

Experimental Collaboration in the Digital Landscape to Enhance Teaching and Learning in the Graduate Painting Seminar

Jesse Thomas

This project will employ flipped and blended learning to create an innovative new collaborative learning space in the graduate painting program. Students will utilize online resources and content in advance of seminar class time to encourage engaged learning and sophisticated cognitive activity during seminar discussion with leading researchers and practitioners in the field. Blended content delivery will occur in multiple media and formats including online resources, library-based research, lecture, seminar/small group discussion, and individual and group critique of studio-based research.

Students will create and develop a University of Alberta Painting website that will serve as a collaborative space in which to explore and exchange ideas. Building upon students' interactions with each other and with a distinguished group of visiting artists and curators, the website will include an initially "limited-user access" wiki for the collaborative generation of image, text, and video content. This content will be developed to experiment with the virtual exhibition of works around a given topic in order to investigate new ways to generate art and develop ideas.

Access to equipment and software will be critical to the quality of both the blended instruction and construction of the website (Hughes & Narayan, 2009). Our equipment needs are modest: a mid-range flatbed scanner, an iMac desktop computer with Adobe Creative Cloud software, and a digital projector. While all stakeholders will contribute actively to website content and development, a GRA will be hired to manage and coordinate the production of the website and wiki, along with archived video content that will include presentations by the visiting artists and critics for use by students in the future. The quality of the proposed seminar is also dependent upon the selection of participants who will shape its content and dialogue (Svensson & Edstrom, 2011). We propose to invite three leaders in the field each semester of the 2017-2018 academic year to participate in the educational experience of our graduate students. Each guest will deliver a public presentation as well as meet both individually to discuss students' studio research and in a group format to lead seminar discussion of a topic relevant to their own research.

Each month a different perspective and knowledge about the state of painting and the visual arts today will serve as the genesis for collaborative student artworks that will be approached as a distinct, web-based body of work for online or virtual exhibition on the website. As the experiment unfolds, the initially limited access to the wiki component of the site will be progressively opened up to collaborators outside the University of Alberta painting program to create expanded networks and virtual communities around particular ideas and visual ways of addressing them.

In order to support the potential of these virtual exhibitions and online collaborations, we will invite painting professors from Concordia University and the University of Guelph to participate in the graduate seminar. We hope to bridge both the geographical gap and the cultural partitioning between our visual arts communities by establishing institutional ties with these schools. This innovative model for the collaborative construction of knowledge will be adapted and improved upon in successive iterations. We hope to involve additional post-secondary institutions to create the sort of

Pan-Canadian research networks that already exist in other media, for instance Printmaking, which the University of Alberta now recognizes as an Area of Excellence. Given the benefits of such networking, it's only a matter of time before it occurs across Canadian university painting programs. This is an opportunity for the University of Alberta to take the lead in a transformational curricular experiment in teaching and learning and to position itself firmly within those networks.

Collaborating Artists and Curators

All of the visiting artists and curators invited to participate in this program are leading figures in the field of contemporary art. Each will lead group discussion in the graduate seminar, deliver a public presentation about their work, and conduct individual studio visits with graduate students. This roster has been carefully designed to provide U of A graduate painters with essential contextual knowledge about current strands within artistic research and production.

Fall 2017

- **Naomi Potter** is the Director and Curator at Esker Foundation, a privately funded, non-commercial contemporary art gallery in Calgary: Potter is in a unique position to be able to provide U of A painting graduates with expert opinion about what is happening at the cutting edge of Canadian art today.
- **Etienne Zack** is a conceptual painter investigating the relationship between art and text by considering architecture, institutional power, and redacted history. Zack's visit will allow our graduate students to learn from an artist widely considered to be the best Canadian painter working today.
- **Janet Werner** is a Professor in Painting at Concordia University in Montreal and a widely exhibited Canadian painter at the height of her career who works in dialogue with today's preeminent North American figure painters. Werner produces a gendered deconstruction of the use of commercial images to create value systems and so provides our mostly female students an example of how to thrive within a tradition long dominated by patriarchy.

Winter 2018

- **David Candler** is the Owner and Director of dc3, the only commercial gallery in Edmonton that operates at the national and international levels; Candler provides Edmonton artists the opportunity to disseminate their research and participate in visual arts communities beyond the Prairies. Meeting Edmonton's most influential gallerist will give U of A graduate students a local connection to the larger art world crucial to their future success.
- **Kim Dorland** is perhaps the best-known Canadian artist working in oil paint today. With a well-established international profile, Dorland is currently based in Vancouver, but grew up in Red Deer, Alberta. With references to formative experiences in Alberta, his work resonates uniquely for Albertan visual arts communities and can provide U of A graduate students a model for transforming Prairies experiences into universal concerns.
- **Monica Tap** is an Associate Professor in Painting, University of Guelph and an accomplished painter who exhibits in Edmonton with Peter Robertson Gallery. Her visit will provide our department an opportunity to establish collaborative ties with Guelph's excellent graduate painting program to support the U of A's position within an expanded network of visual arts communities.

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