KAP Digital Imaging
2014-2015
Cleveland School of Architecture & Design at John Hay
Art Teacher: Nancy C. Murnyack
murnyack@yahoo.com

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, scanners, and digital cameras. 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 10 weeks concentrate on learning Photoshop and creating 2D artwork on the computer and using a still camera and a scanner. The second 10 weeks concentrate on video production. Stop motion and video with appropriate software will be utilized.

FIRST 10 WEEKS: Students will learn how to use the digital media through a variety of visual art exercises before they are required to complete major assignments. After directed lessons on Photoshop basics, students will prove their understanding and capabilities through practice projects.

Practice projects include a selection from this list:

Still Life – Provides practice of composition rules and effective use of elements and principles of design. Focuses on learning the Selection tools, Layers and basic manipulations.

TiltShift – A fun project where an ordinary photograph is made to look like a photo of toys or a model. Uses Quick Mask, Blur and Adjustment Layers along with practice with specific photographic compositions.

MultipleMe – A creative photograph with multiple images of self within one background composition. Focuses on planning composition in advance, layers and layer masks, and basic blending techniques.

Animorph – A combination of a head and shoulders self-portrait and your inner animal. A gradual merging of the animal features with your own will give you a morph quality that is convincingly real. Use of Layer Masks, Clone tool, Selection Tools, Dodge and Burn, practice with blending techniques, and using a subtle hand with these tools will be necessary to successfully complete this project.

Arbitrary Color – A series of manipulated photos in the style of Andy Warhol's silkscreen prints. Use of Posterize adjustments, Color adjustments, use of Grids and Guides.

Composite Animals – A blending of multiple animals into a feasible/believable composite…creating an impossible animal. A more advanced version of the Animorph project.

Portrait – Using Painting tools, Color Selections, Adjustment tools, Filters, Layers and Layer Masks to create a self-portrait that appears to be a traditional painting rather than a digitally enhanced image.

Major Assignments (2D, 1st quarter) include a selection from this list:

Formalism Assignment: 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 scanner to input imagery into the computer and how to use Photoshop software to manipulate those images.

> **Raw Scan** (one shot deal)**:** Students will use a scanner bed 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 on a scanner in a way that indicates and understanding of symmetrical and asymmetrical compositions and proper use of the principles of design. Students will be required to make scans using natural elements, man-made objects, and scans in which motion is utilized to create a strong composition. Students will create a minimum of two scans for each of the above categories to show at critique and submit the best one from each category to hand in.

> **Manipulated Scan** (multiple readjustments)**:** For the second part of the project students will scan parts of the composition as individual objects and arrange them through Photoshop to create compositions that indicate an understanding of the principles of design. Students will choose objects for their physical similarities/differences, textures, colors, shapes, lines and values. Students should make at progression of these to show at critique and then choose the best one to hand in.

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.

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.

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.

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. Students artwork will show the expertise they have gained in manipulating images using PhotoShop.

Fictitious Advertising Assignment: Students will create a concept of a product, in the fashion of Japanese Chindogu (nonsense inventions for every day 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.

Book Project: Students will create a series of images that are formally and conceptually linked and sequential. They will choose the theme (subjects or objects) and start by taking photos that emphasize the formal qualities of the subject, unusual points of view, and artist intervention in the shot, compelling, mysterious, or innovative approaches to shooting the images. Students will build upon the first project where the elements were arranged on the scanner in a way that made their formal qualities dominant, but will also add conceptual meaning to these materials by choosing them for their symbolic value as well. The book will have a sequence in which something is revealed over time as the viewer moves through the images. The revelation can be simple, like another symbol that becomes more obvious through the sequence and takes over the first image, or it can be more complex in meaning. Students will be required to turn in one completed book for a grade.

Major Assignments (3D, 2nd quarter) include a selection from this list:

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.

> **Sonic Collage:** Students will explore the element of sound, recording both Foley and natural sounds. 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.

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.*

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.

Gesture: Using gestural motions you 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.

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. You can use an established narrative to start and change it as needed.

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.

A **research project** will also be part of the program with students choosing a current digital artist to research and present to the class using PowerPoint as the presentation medium. Students will compare and contrast their digital artist with historical periods and techniques innovative in their day along with giving a thorough description of the style and processes used by their digital artist. Photos of his or her artwork along with video clips will be expected in the PowerPoint.