ARH1000: UNDERSTANDING VISUAL ART
Instructor: John Hardin
"IN THE SPIRIT OF"
CREATIVE VISUAL ART PROJECT GUIDELINES

One of the major assignments this semester is for you to complete an original creative visual arts project “in the spirit of” a chosen artist’s work. Along with proposing and completing a project, you will be required to present your work in class and to submit an artist’s statement about your creative process.

Step One -- Choosing an Artist: You are to choose an artist (like a painter, sculptor, photographer, filmmaker, musician, dancer, author or architect) and create a project “in the spirit of” that artist. Your visual arts project will be based on a particular work by your selected artist. You are not to try to copy the work; instead, you are to create your own work based on his/her work. For example, suppose you like van Gogh’s technique and subject matter in his painting The Starry Night. You may then choose to use the same methods or subject in your own project. You do not have to use the same medium or the same art form as the artist; you might choose to use some other medium or you might choose to pursue some other art form entirely (for example, creating a painting inspired by a piece of music). But your project MUST be a visual artwork, like a painting, drawing, print, sculpture, photography, video, computer graphics, pottery/ceramics, or certain types of crafts.

Step Two – Research: Once you have chosen an artist, you will then do research on the time period, life, and style of that particular artist. This means that you must go beyond what you think about the artist and his/her work and actually take the time to gain an understanding of his/her life and the cultural, social, and historical environments that may have influenced his/her work. The more information you discover about your artist, the more material you will have to work with for your project and presentation. A goal of this research is for you to better understand the world that the artist lived in and how he/she was inspired to create some form of reflection of that world and experience. You should also gain a better understanding of how your chosen artist went about creating his/her work.

Step Three -- Proposal: Once you have chosen your artist and particular work and have completed your research, you will need to decide on your project’s form (like painting, drawing, sculpture, photography, or video) and a medium (like watercolor paint, charcoal, clay, black-and-white photography, digital video). You will also need to consider how and where you will go about creating your work. You will likely need to go to an artists’ supply store (like Michael’s or AOE Art Supply) to find what materials you need and/or speak with someone who may best be able to advise you about medium and technique. After you’ve completed these steps, you will write and submit a one- to two-page (300 words minimum), typed project proposal. The proposal must include:

- a brief discussion of your chosen artist and his/her work and a brief explanation of why you selected this artist. When writing this section, consider that you are introducing your reader to this artist and his/her work; you want to help your reader gain an understanding about the artist and the work and why you chose this as your inspiration.
- a clearly developed explanation of how you will be capturing “the spirit of” that artist and that specific artwork in your work.
- a research bibliography of no less than three sources with proper citations.
- your chosen medium and a detailed list of materials (proposals without this detailed list will not be approved) and
- a photocopy or color print of the particular piece you will be working with.

Overall, your proposal should illustrate that you are ready to begin working on your project. Once your proposal is approved, you may not change the medium of your project. Proposals must be submitted for approval no later than Wednesday, February 27. No approved proposal, no project!
Step Four -- Begin Working: Once your proposal has been approved, you will need to dedicate a good deal of time and effort working on your project, especially if you have never created a work in your chosen medium before. You should allow yourself time each week to think about and work on your project so that you will not be rushed the week before or the week that the project is due.

Step Five -- Project: This is a semester-long project, and your final creation should reflect such an amount of effort. Your project must be your original work. Your project will be evaluated based on the apparent care, effort and detail of construction reflected in the finished work, adherence to your initial proposal, and most importantly how well you capture a sense of “the spirit of” your selected artist. Keep in mind that it is also important to incorporate the concepts learned throughout the semester in your work. While I do not expect your work to be displayed in a gallery or a museum or to win an award, I do expect that you will spend a good amount of time and effort on the construction of your project and on how you choose to display your work. You are not expected to create a work at the level of your selected artist, but your work must clearly reflect the style and/or ideas (“the spirit”) of the artist. Clear connections to your selected artist’s work, not just vague ones, should be apparent in your work. Since you chose the project that you would complete, if you submit a project that does not resemble the one that you originally proposed you will receive an “F” for your project. ALL completed creative visual arts projects are due Monday, April 8.

Step Six -- Presentation: Your presentation will consist of the exhibition and a short discussion of your chosen artist and your completed work. I expect you to prepare for this presentation, not simply stand up in front of the class and ramble off whatever ideas come to mind while you are standing there -- or worse, to not know what to say. You are the artist; briefly explain your inspiration and work to your audience. These presentations will take place during the last three weeks of the semester, from Monday, April 8 through Wednesday, April 24. Presentation days will be assigned. Any student not presenting a project will have a full letter grade deducted off of his/her project grade, regardless of reason/excuse.

Step Seven – Presence: Everyone is expected to be in class and to pay attention throughout the presentations. Students are also encouraged to take notes and, if and when appropriate, to ask questions and offer constructive criticism and comments. Lateness suggests disrespect and last-minute work and an absence during the presentation day(s) suggests a disregard for the work of your classmates. Either situation will result in a student having a full letter grade deducted from his/her overall project grade.

Step Eight -- Artist’s Statement: A one- to two-page (300 words minimum), typed artist’s statement is required from each student on the day of his/her project presentation. This paper should include an examination of your inspirations (your chosen artist and artwork), the medium, techniques, and design principles that you used, and any problems that you may have encountered and successes that you feel you have achieved. It should offer a reflection of what you accomplished through your creative process and completed project. You should also include a final statement of what you want people to know about your work, particularly the message you are hoping to convey through your work. A photocopy of the specific artwork chosen as a model/inspiration must accompany your paper.** If you do not submit this material, it will be very difficult for me to evaluate your project.

Satisfactory completion of each of these steps contributes to your overall project grade. The “In the Spirit of” Creative Visual Art Project is worth 25% of your final course grade.

**Students who are working with an artwork outside of the visual arts will need to see me regarding what needs to be submitted with your proposal and your artist’s statement.