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Teaching Philosophy

As a practicing visual artist and educator, I believe that an education in creative arts has incredible value and can lead to personal and professional success. My philosophy of teaching studio art is tethered by the belief that learning is a lifelong process that begins in the classroom. Therefore, I strive to improve classroom pedagogy through student mentorship, while acting as an aesthetic guide and engaged listener. I want to push my students to become better makers and thinkers by nurturing their abilities in *foundational* techniques, *intermediate* processes, and *advanced* methods in conceptual thinking. It is my mission to facilitate their search for personal motivation towards a unique artistic voice.

Technique

A *comprehensive* art education requires a strong background in foundational techniques (oil, acrylic, pen/graphite, cross-hatching, etc). The mechanical skills of drawing and painting taught in conjunction with visual elements and design principles produce an overall preparation for future growth. Consistently, class time in an *introductory course* is spent teaching a crucial skill, followed by student practice so I know they understand the theories behind the lesson. In-class practice is project focused for a period of two weeks and concludes with a group critique. During the two week period of class time, I am constantly walking around the room and speaking with each student as they work; I believe that a great deal of one-on-one time is equally as important as a lecture or lesson. This time is decisive in showing both myself and the student that they have grasped the information, and applied it successfully.

Process

A *rigorous* art education requires a willingness to embrace studio possibilities that occur through planning, experimentation, and risk. The exploratory skills of drawing and painting taught in conjunction with alternative methods (digital software, collage, xerox image transfer, encaustic, fabrication, etc) present exciting solutions, to solving visual problems on canvas. Generally, class time in an *intermediate course* is spent teaching a unique project approach, followed by student practice to build confidence. I ask students to experiment with different techniques or materials so that they can develop a sensibility with the medium and push it in new directions. This includes conventional methods such as painting with a palette knife or ambitiously exploring the use of powdered graphite with found collage assets or drawing with pastels over watercolor. I enthusiastically encourage cross-disciplinary artwork, such as installation, photography, or digital additions to their drawing and painting work. Interdisciplinary experience is critical to student mentorship in preparation for an art world that is constantly changing.

Conceptual Thinking

A *critical* art education requires an understanding that visual art begins with a concept, idea, or experience – and moving forward, evolves. The skill of developing a personal theme for investigation and research is necessary for creating a body of work that indicates a unique artistic voice. Typically, class time in an *advanced course* is spent fostering conversation, towards an independent project that is appropriately situated within art history, precedent, and personal interests. Each student is a unique individual and is driven to create for different purposes. I support a range of different pedagogical methods and actively work to better understand the needs

of individual students, to develop visual concepts. A prominent component to each of my courses is making sure that students have the confidence to seek out the range of resources and influences that are already existing in their lives (cultural, regional, social, etc). I actively promote a learning environment where individual students are encouraged to pursue and express their concepts freely. One of the most crucial aspects of my pedagogy is fostering a creative atmosphere that prompts students to ask self-reflective questions about their work and process.

When a student is actively engaged with a project and has taken a path that articulates an exploration of possibility, risk, success, and even failure, I feel a sense of great accomplishment and regard my teaching method as effective. Using visual elements (form, line, color, space, texture, value, shape) and design principles (balance, emphasis, movement, pattern, repetition, proportion, rhythm, variety, unity), I want students to develop and explore ideas with confidence. As a teacher, it is rewarding to facilitate a challenging project path that is specific, yet can be owned and interpreted independently. It is critical to encourage students to develop and pursue standards of excellence that are personal and go beyond the written lesson.

Student Learning Goals

- **Portfolio** - Ability to develop and design hybrid visual communications that culminate in a cohesive, rigorous body of work targeting professional practice.
- **Elements/Principles** - Ability to understand and critically apply art and design elements/principles through a hybrid lens of contemporary and historical awareness.
- **Technical** - Ability to apply appropriate contemporary and historical tools and software to solve visual problems.
- **Professionalism** - Ability to masterfully execute and display work with a developed and professional voice as evidenced in the assemblage of formal, conceptual and technical concerns.
- **Art History** - Ability to articulate knowledge of historical precedents and their role in impacting the development of socially engaged works.