

KAP Digital Imaging
2007/2008
Mount Vernon High School
Mrs. Badger

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, and the aesthetics of abstraction and the effects of gender/race/class on the creation and interpretation of artwork. Students will come to understand the fundamentals of composition and develop technical skills with a variety of computer tools including still image. Through theory and practice, students will enhance their art-criticism skills, allowing for creative group interactions and for the defining of personal aesthetic vision.

Presentations by the instructor will be supplemented by student research on contemporary artists and issues.

Formalism Assignment: For this assignment students will learn about visual composition and how to use scanners to input imagery into the computer. Students will be introduced to PhotoShop software and will learn how to manipulate their images.

One Shot Deal: Students will use a scanner bed to compose an image that investigates some of the elements and principles of design. Students will collect a wide variety of objects and will proceed to arrange them on the scanner in a way that indicates an 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 five scans for each of the above categories. Students will submit their best two from each category for a grade.

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, and lines, and values. Students will create a minimum of four and will submit their best two for a grade.

Map of the personal: 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, desires, 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.

The final form should utilize many different layers which can work together as one image or may be presented as a series, but in either case it has to work aesthetically as well as conceptually. All of these layers should work together to imply content without being too contrived in their relationships. Students will create one personal map and will turn this in for a grade.

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. The development of the concept will most likely be by trial and error.

Synergy and Symbolism: Students will choose two to three objects or images that are symbolically significant to them. These could include self-portrait or landscape images as well as particular objects. The images should mean something different by being in the same piece than they would mean if they were alone: hence the idea of synergy: an energy that develops from the interaction of images. Isolate the images (no background in the Photoshop document). Students will print the images one at a time in the inkjet printer on the same sheet of paper, varying the position, size, and density of the images so that their final layering is a surprise. Students are required to turn in their best two final images for a grade.

Synergy and Symbolism version 2: Students will take some cues from the last assignment and develop new, more personal aspects to it, as well as increase the manipulation of the images. Students will choose two or three objects or images that have symbolic significance to them. These could include self-portrait or landscape images as well as particular objects. The images should mean something different by being in the same piece than they would mean if they were alone: hence the idea of synergy: an energy that develops from the interaction of images. They will combine these images in experimental ways that will include more than inkjet printing. Students will be challenged to use other mixed media such as colored pencil, paint, stitching, and various more traditional printmaking processes to complete one finished project. Students will develop a series of three images that will be submitted for a grade.

Inkjet Print Mail Art Project: Students will use Photoshop to make postcards that will be mailed. These postcards must comment in some way on the social or political context associated with the students' lives. Students will combine images from existing cultural sources (appropriation) choosing them for their specific cultural implications. Students also will take into account the nature of multiples and the characteristics associated with mailable art. Why does it make sense to send this to whom? What does mailability do to the size, shape, and nature of the piece? Students will make five different variations and mail at least that many or multiples thereof. Students will ask for a response from the receiver- feedback that is either verbal or visual. Students will turn in five images as part of the project grade. Students are required to submit the five responses to their inkjet print mail art project as evidence that they fulfilled this part of the assignment.

Book Project: Students will create a series of images that are formally and conceptually linked and sequential. They will choose the theme (subject 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.

Associated Narratives: Students will be challenged to create a narrative that is atypical and suggestive rather than linear and conventional. Through a combination of chance and random choices, students will select six to ten objects that will act as characters and symbols in their piece. After finding the names of their symbol or objects students will use a combination of methods for arriving at the images. Students may photograph the image, find the element alone in an appropriated (known) source or draw or paint the object. Compositionally they will use methods of dividing the picture plane, repetition and size alterations that may be invented from the ground up or get inspiration from a researched source (architecture, landscape or building blocks). Additionally students will be thinking about pattern and texture in these images and deciding if the addition of texture or pattern will change the nature of the image. Students may also consider surreal manipulation of size or color. These will be very complex pieces, and students will be required to turn in one finished piece for a grade.

Grading Policy

Each project or assignment will be assessed against criteria from the project grading rubric. Students have the option of reworking a color project. If a student reworks a project their new grade will be averaged with the original grade. This policy is designed to encourage students to think of their work as fluid and evolving. Late projects and assignments will have one letter grade deducted per day it is late. If a student fails to turn in a study or project after a critique has begun it will be considered late.

Conceptual, aesthetic, and technical considerations in response to the assignment will comprise the following:

- Is the project compelling conceptually/ aesthetically/ technically? Does it draw a viewer in and make them want to see more?
- Is the idea itself in some way innovative/ challenging?
- Does your project possess depth and sophistication revealed over time, including elements that can be surprising, in order to create a sustained interest on the part of the viewer?
- Does it connect to social/ historical/ cultural contexts?
- Does the form of the piece support the content? Is there a relationship between the ideas and the materials/methods?
- Is your project skillfully designed in ways that support the content?
- Does the project show artistic development and progress?
- Did the artist have a positive attitude / effort?
- Did the artist effectively reflect on and analyze their work and that of others through participation in critiques: written and/or oral?