

VAST 300-02: Studio Concentration Seminar I
Wednesdays 3-6:30pm | Fall 2012 | Millard Art Center

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“Art is not a private nightmare, not even a private dream, it is a shared human connection that traces the possibilities of past and future in the whorl of now.”

Jeanette Winterson, *Art Objects*, p. 117

Introduction:

Over the past three years, you have been working to develop skills in art making while finding your particular voice, conceptual interests, and passions. This semester, you will begin to narrow in on your focus, drawing from the skills you have developed and the lessons you have learned throughout your time as a studio art major. In this seminar you will begin to create a cohesive body of work. This course has been designed to help you generate ideas, fine-tune your skills, and develop strategies for transforming those ideas into compelling and engaging works of art.

This course is the first semester of a yearlong course that culminates in the senior exhibition in the Cantor Art Gallery. Enrollment in the second semester of this class is by invitation based on an evaluation of your work and dedication during this semester. Following the last class day, the studio faculty will meet to review each student’s work in their studios, and determine who will be invited to enroll in the second semester.

Our course this fall was divided into two sections to give you a high level of individual support within a small seminar. The assignments, deadlines and grading are coordinated for both sections. While the majority of your Wednesday seminar time will be spent within your own section of the class, there are also times of exchange and joint discussions, critiques and events. Keep in mind that while working in your studio spaces you are all one group of seniors; all learning from each other as you work through problems, while observing and conversing with one another.

“If you engage in travel, you will arrive.”

Ibn Arabi (1165-1240)

Course overview:

Most of the work you have done in your studio classes to this point has been assignment based. For the beginning of this semester, you will similarly be given a series of short assignments to jump-start your studio practice. It is likely that one of the major challenges you will face in this process is the transition from working through assignments to creating work that is self-generated. For this reason, it is essential to develop an independent work ethic and spend disciplined time in your studio. This is why it is called *studio practice*—it requires dedication, commitment, and time. As a guide, you should expect to spend *at least* 8-hours a week working in your studio and/or your sketchbook/journal.

Throughout the course of the semester, you should expect your work to be scrutinized at a high level. One of the great challenges for artists is at once pouring oneself into one’s work while maintaining a

critical distance in order to receive criticism without feeling personally attacked. I invite you all to discuss with me, with each other, and as a group any difficulties, fears, or anxieties you may have as this process unfolds. If you do have such feelings, it is likely that you are not alone. Discussing such pressures in a supportive environment can help alleviate them.

In addition to working in your studio, your practice involves looking at the art being made in our time and determining what styles, strategies, and ideas resonate with your own work. Being engaged and connected to the art of our time will help you position yourself, enrich your work, and gain awareness of the context in which you are creating. After all, art is not created within a vacuum; it is in constant conversation with other art, ideas, history, psychology, politics, etc. This part of your practice will unfold through conversation within the seminar and with each other, your written work, research, and your engagement with your journal/sketchbook. In seminar meetings, we will have the opportunity to discuss readings, critique your work, and talk about other concerns or issues that arise throughout the course of the semester.

Schedule:

| | Classwork | Due following week |
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| August 29 | Welcome & introduction. -Assign studios -Introductory studio exercise -View Art21 (Stokholder, Opie, WeiWei) | -Assignment 1: <i>25 Small Works</i> -Read <u>Making</u> , "Internal Sources" pp. 121–149 |
| September 5 | - <i>25 Small Works</i> Review -Discuss Sourcing Inspiration -Intro Assignment 2: Journey -Discuss Response Paper and meet writing tutor 5:15 Talk by Tom di Maria, Creative Growth 6:30 Opening of <i>Create</i> Exhibition | -Assignment 2: <i>Journey</i> -Read <u>Making</u> , "External Sources" pp. 150-191 -Sourcing Inspiration Response Paper 1 (first draft) -Process Pages |
| September 12 | - <i>Journey</i> Review -Discuss Sourcing Inspiration & response papers -Intro Assignment 3: Sketchbook (WAM 101: College Night at the Worcester Art Museum, 5:30-8pm) | -Assignment 3: <i>Sketchbook</i> -Read <u>Making</u> , "Relating to the Audience" pp. 77-118 -Response Paper 1 (Final) -Process Pages |
| <i>Friday, September 14: PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURATION OF FR. BURGESS (3pm, Hart Center)</i> | | |
| September 19 | - <i>Sketchbook</i> Review -Combined seminars for discussion of <i>Audience</i> -Intro Assignment 4: <i>Making do</i> | -Read <u>Themes</u> pp. 7-37 -Assignment 4: <i>Making do</i> |

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| September 26 | Combined seminars: -Prepare for trip Separate seminars: -Review <i>Making do</i> -Work session/Individual meetings | |
| <i>Saturday, September 29, Bus Trip to DeCordova Museum and Gropius House, Lincoln, MA</i> | | |
| October 3 | 3-4:30 Work session Curators of the Create exhibition, Larry Rinder, director of the UC Berkeley Art Museum and Matthew Higgs, director of White Columns in New York 4:00 Meet with seminar 5:30 Talk in Hogan 519 | Reading from <u>Themes</u> : <i>Identity</i> , pp. 41-69 <i>The Body</i> , pp. 77-109 <i>Memory</i> , pp. 151-185 <i>Science</i> , pp. 281-314 Response Paper 2 (Assessment paper based on Trip and <i>Relating to the Audience</i> -due Oct. 17) |
| <i>Wednesday, October 10: Fall Break</i> | | |
| <i>Monday, October 15, Dancing Calligraphy Performance, Yin Peet</i> | | |
| October 17 MIDTERM | Combined seminars: -Group discussion of <i>Themes</i> -Work session | -Artist Statements, first draft (submit on Moodle by 12noon on Monday, Oct. 22) - <i>Five Works</i> (due Oct. 24) |
| <i>Tuesday, October 23 Alexis Rockman, Visiting Artist, Seelos Theatre, 5 PM</i> | | |
| October 24 | -Critique of <i>Five Works</i> -Individual meetings in your studios | -Artists Statement, final -Read <u>Making</u> , "Crafting an Artistic 'Self'" pp. 192-231 |
| October 31 | -Work session -Meet with Art History students to review artist statements | -Response Paper 3 -Independent work |
| Tuesday, Nov. 6: ELECTION DAY | | |
| November 7 | Studio Reviews | Independent work |
| <i>Tuesday, Nov. 13: Visiting artist, Robert Siegelman</i> | | |
| November 14 | Work session | -Independent work -Individually directed readings |
| <i>Monday, Nov. 19: Art History Capstone Presentations</i> | | |

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| <i>Wednesday, November 21: Thanksgiving Break</i> | | |
| November 28 | Work Session | Independent work |
| December 5 | Final Critique | Final response paper due on exam date. |
| FINAL TBD | Response paper #4 due | |

Bibliography:

Weintraub, Linda, In the Making: Creative Options for Contemporary Art. Distributed Art Publishers, Inc.: New York, 2003. (Required)

Robertson, Jean, Themes of Contemporary Art: Visual Art After 1980 (Third Edition). Oxford University Press: New York, 2010.

art21 Website <http://www.pbs.org/art21/>

Requirements:

In addition to attending all seminar meetings (see attendance policy), you will be expected to participate in and/or attend a number of co-curricular events. Required events are listed (in bold) within the above schedule. Understanding that there are so many events and activities to which you are committed, you are not required to attend every other Visual Arts event. However, as senior majors, you are also leaders, so the more you are present at Visual Arts events, the better.

Sketchbook/Journal

Throughout the semester, you should maintain a sketchbook/journal in which you write/draw everyday. You should use this space to reflect upon your struggles and successes and use it as a tool to explore ideas, make sketches, and collect information. Research on other artists, study drawings of their work, and drawings from the open model sessions are all good uses of your sketchbook. If you are having trouble establishing a routine with it, you might find it useful to establish a schedule of writing or drawing one page at a particular time everyday. This will help make your sketchbook a habit, which will in turn help keep you focused and engaged.

Early in the semester there is one assignment particular to your sketchbook. In addition you are asked to write *Process Pages* after each short assignment in September and after each benchmark later in the semester. *Process Pages* are intended to help you examine your own working process – or how you source inspiration and craft an artistic self, to borrow the chapter titles from *In The Making*.

The format for Process Pages is attached to the syllabus and on Moodle. Outside of these requirements, precisely how you use your sketchbook is up to you.

I will collect your sketchbook/journal during the semester. I will not announce when I am collecting them, so keep them with you at all times and bring them to all seminar meetings.

Response Papers

Throughout the semester, you will be assigned four short papers to write in response to readings. These are designed to build an understanding of contemporary art practice and to locate your own work in the context of current art. These papers are more formal than your journal entries; they should use be

typed, grammatically correct and include outside sources and all appropriate scholarly apparatus such as footnotes and a list of sources consulted. A tutor from the writing center will be available to help you write thoughtful, well-considered response papers.

- *Sourcing Inspiration*, due September 12 (first draft) & 19 (final version)
- *DeCordova Trip Response*, due October 3
- *Crafting an Artistic Self*, due October 31
- *Themes of Contemporary Art*, due TBD

Grading:

You are in control of your grade with the labor you put into working in your studio this semester. A high grade reflects hard work, comprehension, and creativity. Participation and attendance are essential. Participation in events listed on the syllabus is required.

Your final course grade will be determined by averaging grade percentages within the following areas. Keep in mind, while the final product is very important and I will consider cumulative development, your final grade will reflect the entirety of the semester's work.

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| Individual art work/work ethic | 50% |
| Initial assignments | 20% |
| Sketchbook/journal, participation | 10% |
| Papers | 20% |

Attendance policy:

Attendance to all seminar meetings is required. Unexcused absences will be reflected in your final grade. In cases of an unforeseen absence (i.e. illness, family emergency, etc.) notify me as soon as possible. . If you know that you will miss a class on a specific future date let me know in advance. You are expected to independently complete work that you miss due to absence. Regular tardiness will be treated as an unexcused absence. I reserve the right to request a letter from your Class Dean to excuse any questionable absences.

Plagiarism & cheating:

Artistically, this can get a little fuzzy, as much of contemporary art appropriates pre-existing imagery and objects. However, there are cases where "artistic plagiarism" is very clear. In cases where students are found handing in projects that are not their own, or "recycling" projects from past courses or from another current course, for this course, the College policy on plagiarism will be strictly enforced. **TO BE CLEAR, YOU MAY NOT USE WORK FROM OTHER CLASSES FOR THE CONCENTRATION SEMINAR.** To do so is cheating.

Plagiarism and/or cheating are serious and can lead to permanent expulsion. The College has a policy and you are well advised to bone-up on it. It is available online and in the College Catalogue (*Academic Honesty*). In your written work, when using a source, cite it – be obsessive about it – use either footnotes or parenthetical citations. Do not ever cut-and-paste from the Internet, no matter how very tempting it may be. Although the information is 'out there' seemingly available to all, your use of it without citation, no matter how tiny a fraction or fragment it may be, is plagiarism, pure and simple.

When in doubt, ask advice.

Resources:

The Visual Arts Department has subscriptions to the following magazines dealing with contemporary art, architecture, and design: *Sculpture*, *Flash Art*, *Contemporary*, *Dwell*, *Art Forum*, and *Art in America*. Current issues of *Flash Art* and *Contemporary* are located in the Millard lounge as well as back issues of the others. Current issue of *Dwell*, *Art Forum*, and *Art in America* are located in the Visual Arts Resource room in O’Kane 497 in addition to various DVDs, books, and other useful resources. (Materials may not be removed from the Library.)

We are also continually acquiring new books, which are available in Dinand Library. Feel free to ask Janis DeMarias (Visual Resources Coordinator, O’Kane 497) or me for a list of recent acquisitions.

The Worcester Art Museum is also a fabulous local resource for both research and the experience of original art works. We can arrange private viewings of works on paper (70% of their collection, but not on permanent view) and Holy Cross has a special relationship with their library, making it a particularly valuable resource for students and faculty. Admission is FREE with a Holy Cross ID.

Open Model Sessions

Beginning October 16th there will be models in the drawing studio from 6 – 9 PM on Tuesday nights. While these sessions are optional, they provide practice in gesture drawing and help build your skill in understanding the figure. Figure drawings from the Tuesday evening models, either in your sketchbook or on a larger scale, will count as extra credit towards this class. Please identify such drawings with “open model” and the date.

Note on materials:

With your studio fee, the Visual Arts Department will provide you with a sketchbook and a limited amount of basic supplies. You will be responsible for acquiring any other materials you may need. I recognize that the retail price tag for art supplies may be shocking to you. If you are in financial distress, please talk to me and we will see if there is something we can do to help. If you are having trouble locating supplies, ask and we will help. I would also suggest pooling your resources. If several of you need photo paper, for example, if you chip in, you can get more for less. Be resourceful!

Our local vendor for most supplies is CC Lowell (258 Park Ave., Worcester). Bill is very helpful and will be happy to assist you. You can also try Dick Blick or Utrecht online. Photo supplies at LB Wheaton (259 Park Ave., Worcester) or B&H Photo and Video in NYC or online.

Note on studios:

Each senior major will have studio space in Millard Art Center or Fenwick 434. Because there are so many of you this year, some of you will have to share spaces. You have been assigned a general location (either Millard 6, Millard 2 painting back studio, or Fenwick 434). Within that location, you should negotiate with your studio-mates to determine which specific studio you will occupy. When doing this, you should consider what kind of space you need to generate ideas and nurture your working process. Your studio space should reflect the work that you are creating and show your weekly progress. It is not a storage space. Plan to spend eight or more hours working in your studio weekly. Your studio directly represents your crafting of an artistic self.

Students assigned space in Fenwick will be asked to sign an agreement that respects and maintains this alternative studio space. You will also be given access to the Visual Arts Resource Room (O'Kane 497), which is equipped with two iMac stations and scanner in addition to many other resources.

Given the size of the Millard Art Center and the number of students using the space, it is important that the space you have been given to use is used well. It is a luxury that we work hard to provide. Since all other studios are used for teaching, if you do need to spread out into common spaces, please be sure you remove all of your work after you are done and you clean up after yourself. Remember, common space is for use by all enrolled students. Please be conscientious of their needs.

Also and again, as leaders in the department, please pay close attention to all safety rules (including the rules particular to the use of the Fenwick 434 Studio Annex) and lead by example. If you see other students misusing equipment or doing something unsafe or questionable, please say something.

Final comments:

I reserve the right to modify the syllabus if it is warranted. I will post amendments to the syllabus, a calendar, and announcements as they arise on Moodle. Please note: in the event of inclement weather, I will post cancellations or rescheduling with any applicable assignments on Moodle. It will be your responsibility to keep up with such information.