

ZACH KOCH – Teaching Philosophy
www.zach-koch.com | zdk26@msstate.edu | 618.304.1534

My mission as an instructor of art is to teach my students visual problem-solving, critical and analytical thinking, public speaking, self-reliance, as well as the ability to work collaboratively with others. Since mastery is built through thoughtful repetition, I encourage my students in the beginning stages to hone these areas of growth by creating large bodies of work.

Working quickly and serially is an effective method for my students to gain skill while intuitively engaging with concepts that relate to their interests and sensibilities. Creating in this way also embraces experimentation and invention in a virtually risk-free environment. The classroom becomes a studio laboratory where my students explore different techniques, materials, and media with traditional and non-traditional methods of creation. Nothing is off limits within reason since progress is made through trial and error. Within this period of growth, my students become deeply involved with material and process. This coupled with individualized attention and group critique ensures that future work and concepts may be explored with confidence. As these foundations are laid as the construct, each student works toward developing varied bodies of artwork that may be further refined, redirected, or built upon.

During these stages of development, there may be gaps between each students' intentions and their accomplishments. While there is a healthy dialogue between classmates, individualized communication ensures that critical discussion is appropriately directed toward each students' sensibilities. This includes a critical analysis and current contemporary discourse that is expanded upon by supplemental reading material and the students' personal research. It's my overall mission as an instructor to assist each student with their individualized goals and to help guide their self-directed research as it pertains to their marriage of form and concept. The personal growth of each artist that I see within my students is a constant reminder that the value of a visual arts education extends far beyond the classroom and is crucial to professional development and success.