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## Teaching Philosophy

The field of education is something I never considered until late into my own, while art itself was a pervasive element in my life. It shaped and molded my learning, and as I started college I began to appreciate what art had done for me through my student career. This appreciation is what drove me toward teaching, it was a way to share my experience and dive deeper into what art has to offer in the development of our minds. As I inform my own work through practice and research, my skills as an art educator evolve to accommodate contemporary art students.

In my ideal classroom, I would guide a diverse group of motivated learners through their individual artistic practices, setting an atmosphere of trust and acceptance, safety and accountability. While it is necessary to furnish my students with the technical skills to create proportional compositions and understand a range of media, in my class they will learn to possess the confidence and autonomy to pursue new ideas using these skills. I envision myself in the rear of the class, pushing them forward but allowing them to steer. Ultimately this combination of skill and drive will lay the foundation to be successful professional artists.

It is my responsibility to bring a sense of the contemporary art world to my students by sharing with them a diverse range of successful artists, news, events, exhibitions, and theories as they occur around us. I strive to practice inclusion in the resources I provide to my students, so they can feel represented as individuals and expand their perception of what a creator looks like. Students can use this threshold to better inform their own practice, but eventually the scaffolding is removed and they must learn to stand on their own through experimentation.

I am a proponent of using technology in the classroom, and embrace the immediacy of information smartphones provide, even asking students to look up articles, artists, and artworks in class. This exposure to contemporary art, coupled with art history education, will give students a vast pool of knowledge and vocabulary to draw from when communicating their artistic concepts.

There is more to art than technique in order to be effective; one must discover a desire within themselves to produce something meaningful. As an art educator, it is my priority - and most challenging task - to help students find their unique drive to create. I believe strongly in individualized critique, where I can provide the best support and direction for each student one-on-one while demonstrating my personal interest in their learning. I want to get to know my students, their struggles and their passions, as these elements will fuel a process-driven practice. Group critiques are equally essential, providing a platform where students can discuss their work, ideas, and personal challenges among their peers.

Though teaching art to elementary and middle school aged students may seem worlds away from teaching college level students, my philosophies have remained intact. The experience of teaching K-12 has allowed me to understand what sort of background my higher ed students would be coming from and has provided me sensitivity toward inner confidence and self-imposed expectations. I have even been fortunate enough to teach former students again in college, witnessing their evolution first-hand.

Since we were kids, we have been our harshest critics, and I have discovered it is that inner voice which needs the most repair. Through the right balance of technical skill, real world exposure, constructive critique, and empowerment, my students will find true artistic fulfillment.