

Letter of Intent

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OCAD University
Admissions and Recruitment Office
100 McCaul Street, Toronto, Canada
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To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing to express my sincere interest in the Interdisciplinary Master's in Art, Media and Design (MFA) at OCAD University. I am graduating with a Bachelor of Arts at Brandon University in May 2016. My research has indicated that OCAD has the most dynamic and rigorous contemporary studio arts program in Canada. In particular, the program encourages students to freely incorporate multiple artistic disciplines in their art practise. Spacious, open, well-lit studios and exhibition spaces, as well as an excellent faculty also attract me to the program. I expect that the IAMD program will connect me with those influencing our culture and allow me to develop a sensibility for the interdisciplinary nature of the art world today.

Social relevancy is a major topic on my mind. In 2013, I had the opportunity to formally study fine art for five months at Bezalel Academy in Jerusalem, Israel. After reacting to Israel's endless religious and political issues (*Mamilla Picnic*, 2014), it became clear that drawing from personal experiences is the only way to make socially relevant art. Recently, my work has addressed issues such as appropriation of Aboriginal culture (*He Who Wins the War*, 2014), cultural identity, and the role of technology in art making. This past semester as research assistant for Cathy Mattes of the Visual and Aboriginal Art Department at Brandon University exposed me to Indigenous activism and curating, providing a practical example of how cultural identity integrates into a community. In March I will be showing work that addresses the impact of the farm corporatization on rural life at Virden, Manitoba, an agricultural community. Directing a children's summer Art Camp for four small towns these past two summers was another unique opportunity to give back to communities that supported me. After this experience, I began thinking about the role of intuition and multi-sensory experiences in art making.

My choice to pursue a B.A. allowed me to study music, visual art, and psychology, and to identify connections between these fields. I have explored synaesthesia and other psychological models of art making by representing sensory experience through wet and dry media. My endless fascination with human history, art history, and narratives and experimenting with found objects can be seen in *Encyclopedia of Time Travel*, 2012 and *Icon*, 2013. Finding a balance between these two interests—critical analysis/political discourse and expressive intuition, imagination and story-telling is an objective of mine. Finding emotion and value on the ground of meaninglessness relates to the questions confronting a pluralistic, postmodern society in the face of technology and consumerism (*Comfortable with the New Sincerity*, 2015). This area of interest demands time and research, which the Master's thesis would facilitate.

I expect to be thoroughly rerouted in my thoughts and art production during my time at OCAD, through interactions with my peers, instructors, and my experiences living in Toronto. My technical ability will be greatly enhanced by the studio classes. The final exhibition will expose me to the level of critical discourse existent in professional shows. A teaching opportunity during the IAMD would expose me to instructing at the post-secondary level, which I plan to pursue professionally. To me, art is a vehicle of collective and personal expression. A MFA in Interdisciplinary Art, Media and Design at OCAD University would propel me to become a practising artist with social relevancy, conceptual flexibility, and engaging work.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Sarah Usick