

THE ART OF THE

# ART AND DESIGN

ASSIGNMENT:

PRATT INSTITUTE

**Pratt**



## FOREWORD

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In the spring of 2013 the Department of Art and Design Education launched a course entitled College Teaching: Teaching, Learning, and Research. The course was developed as part of a larger initiative in the School of Art and Design to examine the best teaching practices across campus and was open to graduate students from all majors.

The course gave an assignment inspired by the Paper Monument publication *Draw It with Your Eyes Closed: The Art of the Art Assignment* in which students were required to ask three professors, "What is the best art assignment you have ever given?" They were also to ask three students, "What is the best assignment you have ever received?"

This book shares the responses. They serve as a snapshot of teaching and learning in art and design today. While some of the responses refer to classes at other institutions, the majority refer to the influence and energy of both the teachers and learners at Pratt Institute.

Aileen Wilson, Acting Chair, Art and Design Education  
Pratt Institute

T. Camille Martin, Visiting Associate Professor, Interior Design  
Pratt Institute

Editors

## PAULA ABREU

### Photography Fine Arts

In my first and second semester of the MFA at Pratt Institute I had a photography class with Ann Mandelbaum. During both semesters the professor asked us to bring work every week to class, specifically recent work that we had shot over the week. At the beginning it sounded almost impossible with all the other classes' assignments, but it forced me to think about my interests and reasons to photograph. My mind and eyes were in continuous search for subjects and it gave me the structure to shoot every week and produce a lot of work. At the same time, it helped me to build several photography series. It taught me how important it is to be constantly photographing to strengthen ideas and therefore the meaning of my work.

## ELKA AMORIM

### The Art of Teaching Art and Design Art and Design Education

As I try to remember all the projects I did at Pratt during my Art Education degree, the one that definitely stands out is an assignment given by Amy Brook Snider. Amy asked us to make a free association chart based on the word *Night*. From all the ideas originating from the chart, we were to choose one word or idea for our project. The project consisted of creating a binder, complete with research on that theme, lesson plan ideas, reflections, images, and any kind of in-depth information and inspiration for a possible unit plan based on

that theme. I chose the word *Dream*. My interest was in not only exploring dreams through a psychoanalytical perspective, but also to explore the Dada and Surrealist movement in ways that would help me create a unit plan to better address issues of creativity. At the time I was teaching elementary school and was noticing a rapid decline in creativity as the students moved from lower grades to higher grades. My pre-K and Kindergarten students were extremely creative and prolific, but by the time they got to 5th grade, their work was formulaic, predictable, safe, uniform, contrived, and completely lacking in creativity. Our current school system kills creativity. I knew that. What I wanted to explore was how I could rescue that as an art educator, using some of the same methods used by the French Surrealists during the turn of the century. Amy's project gave me the tools to explore that theme in depth and collect images and information on a theme that I'm passionate about. I've always been very connected to my dreams, specially throughout childhood, so I was thrilled to be building a unit based on a broad theme that I deeply connect to. I did this project more than 6 years ago, and have since kept my "Dream Binder" as an inspiration for future projects.

## PHIL ASHWORTH

### Contemporary Illustration at Rhode Island School of Design

It was my last semester at RISD and this was the last assignment of the class. The premise was to re-do a piece we had done during the semester that we were disappointed

in, or one that hadn't received a good critique. The project I chose to revisit was a music poster. The twist was that this poster advertising/illustrating a musician could not include their face or any distinguishing characteristic. It also had to be combined with a childhood memory.

I stayed awake all night doing two versions of the piece the first time. Given the chance to do it again, I revisited the first, original idea. I learned that I shouldn't put too much pressure on myself to make something perfect. If it gets messed up it may be a blessing in disguise, and I could always revisit it. I got the chance to make it better and turn it into a piece that was good enough to be in my professional portfolio.

Everyone in the class liked the chance to go back and re-do something with better knowledge of what makes a poor piece. You typically don't get that chance in art school. The teacher is sometimes the ultimate judge of a piece, for better or worse. Then you, as the student, just move on to the next assignment.

The day of the final critique I was up all night working and arrived five minutes late to class. My piece was still wet and a little warped. Chris walked up to it on the wall and simply said, "I really like this." He especially emphasized the parts that I saw as unfinished. It made me think that maybe you never really ever finish something, and it could be better to just let it be. It re-emphasized to me the importance of not putting too much pressure on myself and risk overworking a piece.

## RICK BARRY

### Department of Foundation 4-Dimensional Design 20 WORKS

If the “best” assignment is the most successful assignment, rather than the most interesting assignment, then here’s mine. In order to introduce freshman Foundation students to the idea of symbolic (iconic) visual abstraction, I asked them to complete a multi-part assignment (more accurately, a project).

## 20 WORKS

### OBJECTIVE:

Create a symbolic (iconic) visual abstraction of yourself.

### PART I: Conceptualizing

1. Write 10 words that come to mind when you think about yourself. They can be any words. They may represent different facets of yourself. So the words may appear to conflict. That’s OK.
2. Now organize those words so that words that seem related are listed together in groups.
3. For example, perhaps 3 groups of words.
4. Now review each group and combine them down to one word (3 word groups would now be 3 words). It may be a word from the group, or another word that better describes the idea of the group.
5. Now list only the single words that represent each group. These are your concept words.

## **PART II:** Visualizing

Create small sketches of several symbolic versions that abstractly represent your final group of concept words. Keeping them small will help to keep them simple, and that is crucial to symbolic or iconic visual abstraction. Visual simplicity involves a lack of detail in favor of clean, bold, graphic contrast.

## **PART III:** Rendering

Based on your sketches, create 3 crisply rendered symbols using Adobe Illustrator. Use black and white only. No colors; no grayscale. Remember to avoid detail, and to strive for clean, bold, graphic contrast.

## **PART IV:** Incorporating Typography

1. Choose one of your rendered symbols, and consider it together with your concept words.
2. Consider how a single concept word might integrate well with your symbol. In other words, how might you create an icon that integrates your visual concept with your verbal concept?
3. Do three sketches combining your symbol with your concept word. DO NOT approach this by simply adding a word to your symbol. That is not interesting or meaningful. DO approach this as a conceptual and design challenge. How can you integrate typography with your symbol so that they belong together as a unified symbol/message? What kind of typeface is appropriate for your concept? What relationship of position between the symbol and the type successfully integrates the two? What relationship of size between the symbol and the type successfully integrates the two?
4. Create 3 crisply rendered icons.

This process, together with critique and suggestions at each step, produced a good number of interesting, original ideas and designs. The result is a better understanding of conceptualization, self-identity, symbolic abstraction, and basic design.

**SARA BHASIN**

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**History of Interior Design I  
History of Art, Architecture and Design**

My favorite assignment was one that was given by Professor Horton in her "History of Interior Design I" class. Throughout the semester we were given two different sketching assignments. The first one was to find one example of each of the three orders of Greek columns, Doric, Ionic and Corinthian. We had to sketch the columns, identify where they were and label the different parts of each of the columns (such as different elements in the capitols and surrounding facade). The second assignment was given at the Cloisters. We spent the afternoon there as a class and then the professor left us in the Chapter House from Notre-Dame-de-Pontaut. We were assigned to sketch the room as well as to separately sketch several elements of the room we were drawn to in greater detail. Then we had to label the elements of the room that were Romanesque features and those that were Gothic features. In both cases we had to see what we were studying for ourselves and sketch them from reality.

This assignment was my favorite because, although I was reticent to take up my pencil at the beginning, it was the most relevant assignment I ever had. I realized by drawing my sketches that I was paying attention to details I wouldn't have paid attention to otherwise and that those details were the same ones the professor was making us aware of during her lectures. In fact, this assignment was unique because it helped me understand the theory given in class in a whole different level that is reality. With this assignment, Professor Horton made us involved in a different way than by just looking at the subjects, and that was absolutely worthwhile.

**JENNIFER BOGGS****STUDENT****Visual Communication I**

*The best assignment you have ever received?*

**JB**

*It was for Brenda McManus' Vis. Com. I, and I generally think, although I've only taken Vis. Com. I, that Visual Communications classes offer good assignments. I really like the assignments in Design school that have a robust but integrated curriculum to the point that you really have to create a system. So, those are the ones that I think I get the most out of as a student. I am a fan of these integrated overarching systems...In that particular case, I am talking about the conference example. She made us create our own content for the conference: a poster series, and then stationery and letterhead, a website, and then swag material for the conference. So I felt that it gave you a full set of branding.*

*There was tons of research. Then there was the execution of that stuff. I just like the fact that there was this multi-step; multi-platform delivery.*

## RHETT BRADBURY

### Thesis I-II Graduate Communications Design

Thesis has been my favorite so far. It's been the hardest, and I spent a longer time on it than any other project. It's also been the most rewarding, most personal, and it's all based on my own interest and exploring those interests.

## ROBERT KENNETH BRATNEY

### Capstone Thesis Class at the University of Missouri Graduate Communications Design

At the University of Missouri, in the Journalism school there was a focus on broadcast and sequence in the photo department. The assignment was essentially the last assignment and capstone project. So basically it is a project done by senior students. The class is called *photo story done in 2011*. The assignment started with one month of research then the rest of the semester (for a couple of months) you follow the story. The only requirement is that it be a long format and multimedia photo story (audio + video). I followed a story about an 11 year old boy (Derek) who is terminally ill with cystic fibrosis. Derek is a leader in his junior league baseball team 'The Colombia Starpath'. The story follows him from his fragile state (wearing a vest two times a day, taking 30 pills a day, and taking nutrition-rich formula...) to his leading position on a team of boys older than him.

## MICHAEL BRENNAN

### Introduction to Visual Experience at Hunter College Fine Arts

I'm teaching *Art of Visual Experience* to non-art major freshman at an inner city college. I tell them their first homework assignment is to make me a drawing following these three rules: 1) It has to be on an 18" x 24" piece of white poster board. 2) The drawing must include a triangle. 3) The triangle must be blue. 1) is just for the sake of uniformity in a class of 25. I tell them those are the only 3 rules. Bring me back a drawing next week.

What usually follows a week later is that the assignment runs the gamut of diversity. I do a macro read (class) and an micro (individual) read. All the drawings are pinned in a cluster on the wall. I measure their collective energy first. Then I look for common motifs: 4 students chose an underwater motif, 22 personalized the triangle, etc. It helps the class bond. Some people make a bare minimum effort within the parameters of the assignment, while others have spent hours on the most elaborate presentation. Some students make the blue triangle a small part of what they really want to draw, and make the thing they really want to show me. Anyway, it's a great way to explore range and temperament within what appears to be a tightly fixed assignment. I can ask some kids why they chose to be more creative, or less so, and the critical rapport thus begins organically.

## MARTHA BURPITT

### Interior Design IV: Senior Studio Untitled Assignment

#### PART ONE

This particular design problem involved renovating a small commercial space (small mill office) into a very small community meeting space and post office. Next door, was a two-story mill house that the owners hoped to turn into a bed and breakfast. The challenges were to work within the constraints of the guidelines established by the local historic preservation office, the vision of owners of the proposed B&B, and satisfying building codes while retaining the historic overtones of the place.

#### PART TWO

This assignment involved conversion of the three-story textile mill building into apartments/condominiums that would be attractive to the local market. Researching this market- what size space would be attractive, what to retain and what could be replaced, as well as codes issues -were all challenges the students had to address.

STUDENT

*Why was this your favorite assignment?*

MB

*Even though the project was a conceptual project, the place and the client were real. The place had been*

*on the National Register of Historic Places since 1979 and received Local Historic District designation in 1999—Glencoe Mill Village. The place was filled with opportunities for architecture and interior design student projects. We were fortunate to be invited to explore some of these opportunities in early 2000.*

## STUDENT

*What was valuable about the assignment?*

MB

*Students and faculty had the opportunity to learn about this textile mill town and the role it played in the history of the area. Because the buildings had undergone very little renovation since its closing in the 1950's, most buildings were still very much as they were left. Most of the small homes were in various states of disrepair. A few homes had been purchased and renovations were in process. It was exciting to see the potential each of these small homes had, and what possibilities the larger buildings might offer.*

## STUDENT

*What could have been improved?*

MB

*Better documentation of the spaces and field measurements of floor plans. It wasn't until several years into the overall project that accurate field measurements were taken. Because of the distance of the site, only one or two trips were taken during the duration of the project.*

MB

*A great appreciation for working with historic structures, the value of these structures, and how much they can give back to a community, both socially and economically. Part I involved working with clients who were very generous with their time and feedback to the students. While the proposed solutions were explorations of how a B&B might work in this space, it was a challenge and also an opportunity for the students to learn about B&B's.*

*Working in the larger mill building was challenging due to its scale. Nonetheless, the students learned how to work with multi-family spaces, how to make them more economical in design, and about the challenges of working with fixed window/column/door locations.*

## RENATO RENNIE CERQUEIRA

### Type II Graduate Communications Design

It was the first assignment and it was a book, you could literally do whatever you wanted: you pick a topic that has to do with New York. And I had this idea before the Fall semester started. After the Spring semester I went back to Brazil. I was on Craigslist and there is a section I've never heard of before. Apparently it was already a big thing, but we don't have Craigslist in Brazil. So I was looking at the website and there was a section called *Missed Connections*. So I was curious, I was intrigued too.

First of all, when I read it I couldn't understand what it meant and I couldn't think of the possibilities. And then I clicked and started looking and reading through. Then I thought this is weird, creepy, and awesome at the same time. So that's where I got my idea to do a book on missed connections. The book is called *Perfect Strangers*. This was the best assignment because it was one of those projects that you don't see as a burden, you get up in the morning and you open up InDesign and are actually excited about moving things around on the page instead of just trying to find the perfect spot for some bitch-ass logo. It was one of those projects, you sit down and you sit back, and you read through all the missed connections, pick out the best ones, and then taking them into InDesign and thinking what photograph would work best with it that and what composition would make sense with it. It was fun because of the stories themselves. I picked this assignment, because it was one of those projects where you are not being passive in it, you are actually being engaged.

<http://renatomcdesign.com/Perfect-Strangers>

## LEAH CLARK

### Light Color Design I Foundation

Freshman drawing in our first semester at Munson Williams Proctor, Linnea had us do this big project. We had been working on moving figures, so we were drawing the figure

every ten seconds, moving across the page. We were thinking about the most important lines and direction. For our final she assigned us to choose an object and then morph it over at least six phases. I just thought it was really fun because she didn't give any controls about what media or what the content was, just that over six steps we completely alter it. I did a hand and arm changing into a tree branch. I was excited because I got to use pastels which all of my professors hated and didn't like as a medium. It's considered a lesser medium in drawing and painting. I liked that it was student-directed but she really had high standards for us. She expected it to be excellent, and everyone's really was.

## ANITA COONEY

### Interior Design

The best assignment I recall was for freshman in architecture at Pratt. Each student was given a white coffee cup with a lid and inside the cup was a verb (think Richard Serra's list of verbs. It was a variation or selection of those). The next class the students had to come to class with ten modified coffee cups that transformed via the verb. I liked this assignment because it's a puzzle. I felt that important elements to this assignment were engaging play with the presentation and being rigorous about repetition. Repetition allows for quick introduction of editing as a fundamental to making. By asking for 10 cups, there was a high guarantee that one cup had potential for further exploration.

## GRAYSON COX

### **Intro to Drawing I at Columbia University and Silkscreen I Fine Arts Department**

I began teaching an Intro to Drawing class at Columbia University. For this class, I introduced obsessive art and artists ("think Henry Darger.").

I had my students purchase a sheet of Rives BFK and work on an 'obsessive drawing' for two weeks. A lot of the students spent more time on these drawings than on any other assignment that was given that semester.

I also used this same assignment for a screen printing class. The students selected a material (paper, wood, fabric, etc...) of their choosing and instead of having the students continuously work on the material for x-amount of time, they were told to revisit the piece multiple times throughout the semester. Some students dropped the ball on this assignment, but the kids who stuck with it had beautiful artworks by the end of the class. It was really amazing.

I was looking to teach my students the value of coming back to studio work and that sometimes one needs to rework what they thought might be finished.

## JESSICA DEMOURA

### Silkscreen II Printmaking

I think my favorite project was in my fall semester of junior year in Silkscreen II with Cathy LeClair. She taught us how to silkscreen on yards of fabric. The assignment was to make anything out of those yards of fabric. I printed images of a girl with the face of a Day of the Dead sugar skull on my yards of fabric. I then made a quilt. It was the first quilt I had made in a really long time. I loved making it. It renewed my interest in sewing and quilting.

## KELLY DRISCOLL

### Relief I Printmaking

When I first started teaching I had a beginning relief course. I noticed after the first couple of projects that everyone only used the U gauge or the V gauge. This is pretty standard in most relief prints, but there are so many ways to make a mark. So, I created a first assignment called *Economy of Means*.

The impetus was to have students discover all the ways of making marks with just one instrument on a single block in order to develop an ownership of the vocabulary of mark-making before heading into concept based assignments. The project was purely an exploratory investigation. They were not held to concept or image, only to discovery.

I gave each of them four blocks, each 8" x 8", a square playing

field. The assignment was to use a single tool on each block and discover all the marks and textures each tool could make: U gauge, V gauge, flat knife, and the mystery tool.

Mystery tool examples included: driving a car across the block on gravel, drilling holes, hammering nails, push pins, weather decay, hammering with just a hammer, jumping up and down on it in a sand pit, drilling, using a metal bush to open the wood grain and sanding (to close the grain), etc. These are all ways of making a mark, mostly by impressing the wood, molding the wood, or excavating.

The freedom to use a tool without a purposeful intent, other than figuring out what it could do for you, was liberating and was apparent in the work produced throughout the course. I had one student who made incredibly soft photographic landscapes using only a metal brush and sand paper. Other work included, at a minimum, three to four tools for mark making. They thought about the nature of negative and positive space. They incorporated line work with texture. The prints were rich in spatial relationships and fully developed. I believe it also brought down the fear of investigation and failure, as they had a certain amount of skill and information from the first project, so they went forward with a technical base and vocabulary from their own investigation.

## KELLY DRISCOLL

### **Graduate Fine Arts Program in Rome – Seminar**

The groups were all required to take this course as it housed all our field trips and readings—woven into the two studio courses as well.

- Meet at the Center at 6pm prompt.
- Bring your written text from NY (half page):  
YOUR INTERESTS, REASONS AND EXPECTATIONS FOR COMING TO ROME.
- You will read the text to the entire group. As stated we will be using your answers to designate the collaborative groups for your final presentations of the seminar course in Rome.
- Final presentation: projects are to be conducted in groups throughout the semester in Rome.
- 4 groups (3 of 3, 1 of 4)

\* After the in class readings, the class would take a coffee break and Ann Messner and I would go through our notes and map what they were discussing in their individual readings. We would then assign the groups based on where each person aligned with one of the words or more of the words in a specific category. It oddly worked quite well.

## MAPPING A CONTEMPORARY DISCOURSE THROUGH HISTORIC ROME

### CRITERIA:

- Collaborative
- Visual Component—everyone contributing
- Spoken Component—each person must present
- 25 minute in length

### CATEGORIES: 4 GROUPS

1. built environment / survival
2. design—function / desire
3. production—economy
4. invention—change / (r)-evolution

### METHODOLOGY:

Initial Meeting—discussion stemming from your assigned category—how is this relevant to what you are experiencing and learning in Rome?

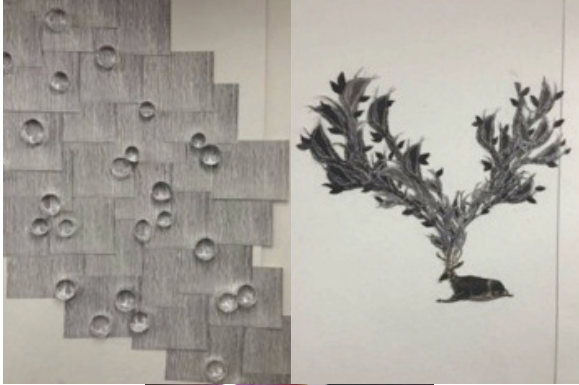
Further Discussion—begin to solidify what the course of action will be for your final presentation.

Expertise—the project is reliant on everyone's individual and collective area of expertise. It's a diverse group of graduate students from different departments—so utilize your knowledge base, educate, and push beyond.

### TIMELINE:

Final Presentations are presented the last evening of the seminar course. Time yourselves—we will keep to a tight schedule. Bring your laptops—we will use the projector in the studio.





## CAITLIN ENGSTROM

### **Roots of Urban Education Problems of Practice**

I think my favorite/best assignment was in Roots of Urban Education with Heather Lewis. She paired students up and assigned us to a teacher working in the city. We met with our teacher and discussed any problems she was having in her classroom and helped create a plan to resolve her problem. My partner and I were able to help our teacher get a projector for her classroom. This assignment was valuable because it not only felt good to help our teacher, but it also gave us insight into the actual struggles of art programs and teaching, as well as taught important strategies to overcome these common struggles. It also helped us develop a professional contact.

## KATY FAN

### **Industrial Design IV: Senior Studio**

In terms of the best assignment that made me feel interested and challenged, its an assignment for my "Graphic Packing" class. We had to design the packaging on two bottles of wine. I felt very interested in the assignment because the product 'wine' is very high end, it shows your taste when you buy the wine. And the packaging itself has to represent the taste of the wine and also the taste of the consumers. So I think its interesting that I can do something fun.

<http://www.packagingoftheworld.com/2013/02/nude-wine-student-project.html>

## ALLEN FRAME

### **Present Assignment International Center for Photography**

I do an exercise at the International Center for Photography one year certificate program, particularly for students who don't have a subject yet and are looking for one. I ask the students to remember a vivid situation and think of it as a photograph and do a sketch of it, and put a frame around it, and it's something they should not have already made a picture of before. And it could be a perception or it could also be a memory that they're in, so they might be in the frame or it might be something they're looking at. Sometimes I start with early childhood and I say "something before the age of 6, 6-10, 10-14, 14-18", etc. Or I start in the present and I say "something from the last week or the last two weeks or in the last two months or in the last year." The theory behind that for me is that when you're first doing photography and you don't have a style or vision yet, you can't make sophisticated pictures but your mind is very sophisticated and it has already made a lifetime's worth of pictures. If you want to see what your point of view is, if you don't know what it is, or your style or your voice, it's there residing in your brain through memory. That memory is a huge reductive edit of all of your visual experience and all you have to do is go into it to see what those are, what are those framed images that you created, and stored. They're just sitting there, ripe and ready for some kind of use. For instance, if you are in that process, you just took ten images and put them together, there would be repeating themes. There would definitely be a style to them if you're drawing them, even if you're doing stick figures. Imagine if you got yourself to do a hundred. That's a book of your life, and what does it look like? Also, the sharing of that allows people into

your experience in a more intimate way. Something might trigger discussion and you might realize that this thing that you hadn't considered as an impetus to making work is a rich source of work.

## JESSE GAMMAGE

### Graduate Internship Seminar

It's definitely from Joe Fyfe's internship class. It was a very dense assignment, and he kind of just threw it out, like, "All right, next week, just have this ready." He wanted us to go to the Brooklyn Museum to see the retrospective of Keith Haring. At the same time, he had us read Charles Baudelaire's "Painter of Modern Life." That was actually an assignment we had to do every week—read this and write about this, again. This time, he combined the two assignments. He asked, how does this relate—does Keith Haring, his retrospective—relate to being a painter of modern life?

Before that, my experience of Keith Haring was like, really corny. It was like, "Oh, that's the guy that did the album art for 'A Very Special Christmas,' or something!" It was this weird—almost really too-pop-culture-art-thing that I never really considered fine art. But seeing the retrospective, I got to see, for example, work from his SVA years—they showed a lot of his videos that he did when he was there. These were things I never even knew existed. They showed some of the work from shows he curated on the Lower East Side. It showed just how much a part of the scene, at that time, he was. So I realized it was a great assignment because he really was immersed in

society. He wasn't an academic, like, "Oh, I'm here with the fine artists, and the rest of society is...somewhere below me." It was like, "I'm just going to do everything here, and mingle with everybody, street art, high art, whatever—and see what comes out."

That really stood out to me. That's an excellent philosophy. I feel that there is a certain part of academia that really does exclude. You know, "You guys will never understand the things that we're talking about, so it's just like, an empty room with like, an empty Dunkin Donuts box," or something. That was when I realized that it was the best assignment. This is a really clever use of the assignment. It really opened up a lot of things for me.

## **KEVIN GATTA**

### **Graduate Communications Design Seminar**

The nature of the course is to work as a team defining a subject, researching and then building a point of view on that subject. Develop an opinion and then plan a design that tells a story, initially in a book, but that can be a video, audio and performed as a skit at the end of the semester at Survey. The point here is to get up in front of a crowd and tell the story by acting it. Telling it and actually demonstrating it.

The social/personal ritual performances have been very creative over the years, almost stand-up comedy.

For example, to name a few:

- Telephone conversations calling in a dinner order
- Describing the use of a telephone line, waiting in line, drawing a line, a perspective line through the unraveling of a knitted sweater.
- Waiting in line at a movie theater and meeting people
- The art of cleaning your home
- The art of washing clothes in a laundromat—where does that one sock go?
- How to dress for any musical concert—an illustrated guide (from a rock concert, rap, jazz to classical music and all in between)
- Bathroom behavior private vs public Restrooms

## DIANA GISOLFI

### Renaissance Art History of Art, Architecture and Design

I'm not at all sure that I can point to one assignment as best. In general I like to foster contact with the work of art/ architecture and its context, which is why I love teaching on site in Venice. One example of using a document and a collection in tandem in NY was when I sent an undergraduate class on Rembrandt to the Metropolitan Museum of Art to seek "props" or costumes in Rembrandt's paintings that match items listed in the inventory of his bankruptcy in 1656.

## ELLEN GOODE

### Study Abroad Italy Design Studio at Meredith College “The Distressed Traveler”

*\*A two-week design charrette where students are asked to design a small-scale airport space for travelers. The student can choose the city or country of origin for the airport.*

I thoroughly enjoyed this project because it was a fast-paced exercise that allowed students to explore a variety of considerations when designing for transient spaces. Students had the opportunity to explore cultural narratives and geographical characteristics of various parts of the world, and then channeled their research into a design for travelers of that region as well as from across the globe. They also addressed human conditions such as stress and fatigue that might be present in spaces like an airport. Quickly delving into all of these ideas got students excited about design, as well as introduced them to a variety of considerations and questions that could be applied in our next two projects of the semester.

## HOLLY GRAVES

### Special Topics in Surface Design at University of Washington

I was in a surface design class and one of our assignments was to “transform a space.” There were no specific requirements, but it was encouraged that we use some sort of fabric-like material (could be anything) in whatever it was we planned on doing. I decided on working with a bench near a bus stop. I

covered the entire bench with upholstery fabric (I guess similar to Cristo and Jean Claude), added throw pillows and a blanket to the bench, and even put out a rug on the sidewalk. The space became much more inviting, not just because of the fabric, but because of the prints and colors on the fabrics—they had such a homey feel to them. People stopped to ask questions about what was going on, and some even asked to sit on the bench. I was really glad to have created that new environment that attracted others, and I really liked that it instantly became a participatory piece.

The other students in the class had many different takes to the project, and it was so great to see what others had come up with, especially since we had such vague directions for the assignment. Someone yarn bombed an elevator, another person photographed a swing set she altered with fabric and plastic, another person created fabric tents. Another girl even did something with a bunch of bikinis, but the exact project escapes me.

Anyway, the assignment really got me thinking off of my paper and out of the studio. I was able to see the potential in different spaces, and how different objects that might be foreign to that place can really change not only the look, but the feel of where you are.

## **ASHLEY GUNTER**

### **Foundation Arts Light, Color and Design**

A favorite assignment that I've received was from LCD. The professor gave us the outlines for the work. It was the second semester of foundation year. We had already studied analytical and synthetic cubism. Our task was to take what we learned about the deconstruction of an image by way of the language of cubism and apply that to a symbol or icon. It could be a commercial icon like the Starbucks logo or a traffic sign. What I liked about the assignment was that it allowed us to use formal techniques that we learned and established in our repertoire to a more thoughtful, conceptual work. It wasn't just a study or practice; we were making art!

## **MICHELLE HINEBROOK**

### **Color Workshop Graduate Communications Design**

The best assignment I have given is the Color-book Assignment for Color Workshop class. My students produce a book that's developed through an intensive study of one particular hue. The hues are assigned at random and they research the historical, contemporary, and cultural meaning for their color. Then they formulate their own opinions about how the color should be used and in what markets. They discover the complexities of this color and relationship to other colors through color harmonies, and they apply those harmonies. This assignment really allows the students to fine tune their color

vision and perceptions about color and their understanding of how others receive and perceive color and the effects of that. Through this assignment they really develop their own attitudes and their own opinions about what's important and what matters within a particular color study and become the masters of a color.

The outcomes are always different. At the beginning we usually have our own assumptions we have to work through about what a color means and what a color does. But once we get past those initial uses, its almost a reflex; a lot of people have a similar reaction to say the color orange. But when we get past those general assumptions of a color, the students really take it in their own direction and I encourage them to develop their own voice with it. So getting past the general and really getting personal helps with the interpretation everytime. It's always surprising to me what people do with it. Every semester the whole color wheel reoccurs, and its always different. Its really fun for me, because I learn more and more about color everytime I teach the class and it's affected my work as well. In my professional work I feel that I have become a kind of color master now. So the more I learn through my students' experiences and their own perceptions of color and context, the more it helps me grow as an artist and as a professor. It's a fun thing for me as it's not a class that has one solution.

## HEATHER HORTON

### History of Interior Design I History of Art, Architecture and Design

Student's hate working with partners, but learning to collaborate productively is essential (when was the last time you were asked to work 100% alone or evaluated based strictly on your efforts—outside of the classroom?). To this end, in my 'History of Interior Design I' grad-level course, taught at Pratt in the Fall of 2011 and 2012, I required students to write their final research papers, comparing period rooms at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, in pairs. About 4 weeks before the paper is due, each student individually presents a room (on site) to a small group of their peers. At this point students have already engaged in a good deal of research to prepare the presentation and are becoming experts on their chosen rooms. Then they choose partners, revisit each other's rooms together, and have an extended conversation(s) comparing the two. The individual presentation/shared paper timeline means that both partners bring expertise to the collaboration and that neither can coast on the others' work. I encourage students to think of the paper as a distilled record of their conversations and their most interesting shared insights. Framing the research paper this way makes a potentially intimidating project more accessible and it encourages students to think about research and informed debate as a part of 'regular life' rather than as an academic exercise confined to the library or the classroom. Plus, I know that before the paper hits my desk it will have been read and edited by at least two sets of eyes.

## WENNIE HUANG

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### 3D Design at Parsons the New School for Design Foundation Drawing

I usually try to teach this lesson every year. It's called *Material Transformation* and I teach it to freshmen in a 3D Design class at Parsons. The lesson explores materials and form and how different materials come together to create form. I have them take a pre-existing object (a jacket, a vest, a shoe, something worn) and they carefully take it apart. Once they have the object taken apart, they are left with shapes that they transfer onto a non-clothing material. I've that seen plastic, reflective mylar, and vinyl are pretty popular. By taking the object apart, they learn what each part is. After they transfer the shapes, they have to put it back together in the new material. They get to see if it can be put back together the same way in the new material and they see what happens to the form when it's made of a different material. The students have one week to complete the assignment. One interesting product I've seen was a silk shirt redone in wire mesh. It went from a soft, flimsy material to being very stiff and structured. Another interesting example was a leather boot that was redone in lace. It changes the form completely. It's great because students get to have all the parts, examine them, and analyze them. The object gets a different existence. It's really about translation. That's what we're doing whether we're drawing or building; it's a translation from one material to another. In terms of coming up with the assignment, some assignments just show up, pop into my head, and some come from adapted failed assignments.

## MARTHA JASOPERSAUD

### Interior Design

The best assignment that I recall from my graduate experience at Pratt came from my studio class with Professor Tarek Ashcar. I was given a site and asked to design a flagship retail space. I began by picking a retailer, and used the retailer's website to design the interior. I enjoyed this assignment because I was able to incorporate my love of graphic design into an interior's project. I was able to take the idea of branding and make it three dimensional. Professor Ashcar pushed his students to think more conceptually than practically. This allowed me to feel more free and really push the boundaries of interior design.

## CHRIS JENSEN

### Population Biology & Sustainable Resource Management

Like ones children it's hard to pick one's favorite lesson, but I'm pretty proud of this one:

*The Sustainable Use of Fisheries* is a flash-based game that allows multiple players to simultaneously exploit a model fishery. The game can be played by anyone for free, and is flexible enough to be adapted for use in levels ranging from high school to graduate school. Students act as fishers sharing a fishery, and must make decisions about how to exploit their common resource. Players have the potential to over-exploit or under-exploit their fishery, both of which can cause their fishing village to fail. Playing the game

allows students to discover the “Tragedy of the Commons” first hand, and to experiment with different approaches to regulating a limited resource. The game empowers students to answer questions about population growth, predation, cooperation, and sustainable exploitation through an inquiry-based process.

This is probably my favorite lesson plan because it involves a teaching tool that I helped design and because I have had the chance to refine it because I have used it for several years. It feels good to have a lesson plan that is polished by many small changes made over the years.

## CRAIG KANE

### ADE 620 The Art of Teaching Art & Design Art and Design Education

Assignment: *The Visual Diary*. Create 2 entries per week.

The assignment:

helped me to understand how to get ideas

helped me open my eyes

helped me make up lessons instantly

helped my creativity

every day I see something I can turn into an idea

made me understand I can draw a lesson from anything

made me understand that the lesson comes from me

made me understand I am the teacher

made me understand how I got interested into things

made me look

made me see relationships between series

was freeing

was empowering

was good practice

created rhythm

created lots of material for art

created lots of material for lessons

created a series

## **EUNICE KIM**

### **Undergraduate Degree Project at Rhode Island School of Design**

We were to create two pieces of furniture based on what we wanted to investigate. What we wanted to investigate was very, very open-ended. We were to choose a topic/thesis, write a statement, and express it through furniture—any materials we wanted. Materials chosen: A wood piece and a metal piece.

My topic was East meets West. It was the first assignment in all 4 years of RISD in which I was finally able to just do what I wanted. I had always been jealous of sculpture students because it seemed like they could do whatever the heck they wanted with whatever the heck they wanted. They got criticized more because they “had no direction” and their work was a bunch of “bullshit.” But I thought that was what school was for: to fuck around until you figured out who you were. Kind of like life in a more controlled setting. Up until that last semester all our assignments were technical, like learning how to finesse our wood and metal working skills. I remember the phrase, “hone your skills,” being used a lot. So this Design Project was refreshing because I was able to answer the question, “Where are you in your designs?” So out of the two pieces, I threw one out after the critique because I didn’t like it. The one I kept was a “chair.” I used wood to create this object to show who I was, how I thought, what I thought about art and design, and how I viewed furniture. It was scary at first because there were no constraints, and I was so used to having them. But in the end, what I learned the most from that assignment was who I really was as a designer/artist because it was so liberating.”

## MICHAEL KIRK

### **Relief I and Silkscreen I at Parsons the New School for Design Fine Arts Department**

I give one of my favorite assignments towards the beginning of all of the classes I teach (silkscreen and relief) at Pratt Institute and Parsons New School.

I instruct my students to go home and write out a story about themselves they do not mind sharing with the class as many

descriptive words as they can possibly use. I give them about two weeks to work on this. At the same time, they must also gather a few items that represent them, like their hobbies, their family, where they are from, and so on—and bring them to class the same day the stories are due. During class, each student goes around and reads out his or her story, and as the student is sharing, everyone else should be writing down what they hear. The purpose of this is to show that sometimes we think we know what we are saying, but others understand it differently. When the student is done sharing their story, they do a show-and-tell of the items they chose to bring in to class.

## NATALIE KOTIN

One of the best assignments that I recall from my graduate experience at Pratt came from my foundation studio. The assignment was to create rectilinear volumes out of clay, to be placed on three bases of identical size. Each volume represented either a dominant, sub-dominate or subordinate form. I found this assignment to be meditative. I liked being able to only focus on the material, form and space and not the user or a program.

## JULIANA KREINIK

### Photography I: 1839–WWII

The best assignment I ever gave my students was in my History of Photography survey. I had all of my students choose a single photograph from a group of approximately thirty iconic images. I had them look at them on Flickr and then annotate them. This was the first assignment that they did, and they

continued to work with these photographs throughout the semester. I first had them annotate them—so when you mouse over the image, you see all kinds of things about the image that are just observable. And then, from that image, they developed the rest of their ideas through the semester. Even though it was only a survey, they were able to have a relationship with the image, and look at it in different contexts. They built up their formal analysis from their annotated images, and wrote blog posts [on Tumblr], and then they wrote their final papers, researching and providing context. It really started with this fun little assignment that was just organized around close looking. And it was very satisfying, and I think the students got a lot out of it.

It's a great use of technology—to get students to just really pay close attention to images. I think sometimes we just skate through images, especially in history classes, where there's a lot of information to memorize—names, dates, times—and you get away from what the image actually looks like.

I use a lot of technology. Some of them really liked it, some of them didn't. I use a lot of technology throughout the semester, so this was a good introduction: "You're going to use these as tools. They're not going to be the only way you'll encounter images, but we're going to learn a lot by using them, and it'll enhance the rest of what we learn in class."

## ANDREW KURCZAK

### Introduction to Painting Conservation History of Art, Architecture and Design

*Intro to Painting Conservation* covered artist's materials and techniques, conservation methods (such as various imaging techniques and cross section samples), ethics, and theories of early Renaissance panel paintings to contemporary artworks. This was similar to Cory's "Theory & Practice of the Art Museum" (a 400 level course in the History of Art Department), another very practical course with real life application for art historians, practicing artists, and those interested in pursuing the field of conservation. The course assignment was one that stretched the length of the semester, with every other week alternating between lecture and studio work. The studio component was like learning conservation treatments but in reverse—instead of dissecting and "conserving" a panel painting, we were guided in the understanding of the components of egg tempera painting on poplar panel by recreating our own, with an image taken from one found at the Metropolitan. Using as close to historical materials as possible, we were given poplar panels which were then sized with rabbit skin glue, gessoed (which we made in class), sanded, transferred cartoons, boled (the red pigment found beneath gilded areas), gold leaf gilded with both water and mordant techniques, pigment ground, and applied the egg tempera medium technique. In the end, every student had a complete, hand made, panel painting which exhibited everything we learned down to gold leaf gilding. It gave a very good understanding of the material labor of what went in to the artworks one can find at the Metropolitan (for example), as well as concerns to be aware of when approaching various painting mediums from a conservation perspective.

## SARAH LANGENBACHER

### Sculpture VI Senior Intensive

My senior year after spring break we had an assignment just so that we'd have a critique right after we got back. And the assignment was line, that was it. So we all went home and when we came back we all started to do performance art. One girl crawled around in a blanket, crying, and then she came back and told us that she had been naked the whole time and laughed. After that, two people did their project together.

They were really close, like they could be twins. They held each other's hands and did that high school thing where they had the thread and the India ink and the needle and they started tattooing a line from where their thumbs were touching so there was a line when they held hands. I had someone come in who actually ended up being a dominatrix (I didn't know that when I asked her!). I had her walk in the middle of the critique and slap me across the face and then she walked away. So that was fun.

## TONYA LESLIE

### Undergraduate Urban Education Art & Design Education

If I really have to pick just one lesson that I enjoyed teaching, it would be *Dude You're A Fag* by C. J. Pascoe that I just recently taught in 2011 in the Urban Education class at Pratt Institute. That class focused so much on race and class that it lacked balance when discussing other concepts. We

rarely discussed gender and sexuality in that class and *Dude You're A Fag* kind of exposed you to another side of an argument. The students always had the potential to discuss these topics, but this gave them another lens, and they did wonderfully. This book allowed us to focus on the text, on what the author is actually saying because we had the tendency to go on political and personal tangents.

But if I could change something about the assignment I would have assigned the whole book instead of just an excerpt from it. I think with the excerpts the students were like, "okay why are we reading this." It would have been more meaningful to read the whole story in order to develop a deeper connection to the research that was done. The students would have been able to comment on and digest the readings easier.

## GEDDES LEVENSON

### Special Topics: Songwriting

For my songwriting class, we would learn a lot about different stages of songwriting history—mostly American, but occasionally British—and then we would have to write songs about it. For our final project, we had to bind them together in a sort of album. We weren't recording it, we were just writing lyrics. But we would put all the lyrics together, in a book, in an order, with a song list and an album cover. The idea was you would have a progression, and a theme. It was really interesting to try to look at songs that were based off country music, or blues, or Leonard Cohen, or psychedelic '70s, and try to make them feel cohesive and unified. We had edited all the songs [we wrote],

which we had talked about in class. It was like trying to write poems, but that went together somehow as songs.

It was really fun, and the professor was really good at giving constructive feedback, and helping identify what exactly works and what doesn't, and exactly how to improve the listener's interest in your song.

The other favorite assignment in that class was when we had to listen to Tom Waits and Leonard Cohen for a week. It was really helpful, and it really did impact my painting practice, because I hadn't thought about voice as a thing. I always think about narrative, or story, or the emotion, or some particular aspect of self-discovery—there's always some factor of that in my work. But I hadn't thought about the way that the persona of the narrator, or the voice of the character, can really transform something.

Thinking about that gave me a lot of perspective on something that I feel has been missing from my work a lot, and from my writing a lot. I have this very distant way of presenting information, and that sense of who's gonna tell the story [started to come through]. It was fun to try and get a voice that was really different from me, as a person, and different from anything I'd done before. I think the teacher really helped me understand how I was doing that, and how to do it better. I've been thinking about that in my painting since then.

## HEATHER LEWIS

### **Roots of Urban Education The History Essay Art and Design Education**

This is a cumulative assignment that is completed in stages across the semester. Students were asked to write an essay about one of the three historical eras we studied. The essay included visual sources. The essays were graded based on comprehension of the historical documents, formulation of a historical question and thesis, and analysis based on inductive or deductive reasoning. Students were given opportunities to revise and resubmit their essays. Student essays were shared with each other on the LMS site and in class.

Student presented their final essay to the class using visual sources and handouts. Students' oral presentations addressed their question and argument, their thinking and research process, and their reflections about how they thought their historical research related to topics today. I asked students to use a presentation rubric to prepare and assess their own presentation as well as their peers. In preparation for the essay assignment students "practiced" developing historical questions and arguments throughout the first third of the semester. In addition, two field trips gave students a visceral sense of historical events in the 20th century.

I would say that I don't think about my assignments as "the most successful" or "least successful" because I need to try them out and revise them. I rarely assign a "one-shot" assignment. Instead, I revise an assignment based on student feedback and the quality of student work.

The context for the assignment is paramount. An assignment may work well in one context (the students' disciplinary

backgrounds, the requirements in their program of study, etc.) and not another. It also has to be revised based on the assignment. Also critical is how I decide an assignment “worked”. I generally survey my students through an anonymous survey mid-way through the semester and also through individual conversations to take stock of what is working and not working. This is not the only way I assess the effectiveness of the assignment but it is an important component.

## **ANN MANDELBAUM**

### **Graduate Fine Arts Fine Arts**

The best assignment I have given is “Make something out of nothing” ...I’ve given it for over 30 years, to all levels of student , and at all schools where I have taught.

I give this assignment to every student, every year, everywhere, whenever they come to be with a moment of obstacle. The simplicity of this project helps students break through moments of obstacle: blocks. It asks students to turn to the unexpected ‘nothing’ which is a space for discovery, recharge and renewal.

## **Photography Workshop**

More than thirty years ago I was given the assignment to imagine that I am going to a desert island for a year and to decide what I would take...and to photograph or make art in terms of that. The question leads to deciding priorities and comfort zones and demands clearer focus.

## **Fine Arts**

My best assignment is to tell students to make something out of nothing. There is so much content that gets recorded by a camera—and we need to figure out how to edit and reinterpret that content and make it our own. So, for this assignment, I tell students to create an image that can't easily be labeled. I find that this opens them up to looking and observing carefully rather than thinking. I've given this assignment in first year MFA photography classes and graduate Lens, Sculpture, Performance at Pratt. I've also given it at Parsons in 'Designing for The Moving Image'. It is all about looking from the creative side of the brain. One of the first assignments at Parsons was to do a drawing with the hand that is not normally used—to have less control and be open to the unexpected marks. Extensions of this same assignment, given in beginning photo classes: shoot not looking through the viewfinder; cover the center of the viewfinder with tape; shoot from the hip. I would encourage the out of focus image, including less than what is being seen and trusting the window of the camera to cut casually into the world. I believe that ease is the enemy of the artist...

## T. CAMILLE MARTIN

### Interior Design

*"There is no difference between reality and virtual reality. What one sees, hears and feels is identical in either case."*

– Damien Keown

This exercise was used to help students understand how the division of the virtual [non-digital], as opposed to the actual, is only a matter of perception. Students were asked to read *Faith and Virtuality: A Brief History of Virtual Reality* by Christian Groothuizen, as part of a studio wide project for a retail environment. The article is a bit wordy and academic in the way architectural writing tends to be, but draws on key concepts of how we perceive light in relationship to time and space that are key to understanding ways in which we think critically about design.

Drawing on concepts of virtual space and perception posited by Groothuizen, phenomenologists like Baudrillard and my own memories as an only child with a little too much time on my hands, the students were asked to do the following:

1. Find a space that is very familiar—your bedroom, your studio, the hallway leading to your dorm room.
2. Walk through the area making brief mental notation of the experience of being in the space, what are the perceived qualities of the space. Height, width, etc.?
3. Take a mirror at least 12"x12" and walk through the space looking down into the mirror at the ceiling above you [be careful not to trip over furniture or fall down stairs, etc.],[while your feet are on the floor it is almost as if you are walking on the ceiling]
4. How does your perception of the space change?

There are a couple of reasons why this exercise tends to be successful.

- It allows the student to understand a space familiar to them from a vastly different perspective. Typically someone becomes adjusted to a new space after just 1 or possibly 2 interactions. Thereafter it takes a major change like a renovation to re-awaken to the space, and pay attention once again. While no change is being made, this exercise greatly and surprisingly changes one's perception of a space.
- The students begin to actively look for ways to design perceived and physical flexibility into spaces to engage the occupant over a longer period of time.
- It requires little if any preparation, so the students actually do the exercise—it is as simple as borrowing a mirror from the Materials Library and choosing a space for observation.

## AMY MAUCK

### Painting II at the Xavier College Painting

I received an assignment to make an archetypal image, and chose to go a literal route and depict images of belly buttons. It served as a departure point for a series of abstract paintings in which I used close up photos of belly buttons as

references. It was important because it was a monumental task that led me to all at once, embrace, challenge, question and explore the concept of an archetype along with conflicts between both formalist and postmodernist ideas. It also led to a series, *Body of Work*, my first experience with using a subject matter to the point of exhaustion.

## DENNIS McNETT

### Big Damn Prints Printmaking

*Big Damn Prints* is a printmaking event that started at Pratt in 2007 and is open to the entire school, not just printmaking majors. Before the event, each student receives an MDF board that is approximately 4' x 8' and carves an image into it. The boards are brought outside and a steamroller is driven over the block to print the relief image onto a large piece of muslin. It was memorable because of how big a collaboration it became. Everybody was required to put effort in since printing each block requires at least 4 people to move it and place it. Students were even starting to carve blocks together instead of each person having an individual piece, making it more about the experience instead of simply a fun assignment.

## JENNIFER MELBY

### Etching I Printmaking

A good assignment that I feel can work in a relief class as well as an etching class is to make a didactic print. The objective is to make a statement that expresses a political, social, economic, or aesthetic idea. I prefer if the students create an image without using text. This is difficult when trying to create a piece that shows a point of view, or is intended to instruct. This assignment relates to one very popular and important role of the print in art history—that of delivering information. The goal is to have the students be as creative as they can while communicating an idea and to get their print to have a ‘wow’ factor. The final prints should have a “BAM! and then it hits you” moment, like in the public advertisements that Brooklyn Academy of Music released in 2012.

## ANN MESSNER

### Senior Seminar Fine Arts

What I like about teaching in the graduate department is that you don’t give assignments. It’s just a studio class, it’s open framework and the students direct themselves, which is actually how I think art emerges from the person...naturally, not being given a framework.

But you did ask me a specific question, so...it wasn’t so much an assignment but rather a problem that I have. I teach an undergraduate Senior Seminar in Fine Arts, they

are on their way to graduating, so I try to focus the Seminar in terms of thinking about professional practice. One of the things that would be helpful for an artist to do that would make their having a successful career more likely is to work collaboratively. The seminar class has as its final project something that they work on collectively, and I give them a parameter within which to work. They have to work collectively or collaboratively, the class as one unit. They have to come to some consensus or understanding about what this final project will be and that it has to have a public component, meaning that it has to breach the walls of the class, either to the campus or outside. I don't set the parameter only on campus, but it somehow has to extend itself out of the class room.

I give three, four, five classes which ends up being a third of the semester to this final project which starts with them just sort of awkwardly talking to each other. They talk hesitantly, not necessarily willingly but it's their assignment, and over the semester they develop their final project. And I've done it about five times. Anyway, so the one that I wanted to refer to was what happened last semester Spring 2012.

So, it's their final project they have to work on collectively and it has to have a public component. Those are the only two things I set as "it must have," "it must be composed of," "this must take place." So, they came up with what become known as *Pratt Campus Soup*.

We put up an open call for proposals, we collected the proposals, and the idea was there would be a soup event, and all the proceeds from the soup event would go to the person whose proposal got selected. You had to eat soup to vote, so their were tiers of organization that needed to happen. The least/most important part was what type of soup we were going to cook and we had to decide collectively. So, we put

out an open call for proposals for people to participate in the open call for *Pratt Campus Soup*. I can't remember whether it was 31 or 36, well...over 30. We made it public, there is a tumblr page <http://pratt-campus-soup.tumblr.com/> . We put up guidelines, you had to write a text with images.

We had to figure out how to get permission to cook food on campus given the rules and regulations, because CulinArt is union run, and we needed to do fundraising for the ingredients, so we raised 700 dollars to make the soup. We made three gigantic 40 pint pots, 120 pints of five bean soup.

We served the soup, and it took place in the Student Union. It was a wonderful evening, lots of social ambiance, lots of people talking, slow steady stream over 4-5-hours. We raised 750 dollars and people did vote and there was a winner and at the end of the event we took the soup to Myrtle Avenue and gave out the soup on the street. We were there until 2am.

## CHRISTAN MOY

### Student Teaching; Pre-K–HS Student Teaching

I guess if I had to choose something it would be my student teaching experience overall. The only reason I choose that is because when I think of “best” I think of what I learned the most from, and it would be when I student taught at PS 21 with Emily Maddy as my cooperating teacher. That was the most real teaching experience I ever had and it led me to my thesis topic that focused on teacher training for emotionally disturbed students. Before student teaching I had no experience with students who were emotionally disturbed. I felt like I walked away from that experience fully understanding what art education can look like in the real world public school setting where there will be a variety of students, some who may be emotionally disturbed. In this type of setting the artistic practice can be used therapeutically, in the midst of physical fights between students and overall aggressive behaviors. The experience of working with this population of students made me a more confident teacher overall as I left with hands on practice working with a specific population of students.

## ERIN MURPHY

### Digital Archives Digital Archival Design

Students worked as a class to design digital archives for the Lesbian Herstory Archives, a New York collection of materials by and about lesbians and their communities. Students did

not choose the client they would be working with, in this case the Lesbian Herstory Archives. This was chosen by the professor. Students did have the choice of which specialized subject group they would be working with to design the digital archives (ex. web design, technical infrastructure, meta data). Beyond the specialized groups, the class worked as a team to share their concentrated information with one another. Through team discussions and presentations students were able to concentrate on their concentrated subject while still actively working as a larger design team through the entirety of the class.

## **TOM MURPHY**

### **Art & the Computer Dozen/Collection/Accumulation**

#### **Dozen/Collection/Accumulation**

##### **OBJECTIVE:**

Create a project using the number 12. Here are your options;

1. Print an edition of 12 prints (at least 3 runs each)—min size 11" x 15"
2. Print an edition of 3 prints (12 runs each)—min size 22" x 30"
3. Create a printstallation/printformance that has 12 steps, or 12 visual elements

Digital output must be used, either as films to shoot the screens or to print the imagery directly. Consider the unique qualities and characteristics of each process. Take advantage of its strengths and weaknesses. Other mediums are encouraged. CRAFTSMANSHIP NEEDS TO BE TOP NOTCH!

Three sketchbook or blog entries.

What I really liked about the assignment was that it was really open, but we still had to check in with the professor at various stages (like sending her scans of the sketchbook entries).

I felt that there were enough requirements to help motivate me, but not too many that it was limiting. A lot of the time I feel that there are too many or too little assignments.

For the assignment I did hand drawings of donuts on acetate, and then exposed the line drawings to my silkscreen so I could print them. After I printed them I hand colored them using watercolors. At the same time I was working on digital environments inspired by 8-bit/pixelated art to co-ordinate with the color schemes of the donuts. At the end I combined the two, superimposing the scan of the donuts onto each of the 12 backgrounds.

I was able to cater the assignment to my needs, but the fact that I needed to make 12 works instead of a smaller series really pushed me to think about how I would present and make a cohesive series of works. Which is what I liked about it the most I think.

## JEFFERSON MUSANDA

### Thesis Fashion Design

I guess my favorite assignment is senior thesis. The assignment is to create an 8–12 look final collection with all the knowledge we have learned so far. It is exciting and fun because I have the ability to be as creative as I would like and it shows the full

breadth of my skill and knowledge in fashion thus far. It is exciting to see my hard work and years of learning come into total fruition as my ideas and designs come alive.

## J. NICHOLAS NAPOLI, PH.D.

### Survey of Art II History of Art, Architecture and Design

My most successful paper assignment was first presented at Pratt in the HA 116 course, taught the spring semester of 2009. In the assignment I had the students read a chapter from Michael Baxandall's *Patterns of Intention* and to use this chapter as a theoretical frame for observing and learning about a work of art that they could see in person in a New York City collection. I wanted the students to reconstruct what Baxandall refers to as a "period eye"—that is, I wanted them to view a work of art with the assumptions and predispositions that a viewer would have in the period and place where the work of art was made.

Students submitted a rough draft of the paper around midterms, and I made comments on the paper and included suggestions for improvement. I then scheduled a review session in which students could ask questions about their drafts (with my comments) and present samples of passages that needed revision.

I gave this assignment to students in later years, but what made the 2009 version of the assignment particularly satisfying was the input of a specialist from Pratt's writing program. In 2009 the writing program was able to provide instructors to collaborate with teachers in the formulation and presentation

of writing assignments and exercises in other departments in the school. My collaborating instructor was enthusiastic about my assignment and helped me teach the review session. I was particularly happy with how both of us could provide two sets of comments to the same passage—students could see how their own writing could spark a conversation between teachers, and it demonstrated that the act of writing itself is a form of conversation across space and time.

One student lamented, “Baxandall’s effort to reconstruct the ‘period eye’ is pointless,” and the writing instructor responded, “But isn’t it great that Baxandall makes such a method of viewing possible?” The writing instructor (who was a fan of Baxandall’s writing) made an observation that I could not—and it allowed the writing assignment to become larger and more inclusive than what I had originally conceived.

I received a set of thoughtful papers from the class at the end of the term, and it was clear that they were engaged participants in the project of recovering the period eye.

## EVAN NEELY

### Present Assignment at Columbia University Contemporary Civilization

It’s hard to say. Any assignment that doesn’t focus on the long-term learning process is bad. So, all of the assignments I’ve given that are good are preludes to other assignments.

Most of them have to do with reading texts that are related to the texts we are reading and figure out the ways people actually structure arguments about certain topics. So, the ones that have been best have been the ones that involve the supposition that the student has to figure out how the person they're reading would talk about a topic they think is interesting. For example, Plato, being a Greek person, probably doesn't spend a lot of time talking about modern health care policies—he doesn't. So the question is how might he answer that? And that actually involves a lot more research than you think. It's not just a question of how do you decide whether he'd like the idea of public healthcare, it's how do you decide that he would even think to accommodate the question of whether we should actually have a public healthcare system. If you assume that it's not even an option, then you're probably assuming all sorts of other things about politics.

### **Ethical Universes at Parsons the New School for Design**

The assignment that was actually really life-changing for me—it was nothing more than to write about somebody's concept—Aristotle's concept of ethics—but it was such a technical thing like "why did he say this here", not "why does he say this" but "why does this come up in the sixth book". It's a funny situation because I was one of those really self-satisfied students, like "anything I'm going to learn is going to be my decision and I won't pay attention to people who I think are bullshit"—really stupid. Anyway, so this guy was my freshman Literature and Composition teacher at Parsons and I remember the first semester I did really well and the second

semester I didn't really get it, I think, and I got a C+ and the instructor wrote me a really bad, scathing commentary on my paper. So I was angry at him and a year had passed and I remember at one point during the year I was holding a door open for him—it was a double door—and he just looked at me and went through the other one. Also, I had been rejected from the honors program at Parsons—which he oversaw. So I was like “fuck this guy”. So I don't know what possessed me in junior year when I decided to take his class and I said “I'm going to stay on even though I don't really get it, out of spite, to show him I'm not stupid” and by the end of the semester I said “allllll right”. It was called Ethical Universes and it was just reading about ancient philosophy and ethics. It wasn't just the assignment; it was just the whole way he taught and his different approach to education. So the assignment was literally just figure out why he said this this way. Don't look it up, just read the book, if the book has a structure then it's going to determine why it says that and you figure it out. And I don't know if I did or not! Because I don't remember what I wrote about. But I remember writing this...he would also do this thing—see, he only gave one assignment a semester, this one paper. But what he would do is have students write drafts of their papers, so each week someone would bring one forward and we would all criticize it in class. And I had signed up to do this one day and it was strange because he was always super critical, but I totally I blew the class away with my paper, which was really weird, because I thought I was doing okay, and that was encouraging and by the end of the semester he said it was the best paper he'd received in years. I don't know if it was; he might have just been saying that to provoke me.

## DIANE NGUYEN

The best assignment that Diane recalls from her graduate experience at Pratt came from studio class with Terek Ashcar. The students were given a site and program, but the student was able to determine how much of the site they wanted to use and they had freedom to adjust the program as needed. Diane's design was entitled the "Culinary Drug Front". It was a culinary club that was hidden by an apothecary storefront. This was Diane's favorite assignment because Terek supported the students' conceptual creativity and gave them free reign to push conventional boundaries.

## AMIR PARSA

### **Interactions of Art & Literature "Theory of Artistic Innovation"**

The best assignment I have given was for students to emulate auto writing or drawing processes to come up with a new method to create something. My goals for the lesson were to examine to what extent is conceptualizing new ways of creating going to lead to new types of work. The big idea was to explore innovation and the challenges one may face in the process. I feel that's its my best assignment because I am attached to the idea of innovation and the difficulty of the concept and execution. The project was successful in making people understand concepts but didn't dig deep enough to create thought provoking conclusions.

## PAULINA PERLWITZ

### Experimental Drawing at the University of Connecticut Fine Arts

Deborah Dancy at UConn assigned a text piece in my Experimental Drawing class. I don't remember the specifics or the exact parameters but it was the first time I was able to understand the word conceptual in relation to my own work. I spent a lot of time writing about what I wanted to do. I ended up with three tea stained paper scrolls with the word please hand stitched into each of them. I began to understand how materials could take over; the paper became the feeling of helplessness and despair incarnate. Something clicked in my brain in terms of making work that was intentional in its meaning and also was a collaboration between myself and the inherent properties of the materials I used.

## NELSON PLAZA

### Intaglio at the Universidad de Chile Printmaking

This was the first assignment of intaglio class, etching specifically. The goal was to create an exact replica of a Rembrandt or Dürer etching. We had to figure out the exact size of the print and then use the expertise delivered by professor to reproduce, step by step, the chosen print. I think it's a great exercise as a first approach to the etching technique, because if you follow the directions step by step, the result is always attractive. Sometimes the first print one does is ugly for various reasons—many of them relating to the

drawing. But one blames the technical [reasons] and often gives up a second attempt. In this way, the student should not worry about the image, or ensuring a beautiful result. The chances of falling in love with the art of printmaking increase.

## ERICA QUINN

### Letterpress: Text and Image Fine Arts

I have received many art assignments that have caused me to think in a very serious, expansive way..... open-ended and conceptual assignments that have forever impacted my art-making practice. However, I think one of the best art assignments I ever received was in my first semester of my M.F.A. at Pratt Institute.... an assignment that ultimately had nothing to do with my photography or life as an artist.

For elective credit, I was taking Brad Ewing's *Letterpress: Text and Image* printmaking class. At this point I had absolutely no printmaking experience, and honestly, my first, second, third, fourth and so on attempts were less than attractive. It was the first time in my educational experience that I felt limited by my technical abilities instead of my ideas, and many of my prints looked amateurish at best. However, one assignment that made us all get out of our heads a little bit was Brad's "make a piece about an artist you hate."

I created a print of D. H. Lawrence's head with accompanying text that alluded to the obvious masturbatory undertones that color all of his stories and poems. I spent hours on this project, for my hatred of D. H. Lawrence had been broiling,

unattended, for eight or so years by this point. By the time my piece was done, I had created an immensely detailed polymer plate print by individually drawing every line of Lawrence's head, every hair hand-rendered, which I then used to print on beautiful cream paper, upon which I finally hand-lettered all of my text. Somehow, my technical shortcomings and worries just abated when I began this project, and I became immersed in the process itself. I have scads of these things now, and, despite the fact that they bear the visage of the one I so despise, they are among my favorite of the objects I've made in my time at Pratt.

There were few formal stipulations to Brad's assignment: three colors, edition of ten—but ultimately the emphasis was on starting from a point of frustration instead of inspiration, and then becoming inspired by that, instead. It worked.

## ARLINE RASLEY

### 3D Design Art & Design Education

My favorite assignment was for Foundation 3D Design. We had to construct a hand-sized chair from basswood made completely of "L" shapes. This project was incredibly intense for me, as I had to take into consideration form and function, as well as keep within the bounds of only "L" shapes! I made about 15 drawings beforehand, and three final chairs. It was super difficult to get the proper proportions!! I consider this among the best assignments I've received because of

how invested I found myself in it. It began as an arbitrary assignment but, before I knew it, I was addicted, drafting over and over again more sketches, exploring the endless opportunities a simple shape of a letter could have! This project also greatly expanded my articulation and knowledge of precise construction, as I was making miniature chairs with exact proportion!

## MARIKA ROBAK

### Expanded Documentary Fine Arts

In my first semester at Pratt (Fall, 2011), I took a class called *Expanded Documentary* with Professor Pradeep Dalal. As the course progressed, it became obvious that the whole point of the course was to get us to think critically about what a documentary photography project really is—what are the parameters of documentary, especially in the contemporary context, after post-modern critics have dissected some of the genre’s potential problems? One article we had to read for class was titled “Oh, Inverted World,” (by Fionn Meade, I think). It spelled out four basic tropes of documentary- what techniques people typically use when putting together a documentary project, photographic, film, or otherwise; in-field interviews; eyewitness reports; re-enactment; and the travelogue.

In an effort to combine theory and practice, Professor Dalal asked us to create projects (of pretty much any medium, though most people used photography or film/video) employing these four tropes throughout the semester. We

could create four separate projects, or combine some of the tropes and make only two or three projects. For me, this was one of the most productive assignments I have gotten while at Pratt—it sparked a lot of ideas for me and made me execute them. It forced me to think critically (to problem-solve) about how I would use these techniques. For example, to fulfill the trope of in-field interviews, I decided to create still portraits of cos players (short for “costume players,” who are people who dress in costume of characters from pop culture) that I encountered at the New York Comic Con 2011. To accompany the still images, I created short video interviews with the subjects, asking them who they were dressed as, why they chose that character, and how/why they decided to dress in costume (hoping to understand what they got out of the experience).

This was good for me, because it forced me to think ahead and plan out projects in advance (something I didn’t always do previously), and made me question what it is I really wanted to achieve with those projects. I still find myself thinking about these parameters today. The assignment was very open-ended; it seems to me that part of the point of the assignment was to learn to question the techniques, and/or exploit them. We were allowed, even expected, to think way outside the box. In the end, our work was evaluated primarily through in-class critiques, and the discussions that arose around the work, as well as whether or not we managed to use all four techniques.

## OLIVIA S.

### **Sculpture I at Munson-Williams Proctor Fine Arts**

The one assignment that always sticks out in my head was my first real welding project that I had for my Sculpture I class my sophomore year in 2010. It was at Munson-Williams Proctor, Pratt's satellite campus in Utica. The project was to create any three-dimensional form out of metal rods and then stretch fabric over it to create a shell. We ended up illuminating them with neon that we bent and wired ourselves at the end of the project, but that's not why it is memorable.

I liked it because I had always been terrible with sculpture, I was a die-hard painter and photographer and I never thought my mind would be changed, but my teacher was so charismatic and inspirational and he told me that I should major in sculpture and that I had a unique sense of form. He could have been bullshitting me, but the way he treated me like an individual and spoke to me like an adult is what I take away from that class. I still have quotes from his class written down in my sketchbooks like, "get drunk on reality." Little sayings that I try to remind myself of every day.

## TAHIRA SANDS

### **Art & Design Education**

So, I never was really comfortable drawing realistically. Up until this class I had mostly drawn abstractly. When I was in

the associates program at Pratt I had a really great drawing teacher. Students either hated him or loved him mostly based on his critique style. But if you took his criticism you really could improve. Over the years I developed a great relationship with him. We would joke, we both have a really sarcastic sense of humor but I could also tell he cared where I was going with my education and would also make sure I focused in class (something that is always hard for me). He pushed me when I would get frustrated. I remember one class we were working on portraits. He taught us how to draw portraits with the proper proportions; drawing the lines to put the eyes in the right place, the nose, etc. and how to sketch everything first before you put the detail of each feature. Additionally, he taught us how to draw the cranium and connect it to the neck. This is when my portraits really became more realistic looking and not only that but I became more confident in drawing them. I remember how many times we had to do it! He always would walk around and around looking at our drawings. When he would walk over, you would just wait for him to comment on yours or even draw over it. But he wouldn't just draw over it, he would explain why he was making that correction. I guess my overall memory is of that teacher.

## **JONATHAN SCHNAPP**

### **Foundations Drawing at the University of Dayton and Fine Arts at the Rochester Institute of Technology**

The assignment that sticks out most in my memory gave me some rules and also helped teach me to think like an artist. This was in early 2000 and I was attending the University of Dayton. (I went there originally for computer science and quickly decided to switch to art). The assignment was in a foundations drawing studio class, the kind where you get to play around with lots of materials but not do anything too serious. I remember almost nothing of what we did in the course except for this: the non-figurative self portrait, a picture of yourself that doesn't contain a literal picture of yourself. This assignment was the first time I felt I could be as creative as I wanted—it was good to be expressive, weird, and most importantly, self-revelatory.

My result from this assignment was a vine charcoal drawing of feathers tied to rocks, falling through the sky. I was struggling with a very deep depression at this point in my life, and as much as I struggled against it I still felt I was falling. This assignment—a school project—actually gave me the power to use art to communicate a little of what I was going through at the time. The drawing no longer exists, but it started me down the path to be the artist I am today.

## DEBORAH SCHNEIDERMAN

### Undergraduate Senior Design Studio Assignment 1A: Screen

## SCREEN

### OBJECTIVE:

Develop a “screen” to be sited at one of the edges of your desk in studio. This screen should act as a membrane that mediates a simple exchange, passage, filtration, etc.—an interaction, visual or physical—across the screen. The screen (material and form) and the terms by which it acts as a mediator (program) should be developed simultaneously and should respond to each other. Consider the screen as a module of a whole.

### CONSIDER:

What does a screen provide? Utility? View? Privacy? Connection? What passes through? What is obstructed? What is the relationship between the two sides? Does it change or is it absolute? How does it relate to the human body, the actions around it, time? How does the screen affect all the senses?

### REQUIREMENTS:

- Full scale screen, securely sited between desks.
- Media –cardboard, glue.

### TIMELINE:

Due October 9. You have three weeks to complete this assignment—be ambitious.

The screen is my favorite assignment because it forces the student to consider aspects of the body, the senses and space though a full scale assignment and very quickly leads students to realize the transform-ation of design when built to scale and tested.

They understood the complexity of the relationship of the body to space and to adjacent occupants.

## ERIKA SCHROEDER

### Art and Design Education

In this course students design a full unit plan based on an overall theme. Themes are developed around the idea that “constructing understandings about contemporary art often depends upon knowledge that is outside the bounds of art” (Stewart and Walker, p. 109). Although I enjoyed the full process of designing my unit around the theme of *Time Travel*, the portion of the project that was successful for me was the emphasis on compiling research on our theme. As a class we looked at different methods artists use when compiling information on themes. Some of the artists we looked at, for ways to compile information, were dancer and choreographer Twyla Tharp and contemporary artist Laylah Ali. Before even writing our curriculum we gathered research on our theme. For me, I organized my information in the template of a blog which extended out through links, films, definitions, music and more. Through this research my theme of *Time Travel* extended into examining forms of hibernation, sleep, aging, memory and extraterrestrial discovery. In class we were encouraged to be open with our research, to

better understand how our themes could extend into realms beyond visual arts and integrate literature, mathematics, science and more. This research exercise also highlighted the creative process of designing curriculum as we could compare our research process to that of contemporary artists', choreographers, writers and other innovators. Because of the emphasis on research for our unit I designed a curriculum with thematic ideas, enduring ideas, and integrated subject matter.

## **IMANI SHANKLIN-ROBERTS**

### **Contemporary Ideas of Art & Self Art & Design Education**

The best assignment I have ever received was in my second year in art education department in the Art and Self class. The assignment was to write an obituary for yourself noting all of your successes and legacies. We were told to look at obituaries to understand all the elements that were included about the deceased life- The children and family they left behind, their life's work, their accolades- and create a personal obituary with our findings. It was an amazing experience to me because it was like looking at my life in reverse. I had to consider what I wanted from life as something I would be leaving behind. As a sophomore in college I was considering everything I wanted to accomplish and become in my lifetime and create my own history in one short paragraph. It was crazy but extremely gifting to my soul.

## SARAH SHEBARO

### **Fundamentals of Printmaking Fine Arts Department**

I have traditionally taught this class with the intention of teaching students about works on paper. However, for a final assignment, I decided to incorporate space into the project. I spoke with the Pratt gallery manager, Chris Versteegen, and was able to reserve a space in a campus gallery for the students to set up their final projects. I didn't want an exhibition where students would frame their work and hang it on the wall. I wanted them to work with the space and make something to go into that space. The students actually took the challenge very seriously and built a project based on the gallery space's dimension.

## MOLLY SHERMAN

### **Furniture Design**

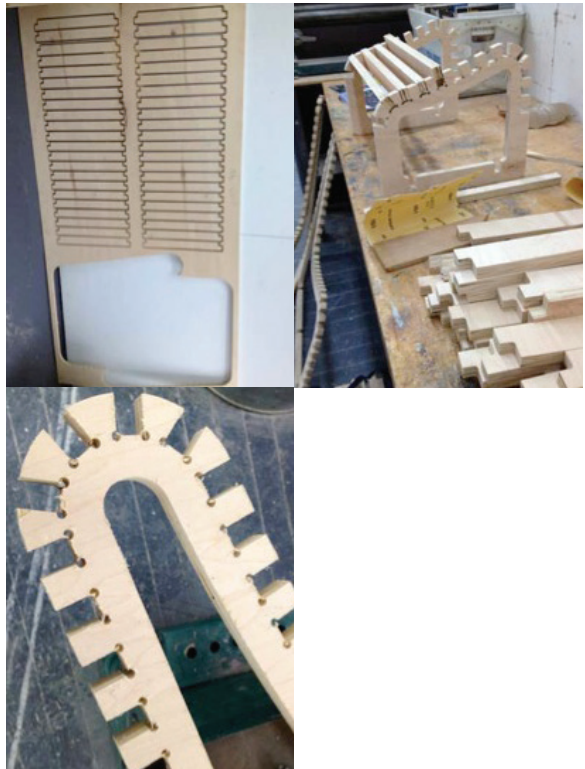
The objective was to design and CNC fabricate a chair from one sheet of 4' x 8' plywood. We were to design a piece that was enhanced by the use of technology. Designs were developed through 3"=1'-0" scale chipboard models that were made with the laser cutter. The laser cutter gave us the ability to test the precision of the CNC machine on a smaller scale so we could tweak their designs.

*I liked that I was able to use technology to my advantage with this project. The decisions I made, such as the number of stretchers I used and where they terminated, as well as designing a footstool that is stored within the chair itself, were dictated by the limited amount of material I had and the way the CNC mill cuts the plywood. I liked that the chair I ended up with wasn't necessarily what I set out to design but was instead the result of my investigation of the technology. I also liked that the quality of my final product wasn't affected by my lack of woodworking skills. The other projects in the class had worked to develop our wood-working skills, but I often didn't have the ability to build what I actually wanted. With this project, my final chair was well crafted and precise. It doesn't scream student project and because of this, is something I am proud of and will keep for a long time.*

*So often in school, you have an idea that you are either unable to represent with the tools you know how to use, or that you would never actually be able to build your idea with the technology available. This project taught us to design with the available technology in mind. This is a lesson I will carry with me into my other projects and will be especially useful when I've graduated and am designing things that will actually need to be built".*

*How has it influenced you as a designer today?*

*I am now designing with technology in mind. In my thesis project, I am thinking more about the materiality of my design and how it would be manufactured and assembled as well as the type of fasteners I would use to make it function the way I am envisioning. I think this is important in being a designer that can take a seed of an idea and turn it into something that could actually be built.*





## JUDITH SHIMER

### Fine Arts

My favorite assignment was when we were asked to think of a song that was our favorite song at some point during our childhood or teenage years and to learn the song and perform it in front of the class, and the reason why I think this was an effective assignment was first of all, you had to confront your general fear of performing in front of other people but also you were performing something that was very personal, very intimate. And, understandably, some of the people who did the assignment were really affected by it and had a hard time but once you were done with it, once you'd gotten it over with, you had done something really big that you'd never done before in your life and it just makes almost any risk that you take artistically after that seem so much easier. The professor was Mickalene Thomas, first semester grad school, so 2011. New Forms.

## HELEN SHIN

### INT 602: Qualifying Design Studio II Vitra Design Museum Design & Exhibition Design

We were asked to design a new museum space for Vitra. In addition, we were asked to design a rotating seasonal display based on a specific artist Vitra had collaborated with. My designer was Kenya Hara. Other program concerns were designing a café space, administration offices, and a retail area. The final design consisted of presentation drawings like plans, sections, elevations and perspectives, as well

as branding and concept schemes, color and materials selections, and physical models to scale.

Designing not only a branding of the Vitra Design Museum, but also a seasonal exhibition design was the pinnacle to why I enjoyed this project so much. You had to wear numerous hats & think logistically about not only the space as a whole, but also how it could function for several rotating exhibitions, retail, cafe go-ers, & administration on top of designing an engaging exhibition for a specific artist of your choice from a list. My artist/designer was Kenya Hara, whom I grew to really admire throughout the project, which made it even more enjoyable. I was lucky in my instincts to choose him, whereas, if I had chosen a designer that I didn't end up liking, it would have been slightly more difficult to put more of my 'heart' into the project.

That being said, I really honed my branding skills in terms of a business model (i.e. the museum, retail, & cafe component). I also learned to develop how graphics can influence the way a storefront is perceived or serve as a form of way finding. It was a holistic project, not a component, which I believe really is what happens in practical applications of our field. This project also really gave me a particular soft spot in creating an experience from a branding perspective.



## JEAN SHIN

### Drawing the Expanded Field Fine Art

The given assignment was based on seeing the Alighiero Boetti exhibition at MoMA. The students were asked to think about one of Boetti's quotes while viewing the exhibit. Essentially, this exercise asks students to create a work in conversation with their alter ego.

I got back strong projects that freed students to really experiment in ways that are not typical of their working style or approach.

Dear Students,

As promised, please find the quote from Boetti for the assignment. "Often when I draw I use both of my hands. Normally I am right-handed. When I draw with my left hand it is a kind of conversation with myself exploring the positive and the negative, the ego and alter ego, the order and disorder and mounting it on paper. It is as if on one hand there is Alighiero and on the other, Boetti."

For next week I will expect you to have viewed the following

Boetti exhibition at MoMA: Alighiero Boetti, Game Plan

<http://www.moma.org/visit/calendar/exhibitions/1238>. Then write a one page critical response to the artist's work (you may articulate what you take away from his work and/or explain specific projects that speak to you and why, etc.) Next, examine Boetti's quote about his drawing process and his ideas about drawing. Then find ways to build on these dualities of self to create your own work next week.

## GERALD SICILIANO

### Foundry I Fine Arts

Since I always teach the same course in almost the same way (consistency is good), pick the year, pick the semester. For me it is not the lesson but learning done by the students and often myself as well.

More specifically, I teach the foundry class at Pratt to undergrad and graduate students and have taught it many years either by myself or assisting Lucio. Each student either sculpts or casts an object out of wax and then learns the technical skills required to cast it in bronze using the lost-wax process. More so the class is about community. While casting bronze we all work as a unit, as a team, we move as one. It's not what we make, although my students have come up with some crazy ideas, it is when we spend the entire day in the foundry working and sweating to produce something together. It is always a new experience every semester and the students always come in with an object and we learn together how to cast it.

## LORI SIKORSKI

### Fine Art Anatomy I

I think the best assignment that I have given is the final project for the semester. It is really open-ended and everyone can work in whichever medium they want. As long

as the piece references human anatomy, it can be anything. It is successful because everyone can bring themselves to the work, to really be present in the art making. One student made molds of all of the bones and made a skeleton out of ice. He hung it up and then filmed it slowly melting. This student was not particularly good at drafting, but the assignment really enabled him to showcase his knowledge and specific skills.

## **ROBBIN SILVERBERG**

### **Fine Art Bookmaking I**

My favorite teaching project I did many years ago—first with a group of 4th graders was to ask them to make a box. I instructed them to put the dreamer on the cover and the dream inside. They could make this box from any materials they wanted. Some worked in clay some in cardboard, or wood, etc. Their efforts were spectacular. I did a similar project some years later with college-age students. I asked them to make artist books—with the dreamer on the outside of the cover or box and the dream inside.

## **THEODORA SKIPITARES**

### **Contemporary Ideas of Art and Self The Container Project**

This is a two-week storytelling project. The first week, students are paired up. One student is designated story-teller and the other is designated story-writer. The story-teller

recalls a family story, legend, or even scandal. This story could have happened a long time ago, an old handed-down story. Maybe the story-teller was alive, maybe not yet. In any case, the story-teller is not the main character of this story. The story-writer's job is to faithfully write down the words of the storyteller, and to shape it as a story. Then, the pair switches roles and another story is recalled and written down. For next week, each story-writer takes the story they transcribed and they take it as their own. They turn the main character into an "I". They create a complete physical miniature world that describes the story. This miniature world fits into a container and is pulled out during the telling/illustrating of the story. This story is 90 seconds long. The container could be a matchbox, a small gift box, a cereal box, a suitcase, or a refrigerator box. The storyteller's job is to convince the audience that the story is truly their own and that it is truly true. I was handed-down the first part of the assignment from Amy Snider when she was teaching *Art and Self*. That was the part about the storyteller and the storywriter. Making it part of a family legend or secret or scandal was my contribution, as was switching identities and constructing a miniature world inside a container.

## JANINE SLEEM

### Pre-Columbian Art History of Art, Architecture and Design

My favorite assignment at Pratt was an art history final, specifically the Voicethread we did with Janice. We chose groups to go to the American Museum of Natural History with. There were picked and photographed one or more objects

that represented our topic: Teotihuacan. Then we had to upload our original picture(s) and any others we wanted to use into a Voicethread to create a multimedia “conversation” around the object. I loved embracing media for our presentations. I loved that we were incited to analyze images and artifacts and discuss them as if we were art historians and not the silly little students that I think most other people in the department considered us. I also loved that we could work as a group but also individually, and record our parts, and leave them open for actual discussion online and not just stand in front of the class and say, ‘Ok any questions?’, even though everyone really just wants to go home. And of course, I loved how supportive Janice was of the topic of pretty much defending fakes, which was initially a wild goose chase, and something most art historians wouldn’t even take seriously.

## AMY B. SNIDER

### **Ideas About Art and Self Art and Design Education**

I have been teaching since 1961 with some breaks. Rather than a project, one class that I am particularly proud of is a course that I reshaped from the form I inherited from its creator, the sculptor, Gillian Jagger. In this undergraduate Pratt course, *Ideas about Art and Self*, the emphasis is now placed on the students’ shared experiences as they continually shift between art making, verbal expression, and performance. The major projects of the class are:

The Bartlett Project, inspired by Jennifer Bartlett's series of paintings, *In the Garden* (1982)—a semester-long series of drawings on a subject or object with personal meaning; a Storytelling Workshop—a two-class exercise based on the representation of an early childhood experience in words and images; and a Performance—a short piece drawn from the life and work of each student.

In *The Bartlett Project*, not only were the students encouraged to reflect on the significance of the subject they chose but were able to see the myriad formal possibilities of that subject. Later, the *Storytelling Workshop* allowed them to identify particular memories that continued to resonate in their lives. These projects, in turn, were preparation for their performance, a pure expression of self as it developed from the most intimate elements of their lives.

## BILL STEPHENS

### AP Drawing at Webster Schroeder High School

I have done so many meaningful lessons in my 40 plus years of teaching. Most were done without much planning and have dealt with life lessons attached to art lessons. Monday I presented a lesson based on memory and ownership. The kids came into the room to a set up a still life of personal objects from my childhood: my grandmothers cookie jar, her cookie recipes, an old photo of her and my mom, and my John Nagy "Learn to Draw" set. I proceeded to tell my story about Saturday mornings baking cookies with Gram and sitting in front of a small black and white TV set with my John Nagy

drawing set all laid out ready to learn. It was a memory with visual images and thought/words. They were mine; I owned them and cherished them. This was the first step in the lesson, sharing and story telling. I then asked my students to bring in their own objects, a list of words/story/memory to share with the class which they all did the following day. The drawing assignment was to produce a large charcoal or pastel drawing of a cherished object with text. This is hard to explain but I think you know what I mean since your work is image based and story-telling. I proceeded to talk about taking ownership of our work and our creativity. We talked about developing a mini series of works, similar to a concentration in AP and the importance of being responsible for all aspects of that work. The next day, I had the students place their objects on a pedestal, and then one by one get up to speak about what that object meant to them/story telling/narrative. Visual words/ideas began to flow. The unexpected gift was the personal stories, which when spoken, brought out a lot of emotions from the story teller and the students listening to the story. The kids began to realize the value of a chosen object, memory, and how that can be used to develop a body of work. It was theirs and they owned it.



## KARIN TEHVE

The best assignment that I recall is a day-long charette that I wrote asking my students to record a motion, analyze the volume occupied by that motion and then design a space specifically for it. The exercise was designed to make its participants conscious of the dimensions of the human body in rest and in motion. It also was designed to challenge them to propose innovative means of representation to capture their dynamic phenomena. This exercise also gives students tools to be able to seek creative ways to begin projects or to help them when they are stuck.

## POLIXENI THEODOROU

### Ideation and Series at Rochester Institute of Technology Fine Arts

My favorite assignment comes from Bruce Sodervick, a crazy/amazing sculpture teacher I had during my undergraduate years at the Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT). The class was called *Ideation and Series*; it was required, and I had absolutely no idea what the hell it meant, but I soon found out.

The assignment went something like this: make a sculpture.

Preface: the class was based on process. So, there was no stress placed on creating one, polished, glorious piece. So when Bruce said, "make a sculpture," he meant make a sculpture out of crappy, raw materials like cardboard, paper, wire, plaster, etc. Nothing huge or too refined.

Make a (small, crappy) sculpture. From that sculpture, draw five drawings (any media). From one of those drawings, make another, different sculpture. From this new, second sculpture, make ten drawings. From one of those drawings, make another, different, third sculpture. From the third sculpture, make twenty drawings...on and on, and so forth, for the whole quarter. Also, he would have us do other things than draw: take one of your sculptures, smash it, ink it, and make a mono-print.

The point of the assignment was to propagate work from work and to work!

Bruce would get so excited during class when we would share our drawings and sculptures. He would go off on tangents,

then say he was sorry, he was exposed to too much DDT when he was young. When he would get really excited about one particular piece, he would say, well, just make 800 more of those. It was always some insanely ludicrous number. "Make 670, and then maybe you'll have 20 good ones." He had an amazing knack for unearthing the crux of what his students came up with regardless of the low-tech materials. He could see what we really intended, and encouraged us whole-heartedly with all his energy, excitement, and weirdness.

This assignment was immensely helpful in that it forced me to loosen up, to stop being overly self-critical while in the process of creating, and to not be scared to reuse my own imagery and material. I think about this assignment all the time, especially when I have some sort of creative block. I remember that I can take a morsel out of something I've already done, and create an entire series or works that spiral out from that one point. Sometimes, if you just work, eventually something new, exciting, and fresh will arise out of it. And stay away from DDT.

## ADRIAN TONE

### Painting Practices at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago Fine Arts

My favorite assignment is to make a bad painting and a good painting. My painting professor in my undergraduate college (School of the Art Institute of Chicago), Scott Reader, gave us this assignment. I think the class was called *Painting Practices*. You are supposed to make what you think is a “good painting,” and then make what you think is a “bad” painting. What happens pretty much every time is that the bad painting comes out much better than the “good” one.

## KEVIN TRUONG

### Studio Lighting Photography

I’m a photography major here at Pratt and when I was a junior I was given the assignment in my *Studio Lighting* class of recreating masterpiece works of art through photography. I thought it was really interesting to be given the assignment in the context of photography. As a photographer it was fun to look at these paintings and try and recreate them through photography, while giving them a modern context.

## **BRYNNA TUCKER**

### **Introduction to the History of Art and Design Observations of Joan Mitchell**

The best assignment I have ever given was spur of the moment. I was teaching a summer pre-college course and brought a group of students to a Joan Mitchell exhibition. The students had a very negative reaction to the work and articulated that it was overly simplistic and unanimously felt that they “could do that themselves.” Based on their reaction, I assigned each of them to come to the next class having created a work in the style of Joan Mitchell. The discussion that ensued at our next meeting revealed a complete shift in perspective for the students. Not only was the work much harder to duplicate than they had thought, but by breaking down the work, each of the students started to recognize nuances in color choice, brush style, composition, and saturation; the work was not as simple as they first thought. They were also able to recognize the difference between an initial gut-reaction or opinion and an in depth and fully formulated observation.

## **VADIS TURNER**

### **Painting I at Boston University Foundation**

Everyone comes to art school because they are good at making something. Oftentimes, a student’s strengths allow them to circumvent their weaknesses. The first year of art school can be the great equalizer. Students have to put

their preferred practices aside and address what has been avoided. I remember how painful this process was. I realize how important it is. Now I try to recreate it for my students.

When I was a freshman at Boston University, I enrolled in Margaret McCann's *Painting I* class. I looked forward to showing off the style of painting I had perfected in high school. My way of working allowed me disguise my issues with drawing. My exaggeration of color allowed me to avoid accurate investigations of light and shadow. I knew how to make something look good but I wasn't learning anything by going through the same motions.

Margaret McCain wasn't interested in how I did things before. On the first day she set up a simple and rather boring arrangement of black and white objects and asked that we document what we see with paint. The only hitch was that we couldn't use brushes. We could only use plastic spoons. She wanted to make it hard for us to rely on our old tricks. I struggled. I wrestled with the tool. I was frustrated and uncomfortable. I looked harder than I ever had before. I had to leave my comfort zone, problem solve and learn how to do something differently.

The painting I made was awkward and wasn't the best in the class but it expanded my skill set and creative process.

## SCOTT WILLIAMS

### Foundation (Light Color Design)

I immediately thought of this lesson; it's a painted still life that focuses on light, color, and form. I like this assignment because it doesn't exist alone; it builds off previous learning. Students work from a still life using two different light sources. I set up a warm light source on one side of the props and, for the other side, I cover the windows in the room with sheets of blue plastic. I hadn't seen anyone covering the windows in plastic before. I came up with that to really enhance the color of the light. The assignment is great because it also involves breaking down the forms with line, something I also do in my own work. I have students extend the lines in the still life and it kind of makes a matrix of lines that define the space of the still life. Students are then forced to make decisions within the shapes of that matrix that they probably wouldn't have seen otherwise. It really is a cubist idea. It incorporates simultaneous contrast, light/shadow, and warm/cool all in the same assignment.

## ALEESHA WOOD

### Animation at Munson-Williams Proctor Communications Design

When I was at Munson-Williams Proctor in 2010 I took an animation class with David Cahill. We had to create a flash animation that was 30-40 seconds long that incorporated the Pratt logo on it to put on the front page of MWP's website. Even though it was a bitch and a half to work on because the

animation was tedious, the results were worth it. I had an awesome partner, Jeremy, and the basic self teaching aspect of the project was frustrating at times, but in the end was really rewarding and the sense of freedom was awesome.

## SEOKYEONG LEE YOON

### New Genre at San Francisco Art Institute 20 WORKS

The student chose from the following three categories: Something autobiographical, something broken and put back together so that what puts it back together becomes a feature, and a brightly colored object made without using paint...

She brought three elements to the class and observed them: drawings, butterflies and flowers. This assignment was followed by a new assignment which asked the students to make one piece out of the three chosen elements.

From the three pieces- drawings, butterflies and flowers- the student created a wedding bouquet in which the butterflies became the petals of the flowers.

### New Genre 1 at San Francisco Art Institute Fine Arts

When I studied at San Francisco Art Institute in 2011, I took the *New Genre* class. It was the first week of the semester, and it was my first week in the United States. SFAI was a

## 20 WORKS

### **OBJECTIVE:**

Respond to at least 3 of the following 20 categories. These are three separate responses. You may use any material or process (from objects to performance to video). Be open, be unexpected, be experimental, be imaginative, be intuitive...

- From something that you wouldn't ordinarily do
- Color as content
- A very dense thing
- The smallest thing ever
- Something autobiographical
- Something modeled with a material other than clay
- The sound of an emotion
- Relating to your body
- From an article
- A shelter
- A document
- Many as one
- Something broken and put back together, the junction that puts the two things back together becomes a feature
- A line
- A charged object
- Two opposite things joined
- A sculpture that is a photograph/video
- Something stretched
- A brightly colored object made without using paint
- A representation that doesn't look like the thing it's representing

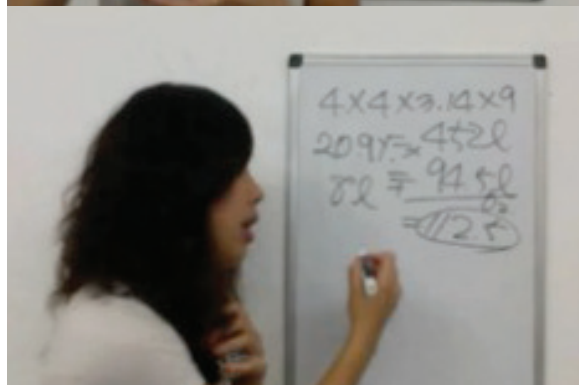
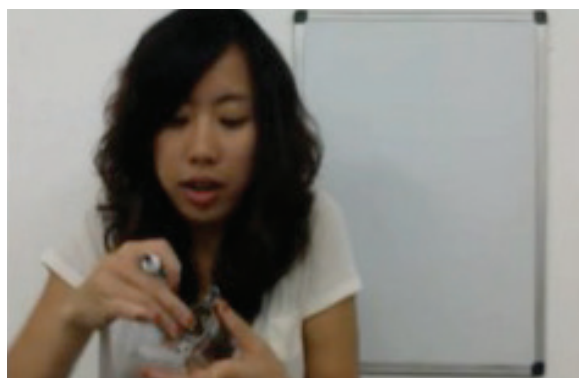
small art school, so graduate students and Post Baccalaureate students could take undergraduate classes freely. I was a Post Bacc student, and the class was for the undergraduate students; most of the classmates were freshmen. My major was sculpture back then, and I was wondering what the New Genre major was; that was why I took the class.

The class was on Tuesdays and Thursdays, so we usually had only two or three days to prepare each project. And the teacher also recommended that we not spend much money on each project. "Just be creative and crazy! Do not think too much!" So, since we did not have much time and money to prepare, the class generated a lot of really impulsive, creative, interesting, and unexpected artworks.

At the first class, the teacher asked us to go out for an hour, and to think about introducing ourselves with metaphor/ action/gesture. It was an interesting assignment. But, after the first class, she gave us a second assignment, which was the best assignment I have ever received. The assignment was to 'make a one minute piece.'

For my 'one minute piece,' I brought in a glass jar and a dead mouse. I said, "I will put this alive mouse in this jar." And I started to calculate the oxygen inside of the jar relative to the mouse; I calculated the breathing amount/ rates of the mouse. The conclusion of the equation was that the jar contains one-minute of oxygen (to live) for one mouse. Then, I pulled out the mouse from the jar, and said, "Yes, it is dead!" And everyone just freaked out.

Other students made interesting pieces as well. One memorable piece was: one girl just said, "Give a minute," and went back to her chair.



## COLOMBINE ZAMPONI

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### **Polylingual Poetics at Bard College New Forms/Integrated Practices**

The students were asked to spend time in New York City with a notebook, recording snippets of foreign language that could be heard on the streets. Kind of like a field recording, except not audio; just transcribed, and then the beauty of the assignment was selecting the words, foreign language snippets, and constructing a poem out of them. Very little meaning involved, just sound associations, associations of foreign words we could or could not understand and it was glorious and so beautiful. The results were wonderful polylingual poems from all the students. Tower of Babel! I still have my poems from the class.

**STUDENT PARTICIPANTS  
ADE 621  
SECTIONS ONE AND TWO**

Holly Graves  
Jessica Munger  
Jes Hughes  
Jessica Kelley  
Sarah Alfarhan  
Ashley Gunter  
Caroline E. Ashworth  
Brittany Miller  
Colombine Zamponi  
Erica Quinn  
Pia Moos  
Meghan Minton  
Erika Schroeder  
Marika Robak  
Imani Shanklin-Roberts  
Polixeni Theodorou  
Elisa Elorza

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Leah Clark	15	Marika Robak	65
Jessica DeMoura	18	Olivia S.	67
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