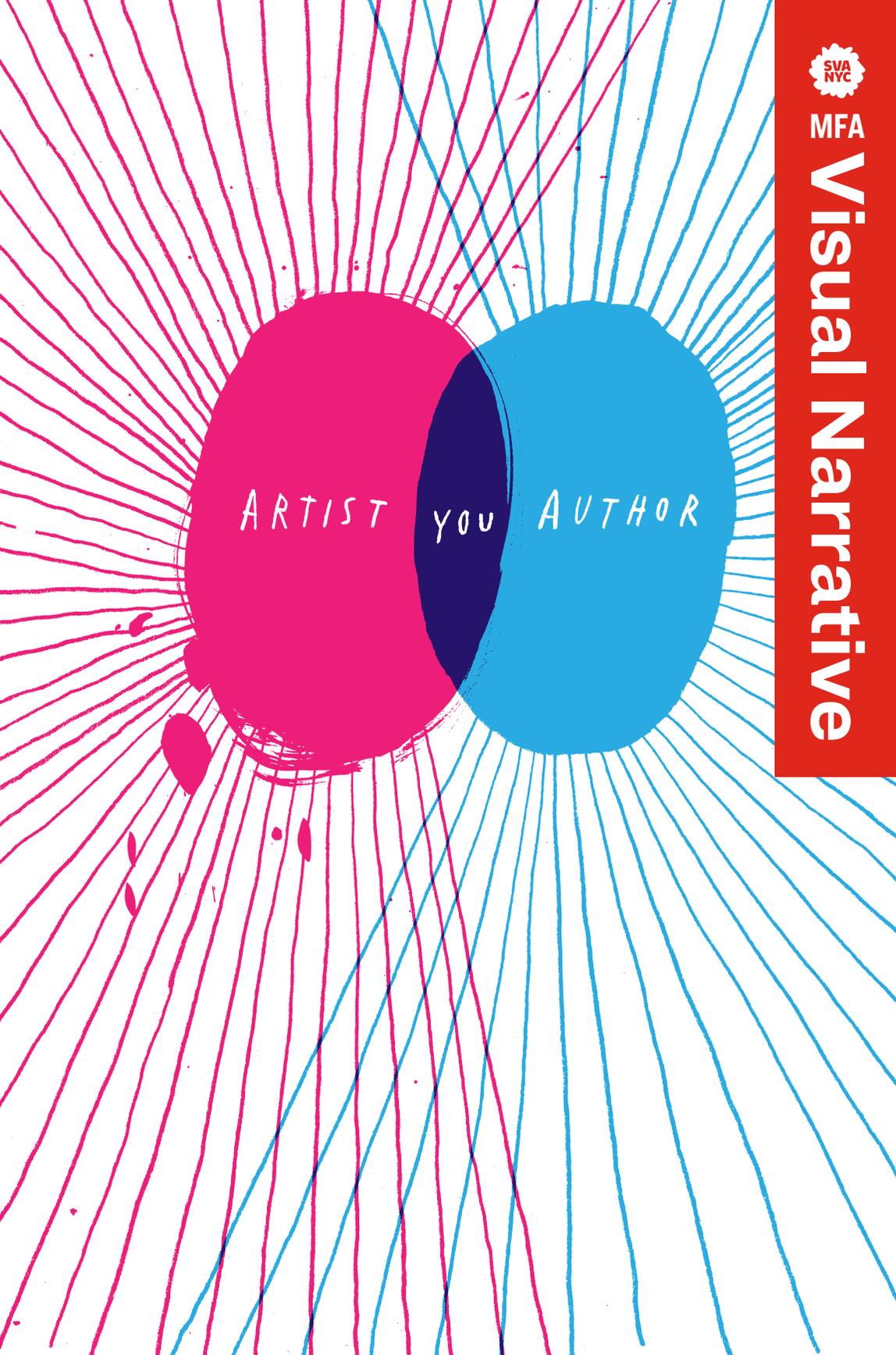




MFA

# Visual Narrative

The background of the entire page is composed of numerous thin, hand-drawn lines radiating from the center. The lines on the left side are pink, and the lines on the right side are blue. In the center, two large, overlapping circles are drawn. The left circle is pink and contains the word 'ARTIST' in white, hand-drawn capital letters. The right circle is blue and contains the word 'AUTHOR' in white, hand-drawn capital letters. The overlapping area between the two circles is a dark, almost black color and contains the word 'YOU' in white, hand-drawn capital letters.

ARTIST YOU AUTHOR

# Where Artist Meets Author

When words and images come together, they can create powerful visual narratives—stories that can touch hearts, ignite imaginations, change minds and even change the way we see our world—**Story First.**

The Visual Narrative MFA at SVA responds to the needs of today's evolving creative markets by merging the artist and author. It's an evolutionary process that puts story first and gives you the tools you need to craft your own stories and to help others craft theirs.

More than just a degree program, the MFA Visual Narrative program is a school of thought that immerses you in story. A select group of artist/authors, we are a diverse, tight-knit community where you learn and collaborate in small classes and are mentored by top professionals who know how to navigate today's competitive creative markets.

Part of the extraordinary appeal of the program is that it is low-residency. Three intensive eight-week summer semesters at SVA in New York City give you the chance to connect with your peers and professors, to create in-studio and to absorb the Visual Narrative process. Additionally, you are able to access the myriad creative opportunities in the city and to build a community of colleagues and mentors that supports and inspires. Four semesters of online coursework, critiques, discussions and interactive projects give you the freedom to pursue your passion and live your life—without uprooting it.

In today's workplace, culture and creative landscape, fresh content, fearless voices and great stories are needed more than ever. At MFA Visual Narrative, you'll develop a fluency in "Visual Writing." We think of it as a whole new language and approach to visual storytelling that can take your narrative voice to the next level, giving you the competitive edge in today's creative economy. If you're ready to dig deep, uncover universal truths and live and breathe story, come join us.

The world needs compelling stories.

What's yours?

—Nathan Fox, chair



story: visualized  
MFA Visual Narrative



## STUDENT PROFILES

Susanne Reece  
Eva Hall  
Feifei Ruan  
Melissa Malzkuhn  
Nadia DeLane

# A Community of Storytellers

Game designers, illustrators, animators—at MFA Visual Narrative (MFAVN), storytellers of all kinds learn what it means to put story first. A big part of the program's success comes from a focus on story craft, shared among a community of peers, teachers and mentors.

### SUSANNE REECE, CLASS OF 2020

Before joining MFAVN, [Susanne Reece](#) had a decade of experience in academia, including German literature and art history. She also had stories to tell. While her writing, illustration, painting and printmaking gave her a lot of outlets to tell them, there was one big problem. “I was trying to figure out how to put all of this stuff together,” says Reece, “and it felt like I had gotten as far as I could on my own with it.”

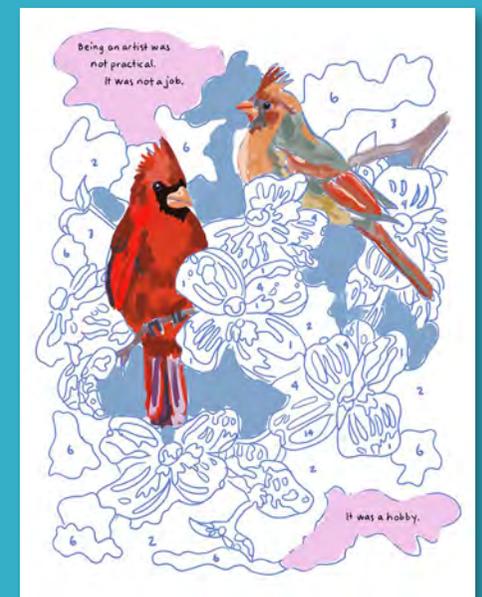
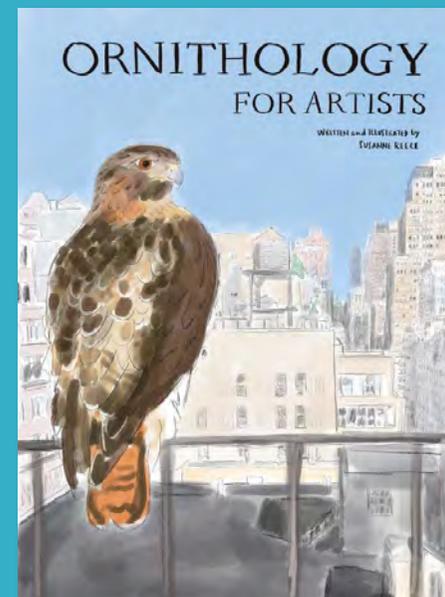
Reece's community of peers, faculty and a dedicated mentor (cartoonist Andrea Tsurumi), provided the focus she was looking for. “I have so many ideas for things I want to do when I'm finished with the program,” Reece says. “And now I know they'll be more than sketches and notes piled up in the corner of the studio.”



[susannereece.com](http://susannereece.com)  
[instagram.com/susannemreece/](https://www.instagram.com/susannemreece/)



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Art from Susanne's 2020 thesis project *A City of Ladies*, Susanne's Digital Short Story project *Ornithology for Artists*.



## EVA HALL, CLASS OF 2020

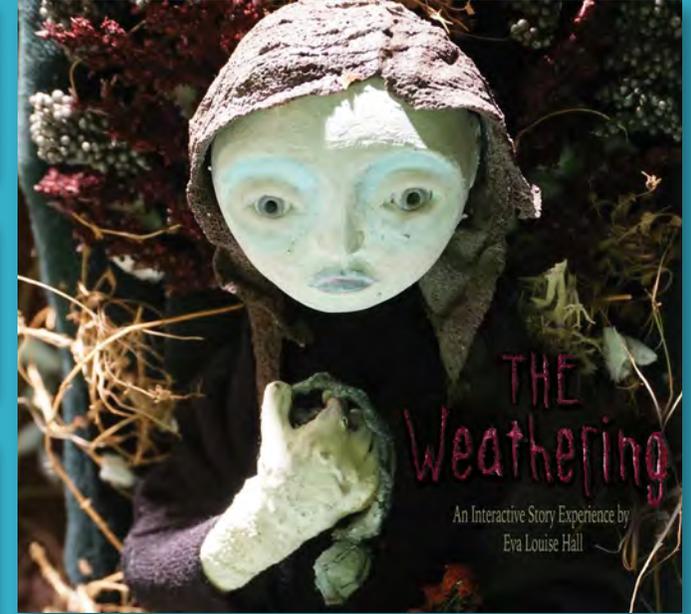
Eva Hall is an animator, filmmaker and artist who has long pushed the boundaries of visual storytelling. “I had always approached storytelling with an experimental lens, and found myself wanting to better study how to create complex and impactful stories that could allow me to connect with and challenge my audience in new ways.”

Her experience at MFAVN changed her perspective on the craft of storytelling and gave her a chance to grow. “Going through this degree has really refined and strengthened my writing abilities,” says Hall. “I’ve learned so much about myself as an artist and as a storyteller.”

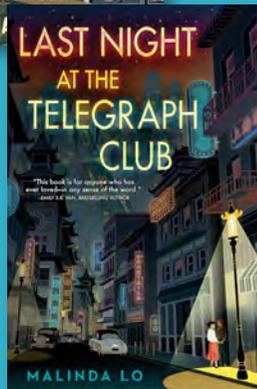
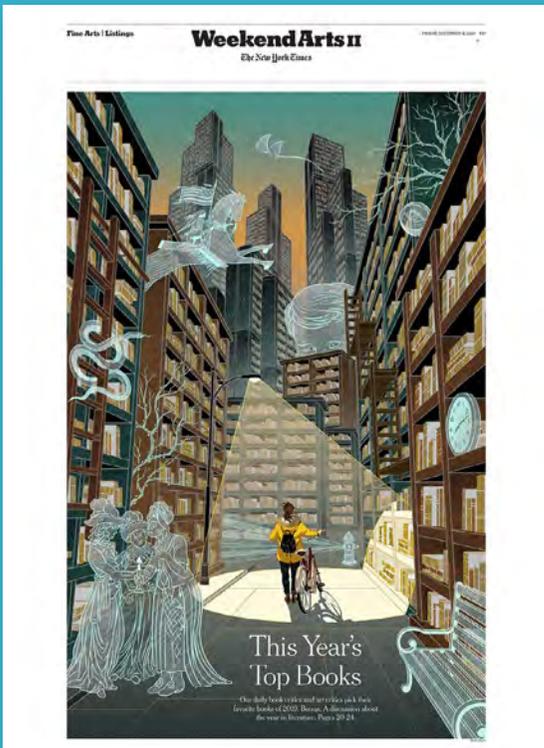
The process was intimate and transformative for me.” While personal, her journey was shared with passionate peers who specialized in many media. “We all have that central thread—our love and dedication to the art of story—that connects our process and work.”



[evalouisehall.com](http://evalouisehall.com)  
[instagram.com/theseacircus/](https://www.instagram.com/theseacircus/)



ABOVE: Eva's Digital Short Story Project, *The Weathering*, Eva's thesis project *The Amazing Mira*.



### FEIFEI RUAN, CLASS OF 2015

Feifei Ruan is a Chinese illustrator and visual storyteller. Her works can be seen on [book covers](#), [magazines](#), websites, merchandise, and [billboards](#). Her style ranges from eastern classic to science fiction and fantasy. Feifei's work has been recognized by the Society of Illustrators, AIAP, AOI, Spectrum, 3x3, Communication Arts, The Library of Congress and CreativePool. If she sounds like a hard worker, that's because she is. "[MFA Visual Narrative] was very intense and things were rolling really fast. It pushed me to find the most efficient way to work. It felt like a part of me was unlocked -- the power to manage heavy workload and stress... It helped connect my different skills together and formed me into a professional narrative illustrator."

Her clients include The New York Times, The Mayor's Office of NYC, WWF, Penguin Books, Harper Collins, Albert Whitman & Co, Boom!Studios, BuzzFeed News, Tor, Variety, ElleMen, Wissen, Modern Weekly, Nautilus, The JimHenson Co, Illumicrate, HCB Health, R/GA, SMG Pictures, BBC Studios, Vanke, Mercedes-Benz, and Fendi Baguette.



[Feifeiruan.com](https://www.feifeiruan.com)  
[Behance.net/feifeiruan](https://www.behance.net/feifeiruan)  
[instagram.com/ruanOvO/](https://www.instagram.com/ruanOvO/)

OPPOSITE: Immigrant Heritage Week for the Mayor's Office of New York OPPOSITE BOTTOM: Cover of the Weekend Arts Section *Top Books of 2019*, The New York Times, Book covers: *A Psalm for the Wild Built* and *Last Night at the Telegraph Club* TOP: Mercedes-Benz, E-class. Featured in *Modern Weekly*, 1000th issue.

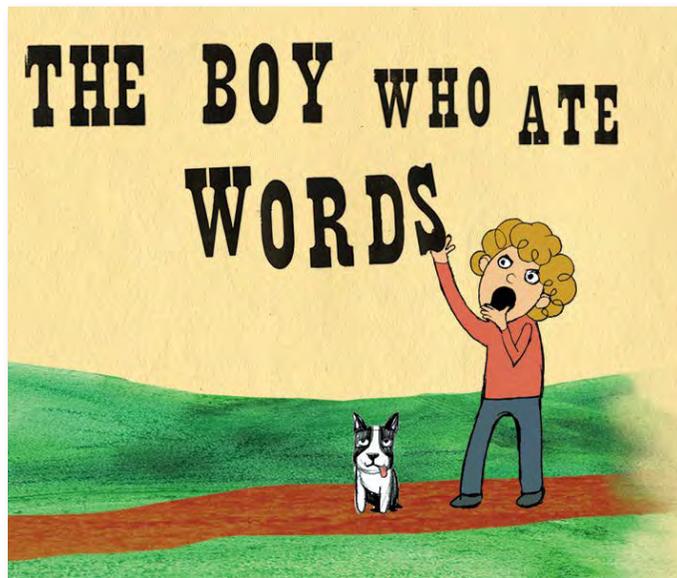
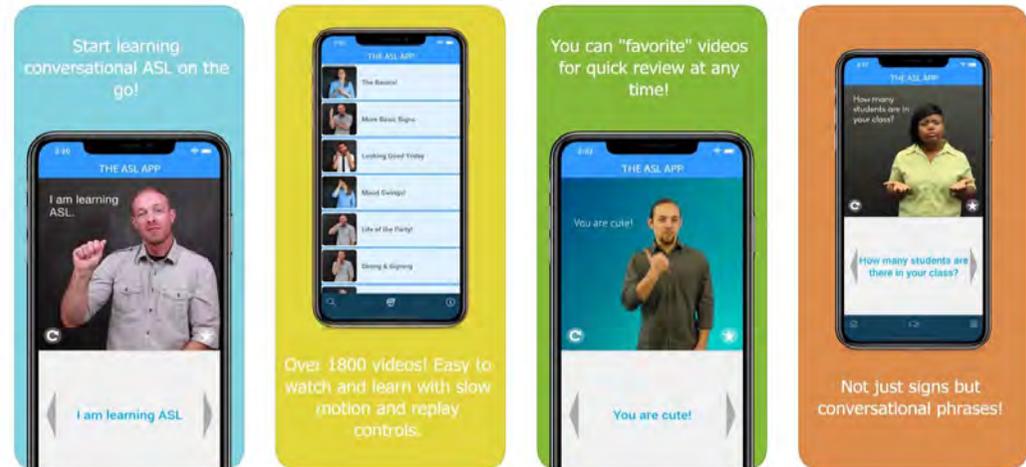
## MELISSA MALZKUHN, CLASS OF 2015

Melissa Malzkuhn is an activist, academic, artist, and digital strategist with a love for language play, interactive experiences, and community-based change. Community was a big part of her experience at MFA Visual Narrative. “The best thing about the MFAVN program is the friendships and the networking you develop with your cohort. I’m still in touch with my cohort, faculty members, and I enjoy following new students of the MFAVN family!”

She founded and leads creative development at [Motion Light Lab](#), at Gallaudet University Research Center. Her production company, [Ink & Salt](#), developed an app to teach American Sign Language, [The ASL App](#), which has been downloaded over two million times. Third-generation deaf, she has organized deaf youth and worked with international deaf youth programs, fostering leadership and self-representation. “For a very long time, deaf people’s stories have been told by everyone else but them. Now, all I think about is how I want to tell our narratives, in all their complicated truths, and let it be.” In 2018, Melissa was appointed one of the first class of twenty [Obama Fellows by the Obama Foundation](#).



[mezmalz.com](#)  
[motionlightlab.com](#)  
[instagram.com/tosignishuman/](#)



OPPOSITE TOP: Melissa giving a speech at the Obama Foundation. OPPOSITE BOTTOM: Melissa’s thesis project “The Boy Who Ate Words” ABOVE FROM TOP: “My Thee Animals”, an ASL nursery rhyme project produced by Melissa’s company Motion Light Lab, The ASL App.

## NADIA DELANE, CLASS OF 2015

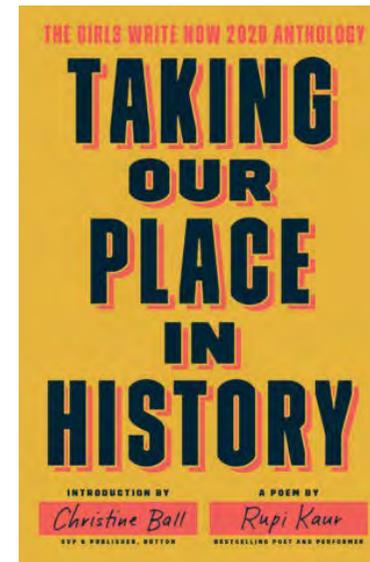
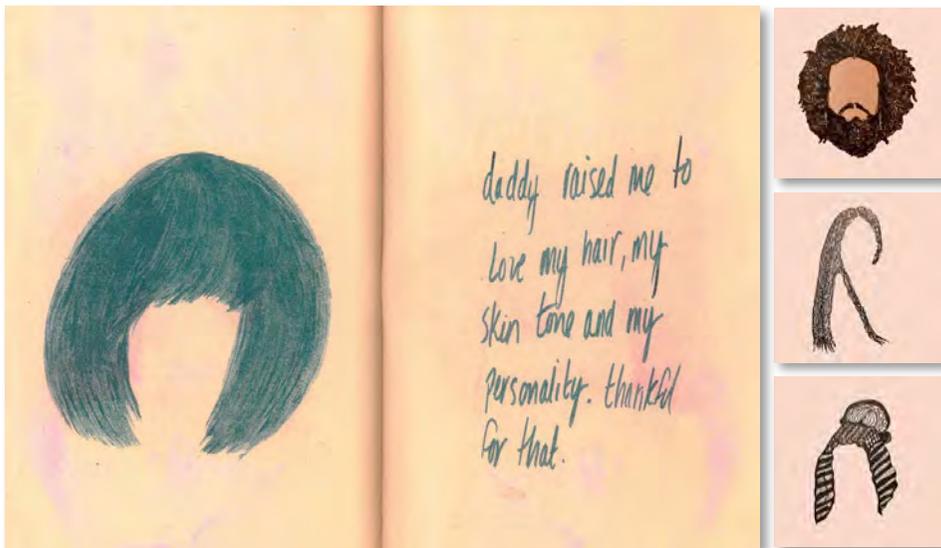
Nadia DeLane is a visual storyteller working in film, digital and fine art. Her clients include Parsons School of Design, Stone Lantern Films, and Turnstone Productions. She co-founded the Visual Muze storytelling residency on Governors Island.

Nadia's tenure at MFAVN was one of incredible growth and boldness. By her own account, the program's impact on her life continued after graduation. "While working on the Crowns of Crown Heights project, I saw women in my neighborhood and observed how their hairstyles communicated so much about their lives. A visual journalism class pushed me to investigate. That project turned into Coif City — a self published zine about women's hair."

Nadia considers an open mind to be the reward for her hard work at MFAVN. "I discovered the power of experimentation. The program encouraged us to use what we knew about narrative, stretch it, and turn it on its head."



[www.nadiadelane.com](http://www.nadiadelane.com)



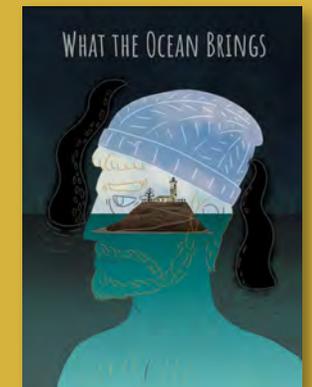
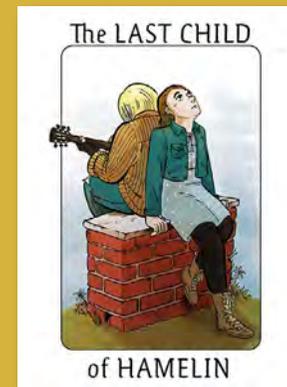
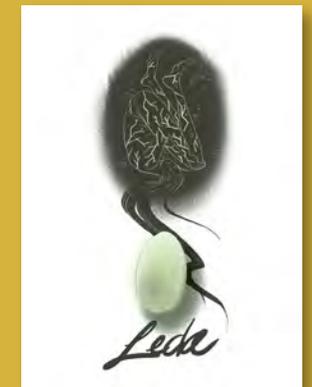
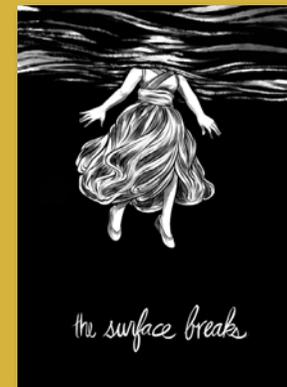
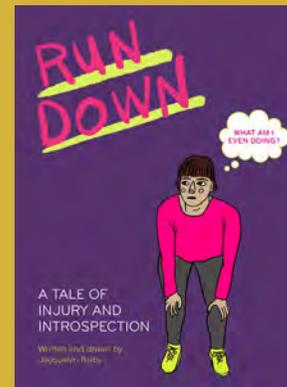
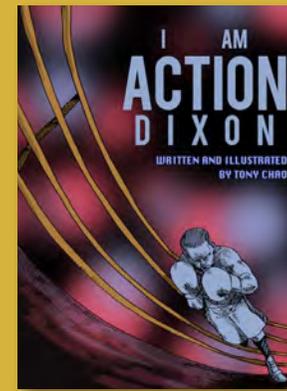
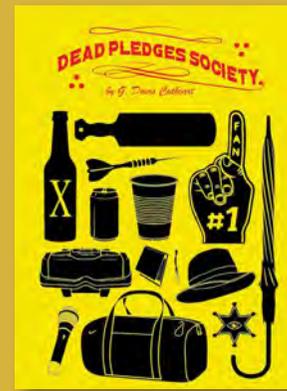
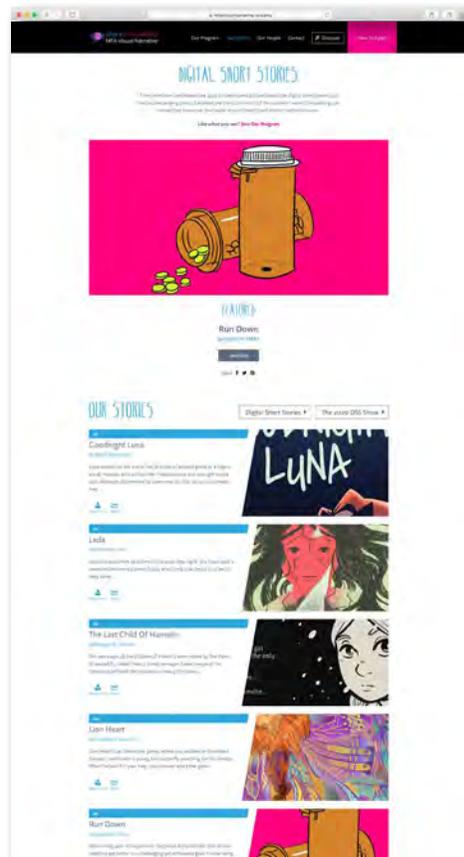
# DSS

## DIGITAL SHORT STORY SMALL BYTES, BIG FICTION

### DIGITAL SHORT STORY

Faculty **Jim Rugg** and **Mark Sable** curate an annual show of student work, titled 'Digital Short Story'. "Students are tasked with creating a short story on a screen in 15 weeks - from concept to finished, exhibited piece," Rugg says. It's an aggressive project, but the heavy load has a lesson. "Completing a visual short story in this difficult timeframe elevates virtually every aspect of a student's growth and practice. It is the heart of this program and, in some cases, it is the most ambitious creative achievement of these students' lives. It can inform their plans for thesis."

Digital Short Story fosters ambitious and exciting new voices through the interaction of faculty and peers. The DSS project is designed to focus on specific story fundamentals and to explore character development, narrative design, and story composition. Students then translate these concepts into a digital format rooted in an information system as old as human culture - story.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: 2020 DSS Projects: *Dead Pledges Society* by Davis G. Cathcart; *I Am Action Dixon* by Tony Chao; *Lilith & Eva* by Elizabeth Gu; *Run Down* by Jacquelyn Kirby; *The Surface Breaks* by Olivia Li; *Leda* by Susannah Lohr; *Goodnight Luna* by Maria Schweitzer; *The Last Child of Hamelin* by Maggie Vicknair; *What the Ocean Brings* by Martin Xing; *Lion Heart* by Handwin He.



# AND THEN THE 2020



## MFA VISUAL NARRATIVE THESIS EXHIBITION

andthen.sva.edu

Faculty Anelisa Garfunkel and Christina Roussos help to guide students in their thesis year, along with the students' mentors. "Thesis is a chance to challenge yourself in scope, technique, medium, and most importantly storytelling," Garfunkel says. "It's an opportunity to focus, to plan, to develop a professional practice and prove your ability to visualize and produce creatively and on time."

A thesis is different from other art-making endeavors, where your personal transformation—through making and writing—is often private, with the end result sprung into the world fully formed. In the MFA Visual Narrative program, making a

thesis requires vigorous collaboration with professors, with a mentor, and with fellow students. It requires an openness to critique and clarity of artistic vision. What they have in common are themes that reflect the strength, confidence, and personal growth that were required to tell these powerful and authentic stories in a critical time in their lives and in the world.

While their stories began before this particular moment of public health and political crises, each one offers a new vision of adversity, bringing inspiring, exciting, and emotional work into the world, filling a crucial need for sincere storytelling.

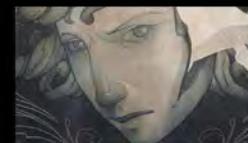
A. M. SARTOR  
ANDREW TAYLOR  
CAROL SILVERMAN  
DAN STREEZY  
EVA LOUISE HALL  
IAN GABRIEL  
LANI CORWIN  
MARISSA JONES  
MICHAEL SHEINKOPF  
NADA MOHAMMED  
PERRI GREELEY  
PILAR NEWTON  
SARAH SHAW  
SUSANNE REECE  
V. A. DOLL



Graphic Design by Ella Romero, '17

# THESIS PROJECTS

THE CLASS OF 2020



A. M. Sartor  
GEMINA UMBRA



Andrew Taylor  
SPELLSLINGER



Carol Silverman  
BELONGINGS



Dan Streezy  
I AM ROBY



Eva Louise Hall  
MIRA



Ian Gabriel  
SUPREME BEINGS



Lani Corwin  
PERSEPHONE



Marissa Jones  
THE SPACE NOMAD



Michael Sheinkopf  
THE ADVENTURES OF SHATMAN  
AND SHADOW



Nada Mohammed  
BECCA BLOOMS



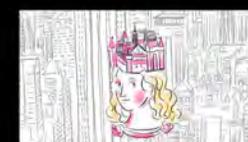
Perri Greeley  
GOLIATH



Pilar Newton  
SNOZZLEWINKS!



Sarah Shaw  
FINDING HOPE



Susanne Reece  
A CITY OF LADIES



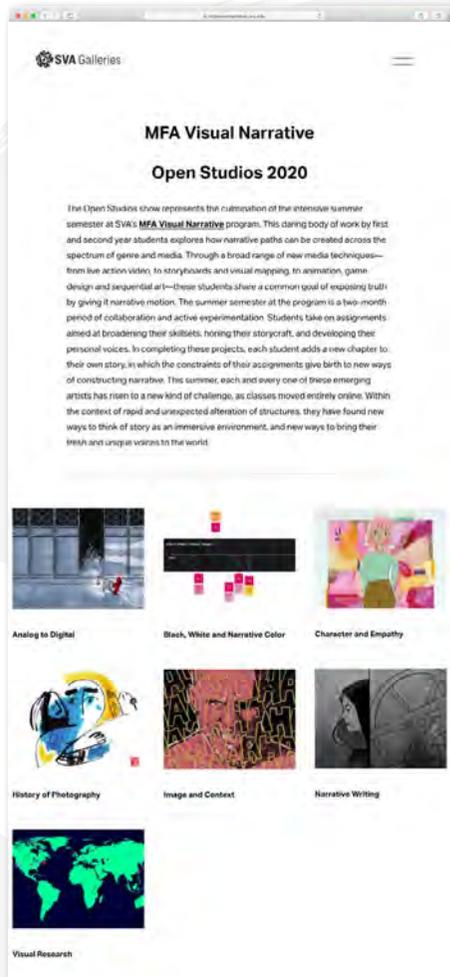
V.A. Doll  
EXHALE

# OPEN 2020 STUDIOS EXHIBITION

The **Open Studios** show represents the culmination of the intensive summer semester at SVA's **MFA Visual Narrative** program. This daring body of work by first and second year students explores how narrative paths can be created across the spectrum of genre and media. Through a broad range of new media techniques—from live action video, to storyboards and visual mapping, to animation, game design and sequential art—these students share a common goal of exposing truth by giving it narrative motion.

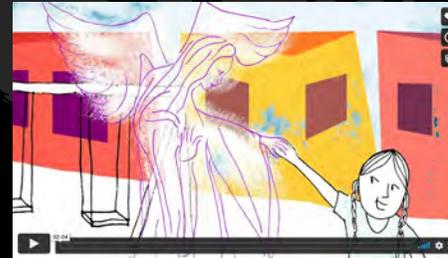
The summer semester at the program is a two-month period of collaboration and active experimentation. Students take on assignments aimed at broadening their skillsets, honing their storycraft, and developing their personal voices. In completing these projects, each student adds a new chapter to their own story, in which the constraints of their assignments give birth to new ways of constructing narrative.

This summer, each and every one of these emerging artists has risen to a new kind of challenge, as classes moved entirely online. Within the context of rapid and unexpected alteration of structures, they have found new ways to think of story as an immersive environment, and new ways to bring their fresh and unique voices to the world.



## Analog to Digital

Misbelief



## Black, White & Narrative Color

Life Of/



## Character and Empathy

The Game



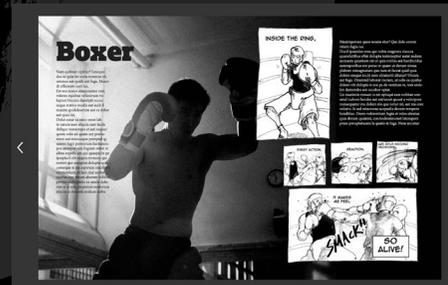
## History of Photography

The Great Picture Conversation



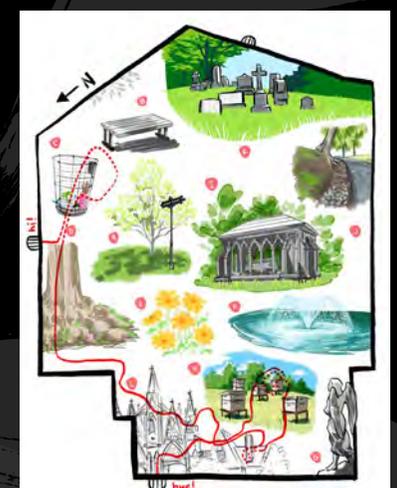
## Image and Context

Editorial



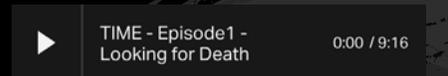
## Visual Research

Mapping Project



## Narrative Writing

Podcasts



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Still from Laura Brown's *Misbelief* project, *Guardian Angel*; Still from Morgan Sawyer's *Life Of/* project *The Betrayal*; still from online class of *The Game*; Image from Lixiaoyue Liu's *Great Picture Conversation* project; Spread from Tony Chao's Editorial project *Who Am I?*; Olivia Li's mapping project *A Place of Rest*; Podcast *Waiting for Death* by Laura Catherine Brown, Raiza Feroz Ahmed, Porad Gasan-Zade.

# Curriculum/ Sample Program

The MFA Visual Narrative is a flexible, low-residency program designed for working professionals and students of visual storytelling alike. Three on-site 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 and White and Narrative 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

SUMMER II	CREDITS
Bridging, Type, Image and Context	3
Form, Empathy and Character Play	3
Shaping Your Story	3
Visual Research	3
Picturing Your Story	3

FALL II (ONLINE)	CREDITS
Identity in a Digital World	0
Thesis and Mentor Review I	0
Thesis Studio I	6

SPRING II (ONLINE)	CREDITS
Selling Your Story	0
Thesis and Mentor Review II	0
Thesis Studio II	6

SUMMER III	CREDITS
Connecting Story to Audience	3
Presentation and Communication	3
Thesis Production	6
Professional Practice Seminar	0

“The most difficult thing as an artist-writer is to define a personal style and voice, something that someone else recognizes as ‘yours.’ MFA Visual Narrative encouraged me to explore and take chances in my work. Not to be the next Hemingway or Picasso, but the first Ryan Ansel.”

—Ryan Ansel '15



Anna Eveslage '15 was awarded a Minnesota State Arts Board Grant to create her thesis book project, *Eating Alone*, a collection of fictional vignettes and staged portraits.



**“I think the biggest lesson is that it’s okay to fail. In the end, all those extra drafts create a better story and more holistic piece of work.”**

—Liz Enright, '15



**“I like to make images and tell stories, but I also was drawn to design. I realized when I found out about this program that it was really narrative story that was at the heart of all that.”**

—Michelle Nahmad, '17



# RisoLAB Becomes a Hub for Creativity

The RisoLAB is an educational print lab dedicated to empowering self-publishing and production of Risograph-based printed works, accessible to all SVA departments. Chair Nathan Fox 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 and a critical thinking process to learn for any profession.”

As 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 center on campus, and a truly effective way to provide an accessible print-production education in a box.”

While the RisoLAB is available for 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 facilities, expanding their design and print skills.

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

See more at [risolab.sva.edu](http://risolab.sva.edu).

# Course Offerings

This is a sample of our recent course listings. For our full curriculum, please [click here](#).

## HISTORY OF VISUAL STORYTELLING

An overview of visual storytelling in graphic media, the course will examine the evolution of children's books, comics, photography and film as the departure point for different approaches to telling a story with words and pictures. A thorough history of these art forms and their various points of intersection will be given, from children's adventure books to comic strips and photojournalism to modernist approaches to storytelling, the underground revolution, contemporary photography and film.

## STORY VISUALIZED

Visual storytelling is a language. Advertising, video, cartoons, symbols, icons and typography transfer information at rates that we previously could not have imagined possible. Today's content crosses borders and time at the speed of thought—its meaning often altered by everyone who receives its signal. In this course, students will investigate the role of distribution, technology and media in creative content, as well as the significance of editing, design, format and context in narrative. They will consider the impact of business on their practice. Assignments include methods of adapting and creating fictional and nonfictional visual narratives from original and found texts. Students will deconstruct, reconfigure and critically analyze existing visual narratives such as films, video games, book covers, movie posters and graphic novels.

## FORM, EMPATHY AND CHARACTER PLAY

Character and narrative are symbiotic; 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 how their characters will behave in fictional settings, better enabling them to write and visualize their character creations.

## SHAPING YOUR STORY

What is the best way to research, develop and produce a particular story? How do you get to the root of what that story is about? These are the core creative questions this course will consider as students begin to develop their thesis idea. Students will be asked to dig deep and put the why of their story first, ahead of the visual or scripted end product. As they start tackling preproduction tasks (asking "why" and "how" every step of the way) students will analyze their chosen medium's strengths and weaknesses in the service of their story. Alongside story development, students will answer questions of scope, budget and other preproduction criteria in pursuit of an ambitious, but feasible, outcome. The ultimate goal is to present a carefully considered and professional thesis pitch wherein students will demonstrate a clear, focused understanding of their story and be poised to hit the ground running as they begin production in the following fall and spring thesis courses.

## VISUAL RESEARCH

This course focuses on the application of mapping and data visualization techniques for use in concept development and world-building. Students will identify locations connected to their existing story ideas and will investigate these locations using documentary media, data collection and other methods of site-specific research. Students will compile the materials they gather into visual archives and create analog and digital maps that describe their content. The work produced in this course will function both as a reference for the development of their thesis projects and as a means of communicating the spaces that their stories will inhabit, and the experiences their audiences will have navigating them.

## SELLING YOUR STORY

Selling your story means telling your story. The creative person's marketing plan can be simple, but it must weave a compelling tale that helps people understand what has been created. Through frank and personal one-on-ones, students will find the best promotional tools and processes. Students will develop and document their own promotional campaign in a thorough marketing plan that is intended to expand their audience and professional networks for both their thesis show and professional practice. Once completed, each student's marketing plan will be executed in the third summer semester—connecting their story to audience.

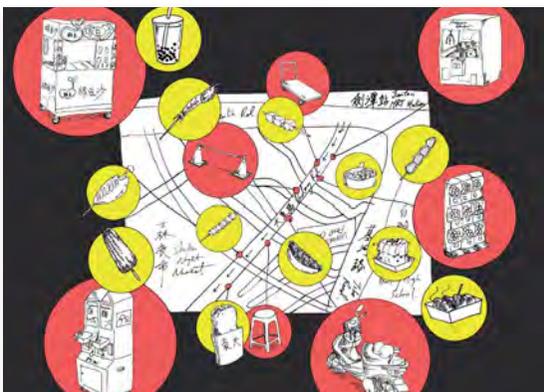
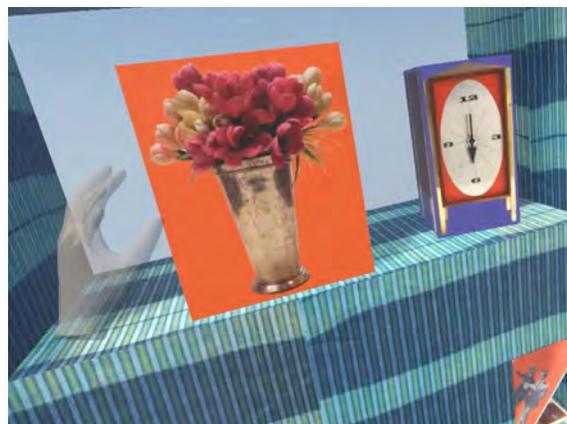
“Great visual storytellers challenge our notions of self and truth, engaging an audience to its core.”

—Nathan Fox, chair



**“When you get people together with this kind of talent in the world of story and the world of visual art, all kinds of magic can happen. And it does.”**

—Craig Coss '15



# Notable Alumni

**Louisa Bertman, '15**  
visual journalist, illustrator,  
animator, assistant professor  
Awards: Communication  
Arts, LUNAFEST  
Clients include: *The New  
York Times, The Wall Street  
Journal*  
[louisabertman.com](http://louisabertman.com)

**Ann Coddou, '15**  
designer, Fisher Price Toy Box  
Clients include: Nickelodeon,  
Disney, Target, Walmart,  
Toys"R"Us  
[anncoddou.com](http://anncoddou.com)  
[andorphin.tumblr.com](http://andorphin.tumblr.com)

**Melissa Malzkuhn, '15**  
founder and creative  
director, Motion Light Lab;  
digital innovation and  
media strategies manager,  
Science of Learning Center  
on Visual Language and  
Visual Learning, Gallaudet  
University; cofounder,  
producer, Ink & Salt  
Awards: 2018 Fellow,  
Obama Foundation  
[mezmalz.com](http://mezmalz.com)  
[motionlightlab.com](http://motionlightlab.com)

**Alison Paul, '15**  
author, *The Crow, Sunday  
Love*; illustrator; animator;  
assistant professor,  
Illustration and Animation,  
University of Connecticut  
[alisonpaulart.com](http://alisonpaulart.com)

**Feifei Ruan, '15**  
illustrator, comic book artist  
Awards: Promax Awards,  
Gold. Hiii Illustration  
International Competition,

Grand Prix. SOI: MoCCA  
Awards, Gold  
Clients include: Penguin  
Books, Harper Collins, Tor,  
BuzzFeed, Variety, BBC  
Studios, Mercedes-Benz  
[feifeiruan.com](http://feifeiruan.com)

**Alexandra Beguez, '16**  
illustrator, comic book artist  
Awards: Latin American  
Ilustración 6, Chosen Winner;  
3x3 Professional Show No. 14,  
Honorable Mention; General  
Scholarship, Fine Arts  
Work Center  
[alexandrabeguez.com](http://alexandrabeguez.com)

**Jon Bero, '16**  
Localization Motion Designer  
at Apple, overseeing  
animation production and  
design.  
[jonbero.com](http://jonbero.com)  
Twitter: @dizzymingo

**Andrea Schmitz, '16**  
animator, motion graphics  
designer, *Business Insider*  
Clients include: Vulture, The  
Cut, Jen Kwok  
Exhibitions: "Things Took a  
Turn" Animation Anthology,  
"Ladies in Mograph Girl Gang  
Gif Challenge," "School of  
Motion Holiday Card"  
[andreaschmitzzz.com](http://andreaschmitzzz.com)

**Thomas Slattery, '17**  
freelance writer/artist  
Clients include: Public Art  
Fund, Mary Kay and Benefit  
Cosmetics for Sarah Kehoe  
[tslattery.com](http://tslattery.com)

**Jenny Bee, '18**  
freelance animator, motion  
graphic designer  
Clients include: Google,  
Zagat, MTV2's *Joking Off*,  
Raphael Mostel, Frederator,  
Purchase College Design/  
Technology Showcase  
[jennybee.design](http://jennybee.design)

**Eva Hall, '20'**  
freelance animator, motion  
graphic designer  
Received the first Thesis  
Completion Grant from the  
Animators Educators Forum.  
Received an SVA Alumni  
Scholarship. Promoted to  
a full-time position at the  
Kansas City Art Institute as  
an Assistant Professor.

**Pilar Newton, '20'**  
freelance animator, motion  
graphic designer  
is now on the faculty here  
for BFA Animation, and  
has self-published a book,  
the *Snuzzlewinks*. She also  
served as a panelist for Black  
Girls Code on the topic of  
careers in animation.

PREVIOUS SPREAD: PREVIOUS  
SPREAD: (top row, from left) Martin  
Xing, Carol Silverman, Jenny Bee,  
Gabi Berkers; (second row) V. A.  
Doll, Carol Silverman, Eva Hall &  
Luz Rodriguez Dager, Jacquelyn  
Kirby; (third row) Michael Sheinkopf,  
Tony Chao, Eva Hall, Laura Brown;  
(last row) Perri Greely, Ian Gabriel,  
Dan Streety, Sarah Shaw, Martin  
Xing.

# Notable Thesis Mentors

Details on all our mentors can be found  
online at:

**Paul Briggs**  
head of story, Disney  
[pbcbstudios.tumblr.com](http://pbcbstudios.tumblr.com)

**Elinor Carucci**  
photographer  
[elinorcarucci.com](http://elinorcarucci.com)

**Bee Gradetti**  
director, designer, Illustrator,  
animator  
[beegrandinetti.com](http://beegrandinetti.com)

**Melanie Hoopes**  
storyteller  
[melaniehoopes.com](http://melaniehoopes.com)

**Joe Kelly**  
writer, filmmaker  
[manofaction.tv/profiles/  
joe-kelley](http://manofaction.tv/profiles/joe-kelley)

**Jeff Lemire**  
Cartoonist  
[imagecomics.com/creators/  
jeff-lemire](http://imagecomics.com/creators/jeff-lemire)

**Ross MacDonald**  
illustrator, prop designer  
[ross-macdonald.com](http://ross-macdonald.com)

**David Mazzucchelli**  
penciller, artist, inker

**Richard McGuire**  
illustrator, comic book artist,  
[richard-mcguire.com](http://richard-mcguire.com)

**Summer Pierre**  
cartoonist and writer  
[summerpierre.com](http://summerpierre.com)

**Julia Pott**  
animator  
[juliapott.com](http://juliapott.com)

**Martin Salisbury**  
Illustrator  
[aru.ac.uk/people/martin-  
salisbury](http://aru.ac.uk/people/martin-salisbury)

**Justin Thompson**  
production designer  
[shinypinkbottle.tumblr.com](http://shinypinkbottle.tumblr.com)

**Robbie Tilton**  
interactive VR design  
[robbietilton.com](http://robbietilton.com)

**Thu Tran**  
visual artist, writer, producer  
[thutran.com](http://thutran.com)

**Andrea Tsarumi**  
author, illustrator, cartoonist  
[andreatsarumi.com](http://andreatsarumi.com)

**Ru Xu EPK**  
comic artist & illustrator  
[ruemxu.com](http://ruemxu.com)

**Alexandra Zsigmond**  
art director, artist  
[zsigmonda.tumblr.com](http://zsigmonda.tumblr.com)

# Faculty

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).

**Anna Eveslage**  
Photographer & Writer

**Nathan Fox**  
chair, illustrator and comic book guy

**Anelisa Garfunkel**  
writer, director, producer

**Jennifer Goldstick**  
Artist, Narrative Designer

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

**Leonard S. Marcus**  
critic, writer, editor

**Stacy Renee Morrison**  
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

**Robert Thill**  
artist, author, independent scholar

**Diego Vainesman**  
design director, 4ON47 Design, Inc.

**Ben Zackheim**  
writer, producer



**If you come in with 100 percent energy, the faculty are going to come back with 200 percent, so there’s this never-ending ping-pong game of idea and idea and idea and idea.” —Mary Georgescu, ‘17**

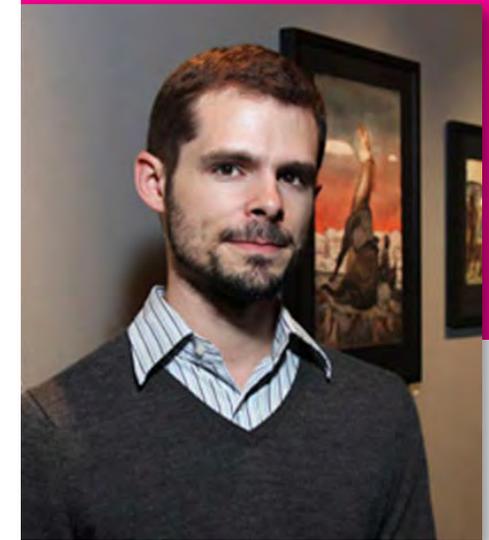


### MATT ROTA, FACULTY

Matt Rota is an Illustrator whose clients include The New York Times, The LA Times, The Criterion Collection, Columbia, Der Spiegel, NBC, Barron's, Variety, among others. He is the author of two books: The Art of ballpoint, and Pencil Arts Workshop, available from Rockport Press.

Matt's role as teacher includes teaching the fundamentals of working with standard industry tools. "A core set of skills [allows] our students to be highly adaptable to a field in which the technologies and interfaces that we experience stories through are constantly changing." This provides solid ground on which students and faculty can see a path forward. "Our program is focused on all of the different directions that story telling is moving, and is looking out beyond what's just happening now to see what new developments in technology will inform the future of storytelling."

Matt's been with the program since its inception. What impresses him the most about MFA Visual Narrative? "The community of artists enrolled in the program, photographers, animators, illustrators, filmmakers, novelists, screenwriters, and then some... [They] all come together to form one of the most diverse networks of creatives in any program that I'm familiar with."



[mattrotasart.com](http://mattrotasart.com)  
[instagram.com/matt.rota](https://www.instagram.com/matt.rota)  
[mattrotasartnews.tumblr.com](https://mattrotasartnews.tumblr.com)

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: *Global Warming*, *Russia Spying on Silicon Valley* from the *San Francisco Embassy* for Foreign Policy, *Charlottesville Will Move On* for *The New York Times*, *Breaking Up*, *Netflix's Innovative User Interface* for *Fast Company*.

## CHRISTINA ROUSSOS, FACULTY

Christina Roussos is a director and teaching artist. She has worked with EST's Youngblood, Caps Lock Theater, Theater Breaking Through Barriers (Associate Director 2009 - 2012), Clubbed Thumb (2017 Directing Fellow), and the New Georges Jam. Her work has appeared at the Kennedy Center, Rattlestick Theater Jam, the Brick, Judson Church, and on Norwegian radio.

In addition to teaching project building and character creation in the MFA Visual Narrative program, Christina guides students through their thesis year, along with Anelisa Garfunkel and the students' mentors. What role do mentors play in thesis year? "Anelisa and I are more focused on facilitating students through the process of their thesis and the Mentor serves as a kind of master teacher, providing both creative and professional feedback one-on-one." What has she noticed about the storytellers who pass through her courses?



"[Students are] a unique blend of driven and curious. Someone who has a voice and wants to use it, but is open to new ideas and methods."

[Christinaroussos.com](http://Christinaroussos.com)



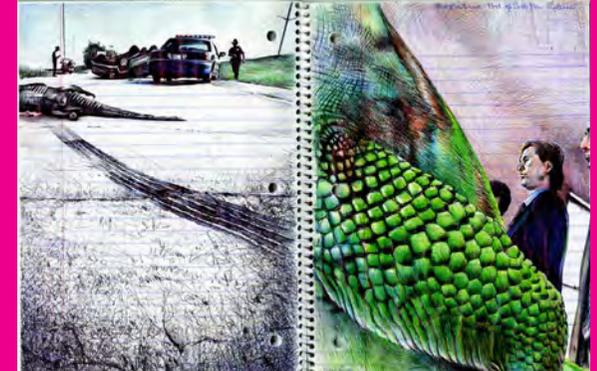
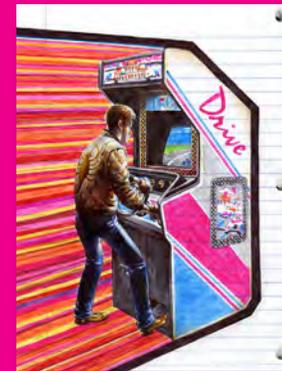
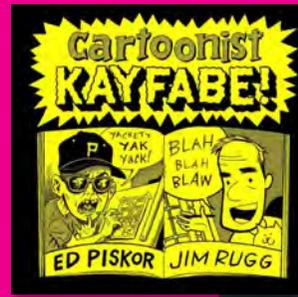
OPPOSITE BOTTOM: *I Will Be Gone* CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Selections from Christina's Directing Portfolio: *The Faith Exam*, Episode 28 of *Family Ghosts* podcast, *Fuente Ovejuna: A Disloyal Adaptation*, *Revolt. She Said. Revolt Again*, *Radium Now*, *Nectar*, *Bathsheba's Psalms*.

## JIM RUGG, FACULTY

Jim Rugg is a comic book artist, bookmaker, illustrator, designer, and cat dad. His books include *Street Angel*, the *PLAIN Janes*, *Afrodisiac*, *Notebook Drawings*, *Rambo 3.5*, and *Supermag*. Accolades include Eisner and Ignatz Awards and the AIGA 50/50. Jim's YouTube channel, *Cartoonist Kayfabe*, will make you love comics even more!

Jim's own love of comics has been a big part of his career. He studies the art form and is informed by creative decisions other storytellers reveal if you look closely enough. But that attention to craft doesn't stop and end with the masters. "Teaching in this program enables me to converse with a group of storytellers who have all seen things I've never seen, and all have practices and processes that are different from what I know. That is a formula for personal growth."

[jimrugg.com](http://jimrugg.com)



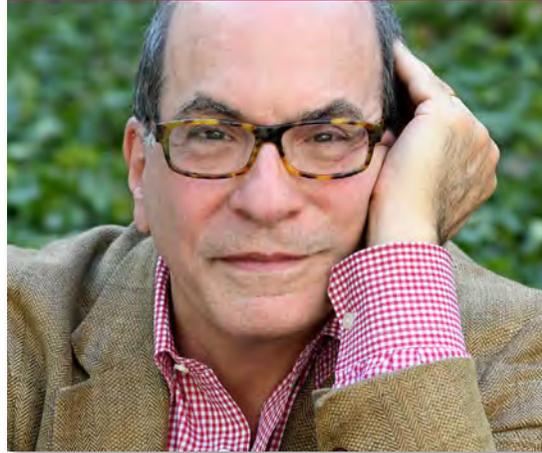
OPPOSITE: Selections from Jim's comic series, *Street Angel* ABOVE: Jim's Youtube show "Cartoonist Kayfabe" co-hosted with Ed Piskor about comics. Selections of Jim's ballpoint pen illustrations.

## LEONARD MARCUS, FACULTY

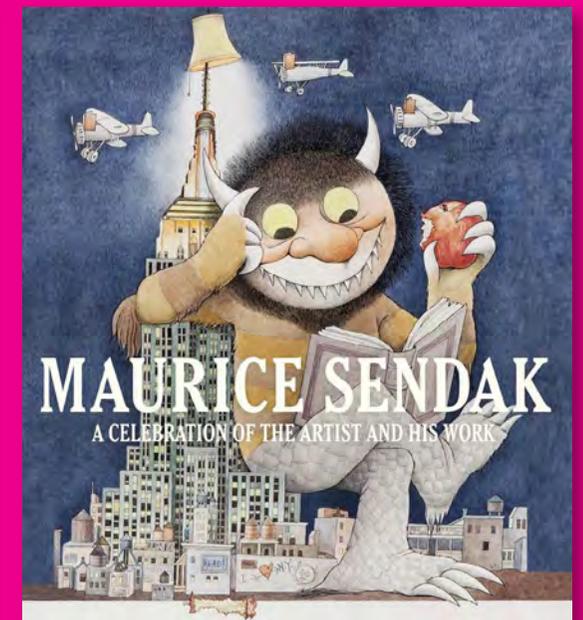
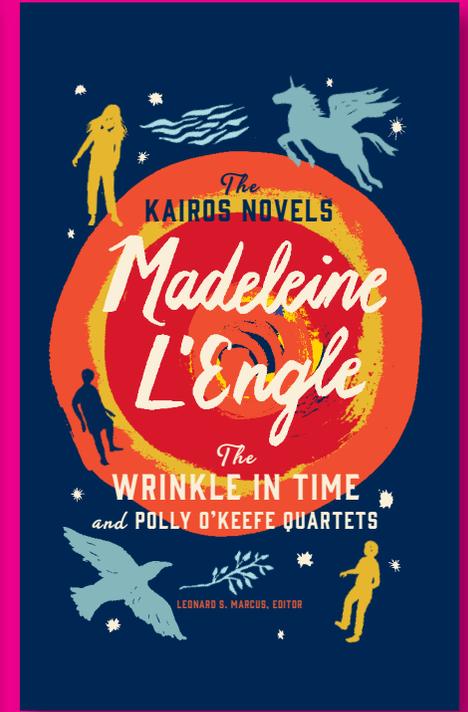
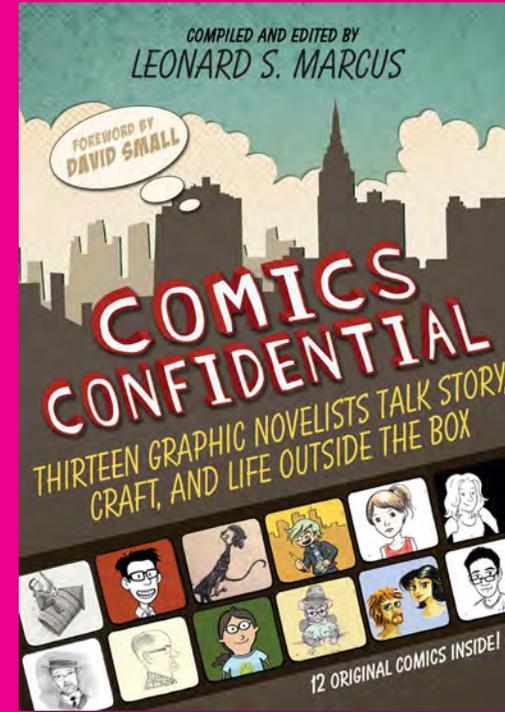
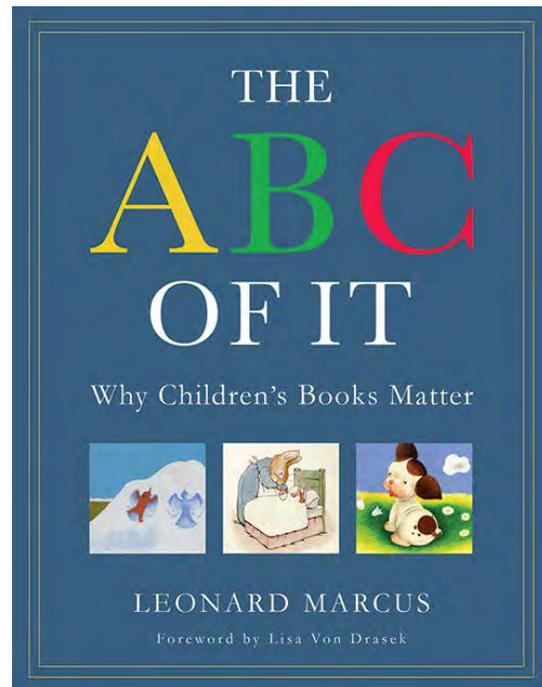
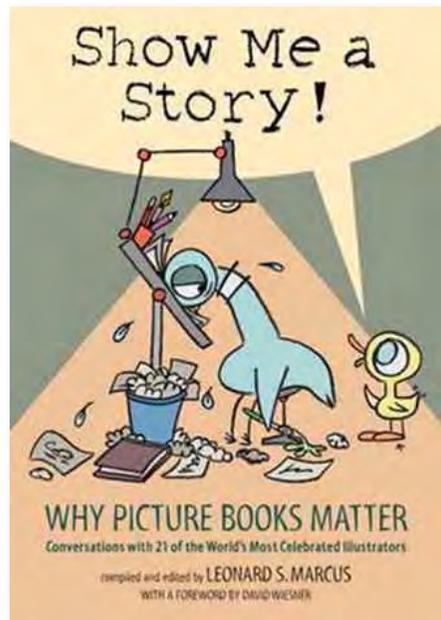
Leonard Marcus is an historian, author, and curator who's regarded as one of the world's preeminent authorities on children's books. His exhibit 'The ABC of It: Why Children's Books Matter' at the New York Public Library was their most successful ever. Leonard is a founding trustee of the Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art, and Editor at Large at Astra Publishing House.

The lessons hiding in the children's books genre as a whole are deceptively profound. "Any artist who is interested in the narrative possibilities inherent in visual art, children's book illustration, with its rigorous obligation to 'keep it simple,' offers an excellent opportunity for students to come to terms with the basic elements of visual storytelling," says Marcus.

Leonard has spotted a lot of talent in his class. "Their collective backlog of life experiences and art experiences adds immeasurably to the quality of our class discussions," Leonard says. "One inspiring development (still in the making) is a children's book by a former student that I hope to publish next year."



[leonardmarcus.com](http://leonardmarcus.com)



OPPOSITE: Cover of *Show Me a Story*, *The ABC of it*, Astra Publishing House CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: *Comics Confidential*, *The Kairos Novels*, *Maurice Sendak: A Celebration of the Artist and His Work*, *Margaret Wise Brown: Awakened By the Moon*.

**DIEGO VAINESMAN, FACULTY**

Diego Vainesman is an accomplished design director, whose work includes corporate identity, print typography, digital media, and large-scale events. His clients have included Starwood Hotels, Canon USA, and IBM.

Diego's role as teacher includes teaching the fundamentals of communicating through type design. His course, 'Type: Bridging Image and Context' is among the favorites in the program. It's also one of the most challenging. Students are challenged to craft a logo for themselves. "Using typography as an art, while maintaining the legibility and readability of the type, is new for most of the students. Some are very strong artists and some are very strong authors. By the end of the course the students come up with very exciting ideas and translate those ideas into their work."

Diego's excitement about teaching is clear. "I feel that every class is like a Netflix episode



that I love. I don't only enjoy it the day I'm teaching it, but I also look forward to the upcoming one."

[4On47design.com](http://4On47design.com)



OPPOSITE: Cover of Logo: The Face of Branding; ABOVE: Spreads from Logo: The Face of Branding, poster commemorating the 250th anniversary of Beethoven's birth, for Universidad Católica Boliviana (La Paz), Tarot Del Tango deck.

# Contact Us

We encourage potential students to visit our department and welcome exploratory conversation at any time. If you are a visual artist with the spirit of a storyteller, sign up for our newsletter, *The Storyteller's Bulletin* at [mfavn.sva.edu](http://mfavn.sva.edu). For questions about the application, 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**, manager of communications & special projects

**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)

## RISOLAB

 Facebook: [RisoLAB](https://facebook.com/RisoLAB)

 Twitter: [@RisoLAB](https://twitter.com/RisoLAB)

 Instagram: [@RisoLAB](https://instagram.com/RisoLAB)

## CONTINUING ED CLASSES

MFAVN offers a range of classes, currently including Risograph printing and graphics, and workshops in world-building and children's book publishing. Learn more:

[sva.edu/continuing-education/visual-narrative](http://sva.edu/continuing-education/visual-narrative).

 I felt like I found a home and people who thought about things in a similar way to me, but translated them so differently.” —Ella Romero, '17

# Application Process

## APPLICATIONS FOR JUNE 2020 START ARE OPEN!

Get your application in by January 15th and be considered first for entry and scholarships. Applications submitted after this date will be accepted on a rolling basis as space allows. See below for useful information on the process. For information on application deadlines, visit: [sva.edu/grad/timeline](http://sva.edu/grad/timeline)

## APPLICATION GUIDES

Your one stop shop for all you need to know about applying. Click to download which works best for you: [Application guide](#), [Application Guide for Educators](#).

## APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

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

- Online Application and \$80 Application Fee: [sva.edu/apply](http://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](http://sva.edu/grad/deptreq)

- Portfolio—accepted at [svagrad.slideroom.com](http://svagrad.slideroom.com)
- Visual Narrative and Creative Writing Assignments
- Interview
- Theme Essay

## IMPORTANT LINKS

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

## 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 Middle States Commission on Higher Education ([msche.org](http://msche.org)), 3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104, 267.284.5000. 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)), 206 Grandville Avenue, Suite 305, Grand Rapids, MI, 49503-4014.

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.

## CREDITS

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Case study photographer: Jose Alejandro Espailat

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# School of Visual Arts

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