

Final Reflection on My 2014 Summer Enrichment Immersion in Art at Rhode Island School of Design

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Honestly, I don't even know where to start with this reflection. I learned, experienced, and gained so much from the Rhode Island School of Design's (RISD's) Pre-College Program. I feel like I could write pages and pages about what happened to me while at RISD. The kinds of things I participated in and the proficiency that involvement allowed me to add to my skill set is incomparable.

Classes and Competencies

The most important parts of the RISD Pre-College Program were, of course, the instructors and classes. Every Monday and Wednesday, I walked across the river (the Providence River, which divides the city in two) to my jewelry class. My instructor, Noam Elyashiv, has been involved with the school as a teacher for more than 25 years. (It's imperative to note that many of the teachers in the program are actual, full-time professors and instructors at RISD.) In addition, a current RISD student accompanied every single instructor as an assistant. The experiences of these teaching assistants varied greatly; however, all were extremely knowledgeable about the area in which they assisted. The teaching assistant for my jewelry class was a second-year graduate student named Monica Choi.

Together, the Professor Elyashiv and Ms. Choi would work with the students through the design process from start to finish. They encouraged me to pay attention to the small details of a piece of jewelry, rather than just concentrating on the piece as a whole. As a result, I created pieces that took longer and were much better thought out than my previous works. This is a lesson I will take with me into all of my jewelry-making projects.

On Tuesdays, I had a design foundations class with Amanda Lebel. Her class was incredibly valuable. Through six projects, one due each week, I developed a greater understanding of the basics of design and how they can be applied to both 2D and 3D art projects. This class was most definitely the backbone of the program.

On Thursdays, I had a class entitled Critical Studies in Art, which briefly covered art history, but which more often focused on the basics of defining art and being able to consider art critically. This course was very different from my other three courses because it encouraged a free-moving dialogue. If the discussion for the day began to move away from its starting point, the teacher, Rebecca Leuchak, was happy to allow it to do so as long as something meaningful was being discussed.

On Fridays, I attended a drawing foundations class taught by Robin Wiseman. His class completely changed the way I draw and think about rendering objects. He emphasized

the presence of light and the way it can be manipulated to cause a drawing to appear even more realistic and interesting.

Through these four classes, I developed many skills. They include: an enhanced ability to create jewelry, a more developed design background, a basic knowledge of art history, an understanding of how to talk about art, and a more established knowledge of 2D drawing and painting.

Extra-circular Activities and Great Friendships

The program also offers students approximately 50 activities outside of the classroom. These were evenly distributed throughout the program and ranged from ping pong tournaments to weekend trips to the beach or art museums in nearby cities. One of the very first ones that took place was a trip to Newport Beach.

This was a very important excursion for me because it was the trip on which I made the group of friends with whom I would spend most of my time during the program. We all became very close, and they were probably my favorite part of being at RISD. We were able to work together, eat together, and help each other learn and advance as artists. Part of the reason we were able to become such good friends is because we were all fascinated by similar things, but, at the same time, our personalities were exceedingly diverse. We all have kept in touch so far and hopefully will continue to do so.

Personal Growth and Reflections on Future Plans

On a personal level, the program helped me develop immensely on a personal level. Being away from my family for six weeks was the longest I'd ever been on my own. It was a nice way to "test drive" the college lifestyle. I did my own grocery shopping, cleaning, and various other tasks that I almost always have help with at home. It also allowed my family to better understand the types of preparations we will need to take care of before I go to college. Additionally, because of the massive amounts of work that had to be taken care of outside of class, I developed much more advanced time-management abilities. All of these skills have helped me to better myself before I live on my own.

All in all, it was one of the best summers of my life and one that I'm positive I won't soon forget. I can see what my potential is and what I can become, and, as a result, I have a much more thoughtful and reasonable idea about what I want to do after high school.

For all of this I have the Garwin Family Foundation to thank. I couldn't have done any of it without you all. Thank you.