

August 8, 2008

Dear Mr. Roski,

I would like to introduce myself. My name is Maya Lujan. I am a recent graduate of the Master of Fine Arts Program at the USC Roski School of Fine Arts. Please find enclosed a cd of my work with images documenting my thesis show titled "Up-Yes-Up-Yes-Up." As an artist, I am highly interested in space. My investigation of space encompasses the notions of outer space, inner space and sculptural space. More specifically, my work explores the space surrounding and contained within an object, framed and inverted space within sculpture, scripted space, including the considerations of how one moves throughout an installation, and painterly depictions of space in relation to concepts of abstraction and the sublime. The scope of my research includes the disciplines of art history, astronomy, quantum physics, psychology and philosophy. This description is only a condensed way to explicate the work I have been engaged in for quite some time. I would like very much to invite you for a studio visit, so that I might have the opportunity to fully discuss my work with you in person.

I recently came across information that you intend to travel into the highest levels of our atmosphere. This is also a dream of mine. I believe in manifesting things into one's everyday reality that seem remote or unattainable. I think that traveling into space would not only be life changing, but consciousness altering. In fact, I would like to be honest about the purpose of my letter. My objective is to kindly request that you sponsor me in order to make a trip into space myself. I see the potential for a long-term project and envision the trip to provide valuable experiential research that would inform my art practice in extremely positive ways. I believe that this trip will be tremendously generative on a creative level and feel very enthusiastic about the prospect of space travel.

In a 2006 interview before the STS-121 launch, the astronaut Lisa Nowak described the desire to go into space: "There are a lot of things we do every day that involve some risk, just getting in a car and driving to work, or people that fly airplanes for their jobs. We can sit in one place and never go anywhere or do anything, but that's not what people are about. We have a drive to go and do things, even if it's on a daily basis or with a larger goal of exploring. You can't explore and go and do things without taking some risk. We here at NASA certainly feel it's worth it, and all the people that support us, and our families know it's a really important goal."

I feel apprehensive about making this request out of the blue. However, I realize that artists tend to flourish when they have a network of support. I understand that the your family has already invested so much in my artistic endeavors as it is, simply by virtue of your generous patronage of the USC Roski School of Fine Arts. Please let me state in advance that I truly appreciate your time and look forward to a response.

Thank You,

Maya Lujan
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