

## WHAT DO BUGS AND HELPING DISABLED PEOPLE HAVE IN COMMON?

By Sara Da Luz Felicio – October 25, 2019



An Art student.

Elise Schaffer is a 22-year-old woman living in Pennsylvania. When you see her, you can easily guess the type of degree she is taking: Art. She has dyed bright red hair and wears funky glasses. Her resume is full of art classes such as theatre, and she plays three instruments.

But this red-haired woman isn't really an Art student. She is taking a master's degree in Art Management. Why did she choose this path when it is clear that she loves producing art?

"I am an artist but I'm not good enough to have a career as an artist."

So, she chose this degree program to be able to be in this universe that she loves. This program includes art history classes, politics, non-profit management, marketing and classes about art communities. The students are learning how to promote art organisations.

"I always say it's 50% like learning about art and the community of art, and then 50% like learning about business."

Elise is also working as project assistant on various projects for the art department of the Penn State Beaver campus. One of them involving bugs is called [Spotted Lanternfly: Zones of Syncopation](#). These lanternflies are an invasive species in the state of Pennsylvania and are now part of an environmentally impactful art. Peculiar, isn't it?

"Art can take many forms!", she said laughing.

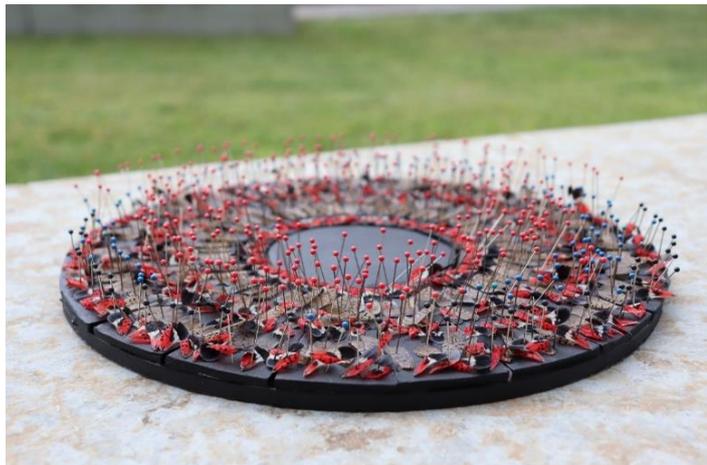


Image of Spotted Lanternfly: Zones of Syncopation Campus Arts Initiative project

The jobs that you can obtain after taking this degree are very different. You can choose to work as a graphic designer for a museum, or to work in an auction house to catalogue art.

"You can't have an artist run a museum and you can't have someone who doesn't know about art to run a museum, so you have to have someone that knows both sides."

But those aren't options for Elise because she already has a clear vision of her future. She has already found a job. "My job will be managing a program that makes art available to people with disabilities."

You can easily understand why this mission is dear to her heart. Her sister was born with a disability. Elise wants to offer people with sensory processing disorders the opportunity to experience art as equally as everyone else. Her goal is to work at the Kennedy Performing Arts Centre in Washington DC on a program called "Very Special Arts".

Elise's story shows us that Art can take various forms - from transforming invasive bugs into an impactful project ... to helping people with disabilities to access art.

