Global Classrooms Faculty Fellowship

GLOBAL CLASSROOMS PROJECT
2018-19
Presented on April 26th, 2019

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• Create a partnership with Xi’an University

• One or more online video collaborations between an Art class (in a studio setting) at Xi’an University and an Art Appreciation/or Asian Art class at Montgomery College
ASSUMPTIONS

- Process of initial contact and partnership would be smooth and uncomplicated
- Virtual/online experience would enhance the global perspectives of the students
- Students would benefit from the use of technology in the classroom
HURDLES AND REALITY

Geopolitics and Diplomacy
- After several attempts the collaboration between the two institutions was deemed unsuccessful
- Class presentation by Xiosheng Bi, Chinese-American artist and resident of Maryland, followed by written Q&A with students

Technical Challenges
- Sorting through the various platforms
- Unpredictability of technology services – on campus and internet based

Language and Learning Styles
- Overcoming language barriers
- Academic calendars of both institutions are not similar
- Managing time-zone challenges
Xiaosheng Bi is a ceramic artist and adjunct faculty at Montgomery College. He was born and educated in Xi’an; before emigrating to the US in 1997.

When asked to comment on the artistic concept of his work, he replied: *In terms of artistic thought, I pursue traditional Chinese aesthetic ideals. I strive to express stillness and tranquility through my work by using the brushwork of Chinese painting to invoke a certain aesthetic mood; it is a quietude leading to a clearer, more penetrating view of the world.*

(Retrieved from online interview)
Q&A with Xiaosheng Bi

- Do you look at art differently since coming to the US from China; and do you see artwork that you can see yourself making now which you did not when you were in China?
  - Yes, I see art differently than I did in China, because in China there was almost no exposure to western art. Our school only ever did some exhibits on Japanese and Korean art. If I was still in China, I would not be making the artwork I make now.

- What was the biggest issue you faced as an artist after coming here?
  - The biggest issue I faced was how to make a living as an artist.

- How did you adapt to the new art styles and culture?
  - I moved to the United States when I was in my mid-thirties, and it’s impossible for me to completely change myself, so there are always Chinese cultural elements in my work. However, I have been living in the United States for over 20 years, and I am always surrounded by western culture, so it does influence my work. My friends in China always tell me my work looks like Western art.

- Is a lot of contemporary art in China still based on traditional/historical styles?
  - From what I know, yes.

- What suggestions would you have for other immigrant students who want to become artists?
  - My advice is to do what you know and understand, because the United States is a multicultural society. I think people need to try and understand and expose themselves to different cultures, in order to further move society forward.
Do you see a difference in the subject matter or reactions of audience to political art, in China and the US?
- There is almost no political criticism artwork in China, and audiences are rarely exposed to it.

Is there a spiritual or religious significance to your art?
- I am not religious, but I would like my work to convey a peaceful, calming, and beautiful sense to viewers.

Why do you use abstract visuals in your ceramics?
- I use abstract visuals and visuals of figures to convey emotion and mood through my work. The imagery I use for this is most effective for this purpose, and I really want the audience to feel the emotion in it.

How are the arts promoted in China compared to the US?
- I had a good job and standing in China, there were new galleries to show my work in and magazines which published my work. I still don’t know how to promote my work here, though, I’m not good at it.

Do you spend more time thinking about ideas or in creating the ceramics?
- I spend more time creating ceramics
Assignment

Compare and contrast the two works:

Jefferson Memorial, situated on the Tidal Basin with the bank of Sakura trees, which were gifted by the Japanese in 1912 and the Kinkaku-ji or the Golden Pavilion, set in a Japanese garden in Kyoto. Discuss the function of each piece, and the significance of the garden/landscape design that are unique to the period and style. In particular, consider the relationship between building and garden setting as well as the intended purpose of each.
Global Outcomes and Assessment

Outcomes
- Investigate, Catalog, Examine and Present a globalized art-historical project
- Foster inter-cultural experience and communication skills
- Complement and expand on the globalized course content
- Develop competency in the use of audio-conference technology in the classroom
- Combine cross-cultural collaborations with technology
- Explore option of new Global Classroom in the future with other international institutions

Assessments
- Quizzes/Tests: Assess the ability to define, recognize and describe cross-cultural artefacts
- Assignments: Assess the ability to do independent research using primary and secondary sources, and to communicate their understanding of cross-cultural connections
- In addition to digital documents such as JSTOR, ARTstor and PowerPoint slides students had to visit local museums and monuments and record their experience through photo journals
Learning Objectives

- ARTT127 and ARTT272 – Global Classroom
- To **reflect** on and analyze the synthesis of styles and influences, and make connections between commonalities in influences and themes.
- To further **explore** and **identify** the cross-cultural exchanges evident in the examples – through the study of style, technique, iconography and ornamentation.
- To **recognize** and **trace** the inter-connectedness of the global cultures throughout history.