

The Marchutz School of Art

Mission

The mission of the Marchutz School of Art is to help students sharpen their visual perceptions of the world around them, decipher their emotional responses to these perceptions, and through a holistic (studio, historical, and critical) discipline, relate their discoveries to an intensive investigation of the nature and aim of art.

Goals

- To provide opportunities for the student to:
- Develop her/his capacity to see.
 - Develop a holistic approach to the study of art and art making.
 - Combine studio art production with liberal arts disciplines.
 - Enhance awareness of the relationship between perception and imagination.
 - Develop an historical and critical sense so that self-expression is linked to a larger tradition.
 - Formulate an integrative relationship between knowledge and intuition, perception and concept, self-expression and global awareness.



Values

The Marchutz School of Art believes that a sustained and intensive study of the relationships existing in the visible world combined with an individual effort to articulate them in a coherent form is an important aspect of an artist's development no matter what his/her ultimate form of expression might become. Without a sense of these relationships it is difficult, if not impossible, to understand and appreciate how the most profound works of art of all periods and places are linked one to the other. For example, in what manner can a Van Gogh be linked to Hiroshige and Rembrandt in the same instant? Understanding the linkage is as important as understanding the dissonance. The recognition of this linkage helps students transform mere self-expression and novelty into something original and of more value.

Seeing is at the base of the program; however, we believe that the discipline of acquiring and responding to historical knowledge and critical thought, as well as immersing oneself in art works from all periods and other cultures is essential to an original and meaningful contemporary artistic process.

A sense of place is also a driving force in our study abroad program. The school is situated in the south of France thus our main focus in a semester or year program is the intensive study of the European heritage derived from the era of the caves of Lascaux to the present day. However, as we focus on the art that presents itself to us in Europe, we strive in the seminars and studio to introduce students to comparative analysis of work from differing periods and cultures.

On a daily basis an artist does not separate her/his life from her/his studio discipline, or the studio discipline from an experience in the museums and galleries, or the museum experience from critical thought and analysis. It is our mission to instill a holistic approach to art in the minds of students so that their work becomes life-oriented rather than, say, simply, course or grade oriented.

Thus the study of relationships (or lack of them) in the world, liberal arts discourse, museum study, and critical analysis are combined into a daily discipline to help students formulate what Flannery O'Connor calls "the habit of art."



Learning Outcomes

- The students will sharpen her/his perceptive apparatus as it discerns underlying relationships in the visible world (as opposed to seeing each element as a separate entity) and reveal their discoveries in her/his painting and drawing.
- The student will improve her/his ability to unify technique with content and form in their studio works.
- The student will exhibit a deeper knowledge of the European artistic heritage, a perception of what may link one work of this heritage to another, and the ability to compare and contrast these works with those of other cultures.
- The student will improve her/his ability to dialogue, and read and write coherently about formal and content issues using specific examples at the level of form to justify their aesthetic judgements concerning works of art.
- The student will demonstrate an on-going willingness to seek connections between the existing art forms of different periods and cultures with her/his attempts to articulate a unique point of view and mode of expression.



Assessment

Assessment Rubrics

Faculty use five assessment rubrics, one for each learning outcome, to assess student learning.

Critiques of studio production

Group critiques

Each semester there are two group critiques in which students gather around a selection of work representing the entire cohort. Discussions around particular issues will emerge based on the work.

Individual mid-term Critique

2-hour critique with faculty member

Final critique.

2-hour critique with faculty member

Response papers for the seminar

In the seminar the student is responsible for writing a 2-page «response paper» which addresses the text to be discussed in the upcoming seminar. The first section of the seminar is devoted to drawing from the images to be discussed in relation to that text. The response papers are graded and annotated by a faculty member.

Opening question

Each week two students are responsible for formulating an «opening question» which they believe will help generate understanding of a given text and focus the discussion in the seminar. The students who formulate the question are not responsible for a response paper that week.

Dialogue and critical analysis

The third part of the seminar is devoted to applying some aspect of the text to a close study of slide images of works of art. Faculty observe students' participation during the seminars, noting how well they can dialogue with others, whether they have engaged in a close reading of the texts and images, and how well they can formulate ideas from the reading and discussions.

Mid-term and final exam

Two 4-hour exams - each involves a written, comparative critical analysis of two or three slide images.

Student Portfolio

The studio work, response papers, mid-terms and finals will comprise a portfolio which the faculty will assess twice each semester using the rubrics for the five learning outcomes.

Student self-assessment

After midterm and final critiques and before the student see the faculty assessment, she/he will use the rubrics to assess her/his own work. She/he will then compare her/his assessment to that of the faculty assessment. These rubric assessments will be added to the portfolio.

Students

As a philosophy major, I'm constantly looking for new ways to think about things. That's what initially attracted me to the Marchutz School, and I've found that, over the time I've spent here, the way I experience and think about the world has changed for the better. I learn a lot at college through studying and formulating arguments, and developing my thoughts based on reading the thoughts and experiences of others. But what the Marchutz School does is teach us about the world through applying thoughts to our own experience of reality. Everything from studio sessions, to seminars, to the trips we go on, all serve to teach us a more informed way of looking at the world, which I can now take back to further inform my life, both inside and outside of the classroom.

O'Neill Cushman
Philosophy major
Kenyon College

At the Marchutz School looking becomes a discipline in itself. We often spend at least an hour in front of paintings, motifs, architecture, etc. I've learned that only after diligently taking the time to familiarize myself with what I'm looking at can I discern aesthetic relationships within the subject. As a music major, I've begun to patiently devote this kind of attention to the music I listen to. From a composer's perspective, when I listen to a composition, I don't listen for how well a section of instruments plays its role, but rather how the melody that section is playing relates to a different section in the orchestra and contributes to the overall swelling and sinking of the piece. As a drummer, I no longer conceive of percussion as only playing a timekeeping role. I've realized that what I play is just as much melodically integrated to what other musicians are playing as it is rhythmically and that it's important to listen to other elements in the music and allow that to inform what I play. As a music critic, an album has become more than a series of songs, but rather one unified, comprehensive musical conception. What I look for in a strong album are elements that work together to uphold and support a musical concept. The lessons I've learned from the Marchutz School are just as applicable to other forms of art. They have informed my listening a great deal and will continue to be the principles around which I center my encounters with music from now on.

Nick Velleman
Music major
William and Mary

I consider my semester at the Marchutz School of Art to have been the perfect complement to my major in art history at Oberlin College. The school's holistic approach to the study of painting has taught me new perspectives on methods of analyzing art. Immersing myself in painting for a semester has helped me comprehend the artistic process, bringing deeper insight into works that I study in an academic context. The art criticism seminar held at the end of each week brought philosophy, literature, poetry, and theory into my thought process in relation to art. I have saved all of our seminar readings; they are truly gems that I will refer to when in need of critical guidance. Having completed a semester at the Marchutz School, I feel more confident than ever in my ability to write convincingly about art, an important skill in the study of art history that I never expected to develop at a painting school. Under the devoted instruction of the school's incredible professors, I have learned valuable lessons on art that I could never find in an art history classroom.

Martha Moldovan
Art History Major
Oberlin College