

Miller Arts Scholars Minigrant Proposal Outcome Report

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Exploring and Engaging in the Arts in Pittsburgh

My original proposal consisted of a trip to San Francisco to immerse myself in the culture and the arts so prevalent in the city. However, unfortunately my trip had to be cancelled due to complications with COVID-19 and my intended plans for staying with extended family while there. Though I was very dismayed by the last-minute cancellation, I was able to put together a trip to Pittsburgh, an artistic and history-rich city that I had yet to explore. This way, I could still travel to and experience the arts in a new place. I flew to Pittsburgh and stayed with a friend who was willing to accompany me to many of the art-related spots that I wanted to visit. We explored the following places:

Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens:

I felt as though I was stepping into a whole different world as I entered and meandered through the gardens full of exotic plants, tranquil bonsai, vibrant orchids, butterflies, and more. We were delighted to find that the Conservatory was holding a Summer Flower Show, *Monet in Bloom*, where they presented several of his most famous works and recreated them in 3D, complete with flowers of all kinds.

Frick Fine Arts Building:

We explored the Frick Fine Arts Building, which houses the Department of History of Art and Architecture and the Department of Studio Arts for the University of Pittsburgh. The building's architecture was beautiful, and it had several large reproductions of Renaissance era paintings adorning its walls and an indoor garden at its center.

Point State Park:

My friend and I enjoyed lunch at Point State Park, a national historic landmark where Pittsburgh's three rivers meet. The park had a scenic view of the city and rivers, which I was able to capture with my camera.

Andy Warhol Museum:

We visited the Andy Warhol Museum, a museum dedicated to the pop art legend who was born in Pittsburgh. Seven stories filled with Warhol's artwork, the museum was a comprehensive look into his life, experiences, and artistic achievements. I had learned a bit about Warhol in one of my UVA courses this past semester, so it was rewarding to be able to connect information that I learned in the classroom to specific tangible art pieces that coincided with different stages of Warhol's life. I was surprised to find that this museum didn't present many of Warhol's iconic, well-known pieces; rather, the collection consisted of multitudes of paintings, sketches, sculptures, mementos, and photos that contributed to a more personal, quotidian outlook on Warhol and his life. I was initially disappointed that I didn't get to see many of his Marilyns, soup cans, or Coca-Colas, but I realized that this museum provided a more personal portrayal of the artist who created such iconic images.

Carnegie Museum of Art:

I visited the Carnegie Museum of Art, where I saw a number of paintings by well-known artists, photographs detailing Black life in America by Pittsburgh photographer Charles “Teenie” Harris, contemporary art, extensive plaster casts in the Hall of Architecture, and exhibitions that celebrated locally sourced art and creative stories. The museum also had a collection of artworks by local students, ranging from 3rd – 8th grade. I appreciated this initiative, as it allowed young people to use art to express themselves and highlight social issues that were important to them.

Carnegie Museum of Natural History:

The Museum of Natural History was adjacent to the Museum of Art, so I walked through this museum, as well. I saw a variety of animals, plants, gemstones, and other historic artifacts presented in creative dioramas.

While I was not able to go on the trip that I originally had planned, I still was able to experience the arts in a new city, and I found Pittsburgh to be very much rooted in history, art, and culture. I was able to use my DSLR camera to document artwork that captured my attention and aligned with my interests. The wide range of artwork that I encountered encouraged me to explore new artistic techniques in my future pieces. Further, observing history’s influence on local art has urged me to consider how space and place could impact the art that I produce. I hope to continue to create art pieces that not only represent myself, but also draw influences from the physical places that I have inhabited and that have taken part in forming me into the person I am today.

Thank you to the Miller Arts Scholar Program for providing me with an opportunity to further my artistic aspirations and interests, as I continue my journey as an artist and student at UVA.

A selection of photos from the trip:



