

# What's your creative community style?

by Mathangi Subramanian

Take this quiz and figure out how you best learn new art forms. Remember, your answers might change depending on the kind of creative practice you're learning, and where you are in your life!

## 1. How do you generate ideas - creative and others?

- a. Alone! Just me, a pen, and paper.
- b. Sometimes I like to work alone, but sometimes having a conversation helps me.
- c. Nothing inspires me like other people!

## 2. Where do you get your ideas?

- a. Books, television shows, observing other people - I like to really immerse myself and give myself time to think.
- b. I like to read or view art alone first, and then talk about it with a small group of friends.
- c. Book clubs, plays, art exhibits, other people - as long as I can discuss it after. I love hearing other people's ideas!

## 3. How do you feel about making mistakes in front of others?

- a. Um, terrifying. You're basically describing a horror movie.
- b. I mean, I know it's not the end of the world. But I don't, like, enjoy it.
- c. Eh, who cares? Making mistakes is hilarious!

## 4. How do you feel about group projects?

- a. Are you trying to kill me? Again: HORROR MOVIE.
- b. If I have a small, dedicated group, I'm into them.
- c. Sign me up! I'm all about collaboration.

## 5. How do you feel about leaving the house?

- a. HARD PASS.
- b. Depends on the day? I like my days at home, and I like my days outside.
- c. Yes please!!!

## **If you got mostly A's you're a Sandra Cisneros**

Sandra Cisneros is a Latinx poet and author who wrote one of my favorite books ever, *The House on Mango Street*. For years, Cisneros was obsessed with building her own, solitary life in her own, beautiful home, where she could be her full self without worrying about other people's opinions. Like Cisneros, you're a homebody who prefers daydreaming to day drinking, who loves your own space, and who values your solitude. Think about building a creative community that allows you all the space you need to be your full self. You might want to take virtual workshops that allow you to stay at home, to take in-person workshops that focus on individual projects, or check out workbooks or self-paced asynchronous classes that let you work at your pace and really listen to yourself without worrying about other people. Whatever kind of class you take, make sure you embrace your independence and do you!

## **If you got mostly B's, you're a Joy Harjo**

Mvskoke poet and singer Joy Harjo is all about community. Whether she's performing live music, editing anthologies as America's poet laureate, or starting organizations benefiting Native American artists, she is all about collaboration and performance. Like Harjo, you're someone who sees the benefits of big groups and draws energy from performing. That being said, you're also not above hiding under the kitchen table to eavesdrop on your elders - and to get away from the noise. If you're a Harjo, focus on balancing your introverted and extroverted sides. Take small, multi-week classes where a tiny group of people can bond intensely. Join a quartet or a band, attend the occasional open mic, and consider multi-week virtual classes where you can build community while also appreciating your cozy, at-home solitude. Being a Harjo means listening to your gut and understanding when you need community and when you need to be alone.

## **If you got mostly C's, you're a Gertrude Stein**

Fabulous, queer, gender-bending novelist, poet, and playwright Gertrude Stein was a serious Parisian partier. Stein surrounded herself with artists and weirdos, and wasn't afraid to put her avant garde art out there - if people didn't understand it, then that was their loss. As a people-loving, non-self-conscious artist, you thrive in the limelight, whether that's sharing your work at an open studio or hamming it up at an open mic. Seek out in-person classes that emphasize collaboration, like scene studies, improv, or zine-making. Join a huge choir or an orchestra, or start your own knitting circle or performance night. Remember that as an extrovert, you thrive in group settings, but you're also great at building community. Throw a bad art party, plan a reading series, or get a bunch of folks together to paint a mural - whatever it is, do it in a group that will appreciate your creativity as well as your charm.