

Final Reflections on My Summer 2021 Experience at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts

By Alexander Brown

Fortunately for me, I was able to make my trip to the east to study for the arts! I am still so grateful for the opportunity and feel so lucky that I was able to make it in times like these!

This experience will stay with me forever. Although I still have many questions, spending my time away from home surrounded by other artists in a school has taught me many things and has given me more direction. My goals have been pushed farther and I have seen more into my own art than ever before.

The higher level education has allowed me to see how much there is out there! Not to mention being in a brand new city with so many new things to offer. Being away and on my own—for the first real time— allowed me to get a better understanding of the scope this world has to offer.

I learned more than expected this summer—about art, people, and places. We all need to find our space. The place where we can forget about everything else, slow down, and express our true self. Some people have many. They could travel all around the globe and find a way into every scene, others are rooted to a place and cannot stand to be away, and some are out searching, longing for a home. You can feel a space out, it hits you like a train or slowly seeps in, but it always finds a way to reach you. You bring home a part of that feeling with you, and share it with the people you meet along the way.

While studying this summer I met an instructor who told me to hang a painting on the wall and leave it. I was instructed to look at it everyday and try to find something new each time. At first you will only see the surface layer, or what you thought was there. As time goes by and you start to notice the color, the shapes, and the lines. Months have passed and those shapes, lines, and colors start to relate to one another, making connections left and right. You start to see unconscious strokes, an image of the painter appears. The artist has left a part of them behind on the canvas, and only after prolonged observation this becomes apparent. This new understanding has changed the way I look at all art, and has spilled into the rest of my life.

And lastly, I returned home and realized that the soul purpose of art is to learn and connect. Just like everything else, we are all here to express ourselves and build off of each other to create new things. Lots of people forget about what they truly need and how short our time really is. The ones who go for it, and forget everything else, are the ones who learn and grow. From this point on I have decided to follow whichever path seems fit, regardless of the uncertainty of life, in hope of finding something more.