

## FOUNDATIONS OF VISUAL ART

### OFFICIAL PROGRAM DESCRIPTION: FALL QUARTER EVALUATIONS ONLY

Foundations of Visual Art was an intensive studio program for beginning through advanced-intermediate students. The program focused on the development of visual and technical skills, with the aim of helping students move rapidly toward effective use of media for the creation of personal, visual statements. Strong emphasis was placed on critiquing and on understanding contemporary aesthetic and social issues in art.

Students attended weekly group meetings which featured films, slides, visiting professional artists and gallery trips; participated in a seminar-critique group; and in one intensive studio-lab. The presentations by visiting artists, representing a wide range of media and viewpoints, functioned as an ongoing symposium on current trends and issues in art and as a unifying point for work done in seminar-critiques and studios. Seminar-critiques, totaling eight hours each week, taught the articulation of visual concepts and served for seminars on design and art history as well. Students developed and presented for critique, a personal body of work in a self-determined medium. Studio-lab meetings, totaling 10-16 hours per week, were devoted to teaching the techniques, aesthetics and history of a particular medium. Studios offered in fall were: sculptural ceramics, black and white photography, and three-dimensional design. Descriptions of individual studios are given below.

A wide assortment of readings (general readings and works concerning specific artists and media) were made available to students - a total of some eighty titles. General titles included:

Art and Entropy, Arnheim  
The Sculptural Idea, Kelly  
Minimal Art, Battock  
Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp, Cabanne  
Silence, Cage  
Varieties of Visual Experience, Fledman  
Dada and Anti Art, Richter  
Pop Art, Lippard  
Idea Art, Battock  
The Bride and the Bachelors, Battock  
Surrealists on Art, Lippard  
Video Art  
Let Us Now Praise Famous Men, Agee and Evans  
Three Roads to Awareness, Fabun  
Selected Issues of Currant, Art Forum, Arts Canada

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FILM STUDIO

Equivalencies: (Eight Quarter Hours in Beginning Filmmaking)

This studio had two distinct halves; a film module in 16mm and a Super-8 workshop which stressed creative concerns and "hands-on" experience.

16mm Film Module

The module was to serve as preparation for further work with advanced filmmaking techniques, e.g., editing, audio, and as a basic camera training program.

Eighteen hours of lecture-demonstration were devoted to these topics: budgeting, pre-production planning; the tools of cinematography, camera and accessories; photographic optics; writing for film, the script; film emulsion characteristics, nomenclature; the film laboratory, capabilities and responsibilities; putting the camera to work, composition, location shooting; lighting, terminology and techniques. Laboratory and production assignments were made for: budget preparation; location filming; photographic optics.

Readings were assigned from Guide to Filmmaking, Pincus. Additional specialized handouts were developed around the MPL Table Talks. Students were asked to develop and maintain a production handbook based on the lecture topics, laboratory assignments and speciality handouts.

Super-8 Workshop

As noted above, this studio stressed "hands-on" experience and creative concerns. As a consequence of this focus, there was a heavy emphasis on film aesthetics and structure. The workshop group met once weekly for four hours. This meeting served as a screening and critique session for the student's own work, as well as providing an opportunity for viewing and discussing a variety of other films.

The work was presented to the students on a problem basis. During the first two weeks, these were to result in two or three slide presentations. Each presentation was to take the form of a short film, representing in fact, a sort of animated story board. In the next two weeks, the students were requested to prepare one three minute film a week. Each film was to be structurally complete, but edited entirely within the camera. In the fifth week this problem was again presented, but with the option of using traditional editing techniques, the final film was to be of approximately ten minutes in length and to be completed within the final three and one half weeks of the quarter. The expectations were that it was to be highly polished and to represent a culmination of the previous quarter's experience. In all cases, the students had full freedom in their choice of subject matter or style of presentation. A heavy emphasis was placed on critiquing, and the development of critical skills was given equal weight with filmmaking concerns.

The students saw the following films during the course of the quarter: Neptune, Eat the Sun, The Melies Primitives, Ephesus, Night and Fog, The Holy Ghost People, The Nose, and Nothing But a Man. There were in addition two other film screenings per week on campus, the students were asked to attend these, and those who did so faithfully saw more than twenty other films. (See attached list) This latter requirement was voluntary, and not required.

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PHOTO STUDIO DESCRIPTION

Equivalencies: Three Quarter Hours, History of Photography; Five Quarter Hours  
Either Intermediate or Advanced Black and White Photography

This studio dealt with black and white photography at the intermediate and advanced levels. It had several general objectives: the development of personal imagery, the development of critical skills, the development of technical competence, to undertake a broad exposure to photographic imagery, and to make a short survey of the history of photography. The students met for two, four hour lecture/critique sessions a week. And had, in addition, an unrestricted access to darkroom facilities and equipment.

At the beginning of the quarter, a careful review was made of the fundamentals of photographic technique, with a heavy emphasis on negative control and exposure. The students were introduced to the zone system of exposure and were encouraged to make some use of its controls in their daily work. Correspondingly, print quality was an important issue. And a minimum expectation was that each individual demonstrate some skill and polish in the presentation of his or her images.

During the first half of the quarter, the studio was paced to a series of problems. These were conceptual in nature, and could be resolved in terms of any sort of imagery the students deemed appropriate. This work was intensely critiqued both informally and through the vehicle of structured weekly group critiques. In group sessions, the focus was on the development of critical skills as well as on personal imagery and technical skills. The group problems dealt with the following areas of concern: a self portrait as an equivalent, an inquiry into the nature of pornography, the possibilities of the non-sensual photograph, a being without clothes, and a probe of the nature of imagery through the means of counterfeit photographs. After mid-quarter, the focus shifted from wide explorations to the development of personal vision, and each person was allowed to pursue some area or problem of personal interest. In addition, each member of the studio group prepared a slide presentation which dealt with the works of one or more photographers in an extended context. These presentations supplemented by my own slides and lectures, afforded an opportunity to study in detail the work of more than twenty different photographers, whose lives spanned the period from the 1850's to present. A partial list of these photographers would include:

Diane Arbus	Mike Mandel
Mike Bishop	Timothy O'Sullivan
Henri Cartier-Bresson	August Sander
Wynn Bullock	Alfred Steiglitz
Imogen Cunningham	Paul Strand
Bruce Davidson	Jack Welcott
Judy Dater	Brett Weston
Lee Friedlander	Edward Weston
Robert Heinecken	Don Worth
Dorthea Lange	Danny Lyon

The following books were used in the course of the quarter; Handbook of Contemporary Photography, Gassen; The Zone System Manual, White; The Daybooks I and II, Weston.

The following criteria were used in evaluating student's work for this studio: attendance and participation, completion of required projects, development of personal imagery, development of critical skills, development of technical skills, amount and quality of work presented

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SCULPTURAL CERAMICS STUDIO (BEGINNING THROUGH INTERMEDIATE LEVEL)  
Equivalencies: 8 quarter hours either Beginning or Intermediate Ceramics

Areas of instruction in this studio included: handbuilding techniques, clay and glaze composition, firing processes, aesthetics, history of ceramics and contemporary use of the medium. General objectives of the Studio were: the development of intermediate technical competence, the improvement of critical skills and the development of personal imagery. Students worked with a low-fire white body and learned the composition and use of underglaze stains, lusters, china paints and ceramic decals. Students were exposed to the use of electric kilns, salt firing and raku. In addition, they learned to dig and test native clays. The studio met a total of 15 hours per week and students had unrestricted access to ceramic facilities.

A series of problems were designed to encourage students to begin to use the medium for the expression of personal themes. These could be resolved through any forms the students deemed appropriate. Thematic problems included: a series of fantastic machines, a commemorative piece, a piece which explored a personal fantasy, and a final series of works concerning some area or problem of personal interest. In addition, the students collaborated in the construction of four large sculpture works to be donated to the college. Group critiques of the problems emphasized concept development and presentation.

Through frequent slide presentations, lectures and presentations by visiting artists, students were exposed to the major periods in ceramic history and to the work of a wide range of contemporary artists using the medium. A partial list of ceramic artists whose work was seen includes:

Robert Arneson	Marilyn Levine
David Gilhooly	Karen Breschi
Clayton Bailey	Peter Volkos
Patti Warishina	James Melchert
Howard Kottler	Ron Nagel
Robert Hudson	Irving Tepper
Richard Shaw	Peter Vandenburg

Clay and Glazes for the Potter by Daniel Rhodes (all chapters except 12-19) was used as a text for the studio.

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THREE-DIMENSIONAL DESIGN STUDIO

The 3-D studio centered on a series of assigned problems or themes which could be worked in any medium elected by the student. The studio aimed to develop the student's facility and acquaintance in the following areas:

- A. The elements of design - formal compositional skills,
- B. The process of design - the creative process (the stages of the process and how to productively operate within them),
- C. Fabrication skills, as they developed in the process of creating pieces to meet the assignments, and
- D. The social role of the artist

The assigned problems included: an eight-foot piece using 'motion', a piece on the theme 'metamorphosis', a composition using found or fabricated repeating elements, a sketch problem (a Claes Oldenburg proposal for the plaza), a 'functional' sculpture, and the design and construction of a stage set for a Chataugua performance (a group collaborative project). Each of the pieces produced were given formal criticism, in writing as the quarter progressed, by the entire studio.

Supplemental to the core of problem assignments, the studio undertook a mid-quarter, three day retreat to Guemes Island in the San Juan's, a bi-weekly series of lecture-discussions on various aspects of design and art (e.g., 'connections', 'the grammar of design', 'functionalist theory'), and two seminars (The Bride and the Bachelor, C. Tomkins and Perception and Natural Light, an article by S. Langer). The assigned texts of the studio was The Universal Traveler, Koberg and Bagnall.

Course Equivalencies - (8) Sculpture (assigned problems, open media)