

## TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

Upon graduating from a masters program in drawing and painting in 1976, I left California to discover what the world held for a young artist. A year and a half and many destinations later, I landed in Paris with the hopes of studying the great works of art, my desire to soak up the rich resources of history still intact. This was the beginning of a long learning process that in many ways is a model of what I still find to be relevant to the education of young artists. Curiosity, a sense of discovery, and creativity are the impetus of a life in art. These characteristics nurtured early on instill confidence and encourage critical risk-taking, so that the horizon may always draw the artist forward, even down paths inconceivable before the journey began. It is in this spirit I seek to encourage students to explore and to find and continually renew themselves in their work.

More concretely, my mission, especially at the undergraduate level of study to which I am drawn, is to give each student the tools they need to give form to their individual expression and accomplish the goals of a professional career in the arts. Given that BFA students pursue professions as varied as painting or graphic design, product design or architecture, all of the many components that make up an education in the visual arts must be continually assessed for pertinence and validity. To fulfill such a wide range of needs requires broad knowledge of the issues common to all artistic disciplines. The ability to draw, to translate form from two to three dimensions, to have technical ability and good working methods, and to be able think creatively, are skills central to any discipline and I believe it is the role of an educator to help students acquire them as they prepare for artistic careers.

Educating students is more than just preparing a menu and setting the table with all that one considers to be important, however. It is also about helping students assimilate the information provided and develop a personal approach to creative work. In this realm it is key to foster in each one a poetic sensitivity to the influences that art or nature may inspire, whether a great concept they may come across in their studies, or a childhood experience that still resonates within them. It is developing a working method that draws on all available inspiration and encourages a personal voice that is a critical part of an art student's education.

Like the fractal image that reflects the essential structure of the whole within each of its parts, the pattern of artistic conception that is instilled in the early stages of development will be echoed throughout a career. Good skills at the service of sound work ethic, the desire to continually learn and grow, the ability to be self critical, and an unquenchable curiosity, will serve a life-long activity in the arts. I know because these are the things I learned as a student. The opportunity afforded by a position in art education allows me a chance to give back what I was fortunate enough to get, early in my education and in my life.