

William E Donovan
227 Dakota Ave
Bay Shore, NY 11706
donovaw@sunysuffolk.edu

Visual Arts Program
Suffolk County Community College - Grant Campus
Crooked Hill Rd
Brentwood, NY 11717

Dear Suffolk County Community College Faculty Search Committee,

I am applying for the Instructor/Assistant Professor of Visual Arts position on the Grant Campus.

For over a decade, I have built experience teaching at community colleges on Long Island. I primarily teach painting, drawing, 2D design, art history, and related humanities courses. My education includes a BFA, MA, and MFA in painting and an MA in art history. I studied botanical illustration at the New York Botanical Garden. In addition to traditional painting and drawing, I make stop-motion animation by recording myself painting intricate designs.

My idea of classroom success includes institutional success: student retention, preparing students for the next level of coursework, generating strong portfolios, graduation, and encouraging transfers to four-year schools. I believe in inclusion and meeting students where they are in their educational journey. I strive to increase access to higher education.

I have relevant administrative experience as the Director of Art Education for the One River School. I supervised our teaching staff, managed the facility, and purchased art materials. I also organized a twice-yearly student show. I was the lead author for the school's project-based drawing, painting, and adult education lesson plans for all 14 schools nationwide.

I am active in contemporary arts. My exhibition record is strong. I also have a substantial Instagram account with short videos focusing on creativity, several of which have over 100,000 views. I have published in-depth interviews and essays online and in print. Three examples are Anoka Faruqee, Yale's Director of Graduate Studies in Painting; Eddie Martinez, who represented San Marino at the 2024 Venice Biennial; and Amir H. Fallah in his hardcover monograph *Scatter My Ashes on Foreign Lands*.

The prospect of joining Suffolk's Grant campus as a full-time faculty member fills me with excitement. It would provide me with the perfect platform to apply my extensive experience and skills while also allowing me to make a meaningful contribution to the program.

Sincerely,

William Donovan

William Donovan

Statement of Commitment to the Principles of Equity and Student Success

My classroom fosters a culture of respect, safety, and access. Each semester, I quickly learn every student's name and start conversations about their art-related interests. This allows me to acknowledge and incorporate the diverse backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives of each student. My commitment is based on listening and then thoughtfully including their interests so that the students see their interests reflected in the curriculum. I also provide art supplies to students if I have them available. I bring extra art supplies with me and have used supplies left behind from the previous semester or donated to the school to help lower their expenses and broaden student access. My commitment to equity and student success at Suffolk County Community College is rooted in the belief that art education should empower, include, and elevate all students. By fostering an environment where diversity is celebrated and equity is practiced, I aim to contribute to the academic success and holistic development of every student I teach.

William Donovan

Teaching Philosophy, The Wildflower Garden

I think of art instruction as wildflower gardening.

Contemporary artists have been described as wildflowers—something unpredictable and beautiful that appears to self-will itself into existence. Each feels unique, and training is often not self-evident, hence wild.

Gardens, however, are about imposing order on nature. The biggest, strongest, most colorful plants grow together in the same place and in nice, tidy geometric designs. The great historical gardens were evidence of humanity's ability to control our physical world.

A school must have some aspect of the garden because the garden is reliable, and we must reliably offer artistic growth to the students.

In other words, I aim for each student to possess the strongest fundamentals and the most fluent way of speaking about art. I want them to have a portfolio that allows them to access the next stage in their education or employment. I also want to inspire them to discover what makes their art unique and to find their own voice in the artistic world.

In practice, this means building syllabi with fundamental topics organized on the calendar to allow for a natural development of skill and sophistication. The calendar is important because I want to be able to tell a motivational story based on what the class just finished, what we are doing now, and what is coming next. I always strive to answer the question, “Why are we doing this?” with a narrative about their artistic growth.

I want each student to do an excellent job on a particular project or assignment. Simultaneously, if they are interested in cars, soccer, music, or anything else, it is a good idea to incorporate that interest into as many projects as possible.

In summary, my teaching philosophy revolves around four key factors: effectively communicating subject knowledge, increasing access and inclusion, showing genuine curiosity about student interests, and answering the unspoken question: Why should I learn this? I call this the ‘why’ question, and it’s an opportunity to present the course as an aspirational, motivational story. Finally, I am committed to preparing the students for what comes next academically or professionally, ensuring they have a strong foundation and a well-documented portfolio.