

Paul Schmelzer

pschmelzer1@gmail.com
paulschmelzer.com

linkedin.com/in/paulschmelzer
612.245.1434

Overview

A veteran writer, editor, and digital strategist who can translate complex ideas into communication that connects.

Selected Experience

Independent Writer, Editor, Digital Strategist

Minneapolis, 2021–present

I consult on content strategy (for Forecast Public Art, the National Performance Network, PUBLICS Helsinki, and others); write mission-driven stories (for clients including the National Gallery of Art, Land O' Lakes, and CentraCare Health Services); manage website redesigns (most recently BockleyGallery.com); and name new endeavors (including the GroundBreak Coalition, a \$2B racial equity development project spearheaded by the McKnight Foundation).

Production Editor, Alexander Gray Associates

New York, 2020–present

Supported editor in producing Coco Fusco's first monograph (Thames & Hudson, 2023), serving as developmental editor and fact checker for all essays and liaison between artist, editor, authors, publisher, and gallery on planning, timeline, and deliverables.

Managing Editor, Walker Art Center

Minneapolis, 2011–20

Provided vision and daily oversight in producing *Walker Reader*, an industry-leading news site, from commissioning and editing audience-focused stories to developing the site's style guide, chartering media partnerships to analyzing engagement metrics, and more—driving 750,000+ pageviews to the museum website annually and boosting the museum's reputation through stories cited by outs including *Artforum*, the *New York Times*, and the BBC. I increased diversity of guest writers each year, from 38% BIPOC and 41% non-male (FY14–15) to 49% and 54% (FY19–20).

Managing Editor, American Independent News Network

Washington, DC, 2010–11

Supervised and mentored six state-based editors in public-service news, helping lead this nonprofit network to record-breaking site traffic in Aug. 2011.

Editor/State Director, Minnesota Independent

Minneapolis, 2007–11

Recruited, trained, and mentored a staff of journalists in covering politics and policy that shape our community, work that earned the site recognition for excellence 18 times from the Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ).

Senior Fellow, American Independent News Network

Washington, DC, 2006–07

Covered the changing media landscape as the *Minnesota Independent's* media critic, a role that earned me four SPJ Page One awards and a 2007 Frank Premack Public Affairs Journalism Award from the University of Minnesota School of Journalism.

Associate Director of Marketing/Editor, Walker Art Center

Minneapolis, 1998–2007

Led production of the Walker's print magazine; wrote engaging TV, radio, and print ads; and served as founding editor of the museum's six blogs, a role that saw traffic increase 30+ percent each month for two consecutive years (2005–07).

Education

St. John's University, BA, English/Communication, magna cum laude

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Freelance Writing

Wrote 300+ articles for outlets including *Adbusters Magazine*, *Art 21*, *Artforum*, *Art in America*, *Hyperallergic*, *Ode Magazine*, *The Progressive*, and *Utne*, and in books, including *Land, Art: A Cultural Ecology Handbook* (Royal Society of Art), *Collecting at the Edge* (Nora Eccles Harrison Museum of Art), and *Ficciones Typografika* (Formist). Business clients: Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, IDEO, Land O' Lakes, McKnight Foundation, National Gallery of Art, National Performance Network, Planet Propaganda, PUBLICS Helsinki, Thames & Hudson, University of Michigan Museum of Art, Zeus Jones, others.

Selected Honors

Recipient, Arts Writers Grant, The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts | Creative Capital, 2019.

Cohort Member, James P. Shannon Leadership Institute, Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, St. Paul, 2019.

Best of the Web: Best Overall Site, Museums and the Web 2012, for walkerart.org.

2007 Frank Premack Public Affairs Journalism Award, University of Minnesota School of Journalism, Excellence in Opinion Journalism, "Who Owns the J-Word? Videoblogger's Jailing Raises Questions for Journalists," *Minnesota Independent*.

Selected Appearances

Guest lecturer, Communicating for Cultural Change, MA in Arts Administration and Policy program, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Nov. 16, 2020.

Keynote, Crossing Borders: An Arts Journalism Conference, Washington, DC, Sept. 25, 2020.

"Art History in Real-Time," part of the panel discussion "Digital Publishing, Dissent, and Socially-Engaged Art History," College Art Association Annual Conference, LA, Feb. 23, 2018.

"Conference as Publishing, or Expanding a Digital Arts Journalism Conference Online," Museum Computer Network 2015 National Conference, Minneapolis, Nov. 7, 2015.

"Innovations in Online Audience Engagement," American Alliance of Museums Annual Meeting, Baltimore, May 22, 2013.

Selected Recognition

"The [*Walker Reader*], led by journalist Paul Schmelzer, produced interesting arts coverage in ways that were topical without being self-promotional, featuring contributions by important art world figures such as Jack Whitten, Hans Haacke, Taylor Renee Aldridge and Jessica Lynne. I've always thought of it as a model for what museums might do to support arts writing at a time when media is shriveling."

—Carolina Miranda, *Los Angeles Times*, Sept. 2020.

"The site is a networked treasure house, where its collection and exhibition displays mingle with a panoply of artistic and art-related content, like the Walker Reader, an editorial arm of the museum that features debates on Indigenous art, or on how museums respond to the #MeToo movement."

—Jason Farago, *New York Times*, in naming walkerart.org one of the world's best museum sites during COVID, Apr. 2020.

"The Walker's new site is helmed by Paul Schmelzer, who has long run the excellent Eyeteeth blog. If anyone can figure out how to turn the Walker's website into an art mag frontend for the museum's collection, Schmelzer can."

—Alexis Madrigal, *The Atlantic*, Dec. 2011.