

February 25, 2024

Faculty Mentor Statement – Payton Brown

I've had the pleasure of working with Payton Brown in both her undergraduate and graduate studies at West Virginia University. I have truly enjoyed mentoring and getting to know Payton through her robust academic writing, research abilities, and highly skilled visual artworks. I first met Payton when she enrolled in my Introduction to Art Therapy in Spring 2020. This course introduced students to various art therapy principles including the use of mandalas for anxiety reduction, self-expression, and mindfulness. Payton immediately took to this practice and began drawing her own mandalas both inside and outside of classes. Recognizing the benefits of this therapeutically based art practice, she developed and self-published her first coloring book, *Mandalas: 30 Hand-Drawn Designs* in 2021.

Since this initial coloring book, Payton has gone on to publish four more coloring books: *Flowers of the 50 States*, *Cryptids and Creeps*, *Berkeley Springs, WV: A Coloring Book*, and her most recent work, *Mountain State Masterpieces: A West Virginia Coloring Book*. While all of her books have been exceptional, *Mountain State Masterpieces* is truly extraordinary because of the tremendous historical and cultural research efforts Payton has put forth in its creation. Her research of historical archives and online sources have helped her highlight the beauty and rich history of the state through her original illustrations and designs.

In conjunction with these significant publications, Payton has simultaneously developed her own artistic brand and business, Art by Payton LLC. She has become highly skilled in both handmade and digital mediums and sells creative products like stickers, post cards, greeting cards, and original paintings. Her entrepreneurial spirit and enthusiasm for her home state of West Virginia are evident in her creative works and business practice.

Mentoring Payton during this tremendously productive creative period has been a rewarding experience. Her exceptional work ethic and creative spirit have resulted in the development of artwork and creative products that reflect her passion, purpose, and enthusiasm for the state of West Virginia. Her dedication and impressive body of work are assets to the land-grant research mission of West Virginia University and deserve strong consideration for the 2024 CCA Mentored Research Award.



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