

ABOUT MY TEACHING

“Marian Marzynski is one of those rare teachers who permanently tilts his students’ perceptions of the world by forcing them to take risks necessary to create art. On my first class with him at Governors State University in 1979, I found him breezy, professional style refreshing after suffering through classes governed by pop-quizzes and shallow course objectives.

Film classes often attempt rather small things in a rather small way. Often the cookbook mechanics of producing commercially- acceptable footage is and in itself. Marzynski challenges his students to go far beyond that point insisting his students create film that is art.

This is no small demand or achievement. It first implies that students can recognize a work of art, a task that is difficult enough in such well-traveled media as the visual arts and music, which have a body of criticism to tell students what is good. In film, where there are fewer guideposts; and criticism focuses almost exclusively on commercial enterprises, developing a sense of aesthetics is a highly individual endeavor. Marzynski provide students wit experience that help each develop an understanding of what is good and what is junk.

He imposes the standards of fine arts on his students’ work and his own, requiring film to make a point that is at once subtle and original, profound and enlightening. The point doesn’t shout, it whispers, quite unlike the ham-fisted approach of some American documentary filmmaker. And like a great work of art, the film must compel the viewer to return to it, to experience it again.

It’s risky to try to create that kind of work, to explore uncharted territory, Marzynski takes those risks, at time on a national scale, by plunging in and making films whose meaning may not be readily understood by audiences accustomed to spoon-fed documentaries. He challenge his students to do the same, and more then any teacher I’ve known, provides them with the means and support to help each pursue his personal. celluloid vision.”

- [Mary Dehner](#), ‘1981, [Governors State University](#)

"Marian is the product of decades of exploration and a multitude of lives. The cinematic language that he had coined over the years, dealing with issues of identity in controversial sociopolitical contexts, evokes his true sense of responsibility towards this medium. His films often resemble journalistic essays, fearlessly crafting unexpected points-of-view around difficult subject matters. He is a well of generous advice, an eccentric teacher and a prolific filmmaker, whose straight-forwardness and well-informed criticism set him apart from any conventional approaches to filmmaking - Or life for that matter!"

- Rachel Vianna, RISD '2010 film graduate

"Marian is a bear of a man, gentle, but strong, guided by his aesthetic and moral instances rather rational purpose, and it is these qualities which infuse his film and teaching with excitement and innovation. The same qualities are translated into film theory, when he says, "My ambition is a complete fusion of reality and filming "dream", to achieve a second level of reality where "documentary" ends and fiction begins - by bringing universality by getting rid of "genres". As perhaps only a foreigner can do, Marian is able to reveal the mythic structure of American life by bringing into the artistic dimension of performance. With uncanny wit and being humor, Marian evokes from people their dramatic revelations. Marian's work, much like structuralism in the social science and humanities, offers a new sense of completeness and holism, but unlike academia, Marian's artistry brings to the vision (or perhaps to the rescue) as sense of humor. And from my many observations of his audience, I hear the laughter not as ridicule or cynicism, but as a rekindling of our sense of ourselves, a sense too long buried in the ashes of modern skepticism."

- John Kelly, PhD

"As a former student of Marian Marzynski., I wish to point out both his strengths as a teacher and his ability to awaken an enthusiasm in his students that goes beyond the study of cinema. The resources he brings to his classroom include a dedication of time, energy and sincere interest , unmatched by any teacher in my experience; a through knowledge of the language and technique of film, both as a filmmaker and, equally important, as a film viewer; and an ability to observe and explore his surroundings with a freshness that inspires his students and encourages them to reconsider their preconceived notions."

- **Oren Jacoby**, RISD/ Brown University '76

"Marian repeatedly proved to be an an exciting and stimulation presence. He can focus his internet and talent brilliantly on all aspect of moving image media: his awareness of film and television is broad-ranging and incisive. In addition, he is an adept organizer of people and events; he can successfully carry on tasks large organizing efforts.His capacity for getting things done are great, both within institutions and as an independent producer."

- **Peter O'Neill**, RISD, Film/Video Dept. instructor