The innovative MFA Illustration as Visual Essay department, established in 1984, is deliberately designed as a full contact program for figurative artists. We ask a great deal from you, beginning with a commitment to be fully engaged in the art of storytelling. This means developing your writing as well as your visual skills. In return, we offer focused personal attention to deepening your intellectual artistic process as well as developing your individual talents in drawing and painting.

This is a classroom-based curriculum, unlike many graduate programs where students are expected to work independently with scheduled faculty contact. We believe that only personal, intense, and constant contact with our faculty will get the results a student wants, and that we expect from those selected to join us. The program is highly selective; we accept only 20 students a year. There is no shortcut to evolving a unique personal vision that sustains a long-lasting competitive and satisfying career as an artist.

Each student has a personal workspace with 24-hour access, seven days a week, 10 months out of the year. Close interaction with other classmates, both social and work-related, forms a lasting creative community that is an essential part of the artistic process. The required classes are only part of the curriculum; students can audit classes from the diverse offerings in our undergraduate College, including film, animation, fine arts, and humanities and sciences, expanding the opportunities for developing a broader field in which to apply their talents.

Guest speakers from the outstanding New York professional community are regularly scheduled. Living in New York City gives students opportunities for access to working artists, gallery shows, museum exhibitions and internships. It is not an inconsequential fact of life that these experiential advantages can lay a foundation for life as an artist. In the second year, students are encouraged to choose their thesis advisors according to their interests. Our advisors, past and present, are as diverse as they are celebrated in their fields.

The process involved in developing a truly personal vision is risky. It demands that you are open to thinking in new ways that stretch your imagination. You will need to reassess your drawing, painting and writing skills, and focus on developing your personal content. Your creativity is necessarily on the line. We offer you a rare chance to believe in your vision with the confidence necessary to compete.

—Marshall Arisman, chair
About the Program

The program operates on a pass/fail grading system with individual reviews each year. At the end of the first year, students must receive an acceptable review from the faculty panel in order to go on to the second year.

Degree candidates must successfully complete 60 credits, including all required courses. A residency of two academic years is required. In the final semester, each student must complete a thesis project, which will be reviewed and approved by the thesis committee and the department chair in order for the student to be eligible for degree conferral. In exceptional instances, transfer credit may be awarded. Decisions concerning transfer of credit are made by the committee on graduate admissions.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND
Although the majority of our students come from art backgrounds, not all do. Some of our most successful alumni had majored in areas such as English literature, biology, engineering, architecture, psychology and women’s studies. You must have an undergraduate degree to apply.

Illustrating Their Own Success Stories: Our Alumni

The mission of the MFA Illustration as Visual Essay program aims to help students develop their own unique vision, and those personal paths lead our graduates to different places. We have featured a few of our successful alumni in this brochure to see where their talent took them after getting their MFA.
YUKO SHIMIZU
(CLASS OF 2003)
is a Japanese illustrator based in New York, and an instructor for the SVA BFA Illustration Department. Her illustrations have appeared in *The New York Times, Time, Newsweek* and *The New Yorker*, among others. Whenever time allows, she travels to universities and organizations both in U.S. and abroad to teach illustration to wider range of students. Her books include *Living with Yuko Shimizu* (ROADS Publishing 2016) and *Barbed Wire Baseball* (Marissa Moss, Abrams 2013). She has been awarded by the Society of Illustrators, *American Illustration, Communication Arts*, Society of Publication Designers and the Art Directors Club, among others.

"SVA MFA Illustration has a great reputation, thanks to many alumni who are working in different fields of illustration. I am extremely proud to be a part of its’ alumni."
—Yuko Shimizu
BRIAN FLOCA (CLASS OF 2001)
is the author/illustrator and illustrator of numerous award-winning books for children, including Locomotive, winner of the 2014 Caldecott Medal, Moonshot: The Flight of Apollo 11, Lightship, and The Racecar Alphabet. Floca has illustrated Avi’s Poppy series, Jan Greenberg and Sandra Jordan’s Ballet for Martha: Making Appalachian Spring, Lynne Cox’s Elizabeth, Queen of the Seas, and Laura Amy Schlitz’s Princess Cora and the Crocodile, among other books. In addition to the Caldecott Medal, Floca’s books have received four Robert F. Sibert Honor awards for distinguished informational books and a silver medal from the Society of Illustrators, and have twice been selected for The New York Times’ annual 10 Best Illustrated Books list.

KATIE YAMASAKI (CLASS OF 2003)
is a muralist, children’s book author/illustrator and teaching artist. She has painted over 80 murals around the world and is currently working on her sixth published book for children. She is the author/illustrator of Fish for Jimmy (Holiday House) and When the Cousins Came (Holiday House), among others. Illustration credits include God’s Big Plan (in progress, Flyaway Books) and Lifelines: The Black Book of Proverbs (Broadway Books/Random House). Yamasaki’s work has been featured in The New York Times, School Library Journal, Real Simple, Booklist, and others. Yamasaki is a faculty member at SVA.
ELIZABETH BADDELEY (CLASS OF 2012)
has illustrated several books including I Dissent: Ruth Bader Ginsburg Makes Her Mark (Simon & Schuster, 2016), The Good Fight: The Feuds of the Founding Fathers (Knopf, 2017), and the upcoming An Inconvenient Alphabet: Ben Franklin & Noah Webster’s Spelling Revolution (Simon and Schuster, Fall 2018). She has won awards including Society of Illustrators (2012), New York Public Library Best Book for Kids and the School Library Journal. Her clients include Abrams; Bloomsbury; Little, Brown and Company; Simon & Schuster; Knopf; and The New York Times.

LAUREN REDNISS (CLASS OF 2000)
is the author of works of visual nonfiction and the recipient of a 2016 MacArthur genius grant. Thunder & Lightning: Weather Past, Present, Future, won the 2016 PEN/E. O. Wilson Literary Science Writing Award. Radioactive: Marie & Pierre Curie, A Tale of Love and Fallout was a finalist for the 2011 National Book Award. Her writing and drawing has appeared in numerous publications including The New York Times, which nominated her work for the Pulitzer Prize. She has been a Guggenheim fellow, a fellow of the New York Public Library’s Cullman Center for Scholars and Writers, a New America Foundation fellow, and artist-in-residence at the American Museum of Natural History.
MARTIN WITTFOOOTH (CLASS OF 2008) has illustrated for New American Paintings, Hi-Fructose Magazine, American Artist, and Beautiful Bizarre. Solo and group exhibitions include the Virginia Museum of Contemporary Art; the Bristol Museum and Art Gallery in the United Kingdom; the Crocker Art Museum in Sacramento, California; La Halle Saint-Pierre in Paris; and in New York City the Jonathan LeVine Gallery, the National Arts Club, and the Museum of American Illustration.

COLIN VERDI (CLASS OF 2018) graduated with honors from New York University with a BA in East Asian Studies and attended the MFA Illustration as Visual Essay program from 2016 to 2018. His clients include Interview Magazine, The Protagonist Magazine, and MilkxHK magazine. He was also a runner-up in AKA NYC’s 2018 student scholarship competition.
JOHN HENDRIX (CLASS OF 2003)
is a New York Times best-selling illustrator and author of many children’s books, including John Brown: His Fight for Freedom, Miracle Man: The Story of Jesus, Drawing Is Magic, and the upcoming The Faithful Spy: Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Plot to Kill Hitler. His illustrations have appeared on book jackets, newspapers and magazines all over the world. Hendrix also is an associate professor, teaching illustration in the Sam Fox School of Art as Chair of Design at Washington University, in St. Louis, Missouri. He has won three medals from the Society of Illustrators.

AYA KAKEDA (CLASS OF 2002)
has worked for Nike, Delta, Disney Hyperion Books, Kidrobot, The New York Times, The New Yorker, Plan-Sponsors magazine, Macy's, Hong Kong Mega Mall, among others. Kakeda also takes her imaginary friends to travel, exhibiting in galleries and museums throughout the world. She has won Illustration awards from Society of Illustrators, SILA, Print magazine, and 3x3 Illustration. She is a member of the faculty at SVA and the Fashion Institute of Technology.
GEORGE BOORUJY (CLASS OF 2002) has exhibited widely nationally and internationally, with solo shows at P.P.O.W. Gallery, Newhouse Center for Contemporary Art, the Central Park Arsenal and the Baker Museum of Art. He has created work for the Wildlife Conservation Society, the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation, La Brea Tar Pits and Museum, The Guardian UK, The New York Times, Harper’s Magazine and the Audubon Mural Project. He is a recipient of a New York Foundation for the Arts grant in painting and a fellowship at the Smack Mellon residency. He is represented by P.P.O.W. Gallery and is a member of the Fine Arts faculty at the School of Visual Arts.

SHADRA STRICKLAND (CLASS OF 2005) has won the Ezra Jack Keats Award and the Coretta Scott King/John Steptoe Award for New Talent in 2009 for her work in her first picture book, Bird, written by Zetta Elliott. Strickland co-illustrated Our Children Can Soar, winner of a 2010 NAACP Image Award. She has published with Lee and Low Books, Simon and Schuster, Random House, and Chronicle Books. Authors include Reneé Watson, Patricia Hruby Powell, Delores Jordan and Toni Morrison. She currently lives in Baltimore, Maryland, and teaches illustration full time at the Maryland Institute College of Art.
The two-year curriculum in Illustration as Visual Essay is designed to capitalize on the technical facility required of students upon entrance to the program. As a result, the program breaks into two distinct parts. The first year concentrates on teaching additional technical skills and introduces students to the necessity of achieving a personal viewpoint as an illustrator. The second year allows students to put into practice the lessons of the first year, through the course Thesis Project: Visual Essay.

### FIRST YEAR / FALL
- Book Seminar: 3 credits
- Computer Illustration Portfolio: 3 credits
- Creative Writing Workshop I: 3 credits
- Critique I: 3 credits
- Drawing I: 3 credits
- Writing Workshop I: 0 credits

### FIRST YEAR / SPRING
- Creative Writing Workshop II: 3 credits
- Critique II: 3 credits
- The Digital Book: 3 credits
- Drawing II: 3 credits
- Seminar: 3 credits
- Writing Workshop II: 0 credits

### SECOND YEAR / FALL
- History of Storytelling: Comics: 3 credits
- Painting I: 3 credits
- Studio Workshop I: 3 credits
- Thesis Review I: 0 credits

### SECOND YEAR / SPRING
- Illustration Business Boot Camp: 3 credits
- Painting II: 3 credits
- Studio Workshop II: 3 credits
- Thesis Project: Visual Essay II: 6 credits
- Thesis Review II: 0 credits
- Studio Visits/Where People Work: 0 credits

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**BOOK SEMINAR**
Students will experiment and create a body of work based on the short story. Although the course title is Book Seminar, students are not confined to the book format; however, a series of objects or an installation is encouraged. Students will outline their ideas in a thesis statement prior to the start of the course, which they will present and discuss in the first session. This written statement will serve as a point of departure and later as a point of reference while the work evolves to its final stages. The project will explore technical, aesthetic and conceptual interests while looking into professional directions and specializations.

**COMPUTER ILLUSTRATION PORTFOLIO**
Digital tools have become mainstream in the design and printing fields, and the Internet has evolved into a medium that enables illustrators to create interactive animations and globally accessible projects. We will investigate several aspects of digital technology, from advanced Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator techniques for print to all facets of web design production, as well as interactive Flash animation.

**CREATIVE WRITING WORKSHOP I & II**
These workshops are structured to develop writing skills in poetry, prose and fiction through readings and discussions. The goal is to explore personal expression through writing that reflects artistic concerns. The second semester will focus on poetry, writing for the theater and songwriting.

**CRITIQUE I & II**
The relationship between fine art and commercial art in dealing with the visual essay will be emphasized in these courses. Students will begin the process of developing visual essays in a limited form. There will be weekly assignments dealing with a variety of subjects related to contemporary concerns. Students will begin to incorporate the material written in the writing workshop with their artwork. The second semester will focus on the production of a one-of-a-kind book that includes text and image.

This is a sample of our recent course listings. For our full curriculum, please visit: sva.edu/mfaillustration/curriculum.
THE DIGITAL BOOK
Our desire to tell stories always has to, and always will, adapt to and define new mediums. The storybook is as old as writing systems themselves; its evolution is bound to that of mankind. The history of film is saturated with animated predictions of stories and characters coming to life and walking off the page. Today, the proliferation of tablets and e-book readers is beginning to redefine what storytelling and characters can be. The digital revolution introduced the storybook to hypertext and interactivity, and with the Internet came social interaction and data-driven narrative. As perceptions regarding digital media shift from desktop to multitouch tablet computers, it’s becoming increasingly apparent that reading, storytelling, animation and interactivity are standing on the precipice of their own revolution. In short: there has never been a more exciting time to be in the business of telling stories.

ILLUSTRATION BUSINESS BOOT CAMP
This class is based on eight intensive critique and instruction sessions. The course focuses on three main goals: 1) the solid understanding of the professional illustration environment; 2) the review of existing work and its transformation into a presentable and cohesive body of work; and 3) the development and application of the student’s brand and identity tools in different media for communicating, showcasing, and promoting that work.

PAINTING I & II
With an emphasis on figurative painting techniques, students will explore both contemporary and classic approaches to painting with oil. The goal is to provide a solid background in oil painting techniques. Painting II focuses on an advanced approach to concepts and techniques, including direct, sustained observation of the human form. Emphasis is placed on a more fully developed or visualized painting process.

DRAWING I & II
These are not traditional drawing courses with models. The raw energy and unpredictability of drawing on location and in the classroom will be explored. Focus will be on interpreting the relationships between subjects and their environment. By keeping sketchbooks and compiling interviews, students will discover the rewards of spontaneity, receptive observation, risk-taking and drawing from intuition. In conjunction with weekly drawing sessions, both in the studio and on location, at least one narrative series assignment will be completed each semester.

HISTORY OF STORYTELLING: COMICS
This course provides an introduction to graphic media in North America, from the beginning of the newspaper comic strip through the development of comic books, the growth of graphic novels and current developments in electronic media. Focusing on its history and aesthetics, we will compare developments in the United States, Mexico and French Canada, as well as the social and cultural contexts in which comic art is created and consumed. The first half of the semester will concentrate on early comic strips and the development of the comic book form through the 1940s. The remainder of the semester will focus on changes that affected comic art in the 1950s and 1960s, the development of a comic book subculture from the 1970s to the 1980s, and contemporary electronic media developments.

SEMESTER
Through lectures by noted guest illustrators, political satirists, art directors, and graphic designers, this seminar will explore the many specialized areas of visual commentators. The course will also include portfolio reviews by professionals working in the field.

STUDIO WORKSHOP I & II
These workshops will develop concepts and finished artwork in relation to the thesis project. Student work will be critiqued regularly by visiting professionals, including illustrators, art directors and gallery directors. We will address the refinement and completion of thesis projects. There will be individual and group critiques; visiting professionals will continue to view and discuss student projects.

THESIS REVIEW I & II
Thesis review is a series of weekly, individual meetings with the department chair for critique and review of the thesis project. These meetings supplement the work in the Thesis Project: Visual Essay courses.

SPECIAL PROJECTS I & II
These courses are coordinated with the chair of the department for students who require specific skill training in the area of drawing or painting.

THESIS PROJECT: VISUAL ESSAY I & II
Students choose a New York City artist as their thesis faculty advisor. They work with the thesis advisor on a one-to-one basis and establish a work schedule to research, write and visualize the thesis project. Topics with special visual essay interest in a variety of areas such as sports, politics, current and cultural events, education, and travel are emphasized. Students will participate in a group exhibition at the end of the second semester.

STUDIO VISITS/WHERE PEOPLE WORK
This unique class will visit artists in their workplace on a weekly basis. Studio visits will include advertising agencies, design studios, illustrators’ studios and animation studios. At a time of ever-changing needs in the market place, the class will explore opportunities in the field of illustration. The studio visits are in essence mini classrooms. Students will research the artists prior to visiting and will be prepared to have a dialogue that is informative.

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Alumni

Jonathan Bartlett  HyeSu Lee  Rich Tu
Lauren Castillo  Andrés Vera Martínez  Will Varner
Brian Floca  Lauren Redniss  Sara Varon
Nathan Fox  Stephen Savage  Sam Weber
Nora Krug  Yuko Shimizu  Martin Wittfooth
Brendan Leach  Shadra Strickland

Lecturers, Mentors and Advisors

Guy Billout
illustrator
Nicholas Blechman
designer, art director
Tomek Bogacki
children’s book illustrator
Steve Brodner
illustrator
Paul Buckley
creative director, Penguin Putnam
Pat Cummings
children’s book illustrator
Peter de Sève
illustrator
diane Dillon
children’s book illustrator
Teresa Faselino
illustrator
Donato Giancarlo
illustrator
Judith Glantzman
painter
Mario Hugo
illustrator
Françés Jetter
printmaker, illustrator
Maira Kalman
illustrator

Viktor Koen
illustrator, designer
Judith Linhares
painter
Ruth Marten
painter
Marvin Mattelson
painter
Peter McCarty
children’s book illustrator
John Nickle
children’s book illustrator
Gary Panter
cartoonist
Don John Parks
painter
J. Brian Pinkney
children’s book illustrator
Jerry Pinkney
children’s book illustrator
Lauren Redniss
illustrator
Edel Rodriguez
illustrator

Stephen Savage
illustrator
Gae Savannah
painter
Yuko Shimizu
illustrator
Peter Sís
children’s book illustrator
Ward Sutton
cartoonist
Anton van Dalen
painter
Riccardo Vecchio
illustrator
Voltaire
animator
Bruce Waldman
printmaker, illustrator
Sam Weber
illustrator
Philemona Williamson
painter

Faculty

Full biographies of our faculty can be found online at: sva.edu/mfaillustration/faculty.

Marshall Arisman
chair, MFA Illustration as Visual Essay Department; illustrator; painter

N.C. Christopher Couch
writer, art historian

Gregory Crane
painter, printmaker

Christine Donnelly
English as a Second Language specialist, actor, singer

Carol Fabricatore
painter, illustrator
Mirko Ilic
graphic designer; illustrator; owner, Mirko Ilic Corp.

Víktor Koen
illustrator, designer
Matthew B. Richmond
principal and senior designer, The Chopping Block, Inc.

David Sandlin
painter, printmaker, cartoonist
Carl Nicholas Titolo
painter

Michele Zackheim
writer, visual artist

Full biographies of our faculty can be found online at: sva.edu/mfaillustration/faculty.
Application Process

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
- Writing Sample
- Interview

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

I came to SVA with a hazy sense of what I wanted to do. The program has supplied a map to my future career.”

—Joanna Neborsky, MFA 2009
We encourage applicants to visit our department. Contact us directly to schedule a departmental tour or sign up to attend an Information Session. For more information and to register, go to: sva.edu/grad/visit.

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

Marshall Arisman, chair
Kim Ablondi, director of operations

Tel: 212.592.2210
Email: mfaillustration@sva.edu
Site: sva.edu/mfaillustration
Department site: mfaillustration.sva.edu

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 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 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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Executive creative director: Anthony P. Rhodes
Creative director: Gail Anderson
Design: Ryan Durinick
Editorial: Sheilah Ledwidge, Abby Kreh

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

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

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