

Painting 1, 1630; Fall 2024

Division of Fine Arts, Film, and Digital Media

Course Number: 1630 - 501
CRN: 75356
Instructor: Professor Heyward
Email: sheyward@unm.edu
Course Credit hours: 3
Office: 104B in B&T



*If you hear a voice within you say, "you cannot paint",
then by all means paint and that voice will be silenced.*
- Vincent van Gogh

Course Description

This course introduces the tradition of painting as a medium for artistic expression. Students will investigate materials, tools, techniques, history, and concepts of painting. Emphasis is placed on developing descriptive and perceptual skill, color theory, and composition.

Student Learning Outcomes/Course Objectives

- Produce paintings that demonstrate the tradition of methods, techniques, materials, and tools of oil painting.
- Construct a variety of support structures and grounds on which paintings are created.
- Examine the historical origins and practices of painting from personal, social, and cultural perspectives.
- Identify and apply environmentally safe painting practices, care of tools, equipment, and facilities, as well as disposal of mediums, solvents, and paint.
- Apply basic color theory to representational and non-representational painting.

Additional Course Objectives !

- Practice professional habits in the arts. Show up to class on time and be ready to work. Excessive tardies or lack of preparation by forgetting materials affects classroom instruction.
- Allow a painting to evolve through discovery and learn to see the importance of mistakes

- Focus on sketchbook sized drawings for the majority of our idea building practice and discover the artist sketchbook as an area of reflection, introspection, and a way to process our observations.
- Focus on your own personal growth and not compare yourself to your peers. That painting is a skill that you can learn, if you stay consistent even when discouraged. (I am here to help!)
- Develop discussion skills needed to critique the work of your peers during critique days. This includes delivering feedback that is respectful, constructive, and thoughtful - as well as relevant to the assignment learning objectives or the peers work.
- Recognize and challenge personal biases you have when viewing work (we all have them!)
- Elaborate on your likes and dislikes in a work by identifying specific areas in a work that could be improved upon or that are working well. I want to know *why* you like that area of a work.
- Understand that the making of art is a finicky labor. You will make good works and bad works. Oftentimes “bad” or failed paintings are some of the most valuable works we make as they can be rich of learning opportunities. *Consider hanging on to some of your failed paintings as they could be gems and rich of information.*
- Develop a consistent work ethic that is needed to “succeed” in painting. A good studio work ethic includes giving yourself ample time to make mistakes
- Be a good studio mate and develop and adopt safe and cleanly practices for set up, clean up. Paint gets everywhere and extra diligence is required.

Meeting Times

This course meets every Tue/Th. 1:30 PM - 4 PM in room 106 of B&T

Class starts at 1:30 - have notebooks out or supplies for the week ready to go. Lunches should be consumed before class or during breaks - by 1:30 it is teaching and learning time - lots of fun and easels are out

Office Hours

In person hours:

I. Mon/Weds: 11 AM - 2 PM

II. Tue/Th: before 10:30 AM and after 4 PM *by appointment*. Depending on my availability - send me an email if you would like to meet during these times. I will be unavailable between 10:30 - 4 PM.

Zoom / Virtual hours:

I. I can always hop on Zoom any day that I am available to answer questions. Email me any time you feel you would like more guidance or need an additional office hour on Zoom to coordinate!

Required Materials

A supply list will be provided to you by the instructor.

No student should drop a course based on their access to obtaining course materials. Reach out to me privately if you are unable to gather your course supplies so that I can help find solutions sheyward@unm.edu

Instructor Response Time

- I prefer emails sent to sheyward@unm.edu rather than Canvas for in-person classes.
- I routinely check the course for postings or emails, Monday (8 am) – Friday (12 pm) and *often* on the weekend.
- You can anticipate a 24 to 48 hour response from me, Monday – Thursday.
- Reach out any time - I love answering questions about a project or course concepts

CLASS REQUIREMENTS:

Attendance

- I. Attendance is mandatory, especially as lectures and critiques cannot be repeated. It is your responsibility to seek any material you miss, downloading lecture slides and assignment sheets and coming to office hours as needed.
- II. You will be allowed three excused absences for the semester. In order for an absence to be considered as excused, you must email or speak with me about it before the class. *This does not mean you have freebies! Use them as needed and aim to have one or none - 3 if ya need.*
- III. If you must quarantine due to illness, you must talk to me about how you can participate virtually.
- IV. I reserve the right to drop any student who has more than three absences, which has the potential to affect scholarships. If you know of obligations or circumstances that may affect your attendance, contact me at the beginning of the semester to see if special arrangements are possible.
- V. Class sessions marked as work days spent without materials will be marked as absences. You must come prepared to class.

The best growth happens in class - I will show up for you all and serve your learning since you are showing up for me and come prepared to work

Participation

- I. You are expected to be an active member of the course. That is because you are an important member to this classroom community.
- II. Your participation in critiques (in-progress and final) and discussions will be noted in your project grade and overall grade. If public speaking is not your thing, please reach out to me to explore group critique options. We will often switch up our style of critique as a collective to incorporate new methods of relaying feedback.
- III. In addition, you are extremely important to the learning and development of your classmates. It is important to be generous with your ideas and opinions during these discussions and critiques.
- IV. I will do my best to foster a safe learning environment for all students. I ask that you join me in critiques and classroom conversations that prioritize respect and honor our classroom community. This includes conveying respect for people of all ages, ability, national origin, race, religion, gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation.

- V. You must be present on critique days with your work presentation ready. Early birds can help their peers by moving tables, setting up stools in front of work or gallery crit space. Your work will be market late if you are finishing, erasing, cropping, etc. during class time.

Studio Work Sessions and Preparation

- I. As a studio course, you are expected to work productively and diligently throughout the semester in the classroom. This requires a good amount of planning outside of class to gather materials and tools.
- II. Texting and the use of social media must be kept to a minimum during class. Cell phones may be used for research and listening to music on work days if they don't interfere with your work.
- III. Consider the safety of yourself and others around you. Always come to class with work clothes, including closed-toed shoes, as well as gloves and eye protection when appropriate. Take precaution with sharp blades, hot guns, installation, etc. Keep your workspace tidy by placing away any food, electronics, or backpacks that may cause or be damaged.
- IV. Clean up after yourself. There is room for papers and flat projects within our flat file drawer. You may claim a storage cubby in the classroom to store supplies and mid-size projects. Storing large projects in the classroom must be kept to a minimum since other classes share the space.
- V. You can listen to music on your cell phone - you cannot watch videos. Screens down as the habit is hard to curb, I know

Locker/ Cubby Policy:

Lockers and Cubbies are available for your material and tool storage. Locker/Cubby use is contingent upon enrollment in a Fine Arts class. Claim a locker/cubby by labeling it with your name, semester, and year. For lockers you must provide your own lock. All lockers/cubbies must be cleaned out at the end of each semester. Failure to do so will mean the lock will be cut and belongings removed.*

*If you are taking an art class the following semester and need to store materials over break, reach out to your professor or lab tech and we will do our best to make accommodations.

GRADING

Projects will be evaluated on the following criteria

Execution - Prompt completion of the project based on a firm understanding of the concept, discussions, and materials.

Investment -The research, effort, and time you have put into the project.

Presentation - The strength of your personal ideas, as expressed visually and verbally.

Growth - Personal exploration, innovation, and improvement.

Statement - Your ability to articulate your process, reflect and make connections in writing. Projects will not be graded without the written statement.

Participation - Your ability to give meaningful and valuable feedback to your peers upon reflection, introspection, and engaging in discussions

Late projects

may be accepted up to one week after their due date, with the understanding that you could lose 10% of the project grade (making B+ the highest possible grade for any late project). **Students must consult with me about turning in late projects for critique to discuss options.** I genuinely prefer students to not rush projects and reach out when they are unable to meet a deadline.

Deadlines

Because of the collective aspect of the critique, it is mandatory that your project is presented on time, so that the critique covers the widest possible breadth of work. Late projects may be accepted up to one week after their due date, with the understanding that you lose 10% of the project grade (making B+ the highest possible grade for any late project). Grades will be posted on UNM Canvas throughout the semester. Please come to office hours or make an appointment with me if you would like to discuss any grade given.

Extra credit:

It is possible to receive up to an additional 5% on your final grade by submitting a copy of a scholarship or exhibit application or by attending select art events and submitting a one-page write up for 1% extra credit each.

Ungrading / Labor Based Methods

I do not grade based on what is learned before the course, rather I grade based on how you grow and learn.

Your FINAL grade will be calculated as follows:

Large Painting assignments (4):

20%	Project 1 Positive / Negative Space
20%	Project 2 Still Life
30%	Project 3 Pixelated Mastercopy
30%	Project 4 Final

Course work:

30%	In Class Assignments
10%	Reading responses
15%	Sketchbook
20%	Outside of class / HW / good practice of working on assignments between class periods and having progress to show

Participation:

15%	Artistic development / in-class work habits
25%	Participation and Group Discussion

Total: %200

Letter Grade Numerical Score (out of 200 Total Points)

Percentage A+ > 195 > 97.5% A 184 - 195 92.0% to 97.5% A- 177 - 183 88.5% to 91.5% B+ 170 - 176 85.0% to 88.0% B 156 - 169 78.0% to 84.5% B- 148 - 155 74.0% to 77.5% C+ 140 - 147 70.0% to 73.5% C 120 - 139 60.0% to 69.5% D 90 - 119 45.0% to 59.5% F ≤ 89 ≤ 44.5%

Extra credit: It is possible to receive additional percentages on your final grade by attending select art events and submitting a one-page write up for extra credit. Art events will be announced during class. Check in with me to receive prior approval for events not discussed during class.

Academic Integrity

The University of New Mexico believes that academic honesty is a foundation principle for personal and academic development. All University policies regarding academic honesty apply to this course. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating or copying, plagiarism (claiming credit for the words or works of another from any type of source such as print, Internet or electronic database, or failing to cite the source), fabricating information or citations, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others, having unauthorized possession of examinations, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, or tampering with the academic work of other students. The University's full statement on academic honesty and the consequences for failure to comply is available in the college catalog and in the Pathfinder.

Cultural Appropriation and Academic Integrity in the Arts

“The widespread use of remixing in the arts has developed alongside cultural appropriation, sometimes also known as cultural misappropriation, which is the process of an individual from a powerful and dominant culture adopting elements from a culture systematically oppressed by the dominant culture....As artists, it is important to strive to avoid cultural appropriation and its power abuses.”

-Remixing and Drawing by Ellen Mueller

Cultural appropriation is fairly common in the arts and especially seen in introductory courses where students are becoming familiar with artistic and social etiquette surrounding a plethora of creative ideas. Students are often well intentioned and unaware that their source material, imagery, and influences are from minority groups and communities in which they do not belong. If a student is culturally appropriative, I will talk to them privately so that they are aware that their work contains some potentially problematic approaches.

Plagiarizing Your Own Work

‘How on earth can you plagiarize your own work?’ you may ask. The answer is simple - all assignments turned in for this course have to be created *only after* the date an assignment was introduced and be created from conception for the project specifically. **You cannot submit former work or use source imagery that was photographed without the project in mind.** Again, all artwork made by you must be created for the projects and assignments of this course in order to receive credit. Submitting already made work or work made in other classes is considered plagiarism and will result an “F” and failing the course.

Accommodation Statement:

UNM is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for students with documented disabilities. As your instructor, it is my objective to facilitate an inclusive classroom setting, in which students have full access and opportunity to participate. To engage in a confidential conversation about the process for requesting reasonable accommodations for this class and/or program, please contact Accessibility Resource Center at arcsrvs@unm.edu or by phone at 505-277-3506. The UNM-Valencia Equal Access Services (Sarah Clawson, Coordinator), at (505) 925-8840 or by email at sjclawson@unm.edu.

Title IX:

The University of New Mexico and its faculty are committed to supporting our students and providing an environment that is free of bias, discrimination, and harassment. The University's programs and activities, including the classroom, should always provide a space of mutual respect, kindness, and support without fear of harassment, violence, or discrimination. Discrimination on the basis of sex includes discrimination on the basis of assigned sex at birth, sex characteristics, pregnancy and pregnancy related conditions, sexual orientation and gender identity. If you have encountered any form of discrimination on the basis of sex, including sexual harassment, sexual assault, stalking, domestic or dating violence, we encourage you to report this to the University. You can access the confidential resources available on campus at the LoboRESPECT Advocacy Center (<https://loborespect.unm.edu>), the Women's Resource Center (<https://women.unm.edu>), and the LGBTQ Resource Center (<https://lgbtqrc.unm.edu>). If you speak with an instructor (including a TA or a GA) regarding an incident connected to discrimination on the basis of sex, they must notify UNM's Title IX Coordinator that you shared an experience relating to Title IX, even if you ask the instructor not to disclose it. The Title IX Coordinator is available to assist you in understanding your options and in connecting you with all possible resources on and off campus. For more information on the campus policy regarding sexual misconduct and reporting, please see <https://policy.unm.edu/university-policies/2000/2740.html> and CEEO's website.

If you are pregnant or experiencing a pregnancy-related condition, you may contact UNM's Office of Compliance, Ethics, and Equal Opportunity at ceo@unm.edu. The CEEO staff will provide you with access to available resources and supportive measures and assist you in understanding your rights.

Support for Undocumented Students

As an educator, I fully support the rights of undocumented students to an education and to live free from the fear of deportation. I pledge that I will not disclose the immigration status of any student who shares this information with me unless required by a judicial warrant, and I will work with students who require immigration-related accommodations.

Student Grievance Procedure

<https://pathfinder.unm.edu/campus-policies/student-grievance-procedure.html>

It is your responsibility to be familiar with the full Grievance Procedure. If you have a dispute with an instructor, follow these steps, in this order within four weeks of the original issue.

1. Talk to the Instructor
2. Talk to the Chair of the Department
3. Talk to the Dean of the College

Connecting to Campus and Finding Support

UNM has many resources and centers to help you thrive, including: -opportunities to get involved (<https://valencia.unm.edu/students/index.html>), -mental health resources (<https://mentalhealth.unm.edu/>), -academic support such as tutoring (<https://valencia.unm.edu/campus-resources/learning-commons/index.html>), -resource centers for people like you (<https://valencia.unm.edu/campus-resources/pasos/pasos-resource-center/index.html>), -free food at Valencia Campus Food Pantry (<https://valencia.unm.edu/campus-resources/pasos/pasos-resource-center/campus-food-pantry.html>), - and jobs on campus (<https://valencia.unm.edu/students/financial-aid/student-employment.html>). Your advisor, staff at the resource centers (<https://valencia.unm.edu/campus-resources/pasos/pasos-resource-center/index.html>) and Academic Affairs Office (<https://valencia.unm.edu/academics/academic-affairs/index.html>), and I can help you find the right opportunities for you.

Wellness

If you do need to stay home due to illness or are experiencing a wellness challenge, please take advantage of the resources below. You can communicate with me at elgould@unm.edu; I can work with you to provide alternatives for course participation and completion. Let me, an advisor, or another UNM staff member know that you need support so that we can connect you to the right resources. UNM is a mask friendly, but not a mask required, community. If you are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, please do not come to class.

Course Calendar

(Complete course calendar will be given by Professor Heyward on 08/24)

Week 1

Tuesday 08/20

Syllabus - read over syllabus carefully for homework / safety and studio information with Lab Tech

HW due Thurs 8/22:

1. complete a reading prepare questions for discussion on Art & Fear/ Your Elusive Creative Genius. Assignment can be found below. Due 08/22 at the start of class

2. What makes a painting, a painting

**Professor Heyward arranged a sub due to being sick - we will go over the supply list on 8/24*

Thursday 08/22

First class period with Professor Heyward

Introductions!

Discussion about the reading / video - your reflections

Supply list information and all the info about the tools you'll need and where to find them

HW: positive and negative space source images

HW reading & video assignment for class discussion: REFLECTION Due 08/22

1. **To begin, take five to ten minutes and jot down some initial thoughts.** Do you have any ideas about art - what it is? Who is an artist? Why we make it? Reflect on some of your ideas about art and art making as a stream of consciousness rather than a formal paper. This reflection is all about your thoughts and opinions so there is no wrong answer.
2. **When done, read the following text and watch the following video.**
 - A. Orland Bayles: Art & Fear, Chapter 1 (PDF attached)
 - B. TedTalk by Elizabeth Gilbert; Your Elusive Creative Genius.
Your Elusive Creative Genius:
https://www.ted.com/talks/elizabeth_gilbert_your_elusive_creative_genius

3. **Complete the discussion questions 1-5 by reflecting on what you just read/watched.** There is no right answers - I encourage you all to be honest with your reflections. Don't be afraid to disagree or dislike something

Based on the reading of Chapter 1; Art & Fear and Elizabeth Gilbert's Ted Talk, Your Elusive Creative Genius, respond to the following questions for discussion:

1. What were your initial thoughts on the reading/video or both?
2. Did you agree or disagree with any part of the text or video? If so, which part?
3. Did the reading/video or both influence the way that you previously thought about what it means to be an artist or to make work?
4. What is one thing from the reading/video that you would like to mention in relationship to your own experiences or thoughts when making art?
5. How can you apply the topics presented by the reading/video to being a student in this course?

4. **Complete your reflection with a copy to turn in to Professor Heyward on 08/22.** 12" font, handwritten OK if legible, Hard copies for turn in / no emailed, assignments will be collected, have your assignment done and ready for discussion by the start of class.

I.

THE NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

*Life is short, art long, opportunity fleeting,
experience treacherous, judgement difficult.*

— Hippocrates (460-400 B.C.)

MAKING ART IS DIFFICULT. We leave drawings unfinished and stories unwritten. We do work that does not feel like our own. We repeat ourselves. We stop before we have mastered our materials, or continue on long after their potential is exhausted. Often the work we have not done seems more real in our minds than the pieces we have completed. And so questions arise: *How does art get done? Why, often, does it not get done? And what is the nature of the difficulties that stop so many who start?*

These questions, which seem so timeless, may actually be particular to our age. It may have been easier to paint bison on the cave walls long ago than to write this (or any other) sentence today. Other people, in other times and places, had some robust institutions

ART & FEAR

to shore them up: witness the Church, the clan, ritual, tradition. It's easy to imagine that artists doubted their calling less when working in the service of God than when working in the service of self.

Not so today. Today almost no one feels shored up. Today artwork does not emerge from a secure common ground: the bison on the wall is someone else's magic. Making art now means working in the face of uncertainty; it means living with doubt and contradiction, doing something no one much cares whether you do, and for which there may be neither audience nor reward. Making the work you want to make means setting aside these doubts so that you may see clearly what you have done, and thereby see where to go next. Making the work you want to make means finding nourishment within the work itself. This is not the Age of Faith, Truth and Certainty.

Yet even the notion that you have a say in this process conflicts with the prevailing view of artmaking today — namely, that art rests fundamentally upon talent, and that talent is a gift randomly built into some people and not into others. In common parlance, either you have it or you don't — great art is a product of genius, good art a product of near-genius (which Nabokov likened to *Near-Bear*), and so on down the line to pulp romances and paint-by-the-numbers. This view is inherently fatalistic — even if it's true, it's fatalistic — and offers no useful encouragement to those who would make art. Personally, we'll side with Conrad's view of

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fatalism: namely, that it is a species of fear — the fear that your fate is in your own hands, but that your hands are weak.

But while talent — not to mention fate, luck and tragedy — all play their role in human destiny, they hardly rank as dependable tools for advancing your own art on a day-to-day basis. Here in the day-to-day world (which is, after all, the only one we live in), the job of getting on with your work turns upon making some basic assumptions about human nature, assumptions that place the power (and hence the responsibility) for your actions in your own hands. Some of these can be stated directly:

A FEW ASSUMPTIONS

ARTMAKING INVOLVES SKILLS THAT CAN BE LEARNED. The conventional wisdom here is that while “craft” can be taught, “art” remains a magical gift bestowed only by the gods. Not so. In large measure becoming an artist consists of learning to accept yourself, which makes your work personal, and in following your own voice, which makes your work distinctive. Clearly, these qualities *can* be nurtured by others. Even talent is rarely distinguishable, over the long run, from perseverance and lots of hard work. It's true that every few years the authors encounter some beginning photography student whose first-semester prints appear as finely crafted as any Ansel Adams might have made. And it's true that a natural gift like

that (especially coming at the fragile early learning stage) returns priceless encouragement to its maker. But all that has nothing to do with artistic content. Rather, it simply points up the fact that most of us (including Adams himself!) had to work years to perfect our art.

ART IS MADE BY ORDINARY PEOPLE. Creatures having only virtues can hardly be imagined making art. It's difficult to picture the Virgin Mary painting landscapes. Or Batman throwing pots. The flawless creature wouldn't *need* to make art. And so, ironically, the ideal artist is scarcely a theoretical figure at all. If art is made by ordinary people, then you'd have to allow that the ideal artist would be an ordinary person too, with the whole usual mixed bag of traits that real human beings possess. This is a giant hint about art, because it suggests that our flaws and weaknesses, while often obstacles to our getting work done, are a source of strength as well. Something about making art has to do with overcoming things, giving us a clear opportunity for doing things in ways we have always known we should do them.

MAKING ART AND VIEWING ART ARE DIFFERENT AT THEIR CORE. The sane human being is satisfied that the best he/she can do at any given moment is the best he/she can do at any given moment. That belief, if widely embraced, would make this book unnecessary, false, or both. Such sanity is, unfortunately, rare. Making art provides uncomfortably accurate feedback about the gap that inevitably exists between what you in-

did not do, and what you did. In fact, if artmaking did not tell you (the maker) so enormously much about yourself, then making art that matters to you would be impossible. To all viewers but yourself, what matters is the product: the finished artwork. To you, and you alone, what matters is the process: the experience of shaping that artwork. The viewers' concerns are not your concerns (although it's dangerously easy to adopt their attitudes.) Their job is whatever it is: to be moved by art, to be entertained by it, to make a killing off it, whatever. Your job is to learn to work on your work.

For the artist, that truth highlights a familiar and predictable corollary: artmaking can be a rather lonely, thankless affair. Virtually all artists spend some of their time (and some artists spend virtually all of their time) producing work that no one else much cares about. It just seems to come with the territory. But for some reason — self-defense, perhaps — artists find it tempting to romanticize this lack of response, often by (heroically) picturing themselves peering deeply into the underlying nature of things long before anyone else has eyes to follow.

Romantic, but wrong. The sobering truth is that the disinterest of others hardly ever reflects a gulf in vision. In fact there's generally no good reason why others *should* care about most of any one artist's work. The function of the overwhelming majority of your artwork is simply to teach you how to make the small fraction of your artwork that soars. One of the basic and difficult

but the non-pieces...
mentally corrected!

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lessons every artist must learn is that even the failed pieces are essential. X-rays of famous paintings reveal that even master artists sometimes made basic mid-course corrections (or deleted really dumb mistakes) by overpainting the still-wet canvas. The point is that you learn how to make your work *by making your work*, and a great many of the pieces you make along the way will never stand out as *finished art*. The best you can do is make art you care about — and lots of it!

The rest is largely a matter of perseverance. Of course once you're famous, collectors and academics will circle back in droves to claim credit for spotting evidence of genius in every early piece. But until your ship comes in, the only people who will really care about your work are those who care about you personally. Those close to you know that making the work is essential to your well being. They will always care about your work, if not because it is great, then because it is yours — and this is something to be genuinely thankful for. Yet however much they love you, it still remains as true for them as for the rest of the world: learning to make your work is not their problem.

ARTMAKING HAS BEEN AROUND LONGER THAN THE ART ESTABLISHMENT. Through most of history, the people who made art never thought of themselves as making art. In fact it's quite presumable that art was being made long before the rise of consciousness, long before the pronoun "I" was ever employed. The painters of caves, quite apart from not thinking of themselves as artists, probably never thought of themselves at all.

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What this suggests, among other things, is that the current view equating art with "self-expression" reveals more a contemporary bias in our thinking than an underlying trait of the medium. Even the separation of art from craft is largely a post-Renaissance concept, and more recent still is the notion that art transcends what you do, and represents what you are. In the past few centuries Western art has moved from unsigned tableaux of orthodox religious scenes to one-person displays of personal cosmologies. "Artist" has gradually become a form of identity which (as every artist knows) often carries with it as many drawbacks as benefits. Consider that if artist equals self, then when (inevitably) you make flawed art, you are a flawed person, and when (worse yet) you make no art, you are no person at all! It seems far healthier to sidestep that vicious spiral by accepting many paths to successful artmaking — from reclusive to flamboyant, intuitive to intellectual, folk art to fine art. One of those paths is yours.

What Makes a Painting, a *Painting*?

Course Introduction and Homework Reflection (due 08/22)

To ponder this semester:

- What is unique to the language and medium of painting that helps an artist articulate a feeling to a viewer?
- How is painting different from photography or drawing?

Knowing the qualities of painting as a unique visual language of its own will help you know how to approach and execute works of art that better articulate or original artistic intentions through the medium of painting. To get there, one must ponder a seemingly silly and abstract question.

- What is Painting?
- Why does a work of art have to be a painting?

This is what I was asked in graduate school. I was confused at first, but I learned that to mean that I had to have a reason for conveying my ideas or intentions through the medium of painting - and that this reasoning and choice to make something into a painting and then into art could only be answered with a deeper understanding of what painting is as a unique visual language. There are things the language of painting can do that other mediums cannot and vice versa. What are the capabilities of this language that are unique to it?

Exploring these seemingly cliché interrogations thoughtfully as you work through your own artworks and projects in oil painting will help you be a better painter / student. The more you uncover about painting the more deliberate your decisions will be and choices informed. You'll never have the entirety of painting and its capabilities revealed to you, however, you will begin to experience the magic of being driven by curiosities as each new discovery only leads to more questions. The process of painting is in itself a unique experience and labor, sometimes as mysterious as a finished painting itself.

Why are we covering this? In Painting 1 courses I have found that students have a misinformed idea on how to translate imagery or feeling visually into paintings. They are stiff around their edges as if they have to describe what they are seeing with clear contours but too loose and timid when painting areas that touch that of another area so much so that white halos are left around them. Their idea of constructing a visual image through paint is through single layers that get it right on the first go rather than the process of underpainting, value blocking, building a painting and then refining it. Painting is not one dimensional. There is a push and pull between strokes you put down and take away. Visual imagery comes alive through this process

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of many sessions layering and editing. It does not happen in the first shot - or the second. To realize a painting to its full potential you must be fearless in the process and not worry about what it currently looks like, but where it is going and how you will get it there.

This comes with time and practice - you will be learning about the unique medium of painting, a concept that helps you successfully articulate something visually when you understand it, at the same time that you are trying to create finished works of art. Things don't always click at once. Not only is that okay, but it is a natural part of the process. This is why I honor ungrading methods in this course like I would any other intro to fine arts course. In remembering how our grading structure honors this process of trial and error, one that accepts failure, I want to invite you to be fearless and embrace this process even when producing inconsistent results. You have your invitation to try your hardest to learn the medium of painting and how to paint/produce paintings even if it means failing and creating shit works. You have nothing to lose when you are fearless in this course but you have a passing final grade to lose if you hang on to fears and let it impact your work ethic, productivity, and overall morale - preventing progress and growth from occurring.

Painting is about paint interacting with paint, the impact of colors through transparency, layers, vibrancy, etc. It is about process, whatever that may be leading to works of whatever style. It is about capturing and articulating a feeling that resonates with viewers and not about capturing reality for what it is - that is what the photographic lens is for - photography is the true master in capturing life as it is in a moment of time. Not painting. Knowing what you are observing, and knowing what feeling you are trying to capture in the imagery you depict will help you focus on how to use the diverse aspects of the painting medium to translate your ideas.

A painting's success begins with the canvas, how it is stretched, gessoed, cared for. Then its success lies on its idea, the planning done before going to the canvas, and then the underpainting steps that begin the building process. How you mix your color in every single way matters and is part of this pre-painting importance. This includes your willingness to explore more dynamic colors through mixing more of them together, the quantities you allow yourself to mix, the notes you take on the tubes you used to create a color you are using to your understanding of the diverse range of colors at your fingertips when considering hue, saturation, value, temperature, opacity/transparency, etc. All of the steps you take in producing a painting for a project matter in this class - you will succeed as long as you really try to grasp core concepts and learning through strong habits and practices that hardworking students possess.

Art classes are hard, they require a lot of time and effort, it is a finicky labor, sometimes abstract, and is influenced by everything from our paints to how we mix them. No student should fear failing as a result of trying their best effort. This outcome is rewarded as it leads to more successful learning. Student's should only fear not putting in their best effort. Your grade will reflect your commitment but I find the most disappointing side to this outcome is never allowing yourself to experience what it feels like to paint something you never imagined you could and forever wondering what capabilities you really had in you.

Professor Heyward

And lastly, challenge your preconceived notions about what makes a painting good or bad. Challenge your understanding and comfortability in your process of making a painting. Be loose and embrace the moments of chance that occur within your work when you allow paint to interact with paint unrestricted.

It took me a long time to understand the medium and language of painting more deeply. My goal is that you all develop as painters and make more painterly paintings by giving yourselves permission to experiment, play, fail, and feel lost. You may not know all the truths about painting when the semester ends, but if you dive into the course and medium with confidence and stride then you will make good paintings (whether you notice it or not!). Plus, it is a lot easier to make a bad painting look good than a bad drawing. Bad drawings just look terrible. A painting is only bad when it didn't teach you anything through the process and the completed work isn't as sophisticated as it could be without challenging basic decisions around composition, color, focal point, source imagery. The simple stuff takes attention and effort, too.

Quotes by Famous Artists

Here are some quotes to keep in your periphery throughout the semester that align your exploration or understanding of painting to the thoughts and sentiments of other artists.

“If I could say it in words there would be no reason to paint” - Edward Hopper

“Creativity takes courage” - Henri Matisse

“The object of art is not to reproduce reality, but to create a reality of the same intensity” - Alberto Giacometti

“The object isn't to make art, it's to be in that wonderful state which makes art inevitable” - Robert Henry

“The modern artist is working with space and time and expressing their feelings rather than illustrating” - Jackson Pollock

Professor Heyward

For Class Thurs. 08/22, please prepare for class discussion based on the following questions:

NOTE: The purpose of this exercise is to offer honest reflections - do not worry about if there is a right or wrong answer. This last question especially - part of our growth in this course relies on identifying what holds us back and when. The goal isn't to not struggle or understand, it is about diving into why we are struggling and expanding on what we don't understand and we can only do this through honest reflections which will be assigned as homework in various topics throughout the semester.

What is your idea of painting and how does it differ to other mediums?

What is your understanding of the process it takes to create a painting? What do you like or dislike about painting?

What are your fears about your capabilities in art or the course?

What do you expect you might learn in a college Fine Arts course? What workload do you imagine it requires?

What is your definition of success in a work of art you will make or through the art making process?

Do you have any fears or worries when it comes to being creative or making art? If so, why do you think you have them?