



**HOBBIES/INTERESTS:**

- Painting
- Drawing
- Museums
- Social Justice
- Performance art

**ART FORMS**

- Colored Pencils

**MARITZA LOPEZ**

**What drew you to arts education, and how do you practice the arts in your own life?**

I enjoy the visual arts and practice using colored pencils on paper. I now prefer exploring art spaces and reading about art literature. I am an art history major hoping to work in an art museum's education department. The arts for me has to lead me into an in social justice and educational practice to see the world in many different layers. The social justice side of me advocates for folks who are formerly incarcerated, system impacted, students who are facing homelessness and need housing. The power of higher education can lead people to pursue many great things and defeats obstacles in life.

I identify myself in the groups I mentioned- growing up as a kid art [programs] allowed me to keep my mind occupied and helped me coped. I was more drawn to arts eructation because my goal is to continue being safe spaces for youth and children in the arts. I want it to be equitable, accessible, and inclusive to everyone no matter if they are passing or failing an academic class. Art should not be an incentive since it is very therapeutic. We do not know what every child has to face on a daily base so instead of making one's life difficult let's make it fun, educational, and safe.

**Tell us about an impactful experience or association with the arts from your youth.**

The arts in middle school allowed me to escape from any academic failures I faced as a 12-year-old kid. It was very disheartening when there was no motivation and lack of acceptance of anyone interested in the arts. Earning an "A" in arts versus earning a "B" in academic classes did not feel the same. There were not as many opportunities to earn entries to art programs or earn awards compared to S.T.E.M. My middle school art teacher encouraged me to enter my first art competition (Lion's Peace Cub Award), I was nervous. I entered... I got first place! As a 12-year old girl, I shared my joy with some folks but their reactions were something I did not expect. Folks told me arts can not academically challenge and what can I do if I pursued the arts?

**Is there anything you would tell your 15-year-old self with regard to the arts, if you had the opportunity to do so?**

If I knew the resources I now know existed, I would have motivated myself to do it and explore these amazing art opportunities

**In your opinion, what are the biggest barriers to equitable arts education access in Los Angeles?**

Students who are facing housing insecurity, folks in juvenile system and youth who do not perform well academically arts are taken away from them. I think art classes should be given just as general classes (math science history). It should not be an incentive to folks who are doing "good" in class