

I've been working closely with [REDACTED], a Junior Visual Arts major, since early February and have given her writing and research assignments to help her systematically narrow down and clarify the range of topics that she's interested in investigating. With the guidance of our conversations, [REDACTED] has already defined the topic that she will examine and has clearly articulated in her proposal, the preliminary approaches that will direct her research and artwork.

"My research will investigate the sociocultural relevance of adorning and modifying the human body across different regions and cultures..."<sup>i</sup>

[REDACTED]'s creative art project will consist of a series of four paintings that will be informed by an analysis of the aesthetic, cultural and religious histories of body decoration. In a culture where decorated bodies, whether tattooed, pierced, branded or simply adorned with interchangeable jewelry have become ubiquitous and fetishized, it's not only appropriate, but extremely timely for a young artist to critically assess histories of body decorations, and to develop a series of paintings that reflect on and are informed by those histories.

The seed for [REDACTED]'s art project was planted in the Intro to Painting class, when she was developing a portrait assignment and became creatively obsessed with painting the layers of jewelry that adorned her neck. That section of the painting, when isolated from the whole image, took on a visual complexity that was informed by the fact that the delicate depiction of the layered jewelry became more abstract than representational. The combination of colors, textures, tones as well as the relationships between the depicted skin, metal and stone, were visually complex and engaging. That section, in isolation from the rest of the image, was the most compelling part of the painting and demanded further exploration.

During this preliminary stage of concurrent research and reflection, [REDACTED]'s objectives and her approach to the project are becoming clearer to her. Her images will continue to become stronger as she expands her research on the topic, and as she develops numerous sketches that broadly examine the aesthetic, cultural and religious histories of the decorated body. Informed by her research, she will also experiment with different material that may be used to develop her paintings. [REDACTED]'s research will stimulate her creativity and inform her paintings.

[REDACTED] will begin by studying the cultural histories of body decorations from various continents and traditions. I made it clear to [REDACTED] that she needs to be very careful to not fall into the traps of cultural appropriation, and insisted that readings that focus on cultural appropriation complement readings on the histories and functions of body decoration. I will recommend readings and artists to [REDACTED] throughout the project.

"One of the questions that my research will raise is whether body decoration promotes cultural understanding, or if much of its contemporary practices are a form of cultural appropriation."<sup>ii</sup>

I will meet with [REDACTED] twice a week to discuss her research, review her sketches and critique her paintings as they progress. I will also have her submit a weekly report that summarizes and

chronicles her research. The reports will include new questions that have been informed by her research as well as reflections on the progress of the paintings.

The first three weeks of the project will focus entirely on research, writing, sketching, developing color studies and experimenting with various media for the paintings. By the fourth week, ██████ should be ready to start the first painting. Depending on the scale and level of details, each painting should take approximately eight to ten days to complete. By the end of the summer, I anticipate that ██████ will have also filled a large sketchbook with sketches, questions, research notes, as well as additional resources that she will continue to investigate throughout her senior year.

As an Art Major, ██████ is required to develop a thesis project that results in a thoughtfully conceived, carefully researched and thematically cohesive series of paintings. Her proposed BURST project, will fully prepare her to implement a more advanced body of creative work during her senior year. Like the BURST Project, her thesis project will also be mounted as a one-person exhibition at USD's Visual Art Center.

Producing and exhibiting a cohesive project with the support of BURST, will actively familiarize ██████ with the essential professional practices of researching, producing, writing about, selecting, preparing and installing artwork for a public exhibition. Expanding her BURST project during her senior year, will greatly enhance her capabilities as a young artist/scholar, and will provide her with a cohesive portfolio of independently conceived creative work, to submit for graduate studies.

---

i ██████ . *Outline and Research Plan for BURST 2024, Creative Work Project.*

ii ██████ . *Outline and Research Plan for BURST 2024, Creative Work Project.*