



IMPACT 0277: TEEN WITH AUTISM USES HIS ART FOR GOOD

Alex Lim · 26 November 2021

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Alex is a 16-year-old vocational student at Pathlight School. He has been drawing and painting since he was five years old as these activities help to keep him calm. Alex enjoys drawing animals and still life, as well as exploring more abstract art through acrylic, watercolour, acrylic pens and other kinds of materials such as impasto and heavy body paint. His first virtual art exhibition “I Am Alex” was held in August 2021.

With the help of his parents and their friends, Alex managed to sell all 50 of his paintings at the exhibition within two days. Of the proceeds from the exhibition, 50 per cent of it went to the Cat Welfare Society, and he hopes to help the underprivileged with his next exhibition in 2022. Today, he shares 10 lessons he has learnt from his journey.

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1. Be independent

I’ve learnt to be independent by planning my time and making a time-table for painting and school work. I follow this schedule so that I do not miss anything important. Additionally, I have learnt how to check my paint supplies, how to order my paints online, and how to pack my paintings correctly.

2. Be responsible

If I am late for my school work and paintings, I cannot blame anyone. I have to check what I have to do for the day, complete my tasks, and plan my week. I have to be responsible because one day, I will be an adult who has to take care of myself.

3. Manage your money wisely

I have had to learn how to save and budget my earnings from the painting sales, as I need to put aside some money for every new series and exhibition. If I want to buy something that I really like, I have to work hard for it like everyone else. My parents said that I am old enough to understand how adults make a living.

4. Keep learning

I’ve learnt how to do other interesting things such as using social media, doing graphic design, Internet banking and simple website uploading! I also watch YouTube tutorials to see how other artists paint and create things so I can learn from them too.

5. Be grateful

I am very grateful to the many people who supported me. I am very touched. I try my very best to make my paintings as nice as I can to show my appreciation. Sometimes, I make special paintings as a gift for regular customers.

6. Be kind

I want to be considerate and kind not only to animals but to those who are less privileged. Whenever I can, I would price my exhibition pieces affordably, as not everyone who wants to buy art can afford it. I want to make my art available to many people.

7. Have fun with it!

I always have fun with what I do – even when I’m at school, at my piano lessons and when I’m painting. If I don’t have fun, I won’t enjoy what I do. It will take me a very long time to finish a task.

8. Laugh as much as you can

I have learnt how to laugh at myself if I make a mistake. I can always start over! I used to get very angry when I painted wrongly and could not erase it. It helped to have adults encouraging me to try again and showing me that it is okay to make mistakes. I can even find something to laugh about, such as when I paint a funny face by accident.

9. Be careful online

There are many people in this world who are good to me, and I am good to them too! Nonetheless, I must be careful on social media. Somebody once asked me to do a variety of sample drawings and later disappeared without purchasing anything. I now consult my parents whenever I am uncertain.

10. Love yourself

Everyone is special in their own way. Many people don’t understand people with autism, but that is okay, as long as your family and friends love you and you love yourself. I was taught to keep calm by doing breathing exercises and meditation whenever I feel frustrated and angry as it keeps my mind focused on positive things. For me, I think about my cats and my favourite Japanese food.



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