



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

IS IT TIME TO KILL THE MFA?

Date: February 9, 7:30 EST, 5:30 MT

Where: Zoom

Cost: Free

RSVP to attend.

Moderator: Paddy Johnson

Panelists: Thomas Evans, Catherine Haggarty, Nato Thompson, Dexter Wimberly, Charlie White.

The educational system isn't working. Enrollment in art schools is down. Tuition costs are going up. Adjuncts don't make a living wage and tenured professors work in broken administrative systems.

As job opportunities for artists dwindle, and loans saddle artists with debts that can take a lifetime to repay is more secondary education really what artists need? How can we remake an educational system that counters the structural inequity that often precludes high-level opportunities for BIPOC artists?

Is it Time to Kill the MFA? brings together professionals working inside art institutions and outside to build art practices, and to help tool artists with the skills they need to get ahead. Some believe that by working within post-secondary institutions they can make needed changes while others have sought solutions elsewhere. The panel serves as a forum to discuss the conditions placing pressure on artists leaving the institutions, and what we can do to support them.

Following the panel, we will be joined by special guests Gridthiya Gaweewong and Heather Darcy Bhandari who will help us think beyond the discussion and inform questions that we will all take during the Q&A.

This talk is free and open to the public.

*Produced in partnership with **VWrkshop***

PANELIST BIOS AND PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Paddy Johnson (moderator)

Paddy Johnson is an online pioneer with more than 15 years experience in communications and publishing. She is the founder of VVrkshop, an online platform offering high-level professional support to artists. She is also the co-founder of Impractical Spaces, Parade NYC, and the Contemporary Art blog Art F City. She has written for publications like CNN, The New York Times, and New York Magazine.

VVrkshop: With courses on art statements, social media, and website optimization, VVrkshop gives arts workers access to high-level professionalization tools at an affordable cost. The hub of professionals, founded by writer and educator Paddy Johnson in response to the pandemic, helps independent artists generate more opportunities.

Classes are collaborative and built on sharing. Our instructors have led esteemed publications such as ARTnews, and Art F City, and published in The New York Times, New York Magazine, and The Wall Street Journal. They've taught at schools including Yale, Brown, and Cornell University. VVRKSHOP's workshops are designed to function like building blocks. One course builds on another, just like the steps you take building a career.

Thomas Evans, a.k.a. Detour, is an all-around creative specializing in large scale public art, interactive visuals, portraiture, immersive spaces, and creative directing. His focus is to create work where art and innovation meet. A born collaborator and "military brat," Detour pulls from every conceivable experience that shapes his landscapes and perspectives. Explaining Detour's work is no easy task, as ongoing experimentations in visual art, music, and interactive technologies have his practice continually expanding. With his ever-evolving approach to art, Detour's focus is on expanding customary views of creativity and challenging fine-art paradigms by mixing traditional mediums with new approaches—all the while opening up the creative process from that of a singular artist, to one that thrives on multi-layered collaboration and viewer participation.

Catherine Haggarty, b. 1984, is an artist based in Brooklyn, New York. Catherine has been a visiting artist & critic at SUNY Purchase MFA (2020), Hunter MFA (2020), Denison University (2020), Brooklyn College MFA (2019) and in 2018 Haggarty was the Anderson Endowed Lecturer at Penn State University. Her recent solo show at Massey Kleinn Gallery in the Lower East Side, NY just closed and previous solo shows include: Proto Gallery, Bloomsburg University, Look e Listen and This Friday Next Friday. Haggarty earned her M.F.A from Mason



Gross, Rutgers University in 2011. Currently, Haggarty is an adjunct professor at The School of Visual Arts (SVA) also co-directs NYC Crit Club with artist and critic, Hilary Doyle.

NYC Crit club

NYC Crit Club is a radical alternative offering critique, community and connection for artists post BFA and post MFA. We are proud to offer BIPOC Scholarships and work study rates for artists in financial need. NYC Crit club is run by Hilary Doyle & Catherine Haggarty and operates on Zoom due to the Pandemic. Now in its fifth year, NYC Crit Club began with rotating studio visits and critiques held in Brooklyn and Manhattan studios and galleries. The Spring 2021 semester is offering 12 courses with 11 new faculty and 50 guest critics.

Follow us @nycritclub and visit us at www.nycritclub.com

Nato Thompson is an author, curator and what he describes as “cultural infrastructure builder”. He is also the founder of The Alternative Art School. He worked as Artistic Director at Philadelphia Contemporary, Philadelphia Contemporary, and Creative Time as Artistic Director and as Curator at MASS MoCA. Thompson organized major Creative Time projects including The Creative Time Summit (2009–2015), Pedro Reyes’ Doomocracy (2016), Kara Walker’s A Subtlety (2014), Living as Form (2011), Trevor Paglen’s The Last Pictures (2012), Paul Ramírez Jonas’s Key to the City (2010), Jeremy Deller’s It is What it is (2009, with New Museum curators Laura Hoptman and Amy Mackie), Democracy in America: The National Campaign (2008), and Paul Chan’s Waiting for Godot in New Orleans (2007), among others. He has written two books of cultural criticism, Seeing Power: Art and Activism in the 21st Century (2015) and Culture as Weapon: The Art of Influence in Everyday Life (2017)

The Alternative Art School: We can make a world together. We can do it by supporting, listening, learning and building with each other. Using the informal networks of a global arts community dedicated to art that meets the public half-way, we launched *The Alternative Art School*. At TAAS the formula is simple: affordability, well paid visionary faculty, and intimate class sizes. We take this formula and put it into motion in an on-line platform that emphasizes group work, community building, and dynamic modes of sociality and art-making. TAAS stands firmly on a commitment to the production of dreams, alternatives, social relationships and inner-dialogues produced in tandem with an active caring for each other and our planet.

Charlie White is Head of the School of Art at Carnegie Mellon University. His work as both artist and academic bridges varied mediums and critical theory, popular culture, and technology. Under his leadership, CMU significantly increased resources and support for its MFA program in Art by adding a new 10,000 square foot facility, expanding financial support for students, and restructuring the curriculum to provide greater individualized mentorship. Prior to CMU, White was a professor in USC's Roski School of Art and Design, where he also served as director of the school's MFA program. White, along with four colleagues in the MFA program, departed USC after a new administration radically restructured and defunded the school's graduate



program. White has had solo exhibitions at LACMA; Domus Artium in Salamanca, Spain; and the Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, among others. Six monographs of his work have been published, and his films have screened at the Sundance Film Festival and Director's Fortnight at Cannes.

Carnegie Mellon

Carnegie Mellon University | The School of Art

The School of Art, housed within one of the most respected research universities in the United States, offers an unparalleled convergence of contemporary art, technology, and critical discourse. Combining a renowned studio program with the interdisciplinary resources of a cutting-edge research environment, the School of Art bridges the fundamental areas of studio practice with the experimental practices of new media, physical computing, and program-based expression. Esteemed faculty provide an intense, professional-level learning environment that fosters experimentation, boundary crossing, and the development of hybrid processes.

Dexter Wimberly Bio

Dexter Wimberly is the co-founder of the financial literacy platforms Art World Conference and Art World Learning. He is also an independent curator who has organized exhibitions and developed programs with galleries and institutions around the world including The Third Line in Dubai; The Museum of the African Diaspora (MoAD) in San Francisco; Koki Arts in Tokyo; and the Museum of Arts and Design in New York City. Wimberly's exhibitions have been reviewed and featured in publications including The New York Times, Artforum, and Hyperallergic, and have received support from The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts. He has also served as Director of Strategic Planning at Independent Curators International in New York City. Wimberly is currently a Senior Critic at New York Academy of Art. He is also the founder and director of the Hayama Artist Residency in Japan.

Art World Learning

Art World Learning (AWL) is a new online education platform created by Art World Conference. AWL brings financial health to artists, designers, and cultural producers through a series of videos and learning materials presented by and for creatives on topics such as freelance finance, budgeting, taxes, credit, debt, investing, and intellectual property. The subscription-based platform is currently being used by educational institutions across the country and is available to schools and arts organizations that wish to foster the financial independence of their students, alumni, and artist/designer communities.

Q&A Presence

Gridthiya Gawewong founded arts organization Project 304 in 1996, and is currently an artistic director of the Jim Thompson Art Center, Bangkok. Her curatorial projects have addressed issues of social transformation confronting artists from Thailand and beyond since the Cold War. Gawewong has organized exhibitions and events including Politics of Fun at the Haus der



Kulturen der Welt, Berlin (2005), the Bangkok Experimental Film Festival (1997–2007), and (with Rirkrit Tiravanija) Saigon Open City in Saigon, Vietnam (2006–2007).

Heather Darcy Bhandari is the program director of the Art World Conference, an independent curator, a co-founder of The Remix, an adjunct lecturer at Brown University, a lead organizer of Forward Union, and a consultant to several for-profit and not-for-profit arts institutions. The second edition of her book *Art/Work* was published by Simon and Schuster in October of 2017. She is on the board of directors of visual arts at Art Omi and the advisory board of Trestle Gallery. From 2000 to 2016 she was a director of Mixed Greens gallery in Chelsea. Most recently, she was the Director of Exhibitions at Smack Mellon in Brooklyn. Her career began at contemporary galleries Sonnabend and Lehmann Maupin.