

I have always been drawn to dioramas, large and small, for the unique power of three-dimensional storytelling. There is a specific magic to a world enclosed in glass—frozen in time yet pulsing with its own internal logic.

When I was asked to contribute to this project co-sponsored by the **Arts Council of Princeton** and the **Cotsen Children's Library**, I saw it as a challenge to interpret my own inner vision of what a library has always meant to me: magic, a pinch of glitter, and fairy lights. This piece is the physical manifestation of that inner picture.

To me, a library is not just a building or a room; it is a living ecosystem. I believe that books open a mind to infinite possibilities not known before—possibilities that lead the reader down paths they never expected to travel. In this piece, the "Library" is being reclaimed by the natural world. The **preserved moss, evergreen pieces, and tree nuts** represent the persistent growth of ideas, while the **regal beaded upholstered easy chair, wire trees sprinkled with glitter**, and **bookshelf with glitter book covers** serve as magical artifacts of the stories that have taken root in me and here.

By combining these organic materials with a structured architectural space, I hope you are drawn into this library as a sanctuary where the boundaries between reality and folklore dissolve. It is a place where we don't just read stories; we inhabit them.

Hope VanCleaf

Multi-Media Artist | Founder of Creative Fingerprint

Hope VanCleaf is a Princeton-based multi-media artist and the founder of **Creative Fingerprint**, an organization dedicated to using art as a catalyst for personal growth, team building, and community engagement. Throughout her twenty-year tenure in the Princeton community, she has been a staunch advocate for making art accessible to all, fostering transformative experiences that leave a lasting, positive "fingerprint" on the lives of participants.

A Legacy of Community Engagement

Hope's career is defined by a deep commitment to the institutions that anchor Princeton's cultural life. At the **Princeton University Art Museum (PUAM)**, she served as a primary artist for the *Art for Families* program. In this role, she designed weekly projects for children ages 5–10, meticulously aligning her hands-on workshops with docent-led talks to bridge the gap between academic observation and creative expression.

She has taught *Drawing for Everyone* at the **Arts Council of Princeton** for children ages 5–10 and currently serves as the instructor for their **Adapted Arts** program. Most recently, she submitted a diorama for an exhibition co-sponsored by the Arts Council and the **Cotsen**

Children's Library titled "*The Library of Infinite Possibilities*," created as a reflection of her current life story.

Art, Wellness, and Advocacy

Her work frequently focuses on the vital intersection of art and wellness. For the **YWCA Princeton's Breast Cancer Resource Center (BCRC)**, she designed and facilitated the *Healing Through Creativity* workshop. This eight-week session provided a safe haven for women in all stages of their breast cancer journey, creating a space to build resilient friendships while completing two distinct creative projects. Demonstrating the program's adaptability, she successfully tweaked this wellness workshop for university students during **Princeton's Inaugural Wintersession in 2021**.

Photography & Digital Storytelling

During her fifteen-years at **Princeton University's Lewis Center for the Arts**, Hope expanded her photographic skills using digital photography to document classes and events leading to commissions across campus. Following her first assignment for the **Office of Communications' TellUsTigers** series with artist **Mario Moore**, she completed three additional assignments, each capturing the human narrative through the lens.

Since 2009 Hope has developed a photography series using her iPhone to capture intricate reflections through glass in New York City. This series has become a cornerstone of her creative process, inspiring her to weave fantastical stories around the captured images, blending the boundaries between the real and the imagined.

The Life of Infinite Possibilities

Retiring from the university in 2022 led to an exciting new chapter of infinite possibilities. Hope currently serves as the **Artist-in-Residence** and board member for the **Friends of Herrontown Woods (FOHW)**. In this capacity, she leads **Hope's Community Collage Project**, where community members create 6x6 canvas tiles that bond neighbors together while contributing to the restoration of the historic **Veblen House**. She has facilitated workshops for this project at the **Princeton Public Library**, and her **Adapted Arts** class expanding the reach of the collage, ensuring every voice in the community is represented.