

JUNE 20, 2019

Stanford students help each other prepare for a career in the art world

Coterm art history students explore career pathways with fellow students and professionals.

BY ROBIN WANDER

After recognizing that there was not anything like it on campus, two Stanford students have founded a student arts organization with a dual mission: to strengthen the arts community on campus and to provide students potential career pathways in the arts.

Established in 2017 by art history coterminals Reilly Clark and Reilly Haag, the Professional Art Society of Stanford (PASS) offers students a variety of hands-on experiences, from curating exhibitions to producing catalogs and organizing arts events. In addition, PASS also facilitates collaboration among students from across campus who are interested in a career in the arts.

When Clark and Haag met during the end of their sophomore year in the course *Arts, Chemistry and Madness: The Sciences of Art Materials*, they were surprised that for two students who shared so many similar interests, they had not run into each other sooner.

“That was one of the reasons we decided to start PASS,” Haag said. “We wanted to build something that could help students develop close relationships with each other and also learn more about the art community.” Additionally, Clark and Haag were eager to advance their knowledge about the market side of the art world, something they were both interested in but was not often covered in class.

When they returned to campus for their junior year, they started PASS and made the art market one of their programming foci. They also dove deeper into engagement with the arts, in and out of the classroom, by working with Stanford arts organizations while on campus and gaining practical experience in the commercial arts arena during the summer.

Clark and Haag both spent winter quarter this year at the University of Oxford. Clark studied art history with a focus on museums and collections in a tutorial called *Collecting, Curating and Critical Viewing*, while Haag studied photography and the aesthetics of the American West.



Coterminal art history students Reilly Jonathan Clark and Michael Reilly Haag founded the Professional Art Society of Stanford. (Image credit: L.A. Cicero)

Hands on

True to the career/pre-professional mission of PASS, the projects and events that the group undertakes provide students practical experience in the arts.

For example, in the group's first year, PASS organized *Badlands*, an exhibition at the O'Donohue Family Stanford Educational Farm that grappled with the intersection of art, earth and environmental justice. Photographs by visual storyteller Josué Rivas taken at the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation during the demonstrations against the construction of the Dakota access pipeline in 2017 were paired with artwork by Gail Wight (<https://art.stanford.edu/people/gail-wight>), a professor of art practice in the School of Humanities and Sciences, and MFA students Livien Yin, Natani Notah and Sean Howe.



Gail Wight, professor of art practice, shares her work with PASS students. (Image credit: L.A. Cicero)

For *Badlands*, Clark and Haag lead a student team of seven assistant curators and a graphic designer who worked with the artists to select objects, design and install the exhibition, write labels and essays, and produce a 43-page catalog (https://issuu.com/theanniedare/docs/catalogue_final.compressed).

Badlands presented some interesting challenges for the exhibition team because it was staged largely outside. “Ultimately it was a huge lesson in how to transform a difficult curatorial situation into an innovative space that still does justice to the art,” said Haag.

PASS' exhibition this year was mounted in the Nancy and Larry Mohr Student Exhibition Gallery in the McMurtry Art and Art History building. Titled *Anceps*, the exhibition was curated by undergraduates and featured work by undergraduate artists. Themes of the show revolved around tension and conflict, societal expectations and natural phenomena.

Other PASS events have included workshops with practicing artists, private tours of local galleries, studio visits and social gatherings – all activities intended to improve professional outcomes for Stanford arts students.

Future

As PASS continues to expand, so will its programming. Next fall PASS will host writer, photographer and curator Teju Cole, who will give a public reading followed by a writing workshop for students in the Structured Liberal Education program, the arts-minded residential program ITALIC and the African Humanities Collective.

The founders plan to remain involved in PASS when they return to campus in the fall to complete their master's program but an entirely new executive team will be in place. Co-presidents will be Mac Taylor, '20, and Angelica Jopling, '20.

“Reilly and Reily filled a much-needed gap with PASS: They created a space for the art-inclined community of Stanford to connect with the art world as it exists on campus, as well as the broader space beyond,” said Taylor. “As an incoming president, I hope to continue and expand the breadth of that vision, to inspire Stanford students to engage in the arts community here, while also prompting them to think confidently about a future in that arena outside the Stanford sphere.”

This summer, Clark will be working in the New York office of Heritage Auctions. Haag will be helping to teach young artists and art historians at the Stanford Summer Arts Institute. He is also going to be writing for the Ansel Adams Gallery based in Yosemite National Park. They are confident that they have left PASS in great hands for the future.



(mailto:?

subject=An%20interesting%20article%20from%20Stanford%20News&body=I%20want%20to%