

## **INTRODUCTION: EYE AND MIND**

The New York Studio School is a place where drawing, painting, and sculpture are studied in depth, debated energetically, and created with passion. The Studio School has played a crucial role in the art world since its first academic year, fifty years ago, and currently prepares talented MFA Candidates and Certificate students with the skills and dedication that they will need to thrive as working artists. Located in the heart of Manhattan's Greenwich Village, in the original site of the Whitney Museum of American Art, the sky-lit historic studios continue to foster creative energy today. The Studio School's pedagogical philosophy—a combination of the Atelier Model with perceptual foundations—has fostered and continues to grow our global reputation as a vital educational institution. Presently a center for artistic growth and evolving dialogue, practice meets cognition at the New York Studio School as the eye and mind unite.

## **QUEST**

The New York Studio School offers an extraordinary Studio Arts Education for the dedicated and aspiring artist. This experience is a preamble to a life-long engagement with art-making. Our intention is to foster our original vision—faith in the great language of art; commitment to excellence; cultivation of serious work habits; encouragement of an open mind; fidelity to studio-focused learning; and the belief in the power of art to change one's life—as we embrace a thorough self-assessment to preserve the thriving aspects of our program and to improve our operations.

We strongly believe in drawing as the most direct means of describing an experience or an idea. Drawing is a crucial pathway to understanding in art and is the common bond between the disciplines of painting and sculpture. There are few places where drawing is so intensely investigated.

In an effort to continuously improve and ensure that we are able to offer a unique and rigorous program of study, the New York Studio School considers this Strategic Plan to be the foundation for shaping decisions over the next five years. Based upon ongoing discussion between Administration, Faculty, Trustees, Students, and Alumni, this narrative will provide a roadmap to connect our rich history with our hopes for the future.

The intention of this document encompasses: championing studio-driven curriculum that offers firsthand learning experiences to students; exposing and connecting students to contemporary artists, critics and Art Historians so that they may begin to see themselves as part of a living lineage; creating the physical and social space for dialogue and discussion of historical and contemporary art issues through academic course offerings, on-site exhibitions, and our Evening Lecture Series; recruiting the most dedicated and energetic students; attracting and supporting the most qualified personnel; supporting alumni through outreach and publicity; bolstering the Studio School's financial situation through development and increased visibility; and engaging in continuous self-study to ensure that our progress stays in line with our goals. It is in order to grow as a vital center for the education of aspiring artists that we have embarked on a rigorous self-examination to create a strategic blueprint of goals specifically for the next five years; 2016-2021.

## **ESSENTIALS**

- Belief in the power of Art Education to change one's life.
- Working from perception, and from the figure, as foundational to a myriad of artistic practices, formative for all artists.
- Belief in Drawing as the most direct route to translating ideas and experiences
- Support for intensity, integrity, and disciplined work habits.
- An intentionally condensed core curriculum of drawing, painting, sculpture and Art History ensure that each discipline is studied in great depth.
- Commitment to excellence in teaching.
- Engagement in rich and varied community discourse through the Evening Lecture Series, rotating Exhibitions, Lunchtime Art History Lectures, Student Exhibitions that connect internal and external audiences.
- Cultivation of deeply motivated students.
- Student-focused environment wherein students are respected as individuals and as future artists.
- Belief in intense periods of work, such as the Marathon Courses in Drawing and Sculpture, as a means of encouraging students to surpass their own boundaries in thought and achievement.
- Studio, Atelier-Model, courses emphasize 'learning through doing'.
- Atelier structure has practicing artists demonstrating a studio practice for aspiring artists and also provides an opportunity for students to learn from one another.
- The use of creative studies, transcriptions, of works in New York City's museums provides students with access to original masterworks which are used for direct learning.
- Studio School interactions founded upon respect and shared experience.
- Forging the desire to look into the ability to see.

## **GOALS**

### Academics

- Offer the best studio-centric art education possible in the areas of drawing, painting and sculpture.
- Examine the function of Drawing courses within the curriculum and consider methods for greater emphasis on Drawing as a discipline (and a practice that can be carried as a lifelong source of discovery).
- Build upon inter-faculty dialogue so that each instructor has a clear understanding of how his or her contribution fits into the mission of the School and within the respective schedules of specific students.
- Expand our Professional Development Series for students to equip them with pragmatic skills that will serve them upon graduation.
- Evaluate the presence of the Writing Tutor and determine the best way to continue the incorporation of this role.

- Continue to offer and expand Study Abroad options for students.
- Expose students and alumni to contemporary issues through Visiting Artist Studio Visits, the Evening Lecture Series, the Lunchtime Lecture Series and Exhibitions in the Main Gallery.
- Continue to offer Marathons as part of our core curriculum and invite visiting artists of the highest caliber as guest instructors.

#### Additional Academic Resources

- Increase the use of the Evening Lecture Series Archive by establishing a viewing area in the Library.
- Support the presence of a Writing Tutor to help students develop their writing skills, Thesis projects, and artist statements.
- Continue to offer a broad onsite exhibition roster that exposes students to important art works.
- Continue to offer a wide range of visiting artists who conduct individual studio visits with students.
- Ensure that the Evening Lecture Series is utilized as a resource by students.

#### Enrollment

- Redesign the role of the Recruitment Coordinator to ensure that a variety of outreach methods are being utilized to connect with potential applicants.
- Continue to search for and to enroll the most qualified cohort of accepted students.
- Increase the generous array of scholarships available to students with financial need.
- Enhance our outreach to prospective students, nationally and internationally.
- Continue to prioritize student experiences during administrative decisions and future planning.
- Use e-marketing and social media platforms to convey the compelling and unique qualities of our programs, faculty and students.
- Redesign the Studio School's website to make it more user friendly and appealing.
- Target a diverse array of students with special programs, Evening and Saturday courses and Summer Sessions.
- Build retention through increased financial and interpersonal support for students.
- Enrich and empower students to develop serious studio habits, a firm foundation in the art of the past, and a meaningful engagement with the contemporary art world.

#### Administration, Faculty & Staff

- Build on the Studio School's history of attracting art world luminaries as teachers and lecturers and recruit dynamic, diverse and exceptionally talented artist teachers.
- Raise funds to support endowed Atelier Faculty Chairs.
- Support creative, talented and engaged staff members.
- Encourage participation in professional development opportunities for faculty and staff, and aim to be competitive with employment compensation packages.
- Continue to create a work environment that promotes a belief in the mission and values of the School.

### Public Identity

- Celebrate and raise public awareness of our unique pedagogy and strong community.
- Highlight the Studio School's prime location within the greater New York art world through promotional images and language.
- Redesign the position of Recruitment Coordinator to be a full-time office with greater outreach and involvement.
- Actively promote academic offerings and public programs through multiple media formats to place the Studio School, its students, renowned artists and historians in front of a broad cross section of students, educators, patrons and community members, both nationally and internationally.
- Raise funding for printed materials, catalogs, and digital advertisements.
- Offer historic tours of the Whitney Studio, a historic landmark site, to interested visitors.
- Enliven strategic branding across all platforms as we affirm our values and identity with an updated website and purposeful use of e-marketing, blogs, and social media.
- Promote and facilitate the success of our Alumni through digital platforms.
- Maintain, support and broaden our Public Programs; Evening Lecture Series; and Main Gallery.
- Enlarge the profile of the Evening Lecture Series and Main Gallery to foster attendance and vitality.
- Continue to attract nationally and internationally recognized lecturers and exhibitors of diverse age, gender, ethnicity and experience.
- Improve technology for production, archiving and viewing of the Evening Lecture Series.

### Location and Space

- Complete façade upgrade to substantially improve the Studio School's visibility and appeal.
- Make critical upgrades to the electrical, fire and heating systems.
- Improve our engagement with visitors by updating the building's public spaces and classrooms.
- Preserve the historic Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney Studio for future generations.
- Formalize a master plan to ensure the improvement and preservation of our historic space on West Eighth Street.

### Assessment

- Evaluate the progress of our Strategic Plan through an ongoing process of self-assessment.
- Create benchmarks for all aspects of self-assessment with continuous dates for processing our conclusions.
- Establish appropriate committees [Student Admissions and Affairs Committee; Security Concerns Committee; Faculty Affairs and Appointment Committee; Curriculum Compliance Committee] to assess operations and offer ways of improvement, when necessary.

- Conduct Faculty Reviews, including the results of Student Evaluation forms, and present findings regularly to the Dean's Office.
- Conduct Board of Governors Meetings four times during each academic year to review and improve all operations.
- Maintain consistent self-study through institutional effectiveness planning.

#### Funding the Future

- Utilize prime naming opportunities to encourage donor support.
- Expand our individual donor base and seek planned giving opportunities.
- Maintain and grow relationships with funding institutions and foundations.
- Formalize a full-scale capital plan to ensure the improvement and preservation of our historic space on West Eighth Street.
- Maintain and continually search for new funding opportunities.

#### Board

- Continue to expand the Board of Trustees by attracting dynamic and committed new members who have a broad range of expertise and knowledge.
- Seek and invite new members who are sympathetic to and understanding of the vision of the School and who possess creative strength in fundraising.
- Encourage fundraising and promotion of the institution by the Board of Trustees.

### **CONCLUSION**

Artist-founded, studio-focused, and student-centric, we are optimistic that the next fifty years promise to bring exciting evolution to the already exceptional history of the School. It is with continued institutional self-reflection, innovative modifications, and positive forward looking that we plan to strengthen our role as a primary nexus for the education of the eye and the mind.