

Wilson, Emily. "Inspired by Maren Hassinger's work, BAMPFA community bonds on paper," *48 Hills*, 23 September 2026.

48hills
Independent San Francisco news + culture

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Inspired by Maren Hassinger's work, BAMPFA community bonds on paper

Knotting and twisting, Julia Goodman leads workshops that celebrate a luminous living artist.

By EMILY WILSON SEPTEMBER 23, 2026



"Wrenching News" workshop

After introductions and saying a little about her background, artist [Julia Goodman](#) began her August workshop, *Wrenching News* at the Berkeley Arts Museum and Pacific Film Archive, by letting the participants know that perfection was not the goal. We were there to rip, twist, and knot pages of the New York Times to contribute a piece to [Maren Hassinger's fabulous](#) BAMPFA exhibition [Living Moving Growing](#) (on view through November 29), not to make technically flawless loops.

Goodman used a variation of a quote by Tom Hanks's character from the 1992 movie *A League of Their Own* to illustrate the impossibility of failure in our adding to Hassinger's piece.

"It's like, 'There's no crying in baseball,'" Goodman said. "There's no messing up in my workshop."

Goodman instructed us to tear a page of newspaper in half and then to twist and pinch. Margot Norton, the museum's chief curator, who co-curated the Hassinger exhibition with Anthony Graham, asked

Goodman to lead a monthly workshop while the exhibition is up (the next ones are Sun/27 at 1pm, October 17 at 3pm, and November 5 at 3pm.)

When you look at Goodman's background, you see she's the perfect person to lead such knotting and twirling. The California College of the Arts teacher started off her papermaking career by tearing up the material into smaller and smaller pieces before throwing it in a blender and pouring it through an old window screen.

Her work has been shown at the San Luis Obispo Museum of Art, the Contemporary Jewish Museum, San Jose Museum of Art, Berkeley Art Center, and Paul Thiebaud Gallery. She is a 2026 teaching artist cohort at the Center for Craft, and a fall 2026 Ranch Studios artist with the Eames Institute.

Norton came to the Bay Area from New York a little over three years ago. She saw Goodman's work, and admired her practice. She also knew her personally from Goodman's trips to BAMPFA, both with her CCA students and with individuals she was working with at a memory center.

"I knew about her process of working with paper," Norton said. "I was thinking about the intersection with Maren's work and her own, with the incredible accumulation and materiality through material that is so intimate."

Goodman's work intersects with Hassinger in many ways, Norton says. Both are mothers, as well as teachers, with Hassinger having worked at Baltimore's Rinehart School of Sculpture at Maryland Institute College of Art for 20 years.

"There's a generosity to their practices," Norton said. "Maren's work is always inviting participation of communities, and she continually comes up with collaborations. For *Pink Trash* [Hassinger is restaged her 1982 performance on UC Berkeley's Crescent Lawn on September 20], she asked to work with six students," Norton said.

"Newspaper twisting is something she's been doing for years, and it brings people of all ages together," continues Norton. "We really wanted it to be an open participation for anyone. Working with your hands opens your mind and taking the news and ripping it up and fashioning it into something new and strong is something you do together with other human beings."

Goodman has seen that all ages participate in the workshop, with the eldest so far being an 84 year old, and the youngest just seven years old.

She told the workshop participants that during the pandemic, she created *Unimaginable Units of Time*, for which she tore up bedsheets and knotted them together, six feet of length every day. She thought she would do this for a month or so, but it kept going, and when she finished, it was 9.3 miles long.

After that solo project, Goodman is glad to experience the same type of artmaking with workshop attendees, as well as the experience of Hassinger, an artist of a different generation who now lives in New York. Goodman joined a workshop that Hassinger led for the staff, as well as one she did on the opening day in June. She's happy to see Hassinger, like local artist Mildred Howard whose retrospective, [*Poetics of Memory*](#), is on view at the Oakland Museum through October 18, recognized for decades of work.

"It was emotional and humbling to see this artist getting her flowers from collaborators and peers and friends," Goodman said. "It was such a celebration of a living artist."