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NEWSMAGAZINE

SCHOOL OF THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO

design

GHOST BIKES

SEX ED

DESIGN HEROES

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F Newsmagazine
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IN MEMORIAM: **Jeanne-Claude**

Jeanne-Claude with husband Christo.

BY BETH CAPPER

Artist Jeanne-Claude Denat de Guillebon died on Friday November 20, the result of a brain aneurism after a fall. She was 74-years old. The story of Jeanne-Claude and her husband and artistic partner Christo is much like a fairytale: born on the same day in different countries (Jeanne-Claude in Morocco and Christo in Bulgaria), the two came together after Jeanne-Claude's mother picked up Christo, then a young struggling refugee in Paris, to paint her portrait. Soon thereafter, they ran away together, much to the chagrin of Jeanne-Claude's parents. If we halt cynicism for a moment and consider the possibility that some of us are destined to come together in this world, Jeanne-Claude and Christo's meeting is strikingly serendipitous. The pair would go on to collaboratively create some of the most ambitious and awe-inspiring large-scale environmental art works ever seen. Works, which, as comments from both of them suggest, were only possible because of their union.

Among some of the most striking works Christo and Jeanne-Claude orchestrated were "Valley Curtain" in 1973, where the pair hung a massive orange curtain between two Colorado Mountains; "Islands" in 1986, where eleven scrub pine Islands in Florida were surrounded by 6.5 million square feet of bright pink fabric; and in 1986, "Umbrellas," where sites in rural Japan and in the rolling hills of Southern California were covered in thousands of blue and yellow umbrellas, unfurled for all to see.

Jeanne-Claude and Christo worked for over five years with New York documentary veteran Albert Maysles to document a number of their projects. These films show intimately the couple's collaborative process – one that was fuelled by argument as much as by love and respect. In the words of Jeanne-Claude herself: "We are terribly argumentative and scream and criticize each other non-stop. It is very helpful. It makes us think."

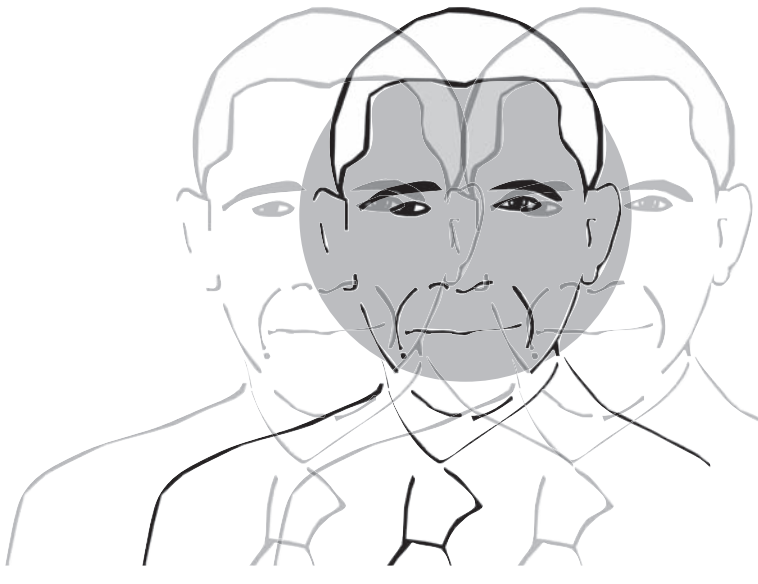
ART NEWS TICKER

BY NATALIE EDWARDS

Illustrations by Olivia Liendo and Elliott Beazley

The news all artists have been waiting for: **the Pope** says that beauty is a path toward God, if you inject your work with some good old fashioned Catholic spirituality. The Vatican has a new cultural commissar, who invited 500 artists to the Vatican, regardless of their religious affiliation. No word yet on who was converted...

Shaquille O'Neal has taken his game to a new level. The man who spends his time hawking Vitamin water and doing Comcast commercials with that creationist nutjob from the Ferris Bueller movie has gotten off the bench to curate an art show entitled "Size DOES Matter," which is not entirely about his penis. The exhibition includes artists like Jeff Koons, Ron Mueck and Chuck Close, and will be on view at New York's Flag Art Foundation in the Chelsea Neighborhood. Shaq, who is also a deputy sheriff who mistakenly raided the wrong house for drugs and scared the shit out of some family will probably not be including the Michael Jordan statue outside of the United Center in his exhibition. How does he find the time to prepare for heavy roles in movies like Scary Movie 4?



A bronze bust of **President Obama** has been set ablaze by Liu Bolin, a Chinese artist who finished his artwork just in time for Obama's recent visit to China. The artist says that the sculpture, which has to be turned off every three minutes to cool, represents Obama's impact on the world. Bronzy, hot, cold, trailblazer? emerging from a firey hell pit?...

Is your mobile phone lacking a sorely needed video of a woman having an epileptic seizure? British artist **Rita Marcalo** invites you to attend her "performance" at the Bradford Playhouse where she will do whatever it takes to induce a seizure. She wants you to record it on your cell phone and flood the internets with your recordings.

Newsworthy

BY NATASHA VEMULKONDA

37 S. Wabash Google Streetview

Sharp Building renovations opening next fall

President Duke Reiter has declared that by the 2010 fall semester, renovation of the first and second floors of the SAIC Sharp building will be completed.

"We are hoping that these new spaces will be open to students 24 hours," said Reiter.

Because the first floor is the only SAIC space visible to passersby on the street, Reiter remarked that he believes this floor is significant enough to be "a window into the School."

Plans for the first floor include a retail space to sell and display students' artwork as well as SAIC merchandise. Ideas for the space are similar to the museum's store. Other additions include a small café and a student seating area. The graduate studios in this area are being moved across the street to the third floor of the Sullivan Center.

Reiter stated that arrangements for the second floor include an area for student groups to meet as well as a small Student Services office for drop-in visits. There will also be a larger cafe where students can grab a substantial meal.

H1N1 101

H1N1 immunizations are now available to all SAIC students and faculty at Health Services, located on the thirteenth floor of the 116 S. Michigan building.

"Receiving the H1N1 vaccine is very similar to receiving the annual flu shot," said Linda Pas, director of Health Services. "There have been changes since the last outbreak on how the virus has mutated, but those changes have also been made within the vaccine."

If the annual influenza immunization is almost the same as the H1N1 vaccine, why isn't the 2009 H1N1 combined into the flu shot? The answer is simple: influenza shots are put together in a yearly cycle, starting in February of each year so that there will be enough vaccines by the fall. The swine flu virus resurfaced only a few months after the seasonal flu vaccines were made.

"People need to educate themselves more on how to avoid the swine flu," said Pas. "The first step to that process is getting the shot."

New students' semester experience and future choices

Registration for the spring term is an exciting time for all students at SAIC, especially First Year Program and transfer students registering online for the first time. It also gives these students a chance to reflect on this past semester and the experience they have had at the School so far.

"I'm a little irritated that, being a first year student, I don't have access to certain facilities such as the UV exposure unit," said Alexander Dick, a freshman printmaking student. "I came to this school with fairly good knowledge on how to use this method for my work and I feel that I'm being denied use for no good reason." Dick plans on taking a bookmaking class as well as a more advanced printmaking class for the spring semester.

Taking advantage of the School's interdisciplinary program, Ellen Costello, currently enrolled in the Introduction to Fashion course, will be taking a video and a photography class next term.
"Fashion is a lot of work on top of my FYP classes and I want to try something different."

Transfer student and sophomore Diane Lent came to the School from Hofstra University looking for an academic environment more conducive to experimentation.

"I'm right now taking a photography and figure drawing class," said Lent. "I thought I should explore more with different materials; that's why for next semester I've decided to take classes in visual communications and designed objects."

A VIEW TO LEARN

BY ANNE KNIGHT WEBER

Photos by Jen Mosier

By redesigning the space on the eleventh floor of the Sharp building, Stephen Farrell, associate professor of visual communications, aimed to create a more cohesive community of visual artists, improve the quality of teaching and learning situations, and provide more chances for collaboration in the Visual Communication department at SAIC. Renovation of the eleventh floor cost $1.3 million dollars and was completed over the summer of 2008.

Unchanged since the late eighties, the visual communications floor was a corridor of doorways, and teachers struggled to maintain eye contact with students in the long narrow classrooms. Farrell's approach to this design project reflects his mission to provide space that invites connections between creativity and community. "For me what started this whole project was that we just seemed to lack a sense of community here. I would go and tour these other schools and the students all knew each other. I felt like the architecture can really influence the sense of community," he said.

Farrell started making design sketches for a more open space in 2005. "A lot of what I was basing this on is the way the design studios look and feel. A lot of them are in these loft spaces or these great spaces, the students go and intern there and they see these great spaces. They work in these spaces. Then they used to come back to what felt so much before like school, archetypal schoolhouse settings. I wanted to open it up and make it feel kind of like hip design studio space feeling. Then we have incredible views…a beautiful space for dreaming. Its just a great way for us to be connected to the city."

Farrell walked me through the remodeled eleventh floor space on his lunch break between classes on a Tuesday. He described the floor's look before the redesign, the tall, bright-red lockers that looked like high school, and pointed out where boarded up windows and skylights used to block out light and great views.

Before the redesign, visitors to the eleventh floor stepped off an elevator to be met with a wall and were forced to find their way around corners to see a receptionist.

Now an open lobby greets a person's exit off the elevator, with wide warm blond wood floors and clear views through glass walls to the windows facing daylight on Monroe Street. A receptionist sits next to custom-built blond wood magazine racks facing out to the lobby.
We started down the hallway, which once was narrow with a dropped ceiling and tall, thin lockers. The new lockers are deep squares, a better size to store laptops and three-dimensional art. The hallway has a vinyl tile floor and is wide, even including an inviting bench seat built in along the wall.

We entered the old computer room. "The lighting and acoustics were so bad in this room, we ended up not using it for teaching," Farrell said. The room was too big and long. One of the things Farrell asked for in his redesign was smaller rooms. "The administration bought that," he said. Before the renovation, "It was a really awkward space."

Farrell said, "When I did a survey of kinds of classroom, I found that there were roughly four kinds of classroom needs: media capabilities, seminar space and two kinds of studio classrooms." One classroom type is "dominated by working with your hands and working on a board." In the old classrooms, "We had large steel desks, but the steel was always really cold." He emphasized using floors of blond wood that felt warmer for the new spaces. The other type classroom includes more computers. "Each of the rooms is hardwired, so you can stand up here and give a lecture.

"I wanted to open it up and make it feel kind of like hip design studio space...Then we have incredible views...a beautiful space for dreaming. Its just a great way for us to be connected to the city."

The classrooms are set up so that students can cut draw, scan, print, make photocopies of what they do and make a mess and spread out. So this becomes a full production environment," Farrell said.

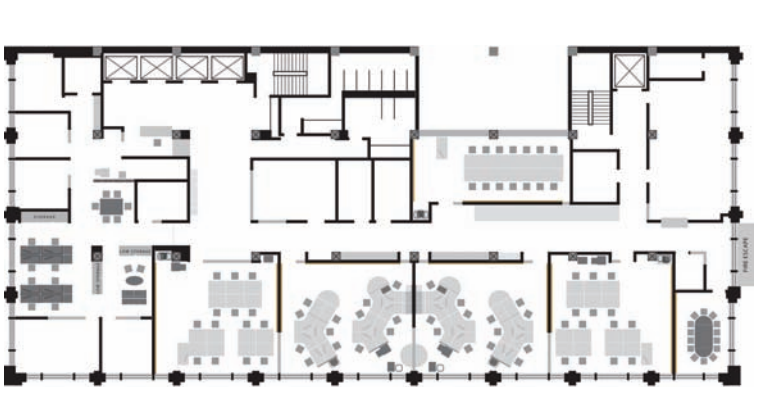
Farrell got the idea to use glass windows to separate classrooms from studying the architecture space in the Sullivan building. He wanted small spaces that still gave students the chance to look ahead at projects or get inspired again by looking back to see first-year students working on a project for a foundation class.

He said, "The space is important for the way they approach the work and the way they approach each other. The teacher would be able to see everybody, and nobody would have their back to a presentation." His solution was to set the desks at one hundred and twenty degree angles from each other, with easy options for reconfiguring the furniture to accommodate different needs.

His challenge was to come up with furniture that was planted down to be hardwired and that could be flexible. "I spent a long time trying to figure out how to put furniture into these spaces," he said. He found tables from Steelcase that are easy to move in a matter of minutes. To accommodate critiques of small work, such as books or tables of contents around a table, take two half rounds and put them together. "The thing I really liked about it was the half-round table, made it possible for collaboration to be part of the solutions we are looking at."

For the walls at the front of the class where a chalkboard used to go, he had another creative solution: a grey polymer board that does triple duty. It's a place to pin up work with magnets. It's a projection screen, which means there's no need to pull a screen down anymore, and it's a whiteboard.

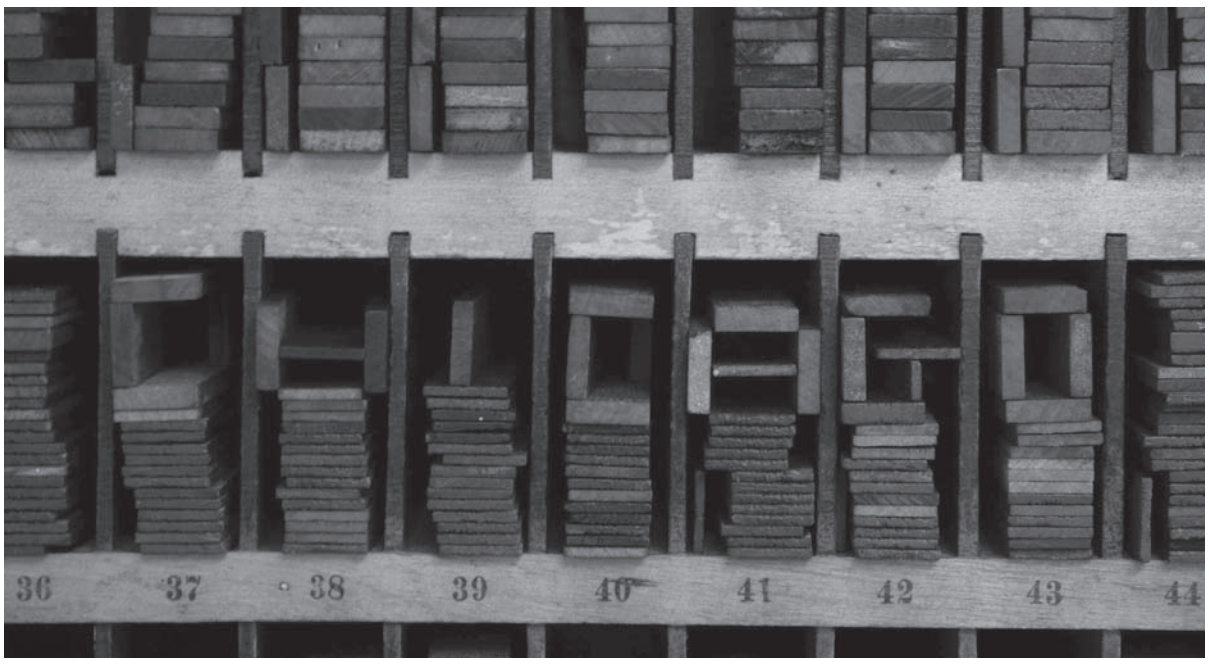
Before the renovation, thirty-two professors and instructors shared one office. Now, each of the full-time faculty has designated office space. The staff area boasts a wide modern table, gathering spaces, sliding drawers to store artwork and teaching supplies, and easy access to the department head and the administrative assistant, whose offices are next to each other. "I am really proud of the office space. It's palatial and we use it. We are the third largest faculty," Farrell said. f



VISCOM's redesign floor plan

Communication Resource Center Photo by Anne Knight Weber

Letter to the editor



From the SAIC Type Shop Photo by Nidhi Isaac

Literary Guide had missing chapters

I have been looking through your new issue devoted to the Chicago literary scene, which promises "a guide to Chicago Literature." But I was struck and disheartened by its omission of many important Chicago based institutions, all involved in poetry and/or political literature. There is no mention of presses like Third World or Haymarket, important presses known to those who care about sociopolitical nonfiction and, in the case of Third World, poetry and fiction as well. The entire landscape of progressive poetry is disappeared from your account. What of the Danny's Reading Series, now a decade strong, or Red Rover and Series A, or the Sunday night series at Myopic Books in Wicker Park? And there is the Palabra Pura series put on by the Guild Complex, serving one of the many multilingual communities of Chicago. I don't see reference to the academic reading series in town, Poem Present at the University of Chicago, for example. Did you speak to local small presses like Flood Editions, Cracked Slab, Answer Tag Home Press, or Kenning Editions? These presses are deeply rooted in the communities they serve, which in some cases extend internationally. Oddly, you even neglect the Poetry Center of Chicago, which is housed at SAIC! Not to mention, the behemoth Poetry Foundation, right down the street. SAIC has ties, especially through faculty, to the experimental poetics community in town, as well as the hybrid genre writing of performance and multimedia artists like Mathew Goulish and Mark Booth. But that is not reflected in your guide. Even the roundtable advertised on the back cover neglects poetry of any kind: "experimental," traditional lyric, slam, or otherwise. As someone deeply devoted to contemporary poetry and poetics, whose artistic life thrives in and because of Chicago's literary scene, I am aware that other genres are generally more popular. But the uniform omission of poetry from your guide to Chicago "Literature" (big L?) implies that the genre, in its myriad manifestations, deserves to be grouped under some other rubric. What would that rubric be?

Patrick F. Durgin
Faculty, SAIC
Liberal Arts & Writing

What people are saying online at the F Newsmagazine forum:

Re: Andy Yang's Taking Credit. Giving Credit. Faking Credit.

This is a very serious matter in many schools, not just in the SAIC community, but from what I have read it seems there is less punishment for plagiarism. I am not sure if there have been students who have been expelled due to plagiarism, but in most academic based colleges there are no if, ands, or buts, for the student is simply expelled from the school. Without the fear of expulsion, I believe that students put themselves in the situation where they hope that they can get away with plagiarism, but they tell themselves the worst that can happen is loss of credit. Basically it is a risk they are willing to take.

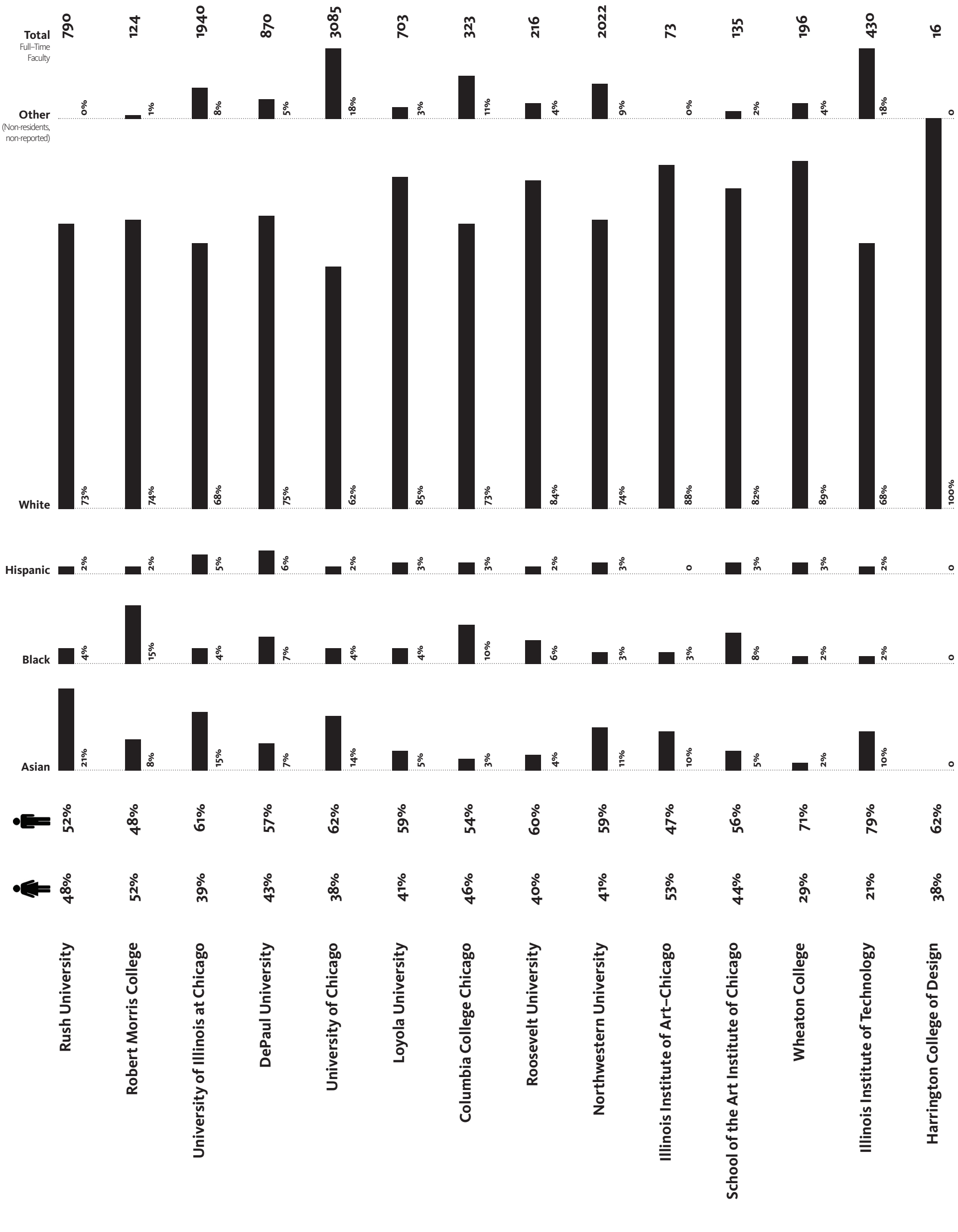
Class motivation brought on by the instructor is another thing.

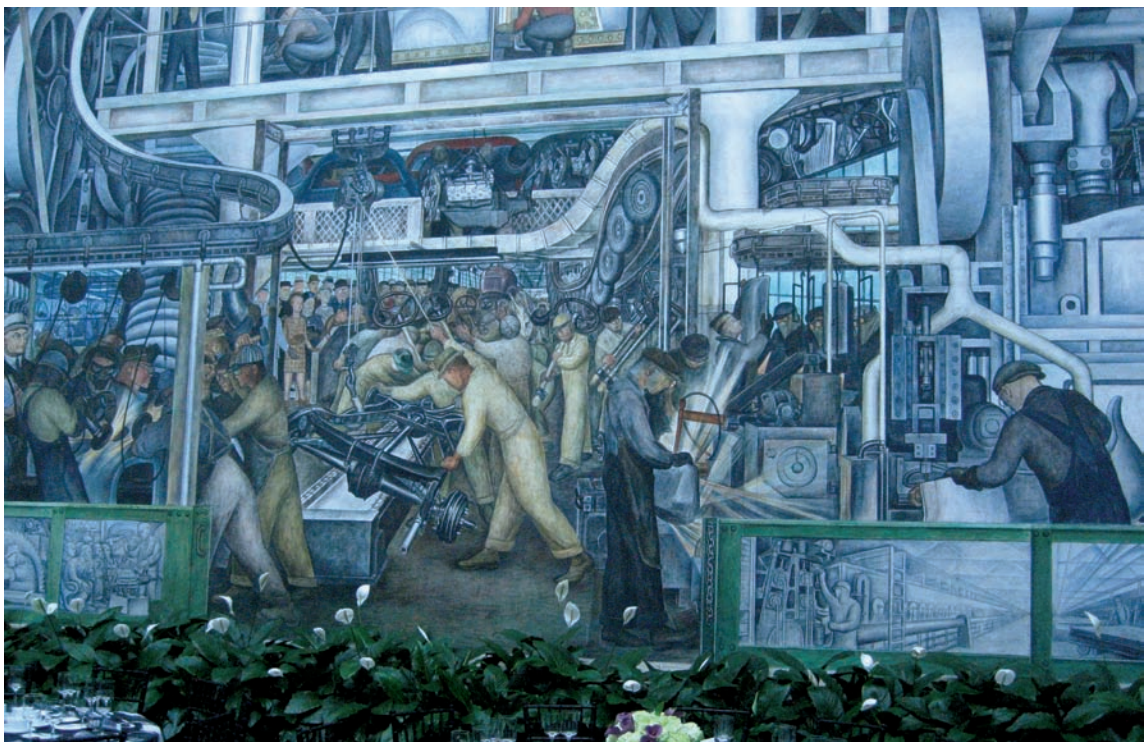
Enthusiastically enthralling the class into loving it may be a benefit, where more students may actually lose the "whatever" attitude; However having a boring teacher in a boring class does not legitimize plagiarism. The students may have a more "whatever" attitude, but it is not the teacher's job to make a student not plagiarize. It is not their job to make a student take full advantage of their college experience. If the student "half-asses" their way through SAIC, then that is their fault for wasting a very advantageous experience and skills at SAIC. Teachers have to enforce their rules, for student's behaviors should not influence the teaching style presented by the teacher. If a teacher turns a blind eye to these behaviors then it is apparent that the teacher may not even care that the student is doing that, but that will be the student's loss in the end. By making the rules very clear and bringing forth the plagiarism directly to the student in an ill-fated way (toward their education and own development) this is the only thing a teacher can really do. A teacher sometimes has to rule with an iron fist when they have the best intentions for their students. As long as the teacher presents these problems to the class, and enforces their rules, then they have nothing to fear, for the students need to take advantage of the school, and if they truly do not care then that will be their unfortunate downfall. We cannot hold their hands forever.

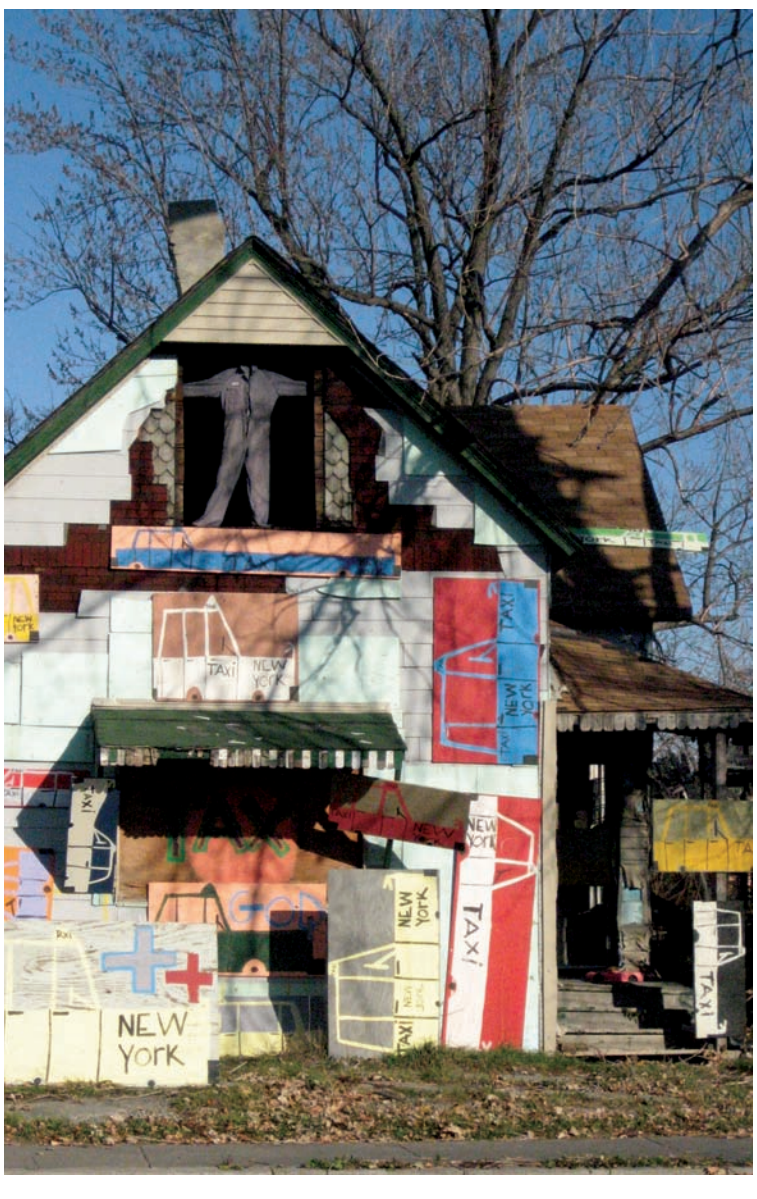
-furiousgeorge

Who's gettin' paid to teach?

White? Male? Then you have a better chance at getting a job in a Chicagoland College or University. The full-time faculty represented in these statistics generally receive benefits like health insurance, pensions and sabbaticals. The statistics do not include the many part-time faculty who make these colleges and universities tick. Statistics were culled from the Chronicle of Higher Education (October 12, 2009), and their source was the US Dept. of Education. **BY ELLIOTT BEAZLEY**







Field Trip to Motown

SAIC Art History professors show students provocative works in Detroit

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY BRANDON KOSTERS

On Saturday, November 14th, SAIC art history professors Daniel Quiles and Kymberly Pinder took a group of students to see two significant artworks in Detroit: Diego Rivera's mural Detroit Industry in the Detroit Institute of Arts, and The Heidelberg Project by Tyree Guyton.

Daniel Quiles, who teaches the course "Latin America: The Last Avant Garde" said, "My initial impulse for going to see ["Detroit Institute"] the [Diego] Rivera murals was as part of a course that I am currently teaching on avant-garde art in Latin America. The Mexican muralists felt that the answer to the question of how to merge art and life would be to create a publicly-situated art with clear messages."

"This happened to coincide with the interests of a class that Kymberly Pinder was teaching ["The History of Mural Painting"]; she knew about the Heidelberg Project [by Tyree Guyton]. In retrospect I think the two works go quite nicely together in a whistle-stop jaunt through Detroit, as testimonies to the optimism of our past and the daunting challenges of our present."

Started in 1986, Guyton's Heidelberg Project utilizes mildew infested stuffed animals, withered houses, auto industry detritus, and a myriad of other found objects, Guyton's Heidelberg Project paradoxically links spirituality to commodification, and kitsch to social toxins in urban environments."

Produced 1932-33, Diego Rivera's Detroit Industry consists of twenty seven frescoes paintings that fill the walls of the inner court of the Detroit Institute of the Arts. Workers in the auto industry are depicted working in the factory for The Ford Motor Company. The workers toil while bourgeois citizens are depicted spectating their activity from a safe distance. The upper panels of the mural feature references to religion and technology.

Quiles said, "The key difference between Rivera and Guyton is the whole structuring condition of the commission. Rivera comes to Detroit and can only execute his work with the permission of the ruling elite of the city, industrialists like Henry Ford, and the director of the Detroit Institute of Arts, William Valentiner, who are pictured together in the bottom right of one of the largest murals."

"Guyton Represents the diametric opposite of this situation," Quiles said. "His work is borne of the post-industrial moment and its abandonment of vast urban spaces and populations. Here we must consider the fact that the city of Detroit has partially demolished the work twice and has not ruled out doing so again in the future."

Pinder said, "A link that can be made [between the two works] would be that both are types of public art that addresses the theme of labor and a disenfranchised sector of society. The Heidelberg Project is an expression of this sector taking back their autonomy and creating something out of nothing to stand as a very visible symbol of perseverance and the power of art making."

Visit the multimedia section of fnewsmagazine.com to see more images.

Grave Reminders

Streetside Memorials Promote Bicycle Safety

Isai Medina's ghost bike installed at Western and Cortez
Photograph courtesy Taleen Kalenderian

BY CAROLINE LIEBMAN

Just before midnight on January 4, 2006, 50 year-old Isai Medina was walking his bike down the sidewalk near Western Avenue and Cortez when a drunk driver swerved and hit him. Medina, an avid participant in Chicago Critical Mass, was known for his hand-built, flashy, custom bikes known as "choppers." A one-of-a-kind, chopper-style ghost bike rests near the area where the accident occurred.

Ghost bikes covered in white paint and chained to street posts are quiet memorials that mark scenes of fatal bicycle accidents. Made of donated scrap bike parts and stripped of functioning material, ghost bikes in Chicago are built independently by family and friends of cyclists killed by cars or traffic accidents.

Chicago's first ghost bike, for Medina, was installed during a January 2006 Critical Mass ride. In order to prevent the fresh coat of white paint from wearing off, the ghost bike was towed through the streets, behind another bicycle. Around 400 riders cycled in procession, stopping for a moment of silence at the scene of the accident to light candles and watch as the ghost bike was installed.

Ghost bikes do not represent every person that is killed in a bicycle accident; it is up to the family and friends of the victims to install a ghost bike. They shouldn't discourage cyclists from the form of alternative transportation either- they are reminders to be safe, aware, and to share the road respectfully.

Since Medina's death, the Chicago bike community now mostly installs ghost bikes during the Chicago Ride of Silence, a ten-mile ride that ends at the location of Isai Medina's ghost bike. The ride is solemn. It echoes a funeral procession, honors slain cyclists, and raises awareness for cyclists and drivers.

"It's estimated the number of cyclists on the road in the Chicago area has increased ten times in the last eight years, even more recently with [the increase in] gas prices. There are new laws to protect cyclists, but even with new legislation drivers are urged to use caution for their sake and the safety of others on the road," according to Leah Hope on WLS-TV News.

Matthew Manger-Lynch, 29, came from a family of mountain bikers, and began road biking in Paris, France, where he lived for five years in order to attend culinary school.

The "Tour Da Chicago" Alleycat street race began in the early morning hours of February 2, 2008. When Manger-Lynch crossed the red-lighted intersection of Lincoln and Irving Park Avenues to pull ahead of a group of about 40 riders, that day's race ended the Chicago Tribune reported. He was struck and killed by an SUV (that had a green light at the time) at 9:15 am. The popular race, a cyclist's battle of speed and skill, has little regard for traffic laws. Manger-Lynch was a serious cyclist with intentions to participate in future official cycling competitions.

22-year-old Tyler Fabeck of Logan Square worked at the Chicago Apple Store as a visual merchandising manager and studied film and photography at Columbia College of Chicago. According to the Star Tribune, he was a Critical Mass participant and a dedicated cyclist. On April 20th of 2008 at about 1:15 a.m., Fabeck was struck and killed at the intersection of Western Avenue and Logan Boulevard.

They shouldn't discourage cyclists from the form of alternative transportation either. They are reminders to be safe, aware, and to share the road respectfully.

Graphic designer Clinton Miceli's bike was his primary mode of transportation. On June 9 of 2008, Miceli was killed on his bicycle when an SUV door suddenly opened in front of him, ejecting him into traffic. He was on his way home from work when the accident happened in the River North neighborhood at the 900 block of North La Salle Street.

Ryan Boudreau, 27, was a bike messenger for the city of Chicago. Boudreau raced through traffic, dealing with snarky drivers and pedestrians on a daily basis in order to make a living. He enjoyed every second of it. The Sun-Times reported that on August 13, 2007, Boudreau was on a personal errand, hustling to return to work around 3:15 p.m. when he was hit by an oncoming truck near the intersection of Clark and 18th Street.

Reverend Pavlo Hayda, 42, joined the priesthood in 1982 and attended St. Basil's College Seminary in Stamford, Connecticut. In 1986, he received a master's degree from the Catholic Theological Union in Hyde Park. He was ordained at St. George Cathedral, Ukraine in 1992. He was the priest at St. Joseph's Ukrainian Byzantine Catholic Church in Des Plaines, IL and became the pastor in July of 2005. Hayda was hit by an SUV that was exiting the driveway of an apartment complex at the 1900 block of East Oak Street in Des Plaines on September 4, 2007.

At the intersection of Diversey and Pulaski Avenue on June 26, 2006, George Chavez, 42, was killed in a hit-and-run accident.

Wicker Park resident Alicia Frantz had "a finely tuned sensitivity to the beauty and music most of us hear and ignore every day," according to her memorial on the ghostbikes.org website. She began archiving every-day sounds in 2002. Frantz fell under the wheels of a truck on Division Street near the Kennedy Expressway, on the day of her 32nd birthday, June 6, 2005 .

A cyclist named Chris was struck at the 4600 block of West Madison Street on January 28,

Liza Whitacre's ghost bike at Damen and Wellington near Hamlin Park
Photograph courtesy Caroline Liebman

Blanca Ocasio's ghost bike at the intersection of Armitage and Kedzie Ave
Photograph courtesy Taleen Kalenderian

Mandy Annis's ghost bike at the intersection of Humboldt Blvd and Kedzie Ave
Photograph courtesy Taleen Kalenderian

2006. His family and friends requested that only his first name be used in the memorial.

Liza Whitacre, 20, was as passionate about coffee and French as she was about life. The Loyola University junior had been an employee and official trainer at Chicago's Metropolis Coffee. On October 21, 2009, as she rode with her roommate south on Damen Avenue at Wellington, she attempted to bike between a CTA bus and a truck as the intersection's light turned green. Whitacre fell from her bike, landing underneath the truck, unbeknownst to the truck's driver.

Logan Square resident Blanca Ocasio, 19, was a sophomore at Northeastern University who was interested in becoming a pharmacist. She was riding her bike eastbound on Armitage around 4 p.m. when she was struck by a garbage truck driving in the same direction, according to WLS-TV News. This past September marked the two-year anniversary of her death. Colorful flowers and small stuffed animals adorn the child-sized ghost bike that memorializes the crash site at the intersection of Armitage and Kedzie Avenues.

Mandy Annis, 24, another Logan Square resident, was a fifth grade teacher at Chicago's Humbolt Community Christian School. She moved to Chicago from Romania, where she spent most of her childhood, to attend Moody Bible Institute. She sold her car when she realized that she could bike everywhere. Annis was riding west on Armitage Avenue when she was hit by a car and killed on May 2, 2008, at the same intersection as Ocasio (although her ghost bike was moved a block east to the intersection of Armitage and Humbolt, out of respect for Ocasio's ghost bike installed later that year). According to the Chicago Tribune, Annis's boyfriend was about to propose to her that weekend.

For more information check out bikechicago.info/ghostbikes.

Silence Speaks Volumes

Ride of Silence memorializes fallen cyclists

BY CAROLINE LIEBMAN

If you're looking for Elizabeth Adamczyk and she's not at work, chances are she's on her bike, the same one she pulled out of her parent's garage in the suburbs of Glenwood, Illinois, six years ago. Since a knee injury set Elizabeth back from running, her bicycling habits have turned from rehabilitation into a routine lifestyle. It's a lifestyle that Elizabeth is quick to defend and has taken to heart with the organization of Chicago's Ride of Silence, a ride dedicated to cyclists locally and worldwide that have been killed in bike-related accidents.

The Ride of Silence began in 2003 in Dallas, Texas, by Chris Phelan after endurance cyclist Larry Schwartz was struck and killed by a passing bus mirror. After other cities' cyclists found out about Phelan's silent memorial ride, the idea gradually spread throughout cities worldwide. The Ride found its way to Chicago in 2005, when Adamczyk made her first attempt at informally organizing one. For the first few years, the number of riders stayed small. In 2006, with better planning, better advertising, and a small coordinated effort with the Chicago Bicycle Federation and the Active Transportation Alliance, about 50 riders came out. The following year, a thunderstorm reduced the number of riders to a dozen. Since then, the numbers have increased to 150 riders just this past May, but it's hard to gain a following for such a solemn event. Adamczyk wishes she "could get more riders that come out for critical mass or that come out to do other bike rides . . . but it's not something that is necessarily considered fun. It is an honor to memorialize someone."

Not all the accidents are safety-related either, some are circumstantial; judgment lapses, daydreams happen just as often as unknown bumps in the road.

Although she has never had a major bike accident or personally lost someone to a cyclist-related death, Adamczyk has seen enough close calls to know that raising awareness is key. "Even if it's just one ride, riding with all of these other riders . . . on that one night, at that one time, it's raising awareness that cyclists have a right to share the roads."

She's met the families of Tyler Fabeck, Clinton Miceli, Dick Herron, and Mandy Annis, four Chicago cyclists who have all had "ghost bikes" dedicated to memorializing their death within the past two years. Recently, ghost bike dedications have happened in conjunction with Chicago's Ride of Silence, but Adamczyk explains that not every family wants or is ready for a "ghost bike." These "ghost bikes" are made of spare bike parts, covered in white paint, usually marked with the name of the cyclist and the date of their death, and then chained at or near the intersection where the cyclist died. Although Mandy Annis passed away in 2008, the family requested her ghost bike be installed in May of 2009 because, "they just weren't ready for it right away . . . the death had been so fresh . . . and [the bike is] a constant reminder."

Seeing Clinton Miceli's mother bike in the Ride of Silence last year had a tremendous effect on Adamcyzk: "Even though I haven't been personally affected, meeting the families, experiencing the close calls, and hearing about the close calls that friends of mine have had . . . it just feels so personal. You can't help but get choked up when you participate in this ride."

After cyclist Liza Whitaker's recent death at the corner of Damen and Wellington, in close proximity to Adamczyk's neighborhood, Elizabeth realizes it could have easily been her. Not all the accidents are safety related either, some are circumstantial; judgment lapses, daydreams happen just as often as unknown bumps in the road. Playing into confrontation with motorists, what Adamczyk calls "fueling the heat," doesn't help bike culture for the Chicago cycling community, and it certainly doesn't help the bad stigma between cyclists and motorists.

Adamczyk is a firm believer that getting motorists on a bike to see the cyclist's perspective can only improve the relationship between cars and bikes. She knows there's a welcome place for everyone in the cycling community. "The weekend roadie, the mountain bike person who wants to be on the trails, the cyclo-cross, the recreational lakefront path user, the mom with a family that uses the bike with the kids, the car free person or family, the commuter."

Adamczyk has become a more aware all-season cyclist by volunteering for Bike to Ride, the Boulevard Lakefront Tour, and Lake ride, along with researching blogs and forums. Being a part of the Active Transportation Alliance and attending Bike Advisory Council meetings that are open to the public have been eye-opening; "learning about the city organization, what they're trying to do . . . you can voice your concerns, you have a say, you're a part of it."

Pedal Power

Degreasing patriarchy with Abby Gordon, organizer of Chicago's Clitical Mass, an all female bike ride

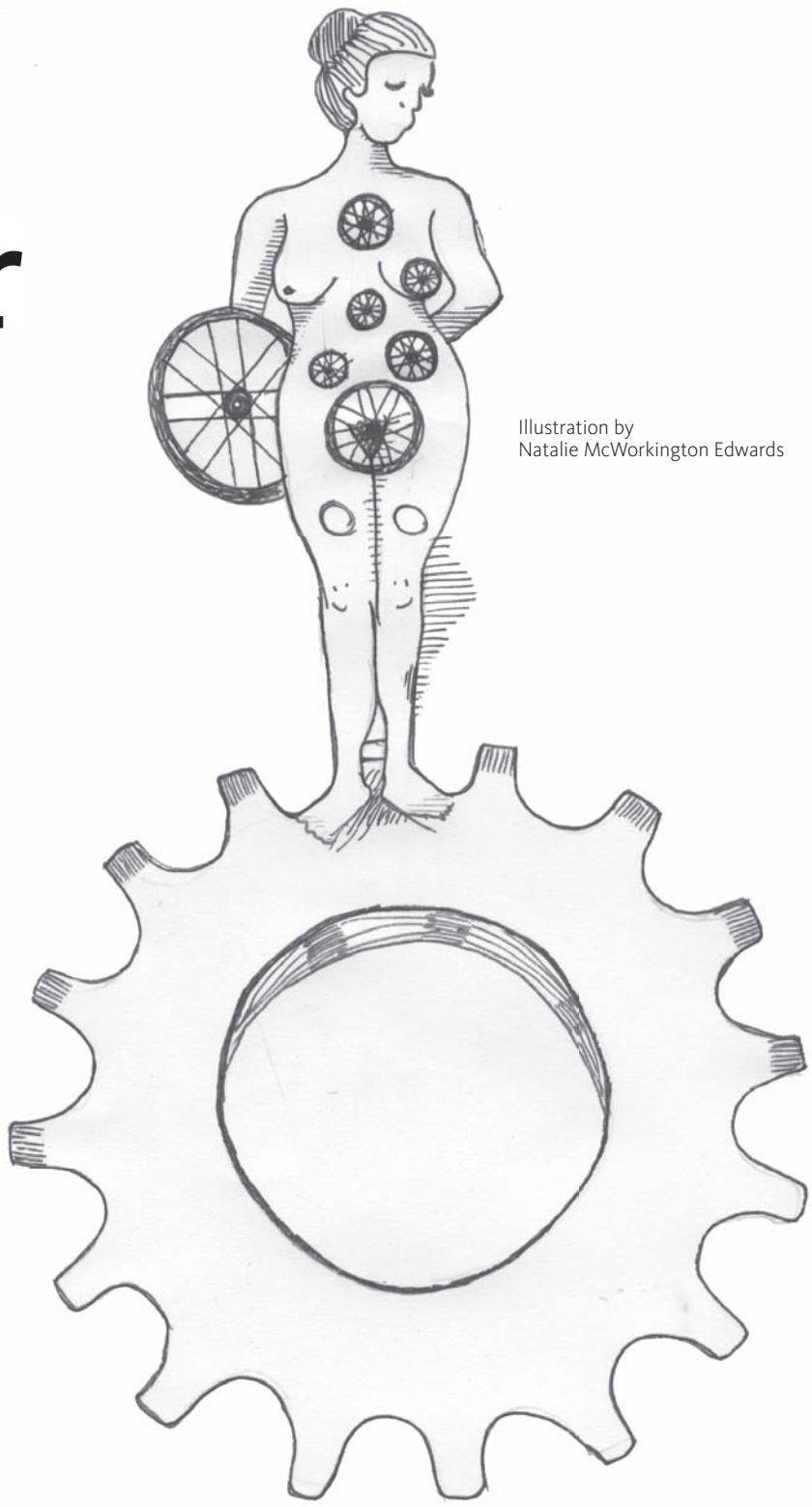


Illustration by
Natalie McWorkington Edwards

BY SILAS REEVES

The male dominated culture of Critical Mass bike rides prompted a DIY activist movement for mass rides to include GLBTQ bikers and empower female cyclists. The growing movement's name came from a zine called "Clitical Mass" that inspired SAIC student Abby Gordon's book club to take political action.

SR: How did you get started with Clitical Mass here in Chicago?

AG: Clitical Mass started in Pittsburgh when I had a feminist collective going on there. We would have meetings and talk about ways to involve more women in the queer community and the bike community.

This spawned the idea of a Clitical Mass. We had been to a lot of the Critical Masses and found that we weren't so welcome there. We felt more invisible than visible because our presence was seen as being accepted, even though it wasn't. We felt alienated. We felt that we weren't welcome as women.

So we came up with the idea of a clitical mass, which would be an all-female bike ride in response to this male-dominated culture which we had all been dealing with, at that time, pretty harshly.

I was working at a bike shop at that point and coming into a lot of problems with the owner who had been discriminating against me and various other women who had been working with bikes or in collectives.

We felt that we need to start changing things and our way of doing that was starting Clitical Mass, an all-female bike ride.

As I became more involved in the Chicago bike culture, I began to see more and more of the (same) problems [here].

My friends and I had a feminist book club that we started on a whim...Typically, we'd pick books that would spawn some sort of activist related action that we could do. I brought in this zine called "Clitical Mass" which was written by a friend of mine from back home (in Pittsburgh), Andulhisa Nole.

We were reading through this, and being like, "Hey, man! We all ride bikes and have these problems." We all got really excited and thought, "Hey! We should start a Clitical Mass here." Since we all have experience with Critical Masses, we knew how to structure our Clitical Mass. We screen-printed flyers and posters and wheat-pasted them around town, used the Internet. We got a decent amount of women together for the first mass.

SR: How was the first ride of Clitical Mass?

AG: It started out really well. We had a power circle going on. We had all the women meet at the fountain in Wicker Park and then we rode to Pilsen, [and] Harrison Park.

In the beginning, it was great. We all sat around [and] talked about what we wanted out of this ride, what our goals were, and discussed some general rules and boundaries we would all follow. We wanted this to create a really collective consciousness. We didn't want anyone to be a leader. We didn't want anyone to be a follower. We wanted everyone to have equal input in what we were doing and what our goals were. [This] was difficult because there were a core group of six women that did...all the work to create this, but once we were in this space as women on bikes, we wanted it to be an equal exchange of ideas and opinions and work.

There were some altercations... At one point, a car clipped a woman, but she didn't get harmed. There was some response from some of the women that I found troubling, and I think part of that was due to the fierce passion that we had at that time. We had such a rush of adrenaline.

We should've talked about what our goals were for a little longer. That's not something they do at a Critical Mass. It's not something we're used to doing. We don't sit in a fucking circle at a Critical Mass and talk about what we want out of this, we just ride our bikes, and that's why Clitical Mass is different.

Our point is to be visible where we're invisible, so we wanted to give everyone a chance to speak. However, there were a few people who had different ideas of what a Clitical Mass is. In the end, the fall 2009 ride was extremely successful for the first Clitical Mass Chicago, and it was a great turnout.

SR: What do you see as the future of Clitical Mass?

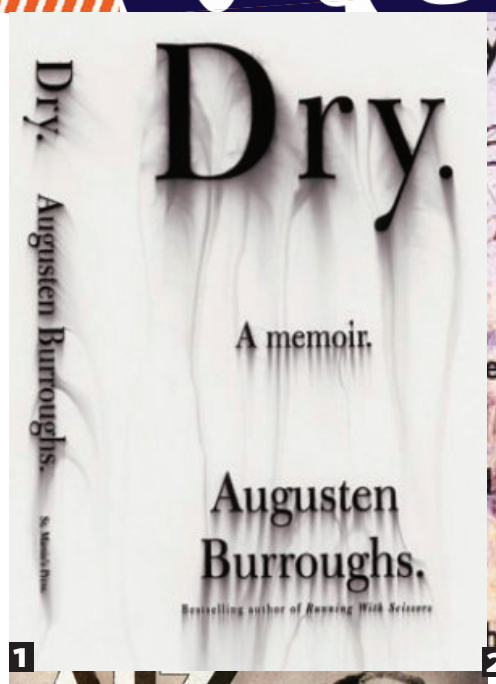
"We wanted this to create a really collective consciousness. We didn't want anyone to be a leader. We didn't want anyone to be a follower."

AG: I see it getting as big as Critical Mass. How many men and women are there in Chicago? Fairly equally amount. How many of them ride bikes? Probably a fairly equal amount. I would say my hope for Clitical Mass is for it to be a mass...the size of a Critical Mass. It's important to think how Clitical Mass can help shape bike culture.

I also want to mention that it's a women and trans mass. People that are invisible in our society are welcome in this mass, and we hope it gains momentum. It did in Pittsburgh. We had 100 or 150 people at one of our last rides there. So, for a mass that's completely outside of regulation, outside of Critical Mass, that's more DIY than critical. That's our goal.

Another Clitical Mass was spawned because we didn't organize for the following month. Some other people got one together, which is exactly our hope. It was really hectic putting the first one together and the struggle was definitely worth it. And someone else picked it up. Someone else started a Clitical Mass. I know that word of mouth spreads quickly. There's Clitical Masses in Paris, London, Pittsburgh. I think that one mass will gain attention and word will spread, and we'll have Clitical Masses everywhere.

d3sign



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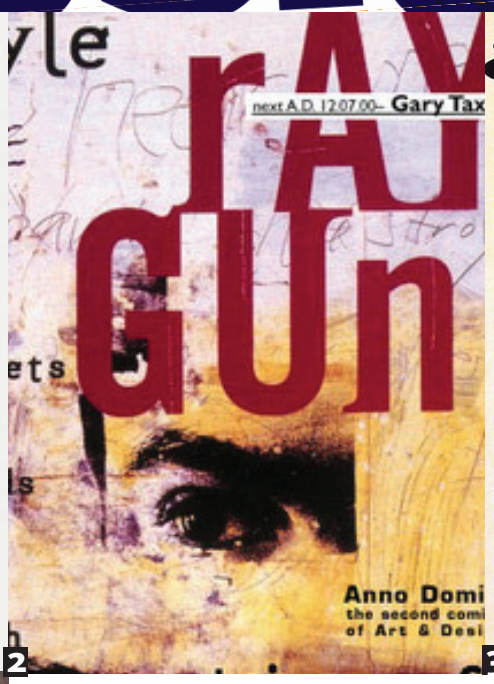

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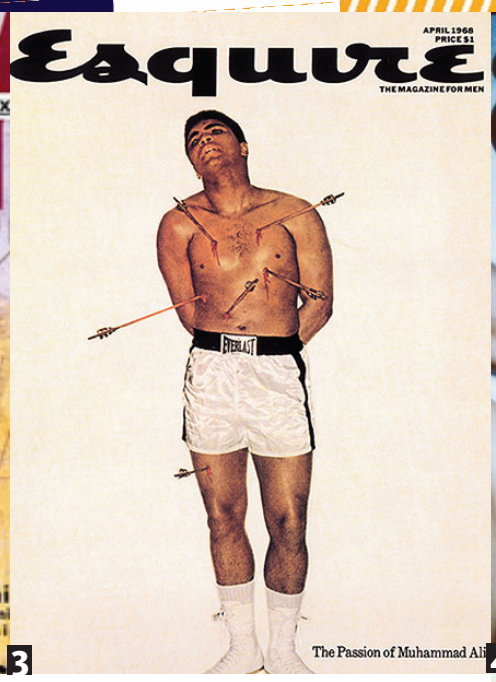

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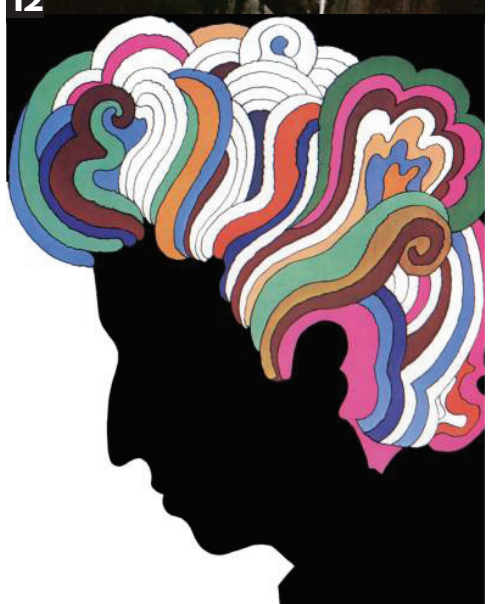

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QUIZ

12 OF OUR DESIGN HEROES

Can you match the work to its creator?

1	____	A	Milton Glaser
2	____	B	Saul Bass
3	____	C	Rodchenko
4	____	D	Neville Brody
5	____	E	Mario Garcia
6	____	F	David Carson
7	____	G	Janet Froehlich
8	____	H	John Heartfield
9	____	I	Chip Kidd
10	____	J	Rodrigo Sanchez
11	____	K	George Lois
12	____	L	Paul Rand

(Answers below)

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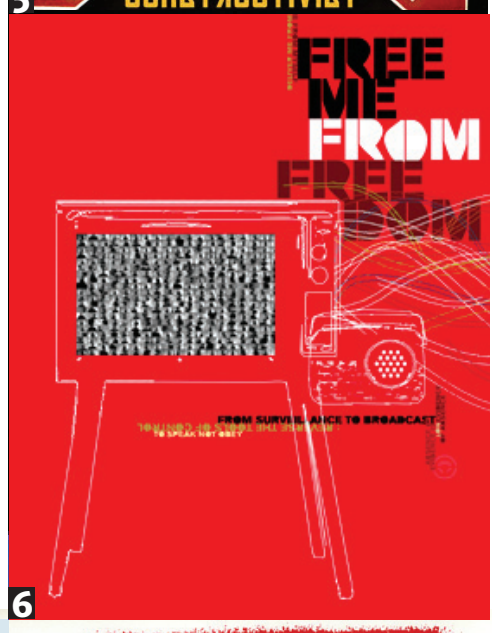

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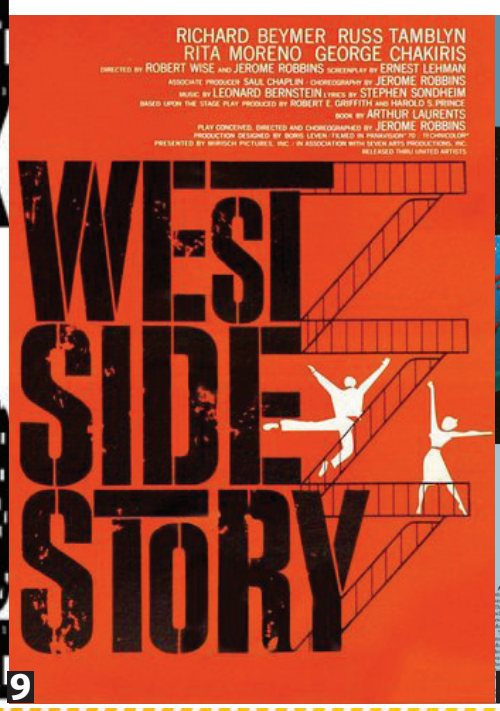

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FOR CAPSULE BIOGRAPHIES OF THESE DESIGNERS, TURN THE PAGE

ANSWERS 1 (I) 2 (F) 3 (K) 4 (G) 5 (C) 6 (D) 7 (L) 8 (E) 9 (B) 10 (J) 11 (A) 12 (H)

DESIGN HEROES

These twelve badasses revolutionized graphic design. Protecting the public from mundane magazine spreads, boring book covers, and no-fun front pages, these artists brought innovation to graphic design in the fields of photomontage, logo design, illustration, and typography. Oh, and each individual profile below was designed by a first-time designer, an amateur — a hero-in-training, if you will.

MARIO GARCIA

THE DADDY WARBUCKS OF DESIGN

WHY HE MATTERS: Garcia designs for print, online, and even mobile devices but he's most famous as the king of newspaper redesign.

NOTABLE CLIENTS: The Wall Street Journal, the San Francisco Examiner, the Miami Herald and close to 500 other papers around the world.

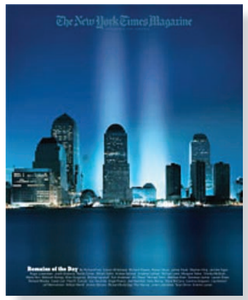
HOW HE WORKS: When redesigning newspapers, he doesn't just think about visual redesign but content as well as saying, "A redesign is like plastic surgery. It can change your nose, but not your personality."

PARTING SHOT: Where does he see the future of newspapers? Tabloid design and more celebrity/fashion/trend pieces.

—WHITNEY STOEPEL

JANET FROELICH

THE HANDSOME ONE



MANY HATS: A designer, an art director, a self-proclaimed "visual journalist," and an altogether handsome woman.

RÉSUMÉ: Former creative director for The New York Times Magazine, current creative director for Real Simple.

GOLD STARS: Froelich has won more than 60 gold and silver awards for her bold art direction and she was inducted into the Art Directors Hall of Fame in 2006.

FAMOUS IMAGE: She designed the 9/11 cover for the Times Magazine, which showed beams of light rising from Ground Zero where the towers once stood.

—ANNA WOLAK

RODRIGO SANCHEZ

THE TRANSFORMER

SUPER STRENGTHS: Art director. Graphic designer. Journalist.

HERO'S RESUME: Sanchez is the art director of the newspaper El Mundo and its supplements — Metropoli and La Revista. He uses typographic solutions instead of photography, challenging other designers to rise to the level of his creativity.

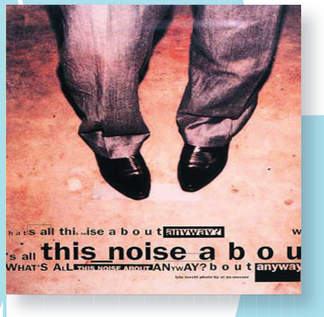
HIDEAWAY BUNK: This famous graphic designer flexes his design muscles in Madrid, Spain.

MOTTO: "Design has a lot to do with personality change and life itself. But life is unpredictable."

—HEATHER LIGGINS

DAVID CARSON

THE FATHER OF GRUNGE?



WHO: A publication designer who is also responsible for a line of surf apparel by Quicksilver.

WHAT: Carson was the art director of Transworld Skateboarding magazine prior to taking over the design of Ray Gun magazine.

WHERE: SoCal was the base for both of the magazines that Carson worked with, although he owns studios on both coasts.

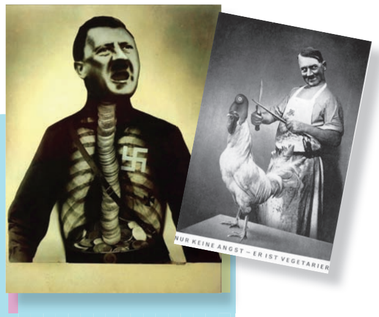
HEROICS: Used dingbat font exclusively for a Bryan Ferry interview.

IMPRESSIVE: "The End of Print: The Graphic Design of David Carson" is the best-selling book on design ever released.

—DAVE CANTOR

JOHN HEARTFIELD

THE ANTI-ANTI-SEMITE



WHO: John Heartfield was a German artist who specialized in photomontage. He was a member of the Berlin Dada group and the Communist Party of Germany.

WHAT: He is most widely known for the covers he designed for Die Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung (Workers' Illustrated Magazine or AIZ).

WHY: Heartfield was unafraid to use his art to make strong political commentary. One of his famous covers for AIZ is Adolf the Superman, a photo of Hitler overlaid with an X-ray that shows him swallowing coins. The caption reads, "Adolf the Superman, Swallows Gold and Spouts Tin." It was a criticism of Hitler's financial backing by wealthy German Industrialists in spite of his promotion of socialism.

—NICOLE NELSON

MILTON GLASER

MOST LIKELY TO BE BETTER THAN YOU

WHY YOU SHOULD CARE: Founded New York Magazine and the "I (heart) New York" logo which found its way onto every t-shirt and coffee mug in America. Also designed his stencil, the "glaser stencil", because he kicks ass.

THE GLASER DESIGN FOR LIFE: "Style is not to be trusted. Some people are toxic, avoid them." Design should be ethical and the designer bold, model and dignified. Don't work for money...cause you probably won't make any. Let your design be your reward.

—CHRIS TURPIN

PAUL RAND

AMERICAN MODERNIST

WHO HE IS: Corporate logo designer

WHAT HE'S DONE: Created company branding and logos for UPS, IBM and, infamously, Enron.

WHERE HE WORKED: *Apparel Arts Magazine*, *Esquire/Coronet*

WHY HE'S A HERO: Rand is the alpha and omega of modernist corporate design

WHEN: Created his most famous works in the 1950s and 60s, lived 1914-1996.

FUN FACT: Rand resigned as a professor from Yale University in 1992 after the hiring of a controversial, anti-modernist designer.

—NICKI YOWELL

NEVILLE BRODY

THE DESIGN ANARCHIST

WHO: Graphic designer, art director, typographer, founded The Studio in London, head of Research Studios.

CLIENTS: Fetish Magazine, FontWorks, The Face, Arena, Fuse, Issey Miyake, Adidas-Salomon, British Airways, Macromedia, Armani, Nike, Sony, The Dutch National Post Office, and BBC

WHY HE'S A HERO: He designed a number of typefaces that are visible in everything from advertising to rock biographies, fashion magazines, album and magazine covers. By incorporating and combining typefaces, he created an opening for digital type design.

FUN FACT: He was almost thrown out of college for putting the Queen of England's head sideways on a postage stamp.

—CAROLINE O. LIEBMAN

ALEXANDER RODCHENKO

CAPTAIN OF CONSTRUCTIVISM

WHO: Rodchenko was an artist, photographer, and designer working in the 1910s and 1920s, before, during and after the Russian Revolution. His graphic work involves photomontage, a primary palate, sharp diagonals, geometric shapes, and bold typefaces.

WHY: He worked only for social change and reform and designed book covers, union posters, and covers of the leftist art journal, LEF. He was the face of Russian avant-garde and one of the most important pioneers of modern graphic design. His bold, progressive style continues to be an inspiration to artists and designers today.

HEROICS: He rejected the term "art" as bourgeois and channeled his passion into producing socially useful creations.

—MIA DIMEO

GEORGE LOIS

MAGAZINE DESIGNER EXTRAORDINAIRE

WHO: An American art director as well as a prolific advertising manager.

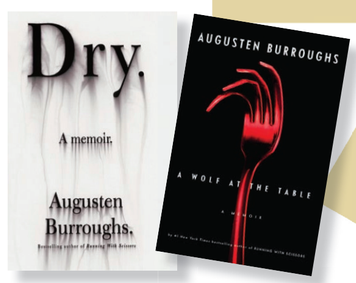
CLIENTS: Esquire Magazine, Xerox, VH1, MTV, Lean Cuisine, Tommy Hilfiger, Jiffy Lube, USA Today, Herald Tribune.

WHY: Famous primarily for his impact on magazine design with his extensive series of covers for Esquire Magazine, Lois's '92 covers were recently featured in a retrospective at MoMA. Lois's covers, which often inspired controversy, are now looked upon as visual icons of the 1960s, forcing Americans to confront such controversial issues as racism, feminism, and the Vietnam War. He is also known for popularizing Xerox culture, beginning VH1 and running the "I Want My MTV" campaign.

—AMANDA ALDINGER

CHIP KIDD

HUNTER-GATHERER



WHO: Chip Kidd is a book cover designer based in Manhattan. He studied at Penn State where he mocked up book covers for John Updike, who he would later do actual covers for.

WHAT: Updike writes about Kidd: "Can he draw? Presumably, yet the mark of his pen or pencil rarely figures into his work. His tool is the digital computer, with its ever more ingenious graphics programs. In the ever-expanding electronic archives of scannable photographic imagery, he is a hunter-gatherer."

HOW MANY: Kidd has turned out jacket designs at an average of 75 a year, and is currently art director at Knopf Publishing, a division of Random House.

—TALEEN KALENDARIAN

SAUL BASS

HOLLYWOOD STAR

WHO: Saul Bass played an unusually glamorous role working in film. One can tell the plot and outcome of a movie by carefully watching the design of his opening credits.

WORKED FOR: Alfred Hitchcock, Otto Preminger, Stanley Kubrick, and Martin Scorsese.

WHY HE'S A HERO: When Otto Preminger's film, "The Man with the Golden Arm" first arrived in theaters, projectionists were instructed to pull the curtain back before the opening credits. Before this time, the opening credits had never been shown because they were infamously dull. Saul Bass changed that.

WHEN: The 1950s and 60s

FUN FACT: Also designed the AT&T Bell logo.

—BRITANY ROBINSON

This is obviously a VERY incomplete list. To propose your own additions, go to fnewsmagazine.com/forum

Obama '08 logo, Courtesy of Sol Sender

Designing Obama

Sol Sender, leader of creative development for the Obama '08 campaign logo, discusses his creative process

INTERVIEW BY CAITLIN SHRINER

Preliminary logo options, Screenshots from VSA Partners' interview with Sol Sender

Sol Sender shaped a new look for political campaigns when he designed President Obama's campaign logo, but he took an unconventional path to design stardom. He graduated from Bowdoin College in 1992 with a major in religion and a minor in studio arts. He began his design education while working at Kinko's in the computer services and publishing department, and after tooling around wtih the design programs and finding inspiration from a fellow employee, he entered the SAIC Post-baccalaureate program. He went on to receive an MFA in Visual Communications in 1999.

F NEWSMAGAZINE: What were your initial thoughts when you were approached by the Obama campaign?

SOL SENDER: Steve Jurris, also an SAIC grad, contacted me about the project. It was almost Christmas so I had to figure out how the team would be structured to work on it because everyone was battering for holidays. I made sure everyone was going to be available. I read both of the books that Obama had written to get a better sense of what ideas we might develop for the mark.

The idea for the new day was something that was mentioned early on, although we didn't take it literally immediately. Hope was central to the theme of the book, and there was a lot about not being a red state or a blue state, and a unification theme that ran through his most recent book, "The Audacity of Hope." Those were the kind of themes we picked up on and explored.

We wondered about the formal relationship between "OB" and "'08". Turned out that was not a great avenue, because it didn't really celebrate story. The investigations that we did on hope and unification and this idea of new day in American politics, those ended up being the most fruitful and interesting areas to explore.We had a ton of options in the beginning, whittled those down and showed the campaign eight or nine. They were really pleased with presentation and wanted to move forward so we did more development around them and thought they might be used. Then they narrowed it down to two options.

We recommended the one that was chosen. It was quite innovative as a portable mark because generally there hadn't been logos, but it was also one of the more conservative options because it used red, white, and blue. I was clear in my opinion that it was going to be an important component and that we didn't go too far out of the box that it didn't have a traditional patriotic foundation. We wanted to reinforce the connection of experience and patriotism. He is sort of representing the American dream in many ways that worked out well.

F: The development of a mark veered drastically from prior political campaign work. What influenced that move? Were there any political graphic contexts that were influential?

We were not inspired at all by political graphics of the past. There wasn't anything we could find to be inspired by.

SS: We did some research as far as American political graphics in presidential campaigns, but the more we looked, the more we realized that there wasn't a lot to admire. I think that our work and our ideas came from a more corporate and commercial branding space developing marks and logotypes for more traditional brands.

With the mark that was chosen, we felt that it would be great if it could be used independently of the candidate's name. It could get to point that if someone was wearing a tiepin and they wouldn't have to have anything except for that mark to identify themselves as an Obama supporter. I think that was a very important component of our feelings about that particular mark. There wasn't a whole lot of direct marketing, and we were not inspired at all by political graphics of the past. There wasn't anything we could find to be inspired by.

F: Coming from working on a political campaign, what is your opinion on the role of the designer today socially/politically/environmentally? Do you believe that there will be an important role for designers in the future?

SS: We were so buried in the project, and it happened so quickly we didn't have much time to think about the designers' role. We were so flattered and excited to be a part of it. Obviously, I had done some thinking prior to the work, and have done some thinking since. I think that communications plays an important role in the society. When you look at areas designers can impact and play a certain role. For the past decade the AIGA has been focusing on ballot reform and designing ballots as clearly as possible.

Design in the broader sense is a way of thinking and looking for quality and logic. Looking for design principles and principles of clear and simple expression and interface elegance are some problems that we face today. I am not sure that many designers have tapped into that.

As things migrate to the Web, interface becomes our central experience to people's lives. Not only how they get entertainment, read, or get news, but how they manage their finances and ultimately how they will manage their health care. Interface is going to increase in importance and obviously designers have a very strong role to play as far as the quality of experience which can make a significant difference in quality of peoples lives.

F: How do you think that the Obama campaign will influence future campaigns?

SS: I think it certainly impacted McCain's campaign. They were trying to keep up with the Obama campaign with use of social media and other design tactics, but always a number of steps behind. There are a lot of people doing decent work coming from the Republicans' admiration for what Obama did and much can be learned from that. We've seen logos springing forth in smaller campaigns since Obama was elected.

One of the areas in which he has been attacked is the slickness and over-packaging. I'm curious how that will play out in 2012.

My guess would be that we will see more logos. There has been a new bar set, beyond the logo. We handed off the logo to the campaign pretty early, and they did such a magnificent job building out the website and building out a whole language around the logo and their use of typography and the consistency in design language. They certainly set the bar quite high, and people are going to aspire to that and realize there is a new level to rise to when you are running a successful campaign.

F: Both you and another SAIC alum Perry Sheppard played strong roles in the 2008 campaign. Do you think that this speaks about the school?

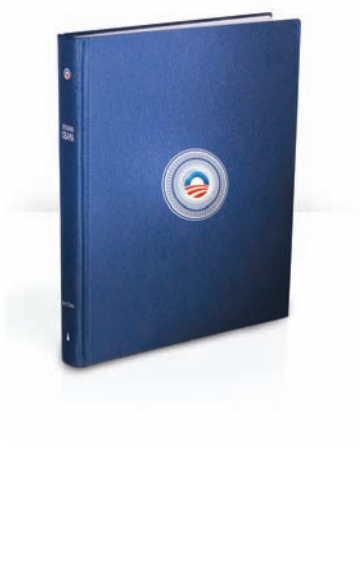
SS: I think that the school, at least while I was there, has a strong social consciousness and looks for cultural intersections. The professors in the Visual Communications Department do work that is political. Ann Tyler does great book work around political issues. BJ Krivanek does great community work that involves installations and works with communities to tell their stories. Steven Farrell is interested in those types of issues as well.

I probably wet pretty far down a commercial rout, maybe further down than I expected, but a lot of SAIC graduates end up in the business world. One of the partners at VSA is an SAIC grad another associate partner is, we have 3 or 4 people there, even one from art and tech. I was happy with the time there and look back on it fondly and am happy to come by now and then. I taught some classes in past years, and hope to again in the future.

Publishing the Obama brand

"Designing Obama" book funded entirely from donations

All seven members of The Post Family, a Chicago art and design collective. Photo courtesy of The Post Family



BY ANNE MORTEL

"Designing Obama", a book chronicling the role of art and design in the Obama campaign is being published unconventionally, using funds raised on the website Kickstarter. Kickstarter is dedicated to helping artists raise money for creative projects and causes. Each project that makes it through Kickstarter's application process has its own fundraising page, and the site tracks the amount of money raised, as well as the number of people who have donated. A total of 1,310 people internationally funded the publishing of "Designing Obama".

Scott Thomas, the Obama campaign's design director, created a consistent identity for Obama's presidential campaign that translated easily from print to web. Two fonts, three colors, and a few subtle gradients made the logo dynamic. Obama's logo, designed by SAIC alumnus Sol Sender, was tweaked to fit multiple uses.

Thomas and The Post Family publish a blog and run a studio and gallery space called The Family Room. David Sieren, a Post Family member, explained that when The Post Family started, every member was interested in publishing books. However, they realized that the cost of publishing can be enormous, making the idea impossible for a group whose initial goal had nothing to do with making money. Publishers contacted Thomas to create a book about the campaign, but most were interested in quick designs and cheap materials to gain the most profit. Thomas wasn't interested. That's when Thomas decided to publish the book independently with the support of the The Post Family. The first Post Press publication raised funds independently online, much like Obama's campaign.

"We used the strengths of the Internet and the strengths of the community to support a project that would otherwise be impossible on our own"

The initial goal was to raise $65,000 to publish the book, but Thomas ended up raising a total of $84,614, the most successful project Kickstarter has sponsored. Fundraising ends when the goal is reached. "We used the strengths of the Internet and the strengths of the community to support a project that would otherwise be impossible on our own," said Sieren. The 360-page hardbound book, available to supporters in February, is a compilation of the artwork that surrounded the Obama campaign. "The great thing about the Obama campaign," Sieren said, "is that there was more non-commissioned than commissioned artwork; people were passionate about this new person on the scene and wanted to make art about it." The work of over one hundred artists is included in the book, from street art to collage, painting, and graphic design. "It all wound its way into public space" Sieren said. You can order the book with a minimum donation of $50 by visiting www.designing-obama.com.

The Post Family used Facebook and Twitter to get Internet communities excited about the book. Just like the Obama campaign, the supporters of the book received updates on fundraising progress along the way. Now the book has been funded and is moving into the production stage. Followers of @designingobama are able to read and respond to posts, such as "shipping the book cloth could take 6 weeks. Ouch! Nice materials or a faster fulfillment. Your thoughts?" Thomas can then use the responses to gauge his decisions on the book.

For more information check the Book's website at www.designing-obama.com or follow it's Twitter, @designingobama.

Installation view of Italics. Courtesy of the MCA.

Eclipsed Histories

"Italics: Italian Art Between Tradition and Revolution" at the Museum of Contemporary Art

BY ANIA SZREMSKI

"I'm a curator, not an art historian…and the two things are completely different." Francesco Bonami's comment on his latest blockbuster exhibition at the MCA is the first indicator of the surprisingly personal, intimate nature of what might otherwise have been a typical encyclopedic show. "Italics: Italian Art Between Tradition and Revolution (1968-2008)" is certainly an attempt to chart a chronology of artistic production in Italy over the past 40 years, but perhaps more interestingly, the show narrates a melancholic tale of artistic careers that traditional art historical narratives have elided—a story crafted from personal histories and nostalgic recollections.

Developed in conjunction with the Palazzo Grassi in Venice (where it was shown in 2008), "Italics" is the sequel to Germano Celant's "Italian Metamorphosis: Italian Art from 1943 to 1967," at the Guggenheim in 1995. The intention of both curators was to make visible a century of work eclipsed from view. While seminal movements like Futurism and Arte Povera managed to make the leap into the international sphere, the majority of Italian artists passed unobserved outside their native country. Operating without an established infrastructure for contemporary arts, in an often oppressive political climate and during times of economic duress, these artists were even further burdened by the crushing weight of their cultural patrimony. Compound this problem with certain latent prejudices in European and North American scholarship in the 20th century, and mid-century Italian artists were faced with almost insurmountable obstacles to recognition, even at home.

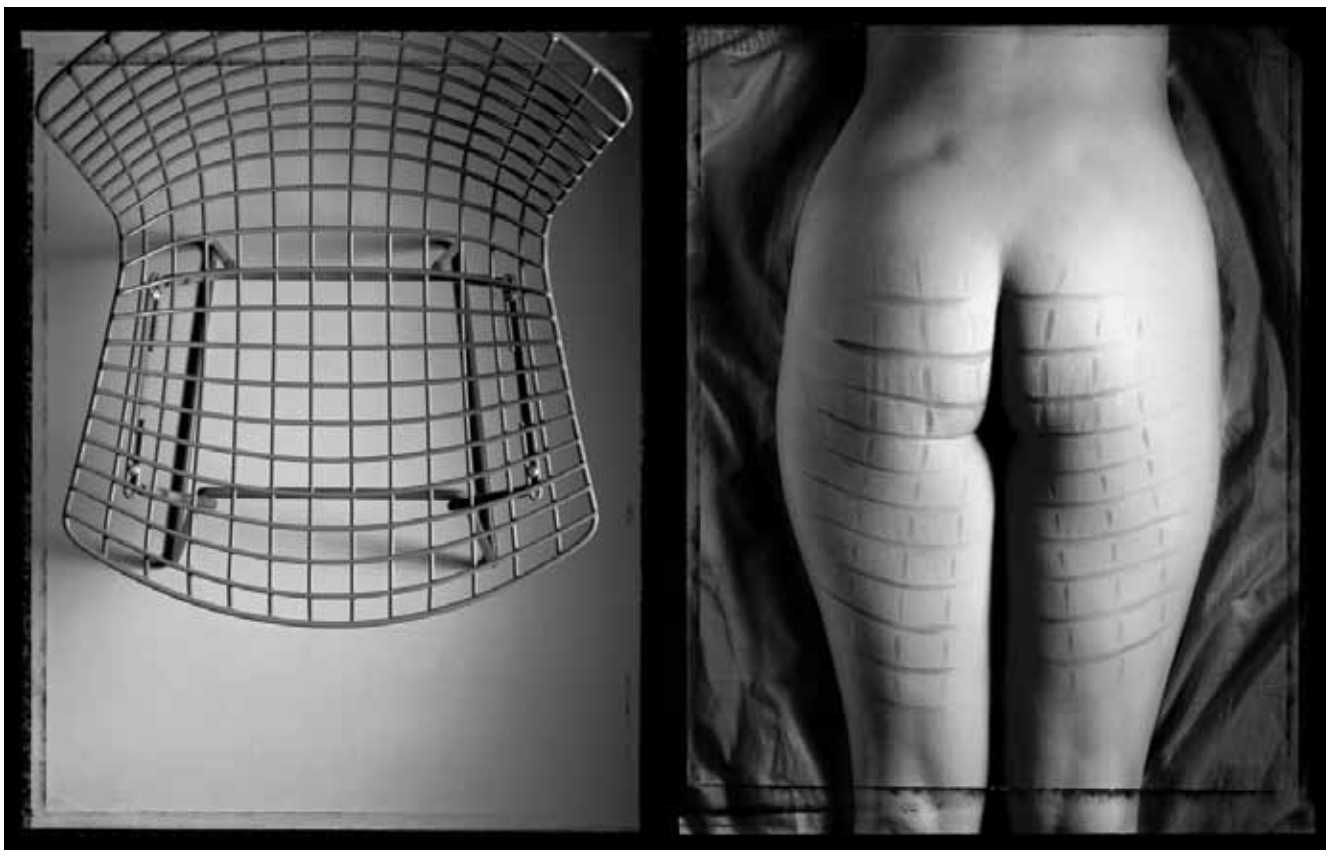
Resurrecting the reputations of these lost generations and inserting them into a dialogue with more canonical Italian contemporary artists is certainly a noble goal, but within the confines of one exhibition seems overly ambitious—"Metamorphosis" was lauded for its intentions, but disappointing in its execution. Fortunately, however, Bonami managed to exercise a restraint that Celant wouldn't (or couldn't). "Metamorphosis" overwhelmed the viewer with over 1,000 objects ranging across disciplines (from painting and architecture to craft and fashion) as the curator strived to present a panoramic vision of that period. Bonami, on the other hand, constructed a more clearly focused thesis for his show, with roughly 77 artists representing genres including photography, performance, video, painting, sculpture and installation. Organized around themes that are, to be frank, fairly stereotypical markers of Italian identity and experience (including family, landscape, design, political unrest and constructed environments). "Italics" leads the viewer through a fairly subjective chronology of artistic movements in the latter half of the century. The show covers Arte Povera and the Transavanguardia through neo-avant garde, post-pop, and the relational works of some of the younger artists.

"Italics" begins with Maurizio Cattelan's unnerving, but beautifully compelling "All" of 2008: a series of nine pristinely white marble sculptures representing shrouded, anonymous recumbent corpses, neatly lined in a row. In a way, it seems a bit disingenuous to open a show dedicated in part to championing unknown artists with one of the contemporary Italian art scene's most recognizable names, but thematically, "All" encapsulates the dynamics inherent in the exhibition. The piece is immediately attention-grabbing; particularly in light of contemporary events, the sculptures call up very recent, anxiety-laden visual memories. However, a closer look reveals that these are not just evocations of death and suffering, but beautifully carved figures swathed in masterfully rendered drapery; and, of course, the figures are carved in that favorite medium of the Italian Renaissance, pure white Carrara marble. The piece hardly "puts to rest the ghosts of the Renaissance and Baroque," as the MCA would have it; instead (and in a much quieter way than Cattelan's more aggressive, political works), "All" poignantly bears witness to a relatively young artist's grappling with contemporary issues, his own identity as an artist and the oppressive burden of an inescapable cultural heritage.

A tension between polarities informs much of the work on view: the yoke of patrimony and the desire for new territory; nationalist political narratives and personal stories; the monumental and the intimate; slick design and humble craft. In terms of the ways in which the represented artists engage these tensions, visitors shouldn't expect to be shocked by any earth-shattering discoveries; there's nothing profoundly ground-breaking in terms of what the art does. That doesn't quite seem to matter, however; "Italics" succeeds in that it offers up compelling, engaging work that is not just representative of "Italian" issues, but that constructively contributes to expanding the global art historical narrative that has ignored it.

Italian artists have been faced with almost insurmountable obstacles to recognition.

There are, of course, the inevitable jarring notes. Bonami has already been criticized in Italy for including unknown painter Pietro Annigoni's "Autoritratto (Self-Portrait)" of 1985, a conventional, easel-sized oil



(Top) Gabriele Basilico, Contact (Bertoia), 1984. Courtesy Gabriele Basilico e Studio Guenzani, Milano. **Six photos by Carlo Mollino, all Untitled, 1968-73.** Courtesy Museo Casa Mollino, Turin.

painting executed in the tradition of Rembrandt self-portraits. This three-quarter view of the somber, bespectacled artist is executed in painterly baroque style and evidences studious attention to things like chiaroscuro; it feels downright anachronistic for 1985. The curator defends his inclusion of this relatively banal work by defining it as emblematic of an artist constantly striving to meet the standards of the past, but never quite measuring up. The painting isn't entirely without merit, but despite Bonami's defense, it simply doesn't gel with some of the more experimental, thought-provoking works in the show.

Similarly out of place is Massimo Grimaldi's slideshow from 2008 in the gallery devoted to revolutionary politics, youthful dissension and violence. "Emergency's Surgical Centre in Goderich" consists of a series of photos of children undergoing medical treatment at a facility in Sierra Leone, displayed on two iMacs. Stress has been laid on Grimaldi's charitable efforts and the fact that he often donates proceeds from the sale of artworks or commissions to this hospital, which is all well and good; but the piece itself lacks the frenzied energy of the works that surround it, no matter how noble Grimaldi's political conscience. "Emergency" doesn't read well next to Letizia Battalgia's disturbing (and ethically questionable) photos of mafia violence in Palermo and Cinisi, Tano d'Amico's photo series of student protests in Rome from 1974 and 1977, or Francesco Clemente's iconic, photocopied drawing of a fist-wielding, frizzy-headed youth.

The probably inevitable discordances are, however, balanced by some stand-out works. For instance, Lucio Fontana's "Ambiente bianco (spaziale)" (recreated installation of 1968), transports the visitor to an ethereal environment that truly feels like a realm apart; similarly, Micol Assaël's "Your Hidden Sound" is a profoundly disorienting installation in which the viewer enters a room of impenetrable darkness, where space is carved up into a grid by white cords glowing in the black light. These immersive installations successfully communicate a hallmark interest in design and built environments, as well as an emphasis on viewer participation, that is, once again, revelatory of the historical and contemporary tensions inherent in modern Italian art practice.

The film and video works in "Italics" are particularly interesting. Berlin-based artist Rosa Barba's video projection "Outwardly from the Earth's Center" of 2007 is a captivating, dream-like visual exploration of an island that is drifting away from the mainland as its inhabitants attempt to stabilize this shifting ground. The film is much like one of Werner Herzog's documentaries, juxtaposing ethereal sequences that depict nature's inherent violence towards man with interviews with "scientists" and "specialists." The result is a kind of oneiric archive that blurs the line between document and spectacle.

In striking contrast to Barba's film is the intensely sensual subject matter of Domenico Mangano's "La storia di Mimmo," a film from 1999. "Mimmo" is a graphically intimate portrait of the artist's obese uncle's solitary and slothful existence; cloistered in his apartment (more often than not in the nude), Mimmo is shown alternately talking about food, eating, talking about food some more, grunting maniacally and, from time to time, bemoaning his wasted life. The man has a larger-than-life, grotesque and buffoonish quality, and the video is downright uncomfortable in its ultra close-range examination of his existence (even documenting the subject as he continues his eternal feast on the toilet). Underneath this outrageous, baroque sensuality, however, the piece has a wistful, almost tragic register; it feels like a document of loneliness, of regret for unrealized opportunities, for what-might-have-been.

Food seems to constitute another one of Bonami's stereotypical markers of Italian identity; extracts from Vanessa Beecroft's 1993 "Book of Food" continue with the theme. Beecroft, of course, represents the notoriously successful contingent of Italy's young contemporary artists, and her "Book of Food" performances have been the target of vehement feminist critique. In "Italics," however, the emphasis is on Beecroft's small-format, delicately rendered line drawings and water colors, as opposed to controversial performances of young emaciated girls in their underwear. The drawings serve as incredibly poignant testimony to the artist's neurotic obsession with alimentation; as opposed to the slick fashionista aesthetic that has come to be equated with Beecroft, these drawings feel remarkably vulnerable.

It is works like these that make "Italics" an exhibition worth re-visiting. Compared to other marginalized artistic practices of the same period, these pieces may at times feel disappointingly safe; but they provide compelling testimony to a generations-long struggle for the assertion of a new, generative cultural identity, a struggle that certainly has implications that reach far beyond national borders.

Installation view of Italics: Italian Art between Tradition and Revolution 1968-2008 at Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, 2009. Photography © Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago. Photographer, Nathan Keay

"Italics" narrates a melancholic tale of artistic careers that traditional art historical narratives have elided - a story crafted from personal histories and nostalgic recollections.

LEGO my LOGO

The School of the Art Institute of Chicago launched a new logo after displacing Katie Friedman's long-standing black and red un-logo. The logo, which came by way of Leo Burnett, is showing up more frequently on windows, doors, stationary, and was at one point the focus of the school's website. Now that students have had some time to get used to the new branding, F News asked students what they think. Head over to the fnewsmagazine.com forum to join the discussion. **BY CAROLINE LIEBMAN**

THE SCHOOL OF THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO

OLD LOGO

SAIC School of the Art Institute of Chicago

NEW LOGO

"It's boring—it's a square."

Favorite Logo: N/A
Mandy Johnston, Film, Video, New Media

"You would think at an institution with such an interesting population... why wouldn't they have the logo reflect that?"

Favorite Logo: The K Records Logo
Jesse, Performance/Writing

"I don't think it actually represents the experience of going here, more the illusion of it."

Favorite Logo: NSYNC
Crispin Rosenkranz, Film, Video, New Media Grad

"It's institutional, combined with a clear business accreditation. I think the students should redesign it."

Favorite Logo: A dot
William Amaya, Various Studies

"It's representative of the weakness of the art institution."

Favorite Logo: N/A
Patrick

"I have a huge problem with the school setting up outside help [to create it]. Why go out of house? It's offensive to the students who are paying money to go here."

Favorite Logo: "I like Cranbrook's logo."
Elise Goldstein, Sculpture Grad

"I like it. It's not overdone like a lot of other colleges"

Favorite Logo: Gatorade
Storm Campo, First year student

"It's better than the last one."

Favorite Logo: N/A
Tom B.

"It's straight up. I'm o.k. with it."

Favorite Logo: "McDonald's, becaue of the history behind it."
Marcel Alcala, Painting

"It's simple and effective."

Favorite Logo: "I don't like logos."
Brandon Seckler, Painting

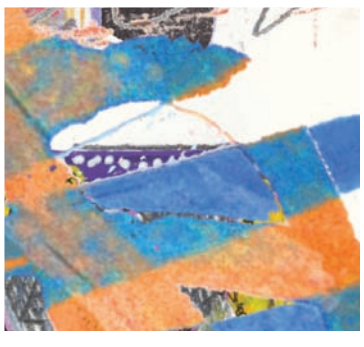
"It's postmodern, it fits the SAIC tradition."

Favorite Logo: N/A
Molly, Performance

"It's not detestable. I can see the criticism that it's a corporate label."

Favorite Logo: "Target has good branding."
Niki Yowell, New Arts Journalism

Illustrations by Luke Armistead



Sex Ed

Images from the Constructa/Vulva performance at the EveryBody! openings. Photos by Bonnie Fortune.

Art exhibition used humor, information to illuminate women's bodies

BY WHITNEY STOEPEL

A giant plush vulva confronts gallery-goers entering "Everybody! Visual Resistance in Feminist Health Movements, 1969-2009" at I Space. As I wandered toward the piece, Mary Antonakos, the gallery director, hurried over with a smile saying, "Excuse me! I have to tidy up my vulva," referring to the scattered decorations strewn on the floor meant for audience participation. Antonakos' humor about the show does not offset her feelings about the show's ability to educate. This show, curated by Bonnie Fortune, a University of Illinois graduate student, presents the female body candidly, unabashedly and informatively.

Illustrations by Suzann Gage show women exploring their bodies with scapulas accompanied by encouraging, smiling women leaning in for a look. The textbook-like appearance of these images makes them surprisingly nonconfrontational. In fact, these drawings appeared in "A New View of a Woman's Body" (Federation of Women's Health Centers, 1981). The images defy the notion that because female genitalia exists inside the body, unlike the male's, they have to remain a secret.

When Suzann Gage saw her cervix, her life changed. Gage had always been a visual person and loved art as early as she could remember. In 1972 Gage attended a meeting with other young feminists to learn about cervical examination. This was a radical new trend in the Women's Health Movement. However, Antonakos talked about why these images have the potential to be incredibly uncomfortable, even for female viewers, because modern female sexuality does not necessarily include familiarity with one's own body.

This show includes Riot Grrrl zines from the collection of Duke University and Barnard University titled "The Herbal Abortion" as well as literature from Women on Waves: Abortion with Pills Saves Women's Lives. Yet the only negative feedback, according to Antonakos, was related to the discomfort people felt from Gage's "explicit" drawings.

Christa Donner's installation wall painting, "Inheritance," is also on view at Everybody! Resembling comic art with bright colors and flattened figures, it depicts a woman whose insides are filled with partially developed fetuses. That same image is duplicated into a bubble hovering over her head, as if she is admitting a secret to the three girls facing her. In contrast, the three girls insides are full of eggs and they all lean into each other, as if telling a secret about the outcast speaker. Again, this solidifies the idea of the female body as a secret or an embarrassment, this time in relationship to abortion.

Antonakos made it clear this show is not pro-abortion. Nor is it pro-life. It is "pro-women's health." Throughout the gallery are poster collections from the Chicago Women's Health Center, the Federation of Feminist Health Centers and the Chicago Women's Graphic Collective. Although the show has a heavily feminist and activist slant, its main objective is to educate, not preach.

The show seamlessly integrates the Women's Health Movement with art. Bonnie Fortune is an artist as well as a *doula*, a woman who assists women during labor and after childbirth. Gage runs Progressive Health Services in San Diego as an OB/GYN nurse practitioner and is an artist. Donner's artist statement says, "Through public projects and collaborative zines, I exchange stories of bodily experience to provoke dialogue both in the art world and beyond it. This inquiry allows me to transform misunderstanding and anxiety into a personal, magical, powerful re-visioning of alternative anatomies."

When Suzann Gage saw her cervix, her life changed.

Antonakos declared, "Yes!" when I asked if she thought I Space, a University of Illinois gallery, felt an obligation to educate. "The University of Illinois is a research institution and facilitates a public service mandate. That is taken very seriously." She also feels that artists have that accountability as well. Students and artists alike have a responsibility to interact and give back to their communities. Antonakos added, "Where are you thinking about going as an artist? How are you being a good citizen? I think that's what it means to be an artist."

I Space is at 230 W. Superior on the second floor. The show closed October 10.

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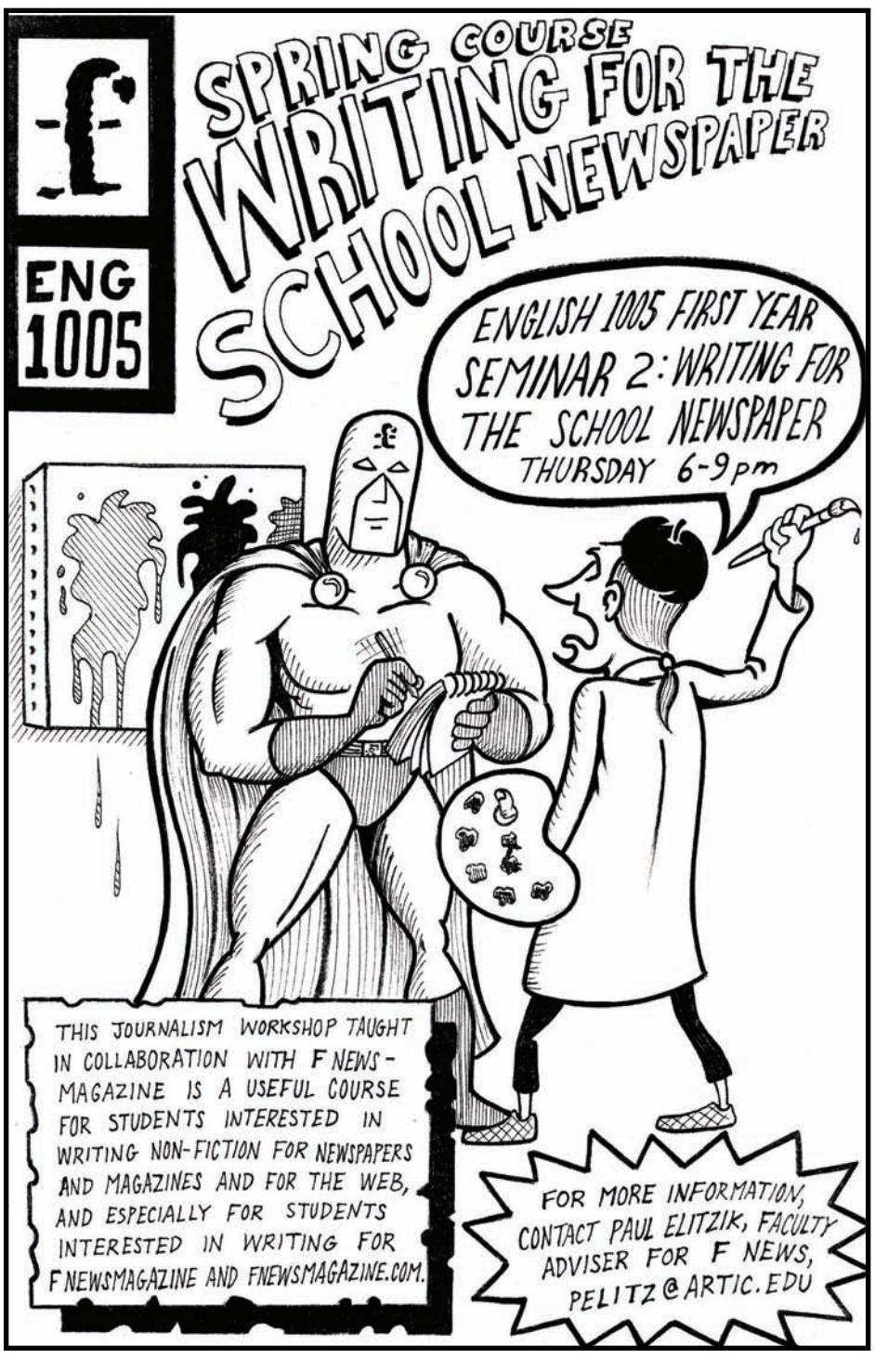


Read about a bad despot or beer in hell, a writer's blog, now a book

The Brief and Frightening Reign of Phil

BY ADAM BIENVENUE

Despots are bad. George Saunders's novella, "The Brief and Frightening Reign of Phil," employs Lorax-like imagery and Orwellesque allegories to make this point clear.

Inner Horner is a country so small that only one citizen can live there at a time, while its other six residents must wait in the Short-Term Residency Zone located in the surrounding Outer Horner. The story revolves around an Outer Hornerite named Phil (a non-humanoid being comprised of gadgets and body parts)who, through ambition, guile, and brute force acquires more power than the president.

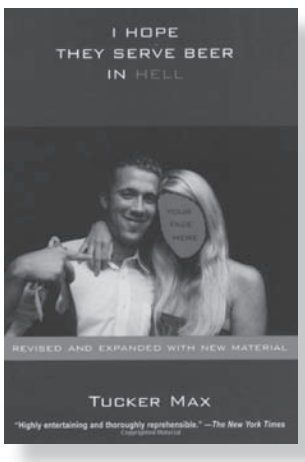
He is the first to suggest taxing the Inner Hornerites living in the Short-Term Residency Zone. The issue of taxation is seemingly small and inane, but when the Inner Hornerites cannot pay, Phil resorts to excessive measures which parallel genocide. Phil manipulates his people through nationalism; his presidential acts (Border Area Improvement Initiatives, Peace Encouraging Enclosures) are merely euphemisms for cultural annihilation.

The people approve the acts unconditionally to show they are with the state and out of fear of being disassembled (they're all widgets and curios and such). Throughout the book, Phil's megalomania turns to paranoia, which leads to unilateral decisions and pre-emptive strikes upon the non-threatening Inner Hornerites.

Despite its silliness, the reader will glint truths about man's nature and see allusions to the atrocities committed by men like Phil in the 20th Century. The story is obvious commentary on man's desire to separate the "others" and establish power divisions. Though it's pedantic at times and the ending is literally a deux ex machina, Saunders's humorous prose and comical imagery make it worth picking up. Besides, the book is 130 pages and will take no more than 45 minutes to read.

I Hope They Serve Beer in Hell

BY RUTH WAXMAN



Tucker Max is an asshole; he says it himself, on the back of his book, "I Hope They Serve Beer in Hell," and the very first page of his blog. Actually, this fact, with a few variations, is the entire basis for his book. It's a collection of short essays about his experiences, or, to be more specific, his deplorable antics as a drunken, misogynistic creature screwing his way through law school and life in general. The title is appropriate; Tucker Max is not guilty of genocide or mass-murder, but if there is a hell, it's hard to imagine him ending up anywhere else.

This book definitely isn't for the conservative or anybody who would be offended rather than amused by Max's accounts of getting obscenely drunk and leaving trails of distraught women wherever he goes. Even for those who don't fall into such categories, it can get old pretty fast; the book contains twenty-seven separate short essays which almost all keep the same basic plot: Tucker Max gets drunk, Tucker Max meets a woman or several women, Tucker Max has a sexual encounter with at least one of said women, and it ends in a mess of defecation, police, injury, tears, hangovers, or some combination thereof. Granted there are some that don't fit the pattern, but the vast majority come pretty close.

Its tough to get through the entire book; two or three stories at a time can leave you satisfied to put it down and find the whole ordeal funny, but more might start to grate on you. The outrage isn't fresh for long, and Max's self-indulgent bragging can get tiring, especially in conjunction with the less-than-varied collection. However, by the end of the book there is something endearing about his idiotic behavior, and some semblance of appreciation for his unapologetic admission of his own over-the-top narcissism. He even describes himself as "self-absorbed to the point of psychotic delusion," which makes up slightly for the fact that this really is the case.

The book, too, brings up the strange new phenomenon of blogs becoming books, almost overnight; originally he wrote his stories on his website as a blog, and only after they gained a great deal of popularity did he use fifteen of his blog posts and twelve new stories to form a collection.

Does it belong on the shelf? There's the fact that it was a bestseller for three years in a row, along with the fact that it became so popular it was made into a movie this year.

Society's craze about confessional writings sells other books; Frank Warren, author of the website PostSecret, where previously untold confessions are mailed in anonymously on postcards to be selected for publication, has just released his fourth book of "secrets"; Maxime Vallette, Guillaume Passaglia and Didier Guedj just published a book collection of entries from their website, Fmylife.com, where entries are anonymous descriptions of the writers' unfortunate experiences.

There are hundreds of similar sites, where people tell either their most personal tales or their most taboo and hilarious. Tucker Max just happened to be writing the perfect combination of these two when he got his book deal. As he puts it, "I get excessively drunk at inappropriate times, disregard social norms, indulge every whim, ignore the consequences of my actions, mock idiots and posers, sleep with more women than is safe or reasonable, and just generally act like a raging dickhead. But I do contribute to humanity in one very important way: I share my adventures with the world."

Prose and poetry

Illustration by Alice Jingxuan Hu

Tales from my Fisherman Father (If I follow my hands, can I shake the winter fish from the trees?)

BY RACHEL SLOTNICK

In Tiburon, on a Wednesday, I saw a seabird with my father's face. "Why don't you get yourself a decent boyfriend?" it cawed. As it flew, it sprouted up and vanished, and it cast a flicker on the sand by my feet, like the limb of a tree, breathing out slowly.

*

On the night before a final exam, I dreamt that my father was eaten by a bear. There was blood everywhere. The bear's belly bulged, and the very next day that same bear grew an enormous fisherman beard, and complained of uncontrollable cravings for seafood. I didn't realize I was still dreaming the next day.

*

When I turned seven, my father's beard filled with silver carp and curls of seaweed. His brown spotted cod eyes scrambled from reef to reef. When he spoke he emitted an enormous gurgling noise, which made everything prickle because it sounded like death. But to me, this was his lullaby. It was the sort of burbling tonality I needed in order to believe in things like that stuff that shifts the clouds.

*

When my father was a child, a shark bit his arm off. He replaced it with a wooden stump. Logically, he became a shark hunter of a fisherman, and he hated all trees for daring to resemble him. Stumps were the worst of the trees for my father, because he knew they were already dead.

*

My father was tormented by winter fish. He saw them everywhere, dangling, ornamenting the trees, reflecting lures chiseling the air, hiccups of green ocean swallowing the sky. I tried to explain that they were only apples. "See, they're not fish at all," I said as I plucked a red, ripe one, but his scaly skin tautened, and so, like he had taught me so many times, I threw it back. Like a falling plea, the apple hit the ocean.

*

"My skeleton is shivering," he said to me once, when his thoughts were cataloguing the winter.

*

One Passover, I brought home a handsome, rich, fish of a boyfriend.
"Is he Jewish??" asked my father, clutching the neighborhood in the palm of his hand.

*

Once, in the Tiburon hospital, I understood my father's sadness. I tried to tell him so by scooping an octopus and spooning it to him. He slurped it in like an inverted wind. I watched legs and legs and legs swarm, and as they were consumed, they clung to the curls of his silver beard. I had never felt my hands so concretely – so many fingers to follow, so many unnecessary digits. That was when I first noticed it, supple and brimming, a perfect tentacle eroding from the heart of my palm.

*

There we stood, just two humans looking out the hospital window, at the edges of the fish bowl, talking about the weather.

*

My father's stump arm flailed wildly as the train shook. When it went underground my father got confused. "But, look," he insisted. "There's a beautiful glowing fish at the end of the tunnel."

*

"We'll call him Charlie," my father said once of a tremendous rainbow trout, as he gutted it and the paint colors spilled out. The clouds were gray as fish skin. My father wiped the purple blood on his pants, and he said, "Don't worry, Sweets, he's already dead."

*

I knew when the clocks were still in the fish skin sky, and the carp rained down from the dying trees like rotten apples. "Be stilled," said my father, like fishing for rotten apples. The leaves hummed, and everywhere was tentacles for hearts. I knew then that this was the beginning of something slow.

Strung

BY SHANE GRABER

Walks right up, pulls it from the paper bag. Moves fluidly and deliberately, like new shag carpeting.
She grabs my wrist, leads my hand right to its white cotton pocket, if you can believe. I withdraw a long strip of purple construction paper.
"Her scarf. Wants you to put it on her. Brrr."
"Oh. Okay. There you are."
Good thing no one watches. So forward and all.
"I think she likes you. Name's Svatlana."
Svatlana dangles before me for me. Bad timing. Want to avoid entanglements. But those coal-dark eyes, woodsy cheekbones. I cave.
"Want to get out of here?"
"Out of where?"
"Not you."
I reach out and take Svatlana by something.
"Let's not ruin this with a lot of talk," I say.
Uncontrollable nodding. She so gets me.

Recovered Visions

Chicago's overlooked experimental film history at the Illinois Institute of Design

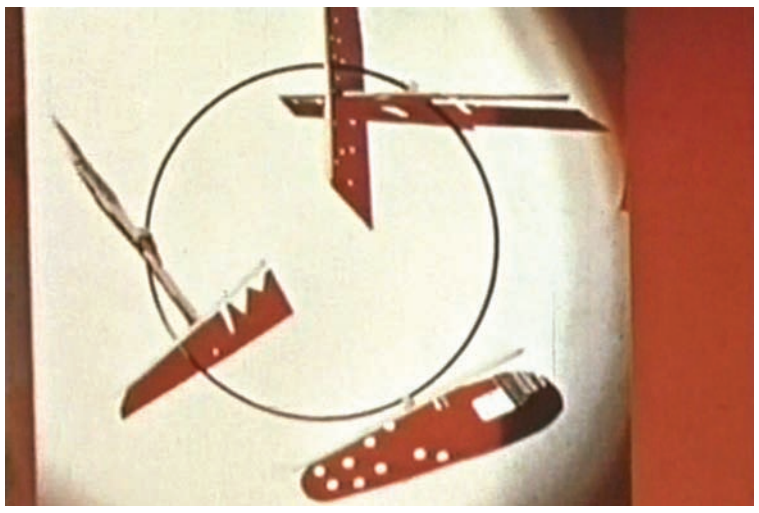
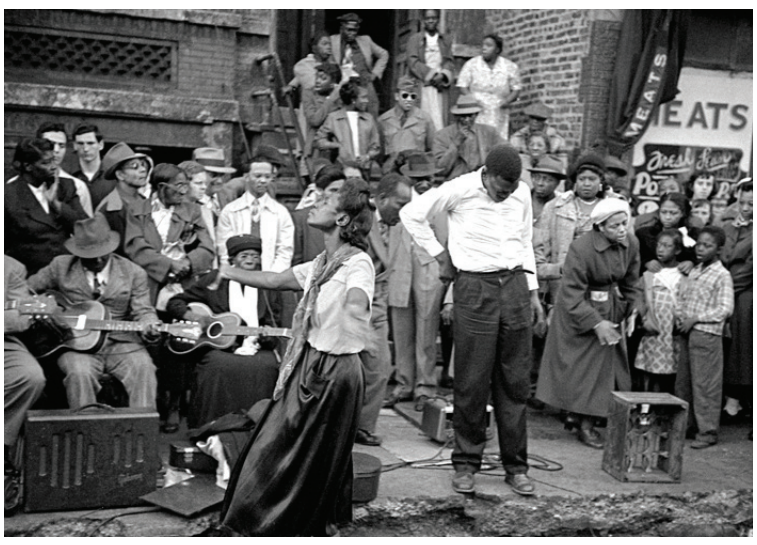


Image from Nathan Lerner's "Light Machine." All images courtesy of Amy Beste.



Marvin Newman & Yasuhiro Ishimoto's Maxwell Street.

BY BRANDON KOSTERS

In 1937, former Bauhaus teacher Laszlo Moholy-Nagy founded the New Bauhaus School in Chicago. Ultimately renamed the Institute of Design (ID), the school became part of the Illinois Institute of Technology in 1949. The school was one of the first in the US to encourage experimentation in film, yet the works produced there remain relatively obscure.

Amy Beste, SAIC faculty member and curator of "Conversations at the Edge," is trying to change this. On October 1 and 2, Beste presented "Visions in Motion: Filmmaking at the Institute of Design, 1944-1970," an event consisting of two programs that screened at the Gene Siskel Theater, showcasing works from the school. ID filmmakers used a variety of methods to produce stimulating and cost-efficient student films. Some artists produced cameraless animations, some documented the natural world in a unique way. For his film "DL # 2," Larry Janiak coated film with rubber cement and exposed it, producing work that evokes the likes of Norman McLaren. For his film "Motions," Harry Callahan utilized in-camera multiple exposure techniques to superimpose images of water over mundane b-roll footage. Yasuhrio Ishimoto and Marvin Newman's "The Church on Maxwell Street" is a stunning black-and-white film that documents musicians playing to a predominantly African-American congregation on the street.

Originally structured in the same format as the Bauhaus, the ID offered a preliminary course similar in structure to the first-year program at SAIC. "Initially," Beste said, "advertising arts, photo, and film students adhered to the rubric of the Light Workshop. Moholy pushed the medium of light as the root of film and photography." Light was "the medium that drove those other iterations of the medium."

Beste suggests that one of the reasons this history has been largely overlooked might have to do with access to national distribution. "In the mid-1960s," she said, "inspired by Filmmakers Cooperative in New York and Canyon Cinema in San Francisco, a group of Chicago makers (a number of them, Institute of Design alumni) established the Center City Co-op which distributed Chicago and Midwestern work." She says. "The organization disbanded in 1976 and it seems that a number of folks were so burned out by the experience, they did not place their work elsewhere, so that this whole period of works produced in Chicago just disappeared from circulation. So, at a time when US 'experimental film' was being canonized, a number of Chicago filmmakers were literally out of circulation."

Resources at the ID were limited and the artists embraced the challenges this presented. Wayne Boyer, who attended ID as both a bachelor and graduate student and who is now a Professor Emeritus at University of Illinois at Chicago, says that when he arrived at the school in 1955, "all of the film equipment was in storage and there was no one to teach it. But that was OK because of the experimental nature of the curriculum, where you were encouraged to combine media. This is what stimulated us."

Hattula Moholy-Nagy, Laszlo's daughter and a scholar of her father's work, confirms Boyer's recollections. "When [Laszlo] started the school, he couldn't afford to pay any faculty. It was really a shoestring operation, and it remained that way for about a year," she says. "The school gradually took ground and started to work, then along came World War II." However, even with several faculty members and students drafted, and the scarcity of materials and funds, "Moholy managed to keep the school alive."

The school was one of the first to emphasize experimentation as an effort to both create a body of work that would provide a counterpoint to and potentially revitalize commercial/mainstream movies and media. "Janiak is a great example of this kind of training," says Beste. "For many years he worked at Goldsholl studios (now largely forgotten, but at the time a nationally-recognized and important design studio in Chicago), where he, along with Wayne Boyer, was encouraged to apply his experiments to advertising and industrial films. The studio was headed by Mort and Millie Goldsholl who both were graduates of ID and directly applied the Bauhaus ethos. The work they produced ended up in trade shows, short commercial films, and in television ads for national distribution.

Boyer and Janiak met at Lane Technical High School in Chicago in the 1950s. Some of their instructors were former teachers from ID, and they inspired both of them to pursue film. One of their instructors from Lane Tech got Janiak and Boyer into conferences for designers in Aspen, Colorado. During their second conference in the late 1950s, Janiak met one of his biggest influences, who was also at the conference. "The Goldsholls we're running it. Millie [Goldsholl] invited us to go to an ice cream parlor. As we were walking there she said, 'Oh, by the way, I've asked Norman McLaren to come over.' And so he showed up and we're having ice cream sodas." One of Janiak's films that McLaren saw in Aspen was what Janiak calls "an attempt at abstract film where I drew on blockout and then used Dr. Martin color dyes absorbed into the emulsion," producing "abstract linear patterns." "[McLaren] was a really sweet man. He did say, 'You know, that's one of the best films I've seen made in 16 mm.' Well, that was a nice compliment but see, he did everything in 35 [mm]!"

Both Boyer and Janiak went on to study at ID in the mid 1950s. In 1968, Janiak began teaching experimental film and design animation at the ID. In the Bauhaus tradition, Janiak allowed his students to have creative license. "My course structure was pretty loose," Janiak says. "I counted on the students to come up with their own ideas. Most of these students had never made a film before, and most of them never did again. There were some that went on commercially and experimentally, but nobody ended up famous or anything like that."

Artists producing films at the ID sustained essentially two practices as filmmakers. "While there was a presence in Chicago of filmmakers who were pointedly anti-commercialism," Beste says, "it seems to me that people had these dual careers: producing experimental films, and supporting themselves through the industrial film sector. Their experiments were happening in both arenas."

Beste believes that a reassessment of avant-garde film history to include these works would produce quite a different picture of experimental film in the US. "Chicago was a center for industrial and educational filmmaking. In fact, for many years, it was considered the Hollywood of non-theatrical film. A number of ID faculty and graduates worked and applied their experimental vision to these industries. Films produced in this industry were (and still are, to some extent) considered highly ephemeral. Companies made them for a specific purpose — to teach a certain lesson, sell a certain product, explain a certain process. Once that purpose was no longer current, many of these films (and their filmmakers' experiments) were just thrown away."

"It's only in the last 15 years or so that scholars and historians have begun to examine these films as both historical artifacts and important aesthetic contributions to our broader media culture," Beste said. "I think looking at works produced within this system has the potential to change the way we think about the role of experimentation in media and the operation of the avant-garde in the US."

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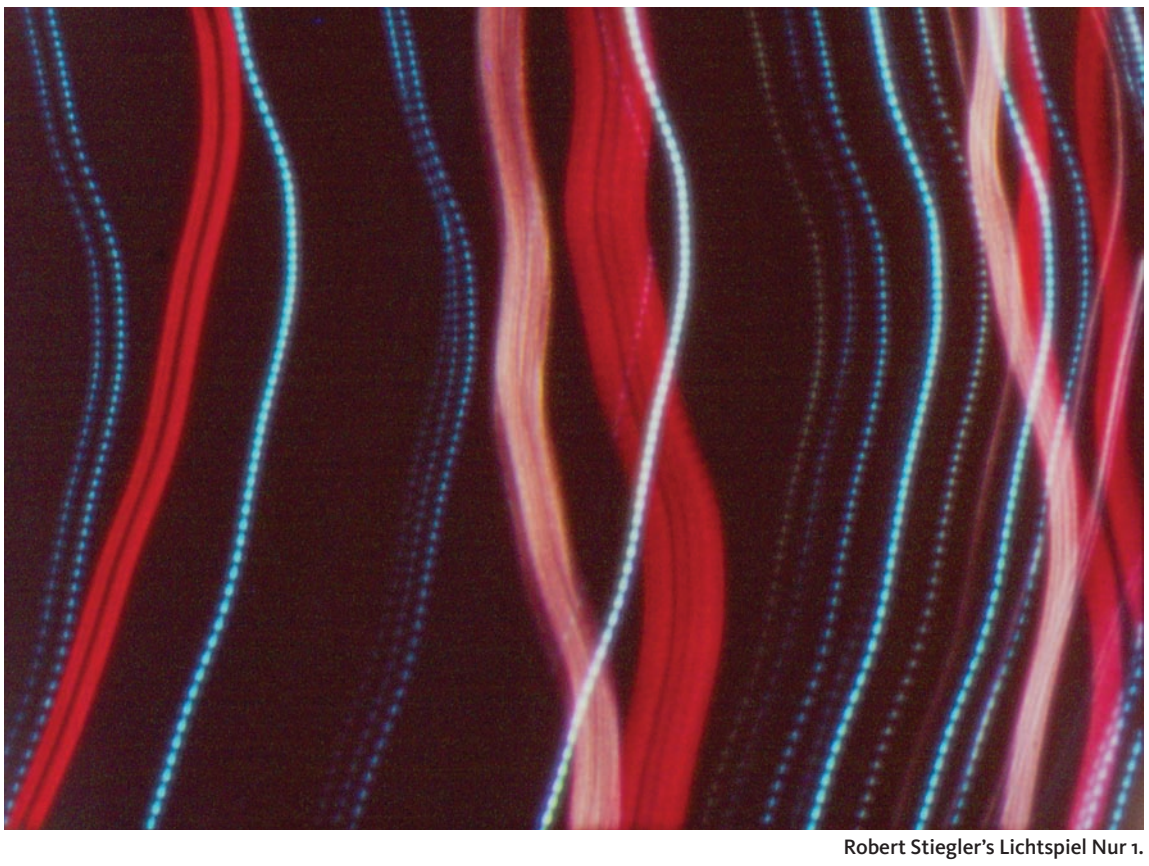
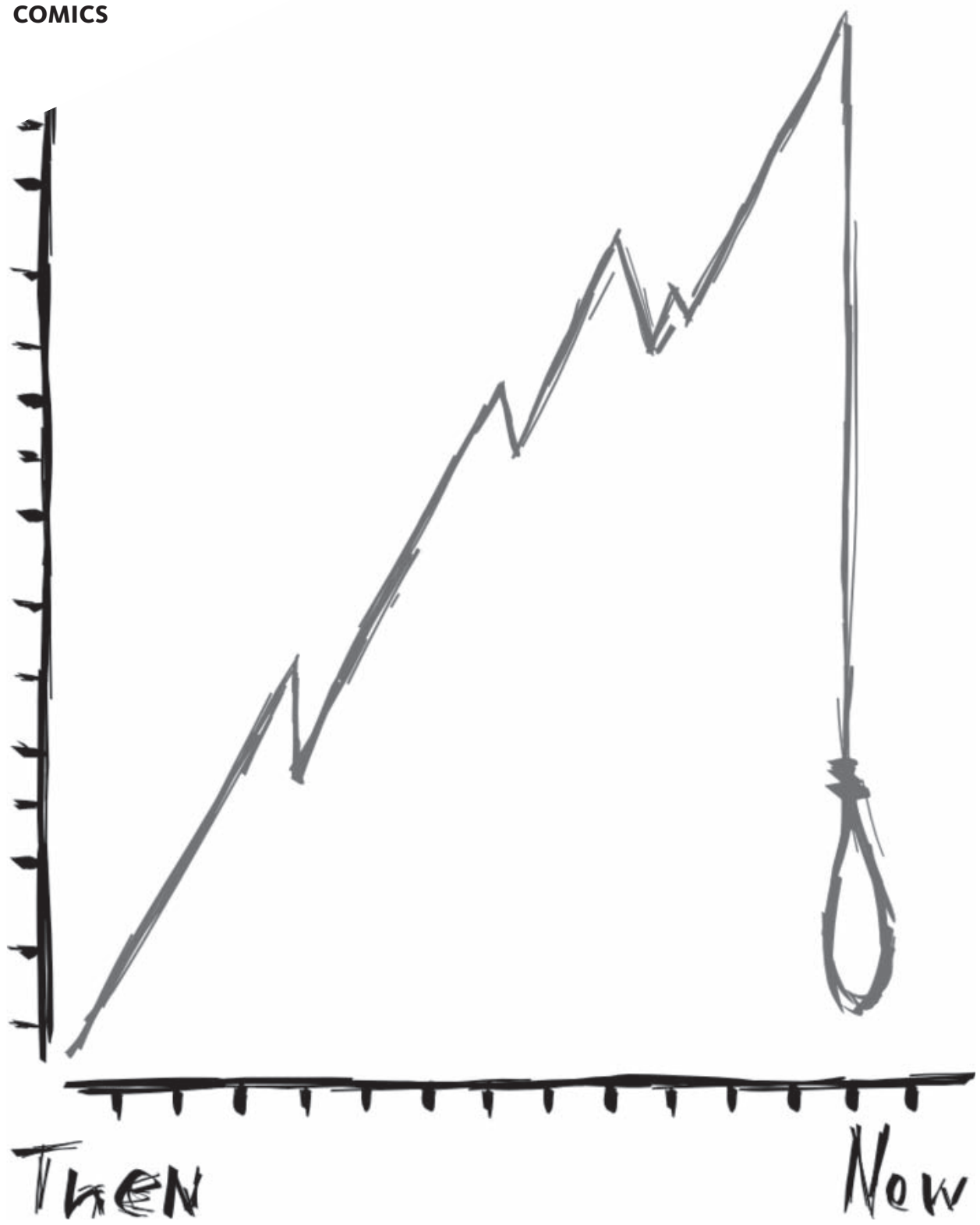
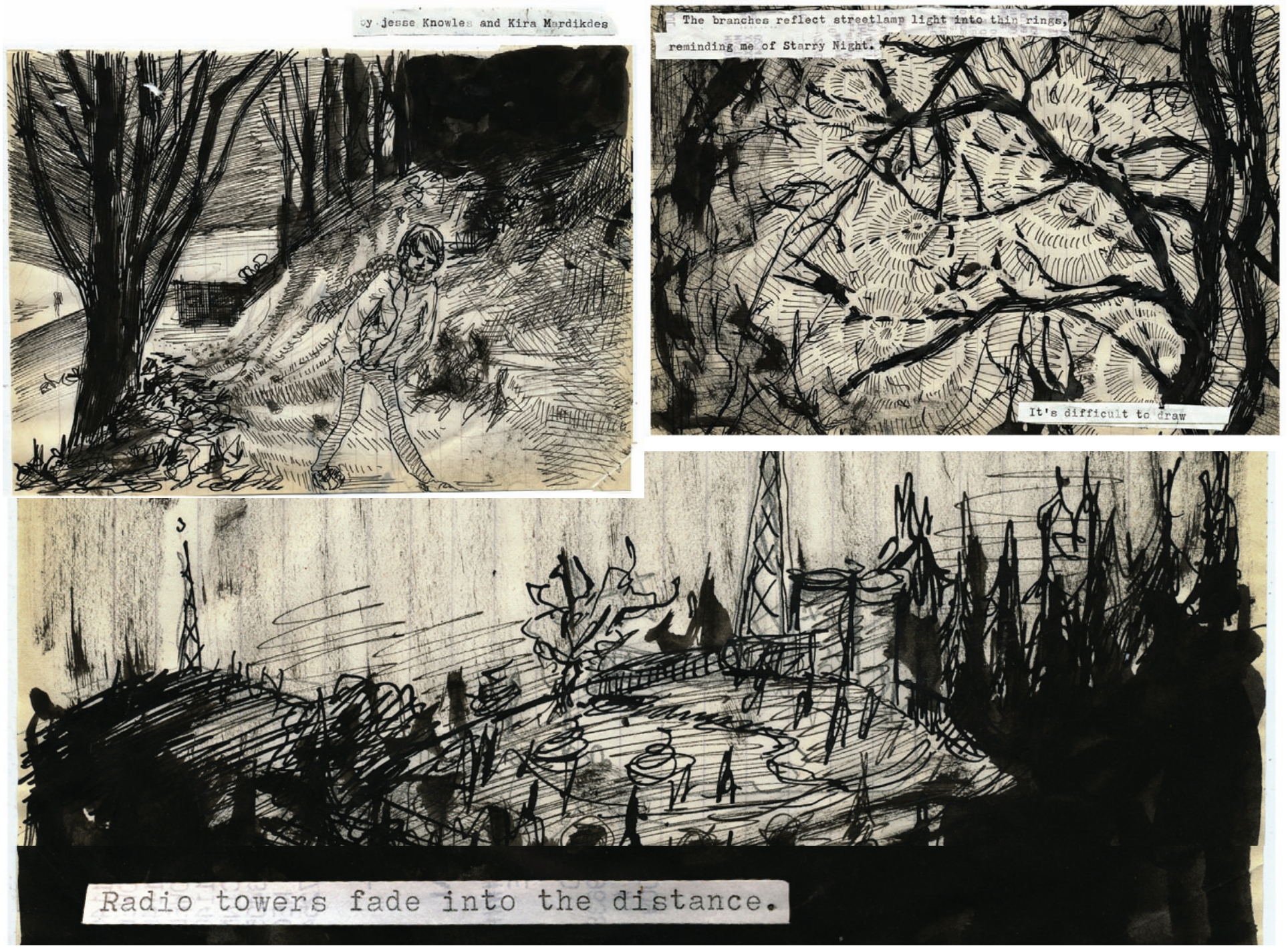


Robert Stiegler's Lichtspiel Nur 1.



By Nolan MacGregor



Betty Rymer turns 20

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the Betty Rymer Gallery at SAIC. The gallery has a long and varied history, exhibiting close to 120 shows in 20 years. Artists from all over the world have shown in the Betty Rymer, both legendary names and SAIC students and classes. This year celebrates the gallery's multifarious cast of exhibition artists as well as the mysterious Betty Rymer herself.

BY WHITNEY STOEPEL

All images courtesy of the Betty Rymer Gallery.

The mysterious Betty Rymer

When Rymer was 18, she was diagnosed with type I diabetes. At that time, in 1946, diabetes was as good as a death sentence, but Rymer never let it deter her from living the way she wanted to, almost to a fault. To mask her illness to the public, she ate copious amounts of sweets and enjoyed her alcohol. She was always a private person, and to this day, there is little documentation of her life.

Two years later, Betty met Barry, "dirt-poor from South Bend, Indiana." Just two months after they met, they were at Browns Lake in Wisconsin and they decided to get married. In 1954, they moved to Nashville, where Betty wrote and acted in musicals that Barry would direct. By the 1970s they were living in Skokie, a northwest suburb of Chicago, where they inhabited a modest apartment building and opened Rymer Foods, a meat packing company. Rymer Foods became fairly successful as one of the first companies to infuse meat with flavor before shipping. Just as the Rymers were becoming successful, Betty's diabetes began to takes its toll on her health.

After being diagnosed with diabetes, Rymer endured 32 surgeries in 32 years. She lost limbs along with her eyesight and by 42, was unable to bowl, her favorite pastime. Even with the loss of her eyesight, she took up painting and was actually very good, considering she only took a couple of drawing classes at the Evanston Art Center. After a series of strokes throughout her 50s, Betty Rymer died on August 10, 1980.

The gallery's prehistory

Two significant events occurred prior to the opening of the Rymer Gallery that likely impacted the reason for starting the gallery and the kind of shows the Rymer has become known for. First, in 1988, graduating SAIC senior David Nelson painted a likeness of Mayor Harold Washington in women's lingerie, a degrading representation seen as both racist and homophobic. The painting was up for less than an hour before aldermen and three police officers arrived and forcibly removed the painting against the protests of students and faculty, When the painting was finally returned, it had been slashed six times with a knife.

The next year, another SAIC student, Dread Scott Taylor, exhibited his installation, "What is the Proper Way to Display a US Flag?" in which audiences were placed in the awkward position of having to either walk on or carefully lean over an American flag, placed on the floor in front of them, in order to comment in a journal on the other side. Republican State Senator Walter Dudycz, representatives from the veterans of Foreign Wars, the American Legion, and Viet-Now, filed a suit in Cook County Circuit Court to shut down the show.

While these frenzied debates over first amendment rights were taking place, Mr. Rymer was a member of the Auxiliary Board of the President's Council of SAIC and was an advocate for free speech. SAIC's President, Tony Jones, approached him about opening a gallery. The timing was perfect. Mr. Rymer had extra money from the meatpacking industry and decided to donate the gallery to honor his late wife; the gallery would have as its mission the promotion and exhibition of progressive and challenging artworks.

"Today the Betty Rymer gallery still holds varied exhibitions from all backgrounds within Chicago and beyond."

The creation of the gallery was a way for school authorities to exercise more supervision over what work went up on school gallery walls, which at the time were easily accessed by a museum public more easily shocked than the school's artist community. A second, student–run gallery (Gallery 2) was established in the alternative gallery district a year or two later to offer students a space for wilder experiments. Today, the gallery still holds varied exhibitions rooted in progressive thinking, involving artists from all backgrounds within Chicago and beyond. It is a space for both students and professionals who value freedom of expression. Over the years, the gallery's identity has shifted, but its mission has remained intentionally eclectic.

The shows

The first show opened June 9, 1989. It was a benefit for the school, honoring photographer and alum Victor Skrebneski and sponsored by the Auxiliary Board. Since then, the gallery has had shows by SAIC faculty curators, student curators, SAIC classes, and world-renowned performance, video, and visual artists. Today, the shows are reviewed by a committee that usually consists of 15 to 20 SAIC faculty members and four to six students. Trevor Martin, the gallery director, stressed that the gallery is a community-driven entity, saying, "Gallery directors don't make the decisions; it's not my curatorial vision." What makes the Betty Rymer Gallery what it is are the people involved. The community creates the vision, giving the gallery its own momentum.

From August 24 to January 27, 2007, the gallery explored the notion of space with FluxSpace, which incorporated two shows: "Empty Space" and "Manifesting Emptiness." "Empty Space" exhibited work by associate professor Douglas Pancoast and students from his "Visualizing Design" course. They emptied the gallery's interior space to explore "environmental work [that] aims to encourage the gallery's use and future identity as a forum for art-making, exchange, and social interaction." "Manifesting Emptiness" was curated by Milena Hoegsberg and "examine[d] the formal, spiritual, and philosophical engagements with empty space" with prominent artists like Yoko Ono, Nam June Paik, Felix Gonzalez-Torres, Kimsooja, and Iñigo Manglano-Ovalle. Later that year, New York-based artist and musician Paul D. Miller aka DJ Spooky performed "Link City Chicago," a collage installation projection in four sections: "City of the Past," "City of the Future," "Third World City," and "Industrialized City."

The compelling juxtaposition between this active public space and the private personality of Betty Rymer herself has surprisingly been left out of the history books until recently. Engrossed by the mystery surrounding Betty Rymer, SAIC teacher Amber Ginsberg and collaborator Katie Hargrave have compiled extensive research to tell her story by means of writing, art, performance, and a website. On November 30, they will host a 20th anniversary celebration at the Betty Rymer Gallery. 32 cakes will be served in symbolic recognition of Rymer's 32 surgeries in 32 years. Given her affinity for sweets, this is likely the kind of party Ms. Rymer would have made sure to attend.