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A STUDENT JOURNAL OF ART, CULTURE AND POLITICS

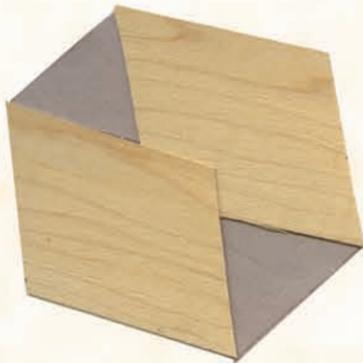
OCTOBER 2011

# NEWSMAGAZINE

THE SCHOOL OF THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO

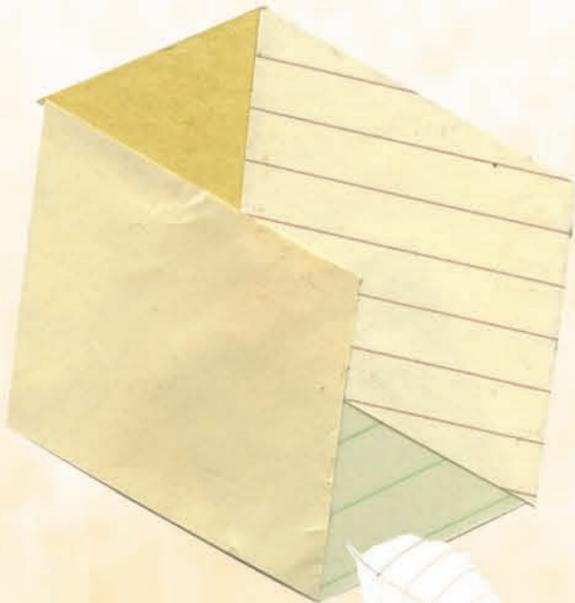


**Don't Inhale!**  
*The fight over Chicago's coal-based monoliths*



**The Electronic Walls Are Watching**

*Kyle McDonald v. privacy*



**And Who Are You Supposed To Be?**

*Cheap costume ideas  
(pretense included)*





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# f NEWSMAGAZINE OCTOBER

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## “Looking Inside Out in Brooklyn”

By Mina Matlon

Mina Matlon presents a critical reflection on the first manifestation in Brooklyn of photo-graffiti artist JR's TED Prize-funded project.

## “Live at the Metro: Peter Hook and the Light” By Brandon Goei

Music Editor Brandon Goei reviews Peter Hook's presentation of Joy Division album “Closer” in its entirety at the Metro. Find out what Billy Corgan has to do with it.

## “Paul Cary” By Kate Taylor

This intimate and funny interview with Chicago musician Paul Cary highlights the processes of his work, whether in carpentry or rock 'n roll. Learn what his mom suggests for getting rid of blemishes.

## “What is the Video Data Bank?” By Catherine Pancake

Watch our latest video featuring an interview with Brigid Reagan Balcom, Assistant Director of SAIC's Video Data Bank.

## “Thomas Comerford Explores the ‘Weird Road’” By Dijana Kadic

Artist and filmmaker Thomas Comerford recently screened his latest project “Indian Boundary Line” at the Chicago Cultural Center. Multimedia Editor Dijana Kadic caught up with him a few days beforehand to discuss his reasons for choosing the project. The online article includes an excerpt of the film.

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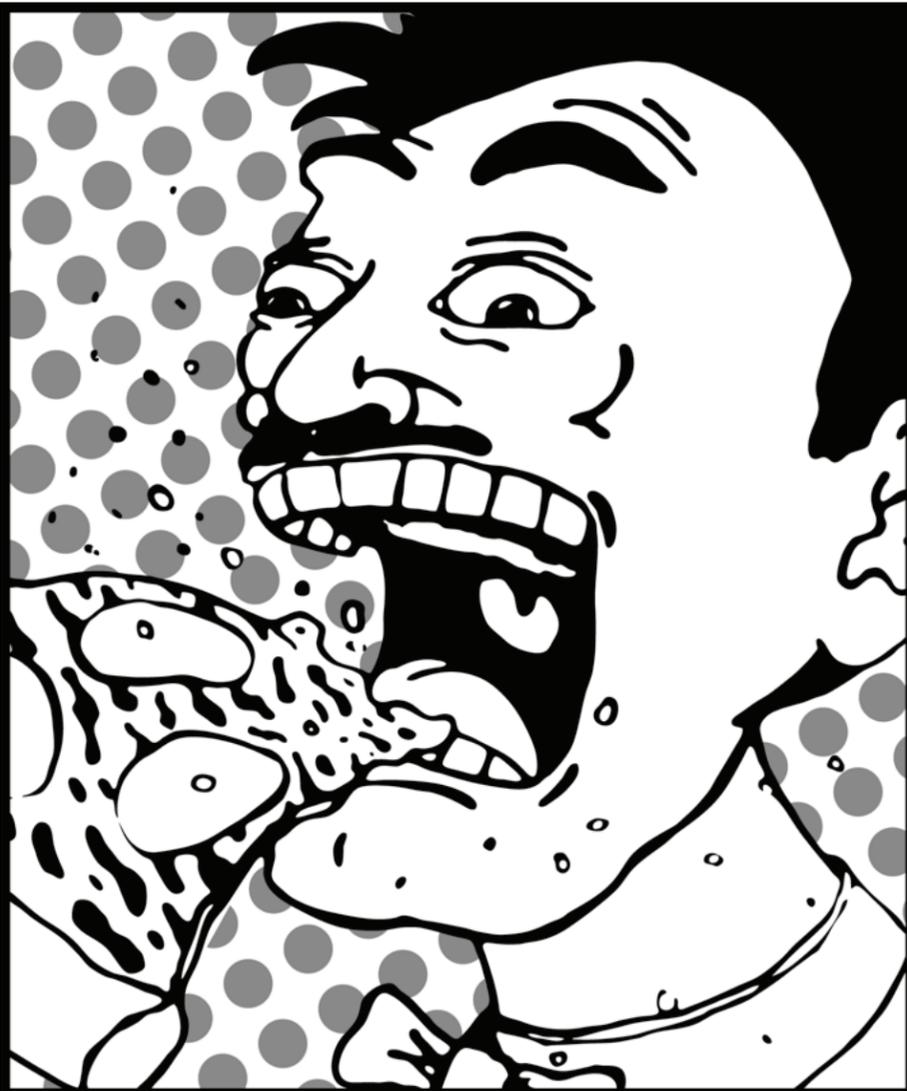
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# EXCHEQUER

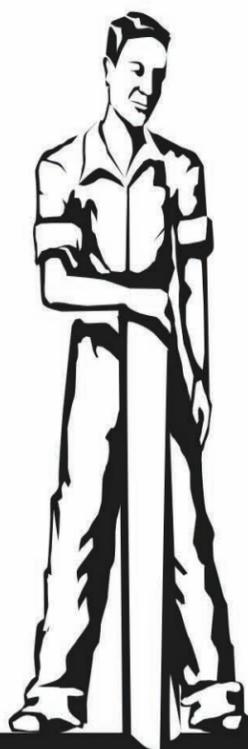
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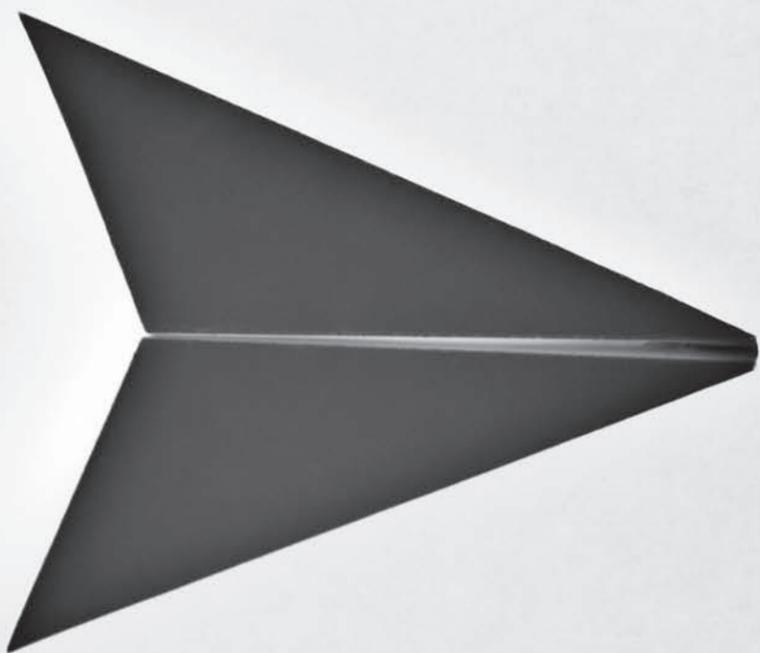
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## STUDY TRIPS SUMMER 2011

THANK YOU FACULTY AND STAFF LEADERS

Terry Myers, Candida Alvarez, Michelle Grabner, Shane Campbell, Anders Nereim, Helen Maria Nugent, Richard Rezac, James Yood, Lisa Wainwright, Richard Deutsch, Susan Kraut, Richard Willenbrink, David Getsy, Shawn Decker, Susanna Coffey, Alan Labb, Dan Gustin, Jenn Steplowski, Dan Edwards

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



Photo: Mardell Nereim

DESIGN BY SONIA HOVHANNISYAN (BFA, 2011)



## Tip Sheet

*This month the editors scour the F Newsmagazine office (which would make a hoarder proud) for low-budget Halloween costume ideas*

Art school is all about pretense. You may fool yourself thinking otherwise, but let's face it — it is. The editors at F Newsmagazine are keenly focused on our audience, which we identify as low-budget artists and scholars that somehow hang on to their oversized egos. With the end of October quickly approaching, we know you'll be looking for that perfect Halloween costume — artsy, fartsy, and above all, cheap. Don't bother with those other low-budget costume options. (Who ever commanded respect by dressing up as witch/cat/nerd?) Stick with these ideas and let your art school pretension flow free in the October wind.

RENÉ MAGRITTE  
*Son of Man*

*by Brandon Goei,*  
*Music Editor*

If the bourgeois isn't your thing, but you still want a taste of René Magritte's surreal wit, then this is the costume for you. At virtually no cost, you can channel the strange spectre of "Son of Man" using items from around the office. F's version consists of black poster board, white paper, two shades of green marker, and tape — lots of tape. Make sure to cut eye holes in the apple before departing for seasonal parties. The effect you're going for is metaphoric and/or sociopolitical (not literal) blindness. For bonus irony points, go bobbing for apples.



PABLO PICASSO  
*Ma Jolie*

*by Sarah Hamilton,*  
*Arts Editor*

Possibly the most scandalous of our costume options, F's version of Picasso's seminal cubist work "Ma Jolie" demands that you pilfer more paint chips from your Home Depot than is normally allowed by the somewhat-menacing, orange-vested attendants. The original is a work of multi-dimensional, synesthetic mastery (a line you can drop at any party, even if you don't know what it means) and commands the attention of the viewer, even from across the room. Our adaptation does one of those two things — try to guess which one.



MARK ROTHKO  
*Untitled*

*by Alejandra Monserrat*  
*Gonzalez Romo,*  
*News Editor*

As soon as you put on these three innocent pieces of colored foam, you'll feel pretentious despite your goofy and un-sexy looks. Mark Rothko would probably not be proud of his artwork's Halloween presence, but you will surely attract the eyes (and laughs) of any party guest, all for under \$1 of store-bought material. The question that remains is what appropriate facial expression best represents a Rothko? Its up to you to decide and make a dramatic entrance at your next Halloween bash. For now, I'm going with a happy face.



# My Ghost at Home

**The curators at the Student Union Galleries strive for consistency and succeed**

By Michelle Weidman

The artist as “anti-hero” is a modern concept. Think Jackson Pollock in his bookless studio, chain-smoking, and degrading a sacred canvas with plasters of paint and shoe prints — an encounter that is the direct inversion of Michelangelo’s “Creation of Adam.” According to an interview with curator Josh Dihle on the Student Union Gallery’s website, “Anti-Heroic” was the working title of the group show at Parallax Gallery in September. The name ultimately chosen for the exhibition was “My Ghost at Home,” but the aesthetic hedonism remains.

It is the figurative paintings by Gil Riley that most closely reflect the “anti-hero” theme in both form and process. It was also these paintings that repeatedly forced me back to Parallax Gallery.

The paintings by Riley, an arrangement of large, capricious planes of color, resolute lines and unexpected figures, are a balanced combination of chance and spot-on decisiveness. There are primitivist and expressionistic qualities to Riley’s work — a crudeness of form and lack of unified perspective and depth. Still, the effects of these devices avoid the violent descriptions associated with Willem de Kooning’s works, instead expressing benevolent irrationality.

“This is My Ghost at Home,” the painting after which the show was named, features an image of a slumped woman, one large squash-colored hand extending nearly past the picture frame. The pose is incidental, avoiding any easily interpreted body language and allowing the painting to be seen as a series of tenuously and grippingly connected parts, without a restricting narrative.

The other work in the show, which closed on September 23, included sculpture and painting by Josh Dihle, and woodcuts and

painting by Brian Rush. Dihle’s work ranged from a boulder-sized pink Sculptamold head, deflating in the center of the gallery, to small decorative landscapes on the back wall. The pieces Dihle chose to show vary widely. They do, however, share aspects of repetition in ways that are not immediately recognizable. In “Banana Painting,” a gang of mostly muted multicolored blocks converge at a glossy ceramic banana embedded in a wooden panel. In “Garden,” patches of foliage emerge from a field of white; evenly distributed, the shrubbery becomes a vintage wallpaper design. The connections found in Dihle’s work are tenuous but found most firmly in tone rather than theme — none of the pieces take themselves too seriously. There is a sense that Dihle makes these pieces because he wants to, with no justification necessary.

However disparate Dihle’s work is, Brian Rush’s pieces adhere to a consistent vocabulary. The paintings and woodcuts are depictions of a colorful fantasy landscape. Uncomplicated colors mingle with a myriad of basic shapes to produce simple, imaginative environments. Rush’s strongest piece is a six-layer woodcut. It utilizes the curvilinear forms and anxious lines that appear in his other work, but the print medium adds cohesiveness, and more complex hues provide a gratifying overall image.

In the interview on the SUGs website, Josh Dihle explains his reason for changing the name of the show. “The idea of the anti-hero was appropriate, but ultimately, the art speaks for itself, and I felt that an overly didactic heading for the show would restrict viewers’ sensitivity to what they are seeing.” The final title successfully adds a lyrical quality to the show by focusing on its emotive rather than thematic aspects. This decision illustrates the thoughtfulness of Dihle’s curatorial hand, nudging the strengths of the show to the foreground.



Work by Gil Riley, *Head Rest Good Samaritan* (left) and *I Loved You Like a Rock in a Hard Place* (right)



Work by Gil Riley

*The pose [in “This is My Ghost At Home”] is incidental, avoiding any easily interpreted body language and allowing the painting to be seen as a series of tenuously and grippingly connected parts, without a restricting narrative.*

# Comics Rising

**CAUTION: White-walled daydreams ahead**

By Margot Brody

Remember when art galleries kept trying to slap graffiti on the walls and call it “urban folk art?” No? Well, that’s because when elements of counterculture are taken out of the context from which they spawned, they are quickly devoured by pop culture zombies and subsequently gurgled back up as contrived, meaningless fads that are eventually exiled to the Island of Bad Ideas. (Fingers crossed that Warped Tour follows suit.)

Needless to say, I was skeptical about “CartoonInk! Emerging Comics In Context.” Prior to seeing the show, I couldn’t help but think that a better title might be, “CartoonInk! Emerging Comics Out Of Context.” (Insert “don’t judge a book by its cover” cliché here.) After experiencing the show, I realized that the very magic of skillful cartooning lies in its ability to transform the real world into a realm wherein conventional rules need not apply.

Curated by SAIC faculty Christa Donner, Jeremy Tinder, and former faculty member Surabhi Ghosh, the show metamorphoses the stark, grey walls of The Betty Rymer Gallery into a lively carnival of contemporary comic art. The exhibit showcases a collection of artists — big-name cartoonists, SAIC faculty, alumni and current students — whose works encourage dialogue about evolving cross-disciplinary aspects of the comics medium. “With ‘CartoonInk!’ we wanted to celebrate the multiple ways in which comics can and do exist,” explains Ghosh, who, along with Donner and Tinder, created much of SAIC’s comic art curriculum. As a result of these overlapping collaborations, the gallery becomes an eccentric universe full of screwball characters — a glum Piet Mondrian, a love-torn Cetus, a PMS-ing wolf-girl — who want nothing more than to have fun.

The curatorial success of the of the exhibition lies in its ability to illustrate the ways in which comics have grown into a remarkable art form without shoving the idea of comics as “high art” down the viewer’s throat. “Comics are fine art as much as they are literature — meaning, they are neither,” says Ghosh. In “Wraparound Cover For Acme Novelty Library #15,” seasoned cartoonist Chris Ware pokes fun at the question of comic art’s status within the canon of art. A caption within the work ironically reads, “VENDOR: Do not display in respectable bookstore anywhere near fiction, art or literature.”

As a large number of the pieces in the show contain text, the strategically placed interactive elements keep the show’s numerous highly-detailed works from becoming overwhelming. A room dedicated to the SAIC student-run comics and drawing zine, “Xerox Candy Bar,” features a cartoon version of the offbeat literary figure Richard Brautigan as the host of the exhibit. (Brautigan wrote a 1976 poem titled, “Xerox Candy Bar,” which the SAIC group later adopted as its name.)

Humorously antithetical to typical gallery behavior, visitors are encouraged to page through the zines on display, and are even prompted to create their own pages for “a special edition of ‘Xerox Candy Bar.’” The sign on the “Flaxicart” (a communal library cart) in the exhibit reads, “give a zine, take a zine,” reinforcing the collaborative component essential to the group’s aesthetic. The “Xerox Candy Bar” room is kind of like the elementary school art class everyone had with that one batty, but lovable art teacher that periodically disappeared along with all of the art and music classes.

According to Ghosh, “CartoonInk!” was also an opportunity to highlight emerging student comic artists, and to demonstrate



Above, left to right: Chris Ware, *Wrap Around Cover of ACME Novelty Library #15* (2001) courtesy of the artist. Image from Gaylord Phoenix, *Secret Acres* (2010). Anders Nilsen, *Pilot's Dream* (from *Big Questions* mural).

the ways that SAIC is influencing the field. Collaborating on studio-based comics classes for the past five years, the curators of “CartoonInk!” realized that the school was home to a thriving comics community. “We would get together every semester to compare notes, compare student work, exchange reading lists and talk about comics,” says Ghosh. “Through our meetings we realized that these students were exceptionally talented, and that their work needed to be shown off to the larger SAIC community,” she explains.

Displayed alongside pieces from comic art celebrities like Chris Ware, the works of SAIC students and alumni hold their own. In the series “Looking Up,” Sara Drake uses graphite gouache to humorously illustrate the romantic relationship between two mythological lovers who have modern-day relationship problems. These smart, playful pieces — as well as works from other artists using painting, sculpture, collage, embroidery and animation — illustrate the larger idea of how contemporary comic art is being redefined by its experimentation in various mediums.

While “CartoonInk!” stresses the hybrid nature of comic art, several technically striking pieces stay true to the traditional “studio method” of drawing. Visually mind-blowing pieces, such as Marc Bell’s “Hot Potatoe”[sic] and Ellis Anderson’s “Abstract Exercise,” testify to the enduring talent and skill involved in illustration, upon which comic art is based.

The emphasis on technical expertise is balanced with an equally fundamental element of comic art: wit and humor. In “Untitled (Of Ages)” Daniel Morris sums up the common

apprehension towards aging by depicting a middle-aged man and a twenty-something man each snobbishly assessing the other. The younger man’s thought bubble reads, “That will never happen to me,” and the older man’s says, “I bet he thinks men’s health is literature.” The jocular nature of the exhibition allows for a fun, dynamic experience devoid of the usual art gallery pretention.

Though the works in the show clearly contain artistic merit, “CartoonInk!” does not provide any sweeping conclusions about the rightful place of comics in the art world. Instead, the show suggests that its context is irrelevant to its content, because successful comic art should take the audience outside of the limitations of reality. Accessible, engaging, and original, “CartoonInk!” manages to transform the gallery space into an amusing daydream wherein the audience can explore the many ways that comics come to life. Regarding the question of comic art’s weight on the ever-shifting scale that identifies fine art, we should heed the advice of Chris Ware: “Do not sell to minors, critics, teachers, estranged parents or gym teachers.”

*CartoonInk! Comics in Context* runs from September 10 to October 15 in the Betty Rymer Gallery.

**“Comics are fine art  
as much  
as they are literature  
— meaning,  
they are neither.”**

**Surabhi Ghosh**

Photos courtesy of Sullivan Galleries.

# Flaxman's Check-up

## *F* Newsmagazine dives into Flaxman Library seeking to determine its state of health

By Daryl Meador

It is still early in the semester. There is still time to explore and take full advantage of the school's resources. Listening to students' comments and complaints, we sensed a concern about what is and isn't available at our library. So *F* Newsmagazine recently decided to research the Flaxman Library, seeking to determine its state of health. Whether you're one of its most frequent users, or haven't visited it at all, learning about its strengths, weaknesses and processes, might come in handy during the semester.

Claire Eike, director of the library, gave us input on what Flaxman has to offer and the changes that have been taking place there.

### INTERVIEW WITH DIRECTOR CLAIRE EIKE

**DARYL MEADOR:** What types of material are given priority in the library?

**CLAIRE EIKE:** Top priority is given to faculty requests to support teaching and learning. Anything that faculty members need for classes or think students should be reading, viewing or listening to, we try to obtain immediately. Students can also request titles or areas for development, and we'll do our best to honor their interests.

We pay a lot of attention, as well, to what subjects people are researching in the library; what kind of reference questions are asked; what we have to request on inter-library loan; which visiting artists/lecturers are invited to campus; what our faculty, students and alums are publishing; and any other clues that we get from interacting with library users.

**D.M:** Is there a possibility for students to request new titles?

**C.E:** We keep a notebook out in the Reference section in which students can submit requests for new titles. We just ordered a new suggestion box for the library

entryway, which should be ready sometime soon. We also have an online form to request new titles at our website. All of that information is used for collection building in the main library and the library special collections — whether people ask for specific artists, authors, titles or just reveal general interests. If it relates to the curriculum or to campus events, we'll try to collect it.

Some types of materials present special problems. When it comes to games, movies, and digital content (databases, ebooks and images), we may run into licensing terms and/or technical limitations that make some titles impractical or unaffordable in a library setting, even though the content would otherwise be perfect for the SAIC community. As a library, we have to have content that we can technically and legally share.

**D.M:** How can students access material not kept in the Flaxman?

**C.E:** I hope most students and faculty know about the I-Share consortium of academic libraries in Illinois. That's our front line for borrowing from other libraries. It's heavily subsidized by the State of Illinois, free to the users and completely self-service. You order what you want from the I-Share catalog and it's usually here at the Flaxman Library within three days.

For anything that can't be found through I-Share, we rely on an international consortium, OCLC — which is known to library users as the WorldCat catalog. You can search WorldCat to find books you'd like to borrow, then ask a library staff member to place an inter-library loan request for you. It's library-to-library delivery, just like I-Share. The difference is that there are sometimes fees for loans from OCLC/WorldCat partners.

**D.M:** Flaxman is a very small library in terms of space. What are the efforts to make up for that lack of space?

**C.E:** We're investing more in ebooks and ejournals. We have over 20,000 ebooks from springer.com in science, medical, and

technology subject areas — all recent publications (2005-2011). They're listed in the library catalog just like everything else, but with a link that takes you into the ebook instead of a call number that takes you to a shelf in the library. Our SAIC community is reading about everything from plastic surgery to robotics, biomimetics, genetics and synesthesia. Having these kinds of subjects covered digitally means that we can reserve our limited physical space for art books and other materials that are better experienced in visual and tactile formats.

**D.M:** There are no longer late fines in the library. Does this apply to everything, or only books? How are students held accountable for returning the books so that others can access them?

**C.E:** Flaxman Library is no longer charging overdue fines for circulating books and CDs. This change is effective for I-Share, as well. There are still fines for recalled and reserved items, as well as videos. Before making this change we ran the stats and discovered that 80 percent of Flaxman Library circulating items are returned on time. Not bad! But not good enough for videos — since faculty depend on reserving them for classes, we need better than 80 percent compliance. We are still charging \$5 overdue fines for movies.

Mainly, we rely on the good will of students and faculty to return or renew things on time. If something is overdue for 16 weeks we'll send a bill for replacement costs — which generally gets people's attention. The average replacement cost for a printed art book is \$50. We have to pay institutional prices for movies, so the average DVD cost for us is probably close to \$100, with some well over \$300 — a shock to students.

Libraries are built on trust, and it's easy to abuse — but most people seem to prefer the idea of sharing knowledge. At any given time we are likely to have at least \$30,000 of Flaxman Library materials "missing in action" (overdue for 45 days or more). Some of the

"lost" items will eventually be returned. Some things are truly lost forever and can't be replaced. Not only does that mean a loss of your collective investment as tuition-paying students, but losses also undermine the usefulness of the collection. We lose part of the history of thought, teaching and creative interests at the school

**D.M:** Are there any future plans to expand the library so as to accommodate more physical material?

**C.E:** My understanding is that the library will figure prominently in the campus master plan being developed as part of SAIC's current strategic planning initiative.

Print materials are pretty much holding steady, but we've reached the point where we can't continue to add new physical items to the library collections unless we remove old physical items in equal volume. Removing older items that are not being used and are easily available on I-Share is OK up to a certain point. We've analyzed the book collections intensively over the past few years and have done a lot to freshen them up. We do have to accept a limited amount of space. Whether we expand the library or simply renovate the current space, it's still a finite amount of space.

It's important that we have intelligent discussions now as a campus and develop our vision for the future of the library. We are planning to bring in a consultant this fall to help us begin this process.

### REGULAR FALL/SPRING SEMESTER HOURS:

**Monday – Thursday:** 8:30am – 10:00pm  
**Friday:** 8:30am – 6:00pm  
**Saturday – Sunday:** Noon – 6:00pm

For holidays and/or changes please see the calendar at [libraryguides.saic.edu](http://libraryguides.saic.edu)



**Elsa Haarstad, First Year Undergraduate, Undecided**

"I can't find many good novels — other than that, for my interests, it's pretty good."

"The movie collection is fantastic and the overall resources extremely accessible."

"It would be nice if they had overnight hours and if space was more aesthetically pleasing all around."



**Ensueño Pabon, First Year Undergraduate, Writing**

"More fictional novels would be helpful for those in Creative Writing program."

"The staff is very helpful."

"I would like to see the library open earlier on Saturdays — just open more hours in general."



**Stephen Germana, First Year Graduate, Sound**

"So far, since I'm a first-year student, I've only spent about 20 minutes in the library, and it has been a wonderful experience; I have found CDs and recordings that I have not easily been able to find in my life."

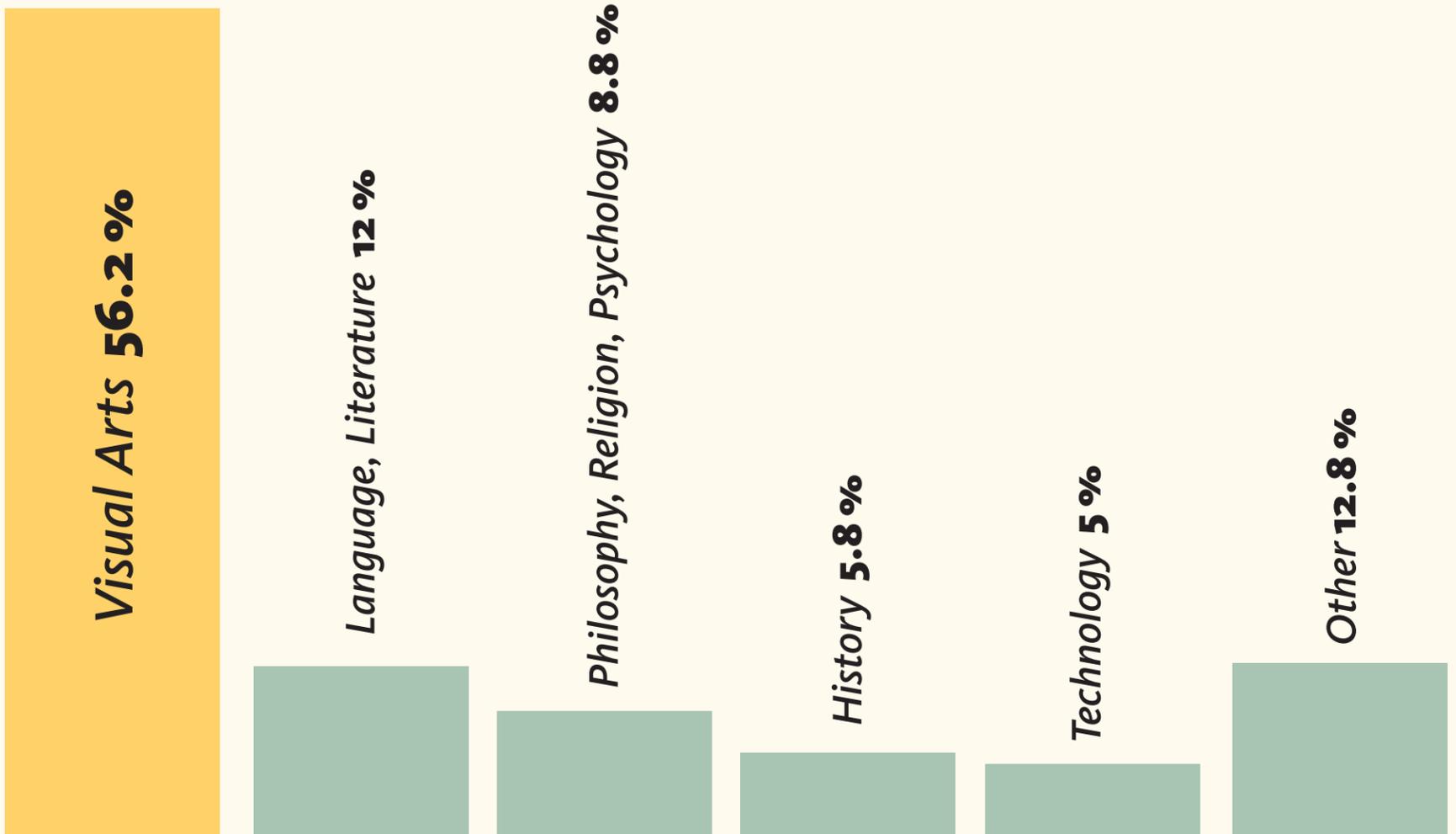


**Annan Shehadi, Second Year Graduate Student In Visual & Critical Studies**

"I find some of the resources I need at Flaxman, but most of the books I get end up being through I-Share."

"I think the process of checking out books through iShare is very easy and the staff is helpful. A bigger variety of political and cultural studies books would be nice."

# FLAXMAN'S CATALOGUED COLLECTION

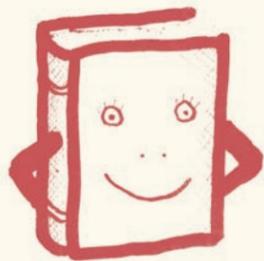


## VISUAL ARTS COLLECTION



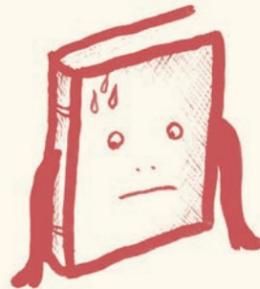
45%

General Visual Arts



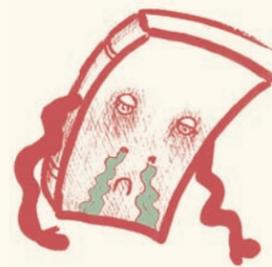
19%

Painting



17%

Each: Drawing, Sculpture, Design, Illustration, Print Media, General Arts



12%

Architecture



7%

Decorative Arts

## 2010 FISCAL YEAR

### THE SPACE CRUNCH

Items	Added/Removed	Held
Books + Other Print Items	-1,468	100,913
Microform Items	0	150
Audiovisual	132,723	144,519
Subscriptions: Paper + Other Physical Formats	-29	372
Subscriptions: E-Serials + Databases	12	97
*Archives	0	645

\*As you can see on the charts, in 2010, the library's print collections were weeded due to lack of sufficient space to accommodate both growth & retention. In 2010, 3,890 books & other paper/print items added, but 5,358 withdrawn. In subscriptions of paper & other physical formats, 4 were added but 33 canceled. We also found that more than half of the content of the catalog is visual art based, as well as what types of visual arts like painting, architecture and sculpture were more represented over others. Nevertheless, Students and faculty are always welcome to present suggestions, ideas and requests for the improvement of our library.

## REVOLUTIONARY WOMEN DULLY PRESENTED

*Combining decades of footage, “!Women Art Revolution” gives a first-person look into the history of feminism*

*“[The film] was just a particular linear narrative that had to do with my own experience, more like a memoir ... it is not encyclopedic.”*  
*Lynn Hershman-Leeson*

*By Alejandra Monserrat González Romo*

Without a single sale in 17 years, Lynn Hershman-Leeson offered to donate some of her work to a local museum. “When they knew it was made by a woman they rejected it — said it wasn’t art and that I didn’t know my place. They told me if I didn’t take them back they would destroy them,” Hershman-Leeson recalls in her recent documentary “!Women Art Revolution.” 35 years later, those pieces were appraised for 9,000 times the original price and it was that sale that enabled the completion of the film.

Hershman-Leeson, a critically acclaimed visual artist whose previous films include “Teknolust,” “Conceiving Ada,” and “Strange Culture” (all starring Tilda Swinton), started shooting the documentary “!Women Art Revolution” 40 years ago, shortly after finishing graduate school, because she “didn’t trust her memory.” The result is an impressive and extremely valuable collection of footage spanning the history of feminist art. The film, which has been shown in 49 different cities around the world and was part of the Toronto, Sundance and Berlin film festivals, takes us back to the 1960s, when a group of New York-based female artists formed a coalition and named it W.A.R. Women Artists in Revolution. Still fighting in the Vietnam War, the US witnessed the emergence of the Black Panther Party, the Civil Rights Movement and the Free Speech Movement. Meanwhile a new revolution was brewing.

Judy Chicago, Nancy Spero, Hannah Wilke, Howardena Pindell, Miriam Schapiro, Judith Baca, Martha Rosler, Sheila Levrant de Bretteville, Rachel Rosenthal, Sylvia Sleigh, Leslie Labowitz, Miranda July and the Guerrilla Girls are only some of the important artists who speak in this documentary. Barbara Kruger and Cindy Sherman, on the other hand, are barely mentioned.

Some of the many recognizable feminist artists featured in the film appear in two or more interviews, done as much as 20 years apart. We see them, discussing, marching, performing and aging, which gives the film considerable historic value. The documentary, though, as the film critic Lauren Wissot rightly described it for *Slant Magazine*, is “as cinematic as a slideshow in an art history class,” which contrasts with Hershman-Leeson’s complex and innovative previous films and video work. When *F News* magazine asked her about the film’s simple composition, she explained, “I didn’t know I was making a film. Back then I was just documenting and shooting what was going on around me.” Her answer seems insufficient, as it is the overall editing and post-production, not the valuable footage, gathered in understandably complicated or improvised conditions, that is disappointing. When later asked if she was satisfied with the result, she answered, “Well, I’m just glad it’s complete.”

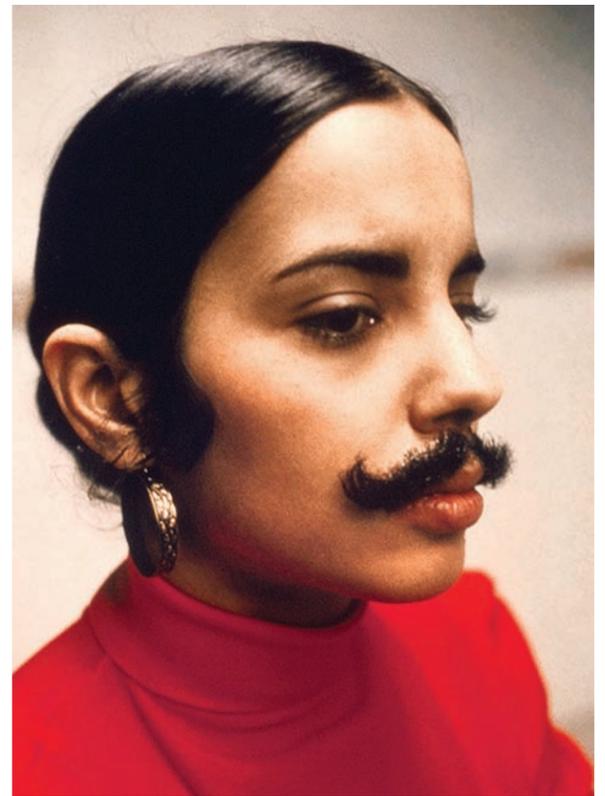
The first half of the film feels particularly dull despite the vibrancy of the events it reports. The arrival of the Guerrilla Girls in the second half brings that craved freshness to the viewer’s experience. Representing a younger generation of feminists, they share part of the humor and irony of their work (and hairy outfits) to liven up the documentary. They come across as more honest and grounded when, for example, one of them admits, “The bra burning didn’t actually affect social change.”

The academic voices in the film complement and, at moments, confront the vision and decisions of the artists during those years. Art historian Amelia Jones agrees with the Guerrilla Girls when she says, “I don’t think feminism successfully changed the structures through which art is made, sold, displayed and written about.”

Internal divisions within the feminist movement came to head with the controversial death of Cuban Artist Ana

Mendieta, who fell out of the window of her 34th floor apartment after a fight with her husband, the minimalist artist Carl Andre. Although Andre was ultimately acquitted by a judge, there have always been doubts about his involvement.

In the most tense moment of the film, the scholar and film critic B. Ruby Rich accuses the Guerrilla Girls of being “so split by differences” and not putting out “a fucking poster in her defense.” The aggrieved do not offer a response in the film to Rich’s criticism. “I asked them if they had any response to [Mendieta’s death,] but they didn’t do anything at the time. They did do a poster, but it was about ten years later,” explained Hershman-Leeson to *F News* magazine. Ana Mendieta’s presence echos throughout the documentary — and it is with a long close-up of her face in a group picture and video footage of her work entitled “Anima” (1976) that the documentary ends. When asked about her decision to emphasize Mendieta’s work, Hershman-Leeson replies, “She had an important story. Her relationship with Carl Andre was representative of the conflict between minimalism and feminism, and what happened to her is a tragic story that I didn’t want to be forgotten.” She recalled the division and tension her death generated in the art world: “It was really just a typical way of not being able to directly confront what



Ana Mendieta. “Documentation of an untitled work” 1972. Courtesy of Galerie Lelong, New York.

was happening out of fear of punishment and reprisals. It was clear in that past, and it is still clear in the present, that there are certain lines that you can’t cross, and certain things that you are not allowed to say or talk about. Her case just typifies that situation.”

Hershman Leeson, director, editor, writer and narrator of the film, explains she questioned for a long time whether or not to include her own work in the film. “I didn’t want it to seem like an excuse to show my work, so it was a difficult decision in those terms. I didn’t want my work to be



Feminist Studio Workshop, 1973. Courtesy of Sheila Levrant de Bretteville Archives.

competing with other artists' work and ideas," she confided to F Newsmagazine. In the film, she justifies her final decision to appear in the documentary as a featured artist, "I decided not to continue with the legacy of exclusion, so here I am." The decision comes across as egocentric and arrogant, not because her work does not deserve that recognition, but because of the tone in which she speaks. Evidence enough of this idea, is the fact that towards the end of the film she shows the final timeline for the film that includes the story of so many great artists and says: "I realized that the timeline for this film is in fact my own."

The conclusion of the documentary reminds viewers that feminism's fight is far from over — the film is part of a larger project that seeks an interactive continuation of this story. The director explains at the end of the film that the 12,345 minutes of footage not included in the film are available for free at a website affiliated with the Stanford University Libraries for free. A second website was created as part of the project, the RAW/WAR portal, invites all women artists to upload their work to keep documenting the history of female art. "One could tell many stories with this particular footage, and one of the solutions was to put everything online so that you could see all of the 400 hours in the archive," says Hershman-Leeson. "People can look through it and create their own stories and assumptions. [The film] was just a particular linear narrative that had to do with my own experience, more like a memoir... It is not encyclopedic. This is just one very small example of how that information can be organized."

She concluded the interview with F Newsmagazine by saying, "The film itself is not the end. It's really just the beginning of more communication about what this movement was and what it can do and what people can do to add to it."

Hershman-Leeson does not have plans for other projects involving this footage — from now on, it's open for public use.

### THE OTHER PART OF THE PROJECT

To offer an analysis of the project as a whole, F Newsmagazine visited the Stanford Libraries portal hoping for an opportunity to dive into this wonderful footage. What is available on the website is not the actual video footage, but transcripts of the unedited interviews with artists that, in most cases, are the same ones appearing on the documentary. The website provides, as well, a large catalogue of the actual physical tapes and images that are available to the public through a specific request to the university.

The RAW/WAR portal, on the other hand, is built on user contributions. The extremely eclectic community-curated collection, currently listing 168 artworks, includes footage and images of the work of Isabella Rossellini, Barbara Kruger, Aretha Franklin, Georgia O'Keeffe and Alice Neel, just to mention some, as well as an episode of "The Ellen DeGeneres Show" that speaks about gay marriage and a performance of "I Will Survive" by The Muppets's Miss Piggy in a YouTube-based archive.

Despite the alarming eclecticism of the RAW/WAR portal, both display extremely interesting work and the opportunity for women artists to recognize each other and unite forces in their fight, which is still far from being over. "Equality. Women aren't treated equally. They aren't shown in the same degree and their work is not valued as highly, so there is still a lot of work to do," affirmed Hershman-Leeson when asked what is still left to achieve by women artists.

Indeed, the available footage is solid gold raw material for endless projects in different disciplines, and the merits of Hershman-Leeson's overall project are unquestionable. Hopefully it will continue to grow in even more interesting directions.

*Women, Art, Revolution*  
October 1-6  
Gene Siskel Film Center



"External Transformations: Roberta's Construction Chart, No. 1" 1975. Courtesy of Lynn Hershman-Leeson.

# A FLOWER BETWEEN THE CRACKS

*Interrupters defuse Chicago violence*



Illustrations by Emily Haasch

*By Annette Elliot*

A bright orange crowd of protesters marches down the street of Roseland chanting: "Cease Fire! Cease Fire! Stop the Shooting! Stop the Shooting! Stop the Killing! Stop the Killing!" The radio echoes in the background: "124 people shot this year, one each day, about the number of Americans killed during the same period in Iraq and Afghanistan." In front of a 13-year-old boy's small memorial of stuffed toys propped against a car, a crowd has gathered. "This is what a war zone looks like," declares an elder from the community. "We can't be quiet no more."

"The Interrupters" by Oscar-nominated director Steve James ("Hoop Dreams") and award-winning author Alex Kotlowitz ("There Are No Children Here") is back by public demand. Setting a record for an all-time box office hit at the Gene Siskel, the film returns this October for a two-week run.

The documentary follows three ex-gangbangers through the streets of Chicago's toughest neighborhoods. Aameena Matthews, Cobe Williams and Eddie Bocanegra have each served over a decade in prison. Stepping out of the cycle of drug trafficking, violence and murder, they have transformed their lives and now walk the same streets as violence interrupters. Their job is to intervene in conflicts before they escalate into violence.

The film opens a window onto the murky underbelly of Chicago. "We didn't go in knowing the answers we needed or wanted," explains author-turned producer Alex Kotlowitz. "We viewed it as an exploration." Haunted by the city's epidemic of violence, James and Kotlowitz sought to immerse themselves, and by extension the viewer, into communities where violence has become the everyday.

"The audience for this film," admits Steve James in a conversation with FNews magazine, "is people who live in communities like Englewood, and people who don't live in communities like Englewood. For those directly affected by the violence, it is a powerful experience to see something that they live with day in, day out represented on screen and to a wider world. On the other hand, people who don't live in these communities still want to be informed, want to know about what's going on and try to understand it."

"It is important to see this as a problem that is not confined to poor neighborhoods," he insists. "It is a problem that we all bear responsibility for and have an obligation to change."

As I waited in a line that overflowed into the narrow galleries of the Siskel, I felt an excitement and urgency in the crowd that I had never experienced at the cinema before. We all waited in anticipation 30 minutes before the doors even opened. For the first time, diversity reached beyond the leopard prints, green hair and asymmetric side-swept bangs of SAIC students. The audience was black and white.

James recognizes the unique potential of documentary film to transport the audience out of their everyday life, out of their community, out of their class, to places different and strange that they otherwise wouldn't understand.



Ameena Matthews, violence interrupter.  
Courtesy of Aaron Wickenden/Kartemquin Films.

Filming was dangerous for the small crew that followed the three interrupters into the heart of seething disputes. It was more dangerous for Ameena Matthews, Cobe Williams and Eddie Bocanegra, who committed themselves to brutal honesty, intimacy and vulnerability, and bared their personal lives for the audience to scrutinize.

"It was hard for me to let my guard down," Matthews admits in an interview with Terri Gross. "It was hard for me to let them in so they could understand that here is someone who has come from the South Side of Chicago, who has been raised under bricks, and a flower has grown from under the bricks."

The interrupters are part of CeaseFire's violence prevention program. The organization relies on the involvement of former convicts with considerable street cred like Matthews, the daughter of Chicago's most notorious gang leader Jeff Fort. The reputation and connections of the former gang members allow the violence interrupters to mediate in conflicts on the front end.

"Violence is an epidemic — one that behaves with the characteristics of an infectious disease," argues CeaseFire at UIC founder Gary Slutkin. His epidemiological model stands in stark contrast with the film's approach to humanize and emotionally understand the problem of violence. For 10 years Slutkin worked in Africa and Asia to combat tuberculosis, cholera and AIDS. In 1995 he returned to Chicago to apply disease control methods to the plague of violence in the city. "That violence is an epidemic is not a metaphor," Slutkin argues in *The Guardian*, "it is a scientific fact." We must prevent the transmission of violence from person to person by attacking the disease at its source.

Far from confronting the deeply rooted and complex origins of violence, CeaseFire is a band-aid that must be constantly reapplied. Professor of Criminal Justice at UIC John Hagedorn criticizes the program because it ignores structural contributors to violence. Looking beyond the immediate causes of outbreaks of violence, we begin to unravel the messy web of poverty, racism and oppression.

I asked Hagedorn what he considered the source of Chicago's rampant problem of violence. "Some of the things we must examine are apparently unrelated, like the state of housing within a community. I'm not sure the best solutions are the most direct solutions."

The 1980s introduced a new drug on the market — crack cocaine — leading to an escalation of violence across America. Unlike cities such as New York, where the stabilization of the crack market brought a drastic reduction in violence in the 1990s, high homicide rates in Chicago did not fall.

Hagedorn connects Chicago's escalating levels of violence to the destruction of the high-rise public housing projects.

"In New York there was a huge influx of money to stabilize public housing. What did they do in Chicago? They ripped everything down. What did that mean if you're selling at Robert Taylor Homes and you've got to move to Roseland? What did that mean? You're coming in on my turf! All hell broke loose. You're moving into my neighborhood and

saying 'Cut me in on a deal' and I say 'Nah, not a chance. There ain't enough to go around.' And there was fighting."

Producer of "The Interrupters" Alex Kotlowitz acknowledges the need to confront structural contributors at play in the complex problem of violence — poverty, lack of education, and social and economic injustice. "What you see in these communities is the lack of opportunity. The film shows how important jobs are to Lil' Mikey and Flamo, yet work is virtually absent. These are communities in which the American dream is a fiction."

Ceasefire's approach is inadequate faced with the vast problem of violence. It is difficult to see last-minute interruptions as tackling the problem at its source and effecting long-term change. "Gangs," Hagedorn argues, "are socially constructed by a compliant mass media as the demonized and dangerous 'other' and become a threatening 'enemy' that must be removed by any means necessary."

### ***"Violence is an epidemic — one that behaves with the characteristics of an infectious disease"***

"The Interrupters" presents an alternative portrait. "Unlike the daily journalism of reporters and news, we had the opportunity to spend 12 to 14 months on a story. We had the advantage to take more than just a snapshot. I don't think of myself as a journalist," admits director Steve James. "I think of myself as a non-fiction storyteller. I'm trying to tell a true story with as much nuance, complexity and understanding as I can bring to it."

Alex Kotlowitz reveals how the process of filming challenged his own assumptions about black gangsters: "We met Flamo out on that porch. I remember he was drunk, he was agitated, he was carrying a gun, he was ready to go off and kill someone. In that moment he was what we all imagine so many young men in these communities to be — filled with rage and anger. What I came to realize as we began to spend time with Flamo is that here was a guy for whom anger wasn't necessarily a permanent state of mind."

Kotlowitz directed me towards the writings of Nigerian-born author Chimamanda Adichie, who discusses the dangers of the "single narrative," thinking you know somebody's story when in fact you know very little. Adichie reflects on her interactions with her American roommate: "She felt sorry for me even before she saw me. My roommate had a single story of Africa, a single story of catastrophe. In this single story there was no possibility of Africans being similar to her in any way, no possibility of feelings more complex than pity, no possibility of a connection as human equals."

"The Interrupters" invites the audience to abandon their notion of the "other." Director Steve James explains how he gained his subjects' trust: "When you are no longer sitting in judgment on them, when you are not coming with all these preconceived notions, when you are trying to understand, then people are willing to reveal themselves."

*The Interrupters*  
October 7–20  
Gene Siskel Film Center  
Filmmaker appearances at selected screenings



Ameena Matthews, violence interrupter. Courtesy of Aaron Wickenden/Kartemquin Films.

# THE ELECTRONIC WALLS HAVE EYES

*Apple Store photo project sparks uncomfortable discussion about “privacy”*

*By Sarah Hamilton*

If you saw the images, you wouldn't think they were all that controversial. Slack-jawed, their eyes glazed over, the subjects of Kyle McDonald's "People Staring at Computers" appear deeply focused or even caught at a bad moment. How McDonald obtained the images is what has been subject to fascination and controversy in the electronic arts community in New York City since the project was shut down in July.

McDonald, a Brooklyn-based media artist, downloaded photo software to Apple Store computers and connected them to his own website. When the built-in iSight camera detected a face, it would snap a photo and then show it to the user. In an interview with Mashable, McDonald claimed that users would almost immediately shut down the photo slideshow, disinterested in what had just been shown to them. After the photo was taken, it was forwarded to McDonald and posted to Tumblr and Vimeo for public consumption. His intention, he told Mashable, was to "think more about our computers and how we're using them."

The project lasted only a few days before Apple discovered the program and the Secret Service showed up at McDonald's home, confiscating two computers, two flash drives and an iPod. When this project was first brought to F Newsmagazine's attention in early July, just the news broke, the work was justified under the pretense of aesthetics, but that conversation has been leapfrogged over to the far more serious concern of legal issues surrounding electronic art production. McDonald, it seems, is another electronic artist whose work has become a standard-bearer of the "Art vs. Law" argument.

It's an interesting position for McDonald to be put in, but not an enviable one. McDonald, who initially declined to comment for this story, was facing charges under 18 USC section 1030 of the US Code, a law that relates to computer fraud. McDonald, who seemed open to discussing the project in his Mashable interview, refrained from talking to the media while he was under investigation — advice given to him by his counsel, the Electronic Frontier Foundation. However, in a tweet from September 9, he wrote "@secretservice investigation of 'people staring at computers' is done. The us [sic] attorney's office has declined to prosecute." Just before press time, McDonald responded to the request from F Newsmagazine for a statement surrounding his work — a statement which has been included at the end of this article.

It seemed like McDonald's situation was a difficult one to stumble into, but not impossible. For artists working in electronic mediums, the boundaries are increasingly blurry.

Michael Dorf, an SAIC faculty and lawyer, explains that "part of it is that we're in unknown territory. Remember those old maps where it says, 'Beyond here be dragons.'? That's where we are in the digital age because the courts have not caught up with the technology. What the courts are trying to do is apply rules that worked fine when things were on paper — on something physical. They're trying to apply it to cyberspace and they're not there yet. I think artists are always at a greater risk now than they were before. You just don't know where the rules are going."

I approached Dorf and his SAIC colleague Barbara DeGenevieve, using McDonald's case as an example to find out what an incident like this means to the artist and get some advice on how young artists can protect themselves from similar situations.

"It's a different world than what it was. ... Even 15 years ago, no one was thinking about these things," explains Barbara DeGenevieve, an SAIC faculty member in the Photography Department, whose own work has led to an investigation of legal and ethical issues for artists.

DeGenevieve explains, "Saying 'I'm an artist, I can do whatever I want to do' ... Well, that's true, you can do whatever you want to do, but know, that if you do whatever you want to do, and you do something that is illegal in some way, you're going to get arrested and it's not going to be fun. Your life is possibly going to be ruined by that."

The education institution plays an important role in informing artists about their legal and ethical responsibilities. "If schools don't, they're irresponsible. At [SAIC], we do. There are a lot of classes that really address those issues," says DeGenevieve, noting that she started a class called "Art Brains, Business Smarts" in the Photography Department, which is taught by one artist and one lawyer covering a lot of

the issues artists face in their professional lives.

Dorf, who also teaches a class on art and law, says there are plenty of ways for Chicago artists to keep up current legal and ethical issues in their field of practice. "The Chicago Artists Coalition is terrific and they're really good at practical advice and helping artists to survive as entrepreneurs in society. Lawyers for the Creative Arts is terrific also. They have pro bono programs for artists that meet certain financial criteria. If the artist is making a little more, they still have a list of people who will give them legal advice for a reduced rate," Dorf continues. "I think one of the things I'm seeing more and more at the School of the Art Institute is [that] the Alumni Network is starting to develop and we're starting to get an alumni network where people can call up other people in the field from the school. Everybody I've ever talked to has been really good about giving advice and helping out."

DeGenevieve adds, "All they have to do is Google it. If they're aware of the fact that there's problems, there's enough books and articles to read about it."

When asked how McDonald could have avoided his particular problem, both DeGenevieve and Dorf were clear.

"With his stuff it would have just been easy enough to ask consent from people. Some of them might have enjoyed it, some of them might say, 'I don't want my identity posted anywhere,'" says Dorf. "When [an artist] arrives at a concept and they know what they want to do, the artist needs to step back for a second and say, 'What are my ethical obligations here? What are my responsible obligations as a member of the community?' And then weigh that against 'What am I trying to accomplish?' and if the answer is 'I want publicity and I want self-promotion' — is that really the goal that outweighs what you may be doing to your subject?"

"In an art gallery they might have asked him for model releases," explains DeGenevieve. "[SAIC] won't let you put up a picture of someone unless you have a model release form. I've been telling my students this for years and years. I have several different model releases that I just hand out for different things. Ethically, it's just atrocious that he's done this."

The ethics of "People Staring at Computers" continues to re-emerge through my conversations about this project. It seems to strike a chord with everyone I mention it to, since, though Dorf and DeGenevieve are right, it still seems like the project is hinting at a larger hypocrisy in the domain of privacy, photography and facial recognition technology.

One of the nearly-missed points of interest was that, according to the same Mashable article, McDonald declined to put his code for the project online, specifying that it could be used for "less than benign" purposes. Indeed, when I first approached Michael Dorf, he noted that "[the American Civil Liberties Union is] going after the airports and these streetlamps because they've learned what things can be done with facial recognition software today. Not only how it can be used to arrest people for things they haven't done because the science isn't good enough, but it can be used for incredible identity theft. As we've all learned, when something is on a computer, it's there forever. Someone is always going to be able to find it if it's posted somewhere."

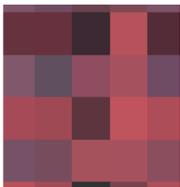
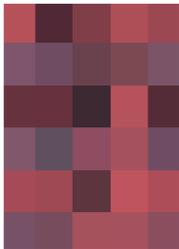
F Newsmagazine contacted the Electronic Frontier Foundation, who was representing McDonald in this matter and they declined to be interviewed, citing a conflict of interest. They did refer me to the Electronic Privacy Information Center, who connected me with John Verdie, Senior Council for the Washington, D.C.-based organization.

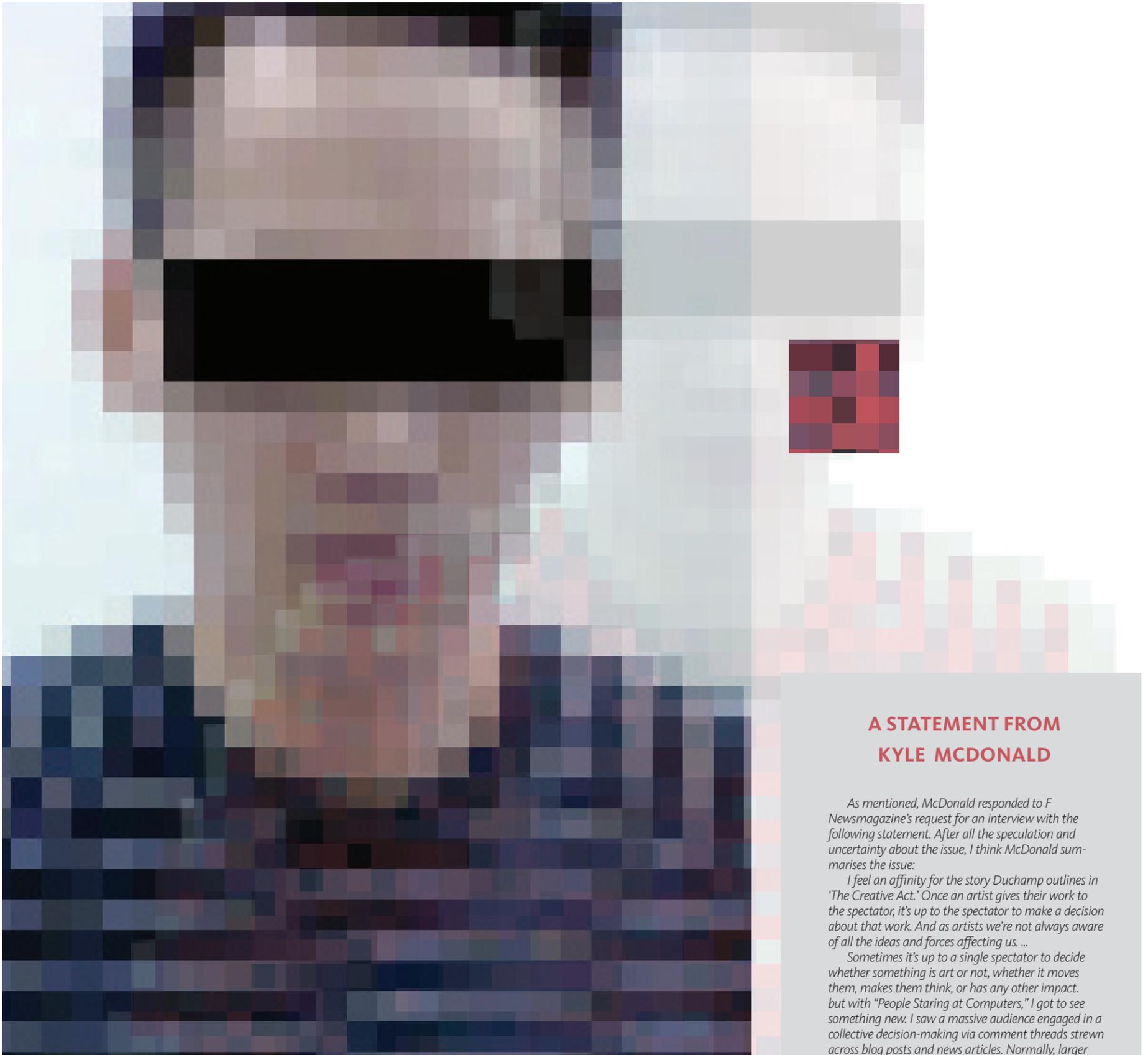
"What [this project] demonstrates is the ease with which individuals and companies can employ Facial Recognition Software," he explained in a phone interview from Washington, D.C.

"We're in a time where more computers and cell phones have built-in cameras than they did years ago," Verdie says, so "the opportunity is greater than it was years ago [and] the technology has advanced so that it's more useful than it was."

Verdie notes that large companies like Facebook are already using this software. For instance — post a group of photos online and Facebook will group them by person and ask you to confirm the identity of your friends.

"Anybody that conducts covert surveillance without consent is not being respectful," Verdie explains, "but it raises questions of what expectation people have of privacy in public spaces ... and in this case I would say it's an egregious violation."





## A STATEMENT FROM KYLE MCDONALD

As mentioned, McDonald responded to *F* News magazine's request for an interview with the following statement. After all the speculation and uncertainty about the issue, I think McDonald summarizes the issue:

*I feel an affinity for the story Duchamp outlines in 'The Creative Act.' Once an artist gives their work to the spectator, it's up to the spectator to make a decision about that work. And as artists we're not always aware of all the ideas and forces affecting us. ...*

*Sometimes it's up to a single spectator to decide whether something is art or not, whether it moves them, makes them think, or has any other impact. but with "People Staring at Computers," I got to see something new. I saw a massive audience engaged in a collective decision-making via comment threads strewn across blog posts and news articles. Normally, larger cultural decisions are left to people in power: judges, law enforcement, gallery owners, curators, media theorists, but here we saw the audience engaging itself in making a decision about the culture they wanted to adopt.*

*This was a special moment. If Apple hadn't so vehemently opposed the project, it would have been resigned to live as just another FAT lab project and part of my ongoing research on human interaction. But because they got the project taken offline and had my computer confiscated, they managed to give it more attention than I could have ever attracted. There were reporters using headlines with "artist" in scare quotes — this got the media artists mad. The feeling of privacy invasion — or just the awareness of surveillance — got the privacy crowd mad. The censorship and search warrant got the freedom of speech people mad. Apple created an amazing discussion. Most of this discussion was out of the scope of the project I created. In a way it became Apple's work. but most importantly, it became the commenter's.*

*I feel very grateful that I was able to spark that conversation, and I'm relieved that I don't have to further defend the work. I'm very happy to let the commenters do that.*

-Kyle McDonald.

Verdie also cites a case in Lower Merion County, Pennsylvania, where, in 2010, a class-action lawsuit was filed on behalf of students from two high schools against the Lower Merion County School Board. Students were issued new laptops to allow them to work at home and at school, but the laptops included theft-tracking software that indirectly allowed lower-level school officials to monitor the student's webcams, chat histories and general computer usage. Though the software was originally installed to help with theft investigations, school officials accessed the program when there was no open theft investigation.

After the US Attorney declined to prosecute the School Board and selected officials, the family of Blake J. Robbins (a student within the school district) chose to file a class-action civil law suit in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. Among the complaints listed in the suit was a violation of 18 USC 1030 — the same section that the US Attorney's office recently sought to charge McDonald under.

The Christian Science Monitor reported in May 2010 that a report filed by a consultant hired by the school board to investigate the allegations showed that "officials monitored more than 40 students who were issued laptop computers. Those incidents generated 30,881 webcam photographs of students and 27,761 screenshots. In the case of 10 of the students, the consultant was unable to determine any authorization for the monitoring activity, the report says. That monitoring generated 2,507 photographs and 2,212 screenshots. But the report says that images were only recovered for three of the 10 students."

McDonald's photographs seem minor in comparison.

All conditions aside, Verdie reminds us that "even when [you're] in public, [you] have a right to know if you're being recorded and when, where and how it is disseminated. I don't think anyone expects to be recorded when engaging in a commercial transaction," explains Verdie in regards to McDonald's project. "I think there's a breach of trust here and it highlights the ability of anyone to conduct surreptitious surveillance."

The question was posed to Verdie: "If the US Attorney had chosen to pursue McDonald for this case, would there be any ramifications for other individuals or organizations that record individuals without their consent?"

"I think a lot of folks would hope that it does. The courts have to decide if individuals have a reasonable expectation of privacy when in a public space." Another issue Verdie cites is the current issue with police officers being recorded by citizens in public when they're on duty. There have been a number of cases where police have ordered citizens to stop recording them but the question remains whether these individuals who are serving the public should expect not to be monitored. I do think that legally speaking, the courts are going to have to figure out what a reasonable expectation of privacy is."

For now, I'm sure Kyle McDonald is just happy to be able to move on to other pursuits.

# FIGHTING FOR OXYGEN

SAIC's environmental activism student group joins fight to close noxious coal power plants

By Daryl Meador

"They knew fully well they would get arrested," said Kelly Pope, SAIC student and leader of the Student Environmental Activism Committee (SEAC) on campus, recalling the day she witnessed her schoolmate and fellow SEAC leader Carlyn Crispell get arrested last April after climbing to the top of a mountain of coal at the Crawford Generating Plant with a huge banner that read "Close Chicago's Toxic Coal Plants". Crispell, who already graduated from SAIC, was charged with trespass on federal land, which is a misdemeanor. She stayed in jail for about twelve hours on the day she was arrested," said Pope.

Chicago's Fisk and Crawford coal plants, the first located in Pilsen and the second in Little Village, have been under attack for years by local and national environmental organizations such as the Little Village Environmental Justice Organization, the Pilsen Environmental Rights and Reform Organization (PERRO) and the Sierra Club, among others. Activists, including members of the SAIC SEAC, are demanding the city require the plants reduce their emissions or close down entirely. According to PERRO, the Crawford and Fisk coal-fired power plants are the two largest single sources of deadly particulate-forming air pollution in Chicago and contribute to the region's violations of federal pollution health standards.

The operation of these two plants is linked to over 40 deaths, 550 emergency room visits, and 2,800 asthma attacks annually, according to researchers at the Harvard School of Public Health. These numbers are of special concern because Chicago is known as the asthma epicenter of the nation. In the city, the asthma hospitalization rate is nearly double the national average. In some Chicago neighborhoods, over 25% of children under the age of twelve suffer from asthma. Groups of young students in Pilsen, particularly from the Lozano Leadership Academy, have played a key role in the activist movement to protect the region's air.

The United States Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) most recent data available (2003-04) states that the two plants combined emit 230 lbs. of mercury (which causes brain damage), 17,765 tons of sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide (which generates ozone and acid rain), and particulate matter that contributes to breathing problems, as well as 260,000 lbs. of soot.

Coal plants cause lead air pollution as well, and speaking specifically about Pilsen, the Illinois EPA's found that "parts of Chicago's Pilsen neighborhood do not meet the new national air quality standard for lead." If the plants don't meet the standards later this year, Illinois will be required to submit a plan by June 2013 to reduce lead emissions. The EPA explains that even at low levels, exposure to lead can impair a child's IQ, learning capabilities and memory. Although airborne lead levels have dropped dramatically in the United States since the transition to unleaded gas, the latest reports indicate that stronger standards are necessary to protect children.

Midwest Generation, the company that owns the plant, disputes the allegations. "We don't see a correlation between the allegations about our plants in relation to health," said Susan Olavarria, Director of Communications and Government Affairs for Midwest Generation to F Newsmagazine. "Asthma, for example, has been rising across the country, while our pollution has been going down," she affirmed. "In addition, the twelve monitors that the Illinois EPA use in the Cook County area to measure particles in the air and where they come from, have indicated that our plants account for less than half of one percent of the pollution in the air. The biggest pollutant cause is vehicles." She concluded the interview by clearing up her point. "Don't get me wrong; I'm not saying that our plants aren't contributing to what's in the air. I'm just saying that it's not as much as people are claiming, and that we are continuing to improve our facilities."

A website for the Fisk and Crawford plants reports that the particulate matter emissions coming from the plants have been reduced 25% in the past ten years.

Built roughly a century ago, the two structures were once symbols of progress and modernity; environmentalists now call them dysfunctional relics. Under the 1977 Clean Air act,

the plants are exempt from meeting the same pollution limits as new facilities. At the time it was assumed they would close down in the near future, but the plants continue to operate today. A 2010 study by the Environmental Law & Policy Center, a Midwest environmental advocacy organization, determined that the plants are costing the public \$127 million (in 2010 dollars) per year in health and environmental related damages.

Peter Gray, a member of the Environmental Law & Policy Center, has been involved for years in efforts to reduce pollution from the Fisk and Crawford Plants. "In 2009 we were one of the groups to file a lawsuit against Midwest Generation for exceeding their emission limits. We tested this by the opacity, or how little light we could see coming through the smoke, and they were way over their limit. That suit is still in process today."

"Carbon dioxide and particulate matter are the two most dangerous things to come out of the smoke stacks, and what is causing asthma, heart attacks and deaths in Chicago," Peter Gray said. The Clean Air Task Force, a non-profit organization that primarily uses research to advocate for environmental change, released a 2010 study that found that the coal plants in Chicago cause 42 premature deaths annually.

The Environmental Law and Protection Agency is currently working with the Chicago Clean Power Coalition to pass the Clean Power Ordinance in the City Council. The ordinance would require the two plants restrict their emissions. Currently backed by 49th Ward Alderman Joe Moore and 25th Ward Alderman Danny Solis, the ordinance is similar to a 2002 version that was backed by Alderman Ed Burke, which died in committee. Moore and Solis' will require 26 votes to pass.

Solis' ward encompasses much of the area affected the most by the power plants. Until March 2011, he had declined to support the ordinance, critics said because he had received generous donations from Midwest Generation. After months of pressure, Solis agreed to become a co-sponsor of the ordinance. At the July 28 City Council hearing during which the ordinance was introduced, Solis said, "There is no doubt that these coal power plants need to be cleaned up immediately to protect the fundamental health and safety of our communities. I am proud to have played a leading role in sponsoring the Clean Power Ordinance."

Midwest Generation opposes the Clean Air Ordinance. "Not because we don't want clean air, but because the Ordinance would force us to shut our doors," explained Olavarria. "Not only would we not be able to comply, but also no coal plant would be able to. The only way we would be able to comply would be to shut down and reconstruct as a Natural Gas Plant."

SAIC student Kelly Pope was at the April 21 City Council hearing about the ordinance, at which the bill didn't reach a vote. She was barely able to get a seat. "Midwest Generation packed the room full of workers hours before the hearing started, and gave them all candy bars," says Pope. "Most of the workers didn't even work in Chicago, either. They would chant, 'Save our jobs, save our jobs,' and we would chant, 'Save our lives, save our lives.'"

SAIC's SEAC student group has worked on zines about the plants, helped build a "coal baron" puppet for actions, and mud-stenciled messages reading, "We deserve to breathe clean air! Close Chicago's coal plants!" around Pilsen. Activists remain hopeful, as at the most recent hearing on July 28 the Ordinance was supported by the majority of the City Council, and Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel has said Midwest Generation should either install equipment to dramatically reduce pollution or convert to natural gas.



Photo by Kelly Pope

***"Carbon dioxide and particulate matter are the two most dangerous things to come out of the smoke stacks, and what is causing asthma, heart attacks and deaths in Chicago."***

***Peter Gray, member of the Environmental Law & Policy Center***

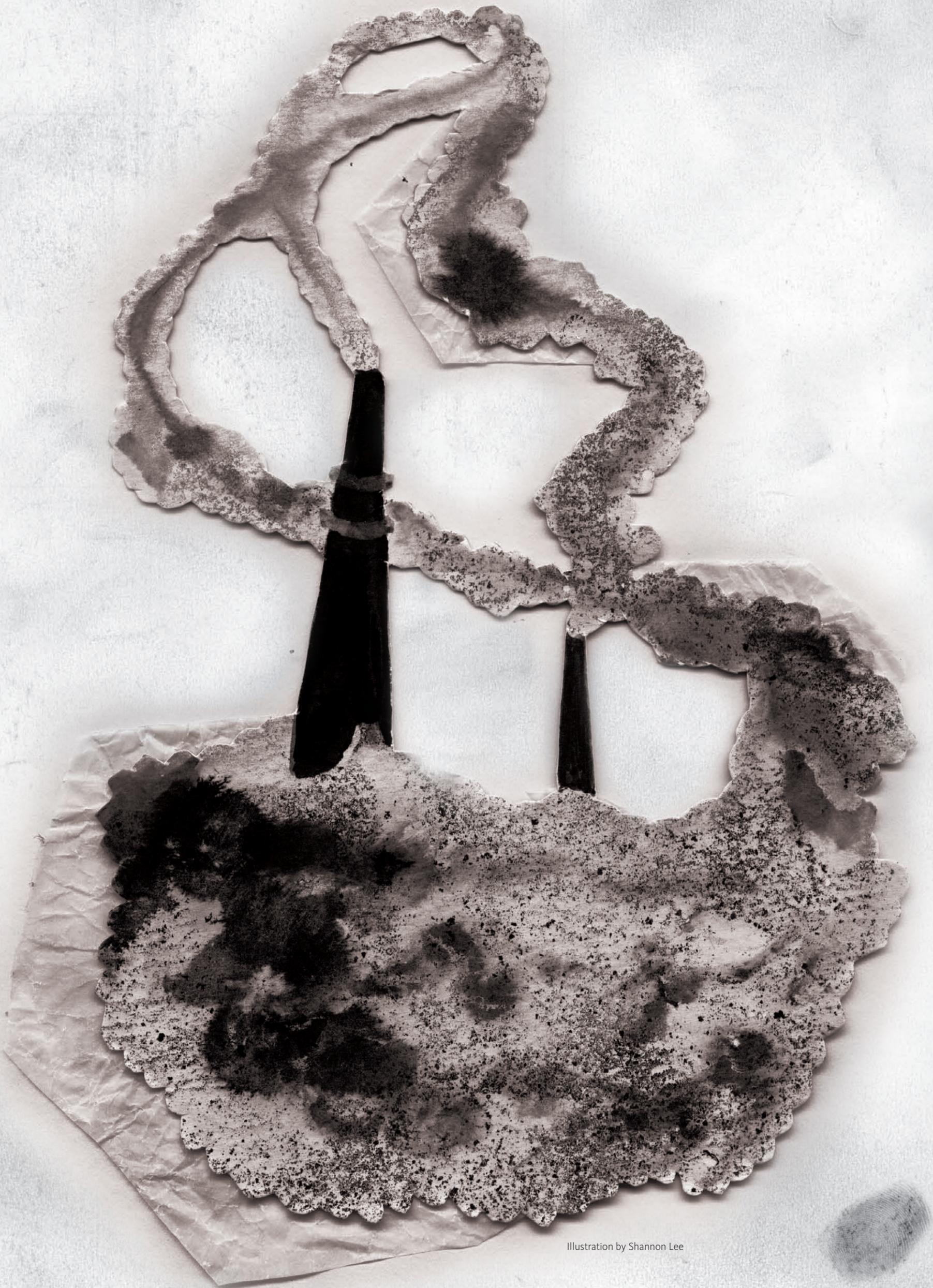


Illustration by Shannon Lee

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# Monument to Invention

An exhibition at the Art Institute looks at Bertrand Goldberg's legacy

By Maura Lucking

In a city known for its stoic skyscrapers, the playful forms of architect Bertrand Goldberg's cylindrical towers read as a breath of fresh air, even forty years after their initial construction. Goldberg is celebrated this month with his first comprehensive retrospective at the Art Institute of Chicago as well as with corollary exhibitions on the residents of his iconic Marina City towers and a more personal look at the architect's art and artifacts at the Arts Club of Chicago.

This reappraisal of Goldberg's architectural practice could not be timelier, as his Prentice Women's Hospital (1974) has been seriously threatened this year by Northwestern University's attempts to demolish it for its valuable Streeterville property. The currently unprotected building is rumored to be on the agenda for an October 6 meeting of the Commission on Chicago Landmarks, making the stakes for the Art Institute's exhibition unusually heightened in the architectural community. Though the museum's entrance into the arena of Chicago politics and preservation was unintentional, in "Architecture of Invention," Goldberg's career and featured projects certainly act as synecdochic of larger questions about the contemporary legacy and uncertain future of modernist architecture.

Goldberg (1913-1997) was a Chicago native, yet his time abroad at the Bauhaus introduced him to the social causes to which he remained committed throughout his career in the United States, where he forged imaginative structural and formal solutions to complex issues in housing and urban development. He is best known for his futuristic modular mega-structures, in dialogue with the international work of the Japanese Metabolists and the British cooperative group Archigram. Marina City, strikingly immortalized on the cover of Wilco's 2002 album Yankee Hotel Foxtrot, originally included a movie theater, elementary school and bowling alley, forming a virtual "city within a city."

Co-organized by Architecture and Design department chair Zoë Ryan and curator Allison Fisher (in collaboration with former MCA chief curator Elizabeth Smith), "Bertrand Goldberg: Architecture of Invention" will draw from the museum's collection and archives, the Harvard Art Museum and several private collections, and will feature over one hundred architectural drawings, models and photographs, including several newly-fabricated

models of Goldberg's hospitals and housing projects.

The retrospective promises to develop an image of Goldberg beyond his iconic towers, however, tracing the roots of his inventiveness from his education at the Bauhaus and early appointments with Chicago architects George and Fred Keck and Paul Schweiker to his own residential designs and prefabricated work, including furniture, a Dymaxion-style car and even a mobile, mast-supported ice cream parlor. The museum's companion exhibition Inside Marina City, conversely, draws out Goldberg's legacy to the present day, subtly questioning Goldberg's modernist housing ideology through a photo project by Iker Gil and Andreas E.G. Larsson that documents the contemporary vernacular use (and re-use) of Marina City's unconventional wedge-shaped units.

Across town at the Arts Club, Goldberg's son — architect and University of Illinois at Chicago professor Geoff Goldberg — has organized "Bertrand Goldberg: Reflections" in an attempt to supplement the Art Institute's praxis-based exhibition. "Reflections" will display personal artifacts of the architect, including selections from his art collection, comprised of works from friends and colleagues like teacher Josef Albers and his mother-in-law Lillian Florsheim; personal correspondence and photographs; further designs for unconventional furniture and jewelry; and WWII military commissions in an attempt to highlight the architect's multi-disciplinary practice and deep personal connection to his work.

Both the Arts Club and Art Institute's ventures are noteworthy with regards to exhibition design as well, with John Vinci and John Ronan Architects involved, respectively, in the exhibitions' layout, and, in the case of the Art Institute, the construction of curvilinear walls within the Modern Wing galleries imitating Goldberg's famous clover leaf motif. The integration of period materials like mirrored doorways and a concrete title wall evoke his residential spaces and are the first exhibition build-out since the opening of the Modern Wing. This tangible materiality echoes what Goldberg wrote in 1965 of his commitment to the people who inhabited his buildings: "Their architecture must meet them and recognize them, not simply store them."

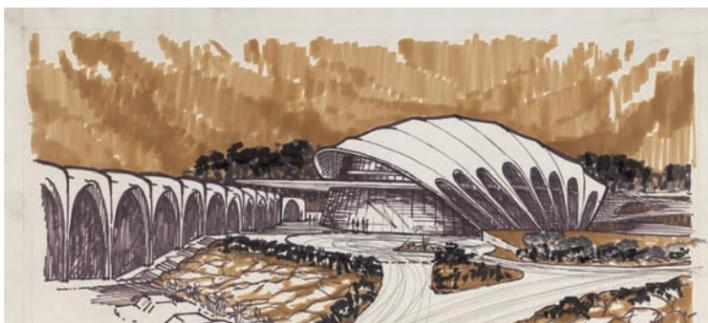
*Bertrand Goldberg: Architecture of Invention is open until January 15, 2012*



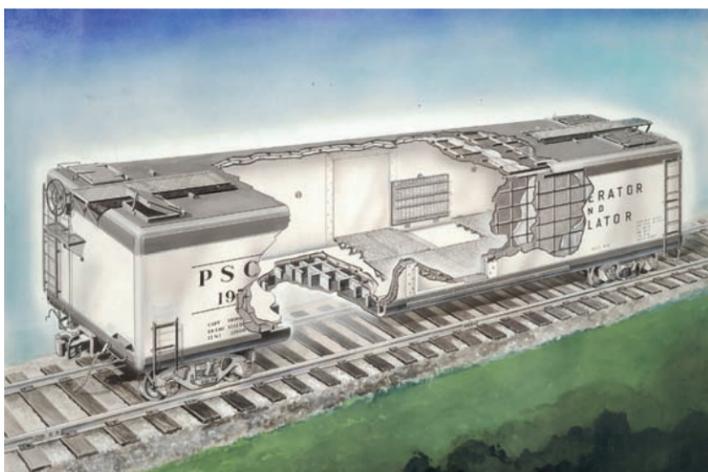
Early scheme for Prentice Women's Hospital, 1969-72.



Bertrand Goldberg (left) with the Marina City model, c. 1960.



San Diego Theater, 1967-68.



Unicel Plywood Freight Car for the Pressed Steel Car Company, cutaway view, 1949-52.

The retrospective promises to develop an image of Goldberg beyond his iconic towers, however, tracing the roots of Goldberg's inventiveness from his education at the Bauhaus ... to his own residential designs and prefabricated work.

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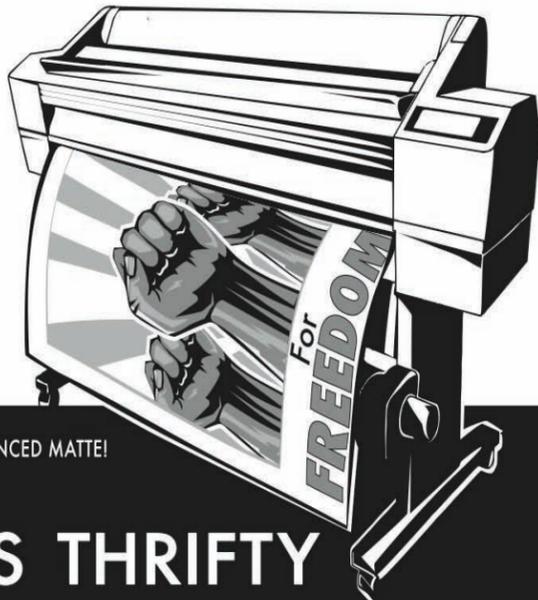
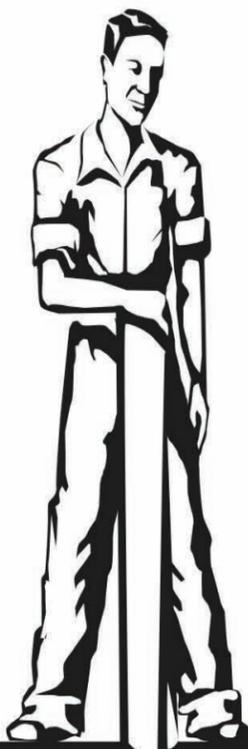
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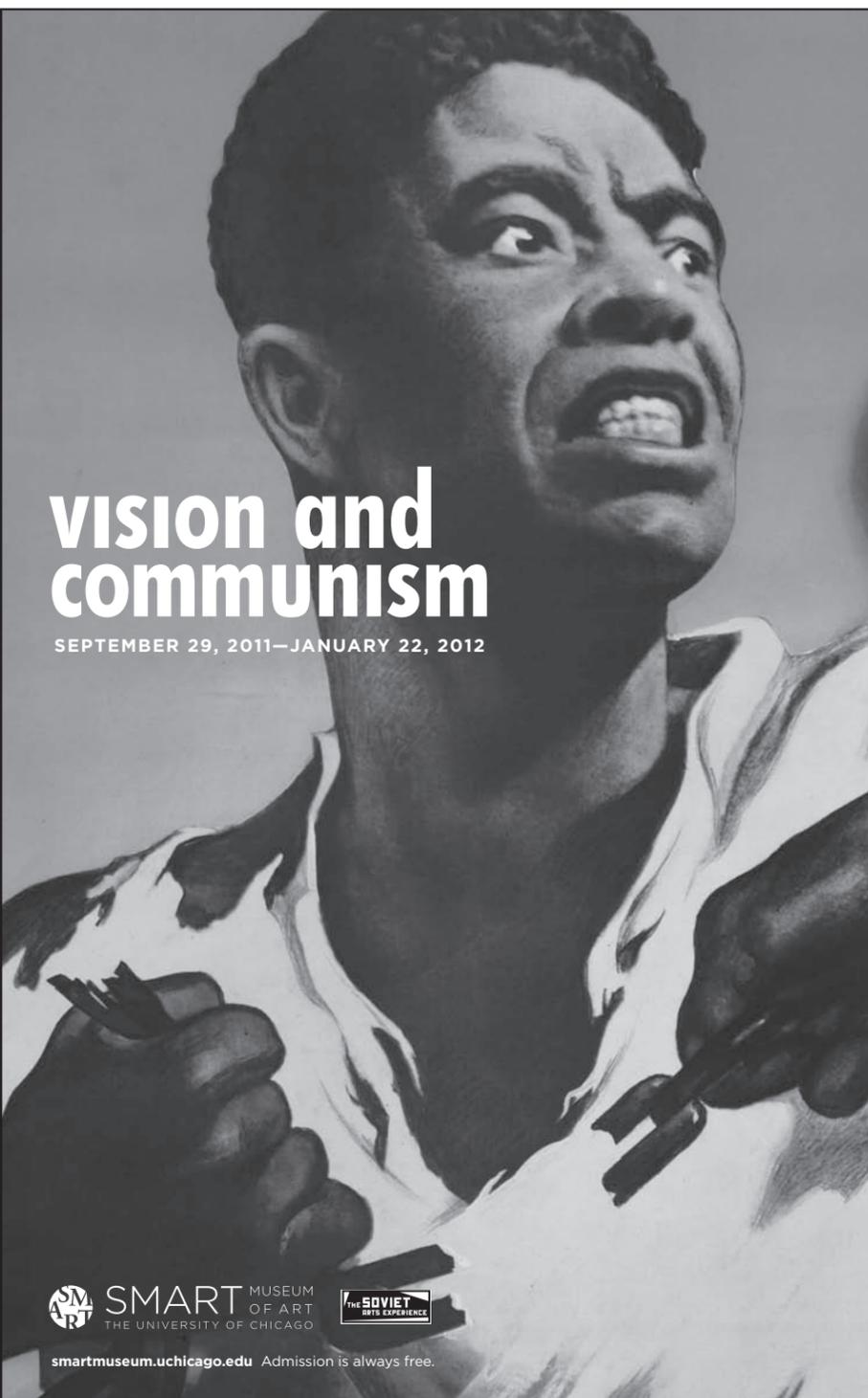


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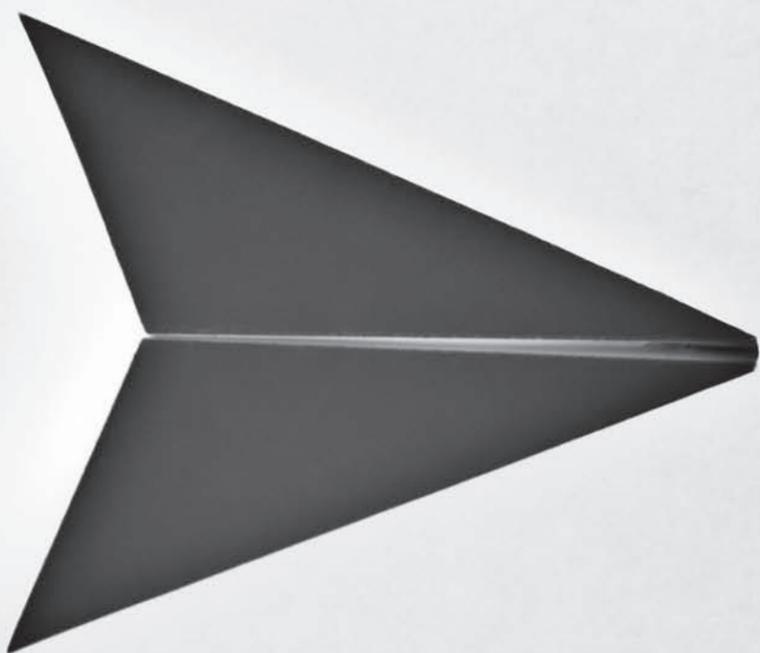
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# The Others

Race and organizational politics on Chicago's South Side



The Dorchester Projects consists of a series of houses filled with artist Theaster Gates' archives. Photos courtesy of Erin Toale.



By Ross Jordan and Erin Toale

"Who I am is much more complicated than one absolute cultural identification," says Theaster Gates, who often finds himself pushing against expectations and preconceived notions collectors and arts administrators have of his artwork and himself. A student of urban planning, ceramics and, most recently, the legality governing non-profits, Gates certainly cannot be satisfied with any one identity. Similarly, his multi-faceted Grand Crossing space, the Dorchester Projects, exists as an enigma by traditional arts organization standards.

The Dorchester Projects are a series of houses on Chicago's South Side on the corner of Dorchester Avenue and 69th Street. Some of the houses have been renovated to hold Gates' archives, comprised of propaganda films of the 1950s and 1960s, thousands of glass lantern slides salvaged from the University of Chicago, art and architecture books from the closed Prairie Avenue Bookshop and thousands of records from the Dr. Wax Record Store. It is also Gates' private residence, where he keeps a community garden. Over the summer, musician David Boykin used one of the homes as a studio to complete an album, and DJ/music archivist Ayana Contreras, using the LP archive, hosted dance parties at one of the homes on weekends. A movie theater, a dining hall — the iterations of identity in the physical place continue to evolve and grow.

One aspect of this new project is teasing out identities: personal, communitarian and institutional. Personally, Gates engages racial

identity through his artistic practice as well as by serving his hyper-localized, majority black Grand Crossing neighborhood. Gates says that as a young child he was more conscious of his family's Christian identity than of his black identity. As he worked with his father repairing neighbors' roofs, he was more aware of being a laborer than of any racial distinction. It was not until his arrival at a predominately white middle school that he was able to recognize his own blackness. In his words, "My nose was wider and my hair was greasy." It was this confrontation with otherness that allowed Gates to understand that black heritage and Christian heritage were only two of his plausible identities.

In terms of community identity, the South Side is very particular. When we first came to Chicago exactly a year ago, we knew little to nothing about neighborhood profiles, but were well aware that Chicago's South Side was presumably dangerous and that we should not go there. Few communities have as prominent a national profile (good or bad) as the neighborhoods that surround Dorchester Avenue, and that profile is exclusively black. Gates, however, says our view of the community should be more transparent. "People say this is an all-black neighborhood, but in fact a lot of the merchant activity that happens in this neighborhood happens by non-blacks all operating under the broad generic sphere of a 'black neighborhood.'" From an institutional perspective, the Dorchester Projects look like a community non-profit arts center, but in reality are a privately funded art project. To be sure, the Dorchester Projects do have a mission. But as Gates



says, "I think as an artist I have the liberty to not have the burden of a mission. My mission could, in fact, change three months from now. The use of this house could shift." The space avoids terms and classifications, preferring instead to exist as an incubator as much as an enigma. To label, monetize or mainstream the project would kill the creative spirit that exists there. "Conviction is way more compelling than an organizational mission statement," Gates explains.

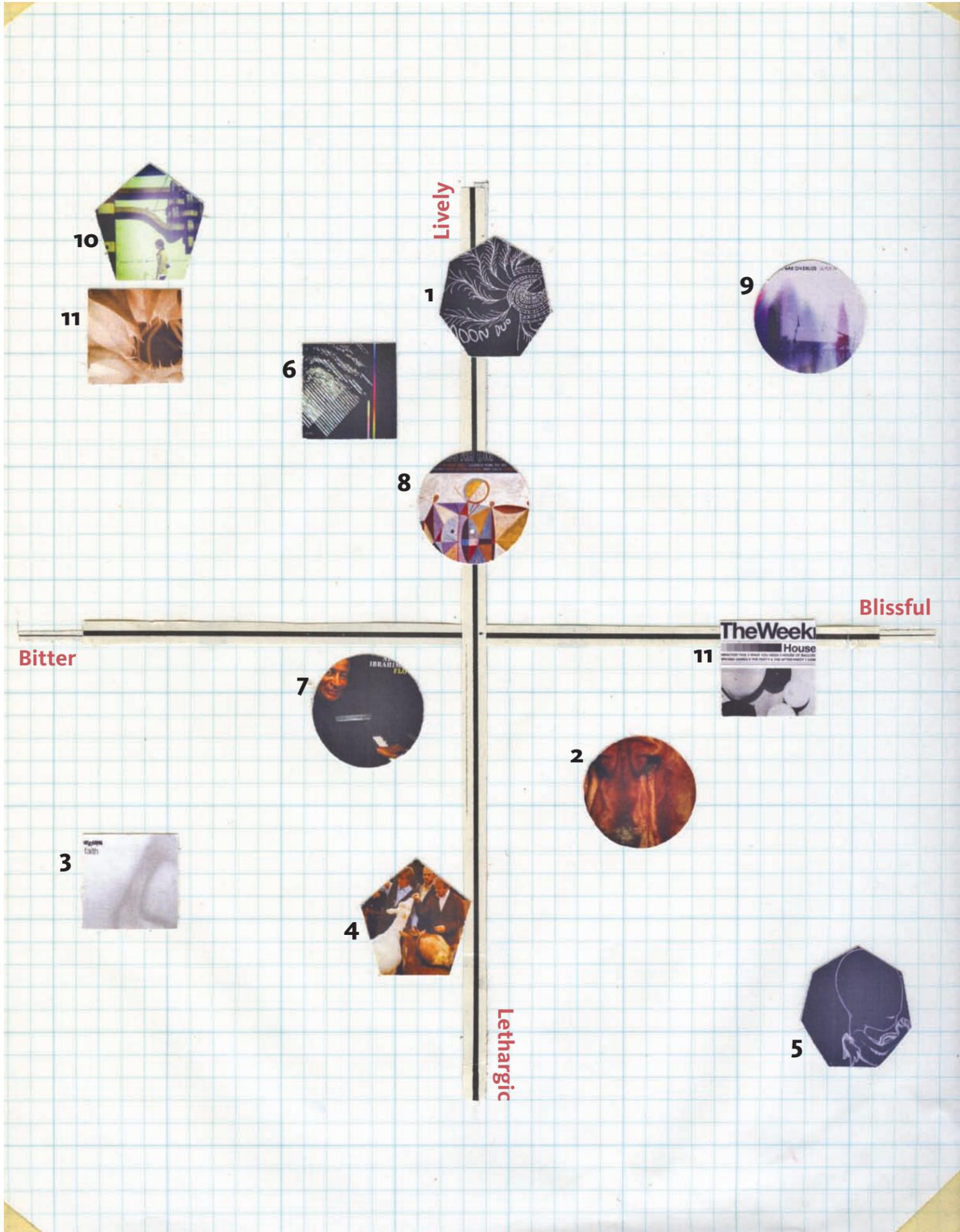
Racial identity is a complicated topic, especially in the art world. This was Gates' sentiment about his own identity and the identity of the Chicago South Side community in where Dorchester Projects is situated. Theaster Gates' artistic practice has certainly grown in recognition and scope, but the

To be sure, the Dorchester Projects do have a mission. But as Gates says "I think as an artist I have the liberty to not have the burden of a mission. My mission could in fact change three months from now, the use of this house could shift."

Dorchester Projects represents his most ambitious effort yet. As he puts it, "if this house has been a certain thing to my neighbors, can my neighbors roll with me to accept that this house might change into something else? Have I been intentional in helping them understand that I am not a service agency or a not-for-profit?" Like Gates' artwork, the Dorchester Projects are an artistic expression that changes and develops meaning through the process of creation.

# Leaf-Raking, Tree-Shaking, Umbrella-Breaking

With the seasons in flux, F Music supplies you with 12 albums to score your autumnal experience.



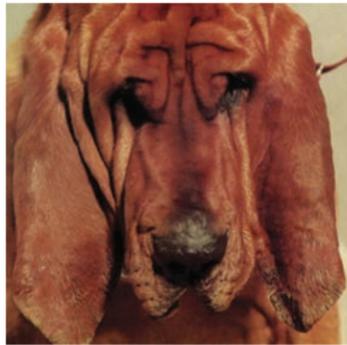
By Brandon Goei @ Kris Lenz

This is Chicago. And the first rule of Chicago is that summer doesn't last forever. But don't let that get you down — there's plenty of music out there to match that heat-busting wind and hurtle you towards multi-sensory harmony. From the subtle plink of soft keys to the warm fuzz of slow-motion static haze, here are our picks for fall.



**1 Moon Duo — *Escape* (2010)**  
F Pick: "Escape"

Moon Duo put out an excellent album earlier this year — one that pops, swings and hooks. But that one ("Mazes") isn't on this list. Instead, for fall, "Escape" is the album to go with. Here the duo darts around underneath thick blankets of haze in seven-minute slabs of palpable fuzz, soundtracking those endless gloomy commutes.



**2 Ty Segall — *Goodbye Bread* (2011)**  
F Pick: "Where Your Head Goes"

"Goodbye Bread" is what you get when you mix T. Rex with red wine and Quaaludes, only in the best way possible. Sloppy in all the right places, Segall tones down his usual summery freak-out to a cocksure, autumnal swagger, and just in time for those first jacket-laden days.



**3 The Cure — *Faith* (1981)**  
F Pick: "The Drowning Man"

One has to imagine that The Cure's Robert Smith spends a good deal of time in front of a mirror to get that black dandelion hairstyle of his. That's time spent staring at himself in introspection, which lends itself to the sullen, mopey, existential crisis of "Faith." Good for wondering why you would ever live in a place that gets so cold.



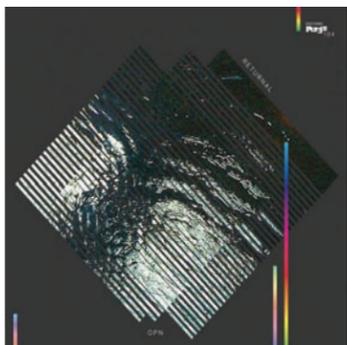
**4 Beach Boys — *Pet Sounds* (1966)**  
F Pick: "Don't Talk (Put Your Head On My Shoulder)"

You hear "Beach Boys" and you think of summer — "Surfin' U.S.A.," "Fun, Fun, Fun," "All Summer Long" — fair enough. Nevertheless, one of their best efforts, "Pet Sounds," rolls back the shoreline and makes way for shimmering strings and choir-boy harmonies — in a word: autumn.



**5 Sigur Rós — *Ágætis Byrjun* (1999)**  
F Pick: "Olsen Olsen"

Moody, sobering and interrupted by sudden, dramatic explosions of warmth: we could be describing fall weather or the music of Sigur Rós. Choosing their most beautiful album is like deciding which Great Lake is the wettest. Our fall nod goes to "Ágætis Byrjun," easily the Sigur Rós-iest album, meaning the lows are stygian and the highs are transcendent.



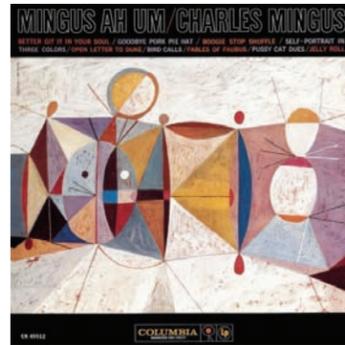
**6 Oneohtrix Point Never — *Returnal* (2010)**  
F Pick: "Stress Waves"

You'll trip over the band's name when you first try to say it, just like you might balk at their sound when it first comes on. "Returnal" sounds like circuit-bent electronic waves crashing on your head, or more thematically speaking, like leaf-shaped breadboards tumbling in gusts of autumn wind.



**7 Abdullah Ibrahim — *Cape Town Flowers* (1997)**  
F Pick: "Song For Aggerery"

"Cape Town Flowers" is an album from 1997: the boorish year of Biggie's death, "Spiceman" and boy band feuds. I only mention this because Ibrahim somehow manages to conjure up the sweet and simple piano work of early '60s jazz in the face of over-the-top pop culture. Perfect for leaf-crunching evening strolls.



**8 Charles Mingus — *Mingus Ah Um* (1959)**  
F Pick: "Better Get It In Your Soul"

The mercury will dip and the cold will start gnawing the tips of your bones. Stave off the impending gloom — stoke the fire deep in your belly with lead track "Better Get It In Your Soul." Rollicking, wild and soulful, this track sets the pace for a jazz masterpiece. Stomp your feet and chase that cold right out of the house.



**9 The War on Drugs — *Slave Ambient* (2011)**  
F Pick: "Come to the City"

As the sunlight fades and gloom encroaches from the edge of every day, it is easy to feel sapped and lack motivation. "Slave Ambient" offers a subtle, driving tempo that will both match your mood and the looming darkness outside. The invocations of great (forgotten?) America may just inspire you to achieve something tremendous (like get out of bed).



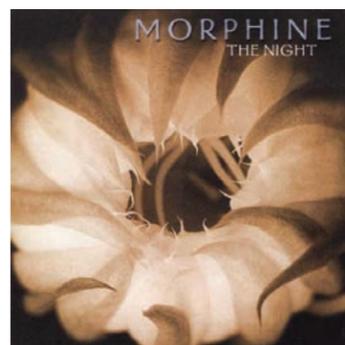
**10 Telefon Tel Aviv — *Immolte Yourself* (2009)**  
F Pick: "You Are the Worst Thing in the World"

In a city of over 2.5 million people, it can be impossible to feel alone. The best fall activity you'll never find in a guidebook is taking a walk along the lakeshore during tempestuous weather. Bundle up, blast "Immolte Yourself" (noise-cancelling headphones double as earmuffs) and feel like the only person on the planet.



**11 The Weeknd — *House of Balloons* (2011)**  
F Pick: "The Morning"

Choose wisely when pairing up this fall. You'll spend the next several months parasitically clinging to one another, desperate for warmth as the TV reruns and take-out cartons pile up. Find your fall fling and seal the deal by throwing on "House of Balloons." Wait for the first chorus of "The Morning" and commence discarding pretenses (and clothing).



**12 Morphine — *The Night* (2000)**  
F Pick: "I'm Yours, You're Mine"

All brooding vocals, relentless baritone sax, throbbing bass and slick drums, the music of Morphine is like a too-big gulp of smooth scotch. Like liquid fire, the ensuing warmth is comforting but short-lived. Tales of woe begin and end with such illusions of warmth — "The Night" provides the perfect soundtrack as expectations are raised, then rudely dismissed.



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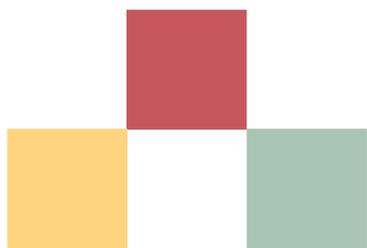
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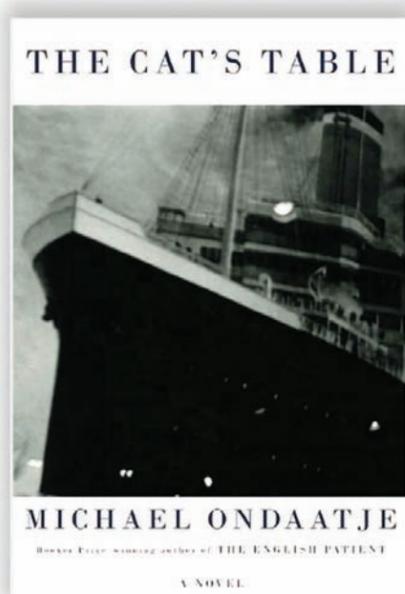
Image: Ellen Nielsen, *Wintervention*

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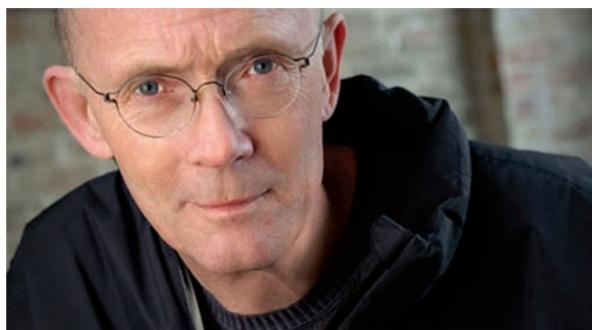


# noteworthy

Whether you saw “The English Patient” and loved it, or, like Elaine in one episode of “Seinfeld,” didn’t understand what all the fuss was about, you’d have to admit that writer **Michael Ondaatje** knows how to put together a good story. Ondaatje, who has written “In the Skin of the Lion,” “Running in the Family” and “Anil’s Ghost,” is giving a reading at the **Art Institute on October 6** to promote his new book “The Cat’s Table.” \$15/20, 6-9 p.m. at Fullerton Hall.



Oakland-based band **WHY?** has recently cancelled their American tour dates on account of injury, but their stop at the **Museum of Contemporary Art on October 15** remains. Why? Because they know a good city when they see one.



The godfather of cyberpunk makes his way to the **Ethel M. Barber Theater** (30 Arts Circle Drive, Evanston, IL) on **October 16**. Celebrating the 30th anniversary of self-coined term “cyberpunk,” sci-fi writer **William Gibson** will be speaking about his work as part of the **Chicago Humanities Festival**. The best part? Free for students and teachers (\$10 General).

Put on your best costume and join the **Windy City Rollers** at the **Monster Bash on October 22 at UIC Pavilion** (425 S. Racine) at 6 p.m. The only question: what’s your Roller Derby name going to be?



If you remember **Sebadoh**, you’re either a little older than you’re let on or just wafting through a cloud of nostalgic bong smoke. Either way, the band’s set at **Schubas on October 30** should be a good one.

# SAIC News Ticker

## Arts

Filmmaker [George Kuchar](#) died September 6 at the age of 69. Known for having inspired filmmakers like [John Waters](#), Kuchar produced over 200 films during his career. His work is now archived in the Video Data Bank.

Gamers help [University of Washington](#) map the HIV-AIDS retrovirus in just three weeks. Using a game called [Foldit](#), which “enlists players worldwide to solve difficult protein-structure prediction problems,” the gamers were able to “generate models of sufficient quality for successful molecular replacement and subsequent structure determination.” According to a study published September 18, “the refined structure provides new insights for the design of antiretroviral drugs.”

[Colin Powell](#), former Secretary of State, is planning to release a new memoir, “It Worked for Me,” according to a post on the New York Times Arts Beat blog. The book, which will no doubt feature some interesting revelations about Powell’s time in the Bush White House, is expected to be released in May 2012.

The soap opera “[All My Children](#)” aired its last episode on September 23. The show, which had been running since 1970, has launched the careers of many famous movie and television stars, including [Sarah Michelle Gellar](#), [Kelly Ripa](#), [Josh Duhamel](#) and [Christian Slater](#).

New-old art museum opens in Chicago. The [DePaul Art Museum](#) reopened September 17 with their show “[Re: Chicago](#),” which features the greatest hits of Chicago’s art scene. The reopening of the museum benefits both the Lincoln Park community, starving art bloggers and student journalists.

## SAIC

SAIC’s president [Walter Massey](#) is inviting students, faculty and staff members to meet with him and talk about their experience at the school. Appointments are limited. Please email [president@saic.edu](mailto:president@saic.edu) to reserve a time to chitchat with our president and share some of your semester’s concerns. Office hours are 4:30 to 5:00 p.m. in the President’s Office.

[Bruce Jenkins](#), SAIC professor and former Stanley Cavell Curator at the Harvard Film Archive, and [Bill Horrigan](#), Curator-at-Large at the Wexner Center for the Arts, are writing the second volume of the catalogue raisonné of Andy Warhol’s films, covering the period 1963 to 1968. The team of film scholars, lead by [John G. Hanhardt](#), who is also serving as editor, was brought together by the Whitney Museum of American Art.

Reality TV is always an alternative for fame-seeking artists and designers. [Meg Caswell](#), an SAIC alum with a degree in Interior Architecture, was the season six winner of HGTV’s Design Star. The prize: her own show! HGTV’s five episode series “Great Room,” with Chicago-based Caswell as host, debuted on September 17 and airs Saturdays at 5 pm.

Four years after graduate school, SAIC alum [Dan Gunn](#) has two solo shows and a group show, all in one month. The Museum of Contemporary Art, Monique Meloche Gallery in Wicker Park and the Columbia College A+D Gallery are all featuring Gunn — definitely great news for SAIC.

Remember that this fall SUGs gallery will be producing exhibitions in [Gallery X](#) (280 South Columbus Drive, Room 113) and at the new [Parallax Gallery](#) (280 South Columbus Drive, Room 122), which will be used for this semester only. Stop by and check out some wonderful student artwork.

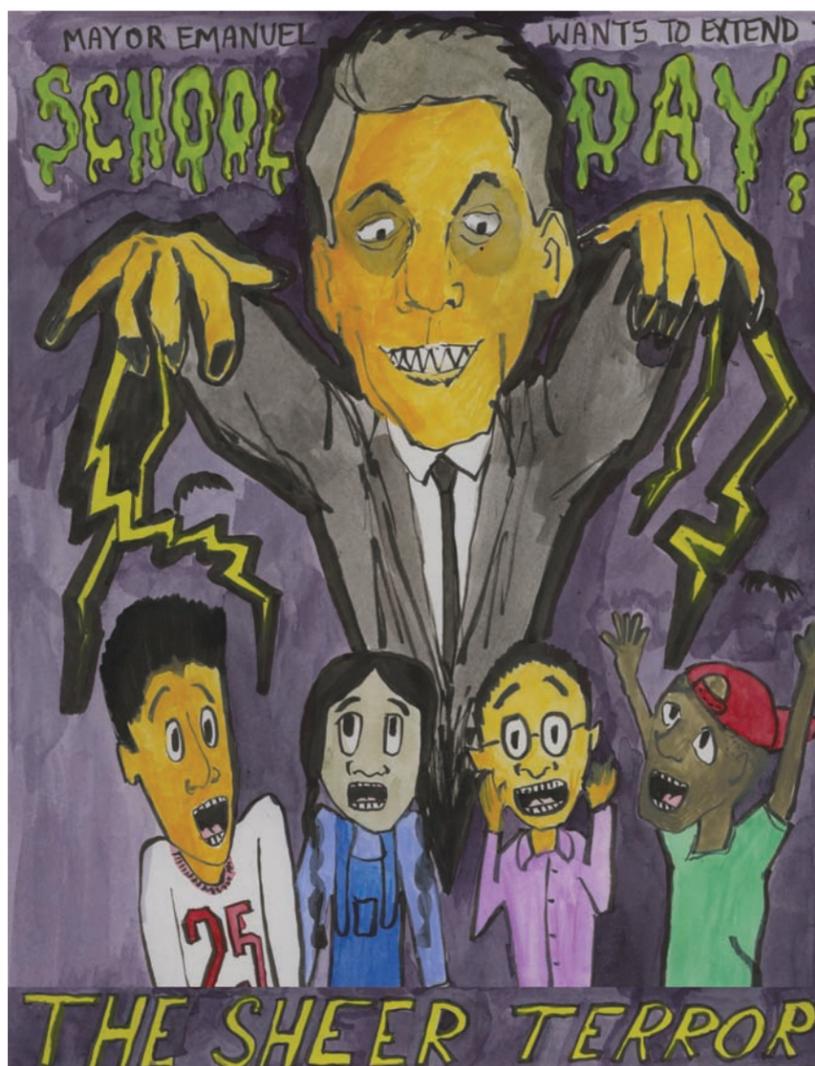
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F News is looking for skilled illustrators proficient in wackiness, absurdity, satire, and with something to say about SAIC, art and artists, being young, living in Chicago or America or surviving among humans.

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