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## **STATEMENT OF TEACHING PHILOSOPHY**

I recall my first figure drawing course in college—one of the first art classes where I realized I wanted to be an artist. I had never known how to draw and found myself paralyzed by perfectionism. The instructor created a classroom environment that dismantled my preconceptions about “good art,” freeing me to work more intuitively and expressively. He lowered the typical academic pressure while raising the stakes in a way that helped me invest in my own creative vision. Paradoxically, I left the course with the technical drawing skills I’d been missing—a foundation I still use today. This balance between technical proficiency and personal vision has been a cornerstone of my own teaching practice for over a decade now.

Most students already have a creative impulse; however, many struggle to access it. Often, this difficulty stems from perfectionism or habits reinforced by rigid educational systems. I strive to dismantle these inhibiting forces and help students redirect their energy towards experimentation and risk-taking creativity. I continually reassess my teaching strategies each term to reduce anxiety around grades and foster more intuitive, process-oriented approaches to making. My proudest moments are when students surprise themselves—creating something they didn’t believe they were capable of. Student feedback consistently reflects how empowering this approach can be, allowing them to communicate personal ideas with clarity and confidence.

While my own art practice has evolved into mixed-media work, I feel grounded in my sculpture BFA which emphasized craft and technical skill. I structure my courses around rigorous demonstrations and material exploration. I believe artists are often born through a deep connection with material, and I am committed to keeping this at the heart of art education. Intimacy with a medium generates new ideas and gives the material a kind of agency—it becomes a true collaborator in the creative process. I’ve observed that students can be stifled either by a perceived need for conceptual meaning or by a lack of technical skills. I reject the idea that skill impedes contemporary dialogue; on the contrary, skill can enrich and deepen it. I aim to cultivate an art environment where material and process are both honored as core components of art.

One ongoing challenge in my teaching has been helping students shift from analyzing performance (especially in terms of grades) to engaging intuition as a productive force. Another is navigating the broad spectrum of student needs—from those who crave clear, step-by-step guidance to those who prefer total freedom. I strive to meet each student where they are while encouraging risk-taking, self-direction, and the ability to navigate uncertainty. I use Canvas both for fully online courses and as a supplement to in-classroom instruction. Students and colleagues have consistently commented on how systematic and organized my materials are.

In every course, we study both historical and contemporary artists to situate our practice within a broader context. I design projects that push students toward innovation, technical experimentation, and divergent thinking. We discuss how success and failure often look the same in practice—and how the most meaningful discoveries arise through experimentation. While technical craftsmanship is important, students are assessed primarily on risk, ambition, and the development of personal voice. My goal is to build a classroom culture rooted in dialogue, collaboration, and mutual respect—one that prepares students to sustain a creative practice, or to carry the tools of creative and critical thinking into whatever path they pursue.