

PATTERNS OF INFLUENCE

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Peter Bonner, Alexandra Rutsch Brock, Marta Cabral, Dionisio Cortes, Carlo D'Anselmi, Adrian Deva, Alanna Dunn, Anne Finkelstein, Andrew Fish, Celia Gerard, Gregory Gomez, Mary Hafeli, Fiona Halse, Vic Honigsfeld, Joseph Iacona, Leeah Joo, Melissa Joseph, Somayeh Kashi, Erin Koch Smith, Melanie Kozol, Judith Kruger, Eunji Lee, Bonnie Levine, William Low, Deborah Lutz, Karen McGarry, Samantha Melvin, Edmund Merricle, Brittany Miller, Patricia Miranda, Kayla Mohammadi, Katherine Mojzsis, Alan Montgomery, Indira Morre, Lotte Petricone, Jessica Poser, Lisa Pressman, Julia Rooney, Jo Ann Rothschild, Dena Schutzer, Reuben Sinha, Susan Stillman, Jamie Treacy, Deborah Winiarski

Curated by Andrea Kantrowitz, Sue Collier, Barbara Laube

THE PAINTING CENTER

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Patterns of Influence

For artists who teach, an experiment or demonstration in the classroom can turn into a new direction in the studio; an artist's personal passions can give rise to engaging learning experiences; observing a student's joy in exploring new materials and techniques can reignite excitement and curiosity about art-making in her teacher. Many of the artists in this exhibition articulated the patterns of influence they experience in their own studios and classrooms. Leeah Joo says, what I say and think in one space always echoes in the other. Art and teaching practices influence each other in myriad ways, competing for limited resources of time and attention, but also energizing and inspiring each other.

Some artists turn to teaching simply for practical purposes, but usually there is more to it. The studio is often a solitary place. Sharing passion, knowledge and experience can bring a needed sense of deep connection with others. Providing opportunities and guidance for young and old to learn and grow through their own discoveries in the arts is often deeply rewarding. Returning to the studio, after immersion in the demanding interpersonal space of the classroom, can feel like heaven.

Erin Koch Smith says, Sometimes I need the solitude of the studio prior to teaching in order to think through that day's class plan, and I think the more engaged I am in the

studio, the better I am at engaging with [the students] about their work. Nurturing their own creative practice sustains and replenishes what artist/teachers have to offer their students. They can be authentic role models, demonstrating what it means to think—and do—like an artist.

The artist/teachers in this exhibition give substance to patterns of influence in dense and layered materials and images; both abstract and representational. In bronze relief, wood, glass, paper, or oils on canvas, each work records a personal journey of discovery. Underlying the rich variety of the artworks is a palpable delight in working with materials that mirrors the mutual give and take of student and teacher. Marta Cabral explains, My practices as a teacher are grounded on getting to know my students and helping them figuring out ways of relating to the world, knowing the world, and being their best selves in the world. In the studio, that is what I try to do for myself too, exploring and listening to materials. Letting materials change me, as they let me change them. Artists who teach can share their students' pleasure in bodily engagement with all kinds of stuff, attending to their specific qualities. Inert matter seems to come alive as we become more alert to and play with the possibilities.

The studio and the classroom both provide spaces for thought, for making and doing, and for the imagination to flourish. For noticing. They are spaces where, in the best of times, ideas and observations flow freely. Within their walls, we think with and through materials, see the world as it is and imagine how it could be otherwise. Students remind their teachers to stay attentive and open to experience and to others. Joseph Iacona writes, The value of the students' impact on myself, my work, and my beliefs cannot be understated; they have awoken me to new ways of thinking, inspire some of the content I choose to explore and ultimately left a lasting impression on my motives for why I continue to make.

In explicit and implicit ways, the artists in this exhibition share their artistic journey with their students. Even in the most abstract pieces, there is a shared sense of human presence, relatedness and adventure that animates the work. Artist and pre-school teacher Brittany Miller writes, I'm going to keep trying to uncover the unknown...following the children wherever they lead me. That's the most exciting thing about teaching, and about making art--we don't know where we are going yet.

Andrea Kantrowitz, 2019



Peter Bonner

The Virgin, 2019, Oil on panel, 32" x 24"

I approach teaching the same way I approach my work. To enter the space without expectations or ideas, to be still and observe: what each artist is doing, my thoughts. To only voice a thought that comes the same way it comes when I'm painting in the studio. I learn from my observations: concerning the way color relationships make light and space, meaningful structure, the power of shape, and importantly our ability to abstract from the world around us, to distill something essential and powerful from our experience.



Alexandra Rutsch Brock

Avalon, 2016, Oil on linen, 8" x 10"

I structure my classroom like my studio, except with 150 artists a day. I am experimental and non-traditional with media and I introduce that element of exploration and play to my students. I started a Visiting Artists program that has visual artists, curators, installers, writers and gallerists come in and share their lives so that students can see the many ways they can be part of the "art world". Their excitement to create is infectious, and their insights and discussions about art are daily inspirations.



Marta Cabral

Steel textures 2, 2019, Glass, 6" x 8" x 6"

Own your work, and let your students’ own theirs,” I often remind my students. But for me to be able to do what I preach, having my own studio time is crucial. The excitement and frustration of working with materials, of struggling with ideas, of listening and playing, reminds me of the importance of giving my students the opportunity to do the same. Studio time keeps me in my place – as does teaching.



Adrian Deva

Landscape, 2018, Handmade oil paint on panel, 9" x 12"

Teaching and learning environments are no doubt microcosms of giving and taking, situations of carefully planned deliveries of knowledge and experiences, but also places of inescapable exchanges of mutual influence. I have had the outmost pleasure and privilege of being a small part of this enriching exchange for the last 16 years, and with each year my appreciation for every aspect of it grows.



Dionisio Cortes

Untitled / Limb, 2018, Smooth raku and metal caster, 11" x 21" x 15"

Incessantly; there is constant application of practice during teaching sessions, mainly in methods of production: technique systematization; efficiency in processes; mindfulness of progress. My work is impacted both formally and conceptually by our students’ interpretation of the world around them and the manner in which they convey their ideas of same; be the way they make marks; use form and color; or put different materials together.



Alanna Dunn

Untitled, 2018, Oil and wax on mesh fabric, 12" x 12"

My work is focused on landscape, patterns of light, and the physicality of paint. I encourage my students to notice things about their work and make connections, to find their own style, and to be fearless in their approach. Through my teaching, I am motivated to think about my own work in a deeply reflective way because of the creative exchange of ideas that I have with my students.



Carlo D’Anselmi

Smack!, 2019, Oil on linen, 30" x 24"

Teaching helps my work symbiotically, it gives me new ideas, helps me to articulate what I mean, and gives me a little more clarity in my artistic life. The creative energy when teaching art is so invigorating-it makes me feel that I’m at my best.



Anne Finkelstein

Scaffolding, 2017, Acrylic on paper, 26" x 33"

Getting back to two-dimensional design basics such as line, focal point, composition, value and color with my Parsons foundation students is always grounding for my (complex) work. I use a combination of digital and analog tools, which are deeply integrated into my teaching. My long experience with the ups and downs of the creative process gives me the ability to steer my students through their own frustrations, obsessions— and triumphs.



Andrew Fish

Temple Visit, 2019, Oil on linen, 27" x 36"

I often tell young artists that if there’s something in their painting that bothers them a little, they should address it immediately. I tell them to be assured that that little thing will grow to be a big thing that bothers them even more. I imbue this narrative with life lessons in tolerance of self-dealing and love. It’s an idea that can be applied to anything. The little things grow to become big things. And in painting, we have control over it.



Mary Hafeli

Field Study 1, 2019, Mixed media on paper, 28" x 28"

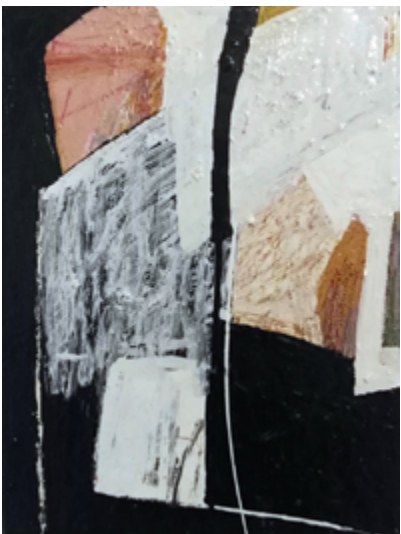
My art practice and my teaching both invite openness to not knowing and to unpredictability, and a trust in trying different, sometimes uncomfortable, ways of figuring things out. I love watching very young children work without the self-doubt that can plague older artists. If there weren’t challenges worth taking on, or chances to push past what I already know and can do--in making art and in teaching--I wouldn’t do these things.



Celia Gerard

Concave, 2016, Bronze, unique patina, 22" x 22" x 3"

How do I construct an image that conveys an emotional truth, a truth that may not only be seen but also sensed? Creating clear spatial and tactile relationships can create metaphors for experience. By questioning what we see, and asking “how can I see more?” I hope to help my students work in depth while developing an awareness of sensation in order to discover hidden realities. I am humbled by my students’ efforts to grow and develop artistically – they inspire and challenge me to question my own habits and assumptions. We are all exploring together and that is a gift. It’s a privilege to experience the world through my students’ eyes.



Fiona Halse

Line, 2018, Mixed media on canvas, 17” x 13”

I seek to create abstract forms that are connected to a visceral essence. Whilst my work values formalism, Tachist processes are important to enable connections to the subconscious. Informal approaches to creating art have enabled insight for students with mental health challenges and university students who deny their creativity. When risk-taking, play and personal connection between form and medium is explored, students remind me that art is embodied feeling and is driven by inner necessity.



Gregory Gomez

Tramuntana #7, 2017, Gouache paint and oil on paper, 22"x30"

I have always tried to model for my students the balance between teaching and keeping one’s own creative work vital. Sometimes, however, during the densest part of a semester, my creative work can seem impossibly far away and the pathway back to the studio seems unlikely to find. Then there are occasions when you encounter a student’s excitement of their creative discovery in the studio classroom, and you realize that they are modeling the creative process for you.



Vic Honigsfeld

On the Bowery II, 2017, Oil on panel, 24" x 24"

Teaching art allows me to watch students creatively solve problems. Sometimes I see this process go in a direction that I could not imagine which then inspires me to do the same in my studio work. On the flipside, my art practice allows me to break a problem down into bite size pieces which I can then bring into the classroom/ studio and share this wisdom with my students.



Joseph Iacona

All the Illegal Things I've Done..., 2019, Soot from burnt confessions, acrylic on cloth, 24" x 24"

I've always been inspired by the concept of cause-and-effect relationships and engage my students to consider connections within their own world. Creating art with people from diverse backgrounds, I've taught over 1000 formally adjudicated teens and incarcerated adults throughout the last 10 years. It is the passion of these individuals for keeping things real, that fuels my drive to reflect on personal history, decisions and consequences; striving for authenticity as an artist and person.



Leeah Joo

Maw No. 1, 2018, Oil on canvas, 16" x 16"

What I think in one space always echos in the other. My work relies on technique and illusions to evoke a story. In class I encourage students to explore any idea, good, bad or strange as long as it is executed with good technique and vigor. I think you teach best what you need the most. I try to I give my best in class and remind myself to take my own advice.



Melissa Joseph

Lotus, 2019, Acrylic, cotton, silk, photographs, ink, 18" x 24"

As a practicing artist, I find that I can better relate to my students' challenges and triumphs. While individual creative processes are unique, the struggles can be similar. I continually learn from how students respond to materials presented in class. They often see things I miss or we bond over shared discoveries. I find that I am constantly looking for new things to show them, and that ends up inspiring me as well.



Somayeh Kashi

Mosaic Pathways, 2018, Inkjet archival print, 16" x 20"

To me, art is not something I set aside time to practice each day. It is a way of life and how I interact with the world around me. I apply this playfulness and create an environment in my classroom that encourages innovation, critical thinking and challenges students to pause and question the world around them.



Erin Koch Smith

Heavy Lifter, 2019, Oil on panel, 9" x 12"

It's my experience that the issues I wrestle with in my studio are similar to the questions I have in the classroom. I create assignments based on things I do in my work, and ways I see other artists working, to give students tools for when they are working on their own. I want my students to be free from the tyranny of talent so they can be more curious, and think and see differently than they did before. When I'm engaged in my work, somehow it translates, and my students are more focused and energetic about theirs.



Melanie Kozol

Dragonback, 2017, Oil on panel, 12" x 12"

There is a give and take between what you know, where you want to go and what happens on the canvas. In my artistic practice, I balance imagery with explorative painting to move beyond the literal. I encourage my students to walk this journey, to expand their vocabulary and push forward.



Judith Kruger

Terrain Study 21, 2017, Mixed media, 28" x 35.5"

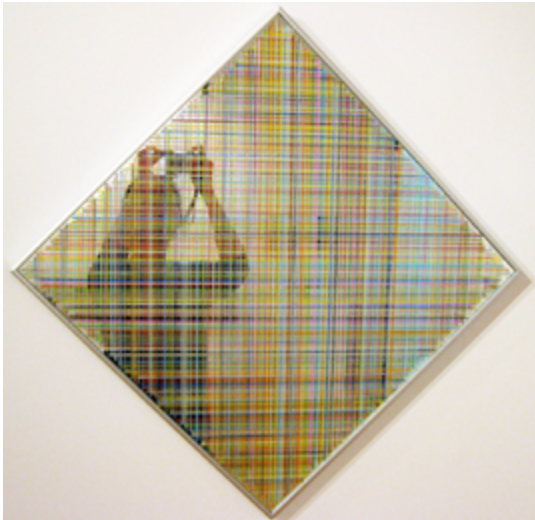
I have developed specific pedagogy for teaching both environmental painting and abstraction: my work’s two primary formal aspects. Teaching is a continuation of my practice. My students (diverse working artists) bring their individual expertise and ideas with them, eliciting equal exchange. My “no boundaries - open discourse” teaching style is catalytic for sharing materials, processes, and unique discoveries well after our time together. Teaching keeps me accountable as being “the expert”. It forces me to practice what I preach, which raises my bar and ultimately influences others.



William Low

Train Ride, 2016, Oil on board, 18" x 24"

I have taught art colleges for 35 years. Painting technique is something that I make a point not to teach - this is best left for my students to discover for themselves. Classroom discussions focus on concepts, the best way to visually explain an idea and to speak clearly with a singular, artistic voice. These classroom discussions carry over into my own practice and I ask the same questions whenever I begin a new personal work or commission.



Eunji Lee

Window Field of Vision, 2016, Glass mirror, oil-base color markers, 29" x 29"

Teaching is a relational, reciprocal, and reflective form of art: We shape each other’s creation, learning, and growth. This view of teaching grounds all my artistic endeavors whether in creating object-based or socially-engaged artworks. With the grid symbolizing a symbiotic axis of time and space. “Window” was conceptualized to reflect the constant flux in identity formation, evoke the textured dimensions of the viewer’s engagement in becoming the subject, and blur the process-object divide in art-making.



Deborah Lutz

Tentative Sight, 2016, Sanguine, ink on paper, 30" x 22.5"

Constrained by their desire to capture an image, my college students create drawings from a place of linear depiction over experience. In ‘Seeing Through Drawing’ at The Met my students are partially sighted and blind adults; working with abandon they create and experience materials and ‘making’ while finding their final image. Observing them has broadened my material explorations and creative experience; in turn, I offer this to my college students. We wrestle with it together.



Bonnie Levine

We, 2018, Porcelain, 10" x 6" x 6"

My creative process is a sensory and emotional experience in which the soul and the surface connect. This has become my template for constructing learning environments for children: a space to experiment, to experience, to be open to the unexpected. Observing children’s curiosity and delight as they interact with materials in this context inspires me to approach my own work with a beginners mind, with a sense of play and wonder.



Karen McGarry

Within and Between, 2016, Mixed media artist book, 7" x 5" x 1.5"

As a visual artist/ researcher/ teacher engaged in studio practice, artmaking opens spaces for unravelling the messy context of struggling to learn more, to understand better, to eventually know. In these brave spaces of coming to know, I am reflexively immersed in process, questioning, and reflecting. In such an ecology of generating knowledge, I work alongside learners of all ages to guide them toward embodying knowing as a place of becoming – as practitioners of creative inquiry.



Samantha Melvin

A Migratory Tale, 2019, Mixed media, 36" x 36"

As a teacher, I know how to “draw out” the artist in my students. As an artist, I had long denied myself investigations into mark-making as process, on the merger of art and meaning. Now, I find myself discovering uncharted territories of possibility. I make time to explore and allow the marks to lead me. The act of teaching brought this creative experience to light. I can’t imagine one artistic practice without the other.



Edmund Merricle II

Lugubrious I, 2019, Oil on canvas, 10" x 8"

My teaching is informed by my deep commitment and passion as an artist, which is the single most important thing I bring to my classes. I want to instill in my students the excitement of painting, making space out of colored mud and a flat surface. In observing my students, I am surprised with the energy they can bring to a drawing and painting.



Brittany Miller

Tar Skep, 2019, Tar, shellac and obsidian on wood panel, 14" x 11"

Working in a preschool, I’m reminded of the profound beauty that’s all around us, ready to be collected, bound up in stories, and fixed as pictures. Children are naturally tuned-in to this beauty. They are ravenous hunters and gatherers of the profound—fully present and engaged with the world and its treasures. In my artmaking, I work as a child does, plunging myself deep enough into what’s in front of me to see its hidden glimmerings.



Patricia Miranda

Florilegium II, 2017, Book pages dyed with cochineal insect dye, 6" x 8" x 4"

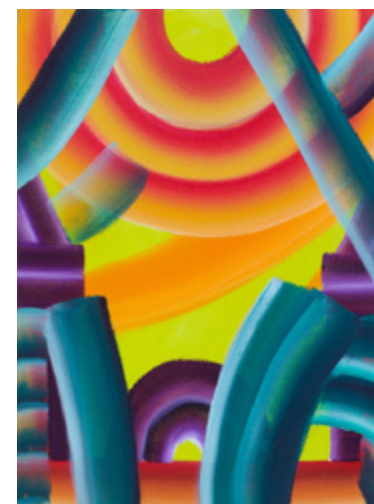
Teaching is a practice of radical vulnerability, radical generosity, and radical optimism. Teaching is intersectional, a daily practice in egalitarian ways of thinking, speaking and acting. Each person brings a rich inner intelligence to the table; I listen, witness, and support. Teaching keeps me honest, curious, and constantly learning. I examine my own assumptions and ideas, and challenge students to explore theirs. Teaching is a partnership; together we think and dream anew about the world.



Kayla Mohammadi

Sea Barge II, 2019, Oil on wood, 16" x 20"

I teach painting at Massachusetts College of Art and Design in Boston, MA. While focusing on the basic formal elements of painting through observation, I also instruct my classes to ask “what if” questions of their work. This challenges students to dig deeper, and allows the work to move past their preconceived notions. In turn, teaching gives me fresh eyes. Encouraging others to be curious and brave helps me do the same in my own work.



Katharine Mojzsis

Tomorrow, 2018, Oil on canvas, 12" x 9"

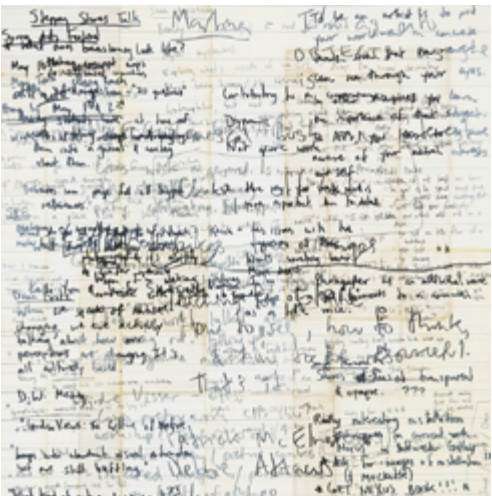
My teaching practice is an amalgam of all the most fitting attributes that I have been able to glean from previous educational and art world experiences. Through this, I impart a skill set and a level of knowledge that isn’t normally found in high school curriculum. I am the teacher I wish I had.



Alan Montgomery

Bog Cuts and Vegetal Gods and Godesses, 2017, India ink, 16" x 20"

The impetus for my current work is founded in a strong interest in how textual works such as Seamus Heaney’s poetry unlocks sensations and memories, which manifest through the visual language of painting and drawing. I speak to students about patterns one finds in nature and how these patterns are part of a deep unconscious collective that can be accessed through exposure to media such as writing, film, and sonic art forms because media is a translation of natural phenomena.



Indira Moore

Adam: Sixteen Notes on Photography, 2014, Artist pen, oil on panel, 18" x 18"

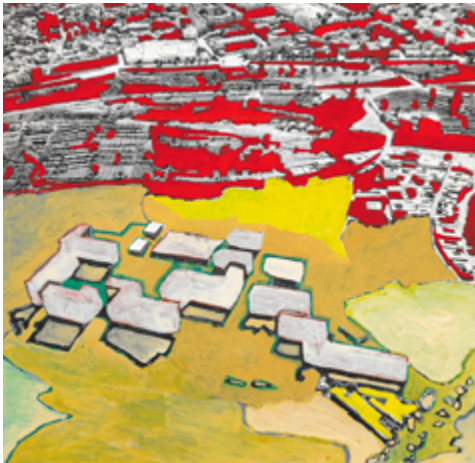
Together with all artists’ miraculous survival skills, the most rewarding responsibility of an art educator is to be a collaborator in establishing a compassionate and socially responsible community of unique individuals. It is my greatest pleasure to demonstrate that we all have a shared purpose in a world where learning is highly valued, and that creativity touches every aspect of thoughtful living.



Lotte Petricone

Through The Blue Beyond, 2018, Acrylic and collage on wood, 10" x 20"

My life’s path hasn’t been a straight one leading toward being an artist, and I wouldn’t be the artist I am without having been an educator. Teaching reminds me daily to be a student in life, to embrace new experiences, to break down how an artist thinks. Along the way I’ve absorbed my teachings, developing into a conscious visual artist with a thorough understanding of design principles, which, in turn, filters back into my teaching.



Jessica Poser

Relocation, 2019, Gouache on paper, 8" x 8"

In my work, I set up a structure or situation for myself, and then create connections within those constraints. Similarly, in my teaching, I set up situations in which my students and I can wander together, respond, and see where these connections might take us. This way of working requires a tolerance for ambiguity and a leap of faith. The discomfort of working without a destination in mind, however, makes way for sustained investigation and discovery.



Lisa Pressman

The Heart of It, 2017, Oil and wax on panel, 12" x 12"

My passion for materials, for art history, the freedom of expression, the joy of making, informs my teaching practice. I watch intently to how students handle materials and listen to what they say about their work. I facilitate personal vision along with technical issues. Teaching is a symbiotic relationship and because it is, each of us benefit. Often, what I tell my students is the same dialogue I use in my own art practice.



Julia Rooney

Deepspace, 2018, Flashe and oil on canvas, 20" x 36"

Through teaching, I am kept moving. My students ask questions and give insights that constantly challenge me to re-examine materials and subjects which I might otherwise have considered familiar. At the same time, teaching roots me in the ‘here-and-now.’ Guiding a group of students, I believe we become suspended in a state of collaborative problem-solving, whether that be in the art project at hand, or the interpersonal dynamic between individuals in the room.



Jo Ann Rothschild

#2, 2018, Oil on linen, 8" x 10"

I try to give students time, materials, permission and recognition. It's more difficult to be intelligent and benevolent towards my own work.



Susan Stillman

Shadows, 2011, Acrylic on wood panel, 24" x 30"

Teaching is a calling, much like being an artist. Having just completed my 36th year, it still feeds my enthusiasm for what happens in the studio, and vice versa. The primary goal is to inspire my students to find their own voices, and to give them tools to fuel their future artistic journeys. Dreaming up the assignments that break down concepts into teachable pieces also challenges me to constantly reassess my own work, to keep it fresh.



Dena Schutzer

Student, 2019, Oil on canvas, 16" x 14"

As a high school art teacher, I spend the days immersed in the language of paint. Then while searching for ways to make an idea feel alive to my students, my own thinking and instincts must stretch and loosen up. This is the same thinking I use in the studio, so teaching keeps me warmed up.



Jamie Treacy

As We Categorized the Membranes, 2017, Cut paper, drywall tape, graphite, acrylic, 35" x 27"

I love seeing my students break art project rules and devise their own responses to my prompts. Inspired by their boundary-testing spirit, I started to combine cut paper, drawing and painting into bio-mechanical forms that seem to mingle in a smoky realm. The spirit of "What if?" spilled from my teacher self into my artist self. It was as if teaching a Notan project gave me the license to unleash and illuminate my internal world.



Reuben Sinha

Brown Study #1, 2018, Encasutic on wood panel, 32" x 41.5"

Most of my teaching practice is a struggle to remind students to persevere, problem solve, and play. Unfortunately, I don't reach many students, and yet I love teaching, much as in my art practice, I keep working and pushing boundaries despite a rather large portfolio of rejection letters. In both studios, the classroom and my cellar, progress comes from emulating my students' honesty, and bringing their level of truth into my studio process.



Deborah Winiarski

Lines Written III, 2015, Fabric, encaustic, graphite, oil, crayon on panel, 36" x 32" x 4"

My life as Artist defines and shapes my teaching at The Art Students League of New York. Through both group and individual discussions and one-on-one critiques, I do my best to set an example as mentor in terms of integrity, focus, and clarity within one's work. I am energized by my interactions with students and often carry that energy and intensity back into my own studio.

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