

ILLUSTRATION

Illustrating Stories

Summer 2019

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This is a class about illustration for students at any level, and is open to beginners as well as advanced students.

Illustration is communicating stories through visual art. These stories can be full narratives or slices of life. They can be documentary or fantasy. Illustration either attends a written narrative, or suggests a narrative that could be put, in part at least, into words. It is meant to communicate with a defined or wide audience. Illustration is more aligned with popular culture than the traditional visual fine arts.

This class will be taught using New Yorker covers as examples of illustration at a level of excellence that is also accessible, thought-provoking, and enduring. These covers will be examined and discussed for content (how content is expressed) and for formal qualities (composition, color, style). Wit and humor, as well as restraint and sophistication, will also be discussed as illustrated through these examples of cover art. Inclusivity and exclusivity will be discussed, as will explicit and implicit social issues.

Work will be done in drawing and in painting media. Some work may also be done in digital media and in mixed media. Painting media will be water-based media. Work will be done on traditional illustration supports such as watercolor paper, illustration board, bristol board and hardboard panels.

Assignments

Using reference creatively: A person turning into an animal

A famous person becoming, or combining with, the features or characteristics of an animal. Identify a “characteristic view” of a person, collect images of an animal. Combine them in a creative way. Consider metamorphosis, transition, and transformation as separate approaches. Use any media.

Use the sketchbook to think this through by drawing.

Applying style #1

Re-create a common object or image through the application of a style derived from a New Yorker cover. For instance, begin with an absolutely uninteresting image of

something like a folding chair, a pair of shoes, a room interior, a car, etc. Combining two references to create something new and interesting.

Use the sketchbook to think this through by drawing.

Applying style #2

Re-create one New Yorker cover (in whole or in part) by replacing its style with the style of another.

Creating a style #1

Analyze New Yorker covers. Find features of style you see in the work of different artists. Put these together into a clear combination-style. Create an image of anything using this style. Use the sketchbook to think this through by drawing.

Creating a style #2

Enumerate the stylistic elements in a New Yorker cover. Create a new style with different and consistent elements that can be used to create original work. Create a written or coded list of stylistic elements using written description, and include conditional protocols: "If this, then that".

Major Project

Create a series of book illustrations in an original style. These illustrations should be consistent in style, but show both close-up and distance views. Illustrations should include:

Two full-page illustrations

One double-page spread

Two spot illustrations

Photographic references should be primarily created by the illustrator. Secondary references can be gathered from other sources.

This may also include a cover illustration. Cover illustration should be consistent in style, but somewhat more ambitious in execution.

The subject of this book should be a pre-existing text. It can be a classic work such as a fairy tale like Little Red Riding Hood or The Snow Queen, or a contemporary work. It could be a text you wrote yourself. It would be interesting to illustrate a text written by a classmate.

Sketchbook

Keep a sketchbook. Get familiar with the practice of drawing as you are thinking, rather than thinking things up and executing them later.

Also, draw in the sketchbook for a half-hour every day. Set a timer. Date each drawing.

Drawing from the model

There will be models posing every afternoon. These models are for helping you to learn how to improve your drawing, understanding of proportion, expression, handling of media, etc. There will be instruction on drawing for accuracy and for handling assorted drawing media. Models will also help you to understand how you can use one figure as an information source for drawing another. Models may also be available for helping with ongoing student work, such as clarifying hand poses.

Text

Text for this class takes the form of an emailed "Illustrator of the Day". These illustrators will include illustrators of historical importance, and sources from which much contemporary illustration derives. It will also include some contemporary illustrators and painters and draftsmen with styles that are influential on illustration.

Studio Practices

No solvents of any kind are permitted in this class or in this studio.

No solvents, conventional oil paints, oil mediums, powdered pigments or spray paints, markers, varnishes or fixatives are permitted in this studio.

In the studio, no wet off-gassing paintings will be permitted in the studio. no pastels; no dust additives or powders. No drawing with markers.

No spray painting, varnishing, fixative, or other atomized materials are permitted, no shellac, ammonia, or other chemicals.

Restrictions include when class is not in session.

Students are expected to preserve the condition of the studio. This is important for many reasons. One reason is that this studio is scheduled for heavy use, and will quickly be cluttered. Carelessness with materials erodes the studio experience, and selfishly disrespects other students. It is difficult for art students to understand that while they are necessarily at the center of their own world, that they do not

automatically deserve to be at the center of everyone else's world. There are rules of studio practice for the sake of the community. Be mindful when working indoors or outdoors. If you plan to be drippy, fully prepare for it. Do not imagine that it is easy to clean up messes after they have been made. It is not easy. Often it is impossible.

No talking while the model is posing. Students are expected to respect models at all times. Students should be alert to help models when necessary, to plug in heaters for instance, and to get things the model may need.

No cell phones, no texting, etc. during class. Avoid talking about issues that are off the topic of drawing and art while class is in session. Observe silence while critiques are taking place.