

Recall

Since I've known myself, I've always been into art. As a child, I constantly doodled and sketched images of people I saw throughout the day, as well as trees, buildings, and other scenery. For me, art was an outlet, a way to escape from the world around me and express my thoughts visually. My early experiences with art were informal but deeply meaningful - I would fill notebooks with sketches, experimenting with shading and details to bring my drawings to life.

As I grew older, my artistic interests expanded beyond drawing. I explored pottery, watercolor painting, and even sewing. Each new medium offered a different way to create and express my ideas. My passion for art led me to enroll in a weekend art program at the Edna Manley School of Art in Jamaica. Being surrounded by other artists was both inspiring and intimidating. I enjoyed the creative atmosphere, but I often compared myself to others and felt overly critical of my own work. However, over time, I realized that art is subjective—there is no single definition of skill or success.

Beyond my formal experiences with art, I also engaged with creativity in many other ways. I visited numerous museums to see the works of highly skilled artists, which broadened my appreciation for different styles and techniques. Growing up, I was fortunate to be in an environment where artistic expression was embraced. This included not only visual arts but also dancing, sign language, and drama—activities that I actively participated in.

As a teacher, I've incorporated these forms of expression into my lessons, allowing students to convey their understanding of concepts through various creative outlets. I have

found that students engage more deeply when they can apply their own artistic perspectives to what they've learned.

As I got older (adult life), I found less time to devote to art, but my passion never faded. I still buy sketchbooks, watercolor paints, oil paints, and canvases, and I have even downloaded digital art apps. Despite my busy schedule, I always hold onto the desire to create. At one point, I even started a journaling and sketching group, gifting my students their own sketchbooks and watercolor sets to encourage their artistic growth.

Reflect

Looking back, I realize that the most meaningful art experiences for me have always involved exploration, self-expression, and a sense of freedom. I have always enjoyed the process of creating rather than just the final product. When I had the opportunity to experiment with new materials and techniques, I felt inspired and engaged. However, structured or overly rigid art assignments sometimes felt limiting, which made me less enthusiastic. I found that I thrived in environments where creativity was encouraged rather than dictated.

In terms of success in art, I have always felt competent in my abilities, but I recognize that success in art is subjective. While I was never the most technically skilled artist, I always took pride in my work and enjoyed the creative journey. Art has never been about perfection for me; it has been about expression and interpretation. My experiences have shaped my belief that everyone has artistic potential, and success in art should be measured by personal growth and creative fulfillment rather than technical mastery alone.

Connect

To me, art is a form of expression that transcends language and logic. It is a way of communicating emotions, stories, and perspectives through visual, tactile, and even auditory means. Art is not limited to paintings or sculptures; it includes fashion, architecture, digital design, and countless other forms. It is deeply personal yet universally impactful.

My past learning experiences have greatly influenced my definition of art and my attitude toward it. Because I found joy in exploration and expression, I believe that art should be accessible and freeing rather than restrictive or intimidating. These experiences have shaped my philosophy on teaching art: I want to create an environment where students feel empowered to explore, experiment, and find their own artistic voices. Just as I found comfort and excitement in art, I hope to inspire my future students to see it as a valuable and meaningful part of their lives.