

April 8, 2011

To Whom It May Concern,

It is a pleasure to write a letter of recommendation for Rachel Tobias. I first met her when she approached me inquisitively on the Pao Hall loading dock about a life-sized dog sculpture she saw me painting. Her beaming attitude was so refreshing that by the end of our conversation I had invited her to help me paint the public art piece I'd designed, due to her inquisitive nature, interest in art, and her extremely pleasant demeanor. This was in the spring of 2009, and the artwork became the raffle highlight of the jointly organized School of Veterinary Medicine/Art Museum of Greater Lafayette's 'Dog Days of Summer'. Rachel instantly formed friendships with the others working together on 'Psychedogic', as well.

Over the past few years, as her works have been displayed in Pao's hallways, Rueff Gallery student exhibitions, the Exponent newspaper, the President's home at Westwood, and downtown Gallery Walks, I've really enjoyed watching Rachel's own work improve and develop. Last summer she was one of a very few student artists I invited to be included in "Go Figure: Creatively Transforming Our Environment". This was a large exhibition I organized for the Art Museum of Greater Lafayette, with life-sized figures by 45 artists. The public enjoyed her cleverly titled figure of Purdue Pete (surfaced with recycled paper from the campus computer labs), which referenced both his amusing pose as well as more serious earth issues of unbalanced use of resources.

Since that first encounter when art provided the catalyst for collaboration and community, I've often forwarded other art opportunities to Rachel. More often than not, she's welcomed the challenge and become involved. Rachel has the outlook of a lifelong learner, taking advantage of the potential for new art experiences outside of the classroom to contribute to one's educational process, such as painting a rain barrel to promote oil and water conservation, teaching a comics workshop, or participating twice in Cancer, Culture and Community colloquiums. Her desire to be fully engaged in the arts is evident, whether in her studio classroom, her university, or her community.

Sincerely,

Linda Vanderkolk
Continuing Lecturer
Purdue University