

ART AND CULTURE

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My name is Cesar Cornejo. I am Assistant Professor at the School of Art and Art History at the University of South Florida. I'm also the coordinator of the Foundations in Art Program. And I'm currently here, standing in the Contemporary Art Museum of the University of Florida.

Contemporary art these days requires artists to be extremely flexible in what they do. Be able to be open to explore new mediums. Be able to reinvent themselves every time they require to. And there are broader reasons. If you look around, and you see the problems that we now are struggling in society with, you will see that many of them are caused, if not all of them, are caused by lack of communication and understanding among people and cultures.

And by students being able to explore different mediums, what they are basically learning are different ways of thinking and being able to study one problem from different perspectives. We are, many times, attached to certain ways of making things. We are attached to our own customs, or our own cultures, or our own ways of living.

And I think making art is a reflection of that as well. So, in order for us to be able to step out and make art that's, let's say, multi-disciplinary, we also are not only are challenging our ways of making art, we're also challenging our beliefs. We're challenging our ways of seeing the world. We're challenging our understanding of culture. And because of that, it's not an easy process.

When I think about a piece, normally I think what is the best technique to express the idea that I have. Before, I would think just in terms of one technique. For instance, I would think everything has to be sculpture. But these days, I really think, first, what the idea that I want express is about, and then I'll choose the medium.

I look for the right technique to make it happen. And even if I don't know it, I would learn it and then carry out the work. So, I don't feel any more limited by one single, or a number of techniques, I feel that there's an infinite number of possibilities when I make art. And yes, it's coming from the same elements that we are introducing in this class.

I think that the world today requires more artists that are not working in the arts exclusively. We need more artists that work in many different majors, redefining, finding solutions for the world, finding solutions for the real problems that we have. We have to be extremely creative to solve the very big challenges that we have today. And I think that the arts can offer a very good chance to people to explore these alternative ways of using their talents to solve those problems.