



**HOBBIES/INTERESTS, AND ART FORMS**

- Making earrings
- Cooking
- Baking pies
- Making videos
- Playing with sculpey
- Teaching
- Sewing Making jokes
- Watching movies
- Curating playlists
- Listening to audiobooks

**JOEY SCHER**

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

In my senior year of college at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, I became very jaded with the insularity and elitism of the art world that I was working in. I decided to volunteer for a creative/expository writing nonprofit called 826CHI. I became really close to this wonderful 2nd grader named Valerie. I could tell she was very insecure about not feeling smart enough at school- she was really hard on herself. In the beginning of coming to 826CHI, she often would zone out and dissociate when prompted to write. One day, I let her doodle in response to the prompt instead of writing- she felt more comfortable doing that. Slowly, she incorporated writing into her drawings. She eventually felt confident in participating in the creative writing assignments. Doodling out her written stories allowed her to be more engaged and excited. My time with Valerie inspired me to devote myself to working within arts educator. As an arts educator, I am dedicated to helping youth celebrate learning and creating in a way that is absent of pretensions and counterproductive ideas of success.

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

I think fondly on the Saturdays I spent with my grandma taking pottery classes at a recreation center. My grandma and I were the only ones who signed up for the class, so it felt very intimate. My grandma has been fundamental in my evolution as an artist. She taught me a lot of what I know about the world of crafts.

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

I would tell my 15-year-old self that making art would continue to be the tool to help me work through trauma and pain, but also help me explore my multiple identities and how I operate in the world.

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

There are so many barriers to equitable arts education. To me, the biggest barriers are cost, access, and the social awareness around arts education. I believe that museums and other Art institutions need to foster conversations with schools in lower socioeconomic communities throughout Los Angeles to make their spaces more accessible. Not only that, but these institutions should be providing free admissions/transportation to these people. I also believe that schools do not prioritize funding for arts education because they deem arts education as less important than academic courses.