

Abstract Art Workshop: Intermediate

Course Description

The class format revolves around biweekly assignments of creating abstract art based on various themes such as still life, landscape, movement, etc. An image presentation one week illustrates examples of work from famous and lesser-known artists that students can use as inspiration for their own work. The following week, abstract work by class members is presented and critiqued by their classmates and instructors. Students are provided with positive comments and suggestions on how their work may be improved. And just as we alternate a week of presentation of artists with the online exhibition of student work, the co-instructors may alternate assigning the topics.

We started using the Zoom format for this class in the spring of 2020 when in-person classes at Arsht Hall had to cease due to the onset of the Covid epidemic. We learned this new format quickly, and even since the return of in-person classes, the students have almost unanimously voiced their preference of keeping the class in the Zoom format. The benefits over the actual classroom setting are several:

1. Students don't have to carry or cart miscellaneous art materials to the classroom every week. Their set-up is at home.
2. Students don't have to lose class time setting up their art materials to work.
3. When showing work on the computer screens, every class member has an equal view. We can zoom in and out of artwork to see details better without having to pass work around the art room.
4. Our classes now include members distant from the Wilmington campus. Several people attend our classes from downstate Delaware and one student is in Florida.
5. With the Zoom format, we record every presentation and student work critiques to the cloud, for which we subsequently provide the link so class members can review at their leisure, or see for the first time if they missed a class.

Actual experience in making abstract art is not a prerequisite for this course. We've found that one of the more important pre-requisites is for the students to be familiar with the artistic medium in which they prefer to work. All materials are furnished by the students. The ability to learn to do abstractions comes from seeing the work of artists we show in our presentations as well as the work of classmates. Techniques are discussed and sometimes videos are shown, or a link

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provided to illustrate, but often the students describe and share processes they use to achieve various results.

While there are eleven class sessions in the term, there are only 5 assignment themes. The final class can be used by the students to discuss particular techniques they wish to learn about further, or they can present other work they've done or re-done. The assignment themes vary each term. The instructor has a number of themes and examples of the same, and since many of the students are repeat class members, the same themes are not used every term. Additionally, the instructor continually adds to his collection of artwork images, which are used to revise the examples used for assignment themes.