

O'Chang Studios, *Temp Tales* (2017)

CHUNHUA (HANJI) CHANG '14, DIGITAL MEDIA

Co-Founder, Owner, Director, Animator, O'Chang Studios
Rockland, ME
ochangstudios.com

Born in Taiwan to a Korean mother and Taiwanese father, I spent the first part of my life in South Africa during the last gasps of Apartheid. I am now married to a Mainer and living in Maine.

My work has always had a social, political undertone, which comes from my multicultural and multilingual background. I deal with culture shock on a daily basis, but thanks to my low brow sense of humor, I'm able to view life in a colorful way. My father grew up in a working class family, then worked in politics as a National Assemblyman in the '90s and was an active member in Taiwan's independence movement, where I got my first dose of political, social awareness. I began my journey as a political artist in my teen years.

Though I've always considered myself a traditional painter, I also have a great interest in technology, which shifted my work from realism to a digital artist during my years at MECA. Whatever the medium is, my work is always focused on the line of class awareness, but with a twist of humor. Aside from being an artist, I consider myself a comedy nerd. Comedy has

always played a huge role in my work. I believe the biggest mission as an artist is to make people laugh, which led me to my current work, *Temp Tales*.

Temp Tales is an animated comedy series created by my husband and I, known as The O'Changs on the internet. It's written by Andy, animated by me. The stories are inspired by our experience working low wage jobs and it has become something of a working-class cult hit in Maine.

We later started our climate change series collaborating with Sea Grant to bring awareness to the serious topic of climate change with an engaging and playful animation.

The two popular animated series later launched our current career as an animation studio producing animated videos for businesses, non-profits, and wide numbers of organizations in and out of state.

What resources, tools, or organizations have you found helpful throughout your artistic career?

Sea Grant, Youtube, clients.

Advice for New Alumni

Know what you are passionate about and good at and believe in it. Don't try too hard, just keep doing what you love to do. Work hard and understand that every single thing you do and people you meet and work with along the way will contribute to your career in one way or another. There is no such thing as a waste of time doing what you love. Be professional but also stay true to yourself and your work.

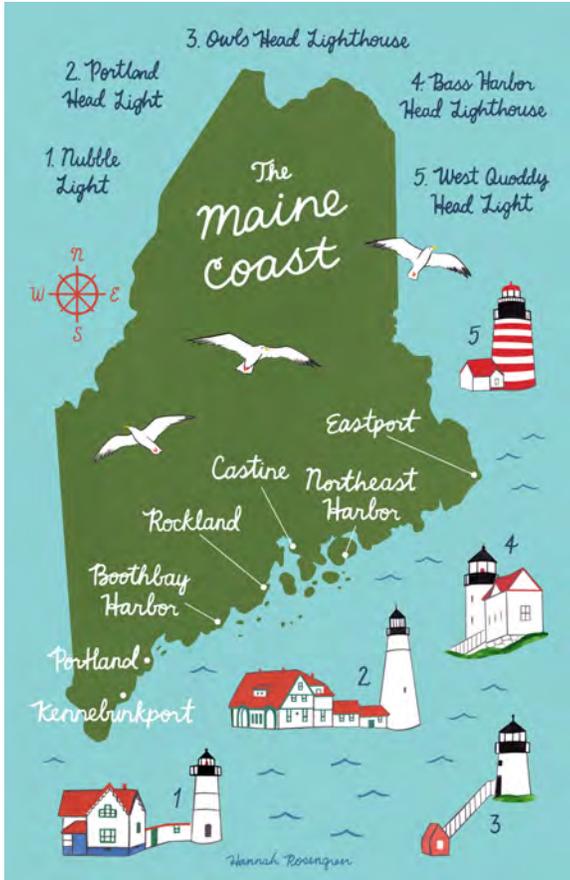
HANNAH ROSENGREN MORAN '13, ILLUSTRATION

Freelance Illustrator
South Portland, ME
hannahrosengren.com

My path to becoming a freelance illustrator began when I made the decision to transfer from a liberal arts school in Massachusetts to an art school next to my hometown. I knew that I wanted to be self-employed but had no idea what that would look like until I learned about freelance work and the world of illustration.

A specific direction for my work became clear after completing my first project post-graduation, *Plant These to Help Save Bees*. I had drawn inspiration from nature for many years, but didn't realize how passionate I'd become

Alumni Stories



Hannah Rosengren, *Map of the Maine Coast*

about bringing awareness to environmental issues through illustration — something I've continued to strive for since.

Now I'm able to work in a home studio freelancing and running my online shop — a job description I had previously never heard of but love so much. Over the last ten years, I've also worked at my family's painting business which continues to be a gratifying and important aspect in balancing my illustration work and financial stability as an artist.

0–2 Years Post Graduation

After graduating from MECA in 2013, I worked part-time at the Portland Museum of Art as a Visitor Experience Associate. In my free time, I started my first project post-graduation called *Plant These to Help Save Bees*. In early 2014, the poster went viral and was published in *American Bee Journal*, *ELLE Decoration Sweden*, and *Jamie Magazine – Dutch Edition*. Its popularity led to my working with Greenpeace on

a poster about the Tongass Forest that year, and attracted other clients and online shop customers interested in the burgeoning environmental themes in my work.

3–5 Years Post Graduation

Throughout the next couple of years, I continued to build my shop inventory by making prints and products of personal projects between freelance jobs. In 2015, the newly-opened Press Hotel commissioned a coloring book all about their hotel and Portland in the summertime. In 2016, I was awarded a Rebel Blend Fund Grant from Coffee By Design to illustrate and distribute a zine called *How to Cultivate a Pollinator-Friendly Yard*, about seasonal ways to help pollinators in Maine. Most recently, I've had the opportunity to work with Greenpeace again on another poster for their campaign to protect the Boreal Forest in Canada.

Advice for New Alumni

My advice for new alumni would be to take a break to recuperate from the craziness of your final semester, but to maintain the work ethic you cultivated as an art school student. It's rare that I have as crazy a workload as I did while at MECA, but when I do, the ability to stay motivated and organized while working on multiple projects with coinciding deadlines has been essential.

SAGE LEWIS '04, PAINTING

Artist

Tunbridge, VT

www.sagelewis.net

I've always had a strong interest in arts administration, curating, and museum work alongside my studio practice. For a number of years I felt conflicted about which path to choose. In 2008, I came very close to taking the GRE and submitting applications for art history graduate programs. A personal loss thwarted these plans and instead I threw myself into curating at the Portland Museum of Art. A few years later, and six curated museum exhibitions completed, I decided to dedicate my graduate education to studio work and research. Studying at a large research university (as a compliment and contrast to my undergraduate experience at MECA) validated the importance of my investigations outside of art that inform my work. My wide-ranging interests in the history of science, philosophy, and architecture were fully indulged with course work, lectures, and access to great libraries and resources. A dedicated alternative process lab captured my attention from the start of my graduate program. I eventually immersed



Sage Lewis, *Facade* (2015) and *Panel Alignment* (2016), black fabric on wall and in the landscape

myself in experimental forms of print media and learned how to use a 4 x 5 view camera in my studio. Photographic processes have been a large part of my practice since I first set foot in the “Alt lab” in 2011.

While my degrees are in Painting & Drawing, my work has a strong relationship to fiber and material studies. Photography and printmaking are crucially important to me. I often make sculptural forms in the studio. While at MECA, I couldn’t decide what to major in after two years of Metalsmithing and courses in Painting, Printmaking, Sculpture, and Digital Media. One of the reasons I selected MECA was the proximity between departments in the Porteous building. My work doesn’t fit into a media category. I’m inspired by tools and materials of all sorts, so I have found interdisciplinary access to facilities to be a dream worth pursuing.

0–2 Years Post Graduation

- Curatorial Assistant (and maternity leave replacement for Director of Education) at ICA at MECA
- Freelance exhibitions work & Continuing Studies youth camp liaison
- RA at High Street dorms (living rent free allowed me to afford my studio space and intern without pay at the Maine Arts Commission (MAC)
- Internship at MAC led to part time paid work as Percent for Art Contractor
- Worked part-time as a nanny
- Received job as Curatorial Coordinator at Portland Museum of Art (PMA)

3–5 Years Post Graduation

- Making and exhibiting my studio work
- Working on exhibitions and publications at the PMA
- Traveling whenever possible

5–10 Years Post Graduation

- Curating my own shows at PMA in addition to assisting other curators, promoted to Assistant Curator
- Stressing over pressure at PMA more-than-full-time job and not having enough studio time
- Decide to apply to grad schools for studio instead of art history
- Undertaking large wall installations as new part of my studio practice, building grad portfolio (install shots from SPACE Gallery front window, Whitney Art Works, and received grant from MAC to build out my studio wall for an installation there)
- Left Portland after 12 years (sob!)
- Started 3-year grad program at Ohio State University (OSU)

10+ Years Post Graduation

- Graduated from OSU with MFA
- Lived overseas for a year in Qatar on teaching fellowship and Artist in Residence
- Currently focusing on exhibitions, publication projects, residencies, and travel, while basing operations from a mountaintop in Vermont

What resources, tools, or organizations have you found helpful throughout your artistic career?

I try to stay apprised of listings on places like College Art Association and New York Foundation for the Arts regularly. Smaller listings such as Art Rabbit, ResArtis, Rubicon, NurtureArt, can be helpful too. CAA is a great resource for professional development tools and understanding issues in the field.

Alumni Stories

The most rewarding and productive relationship-building for me has come from staying in touch with people that I already know over the years, reconnecting and meeting new people through them. Likewise, I always share opportunities that I think someone might be suited for. Helping other artists or curators find meaningful outlets for work is really gratifying.

Advice for New Alumni

Stay in touch with your people: peers, faculty, employers, mentors, and colleagues.

Try not to fret about the competitive nature of the art world. Make your own opportunities where you can and share them with others. Be generous and open with this process.

SEAN WILKINSON '01, GRAPHIC DESIGN

Principal, Might & Main
Portland, ME
www.might-main.com

I've made a career path out of not settling. When things have felt stale, I've jumped into something new. This organic path has led me to a great, confident place of leadership for our little design firm. I've always been a stickler for truth in materials and honesty in execution, and that has led us to become a sought after design partner for brands that can benefit from our attention to detail across varied touchpoints—especially hospitality, food & beverage, and consumer goods.

0–2 Years Post Graduation

Moved to Seattle looking for a change of scenery and a design job, but arriving three days before 9/11 left me scraping together freelance work and doing various Seattle-esque odd jobs, like working in a video store, assisting around a glass-blowing studio, and doing year-round landscaping.

3–5 Years Post Graduation

I returned to Maine and took a job at a print shop as designer / preflight guy. I built a huge store of valuable technical production knowledge and learned how to work FAST. I left that job after 18 months to work as the designer for the *Portland Phoenix*, fell in love with the idea of alternative publications, and was soundly fired a year or so later when I helped start the biggest competitor the *Phoenix* ever faced, *The Ballard*.



Might & Main, *Eventide Oyster Co.* (2013), branding, collateral, website design and development

5–10 Years Post Graduation

While at the *Bollard*, I pursued a mix of freelance work and some time at small agencies around Portland. After an 18 month stint at a particularly dysfunctional agency, I bugged out and took a job as a deckhand on a Smack Boat, selling bait daily to lobstermen in Casco Bay. I bankrolled my summer with additional freelance work for Hannaford, MaineHealth, and The Downeaster.

10+ Years Post Graduation

The week after I stopped working on the boat, and pretty much on the day I ran out of money, I was hanging out on a friend's couch in Brooklyn and I got a call from David Puelle, who hired me over the phone (after having met at MECA and talked several times). I was at his studio the next day, and worked there for almost four years, doing great projects for Sugarloaf, Sunday River, Thomas Moser, and other great Maine companies. In 2010, I launched Might & Main with Arielle Walrath and we've built a firm that's now ten employees strong and working for clients in Maine, Boston, New York, and beyond. We currently employ five MECA alums.

Advice for New Alumni

Get out, meet people, talk about what you do. Then go do it again and again. Get over discomfort. Your most valuable promotional tool is yourself, your voice, and your personality. It can feel repetitive and obnoxious at times, but looking back at the 16 years (Christ, I'm old) since graduating, the people I met and the relationships I've built are the most crucial pieces of my career path. That moment when you think, "Should I say hello to that person? Should I give them a card? Should I tell them what I do?" ... that is an opportunity to potentially change the course of your life.

ANNE BUCKWALTER '12, MFA

Artist, Conservation Technician
Philadelphia, PA
annebuckwalter.com

Inspired by the historic tradition of allegorical painting, my work depicts figures in ambiguous situations as a way of exploring the strange, nebulous rules of human behavior. I intend my paintings to be both quiet and disquieting, using obscurity, tension, and dark humor to investigate social constructs.

For the past year and a half, I've been working on a series of paintings called *Perfect Order*. In this work, anonymous human figures take on the roles and behaviors of animals that live



Anne Buckwalter, *A Highly Successful Animal* (2017), oil on paper, 22.5 x 30 in.

in matriarchal societies. This series playfully demonstrates dominance hierarchies that subvert stereotypes of masculinity, legitimize female authority, and challenge the binary definition of gender. I've always been interested in using my work to create a dialogue about the instability of power relationships between people, and this project has given me the freedom to embrace that concept more fully and explore it specifically within a feminist framework.

What resources, tools, or organizations have you found helpful throughout your artistic career?

The greatest resource I've had in my career is the privilege and pleasure of knowing some very dedicated and disciplined artists, arts workers, arts educators, and curators. I've worked at arts nonprofits since finishing my graduate degree at MECA – the Portland Museum of Art and SPACE Gallery in Portland, Maine, and I'm now at the Conservation Center in Philadelphia – and have found that, not surprisingly, having a day-job in this field comes with the benefit of direct and meaningful connections to those who are interested in art and artists. Being able to engage with such a supportive community has led me to exhibition opportunities, grants, and residencies I wouldn't have found otherwise. I feel very lucky.

Advice for New Alumni

Treat your studio practice like a job, even if it doesn't make you money. Figure out how many hours you will spend in your studio per day or per week and then accept nothing less. Show up. Stay focused. Keep track of your time. Don't make excuses.