

A Self-Portrait

Reframed:

How An Arts-Based Assignment Unknowingly Prepared Me For Tragedy

 **Angela Schroeder**, Child and Youth Care (CYC)

INTRO

- Creating a three-dimensional self-portrait was part of an expressive arts-based project for CYCW 302 (Fall 2022).
- My figurine became a symbol of how creativity and self-examination allowed me to process grief and loss.

PROCESS

- Shaping a self-portrait with my hands made externalizing my self-image easier.
- Figurine was created using a ceramic wax warmer, air-dry clay, a stress toy, dirt, a fake plant, a band-aid, paint and hot glue.
- Digital photography helped communicate insights in a way unique to me.
- Authentic relationships with professors bolstered student engagement in an objective, yet restorative, self-reflection.

RESULTS

- Reflection on ontology, life positioning, theoretical frameworks, ethical reasoning and decision-making, as well as relational practice.
- Appreciation of a healthy coping mechanism—tapping into the therapeutic nature of art.
- Through university and community engagement, I avoided isolation during mourning and felt safe and supported by a compassionate CYC Department.

CONCLUSION

- Engaging multiple layers of the assignment enabled the identification and illustration of the evolution of my thinking process as I worked through the course material.
- The artistic approach empowered me to interpret my learning journey and recognize practical applications for personal life and professional practice.

The **creative process** served as a **remedial outlet** to address **past traumas** and **current disenfranchised grief**, equipping me with **skills** to face an impending **future of bereavement.**

<https://qrco.de/bdrhYt>

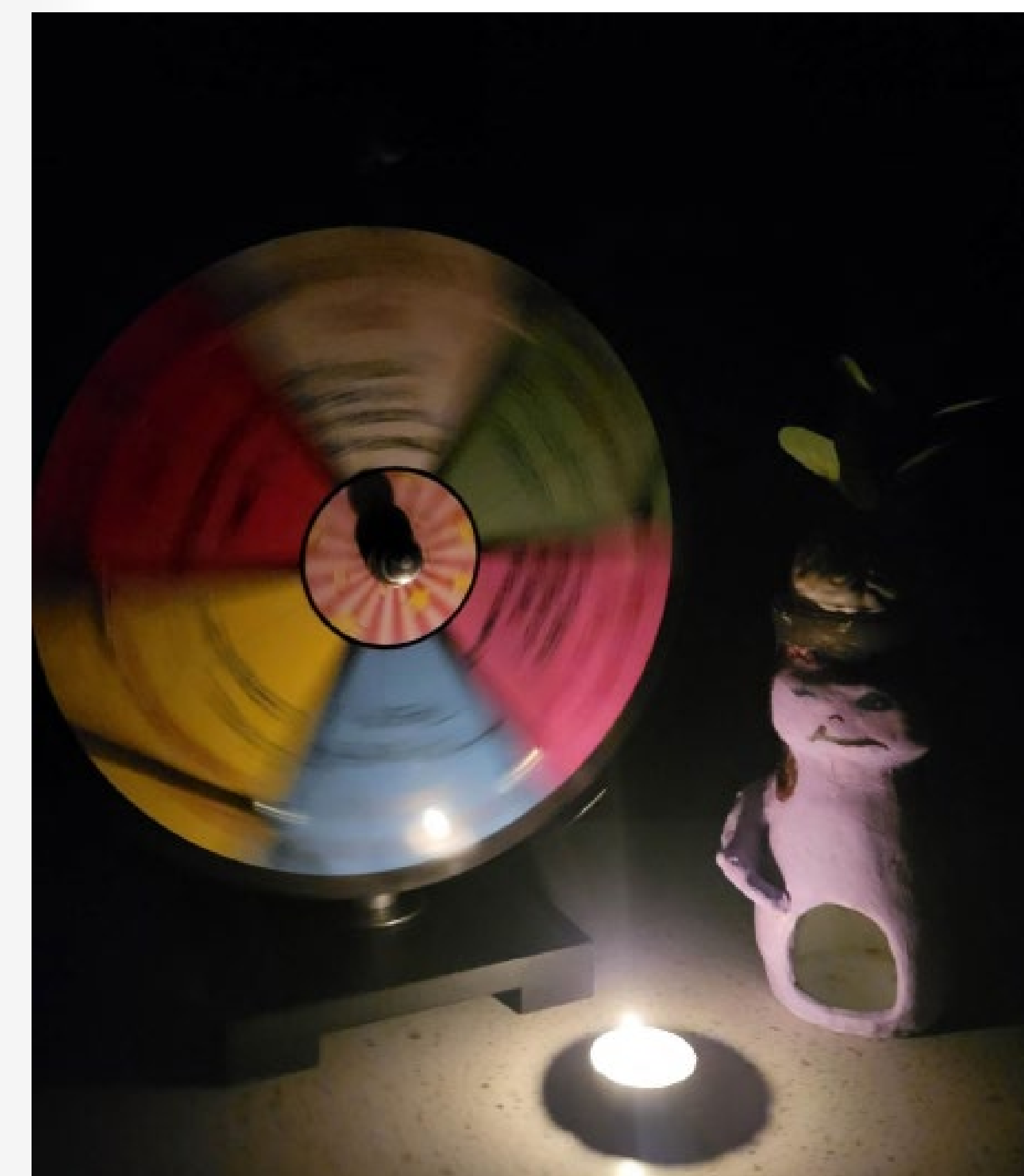


Scan the QR Code to view the **booklet** presented at the **Child and Youth Care Public Showcase Fall 2022**

EMBARCKING ON A HEALING JOURNEY



Photography is an interactive process, enabling the photographer to incorporate different settings into their art. The person behind the lens can be empowered to engage with different elements of one's reality.



Capturing contrasting elements (e.g. light/dark, static/variable) in a photo can help the artist come to terms with parts of one's life that feature similar dynamics. Through externalization, one may be able to explore blind spots that were previously left unchecked.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the Child and Youth Care Department and my CYCW 302 professor, Kylie Schneider (MSc, CCYC). I am grateful for all their teachings and ongoing support.