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Visual Arts Program

The proposed Piedmont Project was to develop a course in the Visual Arts Program--Art Hist 393 Special Topics in Landscape Drawing and Painting--that would concentrate on the traditional genre of Landscape Drawing and Painting, and at the same time update it, and reconfigure it to include more specific environmental information.

While a good beginning idea, the ramifications of the participation in the Piedmont Project has been far ranging both in the scope of what I can hope to accomplish. Because of ideas that surfaced during the project, I can increase the historical, social, cultural, political and ecological knowledge of the students at the same time that we experiment with a wide variety of landscape drawing and painting.

The Piedmont Project forced me to think about landscape in its many forms and transformed my ideas of how to present the materials. In particular, my ideas have expanded out of the classical idea of drawing from the pastoral landscape and into ideas that incorporate the complex urban environment in which we live. In addition, I will incorporate other ways to look at the ideas of landscape and their inter-relations with the politics, culture, social structure and environment of our lives. Because of this, the class will become a writing and research class as well as a studio class. Several projects will involve teams of students pursuing research together.

In the first draft of the syllabus I have incorporated both guest speakers and frequent field trips. In the future I would like to incorporate a several day field trip so that the students have an opportunity to study a landscape over some time and to become more familiar through repeated observation, changes of weather, and more consistent removal from the urban world. Possibilities for this include the Georgia coastal islands like Ossabaw, the Northern Georgia area around Rabun Gap and Highland, or the Chattahoochee River area and I will continue to pursue this idea and a funding source for it.

Emory University, Department of Art History, Visual Arts Program
SYLLABUS 393 SPECIAL STUDIES IN LANDSCAPE DRAWING AND
PAINTING

Julia Kjølgaard

This course is designed to expand both your technical drawing and painting abilities at the same time that we address the genre of landscape from many different vantage points and views. We hope within the context of the course to expand both our definition of landscape, but also to provide expanded tools for drawing and painting by including research into the sciences, politics, and culture that affect both how we see landscape, how it is developed, what it looks like, and how it is changing. Looking at some major themes in art, nature and landscape will help us develop a holistic approach to the landscape that should aid our expression and the content of our work.

Questions that we will address include:

Where are we? How do we identify where we are? What are our Macro and micro landscapes? What does natural landscape mean?

What do we think is a natural landscape? What scientific understanding do we need to acquire to be at home in the natural landscape? What drawing abilities or observational understandings do we have to acquire to express its richness?

What personifies an urban man made landscape? What is its nature? How do we identify it? How does an urban environment affect the content of the image? What drawing abilities do we need to acquire to be at home in this landscape?

How do we express change and transformation? How are phenomena recorded in drawing and paint? How does a static image capture change and transformation? What kind of change is taking place in a natural landscape? What kind of change is taking place in an urban landscape?

Do landscapes reflect politics, demographics and culture? How do things observed in landscapes articulate both the politics and culture of the observed? Of the observer? How do the other arts use landscape as theme and subject matter?

The class will require outside of class time, field trips, and out of class project time.

In addition to the projects outlined in the class syllabus: each student will be issued a live animal or plant on the first session of class. A journal must be kept recording changes in this plant or animal over the course of the semester. Observations must be written in a scientific manner and data collected as well as images being recorded at least three times a week to document changes in the appearance, health and activities of said charge. Students are responsible to turn in their documentation at the end of the semester in the form of a book .

PROJECTS

To integrate these many ideas, the course with is developed along major themes and articulating specific projects to explore each. :

- **Location:** Where and how do we locate ourselves from maps to images from space? Where are we and what is around us. Starting with campus maps, then city maps then national and international maps and moving into images from space. We will try to locate ourselves and the tools of drawing and painting traditionally used to articulate this relationship between man, location, specificity and information. In this segment we will research and look particularly at maps from the earliest drawings of man to map makers to Polynesian stick maps.

Problem: Exterior and interior mapping. Using information unearthed in the discussion about maps and their purposes.

Project: A map pair: Create two maps. One should be a map that identifies your immediate world at Emory, Use traditional tools, but also feel free to be inventive and find new ways to locate yourself in a multi-dimensional way. The second paired map should be an interior map of you at this point of your life. Be creative in how you present the information, and the tools you use to express yourself. (Be sure to make a legend that will allow access to the observer)

- Natural Landscape: Materials, elements and phenomena: Looking at the materials of nature: One of the most important for an artist: Light, but also water (in several possible manifestations) earth, minerals, animals and plants. Combining observation and learning more specific information about the identification of types and kinds of trees, geological structures etc. Special guests will be invited from Environmental Sciences to take the students out to observe in nature. A geologist will be invited to talk about earth and mineral formations. Examples of painting, articulating particular locations will be studied. Contemporary artists such as environmental artists as well as other artists who use observation in direct and indirect ways will be studied.

Problem: What are the elements of a natural landscape? What are the traditional tools? How are these used? How do you visually organize the complicated textures, and structures of the natural world? What is expressed through landscape drawings and paintings?

Field trip: Using traditional tools of observation, create a pastoral landscape image.

- The Man made landscape: Elements and phenomenon of the man-made: light, metals, glass, concrete: A special guest will be invited to talk about architecture and the way that space affects our perceptions. Studies in perspective and drawing from construction and interesting architectural spaces. We will study architectural drawings, drawings of cities and drawings of fantastical architecture.

Problem: What are the elements of the man made landscape? What are the tools needed to articulate the complexity of the man-made landscape? How is the space organized to capture the scale of the man-made landscape? What are the skills needed to capture the textures of the man-made. What are the emotional characteristics of man made space?

Field trip: Using traditional tools of observation, create an urban landscape image.

- Landscape in the other arts: Poetry, song, dance Readings will be given that includes poetry, theatre such as Arcadia by Tom Stoppard, and examples from music.

Problem: Nature has been used always as a source of inspiration for artists and creators of all times. What happens to our vision when we change the actual means of expression? How do drawings and paintings relate to images that incorporate nature in other media?

Field trip: Make an observed natural or man-made landscape image this can be natural or man made. Use this image for inspiration and create a short story, an essay, a song, a poem or using another creative art form create a reaction that clearly draws its synergy from the image you created.

- Change and Transformation. How to draw Phenomenon. Life and nature are personified by change, yet drawings and painting don't incorporate the element of time in them, but just refer to the element of change. How is it that phenomena are incorporated into images? We will look first at light, the phenomenon particularly captured viscerally in painting. What is it about paint that implies the incorporation of phenomena. Can we extend our abilities to capture phenomena?

Problem: It has always been a challenge to incorporate change and movement into a static image. We will look at a number of ways that artists have captured the sensation of change in drawing and painting.

Field trip one: River drawings Chattahoochee River, animal drawings The Atlanta Zoo, Light experiments.

Field trip two: Drawing in active construction sites.

- Observing politics: How is landscape affected by political boundaries, economics, race, and culture? Case studies: Research and the visual image.

Problem: Tying all the ends together: In groups of four: Choose a neighborhood in Atlanta. Research its boundaries, socio-economic structure, natural areas, urban areas, the history of its development and its visual character. Each participant in the group will turn in a 5-page research paper, with notes and a bibliography. Each individual group will decide upon how the topics are divided up.

As groups create eight images (at least one from each person from observation) that you think illustrate the complexity of the research you have learned about this neighborhood and the most salient points of its character. Prepare an in class presentation to give us the historical, political and cultural things that you discovered, to enhance our viewing of your vision of this particular neighborhood.

Possibilities: Virginia Highlands
Lullwater
Little Five Points
Cabbage Town
Inman Park
Decatur
Mid Town
Chambodia

Final: Using a place for which you have a particular emotional fondness, create a landscape painting that incorporates all your understanding of the place as well as your emotional reactions to the place.

Class logistics:

Materials:

Bibliography: