

As an instructor, I strive to challenge students intellectually, technically and conceptually. Regardless of discipline, three factors are always at play within a successful artwork or assignment. The artist as an individual is a critical factor, as is technical skill, and historical precedent/contemporary context.

1. The Individual

I believe that, in art, who you are matters. Each individual student has their own unique point of view, based on their culture, history and experience. I encourage students to investigate their own perspectives while equipping them with the skills and techniques with which to do so. In my class I strive to create an environment that fosters trust. Respect for one another as individuals and respect for the classroom community is imperative. Students' contributing to one another is essential, both by sharing technical knowledge and by giving thoughtful, considered critique. These elements contribute to an environment of trust for the student, an environment where students are able to push beyond the boundaries of what they know, to take necessary risks with their work, and develop their authentic voice.

2. The Technical

A successful artwork has at its core deft and appropriate use of materials. While I strive to foster an interdisciplinary and experimental classroom, I believe students must possess a foundation of technical skill as well as knowledge of material and formal properties. All students will have the means of effective visual communication whether they choose to become artists or not. To this end, I demonstrate technique, tools and materials in every class meeting.

3. History Matters

What we do as artists is important. Art is not only a powerful communication tool, but also a democratic discipline with a long history of ideals, knowledge and traditions to draw upon, or revolt against, which ultimately contributes to the shaping of our culture. I encourage students to consider their art practice in terms of its contribution to our shared cultural legacy. In my classes, I present examples of both important historical works and relevant contemporary art to support and augment their education. Research is required of students at all levels. Recognizing art as a continuum in which we are participants, balanced with the acquisition of technical skill and creative investigation creates a strong foundation for students of the visual arts.

Lastly, Work Ethic

I encourage students to be self-directed and self-regulated, to set their own goals within the parameters of the given assignments, and to make artwork that is truly their own. This requires self-discipline. Students must find the time to be in the studio outside of class. The assignments cannot be completed in the allotted class time. Growth as an artist is achieved only through concerted effort and consistent production of work. I encourage students to be prolific, and to follow the promising leads discovered in this process in order to access their most authentic work. As artists, we are always challenged to find the time to work. Work ethic can make the difference between a practicing artist and a former artist. It is vital to me as an educator to instill this work ethic in art students as a method for growth as well as a means for survival.