

Mount Vernon High School
KAP Digital Imaging
2011/2012
Instructor- Mrs. Badger

Description:

This introduction to studio art will enable students to utilize digital tools to engage in aesthetic and conceptual practices in contemporary art. Personal studio projects will investigate a variety of subjects such as: the role of digital media in the history of artistic practice, the relationship of the arts to popular culture, the aesthetics of abstraction and the effects of social issues on the creation and interpretation of art work. Students will come to understand the fundamentals of composition and develop technical skills with a variety of computer tools that allow each student to create still-image artwork and moving image artwork. Through theory and practice, effective art criticism skills will be developed, allowing for creative group interactions and defining of one's personal aesthetic vision. Presentations by the instructor will be supplemented by student readings on contemporary artists and issues.

Class Structure:

This class will include demonstrations and presentations by the instructor, which will be supplemented with assigned essays, oral presentations, video documentaries, and research projects. Approximately half of the course will be spent investigating **still imaging** with assignments that lead to understanding of the techniques and concepts of digital printmaking. A computer scanner and Adobe Photoshop CS2 software will be utilized for this segment of the course. The second half of this course will be centered on **moving images**, utilizing video techniques and concepts to express ideas that lend themselves to movement/ sound/ etc. Video segments will be edited using Windows Movie Maker and Adobe Premiere Pro software. Students will also create one stop-motion animation project utilizing the software package StopMotion Pro.

Class Presentations

Various artists and their work will be investigated. Students will be required to work in collaborative groups and will prepare presentations for the class.

USB Memory Stick

Students will need to purchase a USB memory stick that has a minimum of 8G. This memory stick will be used to save still imaging and moving imaging projects. Students may not use this memory stick for any other classes. The memory stick will be stored in the art room. Students will also save projects to a special folder on their assigned laptop for backup purposes. Mrs. Badger will require all students to turn in their finished course projects on this memory stick. This memory stick will be returned to students at the end of the year.

Quizzes and Tests

Students earn grades based upon their demonstration of knowledge and skills.

Exams

There will be a final exam project in this class. Failure to turn in the final project will result in an F.

Project Grading: Grading will be based on rubrics and the degree of success in which a student solves each assignment. There will be a deduction of one letter grade per day for a late assignment/project. Please do not compare your grades with your classmates. There are many reasons for variations in grades. What is taking a risk for one person might be comfortable and predictable for someone else with more experience. I am knowledgeable of previous Mount Vernon High School KAP Digital Imaging student's accomplishments. I am also knowledgeable of Kenyon

College Digital Imaging student accomplishments. KAP instructors are required to attend a Digital Imaging Workshop each summer. (One workshop requirement is examination of Kenyon College Digital Imaging student work.) To do the best in this class you should start work right after the assignment is given so that you can rework projects as needed.

Projects are due at the beginning of the class period on the date of the class critique. *Note- video projects must be rendered before a critique. You must render a video project the day before the critique in order to meet the established deadline.*

Digital Imaging Project Evaluation Criteria:

Your artwork should be a creative response to the guidelines/criteria of the assignment. It should show an awareness of the appropriate audience/ assignment/ social context of your work as relating to other artists and non-artists, those of your generation and beyond, what era you are working within, what cultural knowledge you can refer to and what will be lost on the viewer. The piece should be appropriate for experimental galleries.

Artistic Integrity: Does the artwork show originality/creativity/innovation/ of an idea or composition? The artwork should not be a copy or near copy of another work.

Visual Attraction: Is there something that initially draws the viewer in to want to see more? Did the artist use an approach that is visually, intellectually and emotionally compelling?

Complexity: Does the artwork show conceptual depth, sophistication or complexity that allows a sustaining interest on the part of the viewer?

Surprise/Cleverness: Does the work avoid clichés and pat expectations?

Mechanics: Does the artwork show an understanding of dynamic composition and the proper use of the elements of art and principles of design to achieve a unified resolution that makes sense for the project?

Technical Growth: Does the artwork show growth in technical skills, attention to detail and a willingness to take risks...to step away from your comfort zone?

Participation: Does the artist show a willingness to speak up, give valuable and thoughtful comments, share personal insight and react to others' point of view in a constructive way?

Attitude: Does the artist show a commitment to the work that involves a willingness to learn from others, including faculty and students? Does the artist keep a positive attitude throughout the assignment?

Ability to meet Deadlines: Was the artwork submitted by the assigned deadline?
(All projects must be turned in prior to the start of a class critique.)

Reworking Projects: Students are encouraged to rework Digital Imaging projects during the course. You may rework each art project once. The new grade will be averaged with your initial grade. You must re-submit the new version within one week of receiving your artwork back with a grading sheet. Occasionally the instructor will set aside time in which students can rework a project, but for the most part you will need to work during a study hall or arrange time after school in order to rework a project. There are two projects that students can not rework. **The First Semester Culminating Project and Second Semester Final Exam Project can not be reworked.**

Class Goals:

Be curious, playful, dedicated, innovative and unafraid of risk.

Develop metaphors, irony and mystery in your work while avoiding clichés.

Structure your time well and pay attention to detail.

Develop an understanding of visual forms as vocabulary for your explorations.

Learn techniques and processes in still and moving digital image making and use them for your work.

Learn how to control and care for digital imaging equipment.

Make art in relationship to others: your class, your community and beyond.

Anchor your work in its appropriate context: historically, culturally, socially, and aesthetically.

Collaboration: Each student has different aptitudes and life experiences. Your classmates are an important asset. Your classmate's knowledge, insight, and advice should be valued. I encourage you to listen and be willing to learn from your peers. Your participation in class discussions and class critiques is an important requirement of this course. Students will be required to work in collaborative groups at various times during this course.

Academic Honesty: Being honest academically in an art class is more difficult to define than in other classes. Sometimes using another image is intended as a cultural reference. It even has a name: "appropriation". Whenever this is intended, the image is well known enough in the culture for most people to know where it came from, and therefore it evokes some ideas or feelings tied to the original. This is fine for an artist to do. Occasionally students find compositions or images that they want to use in their work. Drawing from a photograph in a magazine is a common example. This should not be done just to make things easier, rather than drawing from life or gathering one's own photos. By using such an image it often looks contrived or commercial. Utilizing this type of image can be done if it is part of the concept of your piece. Taking another artist's image, composition or idea directly and passing it off as your own is a case for dishonesty. I suggest that if you have a question, you talk to me before you start work on a piece.

Equipment policy: *Each student must have a Digital Imaging Equipment Form signed by a parent or guardian. This form will be kept on file for the 2011/2012 school year in the Mount Vernon High School office. Students must have a form on file before borrowing or using any equipment. You are expected to care for all equipment both on the premises and off. If something breaks or is lost while in your possession, you are responsible for it financially. See Attached Form.*

Make sure you clean up after yourself. Don't bring food or beverages into the digital art lab. Water bottles are allowed as long as they are placed on the floor. Mount Vernon High School has several computer based art classes. There may be class periods outside of the assigned KAP class time in which the computers or video lab are utilized by these other courses. If you need to work on an assignment in order to catch up or rework a project please talk to Mrs. Badger in advance so that she may assist in trying to coordinate an appropriate time and the equipment you will need.

Class Etiquette:

Critiques/Discussions/Presentations: Make sure to speak loud enough for everyone to hear and give everyone a turn. Refrain from talking when a member of the class is talking. Remember that you are expected to critique the artwork, not the person responsible for the artwork. Please do not continue to work on your project or other homework when there is a class critique, discussion, or presentation.

Internet/ Computer work: In a class where you are sitting in front of a powerful computer all the time, it is very tempting to use that computer to work on other assignments, browse the internet, etc. Please stay on task. The art lab is to be used for computer based art assignments.

Headphones: You are required to obtain and use headphones for the “moving images” portion of the course. You will be editing sound. This common courtesy allows the classroom environment to remain somewhat peaceful.

Here are some project summaries for this course:

FORMALISM

The first assignment challenges students to experiment with composition/design by creating still life arrangements on the scanner bed. Students will also learn to manipulate their imagery with Photoshop CS2 software.

- **Raw Scans**

- Students will use the scanner bed as a place to compose an image that investigates some of the elements and principles of design. You will collect items that are visually compelling to you, searching for unusual textures and shapes. Then arrange them on the scanner in a way that indicates an understanding of symmetrical and asymmetrical compositions, with unity, focal points, rhythms, etc. This is harder than it sounds. The most successful images start with good choices of materials and are often obsessively detailed and take a long time to arrange before scanning. Sometimes practicing with simple shots can be dramatic as well, but may require many scans to find the best result. Remember also that the items against the glass (thus on the bottom of the pile) will end up being in the foreground of the image because we will be seeing it as the scanner sees it. Raw Scans are a one shot deal. You will not use Photoshop CS2 to manipulate any part of the raw scans. You will choose your best two compositions to show at the class critique.

- **Compositing Individual Elements**

- For the second part of the project you will scan parts of the composition as objects and arrange through Photoshop CS2 to create compositions that indicate an understanding of the principles of design. You should choose objects for their physical similarities/ differences, textures colors, shapes, lines, etc. You should exhibit control over the techniques you are being taught in class and be able to identify what type of compositions you are creating and how to control them. You will choose your best two compositions to show at the class critique.

Considerations:

- Surprise, mystery or unusualness
- Open or closed composition
- Activating the whole picture plane
- Background shape and texture as interesting as foreground
- Integration of foreground and background
- Unity of elements
- Focal point movement through the piece
- Symmetrical or Asymmetrical Balance
- Rhythm of elements
- Complexity/ obsessive attention to detail

APPROPRIATION

Using cultural context to imply content

Artists have long used popular culture as a source for their work. This assignment challenges students to subvert the intent of their subject matter. Students will find a well known cultural image and subvert its intention with their own interpretation. Do not choose something that is just known in your own age group or your subset of our culture. Possibilities include well known art works and generic photos that are known by their “type” (50’s domestic imagery, for example). Students may use imagery or text to subvert the image but do not make it into an advertisement. Weave a bit of mystery and strangeness and strive for multiple layers of meaning with the image. Students should leave the image itself still recognizable or the purpose will be defeated. In order to decide what image to use students should first think about issues that are of concern in our culture like commercialization, portrayal of gender, or race. Then they will find an image that perpetrates what is disliked and find a way of subverting it without making it a surreal transformation as these tend to be contrived and clichéd. The trick here will be recognizing and rejecting a mundane or obvious solution and embracing a witty or clever twisting of meaning. Students will be required to create three different images or one series of three that will be submitted for a grade.

SOCIOLOGICAL MAPPING

The primary *goals* of this assignment are to learn to develop metaphors for your ideas about some socio/political issue and to explore advanced techniques available to you in Photoshop CS2. The image will be constructed in layers and will include some historical imagery (scanned by you or appropriated correctly) and some linear or graphical imagery (drawn by you or appropriated). The result will be one large-scale print that exhibits some of the formal qualities of maps or diagrams (broadly defined).

For *subject matter* you should pick a socially/politically challenging issue that you have either a personal interest or experience with. Climate change, genetics, fertility rates, population growth, issues of poverty or wealth, international relations, religious tensions, are examples of possible starting points. After choosing a topic, you will develop visual symbols and metaphors for these issues, do research on the topic and begin to collect imagery to use. Use the power of juxtaposition of different images and the meaning that is created by their proximity. (You could choose two opposing symbols or contingent ideas.)

For conceptual development and visual resources research different types of maps or diagrams: You might look in government documents, hospital records (EEG, X-ray, sonograms), NASA documents, weather charts, reflexology, phrenology, historical documents, etc. Students will need to research to find the right linear/graphical element for this project. Perhaps you are interested in a topic or phenomena and could do research that will turn up some interesting diagram. Look in the physics/general science section of the library. Brainstorm using lists in your sketchbook to create connections between these types of forms and information about yourself. You could use the form of maps to say something about another topic. (A revised world map is an obvious example, but I’d like you to go further than that) Examples: You might use a diagram of a chicken factory floor plan based on a study of repetitive motion but instead of using food as the consumable element, you could reference the river or a very tall pile of a repeated article (chose things that are interesting VISUALLY, not just intellectually). You could think of metaphorical elements that are tactile rather than linear, if your diagrammatic element is linear...so that formally they compliment each other. You could make a chart of the cycles of the moon and connect it to the cycles of global conflict. You might follow the shape and stitching of a favorite garment to juxtapose to sweat shop labor.

The final form should utilize many different layers which can work together as one large image (at least 16x20"). The finished piece should work aesthetically and conceptually. Scan images in high enough resolution to be at least 200 dpi in the final piece without upsampling! Examples of the possible construction of the piece: There could be a background layer that holds textures/ colors that could work separately as an abstract composition or it could consist of a larger photo or fragment of a photo. (You could deny the idea of background) There could be an intermediate layer or series of layers that could involve more recognizable imagery that is meaningful to you and your concept. You could section off parts of the image for various images or blend images for a disturbing effect. You can use metaphorical images that you photograph or perhaps photos from your family history.

Images can come from popular culture, but must follow the rules of appropriation in visual art...that is, you should use images that are known as a part of popular culture as a visual quote that carries with it certain meanings. AVOID CLICHES...this is not a hallmark card. Instead, surprise us by your image juxtapositions. Surprise yourself by making unusual pairings and choices of images to challenge your theme. Be careful not to make it look like a scrapbook page. There could be graphical data types of elements that give varied meaning to what is found elsewhere in the image. All of these layers should work together to imply content without being too contrived in their relationships. Make the FORM of your image support the idea: an example could be one of a larger shape above a smaller shape that can evoke an idea of danger, weight or fear. Arranging your compositional elements in this way could help evoke the feeling you are after rather than having you spell it out with text or literary illustration. Think about Unity...maybe leaving out elements that are not essential or not compelling as visual sources.

Elements in Assignment:

- Content: Socio/political topic
- Research: to investigate and obtain information and images
- Linear/Diagrammatic Element: from public or private sources
- Photographic or drawn element: appropriated or made by you
- Metaphorical development: NO clichés (or use in non-clichéd way)
- Process: Play with juxtapositions to surprise yourself, don't plan thoroughly.
- Use good compositional principles that support your concept
- Physical Form: at least 16x20" / layers/linear element

STOP MOTION

The primary goal of this assignment is to create a short stop motion sequence that tells a story. Students will create a storyboard. (The storyboard is a graphic organizer that illustrates or displays images for the purpose of pre-visualizing a sequence for the stop motion project.) The story should be quirky or unusual. The sequence should have a strong beginning, middle, and end. Use metaphors and symbols to create your story. The biggest danger with this assignment is that it is easier to be unsophisticated and juvenile as a majority of stop motion pieces are created for the target audience of children.

Writing and Planning:

- Plan the sequence and essentials of your story.
- Create a storyboard for the sequence.
- Get a sense of timing by recording sound (especially if there is dialog) or scanning your storyboard pictures into the computer and putting them on a timeline in Premiere Pro. Although they are not yet animated, you can get a sense of rhythm of image and theme by playing through these still images. This will help you develop your movement. This is called making an "animatic".

Animatic:

At its simplest, an animatic is a series of still images edited together and displayed in sequence. More commonly, a rough dialogue and/or rough sound track are added to the sequence of still images (usually taken from a storyboard) to test whether the sound and images are working effectively together.

Materials and Methods:

Students will take still pictures with one of the art department digital cameras. They will place this sequence of pictures on a timeline in Adobe Premiere Pro. They will add sound to the sequence. Students will need to collect objects.

Use Appropriated printed images from magazines/newspapers (these images can be cut out and manipulated (movable art with hinged sockets, etc.)

Use malleable materials such as clay, wire, wax, mashed potatoes, dirt, etc.

Create a charcoal drawing on erasable paper and shoot sequentially as you add or subtract from the image. (Vine charcoal, kneaded eraser, and hot press water color paper works well)

Create a painting shot sequentially or with parts that can be cut out and manipulated.

Make a small set like a puppet theater or diorama to manipulate.

GESTURE AS METAPHOR

Seeing and hearing the world in a new way. One of the main goals for this assignment is to learn how to edit using Premiere Pro software. An image has meaning because we associate objects, colors, locations, etc. with things we already know from general human experience and from our cultural context. As we start investigating video, we will be adding gestural movement (of a person, object, or camera) to the list of tools for creating meaningful actions using movement. In this project you will work with a partner to create 10 meaningful actions using movement. You will also shoot 5 more abstracted images that could link the actions or set the context. Students will purposefully collect interesting sounds. (This is not a music video- no downloading songs or sounds.) We will be using these clips and sounds to compose a short video piece as we learn to edit. Even though you worked with another student to collect gestures, etc. each student is responsible for creating a finished piece.

As we link these images next to each other in time, they will imply different things based on the action or image that comes before or after. You should choose images that are not clichés or symbols that only have one meaning. The meaning of the gesture can change based on what is nearby.

At the same time you will be creating actions, you will also be creative and skilled in the way you shoot the footage, emphasizing the aesthetic qualities of the image. Think of physical elements that can act as a filter over the camera. Use purposeful camera movements that either follow a motion or let the motion pass through the frame.

REINTERPRETING NARRATIVES

This project will be prompted by text. You will find the audio or written text first, then create or find images that poetically amplify, compound or interpret this text without directly illustrating it. (If it can be shown or inferred, don't also say it with words.)

Content and Process:

The content will grow out of your socio/political research earlier in the semester. Perhaps you found a quote while you were researching your topic, or wrote some journal entries about it. You might record an interview with someone or download a comment from the media. You might choose a poem, myth, operatic story or fragment of an essay that amplifies or refers to your topic as the starting point. All of the text need not be used... in fact you will need to use only parts of it as the final piece will only be about 3 minutes long. You should use the text as creatively as you have been using sound and image (cut/ repeat/ reverse, etc) After finding your text you will develop actions, objects and images that amplify or question it's meaning by being paired with it. Your interpretation will give it an unexpected twist or context. You should not act it out directly with performers although you can use the human body or an action as a symbol/metaphor.

Keep in mind the *ways of seeing* that you developed in the last project, including camera angles, home made filters and the like, although these images do not need to be entirely abstract this time.

Here are some ideas and cautions:

Take into account the zeitgeist (spirit of the age) and think about the art audiences in a contemporary gallery (Not just at Mount Vernon High School). Would your text be relevant to them and the time in which you live? If you choose something from another era, then the other era becomes part of your piece and you have to make it connect to today and who you are. If you don't deconstruct an anachronistic text, then it can become overly sentimental. Text that is very strong emotionally can be difficult to use, especially if you are too close to the feelings yourself. On the other hand, picking text you don't care about doesn't work either.

Realize that non-traditional things can become text...it could be a government document outlining the causes of AIDS or the ingredients on a cereal box. Your images will make it clever, not by illustrating it but by playing again with pastiche, parody, etc.

You can choose a text that can have more than one meaning, or the images could multiply the meaning. Think about the synergistic power of image and text. By putting the images you are thinking of with your text are you making the two elements together mean more than each one individually? Or are you simply repeating one element with the other?

Leave the viewer some room to interpret the piece, don't do all the work for them and solve all the questions they might have. On the other hand, if you are too obscure, you might leave the viewer with nothing to relate to, nothing to hold onto (this is a danger of some abstraction).

This is not a dramatic narrative illustrated, a commercial for neither a political party nor a Hallmark card video full of sentimentality. It should be edgy, fresh, challenging and compelling....

There are many visual artists that will be investigated. Here is a brief list of some of the artists that have contributed to the field of digital art:

Eadweard Muybridge

Etienne-Jules Marey

Andy Goldsworthy

William Wegman

Vitto Acconci

Bruce Naumann

Joan Jonas

Richard Serra

Tony Oursler

Nam June Paik

John Sanborn

Woody and Staina Valsulka

Cindy Sherman

Timothy Hawkinson

Ann Hamilton

Maggie Taylor

Richard Diebenkorn

Doug and Mike Stern

Betty Saer

David Wajnarsicz

Barbara Kruger

Katrina Eisman

Note- This course will require students to study and identify correlations between 20th Century Art and Digital Art.