

# NEW YORK STUDIO SCHOOL

## OF DRAWING, PAINTING & SCULPTURE

### Spring 2022 Intersession Marathon Painting/Drawing

#### Shifting The Earth: The Shape of Color and Transformation of Images

**Instructor:** Graham Nickson & Guests  
**Class Hours:** 9am-1pm; 2pm-6pm, with potential evening critiques after 6pm TBA  
**Dates:** Thursday, March 24 – Monday, March 28  
**Contact Info:** [slevy@nyss.org](mailto:slevy@nyss.org)

#### Course Description

The importance of color cannot be overstated, often derided as too emotional or romantic, its journey throughout history is helpful to know. We will study color from caves of Chauvet from 30,000 years ago to the color of the blue of the Ishtar Gate from present day Iraq; the ember red of Pompeiian painting; the green of Raphael's portraits; the velvet black of Manet; the gold of Cimabue. Egyptian walls, Medieval manuscript painting and Indian manuscript painting, leading to the colors of cities and to pastoral color. Color has enormous effect on imagery, it can endorse the image and content profoundly.

Starting with the visceral nature of earth colors, connections to Shamans working with their immediate circumstances, to the use of more ambitious palettes made possible to work in front of nature by the invention of the paint tube, we will make transcriptions from unlikely works from different centuries and cultures of the deep past and of the present. These will be important and ambitious.

The dependence on local color and its being challenged has proved to be very rich territory to explore. Local color led to conceptual color, and then ultimately to perceptual color. We will work on small paintings every day that show the students an understanding in new possibilities in harmonies, which will in turn affect the large paintings which they do. Color, weight, scale and color mixing will be part of the program. Rather than considering these works as studies, we would like for the student to consider them as personal statements that have their own magic; they surprise you but are still your own vision. We will create images and explore the idea of image-makers versus image-seekers. Be prepared for an adventure.

#### Course Outline

Unorthodox strategies and exercises will be introduced to broaden the student's creative vocabulary. The class meets daily on Zoom for five consecutive days from 9am to 6pm. Evening critiques will be held most evenings, utilizing Padlet as our virtual "studio wall". This course will investigate many implications of drawing and painting as a physical and cerebral activity as well as color as a philosophy. We will discuss key issues, including those of scale—tiny to huge; the use of different formats; the use of the rectangle; the vertical axis and its significance; the nature of distortions; the compression of space and depth; the search for 'form' and its consequences; space and its meaning, functions and the different kinds of space; and the nature of relational color. We will approach the meaning of images, investigating what contributes to a "powerful image". We will discuss "pictorial" subject

versus narrative subject: the diversities of structure, especially using strategies like the grid, the organic spiral and geometry, all of which play a part in research into the language of painting and drawing.

On the first day we will use explore the history and effect of earth colors and look at cave paintings such as: Lascaux; Chauvet. On the second day we will explore the importance of tonality that earth colors endorse, and their effect on artists such as Artemesia Gentileschi, Caravaggio and Rembrandt, Gwen John and Vuillard. The third day will include the importance of temperature, a transition from tonality to the richness of local color focusing on the works of Masolino, Piero Della Francesca and Poussin. The fourth day will deal with color as an equivalency of form with painters such as Cézanne and Matisse. Day five will have the question of color- B&W acrylic into color- transformation of color and image

### **Learning Outcomes**

Students will expand their ability to describe form and space through color relationships and drawing.

“I don’t paint things, I only paint the differences between things,” said Matisse.

“A colorist is essentially an epic poet” – Baudelaire

Each day produces an intense working mode, utilizing the vitality of each individual’s purpose. Students work very hard and are offered individual criticism on a one-to-one basis. The average day usually contains several group critiques and a lengthy final critique at the end of the physical session and is intensified for the last critique at the end of the course. The dialogue and discussions within the group are expected to be clear and succinct. The students are encouraged to participate and understand the visual language of painting.

### **Assessable Tasks**

Students will make many paintings of different scale and size. The student’s work and assessment are contingent with the individual level of each student. The bulk feedback of the class will be in open group critique format. Students should have a deep desire to understand painting and imagery, abstraction and color. Participation and attendance are mandatory.

### **Evaluation and Grading**

NYSS MFA students participating in this course will receive grades. Grading is on a High Pass/Pass/Low Performance/Fail basis. Visiting participants will not receive grades or evaluations for this course.

### **Materials and supplies**

- Ivory Black acrylic paint, 32 oz.
- Titanium White acrylic paint, 32 oz.
- Acrylic gloss medium, 16 oz. (for gluing)
- Recommended Set (alternative to individual purchasing of the earth colors listed above):

***Williamsburg Handmade Oil Paints:  
Native Italian Earths Set*** (10 colors, 40 ml tubes)

Full palette in Oil paint recommended; however, acrylic paint is certainly acceptable as well.

Earth Colors:

- Red Ochre
- Burnt Umber
- Pozzuoli Red
- Naples Yellow
- Raw Sienna
- Indian Yellow
- Indigo

Full Range Chromatic Palette:

- Flake White
- Titanium White
- Cadmium Yellow Light
- Cadmium Yellow Medium
- Yellow Ochre
- Lemon Yellow
- Cadmium Orange
- Cadmium Red Light

- Cadmium Red Medium
- Alizarin Crimson ● Rowney Rose or equivalent- (Quinacridone Rose) ● Magenta
- Caput Mortuum Violet (Mars Violet is a close alternative)
- (Violet Oxide is the closest acrylic equivalent)
- Windsor Violet (W&N) (Dioxazine Violet)
- Ultramarine Blue
- Cobalt Blue
- Cerulean Blue
- Viridian
- Chrome Oxide Green
- Terre Verte
- Raw Umber
- Indian Red (red oxide is acrylic equivalent)
- Lamp Black
- Ivory Black
- Peach Black (blue black is acrylic equivalent)

\*\*if you have any questions regarding specific colors, please email Sam Levy, [slevy@nyss.org](mailto:slevy@nyss.org).

- Large selection of brushes, large and small, from rounds to sable.
- 2 Large Palettes & 2 Small Palettes (approximately 18" X 22", & 10" x 12", if possible)
- Paint rags/ Good quality paper towels
- A wall or hand-held mirror

- Palette knife
  - Solvent (odorless mineral spirits)
  - Linseed Oil or galkyd
  - Tube wringer (suggested)
  - if using acrylics, modeling paste
  - if using acrylics, containers for paint and water
  - Suggested canvas sizes and quantities (oil-primed):
    - 5: 10" X 12" (stretched)
      - 5: 20" x 30" (stretched)
    - 2: 5' x 5' (stretched)
  - optional **alternatives**:
    - one roll of 10 yards of primed canvas: Blick Cotton Canvas by the Yard - 12 oz, Acrylic Primed, 60" Item#: 07334-1160
    - **Primed, painted heavy weight paper**
  - staple gun
  - staples
  - Work Surface: an easel, wall or board upon which to attach the canvas
  - Paper:
    - 10 sheets of decent quality paper (such as stonehenge or fabriano cold pressed), approximately 18" X 24" in size
    - 10 sheets of cheaper paper, approximately 18" X 24" in size
  - sketchbook (recommended)
- Additionally recommended:
- glue or matte medium
  - a set of watercolors or ink (suggested)

**\*\*\*Please Keep All Receipts\*\*\* Due to the improvisational nature of the Marathon, some materials may not be utilized in full. If you would like the option of potentially returning un-used materials, please do not open them.**

**\*NO CHARKOLE OR COMPRESSED CHARCOAL**

**\*NO PADS OR NEWSPRINT**

#### **School, Department & Class Policies**

Please refer to the Student Handbook for information regarding the School's policies on academic integrity and plagiarism. All students must abide by the general health and safety regulations laid out in the Student Handbook, as well as any specific instructions given by the Instructor(s). We expect excellent studio practice from all students. This encompasses respect for models, fellow students and faculty.

#### **NYSS Student Conduct for Virtual Learning**

In order to maintain a virtual space wherein participants feel at ease to share and learn openly with one another, the New York Studio School prohibits participants in virtual classes from recording, taking screenshots, or otherwise copying any portion of New York Studio School's online courses. While participants are free to share images of their own coursework, sharing or posting images or recordings from a virtual class on social media is prohibited without the consent of the instructor, models, and students from class. Course content is solely for registered students of the class and cannot be shared with others. By participating in virtual courses, students are aware that the New York Studio School may record and archive Zoom meetings, Padlet pages, and other content from the course.