



ARTIST you AUTHOR

MFA | VISUAL

NARRATIVE



Graduate Programs

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

About the Program

Whether you want to enhance your work through the power of story or take your professional skills to the next level, the MFA in Visual Narrative, one of SVA's newest graduate degrees, is designed to make you think Story First, and answer the increasing demand for great stories and storytellers.

A holistic approach, MFA Visual Narrative is a low-residency program that gives equal emphasis to creative writing and to visual art in all mediums. This merger of art and writing is a powerful tool that we think of as a whole new language. We call it Visual Writing. And our students are fluent. But fluent communication takes commitment and requires total immersion. It's intense, it's empowering and it gives new purpose to your creativity. You'll find that MFAVN is more than a graduate program; it's a new way of seeing the world—Story First.

A diverse group of carefully selected students spends three intensive summer residencies at SVA's NYC campus. Then, two fall and two spring semesters engage students in rigorous online course work—from anywhere in the world.

Small classes, taught by top professionals who understand the range of the competitive markets, provide an incubator for ideas, experimentation and play. The diversity of the class and of the community lends itself to

unexpected collaborations and off-the-charts creativity. One-on-one mentoring develops in-demand skills for producing films and animation, publishing original content, developing digital interactive media and winning loyal audiences in emerging industries where visual storytelling drives creative direction.

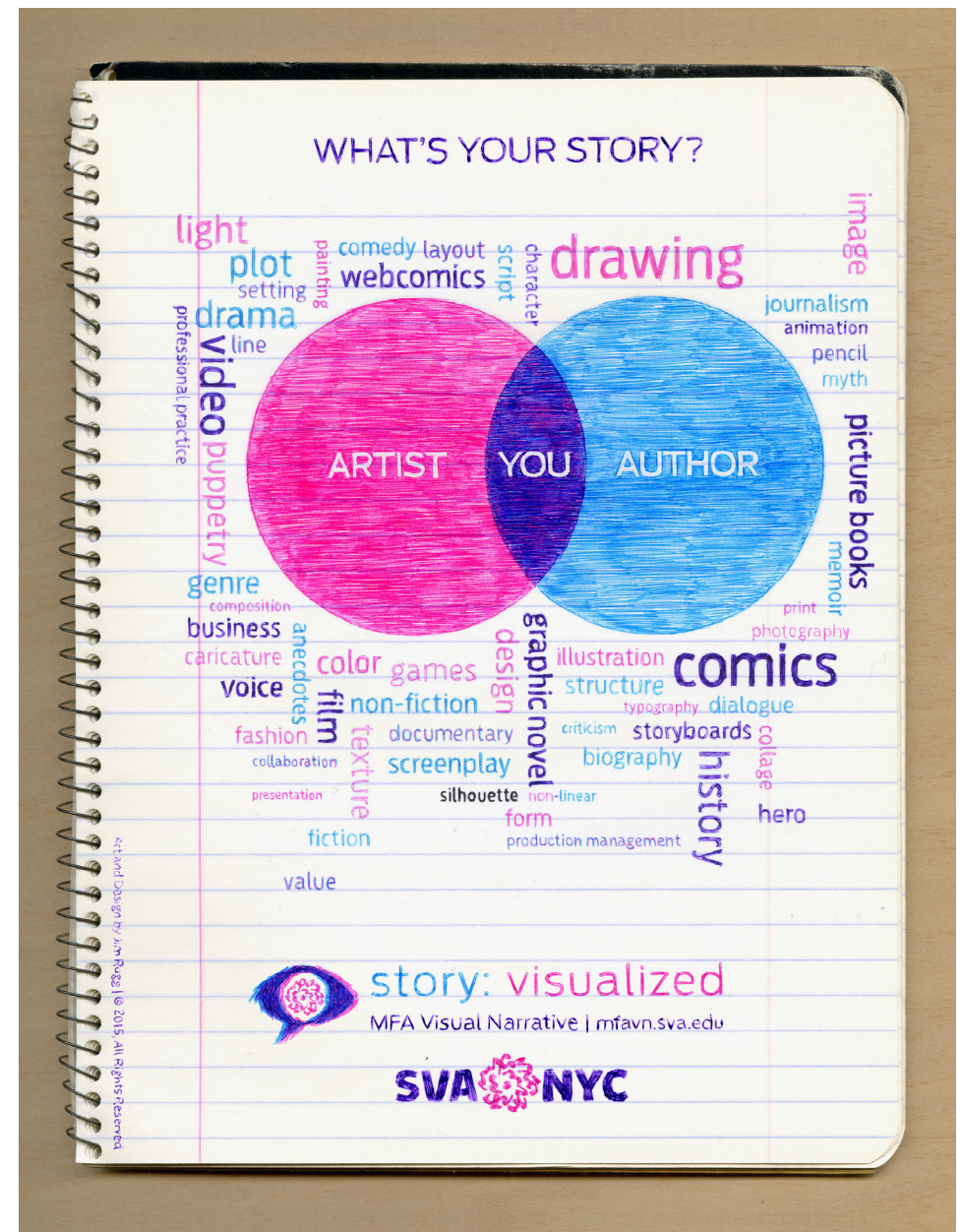
The MFA Visual Narrative program gives you the tools to craft your own stories and help others craft theirs.

WHO SHOULD APPLY

This program is designed for self-disciplined professionals, educators and students from all creative areas to explore what it means to put *Story First*. A bachelor's degree or equivalent is required in any subject. Applicants need to demonstrate proficiency in both creative writing and narrative art forms.

YOU'LL BE:

- Developing an understanding of what story is and how it functions most effectively when visual and written media merge, by sharpening your writing skills and integrating them into your creative process and professional practice;
- Creating original works as both author and artist within a supportive and transformative creative community, with visiting artists and mentoring by a top professional in your field;
- Connecting and collaborating with a professional network in NYC and beyond



Jim Rugg, faculty, *What's Your Story* poster.

- Preparing to compete in creative industries such as advertising, video, gaming, film, animation, sequential arts, illustration, design and more;
- Benefitting from scholarships and our rolling admissions policy.

CASE STUDIES

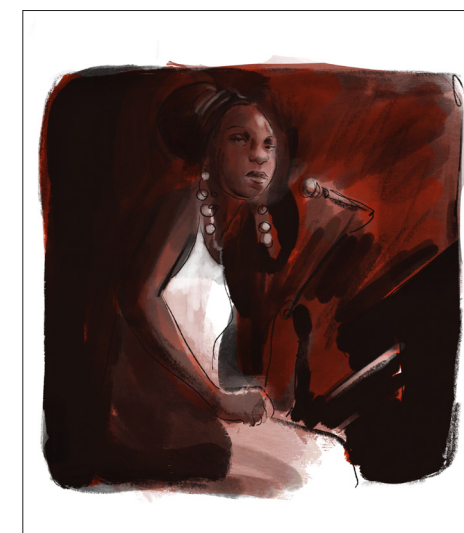
Eva Hall
Susanne Reece
Melissa Malzkuhn

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.

Before joining MFAVN, [Susanne Reece](#) ('20) 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."



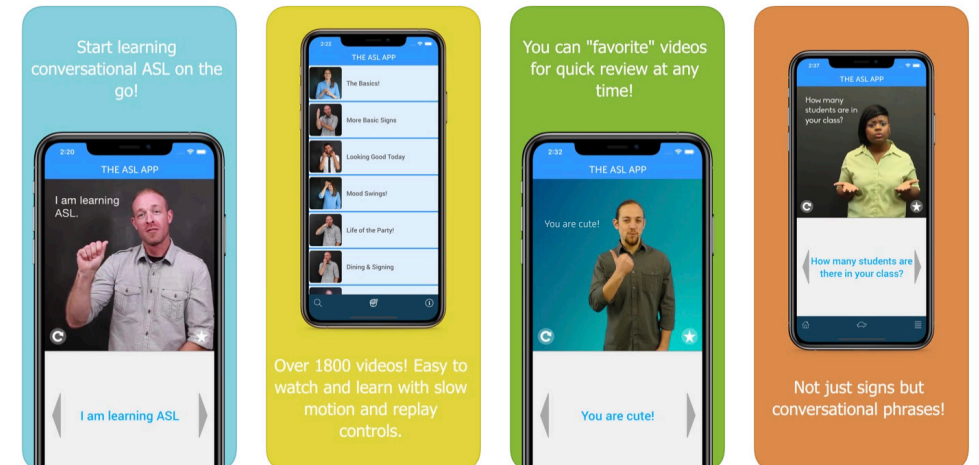
Eva Hall ('20) is an animator, filmmaker and artist who has long pushed the boundaries of visual storytelling. "I had always approached storytelling with an experimental lens, and found myself wanting to better study how to create complex and impactful stories that could allow me to connect with and 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."



Melissa Malzkuhn ('15) 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 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!"

In 2018, Melissa was appointed one of the first class of the 20 inaugural Obama Foundation fellows.. 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 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."



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. Candidates for the 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.

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
Picturing Your Story	0
Visual Research	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
Professional Practice	0
Thesis Production	6

“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.



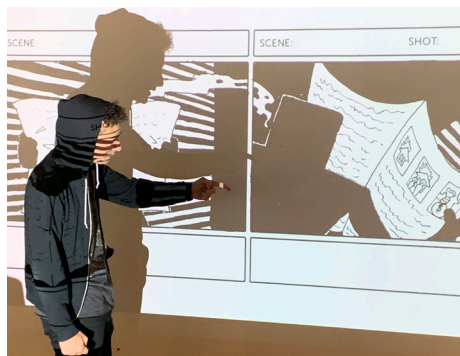
“I like to make images and tell stories, but I also was drawn to design. I realized when I found out about this program that it was really narrative story that was at the heart of all that.”

—Michelle Nahmad, '17



“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



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.

Course Offerings

This is a sample of our recent course listings. For our full curriculum, please visit: sva.edu/mfavn/curriculum.

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.

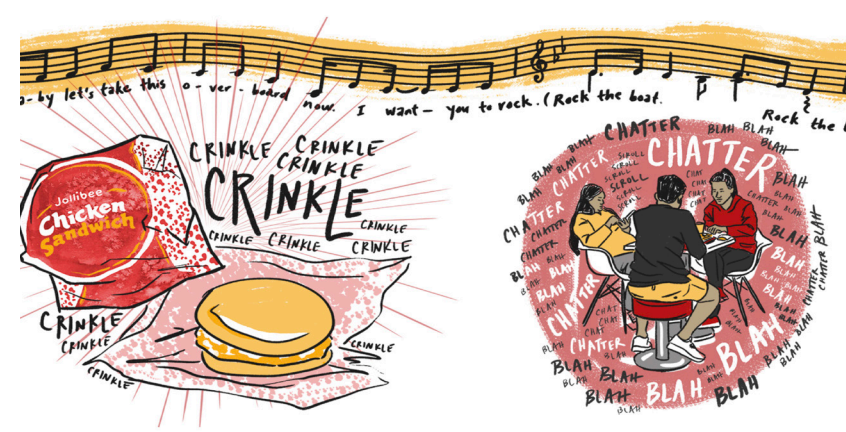
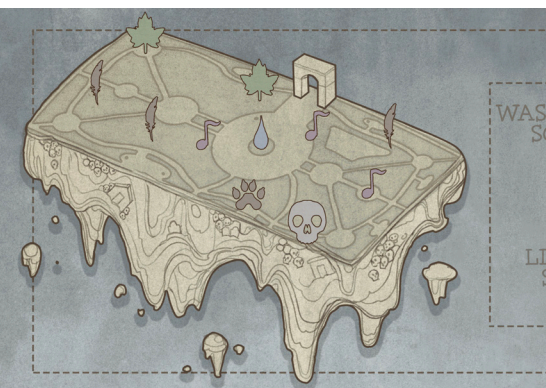
“Great visual storytellers challenge our notions of self and truth, engaging an audience to its core.”

—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

Ann Coddou, '15
designer, Fisher Price Toy Box
Clients include: Nickelodeon,
Disney, Target, Walmart,
Toys"R"Us
anncoddou.com
annorphin.tumblr.com

Craig Coss, '15
Painter; educator; illustrator,
Game of Thrones Tarot,
The Goddess Coloring Book
Clients include:
Chronicle Books, HBO,
Williams-Sonoma
craigcoss.com

Jenny Goldstick, '15
IndieCade 2016
Official Nominee
Selected exhibitions:
Wordplay Festival,
ComicsxGames at TCAF,
Babycastles
design.jennygoldstick.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
motionlightlab.com

Alison Paul, '15
author, *The Crow*, *Sunday
Love*; illustrator; animator;
assistant professor,
Illustration and Animation,
University of Connecticut
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

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

Jon Bero, '16
creative, Apple; live demos,
community outreach,
mentoring, internal digital
content creation,
Today at Apple
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

Thomas Slattery, '17
freelance writer/artist
Clients include: Public Art
Fund, Mary Kay and Benefit
Cosmetics for Sarah Kehoe
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

Gabi Berkers, '19
freelance illustrator, designer
*Ode to Orléans (Op Weg Naar
Orleans)*, Uitgeverij Synd-
ikaat, May 2020.
Instagram & Twitter:
[@gabiberkers](https://twitter.com/gabiberkers)

PREVIOUS SPREAD: (top row, from
left) Martin Xing, Carol Silverman,
A.M. Sartor, Mike Sheinkopf; (second
row) Thomas Slattery, Jenny Bee, Gabi
Berkers, Jacquelyn Kirby; (third row)
A.M. Sartor, Jie Ren, Alana Corwin,
Carol Silverman; (last row) Feifei Ruan,
Eva Hall, Eva Hall, Sarah Shaw

Notable Thesis Mentors

Details on all our mentors can be found online at:
mfavn.sva.edu/people/mentors.

John Benton
artist, storyteller, emerging
media, VR/AR
johnbenton.tv

Paul Briggs
head of story, Disney
pbcbstudios.tumblr.com

Elinor Carucci
photographer
elinorcarucci.com

Clara Fernández-Vara
game scholar, designer, writer
vagrantcursor.wordpress.com

Samantha Gorman
writer, artist
samanthagorman.net

David Mazzucchelli
penciller, artist, inker

Richard McGuire
illustrator, graphic designer,
comic book artist, animator,
children's book author,
musician, toy designer
richard-mcguire.com

Julia Pott
animator
juliapott.com

Justin Thompson
production designer
shinypinkbottle.tumblr.com

Robbie Tilton
interactive virtual
reality design
robbietilton.com

Sarah Varon
illustrator, children's book
author
chickenopolis.com

Alexandra Zsigmond
art director, artist
zsigmonda.tumblr.com

Faculty

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

Nathan Fox
chair, illustrator and
comic book guy

Anna Eveslage
photographer

Anelisa Garfunkel
writer, director, producer

Jenny Goldstick
visual artist, narrative
designer, infographics

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,
40N47 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

Application Process

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

For a full list of application requirements and detailed instructions, visit: sva.edu/grad/howtoapply

- Online Application and \$80 Application Fee: sva.edu/apply

DEADLINES

For information on application deadlines, visit: sva.edu/grad/timeline

IMPORTANT LINKS

- FAQ: sva.edu/grad/faq
- International students: sva.edu/grad/intl
- Tuition and fees: sva.edu/tuition
- Visit SVA: sva.edu/grad/visit

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 at mfavn.sva.edu. For questions about the application, contact Graduate Admissions at 212.592.2107 or email gradadmissions@sva.edu.

Nathan Fox, chair

Joan McCabe, director of operations

Lucea Spinelli, manager of communications and special projects

Tel: 212.592.2388

Email: mfavn@sva.edu

Site: sva.edu/mfavn

Department site: mfavn.sva.edu


 facebook.com/MFAVisualNarrative


 instagram.com/mfavn

 twitter.com/mfavn

RISOLAB

 Facebook: RisoLAB

 Twitter: @RisoLAB

 Instagram: @RisoLAB

CONTINUING ED CLASSES

MFAVN offers a range of classes, currently including Riso-graph printing and graphics and aspects of narrative design and visualization. Learn more: sva.edu/ce.

“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

ACCREDITATION

The School of Visual Arts has been authorized by the New York State Board of Regents (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 programs in Art Education; 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 programs in Art Therapy; Branding; Digital Photography; Directing; Fashion Photography.

The School of Visual Arts is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (msche.org), 3624 Market Street, Suite 2 West, 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 for 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).

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), 206 Grandville Avenue, Suite 350, Grand Rapids, MI 49503-4014.

The School of Visual Arts' Department of Art Education is currently pursuing accreditation of its educator preparation programs by the Association for Advancing Quality in Educator Preparation (AAQEP).

Pursuant to Section 52.21 of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education, the educator preparation program offered by the School of Visual Arts is considered to be continuously accredited for purposes of meeting the New York State requirement that all such programs maintain continuous accreditation. The School of Visual Arts' Master of Arts in Teaching in Art Education program was previously 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

© 2020, Visual Arts Press, Ltd.

Executive creative director:

Anthony P. Rhodes

Creative director: Gail Anderson

Design director: Brian E. Smith

Design: Anthony Carhuayo

Editorial: Sheilah Ledwidge, Abby Kreh

Case study writer: John P. Kazior

The School of Visual Arts does not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, color, creed, disability, age, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin or other legally protected statuses.

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.

School of Visual Arts

209 East 23rd Street, NYC
sva.edu/grad