

LETTER OF SUPPORT

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Dear Colleagues,

I am writing to you today in support of Jenny Corona's work developing her interactive sculptural *Kintsugi Dagger*. Corona is a strong artist scholar whose interdisciplinary practice spans a broad range of fields within the College of Creative Arts from sound and creative coding, to game design and object-making. This diverse set of interests has led her to develop a unique range of technical and conceptual skills resulting in a project that is novel in form and technologically impressive. On the first day of the Art 485: Experiments in Interactivity course, I discovered that Corona was developing expertise in music technology. She also shared her personal interest in creating the enigmatic objects. Both interests would later become the starting point for this piece. The epoxy resin swords that she makes resemble ritual athame or ceremonial knives that might be found at the altars used by wielders of magic. They also resemble a kind of manmade crystal called orgonite that is based on the pseudoscientific research of Wilhelm Reich. Finally, she draws visual inspiration from the Japanese practice of kintsugi for repairing broken ceramics.

Corona has developed her own, personal, take on all of these cultural precedents. Through our work together she began incorporating electronic sensors into these ceremonial objects along with shards of pottery from her job at a ramen restaurant, gold leaf, and other organic materials. At each step in the process of developing this work, Corona was fearless in her ambition and was driven to challenge herself to achieve results that may have seemed nearly impossible to her. This piece relies on custom software that Corona developed to collage voice recordings of her poetry based on electronic color sensors in the object that she made. It is an impressive achievement.

When I work with students on the creation of artworks, I challenge them in the following ways. First, I push them to develop a conceptual question that they find personally relevant and fulfilling. Corona began with a line of inquiry that she had previously explored and pushed that research into new territory.

Second, I push them to challenge themselves technically. I tell students that I would prefer to see them try something new and difficult and fall short of their ambition rather than perfectly executing something firmly within their comfort zone. Corona took this advice to heart and exceeded my expectations in this regard.

Third, I ask them to trust that even if they do not know what form a project will take at the beginning, that an appropriate form will emerge through careful and disciplined experimentation. This is the most important aspect of arts research. The only way artists can discover new forms is through entering a project with few preconceived notions of what the outcome will be. Corona embraced the uncertainty of this kind of creative research and emerged from the other side with a project that neither of us could have predicted. It is my firm belief that following this methodology will help her to achieve great things in the future.

Thank you for your time



Jason Zeh