

Art and Design Personal Statement

Although I pursued an academic rather than creative path in school, I have always been fascinated by the patterns that occur in art, architecture and the natural world, and drawing and painting have heightened my appreciation of them. Creating art, whether it is realistic or abstract, has helped me to see the world more clearly.

In October 2007 I began studying Classics and Modern Languages at Oxford University, but I had to leave in my first term as the problems my dyspraxia caused me were more severe than anticipated and I struggled to cope with day-to-day living and developed mental health problems. Studying this course would give me an opportunity to get back into Higher Education and to learn more about something which has always interested me.

Although I have no formal qualifications in art, I have kept up my passion for it outside the curriculum. My favourite material to work with is charcoal, as I find it helps me to portray texture better than any other material, although I also enjoy working with paints, pencil, collage and I have recently begun to develop an interest in tapestry and relish the opportunity to explore new media which this course would offer me. I have recently been doing a life-drawing project on wood, which stems from my interest in the forms and textures in nature.

I have also been inspired by the art I have seen as part of my study of other subjects. On a school trip to Spain, I visited various museums and was particularly moved by Picasso's Guernica at the Reina Sofia Museum and I was fascinated by Hieronymus Bosch's Garden of Earthly delights which I saw at the Prado. At the Prado, I was also privileged to see some of the works of El Greco, which I found deeply moving.

As a practising Christian, the art of the spiritual matters particularly to me, and I want to learn more about both Christian art and the iconography and architecture of other major world religions. Another thing which left a deep impression upon me when I visited Spain was the Moorish architecture I saw in Toledo. I am also interested in the psychology behind art and how people are empowered by artistic self-expression. For this reason, I am a supporter of the work of The Autism Acceptance Project, an organisation which showcases the artwork of autistic adults.

In my spare time, I have undertaken a variety of voluntary work. I helped with my school's Youth SVP scheme, which organised clubs to help local primary school with reading. I also was a Youth Leader at Edmund Rice Camp, a week-long summer play scheme for children aged between seven and eleven.

This year, I have worked at The Croft Nursery School in Newcastle-under-Lyme with children aged three to four. I have enjoyed this immensely and feel it has improved my ability to collaborate with others. Alongside this, my love of the countryside has led me to complete the Duke of Edinburgh's award (bronze) and have participated in Student Cross, a 125-mile hike from Oxford to Walsingham.

Learning about other cultures, both those of the past and of the present, is also a hobby of mine. For this reason I have always been engrossed by the study of languages and I am currently learning ancient Greek. I also enjoy reading a variety of literature and creative writing (both fiction and non-fiction) and have had several current events articles published online.

My curiosity about language, literature and culture sets my enthusiasm for art in a broader context and is a source of inspiration.