

## Prompt A

In my academic work, I've studied artistic subjects, such as art history, anthropology, and world history. In addition, I've put these studies into practice through extensive life drawing courses, color theory, landscape and figurative painting, ceramics, textile work, as well as mixed media. Through my varied background in art, I can create assignments and activities that teach a wide variety of skills and techniques, as well as providing historical background to art assignments. For example, in a ceramics course, when teaching students how the intended purpose of a vessel influenced its shape and design, as well as the location and time of the culture that created it. In my experience creating art activities for groups of children, I tailor the assignments to fit what the children would be most interested in, as well as being the most successful, by taking into consideration their motor skills and personal interests.

However, an aspect that I need to improve upon is finding the balance between art activities being educational and creative. It's easy to let the assignment to be "just for fun", and while the act of creating is still important, the educational aspects of the activities explains the "how, why, where, and who" that makes art important and impactful. I believe that this balance will vary with the group of students that are being taught, such as younger students being instructed with more focus on technique, skill, and creativity, rather than historical background. As I'm intending to teach middle schoolers, I plan to implement more focus on art history and technical skill. Namely, introducing the concept of perspective, color theory, and the skill of observation: how to more accurately translate what we see with our eyes, to what we are drawing on paper. With these lessons, for example, teaching students how in the Early Renaissance, artists such as Giotto in his painting "Jesus Before the Caif" were monumental representations of perspective in art, that made way for Renaissance artists such as Raphael to master perspective in paintings such as "School of Athens". Through this structure, I hope to prepare students to be well-rounded in their artistic studies and passions moving forward.

## Prompt B

Growing up in Los Angeles, I was exposed to a vast plethora of art and culture, as my father is from Italy, my mother being Mexican-German, and my god-family being Iranian. Being able to visit family in Italy and Germany and having the opportunity to see sights such as the Duomo di Milano, Michelangelo's David, and the Heidelberg Palace no doubt had an impact on me growing up, and instilled upon me the impact of seeing art at a young age, understanding its cultural impact and significance, and of course being enchanted by their beauty and brilliance. Even just in my immediate surroundings in my youth, art was everywhere, in the 1920s art deco buildings, the graffiti decorating the freeway barriers and interchanges, to the Catholic votive candles being sold at almost every corner store.

However, my experiences and studies of art have largely focused on Abrahamic religions and the Western world. This is unfortunately a massive flaw in art education in the United States, that is rooted in racial prejudice and a critical misunderstanding of Non-western cultures and civilizations. In my studies at Evergreen, I sought out classes that focused on cultures that I hadn't had the opportunity to study before, such as Coast Salish people, the Sámi people of Sápmi, and courses focusing on personal gynecological research where I was able to research indigenous Sardegnans and Mimbrenos.

In a classroom setting, I believe it's important to represent the world as accurately as possible, teaching students about art from as many cultures from varying times and places, without favoring specific cultures. However, I know that in a classroom you simply cannot just teach your students whatever you please. Your lesson plans need to be approved, and to meet the guidelines and expectations that have been set. As I've mentioned, the structure of art education in the United States heavily favors Western art from the Renaissance to the Modern art movements. As a teacher, I seek to advocate for more representation, and I plan to learn how to successfully do so with the MiT program at Evergreen.

## Prompt C

In the past year, I've had the opportunity to work and volunteer with three different groups, one being SKIPP, a free playground and meal program by the city of Olympia, the Puget Sound Estuarium, a local marine life center with a focus on hands on experiences, and Y-Care, a before and after school program at most local elementary schools. The most impactful for me personally has been working in Y-Care, where amongst other responsibilities, I have the opportunity to plan and lead art projects with children from grades K-5. Working with at-risk children, I've noticed many of them have not had much experience with art, especially in activities where they are able to express themselves, rather than just follow strict directions where they create something that is nearly identical to all their peers.

For example, one memorable moment for me was when two children in my care that hadn't shown prior interest in participating in art activities, became interested once I encouraged them to have fun with their paintings, doing whatever they wanted, even if it was just mixing colors on a page, and getting a little messy! I was happy to see them find joy in participating in something they previously found unenjoyable, reinforcing that while art can be educational, it is about expressing yourself and having fun as well. I also love participating in the art activities I lead alongside the children, creating an environment where I am making art alongside them, encouraging them to experiment and have fun. Seeing my passion affect the children and seeing their skills improve with each project, in turn increasing their confidence in their abilities.

This has informed my decision to teach middle schoolers, as I believe that art is an important tool to be able to explore and express yourself, as well as expand your horizons. In my personal experience, art is a vessel for both positive and negative emotions, and can help one find joy and comfort in what may be difficult times.

## Prompt D

As I previously mentioned, art education in the United States is Euro-centric, meaning that it focuses primarily (and sometimes exclusively) on European art. Of course, students and teachers alike are both aware that every human civilization has created art, and yet, Europe is always the focus. While the reason for this could be debated, one important factor in my opinion, is that the modern education system focuses and prioritizes written history rather than oral history, and promotes written history as more credible (even if proven otherwise), whereas many non-Western cultures have favored oral history. Because of this, Western art is prioritized, as it is presented to be the most studied and researched, regardless of what may actually be true.

In addition, non-Western art is still depicted and described from a Eurocentric perspective, rather than from the perspective of the culture from which it was created. This contributes to the separation and distinction between Western art and “the other”, being depicted as exotic artifacts rather than art. As an educator, it’s important to be aware that education material can be biased, outdated, misleading, and even incorrect. This reflects on the entire educational system, which is and of itself, biased and unequal. While of course education is wonderful, as it is a social structure, it has all the failures of the society of which it serves.

For example, the quality of instruction in schools in impoverished communities, is worse than of schools in more wealthier areas, which continues the cycle of poverty, and does not promote breaking the pattern. Because of this, schools serving marginalized communities have less funds, which translates to less materials for children in class, which for example, often leads to the cutting of arts programs as they are resource intensive. This contributes to the cycle of children having access to a well-rounded education, perpetrating the inequality gap.

While being aware of the issue is the first step, communicating with your district and advocating for better school policies and funding in one's community is monumentally important. I am eager to learn in Evergreen's MiT program what I can do on a personal level to advocate for equal education, as well as how to encourage one's community to make changes on a federal level.