

JW (James) Toftness

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EDUCATION

- 2026 MFA, Savannah College of Art and Design, Savannah, GA
2011 MA, Humanities, University of Chicago, Chicago, IL, 2011
2010 BA *magna cum laude*, Literature and Philosophy, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO, 2010
2007 AAS Film and Video Technology, Colorado Film School, Aurora, CO, 2007

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Savannah College of Art and Design

- 2026 *Instructor*, Summer Seminar, Photography: Digital Image Techniques
2025 *Teaching Assistant*, Video Techniques for Photographers
Instructor, Summer Seminar, Photography: Digital Image Techniques
Instructor, Studio Safety Training
2024 *Teaching Assistant*, Fashion Photography

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Freelance Images and Permissions Editor

August 2016–current

Clients include: Albert and Mary Lasker Foundation, Art Institute of Chicago, Estate of Leo Steinberg, Terra Foundation for American Art, and many individual authors.

- Research and acquire images and permissions.
- Negotiate fees and terms with image providers.
- Analyze aesthetic and technical qualities of images.
- Coordinate art program, budget, and project timeline with clients.

Savannah College of Art and Design

Publications Manager

February 2021–June 2026

- Institute structure and processes for SCAD's books program.
- Manage book publications from concept through publication.
- Oversee editing, layout, image proofing, and design.
- Propose and review design concepts, cover designs, and book interiors.

The University of Chicago Press

Assistant Editor

July 2018–February 2021

- Acquire four to six books per year in contemporary art and media studies.
- Plan direction of acquisitions and communicate this to Editorial Director.

- Research and contact potential authors.
- Work with authors to develop and edit proposals and manuscripts.
- Continue Editorial Associate duties.

Editorial Associate

June 2014–July 2018

- Manage book projects from precontract through to publication.
- Oversee approximately twenty to thirty books per year and maintain another forty open projects.
- Work with the Executive Editor of art history and classical studies on new acquisitions.
- Assist authors with manuscript preparation; review and approve submitted materials, including analysis of image files and permissions documents.
- Review and approve galleys, layouts and designs, image proofs, catalog copy, and book descriptions.

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2026 [Title TBD], Candela Photo Arts, Richmond, VA (forthcoming)
Eidolon (MFA Thesis), Alexander Hall, Savannah, GA.
- 2025 *Coda*, Cleo the Project Space, Savannah, GA.

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2026 *METASENSUS*, Office Space Gallery, NOVA24 Photo + Film Festival, Detroit, MI.
Savannah Center for Photography Presents (invitational exhibition), Savannah Center for Photography, Savannah, GA (forthcoming).
Manifesting Freedom, Front Porch (invitation fundraiser for Cleo the Project Space), Savannah, GA.
Shit Show, XoXo Gallery, Baltimore, MD.
Infinite Weight/Present Histories (juried by Erin Dunn), Ingram Library Gallery, University of West Georgia, Carrollton, GA.
It's Been a Year, Through the Lens Collective (South Africa), online.
deFINE 2026 Painting & Photography Showcase (invitational exhibition), Alexander Hall, Savannah, GA.
The Worst Picture Show, Blue Sky Gallery (Portland, OR), online.
The Favorite Photograph You Took in 2025, Lenscratch, online.
- 2025 *Red*, Artstryngs Gallery (juried exhibition), Savannah, GA.
2025 Ghosts, Goblins & Other Apparitions Exhibition, Lenscratch, online.
Fine Art Showcase, Graham Scott, Savannah, GA.
Small Works, Alexander Hall, Savannah, GA.
A Summer of Hope Exhibition | Part II (as Whitman Grey), Lenscratch, online.

Arpad Kovacs Selects 2025, Atlanta Photography Group (juried by Arpad Kovacs), Atlanta, GA.
UnBound14!, Candela Photo Arts, Richmond, VA.
11th International Open Call, Rhode Island Center for Photographic Arts (juried by Zora J Murff and Rana Young), Providence, RI.
Light Conversation Vol. 5, Oregon Contemporary (curated by Small Talk Collective), Portland, OR.
Generations, Graham Scott, Savannah, GA.
deFINE 2025 Painting & Photography Showcase (invitational exhibition), Alexander Hall, Savannah, GA.
Compulsion, ATHICA: Athens Institute for Contemporary Art (juried by Erin Dunn), Athens, GA.

2024 *Fine Art Showcase*, Graham Scott, Savannah, GA.

2023 *Fine Art Showcase*, Graham Scott, Savannah, GA.

AWARDS, RECOGNITION, GRANTS

2026 **Top 25**, Lenscratch Student Prize (online; forthcoming)
Review Santa Fe 100, Juried Portfolio Review, Center, Santa Fe, NM (forthcoming)
Shortlist Artist, NOVA24 | Photo + Film Festival
3rd Place, *Infinite Weight/Present Histories*, juried by Erin Dunn
Lead Artist, *deFINE 2026 Painting & Photography Showcase*, Savannah College of Art and Design
Featured Artist, Candelar, Candela Photo Arts.

2025 **Honorable Mention**, Fine Art: Conceptual, Annual Photography Awards
Honorable Mention, Special: Analog / Film, Annual Photography Awards
Spotlight Artist, *Fine Art Showcase*, Savannah College of Art and Design

2024 **Honorable Mention**, Fine Art: Conceptual, Annual Photography Awards.

PUBLICATIONS

photoED, Real vs. Imagined, Issue #78 (Fall 2026; forthcoming).
Maggie Foster and Levi Wells, eds., *VESSEL*, Maceration Press Issue #2, (2026; forthcoming).
Cort Hartle, ed., *Substrate*, Issue 08 (May 2026).
John Morris and Mark Schoon, eds., *3rd National Infinite Weight/Present Histories* (University of West Georgia, 2026).
Atlanta Center for Photography, *New South, Volume II*, featured artist (ACP, 2025).
Zora J Murff and Rana Young, eds., *11th International Call for Contemporary Photography* (Rhode Island Center for Photographic Arts, 2025).

Kate Hadley Williams and James Toftness, "Skin Deep Art," with photography by James Toftness,
Soiled: Skinscrapers, Number 4 (2011): 49-57.
James Toftness, "Beauty and Beautification: Bloomingdale," *Colloquium*, Issue 2 (June 5, 2013).

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Cleo the Project Space, Savannah, GA	October 2024–October2025
Exhibition photography	
Latitude (nonprofit digital photo lab), Chicago, IL	October 2017–December 2017
Program Instructor for Simulation & Sight biweekly reading group.	