David Orr | Interdisciplinary Artist, Writer & Architect

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Studio Resident at the Galena Center for the Arts, Galena, IL

SUMMARY

This creative practice investigates the intersection of architectural structure, graphic textuality, and narrative form. Drawing upon an extensive background in spatial design and material systems, the resulting body of work translates archival residue and legal containment into illuminated visual installations, artists' books, and stage plays. Current research centers on how historical document systems can be activated across gallery spaces and dramatic performance.

EDUCATION

- MFA in Writing and Visual Studies, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL, 2025.
- MLA in Media and Popular Culture (Comic Studies), Henderson State University, Arkadelphia, AR, 2022. *(Supervised by Dr. Randy Duncan)*
- Master of Architecture (M.Arch.), Washington University, St. Louis, MO, 1979.
- Bachelor of Arts (Natural Sciences Major), Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD, 1974.

ADDITIONAL PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

- Network Playwright, Chicago Dramatists, Chicago, IL, 2004–2011, 2025–2026.
- Web Project Management Certification, University of Chicago, Chicago, IL, 2001.

GRANTS & AWARDS

- Illinois Arts Council: Creative Project Grant ($12,000), 2026–2027; Creative Accelerator Grant ($10,000 unrestricted), 2025–2026.
- American Playwriting Foundation—Honorable Mention, The Relentless Award (one of 45 selected from 2200 submissions), for *A Tornado, a Turnip, and a Minotaur Walk into a Bar* (two-act play), 2026.
- The Inkwell Theater — Finalist, 2027 LAB Series (selected from 350+ submissions), for *A Tornado, a Turnip, and a Minotaur Walk into a Bar* (two-act play), Los Angeles, CA, 2026.
- Guild Literary Complex — Finalist (Poetry), 32nd Annual Gwendolyn Brooks Open-Mic Awards, for "The Abated Record," Chicago, IL, 2026.
- Studio Channel Islands — Honorable Mention Award, *The Next Big Thing 2023* (digital collage), Camarillo, CA; Juror: Shana Nys Dambrot (*Los Angeles Times*), 2023.
- Lubeznik Center for the Arts — Juror's Award of Special Merit (digital array), Regional Art Show, Michigan City, IN, 2007.
- National Science Foundation — Undergraduate Research Program Grantee (Biochemistry), Princeton University, 1972.

PUBLICATIONS & SCHOLARLY WRITING

- Monograph: *Forensic Persistence: A Manifesto on Residue, Record, and Narrative* (Prospectus under review, Cambridge Elements).
- Peer-Reviewed Article: "Red River Crawl: Reconstructing 1830s Territorial Court Dockets and Frontier Legal Erasure" (Article under review, *American Journal of Legal History*).
- National Opinion Series: *Newsweek* — Invited Columnist, bi-monthly series on institutional systems, artificial intelligence, and archival forensics, 2026–Present.
    - ″Gen Z Can't Escape AI. It Has to Learn How to Master It,″ October 6, 2026.

RECENT EXHIBITIONS

- Featured Artist (Group Cycles), Regional Art Gallery, Galena Center for the Arts, Galena, IL; Exhibited initial 24 × 36 in. HD backlit acrylic-on-metallic proofs-of-concept for *The Thunderbird Letters*, April–September 2026.
- Juried Exhibition, *Irene Rosenzweig Juried Biennial*, Art and Science Center for Southeast Arkansas, Pine Bluff, AR; Juror: Eepi Chaad, Sept. 2025–Jan. 2026. *(Book as art object)*
- Juried Exhibition, *Open Call: All Media*, Studio Channel Islands, Camarillo, CA, Aug.–Sept. 2025.
- Public Exhibition, *Free Style 3.0*, HMVC Gallery and Times Square Jumbotron, New York, NY, Aug. 2025.
- Thesis Exhibition, *MFA Thesis Exhibition*, SAIC Galleries, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, July 2025.
- Juried Exhibition, *The Next Big Thing 23*, Studio Channel Islands, Camarillo, CA, 2023.
- Juried Exhibition, *Illustrated Arkansas: The Art of Comics*, Roberts Library of Arkansas History and Art, Little Rock, AR, Oct. 2022–Jan. 2023.

SELECTED PAST EXHIBITIONS & ART LICENSING (Highlights)

- *Artosphere*, Walton Art Center, Fayetteville, AR, 2020.
- *Found Objects*, Praxis Photographic Arts Center, Minneapolis, MN, 2018.
- *53rd & 52nd Annual Delta Exhibitions*, Arkansas Arts Center, Little Rock, AR (Jurors: Ellen Rudolph, Akron Art Museum; Martha Tedeschi, Art Institute of Chicago), 2010, 2011.
- Fine Art Image Licensing, Staatsballett Berlin (via Sign Agency), Berlin, Germany; Featured global promotional photography series, 2008.

THEATRICAL PRODUCTIONS & DRAMATIC READINGS

- *Love's Sole Ash: Earth's First Alphabet* (lyric poetry reading) – Advance Preview Reading, *In the Trenches 2026 Writers Conference*, Evanston, IL, Nov. 15, 2026.
- *The Abated Record* (10-minute play) – World Premiere, Juried Selection, Chicago Dramatists Network Play Fest, dir. Adrianne Cury, Russ Tutterow Theater, Chicago, IL, Sept. 5, 2026.
- *A Tornado, a Turnip, and a Minotaur Walk into a Bar* (full-length stage play) – Table Reading, Chicago Dramatists' *First Draft Series*, Russ Tutterow Theater, Chicago, IL, April 2026.

PUBLISHER & PRESS EXPERIENCE

Founder and Publisher | *Riparia.US* | Galena, IL | 2024–Present.

- Direct design and production lifecycle for an independent press specializing in interdisciplinary art, experimental text, and visual literature.
- Published titles: *A Tornado, a Turnip, and a Minotaur Walk into a Bar* (illustrated text / artist's book, Second Edition, 2026); *Love's Sole Ash: Earth's First Alphabet* (2026); *Red River Crawl: From Borderland Mud to a Coherent Civil Order* (monograph, 2027); *Spaghly Syncopated Monk* (2027).

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY & MEDIA

- *USA Today* — "Formulating Forensic Persistence: David Carroll Orr Tracks Historical Ledger Systems," June 24, 2026.
- *Business Insider* — "How 19th-Century Jurisprudence Shapes Modern Algorithms: The Research of David Carroll Orr," June 24, 2026.
- *Chicago Tribune* — "And now, some praise for younger architects who don't do skyscrapers," Paul Gapp, June 5, 1983, section 12, p. 14.

PROFESSIONAL ARCHITECTURE & DESIGN HISTORY

- Vice President and Corporate Architect, *JPMorgan Chase & Co.*, Chicago, 1989–2008.
- Creative Direction / UX Consultant, *State Farm Insurance Innovations*, 2011–2014.
- Strategic UX Design Consultant, *Independent Portfolio*, 2008–2019: John Deere, American College Testing (ACT), and Peapod/Ahold Delhaize.
- Commercial Architectural Designer & Intern, Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM) / Swanke Hayden Connell / Metz Train & Youngren, Chicago, 1979–1988.

TEACHING & COMMUNITY RESIDENCIES

Architect-in-Residence, Urban Gateways (Chicago) & Ottumwa (IA), funded via National Endowment for the Arts and State Arts Council Grants; taught architectural design curricula in public elementary and secondary schools, 1980–1984.

PROFESSIONAL REGISTRATIONS & AFFILIATIONS

- Licensed Architect, State of Illinois (1987).
- Network Playwright, Chicago Dramatists.