



photo: Houston Chronicle, 2016

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### BIOGRAPHY

I was born in 1956 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to William and Patricia Galbreth, the second of their five children. Most of my early childhood was spent in Asheville, North Carolina followed by elementary and high school years in Nashville, Tennessee. I lived in Murfreesboro and Memphis, Tennessee while attending college as an undergraduate receiving my BFA in painting from Memphis State University in 1980. I moved to Houston in 1981 to attend graduate school at the University of Houston at the invitation of the artist James Surls where I received an MFA in video and sculpture in 1984.

Beginning in 1983 I worked with Jack Massing as part of the duo The Art Guys, a collaboration that has spanned more than 33 years. The Art Guys have presented hundreds of exhibitions, performances, lectures and other activities throughout the United States, Europe and China and their work has been covered in all media. On April 1, 2016 The Art Guys announced "The Art Guys are not artists" thus beginning a radical experiment to move beyond the definitions and limits of art itself.

I am married to Rainey Knudson, founder and editor of Glasstire, an online journal of art in Texas. We have one son.

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### EDUCATION

St. Henry's School, Nashville, Tennessee - graduated eighth grade, 1970  
Father Ryan High School, Nashville, Tennessee - graduated high school, 1974  
Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, Tennessee — 1974-1976  
Memphis State University, Memphis, Tennessee — 1977-1980, Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA), painting  
University of Houston, Houston, Texas — 1981-1984, Master of Fine Arts (MFA), video and sculpture  
Masters Thesis - "The Future of Aestheticism as a Four Part Information Based Ontology"

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### EMPLOYMENT, WORK EXPERIENCE

#### GRAMMAR SCHOOL, HIGH SCHOOL, COLLEGE

Newspaper delivery, grass mowing, grocery store (sacking groceries, checkout clerk), construction (laborer road paving, truck and equipment operation), warehouse (laborer, forklift, manager), airport services (park and fuel aircraft), retail (sales clerk and inventory manager), restaurant waiter.

#### 1984-1985 — INSTALLATION MANAGER, BLAFFER GALLERY, UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON

As the Installation Manager of Blaffer Gallery (now Blaffer Art Museum) I was responsible for the installation of all exhibitions including paintings, sculpture, installation art, photography, media works (sound and video). Working directly under Nancy Hixon, Registrar and Bill Robinson, Director, duties included registration assistance, packing and shipping, and all aspects of exhibit installation. Employment continued until recruited and hired by The Houston Festival to be Coordinator of New Music America 1986.

## EMPLOYMENT, WORK EXPERIENCE (continued)

### 1984-1986 — COORDINATOR, NEW MUSIC AMERICA 1986, HOUSTON, TEXAS

New Music America 1986, a one week festival April 5-13, 1986, was the world's largest experimental music festival in the world with more than 200 musicians, composers and artists participating from all over the United States and other parts of the world. NMA '86 presented concerts, events, films and exhibitions all over the city of Houston.

As coordinator, responsibilities included planning the conceptual framework of the festival along with Artistic Advisor, Pauline Oliveros, General Manager, Jerry McCathern, and Technical Director, Arthur Gottschalk. Duties as Coordinator included all aspects of planning and implementation of the festival including budgeting, grant writing, media relations, scheduling concerts, selection facilitation, contracts, travel coordination, technical assistance, venue selection and coordination, and more. Additional duties included overseeing a 19 member Steering Committee of arts professionals from every major arts organization in Houston.

Highlights of New Music America 1986 included:

- The New Music Parade (by Tom Cora, Trish Herrera, Rachel Hecker) comprised of marching artists, musicians, performers, art cars and floats. This parade led to The Art Car Parade presented by The Orange Show.
- World Premier of John Cage's "Ryoanji," Opening ceremony of the Cullen Sculpture, Museum of Fine Arts
- The first experimental music concerts in such various and diverse venues as the Astrodome [see image below], Rothko Chapel, the underground tunnel system in downtown Houston, the planetarium at the Museum of Natural Science and many more.

Employment terminated upon completion of festival

(photo: organizing "AstroSounds" concert, Houston Astrodome, New Music America 1986)



## EMPLOYMENT, WORK EXPERIENCE (CONTINUED)

### 1986-1990 — EXHIBIT DEVELOPER, CHILDREN'S MUSEUM OF HOUSTON, HOUSTON, TEXAS

As Exhibit Developer, responsibilities included all aspects of all exhibits at the Children's Museum of Houston including creation and conceptualization of exhibits, budgeting, design, developing educational goals, implementation, long term strategy for the museum, coordinating traveling exhibits and more. New initiatives were developed including a traveling exhibition program to expand the museum's outreach, to generate income, and provide cities and communities with exhibitions that they otherwise would not have. Further responsibilities included working in coordination with the Director of Education and managing a staff that included the Exhibitions Manager, Exhibitions Designer, and designers and fabricators.

In 1990, I resigned from the Children's Museum of Houston to concentrate and to devote all of my time and energy as a professional artist.

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## BOARDS, COMMITTEES

1986 - DiverseWorks Artist Advisory Board

1987 - DiverseWorks Board of Directors, Chair

1986-1988 - New Music Alliance Artist Advisory Board, President

2013-2014 - DiverseWorks Artist Advisory Board

2013-2017 - Board of Directors, Contemporary Arts Museum Houston

2015-2017 - University of Houston System Wide Art Acquisitions Committee (SWAAC)

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[left]  
teaching at  
Texas A&M University, Kingsville  
2009



[right]  
teaching at  
Texas A&M University, College Station  
2014

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## 1983-2016 – THE ART GUYS [ARTIST COLLABORATION WITH JACK MASSING]

*“The Art Guys are conceptual artists of the highest order.” – New York Times, 2013*

The Art Guys (Michael Galbreth, b. 1956, Philadelphia, and Jack Massing, b. 1959, Buffalo) began working together in 1983 after meeting while students at the University of Houston and continued a collaboration that spanned more than thirty five years. The Art Guys are one of the most recognized and successful artists in Texas history.

The Art Guys' work has been included in more than 150 exhibitions in museums, galleries and public spaces throughout the United States and in other parts of the world including Europe and China. Their work has been seen in more than 40 solo exhibitions among which include the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art, Tacoma Art Museum, the de Saisset Museum, the Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art and the Tampa Museum of Art. The Art Guys have realized major public art projects including Intercontinental Airport Houston, Phoenix Airport and the University of Houston as well as civic and private commissions. Additionally, The Art Guys have lectured at more than 60 universities, museums and other institutions throughout the United States including Harvard, Chicago Art Institute, School of Visual Arts New York, Kansas City Art Institute, UCLA, Vanderbilt and many more.

The Art Guys have experimented with a wide range of materials and activities in their attempt to expand the dialog and definitions of art. Sculpture, drawing, performances, installations and video were among the many forms The Art Guys employed, with food, drugs, pencils, baseball bats, car lot flags, toothbrushes and matches as just a small sampling of the unconventional materials they have utilized. Using an open and offbeat “direct-to-the public” methodology, they have staged exhibitions and events at grocery stores, movie theaters, airports, restaurants, sports arenas and many other non-traditional venues for experiencing art while also exploiting mass media and entertainment to explore contemporary society and issues. They are perhaps most well known for their numerous staged performances, public spectacles, and “behavioral” interventions in a wide array of situations that challenge the perceived divisions between art and life.

Described in the New York Times as “a cross between Dada and David Letterman, John Cage and the Smothers Brothers,” The Art Guys often used humor and everyday materials as a way to demystify art in an attempt to welcome a broad range of audiences into the discourse of contemporary art. In this way their work has been compared to medieval court jesters and fools as well as noted 20th century artists like Marcel Duchamp and Dada, Fluxus artists, Andy Warhol and William Wegman among others.

Articles, reviews and stories about their work have appeared in The New York Times, The New Yorker, Wall Street Journal, Art In America, ArtNews, Artforum, Sculpture Magazine, CNN, CBS News Sunday Morning and many more.

The Art Guys have been included in many books and catalogs including *The Art Guys: Think Twice* and *SUITS: The Clothes Make the Man*, published by Harry N. Abrams, New York; and the DVD *The Art Guys: Home On The Range*, a compilation of 25 years of video works published by Microcinema International.

The complete historical papers and records of The Art Guys, known as The Art Guys Records reside in the Special Collections in the Library of the University of Houston, Houston, Texas.

More information, including a curriculum vitae with complete work, exhibition, lecture, bibliography and media history may be found on the web at <http://TheArtGuys.com>.

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## GOALS AND VISION

### Research

After having worked for more than 40 years as an artist, more than 33 years as part of The Art Guys collaboration, exhibiting, performing, teaching and working in all manners of the art world, I want to find something new. My individual goal is to invent a new methodology, a new way of thinking and working, to search for what has not been thought before, to find something that has not existed before. Drawing upon and combining aspects of science, philosophy, mathematics, meta-logic, comedy, and art, I wish to invent a system that is not any of these. The decision to explore this radical shift are numerous and complex, but the primary reasons, intentions and ambitions for this new path may be simply described as the desire for discovery.

### Teaching

With my collaboration with The Art Guys and individually, I have taught and lectured at universities, colleges, high schools, museums and other institutions throughout the United States including Harvard, Vanderbilt, University of California Berkeley, School of Visual Arts New York, Chicago Art Institute, University of Houston Honors College, and many more.

I have a continued interest in teaching. I enjoy contributing to young peoples' lives just as teachers and mentors helped me. Education is more than simple conveyance of information. The role of art departments is not to produce artists. But regardless if one is an artist, knowledge of visual art is essential to understanding culture and ourselves. A refined critical awareness of the visual environment of our world may serve anyone, whatever their intellectual pursuits, or whatever they might turn out to be. This is a valuable lifelong skill.

### Writing

I am currently writing a series of essays that will be compiled into a book. Examples of this writing may be found on my website here:

<http://MichaelGalbreth.com/writings>



[above] teaching at University of Texas, San Antonio, 2014