

Eleven Artists Share Their Most Memorable Art-School Stories

By KEVIN McGARRY SEPT. 22, 2016



The building that is now MoMA PS1 was built in 1892 and functioned as a school until 1963. In 1971, Alanna Heiss founded PS1 there; this Friday, it will function as a “school” again for a one-night-only benefit orchestrated by the artist Ryan McNamara. Clockwise from left: PS1 in 1900, circa 1978 and in 2012.

Courtesy of P.S. 1; Thomas Struth; Elk Studios.

New York’s beloved kunsthalle in Long Island City, MoMA PS1, was a pioneering alternative art space when its founder Alanna Heiss converted a decommissioned public school into a full-time contemporary art center in 1971. This Friday evening, for the first time since then, school bells will ring to call PS1 to session in its original, pre-museum incarnation, in a festive subversion of T.G.I.F.

Given carte blanche to staff a one-night academy for artful learning, play and other institutional rituals, the artist Ryan McNamara has conceived a “Back To School” benefit event. Projects and performances will include a lecture by the art historian Claire Bishop, guidance by the artist and Threearfour designer Jessica Mitrani, music class

with Nelly Furtado — and sex ed, nighttime lunchtime and recess.

In the spirit of the event, T gathered some reminiscences of art school — the good, the bad, the drug-fueled, the experimental — from artists whose pedagogical coming-of-age stories are as varied as their work today.

Stewart Uoo

California College of the Arts and Crafts, 2007 (B.F.A.)

“My best memory of art school was shrooming with friends for the first time, under a starry night sky in a posh golf course at the base of the Oakland Hills. My worst memory of art school was dropping acid for the first time with friends in the graduate studios.”