

f

A STUDENT JOURNAL OF ART, CULTURE AND POLITICS

FEBRUARY 2011

NEWSMAGAZINE

THE SCHOOL OF THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO

MCCARTHY'S ACTIVISTS
FOR
PALESTINE
TARGETED BY
FBI
GHOST

WAFAA
THE
MAN
BILAL

WITH THE CAMERA
SURGICALLY ATTACHED
TO HIS HEAD

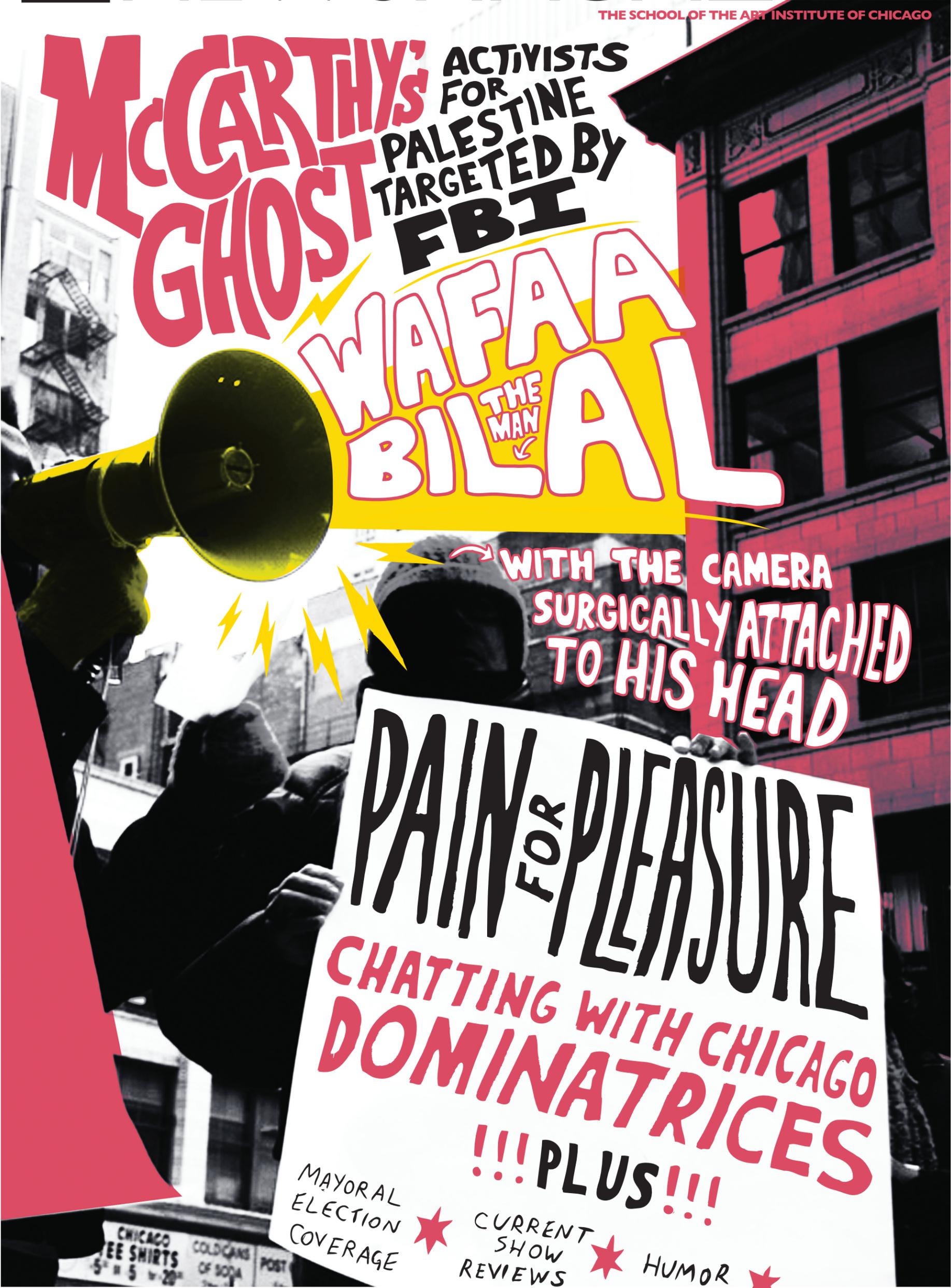
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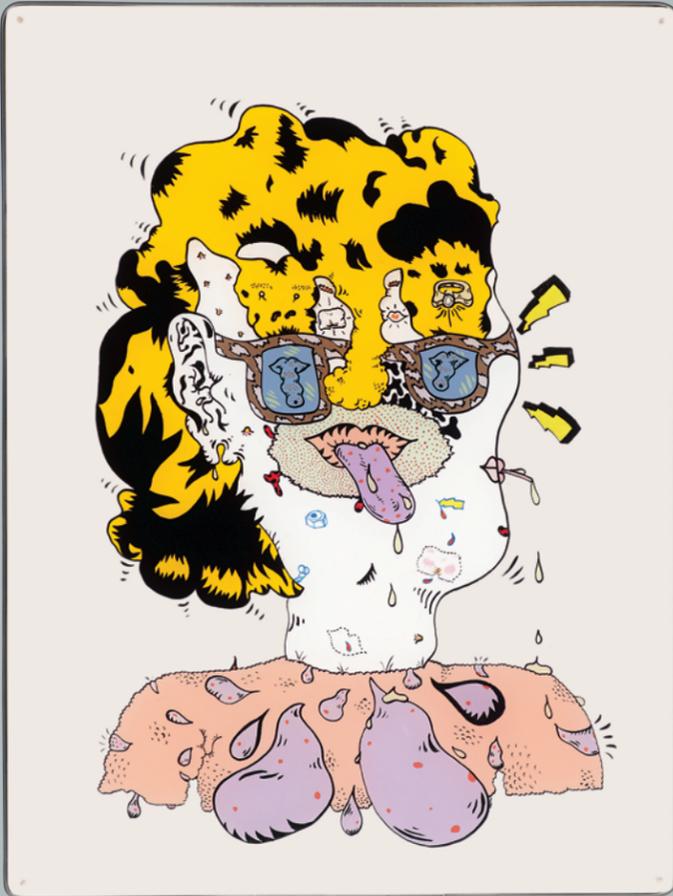
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Trim, 2010. Hall Collection. Courtesy of
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COMING INTO



Wiggly Woman, 1966 Collection of Peter Dallos, Wilmette, Illinois.
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SCHOOL..... NEWSTICKER...

The Margot and Tom Pritzker Family Foundation have awarded SAIC with a \$1 million gift to aid in recruiting students from China, particularly those committed to the advancement of art and design in China. The prestigious presentation of this award was attended by none other than the president of China, himself: President Hu Jintao, who dined on filet mignon with Mayor Daley and various Chicago business leaders on January 20. ■■■ Yvette Marie Dostatni, a 39-year-old photography BFA student at the School, recently had her photos featured on the NY

Times blog, "Lens," including images from her self-published book, "The Conventioneers." ■■■ SAIC alumna Andrea Lekberg, who owns a bakery in NYC called "The Artist Baker," is currently collaborating with gourmet chain Dean and DeLuca, who have one of her doll cakes on display in their SoHo store. Yuuuum. ■■■ SAIC alumna Bridget Boland Foley (MFAW 2000) has sold her first novel, "Doula", to Gallery Books in an exciting, six-figure deal. Think we'll all have such luck post graduation? ■■■ Bored and in the Loop? Check out the ongoing exhibition of SAIC student work at the Palmer House Hilton Hotel, which includes featured works from the SAIC class, Palmer House: Honoré's Gift. ■■■ Finally, SAIC students got a huge mention in Time Out Chicago's "10 Best Art and Design Shows of 2010 in No Particular Order" list in their 12/16 issue. Notables include "Moholy: An Education of the Sense" at LUMA, designed by SAIC faculty member Helen Maria Nugent (Designed Objects), alumnus Jan Tichy (MFA 2009) and Dan Gunn's (MFA 2007) Multistable Picture Fable exhibit at Lloyd Dobler Gallery.

.....ART..... NEWSTICKER...

Lois Weisberg has resigned from her post as Commissioner for the city of Chicago's Department of Cultural Affairs, a position she has held since 1989. Her resignation will be effective as of February 1st. Weisberg's resignation is related to the recent firing of 29 DCA staff members, and the melding of that department with the Mayor's Office of Special Events. ■■■ In further potentially apocalyptic news, on January 21st the Republican Study Committee released a budget plan that proposes the total elimination of the National Endowment for

the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Combine this with the Wojnarowicz censorship scandal, and it would appear that the flames of the Culture Wars have ignited yet again. ■■■ The U.S. doesn't hold the monopoly on arts-related stupidity. In January, the European Union ruled that artworks by Bill Viola and Dan Flavin aren't actually artworks — nope, they're nothing more than light bulbs. The ruling could be severely detrimental to galleries and dealers, who will now have to pay full taxes to import artworks composed of light bulbs or other such materials, as opposed to the much lower import taxes for art works. ■■■ Chicago street artist Chris Drew was arrested in December, 2009 for selling his art on State Street. An activist for street artists, Drew filmed the arrest. He was released from prison a few hours later on the art peddling charge, only to be subsequently charged with a Class 1 felony for being in violation of the Illinois Eavesdropping Act. He could spend as many as 15 years in prison. Drew's court date was just set for April 4. ■■■ Art galleries have been dropping like flies in this poor economic climate. But in Ottawa, Canada, a gallery may have found the solution. Le Petite Mort Gallery has decided to rent out part of its space to porn film producers. Perhaps a model to be replicated?



*To the RAs
From Shirley*

Thank you!

Thank you!

Thank you!





A Disappearing Act

Wafaa Bilal and The 3rd I Project

By ANIA SZREMSKI, ARTS EDITOR

You click through screen after screen of blurred, obscure images, some of which are more recognizable than others (the top of a sofa, an alarm clock perched on a low table, the corner where two walls meet the ceiling, the ghostly form of a moving figure). They are all taken from an odd, slanted angle. A small frame pops up labeling each photograph with the day, the time to the second, and the latitude and longitude at which it was taken. These hard-to-read, banal images could be part of a neo-conceptual photo book, or they might have been culled from a government collection of surveillance photos.

In fact, these are photographs that were captured by the camera implanted in the back of artist Wafaa Bilal's skull.

The jolting disharmony that exists between the quiet banality of the photos, and the startling sensationalism of the method by which they were produced, points to a whole host of tensions and contradictions in this former SAIC faculty member's project, "The 3rd I."

For this year-long performance piece (commissioned by the newly founded Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art in Doha, Qatar), Bilal underwent a two-hour long operation. A body modification artist made an incision in Bilal's scalp, lifted a three-inch flap of skin, and inserted three titanium plates beneath it. Metal posts attached to each plate pierced the skin and formed the mount for a digital camera.

Today, that camera automatically snaps a picture each minute, which streams live to the 3rd I website (and to LCD monitors in the Mathaf Museum). Each photo is updated with Bilal's exact coordinates, as provided by the strap-on GPS unit that the artist wears at all times.

Although Bilal didn't have the operation until December, the story broke in November and immediately caused a sensation. Articles have appeared in mainstream media outlets from The Wall Street Journal to The Huffington Post, and interviews broadcast on NPR's On the Media and on CNN. Cheeky

headlines declared, "NYU Professor Wafaa Bilal's Hindsight is 20/20," and "Meet Wafaa Bilal: The World's First Internet-Connected, Photo-Taking Cyborg."

"[The project] was leaked to The Journal before I had the chance to talk about it and say my objectives," Bilal told F Newsmagazine, "so it instantly became part of pop culture, and the interest is really in the sensation behind it, a man and a camera in his head — that was what grabbed people's attention. In the beginning that is what disappointed me, because there's not much depth in that story, and of course it was reported everywhere in the news, and full attention was not given to the project itself."

Of course, this sort of media attention is fairly de rigeur for Bilal — it seems that media spectacle is something he actively courts, as if it were an important element of his art. Some of his best known works (which typically draw from Bilal's personal experiences as an Iraqi-American, as well as the 2004 death of his brother as the result of the American military offensive in Iraq) have garnered more attention from mainstream media sources than from art critics. Particularly sensational projects include "Domestic Tension" of 2007, where for one month Bilal took up residence in a gallery along with a paintball gun machine. Viewers could fire at the artist at will, 24 hours a day, simply by logging into a website.

Others include a 2008 project whereby internet voters could choose whether to waterboard a small dog or to waterboard Bilal himself (Bilal was the unfortunate winner of that dubious contest). "Virtual Jihadi" was a hack of a hack of a video game, in which the player could guide a Wafaa Bilal avatar on a suicide bomb mission to destroy George Bush. This particular piece was so controversial that the gallery at the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, where it was meant to be shown, cancelled the exhibition. And most recently, Bilal performed "...and counting," a 24-hour body modification performance whereby the artist's back was tattooed with a map of Iraq and small dots representing the casualties of the

Iraq war (5,000 red dots to represent American soldiers, and 100,000 dots tattooed in green UV ink, visible only under black light, to represent Iraqi deaths).

These are projects that easily titillate raw political sensibilities, as well as the average citizen's appetite for morbidity — and it's easy to lose site of the artwork itself in the midst of all that provocation. F Newsmagazine spoke with Bilal in an attempt to wade through the scandal and assess the project itself.

THE PROJECT'S INCEPTION

The idea for "The 3rd I" was conceived well before the Mathaf's curators approached Bilal to participate in the "Told/Untold/Retold" exhibition in 2010.

"The project came from a deep desire to capture images of places we leave behind," the artist told F. "Sometimes we leave these places by choice. And sometimes we're forced. I first started thinking about it in 1991 when I left Iraq and my hometown [Najaf] was under bombardment by the Saddam regime. And that was the initial desire, to capture those images.

"But as I evolved in my thinking and practice, I came to understand that there is no such thing as an objective image. The image is always subjective, and is encoded by the photographer, and influenced by the photographer's philosophy or their point of view. So then I started thinking I wanted to lose that subjectivity ... and one way is to lose the power of our eyes through the view finder, and the power of our finger when we press the shutter. Because that's when the encoding of the photograph takes place. So the only logical thing is to place this camera in the back of my head ... it becomes logical to unite the camera with the body to create a shooting, biotechnological apparatus, and trying to lose as much subjectivity over the image [as possible]."

A BOLD CURATORIAL MOVE

Bilal was unable to secure funding for the project until he was approached by Till Fellrath and Sam Bardaouil, directors of the art consulting agency Art Reoriented, which curated

the "Told/Untold/Retold" exhibition at the Mathaf. Fellrath and Bardaouil invited 23 of the Middle East's best known contemporary artists to participate, including internationally renowned artists like Lara Baladi, Amal Kenawy, Hassan Khan, Youssef Nabil, Walid Raad and Steve Sabella.

According to the curatorial statement, the exhibition was meant to feature multimedia work that focused on a narrative, whether that be of autobiographical memories, imagined futures or rewritten histories. "Central to each story," the curators wrote, "is the use of time as a concrete compositional element and the reflection on the act of journeying."

When the curators approached Bilal, he proposed several different ideas, but they insisted on "The 3rd I" — and, more importantly, offered the substantial funding required to complete the project. The choice was bold and risky; it would be hard to show this type of project, with its political commentary on surveillance, at other venues in the Middle East.

When asked if he experienced any pushback or institutional censorship, Bilal responded, "No, and that was to my surprise. It seems that Qatar is making really strong confident steps in opening up the community and bringing in uncensored voices. No artist has been censored [in this show], and this is a very promising thing that is taking place in that country, and hopefully it will be a ripple effect to the neighboring countries.

I did go to the opening, and the project was received very well. I was completely free to go anywhere in Qatar, I have not been stopped even once by security — with the exception of on my return. I was stopped at the airport when I was about to board an American plane, which is understandable ... but other than that, the project was received very well, and I heard from multiple sources how happy and proud they are of a Middle Eastern artist making such a daring project."

INHERENT CONTRADICTIONS?

Accolades and scandal aside, it's difficult to get a firm grasp on this project, which is fraught with thorny conceptual tensions. Take



Photo by Brad Farwell. Image courtesy of Wafaa Bilal.
Background images taken from 3rd I archive. Collage by Alli Berry.

“The project came from a deep desire to capture images of places we leave behind. Sometimes we leave these places by choice. And sometimes we’re forced.”

Bilal’s insistence that the project was born of a desire to essentially erase himself from his own artistic process, to present a relentless series of images totally devoid of his own subjectivity. The goal of “subjectless-ness” seems at odds with the very personal, violent act the artist inflicted on his own body.

When asked to comment on this tension, Bilal responded, “I use the body as a tactic, and what I mean is, the body has its own language, and then the mind has its own language. What I’m trying to do is not only communicate to the viewer conceptually, but I’m also trying to engage the viewer visually, corporally, with their body, because the mind is all the time trying to put up barriers or justify reasons to not engage. But then when you see a body in motion, or a body being affected, you can’t help but engage immediately in that project, because your body reacts. ... I am a participant, but the object is to engage the viewer as a participant.”

Bilal admits a debt to canonical body artists, like Chris Burden and Marina Abramovic, as well as body artists-cum-cyborgs like Stellarc and Steve Mann. And certainly, the artist’s desire to test his own physical limits (and by extension, he claims, the limits of the society in which he lives) fits within that lineage.

On the other hand, his work is far more expressly political. Bilal has consistently used his own body as a site of protest against specific political problems. In the context of the desperate acts of self-immolation that have recently take place in Tunisia, and then across the Middle East, Bilal’s work appears even more poignant — and urgent.

The artist says that “The 3rd I” is his most physically challenging project to date. Not only is the very act of constantly being wired (and constantly being aware of each movement) exhausting, but “you have also to consider the operation,” he said. “It continues to be a problem. It lasted two hours, but you have posts sticking out of my head to hold a camera, and these are going to be open an entire year, so there’s infection and complications and so on, and besides that, you have constant pain as well. So this has an accumulative effect on me, that’s really, really tough to endure, and I am already bracing myself for the next eleven months.”

When asked why this feat of endurance was important conceptually for the project, Bilal responded, “I was thinking, how do you resist the urge to turn around and take a picture; these are impulses we all have, and the ideas of recording, of witnessing, of being there. ... I guess our lives become really mediated through technology, and the biggest challenge so far is, how do you resist the idea of turning around and

taking these pictures — it’s hard, and that’s a test of will as well.”

Bilal was also asked to comment on the tension between his own personal experience of this act of endurance, and the “art object” that is left for the viewer to encounter: namely, the hundreds of very anonymous digital images streaming on his website. “I see them as a record,” he answered. “One of the hardest things you have of a performance is how you document it. I think these images become the record itself. I’m trying to remove myself from it, which is impossible. It’s going to give me a very good idea of what I’ve done so far this year, minute by minute.”

THE DISAPPEARING ARTIST

Clicking through the archive of images on The 3rd I website feels almost like an inversion of clicking through a Facebook photo gallery. Instead of photos brimming with booze-swelled ego and proud human subjectivity, these are images where the most mundane, trivial, ego-less details of daily life become the subject: forgotten corners, the bathroom ceiling, the wall behind your desk.

In the final analysis, despite the very ego-filled, personal nature of Bilal’s physical performance, the actual art objects that the viewer can encounter do seem to achieve (or nearly achieve) Bilal’s goal. If we look at the photos, we become witnesses to things the artist left behind, forgot, or doesn’t even know existed — things that are untouched by his subjective gaze. We are witnessing the artist’s literal disappearance.

Bilal says that this is going to be his last project — maybe. “I don’t know if I will stick to that promise or not,” he qualifies. “But I don’t have any other projects planned at the moment.”

“The reason why is because as an artist, we don’t live in the moment. We’re always thinking about what we’ve done and what we’re going to do next. I was recently standing in the middle of Washington Square Park and I have never existed in the present as much as that moment. I wasn’t thinking about the next project or what happened in the past. I was truly in the present time, and I think that this is what this project is also about: being in the present, as mundane as it is, and absorbing it.”

See images at www.3rdi.me

Find the full interview online at www.fnewsmagazine.com

Source Hypocrisy

Jeff Koons sues over balloon-dog: Aarrgh!

By NICK BRIZ

"For it was a witty and truthful rejoinder which was given by a captured pirate to Alexander the Great. The king asked the fellow, 'What is your idea, in infesting the sea?' and the pirate answered, with uninhibited insolence, 'The same as yours, in infesting the earth! But because I do it with a tiny craft, I'm called a pirate: because you have a mighty navy, you're called an emperor.'"

— St. Augustine, "City of God"

Master appropriator and SAIC alum Jeff Koons has secured himself a solid spot in the art historical canon, making plenty of cash along the way. Koons' sculptures, based on pop-cultural references and ready-made objects from daily life, are designed by the artist and then farmed out to assistants who re-create them for the gallery.

Like most artists who practice appropriation, Koons has had to deal with countless lawsuits. The most famous instance may be the case "Rogers v. Koons," where postcard photographer Art Rogers sued Koons for copyright infringement. Koons recreated a picture postcard by Rogers that depicted a couple holding a litter of German Shepherd puppies for his sculpture, "String of Puppies." Koons sold three copies of the work for a total of \$367,000. The artist argued that his use of the image was a parody, and so was legally protected; the courts disagreed, and found in favor of Rogers.

In light of this, it is absurd, if not outright hypocritical, that Koons has recently begun to go after a gallery and store in San Francisco called Park Life for selling balloon-dog bookends.

The balloon-dog shape is perhaps the most common of all the balloon animals, crafted daily by magicians and clowns at children's parties all over the world. In addition to making cute bookends, this particular shape is also the subject of a number of Koons' sculptures. For that reason, Koons has ordered the store to stop selling the bookends, send them all to him, and disclose the creator of the product and how much money had been made thus far.

Koons is not the only appropriation artist to want to have his borrowed cake and eat it. Only a few months back, another wealthy and canonical appropriator was screaming theft. That artist was Roy Lichtenstein, or, rather, his estate. On behalf of the artist, long since passed, Lichtenstein's estate threatened an obscure indie band, Elsinore, for appropriating an image for their album cover that Lichtenstein had also used as the

source image for his "Kiss V."

Of course, we can't know what Lichtenstein would have said about the problem, but the pop artist supposedly disapproved of pop appropriator Elaine Sturtevant's copies of many of his works in the 1960s. Sturtevant claimed they were her own commentary on pop art in general.

There are countless other instances of what critic and author Jonathan Lethem calls "source hypocrisy." In his essay "The Ecstasy of Influence," Lethem dates this practice back to its most prolific devotee, the Disney Corporation. Despite the fact that Disney has made its legacy and fortune by adapting classic folk tales (Snow White, Cinderella, Pinocchio, and The Little Mermaid, to name a few), any time anyone else lays claim to the tales, Disney destroys them through litigation.

Throughout the long history of "piracy," exactly who can be labeled as a "pirate" has been subject to debate. As Adrian Johns points out in his book, "Piracy, the Intellectual Property Wars from Gutenberg to Gates," it was not small-time plagiarists who were first accused of "piracy," but rather the Stationer's Company. The Stationer's Company was home to the licensors who owned a monopoly on publishing (essentially, the culture industry of the 16th century). Today, this original conception of "piracy" has been inverted. Small bands like Elsinore and independent retailers like Park Life are deemed the "pirates," while the big, license-holding corporations are the victims.

Whether Koons has a right to lay a claim to copyright infringement of the balloon-dog shape remains to be seen. However, instead of attacking these so-called "pirates," he might do well to consider advocating for a system in which both his own appropriations and those of others are fair game. So long as we try to turn ideas, concepts, and information into a form of property, culture will continue to drown in a pool of litigation.



Whether Koons has a right to lay a claim to copyright infringement of the balloon-dog shape remains to be seen. However, instead of attacking these so-called "pirates," he might do well to consider advocating for a system in which both his own appropriations and those of others are fair game.



Park Life's balloon dog bookends, top, resemble Jeff Koons, "Balloon Dog," bottom. Credit: Courtesy photos

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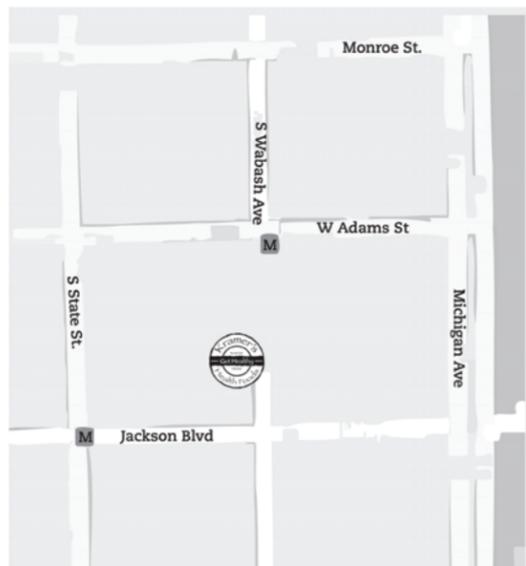
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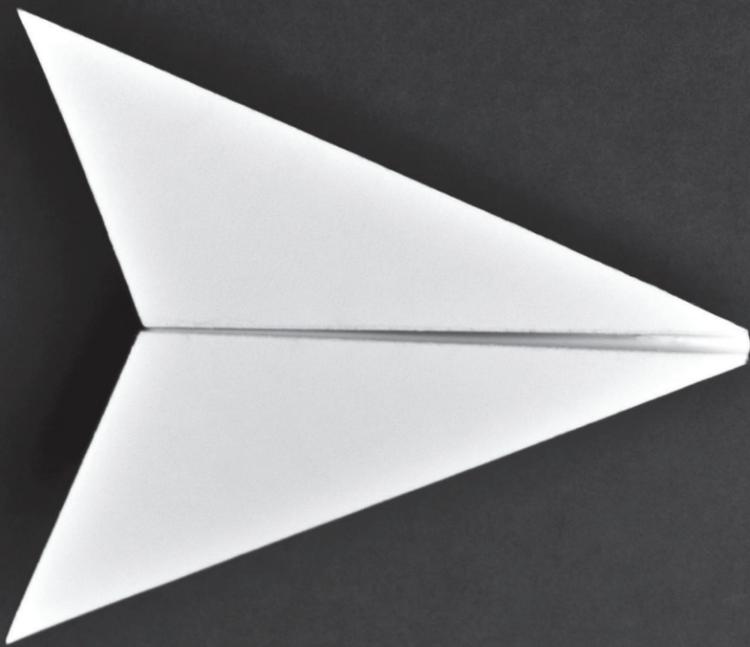


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Audiophiles

By BRANDON KOSTERS

PAYING TRIBUTE TO THE FOLKS AT SAIC WHO PRODUCE VISUAL AND SONIC ART



Goxton. Photo courtesy of the artist.

My practice is about humor and love. Humor is surprise meant to shock you into understanding. Love is tracing the modulations of a sound, i.e. being a "good listener."

This month, we chat with Goxton, a second year grad student who works in Film, Video, and New Media. Goxton is a multi-instrumentalist, and he produces his own music videos, which you might catch sometime on CAN TV, Chicago's public access television station.

BRANDON KOSTERS: Who do you play with? Do you play with other SAIC students or alumni?

GOXTON: Goxton. Goxton is looking for collaborators!

BK: If you were to summarize your practice in two sentences, what would you say?

G: My practice is about humor and love. Humor is surprise meant to shock you into understanding. Love is tracing the modulations of a sound, i.e. being a "good listener."

BK: What instruments do you play, and what have you built?

G: I use the guitar, synthesizer, vocals, and a sampler.

BK: Which artists have informed your practice?

G: Todd Rundgren, Douglas Sirk, Lewis Carroll, and Kazimir Malevich.

BK: For you, what connects your music to your visual art, if anything? And what is the difference for you between producing a piece of visual work, and producing sonic work?

G: After Goxton makes a new song, he closes his eyes to see if it's working. This method doesn't work with visual art. Music for me is totally dissociated with the visual. I close my eyes when I go to concerts.

BK: List your five favorite albums, or the five albums you have been listening to the most lately.

G: Hermit of Mink Hollow (Todd Rundgren); We Go Together (George Jones and Tammy Wynette); The Song Black & Yellow (Wiz Khalifa); Haydn String Quartets; and Arthur (The Kinks).

BK: How has attending SAIC informed your practice?

G: SAIC's sound professor Bob Snyder has turned me on to sampling. In his wonderful class, "Studio Techniques," he suggested that samples tell you how they want to be played. I found that some samples have some pretty weird things to say!

BK: Tell me a thing or two about your experiences playing music prior to coming here.

G: During my undergraduate years at my beloved alma mater, University of Georgia, I was in several pop bands. Athens, Georgia has a tremendous music scene for a small southern town. This has a lot to do with our hometown heroes, REM. Almost everyone I was friends with was in at least two bands. My sister's boyfriend still lives there, and he just joined his seventh. Go Greg!

BK: With the music, what is the ultimate goal for you?

G: For people to hear it and like it.

BK: Do you have a website or place where we can find more info?

G: www.williamcgoss.com

BK: Anything else we should know?

G: Goxton's first self-titled debut is coming out in Spring 2011. Be on the lookout!

MOTION GRAPHICS

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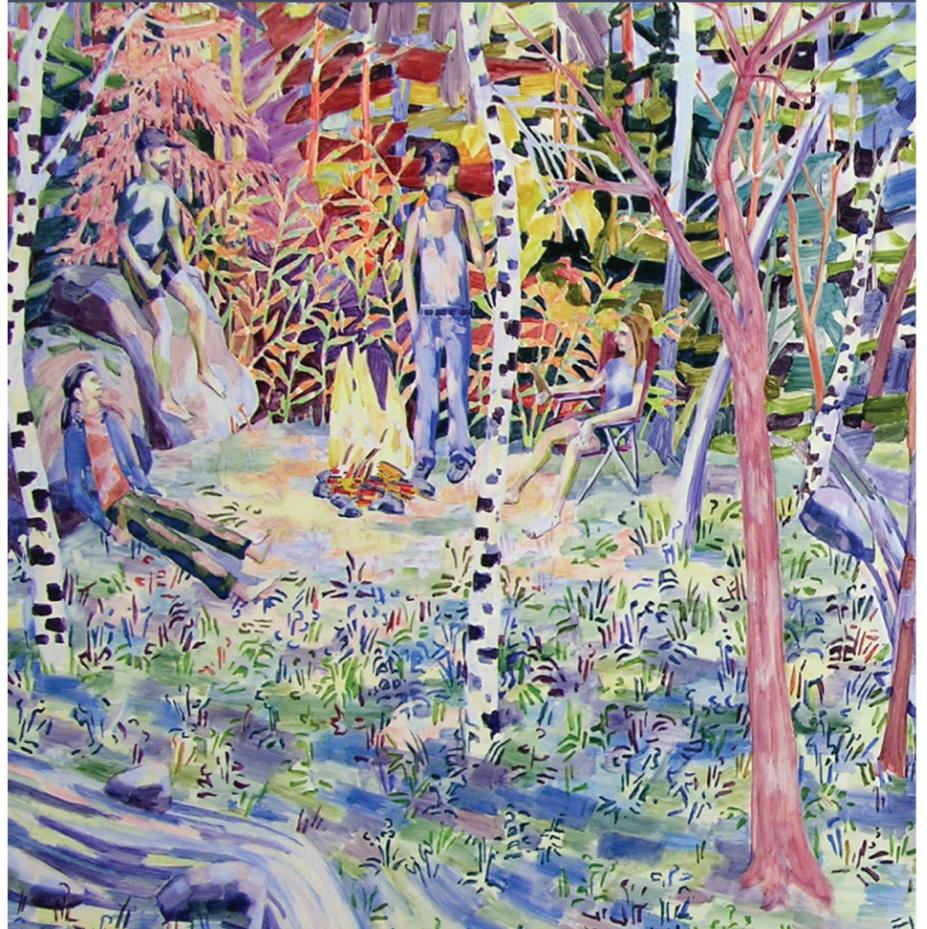
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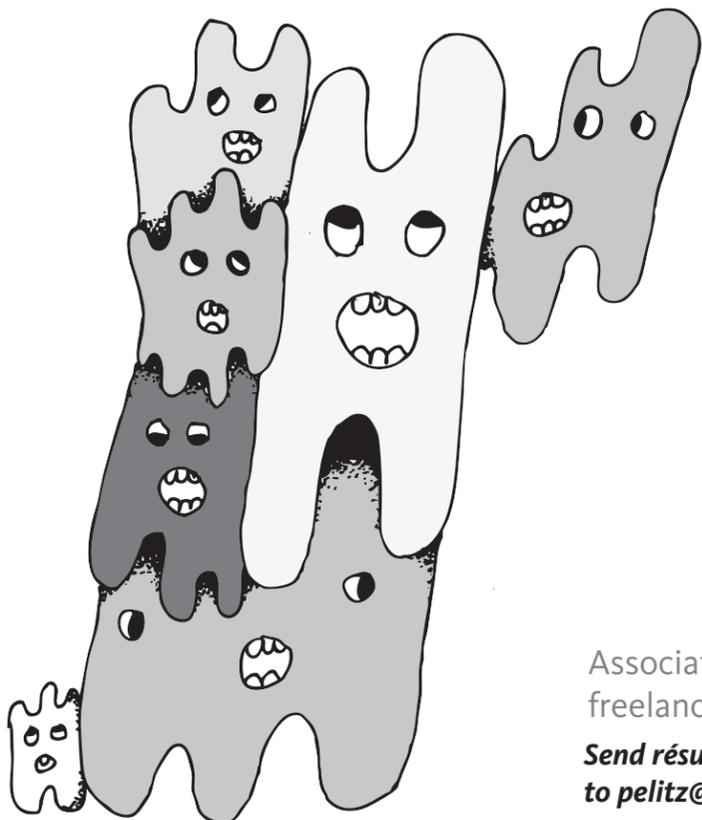


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Illustration by Emily Haasch

“It means so much. I have been working so hard on this. It is nice to finally get a little help. It feels like a nice warm hug from a friend you haven’t seen in a while,” said Todd Diederich, winner of one of the five \$6,000 grants for his project “Life is a Ball,” presented in conjunction with Sara Fagala, Melissa Marinaro and Solomon Arnold.

“Paraphrasing artist Claire Pentecost: art is a place where we can struggle over and determine values in a really public way. I think this is a good definition, because it demands that art has a productive stake in the world without dogmatically asserting what that stake should be,” explained Bryce Dwyer, recipient of a \$2,000 grant along with his InCUBATE fellows Matthew Joynt, Abigail Satinsky, and Roman Petruniak.

Small Projects Take Off

Catching Up With Propeller Fund Grantees

By ALEJANDRA MONSERRAT GONZÁLEZ ROMO, STAFF WRITER

Last fall, Chicago artists had the opportunity to apply for the inaugural round of the Propeller Fund grants. Funded by the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Arts, and administrated by threewalls gallery and the University of Illinois at Chicago's Gallery 400, the Propeller Fund is a grant for Chicago artists and organizers who work on projects with a collaborative and public element. The awards provide substantial support for the major material costs for such projects (printing, rental, honoraria, material, shipping, and research time).

The Propeller Fund is an innovative granting model. The Warhol Foundation gives funds to local organizations in different cities. These galleries then re-grant the funds, providing a rare opportunity for artists and organizers who aren't affiliated with a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization to get some funds. The thinking behind the grant is that small, self-organized projects are a major catalyst for the creative activity and vitality of Chicago's art scene at large. These projects are responsible for much of the complexity and richness in our art community.

In its first edition, the Propeller Fund received 142 applications, out of which 15 winners were selected. The top five winners were awarded \$6,000, while ten others received \$2,000. Grantees were announced during a public ceremony on October 28.

Shannon Stratton, Executive and Creative Director of threewalls gallery, commented on the type of projects that were eligible for the grants. "From artist organized events, informal roundtables and workshops, collectively organized exhibition spaces, and publishing endeavors," she said, "a large number of the activities that actively sustain Chicago's artists are informal, anti-institutional, or inconsistent in public presentation. These three attributes simultaneously fuel projects and disqualify them from traditional funding sources."

This informal, self-organized activity is abundant in Chicago. "The Propeller Fund is [intended] to encourage more varied models; to spread the activities into more diverse areas; to promote the public's interaction with, and public recognition of such activities; and to spark ambitions beyond current formats," said Stratton.

The Propeller Fund also provides marketing support and documentation for these

projects. All grantees are required to supply text and images about their progress for the Propeller Fund website. The aim is to ensure that each project will reach completion, and live up to the artist's proposal.

Unsurprisingly, InCUBATE, a staple of Chicago's alternative art scene that is run by Bryce Dwyer, Abigail Satinsky, Matthew Joynt, and Roman Petruniak, won a \$2,000 grant. "Paraphrasing artist Claire Pentecost: art is a place where we can struggle over and determine values in a really public way," Dwyer told F Newsmagazine. "I think this is a good definition, because it demands that art has a productive stake in the world without dogmatically asserting what that stake should be. It's up for discussion, and it requires the active participation of artists, publics, institutions, critics, and administrators to begin answering the question."

InCUBATE is initiating Pilot Studies, an ongoing publishing project involving a wide range of collaborators, to gather strategies and perspectives on how to organize and support noncommercial, grassroots and community-based creative projects.

The Propeller Fund is a breath of fresh air for young artists who struggle to find support for their work. "It means so much. I have been working so hard on this. It is nice to finally get a little help. It feels like a nice warm hug from a friend you haven't seen in a while," said Todd Diederich, winner of one of the five \$6,000 grants for his project, "Life is a Ball," presented in conjunction with Sara Fagala, Melissa Marinaro and Solomon Arnold.

"Life's a Ball" will be documenting Chicago's ballroom scene. Diederich, Fagala, Marinaro and Arnold combine their efforts to work and bridge different communities. The project includes organizing a ball, displaying pictures of Diederich's documentary project, and a photo shoot and fashion line.

While the Propeller Fund isn't the cure for deep, systemic problems that have long plagued funding for the arts, it is an interesting model, and its replication by other granting bodies is worth considering.

Now that a few months have passed since the grants were distributed, F Newsmagazine decided to check in on a few of the winning projects to see how they were developing. Find out more about all the grantees at www.propellerfund.org.

Brandon Alvendia, The Storefront

Artist, curator, and DIY publisher Brandon Alvendia was awarded a \$2,000 grant to help launch *The Storefront*, an event and exhibition space which is up and running at 2606 N. California. The Storefront is home to Alvendia's much beloved Silver Galleon Press publishing house (whereby he cheaply prints texts acquired from the Internet, hand binds them, and distributes them in different ways). He just released his first project at the new digs: "Quite a Large Bite for Such a Small Berry. A Memoir by Vincent Dermody." The Storefront is now also home to Alvendia's own studio, and several other projects, including a 16:9 Club film series, an experimental educational series called HomeSchool, and more. www.alvendia.net



The Storefront Exhibition in the Logan Square neighborhood of Chicago. Photo courtesy of Alvendia.net.

Jason Dunda and Teena McClelland, The Alliance of Pentaphilic Curators

SAIC's own Teena McClelland (of the celebrated "Death by Design") and Jason Dunda were awarded \$6,000 for the production of, in their own words, "Five Funerals [that] will take place in May 2011 at The Charnel House, a former funeral home in the Logan Square neighborhood. Each of the five Sundays will be dedicated to the contemplation of one 'notional' death and a celebration of its notable life." The duo solicited applications for the concept of each funeral, and they have now announced the schedule. May 1, guests can grieve "The death of multiculturalism;" on May 8, it's "The Wake of the West and Cacti Call;" May 15, "The impending end @ the new beginning of Cable Access Television;" May 22, "The passing of the handwritten letter;" and finally, on May 29, that saddest death of all, "The funeral services and death songs of Modernist Painting." <http://fivefunerals.com>



The Funeral Home for Five Funerals. Photo courtesy of the Alliance of Pentaphilic Curators.

Daniel Tucker, "Transformative Experiences of Art, Politics and Community in Chicago"

Local writer Daniel Tucker won \$6,000 to develop this book, tentatively titled, "Never the Same: Transformative Experiences of Art, Politics and Community in Chicago." So far, he has solicited contributions from area artists to contemplate the confluence of art, politics and community in Chicago, and the importance of socially engaged art to the city. He is also pursuing related curatorial activities, and will develop the book over spring and summer of 2011. <http://miscprojects.com>



Art Platforms

Mayor Daley's out and Rahm Emanuel leads in the latest Tribune election poll. But which candidate really cares about Chicago's arts and culture?

Text & Illustration By ELLIOTT BEAZLEY

SAIC has a long-lasting relationship with Mayor Richard Daley. In fact, at a dinner honoring Chinese President Hu Jintao this past January, Daley said, "Chicago is home to one of our nation's great schools of art and design: the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. It is one of the oldest accredited independent schools of art and design in the United States and attracts students from around the world." (Notably, Daley was announcing a one million dollar grant donated by the Pritzker family dedicated to the recruitment of Chinese students by SAIC.)

Aside from supporting SAIC, Bill and Maggie Daley's contributions to Chicago's art and culture, from theaters to parks, are a major part of their legacy to the city. But news that the city's Department of Cultural Affairs has been drastically cut, and that Commissioner Lois Weisberg, former head of the DCA, has resigned, leave the future of the arts up in the air. What will Mayor Daley's departure mean for Chicago's art and culture?

The campaigns of six mayoral candidates focus on everything from the economy and crime to immigration and traffic, but art is a minor point in their campaigns. Here are four candidates that, if elected, may or may not continue to support the arts in the future.

RAHM EMANUEL

The campaign for Rahm Emanuel began with a tear. Last September, the usually foul-mouthed former White House Chief of Staff became emotional describing his family's immigration to America. But can he fill Daley's big-city shoes? Known for his fundraising abilities, Emanuel's celebrity status doesn't hurt — he's been endorsed by two U.S. Presidents (Obama and Clinton) and in late January campaigned on the streets of Chicago with SNL star Andy Samberg. For Emanuel, becoming mayor of Chicago is like walking a fine tightrope: on one side, he must take notice of the inner-city problems facing Chicago — unemployment, crime, and traffic, to name a few key issues. On the other side of that rope is the city's global status. What (or who) can turn the Second City into the "best" city in the world?

Emanuel initially faced a major roadblock when opponents said his residency bars him from running for mayor (the candidate moved into the city limits less than a year before declaring his candidature). But Emanuel has nonetheless emerged as a strong favorite in the polls. After all, Emanuel grew up in Chicago and worked for Mayor Daley on numerous projects.

POSITION ON THE ARTS: Of all the candidates, Emanuel has the strongest ties to the arts. He's a former ballet dancer, and his wife worked for the Art Institute. In an interview with Time Out Chicago, he said, "I believe the city government can and must play a role that allows our arts and culture to flourish." He added that he intends to increase arts education in school, is against privatizing Chicago's festivals, and would also like to change zoning and development rules to encourage artistic growth throughout Chicago's neighborhoods.

RAHM'S GOAL: Get more than 50% of the votes so he doesn't have to have a runoff in April.

More info: chicagoforrahm.com

CAROL MOSELEY BRAUN

Carol Moseley Braun was the first African-American woman elected to the United States Senate, where she served for six years. She has campaigned on the platform that she is the only candidate who actually relates to voters. While Emanuel and Chico are multimillionaires, Braun, like most Chicagoans, is facing financial uphill battles, and carries significant debt.

By contrast, Braun has tried to paint Emanuel as a celebrity outsider. Many African-Americans, including Braun and Rep. Danny Davis, turned their backs on Bill Clinton when he recently endorsed Rahm Emanuel. Davis issued a public letter saying: "The African-American community has enjoyed a long and fruitful relationship with the Clintons; however, it appears as though some of that relationship may be fractured." Does this mean that the election is turning into a battle of the races?

Before the new year, protesters in favor of Braun rallied outside the Sun-Times and called for columnist Neil Steinberg to be fired, after he wrote that Braun "represents the ego-maniacal muddle that Chicago black leadership has slid into, where calls for imaginary and self-destructive racial solidarity trump minor concerns like reason or history." Braun is in second place in the latest Chicago Tribune poll.

POSITION ON THE ARTS: Braun told Time Out Chicago that "it behooves the city administration to create a supportive atmosphere for the arts, and to support cultural entrepreneurship, and artists' ability to earn a living." Her goal is to focus on arts education in schools and community-based arts initiatives, and adds, "I would love to see a vibrant arts community in the neighborhoods, and an improved climate for live/work space for artists." Although she claims to be an enthusiastic arts supporter, Braun's position on arts in the city is far less articulated than Emanuel's.

HOW CAN SHE WIN? Make sure Rahm doesn't get the majority, finesse her strategy, and lure Chico's voters.

More info: carolforchicago.com

GERY CHICO

Gery Chico is Mayor Daley's former chief of staff; unfortunately for Chico, Daley isn't officially endorsing anyone for his old job. However, Chico has gained some important recommendations that have helped his campaign, including the endorsement of the Fraternal Order of Police (an 11,000 member union), thanks to his promise to hire 2,000 more officers.

U.S. Representative Luis Gutierrez, a leader in immigration reform and a Chico supporter, has accused Emanuel of not fully supporting the DREAM Act, legislation that prevents the U.S.-born children of illegal immigrants from being deported.

Of Mexican, Lithuanian, and Greek descent, Chico has appeared as the immigrant's candidate. "The city of Chicago is a city of neighborhoods and city of immigrants. ... [If I'm] privileged to be elected mayor, I won't let [deportation] happen," Chico said at a Deportation Moratorium rally on Jan. 14.

POSITION ON THE ARTS: Chico is an active member of Chicago's arts community, as a frequent visitor to the National Museum of Mexican Art, the Chicago Architecture Foundation, the Museum of Contemporary Art, the Art Institute of Chicago, and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, he told Time Out. He has already contributed to the scene by helping restore murals in Chicago public school buildings, and creating an inventory and catalogue of said murals, during his tenure working for the school system. He says that he would hold grassroots forums to assess the impact of privatizing city festivals before deciding on that issue. And finally, Chico says he would like to create smaller versions of the theater district throughout Chicago's neighborhoods.

THE PATH TO VICTORY FOR CHICO: Take back votes from Miguel del Valle to beat Braun.

More info: gerychicoformayor.com

MIGUEL DEL VALLE

Miguel del Valle, Chicago's City Clerk, is a humble man who hasn't been lucky in this campaign. His fundraising is very low and his endorsements are few. Maybe Chicago could use an anti-establishment type of candidate, but apparently that's not what the city wants.

Calling himself "the poorest candidate with the most to offer," del Valle has focused his campaign on homelessness, hunger, and environmentalism. Though these issues are important, they haven't captured the attention of the greater Chicago population. Frankly, most haven't been informed of del Valle's values because he isn't advertising his campaign. Del Valle is taking some votes away from Gery Chico but none from the other contenders. If del Valle continues to lack in basic political forms of communication, he doesn't have a chance of winning this race.

POSITION ON THE ARTS: Del Valle told Time Out Chicago that "as I learned years ago when I was executive director of Association House, a social service agency in Chicago, the arts feed the soul. Even as we struggle in this difficult economic environment, we must not undervalue the arts." Like the other candidates, del Valle hopes to increase funding for arts education in schools, and promote Park District classes and festivals. He has a personal connection to the arts through his son, Esteban del Valle, who has an MFA from the Rhode Island School of Design. He hopes to encourage greater youth participation in the arts.

PATH TO MIGUEL DEL VALLE'S VICTORY: Raise money or go home.

More info: delvalleformayor.com

**VOTE
FEBRUARY
22**

HOT Tips

F's advice gurus duke it out for Daley's crown.

By ERIC BASKAUSKAS AND BRANDON KOSTERS

Citizens of Chicago: your prayers have been answered.

Team Baskauskas-Kosters has temporarily split and tossed competing hats in the ring for the coveted mayoral seat. With the fall of the Daley Dynasty, there are a lot of pertinent questions that Chicagoans need answered. What is to be done about the alligators that have been dumped into the Chicago River? Just as we were done mourning the loss of the Jerry Springer Show, we now must gear up for our last few months of Oprah. Can the combined team of Steve Wilkos and Judge Judy really fill that gap? And then, of course, there's ambiguity about what this will mean in terms of local government funding for the arts. All pressing issues. Let's elaborate on our platforms.



Brandon Kusters. Photo doctored by Eric Baskauskas



Eric Baskauskas. Photo doctored by Brandon Kusters

THE KOSTERS PLAN

GAY PARENTING

Unless the child of a gay couple was the product of an earlier failed heterosexual relationship, a gay parent is likely a parent who chose to adopt or bring in a surrogate. Meaning what? Gays don't usually accidentally conceive children. A gay parent probably made a conscious decision to become a parent. The options were weighed, the social stigma was considered, and this hypothetical gay Chicagoan still said: "I need to love and nurture this child, no matter what." And that is why, as Mayor, I will legally mandate that only gay couples may marry and have children.

The proof is in the pudding, Chicago: Nothing has damaged the institution of marriage or the nuclear family quite like heterosexuality.

RE-INVIGORATING THE CHICAGO SKYLINE

"Less is more?" This was architect Mies van der Rohe's justification for building skyscrapers that were little more than glass panes on a steel skeleton in Chicago. Practical and boring, like a rice cake.

Then after a while, architects got bored with looking at buildings that made them think of rice cakes, and designed buildings that proved that while "more is more," "more" is not necessarily "better."

The solution is simple.

We've got to level everything, and only erect buildings that look like dinosaurs.

JUST BECAUSE YOU'RE ENDANGERED, THAT DOESN'T MEAN YOU HAVE TO BE UGLY

With the harshness of the Chicago winter, what can be done to expedite global warming in our favor? And how, you may ask, can we speed that process up without completely phasing the polar bear out of existence?

Well, I hate to be the one to break it to you, but the polar bear has been on his way out of for some time. Sure, there are those in the scientific community who might take offense. But hey: you guys have been studying the situation for decades, and what have you been able to tell us, other than that things are getting progressively worse each year? Step aside, pessimistic nerds. It's time Mayor Kosters took over. What's more productive? Waiting around for another 20 years for the scientific community to reveal that everything is the worst it's ever been, or dedicating time and resources available now to making the polar bears look REALLY sexy as they dwindle into extinction?

As Mayor of Chicago, I pledge to divert 25-87% of all the money currently going to the public schools on the South Side to procuring 7,000 cans of Aquanet, a stylist, and enough power generators and blow dryers to be flown to the Arctic Tundra to simultaneously deplete the Ozone layer, and give the polar bears amazing hairdos.

Let them go out in one last stylish blaze of glory.

A production crew will be sent out to document all of this, and this will yield a daytime reality television program, aired to help fill the void left in Oprah's absence.

THE BASKAUSKAS PLAN

CHROMIUM-666

Early this year the EPA urged the nation's public water systems to evaluate the presence of chromium-6, a toxin that's been linked to stomach cancer. Lake Michigan, source of Chicago's tap water, was reported to have dangerous levels (0.18 parts per billion) of this heavy metal. People seem to be concerned about its presence, but let's be honest: DEATH TO FALSE METAL! Am I right, folks? 0.18 parts per billion?! It's like drinking a Winger concert.

As mayor, I pledge to get that lake up to snuff. Bid farewell to your KISS tea set. Say goodbye to your POISON spray-tan. Nothing says "I rock hard" like rock-hard water. I'll have this whole city playing air guitar to the sounds of upset stomachs in time for the inaugural [headbanger's] ball, which will be catered by MUNICIPAL WASTE. With any luck, my tenure will be affectionately referred to as the "Reign in Blood" by the time I'm out of here. I'm talking pre-haircut METALLICA thrash here. I'll throw ANTHRAX in the lake if I have to!

DALEY SACRIFICE

One of the hardest parts of being a benevolent dictator is striking that balance between tyranny and oppression. It's important to consistently remind your subjects who's in charge. My predecessor, Richard M. Daley, Mayor, knew this all too well. So well that his name is just about everywhere in this city. His moniker shows up in so many places, in fact, that it would be too much work to remove it when he finally leaves office.

I promise to legally change my name to "Richard M. Daley, Mayor" so nobody has to go around finding and changing all those signs and posters and other things which bear his (my) name. It will be a seamless transition into a new era of political presence. As a bonus, this will drastically cut down

on the environmental impact of destroying a bunch of his stuff and then making a bunch of new stuff with my name on it. You heard it here first: I'm putting lazy opportunism back where it belongs — the Daley Center (say, that's where the mayor's office is, right?).

PUBLIC ART, MORE OR LESS

Perhaps the most important of my platforms is bettering the city's relationship with artists. I know past rulers have been very "public" about the art we have here, but our artists are always just a bunch of know-nothing, high-profile out-of-towners, selected more for their status in snobby art circles than for their ability to actually produce art. They fly in, give us some trash, ask us to put it somewhere, and then they leave. Take Millennium Park's sculpture by Anish Kapoor. He calls it "Cloud Gate." Nice try, but everyone normal calls it "the bean" ... an obvious failure, lost in translation between big-art government and the real people of this great country. Ceci n'est pas une "cloud gate." Similarly, there's a reason the Picasso sculpture in Daley Plaza is "Untitled": it stinks! I won't bore you with a list of the city's other public art failures, lest this begin to resemble some kind of Yoko Ono performance.

No, enough with the past. The future is bright! For the first time in 15 years, spray-paint will again be available for purchase in Chicago. I will lift the citywide ban and fully encourage our youngsters to make their mark on our town. The streets are our canvas, and life is our paintbrush. Paint on, brothers and sisters!

In conjunction with the lifting of the spray-paint ban, I will be imposing a citywide ban on graffiti that doesn't read "Richard M. Daley, Mayor." Compromise, folks.

(Yoko Ono will not be asked to produce any work under this new plan.)



THE U.S. V. FREEDOM?

Local activists investigated by U.S. Attorney Patrick Fitzgerald

By ANIA SZREMSKI, ARTS EDITOR

"At 7 a.m. on Friday I heard the policeman's knock at my door. I looked out and saw 10 or more armed men and women. I opened the door and the man in front of me showed me his FBI badge and presented the warrant to search our home. It said our home was being searched because of Stephanie's and my activities and opposition to the U.S. government's military aid to Israel and Columbia, including our support for the people of Palestine and the people of Columbia."

This is Joe Iosbaker's account of the FBI raid of his home on September 24, 2010. On that day, Joe, his wife Stephanie Weiner, and nine other anti-war activists in Chicago, Minneapolis, and Dearborn, Michigan, were served with subpoenas by the FBI to testify before a grand jury regarding their political activities.

The Chicago Tribune quoted Steve Warren, the spokesman for the FBI in Minneapolis, stating that "these warrants [were] seeking evidence in support of an ongoing Joint Terrorism Task Force investigation concerning the material support of terrorism."

The raids that took place on September 24 turned out to be just the beginning of this investigation. In the last days of September, the FBI served subpoenas to three more individuals, bringing the total to 14. Several of these activists were affiliated with the communist-leaning Freedom Road Socialist Organization (including Iosbaker and Weiner). Sarah Martin, who was also served with a subpoena, is a 71-year-old member of Women Against Military Madness. Other individuals were affiliated with the Arab American Action Network, Students for a Democratic Society, and the Columbia Action Network.

According to Jim Fennerty, an attorney with the National Lawyer's Guild (the organization representing all of those subpoenaed), what all of these

individuals had in common was that "they were some of the main organizers in Minneapolis for a protest against the Republican National Convention [in 2008]. An undercover FBI agent infiltrated one of the groups that was helping to organize [the protest], called the Palestinian Solidarity Group, and then discovered that the group has been sending delegations to Palestine for the past eight or nine years."

"Although these groups have had activist activities all over the world, what they're focusing on is any contact [these individuals have had] with any Palestinian organizations or individuals on the ground," Fennerty continued. "They're especially looking for any contact with the General Union of Palestinian Women. What the GUPW does is, they get funding, they run day care centers and women empowerment centers. The government believes that this organization is affiliated with terrorism. So the government is really looking for any contact anyone has had with this group."

All 14 individuals refused to testify before the Grand Jury. The U.S. Attorney Patrick Fitzgerald's office allowed the dates of their grand jury hearings (slated for October 4, 12, and 19 of that year) to pass.

However, reports indicate that the FBI continued to pay visits to individuals of interest throughout the following months. On November 2, the U.S. Attorney's office reactivated the subpoenas for Anh Pham, Tracy Molm and Sarah Martin, three of the original 14 activists. On December 3, three more women were subpoenaed (American Sarah Smith and two Palestinian-American women); and finally, on December 21, four more subpoenas were delivered to Chicago-area activists, including SAIC alumn and noted Palestinian-rights activist, Maureen Murphy

“Over the past four years, under the present administration, we have witnessed the birth of a new breed of political animal — the kangaroo grand jury — spawned in a dark corner of the Department of Justice, nourished by an administration bent on twisting law enforcement to serve its own political ends, a dangerous modern form of Star Chamber secret inquisition that is trampling the rights of American citizens from coast to coast.”

—Senator Edward M. Kennedy on grand jury hearings under the Nixon administration

The Grand Jury: Definition

According to the American Bar Association, a grand jury is an assemblage of people who are asked to review evidence and testimony brought forth by a prosecutor, in order to determine if there is enough evidence to give an indictment. A grand jury trial is different from a regular jury trial in at least four key ways.

First, the grand jury is not screened for bias. Second, the prosecutor is allowed to present evidence that might not be admissible in a regular court of law, such as hearsay evidence. The prosecutor is also permitted to withhold pieces of evidence as she or he sees fit, and the individual on trial does not always have the chance to make a statement in his or her defense or to present his or her own evidence. Additionally, the “double jeopardy” rule does not apply to grand jury hearings. If a prosecutor does not receive an indictment from the grand jury, he or she may bring the same case before the grand jury an endless number of times.

And finally, one of the most important ways in which a grand jury hearing differs from a regular trial is that the prosecutor may subpoena anyone to testify before the grand jury. The prosecutor is not obligated to make a case for the relevance of the testimony. The subpoenaed witness may not bring a lawyer into the room; and if the witness refuses to testify, he or she can be found in contempt of court and imprisoned.

History of the Grand Jury

In his 1984 article, “The Improper Use of the Federal Grand Jury: An Instrument for the Internment of Political Activists,” Michael Deutsch (attorney for the People’s Law Office) says grand juries are a holdover from the British legal system, and were meant to serve as an independent body that would protect prosecuted individuals from arbitrary rulings by the government. However, according to Deutsch, it has been quite the opposite since the very beginning of

America’s history,

In the nation’s early days, politicians like John Adams and Thomas Jefferson used grand jury hearings to indict their political enemies. During the Civil War, the Confederacy used grand juries to indict abolitionists. By the beginning of the 20th century, unionists and activists for workers’ rights became a favorite target.

The use of the grand jury hearing for investigative purposes became particularly pernicious, according to Deutsch, during the Cold War era. This can be attributed to the influence of Wisconsin Senator Joseph McCarthy and his House Committee on Un-American Activities; this is also when the act legalizing compulsory testimony was passed. Individuals affiliated with labor unions and left-wing political groups were targeted by these hearings. Under Richard Nixon, investigative grand jury hearings became so numerous and so infamous, Senator Edward M. Kennedy was moved to make the following statement:

“Over the past four years, under the present administration, we have witnessed the birth of a new breed of political animal — the kangaroo grand jury — spawned in a dark corner of the Department of Justice, nourished by an administration bent on twisting law enforcement to serve its own political ends, a dangerous modern form of Star Chamber secret inquisition that is trampling the rights of American citizens from coast to coast.”

Deutsch writes that after Nixon, grand jury hearings continued to target political dissidents in the ’80s, particularly those associated with the Puerto Rican liberation movement and the Black nationalist movement.

The current spate of subpoenas served throughout the Midwest follows this precedent. According to Deutsch in a November article published in Huffington Post, the use of the grand jury hearing to acquire intelligence has risen dramatically under Obama.

(see F Newsmagazine’s in-depth interview with Murphy in this issue). In the end, a total of nine new subpoenas were delivered in December.

According to Fennerty, “The last nine, and this includes Maureen Murphy, either went to Palestine, or they raised money for a delegation to go to Palestine, or they helped organize a delegation. There are five Palestinians out of the nine that just got subpoenaed.” Fennerty does not believe any of these nine individuals will be accused of supporting terrorism; rather, the FBI is hoping to obtain intelligence from them.

Refusal to testify at a grand jury hearing is punishable with imprisonment for the entire duration of the grand jury investigation. However, in this case, the penalty is potentially even stiffer: because the grand jury is investigating the possible support of terrorism, prison terms for refusing to testify can be even longer. A case in point: in 2007, Abdelhaleem Ashqar, a Palestinian-American professor of business administration, refused to testify at a grand jury hearing. Although he had earlier been acquitted of the terrorist charges levied against him, Ashqar was sentenced to 11 years in prison for refusing to testify.

When asked if Maureen Murphy would likely go to prison, Fennerty answered, “Well, they can’t arrest her immediately. If Maureen refuses to testify, what happens is, they can offer her immunity. And then if she still refuses to testify, they can hold a hearing to find her in contempt. And if you’re held in contempt, then they can hold you in ‘coercion.’ Actually, they’re holding you in custody, but they call it ‘in coercion’ for some reason. And that can last for as long as the grand jury trial.”

Area activists who are refusing to testify before the grand jury often invoke both their First Amendment and Fifth Amendment rights to justify their position. While the Fifth Amendment does “require a grand jury indictment for federal criminal charges,” according to the American Bar Association, it also promises the right to due process, the right to withhold self-incriminating testimony, and the right to not be tried for the same charge twice. According to critics, a grand jury hearing

violates these rights.

In Fennerty’s words, “What happens is, there’s like 23 people [who are chosen by the government and not screened for bias]. The grand jury is taken over by the prosecutor’s office. There is no other story presented except the one presented by the prosecutor. If you go talk to them, your lawyer can’t go in the room with you. He has to stay in the hall and you can come out in the hall and ask him questions. You’re all alone, and there may be many general prosecutors in there. It’s not an open process.”

F Newsmagazine contacted Paul Green, the Director of the School of Policy Studies at Roosevelt University, to inquire whether or not the compulsion to testify before a grand jury was indeed a violation of these individuals’ constitutional rights.

“The U.S. Attorney’s Office has the right to subpoena whoever they want,” he answered. “These people might feel that [it’s a violation of their rights], but the U.S. Attorney always wins. The fact of the matter is that under our constitution the U.S. Attorney’s Office has the right to subpoena, and if you don’t cooperate, you will be thrown in jail. And I support that 100 percent. We’ve got to be a country of laws, not a country of opinions.”

The subpoenaed individuals say that they were targeted due to their opposition to U.S. military support of Israel, and feel that the FBI is violating their right to freedom of speech and association. In a statement made on December 21, Maureen Murphy stated, “What is at stake for all of us is our right to dissent and organize to change harmful U.S. foreign policy.”

Katrina Plotz, one of the original 14 activists subpoenaed to testify back in October, agrees. Like several of the other activists, Plotz had visited Colombia and also attempted to visit Palestine (although she was not permitted to enter Israel and immediately was deported back to the United States), and she cites this as the FBI’s motivation in investigating her. “I am guilty of nothing other than seeking and sharing information about the impact of U.S. foreign policy abroad,” she said in a statement given on October 12. “I have done nothing wrong.

And my friends and I should not be subject to harassment or intimidation from the FBI because of our political views.”

Students at SAIC have been active in protests against the grand jury hearings. Annan Shehadi, a first-year grad student in VCS, organized SAIC’s chapter of Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) last year with fellow student Daryl Meador. Shehadi told F, “We strongly condemn U.S. Attorney Patrick Fitzgerald’s and the government’s attack against antiwar and solidarity activists throughout the country. These activists are neither terrorists nor supporters of terrorism. The subpoenas are an attack against the First Amendment right to freedom of speech and meant to scare people into silence and discourage dissent regarding America’s foreign policy. Many of the activists have been subpoenaed for their support of the Palestinian struggle for peace and justice, which stands contrary to America’s support of Israel’s aggression against the Palestinians. SJP at SAIC stands in solidarity with all those who have been subpoenaed, particularly fellow SJP students at other Chicago schools. We have endorsed a statement condemning this witch-hunt.”

Shehadi continued, “As students, we consider education to be of utmost importance and we have a duty to share our knowledge with others and speak out against the atrocities being committed against the Palestinian people; we are outraged by the U.S. government’s opposition to such peaceful actions. As long as the civil rights of fellow human beings are denied and the oppression of Palestinians continues, we will not be silent.”

Currently, most of the Midwest activists who have been served subpoenas still continue to refuse to testify. As for the future, Fennerty says, “eventually what’s going to happen is that the Attorney is going to hand out an indictment. The government appears bent on indicting someone. He could indict the original 14. And the indictment is for material support of terrorism.”

The U.S. Attorney Patrick Fitzgerald’s office declined to comment on this story.



SAIC ALUM SUBPOENAED

Maureen Murphy (BFA 2004)
summoned to appear before
the Grand Jury

By AMANDA ALDINGER, SCHOOL NEWS EDITOR

Talking on the phone with Maureen Murphy (SAIC alumna, former F Newsmagazine editor, and now the managing editor of the Electronic Intifada), one would be loath to suspect that the political activist's calm, articulate demeanor is that of a woman who was recently been subpoenaed by the FBI to appear before a federal grand jury on January 25, 2011.

A long-time activist, Murphy is only able to speculate as to why she is under investigation by the FBI. "I'm one of several other organizers with the Palestine Solidarity Group who've been subpoenaed, and it seems that we are being investigated because of solidarity delegations to the occupied West Bank that we've done," Murphy says. The purpose of these delegations is to send activists from the United States to Palestine, in order to educate them on the grave conditions of the human rights situation there. "We believe that ending U.S. aid to Israel, since our tax money basically subsidizes the occupation, is the key to ending the deadly status quo in the Middle East."

Murphy has been involved with activist work for Palestine since her undergraduate days at SAIC, when she participated in student activism on campus — passionate work that many of her fellow classmates and teachers remember fondly. "She was a bright, hardworking, very engaged student. Maureen is a very sweet and kind person, highly principled and someone of great integrity. She is a brave and inspiring person to know," says Timothy O'Donnell, a liberal arts professor at SAIC.

After graduating from SAIC in 2004, Murphy moved to the West Bank city of Ramallah. During her year and a half stay, she worked for the Palestinian human rights group Al-Haq. This non-governmental organization was established in 1979 to promote human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. She was deported back to the U.S. by Israel in 2006.

"The time I came back was when Israel launched its war on Lebanon. Meanwhile, it was shelling Gaza, and whole families were being massacred, so that really jolted me into action, and that's when I became involved with the Palestine Solidarity Group,"

says Murphy. Back in the States, she also assumed her current position as the managing editor of the Electronic Intifada, an online publication which is “the leading Palestinian portal for information about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and its depiction in the media,” according to its web site.

Organizations like the Palestine Solidarity Group and the Electronic Intifada have come under greater scrutiny in the aftermath of recent government decisions expanding definitions of material support to foreign terrorists. “I think that they [the U.S. government] are trying to criminalize the Palestine solidarity and support movement,” Murphy said.

But it’s not only Americans in Palestine that the U.S. government is worried about. “I put this into the context of decades of U.S. government repression of the Palestinian community in the U.S., [including when the] U.S. government deported Palestinian activists who immigrated here after Israel occupied the West Bank in 1967,” says Murphy.

“When Palestinians came here, they started organizing, and started educating Americans about what was happening in the Middle East and their government’s role in it. There were a lot of folks who were deported.”

Although this “fishing expedition” has attracted notable attention, it is only the most recent in a series of similar events. “This repression was really ramped up after the September 11, 2001 attacks, and in December of 2001, the Bush government shut down the largest Muslim charity in the U.S., which was called the Holy Land Foundation,” Murphy explains.

The Holy Land Foundation (HLF) was the largest Islamic charity in the United States, and had charges brought against it by the federal government in 2007 for funding Hamas and other suspected Islamic terrorist organizations. Some of the HLF’s primary activists were put on trial, receiving sentences as long as 15 to 65 years.

“Really, all those people did was give humanitarian assistance to Palestinians living under Israeli occupation. So we’ve seen a number of other cases, where ... Palestinian-Americans or Palestinian activists in the United States have been put on trial because they’ve tried to advocate peacefully for changes in U.S. government policy, and also to raise money to support Palestinians living under Israeli occupation,” explains Murphy.

If made to testify, Murphy and the other subpoenaed activists will not be questioned under the typical “bring your lawyer, speak to a jury of your peers” format. Rather, when being forced to testify in front of a grand jury, one is required to show up without a lawyer, and is subject to questioning in front of a jury hand-picked by the United States government.

“If you don’t answer any questions in the way they want, you can potentially be charged with obstruction of justice,” says Murphy. “So it’s basically been used throughout the history of this country to intern political activists, because if you refuse to testify in front of a grand jury, then you risk being jailed. And if you do testify before the grand jury you’re basically coerced into giving information to the U.S. government about how you organize, who you know, and how the other people you know organize.” This inquisition would most likely pit Murphy against her fellow activists. “So that’s why we call it a fishing expedition, and that’s why people have been refusing to participate in it.”

The possible repercussions are very high for these activists, as the U.S. government

recently broadened what constitutes criminal activity in political activism.

On June 21, 2010, the government made a ruling on *Holder v. Humanitarian Law Project*, which deemed that it is a federal crime to “knowingly provide material support or resources to foreign terrorist organizations. The term ‘material support or resources’ means any property, tangible or intangible, or service, including currency or monetary instruments or financial securities, financial services, lodging, training, expert advice or assistance, safehouses, false documentation or identification, communications equipment, facilities, weapons, lethal substances, explosives, personnel (one or more individuals who may be or include oneself), and transportation, except medicine or religious materials,” according to the U.S. Supreme Court.

In layman’s terms, “what the Supreme Court decided in June constituted material support includes things like political activity done in a coordinated way with foreign terrorist organizations, or giving money to groups that are somehow with foreign terrorists organizations, but don’t actually commit any violence themselves,” Murphy explains. The activists believe that this particular investigation is a direct result of the *Holder v.*

“What’s most important for people to do right now is to stand up and raise their voices, because if we lose our rights it’s really hard to get them back. The more of us there are out on the streets, protesting when we feel like we need to protest, the harder it is for people to get singled out and to be politically persecuted in this way.”
— Maureen Murphy

Humanitarian Law Project, as the subpoenas issued in September were part of an investigation into material support for foreign terrorist organizations.

Peter Erlinder is a William Mitchell law professor who was arrested this summer in Rwanda for representing Victoire Ingabire, and who also spoke out after the September subpoenas were issued. He says that in issues of providing material support, it doesn’t matter what the activists’ intentions were. “The individual doesn’t have to intend to be furthering illegal activities,” Erlinder explained during a press conference after the Minnesota raids.

The subpoenaed activists are also frustrated with the grand jury system, and the lengths to which the government has gone to criminalize these political dissidents. Tracy Molm, a union organizer for the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees Local 3800 in Minnesota, received her subpoena on September 24.

“Sadly, it’s becoming more common for the FBI and government agencies to spy on

anti-war and activist groups, as the inspector general publicly acknowledged the Monday before our homes were raided and the first 14 subpoenas were issued,” Molm says. “And it’s also true that there is a history in this country of FBI and police infiltration and harassment of people’s movements that are fighting for justice against the government. We are fighting for justice for Palestine and its people, but the U.S. government continues to fund the government of Israel which uses this money to oppress and occupy Palestine.”

Despite this federal investigation into the work that Murphy and the other activists have been so passionate about for so long, the group wasted no time in organizing after the September 24 raids. In addition to creating a National Day of Action, which occurred country-wide on January 25 — the same day that the Chicago activists were required to show up for trial at the Dirksen Federal Building — the activists have witnessed unwavering support from groups and individuals all over the country, especially here in Chicago.

“The Chicago Teachers Union, which has 30,000 members, has issued a resolution condemning the raids and calling for an end to this investigation,” Murphy says. And that’s not all. “So far, unions representing more than half a million workers in this country have issued resolutions of solidarity with all of us facing the grand jury. ... People believe that this could have happened to any of us and that all of us have something at stake here. People see this as an attack on our fundamental right to organize, and dissent, and peacefully work to change U.S. policy.”

Although groups and unions across the country are rallying in support of the activists, Murphy’s support system is deeply rooted in those she’s touched personally throughout her life.

“She is one of the few people I know who is genuinely committed to justice and to fighting injustice no matter where the injustice occurs. She focuses on the plight of the Palestinians and on their rights, an issue that is very sensitive in the United States where pro-Israeli sentiment is very powerful. We all stand with and support her in these difficult times,” says Raja Halwani, SAIC faculty member and the author of a book on the philosophical analysis of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, *Israel, Palestine, One-State Solution: Philosophical Essays on Self-Determination, Terrorism and the One-State Solution.*

So what’s next? Jail, or the continued right to peaceful activism? “We think that our best defense is a strong and broad support movement, and we hope that no one actually gets put in jail,” Murphy says. But with the potential for incarceration looming overhead, Murphy and the other activists are focusing on what they do best: garnering support.

“I’ll just emphasize that we think that maybe one of the reasons, the motivations behind this invasive investigation is that the U.S. government wants to intimidate people from organizing, and that it might have a chilling effect on our movement,” Murphy explains.

But has that really been the case? “So far we’ve seen the opposite effect. And what’s most important for people to do right now is to stand up and raise their voices, because if we lose our rights it’s really hard to get them back. The more of us there are out on the streets, protesting when we feel like we need to protest, the harder it is for people to get singled out and to be politically persecuted in this way.”

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SAIC studio visit with Scott Carter

Interview with artists and Rod Slemmons, curator of the MCA's "La Frontera: the Cultural Impact of Mexican Migration"

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Ray Yoshida

at Sullivan Galleries

See it Before it Closes



Ray Yoshida, "Touch and Go," 1980. Image courtesy of Sullivan Galleries.



Ray Yoshida, "Untitled," 1995. Image courtesy of Sullivan Galleries.

By NICOLE NELSON, STAFF WRITER

Just to the left of the entrance of SAIC's Sullivan Galleries, a vitrine holds three pieces of paper, scribbled with long lists of puns playing on the word Ray — including "up, up and a-Ray," "singing in the Ray-n," and "Ray-diation." Compiled by Christina Ramberg, the list includes suggestions written in different handwriting, offering a glimpse into a collaborative exercise full of possibility. This piece sets the tone for "Touch and Go: Ray Yoshida and his Spheres of Influence," an expansive retrospective featuring SAIC alumn and instructor Ray Yoshida (1930-2009, BFA 1953).

Curated by John Corbett and Jim Dempsey (directors of the Corbett vs. Dempsey gallery), the show examines Yoshida's evolution as an artist, while also taking into account the influence of his teachers and contemporaries, as well as his own role as mentor to the students he taught during his decades-long tenure at SAIC. To that effect, works by Yoshida's teachers Paul Wiegardt and Kathleen Blackshear, and his numerous students, including Christina Ramberg, Barbara Rossi, Art Green, Ed Flood, and Roger Brown, are also shown.

The result is a collection of work that provides insight into the career of a prolific artist with wide-ranging interests and a far-reaching influence. The show also presents a fascinating examination of the art scene in Chicago during the 1960s and 70s, when the Hairy Who and the Imagists were coming into their own. Corbett and Dempsey make these connections for us, and we can trace the evolution of one idea or motif between the different artists.

If there is one weakness to the show, it is that at times these connections seem static or arbitrary. In the parts of the show that cover the latter years of Yoshida's life, the work of his students seems less relevant, with only Chris Ware's comic piece or Rebecca Shore's painting "24" suggesting a strong connection to his practice.

There are many outstanding pieces of Yoshida's work on display, including an early untitled oil painting from 1960 that earned him a prize in the 63rd Annual Chicago and Vicinity show. Filled with



Ray Yoshida, "Undesirable Grouping," 1975. Image courtesy of Sullivan Galleries.



Ray Yoshida, "Untitled," 1970. Image courtesy of Sullivan Galleries.

expressive abstract lines and shapes, rendered in loose brushstrokes and glowing color, it acts as a point of comparison to the hard-edged aesthetic that Yoshida developed later. Also compelling are the early and late iterations of the "Comic Specimens" series, which feature cryptic arrangements of cropped images from comic books.

However, the most fascinating works in the show are the ones that embody its spirit — the pieces where we see not just a connection, but the direct interaction between student and teacher. The piece "Triple Twins" from 1974 is in this vein. A collaboration between Yoshida, Barbara Rossi, and Christina Ramberg, each artist elaborated on the work of the others in sequence. Another piece is Art Green's "Dollar Bill" print from 1962-1963, made in an SAIC printmaking class taught by Yoshida and co-signed by him.

Yoshida's influence will continue to be felt not only through his own body of work, but through the work of those artists who had the opportunity to study with him. It is a powerful reminder of the great responsibility of those who take the time to share what they know with those around them.

Touch and Go: Ray Yoshida and his Spheres of Influence

Nov 12, 2010 - Feb 12, 2011
Sullivan Galleries
33 S State Street, 7th floor
www.saic.edu

REVIEW ROUNDUP



PHOTO BY ALEJANDRA MONSERRAT GONZALEZ ROMO

Objects That Grow Souls: Mindy Rose Schwartz at threewalls gallery

In Mindy Rose Schwartz's solo exhibition at threewalls, ceramics figurines like the ones we remember from our grandma's favorite cabinet, paper, marbles, feathers, mirrors, macramé and furniture-like structures have been combined into sculptural installations with an almost mystical evocative power.

Mindy Rose Schwartz
Jan 14 - Feb 26, 2011
threewalls gallery
119 N Peoria #2c
www.three-walls.org

While still retaining their connection to interior decoration, domestic objects make the leap from the realm of the mundane to the fantastical. Schwartz is interested in the mutability of domestic objects imbued with a wide range of emotions and personal stories, and she uses these

elements as the building blocks for pieces that blur the boundaries between the object and the human.

Papier-mâché hands with leg-like fingers have somehow sprouted human-like faces, like characters extracted from a fantasy story, and they quietly greet the viewer as she enters the gallery. Another sculptural installation serves as an unusual piece of furniture laden with recognizable household symbols, which has also mysteriously grown feet and hands.

The exhibited pieces bring back memories of tacky knick knacks and ornaments that we have encountered a million times, and perhaps have hated; but in Schwartz's installations, they are transformed. They surprise us, but also remind us of the strength of their sentimental power, the way they manage to occupy the exact same spot in a home for many years, with the sole purpose of pleasing the eyes and filling an empty space.

—Alejandra Monserrat González Romo



PHOTO COURTESY OF WESTERN EXHIBITIONS

Heads on Poles at Western Exhibitions

It appears that the West Loop has been invaded by a sense of fun and willingness to experiment that can be all too rare in Chicago's typically placid art scene. Across the hall from Mindy Rose Schwartz's solo show, Paul Nudd and Scott Wolniak have organized an exhibition at Western Exhibitions that is, in a word, awesome: roughly 50 artists have been invited to show their unique take on the concept of a head on a pole.

Heads on Poles
Jan 14 - Feb 19, 2011
Western Exhibitions
119 N Peoria #2A
www.westernexhibitions.com

Western Exhibitions is a small space, and this show is incredibly crowded — but fabulously so. The viewer has the thrilling sensation of entering a strange forest of Pop, kitsch and gore, a garden of tortured forms that you might expect (or at least

hope) to see in the garden of a particularly morbid outsider artist.

It's hard to choose a favorite, but Nick Black's "Popcorn" machine stands out in particular — this mixed-media kinetic sculpture includes the form of a toy horse, a television, and a huge vat for popping popcorn (yes, it really works). John Riepenhoff's "My Old Head" was also particularly striking: an eerily lifelike plaster cast of a face, adorned with a shiny blonde wig and thick glasses, has been mounted upon a sword. Fake blood drips down onto a note that has been impaled underneath the sword, upon which the artist (or his friend?) cheerfully asks us to enjoy his old head. Some artists took a less literal, gory approach, like Vincent Dermody's "untitled," a post with wooded arrows pointing in different directions, painted his trademark black.

What's the overall curatorial statement here? I don't know, and I don't really care. This was one of the best gallery-going experiences this reviewer has had in a long time.

—Ania Szremksi, Arts Editor



PHOTOS BY NICK BRIZ

Letter from New York: Jimmy Joe Roche at RARE Gallery

If the alternative arts scene in Baltimore can be compared to a brightly colored hippo squirming ecstatic synth-beats as it devours ice-cream, Wham city native Jimmy Joe Roche is its shape-shifting barbarian-wizard. Wrapped in cables and wires, he rides on the city's back as he casts dreams and nightmares on those curiously watching below.

Jimmy Joe Roche
Jan 6 - Feb 3, 2011
RARE Gallery
547 W 27th St, Ny NY
www.rare-gallery.com

this scene, it's characterized by loud, frenzied and colorful musical acts such as Ponytail and Dan Deacon (a long time collaborator of Roche's) and alternative art events like Whartscape.

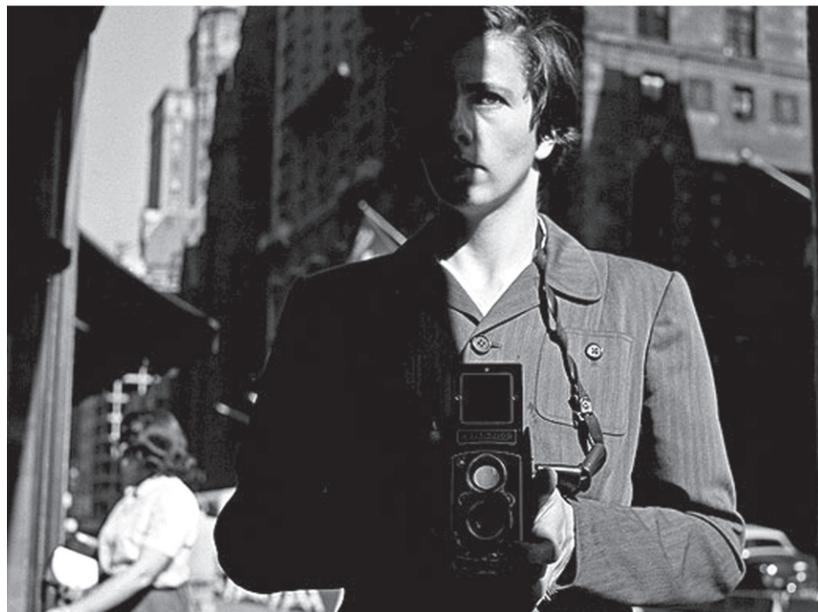
In a solo show currently on display at New York's RARE gallery, Roche presents videos, a mixed-media installation, and a hand-cut paper wall sculpture — a chaotic array that aptly reflects Roche's propulsive, varied and interdisciplinary practice.

His videos are a psychedelic collection of characters, scenes, noises, and moods — sometimes appropriated but usually hand-crafted — that join together in kaleidoscopic communion. The characters in his videos (performed by Roche) are constantly shaking, shifting, jumping, and jittering. They're frantically working on tasks, which almost always require sharp objects and electric guitar pedals, rushing to finish them on time before the 2012 YouTube Apocalypse, all the while contemplating the mysteries of the pop-spiritual narrative that ties all of Roche's work together.

This mythical narrative, which I had previously encountered in Roche's online videos, became real for me as I paid reverence to the spirits depicted in his life-size hand-cut paper wall sculpture, "Deep Horizons." Similarly, when I approached "Pulpit," his mixed-media altar, I found an American eagle trucker hat, a home-brew mace, and a hard, plastic vest wired with electronics, forever waiting for its preacher (or the "True Soldier of My Lord," as was written on the pulpit) to take them up and lead the gallery's visitors in media-doomsday meditation.

Roche's seemingly personal spiritualism is a hyper-concentrated reflection of the iconographic landscape that makes up our on-line and off-line pop-media culture. And while it's easy to get lost and disoriented, it never ceases to thrill.

—Nick Briz



PHOTOS COURTESY OF JOHN MALOOF

Finding Vivian Maier at the Cultural Center

I was skeptical about this exhibition when I first read the press release, which described the Henry Darger-like, post-humous discovery of a treasure trove of images captured by a self-taught photographer. In general, exhibitions that are so determined by biography are not very interesting.

I was wrong. "Finding Vivian Maier" at the Chicago Cultural Center is a knockout. Scores of black and white photos from the 50s and 60s (as well as a few color prints from the late 70s)

Finding Vivian Maier
Jan 8 - Apr 3, 2011
Chicago Cultural Center
78 E Washington St
www.chicagoculturalcenter.org

do include some of the more expected street shots — lots of dirty children playing, grotesque character types, and so forth. But there are also some incredibly striking compositions: one photo that stands out in particular shows a solitary woman striding down a covered arcade. The

columns supporting the arched roof cast strong, inky shadows alternating with bright bands of light, formally echoing the light and dark strips of the window blinds adorning the shops lining the street. There's a powerfully eerie, de Chirico-esque feeling in the image.

The obvious art historical reference here, of course, would be Eugène Atget. Like her French predecessor, Maier almost obsessively attempted to capture ephemeral moments of her daily urban experience and the changing cityscape around her. Unlike Atget, though, Maier had a predilection for photographing herself, and these are some of the strongest photos in the show: we see a sternly concentrated young woman looking down into her camera view finder, as she points the lens into a reflective window or mirror, intent on the work of her lifelong obsession.

—Ania Szremski, Arts Editor

EROTIC THERAPY

Chicago dominatrices on pleasure, pain, performance art, and the therapeutic value of BDSM

The countdown to graduation has begun. In anticipation of the impending entry of hundreds of SAIC students into the job market, throughout the spring semester F newsmagazine will be looking at professions that are off the beaten path. For February, editor-in-chief Brandon Kusters met with local dominatrices to find out more about this often overlooked career. How does one become a dominatrix, what are the day-to-day details of the job, and how do dominatrices feel about criticism suggesting that they're enacting misogynistic fantasies?



Mistress Cleo

By BRANDON KOSTERS, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

"You wanna talk bizarre ... " Head-Mistress Cleo began. "We had this client come in who had all of his genitals removed. He claimed that some person in his personal life was training to go to medical school. [The client] wanted to be castrated and this person did that for him. He came in with nothing in that area, and he brought a branding iron, and he wanted you to just brand the area where the genitals once were. That's probably the most far out thing I've seen in this business yet."

Mistress Cleo, 26, is a professional dominatrix. She first took an interest in fetishism and BDSM (bondage, domination, and sado masochism) as a teenager in London.

"I bought my first whip when I was 14," she said. It was purchased at a "pound shop" in England (the British equivalent to a dollar store). "It was a cheaply made item, but I knew I had to have it, and I couldn't explain why. The next few years, I began exploring it in my personal relationships, and then once I discovered I could make a career out of it, I thought, 'what's better than that?'"

Five years ago, she founded her own commercial dungeon, the Continuum, in downtown Chicago.

THE CONTINUUM

The dungeon is a site to behold.

There are cages; swings with ankle and wrist restraints (used largely for motion and tickle torture); a cross where the submissive party is shackled spread eagle (convenient for spanking and flogging); a "medical room" which is fashioned to resemble a doctor's office for "medical fetishism;" and stools for over-the-knee spanking.

Wigs, costumes and boots abound.

Cleo has a staff of 15 Mistresses, one male Master, one male sub (where the client is dominant) and one transgendered (male to female) sub on staff.

The duration and details of each session may differ significantly client to client. A session may last anywhere from an hour to a day.

"There's a few different categories," said Lady Shana Von Gabor, 25, a Chicago native who has been with the dungeon for two years. "I would say that there is a big difference between a fetish session and a domination session."

Fetish sessions, she said, tend to be friendlier, more playful exchanges. "People who have a fetish are not necessarily wanting to be humiliated, or demeaned, or yelled at, or punished for anything. Someone who has a foot fetish, really, it's about worship and appreciation, and so, if I'm having a foot session, pretty much I get to sit and have a foot massage for the most part."

There are the "forced feminization" sessions. "These are straight men who are married," Lady Shana said, "who are not homosexual at all, and I'm a lesbian, so I know, and they're really just interested in the nylons." Both the client and the mistress wear nylons and essentially play footsie. "It's the feeling of nylon on nylon, and so that's more of a fetish. That's about a sensation."

Then, for those who are a little more masochistic, there is the domination session. "That's where you get into play-piercing with needles, heavy flogging, heavy whipping, paddling, over-the-knee spanking," Lady Shana said. "That's all more about being controlled, confined, and having pain."

And within these three general categories are curiosities which may baffle even the most vivid imaginations.

THE CLIENTS

"There are so many different crazy things," said Mistress Lydia, 24, who has been with the dungeon for two years and plans to study political science and women's studies at Roosevelt University.

"Like the guy who likes to dress up like a pig. Or he likes to be dressed up as a little girl and I play an eight-year old and I have to act bratty and reprimand him. And he likes to be forced to curtsy and do really girly things, like tea parties."

Although it would seem that each mistress has a fairly consistent client base, there are occasionally situations where a client will come in with expectations that are incongruous with the services offered at the Continuum.

"We always have security standing by," Mistress Lydia said. "It's only happened twice that I've worked here that I've had to ask a client to leave." And Mistress Cleo said that in the rare instances where someone has to be turned away, things don't get that confrontational. "No one has ever tried to put up a problem or anything like that. They don't want to get busted any more than we do."

"Domination is not prostitution," Mistress Cleo said, "and some people don't realize that. The sad thing is, there are some people in this business who do that as well, and it makes it difficult for all the rest of us who are running a legitimate business."

Clients forming emotional attachments to their mistresses is another potential problem.

Lydia said that "there's always like one [client], once in a while, that will try to latch on and get closer, and they'll want to know more about you." She spoke of having to sever ties with one client who couldn't discern the reality from the fantasy. "He wanted me to be his girlfriend, so I had to let him go. It was obvious that he was looking for a girlfriend and not a domme to beat him ..."

But clients don't get their hearts broken every day.

"There are some really nice clients that come in and they know what it's about," said Lydia. "They pay and then they leave and you don't think about it, but when they're here they're a lot of fun."

"Just a couple days ago," she went on, "there's one of my regulars who another girl and I, we

have a lot of fun with him. We ordered pizza. We just hung out. We wrapped him in plastic wrap, cause he likes to be mummified. And we, you know, kick him in the balls. That was a six hour session."

MISOGYNY, THERAPY, OR PERFORMANCE ART?

Beyond mere kinkiness, is there also something much richer to this scene? Critics contend that this profession, and related images like those published with this article, perpetuate misogyny. There is also persistent ambiguity about whether this profession empowers women, or simply continues to participate in a system of patriarchal oppression, cleverly disguising misogyny in the guise of mock female aggression.

"BDSM is much more than just a job," said Cleo. "It is a lifestyle that has nothing to do with objectifying anyone, and does not apply to any specific gender or orientation. It's simply about one person choosing to relinquish control and the other choosing to take control in a safe, sane, and consensual environment. The activities that transpire are discussed, negotiated and agreed upon by both parties before play will be considered. Men, women, trans; gay, straight, or bi, who choose to participate in this lifestyle from the role that most appeals to them, Dom, sub, or switch, will then seek out the right individual to fulfill the opposite role based on consensual interests. Women, and men, who choose this as a profession almost always enjoy it as their lifestyle as well. The few who don't never last long in the business because you just can't be good at it if you don't truly enjoy it as well."

There is also, it would seem, a very real level of playfulness, and a potential social utility in this profession that should be acknowledged.

Lady Shana's mother was one of those people caught up in what the dominatrix considers to be a commonly held

“You have some people where they want to scream. They want to have that primal yelling ... that’s part of what gets them going. Part of their release. Their catharsis.”

— Lady Shana Von Gabor

misconception about her profession. Lady Shana recalled her mother being “pissed off, to say the least” upon learning that her daughter, who had recently graduated college with a degree in pre-law, had become a dominatrix.

“I think the impression a lot of people have is that we’re prostitutes, that we sleep with our clients, and that the point is to get them off sexually in some way. Is there a sexual element? Yeah. But it’s a lot more psychological than that,” Shana explained.

Shana says that at the end of the day, “it’s a lot of therapy.” She went on to discuss a client she meets every month for a three and a half hour session. “We spend the first 30-40 minutes actually just sitting and talking. He tells me what’s going on in his life, what’s going on in his mind. Very much like you would talk to your therapist.”

Of course, this session deviates somewhat from “traditional” therapy, Shana explained: “He likes corporal. He likes being suspended upside down. But he likes it to be playful. For him, the most important thing in the session is the story-line. So sometimes I pretend that he’s a sailor and he’s crash landed on my island. He has to survive a certain number of tests.”

Other times, Shana will pretend that it’s the Cold War Era, and the client is an American spy in Russia who’s been captured. It’s her job to interrogate him.

Shana has found her practice to be therapeutic for herself, as well. “When I get whipped,” she said, “it’s a huge release.”

She attributes some of this release to the production of natural opiates within the body in response to punishment. For some, she said, screaming is also helpful. Some “want to have that primal yelling,” she explained. “It’s part of their release. Their catharsis.”

Mistress Lydia says that the Continuum serves a diverse client base, although it is mostly male, and she also attests to the therapeutic value of her work. “It’s all walks of life. Lawyers, doctors, accountants, blue-color types, plumbers, cancer survivors. I’ve had a couple of guys who’ve had traumatic experiences, and they come here and it’s like a release for them.”

Beyond making a case for the potential social utility of the field in terms of psychosexual cleansing, there may also be something to be said for the artistry of it all.

Prior to joining the Continuum six months ago, Mistress Yola, 22, was earning her BA in photography from Columbia College in Chicago. While her practice as a photographer is stagnant presently due to her current financial constraints and lack of studio space, she says she has found a creative outlet as a dominatrix.

“It’s just like acting,” she said. “I come in here, I’m in street clothes, and I get ready, and I put on a persona and it’s like: ‘playtime.’ ‘Dress up.’ ‘Fun.’ [Like] acting a role.”

The aesthetic of the attire the mistresses wear on duty seems to integrate elements of various subcultures. Part heavy

metal. Part vintage pinup. Part burlesque. Leather and pleather corsettes. Tall boots. Fishnets.

Given the performative and somewhat theatrical nature of what the Mistresses do, it’s not surprising that their practice has informed public performance work.

“I was a ballerina and I was a theater person my whole life,” said Shana. “So now I’ve actually taken some of those elements and mixed it together. For example, tonight I’m going to be en pointe, in a tu-tu, in the beginning doing more classical ballet moves to industrial music, and I’m gonna lose the ballet get-up, and do ballet with fire, and spitting while on pointe.”

For Lady Shana, it’s all about cultural synthesis. “I’ve kind of taken the classical training, and the classical cultural styles that I grew up with and [have been] weaving it into fetish, BDSM, and the more industrial scene,” she said.

“Just because it’s underground doesn’t mean it lacks culture.”

The mistresses frequently participate in bondage nights at bars in Chicago like Exit and NEO, where they perform demonstrations with their equipment and whip willing patrons.

Yola, Shana, and Cleo do collaborative performance work regularly.

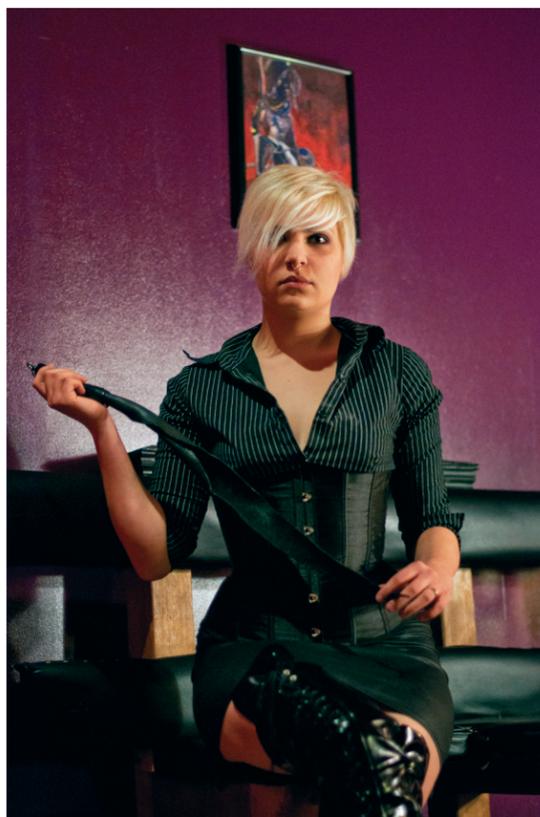
“There’s two different ways you could basically perform,” Shana said. “Traditional burlesque, which we also do, and that’s much more about the kind of classic look and tease. It’s playful. And then there’s more gore burlesque, which is what we also do.”

Yola and Shana perform “needle shows” together. “We’ll get up on stage and maybe use a song that has religious overtones like ‘Hallelujah! Praise Jesus,’ and we’ll get naked and I’ll insert needles in her arms, her chest through both of her lips, and then we’ll take them out and play in the blood.”

“It shocks people” she continued. “You basically take an isolated thing you can do in a session, like needle-play, or fire-play, and you put it on stage, and put it on display, and people are mesmerized. Anything that’s taboo. Anything that people are uncomfortable with. I think that’s what the performance is really about. It’s about making you look at what you’re uncomfortable with, making you face it, and maybe even making you a little more comfortable with it. Some of our shows have offended people before.”

“I can’t imagine why,” I quipped.

“Yeah,” came the response. “I mean it’s offensive to some people. But it’s art.”



Mistress Yola



Mistress Lydia



Lady Shana Von Gabor Photos by Alli Berry

Go to fnewsmagazine.com

For videos, complete interviews and additional photos.

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Photo: Adam Ames

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**KORI
NEWKIRK**
MARCH 8



Kori Newkirk, 1997-2007 (installation view), 2007
Courtesy of the Studio Museum in Harlem. Photo: Adam Reich



**Yael
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MARCH 10

Gene Siskel Film Center
164 N. State St.

*Admission: \$10 general admission,
\$7 students, \$5 Film Center members,
\$4 SAIC faculty, free for SAIC students

Courtesy of the artist and Annet Gelink Gallery Amsterdam

**TOBIAS
PUTRIH**
MARCH 31



Tobias Putrih, *View of Siska International*, 2010, mixed-media installation.
Installation view Espace 315, Centre Pompidou, Paris. Courtesy of the artist
and Meulenstein Gallery, New York. Photo: Georges Meguerditchian

**WANGECHI
MUTU**
APRIL 12



Wangeschi Mutu, *Before Punk Came Funk*, 2010, mixed media ink, collage on Mylar
Courtesy of the artist and Barbara Gladstone Gallery. Photo: David Regen

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Evaluating Evaluations

Students judge SAIC faculty

By TARA PLATH, STAFF WRITER

The age-old challenge of evaluating teachers has been recently reignited through President Obama's Race to the Top program, in which teachers are being thoroughly and aggressively analyzed for their effectiveness in the classroom. While the program is aimed at primary and secondary education, these efforts mirror the scrutiny under which teachers are held at the college level, like at SAIC.

Thanks to Race to the Top, schools across the country have been busy changing their evaluation methods. SAIC has different ways of evaluating teachers, including teacher evaluations written by students, but the school has also jumped on the bandwagon, recently embarking upon a two year study to re-evaluate the evaluation process.

Each semester, every student is asked to complete a teacher evaluation for each class he or she is in. The evaluations are collected by a student, and then returned to department heads, who in turn pass them on to Student Affairs. As far as many students are concerned, the evaluations mark the end of the semester and the beginning of their long-awaited vacation.

They have a much bigger role than that, however. Every evaluation for the roughly 1,200 courses listed each semester is immediately scanned onto an online database. Once grades for that semester have been submitted, teachers, department chairs, and administrative directors can access the evaluations online.

The paper files stay in Student Affairs for one year before they are archived, and they can be consulted by teachers and students researching future classes. Caroline West, Assistant Director of Student Affairs, is generally happy with the number of students who read them. "It would be great if more [students] did read them. A lot of students don't know that they can," says West.

When asked if she found teacher evaluations helpful, SAIC alumna Becka Cooling-Mallard replied, "I do. I take them seriously. But you also take them with a grain of salt. You realize some people use poor judgment and just don't care. The ones that are really thorough can usually be trusted."

The evaluations do a lot more than just inform students, however. They become a vital part in the process of deciding the status of part-time and full-time faculty. A tenure-track faculty member is usually reviewed in his or her second, fourth, and sixth year of teaching. "The evaluations are deeply considered by the department, the elected division chairs, and the 11 elected members of

the Faculty Contract and Tenure Review Committee," says Shanna Linn, Director of Academic Administration. Each party then condenses the dozens, even hundreds, of evaluations in a letter written to the Dean of Faculty.

The process is not perfect, however. "I've had teachers not even give [evaluations] to us. Like tenured faculty. The class really was bad and had some major issues," says Cooling-Mallard.

Not everybody believes that teacher evaluations written by students should hold so much weight in the tenure review process. As author, professor, and literary theorist Stanley Fish wrote in his column in the *New York Times*, "student evaluations (against which I have inveighed since I first saw them in the '60s) are all wrong as a way of assessing teaching performance." Fish argues that often a student cannot measure the effectiveness of a class so immediately, and that an evaluation written at the end of a semester can be premature in its judgment of a class' worth. These evaluations can "also lead to the abandoning or blighting of a career," writes Fish.

Even worse, an extreme reliance on teacher evaluations can lead to a mentality whereby the professors desperately try to cater to students' desires in order to get a good "grade," so to speak. In Texas, a new plan has been launched whereby "college and university teachers contract with their customers — that is, students — to be rewarded by as much as \$10,000 depending on whether they meet the contract's terms [i.e., depending on how well they perform on teacher evaluations]. The idea is to hold 'tenured professors more accountable,'" Fish wrote.

Full-time faculty Romi Crawford agrees with Fish that evaluations can be problematic. She describes the evaluations as having a chaotic element. "You fill them out fifteen minutes before the end of a sixteen week semester. Often you are tired, sick, and sometimes cold. There is not enough time. We're in teaching marathons."

On the other hand, while Crawford says she often takes a pragmatic approach at reading constructive criticism and applying it to her next course, she takes just as much from students' evaluations of themselves. "What strikes me is that moment where students assess themselves. It seems to be the most honest point in the evaluation. Many students have the desire and aspiration to have performed differently and that's really interesting. That's something I can really use and say, 'Jeez my students are really tired.' That's the information I'm not as privy to as I should be, and it informs my

teaching as much as the pragmatic stuff," says Crawford.

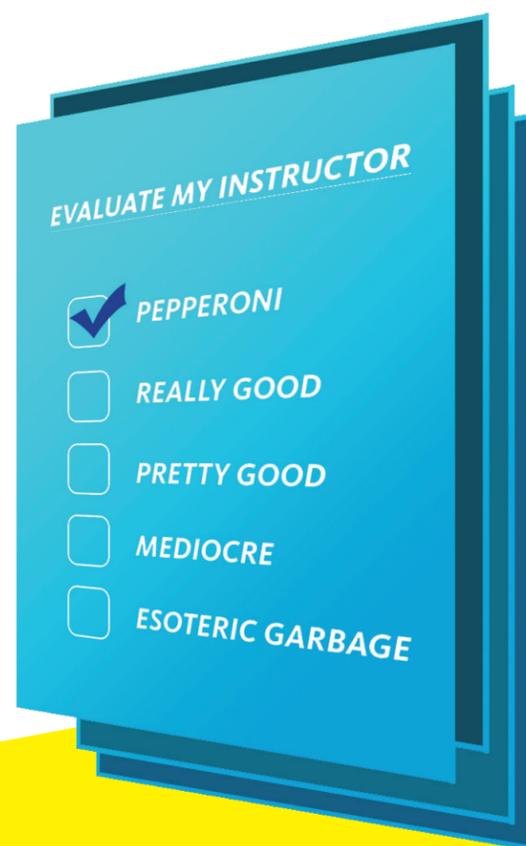
Crawford has sat on several hiring and promotion committees, in which she reads teacher evaluations of her colleagues. She was often struck by students' complaints of something like a teacher's heavy accent. In terms of students' harsh reactions to things such as accents, teaching styles, or personalities, Crawford says, "It's a life model. I can't see that as a bad thing for our students. We want you all to take on the challenge. It's the humanity of it all. We aren't teaching machines."

Full-time philosophy faculty Raja Halwani does take them seriously. "I read my teaching evaluations all the time and I often respond to the suggestions in them if I find them to be fair. I think that the evaluations are good as a tool to evaluate teachers, but they should never be used on their own." Halwani suggests that the evaluations be "a bit more specific, and perhaps different sets of evaluations should be devised for different types of classes."

SAIC is also a little different from other schools because of the pass-fail system, where self-motivation and interest is key to succeeding and getting the most out of a class, as opposed to obtaining an "A." Ideally, this situation would foster an environment where students were truly invested in learning and would judge their teachers accordingly — as opposed to based on the harshness of their grading policies or their showmanship.

Linn emphasizes the importance SAIC places on its own student's evaluations. "The student evaluations are a vital form of feedback and response for the school administration — and while the volume can be overwhelming to the extent that not every evaluation is read every semester, the majority of them are reviewed, considered, and integrated into decisions."

Not everybody believes that teacher evaluations written by students should hold so much merit.



Visit www.fnewsmagazine.com to see Tara Plath's companion piece, "SAIC's Best Kept Secret"

Illustration by Easle Seo

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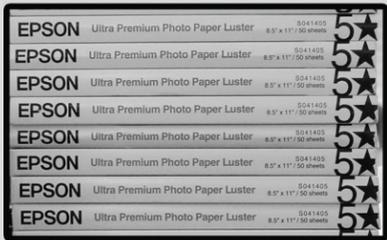
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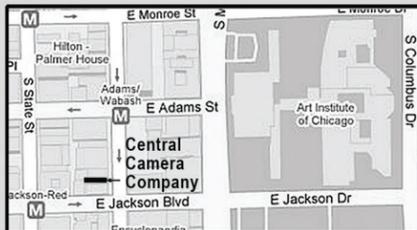
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FEBRUARY 10 THROUGH JUNE 5, 2011

THE TRAGIC MUSE

Art and Emotion, 1700—1900



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Illustration by Emily Haasch

The SAIC Student Telefund raises funds and builds connections by calling alumni

Giving Back to SAIC

By NICOLE NELSON, STAFF WRITER

Paying for school is a stressful, panic-attack inducing process that only promises to get worse as tuition costs rise. For many students, paying for a degree would be impossible without one or more forms of financial aid. With the current economic crisis, it has become increasingly important for schools to raise funds to help offset these costs through scholarships, grants, and other much-needed forms of aid. Institutions are continually looking for new means of fundraising to meet the demand, which is why SAIC joined the ranks in using the students themselves as partners in this process.

SAIC is part of a widespread university practice of using student workers to solicit donations from alumni over the phone. "A phone call allows us the ability to elaborate and really share why the funding is important," said Brian Kish, an Annual Giving Consultant with Campbell & Company, the nonprofit consulting firm that helped SAIC establish their Student Telefund.

"With direct mail, we can only fit so much on a piece of paper and can only hold someone's attention for so long. Verbally, we can hold someone's attention longer and really connect with an emotion — the heartstring leads to the purse string," he said.

This has proven true with SAIC's Student Telefund, which began in 2009 with the two-fold purpose of raising money for the Annual Fund and

reconnecting with SAIC alumni. For a program that is only in its second year, the Telefund has already made a significant impact on the school — one with the potential to benefit all students.

"We doubled our revenue with annual fund gifts alone, and we were able to come in contact with over 10,000 of our alumni," says Maureen McInerney, the Assistant Director of SAIC's Annual Fund and manager of the Telefund. The money that goes into this fund is applied wherever needed around the school, from scholarships to supplies to maintaining the facilities.

This contribution is large, considering the size of SAIC's operation. The Student Telefund is small, consisting of 15 students, with only 11 students working each shift and no permanent space for its operations. Four nights a week, the students transform the 817 Conference Room in the Sharp building into a call center. Depending on how many people answer their phones, the students make 50 to 125 calls a night. Using students to make these calls ensures a greater measure of success.

"Using the person who is going to benefit from the gift is the best way to make phone calls," says Kish. "Everyone you talk to can relate to that student experience because we're calling alumni. They're more tolerant of the person calling because they know a little bit of who they are because they were a student at one time as well. The alum is sympathetic to the person making those calls, and will be more patient and thoughtful in their responses."

Students at the Telefund undergo three days of training, making mock phone calls and learning scripts. They also keep up-to-date with details of what is going on at the school, so they can share this information on calls. This training prepares students to be comfortable making calls, a task that can be unnerving.

"When I first started talking to people on the phone, it was really daunting. All you do is go from person to person," says Melissa Callender, a BFA student in Designed Objects. "But people want to talk to you more than you think they do. It's easier than it seems to have a casual conversation."

Phone calls allow for a two-way interaction between the students and alumni, which lets alumni voice their concerns. "The purpose of our calls is not just to raise money," says Brenna Quinn, a BFA in Painting and Drawing and one of the Telefund's student managers. "We're also updating records and sharing current events and news. Letting people know that there is other information we have to share with them is an important part of the call, and that makes it easier to ask them for a gift or a pledge. Ultimately if they give, it's great, but as long as they get that information it's still a successful phone call."

McInerney is excited about the connections the program has helped build. "We explore all avenues of giving, not just money," she says. "Our most important goal is to make those connections with alumni again. We want them to feel a part of SAIC."

"Our most important goal is to make those connections with alumni again. We want them to feel a part of SAIC."

Every house has a door

Let us think of these things always.
Let us speak of them never.

Wednesday–Sunday, February 9–13

Co-commissioned by the MCA

A joint project between artists from Chicago (former members of Goat Island) and Zagreb, Croatia. This dance-theater experiment builds a common body of language while exploring ideals of utopia and revolt.

Limited stage seating. Buy tickets early.

Let us think ... is a National Performance Network (NPN) Creation Fund Project co-commissioned by P.S. 122 with the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, Fusebox Festival, and NPN. Support is also provided from the NPN Forth Fund. The Creation Fund is supported by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, Ford Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts (a federal agency). The Forth Fund is supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

Support for this performance is generously provided by the Trust for Mutual Understanding.



GLOBAL
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Photo: John W. Sisson, Jr.

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—*Sunday Tribune* (Ireland)

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Photo: Ros Kavanagh

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NOTEWORTHY: VALENTINE EDITION

La Vida Sobre Papel

Jan 21 - May 1, 2011

National Museum of Mexican Art
1852 W 19th St

The National Museum of Mexican Art presents "La Vida Sobre Papel," featuring the work of Judithe Hernandez, the only female member of the famed Chicano artist collective Los Four. In the exhibition, she'll be exploring violence, femicide, love, seduction, and popular culture.



Off the Beaten Path: Violence, Women and Art

Jan 22 - Apr 13, 2011

Chicago Cultural Center
78 E Washington St

In continuing with the theme of violence and women, the Chicago Cultural Center presents "Off the Beaten Path" on the heels of their enormously successful Vivian Maier exhibition (they've really been stepping it up, exhibition-wise). The show features 29 contemporary artists treating the theme of domestic violence. The curatorial concept may be hackneyed, but the artists, including Marina Abramovic and Laylah Ali, are amazing.

Reading Under the Influence: "Love, Baby!"

Feb 2, 7 - 9 p.m.

Sheffield's
3258 N Sheffield Ave

George Hyatt, Byron Hatfield, Scott Miles and Sean Rohwedder kick off what's turned into Valentine's Month with readings about love. Listen and drown your sorrows with copious amounts of booze as you prepare for the 14th.



The Tragic Muse: Art and Emotion, 1700-1900

February 10 - June 5, 2011

Smart Museum of Art
5550 S Greenwood Ave

Valentine's Day seems to have affected curator's minds. Yet another lady-themed show is opening this February at the Smart. Art students, take note — it's good to see some of the historical stuff sometimes. Anne Leonard has curated a show looking at the heroines and tortured martyrs that have inspired artists and viewers alike, with works dating from 1700-1900.

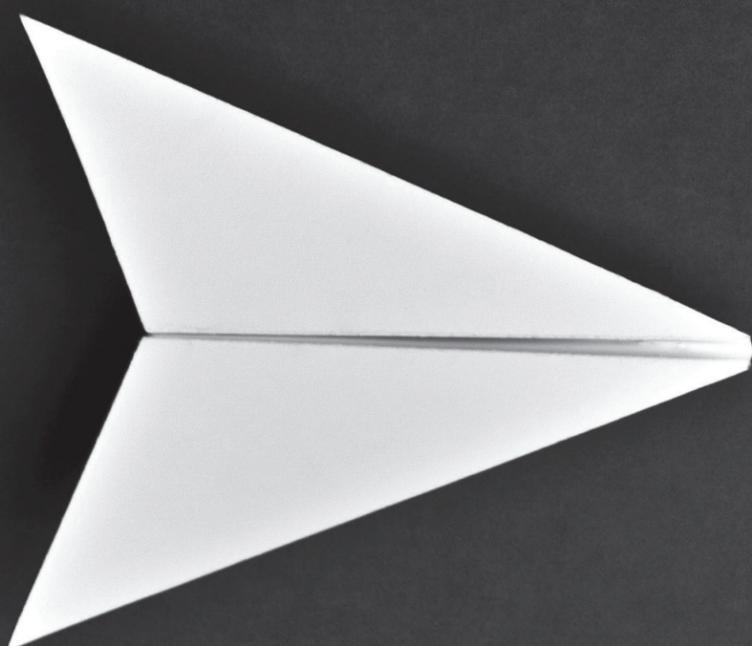


Ten Inch Hero

Feb 14, 7:00 p.m.

Facets Multimedia
1517 W Fullerton

A Valentine's Day-only special event at Facet's features the U.S. premier of "Ten Inch Hero," a romantic comedy about a woman in search of the daughter she gave up for adoption. After seeing women get tortured and beat up at the Cultural Center, the National Museum of Mexican Art, and the Smart Museum, come see this movie for a happy ending.



STUDY TRIPS WINTER 2011

THANK YOU FACULTY AND STAFF LEADERS

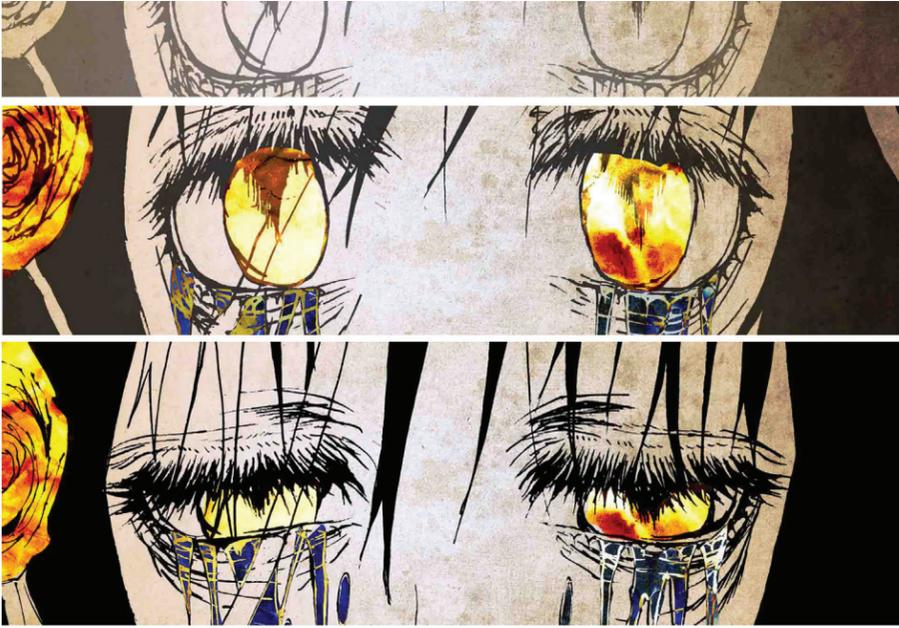
Terry Myers, Peter Gena, Beth Wright, Michelle Grabner, Shane Campbell, David Getsy, Richard Willenbrink, Randy Vick, Jerry Stefl, Jerry Catania, Stanley Murashige, Shay DeGrandis, Hau Kum Kneip, Nick Lowe, Nora Taylor, Shanna Linn, Nancy Gildart, Norm Miller, Ana Peterson & Rachel Buckmaster

We thank you for your creativity, dedication, energy, and leadership. Looking forward to continued collaborations this summer—bon voyage!



DESIGN BY SONA HOVHANNISYAN (BFA, 2011)

JINGXUAN HU presents



WHY CAN'T WE LET GO?

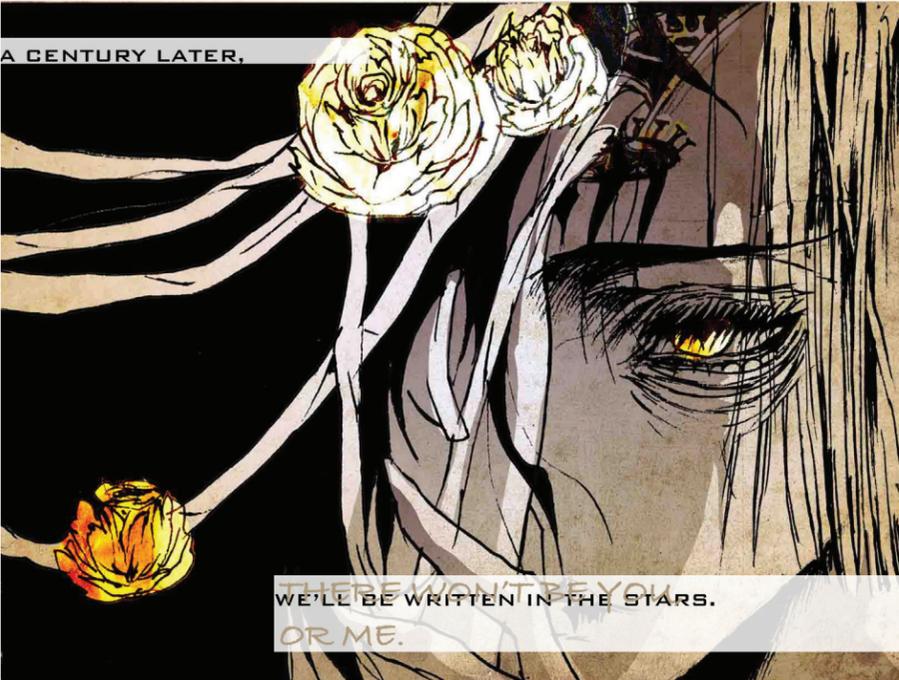


WE HAVE ~~NO~~ STRONG FEELINGS FOR EACH OTHER.

YEAH, I SEE THE POINT.



A CENTURY LATER,



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WE'LL BE WRITTEN IN THE STARS.
OR ME.



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inside dollhouse

By OLIVIA LIENDO

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