

## Art Autobiography

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When I recall my earliest experiences with art, two occasions come into my mind. The first was drawing with my aunt and the second was building a replica of my home with my dad. Both occurred when I was very young. Interestingly, I also think about my elementary school art classes with Mrs. Hunt. I strongly recall learning about famous artists and studying the style of their greatest works. When I was taking the New York State Exam for my teaching license, I remembered Mrs. Hunt's lessons and responded with confidence to each question about art and famous artists.

Throughout my teens, I always enjoyed visiting the Metropolitan Museum of Modern Art in New York City. My favorite pieces were the ancient artifacts. Each artifact told a story and provided insight into the culture of others. Although I loved visiting the museums in New York, I was overwhelmed by the museums of Amsterdam. The museums in New York were only appetizers, compared to the Rijksmuseum and Van Gogh Museums. These contained the entrees and dessert. I was in awe of how Rembrandt viewed people and the world. His work seemed so perfect and depicted another time and place. Van Gogh became one of my favorite artists. I loved the mystery of his paintings, and how he used color and texture.

As an adult, I have had the opportunity to visit many other beautiful museums and churches throughout Europe. I felt each experience was a gift from the artists for future generations. Two moments while visiting Italy will forever remain in my heart. The first was touring the Sistine Chapel. We hired a guide who had worked on the chapel's restoration for twenty years. He brought my family into the Pope's private areas and provided detailed

descriptions of the items in each room. Finally, he walked us into the Sistine Chapel after the tourist had left. My family and I stood staring at Michelangelo's beautiful ceiling in complete silence. We were left us speechless and ten years later my children still reflect on that day.

The next great experience occurred in Florence at the Academia Gallery. My family and I waited in line for 4 hours to visit the museum. (If you go, order tickets ahead of time) While we walked towards the David, we passed Michelangelo's Slaves. You can see how he worked trying to free these figures from the marble. They reminded me of the many countries and people who have been denied freedom. This was also an experience I will always remember. Recently, when I visited Washington, DC and viewed the Martin Luther King, JR. Memorial, I reflected on Michelangelo's slave sculptures.

Reflect: The general characteristics of my art experiences have included sharing moments with the people I love, working together towards a common goal, appreciating how others view the world and embracing new experiences. I find viewing and appreciating art more rewarding than creating art. I don't consider myself artistic but enjoy collaborating and being challenged. Most importantly, I cherish being able to share these wonderful events with my family and friends.

Connect: After writing this paper, I feel art is a common language for people to interpret the way they wish. It's how we want to see the world through the creator's eyes. There are no rules to follow when it comes to appreciating art. I've learned that art doesn't only include paintings and sculptures, but is visible in countless forms. I am excited to introduce my students to the various ways art can be incorporated into my lessons.