"I find tinkering to be highly connected to two of the studio habits of mind: engage & persist, and stretch & explore."
ArtsECO Fellows 2020-2021 - Alyssa Ackerman

Briefly explain what the artifact is and where it came from.

My artifact is a page on my website where I describe an assignment that I had students do at my secondary placement. I had students in an advanced Drawing/Painting class at Waukesha West High School complete this assignment. The assignment was for students to create an artwork with no preconceived plan using 10 different art media. The media was free choice and students were told to play around with the materials. In the lesson I emphasized play over perfection and students were encouraged to learn through trial and error. Some examples of media that students used are paint (watercolor, acrylic, oil, tempera), paint thinner, graphite, charcoal, sharpie, pastels, oil paint sticks, cellophane, tissue paper, embroidery, spray paint, and so on.

Explain how the artifact represents your current thinking on tinkering.

I have interpreted tinkering to mean playing with materials and learning through trial and error. I find tinkering to be highly connected to two of the studio habits of mind: engage & persist, and stretch & explore. I learned by having students do this assignment that this is a very uncomfortable thing for high schoolers to do. By this point, many students have established their media preferences and are very resistant to being pushed outside of their comfort zones. Students like knowing that they will have a pretty and refined artwork at the end of the project, but this assignment asked students to loosen up and make a piece without concern for how it would actually look. This was very challenging for students. I think that in the future I may need to give students more support to help them loosen up in this project. It was interesting for me to see how something that comes so naturally to children (play) is very challenging and uncomfortable for teenagers. So, the question is how can I get high schoolers to make art like they are children again?

Link to artifact:

lisalyssackerman.wixsite.com/arted/learning-through-play