Ife Nii Owoo

Artist / Teacher 2016

JULY 2016

TEACHING ARTIST STATEMENT

I am a visual artist, graphic designer and educator.
I create collages, with hand-painted papers, family images, found objects, typography, and symbols. This work allows me to explore how color, images, patterns, and textures evoke memory. My study of typography, animation, printmaking, painting, and African art impact my visual aesthetic. With many years of experience as a graphic designer, I started to experiment with collage making and repurposing found objects in 2006 and have remained committed to my work as an visual artist ever since. I teach from the perspective of being an artist as a problem solver, cultural worker, and visual storyteller.

In my classroom, students use collage, found objects, artist books, printmaking, design, painting and digital software. I encourage and challenge students to research, share, and use their own personal experiences and identities in their artistic work. My goal is to help them to engage communities and express their views on issues concerning violence, class, racism and social justice from their perspective while experimenting with various visual tools and mediums.

S A M P L E C U R R I C U L U M

Memory + Legacy: Created as Art

Part 1: Memory as handmade art
Goal: to teach students Collage making and to create 10 (7 X 7) collages that documents or preserves a tradition or legacy. The final collages will be presented in a handmade binding technique.

Week 1: What is Collage? History of Collage, Discovery Process

Week 2: Construct and De-construct Collage Techniques

Week 3: How pieces come together

Week 4: Work on Collages

Week 5: Binding Techniques

Memory + Legacy: preserved as Book

Part 2: Legacy as digital archive well preserved
Goal: to teach students how to convert their handmade art created in part one into a small square 20 page photo book.

Week 1: Selecting templates and formats writing text and selecting and collages

Week 3: Editing collages scanning and prep of your images

Week 3: Basic Book Design

Week 4: Completing Book and Upload Files

Week 5: Wrap up: Delivery of Books

SAMPLE LESSON PLAN

Part 1: Memory as handmade art

Week 1: History of Collage, discovery process
Memory/and Family Heritage Collecting,
What is your Legacy?

Day 1
Entrance + set up into space (10 minutes)

Something to think about (15 minutes)
Introduction to self and brief experience in collage and bookmaking to students, Students introduce self and what honor or legacy means to them. I explain workstations and materials tables

- Power Point of my Work /Samples of Collage Artist
- Group discussion

Activity (70 minutes)
- Warm up exercise (How to address white paper phobia)
- Research, gathering and reviewing images.
- Break (10 minutes)----Students take a Break
- Sketching ideas
- Partnering with another class member to sharing ideas, stories and brainstorming with them.

Wrap Up (15 minutes)

Ife Nii Owoo
Collage | Paintings

SIGNATURE LESSONS

MEMORY AS EVOKING POWER

(TUNNEL BOOK WORKSHOP)

Most historical narratives and history lessons are told through the lens of who is telling or writing it. Too often the lives and stories of those who experience the most discrimination and injustice in our society are marginalized, ignored or forgotten. In this lesson, I aim to help students to re-write a historical unsung hero who in some way inspire them to speak up against an inequality.

How do we honor the past and present, select heroes known and unknown who in some way have impacted their community or lives? We will explore whom do you want to remember? What stories and images are important to you? By engaging in research, collage, drawing, cutting, measuring, mono-printmaking, and perspective seniors and students will create 3-dimensional tunnel book structure that serves as a personal memoir.

Ages: 55 +

10 sessions (2 Hour Lessons)

Skills: Research, Historical and Cultural Concepts, Perspective, Color theory, Cognitive Memory, Creative Thinking, Story telling

Ife Nii Owoo
Collage | Paintings

WHAT IS YOUR LECACY?

(DIGITAL BOOK MAKING WORKSHOP)

This lesson will explore to the idea of leaving a legacy in book form. The poem entitled "What will be your legacy be?" by Dr. Margaret Burroughs (1917-2010) is our starting point. Your book will express your own personal narrative and style. Students will collaborate and document together their legacy story. Using online software you will upload content to receive a one of a kind 20 page 7" X 7" book that you may pass on to others. Participants with learn how to scan high-resolution images and image enhancing, select a template design that fits your content, organize their story; image and text sequences, select fonts, colors and book finishes. You will also set up your own digital account. This course is an intergenerational project. Seniors and local youth or younger family members are invited to collaborate together on their final legacy book.

Ages: 55+, 18+ (Intergenerational)

10 sessions

Skills: Research, Storytelling. Book Sequence, Typography, Grid Layouts, Paper Finishes, Color Theory, Image Manipulation, and Basic Book Design

R E S U M E

Education

2015-16 Teaching Artist Certification (ArtsTAC), Art Sanctuary
2006-10 Certificate in Professional Development, Artist Teacher Institute (ATI), Painting and Book Arts, Rutgers University (New Jersey)
1978-79 Candidate MFA, African Visual Arts, University of Ghana, Legon, Ghana
1975-76 Post Graduate Studies, Graphic Design/Typography London School of Communications (London, England)
1972-73 Printmaking, London Metropolitan University, The Cass, Syracuse Abroad Program London, England,
1970-74 BFA, Printmaking (Cum Laude) Syracuse University (Syracuse, New York)

Workshops

2016 *Behind Hidden Doors Workshop*, LaSalle University Art Museum
1997 *Looking at Africa through Alphabet*, Philadelphia Free Library, Ogontz Branch
1996 *Looking at Africa through Alphabet*, Willingboro Public Library

Professional Teaching Experience

1988-94 Adjunct Associate Professor, Moore College of Art and Design
1987-88 Adjunct Assistant Professor, Bucks County Community College
1983-87 Instructors, The Philadelphia School of Printing and Advertising

Selected Group Shows

2016 *Salon Room*, The Colored Girl Museum, Philadelphia, PA
2015 *Empowering Memory:* Scribe Gallery, Philadelphia, PA
2014 *The Art of Re-Memory:* Alumni Artists 1965-2014
2013 *Art + Re-Creation,* William Penn Charter School, Philadelphia, PA
2012 *The Quest for Freedom and Justice*, New Orleans African American Museum of Art, Culture and History, New Orleans. LA
2012 Leeway Community Showcase, Geeche Girls Café Gallery, Philadelphia, PA
2011 *Passion and Pathways,* Salon Joose, Philadelphia, PA
2010 *The American Dream*, New Orleans African American Museum of Art, Culture and History, New Orleans. LA
2010 *Dysfunctional Furniture*, Art in City Hall, Philadelphia, PA
2009 *NCA Show*, Dupree Gallery, Philadelphia, PA
2006 *Silent Voices, Loud Echoes,* African American Museum Philadelphia, PA
2001-05 *Philadelphia Open Studio Tours* (POST), Philadelphia, PA

1992 *Speaking in Our Tongues,* Taller Puertorriqueño, Philadelphia, PA
1988–94 *Faculty Exhibitions*, Moore College of Art and Design, Philadelphia, PA

Selected Solo Shows

2014 *Salt Eaters + Rough Edges*, Art + Peace Museum, Philadelphia, PA
2013 *Ancestry in Transition*, MKA Institute Gallery, Philadelphia, PA
2008 *Recent Work Exhibition,* Greene Street Artists Gallery + *Leeway Foundation,* Philadelphia, PA
1993 *A is for Africa Book Illustrations*, Moore College of Art and Design Gallery Philadelphia, PA

Public Art Commissions

2015-17 Elephants *on the Avenue: Race, Class and Community in Historic Germantown*, Pew Center for Arts and Heritage

2014 *Community Portraits:* Free Library of Philadelphia, Commission for Logan Branch, Library Foundation, Knights Foundation and Percent for Art

2010 The President's House: *Freedom and Slavery in the Making of a New Natio*n, Commemorative Site, Independence National Historical Park, and Philadelphia, PA

Publications/Magazines

2016 "Traveling on Germantown's historic path", Natalie Pompilio http://articles.philly.com/201618/news/69844334_1_germantown-avenue-elephants-historic-germantown

2005 " Looking at Africa through the Alphabet: by Wanda Walls" Art Matters, Fall Issue

1997 "Ife Nii Owoo: making her mark as book author, illustrator, and graphic designer" Germantown Courier, January 8, 1997

1996 "Teaching culture to the young" The Philadelphia Tribune, March 19,1996

1994 "Ife Nii Owoo: graphic artist, design consultant, children's book author," Mt. Airy Times/ Express, August 17,1994

Books

1993 "*A is for Africa*" Looking at Africa through the Alphabet, Picture Book, by Ife Nii Owoo, Published by Africa World Press, Inc. 1993

Computer Skills

Adobe Photoshop / Illustrator/ InDesign / Sketch / Quark Xpress

Grants and Awards

2007 Leeway Foundation, *Change Grant Award*, Philadelphia, PA
2006 National Conference of Artist Award for *Outstanding Achievement in the Business of Art,* Philadelphia, PA
2001 The Philadelphia Convention and Visitors Bureau/ Multicultural Affairs Congress (MAC) *Share The Heritage Award,* Philadelphia, PA
2000 PRAME Award for *Excellence in Advertising/Print,* Philadelphia, PA
1999 Nominee, Delaware Valley Artist Guild Award, *Best Woman Illustrator* Philadelphia, PA
1991 CEBA (Communication Excellence to Black Audiences) *Award of Merit,* New York, NJ

Private Collectors

Lewis T. Moore, Judge Fredrika Massiah Jackson, Adrian Moody, Maria Pajil Battle, Tai Hoa and Evan Li, Charles Fuller and Molefi Kete Asante Institute Collections

Professional Organizations

Germantown Artist Roundtable / Historic Germantown / Greene Street Artist Cooperative

B I O

Ife Nii Owoo is a visual artist/ graphic designer/ and educator who studied African Visual Arts at the Institute of African Studies in Accra, Ghana, and lived in London, England, and Africa for nine years. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Fine Arts from Syracuse University and a Post Graduate Certificate in Design from the London School of Communications, (London, England). In 1978 she was a Candidate for a Masters of African Visual Arts at the Institute of African Studies in Accra, Ghana but due to a coup d'etat, she discontinued her studies.

Nii Owoo works on both traditional canvas, found objects, collages and shaped paintings, and public art commissions mixing images of her cultural heritage with original graphic symbolism by using color, designs, patterns, and textures in her collages, and mixed media assemblages. She works with painted papers, mono prints, symbols, family, historical and social images, to explore expressions of tradition, family and culture.

A skilled graphic designer, Ife designs and illustrations have been featured on jackets covers of over 100 book jackets. Many of her book designs, illustrations, collateral designs were created to communicate about issues and concerns targeted to marginalized, ignored or forgotten communities and cultures for not for profit, healthcare and educational institutions. She also wrote and Illustrated a children’s picture book entitled "*A is for Africa*" Looking at Africa through the Alphabet.

Ms. Nii Owoo has received numerous awards, recognitions, and grants including the prestigious Leeway Foundation Change Award in 2008. In 2010, she was commissioned to create a visual graphic treatment for the slave memorial space at The President's House Commemorative Memorial Site, Independence National Historical Park, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Presently Ife is the recipient of The Free Library of Philadelphia new site-specific public art commission at neighborhood branch Logan Library (Wagner Avenue). The art will be placed at the library undergoing renovation and expansion through the Building Inspiration: 21st Century Libraries Initiative. After a competitive process, Ife was one of four artists who were selected to engage in a Knight Foundation-funded community immersion process in their respective library’s neighborhood.

WORK SAMPLES

1. "Memory Board: Slavery 101" —2009, Wooden tray, acrylic, glass beads, collage (18" X 23")

2. "Mulberry Tree: Pop Pop's Chair" — 2006, collage, mixed media, (37.5" X 17" X 15")

3. "Thanksgiving" — 2014, Acrylic collage on canvas (23" X 27")

4. "Independence"— 2014, Acrylic collage on canvas (23" X 25")

5. "Women of Letters: Salt Eaters" — 2015, Fan collage, acrylic, framed (23.5" X 23.5")

Ife Nii Owoo
Collage | Paintings

"Memory Board: Slavery 101" —2009, Wooden tray, acrylic, glass beads, collage (18" X 23")

”Mulbery Tree: Pop Pop’s Chair” — 2006, collage, mixed media, (37.5” X 17” X 15”)

Ife Nii Owoo
Collage | Paintings

"Thanksgiving" — 2014, Acrylic collage on canvas (23" X 27")

Ife Nii Owoo
Collage | Paintings

“ Independence “— 2014, Acrylic collage on canvas (23” X 25”)

Ife Nii Owoo
Collage | Paintings

“Women of Letters: Salt Eaters” — 2015, Fan collage, acrylic, framed (23.5” X 23.5”)