

Dear Djerassi residency panel and partnering school:

As a working artist with a great enthusiasm for teaching, I am committed to developing adventurous and rigorous avenues in the arts through experimental pedagogical practices. With this motivation and my desire to evolve my own art practice, I have developed a residency proposal specifically for the Youth Innovators + Artist-in-Residence pilot program. Please consider my 'social practice' derived spots methodology project backed by my diverse teaching experience, outlined below, as a beneficial addition to the Djerassi Resident Artist Program and partnering school curriculum.

I myself have a background in teaching painting, drawing and sculpture, as well as digital and interactive mediums. My experience teaching in diverse communities is wide-ranging. I have worked with students ranging from young children to retirees, sometimes in the same setting, and have an inclusive pedagogy that allows everyone to expand their artistic practice. Many of my classrooms have been in non-English speaking environments and I speak Spanish comfortably. I worked as an instructor at a large university-accredited art school in New Zealand focused on fostering innovation and creativity in adult education. While there, I taught a yearlong art course to women (including Maori and Pasifika youth) at Arohata Women's Prison. This pilot program grew in size and expanded into ongoing programs around the country.

Education's vital role in the arts led me to focus on pedagogy as part of my Social Practice MFA at the California College of the Arts in San Francisco. There I was also the teaching assistant to the undergraduate 4D (time-based media) classes. During this time I led Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu and self-defense seminars to adults and urban youth as well. I have since run participatory art workshops around the Bay Area including the on-going "Collaborative Combative Drawing" first introduced at Southern Exposure.

I also offer experience in leadership, program coordinating and curriculum development. I created and developed the children's program at Berlitz language school in Japan and collaboratively coordinated the extramural art program for members of the deaf community in New Zealand. I tutored adults with their art presentations in English in South Korea at a well-regarded culture and arts organization. I constructed a workshop curriculum and art project for a human rights organization working with North Korean refugees as a means to practice and discuss notions of collaborative decision-making. I also developed an ongoing art project component as part of the earthquake and humanitarian relief efforts by Habitat for Humanity in Santiago, Chile. My experience across the globe and in a variety of settings allows me to adapt to the needs of students who themselves come from diverse backgrounds.

My own art practice investigates sociopolitical issues and cross-cultural communication through interactive and collaborative projects and community involvement. I utilize a wide range of mediums in my work, including painting, drawing, installation, video, performance and photography. Working with a class allows me to expand my own artistic practice in meaningful ways, mutually benefitting all involved.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you either by phone or email.

Warm regards,
Melissa Wyman