

## TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

### Intervention

My friend and artist, Giles Lelaine, said to me some years ago, “I do not instruct... I intervene.” Pedagogy that is thoughtfully informed by the art of discovery as much as the act of instruction, is a great advantage because it demonstrates and inspires learning through contextual intervention. Intervening requires that a teacher insist on promoting active and personal pursuit of ideas and strategies rather than passive absorption of information and procedures. Many modes of *instruction* assume that what a student learns is more important than how he or she learns it. Intervention acknowledges that how we learn affects the future validity, accessibility and potency of what we are learning. In fact *how* we learn is *what* we retain most of all from our education. Sensitive intervention deeply affects a student’s long-term creative platform because it enables him or her to identify and develop unique links to a source of inspiration that affect the quality of passage from adolescence into autonomous adulthood. Teaching by intervention therefore focuses on guiding students into practical skills and experiences that are meaningful and therefore memorable.

### Inspiration

Effective communication is an essential life skill. The pedagogy of intervention has a primary goal of communicating and facilitating inspiration. It achieves this goal by inviting the learner into a holistic praxis that delivers concepts in a *contextual* form. Contextual learning develops mental strategies that build interdisciplinary relationships and link seemingly remote concepts with objects and activities. Art is learned as a science – science as an art... the body is a system of architecture — architecture is a system of bodies... mathematical principals derive themselves out of self-awareness and vice versa. Dynamic relationship formation (not only between concepts, but also between the media of various disciplines) is a versatile resource in the face of the changing environments we live in because it cultivates an eclectic and flexible mental studio. The creative learning environment should establish and build up an adaptable platform for intervention where the pursuit of art is the pursuit of inspiration, but also the means of effectively communicating that inspiration and translating it into a successful, meaningful and lasting professional praxis.

### Intuition

Art in community is basically serious play that effectively: **disorients** assumptions, **integrates** strangers, and occasionally **activates** new patterns of relationship formation. My work is very physical partly as a result of an extensive interest in muscle-memory formation, adaptation, the healing qualities of touch, and a history of training for contact sports and sports that require a great deal of physical skill and coordination. I competed in NCAA Division I, Rowing for four years, played Soccer for a women’s club in East Berlin, threw discus, put shot in England, played cricket in Australia, netball in the Solomon Islands and rocked some spirited Basketball and daily touch Football with my at-risk students in Baltimore. When I travel or relocate, movement-based arts and pick-up sports serve as one of my favorite ways of integrating with people. Much like working with a team, collaborative play reveals the essence of cultural configurations and social dispositions. Because I am so frequently engaged in non-verbal, sense-oriented contact with my surroundings, I have been able to invent dynamic contexts for working and learning that draw more heavily from the five senses and intuitive sensibilities. This skill remains my most valued tool as a sculptor and educator – the gift of developing and passing on intuition.