

Art & Mycology

Mountainside Secondary School North
Vancouver
with Isabelle Kirouac & Willoughby Arevalo

NORTH
VAN
ARTS

*Mycelial Sculpture
Project
spring 2022*



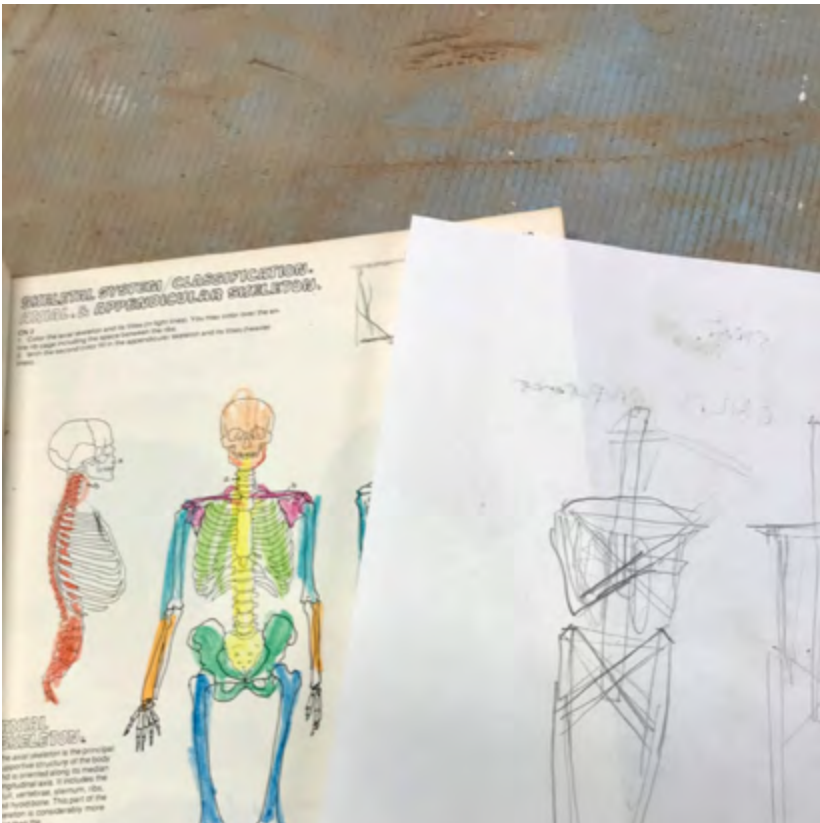


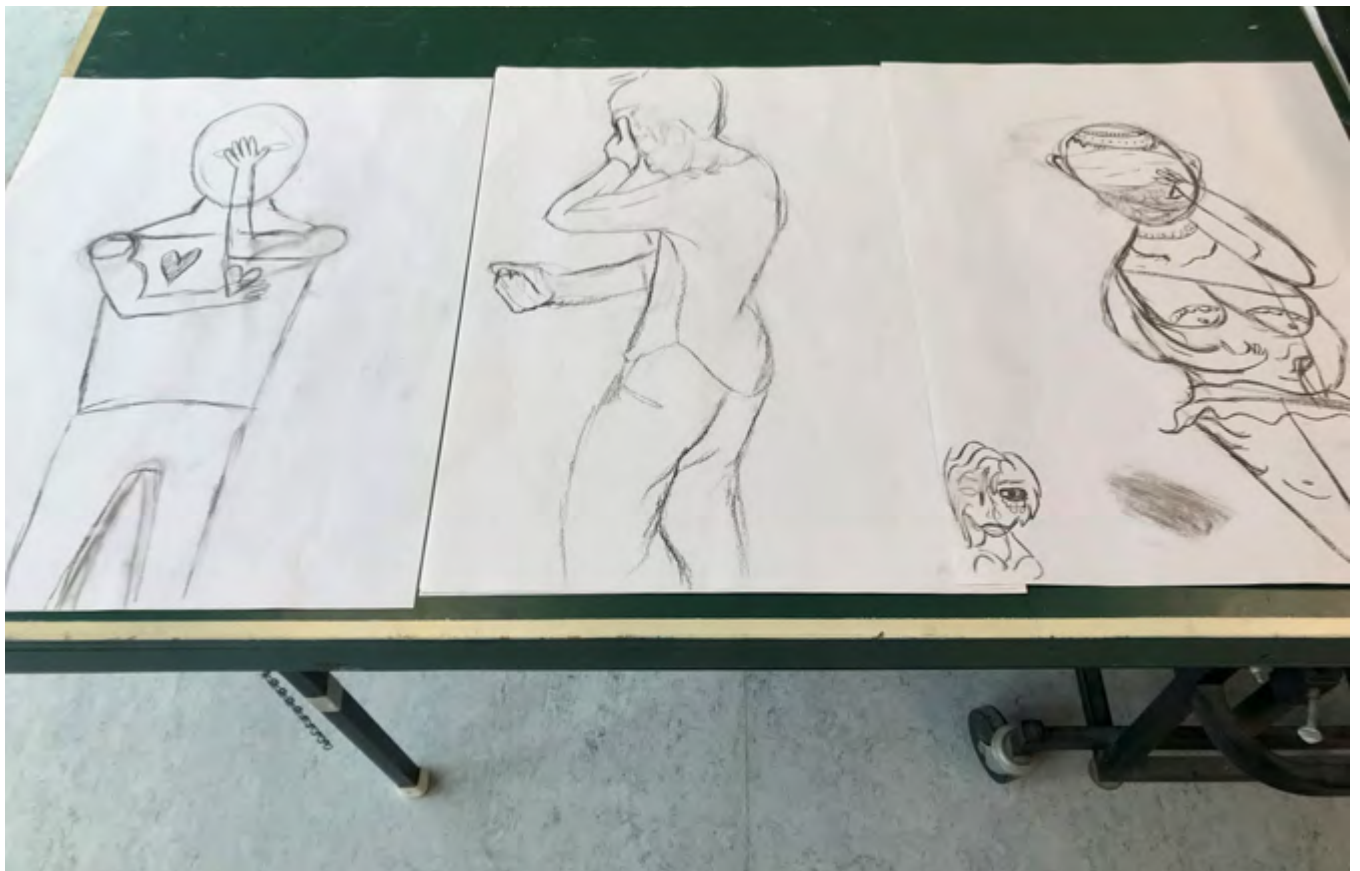
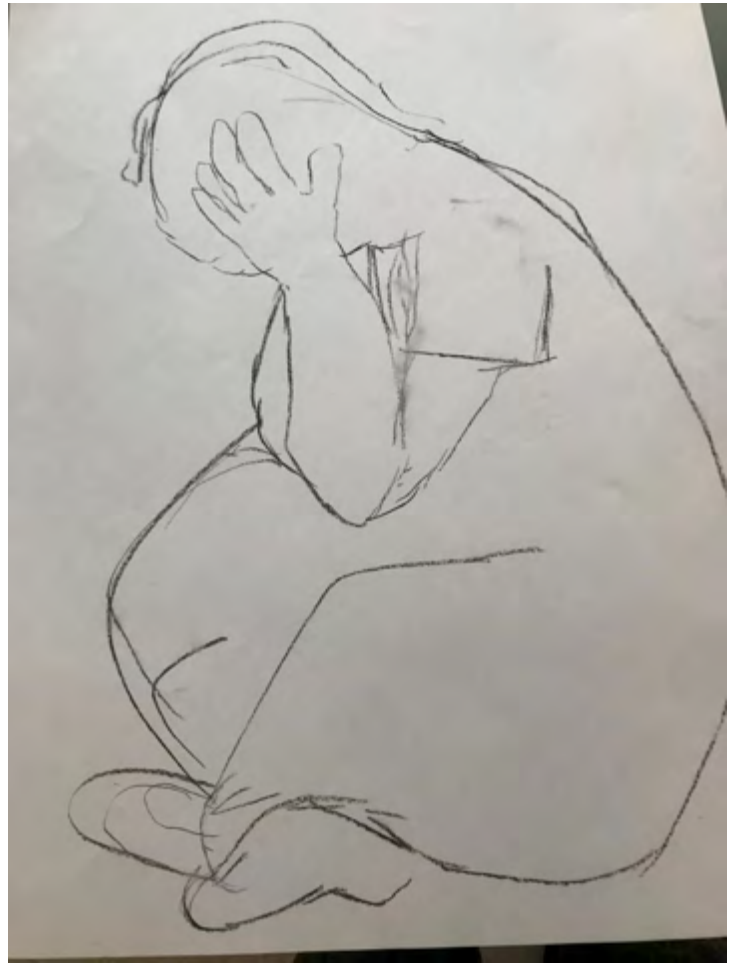
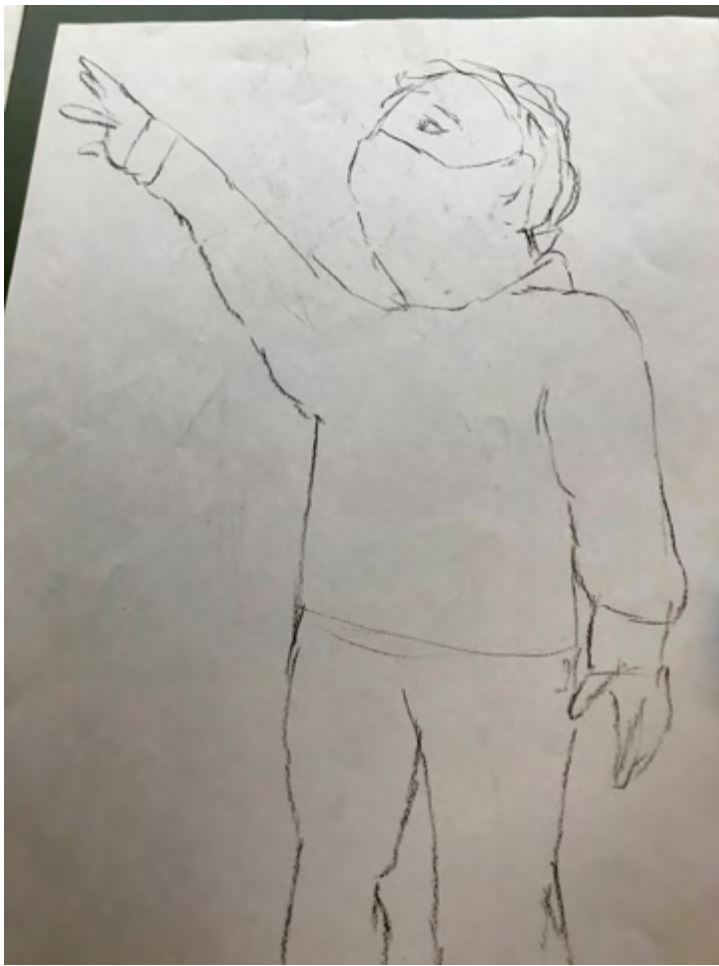
Life drawing session

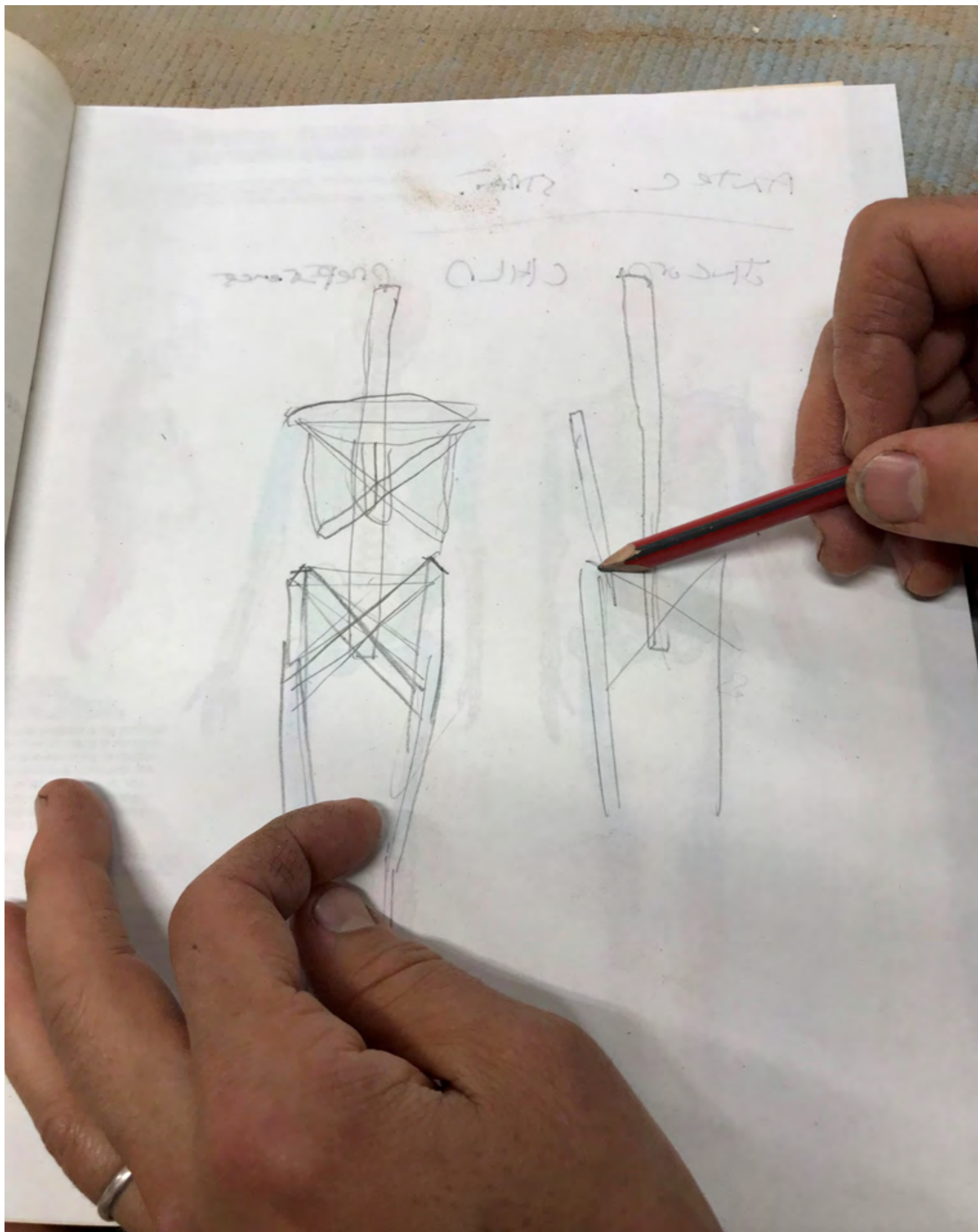
Students created poses inspired by their feelings on fast fashion.

This sketching jam led the group to find the pose to use for the life-sized figurative sculpture.









Building the armature

Fresh branches were harvested in the woods behind the school. Most of it was vine maple salvaged from someone else's pruning. These were used to make the armature for the sculpture. Pieces were selected and cut to match body proportions and assembled using joinery techniques with only wood and no screws so all elements would be edible to the fungi and compostable.

Many of the students had minimal experience with the tools and had an empowering experience building their skills.

















Mushroom Cultivation

The students learned DIY mushroom cultivation techniques: transferring tiny pieces of oyster mushrooms into sterilized sugar water to grow into liquid cultures. They transferred liquid mycelium from existing cultures into jars of sterilized grain to become spawn for the sculpture.















Clothing Inoculation

Unsellable and worn out cotton clothing donated from a thrift store and the school community were pasteurized in a laundry machine (but not dried) then inoculated with the grain spawn we had made 10 days prior.

Clothing and spawn were rolled tightly, packed into mushroom growing bags and incubated for 10 days.



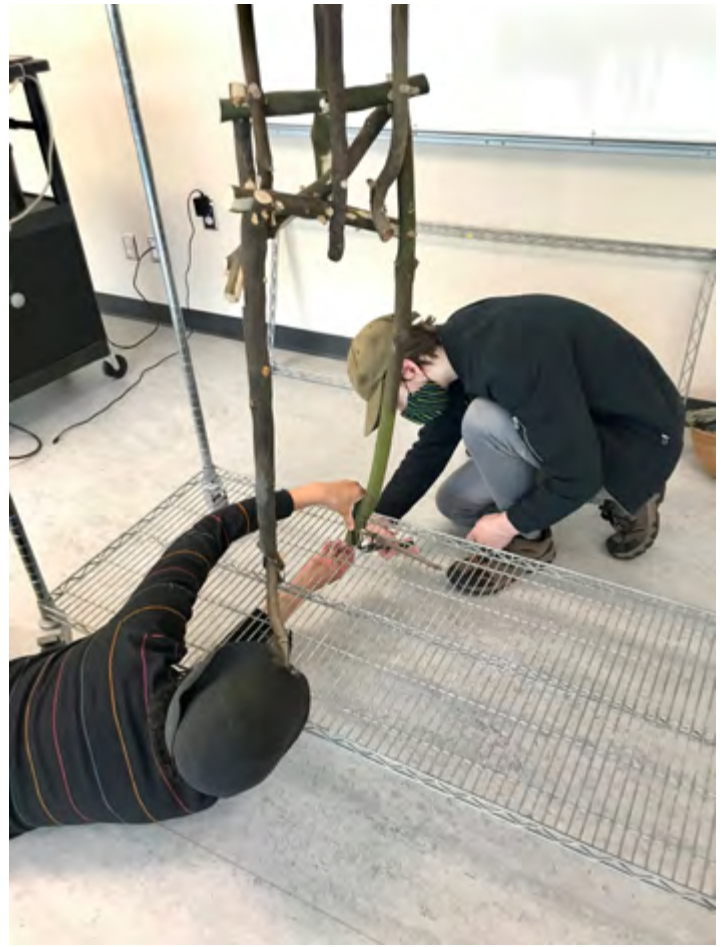




PINK OYSTER

05/06

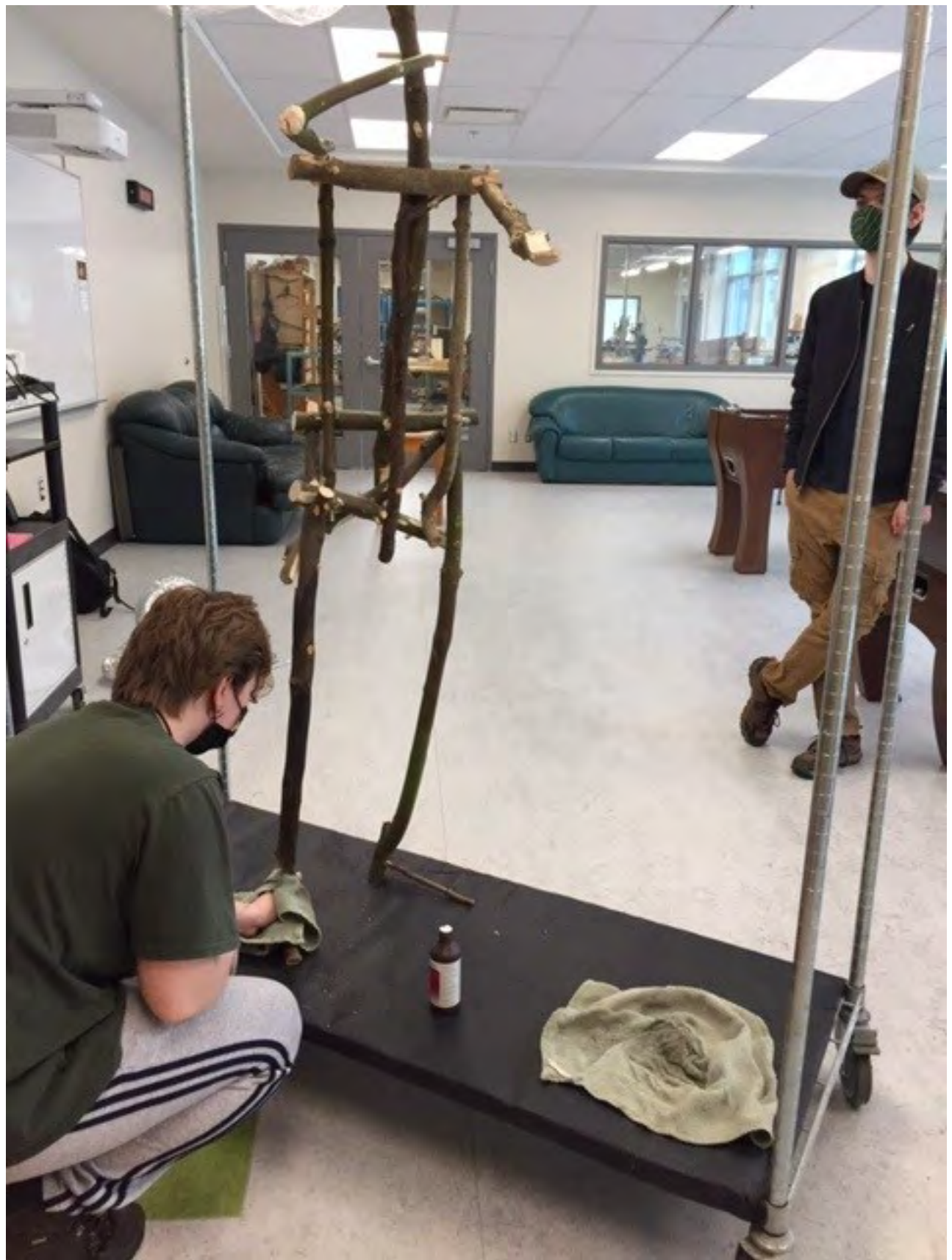
BLUE



Building the fruiting chamber

Students assembled and installed the mushroom fruiting chamber and the armature inside of it. Environmental control systems include a water reservoir with automatic refill valve, a humidifier controlled by a humidistat and fans to balance the fungi's needs for high humidity and lots of fresh air.







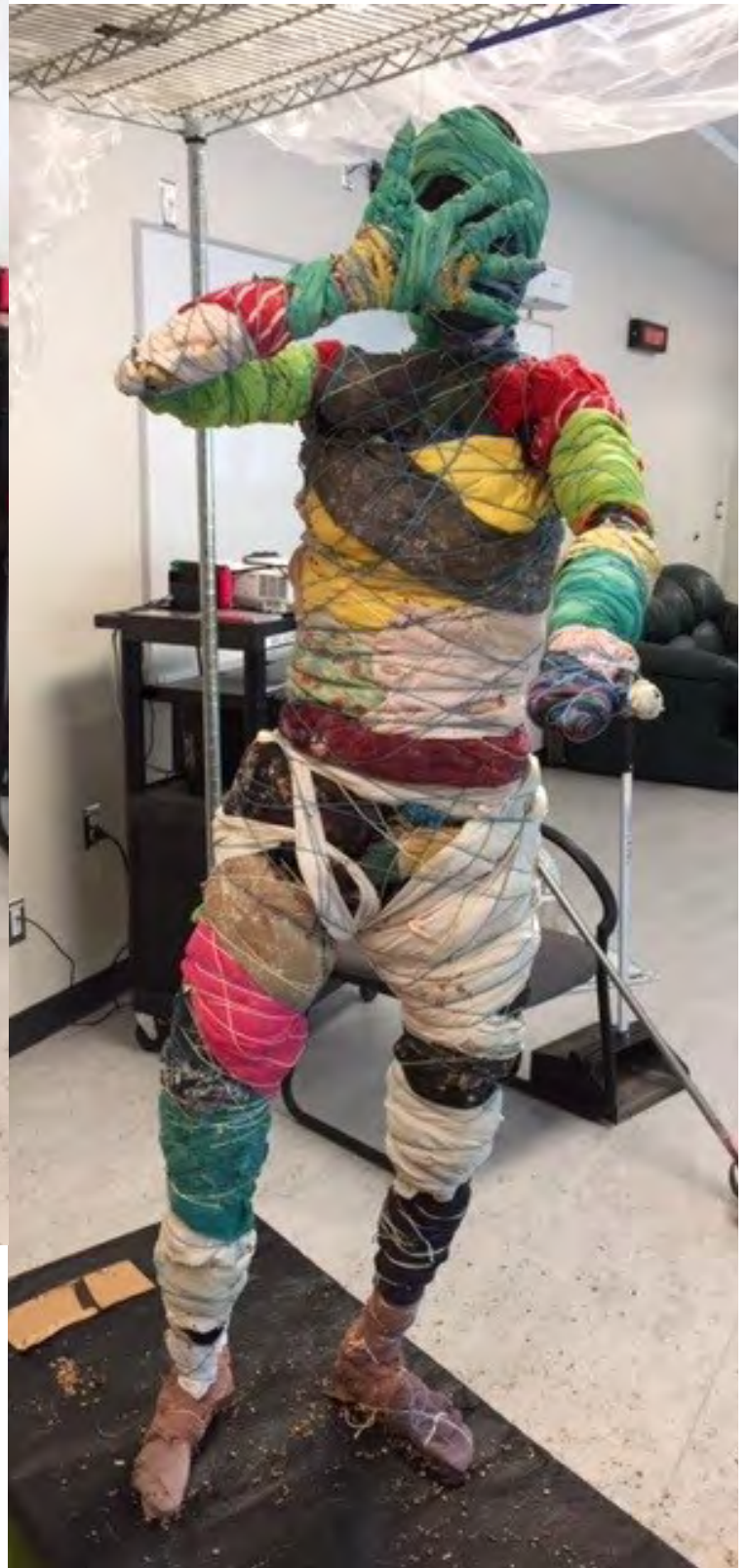
Wrapping the sculpture

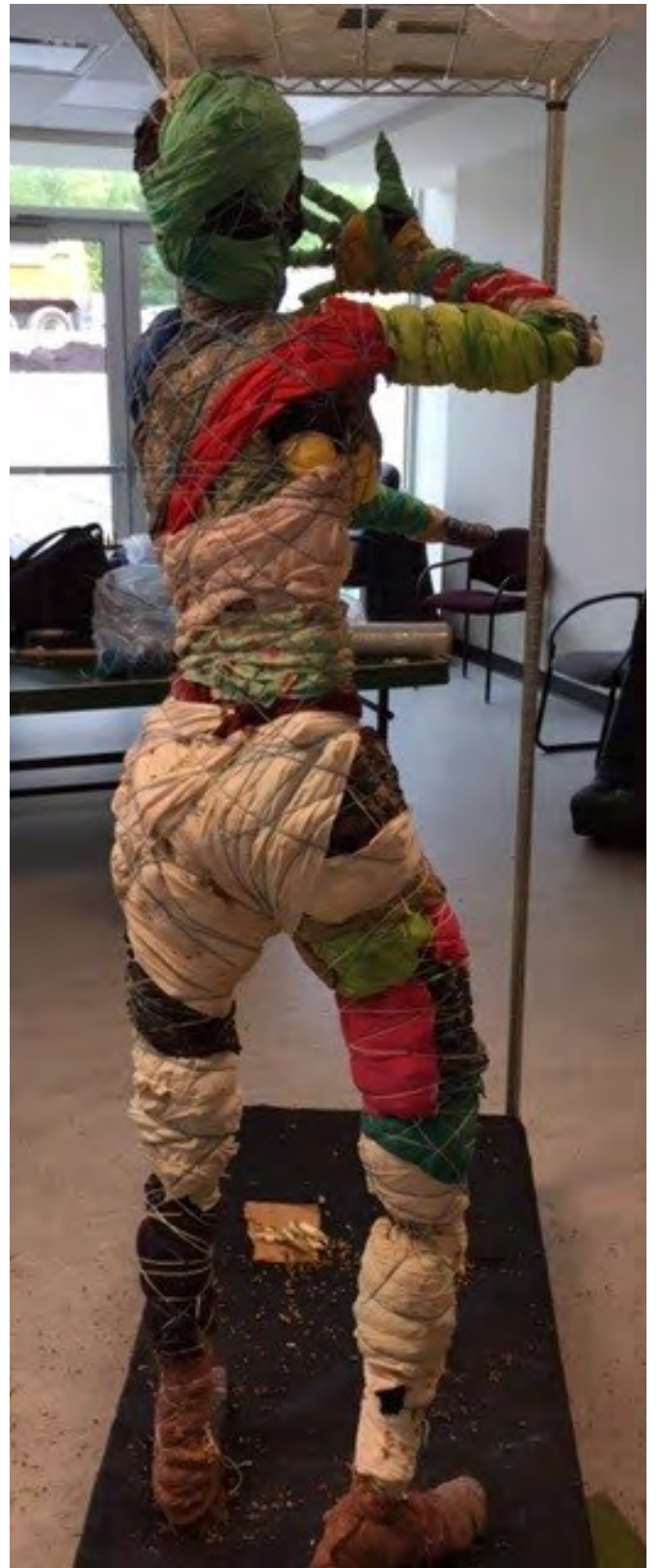
Students wrapped the myceliated clothing around the armature to give the body its “flesh” and used cotton yarn to hold it together. Once the desired form was sculpted, the sculpture was wrapped in plastic film to encourage the mycelium to heal from the manipulation and prepare to fruit.













Initiating Fruiting

After 9 days, the plastic wrap was removed and the environmental controls were activated. Mushrooms began fruiting from the body and several flushes developed and declined over several weeks.



RENEWING THE FUNGAL BODY

A COMMENT ON FAST FASHION

THIS SCULPTURE IS MADE OF A WOODEN ARMATURE COVERED WITH RECYCLED COTTON CLOTHING, WRAPPED AND INOCULATED WITH BLUE AND PINK OYSTER MUSHROOM MYCELIUM. OVER THE NEXT TWO WEEKS, WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO OBSERVE SEVERAL MUSHROOMS FRUITING. OYSTER MUSHROOMS CAN DIGEST TOXIC DYES AND CONTRIBUTE TO REMEDIATION.

THIS SCULPTURE WAS MADE BY THE ART AND MYCOLOGY GROUP.



























At the end of the school year, the humidifier was shut off, allowing the sculpture to dry out and pause the growth of mushrooms.

The sculpture is soon moving to a new home for the broader community to enjoy.

... to be continued.

Art & Mycology is a collaboration with artists and youth using various visual, experiential, movement, literary, and performance art practices focused on fungi to build awareness of how all our lives are connected in society and the natural world. Interdisciplinary choreographer Isabelle Kirouac and artist/mycologist Willoughby Arevalo have been working side by side with students at Mountainside Secondary School since 2018, guiding exploration of the natural world, exploring the intersection between art and ecology.

North Van Arts, founded in 1969 as The North Vancouver Community Arts Council, is a grassroots, social-profit, charitable cultural organization dedicated to maximizing the intrinsic value of the arts in all media.

Our mandate is to enable emerging and professional artists in all disciplines, to bridge cultures, and to build strong and healthy communities through the arts.

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In partnership with:



We gratefully acknowledge financial support from the following to make this programme possible for the 2021-22 school year:



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