

Worksheet: Investigating Symbols

"This is the gas mask I wore in the '91 Gulf War, thinking that the air was poisoned, and now it's a toy for ages 6 and up. It's kind of surreal to see how military culture is translated into civilian culture."

- Ehren Tool

Explore how military culture "translates," as Ehren Tool says, into civilian culture. Then you will choose the imagery and objects you would like to depict in your cup design.

•	List the military and war toys that you and/or your friends or siblings played with. What toys represent
	other ways of serving (for example, as ambulance drivers and other first responders)?

• List movies and television shows that feature wars and battles, and situations at the "front lines" against other kinds of enemies (for example, COVID-19 pandemic).

• List video games with war and military themes, as well as hospital heroes and first responders.





Worksheet: Investigating Symbols (continued)

Note how Ehren Tool translates the imagery back again by using it on his cups. The toy gas mask becomes an image on a cup about war. How can you use some of these images in your own creation? What meaning will be expressed when you use them?
Begin sketching ideas for your cup. Think about imagery, symbols, and potential decorations that you want to use. Do you wish to use any words or phrases? Consider how you will use paint or glaze, if working with clay, or collaged images, markers, and paint, if working with a paper cup.
What do you want your design to communicate? How will you do that? After sketching, ask classmates how they "read" your design. Does their reading match your intention?

