



HELLO ARTIVISM ZINE READERS!

ROWAN MCKIERNAN
BECOMING AN ARTIVIST

I am Rowan McKiernan, an Adelphi University graduating senior in the 4+1 Masters program, double majoring in Psychology and Criminal Justice and minoring in Sociology, and the co-founder and co-chair of the Artivism Club.

I am an Artist who elicits societal change through my poetry.

I became an Artist after my experience as an Artivism Ambassador for the first season of *Artivism: The Power of Art for Social Transformation* in the spring of 2022.

Initially, I was reluctant to be an ambassador and was even more reluctant about sharing my poetry.

With a little prompting and a LOT of encouragement from Professor Agelarakis, Dr. Lake, and Carolina Cambronero Varela, I agreed to share my poetry as part of my ambassador introduction.

While for many people, this may seem like a small thing, for me, it was huge. I struggle with social anxiety and am not one to really put myself out there.

After this experience, my confidence grew, and I realized that other people like me have a passion and are good at what they do but are too scared to take the first step in sharing their talents.

I became an artist so I could help people find their voice and use it with confidence; because everyone deserves to be heard. This is important to me because growing up, I felt like I didn't have a voice and that no one ever listened to what I had to say. *I needed someone who understood me, and I didn't have anyone. I want to be the person that I needed when I was younger.* Through the *Artivism Initiative*, I am becoming that person.

Being an activist has taught me *how to be a leader*, and I apply that in my everyday work.

I am constantly trying to see things from the perspective of others, *encouraging people to stand up for what they believe in*, and trying to make the world a better place.

A key takeaway that I have from being an artist is knowing *that I do matter*. I never really thought that I could make a difference, but through my growth as an artist, I realize that I do, in fact, make a difference.

I don't think I ever would have realized that if it wasn't for my becoming an artist.

Objects

As children we grew up playing with toys
objects there for our enjoyment
a time of play in a land of make believe
a time of serenity
But children grow old and toys are discarded
a child grows into a young adult who is no longer interested
in a land of make believe and play
But maybe toys aren't completely discarded
maybe we, as people, become the toys
We become objects for the taking and disposal
dolls at the hands of those who know "what's best"
All of our toys had happy endings
maybe we allow this treatment because we believe that this is the only way
that we can have a happy ending in a world where nothing seems to ever end happily.

Poetry

Poetry is used as a way to cry, to feel, and to breath
when you have exhausted all other options.

