

Art 107: Digital Imaging 1

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Cleveland School of Architecture & Design at John Hay

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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 including Adobe Photoshop software, digital cameras and video. Through theory and practice, effective art criticism skills will be developed, allowing for creative group interactions and defining of one's personal aesthetic vision. Both teacher lead lessons and student research will center on contemporary artists and issues.

Prerequisite: Digital Photography, or approval from KAP instructor after viewing students' digital portfolio.

Classes meet five days a week for 80 minutes each day, for one semester (20 weeks).

The first 6 weeks concentrate on composition basics, a review of Photoshop and creating 2D artwork on the computer using a still camera and scanner. The remaining 14 weeks concentrate on video production. A variety of video techniques with appropriate software will be utilized.

Students will begin the course with creating a website that will house all required work. The website will be a well-designed site using WIX that will showcase the students' artwork, written critiques and final Artist Statement. All work will be graded from this site and will be used as a portfolio.

Assignments (Stills, 1st 6 weeks) include a selection from this list:

Formalism Assignments: This assignment deals with visual composition. Students will learn how the elements and principles of design play important roles in creating composition. They will also learn technical skills in using a digital camera to input imagery into the computer and how to use Photoshop software to manipulate those images. Influential artists that will be introduced are: Andy Goldsworthy, Andres Gursky, the Starn twins, Sandy Skogland, Jackson Pollack and Radcliffe Bailey.

Formalism_Raw Composition (one shot deal): Students will use a flatbed with the camera affixed from above the composition to compose an image that investigates some of elements and principles of design. Students will collect a wide variety of objects and will proceed to arrange them in a way that indicates an understanding of symmetrical and asymmetrical compositions and proper use of the principles of design.

Motion Scan (using a flatbed scanner): Students will be required to make compositions using natural elements, man-made objects, and scans using a flatbed scanner in which motion are utilized to create a strong composition. Students will create a minimum of two compositions for each of the above categories to show at critique and submit the best one from each category to hand in.

Essentialism Still: This project includes experimentation of Photoshop tools to the extent of creating an abstract work that examines the limit of the tools. They will experiment with the concept of minimalism in composition and learn to observe the essential qualities of the visual content and get down to their essence.

Formalism_Manipulated Composition (multiple readjustments): Students will choose objects for their physical similarities/differences, textures, colors, shapes, lines and values. Using photos of single items, students will manipulate the images in Photoshop weaving the layers into a compelling composition. Focusing on texture, form and depth students will learn more advanced problem solving skills and recognize excellent composition. Students should make a progression of these to show at critique and then choose the best one to hand in.

Magic Realism: Imagining the world in a way that it cannot physically exist has inspired artists throughout history. These flights of fancy have often started with dreams, desires, humor or terror and have been entertaining, provocative and inspirational for viewers. Although there are many styles and degrees of creating eccentric images, students will focus on a semi-believable approach similar to *magic realism*. In this tradition, common or mundane forms are changed but they maintain a degree of believability. They often hold meaning that is personal/ political in nature and have a poetic/ multi-layered interpretation. The subject for this project is personal, exploring your dreams, fears and desires. To the degree that these issues are also connected to society, students might interpret their ideas more broadly. Students' artwork will show the expertise they have gained in manipulating images using Photoshop. Influential artists that will be introduced are: Erik Johansson, Tim Cantor, Maggie Taylor, Vladimir Kush, and Robert & Shana ParkeHarrison.

Appropriation: *Using cultural content 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 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. Influential artists that will be introduced are: Andy Warhol and Kihde Wiley

Multiple Me: Students will learn how to set up the camera to take a series of action photos that will be merged into a single picture using Photoshop. The result will be a sophisticated scene of depth and overlap in a cohesive composition. Lighting, placement and mood will need to be considered. Influential artists that will be introduced are: Eadweard Muybridge and Thomas Eakins.

Sociological Mapping/ Personal Map: Students will loosely use the formal qualities and conceptual implications of maps as a starting point. The image should be built in layers and should utilize several types of compositional elements. Students will pick a personal issue to explore such as their dreams, fears or fascinations. These are elements that make each person an individual and are not readily apparent from the more practical things that identify a student such as physical appearance or interests.

Tilt-Shift: To recognize differing vantage points and how it affects meaning, mood and context visually, students will transform an image into what appears to be a miniature model or scene rather than real life. The students will have to be discerning in setting up their photography scenes since the photo needs to be from a higher vantage point than the normal street level to insure success.

Synergy: This project pairs two seemingly unrelated images to create a new meaning to both the images by their pairing. Students are encouraged to avoid the obvious and go for surprising, compelling, sustaining. Students will

learn to be aware of varied meanings in works of art and to understand what makes a mood or meaning change. They will experience how images paired together can change the meaning or context of an image.

Fictitious Advertising Assignment: Students will create a concept of a product, in the fashion of Japanese Chindogu (nonsense inventions for everyday use), to advertise and make a brochure or poster to accompany it that will ironically reflect/provoke/reinterpret your surrounding culture. The concept should develop from personal intrigue or impatience with an aspect of our culture. Students will need to develop the concept, title, slogan, logo, and advertising copy, then draw or photograph images that support the idea.

Some artists call this practice “Intervention” in our culture. Projects are often social or political commentary. These artists question convention by using humor and unusual associations to challenge public assumptions.

Social Comment: This project is in the form of a poster that features a social issue. The purpose of the poster is to make your audience aware of the social issue and act upon its solution. An “Active Voice” is necessary. Students will use their knowledge of Photoshop tools and composition to create a poster that not only tells a strong message, with passion, but does it artistically.

Genetic Portraiture: This project explores genetic relationships between family members by combining the right side of one members’ face with the left side of another member. Similar lighting conditions and careful blending techniques are required. This assignment creates an awareness of family likenesses and differences as it relates to cultures.

Altered Magic Realism: This project starts with the Magic Realism project. The artwork will be printed and then manipulated to show literal depth of foreground, middle ground, and background. Layers can be built up in a variety of ways. Influential artists that will be introduced are: Holly Roberts and Frank Stella.

Assignments (Video, last 14 weeks) include a selection from this list:

Cinemagraph: Cinemagraphs are part still picture and part video, making it the bridge between the two formats taught in this course. They are small gif files so they take up very little memory. The best images have both something moving and something that should be moving but isn’t...for the OMG effect when someone notices the movement in what at first glance is a still picture. We begin with this first video project to learn a simple process of movie making and to practice photography skills of setting up a scene. Influential artists that will be introduced are: Jamie Beck, Kevin Burg, Julien Douvier, Parisa Ghanderi, Andrew and Carissa Gallo and Ai Wei Wei.

Soundscapes: Using a recorder, students will collect a variety of both natural and Foley sounds, and then combine their choices into sound compositions for their video productions in Movie Maker. Students will experience listening in a new way. Influential artists that will be introduced are: Brian Harnetty, Stephen Vitello, Laurie Anderson, Janet Cardiff and George Bures-Miller.

Stop Motion: Students will choose an existing story or poem or one that the student has written him/herself and abstractly illustrate the story in stop-motion. Images will be symbolic, not literal, and should amplify, not simply repeat what is being said. This visual story must have a beginning, middle and an end. Lighting effects, speed of frames, having an element of surprise that unfolds in some way over time will be considered in the grading of this project.

Sound will be included as a part of this assignment and will be used to give new meaning or amplify the emotion of the project. Students will use their Soundscapes for this assignment.

Influential artists that will be introduced are: Adam Pesapane (Pes), Rhett and Link, Tim Burton and Blu.

Electronic Mirror: This is a stop motion or video project with the camera facing you. Plan a message in an unusual way. *Think surprising, compelling, sustaining.* Students will learn basic videotaping techniques with sound and understand how time is an element of composition. Influential artists that will be introduced are: William Wegman (Stomach Song, Deodorant, Massage Chair), Cheryl Donegan and Bruce Nauman (Stomping in the Studio).

Essentialism Video: As in the Essentialism still project, students will abstract an image through many levels of manipulation. In this project a short video will be used. The image will change through time developing into an abstraction that will hold the audience's attention through the duration. Students will learn the tools available in the software used for video production and to take a visual to many levels deep of abstraction...from deconstructing to abstracting to more deconstructing.

Aesthetics of the Ordinary: This video with sound will feature an ordinary object, changing its view using elements and principles of composition to make an intriguing visual experience. Students will experiment with new and innovative techniques to achieve ambiguity and manipulation. The sound used will also be from the Soundscapes assignment. Influential artists that will be introduced are: Leighton Pierce and Mary Lucier.

Aesthetics Narrative: After pairing the Soundscapes with the Aesthetics of the Ordinary assignment, students will rework the soundscapes to change the mood or meaning of the Aesthetics of the Ordinary project. Further developing the visual aspect of the piece may also be considered.

Reinterpreted Narrative: This video has a beginning, middle, (climax) and an end as in a story. The sound element can be a poem, song, a collection of sounds, etc. Students can use an established narrative to start and change it as needed.

Gesture: Using gestural motions students will create a video that has meaning without using recognizable, usual gestures that serve as normal communication. Sound will be included to further heighten the meaning of the motions. Minimum 1 minute long.

Research and Critique Assignments (dispersed within the full 20 weeks) include a selection from this list:

Historical Research: This is a reading/video assignment of the history of art from prehistoric times to today. Quizzes are given on each chapter to assure students understand the basics of the text. Students will be exposed to the changes and connections throughout history concerning art and culture. Students will be expected to understand the basis of today's art and how it was influenced by the past.

Artist Documentary Video: In this project, students will research, plan, write, create, edit, and export a 5 minute documentary based on the life of a famous artist. Each student will be required to locate, organize, analyze, evaluate, synthesize, and ethically use information from a variety of sources and media. Students will cite their sources at the end of the project. Students will learn research and writing procedures that relate to documentaries and be able to effectively synchronize audio and video, and to overlay a narrative. Students will learn to effectively tell a non-fictional story as it relates to artists' life and works.

In-Progress Critique: is an informal discussion of each other's artwork while still incomplete. Students will participate in the discussion for the purpose of assessing the process and ideas while still in the artworks formation. Student participation consists of critically discussing own and others' art to gain ideas from discussions for the betterment of own art.

Written Critique: This is a formal critique written in paragraph form, describing, analyzing, interpreting and evaluating the artwork. Students will be able to write intelligently and accurately about art, compare techniques and compositions, and understand that critiquing is a communication skill. Students will recognize the value of reading and writing about art... how it helps the audience to more deeply understand what they are viewing and how it helps you to learn to express yourself.

Evaluation Criteria:

Does the work show...

1. An approach that is visually, intellectually and emotionally compelling? Is there something that initially draws the viewer in to want to see more?
2. Originality/creativity/innovation/surprise/cleverness? Does the work avoid clichés and pat expectations? Did you take a risk...step away from your comfort zone?
3. Conceptual depth, sophistication or complexity that allows a sustaining interest on the part of the viewer.
4. Form (its color, media, rhythm, etc.) that supports the content (the idea or concept)? Does it make sense to use this form for this subject?
5. Resolution in the way that makes sense for your own project? The various themes and metaphors should pull together into a unified whole that makes sense. It should be finished. It should fulfill the assignment.

Do you show...

6. A commitment to the work that involves creative problem solving, development of technical skills, attention to detail, meeting deadlines, showing artistic integrity and effort, a willingness to learn from others including faculty and students, participation in group critiques and discussions?
7. 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. It should be a creative response to the guidelines of the assignment.