

WESTSIDE HIGH SCHOOL 2009 SUMMER PROJECTS FOR AP STUDENTS – (3) ARTWORKS

The following assignments (select 3 of the 4 assignments below) are to be completed over the summer as a prerequisite for AP Studio Art:

- These assignments are due before the close of the first 6-weeks and will count as a major painting grade for each of the (3) images.
- This is a required assignment in AP Studio/Design/Drawing, and will be critiqued, giving the student the opportunity to rework them before receiving the final grade.
- New students coming into the class will have an extra three weeks to complete this assignment by the progress report grade time of the second 6-weeks, thus insuring their enrollment.
- Failure to produce high quality works can result in a student being removed from the class.

Assignment #1

View: Surrealism Collection at Menil Museum

The collection of twentieth-century art focuses on European modernism, Surrealism, and American postwar art.

The most comprehensive within the museum, the Surrealism collection covers Magical Realism, automatism, and the depiction of seemingly opposite subjects. Continuously exhibited is the world-renowned art of Giorgio de Chirico, Salvador Dali, Marcel Duchamp, Max Ernst, Man Ray, Matta, Joan Miro, Francis Picabia, Pablo Picasso, and Yves Tanguy. Rare Surrealist publications by Andre Breton, Paul Eduard and Julien Levy are also part of the collection.

Highlights include “Surrealism & Witnesses,” a changing installation of approximately 200 objects from both the Menil and private collections. A kind of *Wunderkammer* [room of wonders], it features both authentic and fabricated curiosities that once captivated the Surrealist artists. Within the haunting room, viewers “witness” the indigenous functions of the objects. Also installed are rare documentary photographs of the artists and their mysterious drawings.

American art from mid-century forward had become a major focus by the 1960s. Notable is the commitment made to the art by Barnett Newman and Mark Rothko. These artists’ fascinating innovations in abstraction, along with those of Jackson Pollock and Clyfford Still, challenged the form and style of the de Menils’ first acquisitions of European modernism. Artists from the second generation of the New York School also form a major presence. Collected in depth is the work of Joseph Cornell, Robert Rauschenberg, Cy Twombly, and Andy Warhol. Also acquired was the work of Jasper Johns, whose painting *Voice*, 1964-67, was John de Menil’s last acquisition before his untimely death in 1973.

Create a Still Life

Concept: Using the genre of still life, create a painting that is inspired by the paintings on view at the Menil Museum, particularly the Surrealism collection as well as the work from mid 20th century to present.

- The painting must read as still life with attention to space and surface treatment.
- Still life will be a picture of inanimate objects such as vessels, food, flowers, books, clothing, etc. on a surface with background and foreground.

- If desired, exaggeration or simplification of the forms may be used and rendered in a way that is suggested by the paintings viewed.
- Spatial consideration will include an illusion of space – deep or shallow
- Use the six color method of mixing paint.

Artists: Juan Sanchez Cotan, Cezanne, VanGogh, Matisse, Magritte, Morris Graves, Audrey Flack, Janet Fish

Assignment #2

View: Tribal Collection: Menil Museum

“Wave after wave has brought to our shores beautiful and mysterious treasures from unknown worlds: figurines, animals, fetishes, masks, ceremonial useful objects.

“They are often called primitive for want of a better name.

“”They are the most sincere and most unself-conscious art that ever was and ever will be. They are what remain of the childhood of humanity. They are plunges into the depths of the unconscious. However great the artist of today or tomorrow, he will never be as innocent as the primitive artist – strangely involved and detached at the same time.

“What could never have been written is there, all the dreams and anguishes of man. The hunger for food and sex and security, the terrors of night and death, the thirst for life and the hope for survival.”

Among the multifarious inferences on modernism, tribal art is perhaps one of the most significant. Already deeply familiar with Cubism and Surrealism, the de Menils began to consider and acquire the art of primitive cultures. They delighted in its conceptual complexity and aesthetic elusiveness; the creative form and style as well as the incomprehensible mystery of these objects engaged them. The influence of tribal art on Surrealism in particular can be seen in “Surrealism & Witnesses.” A large part of this permanent installation – approximately 200 authentic and fabricated curiosities that inspired the Surrealists – consists of tribal art.

Dominique de Menil

Create a Figurative Painting

Concept: Using the primitive artworks from the Tribal Collection, select a figurative piece as the basis for an artwork. Create an artwork inspired from this piece, or as the piece itself.

- Figurative describes artwork representing the form of a human, an animal or a thing.
- Use this as a basis for your artwork in terms of content, form, or narrative.
- Integration of the figure-ground relationship – In two-dimensional works of art, the visual unity, yet separateness, of a form and its background can be distinct or more closely related.

Options:

- Consider bringing together processes or functions that are normally separate into relationship with one another (such as color similarity or techniques that unify both background and image(s)).
- Consider using the image in an environment or with other figures.
- Consider a fantasy or surreal setting.
- Consider transformation – object to real or vice versa. Give the object a special or magical meaning.
- Use the six color method.

Assignment #3

View: Dan Flavin – Richmond Hall (Annex of the Menil)

By selecting light as his medium, Flavin connects the viewer to one of the most elemental components of existence. Using standard electrical fluorescent tubes, in various combinations of size and color, he investigates the dichotomy between the concrete, revealing the actual tubes and fixtures, and the ethereal, capturing the indefinable dimension of light in space.

Use Light as Content (see examples of light – www.artlex.com)

Concept: Construct an artwork in which light is the carrier of the content of the work – either in a literal sense or inherent in the meaning.

- Light can be used to represent many things, both literally as in the way light plays upon a form to render its volume as well as the more interpretive content or meaning of a work beyond its subject matter.
- Light has been important to visual artists for obvious reasons, and has frequently become either the subject or the material of artists' works, such as Dan Flavin.
- Use light as an integral part of the composition in a way that emphasizes the interpretation, nature, meaning or physical aspects of light.
- Use color as an expressive extension to further demonstrate light as subject matter as well as/or content.

Assignment #4

View: Cy Twombly – (Annex of the Menil)

Gesture in painting

Twombly's painting combines elements of gestural abstraction, drawing, and writing in a very personal expression. At once epic and intimate, his work is infused with references to literature and aspects of the Mediterranean and Near-Eastern worlds. The building houses more than thirty of Twombly's paintings, sculptures, and works on paper, dating from 1953 to 1994.

"In a single brushstroke we can say more than a writer in a whole volume."

Edgar Degas (1880-1917), French Impressionist, in conversation with Daniel Halevy.

Concept: Create a painting in which gesture or the paint mark is the dominant carrier of the content of the piece. The work may be figurative and realistic or non-objective. Color must be emphasized with a range of dark and light values, using the six color method.

Painterly – A painting technique in which forms are created with patches of color, exploiting color and tonal relationships. The opposite approach is known as linear, in which things are represented in terms of contour, with precise edges.

- Consider carefully the figure – ground relationship (visual unity, yet reparability, as a form and its background.)
- Use very light lights next to dark darks for optimum contrast.
- Use repetition as a solution to the composition.