

**Schedule:** Fridays, 2:00 pm to 6:00 pm

**Location:** Tower 306

**Credits:** 3.00

**Instructor:** Abraham Evensen Tena

**Phone:** [REDACTED]

**Email:** [REDACTED]

**Office Hours:** Fridays from 1:00 pm to 2:00 pm (hour before class)

### Course Description

This class will explore affordances brought by digital imaging technology to traditional painting techniques and concepts. By exercising our painting skills on par with novel digital techniques, we seek not only to produce appealing images, but also to meditate on the act of creation within digital spaces. We will explore animation as we think about **time**. We will explore tridimensional construction as we think about **space**. And we will explore object-making as we explore **materiality**. Lastly, this class will also investigate the aesthetic and technical demands of new illustration markets, with conversations and assignments about concept art and production design.

### Course Objectives

1. **To expand your artistic practice with innovative digital painting techniques:** We will explore animation, augmented reality, speed painting, 3D maquette, and the laser cutter. But rather than simply collecting skills, we aim to nimbly move from tool to tool in order to respond to conceptual and aesthetic challenges. As important as the tools presented in class, are the ones you develop on your own, through self-education and experimentation.
2. **To meditate on the impact that virtual spaces and digital media have in artistic practice:** rather than client briefs or editorials to illustrate, each assignment in this class will be based on a research question. We seek to produce work in the intersection of technology and art, with a strong personal voice. Above all, our task is to avoid stereotypes and cliches, searching instead for the insight that may help us better understand creativity in the digital age.

### Class Materials and Technology

The core of this class is digital painting in **Photoshop**, but we will expand to other tools in order to solve visual problems and explore ideas. Most of these tools are included with Adobe Creative Cloud, and are available in the computer labs. We will also use a few experimental tools that are free and easy to obtain online. If you prefer to use different bitmap and vector software (like Paint Tool Sai or InkScape) you will have to find the homologous tools and techniques described in class.

You will need a digital tablet and stylus, to work during class and for homework. You can borrow both tools in tech central or bring your own. You will also need an external digital storage device (such as an external hard-drive, or USB thumb-drive) save your projects (minimum 16 GB.) In terms of printing, you will be allotted printing credits at the start of the semester. You can replenish this credits when depleted. Contact Tech central with any hardware and printing questions.

Lastly, make sure to bring a sketchbook every week. Use it to write down notes, and create thumbnails and sketches. Since you may want to scan some of those images, I recommend that you get a spiral-bound or semi-perforated sketchbook for easy page removal. 8.5" x 11" is a good size to pick.

### Assignments and Grading

Every week you will be assigned process work leading to one of **five main** assignments for the semester. Process work counts for 50% of the grade, and the final illustration the remaining 50%. The instructor will give specific instructions for process work, but regardless of particularities, there are 5 elements of image-making that you should keep in mind while working:

- **Concept:** Clear and concise description of the idea you wish to communicate in your final illustration. Measure your final illustration against your original concept to assess clarity, and to identify new conclusions discovered through the artistic process. Tip: Write a small paragraph describing the concept or goals before sketching.

- **Composition:** Deliberate arrangement of pictorial elements in the service of your concept. This is where perspective, pictorial weight, readability, gesture and point of view matter the most. Tip: Create small thumbnails, testing variations on size and position of pictorial elements.
- **Value:** The darkest darks, the lightest lights, and all tones in between in an image. Value, which is derived from rendering and lighting, helps conduct the eye and establish hierarchy. Tip: Create simple sketches with just a few value levels (black, white and two grays, for example.)
- **Color:** From its understanding in naturalistic rendering, to its symbolic and cultural dimensions, color can be the most powerful visual device. Even a limited palette or monochromatic image implies choice and meaning. Tip: Create a few color compositions, testing different harmonies or organizing principles for your color (local color, observational painting, design palette, reference to an artistic period, etc.)
- **Technique:** Formal properties such as form, shape, texture, anatomy, line quality, brushstroke, and others. A solid technique is not enough to make an illustration, but a good illustration can be hurt by poor technique. As it pertains to digital painting, technique also involves self-education through tutorials and experimentation, in order to discover new visual effects or processes. Tip: Create an archive of tutorials that you have found online.

Finally, this is how your final grade will be divided:

Assignment	Value
Animated Portrait	20%
Speed Painting Challenge 1	15%
The Chase Pitch	20%
Speed Painting Challenge 2	15%
Digital Painting as an Object	20%
Participation and attendance	10%
<b>TOTAL:</b>	100%

While the instructor will provide feedback and a grade for every assignment, it is your responsibility to keep track of your progress during the semester. The instructor keeps a record of every assignment and attendance, so feel free to reach out with any questions or concerns. You may receive **academic warnings** due to absences, poor performance, and/or lack of professionalism (late assignments, no communication, class disruption.) Reach out to your instructor as soon as possible with any question or concern.

At different points during the semester, the instructor may require that you work outside of the classroom and come back with your results. Likewise, visits to the museum and field work may happen at any point, so **bring your ID** for every session. Keep in mind that the instructor will pass attendance at the beginning and end of the class, so be sure to be back on time from any break or off-class assignment.

Attendance will be taken at each class session. You are expected to attend all sessions, and your attendance will be factored in to your course grade. **More than two absences will trigger a failing grade in the course.** If you miss a class, you are responsible for getting a complete set of class notes, finding out if there have been changes in the Course Syllabus or reading assignments, and finding out if any handouts were distributed. Punctuality is extremely important. Arriving late is disruptive to the class. You are expected to arrive on time at the start of class and after the break. Lateness will be recorded and factored in to your course grade. **Two lateness count as one absence.** Finally, here is an explanation on the meaning of each letter grade:

- A Professional level, or uniquely insightful work.
- A - Outstanding development, comprehension and quality
- B+ Very good development, comprehension and quality
- B Good development, comprehension and quality
- B - Average development, comprehension and quality
- C+ Marginal development, comprehension and quality
- C Unclear development, comprehension and quality
- C - Lacking any development, comprehension and quality
- D Not acceptable/did not follow direction
- F Not attempted and/or Missed Project/Critique

**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](mailto: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.

**Assignment Description:**

- (1) Animated Portrait: Your job will be to create an animated self portrait, exploring identity in the digital age. While you can focus on naturalistic likeness, the real challenge is to illustrate change and the passage of time. Aim to be done with the animation in three weeks. We will use the last class for final rendering and printing for Augmented Reality (AR.)
- (2) Speed Painting Challenge 1: Use the story prompt from today to come up with an image. Make some simply thumbnails first, before going to final. Use today's figure drawing as a source of inspiration and reference. Make a black and white (grayscale) digital painting to use as a story pitch for next week
- (3) The Chase Pitch: We will explore visual storytelling in the context of production art. There are many ways in which an illustrator can be of service to a movie, video game, comic book, theatrical play, children book or any other complex production. Storyboard artists are directors on paper, making decisions about writing, casting, and acting. We will explore filmic language and how it can help us make better illustrations.
  - There should be at least 7 vignettes for the story, each in the format of the venue of your choice (for example, if you want to make it a film, use the 16:9 ratio.) Most people will do more than 7, but we can negotiate.
  - Each frame should accompanied by notes to help the viewer understand the direction of the story, the transition between shots and any sound effects you would like to add.
  - You can use any technique or color you want, but from the technical standpoint, your focus should be in solid structural drawing and composition.
  - Consider that you will present the movie to the class in the form of a pitch. You may choose to create a Keynote presentation, animatic or present a series of still with your own narration. Convince us that your take on the story should be produced!
- (4) Speed Painting Challenge 2: Read the assigned story and answer a few questions before drawing:
  - What is interesting to you about the story? What aspect of it you do not care for?
  - What is the story's theme?
  - Have you ever been in a similar situation? What can you borrow from real life for your adaptation?
  - Would a change of setting, of time and space, make clearer what is interesting to you about the story?
  - If you decide to adapt it based on a genre (sciFi, fantasy, etc,) how is this change useful, to the audience and you, in understanding something new about the story?
  - Once you have those answers design, for next week (11/13):
    - The protagonist, drawing in layers their full body, clothing and props
    - The Antagonist, drawing in layers their full body, clothing and props
    - A Mood Board, with images that hint at the setting for your story (location, time, etc.)
- (5) Digital Painting as an Object: For our next major assignment, we will bring digital painting out from the screens and into the real world. Using printing and laser cutting technology, we will create a product that uses illustration for both aesthetics, and to inform the audience. This assignment should be a demonstration of your ability to conceptualize, design and produce a professional quality tridimensional object. Below are two options of the project you can take, but regardless of which one is most interesting to you, at the core is a simple mandate: exercise your empathic imagination by thinking of your audience. After all, and in a broad sense, illustration is a service.
  - Option One: Illustrated Tea Box. Choose a flavor for research and sketching. Build a box of at least 6" x 4" x 4", better if larger. The box should combine imagery and text
  - Option Two: Illustrated Board Game. Choose a reference game for mechanics, and apply a new theme to it. Identify and Illustrate the different components of the game. Present a final quality version of your board for final critique.

Date	Class	Homework
1/25	Intro. Syllabus. Speed test. Alchemy	Animated Portrait
2/1	WIP. Animation, technique and principles	
2/8	WIP. Animation technique and principles 2	
2/15	WIP. Printing and augmented reality	
2/22	Critique. What is concept art?	Speed Painting Challenge 1
3/1	Speed painting and critique	
3/8	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>	The Chase Pitch
3/15	Storyboarding and filmic language	
3/22	WIP. Maquette techniques	
3/29	WIP. Maquette techniques 2	
4/5	Critique. What is production design?	Speed Painting Challenge 2
4/12	Speed painting and critique	
4/19	WIP. Drafting for to the laser cutter	Digital Painting as an Object
4/26	WIP. Papercraft and printing	
5/3	WIP and troubleshooting	
5/10	Final critique	

*Note: the instructor reserves the right to modify the syllabus at any point during the semester. If that is the case, the instructor will outline the changes and provide you with the proper replacement documentation on paper or digitally.*