

Cristina Ferrigno
Personal Essay Statement
Queens College
MFA Social Practice
Spring 2019

My interest in Social Practice Art began when working as an Arts Outreach Coordinator at Adorama, a photography retail store in Chelsea. I created educational programming for their event space and curated gallery exhibitions that examined the intersection of art and tech. I thrived under the pressure of organizing multiple events and collaborating with outside organizations. I learned to make conceptual art accessible for the general public, and this position gave me a new direction to grow in. In my latest position with Girl Scouts of Greater New York, I co-lead STEM events and have been able to expand my teaching experience in a more structured setting. In leading these programs I wish to empower young women and to impart leadership qualities, kindness, advocacy, and to help girls find their voice. This praxis of my intersectional feminism has been incredibly rewarding and has given me a better perspective on where I fall in the education and programming spectrum. These past experiences fuel my desire to create work that is for, and in collaboration with, the community.

I wish to attend Queens College, specifically the Social Practice MFA program, because it speaks to my desire to bridge working with the community, teaching and the process of art making itself. I hope to continue to develop my long-term research project, *Latinx*, and to also create new bodies of work that would examine culture and identity. I think SPQ is a particularly good fit because I have lived in Queens for five years and have formed strong relationships with artists and arts organizations throughout the borough. One of the many things I have come to appreciate in Queens is the diversity that we represent, the passion of our communities, the care for our neighbors, and the tenacity of our advocacy on behalf of our working class and immigrant residents. As a New York City raised, public school educated kid, I would love to continue my education through the CUNY system, alongside other New Yorkers who care about our city.

Having access to that peer and faculty critique is a major determining factor in wanting to pursue a Masters degree. I want to be surrounded by other artists who are thinking critically and who have the shared goal of building their practice. I would be an excellent addition to this program because of my passion for *learning* and *doing* as well as my commitment to being a positive addition to my cohort. I hope that my perspective, my experience and my voice will be valued at Queens College and that SPQ would be instrumental in developing my work and research. In honing my Social Practice, I aim to center marginalized communities, prioritize representation and elevate voices. I want to learn how to build trust, enhance engagement and create successful, sustainable projects that grow through listening. I firmly believe what I tell my Girl Scouts, that we can create real change in our neighborhood, in our city and in the world.

Thank you for your consideration,
- Cristina Ferrigno