

Who Art Thou?
ACE-FOCI222
Varshiini Ravishankar

My growth as an arts educator has been revitalized through the process of art making. This painting holds a lot of significance to me especially after not painting for over a year. It holds experiences of my past and my present within it.

My initial process was to include multiple paintings one on top of another, but I realized the process of showing each painting clearly would be difficult. So I decided to show the previous paintings through taping. I painted the first image, then taped strips over it, then painted the second image, taped more strips over that, then painted a third image on top of the second. Then I removed the strips of tape to reveal parts of each painting.

I specifically choose three paintings that reflected the type of art educator I had thought I always wanted to be. Because I always knew I wanted to be visual art teacher since I was a childhood, I felt I had a straightforward pathway. So I decided to choose images from my past experiences that had pathways, for example, a road, a staircase, and a walking trail.

The first image I painted is of a country road in Brampton, the city I grew up in and where I realized that I wanted to be a teacher. This first painting has a grey road and a yellow line dividing the road along with trees in the background. I painted it over two strips of tape so I could eventually show the bare canvas, and give the viewer a break from the hectic lines I anticipated from this art. The second image I painted is of a staircase from Melbourne, Australia where I still thought teaching was the only thing I wanted to do. This painting had curved stairs and more grass. Finally the last painting is of the Portsmouth Harbour in Kingston last summer, where I still continued to think that teaching high school students was what I wanted to do.

The process of painting these three paintings onto each other made me realize that as an art educator I had always thought that there was only one path and that was to be an art teacher. But when I stand back and look at my finished painting I realize that there are multiple paths. Multiple perspectives that join together to create my career path. If I had not experienced traveling abroad I would not be here. If I had not come to Queen's University, Kingston, and met the people I met here, I may not have ended up on this new route of doing my Master's of Education at Queen's. Some people would call this God's choices, or even destiny, I however have not figured that out.

I have realized that having a narrow mindset does not allow one to broaden students' perspectives, or the perspectives of any individual. If I had a mindset that was closed, that would not help anyone, and sadly, I think that was the mindset I previously had. After creating this piece I realize I have become more willing to look at other perspectives and options. This sense of openness is something I want to continue to work on. As I meet new people I hope to keep a sense of openness in terms of what people around me can do and what I can do for them. There is a lot of learning from others that I can gather. I just have to be willing to take that extra step and open up. After creating this piece it showed me that there is no one way to look at things.



First painting: Brampton, Ontario



First painting with tape: Brampton, Ontario



Second painting: Melbourne, Australia



Second painting: Melbourne, Australia



Last painting: Kingston, Ontario



Final image