



PIERREPONT SCHOOL
Westport, CT

Department Head:

Bill Walker

Head, Art & Art History Program

Former Lecturer, Yale University School of Art

M.F.A., Yale University School of Art

Post-Baccalaureate Certificate, The Art Institute of Chicago

The art studio class teaches skills used to create two-dimensional and three-dimensional art using a variety of materials and techniques. The focus is on repeated artistic practice and process. The language of art composition - color, value, line, form, shape, balance, rhythm, movement, etc. - is explored and practiced through abstract and representational projects using various drawing and painting materials, collage, printmaking, clay, found objects and wire. Some projects are designed to isolate the formal elements of composition, dealing with a non-objective language of color, line and shape to create interesting and successful compositions. Other projects are specific to problems of representation and focus solely on training the eye and hand to work together to re-present the subject in a specific medium. Most projects are a combination of these two extremes with, of course, each student's own creativity and imagination.

Rigorous instruction is always balanced with more playful projects. Collage, abstract painting and hand-building with clay are used to focus on different skills while simultaneously allowing the students more freedom of expression, experimentation and artistic play. Projects using a specific style of artist as a framework give the students different and exciting guidelines for creating. The class is always open to the changing dynamic and ability of each individual and of the class as a whole.

The art history class for younger students is a survey of art from prehistory to the present. Students are introduced to a variety of art images and practices focusing on how the art was made and why the artist made it. Reasons and practices change, of course, as the class moves through time from cave paintings and the ancient world to the advent of Christianity, the Renaissance and Modernism, but underlying themes of representation, formal elements and ideas of building on and reacting to traditions emerge and give the students a foundation and a vocabulary for subsequent and more detailed explorations of art history.

With the younger age group, learning how to look at and talk about different kinds of art is the primary objective. Representational cave paintings with specific yet theoretical ideas behind them and African and Native American art filled with abstraction but supported by literal meaning gives these younger students a solid introduction to ideas of representing nature and abstracting from it as well as culturally different ideas of beauty, decoration and the myriad functions of art. As the class continues, students begin to make their own, educated assumptions and insights into meaning and purpose when looking at images.

They begin to see similarities and differences in art across time which allows for exciting discoveries in the classroom and teaches them how to look and, with their growing knowledge of the vocabulary of art, think and speak about what they see. Art history for the older

students is a detailed survey of the history of Western art from prehistory to the present. Students in this course continue their exploration of the history of art, focusing on how and why the art was made while learning more specifics about the cultural forces surrounding the artistic practices and techniques. A strict chronology is followed to allow the students a better understanding of the sometimes subtle changing of traditions that influence the art discussed. In the visual arts we focus intently on the changing attitudes towards and styles of representation, function, techniques used, lost and relearned and growing ideas of personal artistic expression. In architecture we focus on how the tradition grows and changes depending on technical advances, culture and function.

Janson's History of Art for Young People is the text used for this class. All the images and readings discussed in lectures come from this text. Students are given outlines and questionnaires to help them focus on their note-taking skills both during class and during homework assignments. Frequent tests are given to ensure the students are able to clearly write down their thoughts, facts and opinions about the work while displaying an understanding of the vocabulary of art discussed in class.

Additional faculty:

Jennifer Cohen

Former Adjunct Professor, Yale University

M.F.A., Yale University School of Art

Post-Baccalaureate Certificate, The Art Institute of Chicago