

## Statement of Teaching Philosophy

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I see teaching as a collaborative art form. I treat the classroom as an Ideas Laboratory, a workshop space where the group shares ideas and culture links to puzzle out the myths, icons and story threads that course across the many screens of visual and textual information in our daily lives. I see it as an opportunity for students to experiment, to take risks, to step out of their comfort zone of spectatorship and present, to suggest, contribute and evolve.

When the light bulbs switch on in the eyes of students seated before you, something kinetic takes place in the room. While this cannot be quantified, the experience is palpable. To say that teaching inspires me is an understatement of sorts; it also energizes and links into a network of possibility. Teaching demonstrates that what is said in a moment, in front of a screen matters. It resonates, clicks, and moves beyond the architecture of a classroom into streams of activated knowledge and interconnectivity.

Doors open. Pathways of awareness are created as we analyze the zeitgeist of popular culture and creative production, the common language of symbols and mythologies coursing through our daily lives. My goal as a public thinker, writer and activist educator is to heighten awareness of the role pop cultural icons play in our lives, and to acknowledge their influence on our perceptions of politics, power and social change. I also emphasize the unprecedented tools currently available for producing, publishing, and projecting ideas into the electronic universe and encourage students to project their ideas onto Internetworked screens.

My lineage in teaching extends from the path of a media and performance artist, an out-of-the-box thinker, with a teaching style that combines elements the creative with the theoretical. My classroom lectures interweave PowerPoint slides, video clips, and quotes relating to the evolution of certain iconic concepts. With an extensive background in video art and documentary, I am also a cultural theorist. Maya Deren and Shirin Neshat resonate as much as Baudrillard, Cixous and Foucault. That such a broad array of media has arrived at our fingertips through Open Source technology means that the possibilities for exposing students to many different forms of historical media makes the classroom a forum for archive retrieval and historical exposure with a few keystrokes.

I first came to teaching as a means of skill sharing with inner city teenage girls in San Francisco. This led to invitations as a guest artist at colleges, universities and media art centers, combined with youth media artist residencies funded by the National Endowment for the Arts and other foundations. What I found astounded me. Teaching is an act of mutual exchange, with learning a dynamic interchange.

Living as we do at a multimedia crossroads of multiple screens, provides multi-layered opportunities for viewing and interacting, dialoguing with and producing media. We are

also at a moment in history where the skills provided by a college or university must prepare students for a technological world they have yet to witness. Here, designing courses that combine innovation with current technology can help to develop unique approaches as well as a proclivity for overview critique and problem-solving, and an openness to redefining what it means to be a viewer of media. What is a screen? How many screens are available to us in an era of iPhones and YouTube? And how can we project ideas onto these multiple viewing surfaces, and where do text and image intersect? In an era of Kindle and handheld devices, where do reading and viewing interweave?

Spontaneous response writing exercises form a cornerstone of my in-class practice with students. These exercises serve to break the ice, and create an atmosphere of trust, where risk-taking becomes part of the experience of discovery. These writing exercises, followed by optional out loud reading assists students with removing the internal editor and allows for a free flow of trial and error conversations with film clips, quotes, articles, books and images. I make it clear to students that in the majority of instances, ideas are not “wrong” so much as under-developed. Over the course of a semester, a community evolves, a short-term tribe of ideas exchange and trust. These writing exercises often lead to storyboards, essay outlines, and further conversations—sometimes, even entire career trajectories.

Educating others has emerged as another art form for me. It combines elements of social activism, performance art, cultural exchange and community building, all of which are in addition to the rewards of inspiring others to innovate.