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ART 1107
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Vocational Exploration

1. Theaster Gates (How there are multiple ways to give back to the community when it comes to art and how art can look different depending on the setting)
2. Alex Dinh (His dedication and drive when it came to looking for jobs shows what it takes to make it in the art industry.)
3. Sabrina Chacon-Barajas (Her ability to give back to the community through art especially in children's lives.)

I am choosing Theaster Gates to reflect on because his vocational exploration had the most impact on the way I view living out a life that practically incorporates art and giving back to the community.

What skills are needed to do this kind of work?

Theaster Gates needed to learn a lot about zoning laws and how to turn undesirable places into gathering locations for the community. A few skills that were a preface to Theaster's work were a good understanding of the community that he is a part of as well as his knowledge about pottery and how to create something out of nothing. Theaster used his passion for creating to better the community around him and I think that speaks volumes about what it means to be an artist.

What theoretical ideas do people appear to interact with as a part of this vocation?

Theaster community acts with a sense of responsibility for the quality of life for those around them. There is a group prosperity mindset within the community that I believe brings a sense of comradery and fellowship around the arts that might not have always been there. They see art as an essential part of what it means to be human and a lot of the time art and culture are not fostered properly in struggling communities. What makes Theaster's community different is the way they create a space for beautiful life-giving moments while still working on providing the essentials.

How well do your interests and gifts intersect with this field?

My passion for social justice and art intersect with my love for community and making sure everyone feels included. I had not seen this lived out in a way that spoke to me until I watched Theaster talk about the way each community space was a place where all people were welcomed and loved. I would say that my interests align well with the work that Theaster is doing. Theaster showed me that you can take the skills from the art you love and translate them over to another job with the same love you have for art. Theaster went from creating pottery to building community he was still doing the same work it just looked a little different. This helped me to take a deep breath and realize that there can be aspects of what I love in everything I do even if it's not exactly how I pictured it.

What would you need to do between now and your graduation date to be successful in this field?

In order to be successful in this field, I would need to find a community that I can pour back into with the love that Theaster has for his community. I haven't found exactly what I am passionate about but I know through taking more classes and learning about ways to live out art I will find something that makes me feel alive and whole. By the time graduation comes around I would like to have a good idea of what fulfills me and helps those around me, ideally improving the quality of life for all.