



GRADUATE PROGRAMS

ARTIST YOU AUTHOR

MFA

VISUAL NARRATIVE



## NATHAN FOX

**G**REAT STORIES (and the visual storytellers who create them) offer more than just a visual series of things that happen. Beyond the mere delivery of information or illustrated text, they move and engage us. We see ourselves and our humanity reflected within them. Be it through animation, fine art, film, gaming, VR, illustration, design or graphic novels, story remains one of the most powerful, effective and universally emotive expressions of human nature.

We are wired for story from the moment we first open our eyes, immersed in a brand-new world, to the time we grow old enough to reflect on the life lived. Regardless of medium or format, story is how we communicate the visual potential of what can only be imagined. It's how we identify a sense of self and relate to those around us. It's how we understand the world we live in now and connect to the past that brought us here.

In the MFA Visual Narrative program, creative writing and image-making are considered a single language—visual storytelling. Only when we have mastered this language, discovering our own internal process, are we able to communicate our unique vision of the human experience. Through guest lectures, workshops, portfolio development and professional practice studies, we will explore and challenge the conventional rules of narrative design, story development and authorship. Students will discover their own individual narrative voice, not as just a writer or image-maker alone, but as both author and artist. By examining the fundamental forms and visual language of story, students will begin to define their own particular approach and bring their stories to life in a way that only they can tell them.

The MFA Visual Narrative program's goal is to dig deep and elevate the artist and author in you.

So, dear reader, what's your story?



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## ABOUT THE PROGRAM

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MFA Visual Narrative is a low-residency program designed for working professionals, educators and students from all creative disciplines. Three summer intensives at SVA are connected by two years of focused online study during the fall and spring semesters.

During the eight-week summer sessions, students attend classes and work in the studios for eight to ten hours per day. Capitalizing on New York City's rich culture, research trips including story events, studio visits and other activities occur.

Throughout the fall and spring semesters online, students actively engage in courses and discussions, with faculty support. The online workload is designed to accommodate those working full-time. In the third summer, each student is responsible for producing a unique narrative thesis installation. Professional practice seminars are given, on such topics as portfolio development and copyright law, as well as finding an audience and marketing to them. The faculty has broad expertise in storytelling genres, and includes animators, designers, directors, story consultants and scriptwriters.

In all forms of visual storytelling, there is a growing demand for new narrative voices and original content creators. As digital platforms and technologies advance, the MFA Visual Narrative program responds with educated students that rise to the challenge.

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## WHO SHOULD APPLY

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This program is designed for professionals, educators and students from all creative disciplines to explore what story means to them and to integrate visual storytelling into their art practice. Applicants should have a bachelor's degree or equivalent in any subject, and need to demonstrate proficiency in both creative writing and narrative art forms. Because of the nature of a low-residency program, successful students will demonstrate a high level of professional discipline and practice.

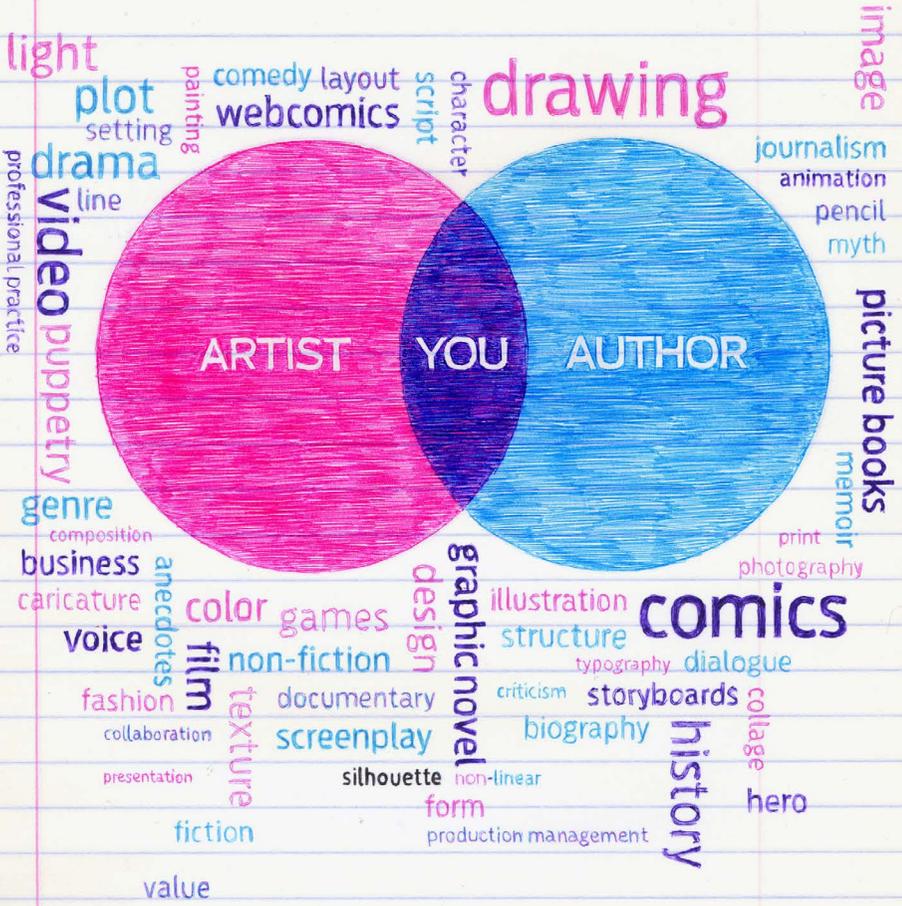
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## CONTINUING EDUCATION CLASSES

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MFAVN offers several classes, including Scriptwriting (online) and Risograph printing, with workshops in world-building and children's book publishing. Learn more: [sva.edu/continuing-education/visual-narrative](https://sva.edu/continuing-education/visual-narrative).

# WHAT'S YOUR STORY?



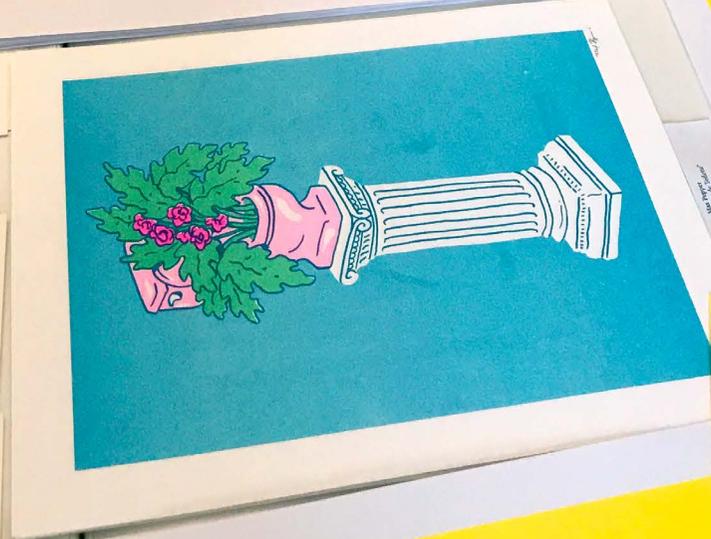
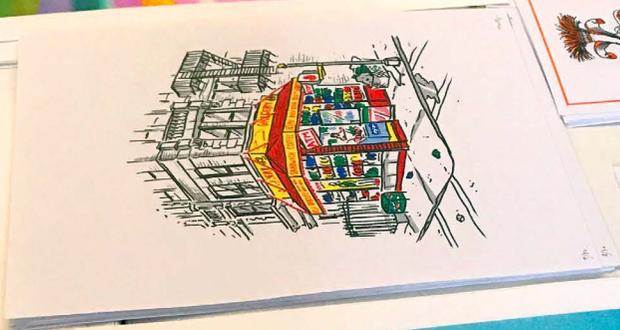
story: visualized

MFA Visual Narrative | [mfavn.sva.edu](http://mfavn.sva.edu)

SVA  NYC

# A Hub for the Risograph Community at SVA

The RisoLAB is an educational print lab dedicated to empowering self-publishing and production of Risograph-based printed works, accessible to the entire SVA community. Nathan Fox, chair of the MFA Visual Narrative program, explains why he launched the Lab. “For a story-focused interdisciplinary visual storytelling program where the artist is author, understanding the printing process and project management is invaluable. Playing around with what print publishing and storytelling can do together is a crucial skill set ▶



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and a critical thinking process to learn for any profession.”

As Mr. Fox notes, the Riso printing phenomenon is yet another case of artists transforming a technology intended for mundane use into a powerful tool for self-expression. He continues, “Risographs were originally created as automated low-cost, high-yield image duplicators for churches and schools. Recently, Risographs have enjoyed a resurgence through the visual storytelling community, with zines, comics, book arts and experiments in printed matter. It was this perfect opportunity to generate a new creative print community on campus, and a truly effective way to provide an accessible print-production education in a box.”

While the RisoLAB is available to the entire SVA community, as well as outside creatives from fields as diverse as fine art, graphic design, illustration, and even the worlds of poetry and literature, it has become a crucial physical hub that underpins the on-campus, summer semester of the MFA Visual Narrative program. All MFAVN students undergo rigorous training in Risograph printing in their first semester, after which they have unlimited access to the Risograph printing facilities, expanding their design and print skills.

Fox says, “As a low-residency program, many students are freelancers or working professionals. All MFAVN students are encouraged to

experiment and access the Lab for personal work production, gallery shows, testing publishing concepts, and pushing the capabilities of these amazing machines. Risographs provide an immediate way to prototype and explore alternative print methods and publishing, which was a big draw for our students and SVA at large.”

RisoLAB Artists-in-Residence are selected through a competition each spring, and host public lectures and workshops, as well as donate output to the lab to sell for scholarship funds. Joan McCabe, director of operations of MFAVN says: “The work created by our Artists-in-Residence encourages students to push their own work further, expanding their professional practice and opportunities to collaborate with working professionals.” Fox always meant for the LAB to be interdisciplinary, which further benefits MFAVN students. McCabe says, “The RisoLAB offers Continuing Education and undergraduate courses, open access and workshops to all students and is a great way for the faculty, staff and all SVA students to cross-pollinate.” The RisoLAB mission is to become a hub of small scale and experimental printing and publishing activity that brings together artists of all backgrounds to encourage dialogue across different creative worlds. Accessing this resource has become an indispensable asset of the MFAVN program and student experience.



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## CURRICULUM/SAMPLE PROGRAM

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*The MFA Visual Narrative is a flexible, low-residency program designed for working professionals and students of visual storytelling alike. Three onsite summer sessions are connected by two years of online study during the fall and spring semesters.*

SUMMER I	CREDITS
Analog to Digital: Dynamic Transformations	3
Black, White and One Color	3
History of Visual Storytelling	3
Narrative Writing	3

FALL I (ONLINE)	CREDITS
Creative Script	3
Lecture Series I	0
Story Visualized	3

SPRING I (ONLINE)	CREDITS
Digital Short Story	6
Lecture Series II	0



***Have you ever experienced a terminal amount of creative block at the worst imaginable time? Stop, find an artist you trust, and ask for their feedback. My mentor and thesis class were able to spot things I couldn't.*** —LIZ ENRIGHT, MFA 2017

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<b>SUMMER II</b>	<b>CREDITS</b>
Bridging Image and Context	3
Form, Empathy and Character Play	3
Shaping Your Story	3
Visual Writing	3
<b>FALL II (ONLINE)</b>	<b>CREDITS</b>
Identity in a Digital World	0
Thesis and Mentor Review I	0
Thesis Studio I	6
<b>SPRING II (ONLINE)</b>	<b>CREDITS</b>
Selling Your Story	0
Thesis and Mentor Review II	0
Thesis Studio II	6
<b>SUMMER III</b>	<b>CREDITS</b>
Connecting Story to Audience	3
Presentation and Communication	3
Thesis Production	6





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## COURSE OFFERINGS

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*Candidates for the MFA in Visual Narrative degree must complete at least 60 credits and all course requirements, as well as produce a successful thesis project to be eligible for degree conferral. This is a sample of our recent course listings. For our full curriculum, please visit: [sva.edu/mfavn/curriculum](http://sva.edu/mfavn/curriculum).*

### **BLACK, WHITE AND ONE COLOR**

Story, atmosphere, composition, character, conflict, resolution and format—these are but a few of the fundamental and unifying building blocks of visual storytelling. Favoring original content, story essential specifics, narrative meaning and solid story-centric design over “artful, finished product,” this course aims to help students examine their assumptions of traditional visual techniques in their own work through a limited and focused palette.

### **WIRED FOR STORY: CREATING POWERFUL NARRATIVES**

Writing artfully shouldn't be the first concern of any author; this is as true for beginners as it is for the seasoned pro. First and foremost, every story author, visual or otherwise, needs a firm grasp of what a story actually is, and what his or her audience is hardwired to expect in every story it reads, hears, interacts with or views (which is often the opposite of what writers have been taught or think it is). This course will tap into recent discoveries in brain science and uncover what those expectations are, where they came from, and how to translate the students' unique stories into the universal language of storytelling. The course will proceed step by step, from the first glimmer of an idea to an evolving, multilayered narrative capable of hooking the audience from the very first page.

### **CREATIVE SCRIPT**

Concept, character, structure and craft—the fundamentals of creative storytelling and the architecture of a well-defined outline—will be emphasized in this course. Through a series of exercises, students will develop writing skills in the core components of storytelling, such as an active but flawed protagonist with a concrete goal, a story with a solid structure based on a character arc, and a unique concept with a specified target audience. The similarities and differences among theater, film, television, comics, and other visual media will be explored through lectures, but primarily by writing itself. Fundamentals of storytelling as applied through writing for a variety of visual narrative mediums.

## DIGITAL SHORT STORY

In this course students will create an original short story in a digital, visual narrative format. We will focus on the creative process of taking an idea from its initial stage through a proposal, story and character development, editing, layout, design, color palette, typography and, finally, revision and finishing. The course culminates in an exhibition of both the digital story and physical artwork. Guest artists will discuss digital publishing, online community building, self-promotion, digital distribution and self-publishing.

## SHAPING YOUR STORY

As readers, viewers and consumers of story, we are hard-wired to respond to every story we encounter. In this course, students will sharpen their creative writing and visual storytelling skills for their thesis projects by focusing on the “who, how, what, where” and, most importantly, the “why.” From a deep understanding of what story is, students will hone in on the specific stories they want to tell and how they want to tell them. Students will identify resources and methods for sculpting their story’s digital and physical presence, and craft a project plan and set of goals that will guide their thesis development. Throughout the course, there will be iterations on methods of story development, story pitches and plans for production of the thesis.

## VISUAL WRITING

The goal of this course is to investigate and iterate on the concept of mapping as a method of visual writing. In the first half of the semester, students will observe and document a specific location’s architecture and objects, and the people that utilize and navigate its space. This process will highlight various techniques of media collection and background research (with a particular focus on site-specific research), applicable to many types of creative output. The final form of the location’s atlas will be both physical (through installation and exhibition) and digital.



***Great visual storytellers challenge our notions of self and truth, engaging an audience to its core.*** —NATHAN FOX, CHAIR

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### **FORM, EMPATHY AND CHARACTER PLAY**

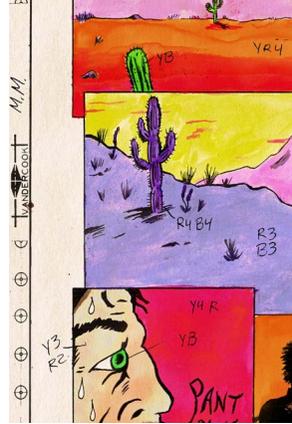
Character and narrative are symbiotic; one cannot exist without the other. Character + choice = story. Sometimes the only way to find a character's "voice" as a storyteller is to get into character—we must become the character in order to understand it. This course is designed to further develop skills in character creation through examining what makes characters behave the way they do. With lectures on character archetypes, character crisis, defining moments, unconscious desire and design, students will examine the elements necessary for creating their own characters. Through improv and role-playing techniques, students will understand their how their characters will behave in fictional settings, better enabling them to write and visualize their character creations.

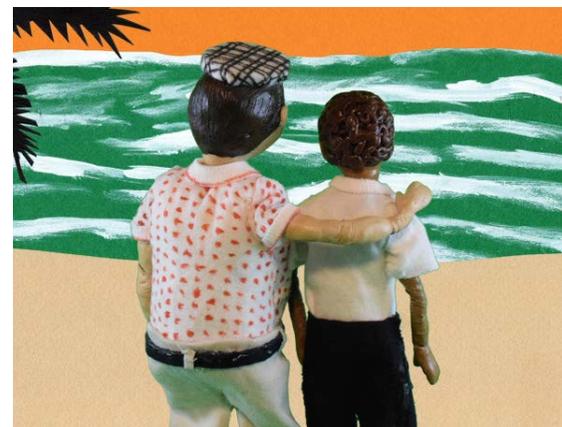
### **SELLING YOUR STORY**

This course will help students to formulate their formal thesis presentations before a panel of their peers and select instructors. Students will share personal insight into their creative work, a vital and necessary component of any creative practice, and will engage with their peers on the panel, as well as with a moderator and audience members. During this course, students will also refine their professional presentation skills through visiting artist talks and discussions, training in studio visits and preparing materials for their upcoming job search and/or studio practice.

### **CONNECTING STORY TO AUDIENCE**

Promotion is a key part of marketing, but it is only one part. To market our work effectively we need to weave promotions, sales and tales into a captivating whole. Do that, and your marketing leads to sales. But what are you selling? Yourself? Your story? An idea? This course will be a forum in which to discuss the elements of the thesis project that drive each student. By developing a marketing plan through discussions, we'll spot opportunities to highlight each student's passions, process and professional practice—connecting each student's story to his or her respective audience.





## NOTABLE ALUMNI

### MELISSA MALZKUHN

class of 2015

creative director, Motion Light Lab; Digital Innovation  
and Media Strategies Manager, Science of Learning Center  
on Visual Language and Visual Learning, Gallaudet University

### FEI FEI RUAN

class of 2015

Hiii Illustration International Competition, Grand Prix Award  
Clients include: Jim Henson Company, Penguin Classics,  
Boom!, Cartoon Network, BuzzFeed

### CRAIG COSS

class of 2015

self-publisher, *The Goddess Coloring Book*  
Clients include: *Storytelling Magazine*, Chronicle Books, HBO

### ALEX BEGUEZ

class of 2016

Latin American Ilustración 2016 Recipient Award;  
General Scholarship, Fine Arts Work Center

### ANDREA SCHMITZ

class of 2016

associate motion graphics designer,  
*New York* magazine

### ALISON PAUL

class of 2015

assistant professor, Illustration  
and Animation, University of Connecticut

### JENNY GOLDSTICK

class of 2015

IndieCade 2016

Clients include: Houghton-Mifflin Harcourt,  
Office of the NYC Mayor, Penguin Books

PREVIOUS SPREAD: (TOP ROW, FROM LEFT) MICHELLE NAHMAD, ROSA CHANG, THOMAS SLATTERY, ALEXANDRA BARSKY; (SECOND ROW) CADY JUAREZ, ALISON PAUL, WILLIAM WEHMANN, SHANNON O'HALLORAN, FEIFEI RUAN. (THIRD ROW) ANNA EVESLAGE, LIZ ENRIGHT, THOMAS SLATTERY, MICHELLE NAHMAD (LAST ROW) BARBARA GEOHEGAN, ANNA EVESLAGE, ANA LOZADA DIAZ, JON BERO, FEIFEI RUAN. OPPOSITE: FEIFEI RUAN, *SASHIMI*, THESIS PROJECT, 2015.



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## FACULTY

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Our faculty represents a breadth of expertise, including children's literature, data visualization, theatre direction, graphic novels, printing, publishing and writing. Full biographies of our chair and faculty can be read online at: [sva.edu/mfavn/faculty](http://sva.edu/mfavn/faculty).

[NATHAN FOX](#)

chair, illustrator and comic book guy

[MEGAN CASH](#)

author, Illustrator, designer, editor

[LISA CRON](#)

author, story coach

[PATRICK CROTTY](#)

comic artist, publisher, PEOW Studio AB

[PAUL JOHN](#)

printer, director, Endless Editions

[BILL KARTALOPOULOS](#)

series editor, *The Best American Comics*;  
publisher, Rebus Books

[ROSS MACDONALD](#)

author, illustrator, designer

[LEONARD S. MARCUS](#)

critic, writer, editor

[STACY RENEE MORRISON](#)

photographer

[MARK NEWGARDEN](#)

cartoonist, writer

[ANNA OGIER-BLOOMER](#)

assistant director, Career Development,  
School of Visual Arts; photographer

[JONATHON ROSEN](#)

painter, illustrator, animator

[LEE AARON ROSEN](#)

actor, researcher

[MATT ROTA](#)

illustrator

[CHRISTINA ROUSSOS](#)

director, producer

[JIM RUGG](#)

comic book artist, illustrator,  
graphic designer

[MARK SABLE](#)

writer for comics, film, live action television,  
animation and theater

[TIM SZETELA](#)

designer, animator, technologist, mapmaker

[PANAYIOTIS TERZIS](#)

Risograph Lead Technician, RisoLAB, School  
of Visual Arts; owner, Mega Press

[DIEGO VAINESMAN](#)

design director, 40N47 Design, Inc.

[ED VALENTINE](#)

writer for theater and television

[MATTHEW WEISE](#)

writer, game designer, co-founder,  
Fiction Control LLC

[BEN ZACKHEIM](#)

writer, producer

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## APPLICATION PROCESS

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### APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

For detailed instructions, visit: [sva.edu/grad/howtoapply](https://sva.edu/grad/howtoapply)

- Online Application and \$80 Application Fee: [sva.edu/apply](https://sva.edu/apply)
- Statement of Intent/Personal Statement
- Résumé
- Letters of Recommendation
- Official College Transcript

Some applicants may be required to submit the following:

- Proof of English Proficiency
- Copy of Permanent Residency Card
- Declaration of Finances
- Verification of Finances
- Foreign Transcript Evaluation

### DEPARTMENTAL REQUIREMENTS

For specific guidelines about these requirements, visit: [sva.edu/grad/deptreq](https://sva.edu/grad/deptreq)

- Portfolio and Department Assignment
- Creative Writing Sample
- Interview
- Theme Essay

### DEADLINES

For information on application deadlines, [visit: sva.edu/grad/timeline](https://sva.edu/grad/timeline)

### IMPORTANT LINKS

- FAQ: [sva.edu/grad/faq](https://sva.edu/grad/faq)
- International students: [sva.edu/grad/intl](https://sva.edu/grad/intl)
- Tuition and fees: [sva.edu/tuition](https://sva.edu/tuition)
- Visit SVA: [sva.edu/grad/visit](https://sva.edu/grad/visit)

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## CONTACT US

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We encourage potential students to visit our department and welcome exploratory conversation at any time. And sign up for our newsletter, The Storyteller's Bulletin at [mfavn.sva.edu](http://mfavn.sva.edu) if you are a visual artist with the spirit of a storyteller. Learn more: [sva.edu/grad/visit](http://sva.edu/grad/visit).

If you have any questions about the application process, contact Graduate Admissions at 212.592.2107 or email: [gradadmissions@sva.edu](mailto:gradadmissions@sva.edu).

**Nathan Fox**, chair

**Joan McCabe**, director of operations

**Lucea Spinelli**, project manager

**Tel:** 212.592.2388

**Email:** [mfavn@sva.edu](mailto:mfavn@sva.edu)

**Site:** [sva.edu/mfavn](http://sva.edu/mfavn)

**Department site:** [mfavn.sva.edu](http://mfavn.sva.edu)

 [facebook.com/MFAVisualNarrative](https://facebook.com/MFAVisualNarrative)

 [instagram.com/mfavn](https://instagram.com/mfavn)

 [pinterest.com/mfavn](https://pinterest.com/mfavn)

 [twitter.com/mfavn](https://twitter.com/mfavn)

## ACCREDITATION

The School of Visual Arts has been authorized by the New York State Board of Regents ([www.highered.nysed.gov](http://www.highered.nysed.gov)) to confer the degree of Bachelor of Fine Arts on graduates of programs in Advertising; Animation; Cartooning; Computer Art, Computer Animation and Visual Effects; Design; Film; Fine Arts; Illustration; Interior Design; Photography and Video; Visual and Critical Studies; and to confer the degree of Master of Arts on graduates of the programs in Critical Theory and the Arts; Curatorial Practice; Design Research, Writing and Criticism; and to confer the degree of Master of Arts in Teaching on graduates of the program in Art Education; and to confer the degree of Master of Fine Arts on graduates of programs in Art Practice; Art Writing; Computer Arts; Design; Design for Social Innovation; Fine Arts; Illustration as Visual Essay; Interaction Design; Photography, Video and Related Media; Products of Design; Social Documentary Film; Visual Narrative; and to confer the degree of Master of Professional Studies on graduates of the programs in Art Therapy; Branding; Digital Photography; Directing; Fashion Photography. Data required by the U.S. Department of Education on "Gainful Employment" for each of the above programs may be found on each individual program page at [sva.edu/ge](http://sva.edu/ge).

The School of Visual Arts is accredited by the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools ([msche.org](http://msche.org)), 3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104, 215.662.5606. The Commission on Higher Education is an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education and the Council on Higher Education Accreditation.

The School of Visual Arts is an accredited institutional member of the National Association of Schools of Art and Design ([nasad.arts-accredit.org](http://nasad.arts-accredit.org)).

The Interior Design program leading to the Bachelor of Fine Arts in Interior Design is accredited by the Council for Interior Design Accreditation ([accredit-id.org](http://accredit-id.org)), 146 Monroe Center NW, Suite 1318, Grand Rapids, MI 49503-2822.

The Master of Arts in Teaching in Art Education program is accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP).

The Master of Professional Studies in Art Therapy degree program is approved by the American Art Therapy Association, Inc., and as such meets the Education Standards of the art therapy profession.

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## CREDITS

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The College reserves the right to make changes from time to time affecting policies, fees, curricula and other matters announced in this or any other publication. Statements in this and other publications do not constitute a contract.

the 1990s, the number of people in the world who are illiterate has increased from 1.1 billion to 1.2 billion (UNESCO 2003).

There are a number of reasons for this increase in illiteracy. One of the main reasons is the rapid population growth in the developing world.

Another reason is the lack of access to education for many people in the developing world.

Finally, the quality of education in the developing world is often poor, leading to high rates of illiteracy.

There are a number of ways to reduce the number of illiterate people in the world. One way is to improve access to education.

Another way is to improve the quality of education. Finally, it is important to create a culture of learning.

By doing these things, we can help to reduce the number of illiterate people in the world.

There are a number of challenges to reducing illiteracy. One challenge is the lack of resources.

Another challenge is the lack of political will. Finally, it is important to create a culture of learning.

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