

I wish to promote an active learning environment where I not only challenge the students, but also encourage the students to challenge themselves. I must adapt to the interests and concerns of the students while introducing a diverse collection of techniques, materials and input. It is imperative that I recognize their individuality to help them determine their strengths and recognize their weaknesses, encouraging them to take an active role in shaping their intellectual and visual palettes, motivating them to move beyond the boundaries of the classroom. I believe a teacher facilitates the setting, but together, the teacher and students stimulate the group dynamic by sharing individual experiences, questions and ideas.

So, what is Art? Is it the same as or does it diverge from art? What is New Media? Is it necessarily defined by an engagement with technology? These are questions with many answers just waiting to be abstracted and adjusted in an effort to create the ultimate collaboration known as art: an ever-evolving abstraction to be traded, shared, and annotated, establishing a springboard for discussion and consideration. But before experimentation can begin, students must first have a sound background in the basics.

Two-dimensional design and drawing create a solid foundation for artists to build upon. Most, if not all, of us start out drawing at a young age, not knowing that there is a method to our creative impulses. Two-dimensional design is that method, and once a student understands the method, he or she can use it to his or her artistic advantage. Points, lines, triangles, rectangles and circles are as important in art as they are in mathematics. They are the building blocks to unlocking the possibilities of compositional integrity. Lichtenstein used points (dots) to illustrate the strength of man against machine; the quality of a Giacometti line is a beautiful balance of delicate and decisive; and the discombobulated images of Picasso's Cubist women would not exist without his extensive knowledge of nature's basic shapes. In addition to these essentials, perspective, space, value, texture and color are integral to the palette artists need to create a canvas of endless possibilities.

Once the basics are understood, students can expand their practice and learn both traditional and new methods for creating art. While the brush, printing press, and chisel still have their place in the world, new technologies are changing the way we document and create art. With Digital SLR cameras and the ability to print slides from TIFFs or JPEGs, the computer as an artistic tool is a force to be reckoned with. Programs like Illustrator, Acrobat, Dreamweaver, Flash and Photoshop have revolutionized both print and Web art. Students equipped with both traditional and digital art knowledge can push their ideas forward as they develop media independence. In other words, the idea is no longer limited by what a student already knows because engagement with new technologies encourages a student to embrace more and more art possibilities. Pioneers like Marshall McLuhan and Nam June Paik expound upon the beginning of new media art through television, while Lev Manovich tracks gaming and digital culture and Friedrich Kittler engages the city as a medium.

What we read and what others teach us exists merely as a sampling of the possibilities. While there are prescribed notions of such things as typography and composition, these concepts are tools not only to be learned, but also dissected. To be successful, an artist must discover innovative ways of interpretation by traversing, bisecting and synthesizing the planes of image literacy.