

Educational Goals Essay

Though my academic career thus far at Macalester has been primarily focused on pursuing the Psychology major, I have realized that the number of courses I have taken in the Art and Art History department has made it possible for me to double major in Fine Arts. Since I am currently in a stable place within the Psychology major, with only three more required courses left, I believe that spending a semester abroad immersing myself in art is warranted. The Marchutz School in Aix-en-Provence, France would not only allow me to make progress in my Art major, but the program would also provide me with an opportunity to grow as an artist in a way that Macalester cannot, given its inspiring location and unique curriculum. The program, which focuses its instruction on painting and drawing, models after the work of Paul Cezanne and Vincent Van Gogh. The Marchutz School takes pride on being situated along the “route de Cezanne,” which it uses in much the same way that Cezanne himself did—to visually and artistically represent the natural world. This approach to art is extraordinarily appealing to me as an artist, because it contrasts with other art schools’ approach that tends to be more contemporarily based. I have always revered the modern impressionist painters and their ability to represent what they see in the world so expressively. This program therefore could not be more fitting to my interests.

Comment: Clearly identify the relevance of study abroad to your major(s).

Comment: Explain how the proposed program relates to your academic interests.

The Marchutz School requires students to take two 3-credit studio painting and drawing courses, and one 3-credit seminar. In addition, students are also required to take two elective courses offered at the Aix Center. The painting and drawing courses are taught simultaneously, with a total of six hours of studio time each week. Instruction

emphasizes the relationship between drawing and painting, and focuses on the study of landscape, still life, portraiture, the figure, and museum exploration. Techniques are taught that develop understanding of color, form, and observation. Since I have taken several college-level painting and drawing courses, both at Macalester and at summer programs during high school, I feel well prepared for the type of instruction that is offered at the Marchutz School, and for the art critiques that will inevitably be included as well. I have never had the kind of personalized, and time-intensive experience that I will encounter in this program, so it will be a prime opportunity to build on my knowledge of painting and drawing. Because of these courses' intensity, they may be sufficient to replace both *Painting II* and *Drawing I* at Macalester, which I would need to take in order to complete my Art Major.

Comment: Describe the relevant experiences and courses that have prepared you for the proposed program.

The studio courses that I would be taking are supplemented by a course titled, *Art Criticism Seminar II*. This is a lecture-based course that offers slides and texts covering various art disciplines, topics, and time periods. Different art principles and ideas are discussed, as is critical and comparative analysis of artwork. The content of this course is incredibly important, because without the ability to understand the artwork of others, and to critique and analyze it, one cannot fully be critical of their own work and therefore cannot develop their artwork to its fullest potential. I have yet to take a course that is entirely dedicated to understanding critical and comparative analysis, so this course will undoubtedly be valuable for me. It may also fulfill *Art 149: Introduction to Visual Culture*, which is required for the Art Major at Macalester. This course also emphasizes art analysis and criticism, and the changing of art principles and ideas throughout time.

Comment: Explain the reasoning behind your course selections.

One of the elective courses that I intend to take at the Aix Center is *Survey, History of Western Art: Renaissance to the 21st Century*. This would replace the second semester of *Art of the West*, which I would be required to take at Macalester in order to complete the major. Both courses cover key artworks and stylistic periods in Western society, dating back to the 14th century, all the way to today. As I am currently enrolled in *Art 160: Art of the West I*, my knowledge of Western Art will only go through art of Early Medieval, Romanesque and Gothic Europe. This should set up me up perfectly for studying Western art from the Renaissance, as well all periods that follow.

Comment: If applicable, mention the current courses you are taking in preparation for the proposed program.

The second course that I plan to take at the Aix Center is *Living in France: A Conversation*, which would fulfill my language requirement at Macalester. Thus far, I have taken three semesters of French: *French 101* through *French 203*. Since the French course offered at the Aix Center requires a prerequisite of three previous semesters of college-level French, I am eligible to take this course. It will build upon the oral and written skills that I have already learned, and apply them to actually living and conversing in France. As a result, the skills that I acquire will exceed those that I would develop by finishing the language requirement at Macalester.

Comment: If necessary, state your language or additional qualifications that are required for the proposed program.

My decision to study abroad at the Marchutz School includes many factors. The program stands out by itself because of its renowned instruction in painting and drawing. Had it been located anywhere else in the world, I have no doubt that it would fulfill my needs as a growing artist. However, it is so enmeshed by its surroundings that the two can hardly be distinguished from one another, which is what makes it such a unique program. Yet it is not only the beauty of this location that makes it such an ideal place to study art. Seeing a new place and culture will give me a wider scope of knowledge and

Comment: Clearly identify the reasons why you are proposing this particular program.

experience from which I can draw for inspiration. I cannot imagine a better place for me to find both artistic and personal growth than in the South of France. Additionally, simply being in a foreign country will allow me to improve my French speaking skills, hopefully to near fluency, and provide me with a new cultural perspective. I will return to Macalester not only in good standing to graduate with a major in Psychology and Fine Arts, but with a much more enriched understanding of art, France, and the French language. Both my study of psychology and art will surely benefit from the new perspective that I will gain while in France.

Comment: Make it clear in your essay that studying abroad will benefit, not hinder, your academic (especially major) progress at Macalester.