

The Newsletter of the American Academy of Art

ACADEMY NEWS



Samantha DeCarlo

Academy Illustration Graduate is One Busy Artist



Samantha DeCarlo – Now Showing on a Billboard Near You!



2012 Academy Illustration graduate is one busy artist.

Samantha DeCarlo's dream for her work to reach many is one step closer to reality with the latest project she recently completed for PepsiCo brand Sierra Mist.

Earlier this year, Samantha was contracted by Sierra Mist's NY-based ad agency to be one of five artists to create the latest Sierra Mist outdoor campaign in Chicago. Samantha had previously worked with the agency on a Samsung Galaxy Note phone project.

Samantha was the first of the five artists who painted the exquisite collaboration mural in September. The method is also known as an exquisite corpse style. Each artist was given a day to create, with the next artist picking up where the last one left off. The finished piece was reprinted on enormous billboards on display at 15 high-visibility locations throughout Chicago.

Building inspiration and connections via the Academy.

Speaking about her early impressions of the Academy, Samantha says: "I knew the Academy was for me the second I walked in the door. The warmth and intensity of the instructors made me want to go there." Sharing her thoughts about the value of networking,

Samantha explains: "The contacts and friends you meet there should last a lifetime if you nurture your relationships. I keep in contact, network and do shows with several of my old Academy friends. You never know who's going to end up where and open another door for themselves and for you. The Academy also taught me how to run a business, not just how to draw. I simply loved and am a huge advocate for the Academy."

Besides graduating second in her class, Samantha also received the Academy's President's Academic Achievement Award in 2012 and made the president's list 2009-2012.

Successfully balancing three sides of her career

Samantha maintains a well-rounded and busy professional life, split among three areas.

First, she works full-time as a studio supervisor for Bottle & Bottega in La Grange. Samantha manages all marketing and instructs four to five times a week. "I love working there. It's a franchise, but I have lots of freedom," Samantha states.

Secondly, Samantha actively exhibits her work, with several pieces showing this fall in Chicago galleries.

Thirdly, Samantha creates and sells commissioned works. She's currently developing two, large-scale paintings for local clients.



Artwork by Samantha DeCarlo, Interruption 2014 Acrylic

An artist's aspirations

"I'm still working on learning to paint and tell a story through art; I practice painting everyday," Samantha explains. "I hope to get a book of art or illustrated story published soon. I love traveling and would love to one day publish a drawn diary that incorporates my travel experiences into paintings."

Samantha's inspirations

Samantha shares: "The Academy and specific instructors – such as Misha Goro, Tom Herzberg and Rich Kryczka – have been big inspirations of mine. These guys are fantastic and very honest with their criticism. They have played a huge role in my style and art. Overall, I feel very fortunate to be where I am today."

Originally from Elmhurst, in Chicago's western suburbs, Samantha now lives in Oak Park. Learn more about the artist and her work here: samanthadecarlo.com and facebook.com/sgdart.

Additional awards Samantha's work has earned:

- 1st place Illustration Award: American Academy of Art (2011).
- Juror's Award & Student Choice Award for Mystery Show: American Academy of Art (2011).
- Finalist for the Higher Learning Committee (HLC) Competition (2011).
- "3rd Place Adult" in the NAVS Art for Animals competition.

Society of Illustrators Competition Winners! Griffin Plumer & Arielle Estrella

The historic New York-based Society of Illustrators (the Society) selected two American Academy of Art students for its prestigious and highly competitive 2014 Annual Student Scholarship Competition and exhibition.

A jury of professional peers, including art directors and illustrators, selected the best works based on the quality of technique, concept and skill of medium used. Of the 2,275 students that participated, representing 86 schools, only 199 were selected for the 2015 exhibition.

The two current American Academy of Art students selected were:

- Griffin Plumer : 2015 Graduate B.F.A. in Life Drawing.
- Arielle Estrella: 2015 Graduate B.F.A. in Oil Painting.

Griffin Plumer has been awarded the \$6,000 Society of Illustrators Board of Directors Award in Memory of Jeff Fisher for his piece *Untitled*.

Arielle Estrella will be awarded the LeVine Gallery Blurred Line Scholarship Award for her piece titled *Possibly A Beginning*.

"This competition is easily one of the toughest art exhibits for students to enter, where over 7,500 pieces of work are submitted for jurying with approximately 200 pieces being selected. I am proud of everyone from the Academy who entered and just blown away by two students being accepted let alone both of them winning prize money. Griffin Plumer's \$6000.00 award is one of the top monetary prizes. Congratulations to them both." Said Rich Kryczka, Instructor and Co-Chair of the Illustration department.

The Society was founded in NYC in 1901 by nine artists and one businessman, and has a rich history rooted in traditional illustration.



Artwork by Griffin Plumer, Untitled



Arielle Estrella & Griffin Plumer



Artwork by Arielle Estrella, Possibly A Beginning

Legendary Pin-up Girl Artist, Gil Elvgren, Academy's Latest Distinguished Alumnus Award Winner



Gil Elvgren at the Academy

Elvgren Celebrated for His Artistic Impact and Contribution

Gil Elvgren's art boosted the morale of American servicemen in World War II; increased sales and brand value for Coca Cola, General Electric and other companies; and brought joy to many.

Gil Elvgren was also a 1936 graduate of the American Academy of Art. Last year, the Academy celebrated Elvgren by posthumously giving him its highest honor, the Distinguished Alumnus Award. Son, Drake Elvgren, accepted the award on behalf of his father, who passed away in 1980 at age 65.

Gil Elvgren was a painter and illustrator best known for his pin-up girl paintings, which not only graced many calendars, but inspired the nose art on U.S. bomber and fighter planes, and were used in magazine advertisements and billboards for large American companies.

His subjects — women posed in everyday situations and accidentally revealing a little more cleavage and garter-adorned thigh than was typical in the middle of the 20th Century — were definitely attention grabbing. Many artists since have imitated Elvgren's style. Today, pin-up girl art is experiencing a huge resurgence. An original Elvgren pin-up can now sell for upwards of \$200,000.

"Gil Elvgren was a very influential American artist and talented beyond



his popularity," stated Richard Otto, President, of the American Academy of Art. "We're honored that he attended and learned his craft at the Academy."

Drake Elvgren, co-author of [Elvgren: His Life & Art](#), which shows the true scope of Gil Elvgren's art, is his father's spokesman. When accepting the Distinguished Alumnus Award, he emphasized to the 2014 graduating class the importance of diversifying.

While Gil Elvgren is best known for his pin-up girls, he was also a skilled portrait artist.

"He went out of his way to capture the girl next door," Drake Elvgren said. "He wanted a good face over anything

else. The Donna Reed look — one of sweetness and innocence. People appreciate that, and are more apt to hang paintings like that in their homes."

Although the growing re-emergence of Gil Elvgren's popularity makes Drake Elvgren happy, the recognition given by the American Academy of Art is especially sweet.

"It was a wonderful experience," he said. "I was very honored for my dad. He didn't get these kinds of accolades when he was alive. It was great to see him honored for his body of work."



Drake Elvgren accepts award



Academy Events



Academy Alumnus Ben Conaghan Fast Tracked to Art Director



Ben with Academy President, Richard H. Otto

Ben Conaghan had his sights set on leading other artists since he could hold a crayon as a child. Now, less than a year after receiving his Bachelor of Fine Arts in Illustration from the American Academy of Art in 2014, he's already an art director at VML. The global digital marketing agency works with several internal brands and has 2,200 employees on six continents.

Shortly after graduating, Ben accepted a job as an associate art director at VML and moved to Kalamazoo, Michigan. Nine short months later, the agency promoted Ben to the role of art director on several Kellogg's brands. Ben has recently moved back home to work in VML's Chicago office.

Battle Creek, Michigan-based Kellogg's is known best for making some of America's favorite breakfast cereals, such as Frosted Flakes, Froot Loops and Special K. But, the company also makes the hugely popular Pringles potato chips and Nutri-Grain cereal bars, for which Ben works with a team of animators, designers and writers to develop websites, web banner ads and social media posts.

Versatility pays off

Ben is clearly having fun in this role and showing off his competency in a range of disciplines. A six-second video clip on the Pringles Twitter page shows Ben flipping a Pringles chip off his nose and into his mouth, accompanied by the text: "You don't just eat 'em. You show off your mad skills with 'em."

"I've always wanted to be an art director

and work in advertising," Ben said. "But, I certainly did not think I would be an art director this early in my career. My approach of not limiting my focus to one, single discipline has been key to becoming an art director. Good art directors must have some experience in a wide variety of areas. This helps us to see how all the parts fit together to form a message larger than those individual parts."

Ben's advice for students

Charge full speed toward your dream job. "Don't let people tell you what you can't do," he said. "You are whatever title you see yourself becoming."

Accept help from those offering it.

Ben said Academy instructors and staff were instrumental in helping him develop a powerful portfolio, which VML found attractive and led to him being hired.

"This job allows me to focus on the big picture, the big idea," Ben explained. "But I also get to be a designer when I have to, and roll up my sleeves. I wear many hats, which I love – even if it is challenging."

Ben's broader design philosophy can be summed up by his statement: "In addition to creating a structured image, I want the viewer to walk away from the

piece remembering what the piece means, not what it looks like."

You can view some of Ben's work here: conaghancreative.com.



Lucky's Sandwich Company ad art directed by Ben Conaghan, designed and illustrated by Academy Alumni Danny Murphy and Jeff Sant



Baldwin Denim designed by Ben. Photography by Academy Alumna Sofia Hardy

Stephanie Masco is Second Academy Student to Compete, Bring Art to Life on Syfy's Face Off Show



Whether it was playing with sculpting clay as a child or applying the finishing touches on a zombie at a haunted prison attraction, Stephanie Masco has always had a knack for art. Now, Stephanie, an illustration major, has quickly vaulted to the national spotlight by competing on the Syfy channel's reality-based competition, Face Off. 2008 American Academy of Art graduate, J. Anthony Kosar, won season four.

Stephanie is one of 15 contestants vying for both the title of Hollywood's next best special effects makeup artist and a grand prize that includes \$100,000 and a Fiat 500. In each Face Off episode, artists are given a set amount of time during three days to conceptualize and create a character or creature to fit a given theme. Each week / episode, judges Glenn Hetrick, Ve Neill and Neville Page name a challenge winner and send one contestant home.

For the Plainfield, Ill. native, pursuing art and getting an education from the Academy was a no-brainer.

"Art just seemed like the natural choice," Stephanie said. "I never even considered anything else, because I've never felt as strongly about anything else." But it wasn't until watching a behind-the-scenes "Making the Monsters" clip from the horror film "Silent Hill" that she got involved in the world

of special effects makeup. For the past five years, Stephanie has developed her special effects repertoire by working as an in-house makeup artist and actor at various haunted attractions. It was this kind of work that led Stephanie to competing on Face Off.

In 2012, she met a producer from Face Off, Seon Park, at a haunted attractions trade show. After staying in touch with her for nearly two years, Stephanie was invited to come to Los Angeles in July 2014 as a season-eight competing cast member. Although she took off the fall semester to free up her time for filming the show, she stated the experience was well worth it.

Stephanie's favorite creation on the show was also the piece with which she won a foundation challenge on Episode 6, entitled "Sounding Off." Contestants were given a foundation challenge where teams of two had to create a character based entirely off of short soundscapes. After hearing a ticking clock and whirring gears, Stephanie and challenge partner Kelly Harris came up with the story of a clock maker who recreates his deceased wife as a wind-up doll. During that challenge, Stephanie received expert and welcomed advice from season-four winner, J. Anthony Kosar, who

coaches contestants on this "Return-of-the-Champions"-themed season.

As for her success on the show, Stephanie credits her background as a haunted attraction artist for helping her with time management on Face Off. In a typical evening, she was responsible for completing the makeup for 25 actors in just a few hours. She also thanks her formal Academy education for many of her skills – explaining that learning to quickly prepare thumbnail sketches was great preparation for Face Off.

In the future, Stephanie hopes to work on more special effects projects in a spacious studio of her own – one with an "unlimited supply of effects makeup – like in the show," she said with a laugh.

Stephanie speaks from personal experience when she shares words of wisdom for those looking to pursue special effects work: "Do it because you love it and are really passionate about it."

Follow Stephanie's journey through the competition: [facebook.com/SJMascoFX](https://www.facebook.com/SJMascoFX) and [syfy.com/faceoff/episodes](https://www.syfy.com/faceoff/episodes).



Stephanie with her winning make-up

Academy Alumnus, Special Effects Superstar J. Anthony Kosar Hosts Chicagoland's Largest Halloween-Themed Art Show



J. Anthony Kosar (photo by Bear McGivney)

Kosar was the American Academy of Art 2008 valedictorian, earning a Fine Arts Degree in Illustration. He has won dozens of awards, has his own school and gallery, regularly completes commissioned work for major movies, and was Season 4 winner of the Syfy channel's special effects show Face Off.

The fourth annual MALEFICIUM Dark Art Exhibition at Kosart Effects Studio & Gallery in Westmont featured the works of more than 50 award-winning artists. Curated by J. Anthony Kosar, the exhibition was both Chicagoland's largest Halloween-themed art show and the largest exhibition Kosart Gallery has ever sponsored.

Strong Academy Showing Among Artists

Among the more than 50 artists featured in the exhibition, nearly a third are Academy Alumni and instructors.

Q&A with J. Anthony Kosar

Q: What originally inspired you into putting together MALEFICIUM four years ago?

A: "I wanted to combine all the things I loved into one killer event. I am



Artwork by Academy Alumna Jill Thompson

passionate about art and Halloween, and MALEFICIUM is the show that perfectly brings both of these together. Plus, I get to share some amazing artwork from some of my friends and favorite artists that I admire. Unlike other Halloween-themed dark art shows, MALEFICIUM brings together art forms and artists that Chicago has never seen before in one place."

Q: How did your life and career change after winning Season 4 of Syfy Network's Face Off show?

A: "My life since Face Off has changed



Artwork by Academy Alumnus Tim Shumate

drastically and become even more fast paced. Though I began laying the groundwork for my business in high school, Face Off pushed my career years into the future. The exposure has allowed me to meet and approach, and be approached by, my heroes on their level. "

"Some of the positive results of the show include having received much bigger projects, more student enrollments in my classes and I now have my own airbrush, Kosart PHANTOM Pro Airbrush (designed by me and custom manufactured). It's competitive with other top models but much less expensive. I am very thankful for my time on the show, and look forward to returning on Season 8."

Q: What are you doing on Season 8?

A: "I will be present throughout Season 8 as a mentor to the contestants. This is the first season Face Off is featuring mentors, and I am one of three past winners the show asked to coach the current contestants. We will share our insight and knowledge about what we think the judges want."



Winning artwork by Kevin Fagaragan



Winning artwork by Oscar Joyo.

Two Current Students Win \$5,000 Prizes in National Wine Label Contest

American Academy of Art Illustration major Kevin Fagaragan and Academy Life Drawing major Oscar Joyo have each been awarded a \$5,000 scholarship grand prize in the 2014 Canvas Artist Series Contest, sponsored by Hyatt Corporation. They captured two of the four grand prizes awarded. This is the third consecutive year that at least one Academy student has won this contest's coveted grand prize.

Participants are asked to design a creative wine label for one of the four Canvas Wine varieties: Cabernet Sauvignon, Pinot Noir, Chardonnay or Pinot Grigio. Four other Academy students were also grand prize finalists:

Hassan Boxwalla and Vsevolod Shchepanovskyy in the Cabernet category; Tom Ryan in the Pinot Noir category; and Gabrielle Carson in the Chardonnay category. But, Fagaragan took top honor for his Pinot Noir label and Joyo won for his Cabernet Sauvignon label.

Always a Strong Showing

A total of 88 students from around the nation submitted entries to the contest this year — exactly half, 44, were submitted by Academy students. The Academy's Illustration Co-Chair and Instructor Rich Kryczka has encouraged his students to submit to the Canvas Wine contest for the past three years.

"This is another great showing of talent by our students. I couldn't be more proud," Kryczka said.

The Academy's Grand Prize Winners

Kevin Fagaragan won the Pinot Noir top prize with his image of a girl under an umbrella as wine falls down around her and forms puddles.

"The inspiration for my piece comes from the thought of wine being calm and elegant," he wrote in his essay about inspiration. "I wanted to illustrate something that would express the elegant taste of wine and pair it with something equally relaxing. I always believed that rain was something nice

to look at if you wanted to relax. Combining the two to create a soothing fantasy world just seemed to fit right."

In his artist statement, Fagaragan explained that animated films and graphic novels inspired him to pursue illustration.

"I would always look at the behind-the-scenes work of these films and try creating concepts and stories of my very own," he wrote. "To me, storytelling is an important aspect when it comes to illustrating, and it's fascinating to see stories told with no words and only the visuals to support it."

Oscar Joyo won in the Cabernet Sauvignon category. He wrote that Pomona, the Roman goddess of fruit,

and 20th Century Czech artist Alphonse Mucha, were his design inspirations. He drew in pastels on paper combined with a digital painting overlay.

Joyo wrote in his artist statement that the technical training in traditional drawing skills learned at the Academy has sparked his interest in professional illustration.

"My hope as an artist is to become a well-rounded illustrator, working for various firms, connecting with a variety of people, and exhibiting my work in fine art galleries," he wrote.

Irene Habermeier, brand director for Canvas Wines, applauded Fagaragan and Joyo for their creative labels.

"Current Academy students and this year's winners in the Cabernet Sauvignon and Pinot Noir categories, Oscar Joyo and Kevin Fagaragan, submitted pieces that went above and beyond in capturing the essence of each varietal, as well as the Canvas Wines brand," Habermeier said. "Oscar's interpretation of the Cabernet Sauvignon really made the label stand out and come alive, while Kevin's Pinot Noir design offered a unique and whimsical take on the beloved 'heartbreak' grape."

The Michael Mondovi family developed Canvas Wines to be served exclusively at Hyatt hotels and resorts.

Academy Education and Dedication Set 3D Artist Richard Lavin on Road to Success

2014 Academy graduate Richard Lavin stepped right into a job he loves before even receiving his Bachelor of Fine Arts in 3D Modeling and Animation. Yet, still as ambitious as ever, he's creating art when not on the clock.

His path began with an internship at Parsons Corp. – a 13,000-person engineering and construction company – while still an Academy student. The hundreds of hours Richard spent making his portfolio pop with diverse work quickly set him apart from other candidates, earning him the internship.

While an intern, his tasks included figuring how to efficiently use the company's 3D printing software and create 3D print models for various jobs and marketing. He was soon helping his creative group with project animations and modeling.

Because Richard demonstrated his value through a strong work ethic and team spirit, Parsons felt comfortable offering him a full-time job working in its transportation division as a 3D animator and 3D printing technician before he had even graduated.

"The work I do at Parsons has taught me how to be efficient and well organized, and I've really come to love my role as part of a team."

The Academy's influence

Richard traces his success back to the Academy, where he was challenged and inspired by experienced professionals. "I made friends with



several instructors at the Academy. They were supportive, encouraging, and showed a genuine interest in seeing me succeed," Richard stated. "I learned how to be an artist technically, creatively and professionally, which wouldn't have been possible without the staff and faculty at the Academy."

The Academy's influence runs deep. Richard works with six artists who also attended the Academy – Visual Team Leader Paul Pilewski, Senior Multimedia and 3D Artist Theo Laich, 3D Modeler and Animator Nick Ward, 3D Modeler and Artist Justin Ablang, Vice President of Creative Services Steve Puttrich, and Creative Services Manager Kathy Sara.

"There is an abundance of people from our college in Parsons' Chicago graphics division," Richard said. "Our team mostly shares each of our projects, so we jointly accomplish our overall goals. There's always something new to be done. This helps keep everyone motivated and taking on challenges as a team."

Richard's advice to new artists

As a newer, full-time working artist, Richard wants to impart tips he hopes will help young artists:

- Work hard. Put in the time and effort to be an artist, and be willing to sustain and even increase that drive after graduating. Stay positive.

- Embrace the unknown. I've developed greatly by taking on work, initially, I had no idea how to do; but I was forced to learn it. New challenges widen your perspective.

- Keep learning. In the 3D world, software, techniques and technologies are always changing. Stay on the ball to remain marketable for all kinds of work.

Never stop creating art

Making art doesn't stop when Richard leaves Parsons each day. At home he spends his free time developing as a more rounded artist, by exploring different avenues, such as more in-depth 3D, music and photography.

"My artwork has always reflected my personal interests, and that's important," Richard emphasized. "At the end of the day, making art is real work. It takes dedication and time; so it has to mean something to you to stay motivated."



Top: Astronaut 3D art by Richard Lavin
Above: P-51D Mustang 3D art by Richard Lavin
Below: Richard Lavin

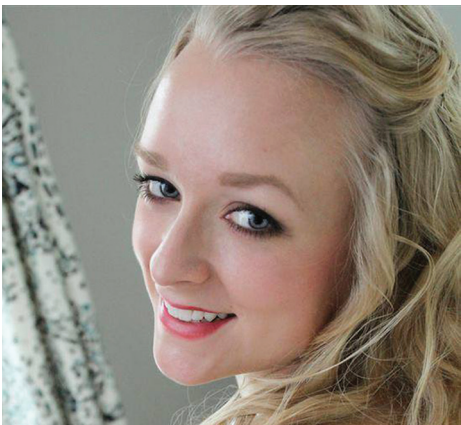
The 3D image of the P-51D Mustang, the fighter plane his grandfather flew in World War II and featured on Richard's website, is a perfect example of that.

Stay curious and flexible

"I love photography and painting, and trying to integrate that into my 3D art. I don't want to sell myself as one particular type of artist," Richard commented. "I think staying versatile is important for all artists. I like applying my skills in multiple ways. I'm always trying new things, and that's what keeps me interested and inspired."

See Richard's work here:
Richardlavin3Dartist.com.

Academy Valedictorian Chloe Peterson Giving Her All And Designing A Successful Career



"Put 100% effort into everything you do!"

It's not just advice Chloe Peterson is fond of sharing. It's a philosophy she actively lives.

From excelling during her four years at the American Academy of Art – enough to earn her the honor of being named 2013 Class Valedictorian, to landing an enviable internship and job, giving it her all seems to be working out pretty well for Chloe.

She began working as a graphic design intern at Chicago's Museum of Science and Industry (MSI) May 2012 and was hired as a full-time production assistant in the exhibit design and development department July 2013. Chloe helps to design, produce and install graphics for signage, exhibits, educational resources, events, maps, ticketing and kiosks at the MSI.

"Chloe was a wonderful student – interested, observant, and always ready to push herself a little further," explained Chloe's web design instructor, Anahita Mobarhan. "You could tell that she really had fun in expressing herself artistically within whatever structure a given project held. Her artwork was so bright, lively and elegantly presented. She also has a very charming personality with this levelheaded wittiness that always came across in the most unpretentious way," Mobarhan added.

Chloe explains that the three most important things she gained from attending the Academy were:

1. Typography skills. "I can't stress how important learning this was and is to me."
2. Professional connections and friends.
3. Learning how to be a professional artist/designer and "not a hobby artist."

Q&A with Chloe Peterson

Q: How would you describe yourself as an artist?

A: I am a designer by career. However, I consider myself an artistic explorer because I am always learning about and trying new mediums. I like trying many styles and approaches, as I'm still molding myself as an artist.

Q: How did you get your full-time job at the MSI?

A: In the summer of 2013, after I graduated, the Academy's Career Services Coordinator Lindsay Sandbothe told me about an open production assistant position at the MSI. I applied knowing that the position basically involved everything I did as an intern. The internship definitely helped me get my foot in the door. I was told a

few hundred people applied for two positions. I went through two interviews and was then told I had gotten the job. I am very fortunate. It doesn't feel like a job because I love working there. I spend my days working with some great people and learn so much about science and history.

Q: What was your role with the Disney exhibit?

A: This was the first major project I helped with when I was hired. Nearly all of the exhibit's story, design and graphics production were done in-house. I helped to design the graphics and their layout for the Walt Disney's Legacy and Mary Poppins sections. When the design was completed, I helped to print and install the graphics.

Q: What do you want to be doing in five years?

A: Working my way up to becoming an art director or starting my own design firm.

You can learn more about her work at chloepetersondesigns.com



Treasures from the Disney Archive Exhibit

Alex Ross Helps Bring to Life Last Illustration Book by Andrew Loomis

American Academy of Art alumnus and world-famous comic book artist Alex Ross helped make I'd Love to Draw – the unfinished, last book by illustrator, instructor and famed author Andrew Loomis – a reality.

"Loomis's books were rare and highly sought after by Academy instructors and students, alike, prior to being reissued," states the Academy's Illustration Co-Chair Rich Kryczka.

An Unfinished Work

Loomis finished the main body of text and illustrations for I'd Love to Draw. However, several captions accompanying many of the illustrations were unfinished. "This is the part where I come in," Ross explains. "In my own voice, I've written these notes to hopefully illuminate the lesson plan he had in mind."

"The publisher, Titan Books, contacted me for the project," Ross adds. "They had previously reached me for a quote about Loomis's influence on me to use with the books they have reprinted thus far. When the prototype for the unfinished Loomis book became a project, they looked to me again as a potential contributor to complete the remainder of his visual notes."

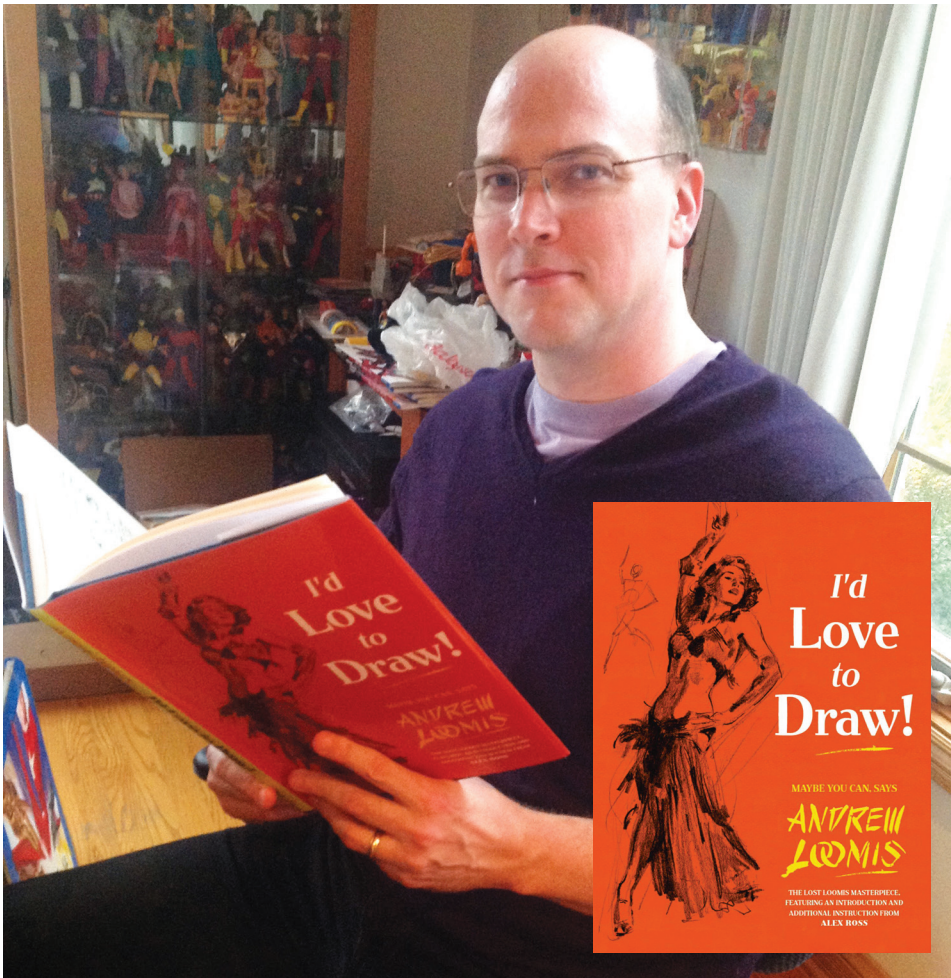
Ross Calls on Academy Instructors and Friends

Ross turned to two other key influences in his career, his former instructors and current friends at the Academy – Rich Kryczka (illustration instructor) and Lou Ann Burkhardt (life drawing instructor) – to edit all of the captions he wrote for I'd Love to Draw.

From Ross's introduction to I'd Love to Draw:

"Loomis shared a wealth of insight from the perspective of a working illustrator, trying to prepare artists for the challenges they faced in the craft as well as the business itself.

"The Loomis books were part of the Ross family library for a long time before I came along. When I was a boy in the 1970s and 80s, I would pore through these instructional books just to



Alex Ross in his studio with the completed I'd Love to Draw book by Andrew Loomis

admire the fantastic illustrations inside. The delicate and charismatic realism of Loomis's drawings connected with me as objects of beauty to try and emulate.

"Andrew Loomis and Norman Rockwell opened up a world of elaborate rendering and lifelike illustration for me.

"I use a painted photorealistic style. While I'm not the first to do so, the principles of basic figure drawing and hand-painted media in a comic book has remained a rare thing that my notoriety is founded upon.

"This book was intended to appeal to the average person who never saw him or herself as a working artist, but always had a curiosity for drawing. "Ultimately, its the masterwork that got away."

"As a student, Alex was very giving and sharing of his talent with everyone," explained Burkhardt. "It's great to see that carry through in his work with this terrific book."

A world-famous comic book artist superhero in his own right, Alex Ross has won the Comic Buyer's Guide CBG Fan Award seven years in a row, among numerous other awards. Interestingly, Loomis taught at the Academy a decade prior to Alex Ross's mother studying there in the 1950s.

Academy's Alumni Workshop Connects, Inspires and Educates



Students meeting with Alumni and sharing their portfolios

When students graduate from the American Academy of Art, they're not alone. There's a network of alumni, as well as the school's Career Services Office, ready to help them find work.

The Career Services Office, headed by coordinator Lindsay Sandbothe, is developing new ways to help alumni be successful. In October the Academy held its first alumni workshop, "Art and Entrepreneurship: How to Succeed as a Self-Employed Artist." The event brought together recent and seasoned graduates who shared experiences and advice with each other. Everyone left with a stronger professional network.

"How We Did It!"

A panel of four freelance artists, at different points in their careers, spoke about their experiences in the working world. They were alumni Mitch O'Connell, who attended in the 1980s; and Samantha DeCarlo, Erich Bihlmayer and Matthew Kocanda, all who graduated within the last five years.

O'Connell has had commercial success with Coca Cola and McDonald's, and has had his work featured in Newsweek and other publications. His designs can also be found in tattoo shops. When he was starting out, he brought a large,

physical portfolio case that held a number of pieces of his work to show potential clients.

DeCarlo, an illustrator who prefers to work in ballpoint pen and watercolor; Bihlmayer, a digital illustrator influenced by graffiti art; and Kocanda, a watercolor artist and digital illustrator, have always used contemporary, digital tools for securing work. Good, old-fashioned networking always plays a big role, as well.

"O'Connell has been in the field quite a while and used some old-school marketing techniques, and the other three are newer alumni who used more modern marketing techniques, like social media," Sandbothe said.

Speed-Dating Networking

The workshop also included what Sandbothe called "networking, speed-dating style."

Sitting across from older alumni, more recent grads had only four minutes to pitch themselves and their art with an elevator speech. Then, the newer grads would move on to the next alum and do it over again, on down the line.

Academy instructor Kristin Mount, a medical illustrator who teaches

anatomy courses and digital illustration, also spoke about her experience. Still an active freelance artist, Mount works with publishers, surgeons, lawyers and pharmaceutical companies.

Strong Alumni, Strong School

The impetus for the workshop came from the strong connection alumni have with the American Academy of Art. The alumni wanted the workshop and chance to share valuable information as much as the school did.

"Our alumni want to be more involved with the school," Sandbothe said. "So, this really fulfills that need. A real win-win, as the cliché goes. We look forward to hosting more workshops in the near future."

Additional Networking Opportunities

Portfolio night allows students to receive feedback from artists in the working world.

The Visiting Artist Series is another good learning opportunity. Artists show their work, talk about their career and answer questions from students and alumni.

"Career Services is free and a lifelong service for all graduates," Sandbothe said. "The nice thing for alumni is we're always here for them."

Chicago - A Great Campus



The American Academy of Art offers the following programs:

- Bachelor of Fine Arts in Illustration
- Bachelor of Fine Arts in Digital Illustration
- Bachelor of Fine Arts in Graphic Design
- Bachelor of Fine Arts in Multi-Media Design
- Bachelor of Fine Arts in 3-D Modeling/Animation
- Bachelor of Fine Arts in Life Drawing
- Bachelor of Fine Arts in Painting
with a Specialization in Oil Painting or Watercolor Painting
- Bachelor of Fine Arts in Photography
- Bachelor of Fine Arts in Art Direction

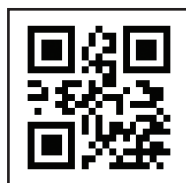


**American
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