Art Student Stereotypes:
A Studio Artist’s Views

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Purpose
- Discuss stereotyping and discrimination directed towards college art students.
- Focused on large studio art student group at BGSU because of the relative isolation of art courses on the east side of campus.

Method 1
- Qualitative Interview
  - Respondent: Savannah Fulmer, a Digital Arts major at BGSU.
  - Includes 34 questions about life as a studio artist, views on art student stereotypes, and discrimination that results from stereotyping.

Major Stereotypes
- Studio art is typcast as an “easy A” major.
- Studio art students are stereotyped as:  
  - Identifiable by an unconventional appearance
  - Poor at math and science.
  - Obsessed with fandoms
  - Politically liberal
  - Promiscuous

Method 2
- Visual Imagery Study
  - Case study of how the inspirations for Savannah’s artworks are influenced by stereotypes.
  - Qualitative interview about three artworks in Savannah’s portfolio.
  - Further analysis of Method 1 answers as they relate to the artworks.

Visual Imagery Study

Imaginary Place

Imagination

Imaginary Place

Savannah Fulmer’s artworks often attempt to reclaim or disprove stereotypes.

- The three artworks together reclaim a minor negative stereotype that art majors will not be able to find jobs in the future; all three were displayed at the 2015 Undergraduate Art and Design Exhibition in February.

Final Findings – Method 1

1. Stereotypes about art students are not isolated from each other.
   - Savannah on the stereotype that art students are promiscuous: “I think that goes back to how most, a lot of art students aren’t conservative . . . but I [also] don’t think it’s a very fair stereotype because they’re basing it on how people are dressing.”
   - The stereotypes are never entirely true or false. Savannah on the stereotype that studio art is an “easy A” major: “I don’t think that’s an accurate stereotype at all,” later explaining that it persists because high school art classes are particularly easy compared to other high school classes.

2. Discrimination surrounding the stereotypes seems to be mostly subtle, not overt.
   - Savannah on the discrimination she faces because of her dyed hair: “I feel like people don’t want to talk to me as much because they’re scared of me or they think I’m weird and different and I’m not a nice person even though I consider myself pretty nice.”

Final Findings – Method 2

Artwork Analysis
- Imaginary Place: “[Savannah’s] artwork’s a little different than the stereotypical art person’s” and defies a minor stereotype that studio art majors create art intending to change society; instead she intends to create a new fantasy world to escape to.
- Imagination: reclaims negative stereotype about art students being obsessed with fandoms by sharing how fandoms have “become a safe haven for [Savannah].”
- Dissonance: disproves the art is an “easy A” major stereotype as it involved finishing a complete minute-long animation within five weeks.

Implications
- Knowing how art student stereotypes affect this student group encourages non-art students to better understand art students’ motivations and daily lives.
- Findings concern interactions between all student groups on campus; understanding effects of stereotyping allows better communication between groups.

Further Research
- Interview more art students to gain a more complete view of the stereotypes surrounding the studio art major.
- Interview students from other majors to study perceived stereotypes and their consequences.