ART DEPARTMENT
Futures Project Self-Study
August 2000

Studio art is about process and risk-taking. The process as well as the product hold mysteries that need to be explored. Because we are unique creations, so also is our art. It must be allowed to develop without rigid boundaries, but within structures and frameworks that have been carefully composed so that strategic connections can be made.

As professors, our job is to make the spectrum broad, but to also lay our personal and technical standards before our students to entice them to reach beyond what they already know. It is our purposeful intention to hold true to the standards, as we see them described in this report, and to maintain and strive for a rich environment so that individual discoveries can be nurtured, and personal growth can be experientially achieved.

In writing this report we, as a faculty, benefited the most from the 24 hours we spent together in relaxed sharing, fervent discussion, and mirthful imaginings. The product of our efforts, demonstrated in this report, is intended to visually reflect our sense of identification, and to encourage those who read it to engage themselves in a visual connection to the written outcomes. The images that we selected to accompany each of the student learning outcomes came mostly from recent student work that reflect the general spirit in which the student outcomes continue to be achieved in our department. The quotations that accompany each of the standards reflect the kind of motivations and thoughtful truth that we offer to our students daily in each of our courses.

We feel good about who we are and what we do.

Scott Anderson
Tony Askew
John Carlander
Lisa DeBoer
Deanna Pini
Jill VanderHoof

Susan Savage, Chair
The visual arts are a means of worshipping God and integrating our faith into personal expression. Genesis describes God as a wonderfully loving Creator of all things, an incredibly creative being who made us in His image. Although our attempts at “creation” through manipulation of God’s creation are comparatively feeble, we are able to greater appreciate the complex beauty and incredible love with which God has created life and our universe through visual practice in the fine arts. Through the creative act, we are able to gain a fuller understanding of the great Creator himself and our place in his masterpiece.

Joe Aguilar
Class of 2001
“I have always believed and still believe that artists who live and work with spiritual values cannot and should not remain indifferent to a conflict in which the highest value of humanity and civilization are at stake” – Pablo Picasso

Christian Orientation Standard

General Statement

The art department joins with the academic community in achieving the goal of balanced knowledge of Christian doctrine, scholarship and history. With its studio and historical components, the art curriculum seeks to equip students with the skills, habits and knowledge to be discerning, faithful participants in the art world and in the visual culture of today. Being critical Christian thinkers involves understanding the historical role art has played, the standards invoked to judge artistic quality, and a hands-on engagement of the materials and processes of making art. We see spiritual, intellectual and creative maturity as part and parcel of one another, and while unlike the Religious Studies department, doctrine is not the content of our teaching. We expect our students to learn to bring a Christian sensibility to all aspects of art making and viewing. The art faculty strive to model this synthesis in their own art making, viewing and teaching.

Our Objectives and Current Strategies

The art curriculum engages Christian knowledge (scripture, Biblical scholarship, doctrine, church history and devotional resources), in the historical images we often draw on in discussions in Principles of Art, in the art history sequences, and in Art and Worship.

- In class, we discuss the identity of the “Christian artist” and art that is Christian.
- We acknowledge that the history of Western art until the mid-nineteenth century, has been dominated by the artist working in and for a Christian context.
- We challenge students' visual awareness of the role that architecture plays in the church.
- We teach about and discuss the different uses of the arts in Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant Christianity, and encourage students to think about the ways that the arts are used in evangelical settings.
- We teach about and discuss the different theological understandings of images in the Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant Christianity, i.e. “Creation,” “Incarnation,” and “Redemption,” as various doctrinal rubrics through which the arts have been interpreted.
- The art faculty use devotional authors, meditations and inspirational quotations as a motivation to learning, and to the cultivation of thoughtfulness. Such resources help students reflect on the spiritual aspects of their projects.
- The art faculty also use images as a devotional resource, seeking to deepen and complicate students’ approaches toward art and spirituality.
Practices

Art making is based in practice. Pointing out the ways in which our practices reveal and shape our commitments helps us teach students the value of actions that resonate with our beliefs.

- Particularly in our computer graphics classes, we stress honoring copyrights as an ethical consideration.

- Taking responsibility for art facilities, equipment and materials, both in preparation and clean-up is part of good stewardship, and respect for community.

- Art students are given opportunities to volunteer within the Westmont community and the greater Santa Barbara Community. (Particular examples include: Santa Barbara Art Museum, Reynolds Gallery, Cold Springs Gazebo Program, creating backdrops for chapel, Transition House Mural).

- Within art studio and history classes, students are encouraged to push boundaries, broaden their horizons, and take imaginative risks.

- We encourage students to create and protect a hospitable environment for all who are present in the classroom.

- The art faculty emphasize that diligence is essential for the development of artistic sensibilities.

- The practice of regular self-reflection reveals and reinforces meaningful experiences. Self reflections are a means to gauge a students’ comprehensive understanding.

Affections

Because art enhances and increases our ability to see God’s world and enriches our day-to-day lives, we constantly reinforce for our students the value and use of their gifts. The visual arts, taken seriously, give insight about ourselves, about other artists, and about people from other cultures and times. When considering how the truth, honor, righteousness, purity, and loveliness, referred to in Philippians 4:8 might apply to the arts, students are invited to understand the importance of the arts, and the relationship between their faith and their artistic activity.

On a very basic level, getting students talking and interacting is one of the ways we help engage students’ sensitivity to God and other people. Talk, whether formal or informal, is a major part of what we do. In most instances the studio environment stimulates talk on many subjects, and most students view the studio as a non-threatening environment where dialogue can easily take place.

Virtues

The practices we cultivate in studio and lecture courses require a foundation in certain virtues. Learning through art-making requires self-discipline, courage, patience, perseverance, and hope, exercised in an environment of hospitality, respect and open-mindedness. Exercising these virtues leads to knowledge and thus is integral to the development of a Christian in the arts.
Assessment Evidence

Formally, we assess growth in students' knowledge of the religious history and uses of the arts through papers, projects, quizzes and exams. Informally, we are able to assess their understanding and growth through student interactions, and through the content and development of class projects. We can assess the impact of their learning on practices and affections by their willingness to participate in Urban Semester, Potter's Clay and other off-campus programs, and by their participation in community programs and activities.

Additional Sources, Improvements and Resources

The College's support for the arts can be enhanced by helping us find funding for departmental participation at faith/learning related conferences. We are committed to including our part-time faculty at these conferences. Our part-time faculty, who have established long term relationships with Westmont, and without whose specialized expertise we cannot function, are every bit as important to our success as the full time faculty. Because of their commitment to this assessment, we are even more aware of their impact on our department and the campus community.

We also suggest that the college consider the impact of it's rhetoric of "Beauty" on what is assumed about the art department (i.e. the common misconception that Thomas Kinkade is a model for Christian artistry). This might be interesting to take up at a faculty forum.
This cover by Art Spiegelman was created in response to the shooting of unarmed civilian Amadou Dialo, who was shot 41 times by undercover NYPD officers. The cover was immediately and angrily denounced by the New York Times and Mayor Rudy Giuliani as being needlessly provocative and fanning the flames of an already explosive situation.
“Art is an idea. It is not enough to draw, paint, and sculpt. An artist should be able to think.” - Gurdon Woods

“Where all men think alike, no one thinks very much.” – Walter Lippmann

Critical Interdisciplinary Thinking Standard

General Statement:

Critical-Interdisciplinary Thinking “requires students to combine a variety of discipline-specific reasoning abilities in attempt to solve problems and answer questions.” It also requires the students to have ability to “frame appropriate questions, to think abstractly, to test definitions of key terms and categories of analysis, and to examine one’s own assumptions” all with the appropriate attitudes.

In the discipline of studio art critical thinking generally pertains to a turning point, a transition, or a crisis in a student’s learning. Studio art is a continuum. Guidelines and standards for performance can be both maintained and manipulated. It is a constantly changing atmosphere. Some things are difficult to verbalize, and generally there is no right or wrong or black or white, but plenty of “grey areas”. Our students can surprise us quite regularly with their interpretations and their focus. Pushing the boundaries is desired.

In the study of art history critical thinking is involved in discerning what is visually conveyed, articulating how something is conveyed, and considering to what end it is conveyed. The analytical and discerning skills cultivated in the studio and art history classroom are crucial for thoughtful living in our increasingly image-driven world.

Our Objectives and Current Strategies:

In all studio and lecture situations, our students exercise a variety of general critical thinking skills through varied individual and collaborative means. Since our classes are open to students from other academic disciplines we find the mixed perspectives to be stimulating to the thinking processes, and beneficial to the outcomes. Woven throughout the activities that engage the critical thinking process is criticism itself. As it is a vital part of our daily curricula, students and faculty alike strive to define criticism as helpful, not hurtful, arrogant, or hindering. We agree that criticism must be spoken with a humble spirit but its tenets must be uncompromised.

The following examples best represent our department’s purposeful endeavor:

- Selecting media as tools for specific expression.

- Working with content and with purposeful intent as technicians, scholars and Christians, by clarifying one’s intentions and stating the purpose(s) of one’s own art (by means of thematic content assignments).
• Defining concepts and visually depict them.

• Broadening one’s perspectives of objective thinking and subjective responses through verbal and written exercises (through critical analysis, aesthetic questioning, and discussion of artwork).

• Learning to write coherent and articulate personal artist's statements (assisted by criteria lists).

• Understanding the historical concept of metaphor and allegory as a useful tool in personalized image-making.

• Embracing the phrase “the artist is found in the art” and understanding what that means.

• Utilizing what has been learned through topical research as a stimulus for student-generated test questions.

• Helping students use their skills of visual analysis to understand art in specific social and historical contexts.

• Helping students understand the social and political power the visual arts have in our world.

• Helping students develop a healthy discerning attitude toward the visual arts and the visual culture of our contemporary world.

• Utilizing one’s knowledge from other disciplines and learning to integrate it into the varied processes of artistic production.

• Learning to conscientiously push beyond what is comfortable, and to acknowledge and articulate the results (through reflection).

• Seeking honest insight and criticism from oneself and others in order to perpetuate growth (through reflection and critique).

• Understanding that learning to “see” implies more than visual perception.

**Assessment Evidence**

Again, the art department utilizes a variety of means to assess what has been experienced or learned through critical thinking processes. We strongly believe that it is vital that students learn to describe and verbalize their intended purposes and hypotheses in order for their active expressions and experiences to be viable. The following examples best represent our department's methods of assessment:

• Critique: personal, group, lottery, written, verbal (sometimes with criteria list or questions, such as “it would be better if...”).

• Quick write as review and periodic unannounced personal reflections.
“The good neighbor looks beyond the external accidents and discerns those inner qualities that make all the people human and therefore brothers.” - Martin Luther King

Diversity Standard

General Statement

Students come to Westmont with varying skills to respectfully engage people unlike themselves. It is our goal to assist students in their understanding of themselves and others. We seek to nurture them as they grow in compassion and acceptance of differences in others. The small number of racial minorities on our campus only increases our sense of responsibility to help broaden the empathy that needs to develop towards the larger human family. Since the production of art is based on an appreciation for personal, individualized expression, the roots of diversity are already being cultivated. We attempt to open the doors wider for that cultivation to be more meaningful.

Our Objectives and Current Strategies

The Art Department works hard to educate in the area of diversity. The following items indicate some of the things that we do:

- Reynolds Gallery has made special efforts to exhibit artists representing diverse ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds that serve the Westmont student body and the community at large.

  - Past exhibits have included: Photography of L.A: Post Riot Rebuilding, and Russian Protest Posters. We have welcomed diversity through such artists as LaMont Westmoreland, Laurie Gross-Schaefer, Sister Corita Kent, Leonardo Nunez, Manuel Unzueta, James Smith, J.D. Hall, Linda Stevens, Lenore Hughes, and Patti Jacquemain.

  - The opening exhibit of the 2000-01 season is a special Hiroshima exhibit: "Messages of Peace" sponsored by the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation in conjunction with a special Japanese delegation, and Westmont College.

- Gallery talks by artists (such as the artists listed above) whenever possible.

- Questions and answer sessions and discussions with students and the general public.

- Classroom discussions feature artists we admire for their public persona and courage in expressing diverse ideas. Kathe Kollwitz, Vincent Van Gogh, Pablo Picasso, Norman Rockwell, Honoré Daumier, Maya Lin, Cindy Sherman, Audrey Flack, Bette and Allison Saar, Robert Rauschenberg, Ernst Barlach, Art Spiegelman, Maria Martinez, Lucy Lewis, Emily Carr, and Don Reitz, are a representative sample.

- Classroom presentations and discussions concerning ethnic and cultural differences and gender issues are presented by both students and faculty. (“Putting yourself in someone else’s shoes”).
- Asian, African, Native American, Pre-Columbian, Australian, European, Middle Eastern, Mexican and South American Art are emphasized in studio and history courses.

- Emphasis is placed upon outstanding minority figures, (such as featuring African American artists on Martin Luther King Day.)

- Mask making and textile decoration in Crafts I are included as distinctly multi-cultural activities.

- Introduction to art that may not be comfortable. Educating tolerance of contemporary art forms and learning to be open to new things is addressed in many of our classes.

- Use of the human body in art, both male and female.

- Showing the video "In and Out of Africa" to generate intriguing and stimulating discussions. Art History courses are seen as a way to open a student's world.

- Use of terminology in art specific to various cultures and periods in history. ("What is ‘Primitive’ Art? ‘ Outsider’ Art? ‘Folk’ Art?")

- Developing an attitude of openness toward diversity in learning about art, its stereotypes and realities.

- Discussion of the socialization of what “the artist” is.

- Travel to Europe and other off-campus environments help bridge some gaps, and to broaden thinking and exposure to hear other cultural perspectives.

- We view competency in a second language as helpful to our students.

- The historical value of German and French is vital to the art historian, and the contemporary value of Spanish in our world today is extremely beneficial and fitting for all.

**Assessment Evidence**

The above experiences assist students in the retention of knowledge and in the creation of concepts and products that reflect knowledge. Since art is seen in the present world as a way of transmitting, maintaining, and analyzing culture, we attempt to design our program to provide a mirror for students to embrace cultural identity. The following have helped focus student thinking and have expanded their understanding:

- Students work with minorities in community art projects, such as Transition House Mural Project.

- Students work with students from various ethnic and economic backgrounds at schools in the Santa Barbara area.
• Westmont students act as docents at Reynolds Art Gallery serving a wide range of age groups in the community.

• Students cross traditional boundaries by using a great variety of equipment and materials in art classes (i.e. girls using power tools for the first time).

• On occasion our students have worked with handicapped individuals using art as a rehabilitation tool.

• Students work with many age groups at churches, summer camps, at mission projects and after-school programs using art as an outlet for the expression of ideas.

• Some student presentations have been given completely in Spanish in (teacher preparation course Art for Children).

Additional Sources Improvements and Resources

As our sensibilities grow in this area we are alert to the need for the further involvement of our students into activities that explore diversity from unfamiliar or opposing viewpoints. We are also alert to the need for further discussion that will encourage the connections that unite us human beings. The following suggestions reflect our desire to provide formats for these discussions to continue:

• Bringing Melanie Yazzie (Navajo Artist, University of Arizona, also College of Santa Fe) to our campus to speak to our students about indigenous people and their art, and to engage her distinct sensibilities into the Westmont environment.

• We can do more in discussing Christian Art: What is it? What is it not? (Expose students to more comparative experiences with Byzantine, Roman Catholic and Contemporary Evangelical art).

• We can do more to bring speakers and artists who represent different cultures, traditions, and countries into our classes.

• We can include more multi-media presentations in our classes to expose students to many more cultures and ideas.

• We could explore more opportunities to include handicapped and/or elderly artists in our class discussions in order to illustrate how people have come to understand and accept their own limitations, possibilities, and expectations.

• Pragmatically we need to expose our students to more figure drawing, to objectify the study of the human form, and to complete the academic training of our students. We would like to begin serious discussion of the Christian viewpoint of the human body. Since the human figure has played a central role in the history of Western Art in particular, our students find themselves lacking in serious study of that form in studio classes.
artwork by Timothy Van Laar "Art Books" 1991, Oil on canvas
“The fear of verbal expression is a sign that we have not quite come of age in the visual arts. Fear of words admits the power of them. What robust artist will stop painting because he talks?” - George Rickey, abstract sculptor

“Art-Speech is the only truth. An artist is usually a damned liar, but his art, if it be art, will tell you the truth of his day.” – D.H. Lawrence

Written and Oral Communication Standard

General Statement

The study of art is integral to the Christian liberal arts college curriculum, and is designed to stimulate full development of the whole person. Images are part of our continuing historical reference. From cave paintings and pictographs to computer graphics, images shape how we relate to our world.

Our task is to encourage our students to use and enhance their speech and writing skills within the field of visual communication which is, by intention, a non-verbal discipline. We encourage language skills in the context of studio art classes (including printmaking, ceramics, painting, sculpture) which stress the ongoing, physical, process of creating art, as well as in the lecture courses which directly engage written and oral communication (i.e., art history, principles of art, art theory and criticism).

Our Objectives and Current Strategies

The processes of creating, revising and completing visual art are sometimes difficult to express verbally; art is visual not linguistic. Yet we encourage our students to express their intent, their principles, and their reasons for doing the work they do, in a verbal medium. How do we integrate the visual and the verbal expression?

- We strive to challenge the students to cognitively address and verbalize how they create art, itself a non-verbal process.

- We encourage students to examine their artistic work and begin making informed decisions, judgements and discriminations in a field for which there are few indisputable rules and no singular solution.

- We strive to enhance students’ understanding that non-linear thinking and creative problem solving will increase their problem-solving skills in all areas of liberal education. Addressing the grey, ambiguous areas in creative work trains them to be open to unusual, or non-linear solutions in other academic work. It involves hard work, concentration, and often frustration.

- We help students understand that learning takes place when they overcome the fear of failure.
• We teach them how to critically evaluate what they see visually in our image-driven world of news photos, television, advertising, and to concisely and clearly express their judgement.

• We maintain an atmosphere where students can develop appropriate language and terms to describe, analyze, and evaluate art.

• We encourage students to write, and orally present assessments of their fellow students' work and their own.

• We strive to show students that the emotional and physical challenge combined with intellectual problem-solving demanded in the art process helps to prepare them for adult life and its challenges. We explain that work is not necessarily of acceptable quality just because they "tried".

• We help students develop a concept of personal, Christian art that reflects an inner Christian attitude rather than specific content or style, and we help them address the language to articulate this concept in a secular world.

• We emphasize that critiques in the supportive atmosphere of this department are for the purpose of analytic viewing with an eye towards improvement.

• We encourage students to verbalize and share their discoveries in technique and direction.

• We teach the proper use of terms and language for techniques and skills in studio classes.

• We prepare students for effective community presentations of art concerns.

• We train prospective teachers to effectively communicate.

• We engage in dialogue about contemporary world events and how they are visually communicated.

• We verbally critique specific aspects of creating art; (e.g. A session devoted to viewing each student's piece and answering the question "What could be done to make this composition even better).

**Assessment Evidence**

Lower and higher order thinking skills are assessed in lecture classes by:

• Written, essay and multiple choice tests, formal research papers properly written, formal critiques on artists, and art topics. In Principles of Art class students are taught to write as if they were a critic for a major newspaper.

• Debates on assigned topic and viewpoint (i.e. censorship and art).
• These skills are assessed in studio classes by:
  • Written tests given on technical skills and equipment.
  • Use of proper vocabulary for particular discipline.
  • Studio brainstorming sessions for content-oriented assignments.
  • Ability to perform verbal description of visual objects and analysis of composition.
  • Artist statements

We know the English department teaches well-edited prose and rhetorical effectiveness, and we encourage the same in our department by:

  • Requiring students to demonstrate well-edited prose in their papers and discussions of field trips to museums and galleries.
  • Engaging students to participate in informal (oral) critiques of visual and written work and small group discussions (with a reporter for each group to the larger class) on topics such as, "What is Christian Art".
  • Formulating student, rather than instructor-led discussions (in Theory and Criticism course).
  • Encouraging student docent presentations for visitors to the Reynolds Art Gallery.
  • Staging student-led critiques in studio classes where they apply the principles of art and design to the current project.
  • Requiring short written critiques of a peer's work and presentation of that critique to the class.
  • Encouraging presentations to the Reynolds Gallery Art Council.
  • Requiring essays on what they learned during the process of creating paintings.
  • Requiring that students submit papers in rough draft approval. If papers are unacceptable, students are required to revise their work. Students who need further help are referred to Writers Corner (in Principals of Art and Art for Children).
  • In the course, Art for Children, future teachers prepare their lesson plans and teach the class as they would if they were in the actual elementary school classroom.

Students demonstrate creativity, fairmindedness and openness to criticism in written form through:
• Written self assessments of their progress.
• Response in writing, to written critiques by another student.
• Demonstrating oral facility through debate.
• Dialogue about contemporary events.
• Student discussions in art history.

Cultural and historical awareness is demonstrated in their reports on and discussions of:

• Work experience through Urban Studies at Mission Graphica (a Latino-based silk-screen studio) and study of the mural project in the San Francisco Mission District (Urban Semester).

• The validity of art restoration projects (e.g., the cleaning of the Mona Lisa, and other historical works, and the issues of art work ownership).

• The use of language and labels in art and the implications of such labeling (i.e., use of terms such as " Outsider Art", Primitive Art).

• The responsibility of the artist to respond to social and cultural issues.

• Current events impacting art. The image that prefaces this section of our report is a cover from the New Yorker Magazine, a cartoon strongly editorial in approach and addressing an episode of violence. Topic: Was the artist's cover proper use of art, or art in that application? (Computer Graphics course).

• Students are encouraged to see that what they make as art, and what we now think of as "art" is culturally and historically conditioned. We look for that awareness in their writing and discussions as well.

Students demonstrate ability to address the Christian faith, beyond popular cliches:

Some assignments incorporate:

• The creation of new visual metaphors and verbal/written discussion of reasons for and execution of that creation.

• Encouraging students to develop images employing traditional symbols, such as the cross, to take the image or symbol further than what might be normally acceptable. With conscious assessment and analysis of such symbols we can approach them with intention, creative interpretation, and care.

Self-assessment and peer assessment, orally and in written form, are demonstrated by:

• Peer review of student drafts and papers in lecture classes.
• Logs or sketchbook notations of progress over the semester.
• Student papers on their internships in the community.
- Portfolio
- Sketchbook/journal as veritable record of semester's work.
- Progress statements: several times during the semester, (verbal and written).
- Oral presentations supported by visual and historical information.
- Artist's statement or statements of purpose to accompany major assignments (sometimes with criteria list).
- Written contractual assessment dialogue between student and professor regularly throughout the semester.
- Papers of critical analysis defining form and content investigation.
- Quizzes, exams, research papers, discussions.
- In-class looking exercises, oral and written.
- Written compare and contrast essays.
- Short answer essays about specific works and their historical import.
- Reflective responses to contemporary works and issues related to the course.
- Interviews
- Senior projects

Additional Sources, Improvements and Resources

- Our department is delighted that the improved and expanded art history program has beneficially impacted the studio program. We look forward to the inclusion of additional art history classes in the upcoming years.

- We are extremely pleased with the impact that travel education and off-campus programs (Europe, Urban, Thailand, Cortona and Orvieto semesters) have had on our students. We find that students return to us with new insights, greater maturity, and renewed respect for the discipline. In turn, students reward us with more informed opinions and greater competence in abstract thinking and inter-disciplinary connections. Our department is beginning to pursue additional off campus sites to continue this broad-based learning.

- The addition of a new, approved Science In Art/ Art In Science course for our department will enable students to enroll in a specifically interdisciplinary art and science experience. We are comfortable that the course will increase the capabilities of our students to further their exposure to critical thinking activities and advance their perceptual knowledge.
• Student journals

• Brainstorming in all classes (theory and criticism class in particular).

• Self-evaluation in supportive student-led discussions.

If we had more than 1 1/2 hours twice per week of effective working time, more could be done in art analysis, essays, and field trip discussions in studio classes. However we cannot ignore, especially in the limited class time, our primary task which is to teach our students how to thoughtfully and technically create art.

Additional Sources, Improvements and Resources

There is a strong writing and oral component in the lecture classes; in studio classes we do written exercises that enhance the creative art process. We encourage verbalization of that process. Given that our mission as a department is to address and teach the visual arts, we are satisfied with the quantity of writing and oral presentation that is required in our curriculum. We would like to improve the quality of the students’ formal presentations and are considering developing formal guidelines and criteria for such presentations. The guidelines would include use of paraphrase, indirect quote, documented footnotes, and library research.
Voices in the Whirlwind

The time draws near the hour of God,
The season in which the night is still
And the Christmas bells from hill to hill
Answer each other in the mist.

True voices of four thousand years
Come far and near, in pride and fear,
Swell out and fade as if a dream.
Were shut between us, all the sounds.
Each voice in our earriages on the wind,
That now dictate, and now decrease.

Peace and goodwill, goodwill and peace.
Goodwill to all mankind.

artwork by Peter Postma '00 Photoshop, Computer Graphics l
"Obviously the Mac is a wonderful tool, approachable and powerful. Occasionally, I wish there was a button on the side of it that says 'Oh you know what I mean'; but generally it's a godsend." – Dave Kean

Technology Standard

General Statement

The state of technology in visual art is one in constant flux. The Art Department agrees that it is crucial for our students to be well-versed in current electronic technology as well as the technology involved in more traditional forms of art-making. We desire to equip them technically and ethically to effectively navigate an increasingly digitized society.

Our Objectives and Current Strategies

- The art department maintains a broader definition of technology. We embrace the computer literacy definition of the standard, but we also expand the definition to include equipment specific to our discipline that is vital to our program.

- We encourage an attitude of responsibility in the use of technologies that relate to all aspects of the art curriculum.

Computer Technology

- Research for many courses requires operational knowledge of the web and online library resources

- All written work in all courses is submitted through electronic means and thus requires electronic literacy. Students frequently communicate with professors via email.

- Current Computer Graphics courses cover programs Adobe Photoshop 5.5, Adobe Illustrator 9.0, and Quark Xpress 4.1. All programs are taught on Macintosh G3 and G4 computers. Students learn how to operate a Umax scanner.

Equipment Technology

- Various technologies related to sculpture—include use of pneumatic tools, diamond saws, compressors, and others.

- Use of kilns, pug mills, compressors, sprayers for Ceramics courses.

- Alerting students to the toxic properties of materials commonly used in the studio.
• Photography course covers the identification and use of basic photo equipment and recognition and use of chemicals for procedures in the darkroom.

• Training students in the use of a camera and proper lighting techniques for the purpose of slide documentation of artwork.

• Instruction in technologies related to printmaking include using press equipment, solar plate printing, handling/disposal of chemicals, proper ventilation and cleanup procedures, etc.

Assessment Evidence

Besides assigning work that must demonstrate a student’s capable use of the computer to submit written work and retrieve digital information, the department’s assessment includes:

• Portfolio/assignment pieces created for Computer Graphics courses and computer-related Senior Seminar projects demonstrate competencies in the various computer programs.

• Success in Sculpture/Printmaking/Ceramics courses is predicated upon understanding of the technological processes involved.

• Ethical approaches/perspectives on technology are addressed. Ease of copyright violations in a digital environment are particularly stressed.

• Use of the internet and library research instruction for research papers, Europe semester, gallery research.

Additional Improvements/Resources

In order for the art department to maintain a viable program, there is an ongoing need for the constant acquisition and updating of all technologies and equipment related to art.

• It is a “given” that computer equipment routinely becomes outdated. As visual arts software increases in power and complexity, more advanced machines will be needed to efficiently operate them, and the following improvements will help to keep this standard viable:

• A STRONG NEED EXISTS FOR MORE DIGITAL ARTS CLASSES. Our current Computer Graphics course teaches three programs, each of which could easily be formatted into a class by itself. Incoming students are already demonstrating their familiarity with these programs from their high school experiences. Specialized courses need to become a priority for our department as well as for the college.

• A course covering Web design is essential, as the Web presents arguably the largest career opportunity for artists today.
• We also need to schedule an additional Photography course to broaden our offerings in the digital field. These particular courses are key points of interest for incoming art students, and provide essential ingredients for the vocational success of all of our students.

• Students need to be further encouraged to learn how to effectively and critically make use of online research resources.

• In order to keep ourselves in tune to student's capabilities, the faculty needs to be trained in the usage of such primary programs as Photoshop. We would like to propose a grant (for a summer training session) that would allow instructor Scott Anderson to train departmental faculty in basic computer graphics fundamentals. This first step in articulating technology would benefit our program greatly.
"When the artist is alive in any person - he becomes an inventive, searching, daring, self-expressive creature. He becomes interesting to other people. He disturbs, upsets, enlightens, and he opens ways for better understanding." Robert Henri, artist

Active Societal and Intellectual Engagement Standard

General Statement

The power of the artist to shape and influence culture should not be underestimated. Art is a vocation that demands lifelong learning and creative exploration, the responsibility of which rests on the shoulders of the individual. We seek to equip our students with the foundational skills that will allow them to further pursue their engagement with art making and viewing on their own, and to feel confident in sharing the results of that effort with others.

Teaching practices in the art department focus on thinking and doing in concert. We strive to teach competency with content so that critical thinking skills, risk-taking, and continual decision-making will ultimately create a sturdy foundation for good communication and social interaction. We desire that our students be intellectually involved in their art making, and be aware of the impact that it can have in shaping both the individual and society at large.

Art is about individual and group learning processes. Community develops in the whole of the department due to the nature of how we do things. The presence of students in the building throughout the day and evening hours, faculty offices in close proximity to classrooms and studio facilities, conversations that are generated as work progresses, all contribute to the flourishing of identity and engagement.

Our Objectives and Current Strategies

The following are examples of these engagements:

- Students are required to work as a group in planning all aspects of their Senior Show. (They assist each other in time management, design, issues of accountability, professionalism, and flexibility.)

- Students are required to work in groups and make cooperative group presentations particularly in the Theory and Criticism course.

- The ongoing development of a more active Art Club will bring an increased sense of community to our majors.

- Various studio classes require cooperative efforts to ensure successful completion of projects.
  - Mold-making in sculpture requires the physical help of other students.
  - The limited number of pottery wheels requires sharing.
  - Concerted effort is needed for correct set up and clean up procedures in Crafts and Art for Children.
• Printmaking students often engage in team printing in order to work more efficiently.

• The usage of the single scanner in the computer lab requires patience and grace!

• Opportunities to work in the Art Departmental office, and volunteer for gallery receptions, enables students to contact and interact with the general public.

• Photography I, in particular, enables the natural world to be the focus of both beauty and social comment. This newest addition to our course offerings helps link learning in all other courses.

• Projects can be organized to encourage emotional connections to current events and social issues. They help students understand that the artist can play an important role as social critic.

• Students can be guided to observe what other artists have done in response to social issues, and students can view firsthand (by attending exhibits, reading current art magazines and critical reviews, and by keeping up with current events) to see how the artist can help make connections for the viewer.

• By experiencing the directness of confrontation, students can see the need for artists as contemporary philosophers and provocateurs.

• The nature of art making requires taking responsibility for creative decisions and managing time efficiently.
  • When lecture and demonstration is missed, students must seek the information through alternative means in order to bring themselves "up to speed."
  • Issues of availability of studio time and equipment require the student to make judicious time management decisions, to say nothing of the numerous personal choices inherent in art making.

• Students must also learn to manage several overlapping deadlines within the structure of each class. (Working on more than one project at a time often promotes better intellectual connections).

• Bringing a project to satisfactory completion, meeting deadlines, preparing for Sophomore/Junior portfolio review, help mold and gauge levels of maturity and responsibility. Organizational guidelines help students to accept and achieve responsibility for their learning.

• Being exposed to a variety of teaching styles and personalities keeps students responsibly alert to what is required and desired of them.

• The benefits of art production itself are easily seen as a source of lifelong learning satisfaction.

• As models of life-long learning, faculty demonstrate professional identities as working artists outside the realm of the classroom. Students witness our continued growth as we in turn are shaped by what we create.
• Critiques offer the largest opportunity to engage students both intellectually and socially.
  • Students are encouraged to experience art with the mind as well as the senses.
  • When offering criticism of a peer’s work, students are directed to demonstrate
civility and compassion while making honest and informed judgements.

• Central to our goal in integrating ones faith into the learning process is the element of
personhood: the premise that the artist is found in the art; that the art reflects the person
who created it. We reinforce the importance of the Christian Orientation standard by
helping students understand that their art has everything to do with their Christian
identity and consequently with their Christian vocation. The identity helps them to go on
to make pertinent lifestyle decisions.

• Students learn how to relate to the community through such programs as vocationally
related internships, Cold Spring School Practicum, Urban Semester Practia, Westmont
in the Arts, and involvement with members of the Reynolds Gallery Art Council
(mentorships, social events)

• Students are encouraged to become active in supporting and participating in programs
and functions of museums, galleries, and arts programs in the community, and to do the
same in the future.

• In addressing the difficulty of establishing careers in art, the department strives to
present students with learning experiences that will help them prepare for jobs and living
life in general. Discussions of ethical behavior, confidence-building, humility,
aggressiveness, commitment, openness, willingness, etc. are all part of what the art
experience engages. We hear from employers that job opportunities are available more
easily to creative people. We believe we are training our students to be contributing
participants in society.

Assessment Evidence

As we provide opportunities for societal and intellectual engagement, and as we assess
the appropriateness and benefits of such opportunities, we also see evidence that these
standards of behavior are being manifested beyond the Westmont experience.

• The eventual student outcomes here, however, are not quickly or easily assessed. We
usually do not know specific outcomes in a particular student’s life until he or she
contacts us and reports on various accomplishments, or pinpoints particular turning
points and significant connections. What we can do on this end is continue to provide the
opportunities that will best nurture the connections.

• Due to the difficulty of becoming an established, professional artist, it may take several
years for us to evaluate how successful we have been in preparing our majors to
become credible artists/historians. While it is our hope that we influence all our students
to take a vital interest themselves in the arts, this outcome is similarly difficult to gauge.
Additional Improvement

- There is a pronounced need for more artistic expression in worship and in the church community at large. We are actively seeking volunteer opportunities for our students to answer that call.

- We are looking for renewed opportunities for internships at the Santa Barbara Museum of Art in particular, especially for our students who are embracing the study of Art History.

- Students need more exposure to how the arts function in our society. Museums provide a key example of how the arts are funded by individuals rather than the state. We need to make our students more aware of ways in which the arts can be supported through existing institutions (i.e. galleries and museums), while seeking to create alternative institutions and venues for the continued flourishing of art in their lifetime.
Fine Art at Westmont

gifts = beauty