

Miller Arts Scholars Minigrant Proposal

Todd Benson

Exploring Memory in Figurative Painting

I am applying for funding for oil painting and other supplies so that I continue my personal exploration of themes memory in figurative painting.

Within the past year, I have completed several paintings in this line of research (see images pictured below). Each painting is a step further in the direction of visual distortion. The first painting stresses the way in which we remember some details of a person or event better than others. I painted the red dress with more clarity and contrast than the woman's face to emphasize this point. In the second painting I used bright and unnatural colors to reflect the emotions tied to our memories of particular people and events. In the third painting, I experiment with a blurred brush stroke at the periphery of the figure to mimic the way in which the perimeters of our visual memory are often unclear.



I am currently enrolled in Intermediate Painting with Professor Neal Rock. The class is oriented in such a way that I am free to make whatever work I want. Naturally, I have been working on paintings related to visual memory. I want to continue exploring this concept but need funding in order to get the necessary supplies.

In addition to being a Studio Art major, I am also a Biology major. I have worked in a neurobiology lab since my second year at UVA, and I have enjoyed learning about the biology and psychology of memory in my intro to neuro and psychology courses. I would like to adapt my scientific knowledge concerning memory and visual recall to an artistic context.

For this project I want to create another portrait but push the painting further in the direction of distortion than those pictured above. This may include experimenting with brush stroke and the application of paint to suggest memory's lack of clarity; with unnatural color to suggest its emotion; and with text to reflect the non-visual thoughts that accompany visual memory. These techniques will allow me to portray aspects of visual recall---specifically of people.

I plan to purchase supplies in October when I receive funding, then begin painting late October or early November, and finish in December. I plan to make at least one painting, and more if time allows. The process of the painting will be as follows: taking a reference photo or using one I already took, preparing a canvas by stretching canvas over stretcher bars, and then applying paint to the canvas. In the past, I have primarily used oil paint, but I would also like to try experimenting with acrylic paint, as its fast-drying qualities can give certain effects.

This minigrant will allow me to further develop my painting skills. I am not as familiar with distorting reality in painting. Therefore, this project is a great way to push me a little out of my comfort zone and help me grow as an artist. Although I am graduating in May of 2024, I will be applying for an Aunspaugh Fifth-Year Fellowship, a UVA Studio Art program in which I would receive a stipend to pursue my own line of work. Therefore, I will be painting in Charlottesville for at least another school year. I hope to continue experimenting with the theme of memory in painting and I aspire to be a painter after I graduate.

Budget

Category	Cost (\$)
<u>Paint</u>	
Golden Heavy Body Acrylic Paint, Cadmium Red Medium 5 oz	-52.89
Golden Heavy Body Acrylic Paint, Cadmium Yellow Medium 5 oz	-43.59
Golden Heavy Body Acrylic Paint, Cobalt Blue 5 oz	-46.29
Golden Heavy Body Acrylic Paint, Ultramarine Blue 5 oz	-24.99
Golden Heavy Body Acrylic Paint, Phthalo Blue 5 oz	-29.19
Golden Heavy Body Acrylic Paint, Yellow Ochre 5 oz	-22.99
Golden Heavy Body Acrylic Paint, Titanium White 5 oz	-22.99
Golden Heavy Body Acrylic Paint, Mars Black 5 oz	-22.99
Golden Heavy Body Acrylic Paint, Burnt Sienna 5 oz	-22.99
Golden Heavy Body Acrylic Paint, Alizarin Crimson 5 oz	-43.59
Golden Heavy Body Acrylic Paint, Quinacridone Magenta 5 oz	-43.59
<u>Painting Materials</u>	
Assorted Brushes	-30.00
Assorted Palette Knives	-30.00
ArtBin Supply Box	-34.99
Stretcher Bars	-28.92
Total	-500