



Cultivating Mentors

With Sharon Louden

PowerPoint presentation, photographs and information

© Sharon M. Louden 2023

@sharonlouden

www.sharonlouden.com

www.livesustain.org

This presentation is not for publishing. Thank you.

A large, dark beach umbrella stands in the foreground on the left side of the frame. The background shows a vast ocean under a twilight sky. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a bright, shimmering reflection on the water's surface that extends towards the viewer. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

With Gratitude!



A little bit about me:
Wearing multiple
hats

**In the field: studio visits
Anchorage, AK**

Hrag Vartanian
www.hragvartanian.com

Amy Meissner
www.amymeissner.com

Matthew Deleget
www.minusspace.com



In the field: studio visits with artists

Shown here: artist Michelle Martin, Casper, WY, one of many artists I visited with across the state of Wyoming to create opportunities, hear their needs and wants, and make connections for them.



Daily and weekly consultations and conversations with artists, mentors and community leaders
both in person and remotely
shown here: artist group in Los Angeles, CA



Professional Development workshops and connecting community leaders with artists. Shown here: Lisa Hatchadoorian (Executive Director, Museum of Art Fort Collins) participating in a remote workshop with artists in Laramie, WY.

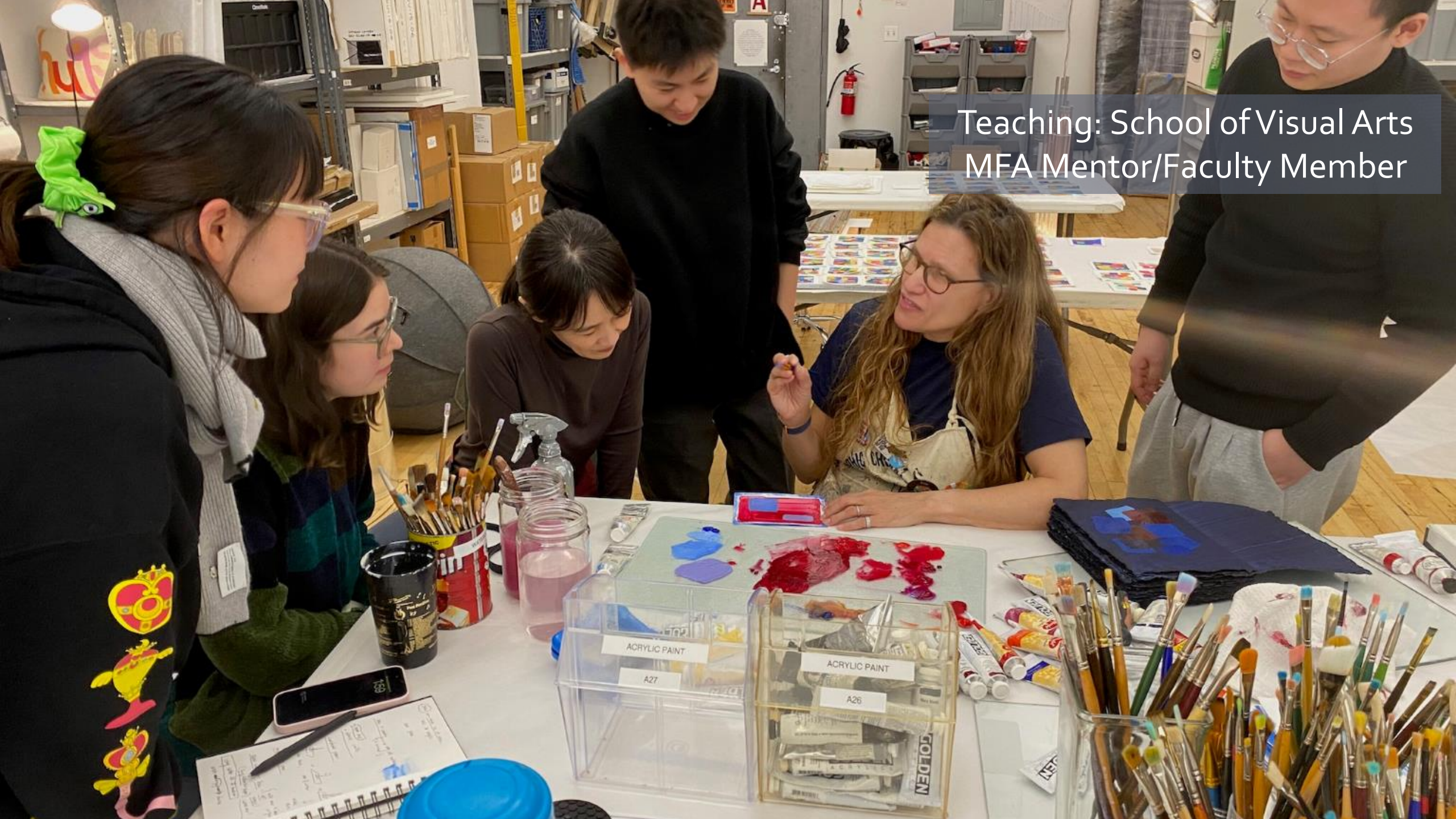


Frequent panel discussions, town hall forums and events in the United States and abroad



With Hrag Vartanian on the book tour
St Paul, MN
@HragV
@Hyperallergic

Teaching: School of Visual Arts
MFA Mentor/Faculty Member



Online Workshop

Building Community for a Sustainable Creative Life, with Sharon Louden

When
March 16 - April 6, 2020

Admission
\$125

[Sign Up](#)

In this four-part online workshop series on building a sustainable career and creative life, artist Sharon Louden will focus on leveraging artists' inherent creativity, thinking outside the box about creating opportunities, and building relationships. Louden will review relevant information and examples of artists building communities that help empower those willing to put in the work to turn generosity into opportunities.

Content will include:

- Honing communication skills
- Methodologies to follow when a new opportunity is identified
- Approaching arts professionals without a referral
- Best practices for building a community of artists
- Meeting the needs and wants of artists

Louden will share the expertise she has gained through collaborations and conversations with gallery owners, museum professionals, critics, curators, and others in different art communities. The workshop series is specifically designed to empower artists, demonstrate pragmatic approaches to sustaining a creative life, and build relationships into communities.

In addition, there will be multiple touch-points of correspondence between Sharon and participants throughout the four-week duration that will include extensive sharing of documents and answering of questions. In-between these sessions, participants will have access to an online forum where they can stay in touch, share information and resources, and build community outside of the class sessions.

Building Community for a Sustainable Creative Life Four-Part Online Workshop Series



At the conclusion of the series, Sharon will be made available for one-on-one consultations where she can answer questions specific to each artist's situation.

Workshop Dates:

- Part 1: Monday, March 16, 7-8:30pm ET
- Part 2: Monday, March 23, 7-8:30pm ET
- Part 3: Monday, March 30, 7-8:30pm ET
- Part 4: Monday, April 6, 7-8:30pm ET

Additional one-on-one consultations

After the workshop series concludes, participants will be given the opportunity to sign up for an additional one-on-one consultation with Sharon Louden. Consultations are 45-minutes long and take place by phone or video conference. The price is \$90. 15 sessions will be made available.

Recordings


This online workshop series will be recorded. The recordings will be shared with all registered participants after the workshop concludes, regardless of whether a participant attends the live workshop. The recordings will be available online to registrants indefinitely; they are not available for download.

Curatorial Consultant, Artistic Director
And Board Member, Franconia Sculpture Park
Shafer, MN







A photograph of a river or canal with reflections of a bridge and buildings in the water. The water is dark and still, reflecting the sky and the structures on the banks. The bridge has a wooden structure with many vertical posts. The buildings on the right have red roofs. The sky is a pale, hazy blue.

What Creativity
means today
Who is an artist
today?

We are a source of abundance, not a deficit.

Artists are the FOUNDATION of FREEDOM of SPEECH

Artists GIVE to the WELL BEING OF OTHERS

Artists are ESSENTIAL to documenting history

Artists are MORE THAN MAKERS

Crushing the Myths

- Reframing: there is **no such thing as a “day job”**: just because you don't make a living directly from your craft doesn't make you any less of an artist.
- Reframing: there is **no such things as a “Starving Artist”**: comes from others having power over the artist and Hollywood! Artists are rarely, if ever, impoverished. We are also in part responsible for this myth: just because you are an artist, you still have to take care of yourself. And this is a good thing.
- There is **nothing romantic about being an artist**: we are a part of society and always have been.
- **Creativity comes in all forms**: administration, curation, community leadership, publishing, educating, and many more “hats”

Who is an artist today?

- Creative thinking inside the studio applied to outside the studio: ability to solve problems
- Ability to multi-task
- Ability to organize in your own way
- The drive to finish projects
- Think out of the box
- Make something out of nothing
- Having sensitivity and empathy leading to insights perhaps not seen by others
- Ability to observe and assess
- Ability to bounce back from failure easily

A photograph of a river or stream flowing through a wooden structure, possibly a dam or bridge, with reflections in the water. The water is calm, reflecting the sky and the surrounding environment. The structure is made of dark wood and has a series of vertical posts. The water is a deep blue-grey color, and the reflections are sharp and clear. The overall scene is peaceful and serene.

What does it mean
to be a Mentor
today:
What is Mentorship?

Cultivating Mentorships

Learning Objectives:

- Understanding the nuts-and-bolts of mentorship.
- Identifying environments and platforms which help mentorships flourish.
- How to strengthen and support mentorship relationships.
- Focusing on community building vis a vis intergenerational exchange and resource sharing.
- Creating opportunities through the mentorship exchange dynamic.

What does it mean to be a mentor?

Mentors: leaders and catalysts who gather people together and keep communities connected. The hope is that a mentor will create other mentors: **every community needs a leader but they shouldn't be burdened.**

I have found adults need mentors through their entire life.



What does it mean to
be a mentor?

VALUE DRIVEN

A CATALYST

**Mentors create space for
opportunities, direct to create
opportunities, follow-up and
stay in touch, connect with
others, site people who are
generous**



A dramatic sunset over a lake. The sky is filled with dark, heavy clouds, with a bright orange and yellow glow from the setting sun breaking through near the horizon. In the foreground, a wooden pier extends into the water, decorated with a string of colorful triangular bunting flags. Several boats are docked at the pier, and the water reflects the colors of the sky.

#1 Key to Sustaining a Creative Life: **COMMUNITY**

Our connective tissue

Organizing environments where mentorships flourish

- Crit groups: **Patricia Miranda**: Boston, MA; Port Chester, NY; Pawtucket, RI:
<https://thecritlab.com/about>
- Dinners: Grand Junction, CO: **Susan Delgalvis**
- Opening up attic as a space: Montclair, NJ: **Katrina Bello**
- Exploring untraditional spaces (an elevator!): Washington, DC: **Julia Bloom**



Share your privilege and open your space

Communities are strongest when they exhibit intergenerational cohesiveness. Sharing resources with different generations is key. **MENTORS ARE OPEN** to possibilities.

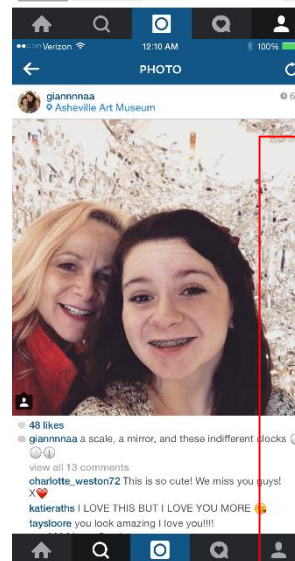
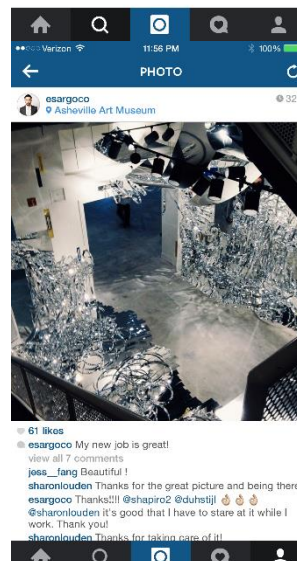






Encourage community
through breaking
down barriers:
openness
and transparency

This creates community
from afar!



Use social media consistently:
PARTICIPATE
to
share opportunities,
communicate,
question, gather,
participate, include people

Partnerships with profit and other nonprofits are also key to creating different experiences, yield more opportunities for artists. The right context is the key.



fomofeed • Following
Signs and Symbols



fomofeed WHAT: ORIGINS. "A site-specific, immersive installation by Sharon Loudon and Hrag Vartanian, a two-person collaboration between interlocutors who have long been in dialogue. Aluminum, screws, bouncing balls, crystal balls, bungee cords, acrylic paint, volleyballs, monofilament line, temporary tattoos, drones, text, writing, more text, and performance: Origins, a cacophony of media and



Liked by hragv and 2,207 others

SEPTEMBER 10

Add a comment...

Post



mrs_newyork_knicks



hragv • Following
Signs and Symbols

...



hragv I've been so overwhelmed by the reactions to @sharonlouden and my installation (and all the photos circulating online) but this is my fave so far because matching the installation is difficult but someone did! Thank you @mrs_newyork_knicks for embracing the installation and allowing me to share this image. It's up until Oct 11 at @signssymbols

5h



thelesbiangaze ❤️❤️❤️



4h 1 like Reply



andrewhendrixsonstudio This is amazing and gorgeous and full of levity.



Liked by michellegirardello and 260 others

5 HOURS AGO

Add a comment...

Post



lasirenaterrena • Follow
Signs and Symbols

...



lasirenaterrena ○💎○

8h



jiannaelyse Ice queen 🤩



8h 2 likes Reply
— View replies (1)



jiannaelyse 😍😍😍



8h 2 likes Reply
— View replies (1)



ootd_tarzim ❤️❤️❤️❤️



8h 2 likes Reply



205 likes

8 HOURS AGO

Add a comment...

Post

Artistic Director, Chautauqua Visual Arts
Chautauqua Institution, 2018-2022



ART.CHQ.ORG

an incubator and brave space





Jose Arellano, Homeboy Industries
Los Angeles, CA



CHAUTAUQUA SCHOOL OF ART

2020 Season • June 27–August 15, 2020



art.chq.org • Application Deadline: March 2

Select the right people who are generous and reflect your community's needs and demographics to effect change and introduce new ideas



Select people who reflect your community and values

CHAUTAUQUA SCHOOL OF ART

2021 Season • July 25–August 28, 2021

LEAD FACULTY



art.chq.org • Application Deadline: March 2



Meet our 2022 Artists-in-Residence!



CHAUTAUQUA
VISUAL ARTS

art.chq.org

Intergenerational:

Class of 2019:
Ages 21-52

Class of 2020:
Ages 21-64

Class of 2021:
Ages 21-

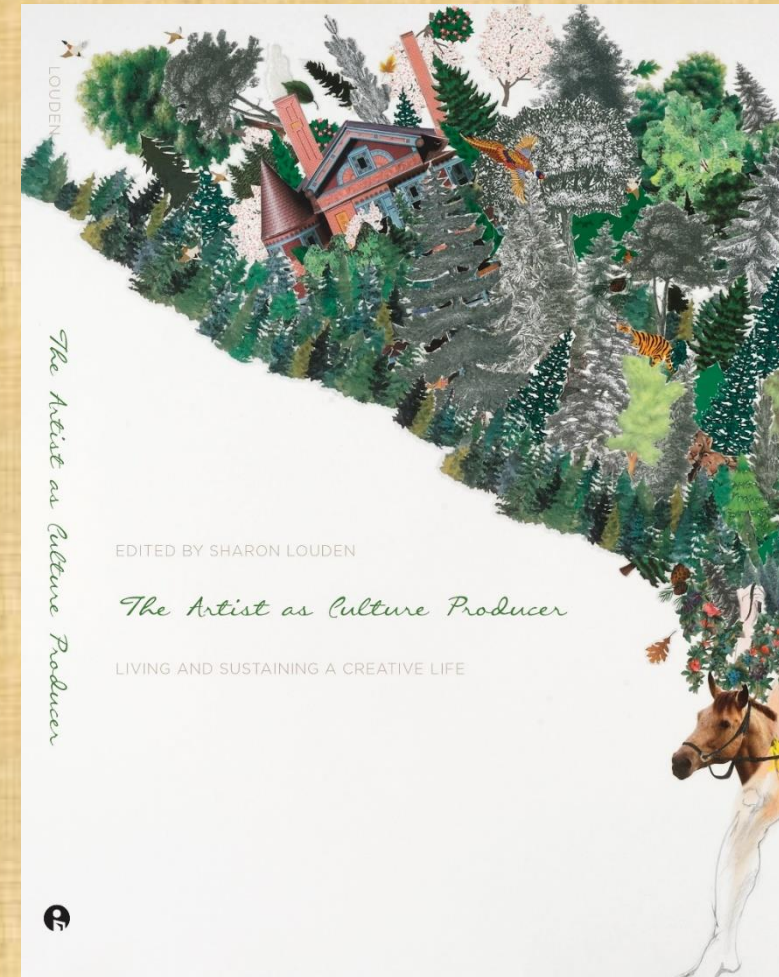
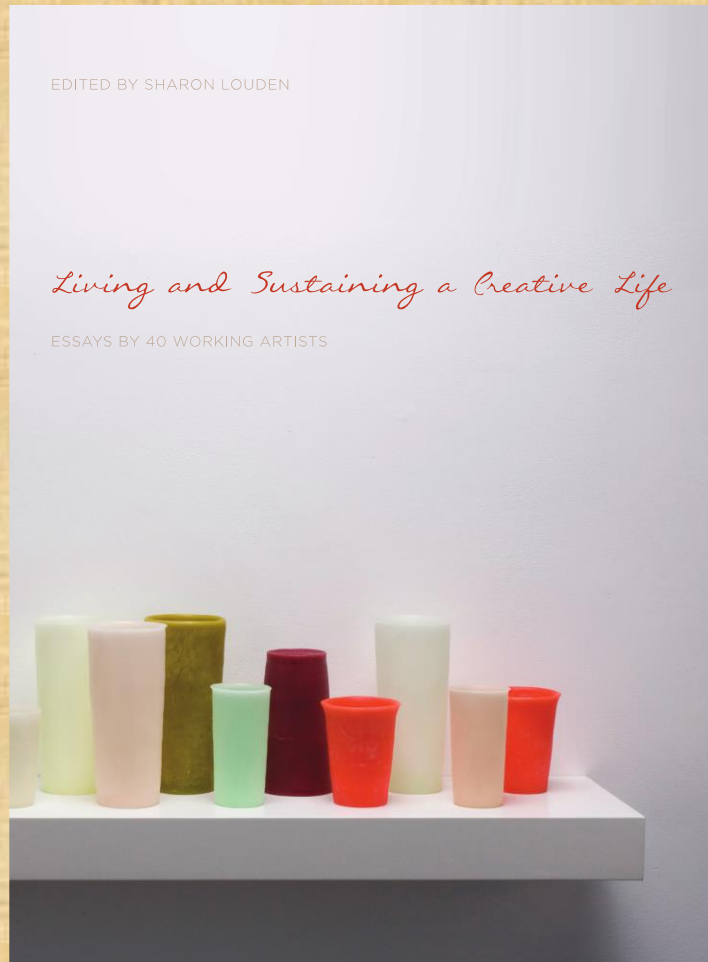
Class of 2022:
Ages 21-69

Two-thirds ppl of color
Half who identify
as queer
From many regional,
rural and untapped
places



The changes and vision

- **No divisions: no media specifications**
 - **No education requirement**
 - **Intergenerational**
 - **Faculty teach out of their practices in their own way**
 - **Director hands-off management of faculty**
 - **Pedagogy recorded and shared after program concludes**
- **Application process simple: question of what do you need, want and give as an artist today; what collaboration means to you**
 - **Anyone who doesn't get in receives brief feedback on their application, connecting everyone together via Zoom, AND offered other classes**
 - **BRAVE space**
 - **Robust alumni program: our relationship never ends**
 - **Hiring of alumni**
 - **Incubator for teaching and learning**



Give and hold brave spaces for other voices, step aside and share with others. Participate in cultural reciprocity. Create a platform where people can participate that is not just a one-time event, but a long-term engaged opportunity.









Posing questions of Artists' needs and wants resulted in answers that have contributed to shaping new ideas and pathways for Sustaining creatives lives. These conversations still live as a pool of data In the form of video recordings, charts and writings listed on livesustain.org.

Royalties, profits, sustainability, advocacy

- “The Artist as Culture Producer” conversation tour was fully sustainable except for the Strand event which was a celebration (but even then, we paid for drinks for the 18 contributors who attended!).
- “The Artist as Culture Producer” conversation tour was a case-study so all requests, inquiries, and fees were reported and completely transparent on the www.livesustain.org website.
 - We made “Living and Sustaining a Creative Life” a fiscally sponsored entity through the New York Foundation for the Arts (NYFA.org).

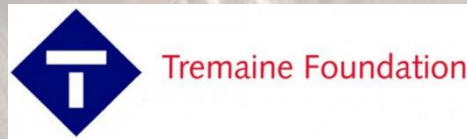
Postage and
Fees Guaranteed
by the U.S. Postal Service
FIRST CLASS PERMIT NO. 1000
LOS ANGELES, CA

Cherian Scott
118 N New Hampshire Ave #4
Los Angeles, CA 90029-1745



Royalties, profits, sustainability, advocacy

- Many organizations gave us support including:



Result of the tours & ADVOCACY

- JOBS
- EXHIBITIONS
- VALIDATION
- EXCHANGE AND COMMUNITY BUILDING
- CONNECTING BETWEEN STATES AND COUNTRIES
- NEW PARTNERSHIPS WITH AND BETWEEN ORGANIZATIONS
- CREATING NEW OPPORTUNITIES
- ACCESSIBILITY WITH PEOPLE FROM OUTSIDE OF THEIR OWN COMMUNITIES
- PARTNERED WITH VENUES & RAISED OVER \$400K TO PAY ARTISTS & ARTS PROFESSIONALS TO SHARE KNOWLEDGE
- PAID ARTISTS TO SET A NEW STANDARD OF SUSTAINABILITY

An Overview: Recommendations

Seen here:
Group of first-time collectors,
creating bridges between
galleries and artists
In my studio, Dumbo,
Brooklyn, NY



Keys to establish & maintain mentorships

- Understanding your needs and wants from artists in your community
- Develop different situations to cultivate mentors: dinners, crit groups, small steps that are simple and welcoming
 - Site generous, giving artists, curators, critics who can collaborate, share opportunities, be accessible
- Follow-up by social media and/or email consistently, even if it takes time

Keys to establish & maintain mentorships

- Create an active, BRAVE (not just safe) space that is welcoming for your community
- Collaborating with artist-run organizations is a way to connect with local communities of creatives
- Be courageous: live by your mission & values; transparency, follow-up, responses to inquiries, communication goes a long way

Needs and Wants

- Understand the **realistic goals, needs, wants** of your community and how members can **give**
 - Understand the **ABUNDANCE** of what you can give
- Address specific needs beyond money: **give validation & crush permission**
- Attract an **intergenerational group of creative individuals**: set up out-of-the-ordinary situations that would attract all ages
- Cross-pollination of different forms of creativity: **inclusivity**

Needs and Wants

- Connect/direct like-minded people
- Connect with people who you can learn from
- Mentors can assist in finding their audience, reaching out in different ways (social media, direct email, newsletters, etc.)
- Having a specific purpose and reason to connect: sharing resources
- Discipline, determination and **FOLLOW-UP is crucial**

MONEY and IN-KIND RESOURCES

- Know your In-Kind Resources: YOU HAVE MANY
- Create Partnerships: individual donors, organizations and corporations having a stake in what you're doing: hand-in-hand
- Befriend your local
- Reach out to wider audiences and crossover to untraditional platforms, companies, organizations that may seem unreachable
- Reach out to organizations who have your same values
- Practice Diversity: not on the surface, but doing the right thing to actually practice DEAI

A LAST THOUGHT

- --"10,000 Hours with [LinkedIn co-founder] Reid Hoffman: What I Learned [as his chief of staff]," by Ben Casnocha:
- **"The best way to get a powerful person's attention: offer to help them.**
 - As chief of staff, I reviewed thousands of requests for Reid's time/attention/money. It was stunning how few requesters actually offered to help him on something. Amusingly, many requests were framed as if the asking party were doing Reid a favor by giving him the opportunity to help them ... But why not figure out what he's working on and send an article of relevance? Or offer to share a perspective that could be useful?"

What can I do for you?

A photograph of a courtyard with brick buildings, palm trees, and white patio umbrellas under a clear blue sky. The text "What can I do for you?" is overlaid in the center.

Different Voices

ROAD TO HEAVENS ABOVE

<https://www.sharonlouden.com/#/lecture-series/>
<https://www.sharonlouden.com/#/resources/>

ESSENTIAL RESOURCE: RUBYLERNER.COM



Photo: "Barriers to Entry" in progress
At Breck Create,
Breckenridge, CO



Join us at Breck Create
Saturday, June 3, 6:30pm •
Old Masonic Hall
Breckenridge, CO



Thank you!

Feel free to stay in touch, add me to your mailing list

Sharon.Louden@gmail.com

[@sharonlouden](#) (insta)

[@LoudenStudio](#) (twitter)

Sharonlouden.com

Livesustain.org