

Final Reflections on My 2020 Summer Enrichment Experience
at the SAIC Pre-College Program

By: Sophie White

I'd like to thank the Garwin Family Foundation for their donation towards my summer education experience.

This summer I took two courses with the School of the Art Institute of Chicago's (SAIC) Pre-College program. SAIC had a well-established history with online learning, and the online options with the pre-college program allowed me the opportunity to add an additional class. My courses were Animation and Video Projects (3 weeks) and Advanced Painting and Drawing (6 weeks). Taking these courses helped me experience many aspects of attending an Art School, including creating works and participating in the critique process. I had the added advantage of having a schedule and something to do the whole summer, while also becoming accustomed to online education, which has been an advantage this fall.

My first course was called Animation and Video Projects. I took this course because I want to expand my knowledge of the art world and learn a new skill. My weeks included making videos of life in COVID and learning techniques to create some simple animations. One of the things Garwin funds helped purchase was a light board that can be used in a variety of art projects, but was particularly useful for hand drawn animation. Having the Animation and Video Projects course on applications and resumes will be helpful.

My second course was Advanced Painting and Drawing. I feel that my specialty in art is and always has been watercolor, but I soon grew to like the convenience of painting with acrylics in my new class. I learned how to stretch my own canvas and even got to know a little bit about the history of art and painting. We were taught how to portray motion and shape in painting and use everyday objects to our advantage. For example, “Bubble Wrap” became useful for me for one week when I created a painting larger than myself using recyclable materials, and another week I used straws as a dispersal device for ink onto a piece of canvas. Garwin’s assistance with art supplies meant that I was able to explore a variety of techniques, and have tools that I will continue to use. In my final project, I chose to make representations of some of the Wonders of the World. The Taj Mahal is the only one of these wonders that I have visited in person, and since it may be some time before I am able to travel to the others, I let my art “take me” to them.

One of the best parts of my experience was simply spending so much time around other aspiring artists. We were a very interesting and diverse group. That was true of our personalities and artistic styles. Yet we bonded quickly, and in a way I haven’t in many other places. Overall, my experience was a good one. I was able to create and express myself, get a sense of the art school process, make some new friends, add works that improve my portfolio, and keep myself busy while staying inside all day.