

Two-Dimensional Art: Portraits

Self Evaluation Workshop

(adapted from Bob Leverich's *Sustainable Design* Self Evaluation workshop)

Catalog Copy

Portraits are unique among artistic production: they are works that intentionally refer to a living or once living person by an artist who may know the sitter well or may never have met the subject. By capturing or presenting something of the aura of another human being, portraits are compelling images in what they tell us about the sitter and more often what they conceal. Moreover, the notion of artistic (self) expression is mediated by the presence/image of another. Thus the artistic relationship of artist/object/audience is expanded to artist/sitter/object and audience. In this sense, portraiture represents a complex arena of artistic practice and appreciation.

This program will explore the human portrait through studio assignments, readings and seminars, and a major visual studies research project. Our work in studios will focus on life drawing, painting and to a lesser extent collage. We'll read and discuss books and articles exploring the nature and theory of portraiture. Finally students will undertake significant research into the work of a portrait artist through writing a research paper and presenting a lecture in the learning community. Between studio assignments, readings, and research, students should expect to spend about 40 hours a week focused on class work. Students of all levels of artistic experience who share a commitment to, and enthusiasm for, both research and studio work are welcome.

Background Documents

Get copies of the following documents:

- Syllabi for the entire class and for painting,
- Seminar reading list and seminar notes,
- Visual research for your independent paintings

Work through the following outline for your preliminary self-evaluation. Don't bog down writing prose here; just make lists in the spaces provided.

Draft Notes

There are different strategies you could use for organizing a comprehensive final self-evaluation. The strategy suggested here is to begin with an introduction, then proceed by major component activities, assessing your learning over the term in each one, then write a brief conclusion. This is a starting exercise; you may well add and subtract things and modify your assessments before you write the final at the end of the term.

Material for your opening paragraph:

- Summarize your experience, hopes and learning goals at the start of the program. How did your hopes and goals change over the course of the program? Any new ones?

- Describe your performance in the program overall. (How was your attendance? Participation? Characterize your work. Complete? Some holes? Your best work was...? Where could you improve? How did you improve?)

Material to draw from for your central paragraphs:

Here is a list of the major program activities. Try numbering them in the order of their significance to you, and then address them in that order. Characterize your learning in each and what you feel were especially significant experiences and insights for you. **What do you think about now that you wouldn't have before? What can you do now that you couldn't do before?**

- **Life Drawing** line, value, composition, anatomy, drawing process development
- **Portrait theory and Art appreciation** Seminar readings, portrait lecture forum
(How's your ability to explore ideas in dialogue? Anything to say? Learning to listen? What insights have you attained from the readings. Critical thinking-insight into your own and other's work, integrative thinking-making connections between ideas, investigations, methods)
- **Portrait Lecture Research** two workshops on image collection and research; small-group mentoring meetings; development of research skills, writing, lecturing skills, ability to organize ideas.
- **Painting studio** painting demonstrations on acrylics, oils, other media; technical assignments in painting: monochrome, color with respect to spatial illusions, painting from life, collage and painting projects, independent research in painting
- **Managing time** what have you learned about managing both academic and artistic work? What did you assume about creative practice when you entered the program? What have you learned about the amount of time it takes to make art?

Material for your final paragraph(s):

- How would you characterize your grasp of the skills and ideas presented? Passing? Fair? Very Good? Excellent? Detailed or general?

- How have your understanding and ideas about terms like *portraiture* and related ideas: likeness, identity, internal psyche or essence of the sitter? The notion of a sitter? The assumptions we bring to an image that looks like a portrait -- changed? What do you know now about portraits that you may not have when the quarter began?

- What “light bulb” have you had? (Discoveries, realizations, career ideas...)

- What progress did you make toward the goals you listed above? What have you learned about yourself?

- What will your next steps be? (Next term? Long term? New hopes? New goals?... }