

PORTFOLIOWORKS



Anonymous student work, 2019

SPRING 2020

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PORTFOLIOWORKS UPDATE

It has been an interesting and challenging time for all of us in confinement, and we write to you from our respective homes. Thank goodness for video conferencing! We can only begin to imagine what the long-term ramifications will be for our students and their families. We hope that you are safe and healthy at home.

We had a truly wonderful Fall-Winter 2019, and we congratulate all of our hardworking students on their completed applications. The results are starting to come in, and we are proud of their accomplishments. They have already had acceptances to most of their top choice schools, and generous offers of scholarships. We worked with students interested in pursuing degrees in Fashion Design, Architecture, Film, Design, and Art, in the U.S. and the U.K.. They have so far received acceptances and some fantastic scholarships from RISD, Parsons NY, University College London, Oxford Brookes, Istituto Marangoni London, Westminster, Reading, Kent, and the London College of Fashion.

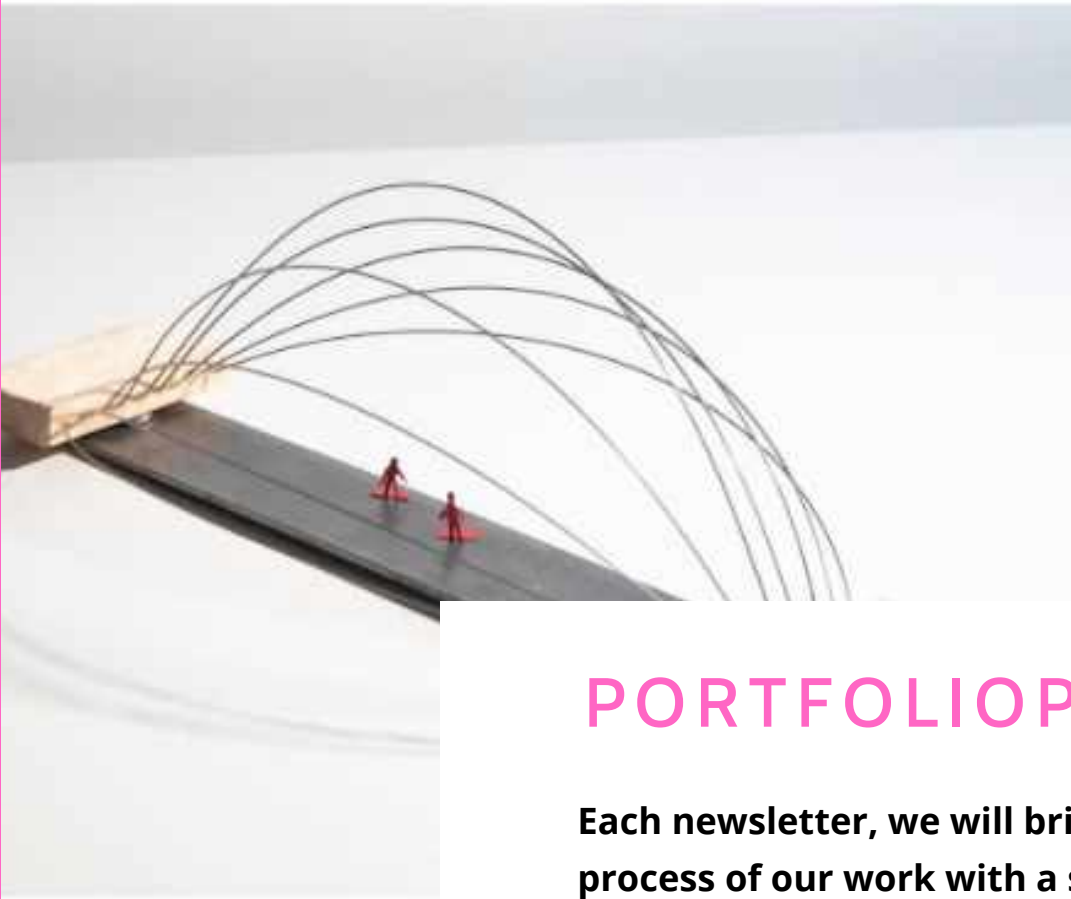
INTRODUCING KELLY NIPPER

We are thrilled that Kelly has joined us (alongside Maggie and Allison) with our California and West Coast students. Kelly is an artist based in Los Angeles. Her practice explores the relationship between physical intimacy and technological advancement. She draws on a network of interrelated research interests, including the study and analysis of human movement, communication theory, geology, and the production and organization of space.

Her work has been the subject of solo presentations at the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Kunsthaus Zürich, Switzerland; Tramway, Glasgow, Scotland; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Centre for Contemporary Art Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw, Poland; South London Gallery, UK; and Performa, New York. Nipper's work is in the public collections of the Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, MOCA, the Hammer Museum, Israel Museum, and Galleria d'Arte Moderna among other institutions.

She has served as visiting faculty at UCLA, MIT, and University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia. Nipper received her MFA from CalArts and BFA from Minneapolis College of Art and Design.





PORTFOLIOPROCESS #1

Each newsletter, we will bring to you a look into the process of our work with a student.

Student: French 12th grader attending a French High School

Student Location: France

Art training: Self taught, no art in high school

College goals: Architecture in the UK.

Communication Mode: Skype

Hours: 12, October 2019-January 2020

This lovely student was very self-motivated and a hard worker. She showed us images of her work which consisted of a number of interesting three-dimensional pieces in a variety of media and some weak observational drawing.

The overall aesthetic of her existing work was surprisingly coherent and revealed a strong leaning towards safe, minimal, light, elegant, linear work that also revealed a fear of color, spontaneity, and risk-taking. She did not show us any of her process or failures. An important objective for us would be to help her overcome her need for control and her fear of failure.

Portfolio Process #1, cont'd

Her portfolio needed stronger drawing and her most selective school required that she carry out a drawing Task. We focused on improving her drawing and using her existing pieces as starting points to create more ambitious projects that would retain her personality, while also communicating the breadth of her interests, her engagement with social issues, her notable work ethic, and her capable nature. We encouraged her to take the pieces she had already made and look at them critically, thinking of them as process pieces: essential steps towards making more complex and engaging work. We assigned her experimental drawing exercises to loosen and expand her mark-making and to broaden her understanding of materials.

Her final portfolio included a number of these experimental pieces, including drawings made by holding pastels in her mouth or by flapping her painted arm on a piece of large paper (as a bird might). These drawing exercises proved invaluable when the time came for her to tackle the Task sent to her by her "reach" school. At the same time, our discussions with her helped us identify how to help her expand on her existing work, take risks, and think big.

She had made a Calder-like mobile earlier in the year. Through dialogue and analysis she was able to understand how Calder belonged to a specific time in history and reflect on how she might reclaim aspects of his work for our current socio-political moment. She created a series of mixed-media mobiles that concluded with a piece where wealth and scarcity hung in imbalance.

The most ambitious project she created while working with us was a large installation piece made with shards of coloured glass and mirrors that she hung from a tree in her backyard. She was able to relate this work to ideas about the environment, light, and reflection.

Her final portfolio was very strong, showing a distinct and fresh personality, a variety of media, ambition, a willingness to experiment, an understanding of process, complexity of thought, critical thinking, and engagement with the world. The captions she wrote to accompany the work were carefully crafted to frame and elaborate the carefully organised sequence of images.



I started this piece in the first place to explore light at different times of the day. My idea was to use mirrors and colored glass hung from a branch, in my garden, to observe the impact of light on its environment.

Once I sketched out the idea and began to construct it, I realized that it would be much more convincing to hang more of these fragments on the entire tree. By taking photographs, I saw how these fragments could be observed differently in real life and photographically, in changing light and spatial constructions.

I therefore decided to use my mirrors and colored glass as objects in the quest for a perfect environment. The way they were placed at different spots was for me a perfect way to re-discover nature, light and my environment.



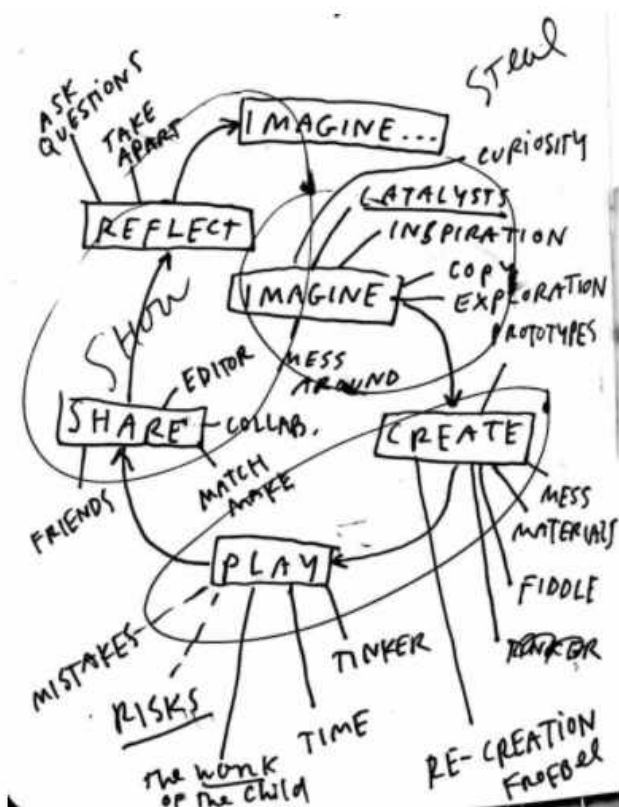
THE DRAWING LAB

What started out as a group class to explore experimental drawing has developed into a one-on-one drawing and making session. These sessions typically last for 2-3 hours and provide the private space for students to try new techniques and explore their interests and concerns with our individual guidance.

The Drawing Lab has become an essential part of the way we work, giving students confidence in their ability and risk taking, experimentation with new materials and scale, and providing wonderful examples of original work for them to include in their portfolios.



THE CREATIVE LEARNING SPIRAL BY AUSTIN KLEON



In a 2018 post, writer and artist Austin Kleon talks about out “how essential it is to stop thinking of our creative lives in terms of linear progress and think of them instead as cyclical, seasonal, and non-linear.” He includes a fresh sketch from his journal that refers to Mitchel Resnick’s book, *Lifelong Kindergarten*. We couldn’t agree more.

This is one reason why we encourage our students to start making ambitious projects early on - before Senior year! We need time to imagine, create, mess things up, fail, tinker, PLAY, reflect, take risks, etc. etc. in order to get to a place where our work is complex and honest.

We wish you all health and patience in this challenging moment, and look forward to sharing with you more of our work and ideas in our next Newsletter.

Allison, Kelly and Maggie