

Oil Painting Curriculum

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Oil Painting 1 Curriculum

1) Achromatic Still-Life

Technique: Indirect Painting – Underpainting

Process: Neutral palette (burnt umber, ivory black, titanium white)

Lesson:

Tonal blending and temperature variation: This underpainting is a basic introduction to the physical act of applying and blending oil paints before color is introduced. The brown and gray tones mixed from this limited palette help the student learn to work with subtle variations of temperature without delving too deeply into the overwhelming world of color.

2) Saturation Landscape

Technique: Direct painting

Process: Limited palette (two primary colors [one warm, one cool], burnt umber, ivory black, titanium white)

Lesson:

Saturation: Like the achromatic still-life, this assignment focuses on one constituent part of color without overwhelming the student with a full color palette. The subject of a landscape is chosen in order to provide the deepest space possible in which the student can learn the spatial effects of color saturation. High saturation color is used to help the foreground advance and neutrals are used to amplify the degree to which the background recedes. In addition to saturation, this assignment addresses the tendency of warm colors to advance and cool colors to recede. Different pigment types are briefly discussed.

3) Alla Primas x3

Technique: Local Color Wash and Direct Painting

Process: Academic palette + brown (cadmium red light, quinacridone rose, ultramarine blue, phthalo blue, lemon yellow, cadmium yellow deep, burnt umber, titanium white)

Lesson:

How to begin: The Alla Primas are not necessarily intended to make the student a fast painter. These two hour paintings are a lesson in how to start with a local color wash to cover the white of the primed support. Secondly, these fast paint sketches are assigned in three consecutive classes in order to break the students fear of making decisions rapidly or of making a mess.

4) Primary Palette Self Portrait

Technique: Direct Painting

Process: Academic palette (cadmium red light, quinacridone rose, ultramarine blue, phthalo blue, lemon yellow, cadmium yellow deep, titanium white)

Lesson:

This is the first major assignment in which the student will deal with a full color palette. By this point, the student should be able to put all the pieces together and mix the colors he or she is observing in the mirror.

5) Overpainting Assignment 1

Technique: Indirect Painting – Overrepainting

Process: Glazes and Scumbles

Lesson:

This assignment explores the transparent effects possible with oil paint. The techniques used will demand an understanding of different classes of pigments.

6) Pointillism

Technique: Optical Mixing

Process: Primary and secondary acrylic palette plus titanium white.

Lesson:

After addressing direct wet into wet mixing and indirect color mixing in prior assignments, the student must now master optical color mixing. This assignment teaches the student to achieve the illusion of intensity through color theory rather than through saturation alone.

7) Full Palette Observation

Technique: Direct Painting

Process: Full palette

Lesson:

This assignment tests the student's ability to juggle all of the formal and technical issues addressed in the prior lessons. By this point, the student should understand tonality, temperature, saturation, hue and be able to demonstrate that understanding through a more complex palette than that which was available to them before. A thorough understanding of pigment types will be necessary to utilize this fuller palette. Conceptually, this assignment asks the student to bring his or her own subject to class which he or she has a personal interest in.

Limited Palette Landscape – Saturation and Temperature

The lesson in this assignment is how to control **saturation** in addition to temperature and tonality. It is a visual property of saturated colors to advance in visual space while neutral tones recede. Likewise, warm temperatures and hues advance while cools recede. The object of this assignment is to amplify the depth of your landscape by utilizing the spatial properties of saturation and temperature. Your full intensity hues should be reserved for the brightest light-planes in the foreground. Shadow planes are going to be less saturated as well as darker and cooler.

This landscape will be painted using a limited palette of 5 colors; one warm color, one cool color, burnt umber, ivory black, and titanium white. Do not pick complimentary colors as they will create brown when mixed. Since burnt umber is already in the palette, we want two colors that will create a third hue when mixed. Another way to sneak a forth color into your composition is through *hue absorption*. When a small area of grey is surrounded by intense color, the gray will begin to resemble the compliment of that intense color. This can work with a neutral brown as well if the intense color is a cool.

Oil Painting 1 – Assignment 3: Saturation Landscape

Composition	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Use of Temperatures	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Use of Saturation	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Tonal Value	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Paint Handling	0	0.5	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	3.5	4	4.5	5

Total: _____
 45

Comments:

Oil Painting 2 Curriculum

1) Alla Primas x3

Technique: Local Color Wash and Direct Painting

Process: Full palette x2, Earthy primary palette x1

Lesson:

Welcome back/ warm up exercise. The first two are executed with a full palette and the last one is an opportunity for the student to experiment with the earthy primary palette before assignment 2.

2) *In Your Element* : Earthy palette self portrait

Technique: Indirect Painting - Underpainting

Process: Earthy primary palette (Indian red, yellow ochre, prussian blue, burnt umber, titanium white)

Lesson:

Fat over lean: how to build an archival painting. Also, this assignment teaches the student to slowly arrive at the colors for his or her composition - to begin with local, neutral tones and then strategically place the most intense colors in the composition. The concept for this assignment focuses on the environment the student chooses to place him or herself in.

3) Adopt an Ism

Technique: Dependent on research

Process: Dependent on research

Lesson:

This is a research assignment. The student must choose and research a movement in painting from art history (current movements accepted). The research must cover intentions proposed in manifestos, artist statements, or critical essays, as well as common techniques of the movement, and prominent artists with examples of their work. The student must then design and execute his or her own original painting in the style and technique of that movement.

4) *Back to Basics* : Observational Painting

Technique: Direct Painting

Process: Full Palette

Lesson:

The student is asked to bring his or her own subject for an observational painting. This assignment is intended to retrain the student's eye after working from photos and reproductions in the past two assignments.

5) Overpainting Assignment 1

Technique: Indirect Painting – Overpainting

Process: Glazes and Scumbles

Lesson:

This process allows the student to focus on the subtleties of color and saturation after the structure, tonality, and local color of the composition has been established. This reinforces indirect glazing and scumble techniques as a process that can be used in conjunction with direct painting.

6) Impasto Painting

Technique: Impasto Direct Painting, Opaque Overpainting Techniques

Process: Full palette

Lesson:

The student must now address the literal material of paint as the substance of an art object and not just an illustrative media. The student must build a textural paint surface and resist the compulsion to over-work the paint.

7) Open Concept

Technique: Open Technique

Process: Open Process

Lesson: Developing and researching an idea from sketch to finished product.

Assignment 2 : In Your Element – Earth Palette Self Portrait

Goal: Our technical goal with this first assignment is learning to build a painting on the most chemically stable foundation possible. You are going to learn how to create an archival painting.

Lesson: Your first coats of oil paint will determine whether the last coats endure or crack. Cracking and peeling on the surface of an oil painting happens because the superficial layers of paint have dried before the deeper layers. Oil paint does not “dry” through process of evaporation. Rather, it chemically cures through oxygenation. In other words, the oil particles adhere together by mutually bonding with oxygen particles. Your layers of oil paint are expanding and becoming heavier as they dry. If the external paint layer hardens first, the internal layer will continue to expand as it dries. The external surface will then shatter like an egg shell from the internal pressure.

Fat over lean refers to the oil content and drying time of a paint. A “fat” paint has higher oil content, thereby drying slower. A “lean” paint has lower oil content, meaning it will dry quicker. Pigments play a role in drying time as well. Some pigments absorb more oil than others, which accelerates drying time. For example, an “earthy” pigment, such as yellow ocher, sucks in oil while man-made or modified pigment, such as quinacridone, absorbs virtually no oil at all. **Fat over lean** is a strategy. You want your first coat of paint to be the “lean” layer. Then subsequent layers should become more and more “fatty”. Your last layer should remain wet for as long as possible so that air can continue to reach the deeper layers. Don’t let your senses fool you. Oil paint could feel dry to the touch, but it will take months, even years to chemically cure.

Materials: Our secret weapon to accelerate drying time will be **alkyd** oil medium. Alkyds are basically fast drying oil paints compared to traditional linseed oil based paints. The light alkyd medium will not only make your paint more fluid, but will cause it to dry more like alkyds. Perfect for sketching! Your under painting will be washed in with the alkyd medium and refined using less to no medium. Then, the overpainting will involve glazes and scumbles mixed with linseed oil because it dries very slowly.

Technique: This painting will be an indirect painting, meaning it will take place in stages. We will use a limited palette of earthy primaries for the underpainting: **Yellow Ocher, Indian Red, and Prussian Blue;** plus **burnt umber** and **titanium white**. The earthy pigments combined with the alkyd medium will mean that parts of the underpainting will be dry before you’re finished with it. This limited palette will look muted, but its function is

to help you make compositional decisions about basic tonality and temperature, allowing you to focus on color and saturation separately.

The second stage of this painting is called glazing and scumbling. This is when you will add your more saturated colors. Glazes and scumbles are identical in process, but produce very different effects. Firstly, glazes are **transparent**, scumbles are more **opaque**. You will have to know how to select the appropriate transparent pigments for a glaze versus opaque pigments for a scumble. Secondly, **glazes** will **darken** the overall tonality of your under painting while preserving every detail. **Scumbles**, on the other hand, have the capacity to **lighten** but masks details. Glazes will be applied more liberally to establish local color, scumbles go in after the glazes have dried in order to establish reflected light and highlights. Because of this, you must make your underpainting tonally lighter overall and flatter in contrast in order to compensate for the glazes.

Content: This assignment is a self portrait. But rather than the traditional bust portrait that usually communicates only likeness, these paintings will reveal more about your persona. You will position yourself in an environment that represents you, whatever that means to you. The majority of the information in this composition will come from the environment. It can be naturalistic, or imagined. This is your space. Design it as you see fit. Also think about the body language of your figure within the environment.

The light source in your space must be consistent. Consider the point where your light is originating from and create a vanishing point at that spot. All light plains and shadows can be plotted out from that vanishing point the same way that perspectival lines can be plotted from a vanishing point on the horizon. See the additional handout for more information about triangulating light and shadow planes.

The paintings composition will be primarily based on your sketches, but the use of photos as reference material may be unavoidable. Here are a few guidelines for working from photography. Your painting should surpass the photo, but a quality photograph will only make it easier on you. If you are not confident in your ability with a camera, enlist the help of someone who is. Secondly, photographs have a much shallower range of tonal values and color than your eye. Be prepared to fill in the blanks. Thirdly, take photos using natural light, NOT A POP FLASH. A flash coming from near the camera lens will wash out all shadows making objects look flat. This will also associate your painting with snap shot photography. Finally, working from a two dimensional source requires you to reconstruct the scene three dimensionally in your mind. It may be necessary to exaggerate foreshortening and perspective. And remember, when in doubt, reinvent a trouble area. Don't use photography as a crutch. You must force yourself to depart from the photo. The photograph must be interpreted into a drawing, NOT copied!

★ You will be required to present three sketched variations of your composition and one highly developed working sketch that will serve as the primary source for your painting.



M.C. Escher, "Hand With Reflecting Sphere"



Monica Cook, "Untitled"



Chris Cooper, "I Don't Know How This Happened"



Anonymous Artist, "Jason Ledet, Seated"



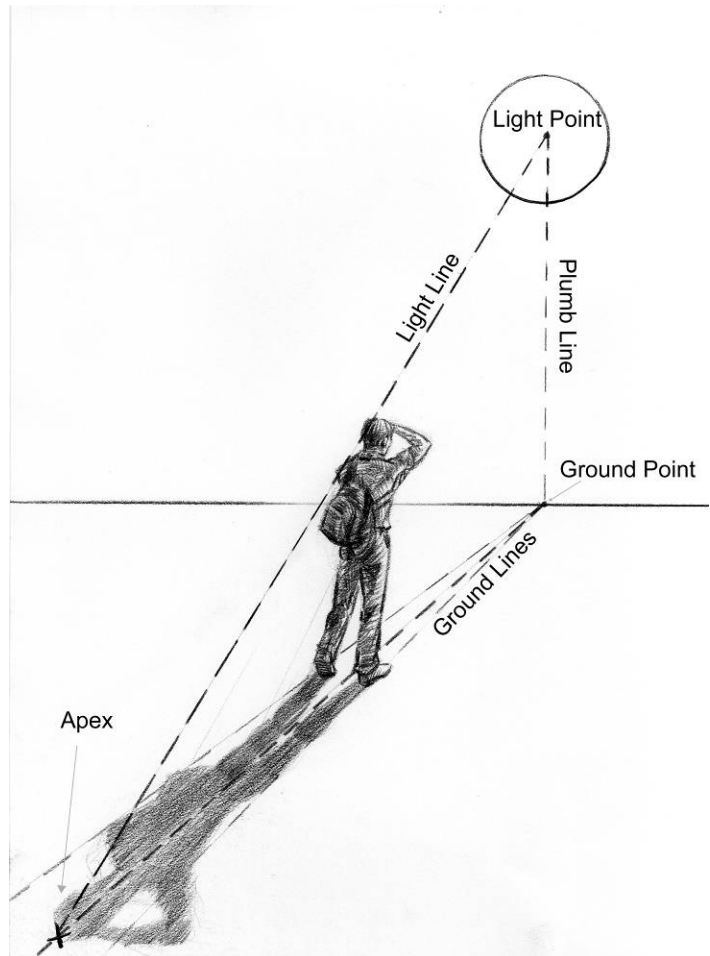
Jason Ledet, "Transmitters (Self Portrait of My Brain)"

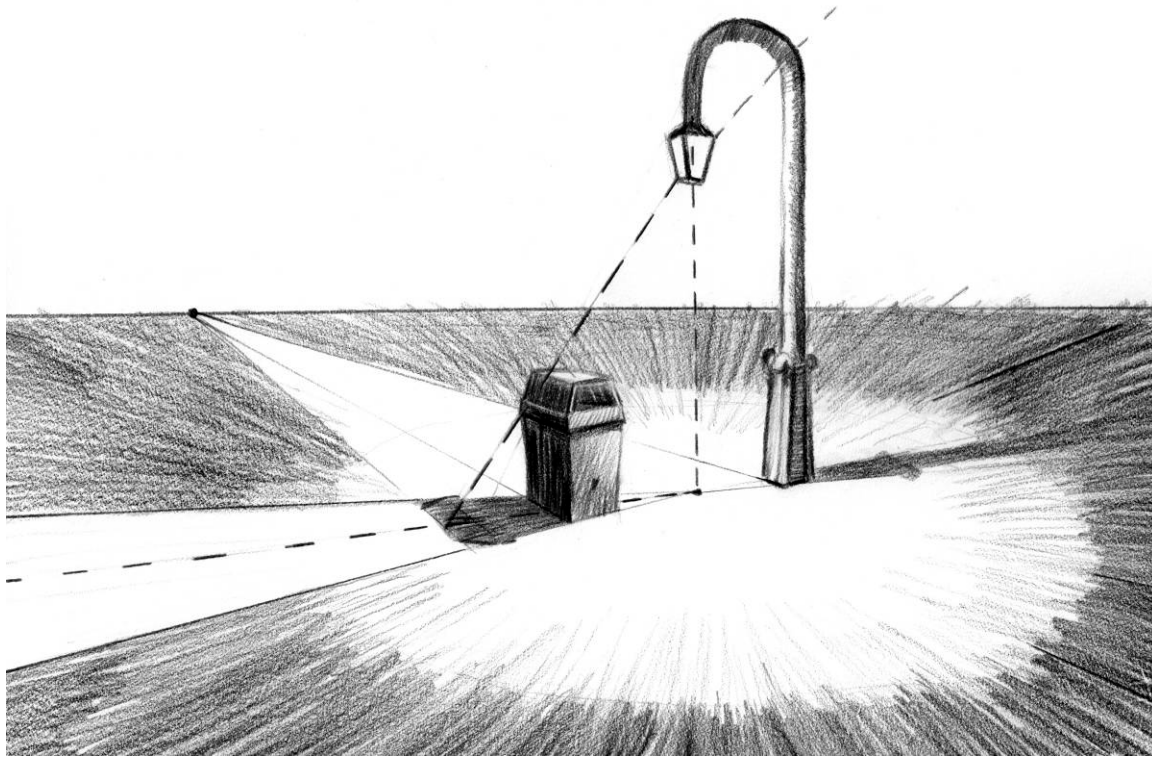
Perspective of Light

- Lessons:**
- How to develop a penetrable space by understanding how light behaves within space.
 - How to plot cast shadows across spatial planes.
 - How to anticipate and optimize tonal relationships in a final drawing by preparing multiple preliminary sketches.
 - The basic tonal laws of visual space. How to make something advance, recede, or appear luminous in an achromatic context.

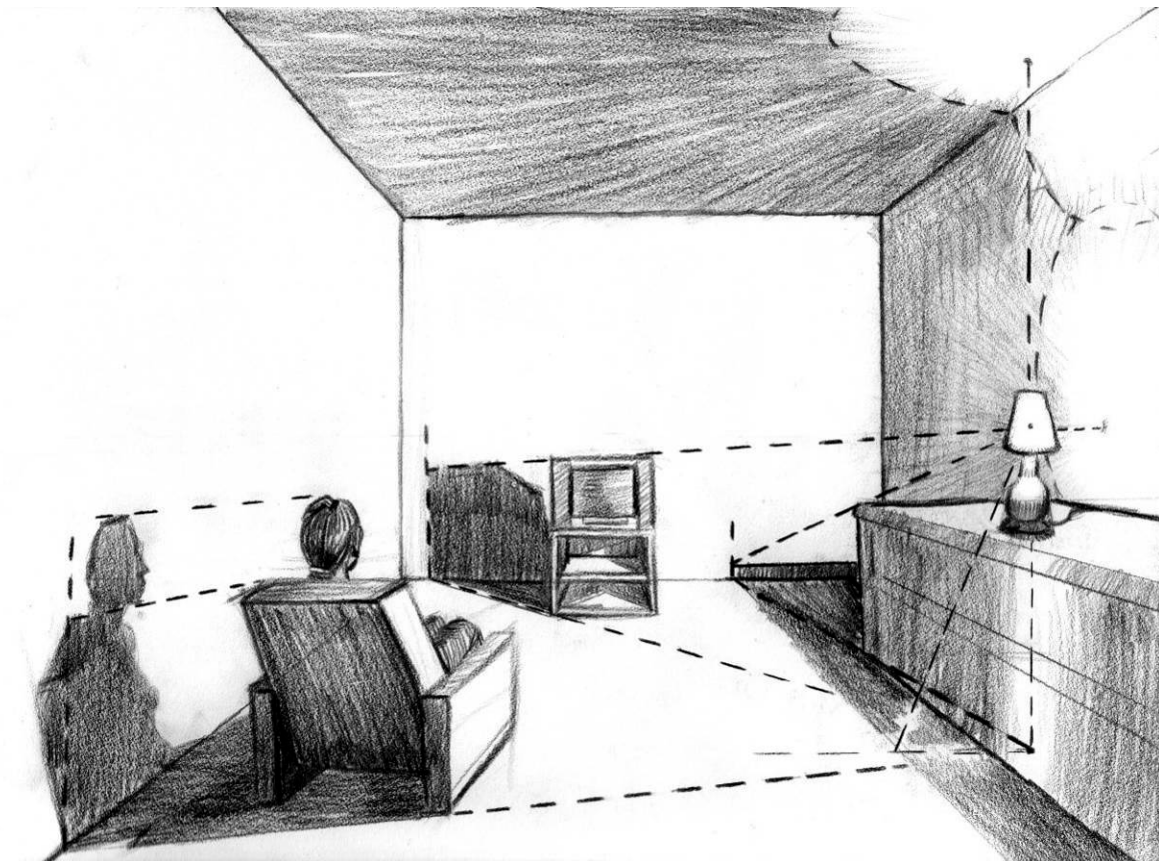
The key to representational art is a fundamental understanding of light itself. Just as the perspective of space can be plotted from a single vanishing point on the horizon, light planes and cast shadows can be plotted from a vanishing point in the center of a light source.

The main difference between the perspective of space and of light is that space requires only one vanishing point, light requires two. Your cast shadows must be triangulated. The first vanishing point (we'll call it the **light point**) is in the center of your light source. The second point (the **ground point**) is plotted from the light source by a straight perpendicular line (**plumb line**) to the plane that your object is resting on (the ground in the example to the right). The ground point corresponds with the placement of the light source within your space. Drawing a line (**ground line**) from the ground point through the center of your object's base will tell you the general direction of the shadow. You can triangulate the apex of the shadow by drawing a line (**light line**) from the light point through the top of the object, ending where the light-line and ground-line cross. Drawing lines from the ground point and through the edges of your objects base will indicate the shadow's width and the rate at which it fans out from the base. In the case of the illustration to the right, the ground point is dropped down onto the horizon, because the sun is at a relatively infinite distance.





Notice how an ellipse of light can form around the ground point. The direction of your tonal marks can also communicate information about form and luminosity. When shading in flat planes your marks could speak about the plane's orientation in space by running across the surface parallel to its edges, or towards the spatial vanishing point. Your marks can also speak about the direction and intensity of the light source. The same way you might shade towards the spatial vanishing point, you could also shade towards the ground point in areas of direct lighting.



The second illustration on the previous page demonstrates that “ground lines” apply to all flat surfaces, despite their orientation. The main point to remember is that the plumb line from the light point must be perpendicular to the plane where you place your ground point. The last illustration also points out that the ground line will change direction with the orientation of the plane that it runs over. A horizontal ground line running across the floor becomes vertical as it runs up the wall. This changes the placement of the shadow’s apex to correspond with the new surface. Thus, the shadow naturally seems projected onto the wall.



The illustration above shows what happens when there is more than one light source. Aside from mutually effect one another, these two candles each cast their own shadow behind the cup. Where the two shadows intersect, they mutually darken one another, thus creating a third shadow in the middle.

Tonal Lesson

Helpful rules of tonal relationships for establishing a sense of light and space:

- Light planes tend to advance and shadow planes tend to recede.
- High contrast enhances luminosity while low contrast seems dim.
- High contrast advances and low contrast recedes.
- Light values expand space and dark values constrict it.

If you were to venture into your final drawing unprepared you would certainly run into tonal conflicts of interest because there are too many factors to consider at once. For instance, you may want a dark object to advance but already started a dark background; therefore the object blends into the back (low contrast issue). Making these mistakes ahead of time and revising your complication to compensate is the value of sketching. For instance, the low contrast issue described before could easily be corrected by moving objects around in the composition in order to position the black foreground object over a light plane in the background, thereby establishing the necessary high contrast relationship.

Oil Painting 3 Curriculum

1) Welcome Back ! Back to Basics

Technique: Open

Process: Fast 1 week painting

Lesson:

This is an introductory assignment intended to reintroduce the student to the process of painting and hone his or her skill back to where they left off in Painting 2.

2) The Form of Painting

Technique: Open

Process: Open

Lesson:

This assignment examines three identities of a painting: depicted form, formalism, and the literal form. In a three week period, the student will produce three small paintings. Each will focus on one of these identities separately.

3) Additive Relief Painting

Technique: Impasto/ Overpainting

Process: Modeling paste relief, glazing, scumbling, opaque overpainting with a full palette

Lesson:

The student must learn to respond to existing textures when building up a painting. Rather than overlapping one texture with another, this assignment teaches the student to augment earlier surface textures in his or her process with transparent or opaque overpainting techniques.

4) *Expanded Forms and Ideas* : Postmodernism

Technique: Open

Process: Open

Lesson:

From chapter eight of *Painting as a Language* by Jean Robertson and Craig McDaniel, the class reads about what distinguishes postmodernist painting from previous movements in painting. The student is then provided with a number of options to pick and combine from in order to make a painting according to the notion of postmodernism presented in the text.

5) Open Painting

Technique: Open

Process: Open

Lesson:

This is the student's opportunity to use what he or she has learned to develop an original painting from concept to execution.

6) Encaustic Painting

Technique: Open

Process: Full palette using wax as a painting medium

Lesson:

Experimentation with an alternative process of painting.

7) Open Concept

Technique: Open

Process: Open

Lesson:

Developing and researching an idea from concept to execution. This is a final capstone assignment.

Assignment 2: The Form of Painting

Goal: To learn how to develop all dimensions of a painting, not just the rendered imagery.

3 dimensions of a painting:

- 1) The **depicted** content – the **represented** form
- 2) The **formal** content – **Formalism** (color, contrast, composition, etc.)
- 3) The **literal** content – the actual **constructed form** of the painting.

The *form* of painting is a slippery term. It can mean the “forms” that are depicted in the picture plane. It can mean the design (formalism) or organization of the image. It could even refer, quite simply, to the actual physical form that the painting takes.

Assignment: You will create 3 paintings (minimum size of 9” x 12”). Each painting will explore a different definition of FORM from the list above. All of these must work with the same theme or concept, but will approach the idea from a different dimension of the painting.

Painting #1: This will be the easiest to execute. Simply render your concept, idea, or theme through descriptive imagery. For example, if your theme were escape, you could paint a figure or a bird escaping from a cage. (That would make a dreadful painting, so think longer about what you choose to render.)

Painting #2: You will rely on the expressive potential of formal devices for painting two. Representation will be minimized because the communication in this painting will come from composition, line quality, color, tonal value, contrast, transition, pattern, rhythm, etc. In other words, your idea will be communicated by your design. This painting could be completely abstract. In fact, abstraction may be the easiest way to avoid relying on the depiction of objects for your concept. In the instance of our hypothetical escape theme, you may think about what colors or patterns might communicate the sensation of being trapped – perhaps a very tight, claustrophobic design using dark, muted colors. Then you can think about juxtaposing this design against its antithesis, using some transitional movement to signify the movement from the trapped state to the free state.

Painting #3: This painting relies on the three-dimensional shape or the constructed form of the painting support to communicate the idea. Use some support to paint on other than the traditional flat rectangle. This could manifest itself as a shape painting (a panel that is cut into a certain shape). You could paint on a 3 dimensional “flat” surface like a folding screen or a door, or you could paint on a “round” 3D shape like a sculpture or vessel. You can employ mixed media techniques like attaching objects to your canvas. All crazy ideas are fair game, so long as the literal construction is adding to the meaning of the painting and not just reinforcing descriptive imagery. Using our escape theme again, perhaps you could cut a hole into the canvas of a painting that depicts a jail cell. You could even build an actual cage or crate to paint on.

All three of these paintings are due at the next critique in three weeks. Try to present them as a single piece.

Oil Painting 4 Curriculum

My Painting 4 class is structured as a role playing game in which the student must prepare a portfolio and show proposal describing his or her concept for the semester in the first week. The proposal is either accepted or rejected pending revision. Sketches, preceding each painting, are discussed as a group just as they are in Painting 2 and 3. Here is an example of the prospectus outlining the requirements of the initial show proposal:

The Breerwood Gallery of Contemporary Art

Is now accepting proposals for solo artist exhibitions.

A standard proposal of exhibition should include the following:

- 1) Ten high resolution digital images of recent work in Jpeg format grouped into folder titled "Jpegs." Each image should be numbered and titled with the artist's name, title of work, medium, and date of completion. Also include a separate PowerPoint slide show, titled with the artist's name, and containing the same 10 images. Both compilations must be submitted on a standard CDR disk formatted for PC.
- 2) A separate image list with numbering corresponding to the submitted images. The title, dimensions, and year of completion should be included.
- 3) A current résumé.
- 4) An artist statement.
- 5) A written proposal of the show's idea, premise, or theme.
- 6) A SASE (self addressed stamped envelope) for the return of materials.

All materials must be sealed in a large document envelope and mailed to:

The Painting Room
Davis Hall, Room 308
1727 W. Alabama
Chickasha, OK 73018-5322

Name: _____

Painting 4 – Submission _____

Composition	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Concept & Execution	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Color, Temperature, and Saturation	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Tonality & Contrast	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Paint Handling	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Total: _____

50

Comments: