all alone at the bottom of the poster like that. So I changed up the layout a bit.

I added a grid so I could line up my letters more evenly while trying to keep the same amount of margins of white space around the entire poster.

On the next page you can see I took the twix package out and just put crumbs at the bottom. I liked the way the letters looked like they had more room to breathe here but I just felt I needed the twix wrapper in order for the poster to be complete. I liked how the twix wrapper immediatly told an onlooker what the medium was, and I liked the color it added to the poster.

So in trial 3, the poster on the right on page 31, I changed the spacing of the letters again so I could fit in the twix wrapper. I thought this layout was great until I printed it out. That was when I realized I could change the letters up even another time in order to put the twix wrapper at the beginning of the alphabet and then just have the crumbs at the end.



Version One



Version Two

Version Three

The final step was to take the poster and mount it on 11x17 inch foam core board. I made sure I got a brand new exacto knife and blade to cut the board with. I didn't want to make cutting mistakes right at the end due to a dull blade because this would make my entire project look bad.

Finally I took pictures of what the final board looks like and included it here.

For this final poster I had to brainstorm on how to position my twix bar (I only used one bar for the entire alphabet), take photos of each separate twix bar letter/position, put it together using Adobe Illustrator and Photoshop, and finally print it on an 11x17 portfolio paper and mount it on foam core board.



Final Project Poster



The first lesson I learned from doing this alphabet project is that restrictions are a good thing. Only because I put restrictions on my alphabet did it turn out well. I only used one twix for the entire alphabet. If I had used as many as I needed, putting little to no restrictions on it, it would've turned out looking nice but also looking like a kindergardener's work.

The second lesson I learned was to think like the age that I am. During the brainstorming process I continued to ask myself, can a kindergardener do this? If the answer was yes I put restrictions on it or stopped my brainstorming right there and took a different route.

Finally I learned that everything does not go as planned and it is always good to get things done ahead of time. I took my first set of pictures of the twix alphabet outside. It was a little cooler than inside and the caramel was looking perfect! Then when I went to take the photos professionally in a studio on campus, the lighting made the caramel melt and not look as clean and yummy. I had to do a lot more manipulation of the caramel and my hands began to melt the chocolate on top so I had to be careful not to leave fingerprints on the bar. Luckily none showed up in the photos.



Final Project Poster