

Course Title and #: STDA 110 – Integrated Studio: Observation and Illusion

Instructors: Robert Farber/Vicky Randall,

Project #1: What Is Art?

Deadline: MONDAY, 9/19/11

NO Late Work Accepted

Objectives (competencies)

- Intro to art as communication / visual language
 - Exploration of 2D and 3D visual processes and principles
 - Formal and conceptual coding and decoding
 - Sign/ symbol /metaphor
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Project Description: What is art? What is communication?

Intro to art as communication and our visual language

Exploration of 2D and 3D visual processes and principles

Formal and conceptual coding and decoding of sign/symbol/metaphor.

Includes mixed-media, drawing, photography, three dimensional skills, digital skills, basic lighting.

The formal goal of this project is to introduce point/line/plane and basic compositional issues in 2D and 3D applications.

The conceptual goal is to help students understand what art is and how we understand and interpret images, signs, symbols and metaphors.

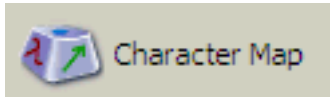
Artists To Look at:

Jessica Stockholder
Marcel Duchamp
Starn Twins

Visual References: This is an example of the level of critical thinking and visual interpretation we are shooting for:

Concept Statement and Design Rationale

Conceptual Art is the movement of ideas, and it consequently houses a staggering variety of work. The focus is on the concept behind the piece rather than aesthetics, so Marcel Duchamp's urinals are as much a part of the movement as Tracy Emin's unmade bed. Conceptual Art seeks to examine the nature of art itself, so for my piece I sought to examine the natures of signs, symbols, and metaphors.

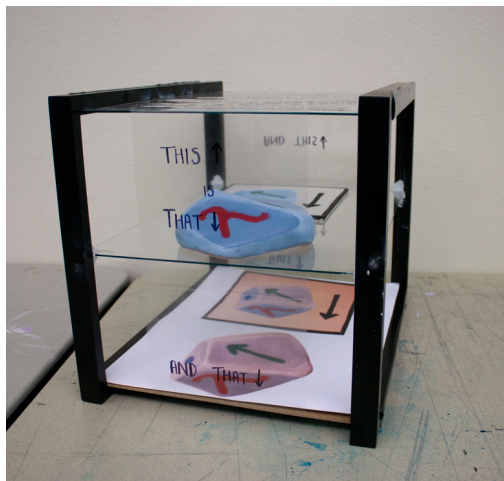


Microsoft users may be familiar with the “Character Map” utility for copying and pasting symbols into applications. I decided to use its shortcut icon as the basis for my piece, an image that is essentially a symbol for symbols. My search for a large version of the icon proved futile, so I printed out an extremely pixelated image and attempted to make a sculpture based on what I saw...hence, the back planes are missing and depth is largely distorted.

I chose a blank square with an indication arrow for my sign, which functions as the sign for a sign. The signs we encounter on a daily basis feature easily digestible logos and indicators of the items and destinations we're seeking. My Conceptual Art sign seeks to be far more literal...the image is near identical to the object it indicates, kind of like if a sign for KFC directed us to Colonel Sanders, or better yet, a posterized image of his head.



A metaphor states that one thing is another thing, so I used the most stripped down metaphor I could think of: “This is That.” To link this statement to my sign and symbol, I drew inspiration from the Joseph Kosuth piece “One and Three Chairs.” It consists of a chair, a photograph of that chair, and an enlarged dictionary definition of the word “chair”, examining the relationship between an object, its description, and a representation of its likeness. I took a digital photo of the sculpture and sign and also wrote out a description of them, then linked all three with the “this is that” statement. When we share photos with others, we say, “this is my cousin,” or “this is the Eiffel Tower”, statements which are obviously false and ludicrous if taken literally. Turning to definitions or descriptions of an object similarly takes us further away from its essential, physical nature.



Resources:

Recommended Readings

Paul Lester "Six Perspectives for Analyzing any Image"

Margaret P. Battin, John Fisher, Ronald Moore, Anita Silvers "Puzzles about Art: An Aesthetics Casebook "

REQUIRED Creative Process

Bring in an image of your own choosing and engage in an exercise in deconstructing the image: Deconstruct the visual language, setting up how we speak about the perception of all images.

Deconstruct the image two dimensionally, and form variations based upon at least five principles and elements of design (example: rule of thirds, gestalt groupings, principle of closure, principle of continuity, figure/ground relationships)

Scan the image in and use Photoshop as one tool for deconstruction.

Bring in another image of artwork, analyze the formal principles in it, and find examples of underlying symbolism

Create a 3D reconstruction, consisting of a hybrid between your original image and the symbolism in the artwork. Reconstruction will employ the element of line and will use two other principles for emphasis.

In the last week of the project, document their work and incorporate that documentation into their blog.

REQUIRED Artwork and Process Work

- **Research:** visual references of an image of your own choosing and an image of artwork, brief background of artist, historical context, and description of symbolism, signs, symbols, and metaphors used in the work. Cite sources.
- **Process:** documentation of deconstruction/reconstruction, including thumbnails, scrapbook/process journal, found writings/references,
- Inspirations
- **Artwork:** (5) 2d deconstructions, (1) 3d reconstruction
- **Writing:** Write a statement of purpose for this work of art which includes a rationale for hybridization and symbolism and personal reasons for choosing their source images, weekly blog writing

Grading Criteria:

Research:	
Visual References – image of their own choosing and image of artwork	<input type="checkbox"/>
Brief background of artist	<input type="checkbox"/>
Context of artwork: historical, cultural, technical, ethical	<input type="checkbox"/>
Description of underlying symbolism and support for interpretation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Citation of sources	<input type="checkbox"/>

Process:	
Documentation of deconstruction/reconstruction	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thumbnails	<input type="checkbox"/>
Scrapbook/process journal	<input type="checkbox"/>
Found writings/references, visual reference for inspiration	<input type="checkbox"/>
Documentation of work on blog	<input type="checkbox"/>

Artwork:	
Five 2d deconstructions	<input type="checkbox"/>
One 3d reconstruction	<input type="checkbox"/>

Writing:	
Write a statement of purpose for this work of art which includes a rationale for hybridization and symbolism and personal reasons for choosing their source images	<input type="checkbox"/>
Weekly blog writing	<input type="checkbox"/>

Student Learning Outcomes:

- Conceptual thinking
- Critical thinking
- Basic principles and elements of 2D and 3D design