

Project Overview Narrative

The project I propose is currently called, *1.8 Cents a Can*. While I am open to letting my ideas and processes grow naturally, this working title references the average amount of money you can make off of a used can in America. Immediately, three dominant themes are brought to the table: our country, its purse, and its trash. My plan is to create the four most common US coins (quarter, dime, nickel, penny) at a huge scale, using recycled and recovered trash. The quarter will obviously be the largest at a 3ft diameter, and the other coins will be built in proportion. Seemingly insignificant coins and their negligible total value, 41 cents, are juxtaposed here by their incredible size and the complexity of their fabrication. This comparison is meant to challenge the narratives around how we conceptualize wealth and profit, specifically bringing it under the lens of America's consumerism and wastefulness. How do material resources connect to our abstract idea of value? How much is our trash really worth? I hope to push the examination of these questions away from standard thinking that asks what materials are worth through how they serve us and push it more towards exploring what the consumption of materials costs us and what our impact looks like.

I'm asking MAS for about 1000 dollars to achieve this project. Most of the cost accounts for transport, cleaning, and assembly, because the sad fact is trash itself is everywhere; it is extremely easy and inexpensive to work with and source. I started working with found materials and trash back in high school because it was cheap and fun, but here at UVA, I've begun to refine this work into a more pointed study of how waste can transform and what it has the ability to say. It is especially relevant to me because it goes hand in hand with the knowledge and perspective I'm gaining from my environmental science studies.

I have developed a little system from my experience volunteering at trash drives and processing materials so that they're usable for art and not filthy. Currently, this includes going either by myself or with peers to our local or neighboring communities and patrolling for trash. I've learned that literally no matter where you are in the world if you look hard enough, you can find garbage. I collect trash that isn't too hazardous (aka wet, infested, etc) with gloved hands and trash claws and try to fill as many bags as I can. I then transport these in my own car, sometimes with the help of towels or double bagging to ensure sanitary safety. It can involve a lot of driving back and forth to destinations. When I get home, I use a soap that's tough on grease and has antibacterial qualities in order to clean it. This part can take a while, so for this project, I plan to buy a tarp and some brushes so I can turn it into more of a mass operation. This will be especially helpful because I want to work with smaller pieces of trash that can function as a kind of collage/pointillism technique. When I'm done with that stage, I'll clean and dry my tarp and store my pieces in organized containers. I'll prepare the tarp once again for different rounds of spray paint to coat all these little items. I will make a few demos and sketches to determine how much of each color I'll need to create the illusion of a painting or illustration from the small pieces, and then I'll eventually execute it with glue. Plywood circles will serve as a

uniform base I can build upon so each coin has the same starting point. If I could salvage this from a construction site rather than purchase it, I absolutely would.

I do have small concerns about the methods of displaying/hanging this scale of work since it is a new evolution for me to go this big. However, I'm sure I'll find guidance about this through my mentor, Federico; I've seen firsthand the creativity of how his shows are organized and the other new media work presented. I will also need to rely on the UVA woodshop space and guidance from staff who have experience with it. I have brief experience with basic carpentry and woodshop work, but I'll definitely need a quick refresher. I'm actually super excited about this because I think more wood and design/fabrication skills could elevate my art across the board. Ideally, I'd love to see the coins mounted on the wall all in a row. Something I'd be interested in is including some kind of audience interaction in the smaller details of the display; perhaps cards with a prompt or something. I know my thoughts on this will grow over the year. I just want to ensure the experience of viewing this work can be mentally fruitful instead of simply aesthetic.

Project Timeline

Coming Summer:

- Throughout the summer, run multiple trash clean-ups. Do so here in Charlottesville and surrounding communities, either alone or with peers.
- Process and clean waste as it is collected to ensure efficiency and sanitation.
- Fill storage bins with small, lightweight items suitable for painting and hanging later on.
- Finish this filling and collecting (better to have too much than too little) by late August and the beginning of the school year.
- *Hopefully have spied some salvageable wood to supplement or replace the base plywood.

Fall Semester:

- Purchase necessary plywood and cut into circles using resources available in the woodshop and the expertise of New Media staff. Take advantage of the lighter schedules that occur at the beginning of the year.
- Use salvaged wood to supplement the foundation, but keep the project from getting too heavy.
- Have multiple rough sketches and studies of collage/pointillism with the pattern of the coins to decide how much of each spray paint color is needed and what the designs will specifically look like (think: creating a color by number).
- Before it gets cold and rainy (about midterm of Fall semester), have multiple sessions of priming and painting the trash. Store in bins again, organized by color.

Winter:

- With wooden bases and collage pieces prepped, make steady progress through breaks and Spring mounting and gluing pieces. Watch the coins come to life!
- Refine until the image is clear and the colors are feeling resolved.
- At any time repeat material gathering processes for more trash.

Early Spring:

- Work with faculty to design a creative way to hang/display the pieces.
- Write the end of project research and be ready to present later in the Spring.

Project Budget

Budget Item Category 1

<i>Items related to the collection of trash and recycled materials as well as their cleaning and transportation</i>	
Expenditure Item: Nitrile Glove Pack (collection)	\$22.68 - Lowe's
Expenditure Item: Trash Bags (collection)	Estimated \$15 - Grocery Store
Expenditure Item: Trash Claw (collection)	\$45 - Lowe's
Expenditure Item: Soap (cleaning)	\$19.24 - Lowe's
Expenditure Item: Brushes (cleaning)	\$5.48 - Lowe's
Expenditure Item: Towels/Rags (cleaning & transportation)	Estimated \$20 - Thrift Store
Expenditure Item: Gas (transportation)	\$180 (~3 tanks)

Budget Item Category 2

<i>Items related to the preparation and fabrication of the final pieces</i>	
Expenditure Item: Tarp	\$9.98 - Lowe's
Expenditure Item: Storage Bins x 2 (set of 8)	\$112 - Walmart
Expenditure Item: Plywood Foundation	\$44.98 - Lowe's
Expenditure Item: Glue	\$21.98 - Lowe's
Expenditure Item: Spray Paint x 2 (primer)	\$10.74 - Amazon
Expenditure Item: Spray Paint x 2 (basic color pack)	\$190 - Amazon
Expenditure Item: Spray Paint x 2 (metallic pack)	\$199.98 - Amazon

Expenditure Item: Safety Mask	\$37.98 - Lowe's
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Budget Item Category 3

<i>Coverage for shipping costs</i>	
Expenditure Item: Mailing expenses	Estimated \$150
Total	\$1085.04

Budget Income, Funding, or Other Awards

<i>Income from private sources and funding requested from Miller Arts Scholars</i>	
Income item: MAS Rising Third Year Award	\$1085.04
Total	\$1085.04