

# The Draw of Color

## Sabbatical Winter 2023: Beth Purdy

### **Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of my sabbatical leave was professional growth and renewal through the creation of a body of artwork, and an in-depth study of colored pencil as a drawing medium to assist me in the development of course content in ART 209 Color Drawing Media and ART 203 Drawing and Composition II.

In the following summary I will review the activities I performed, the objectives I accomplished, and the conclusions I drew from my activities. I will also summarize the manner in which the criteria for my sabbatical proposal was fulfilled, and how I plan to use my outcomes to benefit my students and the Art and Design programs at KVCC.

### **Activities, Objectives, and Conclusions**

#### **1. Time and Space to Finish a Body of Work**

My first activity was to finish a body of work that I started in 2016. The Sleeping Babies Series titled *Never Wake a Sleeping Baby* is a series of mixed media oil paintings on 8"x10" wood panels. At the start of my sabbatical leave I had six paintings done, and three started. My goal was to complete a minimum of sixteen paintings (finish the three started, and an additional twelve paintings). Starting on January 3rd, I got right to work on this activity. I spent an average of six to eight hours a day, Monday through Friday, cutting paper for the collages, planning out my compositions, and painting. By the middle of the month of April I had accomplished my goal and finished sixteen paintings for a total of twenty-one paintings for my exhibit. The completed work can be viewed on my website [bethpurdy.com](http://bethpurdy.com).

Another objective for this activity was to display the series at the Arcus Gallery in the Center for New Media in October 2023 in effort to share it with students, colleagues, and the community. Unfortunately, due to the current exhibition schedule, my exhibit was moved to April of 2024. As a result, I cannot reflect on this part of my objective in this report. With this extra time, however, I may be able to finish a few more paintings before April as part of this series. If I am able, I would like to finish three more paintings. Then I could display the series as a 3x8 grid or a 2x12 line. In addition to displaying this body of work at CNM, I also wanted to seek out other venues such as the UICA in Grand Rapids. Unfortunately after 45 years, the UICA decided to close in March of 2023. The UICA was a wonderful place for contemporary artists to collaborate and display work. I am disappointed, but still seeking out other venues in Grand Rapids. I want to make sure my work is displayed at KVCC before I exhibit elsewhere.

The time and space of sabbatical leave was exactly what I needed to finish this body of work. I was able to work all day while my kids were at school. I usually worked on three paintings at a time and finished them approximately every two weeks. I was like a painting machine, but I loved it. I only wish I could have finished more, and I still might with the extra time between now and the April Art Hop. Students benefit from seeing faculty constantly creating new work and participating in exhibitions. I look forward to sharing this work with students, colleagues, and the community.

## **2. Enroll in a Colored Pencil Workshop**

My second activity was to enroll in a Colored Pencil Workshop to learn techniques I can bring to the classroom. I was looking for an in-depth study of colored pencil as a medium to help me demonstrate techniques, structure my class content, and create new assignments in colored pencil. I was able to find exactly what I was looking for. I attended a two-day workshop, *Colored Pencil: Delicate to Dynamic with Kristy Kutch*, at the Art Barn School of Art in Valparaiso, Indiana.

What I learned while taking this workshop was that I know more than I think I do when it comes to techniques, which boosted my confidence in teaching colored pencils. I also got a lot of

information on different tools, materials, pencils, and different types of surfaces. Kristy provided the class with several different samples of everything from paper to pencils, to erasers, and blenders. She also provided several handouts with explanations and details related to the tools she shared with the class and a comprehensive list of "art-related" websites.

I really enjoyed experimenting with all of the materials Kristy provided during the two-day workshop. I was able to start a series of colored pencil drawings based on pictures of insects and flowers from my own backyard. Each drawing is on a different type of paper provided by Kristy, using different techniques I learned during the workshop. I have already shared my drawings and materials with my ART 203 Drawing and Composition II class this fall. I also plan to display this small series of drawings during the April Art Hop. Two pieces are eligible for submission to the Art Barn School of Art's *Student and Instructor Exhibition* in late January. I plan to submit at least one piece to this exhibition.

### **3. Rejuvenate and Refresh**

My final activity was to use part of my sabbatical leave to travel to different destinations for durations of time not allowed during regular teaching semesters. My sabbatical allowed me time to say "yes" to travel opportunities. In January, I spent the day with some friends as we watched the MSU men's basketball team take on Purdue. In late February, I traveled to Nashville for a long weekend with my undergraduate roommates, and over my daughters' spring break in April, we traveled to Chicago.

In addition to traveling, I also prioritized time to immerse myself in the creative process and reflect on why I love to teach Studio Art at KVCC. While I spent approximately six to eight hours a day in my studio thinking only about the task of finishing the Sleeping Babies Series, I also took time to self-reflect. What I discovered (or rediscovered), was the level of commitment and satisfaction creative people get out of finishing a project. Before my sabbatical I was overwhelmed, and now I really do feel rejuvenated. The sense of accomplishment is satisfying in a way that feeds my soul. I am energized and looking forward to future projects.

## Summary of How my Sabbatical Leave Criteria were Fulfilled

### Professional effectiveness:

The above Objectives and Activities enhanced my professional effectiveness by doing the following:

- Increased my skill level
  - 6-8 hour/day painting January-April
  - Finished 5 colored pencil drawings
- Studied the versatility and techniques of Colored Pencil, Gained knowledge to develop course content for ART 209, and Reestablished confidence in my ability to teach color drawing
  - Attended *Colored Pencil: Delicate to Dynamic* with Kristy Kutch
  - Experimented with different tools, supplies, and techniques
  - Finished additional Colored Pencil drawings after the Workshop
  - Collected Resources provided by Kristy Kutch
- Demonstrate that I am a professional in my field
  - Shared my Colored Pencil drawings and new materials with my ART 203 Drawing and Composition II class this fall
  - Accomplished my artistic goals
  - Met my Deadline to complete work
- Completed a body of work, and Met my deadline to display my work at CNM in October 2023
  - Met my minimum goal by finishing the three started paintings and an additional twelve paintings for a total of twenty-one paintings
  - Exhibit was moved to April 2024
    - Extra time may allow for exceeding my goal

### Enhance KVCC (and CNM) to fulfill its mission and/or improve service to students:

The above Objectives and Activities have enhanced KVCC (and CNM) to fulfill its mission and/or improve service to students by doing the following:

- Supporting students in my ART 203 Drawing and Composition II class this fall by returning to the classroom with new knowledge of Colored Pencil
  - Shared materials, showed examples, demonstrated techniques, and discussed my experience at the workshop
- I will Reinforce students' artistic endeavors and those in our community by sharing/exhibiting new artwork in April 2024
- Returned to KVCC refreshed and rejuvenated, ready to Assist students to achieve their goals

**Exceed expectations for routine/ongoing professional development:**

The above Objectives and Activities exceeded expectations for routine/ongoing professional development by doing the following:

- Allowed the opportunity, time, and space to focus my time on creating new artwork
  - Spent 6-8 hours a day in my studio focused on the Sleeping Babies Series
  - Completed 5 Colored Pencil Drawings
- Embraced the opportunity to step away from the distractions of my daily routine
  - Painting, Drawing, Traveling, and Volunteering at my daughters' school
- Traveled and collected visual references
  - Traveled to Nashville and Chicago
  - Collected visual references
  - Rediscovered my interest in Inuit Art while at the Field Museum in Chicago
- Took the time to become a student again in order to develop my colored pencil drawing skills
  - Attended *Colored Pencil: Delicate to Dynamic with Kristy Kutch*
  - Spent two-days learning, experimenting, and practicing colored pencil skills under Kristy Kutch's instruction
  - Received feedback from the Art Barn staff, Kirsty Kutch, and the other workshop participants

**Opportunity for reflection and renewal:**

The above Objectives and Activities provided an opportunity to refresh my mind, body, and creative challenges and/or incentives for critical thinking by doing the following:

- Permitted time and opportunity to reflect on why I love teaching Studio Art
  - The gift of time was precious, and I did not waste it
  - I reflected through the many hours of painting, drawing, and creating
- Challenged myself to get uncomfortable and vulnerable while learning new skills that I can take back to the classroom
  - Accomplished by taking *Colored Pencil: Delicate to Dynamic with Kristy Kutch*
- Devoted time and space to immerse myself in the creative process with nothing else to consider
  - Spent 6-8 hours a day in my studio focused on the Sleeping Babies Series
- Collected photographic references for color pencil studies, classroom demonstrations, and future artwork
  - I did not create a whole catalog, but I did collect photographic references to use in future projects, color pencil studies, and/or classroom demonstrations
- Visit Galleries and Museums in order to reflect on contemporary art, and seek inspiration for the classroom
  - Visited the Field Museum, the GRAM, and KCAD

## **How I Plan to Use my Outcomes**

I plan to use my outcomes to benefit my students and the Art and Design programs at KVCC by sharing my work and experiences with students, colleagues, and the community. My body of work will be displayed in the April 2024 Art Hop, demonstrating my commitment to professional activities in my field of study, and meeting deadlines. This activity will also demonstrate my creative, professional, and technical artistic skills. My experience with Kristy Kutch's Colored Pencil workshop will assist me in building course content for ART 209 next semester. My experience has already been shared with ART 203 this semester. I am now more confident answering questions related to colored pencils. The materials and information provided

by Kristy Kutch was valuable, and I know it will aid me in developing new assignments. Finally, the chance to reflect and rejuvenate was valuable time. I have returned to my role as faculty and Department Chair with a fresh perspective. Spending time with friends and family when I normally cannot benefited me personally, but the time I worked and created has helped me professionally.