

ANA KAMIAR · TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

My teaching is grounded in my experience as both a practicing artist and an interdisciplinary researcher. Photography remains my primary medium, but my scholarship extends into the history of photography, visual culture, and the interpretation of ancient material culture. These parallel practices continually inform one another, shaping both my artistic work and my approach to education.

My research examines how photography has shaped not only the visual record of the modern world, but also the ways the cultural landscapes of Mesopotamia, Persia, Indus Valley and northeast Africa, and around the Mediterranean have been documented, interpreted, and understood. My Iranian-Kurdish heritage has informed a sustained interest in the cosmological design, symbolic language, and visual traditions of these regions. Together, these interests continue to shape my approach to photography, art history, and visual culture in the classroom. This perspective encourages students to consider images not only as creative works, but also as historical documents that participate in the construction of knowledge.

Art education is both the disciplined pursuit of technical skill and the lifelong practice of becoming conscious of perception. For me, technical proficiency and perceptual awareness develop together, each strengthening the other throughout the creative process. I introduce students to a broad range of historical and contemporary artists, critical perspectives, and studio practices. Through carefully designed assignments, students strengthen both craftsmanship and conceptual thinking.

Questions play an important role in my classroom. Through critique, discussion, and studio practice, I encourage students to slow down, observe carefully, and articulate the decisions they make as artists. As students gain technical proficiency, they also become more aware of how perception shapes both the images they create and the ways they interpret the visual world.

To ensure that craftsmanship and conceptual development are valued equally, I evaluate each project on two levels. One grade addresses the technical objectives of the assignment, while the second evaluates conceptual development. Students also write a statement of intent for each project, encouraging them to reflect on their objectives and consider how effectively those intentions are communicated through the finished work. These conversations often become the foundation for meaningful artistic growth.

I place a strong emphasis on motivating students to excel while recognizing that each individual brings different experiences, interests, and ways of learning to the classroom. I strive to create an environment that balances high expectations with encouragement, curiosity, and respect. Beyond lectures, demonstrations, and studio practice, I encourage students to become active participants in their local arts community through exhibitions, museums, and engagement with the work of

practicing artists. These experiences connect students to a broader creative dialogue and reinforce that artistic practice extends well beyond the classroom.

Observation is the foundation of my artistic practice and my teaching. If students leave my classroom with stronger technical skills and a more thoughtful awareness of how they observe, interpret, and understand the realities they inhabit, I have succeeded as an educator.