Personal Interpretations of the American Dream after viewing works by Edgar Endress

Visit the Duke Hall Gallery of Fine Art exhibition of Edgar Endress and look at his piece, “The Shrine of the American Dream.” Choose an invention out of these images that you relate to or find interesting and would like to alter to fit a specific unmet need in your home or community. Your invention may document your interpretation of the “American Dream.” After spending time in the gallery, you will sketch your invention thinking about its context (what it will do, where, for whom?). Also, consider mechanics/objects/tools that you are familiar with while trying to meaningfully abstract or manipulate the objects to become your invention.

Questions while viewing “The Shrine of the American Dream:”

- What needs might this invention be fulfilling?
- What population might this be meant for?
- What values does this express about a specific community?
- What differences in gendered inventions do you notice?
- How do you think that the values of a culture demonstrated through desired inventions, relates to the desire to own a house?
- Is this also a gendered concept, why or how so?
- What can you tell about the culture that Edgar is referencing through the inventions that were patented in the past?
- What does it mean to you that the wood is from houses that were abandoned and the inventions were never realized?
- What connection do you perceive to exist between the nature of the inventions and the concept of home ownership?

Use art materials to sketch/paint/collage an image of an invention that would satisfy a need in your community. You may be inspired by one of the artist’s images and improve upon the original design or create an entirely new invention. Think about what the “American Dream” means to you and how that may relate to your invention.

Questions for making:

- What needs does your invention fulfill?
- How do you or your community relate to the invention that you chose?
- Are the values you are expressing of your community positive or negative? Gendered/non-gendered? How so?
- What does the “American Dream” mean to you?
- How does your invention relate to your idea of the “American Dream?”