Interdisciplinary Sophomore Seminar - Sonic Experience

Course Description

What are the concerns that drive one’s creative practice? How does one set the terms for its future development? Sound is a time-based art, simultaneously elusive and omnipresent. This course offers strategies for the evaluation and communication of students’ individual practice as artists, designers, and/or scholars. We will experience sound in myriad forms and settings - sometimes traveling to specific locations to do so. Through essential readings, studio projects, and writing, students will generate narratives about how and why they make art.

Instructor Austen Brown

Course Readings

13 ways of looking at a blackbird - Thomas McEvilley
Function of the Studio – Daniel Buren
Acoustic Territories – Brandon LaBelle
In the Blink of an Ear – Seth Kim-Cohen
Critique Handbook - Kendall Buster and Paula Crawford

Assignments

Peer Studio Visit

How do you navigate and prepare for a studio visit? How do you talk about your work outside of the classroom? How is your work presented in the studio versus a more formal presentation?

Students will be paired with a classmate for an informal studio visit. Once the visit is finished, choose one work from your partner's studio to bring in for a class wide studio visit. This can be a finished piece from a previous semester, it can be a sketch or work in progress, or it can be some studio ephemera that is of interest.

During the class ‘studio visit’, we will discuss the work in relation to the studio visitors interest in it, not the makers. What drew you to it? What can you say about it formally or conceptually? What is its context?

Art and Content
Where do you find content in your work? Write about the piece that you brought for critique in week 6. Cite the McEvilley reading in relation to it – which of the thirteen ways do you look at the blackbird which is your piece? Outline the steps you took to make this piece, both conceptually and materially, and spend some time discussing how it was received when you originally presented it. How did the response impact your perception of the work? Why do you want to critique the piece again? (1000 words min)

DIY Futures Essay:

Write an essay that describes who you are as a creative practitioner, where you imagine your practice might take you, and how you plan to utilize the time, space, and resources during your remaining time at SAIC. In other words, while holding who you are as a practitioner and your future vision in mind, how can your time here at SAIC work in service of your vision and goals as an artist, designer, scholar, professional? In order to design your own curricular map, you will need to research specific SAIC classes, summer work, and/or co-curricular experiences (see below for some suggested resources).

Self-Reflective Essay

Write an essay that reflects on what you have learned as a student at SAIC. The essay must address each of the following: Strengths, Creative Production, Contextualization, Critique, and Community.

Identify the most important catalyst for your growth: reading, writing, projects, critique, or some combination? Drawing from both your DIY Futures Essay and experience in this course, articulate how you will leverage the tools, time, and space needed to best support the development of your creative practice. Write a two- to three-page paper that summarizes your experience in the Sophomore Seminar.

Documentation of Practice

As artists, designers, writers, and scholars, we are informed by research, experimentation, critical feedback, and reflection. In this assignment, students will document the development of their work and demonstrate how the interplay of ideas, technical skills, and formal/material concerns are developed over time through iteration, experimentation and revision.

Create a visual presentation that shows the development of your work. Choose five to seven work samples (images, PDFs, media files, etc.) that best represent your practice.

You may select a single project to focus on and capture the development of the piece at various stages including research, sketching, material tests, in-process, and ultimately the finished work.
Alternatively, you may select a series or body of work to document and highlight how the pieces share a conceptual focus, theme, or concern across various mediums and formats.