ART 239: Building a Photographic Portfolio

All Images by David Nadel from the series “Burns”

Instructor: Adam Katseff
9 Tuesdays, March 29 – May 24, 6:30 – 9:30 pm;
Saturday, April 9, 12:00 – 3:00 pm

Assignments:
- Every week:
  - Shoot 3 rolls and make contact sheets (or digital equivalent)
  - Spend one hour looking at photo books in the Art Library
- By the end of the course:
  - 20 final prints (preferably 11x14 or larger)
  - 1-2 paragraph Artist Statement
  - A “Personal Canon” list of photographers that inspire you and help to inform the work you are making

Course Objectives:
- To understand the difference between individual images and a body of work
- To be prepared to show your work professionally after this class
- To be prepared to apply to shows, grants, magazines, residencies or photography programs
- Most of all: TO MAKE GOOD, MEANINGFUL PICTURES
Supply List:
- Camera of your choice - 35mm, medium format, large format or digital
- Film of your choice (I can help you to decide which is best)
- Paper of your choice (digital or wet darkroom)
  I recommend that the final portfolio is at least 11x14 in size and either traditional fiber paper if darkroom prints, or an exhibition quality digital paper (I will be happy to help you to decide which best suits your project)
- Portfolio box or equivalent way to store and transport prints

Requirements for a Letter Grade and/or Credit:
There are three options for grades or credits:
- To receive a letter grade (A, B, C, D, No Pass), weekly assignments must be completed and reviewed.
- Credit/No Credit - attendance and participation (as determined by the instructor) is required.
- No Grade Requested (this is the default option) no work is required; no credit shall be received; no proof of attendance can be provided. (Not suitable for those requiring proof of attendance/completion.)

Schedule:

Week 1: -Intro to course, review syllabus
- Personal introductions
- Why is the portfolio necessary and what is it used for? Discussion of applications and grants

Week 2:
- Slide show of bodies of work or portfolios by various artists. This will be a focus on a single body of early work.
- Proposal of personal project
  Please be prepared to discuss:
  - what camera you plan to use
  - the type of prints you plan to make
  - the subject you plan to photograph or project you would like to complete
  - inspiration for the project (this can be work that you have already made or other work that inspires you)
  - what you imagine the final output to be

Week 3:
- Critique #1 Group A: first pictures and a rough sketch
Please have at least 5 images that can serve as the beginning of the portfolio. This can include images that are from previous classes that you plan to expand upon. The focus of this critique is how to build upon what you show.

**Slides / Photo Demo**

**Week 4:**
- Critique #1 Group B: first pictures and a rough sketch
  Please have at least 5 images that can serve as the beginning of the portfolio. This can include images that are from previous classes that you plan to expand upon. The focus of this critique is how to build upon what you show.
- Discussion of the artist statement. We will look at examples and different ways of approaching this.

**Week 5:**
- Give a 5-10 minute presentation on yourself. This can include significant life experiences that has inspired you as an artist and work that you have previously made. You may show photography or art that has inspired you or anything that has influenced your artistic endeavours. Think outside the box!

**Week 6:**
- Critique #2 Group A
- Statement of Purpose
  We will discuss and look at examples of success and the reason for the Statement of Purpose

**Week 7:**
- Critique #2 Group B
- Slides / Photo Demo

**Week 8:**
- Open as of now (subject of class TBD)
- Slides / Photo Demo / Open Lab

**Week 9:**
- Group editing day
  Bring all the prints and contact sheets you are considering for the final edit.
  We will spend the majority of the class looking at each others work one on one to get multiple opinions on the final edit
- Print trade
Optional, but remember, you'll get 20 prints from the class if you give 20!
8x10 or 8.5x11

Week 10:
-Critique of final portfolio
This will take up the entire class so please have work on the walls to begin right at 6:00. There is a good chance this class will run late (I'm being honest) so if you have to leave right at 9:00 please make sure to have your work on the walls at 6:00 for the first round.