



LETTERS FROM

THE

DEPARTMENT OF

ART,

ART HISTORY, AND

DESIGN

FACULTY

PREFACE

The Michigan State University, Department of Art, Art History, and Design is home to five undergraduate degree programs. We offer a BFA and BA in Apparel & Textile Design, Art Education, Art History and Visual Culture, Graphic Design, and Studio Art. Additionally, we offer minors in Art Photography, Art History and Visual Culture, Comic Art & Graphic Novels, and Graphic Design. Our faculty are affiliated with the Experience Architecture BA and the Arts and Cultural Management and Museum Studies Minors.

MISSION:

Our department seeks to integrate the history and practice of art and design into the MSU community, through teaching, research, and public engagement. We further the mission of the arts to deepen understanding of the human condition.

VISION:

We inspire rigorous paths of study through individual expression and collaboration that focus in and across disciplines. Our faculty and students make meaningful contributions to and/or challenge existing paradigms in art, art history, and design. Through education and encouragement of broad dialogue within and about the arts, we promote positive and sustainable change in our global community.

VALUES:

As a department within a land-grant institution, we work “to democratize higher education and expand its opportunities based on merit, not social class.” Our creative work and scholarship are sensitive to the intersections between diverse contemporary contexts and their histories. The department provides an empowering environment where the inherent worth and dignity of all people are respected and celebrated. We recognize the value of diversity, which includes differences of race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexuality, age, religion, politics, and socio-economic status. We extend this social definition to include a diversity of aesthetics and modes of scholarship and creative practice.

*mindful of the past
we contemplate and create
a better future*

Haiku by Walter Peebles

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THOMAS BERDING

PROFESSOR OF PAINTING



I have been a Professor for 36 years. Many years before that I knew I wanted to be an artist or better said, I knew I wanted to keep being an artist. For sure, I always liked to draw. So being an artist never felt like a choice. It just wasn't. I was passionate and worked hard. At the same time, I wasn't always the best or championed the most for my art in school. I was also a good academic high school student. None of that mattered much as I knew I was going

to attend a hometown university, live at home, commute to classes and hold a job. While I am a first generation college student, I had the advantage of watching several older siblings go to college. As the youngest of one of nine children who grew up in a small house, I was hardly from an elite background in the conventional understanding, but both my study of the history of modern and contemporary art and my life in the arts has taught me that the perspectives life affords each of us can be grist for the artistic mill.

I am so grateful for my own parents' recognition of the passion and interest I had in the arts. While my parents and siblings instilled in me a great work ethic, the greatest gift they gave me was the courage and belief to take on questions I did not know the answer to. I have come to realize that in supporting me, they had to tap into their own courage and belief. I am also so grateful for the fine educators I had who helped me mature artistically, tolerated my occasional scholastic indiscretions and somehow always believed in me, certainly more than I believed in myself at times. Through my studies I learned the discipline, methods and strategies artists employed. Importantly, my mentors also helped me understand how to build a sustainable life in the arts.

As a younger person, I had a fairly defined sense of what an artist was based on what I thought an art work looked like. In time I have come to identify how an artist thinks and behaves as the most important way of understanding an artist. But even this does not yield a single or simple answer, for an artistic practice asks one to do many things; find patterns where others see only chaos, welcome ambiguity where others run for certitude, and most of all approach the world with an openness and vulnerability. While art making is ultimately an integrative act, at times, it asks the maker to be analytic or intuitive, observant or inventive, objective or deeply



Traveler: thomas berding, traveler, 2016, oil, acrylic and flashe on canvas, 76" x 63"

empathic. The look of art is as varied as is the human race, at the same time, the aptitudes cultivated in the arts are endlessly translatable.

Being an artist is not easy. Never was. Nor is any other pursuit worth pursuing or life itself for that matter. We all want our children to experience no pain. As a parent of two children myself, I understand the instinct to protect. But I have found as an artist, parent and educator, the path to growth and maturity is not built around the avoidance of pain or the pursuit of predictable outcomes, but rather it is rooted in paying attention to what gets your attention, and being a student of one's behavior and the world. Ultimately, both art and life, asks us to be at once disciplined and open so that we might travel to places we could not preconceive.

Sincerely,
Thomas Berding
<https://thomasberding.com/>

RYAN CLAYTOR

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF
COMICS + GRAPHIC NOVELS



My name is Ryan Claytor. I'm a professor and comics artist, two vocations I feel lucky to combine in the studio courses I teach for the MSU Comic Art and Graphic Novel Minor.

As a young, visually-oriented, reluctant reader, comics were my gateway into literacy. Now, after two decades of publishing, comics have become a cornerstone of my life. Not only is the medium of comics rich, accessible, challenging, and rewarding, one that requires a remarkable number of skills and consideration to master, it has also provided a space for me to explore personal narrative, art theory, the history of gaming, and even collaborate with passed family.

However, one of my joys is synthesizing and sharing the knowledge it took me many years to discover into approachable lessons and valuable courses that empower students and culminate in any number of professional development activities, ranging from in-store signings to tours and even crowd-funding successes for many of my past students. If your child is interested in comics, I would love to chat with them about the possibility of furthering and fostering their interest in the medium.

Wishing you and yours all the best,
Ryan Claytor
www.ElephantEater.com
comicsforum.msu.edu
tinyurl.com/MSUComicsMinor



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A Hunter's Tale, 32-pages, 4.125" x 5.25",
features full-color printing throughout

BENJAMIN DUKE

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF FOUNDATIONS



us, Why study Art? Slomo's answer, "Do it because you want to." Important to pause here and watch the video.

Now it is also true that studying the Arts can be part of a broader liberal education. This educational philosophy focuses on the development of a broad range of knowledge, skills and abilities that are essential for a well-rounded individual. Some key themes are: critical thinking, communication skills, cultural and historical awareness, problem-solving skills, creativity and the creative process, ethics, social responsibility, and active learning. A liberal education assumes the transferability of skill-sets and are often designed to be interdisciplinary. It allows students to make connections across different fields of study, and to see how different disciplines can be used together to solve problems. A liberal education aims to create lifelong learners, an essential skill fostering agility in the face of change. So for us, Why study Art? Liberal education's answer, "Studying across the wide range of the human experience, in the sciences and the arts allows students to understand and develop to their full potential and make meaningful and lasting contributions to our collective human endeavor."

It's important to keep in mind that the reasons for studying art are as varied as the people who choose to study it,



There is a short documentary on youtube called Slomo: The man Who Skated Right Off the Grid. It's not about art but rather the possibilities of living a creative life. In a world with a multiplicity of true 'trues,' I think it sums up in a powerfully and liberating way the question of "Why." For

and everyone will have their own unique reasons and motivations. It took me a few years at the University to fully embrace the leap into art-making and while the specifics are incidental, a book that really resonated with me at the time was the book "My Name is Asher Lev" by Chaim Potok. This is a novel about a boy that loves to draw and learns to paint. It explores the challenges of choosing to pursue an artistic life. These themes include:

- 1- The conflict between artistic expression and religious tradition: The main character, Asher Lev, is a young Hasidic Jewish boy who has a passion for art. However, his community's strict religious beliefs clash with his desire to create art, leading to conflicts and struggles for Asher as he tries to reconcile these two aspects of his identity.
- 2- The tension between the individual and the community: The novel explores the idea that the individual must sometimes go against the wishes of the community in order to stay true to themselves. Asher's passion for art causes him to break away from the expectations of his family and community, and he must find a way to reconcile these differences.
- 3- The cost of artistic success: Sometimes artistic success can come at a high cost. Asher has to make sacrifices in order to pursue his passion, and the novel shows how the pursuit of artistic success can affect relationships and personal life.
- 4- The power of art to transcend time and place, both in the sense of Asher's art, as well as the way in which the novel uses art as a means of exploring larger societal issues and themes.
- 5- The novel also raises questions about the role of the artist in society, and how the artist's work is perceived and valued.

Another book that explores the struggle of an artist to create and leave behind a lasting legacy is the novel "The Horse's Mouth" by Joyce Carey, it tells the story



the tea shop incident #1, oil on canvas, 72 x 73.5, 2022

of Gulley Jimson, an eccentric and independent painter who is determined to create one last masterpiece before he dies. He is a visionary and obsessed with art-making. Jimson is portrayed as a complex, flawed, and an ultimately sympathetic figure. The book also explores themes of ambition, creativity, and the quest for meaning and purpose in life.

It is difficult to capture in a short letter my answer to the question "Why study art?" Because for me, even after 25 years, it is a question I am still finding the answer to. I find it not just in books, museums, gallery shows, and working with students, but in the daily practice of the studio and within the work itself. I have found art making an endlessly fascinating endeavor that seems to have the feel of constant acceleration (watch that video). It's also worth noting that even if someone doesn't pursue an art-related career, studying art can still provide many benefits that can be applied to any field or profession, it's actually quite fun...most of the time. May all the luck you earn be bestowed upon you.

Best,
ben duke
www.bendukeart.com

TERESA DUNN

PROFESSOR OF
PAINTING + DRAWING



they were supportive. I had always been a maker since I was a kid—drawing, painting, creating. I was known as the class artist as a younger person. But I had never seriously considered art as a career and professional. As soon as I started taking my art classes, I never looked back. I felt at home and knew that while a BFA degree in painting was challenging, it was my calling. I did not have a Plan B.

When I finished my undergraduate degree, I went to graduate school at Indiana University. IU was one of the premiere grad programs in painting, particular for figurative artists like me. Even in my advanced degree I wasn't really thinking about what I would do after my MFA. Still no Plan B, but encouragement from my mentors that I should apply for teaching positions and submit my artwork for exhibitions. After some adjunct teaching at Miami of Ohio, I got my first tenure position at Stephen F Austin State University in Texas and then found myself being offered the job here at Michigan State, a Research 1 institution. This is a blessing because my appointment balances teaching, my creative research (making and showing paintings), and service. In the meantime, I have also grown my exhibition record as well as making sales on a regular basis.

My artwork has given me many opportunities. One of those opportunities

besides my job at MSU that I most value is the ability to travel. I have spent many years traveling to Italy for my work, taking students on study abroad, and exhibiting and selling my work to a growing base of collectors in Italy. The other opportunity that art has given me is the gift of visual storytelling. I am a brown Mexican American woman; my recent paintings share the stories of people like me who have a race, ethnicity, or cultural complexion that differs from normative American stories. That storytelling gift helps me represent Black and Brown lives, the incredible colorful tapestry that is America, and connect with viewers who see themselves in my work when they can't see themselves in other cultural expressions in this county.

I never had a Plan B, while it might have been the responsible or practical thing to have one. But I had a vision and a calling to be a maker, a painter, and a storyteller. I can say with certainty that my mental health and wellbeing would have been severely damaged had I not followed the pull to the arts. While I understand any parent's concerns about the value of a visual arts degree, from my own personal experience it is not only possible to make a life as an artist, but to make a meaningful life that contributes to society in valuable ways. I have many friends, colleagues, and former students working in the arts in a variety of ways. Some teach, some make a living selling their work, and some work in museums, galleries, and art centers. Some do a mixture of all the above. I cannot guarantee whether your child will be successful in the arts. But I can be sure that it is possible to work in the arts, pay the bills, be fulfilled, and be a value to society. My husband and I have a beautiful home, a cottage in northern Michigan, we travel, and provide for our daughters needs and wants.

I can also commit to you, the concerned parent, that I will do my best to educate



the ballad of Lillian Young (allegory of black joy and sorrow), 2019, oil on canvas, 40x30 inches

your college student and help equip them with the tools they will need to succeed. I care about each student as a unique human being with individual needs, wants, and goals. I am in touch with so many former students, even one from my very first semester teaching 20 years ago. I love getting updates about new jobs, exhibitions, and other professional and personal successes. When the semester ends my commitment to your child does not end. I provide guidance, mentorship, and support so long as your student needs me. My goal as an artist educator is to help your child articulate their futures and find their way in the world through the arts and creative expression. Your child matters to me.

All the best,
Teresa Dunn
www.teresa-dunn.com



When I first went to college, I was a Presidential Scholar Recipient getting a full ride, I had been top in my high school class, and could have pursued any career path I wanted. My mom always wanted me to study medicine or law. At first, I thought political science, but then settled on being a math major. I had placed into Advanced Calculus and by my second year I was taking graduate level abstract algebra. While academically I was successful my mental health was suffering. I was desperate because I could not envision a life in which my professional aspirations aligned with my course of study in math. My parents strongly encouraged me to take courses that I wanted and when I said I wanted to take a few art classes,

PETER GLENDINNING

PROFESSOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY



Near the end of 3 semesters of studies at Syracuse University's School of Law, with 3 more to go, I went home to share some news with my parents. I had been accepted as a BFA student in SU's Experimental Studio Art Department, and if I completed credits successfully in the coming Spring semester I would be guaranteed admission, with all expenses paid, to the MFA program in Fall....and I would not be continuing my Law School studies.

For any parent who expected that their son would be an attorney, news of a change in career path would be a surprise. That the alternative he had chosen instead was in the arts would be, for many, more than surprising to say the least! I was the one who was surprised when they offered to pay for that semester of undergraduate art studies if I felt I had truly found my calling. As my Dad said, "In law school you showed that you have learned the lessons



portrait of ntando ngwenya, from the series attached to the soil, 2019, in response to his life story and the aspirational metaphor by Justice Krossa

that we have tried to share about hard work and self-discipline. If you keep at it in art your creativity will be able to shine and you can be a success. Don't disappoint us." He made it clear that the disappointment he referenced was not related to any particular creative art expressions I might make, but to any failure to follow through on my commitment.

My parents met after World War II, as actors serving in the USO, both going on to have some success on stage in New York. I'm blessed to be able to serve your children, because John and Lorraine were both raised to be self-disciplined and responsible people, who recognized that while it is important for artists, or lawyers, to be well educated, without the personal commitment to doing the work necessary to succeed, no amount of excellence in creative expression or knowledge of art or techniques would be enough to overcome that deficit.

Your child has made a personal commitment to a career in Art. They would not have been able to make that decision without the confidence that you have shared that their individual creativity is special enough to form the foundation for a career. They would not be as successful in art as they already have been if you

had not done your best to inculcate in them the work ethic and self-discipline necessary to make it possible for their unique individual creative approach to shine through in the artworks they have created.

Your role as a parent of a creative child does not end when they move into their freshman-year MSU dormitory. On the contrary, you gain a team of Art, Art History, & Design faculty members to support your efforts. We will support your child's continued development of their individual creativity, and their gaining of the knowledge and skills necessary to form it into works of art. We will also reinforce your lessons on the importance of self-discipline and commitment to excellence, without which their unique creativity and any knowledge gained are worthless. As you continue your efforts, together we'll all look forward to attending their graduation ceremony, and to their ultimate success thereafter in a creative career that will bring them great joy. Thank you for entrusting your child's education as a creative professional to Michigan State University.

Sincerely,
Peter Glendinning
<http://peterglendinning.com/index>

TANI HARTMAN

CHAIRPERSON + PROFESSOR
OF STUDIO ART



Every morning, I set my alarm for 5:15 AM. My studio is across the hall from my bedroom, and sometimes the sound of the soft alarm's bells and chimes is unwelcome, and I want to sink deeper into slumber, but most mornings, I get up with a sense of anticipation and wonder, because I will have one hour to create whatever I want, before the demands of the day take me away from the joy that is my studio practice. Privately, I imagine time in the studio as my "ritual of being free." Each day that I commit to time spent in creative endeavor, is a reminder that who I am and how I comport myself in the world is holy, and personal and a private journey that belongs solely to me. This practice has sustained me for most of my 57 years on planet earth—first, as a way to alleviate stress after days at a school in which bullying was the norm, not the exception. I would arrive home, get a snack and rush to my "Magic Markers" and draw for an hour. The practice cleared my mind and allowed me to focus on homework and chores.



murmurations, digital video, (25:22 min.),
2018 in collaboration with brian hawkins

My own conception of art is that it is a ministry to a society that both aches with human suffering and shimmers with human joy. People are complex, and art helps us to understand them; to have empathy and tolerance for their foibles and to know when a behavior or an attitude is intolerable or unacceptable. Think of the wisdom contained in the psalms. They are poetry. Imagine a life without children's books. Without television programs. Without great novels, and entertaining mystery stories and beautiful sweaters, and new fashions, and colorful murals, and car interiors, and Christmas cards and lovely mugs of hot coffee that fit, just so, in your hands. All of this is art. It entertains and it edifies. It teaches us to enjoy our lives and to think about them. It is a holy thing, and the fact that your child wants to participate in this noble endeavor is a fact to be celebrated!

My friends are artists and most have degrees in studio art and they have cobbled together meaningful and sustainable careers as teachers, as case workers, as illustrators, as website designers, as editors, as creators of textiles for plane interiors and for automobiles, as master gardeners, as master printers, as studio technicians, as sound engineers,

as event planners, as travel agents, as bloggers and as practicing artists. I had a student who was vision impaired and chose a degree in painting so that she could show others how the world looked to her. She is selling her paintings and making a wonderful life for herself (<https://www.katherynkrouse.com>).

Making art as a lifestyle is a faith walk. But then again, so is life in any profession. My husband is an engineer, and his first wife, with whom we are very close, is a city attorney. Both were laid off at the same time, a decade ago. Who sustained the family? Me! An artist and educator! I promise you that all of us who are artists and faculty here in AAHD at MSU will celebrate the creativity in your child, the holy gift that makes your child want to make art. They may never be wealthy (but then again, they might be) but they will have the inner resources to love their lives, to be flexible and thoughtful and true to themselves. And that, in my opinion, is the greatest wealth of all.

Sincerely,
Tani Hartman
www.tanyahartmanart.com

PAUL KOTULA

PROFESSOR OF CERAMICS



By the age of six I knew I wanted to be an artist. While my creativity in the visual arts and music was supported by my parents, I did not visit a real museum until the age of 17; such culture was not part of my upbringing. A high school field trip to The Detroit Institute of Arts (DIA) provided me that experience; it was transformational. When I entered Wayne State University the following year, I took the path of graphic designer. That was, of course, to appease my parents who wished to see their son financially successful, but I acknowledged I was happiest when I was drawing. I told my parents I would be an illustrator and convinced them that I needed to draw well to enter such a career even though the disciplines are different. I received my BFA with a major in drawing, but an elective in ceramics senior year turned my world upside-down. The plasticity of clay and the abstraction innate in pottery drew me in, so I enrolled in post-baccalaureate study to further pursue my new interests. At that time, one of my instructors suggested I apply for a position as gallery director at Pewabic Pottery, a historical art pottery in Detroit that grew to support a multi-tiered educational program as a non-profit organization. For two years, I worked with an amazing group of women – artists, educators, gallery owners/directors, and even an architect – to form, organize, and

promote important exhibitions of art by contemporary artists working in clay, many of whom I met during exhibition openings and workshops. At this same time my yearnings to be an artist grew. The New York College for Ceramics at Alfred University, NY (one of the nation's leading programs in the ceramic arts), offered me a full scholarship to their MFA program; I accepted. When I returned home (to a shared life), I taught courses at College for Creative Studies (CCS), Detroit, and Henry Ford Community College, Dearborn, as well as directed exhibition programming for Swidler Gallery (which was devoted to the ceramic arts). At this same time, I was awarded two Individual Artist Fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and one from the Michigan Council for the Arts and Cultural Affairs. The DIA also acquired one of my works for its permanent collection. My studio practice never waned; neither did my interests in the broadest sense of what art is or could be.

At CCS, I met a student who wished to back a growing dream, a gallery devoted to a cross-disciplinary program defined by a non-hierarchical approach to curation. I became the founding director of Revolution: A Gallery Project, Ferndale, MI (1993-2005) which gained national recognition shortly after it opened. By the late 90s I was honored to named "one of twenty-five people making a difference in the arts in the Midwest" by Dialogue



Place Setting with green tile, ceramics, 2018

Magazine. The list included Suzanne Ghez, who was internationally recognized for her astute and challenging exhibitions generated as the Director and Curator of the Renaissance Society, University of Chicago.

I opened my own gallery, Paul Kotula Projects, in 2006 when the backer of Revolution and her new husband decided to take another path in life. The gallery continues to promote artists through a similar, but more intimately scaled, cross-disciplinary program as Revolution. MSU became part of my life in 2009; I had longed to be a full-time educator. My appointment offered many new opportunities in research and teaching. Shortly into my appointment, Korea Ceramic Foundation invited me to be a juror for one of the largest international exhibitions in the ceramic arts. I was the youngest American to serve in this role at this point and I travelled to South Korea as a guest of the hosting organization to celebrate the many cultural events that took place as part of this exhibition. There I met and shared meals many prominent figures in the ceramic arts from around the world.

In retrospect, I was fortunate that I trusted myself to make my own educational and

career choices. Not all students follow their hearts and instinct. In truth, I recognize that I may have made more money in my younger years had I been a graphic designer, but the experiences I gained being an artist, gallerist, and educator outweighed any monetary rewards. I have also been enriched by the many successes of my students. They have gone on to have such careers as artists, designers, educators, clay modelers for the auto industry, gallery directors and assistants, as well as preparators and art handlers for museums, galleries, and private collectors.

It is my hope that when parents learn their students wish to seek a career as an artist and/or designer that they share their child's curiosity and support whatever journey it may take. While I knew I wanted to be an artist at a very young, I had no idea I would use my education in the visual arts to enter successful positions in arts management, curatorial practice, and education. And, at the core of all of that is a studio practice that allows me freedom, a marriage of curiosity and hard work that allows me to further understand myself and our ever-changing world.

Sincerely,
Paul Kotula
<https://people.cal.msu.edu/kotulap/>

ROBERT MCCANN

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF
PAINTING + FOUNDATIONS



I came to a life in art gradually, with little incentive or expectation. My father was a telephone lineman. My mother was a beautician and stay-at-home mom. My father once drew a sign depicting the old comic character Andy Capp that hung in our garage. My mother painted little animals on the back pockets of my jeans. I would sketch monsters on scraps of paper under the covers by flashlight. We lived in a small, rural town in the Ozarks. I didn't visit a museum or art gallery until I was old enough to take myself there. I would drive 200 miles to spend the day at the St. Louis Art Museum. I was interested in art, but I didn't know much about it. I liked to look and imagine and make things with my hands. I would read a comic book and think maybe I should write and draw comics. I would listen to music and try to learn guitar. My high school art teacher had us copy an alphabet of Old English lettering with India ink and plastic quill pens. But I could do whatever I wanted



Squish Them and Their Butts Still Shine
54 x 84 in., oil on linen, 2021

when I finished early. My father would tell me I could go to any college in the country if I kept my grades up.

That unlimited college fund never materialized, but my grades were enough to earn a scholarship to a good area state university. I drifted through a year of general electives with no idea what I wanted to do. Then I took some drawing and painting classes, and I moved in. The 90's were not a great time for painting, but my art teachers there assured me—I think rightly—that no “career path” was meaningfully more concrete. If you want to paint then you'll figure out the rest as it comes, they said.

Artmaking is a mental and physical act. For me, it was a breakthrough to find a pursuit so challenging and comfortable at the same time. I had been around the edges of art, but in college I got inside of it. It was simple in how it unfolded as self-directed exploration. I could flip through art books in my job at the campus library, spend the weekend grappling in the studio with what I'd seen, and then have a conversation with my professors and peers when Monday rolled around. Studio art was complex in that understanding the history and contemporary context of art is fluid and ongoing. My own path also eventually brought me to teaching, but

choosing to study in a creative field was the first step toward a creative profession. I had a creative inclination before, but studying art brought me into the wider field and gave me a compass.

It's a much better environment for painting now. Painting is at one level about how we see. It's another way of seeing and another way of knowing. Everything happens all at once between the four corners of the canvas, starting in the same limitless field that an artist stared at hundreds of years ago. Computer innovations in the 90's and up through today have not displaced painting, but rather helped expand it as an evolving reflection on the world around us. I have an older cousin who became a computer programmer at the right time 30 years ago and got rich. Now he owns a couple of gas stations and has a lot of time on his hands. The visual dividends continue to be paid in my line of work.

To paraphrase the painter Philip Guston, a person can go into a room alone and figure something out. A professor of mine likened it to a calling, like the priesthood. There is a level of faith and belief that it requires, and also a community. It is a rich life.

Sincerely,
Robert A. McCann
www.robertmccannpainting.com

NATHAN PREBONICK

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF
FOUNDATIONS + PRINTMAKING



He always said, “there are no jobs in art.” At the time, my dream was to get a gallery to represent my work and buy a studio near the Cuyahoga river.

I learned observational drawing skills, oil painting, printmaking and more during my first year. At the time, I was working 2 jobs in landscaping and food service. I fell in love with the late nights and early mornings alone in the painting studio. I won a full tuition scholarship competition as a Sophomore and a trip to Venice for the Biennale. On top of that, I received material grant money from the school. Not long after, I quit my jobs and began spending all of my time making art. I was able to make more money selling paintings than the year prior with 2 low paying jobs. I was invited to an exhibition called “New Directions” at one of the only local galleries. The show featured one student from each of the 3 major regional art schools. All of my paintings sold during the opening reception and the gallery decided to take on my work.

I applied to nearly 20 graduate programs and wound up choosing my dream school, The Rhode Island School of Design. I was given the opportunity to work as a Teaching Assistant in the art department at Brown University while studying at RISD. It was my first taste of what it was like to teach art. During the winter of 2018, I was able to teach my own Painting course at



After taking art classes throughout High School, I decided that I was done with art because it took up too much time and money. As an avid fisherman, I wanted to become a park ranger and spend my days near the water. I enrolled at the local University as a Geology major but began losing interest after a year in the program. I took a Drawing course as an elective and wound up spending all of my time working on the daily drawing assignments. I switched my major to Painting and Drawing much to my parents dismay. My dad spent 2 years in commercial art classes before entering Law Enforcement.



roundabout, acrylic on
canvas, 72x126in, 2023

RISD. After graduating, I was hired to teach for RISD Continuing Education, and later in the Painting Department. During covid, the school had to cut adjunct faculty among many other changes, leaving me jobless. Unable to afford East Coast rent, I moved back to my hometown.

I called a friend who I met during my undergraduate thesis exhibition looking for potential studio space. He owned nearly a dozen buildings in the area. He had recently purchased a building in Cuyahoga Falls along the river, and wasn't exactly sure what to do with it. Having no money, we made an agreement that I could pay rent in sweat equity by repurposing the building. I took a U-haul from Providence to Cuyahoga Falls and moved all of my belongings upstairs into the abandoned building. I spent a few weeks creating a live-work studio space and then began fixing up the rest of the building. The building is now the most visited on Front Street, featuring a canoe shop, tackle shop, general store, cafe and art gallery. Without realizing it, I ended up with my studio on the Cuyahoga River.

In 2021, I was asked to fill in for an old professor who was diagnosed with cancer. I taught Painting and Design as an adjunct for 3 semesters at the University of Akron. Last fall, I worked at The University of

Akron and The University of Mount Union simultaneously. During an exhibition at Mount Union, 2 professors from Michigan State encouraged me to enter their applicant pool for foundations. I was hired this spring. Aside from teaching foundations, I was fortunate to be offered an etching course.

Though I had to weather a few struggles and take leap of faith or two, I look back on those times with the fondest of memories. I would never consider trading the times of financial difficulty and uncertainty for a regimented 9 to 5. I have received a blessing for every hardship endured. I recently turned 30 and have a job my parents are proud of. My income is split between art sales and salary at Michigan State. I have a print shop to use in Michigan and a painting studio in Ohio. I have a network of teachers, classmates and colleagues from around the country and world. Most importantly, I have developed the tools to face any storm. Life as an artist has prepared me for whatever life throws at me. I'm incredibly grateful for all of the lessons I've learned along this journey.

Best Wishes,
Nathan Prebonick
www.nathanprebonick.com

KELLY SALCHOW MACARTHUR

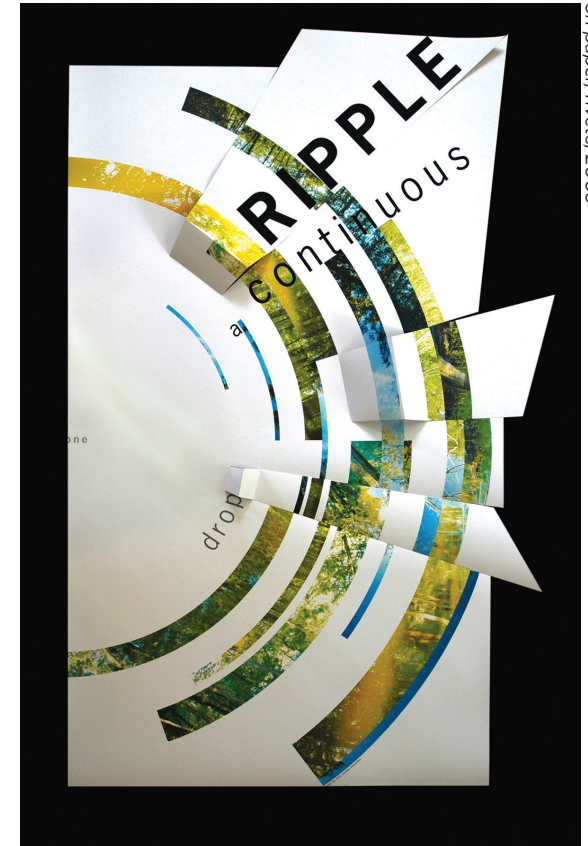
PROFESSOR OF GRAPHIC DESIGN



What an exciting possibility it is to pursue a creative career, beginning with study in MSU's Department of Art, Art History, and Design!

As a graphic design professor, I very much enjoy getting to know the students, and seeing them progress through their undergraduate years. The time we spend together in the Kresge Art Center is formative and precious and builds a close-knit community. We support and challenge each other, striving to find new opportunities in graphic design coursework and beyond. Our studio classes are capped at 20 students and last 2 hours 50 minutes—allowing time for inquiry and discovery, individual and collaborative work, and one-on-one and group discussion. Every day is different and brings a new challenge.

A hurdle in many young designer's career is landing the first full-time position. Our BFA in Graphic Design has an internship component, which helps prepare students to enter the workforce with the skills they need. The more internship experience a student accumulates before graduation, the better idea they have of what kind of workplace they want to contribute to, and what area(s) of design interest them most. The AIGA (the professional association of design) Student Group and Design Center are other ways for students to forge connections to the field. The job market in graphic design is healthy and shows no signs of slowing down. It is also broad, offering many different areas to concentrate in. Graphic design majors should expect to graduate with a well-developed portfolio that demonstrates a spectrum of concept, content, skill, media, and format. They will have a personal portfolio website completed, a corresponding resume, and verbal and visual acuity that will allow them to present their work eloquently. Design thinking skills will allow them to face future endeavors with creativity and assurance.



Even after 30+ years, I still find graphic design to be exciting and fulfilling. In addition to my teaching, I am a practitioner. I pursue experimental creative research (focusing on social and environmental justice through dimensional and material exploration) and maintain a freelance business (completing commissioned work for clients). I find I am constantly dealing with different questions to ask, problems to solve, parameters, clients, deadlines, and tools and processes to master. When I have the time to design, I feel free, and embrace the discomfort of not knowing where the creative process will take me. It is always a surprise.

Sincerely,
Kelly Salchow MacArthur
www.elevatedesign.org

LAURA SMITH

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF
ART HISTORY + VISUAL CULTURE



“Do what you love, and the money will follow.” Marsha Sinetar (1989)

I am an art historian, a scholar, a teacher, and a humanist, and I love what I do! Every day I get to affect the ways people see themselves, others, and the world. Considering that the teaching and writing of history provides, among other things, a means for people to evaluate, affirm, and sometimes change their identities and relationships, I get to create a more just and equitable world.

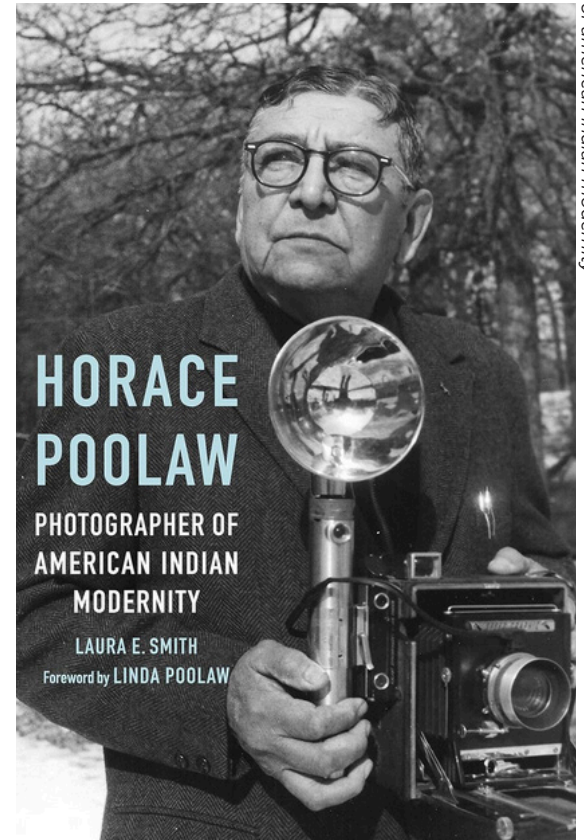
I remember telling myself early on in my career search that if I am to devote forty-some hours to anything in this one life we get, I need to be passionate about it. I wasn't interested in spending most of my life working in a job that paid the bills so I could do what I love at night or on the weekends. I was lucky to have parents who supported this quest. They were first generation college students in the 1950s. Both loved music and literature but neither

pursued the arts as careers. My mom told me and my sister that in the 1950s when there were only two professional careers for women: nursing and teaching. She wanted her daughters to have the chance to find their passion and not only be financially independent, but also be happy and self-assured women. Life is precious.

I loved to read and write, and I was committed to making the world a better place for women and people of color. These values were instilled in me by my parents who fought quietly against racism and white privilege through their Protestant church, as inspired by Martin Luther King and many other religious activists. Money and material wealth were discouraged as life goals. Service to one's community and humanity was paramount.

My first career choice was social work. I worked in support of battered women and the indigent, homebound elderly. I turned to the study of visual arts after experiencing personal trauma. I took a risk by completely changing my career and life, but I needed time to take care of and heal myself; I did so through drawing and painting. My BFA thesis work focused on trees as metaphors for my artistic and individual journey. Art was critical to transforming my self-awareness and self-confidence. But I was not naïve to the problem of financial independence.

My classmates with whom I am still in contact are all happily employed as grade school or university art teachers, gallery owners, independent artists, or graphic designers. So many teachers and friends at the school helped support my search for an art career after graduation. Through volunteer work at a few different local museums and galleries in Philadelphia, I ended up securing part-time jobs as an assistant curator, a picture framer, and a museum collections assistant. I supported myself adequately, but I still relied on my parents to pay for health insurance. I was



horace poolaw, photographer of american indian modernity

single, in my thirties, and needed more financial stability.

With guidance from former art school professors, I prepared a dossier and went to graduate school to study art history in New Mexico. It was another risk. I know my parents were concerned. I took out loans for the master's degree (which are now paid off); but my doctoral studies were nearly all paid for with scholarships and assistantships. In the end, I got a job (with health insurance) where I blend my art knowledge, with community service, and my love of reading and writing. I now frequently work much more than 40 hours a week, but to me it's about spending my life doing what I love.

Sincerely,
Laura Smith
<https://smit1550.msu.domains/>

JACQUELYNN SULLIVAN GOULD

DIRECTOR OF GALLERIES
OUTREACH + PROGRAMMING
COORDINATOR
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF STUDIO ART



My name is Jacquelynn Sullivan Gould and I have had the pleasure of teaching at Michigan State University since the fall of 2011. In addition to teaching, I am the Director of Galleries and the Outreach and Programming Coordinator. I have the honor of working with Undergraduate students who are new to AAHD in foundations courses as well as in upper-level sculpture classes. I also get to help Undergraduate and Graduate students as they pursue degree required exhibitions. Each semester, I mentor students one-on-one in experiential learning opportunities in the AAHD Galleries and as Graphic Design Interns for events and programming for AAHD.

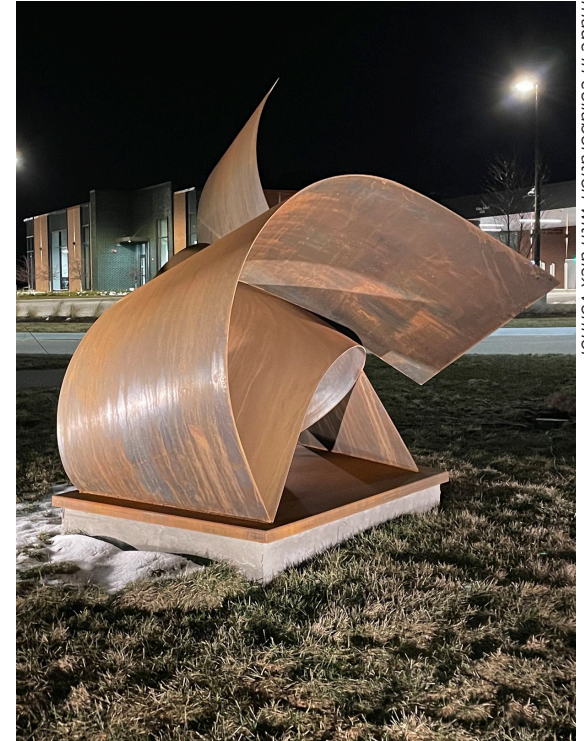
As an Undergraduate student, I pursued a degree in Studio Art and Art History. My studio focuses were sculpture and printmaking. My Art History senior focus was in 16th Century Flemish Art. In my family, I was a first-generation college student, and as an Undergrad I had at least two student jobs every semester, in addition to taking a full course load. My goal was to leave college with as much experience and as little debt as I could. As a result, I worked at the University Library the entire time I was an Undergraduate student, as a Teaching Assistant and

Research Assistant for Art History Faculty, I also spent a year as an RA—Resident Advisor with a floor of Freshmen.

After I completed my Bachelors in Studio Art and Art History, with a minor in History, I decided to immediately apply for graduate school. Looking back, I wish I had taken more time between Undergrad and Graduate School. While I have no regrets about my experiences, I think if I had had more distance from Undergrad before beginning my Graduate degree, I could have pushed the work I made in graduate school further. I hold an MFA in Studio Art with an emphasis in sculpture. As both an Undergrad and Graduate student, I attended programs where I was an out-of-state student. As a result, I feel like I quickly learned how to be independent and that for me it was a push I needed to gain confidence in the path I wanted to pursue.

As a graduate student, I had the opportunity to teach foundations courses and I worked part-time at the University Fine Arts library to help cover the cost of some of the materials I chose to work with. One of the best decisions I made during graduate school was to go on a study abroad to China, for ceramics. Studying and making in China was a once in a lifetime experience and changed a lot not only about the ways in which I thought about my own work, but the ways in which I understand in a very small way the experiences of our international students.

After graduate school, I spent some time teaching at a few different schools simultaneously as a part-time faculty member. It was not easy. It was a lot of long days, a lot of driving, and it left little time for me to make any work. I feel very fortunate that I was able to land at MSU initially as a part-time faculty member and someone who was working on a few special projects for the University, before I began my current role.



us, corten steel, 2023, 6:5 x 5:7 x 6:3
made in collaboration with alex vonhof

I feel very lucky that every day I get to draw upon the knowledge and experiences I had as an Undergraduate and Graduate Student. I get to help others find themselves in their work, put together exhibitions, public events, and pursue my own creative research. If I could offer any advice to new students, it would be to engage with everything and everyone around you. One of the best pieces of advice I was given as a student was that one of my jobs was to get to know my faculty and classmates, because in the future they would continue to be your community, your link, and your support structure.

I hope I get to help guide and inspire you on your creative path and to help you push yourself to find what you want to do in the future.

Sincerely,
Jacquelynn Sullivan Gould
<https://www.jacquelynnsullivan.com/>

SUSANNA VAN HORN

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR
OF ART EDUCATION



As a parent or guardian of a prospective MSU student, you know all too well that they are the first group to have grown up wholly in the digital era, with immediate access to more social media and knowledge than any generation before them. As a result, a typical Gen Z-er is self-driven about their education and future career but are also very aware of societal issues. Therefore, they tend to care deeply about others and strive for a diverse community of voices to be heard. They are also highly collaborative, very social and, perhaps due to the Covid-19 pandemic upending their normal lives, they value flexibility, relevance, and authenticity. What is more, they have a pragmatic attitude about the work that must be done. If this sounds like your prospective student, there is no better field of study and future career for them than art education.

As a visual arts educator, your student will have the unique ability to inspire the next generation of artists, critical thinkers, and decision makers. Their concern for others will be a major strength to their teaching practices and every day they can help to make a meaningful difference in the lives of others. Becoming a teacher will also satisfy their need for flexibility since teaching is a job that thrives on variety. For teachers, two days are rarely the same. Art education involves more than just studio production; it can incorporate art history, social awareness, and problem solving as well, and working through new units in



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the art curriculum will allow your student the flexibility of new topics to teach while having new students in their classroom each year.

Additionally, unlike some careers that offer little job security or provide little opportunity for new experiences, there will always be a need for teachers, which allows for a high level of mobility within this field. A certified art teacher can work almost anywhere in the world. Substantial health care benefits, job security, guaranteed non-working holidays, and extended summer breaks are also quite attractive aspects for the Gen Z-er.

Personally, I was drawn to becoming an art educator for many of these reasons. Originally, I considered studying architecture, interior design, elementary education, and art history, but found art education to be the perfect fit because of the flexibility in curriculum. But since I love to travel, the flexibility of finding work in various locations was also a major factor. For example, I have taught at an elementary school for the hearing-impaired and an international magnet high school, both in Columbus, Ohio.

I have been a teacher at a rural high school outside Nashville, Tennessee, at a private Chinese bilingual K-8 school in San Francisco, and at a Catholic elementary here in Michigan. I have even taught private art lessons while living in Athens, Greece! But I was also able to use my art education training to find positions teaching in art museums, running my own private studio, and painting murals on commission. Now, as a parent, I love teaching even more, because I know that I have wonderful health care for myself and my children, an excellent retirement plan, and I get every holiday and summer off to spend with my family. The greatest aspect though, is that I am having fun! It is so rewarding to see young artists create, become engaged in a topic, or squeal with delight about a project because I was able to share my passion for art with a sense of excitement for them!

Thank you for supporting your prospective student in their studies at MSU.

Sincerely,
Susanna Van Horn
<https://people.cal.msu.edu/van/>

2020

CONTACT

this book was printed and bound by
foresight group, lansing, mi.

the primary typeface used is gotham,
designed by tobias frere-jones in 2000.