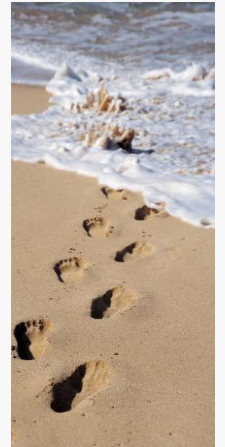


MASTERY OF ONESELF

ARTIST AS EDUCATOR
DANIEL SPRINGER



- The NEAE believes in the importance of professional development for art educators and even quotes Leonardo da Vinci, who said that, “one can have no smaller or greater mastery than mastery of oneself.”
- In my quest to become a better person and teacher, I have come to the profound conclusion that for me, an essential component in that professional development is the actual making of personal art NOT directly related to the classes I teach. As a result, my ability to both teach, critique and respect process has vastly improved. I also now show and sell my work.
- In this workshop I will share the steps, the people and the texts that led me to the level of mastery I have achieved and how YOU can achieve similar results.



- “I’m just too busy with my job, the kids, the dog...”
- I have no place to work that’s all my own...”
- I have no style or particular message...”
- I don’t need to make art, I teach it every day!”



- So what's the secret combination to making sure you're making art – **meaningful, important ART?**
- I'm going to take you through my journey and outline where I went wrong and where I've gone right in order to arrive at where I am today – a reasonably happy working Artist **and** Educator.
- There are **FOUR SIMPLE STEPS:**

STEP ONE: PROCLAIM!

- Acknowledging that you are indeed an **ARTIST** with something important to communicate to yourself and to those around you both personally and professionally.
- When I first began teaching studio classes, I was hesitant to even demonstrate techniques for my students for fear of intimidating them! **Crazy!** I was so busy with creating lessons [there were none] that the art I had been making was put on hold. “You’ll get back to it when you retire...!”



- **“ELEVATOR SPEECH”** What is it? Why does it matter?

COMPOSING AN “ELEVATOR SPEECH”

- Imagine you are on an elevator and are introducing yourself to a stranger. What would you say in the 10 floors it takes to travel? In 5? In 2?
- Now imagine that the person you are speaking with has the power to transform your life! What you say must define who you are! **ALL** of you (not just the teacher)!!

WHY don't **YOU** give it a try?



HERE'S MINE!

“ Hi. I'm Dan Springer and I'm an artist and an educator. My art evokes an emotional sense of place from the observed to the abstract and my teaching allows me to share that understanding with my students.”

WHO AM I?



- I have been teaching in the Arts for over twenty years, the last seventeen at Dennis-Yarmouth Regional High School where I currently hold the position of Fine Arts Department Chair.
- I earned my BFA at Parsons School of Design in NYC, studied performance and theater design at Syracuse University and hold a Masters in English from Northeastern University.
- In addition to my duties at D-Y, I am also on the Advisory Board of the Cape Cod & Islands Art Educators Association and teach regularly at the Cape Cod Museum of Art. I also continue to present workshops at annual National Art Education Association conferences like this one.
- I was recognized for my passionate work in Art education by the Arts Foundation of Cape Cod when I was named the "Arts Educator of the Year" in March of 2010.
- When not painting or teaching, my "extra" time is mostly focused on the Art Educators of Cape Cod and the Islands, working with colleagues across the region to advocate for and defend the Arts in our public and private schools.
- As an artist, I paint en plein air, contemporary and abstract, luminous, atmospheric landscapes evoking an emotional sense of place. I capture moments when light creates a contemplative mood compelling the viewer to linger. In my assemblage and abstract work I try to come to terms with feelings of solitude and solace.
- I have had three solo shows at the Brewster Ladies Library, in 2006, 2007 and in 2009. In addition, my paintings were featured in two group shows at the Cape Cod Museum of Art in Dennis, MA in 2009 and 2011 and at the Centerville Historic Museum in 2011. I regularly show my work in member shows at PAAM and on my blog @ www.springed.wordpress.com . I was part of a group show at the Cultural Center of Cape Cod in South Yarmouth in January 2012. I will have work at the Falmouth Art Center in March and am scheduled for another SOLO show at the Brewster Ladies Library, JULY 2012.

STEP TWO: READ



- A few years ago I heard about a book and it has changed my life! The book is: *Art & Fear* by Bayles & Orland and it was as though they knew my every secret thought about the challenges of making art.
- They describe in frightening detail the process whereby art educators lose all sense of themselves in the day to day obligations of teaching and living their lives...and OMG is it depressingly familiar!
- But then...

Bayles & Orland summarize their observations on the challenge of personal and public career with this observation:

“Your life is a paradigm of the process of being an artist, a witness and record to the way time and circumstance, event and emotion, courage and fear surround the making of art. Your experiences provide an affirmation to younger artists that the path they have chosen does lead somewhere, and that you are all really fellow travelers, separated only by the time you’ve already travelled down that path.”

This is one reason why I **MUST** make art all the time!

More inspiring observations:

“Talent is a snare and a delusion. In the end, the practical questions about talent come down to these: Who cares? Who would know? And What difference would it make? And the practical answers are: Nobody, Nobody, and None.”

“The difference between acceptance and approval is subtle, but distinct. Acceptance means having your work counted as the real thing; approval means having people *like it*.”

On making new work...

“New work is *supposed* to replace old work...Old work tells you what you were paying attention to then; new work comments on the old by pointing out what you were not previously paying attention to.”

“It’s all a matter of balance, and making art helps achieve that balance.”

“Style is the natural consequence of habit.”

“VOX HUMANA”

“To make art is to sing with the human voice. To do this you must first learn that the only voice you need is the voice you already have. Art work is ordinary work, but it takes courage to embrace that work, and wisdom to mediate the interplay of art & fear...Your art does not arrive miraculously from the darkness, but is made uneventfully in the light.”

“Simply put, artists learn how to proceed, or they *don't*. The individual recipe any artist finds for proceeding belongs to that artist alone – it's not transferable and of little use to others.”

“You have to find your work all over again all the time, and to do that you have to give yourself maneuvering room on many fronts – mental, physical, temporal. “

“ ...you have a choice...between giving your work your best shot and risking that it will not make you happy, or not giving it your best shot – and thereby guaranteeing that it will not make you happy. It becomes a choice between certainty and uncertainty. And curiously, uncertainty is the comforting choice.”

MORE BOOKS!



- **Dan Pink!**
- Is there really any more to say? If you don't know his work or have not heard him speak @ NAEA, you must access his words ASAP! Back in 2005, Mr. Pink wrote a little book called, *A Whole New Mind: Why Right-Brainers Will Rule The Future*. He followed up in 2009 with *Drive: The surprising Truth About What Motivates Us*.

These two books gave voice to all the instincts and feelings I have had about what is inherently wrong with accepted educational policy...

FROM: *A WHOLE NEW MIND*

- “The most creative among us see relationships the rest of us never notice”
- “Great minds are androgynous”
- “1. Can someone overseas do it cheaper? 2. Can a computer do it faster? 3. Am I offering something that satisfies the nonmaterial, transcendent desires of an abundant age?”
- “It’s economically crucial and personally rewarding to create something that is also beautiful, whimsical, or emotionally engaging.”

FROM: *DRIVE*

- “Carrots and sticks are so last century. *Drive* says for 21st century work, we need to upgrade to autonomy, mastery and purpose.”
- “Set your own goals”
- “Remember that deliberate practice has one objective; to improve performance”
- “Keep mastery in mind”
- “Cezanne’s most enduring paintings came late in his life”

STEP THREE: COURSES



About a ½ dozen years or so ago, I signed up for a graduate level, plein air painting class sponsored by Northeastern University and taught on site @ the old Coast Guard Station in Eastham, MA. As a trained illustrator I was VERY nervous!

With the encouragement of generous colleagues and a supportive professor, I broke through and have never looked back.

My only caveat is that before you take a class, be sure that the instructor is an empathic soul who both understands and appreciates your “day job.” A condescending instructor can destroy what little self-esteem you may have left, or simply never inspire.

I also took business and evaluative classes through the Arts Foundation of Cape Cod that told me things like, “the work is ready, you’re not!” and “make a presence for yourself on the internet”

STEP FOUR: COLLEAGUES



Some years ago, I discovered there were other teachers out there like me, who believed that the best art instructors were those actively making their own art (something I learned @ Parsons).

For the last 8 years, a group of art educators and I have been regularly meeting (with the support of our local museum) and sharing best practice, artist lectures, socialization and fellowship.

This past summer, one member organized several days of plein air painting @ the base of the Provincetown Monument. As a group (Cape Cod & Islands Art Educators Association) we are regularly exhibiting (and selling) our work at arts-related venues across the cape. We have a website, are on Facebook and our name is recognized by the Arts and political community.

REVIEW



- STEP ONE: Embrace the ARTIST that you are!
- STEP TWO: Read (and embrace) meaningful books about the creative process!
- STEP THREE: Take STUDIO classes at a local art association or college taught by empathic staff!
- STEP FOUR: Create opportunities to meet, engage and grow relationships with like-minded colleagues!

BOOK INFO

- *Art & Fear: Observations on The Perils (and Rewards) of ARTMAKING*

by David Bayles & Ted Orland

ISBN-13: 978-0-9614547-3-9

- *A Whole New Mind: Why Right-Brainers Will Rule The Future*
by Daniel H. Pink

ISBN 1-59448-171-7

- *Drive: The surprising Truth About What Motivates Us*
by Daniel H. Pink

ISBN 978-1-59448-884-9

THANKS FOR COMING!

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS?

