



Week Five

Wednesday, Audrey Flack, Painting IV

Medusa looms large in Audrey's legend and her lecture attracted quite a few outside guests on Wednesday. She reviewed the myth of Medusa and Perseus for the class and showed numerous examples of the myth in art history. There was a beautiful and terrifying version by Rubens that Audrey helped select for the collection of Stewart Pivar, who has an infamous reputation with the Academy himself. She shared pieces by Ricci, Nattier and Thirion and they were all beautiful and strange. Audrey made the observation that Perseus was a bit of a terrorist carrying Medusa's head around turning his adversaries into stone. It was interesting to see how many of the images had stone sculptures in the background to reiterate the Medusa message.

Thursday, Wade Schuman, Man and Beast

Man and Beast is an Academy favorite, but a little tough to teach without our furry friends. Wade spiced up his class with two guest lecturers, alumna Bahar Sabsevari and Zooarcheologist Simon Davis. Bahar presented Indian and Persian miniatures of chimeras. It was incredible to see the variety of gods, goddesses and demons inhabiting the spiritual worlds of these two cultures. Wade made the point that there is so much inspiration that exists beyond the boundaries of Western culture and Bahar's lecture was ample proof of this.

Wade has known his guest Simon Davis since the mid-eighties and they share a love of the animal world. Simon's specialty is the examination of animal remains from historical slaughterhouses, kitchens and burial sites. His presentation focused on the domestication of wild animals from Portugal to the Fertile Crescent. It was remarkable to think that Neolithic Revolution (one of the most important cultural shifts in human history) was essentially the shift from hunter-gatherers to the keeping of domesticated animals. Brilliant presentation!

Thursday, Manu Saluja, CE Intro to Portrait

Manu is one of the best portrait teachers I've ever seen. For her Zoom class she splits up her group into manageable smaller groups of two or three and gives each student individualized attention. Each student mails Manu their piece which she then shares on Zoom. She makes very specific notes with the annotation tool marking terminator lines and measuring the distance between the edge of an eye and the side of a nostril. At one point, Manu removed color from a reference so her student could see the difference between a shadow mass and the blush of her model's cheek. Manu has at least eighteen students in her class and they were all getting her full attention. It's just unbelievable how dedicated the Academy teachers are to their students.

Friday, Zane York, Painting II

The students have had a few weeks to digest Zane's approach to the Dürer/Pontormo technique. Today they had a Bruegel lecture (wonderful landscapes) first thing in the morning and then group critiques of their projects. Zane went through the entire class one at a time. You could see the pen and ink drawing coming through the veils of paint added on top. Some of the students were really using the drawing to help turn forms and others seemed to like the ways that the drawing effected their palette. There is a tendency to get a bit too warm with this particular iron oxide underpainting, but the students were really liking the technique since it brings the structure of drawing back into the paintings.

Friday, Fred Mershimer, Intaglio

I've never tried Chine Collé, but Fred Mershimer made a great case for the process. In French it literally means China Glue or Paste. The glue you use is a wheat starch paste made from bread. It has to be gluten-free in order to resist parasites. It's process where you glue a rice paper (no such thing really) to a print to add a tone, color or pattern. He actually had alumni prints where he would show a before and after version of a print. Fred's Teaching Assistant, Eliana Perez, had a few examples of her own work and they most often looked a lot more interesting with the Chine Collé. He did show how with one of his own mezzotints the blacks were not as rich because the fiber of the rice paper left too much ink behind, so it seems better suited to dry-point, soft-ground, aquatint and etching. Fantastic presentation!

Yet another great week of Academy teaching!

Best,

Peter Drake

Provost

New York Academy of Art

Monday, April 20–Friday, April 24, 2020