

Preview /  
email exchange between  
Arthur Menzes Brum and Ruslana Lichtzier

Mar 29

Dear Ruslana,

I have a question that has practical repercussions. Do you think it is wise to present these teachers as dangerous?

What do I mean? I'll try to give an example. A professor is trying to get a job and someone googles them and finds that they participated in an exhibition called "dangerous Professors" and in which that professor wrote a description of themselves as dangerous, in the language of conservatives and the far right. They will have to explain themselves—if they get the chance. Or worse, they might be chosen over someone who seems apolitical or is less qualified.

The framework of the exhibition may unintentionally incriminate people by asking them to incriminate themselves.

I would like to talk about teaching/art and how it works with or against ideology. I don't think of myself as dangerous. What I promote is healthy and useful. I present opportunities for my students to use and develop a set of technical and cognitive skills which are innate and beneficial. Regardless of the origin of some material, I believe what I expound improves the quality of life of others. I feel uncomfortable using edgy and oppositional language, only to have myself painted as something I am not.

The world is a dangerous place, I believe what I do helps people protect themselves from the undo rhetorical influence of images.

I would like to hear your response. I think others should consider this before participating. So, I must admit my hesitation to participate.

All the best,

Arthur

Apr 3

Dear Arthur,

I use this specific terminology because this is the wording that aims to hurt academic freedom. I appropriate the language of the oppressors as a form of resistance. The exhibition embraces the same terminology that calls out and shames educators as a way of responding to it and battling it. Simply saying, I am using the rightwing tools to disarm its attack.

I don't think of myself - or the artists participating in the show - as dangerous. People that are trying to silence progressive / liberal / transgressive productions do think we are dangerous.

I do consider myself as a political person, and I accept the prices that are coming with it. In my opinion, it is important for artists-educators to speak out and question their ethical, conceptual and ideological frames in a public way, though I don't expect from everyone to take upon themselves the same attitudes.

I would love to hear more of your thoughts about it.

Best wishes,

RL

Apr 8

Dear Ruslana,

I think the rhetorical maneuver of appropriation has its merits. It is often required by those who find themselves marginalized by dominant discourses. It serves to neutralize the negative affect of reactionary and conservative liable/ slander. This is right and good.

On the other hand, although it is often necessary and quite clever, it is primarily deflective and as a result mainly defensive. It helps to hold and maintain ground. Its irony, parody, and humor feed a sense of self-respect against the other side's denigration. I hope you find this description both accurate and fair, as my use of the word rhetorical, is not intentionally derogatory, but instead aims at description.

At this point, I would like to place my proceeding comments at the juncture between appropriation's rhetorical function and its merit. This is where I would like to suggest that what is needed is more proactive. A construction of language which advances steadily, assuredly, and more decisively into a terrain in which reactionary ideology cannot help but fail.

In terms of political commitments, I am pursuing moments when politics as currently understood develops into something worthy of commitment. This statement is both a humility facing the poverty of current discourse and a prideful affront to the ideological frames of which I am expected to transfer my desires and aspirations.

If you would like to develop a way in which I could participate in light of my reservations, I would be pleased. If such is not possible, I look forward to future your exhibitions and If you like further opportunities to participate.

In struggle with luck,  
Arthur

Apr 9

Dear Arthur,

Thank you for writing, this is wonderful. One way I see you participating considering your reservations, is by publishing our email exchange, or an edited version of that, while us continuing our dialogue. The dialogue can be published in the book I am putting together for the show that compiles the challenges/strategies artists-educators are dealing with. If you agree, I will expect you to put a work in the exhibition, together with the textual component. Please let me know if you have another idea in mind.

This discourse is very much necessary.

Best wishes,  
R

Apr 9

Ruslana,

Thank you for such an enthusiastic reply. I like your idea. I look forward to more dialogue.

Arthur

Apr 9

Arthur,

Great, now I would like to address some of the issues you touched in your email:

First, you wrote that the approach is "primarily deflection and as a result primarily defensive."

I think that the approach is not deflection because it mirrors back, to all sides, that now are required to reconsider the word "dangerous." This approach can be defensive, but in this case, in my opinion, it is used to empower a community and provide a platform for crucial discourses while connecting many of the practitioners, both within and outside the institutional framework.

Second, I am not interested in denigrating anyone. While you can read humor, irony and even parody into this show, I take its premise seriously. Similarly, I don't take the existence of websites such as professors watchlist lightly. To me these types of sites signify a movement that we as cultural producers must oppose to through loud and clear channels.

I am very interested in your following proposal and what to hear more about it: "A construction of language which advances steadily, assuredly, and more decisively into a terrain in which reactionary ideology cannot help but fail."

Apr 12

Ruslana,

I am concerned that we consider certain rhetorical tactics and their valence at various scales. I apologize if anything I said challenged the sincerity of the exhibition or the intention behind its development. In addition, to that preemptive apology, I do not think parody, humor or irony are denigrating things but in fact important genres, worthy of development. I also think defensive strategies are important. I do not believe you had any intention to denigrate anyone.

If you'd indulge me a bit further, it would be interesting to consider the optical metaphors employed here. I wonder if power via a discourse, or power discursively employed\* works the way light does. Can force be reflected the way light can be reflected. This sequence interests me (mirror, light, enlightenment, reflection, introspection, knowledge etc.) This is a fruitful thread to follow...

But, my sense of what would be proactive would be what make us into protagonists. I mean that a protagonist is not the good guy or the bad guy, but the one who drive the plot. Our task is simpler. One side wants to control the pacing and the context thus control the plot..

I think the best way to deal with those who equate simple rhetorical maneuvers with force is to place them into a context where simple force is impractical. These are just notes. I would need your help as you would need mine. Cooperative relations complicate the force of certain rhetorical manners.

Arthur

Apr 19

Dear Arthur,

I apologize for my delayed response. The past week was very busy.

I love the light metaphor, and please do not apologize regarding your initial reading of the project. Recently, I am thinking a lot about refractions. I am thinking about us not being able to have or receive clear reflections; that things, the world and us, to ourselves, are not fully illuminated. I am thinking about darkness, and that we must remember that it is always here although we perceive ourselves as already enlightened. I love light refractions because they are not being projected in a simple trajectory, rather they deflect. There is no such thing as a perfect understanding, seamless translation, total knowledge. I am also thinking about the light/wave experiment, which still blows my mind. It reminds me, that yes, indeed, we are the protagonists, because Reality is a potential that we keep constantly producing.

I completely agree with your cooperative relations statement. A lot of what I do is devoted to this premise (or is it promise?). I do think that working through and as cooperatives is powerful within the art (and elsewhere), but it also points to some inherent problems of the field. One would be relational aesthetics, that, well, I am in a complete disagreement with that trend. The second one is the hyper-individualization, professionalization, and conformism of many artists.

Thank you for writing,

Ruslana

***The Dangerous Professors***, a curatorial project exhibiting over one hundred and fifty artists—educators, acts as a counter-action to the pervasive right-wing impulse whose spirit jeopardizes civil, artistic and academic freedom by calling out, shaming, and harming those it opposes. The exhibition responds by first inviting artists who define themselves as educators to participate, the result of which creates a list of art educators that can be deemed, in the current political climate, as dangerous. Second, the exhibition portrays the spectrum of art done by the presumably “dangerous” educators, and has the potential to become “dangerous art.” Third, the exhibition provides the following publication that voices the individual concerns of the artists-educators participating in the show. The text will structure a platform for public dialogue that furthers the development of strategies for radical education.

Participating artists, by alphabetical order: Tal Adler, Nelly Agassi, Yair Agmon, Alberto Aguilar, Hiba Ali, Brandon Alvendia, Claire Arcander, Rajee Aryal, Claire Ashley, Yochai Avrahami, Ido Bar El, Brit Barton, Leslie Baum, Lauren Beck, Erik Beehn, Sarah and Joseph Belknap, Marissa Lee Benedict, Iris Bernblum, Troy Briggs, Austen Brown, Stella Brown, Alex Chitty and her Intro to Sculpture SP17 Class, Thomas Comerford, Kate Conlon, Adam Crosson, Matty Davis, Dana DeGiulio, Jen Delos Reyes, Joshua Demaree, Patrick F. Durgin, Trey Duvall, Liz Ensz, Hope Esser, Adam Farcus, Hannah Feldman, Jase Flannery, Eric Fleischauer, Danny Floyd, Benjamin Foch, Lindsey French, Rainer Ganahl, Alex Gartelmann, Beate Geissler and Oliver Sann, Rami George, Azadeh Gholizadeh, Danny Giles, Adela Goldbard, Kevin Goodrich, Alex Goss, Joseph Grigely, Dan Gunn, Ilan Gutin, Yoav Haibach, Lise Haller Baggesen, Kate Hampel, Stevie Hanley, Laura Hart Newlon, Cameron Harvey, Jessica Harvey, Joe Havel, Daniel Hojnacki, Boyang Hou, Cathy Hsiao, Christalena Hughmanick, Lesley Jackson, Jaclyn M. Jacunski, Mathew Paul Jinks, James Kao, Leonardo Kaplan, James Pepper Kelly, Annie Kielman, Alexandra Lakind, Jason Lazarus, Kirsten Leenaars, Nazafarin Lotfi, Daniel Luedtke, Robert Lundberg, Liz McCarthy, Jennifer and Heather Mackenzie, Jill Magi, Jesse Malmed, Devin Mays, Billy McGuinness and Rhoda Rosen, Sarah Mendelsohn, Arthur Menezes Brum, Orr Menirom, Roland Miller, Moronauta, Jason Morris, Eileen Mueller, Yue Nakayama, Kia Miakka Natisse, Abbé Odunlami, Gilad Ophir, Allyson Packer, Roni Packer, Jason Pallas, Dan Paz, Lee Sparks Pembleton, Juan-Carlos Perez, Tony Perucci, Eli Petel, Phil Peters, Benjamin Peterson, Drew Peterson, Cole Pierce, Sreshta Rit Premnath, Jeff Prokash, Chris Reeves, Elliot Reichert, Gonzalo Reyes Rodriguez, Josh Rios, Roe Rosen, E. Aaron Ross, Greg Ruffing, Alison Ruttan, Avi Sabah, Gabriela Salazar, James Scheuren, Matthew A. Schlagbaum, Fred Schmidt-Arenales, Gregory Sholette, Teresa Silva in collaboration with Sebastián Aguirre, Suzanne Silver, Edra Soto, Felipe Steinberg, Antoinette Suiter, Dov Talpaz, Kenneth Tam, Marvin Tate, Ryan Thompson, Ruby Thorkelson, Diana Torres, Martha Tuttle, Udit Upadhyaya, Rambod Vala, Ramyar Vala, Rodrigo Valenzuela, Philip Vanderhyden, Amy Vogel, Allison Wade, Lisa Walcott, Kingston Waller in collaboration with Kelly Lloyd, Julie Weber, Tyrone Williams, R. Treshaun Williamson, Student of Ryan Coffey, Masha Zusman and Valery Bolotin.

-Many thanks to Troy Briggs, Lee Ann Norman, Max Guy, Jordan Jamerson and Steve Palmer for the assistance with the show, we are endlessly grateful.

**Tal Adler** teaches his two kids that humans are a part of the natural world, not superior to it. That religions are human inventions, not cosmic truths. He tells them that zoos are prisons for animals who didn't commit crimes. He tells them about the history of colonialism, slavery, genocide, occupation, racism. In addition to all that, he's an artist.

In her class the tool box is vulnerability, fragility & anxieties. Through a process of alchemy, **Nelly Agassi** teaches her students to sculpt their emotions; to thread and weave their personal landscapes into a patched quilt work of biographies. The personal histories create a political scenery. Agassi educates her students to find and strengthen their spine, turning their disadvantages and faults to gold.

**Yair Agmon**, Graduate Student and Teaching Assistant at the California Institute of the Arts, Valencia. In both his work and his classes Agmon asks his viewers and student to constantly de-colonize their work, through reading Black, Latin, Palestinian, Indian and non-western thinkers, that overturn the subjugation of knowledge and nationalism. Agmon demanded his audience to commit to community engagement and social justice practices.

In a time where information and historical accuracy are being devalued in the society by the state and by the media, a challenge to refuse the reductiveness of news and manipulation of facts arises as the most troublesome. As the malleability of history can only lead to a rise of nationalism and the exclusion of all those deemed inappropriate. It is in light of this that in my practice and pedagogy I look for and foreground methodologies that provide information as well as aesthetics on the multitude of histories, cultures and identities.

**Alberto Aguilar** is full-time, tenured instructor of studio art at Harold Washington College, one of the City Colleges of Chicago. Since he first started teaching there in 2006, Alberto has been dedicated to exposing his students to contemporary art practices rather than academic approaches, which he views as a form of institutional racism. Aguilar initiated "Pedestrian Project" that focused on making contemporary art practices more accessible to students. The project invited working artists (particularly artists of color) to engage with the college students by organizing exhibitions. In 2015 Alberto was reprimanded by an administrator for writing an article in Newcity that mentioned a negative comment his daughter overheard her high school teacher say about Harold Washington College.

Bringing in other voices to the classroom amplifies your own while giving you new approaches. Learn about the students' interests before teaching them yours.

- Take the students out of the classroom whenever possible, into the surrounding and far reaching neighborhoods.
  - If there is an option to look at an actual artwork instead of a projected image of it, go see it right away.
  - Have the students teach each other all the skills they have before giving your first lesson.
  - Deviate from the course outline whenever an exciting opportunity that involves risk presents itself.
  - On a semester that you don't use a course outline, have the students write one as a final exam after the experience is had. This can take the form of a song, a lecture, a list, a play list, a performance, a video, proverbs, a proclamation, a manifesto, a graph, a diagram, a family tree, a timeline, a map, club rules, or a standard course outline.
  - On the first day of class have students write out their collective knowledge, on the board, of a subject related to the course without you being in the room. Upon your return have them present it to you.
  - Show things in class that you know little about, but are interested in, so that you have a fresh reaction to it and learn something new along the way.
  - Open the shades in the classroom to bring in natural light and turn off the standard fluorescent lights.
- Allow students to tell stories at the start of class and let something in these stories be the starting point for the direction the class takes that day.
- Allow your students to see your creative process at work by the way you guide the class. Allow for failure; allow for chance; allow for intuition; allow for repetition; allow for questions.
  - What can you do on the first day of class to surprise the students and challenge their idea of what school can be?
  - Allow for sleep in class as long as the students retell their dream when they awake. Always be willing for your teaching philosophy to expand and borrow from others.

- Ask students' advice about the next direction the class should take so that they are part of its making and outcome.
- Set up constraints and frameworks to enhance class efficiency. Encourage students to do the same on their own to enhance individual efficiency.
- Take breaks whether or not you feel they are deserved.
- Don't teach the same thing semester-to-semester; take a new path.
- Be willing to break the systems, structures, and rules that you set up.
- One term, have the students make a single work that lasts the entire semester. Another term, have students make 100 works in one semester's time.
- Take a walk as a class with no end in mind and see what you find along the way. Assign students to do this on their own as well.
- Put yourself and the class in an uncomfortable situation before introducing yourself in order to overcome fear and restraints.
- Play is a form of research and a way to test the pliability of objects, systems and structures.
- Instead of trying to find balance in an uncomfortable situation learn to be comfortable being out of balance.
- If you don't have direction or a desire to work, start with a repetitive action. This will create a stimulus in the brain and generate new directions and possibilities.
- Always leave room to expand your philosophy.

**Hiba Ali**, a Graduate and Teaching Assistant at University of Texas Austin, requires her students to conduct mandatory experimentation with questionable new and old technology in ways they were not meant to be used. Her pedagogy explores contentious media and pushing boundaries of all assumed categories.

#### **Concerns**

- A) Address politics
- B) Openness and vulnerability
- C) "Diversity"/ difference

#### **Strategies**

- A) Not being afraid to make work that pushes the boundaries (in an intentional way) as to what we are comfortable talking about.
- B) Being okay with the fact that you don't know something, you can't be an expert at everything. Therefore, having a frank conversation, asking questions, about what we know and don't leads to intellectual growth and community building.
- C) Difference within the academy - pointing out and working towards filling in the gaps of who isn't present and what we don't talk about in our discourses.

Chicago-based artist, curator, and educator **Brandon Alvendia** has taught art for nearly 15 years with various institutions, serving both at-risk and very-extremely-not-at-risk-at-all populations alike, as well as independently through his art practice (none of which officially bears the title of Professor, though he won't correct students who call him that.) Alvendia is known to self-publish and freely distribute radical-leftist propaganda through his art-publishing house Silver Galleon Press and encourages others to do the same because of the low ROI on art history textbooks. In addition, he prefers to teach by example and use his curatorial practice to collaborate with students, former students, and the general public instead of exploiting them for free labor as art-assistant interns. Alvendia agrees with the most recent student evaluation on the review website Rate My Professors that states, "...he sometimes tries to make more meaning than there actually is, or insists there should be meaning behind everything." (He also agrees with another earlier appraisal on the same website that claims he is, "dope".)

I am currently on brief hiatus from institutional teaching (through an unofficial ad-hoc DIY "sabbatical") and meditating on how to ameliorate the sunk-cost feeling of the part-time adjunct hustle gig culture by returning to the studio to hone my 3 R's (Reading, Writing, and Resisting).

I believe the large-scale corporate models of learning exhibit a cumbersome top-down institution-centered approach and am instead more interested in advocating for the alternative in a smaller-scaled neighborhood

cultural center model that functions as a grass-roots educational model that is student/teacher/subject-centered.

I have concern over educational model of winner-takes all mindset of art education that instills an unreasonable goal of superstardom over a more middle class ethos of the working artist. However, the current market model for teaching/learning leaves little room to support otherwise so my recourse is to combat a certain acute cognitive dissonance by attempting to subvert the complexities of institutional structures from within by exploiting the opportunities given to me when available.

***Claire Arctander** guides students of all ages through contemporary art exhibitions at the Museum of Contemporary Art and Weinberg/Newton Gallery. She encourages gallery visitors to ask critical questions, to express their thoughts and opinions, and to make their own art.*

**-Concern:** Although I served as an adjunct professor at the City Colleges and UIC for a total of 5 years, I now teach in gallery settings where I work with new groups for usually only 1-3 hours at a time. One of my ongoing concerns as an educator in this context is rapidly creating a rapport with students in order to really get into discussing the artwork's content.

**-Strategy:** With each new group, I do an interactive introduction, however brief - to share a bit about myself and to learn about their previous experiences with art. With the current Merce Cunningham retrospective show at the MCA, I have incorporated a movement exercise into the beginning of my tours, in order to help students get into their bodies and into the moment. Younger students are typically much more game to jump into surprising or uncomfortable discussions or situations - groups of adults or college students often need much more coaxing - which I always find surprising and NOT surprising at once.

**-Concern:** When introducing students to contemporary art that they have never seen before, I hope for them to link the work to their lived experience and the present moment, but also to situate the work in a longer arc of history.

**-Strategy:** I first encourage students to share their initial, gut responses to the art and to make connections to their life/current events. Then, as the conversation deepens, I often introduce references to earlier art/political moments in order to better contextualize the work and help students understand a trajectory of art and activism over time. For instance, I recently led a teen workshop at the MCA about the show *Riot Grrrls* - a group show of large, abstract paintings made by women. The curatorial conceit of this exhibition arguably risks tokenizing women artists by connecting a group of painters based on their gender identities. But rather than focusing on this critique, I allowed students space for their own interpretations of and connections with the work. Then I taught them a bit about the actual Riot Grrrl movement and we discussed whether abstraction can express political resistance (the students resoundingly agreed that it can!). The students ended the experience by making their own creative protest signs, incorporating abstraction into their messages.

**-Concern:** I want exposure to contemporary artwork to engender not only a sense of contemplation amongst students but also to encourage them to take action.

**-Strategy:** Beyond encouraging a thorough contextual understanding of artwork, I hope for much of the art that I present to students to encourage them to their own action - whether this is artmaking, other activism, or simply more critical consumption of mass mediated culture. I strive for discussion of the art to connect with ways that individuals can directly intervene in the many challenging situations and discussions of our day. The exhibitions at Weinberg/Newton Gallery, which has an explicitly social justice-facing mission, allow excellent opportunities for this kind of direct engagement. For the gallery's last exhibition, titled *House*, the artist collaborative Red Line Service used the bulk of the show's budget to house two Chicagoans formerly experiencing homelessness for a year. The gallery was therefore left quite bare, save for a few objects including a refrigerator with a map of local grocery stores and a grocery list affixed to the front of it. Gallery visitors were encouraged to directly participate in the show's action by buying groceries for the two newly housed people. A group of high schoolers from Noble Academy were so moved by the show and the activities that we did in response to it that they implemented a food



drive at their school and made a collaborative artwork to give to the newly housed people to display in their apartment. Seeing these students develop their own way to engage in homelessness in their community was incredibly inspiring.

***Rajee Aryal** is a woman, a person of color, and an immigrant, so she may be deemed dangerous for no other reason at all. She is also the mother of a young American boy to whom she teaches about the atrocities of the American past, the injustices sanctioned and supported by government, and the insidious overreach of the free market instead of imparting tales of American greatness. She also teaches the value of criticality and the need to contemplate an alternative to capitalism—all subjects that may be deemed “un-American.”*

**Challenge:** The little-talked-about lesson learned from the presidential election—that misogyny is ok because even a public example of it failed to stop a person from holding the highest office in the country and even the world.

**Strategy:** Reading and learning about women who have challenged the patriarchic social order including scientists, philosophers, leaders (Often of other nations!), artists, and women in other varied professions; questioning the use of language that perpetuates ideas of “real” men and “ideal” women; analyzing popular culture and media images that help propagate denigrating notions of women’s bodies or roles in society, even when such images seem innocuous.

**Challenge:** Increased racism and feelings of not belonging in America.

**Strategy:** Provide reading materials and examples of the countless immigrants and people of color who have contributed to American culture and society in meaningful ways; come up with ways racism can be challenged even in our everyday discourse and behavior; have open, candid, and philosophical conversations about the long history of racism and the reasons behind it including its relationship with language, biology and environs.

**Challenge:** A general hopelessness about the future in the vein of, “If this person, after all that he’s said and done, can become the president then how can we ever be hopeful about the country?”

**Strategy:** Learning about the process of American presidential elections, how it is possible for one candidate to win even when more people in the country voted for the other; teaching about empathy and understanding for reasons why so many people in bad economic situations may have voted the way they did; being open about prevalent feelings of racism and sexism in the country despite the continuous struggle to bring about changes and hence the need to continue the fight.

***Claire Ashley**, Adjunct Full Professor at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, requires that every student’s individual voice become part of their work. Quirks, peculiarities, polarities, arguments, desires, worries, doubts, beliefs are sought out. Homogeneity is banned.*

***Yochai Avrahami** is the director of a BA program and an art teaching certificate at Oranim College, in north Israel. The college, which for many years had a homogeneous student population from the surrounding northern kibbutz, has in recent years received a wider range of students from different religious backgrounds, from Jewish, Palestinian, and Druze cities, towns and villages. Despite the welcomed change, the terms of acceptance still force compliance to a homogeneous society. In the past year, Avrahami changed the criteria for receiving students in the art department, but now this step is being perceived [by administration] as threatening the “academic quality” of those interested in learning art and their heterogeneity as a Jewish audience.*

*Professor **Ido Bar El**, a painter, teaches since 1996 at Hamidrasha School of Art, Ramat Hasharon and Beit Berl College, Kalmaniya. Bar El also teaches since 1997 at Bezalel Academy for Arts, Jerusalem, where he was the Head of the Art Department between the years 2003 and 2010. Bar El took part in public protest, reading of soldiers’ memories, sharing their military service in the occupied west bank, organized by “Shoverim Shtika.” Shovrim Shtika,” “ that translates to “Breaking The Silence,” is an Israeli Non-Governmental Organization established by Israel Defense Forces veterans who collect and provide testimonies about their military service in the occupied territories since the*

*Second Intifada. The organization was attacked by the Israeli government and accused of acts of treason. A year after Bar El's public reading, he was accused by an organized right wing campaign of being "a traitor " and "a collaborator" over billboards and the internet.*

**Brit Barton** is Teaching Fellow in the Department of Visual Arts at the University of Chicago. In her pedagogy, as in her practice, there is an inquiry and reaction against the status-quo of institutions. Working against the traditional and patriarchal methods of object-making, her students are tasked with utilizing time and space in their work to reconsider what an artistic practice is within the hypercapitalist environment of contemporary society.

My persistent concerns are bound in the restraints of academia. I am often working against the peculiarities and pressure cooker mindset of the University setting. How do I teach students that visual art is more than the object, that sometimes the unexpected is as fruitful as the calculated, and that success is relative and not necessarily a letter grade?

In reality, I know that most of these concerns are at times a projection of my own insecurities. I struggle with control. I work with theoretical frameworks that are less fixed and refined, but intentionally so. I accept the improvisation that comes with teaching because art is a fluid thing, and it is important that it drives an authentic dialogue that cultivates trust. In this, I have found that establishing an ethos of open participation and adaptive methods allows students to push themselves into experimentation and accept failure as a production measure to success.

**Leslie Baum** teaches outside the academia and believes that everyone can make art and that engaging in such making has life-enhancing potential. Her students are both children and adults. She teaches the general public at the Art Institute of Chicago and people at the Thresholds Bridge South, a mental health service provider.

#### **How to open up the idea of what drawing can be and do.**

I am challenging my students to think about drawing as a process more than as an outcome or a product. Many of my students get stuck on the idea of accurate representation and perfect drawing. I find that these preconceived notions limit their ability to both learn and enjoy the actual experience of drawing. Drawing, as an experience, is about the processes of sitting still, spending time engaged in careful observation, and then working with a set of mark making tools and strategies to make an image. I believe deeply that connecting with this whole experience holds profoundly more value for the student as a person and as an artist than focusing on the final drawing product.

Creating projects and propositions that encourage experimentation and play.

#### **How to help my students build skills and confidence.**

I suppose my approach is to accept each student where they are in relation to their experience of making art and then act and work toward incremental growth. I also work to foster a feeling of pleasure in the process of learning.

#### **I strive to create a space where students feel safe to express their ideas and to be vulnerable as they learn.**

I try to project my support and positive attitude into the dynamic of the group. I welcome anyone into the art program regardless of their experience with making. This work of welcoming is primarily implemented by my long time students, who have firsthand felt the benefits of making and want their peers to share in the experience. The art room is usually filled with such powerful good vibes and music that people who are not in the class are drawn in and just want to hang out and visit. My dedicated students then encourage to the visitors to join the class. Once a new recruit joins our ranks, the established students are the first to provide verbal and emotional support and encouragement.

**Lauren Beck** is a Lecturer at the University of Chicago and a teaching artist with Chicago Public Schools. Whether she is working with MFA students or with 6<sup>th</sup> graders, she believes it is important not to mold students' work in the image of

*what she believes to be good. Meeting students where they are at, helping them to discover the questions that will sustain them and to make the best possible version of their work, can be its own form of resistance.*

- 1) One of my pedagogical methods has been to come up with an excess of rules with the goal of guiding students to work outside of their comfort zones. By my design, some of these rules are byzantine or not necessarily clear. Sometimes these rules are configured to short-circuit potential interpretations of the assignment that can tend to be overly simplistic. Lately I wonder if this approach is in some ways cynical. I do think that the rules satisfy that part of the brain that wants clear instructions, that is understandably uncomfortable in a space of not-knowing. I am constantly thinking about how to marry structure and openness in my teaching methodology. Can I teach myself to ask the questions that I don't already know the answers to?
- 2) When I first started teaching foundations classes to mostly non-art majors, I designed my syllabus to, in many ways, mimic the process that I use in making my own work. I assigned texts that had been seminal for me as a young artist, including texts by David Wojnarowicz, Julia Kristeva, Maya Deren and Hardt & Negri. A not insignificant number of students, on my initial evaluations, stated that they had no idea what I was talking about. I took this to heart and, while my philosophy of teaching remained the same, I eliminated readings in my classes and asked my students to throw themselves into the physicality of process. I have found that the hard work of making is an easier way to get students to broaden or even shift their perspectives. That, for me, is the place where discourse can begin.
- 3) I am wary of inadvertently training high-level bullshit artists. In critiques, I try to find supportive ways to encourage students to use language incisively, to frame meaningful questions about the work before us.

**Erik Beehn**, is an Artist and Adjunct Instructor at Columbia College Chicago that believes the classroom should be an environment which fosters risk. Beehn works towards creating an academic experience that helps to expand student understandings of the world, as artists responding to those understandings, and as participants of that world who can make positive change in their communities.

- 1- Helping students to feel valued as students, artists, and individuals
- 2- Helping students to feel heard, and to better know how to use their voices
- 3- Helping to provide a platform for dialogue to discuss ways to actively create positive change in the world

It is important to not feel alone, to know that these feelings are shared, and that collectively we can leave the world a better place than we inherited it.

**Sarah and Joseph Belknap**, lecturers at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, demand their students defend their work by addressing the complexities of histories, economies, and ecologies. Every student must establish a complex framework and way of understanding themselves and others. No one brings bullshit to the table. They also believe in global warming and require students to read and to watch videos about science and our planet.

### **Class and wealth**

1. The students in our school are enormously divided in class and wealth, making it very hard for some of them to make the work they want to make. Those students feel the weight of being full time students with jobs, families and bills and the pressure of not being able to spend money on their work. Both of us have been on this end and work hard with these students so that they can take so these larger, more ambitious project ideas and turn them into something more reasonable. We always tell our students that your excuse cannot be time or money because you will never have enough time or money.
2. Visual cues at the school demand that it become more corporate such as specially designed furniture, brightly painted walls and monitors flood our school. More forms have to be filled out each year. (Being spontaneous with the class is frowned upon with the strictness of the syllabus.) The school feels clean and not like an art school—there is no dirt, no filth, or graffiti in the bathrooms. This is one we don't know how to work with. We are strong believers in plastic rolls so that we can completely cover a room to let a

student do something that would be considered outrageous. We bring our students to our studio; we have a campfire, and let them see how most artists make. We let them get dirty in our studio and do the things that they cannot at school.

3. Wastefulness and a general lack of concern about what we buy and the true cost of those decisions. We should take more self-sacrificial stands to force change and imagination. As a whole, we respond every time we consume anything. It would produce radical change, maybe radical empathy, if we thought more about how our decisions affect others and those decisions could possibly inspire a future creative force. This is something we are constantly talking about with students, colleagues, friends and family.

**Marissa Lee Benedict**, an Instructor in Sculpture and Fiber at the University of Oregon, publicly describes her practice as one "of instigation." Along with her collaborator and partner David Rueter (Assistant Professor, Art & Technology, University of Oregon), Benedict is currently spending federal monies from the NEA to produce "infrastructural" art—art with a sympathy toward WPA era "public works" projects—for Gary, IN. In 2016 Benedict and Rueter were commissioned to produce work for an exhibition that openly criticized the oil industry and environmental contamination in Southeast Chicago ("Petcoke: Tracing Dirty Energy," Museum of Contemporary Photography, Columbia College; funded by the National Defense Resource Council). In the classroom she distributes resources and invites guest speakers that align with a socialist and social justice agenda, requiring that students consider their artistic gestures as historically contextualized by concerns such as feminism, "Maintenance art," racial inequity, gender violence, environmental justice, and legacies of colonialism and globalization.

-- "The bubble effect" -- Having moved recently from Chicago to teach part-time at a public university in Oregon, I find myself coming up against what I'm calling "the bubble effect" of working with students who generally enter the university community from primarily white, west coast, suburban contexts. Although I have students of many different class backgrounds and political leanings, for the most part there is minimal racial diversity at the university, or in the university town. The west has an oddly casual way of erasing and forgetting histories -- perhaps something about the resilience of the "wilderness" that still lingers here, quietly sidelining social struggles with the seemingly "eternal" or "resilient" timescale presented by the natural landscape.

A large portion of my students have never been on the "wrong side" of a system of authority and see little cause to question authority (my own or others). Many have difficulty even recognizing that these systems exist. This is not to say I don't have wonderful, aware, and critical students; they are just in the minority, and seem overwhelmed at the effort it takes to care -- to have something at stake -- when the majority of their peers are happy to forget or to look away. My attempts to combat this so far have been rooted in trying to provide a sense of multiple and parallel contexts and positions from which one might make work. To this end I've been skyping in artists to be wormholes into other worlds; taking field trips and walks; and asking them to make work that addresses their local environment -- to find the politics they see as distant macrocosms played out, at different scales and amplitudes, in our microcosm. With each class I'm trying to figure out how to move with them from inside to out -- while at the same time working to recognize the different bodies of knowledge my students bring to the classroom, and to acknowledge the new conditions in which I am now operating.

-- "The skills economy": Understandably, there is much worry and concern from my undergraduate art students that they gain "tangible" skills before graduating and leaving the university "bubble," saddled with debt and challenging prospects in the job-market. However, the skills my students see as of value -- the skills they have determined will assist them in the job-market -- are not critical thinking or analytic skills but "technical" skills ("making" skills) related to tools, procedures and labor. I've been thinking about a suggested binary between critical and technical skills through the projected logic of logistics, as discussed by Stefano Harney and Fred Moten in The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning & Black Study. In a 2011 Youtube video, Harney describes a world in which content is hollowed out in favor of form: "... we justify our work not by the content of it... [but by a] a transferable skill [it possesses], a skill that can be plugged in somewhere else, a skill can be adapted, a skill that can flow and be connected somewhere else... the logistical subject is that subject who can walk into any situation and can plug this hand in there, and that foot in there and this tongue in some other socket and become a laboring conduit for things that seemed previously incongruous, that previously seemed like they couldn't flow through each other... " The ultimate, flexible, neoliberal laboring subject that my students feel they need to become (that I often feel I need to become) is worrisome to me, and is something I'm not quite sure how to combat. I can't offer them a

new economy; or a new job market outside the institution. But I can alert them; ask them to consider how to build differently; how to employ themselves with an awareness; and encourage them to think about the creation of critical content, alongside (and sometime counter to) the transferrable skills that they need to operate in the greater economy.

-- "Non-Tenure Track Faculty (NTTF or "Adjunct") precarity" : The conditions of precarity faced by adjunct, part-time, semi-employed faculty balancing multiple jobs without health care or job security beyond the immediate present has been discussed much in our community, but it is something I feel (affectively) and think about on a weekly, sometimes daily, basis. In doing my taxes the other day I realized I worked for five different universities last year as both educator, artist, and an administrator, and I still barely make a living wage -- a confusing feeling when I simultaneously feel, think, and know how fortunate I am to be where I am, with access to the resources I have access to. The university communities, and to the brain trust stored in these communities, is remarkable and I am grateful to participate when and where I can. At the same time I know that gratitude is what universities -- and the art world generally -- profit off of (the labor, energy, time, investment I give above and beyond what I am paid for), but I can't imagine any other "day job" for myself (having tried many) that feeds me the way teaching does. Precarious conditions are sometimes self-perpetuating and self-stabilizing... and I'm along for the ride.

*Iris Bernblum* could be deemed "dangerous" because she loves her students. She loves them enough to demand critical thinking, and she loves them enough to demand they face what's in front of them; to confront their 'humanity, and all the messiness it entails without self-censorship. It's so important to be present fully and completely; eyes, ears, and mouths wide open.

At this moment, I feel the biggest challenges for me as an educator are issues related to censorship and control. It's a very heated time politically, which is creating an atmosphere that is charged with fear. In many ways, we are facing things as we have never faced them before (at least for this generation) which is a good thing, but it's also creating a backlash and silencing in ways that I do not feel are conducive to productive dialogue. My strategies thus far have been to confront students from as many angles with as much text and artwork as possible that deals with controversial issues on all levels head on. I try to focus on work that gives one no choice but to react, which then, naturally, leads to a dialogue in which something is at stake. As soon as that is felt, everyone wakes up, has something to say, and often constructive things come about.

*Troy Briggs*, a Lecturer at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, lectures about the dangers and signs of cultural and symbolic appropriation. Showing students that it is important to recognize the façade of a building as a mask, that locks are symbols, cultures are not mascots and that wood stain named walnut is still just paint on pine.

Institutions of higher education are following business models more often than pedagogical ones.

- the way that I combat this in class: I show Richard Serra's "television delivers people" and discuss how they are what gives the school value (vs. capital gains).

Our government seems to see nothing wrong with that.

- the way that I combat this in class: We talk about the meaning of politics via 'Polis' reminding them We are our society and our government derives its power from our complicity.

That our population seems to see nothing wrong with that.

- the way that I combat this in class: I emphasize the importance of seeing things.

*Austen Brown*, an Artist and Educator in Chicago, requires students to make work that is irrelevant. In asking students to carry out a trajectory of thought that works against "true free market values", as well as value found in the art market, we leave behind a world that is deemed valuable by the elite, and enter one that advances notions of equality and openness.

1) Students prefer the result over the process. I try to teach them to forget about the work, and focus on the

questions and the practice. Whatever is made from this can be interesting.

Strategy - Give them interesting prompts, and less formal direction.

2) It's difficult convincing institutions that what I'm interested in teaching matters to them. These institutions prefer segmented art practices that are easy to administer and receive funding for.

Strategy - Continue to do work outside the institutions, and continue to harp on them to accept younger ideas. I feel this is an "aggressive" waiting game.

**Stella Brown**, an artist and curator living in Chicago, IL, creates work that explores our current geologic moment- the transition into the Anthropocene epoch. She proposes that for the first time in human history we are knowingly creating a geologic period of our own and she is working to collect and document its geology. The presentation of man-made detritus as geology asks the viewer to not only acknowledge mankind's permanent changes to the planet, but to also consider its possible value scientifically and as a curiosity or specimen to collect and admire.

In presenting art, my main concern is the information contained within the installation or work is imparted to the viewer in an engaging way, that allows even those without an art history education or knowledge of contemporary art to enjoy and absorb the information. There is often a source text or written statement attached to my projects, and knowing that not every visitor will choose to read this, I attempt to bring them into the content in other ways. I have begun using the store as a structure for exhibitions. I believe presenting objects within the framework of a shop gives them more value and allows the visitor to interact with the objects in a familiar and easily accessible way. I have employed this model several times and found that offering something small and cheap for people to own activate their interest in the greater space and in the subject.

Another concern of mine is to impart scientific and historical information in an interesting way. The reason I have chosen to do this through art rather than natural history or writing, for example, is that it allows for much flexibility and space for play. I strive to make an artwork that is content rich, but at the same time humorous and fun. My work often deals with the environment and the permanent changes humans have brought to the earth. This is a heavy and depressing topic and I am not interested in preaching or finger pointing. Instead, I prefer to approach the subject with the attitude of accepting what we have done and trying to move on from where we are. What is interesting about the giant holes we have made for mines, or how are invasive plants changing the ecosystems of our cities, or what beautiful, strange materials have we created through industrial processes?

**Alex Chitty**, a Graduate of and Lecturer at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, requires students make an oath where they solemnly swear not to care about "making an ass out of themselves." After demonstrating that much of the information covered in class is available online for free, students participate in activities, readings, thought experiments, and dialogue that help them reap the benefits of physically being in a room with other humans. Rather than solely focusing on academic abilities, Chitty's classes cultivate skills indispensable in the nurturing of group and individual creative capacities.

"Salvage Accumulation" is a term used by Anna Tsing in her article of the same name, subtitled "The Structural Effects of Capitalist Generativity." I found it impossible not to see parallels with the concerns I currently face as an educator at SAIC. Myself and many other part time educators are delegated classes that require us to create entirely new curricula from scratch every semester, year after year. This system eliminates opportunities to build on what was learned from teaching prior courses and demands that we use our unpaid summers and winters for the development of cutting-edge classes rather than allow educators to focus our energies into our creative practices. It makes us too busy to socialize, fuel our practices, care for ourselves and maybe even implement courses that align with our practice or provide students with the quality of education they deserve, given the exorbitant rate of tuition. All this, of course, is expected with no job security and no health insurance.

Undergraduate Art Education is null and void without the inclusion of interpersonal skills, professional skills, organizational skills, and a liberal arts education that nourishes individuals and gives insight into how art coalesces with the rest of the big ol' world out there.

Students are afraid to make mistakes and fail. This destroys creativity and leaves no room for original thought.

The way we learn and the reasons we learn have changed. Deliberately distinguishing between disciplines is an antiquated logic. The role of student and teacher consistently flips. Information is potentially available anywhere, and as we grow we learn both where to find information and what to do with it once we have it. The physical architectural design and layout of schools and classrooms does not accommodate for these changes. Neither does the structure or schedule of individual, school-wide, citywide, national, or international classes.

**Ryan Coffey** *is a human being in a continuum of human, and other beings, that is learning, evolving, creating, sharing and finding meaning whilst in the midst of vast form and vast nothingness.*

By far my largest concern at this moment is the inherent systemic institution racism and segregation that is inherent in the structure of our educational institutions, and most pertinently, how I am helping to recreate these systems. In order to address this I attempt to remove hierarchy from my pedagogy, treating myself as a student as well, albeit, one with more life experience. I look to speak with my students rather speak at them.

The anesthetization and Disneyfication of institutions of higher learning in order for the administrative class to grow economically, while at the same time creating a protective culture, for the institutions, so that as they increase the class sizes in order fund more administration, the remove as much as possible the potential for any student to sue the school. I as yet have found a solution to this and as many others are fearful to voice any concerns due to the lack of long term job security.

Attempting to teach in a way that reaches each student, trying to be pliable in order to educate the individual students in the best manner that works for their personal experiences, strengths and challenges, while retaining the curriculum. I pay attention and change when it seems that my original notions seem to not be working.

**Thomas Comerford** *teaches an ever-changing course on contemporary non-fiction media at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. In this class, he asks that students develop a critical relationship to the media which they view or consume by studying both the rhetorical devices employed therein as well as the assumptions made by producers regarding how groups or individuals be represented. In doing so, he also insists that students examine the dynamics of power within the production of non-fiction media, and how this power might relate to their own positions and group identifications.*

**Kate Conlon** *lectures in the Art and Art History department of Columbia College Chicago. Her courses examine the ways that language, both written and visual, create the world. She implores her students to approach this constructed world with criticality, questioning all of the forces that have affected its structure so that they may contribute, through their artwork, in a responsible way.*

**Safety:** A number of my students are dealing with profound instability outside the classroom. Some have recently been affected by gun violence. Several more feel threatened by anti-immigrant sentiments or have even had their families separated by immigration enforcement. The only way I feel I can help these students in the immediate is by helping to create some feeling of a haven in the studio. Process-based studio courses lend themselves to this end as the satisfaction of making is an excellent distraction.

**Identity:** How do a student's racial, national, and gender identities (etc.) affect the way that their work is read and discussed? Do these identities also define the type of work that it is appropriate for them to create or the issues that they have the authority to discuss?

**Community:** What does it mean to be a responsible member of an artistic community? When does this responsibility result in criticality rather than support for fellow artists? What are the responsibilities of the art community as a whole to larger neighborhood or city-wide communities.

**Adam Crosson** was vocal in his opposition to Texas' S.B. No. 11, pertaining to the carrying of concealed handguns on college campuses. He signed a faculty petition that would disallow students to enter classrooms armed with a gun and voiced to his students that campus carry would potentially endanger the quality of their education and limit the University's ability to hire faculty members. Crosson feels that the studio art classroom is a place for vulnerability and the presence of loaded weapons would inhibit the University from evolving through necessary vulnerability within pedagogical praxis.

The largest challenge I think I've always faced as a student and a teacher is negotiating the relationship between impactful life experiences outside of school and their presence within. If ever asked I encourage most all of my students to spend time in outside of the institution, whether that be in between high school and undergraduate studies or prior to entering graduate school. It is my hope that a studio environment does not operate as a vacuum but necessarily opens up to the world beyond the institution. In my experiences there can be a culture of insularity within the institution and my ambitions are to open this up. I am trying to develop projects that ask students to spend time off of campus collecting and recording but also responding to real-world contexts that might be unfixed and in flux. I hope that students can balance the studio space as a kind of home base and laboratory for exploration, discussion and development.

Twice a semester I hold artist statement workshops as a way for students to improve upon their individual writing abilities. These workshops are held in the manner of group critiques in which the statements are projected and and as a class we workshop methods for improving statements. This is an opportunity for students to utilize one another as sources of knowledge potentially building a stronger cohort while improving upon student writing abilities.

***Matty Davis** is a movement-based teacher working across DIY spaces, cultural institutions, and universities—he is also wont to share studies on social media. Davis makes his students collide, with the ground, other bodies, and the systems that constitute their physicality—skeletal, metabolic, muscular . . . forcing access to primitive kinesthetic resources. Without these resources, the body risks destruction, and otherwise begins to reclaim vital embodiments lost to pedestrianism and certain technological habits.*

1. Where: I've taught at universities and colleges as a guest artist. While I appreciate these opportunities—and they are also kind of rare—I want find other contexts in which to teach, contexts which themselves impact the body—the desert, the shore, elevation . . .
2. Transcending concern for their own attractiveness as a body and mover.
3. Sometimes people are afraid to let their head touch the ground.

***Dana DeGiulio**, Adjunct Faculty at NYU, SAIC and Columbia University, has slept with two graduate students, having sought love contra the rhetorical position of teaching in a discipline without a stable evaluative mechanism beyond historical criteria notable for exclusionary politics, flatness and actual violence. Like a mosquito.*



**Jen Delos Reyes** was born in the city of Winnipeg, and educated first in its local music scene of the mid-90's infused with the energy of Riot grrrl and DIY, and then in its university. [1] How she works today is rooted in what she learned in her formative years as a show organizer, listener, creator of zines, and band member. Graduate work at the University of Regina made the space possible for her to see her work as an organizer as a key component of her continued creative work.

[1] Credit to Saul Alinsky in form, and for the reminder that often the most formative educational experiences happen outside of the classroom.

**Joshua Michael Demaree**, a Teaching Assistant at Rutgers University-Camden, actively forces his students to engage in institutional critique. Despite being hired to teach students to write, he unapologetically requires them to read texts written by authors of all genders, races, ethnicities, sexualities, and creeds. This he justifies by claiming that effective writers are, intrinsically, effective readers and that to succeed in both endeavors requires an ongoing praxis of empathy.

1. Students are jaded -- I have heard Generation Z, in which the majority of my students fall, referred to as the "woked generation." This is true from my experience but recognition only addresses half the problem. When I push my students on certain social issues, they seem quick to admit defeat. It is vital to address problems in new and manageable ways. To clearly illustrate the process by which education can lead to knowledge and knowledge can lead to action allows to students to see how their actions, no matter how seemingly minuscule, can help lead to change.
2. Students suffer from a lack of imagination -- Progressives must use the hard sell. We don't have the luxury of mincing our words because we are trying to promote an as-of-yet unknown future. We know the future can be better than the present but can't know exactly how that future will look or function. Conservatives, on the other hand, need only to look into the past to find an example of a proposed direction. *Remember how things used to be? Let's go back to that.* They have experience on their side. In this way, progressivism can seem like all problems and no answers. Students grow tired of hearing the world's woes and will often ask me *if* society can be different, not *how* it can be different. Recognizing the frustration of this scenario is vital to reassure students that while we might not be able to definitively say, for example, how future race relations will look like, that we surely have come a far way in the past one hundred years and it stands to reason that, with an eye forward, we can be in an even better place a hundred years from now.
3. Students need to know their audience -- As a composition instructor, I have to lead students through the sometimes very defeating process of translating their thoughts into intelligible writing. It is a regular exercise of mine to explain to young writers that while you may know exactly how to tie their shoes, that if they only write "take your laces in hand and tie your shoes," unknowledgeable readers won't know anything more about tying shoes than they did before reading. We can easily fill in the blanks, the leaps, the missed connections in our own mind but we fail to consider how our audience can range from skeptical to ambivalent to supportive, or unknowledgeable to amateurish to an expert. And while I cannot say for certain, I believe this disconnect is resultant in our students not yet having a fully experiential knowledge of society and the infinite spectrum of people that make it up. I often hear the sentiment: *I just can't understand how someone could think like that!* To which I implore, *Let's see if we can understand it.* Envisioning your audience is an inherently empathic skill. It's being to put yourself into another person's mind while reading your own work. Empathy is also what allows us to be introspective and giving and understanding. I run an activity in class when we are just beginning to learn argumentation where I have students pair off and chose a topic on which they disagree (I ask them to keep it silly: anti-pineapple on pizza and pro-pineapple on pizza). In order to start debating, they must work back through their own views until they find a meeting point of agreement (we both loving toppings on our pizza) and begin to work, step by step, to argue the other person to their point of view (we both can agree that the pairing salty and sweet is delicious). This is how true debate and compromise works: knowing your audience. It is infeasible to imagine a collective change without being able to first put yourself into the shoes of someone who disagrees with you.

**Patrick Durgin** teaches *The Communist Manifesto*, radical Marxist and post-Marxist thought, and literature that stresses gender queer, feminist, anti-racist and post-ableist ideology. He forces students to study and write about American literature from the perspective of democracy and the founding of the United States in irreligious, genocidal, and enslaving tactics that continue apace in various more “mainstream” disguises.

The three largest concerns I am dealing with at this moment as an educator might be, 1) a generation gap that results in my students discerning far fewer significant traits in the medium of language than I am predisposed to observe, such that we define the act of reading in increasingly incompatible ways; 2) the inability to derive a livelihood from teaching, such that students suffer from their professors’ struggle to pretend they have their “undivided attention”; 3) students’ relative ignorance of the labor practices resulting in 2 above, such that intellectual challenges appear rather to be crises of faith.

Some strategies I am implementing to overcome these challenges: 1) I designed and teach each year a course on the differences between looking and reading, and in other courses I emphasize semiotic approaches to contemporary political discourse as an approach to grammar and argumentation. 2) I interact with my students online more often than I do in person. 3) I teach labor practices and acknowledge the poverty of student life as epiphenomena.

I wish to add a fourth, for which I have no effective strategy yet. I can relay this anecdotally rather than as an ongoing “moment,” though it is probably both. For weeks after the November 2016 US presidential election, many of my students were so traumatized that they were simply unable to function for a time. We had to retrofit the syllabus to account for the election of someone who manifests the most pernicious norms of a repressed and misinformed culture. This seemed to affect young white women in particular and was linked to the president being an admitted and unrepentant sexual predator. I have never had so many total strangers say to me that they had been raped and were afraid to leave their rooms and go about life as normal.

**Trey Duvall** is a teaching fellow at the University of Houston. Duvall encourages ethical conduct within his classes, including the acceptance of racial and sexual diversity. As an art teacher, Duvall expects students to discuss and explore topics outside of the arts, such as events, in popular culture, public policy, and politics. He also encourages students to consider social context and societal implications of these current events. Duvall also asks students to reflect on social and political obligations in their role as artists.

### **Loss of truth**

Skepticism of facts and research to create better understanding ought to be compulsory habits of mind, fostered in any pedagogy. How are these habits best taught when the very idea of “truth” is on such unstable ground? Belief, feelings, and facts are different things. How can education serve the idea that fact is something that must be proven, and not simply based on belief?

### **Personal identity to group-think**

There is a growing trend that people identify with a group based on one value or idea, and then the individual believes s/he must agree with all other ideas and values to gain acceptance in the group. This dynamic leads to a loss of thought diversity and diminished refinement in the ability of individuals to entertain multiple positions at the same time. As a result, people (and the groups with which they self identify) focus interactions on proving themselves right, rather than enhancing understanding and improving common goals and outcomes.

### **Fear of cultural regression**

How do we value and include marginalized students and populations at a time when leadership is making every effort to exclude them further?

Building a micro-community within my classes is the best way I know to overcome polarization and the fear of the “other.” While the idea of starting small to enact large change is not new or radical, I believe it is the most effective strategy when confronted with such large themes. Expecting and encouraging dialogue is the best way to foster empathy and solidarity between individuals of diverse backgrounds. Building this kind of community only

happens when every individual feels valued and accepted at all times. When acceptance and community is achieved within a class, dialogue on any topic can be opened. I see facilitating this kind of environment as central to my role as an educator. I recognize that these themes are massive undercurrents in the world and America today as evidenced by any number of current events. I see my role as an educator being to help young artists and students navigate and engage our cultural moment and find their voice therein.

*Liz Enszt, a Lecturer of Sculpture and Fiber & Material Studies at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, requires that students read Marxist, Feminist, and Queer theory texts in her classes. She instructs her students to dig through the trash for art supplies.*

### **Student anxiety and exhaustion**

In class we discuss self-care tactics, especially ones that don't involve shopping. What are the ways that you can protect your mind and body from burnout? Are you getting enough sleep and healthy food? Is what you are doing enjoyable or harmful to you? How are you supporting and being supported by others in your community?

### **The lack of affordability of higher education and the lack of viable alternative models of success for young people who can't or don't want to go to college**

Teaching critical thinking is the most important part of my job as an educator. Encouraging students to identify the systems that they participate in (with or without their consent) and ask themselves if they want to be participating is key. I believe creativity doesn't happen on a "canvas," but rather, perhaps the canvas could be a place of meditation or conceptual prototyping for a practice of thought and action to be realized in life. Creativity at its best is real problem solving, proposing alternatives, asking questions of all that has been normalized.

### **The precarity and lack of sustainability for part-time faculty at SAIC and at institutions across the country**

I believe that all actions are pedagogical, in and out of the classroom. If as educators we are modeling some kind of success, and our example of what success is includes a lack of diversity, being overworked, and without real job security, then what are we really teaching?

*Hope Esser, a Lecturer at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, talks about sex.*

As an educator, one of my biggest concerns is the cost of higher education and the loans that students are taking out to attend the school where I teach -- the school where I also took out loans to attend. After a recent event at SAIC, I am concerned about the recent trends towards institutions (and individuals) advocating for censorship rather than engaging in the difficult conversations inspired by an artwork. And I am struggling with talking to first year students about difficult topics that are especially critical in 2017, without making assumptions that all of my students agree with me or with each other. In an effort to overcome this, I have tried to be more transparent with my students - acknowledging that I don't have the answers has created room for varying opinions and experiences.

*Adam Farcus, the William R. Hollingsworth Fellow (in education) at the Mississippi Museum of Art, asks their students and colleagues to refer to them as "Adam" because the "Mr." part of Mr. Farcus is not appropriate for their gender identity. Farcus states that if pronouns are needed that people should use they, them, and their. Students are expected to respect their gender.*

The Mississippi Museum of Art has asked me to not use my (gender neutral) pronouns in front of museum guests or in classrooms where it is not "age appropriate." My use of gender neutral pronouns is a concern for the museum because they believe I could make some people feel excluded from the museum and that in the past I have confused students and hurt parents who trusted their children to the museum.

I am working to educate the museum on how they can be inclusive to people of all genders and sexualities.

I create classroom environments where everyone is included and heard. This is a primary objective of my education philosophy. The way the museum has responded to my pronouns (not all of it is described here) has degraded my

trust in their willingness to support queer or gender non-binary students in my classroom.

I have removed the “Safe Zone” signs from my room because they represented a promise I could not guarantee for my students if someone brought their bigotry to the museum administration. I will continue to create an inclusive classroom and model a humanist ideology through my curricula, words, and actions.

The culture at the museum (and by extension, some would say, the culture of the region) excludes and dehumanizes people outside of the LGBTQ community also.

Through this I am finding and aligning with allies in the institution and in Jackson who are interested in combining justice-energies and supporting each other.

*Hannah Feldman is an associate professor with tenure at an elite, private university in suburban Chicago. Her annual salary is at least 5x that of the luckiest of lucky full-time adjunct professors in the same area. This fact often renders her speechless when she tries to articulate her furies; it reminds her of the relative values of higher learning, where debt forges subjects like yellow tape traps flies, where ideological whitewashing of the most extreme variety is exercised by the same private interests that are responsible for generating the real and often bodily risk that keeps vast numbers of the world's populations subjugated by and subject to dispossession, genocide, starvation, environmental catastrophe, sexual violence, gendered violence, shelterlessness, illiteracy, poverty, discrimination, and brutalities of all kinds. Hannah Feldman thought you might want to know how many Northwestern faculty are cited as dangerous by campus-watch.com, but, in the last two weeks, the university's name has vanished entirely from the website's "survey of institutions." She wonders why, and puts the question to you, so that you too might look into the private interests of the public figures who serve on Northwestern's board of trustees.*

*(Northwestern University letterheads)*

17 April 2017

Dear students, dear colleagues, and dear, dear watchers:

I will neither refuse nor appropriate and brag about your, or any, charge regarding the danger of my politics entering our classrooms. Nor will I respond to the suggestion that there is a risk that I might—or anything at risk should I—“advance a radical agenda in lecture halls.” Agendas, radical or otherwise, are the stuff around which lecture halls have been built since the inception of the European university. Certainly, they now run legion across multiple spectra in the university's contemporary, corporate manifestation, in which ‘corporate’ and ‘university’ join in something far from the etymological root of *universitas* as a ‘corporation of the whole,’ a *community*, as it were, but probably not as it ever was. The corporate university, writ large, champions itself as an advocate and defender of free speech. And so it is, sometimes. And yet, such braggadocio conveniently sidesteps the fact that free speech, *parrhesia*, is also always and already apologetic and indebted speech, subject to the very same regulatory structures that determine what is elsewhere permissible, punishable, and privatize-able, not to mention for whom and by whom. This celebrated speech is never “free.” In fact, it comes at great costs. In our corporate university ‘Truth to Power’ has become the truth of the new power. What we herald as our freedom of speech is only another entitlement that, like most western, secular entitlements, disavows its indebtedness to the capacious capitalist hunger that has now incorporated and financialized not only your public existence, but also what was once private: your feelings, those very same sensibilities that might be hurt if someone speaks something anathema to your faith (and I don't mean just your religious faith), something that might also be sold to advertisers, for example, something that might be made profitable according to the pleasures of those who control the ethers of global economies and the regulatory structures that they produce. But you know all of this.

I am lucky. I have been allowed the entitlement that is my speech, at least for now, or at least until someone—maybe even you—denounces what I speak and what I teach as hateful, an imposition on the free speech of another, maybe yours. My speech, like my property, is only mine when it does not encroach upon or damage someone else's. Such an encroachment is described as hate when it is spoken. In other arenas, it is acknowledged as

property violation. You only own your speech because it hasn't yet been purchased by someone else. The university cannot properly define hate speech in the specific because it is already too busy scrambling to determine who *cannot* be deemed hate-worthy. This person is not always the same and their nomination is dependent upon the private interests of those whose investments in the privacy of others turns on a dime, even as they turn a million. Hate speech is relative, like the agendas that fuel its arbitration. I can not say I am a free-speaker, a radical, or a fighter; such boasts would risk not only the weakness that comes from a reactive stance, but also the arrogance and idiocy of ignoring what real dangers some do face when they speak. Such celebrations would also allow me—and you with me—to shadow-hop a conversation about just what it is that makes the private sector, corporate university comfortable enough with dissent and “danger” to celebrate it with such niceties as tenure; retention agreements for the most visible faculty; conferences and exhibitions about human rights, indigenous and autochthonous uprisings, the largely self-evident catastrophes wrought by neo-liberalism, colonialism, Zionism, racism; books about the same; and so on and so forth. Ad infinitum. No. My procedures are proactive. I have said it before, and I have sung it too: “I eat your hate like love.”

I decline branding myself—even if negatively—in relationship to projects of control and censorship. I decline even to brand myself by refusing the obvious insult of suggesting that we need intellectual and emotional harbors, not to speak of “trigger warnings,” in our classrooms, which is to say that we need yet more private recesses in the sphere of already private spaces dependent on the largesse provided by private, corporate agreements and the status quo they need to maintain. I have no desire to separate us further, you and me, to insist that my critique as professional profess-er should be the basis of your certitude, either way. I do not want you to fear me. We are all already too afraid. I present and represent no danger, only the joy of my thought and my thinking. I am lucky to be in a position to share both, especially when what I think runs counter to what it is you hoped I would, at least based on who it is you think I am.

Because my speech is neither free nor earned, neither given nor taken, neither mine nor yours, but rather always on loan like all the other belongings that secure my debt as collateral, I don't want to waste my time talking about the tactics of a righteous left; or, about the strategies of a self-congratulatory right; about your all too celebrated selves; or, about the strength of your ideas, convictions, and narcissist postures. Today, I want to give you a gift. I want to give you these words, which were gifted to me in the form of a text published in a French newspaper by an artist who wrote in refusal of the congratulations bestowed upon them for having lived a life that was read as oppositional to the very same structures that scripted the authority of those who were doing the congratulating. Knowing full well that the goal is not to scramble to end all the world's problems with piecemeal correctives and corrections, indignations and denunciations, but rather to end the very ‘world’—our world, our lived system—that creates these problems, this artist, Paul B. Preciado, said this:

Because I love you, my brave equals, I wish for you a lack of courage; it's your turn. I wish for you to no longer have the force to repeat the norm, to no longer have the energy to fabricate identity, to lose faith in what your papers say about you. And once you have lost all courage, drained with joy, I wish for you that you invent another mode of use for your bodies. It is because I love you that I desire you weak and despicable. Because it is through fragility that the revolution operates.

Welcome to the ‘undercommons.’ Refuse to be made available to the subjugation that resounds and rebounds through your language, your language, which wants to ascribe danger to what could and should be imagined as love.

Yours in sincerity and solidarity,

and with love,  
Hannah

Hannah Feldman  
Associate Professor of Art History  
Middle East and North African Studies  
Comparative and Literary Studies.

**Jase Flannery**, an Adjunct Professor at the University of Cincinnati and the Art Academy of Cincinnati, encourages students to engage in an open dialogue around political and social issues through their own artistic output. In his classes, students are regularly exposed to artists, writers, and filmmakers whose works have progressive undertones and agendas. Students are also assigned written responses pertaining to these progressive thinkers.

As someone teaching within an art and design context, I want my students to feel that they have the safety and freedom to express their convictions, concerns, and questions. Critiques and class discussions can often become socially and politically charged, but I work to keep them respectful and conversational. Many of my students are working through their feelings of frustration and disillusionment in their artwork, and I want to help them to find and hone their voice in doing so. I also worry that individuals in my classes may feel undervalued or overlooked (some have confided as much to me) due to the climate of recent events. I strive to maintain the classroom and studio as a pluralistic space of community, where critical thinking and questioning help students to grow and understand one another.

**Eric Fleischauer**, an Adjunct Assistant Professor at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, promotes and encourages anti-capitalist ideas and practices. He shamelessly uses his position of influence to champion liberal political and social ideas to his students. His teaching promotes a questionable set of ethics, such as enabling piracy and bootlegging, encouraging civil disobedience, or lauding work by artists/activists who break the law. On more than one occasion he has suggested taking drugs before going to the movies or museum in order to gain a heightened “understanding” of artworks.

#### 1 Too Much World: Media Literacy + Information Retention.

With infinite amount of knowledge an internet search away, many students feel that individual (local) memorization of info is less important than generally understanding and knowing where to find said info. I am countering this by:

- Discussing media literacy as it pertains to veracity and sources for citation (not to mention day-to-day life). Student research papers are frequently citing wikipedia and other websites rather than published books, journal articles, etc. Countering this by encouraging critical-thinking + critical-research methods.
- Giving research assignments where students must use sources from the school library exclusively to establish good research habits. This is not to say internet research is invalid. But teaching how to use the distinguish between different types of sources on the internet, and that is is merely one tool in their arsenal of information searching.
- Teaching in a way that acknowledges the new methods and modes in which students are accessing and absorbing information. e.g. having “google races” where ask students to find obscure information, or a PDF of a rare essay online.
- Teaching note-taking best practices, and giving weekly quizzes so students have to review their notes to identify key concepts and absorb+retain+recall a range of material covered in class.

#### 2. Adjunct Precarity.

Where I teach (at SAIC) part time faculty make up 76% of the faculty body! This statistic shows just how much higher ed institutions rely on cheap, part time labor in order to increase profits. Its exploitative and ethically suspect, but not surprising given the business model running most schools in late-capitalist education industry. Some ways to engage in combatting this problem are:

- Organizing part time faculty on campus, encourage them to become active and voice their concerns through established channels - or carve out new channels if existing ones are inadequate or ineffectual.
- Collaborate with local, state, or national efforts such as National Adjunct Walkout Day.
- Discuss this issue with students, letting them know how it affects their education. Teaching them about the invisible mechanisms behind higher education in general, but also the specific institution they are attending. Furthermore, it can lead to a new group of allies (who are the “customers” in the eyes of the school) voicing support for adjunct-related issues on campus. It can also be helpful if they are considering teaching college

as a career.

- A more immediate and individual approach is to observe and take advantage of any opportunities for funding or extra work existing in the fissures of the bureaucratic system running the school.

### 3. *Complacency with the dominant surveillance state currently in place.*

i've found many students aren't aware of the pervasiveness of surveillance in their day-to-day lives, and therefore don't think it's unusual, or an infringement of their right to privacy. This issue is a very serious concern for me, and i am constantly addressing this topic using a variety of methods and tactics:

- Educate students about the many different ways in which the surveillance state functions, broadening their understanding of what "surveillance" means, and what forms it can take.
- Show and explain exactly how they are being surveilled by the state and the private sector. Assigning readings on the subject, and presenting artists + activists who work to raise public awareness and create social change.
- Class discussions where students discuss their understanding of the subject, and how they feel it affects not only them, but "others" in society. This is meant to challenge them to consider an uncomfortable reality, hard truths, and hypotheticals questions.
- Ongoing discussions (debriefings?) of related current events and how they work on a micro and macro level.
- Giving lectures on topics such as Video Art+Surveillance, or Activist Strategies in Art and Beyond where students learn about technology's impact on surveillance, look at the work of artists and activists confronting this issue, as well as teaching significant court cases and legislation. For example, when none of my students knew who Edward Snowden was, i was shocked and immediately gave them an abridged summary of his actions and the outcomes stemming from them, and suggested further reading, viewing, etc.

**Danny Floyd** is a lecturer of Visual & Critical Studies and Sculpture at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago. He does not hide his Marxist leanings, and in fact, sees critique of capitalism as one of the very purposes of education. For example, he teaches a course which, in the Marxist tradition, examines and questions the nature of reification in music, redefining music as a verb as opposed to a noun. This is not merely a semantic distinction but one that empowers audiences and listeners to break from hierarchical and hegemonic Western traditions under capitalism. Danny is interested in the radical idea that everyone has something to contribute to cultural production.

As an undergraduate with limited means, I relied on a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts to cover tuition. This demonstrates that everyone, even those like me who attended a private art school, benefits from public funding towards education. Moreover, I believe a cultural, and not merely financial, turn away from public education results in a jaundiced view on the whole of education's role in fostering an equitable society. Knowledge is a public phenomenon and cannot properly flourish under the attitude that can be treated as an industry or business. The only ways I see to counter these problems are to set a tone that empowers students' pursuits, to support policies that benefit all educational institutions (not just private ones), and to teach students that the right's reactionary attitudes are not normal and not to be taken as givens.

**Ben Foch** is Co-Director of New Capital (Chicago); boyfriends (Chicago) and 1.5 RMS (New York), all artist run spaces that promote cultural activity independent from the market and academic institutions. His own work takes many forms challenging the traditional studio to market model and tackles topics from institutional critique to race, class and gender identity politics. Presented here is "Money to Burn" a work composed of shredded US currency in a found frame. This work uses the symbol of capital and exchange as the formal material for artistic production, calling into question the nature of the art market and the private institution (the Federal Reserve banking system) whose business is the printing of money itself.

My role as an educator is best reflected in the galleries I run with my collaborators in a community of artist run spaces, which we all see as extensions of our practice. Here we can make a space for peer to peer review, find resources to support underrepresented artists and increase awareness of gender inequality, POC and queer identified voices. Because we keep our over head low, we are not dependent on the market for support, therefore content doesn't need to conform to popular taste, allowing us the freedom to make decisions based on passion and integrity. We are also creating a community around shared ideals, and can rely on each other for support.

**Lindsey French**, a Lecturer at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, teaches climate change as fact. She undermines American ideals such as the preciousness of nature, and pushes an agenda of science-based research. Her lectures and syllabi are filled with queer, feminist, and anti-capitalist artists and writers who actively embrace non-normative practices. Her classes explicitly intend to prepare her students to challenge authority and normativities.

My challenges as an educator are marked by widespread anxiety in my students, punctuated by explicit fear in the current political climate, and amplified by own sense of precarity.

Anxieties appear in a number of forms: as self doubt, as suppressed or active interpersonal conflict, as difficulties that appear in the creative process, as explicit content grappled with in the work. Explicit fear is more direct - and appears as more directly political in classroom conversation or the content of work. My own precarity complicates my position as an educator, and my position as an artist, because it is both expected and surprising—and like any good capital, it both fuels and resists its own functionality.

My approaches to overcome these challenges come from strategies of social activism and therapy. A classroom can be a space for collectivity. Collectivity comes from building trust and investigating ones own contributions - material, psychological, intuitive, receptive. A primary goal in my pedagogy is to establish an environment of mutual respect and accountability, where risk can be supported and trust can be built. The classroom is a place to develop practices. As an educator, I practice facilitation such that students can create and sustain supportive peer groups, below and beyond more authorized political and institutional structures. While as a teacher I am in some ways positioned as an authorizing figure, I aim to resist - by revealing my own precarity when appropriate, by continuing to learn from a range of sources - lectures, therapy, social activism, writers, poets, amateurs, experts, students - by continuing to evaluate my own contributions to the peer groups that support my own practices and risks.

**Rainer Ganahl** is a dangerous ART SCHOOL TEACHER, since he Propagates the art of STRANGE TEACHING ([strangeteaching.info](http://strangeteaching.info)). His main objective is to encourage art school students to stop making art but start thinking, i.e. STRANGE THINKING. Strange thinking is rendering alienation in the sense of Marx, Freud, Bataille, Adorno and Lacan into practice, as a set of strange practices. For a TEACHING SESSION he proposes to re-enact TRUMPUTIN: Perform FAKE group SEX with Putin and Trump masks the way our "so-called president" participated in sex parties in Moscow as reported in the news. Please, have the Boney M. song RASPUTIN ("Lover of the Russian Queen") blasting out loud.

Concern Nr. 1: How to shoehorn AUTHORITARIANISM into students' brain Remedy: Let students recite Breitbart news for hours.

Concern Nr. 2: How to perform TRUMPUTIN in a way, it doesn't alienate Trump voters when adding members of countries blocked from entering the USA. Remedy: Offer a course in EXTREME VETTING

Concern Nr. 3 How to practice ALTERNAIVE ABORTION. Remedy: Study the witch-hunt, alternative fact theory, and stock up on metal coat hangers.

**Alex Gartelmann** asks two things of his students. First, to slow down, look, and fully absorb their worlds. Second, to subvert their comfort. It is in looking and in discomfort that students find a powerful agency that is self-aware, critical, and pushes against the problematics of populist thinking.



1. Distrust virtuosity. It is in a reliance on what we think to be skillful that we get caught in a stagnant cycle of making and thinking. To challenge skill, to subvert skill is where growth, change and awareness begin to emerge.
2. No 'cool guy' behavior. In the act of 'being cool' or presenting oneself as 'cool' the student removes themselves from their actual interests, and pits themselves against their peers in what they see as self constructed hierarchy of cultural capital. To remove this thinking or approach from the classroom allows for honest critical dialog, rigorous self reflection, and an open atmosphere for the exchange of ideas.
3. The student has all the answers. They often just need guidance in how to access them. As an educator, I can not tell a student what to care about. I don't really know them, and I certainly cannot account for every experience they have had in their lives. However, I can present the student strategies for sorting through those experiences to uncover what is at stake for them in pursuing their actual interests, in addition to what is at stake for them in being an artist. They possess all that knowledge they need for a core value system of interests as an artist.

**Beate Geissler** and **Oliver Sann** have been active as a collaborative partnership since 1996. Their work concentrates on inner alliances of knowledge and power, their deep links in western culture and the escalation in and transformation of human beings through technology. Geissler/Sann's artistic research utilizes a variety of forms of visualization: these include photography, video, installation, games, performances, internet-based work and books. On the threshold dividing document from created reality, on the border between factual occurrence and fictional bringing-into-being, their work scrutinizes the inherent idiosyncrasies of media. Within the collaborative space of an artist duo and interdisciplinary research, the artists' work spans science, anthropology, sociology, philosophy, political science and contemporary art.

*While not working in higher education, **Rami George** believes and fosters radical criticality and intimacy in life and practice – queerness is not just for the bedroom, resistance is not just a return to a lulled state of complacency, joy is necessary.*

1. How to stay critical, aware, and conscious of political realities, while maintaining positive mental health.
2. Strategies to continually resist implementation of a(n even deadlier) regime.
3. Ways to support those more at risk and danger, ways to use one's privileged position.

**Azadeh (Azi) Gholizadeh** is an artist and not affiliated educator. She uses intersectionality as a reference to promote empowerment of women. She as an immigrant artist from one of the six countries banned from entering US, refuses to engage in conversation with individuals not recognizing underrepresented women of color who have no privilege.

Concerns:

- Lack of diversity in the education system. While students are increasingly diverse in schools (college and universities), the diversity in teachers is not proportionate.
- It is very difficult for a person (not from the US) that has a legal status but not a resident status or a citizenship to make their way into the education system.
- The consequence of this is that educators create a very narrow perspective on art and students look at art through a Western lens.

Strategies:

To raise public awareness through art and conversation. To initiate conversations about immigration and share with people personal experiences. Invite international artists to discuss with students their work and their backgrounds. Propose courses that not only focus on study Western or Eastern artists but also the hybrid of these two. How to be more critical about artwork.

**Danny Giles**, a lecturer at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, is an African-American son of a single lesbian mother, has five siblings and grew up in a white-dominant, although somewhat diverse college town in Missouri. As the product of idiosyncratic influences and having come of age in the heyday of multiculturalism, Giles often reflects on

*the schematics of racial difference, representation and political speech. Danny actively encourages his students to investigate the intertwined aspects of personal and social identity that form our perceptions of self and others.*

1. Often in conversations around power and oppression, the historically oppressed is the one required to repeatedly “represent” and to actively be re-situated within representational spaces which re-inscribe discourses of black/brown/female/queer victimization. What is often left unchallenged is the identity of the historically empowered position (eg. whiteness, maleness, heteronormativity). Particularly within conversations of racial identity, white artists must find strategies to address themselves as marked by race and implicated within a larger cultural historical network which extends beyond the safe boundaries of abstraction and formalism. I actively challenge my students to address their identities and to ask questions about how to participate in these larger dialogues.
2. As an instructor at one of the most famous and expensive art schools in the nation, I am aware that I am implicit within an inherently exploitative financial scheme based on a high reliance on private student loan companies and an unfair narrative of “success in the art world”. I try to counsel my students to consider their own path through school and life and to think critically about the institution on multiple levels.
3. Critical discourse in the age of social media has been transformed by the rhetoric of instantaneous call-out culture. The de-personalization and hyper-individualization fostered by spaces like Facebook and Twitter now inform how many of us approach addressing political conflict, encouraging bullying, grandstanding and a rush to evaluate and judge within the artifice of social media. This style of communication affects how we approach conflict, heightens fears and increases our inhibitions when confronted with important conversations. As an instructor, I attempt to create assignments, readings and other prompts that encourage students to process their own experiences and to examine their views and opinions in real-time conversations with their peers. I want to reveal these conflicts while cultivating a space of empathy and questioning.

**Adela Goldbard**, a Graduate and Teaching Assistant at SAIC and former Assistant Professor at the National School of the Arts in Mexico, trains her students to be suspicious and to question their inherited modes of thinking by continuously and acutely interrogating what they do and how they do it. She deconstructs power relations through non-hierarchical methods of working and by stirring a deep consideration of the (non-revealed and non-accounted) socio-political agendas of our lives and work. She reads Latin-American poetry in class, and addresses the revolutionary nature of its Baroque character. She believes that in a country marked by prohibition and the commodification of rebellious thought, education and art need to dissent with the familiar and incorporate the neglected and the overlooked.

1. I’m concerned of the paralyzing effect of fear. Fear aims at dividing; in the classroom we unite to confront and challenge our social constructs, our actions, our institutions.
2. I’m concerned of how the velocity of our times arrests our thoughts. In the classroom the pace of everyday life changes as we unfold into a reflective collective: we take the time to listen to each other and think together.
3. I’m concerned of the underrepresentation of minorities in the classroom. How can we talk about discrimination when it’s embedded in our educational system? In the classroom we acknowledge and make visible the historical debt to ignored communities.

**Kevin Goodrich**, a Lecturer at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, requires that every student who takes his class to take responsibility for the content of their work. In order to earn credit for the course, his students must demonstrate growth and theoretical/critical research in all of their work. Students must find a form for writing in their studio practice.

Many students have been educated under the premise that they are told exactly what expectations need to be met to get a certain grade. I of course structure my assessments in the same way so that students are aware of the expectations for the course. However, some students have difficulty choosing their own content and what motivates their work. Instead of answers, I provide strategies. It’s so important that students find what drives their work

without a heavy hand from their instructors, but it seems contrary to how some of them have been taught to think critically before college. It is their biggest challenge.

Many of my students have difficulty in allowing themselves permission to create work that is celebratory. Somewhere the idea perseveres that work overtly about politics, the complex problems of the world, or someone else's critical thoughts on art are the only viable options to make serious work about. This is such a lost opportunity. I try to demonstrate how artists can work through humor, candor, and play to achieve dynamic work that is capable of embodying the complexities of "serious" content while also being something more than an illustration of a single thought.

As a part time faculty member I feel like I have no job security. This has an impact on my students in many indirect ways. My school has made many recent attempts at creating a greater sense of security, which is greatly appreciated, but they do not solve the problem entirely. I'm not sure there is a solution without a huge shift in the culture surrounding contingent faculty throughout higher education.

***Alex Goss** is a woodshop and video teacher at a The High School for Performing and Visual Arts in Houston, Texas. Goss pushes his students to understand their city by learning how to first take it apart. Outside of the classroom, students are encouraged to cut up downloaded movies, and recover fasteners from long-abandoned construction sites. Students are told to reclaim their city and make it their own. Goss has been known to replace the screws in public bathrooms with his own tamper-proof design.*

1. In teaching material and virtual building skills, I have found that students, from a range of backgrounds, are largely unequipped to participate in both the physical and digital worlds they inhabit. In return, I invest in providing the access and the knowledge to the uses these tools, that must be available to young people in building a more just world.

Tools must remain free or accessible to young people.

2. That current young students are incapable of using right-click or dragging and dropping is partly due to a system of turn-key interfaces contemporary products and tools commonly present users with. This lack of literacy could also be a result of the saturation of physical structures and digital media already filling the streets; the production of additional material may no longer seem necessary. I do not accept complacency, and expect the next group of young people to do their worst against its force. Between my classes I urge students to use their education, skills in technical and critical processes, to reject the world that is already constructed for them. It is not enough to accept a music video as truth before deconstructing its production and biases, as it is to entrust the weight of our body with the structure of a chair without understanding its construction.

Young people resist complacency.

3. One of the most frustrating barriers to learning is the value pressed upon quantifying a student's achievement. A person fearing a bad grade limits his or her willingness to take risks. Failure is a painful, but valuable process in understanding. I have struggled most with encouraging young people to fail as they face the pressure of standardized tests or maintaining a GPA toward applying to college. This reduction and evaluation of people to numbers creates a precarious for young people who are still growing. The immediacy of quantified success is much different from that given by the feedback of things falling apart. As an educator, I cannot simply tell a student to not go to college, but I pose the challenge that alternatives to such a costly system exist. Understanding of and holding agency within a person's world does not come without stumbling.

People learn to fail.

***Joseph Grigely** is an artist and critical theorist, and Professor of Visual and Critical Studies at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. He teaches classes on exhibition prosthetics, dissemination, and archiving practices. In one of his classes, on theorizing disability, students are required to address a situation involving inequitable accessibility and propose a pragmatic solution to the situation, even if it requires filing a formal legal complaint under provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act.*

**Dan Gunn**, a Lecturer at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, ostensibly teaches painting but also requires students to examine art history outside of the accepted Western canon. He encourages students to consider their creative output using texts from the philosophy of language, linguistics, and sociology including those by radical leftist thinkers. Gunn works to give students the license to develop their own approaches to learning and artistic practice instead of just teaching them how to mix color or render the figure.

My 3 biggest concerns as an educator are pretty thoroughly tied to the environment at the school. First, the “selectivity” of the school has been rising so theoretically better students are attending. But in actuality because of the habits of their “No Child Left Behind” high school educations, these students notions of success are extremely tied to following instructions. This makes the acquisition of personal values in artistic practice difficult. To compensate my classroom instructions have been getting vaguer and projects more explicitly examining how previous eras of artists have progressed into their individual practices by focussing on incorporating influences, tracking personal responses to content and formal invention.

Second SAIC relies on international student tuition. These students are often from countries and contexts that I’m less familiar with and arrive with cultural approaches to aesthetics that operate differently. Educating myself on the nature of their context helps alleviate some of the misunderstandings and makes the curricula more global. (But this takes time and resources that aren’t available to part-time faculty.)

Third, is the economics of the teaching profession versus the economics of students. It is extremely precarious work at the adjunct level for the faculty. And the student constraints with their debt load weigh equally heavily on their performance. A transformational solution to this is not immediately clear without scrapping the entire project and starting over.

**Ilan Gutin** received his MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago where he now serves as an Assistant Director of Undergraduate Admissions. While speaking with potential SAIC students who are still in high school, he encourages them to look past the obvious aesthetic choices they are drawn to in their work and focus on the deeper meaning. Often, that deeper meaning forces the student to look inwards on themselves and hone in on some harsh truths about who they are as a person and as an artist. Why do they make the work that they make? How is it different than every single other artist in the world? How do their unique lives and perceptions shape what they choose to show the world? These are not always for good reasons and there are no easy answers. Students, especially at such a young age usually struggle with this kind of subconscious search, but their work will ultimately benefit from it.

**Yoav Hainebach** a painter and a teacher, asks his students to forget everything they were taught. Destabilizing their pre-perception by going back to basic questions about the obvious. How do we see the world? How do we hear it? And how we communicate it? Only certain in the existence of questions, doubt there are answers.

**Kate Hampel**, an Instructor and Administrator at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, designs courses and programs that require students to question the ideas they may presume to be normal. She encourages her students to opt out of commercial systems in the sourcing of materials, and assigns readings that are critical of patriarchal and colonial capitalist culture.

1. Accessibility (this one is obvious)

Strategy... faced with the failure of publicly-funded systems as the moneyed classes opt out of supporting them, fund privately what can't be funded publicly (donations instead of taxes).

2. Education (in the arts specifically) not seen to have value in and of itself; it must be marketed and sold in terms of guaranteed jobs, salary prospects, etc.

Strategy... feel confident in the value of what we do. Fortunately, it can be shown to support students' career prospects and eventual net worth, so show that and state it. The benefits for humanity are still there.

3. Regarding #s 1 & 2 above, needing to operate within a certain moralistic sphere in order to continue to find favour in an opt-in funding system. It is much more difficult to be a "dangerous" professor than it once was. Strategy... this one I do not know yet. Sneak it in whenever possible.

**Stevie Hanley** is a self-described "gender non-conforming radical queer" who worked for more than ten years as a sex worker. He now teaches in Continuing Studies at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, including in the Early College Program (ECP) and the College Arts Access Program (CAAP), where he teaches minors.

My biggest concern currently as an educator is Trans Inclusion. My high school students have repeatedly raised this need, nearly every ECP or CAAP class I have taught a student has come out as transgender. At one point I was surreptitiously accused of encouraging these Coming Outs and told in an email to explicitly stop asking students their preferred gender pronouns. "Please do NOT ask students their preferred pronoun at the beginning of class. We have discussed this as a staff at length, along with key staff in the Dean's office. Due to our students' young ages, and the fact that they are often at the beginning of a possible transition in our classes, we do not want to put direct undue pressure on any student to identify."

Transgender suicide attempt rates are staggering, as are the unrelenting murders of Transwomen. I do not pressure students to gender themselves; this pressure is heavy and abounding outside the classroom. To the contrary, I attempt to craft the classroom as a safe and inclusive space where difference will be respected, including any preferred gender pronouns or names, by simply stating so at the beginning of a course.

**Laura Hart Newlon**, an Associate Professor at Cornish College of the Arts, enjoys talking to her students about Nicki Minaj, 4th wave feminism, and motherhood. She believes 'intersectionality' is a concept all students should understand, and creates cultural context for her curriculum with progressive propaganda, assigning essays from *The Atlantic* and other liberal rags. Recently, Newlon discussed the ways artists use humor as a political tool with graduating seniors, hoping to prepare them for a future of various types of disruption.

Challenges:

1. I am particularly concerned with creating space where those most vulnerable and underrepresented, particularly transgendered students and students of color, feel seen and supported. This feels increasingly difficult right now, given the political climate and the kind of aggression that has been licensed by prevailing political rhetoric. So far most of this has been on a 1v1 level, sitting with students and more or less just listening to their concerns. I'm still struggling to find the support and momentum to make larger structural changes at the school.

2. Number 1 is exacerbated by the fact that choosing a career in the arts already feels like a dangerous decision. Given the talk of gutting arts programs at all levels, it's increasingly difficult to convince students that choosing to study and make art can be liberating, and a form of empowerment. For this, my colleagues and I have had to put in the research to find alternative models of art-making and cultural critique that we can model for students that are sustainable and less beholden to political policy-making.

3. Finally, I urgently feel the need to impart to students that deciding to work really, really hard in the arts--in whatever form that takes--in and of itself can be a worthwhile form of resistance. It is challenging to overcome apathy. My response to this challenge is to show them as many artists doing this as I can--planning studio visits, inviting seminar guests, hosting artist talks, introducing students to a diverse range of thinkers and makers, and making the reality and benefits of artistic work less opaque.

**Jessica Harvey** is an artist and educator based in Chicago, IL. During a recent workshop, she espoused anti-male sentiment by encouraging students to "fuck the patriarchy." Also, in a recent assignment on the archive and "reinterpreting histories," she forced students to use source material strictly from work by women, LGBTQ people, and those who identify as "non-white," therefore, de-centering the straight white male voice in history.

## **Debt**

Maybe the biggest concern in terms of higher education is debt. Not only are students incurring huge amounts of debt, but also, we the educators have these debts, further contributing to the cycle of debt by working at the very institutions that provide little support to students in understanding their personal debts for higher education. This is a huge internal conflict for many educators who recognize the value in higher ed, but see how students are often unprepared for life after college, especially at private art institutions. Often times after graduating, students are tied to jobs either not in the field they studied or want to partake in and end up taking jobs just to pay back the debt they owe, putting them further away from where they want to be in the world and where they expected to be when they began school.

If this issue of higher education debt is not reformed in a real way, the already astronomical disparity of wealth in the U.S. will only increase. If graduates wish to own property, or simply rent property, a failure to manage their debt can make this impossible.

## **Ideas**

- Advocate to debt counseling available (possibly required) throughout undergraduate and graduate education. Often times students do not start thinking about the debt they are incurring until after graduation, having little support and resources on how to manage these debts.
- Work with the financial aid departments at institutions to make free workshops on debt available to students throughout their secondary education.
- Encourage students to protest, advocate for policy change, write their state reps and school administration on this issue of debt.

## **Teacher Burnout**

With educational institutions becoming more and more top-heavy, where large salaries are paid to executives and administrators, full-time faculty positions are being eliminated in favor of more adjunct positions (or even just fewer professors with larger classes), leading to less job stability for those in higher ed. Getting caught on the adjunct circuit can lead to a quick teacher burnout.

## **Ideas**

- Adjunct Unions
- Just teach classes you see as most valuable and find another job to supplement
- Adjunct support/meeting group (in person and online)

## **Curriculum**

In working with grade school students in both public and charter schools, a major concern is the content of the social studies curriculum and all of the supplemental information that teachers need to provide to present a more well-rounded view of history.

## **Ideas**

- Supplement the curriculum with books in the classroom library that students can check out featuring histories told by women, non-white, and LGBTQ people.
- Quit teaching. Become a policy-maker.
- Quit teaching. Try to be on board of education.

## **Current political climate**

- Find consolation in the fact that the Earth will outlive all humans and become something new with or without us.

***Cameron Harvey**, a yoga teacher at Yoga Cares and an artist in Chicago, IL, teaches spirituality from many perspectives. She believes in diversity and reads the class Islamic and Jewish texts, Sufi poetry, and tales of the spiritual*

path from Hindu, African and Native American traditions. When reading from scripture she changes the pronoun from 'he' to 'her' and insists that religious texts are metaphor and that one does not need religion, but spirituality, to have a relationship with Spirit. Students must not believe what any authority tells them (including her as the teacher) but must learn to think for themselves through having their own experiences and honestly reflecting on them, becoming their own teachers.

1. Concern 1: Feelings of stress and exhaustion in students

Response: Restorative classes focused on mindfulness and the permission to let go and release patterns of holding both mentally and physically (say no, do less, let go of the past).

2. Concern 2: Feelings of fear and powerlessness/voice-less-ness in students

Response: Make students do something that is hard, that they are afraid of, in a safe way. Chanting as a means for the student to hear their voice. Teach challenging asana to train the body and mind to stay strong and calm in times of difficulty so that students can rely on those skills off the mat, life is harder than yoga, be trained.

3. Concern 3: Feelings of loneliness, sadness and disconnect in students

Response: Create community, eat and joke and laugh together. Link to years of tradition, read texts from many cultures about the human condition. Cultivate joy and the permission to experience pleasure. Remind students that we are all (regardless of social constructs: race, gender, sexual orientation) divine beings of light on the earthly plane and to experience life we have to participate, be vulnerable and love with an open heart. We have to cultivate mindfulness, creativity, compassion towards others, and take risks. Life is hard, we are all wounded warriors and we are all in the same boat - and no one makes it out alive.

**Joseph Havel**, Artist and Director of the Glassell School of Art, Museum of Fine Arts Houston has required students to read "The Ignorant School Master" by Jacques Ranciere, "Capital in the Twenty First Century" by Thomas Picketty, and "Cruel Optimism" by Lauren Berlant as well as other books that present leftist and Marxist ideas.

All three of my concerns currently fall under the blind acceptance of normative thinking through the professionalization of the student. This inhibits the development of independent critical thinking. The emphasis on career training over a broad width waveband of knowledge leaves social paradigms unchallenged or only challenged in acceptable ways.

This spring semester I am a viewpoints scholar for the graduate art program at the University of Texas where in three lectures I introduce and perform the idea of the responsibility of practicing aware and independent inquiry. The first lecture emphasized this idea of performance by which I mean that even if my presentation appears sincere, autobiographical and confessional that this was a fiction to be read through a critical lens. The selection of what is presented creates theatre and the theatre has a meaning imbedded in its aesthetic. It also has a context and historical roots both in overall form and the specifics. To further this point I ended the lecture with credits and a soundtrack as in a movie to make theatricality more present.

My second lecture begin with a quote from Wallace Stevens, "It is necessary to any originality to risk being an amateur". This lecture had two related points. The first being that every inquiry of importance begins with an awareness of self definition so truly each time it is important to begin again as an amateur. The second point was an argument for developing a community of committed amateur to challenge and expand each individuals ideas. This is essentially what I developed as the foundation of the Core Program at Glassell.

My third lecture will be about the importance of performing risk in public. The act of being an active thinker; of speculation and conjecture; of wonder and wander; decisiveness, mistakes, and reconsideration; this is the role of the artist, scientist and speculative scholar. This keeps the practice of critical consideration alive and exhilarating. In this case I have asked the graduates to perform a song with me returning to the soundtrack idea from the first lecture. I thought perhaps shared risk was an important experience.

**Daniel Hojnacki** teaches workshops and afterschool photography programs to high school students at After School Matters & Marwen; promotes students using “experimental” photography as a form of marketing topics of race/gender equality, and Chicago as a “Sanctuary City” for illegal immigrants. The material in his curriculum has encouraged radical liberal ideas of art making and to protest the values of our government.

1. The justification of my curriculums to programs and why my experimental approach to teaching photography is relevant to high school students for “career readiness”.
  - I am overcoming this by proving these processes with photography can yield to stronger and more thoughtful work to voice a students’ opinion and self expression.
  - I give more time for students to practice writing about their work and how to articulate their ideas to a larger audience outside the classroom.
2. Keeping my students engaged with photography outside of the classroom setting, and engaging with their surroundings.
  - I try to take my students on multiple field trips each term to museums such as the MOCP, Art Institute, and the National Museum of Mexican. Keeping students aware of resources in neighborhoods other than where they may live.
  - Inviting visiting artists that use the urban environment, community and social intervention in their practice
3. Pushing students to explore other techniques after they become complacent and satisfied with a certain way of working
  - Giving students “mini challenges” with the process. Not getting them to think about a long-term project but how one successful image or technique can then be used later for a larger conversation.
  - Encouraging peer to peer feed back through critique and one on one exchanges about each others work. Giving students space to work through technical/conceptual issues on their own with the help of their peers.

**Boyang Hou** is a director of Fernwey Gallery in the Ukrainian Village in Chicago, IL. Hou prescribes to no dogma; he is unsure of most things and uncertain on the rest. If you meet Buddha in the lane feed him the ball.

As someone who recently resigned from a full-time position as Digital Marketing Liaison and Career Advisor in the Career and Professional Experience department at SAIC, **Cathy Hsiao** encountered on a day-to-day basis its priorities as steered by the leadership. Unfortunately, it seemed motivated by how to appear marketable and sellable to prospective parents, especially international undergraduates from China and South Korea, and called students ‘customers’ in meetings. Yet Hsiao needed this full-time job. Like most of the staff, including lecturers, who hold up the institution on a daily administrative level, Hsiao is from the working-class. She worked full-time at SAIC because it offered full health benefits and the prestige of working at a premiere institution. It has sensitized her to the ways in which Bourdieu’s notion of distinction operates on an invisible and unconscious level with art. Much of her practice is grounded on a process based self-education, that she hopes will affect also other. Hsiao is concerned with how to occupy a position of complexity in regards to our relationship to hegemonic structures.

“Students at elite colleges are even richer than experts realized, according to a new study based on millions of anonymous tax filings and tuition record . . . Roughly one in four of the richest students attend an elite college – universities that typically cluster toward the top of annual rankings . . . In contrast, less than one-half of 1 percent of children from the bottom fifth of American families attend an elite college; less than half attend any college at



all." - New York Times, Jan. 18 2017 <https://nyti.ms/2jRcqJs>

Since most of my time in the last year has focused on SAIC students my three concerns right now are concentrated around SAIC itself. First and foremost is the parity in wages between SAIC graduates and graduates of institutions in the rest of the state of Chicago. The text below is an email I sent to the 2016 and 2015 SAIC MFA classes in January of 2017.

Call for Faculty Alumni Conversations nominations Dear 2016 MFA class,

I am organizing a four-day event for SAIC's Career and Professional Experience this spring and would like your nominations to curate one of the panels. The event is scheduled for the days of Sunday April 23 through Wednesday April 26 at the Neiman Center, the faculty panel is one day with another day of graduates. I am inviting SAIC MFA alumni faculty throughout Chicago to come speak about their experiences as professional teaching artists, how they got their position, how they maintain their practice and community, and anything else related to professional life after graduate school at SAIC.

Especially important to me is a frank and open discussion about the issue of securing stable incomes for graduates of the MFA program, especially in this new administration. New data from the Equality of Opportunity Project compiled by the New York Times shows that by age 34, the median salary of School of the Art Institute graduates (undergraduate and graduate combined) is \$25,500. This is second to last in the state, after Columbia College \$28,500 and Moody Bible Institute at \$27,400. We barely eke past City Colleges of Chicago by \$200.

<https://www.dnainfo.com/chicago/20170120/douglas/chicago-colleges-universities-best-jobs-for-graduates-iit-university-chicago-northwestern-improving-potential-earnings>

Please forward me any faculty nominations you think fit this bill and you'd like to hear from!

Thanks! Hope to see many of you there and elsewhere.

Best,  
Cathy

Second concern, again SAIC related right now, is the huge number of Asian students and what I perceive from being a TA, a student and a CAPX staff, to be a certain lack of understanding or ability to engage with the Asian student population. Unlike Los Angeles where I lived before Chicago, I do find that in Chicago the diversity of Asian experience is not well represented, especially within my own interests in linking conceptual art and craft. That's why I choose such specific poses when I play guitar, on my knees, what many people might consider 'submissive,' and which is actually a very comfortable position. It's submissiveness is meant to be a radical submissiveness in a Levinasian sense. The text below is an email I sent in April 2017 to a partial list of Sculpture Search Committee members, it was forwarded to the entire committee and promptly addressed by the chair which I found very rewarding.

Dan Price  
Lan Tuazon  
Stephanie Brooks  
Lisa Wainwright  
Mary Jane Jacob

Adrian Wong's Sculpture Finalist Presentation

Dear Sculpture Faculty Search Committee,

I wanted to thank you all for your work recruiting such compelling artists and faculty for SAIC. I've been to all of them and really felt lucky to be able to. As a member of the SAIC community I feel safe because of you all and your efforts to foster an atmosphere of critical dialogue and investigation.

I also asked Adrian Wong the question about the stakes involved in his negotiation with HK both it's people, past and

present. I had to run back to work so I didn't want it to seem like I disliked his answer and abandoned the presentation!

His answer was, to be honest, not satisfying. It's clear to me as a Chinese person that he clearly occupies an unique position of privilege being able to migrate between East and West with such facility. And yet I felt I gleaned nothing of what he actually cared about other than his own reactions. What does Daoism actually have at stake for us other than us being skeptical and finding comical it's ideology? Maybe it was the time constraint. But this is my response and I feel obligated as an committed citizen of SAIC to voice it. Thanks for hearing me! If I've missed anyone on the committee my apologies.

Very best,  
Cathy Hsiao.

Last concern: how do we reconcile the teaching of history and art history to be more inclusive while also not making the choosing for a canon divisive and polarizing? Or is that even possible? Should we all choose one side considering how important it is to choose a side in our current politics against Trump? Again, a lot of my practice is a critical engagement with Minimalism and it's legacy. For me, I think it's crucial for artists to find ways to negotiate narrative, and the narrative of Western art is so dominant in the world. This does not mean in any way that my love for Minimalism is not profound, or that I understand that because the aesthetics of conceptualism as a de- or anti- aesthetic has been so dominated by the West that in order to communicate conceptual concerns to an art audience one must, in seems, pick up Western tools. I want to know, how do we even begin to talk about tools when it seems difficult to see the house in which it built??

*Christalena Hughmanick, a lecturer in Fiber & Material Studies at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago advances and promotes the field of fiber art which has historically been relegated to the basement of the museum. Prehistoric textile construction methods are used as techniques for making conceptual art. Keeping alive ancient ways of making provides agency in an ever growing economy of mass production that also functions as a basis for much contemporary art fabrication. Students are encouraged to consider their relationship to material culture while studying the evolution of industry, beginning with the field of Motion Economy and working through all four industrial revolutions.*

1. I struggle to understand students reliance on technology as I watch it take away from general participation, personal interaction and connection with one another in the classroom.

Before a critique or presentation we collect our phones into a pile to both keep ourselves from looking at them and to understand their physical weight. Attempting to pick up the stack helps. Seeing the phones disembodied creates a sense of longing and often a dialog begins about our constant contact with this object. Why do we need to have more communication with people outside of the room than those in it?

2. Related to our current relationship to technology, I notice many students not seeking community building in the classroom. The relationships formed in school are what sustain a practice and professional endeavors after school so how do you encourage personal interaction around their work and interests?

When a class is struggling generally with engagement I ask them to write a 50 word list of 'things they are really into' as a homework assignment. The next time we meet we read the list for one another (myself included) either in the classroom or in a public place on campus. This is a way for us to organize and formalize our interests while participating in an easy performance and writing exercise that often makes the group feel bonded.

3. I'm generally concerned with students abilities in the areas of technique, craft and long term project planning. The SAIC undergraduate education is conceptually strong and provides excellent facilities and resources for producing work but how can these practices learned in school be cultivated and nurtured after graduation so they continue making work?

I teach students technique and skill but there is no simple answer to the larger question of 'what next' besides pointing them to residencies, studio buildings and galleries.

4. As part of Sexual Assault Awareness month in April, I co-facilitated workshops for student supporters and survivors of sexual assault to participate in the *Monument Quilt Project* at SAIC. My motivation for bringing this project to SAIC was to provide space for collective healing; to bring awareness to the prevalence of sexual assault and to give students a place to speak openly about their experiences. As educators we are legally required under Title IX to report any mention of assault. The safe space, thusly, protects the victim from fearing further investigation or the denigration of any publicity.

The action of Emma Sulkowicz carrying the mattress she was raped on around the Columbia College campus for the entire 2014-15 school year cites her as an effective activist and the act as a well executed work of endurance performance art. She refused to put it down until her rapist was expelled from campus, which never happened as he was found "not responsible" for the act by a university inquiry into the allegations.

According to the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network's 2015 Campus Sexual Violence statistics, 11.2% of all students experience the most horrific form of rape or sexual assault through physical force, violence, or incapacitation with women ages 18-24 being three times more likely. This figure rises to 21% in TGQN communities, which makes up a large part of our student body at SAIC. This means that about two students in each one of my classes has or will experience this form of extreme trauma which often manifests itself in their art and academic practices. They need a voice.

In designated workshops, each participating student constructed their own quilt square illustrating the specifics of their story which provided for opportunity for open discussion and collective healing. The works will be displayed on the Washington DC Mall in Spring '18 along with approximately 6,000 other squares, which represent the number of sexual assaults reported in the US each week. The objective of this project is to expand the dominant public narrative by telling many stories instead of one. This highly public venue will hopefully effect policy change.

This project was proposed by my co-facilitator and myself to the Office of Student Affairs in July 2016 and received approval and administrative and financial support. A portion of this proposal included exhibiting the quilt squares in the windows of the first floor Neiman Center facing outward to the street; however, one week before the installation date, the Office of Student Affairs decided the work had to face inward, keeping it from public view. We were not aware of the installation needing any further approval nor were we able to defend the exhibition proposal and felt that the outward facing work was in line with the project's inherent mission to provide public awareness. This last minute change left all the project participants questioning the motivation for the reversal of the work's orientation.

Part of my effort as an artist and educator is to be a critical agent to society. Many artists and intellectuals have historically functioned as revolutionary bodies, constantly questioning the ways in which society evolves and bringing awareness to the power structures we exist within. The disappointment by participating students, my co-facilitator and myself of how these relevant, bold and necessary expressions of our student body have been censored has led to rich conversations in the classroom about the role of the institution and our respective positions within it. We are left now to ask ourselves questions that aim to articulate these positions and configure new ways to seek visibility and expansion in our efforts as change makers. The school has done an extraordinary job of fostering a culture of protection and advocacy for the students from within but did it miss an opportunity to be an example of what should be happening on every other college campus by making the prevalence of sexual assault a public conversation? Is that even their responsibility? Does the public face of SAIC accurately represent its student body and have the voices of student sexual assault victims been further silenced? Who is the school protecting and who do they have a duty to protect? How effective can art be in changing a dominant narrative when it is presented exclusively to its own community that can be difficult to access in the first place?

Monument Quilt Project runs May 1 to 31, SAIC Sharp Building, Leroy Neiman Center floors 1 & 2, 37 S. Wabash Avenue. More info at <https://themonumentquilt.org>.

Statistics taken from Rape, Assault & Incest National Network  
<https://www.rainn.org/statistics/campus-sexual-violence>

*Lesley Jackson is an inter-disciplinary artist and manager of the wood shop at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago. During the day, she helps students fulfill their sculpture dreams by drilling assholes in mannequins. At night, she retires to her own studio to research spells for conjuring flocks of birds and the recently dead.*

#### I. Inclusivity

My primary concern as an educator is creating a non-judgmental working environment for students. I've found that people are more likely to take risks and experiment with their ideas if they are first around others that they respect.

#### II. Staying Current on Contemporary Art

It's serious work these days keeping up with the contemporary art world, even just the Chicago art scene. One of the best things I can do for students is to stay educated on what's out there so that I can then share resources based on their individual interests. I encourage my students to show up to everything- that going to shows is part of their practice and a great way of researching. I also stay informed by reading art blogs and checking in on my favorite galleries, always keeping an eye out for similarities to students' work.

#### III. New Wireless Internet on the Blue Line

The internet is everywhere now, even on our morning commute, leaving us with virtually no time to conveniently sit around and do nothing. This kind of free time is crucial for both casually working through new ideas and forming critical opinions. I fight hard for internal reflection by providing a maker-space for students to think through things physically. There's also no cell phone service, so that helps a lot.

*Jaclyn Jacunski is the Director of Civic Engagement at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago where she is responsible for coordinating arts programming in North Lawndale. She was trained and mentored by radical feminists, organizers, and activists. She now coordinates art and civic engagement programs that are overtly political to address issues of people's "lived experiences" in Chicago under segregation, displacement, inequality, and violence; expressing the artistic mission [of the School] as using personal experience as sites of research, expansive understanding of art forms, and creative practices such as dialogue, listening and protest, spaces of restorative justice, care, and respect, cultivating a spirit of generosity in community, and honoring spaces outside the traditional art markets as valuable resources within the arts.*

My largest concerns as an educator working to build community programming is the challenge of acknowledging our differences as well as our common causes to move through the complicated work of deconstructing our privileges and biases, and to seek how we understand race, gender, sexuality, class difference, ability, etc. within our communities. How do we regard systemic forms of oppression within these frameworks?

One strategy I have been considering is co-struggle. Co-struggle is **different from solidarity, which can gloss over difference; co-struggle is the concept of standing together even as we stand apart**. When we co-struggle, we work to acknowledge our differences as well as our intersections, and provide support for each other on our separate journeys and self-care for ourselves on our own.

I have been thinking a lot about artistic missions as strategies for understanding, which can open spaces, and build community:

- Personal experiences and inconclusive data as sites of research.
- Expansive understanding of art forms and creative practices such as dialogue, listening and protest.
- Spaces of restorative justice, care, and respect.

"As teachers we try to participate in the process of empowering people to be who they are. And as artists we accept responsibility to create, to realize our immense powers to change things to fit thing together in a new ways. As artists, we work everyday. We make our own lives everyday, we care for our family everyday. It is hard daily work, this daily creative process. But it is greater than personal. We are asked to care for others as well—helping

them to create their lives as we were helped.” Sister Corita Kent

**Mathew Paul Jinks:** *A previous professor at DePaul University, The Art Institute of Chicago and The University Of Illinois At Chicago. Mathew frequently includes conversations in his classroom around the subjects of transgressive ness, inclusiveness and how to break the Suburbanite model. His classes contain graphic imagery from artists such as Sally Mann, Nan Golden and Robert Mapplethorpe and asks that his students emulate and embody these works.*

1. Authorship and ownership; re-sampling and re-cycling taught as a skill rather than a resource.

It's becoming harder to know how to offset the immediacy of available digital content for use and re-use. I take a hard line stance with first hand, observational source mining such as drawing and original photographs, collecting, over online content sourcing, in most cases this results in a certain amount of cultural and physical 'noise' introduced into the source material which is the essence of research for me.

2. The privilege of knowledge; the cost of education.

Self education can be a rich empowering process, investing wisely in your education and deciding how and where to get it. Education is expensive and exclusive in that respect, rarely aimed towards impoverished communities without Federal funding. If you are afforded an education, give back.

3. Apprenticeship v's modular.

Modular education has become more about choice and product, at the expense of concentration and focus. We are keen as educators to give 'experience' to students of varied forms and practices, it's exciting to offer a smorgasbord. All travelers get home sick in the end, unless you are running from trauma :( and many artists experience a reduction in their practice through time. It might be fun to see how an image might render in Neon sculpture and maybe you will have a breakthrough, but should a Photographic major be encouraged to sign up for a Neon sign making class? I would not discourage focus.

1. Introduce a first hand source material into every project you start, drawing in sketch books, voice/field recordings, shoot your own video, go to the library and make photocopies then draw those, or better still draw at the Museum. It's not hard to make first hand source material but it is inherently different than searching from the secondhand level alone.
2. Really in so many ways the answer to privilege is to close the loop and give back in some way, not just financially, although that is all some people may be able to offer as Alumni, but to perhaps teach or foster/mentor, give your time or skills to the community you reside in outside of your regular friend circle, take on an intern and share the knowledge you have worked so hard to invest in, re-imagine the craft Guild system of the 12th Century, build a school, share a trade, return to the community and not big business.
3. I would encourage mentorship, if you are a student find someone to work with who is not faculty, find sources of knowledge beyond the institution, maybe even consider not going to art school at all and starting internships with people who's knowledge and experience you want to tap. The education for profit system was sold on the back of modular cross disciplinary systems of learning, make an informed decision earlier on about what you want to study then ask yourself if you really need to go to art school :) (see point 2 for the closed loop and the reintroduction of the Craft Guild system 12BC)

**James Kao,** *an Assistant Professor of Art at Aurora University in Aurora, IL, teaches his students to ask questions about the institutions within which they live, learn, and work. He cautions his students to beware of how actors within an institution often lose their humanity in service to the institution.*

Reflection and a firm belief in truth lead the approach to all my concerns as an educator. They allow me to initiate conversations and engage with consideration. I am concerned that educational institutions may need to address their financial solvency before they address the kind of education they offer their students. I am concerned that the student-teacher relationship might be recast as a relationship between client and provider. I worry, too, that colleges and universities have given up their ability to inspire young persons to question, challenge, protest, and revolt.

**Leonardo Kaplan** is a Chicago-based artist. He has co-directed the now passed Hills Esthetic Center and currently BOYFRIENDS, spaces that enable marginalized emerging artists to produce exhibitions that are critical of our surrounding social structures. He has shown at NEW CAPITAL and The Graham Foundation in Chicago, the Fries Museum in Berlin and ACRE. In All of these projects, he strives to create expressions and visible platforms of plurality, diversity, and equity.

1. Trump - Our current president poses a serious question about our nations values and the way those values express themselves. Obviously this is a enormous concern across our nation. This reframes our perception of production of culture and the ethical implications of being an artist.

2. capitalism - It has been a long time concern of mine to be able to be an artist concerned with authentic human expression with out vacantly producing corrupt commodities.

How can we shift our practices to not enable or emulate a corrosive ideology?

3. sustainability - how can we continue producing work with out contributing to the systemic destruction of our resources?

*James Pepper Kelly, an Instructor and former Teaching Assistant at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, insists on active listening and a lack of silencing in the classroom. He rejects simplistic paradigms, both conservative and liberal, in favor of complexity, relativity, and generosity. Students in his classes study international and non-normative works in order to sharpen their empathetic & critical abilities.*

**Reactionism/Dogmatism:** The dismissal of ideas, discussions, and creative works that don't fit neatly with preconceived beliefs—the tendency to react without making an effort to understand. The unstated conviction that one's own beliefs, however achieved, are enough to guide one through any and all situations without bringing those beliefs themselves into question.

**Active Strategy**

Teach skepticism; teach generosity. Emphasize critical thinking as the most important thing. Teach against the pre-packaged convictions of others.

**Reductionism:** Oversimplifying material and points of view until they are anodyne and/or dismissible. Easily identifying what is dated or unpopular but missing everything else. Forcing the material into the box-shape of one's own understanding.

**Active Strategy**

Teach active reading, writing, and attention. Teach the identification of clichés, teach making note of reservations and then moving on with the analysis to see what else. Teach appreciation.

**Fear:** Lack of belief in their ability to read, write, and think. Relying on known strengths in order to avoid the possibility of experimentation and failure. Playing it safe.

**Active Strategy**

Insist on practice, on work sessions during class. Talk openly about work methods, not just the work itself. Ask for different results with each assignment. Teach lived scholarship.

**Annie Kielman**, Adjunct Faculty at Harold Washington College in Chicago, requires that every student keep a journal. She does not ask that the entries discuss the course material, but instead address their thoughts for each day. She necessitates that they build strong and skeptical opinions as they navigate their worlds, and hopes that with practice and repetition, this mindful presence is not longer a required assignment, but a natural behavior. Her classroom activities include regular debates, experimental writing, and discussions about academic frustrations.

1. **Adjunct Burn Out** – As an adjunct working at multiple institutions on a contract by contract basis, I also need to maintain two other part-time jobs to stay afloat. With time, this is becoming increasingly

emotionally and physically draining. I am concerned this is not only depriving me of my energy, but also progressively eating away at my love and hope for this profession. I believe that visibility is one of the most important factors, and will continue to protest at the front of my own school with handouts for my fellow faculty and students about our 75% adjunct population, funding cuts, and wage gaps.

2. **In-Class Discussion of Outside Topics** – As an educator I find it inappropriate to strongly declare my personal political beliefs and opinions, as it may ostracize certain students. Lately, I have found it incredibly difficult to leave these topics outside of the classroom. How can I create a space safe enough for all students to feel welcome expressing their individual opinions, when it seems so necessary to call out such blatant injustices? Furthermore, in a studio class where the course description does not include these themes, how much time am I legally permitted to use on such discussions? I have been approached by students in the past asking me to not use studio hours as a platform for my political agenda. I am consistently testing the waters with this, but believe that in trying to read a particular class atmosphere (as they are each uniquely different every time) and insert these conversations however possible, I am collecting data. I have found that classroom debates where students are assigned a belief can stretch that empathy muscle we all need so much.
3. **Student Success** – Many students come to me without writing skills. While I require that they visit the writing center before any large assignment submission, I cannot always grade for grammar and writing ability in my exams. I often must grade for content, and hope that they take the time to build this skill after they leave my class. With 40+ students per semester I cannot grade every assignment for sentence structure, etc, and frequently must look over many mistakes. I feel implicated in passing a student along who will be unable to write an impressive cover letter after acquiring a degree from my institution. There **MUST** be a way to strengthen

*Alexandra Lakind, a graduate teaching assistant at University of Wisconsin, Madison, teaches environmental perspectives through film. All students are required to critique films in regards to gender, race, power; to contextualize the work socio-culturally; and to place creations in a historical context. Discussions are encouraged to include subjective and experiential understanding: How did you feel? What was visually stimulating? Even the liberals see the danger in seeing that divides between culture and nature are often socially constructed!*

### Concerns

- While my **healthcare** is great at the moment, I am worried because it is connected to my employment. As my work is temporary, I imagine I might soon face a scenario where I am unable to get healthcare.
- I am concerned about **job stability**, as a TA I am not guaranteed continuous funding nor provided a straightforward path towards a tenure track position.
- I am concerned about **income**. The Teaching Assistants Association at UW-Madison lost union rights during Act 10 (see Scott Walker). Now collective bargaining is hard and there is a movement to allow different departments to pay different wages. This means that instead of sharing funds or paying equally for equal work, a physics TA (for example) would be paid much higher than a TA in Art.

### Strategies

- With **Unconditional Basic Income**, I would be able to pursue my passion without the concerns of dropping into poverty or living on the brink (not to mention what it would do for the entire country and culture). A strategy might be learning more and sharing the idea!
- Furthermore, **Universal Healthcare** would provide everyone with healthcare unattached to labor and would personally allow me to work adapt better to an economic situation where many people work various part-time jobs. The strategy here might be helping people see this as a possibility rather than something that could never be.

- Supporting **Public Education** will mean that places like UW-Madison would be able to thrive, providing the best opportunities for learning and the production of knowledge. I think the best place to start is with local elections from School Board to State Superintendent.

*Jason Lazarus is an Assistant Professor of Art and Art History at the University of South Florida, Tampa and a Low Residency MFA Mentor at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. As an artist-educator mostly situated at a public research university in Florida, his students, regardless of their practice, are actively challenged to describe the relationship between their artist practice and the machinations of late-capitalism/the political status quo. Historic and contemporary artists whose practices upend normal power structures and modes of understanding are prioritized and communally investigated. Issues of racial, ethnic, cultural, and economic bias are introduced at introductory level classes.*

**Diversity:** as a member of the Visiting Artist Committee I am actively programming artistic practices that antagonize and expand the methodologies, voices, and histories represented by our current faculty. Second, our photography department has created a department-wide initiative to expand the curriculum/canon to non-western, non-heteronormative, non-patriarchal, ahistorical artistic figures that is continually updated by the faculty and graduate students.

**Context:** as an educator at a public research university in the state of Florida, there is a rich mix of political viewpoints and experiences--sometimes combustible at times of national polarization. Fostering constructive classroom conversations is sometimes challenging as students automatically engage in personal attacks rather than discourse--and depending on the (often youngest) students in an art department in a red state, any mention of politics can be viewed as inappropriate and alienating. One strategy to address this is to, from day one, introduce radical artists whose practices engage and complicate our understanding of everything from the beautiful, the quotidian, and the political. Students are encouraged to actively cite the work of art history/contemporary artists in class discussion to argue their political views rather than focus exclusively on their own nascent political views.

**Economics:** students often see their artistic production as their only chance for economic stability or success (how do i sell my work/promote myself?) rather than prioritizing practice as necessarily a non-economic process first. Often, students see the market (a political force all its own) as the primary litmus test for their success and by doing so become interlocked with its caprice and underlying value structure. Students are introduced to non-market support structures that foster experimentation and meaning-making over market forces. All visiting artists are encouraged to discuss the economic backbone of their practices in order to create blueprints and possibilities for student-artists. Critical writing is emphasized as a practice and a process for accessing non-market support structures. Last, models of the artist-cooperative (formal and informal structures) are introduced early in their education as alternative modes of sustainability and production.

*Kirsten Leenaars, Associate Professor Contemporary Practices at the School of the Art Institute at Chicago believes in a pedagogy of hope. Hope locates itself in the premise that we don't know what will happen, and in that in the spaciousness of uncertainty is room to act, create and imagine. To hope is to give yourself to the future and that commitment to the future is what makes the present inhabitable. Hope requires imagination, empathy, information and determination. Hope is the willingness to work for something because it is good, not just because it stands a chance to succeed.*

#### 1. Context of meaning

In my classes I always ask the student to consider the historical, social and political conditions in which the work is implicated. Approaching art and design in this way implies an investigation of the social situation in which art takes place and encounters society. In what way does imagination and our own subjectivity not only produce the artwork, but also a social relationship? How do our cultural beliefs, projections, and biases inform a response? Who participates in this process of meaning making, and what does participation mean in this context? I have found raising these questions relevant for both undergraduate and graduate students alike.

#### 2. Relationship to the world

My teaching is based on the premise that contemporary art, film making and theater are connected with a wider



field of cultural and social practices, and I am interested in how artistic production can connect with public discourse. It's of great importance that students are able to draw parallels between what is going on in our world and how art and culture at large—in one way or the other—reflects the developments and happenings within our own or other societies.

### 3. Notion of play in critical thinking and making

I often consider often the notion of “play.” Play is indicative of how my teaching fits within modes of thinking about media that take a step beyond binary oppositions of representation versus something more real or present, and of presenting a message versus just doing, showing what is there, or presenting fiction versus reality. Instead, my in-class work engages students in playful embodied encounters and exercises that mediate in explorations of things that matter. This foregrounding of play shifts attention to trust, experimentation, improvisation and relationality as core values and aesthetic principles.

**Kelly Lloyd**, a Visual Artist, Essayist and Educator at The Baltimore School for the Arts- Baltimore, MD, requires that every student create artwork and write essays that are personally meaningful and politically relevant. Her classrooms are chaos. Painting I is full of students working on independent projects while listening to National Public Radio and freely discussing a mix of political events and pop culture anecdotes. Her current Contemporary Art History curriculum was determined by a conversation she had with her students about what they would like to learn.

#### (1) Budget Cuts

Strategy: Leave with the understanding that I have helped the students that were in my care this year and will continue to do so, however, for the sake of my financial stability and mental health, it is best for me to move on to a place where I can begin to imagine how to work against systemic inequalities, rather than be subject to them.

#### (2) Students' mental health and experiences of death

Strategy: I'm unsure of the effectiveness of any kind of training, and I don't feel as though I have adequate experiences to ground my responses. I ask colleagues who have had more experiences with the students for a sense of perspective and advice. I give the student room to be alone and invite conversation if they feel like it. It is jarring to me how many students over the course of the year have experienced the death of friends and family members and who have left school for a period of time to recover from this and other more regular traumas.

#### (3) Am I a Teacher?

Although I have taught for the past 10 years, I'm unsure about whether I'm a "teacher." I know teachers and I'm not them. For me, education is about community service and social justice, which means that I am only interested in having certain conversations with certain people. Perhaps attempting to define my profession and my educational proclivities for myself doesn't serve me.

**Nazafarin Lotfi** is an adjunct faculty member at Harold Washington College in Chicago. She teaches required art classes to the community college students. She does not follow the department policy to teach within the confinement of the textbook and instead provides counter examples to the topics presented in the book. She emphasizes the students to look beyond the American-centric worldview to investigate art history, and requires them to find artists in their communities, interview them, and create alternative materials to learn about art.

I teach at two different community colleges with very different demographics: College of Du Page (COD) in the suburbs, and the City Colleges of Chicago, where I teach at different campuses. Since the election, I have taught at three different schools, COD, Harold Washington College, and Daley College, and there has been one common thread among all the students: They seem to be very reluctant to talk about politics! Their silence is difficult to bear but worse than that is their despair. Most of these young people did not participate in the election because they had already made their minds that they didn't want either candidate. They don't believe in this system and feel excluded. I can't blame them but their response is painfully familiar to me as an Iranian immigrant.

For adjunct faculty, there is only so much you can do. With no job security and the schools' policies you have to be careful about how you engage the students in expressing themselves. At the same time, I don't believe that you can just show up and pretend that nothing has happened especially when I am, myself, being affected and some

students are directly affected by the policy changes and the hateful speeches.

One way that I deal with this is bringing up relevant issues by introducing contemporary artists whose work explores similar concerns. When talking about an artist's work, it's likely that the issue feels close and gets to here and now.

**Daniel Luedtke**, a lecturer at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, teaches a class called "Alternative Sex Education for Artists" to Freshmen. Students are required to play pornographic videogames, visit places like the Chicago Leather Archives and Museum where they view and discuss Bondage, Sado-Masochism and the history of Queer bathhouses in America. The sex-obsessed syllabus boasts that the course "will examine the ways that explicit and covert representations of sex and sexuality have allowed artists and cultural producers to express alternative forms of pleasure, beauty and power that critically engage dominant social norms and oppressive dynamics."

1. School should be uncomfortable and hard at times. Students with a consumer-driven understanding of an education often misrecognize criticism, difficulty and disagreement as harm. In class when things are difficult I try to hold the class within that moment, explaining that even the act of paying attention can be inherently uncomfortable for the teacher, the student, the artist and viewer.
2. Cost. Risks in curriculum, academic structure, pedagogy, engagement are measured against the overarching cost of tuition. Experimentation has been tarnished as a practice due to its' lack of practical and marketable viability. "Innovation" moves creativity into a neoliberal marketplace. Experiential learning, non-goal-driven exercises and discussion of legal and economic history helps students understand the limits of freedom.
3. No Future. Higher Education is simultaneously over-valued in terms of aspiration and economic mobility, yet underfunded by the State. Private entities, individuals and corporations are the engines of higher education. If the value of pedagogy is defined in relation to a corporate mission, then dissident actions and discourse are becoming incompatible with models of higher ed.

**Robert Lundberg** is a graduate student in law and environmental studies and a teaching assistant at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. He teaches an undergraduate course on how the Greenhouse Effect warms our environment and how anthropogenic emissions of carbon dioxide, methane and other gases are increasing that effect. Additionally, he instructs his students to seek facts, and think critically about those facts, in making decisions related to the environment and sustainability.

#### Concerns

- How to teach critical analysis of often-politicized scientific information.
- How to resist a grade-based system of external evaluation while being required to operate within that system.
- How to utilize the questioning and complicating potential of art in a science-based course.

#### Strategies

- I try to create space, and show appreciation, for students to develop and explain their own answers and reasoning to questions asked in class.

**Liz McCarthy** is a Graduate Student and Teaching Fellow at University of Illinois at Chicago. In her Digital Photography class she asks that her students think critically about how they "see" the world, and how social, material, and psychological factors influence their process of seeing. Repeatedly she asserts "The camera is a tool, but it is also a weapon, use it responsibly."

concern:

Promoting critical thinking for my students.

- Asking them to share experiences that reveal what they believe, how they live their life, and their cultural context. Asking them to listen to each other's responses, and respect that difference.
- Showing them artwork by other artists and thinkers that are asking questions and participating in a dialectic with their social and environmental context.
- encouraging students to discover what they are excited about, and what makes them want to keep learning.
- Letting them know I don't know all the answers, and am teaching from my own perspective which might be different than theirs
- reminding them that history is always a reflection of the present.

Concern:

Acknowledging the importance of physical/material experience in the world in the midst of abundant virtual digital realms.

- Asking students to analyze the quality of printed material, discuss how material objects act in the world (especially photographs)
- travel to visit physical art and spaces that shift students out of their everyday environments, and force them to physically explore space using new techniques (looking through a camera viewfinder).
- ask them to work with materials in ways that feel foreign to them (ex. drawing on photographs).

Concern:

Availability of inexpensive and accessible education.

- Participating, representing, and teaching in a state funded public school with a diverse student body.
- Writing letters and calling various political representative to voice my concern about the importance of education.
- Voting for candidates that support accessible education
- Going to protests in support of public funds for schools and accessibility for schools.

**Heather MacKenzie** has been on the faculty at the School of the Arts of Virginia Commonwealth University and at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. She requires her students to read radical and provocative texts that focus on topics including feminism, racial justice, and class and economic issues. She promotes an agenda within her classroom that encourages active questioning of institutional hierarchies and has incorporated various teachings of Paulo Freire into her teaching philosophy.

I am not teaching this year in large part because of concerns I have regarding institutions of higher education. The amount of debt that students take on is becoming absurd, especially when so many will not end up working in their field of study; the proliferation of the underpaid adjunct faculty goes against my values; I love school, but these two factors lead me to my third concern around the authority of ivory tower institutions in general. They seem a bit like empty shells, emperors without clothes. I want to dream up and build alternatives.

**Jennifer MacKenzie**, a lecturer in the English and Journalism & Communications departments at CUNY's Lehman College, centers her courses on media history around anti-racist activism from Ida B. Wells through Black Lives Matter. In her freshman composition courses students write essays on social justice movements, civil disobedience and police brutality. Her poetry class is a hotbed of lyrical protest, love and power grounded in the intersection of queer, female, Latinx, Black, anti-colonial and anti-war voices.

Three largest concerns facing me as an educator:

1. How to provide adequate mentoring and support for students living in intense and increasing precarity-- economic, political, legal, and often domestic. Students who fear deportation, students working multiple jobs in a cruel fragmented economy and city fragmented by racism and income inequality, while also parenting and going to school simultaneously.

2. How to integrate activism into the classroom in the current hostile political climate--or, how to keep a social justice framework in my classroom.
3. As always, how to keep learning from my students and my own experience how to be a better more competent and generous teacher while remembering the first rule, Do no harm.

Strategies: honestly this feels like too big of a question to answer simply, especially if I have to break it down for each number. If I have to answer really briefly I would say, listening, listening, listening; center students and their experiences; validate their realities and sovereignty while providing tools for them to build research and writing that makes a difference on these grounds. Never become so self-indulgent as to despair: remember that hopelessness is a luxury. Remember my own great privilege and use it to hold open spaces of safety and empowerment for students. Remember that generosity is an act of power, and as Toi Derricotte puts it, "joy is an act of resistance."

*Jill Magi, an Assistant Arts Professor at New York University Abu Dhabi, insists that students self-publish and curate each other, believes that art classes are trainings in how to live life, and is Freirian in her belief that students enter the classroom already in possession of criticality and they gravitate toward humanization. Teaching, for her, is a practice of examining how she both constructs and deconstructs the autonomous liberal subject. She aims to create a community that is supportive, playful, and rigorous enough to facilitate brand new diagonals—artworks—that cut through overdetermined notions of self, art, and society.*

#### 1. The adjunctification of the university.

I suffered under the regime of contingency in the United States for many years. Adjuncts are not failures as teachers, researchers, artists, academics. Rather, corporate-style greed and unethical human resources tactics have infiltrated higher education. Now that I am no longer part-time, but I am also not tenure-track, I see how the tenure system within the current economic environment breeds passivity, anxiety, competition. Talented undergraduates, who might contribute in important ways to new scholarship, are choosing *not* to pursue academic careers because of this. If the only ones who can stay in academia are the independently wealthy, or are subsidized by good private-sector salaries within their families, academic and art discourses may become even more homogeneous than they are now. I edited two pamphlets for Essay Press—free and downloadable pdfs—called *Labor Poetic Labor!* exploring some of the problems of class, race, culture work, education, and contingency. My book *LABOR*, whose alternative employee handbook pages are featured in this exhibit, writes the texture of contingency not as complaint only, but as insightful “outsider” status—the outsider being, as Elizabeth Grosz reminds us, a person not necessarily wrapped up in envy, but capable of great innovation. And how odd that the adjunct is an outsider while also being the center around which the institution turns. This contradiction is a poetics in itself.

#### 2. The current economic landscape, including inflated tuition, the underfunding of public universities and schools, student loan debt, the deregulation of banking, systemic poverty and the crisis of health care and housing.

It is wrong for students to emerge from university with tremendous debt. I work for an institution that is “needs-blind” in its admissions. The impact of this is palpable in the classroom; students are less depressed and more able to learn. Tax monies should be comingled and equally distributed to ensure truly public education. It used to be that more poor and working class students could enter school and pursue art even though no one expected this from them. We’re seeing the end of this possibility, and in the States, I was increasingly challenged by classrooms becoming less diverse with regard to class, and this often aligns with race. As citizens, and especially as artists, our concerns should be bound up with the plight of the poor—housing and health benefits will only be secured by fighting poverty alongside those who have suffered from the structures that perpetuate it. I wrote and published sequence of haiku called “The Economy Poems” connecting economic history—policies such as tax “reform” and banking deregulation—to the present situation.

#### 3. Disciplinary divisions.

I am always looking for colleagues who want to take the adventure of thinking beyond such divisions as humanities/sciences, living/non-living, making/theorizing, visual/textual, artist/scholar. Inside my classrooms I push these binaries to the side as much as possible, and when “inter-disciplinary” exchange does happen, I find it totally enlivening. But the economy of academia favors a certain kind of research and rhetoric. And sometimes retreating into a discipline is a way to protect work that would otherwise get totally overshadowed by the loudest voices, the most well-funded research agenda. But I still wonder, what does rigor and equality look like in a truly interdisciplinary, or non-disciplinary, institution? Is this happening somewhere? While I have an ear to the ground for such places, I also insist on making these connections wherever I find myself working. I inevitably fold these connections into my art, teaching, and scholarship, though the informality of these friendships means the work that results usually lands outside the institution’s sidelines. Good to remember that new life happens this way.

*Jesse Malmed, an artist, curator and educator, is presently teaching at two colleges (University of Illinois at Chicago, University of St. Francis), a high school (North Grand) and a kindergarten (Hibbard) alongside facilitating screenings, exhibitions, performance events, residency programming, publications and other non/quasi-institutional educational and cultural encounters. His pedagogy works to link critical artistic production with a sense of liberation and an invigorated engagement with the world. A radical approach to politics, form, access and creation alongside the twinned virtues of play and criticality bulwark readings, screenings and discussions that reveal potential ways of making, un-making and re-making media.*

1. The safety of my students, colleagues and the institutions we use to find each other.
2. Needless stress (economic, social, political, etc.) that can hinder a non-teleological approach to learning.
3. A wounded education system that under-prepares students for the academic rigors they'll encounter as they progress.

*Devin Mays is an educator and conceptualist whose interrogation of space and culture questions the socio-political and cultural conditioning of contemporary society. He uses trash and other forms of detritus to reframe ways of seeing. After introducing his practice to the classroom, students have been seen photographing and collecting discarded Newport boxes.*

1. **Being Present** - At times I find students have a difficult time being present. I believe we all suffer, some more than others, from this ailment. The consumptive pace of our everyday lives continue to increase at a rapid pace. It can be challenging to ask students to slow down their conceptual consumption when most of society is demanding more and faster. That lack of patience coupled with a number of other distractions can make it difficult for the learning environment. However, I've learned that if the educator becomes an active participant in the classroom there is a lesser chance the student will become a passive one.
2. **Being Analytical** - *Is this right?* Some students seem to be more concerned with having the right answer than knowing how to get it. It can very difficult to ask someone to trust and embrace the process with something as fluid and expansive as art - especially if they're still trying to define it for themselves. However, I believe it's important to be able to know the *How?* and *Why?* So I encourage my students to ask themselves, their peers and instructors these questions. I'm not looking for the right answer, rather the right way to form the question.
3. **Confidence** - Art can be intimidating. I've found that a lot of students can be reluctant to give themselves the title of "Artist" because of their self-assessed abilities to make or understand contemporary art. I've experience a similar intimidation of the white cube and its discourse. So I pass on a theory that was passed on to me by a former professor. Everyone has a different art collection based

on their experience or interaction with it. I might have more artists or different artists in my collection, but it doesn't make mine more valuable than yours. And as your collection evolves, so will what you create and understand.

*Artist **Billy McGuinness** and curator **Rhoda Rosen** are professors at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago who invite students to create inclusive communities both within the classroom and outside of it in the city's public spaces. Students are encouraged to read and think critically about a range of texts that engender solidarity and compassion and position art not as something framed on a wall, but as collaborative and participatory, anti-representational consumer; opposing the consumerist, profit-driven investment goals of the art world, and bumping up against and becoming real life. In order to earn course credit, students are asked to acknowledge, care about, and work with people living in poverty. To Rosen and McGuinness, art has the power to restructure social relations such that human interdependency is recognized and every human being is equally valued and celebrated.*

Learning communities are not simply academic. They are also communities of care and an exercise in mutual respect. We spend a great deal of time building and attending to an inclusive classroom environment that will support a process of engaged co-learning.

Nor is education limited to the theoretical. It reflects on and connects with issues of concern outside of the classroom. In our courses, we take students into the world and introduce them to people living in poverty. Through the relationships built, student research comes alive.

The skills we practice are not discipline specific. As professors with full-time positions outside of academia as a working artist and curator, we bring proficiencies developed beyond the classroom to students who will likely work outside of higher education themselves.

***Sarah Mendelsohn** dreams about former students, former teachers, and civil collectivity. March 20, 2017: Anna, Franky, Lila, and a few others from my ten-to-thirteen-year old-crew at Abrons are sleeping on gym mats inside the New York Public Library during some kind of environmental or human disaster—the kind of disaster that ends a city. Diedrich Diederichsen is there too, wearing shorts, checking in to see how we were doing. I'm trying, I say.*

1. I've been thinking about introductions, and a tightness I've often felt when asked to identify myself in groups. This is my name, these are my pronouns, this is what my voice sounds like when I'm speaking to a room of potential peers. My shoulders tense and hunch. How can I create a space in which we are asked to do something other than state what we already think we are? When I teach I want to make an opening you enter without already being named or having to name yourself—which is usually just another way of being named—but where you can exist in the process of becoming. I guess I'm craving the kind of transformation that happens through dance, or maybe drawing, or maybe some kinds of sound practices: activities through which you are continually becoming, moving through multiple selves that are all equally possible and real. My roommate vogues and says that when he started, he was told that in voguing you can be any gender you want—that happens through doing and making beautiful jokes with your body. I don't know how to do that, but I'm thinking about how I can set the stage for that kind of transformation. I'm planning an experiment for an upcoming workshop. During the first session, before introductions, we'll go for a walk together around the school in silence: ten minutes, no speaking. Then we can do introductions after. I'm thinking probably we'll all say the same things we would anyway, but maybe our voices will feel different. Reservations: I don't want to seem too new age-y. What if someone can't walk for ten minutes?
2. In the United States people indebt themselves to their educations and to the institutions that sell them, because our society has buried our rights to education. I am emerging with comparatively little debt, but in other ways I owe a lot, and in other ways I never emerge. Our indebtedness takes so many forms it is impossible to name them all.
3. I want to change myself through listening, and when I teach I want to hold that as a collective possibility. I want to listen to ambivalence without feeling immobilized by it. Actually, I want the act of listening to make ambivalence

matter.

Pauline Oliveros: "Listen to everything all the time and remind yourself when you are not listening."

Lawrence Abu Hamdan: "For now, it seems that the battle for free speech is no longer about fighting to speak freely, but fighting for the control over the very conditions under which one is being heard. For me, a 'politics of listening' is therefore a politics that moves away from classic notions of advocacy and of giving people a voice. It is not a call for free speech, or to have an equal platform for all voices to be heard. It is an intervention into, and a reorganisation of, the forms of listening to speech itself. A politics of listening does not seek to amplify voices and have issues heard, but rather attempts to redefine what constitutes speech."

*In terms of his profession, **Arthur Menezes Brum** struggles to make a career out of tentative contracts with various institutions throughout New York City. When asked what he does, he says he is an educator first. Only much later does he discuss his practice or the cultural production of others. He resists being called an artist because he recognizes that when asked what he does, people would like to know who pays him for what. This obviousness is seen as a pretentious evasion. He does little to correct this.*

Brum has the simple goal of having people reflect on the relationship between what they experience sensorially and what they know. He prefers to consider art works cultural products which emphasizes the pluralistic and democratic nature of material culture. This equivocating and democratic impulse is often received as a nihilism. With both faculty and students, he discusses issues of power in a common place way which makes many people nervous. He enjoys questions as much as answers, if not more so. This enjoyment leads him into the wall of american anti-intellectualism. This consistent collision leads to much anxiety and despair. While pondering this situation, He yearns to discover something political to do. What it is he does not know.

### Three Strategies

1. Confusion precedes understanding. Being confounded leads to learning. Laxness in instruction leads to invention and anxiety, something to be overcome.
2. Point out that the phrase, "It is what it is." is close to saying nothing or horrifying.
3. Create ways for students to be able to know if what they are doing is working; avoid multiple choice.

***Orr Menirom** enjoys setting on fire effigies of entrepreneurial luxury towers. She encourages her students to burn fixed patterns of political perception, oppression and narrow-mindedness, and to nurture a culture of free speech.*

### Adjunct Burn Out

As an adjunct working at multiple institutions on a contract-by-contract basis, I need to maintain two other part-time jobs to stay afloat [financially]. This is becoming increasingly emotionally and physically draining. I am concerned this is not only depriving me of my energy, but also progressively eating away at my love and hope for this profession. I believe that visibility is one of the most important factors,[for...] and will continue to protest at the front of my own school with handouts for my fellow faculty and students about our 75% adjunct population, funding cuts, and wage gaps.

### In-Class Discussion of Outside Topics

As an educator I find it inappropriate to strongly declare my personal political beliefs and opinions, as it may ostracize certain students. But lately, I have found it incredibly difficult to leave these topics outside of the classroom, which forces me to consider a number of questions: How can I create a space safe enough for all students to feel as if they can express their individual opinions, while also drawing attention to blatant injustices? In a studio class where the course description does not include these themes, how much time am I legally permitted to use on such discussions? I have been approached by students in the past asking me not to use studio hours as a

platform for my political agenda. I am constantly testing the waters with this, but believe that in trying to read a particular class atmosphere (as they are each uniquely every time) and insert these conversations however possible, I am collecting data. I have found that classroom debates where students are assigned a belief can stretch that empathy muscle we all need so much.

### **Student Success**

Many students come to me without writing skills. While I require that they visit the writing center before submitting any large assignment, I cannot always grade for grammar and writing ability in my exams, and I hope that they take the time to build this skill after they leave my class. With 40+ students per semester I frequently must look over many mistakes. I feel implicated in passing a student along who will be unable to write an impressive cover letter after acquiring a degree from my institution. There **MUST** be a way to strengthen fundamental writing skills at a high school level before these students get to college.

*R W Miller is a Chicago based artist known for prints, collages, paintings, and installations exploring images as material. Critically exploiting the images that clot our political and sexual imaginations, wide-ranging output presents the proliferating digital media as decentered propaganda.*

Julius Ceaser (JC), an exhibition space in Chicago, run by an always evolving group of artist co-directors, is currently Levi Budd, Josh Dihle, Tony Lewis, Roland Miller, Maddie Reyna, and Kate Sierzputowski. The JC world has 3 constituents: artist, space, and audience. JC is a repeating space in time, wherein differing inhabitants host guests for shared experience and conversation. JC is propositional, a demonstration, a critique by offering exhibition-value to exhibitions. Our value as a white cube is not commercial but social. We have a mission of fostering an educational space and a history of promoting underrepresented artists. Money is not the destination but rather a distraction.

When you stop thinking about money, all of the sudden it's much easier to think about visibility. And visibility was one of the most important questions to us. [Visibility of] underrepresented people, histories, and dialogues. It's not that people aren't there or having conversations, but that too few people see and hear them. People are not given the space. How to address these issues is crazy complicated, however, much more so than filling a white cube or two with fresh faces and new ideas.

Several questions became paramount to the space's function in our 3-part equation: How do we serve the artists, how do foster an audience, and how do we address the space?

### **Artists**

We created a venue that finds great value in underrepresented artists, but how do we serve that value? Do we dedicate the space to underrepresented artists? Do we create a platform that puts them into direct contact—over time in shared space—with potential, more visible peers? Do we dedicate resources to exhibit well-represented artists to improve visibility for the underrepresented? It's so much more expensive to bring in more successful artists, it can be like asking: Is it better to share four artists who need help, or retrieve one artist offering help by sharing light? Furthermore, how do we even know what underrepresented is? (That question is enormous and cannot be given adequate consideration in this essay.)

One way I try to identify underrepresentation is by seeing as many shows around Chicago as possible—try to have a sense of what opportunities are being given out, what people have done or what I think they could do. How they fit with what we've done and how they would be seen. We do not have a roster of artists, but we do have history. The context of a show is not only the current landscape of the art world, but also the history of the space (a line descending from a point on a plane). How can that structure benefit the artists, and under what terms could JC harm them? Offering someone space does not mean visibility if they will not be seen fairly, but helping the artist become visible to the audience is the foundation of their relationship. How to serve that relationship is an endless source of concern.

### **The Audience**

The audience has been a great source of deliberation as well. Who comes to what shows is unpredictable, and the



number of attendees does not determine success. There is a feeling of regret, however, when an artist puts forth great effort and is not seen or offered meaningful interaction. We must court the audience with social media, post to social event calendars, and reach out to people potentially relevant to an exhibition. We must also be mindful of who the artist is; it is so easy to get Chicagoans to attend the show of a friend or colleague, but difficult to get them to attend an unknown artist. The audience needs attention in this equation. They are the blood that runs through the space, and as they feed us we must feed them.

### **The Space**

The space where we congregate needs to be flexible and discrete. Some improvements are obvious (e.g. the decision to double the space, plans to improve lighting, how to approach the walls). Some are more complex, like which features are distracting vs. which are “funky.” The rooms are different, and those differences are an opportunity for some and obstacle for others. The more money we invest to address these issues, the caring labor must be mindfully directed.

The space and all it encompasses is in service of the artist. Some [service] is simple labor. Always give someone a fresh space to own with well-painted, patched walls and tools available. There’s emotional service as well, including treating artists with professional courtesy, understanding their project, and investing in its success. There is conceptual service by helping them have writing to bridge the distance between artist, space, and audience. The text must facilitate their visibility by distinguishing which differences are the features for recognition.

The space has directors, and we must be dedicated to empowering the artists with a broader and longer view. On a movie set, the director helps actors perform for a movie, because many tell a story without ever having worked together. It’s our job to fit and sequence compatible artists to form a linear series of events. Unlike a movie, the narrative is found in audience members who have come and gone with differing segments in sequence. No one sees every show, and no one sees the same thing at any show. When Julius Caesar functions properly, people are learning without authority. It is a space for individuals to form a social structure of communal knowledge where no one person holds the answer, but each member constitutes a valuable key to understanding.

***Moronauta (Niccolò Moronato)***, Permanent Lecturer at Polytechnic University of Milan, Italy.

In his classes, he teaches students how to think and express themselves creatively in English even if they don’t speak the language.

He helps the class detect and share the thought processes deriving from his fluency in 6 different languages, and encourages his students to use them in everyday life to bypass and challenge the single-language cultural, political, and work environment fostered by the National government.

In the last few years, **the education system has become more and more work-oriented.**

There’s nothing wrong with finding a job after investing on a Masters Degree, but University time is meant to open minds rather than tuck them into career paths.

My students come to Politecnico from different walks of life; all of them want to become well-rounded creatives, and they work in close contact with Creative Directors, with a hands-on approach.

I, instead, try to bring to class people and experiences that don’t come from advertising or design: artists, curators, poets – so that students are constantly challenged to find new thought processes to express their ideas. In my hopes, this will make it more difficult for employers to pigeon-hole them into a role, no matter which one.

Another major concern is the **linguistic isolation of Italy.**

Movies are dubbed, politicians and professionals speak very little English, and every piece of information or cultural production is filtered through a language that does not evolve at the same pace of English, Spanish or French.

I dedicate significant time to re-creating a childhood in English that my students didn’t have, to give them an innate sense of sound – this includes reading Dr. Seuss out loud, singing soccer chants, and creating nursery rhymes of their own.

Although I try to only speak English in my classes, I also encourage my students to use the thought and sound processes derived from the languages I speak to enrich their Italian-thinking as well, creatively and linguistically – this means overcoming the concept of “translation” and embracing “language design”.

Finally, the **loss of manual skills** is bothersome to me.

Computers are great at getting things done, but they are keeping creatives away from experiencing different thought patterns that only come with physical manipulation and spatial exploration.

In my class, I try to bring together the analog and digital approach. As an example, I make students use actual dictionaries and vocabularies (which conceptual depth is still unmatched), reflect on their usage patterns and then integrate them with online tools, such as Wikipedia. This way, Wikipedia can be used as a context-based, multi-lingual dictionary, rather than a repository of notions. Adaptations improve dramatically by doing so.

I also often set the class free to go for a walk for an hour, and then expect them to bring back things they noticed, random interactions they’ve had, objects they found, to produce work and to integrate with work they had already begun digitally.

*Jason Morris, poet and occasional guest lecturer (at SF State and California College of the Arts, among others) encourages disobedience among students, both formal and otherwise. Advocates deviance, slowness, rot, refusal, and digression as alternative aesthetic tactics. Assigns students Artaud, Beckett, Spicer, Virilio, Deleuze, Acker, Bataille, etc. Encourages close readings of Emily Dickinson and Melville’s Bartleby.*

I’d say that of the three largest concerns I am working with at the moment the first two overlap. We need to counter hopelessness. We are alive at a moment when complete hopelessness is not merely a temptation, but practically legible, a tendency engraved in the work. The inevitability of ecological catastrophe, alongside a broader imaginational collapse, both appear immanent. But to paraphrase Heidegger, by the saving force lies the danger: close looking is radical politics. Where speed and growth have been valorized simply for their own sake, where monolithic culture is prioritized over the local, we can take our cues as educators, students, artists and writers from people like Francis Ponge, writing out / seeing a snail. Looking closely at the particulars and anomalous or contradictory multiplicities within hegemonic systems becomes a form of immediate, immediately possible resistance. The other is a force in the writing which mysteriously enacts its obligation to the unassimilable. I’d like students to see how strong work reveals its debt to what can’t be bought and sold, to what can’t go faster, to what is never new, shiny, best, first; but rather how at its joints the work shows its origins in ephemerality, decay, dissonance.

*Eileen Mueller, an instructor at the Chicago High School for the Arts, openly explains to the room when student behavior or opinions displayed during class are biased with misogyny, differentiated racial or economic experience, a disregard for the culture of others, limited understanding of trauma, or a lack of empathy. Conversations on such behavior are performed publicly in which students are asked to analyze their own bias and that of others- during these conversations the class room is referred to as a “safe space” within which students are encouraged to self-advocate. When discussing art history students are asked to respond out loud, in unison to define “the canon” to which students loudly reply, “OLD DEAD WHITE MEN” before an individual student is then asked to further define the term and discuss the limits of learned histories. Feminism is touted as an ideal, during lectures artists of color and depictions of the black experience are at times given primacy over the work of white artists, and race is openly discussed in terms both ideological and personal. Mueller endangers her authority in the high school classroom when she recognizes verbal or performed biases in her own lectures and apologizes to the students.*

The three qualities of a responsible citizenry that I am most concerned with addressing in the classroom are as such:

1. Building empathy and awareness of others in all students.
2. Helping students to gain access to institutions of privilege and spheres of influence.
3. Dismantling the privilege of young white men and engendering ownership of public spaces and righteousness in students of color, queer students, and female identified students.

**Yue Nakayama** - An alien with extra ordinary ability who teaches video production classes and gives orgasmical studio visits. Existential cockroaches will take over the world during alien invasion. Life is feral, so is your belief system and higher education's effect on it.

- Students allowed to carry guns into classes in some states
- Why right wing and religious stuffs do not work in contemporary art
- Respecting student's religious/political belief while pushing the contemporary agenda

**Abbé Odunlami** [A-b-e], a doctoral student at The European Graduate School. He's an advocate of cultural and political analysis from the Tricontinental regions (Africa, South America, and Asia). He's lectures and writings question power dynamics within standardized structures and modes.

The three concerns I'm dealing with as an educator is; grappling with how to combat the lack of wider perspectives about society and the global space currently incorporated in how education is practiced, the continued corporatization of higher education, and the passive liberal/progressive ideology. I address these issues by promoting a broad range of readings and perspectives which both challenge "standard" ideologies while they explore the nuances within what's standard. I support alternative education platforms, experiments and explorations aside from the University model, and the further development of strategies towards radical education. I ask students to both challenges and support their assertions through actions but also keep those who advocate for us accountable beyond rhetoric.

**Gilad Ophir** is an Israeli visual artist, and photographer, based in Tel Aviv. Ophir is a senior lecturer at Bezalel Academy for Arts, Jerusalem. He also teaches at the Shenkar College of Engineering, Design and Art, Ramat Gan, and Oranim College, Kiryat Tivon. Ophir served as the Head of the Israeli Artists Union between the years 2012 and 2016. His work and pedagogy reveal the visible and invisible relationships between power, economy, and ideology, and the ways they manifest through the local landscape.

Terence McKenna Once wrote "Culture is not your friend". As an artist, an educator of art, indeed of humanism, which is the one fortress I believe in, this sentence, these words are ones that can make the world stop still. For I have no other land, but culture. Yet, I am not naive, I understand perfectly well what they mean, what he meant, but there is something terrifying there, a threat, that if you really understand, than you live your life as an artist, a teacher, in permanent exile.

"Perhaps especially these days, when contradiction, casting doubts, questioning and criticizing the state Power and professed ideologies is dangerous, one who is lucid, compelling, internally consistent, and dedicated to free inquiry, is dangerous as well. The Teacher."

**Roni Packer** is a graduate student and teaching assistant at the University of Illinois at Chicago. In her intro to painting and color class, Packer requires her students to embrace and understand their ancestral aesthetics taste. By encouraging students to espouse the beauty of their native culture, she emboldens diversity in class and generates a discussion about the ways in which the capitalist system dictates specific aesthetics and particular modes of thinking.

Who is Privileged: on election day, I asked my students who voted already. When only two or three students raised their hands, my heart shrank. I encouraged them to go and vote although I was not sure I have the right to so. After all, not being a citizen I myself did not and could not vote. I am in the United States only because I am privileged enough to do so. When I decided to start my MFA in the United States, there were a few thing I did not consider. One of them was that I will not be allowed to vote in the election. I did not think of that. Another was that Donald Trump will be the President of the United States. I could not anticipate it.

Lack of Knowledge: I do not pretend to know or understand a lot about American politics, history or current affairs. There are so many things I have no clue about. I often feel that my students know so much more than I do on

American culture, the political system, the proper code of conduct... When I only started to teach, I was terrified: I felt that I will have nothing to offer them. Today I know that this knowledge gap provides an opportunity for us, the students and I, to break out of the institutional power dynamics of the academy. This is what we should do, not only in the classroom but outside of it as well.

Cultural and Language Gaps: can a 'disable' person teach and benefit 'able' ones? In my homeland, I worked with socially challenged adults and youth with mental disabilities. I had the proper linguistic skills and adequate cultural sensitivity to understand and provide for their needs and wishes. Here, in a foreign land, I find myself searching for the proper words. I reach into my mental bag not knowing if I will find what I am looking for. Lacking the confidence of a native speaker, and being painfully aware of the age difference between the students and myself, their references often go over my head. When I was finally able to accept the disability forced upon me, I started using it as a tool to open new paths of communication between us. Our continuing dialogue feels me with hope about fighting xenophobia and reminds me that art might still have a vital role to play in our fucked up world.

**Allyson Packer**, *Part-time Faculty at the Santa Fe University of Art and Design and Teaching Artist for El Otro Lado and Friends of the Orphan Signs in Albuquerque, NM, asks students to identify the injustices they witness in their own communities. As part of her class, Packer requires students to complete independent research on historic and contemporary social justice movements and to critique the role of art in these movements as well as the way artists have subsequently appropriated these movements' aesthetics. Students are asked to use this research to find precedents for their work in her class.*

These concerns are not exactly pedagogical, but if you asked me about the top three things I'm typically worrying about in regard to my students:

1. The potential deportation of students and/or students' family members.
2. The immediate physical safety of students who are trans and/or POC.
3. A lack of concern and comprehensive understanding among students of who is profiting from their personal data, identities, and educations.

**J. Thomas Pallas**, *an adjunct college professor and art museum educator, purposely teaches without a syllabus or grades. Students co-design their curriculum in a community of learners without adhering to hierarchies to which they have otherwise been accustomed. Encouraged to participate civically and democratically for the benefit of others, these students are essentially paying to perform services for others and are therefore indoctrinated to liberal ideologies.*

1. Breaking down student expectations about who carries expertise within their field of study, so [I am interested in] moving beyond academics and program directors as experts and toward providing opportunities to engage with people directly experiencing the issue in their daily lives as the primary source of knowledge about that topic.

Strategies such as introducing them to a broad range of practitioners, many of whom are unexpected or otherwise overlooked, and demonstrating the capacity to learn immensely if you're able to listen. Genuine curiosity, empathy, and listening skills must be modeled and shared consistently as well.

2. Guiding students through ethical interactions with people, communities, and histories so they have a holistic and considered relationship to the people they engage.

We conduct a required IRB training session and workshop the design process as a group to address issues proactively before they arise.

3. Facilitating the use of the city as their studio, that a direct relationship and engagement with the resources, organizations, and communities within the city will be far more productive than objects and images made in isolation.

I think this goes back to expectation setting and when we alleviate the idea of what needs to be produced, we are free to concern ourselves with the process of our own learning.

**Dan Paz**, Assistant Professor of Art at Truman College and visiting artist/lecturer at University of Washington teaches a course on the construction of identity through popular media. Paz considers the topic of selfhood under a patriarchal, white supremacist state as urgent and critical to pedagogic practice. In the beginning of this practicum-based video course students study the political stage through the polemics of consumer capitalism. Students are asked to analyze and compare the play *The Strangerer* by the Mickle Maher with the 2016 Trump/Clinton debates in order to isolate the performativity of patriarchy and the political state.

As my students come from vastly different cultural backgrounds and have very different experiences in educational settings, my pedagogy is rooted in fostering continuing sensitivity to difference as critical to building trust in the classroom and the greater campus. In this, my priority is to help students learn to theorize diversity and difference, as well as to see how they are made manifest in art. To this end, my syllabi incorporate a range of national and international artists whose lives, experiences, and work reflect the race, gender, sexuality, national identities of my students. More than this, I incorporate connections between critical, identity-based work and socio-political context that students are examining in their photographic projects.

**Lee Sparks Pembleton** lectures nigh on ceaselessly, and even occasionally to students in a professional capacity. Pembleton's current musical composition, an opera, features a central character who is the last human, indeed the last life form, likely in existence in the universe. The character refuses to participate in repopulating the universe. The libretto focuses on a discussion between the disappearing multitude of stars, mysteriously dying; the last human; a ship's computer; a geek chorus; and a god with no purpose. The role of God is performed by Shaun Albro, singer of the bands *Against the Plagues* and *Throne of Sacrilege*; ex-singer of *Ebonmortis*.

The self-fulfilling philosophy best espoused by Margaret Thatcher in 1987, "there's no such thing as society. There are individual men and women and there are families. And no government can do anything except through people, and people must look after themselves first. It is our duty to look after ourselves and then, also, to look after our neighbors." Or: greed is good.

Short-termism, not primarily as we think of it as a problem of the business world, but as a default way of thinking that manifests in our disregard for long-term planning as a species, as well as individuals, and a major life form on a shared planet. The actions we take that benefit us now without forethought on how those actions impact our children, our grandchildren, our great-grandchildren, our great-great-grandchildren our great-great-great-grandchildren, our great-great-great-great-grandchildren...

How individual voices can engage in opposition to the above views, both of which are propagated and driven by enormous multi-national corporations and their collaborators in multi-state governments, in themselves carefully crafted societies with centenary plus visions.

**Juan-Carlos Perez** is a visual artist who works with organizations, communities and schools (etc.) teaching a wide range of art disciplines through out the city of Chicago.

His artwork and teachings challenge individuals to investigate how perspectives and behaviors today have been shaped by traditional, nationalistic, colonial ideals and how they have contributed to the deterioration of targeted neighborhoods.

He has been known to say in regards to president Donald Trump, "Someone needs to take him out."

As an educator, the three largest concerns I am currently addressing are:

1. The demonizing of immigrants/mass deportations & whitewashing of indigenous ancestry.
2. The deterioration of targeted neighborhoods.

### 3. How to engage community and collaborate to respond to issues affecting our neighborhoods today.

Here are my strategies to address them:

1. Juan-Carlos has designed and is currently implementing an art lesson/mural making investigation workshop titled “La Promesa de Libertad / Liberty’s Promise,” geared toward students and communities who have been personally affected, targeted, and bullied by the new U.S. administration’s immigration policies. A social media campaign has been launched around these art workshops across the city of Chicago for those that would like to show solidarity around this issue.

2. Juan-Carlos works with students in the Back Of The Yards neighborhood in tackling social issues plaguing our communities, such as racism, police brutality, gang violence, drug addiction, (etc.). These issues are communicated through art concepts, materials & techniques used by Latin American tribes and ancient civilizations to help students find a deeper understanding and connection to their Mexican ancestry while at the same time advocating for social change.

3. Juan-Carlos is part of the Chicago Act Collective, a group of socially & politically engaged artists that create many forms of resistance through the use of art that promote collaboration and dialogue across multiple communities that reflect and respond to current and local needs identified by those directly impacted.

*Dr. Tony Perucci is an Associate Professor of Performance Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He requires his students in his courses on “Performance Activism,” to create pornographic performance “art” that expresses his radical anti-capitalist agenda. In 2009, he founded “The Performance Collective” with his students, which his website describes as an “autonomous, non-hierarchical ensemble” that makes “art and trouble.” In his writing and classes, he has referred to President Donald Trump as an “authoritarian bullshit artist” and mocking the size of the president’s hands.*

Challenges:

1. Ever since the Financial Crisis of 2008, I have seen enrollment in performance classes go down, as students have felt pressured to pursue more
2. Budget cuts due to the slashing of funding for the university by the NC State Legislature
3. College has not been appropriating new faculty hire lines as senior faculty members in performance studies have retired.

Strategies:

These three issues are all related and come from one general concern, that the state is pushing the university towards an increasingly “vocational” mission. The “danger” that arts faculty pose to the university is largely being managed by portraying the arts as a diversion rather than a form of serious study. Despite being a premier research university (and the largest employer in North Carolina), the new metric is “does the degree help you get a job” not “what do you learn.” To the degree that research is valued, it must now have “high impact” for “industry.” Performance Studies is very much fighting survival in this environment. Our primary strategy at this point has been to cast our courses as fulfilling the “experiential education” and “engaged scholarship” requirements the university has added for undergraduate students. Also, we market ourselves to administration as providing “employer-desired” skills as critical thinking, public speaking, thinking “outside the box,” and collaboration. This, of course, runs the risk of instrumentalizing arts pedagogy. Moreover, it’s unclear how sustainable this will be in the long run. It’s a real possibility that Performance Studies as an area of study could be eliminated under the guise of “efficiency.”

*Eli Petel, is an artist and the head of the art department at the Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, Jerusalem. The department includes students from every social, religious, economic and sexual background and stream in Israel and the occupied territories. Petel tries to simulate democracy therefore all groups or individuals influence the department’s agenda. This leads to activities that are influenced both by right-wing perspectives and left-wing perspectives, religious agendas and secularism, social responsibility and the unpopular right to be outside the political discourse.*

*Yochai Avrahami is the director of a BA program and an art teaching certificate program at Oranim College, north*

*Israel. The college, which for many years had a homogeneous student population from the surrounding northern kibbutz, has in recent years received a wider range of students from different religious backgrounds, who now come from Jewish, Palestinian and Druze cities, towns and villages. Despite the welcomed change, the terms of acceptance still comply to adaption to a homogeneous society. In the past year, Avrahami changed the criteria for receiving students in the art department, however now this step is being perceived as threatening by the "academic quality" of those interested in learning art and their heterogeneity as a Jewish audience.*

For the past four years, Yochai Avrahami and Eli Petel have been conducting a pioneering BFA program for haredi (Ultra Orthodox) women. The two major challenges in the construction of the program's curriculum were the restrictions of showing nude imagery and a severe prohibition on Christian imagery.

In Petel's and Avrahami's view, it is possible to create a curriculum that bypasses these two central motifs in art education, without creating a counter-school that focuses on the identities of the students. We refuse to produce purely national/aesthetic / eclectic code. This opposition raises forms of expressions that we see as appropriate and original contemporary art.

**Phil Peters**, an artist currently living in Los Angeles, has lectured and lead workshops for students. His research practices encourage us to explore parallel and associative narratives, expanding and investigating what we know of recorded histories. This practice re-frames these histories as incomplete, asking us to maintain a critical position in regard accepted systems of knowledge.

I am interested in how artists can conduct and interpret research to produce new bodies of knowledge. I worry that when we stop asking questions, when critical discourse gives over to acceptance, that we can loose the living edge of our thoughts. While the historian records this information for posterity, the artist is not duty bound to resolve these conflicts and can continue to work from a place of open questions and ambiguity. Perhaps it is a strategy towards the negotiation of this ambiguity that artists can give back to the discourse. Far from endorsing a notion of "Fake," something that has been imbued today with a stigma that itself fails to realize and address the complexity of what we characteristically mean by "Truth," this is a strategy to interrogate an idea from it's many aspects. It is an opportunity to see everything one picks up as an open question, and resist the desire to settle. It explores the gap between an object or event and its history. It is the place where curiosity, speculation, and imagination live. I approach this in my own practice by drawing together disparate places and times, overlapping and reimagining them in a single space.

**Ben Peterson**, an Adjunct Faculty of Undergraduate Ceramics, Non-Teaching Adjunct of MFA Sculpture at Hunter College, and an Adjunct Assistant Professor of Undergraduate Sculpture at the College of Staten Island the City University of New York, requires students to read literature about gender, race, queers, and humiliation as part of his studio art courses. Students must relate the readings to personal experiences through art making, thus indoctrinating them into the liberal progressive movement known as "contemporary art." He sometimes shows undergraduates photographs of naked people.

My three largest concerns as an educator are student distraction, student burnout, and grade inflation.

To help curb student distraction, I have implemented a pro-technology stance in my studio art courses. Students are allowed to use their phones, cameras, and social media as part of the creative process. I find that students appreciate the freedom and are able to use their cellphones to their advantage and to troubleshoot during class using the Internet.

To help with student burnout, I talk to students about their schedules, how they can structure time to attend the art studio's open hours, and how to prioritize their academic concerns. Many students have families, full-time school and full-time jobs! I can understand why it is a huge challenge.

To help with grade inflation, I give the students very clear information about grading. In the end, I have very little control over this issue as each campus and department has their own culture about grading and how important

merit is to education.

**Drew Peterson** is an artist, printmaker, and educator serving as Adjunct Faculty in printmaking at the University of Minnesota and Lead Instructor of the Visual Arts Literacy Training (VALT) program at Juxtaposition Arts in North Minneapolis. As a male artist of European decent given the opportunity to build and teach within communities of color he works to eliminate oppressive forces of misogyny, white supremacy, homophobia and transphobia through a pedagogical approach rooted in cooperation, self-determination, the dissolving of hierarchies, and empathy. As a printmaker, Peterson works to amplify the voices and provide greater visibility to artists from diverse backgrounds through collaborative fine art print publication.

Mental Health and trauma recovery.

The racial inequalities present within the educational system, extrajudicial police shootings, and other forms of institutional oppression/violence have undoubtedly impacted the mental and emotional well being of my students in varying degrees. As an educator and mentor working to build new lines of trust and support I want to be able to identify points of trauma and its lingering effects and be able to respond appropriately and effectively. In addition to being more attuned to the emotional and mental states of my students, I hope to foster a space that facilitates and enables youth to process, deconstruct, voice and explore their disposition towards the world. At Juxtaposition Arts we have reached out to professionals and mental health resources to help navigate these situations and to educate teachers to the warning signs and markers associated with mental illness.

Channels to catharsis, conversation, collaboration (processing media culture and its relationship to police violence, political turmoil, gender politics, etc.)

In wake of the police shootings of Jamar Clark and Philando Castille, and after the election of Donald Trump our class broke way from the routine drawing assignments to create a series of large scale collaborative text drawings. These works are generated from an open dialogue between students, I record and type fragments of their conversation into a photoshop workspace that is being projected on to sheets of paper mounted to the wall. The text is traced and filled in with color by all the participants. The finished works read almost as surrealist poetry—lines strung together in loose thematic order—but also serve as a collective cathartic experience which works to build an intimate bond between participants in the class.

Debt

Working with High School aged students preparing for college I see young people go through the same seduction I went through on behalf of the art school catalogues and well designed websites. Nearly all of my students interested in college (pursuing Visual Arts) name the premier undergrad programs as their first choices. I find it negligent to direct them towards these schools because the debt they can inherit is outrageous.

My advice is to consider the path towards a state or less expensive liberal arts school with better exposure to disciplines outside of the visual arts. Use these as classes to inform the content of your work as an undergrad, and allow yourself to mature into adulthood before choosing to go into exorbitant amounts of debt. Save the art school of an MFA.

Empty creative production VS. Critical thinking

Arts education that prepares youth to be a part of the creative workforce without preparing them to engage critically with the world is problematic. Therefore, I often pair foundation level lessons with relevant cultural content.

Example: A lesson on *Gesture Drawing* expands to include other definitions and forms of gesture within subcultures. We explore the aesthetic and politically symbolic gesture of graffiti culture and look at the expressive qualities of gesture through dance in *Paris is Burning*.

**Cole Pierce**, Communications Director at Northeastern Illinois University's Center for College Access and Success, works tirelessly to ensure that underprivileged youth are prepared and supported for a post-secondary education. In addition to basic college readiness, students are indoctrinated with ideas of social justice. Founded upon liberal and progressive



*ideals, the teachers, students and parents in these segregated communities are being emboldened by resources and access to education.*

1. Racial segregation, reinforced by school funding systems, local economies, and systemic racial bias in law enforcement.
2. The potential lack of federal funds for K-12 public education programs.
3. The propaganda used by the Trump administration to dehumanize minorities and marginalized people, in order to reduce funding for social programs.

Perhaps the biggest challenge to overcome these concerns is resisting the sense of helplessness. Democracy in our society appears to be failing on many levels. Our primary outlet for public debate is social media, which has been segmented into groups of like-minded people. Despite this skeptical outlook, I remain cautiously optimistic that I can use social media to counteract the opposition's ideology. I've been taking part in a media campaign that highlights the achievements and success stories of NEIU's college readiness programs. TRIO and GEAR UP are the programs in question, and result in a 32% increase in college attendance. I manage the social media sites belonging to the Center for College Access and Success, and I produce videos that document and promote their program activities in Chicago area high schools. I publish anecdotal testimonies, repost stories from grant programs, and engage in the online conversation about public education funding. I endorse information that disproves propaganda and racial stereotypes. As a state university, we are experiencing financial stress from the state and from the federal government. The Illinois budget impasse is forcing furloughs at NEIU, and the federally funded programs (TRIO and GEAR UP) are facing cuts of 60% to 90% in 2018. The situation is dire, and will affect millions of families across the country.

**Sreshtha Rit Premnath**, an Assistant Professor of Fine Art at Parsons School of Design in New York City does not teach at all but instead attempts to unlearn what he has been taught and helps his students do the same.

1) The professionalized artist who has learned to deliver a one sentence elevator-pitch.

I ask questions to provoke self-doubt.

2) The professionalized critic who has gathered a great deal of knowledge and learned to make complex arguments, but lacks the self-criticality to ask fundamental questions that upend their own positions.

I encourage an ethics of uncertainty.

3) The academic institution that cannot reconcile its financial model with its political posturing.

I am open about the inherent contradictions in the institution. Not as a counter institutional position, but rather to dialectically remain aware of the conditions within which we are operating.

**Jeff Prokash** is an adjunct lecturer at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Despite his usual mild-mannered demeanor Prokash is prone to frequent outbursts and lengthy digressions that advance an anti-capitalist agenda bent on dismantling cultural norms. Prokash's reading lists include numerous texts that are leftist in nature. He frequently requires his students to participate in lengthy discussions on ecology, feminism, and Marxist dialogues, and assigns cryptic exercises that require the exploration and application of these concepts.

My first concern as an educator is to encourage my students to push beyond the self-imposed and conditional limitations they experience when developing a work. Much of my work is set to the task of instilling confidence and assuring validity of pursuits that may at first seem absurd or not worth the effort to a young artist.

My second concern as an educator is pertaining to the distractions and desensitization that occurs as a result of our consumerist culture and attachment to our technological devices. I find a challenge in opening a deeper sense of perception that is more sensitive to experiencing the material and immaterial world we are living in. My course

plans typically include a set of exercises with the intent of encouraging my students to develop a practice of experiencing rather than looking. These exercises are designed to encourage exploration with an open mindset to unexpected results and to encourage my students to set aside their expectations and commonly held assumptions to look beyond the image, object, or surface.

My third concern as an educator is to encourage an urgency to dismantle, reform, and reorder the material and immaterial substances of this world. Beyond the seemingly fixed surface of things, a sense of agency and malleability can be reinstated. I encourage my students to engage in projects that are beyond their control and to work collaboratively with other entities. I encourage collaborations with unconventional and often involuntary collaborators. I direct them to engage organizations, institutions, audiences, and even the processes of the natural world and their environmental surroundings in order to become a part of something or to be embedded in something that is much larger than themselves.

**Chris Reeves** is a PhD student, instructor, and Teaching Assistant at the University of Illinois at Chicago in Art History. In his art history courses one becomes mindful of the omissive structural nature of written history; who writes what happens, and, of course, this appeals to art: what are we looking at, why are we looking at them, and who decides this? In a moment where the defunding of state education cozies up with evangelical US education secretaries and state legislative pressures to construct alternative histories—more Texas less Howard Zinn. There is danger in any historical pedagogy: Attempting historical truth should not be seen as progressive.

1. How do we contend with still prevalent 19th century models of pedagogy to a generation/world that has constructed entire realities online? We must understand the social virtue and pedagogical possibilities of a generation in tune with internet idleness, while at the same time understanding its ability to construct a world entirely (and sometimes dangerously) out of step with the real one ("alternative facts" and "bubbles").

2. Reading list:

Eve Chiapello and Luc Boltanski - *The New Spirit of Capitalism*. London: Verso, 2006.

Herbert Marcuse - *Counter Revolution and Revolt*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1972.

Hortense Spillers - "Mama's Baby, Poppa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book" *Diacritics*, 17:2 (Summer 1987).

Franco Berardi - *The Soul at Work: From Alienation to Autonomy*. Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2009.

Hi Red Center - Tokyo street event poster (ed. by Shigeko Kubota & Designed by George Maciunas) (1965)

Hito Steyerl - "Art as Occupation: Claims for an Autonomy of Life" from *E-Flux* #30 12/2011

Claire Pentecost - "A Glossary" from *Immersive Life Practices* ed. Mary Jane Jacob and Kate Zeller (2014).

3. Education under fascism = means of social control for purposes of empire. How do adjuncts, instructors, teaching aides, GA's, RA's, early childhood educators, preschool and alternative school, underpaid, exhausted, and (understandably and inevitably) disaffected by an endless barrage of cents > sense summon the courage and strength to actually resist not only oppressive educational ideologies but the educator as livestock model of business?

(Strategy for considering the three above diagnoses: Care enough to risk your own livelihood).

Complex ideas are most efficiently communicated when related through common experience. Tight reign makes for expected outcomes. Holding on loosely welcomes surprise.

**Elliot Reichert**, a graduate student at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, researches the origins and transformations of nationalist movements in the Middle East in the wake of Sykes-Picot, the Second World War, and the Global War on Terror. His work uncovers a history of complex negotiations of political and social identity-formation that defy the West's convenient narratives of Eastern inferiority, which have been used to justify colonial and neo-colonial campaigns in the Middle East. Intersectional and transhistorical solidarity form the basis of his investigations, which link Communist, Pan-Arab, Pan-African, Non-Aligned, and decolonial struggles worldwide over the course of the 20th and 21st centuries.

## Issues and Strategies

Pedagogically and personally, the three major axes of my work concern history, identity, and expression. At the ends of each axis are concepts that stand in direct antithesis to each other. Thus, they are mutually constitutive issues and strategies for the coming crisis.

At ends of the axis of history are memory and forgetfulness, each the solution to the ills of the other. Now more than ever we must remember history in the face of its obliteration by powers that would trap us in an eternal present of un-freedom. However, we must also be brave enough to forget the contours of history that have delivered us to this grim reality, lest we lose all hope of bending the arc in our favor. We must remember to forget, and we must acknowledge that much of the history we seek to uncover as blueprints for our present struggle has been deliberately hidden from us by the very structures that we oppose.

Our knowledge of our identities as individuals grounds us in the strength and security of self-recognition and affirmation—To know oneself is to find the strength to resist the social and political forces of hegemony that press against each of us. And yet, the individual must develop faith in the self-agency of others operating in the social fabric in order to attune oneself to the potential energies of collective action. The efficacy of the Left has suffered greatly from the misapprehension of this phenomena, at first shunning so-called "identity politics" as fissures in the uneasy liberal coalition that appeared at the end of the last millennium; and then, much belatedly, embracing a categorically defined conception of intersectionality that overemphasizes difference and neglects the common cause of class struggle. What Marx could never have imagined is now within our grasp, but only if we are able to maintain the contradictions of self and solidarity even as we seek to overcome them. The self will not survive alone, and yet there is no solidarity without the self.

In times of crisis, two extremes of expression prevail over moderate discourse. The impulse to withdraw the self from a tumultuous or otherwise threatening environment is a legitimate reflex in so much as it mitigates harm to the self and protects against the fatigue of constant stimulation within an overactive social interface. However, withdraw necessarily limits one's presence in discourse at crucial moments of heightened activity, when the contours of consciousness are most malleable and susceptible to transformation. Total diffusion represents the antithesis of withdraw, in which the subject becomes immersed in the excited activity of the environment to the extent that the self-exists only as traces in the ether of discourse, feeding rather than being fed by it. Social media exemplifies this condition. Who is "liking" your posts? Who has "un-friended" you? Who has simply disappeared? Then again, there is also painting. Whose work is getting bigger, louder? Who (perhaps unwisely) paints about race for the first time after years of color-field abstraction? Who has stopped painting altogether in favor of making something else? It is as feasible to withdraw into a painting as it is to diffuse oneself into an ocean of news.

**Gonzalo Reyes Rodriguez**, an Adjunct Lecturer in the department of Art and Humanities at the City Colleges of Chicago, requires students to read essays by writers of Marxists tradition. In his History of Photography course, he breaks away from the textbook to include photographs and film of protest and war that are anti-American. In his studio classes, he persistently shows work by artist with a radical political agenda and requires students to read *Death of the Author* (Barthes), an essay that promotes the refusal of god.

Teaching visual and critical studies alongside studio art courses at a city college poses different challenges that stem from the same source. The concerns I am dealing with stem from a capitalist-based education system that for most students is the only way they know how to learn. This banking model of education has caused a lot of concerns as an educator, and I hope to teach students not only skills that can be applied toward a career but also how to examine and be aware of the world around them. Three of these concerns are a push toward anti-intellectualism, lack of funding in public education, the business structure that schools are taking on.

I believe that overcoming these challenges must start in the classroom. I try to do this by breaking away from the traditional curriculum and adding material that challenges students' belief in the dichotomies of right and wrong, good and bad, etc. A favorite strategy in both studio and visual studies courses is to introduce the many ways in which an event is covered. Students are presented with various materials covering the event such as news articles,

images from photojournalism, a documentary, video news coverage such as [the broadcasts news program] *Nightline*, and if available a Hollywood film based on the event. Presenting the various positions around an event and discussing the different viewpoints and value systems behind the positions works to break the ethical dichotomy that students are more familiar with.

My other concerns are tougher to challenge because they are institutional and political. As someone with the privilege to have attended a private art school and a private research university, I find the bureaucratic systems of public colleges difficult to navigate. They unnecessarily create problems that affect students. While the lack of funding goes back to a political reality in the state of Illinois, it is closely related to the business model that is becoming the norm in higher education. There is an inextricable connection between the elimination of professor and support staff positions and the increase in administrators. Currently, my strategy of combating this is to work with fellow adjunct union members in exposing the issues created by lack of funding, and the corporatization of the City Colleges. My hope is that once my students become “woke” they remember that they, as students, hold a powerful political position and that they will make their voices heard when addressing the issues that face their own education as well as higher public education.

*Josh Rios, an educator at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, constantly undermines institutional authority (and his own in the process) by prioritizing horizontal methodologies of knowledge production in order to disrupt ideas about expertise, proficiency, and common sense criteria of judgement. He consistently presents slide shows with no images because he is deeply suspicious of visibility and scopical pleasure, and hopes to instill that suspicion in his students. Tardiness often goes unpunished and students can leave the room without asking permission for any reason they believe justifiable. He habitually values process over outcomes and only promotes practices that reject incorporation into the art market or that recoil from the idea of creativity as an investment.*

I.

Over-bureaucratization, which adversely effects the quality and expense of education, and is directly tied to the insidious creation of evermore varieties of debt subjectivities.

Being transparent and teaching theories and practices that call attention to these issues.

II.

Precarity inflects just about every interaction in a higher education system that sees both adjuncts and students as resources to be commodified and extracted, as opposed to social relations to be stewarded.

Regular presentation and prioritization of different sets of values and criteria of quality that have little to do with how a practice or idea might produce marketable results.

III.

The use of diversity by institutions to create goodwill umbrellas that showcase minoritarian visibility without making significant changes to systems of power or colonial curriculum.

Consistently practice classroom politics that challenge handed down ideas about what counts as the best things society has produced, while attempting to decolonize my curriculum with a sense of urgency.

*Roe Rosen, a transdisciplinary artist, writer and filmmaker, is a professor at Ha Midrasha College of Art in Kfar-Saba, Israel and at the Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design in Jerusalem. In his work, Rosen emphasizes Modernists transgressive traditions, blurring fiction with truth, phantasmagoria and facts. In 1997 Rosen's exhibition “Live and Die as Eva Braun” at the Israel Museum, Jerusalem sparked a public scandal, due to its unprecedented treatment of holocaust representation. Rosen invested years in developing his female alter ego, Justine Frank, that produced exhibitions, a video work, and a pornographic novel. Currently, at Documenta 14, Rosen exhibits Live and Die as Eva Braun in Athens, and The Blind Merchant, and The Dust Channel in Kassel. His latest book, a selection of short fiction pieces and essays is entitled Live and Die as Eva Braun and Other Intimate Stories (Sternberg Press, 2017).*

**E. Aaron Ross**, a former summer camp and after school teacher in Chicago, now spends much of his time as an uncle to a small niece and nephew. Together they learn how to play, to be kind, to read, to share, to take photos, to make music, and to tell jokes. After his niece showed a strong curiosity and love for using his camera, he purchased for her an instant camera of her own, which she now uses to explore this interest independently, and completely unsupervised. Ross has also begun an independent critique and discussion group that exists entirely without the oversight of academic or financial institutions.

When I think of the problems of education, I think first of the public education system that ends with high school, and second of the higher education system that ends with an MFA for so many artists. Both suffer from similar issues. The first issue I think of is unequal access to quality education due to financial limitations. As an artist, I think we have to dispel the myths around the promises of advanced degrees, and question the institutions' desire to normalize insurmountable student debt. They need us more than we need them. As an uncle, my niece is fortunate to live in an area with good public schools, but where my sister teaches, just 20 minutes away in Aurora, this is not the case. How this is solved on a national level is a bigger question, but on an individual level it can be accomplished much more simply. Through deciding that educating yourself and your loved ones is a priority and your personal responsibility, we reduce our dependency on faulty or inaccessible institutions, and increase our ability to excel without them. Of course this is easier said than done.

This leads me to my second biggest concern with education, which is the lack of a supportive environment for education. I see this partly as a result of the disconnect between the classroom and the real world. Or to put it another way, a disagreement about what the function of education should be. This disconnect creates expectations for what achieving a certain level of education will get you, and in turn, a complete backlash when it's not delivered. I grew up with the idea that school is mostly where you go to learn how to learn. When you leave school that is the beginning of your education. In the spirit of that ethos, I use my time with my niece to explore art and music and all of the things I'm afraid she isn't getting if I'm not there. To keep her curiosity flowing, I try to lead by example like so many others. As cheesy as it sounds, I'm most inspired by my fellow artists who run practices on their own terms. Who are not afraid of failure, who are not overly concerned with the right residencies, the right galleries, etc. Supporting one another in a community is absolutely essential to finding success without institutions. But to not be limited by a lack of support, to create a gallery, a lecture, an aesthetic, or curiosity where it is lacking is even more powerful. To create a community where one does not exist. Sometimes the lack of a supportive environment is an opportunity to create that environment. I guess you could call it the DIY approach.

The third problem I see education facing today is the movement against facts, against the arts, against science, and against objective truth. To encourage misinformation, to discredit specialists, and to generally turn a blind eye to anyone who doesn't align with your personal agenda. Of course this is a problem that is directly related to the first two problems of money and a supportive environment. It's also a problem that is both creeping in, and in some cases being manufactured by those who stand to benefit from ignorance. To combat this willful ignorance, I do my best to remaining willfully engaged and to understand the arguments of the enemy. I read articles about issues that don't directly effect me. I listen to the Republican National Convention. I watch videos on Flat Earth Theory. I call my dad. I try to understand the whole picture. I try to practice what I preach even when it's annoying and exhausting. Even more important, I think, is to encourage anyone who hasn't gone over the edge to stay optimistic. To motivate friends, peers, and strangers to continue to be generous even when the world feels selfish. To continue putting value into asking the tough questions, and not be distracted by the noise of people who want to deter us. I heard John Waters the other day talk about how it's the job of art to agitate, but we shouldn't waste our time trying to annoy our parents, we should try to annoy the people just a few years older and a little bit cooler than us. I really liked that. I think we can do both.

**Greg Ruffing**, a Graduate and Teaching Assistant at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, encourages students to question the institutions and societies in which they're being educated. He is known to teach students that the common history of America should be contested, and he asks students to read texts by Marxists, socialists, black and brown writers, homosexuals, and others outside of mainstream norms. He is under the extremist belief that education isn't a

*privilege, but instead should be a right that all people are guaranteed access to. He has been overheard denouncing for-profit education models and the rising amounts of student loan debt.*

1) Art institutions re-creating and perpetuating the same systems of structural inequality and oppression that exist in society at-large.

Awareness and discussion of these problems is a starting point, but we should also be teaching AND practicing ways to de-center the heteronormative white male paradigm and create more space for the perspectives and practices of female artists, artists of color, LGBTQ artists, and other marginalized voices.

2) Art education being too oriented toward hyperprofessionalized, entrepreneurial artists.

Strategies here could include interrogating and questioning the commercial art market and its ties to the 1%, to income inequality, to real estate and gentrification, etc. This would also involve critiques of capitalism and discussion about art's role in that system. Also useful to encourage students to develop practices that are open-ended, messy, de-skilled, risk-taking, etc. without pressuring them to have everything perfectly polished and articulated.

3) Academic institutions reorganized along corporate models, with a rise in overpaid administrative positions (who often have little to no experience in the arts) along with decline of long-term, secure teaching employment (and a surge of precarious adjunct positions instead).

I'm not 100% sure what a long-term solution is to this problem, but we can begin to fight back by raising awareness of these inequities, working toward more solidarity among tenured faculty + adjunct faculty + grad student TAs, and exploring forms of organized/unionized labor on these fronts.

**Alison Ruttan** is an Associate Professor at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. She teaches a freshman class in Contemporary Practices called "Truthiness," a course that is even more apt today as the borders of what is understood as "truth" are blurring under the Trumps Administrations wholesale use of "alternative facts."

### Teaching strategies

I primarily teach freshman research classes, these classes focus on developing effective research skills and methodologies. A second level research class extends this idea through large offerings of thematic courses. I teach one called "Truthiness," "The quality of seeming or being felt to be true, even if not necessarily true." Webster's, that late night comedian Stephen Colbert coined. Students in this class examine different strategies of challenging what we think we know.

I try to help students see that artists do, and have had an important role in creating cultural change. I often think about Lewis Hyde's book *Trickster Makes the World* where he writes about "the disruptive side of human imagination as it is embodied in trickster mythology." The idea of the artist as "trickster" can be an empowering concept to students, especially when they are feeling that what they have to say doesn't matter. Many students worry too, that if their work can't point to measurable change it has no value. I think it is important for them to realize that people contribute in different ways.

Malcolm Gladwell talks about this in *The Tipping Point*; he asserts that change starts slow, bubbling up and eventually becoming unstoppable, when everyone, artists, writers, filmmakers, comedians, journalists and others are pushing at similar issues from all sides.

As artists, we have so many tools at our disposal. Some of these might be in "showing," as in mirroring behavior, imagining monsters, opening up channels of empathy or working on practices that radically engage the absurd, and there are so many more. What creates a tipping point for any individual is hard to predict. It may be the reaction to a powerful event that triggers change or it might be the intimate voice speaking from experience, sometimes it is the admission of failure, it happens when pointing out mismatches that make you uncomfortable or leave you wondering why you are not, the thing is, art is basically propositional, things get thrown out there and we get to moved by it or argue against it. This is active culture. What we do individually may rarely make a dent

but collectively we do move culture. That's the positive voice of empowerment, But we are also in a time where fear of regression looms heavy for many of us. It is more important than ever we stay on high alert, that we are persistent and we are inventive in these challenging times.

**Avi Sabah**, a professor at Bezalel Academy for Arts, Jerusalem, encourages students to destroy, and document the destruction of their favorite work of art. Sometimes, Sabah proposes the students to adopt a cat.

1. Respecting all forms of life, while responding with harshness to evil.
2. Remembering that will live in an economical system that the art world is a part of it. Therefore I repeatedly invite economists to lecture in my classes.
3. Encourage group and collaborative work within the classroom. The collaborative model enables a strong presence, a proof to it is the gallery "Barbur" that I was apart of for many years.

**Gabriela Salazar**, a visual art teacher at the Grace Church High School (New York City), asks her students to go to the shows of leftist, liberal, and licentious artists, and write and talk about their responses to the work. A recent project required students to use "resist" techniques (stencils, masking) to create a poster communicating a cause important to them to support or resist. Students are continuously challenged to question their assumptions about how they "see" the world.

The largest concerns I am dealing with right now are having the bravery to introduce and discuss difficult art with my students (The controversy over Dana Schutz's *Open Casket*, for example); to allow them freedom to express their sometimes-unformed or peculiar opinions publicly (as in the "resist" poster project I did with 9th and 10th graders); and in maintaining a safe and open classroom for students of different levels of social engagement, political leanings (a few of our students and families are not entirely liberal-leaning), and intellectual/emotional maturities.

I try to approach my classes with the mindset that we are all learning—including myself—and that, though I have a lot more experience than my students, I do not have all the answers. In our discussions, I work to express that I am often befuddled, confused, dismayed, enraged, and bored by art, but that those feelings are just starting points, not conclusions. Because students of this age are still learning to express their opinions conscientiously, I am often put in the position of moderator, translator, or even mirror. While doing this, I will pause every now and then and explain what I am doing. I want the process of learning, and my position as a "teacher"—and the power that comes with it—to be as transparent and accessible as possible to them. In my classroom, there is an insistence on the ways in which we learn from each other and about each other as a crucial part of the art-making-and-looking process. When I find the work a student makes difficult to understand, get behind, or approve of, I try to explain to them what it is that I find problematic, and give them the choice to work with/on that or stick to their guns. I want them to understand that, ultimately, it is their choice what they put out into the world, and they have the agency to become articulate and deliberate at it.

**James Lam Scheuren**, a sabbatical replacement at the University of Vermont, teaches an introduction to critical theory course which has a required reading list of historical Marxist texts and philosopher Emmanuel Levinas. Learning to truly critique—in the orthodox Marxist sense—integrates itself into the course by parsing texts, art films, and music videos. The Levinasian "other" has its own section centering around art and essays concerning the prison system, racial inequality, and social justice.

While my **healthcare** is great at the moment, I am worried because it is connected to my employment. As my work is temporary, I imagine I might soon face a scenario where I am unable to get healthcare.

I am concerned about **job stability**, as a TA I am not guaranteed continuous funding nor provided a straightforward path towards a tenure track position

I am concerned about **income**. The Teaching Assistants Association at UW-Madison lost union rights during Act 10 (see Scott Walker). Now collective bargaining is hard and there is a movement to allow different departments to pay different wages. This means that instead of sharing funds or paying equally for equal work, a physics TA (for example) would be paid much higher than a TA in Art.

### Strategies

With **Unconditional Basic Income**, I would be able to pursue my passion without the concerns of dropping into poverty or living on the brink (not to mention what it would do for the entire country and culture). A strategy might be learning more and sharing the idea!

Furthermore, **Universal Healthcare** would provide everyone with healthcare unattached to labor and would personally allow me to work adapt better to an economic situation where many people work various part-time jobs. The strategy here might be helping people see this as a possibility rather than something that could never be.

Supporting **Public Education** will mean that places like UW-Madison would be able to thrive, providing the best opportunities for learning and the production of knowledge. I think the best place to start is with local elections from School Board to State Superintendent.

***Matthew Schlagbaum**, an Academic Advisor and previous instructor at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, incorporated progressive readings and discussions regarding race, class, gender, and queer theory into his courses. He even used this propaganda in courses whose description did not explicitly state that this type of content would be covered. Recently, in his role as an advisor, he became aware of a situation regarding the censorship of a student's artwork by the institution he works for. Instead of siding with the institution, he informed upper level administrators that he felt the situation was handled in an inappropriate and culturally insensitive manner.*

As an educator I often find myself assisting students who are navigating serious physical and mental health issues, students with financial constraints that affect their ability to attend school, and students navigating the US immigration system. The way I try to assist these students is to listen to and validate their concerns, build a trusting relationship with them, and provide them with as many resources and support networks as I can.

***Fred Schmidt-Arenales** is an artist and filmmaker based in New York. In his work, he interviews and interacts with people whose views he finds distasteful: Republicans, Constitutionals, Patriots, or those who he deems "nationalists." He studies the behavior and language of his interviewees to develop strategies to understand political ideologies are created and maintained. He encourages students to listen generously and closely to the perspectives they encounter, and to question narratives received from "mainstream" culture and media.*

Currently my primary activity as an educator is a process of rigorous self-education. In preparation for a documentary film I will shoot starting this summer, I am preparing myself for a role. The role will be "the curious American who is fascinated by the activities and rhetoric of the European far right." This process involves educating myself in the language and mindset of the European far right, and to some extent, taking on that mindset. My concern with this self-education project is that I might go too far, that I submerge myself too deeply in this world. Then again, this is always a concern: it's the concern of the echo chamber. That the information one is exposed to creates one's reality. I seek to mitigate this by diversifying the kinds and sources of information I expose myself to. The deeper concern is that being two kinds of brainwashed isn't any better than being one kind of brainwashed.

*As an artist, writer, and activist **Gregory Sholette** teaches the history and theory of politicized and collective art practices since the late 1970s, primarily in NYC. One focus of his classes is on art as direct action. As a member of Gulf Labor Coalition (GLC) he seeks to call attention to the plight of precarious migrant workers in Abu Dhabi where a new Guggenheim Museum is in the works. Knowledge gained through research and seminar discussions focuses on how to challenge this development made all the more dreadful by the emerging global presence of xenophobic Capitalist Nationalism. Sholette is faculty in the Social Practice Queens project at Queens College, City University of New York*



(CUNY), where students are offered small stipends to develop "art and action" collaborative projects that move out of the university into other communities.

My concerns as a teacher of artists and occasionally art historians is to show students how the art world has gradually become part of a larger capitalist tendency linking global finance with the exploitation of the growing multitude of migratory, precarious, and paperless laborers now being mobilized to serve the desires of the world's 1% ultra-rich. A second focus is to provide knowledge and case studies showing collective art practices that have redirected existing resources, as well as invented new models, for both protest, as well as for sharing the commons. Finally, I am concerned with keeping calm and grasping that as awful as things are at this current moment of crisis they will eventually be part of history, and therefore it is important to not only be unafraid, but to avoid "re-inventing the wheel" by learning from previous oppositional organizing in the 1920s and 1930s with the Old Left, the 1960s with the New Left, the 1970s with DIY culture, the 1980s opposition to the rise of neoliberalism, and the 1990s with the counter-globalization movement and tactical media.

**Teresa Silva** is the Director of Exhibitions & Residencies at the Chicago Artists Coalition. She believes that artists can transcend the here and now -- the madness that the government hands us and the lies that the media tell -- to show us that another world is possible, and she is here to support and uplift them.

Forever battling on multiple fronts, I would say that the current biggest issues I fight for are resources, monetary support, respect for my field, and mentoring artists and curators to be ethical in their projects. In doing battle, I use my intuition and apply some broad strategies:

**Educate:** I point out research, readings, kindred makers/writers in the art community whose work could enhance an artist's project. I also remind those who don't have strong visual literacy that we are bombarded with images on a daily basis, and the majority of times these images are trying to sell us something, i.e. work against us. As citizens, we need to be woke and poised to decode and debunk these toxic messages.

**Empower:** I actively listen and respond to artists about their work. No idea is a bad idea, unless it's doing violence physically or psychologically to a community. That is when I intervene and express that the work is problematic and in need of reflection and engagement with community stakeholders. If the artist doesn't have the courage to do this, then the work lacks integrity and isn't worth my support or attention.

**Push Away:** I tell artists to disconnect from me and find others to support and critique their work. I have my own creative production to do. My energy is finite.

**Suzanne Silver**, Associate Professor of Art at The Ohio State University, advocates the importance of social justice, freedom of speech, and freedom of expression in her teaching and in her art. She allows all points of view in the classroom, encourages artistic expression, and shows works by minority artists and those from countries on the "banned list." Empathy, understanding, and the importance of art in society are included in her assignments and readings.

Since the presidential election, most students are dealing with increased stress, distress, and uncertainty about the future. While some concerns remain existential, others are empirical as certain students risk deportation and are in need of sanctuary space, which a university should provide. A major concern is that of freedom of speech. Will there be censoring or self-censoring? Will a diversity of opinions be protected? Do such discussions belong in the classroom or should outside events stay outside? In the current climate is it even possible to separate the two?

I have not been teaching this semester so do not have direct experience in the classroom since the new administration, but plan to design studio-based assignments that can open up discussion of these issues upon my return to the classroom in the fall. I always assign readings by artist, art historians, and curators. I will specifically select those that analyze the role of the artist in society in times of political upheaval to complement and guide students' work in the studio.

**Edra Soto**, an artist, gallery director and Instructor for the Contemporary Practices Department at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Currently a freelance artist with a full time art career. Used to teach high school at the Chicago Public School system for 3 years and at the Charters School system for 6 years.

I consider this to be my best advice to art my students: "If it looks like art, perhaps be in doubt". Their preconceived notions on what art should look like dilutes the possibilities for an authentic thought to come through.

Concerns:

- It is extremely hard for a Chicago Public School Principal to fire a teacher that has work for their system over 10 years. A job is guaranteed in a situation that's need to be asses on an individuals performance. Not having a guaranteed position is problematic, but the potential harm that can be caused by a teacher that is no longer motivated to give to their students quality education or respect is unacceptable.
- The Charter School System demands that a teacher serves by volunteering or instructing an after school program as a way of demonstrating your devotion and commitment with the school's community. This particular situation demand limits the amount of time a teacher can spend away from the school (working on other projects, prepping, resting/relaxing). This particular situation also instigate for an excessive amount of time that a teacher should spend with a student. I consider this to be problematic. For an artist that teaches in this system, it is almost impossible to foster a personal art practice. It is also no *celebrated* that you have an accomplished career outside to the school. In fact, it becomes a reason to suspect that your *devotion* to the system is insufficient. I consider this demand to prompt unhealthy relationships in between students and teachers. Last year, I learned that one of my colleagues from the Art Department of the charter school I used to work for was arrested for sexually harassing students. This was a chocking and tragic news to learn. This was a teacher that was celebrated by many students. This was a *devoted* teacher by the Charter School system standards. This was also an individual that spend copious amounts of time at the school, being *devoted*.
- Working for the higher education system will except you from getting involved in a students life at a personal lever (no need to engage with their parents / family) and no saturation of legal premisses. At the higher education system the process of selection can be as subjective as *being liked or disliked* by the department chair in position.

**Felipe Steinberg** is interested in the claim that the USA would be a place of social accountability, interpersonal trust, respect of the impersonal laws and equality. Proposals are made; Proposals are rejected, transformed and/or accepted; everything is taken into consideration and something is done or not.

Three etymological concerns in life. Situation: *situate*, place, position, location, station, idleness, sloth, inactivity, forgetfulness, the effects of neglect. Condition: *com-*, together, together with, in combination, with. And *diction*, speak, tell, say, proclaim, dedicate. Propose: *pro-*, to put forward. And *pose*, suggest (something is so), suppose, assume, grant, concede, to halt, rest, cease, pause. Strategies of implementation would be: Waste time in a situation. Never get paralyzed on a condition, act or run. Propose something and think if you really mean what you said. Don't self-criticize someone else as if you trying to suicide someone else.

**Antoinette Suiter's** documented claims that the University is becoming a tool of capitalism, as well as her penchant for cursing in the classroom (particularly at the evils of supposed "toxic" masculinity), are both regularly employed as tools for indoctrination of the queer/feminist agenda. On October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2016 she also stated to an undercover campus reporter that it was "problematic" to assume that those in minimum wage jobs were mostly teenagers, and that "the supposed myth of a class barrier is very much real". To hammer the last nail into her leftist coffin, she added, (as the

conflict escalated): “it’s just really hard for me to reason with someone who has never had to earn a living”—proving clear class discrimination.

I’ve been asked for the three biggest concerns that I’m currently dealing with as an educator... At the moment, it seems impossible to quantify. I worry that we tout the symbols of inclusivity without willingness to do the legwork. I worry in the climate of lawsuits and growing income and class gaps that progress towards diversity and bias awareness won’t include faculty. I worry about paying rent. I worry about having health insurance. I worry about my \$100,000 of student debt. I worry about the increasing competitiveness of grants and fellowships that we rely on to supplement our practice, and its contribution to the increasing working-artist income gap. And of course I worry about my students who worked their asses off to get enough scholarships to go to school, and who work full-time, often at shitty jobs with hostile environments, and who can’t afford high quality art supplies and time to make the quality of work they need to get more scholarships. I worry about the students that can’t sleep at night because of their debt. I worry that we won’t even get that far. These concerns are the elephant in the room at faculty meetings that looms heavily while I re-arrange myself in a manner to present as someone with twice my income. These are the concerns that I’m afraid to voice because I have so little job security. I worry about losing my job over micro-aggressions that others don’t see. And I worry that I’m not good enough to keep up this pace.

**Dov Talpaz** is a painter and a father. He has empathy. He feels and sees the pain suffered by others, with no regards to race, color, gender and religion. He wishes his paintings to open people’s hearts.

Over the past two years, I taught a “drawing from life” class, and while I did this hesitantly (because I think teaching has many dangers for the working artist), I wanted to see how I could share my thoughts with others. I emphasized in the class, how difficult it is to plainly see what is in front of us, how much it takes to move beyond our preconceived ideas about how things look. I tried to see the personal qualities and potential in each participant’s specific drawing.

Sharing some of my own concerns as a painter, at the end of class, felt the most sincere to me. Here are some of them where “A”= “Concern ” and “B”= “Strategy”.

1A: Am I true?

1B: While painting, I continually ask questions about what it is that excites me in its story [I am visualizing] and how I can find deeper meanings.

2A: Am I repeating?

2B: I avoid repeating myself by seeing where I am in my personal life to illuminate the work, which also illuminates my personal life. Becoming a father and husband affected the work immensely. The changes and growth in these relationships present challenges and joys in my life also affecting the progression of the works in the studio.

3A: Am I simple?

3B: I hope to contain mystery in the painting forms but also to be clear at the same time so that there are no “holes” in them. Then the space becomes the true metaphor for the subject.

An ancient Hebrew text translated by Yehuda Even Tivon in the 12th century, contains an interesting definition of the word “painting” (ציור). It places finding truth at its core and reads: “At a distance derived from its true form, a renewed knowing of a thing in its truthful form by the action of the mind.”

**Kenneth Tam**, faculty at Bard College MFA, is not quite sure if his work as an educator is necessarily dangerous. Producing artists within the academy often seems to defang art of its most dangerous potentials, channeling perhaps dangerous impulses into more socially acceptable forms and acts. If Tam is guilty of anything, perhaps it is not being dangerous enough in the classroom.

1. our current administration

2. over-professionalization of young artists
3. instrumentalization of the arts

*The strategies required for overcoming all three challenges are far greater than what can happen in an individual classroom. The latter two are issues that all educators have encountered, and are the result of the way the visual arts in general have become understood as a means to an end. I have no easy remedy for them, except to offer my students the opportunity to continually re-think and challenge the idea of what it means to be an artist, and how that role should constantly be questioned.*

**Ryan Thompson**, Associate Professor of Studio Art at Trinity Christian College, encourages students to think for themselves. His students are required to question their presuppositions and support opinions with facts. Furthermore, in his courses, he dissuades students from believing in Young Earth creationism and instead promotes “geologic time.”

Many, but not all, students at Trinity Christian College come from conservative Evangelical backgrounds. This presents a unique opportunity to help students move out of their comfort zones and into a better understanding of the complexities of oppression, inequality, and privilege (to name a few specific areas of discomfort for students). Earning and keeping students’ trust in the classroom is paramount in this process, and I’m constantly thinking about how to be more successful in this regard. Too much pushing too early, and it’s hard to get them back.

In direct contradiction of the dictum “teach to your strengths,” I’ve been thinking more intentionally about my own blind spots as an instructor. As someone interested in work that is most often associated with research-based methodologies, I have a tendency to under emphasize learning through making. Recognizing this is the first step in exposing students to a more diverse set of discourses. I’m currently working to incorporate more “making as research” in my pedagogy.

The third concern is for a set of students who struggle to meet the demands of college-level work. Trinity is home to many first-generation and disadvantaged students lacking role models or support that might otherwise allow them to flourish in college. Some of these students also have distractions and trauma in their home lives. The challenge [I have] with many of these students is knowing how much leeway to give them. Should every student be graded on a curve specific to each student, or should all students be held to the same (contextualized, but ultimately arbitrary) standards?

*At the beginning of each class, **Ruby Thorkelson** and her students sit around a table writing and reading their work aloud to one another. She shares as much of her writing and life with her students as they share with her. Is vulnerability dangerous? Thorkelson’s syllabus focuses on Claudia Rankine, Gloria Anzaldúa, Juliana Huxtable, Jenny Holzer, Sojourner Truth, Adrienne Piper, Félix González-Torres, Emory Douglas, Group Material, General Idea, Zoe Leonard, and more. Is centering work by artists who aren’t cis-het white men dangerous?*

Students are undervalued with few options for sustainable employment and not enough regard for their wellbeing. Many are struggling to make ends meet financially while also dealing with racism, able-ism, transphobia, and immigration status concerns.

Educators—especially adjunct—are undervalued with little to no job security and a lack of administrative support.

The world is falling apart, and it’s distracting.

My strategy for overcoming these challenges is to turn them into material for research, inquiry, and resistance—in the classroom, my art practice, and in my life.

**Diana Torres** is an artist and educator at Marwen. She defends and supports queer women and those with less privileges because of their sexuality or gender. She always encourages her students to examine the complex and ambiguous nature of identity claims and understand the importance to claim their identity even under the danger of exclusionary practices.

Only about 19% of US secondary schools provide curricula that are LGBTQ-inclusive. Fewer than 5% of LGBT students have health classes that include positive representations of LGBTQ related topics.

There is a lack of protection of rights and inequality that exists for the LGBTQ community.

In general there is a very narrow understanding of sexuality and gender.

In most people, gender identity, and gender roles are congruous or the nuances within sexual orientation are ignored (only straight, gay, lesbian or homosexual and straight as an umbrella term).

In order to understand gender identity and sexuality definitions must be emphasize for clarity. The language is tricky but necessary. In our generation there are new understandings of sexual orientation and gender identities and what that means to us therefore teaching kids at a young age about the correct use of language is very important.

Things to do:

Start with changing the use of language in class conversations

Always use precise terms like, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning.

Use the term partner instead of boyfriend or girlfriend

Respect students wish to be called and what pronouns they prefer.

As a queer educator sharing personal experiences might help students feel more comfortable.

**Martha Tuttle** is an artist, a writer, and a beginning educator living in New York City. Learning how to teach is synonymous for her with learning how also to create education environments in which voices that want to speak feel they have the space and support to do so regardless of volume or bravado. Tuttle believes that challenging what voices we associate with authority, especially within an educational setting, is pivotal to shifting hierarchy, as well as to creating conditions for a discourse that values listening as much as it does assertion.

1. How can I make space for different voices and different ways of speaking without breaking either the energy or the flow of a conversation?
2. Figuring out the position that I want my (mostly abstract, intentionally difficult to verbalize) visual work to have with declaration, and what position it takes within our tangible world; and
3. Finding places to teach as a beginning educator, especially in an urban area.

My strategies are

1. Slowing down and asking questions.
2. Accepting that a position of not knowing can be, at times, just as valuable as one of information.
3. Depending on my already existing network and reaching out to new ones. Trying to be honest with myself when I ask for something where the request is coming from, and when I ask to give something, what my intention is.

**Rambod Vala** teaches Visual Communication classes in the Continuing Studies Department at School of the Art Institute of Chicago. His students explore social and political uses for design such as protest posters, guerrilla advertising techniques, digital activism, political propaganda, or even graffiti. The goal of his courses is to rethink the purposes of design, to become conscious of how social and political issues are engaged through design, and explore resistance to current political and social ideals. He challenges the belief system of students through various lectures such as juxtaposition of the Nazi and ISIS design aesthetics with American propaganda aesthetics.

I have observed three different educational systems closely: the Iranian restraint educational system in which students are treated as soldiers, the Swedish self-oriented system in which students develop their own unique individual thoughts and skills and the American corporate system in which students are seen as customers. My concern as an educator in an American institution is how to criticize the actions and works of the “customers.” If the objectives of a corporation were to satisfy and obey the customer, how would students work under the guidance of an educator? By implementing my observations of the Swedish methods, I attempt to identify positions in a classroom setting.

In addition, as I have been teaching minors, it has always been challenging for me how to run heavy discussions in a group. Considering the deepened political division in our current time, it is my concern how to moderate a sensitive discussion without attacking the belief system of my students but to invite them to rethink the source of their belief. How does one step outside of the self and watches the self with a critical eye? Would self-criticism question our belief system?

**Ramyar Vala** was previously a teaching fellow in the Department of Visual Arts at the University of Chicago. In the first session of his class *Visual Language: On Images*, he asks students to draw the objects they are holding in their hands. All the surrounding objects are drawn from a side view. He takes the advantage of this assignment towards a broader political discussion of how the designed everyday objects can be dominating and drying the other possibilities of our observational and imaginative understandings.

Art education today is focusing more and more on ways of presentation rather than the “whys” of production. The emphasis on how to verbalize a production through a specific academic language rather than challenging the modes of production creates a thorough manual for an incomplete instrument. By focusing on the production aspect of a practice I tend to engage students with reasons of production.

As an art educator, I am interested in challenging my students with their limits of production. I require them to become overwhelmed and obsessed with their daily life-encounters and surrounding objects. It is crucial to question and think of how we physically relate to objects around us. This process initially requires a design discussion. I always refer to Boris Groys’ article “On Art Activism” in which he discusses what happened after the French revolution: “Our contemporary notion of art and art aestheticization has its roots in the French Revolution—in the decisions that were made by the French revolutionary government concerning the objects that this government inherited from the Old Regime. A change of regime—especially a radical change such as the one introduced by the French Revolution—is usually accompanied by a wave of iconoclasm. One could follow these waves in the cases of Protestantism, the Spanish conquest of the Americas, or the fall of the Socialist regimes in Eastern Europe. The French revolutionaries took a different course: instead of destroying the sacred and profane objects belonging to the Old Regime, they de-functionalized, or, in other words, aestheticized them. The French Revolution turned the design of the Old Regime into what we today call art, i.e., objects not of use but of pure contemplation. This violent, revolutionary act of aestheticizing the Old Regime created art as we know it today. Before the French Revolution, there was no art—only design. After the French Revolution, art emerged—as the death of design.”

**Rodrigo Valenzuela** is full time artist and starting this Fall an associate professor of photography at UCLA. Often during class or in the middle of a critique session will show Jodorowsky movies, Black Flag videos or interview clips with some relevant thinker to exposed students to discourses away from trendy culture or global capitalist train of thoughts.

**Philip Vanderhyden**'s classes read Marx, Lukacs, Marcuse and many of the other open-ended followers of that line of thinking. Vanderhyden tries to be upbeat when he teaches it, though the classes are usually a bit melancholic, mostly because the reading list encourages one to compare hopeful moments with the realities that push against those hopes. The terminus of the class is the ultimate moment of sadness, when students consider the money that they spend on education in order to participate in a world that doesn't hue to the ambitions that we so carefully construct in art school. An awareness of this condition is hopefully a danger to the art world.

I don't think I would be a good teacher if I wasn't gravely concerned about the role that debt plays in education right now. Talk about dangerous! Massive debt binds us to professional and social contracts that we might otherwise be willing to walk away from. My solution to this problem is simple: I teach at a community college.

**Amy Vogel** is Associate Professor in Contemporary Practices at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and Interim Director of the Department. As a professor she has taught classes such as *Thinking with you Gut*, examining the strengths and failings of human intuition; and *Not Normal*, looking at how artists use difference as subject matter and an enabling perspective. As an administrator, she supported topics for freshman such as: *Alternative Sex Education for Artists*, *Radical Presence*, *Interactions and Interventions* and *The Toxic Avenger: Trash, Apocalypse and Material*.

1. Increasing diversity in students and faculty population, and expanding the notion of what diversity is.

Ways to address: Hiring, course topics, questioning institutional structures and support, or lack thereof, listening.

2. Addressing mental health of students. Understanding current student's emotional and psychological needs and supporting faculty who work with a student population with high rates of stress and anxiety.

Ways of addressing: Discussion, training, education, restructuring class-time, integrating wellbeing into the curriculum.

3. Faculty support. While this is very institution specific, in tuition driven schools, so much attention is on the students, and little goes to the faculty that are educating them. High reliance on underpaid part-time faculty, burn out of full-time faculty, all the institutional support for students does not translate to faculty who are being asked to do more and more to support our students.

Ways of addressing: Being vocal (especially FT tenured faculty), addressing administration, writing articles, letters and, when necessary, legal action.

**Allison Wade** is a woman. She has a brain and a voice. As a Lecturer in the Art Theory & Practice Department at Northwestern University, Wade uses her voice – it may not be loud but it is strong – to call out what she deems as discriminatory or unjust, to foster reasonable discussion around issues that matter, and to create a safe space for ALL students.

1. Institutionalized patriarchy in art, education, and America at-large
2. The security of my students who are immigrants, or come from immigrant families, and my international students
3. The well-being of a bunch of 18-22 year-olds who are struggling to develop/articulate their identities and become citizens in this current political climate

In presenting artwork, I am conscious of selecting as many or more works from women and LGBTQ artists as I do from men. I make a concerted effort to present works from artists of color, as well as works that question dominant power structures. I incorporate a project that draws on identity and autobiography. Research includes a writing component and discussion based a list of questions like "Have you ever tried to hide your racial, ethnic, religious or sexual identity?"

*Lisa Walcott, an educator, artist, mother and professor promotes openness, collaboration and respect. She asks her viewers to approach her work with a contemplative attitude and consider the unassuming or discarded as important. Her works contains themes of interdependence and tenuous balance held by reliance on others.*

I am concerned with creating a safe place to make and discuss. If a safe environment is not protected, students won't take the necessary risks toward discovery. There is no tolerance for dismissive language or attitudes. Critique and research are important for developing the ability to think and talk about others work. I allow myself to be questioned along with everyone else.

I am concerned about administrative resistance to free expression of artists and their ideas. We continue to exhibit, discuss and encourage expressive work in the art department even when it offends.

I am concerned with making sure my daughter knows that she is heard and that she is important. I actively listen and translate her sounds and gestures and move my body down to her level to communicate.

*Julie Weber, an adjunct professor of photography at Waubensee Community College and Dominican University, is a known feminist and equal rights supporter whose practice explores using photographic materials in nontraditional ways. The intersection of art and politics is a recurring topic in her classroom. She teaches visual literacy by instructing students to not consume but digest images—to question authenticity by analyzing source, noting aesthetics, considering narratives, and cross-checking information. When considering photography as a powerful tool that can be used to raise awareness and incite change, she includes texts by Susan Sontag, John Heartfield, Errol Morris, and Rebecca Solnit on her reading list.*

### **Getting Students to Rethink Creativity**

Photography is commonly understood by its outward technical components (i.e. the camera, lens, lighting, and composition). For this reason, students new to the medium often overlook the human component, which I define as the element of individuality and creativity behind the work. Each semester I meet new students who are equal parts surprised at how creative photography can be and insecure in their own ability to be creative. They often define creativity as something one is born with or not. I spend a great deal of time trying to get students to rethink their definition of creativity and to come to see themselves as creatives; we work toward this through assignments, discussions, and critiques. Getting students to value artistic and creative process is difficult in a society that generally works against this perspective. I advocate for liberal arts education and incorporating creative process throughout curriculum rather than at its fringes and only within “art” classes.

### **Addressing Present Day Social Issues**

Social issues inevitably come up when looking at and discussing historic and contemporary photography as well as student work. Such dialogue has the potential for enhancing students' connection to society, helping to develop social conscience and awareness of community. The part I find most challenging about this is getting students to share, feel comfortable opening up, and be willing to work through their experiences and understandings out loud during discussions or visually in their work. In some ways, the current political climate has made it easier to have these conversations as more students feel their beliefs and definitions being challenged and are therefore more vocal.

**Professional Development Opportunities (side note: Decline of the Darkroom)** Photography is a medium that largely progresses in tandem with technology. New cameras and equipment and software updates - the innovations are abundant. It is imperative to have access to training in order to keep apprised of developments and incorporate new knowledge into the classroom and curriculum. Whether that support takes form in a subscription to an online learning platform or covering workshop or conference expenses, such financial support should be integral to the educational system. Teachers are students for life and institutions need to reflect this sentiment. All that being said, on the other side of technological advancement in photography, another issue arises: technology has progressed to the extent that schools are widely eliminating darkrooms and removing or limiting analogue photography from curriculum. I find this very shortsighted and at the expense of students' education.



**Tyrone Williams** teaches literary theory at Xavier University, in Cincinnati, OH. Williams challenges bedrock assumptions about the both the concept and possibility of the "literary." He also teaches English language literatures from around the world that challenge the hegemony of Western values in general and United States' values in particular.

I do not have any challenges as an educator other than those that all educators face: student apathy. This one challenge I attempt to overcome by emphasizing a more performative pedagogy—and less straight lecture style—in order to directly engage students.

**Kia Miakka Wood**, a substitute teacher in Chicago, works to advance a knowledge in young students that Black Lives Matter, Water is Life, climate change is real, American exceptionalism is a myth, that they can defeat white supremacy, and to respect, honor and love people of all colors, cultures, backgrounds, genders, orientations and religions.

My concerns are lack of independent thinking, knee-jerk judgment and shaming. I think our culture generally encourages "group think" through the implementation of media channels programmed to give us more of what we think we want with no real consideration to what we need. Hence, the surprise of a Trump presidency: We were so ensconced in our timelines and webpages that we never considered a world where those who were unlike us still had the power to influence and impact us.

Within that media landscape is also the pressure of the 24/7 environment, where one "wins" the "news" cycle based upon speed of response and salaciousness of content. Those that win are rewarded with attention and control. There are few, if any, spaces to have a nuanced, slow, thoughtful conversation—and yet this is where a lot of public dialogue is taking place. The desire to condemn and control within these environments are, to me, indicative of a general malaise of our age, struggling with ideas of mortality (and thus out of our control) when everything feels both immortal (as if everything online lives forever) but finite (we cannot change).

My strategies include meditation, time away from media, and critical thinking. For me, the work starts entirely in me: What parts of my experience are based solely out of my perception, which is entirely in my control? How can I shift my perception to consider other options? This evolves into a spiritual practice in which I must acknowledge that (a) everyone is the center of their own universe; (b) thus, my perception is simply my own; (c) and yet, my universe is affected and dependent upon the universes of others, and so the practice of being responsible and caring for others positively impacts my quality of life. Similarly, I try to look at everyone like children—adorable, still figuring things out, well intended but often misguided, but with the profound ability to evolve into something greater.

**Masha Zusman**, a Teaching Associate at the Fine Art Department, Bezalel Art Academy of Art and Design, Jerusalem, introduces her students to various independent initiatives, groups and collectives in the field of art and society and encourages them to challenge conventional practices and accepted models of economic and social relations.

### Concerns

- Civil awareness and artistic freedom - what it means to be an artist in contemporary society.
- Collective creativity - how to create collectively without suppressing individuality.
- Expressing ideas in art - how to communicate without relying on text.

The strategies: Encounter with inspiring people and collectives, direct action and open discussion.

### **Why and where do you see artistic freedom being in danger?**

I think that artistic freedom is always in danger and it is the first responsibility of the artist to be aware of it and keep the studio as free as possible of numerous considerations—economical, ideological, and political. This is true for all times and all places. The current situation in Israel adds to that the heavy political pressure because of the strong right wing nationalistic propaganda and official policy of the government. I feel it extremely present both as a teacher in the Academy and as a curator of the Barbur Gallery, which I'm part of.

***Can you please define "contemporary society"?***

It is possible to take out "contemporary." It is society in general. Every period brings its own complexities and pressures. Contemporary Israel is extremely nationalistic religious oriented country with extreme capitalistic neoliberal economy and occupation policy.

***How do you find inspiring people and collectives?***

It is my interest in general, because this is the source of my personal inspiration. As a founder and a curator of the Barbur artist-run gallery, I'm part of the network of different artistic and civil collectives and organizations in Israel and abroad. And I am always in search for new.

***What kind of direct actions?***

I think that at the moment the work of art goes out of the studio to the public space it is a direct action. What is important to me as an educator is to encourage the students to create and to bring it into the world, to be aware of the different possible contexts and impacts of such encounter and to see it not as external conditions, but as a part of a work. Here it is the moment where the artistic freedom is challenged.

***How do you define and facilitate an open discussion?***

I'm very much concerned about the "critique" part of the educational process and always try to create conditions for a discussion with the students to be an integral part of the assignment. It can be kind of a conference, sharing circle or correspondence. Earnestly, it is the most tricky part of the educational process for me, because it is a "direct action" of the education. We can speak and teach about beautiful principles, but then to conduct the lesson and the whole communication with the students in a way that completely contradicts these principles.