**Object Analysis Reflection**

This piece that I found within Bedford Hall is called “Helping Ducks,” and it was created by James Conner. It is a unique kind of sculpture made out of rubber ducks, wood dowels, and crochet hooks. Its colors are very eye-catching; vibrant, bright yellow dominates the piece with little specks of orange from the ducks’ bills. The scale is accurate to that of what it is trying to resemble, which allows the message to be much clearer when it reflects reality. However, there is much more to this piece than just a bunch of rubber ducks on a stick.

I won’t lie, when I first saw the piece, I giggled at all the rubber ducks. I didn’t get the bigger picture until I read the artist’s statement. In it, the artist mentions that he has a toddler cousin with cerebral palsy. Once I read that, I could perfectly see that theme throughout the piece. The piece is in the shape of child forearm crutches. James stated that he used rubber ducks due to his cousin’s love of “The Rubber Ducky Song” from Sesame Street. I myself adored “The Rubber Duck Song” as a child, and my mother and I would always sing it together, so that was a nice personal connection I had with the piece.

After my friend read the description of the piece, she thought it was very sad. However, even though the subject matter wasn’t the most uplifting, I didn’t get very many sad vibes from it. With the lively colors and youthful images, I interpreted it as staying optimistic in the face of great obstacles. The title “Helping Ducks” sounds so innocent and sweet. The child is getting help—maybe not physical help, but emotional help—from what he loves, which is these rubber ducks. He does not allow his condition make him live in a depressive state; he instead focuses on what he loves and remains positive.

The final theme behind this piece was the emptiness between the crutches. There is no child figure that the crutches are supporting, and there’s a reason for that. In the statement, James says that the lack of a child represents how, when people who are not disabled see someone with some sort of physical aid like crutches, they only see the object of aid and not the person who is using it. That was another powerful message that I didn’t even consider first glance, but it is most certainly an important one that more people that need to realize. I thought the contrast between the piece’s appearance and its actual meanings was so powerful, and it was the main reason why I chose to cover this piece.

This piece, while at first glance may seem simple and goofy, is loaded with multiple powerful themes that stuck with me afterwards. It affected me emotionally and opened my eyes to issues that I don’t often consider. And yet, with all these heavy and negative-sounding themes, I never felt sad looking at it. I instead felt uplifted and optimistic. No matter what obstacles you may overcome, you can’t let it kill your happy vibes. Just stick with what makes you happy, like your *rubber duckie, cute and yellow and chubby. Rub-a-dub-dubby!*



