



MFA

Visual Narrative

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 of 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



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 the MFAVN is more than a graduate program; it's a new way of seeing the world. Story First.

A diverse group of carefully curated 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.

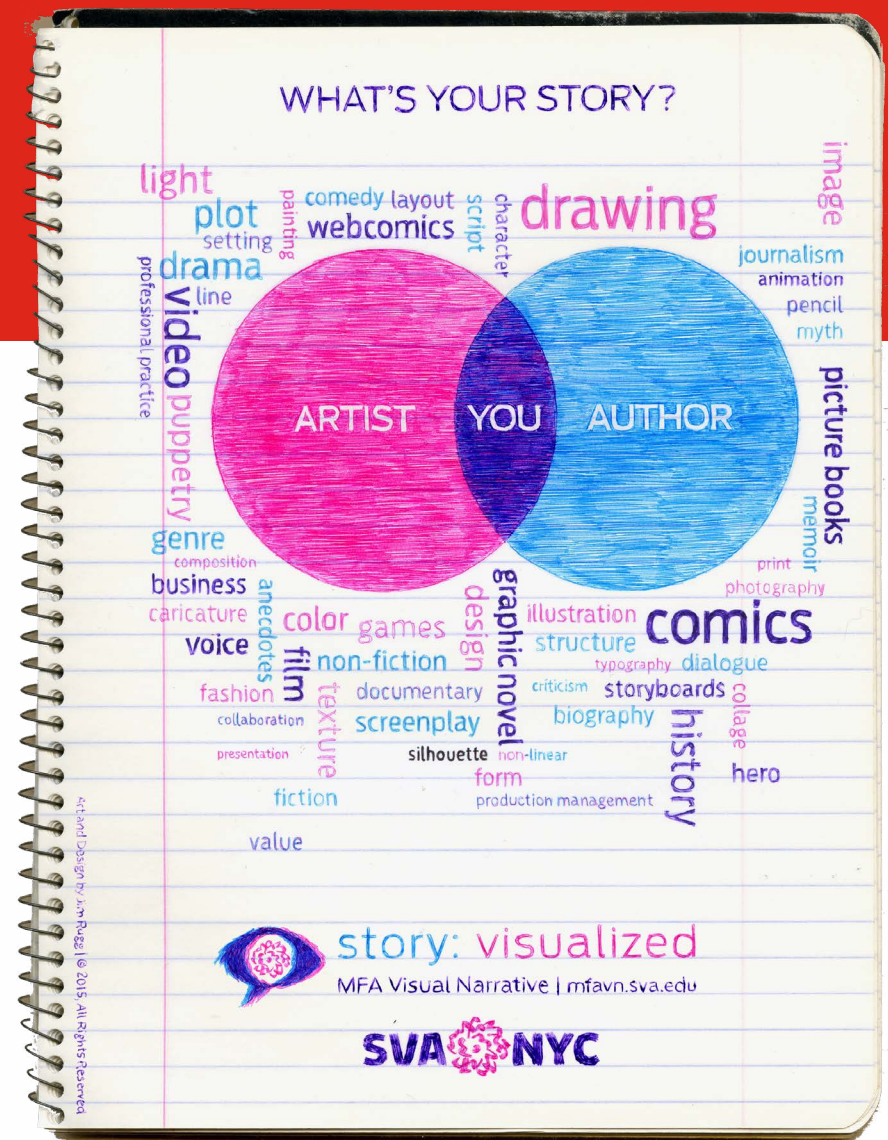
The MFA Visual Narrative program gives you the tools to craft your own stories and help others craft theirs.

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 WILL:

- Develop 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
- Create 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
- Connect and collaborate with a professional network in NYC and beyond



- Prepare to compete in creative industries such as advertising, video, gaming, film, animation, sequential arts, illustration, design and more
- Benefit from scholarships, housing grants and our rolling admissions policy.

ABOVE: [Jim Rugg](#), faculty, What's Your Story poster.

Looking to Tell Their Stories: Students on Why They Chose MFAVN

CASE STUDIES

Jennifer Brent
Melissa Malzkuhn
Alison Paul
Feifei Ruan
Thomas Slattery
Andrea Schmitz

MFAVN students come from different backgrounds with diverse skill sets, but what usually unites them is a passion for storytelling and a talent for visual arts. Some of the students we spoke to used their time at MFAVN to pursue a new medium for storytelling. Alison Paul, an illustrator, made a stop-motion video for her thesis. Thomas Slattery, a cartoonist, created a video game. And Jennifer Brent, a motion graphics designer, turned to live-action film, among others.

ALISON PAUL, CLASS OF 2015

In addition to freelance work, artist Alison Paul teaches illustration at the University of Connecticut. When she discovered the MFAVN program, she says, "It was literally a dream come true." She had always been interested in writing, and minored in English as an undergrad. "I was looking for opportunities to merge

the two things together," she explains. "So when I saw this program at SVA, it felt like it was made for me."

Alison explored a new medium for her thesis, creating a stop-motion animation called [Equinox](#). "Stop-motion is more of a labor of love for me, a personal project, not work," she explains. "I really enjoyed having the time for myself, not

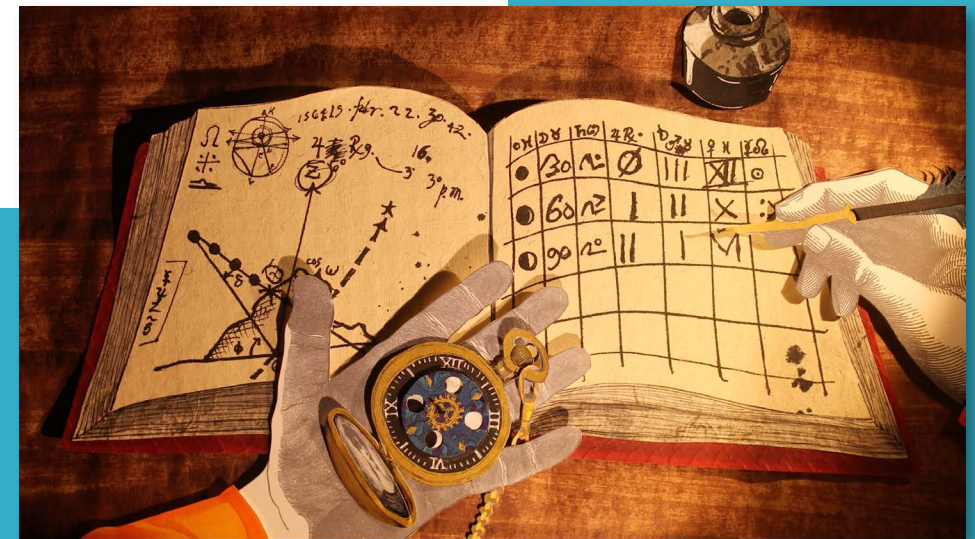
for a client." Since graduation, she has continued her work on that project, re-recording sound and reediting for film festival submissions.

Alison also wrote and illustrated two children's books, [The Crow](#) and [Sunday Love](#), for Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

alisonpaulart.com

alisonpaulart.blogspot.com

RIGHT AND DIRECTLY BELOW: Stills and material used in Alison's thesis project. BOTTOM: Alison holds two children's books she wrote and illustrated.





JENNIFER BRENT, CLASS OF 2018

Jennifer Brent—or Jenny Bee—has been freelancing for clients like MTV and Google, mainly doing motion graphics. “I always wanted to do cartooning and animation work. I’m very story-brained,” she says. “So with my clients, I’m often thinking, How can I tell a story?” That passion for storytelling made her think about going back to school.

“I had initially been a double major in writing and art in college,” she says. “So this program combined both of my favorite things.” “The program starts in the summer and you meet your classmates. Classes are nine to five and it’s intense, a big story pressure cooker,” she says. “We keep in touch during the year. Those of us who are New York–based try to meet once a week for lunch and discuss our stories. I keep in touch with the international students via Skype.” For her thesis, she branched into live action, writing and directing a film called [Negative Space](#). “It’s a mockumentary,” she said.

jennybee.design
vimeo.com/jennybeedesign

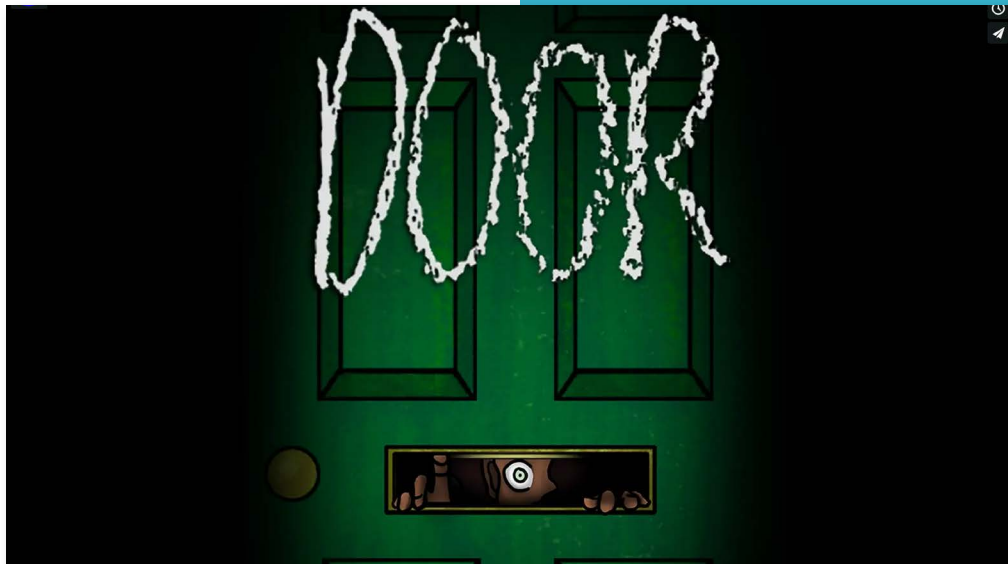


CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Jenny’s thesis project “[Negative Space](#)”, [animated sequences](#) for Zagat’s Youtube channel, a video game novelette she created for her [Digital Short Story](#) project “[Equivoque](#)”

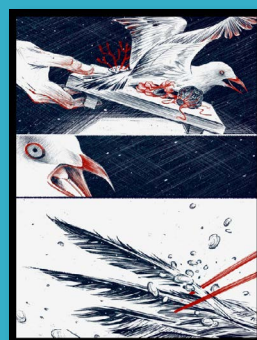
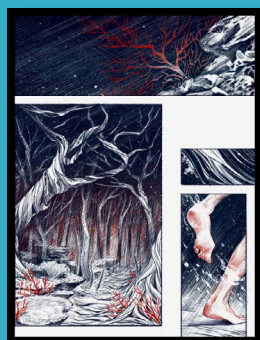
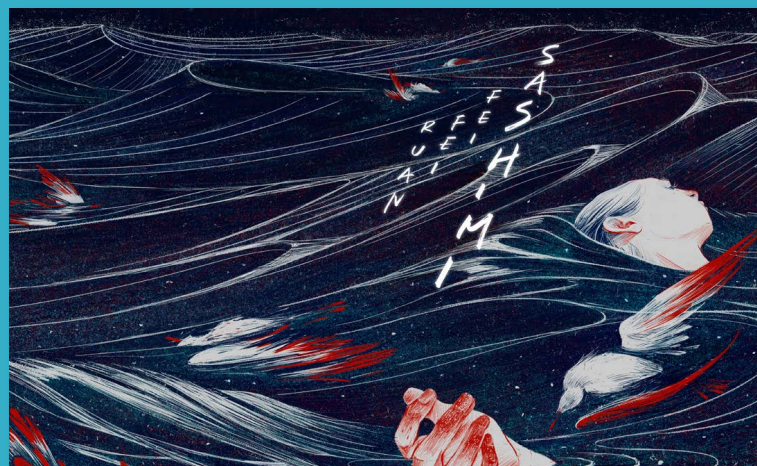
ANDREA SCHMITZ, CLASS OF 2016

Andrea Schmitz is a motion graphics designer and short-form animation director from Little Rock, Arkansas, currently working in NYC. Her path took her straight through MFAVN, which shows how the low-residency format can help students find their voice. "Throughout the program, I moved to two new cities, got my first job as a graphic artist, made friends in other professions, learned new skills, and made three animated shorts using different techniques and styles. By the time I graduated I was confident enough in my own skills to both get jobs, and perform them well once I had them." A storyteller at heart, Andrea has four short animations to her name and more projects in the works. She has created work for brands such as Vulture, The Cut, and Science Insider, and is the creator and host of the annual animation anthology "[Things Took a Turn](#)," in which female, trans, and non-binary animators adapt familiar stories with a twist.

andreaschmitzzz.com
vimeo.com/andreaschmitz
instagram.com/andreaschmitzz/
[@andreaschmitzz](https://twitter.com/andreaschmitzz)



OPPOSITE PAGE: Andrea Schmitz's thesis project, [The Door](#), 2016. ABOVE TOP: Posters for "[Things Took a Turn](#)", the animation anthology Andrea started which features work from trans, non-binary, and female animators. ABOVE BOTTOM: Selections from Andrea's work for New York Magazine's "[The Cut](#)".

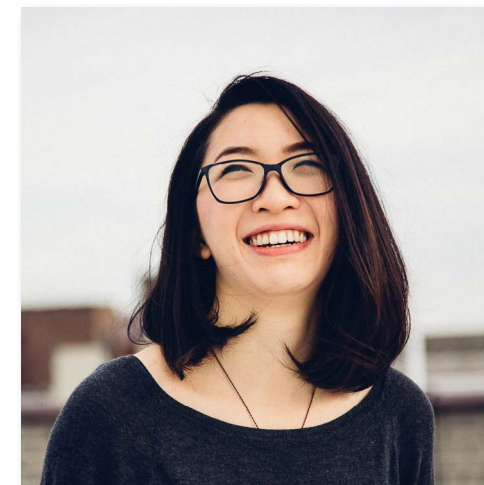


FEI FEI RUAN, CLASS OF 2015

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, AOI, Spectrum, 3x3 and The Library of Congress. 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 Penguin Books, Harper Collins, Albert Whitman & Co, Boom!Studios, BuzzFeed News, Tor, Variety, ElleMen, Wissen, Modern Weekly, Nautilus, The JimHenson Co, Illumicrate, School of Visual Arts, HCB Health, R/GA, SMG Pictures, BBC Studios, Vanke, Mercedes-Benz, and Fendi Baguette.

[Feifeiruan.com](#)
[Behance.net/feifeiruan](#)
[instagram.com/ruan0v0/](#)



OPPOSITE TOP: Advertisement for [Mercedes-Benz](#), E-class. Featured in Modern Weekly, 1000th issue. OPPOSITE BOTTOM: Selections from Feifei's thesis project, [Sashimi](#). TOP: [Poster Series](#) for BBC's [Dr. Who](#). Still from animated shorts: [The Shape of Despair](#).

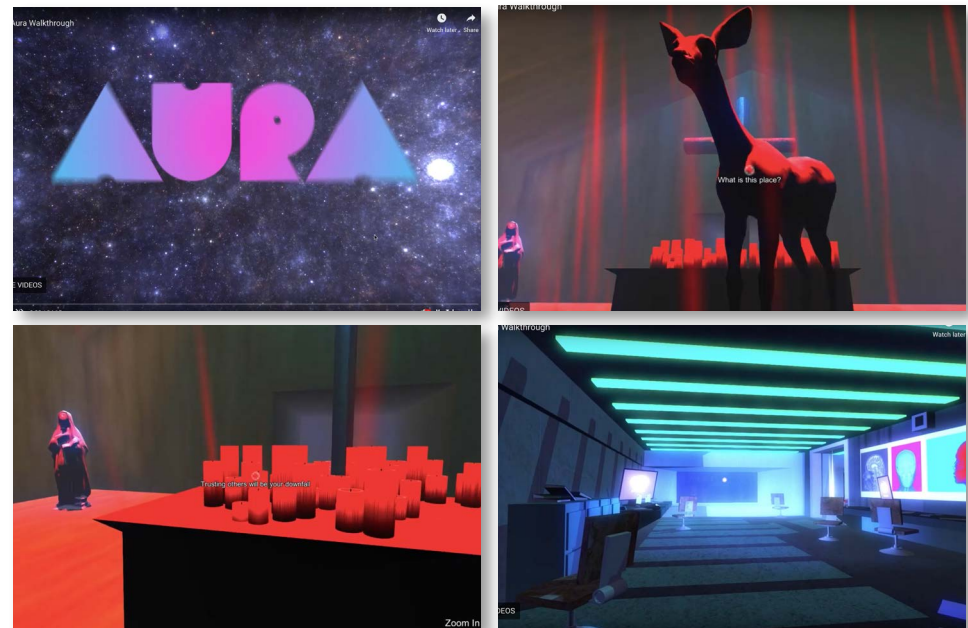
THOMAS SLATTERY, CLASS OF 2017

Thomas Slattery earned his undergraduate degree from SVA in cartooning. After college, he freelanced, doing storyboarding and set dressing. He wanted to return to school however. "I really wanted to tell my own stories," he says. "I came back wanting to focus on writing." For his thesis he created a video game called "Aura." What does writing have to do with creating a video game? "The game is narrative-based," he explains. "I figured out the story first and then worked backward to create the game." His experience with set dressing was good training. "Because it uses environmental storytelling," he says.

Since graduating from the MFAVN program, he has continued freelancing, working for television and film. "I have been shifting my focus to screenwriting, which was a surprise to me," he says. "MFAVN is an intimate and young program. The students are all really involved. I'm still in touch with everyone. It's a great support group. We all do different media, but it all comes from a narrative place."



tslattery.com
psychickids.tumblr.com
instagram.com/tetsuobulletman



OPPOSITE TOP: Thomas Slattery in his studio. OPPOSITE BOTTOM: Sample of Thomas' illustration work. ABOVE TOP: Still from Thomas' [Black, White & 1 Color](#) project, "[Appendage](#)" ABOVE BOTTOM: His [thesis](#) project [Aura](#), an immersive VR gaming experience using user-driven storytelling.

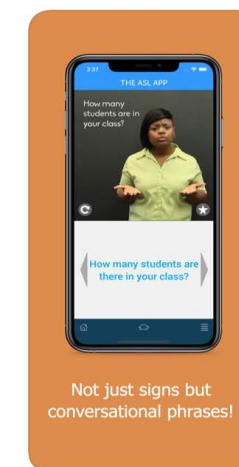
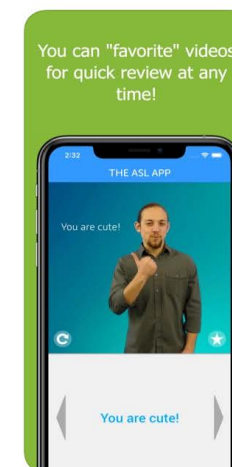
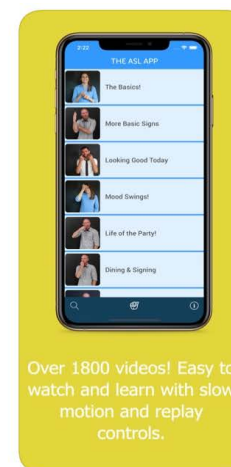
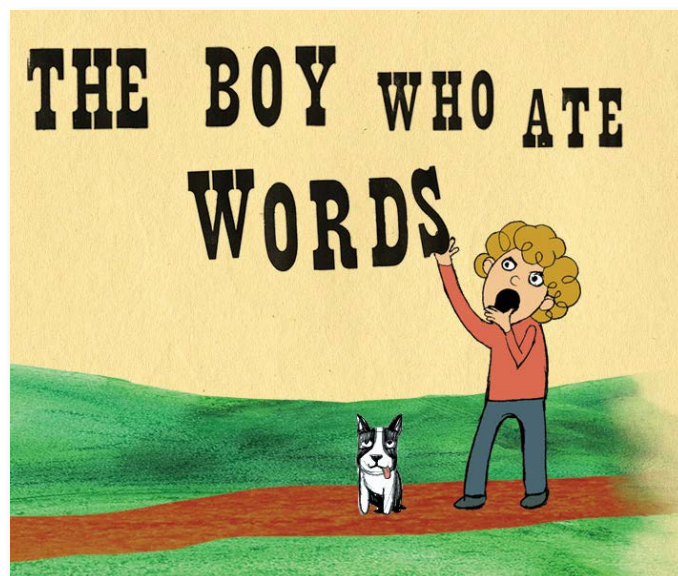
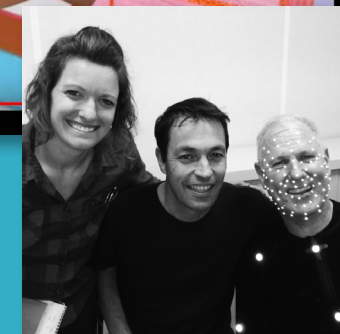
MELISSA MALZKUHN, CLASS OF 2015

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!"

In 2018, Melissa was appointed one of the first class of twenty [Obama Fellows by the Obama Foundation](#). 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."



mezmazl.com
motionlightlab.com
[instagram.com/tosignishuman/](https://www.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 Three Animals](#)", an ASL nursery rhyme project produced by [Motion Light Lab](#), [The ASL App](#).

DSS

DIGITAL SHORT STORY

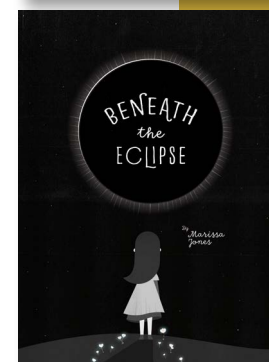
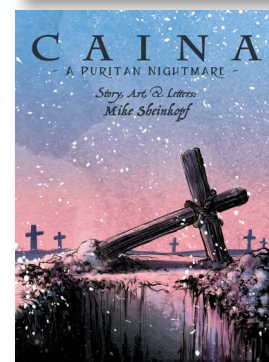
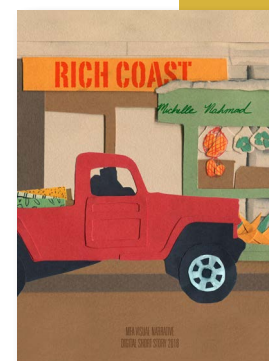
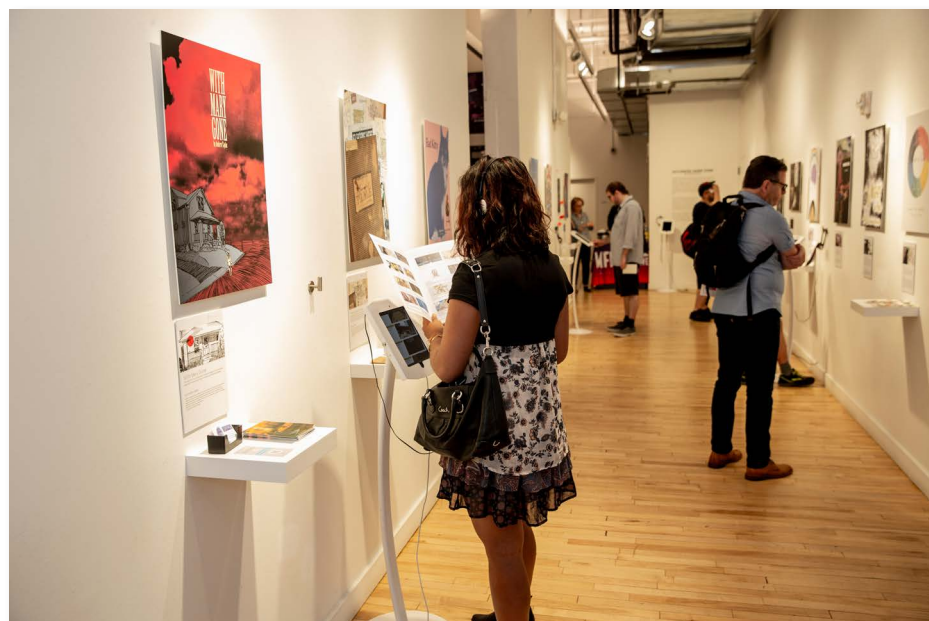
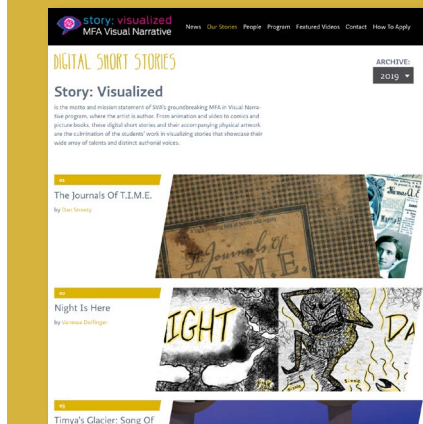
SMALL BYTES, BIG FICTION

DIGITAL SHORT STORY

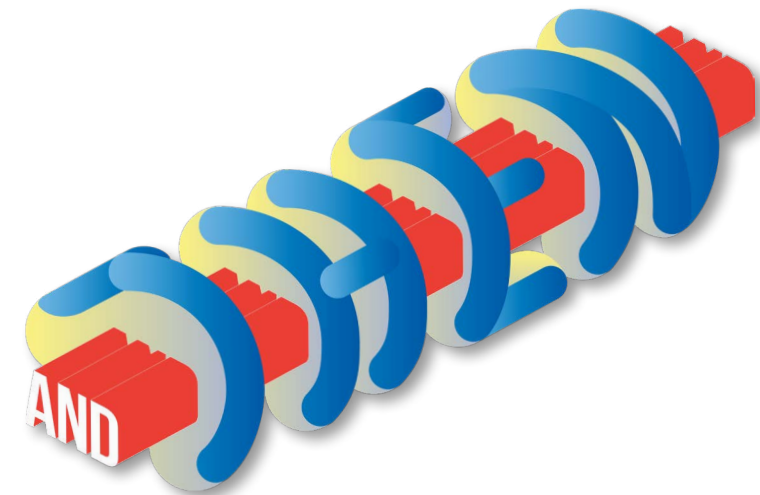
Faculty [Jim Rugg](#) and [Mark Sable](#) curate an annual show of student work, titled 'Digital Short Story'. "Students are tasked with creating a short story on a screen in 15 weeks - from concept to finished, exhibited piece," Rugg says. It's an aggressive project, but the heavy load has a lesson. "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.

Visit these projects here!
mfavisualnarrative.sva.edu/dss/2019/



OPPOSITE: DSS Logo, [DSS online exhibit](#), visitors at the 2019 DSS show. ABOVE: Visitors at the 2017 DSS exhibit, Selected projects clockwise from top left: [Beatrice](#), by Freya von Mizener '18; [Rich Coast](#), by Michelle Nahmad, '16; [Train Man](#), by Alex Barsky, '18; [The Weathering](#), by Eva Hall, '20; [Beneath the Eclipse](#), by Marissa Jones, '20; [Caina](#), by Mike Sheinkopf, '20

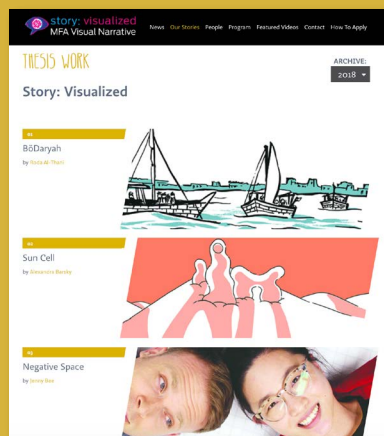


AND THEN ... THESIS

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."

The MFA thesis is a special kind of animal. It can be a personal and transformative experience.

That transformation runs deep through each story, whether it be the coming-of-age of a twenty-something Orthodox Jew, the [later-in-life awakening of middle-aged artist](#), or a young K-pop star's struggle to adapt to the afterlife. Each year, these thesis projects are the culmination of two years and eight weeks of exploration and discovery - an educational and creative journey that challenges each student to experiment and push their own boundaries as artists and authors - true visual storytellers.



The final phase of the thesis project is an installation showcasing the student's story project. Here are some select installations - click on them to discover their story!



OPPOSITE TOP: Logo for And Then thesis exhibit designed by Rachel Shim; click on the [Thesis Project Page](#) online to see more!; Image from thesis exhibit, 2019. ABOVE CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT: Thesis Installation for "Untitled Intimacy Project" by Shannon O'Halloran, 18'; "Landfall" by Christina Mattison Ebert, 17'; "Ode to Orleans" by Gabi Berkers, 19'; "Failed State" by Ana Lozada Diaz, 19'; "The New Barn" by Walter Tyler, 17'; "Orchid Labyrinth" by Freya von Mizener, 19'; "Bruja" by Michelle Nahmad, 17'.

A Hub for the Risograph Community at SVA

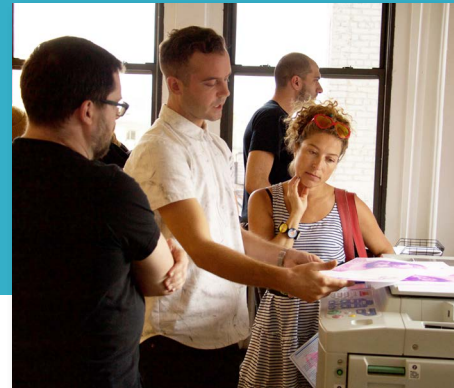
The [RisoLAB](#) is an educational print lab dedicated to empowering self-publishing and production of Risograph-based printed works, accessible to the entire SVA community. Nathan Fox, chair of the MFA Visual Narrative program, explains why he launched the Lab. "For a story-focused interdisciplinary 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 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

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."



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

“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](#)

SPRING I (ONLINE)	CREDITS
Digital Short Story	6
Lecture Series II	0
SUMMER II	CREDITS
Bridging Image and Context	3
Form, Empathy and Character Play	3
Shaping Your Story	3
Visual Research	3
Picturing Your Story	0
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 and Professional Practice	6



[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, '17



"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

Course Offerings

Candidates for the MFA 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.

BLACK, WHITE AND NARRATIVE COLOR

Beyond format and medium, how do the images and visual content we use really function in the stories we create? And why does an audience care, empathize or immerse themselves with some stories or images, over others? What are the fundamental elements required to communicate specific content effectively and how do our choices as visual story designers inform how successful our stories are constructed and received? Are there rules to visual storytelling and if so, how do we know if or when they can be manipulated or broken? This course aims to help students challenge and examine these questions in their own work and explore the fundamental building blocks of visual composition, communication and storytelling through a limited and focused palette. Through collaboration and rapid prototyping, students will be given a series of visual story explorations that are intended to disrupt and chal-

lenge their assumptions and current working methods, going beyond visual problem-solving by asking students to dig deeper. Students will discover how informed story-first decisions can truly elevate their visual narrative art and personal voice - as both author and artist.

HISTORY OF VISUAL STORYTELLING

This 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.

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 the course will function as a reference for the development of thesis projects and as a means of communicating the spaces that these stories will inhabit, and the experiences their audiences will have while navigating them.

SHAPING YOUR STORY

What is the best way to actually 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 and professional questions this course will ask of each student as they 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 pre-production 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 be asked to answer questions of scope, budget, and other pre-production criteria in pursuit of an ambitious, but feasible, outcome. The ultimate goal is to present a carefully considered and professional thesis pitch at the end of the class 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 studio courses online.

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 their how their characters will behave in fictional settings, better enabling them to write and visualize their character creations.

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 drives 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.

SELLING YOUR STORY

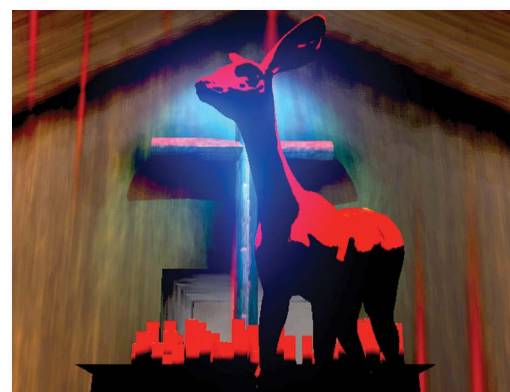
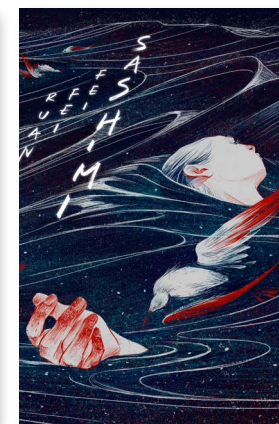
Selling your story means telling your story. The creative person's marketing plan can be simple, but it must weave a compelling tale that helps people understand what has been created. Through frank and personal process one-on-ones, students will find the best promotional tools and processes. Students 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 in this course, each student's marketing plan will be executed in the third summer semester—connecting their story to their 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

Ann Coddou, '15

designer, Fisher Price Toy Box
Clients include: Nickelodeon,
Disney, Target, Walmart,
Toys R Us
anncoddou.com
anndorphin.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

2018 Fellow, Obama
Foundation, 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:
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: Hiii Illustration
International Competition,
Grand Prix Award, SOL:
MoCCA Arts Festival Awards
of Excellence, Gold Medal
Clients include: JimHenson
Co, PenguinClassics,
HarperCollins, Boom!Studios,
BuzzFeed, 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, New York magazine
Clients include: Ellevest,
Vulture, The Cut, Daily
Intelligencer Exhibitions:
"Ladies in Mograph Girl
Gang Gif Challenge,"
"School of Motion Holiday
Card," "Things Took a Turn
Animation Anthology"
andreaschmitzzz.com

Thomas Slattery, '17

freelance writer/artist
Clients include: Public Art
Fund, Mary Kay and Benefit
Cosmetics for Sarah Kehe
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

PREVIOUS SPREAD: (top row,
from left) Michelle Nahmad, Rosa
Chang, Christina Mattison Ebert,
Alexandra Barsky; (second row)
Cady Juarez, Perri Greeley & Carol
Silverman, Kenny Nam, Feifei Ruan.
(third row) Eva Hall & Luz Rodriguez
Dager, Liz Enright, Thomas Slattery,
Michelle Nahmad (last row) Barbara
Geoghegan, Jie Ren, Shannon
O'Halloran, Jenny Bee, Ella Romero.

Notable Thesis Mentors

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

Paul Briggs

head of story, Disney
pbcbstudios.tumblr.com

Elinor Carucci

photographer
elinorcarucci.com

Melanie Hoopes

storyteller
melaniehoopes.com

Joe Kelly

writer, filmmaker
manofaction.tv/profiles/
joe-kelley

Ross MacDonald

illustrator, prop designer
ross-macdonald.com

David Mazzucchelli

penciller, artist, inker

Richard McGuire

illustrator, comic book artist
richard-mcguire.com

Summer Pierre

cartoonist and writer
summerpierre.com

Julia Pott

animator
juliapott.com

Justin Thompson

production designer
shinypinkbottle.tumblr.com

Robbie Tilton

interactive VR design
robbietilton.com

Thu Tran

visual artist, writer, producer
thutran.com

Andrea Tsarumi

author, illustrator, cartoonist
andreatsarumi.com

Ru Xu EPK

comic artist & illustrator
ruemxu.com

Alexandra Zsigmond

art director, artist
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.

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

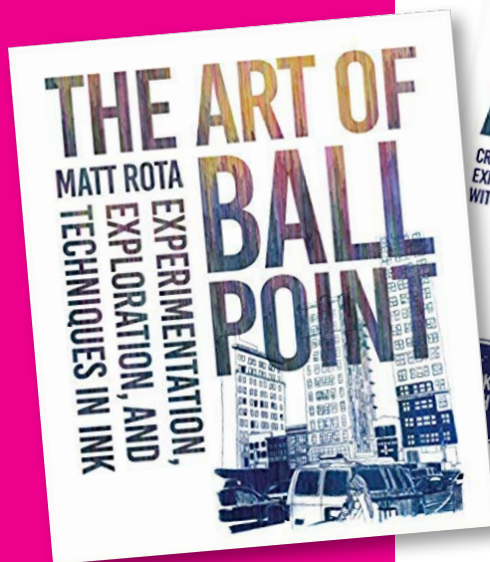
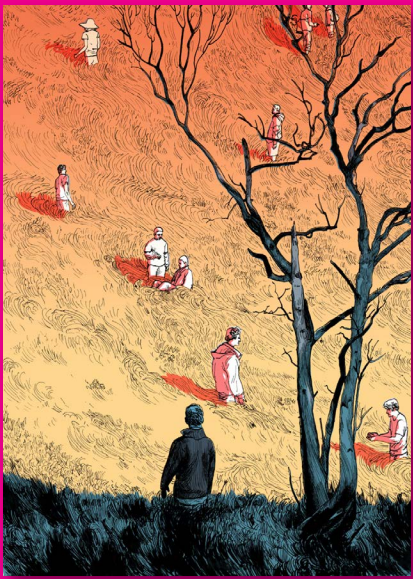
Robert Thill
artist, author, independent scholar

Diego Vainesman
design director, 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



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

[instagram.com/matt.rota](https://www.instagram.com/matt.rota)

mattrotasartnews.tumblr.com

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Selections from Matt's illustraton work, Matt's two books: "[The Art of Ballpoint](#)" and "[Pencil Arts Workshop](#)" available from Rockport Press

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



CLOCKWISE FROM BOTTOM LEFT: Christina's directing includes "[Revolt. She Said. Revolt Again](#)" "[Nectar](#)" and "[Magic Trick](#)"

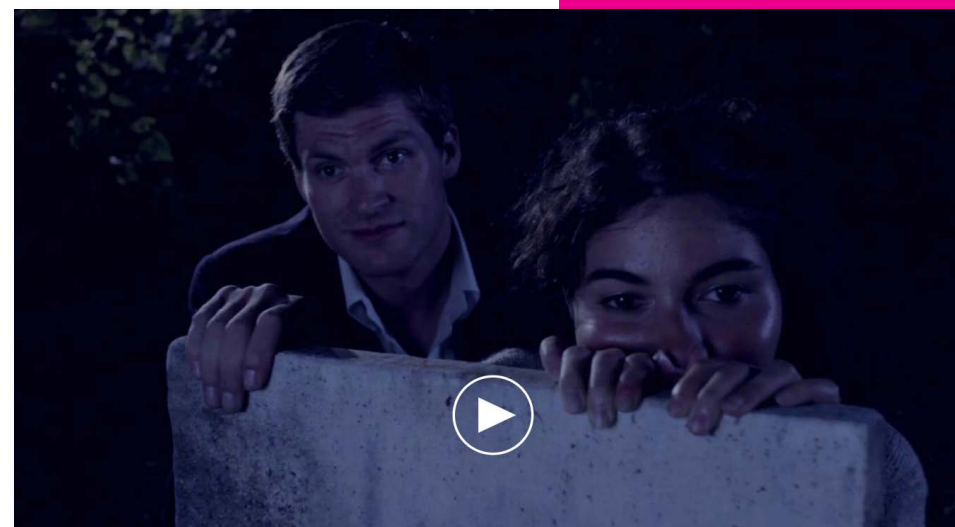
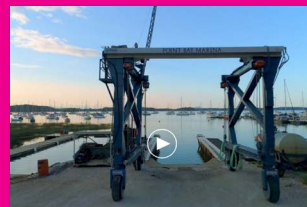
ANELISA GARFUNKEL, FACULTY

Anelisa Garfunkel is a writer, filmmaker and educator. She has produced content for National Geographic and the History Channel, GreatCall, The Nature Conservancy, and UNICEF, to name a few. Anelisa is also a graduate of MFA Visual Narrative ('16), where she wrote and illustrated her thesis, a visual novel titled, [A Conjuring in the Gyre](#). With this unique perspective, what does she think the program offers students? "[They] come in with solid foundations in writing and/or a visual discipline. They leave as visual storytellers and that is a profound evolution."

Anelisa helps to guide students in their [thesis year](#), alongside [Christina Roussos](#). Thesis production includes online peer review in the fall and spring terms. How is this managed in a constructive way? "We have peer critique guidelines, an adaptation of Liz Lerman's Creative Response Process that asks peers to view the work of their fellow classmates from the point of view of the goal of the individual rather than their own personal taste." But how does the storyteller approach peer feedback when working remotely? "We also ask students to ask specific questions



when they submit for feedback so that they are guiding the discussion to their needs."
anelisagarfunkel.com



ABOVE: Portraits of Hazelitt Bay. Clockwise from left: Ray Shapherd, Kurt Hawkins, Mike Wickenden. MIDDLE: We Will Ride, 2013. Tuberville, Youtube series. OPPOSITE: Spread from "A Conjuring in the Gyre", Thesis project 2017.

MARK SABLE, FACULTY

Mark Sable is a professional writer and writing instructor for comics, stage and screen. He's best known for his work on Spider-Man for Marvel Comics and Batman for DC.

His passion however is his creator-owned work, including Graveyard of Empires, Grounded, Fearless and Hazed for Image Comics and Unthinkable for Boom! Studios.

Mark encourages his students to follow their own passions, too. "They're of all ages from all over the globe. Some right out of undergrad who bring a tremendous amount of energy and others who have been out of school for years with extraordinary life experiences. What they all have in common are unique voices... Students become more technically proficient, but what is most rewarding is to see them tell the kinds of stories they are passionate about."

twitter.com/markstable
marksable.tumblr.com/
instagram.com/markstable/



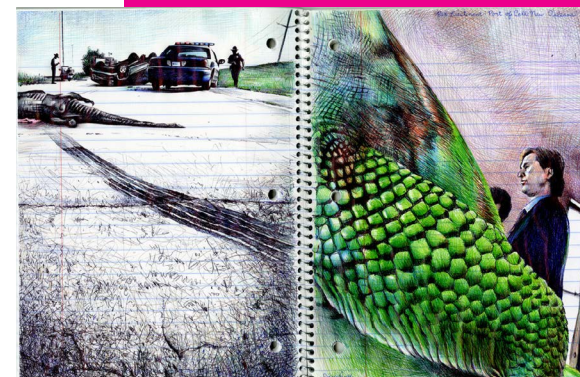
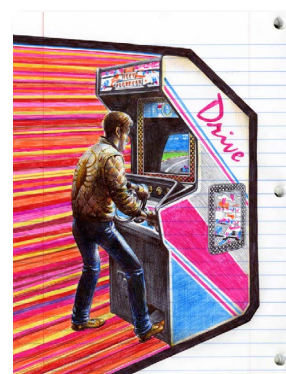
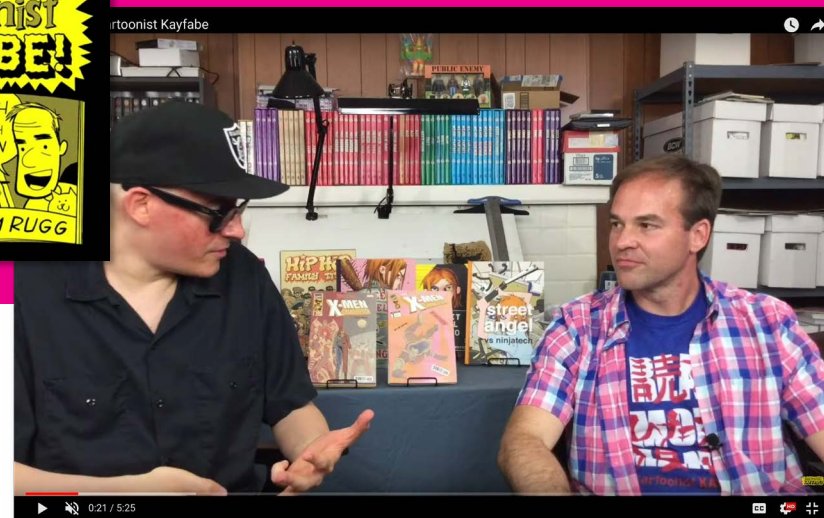
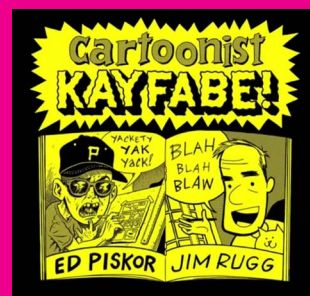
OPPOSITE: Mark's *Graveyard Empire* series, co-created with Paul Azaceta. ABOVE FROM LEFT: *Fearless*, *Teen Titans*, *Batman*. ABOVE BOTTOM: *The Dark*.

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



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*.

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. For questions about the application, contact us at 212.592.2388 or email mfavn@sva.edu.

Nathan Fox, chair
Joan McCabe, director of operations
Lucea Spinelli, special projects & communications

Tel: 212.592.2388
Email: mfavn@sva.edu
Site: sva.edu/mfavn
Department site: mfavn.sva.edu

facebook.com/MFAVisualNarrative

 instagram.com/mfavn

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RISOLAB

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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.

“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 admission 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

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](#). Our [How to Apply](#) page is very informative.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

For detailed instructions, visit: sva.edu/grad/howtoapply

- Online Application and \$80 Application Fee: 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

- Portfolio—accepted at svagrad.slideroom.com
- Visual Narrative and Creative Writing Assignments
- Interview
- Theme Essay

IMPORTANT LINKS

- How to apply: mfavisualnarrative.sva.edu/application-overview/
- FAQ: sva.edu/grad/faq
- International students: sva.edu/grad/intl
- Tuition and fees: sva.edu/tuition
- Visit SVA: sva.edu/grad/visit
- Graduate Admissions Office: sva.edu/grad/visit

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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 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.

The School of Visual Arts is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (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).

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 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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Espaillat

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School of Visual Arts

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