Experiencing the Arts

Art can be described as the expression or application of the human creative skill and imagination, typically in a visual form such as painting or sculpture, producing works to be appreciated primarily for their beauty or emotional power (Google, 2014). When we think of art, most people think of drawings and paintings. Art can be expressed in many forms, not just through drawings and paintings; some people express their artistic creativity through sculpturing and performing arts such as dance, play, and film.

As a native Washingtonian, I have enjoyed the vast majority of museums, monuments, galleries, and memorials the nation’s capital has to offer. As an adult, I have had the pleasure of chaperoning plenty of field trips with my children to many of the places I enjoyed as I child. One field trip in particular that I recall was to the National Gallery of Art in early November 2014. There was a beautiful display of art by El Greco: A 400th Anniversary Celebration from Washington Area Collections (National Gallery of Art, 2014). One portrait in particular that caught my attention was Laocoön. The portrait communicated to me that angels were being punished for something. The background is a dark blue with white clouds that appear to be in motion. There is a town in the distance in the background and a horse that appears to be trotting away from the angels. There are six nude angels in the portrait, with pale white/grey skin. There are two angels on the ground that appears to be afraid, as one is cringing. There are four other angels standing who also appeared afraid of something. Two angels, one on the ground and one standing are looking towards the sky while holding onto something that resembles a whip of some sort. This portrait made me feel humble and made me think of various biblical lessons I have learned which describes God casting angels from heaven.

Another memorable work of art that I had the pleasure of witnessing was when my grandmother passed away in 2004. An old friend of my grandmother’s whose son; Melvin Deal took great interest in African Heritage opened an African Heritage Dance Studio when we were kids and we often visited the dance studio on weekends, but never really became 100% involved in community events. When my grandmother passed away, Melvin asked if he could honor her life by having his dancers perform an African ceremonial dance. The dancers were dressed in beautiful colorful African garments, wore ceremonial masks, and some even walked on stilts. The performance communicated to me that we should dance and rejoice in celebration for a life lived once it is lost.

References Google. (2014). Art. Retrieved from https://www.google.com/?gws\_rd=ssl#q=meaning+of+art&revid=5917525 National Gallery of Art. (2014). El Greco in the National Gallery of Art and Washington-Area Collections: A 400th Anniversary Celebration. Retrieved from http://www.nga.gov/content/ngaweb/exhibitions/2014/el-greco-400-anniversary.html