

[Election Spotlight: Vote for Art \[1\]](#)

November 7, 2022 [TW Podcast](#) [2]

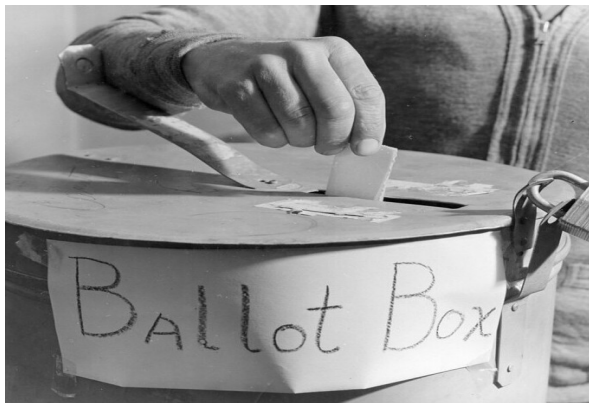
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Podcast with Martha Nichols and John Vogel

A TW Anthology of Poetry, Prose, and Music

Also available on [Apple Podcasts](#) [5], [Spotify](#) [6], [iHeartRadio](#) [7], and [elsewhere](#) [8].



Episode Notes: For Election Day 2022 in the United States, TW proudly presents a special podcast episode about politics and art. Elections around the globe this year have been fraught and divisive—and here, we highlight why artistic freedom matters in an unstable world.

TW contributors have often addressed political and social concerns, so at first, choosing selections for this anthology episode seemed daunting. Should we conduct new interviews? How many poems and comments to include? How "political" did we need to be?

The last question already had an answer: as a public charity, TW can't do specific electoral politicking. But individual writers can and do comment on the political challenges of being an artist, and as I searched our archives, I quickly felt energized rather than daunted. To produce this episode, we drew on our rich audio archive of readings by TW poets, along with interview clips and other commentary from recent features.

All along, I'd planned to read excerpts from my essay in the current issue: "Is History Wasted on Everyone?" Once art director John Vogel—a talented musician, sound engineer and the host of this anthology episode—began organizing selections, he came up with the right emotional arc. He wove my readings with poems, commentary, and his original music. You'll find an Episode List with links to the various contributors and features below.

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As for my "History" essay, it was sparked by Election Day 2020, when I took notes while visiting polling places during that first year of the pandemic. Other selections in this episode touch on the impact of the pandemic, the lack of funding for the arts, George Floyd's murder, and the horrific shooting at the Al Noor mosque in New Zealand in 2019. I felt a range of emotions when reading my own essay, much of which is an ode to my father, a political scientist and late-life poet who found little solace in political trends before he died but still believed in the power of voting.

John, who lives in Philadelphia, says he's thoroughly sick of hectoring political ads. I can't blame him. But I'll take a leap here and say he's behind all artists paying attention to reality and doing their part to remake the world. In this episode, it's been inspiring to bring back readings he and I always believed deserved more than a casual listen when a poem was published. We'll do more of this in future themed episodes, too.

Now, get out there and vote for art! — *Martha Nichols*

Episode List

Many thanks to TW's amazing contributors in this episode and the rest of the magazine. You do, indeed, remake the world.

- ["Is History Wasted on Everyone?"](#) [9] by Martha Nichols (Fall 2022).
- ["Autumn Quartet"](#) [10] by Juana Rosa Pita, English translation by Erin Goodman (Fall 2020).
- ["TW Turns Ten."](#) [11] commentary by Mark Brazaitis (Fall 2020).
- ["Hello, Brother"](#) [12] by Jenny Qi (Spring 2020).
- ["Writing in a Crisis."](#) [13] commentary by Mercury-Marvin Sunderland (Spring 2020). Also see ["Sexy."](#) [14] Mercury-Marvin's comic feature in the same issue.
- ["Path Integral"](#) [15] by Alice Major (Fall 2020).
- ["If Not Now?"](#) [16] by Carol Dorf (Spring 2019).
- ["The Land of Innocence"](#) [17] by Alan King (Fall 2020).
- ["Author Talk: Anjan Chatterjee."](#) [18] interview with John Vogel (Spring 2022).
- ["Writing in a Crisis."](#) [13] commentary and art by Darrell Urban Black (Spring 2020). Also see Darrell's ["Perceived Threats"](#) [19] in the same issue.

All the music in this episode, including the podcast theme, is by John Vogel and used with his permission.

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Martha Nichols co-founded *Talking Writing* and is a faculty instructor in the journalism program at the Harvard University Extension School. Much of her teaching craft appears in her recent book [First-Person Journalism: A Guide to Writing Personal Nonfiction with Real Impact](#) [22] (Routledge, 2022).

For more information, subscribe to her newsletter and website: [Martha Nichols Writer](#) [23].

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John Vogel is a musician and writer in Philadelphia. He is the art director for *Talking Writing* and creator of the multimedia project *Weird Music*. Aside from his TW work, he has served as a reviews editor for independent magazines as well as a linguistic annotator and a member of the Philly band Grandchildren. He's also a stay-at-home dad.

For more information, visit [John Vogel's Vimeo page](#) [24] and his [Eddie Sids Vimeo page](#) [25].

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