Rob Marks • San Francisco Bay Area, CA • robmarkswriter.com • rob@robmarkswriter.com

Education

California College of the Arts, San Francisco — Master of Arts, Visual and Critical Studies, 2011

University of California, Berkeley — Master of Journalism, 1986

University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia — Bachelor of Arts, *cum laude,* 1980, English and Individualized major in Gender Roles, with distinction for honors thesis

Continuing Arts Education

The Marsh Theater, San Francisco, Solo performance, 2024–present

Studio ACT, American Conservatory Theater, San Francisco — Singing/acting, 2018–present

23rd Street Studio, San Francisco — Life drawing, 1996–2010

Mantic, Project Artaud, San Francisco — Contact improvisation dance, 1983–1987

Honors and Grants (Selected)

2025 Finalist, Michael Steinberg Memorial Essay Prize, *Fourth Genre*

2025 Notable Essay, *Best American Essays 2025,* ed. Jia Tolentino and Kim Dana Kupperman

2024 Fellow, Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, (VCCA), Mt. San Angelo, VA

2019 Shortlisted, Saari Residence International Open Call, Arts Writing, Kone Foundation, Finland, "Reclaiming 'Disaster Porn': Healing the Schism Between 'Aesthetic' and 'Political' Art"

2012 Winner, Hannah Arendt Prize in Critical Theory and Creative Research, juried by Keith Gessen, Lewis Hyde, Atta Kim, Geoffrey Mann, W.J.T. Mitchell, Sina Najafi, Anne-Marie Oliver, Jacques Rancière, and Barry Sanders)

2012 Finalist, Creative Capital/Warhol Foundation Arts Writers Grant, Article category, "Beside Space and Time: The Unexplored Surface of Richard Serra's Steel Sculptures"

2010 Research Grantee, California College of the Arts, Visual and Critical Studies, "Richard Serra's Sculptures and the Kantian Aesthetic"

Employment

Freelance Writer, 2011 to Present

Alliance Health Project (formerly AIDS Health Project), University of California San Francisco, pioneering HIV/LGBTQ+ mental health agency. San Francisco, 1988 to 2018. Many editorial and managerial roles ending as Provider Training and Education Manager (2005–18). Co-author, HIV and mental health law book. Named co-editor, anthology and five-monograph series. Editor, longest-running semi-scholarly HIV mental health newsletter: *FOCUS: A guide to AIDS Research and Counseling*.

California College of the Arts, San Francisco, 2014, Lecturer

Publications

BOOKS (Selected)

"How To Feel Yourself Up: A Meditation on Identity, Empathy, the Faggot Body, and the Wonder of Survival," manuscript submitted for publication, 2026

James W. Dilley and Robert Marks, eds., *UCSF AIDS Health Project Guide to Counseling: Perspectives on Psychotherapy, Prevention, and Therapeutic Practice* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998)

Gary James Wood, Robert Marks, and James W. Dilley, *AIDS Law for Mental Health Professionals: A Guide to Judicious Practice* (San Francisco: UCSF AIDS Health Project, 1991, rev 1993) (Distributed by Ten Speed Press)

James W. Dilley and Robert Marks, eds., *UCSF AIDS Health Project Monograph Series*. San Francisco: UCSF AIDS Health Project, 1995–2001:

- Gonzalez, Francisco. *HIV and Depression: Context and Care*. 2001
- Shernoff, Michael, and Raymond Smith. *HIV Treatment: Mental Health Aspects of Antiviral Treatment*. 2000
- Goldblum, Peter, and Sarah Erickson. *Working with AIDS Bereavement: A Comprehensive Approach for Mental Health Providers.* 1999
- Zweben, Joan E., and Patt Denning. *The Alcohol and Drug Wildcard: Substance Use and Psychiatric Problems in People with HIV.* 1998
- Zeifert, Penelope, Mark Leary, and Alicia Boccellari. *AIDS and the Impact of Cognitive Impairment.* 1995

Lee Finney, MA, and Virginia Dean, JD, and Robert Marks, *The First Steps to Identifying Sex- and Race-Based Pay Inequities in a Workplace: A Guide to Achieving Pay Equity*. Berkeley, CA: University of California, Berkeley, Center for Labor Research and Education, 1989

CREATIVE NONFICTION ESSAYS (Selected)

"An enchantment of language," *Fourth Genre,* vol 28, no 1 (Spring 2026): 79-87; https://muse.jhu.edu/pub/26/article/985342/summary (finalist for the 2025 Michael Steinberg Memorial Essay Prize)

"'The Best Thing to Do': Virginia Woolf's Suicide Notes and the Construction of a Taboo," in Valery Vino, ed., *Philosophy of Final Words* (Melbourne: Mongrel Matter, 2025)

"Wholly Bloody, Holy Land?" *North American Review,* vol 309, no 2 (Summer 2024): 76-81; https://www.jstor.org/stable/27317389? (listed as a "Notable Essay" in *Best American Essays 2025*)

"Epistolary Failures" in Adrienne Skye Roberts, *Intimate Revolt* (2009) (zine produced as part of exhibitions *Sweet and Matchless* and *For Lovers and Fighters,* San Francisco)

"The Fall of Towers (11 September, Austin, Nevada)" in Rob Marks and Saul Rosenfield, *Southwest to New York* (Dubo Press, 2002): 1-12

ART AND AESTHETIC PHILOSOPHY ESSAYS (Selected)

"Disarming 'Disaster Porn': The Use and Abuse of Aesthetics" in Valery Vino, ed., *Aesthetic Literacy, Vol. I: a book for everyone,* 2d ed. (Melbourne: Mongrel Matter, 2023)

"Ceci n'est pas un mot: It's Word Art," *Art Practical,* 4/24/2018; https://www.artpractical.org/column/ceci-nest-pas-un-mot-its-word-art/

"In the Body's Space, the Body's Time: Feeling Your Way Through Richard Serra's *The Matter of Time,*" in Sarah Lippert, ed., *Space and Time in Artistic Practice and Aesthetics: The Legacy of Gotthold Ephraim Lessing* (London: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 2017)

"Looking at Sound, Listening to Sight," *Art Practical,* 10/17/2017; https://www.artpractical.org/column/looking-at-sound-listening-to-sight/

"Saraceno's Anthropocenic Art and the Rise of the Aerocene," *X-TRA Contemporary Art Quarterly,* vol. 19, no. 4 (2017): 20-37

"Home Land Security,"*Frieze,* 10/24/2016; https://frieze.com/article/home-land-security

"Site Unseen, Time Unbound: The Double Life of Richard Serra's *Gutter Corner Splash,*" *X-TRA Contemporary Art Quarterly,* vol. 18, no. 4 (2016): 49-73

"Inside-Out and Outside-In: The Reopening of SFMOMA," *Frieze,* 5/23/2016; https://frieze.com/article/inside-out-and-outside

"Anselm Kiefer at Mass MoCA," *Daily Serving*, 10/28/2014; https://www.dailyserving.com/2014/10/anselm-kiefer-at-mass-moca/

"Yarn Trails: Visual Resonance Among Three Exhibitions in Chicago," *DailyServing,* 3/21/2014; http://dailyserving.com/2014/03/yarn-trails-visual-resonance-among-three-exhibitions-in-chicago/

"Terry Berlier: Erased Loop Random Walk," *Art Practical,* 1/14/2014; https://www.artpractical.org/review/erased-loop-random-walk/

"Substance and Accident: Anoka Faruqee," *Art Practical,* 12/2/2013; https://www.artpractical.org/review/anoka-faruqee-substance-and-accident/

"Mining" (representations of disaster), *Art Practical*, 10/14/2013; https://www.artpractical.org/review/Mining/

"Seeing Things: Thinking Faces," in Saul Rosenfield, *An Encounter at Sneath Lane* (San Francisco: Dubo Press, 2013)

"No Wrong Way In, No Wrong Way Out" (abstract works on paper), *Daily Serving*, 10/22/2013; www.dailyserving.com/2013/04/hashtags-no-wrong-way-in-no-wrong-way-out/

"Time After Time: *The Clock* at SFMOMA," *DailyServing,* 5/29/2013; http://dailyserving.com/2013/05/time-after-time-the-clock-at-sfmoma/

"Silence" (works inspired by John Cage), *Art Practical,* 4/22/2013; https://www.artpractical.org/review/silence1/

"Jay DeFeo: Spatial Relations," *Daily Serving*, 1/11/2013; https://www.dailyserving.com/2013/01/jay-defeo-spatial-relations/ (reprinted in *Art Practical,* vol. 4, no. 10, 2/26/20130)

"The Site of Imaginative Contention," *Untitled*, 10/15/2012; https://oicr-e4.org/hannah-arendt (Winner, Hannah Arendt Prize in Critical Theory and Creative Research)

"The Museum on My Mind," *Daily Serving*, 4-part series on museum commentary: https://www.dailyserving.com/2012/12/best-of-2012-museumpractices-the-museum-on-my-mind/: Part I: "If the Walls Would Not Speak," 9/7/2012; Part II: "Writing on Water," 10/5/2012; Part III: "Struggling Toward Wonder," 11/2/2012; Part IV: "Play Is the Thing," 12/6/2012 (reprinted in "Best of 2012" series)

"Going Up at SFMOMA," *Daily Serving,* 8/7/2012: https://www.dailyserving.com/2012/08/hashtags-going-up-at-sfmoma/ (reprinted on 3/11/2013)

"Matter and Spirit: The Sculpture of Stephen De Staebler," *Art Practical,* vol. 3, no. 14, 5/3/2012: https://www.artpractical.org/review/matter_and_spirit/

"John Cage," *Art Practical,* vol. 3, no. 11, 3/15/2012: http://www.artpractical.org/shotgun_review/john_cage/

"Act. Repeat. Suspend. Sharon Lockhart's *Lunch Break* at SFMOMA," *DailyServing,* 12/5/2011: http://dailyserving.com/2011/12/act-repeat-suspend-sharon-lockharts-lunch-break-at-sfmoma/ (reprinted on 3/14/2012)

"Recovering Site and Mind: Richard Serra's *Sequence* Arrives at Stanford," *DailyServing,* 9/12/2011, http://dailyserving.com/2011/12/best-of-2011/ (reprinted in "Best of 2011" series)

"The Sublime and the Beautiful in Richard Serra's *The Matter of Time," Sightlines: A Journal of New Writing on Visual Culture,* 2011

"Leaning Over the Colorado (15 September, Dead Horse Point)" in Rob Marks and Saul Rosenfield, *Southwest to New York* (Dubo Press, 2002): 13-16.

"Cradling Under Sandstone (16 September, Delicate Arch)," in Rob Marks and Saul Rosenfield, *Southwest to New York* (Dubo Press, 2002): 17-20.

Presentations (Selected)

"How to find your voice," Solo performance, 11/15/2025 (San Francisco); 12/1 and 12/8/2025 (Berkeley), *The Marsh Theater,* San Francisco/Berkeley, CA

"An enchantment of language," Guest lecture, Knowing Others, and Being Known: The Art of Writing People, UC Berkeley, 10/15/2025

"Disarming 'Disaster Porn': The Use and Abuse of Aesthetics," Guest lectures at:

Writing at the Limits of Empathy, UC Berkeley, 10/9/2023 and 3/6/2023

Graduate seminar: Japanese Culture and the Sublime, UC Berkeley, 9/28/2022

"The Use and Abuse of Aesthetic Content," Guest lecture at Townsend Center Collaborative Graduate Research Seminar: Beauty, UC Berkeley, 3/30/2021

"The Rivalry Between Seeing and Saying: The Silent Treatment of Richard Serra's Steel Surfaces," Presentation at the 2014 College Art Association Conference, Chicago, 2/15/2014

"Prepare to Be Stunned," Guest Lecture at EAS 106: "Expressing the Ineffable in China and Beyond: The Making of Meaning in Poetic Writing," University of California, Berkeley, 10/11/2012

The Sublime and the Beautiful in Richard Serra's The Matter of Time," Visual and Critical Studies Graduate Symposium, California College of the Arts (CCA), 4/24/2011

"At the Edge of Smooth Space: Aesthetic Judgment and David Maisel's *The Lake Project*," Sites Symposium: Graduate Symposium in Visual and Critical Studies, CCA, 4/20/2010

"Post-Race in America: Through the Middle Passage to the Unfortunate Transformation of Forgetting into Truth," Identities Symposium: Graduate Symposium in Visual and Critical Studies, CCA, 12/7/2009

"Being Judith Butler: The Experience of Disorientation and Groundedness in the Theory of Gender Performativity," Sex, Gender, Queer Theory: Graduate Symposium in Visual and Critical Studies, CCA, 4/27/2009

Group Exhibitions

BookWorks 2014, San Francisco Public Library, 2014 (Book arts project)

Cover to Cover, San Francisco Camerawork, 2014 (Book arts project)

BookWorks 2003, San Francisco Public Library, 2003 (Book arts project)

Art for AIDS, Butterfields, San Francisco, 2002 (Book arts project)

TEN, SOMArts Gallery, San Francisco, 2002 (Drawings)