

CERAMIC CREATION AND CARVING: MANUAL DEXTERITY FOR PRE-HEALTH STUDENTS

by

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by

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Artist Statement

Since I was a child, I have loved art and design. I've always been a passionate crafter and problem solver so when exploring careers, I looked for something that displayed both skills. I saw that the dental field calls for detail-oriented and caring providers, so I chose a pre-health concentration. Manual dexterity skills are necessary in health professions as the work done is very intricate, especially in dentistry as the area of operation is very condensed. As dentistry often has a heavy cosmetic aspect, artistry and analytical thinking are both vital in a great provider.

For my project, I explored this link between art and the need for attention to detail in healthcare answering the question, "how does using attention to detail in hands-on art improve manual dexterity?". I created three pieces, each exploring a different aspect of detail work that has improved my fine motor agility and prepared me to eventually be a great dental provider. The pieces focus on the work I have put into other aspects of my life that all contribute to my ability to be a health care provider and grow overall. The overall themes portrayed are emotional development, women in dentistry, creatives in healthcare, and of course hand skill growth through detailed practice.

A technique I showcase is emotions and passion guiding knowledge backed decision making. In the art field, emotional growth, attention to detail, balance, and small pieces coming together to make a whole is crucial. I've analyzed and researched these concepts to incorporate them into my designs and to then produce high quality art with emotional and technical grace. Getting my message and passion across amplifies my work and the results of manual dexterity growth shown by the successful production of highly detailed clay pieces that are accurate to their designs.

By working carefully on this project and not accepting any work less than perfection, I have prepared for the grueling physical work and tests needed to become an apt dentist. The variety of tools used in ceramic carving is somewhat comparable to the variety of dental instruments a dental provider needs to master and the artistry skills are directly applicable. Though I will likely not have to perform a live manual dexterity test when applying to dental school, I will be able to discuss my experience and deeply analyze my growth and ability to attain the needed detail in the art of ceramics and the art of dentistry. Relating my two passions of art using self-discovery and personal growth, and service through dental work, this collection shows who I am as a competent ceramic artist but more importantly as a person.

Bright and Inspired Jewelry Box

My jewelry box is more than just a decorative piece; it holds a deep emotional value for me. As someone who grew up with financial strain, this box represents a prized possession from my childhood. I have recreated this piece with technical carving details and vibrant colors using mid-fire cone 6 white stoneware and Spectrum Sangria and Kimchi floating glaze. To me, this jewelry box embodies both my financial growth and independence, as well as the beauty of collaboration after extensive conversations with ceramic artists around the world. I drew a detailed pattern and stuck as close to it as possible, with only slight artistic liberties, to challenge my manual dexterity skills. The result is a beautiful piece that showcases the technical skill required to create something truly special.

The Intricate Windchime of Emotional Growth

"The Intricate Windchime of Emotional Growth" is a deeply personal piece that reflects my journey from an independent young girl to the woman I am today. This windchime consists of 29 small ceramic dishes, each intricately carved with descriptive designs that represent different stages of my life. At the top, the windchime captures my story growing up, with each dish symbolizing a significant memory or moment from childhood. The designs at the bottom symbolize how I have healed my inner child through emotional intelligence. The windchime features birch wood as the base and pieces of various ropes connecting each carved dish to one another. The piece uses cone 6 terracotta clay, creating a natural effect that complements the intricate carvings and emotional depth of the windchime.

Oral and Systemic Health's Effect on Quality of Life

The tooth is a piece that reflects my passion for dentistry and the need for affordable and caring health services in our communities. Oral health care has a profound impact on systemic health and overall wellness, yet there remains an overwhelming disparity of care in this field. The sculpture is a large molar with carvings that depict the decay and repairs needed in the system, represented by detailed miniature figures within the carvings. Each cavity has a specific symbolic representation, including an office on a pedestal to represent the lack of available and affordable care, and a person isolated and not smiling to illustrate how oral health affects one's confidence and quality of life. The piece is made from white stoneware and is unglazed to represent an actual porous tooth. Through this artwork, I hope to inspire pre-health students and the broader community to become aware of and address the disparities in oral health care to truly make a difference in people's lives.

Conclusion Statement

In this collection of artworks, I have showcased the link between attention to detail and manual dexterity skills used in healthcare. Through the creation of three unique pieces, I explored detailed carving work that has improved my fine motor skills. I experienced a learning curve that I did not expect, not realizing how fully these techniques rely on muscles that can be sore and weak, needing repeated effort and practice to be able to work for extended periods without discomfort. By staying true to my goal and not accepting any work less than my best, I was able to find a way to prepare for the physical work and tests needed to become a competent dentist. I was also able to show how the variety of tools used in ceramic carving is comparable to the variety of dental instruments that a dental provider needs to master as I switched between at least 15 different tools with each piece to achieve the best results possible. Overall, this collection showcases my personal growth, self-discovery, and development as an artist in a field that is difficult to manage with a pre-health classwork and work schedule taking precedent. Each piece exceeded my expectations, strengthening my confidence in my refined hand skills and artistically expressing my journey to becoming who I am and my aspirations for the future.

Pieces can be seen on website: <https://sites.google.com/view/signaturehonorsproject/home>