



## **Week Seven, Last week of Instruction**

### **Tuesday, David Ebony, CFA Art History**

There is something about this year's CFA class. They are so engaged with their classes and each other. I sat in on David Ebony's CFA Art History class and it was hard to leave. David was presenting women artists like Lussier, Lebrun and Coster. The students seemed to be very informed already from David's previous classes and their readings, but what made it such a great class was the way that David engaged the students.

Each student had to select one painting from the Met's collection and give an in-depth analysis. One student analyzed Guido Reni's "Charity". It's a picture of a mother breast feeding her three infants. The student suggested that each of the four characters had distinct flesh tones indicating the degree to which they were nourished. The mother was the palest indicating that she was giving everything to her children. Such a beautiful painting and a lovely interpretation.

### **Wednesday, Amaya Garpide, Drawing II**

Amaya started off her class with a presentation of artists who had worked on colored grounds with multiple colored drawing tools. The artists ranged from Da Vinci and Mucha to Michael Borremans and a few Central European artists I hadn't heard of. The work was all stunning and the range of applications, especially in the Degas drawings, was surprising.

She then moved on to a pre-recorded video demonstration that she could fast-forward to show its development. Given some of the traditions Amaya embraces, it's really astonishing how varied her tool kit is. She uses white chalk, graphite and charcoal of course, but she also uses white watercolor and brushes to hit some of the areas that are closest creating a texture that forces the figure forward in the picture plane. The drawing had a velvety quality that can only be achieved by multiple, and I mean multiple, passes. She was actually using 4H pencils to blend with, which I had never seen before.

### **Thursday, Jordan Sokol, Drawing IV**

Jordan Sokol was doing individual critiques with his Drawing IV students. I like it when students get to present their work without the entire class looking on. Ann Herrero presented a self-portrait that she was in the middle of. She was concerned with a shadow mass that seemed to flatten the appearance of her neck and an eye that was too defined. We also looked at a painting she was working on where some rock formations were a bit confused. One of the things that came up in both images was the fact that the design of the image had to take precedence over the observation. This is something that a lot of representational artists struggle with. Aiden Barker-Hill shared a Titian painting of Sisyphus that had a similar design that ended up being one of Ann's favorite pieces. So often if you look back through art history, you'll find that another artist has solved a problem that might be vexing you.

### **Thursday, Dan Thompson, CFA Drawing**

Here's Dan's assignment, find a word in a foreign language that has no equivalent in English and make a drawing about it. Mery Pujato did a drawing of her boyfriend sitting on a toilet with his laptop open. He was dressed in a jacket and tie but with no pants on. His laptop was open and had rock and roll stickers on the lid from the Stones and ACDC. He was wearing socks with little monkeys on them and his toe was sticking out of a hole in one sock. "Billeta mata el galan" roughly translates as "wallet kills the gentleman". It was a perfect COVID image. What the world of the laptop would see was diametrically opposed to the reality of his taste in music and footwear. It was incredibly funny and poignant. Kudos to Dan for coming up with such a great assignment!

### **Friday, Zane York, Painting II**

Zane's class was in the middle of critiquing their final projects, which were displayed in a virtual gallery that Zane made. It was a great way to see the work in context with the theme of "Gun Cup". Alexandra Mirzayantz's press release stated, "In these works, the students push the surrealism and absurdity of the juxtaposition of object, figure, clothing and environment to breaking point both metaphorically and physically with the optical effects' full range". It included everything from a hyper real/unreal, multi-self-portrait with a Harley to an Escher-like procession up a spiral staircase to an almost revolting, but still beautiful, plate of pasta. This was a wildly inventive group most of whom chose to work from their imagination instead of photo references. The Harley portrait was by Allison Riback and must have included a score of self-portraits in the reflections of the motorcycle, just an amazing level of craft! There was also a lovely reclining figure by Patricia Wongkar that had one of the subtlest palettes that I have seen in years!

## **Seven long, exhilarating, exhausting, inventive weeks**

What can I say about the faculty and students at the Academy? No one saw this coming and there was no way to prepare for it. Katie Hemmer and Sarah Sager learned Zoom and taught the entire faculty and staff how to use it. The faculty reinvented the wheel and found creative and stimulating ways to conduct classes online. The students had to make studios at home, make great art in quarantine and overcome Zoom-fatigue. The work that I've seen has been truly impressive, the quality of teaching has been a miracle, the support from the staff incredible.

Best,

Peter Drake  
Provost  
New York Academy of Art

Monday, May 4 – Friday, May 8, 2020