

Teaching Philosophy

The core of my teaching philosophy is to facilitate students' individual talents while challenging them to take risks, both intellectually and artistically. Giving students a foundation of knowledge and a solid base of skills to create and understand images within the context of a contemporary society, allows them to further their own personal creative practice. An emphasis on the importance of art history, gives an artist a place from which to contextualize their own work. These foundations should be learned concurrently with exposure to contemporary art theory, thus developing critical analytical thought and the ability to understand both structural qualities and formal qualities of a work of art in contemporary practice. I want to help my students become visually literate, and to negotiate the meaning and function of the image in a world that is often understood through imagery.

My students are required to articulate their creative process through writing, formal analyses, and critique. I believe in an open exchange of ideas as the basis for any artistic learning environment. Students should feel free to express themselves, both in their own work, and in discussing the work of others. The respectful conversation around a work of art contributes to the meaning of that work, and the ability to accept constructive criticism is a part of growth that offers an understanding of the affect on the viewer. I communicate to students that as artists they have the opportunity to expand their creativity and their mind by trying new practices and methods, while understanding that failure is a part of success. I teach students to believe in what they are doing when prioritizing an artistic concept, as well allow themselves the latitude to allow a concept to evolve and morph into something else.

I consider photography a method of intellectual inquiry and investigation. Encouraging students to have a critical and observant eye on the world helps make them informed citizens who can better understand how interconnected we all are to one another. I believe firmly in being an inquisitive member of the global community and an active member of society. I like to have a brief weekly class discussion where students share a new discovery or current event. This can almost always be related back to art. The subjects raised are often a catalyst for a broader discussion that poses larger ethical issues, which students can contemplate or research. When we engage one another, we learn from one another.

My respect for teaching instills an enthusiasm and pride in mentoring students, to which I am committed. With education comes great personal growth. Some of my instructors were incredibly instrumental in my understanding of my own artistic process and my work. As a teacher I don't necessarily have all the answers. I think it even more prudent for a teacher to have the right questions. By asking me thought provoking questions, those to which I had to contemplate personal answers, professors helped me open up my thought process, and thus my artistic process. This made a difference in my growth and in my life by encouraging me to find my own answers. As a teacher and as a human being, I want to be able to develop relationships and make a difference in someone's life. Creating an environment of openness, honesty and respect hopefully fosters that in others, and allows them to give themselves the space they need to answer their own questions, finding confidence in their resolution.