

I think of art in many different ways. There is visual art, which is what you do in an art class and there is performance art, such as band, drama, dance, etc. I do not think of myself as a person who does well with visual art, but I am good at performance art, especially music.

When I was an elementary student I really enjoyed going to art class and doing visual art. Once I got into middle school and high school art became less enjoyable and harder for me to do. In elementary school, we would do a lot of projects that had a fixed end and there seemed to be a lot more guidance. I liked how my art turned out perfectly. Once I got into middle and high school the projects still had a fixed end, but there was less instruction. I felt like I wasn't very creative or I just couldn't do it perfectly. If it wasn't perfect or I messed something up I felt like I had to throw away the art piece and start over again. There was also a grade tied to the art that was created. Perfection was encouraged and anything else seemed to just be ok. Now as an adult, I don't do a lot of visual art. I do some crafts, like crocheting, latch hooking, and painting small figurines, but I tend to do these as hobbies. I enjoy doing crafts that involve little attention to detail and can be messed up and not scrapped.

I am a musician, so performance arts are where I feel like I can shine. I started playing the flute when I entered fifth grade. I have continued to practice that instrument throughout my life and have also picked up other instruments along the way. I have also dabbled in theatre and I enjoy watching others perform.

I think art was fun in elementary school because what you created didn't have to be perfect. You were a kid and so it didn't have to look amazing for it to be considered good. It was also very structured and there was always a fixed end. I think if there would have been more exploration, less instruction and no fixed end I might have done better in high school. I think I would have more confidence in my art skills if I would have explored more as a child. I also think if art in high school hadn't been graded based on quality I would not have felt so much pressure and I could have created and explored more fully.

Band was my thing as a student and still is. I loved to play music and I still do to this day. I think my love of music comes from success and lots of exploring, which was encouraged by my teachers. It also helped that playing an instrument doesn't have to be perfect all the time. You can make mistakes and you don't have to start over a whole piece. Practice was encouraged and making mistakes was something to learn from. My band teachers were always very encouraging and were willing to take the time to work with me when I needed it.

I think art is many things. I think a key component of art should be exploring, making mistakes, and continuing to practice. Art is painting, drawing, crocheting, knitting, jewelry making, dancing, theatre, music, and anything that has a creative component. I also think art needs to be fun. There shouldn't be a lot of emphasis on perfection.

Now that I look back, perfection seemed to be something that mattered and matters to me. However, art does not have to be “perfect” and I realize this. Overcoming that feeling is a challenge and will always be a challenge for me. I don’t expect perfection from others, but I do of myself. I need to realize that I am still practicing and I am going to make mistakes and I will need to learn from those mistakes.