



For my midterm project, I created a collaborative alphabet collage made up of letters from people in our class, community and artists. I asked each person to create the first letter of their name however they wanted drawing it, decorating it, writing it neatly or messily, or even making it more abstract. There were no rules, which was really important to me, because I didn't want there to be a "right" way to participate.

I chose to use the alphabet because it's something we all share. It's one of the most basic forms of communication, and we're taught from such a young age that there's a correct way to write and present it. But when everyone created their own letter, they all came out completely different. Some were bold and colorful, some were simple, some went outside the lines and they are layered in the frame. This difference became the whole point of the project.

I also intentionally made this a collage, which is an art form about bringing together separate pieces that don't necessarily match, but still create something whole. It allows for contrast, layering and individuality without forcing everything to look the same. I think that connects deeply to disability, especially the idea that not everything has to be uniform or "fixed" to have meaning or importance. The individuality of each letter is what gives the final piece its strength. Through this project, I wanted to explore how disability challenges the idea that communication has to look one specific or standardized way to be valid or appreciated and listened too. We're so used to associating "good" communication with neatness, clarity, and legibility but that doesn't account for the many ways people actually express themselves. Not everyone communicates in the same way and that doesn't make their communication any less real important or meaningful.

When all the letters come together, they are an alphabet, even though none of them look the same or in the "correct" order. To me, that reflects interdependence and shared meaning.

Communication isn't something we do perfectly on our own. Communication is something we build together and across our own differences. Instead of seeing variation as a problem or incorrect, I hope my collage highlights it as something that expands what communication can look like. When you step back, these differences are actually what make communication more human, more creative and more inclusive.