

Arts 351

Contemporary Painting Practices



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"Painting is a state of being... self-discovery. Every good artist paints what he is."Jackson Pollock

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Contemporary Painting Practices is an intensive studio course that offers painting as a means of investigating concepts through the application, mark-making and surface building of paint. The emphasis will be on developing ideas while refining techniques of handling acrylic paint. The class period will be split between demonstrations, slide lectures, critiques and in-class painting time. Out of class assignments will include painting begun in class, sketches for preparatory work and readings related to historical and contemporary issues in the world of art and the process of painting specifically. For every hour spent in class working you need to spend an hour, minimum, working out of class. This is the amount of time you need to work to receive an average grade of a C.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

1. Come to know painting as a material (medium, pigment, ground and support) as well as something to be manipulated to make an illusion.
2. Develop an awareness of the painted space through color, transparency and opacity and varying methods of application.
3. Develop an awareness of the history of painting with an emphasis on 20th century/contemporary artists, as it relates to the studio artist--that is, the evolution of different attitudes toward paint, the subject, paint and painting as object and picture.
4. Maintain a familiarity with preparations for painting --small sketches in paint, pencil, ink, etc...; collage; image gathering.
5. Practice the safe use and disposal of acrylics and related materials.
6. Begin to develop and notice intuitive or personal instincts toward paint as material and painting as idea through consistent, rigorous exercise.

Requirements / Evaluation Methods:

1. **Attendance:** due to the nature of the course, i.e., demonstrations, spontaneous discussions, slide presentations and overall painting time, it is essential that you be present at every class. You will learn from the instructor and each other. If you must be absent due to urgent medical needs or family emergencies, these are excused. Ambulatory illnesses, taking friends to the airport and leaving early for or returning late from spring break are not excuses. More than three unexcused absences in the semester will cause your final grade to lower by one third for every day over three. If you are absent the day of a critique you will not receive credit for the assignment. Missing the class before or after break will be counted as two unexcused absences.

Attendance will be taken between 1:10 and 1:15. Three unexcused tardiest equal one absence and leaving early unexcused equals one absence. You must be ready to paint at the beginning of class. Stretching and gessoing canvases must be done outside of class time. Clean up will begin at 2:45 and not before.

2. **Participation:** experimentation, and rigorous engagement with new ideas and techniques are expected. Positive attitude as in hard work and enthusiasm is essential if you wish to receive a good to excellent grade!

3. **Grading:** will happen after each assignment is due. You will have one or two days to complete a painting after a crit but the work must be 90% finished on the day of the crit. I will use a point system for all grading. Your participation in the crit will have an affect on your grade for the project. Active discussion in this class is very important. Even though I do not curve my grading and I use a straight 90-100% = an A system, it is inevitable that I will be comparing works in the class to one another and the most excellent work will establish a standard for grading.

Painting project criteria for grades are as follows:

1. **Creativity / Concept / Effort:** How original are your ideas? How committed were you to processing them? Did you challenge yourself in content and craft? Did you confer with the instructor as you were working on the painting? Did you do necessary research and preliminary sketches? Did you meet the requirements of the assignment?

2. **Design elements:** How successful is the composition? the color? value? point of view? spatial concerns? handling of forms? How do the formal elements work together and do they support the content?

3. **Craftsmanship:** How well do you handle the paint? Is neatness or messiness an issue? Is the support well constructed and/or properly primed/gessoed? Are surfaces handled in such a way that they complement the success of the painting? If other materials are added to the painted surface has this been done correctly?

I encourage you to talk to me during my office hours if you have any concerns in the class. I believe that good communication between you and me is a means to help you do your best work. I do not have all of the answers and am convinced that a great deal of art making is dependent on process, a search so to speak. There are no black and white answers and it is up to you to find the resolution which fits you best. I will give my support in the form of technical and conceptual suggestions if necessary. I may also find it in your best interest to leave you alone and let you work through a problem. Because I have been making and looking at art longer than you, I am in the position to evaluate your work. I am also in the position to learn from student which is very exciting to me and adds great energy to the classroom. You will also learn from each other.

PROCEDURES:

1. **Sketch Book:** Although I will not be grading a sketch book it is necessary for you to have one to work through your ideas. Sketching, jotting down phrases, cutting out images from magazines, etc..., are all excellent ways to keep your visual language fresh. The most successful artists do this regularly.

2. **Stretcher Building:** You will eventually be making your own stretchers. You will learn how to select good pieces of lumber and find the correct hardware at a lumber yard. I will demonstrate proper techniques for building your stretchers in the painting studio, including use of the miter saw.

3. **Critiques:** We will utilize various methods of group crits so that you will learn the value of informed discourse when it comes to evaluating art.

4. **Concept Development:** I will give assignments which will encompass a range of approaches that will introduce you to traditional and non-traditional means of developing ideas. After about 9-10 weeks you will be formulating your own ideas for paintings.

5. **Articles on Contemporary Painting Issues:** You will given reading assignments of articles taken from books and periodicals which address concerns of the contemporary painter. It is very important that you are aware of these issues in the world of art and be able to comment on and discuss your opinions regarding these topics. Students will be assigned to lead these discussions.

6. Slide Presentations: It is essential that you have a understanding of painting of the 20th century. The work done since the early 1900's has had crucial impact on the work of artists today. In this class we will view work done since the late 1920's to the present with emphasis on work of American painting of the last 50 years. I firmly believe that students need to know where their work fits in relation to art history and their culture. Looking at other works of art stimulates and educates an artist.

DISABILITIES:

If you have a disability and therefore may have a need for accommodations to participate in this course, please feel free to discuss you concerns in private with me AND be sure to contact Erin Salva, PBX 5453, in the Office Of the Dean for Academic Advising or e-mail her at SALVAE@kenyon.edu.

MATERIALS LIST:

Acrylic Paints:

Cadmium Red Medium
Naphthol Crimson
Cadmium Yellow Light
Permanent Green Light
Cobalt Blue
Dioxazine Purple
Ultramarine Blue
Hansa Yellow Light
Yellow Ochre
Raw Umber
Acra Violet

Mediums etc...:

1 pint gel medium
1 pint matte medium
1 pint modeling paste
2 or more qts. of Gesso

Brushes:

1 - #6 hog bristle, bright
1 - #10 hog bristle, bright
1 - #6 hog bristle, round
1 - #4 hog bristle, filbert
1 - #6 nylon bristle, flat

Miscellaneous:

1 pr. 8" scissors
J-21 Stapler and staples, Arrow
2 palette knives: trowel, flat
Disposable palette, 16"x20"
Sketch book
can and jars for water
cotton rags
vine charcoal (optional)