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Creatively Making Through Failure

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Abstract

This work of art is a 3D Map of Rome, Italy that uses laser cutting and 3D printing techniques to create. The project and technique is explained by the artist and author Spencer Ashnault.

Keywords

3D Map, Colosseum, Laser-cut Project, Student Artwork

Disciplines

Art and Design | Other Engineering

Comments

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Creatively Making Through Failure

Spencer Ashnault, FYS 158-4, Creativity, Making, & Failure | Gettysburg College, PA

Introduction

The Innovation and Creativity Lab (ICL) is located in the West Building and is open to all students through all hours of the day. Within the ICL there are many pieces of equipment that create unique works of art mostly 3D art. The versatility of the ICL is its strength as students' ideas come to life!

From 3D Printers, Laser Cutters, CNC Machine, Vinyl Cutter, and more, paired together these machines allow for exploration as new skills develop.

Brainstorming

Over the course of the semester, I made each project about highlighting the memories in my life. These projects included a polaroid frame to store all the new memories I was making at college,

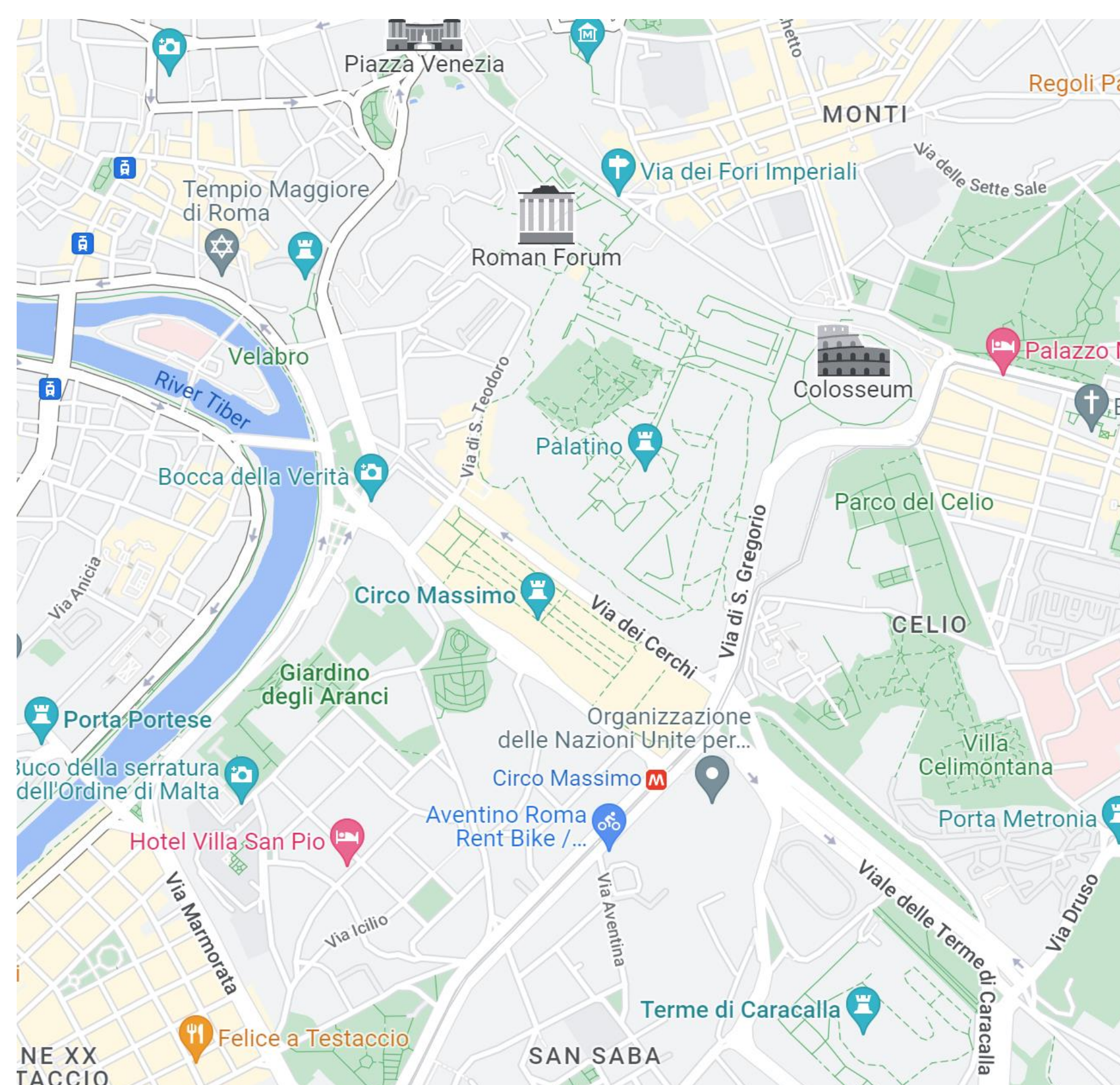
In brainstorming for this idea, I knew I wanted to utilize two pieces of equipment into making this project. Immediately the laser cutter was my first choice to use as I always appreciated its versatility.

I then thought about what defines me as a person, as this would be my final project for the course. This brought me to the idea of creating a piece that resembles my heritage and family origin. From here an idea of a 3D map was born as now I began researching certain locations.

First, I wanted to gift my grandfather who was born in Sicily a 3D map of his hometown. Although, this would be very sentimental, I wanted a more intricate, iconic map. So, Rome being the capital of Italy became the location I chose. Understanding the large size of Rome, I wanted to highlight a certain monument that represented the heart of the city. In this creative choice, I was able to maintain the street names and small details of the area that surrounds the Colosseum.

In the creative process, I learned the best way to figure out an idea is to identify what the purpose of the project is. Are you in need of something? What are your interests? Is there another work that inspired you recently?

These sorts of questions have allowed me to continue the creative process. Sketching and research online can also be useful tools in brainstorming!



Methods

In order to laser cut a 3D map I would need to find an accurate map. The map needed to be barebones as the image would be directly used. To do this, I first went to Google Earth and Google Maps, but a good overhead view was not possible. From there, I began searching other navigation applications, where Waze offered the most barebones map away from all icons and unnecessary noise.

After taking a screenshot of the barebones map, I was able to import it into Retina Engrave (RE), the software that is used to send images to the laser cutter.

On the same program RE, I first printed a map that would only sketch into the wood, in order to produce the first layer of the map (base layer).

Next, I vectorized the same map using RE, and lowered the speed of the laser to ensure it would cut through the land in between the roads and river.

Once both were printed, I stacked them on top of each other to give a layered effect.

Finally, I imported a Colosseum file into the 3D Printer which began to build the model from ground up, which I finished the project. By attaching to the top layer of the map, where it stands in real life to keep accuracy.



Reflection

This project was a success as I was able to combine my skills and knowledge within the ICL to create a work of art that represented my heritage.

I also learned that when failure occurs, it is okay, and asking for feedback or help can be useful in creating another creative solution.

Conclusions

For the future of my college career, it is important to remember that the first iteration is not the final iteration. This means that the first iteration of a project, paper, or other work does not need to be perfect on the first go. Editing is an important part of the process to succeed.

□ Essentially: "If at first you don't succeed try and try again" – Zen Cho

Recognizing that everyone fails is important to understanding that failing is part of the process.

Failure allows for creativity, as you can find new solutions to old problems. Innovation occurs this way.

Tools and Materials

- This project required the use of the FSL Muse 3D CO2 Laser, or the Laser Cutter as well as the Ender CR10s 5, the 3D Printer.
- The map is built out of wood, and the Colosseum is built out of wood colored plastic filament.
- Wood glue is used to bind each layer of the map as well as the Colosseum to the map.

