

Elissa Bardhi
eb5tz@virginia.edu
October 3, 2018
Miller Arts Scholars Minigrant Application

Proposal:

A simple apple, orange, and banana is what my first oil painting consisted of. Since then, I have been addicted to the technique, style, consistency, and characteristic of oil paintings. The slow long-term repetitive process of painting and drying, and painting and drying. The many layers and texture that make themselves known upon inspection. The cloudy muddling of the purest of colors together. The creation of the color black out of Alizarin Crimson Red, Thalo Blue, and Indian Yellow. Each color having its own unique consistency and character. The cutting of the knife on the wooden palette. The turpentine that transforms the thickness of the paint for minute details. The smell of the paint. It's all addicting.

I am applying for the artist minigrant to find a way back to oil painting. With this grant I will have the resources I need to create a large oil painting that ties to my realism roots. This would be different than every project I have ever indulged in because it would have no guidelines, no short-term biweekly due date, and no grade. This grant would give me the opportunity to produce the art I once knew and loved on a grand scale. For the past two years, I have found myself drifting from the practice. Whether it be the demanding weekly art projects due in my classes, the two jobs I am juggling or preparing for the MCATs, I ache to get back to painting. Furthermore, realism is slowly becoming an underappreciated form of art. For this reason, I am unable to incorporate it into many of my abstract-based art classes at the risk of doing poorly. This grant would give me boundless opportunities.

Schedule:

I plan to create a massive realistic oil painting on a large canvas. First I will make a collage of photos I've taken using photo shop, in order to present a person, place or thing. I will use this step to create a sense of insight for the audience. Related to most of my previous oil paintings, I will use the surroundings, colors, and details of the collage to give the subject character—to make viewers feel like they *know* the person they are looking at, make them feel like they've *been* there before. This will take me around a week to put together.

I will then use the LED Pico Projector to project this image onto the large canvas. A canvas this large would require a big wooden easel as well. I would outline the shapes and sizes with a pencil to scale my picture onto a large surface. This step will take about 1-2 weeks.

Then I will start by painting the undertone—this is the first layer of the painting, which is made up of Indian Yellow and Violet to create a yellow/purple foundation. This layer is the bones of my painting—it will outline the darkest of the dark and highlight the lightest of the light. This step will take 1-2 weeks.

Then once this layer is complete and dry, I will start pushing color into the art. This layer is the meat and skin of the painting. This paint will be thick, and applied with a large brush. Once this dries, I'll go for the details. This step is the personality: the facial expression, the way the shadows line the body, the knuckles and nose and ears. This will take another 2 weeks.

And, once this dries I'll come in with my size-0 extreme liner brush. This phase is the eyelashes, the stray hairs, the freckles and bumps. I could spend my entire life in this phase. This is where my perfectionist alter ego takes control. Hours, days, weeks, months of all-nighters spent here. I wouldn't let myself put down the brush at night until it was perfect. Until my tired, weary eyes would blur. Until my fingers would shake from painting the microscopic leaves that hung off all the branches. Until my legs were numb from standing. Until I couldn't hold my arm up to the easel any longer. It wasn't until then that I would put the paint brush down. And finally recede to my bed, unsatisfied and beaten down. And the next day my trained eye would find a myriad of new blemishes and mistakes that would haunt me for the next 24 hours. It would never be complete; they're never truly finished.

Conclusion:

This proposal is not meant for a singular result. With this grant I will have the resources to get the ball rolling, then there would be no telling where I would take it. Once I have these supplies, all I'll need to refill is the paint and get new canvases. This will give me the ability to use art as an outlet. This will allow me to set up that wooden easel in my bedroom, that will stare me down and beg me to put a new canvas on it. That canvas will plead to be painted on. And that painting will be made. In my case, this is not a donation, but an investment—one that will follow me everywhere I go. Like the old saying goes, “You give a man a fish, and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.”

Budget:

Item	Cost	Additional Information
Gamblin Artist's Grade Oil Paint Set	\$100	6 paint colors (37ml each)
Canvas	\$75	48x60/36x40
LED Pico Projector	\$125	To project image onto large canvas
Large Easel	\$130	Large enough to support the canvas
Turpentine, Linseed Oil, Brushes, Varnish, Palettes, Knives, Additional Colors	\$70	
Total	\$500	

Furthermore, I would like to thank the Miller Arts Scholars Program for this opportunity. I have attached a few of my oil paintings.

My first oil painting: 2014



Oil painting of my uncle photo-shopped into a picture with Al Pacino and Robert Dinero:



Oil painting of my grandfather photo-shopped into his home country:

