



Week Four

Monday

One-on-one instruction from Matt White is extremely thorough. He's thorough by most standards with a full class. Nandi Dabrowski had Matt's full attention today as he focused on a self-portrait in class. Nandi was having a bit of trouble finding her center-lines because of an unstable armature, but she was measuring her skull with calipers by the time I checked out. Matt's approach to the class is to give a demo first and then see how the students apply it later. I've seen him teach a SURP class how to complete an entire figure in the equivalent of a week's time.

Roberto Osti had to take over for John Horn's Anatomical drawing class this semester, and I can't think of a better replacement. There was so much Latin being thrown around I thought I was in the original Spartacus. Vastus Medialis, Vastus Lateralis, I was overwhelmed! Roberto has really gotten the hang of Zoom. The focus was really tight by now and he was zooming in and out for details as he was drawing! He was working with different colored pencils so he could show attachments and origins and then cover them with a darker shade if they were hidden. It's amazing to me that he does this for every class!

Wednesday

Jill Moser joined Catherine Howe's Monotype class today. Jill is an amazing artist who Catherine has collaborated with in the past. She was on residency and shared her studio with the class. She showed some of her early prints and talked about collaborating with Master Printers and the quality of that relationship. She mentioned that the printer never touches her plates when she is making them. They are there to bring their experience and expertise to the artist. It was interesting to hear Jill talk about how organic her relationship with her Master Printer is. They rarely talk when they are working together, they are so in tune with each other, they don't need to.

Thursday

Russell Wilkinson and I both dropped into Michael Grimaldi's Anatomy class. Michael was doing a presentation of the muscles of the head including muscles of mastication and muscles of expression. It was really enthralling to see Michael go back and forth from anatomical diagrams to photographs of flayed cadavers. Seeing the cadaver photos made it so clear how the muscles attach and coordinate with each other. It was relatively early in the morning and you would think looking at cadavers would be a little hard on the stomach, but because it was so compelling that wasn't the case.

Friday

One of the hardest things to learn about drawing is managing value relationships. Chris Gallego had some really useful videos by Proko that made it absolutely clear that "the lightest part of a shadow mass is darker than the darkest part of the light mass". He took samples of both sections in Photoshop to prove it. There was also a lively discussion about line weight in the works of John Singer Sargent who was a master of complex drawing. He would frequently have almost no line work in the face of a portrait and then use line with abandon in the torso. The Sargent drawing show at the Morgan this past fall gave ample evidence of this.

If you have ever tried to register a multi-color plate in printmaking, you know how hard it is. Fred Mershimer showed his Intaglio class examples of the "kiss-off" technique for etchings and some much more complex systems for his own mezzotints. It's really incredible how strategic Fred has to be for his prints. He showed us some "key" plates that looked perfectly beautiful to me that changed dramatically when the color plates were added. It's one of the things that I love about the Academy that we have such a diverse range of instruction from Catherine Howe's monoprint class to Fred's intaglio class.

I was really struck this week with how fluid the instructors have become on Zoom. They were switching between programs and making notes on shared materials like old pros.

Best,

Peter Drake

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Monday, April 13–Friday, April 17, 2020