

*If a man can be kept alert and imaginative, an error is a possibility, a chance at something new; to him, wandering and wondering are a part of the same process. He is most mistaken, most in error, whenever he quits exploring.*

William Least Heat Moon

Teaching the use of tools, materials, the nuts and bolts of art making, is the easy part. Helping students unearth their personal voice and discover a means of individual expression is the exciting challenge of teaching art.

I believe art making is about finding a sense of identity and relationship to the world around us. It is about reflection and self-discovery. I challenge students to express themselves, I nudge them along and provide the support they need to clarify their vision and bring it into being. I try to instill the importance of taking risks, that failure is acceptable and crucial to learning and growth.

I encourage experimentation and expose students to a wide variety of materials and processes. Assignments are open to interpretation, but may require the use of specific tools or techniques. I prefer to provide a general idea and allow students to make decisions based on their sensibilities.

Exposing students to other artists is an important element of studio classes. It provides an art historical context, gives lessons in aesthetics, and teaches a relationship with tradition. Critiques are a vital element of the studio class. I strive for an atmosphere where critical views can be expressed comfortably and thoughtfully. I prefer to allow the class to respond to work before the student presents the concept intended in the work. This allows for the most diverse possibilities in responding to the work, tells the student whether the work says what they intended to say, and teaches that work can be seen in very different, equally interesting ways by different viewers.

Fostering an open, creative atmosphere in the classroom is essential to an environment that is conducive to inquiry and growth. My goal is to create a curriculum including classroom discussions, group projects, and class activities to encourage individual "wandering and wondering" with new and yet discovered modes of expression.