

Teaching Portfolio

“In Hand and In Thought”

Amna AlMemari

In Hand and In Thought

How can I experience and express life and myself in an authentic manner? It was the question that I had to answer for almost all my art classes as an undergraduate student; I still repeat it to myself every time I wanted to start fresh. It used to take me a while to translate my thoughts and feelings into form until I learned to make myself comfortable using whatever available in hand to make, the more simple and forgiving the material and the process is the more I deliver mind and heart into object. Object making consist of collecting ideas and materials; then birthing the form takes intuition and hand.

I intend to offer that variability and directness in making three-dimensional objects. My intention is to offer sets of challenges for both the content and material and push the development of the students; helping to build and facilitate their own authentic approach in making.

Why object making?

There is something intriguing about the in-between processes from the intangible to the tangible form. Thinking you know how it would or should look at the end. While you still thinking you are in control and have a clear plotted path. Form start to lead the way to you, forcing you to become open and vulnerable, and then the form pushes itself and you to become more open and more vulnerable until it completes itself, and then it birthed itself through you.

This process of openness and vulnerability helps one grow internally as much as in hand building and craft. That is the drive to become a facilitator to such process. The learning practice has always been about how much the student is willing to take and give. Taking can be seen as learning the foundations of using the material and giving is the effort and stages the work have to go through to reach its final phase; both through trial and error.

What is authenticity?

I experienced it so far as whole-heartedness in everything you offer the world, it is a constant challenge and sometimes very difficult to achieve and hit the mark in specific timelines you exist in. that is why I push for it in just in making but as a human, its real and genuine.

My objectives as a facilitator are:

- To provide the students with material knowledge, go through the basics of making and using the material in hand.
- Help the students to push the material and their basic knowledge about it forward according to their ways of expression.
- Safety and working within a safe and protected community both with the tools and people around.
- Expanding the students' vocabulary in express their ideas in every form possible from two-dimensional to three-dimensional works.
- I will be looking and encouraging authenticity in every step of the making process.

A facilitator position means that I will have the chance to grow as a return of the give-and-take process. Through new experiences gained from the students' learning outcomes. These encounters will play a role in my growth and help shape me as I go through life.

Examples in approaching these objectives as courses:

-Would include studying the time and space the student exist in both inside themselves and outside of them, nationally and internationally:

1) A history class in art and craft from both the eastern and the western culture would support or help initiate a starting point. (Sophomore level)

2) An art appreciations class, which would address the contemporary, and the post-modern art world in both art and craft. (Senior level)

-These courses would be in conjunctions with their studio practice

A) A history class (sophomore level) would help the student to start questioning the drive and motive behind the process of making, what are they trying to communicate? What are they trying to offer? How can they build their visual and written vocabulary?

B) An art appreciation class (senior level) would help the student to make their own set of questions and try to answer them inside the studio. Are they communicating? Who are their audience? Is the work private or public? Are they offering something genuine with certain parameters they exist in and born with? Are they pushing against or with? Are they keeping up with written formats of their work? How can they be specific and push forward?

Inclusivity Statement

The multiplicity and various opportunities from the moment I decided to engage myself in the arts till now sets me as a distinct candidate for a studio facilitator position in terms of inclusivity and diversity today.

I come from Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates that is a semi island emirate to the rest of the country, which is known as a desert in the Arabian Peninsula. I was born within the tribal system, I know that it is seen as dismissing to a lot of the more complex broad cultures but we go as tribes it has always been like that. And I hope that we will hold that strongly through the times to come. I know it is not pride that I am stating it like that, but knowingness that it is the full freedom to be just as such. It does not make it less or more it is just as equal, as long as there is the true meaning and practice of tolerance.

The tribal system can be explained as a woven structure, as a textile. Defined by the frames that are set to hold its interdependencies, despite the differences we come from and aim for, there is a kinship and willful labor that holds the woven structure inside the frames. I would describe it as intricate, disciplined, ultraistic devotional for both the individual and the whole.

My art experience as an undergraduate was very liberal, I had the chance to go through two years of general education that included, Arabic, English Environmental studies, and literature to finally get to major in visual arts for the second half of my study, which was also a brief open curriculum. A studio course for every subject; one beginner and one advanced ranging from foundation, drawing painting, installation, printmaking, sculpture and photography and ending with a senior thesis studio.

By having the opportunity to study in the Rhode Island School of Design I am getting to experience diversity in education and life. This experience allowed me to broaden my view both intellectually and in the studio by giving me a new set of perspectives to observe the world from. By taking these outlooks back home I will be able to contribute from a different point of view. What makes my contributions unique is this aspect of my education, which was gendered education from k-12 through university learning. Then I went back and worked as an elementary teacher for girls who happened to be only emirates'. It was both empowering and enclosing at the same time. I think it's the other way around for me here at RISD.

Having the opportunity to attend graduate school in the field I respect and love gave me the permission to accept all that I went through prior to it and everything that I can offer after it. It definitely broaden my view of the world, I cannot believe all the different individuals that I had the chance to intersect with and stood in close proximity to who comes from different backgrounds and all that they offered for me in conversations both inside and outside school.

It helped to know my place in a bigger structure and redefined my perspectives more. Redefined and sharpened how understanding and tolerant I showed be with all the similarities and differences outside the sheltered system I came from, which also made me love it and respect it more.

My intention inside the classroom is to bring a summary of this experience through understanding the differences and the common threads in both these cultures.

-How can the student practice tolerance with its dichotomies? By having the ability to shift perceptions no matter where they are situated.

-How can the student record intuition and work with presence? Pushing through the weight of the history narrative and birth something new.

-What is the real meaning of intellect?

Supporting students to reveal their purpose in and through making.

-What are the common threads? By making the students explore both readings and research hand in hand with their contemporary art practice in the Middle East and beyond. Realizing we all are global artisans and citizens at once.

Proposed Course Descriptions

The Intellect: Advanced Sculpture

(3 credits)

Studio Course

9:00 AM-1:00 PM/Mondays

Pre-requisites: Foundation, Sculpture I, Painting I, Printmaking I

Locations: AlFunoon building

Offered: Fall

Capacity: 12 students

Undergraduate

Major only

Elective

What is the real meaning of the intellect and who possesses such character? Is it the mind or the heart? Or is it the constant movement between both?

This course is an experimental approach to practicing art and it is made to challenge the emerging artists and curators to think more deeply about their practice outside the horizontal system, as we know it.

The "Horizontal" refers to anything that concerns the body and matter. It is an open course with an aspiration to push forward without the intention of a certain destination but to constantly offer without the need for outer validation. It is a place for profound introspection.

Introspection can be seen as verticality in life, everything that concerns the inner path in life.

A rigorous art practice will lead participants to strengthen their inner purpose in making visual art through discipline and proliferation.

This inner search will include research, readings, slide lecture, and group critiques.

Common Threads: Seminar

(3 credits)

Seminar course

9:00AM-12:00PM/Tuesdays

Pre-requisites: Foundation and Art History I

Locations: AlFunoon building

Offered: Fall

Capacity: 12 students

Undergraduate

Major and non-major

Elective

Where do you exist in time and space?
Between the intersections and the proximities?
Why is it any relevance inside and outside of you?
Do you think of the world as a mirror?
What can you offer from where you stand?

This course's intention is to make you aware of the contemporary issues in the MENA region. What are the common threads in that space? How can you merge that without the need for borders? Can you move beyond them? Where does your art practice stand in the midst of that? It is an open seminar course for open possibilities. A necessity to observe things as they are; without the purpose to make any changes or resolutions. By looking closely at the current milieus, we will be able to move more soundly and effectively into the future. This course will include readings, slide lectures, and group discussion. The class will start with creating a list of all the issues in hand in the MENA region, what does the group want to discuss and give effort to investigate for the full semester. The students will be building a source material that will be shared with the whole group. This source materials will include readings, sound, social networking platforms, blogs, other seminar events happening in campus and outside with the chance to invite guest critics, artists, curators and collectors to open up the class and give them a sense of connectivity and widen their understanding.

Recording Intuition, Practicing Presence: Mixed media.

(3 credits)

Studio course

9:00AM-1:00PM/Wednesdays

Requisites: Foundation, Sculpture I, Painting I, Printmaking I

Locations: AlFunoon building

Offered: Fall and Spring

Capacity: 12 students

Undergraduate

Major only

Elective

How can we create out of emptiness?
What is that space within?
Can I record it into form?
Without the need rationalize?
How can I perceive art both in making and experience outside the timelines of history?
Is all art a reply to the time its was created?
What is the timeless? What is ephemeral? What is reverie? What are my edges?
And how can I push through the still parts of me?

Action and process is the core for making in this course. The students will be encouraged to take immediate actions in reply to their art making, outside timelines, thoughts and the need to rationalize. Losing interest in validation and seeking a deeper meaning through the practice record keeping and presence. This course is an anchor to explore both the vertical and the horizontal outside there? Meaning in mind and heart. There is no right or wrong, and the student will come up with weekly plans with the responsibility to push their own examinations and studies forward through a weekly group and one-to-one critique. This course will include writing on weekly basis that goes hand-in-hand with the studio work, practical exercises, and open discussions.

This class is independent studio class for advance students.

Syllabus

Recording Intuition, practicing presence, Fall/Spring 2019-2020

Amna Almemari

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9:00AM-1:00PM/Wednesdays

AlFunoon building/room 223

Description/ Objectives

Record keeping as a visual process for artists to merge their own studio making with what this class will offer through practical and experimental prompts to help guide the maker into different ways to conceive and think about their own body of work mainly through the context of spirituality and the everyday. This class will help initiate and offer the space to work solely from a disciplined and devotional basis. This class will start with the intention for each student to find or personalize a daily practice in their studios, which will be framed with set of boundaries and restrains to think less about the form as an object but as the process. We will be exploring the general and the specific in subjects and form, will move in between and the goal behind that is to give the artists a set of personal tools and approaches into their own making.

The class will be divided into

Assignments: The class will start with quick assignments “prompts”

To start you making by collecting specific topics and processes that you worked with and upgrade them as we move forward to assignment that would take more than a week to solve or create. The assignments are broad and encompass any visual practice approach and it could be applied to any art major practice. The

purpose behind the prompts and the experiments is to give space to the everyday to be woven into your studio practice.

Group critiques: This component of the class will be inter-woven with the assignments and studio time you will have in class. I would introduce different ways to critique forms and processes. Everyone would be expected to participate to each critique not just for the grading component in this syllabus but as a way to build your verbal and visual vocabulary will you speak and create your work.

One on one meeting: This would be in class when we have the studio time to work on our prompts and assignments, each student will fill the sign up sheet at the specific time and I will pass by your space to have a 10-15 minutes informal conversation about your process, and maybe problem solve.

Source material: This is the most exciting and fun part of the class, you would be expected to create an archive on any social networking platform to keep record of your interested through articles, music, visual references, your own research and journaling through the subjects you choose to explore further in your making in his class. It will be updated and recorded with the day and date of the specific time you posted or added a new component in it. Think of it as your own timeline.

Policies

Attendance: lateness is unacceptable and disrespectful to everyone who puts effort in showing up on time, being late for more than 4 times will result in a grade drop and you will automatically be marked as absent. More than 3 times of absence will result on failing the class.

In case of medical and emergency concerns, please inform me through email or text about it, hospital slips and reports can be accepted after you exceeded the amount of absence you have.

Grading: the grading will be divided into percentages and will all depend on your effort in each percent of the total. It all depends on how much you push your own practice from the beginning to the end, how much are you willing to offer and experiment and be both sincere and authentic to your making in this course.

45% goes to effort, enthusiasm, authenticity, devotion, trail and error.

35% goes to the contribution you offer to your class members and how much you participate in class discussion, group critiques.

20% goes to attendance, being on time before class and after breaks, cleanness inside the studio.

Email and office hours: please check your university email regular for updated information about our meeting times, readings, and scheduling office hours with me to go over your progress through out the semester, and how much I can be of service to push you forward in your practice.

Electronic devices: are only used for playing music while working in the studio with a headphone, when you have to share extra information about your process,

and when you are expected to give a slide show in class or conduct research in your own studio time.

Grading Rubric

Exceptional A 90%-100%	Talented B-B+ 80%-90%	Fundamental C-C+ 70%-80%	Below expectations D+-F 70%-65%
The level of articulation of the visual and the spoken are exceptional	The level of articulation of the visual and the spoken are excellent	The level of articulation of the visual and the spoken are average	The level of articulation of the visual and the spoken are poor or non existing
The use of the prompts and the processes in a full range, giving attention to every aspect in the assignments	The use of the prompts and the processes of the class in a good way giving effort to the assignment in parts and as a total	The use of the prompts and the processes of the class in an average way giving mediocre effort to the assignments as a total	The use of the prompts and the processes of the class with no or minimum effort not giving any attention to every aspect of the assignments
Working with the given materials and pushing the personalized and the specific forward in an extremely exciting and inventive ways	Working with the set of rules and limitation of the class which are the materials and giving effort to the process from the specifics and the general	Working with the set of rules and limitation of the class which are the materials and giving effort to the process from the general only	Working with the set of rules and limitation of the class which are the materials and giving no effort to the process
Shows a deep understanding to their own practice through the use of vocabulary and source material to move forward on	Shows understanding to their own practice through the use of vocabulary and source material to push their practice forward, and the	A shallow understanding to their own practice and making, untied to their source material and barely any use of vocabulary in their	No understanding of their practice in the studio no use of vocabulary and no effort have been shown in the source material space to

their own way with the amount of dedication in each of the niches created to serve their own growth as practicing artists	willingness to give more effort	own practice	support their own practice
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Class project

Week 1: Wednesday, Sept 15th

Class project: Inner Spaces

How can you keep records as a ritual of documenting your current spaces you go in and out from within? What does your inner space consist of? How does it look like? This project will be an investigatory start to the idea of recording intuition and practicing presence as artists. You are required to go through a series of investigations and experiments in creating completed studies according to the timeline that is set for this assignment. You would need to start from a specific thread to initiate your work for this assignment.

The Timeline would be over the next 7 days and divided into different times of the Day that you would be recording intuition in.

Example for specificity in making can begin by writing down three subjects you are interested in, and then sourcing images to back the subjects and work with both hand in hand to start making.

This assignment will divide into two parts:

- 1) A 2-Dimensional investigation that would happen with a time frame and one set of tool.
- 2) A 3-Dimensional investigation that would happen with a time frame and two set of tools.

Timeline

<u>Day</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Dimensions and tools</u>
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Wednesday, September 15th	10:00-11:50 PM	2-Dimensional: Graphite on paper
Thursday, September 16th	8:00-9:50 AM	3-Dimensional: Glue and cardboard
Friday, September 17th	5:00-6:50 PM	2-Dimensional: Graphite on paper
Saturday, September 18th	3:00-4:50 PM	2-Dimensional: Graphite on paper
Sunday, September 19th	7:00-8:50 AM	3-Dimensional: Glue and cardboard
Monday, September 20th	12:00-1:50 PM	3-Dimensional: Glue and cardboard
Tuesday, September 21th	4:00-5:50 PM	2-Dimensional: Graphite on paper
Wednesday, September 22th	9:00-10:50 AM	3-Dimensional: Glue and cardboard

Assignment Goals:

1. Having the ability to articulate your ideas despite working from intuition in a specific 2-dimensional and 3-dimensional way
2. Having the ability to rely on what is available at hand to make and create work
3. Having the ability to direct your intuition (Specific words and object of importance) to an uncalculated outcome but a quick reply and focused gestures

Deadline criteria:

- 1) Each experiment needs to be marked with a date and time and shown as a separate form (2-dimensional hanged on the wall and 3-dimensional placed on a table)
- 2) All experiments should be installed as its chronological order
- 3) Each student will have 15 minutes to speak about the choice of their specific list of words and objects, and then the process of replying and recording their intuitive approach in discussing the list on their art experiments.

