

UNCA ARTS AND IDEAS – 310-014
Art as a Reflection and Expression of the Self
Wednesday 2:45- 5:15–CH 102
Spring 2009

Instructor: Rebecca Williams
Home: 828-686-3922
Email: serpentchild@earthlink.net

Campus- NH 120
rjwillia@unca.edu

Course Description: Artists use photos, films, paintings or words to express their personal experience and shape the narrative of their life. We'll look at examples of autobiographical art and explore art-making activities to better understand our own experiences and personal stories. Through journaling, mixed media, and storytelling, we will approach art as a tool for self-reflection and self-identity.

Course Objectives: Students will view and discuss examples of autobiographical art in several mediums, including visual, literary, and digital media. In addition, students will create their own autobiographical art through participation in creative writing, visual journaling, mixed media, and storytelling exercises. By examining the stories of our own lives and the autobiographical art of others, we will gain a greater understanding of how art making is a tool for self-reflection and self-identity.

Class Requirements:

Attendance and Participation –All students are expected to have read and be able to thoughtfully comment on the assigned viewing/reading material. Students will also participate in a variety of in-class creative exercises designed to explore new techniques and shape life narrative materials. These exercises will often be recorded in your art journal. Although many of these exercises will be taken from your texts, some will come from other materials. It is very important that you are present to participate in these exercises and share in the work of your classmates. If you must be absent, due to an illness or emergency, it is your responsibility to make up any missed work.

Art Journal- This will be your most important text. Your journal will be the place where you will maintain your responses to the creative exercises we explore in class as well as the place where you will keep your homework journal assignments. This is not a traditional “words only” journal. (Though that may be an aspect of your journal if you wish). You will be expected to try the various visual approaches to journal keeping as described in your text, *The Decorated Page*. Your journal will be collected twice- once at midterm and again at the end of the semester. You will not receive a grade for your journal at midterm.

Life Story -You will “tell” a story, based on an autobiographical event. There are many options of how to approach this. You can perform your story live, read from a text you have written, or create a digital story using PowerPoint, audio, or video.

Cultural Heritage Box - You will create a shadow box, a kind of 3-D journal that explores your history and personal heritage, answering the question “Who am I and where do I come from?” Your shadow box will be a mixed media collage that may contain artifacts, photos, quotes, stories and music that reflect who you are.

Midterm- Each student will research and present information about a piece of autobiographical artwork from an artist that interests you. The art can be in any form, literary, visual, musical, etc.... Students will research the work, show it to the class, and create a 5-8 minute presentation about the work of the artist. Some questions to keep in mind are: Why do you respond to this work? What do you like about it? What does this person’s work say about their identity? Can you borrow some techniques from this artist for your own work? Propose a follow-up exercise, based on or inspired by the artist that you have presented that your classmates can use as a way to explore their own story. The proposed follow-up exercise should be typed, with copies for each student.

Final Project- You will create a final autobiographical art project. This can be in any form. It may be a poem, a memory book, a short story, a photo collage, a painting, an altered book, a digital story, an autobiographical comic strip, or a song. It may grow from one of the journaling or storytelling exercises we explore in class

Texts:

Telling Your Own Stories- Donald Davis

The Decorated Page -Gwen Diehn

Additional assignments, as described in your syllabus, can be found online or will be given as handouts.

Grades:

Participation:	10%
Journal	40%
Heritage box	15%
Midterm	
Presentation	10%
Story	15%
Final Project	10%

Please note that the class schedule is subject to change.

January**14 Class Overview, syllabus, journal keeping, storytelling****21 The Value of Stories in Our Lives**

Read: Davis: p 6-23

Listening assignment: This American Life: In Dog We Trust #154 – Act One: The Youth in Asia

http://www.thisamericanlife.org/Radio_Episode.aspx?episode=154

Introduction to Creating Visual Verbal Journal

Diehn pp 6-10, Materials & Supplies: 11-29

Illuminated manuscripts: 30-32 Techniques 33-40; 44-49, 53-66

In class: Preparing pages & customizing a cover

Bring in art supplies and journals

(Homework: Prepare additional pages in your journal using at least 2 techniques found in Diehn’s text. **Journal Prompt 1:** Create at least one journal entry that reflects something about your week, an event you attended, a conversation with a friend, a meal etc...Make sure your journal page integrates both a visual and verbal response

Davis – p.10- Journal Prompt 2: Can you remember a time when you got in trouble for something you had already been told not to do? Respond both visually and verbally, illustrating your story in some way)

28 Introduction to Story Circles –

Bring in an object that has meaning for you- that you can tell a story about for in -class story circle

Read: Davis- 25-39

Shaking up your Journal

Read Diehn: Layouts 69-83

In Class Exercise: Use one of the different layouts to journal about your story circle object

(Homework-: Experiment with DIFFERENT layout methods (as described in Diehn) to use in your journal this week **Journal Prompt 1: (choose one)** Can you remember a trip you would not want to take again? Can you remember a time you got sick at a very inconvenient moment ? Can you remember a night your parents never found out about ? Can you remember a party or date you didn’t want to go out on to begin with?

Journal Prompt 2: Now journal about your day or your present circumstances, feelings, etc using one of the different layout methods.)

FEBRUARY**4 Identity & Storytelling**

Read: Etheridge Knight- “ “The Idea of Ancestors” (handouts)

Watch: Stories from the Center for Digital Storytelling:

August, 1977:

<http://www.storycenter.org/stories/index.php?cat=7>

Mixed Race Me:

<http://www.storycenter.org/stories/index.php?cat=7>

In Class: Respond to prompt- Who am I? Where do I come from?

Altered self portrait exercise

Look at examples of boxes

Bring in a COPY of a pix of yourself that you like. Don't bring in the original photo if you cannot mark on it. You need to be able to cut it up, write on it, etc.

11 Present cultural heritage boxes

(Homework: Journal Prompts: Respond to **TWO** of the prompts found in Davis pp 40-49. **Some** of the prompts include: Can you remember a time when you got lost or separated from your companions? Can you remember a time when you got locked out of where you needed to be? Can you remember a time when your first impression of someone ended up being completely wrong? Can you remember a time when you learned something from a child? Can you remember a time you were tricked or lied to? Your entry should combine both a visual and a written response)

18 Stories of place

Davis: 50-75; 84-88

Diehn: 105-107

In class Viewing: The Mountain

<http://www.storycenter.org/stories/index.php?cat=8>

In Class Exercise: Create Bird's Eye View of Favorite Place

(Homework: Journal Prompts: Respond to **TWO** of Davis's prompts pp .50- 75 or 84-88. **Some** of the prompts include: Take us with you when you had to move from one home to another. Take us with you to a movie when you were a child or teenager. Take us to school with you during one of your favorite years in school. Take us to summer camp, for an afternoon or even overnight. Your entry should combine both a visual and a written response)

25 Journaling in Class - TBA

MARCH

4 Mid-term: Student Presentations on Artists

(Homework- Journal Prompt 1: Create a reflection page about the week of Spring Break. You can incorporate photos, collage materials, and other artifacts **Journal Prompt 2:** Create a journal entry from 1 of the prompts created by your classmates.)

SPRING BREAK

18 Stories about People

Watch Stories from the Center for Digital Storytelling

Sacrificios:

<http://www.storycenter.org/stories/index.php?cat=4>

Ironing:

<http://www.storycenter.org/stories/index.php?cat=4>

Read :Davis pp 90-105

Alice Walker poems - “Women” “Uncles”(handouts)

Bring several copies of photos of someone who was or is an important person in your life to class. Bring in COPIES of photos- something you can mark on, cut up, etc...

We will create a visual/verbal portrait of your VIP in class. In- Class Exercise: VIPs - Who has been a Very Important Person in your life? It may be someone very close to you or perhaps a role model you never even met. How have they influenced you ?

Turn in journals for mid-term evaluation

(Homework: Make a preliminary decision about an autobiographical story you want to tell to the class. Bring that story to class on the 25th to begin work on your storytelling technique.)

25: Stories as Performance

Read: Davis: 76-83 - Five Languages of Storytelling

Read about the Moth:

<http://www.themoth.org/about>

Listen to Doreen B- “Locked Out”

Jeffery Rudell “Under the Influence” - <http://www.themoth.org/listen>

In Class- Practice storytelling with a partner

(Homework – Journal prompt: Respond to one of Davis prompts pp 92-105. **Some** of the prompts include: Introduce us to the oldest person you remember knowing as a child ? Tell us about an early friend who you have continued knowing all your life ? Tell us about an early friend whom you wonder what finally happened to? Tell us about a teacher to whom you owe a lot ?

APRIL

1 **Perform or present an autobiographical story to class.** It should be about you. It could be about an event that occurred with a family member or friend, an adventure or misfortune you had., or a great place you once visited. Keep in mind Davis' story format for good stories

8 **Finish presenting stories**
Observation, Writing Small, Changing Forms
 Diehn - 84-88, 97-101, 118-121
 On campus- Observation & List making exercise

(Homework: Journal Prompts: Make TWO journal entries this week that are based upon OBSERVATION. They can include list making, descriptions, witnessing, and listening. Make sure one of the entries is based on the Changing Forms exercise in Diehn pp 118-121. This is a sensory exercise, which includes the translation of sound, touch or taste to an abstract visual image.)

15 **FIELDTRIP BOTANICAL GARDENS-** Bring Journal
 Read: Diehn pp 67-68.- Nature Writing

(Homework: Do Autobiographical Comic writing prep sheet before coming to class on the 22nd, so that you have several story ideas to work on in class)

22 **Autobiographical Comic Strip**

29 **Last day of classes-** Graduating Seniors present final projects.
 Finish up comic strips, additional work in journal or on final project

Turn in journals to be graded

MAY

4 **FINAL EXAM- 3:00- 5:30**
Present final projects
Journals returned