

Stephanie Hardin
Artist Statement

My earliest memories involve the arts. My vision has morphed from scattered projects, mostly assigned by life's tasks or projects associated with school, shows and jobs to having more time to create my own work- something that is a growing process.

I was always a performer, a writer and loved to draw and paint- anything to express myself and maybe to escape reality.

Being interested in fine arts as a whole has made it difficult to focus my goals, at times. My jobs were not always in the arts, and I have done everything from the mundane processing of insurance claims in a cubicle to my dream (yet challenging) job currently, teaching K-5th graders in a local Title I school. At times, life experiences were a broad, curvy path around discovering my true self as an artist and teacher. The ongoing process of finding myself has brought feelings of disappointment and frustration; at other times, contentment and joy. It may have taken this long to get here, and I never will say "I've arrived," but I now consider my work an expression of that journey and all that I have absorbed.

As a teacher, my students also inspire and *are* my work. As an artist, my process often begins with sketches and writing. My sketchbook is full of ideas with explanations jotted down, or an observation I may have had in an inspiring place. I often take pictures with my phone then use the photos to remember a scene or a face; sadly, the darkroom days are long gone. My palette is never very organized, as I've had many peers wonder how I keep my color scheme straight in my head. Even though I can be a bit scattered, my work miraculously ends up having a sense of plan and focus.

With the current crisis in our country, I would like to cautiously include more political statements in my work, something that I ponder often. As an advocate for the arts, my political pursuits include obtaining fine arts funding for all schools. Through that process, many other injustices reveal themselves. That crossover, of pursuing and sharing my passion with helping create a more just and peaceful world, is a place I would like to explore and express more in my work and hopefully, inspire others to enact change.