

Stuart R. Givens Memorial Fellowship Personal Statement & Experience Proposal

By: Jessica Short

The Stuart R. Givens Memorial Fellowship Grant is the answer to my prayers. I am an artist pursuing the study of an uncommon French painting technique called *Technique Mixte*. This process was first used by Jan Van Eyck in the late 1400's. It is begun by first producing an accurate drawing, which is crucial to the physical representation of the sitter and acts as a foundation for the painting. This slow, meditative process allows me to visually describe my friends who agree to model for me and to help acquaint me with their physical form, expression, and their beloved objects. Being able to study this somewhat obscure technique will advance my skill as an artist in an environment that I would not otherwise be given in a formal university setting.

This year, I have been completing an independent study with Dennis Wojtkiewicz, a painting professor and artist on campus at BGSU. Wojtkiewicz studied *Technique Mixte* in France while he was a young, aspiring artist at an atelier (or workshop) called The Atelier Neo-Medici. He studied there with his friend and instructor, Gregory Pelizzari, who eventually took over the Atelier and now is its sole operator. Wojtkiewicz suggested that I go to France to study *Technique Mixte* with Pelizzari at the very same school he attended. The name *Medici* is synonymous with Renaissance in art history; declaring that this workshop is dedicated to traditional, realistic techniques. The artists at the Atelier Neo Medici aspire to paint like Renaissance masters like Botticelli and Raphael. Dennis Wojtkiewicz believes that France was his

key to learning this intensive painting method, and I think it will be essential in my art career as well.

The Atelier Neo Medici is located in a beautiful little town in the south of France called Villeneuve sur Lot. Living in the south of France seems like a dream in itself. France would be a perfect environment to give my artwork and I new vitality. However, at first, the thought of being able to afford this trip to study in France seemed to be an extremely daunting task. I work at the BGSU galleries for five hours per week and I am a recipient of work study and government financial aid; I thought that I could never come up with the money to go. The opportunity that this grant offers seems to be my only redeeming option to make this dream trip happen.

Greg Pelizzari has made a few housing options available to his students. The most attractive one to me is the Manoir de Bourdeneuve, which is the manor of the French Baroness de Mazet. The baroness rents out a small apartment space on the second level of her manor. It is also only a ten minute walk to the Atelier. Sleeping in the manor of the Baroness would contribute to the romanticism of my artistic journey in France. Just think of walking out to the gardens in the morning to have a cup of coffee and sketch!

My paintings represent portraits of my friends and loved ones. My work explores the romantic nature of traditional, realistic, representational painting. I believe that my portraits create a dynamic between the viewer and the subject through poses, body language, facial expression, clothing, and the objects with which these people are interacting. The models that I choose for my portraits are my close, personal friends. My intent with these paintings is to venerate my sitters so that the viewer may also experience our exceptional relationship.

I have always wanted to be an artist. Ever since I could pick up a crayon, I loved the accomplished feeling that creation brings. My grandma, or Nana as we called her, noticed my interest in art from a very early age and encouraged me by doing crafts and taught me watercolors every time I visited her. Since her passing, she has continued to be one of my sources of inspiration. I know that she would be so proud of where I am now.

Recently, I have changed my major from BFA Art Education to BFA 2-Dimensional Studies with a self-created minor in Art Education. I am also taking some Arts Management courses to further inform myself about the business end of the art world. The choice to become a serious, full-time artist is not a stable or easy one, but it was one that I had to make to wake up every morning feeling fulfilled. I have no doubt that this is where I need to be.

In addition to my passion for painting, is my desire for travel. I am thoroughly interested in world cultures and languages. I intend to continue to travel to new places throughout my life. I have visited France before when I was young. I speak French almost fluently; having taken four years of advanced French while I was in high school. My trip to France was a study abroad for high school students to study the language through immersion. My travels overseas opened my eyes to a whole new international world perspective. In my heart I always knew that I would return to Europe later on in my life.

The plan for me is to fly from Cleveland, Ohio, into Agen La Garenne Airport in the south of France and be picked up by Greg in his car. Then I will move into my apartment space with the Baroness at the Manoir de Bourdeneuve. The summer session at the Atelier starts on July 6 and

ends August 27. When I begin working at the Atelier, the first month will focus on the preparatory drawing and the second month the application of color for the painting begins.

I will create new artwork while I study with Gregory Pelizzari at the Atelier Neo-Medici in France. I propose to create two to three paintings during my two month stay at Villeneuve sur Lot. I also propose to donate one of these paintings to The Stuart R. Givens Memorial Fellowship Grant as a token of my gratitude should I be chosen as a grant recipient.

Budget for Fellowship Project

Exchange Rate Euro > Dollar = 1 € = \$1.13

\$395.69	350 € Deposit Applied to Program Cost for Atelier Neo-Medici (Deadline May 20)
\$3,617.76	3,200 € Full 8 Week (July 6- August 27) Program Cost of Atelier
\$1,582.77	1,400 € Apartment Stay at Manoir de Bourdeneuve
~ \$400	Food
Total = \$6,000	Grant Amount
~\$1,500.00 round trip	Cost of Flight
\$135.00	Renewed Passport

Other costs may include: international cell phone, shipment of artworks from France to U.S., personal travel, or traveler's insurance.