

Discovery & Direction: An Art/Life Workshop

Conceived & conducted by Robert Atkins

Discovery & Direction is a workshop **for artists** presented by the **Santa Fe Art Institute** that focuses on ways to **identify barriers, renew meaning and facilitate movement** in your art. It entails discussion, writing, reading, and—by its end—the production of an **action plan** for moving forward. Its basis is art but it acknowledges that obstacles to making art or changes in it may have a psychological component. (As with so many areas of life, the anxieties, defenses, insecurities or whatever gets in the way of realizing goals are usually *symptoms*, rather than *causes*, of our problems.) We'll focus on **identifying and clarifying problems** and **transforming them into opportunities for change** within the context of your circumstances and history, abilities and goals—whether you create art exclusively for your personal satisfaction or seek enhanced professional opportunities and standing.

Discovery & Direction: An Art/Life Workshop lasts **three-weeks** and consists of **6 meetings—3 group sessions and 3 private “tutorials.”** The mix of group and individual meetings helps ensure that every participant's needs can be met. A wide range of **goals** is typically pursued by workshop members: From radically changing one's art to identifying the 'next step' professionally; and from overcoming distraction and disorganization to sharpening the ability to critically consider (and write or speak about) your own art and the work of others.

Before the first workshop session (and after you've enrolled and paid for the workshop) reading will be (electronically) distributed and I will ask you to send me your CV and artist's statement. You should arrive both having read the assigned reading and considered your workshop goal(s). They may be as general as “moving my art to the next level” (can you define *level*?) or as (deceptively) simple as “I'd like to be able to approach curators, dealers and critics in a professional way.” Because of its brevity and focus, benefiting from the workshop experience will require a few hours' work each week.

Topics for consideration include:

- **Art's nature and purpose** (as self expression, entertainment, therapy, knowledge production, community building etc)
- The nature, purpose and origins of **your art**
- Issues of **presentation** (both in writing & power-point)
- **Criticism** & feed-back, critical thinking & self-criticism)
- Grants & **funding**
- **Collaboration** & competitions
- **Art history** & your place in it

- Allegiance to **community** (& how to encourage it)
- **Professional strategies**
- Professional etiquette
- **Goals & action plan**

Dates: July 9 - 27, 2012 Group meetings: Monday eves, July 9, 16 & 23, 6:30-9 pm, Three required private meetings by appointment by July 27

Tuition fee: \$225 / \$150 SFAI resident artists & students / 25% discount for enrollment by June 10 / Need-based, low-tuition-fee scholarships available and awarded on a case-by-case basis)

Robert Atkins is an art historian, curator and critic who has written for more than 100 publications, ranging from The New York Times to Wired. He is a former columnist for the Village Voice and co-author, in 2006, of Censoring Culture: Contemporary Threats to Free Expression. His texts ArtSpeak: A Guide to Contemporary Ideas, Movements, and Buzzwords and its modern-art companion, ArtSpoke, are among the best-selling art books of the past 25 years. He has organized more than forty exhibitions including From Media to Metaphor: Art About AIDS, the first international traveling museum show of its kind, and Fusion! Artists in a Research Setting, for Carnegie Mellon University, where he is a Fellow of the STUDIO for Creative Inquiry. He is an online media pioneer and recently produced ArtSpeak China, the first bilingual "wiki" devoted to contemporary Chinese art. He is a co-founder of Visual AIDS--the creators of Day Without Art and the Red Ribbon and a former board member of the American branch of the International Association of Art Critics. For more information visit www.RobertAtkins.net or contact him at rdatkins@gmail.com

Responses to Robert Atkins's workshops:

"I began Robert Atkins's workshop last summer hating to write and finished it better at writing and at thinking...Our group discussions functioned as useful critiques: They were honest, challenging, and safe--thanks to Robert's professionalism." Krista Elrick, Santa Fe

"Robert Atkins's workshop is about communication: It offers insight into what's current in the art world "out there" as well as an encounter with the personal art world within." Marcia Lyons, Waiheke Island, New Zealand

"Participating in Robert Atkins's workshop helped me become more creative, confident and professional. Working with him for a few weeks was like getting an MFA in real-world art practice." Joy Wilson Gray, San Francisco