Finding Something New (to Us)

Maggie Murphy & Dan Hale, UNC Greensboro
with thanks to the students of ART 400X (Fall 2021)

ACRL Image Resources Interest Group Fall 2021 Meeting
Slides: go.uncg.edu/irig-slides
THE ASSIGNMENT

● Choose an established contemporary artist whose work you admire but whom you are not already familiar with.
● Research the artist, their medium of choice, their material process, etc., as well as at least one reference image of their work to present to the class.
● Using a 1920x1080 canvas, draw the final frame of your animation. This is your interpretation of their work. This should not be a precise replica, but it should be easily recognizable as being clearly in the style of the artist you chose.

THE PROBLEM

● We know from experience that students typically find reference images of work they admire from social media and artist portfolio platforms, such as Artstation or DeviantArt.
● Most of these platforms use algorithms that attune themselves to user behavior.
● As a result, students see an ever-narrower stream of images in their preferred aesthetics.
● This limits opportunities for serendipitous encounters as well as holistic exposure to visual culture.
Screenshot of Artstation homepage at first visit, with no account
Screenshot of my new Artstation account page, showing my “likes”
My Artstation “Explore” feed, following the addition of likes and follows
THE APPROACH

- Ask students to share their current strategies for finding new-to-them artists and reference images.
- Discuss and reflect on the role of algorithms in influencing what we see online, and what that means for our development as artists.
- Provide concrete ideas for exploring contemporary art made by established artists working in styles, media, and themes we like through searching and browsing.
- Encourage students to test out different approaches and practice new strategies in class.

Class workshop slides: go.uncg.edu/art400x
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>google</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Through recommendations on social media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instagram</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>searching keywords on google</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter or YouTube</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Either through social media or based on a particular genre of art or medium that I am interested and want to see current artists as reference.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I've typically asked professors that I've had about artists that they like; and of course I also do google searches.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>google</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media, primarily twitter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instagram for you page or in my mutual's follow list</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Through social media or peer's recommendations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A research practice takes practice

**Make time for research**
Artists *are* researchers! Don't forget to incorporate reading, writing, looking, listening, talking, thinking, reflecting, and making mistakes into your art-making.

**Beware the algorithm**
Social media is great, but browsing your feed should not be your only strategy. Browsing through print materials is a great way to encounter the unexpected.

**Be curious & open-minded**
We like what we like, but sometimes forcing ourselves to work outside of our comfort zone produces new ideas or breakthroughs in our processes and products.
STUDENT WORK EXAMPLES
Sol Calero, Contemporary Artist
DAVID HOCKNEY, CONTEMPORARY ARTIST
VICTOR CASTILLO, CONTEMPORARY ARTIST
Danny Wilson, student
TEYIAH CRUMEL, MARK BOONE, AND KAYE JOHNSON, STUDENTS
THANK YOU!

Maggie Murphy  
Assistant Professor and Visual Art & Humanities Librarian  
UNC Greensboro University Libraries  
mmurphy@uncg.edu

Dan Hale  
Visiting Assistant Professor of New Media & Design  
UNC Greensboro School of Art  
dghale@uncg.edu
Slide 10
Amy Beager, Zeus, 2021
Amy Beager, Eggshell, 2021
Amy Beager, The Torches Burn Bright, 2021

Slide 12
Sol Calero, Pintura de Frutas III, 2014
Sol Calero, Cambure, 2014
Sol Calero, Untitled (Bienvenidos a Nuevo Estilo), 2014

Slide 14
David Hockney, Sprungbrett mit Schatten (Paper Pool 14), 1978
David Hockney, Garden, 2015
David Hockney, Dog Painting 19, 1995

Slide 16
Victor Castillo, Pure Pleasure, 2013-2014
Victor Castillo, Breaking the Law, 2012
Victor Castillo, No More Fantasies, 2012