

Massachusetts College of Art and Design



Bird in Space, Constantin Brancusi, 1931

SFDN183 Form Study

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Massachusetts College of Art and Design

SFDN183 Form Study

CATALOGUE DESCRIPTION:

An Introduction to the central tenets of three-dimensional art and design. Understanding 3D form is essential for all majors including sculptors, architects, and industrial designers, and is necessary for successful 2D images. Through design and construction of assigned projects, students explore the conceptual and technical fundamentals of form study: scale, volume, mass, and space. Using a wide range of materials in conjunction with varied building techniques, students creatively investigate the 3D form and its position in space.

Type: hybrid studio/critique, Enrollment: departmental required

COURSE AIMS

The primary goal of this course is for students to become skilled in the art and craft of three-dimensional form. Major emphasis will be placed on understanding the relationship between form and function and include material selection and the development of a high level of craftsmanship.

COURSE CONTENT

Projects will include elements of creativity, problem solving, concept development and execution in appropriate materials. It is expected that each of these elements will enhance and reinforce your concept. Understanding abstraction is a fundamental component of form development.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Art and Design is a combination of creativity and discipline, and artists and designers are professionals. Work that is late, incomplete, and/or hastily produced, as well as missing class meetings and failing to meet deadlines is not a sign of professional attitude, nor an indication of creativity, and often results in loss of client, gallery or job. Professionalism is a learned skill and in order to assist you in attaining this goal, I have written the following class standards. These requirements have been a part of my teaching philosophy for a number of years, and student adherence to them has resulted in a high quality of work, successful coursework and department reviews, and a sense of personal achievement.

1. Students are limited to a combined total of two absences and or late arrivals. Please exchange phone numbers with several of your classmates. If you miss class you can arrange to have your work brought in so you can receive credit, and ask for the current assignment. Missing class is not an excuse for failure to present work on time.
2. All assignments are due at the beginning of each class - 100% complete. Late work will not be evaluated or graded without prior approval.
3. Pin up and/or display all work and be ready for crit at the start of class. Begin to review work and be prepared to participate in the critique. Prepare constructive criticism, what are the strengths (why) and the weakness (how can the work be improved).
4. All work that has been turned in on time can be resubmitted up until the second last class of the semester, for a new grade that will replace your first grade. You are encouraged to redo work, in order to take full advantage of the crit process, and demonstrate your comprehension of comments that have been made about your work.

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REFERENCES & RESOURCES

Become a regular museum visitor. In addition to the art museums include the science museum and the art and science museums of Harvard. Visit our library and the World Wide Web regularly; strive to become an informed and critical viewer of fine art and designed objects. Be prepared to discuss your research and its relevance and relationship to your work.

GRADING

All students will be evaluated on the following:

Studio Assignments (60%)

Concept generation and selection

Material selection

Technical Execution

Class participation, attendance and completed work at the start of each class are significant aspects of your evaluation. The maximum number of absences is two and work must be completed on time.

You are expected to be on time, with your assignments complete.

Students enrolled in Massachusetts College of Art are expected to expand and redefine the concepts and experiences of art making. Used or recycled materials are not acceptable.

Students of all majors are expected to gain a working knowledge of the basic tenets of three-dimensional form.

Artist Journal (25%)

Document each project including: a. concept generation and selection b. concept development c. drawings and 3D sketches. Use verbal and visual descriptions, (written, drawings, material studies, models, photographs, etc.

Use a black 8.5 x 11 spiral bound journal; design a cover for your journal—drawing or collage.

Class Assignments (15%)

This is a studio class and students are required to bring their tools and materials to each session.

Class assignments are designed to improve technical skills, ideation, understanding the nature of materials, and development of ideas.

Include photographs of your class assignments in your artist journal.

Tools

Cutting Bar

T-square (30" +/-)

Matt Knife

Scale

Triangles 10" (45 degree and 30/60 degree)

Materials

Pencil, pen and paper

White glue and Glue stick

Journal (9 x 12 hard cover spiral bound 75 sheets for pencil, pen)

White matt board, corrugated cardboard, wood, wire as required

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Form Study Assignments (exchange emails with team members)

1. Form and Function Part I

Select one of the following:

- a. Good and Evil
- b. Hate and Love
- c. War and Peace
- d. Compassion and Inhumanity
- e. Freedom and Slavery

Select one of the following forms:

- a. Cube
- b. Tetrahedron
- c. Pyramid
- d. Cylinder
- e. Rhomboid

Choose one material: corrugated cardboard, Wire, wood, white or black matt board.

Express the two words you have selected with the form and material you have chosen, that is if you chose good and evil and the primitive form cube, build two cubes one that expresses Good and one that expresses evil using one material (white matt board). **You may not use any realistic imagery or any symbol.** Your solution must be completely abstract working with the formal qualities of art. (Proportion, scale, value, contrast, texture, pattern etc.) Consider the following: Abstraction, Deconstruction, Modernism and Minimalism.

Include an artist statement written on a word processor and printed out and included in your journal with all other required entries (*research, sketches and photographs of finished projects*). Summary: for next week complete two models using the same material one that represents each of your word pairs (Good and evil).

Homework: Artist Statement, final project, tools and materials for the next project.

Criteria for evaluation: Material selection, Craft-planning, measuring, cutting, gluing.

Museum of Fine Arts field trip

In your Form Study journal note abstract sculpture and paintings that express the meaning of any of the words listed in the word pairs at the MFA. Include photos, sketches, written descriptions, artist name and date from curators labels in your journal. Use this material plus archival (library and web) research as a starting point for your work.

2. Form and Function Part II

Based on your critique (enter critique notes in your journal) rebuild your project completely Requirements: Make it minimal and non-literal, improve your craft and remake all the parts to achieve a quality object. Bring material of your choice (same as last week or use one of the other listed materials: Wire, wood, white or black matt board. For next week bring in a new artist Statement, final new project, tools and materials for the next project.

Criteria for evaluation: Material selection, Craft-planning, measuring, cutting, gluing.

3. Form and Function Part III

Complete two drawings (1) on white hot press illustration board ink line drawing and (2) on cold press illustration board (cut paper, acrylic paint or gouache). Only use black, white, light gray, medium gray and dark gray. (each drawing 15" x 20" illustration board)

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4. Three Objects-Part I

Build three rectangular solids representing the following BULK, SURFACE and DIRECTION. Assemble the three solids into one form that expresses BULK, SURFACE and DIRECTION.

Use corrugated cardboard for study models and white foam core for the final project.

Study Guide: Richard Serra, Frank Stella, Frank Lloyd Wright, and Richard Meyer

Materials: chipboard and white foam-core.

Class team assignment: Build three each rectangular forms: BULK, SURFACE and DIRECTION (as different as possible). Experiment with different combinations, Combine in rectilinear relationships (right angles).

Homework: Artist Statement, final project, tools and materials for next assignment.

5. Three Objects-Part II

Build your final models based on class critique one wood and one wire.

Class assignment: Improve your form based on class critique.

Homework: Artist Statement, final project, tools and materials for next assignment.

6. Three Objects-Part III

Execute two drawings on 20" x 30" vertical white illustration board in cut paper (solid model) and pen and ink (wire model).

Drawing I of Three Objects Part I

Cut paper or paint Black, white and three greys. Do at least six different views and choose the best. Perspective drawing of your project must bleed on three sides of your 20" x 30" board. Consider positive and negative spaces.

Drawing I of Three Objects Part II

Black pen and ink or marker. Place your wire sculpture in direct sunlight-do not use artificial light. Project the shadow in your journals and trace the shadow. Do at least six different projections. Choose the best image and enlarge to fill a 20" x 30" sheet of white matt-board.

7. Infinity Box

Build an open box out of 1/4" black matt board measuring 6" x 6" x 12" deep. The 6" x 6" viewing end will have a rectangular viewing port no greater than one square inch. The back end will have one to three holes cut to allow light to enter your infinity box (max 1" square). The viewer should not be able to see the holes or light source; this can be accomplished through the use of baffles. The box will be filled with one material: straws, monofilament fishing line, plastic mirrors, string, thread, or any other approved material. Do not use pictorial imagery. The object is to create a sense of infinite space. The viewer should not be able to see the back of the infinity box.

Class assignment: Build a half size box 3" x 3" x 6". Experiment with different materials to determine the best material that creates a sense of infinite space.

Homework: Artist Statement, final project, tools and materials for next assignment.

Criteria for evaluation: Concept, Material selection, Craft-planning, measuring, cutting, gluing.

8. Infinity Box Part II

Drawing of infinity box. Media: Graphite, acrylic paint, mixed media. Expand the illusion of your infinity box; select a view from within the box. 20" x 20" Illustration Board.

9. Form and Abstraction-Part I

Continuing with our exploration of abstract form we will select a natural or animal subject and produce a series of three-dimensional forms that reduces the subject from a representational form to a pure abstraction: the essence of our subject.

For your subject choose a complex three-dimensional subject (not a leaf). Begin with a monochromatic representational image of the natural form and then produce four additional forms that are progressively more abstract. The final form will represent the essence of the subject.

Class assignment: Take 30 minutes to go outside along the Fenway and select a minimum of six natural forms. We will select the best natural form and you will do the first of the five steps of abstraction (monochromatic representational form).

Homework: Artist Statement, final project (four incremental steps towards an essence of form), tools and materials for next assignment.

Criteria for evaluation: Research, Concept, Material selection, Craft-planning, measuring, cutting, gluing.

Museum of Fine Arts field trip

In your Form Study journal sketch and describe abstract works of art in at the MFA.

Include photos and sketches and written descriptions in your journal. Select one work and generate a minimum of five steps that start with a drawing of the abstract work and proceed to a realistic image.

10. Form and Abstraction-Part II

Continue to develop your final form and execute that form in your choice of the following materials: wood, metal, plaster or wire (no found objects). We will work on this in class and complete for next class. BRING TO CLASS:

1. MFA Assignment drawing from abstract>real studies
2. Natural objects (select a minimum of six natural forms)
3. Journal sketches of natural object, 4 steps to abstract
4. Rough model of abstracted natural form
5. Materials to execute final form in class (we have wire, plaster, scrap wood)

http://www.metmuseum.org/works_of_art/collection_database/modern_art/bird_in_space_constantin_brancusi/objectview.aspx?collID=21&OID=210006973

<http://lingni-net.blogspot.com/2009/04/brancusi-allways.html>

11. Set Design-Part I

Choose a play by Ibsen, Miller or Williams. Read the play and select one scene. Write an artist statement that describes the atmosphere and sense of place. Understand dialog, viewer response and emotional impact. Interpret the script as 3 dimensional space.

Create an image of the set on a 20 x 30 illustration board. Keep the set as minimal (abstract) as possible. Concentrate on the psychooical and phisiological aspects of form and color.

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Materials: Media: Paint, charcoal, collage, brush and ink, oil pastel, chalk pastel, fabric or any approved media.

12. Set Design-Part II

Build a model of your set that expresses the sense of place of the scene.

Create a three dimensional relief 2 inches to four inches deep on a 15" x 20" illustration board (horizontal).

Materials: Corrugated cardboard, brown paper and elmers white glue.

Criteria for evaluation: Criteria for evaluation: Research, Concept, Material selection, Craft-planning, measuring, cutting, gluing. Demonstrate your ability to control your use of materials, use restraint and communicate your knowledge of minimalism; let each choice of material and form express a specific aspect of the play. Use all the skills you have learned during the semester.

12. Set Design-Part III

Based on your critique (enter critique notes in your journal) rebuild your project completely Reduce your concept to the most fundamental forms possible.

SFDN 183 FORM STUDY: OBJECTIVES/GRADING CRITERIA

CRITERIA	PROJECTS											
RESEARCH	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Field Trips	•	•						•	•			
Archival	•		•	•						•	•	•
Behavioural					•	•	•					•
CRAFT												
Tactile	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•
Digital									•		•	•
Tools	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•
CONCEPT												
Ideas	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•
Idea selection	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•
Execution	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•
Material choice					•		•		•	•	•	•

PROJECTS LIST

1. Primitive forms-Part I
2. Primitive Forms-Part II
3. Three Objects-Part I
4. Three Objects-Part II
5. Infinity Box
6. Enclosed Form-Part I
7. Enclosed Form-Part II
8. Form and Abstraction-Part I
9. Form and Abstraction-Part II
10. Set Design-Part I
11. Set Design-Part II
12. Construction Toys (optional project)

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CRAFT

Tactile: hand built projects (1)
 Digital: computer aided design/imaging
 Tools: selection & use

CONCEPT

Ideas: generating project schemes
 Idea selection: select best scheme
 Execution: Presentation quality
 Material choice: Best material to enhance scheme

CRITERIA DEFINITIONS

RESEARCH

Field trips: Museums, Libraries, etc.
 Archival: Books, periodicals, Internet, etc.
 Behavioural: Observation, interview & questionnaire

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EVALUATION FORM II

Infinite Space Critique

Comment on the following:

1. Illusion
2. Craft (cutting, gluing, light leaks etc.)
3. Material choice and effectiveness
4. Lighting (placement, source and colour)
5. Additional comments (surprise, delight, mystery, etc.)

Artist Statements Research Guide

Library Catalog

When looking for Artists' Statements in our [Library Catalogue](#) please use the term *Artists' Writings* there are many items, a few are compilations of writings and others are individual artists. Below are a few that you may find helpful.

Books with examples of Artists' Statements in the Massart Collection

M/E/A/N/I/N/G : an anthology of artists' writings, theory, and criticism.
 Edited by Susan Bee and Mira Schor. Durham, NC : Duke University Press,
 2001.
 MassArt Call Number: *N6512 .M378 2001*

Surrealist painters and poets: an anthology. Edited by Mary Ann Caws.
 Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, c2001.
 MassArt Call Number *PQ1170.E6 S8 2001*

Theories and documents of contemporary art: a sourcebook of artists' writings.
 Kristine Stiles and Peter Selz. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996.
 MassArt Call Number *N6490 .S765 1996*

Towards another picture: an anthology of writings by artists working in Britain, 1945-1977.
 Nottingham: Midland Group Nottingham, 1977.
 MassArt Call Number: *N70 .T68*

Twentieth-century artists on art: an index to artists' writings, statements, and interviews.
 Robertson, Jack. Boston, Mass.: G.K. Hall, c1985.
 MassArt Call Number [NX456 .R59 1985](#) or
[XJ NX456 .R59 1985 \(in the Reference Collection\)](#)

Witness to her art: art and writings by Adrian Piper, Mona Hatoum, Cady Noland,
 Jenny Holzer, Kara Walker; Daniela Rossell and Eau de Cologne.
 Annandale-on-Hudson, N.Y.: Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College, c2006.
 MassArt Call Number *N8354 .W58 2006*

How to Write an Artist Statement

Writing the artist statement: revealing the true spirit of your work. Goodwin, Ariane.
 Haverford, Pa.: Infinity Publishing, 2002.
 MassArt Call Number *N8600 .G65 2002*

Non-MassArt Books but within the FLO consortium

Reflections on art: a source book of writings by artists, critics, and philosophers.
 Langer, Susanne Katherina Knauth. Baltimore, Johns Hopkins Press [1959,
 c1958] (1960 printing)
 Available at AIB, Emmanuel, Wentworth and Emerson *N79 .L2*

Art recollection: artists' interviews and statements in the nineties.
 [Ravenna]: Danilo Montana: Exit: Zona archives; New York: Distributed in
 the U.S. by D.A.P., 1999.

Articles

Using our electronic databases can get you some great information about writing artist statements and many examples. Within [Art Full-Text](#) use the keyword *Artists' Statement* and you can locate many artists statements that have appeared in journals. For [Art Bibliographies Modern](#) and [Bibliographies of the History of Art](#) use *Artists' Writing* and *Artists' Statements* to get more examples and some how-to articles.

Ricci, M. Making a Statement: How and Why to Create an Effective Artist's Statement. *Crafts Report* v. 33 (July 2007) p. 14-16.

Liddle, M. Artist's statement--Matt Liddle. *JAB (Journal of Artists' Books)* no. 14 (Fall 2000) p. 20-1
Link to the full-text of the article

<http://vnweb.hwwilsonweb.com/hww/jumpstart.jhtml?recid=0bc05f7a67b1790e8ac19c6e8e7ebde3e9ada423cb38fc05c3cac404edaca77292ce6b4484830a03&fmt=H>

Whittaker, D. The rise and fall of the artist's statement. *Art Review (London, England)* v. 51 (September 1999) p. 50-1

Link to the full-text of the article

<http://vnweb.hwwilsonweb.com/hww/jumpstart.jhtml?recid=0bc05f7a67b1790e8ac19c6e8e7ebde39699f74964fcd253b3c8ec37aaf6f26ed10b912dfa178ca6&fmt=H>

Goodwin, A. Writing an artist's statement. *Ceramics Monthly* v. 47 no. 5 (May 1999) p. 39-40

Link to the full-text of the article

<http://vnweb.hwwilsonweb.com/hww/jumpstart.jhtml?recid=0bc05f7a67b1790e8ac19c6e8e7ebde39699f74964fcd253e3d234792088aa4720ebc037373ebdf4&fmt=H>

Website by the author about artists' statements

<http://www.ceramicsmonthly.org/mustreads/artist.asp>

Digital Salon Catalog: [Artists' Statements](#). *Leonardo*, Vol. 31, No. 5, Sixth Annual New York Digital Salon. (1998), pp. 475-479.

Link to the full text of the article

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0024-094X%281998%2931%3A5%3C475%3AAS%3E2.0.CO%3B2-K>

Miller, J. How to write an artist's statement. *Art Papers* v. 21 (September/October 1997) p. 35.

Link to the full text of the article

<http://vnweb.hwwilsonweb.com/hww/jumpstart.jhtml?recid=0bc05f7a67b1790e8ac19c6e8e7ebde35cb7fd71d084d785219dbd87d6d3b6f192b4e81228f95f0d&fmt=H>

Websites

ECIAD Writing Centre: Writing an Artist Statement

<http://www.eciad.ca/wc/artstate.htm>

Artists Foundation – How to write an artist statement.

http://www.artistsfoundation.org/art_pages/resources/resources_arts_statement.htm

ArtBusiness.com – Writing an Artist Statement

<http://www.artbusiness.com/artstate.html>

Syllabus Attachment

GRADING

Two grading systems are used at the college; choose the one appropriate for your course.

1. Letter grades (A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, D, F, Incomplete) are given in courses offered in:

Animation	History of Art	Master of Arts in Teaching/Art
Architecture	Illustration	Education
Art Education	Industrial Design	Master of Science in Art Education
Fashion Design	Liberal Arts	
Graphic Design	Master of Architecture	

2. Pass/No Credit/Incomplete grades are given in courses offered in:

Studio Foundation courses	Photography
Film/Video	Studio for Interrelated Media
Fine Arts 2D	Master of Fine Arts
Fine Arts 3D	

3. Grades are defined as follows:

A	Exceptional work in all respects.
B	Above average work, distinguished in certain but not all respects.
C	Average. Individual departmental policies may set standards for the application of “C” grades toward progress in the major.
D	Below average work. This is the lowest passing grade; individual departments may set standards for the application of “D” grades toward progress in the major.
F	Failing work. No credit is given.
Pass	Work meeting all expectations for successful completion of the course.
NC	No Credit Work that does not meet the expectations of the course.
Inc.	Incomplete. A temporary designation indicating that at least 80% of the course requirements have been met and that the remaining course requirements are expected to be completed, and a permanent designation issued by the subsequent mid-semester. The student is responsible for having an Individual Grade Sheet completed by the appropriate faculty member and filed with the Registrar. If the student does not complete the course work, a non-passing grade will be issued.

Department Academic Progress

(To be inserted by Department)

Course Attendance

The college-wide policy permits no more than two absences per semester for a course that meets once a week prorated for classes that meet on a different schedule.

Plagiarism

Whenever your work incorporates someone else’s research, images, words, or ideas, you must properly identify the source unless you can reasonably expect knowledgeable people to recognize it. Proper citation gives credit where it is due and enables your readers to locate sources and pursue lines of inquiry raised by your paper. Students who do not comply will be penalized. For further information, see the Massart Student Handbook or consult with the Academic Resource Center.

Classroom Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Massachusetts College of Art and Design is committed to fostering the academic, personal, and professional growth of our students. We are especially committed to ensuring that students with documented disabilities, as defined under the Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA), are provided equal access to all campus resources and opportunities. If you believe you have a disability that may warrant accommodations, I urge you to contact the Academic Resource Center (ARC) at arc@massart.edu or 617-879-7280. The ARC is located in the Tower Building, Rm 811. The Academic Resource Center provides academic support to all matriculated MassArt students through access to academic advisors, a learning specialist, academic coaches, professional writing and subject tutors, and training on assistive technology.