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ART B0051 Studio Critique

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ART DEPARTMENT, THE CITY COLLEGE OF NEW YORK, CUNY, FALL 2018
STUDIO CRITIQUE, ART B0051 & B0053, 4PS, TH 2-550, Room: CG201
INSTRUCTOR: TOM THAYER, office CG250, e-mail: tthayer@ccny.cuny.edu
OFFICE HOURS: W 4:00-6:00PM, TH 11-12PM and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Graduate Studio Critique is an interdisciplinary/ non-discipline-specific studio course, taken each semester of the MFA Studio Art Program. It is a venue to receive critical feedback on the development of your work's progression towards the thesis exhibition.

First year student's work is exploratory and experimental in nature. Second year students focus the results of those experiments into their thesis exhibition. The class meets weekly for a series critiques, discussions and workshops. We work together to identify and hone the unique qualities of our individual voices and experiment with ways in which to use them to their most profound and powerful effect.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Comprehension and demonstration of the cyclical process of creating and exhibiting a body of artwork.
- Utilizing creative problem solving and experimentation within this work cycle.
- Use of the critique as an integral tool in the development of a body of work.
- Ability to respond to critical analysis of ones work through exploring ideas brought up in critiques.

ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES TO BE USED BY THE INSTRUCTOR

- Participation
- Assessment of artistic works
- Critiques

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE COURSE

The work made for this class will be reviewed in pre-arranged critiques with the instructor. These meetings may take the form of individual critiques and group critiques. There may be required individual and group activities such as viewing films, workshops, reading, writing and visiting exhibitions.

Each student will develop a body of work for this course. While the instructor will also discuss work you made specifically for other classes, it should be understood that you will also be generating a distinct body of work for this class, devoting 10-15 hours per week to the work for this class.

Attendance Policy: Critiques are mandatory. Missing more than two scheduled critiques will earn you a failing grade. If you miss a critique it is your responsibility to schedule another critique at a time that works for the instructor.

Grading Policy: The instructor will discuss your approximate grade with you around midterm, and discuss your final grade with you at the end of the semester. Your work will be graded on the following: Experimentation, Work Ethic, Formal Issues, Ideas/Content, and Participation

GENERAL GRADE INTERPRETATION:

- A -Outstanding work and effort in and outside of class.
- B -Very good work and effort, clearly above the minimum requirements.
- C -Good, but average work and effort, meeting all requirements.

D -Below average and contributing less than the required effort.
F -Not enough work to justify credit for the course.
I -No Incompletes will be given.

How to do well in this class:

-Put the physical time necessary into the work! This cannot be stressed enough.

-Keep an open mind and experimental attitude towards the work you do for this class. Remember that school is a place of growth. It is an artificial and protective environment for you to take real chances with your work.

-Ask yourself if there is mystery in what you are doing. Create experiences that generate questions, rather than answers. To quote the Belgian poet/ writer/ artist Henri Michaux
“The wolf that understands the lamb is lost, will die of hunger, will not have understood the lamb, will have been wrong about the wolf-and almost everything remains for it to learn about being.”

Your journey should include experimenting with materials, ideas, content, and subject matter. Experiment with everything. I would almost go so far as to say, if you can recognize your work as contemporary art, then you are not pushing things far enough. The art world is filled has a never-ending supply of people who are simply paying homage to other artists they admire. You want to be brave and individual enough to contribute to the contemporary artistic dialog by moving it forward and shaping it... not by swimming in it's wake. Move past your preconceived ideas of what art is, the function it serves and how it acts. This will only come from the synthesis of massive amounts of making, critiquing, and research. Your research should be in-depth and engaging to you. It should fuel the work via interests that excite you beyond the ideas of art.

Think about what excited you as a child, before societal influence shaped you.

Do not allow yourself to be the smartest person in the room. Stretch yourself and seek out experiences and information you do not yet understand and try to learn about them.

A graduate student's worst enemy is their own sophomoric dismissal of artwork that does not fit into their artistic wheelhouse. If you want to reject ideas, then, by all means, do it. But reject things based on your comprehensive, objective understanding of them, not through subjectively fueled ignorance.

CALENDAR

Week 1: Introduction and scheduling.

Week 2-17: Critiques

Week 18:Finals week

STATEMENT OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

"Plagiarism is the act of presenting another person's ideas, research or writings as your own. The following are some examples of plagiarism, but by no means is it an exhaustive list: 1. Copying another person's actual words without the use of quotation marks and footnotes attributing the words to their source. 2. Presenting another person's ideas or theories in your own words without acknowledging the source. 3. Using information that is not common knowledge without acknowledging the source. 4. Failing to acknowledge collaborators on homework and laboratory assignments. 5. Internet plagiarism includes submitting downloaded term papers or parts of term papers, paraphrasing or copying information from the internet without citing the source, and "cutting and pasting" from various sources without proper attribution. The City College Faculty Senate has approved a procedure for addressing violations of academic integrity, which can also be found in Appendix B.3 of the CCNY Undergraduate Bulletin."

Strategies for our Studio Critique Art Course

- We come from different levels of experience and places within the field of art making, but we gather with a singular focus: to get better. And we gather to help one another achieve this goal. It is easier to see what a fellow artist needs than it is to see what you need yourself. No one does this alone. We are each other's team.

-We all come to this point from a somewhat non-traditional trajectory. This is a strength. If harnessed, this uniqueness can result in much more powerful art than art coming from more predictable and sanctioned pathways.

-While it does get easier to critique yourself over time, it generally never becomes a solo pursuit. You will need a team your whole life. This team will exist of other artists who you trust to critique you, a gallerist, a curator and a critic who believe in your work. I'm sure some of the people you met yesterday will remain on your team for life.

-Your own eye gets more refined and trustworthy the more active your practice is. So I will help to organize and set parameters that get you into a highly active state. We will consider the time of day and length of time assigned to the broad array of activities a professional artist must undertake. We will work to develop consistency in this process, fueled by an unwavering sense of priority.

-In our class we will work together, under a temporary, monolithic definition of what art is and what art is not: Art is a form of communication that activates its audience's minds through generating questions, not through delivering answers. The purpose of this communication is ultimately to advance human understanding of our ourselves and our role in the universe. Art is not an interesting, creative and skillfully crafted object or experience. Of course creativity, craftsmanship and talent are elements often used in creating art, but on their own they do not communicate anything beyond an interesting display of skill and a therapeutic activity for the artist.

-A note on Awareness: to make progress through the ideas we explore this year, you must approach them deliberately, consciously, and be aware of your specific goals. For your practice to function, you must be aware of your intended and current location in the world of art. You must be aware of the connections between your practice and it's historical and contemporary influences.

Our topics for this year are: **Freedom, Time, Writing and Form**

Freedom

We want total freedom to communicate with a universal resonance from the most personal voices. We want freedom from our impulses/habits/comforts/fears, freedom from our own identification with tools, mediums, subject matter, freedom from labels, freedom from history, even freedom from identity. Freedom! To have any hope of freedom from these thought forms, we must first be able to clearly identify and understand them. Artwork that functions at a high level is fearless.

Writing

For us, writing is a way to develop and be more conscious of the content our own work deals with. It is our way of researching the content of in our work. You will develop a daily, scheduled writing practice in which you regurgitate written information you take-in that relates to your content. It will come out filtered through your own artistic point of view.

Time

For us, time relates to the sun and our biology, as well as the mise un place of the various aspects involved in our professional art practices. I have experimented over the years, trying to understand the circadian rhythm's relationship to creativity activity. I have struggled with the relationship between making things and trusting my eye, often working for long stretches throughout the day that crossed through different mindsets and conflicting self-criticisms about the work. We will work to identify the length and time of day that best suite the different jobs you do as an artist.

Form

Through a series of exercises we will work to consciously inject our work with formal rules of thumb that will act to super-charge our artistic communication.