

## **APPROACH TO TEACHING**

Teaching is a source of pleasure, and discovery, for me. I strive to continually connect lived experience with an understanding of the historical and theoretical underpinnings of visual language. The ability of a teacher to manage diverse experiences and bring multiple points of reference to bear on particular subjects is crucial. My approach to content is rooted in formal studies of visual culture, art history, literature, practical technique, as well as observation and hands-on exploration.

My pedagogical concerns parallel my own artistic practice. Students learn through active investigation. The classroom functions as a community that sustains self-invention and shifting artistic sensibility. I believe in an inter-disciplinary approach that joins photography, digital media, time-based media, object construction, and mark-making. I seek to create an environment where everyone is free to articulate his or her own personal experience. I mutually investigate with students, teaching not only my subject, but also critical thinking skills that apply to learning in any area. My classroom is interactive and differentiated. I establish high standards and work to encourage initiative, while also striving to connect with students, to know and support them. The developing artist requires an understanding of cultural discourse within the context of a global world. Visual expression is bracketed by both the artist's and the viewer's perceptions; art historical discourses—in conjunction with an awareness of visual interpretations—provide a springboard for new creative voices. The comprehension of traditions and concepts helps students focus their own practices.

In addition to structured critique sessions, I foster an awareness of students' work within the classroom community through regular and spontaneous discussions of works in progress—modeling the benefit of dialogue in art production and artistic development. Problem solving, both formally and conceptually, encourages students to wrestle with how their peers approach issues and how other artists have addressed similar issues both historically and contemporarily. Ideally, art education raises fundamental questions and social concerns, encouraging students to respond within their chosen media. I balance instruction in concrete technical information with guidance through a theory-based backdrop of historical, social, cultural, critical, and aesthetic considerations. This includes working with students in the studio, darkroom, on the computer, developing supplementary lectures, providing material on subjects of unexpected interest, and adding alternative assignments that respond to specific conceptual or technical concerns. With an enthusiastic approach to new ideas, opinions, and practices I cultivate a flexible, yet focused, classroom.