

Teaching Philosophy

Students learn best when they are pushed to explore outside of their comfort zones. In the realm of fine arts, to become comfortable is to become complacent. It is my belief that in the classroom, much as in life, students will perform up to the standards that are set for them. If a low bar is set by the professor, that is the bar that will be met by the class. Conversely, a successful professor will work to encourage her students to not simply reach the level of potential that they believe is within themselves, but to then barrel past that threshold into new, unfamiliar territory. The territory that is discovered once you surpass what is comfortable is where you are truly able to thrive as an artist.

This was a striking realization for me during my own time as a student and it is a belief that has stuck firmly with me to this day. My most meaningful classroom relationship was with a tough as nails, no nonsense painting professor who insisted that each student in his class was to produce one painting per day for the duration of the semester. As a naturally slow painter, I initially found this assignment to be prosperous. I was absolutely certain that this professor's request was, simply put, impossible. But, somehow, as the semester wore on, I surprised myself. Each day, I produced a new painting and each day, I left the low bar that I had set for myself further and further in the rear view mirror. Had I been left to my own devices, or perhaps with a professor who did not push his students so far past what felt comfortable, I would have ended the semester with ten paintings perhaps. Instead, I ended with one hundred.

No, not all of these paintings were great works of art, but the assignment created a safe space for experimentation and growth, which are two essential aspects of an effective learning

environment. Experimentation in the classroom is bound to come with mistakes and failures, but it will also come with successes that students could not have achieved without that trial and error. As a professor, it is important to foster trusting and open relationships with each student so that they feel safe to risk failure. In the classroom setting, there is nothing wrong with failure itself. My goal as a professor is to instill in my students the ability to learn from their failures, not to fear them, and to turn them into successes in the future.

As a professor in the fine arts, cultivating relationships with the students is essential, but perhaps even more important is to develop the relationships *between* students in the class. Group critiques, constructive criticism between students and coaching students how to clearly articulate their ideas to one another are some of the most important aspects of teaching a fine arts course. Critiques are an integral aspect of studio courses and can easily break down a student that is not confident in themselves or their work. A key goal as a professor is to instill confidence in each student, while also keeping them open to new suggestions and viewpoints on their work from their peers.

In my personal art practice, these relationships and the advice traded back and forth between peers have been indispensable. As a digital + media artist, my work is largely interdisciplinary and research driven. I jump between many mediums, such as sculpting, photography and cartooning. Having a circle of artists who I trust and respect and the relationships I have formed with my peers have been the most invaluable gift I have been given as an artist. They give me a safe space to show new work, ask questions, make mistakes and grow. As a professor, to cultivate these life long relationships between my students would be one of my primary goals and most meaningful, long lasting achievements.

Diversity Statement

Growing up in Baltimore, I was exposed to a diverse and vibrant community from a young age. While I was lucky enough to attend a school that embraced and supported the various backgrounds of its students, that same opportunity is not available to many others living in Baltimore City. The poverty and imbalance of resources there, as well as across the country, is a systemic problem that hurts not only individual children, but our future as a whole. I feel strongly that the responsibility falls on *all of us* to do our part to create a more equal playing field for students from all backgrounds.

During my time in Baltimore, I volunteered with “Reading Partners”, which is a program that matches volunteer tutors with students from under resourced schools. Reading Partners’ goal is to provide one-on-one support for students in Baltimore City’s low income schools to help improve their reading abilities. Reading is a fundamental skill, but many of the children in Baltimore’s public school system are years behind their more affluent peers.

As a graduate student, I have also worked as an art teacher’s assistant at The Paul Cuffee School, in Providence, Rhode Island. The majority of students at The Paul Cuffee School, which is a public charter school, come from low income families and many are first generation American. When getting to know these children, it so quickly becomes clear that they are smart, kind and full of potential. Even at such a young age, many have overcome difficult life circumstances with a level of perseverance that alludes many adults. These children truly are

capable of anything they set their mind to, but they need the support, guidance and believers who are willing to invest in their future.

None of us get anywhere all on their own. That can be an easy fact to forget once we have found success, but it is so important to remember. Who helped you get here? Was it a parent? A teacher? A friend? When I was an awkward little girl in crooked glasses and oversized overalls, it was my parents and teachers who were able to see potential in me and I am endlessly thankful for that. As teachers, now it is our job to pay that forward by giving each of our students the support they deserve.

Class descriptions

Political cartooning

3 credits

Foundations

Wednesday 1:00-4:00 pm

Location TBD

In the age of Donald Trump, it seems like not one day passes by without a major breaking news story. We have Russia hacking into our elections, a massive investigation into the President and his associates that has produced piles of “guilty” pleas, and a reality television President who appears to take great pleasure in lying to the American people on a daily basis. As artists, our greatest tool to enact change and to voice our opinions is our art. This is a studio course that will introduce students to political cartooning as a tool for change. Throughout the semester, students will be tasked with reading the news on a daily basis and we will have class discussions regarding current events. We will use these discussions as material for our assignments, which will be to create drawings and captions for them based on the news each day. Students will experiment with a variety of cartooning techniques, such as caricatures, symbolism, and analogies. Upon completion of the course, students will have a large portfolio of cartoons (one for each day that the course runs) and a greater insight into the political world we live in and how to voice your opinion through art.

Open to all majors, graduate and undergraduate.

Class size: 20

Bookworms: the artist's book

3 credits

Printmaking

Thursday 8:00-11:00

Location TBD

The book itself is a beautiful and timeless object. It is something that can be cherished and kept for a lifetime, but it is also something that can be passed between friends and family. Books are an ideal format for many artists to display their work in an elegant, sharable, and economical way. This is a studio course that will introduce students to the process of creating their own artist's books. Throughout the semester, we will develop the technical skills necessary behind producing your own books, such as binding, paper making, and various printing. Printing methods will include both analogue and digital methods, such as Indesign and Photoshop. Upon completion of this course, students will have a fully completed artist's book and have acquired the skills necessary to self sufficiently make additional books in the future.

Open to all majors, graduate and undergraduate.

Class size: 20

The Art of Going Viral

3 credits

Digital + Media

Wednesday 1:00-4:00 pm

Location TBD

In the year 2018, social media is more than just a platform to message your friends; it is the primary means in which we consume the majority of our information. People are living more and more of their lives online, which in turn means that art itself is existing more and more on these platforms as well. The artist who does not embrace platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and Tumblr for their work is the artist who will be left behind in the dust. This is a studio based course that will act as a testing ground for students to investigate how their own art practice can exist in the realm of social media.

There will be weekly readings and discussion for this course that will focus on questions such as: have these platforms enhanced or hurt art? What is even the definition of "art" on social media? What makes a piece of art go viral...and does "viral" necessarily make it "good"? How as artists can we take advantage of "viralness"? Each student will be tasked with creating their own social media account and this is where they will post their class assignments. Through

various experiments and exercises, students will learn what aspects of their art practice works online and what does not. For the final project, students will create an art project with the specific goal of making it as “viral” as possible. Upon completion of this course, students will have an understanding of the history of internet art as well as viral staples such as memes, GIFs and vines. Students will also have a social media account designated for their art practice and have a stronger ability to utilize these platforms to their advantage.

Open to all majors, graduate and undergraduate.

Class size: 20

Class Project

The Politics of Cartooning

Does the current state of the world make you angry? Depressed? Feel the need to curl up in bed with a pint of Ben and Jerry's and cry? Donald Trump, North Korea, golden showers, Brett Kavanaugh... it's a never ending stream of horrible news. While most days it seems easier to bury our heads in the sand, today we will be facing these current events head on by creating our own political cartoons.

Goals:

- To gain a deeper awareness of current events
- To learn a method of research that can help you get inspired to make art
- To strengthen your pitching and critique skills in small groups
- To investigate how humor plays a role in art

Outcomes:

- At least three sketched out political cartoon ideas... 20%
- A list of caption ideas.....20 %
- One fully realised political cartoon, which includes both a drawing and text/caption....60%

Methods:

There are various newspapers from this week on the table to share. Choose one and spend the first ten minutes of class reading. What articles stand out to you? Does something upset you? Make you laugh? Has someone done something especially horrible today? You are encouraged to jot down notes on your findings as you read.

Once you've completed your notes and reading, quickly choose three topics from the newspaper that stood out to you the most. Now, take 10 minutes to sketch a drawing to represent each of these topics. Don't worry, these drawings are supposed to be quick and dirty.

When you've finished your three drawings, pair up with a friend or in groups of three and pitch your cartoon ideas with each other. Hold a mini-critique in order to determine which rough idea has the most potential moving forward. Help each other brainstorm captions to go along with the cartoons. Come up with as many as you can!

You will choose your strongest sketch to turn into a fully realised cartoon for next class. This will include a drawing and a caption or text to go along with it. At the start of next class, we will present our finished work to each other.

Assessment:

Basic competency: Your sketches, captions, and final cartoon are all completed.

Advanced competency: The sketches, captions and cartoon use humor and critical thinking to voice your opinion. There is a clear progression between the three steps of the drafting process and it is apparent that you worked well with your classmates during your mini- critiques to further push your work.

The Art of Going Viral

Credits: 3 Credits

Meeting Times: TBD

Location: TBD

Office Hours: TBD

Instructors: Anna Gensler

Course description

In the year 2018, social media is more than just a platform to message your friends; it is the primary means in which we consume the majority of our information. People are living more and more of their lives online, which in turn means that art itself is existing more and more on these platforms as well. The artist who does not embrace platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and Tumblr for their work is the artist who will be left behind in the dust. This is a studio based course that will act as a testing ground for students to investigate how their own art practice can exist in the realm of social media.

There will be weekly readings and discussion for this course that will focus on questions such as: have these platforms enhanced or hurt art? What is even the definition of “art” on social media? What makes a piece of art go viral...and does “viral” necessarily make it “good”? How as artists can we take advantage of “viralness”? Each student will be tasked with creating their own social media account and this is where they will post their class assignments. Through various experiments and exercises, students will learn what aspects of their art practice works online and what does not. For the final project, students will create an art project with the specific goal of making it as “viral” as possible. Upon completion of this course, students will have an understanding of the history of internet art as well as viral staples such as memes, GIFs and vines. Students will also have a social media account designated for their art practice and have a stronger ability to utilize these platforms to their advantage.

Aims:

1. To gain a deeper understanding of the history of social media and how artists have used these platforms in their art practice.
2. To familiarize students with these platforms and gain insight into how things go viral.
3. To integrate their own art practice into social media in new, creative ways.
4. To investigate how to make their own artwork go viral and whether or not that produces better or worse work.

Outcomes:

1. An online social media portfolio of new, internet based artwork.
2. The ability to identify and assess social media based art and an expanded understanding of the history of this medium.
3. A greater knowledge on how social media works, how to take advantage of these structures to to advance your own work and how to question the means behind virality.

Evaluation

1. 20% Participation and involvement in class activities and discussions
2. 20% Communication via individual meetings.
3. 30% Conceptual development, experimentation, risk-taking, documentation and communication of week-to-week assignments.
4. 30% Planning/scheduling, prototyping/sketching, making/execution, documentation, and communication of project.
5. Students cannot miss more than two classes and still pass the course. Should you be unable to come to class, contact the instructor ahead of time so that we can make appropriate arrangements.

Reading materials:

The Art of Social Media by Guy Kawasaki,

Writing on the Wall: Social Media - The First 2,000 Years by Tom Standage,

Going Viral by Karine Nahon,

Mass Effect: Art and the Internet in the Twenty-First Century by Lauren Cornell

Art and the Internet by Phoebe Stubbs

The Culture of Connectivity by José van Dijck

Contagious: Why Things Catch On and *Invisible Influence* by Jonah Berger

Jab, Jab, Jab, Right Hook by Gary Vaynerchuk

Everybody Writes by Ann Handly.

Art in the Age of the Internet, 1989 to Today by Eva Respini

Schedule

Week one:

Class 1

- Syllabus overview and introductions
- Introduction to social media as tool for artists- what even *is* art on social media?
- Assignment 1: Choose an artist who uses social media in a successful way to present on next class.

Class 2

- Student presentations: each student will have 20 minutes to present to the class the work of the artist they have picked
- Lecture: Pros and cons of various platforms (and brief history). Each student will have to choose one platform (Instagram, Tumblr, Facebook, Twitter...) to create an account on for this class. This will be where all of your subsequent assignments for the class will be posted. Think about what platform works best for *you* and your work.
- Assignment 2: Choose a hashtag from the hat (ie: #petsatworks, #mycalvins, #makeamericagreatagain, #throwbackthursday...). Make a piece inspired by this hashtag and post it to your platform. Critique will take place in class 4.

Week 1 learning objectives: knowledge of history of social media and how it has been used as a tool for artists, greater understanding of specific artists that have produced interesting art on social media, and students will begin creating their own platform and their first piece for the platform.

Week 2:

Class 3

- Guest speaker: *someone who has worked for one of these social media platforms* talking about privacy, algorithms, and ownership of work.
- Lecture: Censorship and ownership on social media

Class 4

- Assignment 2 critique. This will be a “cold” critique, where the presenting student is not allowed to speak or explain their piece. The class will view the piece on the social media account and it must be understood without additional explanation. Each student will have 30 minutes get feedback from their peers.
- Lecture: algorithms on social media and how to use them to your advantage
- Assignment 3: Choose a location pin from the hat (ie: RISD beach, Kennedy plaza, Dunkin Donuts...). Make a piece inspired by this location pin and post it to your platform. Critiques will take place in class 6.

Week 2 learning objectives: A greater understanding on what goes on behind the scenes at these companies in regard to algorithms, virality, and censorship. We will have our first critique, which will be a “cold” critique. In this critique, we will learn how to discuss and debate what works and what does not in regards to art on the internet. Because the presenting students is not permitted to speak, we will gain greater insight on if the work is able to speak for itself online.

Week 3:

Class 5

- Guest speaker: *someone who works at BuzzFeed* talking about how things go viral
- Lecture: Viral-ness
- In class assignment: create a buzzfeed post on an art piece you think is viral worthy

Class 6

- Assignment 3 critique. For this critique, we will split into small groups of three. Each person will have 30 minutes to present their work to their group and gain feedback. Each student will be responsible for providing written feedback to their group members as well.
- Lecture: Social media in the age of Donald Trump
- How celebrities and brands gain influence on social media
- Assignment 4: Choose a person from the hat (ie: @donaldtrump, @Kimkardashian, @Oprah...). Make a piece aimed at this person, tag them in it and post to your platform. Critiques will take place in class 7.

Week 3 learning objectives: The internet is essential way for politicians, celebrities and brands to gain influence and spread their opinions. This week we will explore how that is done, how we

can distinguish truth from facts and how propaganda spreads. We will specifically use the examples of the 2016 election, Donald Trump and Russia's meddling.

Week 4:

Class 7

- Assignment 4 critique. For this critique, presenting students will have the opportunity to explain their work, then peers will give written, anonymous feedback in the form of social media comments.
- Lecture: Social media across the globe- internet laws, government and how it varies country by country

Class 8

- Final project proposals- students must present what they plan to do for their final project
- Studio time and one on one meetings

Week 4 learning objectives: Through our critique this week, we will explore how the anonymity of the internet changes how we interact with one another. We will also gain insight into how censorship and internet laws vary by country (we will specifically discuss China and Thailand). We will also begin planning our final, self-directed projects that will use the knowledge and skills we have acquired from the first four weeks of class.

Week 5:

Class 9

- Guest speaker- *artist who has gone viral*
- Lecture: "good" art vs. viral art- can they overlap?
- In class assignment: Find an example of *bad* viral art and share with the class. Why did it go viral?

Class 10

- Studio time to work on final projects. Instructor available for one on one meetings.

Week 6: Explore and analyze how things go viral. We will investigate specific examples of viral-ness and discuss whether or not this is a formula that promotes better or worse content. We will also have time to continue work on final project in preparation for final critiques next week.

Class 11

- Studio time and one on one visits where we will discuss status of final project, how this work might continue going forward, and any final concerns
- Students must submit documentation pages with photographs and written explanations of their work (min. Ten pages and 500 words.)

Class 12

- Final critique, which will include visiting critic. Each student will have 30 minutes to present their final project and receive feedback from peers.

Week 6 learning objectives: Assessment of final projects, reflection on how this work might continue in the future and how this new understanding of the internet as a tool can enhance their work.

Attendance Policy

Attendance is an important and mandatory aspect of this class. Should you need to miss class, please inform the instructor in advance. Any unexcused absences will affect your grade. Each unexcused absence will drop your grade by one letter grade and two or more unexcused absences are grounds for removal from this course by the registrar. Please see the full RISD Class Attendance policy at: http://www.risd.edu/Policies/Academic/Class_Attendance/

Academic Code of Conduct

Student work is expected to follow RISD's Academic Code of Conduct. Please see http://www.risd.edu/Policies/Academic/Code_of_Conduct/ for more information.

Diversity and Inclusion

The RISD community is dedicated to the advancement of knowledge and the development of integrity. In order to thrive and excel, this community must preserve the freedom of thought and expression of all its members. A culture of respect that honors the rights, safety, dignity, and worth of every individual is essential to preserve such freedom. We affirm our respect for the rights and wellbeing of all members.

DISABILITY STATEMENT:

If you are a student with a disability that may require accommodations to complete the requirements of this class, I encourage you to discuss your learning needs with Brittany Boyne (bboyne@risd.edu) during the first week of the term. Once you submit an approval letter from the Office of Disability Support Services to the instructor, accommodations will be provided as needed.

http://www.risd.edu/Students/Wellness/Disability_Support/

Pre- and Co-Requisites: None

Grading Rubric

Criteria	A	B	C	D
Technical skills	Demonstrates a fluid and masterful ability to work with the tools	Technically proficient	Demonstrates basic competency	Does not demonstrate necessary skills
Class participation/ critiques	Regularly volunteers to contribute in discussions and gives insights to their classmates that are helpful, creative and insightful.	Regularly volunteers to contribute in class in a thoughtful manner	Participates rarely in discussion/ critiques	Does not engage in discussions or critiques
Creativity/ ideas	Displays well developed, unique ideas that have been thoughtfully considered	Ideas are thoughtful and unique, but still have room for growth	Ideas are simple, not well considered or redundant	Does not demonstrate clear ideas
Assignments	All criteria is fulfilled and the student has gone above and beyond	All criteria of assignment is fulfilled and the work demonstrates critical thinking and creativity	Basic criteria of assignment is fulfilled	Does not fulfil the basic criteria of the assignment

What do you hope to accomplish in the remaining weeks of this course?

Other comments: