Process
IN THE
Classroom
Imagine this is your first time in front of a classroom of children.

Seventy-six eyes are staring at you, your heart is racing, sweat is running down your back. Your thoughts rush through your head, you take a breath, look at the kids and begin speaking a-mile-a-minute.

But before you know it, these kids are looking at you as their teacher. You asked them questions and they answered you, what a feeling—I’m teaching.

MAT students slowly but surely experience the joy and exhilaration of sharing their love of art with young people. What a gift it is to set the stage for children to learn how to express themselves through visual art.

If sharing your passion for art making is in your DNA, being an art teacher is the best job in the world. In this catalog we celebrate both the art works created by the teachers and the art works made by their students.

It has been a joy and a pleasure for me to nurture these student teachers and to watch them develop into the best art educators they can be.

Michael Filan
STUDENT TEACHING SUPERVISOR
Carl Landegger
Artist’s Statement

When I was young growing up in New York City, I was introduced to the street arts. At first, it was a way to express myself as an adolescent filled with energy. As I started to get older, I understood how this artform was a way to communicate to a larger community. It was also a tool to affect social change within my environment. This mural, painted at 5 Pointz NYC, was a symbol of peace that stopped two street gangs from fighting in the neighborhood. This statement of “Stop the Violence” rang many truths to all individuals who walked by this artwork and instantly evoked a positive message. As an artist, I will continue to use the visual and digital arts to make the world a better place to live in for all.

“Stop the Violence, spray painted wall mural, 30' x 30’

“Design is Everything, painted wall mural, 3’ x 34’

“Our goal was to create a mural in the school that could unify our community and be able to be added onto by future students of Art and Design. And during our process of cutting, painting and peeling, I knew we did exactly that. I felt our school needed to step up to show our student talent and what better way than adding more art into our hallways. Not only was it a great way to bring attention to our school but also a great experience, being able to work with multiple students, collaborating on one huge mural project. There was no better way to represent our graphic design department on the 11th floor than a quote by the brilliant Paul Rand. Through the leadership of Mr. Landegger all our dreams for the High School of Art and Design were able to finally become a reality.”

– James, 11th Grade
Curt Confer

Artist’s Statement

This drawing was inspired by a friend who was living a constant duality between the world of his day job and the world of theater. The day job demanded constant attention to his computer screen, while his mind would crave being elsewhere – that imaginative place where he would fantasize about the next audition, the next call back, or the next role – all future realities that seemed possible but also beyond reach. For me this drawing was an attempt to make visible those two worlds that see themselves in each other, not necessarily agreeing, but coexisting. When speaking with Christopher, a student at the High School for Art and Design, we immediately connected over our mutual interest in surrealism. Our dialogue continues to revolve around themes of duality and we both find inspiration in images that appear both real and surreal at the same time.

“The way this artwork was portrayed had to do with decision-making. Whether it will affect you, or do good for you, or to the point where you have to think twice before getting involved in a certain position or committing an action. The brain indicates ‘thoughts’ in making decisions. The chairs express direction as the way things may go in the setting and cards show action. The heart represents ‘risk’ in getting hurt, whether it will still be in place or torn apart leaving the scene. What inspired me in creating this piece was that for a certain time period I was having trouble in trying to express myself to a girl. I then talked to an older friend and the advice that he told me was that ‘You should play all your cards because at the end of the day you either walk away with your girlfriend or your mind at peace.’ Which means that on one side it worked out and you won, and on the other side, even though you lost, you still gave it a try and got rid of that need of having to say what you felt off your chest. The way it’s viewed is that the brain and the heart are always in conflict with each other, but at times both manage to help one another out in certain occasions. In my case, I left the game. Why? Because I thought about it and realized that nothing was worth saying anymore, and just moved on. Through this piece, I want to encourage people to not be scared to express their feelings.”

– Christopher, 12th Grade
Gracie Nesin
Artist’s Statement

Double Eagle (October 2011) is one of a cycle of nine songs composed in video-form between summer 2011 and spring 2012 called White Witch/Bluff City. It is essentially a diaristic narrative about 9/11, prep school, the culture of finance (the men of finance), the space of Manhattan’s Financial District (my birthplace) and all its acting and reenacting ghost vibrations/ghost scenes/ghost plays, steakhouse menus, Town & Country magazine copy, hermetically sealed condos, interiors and exteriors, my Jazz Age past life—dreams, shreds, parts. It’s impressionistic, a drunk/dull/sleepy poem about After-Empire sung somewhat underwater, smoked and muffled by a blue, New Age cloud. This particular still, extracted and printed in 2014, is a radial abstraction of an early Tiffany objet. It is also a fragment of a bound whole. This notion of “binding,” gathering and fixing in the occult sense, a collage for a witch’s spell, is central to my artistic practice. At The Earth School, the ‘God’s eye,’ this simple, old amalgamated Christian and Pagan craft-form is treated as a sort of pleasurable side-task, a reward for finishing an assignment. When I began teaching there, I had never made one before, and am rather slow to learn and uncoordinated with such tasks at first. So, the two students, both 4th graders, who made and gifted me these ‘God’s eyes’ were my teachers (though still my sample was too dismal to include). This, materially, is a practice far removed from my self-styled world of layered digital art, but as art objects, these little ‘bindings’ perfectly illustrate the essence of my videos and songs—knotted, woven, rough, strange, elemental, magical, sacred. When I began teaching, I was in need of a new way into my own art-making, which had become somehow too strange and opaque, impermeable, for even me. Harboring a learned discomfort with my essential artistic skills, not the writing and thinking and composing complex collages, but the making of objects, drawings, things—in-hand, I was immediately shaken out of these old, false limitations. I had to make in order to teach, and in turn, I was privy to all of these incredible young people’s making, unfettered, utterly surprising making. I cannot yet measure the impact this work has had on me as an artist, but I am making—forming a therapeutic and non-commercial relationship to art that had heretofore been sorely missing.
Students love to see the art teacher work on projects that show personal interest. Students also appreciate being able to see the process and development of the work overtime. During my student teaching experience, I was able to work on this self-portrait during studio time. This artwork is based off a photograph taken by my father. I used a gridding technique to scale the drawing up from the size of the photograph and still make it look realistic. Working on artwork in the art classroom during studio time gives the students an opportunity to engage in conversations that might normally have taken place, as well as lend an opportunity for students to witness a new medium or technique in use first-hand.

Portraiture projects overall are interesting to most students and are a way to engage them in looking closely, being considerate and careful with craftsmanship and details. The group of female students who worked on this painted clay portrait artwork was very ambitious. The base form of the mountains was fabricated with recycled cans. The students wanted to re-invent a version that celebrated important women in history as opposed to men. I was able to work with them to demonstrate various techniques possible with the clay. The students worked together to come up with the important details necessary to the women’s faces with appropriate hairstyles and carefully sculpted noses. After they dried, embellishment was added with the silver metallic paint.
Justine Morrow
Artist’s Statement

Often there is a nagging fear that bites at my ankles. We seem to be lost in a cyclical retreat to that which is not working and never has. We are alienated from ourselves, from our needs, from our neighbor, from the earth. We value material belongings above almost all else, regardless of what this does to our lives or others. We will subject ourselves to jobs we hate, surround ourselves with empty friendships, and strive to gain what we are told we need and want although it leaves us empty. There are so many problems, and yet we continue to do the same thing. There cannot be change without fixing the source, the foundation.

Education is vital because that is how we are taught what to value and where we build the foundation of knowledge. If we start in an environment of competition, of discipline, of warped histories and white washed information, is it no wonder that we continue the cycle of what others before us struggled with? The vast difference between what we are taught and what we should be taught is disheartening.

Camus spoke of the Invincible Summer he found within himself, in the depths of a dark winter. Life can be cold; it freezes you out, breaks you down, makes you starve for happiness and freedom. This is why every person is responsible for teaching the aspects of life that are authentic and necessary. I know education is a medicine. I know that being taught the worth and value of compassion, respect, empathy, and solidarity could lift society out of an illness perpetuated by corruption, and greed. If everyone gave, everyone would have. If everyone tried, everything could be fixed. We are all responsible for spreading bold truths, resilience, and positivity. So, I say, be that invincible summer. Emulate your heroes to become your own hero and a hero for others. Always have hope, be kind, be open, and work hard.
Melissa Siegel
Artist's Statement

This monochromatic lithograph sought to conceptually explore the in-depth thought processes that occur within the philosophical mind. Depth of thought is a beautifully complex phenomenon, and the act of delving into the web of intense insightful pondering is an extraordinarily powerful experience. This piece also speaks to the parallel between the human and nature, with cognition as an identifying feature of “human nature.” The intertwining intricacies within an organic form are reminiscent of the cellular presence within neurological pathways. The humans-as-nature ideology is essential, rather than a humans-in-control-of-nature mentality. However, our distinctly human ability to embark upon a deep philosophical journey within the mind is also worth celebrating.

It was the creation of this piece that established my perception of poetry as art and art as poetry. The written word and visual imagery both hold immense independent strength and validity, but together they become something even more beautifully alive. It was this notion that inspired me to explore the integration of visual art and poetry as the topic of my Masters Thesis for this program. In fact, the student’s artwork shown here was one of the works produced for my thesis project. In the future, I hope to encourage all students to confidently incorporate writing into their artwork, establishing that they do have a voice and empowering them by showing they deserve to be heard.

There are many boundaries that are shown throughout one’s daily life. In my own, I have been subjected to do things that do not allow me to express my creativity, and make something unique. Because of this, I began to slowly develop a fear of trying new things, and I convinced myself that I had risk of messing up. This type of mentality did not allow my ideas to grow, and began to slowly take out the distinctive and special aspects of my work. However, this artwork allowed me to try out new things, without the fear of messing it up. Because the theme of my piece was creation and creativity, I was able to experiment and execute ideas that I was too afraid to put down on paper. This included the mixing of multiple colors, and different types of calligraphy that I varied throughout my piece. The paintbrush, which was the focal point of my artwork, was supposed to represent the place where I stored my ideas, and all around it were ideas coming to life to form something bright, colorful, and overall, beautiful. When people see this piece, I hope that they feel empowered to show off their ideas and not be afraid of the risks that may come with it, because in the end, ideas are what start great things.”

– Nicole, 7th Grade
Flowers have been a constant theme in my artwork. They amaze me because they symbolize so many different topics that are close to my heart such as, growth, beauty, family, uniqueness, joy, femininity, life, and relationships. This year I began teaching a watercolor class and fell in love with the medium.

Teaching my students watercolors was a very rewarding experience. I learned so much from my students about both teaching and watercolors. Our artwork influenced one another’s, showing similar style and techniques. As I grow as an artist by adopting and learning new techniques, I naturally create flowers.

“I chose to make this piece because I wanted to add a bit of creativity to my style. I wanted to make a piece more unique than just painting any regular flower. I used watercolor because it is my favorite medium. I really adored the process of making this piece because I had watched myself start with simple shadows and highlights, that turned into something so pretty as result.”

– Christianne, 12th Grade
Qing Zhuang
Artist’s Statement

I made this painting when I began to see that joy and whimsy are places where I can draw inspiration. Growing up, I was taught that in order to be a great artist, you need to make very tightly drawn still lives. More emphasis was placed on a canonical list of artistic styles and techniques than enjoying the process of making art, at least during my high school years. Those were the years that, while I felt some amount of accomplishment in creating an academic drawing, I no longer felt the thrill of creativity and imagination that I had in childhood. What I hope to imbue as an art teacher is that while technique and discipline are very important, it cannot override the development of one’s artistic spirit, or natural instincts for the creative process. In cultivating one’s enjoyment of making art, one begins to trust oneself and discover one’s personal voice. This particular painting, while not one of my technically best, is one that I truly enjoyed making and inspired me to create more.

“My 4 year old shadow puppet whose name is Johnathan is a butterfly who has big, very vibrant multicolored, exquisite wings that set him apart from everyone else. They are what make him different. I made this work because I’ve always had a passion for butterflies. The way their wings can vary in size and color makes them unique. Creating this puppet wasn’t so easy for someone like myself who had no experience in making shadow puppets. There was a rough sketch and a final drawing of the puppet that was required and tracing the butterfly with a sharpie was as well. The materials I used at first weren’t so easy because I had to try one material such as a thin wire to connect the butterfly’s body to its wings, then found out that the fasteners work and hold the butterfly together. Bamboo sticks and tape also came in play with this because that’s what was used to maneuver Johnathan’s wings. For the wings themselves, I need up using different colored sharpies to color the butterfly because I knew that I didn’t want him to be basic. I wanted something unique. What inspired my design was something we learned in class not too long ago called Zentangle designs. They are random designs that calm the mind and are used in different forms of art, I knew that creating a design that wasn’t seen before would make him appeal to more audiences.”

– Imani, 11th grade
This piece was inspired by my students and their castle making experiences. I like giving students the role of architect and designer. It’s great to watch their imaginations run wild when designing their pieces. It was interesting to see how with the assignment of creating a castle, the variety, and personality that each artist brought to their work. Every sixth grader made a unique castle. The student castle featured here has a prince on one knee holding a flower. The project is also integrated with the medieval studies unit that the grade embarked on during the year. This project is a really great hand building challenge because it incorporates many techniques such as slab rolling, surface design, and positive/negative space. It’s actually quite labor intensive and some students struggled with their walls falling over. When attaching walls we often had to pull out the blow dryer as it is best to attach certain elements when they are leather hard. Glazing in more than one culture is actually a process that involves painting, waxing, and dipping. The glaze really transformed the pieces and made them come to life. Despite the technical aspects, many students were in a deep, imaginative flow when working. The students were all really excited to see their projects. Many checked to see if their work was out of the kiln in between periods. The castles have a fantasy, escapist element that I think is fun for young adolescents to indulge in. They have the opportunity to create their own little universe. Creating a castle can be an enchanting experience.