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Class of 2025

Creating Pottery to Explore Beauty, Service, and Gift-giving

Executive summary:

I am seeking \$3,000 to buy materials, training, and equipment to create an exhibition of hand-painted pottery vessels. This multi-piece exhibit will be entitled “Cup Overflowing.” As I create this project, I will gain skills through personal experimentation, an 8-week pottery class, and guidance from my faculty mentor Conrad Cheung. Alongside creating my pieces, I will explore how pottery has historically been used to reflect diverse expressions of beauty while serving and inspiring others. In my participation in the arts at UVA, I have tried to connect art with service and gift-giving. This is a connection I want to strengthen by creating and studying functional and beautiful pottery. The Miller Arts Award will support my supplementary arts education, skill-building, and creative research. It will propel me on my journey as an artist, citizen, and friend.

Project Overview:

As I passed clay back and forth with the two elementary school girls I was mentoring, I recognized the uniqueness of this medium. The gray mud took on different forms as we gently molded it with our hands. We joked and laughed until we had jointly crafted a simple but beautiful pot. When these young girls saw the beauty their hands could make, their self-esteem grew. This pottery piece served as a source of pride. And it also had a practical use. The pot was a true gift.

I have always been intrigued by art that is both visually appealing and can benefit others. This past year, I made many art pieces in a variety of mediums to give as gifts to the people around me. I have gifted paintings, drawings, photography, clothing, wood-burnings, and even a personalized, laser-cut puzzle. As a multimedia artist, I push myself to work with new materials. I keep finding myself gravitating toward clay. In the summer of 2022, my sole birthday wish was to take a pottery class. As my hands worked the clay, I became intrigued yet again by how pottery can be both usable, artful, and a means to serve others. I want to spend a year exploring the overlap of pottery, service, and gift-giving.

My proposal is to embark on a year-long journey (April 2024-April 2025) learning to create and fully appreciate pottery that is both beautiful and functional. I will end the year having created a collection of vessels to give away as gifts. As I work on this project, I will research the history behind pottery in different cultures and historical periods to better understand the context and significance others have tied to beauty, service, and gifts. I expect that in the research portion

of my project, my understanding of these broad cultural concepts, including service, gift-giving, and beauty, will broaden, deepen, and inform my final collection of vessels.

The Miller Arts Award will give me the clay, glazes, tools, wheel, and kiln needed to create my finished one-of-a-kind vessels. I will gain the skills needed to create these pieces through a summer pottery class, personal experimentation, research, and guidance from my faculty mentor Conrad Cheung. Professor Cheung is UVA's sculpture professor and has graciously agreed to guide me as I immerse myself in the world of pottery. Professor Cheung was trained originally as a professional potter, and their knowledge of the medium makes them a skilled and valuable mentor.

The Miller Arts Award is necessary for me to create my series of vessels. While UVA offers an Introduction to Sculpture class, which I plan to take next Fall, the course only briefly covers ceramic sculpture. It does not cover the genre to the extent I need for my project. Ceramic sculpture is also different from functional pottery. Pottery, and the history of utilitarian vessels, is not taught at UVA. Additionally, according to the Studio Art DUP Akemi Ohira, the new Sculpture instructor may change the curriculum and possibly eliminate the ceramics portion. For these reasons, I am seeking funding to take a wheel-throwing and hand-building pottery class over the summer so I can gain substantial pottery training. Taking this class over the summer will also prepare me as I experiment on my own. The summer is a valuable time for me to work with different forms, glazes, and techniques. I want to use that time to develop momentum and prepare myself for when I meet with my mentor in the Fall.

To complete this project, I will need a small kiln and wheel to form and fire my pieces. Prof. Akemi Ohira informed me I will not be able to use UVA's kiln and wheel in the Fall. Therefore, I must buy my own. Moreover, while I will present my pottery creations in April of 2025, I intend to create pottery well beyond the timeline of this project. Owning a wheel and kiln will help me continue serving others through ceramic gift-giving long after this project is over.

If I receive funding for the resources listed in my budget, I am confident I can successfully deliver on this project. My 3.98 GPA is a testament to my strong work ethic, ability to manage my time well, and dedication to excellence. To help guide me as I work, I have outlined a timeline below. Not only will this timeline help me stay on track for a successful exhibition at the Annual Awards Outcome Event of April 2025, but I will also meet regularly with Professor Cheung to ensure I am making steady progress.

Spring 2024

- Begin researching and reading about the history of pottery
- Note techniques and forms to incorporate into my final project
- Order supplies and register for summer class

Summer 2024

- Attend weekly wheel-throwing and hand-building class to gain skills
- Use wheel to practice making a variety of clay forms
- Use kiln to experiment with different firing and glazing techniques

- Gain comfort with wheel and kiln through practice, practice, practice

Fall 2024

- Meet with mentor to receive additional pottery training
- Continue building experience by creating clay forms and firing them with different glazes
- Continue to research the history of pottery as I learn techniques to incorporate into my exhibit
- Note favorite forms and styles, and form several final pieces
- Sketch out final designs for the “Cup Overflowing” exhibition

Spring 2025

- Make and fire final forms
- Glaze pieces made in Fall and Spring
- Meet with mentor to check in on progress
- Write a reflection paper on the process, challenges, discoveries, and final results
- Prepare the final exhibition for the Annual Arts Outcome Event

Arts involvement:

At the University of Virginia, I have been involved in the arts through classes, community service, work, and my personal life. I have taken a series of art classes and will receive a Minor degree in Studio Art. I was engaged and pursued excellence in each class, receiving A's and A+'s. Outside of classes, I work to incorporate art and creativity into the Charlottesville community. I have volunteered with the Fralin Museum's Early Visions program for two consecutive years. As a mentor, I guided elementary schoolers through the Fralin exhibits and co-created art with them, helping them build self-esteem and artistic skills. In addition, I spent a year volunteering at Ix Art Park, a non-profit in downtown Charlottesville, working on Friday mornings to keep their space organized and ready for arts events. I also set up and managed their free art-making stand which helped Ix achieve their mission of empowering the community through creativity.

I have also used my artistic talent to add good design to business settings. As the Marketing and Social Media Intern of a non-profit serving UVA students, I designed social media graphics to attract students to their events. I currently work as a part-time project manager at Journey Group, a design firm in downtown Charlottesville, where I am seeing first-hand how good design principles can enhance businesses and communities.

During college, I have also created art to benefit my friends and family. My sister is getting married this spring, so I spent this past year creating all of the designs for her wedding. From designing Save-the-Dates, invitations, signs, menus, programs, and place cards to designing custom t-shirts, I have been able to contribute to my sister's special day. I have also painted personalized thank you cards, wood burnings, coloring sheets, and even a custom puzzle as gifts for the people I love.

Whether I am engaging in art for my community, businesses, or loved ones, I am using art to benefit them in some way. Art has been a means of service for me. As I research the history

of pottery and its different uses, I am intrigued to learn how pottery can serve others through its functionality, while embodying personal expression. I will look forward to forming a deeper understanding of how art has been, and can continue to be, a gift for others.

In the Miller Arts Scholars program, I have enjoyed engaging with my fellow scholars during our discussion section. I have been actively participating, and frequently leading, the formation of a professional document to request a transcript designation for Miller Arts Scholars. I am looking forward to increasing my involvement in the Miller Arts Program through this Arts Award project. I am eager to lean into the intent behind these Arts Awards and be a testament to how this program emboldens and develops young artists.

Project Budget:

Budget Item Category 1

<i>Equipment and Training</i>		
Expenditure item: Evenheat Ceramic Kiln- High Fire 810		\$1,445.99
Expenditure item: Shimpo VL-Lite Pottery Wheel		\$930.00
Expenditure item:	NY School of Arts Hand Building and Wheel Class	\$455.00

Budget Item Category 2

<i>Materials</i>		
Expenditure item: Clay (250 lbs of Stoneware Clay)		\$155.00
Expenditure item: Glazes - Speedball Ceramic Underglazes		\$64.00
Expenditure item: Glazes- Speedball Mid-Fire Sample Pack		\$100.00
Expenditure item: Carving and Sculpting Tools		\$40.00
Total		\$3,189.99

Budget Income, Funding, or Other Awards

Income item:	MAS Fourth Year Award	\$3,000.00
Income item:	Personal contribution	\$189.99
Total		\$3,189.99