

4-9-2019

Framing Questions and Modes of Inquiry in Illustration Process and Critique

Robert Brinkerhoff
Rhode Island School of Design, rbrinker@risd.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.risd.edu/faculty_work



Part of the [Art Education Commons](#), and the [Illustration Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Brinkerhoff, Robert, "Framing Questions and Modes of Inquiry in Illustration Process and Critique" (2019).
Faculty & Librarian Work. 6.
https://digitalcommons.risd.edu/faculty_work/6

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the RISD Faculty & Librarians at DigitalCommons@RISD. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty & Librarian Work by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@RISD. For more information, please contact mpompeli@risd.edu.

**Framing Questions and Modes of Inquiry
in Illustration Process and Critique**

By Robert Brinkerhoff,
Professor of Illustration
and Dean of Fine Arts,
Rhode Island School of Design, USA

Abstract:

Every creative act begins with a question—whether consciously or unconsciously formed—and illustrators may enhance their approaches to visual problems by framing a line of critical inquiry that invigorates conceptualization. While inventories and lists of questions are suitable ways to begin, there exist many different modes of questioning—verbal and non-verbal, manual and cognitive, linear and discursive, intuitive and rational, integrative and deconstructive. This chapter explores diverse methods for inquiry in problem definition and resolution, describing a variety of models and incorporating observations by professional artist-educators to expose different strategies for illustrators.

Key Words: *Socratic Dialogue, Socrates, Critical Thinking, Questioning, Question, Creative Process, Illustration*

“The role of the artist is to ask questions, not answer them.” —Anton Chekhov

“The unexamined life is not worth living.” —Socrates

Introduction: Interrogative Stirrings

We first question our surroundings as infants, our mouths forming not inquisitive words but playgrounds for sensory exploration. We lick and taste, feel with our lips and tongues, smell with the nostrils that hover above our mouths. As tiny humans, everything goes into our mouths in what is primarily a quest for sustenance, but which also proves to be a very efficient means of understanding on the most basic level the innumerable stimuli engulfing us since birth. Other senses are likewise important. Our capacity for language—the complex systems which label and define with exquisite specificity the world around us—is preceded by taste, hearing, touch, smell and seeing. John Berger opens his 1972 book *Ways of Seeing* by exalting visual perception: “Seeing comes before words. The child looks and recognizes before it can speak.” (Berger, 1973) Our senses provide an initial perceptual framework for all that surrounds us. Our senses ask, albeit unconsciously, “What is this?” and the answers come from contact with the complex mass of nerve endings in our mouths in those first months of life. But is mouthing a marble or a blade of grass truly akin to questioning? The first definition offered in the *Merriam Webster Dictionary*

indicates that a question (and questioning) need not be limited to linguistic interrogative expressions:

- (1) : an interrogative expression often used to test knowledge
- (2) : an interrogative sentence or clause. (Webster, 2016)

Note the use of the word “expression” in the first definition. More importantly, however, it is helpful to recognize the distinction between the first and second definitions. The inclusion of a reference to language—the words “sentence or clause”—appears in only one of them (definition 2). This chapter investigates traditional and highly structured modes of questioning, and yet touches on some definitions that may not involve words at all, at least not in a predominant capacity.

Inquiry vs. Research: Instinct, Impulse and Inquisitiveness

One of the great conundrums facing American schools of art and design is how the practicing artist-cum-professor may best respond to the codified definition of “research” that has been modeled on traditional academic disciplines and so inextricably bound to the pursuit of conclusions driven by a hypothesis. In 2011 at Rhode Island School of Design, the Division of Fine Arts (ten departments operating under the auspices of a single division and led by its Acting Dean Deborah Bright—Ceramics; Film, Animation and Video; Glass; Illustration; Jewelry and Metalsmithing; Painting; Photography; Printmaking; Sculpture and Textiles) developed a position paper on the nature of studio research in the fine arts that put forth twenty potent statements. Among this compendium of assertions were several that resisted specifically the traditional model of scholarly research established in the humanities, sciences or social sciences, tacitly asserting that pursuit of intuition, instinct and inquiry itself is a mode of research. Statements 15-18 of the document, “Fine Arts Now—20 Statements,” summarize the faculty stance on this issue:

15. “Research for the fine artist is not the same as research or scholarship in the humanities, sciences or social sciences; nor is it the same as the application of advanced techniques or ‘design thinking’ to solve given problems. An artist’s research is self-directed, open-ended, and often proceeds in a non-linear fashion, without a clearly defined end-goal or predetermined measure of success.”

16. “An artist’s research engages multiple discursive practices that may include: experiments with materials and their properties; historical and cultural research to illuminate the meanings and contexts the work engages; travel and extended residencies to develop the work; scholarly/critical writing to work out ideas intellectually and create new contexts for the work’s reception; aggregation and publishing of research results for use by others; teaching and working with others to investigate sets of issues that the artist engages as part of his or her practice.”

17. “Art research may take many forms. Sometimes, the research process *is* the final content of the work; other times, research is all of the preparatory activity that leads to the finished work but remains invisible. Sometimes, a work’s research can only be recognized as such after the fact.”

18. “The pedagogy of art schools, by necessity, is self-reflective, dynamic and dialogical. The artist learns, over time, how to make decisions simultaneously on many perceptual and conceptual levels. The decision-making process is always constrained by the balance between formal choices and idea; the properties of the materials and technologies used; the historical and cultural meanings of the materials, arrangements, and iconography chosen; the different contexts in which the work is made and received.” (Bright, 2011)

Ultimately, in avoiding persistent attempts to conflate “research” in the fine arts with “research” in the humanities, sciences and social sciences, RISD’s Fine Arts faculty have come (rather unofficially, but comfortably) to refer to research as “inquiry,” a word which references more directly the questioning nature of artistic process without presumption of a “solution” or an “answer” as the ultimate measure of success. Inquiry emphasizes an investigative process, rather than a solution; it is the inquisitive path, as opposed to its conclusion.

Rigorous inquiry—questioning, investigating, critically apprehending—is fundamental to healthy studio practice, whether the artist is an architect or graphic designer, an illustrator or painter. Studio practice—even for illustrators, whose work is driven by extrinsic, communicative need—is not fully constrained by problem solving and the desire to find *the* answer. Rather, immersion in inquisitive activity propelled by intuition and instinct play a significant role in creative process for the illustrator, poetically balancing the logical and rational questions that are built into any practical approach to art making.

Conscious Questioning: The Need for Critical Thinking

The Foundation for Critical Thinking in Tomales, CA is dedicated to advancing conscious, critical inquiry and they offer solid techniques to guide people, no matter what discipline, toward conscious, full engagement with ideas. At the fore of the Center’s work is the promotion of “essential questions” as fundamental to all critical thought, whether scientist or artist, poet or politician. Among their publications is a remarkably potent little booklet that summarizes the building blocks of good questioning. *The Miniature Guide to The Art of Asking Essential Questions*, by Drs. Linda Elder and Richard Paul begins with the following bold statement: “It is not possible to be a good thinker and a poor questioner. Questions define tasks, express problems and delineate issues. They drive thinking forward. Answers, on the other hand, often signal a full stop in thought. Only when an answer generates further

questions does thought continue as inquiry. A mind with no questions is a mind that is not intellectually alive.” (Elder and Paul, 2006)

The statement above may remind college art professors of how challenging it is to awaken young minds to the value of questions over answers. The latter are important, and yet it is the process of active, conscious questioning that illuminates the paths to gratifying creative response. A frequent complaint in academia is that, rather than entering a creative venture inquisitively, fledgling artists and designers express a desire to “know what the professor wants.” But perhaps the problem is not in the students’ desire to jump to the answers. Rather, it may be an expression of frustration in response to creative challenges presented without guidance, and particularly with no grounding in conscious questioning. The teacher’s primary responsibility, if nothing else, is to help the student establish a habit of consciously posing meaningful, productive questions as part of their creative process.

Elder and Paul identify three essential systems for approaching questions: *questions of procedure*, in which an existing system for determining an answer is followed, such as “how are pigments bound together in oil paint?”; *questions of preference*, necessitating subjectivity, such as “which colors look best when combined?”; and *questions of judgment*, in which there may be multiple conflicting yet rational viewpoints, such as “which sketch best represents the central idea?” (Elder and Paul, 2006)

Conscious questioning is fundamental to defeating assumptions, and our heads are full of them. In *The Storm of Creativity*, architect and professor Kyna Leski writes, “Questions have a remarkable power to undo preconceived choices, disrupt assumptions, and turn your attention away from the familiar. All these lead to a more open mind. Instead of choosing where the window should be, I might, as an architect, ask, How is the inside connected to the outside?” (Leski, 2015)

It helps to witness the impact of conscious questioning on a simple problem. For example, if I challenge myself to elucidate why “conscious questioning” is important to creative process, I may begin with a deliberately phrased question:

What is conscious questioning and why is it a vital aspect of creative process?

Conscious questioning is inquiry involving full awareness, with the aid of clearly articulated interrogative statements and actions that both limit and expand possible conclusions.

While this explanation may at first sound pedantic, its evolution in the span of five minutes has enabled me to both broaden and constrain my understanding of the subject. By the time I finished crafting that sentence I had grown fairly certain of what is and isn’t meant by the phrase “conscious questioning.” I decided that an appropriate synonym for “questioning” is “inquiry,” informed by my earlier agreement with the RISD Fine Arts faculty position paper. I became confident that

“full awareness” would be a helpful way to define the nature of consciousness. By emphasizing the need for “clear articulation” I decidedly eliminated linguistic vagueness as a feature of conscious questioning. Perhaps the most gratifying conclusion I reached in defining the term is that conscious questioning both “limits and expands possible conclusions.” In this phrase I concluded that a conscious attempt to define a subject both dilates one’s consideration of it and ultimately—as is the nature of language—limits the definition. In reviewing the definition I crafted, I am led to another line of inquiry, prompted in particular by the phrase “*that both limit and expand possible conclusions.*” What is meant by this cryptic oxymoron? It’s a provocative way to say that conscious questioning uses language that expands our thinking about a limited set of issues. The complex question posed at the outset led to a series of smaller questions, all of which were weighed in the course of crafting the definition.

To demonstrate the value of conscious questioning in the critical evaluation of an illustrated work (an activity that is at the center of illustration studio discourse), a concrete example is useful. In the image below—a cover illustration by Ellen Weinstein for *Nautilus* Magazine (fig. 1).—Weinstein evokes many key ideas with subtle metaphor, both figurative and formal. In her own words, “the subject was a series of articles about observing nature and the possibility that nature also looks back at us. The issue was their summer quarterly, which called for a bright, summery feel and was titled “Outside Looking In.”



Fig. 1: Ellen Weinstein, "Outside Looking In." Cover for *Nautilus Magazine*, Summer 2014.

With this helpful context to open critical discussion, questions may take shape, but they must be well-formed and provocative questions, crafted consciously to elicit deeper discussion. Lethargic, generalized inquiry is unproductive. Instead of asking, "What do you think?" a better question may be "How is the concept of 'the familiar made strange' used in this illustration?" Questions like this possess specificity yet openness for an array of responses, and this may propel more productive conversation about important concepts of visual communication. Some real learning about universal ideas can take place, as opposed to mundane discussion of how the reds and oranges "pop."

Here is a question that may prompt good critical discussion: "Is this an original idea?" This will lead to an assessment of the illustration's relative ingenuity, and discussion may turn alternately critical and supportive. A follow-up question: "If this is an original idea, and we consider that a good thing, what do we value about

originality? Why is it important to the work we do? Is it tied primarily to ego and accomplishment?" Questions like these steer the group away from the typical discussions of form alone that often neglect concept.

History: Socrates and His Method

Conscious questioning may have its most notable beginnings in Ancient Greece. The Athenian philosopher Socrates (470/469 – 399 BC) is credited with developing a mode of critical discourse that remains every bit as potent—if not widely used—today. (Indeed, if it were practiced by all citizens as a critical thinking tool, we would not so carelessly allow slippery politicians to linguistically evade the truth). The *Socratic Method* uses the art of questioning as a means of stimulating exhaustive critical thinking and illuminating truths. By engaging the interlocutor in challenging, inquisitive conversation and instilling a powerful sense of ownership of the critical thinking process, this form of interrogative dialogue is essentially designed to deconstruct hypotheses, often leading to—if not the truth—disproval of presumptions. (Wilberding, 2014)

Socrates remains a somewhat mythic figure. Our primary portraits of him come from Plato, whose *Republic* features sizable dialogic segments in which Socrates guides followers from smug professions of knowledge to states of *aporia*, or a higher level of ignorance. Socrates himself claimed that his only intellectual advantage was knowing that he knew nothing, while most other learned men claimed superior awareness. (Evans, 2014)

The Socratic Method is *dialectic*, using inductive questioning to systematically test the limits of the interlocutor's assumptions. In the *Republic*, for example, Plato stages an encounter between Socrates and Euthyphro, who has arrived at the Court of Athens to bring charges of murder against his own father. Goaded into dialogue, Socrates questions the presumptuous Euthyphro on his claims to authority over piety. "What is piety?" asks Socrates, and we're off! Four times Euthyphro attempts to define the idea of piety, but is compelled after each round to reconsider his definition, ultimately abandoning the conversation. It is important to note that the goal of this form of Socratic dialogue is the aforementioned state of "higher ignorance"—*aporia*. (Brickhouse and Smith, 1983)

Questioning in Artistic Process: The Socratic Method in Art School

While the Socratic Method has been instrumental (and quite effective) in educating the likes of lawyers, scientists and divinity scholars, there is scant evidence of its use in studio discourse, at least not in the purest sense. Artists (and most designers) seem to enjoy guidance by instinct over reason, but can highly rational modes of

questioning play into studio practice and criticality? Perhaps the resistance to linear discussion—hammering away at assumptions in dialectic to and fro, with exquisite specificity—is necessary to creative practice. James Elkins, in his controversial and deeply committed book, *Why Art Cannot Be Taught*, admits openly the inherent conflict in the intersection of teaching art and exhaustive dialectics:

“...When teachers or students sit around a table and talk, they rarely pursue one topic right to its conclusion. The very open-endedness of our normal conversations is centrally important, and I want to acknowledge that here...Our informal ways of talking, I will argue, are ways of *not* coming to terms with a number of fundamental difficulties. It’s not polite to press too hard on an issue, since a lunchtime conversation or a studio chat is not supposed to be a formal debate, and it is also a way of acknowledging that the issues are not easily resolved.” (Elkins, 2001)

Elkins’ last point is particularly interesting, since the Socratic Method in its purest form leads ultimately to acceptance of a state of uncertainty, which is in itself a form of intellectual enlightenment. It would appear that a lack of resolve is the anticipated (and accepted) outcome in both the modern art school and Ancient Greece. It is doubtful that a linear form of reasoning would be helpful to the illustrator as she rolls up her sleeves to work. The intuitive orchestration of sensing, knowing and action—a cooperative, symbiotic act involving eye, mind and hand—is absolutely vital to creative inquiry, and one would be hard pressed to find an illustrator whose methods of coming to grips with the work they are undertaking involves the sort of linear, relentless attack on assumptions that is demanded by the Socratic Method. Intuition is the sacred cow of artistic process and should be understood as a legitimate complement to reason.

In *Seven Days in The Art World*, Sarah Thornton dedicates an entire chapter to observing the nebulous dialogue espoused by California Institute of The Arts’ (Cal Arts) crit culture, and one course in particular, the late Michael Asher’s “Post Studio” graduate critique, is the setting for her account. The purely conceptual framework of the Cal Arts program dispenses with what it considers the limits of material disciplines and instead plumbs the depths of artistic critical thinking. It is difficult to imagine how any form of deductive reasoning would come into play in this sort of environment, but Asher evidently possessed a relentless spirit of inquiry, as remembered by artist Christopher Williams in a 2011 interview with Fiona Conner for *The Experimental Impulse*: “He had an endless supply of questions for any one student, and the duration... I wouldn’t want to say that it would break you down, but at a certain point, bullshitting would be much harder.” Sound familiar? While the highly structured line of questioning germane to Socratic dialogue is perhaps emphatically convergent, there is nevertheless a detectable effort to hone thinking through interrogation in the class. (Thornton, 2009)

Reason and Intuition: The Science of Hemisphericity

Since the 1970's a tidy model of neurology has guided popular understanding about creative and rational thinking. Hemisphericity—a theory dividing left and right-brained cerebral activity into two major classes: rational and creative— was codified by the layman, and soon enough artists and mathematicians were laying claim to being “right-brained,” or “left-brained,” the result of an oversimplified interpretation of the research. In truth, while much work has been done to prove the hemispherical division of the brain's functions, there is absolutely no proof that the two halves of our minds work independently of one another, and just about any cognitive task requires both reason (convergent thinking) and its more free-wheeling, associative counterpart (divergent thinking). (Beaumont, Young McManus, 1984)

The same is true for art-making, despite the occasional resistance of students of art and design, who sometimes shield themselves from deep inquiry from their professors and peers by claiming the sanctimonious right to subjective, artistic expression. Art students need to recognize their conscious, rational contributions to the work they produce, in concert with their more intuitive, unconscious, creative impulses.

I had a student several years ago who devised an exquisite project involving found photographs. She outlined the rationale behind the work beautifully, and our conversations leading to its execution were laced with interrogative banter about her intentions and potential interpretations. The closer we came to finishing this semester-long endeavor, the more excited I grew in anticipation of a well-conceived, well-realized project. But when she arrived for crit some technical aspect had gone awry and she wasn't able to realize her initial idea, instead presenting the same material in a weaker incarnation that was unrelated to her original plan. Perhaps more disappointing than the abandonment of the original idea was her willingness to shrug off the loss of 12 weeks' worth of conceptual development. She seemed surprised by my disappointment, as surprised as I was about her languid willingness to let go of a great idea, which was the product of both hemispheres of her brain teaming up to make something profound. Rational and intuitive thinking are both vital to artistic process, and the former often involves conscious questioning as ideas take shape.

Arguments Against the Socratic Method

Despite the meandering, ponderous and sometimes aimless nature of some art school critiques, dialectic inquiry—with its contracting exactitude and relentless honing in— isn't necessarily the way to conduct a proper crit. Indeed, there exist respectable arguments against the Socratic method as a tool for teaching *anything*, much less the highly subjective evaluation of art, or as an integral part of artistic process. In a 2011 study published in *Mind, Brain and Education*, scientists

replicated Socrates' line of inquiry from Plato's *Meno* (repeating the fifty questions the Greek philosopher asked a slave boy in the construction of a geometric figure), using contemporary high school students as their subjects. It must have been exciting to discover that the answers the students provided to the questions replicated precisely those of the slave boy. According to the authors, this finding suggested that "Socratic dialogue is built on a strong intuition of human knowledge and reasoning which persists more than twenty-four centuries after its conception." But there was an equally surprising and perhaps disappointing discovery: today's students were unable to grasp the relevance of the questions in trying to achieve the intended result: drawing a square with an area twice the size of one shown to them. (Paul, 2011) While universally intuitive reasoning seems to transcend millennia, cultivating a broader, deeper understanding through dialectic inquiry doesn't seem to gel with contemporary ways of thinking. A portion of this dialogue from *Meno* may be read below:

SOCRATES: Tell me, boy, do you know that a figure like this is a square?

BOY: I do.

SOCRATES: And you know that a square figure has these four lines equal?

BOY: Certainly.

SOCRATES: And these lines which I have drawn through the middle of the square are also equal?

BOY: Yes.

SOCRATES: A square may be of any size?

BOY: Certainly.

SOCRATES: And if one side of the figure be of two feet, and the other side be of two feet, how much will the whole be? Let me explain: if in one direction the space was of two feet, and in the other direction of one foot, the whole would be of two feet taken once?

BOY: Yes.

SOCRATES: But since this side is also of two feet, there are twice two feet?

BOY: There are.

SOCRATES: Then the square is of twice two feet?

BOY: Yes.

SOCRATES: And how many are twice two feet? Count and tell me.

BOY: Four, Socrates.

SOCRATES: And might there not be another square twice as large as this, and having like this the lines equal?

BOY: Yes.

SOCRATES: And of how many feet will that be?

BOY: Of eight feet.

SOCRATES: And now try and tell me the length of the line which forms the side of that double square: this is two feet—what will that be?

BOY: Clearly, Socrates, it will be double.

SOCRATES: Do you observe, Meno, that I am not teaching the boy anything, but only asking him questions; and now he fancies that he knows how long a line is necessary in order to produce a figure of eight square feet; does he not?

MENO: Yes.

SOCRATES: And does he really know?

MENO: Certainly not.

SOCRATES: He only guesses that because the square is double, the line is double.

MENO: True.

(Excerpt From: Plato. "Meno." iBooks. <https://itun.es/us/o2tUD.l>)

And so on. What persistent interrogation! Socratic discourse sets out to reveal essential truths, but in many ways the quest for such philosophical Holy Grail contradicts the very nature of artistic inquiry, which delights in the nebulous, the discursive, and in loosely constrained avenues of interpretation, understanding and discovery. Chekhov said, "The role of the artist is to ask questions, not answer them." But, what about the art of illustration, whose primary concern is the conveyance of ideas with varying degrees of specificity, with at least some helpful constraint of interpretive possibilities provided in the initial brief? Isn't the illustrator often concerned with both posing and answering questions in the work she constructs? Doesn't she form a sort of dialogue with an audience, and—integral to creative process—with herself? Despite such necessary leveling and sharpening, the illustrator's ways of making would in no time be bled dry of its precious life force of intuition, and would instead become tethered to logic and reason if they were to become so extrinsically guided by a conscious, narrowing line of inquiry.

When I was invited to contribute to this book, I naively proposed a topic about which I had some previously crystallized observations, but no empirical evidence apart from my own self-awareness after three decades of practice. My fundamental question was this: in what ways do illustrators use conscious, active questioning in their approach to their work? In my teaching, as well as my studio work, I have always used writing—in particular, the articulation of pointed questions—as a way of defining creative problems. Fueling a symbiotic engine of mind, eye and hand

with carefully concocted questions, I knew that I have always found conscious questioning invaluable to my own understanding of where I was headed. Working on this hunch (and perhaps making some silly, egocentric assumptions about how others must be equally enthralled with a similar approach to problem definition), I decided to enlist some friends and colleagues to better understand how they worked with questions. I asked several illustrators to describe for me the role of conscious, active questioning in their creative processes. Some didn't answer at all; many had never given it much thought. Nevertheless, several kindly agreed to indulge me in responding to some questions, and I learned a bit about the varying levels of conscious, up-front inquiry many illustrators integrate in their work. Many of these illustrators are also educators, so discussion involves not only their own work, but their methods of guiding students in their creative endeavors.

Variety of Approach: Conscious Questioning Among Illustrators

Simply put, questions prompt inquiry, and that's what the creative process is all about—the sometimes enigmatic investigation of making, involving eye, mind and hand. As an illustrator, I consciously frame and articulate questions as I approach visual communication problems, and most often I do this in the most traditional manner: an interrogative sentence ending with a question mark. Sometimes, however, I energize my process by developing a looser use of words that may be lists of considerations, matrices or free associative mapping of verbal/conceptual relationships. In all cases the partnership between word and image, between the visual and the verbal, plays significantly in shaping my approach.

Andrea Dezsö is a visual artist whose expansive portfolio of work displays a nimble creative process, traversing a broad range of mediums, market areas and fabrication processes. As an associate professor of art at Hampshire College in Massachusetts, she received both a BFA and MFA from Moholy-Nagy University of Art & Design in Budapest, Hungary. Dezsö has lectured around the globe and has taught in numerous prestigious institutions. On the subject of whether and how she integrates conscious questioning in her process she offers the following:

I do. Sometimes in writing and always in my mind. A list of questions, considerations, words. I also discuss ideas with my husband, Adam Gurvitch, who is involved in many of my projects. He asks really great, original questions and that's wonderful.

Enlisting another mind in this preparatory phase, as she attempts to apprehend the essential dimensions of the work at hand, adds another layer of inquiry to the process, enriching and expanding possibilities. Collaborative questioning is something students of art and design are generally not inclined to pursue independently, without prompting from their professors, and—as Dezsö suggests—it can lead to some unexpected provocation and insights.

The nature of Dezsö's questioning changes as she weaves between multiple modes

of working, growing more specific with shifts in context, materiality and purpose:

As I work across several practice areas including editorial illustration, permanent public art and art that is shown at galleries and museums, some of which may hang on walls while others are site-specific installations, these questions tend to be specific to those areas.

When I start working on an illustration my first question often is “What is the heart of this story?” From that question others might follow including: what is the most appropriate medium, approach, format. etc.?

Each of these questions is practical and necessary, and while some can be quite typical and expected, others may prompt an alertness of mind in consideration of unanticipated issues—things we would not have thought important until properly framed in an interrogative form. I’ve highlighted below (in bold) two particularly well-framed questions Dezsö may confront, and they appear to have one thing in common: a challenging yet healthy degree of ambiguity achieved by artful phrasing and the careful selection of words:

*When I prepare a public art proposal my main question is “What kind of art would be most appropriate to this particular place?” To answer that question, I need to learn a lot about the place and its users. Who will see the work? Who lives in the area and how did the community change over time? Who visits the area vs. who lives there? What is the history of the area? Who uses the public space where the work will be installed and how do they use it? **What are the functions and aspirations of the space?** What is the light like? **What is missing?** What materials are most appropriate for the work? What kind of maintenance is the work likely to receive? Who will maintain the work? What is the budget? Some of this information I can find by researching public data but to really get the feel of the place I also have to be there in person, walk around in the neighborhood, use the space or if it’s not yet built imagine using it.*

“What are the functions and aspirations of the space?” is an elegant question that comes close to personifying the space itself, transcending its mundane limitations as a passive environment and in some ways imbuing the space with a spirit of intention independent of Dezsö’s intervention. This is an enchanting way to begin the design process, in which the qualitative aspects of the question are vital to the cultivation of deeper, more poetic thinking. Likewise, asking “What is missing?” immediately thrusts Dezsö into active intervention, with a sense of artistic purpose that is ostensibly called out by the space itself: “I am missing something,” says the space. “Tell me what that is; make me whole.” Personification for the sake of clarity may sound quaint, but such poetically structured inquiry enriches the sense of immersion with the undertaking and personalizes the relationship between artist and creative problem.

Questioning is not always exclusively tethered to verbal prompts. Perpetrating any inquisitive action with the intention of creating a reaction—a “dialogue” of cause and effect with the work in progress—is every bit as valid as a mode of inquiry as is traditional interrogation with words. It is indeed active inquiry, and a non-verbal approach is often best. Dezsö lucidly explores this her insightful comments below.

At the heart of my self-initiated work—especially drawings, paintings and artists books (fig. 2)—there is often something I’m curious about that I can only find the answer to through actually making the work. What can this material do if I...? If I combine this and that I wonder... What does visual complexity look like? Is it possible to successfully combine black and white ink drawing with vividly colorful painting, printmaking, collage, representational and abstract imagery, various materials from wet to dry and compositional elements ranging from tiny to very large into one cohesive piece of work? What is it like to make a large and complex image without any plan, simply by improvising? What happens if I dispose of the idea of composition and viewing direction and place visual elements on the surface of the work based on chance and available space— when the space is filled, the work is done. What is there is no clear order of importance between elements in a composition? What if a work is made without any concept or forethought or at least not any that can be verbalized? How can I disengage the part of my mind that talks and articulates concepts, questions and answers and allow the visual decisions to emerge from the non-verbal non-self-conscious place that I believe ultimately makes the work? Where does the energy in an image come from and when does it get into the work?

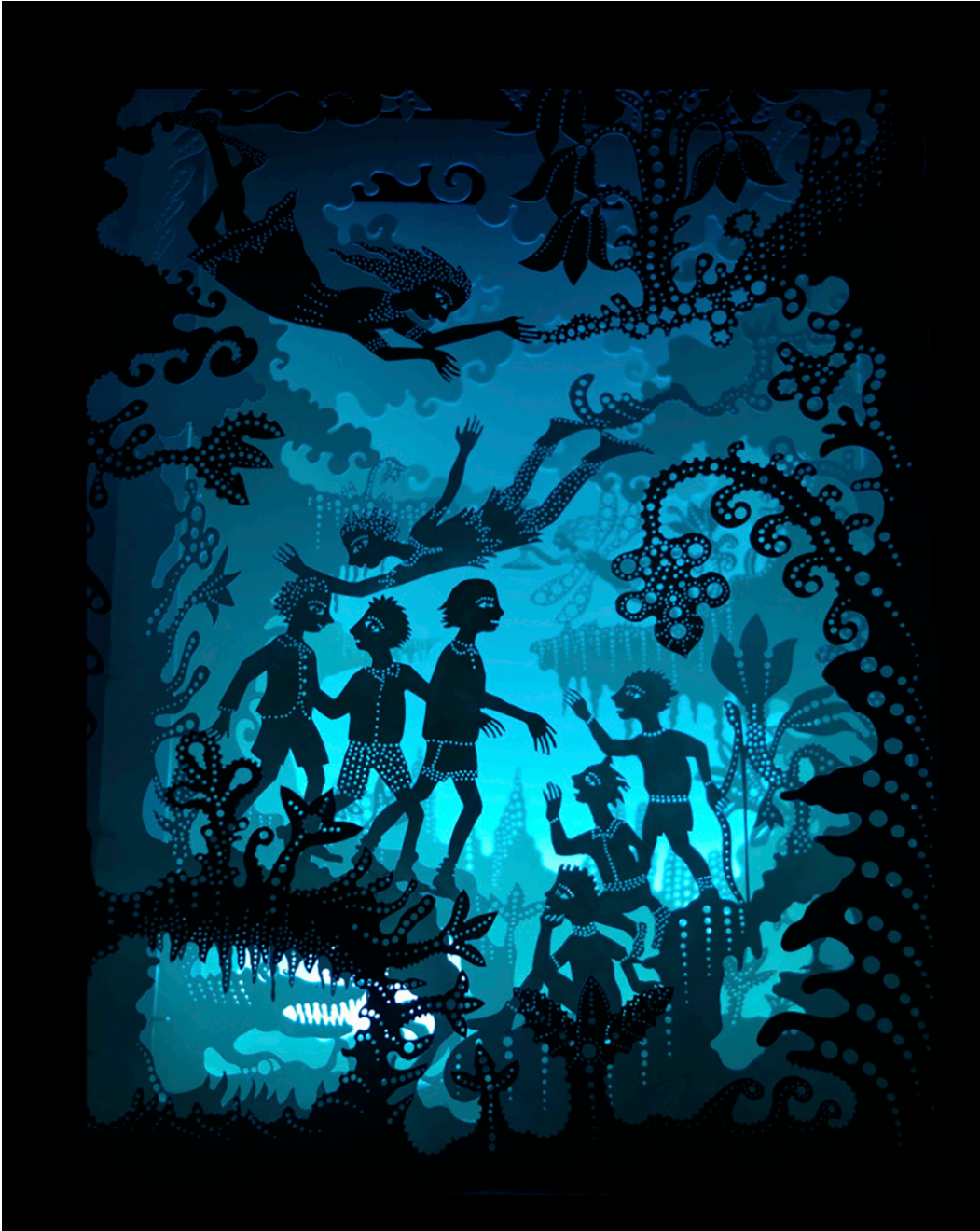


Fig. 2: Andrea Dezsö, *The Island Come True* (Peter Pan tunnel book) 2015; Japanese hand-made Shojoshi paper
Hand-cut and sewn, collapsible, multi-layered one-of-a-kind tunnel book 14.25 x 11 x 7 inches

Expanding the definition of questioning is important if we are to fully apprehend what goes on in the creative process and to build on the significant role “pure research” plays in artistic development (as described earlier in the discussion of RISD Fine Arts Faculty’s position paper on the topic of research in studio disciplines). And many illustrators not only prefer to be non-verbal in their inquisitive investigations, they are simply more adept at utilizing a unique brand of visual intelligence to build good work. Armando Veve, (fig. 4) for example, is remarkably facile in both the technical and conceptual sense, and he asserts that this

comes primarily from thorough engagement in an open-ended, inquisitive visual thinking process, with the use of words limited to lists and brief, provocative statements. His elegant description of how he works—meandering through a sort of menagerie of visual, art historical and conceptual stimuli—reveals a vivid imagination at work, fueled in large part by an organic approach to visual thinking, in which the destination is never pre-determined:

Direct experimentation with found and made materials provides me with something concrete to respond to. I'm constantly collecting reference materials that I'm drawn to, which come from an eclectic range of sources – they could be cartoons, Northern mannerist engravings, and contemporary furniture design. I stretch and warp them through drawing and digital collage and in the process they become connective tissue for new work. A drawing becomes a frozen account of my thinking process. Webs of actions and reactions enter into them, are erased and replaced overtime. They are self-contained ecosystems with their own inherent logic.



Fig. 4: Armando Veve, short story illustration for Tor Books: "This World is Full of Monsters," by Jeff VanderMeer

Similarly, Ellen Weinstein, whose metaphorical illustrations for editorial and corporate/institutional clients result from very rigorous experimentation with semiotic inquiry, thinks of her experimental visual thinking processes and self-initiated prompts as a unique form of questioning, in which her inquisitiveness is more important than the answer itself. Her work is energized by inquiry; that's what gives it life. "As a commission based illustrator," she says, "I am paid to answer questions and solve problems for a variety of clients. In work that is self-driven, I need to frame the questions myself. The actual process of making work through concept and various media provides a quest to answer the questions. I am not necessarily looking for concrete answers to questions in this work, it's more about the process and the journey of asking them."

Some artist-illustrators are profoundly exhaustive in launching complex intellectual inquiry. The Illustrator and painter Alison Byrnes has built a remarkably focused career from painting history, questioning the canons of historical record and examining the slippage between written historical accounts and how one visualizes them. Byrnes' charming narrative paintings of famous animals (fig. 3), scientific theories, and well-known Indians, Romans, Greeks and Americans (including John Wayne) are densely packed pictorial tableaus that are the result of conscious questioning. This is made evident in her discussion of the image-making process:

As one who practices image-making as an embodiment of knowledge, questions are both implied and overt in my own creative practice. There are long-running questions that are always in the background of each piece I undertake, that are built upon, or complemented with questions of a specific subject matter, or even of composition and other "art" factors. These include: What is the nature of knowledge? How can the abstractions of thought be portrayed in a physical form/composition? How do we understand the past and our place in the trajectory of history? What are our implicit biases when imaging history? How does the structure of the human mind conflict with academic, or factual, understandings of a person or event?

These are also specific to an individual piece: How do official renditions of this person prompt our beliefs about him or her? Can this ancient Roman be compared to this Enlightenment thinker, and what are the conflicts in such a comparison?

I find that I never discard any questions in my practice, but continue to add more and more, as I begin to understand my own lines of inquiry with a longer lineage of my own understanding and concern.

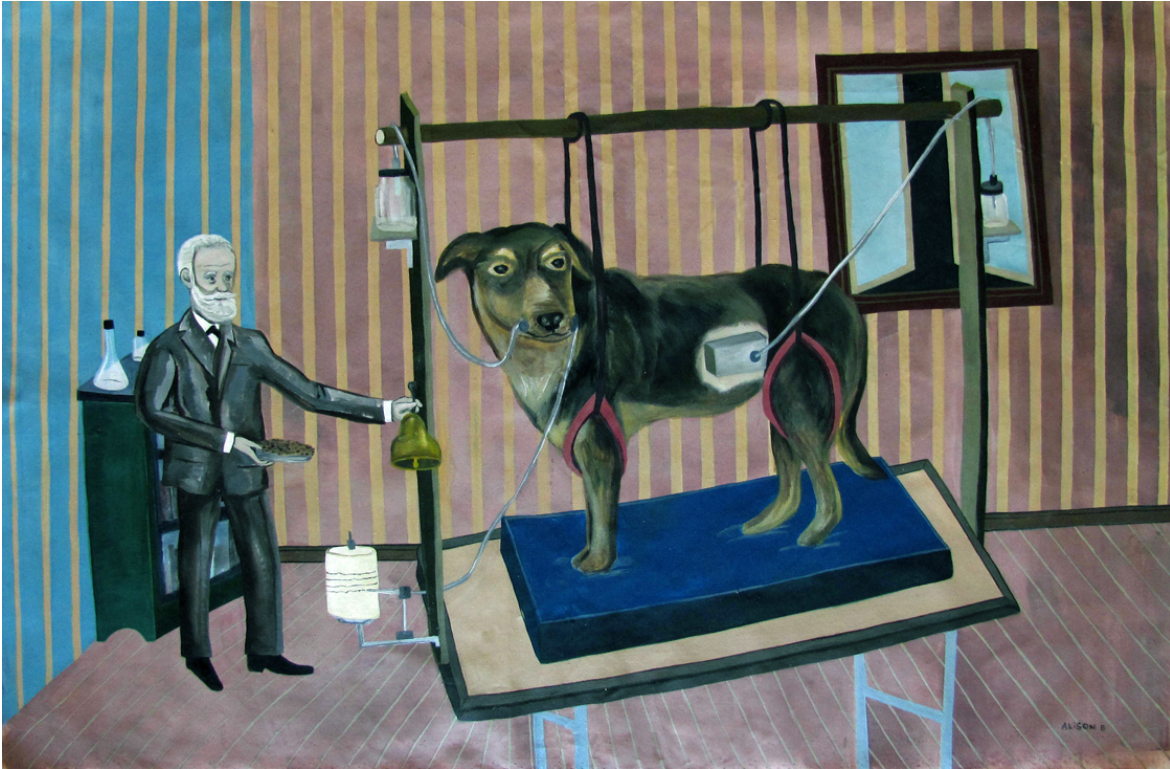


Fig. 3: Alison Byrnes, "Pavlov's Dog" oil on silk, 15 x 12"

Unlike many of the artists surveyed Byrnes articulates a discriminating definition of what "questioning" is to her:

I think it's only through writing, or reporting/explaining to others, that questions take the syntactical form of a question, in language. When doing the work itself, I do not write out questions. I get an idea, though, usually from a written source, then read further on that subject in order to find out my entry into it, as well as to find basic facts that I can portray in a visual form (what did this person look like? How can I make this person recognizable with certain 'visual epithets' while layering my own interpretation upon her?)

Writing does not capture the human mind: writing is a sequential and imperfect recreation of thought, which functions as web of associations, knowledge, memories, emotions, and interpretations. Writing is dominant in the academy, and a lot of what I create is to follow a similar research process that a traditional academician does – finding and reading multiple sources, evaluating the sources, finding my own ideas "in conversation" with the authors of the sources, then articulating those ideas. My images are an embodiment of knowledge, just as would be a chapter or article, or book. A thesis statement, or scholarly "argument" is a question in the form of a statement, and this is what I consider my work to be.

And yes, each decision in the process of making is a series of micro-questions. Will this arrangement of elements embody my set of thoughts? Will this color enable this element to work in harmony with the others?

Fred Lynch is a journalistic illustrator and Associate Professor of Illustration at Rhode Island School of Design. In his tandem commitment to educating young illustrators and pursuing his own line of inquiry in the depiction of architectural and historical places, shares some well-informed insights. Like Byrnes, he makes a distinction between questioning and the verbal statements we have come to understand as questions. "While questioning is fundamental to my teaching and research, I wouldn't say that well-articulated questions are part of my creative practice. That said, the artistic process - the very notion of making something but not knowing ahead of time, what it will be entirely - is dependent on a series of choices. Those choices are answers to questions, whether they are articulated well or not."

Shifting Methods: Extraordinary Modes of Inquiry

Some illustrators have devised clever instruments for working with language, engaging manual and creative processes as they seek new ways of shaping and articulating questions. Word play games, list-making and other means of lending tangible or formal structure to inquiry are not uncommon. Rebecca Heavner has enjoyed a fascinating career with considerable success earned across a broad scope of art practices, beginning in the 1980s as a very active illustrator and eventually broadening her practice to include a second degree and studio practice in Landscape Architecture. She teaches at the University of Colorado in Denver and offers this interesting description of how she physically structures verbal inquiry:

In my creative process, I consciously frame, refine, articulate and revisit questions by writing and cutting apart sentences. Collage is a useful way to articulate and physically pull apart ideas to add room for an argument to develop. I separate the headings and subheadings from the content to strengthen a point or influence the hierarchy. Process iterations may be influenced by a set of constraints, a set of rules, framework model and research.

Lists and other word play are some of the most widely used self-prompting instruments employed by illustrators and just about everyone interviewed for this chapter mentioned some form of verbal gymnastics as a complementary means of invigorating visual thinking processes. A wide variety of practitioners share a healthy reliance on this verbal-visual partnership.

Mark Hoffman is Chair of Illustration at Montserrat College of Art. A gifted illustrator and designer, his delightfully fresh and whimsical illustrations for children's literature emerge from a combination of visual and verbal thinking. "In working on illustrations I tend to make a lot of lists. I don't write proper questions but rather a

list of words that need to be addressed, whether it be through writing or through a visual representation,” he says. Likewise, Whitney Sherman, Director of the MFA in Illustration Practice at Maryland Institute College of Art, incorporates verbal elements in her approach to image-making:

Depending on my project, I will either work intuitively or frame the questions through word and word play. Intuitively originated work normally occurs when there is no client or self-imposed directive. Using intuition brings forward unconsciously held but known ideas and perspectives—often ideas that would not occur with purposeful thinking—that might include randomness, nonsense or dissonance. This kind of questions would be categorized as a “why” or even a “why not” question. The other type of questioning I use begins with words—from a narrative, a title, or keywords. I will literally mark a text and draw in the margins or on the text to bring me closer to the words. When it seems right, I utilize word play which comes out of word lists. Dialogue with others, if ever, happens only when choosing between seemingly equal options.

At the University of South Australia in Adelaide, David Blaiklock is Course Coordinator in both the Bachelor of Design Illustration Design specialization and the Graduate Diploma in Visual Art and Creative Practice at the School of Art, Architecture and Design. His doctoral research is centered on a critical examination of the ambiguous concept of “vision” as a prized characteristic of expertise in artistic practice for illustrators. Like Sherman, Heavner and Hoffman, he manipulates words and phrases as a pathway which both intersects and runs parallel to other processes.

Questions are framed depending on the context of the work. ‘What needs to be communicated’ is most often located within the project ‘brief’ or ‘narrative’? An exception to this is self-directed projects which intuitively evolve depending on personal circumstance and experiences. Typically, this information is first articulated cognitively (critical reflection) then is distilled and expressed (articulated, reflection in action) as physical notation which involves the use of written language and pictures (visual notation/doodles). Articulation/reflection as Visual notation (notes, doodles, sketching, etc.) is my primary mode of examination and is used in conjunction with questions framed by the brief which outline the nature of ‘problem’ to be communicated.

Can questions occur without words? Mark Hoffman, like many of us, considers visual thinking—pictorial investigation through a circular process of seeing, imagination and mark-making—can be fundamentally likened to deep verbal inquiry. “Sketching is the philosophy of the art world,” he says. “It is the time we take to address the question and answer.” Hoffman goes on to posit that “it is not just the media and technique that is the questioning, but it is your visceral reaction to it and how the artist reapplies that in a method that suits the piece. I would think this is the heart of art making and if this becomes stagnant or ceases to exist in the

artist's work methods, then it is hard to justify that they are creating anymore, just repeating." Similarly, Whitney Sherman says that, to her way of thinking, formal and material exploration is a form of intuitive questioning. Her process involves trust in materials to help guide her inquiry. Likewise, Fred Lynch admits an enjoyment of surrendering to the unknown as he traces a path of inquiry in his work:

My process would be best described as wandering, and wondering. Like a questioner, my work is a form of inquiry and exploration. I could list questions that were confronted, but perhaps only after the fact.

Perhaps the British philosopher Isaiah Berlin's notion of "The Hedgehog and the Fox" helps to explain my style of working. He uses the Greek adage, "The fox knows many things, but the hedgehog knows one big thing" to describe different kinds of creators. One group, hedgehogs, tend to follow a single path of thinking, while foxes pursue many paths. He says Dante was a hedgehog and Shakespeare was a fox. As for me, I work like a hedgehog, creating long series of works, following a singular line of inquiry with small variations. I tend to dwell on many answers to a single question more than many questions leading to a single answer.

Through her unusual tandem expertise in both illustration and landscape architecture, Rebecca Heavner has formed some observations about the differences between the two fields of practice. Comparing their respective research methods reveals this. "In landscape research," she says, "an inquiry or site analysis is driven through research and a site visit. When an illustrator approaches a project, they might choose to develop the project more physically. For example, annotation, marking on top of an image can render outcomes and possibilities for illustrators. Illustrators can use first hand observational methods to drive inquiry. Interviews, photography, observations, annotation, and collage are ways to generate inquiry."

Symbiotic Processes: Writing and Illustration

Illustration inherently and historically possesses a close relationship to the written word. I rarely teach a course without at least one significant exercise in writing associated with image making. Students are encouraged to self-author material for a variety of reasons, least among them to cultivate a deeper sensitivity to the partnership of verbal and visual languages. In Voice + Vision, a six-week RISD Wintersession class dedicated to exploring the breadth of semantic possibilities that live at the intersection of the verbal and the visual, students create quite a bit of their own written material, from simple word-image pairings to written memoir to fully realized short fiction. Writing words, sentences and larger bodies of text is used to stimulate, provoke, reflect on—and sometimes even *become*—visual experience. Likewise the students explore how the visual can prompt the verbal with writing exercises inspired by pictorial information.

To an illustrator, the text itself can be understood as one big question, and reading, writing and image-making converge in the illustration process. Rebecca Heavner believes that “writing is thinking and drawing is thinking. You can see there is a circular relationship to this in my mind. It is all related. So for me to draw, is to design and problem-solve, and to do these well, I must write. To figure things out artists, physicists, musicians draw or annotate to think through a problem. When I write, it leads me to diagram something, and then write about it again.”

A story underlies each of Alison Byrnes’ narrative paintings and her expectation is that every viewer arrives at her work with a fundamental question, whether consciously or unconsciously established in the moment of encounter: “What am I looking at?” “The final presentation of my images, then, always includes writing. I consider the writing to be part of the form, and not just a label, as in a museum-like informational label. I am aware that viewers privilege text, so I try to subvert the expectation that an image can be neatly ‘explained’ through writing.”

For Fred Lynch, writing in the traditional sense is not a prelude to image making, but a form of post-reflection and an integral part of interpretation that is introduced after the fact, presenting the viewer/reader with rich narrative content that is at once visual and verbal. “It’s useful in sorting out the many passing strands of thought that pass by day after day” he says. “So much of my teaching practice is thinking out loud—ruminating on the fly. In my art, I now create works which are often linked to writing. Picture and word collaborate. My writing either further explains the subject of my drawing, or, speaks of the experience of drawing itself (for me, working on location as a visitor, witness and documentarian).”

Criticality: Teaching and Conscious Questioning

In my own teaching at RISD, critique involves the articulation of a series of well-formed questions about the collection of visual phenomena tacked to the wall. I attempt to encourage active, conscious questioning among my students by leading assignments and discourse through a framework of critical inquiry. My highest hope is that students will eventually examine all creative endeavor through an inquisitive critical lens, having developed a habit of instigating dialogue through the delicate art of questioning. As discussed earlier the quality of a question—its potential to engage, to prompt full reflection, to sort out intention and effect is of critical importance to fruitful discussion. While questions about material considerations are important, my own teaching is primarily focused on the communication of ideas and information, and I find myself steering students away from softball questions such as “is that acrylic?” and “what kind of paper is that?”

Six Great Ideas, by the philosopher and great educator Mortimer Adler, asserts that “philosophy is everyone’s business” and by this he means that we must recognize the pervasive significance of philosophical ideas as they relate to the governance of judgment. A few years ago, I began to recognize that much of studio discourse is founded in three fundamental ideas of western philosophy Adler identifies in his

book: truth, beauty and goodness. This timeless constellation of great philosophical ideas is essential to navigating life and they are integral to art making. We cannot get through a day without these fundamental measurements of virtue, and judgments of what is true (or not true), beautiful (or not beautiful), and good (or not good) pervade our critical thinking, both consciously and unconsciously.

In particular these formidable ideas shepherd critical discourse with students about the art they are making. We grapple with critical language to laud the beautiful or steer the ungainly into aesthetic balance. Most of us look for the true, the beautiful and the good as they are manifest in process, materiality and critical reflection. And yet many of us rarely acknowledge this philosophical framework openly, through rigorous dialogic inquiry, instead pitting opinion against opinion in a contest of wills, with minimal tribute to philosophy as the soul of taste. I have found that grounding inquisitive discussion of student work in these philosophical ideas is a remarkably effective way of cutting through empty talk and examining the core of intention and effect.

Many years ago, a student approached me after a tough critique left him bruised and perplexed. My displeasure over the aesthetic shortcomings of his work had been apparent, despite the many hours he'd invested in the project, and he wanted to know why I didn't like it. Moreover, he wanted to know **how**.

How had I arrived at the opinion I offered in critique? What was the basis of my critical judgment?

"So, if you didn't think my project was good, how did you come to that opinion?" he asked. "Is it a matter of whatever strikes your fancy?"

Tough question. Without any framework for addressing the subject of aesthetics, the answer could only be "yes." But what is this "**fancy**?" A tingle up my spine? Gut instinct? There's no definitive rubric for beauty. Evaluative methods vary widely, and I have had colleagues on both ends of the spectrum: one who referred to a dogmatic checklist of "compositional mistakes" in grading student work, and another who contended that his job is to "get out of the way" of his students, avoiding at all costs the imposition of subjective opinion.

So what about the tangle of beauty and subjectivity? We have to know how to talk about such a complicated subject if we're going to claim authority. A fundamental, collective acknowledgement of philosophical ideas can be central to our conversations, helping us to both structure and defend our opinions, expressed as personal taste.

Judgment can become even more nebulous when we approach the notion of beautiful ideas, which sometimes exist independent of beautiful form. I have a funny example in which my own thrill over what I considered daring aesthetic

inquisitiveness was met with a sea of disinterested faces. In an effort to construct a dynamic narrative environment, a student decorated a public toilet seat with a ring of sensual lipstick kisses. Many in the class were repulsed by the notion of kissing a toilet, and couldn't get beyond issues of hygiene to even begin a discussion of beauty. A small minority of us saw poetry, resonant beauty, in the contradiction—a loathsome toilet seat, smothered with kisses, in defiance of accepted mores. This was a difference of opinion grounded in philosophy. The take-away from this enterprise was that beauty can present itself in surprising ways, and we must aspire to heighten sensitivity to its presence in unexpected things and events—to educate generations who will build upon aesthetic tradition while defining new interpretations of the beautiful. But without philosophical grounding, the discussion doesn't get very far.

By forming some collective awareness of the many ways truth, beauty and goodness are manifest in the art we discuss, we can embark on a much more open, democratic debate—one in which authoritative rank takes a back seat to consensually recognized criteria for judgment. I've found that the best way to introduce these monumental ideas in the studio is openly and objectively, preceding formal critique. Undertaking this exercise at the beginning of the term can establish the proper intellectual atmosphere for a semester's worth of critique—the ideas in all their great variety resonate deeply with critically astute students and remain in the forefront of consciousness. The most effective method I have explored begins with 20 minutes dedicated to exhaustively questioning the ways that these philosophical ideas may be identified in the work we're about to evaluate, and students are remarkably perceptive and expansive in their thinking at this stage. In fact, I have found that they are ravenous in their desire for a construct for critical thinking. Because they have not yet targeted specific work, they are instead open to mining and revealing their own sensibilities and beliefs, independent of any material subject and these questions about truth, beauty and goodness provide a profound, fundamental framework. The ensuing critique is more meaningful, open and—somehow—more objective, with students leading much of the discussion. Before we begin, I ask the students to—on three index cards—write the words “truth,” “beauty” and “goodness” with the intention of labeling three pieces—each of which they believe exemplifies one of the ideas. Remarkable patterns of consensus emerge, and the resulting conversation reveals much broader consideration of these great ideas as the bedrock of critical judgment in the studio. After thoughtful investment in this process, each student is at liberty to explain the relevance of truth, beauty or goodness to any particular work, and there's terrific variety in these many perspectives.

Andrea Dezsö is committed to cultivating a deep sense of inquisitiveness in her students. She does this in a variety of ways, but at the core of her work as an educator she wants students to propose alternatives to deep-seated assumptions. When asked how she encourages such conscious questioning in her classes, she says that “learning to draw or paint relies upon learning to see. Being able to see things in their unmitigated complexity rather than through the visual shorthand of media

and the filters of culture and tradition can be achieved through conscious and sustained attention and questioning.”

David Blaiklock contends that critique can be well-structured and very productive if questions are articulated up front. “Effectively critical reflection is the focus of this initial stage whereby the student is asked to deeply examine, question and reflect on the topic they have been asked to address through the picture. They are asked to consider a multi-perspectival approach which enables students to question all assumptions, truths and attitudes relating to the topic (all perspectives) before deciding on a ‘solution’.”

Alison Byrnes always uses questions in class and critiques. In reflecting on her own learning experiences she recalls “being subjected to the ‘free association’ style of critique as a student, when fellow students pin up their work, and the implied question to the entire group of us is ‘do you have something to say?’”

Obviously, this line of questioning is useless and Byrnes has devised an alternative—a simple method for entering conversation with a potent inquisitiveness.

One exercise that I use a lot is the simple question slip. I write three to four questions (usually about concept, form, and the ability of the form to embody the concept) to prompt critique of peers, with space to write 2-3 sentences under each, and assign them to partners for whom they fill out the questions. Then I assign them to another partner so everyone can get a second opinion. The slips, already filled in about the work of a few peers, allows them to feel more confident if we do open up to a group discussion, because they already have the words ready to share with the group. The ways we think about art and images are not necessarily in words, and making that leap, from thinking in abstractions to articulating in words, for many of us, and especially for students, is a skill that must be practiced. I consider it a primary goal that I provide space in my class in order to students to gain experience doing so.

Mark Hoffman states simply and definitively that “questions are the best way to teach. Obviously we have the task of instilling some sort of objective in the questions we ask, but it serves the students best when we don't officially have the answer. We play in a subjective world. I tend to tell my students that I don't have the answers, I only have a few years lead on getting there. I think it is well received in all of my classes that I am not an expert. And that I have the same questions about my work that they do on a regular basis.”

Fred Lynch once heard it said that “a good professor asks the questions that one answers for a lifetime.”

Conclusion

It may be said that every human act is meant to negotiate our relationship to the world in which we live and that inquiry is naturally infused in all aspects of our physical and perceptual faculties—from shifting our wondering gaze to follow the path of a plane in the sky to consideration of the most complex problems in mathematics, science and art. While a walk down an unknown path in a forest may be the physical manifestation of our impulsively inquisitive nature, we have over millions of years evolved to understand that not only survival but progress, innovation and prosperity all are born of conscious critical inquiry. Tracing the nature of inquiry in the history of art and visual culture over the millennia, we discover that—while the substance and nature of questions change with every period of art-making—that fundamental inquisitiveness endures as the engine of creative action.

Illustration's unique nature as pictorial visual communication that is born of purposeful creation inherently tethers artistic practice to utility—to purpose. At its core is a need to communicate, describe and define. Of course, definition is born of questioning—prompted by both extrinsically and intrinsically generated sources. Perhaps the illustrator's keen sensitivity to verbal language, cultivated through years of practice and exposure to verbal stimuli, has ingrained in her a way of framing artistic inquiry with not only conscious verbal questioning, but analogous modes of discovery. We are constantly questioning—linguistically, physically and perceptually.

References:

Berger, John. 1973. *Ways of Seeing*. New York: Viking

Beaumont, J.G.; McManus, I.C.; Young, A.W. 1984. "Hemisphericity: A Critical Review." *Cognitive Neuropsychology*. Volume 1, issue 2. DOI: 10.1080/02643298408252022

Brickhouse, Thomas C. and Smith, Nicholas D. 1983. "The Origin of Socrates' Mission." *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 44, No. 4. DOI: 10.2307/2709221

Elder, Linda and Paul, Richard. 2006. *The Miniature Guide to the Art of Asking Essential Questions*. Tomales: The Foundation for Critical Thinking

Elkins, James. 2001. *Why Art Cannot Be Taught*. University of Illinois Press

Evans, J.D.G. 2014. *A Plato Primer*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press

Leski, Kyna. 2015. *The Storm of Creativity*. Cambridge: MIT Press

Merriam-Webster. 2016. *The Merriam-Webster Dictionary New Edition*. Springfield: Merriam Webster

Paul, Annie Murphy. 2011. "Why Asking Questions May Not Be The Best Way To Teach." *TIME*. December 14, 2011.

Thornton, Sarah. 2009. *Seven Days in the Art World*. W.W. New York: Norton and Company.

Wilberding, Erick. 2014. *Teach Like Socrates*. Waco: Prufrock Press, Inc.