

PAINTING 3, AVT 432

ADVANCED PAINTING AVT 433, 434, 435

SPRING 2017 MONDAY, WEDNESDAY 10:30 - 1:10

STEVEN CUSHNER - scushner@gmu.edu

The purposes of this course are to stimulate perceptual growth and visual awareness in the student; to familiarize the student with a variety of possible painting materials; to develop a personal language of image making , expression, and analysis; and to develop an awareness of the role of visual judgement ( objective ) and intuition ( subjective ) in making our creative decisions. We will address the form of painting ( the what ), the process of painting ( the how ), and the content of painting ( the why ). We will paint, we will discuss and read about painting, and we will look at a lot of paintings. Our goals are to have as many different painting experiences ( as young painters, you don't know what kind of painter you may become ), and to work hard at the discipline of painting – to learn to think with the brush in our hand.

Here is what you can expect from me and this class - that we will try to experiment with as many approaches to painting as possible; that we will focus on experience and product; that I will attempt to explain projects, concepts, and ideas articulately; that I will attempt to answer all questions; and that I will treat everyone's work equally and without bias.

Here is what I should expect from you - that you will arrive to class on time and prepared to work, with your supplies and a good, open attitude; that you will work hard; that you will be open and willing to experiment and take risks; that you will pay

attention; and that you will treat me and everyone else in the class with equal respect.

Students are required to keep all of their work done throughout the semester. Individual and group critiques will be our evaluation process. You should expect to do work outside of class – all paintings are to be completed for critique, and there will be additional homework assignments. We will meet briefly at the beginning of each class, to explain what we will do that day, look at artists work, and answer any questions that we may have. It is important that you are on time - this is a group activity.

We will look at and study a variety of artists and their ways of working, and attempt to incorporate their approaches in our own work. In addition to scheduled class time, students should be prepared to spend 6 hours of work outside of class. We will work with a variety of subjects - portrait, the human figure, the figure in its environment, still life, interior space, landscape, and photography.

## PROJECT 1 - LESS IS MORE, MORE MORE MORE

“ The more stuff in it, the busier the work of art, the worse it is. More is less. Less is more”.

Ad Reinhardt

“ The road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom “.

William Blake

Go through all of the paintings that you have produced in your career as a painter. Choose one that you find interesting, curious, full of possibility. Complete 2 variations of this painting, using the above quotes as instructions. In one painting, we will follow Ad Reinhardt's advice to eliminate, to remove anything that is not essential, remove everything superfluous. In the second painting, we will listen to William Blake, who advises us to do more, more, and then even more, to the point of ridiculous excess.

Materials, scale, format, process and approach are up to you.

Lari Pittman, Richard Estes, Janet Fish, Marilyn Minter, Phillip Taffe, David Salle, Sigmar Polke, Bosch, Joyce Pensato, Frank Aurbach, Seurat, Elizabeth Murray, Vija Celmins, Andreas Gursky, Frank Stella ( late ), Yayoi Kusama, Max Beckmann

Hiroshi Sugimoto, Alex Katz, Robert Irwin, Malevich, Barnett Newman, Matisse cutouts, Frank Stella ( early ), Agnes Martin, Fred Sandback

PROJECT 2 - PLANNING, THINKING, TRANSLATION

( Lateral thinking )

Most visual artists work in more than one material. Some artists use 1 material to plan major work. Some artists pick up a new material as a break or relief or detour. Others will challenge themselves with a new or unfamiliar material. Painters draw or make prints. Sculptors take photographs. Photographers make collages or videos. Most artists find that as they experiment with new materials, they begin to think in new ways, and develop new languages, and that this new work influences their major work in surprising ways ( think about Matisse's late cutouts, Morandi's watercolors and etchings, Chuck Close and his material changes, Seurat's drawings and paintings, Nancy Chunn and her doodles and their echoes in her major paintings, Terry Winters work as a printmaker as well as a painter.

Produce 1 work in response to each of your 2 paintings from Project 1 ( you will produce 2 new works for this project ). Try to work like you paint - think about how you paint as well as what you paint ( how are you applying the paint, what kind of marks are you making ). You may work in any material or materials EXCEPT the material you used in the original painting - you may choose any drawing material or combination of drawing materials, any printmaking process, collage in any material or materials, photography, video, any sculptural material, performance, any combination of these. Use a different material and approach for each new piece.

Material, surface, scale, shape, format are up to you.

## PROJECT 3 - HYBRIDS

Our world is more and more multi sensual - more and more varied visually, more and more varied auditorially, and the digital realm allows for more and more combinations of more and more things, images, sounds, ideas.

After Projects 1 and 2 of this semester, you have produced 2 pairs of works. For Project 3, you will take elements from each of these and combine them in 1 new piece. You may use as much or as little from each, but there must be evidence of all in this new piece.

Think about Rauschenberg's combines ( painting, sculpture, collage, screen printing, art and life ), the assemblages of Elliott Hundley ( painting, relief, photo collage in 2 and 3 dimensions ), the paintings of Albert Oehlen ( painting and digital image-making ), Joanne Greenbaum ( drawing and painting ), David Salle ( multiple panels and images and styles ), Joan Snyder and Anselm Keifer ( paint and other stuff ), the collages and sculptures of Wangechi Mutu, Rachel Harrison ( stuff, stuff, stuff ), graffiti artists ( painting, calligraphy, and the real world ), Yayoi Kusama ( every material plus real time experience ), and George Condo - artists who combine materials, languages, dimensions.

## PROJECT 4 - INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS:

### FORM, PROCESS, SUBJECT, CONTENT

All paintings are a conversation between form, process, subject, and content. Some paintings are driven by their content. Some are driven by their formal concerns. Some are process driven.

The first step in our development as painters is to learn to see, to control our materials, and to understand the formal elements of 2D image-making ( composition, shape, edge, value, color, texture, gesture, space ). You have all reached this place. At this point, painting begins to get more difficult, but also much more interesting - you need to figure out what YOU want to do with these skills that you have worked hard to develop. You must figure out what are your questions, motivations, and concerns as a painter.

To begin this project, each of you will write down a list of important elements that you feel are ESSENTIAL to your paintings - what NEEDS to be in your paintings( you are making a list, not writing an artist statement, manifesto, description, or autobiography ). This list could include specific imagery ( subject ); specific material, shape, composition, colors, etc ( form ); specific ways of working - loose and gestural, slow and careful, planned or improvised ( process ); and specific ideas, stories, and feelings ( content )- a list of needs! This list is both an analysis of your work up till now, and guidelines for future work.

Produce a painting based on this list - include as many of the things on your list, try not to add things to the painting that are NOT on the list. Hopefully, this list and this painting helps to define YOU as a painter.

Size, format, material, presentation are up to you.

## PROJECT 5 - MASTERPIECES

You got it - produce a masterpiece! The best, most ambitious, most specific, most honest painting. Think about the paintings you have already done. Analyze your work and yourself as a painter. What are you up to, what is your work really about? Paint it!