



Express Yourself Responses

Question: Tell us how the arts related to your childhood education.

I have no real artistic talents but was exposed to art, music, theatre and dance throughout my childhood. Art and music were a mandatory part of the curriculum. As a little girl, I took dance on and off and into my adult years. The arts defines a culture, be it written, sung, danced or drawn. Without the arts, we lose an essential part of who we are. Without performing or visual arts in the schools, we lose an opportunity to expose students to their hidden talents and a outlet to succeed!

- Geri, Denver

I was amazed at the things that I could do with good art instruction and education. I found a new way to express myself in Junior High art which ultimately gave me an outlet that I needed at the time.

- Lisa, Golden

The visual arts gave my 4-year-old stuttering self a new persona to confront the vagaries of the art world in the late forties of the last century in a rural Virginia kindergarten, when an empathetic Miss Gary gave me drawing and painting materials because speaking was a painful and shameful ordeal to me. I responded as if born once more, and thus began the absolutely necessary path which led to the adult convergence of skill and confidence which has brought me to a professional painter's life for the past 45 years. I overcame the stuttering, and eventually was able to push the urgently autobiographical through to a more universal expression in quasi-abstract landscapes, whose focus on process I am actually able to explain to collectors of my work. I would have totally languished in this life without an early arts education.

- Joellyn, Englewood

I knew I was artistically gifted by the time I was 5. This area of ability gave me a confidence that fueled exploration in other areas (academic). Whenever I feel any level of frustration with work or learning I always step into the zone of my comfort and that is in being artistic in some measure. I was always encouraged in the arts and it remains an area where I hold confidence.

- Tyre, Grand Junction

Exposure to art, music, theater, and dance throughout my education was potent. Once I was exposed to dance in high school, I found my calling. I went on to major in dance in college then moved to New York to dance professionally. Even once I retired from dance, I continued in an artistic field, becoming a fashion designer. This was due in large part to the exposure to fabrics and home sewing from my mother and from home economics in middle school. We cannot underestimate the power of the arts to form us.

- Lisa, Denver

I was a very shy child when it came to speaking up. My first grade teacher even installed me under her desk next to her trash can because I would not answer her questions in front of the class. I do remember exactly how I drew Cinderella over and over again, rather a sophisticated drawing for a six year old. Throughout my childhood education I excelled in the visual arts. It was a source of pride for me as well as a way to express myself with other students. My memories are vivid as to specific art projects.

- Susan, Littleton

My father was an architect, my mother, the singer & choir director. The arts were all around. As for dance, my earliest memory is of seeing Jose Greco, a father and son date when I was 8. Music included my moms' boys choir, piano lessons and singing in Carmen and getting paid \$5.00 from the Central City Opera for wearing a little paper sailor hat. In school I seemed to gravitate to the arts and athletics. I was getting hit so hard on the football field that I saw stars. So I went to the theatre department and got cast as a muleteer in Man of La Mancha. I also carried the bass drum for football game half times. Keeping the grades a bit above average, the art classes did it; drama, madrigal choir and various visual arts. My senior year I got to study in Banff, Canada and returned to dance and choreograph the Douglas County High School musical "West Side Story". Today I still serve the arts and politics, challenging the imagination to inspire education and develop the whole child.

- Paul, Denver

The 1950's brought to elementary school atomic war. But, between ducking under our desks and lining up in the hallway in perfect time, my 6th grade social studies/art teacher, Mr. Howard, inspired artistic expression. Eighth grade brought Kennedy's assassination and my 1st art teacher. High school actually provided fashion design class, a pottery class with Mark Zamintakis, and painting with Evelyn Lail.

- Sheila, Englewood