

How Education Transformed my Life: Amiee Risby

My initial goal when entering Kwantlen Polytechnic University (KPU) was to pursue a Bachelor of Fine Arts and to use this degree to teach Art classes at a High school level. This was incited by my experience in high school as it was a way to release the pressure around me from peers and my dysfunctional family life.

After a couple years of going through the program I was overwhelmed with the common path some of my peers had including their plan to use their degree that drew from the appeal to the stability of a High school art teacher. I quickly realized that I have not experienced much in the art world and considered the potential for my BFA. As the professors brought in artists through the arbutus gallery and included them in class critiques, a newly found faith in the possibilities shown in front of me started to bring excitement with all the opportunities that I just needed to reach for. I decided becoming an art teacher would be great too witness the upcoming artists and guide adolescence through an artistic practice, but I started to fear falling into a routine and falling out of my own artistic practice more daunting than pursuing life as a professional artist which to me represent an uncertain life style.

Entering my third year at KPU has introduced me to a community filled with people that have the same interests as I do and motivate me in so many ways including getting involved with artist talks, demonstrations from innovative pioneers in my specific practices and just connecting with the surrey art scene. Now that I have become more confident in my own practice I have been able to set aside my anxiety and join associations such as the Fraser Valley Potters Guild (FVPG) as the Secretary and the Kwantlen Art Collective as the Vice President. Through these roles I have volunteered more of my energy and practiced dedication by coordinating functions and engaging other students to join and feel more comfortable and supported here at KPU.

Kwantlen has provided me with the opportunity to learn and network with so many professional artists and organizations who have demonstrated the dedication, passion and creativity it takes to make a living through their life's practice. The piece I have chosen to enter, show the many stages of my educational development. With washes of colour charcoal drawing and textural differences, show the characters I have met and who has inspired me. The child facing the opposite direction of the viewer is the adolescent entering the first year here and the internal neck would represent my growth from experiences. The open lung demonstrates how vulnerable I felt and how much I relied on the interaction with these influential figures, such as professors and class mate . All in different stages of our lives.