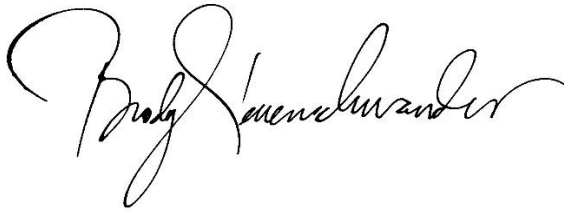


Dear Students,

Here is the supply list for “Metal and Glass,” which begins on September 4, 2023. The list is short and does not require you to buy anything expensive or difficult to find.

We will discuss everything in the first lesson. You do not need to have the whole list by then. We will also discuss how to find a company to do the laser-cutting for your metal project and a sandblaster to do the sandblasting for your glass project.

I look forward to working with you in September and October 2023!



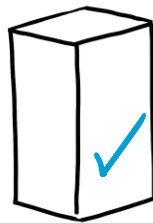
SUPPLY LIST FOR METAL AND GLASS

MATERIALS YOU WILL NEED

- A variety of pens and brushes to create your calligraphic designs
- Black ink
- White paper for your rough ink sketches (not too thin, to avoid wrinkles and waves when ink dries)
- Better quality paper for your final designs (not strictly necessary, but it is nice to work on good paper!)
- Pencil, eraser, ruler, etc.
- Computer and scanner
- Photoshop and Illustrator on your computer (other programs can be used, though I will demonstrate in Photoshop and Illustrator; we will discuss options for avoiding the digital process altogether, in which case you will want Dr Martins Bleed-proof White or other white paint for touching up; and you will need someone else to do your digital work for you)
- Gold leaf (optional)
- Acrylic or oil-based gilding medium (optional)
- A straight-sided vase (round, oval, or rectangular base, tapered or vertical sides) or flat glass on which to sandblast your design



GOOD



GOOD



NOT GOOD

- A photograph of a building for your fantasy architectural project. You can choose your own house, a skyscraper, anything at all. The fantasy project will ask you to apply words to this building in Photoshop or by drawing on the photograph itself.

A WORD ABOUT WORDS

The words we use as calligraphers and text artists are the fundamental materials of our artistic process. They are more important than the paper and ink, the gold leaf and Gothic, the skill and the swelling line. Words are our artistic soul!

The words we work with must be chosen carefully. We will shape them and then show them to the world, where they will either stimulate thought and emotion or induce boredom and that “been there, read that” feeling.

Many artists work with words. Jenny Holzer, Cy Twombly, Bruce Nauman, Andy Warhol, Lawrence Weiner, Ed Ruscha, Barbara Kruger all work with language. One artist will use an ironic tone of voice, another more satirical, quizzical, or angry language. Few contemporary artists speak with clear, simple words. Artists aim for layers of meaning that require the viewer to figure it out for herself.

Why should that be? We are inundated with language. Signage, social media, conflicting sources of news, dinner parties full of blablabla - all fill our heads with a stew of conflicting ideas. We ask ourselves what our own true voice is, what we really believe, what we want to say to a world drowning in words. It is not easy to live in the modern information tsunami.

No matter, we will have to find words to work with. We will discuss this in the first lesson. For the moment, you can start collecting words and short phrases. I suggest that you write them on index cards (small cards measuring roughly 7.5 x 12.5 cm or 3 x 5 inches), one word or phrase per card.

As you collect words, I would like you to create a point system to judge the quality of each word or phrase. Ten points is the highest score, 1 point the lowest. Here are some of the criteria you can use to judge your words (you may have other criteria):

1. Is the word (or phrase) profound or predictable?
2. Is the word surprising?
3. Is the word a cliché?
4. Does the word have several layers of meaning?
5. Does the word need interpreting?
6. Is the word flat, overused?
7. Does the word conjure up other ideas?
8. Is it a real or made-up word?
9. Will the word confuse people?
10. Will the word make people laugh?
11. Will it make them cry?
12. Will it stop them in their tracks?

13. Is it something we might find on a greeting card?

14. DOES THIS WORD EXPRESS SOMETHING VERY IMPORTANT TO YOU PERSONALLY?

Write the word or phrase on one side of the index card. When you have a small pile of cards (let's say 20), compare one card with another and decide if Word X is better or worse than Word Y. You can change your mind as many times as you like. Assign points to each word based on these comparisons and write the points on the back of the card in pencil. You may find it useful to ask other people to give you words and to help you assign points to them.

My fourteen considerations do not state whether "predictable" words are good or bad; nor do I say clearly that words from greeting cards are necessarily to be avoided. It all depends on how you present them in the work of art. Many modern artists use clichés (Jenny Holzer). Some artists use banal, flat, meaningless words (Ed Ruscha). The trick is to find the lettering style that brings out the richness of even the most overused language.

Metal and Glass will be about the language we use as calligraphers. We will compare words, judge words, and give them a chance to move us.