

BRIEF WORKSHOP DESCRIPTION

Though the content can be applied to all media, this workshop is designed specifically for visual artists. The goal is to help participants become more creative by exploring their own work modes and developing a personal set of strategies and mindsets that support the creative process. The emphasis throughout is on the practical—on approaches that artists can apply usefully and immediately. Materials are drawn from a wide variety of sources including the literature on creative process, other artists' experiences and work, the psychology of creativity and its research, and the workshop leader's experience and reflections as a practicing artist and psychotherapist.

BRIEF INSTRUCTOR BIO

Frank Rodick is a photo-based artist who has exhibited and published his work across the world. His images are in the public collections of numerous museums and other public institutions including the Brooklyn Museum, the Brandts Museum of Denmark, The Kinsey Art Collection, the National Museum of Fine Arts of Buenos Aires, the Museum of Fine Arts Houston, the National Gallery of Canada, the New Mexico Museum of Art, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and Yale University. He has taught in different settings and concurrent to his art career he trained and worked as a psychotherapist, working in the field for over 20 years. Part of his counselling practice included working with artists from different media who sought help in improving their art practices. For more information on Frank Rodick's work and career, see frankrodick.com.

SYLLABUS

Workshop leader: Frank Rodick

Grading: Ungraded

Format: Flexible. Based on time allotted which can run from two to eight hours.

Please note that some of the following workshop details will vary depending on time available.

I. Rationale:

This workshop is designed to meet the practical needs of artists looking for ways to improve, accelerate, and expand their creative process. It exists because my own experience as an artist,

teacher, and psychotherapist, as well as the existence of an ever-growing literature on the subject, indicate the demand for practical and immediately applicable guidance for artists on how to enhance creativity. I also believe, for reasons described elsewhere, that the age of mass imagery ushered by digitization and connectivity and its effect on photography as an art form has increased the need for this kind of engagement in the professional development of visual artists.

II. Workshop Goals and Outcomes:

Goals

In terms of general outcomes, this workshop is designed to help the artist critically evaluate their own creative work process identifying strengths and weaknesses, and to develop a practical set of approaches and strategies to enhance this process, which they can begin applying immediately.

Specific Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course, students will:

- Be able to understand and articulate the components and mechanisms of the creative process in such a way that they can compare them against their own practice.
- Develop through self-assessment a personal plan that includes a list of strategies that they can apply immediately to improve creative process in their own practice.
- Understand the practical importance of key mindsets for creativity and have strategies for establishing and maintaining helpful approaches as well as strategies for dealing with potentially detrimental mindsets.
- Be able to understand the connection between personal vision and artistic practice, identify that connection in their respective practices, and strengthen that connection if desired.
- Be able to identify the major blocks to creativity and identify and apply strategies to remove these blocks.

III. Format and Procedures:

The workshop is structured as follows:

- The total time required is flexible, as I've designed the components in mostly modular form. Given time constraints, I prioritize those components I consider most critical as well as those identified through an informal or formal needs assessment of the students, when available. In the past, I've delivered this workshop in formats of two hours, four hours, and eight hours, the latter delivered over two days.
- Workshop components can include lecture, slide presentation, class discussion, and individual exercises including experiential work. Depending on time, participants may be asked to analyze and evaluate their own work using material learned in class. In order to better illustrate key points, the work of other artists may be shown and discussed.

- Students are expected to actively engage the course material so as to create a personal list of strategies and approaches that they can immediately apply to their own practice.
- Students are given regular opportunity and are encouraged to engage in class discussion through questions, comments, and sharing of personal experience.

IV. Instructor Assumptions/Orientation

- I assume the participants are more interested in practical strategies that they can use immediately to enhance their personal practices than they are in theory. The workshop is designed accordingly.
- My working definition of artistic creativity is that it is a process of combining, connecting, adding, subtracting, and reconfiguring existing elements—often undefinably, even mysteriously—to produce artwork that communicates substantially on different levels with an audience. It is a process energized and informed by personal meaning.
- In developing and delivering the materials in this workshop, I am informed by my experience as a practicing artist, teacher, and psychotherapist.
- I believe that a key component of the creative process is how the artist practically manages their (art)work life within the context of their overall life.
- Included among the artworks used to illustrate the workshop material are selections from my own work. I include my work not to highlight it for its own sake but because I have more access and insight into my own creative process than I have into anyone else's.
- I assume that the student understands that the course content of this workshop is designed to enhance their individual creative process, not to help market themselves and their work, network, or otherwise move their careers ahead from a business perspective. However, my experience is that this workshop can indirectly help students with these issues (one example would be by helping them better articulate the nature of their work and, of course, by hopefully enriching the quality of their work) but this is not the goal of the workshop.
- I do my best to state things plainly and avoid psychology or art jargon.

V. Workshop requirements:

1. Workshop attendance and participation policy:

- The instructor and students are required to actively listen to the contributions of all members of the class.
- Students are encouraged to take notes as an aid to implementing their personal learning.
- Students are encouraged though not required to participate in workshop exercises.
- Students are encouraged to participate in class discussions but not required to do so as I recognize that each student has their own learning style and comfort level with such participation.

2. Workshop readings:

- There are no required workshop readings, though I may offer suggestions. A bibliography is available for interested participants.

3. Other requirements

- In some formats, students may be asked prior to the workshop to bring one image of their own and one image by another artist (a work important to the artist personally) to the class. This image can be in hard copy or digital format (laptop, tablet, smartphone).

VII. Accommodations for students with disabilities

Venues in which I deliver this workshop shall provide any and all reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities.

VIII. Inclusivity Statement

As instructor, I'm committed to providing an atmosphere for learning that respects diversity of all kinds. All participants are expected to work together to establish and build this culture and community. I therefore ask all participants to:

- Consider sharing their unique experiences, values and beliefs.
- Be open to the views of others.
- Honour and respect the uniqueness, diversity, and differences of their colleagues.
- Appreciate the opportunity that we have to learn from each other in this community.
- Value each other's opinions and communicate in a respectful manner.
- Keep confidential discussions that have a personal nature.
- Use this opportunity together to discuss ways in which we can create a supportive community for each other as artists and human beings.
- Be courteous and respectful at all times.

SELECTED MADIOGRAPHY

Abramovic, Marina and 35 other artists, *Akademie X: Lessons in Art + Life*, 2015.

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Bayles, David & Orland, Ted. *Art & Fear*, 2001.

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Herzog, Werner and Cronin, Paul. *A Guide to the Perplexed*, 2014.

Hugo, Richard. *The Triggering Town*, 2010.

Kessels, Eric. *Failed It!*, 2016.

Kleon, Austin. *Steal Like an Artist: 10 Things Nobody Told You About Being Creative*, 2012.

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Maisel, Eric. *Fearless Creating*, 1995.

Maisel, Eric. *Staying Sane in the Arts: A Guide for Creative and Performing Artists*, 1992.

Minkinen, Arno Rafael. "The Helsinki Bus Station Theory: Finding Your Own Vision in Photography," <https://petapixel.com/2013/03/13/the-helsinki-bus-station-theory-finding-your-own-vision-in-photography/>, 2013.

Rodriguez, Robert. "10 Minute Film School," <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W-YpfievjSk>. (video)

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