

Video Script

Hello, my name is Kate Reynolds, and I am an art teacher. The arts, music, dance, theater, visual arts, have always been used by people to find that which is meaningful to them. Another way of saying this is, art is a way of finding what people believe to be true, to be real.

For example, consider Van Gough's painting of a starry night. Van Gough painted what he saw, but he also painted what he felt, what he experienced. His perception of that night were more than what things looked like to his eyes. And this is the best way of explaining what art is for, and what it is. Art is a way of combining the world that is outside with the world that is inside. So, for any piece of artwork you see, there is a ratio between how much an artist pays attention to the external world of appearances, and how much he depends on his internal world of experience.

My students often paint their own images from direct observation. But even when they look objectively, their portraits always show something of their interior experience, something of their inner selves. Self-portraits are always profoundly more than what someone looks like.

My students are inspired by what they feel, but also, they are informed by the larger culture around them. All artists work from a specific time and place. Paintings by David Hockney inspired one of my students to approach her self-portrait with a similar technique. She also looked at Amadeus Modigliani's work and combined his style with symbols and mythological narratives from China, producing a self-portrait that combined all of these elements with her own vision. Whether it is Pop Art of Andy Warhol or Roy Lichtenstein, students belong to a cultural river that flows through and around them. Artmaking is a kind of participation in life, and a way to define oneself within it.

The work of Banksy and Street Art has had a huge impact on my students in the past few years. But each student invests their own meaning, their own symbols; they make the art uniquely their own. And they always combine the two worlds

in which they live, the world they see outside, and the world they experience inside.

So, in my art class, we will be looking at art history and at contemporary art. But a large part of the class will be concentrated on learning techniques. Technique has to do with the way we use materials. Learning how to draw, learning the relationships between colors, knowing how to mix them and how to use the right values and colors to paint from direct observation, is part of an art class.

There is a protocol to the way a subject is painted but that said, students can choose many kinds of mediums and adapt their own styles and interpretations to traditional methods. Art can be whimsical and lighthearted, it can have a political intention, it can be humorous, and it can be self-ironic as well as funny; or it can be based on beauty. It can have an approach to mystery and the mystical. But within all the units offered in this art class, the focus will always be on the individuality, upon the unique character of the student. All projects will be about self-knowledge, All units will result in artifacts that reflect technical skill, and what is important to the student who made it,