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The School of the Art Institute of Chicago

MAY 2013

news magazine

A student journal of arts,
culture and politics

SHOULD BE FREAKING OUT RIGHT
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Chicago
Design Museum

Block 37
108 North State Street
Chicago, IL 60602
3rd Floor

Design Talk: Marian Bantjes
June 08, 2013
2-4 pm

Opening Reception
June 10, 2013
7-11 pm

→ For many, the compulsion to create is constant. It's unstoppable. Beyond the hours at the office, we create, we make—we play. In an attempt to find our own voice, we may stumble upon a visual language that can speak for and, perhaps, inspire others. This year, we celebrate the blurred line between work and play.

2013 Exhibition
June 01-30
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Chicago Design Museum

Work at Play

Work on Exhibit

Marian Bantjes
John Massey
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Special Exhibition

Re/view

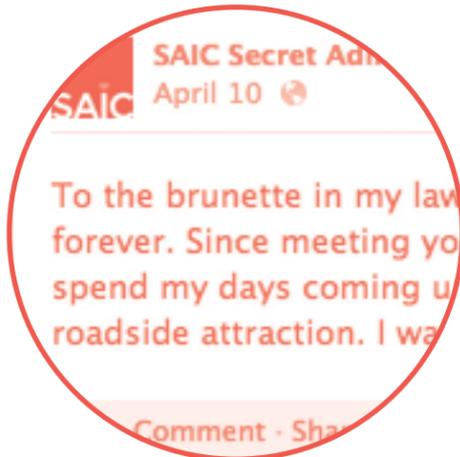


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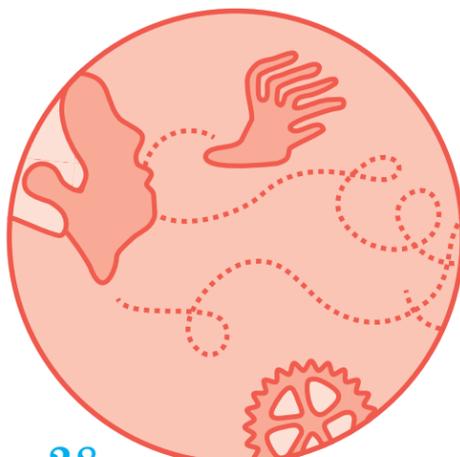
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WEB EXCLUSIVES fnewsmagazine.com



Open Dialogue — Visit the website this week for the extended video of F Newsmagazine's Open Dialogue conversations. Managing Editor Kristofer Lenz interviewed students and faculty about race and diversity at SAIC. Check out what they have to say and add your own opinion.

Controversy, Community and Curriculum at SAIC — News Editor Diana Buendía offers an overview of the thought-provoking April 10 panel discussion moderated by Rashayla Brown.

Alexandria Eregbu: Black Venus Is On Fire! Videographer Alfredo Salazar-Caro profiles BFA candidate Alexandria Eregbu's work.

If you have a story, article or note that you want published on *Fnewsmagazine.com*, send submissions to webeditor@fnewsmagazine.com.

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COVER: "overreaction//undereaction"
by Chris Givens

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Break- ing the Religious Taboo

SAIC Hillel Speaks Out

BY SAIC HILLEL

We should not limit freedoms of creation and speech when it comes to religion and politics, but at what point should students and professors be called out for not only racial insensitivities but for religious intolerance as well? In their Letter to the Editor in February, Black at SAIC criticized SAIC's promotion of undefended work. We at SAIC Hillel would like to add to that by calling for a criticism on undefended discourse as well.

Some of us have not only been afraid to affiliate ourselves with Judaism in this school, but have been discouraged from creating artwork that identifies with our religious or cultural identities. When some of our observant students are criticized for 'being a part of the root of all evil' or stymied for expressing religious beliefs within their work, we become afraid to openly claim ourselves a part of the Jewish faith and culture. Such statements do not allow for a productive and open discourse about difference. Instead, they invoke silence on a voice that could contribute a great deal to the diverse community that SAIC has claimed to be.

Meaning and making are inseparable, can it not also be said that meaning and being are inseparable as well?

Those who are observant among us miss a number of classes during the year due to our religious obligations on particular holidays. We do not miss these

classes by choice—as some of our professors have been critical of us for. Our religious practices are as much a part of our identities and beings as any race or gender or culture might be.

In this regard too, we should not be looked down upon for our observant obligations, for keeping Kosher, for observing the Sabbath, for missing school on the holidays. If you do not understand and on default disagree with our practices, do not dismiss or judge us for them. With this in mind, for our core curriculum, we would like to suggest a heightened focus on comparative religion and cultural diversity.

We would also like to bring attention to historical insensitivity. When we hear a professor say that they are 'up to their eyeballs in the Holocaust,' or when a student tells us that there was a reason for Hitler and that we should just 'get over it already' we question the kind of community that SAIC is. Granted, the majority of this institution does not believe such things or accusations, but if there are select students who do, does that not also reflect poorly on our ability to promote difference and diversity within this establishment as a whole? We remember the Holocaust as a means of understanding how powerful indifference can be. Through remembrance we teach the importance of tolerance. Last year, with the assistance of the Multicultural Affairs office and various other student

groups on campus we were able to host SAIC's first Holocaust and Genocide Awareness Week. But a Holocaust and Genocide Awareness week should not be the sole responsibility of student groups. Rather, it should be the purpose of this institution to promote such an education annually. If people are sick of hearing about it, then perhaps we as an institution are not teaching the lessons we have gained from it correctly.

The exaggerated use of words like 'Nazi' within the classroom to reflect on a group of people or country negatively should not be tolerated, nor should the religious or political opinions of our professors, men and women who carry a significant power over the minds of their students, be voiced within the classroom.

In further instigating non-western, political, and religious classes within our core curriculum, we should also be monitoring our classrooms to ensure a balanced and non-biased dialogue among professors and students.

We wish that we did not have to hear the words "I am Jewish, but don't tell anyone," from various students within this school. The critical opinions that have surfaced within our classrooms and studios regarding religion should be open to debate and dialogue. It is time that this religious 'taboo' experienced by some of us at this school, be brought to the attention of this establishment and broken.

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NEWS

SHORTS

Remains of poet
Pablo Neruda
exhumed

Forty years after his death, the remains of the Nobel Prize-winning Chilean poet were recently removed from his grave so forensics experts can examine whether or not Neruda died of cancer or if he was poisoned. Neruda was an active member of the Communist Party in Chile, and his home was raided several times by military leaders who took power after Salvador Allende was ousted. His former driver claimed in 2011 that when Neruda was admitted to the hospital in a stable condition, a doctor gave him an injection that led to his death. Although the Pablo Neruda Foundation does not believe the claim, the Communist Party filed a criminal lawsuit to have his remains examined.

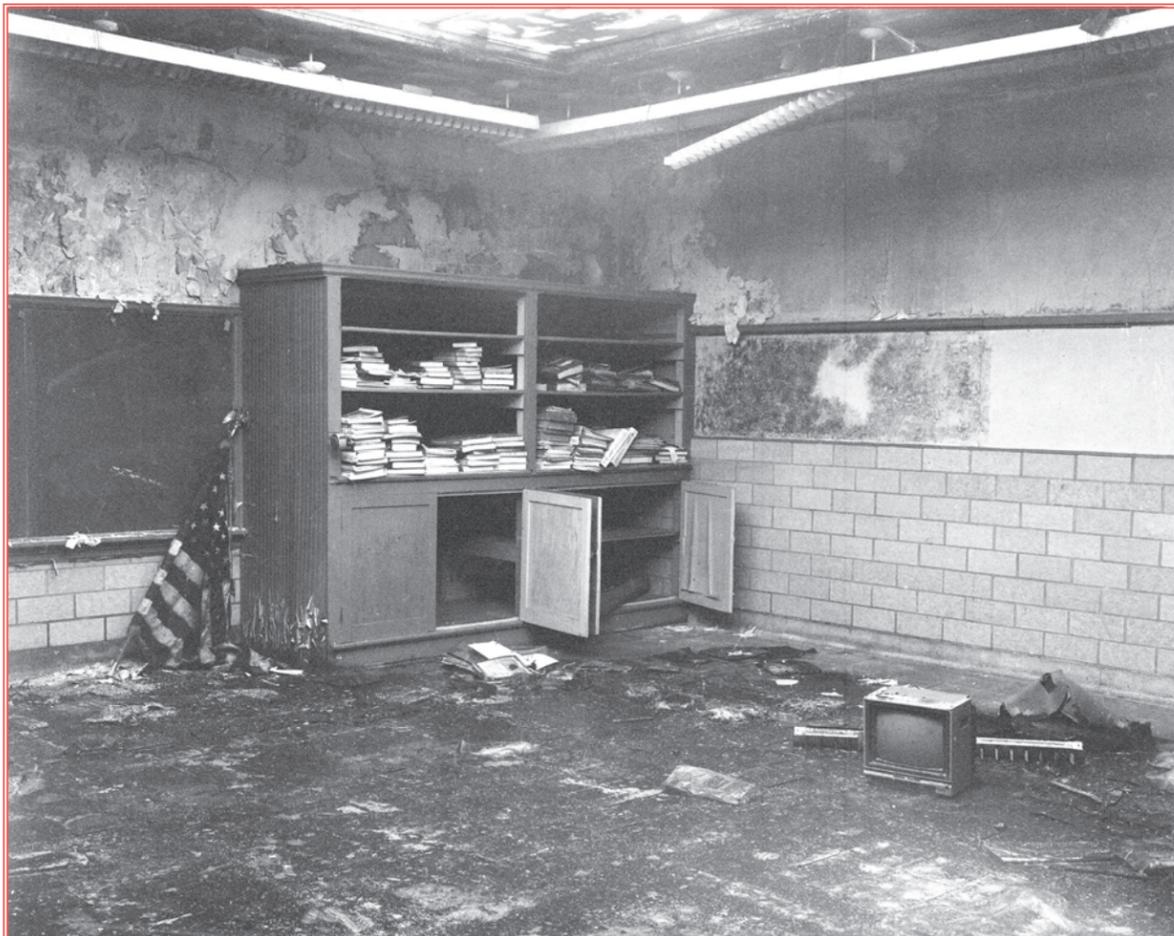
Associated Press
removes “illegal
immigrant” term
from Stylebook

In a recent blog entry, the executive editor of the Associated Press Kathleen Carroll announced that in an effort to rid their Stylebook of labels the news-gathering organization would no longer be using the term “illegal immigrant.” The term “illegal,” Carroll explained, “should describe only an action, such as living in or immigrating to a country illegally.” Approximately 1,400 newspapers make up the Associated Press Cooperative that mostly follow AP Style.

School Closings
stir up Chicago
Teachers Union

The proposed shutdown of 54 schools mostly in the West and South sides of Chicago which would affect 30,000 students, has led the Chicago Teacher’s Union to announce a political action campaign to defeat Mayor Rahm Emanuel and elected officials who support the closings. Chicago Public Schools is in the process of holding 190 community meetings and hearings to gather feedback about the school closings. The Chicago Board of Education has to approve a final list of closings; a vote is scheduled to take place sometime in May.

Photo by Chris Johnson

“Controversy, Community and
Curriculum” panel held at SAIC

BY DIANA BUENDÍA

On April 10, Black at SAIC co-chair Rashayla Brown led a conversation between students and four faculty members to discuss “the unique role of the artist in addressing power dynamics, how controversy can affect an artistic community, and why critical consciousness of diversity and inclusion should become part of the curriculum.” Romi Crawford (VCS), Barbara DeGenevieve (Photography), Oli Rodriguez (Photography) and Faheem Majeed (Sculpture) addressed questions that mostly focused on how to discuss work that addresses race, class, gender and sexuality.

The event was in response to a series of institution-wide conversations SAIC has been having about diversity since 2009, as part of the school’s Strategic Plan. Some SAIC students belong to the Diversity Action Group (DAG), a group of faculty, staff and students who have recently held two rigorous, several-hour long symposia to discuss the issue that has been

deemed a priority at SAIC. Most recently, the DAG presented the most pressing issues concerning diversity — delineated by students participating in these symposia — to President Massey’s cabinet.

Throughout the panel there was a repeated mention of the controversial as a genre, and an agreement that controversy it at its most productive when there is a possibility for a larger conversation about what a controversial work is addressing, not just about how problematic the work is. It is important, they all agreed, that students realize they are not the only ones trying to address these issues — of sexuality, of class, of gender, of race — critically at SAIC. Learn to speak about your work aggressively, with swagger, Crawford suggested, and don’t be afraid to confront faculty members. It’s a recurring problem, a student pointed out, that many instructors are not always willing, or prepared, to address issues that concern communities of difference.

SAIC conducts series
of shelter-in-place drills

BY PERCY BAKER

In March, SAIC held its first Shelter-In-Place drills. Although emergency procedures are detailed on the “What To Do in Case of an Emergency” poster in every SAIC classroom, practicing the procedures was meant to ensure that students, faculty, and staff understand the protocol and are prepared.

According to Art Jackson, Associate Director of Campus Security, SAIC’s first week-long drills were organized as part of its overall strategy for emergency response and preparedness as mandated by the Illinois Campus Security Enhancement Act of 2008. The plan also includes the semiannual evacuation drills that SAIC has conducted for the past 30 years. Drills are designed to bring attention to such issues as communication efficiency, technology malfunctions, and facilities deficiencies.

“I think it’s important, just like with fire drills, that we have at least a very loose idea of what the procedure is if a situation calls for us to take shelter in instance of emergency,” commented SAIC student Henry Harris. BFA student Liz Gomez agreed that the drills are “definitely necessary because it’s a serious issue in our society, as we’ve seen in the past year — a movie theater, an elementary school — it’s reality we need to be prepared for.”

Jackson said Campus Security and IRFM are studying the data recorded during the drills, including “various facilities issues we were not aware of, any deficiencies in our communication systems, and those few compliance issues we recorded” that will be used to inform the improvements necessary for ensuring the safety of the SAIC community.

COMMENTARY

CHOOSE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE

a) GINSBERG

b) KEROUAC

c) BURROUGHS

d) YOURSELF

WRITE YOUR
OWN FUTURE

A LOST AMERICA

Why the Millennials Idealize the Beat Generation

BY JOSHUA MICHAEL DEMAREE

In the 1950s, Indian philosopher Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar speculated that history, as it exists socially, is cyclical rather than linear. This would suggest that culture is prone to repeating itself, that the trajectory of our collective past exists more as a spiral than what we commonly think of as an end-to-end arrow pointing into the unknown future. The notion that there exist periods of history that run parallel to each other, speaking to each other from across time, illustrates our culture's penchant for resurrecting past eras.

Within recent years there has developed such a parallel between our contemporary existence and the height of the Beat Generation, which straddled the late 1940s and early 1950s. The Beats — most popularly represented by Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, and William S. Burroughs — are the subject of a spate of recent films. Documentarian Jeffrey Friedman's "Howl," featuring James Franco as the tortured-yet-vibrant Ginsberg, was released in 2010. This was followed most recently by Walter Salles' film adaptation of Kerouac's "On The Road," the famed novel's first film adaptation since its writing fifty-five years ago. Not yet released are John Krokidas's "Kill Your Darlings," which follows the three mentioned Beats during the murder trial of fellow comrade Lucien Carr, as well as Michael Polish's adaption of another Kerouac novel, "Big Sur."

Film trends do not always offer intrigue: look no further than our recent obsession with vampires. But this renewed interest in the Beat Generation runs deeper than mere fascination. There is something about the Beats that speak to our contemporary condition as though, taking Sarkar's suggestion, time has folded in upon itself and opened a wormhole between the Millennials — those of us born in the 1980s and 1990s — and the free-

wheeling, devil-may-care antics of those crazy Beats.

Karl Marx, an inspiration to the Beats, once wrote: "Hegel remarks somewhere that all great world-historic facts and personages appear, so to speak, twice. He forgot to add: the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce." Marx, ever critical of progress, understood the inherent danger of allowing the past to replicate itself without learning anything. In the case of our renewed fascination with the Beat generation, this is incredibly important to keep in mind.

Born before the Great Depression, the Beats came of age in the 1940s. Centered in Manhattan, during their twenties, they collapsed the safety of middle-class Columbia University — attended by Kerouac, Ginsberg, Burroughs, and Carr — with the drugs, criminals, and eccentricity of Times Square. Their perpetual mixing and moving through New York would later extend to the entire country, coast to coast, which Kerouac memorialized in "On The Road."

It was not until the Fifties that their works came to national prominence, pushed into the spotlight over separate obscenity trials for Ginsberg's "Howl" and Burroughs' "Naked Lunch." Their pro-sexuality, anti-authoritarian attitudes stood at odds with the neat and tidy mass-market consumerism and staunch nationalism of the time.

Time had again circled around, with the Beats looking back to the era of the Lost Generation — Ernest Hemingway, Gertrude Stein, T.S. Eliot, and John Dos Passos, to only name a few. Joyce Johnson, Kerouac's girlfriend when "On The Road" found success, writes in her book "Minor Characters," "The Twenties were much closer then, almost touchable; you could still find flapper dresses in your mother's closet." Sharing a lost adulthood with the Beats' lost childhood due to the horrors of World War II, the Lost Generation took to Europe to find

another America living abroad as expatriates after the war.

The Beats, in turn, found their America on the road in places like Davenport, Iowa. In "On The Road," Kerouac writes "And here for the first time in my life I saw my beloved Mississippi River, dry in the summer haze, low water, with its big rank smell that smells like the raw body of America itself because it washes it up." Their America was not clean, it did not watch television, and it was certainly not found on the cover of Time.

There is something comforting about having a mirror decade,

following the tradition of American exceptionalism that began in the mid-century, pushed us into higher education, sinking us into unimaginable debt, only to graduate into a non-existent workforce. We have made none of the decisions but reap all of the fallout.

There is no wonder that the Beats appeal to us. They spent their entire lives living out their twenties, being in control of themselves. In many ways, what the Millennials need to do is embody the freedom of the Beats. Where the danger lies — Marx's historical farce — is in over-romanticizing them. There is no

There is no doubt that this farce is found in the Hipsters of our time. Trust fund children that slum around Williamsburg as a career are far from the frenetic, hooked-to-the-vein-of-life adventurers of the Beats.

like an older sibling that can tell you what to do and how to be. But, like siblings, the dynamics of the relationship are rarely simple. Our parallel to the Beats (and to the Lost Generation by proxy) is the idea of a lost America — one just below the surface waiting to be rediscovered. Like the Beats, the Millennial adolescence was spent during wartime. The kind of freewheeling nonchalance that the Beats embodied is perhaps our own longing for a freer, more trusting America that 9/11 and the War on Terror put an end to, forcing our sociability off the road and onto the information highway.

A friend recently argued that our generation was robbed of our twenties. While the Beats enjoyed the economic boom of the postwar 1950s, the Great Recession has certainly hampered the Millennial's young adulthood. Our second-generation Baby Boomer parents,

doubt that this farce is found in the Hipsters of our time. Trust fund children who slum around Williamsburg as a career are far from the frenetic, hooked-to-the-vein-of-life adventurers of the Beats. Where our interest in them becomes farcical is that the Beats found America on the road, while we keeping looking for it in the past.

A line from Ginsberg's "America" poem reads: "America I've given you all and now I'm nothing." Ginsberg was of course writing under the backdrop of McCarthyism. We are similarly implicated in the ever-spying eye of the Patriot Act: "If you see something, say something.™" The Beats reveled in the off-beat, but today, one call to Homeland Security would put Kerouac's Ghost of the Susquehanna in some offshore prison that would guarantee to be more wild than anything in the United States.

There is no mistake that as parallel as our circumstances run, some remain quite different. What lost America can be found if it can all be seen on Google Maps? In "Naked Lunch," Burroughs writes: "You see control can never be a means to any practical end. ... It can never be a means to anything but more control." The Beats bucked anyone who tried to control them; they were quite literally out of control. There comes a point when the Millennials need to buck up themselves and leave home; to live the change they want instead of growing mustaches, wearing wingtips, and watching it all play out on the movie screen.

That time is now. When you can no longer look for hope in the Americas of eras past, you need to make your own. Merely romanticizing the Beats does nothing productive for us today. With the failures of the Occupy Movement still near at hand, national governments going bankrupt across Europe, and the Global South still unacceptably impoverished, perhaps the Beats can push us towards a greater freedom for change. Even as self-guided as their adventures were, the Beats held an intense commitment to the principles and development of their own generation — a collectivity the Millennials lack.

If history is bound to repeat itself, then the least that can be done with it is to insure its path is progressive. Perhaps our lost America is not something to be found, but created. After all, as many times as Kerouac took off on the road he always returned home to his mother. His road was as much in Davenport, Iowa, and Lawrence, Kansas, as it was in his mother's home on Long Island. His road was his generation.

What we can take from our parallelism to the Beats is the need to extend beyond ourselves, to connect with each other not only on Facebook but also in meaningful ways. If we are going to break the rules and set out on our own road, we have to do it together.

Why We Zombies

An Exploration of the Brutal Pop Culture Craze



BY MAYA DEVISSY

Let's face it. We live in an age where zombies have shuffled their way back into mainstream media after on-and-off popularity stints over the 20th century. The smash TV show "The Walking Dead" on AMC exemplifies this zombie craze. The pop-culture phenomenon has been so widespread that, according to Nielsen Ratings, it was the first cable series to grab the Number 1 spot in last fall's TV ratings in the key demographic of adults ages 18 to 49.

Confirmed for its fourth season in October, "The Walking Dead" is based on a comic book series that follows the character Rick Grimes (played by Andrew Lincoln), a local sheriff's deputy in Georgia, who wakes up from a coma to find the world overtaken by flesh-eating zombies. Rick, determined to find his family, goes to Atlanta and comes across other survivors along the way. Since the governmental structures of society have fallen, Rick and the group of survivors continuously face dangerous obstacles as they live on the bare necessities in a post-apocalyptic world. The group moves around and searches for a permanent home, especially after the survivor camp they settled at in the first season is overrun by zombies. But it seems like no matter where they go throughout the series — Atlanta's Center for Disease Control, a family owned farm, and a rural prison — the group's efforts to avoid the "walkers" (the show's reference to zombies) are in vain.

A question has come to many minds since the show's premiere in 2010: Why are we so obsessed with "The Walking Dead," and zombies in general?

Even though "The Walking Dead" has a lot of walkers, the series, like many zombie stories, isn't really about zombies. It's a multifaceted drama embedded with layers of survival, humanity, democracy and trust — four ideas Americans struggle with on a daily basis.

According to the Huffington Post's article, "Zombie Fads Peak When People Are Unhappy," Clemson University professor and zombie researcher Sarah Lauro believes our society's obsession with zombies occurs when people are dissatisfied with the economy and culture.

"We are more interested in zombies at times when as a culture we feel disempowered. And the facts are when we are experiencing economic crises, the vast population is feeling disempowered," said Lauro. For example, soon after the first major organized zombie walk was held in Toronto in 2003, zombie walks became extremely popular in the US. Lauro believes this rapid appropriation coincided with disapproval of the war in Iraq. "Either playing dead themselves ... or watching a show like 'Walking Dead' provides a great variety of outlets for people," observed Lauro.

Rick and the rest of his group are constantly striving to maintain a balance between their will to survive against zombies and their humanity. Because all of the survivors have suffered horrific trauma on a massive scale, the "whatever it takes" attitude is used in the literal sense. The increasingly graphic ways in which the survivors kill the undead, from Rick swinging a baseball bat to a walker's head in the pilot episode to the group using knives, screwdrivers, and arrows to kill a zombie hoard in the beginning of season two, are ruthless to say the least. But given the fact that food and safety are scarce, their barbaric choices seem validated. According to My Record Journal's article, "Where Are the Zombies Coming From and Why Are They So Popular?," Quinnipiac University journalism professor and pop culture commentator Rich Hanley explains the appeal of this brutality — "There's no lobby for a zombie. You don't have to worry about 'People for Zombies' protesting." In other words, killing the undead through gruesome ways seems acceptable in our culture because zombies are no longer human, but frightening flesh-eaters.

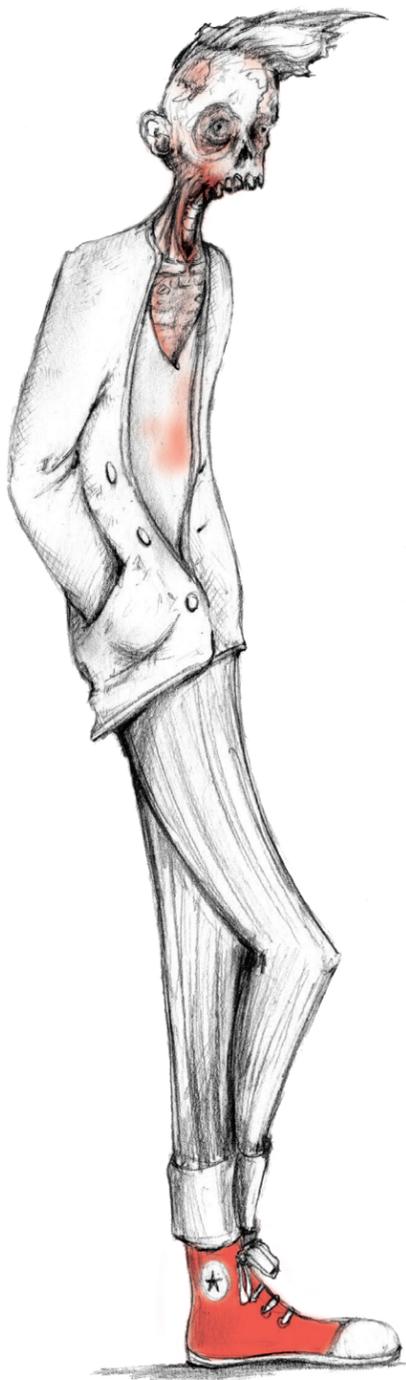
Democracy and trust are also major concerns in "The Walking Dead," as Rick becomes the leader of the survivors. Although Rick takes advice from his peers and has co-leaders, conflict and division arise between him and other members as they decide what is best for the group as a whole. The group faces many dilemmas including who to depend on, how to cope with the loss of their own members, and what to change in their dynamic as people come and go.

The way Rick's group deals with other survivors is a challenge in itself. Strength in numbers sounds like a good thing, right? However, many of the people Rick's group comes across are dangerous and have selfish motives. There's one instance where two men encounter Rick and a few of his group members at an abandoned rural bar and wish to know the location of Rick's group. The situation quickly escalates and turns fatal when it becomes clear that the men want to steal the group's site, weapons, food and other resources. Because each person's good and bad characteristics have been severely heightened by the circumstances, humans are at risk from each other just as much as they are from zombies.

According to the Toledo Free Press

article, "UT Professor's New Book Explores Zombies, Gun Control," instructor Brian Anse Patrick believes the zombie phenomenon represents "a disturbance in the Western collective unconscious." Similarly, Patrick thinks the UFO fascination in the 1950s represented America's fear of nuclear war. Patrick believes zombies can represent all sorts of anxieties which relate to the decline of the West. The fact that our country still has high rates of unemployment, is highly dependent on foreign production to sustain the economy, and owes trillions of dollars to other nations, justifies Patrick's connection between trouble in the West and zombies. As our government fails, immersing ourselves in an apocalyptic, government-free world seems all the more liberating.

Lauro and Patrick's research explains why zombies are trendier at certain times than others. "The Walking Dead" plays on common anxieties and unhappiness on a national level. The ongoing theme of the show seems to be that the hopeless living may have it worse than the walking dead. "The Walking Dead," through an end-of-the-world scenario, distracts our culture and expresses the idea that when things are bad we can always get our minds off the present situation by looking to something worse.



As our government fails, immersing ourselves in an apocalyptic, government-free world seems all the more liberating.

SCHOOL NEWS



Hello?
Is it me you're
looking for?

I Wanna Eat Dat B*tt

SAIC Secret Admirers Page Spreads the Love

BY SIERRA NICOLE RHODEN

Twirl that handlebar moustache, squeeze into your favorite pair of rump-hugging skinnies, strut your stuff around SAIC's campus and prepare to be admired. You're bound to be briefly hoisted into the social media spotlight on SAIC Secret Admirers, the flourishing art-school-meets-missed-connections Facebook page.

SAIC Secret Admirers was begun by an anonymous SAIC student on March 27 with a simple yet visionary wall post: "Messages will be posted soon, you lovesick artists." It now has 1,639 followers from both within and outside the SAIC community. All are encouraged to use an anonymous online form to submit confessions of love, lust and longing to the admin to be posted on the page wall.

Some posts amuse with their hipster subtexts, addressed to "Girl with dicks drawn all over her blue bag," "Boy with the unicorn tattoo," or the "girls in my Wednesday existentialism class."

Others divulge more serious sentiments, like this heartwrenching confession:

"I tried to turn cold. I tried to act as you do. But I can't. I like you, but life means so much more to me than alcohol, sex, and drugs. I can't watch you reach for another girl either."
— Ignorant little girl."

"The page is now transforming into my own little experiment," says the amiable creator and administrator of SAIC Secret Admirers (called Admin) in an anonymous email interview with F Newsmagazine.

Admin had seen a few secret admirer pages that were specific to certain universities and was curious how such submissions would differ in an art school setting. "There are a lot more posts between same sex couples," observes Admin, "and the submissions are so creative and funky. ... I have also been really surprised with how many people submit posts stating that they are in relationships, yet they secretly admire another person."

When SAIC Secret Admirers was first created, every confession was

posted. "As time went on, explains Admin, "I decided to only post submissions that did not include a specific first and last name to protect the identity of others. There were also submissions targeting others in hurtful ways, so I posted on the info page that hate would not be tolerated." When the stream of submissions grew to a flood, Admin adopted a tighter filter, selecting more detailed and creative posts over vague admirations that could apply to anyone.

Assisting SAIC Secret Admirers' lovesick participants requires constant attention and nurturing. "The only time I am not trying to update is when I'm really busy in class, work or sleeping," says Admin. "Thanks to my lovely iPhone, I can do it when I'm out in public too. ... Knowing that this page is helping others or even just entertaining others motivates me to keep up with it."

Admin expresses amusement about overheard complaints, often from former Secret Admirers addicts who are "over the stupid page" — "Honestly, if they are able to see that this page is constantly being updated, they are online clicking around as much as I am!" Still, haters gonna hate, and on April 1 another unnamed Facebook user created the anonymous vent forum SAIC Dirty Deeds Confessions. But so far, Dirty Deeds has only 150 likes, proving SAIC's preference for romance over rants.

Nina Palomba, a senior BFA student with an emphasis in illustration and cartooning, has found herself on the receiving end of SAIC secret admirations four times. Palomba is already in a serious relationship — "I'm in love with who I'm with," she says — so she hasn't taken steps to solve the mystery of her distant devotees. Confronted with everything from light-hearted pizza offers to "heavy shit" like propositions for a very first lesbian experience, Palomba has responded the best way she knows how: by posting comic strips addressing her admirers.*

Berke Yazicioglu, a Visual Communications Design BFA sopho-

more, has also been the object of affection multiple times on the page. A Neiman Center assistant, he nonchalantly attributes these admirations to his constant presence at the center's help desk.

Yazicioglu's theory is solid. Palomba also spends much of her time in the Neiman Center for her job in student government, and lately she has even observed a surge in student wanderers. "After the page blew up, I noticed more people in the Neiman Center than I'd ever seen before," says Palomba. "I think kids are trying to get noticed. It's really weird."

Can anonymous online admiration really lead to real-life romance? Yazicioglu, for one, isn't interested in pursuing someone who can only spout sonnets from afar. "It seems like they wouldn't be my type of people, [because of] the insecurity they seem to have," he says of his online admirers. "I'm more attracted to confidence. ... I don't know anyone who's had a successful hookup on it."

A few anonymous success stories, however, have been posted on the page. "[It] melts my heart," says Admin. "I love that people are actually finding each other, and love (or lust and sexy times) are blossoming from this page." BFA freshman Rebecca Blau cites a close friend whose SAIC Secret Admirers encounter sparked romance. Upon hearing through the grapevine who had posted an admiration, "She texted him," divulges Blau, "and they hang out now."

Some students may find the page's tongue-in-cheek content makes it difficult to distinguish true yearning from mischief. Many posts are a bit of both. "The ones that are more sentimental I take seriously, but the ones that are like, 'I'm gonna eat your butt,' I don't really think that they're serious," says Blau.

Blau is, of course, referring to the phrase "eat dat butt," a beloved meme among the SAIC Secret Admirers community appearing in increasingly creative forms, including haiku, since first surfacing in this gem of a post:

Hey girl,
You know I eat dat butt,
sincurlly,
yers n shit

The true definition of "eat dat butt" is to be determined. "Dude, I don't even know! I just wanna, like, get up on that? I'm gonna devour it?," speculates Blau. "Rim jobs!" says Yazicioglu, sitting nearby. Blau promptly disagrees: "I don't think there's that many people in the school who'd wanna do a rim job."

Palomba suggests a darker reading — "It was really weird because I watched this VICE documentary on a guy who was a cannibal, and he was talking about legitimately eating that butt. So my initial interpretation was like, 'That's kinda fucked up!'"

"I guess all us SAIC kids just have a major infatuation with butts," sums up Admin.

Yet among the butt fixations and lusty proclamations float BFF praises, good-natured snark and heartfelt graduation goodbyes. The online lovefest, besides blindly shooting Cupid's arrows, has, perhaps most importantly, shifted perceptions among SAIC students about each other. "Thank you so much for creating this page," reads one post to the admin. "It has allowed me to see that not everyone at this school is a pretentious asshole, and that most of the people who don't come up to talk to me (even after we've met) are not doing it because they are bitter or rude, but a lot of SAIC students are apparently shy!"

At its core SAIC Secret Admirers fulfills a simple but welcome purpose — to embrace even the most introverted students in a big, warm group hug. "I'm admiring the whole school now after reading all of these awesome submissions," says Admin. "Ya'll are so cute."

*Check out one of Nina Palomba's SAIC Secret Admirers comics on page 31!

COMMENTARY

Risk Assessment

When Art and Institutions Collide

BY MICHELLE WEIDMAN

Under what circumstances is it appropriate for SAIC to ask a student to change work exhibited on campus? Art that causes controversy is not new to SAIC. By now we all know the story of the Harold Washington painting by former SAIC student David Nelson and “What is the Proper Way to Display the U.S. Flag?” by Dread Scott Tyler. The school stood behind Tyler and suffered significant financial cuts in both government and private funding because of it. In both cases the work outraged communities outside SAIC. So, understandably, there is always concern around work that may be offensive or illegal.

For what other reasons might the school request alterations? Now consider the case of Caroline Wayne, a BFA candidate in the Fiber and Material Studies, whose work was altered during the course of the 2013 BFA exhibition, to protect, according to the school, her safety.

Wayne’s specialties are soft sculpture and hat-making, which sound innocuous enough. However, Wayne’s work doesn’t stop at object creation; she is also interested in issues of intimacy and social interaction and how relationships are altered by technological innovation.

Her contribution to the BFA exhibition, titled, “Was it Something I Said?” included a headpiece at the base of which was a phone number stitched in red thread underneath the provocation “text me.” When an audience member followed the instructions and texted the number, Wayne would respond by aggressively attempting to initiate a sexting conversation. She would also include a provocative image of herself with her face covered.

Wayne took steps to ensure that her identity and personal contact information were obscured, including purchasing a burn phone and paying for one month of a pre-paid phone plan that she would use only for the duration of this project. She set guidelines for herself, including having no in-person contact with audience members and terminating all communication at the end of the exhibition.

After the BFA exhibition opening, according to the school, an audience member complained after

texting the number and receiving Wayne’s response. In reaction to the complaint, the school posted an audience warning next to the piece and spoke with Wayne during a meeting she had arranged with the Career and Co-op Center. During that meeting, Wayne; Kate Schutta, Assistant Dean of Student Affairs and Co-director of the Career + Co-op Center; and Amy Dane Falkowski, Associate Dean of Budget and Administration discussed their concerns for Caroline’s personal safety. They asked Wayne to file a form with the school for approval of the work.

F Newsmagazine met with Amy Dane Falkowski, who is involved in a new initiative at SAIC called Art School Considerations, as well as the Threat Assessment Group (TAG), which is why she was elected to meet with Wayne initially. She pointed out that Wayne’s identity was readily available online with an easy Internet search, which Falkowski considered the most serious concern.

Art School Considerations (ASC) is a structure devised by the school, seemingly to avoid messy situations such as the Nelson and Tyler controversies mentioned above, but also to help students understand the potentially negative personal or ethical impact of their work. A poster that can be found around campus for the group features the motto, “It’s Not ‘No,’ ‘It’s How.” Their list of items and situations that need prior approval includes foods, liquids and controlled substances; chemicals and hazardous materials; biomatter, bloodborne pathogens and organic materials; performances; weapons, structures and kinetics; electric and sound levels; alternative spaces; fire and safety; community and courtesy; anything you are unsure about. A formidable list.

Still, Falkowski insisted that ASC is meant to help students, not hinder them. She offered examples of situations in which ASC aided students in the completion of their projects in a way that ensured their safety, as when a student wanted to climb the walls during an exhibition and the group helped determine the safest way for the student to accomplish that goal. Other than Wayne’s case, which was brought to ASC after the fact, Falkowski could only think of one situation in which a student’s proposal was denied, and that was because the student

submitted it the day before the exhibition, not leaving adequate time to assure its safe execution.

Wayne did not know about Art School Considerations before exhibiting “Was it Something I Said?” Falkowski said that if she had asked one of the Student Project Coordinators about the piece, they would have been able to find a way to make the project happen in a way that was acceptable for Wayne and the school.

However, because it was too late to ensure complete anonymity for Wayne, ultimately her situation was brought to TAG and she was asked to remove the texting portion of her piece. “If we had had a conversation early on, we would have been able to make sure that she was covering all of her bases,” Falkowski said.

Additionally, the school asked for the SIM card of the prepaid phone that Wayne had been using to converse with participants. Although she agreed with all of the requests, Wayne still feels uncomfortable about the incident, and says she only handed over the phone in order to avoid a controversy so close to her graduation. “I did voice that I was uncomfortable with giving over my SIM card and letting them read through my conversations, to which they responded that they have the same right as they do to go through faculty’s e-mails,” Wayne explained.

“There was an implied risk that I thought was important to demonstrate,” Wayne insists. “While the school has its concerns, I am over the age of 18 and feel that I should have had my opportunity to speak about the reality of virtual self-exploitation.”

When asked what steps would have been taken if Wayne hadn’t agreed to alter her work, Falkowski explained that since it was primarily a student safety concern, Wayne’s emergency contacts would have been notified. “That would mean calling my parents, and as a 28-year-old that makes me a little uncomfortable. ... I would certainly feel diminished and not trusted as an artist and an adult,” Wayne said.

While it is too late for Wayne’s piece to be exhibited in full, this case highlights important tensions between acceptable risk at an educational institution. Art School Considerations seems to be trying to function in a gray area between unrestricted creation, vital for some art practices, and un-

acceptable hazards for an institution. This can become problematic in situations like Wayne’s when the hazard, to some degree, is the point. Additionally, repression of female sexuality and autonomy have long been restricted in the U.S. on the pretext of concern for a woman’s safety. The history of institutional and self-censorship in the arts, especially after the Culture Wars of the 1980s, makes it imperative that the reasons for altering work are thoroughly analyzed. Although censorship was not the school’s intention, careful analysis of the kinds of suggested changes and the real reasons behind those suggestions needs to be discussed.

“I think it is important to think about why you are making the point you are when you make a work of art that may be controversial or polarizing,” Wayne said in partial support of the proposal process through Art School Consideration. “However, if we have earnest theory and plans for a piece, I believe it is the responsibility of an art school to let us be in control of our work and take the risks we should be taking as art students.”

Undergraduate Lauren Wessel also often uses her own body in her performance, painting and photographic work. Wessel told F Newsmagazine that she sees both good and bad potential in the ASC process. “I wish something like that had been around when I was a freshman. I think it’s a good alternative to flat out telling people ‘No!’ to their project ideas.” Yet, she added, “If the procedure is meant to identify and dissuade students who might want to make transgressive work, I think it is hampering the art-making process. I know in the past I have been told I couldn’t make work that was in any way harmful to my own body. I think there should be a discussion with students who want to make work that is a ‘no-no’ about how and where that work can be made and displayed.”

F Newsmagazine wants your stories. Have you gone through the Art School Considerations process? Did you find it beneficial for your work? Visit FNewsmagazine.com to comment on this article and let us know what you think about art and controversy at SAIC.

COMMENTARY



“However, if we have earnest theory and plans for a piece, I believe it is the responsibility of an art school to let us be in control of our work and take the risks we should be taking as art students.”





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MANY THANKS

As the Fashion Resource Center (F R C) looks back on its 25th year, we would like to thank those in the SAIC community for helping to enrich our mission of education and inspiration through fashion design. The wonderful success of the FRC's events would not have been possible without the enthusiasm and contribution of the Fashion Design; Fiber and Material Studies; Architecture, Interior Architecture, and Designed Objects; and Art and Technology Studies departments and the FRC student fan club. Their support has highlighted an incredible year marked by the Material Innovations symposium + Making workshops, along with the visit of design duo Isabel and Ruben Toledo, and the Material Translations exhibition, which marked the first collaboration of its kind between the F R C and the Art Institute of Chicago. We invite you to follow us into next year as the F R C anticipates its ongoing series of innovative workshops, symposiums, and lectures. Donations and enlightening, collaborative opportunities are always appreciated by the F R C. Thank you, again, and we look forward to your continued support of fashion in Chicago!

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A Heritage Destroyed

The Devastation of Historical Sites in Syria is Met with Inaction

BY LERIFAI

Mark Twain wrote about the city of Damascus, Syria, in his 1869 book "Innocents Abroad." "Damascus has seen all that has ever occurred on earth, and still she lives. She has looked upon the dry bones of a thousand empires, and will see the tombs of a thousand more before she dies," Twain predicted. "Though another claims the name, old Damascus is by right, the eternal City."

Syria is where it is believed the first alphabet was invented and the rise of the world's earliest civilizations occurred. Christianity and Islam both flourished there, leaving behind some of the earliest and most important religious sites in the region. It's one of the only countries where Aramaic, the Semitic language of Jesus Christ, is still spoken to this very day.

Today, headlines worldwide carry messages pertaining to the death and destruction in Syria, especially in cities like Damascus and Aleppo. After four decades of totalitarian regimes, the country rose up against oppression and tyranny. The Syrian civil war is now in its third year. Brutal government crackdowns and unprecedented violence have made Syria one of the most dangerous spots in the world. Violence in the country continues to escalate,

bringing the death toll to 70,000, and facts on the ground tell us there is a lot more to mourn than a body count.

In May 2012, Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO, issued a public appeal for the protection of Syria's cultural heritage, expressing "grave concern about possible damage to precious sites." Only 10 months later, however, Aleppo's ancient marketplace known as the "old souk" — a UNESCO world heritage site that survived the rules of the Greeks, Romans and Ottomans — did not survive attacks by the modern weaponry of the Syrian regime. After the stone walls had been pockmarked with bullet holes, and snipers surrounded the old quarter from every corner, a fire following clashes between the regime's army and the armed opposition lit the souk up in flames, burning a large portion of its shops and historical assets.

Bokova further expressed her concern following the fire, calling Aleppo "a crossroads of cultures since the second millennium B.C." and warning of possible destruction threatening other important sites. Joanne Farchak, a Lebanese archaeologist who also investigated the destruction of Iraq's historical treasures after 2003, was quoted by The Independent's Middle East correspondent Robert Fisk saying the

situation of Syria's heritage today is "catastrophic." While other archaeologists and groups such as the World Monuments Fund have been monitoring the losses, government forces, thugs, looters, and terrorists have been playing a more significant part in lengthening the heritage casualty list. These parties, however, have yet to be identified as it becomes increasingly difficult for international agencies to enter the country. In the meantime, government officials claim the opposition army forces are responsible, while opposition members blame government forces and regime thugs.

Recent reports have shown that the holiest Jewish site in Syria — the 2,000-year-old Jobar Synagogue — has been looted, burnt and destroyed. The holy site built atop a cave is believed to be where the prophet Elijah hid from persecution; it is located in a Damascus suburb that has been under indiscriminate government shelling for the past two months. Mohammed al Shami, an opposition activist who lives in the area, said in a Skype interview with NBC News that the shelling has not spared any building. "Luckily, many artifacts from the synagogue were removed by a local council in Jobar and are now being stored for safety," al Shami added.

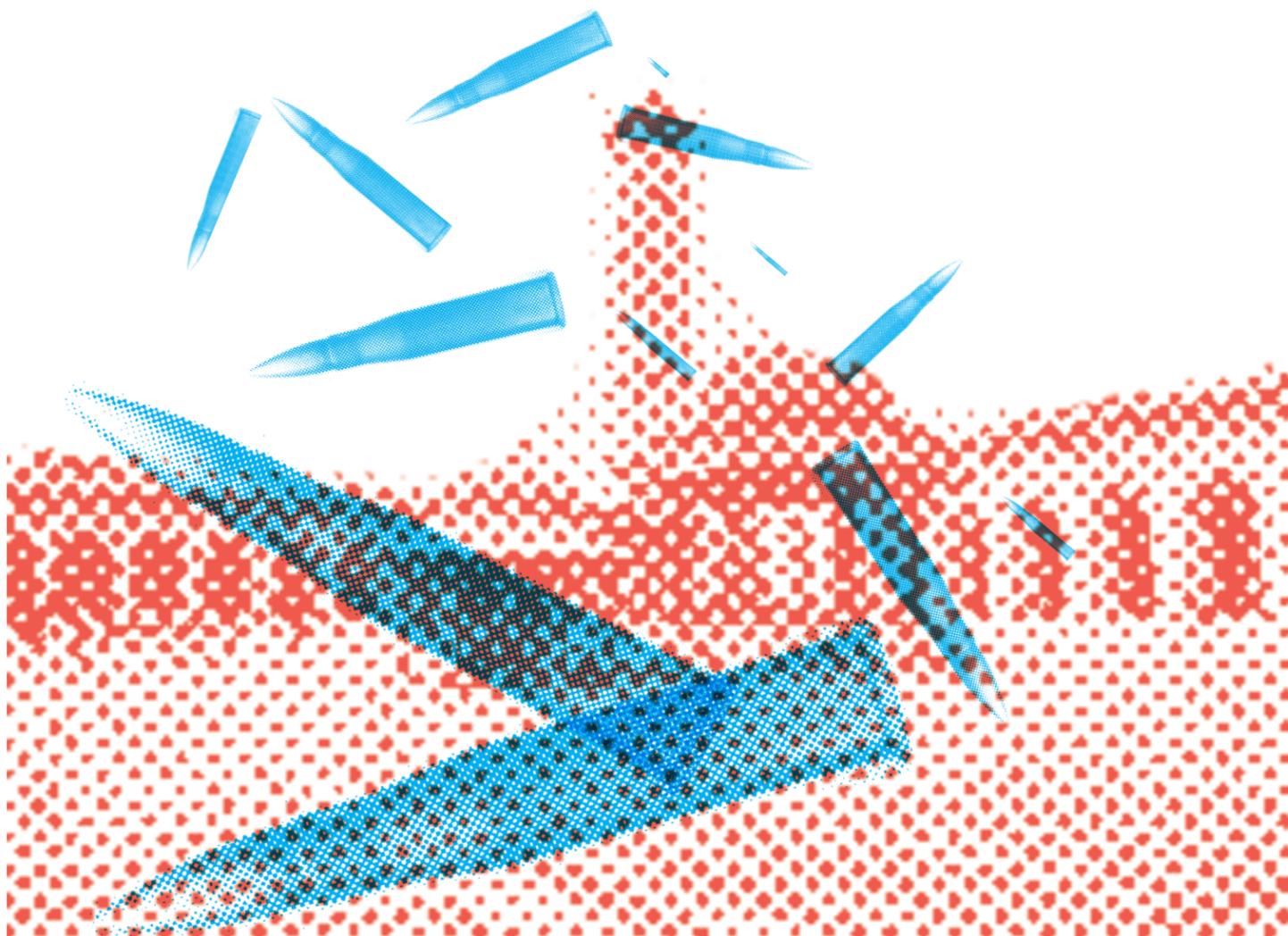
Much as in Afghanistan and Iraq,

it has been reported that nearly \$2 billion worth of artifacts have already left Syria. The list of damaged heritage sites and missing antiquities is approximately four pages long. A writer for a Syrian opposition newspaper mentioned that a rare gold statue of an Aramaic God was stolen from the city of Hama, and various YouTube videos show ancient ruins torn down and destroyed in several parts of the country.

The Syrian regime has been wiping out entire neighborhoods, destroying towns and displacing millions of civilians through violent warfare. And while heavy Russian army tanks still surround citadels, snipers hide behind ancient limestone city walls, and shells continue to rain on the alluring courtyards of Umayyad and Ottoman mosques, the rallying cries of unknown heritage organizations remain unheard. Whether that is due to a lack of funding or publicity, sites that have provided generations with knowledge and richness are in a perilous state. As renowned British historian Dan Snow said recently on BBC World, "The treasures now being destroyed matter to everyone on the planet." But the underwhelming inaction in response has been proving otherwise.

This list below shows only a few of the world's archeological sites in Syria that have been seriously damaged by the ongoing fighting, bombing and shelling:

- 1. Great Mosque of Aleppo:** The UNESCO World Heritage site is the largest mosque in the city of Aleppo and one of the oldest. It is said to be a former Roman temple and then a Byzantine church.
- 2. Krak des Chevaliers:** A crusader castle, built by the knights of St. John in the mid-12th century on the site that had previously been inhabited by a settlement of Kurds. It lies on a hilltop between Homs and the coastal city of Tartus.
- 3. Al Omari Mosque:** One of the earliest mosques in Islam, located in the city of Daraa in the south of Syria. The symbolic minaret built by the Caliph Omar was shelled and completely destroyed in April by the regime army forces.
- 4. The old palace of Junblat:** One of the largest palaces in the northern city of Aleppo; it dates back to around 1604, originally built for a prominent Kurdish leader in Aleppo during the Ottoman rule in Syria.
- 5. Temple of Bel:** Located in the ancient city of Palmyra in central Syria consecrated to the ancient Semitic god, Bel. Palmyra was a stronghold of Queen Zenobia in the third century.



COMMENTARY

A Villain Above, a Hero Below

The Legacy of Hugo Chávez as Told by Western Media

BY DIANA BUENDÍA

In 2009, filmmaker Oliver Stone released a documentary titled “South of the Border.” In the 78-minute long film, Stone set out to debunk the U.S. media image of then-president of Venezuela Hugo Chávez perpetuated by U.S. media — that of a mindless dictator, a 21st century Fidel Castro. Stone had it easy; it’s not difficult to find laughable footage from Fox News or CNN pundits. He then embarked on a trip around Latin America, to hang out with Chávez and the rest of the leftist heads of state of the region to clarify, through first-hand conversations with each one of them, just what is going on south of the border.

The film attempts to bring to the forefront that the shift to the left in countries like Venezuela, Ecuador, Bolivia, Argentina and Brazil is in reaction to years of destructive U.S. meddling in Latin American affairs — through the International Monetary Fund, forceful removal of leftist leaders in CIA-backed plots, etc. — and former Latin American leaders who would easily comply with White House orders. It’s the brown and the poor people in an armed but peaceful revolution, Chávez says to Stone, against white oligarchies.

Stone wasn’t trying to be neutral. Throughout the documentary he is as much of a protagonist as Chávez and the rest of the leaders. He sits next to them and always appears on camera, nodding his head in agreement with their leadership and congratulating them on their success. Throughout the documentary Stone features outside interviewees who can speak in favor of what is referred to as the Bolivarian Revolution. Nevertheless, Stone himself acknowledged to reporters covering the release of the film that the production was not “dealing with a big picture, and we don’t stop to go into a lot of the criticism and details of each country.” He said, “It’s a 101 introduction to a situation in South America that most Americans and Europeans don’t know about.”

Today, Stone can look at the more liberal media for forgiving assessments of Chávez. Outlets like Al Jazeera and Democracy Now were quick to offer more levelheaded opinions after the death of the Venezuelan leader in early March. Both outlets attempted to break down the reasons why Chávez was such a beloved political figure in the first place. The millions of mourners who took to the streets of Venezuela should have made it clear to outside viewers that Chávez was much more than just a charismatic president bribing his way into the hearts of his people.

Mark Weisbrot, columnist and co-director of the Center for Economic and Policy

Research, has been leading the charge recently with hard economic facts that support how the situation in Venezuela has improved considerably, especially for those living in extreme poverty. Al Jazeera and Democracy Now have summoned Weisbrot when in need of a clarification of just how positive Chávez was for the country. There has been a 50% reduction in poverty and a 70% reduction in extreme poverty, Weisbrot cites in his appearances on both outlets. Plus, living standards have increased for most residents of the country, especially thanks to the availability of universal health care. Chávez is never recognized for these successes in the U.S. media, in order to portray “a one-sided, negative picture of the country, and of course of Chavez himself,” Weisbrot recently wrote.

Weisbrot has had recent on-screen confrontations with Rory Carroll, The Guardian’s former Latin American correspondent who was based in Venezuela for six years and recently published a book on Chávez titled “Comandante.” What Carroll offers is mostly on-the-ground evidence from his time living there — the hospitals available to access this universal health care touted by Weisbrot are not in good shape, and the “misiones” (missions) set up to help aren’t that efficient either; the nonexistent separation between party and government leaders and the easy access to TV and radio waves gave Chavista leader Nicolás Maduro an unfair advantage in the recent election; and Caracas is now considered one of the most dangerous cities in the world. Carroll and Weisbrot have been pitted against each other on both Democracy Now and Al Jazeera. When Carroll was invited to comment on NPR about the recent election results, Weisbrot was quick to come to the defense of Chávez with a piece on Al Jazeera titled “Haters Gonna Hate,” and cited the hard numbers and statistics he now probably knows by heart.

It’s fair that outlets like Democracy Now and Al Jazeera choose people like Weisbrot to comment on Chávez — facts are good. But what is the value of more levelheaded media outlets, if they fall into the same trap: calling upon a talking head to come to the defense of one man and his politics. And what is it important to focus on, really — the people living in the country or the reputation of a leader? If we can learn one thing from history, it’s that no one man (or woman, in the case of Argentina) has the key to all of a country’s problems, and we should be wary of all of them.

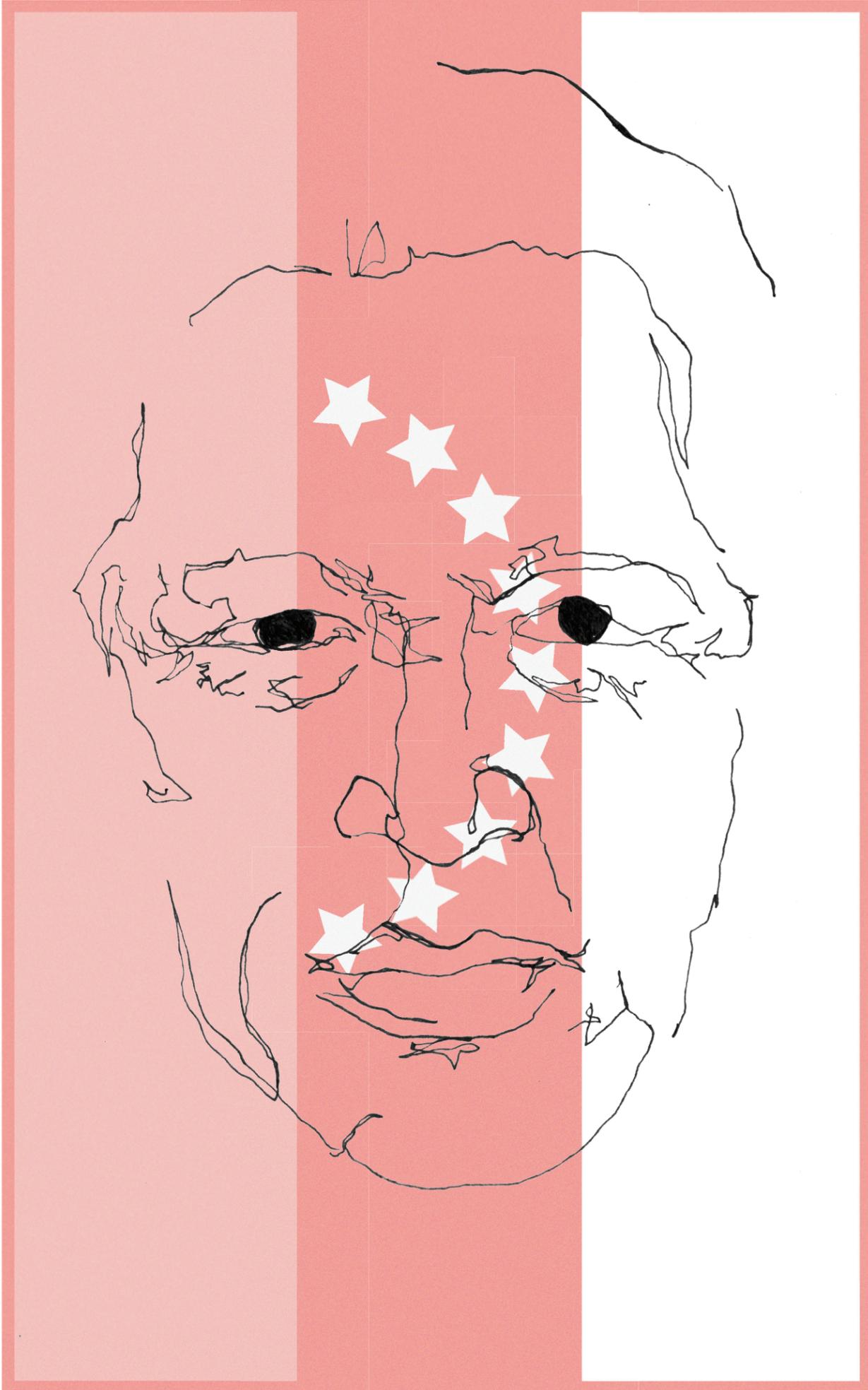
Instead of looking to the president, why not cast a wider net and look closer at the situation on the ground? Venezuela’s leadership would be rightly served with more information about thriving social movements like feminists, gay and lesbian

rights organizations, economic justice activists, and environmental coalitions that were given a voice by the Chávez administration, a rare occurrence in Latin American countries still very much plagued by misogyny and homophobia. Can we put a face to this oft-cited mass of Venezuelans who have benefitted from universal health care and literacy programs? What about the leaders of the neighborhood councils that make sure that the Venezuelans living in dire poverty get more access to the services they deserve? It is telling that the opposition leader Henrique Capriles has promised to maintain many of Chávez’s social programs. Yet the reasons for their success are shrouded in talking heads babble, disputing whether or not the polarizing leader did well.

The consequences of setting up a government so dependent on the image and reputation of one leader are clear now that Chávez is dead. Maduro ran a campaign that capitalized on his close relationship with the late leader, going so far as to say that Chávez had appeared to him in the form of a bird. And now the close outcome of the election and the inability of leaders on both sides to tone down their rhetoric and put a halt to their acts of defiance has left people no choice but to fight it out on the streets, in the name of each candidate. The people are desperate for solutions to serious problems of crime, shortages, violence and corruption.

In many ways, Chávez, and the presidents from the region that followed his lead, embodies the fantasies of a bred-in-the-bone leftist: he’s a socialist leader from an oil-rich South American country constantly giving the middle finger to the U.S. But in attempting to inform, commentators in global media — left, right and center — should look beyond the polarizing personality of a leader and focus more on what the policies enacted mean for the people. The late Argentine president Nestor Kirchner said it best to Oliver Stone. “In a multilateral world, you can’t have just one power decide for everyone. It’s bad for power itself,” Kirchner commented. “This is something I always tell Hugo — I’m very close with Chávez, he’s a friend — but I tell him: you need to build collectively, you need to have 10 presidential candidates. It can’t just be you. Otherwise, if you get sick and you die, the whole process will be over. To believe that one person can give the guarantee is like believing that only one country can resolve all the world’s problems.”

COMMENTARY



If we can learn one thing from history, it's that no one man (or woman, in the case of Argentina) has the key to all of a country's problems, and we should be wary of all of them.

Consider the Tomato

Farming Chicago's
Urban Landscape

BY KRISTOFER LENZ

ELEGY FOR THE UGLY TOMATO

One can find tomatoes at Chicago's chain grocery stores year-round. These tomatoes are uniformly round, bright red and flavorless. For many, this is simply the status-quo, they've never known a tomato to look or taste otherwise. Yet older consumers or those who frequent Farmers Markets know that tomatoes come in a wide variety of colors, sizes and shapes and typically have a rich bounty of flavors, from sweet to salty depending on the varietal. Why then do the bland, mealy uniform tomatoes dominate Chicago shelves? The answer is a familiar refrain in this world: follow the money. Grocery store tomatoes have been bred for pest-resistance, shipping durability and shelf-life. Conspicuously absent on that list are flavor and nutritional value. As is always the case in these circumstances, the blame isn't only on the producers of sub-par tomatoes, for they are reacting to market demands. These poor-quality tomatoes are consistently sold to an audience that hungrily consumes them and demands their appearance in winter months when they are out of season.

The example of tomatoes is a microcosm of the circumstances that lead to poor quality and availability of produce in major urban areas. The food market in a city like Chicago is vigorously entangled in the food supply web of factory-farms, international retailers and government subsidy that keeps lackluster produce available 365 days a year. But even this sub-par service is only available to those in neighborhoods where profit is to be had. Chicago has become rightfully notorious for the existence of "food deserts," areas with neighborhoods with no or distant grocery stores. "Examining the Impact of Food Deserts on Public Health in Chicago," a 2006 report commissioned by LaSalle Bank, found that "living in a food desert can mean greater rates of obesity, premature death, and lower quality of life, especially for mothers and children." Eating good food is a matter of life and death, and many populations in Chicago are losing that fight.

This status quo is increasingly unacceptable to a growing number of farmers, community organizers, consumers and city planners. Across the city Farmers Markets, organic food co-ops and community gardens are sprouting up. Yet, more significantly, groups of forward-thinking visionaries are planning and executing industrial and community-scale projects that aim to fundamentally alter the understanding of, and access to, food in Chicago.

OASES OF GREEN

Instead of Chicago as an unbroken stretch of pavement, concrete and monolithic structures, imagine instead a blend of the natural and manmade. As an urban environment criss-crossed by swaths of green, open space. Places where citizens can stretch their legs, engage with nature and, perhaps, cultivate their own food. This is the utopian vision of Chicago Rareties Orchard Project (CROP). This non-profit organization has taken major steps toward developing an orchard in Chicago. It will be nestled in a busy, quickly developing corner of Logan Square (at the southeast corner of Milwaukee Ave and Kedzie Boulevard). This 1/4 acre strip will one day be home to 40-50 apple- and other fruit-bearing trees. Their mission is focused on preserving some increasingly rare apple tree varieties that are at the risk of going extinct, plus reintroducing native species like the Paw Paw tree, which once fed native communities. Vanessa Smith, board member and active volunteer for CROP, emphasizes the role of community in this project. "We will be recruiting a huge volunteer army to help with maintenance, but also because if this orchard is in your neighborhood we want you to feel like you have ownership of it."

CROP is currently mired in the long and sometimes torturous process of developing land in Chicago. But, Smith says that local government has been incredibly helpful and supportive of the project. With help from NeighborSpace, a non-profit land trust dedicated to community gardens, CROP was able to purchase the plot of land from the city for a symbolic \$1. Via donations and other grants they have enough funding to tear up the asphalt and build what will be the multi-use park and orchard. CROP hopes to be planting the orchard by Spring 2014.

The ultimate function of CROP is one of education and reappropriation of urban spaces. It has no intention of being an economically viable model, dependent as it is on the "gift" of the land and volunteers, and focused instead on education. There is a lingering sense that urban farming is a "hobby" of affluent and middle-class white people — one can purchase a \$1,500 chicken coop from Williams and Sonoma's agrarian line of urban farming products. While the importance of CROP and small-scale community gardens cannot be understated, it will take more fundamental and large-scale projects to alter Chicago's eating habits.

*Chicago is on the cusp
of becoming one of the
first major urban areas to
successfully reclaim previously
unusable post-industrial
landscapes and rezone into an
agricultural hub*

SOWING THE SEEDS

Brian Campbell, a crop scientist based in Colorado, puts the economics of urban farming succinctly:

Food systems, like everything else, are dictated by supply and demand. The ability to purchase supplies in bulk, invest in infrastructure, control delivery systems, perform extensive marketing, etc., allows large companies to outcompete small businesses. In the same way that a mom and pop drugstore can't offer lower prices than Wal-mart, CSA (community supported agriculture) and family farms will not be able to offer lower food prices than Monsanto. ... Affluent citizens in large cities have many options of healthy and exotic foods, while the poorest citizens have almost no options, which is the root of the problem. It does not make financial sense to open grocery stores or even farmer's markets in areas where nobody can afford the merchandise.

The aforementioned report on food deserts also found that these swaths of land where residents simply cannot find healthy food if they want it are almost universally low-income, largely African-American neighborhoods. In the last decade a number of groups have organized to help combat the food distribution disparity connected to poverty. Following the lead of Growing Home, a non-profit that has built operating urban farms in the Englewood and Back-of-the-Yards neighborhoods, the city of Chicago has developed the Green Healthy Neighborhoods initiative. The plan proposes to redevelop 13 square miles of the South Side into urban farmland. The benefits would be myriad and extend beyond improved nutrition for nearby residents. They will also create agricultural jobs and attract eco-friendly housing, industry and other businesses. The hope is to engender a South Side renaissance based on economically sustainable agricultural practices in a neighborhood that, according to census data, has lost a quarter of its population in the last decade.

Eating well is about more than access to food, it is also connected to daily habits. That's why the targets of educational efforts in food deserts are not adults who purchase the food, but their children who influence that decision. One of the largest steps toward the goal of changing eating behavior from the young up came last winter when the Emanuel administration granted \$1 million dollars to The Kitchen Community. This non-profit builds learning gardens in underprivileged elementary schools across the country. Flush with city funds (leftover from NATO grants), The Kitchen Community is building gardens in 80 South Side elementary schools. Darin Delay is project manager for Kitchen Community and he walked me through the goals of the project. Kitchen Community builds learning gardens, that are "Social environments where kids can decompress, but the bigger focus is on connecting kids to real food." Kitchen Community chooses schools based on an algorithm that includes the percentage of kids who receive free and reduced fee lunches (an indicator of a low-income student body). The installation of the gardens becomes a community bonding event. The children and their parents help construct the beds, create a "bucket-brigade" to fill the beds with soil and participate in the planting of seeds and bulbs. The hope is that this will result in families who see the learning gardens as connected to their communities and the lessons learned are taken home and shared.

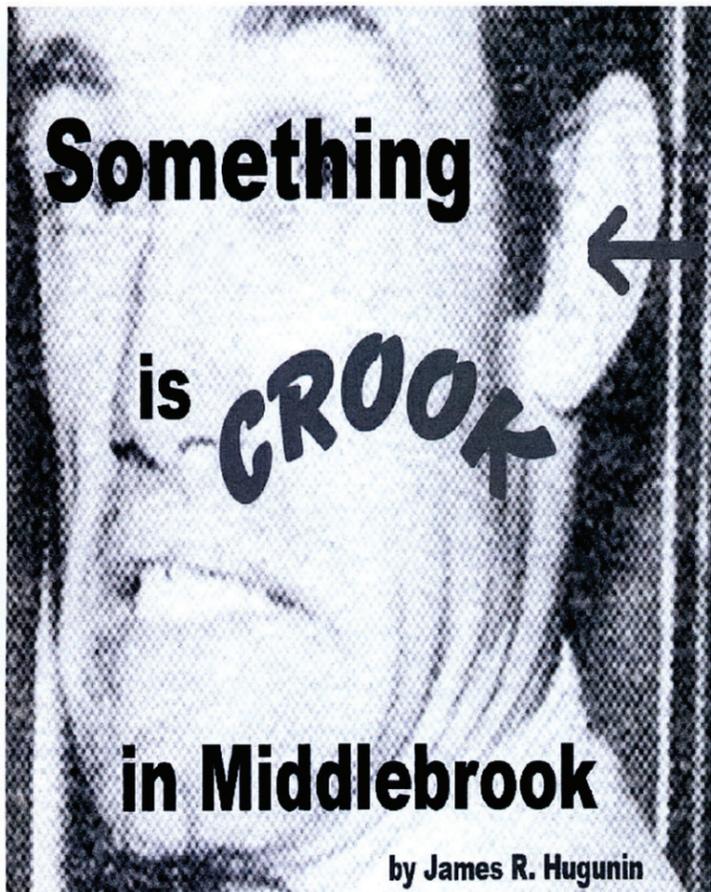
FARMS WHERE FACTORIES GREW

The final step in changing food distribution systems and eating habits of Chicagoans is to make some money. A majority of the urban farming and education initiatives citywide are funded and operated by generous donations and volunteer work. These initiatives can and will continue to have a great impact on the city, but their scope is limited until they aren't only ecologically sustainable, but also economically. A solution to the problem may already be in the works. The Plant is an 83,000 sq.ft. former industrial food processing plant in Back-of-the-Yards, a once booming but now largely low-income neighborhood. Abandoned for years, The Plant was bought for a song and is now being converted into Chicago's, and perhaps the world's, first "net-zero energy vertical farm and food business operation." At the root of their system is aquaponic farming, where schools of tilapia are grown in vats and waste from the fish fertilizes plant beds. The produce is then sold to local restaurants, co-ops and Farmers Markets. When construction is complete The Plant will be producing its own energy via an anaerobic digester, which creates power by breaking down bio-material. It will also host a series of mutually interdependent businesses, including a cafe, brewery, and mushroom farms who will share waste and organic by-products. The operators of The Plant are also dedicated to education and outreach within their community and host a regular series of classes and workshops connected to sustainable agriculture. Perhaps most importantly, their systems and processes are transparent to the public. The Plant wants to be more than an operating business center, but also a replicable model for other urban vertical farming systems. Currently, The Plant's grounds and buildings are still rough and bear the traces of its post-industrial past. The plans (and funding) are in place and they are moving toward their goal of net-zero energy, closed-loop food production by leaps and bounds.

The Plant, CROP, and Growing Home are just a small sample of the city-wide urban farming initiatives taking root in Chicago. These groups are powered by good intentions, smart planning and support from city government; a powerful combination under any circumstances. If they continue with the momentum they already have, Chicago is on the cusp of becoming one of the first major urban areas to successfully reclaim previously unusable post-industrial landscapes and rezone into an agricultural hub. The benefits would be tremendous, including a boost in employment opportunities, better nutrition for at-risk populations, decreased environmental impact from shipping in food from out of state, increased open space for residents, and finally, some delicious and nutritious locally-grown tomatoes everyone can enjoy.



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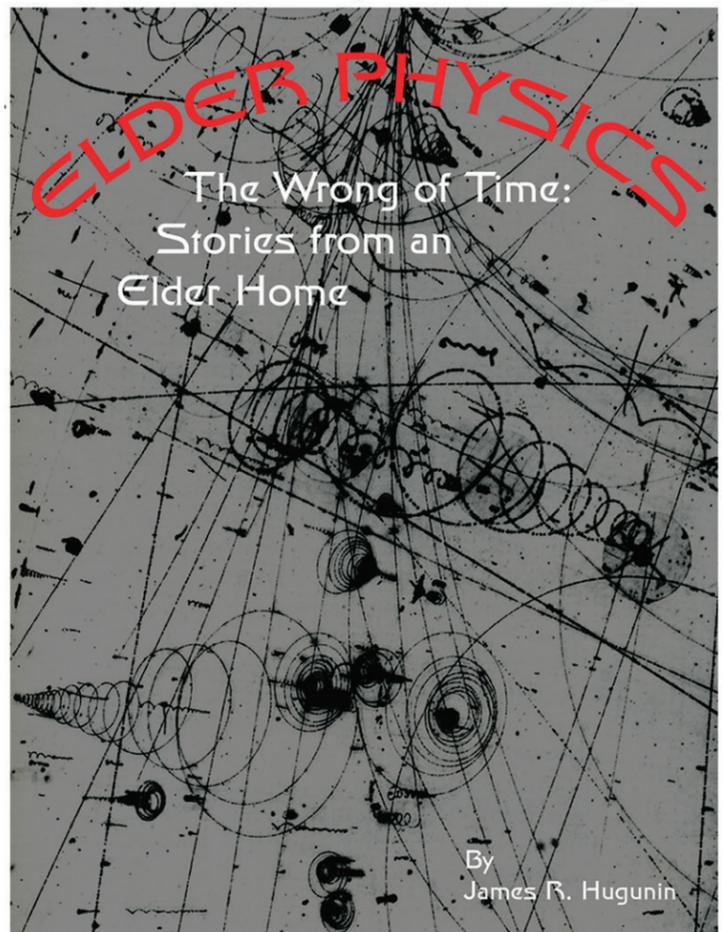
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REVIEW

Invasive Roots

Reflections on the Appearance of Potted Plants in Contemporary Photography

BY HENRY HARRIS

The harnessing of nature into man-made indoor climates has been occurring for centuries via an array of vessels including terrariums, greenhouses and flower vases. In many places, structures were built around a living tree so as to minimize environmental impact, or simply for the sake of convenience. Ficus, bonsai and rubber trees have dominated living rooms and dens for decades. No matter the climate, we humans are a species that demands the outdoor environment be brought inside.

Regardless of the organism brought indoors, the maintenance and containment of a houseplant is key. It is expected that a plant match its container proportionally and that its extremities not exceed a certain margin of space. Fallen leaves and buds on the windowsill or coffee table must be removed swiftly. Soil is expected to be well-watered and the leaves positioned to receive a healthy duration of sunlight (many owners elect to occasionally rotate their pots to provide even exposure). Care through control on all fronts is the triumph of houseplant-ing.

The photographs of Ian Whitmore and Andrew Curtis show artists participating in an increasingly noticeable aesthetic focus: the inclusion of houseplants in their work. They are just two examples of a large shift toward including these ubiquitous pieces of our built environment in contemporary art. Moreover their work centralizes indoor spaces and other highly controlled, stark, almost-empty environments and landscapes (three-season porches, patios, lanais). These are often, at least in Whitmore's case, commercial and institutional spaces. Curtis is more focused on examining houseplants in domestic settings. For both photographers, the foliage they look at spans a diverse register of species and health — some are fruitful and vibrant, others dying and losing their leaves.

There is something compelling about these organic wanderings, however. Both photographers' works are simple and often far from any ideal notion of garden or elaborate adornment. To be sure, the term "houseplant" itself suggests a special marked quality differentiating from its outdoor, wilder counterpart. One

The tree, as the photograph shows it, could be a channel of aggression and otherworldly strength within the limited behavioral bounds of corporate America.

of the fundamental differences in these terms is whether or not a pot or planter is used. These contain the roots, soil and watering. They also enable convenient transportation, depending on size and material, of course. Noticeable systems of containment will be the criterion for "houseplant" here. Yet the curbed aesthetics of those spaces remain. A majority of plants appearing in their works are clearly under some influence of control. Essentially, repression is aestheticized, restraint made tasteful. The play of control and natural tendencies are worth paying attention to when looking at Whitmore's and



Curtis' pictures.

Whitmore's work often frames the houseplant as folly in the built environment. His photograph "Nowhere #8005," (2009), a ficus tree in a conference room, betrays any sense of obedience on the part of nature. The tree is off-center, toward the back of the room as seen from across a standard conference room table and chairs. It stands in waiting or perhaps delay, preparing to enter or exit from an important board meeting. The empty chairs personify the tree,

as if to state "standing room only." The natural object brings discomfort, almost prompting a desire to see it in a larger, more natural landscape. It does not match.

The folly here is riddled with intentionality. Regardless of how it got there, the tree was an attempt to make the space more inviting, more human. The tree stands as a pocket of nature, a small patch of wild earth. Whitmore's approach slaps away all politeness with a knowing hand, abhorring the plant's supposed pleasantness in favor of an awkward yet latent aggression (the ficus tree is on file with United States Forest Service as a species with rapid-growing and

invasive roots). The tree, as the photograph shows it, could be a channel of aggression and otherworldly strength within the limited behavioral bounds of corporate America. It is a totem of what is to be fought for. Could it stray from its compliant positioning? Whitmore could very well have given us something to believe in.

In other cases, houseplants occurring in Whitmore's work may serve as a unifier among various locations and representations of nature shown in the photographs. The larger body of work in which his plant photographs appear is titled "Nowhere." Here, a collection of scenes traverse 22 non-descript locations, in each of which a plant is evoked or an actual plant is found in surrounding content. Over time, viewing these photographs in a sequence makes a game of spotting the houseplant (although they are easy to find). One realizes that the plant (or the idea of one) is a single thread that runs through the work and each instance must be located.

Andrew Curtis exposes the plant in full-frontal view, making it central to the work with minimum content on the outskirts of the image. Curtis' work seems to recall the idealized specimens of "Sunset" periodicals and the more extensive full-color landscaping manuals printed under the same name. Here, however, the plants have been isolated from their other surroundings by the use of Rotring ink. Their cut-out shapes evoke space with no other grounding features (see "INTERNATIONAL LAWNS (Survival Programmes)"). The work provides a certain sense of dependability given that the plants dictate the black-hole-like space that encapsulates them.

Curtis presents the plants as a means for orienteering, predicated upon the unseen prime meridian of conventional landscape arrangement and design. In other words, a sense of space is discernable. The quest prompted in these photographs is not to find the element of nature but to see its containment and its possibility.

It could be that Curtis is calling to mind the notion of control through his strict photographic treatments. At first glance, there seems to be no escape for the foliage. Vibrant and near artificial renderings (i.e., highly-processed) create a second layer of control/containment. Yet, the distortion that appears in these techniques also brings with it a sense of potential. Nature is held captive but only visually. It could be that a removal of surrounding content alleviates literal containment and allows for freer growth, something wilder. Maybe Curtis' work seeks not to show how nature has been tamed but how it can be liberated within some of the most intensely regimented spaces.

The larger implications of houseplants in various media have yet to be formally unpacked. Regardless of context, they operate as a starting place. Perhaps this is their larger significance: they are looked at, almost depended upon, by the viewer as a bellwether for understanding the conditions shown in the rest of the work. They are moments of nature, adaptable and clear representations of care (or lack thereof). Therefore, the plant becomes not only our point of access into the work, but also a determining factor for how the rest of the scene is doing (or what it is trying to do).

COMMENTARY



The Internet Made me Hardcore

Confrontational Politics and Contemporary Internet Art

BY ALEXANDER WOLFF

In the polemical essay “Digital Divide,” published by Artforum in September 2012, art critic and professor Claire Bishop posed the question, “Whatever happened to digital art?” She states, “While many artists use digital technology, how many really confront the question of what it means to think, see, and filter affect through the digital?” In a subsequent response to critics, Bishop criticizes the field of new media art, claiming it also misses that point when it fixates “on the centrality of digital technology, rather than confronting it as a repertoire of practices ... that increasingly lodges capitalism in the body.”

When thinking about what truly has happened to “digital art” since the 1990s, it becomes clear that much of new media art is not merely technology for the sake of technology, and much of it has confronted our dependence on consumer technology. While countless Internet-based artists today are more than willing to cynically critique the hollowness of how we think, speak, and process our lives through commodified digital technology, very few are willing to hold convictions and create true confrontation, disruption, or politically-charged tensions between their work and oppressive power structures in society. In contrast to current trends in new media art, the politically engaged Internet-based work of 1990s artist collectives and the contemporary Angolan new media artist Nástio Mosquito show that creating a pressure between art, aesthetics, technology, society and politics is a project that needs to be resuscitated.

In the 1990s and early 2000s there was a wealth of artist collectives like 0100101110101101.org [Eva and Franco Mattes], Electronic Disturbance Theater and RTmark, who employed the Internet as a tool to create direct confrontations with ideological, political, and social issues. These groups used the Internet as a form of tactical media that could be used as a temporary outlet for activism and sociological/political disruption. For instance, in 1998 Electronic Disturbance Theater initiated a flurry of DDoS (denial of service) attacks on the websites of former Mexican President Ernesto Zedillo, former U.S. President Bill Clinton, and the Mexican Stock Exchange, in support of the revolutionary leftist Zapatista group of Chiapas, Mexico, who were facing government coercion. In a similar spirit of intervention into issues of power structures, political imbalances, and social injustice, RTmark (who would later become the political-provocateurs the Yes Men) created pieces like “GWbush.com,” a convincing mock-web-site of George W. Bush for the 2000 presidential election, which incurred numerous cease and desist letters and provoked Bush himself to claim that “there ought to be limits to freedom.”

Sadly, the use of Internet art as a tool for societal and political provocation has gradually decreased. While it would be a misstatement to essentialize the diverse practices of artists working through new media or the Internet today, there are

large numbers of contemporary web artists who would rather dabble with the permutability of digital files, the meme of painting, or cgi Greek sculptures as an aesthetic rather than imbricating art, and the possibilities of the new media, with real political and social engagement. Aside from these artists, there are those more concerned with critiquing Internet culture (personal cell-phone photos, memes, YouTube clips, advertising, etc.), commodities, and mass culture with ironic humor, like Jeff Bajj, Rachel Lord, and Nick Demarco (to name a few). Even so, there seems to be a divide between these artists and those who do not identify themselves as artists, like hacktivists, and those orchestrating Internet attacks on opponents of free speech and digital rights through the message-board site 4chan.

While the work of most artists dealing with commodities, kitsch, and Internet culture through humor is highly entertaining, and exactly illustrates how we

use aggressive self-branding through social media to accrue social and cultural capital. Though his piece does not specify names, it would seem that the two most flagrant Internet-based artists embodying this type of dandyism are Parker Ito and Ryder Ripps. Through cynical self-commodification, Ripps and Ito drain their work of deep political and socially concerned content, as did Andy Warhol and Jeff Koons.

Both Ito and Ripps take the promotion and fashioning of their undifferentiated online and real life personas as the main subject of their work. In dual display of quasi-critique and embrace, the otherwise permeable boundary between irony and reality is completely liquidated. Though Ripps’ body of work like “Ryder Ripps Facebook,” a downloadable archive of his Facebook page up to 2011 is almost self-explanatory, Ito’s most recent piece “Parker Cheeto: The Net Artist (America Online Made Me Hardcore)” seems to perfectly encapsulate their shared ethos.

While countless Internet-based artists today are more than willing to cynically critique the hollowness of how we think, speak, and process our lives through commodified digital technology, very few are willing to create politically-charged tensions between their own work and oppressive systems of power within society.

“think, see, and filter affect through the digital,” their work runs the risk of becoming non-confrontational and complicit with the objects of their critiques. Rarely do any of these artists use the topics of Internet or commodity culture as a means to interrogate, engage, or create sustained critical tension between their own work and the ever-present power imbalances or social injustices (such as those between class, race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, disability, etc.) that underpin our lives. Though political and social problems have only increased or become even more complicated (such as the 2008 economic crisis and ongoing U.S. military involvement overseas), there seem to be few artists explicitly addressing these problems through the use of the Internet and digital technology. It appears that creating real agitations or political/social disturbances have become a taboo subject for many contemporary web artists exercising what Hal Foster would term “cynical reason,” in that the cynics know their beliefs are false, but hold on to them to protect themselves from contradictory demands.

In an even more extreme avoidance of social or political concerns, there are some U.S. net artists who ironically fuse themselves with the commercially-driven aspects of the Internet. Troemel’s 2012 essay “Art After Social Media” precisely describes the phenomenon of artists who

With a textured graphic of an America Online logo and a conglomeration of words, Youtube clips and kitschy graphics, the web page begins with an altered line from Prince’s song “Let’s Go Crazy:” “Dearly beloved, We are gathered here today to get through this thing called life/the Internet.” Viewing the internet as an all-consuming platform that allows no differentiation between itself and life outside it, the text continues, “If a tree falls in the forest and no one is around to photograph it with their iPhone while simultaneously uploading it to Tumblr, Facebook, Flickr, Google Reader, Instagram, Twitter, and Delicious does the tree really exist?” To which he responds, “Only if the photo gets more than 10 likes, 5 reblogs and 2 RT’s.” In the hyper-awareness and self-marketability afforded by social media, Ito narcissistically presents his identity and work as only viable in terms of how many arbitrary likes, reposts and views it can achieve. A YouTube clip on the page metaphorically conflates his self-aggrandizing identity with a sack of fast food — he waltzes into an apartment full of hip 20-somethings (whom he greets as “My children”) and presents them with a bag stuffed full of McChickens, in which everyone then partakes.

While their grotesque technophilia parodies commodities, artistry, capitalism, and our digital media-induced obsession with promoting and construct-

ing our personas through social media, both Ripps’ and Ito’s work stops at these issues, failing to funnel this narcissism into art that would confront more pressing socio-political matters. In the essay “All I am is a Son of the Cold War,” Professor Delinda Collier analyzes the disarming work of the Angolan artist Nástio Mosquito, who similarly presents his video work through social media and iPhone applications with a liberal amount of irony, technophilia, and narcissism. But what is most notable about his work is not merely the fact that it addresses the split subjectivity and disintegration of critical distance associated with digital media. Instead, his work resolutely achieves all of this while examining, interrogating and critiquing specific historical, political and ideological legacies of his context in South Africa.

In multiple video pieces like “Continent” or “Fruit & Juice,” he addresses a wide array of topics like the hollowness and failure of neo-developmental rhetoric, urban poverty, and the lost promises of Marxist ideology. In the piece “Fruit & Juice,” Mosquito lampoons representations of poverty and “Africa” by impersonating a substance-dependant “sociologist” in Joubert Park, Johannesburg. As this “sociologist,” Mosquito proceeds to both conceal and aestheticize the destitution of Johannesburg by examining a huge pile of fruit on the street. He exclaims, “There is nothing wrong with this area. It is clean! And it’s productive.” Mosquito uses disarming irony and self-promotion as a tool to question and probe the social and political aspects of his context, while in both Ripps’ and Ito’s work the process becomes so self-serving that it prevents deeper forms of critical consciousness outside the narcissism of its author and the way we fetishize and promote ourselves through technology. Nástio’s work embraces a contradiction between commitment and narcissism, existing both as a direct engagement with harsh socio-political realities and as a parody of a modern media-obsessed public.

If anything, the work of the artist collectives of the 1990s and the work of Nástio Mosquito prove that artists can exploit new media and the net to realize substantive interventions within society and culture. Rather than using art for purely political means, or engaging in a more cynical surface-level critique of capitalism and new media, Nástio’s work realizes a mode of creation that is at once historically, politically, aesthetically, and socially oriented. If the Internet is still able to present a slightly less market-driven space for practice than gallery circuits or the contemporary art institutions, it should be disconcerting that much contemporary Internet-based art and new media work is willing to abandon the idea of deeper political or social involvement through artistic practice. The Internet and new-media are productive fields to test the borders of socio-political opposition with mass audiences, and if large amounts of net artists today are willing to refuse this onus, then they run the risk of denying the full critical potentials of the mediums themselves.

Q & A

An interview with Chicago DIY makers and hackers

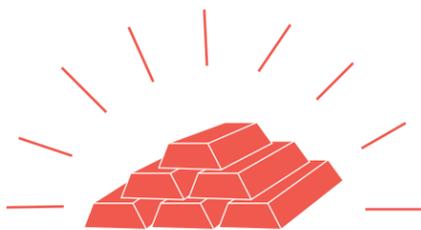
BY JEN MOSIER

We have entered the age of a new industrial revolution where plastic is trending as a commodity and is being used to create customized objects like miniature busts or the perfect pair of scissors. The Maker Movement is a DIY subculture that turns passive consumers into producers, and it is gaining momentum and creating a frenzy of utopian dreams. Desktop-sized 3D printers are inciting new ways to think about technology and at-home manufacturing.

Liz Neely, Director of Digital Information and Access at the Art Institute of Chicago (AIC), quickly realized the practical uses for 3D printing at the museum level — which urges people to think differently about the art collection. She paired up with SAIC professor and 3D-printing guru Tom Burtonwood and their collaboration is the vigor and the vim of the Maker Movement. Liz and Tom met with F Newsmagazine and discussed the maker culture alongside disruptive issues with 3D printing, and why this will change our approach to looking at three-dimensional objects.

Jen Mosier: *How did you get involved with 3D printing?*

Liz Neely: I was involved with other Maker Movement activities and attended the The Met's "Makerbot Hackathon" — an event where a ton of DIY-makers, software engineers, or graphic designers collaborated to share files and ideas, and recreate pieces from the Met's collection. I tweeted Tom to find out if he was there. he was, so this kicked my butt into bringing the hands-on approach of 3D printing to the Art Institute. I felt an urge to pursue ways to create different reactions with the collection. With 3D Printing, seeing is believing. I watched it inspire people and make them excited about looking at art.



"3D printing is magic and alchemy. You're essentially turning plastic into gold."

— Tom Burtonwood

Tom Burtonwood: In terms of how I got involved, I was a big science-fiction nerd reading William Gibson's book "All Tomorrow's Parties," where he talks about faxing a teddy bear from Houston to Paris. The bear would be reassembled atom-by-atom and particle-by-particle. Although we're not there yet, we are getting closer.

At SAIC, I saw the 3D printers in the Advanced Output Center and thought, "Wow, I want to do that." Instead of cutting 2D shapes out of fiberboard and assembling them — which doesn't have great resolution — the 3D printer essentially works to recreate an object by layering it out as plastic.

JM: *The idea of 3D printing has been around for a while, so why has the media exploded over the topic recently?*

LN: It has been around a long time, and as with any other technology on the verge, it's also connected to an ecosystem of tool making and software accessibility. The MakerBot 3D printer we use at the Art Institute is more affordable than before. The software is mostly free and easy to understand, and your iPhone or iPad is used to scan objects or people. Plus, Maker Movement people are willing to share digital files online, creating this perfect storm of making things.

TB: What's really pushed it out there is that certain patents have expired within the last five or six years. Since then, a project called the RepRap, a 3D printer designed to use off-the-shelf motors and parts, emerged. So if you had time and were not intimidated by electrical building (which is a fairly narrow demographic), you could build a 3D printer yourself.

JM: *Is a RepRap a machine that can reproduce itself?*

TB: RepRap is open source, so the logic is, if you have access to a 3D printer, then you can make another. It's self-replicating. But these are notoriously hard to build, hard to calibrate and hard to maintain.

JM: *So that's where companies like MakerBot come into existence?*

TB: MakerBot's route was to take parts needed for a 3D printer and sell assembled machines. Other companies sell kits so you can build your own, similar to a RepRap approach. I bought a MakerBot because I wanted it to work. I was building a RepRap, but I didn't get it finished. Although with that, I'm printing parts for a new version of the RepRap and I will finish it today.

JM: *What's a Botfarm?*

TB: A collection of 3D printers in one location. I'm currently working with a few other people at our River North store called The 3D Printer Experience — a one-stop shop for 3D printing. We have workshops to teach people how to use the equipment, 3D printers to sell, and if you want a 3D head scan, we can print out your 3D portrait.

JM: *Why is 3D printing important to a museum? Who benefits the most: visitors, curators or conservationists?*

LN: Each group has its own challenges, but it benefits everyone. The public

aspect of the program is very exciting because engaging with the collection is our goal. Just scanning an artwork, looking at it in all directions — the angles and the shadows — gives you a different relationship with the object. It's important in a museum to have a platform for creativity. People stop by my office to see the MakerBot 3D printer, which inspires them to think more experimentally within a museum practice. I want more people to interact with it so we can start solving problems and changing the way we approach the art.

TB: When you go to a museum, you're not allowed to touch the art. Now we can go to a museum, 3D scan elements of the collection and print them out — potentially to scale to see it from different angles. Since the beginning of the institution, artists have gone into museums to draw or paint, so this is the next extension.

LN: While it is a natural extension, the big difference is that we can share these 3D scans online, which means someone far away can also have a creative response.

TB: If you're a scholar in Hong Kong, you could download the model, print it out on your 3D printer, and examine it. You can't do that with a 2D image in a book.

JM: *How many art-based museums are using this technology?*

LN: Around four or five so far, which is not many. We've been having workshops to spread the word.

TB: It's so easy to get into 3D printing because the bar to access is very low. I find the Maker community in general to be very open and generous people.

JM: *Are issues of intellectual property law and copyrights discussed within the community?*

LN: There's a lot of misunderstanding in the media with terminology used incorrectly. An article from "Public Knowledge" (a non-profit dedicated to protecting Internet rights) stated a lot of people are applying the ideas we know from the music industry. However, the fact is there are a lot fewer intellectual property laws on objects.

TB: A contemporary artist might have something to say if you scanned one of their artworks and reproduced it to sell.

LN: In a museum, though, copyright is a different thing. The policy at the Art Institute is that you can do anything for

personal use, such as taking the 3D scans and printing them, but as soon as you publish, it's a different thing.

TB: Let's say you've got a wrench or a chair. These are typically things that can't be patented. No one's going to come after me for making my own chair, but we're definitely running into gray areas.

LN: And we're always asked about people printing guns with 3D printers. It's over-represented on the bad end, and everyone wants to look at the scary side.

JM: *With the big emphasis on online sharing, why are hackerspaces — the community-oriented physical places — necessary to the Maker Movement?*

TB: Let's say you take a miniature-Liz bust, put it on a turntable so it will spin when you get close to it, and add some eyes that will light up when you talk to her. You may know how to make it spin, but not how to turn on the eyes.

LN: Hackerspaces involve hands-on constructivist learning with a very supportive network. If you don't know how to get the eyes to glow, someone will help.

TB: Hackerspaces are also a hot bed for entrepreneurial activities. As much as it is about sharing and thinking, it's about business models and ways to make money. They create the ability to produce products we can take to market. Research and development is not doing this behind closed doors, it's all experienced out in the open.

We are entering the age of the mass-produced customized object. Up until now, it's just been the mass produced object. That's a huge difference and not many people know that. Getting that message out and getting people to understand that they can customize anything, means...

LN: ...we won't have to buy anything ever again.

TB: Think about all the plastic crap in our lives that has failed or when you lose it ... now you can take control of your environment. We are taking passive consumers and turning them into producers.

The 3D Printer Experience is located at 316 N Clark Street. Visit online at www.the3dprinterexperience.com

REVIEW

Unruly Intentions

Three Exhibitions in Chicago's Alternative Spaces



BY ARIEL WILLIAMS

"HERZOGGODREULT" New Work
by Alexander Herzog and Jacob Goudreault

Lloyd Dobler Gallery
Open through early May
1545 W. Division St., Chicago, IL 60622

In "Herzogoudreault," we realize (again, and again, as we have before), the tactility and the exclusiveness of painting. Alexander Herzog and Jacob Goudreault's work is anything but gentle. They are instead swift and gestural, or uncompromisingly formal, like a brusque handshake, we meet a punctuation in painting.

Goudreault's pieces of soft fabric and shiny plastic have been stapled or conformed uncomfortably to their frames, some forced so unwillingly onto the stretchers that the materials become objects of our sympathy, or waylaid renegades on display like shrunken heads. These subtle and controlled moments of aggression may not be quite as violent as battle trophies, but there is a subtle, chiding punishment for these unruly materials: the exposed staples in the skin of an innocent white velour, the neatly sutured gash cut into a plywood square, the buckling at the curves of a stretched painting like a too-tight party dress. It is more difficult to determine if these objects extend beyond their materiality — though their own ill-fitting garments compose a series of interesting objects.

My own thoughts cycle back around to painting, again! These works profess to be nothing more than themselves, offshoots in the air between wall and floor, painting and sculpture. Herzog's paintings reverse this theme of disobedient materials; here, the artist's own fingers push and caress the paint into itself, within the bounds of the surface. The gestural manipulation of material, hatching over and over on itself like a grander, subtractive version of ink-wasting doodles in notebooks, piles up a depth behind the tracings, a grid into which the untouched paint falls deeper with each layer. But here, too, we see paintings that are as much as they can possibly be: a sophisticated reiteration of materials, a tracing of former tracings rather than a map of new terrains. When painting becomes only a painting, I find myself caught in these tracings, wrapped into these fabrics, unable to find the rend through which to escape to new ideas.

"Some Poor Girls" by Alex Jovanovich

Adds Donna
Open through May 12th
4223 West Lake Street, Chicago, IL USA 60624

Something in synchrony, something both general and very, very particular is alchemized in Alex Jovanovich's exhibition "Some Poor Girls." Jovanovich has netted a teeming lack of specificity, a yielding openness, in a series of drawings and projections that congregate around — but never quite touch — an impossibly beautiful, and unspeakable center. The show includes three horizontally mounted ink drawings of organic forms, ribbons of black ink and the scalloped edges of petals that vibrate in fine lines to the edges of the page. Another drawing has its center removed, and a fourth is pressed between panes of glass, an old doodle on scrap paper. Three slide projectors project the white text of enigmatic poems and spots of stars onto crinkled paper frames. The only way to grasp these works is by moving between them — not by situating the materials, the projected words, the underlying formula that is always presumed to exist, but by situating oneself in these gaps of comprehension.

Contemporary work often flatly rejects this fragility of thought — the capacity for intuition that we all possess — in favor of an almost scientific stratification of concepts, as though a conceptual artistic process is necessarily built upon concrete ideas or an artist-designed formula. Granted, it is impossible to concretize or articulate that which evades verbal (or even visual) languages, and most work cannot escape the possibility of rupture with its intention. It is precisely this hard-honed intentionality that staunches the rifts in our thinking, the sweep of cerebral to mental thought. Jovanovich's work re-opens this rift without sacrificing even a mote of conceptual complexity. Like the distance between stellar bodies, or the troughs and crests of a disturbed body of water, these pieces resonate something silent yet eloquent; the space between words, the moments of lapse and return in chronological time and the absence of a lingual thought between points of signification. These lapses in time and space (a roughly cored drawing, like an apple, long moments of empty slide projections, outtakes of a common history in an appropriated drawing) don't meet neatly with their edges.

The fragile, resonating lines of the drawings undercut their more solid centers, and the projected poems only brush the delicate surface of the crinkled paper frames on which they land. Every piece flickers, ripples, and gradates from one pole to another. The medium is not quite time, not quite transmission — it is something evasive, the thin border of a thick absence, that gives into an equally evasive meaning. The work orchestrates a metaphor, a small and silent symphony of metaphors that get as close to the center of things as only a metaphor can: by constellating the space around something unspoken. Through a cerebral osmosis, a slow radiation of a thought, that destructive impulse to analyze in search of a meaning is dissolved, and the desire to explicate, pinpoint, and signify is replaced by another desire: to reside, if only for a slow moment, in the confounding clarity that occurs only in intuition.

"Ghost Machine" by Christopher Ottinger

Chicago Artists' Coalition
Open Through May 2nd
217 N. Carpenter Street, Chicago, IL 60607

Though the only bodies present with Christopher Ottinger's "Ghost Machine" were gallery-goers, the work had the peculiar effect of a performance — where viewer becomes audience, and one cannot find the usual passive comfort of standing still. Like a television left on in an empty room, this series of earnest little machines (screens projecting colorblock, magnified light, hissing static) had the mysterious purpose of a group of live performers. Ottinger seems to be directing our attention to the screens — what they are, or are not, doing, and how we interact with them.

Though this theme is not trite in itself, it is dealt with in such a heavy hand that I found interest not in the multiple projected images and overworked manipulations of light, but in the simple— and demanding— presence of the machines themselves. Is it redundant to comment on the ignorance of machines? Perhaps not. Their activity is only illusionary, rote gestures in humans are essentially no less machinic. Sleeping is no less passive than a daily routine. What interests me here is not a commentary on new or outdated technology (for artists, at least, the slide projector is as contemporary a tool as the Internet), but rather our altered (or enhanced) relationship with machines. As machines become more intuitive, we become less cognizant of the artificial liveliness they seem to possess. A computer is more subservient than a whining television set— it sleeps when we leave it alone. But older machines hold onto some other disconcerting autonomy, a stubbornness and resistance to our attempts to manipulate them. My ancient, rumbling refrigerator is as much a presence in the kitchen as my roommate, chopping celery or reading a book.

Of course, there are inconsistencies in comparing television sets and household appliances to computers; but when considering their presence in everyday life, our awareness and often uncritical use of these machines, their sounds, signals, and presence become significant. Ottinger's machines do the same: they operate strangely, for no one, and their screens recall the persistence of a toiling technology, only robbed of any utility. With this, they cross — albeit unwittingly and ignorantly — into a more humanized existence. The static screen is no longer leftover from a movie, and the whirring that might have signaled the production of something useful (energy, images, information) is aestheticized, overturned onto itself. The machine is enlisted to make its own music, even draw its own pictures, while we stand and watch.

INTERVIEW

Beyond Boundaries

Alumna Allison Glenn Discusses Incubator and Life after SAIC

BY GABRIELLA BROWN

Allison Glenn is the new Program Manager of Incubator, an art space envisioned and operated by artist Theaster Gates in Washington Park for the University of Chicago. The Incubator formally opened its newly renovated, 10,000 square foot space last month and is already making a big impact on Chicago. Not only does it act as an exhibition space for art and music, it includes an artist-in-residence program, a woodshop for a design apprenticeship program for local high school students, and public programming. The vision of the Incubator is to use its various arms of programming to bring multiple voices together to act as a cultural hub and incubator of creativity for Washington Park and the city at large. Allison talked to me about her new position as Program Manager, as well as her experience as a graduate of SAIC.

Gabriella Brown: *Can you introduce yourself by briefly describing your curatorial, research, and writing projects since you've been in Chicago either as a student or post-graduation?*

Allison Glenn: Sure. I'm drawn to spaces that are a little bit off the cuff — an interstitial space. Interstitial is an architectural term that means the space between floors

in a building. I could use that conceptually to say a space in between the institution and the environment or community. I'm interested in projects that bridge those two — the Incubator does that quite seamlessly.

GB: *How did you come into contact with Theaster Gates and what projects have you been working on with him prior to the Incubator?*

AG: I'd known Theaster for about five years prior to working for him. I met him at an opening for the artist Hebru Brantley at a gallery in Chelsea. Both Theaster and Naomi Beckwith (Curator at the MCA) were at the opening and I was immediately like, "Wow, these people are amazing! I want to know who they are and learn what they've learned." That was the first time I met him, but we also connected in Chicago, attending talks and lectures and public events. Additionally, faculty at the School of the Art Institute were really instrumental in connecting students with artists working in Chicago, and Theaster was one of those artists.

GB: *Do you have suggestions for ways that students at SAIC can make connections between their practice or school and communities outside of it? Is that important?*

AG: It's definitely important. SAIC is a wonderful institution, but it's important to reach outside of it and realize it's quite insular, and there's a lot that exists beyond that four square block geographic radius, but also the conceptual boundaries. SAIC has a specific pedagogy — one that worked well for me, this interdisciplinary practice that, even though I wasn't in a studio program, the idea of collaboration extended. It's important to get outside of the studio, the student body, Chicago, the United States — explore!

GB: *How is the space associated with the University of Chicago? Do you think there are ways for SAIC to be more connected to other audiences?*

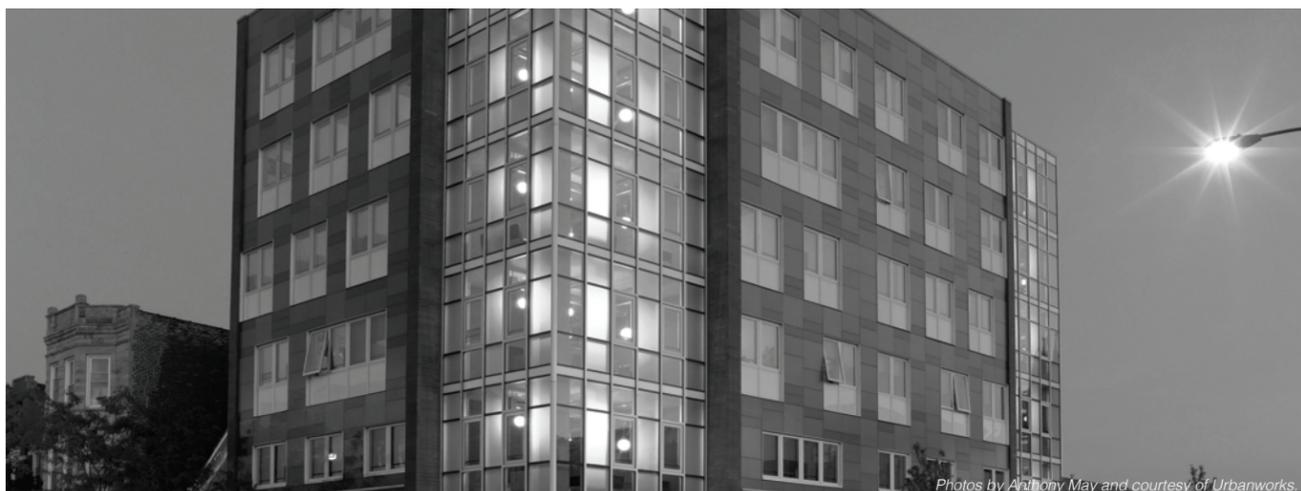
AG: We are 100% associated with the University of Chicago through the Arts and Public Life Initiative and the Provost's office. Theaster Gates, who is the director of arts and public life at the university, envisioned the whole project. We have interns from the university who work here, and we have students come by for talks and performances, etc. We are located on the other side of Washington Park, so we're not directly on campus. The university is doing something unprecedented. I don't know of another educational institution in Chicago that has partnered with an artist

that bridges the gap between the university and neighboring communities. I don't think SAIC is doing anything like that, but I don't think it's out of the question. University of Chicago is just on the forefront of that initiative.

GB: *Do you have advice for current students about how to forge connections and take advantage of the community and resources at SAIC before graduation?*

AG: I got involved in everything. I was involved with student organizations, and I was lucky enough to have a job on campus with exhibition practices. Get to know everybody, go to everything and connect with everybody. Connect outside of the school. Go to the MCA, the Art Institute, come down here and see us! Build yourself up outside of your role as a student. Take yourself seriously so others take you seriously. Be determined, diligent and open. Take risks because it's probably one of the only times you'll be able to do that. Read everything.

Visit FNewsmagazine.com to see Allison and the Incubator space in an extended video interview.



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STUDENT PROFILE

Creating Communities

Anthony Stepter on Facilitating Creative Practices

BY JOSHUA MICHAEL DEMAREE

Sitting in a coffee shop on Michigan Avenue, the Bean standing just over his shoulder, SAIC graduate student Anthony Stepter appears calm despite his quickly approaching graduation from the MA program in Visual & Critical Studies. “I am a little over extended right now,” he sighs, “but there is such continuity in everything I am doing.” As we sit over coffee, Stepter explains how his career has led him from Grand Rapids, Michigan, to London, from Washington, D.C., to this cold, spring day in Chicago.

Stepter has made a career out of finding unexpected commonalities. “I was a double major in Sociology and Marketing. The professors in one discipline practically despised the professors in the other, but when you think about it, both are about studying how people function in groups,” he muses. “They just use their observations for different ends.” In many ways, this is the exact basis of Stepter’s own practice.

While studying abroad in Brazil, he found himself drawn not to the beaches, but to Rio de Janeiro’s many museums. “I began thinking about what the role of the artist in society was, and not that myth of the ‘genius artist’ in his studio creating a masterpiece that only that person could create. I now know there is a lot more that goes into it — we’re all the sum of our influences.”

Years later, while discussing Erich Fromm’s seminal work “The Sane Society,” a professor would provide the push for Stepter into working with the arts. “Our professor had asked us, ‘How many of you think about your unique contribution to the job you do?’ I had never thought about that for myself before. I knew I had skills in administration. So I decided to work on that so the people who needed to be creative could be creative without having to worry about money.”

Thinking back to his time in the museums of Brazil, Stepter decided to take an internship at the Grand Valley State University Art Gallery. His first day he showed up wearing a tie and was surprised to be handed a power drill. “That’s where I learned to frame, hang, and do the nuts and bolts. I also learned how a collection works — it has to be stored, someone has to keep track of it all.”

This desire led Stepter to an internship at Sotheby’s of London that, in turn, landed him a job at the Grand Rapids Art Museum and finally a position at the national non-profit arts advocacy group Americans for the Arts in Washington, D.C.

“I worked in a department called Leadership Alliances. We weren’t development and we weren’t public relations. My job was to help create alliances between artists and

patrons so that these really interesting projects could go forward,” Stepter recalls. “I was working under Nora Halpern who has made a career out of these really intense relationships with artists and others in the field.”

“The reason working with Nora was so important to me was because she taught that if you want to do something, just do it,” he recalls. “If you ask a curator how to curate, they have no idea how to explain it in those terms. If you want to be a curator, then start organizing exhibitions.”

After three years on the job, Stepter had his own projects he needed to begin. “I walked in the day after the holiday break, the first day back in the office of 2010, and I told Nora that I was leaving. I gave them my three months notice, and on March 24, 2010, I moved to Chicago.”

“When I moved to Chicago I had no official connections. But I had these projects I wanted to do and I just had to do them.” Stepter’s first project came in the form of Bicycle Bakery Crawl. One day while discussing their shared love of baked goods and cycling, Stepter and a friend from D.C. that now lives in Chicago, decided to combine their loves. “What could have been just that — riding our bicycles to bakeries — could be so much more. I had the skills to organize and didn’t want to just let those abilities atrophy. It was a way to do something that felt like art, like a practice, but I didn’t have to call it that.”

This led Stepter to restart a project he had begun in Grand Rapids. One year he needed to make a costume for Halloween but didn’t know how to sew. He began meeting with a friend, Stephanie Richards, who taught him the basics. “She was living in a big group house so we would do a potluck and just sit around and sew. Then we began meeting in cafes and then live-work studios and finally in little art spaces.” And so Stitchy was born.

In Chicago, Stepter began working for SAIC in the Continuing Studies department helping with summer programming. There he met Maxwell Graham who runs the Essex Street Gallery in Manhattan’s Lower East Side. Graham suggested Stepter read Jacques Rancière’s “The Ignorant Schoolmaster.” “The analogy used in the story is about an illiterate farmer whose son wants to learn to read. So he taught his son to read by asking him questions. It reminded me of what we tried to do with Stitchy back in Grand Rapids. So I resurrected it.” The monthly sewing circle doubled as a lecture series for speakers working in fields that intersect with crafting, textiles and the garment industry.

This is the basis of Stepter’s practice: creating spaces where communities of shared interests



can learn and grow together. Sometimes this comes in the forms of curating, other times as an administrator. “Art is this weird space where things happen, where people interact.”

With the end of Stitchy last month and not being one to let something end without another beginning, Stepter recently began working as the coordinator for University of Illinois at Chicago’s Museum and Exhibition Studies department. “The program, which began two years ago, has an avowedly social justice lean in its criticality of how museums are run. Just as I am interested in flexibility in the museum structure, my hope is that folks who apply to the program are wanting to do something different with museums and exhibiting artists.”

“My first job in the arts was working with a university’s art gallery, so I think I hold this beautiful kind of spaces up as where you can work with the public, artists, and students altogether.” Finishing where he began — working with a university gallery — this is, truthfully, not an end, but one of many beginnings for Stepter.

“I began thinking about what the role of the artist in society was, and not that myth of the ‘genius artist’ in his studio creating a masterpiece that only that person could create.”

AUDIOPHILES

FACULTYXSCORE

A Collection of Music by the Staff and Faculty
Members That Keep SAIC Running

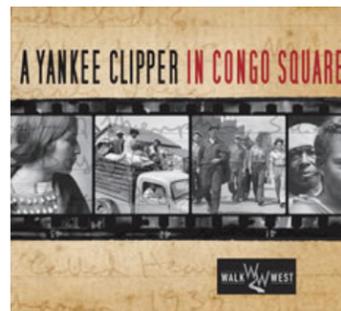
BY CHRISTOPHER KARESKA

In an earlier issue of F Newsmagazine this year, Audiophiles was dedicated to the music of SAIC students. This playlist represents the other half of the school population: the professors and staff of our institution. The genres here are far reaching (ambient, roots reggae, British Isles traditional music) and a strong representation of SAIC's eclecticism outside of the curriculum.



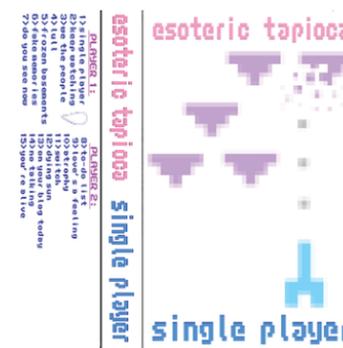
Bob Snyder
Swamp Scene
Orniphonia 2
experimentalsoundstudio.org

This synthesized soundscape by SAIC Sound department faculty member Bob Snyder is currently part of the Florasonic sound installation series at the Lincoln Park Conservatory. The Florasonic series, curated for the Experimental Sound Studio by SAIC professor Lou Mallozzi in collaboration with the Chicago Park District, is a site-specific installation series in which composers and artists create audio art for the LPC fern room for a three to five month period. Bob Snyder's "Swamp Scene," in the LPC fern room until May 31st, evokes the sounds of water, insect life and various birds, but all of the naturalistic sounds have been synthesized on analog electronic equipment, avoiding the perhaps more obvious approach of swamp field recordings and bird-call sampling.



Steve Mullen
Blow, Boys, Blow
walkwestworld.com

In the often esoteric, texture-sensitive and soundscape-centric Art & Tech department, Steve Mullen is a rare breed of professor who is also interested in pop history and songwriting. Steve studied jazz at Arizona State University and spent much of his professional career as a composer, songwriter and performer. One of Mullen's recent major projects was the album "Yankee Clipper in Congo Square" (2011), a collection of uniquely American songwriting experiments, which according to his website are "each built around an archival field recording originally made between 1930 and 1959." "Blow, Boys, Blow" is an example of the album's rich and diverse collage nature. Mullen is seeking to follow and connect common threads through the disparate musical traditions that came together to create the original DNA of what is known as "American music."



Mark Zebedee Ciarleglio
Esoteric Tapioca
no talking
esoteric Tapioca.com

Mark Zebedee Ciarleglio, the CRIT technician who recently updated the computers that produced this very issue of F Newsmagazine, also records and performs as Esoteric Tapioca. "no talking" is a highly relatable song, detailing a one-sided conversation with a distant non-listener — "Look at me, please put your phone away / This is something. Is this something?" Esoteric Tapioca's 2012 album "Single Player" is in the perfect musical genre for this type of storytelling — his yelping, doubled vocals and overall lo-fi fuzzy punk/pop aesthetic works its way into your head where it begs to become a solo singalong.



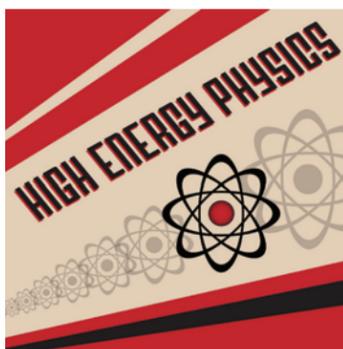
Nicholas Lowe
On Christmas Day it Happened So
youtube.com/user/ruftydog

Have you ever heard of the hurdy gurdy? Unless you're listening to traditional, rural European music, it's unlikely that you're familiar with the crank-wheel operated violin-esque instrument with drone strings used to create a bagpipe-like sound. All right, the best way to understand this is to look up the videos on ruftydog's YouTube channel. Nicholas Lowe, the man behind ruftydog's deft hurdy-gurdy playing, is an associate professor in the Arts Administration program. Lowe was encouraged to take up hurdy gurdy playing by a mentor of his as a way of incorporating music into his performance work. Lowe's mentor, Jacqui Swift, was an active member of the English folk revival of the 1950s and '60s, and was instrumental in the rediscovery of much of the traditional music revived during that time. Lowe told F Newsmagazine, "When I arrived in Chicago in 2003, I brought with me some significant experiences with working songs and traditional music that had come from working in rural communities where traditions are still quite strong." Lowe's YouTube playlist titled "hurdy gurdy" is a solid introduction to the sounds and folk traditions the centuries-old instrument carries.



Mark Booth
Tiny Hairs
Live on WNUR 9/5/09
tinyhairs.com

Tiny Hairs is a now disbanded experimental instrumental collective that in its time featured SAIC faculty members Mark Booth (guitar) and Jim Lutes (drums). Tiny Hairs released two full-length albums, "Subtle Invisible Bodies" (2002) and "Coldless" (2004), as well as a number of demos and compilation appearances. Tiny Hairs' studio albums reveal a specific gift for song titles that evoke the exact delicate and ethereal moods of their improvised music [see "Three-Part Diagram for Making Tea," "Halo of Talking Horses," and "A Ghost Torn and Rolled Between the Fingers"]. One of Tiny Hairs' final recordings is an archived 2009 live performance available from Evanston radio station WNUR's website. The untitled set shows Tiny Hairs at their best, exemplifying the droning collective spirit and sparse sonic detailing that defined the group's challenging and atmospheric work.



Dann Morr
High Energy Physics
Skin & Bones
highpep.com

The music of Chicago quintet High Energy Physics is a well-executed brand of American guitar pop. Dann Morr, SAIC's Assistant Director of Faculty Services and HEP's bassist, hasn't shed the power-pop sensibilities of his past work with the Carlises and Analog Radio, and the rest of HEP are also local rock veterans. Other projects from High Energy Physics' players include Kerosene Stars, Mooner, Wells-next-the-Sea, and Youngest Son. The self-titled High Energy Physics EP features the punk-leaning track "Call the Police," the sweetly classic rocking "Daytime Television Revolutionary," and the blissfully lazy guitar rumination and closer, "Skin & Bones." High Energy Physics feels like a new installation in a long running musical legacy, their songs reminiscent of the alternative country rock of early Wilco and the archetypal indie rock of REM.



Cosmos Ray
Akasha
Material Man
akashaband.com

Akasha is a local roots reggae group lead by Cosmos Ray, one of SAIC's CRIT technicians. On a first listen, it's immediately apparent that Akasha have done their homework. Their take on 1970s Jamaican music feels like a long-lost and lively relic from a bygone era. Their use of dub delay, gentle phasing and lush instrumentation would certainly feel right at home on any vintage dancehall or dub compilation. "Material Man" is the first track from Akasha's most recent album, "The Cool Ruler Overture," a tribute to the late, great reggae star, Gregory "Cool Ruler" Isaacs. Akasha's cover plays it pretty close to Isaac's original, but Ray's voice is slightly deeper and drenched in delay, and their groove is performed at a slower pace. "Material Man" is an unabashed nod to one of Akasha's forerunners and a reverent carrying of the torch.



Kent Lambert
Roommate
August Song
roommate.bandcamp.com

Roommate began as the solo project of FVNMA (Film, Video and New Media, and Animation) tech Kent Lambert, but has since become a full band focused on mellow, atmospheric groove-pop. "August Song" features vibraphone, violin and '80s-indebted guitar licks accompanying Lambert's woody vocal performance. The music video for "August Song" (featuring a psychedelic cat silhouette riding a magic carpet) was created by MFA student Jodie Mack and Lambert's fellow FVNMA tech Emily Kuehn. Roommates' bandcamp.com tags used to describe their 2011 album "Guilty Rainbow" include "art-pop," "downer jamz," and "stoner." I'd like to add "kaleidoscopic," "nauseous," and "totally chill" to that list.

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TIPSHEET

THINGS I'VE LEARNED IN ART SCHOOL

Rusty Shackelford Tells It Like It Is.

I've been in art school for almost a decade, and in that time I've learned that art school exists in a dimension of its very own. It's a haven for everyone who really had no other choice in life, those who couldn't survive any other way than to live a creative life, those who didn't want to follow society's norms. I'm not necessarily talking about rejects — it's far greater than that. However, part of the price you'll pay for becoming one of art school's Great Entities is becoming aware of some of the issues associated with this unique education. Twenty things I've learned in art school:

1
The crazier the dresser, the worse the artist.

2
Marijuana makes your work better. No, really, it actually does.

3
Glassblowers love smoking weed.

4
Avant-Garde/Alternative animation is overlooked.

5
Print isn't dead, you assholes. (Punk, however, has always been dead.)

6
One becomes able to call up his/her inner cynicism at the drop of a hat.

7
Let's be honest, any admissions department is willing to sell you anything.

8
Shaving the side of your head is absurd.

9
Shitty tattoos are everywhere.

10
Stay away from the claptrap of art school music (Ex. "I'm thinking about recording my refrigerator and pressing it into a record.")

11
Wu-Tang is forever.

12
Ironic mustaches are lame, genuine ones are cool. Knowing the difference is all-important.

13
The best filmmakers don't go to film school. (Ex. Spike Jonze, Harmony Korine, Paul Thomas Anderson, etc.)

14
You'll learn to successfully bullshit your way through anything you do (or don't do).

15
I'm still not convinced that Fashion isn't superficial.

16
Including an image of yourself in your art is just plain narcissistic.

17
Critiques can always be constructive, whether sugar-coated or abrasive.

18
Unfortunately, everyone is allowed his/her opinion on your art.

19
Don't stop doing something because you feel you're bad at it. Art is completely subjective and always will be.

20
Never stop making art. Even if you don't have the resources. Just do something creative, you owe yourself that much.



The Etiquette of Being Broken

NON-FICTION BY KRISTOFER LENZ



2012-07-07
6:47 PM

He wiped at the fogged mirror with a bare hand but left only soapy streaks. In a hurry, he slipped into a pair of light brown jeans and a bright blue t-shirt. Considering the rush he skipped putting on socks and shoes and chose his green Havanas. Typically he'd never bike in sandals, due to a long-standing fear of scraping his exposed toes against the pavement. Tonight he was travelling less than a mile, so what was the harm? He rushed out of the house leaving a rarely used helmet hanging in the closet. The earth still shimmered as the days baked-in heat slowly leaked back into the atmosphere. He pedaled fast.

2012-07-07
7:07-10:19 PM

Arms crossed, a frown pulling at her lips, she waited impatiently outside the comedy club. With (what he hoped was) a disarming smile he grabbed her by the waist and they entered together. He ordered them beers, two oversized bottles of Fat Tire, and they settled in to enjoy the show.

After the performance they decided to have a snack and moved to a restaurant at the corner. They shared an order of fajitas and had a margarita each. They paid the bill and walked back to where his bike was parked. She asked about the plan for the evening, did he want her to come home with him? He demurred, claiming exhaustion, that he was just going to go to sleep anyway. She looked disappointed but said she understood. The sun had set a couple hours prior but the earth still seemed to glow. As he unlocked his bike, she asked him to text her when he got home. He smiled, I'll be fine, he said. It's just a couple blocks. Well do it anyway, please. He kissed her good night and got on his bike.

2012-07-07
10:20 - 10:37 PM

As he rode down Armitage, the soft breeze helped soothe some of the lingering heat from the day. The street was busy so he turned south, then west

again, riding slowly down Cortland. With almost no traffic on the street he rode languorously. His legs were tired so it felt good to push the blood down through his heels as he pedaled. He slowed as he approached the intersection at Cortland and Humboldt Boulevard, less than 100 yards from his front door. The light turned green and he coasted out into the street.

Cloaked in a screeching sound and escorted by a gust of hot air, a malicious shape unfolded from the corner of his vision. Sparks burst and dissipated in the night air. Everything went dark.

2012-07-07
10:44 PM

Veil as liquid mask. Viscous and hot to the touch, he couldn't see through the curtains of crimson streaming into his eyes. Shapes wavered outside, two, maybe three people. They were circled around him as he staggered in the street. Sit! They seemed to say. Please! Sit down! No, no, he said. He didn't know who he was, where he was, who these people were. He wiped at the blood but more spilled into eyes. He wiped again. Shame overwhelmed him, the sense that whatever had happened was his fault. He didn't know why, but he was embarrassed. Please sit down, they said. Someone held his shoulders. No, I'm okay. I just need to go home, I'll be fine. Please sit, they said. Please. Finally he relented and sat on the curb. The night rushed at him and consumed his vision. Limp, he fell back into the soft grass.

2012-07-07
11:04 PM

The swaying of the ambulance in flight urged him awake. Paramedics sawed at his clothes as he blinked and looked around. He was strapped to a backboard, his neck in a brace. They saw he was awake and started to ask questions. Where was he. What is his name. Who can they call. He was apologetic. I'm sorry, I don't know. I don't know. They were patient. They weren't mad he couldn't remember, but they wanted him to understand where he was, where he was going. There had

been an accident, they said. He was going to the hospital. Do you know your name, they asked. Of course, he said. What is your name, they asked. He couldn't answer.

Where does it hurt they asked? He tried to smile. Everywhere, I think. Can you move your hands? The howl of the siren and the swaying interior made it difficult to focus. He concentrated and sent an electric signal from his brain to his limbs. A moment passed, then another, then he felt a twitch as his hand rasped against the plastic board. Good! They said. Can you move your toes? He concentrated again, the howling siren getting louder and louder. Another signal wandered vaguely down, in the space of a moment the ambulance became a vacuum, emptied of air and all was frozen in perpetual motion. He held his breath. At the furthest edge of the backboard, he couldn't see, but he could feel his toe twitch once, twice. In a rush the sound crashed in again and the paramedic resumed working. The paramedic hung his face over the patient, congratulations, he said smiling. You're not paralyzed.

2012-07-07
11:11 PM

In the ER he couldn't put a face to the flurry of activity attending to him. His neck was still held fast as the many-handed entity hovered above him; binding the fast bleeding wounds, adding IVs and pummeling him with questions. When he tried to put the evening's events back together they scattered and reformed like starlings shocked into flight. He recalled — the smell of fresh grass, the blur of lights as he biked, the girl — but they were disconnected sensory points of reference. Fragments of memory and sensation that refused to cohere. As they asked questions, his tongue brushed against his front teeth. He felt the back of his incisor break off and in tumbling toward the back of his throat threaten to choke him. He located it and with his tongue pushed the fragment of enamel out of the corner of his mouth..

When the doctors and nurses were

done, he was left alone trying to rebuild his night, his life. A woman in a dark suit entered and spoke. She moved in an interstitial place, both here and outside his perception. She introduced herself as the hospital's chaplain and asked if there was anything she could do. He said no, he is fine. Well, your family is here, and she escorted in his mother and sister.

They all stood over him, varying levels of concern drawn tightly in the lines of their faces. The chaplain lurked, wanting to help, providing nothing. Finally she asked, anything you want me to tell the doctor? Yes, he said. Tell them to bury me at sea. His mom and sister laughed with relief.

Later the police officer who reported at the scene came in to take a statement. The details were vague, but according to the officer, corroborated the sequence of events as conveyed by an eyewitness. The bicyclist proceeded through the intersection with a green light when the motorist, travelling northbound, ignored the red light and sped through the intersection. The motorist struck the bicyclist with the front of the car, throwing him into and shattering the windshield. The bicyclist was knocked unconscious on impact, awoke for a few moments before passing out.

Later the witness would testify that the driver was visibly intoxicated at the scene, but for unknown reasons the reporting officer did not perform a field sobriety test. As the car was towed away he wrote the driver a ticket for an obscure moving violation. Meanwhile the bicyclist was in the hospital garnering what would be over \$30,000 in hospital bills.

2012-07-08
02:18 AM

After being wheeled to his room the nurse helped him walk to the bathroom. I'll give you a moment, she said, but I'll be right outside. He limped to the sink and held himself up with two hands and raised his eyes. He found the ghastly visage of a broken man staring back at him. How could this be the same man from before? Their faces



had the same shape, but this new person was swollen and caked with blood. His lips were flecked with dry spit and his eyes were crisscrossed with fiery lines. An already rust-brown bandage held his nose together and his hair was pulled back, wet with fresh blood from the bandaged wound on his temple.

He tested his face with his hands, all seemed to be in place. He smiled, relieved that this was a different person. It couldn't be him, he knew, this new man had two broken front teeth. He called in the nurse and together they washed the remaining blood from his face.

Set in bed his whole body ached. Nurses plugged him into two saline IV drips and a third that flooded him with morphine. His mother entered the room and took the chair next to his bed. They chatted awhile but as the morphine kicked in he nodded off. You should go home, he told her. It's okay, she said, I'll just stay here. Mom, he said, please, I'm fine, just go home and we'll both sleep better. She turned and fixed his eyes with a look that brokered no further discussion.

2012-07-08
05:20 AM

He had never been good at being sick. He didn't typically self-administer medicine and would just suffer (complaining to anyone who would listen) until the illness went away. This was his first time in a hospital for a reason that was his alone and he didn't understand the etiquette of being broken. When the nurse awoke him in the morning to ask him how he was doing and to rate his pain, he had no clear answer. It hurts, he said. Where, she asked. Everywhere, he said. Rate the pain 1-10, she said. I don't know he answered. So she gave him more morphine but it just made him sick. It was difficult for him to isolate the pain. He knew his head hurt and the back of his neck burned (they brought him ice). They changed the bandages on his wounds, and that hurt, but there was something else. A general sense of disconnectedness. As if he was there, but not all the way. He'd look at the still wet wound on his arm and

he'd know it caused pain, but he wasn't sure to whom, or how bad. It was like the arm was shouting to him but in a language he couldn't understand. The arm was a child with outstretched hands and he had nothing to give, so he tried to ignore it.

After a morning trip into the quivering canyon of the CT Scan (his first was late the night before) a doctor came by on his rounds. The CT Scan indicated what they all feared, the patient had a subdural hematoma that had spread over night. Essentially, his brain was bleeding and he would have to be kept at the hospital until it stabilized or they performed surgery to remove the pooling blood.

2012-07-10
07:12 PM

A seemingly endless parade of doctors, nurses, experts and therapists shared one view alike: he was lucky. The bleeding in his brain had stopped and since he didn't break any bones, he was free to leave the hospital. Best of all, he could finally eat and drink water again, two things denied him as he waited for surgery ultimately deemed unnecessary.

As he was transported home he didn't feel lucky. He felt wronged. He was full of an irrational anger that had no logical target, or perhaps too many targets to focus. He had been riding safely, following all required traffic requirements. It was only through the extreme carelessness of a stranger that his life was put into crisis. He felt wronged by the driver, by his once comforting and now malicious neighborhood, by the very forces of chance that put the illusion of solid objects within each other's path. He burned inside with a sense of injustice that grew with every bandage he changed.

2012-07-11
10:46 AM

In one sense he was lucky, or to be more accurate, his family seemed to share the same twist of bad luck at the same time. Two weeks before the bike accident, his father had fallen a short distance from a trailer, landed

awkwardly, and shattered his left leg. His dad wasn't able to visit him in the hospital because he was laid up at home himself. So the day after leaving the hospital, the patient was transported to his father's house, where they both came under the gentle care of his step-mother.

The days following the hospital stay were a blur. He slept nearly 18 hours a day as his body recovered from the shock of impact. He drifted around the house mindlessly, barely stirring to eat and field phone calls from concerned friends and family. His closest companion was a deaf Persian cat named Timmy who shared his sleeping habits. It was during this time that he developed the practice that would define his convalescence, something he called "laying quietly." He had never been one predisposed to idle reverie but after the accident it was often overwhelming to do ... anything. Instead of watching TV, reading or listening to music to fill the hours, he found he could only lie on the bed or couch simply staring into space.

CONCLUSION

Brain injuries offer unique and vague obstacles to overcome. As he watched the wounds on his body heal in their turn, he had no such indications for his mental progress. Some days he was alert and mentally agile, as if nothing had happened. Other days he was sullen, tired and seemingly incapable of anything beyond long sessions of "laying quietly." At night he was haunted by insane nightmares, and on the rare occasions he ventured outside by day he was maniacally nervous just trying to cross the street. Despite these obstacles, he was determined to live unbowed by fear, even if it was rational. After a little over a month of recovery, he bought a new bike (and a helmet) and was biking again.

The sense that he was, in fact, lucky also took hold. He began to understand the enormity of his circumstances. With that dawning he found peace and perspective. While he didn't break any bones and the other wounds were ultimately superficial, what left an unshakable chill was understanding

that ultimately his life was saved by fractions of a degree. Had the driver flinched a moment later, had the car been travelling at 1 mph faster, had the angle of impact been slightly altered, he could have easily been paralyzed if not killed. Every being faces this crisis every day and most choose to ignore it. We are all just barely holding our places on this planet, our lives as arbitrary as the toss of cosmic dice. But few see those machinations exposed so clearly before their eyes and live to ponder it. In this sense he understood that he was impossibly lucky and each additional day of life began to bear the saccharine but still poignant gilding of a gift.

The paramedics had placed the bandage on his nose the night of the accident, essentially holding it together. It was their advice that he leave it untouched until the wound healed of its own accord. Eventually the bandage fell off, leaving a wet, red scar down his nose. In the weeks that followed the wounds on his body healed, but his nose was stuck in time. The wound still looked fresh and made no progress. One night he had a nightmare where shards of broken glass were pulling at his flesh from within. The next morning he met a determined self in the mirror. He took up a pair of tweezers and with the tips gently explored the wound. As he pushed around the wound's contents, vaguely the consistency of peach jelly, he found something solid. With shaky hands he drew out a long thin shard of broken glass. Through the process there was no pain, just a vague and uncanny sense of displacement. Three days later he pulled out a second shard in the same way.

Eventually the wounds healed and he re-entered life shaken and changed, but far from ruined. Today he sometimes thinks of the still undiscovered glass bound in his flesh, of the dark scars crisscrossing his body, of the beads of sweat that pool in his hands in traffic. He wears these changes proudly, as totems of the person he once was. In the act of transformation not everything becomes new.

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