

3D FUNDAMENTALS

VAST 102-01: 3D Fundamentals
Tuesday & Thursday 1-2:50pm | Fall 2008

Prof. David M. Gyscek

Introduction:

We inhabit a three-dimensional world. This world, however, is not static. The way in which we encounter the physical, 3D world involves the fourth-dimension (time), but the objects *in* it, whether a tree, our bodies, a building, or even a painting (in the strictest sense of the term) are all three-dimensional. In mathematics, these dimensions are conceptualized by intersecting X, Y, and Z planes (length x width x height).

Oftentimes, students in the visual arts are more comfortable with two-dimensions. For some reason, that third “D” is a hurdle that is not always easily overcome. That is not to say, however, that working in three-dimensions is inherently more difficult – it does, however, require careful observation from **all** angles – not just straight on. This should not be a problem, however, if we are present to and mindful of our surroundings and the objects we interact with.

Course overview:

This course will introduce the concepts, forms, and techniques of working in three dimensions in both its practical and aesthetic applications. This will be accomplished primarily through the completion of a series of small, in class projects, as well as more substantial projects. Class time will be largely devoted to this end, but there will also be slide lectures, technical demonstrations, and critiques at the completion of each project. While you will have time in class to work on your projects, it is expected that you also work independently outside of class time as well as completing all assigned reading and writing assignments. (See the following sections for more details.)

In this class, you will learn in part through discovery and part through instruction. It is designed to engage students with varying levels of experience and skill. For the studio majors and minors among you, there will be ample opportunity to push and challenge yourselves to grow as artists. For those of you coming to this course as beginners, you will go away with a solid foundation from which to continue in the arts, if you so choose, or, at least, you will go away with an understanding of the creative process and the context in which that process unfolds – all lessons that can be applied to other disciplines.

Assignments:

We will begin simply with an introduction to the sculpture studio facility and the materials available. That will be followed by a series of in class exercises and discussions to familiarize you

with the sculpture studio, elements and concepts of 3D design (line, form/shape, mass, volume, texture, space, composition), materials, and techniques to help you develop a level of dexterity with very basic materials.

Following, please see a list of the major projects that will be the main focus of the semester. Further descriptions and information will be distributed and discussed in due course.

1. Bridge to the Future: Collaborative Construction

Architecture, although there is often a single named architect at any given firm, is a collaborative enterprise. Moreover, as I understand that many of you will not go on to become artists or architects, virtually every field or job you enter in the future will have some degree of collaboration where efficient teamwork is required. This project is an exercise in developing that ability through cooperation and a shared goal:

You will break into five groups to design and construct a bridge with a four-foot span. Your bridge must be free standing (i.e. you can not rely on attaching it to a base in order for it to stand). Materials will be strictly limited.

2. Mass and proportion: Human Head in clay

The human form has a long been the source and subject matter of art. In the age of photography and digital media, the representation of that form is often taken for granted. Through the manual construction of that form in three-dimensions however, we can reconnect to the body (our own and the one we are representing) in a very physical way.

Likeness to the model is not the goal of this project. Rather, focus on the proportions of the head – how much space is there between the top of the head to tip of the nose in relation to the space between the ears?, for example.

During class we will do a series of ten to fifteen minutes 3D “sketches” from the model. You will then have to complete the head using your memory of the model, what you have learned and understand about proportion, and, of course, your imagination.

3. Found Object/Assemblage project: “Red State, Blue State... United States”

“Found objects” have been a common and legitimate form of art since Marcel Duchamp’s Dadaist “Fountain” in 1919. Since then the common and everyday have continued to be elevated to the status of art – from Andy Warhol’s Brillo boxes to Tim Noble and Sue Webster’s piles of garbage. Others still have hand crafted or designed objects to *refer* to a “found” or manufactured object. In this project, you will have to consider all of these possibilities and concepts in addition to incorporating the skills you have acquired over the course of the semester so far.

Using this year’s historic upcoming elections as your subject matter, you will create a work of art that makes a statement about a particular political or social issue or

concern using, primarily, found objects. NO TEXT MAY BE USED unless the text is an integral part of a found object.

4. Space Intervention

Using a variety of construction materials, create a site-specific installation in the sculpture studio that interacts with and responds to the space and the work of adjacent, fellow students.

5. Final Project: The Body: Whole, Fragmented, or Hybrid

Using at least two materials of your choice, create a figurative sculpture that is free-standing. The sculpture must be at least 12-inches at its shortest dimension.

In addition to these studio projects, you will be required to prepare one 10-minute presentation on a contemporary artist, architect, or designer. There will also be a number of brief response papers assigned throughout the semester.

Bibliography:

Primary textbook:

Stewart, Mary. Launching the Imagination 3D. McGraw Hill: New York, 2006.

Secondary texts on ERes:

Durini, Lucrezia De Domizio. The Felt Hat, Joseph Beuys, A Life Told. Edizioni Charta: Milan, 1991.

Gideon, Sigfried. Space, Time and Architecture. Harvard University Press: Cambridge, 1982.

Kelley, Mike. Foul Perfection. MIT Press: Cambridge, 2003.

Lanteri, Edouard. Modelling and Sculpting the Human Figure. Dover Publications Inc.: New York, 1965.

Le Corbusier. Towards a New Architecture. Dover Publications Inc.: New York, 1931.

Venturi, Robert. Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture. Museum of Modern Art: New York, 1977.

Venturi, Robert. Learning from Las Vegas. The MIT Press: Cambridge, 1989.