

Teaching Philosophy



Like air and water, Art is a basic human need. It is sometimes difficult to explain to folks who feel detached from their creative spirit why Art is important, it is not so easily deconstructed in the likes of O₂ and H₂O. Art makes itself felt in bedroom walls of a painter, who fills her material world with loving creations all of her own meditation, each imbued with secret meaning she shares with only herself and perhaps a few others. Art is what keeps our hearts warm when we go to far away places and we finger our friends' written messages in our pockets, or a cherished trinket from a loved one. Art is what gives a classroom its vitality, a student's notebook its character. Art is a sign of someone's cherish, of mindful engagement and a creative and critical thought process.

Why is it that throughout the history of social revolutions, it is artists who are on the frontline of any social change, thus always among the first to be persecuted? **An artist is someone who thinks critically and creatively**, to not only absorb information and experience but to reflect on them and enact on this reflection. *Artists do not simply allow for the world to shape them, but rather they push back and shape the world around them in turn.* As human beings we are all born artists. As an artist and educator, I take it upon myself to help nurture this artistic spirit in every student.

As an artist, historian, and activist, I am able to create innovative curricula that imparts not only traditional and new media techniques crucial to engaging in art world proper, but which also incorporates history and social relevance. When we start with the basics of *drawing techniques*, why not start out by making our own paper and learning about its origins? If we are *oil painting*, why not spice it up and deliberately make our subjects personal and/or deliberately political? In fact, contemporary artists like Kerry James Marshall does so with his portraits of Nat Turner and Harriet Tubman at the recent Met Breuer show. Using *digital technology*, how might we deconstruct and 'talk back' to media that is always telling us what to feel, and what to buy?

In this way, I engage my students in an exciting, personally and socio-politically relevant, interdisciplinary approach to creative experiments, skill acquisitions, and visual literacy. My first priority is to help awaken their excitement for their own creative potential. I meet my students of all ages where they are in relation to their development and relationship to the arts. I make an effort to get to know my students in order to make every lesson relevant, and every interaction honest.

I am honored to serve as educator and through my work, I hope to contribute to a society of unabashed, confident individuals and critical thinkers to help move humanity onwards and forward. I have great faith in our people, education, and the arts.