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Solar Anus. Photo: Regis Hertrich

FEB 4

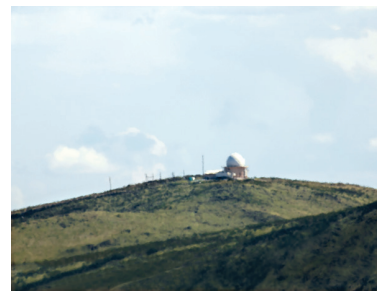
RON ATHEY



*Fuckface (Kendell Geers), 2007, C-print, 150 x 111 cm
Courtesy of the artist*

FEB 20

KENDELL GEERS



*National Reconnaissance Office Ground Station (ADF SW),
Jornada del Muerto, New Mexico
Distance ~ 16 Miles, 2012, C-print, 38 x 48.6 inches
Courtesy of Metro Pictures, New York; Altman Siegel,
San Francisco; Galerie Thomas Zander, Cologne*

MAR 3

TREVOR PAGLEN

MAR 12

XAVIERA SIMMONS



*Index Four Composition Two, 2013, color photograph,
40 x 50 inches*

MAR 25

JENNIFER DOYLE



*Hayley Newman, Crying Glasses (An Aid to Melancholia),
from Connotations Performance Images - 1994-1998, 1998.
Photo: Casey Orr. Courtesy of the artist and Matt's
Gallery, London.*

APR 2

ROBERTA SMITH



Photo: Tony Cenicola/The New York Times

SAIC School of the Art Institute
of Chicago



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fnewsmagazine

02/
2014

The School
of the Art
Institute of
Chicago

TURN
A8FEX
URGE
INTO
ART

» Trans* Identity at SAIC

» Free Love at the OpenLab

» How SAIC spends

WEB EXCLUSIVES
FEBRUARY 2014

Bound 2 Hate: In Defense of Kanye West
Tristan Espinoza defends the controversial rapper (and Chicago native) by recounting his numerous contributions to the hip-hop world over the course of his career.

Replication as Transmutation
The February edition of F Words continues the theme of “sublimation” with Katie Wall’s poem conceptualizing DNA.

Holistic Remedies
Managing Editor Alyssa Moxley and Web Editor Jessica Barrett Sattell share a collection of helpful resources, tried-and-true tips and experimental ideas for a holistic approach to staying healthy in the depths of winter.

A Visit to *Tracing Affinities & Faculty Projects*
Maggie Carrigan reviews the two latest shows at the Sullivan Galleries, finding that both “foster dialogues rather than simply show-and-tell.”

Video Interview: Vincent Uribe
Multimedia Editor Patrick Reynolds talks with the LVL3 Gallery Director and SAIC alumnus about Codification, the current two-exhibition by Alex Chitty and Zach Reini.

Ten Years of Taiko
Maria Mori reviews Chicago-based Tsukasa Taiko’s annual performance at the Museum of Contemporary Art, outlining the group’s talents in fusing tradition and experimentation.

The End of the Day
Multimedia Editor Patrick Reynolds reviews Mike Kelley’s landmark retrospective at MoMA PS1. The immersive exhibition features more than 200 of the late artist’s works.

SUGGESTABLES

INTROSPECTION

COMMONALITY

INGESTIBLES

BODY LANGUAGE

SUBTERRANEAN SOCIETIES

RETROSPECTACLES

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Open Lab Magdalena Wistuba

Call to Collaboration Kara Jefts

Microgalleries Anne Meisinger

Tea, Yerba Mate & Liquor Nadine Mostafa

#Taste Emily Elizabeth Thomas

Trans*-forming SAIC Troy Pieper

The Right to Use my Own Name H. Melt

Cash 4 \$perm Alex Wolff

Thanks Obama Alex Wolff

The Revolution Will be Webcast Alexia Casanova

Moscow’s Underground Alyssa Moxley

A Review of Nebraska Patrick Reynolds

Visual Journalism as Visionary Artifact Jessica Barrett Sattell

No Object Alyssa Moxley

Between Math & Mystery Eleanor Larsen

Comics

fnewsmagazine since 1984

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Hot Air

Sublimation is a word with a double meaning. In physics, the term refers to a process in which a polarized substance transforms directly from a solid to a gaseous state without passing through an intermediary liquid form. This change requires extra energy from the outside to alter the medium but retain the content. In psychology, Freud used the term sublimation to represent the rechanneling of impulses considered to be socially unacceptable or idealizations into forms of cultural development. In this issue we look at changes that are underfoot institutionally within SAIC (The Right to Use My Own Name, Trans*forming SAIC), as well as the impact of minority resistance in national societies (Revolution will be Televised, Moscow’s Underground). We also look at the shift in graduation venue (Where to Commence Commencement), how currency is translated into resources (Show me the Money) and how image infiltrates our taste buds (#Taste, and Tea, Yerba Mate, Liquor). Our reviews section covers works that intimate the sublime, contradictorily containing ideas that are just too great to contain (as is this introductory note, so please turn the pages).
—Alyssa Moxley, Managing Editor

cover: **Sub-Blaaart-Mation**
by Magdalena Wistuba

This month, while reading up on our theme, I attempted to outline the concept of Freudian sublimation for the F-Design staff. Now my crude oversimplification of the topic graces this month’s cover, beautifully rendered by staff designer and rad dude Magda. We at F have an inkling that SAIC might be dealing with some unresolved sexual frustrations, and what better advice could we give than to channel those frustrations into art. The rough hand-drawn type on the cover and the fleshy salmon tone of the issue remind us of Freud and the thing on many people’s minds in the month of St. Valentine. Even our headline typeface this month, Letter Gothic (a personal favorite of mine), has its own history of sublimation. Made in the late 1950s and early ’60s for IBM’s new electric typewriters, Letter Gothic occupies an odd space in typographic history. Its genesis does not belong fully to either the age of the printing press nor that of computers; it represents type’s sublimation from the physical to the digital.
—Christopher Givens, Art Director

Editors' Picks //

FEBRUARY 2014

02/02
Alexia Casanova, Arts Editor
Chandeleur

February 02
Admission: free

La Chandeleur is a tradition widely celebrated in France and French-speaking countries. Although its origins — Christian or pagan — remain a bone of contention, the culinary tradition of making crêpes always brings people together. According to custom, candles are lit to symbolize light and guests are invited to flip crêpes on a pan in order to attract good fortune and prosperity throughout the year.

02/12
Jessica Sattell, Web Editor
Zak Kyes: Giving Shape

Feb. 12, 6:00 p.m.
The Graham Foundation
4 W. Burton Place
Admission: Free, RSVP Requested

In a lecture originally presented at the Centre Pompidou in Paris, the Swiss-American graphic designer, educator and Graham Foundation grantee outlines the latest collaborative works in book design, exhibition design, art direction and much more from ZAK Group, his progressive London-based studio.

01/31+
Patrick Reynolds, Multimedia Editor
Shadows by John Cassavetes

Jan. 31 and Feb. 04, 6:00 PM
Gene Siskel Film Center
164 N. State St.
General admission: \$11.00, Students: \$7.00

Cassavetes' first directorial effort is one of the defining works of the American New Wave, and its improvised dialogue and incredibly low production budget have continued to inspire and resonate with independent filmmakers since its initial release in 1959. This is a rare opportunity to see the film on a restored 35mm print from UCLA.

01/09-
Alyssa Moxley, Managing Editor

The Sochi Project: An Atlas of War and Tourism in the Caucasus

Jan. 09 - Mar. 23
DePaul Art Museum
935 W. Fullerton Ave.
Admission: free

The Olympics, a temporary, large-scale international event, dramatically alters the political and physical landscape wherever it lands. Photographer Rob Hornstra and journalist Arnold van Bruggen continue to intimately document the changes in Sochi, Russia, with interviews and films as the city prepares to host the winter 2014 games.

02/03
Alex Wolff, Arts Editor
Death by Hanging

Feb. 03, 7:00 p.m.
Screening Room, University of Chicago's Logan Center for the Arts
915 E. 60th St.
Admission: free

Nagisa Oshima's tense 1968 film *Death by Hanging* will be playing in the Logan Center as a part of the University of Chicago's "Death by Cinema" film Series. The film is part of a series programmed by artist and U of C Department of Visual Arts faculty member Karthik Pandian exploring "the relationship between human finitude and the medium of film." Originally released in 1968, Oshima's film examines feelings of guilt, persecution, consciousness and the violent repression then experienced by some ethnic Koreans within Japan. The film is followed by a panel discussion.

02/01-
Troy Pieper, News Editor
Thirty-Five Years of Public Art, Jan Tichy: aroundcenter

Feb. 1-Apr. 27
Chicago Cultural Center
78 E. Washington St.
Admission: free

This exhibition of Chicago public art is comprised of many artists models, one of which is of Anish Kapoor's bean sculpture (Did it go way over its miniature budget?) and of Mary Brogger's tepid tribute to the Haymarket martyrs, as well as what a Lakeview police headquarters chose to display.

Jan Tichy seems to be everywhere lately. In his first turn at the CCC, he leads visitors through "unrevealed areas of the building," including inside a secret vault.



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In Brief

MoMA Swallows Folk Art Museum Whole

Like a shark that must not stop swimming, the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) announced early last month that it will, after all, raze its neighbor, the American Folk Art Museum building. An *LA Times* article reported that the building, which MoMA had acquired in 2011 after the Folk Art Museum went bankrupt, will be torn down to make room for an expansion that will add 30 percent more to the space MoMA now occupies. The building, designed by New York architects Todd Williams and Billy Tsien, is an important piece of contemporary architecture, and its acquisition by MoMA was already controversial according to a *New York Times* article. The news of its destruction, said the architects in a post on MoMA's website, "represents a missed opportunity to find new life and purpose for a building that is meaningful to so many." In place of the 12-year-old building will be a new entrance to MoMA and what the museum calls the "Art Bay," a multi-use space with high ceilings and a retractable glass wall.

President Massey Elected To Another Board

The Association of Independent Colleges of Art and Design (AICAD) elected the School of the Art Institute of Chicago's (SAIC) own President Walter Massey to lead its trustees as Chair, according to an SAIC release. AICAD is a nonprofit consortium of leading art schools in the US and Canada with a mission to "help strengthen the member colleges individually and collectively and to inform the public about these colleges and the value of studying art and design." Comprised of 43 schools, AICAD educates 50,000 undergraduates and graduate students annually. Massey, who has been, or is, on the boards of Bank of America, McDonald's, the Mellon Foundation, the Smithsonian Foundation and others, is joined by Vice Chair Denis Mullen, President of the Oregon College of Art and Craft; Treasurer Sean Buffington, President of the University of the Arts and Secretary Ron Burnett, President of the Emily Carr University of Art and Design.

Federal Court Allows Internet Providers To Control Content

A US federal appeals court ruled in January that Federal Communications Commission (FCC) net neutrality rules, which require Internet service providers to "treat all Internet traffic equally," are invalid, according to an *Aljazeera America* article. Reasoning behind the court's decision stems from the FCC's previous classification of the Internet as an "information service" rather than a "telecommunications service." This means that large, monopolistic internet service providers (ISPs) like Verizon or Comcast might soon be able to charge content providers like Google or Facebook for faster access to content online. This of course would make smaller content providers unable to provide access to content at the same speed, likely edging them out of the competition. The FCC can still reclassify ISPs as telecommunications providers, the article states, in order to protect Internet users from varying charges and information from being restricted preserving "the competitive market that has driven growth in the Internet sector for decades." However, he is the former head of the National Cable and Telecommunications Association, one of the most deep-pocketed lobbying groups in Washington.

Rate of STD's In Senior Citizens Approaches That Of People In Their 20's

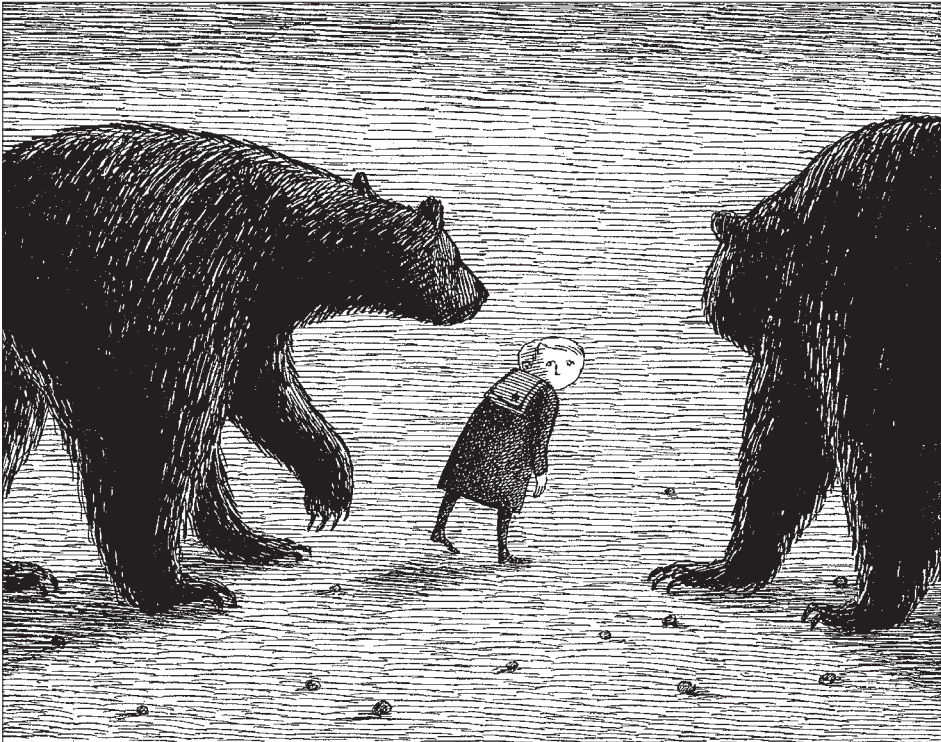
Sex — and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) — are not just for younger people anymore. A January *New York Times* op-ed cited Department of Health research in 2011 and 2012 on beneficiaries of Medicare, a national insurance program that guarantees access to health insurance for Americans aged 65 and older who have paid into the system over a lifetime of working. 2.2 million of them received free STD screenings and counseling, and 66,000 received HIV tests. That's about 5 percent of all Medicare enrollees, according to the article and about the same number as those who received colonoscopies. Older people are also getting more STDs. Chlamydia infections between 2007 and 2011 in Americans over 65 increased 31 percent, syphilis infections by 52 percent. In 20-24-year-olds, the increase was 35 and 64 percent, respectively. Experts attribute this to the fact that more older people are having sex with each other. They are living longer, spending more time in assisted living facilities that are "like college campuses," according to the article, and they seem not to have gotten "the safe sex memo."

Nazi List of Modern Art Hated by Hitler To Be Published Online

The Victoria and Albert Museum in London announced recently that it will publish the only surviving copy of a list of the "Entartete Kunst" or "Degenerate Art," works of modern art that Hitler despised. According to *The Art Newspaper*, the list is an inventory of 16,558 works deaccessioned by German museums in 1937 and 1938 meticulously compiled by the Reich Ministry for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda. It covers cities in alphabetical order from Aachen to Zwickau and includes works by Max Ernst, Paul Klee and Picasso. The V and A's director, Martin Roth, who was previously the Director of the Dresden State Art Collections, regards the document as an "invaluable resource that should be made available internationally." "Entartete Kunst" is also the name of an exhibition held by the Nazi government in 1937 in an attempt to humiliate artists whose work it considered degenerate. The V and A's publishing of the list, which is slated to be complete by early February, is timely considering the November discovery in the apartment of Munich dealer Hildebrand Gurlitt of 1,400 works of art deaccessioned under the Nazis.

Judy Chicago Honored With Tribute Show At National Museum of Women In the Arts

Washington's National Museum of Women in the Arts mounted a small retrospective of visual artist and Chicago native Judy Chicago's work. *Judy Chicago: Circa '75* honors the now 75-year-old's place in the history of feminist art. The show's subject is her seminal 1979 installation "The Dinner Party," a triangular table with place settings for 39 iconic women. It was "one of the most popularly successful works of contemporary art in the 1980's, when it toured the world," according to the *Washington Post*. Chicago did not, however, anticipate the brutality of the culture wars of the late 80's and early 90's, when it became time to store "The Dinner Party." When she attempted to give it to the University of the District of Columbia in 1988, controversy ensued with critics attacking the work as pornographic and obscene for its "lush renderings of female anatomy," according to the *Post*. Eventually the work came to rest at the Brooklyn Museum in 2007. Chicago told the *Post*, "I always believed in the power of art, and I learned from 'The Dinner Party' that there's no going back from that."



Edward Gorey returns to Chicago.

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Edward Gorey, Illustration (detail) from *The Gashlycrumb Tinies*, pen and ink, 1963, © The Edward Gorey Charitable Trust. All rights reserved.

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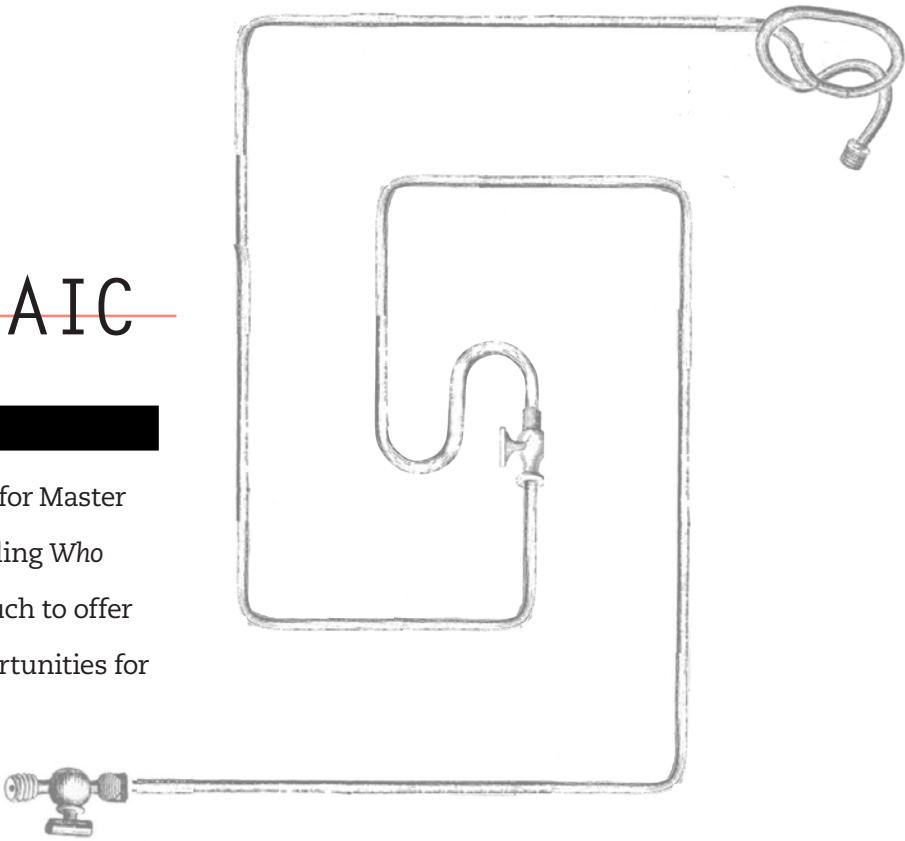
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You ~~Could~~ Make Art at SAIC

» alexia casanova with contributions from troy pieper

In December, *F Newsmagazine* addressed the lack of art-making opportunities for Master of Arts students at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC). After reading *Who Can't Make Art at SAIC?*, several members of the SAIC administration got in touch to offer options and answer readers questions. Here, we compile the art making opportunities for MA students.



Engage Your Creativity

Take a Studio Class
All MA students have elective courses. They have the right to select whatever they like among graduate level courses. Though they may need the approval of the professor teaching the course, they do not need approval from any department.

Learn with Lynda
SAIC students have free access to all of the tutorials on Lynda.com. The website offers a wide range of video tutorials in various subjects: audio, photography, graphic and web design, video editing, typography, drawing and many more.

Start your own group
If there is a particular art form students absolutely want to focus on, they can always create their own student group. When students find an instructor among SAIC students or staff, they can organize weekly, bi-weekly or monthly classes for their group. Starting a group is easier than one might think:

- Pick up a copy of the Student Group Handbook at the Neiman Center. It contains all of the information you needed on how to start a student group, from completing the online application to applying for funding and developing advertising
- Find an advisor and another student who will manage the student group with you. The student group advisor should be a full-time or part-time faculty member.
- Go on engage.saic.edu/Organizations, click on the “Register a New Organization” button on the left hand side, and follow the instructions. *Note: Alternatively, you can request a pdf version of the Student Group Handbook via email: student_life@saic.edu.*

Improve Technical Skills

SAIC has several places where students can learn technical skills. Although the following locations don't offer “creative workshops,” they do provide students with practical skills involving different media and materials.

Visit the Instructional Shops
All students can be authorized to use the wood shop and the metal shop. The authorization consists of an orientation and basic training on how to use the machines safely. The authorization lasts for two years.

The instructional shops also offer specific workshops:

| Wood Shop | Metal Shop |
|------------------|------------------------|
| Lathe | Cold-Fastening Systems |
| Stretcher/Panel | Power Hammer |
| Frame Making | Blacksmithing |
| Art Installation | Hossfield Blender |

Students can also get authorized for the Columbus Digital Fabrication Studio where they can do laser cutting. Charges apply for laser cutting.
Walk-ins: \$0.15 per minute
Reservations: \$5.00 for 45-minute blocks of time.

Use the Media Center
The Media Center lends basic audiovisual equipment, including cameras, lights, video projectors and sound equipment. Students can get authorized to use more complex equipment. This semester, the Media Center launched a workshop called *Art Documentation Workshop* teaching students how to set up and light artworks for photographing.

A complete list of authorization and workshops available: www.saic.edu/academics/mediaservices/workshopsandtraining/
Note: Restrictions apply, as departments have priority on their resources.

Other Options

Slide Social
This is an opportunity for graduate students to present their work to their peers in 60 seconds with up to three slides. Although there is no art-making involved here, it is a great way to share projects and ideas and to hear about other students' current practice.

Crit Week
Students can apply to be panelists during Crit week or attend crits as a spectator. This could be a way to meet students involved in art practices.

Dean's House Salon
Hosted by Dean of Graduate Studies Rebecca Duclos, the periodic Dean's House Salon is an evening dedicated to discussion and idea sharing. Coalescing around a theme and an invited artist, the Salon is a great place to meet graduate students from other departments and get partnerships started.

Future Offerings
The department of Graduate Studies is currently working on developing summer “crash courses,” short, intense seminars to develop basic fabrication skills. The courses would be open to all graduate students to study the subject of their choice and would be worth 1.5 credits. They would offer a condensed version of the 2000-level art-making classes which usually require a dean's permission. The department is still exploring the feasibility of the crash courses.

F Newsmagazine has also been informed that the office of Student Affairs is considering organizing similar workshops available to all SAIC students.

F Newsmagazine would like to thank Rebecca Duclos; William M.Newhouse, Executive Director of Resources Allocation; Craig Downs, Executive Director of Media & Instructional Resources; Tom Buechele, Vice President of Operations and Facilities; and Allie Markland, Assistant Director of Campus Life.

Interested in art-making workshops? Keep an eye on the upcoming Graduate Creative Workshops (MaWorks) student group. Designed to offer bi-weekly art-making classes to SAIC student, MaWorks will be up and running soon. Email ajacqu@saic.edu for more information.



Where To Commence Commencement

A Controversial Change In the Ceremony's Digs

» troy pieper

Some students at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) winced when they received a news release from the administration announcing a change in the venue for the school's 2014 commencement ceremony away from Pritzker Pavilion. Each May for the last five years, the enormous open-air amphitheater in Millennium Park, which lies at the heart of the SAIC campus, was host to the school's graduate and undergraduate commencement. But in that first year, administrators walked the stage a day prior to graduation in preparation for the event, and a thunderstorm brought sideways rain and 50 degree temperatures. The next day, the storm had passed, and the weather was sunny and warm, but administrators at the school realized the need for a back-up venue.

In years past, says Felice Dublon, Vice President of the School and Dean of Student Affairs, commencement was held at the Art Institute of Chicago's Rubloff Auditorium, the Chicago Theater, the Civic Opera House, Medinah Temple and Symphony Hall. But when they became too small to host hundreds of graduating students and their families (each student receives a ticket for themselves and three for family), Pritzker became the obvious solution. The pavilion was designed by renowned architect Frank Gehry, is bordered by the school and a museum that houses one of the largest encyclopedic collections of art in the world and it can accommodate SAIC's graduation audience.

"Graduation-related costs" at Pritzker, says Patrick Spence, the school's Assistant Dean of Student Affairs, amounted to roughly \$63,000. Then there was the cost of renting a venue in case of rain, or rather lightning. Renters of the pavilion are allowed to stay during rain showers but are required to leave at the first flashes of an electrical storm. Last year, the rain venue was the Auditorium Theater, a 116-year-old opera house and a national historic landmark. It is imposing, impressive, a bit dim and covered in red velvet. The view from stage seems to go up forever, disappearing among rafters into the night.

It is impossible to compare what must be vastly different experiences as an attendee at Pritzker or the Auditorium. But as a renter, the Auditorium's \$50,000 price tag and its controlled environment mean a savings for the school of around \$75,000-\$78,000, says Spence. Dublon made the switch to the Auditorium because "we could not sustain what was essentially two graduations with the same staff and at the same time," and the Auditorium has enough seats for all of the graduates and their families. "The auditorium is a really beautiful space, and I believe that students will enjoy it at graduation."

Some SAIC students, however, are unhappy about the decision. "I feel like Pritzker is really iconic. Graduating there is something special that we get to do together as a school," says undergraduate Robyn Boehler. "Like at DePaul [which has a strong theater program], students graduate at the Chicago Theater. From Pritzker you can see the Modern Wing of the Art Institute. It just feels like our school."

"We didn't go to McCormick Place or Navy Pier, because it really doesn't speak to our school," says Dublon, "but the Auditorium is respectful of students in terms of access for elderly family members and because of its historical significance." Boehler also said that she knew the weather during last year's graduation was quite warm and "It's nice that [the Auditorium] is air condi-

tioned, especially if you have elderly relatives."

Boehler also says that it was implied several times during a visit to the school and during her orientation that Pritzker is where the school's commencement ceremony takes place. "When Walter Massey gave a speech in the Modern Wing to us as freshmen during orientation, he said something like, 'One day I'll see you graduate at Pritzker Pavilion.'" Dublon says, "It's possible that in some presentation it was said that this is where you graduate, but I don't think you could ever promise a space for graduation."

"I don't remember people telling me that Pritzker is where you would be graduating," says Daniel Luedtke (MFA, 2013). "It was nice to be there, but it doesn't make any difference where it's held," he says. Luedtke thinks it is "annoying when money is wasted on ceremonial or superfluous things." He said that he would rather the school save as much money as it can on commencement and translate that to lower tuition prices or aid dollars.

He feels the same, he says, about the "swag" he saw during his time at the school. "Do you want stupid USB bracelets and gloves that say 'make art,' or do you want lower tuition?" He attributes both those and ostentatious commencement venues to an image the school values keeping up at the expense of other things. Still, commencement at Pritzker was, he says, "really nice, with champagne after the ceremony."

About the change of venue, Dublon says, "I can understand why there are students who will be disappointed." Indeed, "Pritzker Pavilion is a really beautiful place to graduate," says Drew Peterson (MFA, 2013). "To be so close to the school and in that environment. I really liked it."

Show Me The Money

How the School Spends its Tuition and Endowment Income

» troy pieper

According to Abigail Rose Roberts, the Student Government’s comment boxes in the Nieman Center contained a handful of questions last semester about where The School of the Art Institute of Chicago’s (SAIC) money goes. For the most part, the school operates like any other. For example, SAIC has an endowment, a sum of money that has been donated to the school with the intention that the school will invest it in order to make money on interest while the principal amount remains intact. SAIC also has debt, money the school has borrowed to buy a building or equipment or make an improvement or do something else and is now paying back with interest.

Brian Esker, SAIC’s Vice President of Finance and Administration, very kindly broke it down for F News-magazine.

One question students wanted answered was whether the school still pays its former president, Anthony Jones, who served for nearly 20 years. “No,” said Esker. Other students had asked whether SAIC is financing the Art Institute of Chicago’s debt. “No.”

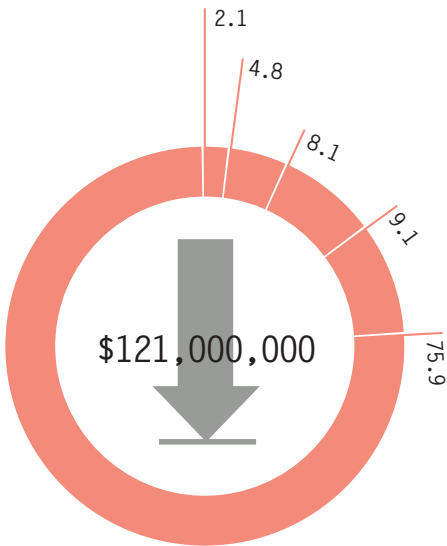
Jones still does things for the school, said Esker, like speaking engagements, but he is no longer being paid. His title now is Chancellor Emeritus, a sort of retirement role, said Rose Milkowski, Vice President of Enrollment Management at the school. “It means you can go on campus,” Esker said. (According to the Internal Revenue Service, SAIC’s nonprofit 990 tax form reported that Anthony Jones received a more than \$100K base compensation in fiscal year 2012.)

Esker confirmed, in response to a student inquiry, that the school’s and the museum’s finances are “pretty separate.” Except of course in places where it makes sense for them to share like human resources, legal support and other central administration. The school and museum share the cost of these salaries, pro-rated by how many hours are used by each. It is almost always cheaper to outsource services like security and housekeeping and building maintenance, so the school does that too.

Faculty pay was important to some students. Teachers are the people that help make SAIC students realize their potential. Nationally, tenured teaching positions only become fewer in number, but Esker said SAIC made a decision a number of years ago to offer part-time faculty benefits like health insurance and pensions. Elsewhere across the country, he said, “Part-time faculty are simply not benefitted, across the country.” The school budgets, said Esker, for 169 tenured track/visiting artist positions (benefited), 152 adjunct (benefited part-time), and 200-300 instructors (not benefited part-time).

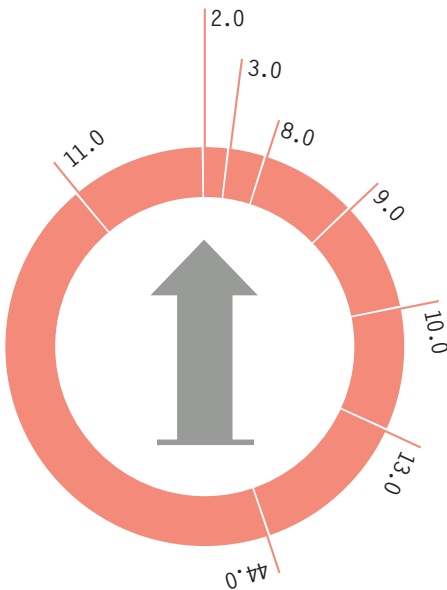
Some students wanted to know the SAIC’s president’s salary. Walter Massey’s base compensation in the 2012 fiscal year, according to the 990, was close to half a million dollars. This is commensurate with those of presidents at some other world-class art schools in the US. The Rhode Island School of Design’s president during that school’s fiscal year 2012 made only slightly less, the President of the California College of the Arts made close to \$400K and the Maryland Institute College of Art President made around \$300K.

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- 2.1% / \$2,600,000**
Endowment Income: what the school made by investing money from its \$170million (smaller than RISD’s) endowment
- 4.8% / \$5,800,000**
Other Program Revenues: what the school made from tenants who rent property from the school and from renting out the SAIC Ballroom
- 8.1% / \$9,800,000**
Residential Fees: what the school made from students renting dormitories
- 9.1% / \$11,000,000**
Fundraising: what the school received in donations
- 75.9% / \$91,800,000**
Tuition and Student Program Fees

Outgoing Finances:*



- 2% Utilities**
- 3% Interest on loans** the school has
- 8% Rent, equipment and maintenance**
- 9% Capital improvements:** building maintenance (like that sewage leak)
- 10% Contracted services:** security, housekeeping
- 13% Fringe benefits:** health insurance and pensions for staff and faculty
- 44% Salaries and wages**
- 11% Other Expenses**

*during the fiscal year 2012, according to Brian Esker, VP of Finance



free love, open-source style

A New Lab Promises to Become A Pivotal Hub
for Open Projects at SAIC, Face-to-Face and Online

» **magdalena wistuba**

The OpenLab is a little room with a website and a big idea: providing a catalyst for open art and design practices at SAIC. This will be a space for creatives to gather and generate knowledge, ideas and resources — and then make them available online, to anyone, *for free*.

OpenLab is spearheaded by Christopher Baker, Assistant Professor in the Art and Technology Studies department. In his five semesters teaching here, Baker has cultivated relationships with an energetic group of students, faculty and staff who are working in what he calls “open ways.” But these artists and designers are spread out across the school and the Internet. In the OpenLab, students will find resources to develop and publish projects that celebrate open source philosophy. Although the Internet makes sharing possible, he explains that the conversations we have online are often “one-dimensional and functional ... having a physical location is a way to get more people involved.” This lab addresses a need to consolidate, to make room for an emerging community to develop and grow together.

The OpenLab is in a tiny room in the MacLean basement, but aside from its underground location, it is a bright friendly place that bears no resemblance to the dark and lonely nerd-caves we imagine when we think of computers and code. There is a small round table for discussion, and a few surfaces that can accommodate a soldering station for wiring small circuits or prototyping projects. The room always smells like coffee. When giving tours of the space, Baker spends most of his time talking about the lab's coffee and tea selections. If you visit, he will labor over a time-consuming, pour-over method that guarantees a moment of relaxed conversation followed by a very methodically brewed cup.

Currently, the OpenLab's web component exists as an online forum, which keeps everyone's links to resources in one place. The forum is already a web destination for more than 20 students, faculty and community members, who are actively discussing a wide range of topics, from de-bugging code to upcoming exhibitions and collaboration opportunities.

Like other buzzwords, the definition of “open source” is not quite so easy to pin down, but the energy surrounding OpenLab suggests that SAIC students are already exploring questions of openness and making free content in their own ways. Brannon Dorsey — a tech whiz in his junior year — describes “open source” as “open access.”

It is a bright, friendly place that bears no resemblance to the dark and lonely nerd-caves we imagine when we think of computers and code.

“Accessibility. Above all it means access to information without restrictions that come from intellectual rights protections.” To this, Dorsey quickly adds that open source is not about “not getting paid for your ideas or the legal retention of your work, it means empowering others to use it in ways that benefit more people, allowing ideas to grow.” Last semester, Dorsey designed and developed zetamaze.com, which is a collaborative game that encourages players to change and explore a 3D environment. Zetamaze is open source — Dorsey says you can grab the code from his GitHub page. GitHub is free online service that makes sharing open source projects easier.

Zetamaze is one kind of project that you might encounter at the OpenLab, but the space is not exclusively for art involving code. Students across departments have expressed interest in a range of projects, primar-

ily in the form of workshops, in areas like open source typography or education. If students find a way to make the most of this opportunity, the OpenLab could become a place where ideas about open practices can develop. Many students at the graduate and undergraduate level are enthusiastic about the lab's potential, and are working alongside Baker to make OpenLab a tangible reality. Faculty from Sound, ATS, and AIADO are also involved. Next year, an incoming graduate student will receive a research fellowship to advance the goals of the Lab. The fellowship is sponsored by the Shapiro Center, the school's recently launched center for research and community outreach.

The OpenLab's arrival presents a complicated question: How does SAIC feel about giving knowledge and resources away for free? Baker hopes students will submit project proposals where the OpenLab will act as a partner in a collaboration. Baker says that having a physical space for open ideas grounds this philosophy in community: “It's not anti-capitalist or anti-this and anti-that, but a way of putting community first. A way of hopefully humanizing these computer-mediated relationships.”

The OpenLab is set to launch on Valentine's Day; this date was chosen specifically for the day's symbolic connection to celebrating love. When asked about his definition of “open source”, Baker pointed me to the symbol of a heart, and to a YouTube link of American writer, thinker and teacher Clay Shirky, who says that what drives the open source philosophy are the ideas that we pursue for love. Not the hypersexualized saccharine stuff that oozes out of Hollywood and marketing departments, but the love we have for ideas and sincere human relationships. This is “love, internet-style.” After February 14, SAIC students will have a room to meet up and share their love for ideas on art, design, fashion, whatever — for free. No tech experience required. Just a heart.

A Call to Collaboration

Exploring Collaborative Artistic Communities: the Yes Men and Beyond

» kara jefts

New Partnerships

The most difficult part of relocating to a new city for me has been the loss of an established creative community. I find myself longing for the support and opportunity enabled by collaboration. It seemed to happen so organically, but before I relocated to Chicago for graduate school I had a fortunate, even unusual situation. I was embedded in Troy, NY, a quaint city with concentrated levels of creativity. I resided in a building at the nexus of this activity owned by the artist known as Mike Bonanno, leading member of highly collaborative activist duo, The Yes Men.

As I seek to build a similar support network in Chicago, I have spent a lot of time contemplating the nature of collaboration. It can take shape in many ways. In the simplest of terms, collaboration is a tool to achieve something beyond what one is able to accomplish individually. It could also be said that in partnerships there is strength. Working in a group can offer a sense of empowerment because there is less individual risk. Also, each individual brings a different skill set to a group dynamic, enhancing the possibilities for discovery and outcome. Last but not least, collaboration can occur within already established relationships, nurturing a close bond that enables new creative potential.

In an academic environment where creative people are brought together for short periods of time, what level of collaboration is really possible? I interviewed a variety of people involved in successful collaboration in order to better understand this question.

Artists/Activists

The Yes Men harness creativity as a tool to affect social, political, and environmental reform around the world. They have even inspired positive change right here in Chicago, with an action carried out in collaboration with Columbia College students that that helped close the Fisk Coal power plant in Pilsen last year.

While the success of The Yes Men relies on highly organized collaborative effort, what is of particular interest is the trajectory of their growth. What began as a partnership between two artists grew to include many friends, then an army of volunteers. Now The Yes Men receive thousands of inquiries from people interested in participating worldwide. They have inspired an urge to collaborate that requires an enormous amount of organization and resources. When I caught up with Bonnano, he emphasized The Yes Men's current effort to make the monumental task of connecting artists and activists sustainable.

They are developing an online platform called the *Action Switchboard*. "It will be kind of like Match.com for creative activism," said Bonnano. The goal is to create a sustainable way to host activity for social change. And while it is inspiring that The Yes Men have created such a large demand for participation, the effort is only as strong as the support structure behind it. When asked if fundraising could be considered a form of collaboration, Bonnano answered yes: "I think of the executive producer of a film. That person gets a major credit line for participation in the form of dollars. Without that support, the film doesn't happen."

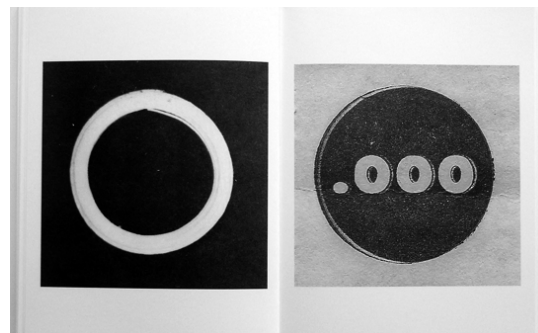
Artist-led Participation

For further understanding of the value of participation I looked to Canadian artist Micah Lexier, who recently visited SAIC and will return this Spring term as a Visiting Interdisciplinary Graduate Advisor. His work is largely dependent on collaboration. In projects like *1,334 Words for 1,334 Students*, Lexier relied on hundreds of participants. This type of project, however, fits more into the category of an organized effort rather than an equal collaboration, according to Lexier, who instead finds direct interpersonal exchange to be significant to his practice.

For the book project *Call Ampersand Response*, Lexier engaged in a call and response exchange of images between himself and a friend. He noted that this wordless dialogue is one of his most meaningful collaborations. "I got to work with an artist I deeply respect, and there is an element of play and playfulness that I thoroughly enjoy."



Detail from *Call Ampersand Response* Michael Dumontier and Micah Lexier 2012//images courtesy of micah lexier
Still from the film *The Yes Men Fix The World*



The emphasis put on individual achievement in the arts can indeed be isolating, even fostering a dangerous prison-of-the-self mentality.

Lexier said he also has "a feeling that this project could last for years or even decades if we are lucky. I don't want it to ever stop." He values this close interpersonal exchange as a way of nurturing his creativity, promoting communication so seamless that neither person can identify where an idea first began.

Returning to my original question, I wonder how an institutional setting can enable lasting connections. While in theory there is a built-in creative network provided by the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, how are working relationships compromised in a competitive environment? After much consideration, it seems critical to recognize the merit of collaboration not only as a tool for creative accomplishment, but also as a way of reaching meaningful goals that are larger than one's self. I encourage all members of campus to be thinking of how they can actively collaborate.

Network as Alliance

It is not a new idea for artists to rely on a larger group for structural support. For another model, I looked to the HATCH program at the Chicago Artists Coalition (CAC), a staple in the arts community in the city. The HATCH program, a yearlong residency pairing curators with artists, began when Cortney Lederer, CAC's Director of Exhibitions and Community Initiatives, questioned how the space, which had been supporting Chicago artists for years, could also support curators.

When asked how the residency fulfills the idea of collaboration, Lederer emphasized the community building aspect. HATCH participants, both artists and curators, come together regularly not only in the studio, but also informally for potluck meals and group critiques. These casual conversations strengthen the program, but are also intended to build a lasting alliance among the network of participating artists and curators. "What we hope emerges from these very intentional relationships," Lederer said, "is a healthy and supportive creative community that together, can excel in unique ways within a profession that can often be very isolating."

Lederer's program goals are inspiring. The emphasis put on individual achievement in the arts can indeed be isolating, even fostering a dangerous prison-of-the-self mentality. The weight put on the individual can be lessened when striking a balance between self-reliance and social connectedness.

ordinary space

Chicago's artist projects
bring art to dollhouses,
bumpers, and stairways

» ann meisinger

Society of Smallness, Trunk Show and the JT Baker Chemical Company are all to some degree artist projects. They present themselves quite seriously in press releases and online, drawing on their standing as a society, a gallery and a business, respectively, to present the everyday and the ordinary as something extraordinary. Last February the Society of Smallness (SoS), led by Georgina Valverde and Matt Stone, continued to expand the artistic possibilities of a handbag. They took Meg Duguid's purse, also known as Clutch Gallery, on a tour of Logan Square homes as part of the Second Floor Rear festival. Their performance, *Unsuspecting Activity Around an Attended Package*, included guided tours of the minute venue within the informal art spaces, apartments and galleries that make up the festival.

This past December SoS launched an entire arts district within a residence on Thomas Street: *Mini-Exhibitiothon II*, the *Duchess Credenza Arts District*. Visitors to the exhibition frequently congregated at the door, unsure if this was indeed the "arts district." Upon entering, a friendly portly gentleman sat on the couch to the right of the entrance, Patrick McGee, offered vintage stereoscopic tours of the Palace de Fontainebleau. He also suggested walking to the second floor and down the back stairs into the kitchen to view the rest of the exhibitions.

The first works presented themselves in the stairway in a venue called The Ledge, which was just that, a ledge in the stairway. The show in The Ledge, curated by Terah Walkup, was called *Pocket Sanctity: Pilgrimage Eulogiae*. The collection featured materials inside small vessels, gathered at religious pilgrimage sites in Jerusalem: burned oil, used water and pebbles. Small cloths were provided to touch the eulogiae, thereby transferring some of the holy power from the object to a place in a visitor's pocket.

The venue directly after The Ledge was The Mansion, with the exhibition *Rehab*, curated by Annie Morse. Really a dollhouse, the structure was dated from the 1700s according to a stamp on the exterior. Each of the seven rooms of The Mansion contained a work by a different artist. Amy Yoes installed an iPod, mimicking a flat screen TV, that played the video *Equator*. Tiny, colorful baggies, ostensibly used to transport illicit drugs made up a miniature area rug by Patrick McGee. The works fit perfectly into the structure by assuming the roles that works of art play in any normal house or gallery. The *Mini-Exhibitiothon II* continued down the stairs with another eight venues.

Trunk Show was named the best new art gallery on a car bumper by *Newcity* in their 2013 *Best of Chicago* issue. The project features month-long solo exhibitions that consist of a commissioned artist bumper sticker affixed to Trunk Show directors Raven Falquez Munsell and Jesse Malmed's beat up, 1999, forest-green Ford Taurus. The stickers are for sale, out of the trunk at each exhibition and through a now sold-out yearlong subscription. The project has featured Eric Fleischauer, Assaf Evron, Jodie Mack and most recently, Deborah Stratman.

Each of the Trunk Show openings have been in different locations, the first was at the Nightingale, then at Eckhart Park and in an amazing feat of administrative genius, on the concrete apron of SAIC's Columbus building,

just south of the main doors to the school. For Stratman's opening, the location was TBA until the last moment. A part of a larger project about "the geological formation, man-made induction and psychological import of sinkholes," Stratman's bumper sticker read "Honk If You Love Sinkholes," and the directors were hoping for a sinkhole in Chicago to develop just in time for the opening. Unfortunately for Trunk Show, Chicago's surface stayed intact for the day and the opening was held in the Whole Foods parking structure on Kingsbury. For those who didn't have time to grab lunch beforehand, Trunk Show's new sponsor, the JT Baker Chemical Company catered the event with a unique layout of snack offerings inside the trunk of the car.

The project's premise as a serious art gallery extends beyond the openings or language in the press release. For example, many of the bumper stickers or solo exhibitions, as the directors call them, are extensions or promotions for existing projects for the featured artist. For Assaf Evron's exhibition in October, he created a site-specific work and conducted a site visit to the Taurus to conceptualize his bumper sticker, which was based on the Ford logo and is meant to be seen while the gallery is moving in traffic. Beginning with Jodie Mack, the artists have also been giving talks at the openings, taking a moment to describe the exhibition in the context of their practice or relating it to other projects. Their sponsor, the JT Baker Chemical Company, is an artist-run project headed by Chief Operating Officer Kyle Schlie and based in the University of Illinois at Chicago MFA studios. The partnership shares a sober and all business approach with humor at the core.

Trunk Show demonstrates an element of playfulness in its form. It incorporates traditionally erudite and mundane art world structures and language, but uses them to articulate the quotidian nature of the project. As Malmed said during a recent conversation about jokes and fun in the art world, "The more seriously you take the thing, the funnier it becomes."

As Malmed said during a recent conversation about jokes and fun in the art world, "The more seriously you take the thing, the funnier it becomes."

Even more than being humorous, The Society of Smallness, Trunk Show and JT Baker Chemical Company emphasize the importance of the quotidian in the art world and the power of commonplace in Chicago. The Society of Smallness is a descendant of apartment galleries, a widespread practice in Chicago. Trunk Show finds precedents in a project like *Your Message Here*, (Billboard Exhibition) in association with Randolph Street Gallery in 1990, which commissioned artists to create and install work on billboards around Chicago. Whether these ongoing, alternative projects are continuing traditions or starting new ones, what is clear is that viewing art in a stairway, in a parking garage, in a dollhouse, in traffic or from a trunk is a good joke. It also challenges the preconceived notion of what viewing art might be. Through plays on size and place these projects are inviting visitors, participants, fans and friends to move past walls to recalibrate the way we see and experience a work of art.

You can follow Trunk Show on Twitter @trunkshowtogo and also on Facebook. The Society of Smallness can also be found on Facebook and at societyofsmallness.com. JT Baker Chemical Company can likewise be found on Facebook and at jtbaker-chemicalcompany.com.



TEA

YERBA MATE

LIQUOR



In Syria, Popular Drinks Suggest Political Affinities

» **nadine mostafa***

My weekends in Damascus usually consisted of a trip to my grandmother's house and then a night out with friends or a Friday brunch at the old town. The scene never changed; old men were always competing in a game of backgammon outside their tiny stalls with their tea glasses, and the 20-something tipsy guys were always drinking their Barada brand beer while they checked out girls and welcomed frantic tourists in broken English. Closer to the Damascus Gate of the Sun, built by the Romans in 200 AD, young soldiers wandered cautiously sipping on their yerba mate while girls and guys laughed over their arak at a nearby pub.

Amidst the hustle and bustle of the old town, I would always be walking steadfast, baring the degrading comments from sleazy guys and the stares of old bearded men. I would weave in and out, surviving the speeding 504 Peugeots that occasionally rushed obnoxiously by on the masonry streets, disregarding the pedestrians and the aimless stray cats. As I enter the hazy courtyard of an old Ottoman house that has been transformed into a restaurant, I wipe the sweat off my forehead and notice my friends waving at me from a distance across tables and tables of lined up plates of hummus, kibbeh, tabouleh, and colorful cups of freshly squeezed juices. I pull up a chair and my night is made.

There is something distinct about the flavors of Syria. Aside from the delicious, rich cuisine that Syrians love to boast about, beverages also tell stories of culture and history that are inevitably brought together at the country's capital, the melting pot of Syria's different ethnic and religious groups, Damascus.

In a city where 30% of its residents lived in slums, the daily concerns of the average Damascene were with surviving inflation, the drought, electricity cuts, and the Mukhabarat (the Syrian intelligence agency). Yet somehow, everyone found some time for leisure or gossip

at a local café, or merely on the bamboo stools on the doorsteps of their homes. In the Muslim Sunni neighborhoods those discussions were over a glass of tea. Syrians, like many in the Middle East, drink their tea in small glasses, rather than cups, to ensure that the tea leaves have perfectly infused in the teapot and that the concoction is thick enough. Typically, men would take their tea heavier and sweeter than women. With fresh mint leaves, the sparkling drink is complete.

In the Alawite neighborhoods men and women gathered over yerba mate, an herbal drink brewed in hot water. Yerba mate is mostly popular in rural and coastal Syria; the majority of the Alawite population in Damascus originates from these areas, hence their admiration for the beverage. Syrians often associate mate with soldiers or government employees. I vividly

*Damascus has changed,
and so have her
drinking habits.*

remember frantically running around the department of immigration and passports to renew my passport and being referred from one mate-addicted employee to another, none of whom were willing to assist me without a "sweet" — aka a bribe.

At the Christian quarter, many enjoy drinking arak with raw almonds or mezza (tapas). Arak is a clear colorless alcoholic spirit drink that turns milky when water is added to dilute it and is popular among many other Mediterranean cultures. Local wine, in addition to beer, is also popular, as Syria's climate makes the country ideal for winemaking.

While these distinctions are a lot blurrier than I put them, it is safe to say that these three drinks, tea, mate, arak, are extremely popular among all Syrians and an essential part of Syrian culture in general. But, they

have become associated with the major factions of the Syrian society: tea with Sunnis, mate with Alawites and Druze, and arak with Christians and atheists.

Today, these distinctions are even more complicated. At the beginning of the Syrian uprising, in Assad's first speech, he had already accused the non-violent protesters of sectarianism, when in reality all factions of the Syrian society took to the streets demanding reform. Shortly afterwards, anti-sectarian slogans were chanted during the protests, challenging Assad's false accusations with the chant "One, one, one, the Syrian people are one," one of the most popular of the revolution. Later on, a photograph of the three drinks — tea, yerba mate, and arak — began circulating to symbolize the unity of the diverse Syrian people.

Unfortunately, much of this unity has been shattered, due to Assad's persistent use of sectarian rhetoric, propaganda and violence, fueling hate, fear and rage to ensure the loyalty of the minorities and some of the majority.

The city we thought would never change has changed. The voices of the Muslim call to prayer echoing along with church bells, leaving behind them the soothing voice of Feyrouz playing in the background, have been replaced with deafening shelling and the silence of fear. Old men no longer sit outside their homes and shops drinking heavy tea in little glasses. Those who used to enjoy arak now drink it at home to forget. Mate has become a controversy as Alawites, Druze, and Ismaili Shiites attempt to reclaim their favorite beverage that the regime's soldiers and killers of their own friends and family members take pride in drinking, claiming as their own.

Damascus has changed, and so have her drinking habits.

**Author's name has been changed.*

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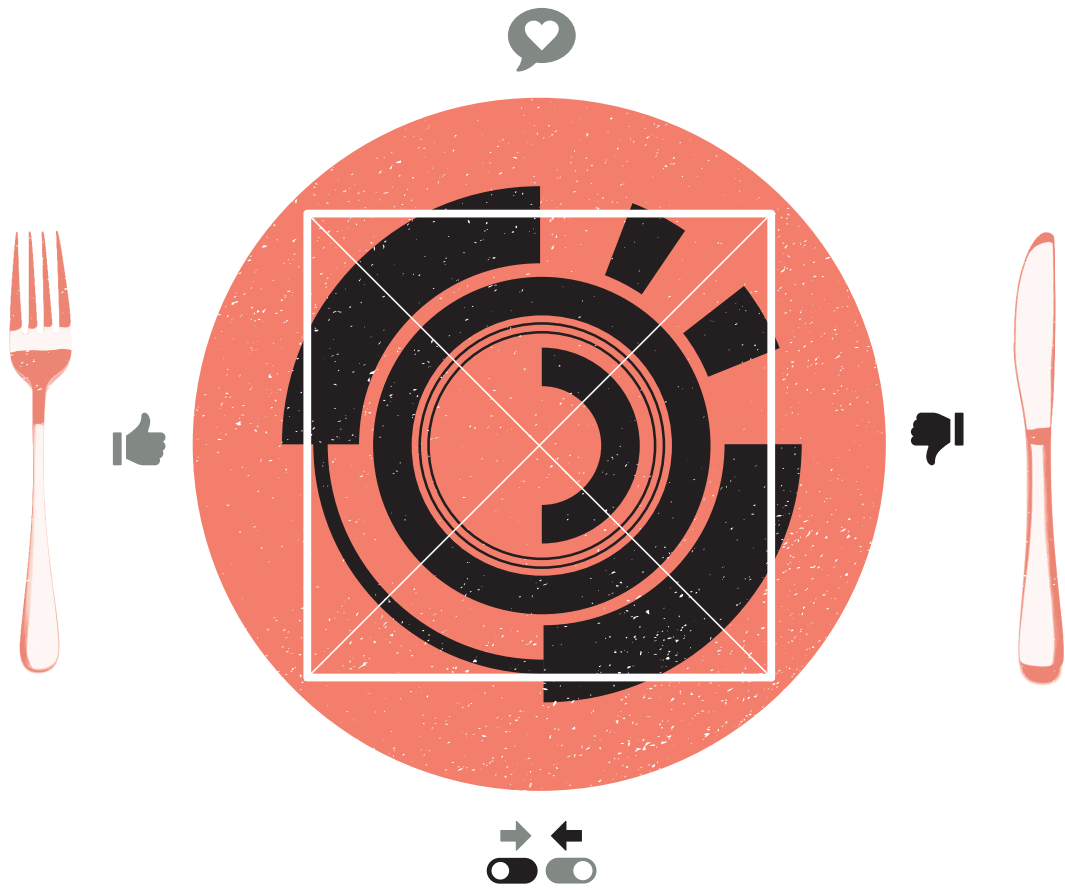
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#Taste

Instagram's Digital Food Politics

» emily elizabeth thomas

With the convenience of less than the touch of a button, we have finally found the perfect arena by which to define ourselves as individuals with individual tastes, individual desires and individual agendas. Social media is designed to give each participant an opportunity to create their own digital footprint, to shape an electronic prosthetic of themselves, and of course, to keep in touch with family and friends. Steve Jobs' Apple empire, Mark Zuckerberg's Facebook landscape, Bill Gates' Microsoft universe, Instagram co-founders Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger's visual playground, the #hashtag and the smartphone are all networks of tools that we employ to participate as social beings having a modern, social experience.

#organic #farmtotable #sushi
#sustainable #bloodorange
#icecream #homebrew #ipa #beer
#MichelinStar #TopChef #foodporn
#donuts

Instagram is the epitome of postmodern communication, designed to satisfy our collective hunger for overstimulation, constant intercommunication, and strong visual connections. Crafting an artfully filtered post is a daily ritual for many people of all ages, all over the world. According to statistics from the photo microblogging platform's press site, there are upwards of 55 million photos shared on any given day. It seems surreal that this tool offers a four-sided visual space controlled completely by the individual, a place that can capture every movement according explicitly to one's wishes. The allure of this opportunity is powerful. Our Instagram habits have altered our way of viewing everyday life and has shaped the future as perfectly square; no longer do we take experiences simply as they come, enjoy life while we can or seize the moment with the same ferocity. Instead, we take out our phones and ask ourselves "which photo filter would make this look best?" As citizens in a postmodern age, we find satisfaction

in our own consumption as we feed our innate need to feel like a part of the consuming masses, living a mantra of excess and pleasure. As we carefully curate a collection of stylized, squared snapshots, we are doing more than simply upping Instagram's stock: we are branding our lives.

With nearly any Instagram feed for proof, the quickest way to define our social value is through our stomachs. In recent years one aspect of our everyday lives has emerged as bold enough and strong enough to compete for the diminishing attention of the American public: food. This is merely the latest incarnation of a historical pattern; generation after generation has used visual representations of food to convey assumptions and aspirations about social worth and status. Cavemen painted cows and bison on walls while the Gilded Age brought sumptuous still life arrangements of food and drink. Every generation asks themselves: to have or to have not? We have chosen to have, and we want everybody to know it through negotiating the dinner table. We have become insistent on taking the food from our plate and putting it on public view, not only as savvy tech-users but also as active participants of a ubiquitous new reincarnation of a gourmet food movement that was once limited to an elite few. Anyone with a smartphone can participate as we insist on delegating hashtags to our dining experiences.

It is no longer enough for us to simply enjoy a meal with friends; we need more and we want more from the dining experience that goes beyond just the visceral satisfaction of eating. We need organic, we need grass fed, and we want to spread social knowledge of our consumption. We are hungry to single-handedly assign ourselves social value through the food we encounter, enjoy and consume.

Pierre Bourdieu, in his 1979 book *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, first proposed the idea that social class is principally defined through aesthetic concepts. Distinction creates social values and works to differentiate between the classes; the dominant aesthetic rises as public interest shifts. As the percentage of "food porn" in Instagram's ocean of snapshots directly mimics the rate at which new artisanal restaurants open in a city near you, or the accelerated speed at which social interest leans more and more towards the dinner plate, we have de-

fined our generation's leading aesthetic principal as "#taste," a far stretch from "taste."

This distinct division between "taste" and "#taste" is the genesis of electronic food politics. Although we value food for its physical tastes of savory, sweet or sour, its methods of preparation, and the

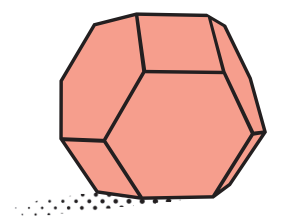
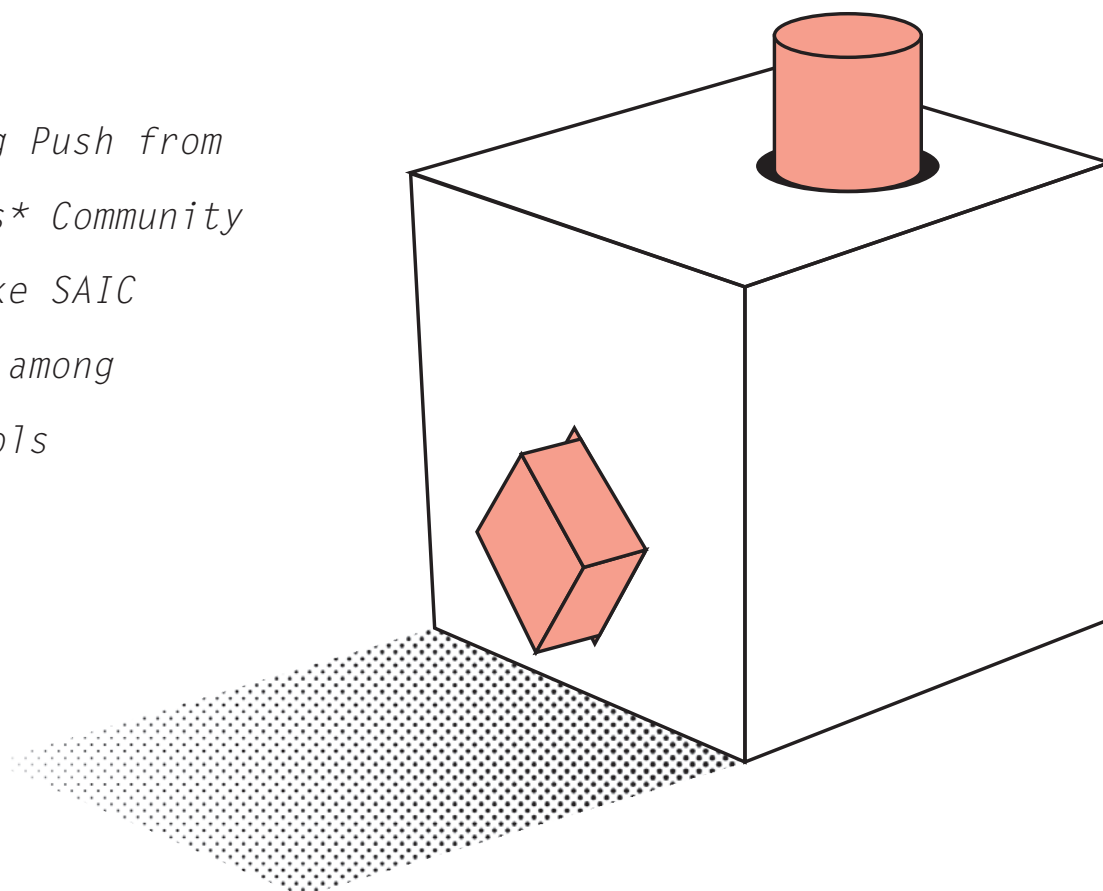


quality of ingredients, we value its social taste even more. Through the electronic agency of Instagram, we have the opportunity to post a filtered photo of our gourmet meal and tag ourselves at the new, hip restaurant. We also value those posts of the corner stand hot dog, the Starbucks cup, the simple salad and the double cheeseburger, all with the goal of letting our followers know how much fun we're having and how much we love food. We have created a distinct point system for social definition, gained in the form of a tally of "likes." Whether sitting at a picnic table or perching at a fancy bar, the dining experience has become less about eating the food and more about being a foodie, less about a time well spent and more about a time well documented.

Share your Instagram food adventures with
@FNewsmagazine using the hashtag #fnewsfoodselfie

Trans* forming SAIC

*How a Big Push from
its Trans* Community
Could Make SAIC
a Leader among
Art Schools*



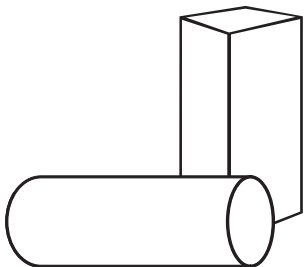
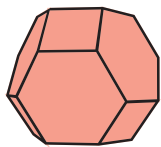
» troy pieper

Nationwide, trans* (a neologism that includes a range of gender-identities that do not conform with those assigned at birth) students at universities may be at the forefront of a civil rights movement. Students at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) have been active in pressuring the school's administration to make changes, and one result is that the school has been in talks with the Lurie Children's Hospital and other organizations about the services SAIC students may need.

Last year pediatrician Dr. Robert Garofalo founded the Gender and Sex Development Program at the Ann and Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital. Just down the street from SAIC, it is one of only a few centers like it in the country offering medical and counseling services to youth and adolescents up to age 21 who have "gender-nonconforming behavior or who are gender-ques-

tioning and transgender," according to the program's website.

SAIC's Joseph Behen, Executive Director of Counseling, Health and Rehabilitative Services at the Wellness Center, has been researching what services organizations like the Lurie can offer and paying attention to what trans* students at SAIC may need. But there are many ways that both the cultures and the bureaucracies of institutions like SAIC need to change in order to respect the rights of a population whose members are more and more likely to ask for those changes. The American Psychological Association recognizes that "in recent years, transgender people have increasingly been willing to identify themselves openly. Public awareness of transgender issues has increased dramatically, in part because of an increasing number of books, motion pictures and television programs featuring transgender characters and addressing transgender issues."



One step student activists at SAIC took in 2013 was to request gender-neutral bathrooms on campus. The school now has 16, according to its website; however, all are single-occupancy, rather than multi-person bathrooms designated for use by anyone, regardless of gender. In November, 2013 trans* activist students, with the help of the school’s Multicultural Affairs office, made an attempt to call for policy changes at the school with a panel discussion including several trans* students and faculty. Trans* students, both on the panel and in the audience, asked for more diversity training for students, faculty and staff for trans*-specific support from the administration and for the school’s health plan to cover hormone therapy, transition surgery and counseling for trans* students. Behen assured those at the panel discussion that the school would do everything in its power to create a safe and inclusive environment on campus for trans* students. He has since met with Dr. Garofalo and with the TransLife Project at the Chicago House, a non-profit support program for trans* people. So far Wellness Center staff have received TransLife’s training sessions Trans 101 and Clinical Implications of Working With Trans Students: a 101 For Health and Wellness Providers.

I don't think they can do it on their own. Student activism is a necessary component.

Behen says he plans to “advocate for coverage for hormone therapy and gender reassignment/confirmation surgeries within the SAIC-sponsored student accident and sickness insurance plan during the upcoming annual renewal process,” a change sorely needed by at least some trans* students at SAIC. Natalia Nicholson (MFA Performance 2014), who was part of the panel discussion last year, has been diagnosed with clinical depression related to her inability to gain access to gender confirmation surgery. She is calling for just such changes in the school’s insurance policy, in order to cover the cost of that surgery.

SAIC has a larger number of trans* students than many other schools. The National College Health Assessment, a 2013 study by the American College Health Association (ACHA), which included 153 US campuses and 123,078 students, found the rate of students who identify as trans* across those campuses was 0.2 percent. SAIC’s rate was 1.5 percent, or around 50 students and seven and a half times the national rate.

SAIC, if it were to offer hormone therapy, surgery and counseling services through its student insurance

policy, it would be the first art school in the country to offer all of these, says Behen. The ACHA notes that 37 colleges nationwide, including UCLA, Ithaca College, Princeton and Yale already do so. Campus Pride, a national nonprofit that advocates for LGBT students, compiled an index in 2012 of the top 10 US colleges and universities that have demonstrated a commitment to trans* students. It lists schools that have added gender identity or gender expression to their non-discrimination policies and offer, according to an article on Advocate.com: “gender-inclusive bathrooms, locker rooms, and housing options; providing a means for trans students who have not legally changed their names or had gender confirmation surgeries to use a preferred name and to change the gender on campus records and documents; recognizing trans identities on campus forms; and covering hormones and surgeries for transitioning students as part of student health insurance.”

Though Nicholson says she is happy that SAIC is now attempting to address the concerns of its trans* students, she says it concerns her that they were not addressed sooner. She considers it “negligence for any institution to be unaware of trans* needs, just as it would be if it were unaware of the needs of women and

ethnicities.” And she is not alone. Trans* sophomore Florian Palucci pointed out that the conversation at the trans* discussion panel centered on a lack of awareness of trans* issues on the part of the school’s administration.

Still, trans* sophomore Duff Norris acknowledges that “the people in a position to make changes get it, but it’s difficult to get all of the pieces together and the different departments to work together.” Norris’ overall experience as a trans* student, they say (using the correct pronouns to refer to trans* people is an important part of respecting a trans* person’s identity), has been a mixed bag. “I was told before coming to school a year and a half ago that the administration was aware of these issues and that they were trying to get policy changes implemented, but why has it been so hard to get my name correct?”

Norris is referring to documents like their student ID and school email address. While checking out equipment from a lab on campus, their name in the school’s computer system did not match that on their student ID. “The security guards didn’t know what to do, and they

were asking me a bunch of questions — and laughing, which means they need diversity training,” says Norris. Being “outed” or “mis-gendered” when someone refers to a trans* person using pronouns inconsistent with the gender with which the person identifies is “extremely dehumanizing,” says Nicholson. Measures like making trans* sensitivity training available to students, faculty and staff, she says, would be a step in the right direction.

Sophomore Florian Palucci agrees that gender sensitivity is essential for faculty and staff among student bodies that include trans* students, because they are in positions of authority and have some measure of control over the general attitude of a classroom and the school. It would be nice, he says, if trans* students “didn’t always have to be the educators.” He advocates for the school to have a dedicated office or staff person for all genders and sexualities. “We pay so much for school; we should be getting more services like that.”

“Rashayla [Marie Brown, Assistant Director of Multi-cultural Affairs] and Patrick Spence [Assistant Dean of Student Affairs] have been super helpful and incredible assets,” Norris says, but simple policies to help trans* students avoid these struggles and systems to support trans* students are what is really needed. “The time I spend advocating for myself distracts me from school work and from the rest of my life. If you acknowledge that these problems can cause significant emotional and mental stress, it’s not acceptable for it to be this difficult.” Norris expressed a desire to move forward in developing support for trans* students through a meeting with SAIC President Walter Massey and others who make policy at the school, rather than “the usual suspects.”

Palucci says students should not have to fight an institution for changes it should already be making, but acknowledges that since institutions simply “don’t work that way, it is imperative that students fight their administrations to change policies that are negligent and unfair.” Behen says the school may not have known about trans* students’ concerns without activists among the student body bringing them to light. Since they have, students like Nicholson feel it is their responsibility to keep pressuring the school for change. “I don’t think they can do it on their own,” says Nicholson. “I think student activism is a necessary component.”

Whether medical care, advocacy or activism, work is being done by all parties involved to help make schools like SAIC more inclusive and safe places for trans* students and for all students. The question is whether enough is being done at the moment and what the best ways are for institutions like SAIC to catch up to the needs of trans* students. Even Garofalo, a national expert on gender and sexuality, admits “We’re still figuring out where we need to go.”

THE RIGHT TO USE MY OWN NAME

The Experiences of a Trans Student in the Writing Department

»h.melt

It all began with the admissions application. One of the first requirements was to fill in my name. I hesitated to write my birth name. I wanted to write my chosen name but worried about the consequences of doing so. That initial feeling of uncertainty came up again when I reached the gender section. Most people would select male or female without much thought. I took a long pause at that part of the application. I thought about choosing male. I don't identify as male or female. However, I feel more visible when people identify me as something other than the gender I was assigned at birth. Why wasn't there a space to write in my chosen name, my gender or my pronouns? The truth is, I was too afraid to ask these questions before I was accepted into the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC).

Right before school started, I celebrated my twenty-second birthday. My mom ordered a cake with white frosting and six balloons—one for each color of the rainbow. Below the balloons, the cake read “Happy Birthday Hannah.” That was the last time I wanted to see my birth name anywhere. When I went to register for an SAIC identification card (ARTICard) a few days later, I wrote down my chosen name on the form. I was told that I was required to use my birth name. They sent me to the registrar, who questioned my name change, which made me question myself.

This is the issue that began my trans activism at SAIC. I met with James Britt, the Director of Multicultural Affairs at the time. He helped bring the name change issue, along with other trans concerns like training for faculty and staff, gender neutral bathrooms and housing and trans inclusive healthcare to staff members and people in the administration. This included people from student life, student affairs, the financial aid office, the ARTICard office, technology services and the registrar. They discussed trans issues and made decisions about trans people without any of us present.

One of the main reasons I was not allowed to change my name on my ARTICard was because of “security concerns.” What the school didn't realize was their lack of accommodations for trans students made me feel incredibly unsafe. Every time I used my ARTICard or every time someone sent me an email, my birth name was revealed, which allowed people to make assumptions about my gender. I was forced to out myself to administrators, professors, staff, and fellow students because the school did not allow me to use my chosen name. Even after I would out myself, people would still treat me as if they did not know I identified as trans. I was suicidal during my first few months at SAIC because the school refused to recognize me as a

trans person. The school acted like my body, mind and identity were unreal.

After many exhausting meetings with James Britt, then Director of Multicultural Affairs, I finally decided to contact a lawyer. I sought out legal support so that the school would take my concerns more seriously and expedite the process of granting me an ARTICard with my chosen name. Attorney Owen Daniel-McCarter wrote a letter to the school stating that denying me a name change was illegal under the Illinois Human Rights Act (775 ILCS 5/1-101), the Cook County Human Rights Ordinance (Cook County Ordinance No. 93-0-13) and the Chicago City Code (Municipal Code of Chicago Chapter 2-160). It was also a violation of the school's own non-discrimination policy. When I got a lawyer involved, the administration finally paid attention, and I immediately received a new ARTICard that read “H Melton.”

Even though I acquired a new identification card, other problems remained. Many of my problems at SAIC revolve around language. I always make sure to introduce myself as H. Melt and state that I use they, them, and their as my pronouns. Minutes later people misgender me. I keep quiet in my classes due to a fear of misgendering. The majority of the professors and students in the writing department are cisgender women. Many of my professors and peers assume I am one of them. I've heard the head of my department use the “T word,” been assigned outdated and objectifying readings about “transvestites” written by cisgender men, and had a professor repeatedly refer to an entire classroom as “ladies.” I've adopted an aloof posture so I don't break down every time I walk into the school.

I want every space in the world to be inclusive of trans and gender nonconforming people.

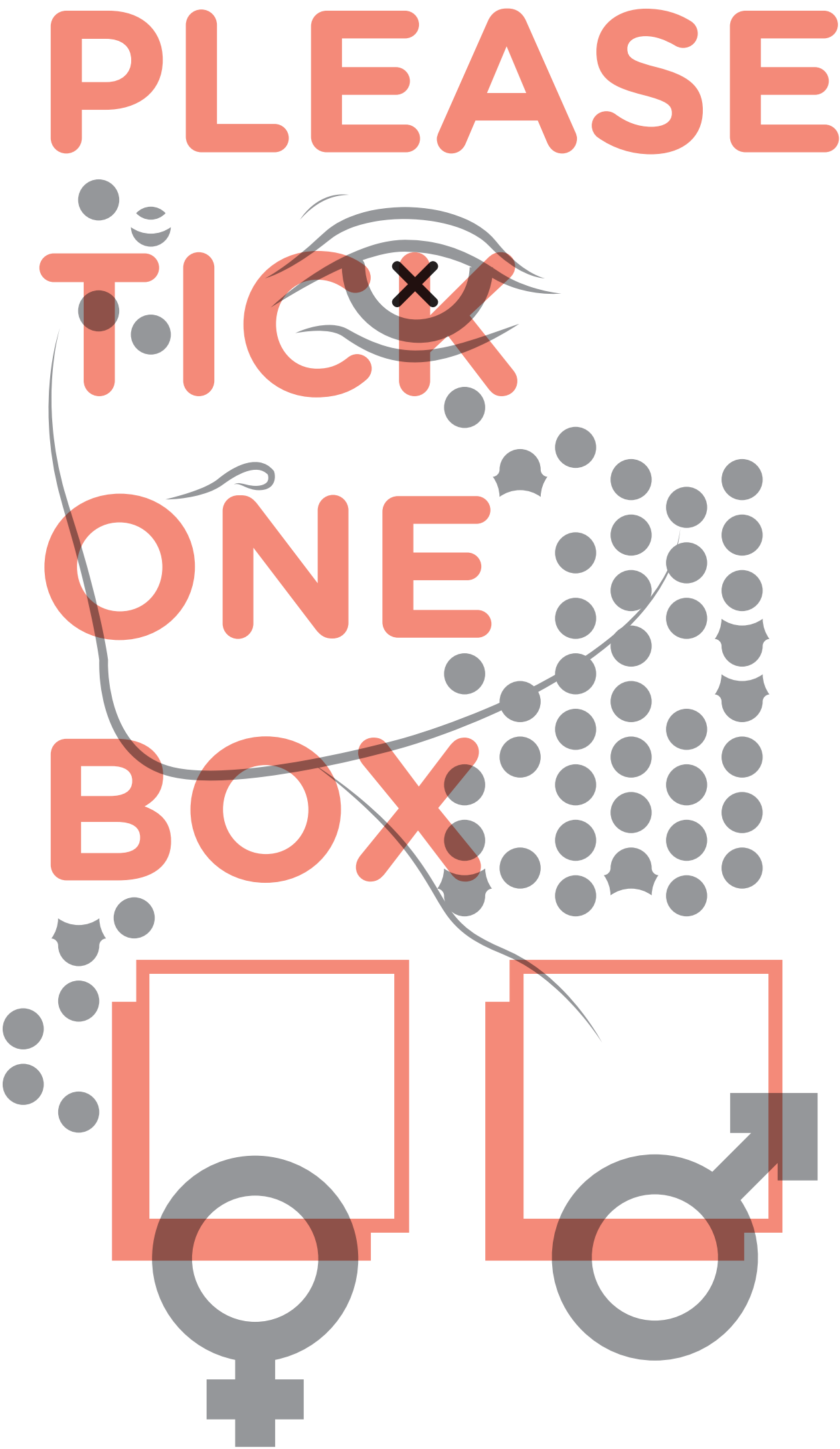
I write about being a trans and queer person in Chicago. When I read poems specifically about being trans, people still treat me as if I am talking about someone else, as if my art is separate from my life. Maybe this is because my department is so heavily focused on fiction, and it is rare that people write explicitly about their own lives. Because there is so little awareness about trans identities in my department, I have received little critical feedback on my work. Either people praise it as revolutionary because they don't know any trans writers, or they avoid talking about the trans content

out of fear that they will offend me or have to question their own ideas about gender. During my time at SAIC, I have not learned much about writing because I've spent so much time educating everyone else about trans and queer issues.

I knew I was not the only trans person having difficulties at the school. After dealing with these issues privately for over a year, I decided it was time to organize a public conversation. Along with Rashayla Brown in the Office of Multicultural Affairs and Kevin Sparrow, a friend in the writing program, I organized an event called Trans @ SAIC: A Discussion with Students, Faculty, and Staff. It featured the voices of trans and gender nonconforming people from across the school—including Mickey Mahoney, Natalia Nicholson, Wolfie Rawk, Oli Rodriguez, and myself.

On the day of the event, the first floor of the LeRoy Neiman Center was overflowing with administrators, teachers and students waiting to hear our stories. Judging by the large attendance at both this event and the Transgender/Arts roundtable two weeks prior, trans art and education are of great interest to the SAIC community. Seeing so many people in the audience and sitting next to the other panelists made me feel real support for the first time at SAIC. The panel spoke about a wide range of topics including respecting pronouns and chosen names, medical and mental health needs, incorporating trans topics into the classroom and the difficulty of receiving critical feedback on our work. For me, the most unexpected moment occurred when Natalia said, “I didn't know we had rights,” until her involvement in the event. The discussion both empowered trans people to speak for themselves and taught the school to listen and respond to our needs. Hopefully, the event will be a catalyst to make SAIC more inclusive of trans people and all marginalized people within the school.

When I first experienced problems as a trans student, I was hesitant to call attention to them because of my own privileges within an academic institution. Many trans people face much more pressing concerns like homelessness, unemployment and physical violence. I realized that it's important to combat transphobia everywhere that it exists. I want every classroom, every school to be inclusive of trans and gender nonconforming people. I want every space in the world to be inclusive of trans and gender nonconforming people. We must point out transphobia wherever it occurs and work together to eliminate it from our schools, our workplaces, our homes and our daily lives.



Cash 4 Sperm



Structural Homophobia in the Seed Industry

» alex wolff

This winter, with \$50 in my checking account, I started seeking alternative routes to earn money. My equally destitute girlfriend was considering undergoing egg donation, or the process whereby a woman is paid upwards of \$4000 to have 10-15 of her eggs surgically removed at a clinic for future usage in in-vitro fertilization. When we read about the process and the terrifying long-term medical risks involved, like ovarian hyperstimulation syndrome, ovarian torsion, and possible bowel injuries, she began reconsidering. After a rigorous screening process that spans physical exams, personal questionnaires, and blood, genetic, and psychological screenings, the procedures for donating eggs involves self-administering daily shots of fertility drugs for five weeks. Then you have a needle forcibly inserted into the top wall of the vagina to penetrate the ovaries, and the doctor extracts some eggs. Both of our genitals hurt thinking about it.

Talking about egg donation made me consider its much less invasive sibling-process: sperm donation. Though the screening process is equally picky and rigorous (usually only 5% of potential donors are accepted), sperm donation is extremely simple. You just ejaculate in a cup, usually once a week or more. For one plastic cup of sperm, or specimen, you can be paid anywhere from \$50-100. This means that you could earn almost \$1,200 per month, for around 12 months, just to ejaculate into a cup instead of a pile of Kleenex. My pupils turned to dollar signs and I began my pursuit to convert masturbation into capital.

I began my online application with Midwest Sperm Bank and started reading their specifications for donors. Though there were strange requirements for donors, like being 5' 10", having a B.A., and attending a four-year college, there was one especially

disturbing detail. In addition to being classist and discriminatory against shorter members of society, it stated that the donor's "sexual partners [must be] exclusively female." I initially thought this was just a prejudiced policy of Midwest Sperm Bank, but after doing a quick Google search I realized that it was a part of the ongoing structural homophobia of US federal policies. Though I wanted to donate sperm purely for the profit, shouldn't sperm donation be open to all donors, regardless of who they choose to sleep with?

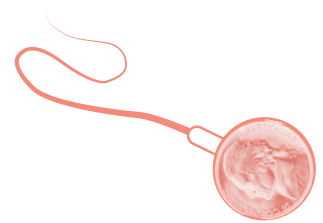
Since 2005, the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has suggested that sperm donation clinics prevent "men who have had sex with men" (MSM) in the past five years from donating sperm. The usage of the medicalized acronym, MSM, indirectly addresses homosexual and bisexual men, as they are obviously the "men who have sex with men."

The issue is rooted in the more historically visible FDA ban on blood donation from MSM, which has been in effect since 1983. At the time, these policies were put in place as a response to the AIDS epidemic. They put a lifetime ban on any man who had engaged in sexual activities with another man since 1977. Three decades later, gay and bisexual men are still banned from donating blood. A 2010 government panel upheld this prohibition, even though tests can now tell if someone has a disease like HIV within a very small window period. While all donated blood and sperm is subjected to modern-day testing methods, the outdated logic that removes homosexual and bisexual individuals from the donor pool continues.

The same institutional prejudice preventing MSM from anonymous blood donation determines the FDA's policies on sperm donation. They insist that the statistically larger incidence of HIV infection (the disease that causes AIDS) among gay and bisexual men is the reason for their decision. On an FDA docu-

ment, which serves as an industry standard for most clinics, they list "men who have had sex with another man in the preceding 5 years ... (risk factor for HIV and Hepatitis B)" as the number one warning sign for clinicians to look for when rejecting potential donors. It is even listed above those who have "injected drugs for a non-medical reason in the preceding five years."

"Though I wanted to donate sperm purely for the profit, shouldn't sperm donation be open to all eligible donors, regardless of who they choose to sleep with?"



This FDA mandate is certainly not news, as the FDA has unwaveringly endorsed it since 2005, and the media have not given it much coverage. Though MSM blood and sperm donation have been constant rallying points for gay-rights activists, part of their relative lack of contemporary visibility is because the FDA guidelines are not an outright ban. While this is true, most donation centers follow the suggested guidelines and will be blacklisted or warned by the FDA if they refuse. Countless clinics across the US still ban homosexual and bisexual men from donating, though some, like the (now-defunct) San



Francisco-based clinic Rainbow Flag Health Services, have ignored the suggestions and accepted gay and bisexual donors.

The policy suggesting that gay and bisexual men should be banned from donating sperm is un-scientific, as all donated blood and sperm is thoroughly tested by clinics for HIV and other diseases like hepatitis B. The screening process for potential donors is rigorous and takes months at a time. It involves multiple blood tests, urine tests, and in-depth examinations of a person's medical and sexual history. Scott Brown, director of Communications at the California-based clinic California Cryobank, stated in an interview with *F newsmagazine* that the testing process is extensive and donors are tested for HIV "every three months." This means that if a person initially tested negative for a disease like HIV, after the three month re-testing, clinics would definitively know which donors were infected. Individuals determined to have diseases like HIV are always ruled out as donors and their specimens are disposed of.

This protocol makes the fear that homosexual and bisexual men will contaminate the donor pool look absurd. As the gay rights group Lambda Legal suggests in a critical letter to the FDA, screening should be egalitarian, with donation prohibitions based on "individual risk assessment." In Lambda Legal's plan, both homosexual and heterosexual individuals would be rejected if they had unprotected sex in past 12 months with an HIV-positive person or a person using illegal drugs, rather than just prohibiting gay and bisexual men outright.

Standards for heterosexual blood and sperm donation are inconsistent by comparison. As journalist Camille Beredjick observes in a report on these FDA standards, if a man "has had sex with an HIV-positive woman," he "can donate blood after a period of just

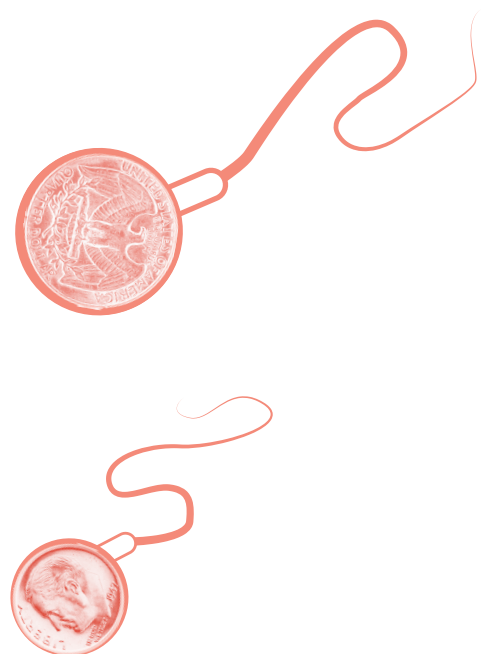
12 months," while MSM donors are immediately ruled out just because they have had sex in the past five years. The regulations don't consider that individuals who have heterosexual sex are also at a high risk for HIV transmission. As a March Kaiser Family Foundation report observes, "Heterosexual sex has accounted for a growing share of transmissions over time, representing 25% of new infections in 2010." David Moore, a physician and long-time activist on issues related to HIV, told *F newsmagazine* that the ban on gay and bisexual sperm donation is "part and parcel of the policy of discarding blood that is donated by MSM" which "attempts to discourage gay men from serving as donors of body tissues."

"It remains stigmatizing of a group of people and discourages safe and willing donors from participating in the donor pool," said Moore. "It is not effective policy."

Though I was qualified to do so, in the end, I never ended up donating sperm. Over the course of two months I ended up contacting the clinic through multiple emails and phone calls. Unless ignoring me was part of the first test, all I was left with was a claim from the receptionist that they had been "hacked" and lost data (someone disgruntled about bad sperm?). I decided that it probably wasn't worth the effort. Even if I had kept calling for another month and somehow got accepted, I would have felt implicated.

Though the website for Midwest Sperm Bank, like many others, states that they work "with heterosexual couples, lesbian couples, and single women of all races, religious and ethnic backgrounds," there is no sign that the FDA will actively include gay and bisexual men in this process any time soon. No matter how you slice it, stopping gay and bisexual men from donation because they are "statistically

at risk for HIV" is like discriminating against other donors based on gender or race. It denies an entire demographic of eligible donors, ignoring the fact that countless gay and bisexual men practice safe sex. Regardless of what euphemisms are used to skirt around the issue, this policy is homophobic. Until the FDA decides to acknowledge this and change policy, the seed industry will remain a seedy place.



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Thanks Obama!

Artists, Get Health Coverage Now

» alex wolff

2014 is finally here, and in Illinois, February 15 is the cut-off date for uninsured U.S. residents who want health insurance by March 1. Knowing the details and the deadlines of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) is crucial for SAIC students who are considering getting coverage outside of the school and alumni who are looking for insurance. A 2013 online survey carried out by the Future of Music Coalition (FMC) and the Artists' Health Insurance Resource Center (AHRIC), found that out of 3,402 U.S.-based artist participants, 43 percent did not have health insurance. Under the expansion of Medicaid in Illinois, anyone making an income below the Federal Poverty Level (\$15,281 individual, \$20,628 couple – annually), which includes many artists, is eligible for nearly free health insurance. But for those who are still in school and recent graduates, understanding the ACA can be a hassle.

Though the federal website, or health insurance marketplace, for the ACA has experienced a multitude of technical problems in the past months, many news outlets report that it is working smoothly on the front end. While this is true, many are still experiencing technical problems enrolling on the website. SAIC alumna Simone Thompkins states that “signing up was a pretty straight-forward process,” though due to a glitch she is still unable to see her possible premiums. “No matter which browser I use, when I click on ‘pay your first premium,’ there's an incomplete sentence and then — nothing,” said Thompkins.

One of the largest benefits of the Affordable Care Act is that insurers are no longer able to turn away individuals with pre-existing medical conditions. This means that insurers will have to pay for medical issues that would have previously made individuals uninsurable or allow insurers to cancel medical coverage. Additionally, each plan must now contain certain benefits, some of which AIDS Foundation of Chicago director Dahlia Mehdi outlined as “outpatient care, emergency services, hospitalizations, maternity and newborn care, mental health and substance abuse treatment, prescription drugs, and rehab.” Adult dental coverage is not offered as a covered benefit under these health plans, and it is also not offered through Medicaid.

Under the Affordable Care Act each plan has a specific deductible. A deductible is the amount of money you pay out of pocket before your insurance company begins helping you with payments. There are also different out of pocket maximums or “limits” that you must pay and then insurers will cover any additional costs, which are yearly, regardless of how much medical coverage you need during a year. Specific variables can affect the price of your health insurance premium, which are your age, zip code, and whether or not you smoke. The zip code variable acts in some ways as a form of institutionalized racism by charging specific low-income areas with different ethnic population densities.

A helpful aspect of the marketplace website is that once you plug in your numbers, it will tell you if you're below the federal poverty limit, which is dependent on the size of your household, and if you're eligible for Medicaid. For an individual, if you make “less than \$15,850” and if you make under “\$21,400 as a couple” you will be eligible for Medicaid if you are a citizen of the U.S.

Knowing the details, and the deadlines of the Affordable Care Act is critical for SAIC students still in school and recent grads.

SAIC alumnus Brandon Goei also experienced enrollment issues at first, but then realized he was eligible for Medicaid by plugging in his income information. “I did just finish signing up for Medicaid and found it relatively simple” said Goei. Before he realized he was eligible for Medicaid, he had “previously tried to use the healthcare.gov site with some difficulty.” In his opinion the ACA site had “badly designed pages,” and after accidentally inputting his income level too high, the site locked him into one set of payment plans, as you only get one chance to input data. It only offered him plans that he “could never even begin to afford” and eventually he had to start over with a new email address. “At heart, it seems like a good idea, but there are definitely some kinks that should have been worked out before a full public release,” said Goei. “I’ve been uninsured

for almost two years now, so it gives me at least a little peace of mind to know that I've started the process relatively smoothly.”

Similarly, Alyssa Moxley, F Newsmagazine Managing Editor and second year graduate in the Sound department, states that her application for Medicaid was going slowly until she called the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services. She says, “as an independent with low income, I was curious as to whether I could qualify for Medicaid while still in school. I can, and now I am saving \$990 a term in health insurance premiums, plus the medical costs on top of that.” A social worker stated that applications online were backed up for weeks and by calling she could be enrolled immediately, which meant she met the school's spring insurance waiver deadline.

But even if you are eligible for almost free health coverage under Medicaid there are issues with receiving services. Physician Philip Verhoef told F newsmagazine that there is plenty of literature about how few Medicaid providers there are. “Many, many, doctors don't accept

Medicaid patients,” said Verhoef. If there are no Medicaid providers where you live, “you just have to pay extra then for an out of network doc.” Some artists and former students have even decided not to get insured, because the costs are still too high and they might not be eligible for expanded Medicaid coverage. Simone Thompkins states, “I have a few friends with preexisting medical conditions, but I don't believe they've signed up yet.”

“One of my best friends has a rare form of Addison's Disease and pays more than \$500 a month for the medication she needs to live — she still won't sign up” said Thompkins. “She doesn't think it will help.”

Visit FNewsmagazine.com for more information, resources and tips to stay healthy this winter.



REVOLUTION WILL BE WEBCAST

Zapatistas: 20 Years of a Pioneering Grassroots Movement

» alexia casanova

Twenty years after their first uprising, the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN), a revolutionary leftist group based in the state of Chiapas in Mexico, remain active and expertly organized. Composed mostly of indigenous people, the EZLN has challenged the assumption that indigenous groups and new media were incompatible and truly paved the way for contemporary political grassroots movements. As early as 1994, the EZLN used global communication tools — international press and later the Internet and social media — to organize, inform about, and represent their rebellion.



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MOSCOW'S

UNDERGROUND

*Hamid Ismailov talks to F Newsmagazine
about the brief life of an "Olympian"*

Despite not knowing any “Olympians” before writing the novel, Ismailov wrote about this generation because of his personal experience of living in Moscow during those years. “I took to the extreme: the experience of my daughter, because she was, in a way, mixed race. She was different from other people, quite different. I knew her friends and I used quite a lot of this experience and my extensive experience living in Moscow ... We were unsettled. It was difficult to find a place to rent at that time, being a national minority. Though we were perfectly, whatever, 'normal' Soviet people, there was a kind of distrust. I don't know. Narrow thinking.”

Born in Kyrgyzstan, the author moved to Uzbekistan as a young man and now lives in London, England, where he heads the Central Asian division of the BBC's World Service. Between 1984 and 1992 he lived in Moscow with his family. After the USSR broke up, they moved back to Uzbekistan with hopes of living in a fresh and revitalized culture. A few years later, dictatorial tyranny and censorship drove them back to their Moscow apartment (that became the setting for this fictional novel) before they ultimately headed into Western Europe.

Ismailov conjectures that during his time in Moscow, “the underground was the cheapest, the closest to communism, in a way, because you wouldn't care about money. You couldn't buy anything there. All you were left with was people and people's relationships, apart from the sort of pragmatic action of traveling from one place to another place. The communism was, in a way, achieved underground rather than on the surface ... a utopian idea that has no place on earth buried underground from the beginning. So it was a paradoxical idea, the paradise on the earth, but under the earth, under the soil.”

“Communism is about equality, but with this equality, you can become a sort of paranoiac about becoming more equal than others,” says Ismailov. “Parents were uncompromising in that. They were beating their children. They were ruthless towards children because they wanted them to become a sort of superhuman, every child. That was my idea: that you can live the sort of lives of the heroes of Dostoevsky, not knowing you are going through it.” The adults throughout the novel, dissolute failures at embodying utopian perfection, abandon personal hope to hedonism, fucking, drinking, and ultimately embezzling (after voucher-isation) without inhibition. The young generation at the curbside of the USSR is left to fend for itself, carrying the weight of their forebears' misadventures.

“Realistically, everyone understood that he was not up to these expectations, which were put upon by the society, by the parents, by the organizations like Oktober, or Komsomol, because these expectations were ideological, they were utopian. What happens in the hearts of these children, who are asked to be super-humans, but who are just normal children?” Despite Mbobo's achievements as a straight 'A' student with a keen memory for poetry, he is deeply self-deprecating throughout the tale, which is supported by the reckless care he receives from his parents and the cruelty of strangers. His feeling of not being able to measure-up, is symbolic not only of a repressed minority, but rather the condition of a society as a whole with unachievable goals.

The Underground, in this way, is not about one particular kind of person, but rather the pressures and contradictions facing many Soviet people growing up during this time period. “I personally feel 'Russian' in many cases as well,” Ismailov says. “I was brought up

The communism was, in a way, achieved underground rather than on the surface ... a utopian idea that has no place on earth buried underground from the beginning; a paradoxical idea, a paradise on the earth, but under the earth, under the soil.

In *The Underground*, the character Gleb, one of Kirill's stepfathers, is an erudite though violent and alcoholic man who writes for the international journal of the *USSR Friendship of the Nations*.

“Yes, Uncle Gleb was a hollow man,” muses Kirill, “and if I had to compare him with anything at all on this earth, I would compare him with the whistling cavities of the dark metro, their grayness occasionally lit up with bursts of uncommon beauty.”

Gleb calls Kirill “Pushkin,” a reference to the fact that this progenitor of Russian literature had an Ethiopian grandfather. The real poet Pushkin had an unfinished book portraying the life of his grandfather, who was employed and educated by the Tsar in the 18th century.

Race relations in the USSR certainly differed in ideological objective and actual fact. In pursuit of class-consciousness and capitalist decolonization, the Soviet Comintern earnestly began its recruitment of African Americans in 1928, training lawyers to unionize US workers. The 1935 Russian film *Circus* portrayed a white American circus performer and her mixed race son (played by the child of a recently emigrated American actor, Lloyd Patterson, and his Russian wife), fleeing persecution and living a life of social acceptance in the USSR. In the 1950s, an Everyman Opera production of *Porgy and Bess* visited Russia, reported on by Truman Capote, as part of a campaign to promote cultural exchange (from the US side) while purportedly highlighting the extreme injustices in American society (from the USSR angle).

The racism portrayed in *The Underground*, set during the disintegration of the USSR in the 1980s, highlights the increasing hypocrisy of a society predicated on actualizing egalitarian values, as those values were being undermined.

amongst Russian literature and Russian culture. The sort of the cultural code, the cultural DNA is sitting inside of me. I know the jokes, I know the references, I know everything about them. I also have the DNA, for Uzbek literature and Uzbek culture and so on and so forth. Its kind of a schizophrenic feeling of 'Russianness' which sits in every Soviet person.”

The locations, writers and poets, and social events that take place are meticulously realistic. Ismailov imparts that he “tried to save, to maintain the Moscow of that time in its full stereoscopic glory. I wrote it for Russian readers. It was a monument to that epoch.” The characters in *The Underground* are passionate residents of Moscow, with ancestry in Central Asia, Siberia, and Africa, as well as autochthonous natives to this central city of the USSR. Illuminated by Ismailov's poetic prose, their hopes and despairs are beautifully evoked through the inner monologue of Mbobo. As the reader bears witness to his life, love, and perishing, the language shifts from that of a four-year-old to that of a young man in his twenties. The misunderstandings of childhood develop into worldviews and deserted conclusions.

The Underground was originally published in Russian in 2005 and is now included in the school curriculum in the province of Samara to teach children about tolerance. Recently translated, the novel came out in English as an e-book in December 2013. His third novel translated into English, it follows *The Railway* (2006) and *A Poet and Bin Laden: A Reality Novel* (2012). His fourth, *The Dead Lake*, about young boy in Kazakhstan who never grows up after falling into radioactive waters, comes out this February in paperback.

» alyssa moxley

“This novel shows the xenophobia in the very beginning of the breakup the Soviet Union. Now these tendencies have become sort of insane in Russia,” says poet novelist and journalist Hamid Ismailov. “Russia, possibly, now is the most xenophobic country in Europe, if not in the world.”

The Underground, Ismailov's latest novel published in English, depicts the brutal separation between the hopes and realities of social integration on the threshold of the collapse of the Soviet Union. The dark and picaresque tale follows the life and death of the young Mbobo (also the book's title in Russian) in a series of vignettes marked by the grand stations of the city's metropolitan transportation system.

Moscow's underground was how Ismailov began to understand the layout of the city as an immigrant. He recollects, “We lived on the surface, but all our communications, all our correspondences with different parts of Moscow were through the underground, it was our habitat. We moved around, knowing just metro stations.” In *The Underground*, the stations became a metaphor for the dreams and derelictions of the society above ground. The connotations of the Soviet term suggest underground life, underground thinking, and the cultural underground. At times, this is laid out explicitly in the fantastical reminiscing voice of Mbobo, who throughout the novel narrates from an unnamed earthen tomb:

“The construction of such magnificent stations as Sokol amid the maggoty darkness was a subconscious hint at fashioning the heavenly homeliness of life, albeit underground, in the very place where hell is generally supposed to be [...] I would dare to venture that the best museum of Communism and the Soviets is the Moscow metro...

Mbobo is the sobriquet given to the formally-named Kirill by his mother. Named Moscow, she is a half-Russian, half-Khakassian *limitchitsa* (immigrant with permission to work in Moscow) from Siberia. Mbobo's father is an absent athlete from Guinea who competed during Moscow's 1980 Olympic Games. Ismailov explained that a generation of Afro-Russians born in this era was cynically referred to as “The Olympians.”



the virtues of grayscale



*A Return to Form
in Alexander Payne's
Nebraska*

» patrick reynolds

In a year overflowing with hyped sequels, poorly received remakes, derivative rom-coms and embarrassing sci-fi, one modest film has managed to avoid the pitfalls of Hollywood's oversaturated market — notably, with a lack of (color) saturation.

Director Alexander Payne's *Nebraska* uses black-and-white imagery to present a simple slice-of-life story that fully embraces its visual and narrative restraint. The film follows Woody Grant (played by Bruce Dern), an aging Midwestern man, as he attempts to make his way from Billings, Montana, to Lincoln, Nebraska, to collect \$1 million in prize winnings — an award to which Woody has been alerted through a questionable notification in the mail. Woody becomes unwittingly accompanied on his journey by his son, David (SNL alum Will Forte). Their journey's passage through Woody's old hometown inspires an impromptu family reunion, and Woody is forced to confront a past he had left behind in the film's titular state.

Having now been nominated for three of the year's most significant film awards, the Palme d'Or at Cannes and Best Picture at both the Golden Globes and Academy Awards, *Nebraska* stands in sharp contrast to its consistent competition. It lacks the visual effects and visceral excitement of films like *Gravity* and *The Hobbit*, the heavy melodrama of *12 Years a Slave*, the sensationalized sex scenes of *Blue is the Warmest Color*, and the glamorous stylization of crime in *American Hustle* and *The Wolf of Wall Street*. However, it is precisely through its minimal and sparse approach to its subject matter that *Nebraska* manages to shine as one of the year's most genuine films and as Payne's most compelling directorial effort.

Nebraska works as a sister film to Payne's *About Schmidt* from 2002: both films follow retired men on road trips of self-discovery, each one examining the lingering

effects of familial fallings-out against the backdrop of the American midwest. *Nebraska* also solicits comparisons to the minimal black-and-white visuals of films like Jim Jarmusch's *Stranger Than Paradise* and (more recently) Noah Baumbach's equally excellent *Frances Ha*.

In imposing strict limits on its visuality, *Nebraska* shifts its focus to its most important narrative elements: its characters' interactions and the Midwest's isolative landscape. While dialogue is peppered throughout the film like the sporadically placed bales of hay occupying background shots throughout its numerous driving sequences, the acting in *Nebraska* is among the strongest and most subtle of the year. Bruce Dern's turn as the monotone alcoholic Woody earned him a highly de-

In imposing strict limits on its visuality, Nebraska shifts its focus to its most important narrative elements: its characters' interactions and the Midwest's isolative landscape.

served Best Actor trophy at Cannes, and Will Forte and Bob Odenkirk both excel in spite of their usual affinity for straightforward comedic roles. The film's shining performance comes from June Squibb, who plays Woody's nagging and surprisingly sharp-tongued wife, Kate. Squibb's Kate manages to unabashedly defend her bumbling family while simultaneously acting as its most vocal critic, and the dynamism of her role is masterfully executed through a combination of spot-on dialogue delivery and precise facial expressions.

Nebraska is refreshing not only as a celebrated release in 2013, but also as a return to form for Alexander Payne. Although the director has consistently demonstrated a vested interest in analyzing the gradually corrosive properties of American masculinity, his most recent directorial efforts prior to *Nebraska* have exhibited a

tendency to dilute his characters through commercially accessible writing and visually generous camerawork. 2004's *Sideways* lacked the sharp wit of *Election* and the devastating placidity of *About Schmidt*, and 2011's *The Descendants* relied on a typically hammed-up performance from George Clooney to mask its disingenuous stab at transcendent dramatic comedy.

Much like the isolated small-town life that *Nebraska* depicts, the film will likely go unnoticed at the Oscars in a season full of biopics, sequels, epics, guns, drugs, and money. Dern seems to stand the best chance of the

film's nominees of receiving an Oscar for his contribution. The Academy has a tendency to reward veteran actors that have never received proper recognition. However, he has stiff competition. Leonardo DiCaprio, too, has not yet received an Oscar, audiences have been consistently floored by Chiwetel Ejiofor's turn as Solomon Northup in *12 Years a Slave* and Matthew McConaughey has already set a precedent by winning the competitive Golden Globe for Best Actor in a Drama.

Regardless of whether the film receives any of the five Oscars for which it has been nominated this year, its poignant performances and willingness to buck stylistic trends unquestionably justify the praise that it has received. One hopes *Nebraska* will inspire similar turns from successful directors in the future. The awards season will always have its share of period pieces and thrilling spectacle, but movies like *Nebraska* maintain faith in film's ability to thoughtfully mediate the human experience.



Visual Journalism as Visionary Artifact

The Alchemy of The Modern Magazine

» **jessica barrett sattell** ^{US}

The collaborative endeavor that you're holding, perhaps perusing on your commute or over a relaxed coffee break, exists somewhere between a static artifact and a disposable product. A print magazine holds the present still in a space that doesn't demand the rapid-fire immediacy of a website nor offer a final say on a matter like a book. But it still must reflect the cultural relevance of the time of its publication. Magazines, whether print or web-based, are transitory objects that, because they lack the urgency accorded to daily newspapers, allow prime opportunities for experimenting with new methods of storytelling.

As Jeremy Leslie explains in his new book, *The Modern Magazine: Visual Journalism in the Digital Era*, the etymology of the word "magazine" is rooted in the process of collecting. It derives from the Arabic *makhzan*, meaning "storehouse," and then the French *magasin*, "shop." There is also the connection of the word as used in the realm of guns and ammunition. "We can see the shared meaning relating to the storage of disparate items or collections," Leslie says, "and the sense that the magazine might explode at any moment appeals from the point of view of the reader sometimes being surprised by what they find." Like other kinds of media, magazines as ephemera are often ephemeral; the format invites consuming and recycling usually more often than saving and savoring. It is a marker of modernity cataloging and saving the zeitgeist. Through a thoughtful collaboration between editorial fine-tuning and design dynamo, a slice of time is frozen on its pages and it becomes a specific artifact of a specific vision.

Despite the tired debate about the relevance of print as we've collectively jumped into the digital ocean, we cannot, and will not, be reading everything on screens. However, as the media landscape continues to grow into a network that is far more complicated than simply negotiating the issue of how content is delivered, we're seeing less of the market share that print

magazines once held. The upside to this, as *The Modern Magazine* shows, is that periodicals that are making conscious decisions to stick to print are creating some of the most innovative work in decades, amplifying the positives of staying off-line while honoring the lessons of web-based publishing. London-based Leslie, who both authored and designed the book, is a leader in magazine and editorial design and the editor of *magCulture*, a blog that examines the best of global magazines. He posits that we are in a new golden era of the medium, marked by more examples than ever of periodicals that utilize fine-tuned choices in production and design to

To survive the hyperspeed of the media landscape, stories, and their accompanying design decisions, need to be conversational, rather than simply reactionary.

holistically honor editorial voices. He defines this as an exciting time for visual journalists, those who revel in "the basic alchemy of manipulating text and image on a page." To survive the hyperspeed of the media landscape, stories, and their accompanying design decisions need to be conversational, rather than simply reactionary. The visual journalist is the visionary journalist.

As Leslie shows through hundreds of spreads from global lifestyle, news and niche magazines, the marker that visual journalists are sticking to is the embrace of design as content. The examples he shares run the range from newsstand favorites such as *Wired*, *New York* and *Bloomberg Businessweek* to "tasty zine" *Put A Egg On It* and fashion magazines *Fantastic Man* and *The Gentlewoman*. The most innovative and promising of independent magazines are hacking traditional interest

categories such as sports, fashion or automobiles into new cross-genre explorations. Ultimately, Leslie justifies a new level of periodicals that show how magazine publishing is navigating the form in the midst of an age where readers are well-versed in a multiplicity of media formats. *The Modern Magazine* has a charmingly documentarian feel; periodicals are photographed as objects, rather than just spreads open to examples of innovative editorial content.

Publishing provides a multitude of opportunities to ensure that media outlets keep multiplying, but many have shown little innovation beyond producing staggering amounts of content and blasting it into the world; Leslie's "alchemy" of arranging text and image to shape meaningful stories is largely disregarded in favor of point-and-click dissemination. But rather than play up fears about the dissolving state of the industry, Leslie's enthusiasm provokes a reveling in the sheer amount of creativity that visual journalists-cum-magazine hackers are bringing to the field. "I hope the book ... moves us on from 'magazines are dying' to an appreciation that the disruption caused by multiple events (the Internet, paper prices, distribution problems, recession ...) has encouraged investigation and creative thought about what a magazine should be," Leslie remarked on *magCulture* in September.

Creativity in the digital age exposes both the beauty and danger in the democratization of art. As more people than ever identify themselves as "artists," the massive amount of creative work vying for recognition ensures that the greater cultural conversation is more of a shouting match than a thoughtful chat. Leslie shows, however, that thoughtful editorial design has the power to harness this explosion into exciting reconciliations.



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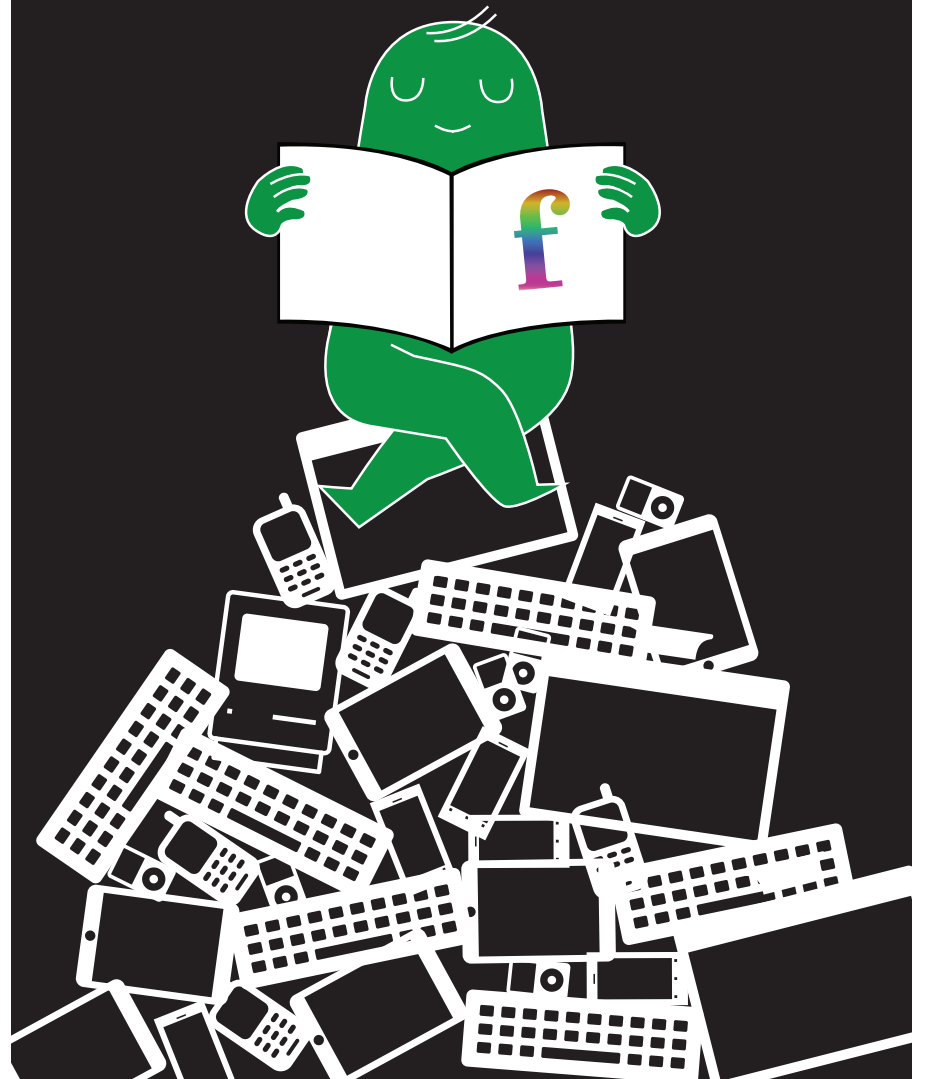
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We thank you for your creativity, dedication, energy, and leadership. We are looking forward to continued collaborations this summer—bon voyage!

print isn't dead yet.



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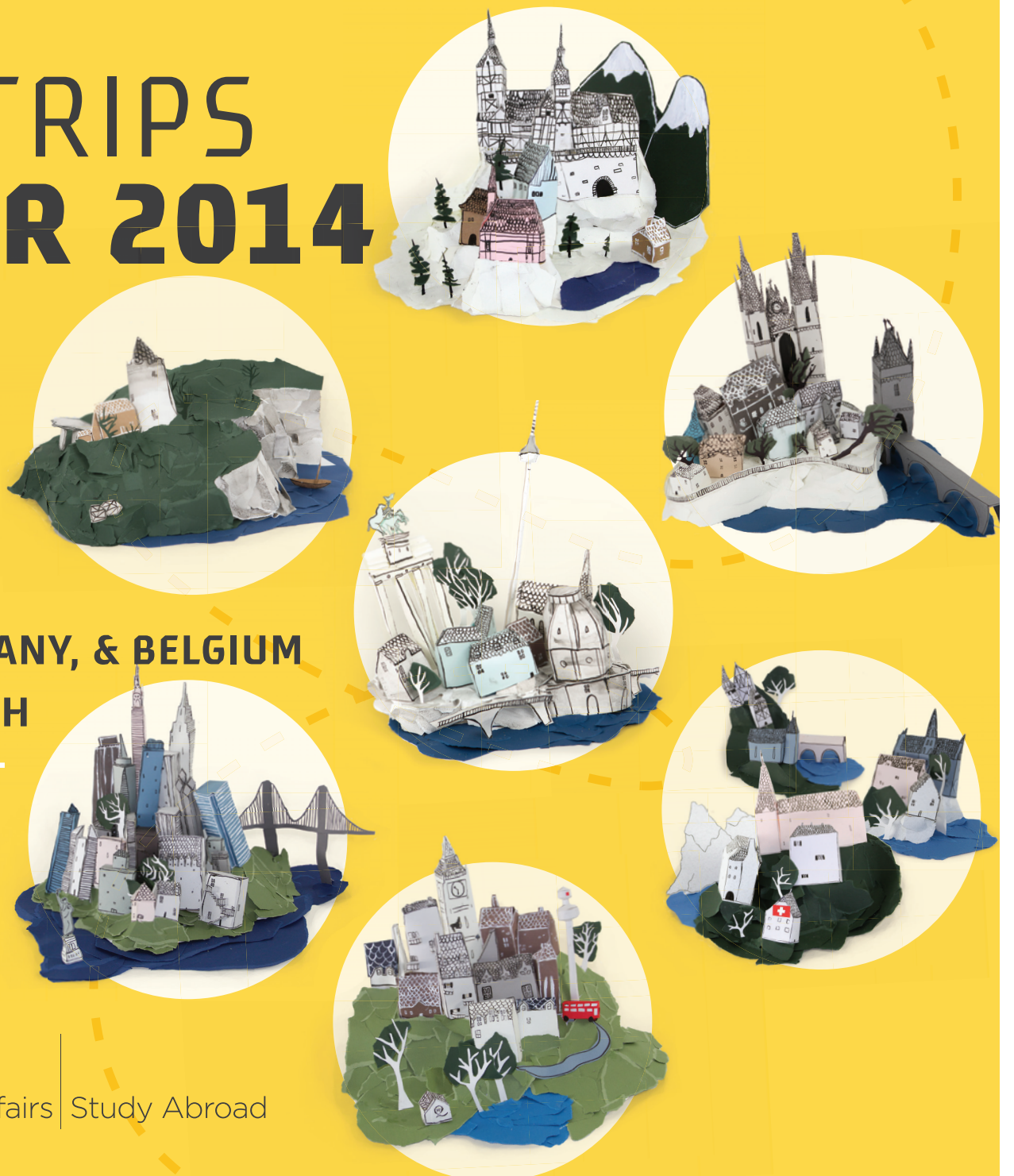
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No Object. No Image. No Focus

Turrell illuminates the possibilities of perceiving the infinite

» alyssa moxley

Entering *Darkness Matters* (2011) feels like entering a tomb, or perhaps a haunted house. After signing a waiver at the door, the security guard informs me that I have ten minutes inside the chamber. She shows a map of the space, which diagrams the bent corridors, and where the chairs would ultimately be. Upon entering, the only guide is the sense of touch along the metal handrail and felted walls. The industrial materials for public use and safety contrast with the unknown potential of the limitless darkness. I inch through slowly, sitting down and looking out into nothing. I blink and the darkness outside and behind my eyelids is the same. Finally, after about five minutes of swiveling my head around the room, I notice a faint russet glow, hovering on the back wall. I feel like I might be looking at the back of my own eyeball. I blink and close my eyes. The memory of the hazy cloud lingers on my retina and once again my eyes, open or closed, reveal the same image. This is the breadth of the vision, a very faint distant glow, which is unreachable, and might not even exist. The similarities between the work and the mysterious stuff of unknown physical properties that makes up the majority of our universe is striking. Like dark matter, or more accurately dark energy, *Darkness Matters* is visible through its effect rather than its substance. I hear the footsteps of the guard up the ramp, and she calls out, “Your time in the exhibition is up.” It’s been ten minutes. A maximum of two are allowed inside, but I am unaccompanied. I feel my way down the ramp and enter the daylight of the gallery preparing for the next phenomenological adventure. The didactic informs that the glow was a dimly lit incandescent bulb.

Light Reignfall (2011), a light program within the *Perceptual Cell* series, is another work that activates the apparatuses of perception, including the potential of solitude. Two attendants in white lab coats hand me another contract that I sign to say that I am prepared for the psychedelic effects. I choose the “hard” program rather than the “soft,” as one attendant, who has experienced both many times over her months of work, informs me that this option is more likely to create an out of body experience. After removing my shoes, I lay down on a white leather bed and am handed noise cancelling headphones and a panic button on a string to wear around my neck. Entering the work is slightly spooky, as if I am being interred in a mausoleum. Once inside the steel dome, a former gasworks storage cham-

ber, the light is a pure sky blue, projecting softly onto a limitless dome. Droning sine tones begin to sound in the headphones. The pitches shift, creating binaural beats, which are meant to entrain neurological electric pulses and induce meditative states. A pure red, and then darkness, intersperses with the blue. Wherever I can turn my head, there is always a spot in the center of my vision, the shadow of my cornea. The speed of flashing increases until I no longer see separate envelopes of color, but rather pulsing geometric forms that slither flickeringly in a space of infinite depth. At one point, a tear flowed down my cheek and I had no idea whether my eyes were open or closed.



Light Reignfall, 2011 // photo by Florian Holzerr courtesy of James Turrell, Pace Gallery, and Garage Center for Contemporary Culture, Moscow

James Turrell is adept at offering viewers the experience of containing the infinite within their own physical perceptions, which is simultaneously expansive, revelatory, and occasionally terrifying. *James Turrell: A Retrospective*, at LACMA from May 2013 - April 2014, is the artist’s first retrospective since 1985. The exhibition is part of a nationwide drive for recognition which began last spring with simultaneous, albeit shorter, shows at the Guggenheim in New York City, and the Museum of Fine Arts Houston. The shows will perhaps draw financial support for Turrell’s unfinished natural observatory, *Roden Crater*. The LACMA show is the most wide ranging of the three, including sketches, aquatints and early projection light works. *Afrum* (1966) is the first installation, a white light projected onto a corner conveying a solid floating cube. In another room, a number of holograms show three dimensional planes of color, with a few incorporating projections as well. A whole gallery is dedicated to Turrell’s far-flung “sky spaces,”

which use projected light on an aperture facing the sky to, as Turrell puts it, “bring the space of the sky down to the plane of ceiling.” An additional gallery space shows models and images of his unfinished opus of the last 35 years, the natural observatory *Roden Crater*, that conveys the “vastness of the cosmos within the tangible space of human experience.” Some of the installation works at LACMA have recommended viewing times to allow for adjusting eyes, like *Key Lime* (1994), a “wedge-work” that transforms the dimensions of the room through thin angled frames of beamed light. Timed tickets ensure that visitors have an experience of their own perception without a crowd, and feel comfortable lingering.

Turrell has worked at LACMA before, as part of their burgeoning Art and Technology program. In the late '60s he collaborated with artist Robert Irwin and aerospace psychologist Ed Wortz, who led the Garrett AiResearch corporation lab, testing environmental control systems for NASA’s manned space flights. A foundational experience for the trio’s research was individually spending up to eight hours inside a dark anechoic chamber at UCLA. The withdrawal of sensory information heightened the perception of the sensory apparatuses themselves. The trio experimented with meditation, and audio entrainment, and went on to create a “Ganz Field,” saturating one’s vision with 360 degrees of pure white light.

Breathing Light (2013) is part of Turrell’s *Ganzfeld* — meaning complete field — series and was commissioned for the show. After waiting in a queue, seven people are allowed to enter the antechamber of the light space. The guard gleefully guarantees that this is the highlight of the show and we’ll be able to see our toothpaste, perhaps differentiating brands by the glow of our fluoride smiles. We’re given booties, and watch as the previous group descends the tiered steps before walking into what initially appears to be a suspended blue screen. The curved white walls of the space lead to a luminous glow that slowly shifts, flooding the ovate tunnel with color. Turning around, the entrance appears as a screen again, shifting from turquoise blue to deep forest green because of the surrounding frequencies of luminescence.

Speaking of his own work, Turrell has suggested that his medium is perception, because “with no object, no image and no focus, what [else] are you looking at?” A master of neon, argon, ultraviolet, fluorescent and LED, he brings the immaterial within our reach.

Between Math and Mystery

Kurt Hentschläger's Immersive Installations

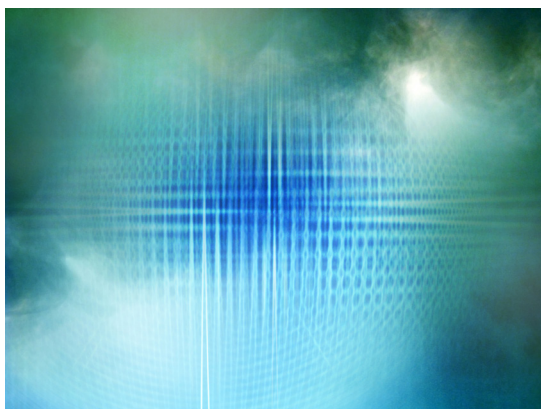


» eleanor larsen

Chicago-based artist Kurt Hentschläger effectively merges art and science by way of his creative process, which eerily approaches transcendence through calculable technical systems. Using immersive sensory experience as a vehicle, his work is deeply layered and thought-provoking, handling themes of sublimity, consciousness, and human interconnectivity. Hentschläger's widely exhibited, award-winning work transforms generative 3-D animation and audio technology into mesmeric, penetrating, and highly stimulating illusions that blur math and mystery, science and spirituality.

Growing up in a small industrial town in Austria, Hentschläger was exposed to Viennese Actionism through the thriving punk subculture of the 70s, which railed against Austria's stultifying conservative government and its repressive cultural policies. While not completely a part of these artistic and cultural movements, the shocking, confrontational aesthetic of Actionism and the exhilarating, hypnotic experiences of the Punk scene would go on to deeply affect the subject and style of pieces like *Cluster* and *Feed*.

Cluster is an hour-long, real-time 3D computer animation that portrays group behavior. It primarily features a cluster of amorphous, human-like forms that interact with each other within a dark expanse of empty space. The background is black and vacant except for an outer frame that deflects the movement of the cluster several times as it moves from one place to another on the screen. The cluster travels as it expands and contracts. It changes its density and form, as figures are drawn in and pulled away. The nude figures that Hentschläger creates are generic in form, with few signifying features. The abstract representations of human forms shift our focus from the specific subject of humanity to the subject of biological life. The beings and the process depicted could almost be a colony of microorganisms instead of people. *Cluster* is a fascinating union of the scientific and the mysterious; it refers to the inscrutable inner workings and structures of the natural world through a highly technological process. Through sound and imagery, Hentschläger creates an immersive presence that interrupts the isolation of the viewer.



The audio counterpart that plays during Hentschläger's visual performance is directly responsive to the generative imagery on screen. Hentschläger utilizes the heavy vibrations of low bass tones to generate a tactile spatiality to the sound. Combined with the visuals, *Cluster* creates a kinetic, virtual space that immerses the audience in a strange, otherworldly environment. It feels as much internal as it does external. The music moves the artwork itself away from the visual realm of film towards a palpable realm of sensory experience. An unfortunate testimony to the intensity of his work emerged with *Feed*, a related piece that caused photosensitive epileptic seizures for some of its audience members. This ranged from reactions of disorientation and confusion to traumatic seizures and momentary losses of memory.

Hentschläger's work is part of the emerging interest in collective behavior that is developing across a diverse array of artistic and academic fields. We want to know where else cooperative behavior can be found in society and nature, and why it occurs. What is the biology behind altruistic actions within microbial populations? There must be some evolutionary explanation behind the incidents of self-sacrifice that scientists have observed in bacteria. How do we define the collective

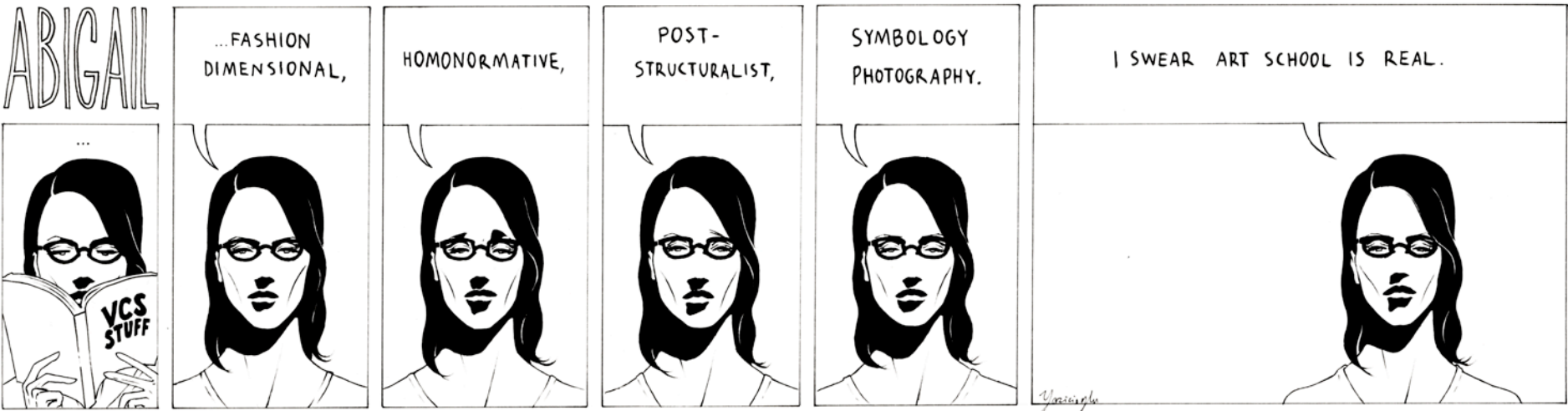
power of communities, and the indescribable energy of a group that somehow exceeds the sum of its parts? How do cities form from the social serendipity and collaborative labor of dense populations? What is it that inspires people in close proximity to invariably engage in the highly cooperative task of group organization? In other words, what is the cooperative counterpart to Darwinian competition? In pieces like *Cluster*, Hentschläger portrays social interconnectivity and collectivism as a manifestation of instinct, in opposition to the familiar characterization of community as a romantic quirk of the human prefrontal cortex. Author Steve Johnson similarly describes Victorian London as "a vast organism" in his book *Ghost Map*, evoking the idea of a social network as complex as a living, conscious animal. Both artists are examining the fundamental organic mechanism behind communities of organisms. This often forgotten aspect of human nature is becoming increasingly pertinent in a rapidly urbanizing world. As we decide how best to organize ourselves, we have to understand how organizations form in nature.

Hentschläger's piece *Zee* is an installation that uses stroboscopic light, thick fog, and droning sound to similarly transform a simple room into a strangely undefined otherworldly region. Much like his contemporary, the Danish-Icelandic artist Olafur Eliasson, whose large-scale installations put "the body in the mind and the mind in the body," Hentschläger de-familiarizes participants in a constructed sensory environment. *Zee* begins with a guide who leads participants into a room with a rope, but then encourages them to wander around freely. In some cases, people experienced hallucinatory visions and many participants compared their experience with *Zee* to their conceptions of heaven or death. The space itself is a marriage of contradictions in sheer intensity—the participants feel surrounded, but completely alone. They feel entirely aware and completely disoriented, both anxious and transcendent. The environment is serene and exalting, seeming at once strange and sublime. It induces a sense of inner contemplation by removing people from the everyday qualities of life.

Zee is a reality-defying construction of light and sound that might best be described as a technological attempt to fabricate the sublime. It can be understood as a merging of the secular and the sacred, where in the absence of religion certain components of religious experience are sought for in secular settings. "If anything, post eons of superstition, we built another elaborate collective construct we now call science, supposedly rational and all reason," said Hentschläger. In non-religious phenomena and environments, we seek a desire for otherworldly sensations. We have a tendency towards idolatry, a propensity for ritual, and often submit to dogma where it develops in the secular world. We see the simultaneous corrosion of the sacred realm through advances in science and, conversely, the dispersion of sanctity in everyday life.

Hentschläger's work exemplifies our attraction to transcendence, whether it is satisfied through spirituality, mind altering substances, or sensory manipulation achieved through installations like *Zee* and *Cluster*. In a sense, Hentschläger's secular installation explains a certain aspect of spiritual fulfillment, and perhaps satisfies an innate desire for the sublime.

»berke yazicioglu

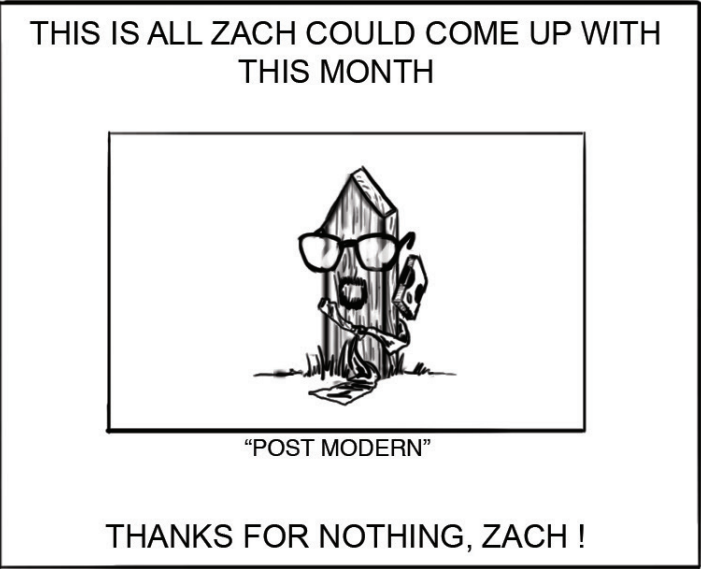


Drawn Out Thoughts Drowned Out Drawing

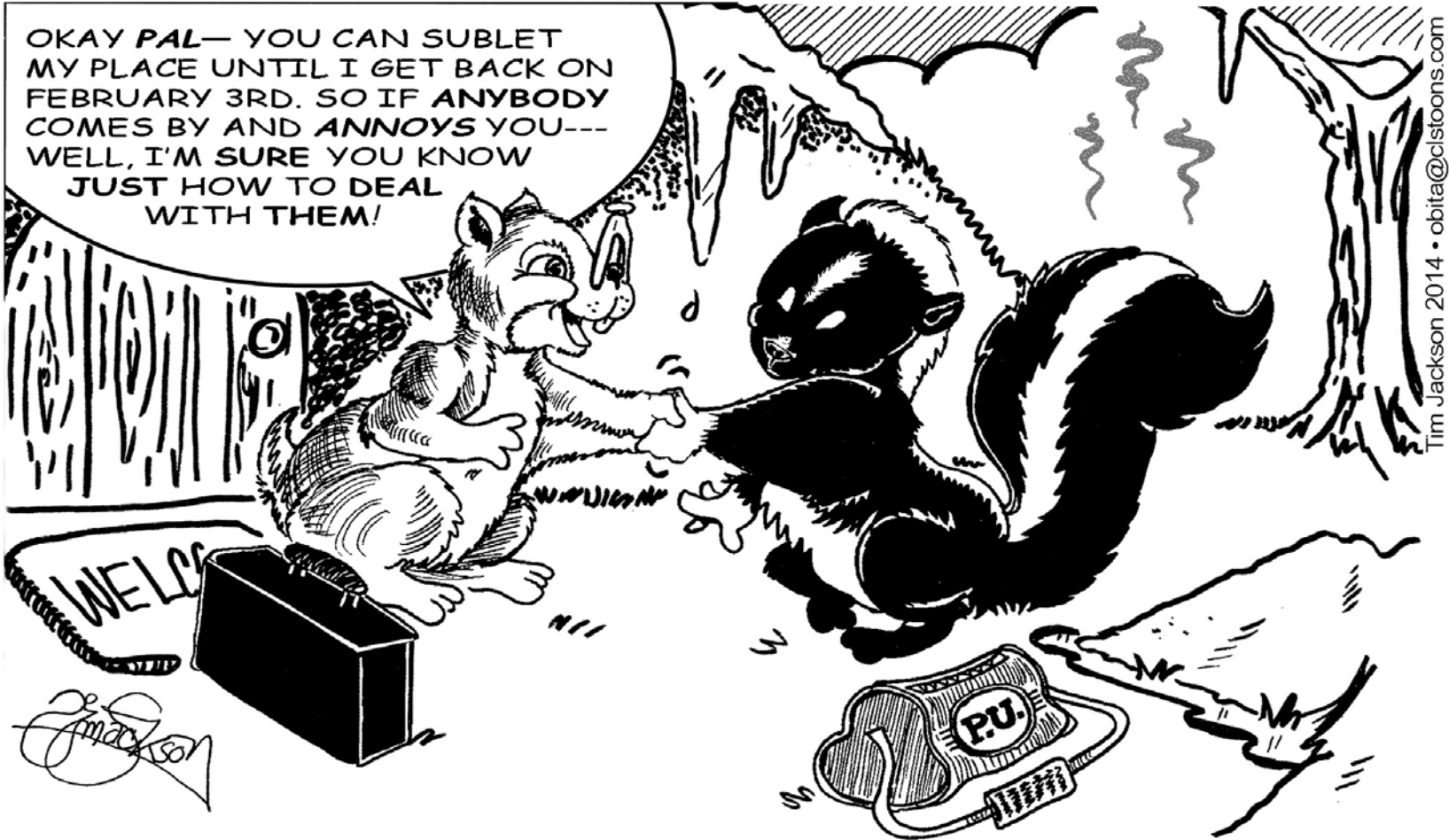
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Having endured years of humiliating Groundhog Day abuses, payback is set in motion.

»eric garcia



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