

# ***Inescapable Beauty Elusive Sublime***

*Addendum to the Syllabus (FALL)*

## ***Studio Focus Requirements***

**PREFACE:** Art making is an examination and observation of who we are in relation to our world. Vision and language are the principle elements by which we experience and define our world, and we can use them to reveal things that would otherwise be invisible to us. This is where we will begin. We will see how far we are willing to push the parameters of how we individually experience, define and reveal our world. You were born with what is essential to do this. These revelations can be made in many ways. Essentially, this is a program about content. The goal here will be to create a supportive community of practicing artists with the aim of collectively addressing each artist's effort to refine the form and content of their work.

**ARTISTS:** As a member of this program it is assumed that (in some way) you plan to pursue a career in the arts. As such, you will be treated as a serious artist from this point forward. That is to say, we are here to get down to the earnest work of artistic enquiry and you will be expected to perform accordingly. This takes considerable time, energy, concentration, motivation, and perseverance. It is assumed that by registering for this class, you are dedicated to these challenges.

We are about to embark on an exciting journey. Of course, it will involve hard work, sleepless nights, struggles, frustration, confusion, and a host of other problems. Simply embrace the wonder of the artist's life and enjoy it. The payoff is worth it...

I have a friend who did a visiting artist stint at a school out east. She went through all of the student's studios and then asked them to meet her in a central place. She asked one question (followed by a proposed answer). "What the fuck do you think you're doing here? Making art?" She asked. The students were silent. "Well, you ain't! So loosen up and stop being so worried about it and take some risks!" She answered for them.

The point here is an interesting one. I don't think She truly felt the students weren't making art. I think She felt they were too conscious of themselves making art and too conscious of it being both good and cool. This, in turn, was making what they were producing not exactly art. You're in a place, maybe one of the only places, where you will get immediate rewards for trying things, taking risks, and putting it all on the line. We're at the very beginning of this program and now, more than ever, is the time to not worry if what you have is too sappy, too silly, too good, too bad, too cool, not cool enough, art, not art, or even "perfect". I will expect you to worry about these things later, but for now I want you to throw everything including the kitchen sink into this program just to see what comes out.

Remember that everything is a part of the artistic process. Outside of the classroom I strongly encourage you to approach exhibitions, movies, books, television programs, advertisements, music, store displays, etc. with the same conceptual tools that we will be using in the classroom. These are all relevant to the artistic process and I would welcome them being referenced in discussions. Although they are not yet scheduled, there will be excursions to a number of different galleries, museums, and other sites of interest.

**ATTENDANCE:** To earn full credit for this program you must attend all scheduled activities and participate in all critiques. Tardiness and absence will harshly affect your evaluation and will ultimately result in a loss of credit. Attendance is always mandatory. I am particularly sensitive to missed critiques.

**PARTICIPATION:** because we only have a short time together, it is important that we make the most of each program meeting. This is not as easy as it sounds. At any instant the mind wanders and shadows our thoughts with other, places, people, things. It requires a great deal of energy to occupy this space at this time, not where you would rather be or with whom you would like to be, but here in this room with the people around you. I will ask that you do your best to be right here, right now. There is no reason to come to class if you aren't going to be here. This means that you must be here, not only with your body, but with your mind as well. Don't just occupy the chair you are sitting in. I will do my best to assist you, but I will need your help just as much as you will need mine. So, even if you think you have a valid reason for not participating, it will do none of us much good if you don't. The rest of us need to hear your voice in class as much as you will need to hear it yourself.

**ASSIGNMENTS/EXERCISES:** My assignments and/or exercises should never get in the way of your learning. They are meant to create a dialogue that will stimulate and challenge you. They are also meant to give you an opportunity to express yourself. Do not worry about pleasing your instructor or fulfilling someone else's expectations. If you do, you are forfeiting the most important freedom that your art will allow you.

### ***The Nuts and Bolts:***

Students registered in the studio focus of Inescapable Beauty Elusive Sublime must manage the following requirements:

**JOURNALS:** You are required to maintain a journal that chronicles your academic enquiry throughout this program. These journals will be collected at mid-quarter (Thursday, October 30th), and at the end of the quarter.

***Your journal must contain the following entries:*** (Organize your journal any way you'd like, but these entries must be titled and dated so that they can be easily identified)

- Notes and questions on the readings, lectures, films, and seminars.
- Notes and questions from critiques.

- Notes from guest lectures
- Notes from exhibitions and gallery visits

*Your journal should also contain the following entries:*

- Clippings
- Sketches
- Ideas
- Random tidbits

Essentially, anything you want to toss in that suggests clear evidence of authentic academic enquiry. Have fun. Go wild!

**STUDIO ASSIGNMENTS:** In addition to working diligently on your personal portfolio of studio work, there are five (5) studio assignments... Four (4) designed specifically for you and a fifth that the entire program will embark on. The work for these assignments must be finished and ready to hang (no work in progress) when critique starts (10:00 a.m.). Be prepared to defend your work by responding with serious and compelling answers to questions about why you did what you did and what you are attempting to say. Take this work seriously. Trust your intuition. Don't edit yourself. Take ownership of your process.

### ***STUDIO ASSIGNMENT 1: Locating Beauty:***

Due: Week 3, Monday, October 13th

Thinking of form and content... Does beauty reside in the subject or the object. Does the viewer imbue the work with beauty or does beauty reside in the work? Make whatever you can that has this idea as the primary conceptual focus driving the form and content of your work. This assignment quickly references both Platonic and Aristotelian concepts of beauty... Aristotelian: Is it possible through materials or techniques to make beautiful imitations of ugly things? Platonic: Is beauty, or the surface of things (cosmetics) something that should be revered at all? Is all that of the profane world ugly in relationship to sacred or divine.

### ***Assignment 2: Damage, Repair, Transformation, (perfect) Imperfection:***

Due: Week 5, Monday, October 27th

In "On Longing," (not a required text for this program) Susan Stewart suggests that beauty is usurped when the organism or object is unresolved or arrested in a state of transformation... where outside becomes inside, when a line is interrupted, when the thing is not entirely this or that, when there is evidence of damage or repair. On the other hand, a sort of perfect imperfection is often valued in Japanese aesthetics. Consider this, and many ideas emerging from Eco's,

On Ugliness. Make a serious and compelling piece with these concepts as the central theme.

### ***STUDIO ASSIGNMENT 3: Regarding Kant:***

Due: Week 7, Monday, November 10th

Make a work of art in response to this little ditty by Emmanuelle Kant... "Everything goes past like a river and the changing taste and the various shapes of men make the whole game uncertain and delusive. Where do I find fixed points in nature, which cannot be moved by man, and where I can indicate markers by the shore to which he ought to adhere?" –Kant

**note:** As a LAST resort, if you are struggling to respond to this quote, you may identify one of your personal favorites from Kant to inspire your work. Make sure this quote accompanies your work to critique.

### ***STUDIO ASSIGNMENT 4: Your choice...***

Due: Week 10, Monday, December 8th

Given all we have watched, read, discussed, and dialogued on, create two finished pieces that are centrally located in your most impassioned responses to the curriculum thus far. Courageous students will make work responding to concepts of the sublime.

### ***STUDIO ASSIGNMENT 5: Low budget***

Due Date: TBA (sometime late in the quarter)

The idea: Make (you must make something rather than simply finding something) the most beautiful thing you can for \$7 or less. That's it. For advanced thinkers, substitute Sublime for beautiful.

The thing here is... you're aiming for the viewer's first response to hover in the realm of the beautiful (or the sublime). Think about the significance of scale and material in a piece's impact. Do not go over budget. If your project costs less than \$7, make it bigger or make a few of them. The piece can be site specific, or you can bring it into the classroom. Think about the significance of temporality in a piece of art. What does it mean for something to be consciously anti-archival? How does it's predetermined life span change it's value and a viewer's experience of it? It can be in any medium you wish. Think dollar store. Think spaghetti... you can buy a lot of glue and pasta for under \$7. Prizes will be awarded for the most beautiful piece, the biggest piece, the most pieces (multiples of one beautiful thing) and the cheapest most beautiful piece.

You must also bring your materials receipt to class.

**WRITING ASSIGNMENTS:** The studio component of this program has six (6) written assignments in the fall quarter. Developing an eloquent and articulate fluency with language is a critical component of any career in the arts. Probably, in any career, for that matter... case in point, Charles Bukowski, postal worker and/or Harry Middleton, sanitation worker. Written assignments are worth credit and will not be accepted late. All written assignments must be typed.

The main written assignments are as follows

**WRITING ASSIGNMENTS 1 and 2:** Two, One-page responses to two separate visiting artist's lectures, or artist's lectures you attend off campus. In other words, you will be writing responses to two lectures you attend, and thus, turning in two papers. Your response should reference your feelings about their work and possibly what you thought about how they represented their personal relationship to their work. It might be appropriate to comment on their presentation, but only if done as a serious critique of the way they presented their work and how that influenced your response to the work.

Due date: Both responses are due, Monday, December 8th (week 10).

Don't delay on writing these. Thought they are due at the end of the quarter, you will be doing yourself a big favor by writing them immediately after each lecture. Email a copy of them to yourself so that you can retrieve them in week ten.

**WRITING ASSIGNMENT 3:** One written response to an exhibition you attend. This response should be about two pages or longer (double spaced, Ariel, 11 pt.). Your response must be framed in the context of aesthetic themes emerging in this program.

Due date: Monday, December 8th (week 10).

Again, don't delay on writing this. Though it is due at the end of the quarter, you will be doing yourself a big favor by writing it immediately after viewing the work. Take notes while looking at the work. Email a copy of them to yourself so that you can retrieve it around week ten.

**WRITING ASSIGNMENT 4:** Mid quarter paper responding to concepts of beauty: This is somewhat open ended... You can write about beauty in general, beauty as it relates to a specific artist, beauty as it relates to your personal studio practice, beauty as it relates to a specific philosopher, culture, time period, movement, whatever... The one content based requirement is that you frame your writing in the context of (make reference to) the readings we have been doing.

Length: at least five (5) pages, double spaced, Ariel 11 pt.

Due date: October 30th

What is due: A peer reviewed copy of your first draft that has been proof read, marked up, and signed by a peer in this program or someone in the employ of the writing center. And, your final draft that shows clear evidence that you have

responded to comments made by your proofreader.

**WRITING ASSIGNMENT 5:** End of quarter paper responding to concepts of the sublime: This is somewhat open ended... You can write about beauty in general, beauty as it relates to a specific artist, beauty as it relates to your personal studio practice, beauty as it relates to a specific philosopher, culture, time period, movement, whatever... The one content-based requirement is that you frame your writing in the context of (make reference to) the readings we have been doing.

Length: at least five (5) pages, double spaced, Ariel 11 pt.

Due date: December 11th

What is due: A peer reviewed copy of your first draft that has been proof read, marked up, and signed by a peer in this program or someone in the employ of the writing center. And, your final draft that shows clear evidence that you have responded to comments made by your proofreader.

**ASSIGNMENT 6:** An artist's statement that relates to your final assignment (both pieces). Simply write a serious and compelling artist's statement that describes why you do what you do, what you intend to say (or ask), why you used what you used to make it, etc. Ask me for some assistance with this if you are struggling. Consider dedicating a section of your journal to notes supporting an artist's statement. You'll be glad you have them when you start working on this.

Due date: At the final critique