

In my artwork, *One in Two Worlds*, I explored the concept of subjective human perception, focusing on how emotions – particularly stress caused by academic workload – alters an individual’s perception of reality. Working through both a contemporary and personal context, my artwork communicates the permeating nature of stress within everyday life. According to a recent medical study in 2022, it was recorded that 87% of college students identified education as their primary source of stress (Barbayannis, et al., 2022). With the prevalence of this issue in contemporary society, as well as my own personal understanding of the affect academic stress can have on an individual, I wanted to explore through *One in Two Worlds* how stress can permeate an individual’s perception of life. In the artwork, I used a defective laptop donated to my school’s art department and painted over its screen to depict a student holding her head in her hands. By recontextualising the image of the student with the laptop, viewers are invited to understand the association between the student’s stress and schoolwork, communicating that an individual can become defined and almost a product of their own stress. This is further enhanced by the papier mâché of assessment papers displayed across the frame of the laptop. By creating an overwhelming and exaggerated display of the assessment materials, the artwork encourages viewers to recognise the fixation associated with academic stress. It highlights how an individual’s perception of a task can become distorted, making it appear more severe than it would be from an objective point of view. The way in which the artwork is composed creates the setting of a workplace, where I have incorporated imagery such as a bowl of spaghetti and a spilt water bottle. In the bowl of spaghetti, I used clay and formed it into the shape of spaghetti strands and meatballs and then painted it. From a vertical view, the audience can see the words ‘3 days’ camouflaged into the form of the spaghetti, symbolising the fixation on due dates frequently associated with academic stress. By integrating the words into the spaghetti, the viewer is invited to understand the permeating nature of stress, where even in unrelated aspects of life, this stress can alter an individual’s perception. This is further enhanced by the imagery of the water bottle ‘spilling’, where the puddle of water created through resin depicts a task sheet. The spilling of the water bottle symbolises the notion of ‘reaching a tipping point’, illustrating how a person’s stress can result in a point of breakdown. As well as this, the incorporation of the task sheet in the water puddle reinforces the idea that stress can permeate an individual’s perception of everyday life.

## References

Barbayannis, G., Bandari, M., Zheng, X., Baquerizo, H., W.Pecor, K., & Ming, X. (2022, 5 23). *Academic Stress and Mental Well-Being in College Students: Correlations, Affected Groups, and COVID-19*. Retrieved from frontiers: <https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/psychology/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.886344/full#B47>