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Teaching Philosophy

As an art educator, it is my job to not only help my students become better artists, but to present art as a means of better understanding one's self and the world around us. I am passionate about creating art and learning about its history because through this I am able to expand my worldview as well as better understand my place in it. Studying art history as an undergraduate was incredibly stimulating as it was a way for me to better understand the social, cultural, and political histories of the modern and ancient world through something tangible that I was passionate about - art. I hope to in turn stoke this same fascination with learning about art and its sociopolitical context as a teacher.

As an educator who falls in line with progressive philosophy, I believe that students learn best through doing and discovering on their own. It will be my job to teach technique and history, but more importantly to be a facilitator of creative expression and lifelong learning. First, I will adequately demonstrate a new concept or technique and how to use the proper materials. Then, I will present projects that allow students to explore their past and present experiences, world cultures, and to get in touch with their emotion and imagination. Giving students the ability to exercise their creative license will allow them to better understand themselves and their place in the world. I believe that this in turn promotes increased self confidence and expands students critical thinking skills.

My goal as an art teacher is to not only teach my students about the principles of art, new techniques, and art history - but to also provide them with life lessons that they can take outside of the classroom. The artistic process - from drawing from one's personal experiences to create a meaningful piece, to discussing this meaning in group critique - can be cathartic, and vulnerable. Because of this, I will create a classroom that is a space of sensitivity, respect, and empathy. I will not tolerate any signs of disrespect towards peers. When viewing another artist's work, one might not always find the piece aesthetically pleasing or understand the meaning behind it. However, it is important to still appreciate the effort they put into their work and to recognize what might be a different point of view. This is an important lesson that I hope to teach my students to take beyond the art classroom. I also believe in art as a form of meditation. The physical act of drawing or painting can be extremely relaxing and soothing, and for many people can be a healthy way to relieve stress and anxiety. I will make myself available to my students not only as an art teacher, but as an approachable confidant for when they need someone to talk to about more difficult issues that might come up.

One of the most important rules that I will emphasize in my classroom is that it is okay to make mistakes. When drawing from life, the first line you put on paper will hardly ever be the right line. One simply must put pen to paper first and through keener observation see what

changes need to be made to that first line in order for it to become more correct. Through much erasing and re-drawing, you will be able to render something that better mirrors reality. Teaching students how to see the success in “failing” the first time, and exercise resilience, is crucial for students to learn and also take outside of the art classroom. As an art teacher, my primary focus will be on getting my students to put themselves out there by trying their best with new materials, new techniques, and thinking critically and creatively. Grading will not be wholly based on aesthetics, but rather on students’ overall effort.

My ideal classroom is one that showcases the artist in all of us, and the idea that art is present in everyday life in unexpected ways. I have an ever growing collection of posters and postcards from museum visits that I am excited to one day hang on the walls of my classroom. It will be a gallery showcasing masters of the past, equally interspersed with student art. I will also have my students research contemporary artists that they are interested in, whether that be street artists, tattoo artists, or fashion designers. I want my students to be exposed to the variety of career paths that one can take in the arts. I will have a poster listing many different examples (e.g. graphic design, tattoo art, floral design, set design, etc.) with extra space for students to add more examples as they think of them. I hope to teach my students that art is literally all around us, even if we might not realize it at first.

The art classroom is not only a space where students will become better artists, but it is where we as educators can help foster self expression and understanding, and inspire critical thinking about the world around us. These lessons transcend the boundaries of a classroom, and will prepare students to not only be better artists but more well-rounded citizens of the next generation.