

Course Title: *Abstract Drawing*

Course Code: ART 25

Instructor Name & Bio: Trevor Tubelle, MFA

Tubelle works with hybrid forms of drawing, painting, printmaking, mixed media, and performance. He has taught at the Stanford Arts Institute (Honors in the Arts program), UC Santa Cruz, and elsewhere. His work is included in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Tubelle received an MFA in painting from the San Francisco Art Institute.

Instagram: [@trevortubelle](https://www.instagram.com/trevortubelle); Website: www.tubelle.com

Course Sessions:

- Day & Dates: Mondays, October 3 – December 5 (no class on 11/21), 6:30pm – 9:30pm (PT)
- Location: On-Campus (classroom will be shared to enrolled students closer to start date)

Summary*

Abstract Drawing is a studio art course that explores various abstract drawing strategies, techniques, and tools within a playful, supportive, and judgement-free environment. Having an open mind and a willingness to experiment and to take risks is especially valuable. Previous experience is helpful, but not required.

**Please see course page for full description and additional details. This syllabus is subject to change. Students will receive an updated syllabus on the first day of class.*

Objectives

- To practice and experiment with some abstract drawing methods, tools, and concepts
- To take part in a supportive community of artists
- To *enjoy* the challenging and nuanced process of abstract drawing

Methods

- Experimentation & play
- Observation (internal & external)
- Creative Synthesis
- Mutual support & feedback

Requirements/Grading/Guidelines

Please make a *commitment* to the work we're going to do together. Students who want to get the most out of this class should be on time, have regular attendance, and complete all assignments.

Grading options:

- No Grade Requested (NGR): Default option. No work will be required; no credit shall be received; no proof of attendance can be provided.
- Credit/No Credit* (CR/NC): A passing grade (for "Credit") = at least 70% of expectations accomplished. This means no more than two absences, and completion of at least four projects, three home assignments, and active participation in discussions.

**Please Note: If you require proof that you completed a Continuing Studies course for any reason (for example, employer reimbursement), you must choose Credit/No Credit. Courses taken for NGR will not appear on official transcripts or grade reports.*

Guidelines:

- **Do** arrive on time.
- **Do** actively participate in discussions.
- **Do** listen to the instructor and fellow students.
- **Do** complete all projects, including home assignments.
- **Do not** talk while the instructor or a fellow student is speaking.
- **Do not** use a digital device in class (call/text outside).
- **Do not** be mean, rude, or disrespectful to *anyone* in the class.
- Students who can't follow the guidelines or instructions of the teacher might be asked to leave

Structure

We'll be drawing the majority of the time, but there will also be short slide lectures, demos, group and one-on-one discussions, and brief writing projects. At the start of most classes, we will have a warm-up before the main project. You'll receive info via email before each class day that explains what we'll be doing that week, which materials to bring, and what to work on at home.

Materials

We will explore a variety of materials in the course, and there will be recommendations for what to use with each project. That being said, there is a fair degree of flexibility around these recommendations; the intention is to give students the leeway they need to choose materials they are comfortable or proficient with. Keep in mind that the focus of this class is on *exploring the technical and conceptual aspects of abstract drawing*. The assumption is that students already have a basic familiarity with at least some of the recommended drawing materials or, at minimum, the willingness and resourcefulness to experiment, discover, and learn with some degree of independence.

For the first class you will need:

- Work Clothing: Always wear old clothes or a smock/apron that can get dirty.
- Pencils: An assortment of hard and soft pencils. At minimum: 4H, HB, and 4B.
- Eraser & Sharpener: A white eraser (e.g., Staedtler Mars Plastic) and a small, portable pencil sharpener.
- Paper: A watercolor or mixed media paper pad or block (at least 9" x 12" in size and 140 lb./300 gsm or thicker weight). A good choice for this class could be an Arches Watercolor Pad (12 sheets, Hot press, 140 lb/300 gsm). Alternatively, one could use sheets of watercolor, mixed media, drawing, or printmaking paper (140 lb./300 gsm or thicker weight). Good brands: Canson, Arches, BFK Rives, Fabriano, Stonehenge, etc.

Later you will need:

- Pens and/or Markers: Your choice of different types of pens and/or markers (e.g., ballpoint, rollerball, felt, fountain, brush, paint, gel, alcohol, permanent, etc.) in various colors.
- Sumi Ink & Brush: A small bottle of Japanese liquid black sumi ink (do not substitute other types of ink!) and a small to medium-sized Asian-style bamboo calligraphy brush. Also, two mixing cups/jars/containers.
- Collage Supplies: Glue (e.g., glue sticks, white glue, matte medium and brush, PVC, etc.), artist masking tape, scissors, and a utility or X-Acto knife.
- OPTIONAL: Colored pencils, charcoal, crayons, pastels, water spray bottle, gloves, ruler, etc.

Portable Art Kit (PAK):

- A PAK is a small, portable container with supplies and a small sketchbook. *The key aspect of the PAK is that it is truly portable—it must fit in a backpack, pocket, or purse.* Use it to write down ideas, plan a piece, sketch on the fly, and brainstorm freely without judgment. For your PAK you need:
 - Sketchbook: **Must be 5" x 7" or smaller.**
 - Pencils and/or Pens: A small assortment of your choosing.
 - Container: A small and portable box/bag for supplies.

Where to buy supplies:

- University Art (Redwood City): 2550 El Camino Real @ Center St.
- California Art Supply Co. (San Mateo): 3600 S. El Camino Real
- Michael's (Sunnyvale): 818 W El Camino Real @ S. Pastoria Ave.
- Michael's (Mountain View): 2415 Charleston Rd @ Independence Ave.
- Michael's (Cupertino): 20640 Homestead Rd @ Forge Way
- Michael's (San Mateo): 1750 S Delaware St. near Concar Dr.
- Maido Fine Stationery & Gifts (San Jose): 378 Santana Row, St. 1125, @ Olsen Dr.

Where to buy supplies online:

- Jet Pens: <http://www.jetpens.com>
- Dick Blick: <http://www.dickblick.com>
- Clever Hands: <https://www.etsy.com/shop/cleverhands> (For getting a Journal Bandolier)

Tentative Outline

Week 1:

- Introductions, syllabus & materials
- Discuss: Class objectives & prior experience
- Slides: Range of Abstraction
- Demo: Grids & Systems
- Warm-up: Test Grid
- Project: **Geometric Life-Formed**
- Home Project(s): 1) Get all supplies. 2) What's *your* definition of abstraction?

Week 2:

- Discuss: Definitions of Abstraction
- Slides: Surrealism
- Demo: Creative Synthesis & Chance

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- Warm-up: Exquisite Corpse
- Project: **Disparate Juxtapositions**
- Home Project(s): Bring examples of patterns.

Week 3:

- Slides: Pattern & Repetition
- Demo: Non-Illusionistic Composition & Positive/Negative Space
- Warm-up: Observation Task – Patterns
- Project: **Pattern Transmogrification**
- Home Project(s): 1) Finish Pattern Transmogrification. 2) Bring two or more poems you enjoy. 3) Bring all work done thus far for discussion.

Week 4:

- Slides: Ambiguity & Metaphor
- Discussion: All work thus far
- Demo: Gesture
- Warm-up: Observation Task – Visual Haiku
- Project: **Poetic Distillation**
- Home Project(s): 1) Finish Poetic Distillation. 2) Prep collage ingredients. 3) Observation Task – Different Angles.

Week 5:

- Slides: Collage
- Demo: Collage & Shaping Surfaces
- Warm-up: Five Senses
- Project: **Trans-Form Triptych**
- Home Project(s): Finish Trans-Form Triptych.

Week 6:

- Slides: Portraits
- Demo: Deconstructing your “self”
- Warm-up: Deface Face!
- Project: **Anti-Self-Portrait**
- Home Project(s): Finish Anti-Self-Portrait

Week 7:

- Warm-up: Planning
- Project: **Final Project #1 – Plan & Begin**
- Home Project(s): Continue working on Final Project.

Week 8:

- Warm-up: Attention Training
- Project: **Final Project #2 – Develop & Build**
- Home Project(s): 1) Finish Final project. 2) Bring all work since last discussion & three questions for group.

Week 9:

- Warm-up: Extreme Drawing!
- Project: **Final Project #3 – Finishing Touches**
- Discussion: **Final Group Discussion**