

Science and the Arts at Lake Forest College

Leah Frenette¹, Sam Pinto², and Nadia Vinogradova³

Departments of Chemistry^{1,3}, Biology², Art², French¹, and English³

Lake Forest College

Sam Pinto - The Studio or the Laboratory?



Sam Pinto '13, a biology and art double-major

Once you get to college, the one common question most people hit you with is, "what's your major?" Most students double-major in very closely related subjects such as economics and business or psychology and neuroscience. Others choose majors at extreme ends of the spectrum; I am one of those students. A double-major in biology and art leaves people with perplexed complexions and further questions. They may seem unrelated, but science is a form of art.

Art has its various benefits in the field of science. In career paths such as medical illustrations, a medical illustrator is required to know the anatomy as well as the physiology of the object being illustrated so as to portray it like a camera image. Engineers or web designers need to have an artistic side to them so that their products make sense. According to his article, "Art and how it Benefits the Brain," Grant Eckert emphasizes the fact that art is theoretically essential for the brain and a healthy lifestyle. Eckert refers to this 'mechanism' as "thinking outside the box." He also talks about art in the real world; "the artistic side of the brain helps engineers solve problems. It guides individuals to create solutions. Art is the property of fine artists; it is also the product of engineers, technicians, and computer designers."

Scientists are known to be very narrow-minded. Their main focus is on the science behind their research. In all my years of school, I have never known a teacher or a professor in the sciences who talked about the benefits of science in art, business, or engineering. As an artist, I have grown to understand that no one subject revolves around itself. I have come to the realization that art and biology mingle every day. I recognize that being a double-major has helped me expand my horizons and broaden my mind.

Studying two very different subjects, both of which are my passion, has opened doors to a whole other world – a world filled with opportunities not only in the sciences but also in art and design. As a future medical school applicant, being an art major also provides me with the opportunity to

show off my talents. It has helped me solve various problems with ease, and I have learned to think outside the box. So for anyone out there double-majoring in subjects at extreme ends of the spectrum, look at it as an opportunity. After all, nothing stands alone – everything somehow interacts with the other!

Nadia Vinogradova - English and Chemistry Focusing on Play Translation

It certainly felt like a cold Russian winter.

We sat huddled and shivering in our winter coats, watching through the birch trees the living room of the Prozorov household, where Dr. Chebutykin had just presented the Samovar to the mortified three sisters.

"Okay, stop!" said Richard Corley, "Whose line is it?"

The theater department was putting on Chekhov's drama, *Three Sisters*, which I had translated the previous summer under the supervision and with the aid of Richard Corley. From translator I became spectator, as the text was adapted to the stage. The interior of Hixon got so cold that I would descend to the warm, surreal circle of the wooden stage to join the actors in their warm-up exercises. We shouted about shitting bricks and milking cows.

The world I had developed like a photograph in my mind the previous summer was beginning, unfathomably, to materialize. First the round stage, an utterly surreal lone burst of bright color in the monochrome blackbox of our theater. Then the actors, forced by Director Corley's faith in Stanislavsky to become the characters, manifested themselves through dialogue and minute gestures, glances, expressions. I only attended a handful of the later rehearsals and a handful of shows, but I could not get enough of the staging and the story, which I had come to newly appreciate upon iteration.

It was a transformation I wanted. Afternoons in organic lab I could affect the transformation of matter, filtering and working up small yields of product for hours, inhaling dizzying quantities of ether and producing microsamples of product, analyzing them using the NMR, puzzling over spectra... Nights in the theater I could observe the analogous transformation of a cast of students into Chekhov's characters, travel in time, sleeves still smelling faintly of ether, to puzzle over the intricacies, the hope and despair of the characters, yearning toward a quixotic return to Moscow.

Translating and watching the realization of Chekhov's play was a thrilling experience, one unique and telling of the opportunities at Lake Forest College. The attention and aid of professors has allowed me to craft a frankly strange schedule, navigating a path in Pre-Med with dual majors in chemistry and English writing. Branching out into theater felt transformative: a metamorphosis and a convergence of knowledge across the spectrum from humanities to the sciences. I would recommend such an Ovidian experience highly, and to everyone.

Leah Frenette - Being a French Chemist

For me, a typical day begins in Carnegie discussing symbolism in Baudelaire's *Chant d'automne* in Professor Garneau's French Literature class before making my way to the third floor of Johnson and learning about hardware and software methods for eliminating noise in Instrumental Analysis. As a Chemistry and French double major, I may

find myself singing French songs to improve my pronunciation and then running my reactions in triplicate to assess my precision.



A sign directing students and visitors to the Chemistry (Chimie en français) Department at Université Joseph Fourier Grenoble I in Grenoble, France where Leah studied abroad her sophomore year.

The switch between the two, between my right brain and my left, sometimes comes so fast I don't have time to adjust. Those are the days my research advisor gives me strange looks as I accidentally greet her in French and the days when my mind wanders in French class as I remember that I've forgotten to remove my bacterial plates from the incubator in the microbiology lab.

Though majoring in very different disciplines like Chemistry and French can be difficult, like the inevitability of labs conflicting with afternoon classes and the constant juggling of priorities, I would not drop either one of them. Having the double major has made me a well-rounded student and has broadened my possibilities as I consider my life outside of Lake Forest College.

Note: Eukaryon is published by students at Lake Forest College, who are solely responsible for its content. The views expressed in Eukaryon do not necessarily reflect those of the College. Articles published within Eukaryon should not be cited in bibliographies. Material contained herein should be treated as personal communication and should be cited as such only with the consent of the author.