



# INTERWOVEN

WINSTON-SALEM, NC

**The Call for Papers for SECAC 2026 in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, is now officially open. Please review the list of sessions and submit your paper proposal by Wednesday, April 1, 2026, 11:59PM EST.**

Sessions for the SECAC 2026 Call for Papers are organized in the following categories:

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SECAC Call for Academic Posters

**New opportunity to present at SECAC 2026!**

Poster session co-chairs: Al Denyer, Kevin Curry, Faith Berringer

SECAC 2026 will be offering an Academic Poster Session, and seeks poster proposals from graduate students, post-graduates and professionals. There is no session theme as we seek to showcase a range of research and projects created by members from education and research disciplines in the visual arts. Poster proposals will be reviewed by the panel chair and co-chairs.

SECAC will provide; display easels, sheets of black 20x30" foam core, double sided scotch tape and masking tape. Poster presenters will provide; a printed 20x30" poster, or a number of smaller sheets of image and text that can be collaged to the sheet of foam core. Presenters may choose to include original artwork (please bring alternative archival tape or hinges). Presenters will be responsible for creating their poster on the foam core sheet ahead of the session.

Proposals must be submitted through the SECAC website, in the form of an abstract that includes a description of the project / research and a weblink in order to access images and additional information.





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## AFFILIATE SOCIETIES

### **Art of the Gilded Age in America: Glamor, Glass, and Grit**

Affiliate Society: Association for Textual Scholarship in Art History (ATSAH)

Jennifer Bates Ehlert, Emmanuel College and Salve Regina University

This session, sponsored by the Association for Textual Scholarship in Art History, examines the visual culture of the United States between 1870 and 1900 to explore this time as a field of striking aesthetic contrasts and social tensions. During these decades of rapid industrialization, urban expansion, and extreme wealth disparity, American artists responded to modernity in divergent yet interconnected ways. This panel aims to bring together three major artistic modes of the period. First, it considers elite portraiture, exemplified by crafted images of refinement, leisure, and cosmopolitan aspirations for America's newly wealthy patrons. Second, the session hopes to include innovations in stained glass and decorative arts which aligned with Gilded Age ideals of beauty and consumption. Finally, the panel turns to grit and realism by examining early urban subjects and the social consciousness of movements, such as the Ashcan School, which rejected polish in favor of immediacy and modern urban life. This session hopes to explore the power of Gilded Age art which lies in its dynamic interplay between spectacle and struggle, refinement and realism, while revealing how American artists negotiated identity, class, and modernity at the threshold of the twentieth century. Papers on textiles, landscape, architecture, photography, as well as the Arts and Crafts movement, or the Hudson River School are welcome. Please contact Jennifer Ehlert, at [ehlertj@emmanuel.edu](mailto:ehlertj@emmanuel.edu), if you have questions.

### **How Do You Teach Digital Foundations in an Art and Design Program Today?**

Affiliate Society: Foundations in Art: Theory and Education (FATE)

Neill Prewitt, Georgia State University

Today's Foundations students use digital tools all day long to create, share, and consume images. Yet that doesn't make them digitally or visually literate, as defined by Art and Design programs. So you offer Digital Foundations. But why should students take your Digital Foundations class when they can learn everything on YouTube for free? Do you really have to make them sit at a desktop in a computer lab and use last year's software? Or are you exhausting yourself responding to every software update and digital trend? How do you balance skill-building with conceptual development, and keep the class from becoming an Adobe certification program? And should Digital Foundations even be a standalone class, or is it more effective to incorporate digital tools horizontally into Drawing I, 2D Design, and 3D Design? This panel seeks presentations and project shares from teachers who have been grappling with these issues and others, want to share the curriculum and approaches they've come up with, and find new ways of serving students today.





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## **Resilience and Versatility in Animation Education**

Affiliate Society: The Collective of Animation Scholars + Practitioners

Huali Fu, Ball State University; Marc Russo, North Carolina State University; Jim Sidletsky, University of California, Santa Barbara

Animation education exists at an intersection of art and technology, where the warp and weft of the discipline are currently under immense strain. This panel invites educators and practitioners to examine the Interwoven nature of animation pedagogy amidst the current disruptions. As the industry faces changes in media delivery, the rise of generative AI, and remote and contract labor force, career preparation is changing fast. How do we prepare students for an industry where instability is the new norm? We seek papers that explore the threads connecting Animation, Game Design, Virtual Production, and Interaction Design, arguing that versatility is the key to resilience. Beyond technical craft, this panel addresses the human threads of the classroom: strategies for supporting neuro-divergent student populations and methods for bridging the crucial gap between college and career maturity. How do we foster professional behavior and adaptability in a generation facing an outsourced, gig-based future? By highlighting the convergence of these creative disciplines, this panel aims to map out new pedagogical patterns that empower students to navigate the disruptions of the modern media landscape, ensuring they are not just surviving the industry shifts, but actively weaving its future.

## **Textiles as Public Art: Making the Private Political**

Karen Shelby, Baruch College, City University of New York

Textile artists harness the structural and symbolic power of textiles to expand what public art can mean, creating spaces and surfaces that are as layered and interconnected as the communities they serve. Sarai Alvarez Riveros's Den Sociala Väven (The Social Fabric) invites passers-by to stop and embroider with the artist. Yafatou Sarr created Weaving the Future: A Vessel of Water, Roots, and Community, covered twith crochet patterns reflecting themes deeply rooted in Gambia, the artist's homeland. Swedish exhibition Make it Grow highlighted textile works for public spaces. The artists aimed to counter hierarchies in the art world seeking contact with audiences outside designated art spaces. The artists also moved their studios into public space to demystify artistic work, exemplifying the Swedish feminist organization Group 8 1973 slogan: "The private is political." Papers for this session may address a broad range of issues related to textiles as public art in both historic and contemporary settings. What do textile arts mean in our shared public spaces? How does the language of traditional textiles translate into steel, plexiglass, leather, synthetic fibers, embroidery or light? How do public textile projects engage with urban, suburban, or rural environments, and make the private political?





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## ART EDUCATION & PEDAGOGY

### **Art Criticism as a Public Service: Bridging the Gap Between Gallery and Community**

Gary Daichendt, Point Loma Nazarene University

Traditional art criticism has long been viewed as a high-minded evaluation of visual art, often confined to academic journals, or elite circles. However, when reframed as a public service, art criticism evolves into a vital tool for democratic engagement and social literacy. This session explores the transition of the critic from a "gatekeeper" to a "facilitator," whose primary role is to demystify complex visual languages and foster public dialogue. By directing criticism toward the public sphere, we can empower diverse audiences to navigate contemporary culture with confidence. This service-oriented approach prioritizes clarity, historical context, and the dismantling of institutional barriers. This is achieved through histories, pedagogies, and personal narratives where critical discourse has successfully sparked community conversation, influenced public policy on the arts, and increased accessibility in arts spaces.

### **Critiquing the Critique**

Laurel Archie, Columbia College

In the college art studio, perhaps the most common practice we see is the critique. Many of us have been engaging in critique since before we can remember, from a young age viewing work on the wall, commenting on what we observe and how we evaluate it. Educators witness variations on this traditional critique format and are likely familiar with the ebb and flow of successful and "failed" crits. This session proposal hopes to bring together creative modes of critique for the classroom or amongst colleagues. How can we disrupt tradition whilst holding the values of this historic teaching structure? How can learning become more active, memorable, or insightful? Critique involves vulnerability and trust. How can this be cultivated in our classroom and studio communities? Open to both conventional and innovative presentation models, this session invites educators and practitioners who have challenged the traditional critique model, taken risks in the classroom, and found new ways to successfully discuss and improve work within a studio setting.

### **Disrupting the Page: Contemporary Sketchbook Practices in Art and Design Education**

Michael Flynn, SCAD

In contemporary art and design education, sketchbooks are often treated as informal, preparatory tools rather than as integral sites of professional practice. This session proposes a re-imagined approach to sketchbook pedagogy that positions the sketchbook as an interwoven structure one that connects place, color, craft, reflection, and design thinking into a cohesive professional artifact. Grounded in sabbatical research conducted in the Caribbean and a related study-abroad course focused on professional sketchbook development, the session examines how immersive, place-based methodologies can transform the sketchbook into a living archive of creative inquiry. Through case studies, curriculum models, and interactive prompts, participants will explore how sketchbooks can weave together analog and digital processes, observational research, cultural context, and iterative making. Emphasis is placed on pattern formation through sustained practice, as well as productive disruption moments where





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experimentation, material investigation, and lived experience challenge linear or outcome-driven design workflows. Aligned with SECAC 2026's theme, this session invites educators to reconsider how sketchbooks function as threads linking tradition and innovation, memory and material, craft and contemporary practice. Participants will leave with adaptable strategies for integrating professional sketchbook practices across foundations, studio courses, and study-abroad contexts.

## **Entangled Pedagogies: Teaching Art through More-Than-Human Ecologies**

Boram Kim, University of Massachusetts Amherst

This session invites studio artists and educators to share pedagogical strategies that integrate material, ecological, and interdisciplinary approaches into art curricula. In alignment with the SECAC 2026 theme *Interwoven: Threads, Patterns & Disruptions*, the session explores how teaching through artmaking can foster “more-than-human” awareness, where matter, environment, and learner are co-participants in knowledge creation. Grounded in posthumanist and new-materialist perspectives, presenters will discuss classroom practices—drawing, printmaking, fibers, sculpture, digital media—that foreground care, interdependence, and embodied observation. The session highlights how art education can move beyond human-centered paradigms to cultivate ethical relationships with materials, ecologies, and communities. Participants are encouraged to share syllabi, assignments, and collaborative projects that weave together theory and practice, revealing how teaching can become an act of making-kin (Haraway, 2016) and responsive repair. Together, we will examine how curricula can function as living systems—open, relational, and continually remade through dialogue between students, instructors, and the more-than-human world. By interlacing studio practice and pedagogy, this session seeks to model art education as a site of ecological attunement, material thinking, and transformative learning.

## **Everything Is Painting Now (So How Do We Teach It?)**

Neil Callander, University of Arkansas

Painting has survived its critics in part by embracing expansive forms, materials, and processes. Hurrah! But this very openness now poses a pedagogical crisis: if almost anything can be called painting, where do we begin teaching it? As Painting's boundaries have dissolved, what remains fundamental to a painting education? Wishy-washy approaches to an expanding medium underserve students, but excessive focus risks turning a blind eye to the complexity enlivening the field. This session invites informed, opinionated perspectives on teaching painting in 2026. We're looking for an exchange of concrete pedagogical stances that address questions such as: Which skills are non-negotiable and which are nostalgia? What are your key projects? How do we balance technical foundations with conceptual experimentation? How do art historical examples help or hurt? What role does painting's history play when its present is so diffuse? Arguments for Painting's ongoing vitality are encouraged—as are fresh claims for its obsolescence.





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## **In Situ: Place-Based Learning in Art and Design**

Marissa Tirone, Rochester Institute of Technology

This panel examines how art and design education is shaped through place-based learning within realms such as study abroad programs, community partnerships, and experimental site-responsive approaches. Engaging with cultural, historical, and spatial conditions beyond the classroom, the session will explore ways of teaching, making, and researching within these external contexts. Panelists will share teaching methods, practical considerations, and critical reflections on the challenges of place-based pedagogy, emphasizing how these approaches have the potential to deepen meaning and connection.

## **Interwoven Practices: Bridging Studio Art and Art Teacher Education**

Maria Knuckley Robinson, Salem College

Rooted in the theme Interwoven: Threads, Patterns & Disruptions, this panel examines the persistent divide and intersections between studio art, art teacher education, and the preparation of college-level art educators within higher education. Studio programs often privilege individual practice and critique with preparing instructors for college teaching through professionalization rather than intentional training, while art education pathways emphasize pedagogy, licensure, and classroom realities. Together, these patterns reinforce disciplinary silos that shape curriculum, identity, and institutional value. Drawing on Winston-Salem's layered history of craft, industry, and innovation as a guiding metaphor, panelists including studio artists, art educators, and hybrid teacher-scholars will share case studies and pedagogical models that intentionally interweave studio rigor, teaching practice, and curricular design across K–12 and collegiate contexts. Topics include collaborative course structures, shared critique models, mentorship for emerging college art educators, and approaches that position art teachers and faculty alike as practicing artists and cultural producers. By addressing both structural barriers and successful integrative strategies, this panel argues that bridging studio practice and pedagogical preparation strengthens teacher identity, supports emerging educators, and fosters more resilient, inclusive art programs. The session invites dialogue on reimagining art education as a woven continuum rather than a divided pathway.

## **Pedagogy as Art Practice in the 21st Century Classrooms and Museums**

Izabel Galliera, Susquehanna University

In the introduction to the 2025 anthology *Pedagogical Art in Curatorial and Activist Practices* that I co-edited and co-written, I define “pedagogical art” as a generously accommodating term that encompasses various forms of social art practices that act as advocacy tools to advance social justice on issues and concerns both inside and outside established institutional structures. In this context, “pedagogy” signals a series of specific tools, strategies and modes of operation that enhance the life-long process of learning. Over the last few decades there has been a growing interest in pedagogical art by contemporary artists around the world. From the “education turn” (2008) and “the curatorialization of education” (Paul O’Neil and Wilson, 2010) to the “self-organized Art Education” (Sam Thorne, 2017) pedagogical art has represented a means to address the urgent issues around the world, from war to climate change to the rise of authoritarianism and recent attacks on education. This panel seeks to bring





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together artists, educators, art historians, and curators that explore the activist potential of pedagogy as art in the 21st century classrooms and museums.

## **Pedagogy in Transition: Teaching Design While the Institution Changes**

Bri O'Neal, Virginia Tech

Design education increasingly unfolds within changing institutional conditions. Curriculum redesigns, program rebrands, shifting missions, and evolving governance can turn the university and classroom into unstable contexts rather than fixed frameworks. In these conditions, teaching design requires navigating transition as part of the pedagogical terrain. Faculty work as designers within living systems, and courses become spaces where expectations are negotiated rather than assumed. Policy, authorship, collaboration and strategy shift as conditions change. Drawing on case studies from undergraduate design courses, this session examines how teaching through uncertainty reveals structures that are often fixed or invisible, including competitive cultures, governance frameworks, transparency, and decision-making processes, and allow them to be worked out in practice. Instead of framing these conditions as something to correct or fear, these pedagogical approaches prepare students to work with complex and evolving professional environments. This session focuses on moments where past expectations and practices meet constraints and require both students and faculty to adapt. Participants are invited to share experiences of teaching during institutional change and to consider how pedagogical models evolve when learning must respond in real time.

## **Stitch by Stitch: Teaching Deliberate, Unhurried Creation**

Karen Gergely, Graceland University

In an era defined by digital immediacy and mass production, is it possible to slow down creation and reclaim the "slow craft and making" movement as part of our curriculum? This session explores the pedagogical value of labor-intensive processes—such as textile work, woodworking, and pottery etc.,—where the primary objective shifts from the finished product to the journey of making. By prioritizing deliberate creation, can we guide students to resist the pressure of instant gratification, replacing it with a deep investment in intricate and delicate personal labor? Can slow, therapeutic making and material intimacy counter, or work in tandem with, a fast-paced digital culture by cultivating focus, patience, and critical thinking? Is it possible for these foundational "slow" skills to serve students throughout their academic careers, foster a community that values human connection, resilience, and material wisdom allowing and encouraging students to develop a profound understanding of cultural context and material agency over speed and spectacle? Project shares and case studies may include but are not limited to strategies for balancing structured technical skills with the creative freedom necessary for personal storytelling, shifting the classroom dynamic from performance-based output to deep, reflective practice, success and failures.





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## **Teaching Across the Divide: Rethinking Pedagogy for Polarized Student Performance in Design Classrooms**

Thomas Jockin, Independent

Research in graphic design education has documented widening variance in foundational student performance, particularly in critique literacy (Blair, 2006) and in iteration and process behaviors associated with novice–expert divergence (Cross, 2004). When combined with documented disparities in visual art performance (Imms, 2000) and higher-education learning pathways (Singh, Allohverdi & Graether, 2022), these findings suggest that first-year design cohorts may not form a single continuum of readiness, but instead exhibit clustered skill profiles indicative of emerging bimodal patterns. Further evidence challenging the “digital native” assumption shows that students possess uneven digital fluency: adept with consumption tools yet highly variable in creation-based workflows essential to visual communication (Learning in the 21st Century Report, 2017). This creation–production divide reinforces clustered skill trajectories. AI-supported learning may amplify these dynamics, as personalized systems disproportionately benefit moderately motivated learners while underserving students at both ends of the performance spectrum (Huang et al., 2023). This session examines how such clustered performance patterns reshape pedagogy, critique culture, and assessment in graphic design. We invite empirically grounded analyses—including structured anecdotes, case studies, and observational data—that articulate identifiable patterns and their implications for studio teaching.

## **Teaching Across Time: Weaving the Past and Future of Art Education**

Joseph Kameen, University of South Carolina Aiken; Nathan Perry, Western Carolina University

Many common art projects today have been passed down to us; an observational painting class may complete exercises not very different than what William Merritt Chase’s students would have done, and many color theory courses rely heavily on Albers. After all, these structures have stood the test of time. They have significant value to offer those who study within them, they are a proven way to teach a concept, and developing new systems is no small feat. Still, continuing these structures is a choice. As one moves from student to educator, they are faced with the question; what of my education has value enough to carry forward, and what needs to be updated? This session calls for presentations from artist-educators who have considered their current teaching in relation to their past education. Do you continue to teach as you were taught, and why? Have you carried some aspects forward and updated others, or did you drop everything for better structure? Perhaps most importantly, what would you urge other educators to keep or change in their curricula, knowing that the education our students receive is the foundation of the one they will in time deliver to their future students?





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## **This Classroom is a Safe? Woke? Authentic? Space: Pedagogy for the Post-Millennial Generation**

Elizabeth Pugliano, University of Colorado Denver; Lindsay Alberts, Savannah College of Art and Design

Generational divides have always existed in educational settings. Yet, as our classrooms fill with Zoomers and children of the Covid pandemic, the breadth of new challenges in classroom management, engagement, and professionalism and the pace at which they seem to arise feel increasingly dire. Amidst issues ranging from device dependency and distraction to the Gen-Z stare to mental health diagnoses to mismatched expectations regarding academic standards and appropriate classroom behavior, effectively teaching complex academic and artistic material while also navigating proliferating generational differences is a mounting difficulty for many faculty. Recognizing the frustration that can accompany such teaching experiences, this session aims to explore practical approaches to encountering, managing, and bridging this generational divide, increasing student engagement and buy-in, and diminishing friction between student and instructor. We invite proposals highlighting practices or activities designed to mitigate generation-based classroom challenges such as (but not limited to) participation, deadlines, professionalism, technology, feedback, personal identity, subjectivity, and pronunciation. Focusing on classroom interactions and in-class practices rather than assignments or course topics, we encourage papers presenting concrete approaches, no matter how small, that have resulted in improved classroom environments that are responsive to the particularities of Gen Z, Gen Alpha and Gen Beta students.

## **When Creativity Becomes Contested: Teaching, Censorship, and Cultural Power**

Christopher Olszewski, Savannah College of Art and Design

At a moment when creative expression is increasingly surveilled, politicized, and constrained, educators and cultural workers find themselves teaching at a crossroads—and often in the crossfire. Across the U.S., books are being pulled from shelves, histories erased or softened, and classrooms reframed as ideological battlegrounds. Within this charged landscape, teaching creativity is no longer neutral; it is an act shaped by power, resistance, and care. This session examines how art and design educators navigate institutions under fire while continuing to teach, curate, and advocate for spaces of complexity, imagination, and critical dialogue. Drawing from pedagogical and curatorial practice, the presentation addresses how creativity can function as a site of refusal and possibility—where students are invited to engage difficult, politicized subjects without simplification or silence. Rather than retreating from controversy, this session argues for holding ground: sustaining inquiry, honoring lived experience, and fostering creative practices that confront cultural division with nuance and courage. Creativity becomes a tool for collective sense-making—one that resists censorship, centers marginalized voices, and insists on imagination as a necessary political and pedagogical act in difficult times.





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## ART HISTORY

### **A Sight to Behold? The Visualities of Ancient Mediterranean Art**

Michael Anthony Fowler, East Tennessee State University

Over the last two decades, scholarship on ancient Mediterranean art has intensified its analytical attention to the materiality of works of art, with pronounced interest in their agential capacity (as “things”) or potential affordances in specific environments or situations. This approach is predicated upon the assumption that ancient peoples had at least visual access to the object(s) being studied. Yet, despite their visual properties and even the materials and labor invested in their creation, not all objects were necessarily made to be seen by many or, indeed, any. And this is beside the point that ancient objects were rarely, if at all, experienced in the isolated, static, eye-leveled, and uniformly lit manner to which museum exhibits and photographs have accustomed us. In short, ancient objects did not necessarily possess the same kinds or degrees of visibility. This session seeks context-sensitive examinations that address objects’ (in)complete (in)visibility in a diversity of Mediterranean cultural contexts between the Late Bronze Age and the Roman imperial era. How might greater sensitivity to varying visualities enrich our understanding of ancient experiences of, inter alia, the agency or affordances of objects? What new insights may arise from questioning the link between the visual and the visible?

### **African Animals in Art and Visual Culture**

Elizabeth Howie, Coastal Carolina University; Amy Schwartzott, North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University

Non-human undomesticated animals native to Africa have been widely represented in African and African diasporic visual culture, as well as in Western and global contexts. We are seeking papers addressing art from diverse geopolitical temporalities which explore the implication of the representation of animals native to the African continent in art from a broad range of styles, periods, and cultures, whether charismatic megafauna or less well-known species. Such representations could serve to reinforce or disrupt ideologies and hierarchies of anthropocentrism, racialization, and/or Western humanism, or relate to binaries of wild versus tamed, civilized versus uncivilized. Examples include traditional art of the African continent, early modern European art, Western “primitivism,” images documenting animals given as court gifts, representations of zoos, maps, imagery associated with animal taming performance, etc. We hope to engage ideas from postcolonial studies, critical race theory, critical animal studies, etc.

### **Art of the United States Open Session**

Kelsey Frady Malone, Berea College

Papers are invited on research topics in the art of the United States for this annual open session. Topics dating from first contact through 1980, from across the Americas, and scholarship from the Atlantic/Pacific or transnational perspective will all be considered. Papers that attempt to disrupt traditional approaches to the study of the art and artists of the United States are particularly welcome,





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such as studies that critique the influences of institutional racism, settler colonialism, “nationhood,” white supremacy, Eurocentrism, patriarchy, and heteronormativity on the art, craft, material culture, and/or architecture of the Americas and its histories. This session especially seeks to highlight figures and topics that have been underrepresented or absent in art historical scholarship—whether due to minoritized identities, gender or sexual orientation, geographic location, the chosen creative medium, or other factors. Papers from all scholars, regardless of career stage, are welcomed. Accepted papers will be organized into thematic sessions.

## **Crafting a Narrative for Preservation: Curating and Defending Public Art from the New Deal to Now**

Mary Okin, Living New Deal; Jacqueline Francis, California College of the Arts

Recent executive actions have resulted in the defunding of federal programs that support exhibitions and historic preservation, seeking to undermine public access to the arts, craft, and the breadth of U.S. visual culture. Severe limits to federal funding have also dovetailed with legal challenges to freedom of thought and expression that public spaces exhibiting art have long worked to encourage. This session explores how scholars working independently or within the academy, museums, research centers and other cultural organizations craft meaningful narratives that shape and justify support for and material and digital preservation of publicly funded and publicly owned art. How have exhibitions, preservation projects, and related public programs (in-person and virtual) illuminated and advocated for the importance of culture that is created and sustained with government money? Research papers examining the curatorial and historical frameworks that construct narratives about public art are particularly welcome. Potential areas of research include cultural initiatives and emergency relief funded through the New Deal, the Great Society, the National Endowments for the Arts (NEA) and for the Humanities (NEH), the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA), the General Services Administration (GSA), and the COVID-19-era CARES and American Rescue Plan acts.

## **Creating a Library of SoTL/Scholarly Pedagogy Resources**

Sarah Archino, Furman University

Have you experimented with assignment design or assessment methods, hoping to produce better learning? Have you dipped your toe into Scholarly Pedagogy or the Science of Teaching and Learning (SoTL)? Have you felt unsure about publishing your work because you are overwhelmed by literature reviews and methodologies that have nothing to do with your training or academic background? Imposture syndrome around teaching and learning is real, but your expertise is valuable! This panel aims to bring together pedagogical scholars at all levels, with a particular interest in sharing the scholarship and research that have been helpful to your own explorations. The goal is to create community, crowdsource some resources that can help to challenge imposter syndrome, and encourage more publications about art history teaching.





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## **Decoding the Pattern: Remapping Global Textile Art History Through a Contemporary Lens**

Shen Qu, Arizona State University; Huixian Dong, Washburn University

This session reexamines textiles as a visual and material medium that reveals complex narratives of identity, power, and materiality. Centering on the global circulation of textile art, this session explores how fabrics, fibers, and weaving techniques have historically functioned within both daily life and visual representation. From premodern tribes and religious contexts to imperial courts and folk markets, textiles have mediated systems of value and belief, encoding social order within their threads, from yunjin brocades and intricate embroideries to whimsical quilts and beyond. By foregrounding materiality, we invite scholars and artists to engage in a dialogue of centering textiles as living archives of cultural exchange, colonial encounter, and technological transformation. It further examines how contemporary artists, especially women artists such as Pacita Abad, Melissa Cody, Marie Watt, Lin Tianmiao, and Chiharu Shiota, reinterpret these traditions, using threads to weave new narratives of art history and self-expression. Through a contemporary lens, we seek papers and presentations that explore how artists engage, disrupt, and reimagine textile techniques, traditions, and materials to challenge preexisting global art historical narratives. Topics may include textile as resistance, postcolonial remappings of craft, digital weaving technologies, and cross-cultural translation in fiber arts. Geographic focuses may include, but are not limited to, Asia, Indigenous regions of the Americas, and the pan-Pacific Islands.

## **From Disruption to Renewal: Rethinking Art History with AI**

Rachel Daichendt, Point Loma Nazarene University

AI introduces a disruption in typical art history pedagogy that unsettles familiar ways of seeing and interpreting the visual past. From the slide-based survey to the disciplined routines of formal analysis, phenomenology, and stylistic comparison—these long-standing pedagogical anchors have shaped how students learn to see and how scholars construct historical meaning. This session explores how such AI ruptures might open toward renewal, prompting fresh theoretical and methodological possibilities for art history. Rather than treating AI as a threat or shortcut, we approach it as an occasion to rethink perception, hermeneutics, creativity, and historical meaning. The session invites reflections on how the discipline might evolve through this new technological horizon.

## **Ghosts: Tracing the Spectral from the 19th Century to the Present**

Natalie Phillips, Ball State University; Laura Golobish, Ball State University

During the nineteenth century, printed text and illustration enabled viewers to travel virtually, populating distant landscapes with imagined histories and images. Across genres, these spectres began to inhabit contemporary spaces, transforming the living landscape into a palimpsest where traces of past human creativity could be encountered asynchronously. This session invites papers that examine how ghosts, spectres, and traces, literal or metaphorical, mediate human experience across historical and technological contexts. We are especially interested in how evolving technologies over the past two centuries have reshaped our understanding of presence, authorship, and authenticity. Possible topics include: literary haunting and historical memory; virtual travel; imagined geographies; spectral





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authorship; the afterlives of texts, anxieties about AI and artificial creation; digital ghosts and archives; ethics of resurrecting voices/bodies/ideas through technology. By foregrounding ghosts and spectres as critical frameworks, this panel seeks to explore how textual, visual, biological, or digital traces continue to shape how we understand creativity, history, and human presence in a world of fluctuating technological mediation.

## **Human, Inhuman, and Unhuman: The Body and Definitions of Humanity in Art and Visual Culture**

Brynne McBryde, University of Maryland

The nineteenth century saw a rise of interest in, and anxiety about, what it means to be human around the globe, leading to debates over how to define a human body. The advent of industrialization and resulting increase in the speed of intercultural contact and exchange occurred alongside the formalization of evolutionary theory and scientific racism and the cultural export of Western classification and speciation systems. The Western insistence on dividing and subdividing the natural world presented universal questions about the relative importance of physical difference, similarity, and familiarity in defining the edges of humanity. Images and artworks have played a key role in building, and challenging, the boundary between the human and the inhuman. Each representation of the body contributes a thread to the image of what it means to be human, simultaneously creating a reverse, an image of the inhuman. This panel explores the role that the body – its forms, variations, limitations, and possibilities – play in defining the human during and after the nineteenth century. It reconsiders the body, broadly defined, as a visible marker of belonging and exclusion in the face of formations, contestations, and reformations of what it meant and means to be human.

## **Innovations and Institutions in Southeastern Cities**

Sarah Gordon, National Museum of African American History and Culture; Miriam Grotte-Jacobs, National Museum of African American History and Culture

Historically, art production has flourished throughout major southeastern cities, and contemporary artists continue to carry this legacy forward. In studios, galleries, museums, and other public spaces, artists have created and displayed works that interpret the natural landscape, material culture, regional identity, and historical memory of place. These artistic endeavors showcase the innovations of home-grown talent as well as artistic exchanges and collaborations while also revealing site-specific opportunities and challenges. Art production in each metropolitan area is impacted by a range of factors, such as the availability of university training, including HBCUs; arts council funding; and the presence of local associations. Challenges can arise from institutional barriers, deeply embedded biases, or lack of access to funding and venues. This session invites investigations of the interactions among artists, organizations, and institutions in southeastern American cities, broadly construed. What are the connecting threads and the disrupting elements that have shaped artistic production in cities like Washington, DC, Louisville, Atlanta, New Orleans, and others? How does each region weave together a unique artistic culture? And what can we learn from one another about maintaining the fabric of these





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vibrant arts communities in the face of changing municipal, institutional, and organizational priorities and landscapes?

## **Interwoven Labors: Motherhood, Care, and the Politics of Visibility in Art and Design**

Jessica Braum, Temple University; Meghan Kelly, Jefferson University

This session examines how motherhood and reproductive labor have been articulated, materialized, and contested within modern and contemporary art, design, and exhibition practices. Historically relegated to the private sphere, the labor of reproduction and care has increasingly entered public, institutional, and artistic spaces, disrupting entrenched divisions between domestic and political life. Framed through the SECAC 2026 theme *Interwoven: Threads, Patterns & Disruptions*, the session considers motherhood as an interlaced system of bodily labor, material culture, and social design that both sustains and challenges dominant cultural structures. Papers may address how artists, curators, and designers render visible the often-invisible work of caregiving, childbirth, and maintenance through performance, sculpture, installation, moving image, and exhibition-making. The session is particularly interested in feminist and transnational perspectives that foreground reproductive autonomy, institutional critique, and the aesthetics of care. By attending to objects, practices, and spaces that mediate human reproduction—from domestic artifacts to museum displays—this session explores how art and design function as sites where social imaginaries are formed, contested, and reconfigured. This session welcomes art historical papers and practice-based perspectives that critically engage motherhood, care, and reproductive labor across historical and contemporary contexts.

## **Interwoven/Interdisciplinary**

Ashley Busby, Nicholls State University

The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SOTL) has long emphasized the benefits of interdisciplinary learning, and art history has been a natural partner in such efforts. Much like the conference theme, the threads of other areas of inquiry are interwoven in the practice of art making, the work we do as researchers, and the ways in which we work with and teach students in the classroom. At a moment when the humanities are under attack and the arts are seeing ever more demands to defend our relevance in the academy, such efforts can play a crucial role in disrupting such narratives. This session seeks papers on new and innovative ways in which faculty are stressing connections between the history of art and other fields of inquiry. This might include STEM/STEAM initiatives, the design of special topics courses to engage new/outside student populations, experiments in co-teaching with non-art faculty, or assignment designs that borrow from other fields or prepare students for post graduate success in areas outside the arts. Submissions from educators at all career stages and those working with traditional or non-traditional student populations are welcome.





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## **Labor, Desire, and the Working Body: Queer Visual Culture and the Politics of Class**

Alex Del Dago, University of Virginia

This panel investigates how queer artists have engaged with representations of the laboring body to negotiate questions of desire, class identity, and political solidarity. From the end of the nineteenth century through the present day, depictions of physical work have served as charged sites where sexuality and class consciousness intersect and complicate one another. Rather than treating labor imagery and queer visual culture as separate traditions, this session examines how artists mobilized the iconography of physical labor (e.g., dockworkers, miners, construction workers, industrial laborers) to articulate complex relationships between erotic investment and class politics. Papers might address how queer artists appropriated, reimagined, or subverted representations of working-class bodies; the role of homoerotic aesthetics in social realist traditions; tensions between political solidarity and sexual objectification; or how contemporary artists revisit historical labor imagery through queer frameworks. By foregrounding this intersection, the panel reveals overlooked histories of political artmaking and enriches our understanding of how identity shapes aesthetic production and ideological meaning. This scholarship is especially vital now as contemporary debates about labor rights, economic inequality, and queer politics demand we understand how these struggles inform and strengthen one another. We welcome interdisciplinary approaches spanning visual media across geographic and temporal contexts.

## **New Uses for Old Things: Toward a History of Artists using the Old-Fashioned**

Joseph Litts, Princeton University; Michael Hartman, Rhode Island School of Design

What does the historical, the out-of-date, the old-fashioned offer artists, contemporary and otherwise? Retaining and reviving techniques and materials can be an important way of critiquing past injustices while celebrating survivance. From Will Wilson's tintype portraits to Jordan Nassar's cross-stitch landscapes, artists find new uses for old techniques and materials. Valerie Hegarty and Kent Monkman use historical works of art as a literal and conceptual basis for their practices, but both also utilize their academic training in surprising ways. For artists like Sarah Sockbeson and Demond Melancon, traditional crafts (basketry and beading, respectively) honor the past while offering a way forward. This is not a recent development, though the political valences have shifted: Paul Cadmus's tempura paintings, the nineteenth-century etching revival, and Agostino Brunias's frescos come to mind. This panel thus invites submissions that examine how and why artists deliberately choose to use the old, especially techniques and materials. We are particularly interested in submissions that move beyond statements that an artist (re)presents the past to highlight historical absences. Instead, how do historical techniques and materials offer complex inspiration, and what are the phenomenologically affective qualities of using the frankly old-fashioned? We welcome submissions across geographies and career stages.





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## **North Carolina and Modern Art: Artists, Exhibitions, and the Tar Heel State as Influence and Receptor**

Jared Ledesma, North Carolina Museum of Art

Throughout the 20th century, North Carolina served as both a source of inspiration for modern artists and a receptor of modern art. This session calls for case studies that examine artistic production and exhibition activity across the state, demonstrating how modern art was shaped by encounters with North Carolina and actively shown here. Points of departure include the photographic work of Rosalie Gwathmey; a study of North Carolina-focused photographs that form part of Robert Frank's "The Americans"; the 1948 suite of Black Mountain paintings by Elaine de Kooning; Theodoros Stamos's 1950 work "North Carolina Landscape"; or Irene Rice Pereira's 1968 solo exhibition, which traveled exclusively within North Carolina. In these examples, the state emerges not as a passive backdrop but as an environment that informed artistic practice and expanded the reach of 20th-century art. Through analyses of place-based production and exhibitions, the session invites papers that examine how temporary residencies, sustained engagements, and itinerant exhibitions contributed to modernist vocabularies in the Tar Heel state. The session is open to studies on artists who either came to North Carolina and were influenced by their experiences there, or regional artists who called North Carolina home.

## **Open Session in Latin American Art**

Jeanette Nicewinter, Northern Virginia Community College; Janet Stephens, Georgia Gwinnett College

This session invites papers related to topics in Latin American Art, from the pre-Hispanic period to the present day, with a special emphasis on interwoven connections and patterns. Textiles and fiber arts hold a privileged place in the history and identity of many Latin American cultures, both past and present. We invite scholars to both think about the theme literally (in terms of textiles and fiber arts and/or the depiction of these objects in other media) and figuratively (in terms of connections and patterns identified in visual or material culture). This year's theme also invokes ideas of resilience, identity, and memory, which might be incorporated into discussions on Latin American art from across time and space. Participants might also consider new threads in scholarly approaches, connections among various art production and reception, and/or the individual practice or critical assessment of artists' work. In sum, this panel seeks to weave together topics to elucidate connections and patterns that transform our understanding of Latin American art.





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## **Open Session: East Asian Art**

Amanda Wangwright, University of South Carolina

This session welcomes proposals for papers on any topic in East Asian art and architectural history or visual culture, with special emphasis on topics related to this year's conference theme, Interwoven: Threads, Patterns & Disruptions. Scholars of all career stages are encouraged to apply.

## **Open Session: Eighteenth-Century Art**

Lauren DiSalvo, Virginia Tech; Sarah Williams, Millsaps College

This open session invites research of any art historical topic that spans the long eighteenth century. Particularly welcome are papers that address global interactions, highlight artists or mediums that have been historically overlooked, or challenge disciplinary norms. Papers may focus on, but are not limited to, visual and material culture of the eighteenth-century, the reception and historiography of eighteenth-century art, pedagogy in the eighteenth-century classroom, or disciplinary concerns for eighteenth-century art. Scholars of all career stages are encouraged to apply.

## **Open Session: History of Photography**

Peter Wang, University of Kentucky

This open session invites a wide range of papers on topics dealing with the research and understanding of history of photography from its inception to the present day across regions and practices.

## **Step Right Up! Come One, Come All!: Games, Roleplaying, and Gamification in Art History**

Mary Brink, Young Harris College

Gaming, Gamification, and Game play are dominating many art history classes, triumphing over syllabi, conquering the traditional lecture format, and winning the prize of student attention! One example of this gamification is Reacting to the Past (RTTP) games, which vary from microgames to semester-long immersions in history and art history. Art historians have used gamification in exploring museum exhibits, in Wikipedia scavenger hunts, and in interactive quizzes to increase student participation and interest. Some professors have developed full-scale video games where students solve mysteries or expand their empire to become a successful art patron. Badges and other prizes are sometimes used to add incentives. While some casual games focus on increasing participation without fundamentally changing the class format, other more serious games may create a full immersive experience with a range of learning objectives. This session will aim to include a range of presentations that may address gamification as a strategy, detail specific gaming experiences (including failures and lessons learned!), or even include actual game play as the presentation. Relevant games could include video games, board games, role playing activities, active learning activities, or any other methods of gamification!





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## **Teaching American Art: Opportunities and Challenges**

Jenevieve DeLosSantos, Rutgers University

The teaching of American art comes with its own set of distinct opportunities. As students often have exposure to American history and instructors may have access to relevant local collections, there are often exciting ways to teach this content. However, these courses also come with challenges. Scholarship and teaching resources on American art have moved away from their emphasis on nation-building and Eurocentric categories of high art to include histories of Indigenous, black, and other minoritized voices. Our current political context has potential implications for these scholarly directions and our classrooms. As SECAC has long been a generative space for the discussion of both American art and art history pedagogy, this panel seeks to create a space for the merging of these discussions. How have you navigated teaching students with varying perspectives on American history? In what ways has contemporary discourse shaped your teaching? At the eve of the nation's 250th birthday, how do we envision the importance of our classes on American art today? Papers exploring practical discussions of assignments, discussions, or classroom management strategies as well as theoretical reflections on the current challenges/opportunities of teaching American art history are welcome as well as speakers from all perspectives, institutions, and teaching settings.

## **The Art, Architecture and Material Culture of Renaissance and Early Modern Europe**

Joseph Silva, Community College of Rhode Island

This session seeks papers on all aspects of Renaissance and Early Modern European art, architecture and visual/material culture. Such topics and themes as patronage; ritual and festival; collecting and collections; workshops and production; gender; reception; globalism and transnationalism; etc. are but a few approaches in investigating this highly productive period in history.

## **The Dream of Regionality in a Post-Globalized America**

Chad Dawkins, Spelman College

It seems that everywhere is more and more like anywhere else. We've all come to recognize the repetition of brands along the interstate, the sameness of architecture in every city, and the availability of pretty much everything in every corner of the US. What is to be said for the similarities in museum collections and exhibitions across the country? It seems that the same artists' names appear in institutions large and small across the country and that any semblance of regional focus is hard to find. In a pre-internet world there were certainly styles, influences, and affects that persisted in different ways across different regions of the nation. Is that still possible? This session seeks papers that address regionality as a style and/or as a focus of an artistic, curatorial, or scholarly practice. How does regionality, or forms of place-specific signification, exist today and how is it expressed? Are there regional styles that persist not only in traditional forms but in contemporary art practices as well? Is such a notion a relic of a pre-internet, pre-globalized world? How are we thinking about place-specificity at a time in which America's global position—and American political rhetoric—has shifted?





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## **The History of Art Research: Recipients of the William R. Levin Awards**

Yumi Park-Huntington, Framingham State University

This session aims to provide a platform for discussing the scholarship associated with the two William R. Levin Awards for Research in the History of Art, which are awarded annually at SECAC. These awards also recognize the scholarship and SECAC participation of Bill Levin, who established the first award in 2013 to encourage and acknowledge research in art history and endowed a second award in 2018. The two awards now support research focused on art from two distinct time periods: before 1750 and after 1750. Participants will include past and recent award recipients, as well as honorable mention winners from both categories, who will present their research related to the Levin Awards.

## **Throughlines: Art, Tradition, Innovation**

Stephanie Chadwick, Lamar University

The vast array of creations comprising the history of art demonstrate that under various culturally and historically specific monikers artists have produced their works within frameworks of tradition, emulating and innovating based on past production. Although the modern era represented a turning point, it was by no means an exception. Even at the height of Modernism artists responded in one way or another to tradition, often radically breaking with it and inviting others to join them as they created new forms that would form their own artistic lineages. The worlds of contemporary art embrace messy dialogues with history, featuring new and more locally and globally conscious perspectives. This session explores some of the various ways that artists, through their works, have explored and responded to tradition. Papers may consider artistic lineage, innovative appropriation of art history, linearity and literal or metaphorical engagement with line and lines of artmaking and inquiry, figure and figural work, abstraction, or conceptual and mixed-media approaches.

## **Transnational Threads in Asian Art**

Pinyan Zhu, Emory University; Keyu Yan, Savannah College of Art and Design

This panel invites a cross-cultural dialogue on the production, distribution, and reception of Asian art. Moving beyond views that treat Asian art as a siloed or static entity, it highlights the dynamic networks, exchanges, and interpretive frameworks that have shaped artistic practices across the region and its diasporas. We are especially interested in papers that examine how multi-regional encounters—whether through international expositions, wartime mobilizations, or transnational artistic exchanges in sites such as treaty ports—inform the making and meaning of artworks. The panel welcomes diverse methodological approaches, including studies of modern reception of historical art and culture, the enduring relationships between text and image, and queer artists whose work complicates nation-centered narratives and expands the scope of Global Asia. Together, these perspectives aim to reconsider how “Asia” is defined, circulated, and continually reimagined within global art histories.





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## **Weaving and Disentangling Imperial Identity: Art and Expansionist Violence in the Long Nineteenth Century**

Hoyon Mephokee, Washington University in St. Louis; Marie-Agathe Simonetti, University of Illinois Chicago

Over the course of the long nineteenth century, the distant corners of the map were aggressively conquered, colonized, economically dominated, or otherwise subjugated by the West. From these violent encounters emerged hybridized identities that interwove the imperial and subaltern, colonizer and colonized, settler and native, and enslaver and enslaved, as the West appropriated and absorbed the Other in service of artistic, commercial, and colonial goals. Non-Western artists and institutions responded to Western intervention in a number of complex ways; while some interwove their indigenous cultural, political, and spiritual identities and practices with those of the West as a form of submission, alignment, or resistance, others resisted by directly challenging and disentangling the new identities that were forced upon them by their colonizers and would-be invaders. This panel examines the formation and reiteration of these unstable identities through imperial violence and discourse in the long nineteenth century, and the practices that materialized, memorialized, negotiated, challenged, and troubled them within a global image economy. It seeks papers on diverse and interdisciplinary topics from Western and non-Western as well as Global Northern and Global Southern contexts in the long nineteenth century, and also welcomes submissions on pre-modern precedents and contemporary responses.

## **What is "Psychedelic Art" Now?**

Guy Jordan, Western Kentucky University

Inspired and informed by the current "psychedelic renaissance" in medical research, contemporary artists are profoundly transforming the aesthetic category of psychedelic art. Instead of depicting perceptual phenomena associated with a psychedelic experience (e.g. fractal imagery, swirling patterns, and vibrant colors), artists increasingly utilize altered states of consciousness as an operational model. Projects by artists such as Refik Anadol, Carsten Höller, and Bobby Anspach do not re-present psychedelic experiences: they emulate them. Their artworks initiate analogous and potentially therapeutic states of consciousness. They leverage artificial intelligence, algorithms, real-time data processing, spatialized sound, vestibular system stimulation, neurofeedback, and other techniques to activate states of mind that mimic the temporal dilation, ego-dissolution, and cognitive entropy of a psychedelic trip. Drug and pharmaceutical-mimicking aesthetics that structure these installations are also interwoven into the strategies of digital art collectives like Marshmallow Laser Feast, immersive experience spaces like Meow Wolf, Artechouse, and Mercer Labs. The therapeutic potential and ethical perils of the deployment of increasingly intense, precise and clinical techniques of neuro-stimulation in such projects is a central concern of this session.





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## **Who could forget?: Art as Memory for Social Justice**

Nicole Scalissi, CSUSB

This panel considers how art functions as memory when media, nationalism, and other forms of public recognition and remembrance fall short—or intentionally erase, mis-represent, or ignore inconvenient histories and events. For example, Henry Taylor’s monumental painting of the 2016 killing of Philando Castile visually and permanently insists upon the culpability of officer Jeronimo Yanez, who was acquitted despite video evidence. In the 1970s, Suzanne Lacy and Ana Mendieta’s public interventions revealed, equally, the prevalence of sexualized violence against women and the willful inaction of law enforcement in response. This panel seeks short papers—including early-stage research, case studies, experimental methodologies—for a dynamic conversation about art’s capacity for memory and testimony for social justice. Presentations of 10-12 minutes are encouraged to prioritize conversation among panelists, panel chair, and audience. Scholarship on art that serves as memory for social justice from any culture, geography, and time period is welcomed; especially encouraged is research on art of the United States (any time period) including its historical and contemporary colonized territories, spheres of influence abroad, and at its borders. Exhibitionary/curatorial and activist practices that similarly provide space for memory are also welcome.





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## GRAPHIC DESIGN

### **Async Graphic Design: Building Real Studio Culture**

Sebastian Giraldo, Youngstown State University

Teaching graphic design asynchronously often reduces courses to disconnected solo assignments rather than cohesive studio experiences. This session explores practical approaches to rebuilding that lost studio culture in remote settings, focusing on what actually works to create genuine student connection and creative momentum. Presenters will share real strategies, honest failures, and ongoing experiments in making async courses feel more like authentic design studios. The emphasis is on actionable methods that foster community and engagement without adding overwhelming complexity. If you're navigating the challenges of online design education and want concrete ideas for strengthening student relationships and creative collaboration, this session delivers peer-tested frameworks grounded in classroom practice.

### **Design in Action: Faculty-Led Outreach Events in Graphic Design Education**

Patrick Finley, Iowa State University

Faculty-led outreach events have become a powerful teaching approach in graphic design education, offering students hands-on learning opportunities beyond the traditional classroom. This presentation explores the design, execution, and effect of event-based initiatives—such as design-a-thons, design weeks, community workshops, and short-term intensives—that are organized and led by faculty to connect students with real audiences, partners, and constraints. Unlike semester-long client projects, these events are deliberately time-limited, open to the public, and collaborative, requiring students to quickly combine research, strategy, and craftsmanship while responding to civic, nonprofit, or community-identified needs. Drawing on examples from multiple faculty-led outreach events, this session discusses how these initiatives serve as educational frameworks, supporting professional development, encouraging interdisciplinary teamwork, and boosting students' confidence, visibility, and impact. The presentation also covers logistical aspects—including partnerships, schedules, assessment methods, and faculty workload—and provides adaptable models suitable for various institutional settings. Attendees will leave equipped with practical strategies for designing outreach events that enhance graphic design curricula, strengthen community ties, and highlight design's role as a civic and social practice.

### **Design Under Pressure: Graphic Design, Information, and Political Crisis**

Melanie Uribe, Southern Connecticut State University

In periods of political instability, graphic design transcends its commercial function to become critical infrastructure for information, visibility, and collective action. This session examines how visual communication shapes the circulation of truth and resistance as trust in institutions and traditional media fractures. While inspired by the current Venezuelan political climate, the session invites broader global comparisons to position graphic design not as a neutral discipline but as a vital civic practice. Panelists will examine the tactical role of design in challenging state-controlled narratives, specifically exploring visual strategies for communicating under censorship, navigating digital surveillance, and





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protecting authorship in volatile environments. Beyond professional practice, the discussion extends to pedagogy: how do educators teach design ethics and responsibility when student work may carry high-stakes social consequences? By foregrounding diverse geographic and methodological perspectives, this panel highlights how designers navigate urgency and risk. Ultimately, this session offers attendees critical frameworks for understanding graphic design as both an act of political resistance and a form of cultural memory essential to preserving history in times of uncertainty.

## **Design Without Command-Z: Play, Materiality and Discovery**

Jen Pepper, Salisbury University

This panel would explore material-based approaches to graphic design education as a playful yet critical resistance to software-first learning. Presenters will explore projects that use physical materials—paper, ink, collage, textiles, and found objects—to introduce the idea of irreversibility and constraint into the design process. Within these projects, play becomes a strategy for experimentation and curiosity rather than perfection, encouraging students to test ideas, take risks, and become comfortable with decisions without the safety net of infinite undo. These practices disrupt the norm of efficiency, polish, and the drive for pixel-perfection that shape digital design. Material experimentation and the act of play reframe design not just as a digital workspace but as a human-made, consequential act. By engaging playful exploration within the boundaries of physical materials, students develop a deeper understanding of hierarchy, composition, and visual impact while learning to embrace uncertainty and foster their own curiosity. The session positions material play not just as a nostalgic art-making process or a warm-up exercise, but as a deliberate pedagogical expression that challenges screen-based habits and shapes how emerging designers develop habits of observation, risk-taking, and visual reasoning without relying on unlimited undos.

## **Designing Beyond Sight: Multi-sensory Approaches to Educational and Public Information Design**

Mira Jung, Kansas State University

This session focuses on sensory and experiential approaches to visual communication in educational and public information contexts. Graphic design often emphasizes visual clarity, yet learning and understanding also involve touch, sound, movement, spatial awareness, and physical interaction. This session explores how designers and educators utilize multisensory strategies to convey information clearly and accessibly. Presentations may address teaching practices, design processes, and applied case studies from classrooms, museums, exhibitions, and civic or community settings. Topics may include tactile communication, sound-based or spatial information systems, accessible and inclusive design, neurodiverse learning environments, wayfinding, interpretive graphics, and interactive tools used to support comprehension and learning. The session invites contributors from graphic design, design education, museum studies, and related fields to share methods and outcomes rather than theoretical speculation. Emphasis will be placed on how sensory design decisions are planned, tested, and evaluated in real instructional and public-facing situations. By treating sensory experience as part of the core communication process, this session seeks to clarify practical approaches to educational and informational design that respond to diverse audiences and learning needs, while remaining grounded in





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graphic communication practice. The session encourages exchange among educators, practitioners, and researchers working across physical, digital, and hybrid communication environments today.

## **Everyone Is a Designer (Again): Branding and Identity in the Age of Canva**

Ric Wilson, University of Missouri; Deborah Huelsbergen, University of Missouri

This session seeks to start a conversation about how Branding and Identity is being taught when there are so, so many easy solutions for clients to choose from that do not involve hiring a designer. As designers and educators, we understand how Canva, Kittl and Brandmark can create fast, sexy but ultimately lifeless brands. But how are we best equipped to explain this to students new to design? While it is easy and often satisfying to gripe and complain about this, how are you getting through to the young designers we are teaching about identity and branding design in the time of AI? How are some ways we can prepare emerging designers to articulate their value to clients who may believe they no longer need a designer.

## **Human Threads in the Age of AI: Materiality, Identity, and Resilience in Contemporary Design Practice**

Riva Nayaju, Auburn University

What role does human agency play in navigating and shaping the relationship between tradition and innovation? How can the integration of material and technology enhance creativity without compromising authenticity? As artificial intelligence becomes increasingly embedded in creative industries, the roles of artists and designers are being redefined. This panel explores how emerging technologies challenge and expand the material, cultural, and human dimensions of creative practice. Instead of viewing AI as a replacement for creative labor, the discussion considers how these tools can be consciously integrated into processes that uphold individuality, identity, and the enduring value of human craftsmanship. Drawing on Douglas Rushkoff's (2010) call to "program, not be programmed," the panel emphasizes proactive authorship and critical engagement with evolving technologies. Artists, designers, and educators are invited to present practices that balance digital innovation with analog engagement, emphasizing the manipulation of physical materials, the unpredictability of process, and the embodied act of making as central to meaning and discovery. These explorations reveal how tactile knowledge, material experimentation, and human touch foster authenticity, resilience, and innovation within contemporary creative practice.

## **Immigration Visualized: Interwoven Stories Through Artifacts of Migration**

Elisabeth Kvernen, James Madison University; Dori Griffin, University of Florida

This session invites design educators, scholars, and practitioners to share artifacts that visualize immigration—examples include ephemeral objects such as posters, book covers, ad campaigns, memes, or personal keepsakes—and to reflect on how these artifacts interweave with their own lived or familial migration stories. Rooted in the collaborative project Immigration Visualized, which foregrounds #ownvoices scholarship in design history, this session explores how immigration stories are woven into





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the warp and weft of cultural memory, supporting or disrupting dominant narratives. Participants will present a chosen artifact and situate it within broader histories of migration, identity, and belonging. Together, these contributions will highlight how visual communication design has historically shaped, contested, and reimagined immigrant narratives in the United States. By centering personal contexts, the session emphasizes the agency of marginalized voices in reclaiming and reframing visual rhetoric around immigration. The format will be dialogic and participatory: brief presentations will be followed by facilitated discussion, encouraging attendees to consider how their own teaching and scholarship might incorporate artifacts of migration as sites of critical inquiry and creative practice. Ultimately, this panel seeks to foster inclusive design pedagogy by modeling how personal histories and visual artifacts can be interlaced into collective scholarship.

## **Interwoven Lines: Illustration as Thread, Pattern, and Disruption**

Rebecca Bagley, Elon University

This session examines contemporary illustration as an interwoven practice that functions as thread, pattern, and disruption across art, design, craft, and pedagogy. Long positioned between fine art and applied practice, illustration connects narrative, materiality, labor, and meaning while resisting fixed disciplinary boundaries. Grounded in SECAC's 2026 theme Interwoven: Threads, Patterns & Disruptions, the session combines a research presentation with a live demonstration and participatory workshop. Illustration is framed as thread, connecting image and text, strategy and expression, and maker and audience. It operates through pattern, using repetition and visual systems to guide interpretation. It also acts as disruption, challenging hierarchies between fine art and design, handmade and digital processes, and expressive and neutral visual languages. The session centers on Rapid Visualization: Design + Illustration Resource Card Deck, a tactile ideation tool that bridges design strategy and illustration during early-stage creative thinking. Participants will engage illustration as a research-driven, hands-on practice rather than a decorative outcome. The session addresses illustration as skilled labor, narrative and sequential practice, and digital process, while highlighting pedagogical approaches that emphasize thinking through making. By integrating theory and active making, the session presents illustration as a flexible, interdisciplinary model for creative research and teaching.

## **Interwoven Practices: RISO Printing in Design Education, Research, and Studio Culture**

Marius Valdes, University of South Carolina; Brent Dedas, University of South Carolina; Stephanie Nace, University of South Carolina

Risograph printing continues to grow in popularity within design education, where digital and analog modes of making are increasingly interwoven. RISO allows students to merge digital workflows with hands-on production, resulting in original, limited-run, and experimental design artifacts such as zines, posters, publications, and prints. The distinctive aesthetic of Risograph is characterized by vibrant spot colors, layered textures, misregistration, and material unpredictability which offers students an accessible entry point into process-driven and exploratory making through its intentionally "lo-tech" nature. This session proposes a focused discussion on the role of RISO machines as pedagogical tools within undergraduate and graduate design programs. It seeks to bring together educators who have successfully integrated Risograph printing into curricula, studio practice, faculty research initiatives, or





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extracurricular print labs. Presenters will share approaches to teaching technical operation, collaboration, sustainability, and authorship through RISO-based projects, as well as strategies for maintaining equipment, managing costs, and ensuring equitable student access. This session will highlight how Risograph printing supports experiential learning, community-oriented publishing, and faculty research that challenges or enhances screen-based design education. Let's showcase the value of RISO as both a creative medium and an engaging teaching platform for students and faculty within evolving design programs.

## **Mediating Memory: Cultural Perception and Heritage in Contemporary Design**

Narges Panahandeh, East Carolina University; Sumi Limbu, East Carolina University; Golnoush Behmanesh, University of Mississippi

Visual communication is never a neutral act. It is a learned process structured through cultural frameworks, symbolic systems, and inherited histories. As designers navigate a landscape increasingly mediated by emerging technologies and global shifts, the intersection of traditional heritage and digital innovation becomes a vital site for critical inquiry. This session invites designers and educators to explore how personal and collective memories inform contemporary practice, transforming static traditions into dynamic visual languages. We will examine the "non-neutral" eye, investigating how visual hierarchies, reading patterns, and meaning-making vary across cultural contexts. By addressing the tensions between preservation and evolution, this session highlights how designers can engage with cultural narratives without falling into simplification or erasure. We seek contributors who utilize diverse methodologies, from experimental typography and digital fabrication to AI and speculative practice, to disrupt and reframe existing narratives. By bridging the gap between how technological systems interpret visual language and how communities actually perceive and feel them, this session positions graphic design as a resilient tool for connection. Participants will reflect on how intentional design can honor specificity while fostering a global dialogue that respects the complexity of identity and the fluidity of modern visual systems.

## **Patterns of Power: Data, Design, and Civic Storytelling**

Antwon Key, University of Maryland

In an era when politics, media, and technology are deeply intertwined, designers play a critical role in shaping how the public understands truth, identity, and participation. This session invites artists, educators, and researchers whose creative practices engage the intersections of data visualization, social design, and democratic discourse. The session seeks work that reframes civic data, including elections, demographics, and media narratives, through visual and interactive systems that reveal patterns, disparities, and moments of disruption in contemporary life. Presentations may include generative mapping, immersive or participatory installations, digital archives, algorithmic artworks, or design research that translates complex public information into accessible and meaningful experiences. Aligned with the SECAC 2026 theme Interwoven: Threads, Patterns & Disruptions, the session examines how designers transform data into narratives that connect communities, histories, and civic identities. By reconsidering how information is visualized and encountered, these projects position representation as both a critical and ethical practice. The session chair will open with a presentation on design as a civic





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tool for storytelling and transparency, followed by selected papers and projects demonstrating the broader potential of data-driven art and design.

## **Reading the City: Public Typography and Accumulated Time**

Dain Won, University of Florida

This proposed session begins from a site-specific typographic intervention in Gainesville, Florida, where language was installed on a public wall and encountered repeatedly through everyday passage. Rather than functioning as a singular graphic event, the project revealed how typography accumulates meaning over time as people return, linger, and move past it, allowing patterns of reading and memory to emerge through repetition. This session brings together multiple perspectives on public typography, site-based language, and temporal urban practice. It explores how text embedded in public space can register local history, accumulated time, and the rhythms of everyday use. Typography that appears, fades, and reappears—often temporarily or without formal authorization—operates simultaneously as pattern and disruption, making visible the layered social life of a site. Aligned with the theme *Interwoven: Threads, Patterns & Disruptions*, this session invites artists, designers, and scholars to consider typographic interventions as connective threads that link place-based histories, lived experience, and collective memory. Structured as a panel with short presentations and facilitated discussion, the session emphasizes duration, repetition, and public encounter as key methods for examining how language shapes and reveals the temporal fabric of the city.

## **Regional–Global: Graphic Design Rooted in Place, Circulating Beyond It**

Christopher Cote, University of Tennessee, Knoxville; Everett Epstein, University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Graphic design is often framed as either locally embedded or globally oriented, yet many contemporary practices operate productively between these positions. This session proposes regional–global graphic design as a way to describe practices that begin with specific places, communities, and situated knowledge, but circulate outward through publishing, exhibitions, pedagogy, and other forms of dissemination. Responding to SECAC 2026’s theme *Interwoven: Threads, Patterns & Disruptions*, this session invites presentations that examine how graphic designers engage regional histories, vernacular systems, local archives, and community-based contexts while developing frameworks that allow this work to travel beyond its point of origin. Rather than flattening place-based specificity, these practices preserve and foreground it as work moves across publics. We are particularly interested in projects that: – begin from a clearly situated context (geographic, cultural, institutional, or communal), – use design to translate, mediate, or activate place-based material, – employ publishing, exhibitions, teaching, or other dissemination systems as core design strategies, – and reflect on how graphic design circulates, whom it reaches, and what is gained or disrupted in that movement. This session positions graphic design as a connective practice—one that weaves together place, people, and systems of circulation. By foregrounding frameworks rather than a single outcome, the session seeks to highlight repeatable, adaptable approaches to making design public across regional and global contexts.





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## Shaping Tomorrow's Designers: AI's Role in Design Education

Ting Zhou, University of Connecticut; Kourosh Jeddi, Independent

As artificial intelligence becomes increasingly embedded in design tools and workflows, design education finds itself in a state of rapid transition. Longstanding human-centered values—creativity, critical thinking, ethical responsibility, and aesthetic judgment are being reshaped by AI-driven processes that often evolve faster than curricula can adapt. This session examines how educators are navigating this shifting landscape, particularly within interaction design and related fields, where AI tools and plugins are introduced continuously and frequently enter the classroom before their broader implications are fully understood. At the same time, educators are increasingly challenged to prepare students not only to use AI tools, but also to design AI-powered products and systems responsibly. Positioning AI as a collaborative partner rather than a replacement for human designers, the session explores how design education can prepare students for a future defined by human-machine collaboration. Topics include AI literacy, the use of AI design tools, interdisciplinary collaboration, and the educator's role in guiding students through emerging and sometimes unstable technologies. Presenters will reflect on teaching experiences across graphic design, UI/UX design, and interactive media design, highlighting moments of experimentation, tension, and adaptation as instructors and students learn alongside rapidly evolving tools. Rather than prescribing a single pedagogical model, this session creates space for shared reflection and dialogue around teaching design amid technological disruption. It invites educators to collectively consider how design education can empower students to navigate technological change while preserving the human-centered values at the core of design practice.

## Tangible Typography

Megan Irwin, Washington University in St. Louis; Dan Elliott, University of Louisville

The field of Design is increasingly shaped by digital tools, prioritizing efficiency and visual polish over physical making and material engagement. Historically, however, design and typesetting emerged through analog processes that foregrounded craft, labor, and materiality. While contemporary typography is predominantly created and experienced through screens, a resurgence of tactile typographic practices has emerged, disrupting the status quo by embracing imprecision, risk, inefficiency, and physical experimentation. This panel examines the value of tangible type—letterforms rooted in materiality, analog processes, and physical engagement. In contemporary Communication Design, what value is found in physical processes and typographic artifacts? What is gained when typography is understood as a material medium? And how do hands-on approaches foster curiosity and unexpected outcomes? Panelists will discuss how working with physical media reshapes the process, meaning, and experience of typographic work. Topics may include experimental printing, material exploration, typographic installations, antiquated technology, and letterforms designed for physical interaction. Particular emphasis will be placed on presentations that address the benefits of hands-on practices for both designers and audiences. The panel invites diverse perspectives on how analog or hybrid approaches can reframe typography as a communication tool and an embodied presence in our screen-based world.





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## **The Orchestrated Interface: Building a high-fidelity UX/UI design workflow with AI**

Jong-Yoon Kim, Plymouth State University

The traditional UX/UI design funnel—Research, Wireframing, Prototyping, and Testing—is undergoing a fundamental architectural shift. As AI tools move from novelty to necessity, graphic design instructors are pioneering new workflows that prioritize creative direction over manual execution. Rather than viewing AI as a surrogate for student creativity, this session proposes a curriculum model where students serve as directors and curators. This session brings together perspectives from design educators to dissect a multi-tool AI pipeline. We explore how ChatGPT and Gemini serve as the cognitive engine for strategy and empathy mapping, while Google Stitch and Figma AI act as the generative fabric for rapid UI synthesis. Any AI tools for UX/UI design are more than welcome to explore.

## **INTERDISCIPLINARY**

### **A Time of Monsters**

Jeff Schmuki, Georgia Southern University

Drawing on Antonio Gramsci's concept of a "time of monsters," the unstable period when dominant structures decay and no new framework has solidified. This panel invites artists working at the intersection of environmental collapse, political upheaval, and creative witness to examine how artistic practice materializes ecological and systemic crisis through innovative processes and unconventional materials. Panelists will explore how art functions as both documentation and catalyst in moments of civilizational transition. Works may engage extractive industries and their residues, climate catastrophe and its material traces, the aesthetics of ruin and reclamation, or the figure of the opportunist within collapsing systems. We welcome proposals from artists whose work supports environmental literacy through material innovation, archival practice, performance, or public engagement. How do we make the hidden costs of consumption, technology, and power aesthetically legible? What role does artistic practice play in generating the collective awareness necessary for systemic change? This panel positions art as essential testimony and a tool for transformation in an age of ecological and political uncertainty.

### **Aesthetic Witnessing and Nonviolent World-Building: Art, Beauty, and Relational Ethics in Conditions of Crisis**

Shana Garr, Institute for Doctoral Studies in the Visual Art; Alicia Thompson, Institute for Doctoral Study in the Visual Arts

This panel invites contributions that examine how contemporary art functions as a form of aesthetic witnessing and nonviolent world-building in response to violence, ecological collapse, political unrest, and systems of extraction. Moving beyond representational or documentary approaches, the panel foregrounds artistic practices that actively produce ethical, affective, and relational spaces—spaces of





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refuge, care, and expanded subjectivity—within ongoing conditions of crisis. The panel welcomes interdisciplinary approaches such as art history, philosophy, feminist theory, posthumanism, and critical theory. Central questions include: How does art bear witness without reproducing violence? What forms of relational ethics emerge through more-than-human perspectives? And how might art cultivate new modes of presence, care, and world-making rather than merely responding to destruction after the fact? We welcome papers engaging a wide range of media—including visual art, moving image, performance, installation, and socially engaged practices—that address witnessing, grief, memory, and ethical relation. Submissions may explore feminist, decolonial, ecological, posthumanist, or speculative frameworks; interrogate violence and its transfiguration through aesthetic form; or examine how art sustains attention and relationality amid political and environmental precarity. This panel aims to foster a generative conversation about art’s capacity to affirm life, resist violent logics, and create alternative ways of being in common.

## **Archival Research in Artistic Practice**

Etai Rogers-Fett, University of Tennessee Knoxville; Beauvais Lyons, University of Tennessee Knoxville

In 2008, Okwui Enwezor curated *Archive Fever: Uses of the Document in Contemporary Art*, a collection of artists using photographic and filmic archives as source material. Enwezor proposed mass media photography as a primary site of archival encounter for artists, noting how iconic photographs become shorthand for a historical moment while also demonstrating the production of archival materials as a “regulatory discursive system.” The concept of “the archive” and its attendant possibilities for contemporary artists is vast – expanded by online access to institutional archives through digitization and by interventions from postcolonial, queer, and disability theory that introduce forms of communal memory preservation outside of institutions. In working in this broadly defined archival space, how do visual artists engage with or resist notions of historical authenticity? What is the role of what Saidiya Hartman has termed “critical fabulation” in filling in the gaps of what is left out of the archive? How are the visual arts uniquely situated to contribute to a public understanding of archival materials and the histories they carry? This session seeks presentations from artists and arts educators who are drawing on archival research in their practice or designing curricula that draw upon historical primary source materials.

## **Beyond the Studio: Research Labs as New Paradigms for Design Practice**

Nadia Issa, University of Arkansas; Sousan Samanifar, University of Arkansas

Design fields are becoming increasingly multidisciplinary, intersecting with technology, computer science, social systems, research methodologies, and collaborative forms of knowledge production. Contemporary design curricula now require skills and literacies that extend beyond any single discipline or individual expertise. Even with the best intentions, educators can no longer be the sole holders of the diverse knowledge that contemporary design practice requires. At the same time, educators often operate within traditional academic models that leave limited room for interdisciplinary exploration. These established academic patterns create pressure on design education related to evolving professional demands, student support, and hybrid skill sets that combine multiple forms of knowledge. Within this context, both faculty and students are constrained by structures that limit opportunities for





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shared research and cross-disciplinary collaboration. This panel explores frameworks through which research labs can function within design schools as interwoven spaces of inquiry, where faculty and students work together, share expertise, and collaborate across fields. Panelists may address the opportunities and challenges of establishing and sustaining labs, including questions of interdisciplinarity, authorship, curriculum integration, institutional support, and long-term viability. Together, the panel aims to foster critical discussion around how design research labs are reshaping contemporary design education.

## **Beyond the Visual: Time, Senses and the Expanded Experience**

Derek Toomes, UNC-Greensboro; Stephen Skorski, UNC-Greensboro

This session invites creative and scholarly work foregrounding time, sound, touch, movement, and embodied perception as core components of spatial and narrative experience. Centering on sensory modes that may often be treated as secondary, the session examines how artists, designers, and educators construct environments that are experienced through duration, interaction, and presence rather than image or form alone. In response to the theme Interwoven, the session considers sensory experience as a connective thread linking bodies, materials, spaces, and social contexts. Practices that unfold through sound, performance, material engagement, or moving image may disrupt established hierarchies of representation while revealing how meaning emerges through experience. We welcome proposals from artists, designers, and educators working across any media foregrounding: senses as material, multisensory or immersive installations, performative or participatory space, craft traditions beyond the visual, and pedagogical approaches that emphasize experiential learning. Presenters are encouraged to explore alternative, participatory or hybrid formats alongside traditional academic presentations, including listening exercises, performances, and guided experiential approaches. By bringing together artists, designers, and scholars, this session aims to generate dialogue around expanded ways of making, knowing, and teaching that integrate sensory experience, time, and meaning.

## **Breaking Down Silos: Interdisciplinary Strategies for Art and Art History's Future**

M. Franny Zawadzki, University of Mississippi

On a trip to Wisconsin in 2014, President Obama famously compared art history degrees to manufacturing jobs, stating that “folks can make a lot more, potentially, with skilled manufacturing or the trades than they might with an art history degree.” His comment echoed a widespread belief that humanities and creative fields lack practical value compared to degrees that lead directly to high paying jobs. This sentiment has been repeated by politicians and business leaders across the political spectrum, prompting the defense of these programs couched in humanistic terms, the compiling of job statistics, or the elimination of humanities and art departments. Over the past decade, sessions at SECAC and CAA have explored the “state of art history and the arts.” This session builds on that conversation but takes a different approach. Rather than focusing on statistics and bleak forecasts, it seeks papers that highlight how art and art history departments are reinventing themselves through interdisciplinary partnerships. By collaborating with programs such as health sciences and business, art departments are creating innovative, art-driven programs and courses. Possible topics include slow looking for criminal justice,





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arts entrepreneurship and business programs, using art history to teach empathy in medical education, and STEAM-based curricula.

## **Conversation as Craft: Relational Practices in Art and Education**

Matthew Villarreal, The New School

Conversation is often treated as informal or secondary within art, education, and research contexts. This session proposes dialogue as a deliberate creative and pedagogical practice that connects making, teaching, and community-based inquiry. Drawing from Indigenous, Latinx, and diasporic traditions, the session introduces plática—a structured, relational approach to conversation—as both a topic of study and a method for shared learning. The panel will combine brief presentations with facilitated discussion periods that model plática in practice. Presenters will be invited to share concise case studies, projects, or research examples that use conversation as a central method—whether in studio practice, classrooms, exhibitions, or community settings. Guided dialogue will follow each grouping of presentations, allowing participants to reflect collectively on process, challenges, and outcomes. Aligned with the theme Interwoven: Threads, Patterns & Disruptions, the session highlights how dialogic practices weave together memory, place, and lived experience while offering alternatives to hierarchical critique models. By integrating presentation and conversation, the session aims to create a clear, accessible format that supports meaningful exchange among presenters and attendees while demonstrating how relational dialogue can function as a rigorous and adaptable approach within contemporary art and education.

## **Crafting Modernity and National Identity in the New Deal Era**

Jody Patterson, Ohio State University; Erika Doss, University of Texas at Dallas

As the Works Progress Administration’s Federal Art Project marks its ninetieth anniversary, New Deal visual culture is the subject of renewed scholarly attention. While federal arts patronage is often associated with monumental murals commissioned for public buildings, New Deal support for the arts extended deeply into craft production through a network of federally sponsored programs embedded in local communities nationwide. Federal support for craft programs reveal how the Roosevelt administration mobilized craft as both economic relief and cultural strategy in service of a “usable past.” By elevating regional craft traditions—pottery in the Southwest, ironwork in the South, and textiles in Appalachia—the New Deal framed artisanal labor as a source of social stability, psychological rehabilitation, and national continuity during the Great Depression. Craft labor functioned not only as productive work but also as a symbolic repository of American resilience and belonging. This session examines how New Deal craft programs shaped regional, racial, and gendered identities while exposing tensions between vernacular traditions and the modernizing, regulatory impulses of the federal state. It is designed for historians of American Art, scholars of the New Deal, material culture specialists, and museum curators interested in the legacies of federal craft patronage and their lasting impact on American cultural identity.





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## **Crafting Technological Futures**

Nishra Ranpura, Texas State University

This session proposes craft as a methodology to imagine technological futures, one grounded in practices of community, survival, repair, sustainability, and continuity rather than nostalgia or preservation alone. In an era being shaped by automation, digital abstraction, and centralized technological systems, craft-based approaches offer alternative models for making, thinking, and storytelling that prioritize material knowledge, process, adaptability, agency, and care. Moving beyond conventional distinctions between craft and technology, this session invites artists, designers, technologists, and scholars whose work engages craft philosophies and applications across both analog and digital contexts. Papers and presentations may examine how contemporary innovation practices draw on craft ideologies to reimagine technological futures that are decentralized, resilient, and responsive to local and social needs. The session will bring together two to four independent presentations and/or tabletop demonstrations, concluding with a facilitated group conversation and audience interaction. By framing craft as an active and evolving design and research methodology, this panel seeks to explore how interwoven practices of making and storytelling disrupt dominant narratives of innovation and open pathways toward more sustainable, humane, and imaginative futures.

## **Drawing South Podcast: Archiving connection, practice, and place**

Mike Windy, Tennessee State University

This session proposes a live recording of the Drawing South Podcast at SECAC 2026, bringing together former guests and conference participants to examine podcasting as both an archival practice and a tool for community-building within contemporary art ecosystems. Grounded in the conference theme of art as embedded in networks of memory, identity, resilience, and innovation, the session treats podcasting as a thread that binds lived experience to collective history. Drawing South functions simultaneously as an oral archive and a social infrastructure. With an alumni group chat connecting over one hundred artists, writers, and musicians across disciplines—including Swoon, Jodi Hays, Jason Moran, Paddy Johnson, and Dylan Camp—the project models how artist-led media can sustain relationships beyond institutions while preserving voices often left undocumented. The live recording will feature moderated conversation with a mix of guests who may be new to the podcast or returning for a second or third episode foregrounding dialogue as a method of knowledge production. Part “how-to” and part “why-it-matters,” the session will demystify the technical and ethical dimensions of podcasting while emphasizing its urgency as a form of grassroots art history. Participants will be encouraged to take authorship over documentation, advocacy, and storytelling within their own regions. In doing so, the session aligns with SECAC 2026’s commitment to honoring layered pasts while actively shaping the future of contemporary practice through shared, living archives. The episode will be published within hours of the session ending and made available on all streaming platforms.





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## **Dropped Stitches, Glitches, and Unravelings: Failure in History and as Practice**

Toni Armstrong, Boston University; Douglas Cushing, University of Texas

Art history's focus on the canon has encouraged a disciplinary prioritization of so-called greatness and success. Yet failure is as much the norm as success. This panel invites an interdisciplinary conversation about how failure has shaped artistic production, critical reception, and art history as well as how we might harness failure as a method or in pedagogy. An acceptance of failure can be freeing: Jack Halberstam theorizes failure as a way to unseat capitalism in our scholarly practice. In a culture obsessed with perfection, the merits of messing up and struggling through hardship can build community and resist systemic injustice. Yet, as critics, artists, and art historians, we must also consider what is lost between an artist's intent and the work's manifestation, as was the case with Dana Schutz's "Open Casket." Some failures are technical—when material or process goes astray, as in murals by Leonardo or William Morris. In other cases, artists trap themselves in the amber of stagnation or fruitless digression. This panel thus invites papers that explore the richness of artistic and scholarly failures from intentional errors, missteps and stagnations, critical responses, and reclamation projects. We also welcome thoughtful reflections on our own scholarly or pedagogical failures.

## **Evolving Approaches to Student Exhibitions: Tradition, Process, and Pedagogy in Student Art Shows**

Ryan James, Ball State University

This session brings together faculty, administrators, and practitioners for a moderated panel focused on how student exhibitions are organized, sustained, and taught across diverse institutional contexts. Student exhibitions—particularly juried student art shows—often function as both public-facing events and pedagogical frameworks, shaping how students understand professional practice, authorship, and exhibition standards. Questions of inclusion and student engagement are central to how these exhibitions are designed and maintained, and this session invites participants to examine how institutional structures and processes influence those experiences. Panelists will share brief 8–10 minute position statements reflecting on their institutional contexts, exhibition models, and the pedagogical implications of their approaches. Emphasis will be placed on process, decision-making, and student experience rather than technical demonstrations. Topics may include juried versus open-call exhibition models, digital submission and jurying workflows, committee-based governance, equity and transparency, archival practices, and the role of exhibitions in professional preparation. Following the position statements, the session will move into a moderated discussion with audience engagement, encouraging discussion around shared challenges, differing institutional approaches, and what practices may (or may not) translate across contexts. Institutions of all sizes and resource levels are encouraged to participate.





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## **From Expression to Empowerment: Using the HERO Mindset to Sustain Artists, Educators, and Communities**

Schwartz Precil, Independent

Artists, educators, and arts leaders are often tasked with sustaining communities while navigating personal burnout, uncertainty, and shifting systems of support. This interactive session explores how creative expression can serve as both a leadership tool and a resilience practice through the HERO Framework—Honesty, Empathy, Resilience, and Ownership. Drawing from lived experience, spoken word performance, and applied work across schools and community-based arts programs, participants will examine how emotional intelligence strengthens artistic leadership and long-term sustainability in the arts. Attendees will engage in reflective exercises, movement-based activities, and narrative prompts designed to reconnect creative identity with purpose and impact. The session emphasizes how storytelling and artistic voice can build trust, foster inclusive environments, and support personal well-being while advancing community engagement. Participants will leave with practical strategies for preventing burnout, strengthening leadership presence, and translating creative passion into sustainable practice. This session is ideal for teaching artists, arts administrators, and cultural leaders seeking tools to lead authentically while supporting themselves and the communities they serve.

## **Immersive Threads: Narrative, Participation, and the Making of Experiential Worlds**

Angela Whitlock, Mississippi State University

This session explores how narrative and participation are interwoven through experiential artworks, immersive installations, museum environments, performances, and digital or urban spaces. Drawing on the theme Interwoven: Threads, Patterns & Disruptions, it invites submissions investigating how story, space, and experience intertwine and shape the ways individuals encounter and inhabit artistic worlds. The session foregrounds the participant as an active thread in this fabric of immersion—bringing memory, expectation, identity, and movement into dialogue with spatial, sensory, and material design. Contributors could consider: how immersive encounters create opportunities to construct, discover, or disrupt narrative threads, how design decisions shape patterns, rhythms, or atmospheres that contour these engagements, or how disruptions—breaks in narrative, technical failures, sensory overload, disorientation, or unexpected emotional responses—become generative sites for reflection or creation of new meaning. Topics may also include: embodied storytelling, haptic and spatial perception, visitor-centered museum practice, participatory and community-engaged art, mapping and place-based narrative, phenomenology of movement, multimodal or transmedia environments, and interdisciplinary approaches to narrative and form. By highlighting the interwoven nature of narrative and participation, this session invites expansive interpretations of immersion that move beyond technological spectacle toward relational, sensory, and interpretive practices.





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## **Interstice: Existing Between Spaces in Art & Academia**

Colleen Merrill, Bluegrass Community & Technical College

Interstice is defined as ‘a space that intervenes between things.’ Whether it is medium or disciplinary hierarchies, “low brow” verses “highbrow”, or other systems that regulate the way things “should be” and “be perceived as”, the art world and academia have long relied on categories and silos. Yet many artists and educators deliberately inhabit the nuanced spaces between these boundaries, challenging expectations and disrupting established norms. This session invites those who identify with these in-between spaces to reflect on their experiences navigating such ambiguity. What opportunities and challenges emerge when distinctions are blurred? Can working within the interstices help us cultivate common ground in times of uncertainty or even serve as a collective act of resistance against authoritative structures? Together, we will explore how occupying these liminal spaces can reshape creative and educational practice.

## **Interwoven Classrooms: Community, Connection, and Learning Across Modalities**

Kimberly Mitchell, University of Tennessee

Inspired by SECAC 2026’s theme Interwoven: Threads, Patterns and Disruptions, this session invites educators, artists, and designers to consider what it means to build community in today’s classrooms. Whether teaching happens in person, online, or in hybrid spaces, the learning environment is shaped by the relationships we encourage and the ways we help students feel connected to their work and to one another. This session invites presenters to reflect on how they define community within their teaching, how they nurture it, and why it matters. We are interested in approaches that echo the conference theme by bringing together practices, stories, and ideas that foster belonging, care, and shared purpose. Presentations may explore: + How community forms within studios, seminars, or virtual learning spaces + Ways educators support trust, collaboration, and meaningful dialogue + Moments when unexpected disruptions changed the way a class worked + Strategies that help students feel supported or included + Community partnerships that enrich learning + Pedagogical experiments that encourage curiosity or mutual care We welcome research, reflective teaching practices, classroom case studies, and approaches that invite participation. Presenters may share assignments, collaborative structures, or experiences that reveal how a learning community takes shape. This session highlights the classroom as a human space where relationships and learning develop together and where the connections we weave can influence how students experience art, design, and each other.

## **Interwoven Counter-Archives: Craft, Memory, and Creative Reconstruction**

Danial Ezzati, University of Connecticut

How do artists rebuild cultural memory when histories are fragmented, displaced, or misrepresented? This session explores creative reconstruction as a concept-driven methodology that weaves together research, making, and critical care. Framed by Interwoven: Threads, Patterns & Disruptions, we treat “threads” as lived knowledge, community practice, and inherited techniques; “patterns” as ritual, ornament, pedagogy, and visual language; and “disruptions” as the forces, migration, industrial change, institutional narratives, climate, and political violence, that reshape what can be remembered and what





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gets erased. We invite artists, scholars, and educators to share projects across any medium—fiber/textile, painting, installation, performance, photography, print, social practice, archival work, and digital forms, centered on the core ideas, not the toolset. Contributions may address: ethical reconstruction and “missing” archives; pattern as cultural code; craft as resilience and reinvention; and teaching approaches that connect making to context and responsibility. One possible case study is TIME: Journey to Nowruz, positioned as an example of building a counter-archive through research-based creative practice rather than as a technology showcase. The 105-minute session will prioritize dialogue through short presentations followed by a moderated discussion to connect methods, ethics, and pedagogy across disciplines.

## **Interwoven Narratives: Reinventing Storytelling Across Art, Design, and Emerging Media**

Feixue Mei, James Madison University; Rachael Paine, Virginia Tech

Storytelling, like weaving, intertwines image, text, and imagination to reflect and reshape cultural moments. In periods of technological, environmental, and social change, artists, scholars, and designers are reimagining visual narratives—from comics and graphic novels to interactive, AR, and VR experiences—to both preserve and disrupt cultural patterns, reweaving memory, identity, and heritage. Drawing on thinkers such as Robin Wall Kimmerer, Donna Haraway, and Anna Tsing, this session explores feminist, ecological, and posthuman narratives that challenge dominant paradigms through visual and material practice. Kimmerer emphasizes storytelling’s role in fostering care for more-than-human worlds; Haraway highlights the co-constructed relationships of humans, nonhumans, and technology; and Tsing examines how multiple, often unintentional interactions co-construct worlds—paralleling artistic practices that reconnect culture and ecology. By interlacing theory, practice, and experimentation, Interwoven Narratives invites artists, designers, scholars, and educators to discuss how narrative functions as a site of inquiry and transformation, where threads of craft, culture, and innovation converge to form new aesthetic and philosophical patterns.

## **Interwoven Practices: Art & Design, Identity, and Community Narratives**

Samira Shiridevich, University of North Carolina at Charlotte

This session invites presentations that explore how contemporary art and design practices engage identity, memory, and community as interconnected and evolving systems. Responding to the SECAC 2026 theme Interwoven: Threads, Patterns and Disruptions, the session foregrounds creative work that examines how cultural narratives are formed, challenged, and reimagined through visual, material, and digital practices. Presentations may address how artists, designers, and educators work with themes such as belonging, displacement, migration, heritage, and social transformation. Contributions might draw from visual communication, storytelling, digital and interactive media, motion, textiles, emerging technologies, or interdisciplinary research to examine how creative practices mediate relationships between individuals, communities, and broader cultural contexts. The session welcomes research- and pedagogy-driven perspectives that reflect on process, ethics, and collaboration in creative practice. Presenters are encouraged to consider how art and design can function as tools for inquiry, dialogue, and critical reflection, particularly within communities shaped by inequality, historical erasure, or rapid change. Attention may be given to classroom-based projects, community-engaged learning, or practice-



led research that centers lived experience while remaining attentive to power, representation, and responsibility. Guiding questions for the session include: How do art and design practices construct and communicate identity and memory? In what ways can creative frameworks support more inclusive narratives? How do technological, social, or cultural disruptions reshape established patterns of meaning? How can educators and practitioners foster ethical and meaningful engagement through creative work?

### **Knotting Together: Strange Alignments, Emergent Feelings, and Moments of Undoing**

Jena Seiler, University of Kentucky

In his book *The Life of Lines* (2015), anthropologist Tim Ingold states, “the ground comprises a domain in which the lives and minds of its human and non-human inhabitants are comprehensively knotted with one another.” Ingold uses the term knotting to discuss the tangled way that knowledge, sociality, and becoming emerge from the joining together of things. This interdisciplinary session invites artists, filmmakers, and scholars who explore knotted existences, moments, or couplings in their work. The session is particularly interested in projects that wrestle with humans intertwined with non-humans, as in the work of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, John Berger, Donna Haraway, Karen Barard, and others. How can knots reveal strange alignments, emergent feelings, and moments of undoing between humans and other species, materials, environments, technologies, and/or physical structures?

### **Leading Through Disruption: Creative, Compassionate, and Resilient Practices in the Arts**

Marty Maxwell Lane, University of Arkansas; Rachel Debuque, University of Arkansas

The current academic climate is defined by continual disruption, where leadership increasingly resembles crisis management without adequate preparation. Challenges in higher education include campus violence, visa revocations, threats to academic freedom, budget cuts, enrollment declines (O’Connell-Domenech), and eroding public trust (Carson). These conditions have contributed to low faculty morale (Boyd) and placed extraordinary demands on leaders who are expected to provide stability while navigating constant uncertainty. This session focuses on how creatives are uniquely positioned to lead through disruption. Rather than defaulting to managerial or reactive models of leadership, this session explores leadership grounded in curiosity, care, collaboration, and resiliency. These practices offer new ways to build trust, foster community, and support faculty and students through change. Participants will consider leadership that interrupts harmful norms while resisting the destabilizing forces. The session invites dialogue around letting go of entrenched systems and cultivating the courage and adaptability required to advance big picture goals while still caring for ourselves and others. Guiding questions include: How do we build resilient cultures during ongoing disruption? What affordances do creative practices offer leadership? How can we safely defend the arts and academic freedom in higher education? How can we prepare the next generation of leaders?

## Multispecies Futures: Technologies and Practices for Cross-Species Dialogue

Margaret Lejeune, Independent

As ecological crises deepen and scientific paradigms shift, the boundaries of communication, cognition, and agency are increasingly recognized as extending far beyond the human. This session explores emerging research and creative practices that center cross-species collaborations—including animal communication studies, plant sentience and signaling, fungal networks, AI-mediated multi-species interaction, and Indigenous knowledge traditions that have long acknowledged non-human agency. By bringing together scholars, artists, and practitioners, this session invites participants to rethink what collaboration means in a more-than-human world. Recent advances in biology, ethology, botany, and neuroscience—alongside longstanding Indigenous and relational worldviews—challenge the assumption that communication, intelligence, and intentional action are exclusively human traits. From the intricate signaling of mycorrhizal networks and the problem-solving abilities of corvids and octopuses to the biochemical languages of plants and the interspecies interfaces enabled by emerging technologies, cross-species communication is increasingly recognized as a legitimate site of inquiry and collaboration. At the same time, the arts and humanities offer conceptual and imaginative frameworks that help interpret these exchanges, illustrating how non-human beings participate in shared worlds as communicators, decision-makers, and agents.

## Patterns of Change: Art Departments as Catalysts for Creative Economies

Scott Thorp, Augusta University; Siavash Tohidi, Columbus College of Art and Design

Art departments have often been seen as peripheral to a university's core strategy. Yet their ability to think creatively and solve complex problems positions them to play a central role in academic transformations. This session looks at how art programs can lead the way in building entrepreneurial mindsets through creative practice. We'll explore how traditional studio approaches can be interwoven with design thinking, business strategy, and interdisciplinary collaboration to create a culture of innovation across campus. Presenters will share examples of curriculum redesign, public/private collaborations, partnerships with entrepreneurship centers, and hands-on learning opportunities that help students turn ideas into ventures. Topics may include faculty-led innovation labs, in-class assignments, public art initiatives, cross-disciplinary incubators, and courses in creative leadership, intellectual property, and venture development. The conversation will focus on practical strategies for balancing artistic integrity with market realities, reframing the role of art in shaping institutional identity, and preparing graduates for dynamic careers in today's creative economy.

## Practices of Place: Making, Learning, and the Land

Robin Klaus, Duke University; Jessica Orzulak, Asheville Art Museum

This panel examines how artistic learning and creative practice are shaped through material engagement with place, drawing on the early 20th-century educational philosophy of John Dewey's "Art as Experience" alongside more recent new-materialist approaches that understand objects and environments as agents of co-creation. We invite papers that focus on artistic and educational communities from the 19th century to the present, such as the Modern School movement, Black



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Mountain College, and others, exploring the relationships among materiality, pedagogy, creative process, and the landscape. We encourage inquiries into how collective engagement with the material of place informs learning and creative practice—from building communal structures with locally sourced materials, to cultivating learning environments embedded within the surrounding terrain, to artistic experimentation with materials and process. We aim to consider how such experiments function as pedagogical ecologies in which landscape, community, and embodied knowledge collectively shape artistic practice, cultural imagination, and modes of learning.

## **Queering Our Silos: Gestures of Euphoria — Creative Arts Workshop Models for Appalachian LGBTQIA2S+ Community Building**

Maurice Moore, University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Queering Our Silos: Gestures of Euphoria is a community-engaged arts initiative that supports LGBTQIA2S+ communities and allies across the Appalachian region in building stronger, more collaborative creative networks. This session invites artists, educators, and scholars to explore how workshop-based practices—rooted in queer worldmaking, embodied mark making, and community care—can disrupt disciplinary and geographic silos that often isolate queer and trans creatives. Aligned with the SECAC 2026 theme Interwoven: Threads, Patterns & Disruptions, the session considers queerness as a methodology of weaving: a way of linking bodies, materials, and stories across Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia. Through short presentations and participatory micro-activities, presenters will share models for creative workshops, performance-based practices, and collaborative pedagogies that cultivate connection, resilience, and joy. Key questions include: How can arts workshops serve as connective tissue across Appalachian queer and allied communities? What gestures of euphoria—visual, sonic, somatic—foster belonging and interregional dialogue? And how might creative collaboration transform the structure of arts communities throughout the region? This session aims to uplift practices that interlace queer histories, contemporary innovations, and community-centered creativity to imagine new possibilities for artistic exchange across Appalachia.

## **Resourceful and Sustained Craft**

Millian Giang Pham, Auburn University

Craft processes have been a go-to in lessons around resourcefulness for artists and designers. Yet craft processes are still relegated as alternative processes despite some collapse in medium hierarchies over the last few decades. This panel seeks solutions, challenges, and rewards from practicing artists, designers, and educators who have faced or overcame the integration of craft processes into a sustained practice and or classroom. Beyond answering why craft is important and a great way to learn resourcefulness, this panel aspires to conclude why we need craft processes to sustain a vibrant practice and pedagogy, and how (not) to do it.





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## **Self-Representation in Contemporary Art: Interweaving Artist-Run and Institutional Spaces**

Cali Kurlan, Photography theorist & inventor

This panel examines self-representation in contemporary art through the lens of both artistic practice and institutional context. Drawing on experience running an international artist-run storefront space in New York City prior to the pandemic, the session traces how artists navigate self-representation across independent and institutional platforms—from experimental open-call environments to recent major exhibitions. By mapping this trajectory over the last two decades, the panel highlights emerging hybrid models of visibility, where conceptual frameworks, technological innovation, and economic structures intersect to shape how artists are seen and represented. Presentations explore the interplay between medium, material, and narrative, connecting philosophical, sociological, and technological perspectives. In dialogue with SECAC 2026’s theme, “Interwoven: Threads, Patterns & Disruptions,” the session positions self-representation as a dynamic, multi-layered process that intertwines artistic autonomy with broader cultural and institutional forces.

## **Site-Responsive Reflections: Visual Inquiry and Community Storytelling**

William Culpepper, Montana State University

This community-centered session expands beyond the standard paper presentation to highlight site responsive and place activated methods of inquiry in which location, material conditions, histories, and communities actively shape both process and outcome. This session invites presenters to share approaches that demonstrate the capacity of graphic design, visual communication, and related creative art practices that reveal local narratives and foster community engagement through site-responsive work. Aligned with the Interwoven: Threads, Patterns and Disruptions conference theme, the session invites presentations that examine cities as layered, transitional spaces shaped by history, movement, climate, and growth. Presenters may address topics such as visual research methodologies, community collaboration, archival interpretation, temporary or experimental installations, public projection, storytelling through design, or pedagogical models that connect students and communities through creative inquiry. The session emphasizes dialogue, shared methods, and collective reflection rather than isolated presentations. Presenters may include faculty, artists, designers, and collaborators whose work intersects with public space, community storytelling, or participatory visual practices. Collectively, the presentations will establish a foundation for a conference-based activation that invites attendees to consider how creative practice can illuminate overlooked spaces and foster meaningful connections between place, people, and design.

## **Spirituality, Creative Practice, and Pedagogy**

Anmol Shrivastava, Illinois State University

Creativity is often framed as problem-solving and outcomes-driven, yet many practitioners describe intuition and mystery as central to their work. This session welcomes inquiries into slowness and craft; interdependency of spiritual dimensions and making; and how such approaches can sustain creative communities and pedagogies, especially in moments of transition. We invite artists, designers, scholars,





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and educators to consider how personal practices shape creative work and the creative ecosystems around it such as classrooms, studios, and communities. This may include connections between material culture and spirituality, personal processes of meaning-making, ancestral storytelling, experiential learning, or contemplative research, and how these perspectives inform histories and current practice. Guiding prompts: • Personal practices that support and sustain creative work • Creating learning spaces grounded in intuition, empathy, and reflection • Assumptions that surface when spirituality enters academic creative spaces • Spirituality alongside — and beyond — wellness and productivity frameworks • Creative work engaging inherited stories and lived community histories Submissions may be reflective, practice-based, historical, pedagogical, or theoretical — all are welcome.

## **Stitching Freedom: Craft, Memory, and Belonging Across Diasporas**

Sage Hall, Georgia Southern University

This panel invites artists and scholars to explore how craft—especially fiber, textiles, and hands-on making—can be a powerful tool for freedom, memory, and belonging. We are interested in craft as a way of “getting free” from colonial ideas and systems. Making can hold stories that were never written down, including spiritual knowledge, family histories, and cultural traditions passed through the body and the hands. Craft can also disrupt official histories by creating new patterns of meaning and care. The panel welcomes papers and presentations from studio artists, art historians, educators, and researchers working across Caribbean, African diasporic, Indigenous, and Global South contexts. Topics may include textiles as storytelling, craft as healing, memory in materials, community-based making, or artists such as Maria Magdalena Campos-Pons. By bringing together different voices and methods, this panel asks how interwoven craft practices help people remember, resist, and imagine new futures—one stitch, pattern, or gesture at a time.

## **The Promise and Peril of AI in the Teaching and Practice of Art History**

Zbynek Smetana, Murray State University

AI tools now generate imagery, analyze visual data, and curate historical content. These technologies promise transformative potential: automating visual cataloging, expanding access, and inviting new modes of inquiry. The speed in the rise of AI in art history and studio-based disciplines suggests urgent need for scholars and educators to rethink foundational assumptions about authorship, creativity, and pedagogy. Yet, this rapid integration also threatens to displace critical human interpretive skills. Questions of authenticity, historical fidelity, and cultural context become increasingly fraught when machine learning systems imitate aesthetic styles without understanding their intellectual, political, or emotional dimensions. Similarly, in classroom settings, AI-generated outputs risk replacing—rather than complementing—close visual analysis and interpretation grounded in human experience. This session invites scholars and educators to consider how AI is reshaping methodologies and pedagogical frameworks in art history; it aims to build a more nuanced understanding of how AI might both expand and constrain the imaginative and interpretive capacities of art historical inquiry. Contributions might explore case studies of AI-assisted analysis in museum collections, critical reflections on authorship and





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originality in generative art, or innovative teaching models that integrate digital tools while maintaining disciplinary integrity.

## **Threads, Patterns, and Disruptions in Art + Disability Studies**

Jonathan Frederick Walz, The Columbus Museum, Georgia; Melissa Warak, University of Texas–El Paso

This panel aims to bring together scholars in the field of art relating to disability and neurodiversity to explore the threads, patterns, and disruptions of disability in the arts. How do we, as researchers, design and craft our orientation toward these concerns? How does thoughtfully considering visible and invisible disabilities make art a valuable resource for cultural literacy and, ultimately, expand and complicate the conversation on access, acceptance, and disability justice? Possible presentation topics include but are not limited to: • papers that probe the politics and ethics of disability representation • papers that consider threads, patterns, and disruptions of disability in art and art history • case studies of artists or works of art that help in understanding varying cultural attitudes toward disability across time and geography • interdisciplinary methods for studying art from disability studies perspectives • the addition of the arts to disability studies curricula in higher education • pedagogical strategies for increasing access for and acceptance of disabled and neurodiverse students in the art classroom. Additionally, we welcome artist talks and presentations by scholars of art education, design, craft, and museum studies to broaden the discourse beyond art history specifically. New voices, graduate students, and emerging scholars are particularly encouraged to apply.

## **Toward an Appreciation of Dolls as a Creative Medium**

Sara Woodbury, Barry Art Museum at Old Dominion University

Dolls are an overlooked medium in the history and practice of art, their associations with craft, domesticity, and mass culture historically limiting their presence in serious academic and creative study. Yet as collectors and enthusiasts have long recognized, as well as a growing number of scholars and artists, dolls are an important means of cultivating tradition, resilience, and innovation for both individuals and communities. From enabling nineteenth-century women to achieve entrepreneurial success, to fostering interracial collaboration through initiatives such as the Milwaukee Handicraft Project of the Works Progress Administration, dolls have been, and remain, important objects within social, economic, and women's histories. They enable makers of diverse backgrounds and interests to pursue such objectives as achieving financial stability, preserving a sense of personal identity, or expressing communal solidarity. Rooted in such concepts as the body, play, and personal expression, dolls can engage people across different disciplines and interests, and warrant seriously scholarly and artistic attention. This session considers dolls as a creative medium. Open to art historians, curators, educators, and artists, this panel invites submissions highlighting scholarly research on historical and contemporary dolls as well as doll-focused creative practices. Together, we will explore how dolls can bring people together.





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## **What Punk Taught Me: Moving Punk Beyond Punk**

Greg Blair, University of Southern Indiana; Jason Swift, University of West Georgia

This panel will draw upon material from the recently published book *What Punk Taught Me* by Vernon Press. The panel will include 3-4 of the contributors to the book who will share how punk has provided them with an incredibly valuable tutelage in becoming an artist, writer, educator, and human being. From personal anecdotes to philosophical inquiries, these presentations examine how punk has been the source of community and ethics, philosophy and aesthetics, or even an attitude and identity. This panel explores how various individuals have connected with punk culture in a variety of distinctive ways—through music, venues, fashion, art, writing, activism, collecting culture, rebellion, or DIY projects. Each presenter will share their own story of what punk has taught them – how those experiences have created a type of cultural memory and been formative in their personal and professional development. These narratives will serve as a reflection on the myriad influences of punk – as a methodology, a philosophy, an ontology, an aesthetic, a strategy, a cultural phenomenon, or a worldview. The culmination of this panel will provide a deeper understanding of the individualized influences of punk but also the wider ripples of its wider socio-cultural impact.

## **What We Carry Forward: Inherited Practices in Design and Making**

Ashley Anderson, Virginia Tech

Histories of making, from brick and textile production to other forms of skilled labor, have shaped built and cultural landscapes, often without recognition. However, the knowledge behind this work persists through ways of working that are carried forward and adapted over time. This session invites participants to think about inherited practices: the habits, values, systems, and approaches to work that are passed down through families, communities, or cultural lineages. While contemporary practitioners may not make the same objects as those who came before them, their work is often informed by similar logics such as self-reliance, repetition, care, efficiency, or adaptation to place. These inheritances may surface through physical materials, visual systems, design processes, pedagogy, or digital and technological practices. The session asks: What do we inherit through work, and how do those inheritances shape contemporary practice? Presentations may explore personal or collective histories, regional or cultural influences, or speculative approaches that consider what future generations might inherit from today's material systems, design processes, and technological practices. Rather than focusing on objects alone, this session centers continuity between past work, present practice, and future responsibility.

## **When the Story Breaks: Making and Teaching in Fragmented Systems**

Yana Sakellion, American University

We are entering a new era of mass fragmentation in collective storytelling across public life, education, and creative practice. The proverbial threads no longer hold narratives together with comfortable or reliable continuity. Instead, we find ourselves patching disruptions produced by AI technologies, instability in higher education, a volatile economy, and ongoing civic turmoil. Trust, authorship, and even our very identities feel increasingly disjointed and out of our control. This session asks what remains





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within our control and how we might shift familiar paradigms away from treating fracture as a problem, and toward understanding it as an opportune condition to work within. The panel invites artists, designers, and educators across all creative disciplines to share storytelling projects, teaching approaches, and case studies that operate within unstable systems. Rather than seeking repair or coherence, the session centers on how art-making and pedagogy continue when continuity can no longer be assumed. In this context, fragmentation is approached as a civic problem of meaning, one that unfolds across shared cultural and educational spaces rather than as a fundamental failure to be resolved.

## OTHER

### **AI ate my homework?! AI, Artistic Agency, and Making Space for Making**

Jonathan Jonathan, Surreal Photographer

In an era in which artificial intelligence is increasingly positioned as a replacement for creative labor, this panel proposes an alternative framework: AI as a disruptive tool for restoring artistic agency. Rather than asking what AI can make, the session asks what AI can remove—namely, barriers to process, access, and sustained creative practice. Framed within SECAC 2026's theme, Interwoven: Threads, Patterns & Disruptions, the panel explores how artists and educators are incorporating AI into their practices not as an authorial force but as a support system. Presentations may examine AI as a means of translation between visual thinking and language; as a tool for navigating writing paralysis, accessibility concerns, or administrative labor; or as a response to the increasing demands of self-articulation within contemporary art culture. The session foregrounds studio-based and embodied practices, including photography, film making, drawing, performance, and teaching/admin, where making remains rooted in physical engagement, material knowledge, and lived experience. Within these contexts, AI functions as a disruptive thread that alters patterns of production without erasing authorship. The panel invites artists, scholars, and educators to contribute case studies, pedagogical strategies, ethical frameworks, and critical reflections that address AI as a tool for resilience, agency, and sustained creative life. Collectively, the session aims to reframe disruption not as loss, but as an opportunity to reclaim time, attention, and artistic intention.

### **Community and Makers: Examining a Vital Relationship Across the History of Art**

Elizabeth Brown, Duke University; Brittany Forniotis, Independent

This panel takes up the intersection of spatial and social organization in art-making communities to complicate our understanding of myths of the artist as genius and art production in capitalist economies. Collaboration among makers defined art production from prehistory— notable examples include ancient pottery studios, monastic scriptoria, and socially-engaged participatory art practices, such as the Guerrilla Girls and Theaster Gates. We invite papers from a diversity of periods and geographies such that we are able to discover common themes in artistic communities, while thinking expansively about





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what constitutes community across cultures. Broadly, we encourage papers addressing topics such as theory and praxis of group art production; the transmission of knowledge; co-production, authorship, and unknown/unsung labor; and the relationship between the physical and social design of said communities. We are especially interested in papers on non-Western topics, or that challenge conventional notions of artistic communities formed in the Western canon. Thus, we hope to attract scholars who intersect with diverse fields such as architecture, geography, archaeology, sociology, and cultural anthropology.

## **I Got the Chair: Navigating Career and Administrative Roles in Art and Design Academic Departments**

Vinicius Lima, Grand Valley State University

Faculty in institutions of higher learning often visualize their career paths grounded in teaching, scholarly pursuits, and occasional service. As careers evolve, some ascend to higher leadership roles — faculty become program coordinators, then department chairs, assistant/associate deans, etc, a career evolution that sometimes happens by nomination, sometimes by pressure (no one wants it...), or sometimes by simple peer rotation. The authors in this session will discuss how they brought their creative selves into leadership positions. Participants will be asked to discuss how they shaped their tenures in alignment with their personal values and abilities, simultaneously considering the collective and their self-preservation and well-being. This session will share resources and reflections from former, current, and future administrators, often acquired without any prior practical experience.

## **Place and Time Beyond**

Shahead Maghreby, Texas A&M University

This session explores the relationship between place and time beyond linear, chronological frameworks, foregrounding lived experience, memory, and continuity as central dimensions of historic environments. Drawing from phenomenological approaches to architecture and urbanism, the session invites papers that examine how places endure—not merely through material persistence, but through embodied perception, collective memory, and intersubjective meaning. Contributors are encouraged to investigate how historic places negotiate change and stability, objectivity and subjectivity, and the interplay between past and present across diverse cultural contexts. The session welcomes theoretical, methodological, and case-based contributions that move beyond North American and Eurocentric assumptions in dominant architectural discourse and expand the vocabulary through which endurance, atmosphere, and attachment are understood (e.g., the Farsi concept Mandegari (ماندگاری), the Japanese concept Ma (間), the Chinese concept Shi (勢), and the Arabic concept Dahr (دهر)). Topics may include the phenomenology of place, sense of place, temporality in architecture, revitalization and continuity, and cross-cultural readings of historic environments. By positioning time as experiential rather than purely historical, the session aims to open new perspectives on how architecture sustains meaning over time and how places continue to matter within rapidly transforming urban and cultural landscapes.





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## **The Curse of Competence**

Shannon Lindsey, University of Central Florida; Ashley Taylor, University of Central Florida

You answer emails quickly. You meet deadlines. You solve problems. Congratulations, you are now the “go-to” person who gets asked to do everything. This session explores the curse of competence: the familiar academic phenomenon in which being good at your job results in more committee assignments, more student mentoring, more “quick asks,” and more labor—often without a lighter workload, additional pay, or new title. The unofficial infrastructure common in studio art and design programs is quietly built on highly competent individuals with highly impossible standards for themselves. Through humor, shared recognition, and real examples, this session examines how “reliable” becomes “default,” how praise replaces compensation, and how success can accidentally trigger burnout and stagnation. Rather than framing this as an individual boundary problem, the session treats it as a systems design issue: institutions are optimized to lean on people who follow through and don’t break. Attendees will leave with practical strategies for spotting invisible labor, anticipating future asks, documenting impact, setting boundaries and saying no without guilt. By naming (and laughing at) the curse of competence, this session offers a shared language for navigating professional success with your sanity intact.

## **The Responsibility of Public Art in the City of Arts & Innovation**

Erica Palmiter, Independent - City of Winston-Salem, Public Art Planner

As public art commissions face the responsibility of allocating government dollars to public art, they must ask what public art can do to serve a community. Looking to Winston-Salem's long history in the arts and yet a relatively young public art commission, learn how artists and art professionals that make up the City's commission have grappled with large questions about creating local art ecosystems, encouraging contemporary/non-traditional projects, and building a reputable art collection all while responding to community demands. In this session, the manager of the Public Art Commission alongside Commission members will share the City's public art collection and how the training of young artists in public art is crucial to the future of public art and civic engagement. A walking tour can be offered in conjunction to the session.

## **The Variety Show**

Kris Belden-Adams, University of Mississippi; Joshua Brinlee, University of Mississippi

“The Variety Show” is an energetic, 105-minute performance session inviting SECAC attendees to share short, polished, or in-progress acts in the spirit of a pageant talent competition, à la Miss Congeniality. Open to artists, educators, historians, designers, and students, this session celebrates risk-taking, humor, vulnerability, and virtuosity through live, time-based work. Participants will each have 8–10 minutes to perform: options might include monologues, lecture-performances, musical or vocal pieces, bad slide karaoke, live drawing, quick project demos (maybe gone awry), stand-up, drag, or other hybrid experiments that defy category. Emcees will keep the event moving, introduce performers, and maintain an atmosphere that is playful but generous, echoing a blend of camp, critique, and camaraderie. Rather than a competition with winners and losers, “The Variety Show” reframes the talent-show format to





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foreground mutual support and community-building across SECAC's diverse fields. The session aligns with SECAC's encouragement of alternative modalities beyond traditional paper panels by embracing performance as a process.

## **Weaving a Tapestry: Contemporary Collaborations Among Art Department Staff**

Damon Arhos, Maryland Institute College of Art; Elissa Graff, University of Pikeville

Most artists who become instructors are practitioners who are experts in their craft, self-reliant, and independent. Few artists are taught to be, or function as, collaborators who work together seamlessly. Even less art faculty may be comfortable as a co-worker or teammate, let alone teaching jointly. How then, in times of challenge, strife, or disruption, should today's departments and programs prepare students to function with a skill that few artists have themselves? According to Wikipedia, Tapestry "is a form of textile art woven by hand ... to create images rather than patterns." ... "Technically, tapestry is weft-faced weaving, in which all the warp threads are hidden in the completed work, unlike most woven textiles, where both the warp and the weft threads may be visible." Today's art departments continue functioning as woven textiles or a selection of independent pieces. To prepare students better, perhaps the discipline needs to consider more weft-like work, unraveling some traditions and finding new ways to function collectively. This session invites papers to share new approaches to Collaboration, whether through mending or crafting, toward the aim of supporting one another as a collective tapestry in service to the art student of today and citizen artist of tomorrow.



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## STUDIO AND ART HISTORY

### Art(ist) Work

Corey Dzenko, Monmouth University

For the 2002 exhibition *Work Ethic* (Baltimore Museum of Art), curator Helen Molesworth described that after World War II the “basis of the United States economy shifted from manufacturing to service, transforming traditional definitions of labor.” She argues that this shift impacted artists’ labor alongside other types of work, which was further transformed by the twenty-first century expansion of the global labor force (18). Given this context, *Work Ethic* examined the role of an artist as a manager, a worker, or an experience maker, along with what happens when an artist quits or tries not to work (19). Using these roles and others as springboards, this panel seeks to examine the various forms of work artists undertake both in their artmaking and beyond, examining labor spaces in modern and contemporary economies. How does an artist make labor explicit in the creation of their artworks? What related roles or jobs does an artist undertake in addition to their creation of discrete art objects? What labor may often remain invisible in discussions of their artworks, but still ties back into their artistic practice? This panel invites submissions from both artists and art historians.

### Beautiful Residue: Marking Time Through Creative Practice

Christopher Cobillas-Ottinger, Saint Mary's College of California; Andrew Cozzens, Kentucky College of Art + Design

All of us are bound to time. Either by counting the units of its measure—minutes, days, months, years, millennia—or by traversing the uncountable sublime sea of infinity that marks the accumulation of our experiences both subtle and profound. Time is also a part of every creative practice. Material research, trial and error, reading, writing, making, critiquing, being, and thinking all elapse within time. These interwoven durations, by design or by chance, leave a trace of their happening. Roland Barthes claimed that “every photograph is a certificate of presence.” So too, we might say, is the result of any creative act, that beautiful residue that the artist’s journey leaves behind. These moments are not fixed in time, however. An artwork is evidentiary, not only of the work’s subject or site of its production, but of the presence of the artist and our experience of the work as viewers. An artwork is a confluence of temporalities. To further explore these ideas, this panel seeks papers, presentations, and artworks that consider the idea of marking time through creative activity. Specific topics may include the durational, indexicality, slowness, multiplicities, repetition, alternative temporalities, and topics related to keeping, marking, or visualizing time.

### Beyond Fiber: Threaded Processes Across Materials

Elizabeth Heuer, University of North Florida

This session reframes “fiber” not as a fixed material category but as a structural and conceptual logic that operates across a wide range of artistic media. In dialogue with the conference theme *Interwoven: threads and patterns*, the panel explores how artists working in wood, metal, glass, paper, ceramic, or





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hybrid forms mobilize processes that echo or reinterpret textile logics, weaving, binding, casting, layering, tension, modular repetition, and filamentary structure. By shifting attention from substance to process and structure, the session challenges familiar distinctions between soft and hard materials, craft and sculpture, textile and industrial form. Papers may address topics such as pattern systems and molds as woven matrices; glass caning and filament as thread; botanical or biological fiber structures translated into material practice; paper pulp as sculptural process; or artists who use fiber-like thinking to rethink categories of media, labor, gender, ecology, or technology. Bringing these perspectives together, the session asks how fiber as a way of thinking, rather than a discrete medium, opens new insight into pattern, connectivity, and material experimentation in modern and contemporary art.

## **Breaking Stereotypes: Recontextualizing Underrepresented Voices and Communities**

Alexander Alvarez, University of Central Florida

This session explores how underrepresented voices and communities are actively recontextualizing dominant narratives through art practices that disrupt stereotypes, reclaim agency, and foreground lived experience. Grounded in the conference theme Interwoven: Threads, Patterns & Disruptions, the panel considers how cultural, historical, material, and experiential “threads” are woven into contemporary artistic and scholarly work that challenges inherited frameworks and expands understandings of identity, memory, labor, and representation. Open to artists, art historians, and educators, this session welcomes diverse methodologies and perspectives, including studio-based research, historical analysis, community-engaged practices, pedagogy, and interdisciplinary approaches. Topics may include visual strategies of resistance, reimagined archives and craft traditions, narrative reclamation, social justice-oriented practices, and the intersection of place, labor, and cultural identity. In keeping with the theme of disruption, the session welcomes nontraditional presentation formats such as performances, audience participation, digital or technological integration, hybrid presentations, and other experimental modes of engagement. By bringing together multiple viewpoints and formats, the session aims to foster dynamic exchange across disciplines, highlighting how underrepresented voices not only challenge established patterns but also generate new forms of connection, resilience, and innovation in contemporary art and scholarship.

## **Con/Texture: Surface and Sense**

Roja Najafi, Chandler-Gilbert Community College; Catharine Ingersoll, Virginia Military Institute

This session will investigate the roles and contexts of texture in the visual arts across time periods and media. Texture, as a quality of surface, has long played a central role in how art is made, perceived, and understood. Whether rendered illusionistically or encountered materially, texture mediates between surface and substance, vision and touch, representation and embodiment. From the tactile surfaces of painting, sculpture, and textiles to material interventions and digital practices, texture shapes how artworks register labor, process, time, and use. Artists have employed texture to evoke sensory experience, challenge visual hierarchies, assert material presence, or disrupt expectations of finish and form. In many cases, the surface becomes a site where artistic intention, cultural value, and viewer perception intersect. We welcome proposals from art historians and makers to explore texture and related themes in any medium across historical periods, aesthetic movements, and geographies.





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Contributions may address actual texture, visual or implied texture, and other tactile or haptic effects. Papers may consider the role of texture within specific historical or aesthetic contexts, its relationship to broader artistic and cultural trends, or the challenges and transformations texture presents in the digital age, where materiality is increasingly mediated, simulated, or reimagined.

## **Crafting Blackness: Histories, Practices and Critical Frameworks**

Karlota Contreras-Koterbay, East Tennessee State University; Earnestine Jenkins, University of Memphis

Since 2022, Crafting Blackness, is an ongoing research initiative, exhibition series, publication program, and community-engaged project documenting a century of African American craft practice in Tennessee, tracing histories from the 1920s up to present while foregrounding artists and traditions long excluded from dominant art-historical narratives. Organized across more than twenty exhibitions until 2027 featuring Black craft artists from Tennessee, Crafting Blackness has aimed to increase visibility, address historiographic omissions, and expand how craft and Black creative labor are understood within American art history within a collaborative framework engaging Black and Appalachian scholars, artists, curators, and communities to reconsider craft as a critical site of knowledge production, cultural memory, and aesthetic innovation. A central tenet has been that craft has often been relegated to the margins, paralleling the sidelining of Black art history, and that recent interest and innovative practices should bring it back to the forefront of conversations on identity, creative practice, and collective representation. We invite art historians and artists whose work engages Black craft in the United States, including historical, theoretical, material, and curatorial approaches to participate in our panel that explores the contemporary relevance of craft and its critical role in rethinking Blackness and the Black experience within American art history, in Appalachia, Tennessee and beyond.

## **Decoding Racist Representation: Visual Semiotics and Ethical Practice in Art and Design**

Thomas Elder, Independent

Contemporary artists, designers, and institutions are increasingly examining the hidden biases embedded in their creative practices and visual cultures. What was once a kind of "visible invisibility" or racist codes woven into logos, mascots, food branding, and artistic traditions is now a sustained practice of critical scrutiny. This session brings together scholars, practitioners, and educators who identify, analyze, and disrupt racist representation through the framework of visual semiotics. Visual representation communicates through systematic codes: object representation (depictions of human identity), abstract representation (conceptual meanings), and nonverbal signification (what images convey beyond language). When these codes objectify, erase, or misrepresent human identity based on race or culture, they function as tools of harm regardless of intent. This challenge appears in systematized erasure, museum practices that perpetuate bias, and AI-generated imagery built on historically biased datasets. We welcome papers addressing visual semiotics and racist imagery; objectification and identity appropriation; contemporary artists interrogating bias; design ethics and civil rights; decolonizing institutions; pedagogical strategies; AI and algorithmic bias; and intersectional approaches that link race with gender, class, and ability.





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## **Disruptive Art and Design: Creative Revisions of Southern History**

Tania Allen, North Carolina State University

The 2020 murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis was one of far too many tragic events that ultimately forced a public reckoning with the infrastructures that perpetuate racism across the American landscape. It made many ask fundamental questions about their own privilege and complicity in the systems of oppression that fed Floyd's murder and too many before. As artists and designers, it encouraged us to confront how our practices might be founded on and actively participate in the racist policies and power structures embedded throughout the fabric of our country. It also raised critical questions about how we work within these systems to dismantle centuries of active, passive and systemic oppression through future design interventions. In the south in particular, this reckoning took the form of actively dismantling many of the public and semi-public displays of the confederacy that were erected as instruments of terror in the early 20th century, most visibly evidenced by protests and mark making on top of the statues in memorial row in Richmond, Virginia or the public "hanging" of a confederate statue in Raleigh, NC - many of these statues such as Kara Walker's Unmanned Drone, are now on display in art museums as art pieces, complete with their defacement. This reckoning can also be seen in the erection of new types of museums and memorials such as the National Memorial for Peace and Justice in Selma Alabama or the Nasher Museum's Southern Accent: Seeking the American South in Contemporary Art which "addresses and complicates the many realities, fantasies and myths that have long captured the public's imagination about the American South" ([nasherduke.edu](http://nasherduke.edu)); or in internal projects such as rearranging collections and reclassifying archives to reckon with racial stereotyping and exclusions. This session invites presenters who are using art and design to actively disrupt systems and mechanisms of oppression and revisionist history through participatory, engaged and critical art and design. Papers are welcome from areas of art and design activism, pedagogy, as well as historical accounts from other eras that might inform contemporary approaches.

## **Drawing Data Trails: Marking Presence in the Age of Extraction**

Seth Van Der Eems, George Fox University

This session investigates the role of drawing as a daily, often unrecognized activity—both as a vital human record and as a modern data source. Beyond its apparent role in artistic practice, we scribble, jot, trace, and mindlessly mark our way through public planning, theoretical diagrams, or our intimate marginalia. These "detritus marks", often passing moments, have served as precious windows into the lives of those before us. Today, these marks are being intentionally scraped and converted into traceable and monetizable data points as AI systems relentlessly expand their scope of consumption. If mark-making is evidence of the life lived, how do we keep the life of the line in the face of big data's inevitable logic of conversion and consumption? We seek a wide, interlaced view of drawing to create a "matrix" that helps us understand how the processes and subjects of drawing reveal ourselves, our neighbors, and contemporary data use. We welcome proposals from all discourses: art history, applied and personal practices, and non-art fields. Let's gather the threads of history, place, and action together and mark our presence!





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## **Fraying Edges: Fibers in the Era of Excess**

Greg Shelnett, University of Delaware

According to a 2024 report from the Boston Consulting Group (BCG), “the world discarded enough clothing to fill more than 200 Olympic stadiums—highlighting a growing crisis of textile waste.” Sadly, this is nothing new: as noted in a 2017 study by Ellen MacArthur Foundation “the equivalent of one garbage truck full of textiles gets landfilled or burned every single second of every day of the year.” However, pressure is mounting—despite domestic anti-environmental policies—to scale a circular textile economy. And as the authors of the BCG study noted: “we believe the industry could see waste recycling rates surpass 30%, generating new fibers with a raw material value worth more than \$50 billion and creating approximately 180,000 new jobs.” How are artists, crafts people, anthropologists, and fashion designers responding to this Sunami of fiber waste and—more importantly—how are they working to frame, shape, and promote engagement with their students and the public to address this crisis? We seek input from a broad range of stakeholders from a wide variety of disciplines.

## **From Archive to Studio: Art History as Material**

Hannah Israel, Columbus State University; Claire McCoy, Columbus State University

This session positions art history as an active medium in artist studio. Artists draw from historical movements, techniques, images, and theories treating them as materials to be sampled, quoted, disrupted, and reconfigured through studio practice. Threads signify lineage and transmission; patterns operate as visual languages passed across time; disruptions emerge through reinterpretation, critique, and hybridization. By weaving research with making, artists blur the boundaries between studio practice and historical inquiry. Works may reconstruct traditional processes, challenge canonical narratives, or collide multiple histories to generate new meanings. The session foregrounds how contemporary artists inherit, resist, and transform the visual languages that precede them, revealing art history as a living, contested, and evolving field. This session invites collaborators, individual artists, and art historians.

## **Governing Visibility: Art, Power, and Creative Resistance in Authoritarian Contexts**

Vahid Valikhani, University of Dallas

This session explores how artists resist authoritarian and autocratic regimes through a theoretical approach that emphasizes power, visibility, and cultural production. Using insights from film and media studies, visual culture, feminist theory, and political aesthetics, it considers how artistic practices function within and challenge systems of surveillance, censorship, and state control. Key instances involve the work of Iranian documentary filmmakers, particularly women whose films smuggle powerful political critiques into constrained production environments. Instead of viewing resistance as simply opposition or external to these structures, it sees it as an interconnected process that occurs within restricted production environments. Focusing on documentary film, music, poetry, visual art, and performance, the session studies how artists navigate authorization, use ambiguity, and shape aesthetic form to resist prevailing stories. The session will include presentations, panels, and discussions to promote a thorough comprehension of the topics. Special focus is given to practices that exist in liminal





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spaces, between legality and illegality, public and private, visible and hidden. Participants will have opportunities to engage through presentations, panels, and participatory conversations.

## **Horribly Average: Creativity, Context, and Control After AI**

Ry Fryar, York College of Pennsylvania; Jessica Sponsler, York College of Pennsylvania

Gen AI has made creative production faster and easier. Cheaper. And, so often, horribly average. Once you recognize AI slop you cannot unsee it. This session argues that this frustrating sameness does not mark the end of creativity, but instead reveals opportunity. It is a market signal. As generative tools flood creative labor, value shifts toward those who can do what machines cannot: impose context, judgment, and specificity by actively directing AI to extend creative reach, rather than ignoring it. Recognizing when output is generic, historically incoherent, visually lazy, or culturally flattened becomes real leverage. Humanities training, studio practice, and deep disciplinary knowledge are no longer only academic. Now they are practical. Drawing in part on the development of the Digital Art and Artificial Intelligence program at York College of Pennsylvania as one response, this session examines how creatives may evolve less as tool operators and more as AI conductors. A conductor does not play every instrument. They do need mastery enough to hear when the parts go wrong and direct toward something better. Papers may address pedagogy, labor, theory, or principled resistance to AI. Optimism is encouraged; skepticism also has its place.

## **Interwoven Identities: Latinx Visual Narratives as Pattern, Memory & Resistance**

Stanley Bermudez, Institute for Doctoral Studies in Visual Arts

Latinx artistic practices have long operated as visual languages of resilience, shaped by migration, cultural hybridity, political struggle, and ongoing negotiations of belonging. This session examines how Latinx artists mobilize symbolic “threads”, including textile traditions, chromatic systems, inherited craft knowledge, linguistic hybridity, and personal or collective memory, to construct visual narratives that both preserve and interrogate cultural identity. In dialogue with SECAC 2026’s theme Interwoven: Threads, Patterns & Disruptions, the session foregrounds the aesthetic, political, and affective dimensions through which tradition and contemporary lived realities are interlaced. Pattern emerges as a critical mode of storytelling: Indigenous weaving structures, Caribbean modernist color logics, and gestures drawn from domestic craft function as strategies for reclaiming histories obscured by colonialism, displacement, or assimilation. Within diasporic contexts, these visual languages anchor identity amid fractured cultural continuity, while simultaneously resisting fixity. Patterns shift, rupture, and reconfigure, mirroring the contradictions of bicultural and multicultural experience. The session invites scholars and artists to explore how Latinx visual “threads” negotiate belonging, assert cultural pride, dismantle stereotypes, and confront systems of inequality across media, including textiles, painting, printmaking, installation, digital practices, and performance. Centering liminality and hybridity, the panel situates Latinx art within broader Southern craft legacies, illuminating art as a site of cultural survival, innovation, and resistance.





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## **Interwoven Surfaces: Public Art, Space, and Disruption**

Raymond Yeager, Savannah College of Art and Design

This session explores public art, including street art, murals, billboards, and other urban interventions. It examines how these forms address visibility, power, and meaning in contemporary cities. Public space is not neutral. Economic systems, regulations, and accumulated histories shape it. In these conditions, public art disrupts the norm; intervening in daily visual experience and urging viewers to pause, reconsider, and look again. Drawing from visual culture and spatial theory, the session reflects on how artists work in spaces filled with images. Many of these images are linked to advertising, civic messaging, and institutional control. Examples from street-based practices and artist-driven billboard projects show how public art interrupts dominant visual narratives. These examples also emphasize consideration of place, audience, and context. Attention is given to cities in transition, where growth, displacement, and cultural change intensify questions of authorship and belonging. The often temporary nature of public art is approached not as a deficit, but as a productive condition; one that allows work to respond directly and ethically to shifting social realities. Intended for artists, educators, and scholars, this session invites conversation around responsibility, intention, and impact, and considers how disruption itself can function as a meaningful pattern within the shared visual language of the city.

## **Interwoven: Textiles and Digital Technology**

Miriam Kienle, University of Kentucky; Lauren Applebaum, North Carolina Museum of Art

The history of textiles and digital technologies are deeply interwoven. The binary code designed by the world's first computer programmer, Ada Lovelace, was famously inspired by the Jacquard loom's punch cards that instructed the binary "on/off" for threads on the loom in the mid-19th century. Today, algorithms control high-speed, automated looms that produce nearly every inch of fabric that we wear, with AI increasingly utilized in the design process. From the modern to the contemporary era, artists, designers, and scholars have looked to the ancient process of weaving to understand the history and present-day implications of digital technology in our daily lives. For example, Anni Albers's Bauhaus-inspired *On Weaving* (1965) asserts that the tools and techniques of textile production provide lessons that exceed the craft and transmit deep social significance about our mechanized world. More recently, Mika Tajima's *Negative Entropy* (2014) revealed the deep interweaving of embodied experience and computational life through abstract textile portrayals of computer data centers. This panel invites papers investigating how visionary thinkers and makers from the 19th to the present have explored textile production as a means of understanding, questioning, and disrupting the societal changes that have accompanied automation and digitalization.





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## **It's Complicated!! Relationships to Material, Place, and Identity**

Wendy DesChene, Auburn University

"It's Complicated", invites papers that examine how contemporary art practices address questions of identity through relationships to material choice, site-responsiveness, and engagement with place and community. We seek scholarship that considers how artists connect personal and embodied experience to expanded cultural, social, historical, and ecological contexts. Building on antecedents such as environmental art, post-minimalism, and socially engaged practices of the late twentieth century, this panel considers how contemporary artists expand these frameworks by centering identity, embodiment, and community. Proposed papers may explore how materials, whether natural, industrial, recycled, ephemeral, or culturally specific, communicate narratives of identity, activism, memory, and power. Topics may include site-responsive and place-based practices that engage local histories, contested geographies, and collective memory, as well as contrasts between rural and urban contexts and their differing approaches to place, belonging, and relationality. The panel welcomes analyses of how artists use material and spatial strategies to resist dominant cultural discourses, including those related to environmentalism, nature, and systems of place and value, while also potentially addressing race, gender, sexuality, indigeneity, migration, class, and disability. Papers activating social practice, environmental justice, community-based work, or participatory approaches are encouraged, particularly those that consider how art fosters agency, dialogue, and communal accountability.

## **Painting Isn't Dead: The Post-Mortem (Revival) Reincarnation**

Alexandra Giannell, Florida International University

One of if not the oldest recorded forms of communication, painting houses essential modalities of semiotics, merging the record of bodily movement and ideology into the mark, opening doors to representation and beyond. Seemingly phased out by the spatial complexity of sculpture and installation, the ephemerality of performance and video, the accessibility and intrigue of photography, and the myriad of alternative processes akin, painting is resurfacing in our interdisciplinary era, expanding far beyond the frame, happily veering into lanes of oncoming traffic. The backbone of painting as it collides and fuses with other mediums and artistic approaches both supports and expands the concept and cannon of what painting is and can be. Exploring this vast potential beyond traditional ideas of painting, panel "Painting Isn't Dead: The Post-Mortem (Revival) Reincarnation" will discuss navigating the expansion or dismantling of the rooted painting practice into newly born hybrid territories as they exist in the studio and in curatorial conversations. Where is the future of painting headed, and how are you challenging and engaging this vision in your practice?





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## **Reinterpreting Universal Design: Pluralities, Inclusion, and Equity in Design**

Bess Williamson, North Carolina State University

This session explores a local thread within a global design concept: Universal Design, rarely recognized as the work of North Carolina architect Ronald Mace, who founded NC State's Center for Universal Design and co-authored the Principles of Universal Design, published in 1997. As the once-dormant Center has been reinstated as the Alliance for Inclusive Design and Technology, this panel proposes that Universal Design remains relevant, but in need of ongoing critical analysis for the 21st century. Recognizing the fractured world where design is shaped by both global technology networks and localized cultural realities, what is the meaning of "universal" in Universal Design -- does it require a redefinition or entirely different terminology? What are the relevant measures of equity, usability, and performance that will shape the next generation of inclusive design frameworks? This session invites presentations on the history, theory, and practice of Universal Design and allied fields such as pluriversal, inclusive, equitable, sustainable, or other methodologies. Papers may describe historical interpretations of Universal Design or present- and future-oriented cases. Disability need not be the principal (or sole) lens of analysis, although presenters will be asked to model accessible formats in presentations, such as captioning and visual descriptions.

## **Reweaving Design History in Contemporary Graphic Design Education**

Marwa Elkashif, Wartburg College

In many contemporary design programs, the study of design history is marginalized or separated from studio practice, leaving students disconnected from the cultural, social, and technological threads that shape creative work. This session explores how reweaving design history into the curriculum within graphic design (GD) education, can illuminate patterns and disruptions that have shaped visual culture, offering students a richer understanding of design as both a creative and socially engaged practice. Design history is not merely a record of styles but a fabric of ideas, innovations, and societal change. Within GD, these narratives are especially significant, as typography, visual communication, and cultural representation evolve in response to technological and social shifts. By examining how visual movements emerge, persist, and transform, educators can help students recognize design as a living system of ideas influenced by threads of context, culture and community. Through case studies and pedagogical strategies, this session demonstrates how historical inquiry, critical reflection, and contemporary practice can be integrated into GD education. Students will explore how design history fosters empathy, resilience, and social awareness while enabling them to apply, experiment with, and translate historical knowledge into meaningful design work, recognizing the patterns that connect past and present design practices.



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## Storytelling as Resistance

Crystal Brown, West Virginia Wesleyan College

Storytelling as an act of resistance is a powerful tool against oppression and reverberates throughout social communities and beyond. Artists have used storytelling as a means of responding to and reimagining futures beyond their current moments via interdisciplinary means such as fabulations found in literature, theater, installations, paintings, sculpture, and beyond. This panel seeks papers from studio artists, art historians, philosophers, and academics that engage with storytelling as resistance, asserting the autonomy, identity, and epistemologies of marginalized peoples. The act of storytelling can challenge harmful narratives, amplify voices that have been silenced, and mobilize communities towards change. Storytelling from the point of speculative fiction, such as the work of Octavia Butler, allows worlds to unfold and exist outside of the social expectations of the current moment. What, who, and how have other artists navigated storytelling as resistance?

## The Art of Games

Dickie Cox, Monmouth University

In *Rules of Play: Games of Design Fundamentals*, Eric Zimmerman and Katie Selen define games as “system(s) in which players engage in artificial conflict, defined by rules, that results in a quantifiable outcome.” With this definition in mind, this panel seeks to examine both the art of games and games within art. Of particular interest is the critical analysis of analog games, including, but not limited to board games, card games, and artist-made games as gaming affords players the opportunity to bring the energetics of temporary worlds into the world of permanency toward social change. For example, Surrealists played exquisite corpse to tap into the subconscious given the mass destruction of World War I. By changing a chessboard and pieces to white, Yoko Ono made it impossible to sustain a battle between opponents. For over 20 years, Francis Alÿs filmed children playing games, particularly in places in turmoil. More than a shallow claim to the universality of play, critics describe how his films show the specificity of each group of children as they use games to build their own real worlds. Submissions from any time period and geography welcome. Artists, designers, and art historians are all encouraged to apply.

## The Artist’s Book: Defining and Defying a Medium

Morgan Brittain, William & Mary

Widely considered to be the first modern example of the artist’s book, William Blake’s 1794 *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* began a prolific practice that has spanned movements ever since. Another notable example is Ed Ruscha’s 1963 *Twentysix Gasoline Stations*, which itself spun less famous but equally fascinating parodies like Daniel Teoli’s *Twenty-six Roadkills* (2013) and the 2022 *Twentysix Wawa Stores* by Eric Weeks. Even more recently, Cannupa Hanska Luger’s *Surviva: A Future Ancestral Field Guide* (2025) uses redaction and overlaid poetry and drawing to provide an Indigenous corrective to a 1970s Army survival guide, further enriching this long tradition of conceptual and critical response. Equally diverse as difficult to define, the artist’s book has always spanned media and bent genre. How are we as artists and art historians thinking about the artist’s book right now? What does this conceptual



frame offer our practice? Session topics might include but are no means limited to discrete art historical studies of specific books, artists' reflections on creating their own book/s, and pedagogical engagements with the artist's book.

## **To Robot-Proof or Not to Robot-Proof: AI in the Age of Cultural Transformation**

Jeremy Culler, University of South Carolina Aiken

In *Robot-Proof: Higher Education in the Age of Artificial Intelligence*, Joseph E. Aoun presents a framework for the university as a catalyst for human reinvention during a time of technological transformation—one in which individuals must continuously (re)negotiate between the evolving impact of artificial intelligence on creative output and the humanist enterprise of “experiential and lifelong learning” in the service of enhancing “cognitive capacities” and “mental abilities.” Aoun’s suggested solution is a framework for a new curriculum called “humanics,” which combines technological, data, and human literacies within an experiential environment. Additionally, he reiterates the necessity for universities to adopt a lifelong learning approach through a social agreement with government, employers, and the learners themselves. While this pedagogical model might provide a route for negotiating a technology that is becoming all pervasive, it does address AI in the age of cultural transformation at the level of creative output—one that is transforming the way artists, designers, scholars, and teachers learn, make, and teach. This session calls for papers that extend the conversation beyond surface level negotiations of AI in creative, scholarly work, learning and teaching. Proposals addressing critical, theoretical, historical, and practice-based perspectives are all welcome.

## **Weaving Relations: Indigenous Women’s Textile Practices in Contemporary Art**

Changil Kim, University of Florida

This session invites 3–4 paper presentations examining Indigenous women’s textile-based practices—such as weaving, embroidery, fiber painting, and collective making—as critical contemporary art forms. Across Indigenous communities, textile practices function as relational systems that connect land, body, ancestry, and knowledge transmission, rather than as decorative or secondary “craft.” Recent international exhibitions, including the 60th Venice Biennale and Frieze London, have foregrounded artists such as Claudia Alarcón & Silāt Collective, whose work emerges from Wichí women’s communal weaving traditions in Argentina. Their collective authorship challenges Western art-historical models that privilege individual creativity and hierarchies separating fine art from Indigenous women’s labor. Similarly, artists such as Dyani White Hawk, Teresa Baker, and Marie Watt draw on Indigenous textile logics to address histories of displacement, survivance, and relational belonging within contemporary exhibition contexts. This session is grounded in Indigenous feminist and decolonial scholarship, including Linda Tuhiwai Smith’s (2012) *Decolonizing Methodologies*, Leanne Betasamosake Simpson’s (2014) writing on land-based relationality and resurgence, Kim TallBear’s (2019) work on Indigenous relational ontologies, and Audra Simpson’s (2014) theorization of refusal. We welcome interdisciplinary papers from art history, art education, Indigenous studies, and visual culture that address material agency, exhibition practices, collective making, and Indigenous women’s epistemologies.



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## STUDIO ART

### I Painter, I Painting

Amanda Lechner, Virginia Tech

Painters talk about a single painting they have made. What inspired it? How was it made? What are the subjects? What was the process? Presentations may include contributing research, material discoveries, WIP images, studio patterns, color orchestration, the impact of theory... This is a platform to share and discuss the minutiae of the painting process. This is not navel-gazing - instead it is the generosity of transparency, laying-bare studio pathos, showing patterns of discovery or perhaps the jettisoning of a spent idea. Each presentation is a case study of a studio moment (or era) - a forum for practice-grounded discussion. This session may feature artists responding to specific traditions/schools or re-evaluating and disrupting the media of painting. Note: Proposals should include a link to an image of the finished or in-process painting featured in the submitted abstract.

### Artist driven AI

Augustus Wendell, Duke University; Shachaf Polakow, University of Louisville

As artificial intelligence (AI) becomes increasingly dominated by extractive corporate models, built on unlicensed media and optimized for profit, a counter-movement is emerging. Artists and educators are rejecting passive consumption of proprietary systems, instead authoring their own models, developing alternative infrastructures, and establishing critical practices that center creative agency. This session convenes practitioners who are actively shaping AI development from within arts contexts. We examine how artists are training models on intentional datasets, building tools that resist platform dependency, and creating pedagogical frameworks that treat AI as a medium for critical making rather than a black-boxed utility. Rather than asking how artists can adapt to AI, we investigate how artist-led development challenges the technological determinism of the current moment. What does it mean to author intelligence as creative practice? How do we build sustainable alternatives to corporate AI? What pedagogies emerge when students learn to make these systems? Join us to explore strategies for reclaiming AI development as a site of artistic research, cultural production, and institutional resistance.

### Beyond the Studio: Art Pedagogy and Community Collaboration

Su A Chae, University of Arkansas

What happens when artists and educators move beyond the studio walls to work directly with communities? This session explores how art practice and pedagogy become sites of connection, dialogue, and transformation when grounded in collaboration and shared purpose. From public art initiatives to community partnerships, socially engaged design, participatory projects, and service-learning courses, we invite presentations that examine how artists and educators engage communities to address pressing concerns, build relationships, and shape resonant community impact. We welcome contributions from all disciplines whose work interlaces classroom learning with community engagement. Presentations may address collaborative artmaking processes; partnerships with civic or nonprofit organizations; pedagogical strategies for community-based projects; or student learning





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outcomes that extend beyond technical skills. We are especially interested in projects that bring together communities across differences, create spaces for dialogue, and amplify voices often marginalized in public discourse. Because community-engaged art requires navigating complex dynamics—between artists and communities, partners and institutions, expectations and realities—this session invites critical reflection. Topics may include reciprocity, authorship, ethics, shared labor, interdisciplinary collaboration, and the evolving institutional role in supporting community-responsive curricula. Presenters are encouraged to share models, case studies, research, and reflections that speak to art’s capacity to build connection, agency, and belonging.

## **Binding Stories: Cultural Threads Across Borders**

Haelim Allen, Samford University

This session invites artists whose creative practices explore themes of identity, cultural traditions, and the complex narratives that emerge from experiences of displacement and the search for belonging. We seek works that interweave personal and communal histories, highlighting how cultural threads persist, adapt, or unravel across borders and generations. Through visual storytelling and material engagement, these artists illuminate the tensions and harmonies between rootedness and transience. The session will begin with brief presentations in which artists share the conceptual frameworks and processes behind their practice. Following this, attendees will engage in a collaborative art-making activity facilitated by the session chair. This hands-on, shared creative expression aims to foster connection, deepen understanding, and generate new insights into the ways art can bind stories, and us, across diverse cultural landscapes and borders.

## **Collaborative Responsive Geometric Pattern Activity**

Matthew French, University of North Carolina Wilmington

This proposal is for a collaborative and interactive art activity to be completed by participants who are present at the conference session. As a group activity, this proposal can be completed within the 105 minute window for presentations. Multiple geometric patterns can overlap each other to create a singular design. As the designs and patterns overlap the shapes that compose them respond to each other creating a cohesive and organic appearance, much like the topography of a landscape. Participants would be divided into 3 groups, each group would draw a design on an 18 x 24 inch sheet of tracing paper. These three designs would be combined to overlap on a separate sheet of drawing paper. The groups would be divided into 1) iconic radial balance, 2) gestural tessellation, and 3) ambient background pattern. The three groups collectively producing a singular cohesive pattern with geometric shapes responding to each other. Color can be applied at that stage. This project can also expand as separate panels depending on number of participants, thus there is potential to increase the size of the project beyond 18 x 24 inch.





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## **Computational Craft: Structures and Shifts**

Dustin Dennis, Virginia Tech

How is computational craft defined in our contemporary age? In a time when AI slop is oversaturating social media feeds and screen attention, artists are turning to the tangible, the physical, but without losing sight of the potential of digital innovation. This session addresses how artists are incorporating computational technologies and processes to disrupt or enhance conventional notions of physical craft. Artists present case-studies on the use of digital craft to hybridize, enhance, evolve, or interrupt physical outputs within creative practices. Do digital processes and technologies impede or challenge what we may traditionally consider craft? Or do they enhance and evolve the possibilities of how craft is defined and understood? What constitutes an updated definition of computational craft? Are there discernible patterns that might arise to help define what digitally engaged craft might mean today? This session aims to find out. This session calls upon artists who merge traditional physical methods with innovative digital processes and might include creatives who deploy digital Jacquard looms, create 3D printed ceramics, robotics, creative coding or projects that incorporate Human Computer Interaction (HCI) that yields tangible interfaces, etc.

## **Cut and Paste: Collage and Contemporary Practice**

Jessie VanderLaan-Delaney, Walters State Community College; Alice Stone-Collins, Georgia Gwinnett College

Ubiquitous in the digital landscape in reference to editing documents, spreadsheets, and designs, to “cut and paste” is rooted in the tactile action of scissors and glue. Both rely on methods of repetition, iteration, construction, and re-contextualization. As a medium, collage is among the most broadly defined. Collage continues to challenge its humble premise, as the materials it employs often transcend their material qualities—paper for one could be “found paper” “newspaper”, “painted paper”, etc. Collage centralizes materiality, both integrating and challenging the presumption of authenticity. While collage often employs a sense of play, it also demonstrates an exacting lens of how an artist collects, sorts, and processes their life, work, and environment. This panel seeks papers and presentations by artists working with collage in either (or both) analog or digital methods to reflect on the history of collage, ties to personal or collective memory, examination of social constructs, and to answer the eternal question: “Which is the best type of glue?”

## **Down The Rabbit Hole: Nurturing Intuitive Art-Making Processes**

Grace Ramsey, Transylvania University; Kurt Gohde, Transylvania University

Too often students are led by fear and a reluctance to take risks in college-level studio art courses. In this session we will explore ways to incorporate intuitive processes into class projects. How can we encourage students to embrace play, relinquish control, and invite the randomness of chance into their creative work? Have you developed strategies for students to arrive at their own making processes through intentionally intuitive measures? Have you created projects that allow students to work intuitively from start to finish? Surrealists used the “exquisite corpse” game to facilitate an intuitive approach. Even earlier, a parlor game called “consequences,” enabled participants to intuitively write a





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story with others. Have you used these or similar structures to release students from the pressure of perfection and embrace intuitive processes? Have you developed strategies that cause students to embrace & trust their own intuition as it relates to making art within college courses? We invite submissions that discuss theoretical exploration of intuitive processes, case studies, successful class projects, or teaching artists sharing their own intuitive studio practices.

## Drawing Out

Brad Adams, Berry College

Drawing is central to contemporary discourses employing traditional modes of representation to those that incorporate elements of time, actual space, temporality, site-specificity, and expanded media. Drawing also plays a key role for many artists for purposes of ideation, exploration, and play. Drawing Out seeks artists who utilize drawing – however they define it – as part of their studio practice. A range of ways that drawing is used are sought; from artists who use drawing as their primary means of expression to those that, while more peripheral, play an important role in their creative process. Talks may highlight the immediacy of drawing to more hybrid approaches that expand the ways that drawing is often defined. Further, talks might focus on material explorations, ways that drawing positions itself within a particular lineage, or how a practice informs (or is informed by) pedagogy. In addition to an engaging group of artist talks, work by these artists will be included in a group exhibition following the conference.

## Flat Screens, Flat Images? Rethinking Craft, Resistance, and Materiality in the Studio Art Classroom

Yun Shin, Austin Peay State University

In recent years, many upper-level drawing students have gravitated toward digital tools such as Procreate, often expressing resistance to working with physical materials. This shift has generated ongoing debates in my studio classrooms: Why do students prefer digital drawing? What is lost or gained when craft, scale, and material resistance are minimized? Despite structured assignments requiring students to physically intervene on digitally printed images, many resist this process, resulting in work that remains visually flat, underdeveloped, and inattentive to scale. This session reflects on teaching experiences that reveal a growing disconnect between students and traditional notions of craftsmanship. While some instructors may interpret this trend as a matter of generational difference or lack of effort, this presentation complicates such assumptions by situating students' digital preferences within broader generational, technological, and cultural shifts. I argue that students' reluctance to work with physical materials reflects not only changing values around labor and skill, but also the absence of pedagogical frameworks that meaningfully integrate digital practices with material rigor. Through classroom examples, student work comparisons, and guided discussion, this session explores whether educators should continue to insist on physical engagement, recalibrate expectations of craft, or develop strategies that deepen digital work beyond the screen. It invites dialogue on redefining craftsmanship, materiality, and critical making in contemporary studio art practice.





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## **From Pop-ups to Artist Run Spaces: DIY and Experimental Exhibitions**

Madison Creech, University of North Carolina Wilmington

DIY and experimental exhibition spaces, including artist-run galleries, studio-based spaces, pop-up exhibitions, hallways, nooks, exterior spaces, garages, and empty storefronts, have long provided flexible platforms for artists to share their work. Often starting with limited resources, these projects grow out of necessity, curiosity, and collaboration, becoming meaningful sites of learning for artists, students, and communities. This session takes a how-to approach to exhibition making in DIY and experimental exhibition contexts. Panelists will share what's involved in starting, organizing, and sustaining experimental exhibition projects, offering origin stories and working models that range from artist-run spaces to pop-up exhibitions and event-based happenings. The focus is on exhibition-making as an active practice, from planning and collaboration to installation, programming, and outreach. Contributions are welcomed from artists, educators, and curators who have started or worked within these exhibition projects. Presentations may address student involvement in curatorial decision-making, installation, design, marketing, or event production. The session also emphasizes community connection, examining how experimental exhibition models build relationships with local audiences and collaborators over time. Practices that are difficult to accommodate in traditional exhibition settings, such as ephemeral, performative, or experimental work, are particularly encouraged.

## **Interwoven Lineages: Threads, Patterns & Disruptions**

Sheila Goloborotko, University of North Florida

This panel invites artists, educators, researchers, and activists to reflect on the interwoven relationships through which knowledge is shared across generations. From mentors and mentees to artists and studio assistants, from researchers and collaborators to teachers and students, these partnerships form ecologies—living systems where skills, values, ethics, and ways of working are passed on, reshaped, and sometimes disrupted. Rather than framing legacy as a fixed inheritance, this panel centers mentorship as a reciprocal and evolving exchange. We ask: What do we teach—and what do we learn—within these relationships? How do generosity, care, authorship, and power circulate? How are traditions sustained, transformed, or intentionally challenged through collaboration? We welcome proposals that address formal and informal modes of transmission, including studio practice, craft, pedagogy, research, and activism. In the spirit of Interwoven Lineages: Threads, Patterns & Disruptions, this panel foregrounds mentorship as a thread connecting past, present, and future—one that carries responsibility, possibility, and care.

## **Interwoven Materialities: Traditional Weaving Logics in Digital Art Practices**

Qianyu Zhou, Teachers College, Columbia University; Cece Jiao, Teachers College, Columbia University

This session centers on traditional weaving not simply as a craft technique, but as a conceptual logic that continues to inform contemporary digital art practices. Framing weaving as a system of thinking grounded in pattern, repetition, tension, and relational structure, the session brings together studio-based explorations of how these principles subtly resonate with generative and digitally mediated forms





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of artmaking. Across cultures, weaving operates through interdependent systems of warp and weft in which meaning emerges through accumulation, variation, and constraint. Presentations are expected to be practice-led and may take the form of artist talks, process documentation, or reflective discussions of studio work that integrate hand weaving with digital tools, rule-based systems, or generative workflows. Together, the session positions weaving as an interwoven site of embodied knowledge, cultural memory, and quiet technological negotiation, bridging historical craft traditions with contemporary digital practice.

## **Interwoven Practices: Building Artist Communities Through Shared Structures**

Kelly Boehmer, Savannah College of Art and Design; Shannon Estlund, Savannah College of Art and Design

This session explores how artists cultivate resilient, meaningful communities through intentionally designed group structures such as critique groups, studio crawls, artist collectives, and informal peer networks. Framed by the conference theme Interwoven: Threads, Patterns, and Disruption, the session examines community-building as an active, evolving practice—one that relies on repetition and, care, and strategic disruption to remain relevant and responsive and inclusive. Rather than positioning community as a byproduct of proximity or institutional affiliation, this session foregrounds the labor, negotiation, and generosity required to sustain artist-led networks. Presenters will share models for forming and maintaining groups that support artistic growth, professional development, and mutual accountability, particularly in contexts where artists may feel isolated from traditional art centers or institutional resources. Topics may include the mechanics of successful critique groups, the role of studio visits and crawls in strengthening local ecosystems, collective approaches to visibility and resource-sharing, and strategies for navigating conflict, burnout, and change within long-term collaborations. Emphasis will be placed on how these structures create patterns of support while remaining flexible enough to adapt—or intentionally unravel—when no longer serving their members. This session invites artists, educators, and administrators to consider how community functions as an interwoven system of relationships: threaded through place, practice, and time. Participants will have an opportunity to share concrete strategies, reflective questions, and adaptable frameworks for fostering sustainable artist communities within and beyond their own regions.

## **Interwoven Practices: Destabilizing Medium Hierarchies in the Undergraduate Studio**

Ashe Laughlin, University of Mary Washington

Guided by the theme "Interwoven: Threads, Patterns & Disruptions," this session examines studio practice as a continuum of making rather than a sequence of discrete media. Many undergraduate curricula reinforce linear hierarchies; this workshop invites educators to disrupt these patterns by focusing on shared material actions: layering, sequencing, erasing, and reconfiguring. We explore pedagogical methods that encourage students to move beyond medium-specific constraints toward open-ended, process-driven inquiry—directly addressing the contemporary student's desire for tactile engagement as a counterbalance to digital saturation. Operating as a pedagogical laboratory, the session replaces traditional papers with high-impact exchange. Presenters lead "lightning rounds" to introduce core philosophies and project prompts. Participants then engage in a hands-on workshop simulating classroom activities that translate ideas across various surfaces and processes, followed by a facilitated





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discussion on adapting these methods to diverse institutional contexts. The Session Chair will provide core Workshop Materials including: flexible substrates (canvas scraps, cardboard, varied papers); drawing media and water-based paints (watercolor/acrylic/low-VOC markers); and binding elements for adhesion and simple stitching. Presenters and participants are encouraged to bring supplemental materials to enhance collaborative exchange. All attendees will receive access to a shared digital toolkit of project briefs and assessment strategies.

## **Life Disruptions as Opportunities for Artistic Growth**

Stella Arbeláez, University of Central Florida (UCF)

In *The War of Art*, Steven Pressfield asserts that “the more scared we are of a work or calling, the more sure we can be that we have to do it.” He situates this insight within reflections on isolation, love, and healing as forces that both shape and counteract creative resistance. Fear, in this sense, becomes not a barrier but an indicator of potential transformation. Throughout life, we encounter disruptions that unsettle our identity and practice—becoming a parent, navigating divorce, relocating, graduating or grieving a loss, to name a few. Such experiences can interrupt creative momentum while opening pathways to new forms of inquiry and expression. This session invites studio and interdisciplinary artists, designers, and researchers to present work emerging from periods of disruption, uncertainty, or transformation. We seek contributions that explore how fear and change influence creative processes, and how acts of making provide opportunities to foster adaptation, resilience, renewal and self discovery.

## **Making Your Mark: The Evolving Role of the Artist’s Hand in Drawing and Painting**

Jessica Mongeon, Arkansas Tech University

In a visual culture that has been saturated by AI images, has the hand-drawn mark become more significant or less relevant? What is the role of the hand-drawn and hand-painted image in your teaching and in the future of art and design? This session seeks instructors that explore mark-making in the classroom with their students, and artists who use it in their art practice. Are students embracing imperfection in their work more now than ever? What is the role of technology in mark-making such as drawing with a stylus on a tablet? Share your best projects, your classroom experiences, successes, failures, and manifestos with a mind to mark-making.

## **Parts Unknown: Working and Teaching Beyond Established Expertise**

Sam Blanchard, Virginia Tech

Have experiences in your own studio practice led you to develop new methods that you then transformed into a course? Have you ever had to teach something you were less familiar with? This session is designed for those who have stepped outside their comfort zones—whether in the classroom, the studio, or both. As departmental resources dwindle, faculty are increasingly asked to teach a broader range of courses. Many of us have accepted teaching assignments without full familiarity with the subject matter or encountered a new material or method in our own studio practice that we felt





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compelled to bring into the classroom. Others have found their work becoming stagnant and intentionally veered into unfamiliar territory. How did these shifts reshape your approach to teaching? Did you focus on mastering specific outcomes, or did you adapt your pedagogy to allow learning to unfold alongside your students? This session offers an opportunity to reflect on the challenges and opportunities that arise when venturing beyond one's established expertise.

## **Rooted Alchemy: Plants as Process, Partner, & Teacher**

Aimee George, James Madison University

This session explores how plant-based creative processes can help us navigate the imbalance, uncertainty, and transformation of our current ecological moment. As Mother Earth mutates—subtly, violently, continuously—we are called to respond not only with innovation, but with presence, reciprocity, and deep ecological awareness. This session centers work that honors cycles, rhythms, and the organic intelligence inherent in both human experience and the botanical world. Through the lens of a photography professor/nerd engaged in plant-based research and development, the session examines how teaching and image-making can become a living conversation with the vegetal: a space where intention, attention, connection, and material processes generate insight, healing, discoveries, disruption, or transformation. Using traditional, sustainable, organic, and plant-derived materials—alongside experimental and interdisciplinary approaches—this inquiry highlights how plant-centered methods embody or challenge the contrasts of our contemporary time: certainty and ambiguity, balance and imbalance, creation and dissolution. At its core, this session asks how mindful, sustainable, plant-based image-making can help us reconnect, reimagine, and re-balance ourselves within the broader living ecosystem we are intertwined with—cultivating practices that are both artistic and ecological, both contemplative and radically responsive.

## **Sew What? Integrating Textiles into Studio Art Curriculum**

Annie Strader, Wabash College; Matthew Weedman, Wabash College

This panel invites submissions from educators who incorporate textiles into studio art courses at institutions that do not have dedicated textile or fiber programs (but will also accept proposals from people who do.) We are especially interested in creative, resourceful, and conceptually driven approaches that introduce fabric-based practices within drawing, sculpture, painting, performance, foundations, or interdisciplinary studio classrooms at any level. Have you experimented with sewing or fabric as a collage medium, sculptural material, conceptual tool, or process-based strategy? How do textile methods expand students' understanding of material, labor, identity, history or meaning—particularly in spaces where textile instruction is not formally supported? Proposals can address, but are not limited to:

- Using fabric, sewing, or soft materials as collage, relief, or assemblage
- Textiles as sculptural or installation-based material
- Conceptual or socially engaged textile projects
- Low-tech, accessible, or nontraditional textile processes
- Teaching strategies for introducing sewing or fabric skills to beginners
- Assignments that challenge hierarchies between “craft” and “fine art”
- Cross-disciplinary approaches (textiles + drawing, printmaking, ceramics, etc.)
- Equity, sustainability, labor, or cultural narratives embedded in textile work

Presentations may include assignments, course structures, pedagogical challenges, student outcomes, or reflections on institutional constraints and opportunities.





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## **Show Off: Art exhibitions and their discontents**

Rocky Horton, Lipscomb University; Thomas Sturgill, Belmont University

This panel challenges the white cube gallery and traditional museum display as neutral, universal formats. Conventional exhibition practices have dictated how we encounter art: white galleries, chronological arrangements, individual contemplation. These formats aren't inevitable—they reflect specific institutional values and power structures. Our panelists will discuss alternative approaches: participatory exhibitions, refusals of display, community-curated shows, deliberately chaotic installations, and digital formats that bypass physical institutions entirely. We'll examine concrete examples of exhibitions that disrupted conventions and consider what they reveal about whose art gets seen, how it's valued, and who decides. We'll also grapple with contradictions: Can critique happen within institutional walls? Do experimental formats create new exclusions? How do artists navigate or subvert dominant display structures? This conversation invites artists, curators, and scholars to reimagine exhibition practices that better serve the possibilities of contemporary art.

## **Sing Along with Kitsch**

Alessandra Sulpy, Winona State University

In our lives, we've seen a lot of art. Every day we're inspired by great artwork, but admittedly... we've also seen a lot of crap. We can usually tell the difference, but that comes to a greater question; what IS the difference? One way to approach quality is to address Kitsch and Cliché, which can help us understand originality, intent, and art that may mean something. When we talk about kitsch, we're typically pulled into a world of mid-century sentimentality, religious excess, or 'collectable' knick knacks. However, the existence of kitsch didn't begin with Clement Greenberg and didn't end with Thomas Kinkade... it's alive and well in 2026, but it's changed shape. In a culture of homogenous Pinterest art, AI image generators, and a growing fear (and suppression) of free expression, thinking about non-ephemeral, non-disposable, and anti-sentimental art seems to be as important as ever. How do we identify it, distinguish it from cliché (especially in pop culture and art trends), and how do we get students to think about these things in a contemporary setting? This session aims to seek artists and professors who address kitsch or cliché in their own work or in the classroom.

## **Space Makers (part 2): Disability and the Changing Tide of Inclusion and Perspective**

Aaron Wilcox, UNC Wilmington

Space Makers: Art and Disability in North Carolina was an exhibition at the Cameron Art Museum in 2025. The exhibition highlighted the "rich tapestry of work by disabled artists/artists with disabilities in North Carolina." In the description, I continued that, "there are limitless ways that disability impacts how we navigate the world, and the art disabled folks makes reflects that variety in abundance. In the exhibition, artists with disabilities claim their voices and command space through visual, experiential, and often incredibly experimental artwork." I This roundtable will continue the conversation and focus on changing perspectives on disability in art and teaching. This is a complex topic within the ebb and flow of experience. As an artist and educator with a disability, I know this is not easy. There is always pressure,





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resistance, and barriers, but there is also a building confidence, one fueled by vulnerability. The strength for any of us to do this comes from a larger community of people that struggle with ideas and instigate change. This roundtable is about ownership—artists, educators, students, museum and gallery professionals, advocates, and activists will come together to share experiences and generate ideas for change. I. Wilcox, Aaron. “Space Makers: Art and Disability in North Carolina.” Cameron Art Museum, <https://cameronartmuseum.org/exhibition/space-makers/>

## **The Art of Not Being Yourself: Alter Egos and Artistic Identity**

Loraine Wible, Art Academy of Cincinnati; Joshua Yates, Georgia Southern University

Ziggy Stardust, Rose Sélavy, Hennessy Youngman, Claude Cahun, Shoji Yamaguchi (etc.): artists have long employed secondary names, constructed personas, alter egos, and literal masks to interrogate authorship, visibility, and the conditions under which art is produced and received. Far from functioning solely as concealment, these strategies operate as critical methodologies, enabling experimentation, resistance, and reinvention. These practices disrupt fixed notions of the artist-subject while revealing patterns shaped by race, gender, class, surveillance, and professionalization. This session proposes to explore how pseudonyms, alternate identities, and masking function as creative approaches within artistic practice across historical and contemporary contexts. Panelists are invited to present papers or performances grounded in personal artistic practices, as well as theoretical and historical research focused on artists, collectives, or movements that employ(ed) anonymity or multiplicity as conceptual tools. Through historical, theoretical, and practice-based perspectives, contributors will examine how alternate identities operate as interwoven threads connecting craft, labor, performance, and resistance. In alignment with SECAC 2026’s theme of Interwoven: Threads, Patterns & Disruptions, this session highlights how artists repeatedly unravel and reassemble identity as a material and conceptual practice, revealing the self as contingent, constructed, and strategically deployed within broader cultural, social, and institutional systems.

## **The Sketchbook as a Journey and a Practice**

Hannah Keats, Chipola College

The sketchbook only wants to be filled. It is a silent observer of the process and the practice, but plays an instrumental role in how finished work comes together, allows for experimentation, encourages reflection, and sometimes even lets you vent. In this panel, we will explore the various ways that contemporary artists are utilizing the sketchbook in their practice, teaching, and life.



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## UNDERGRADUATE SESSIONS

### **Undergraduate Session: Art History & Museum Studies**

Ewa Matczyk, UNC-Wilmington; Alex Brown, NCMA-West

This session welcomes presentations on any subject in art history, architectural history, and museum studies by undergraduate students. The student's proposal must be accompanied by a faculty member's letter of support attesting to the validity of the research and also stating the faculty member's willingness to assist the student in preparing a paper for presentation. Please email the faculty support letter to Ewa Matczyk, [matczyke@uncw.edu](mailto:matczyke@uncw.edu), and Alex Brown, [alexander.brown@dncr.nc.gov](mailto:alexander.brown@dncr.nc.gov).

### **Undergraduate Session: Studio Art & Graphic Design**

Kathryn Shields, Guilford College; Augustus Wendell, Duke University

This session welcomes presentations on any subject in studio art and graphic design by undergraduate students. The student's proposal must be accompanied by a faculty member's letter of support attesting to the validity of the research and also stating the faculty member's willingness to assist the student in preparing a paper for presentation. Please email the faculty letter of support and résumé to Kathryn Shields, [shieldsk@guilford.edu](mailto:shieldsk@guilford.edu), and Augustus Wendell, [augustus.wendell@duke.edu](mailto:augustus.wendell@duke.edu).