

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Statement

As an educator, my commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion is rooted in the belief that art is both a mediator of personal historiography and a catalyst for societal transformation. My teaching philosophy extends beyond technical instruction in painting, drawing, and digital design to facilitating a classroom environment where every voice is heard, respected, and valued.

Having grown up in a poor household raised by my grandparents, I found solace in creative discovery, often using art and junkyard-scavenged technology to navigate the instability in my life. The past few years, I have lived in my studio and couch-hopped to afford the means to create and exhibit my work—experiences that underscored both the hardships of pursuing a creative path and the transformative power of art to provide stability and purpose. These personal struggles have profoundly shaped my teaching, allowing me to empathize with students facing their own challenges and to create a classroom that not only accommodates but celebrates their unique circumstances.

Diversity

In my classroom, diversity is celebrated through a curriculum that amplifies a broad range of artistic voices and cultural perspectives. By incorporating works from contemporary figures such as Sasha Gordon, Calvin Marcus, and Kehinde Wiley alongside canonical masters like Bosch, Sargent, and Cimabue—and even pop culture references like *Courage the Cowardly Dog*—students engage with a tapestry of identities, histories, and artistic practices. This inclusive approach not only enriches their understanding of art but also challenges them to consider its role in cultural representation and societal change.

Equity

Recognizing the varied socio-economic realities and learning styles of my students, I strive to create equitable learning opportunities for all. My teaching methods include hands-on projects, collaborative workshops, and digital forums, offering multiple pathways for students to engage and succeed. I also actively work with students to develop individual adaptations of projects to accommodate their needs and goals.

Inclusion

Inclusion, to me, is about fostering a sense of belonging and community within the classroom. I prioritize understanding each student's unique background, artistic interests, and aspirations. Open dialogue about diversity and inclusion is integral to my teaching, as is creating an environment where all students feel empowered to share their perspectives and contribute to an evolving, inclusive art world. By incorporating critique guidelines that are constructive and respectful, I ensure that every student feels comfortable expressing their ideas and receiving feedback.

Conclusion

Art is a powerful tool for self-discovery, personal growth, and societal transformation. As an educator, I am committed to fostering a learning environment that reflects the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion. By integrating professional practices with an inclusive curriculum, I aim to empower students to see themselves as both skilled artists and agents of meaningful change. My goal is to prepare students not only to excel in their creative pursuits but also to become empathetic, thoughtful, and culturally aware individuals who use their talents to contribute to a more inclusive and equitable world. Together, we can build a creative community that values diversity and inspires positive transformation.