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Miller Arts Scholars Minigrant Outcome Report

A Journey to Continue

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to the Miller Arts Scholars program for funding my journey of returning to my roots. With the mini grant, I was able to set up a small area in my room dedicated to the passion that started it all— although it's simply an easel, cart, and stool, I've noticed that just having this corner of my room set aside for painting has made a significant difference in how I approach my love for art. I previously considered any artmaking outside of classes to be a waste of valuable time, and felt guilty starting projects that didn't correlate to any projects or requirements. However, now with my mini studio, I feel much more inclined to take a moment to sit in front of the easel and allow myself to spend a few moments with my first love: acrylic painting.

Since receiving the mini grant, I have dedicated a minimum of 2 hours a day painting the leaves of the plants I've grown and cared for over the past 3 years. I began by personally taking photos of the plants I have around my room, and then sketched a rough layout on my 20 x 30 canvas. I then tackled each section using one or two of my photos at a time as it was much easier than photoshopping the backgrounds out of the photos and attempting to make a digital rendering of the final product. I chose my plants as my subjects thinking that it would be a nice way to ease back into painting, but became surprisingly overwhelmed while tackling the small details that bring these plants to life on canvas. I didn't want to allow myself to overlook the slight variations in tones of green or the small lines and dots that give these plants so much personality, and this unfortunately led me to be unable to finish the painting before leaving for my study abroad term in Italy. I would estimate that I have put in over a hundred hours of painting, with many of them having been eaten up by me repainting leaves that I wasn't quite satisfied with. I prioritized getting details right over the amount of area covered because I felt as though one would have more impact on the finished product. I found that my initial progress was painstakingly slow as I tried to recall the techniques I learned over 5 years ago, but I slowly gained momentum before my project was tragically cut short by my flight back home for the summer and then my following flight abroad.

Although the actual project remains unfinished, I'm very happy to report that the main intentions of this mini grant proposal have been fulfilled. One of the greatest successes of this project was the restoration of my excitement towards painting, and I found myself genuinely looking forward to sitting in front of the canvas with my brushes and palette. While I'm currently abroad in Italy the excitement has yet to dwindle and I look forward to returning to finish what I started. I currently plan on completing the pilea, jade, and peperomia leaves I have left (each leaf took me an average of 6-12 hours to complete so far, but I left the simplest plants for last and am expecting them to go by faster) and then working the silhouette of my albino corn snake into the background. I'm most excited to paint in the dark navy background at the end, which I believe will clean up the edges and be the finishing touch that brings everything together. I look forward to updating my report with the final project once I return to UVA, and I absolutely love that I have a painting project waiting for me at home that I'm excited to continue.



My personal painting corner featuring the new easel and cart



The most recent progress photo of my 20 x 30 painting, with more to come