Searching as Serendipitous Exploration: Information and Visual Literacy in Studio Art Courses

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In the next 15 minutes...

Case study
Theoretical context
Further resources
History & Evolution
Institutional Context

Information & visual literacy in the BFA program

Year 1 Foundational information and visual literacy concepts introduced in English & Writing classes (all students)

Years 2-4 One-shots and research consultations (some students)

Year 4 Senior Thesis (some students)
Theoretical Context

ACRL Framework

Searching as Strategic Exploration

Research as Inquiry

Artists’ information-seeking behavior

Browsing and Serendipity

Libraries as Cabinets of Curiosities
Current Semester
MTL 3002: Advanced Jewelry Studio/Seminar

*Students will*

Build on the foundational information and visual literacy skills acquired in first-year writing courses

Reframe engagement with research and library collections

Bring serious inquiry to their motivations

Cultivate a research practice that directly informs and enriches their artistic practice
Day One Questionnaire:

Name:
Phone Number:
Year in the Program:

1. What is your general studio focus or area of study here at SMFA?

   JEWELLERY / INSTALLATION

2. How do you typically go about conducting research?

   TYPICALLY I DON'T, BUT UTILIZING THE LIBRARY STAFF HAS BEEN EXTREMELY BENEFICIAL.

3. What does the term 'scholarly research' mean to you? Can you define this?

   BIG BOOKS, SMALL TEXT.

   NOT JUST USING THE INTERNET, RESEARCHING ALREADY RESEARCHED MATERIAL [INTENSIVE STUDIES].
Due Next Week:

1. Research the object and write a 1-page description of your research findings.
   a. This should include an image of the object, your research findings, and your own observations. Write about what you are choosing to respond to and WHY?

2. Make one piece in response to the object you chose to research.
   a. I recommend using materials that are easily manipulated such as paper, wire, hot glue, etc. but you can choose what to work with

3. Bring to class your 1-page description, the object you make, and a kit of materials + supplies. You will need these for an in-class exercise next week.
The influence of Post-Islamic Persian architecture.

- Symmetry.
- Simplicity.
- Repetition.
- Textures.
- Coexistence of intricate organic and geometric shapes and patterns.
- Significant scale.
- Calligraphy.
- Importance of presence or absence of color.
Concept mapping
Library Exploration
Libraries as Cabinets of Curiosities

Read and discussed Bonnie Mak and Julia Pollock’s “The Performance and Practice of Research in A Cabinet of Curiosity: The Library’s Dead Time” (Art Documentation, fall 2013)

Next assignment: annotated bibliography and cabinet of curiosities

What will you DO with this information?

How will you MAKE VISIBLE the new ideas and knowledge that you are generating in the course of your research?
Cabinet Projects

The Wilderman
The wet stones shalaee
Doused,
By the hand of the wind.

Stones tumble from their homes,
Pushed aside,
The worn rope of the bow;
Marks the hand.

An empty path behind,
Growing smaller,
As the wind leads the way.
Semester Wrap-Up and Assessment

Next up:

Visits to the MFA’s Main Library and the Textile and Fashion Arts Department

Librarians participate in final critiques

Assessment points:

Student feedback forms

Annotated bibliography + Cabinet of Curiosities assignment

Observation of other student work throughout semester

Quality of research evident at final critiques
Impacts

IL/VL instruction in studio & academic courses
Collection development
The Future

- Senior Thesis
- MFA Thesis
- Curriculum embedding
- Tufts merger
Thank you!

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