

This is a story about me – how I grow up as an artist from NO to YES. In your perspective, what does an artist look like? In my imagination, an artist should be a famous painter, like Pablo Picasso. An artist could be good at different art formats, but at least he/she needs to be well-known, so he/she is qualified to be called “artist”.

Before enrolling in Art Education graduate program, I treated myself as a photographer and filmmaker, but I was not an artist, after all I am not famous, and I did not know much about traditional studio art formats. So I was inclined to call myself – photographer and filmmaker, because I’ve taken a bunch of photos and videos. I believe that everyone has his/her own right to have beautiful portraits, and I have “magic” power to make it come true. Besides that, I am fond of film very much, because it manifests world in a dynamic way. Film can increase our knowledge about our own and other cultures, certainly, it allows us to experience other cultures. Moreover, it enhances our cross-cultural skills, such as empathy, listening, mindfulness. I treat myself as a filmmaker, because I’ve been creating a lot mini-films, which contain different stories. I make communication (verbal and non-verbal) visible. So, am I an artist? My answer was NO.

After studying in Art Education program, my perception towards artist has been transformed. My advisor Dr. Unrath’s face is showing up in my brain. “YOU ARE THE ARTIST Jenny. DEFINITELY!” I can see Dr. Roupp’s face is spirally flying in my brain as well. They push me to consider myself as an artist. Self-identifying as an artist is critical when I am making artworks. It is significant to cultivate artistic thinking. I’m so happy that I’ve got opportunities to explore traditional studio art formats, and I’ve found that I have strong potential to be an artist. Fibers, for instance, I twined the basket naturally and the result – my artwork was exhibited in Fine Art Building. WOW, I am so proud of myself. Now, I am taking drawing and printmaking courses. The more I engage with traditional studio arts, the more belonging I can feel along with the path. I notice that I always make artworks meaningful, and I naturally grasp the skills.

SO, can a photographer be called as an artist? Are photographer and artist the same? I think artist is the big scope, which includes photography, videography, and MORE, so photographer and filmmaker are one of branches from the “tree” of artist. In this lens, I am obviously an artist.

Up to now, I’ve got confidence to self-identify as an ARTIST. Dr. Roupp has a rather expansive conception of the notion of “artist”. She claims, “you make creative choices every moment, you compose experience, you contemplate meaning. Living is an art, we are artists of life”. Eventually, I am along with this path to be a self-identifying ARTIST. I am growing up in this field with love, trustfulness, and kindness. GO JENNY! 😊